

AN OR

Issue 25



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Anor 25 - Credits

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Editorial

It is one of my least favourite tasks to introduce an issue of *Anor* as late as this one. The copy date for *Anor* 25 was almost exactly six months ago. Not surprisingly, therefore, the reports and reviews in this issue are a little out-of-date. I refuse, however, to produce an issue of *Anor* without at least one substantive article. So you have Mark Sutton to thank for this issue.

I took over the editorship of *Anor* under some duress: a resident candidate could not be found. I have been editor-in-exile for over two years now. I am ashamed to have produced only five issues in that period. I am also saddened by the fact that for most of this time I appear to have been editor-in-exile of a magazine filled with articles by authors-in-exile (with a few notable exceptions). If this magazine is to represent the Cambridge Tolkien Society, it should not have to rely continuously upon the work and interest of graduate members. If the current membership wishes to develop a new model of the CTS then it is your choice. I am more than willing to continue to edit *Anor*, if that is what the membership wants, or to hand over *Anor* to a resident student. Equally I would be prepared, though sad, to let the magazine fold if that is the view of the Cambridge Tolkien Society ...

Duncan McLaren

MEMORANDUM-TO-ALL-MINIONS-OF-THE-DARK-LORD:

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 - G O T H M O G X I I I

P4-WHAT THIS CAMPAIGN NEEDS IS MORE PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICHES

Palaeontology in the Silmarillion

Whilst recently re-reading the Silmarillion, I was intrigued to notice a few passages near the beginning of Chapter 1 ('Of the Beginning of Days') that seemed to provide an 'order of appearance' for some of Tolkien's *Kelvar* and seems at first sight at least to fit in quite well with the 'real' order that palaeontologists have obtained from the fossil record. A closer reading of these texts strongly suggests that these suspicions were at least partly correct, and that although Tolkien undoubtedly did not read any palaeontology text before writing or revising the chapter, nonetheless he was influenced by at least the popular perception of such natural history.

Firstly let me summarise the relevant parts of the fossil record. Tolkien does not concern himself with life in the sea, so I too will dodge the issue, and look at the history of life on land. The first terrestrial life (microbes excepted) probably consisted of simple plants, related to modern mosses and liverworts. The first large plants to dominate were various relatives of ferns and the like, some of which grew very large indeed. Flowering plants, which make up most of today's flora, did not appear until somewhat later - about halfway through the reign of the dinosaurs.

Large backboned land animals appeared a good while after the first land plants (and the insects), and produced a great variety of forms, including the earliest mammals, before the dinosaurs appeared. A little earlier than the flowering plants made their entrance, birds evolved (from dinosaurs, it is believed). When the dinosaurs went extinct, the mammals took over, and essentially, though this was over 60 million years ago, the Earth's flora and fauna had achieved its modern character (though, for instance, grasses did not evolve until relatively recently).

So what does Tolkien say, and how does it fit in with all this? The main passage concerned is:

'... and there arose a multitude of growing things, great and small, mosses and grasses and great ferns, and trees whose tops were crowned with cloud as they were living mountains, but whose feet were wrapped in a green twilight. And beasts came forth and dwelt in the grassy plains, or in the rivers and the lakes, or walked in the shadow of the woods. As yet no flower had bloomed, nor any bird had sung, for these things waited still their time in the bosom of Yavanna ...'

This fits strikingly well with the earlier period of life on land, and indeed only the 'erroneous' mention of grasses mars an excellent description of those times. Of particular note is the early appearance of mosses and ferns, and the comment that both birds and flowers had yet to arrive.

Tolkien furthermore, a few paragraphs later (referring to the actions of Melkor in despoiling this paradise) produces the memorable line:

'and beasts became monsters of horn and ivory and dyed the earth with blood.'

To my mind at least it seems very possible that he was thinking of dinosaurs when this was written. The timing would fit quite nicely, coming after the early world described above, but

before the rise of flowering plants and birds. More tentatively we could link the chaining of Melkor when the Elves first awoke with the end of these creatures, as it seems very possible that the Valar would have destroyed them when their master was overthrown. The exact time of the appearance of birds and flowers is not obvious (it should be before the dinosaurs vanished, if a relationship to 'true' natural history is sought), but they had certainly arisen by the time Thingol met Melian.

One other small piece of information lends weight to the idea that there is no accident in these similarities, and that Tolkien did know something of such matters. In his letter to Rhonda Beare (*Letters*, 211), he responds to the question 'Did the Witch-king ride a Pterodactyl at the siege of Gondor?' with the following:

'Yes and no. I did not intend the steed of the Witch-king to be what is now called a 'pterodactyl', and often is drawn (with rather less shadowy evidence than lies behind many monsters of the new and fascinating semi-scientific mythology of the 'Prehistoric'). But it is obviously pterodactylic and owes much to the new mythology, and its description even provides a sort of way in which it could be a last survivor of older geological eras.'

Most interesting to my mind here is his admission that the creature 'owes much to the new mythology'. In this case therefore the influence cannot be doubted, which must support the theory that Tolkien was influenced elsewhere by the 'scientific' history of the deep past.

The correspondence between the details from the *Silmarillion* and palaeontological knowledge is not, of course, perfect. None the less, it does seem a little too good to be mere coincidence, and I think it is quite possible that Tolkien made at least a token attempt to match his natural history to that of our world - as which, after all, he always intended Middle-earth to be perceived.

Mark Sutton

Reports

J.R.R. Tolkien Centenary Parade: Friday 13 March 1992

Woke up this morning. Discovered I still had two feet. Stepped out of bed gingerly. Discovered I could still stand up. Tried walking about. Discovered I could still hobble a bit. Limped into college to write up an account of last night's events:

Quite whose idea it was to hold a centenary parade I don't know. The idea of wandering around Cambridge in costume would not appeal to anyone with an ounce of sanity. But sanity is in shorter supply than certain other things in the Cambridge Tolkien Society, so we went ahead with it.

Mind you, there were only nine of us in total (seven at any one time) and three of those failed to turn up in costume. Compared with attendance at our weekly innmoots, this was disappointing. Maybe they had noticed the date and stayed in bed all day.

The parade took place at night. Despite the cold, this was considered to be a good thing. It meant that it was only the occupants of five pubs who saw our antics, rather than the whole town. I record some of their comments below:

The St Rhadegund

'What's with the bare feet? Are you on the way to Mecca?'

'What has Tolkien's centenary got to do with drinking in pubs?'

Stupid question

The Zebra

'Is this a shepherd's convention?'

'The Talking Society??'

'Oh. I've never read The Hobbit.'

'It must be a re-enactment.'

Of what, I ask

The Ancient Druids

Either the clientele of this pub were too boring to notice us, or they are used to robed figures wandering in for a pint of Merlin.

The Elm Tree

'Where's the baby Jesus?'

-
1. OK, it wasn't quite the centenary, but if the Professor insisted on being born in January, he couldn't really expect us to be around in Cambridge to celebrate it.

'This may seem a rude question, but I'll ask it anyway...'

The Cambridge Blue

'Are you the Science Fiction Society?'

Insult of the evening

'It's the Blanket Wearing Society.'

Remark obviously directed at Matthew, who was wearing a blanket. The rest of us were wearing cloaks, I'll have you know

'Are you Gandalf?'

Addressed to a Rider of Rohan, aka Steve

'Of course you're Gandalf. I've read Lord of the Rings, you know.'

'Vote Monster Raving Loony. We stand up for weirdo rights.'

Nick the Landlord, canvassing as candidate in Cambridge

'Yeeeeuch!'

Bare foot meets puddle of beer

'We ought to do this every year.'

We hadn't had that much to drink, surely?

None of the pubs were quite up to the standard of the Prancing Pony, so we didn't feel obliged to sing on the table. Monica knew the words, but was unwilling unless she had a ring to disappear with. But we did manage to clear ourselves a table in The Cambridge Blue remarkably quickly, even last thing on a Friday.

We had some odd conversations as the evening progressed. Very few of these were about Tolkien, but that was to be expected. One was about Prophets and why they did such strange things. Apparently Jeremiah (no relation) buried a pair of underpants in the ground for a while, then dug them up again. He also gave his children weird names. Bet he wouldn't have been seen dead on a CTS pub-crawl though.

My biggest fear was that I would arrive at The St Rhadegund and find I was the only one there. Fortunately this honour fell to the Steward, Mark. My second biggest fear came on entering The Zebra and noticing a familiar leather jacket. Fortunately it did not belong to the girl I thought it did.

The only people we encountered that I knew at all were on the next table at The Ancient Druids. But I refrained from embarrassing Fiona by revealing that I knew her name. I shouldn't think that being accosted by passing Wizards would add to her street-cred. After all, look what it did to Bilbo.

My costume got voted the worst tailored. But I paid good money for my cloak. I tell you it was not a brown blanket. Rhadagast would have been proud to wear it. My Celtic goblet got voted the best drinking vessel. But the opposition were only 414s, 8s and even a 1370, whatever that is. (But a 96 would have been better! - Ed.)

My footwear got voted the least sane. Others had wimped out and were wearing trainers. At the time I was proud of my achievement. The cold and the beer combined to stop me feeling any pain. This morning I am having second thoughts, none of them printable here.

All in all it was an enjoyable evening. It will give the locals something to talk about in days to come. I just hope we haven't made ourselves any less welcome at The Cambridge Blue - innmoots carry on there, every Tuesday.

Jeremy King

The Misspelling of Beorhtnoth, Beorhthelm's Son

A report of the CTS/Jomsborg trip to Maldon, August 10th, 1991

On a bright August morning, a doughty band of seven Jomsvikings boarded their longships (cunningly disguised as cars for ease of travelling up the motorway) and fared forth to the small Essex town of Maldon. Fortunately for the inhabitants, our errand was a peaceful one: we came merely in search of strong ale (as ever), and to witness the celebrations in honour of the one thousandth anniversary of the Battle of Maldon.

Having manoeuvred the 'longships' with a certain amount of difficulty down the narrow lane to our campsite, we proceeded to the re-enactment site. Here we found an impressive array of attractions: first and foremost (of course) an excellent beer-tent, offering mead, farmhouse cider and a 'Millennium Ale', specially brewed by Crouch Vale for the occasion. Besides this vital landmark, we also explored the craft fair (actually, this was pretty tacky on the whole, though we did manage to pick up a copy of the special anniversary edition of *The Homecoming*). Much more impressive was 'Maldon Burh', a re-creation of the tenth century settlement, complete with smithy, weaving looms and traders' stalls (the traders seemed, however, curiously familiar with twentieth century coinage, and even cheque-books...)

The re-enactment itself was divided into several stages: a historical prelude, a 'call to arms' (i.e. explanation of Saxon arms and armour and military training), and finally the battle proper, preceded by a falconry display. This last item was perhaps the most impressive on the programme: six or seven beautiful birds were put through their paces by very professional trainers. The highlight of the show was a huge eagle-owl, which was disposed to be lazy, but was an amazing sight once the trainers finally managed to coax it off the ground.

The battle itself was also very well done, despite the usual daft commentary over the public address system. Although officially Vikings, our party were all rooting for the Saxons - who nevertheless lost as usual, in spite of all our encouragement. Mind you, the Vikings did seem to be having a certain amount of trouble with Beorhtnoth, even after he was supposed to be dead!

At this point, there was a break in the main proceedings, during which there was a model aircraft display and a jazz band (do I detect the teensiest note of anachronism here?!). Our party decided to forgo these 'delights' in favour of the superior attractions of the beer-tent, but returned to the main arena for *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth* (sic). This, so the programme informed us, was written by Tolkein (sic), who was Professor of Anglo-Saxon Studies (sic) at Oxford, as a study exercise for his students (sic)! This notice did not inspire great confidence, and sure enough, the performance in fact turned out to be little short of a disaster. The text was very heavily cut, and most of the lines that were retained were virtually inaudible. Consequently, the contrast between the characters of Torhthelm and Tídwald was completely obscured, and the 'performance' was reduced to little more than two dim figures falling over corpses and muttering to each other in the dark, before marching off with Beorhtnoth's remains.

The proceedings concluded with a torchlit procession of both armies, followed by a firework display - an impressive finale which almost made up for the mangled version of Tolkien! This was the end of the official celebrations, but our intrepid heroes returned to their encampment to continue the revels 'far into the night' (not to mention the next day)...

'Findegil'



Competition

Mark Sutton's article in this issue follows an honourable tradition. In 25 issues of Anor we have not quite published articles by students of every subject, but we have seen a good variety.

This issue we have a competition based on this variety. Below are listed the titles of several Anor articles. There follows a list of subjects. All you have to do is match the article to the subject that the author studied (e.g. 1:iv).

There is even a prize: the first correct answer drawn from a hat at the Puntmoot (13th June) will receive a bottle of Mead (or equivalent of his/her choice). You may find the articles themselves contain clear clues: if you want to buy back-issues to check, just contact Steven Linley (see back cover). The number in brackets after each title refers to the issue of Anor in which it appeared.

Entries can be sent to the Editor, or to Steve Linley.

1.	On Elven Sight (9)	i)	Librarianship
2.	English in Tengwar (2)	ii)	Classics
3.	Tolkien and Structuralism (4)	iii)	Computer science
4.	The Norse Dwarf in Tolkien (20)	iv)	Mathematics
5.	To the Sea (music) (8)	v)	Linguistics
6.	Love, Magic and Childbearing in the life and works of JRR Tolkien (13)	vi)	Mineral physics
7.	Magic and Technology in a Fantasy Universe (11)	vii)	Geography
8.	The Draining of Moria (15)	viii)	Mathematics
9.	Ancient Greeks in Middle-earth (1)	ix)	Mathematics
10.	Barter in the Shire (17)	x)	Classics
11.	An Analysis of the Mortality of Hobbits (21)	xi)	Physics
12.	Tolkien and Chaucer (19)	xii)	Economics
13.	Hobbits, Authors and Translators: a preliminary attempt to unmask the reality of Middle-earth (8)	xiii)	Mathematics and Computer Science
14.	The Road Goes Ever On: Reflections on Tolkien & the Classical Epic (21)	xiv)	History and Philosophy of Science

The Puntmoot

(From the Annals of the City)

... On the first day of his office, the Steward of Minas Tirith rose early, and full of hope. For this was to be the day of the expedition, when the people of the city would journey once more up the great river Anduin, even unto Egladil, (that is called Grantchester in the tongue of later years), where they would eat, drink and make merry on the very banks of the river. He threw open the tasteful orange curtains of his chamber to greet the morning, but to his dismay the airs loomed grey over the city, whereas in former years, by the grace of the Valar, the day had been one of summer skies unblemished. These black clouds, assuredly, came from Mordor.

The Steward made his way to the stables, where his steed awaited him, thinking to ride first to the kitchens and ensure the craft were to be fully provisioned. But when he sat astride his mount, it seemed curiously unwilling, and emitted a strange noise, like unto the hissing of a snake. He feared now to ride upon it, so was forced to make his way by foot. It was become plain that the enemy purposed to thwart him by whatever devices might avail, but the Steward hardened his will, and made his way through driving rain to the kitchens.

At length he arrived, and his heart was glad indeed to find men of the tower had laboured mightily there, and all was nigh on ready. They gathered both food and great store of ale, set forth from the city in the grey morning, and swiftly came to the banks of the great river Anduin, where the boats were made ready.

It seemed then to them that the malice of the enemy was wavering, for though the sky indeed remained heavy with threat of black storms, the rain lifted, and they saw riders approaching across the plains. Many were eager young folk of Minas Tirith, but not a few were older and maybe wiser veterans of many winters, who hailed from distant lands, and had travelled long to reach the city. Yet ever they were fewer in number than hope called for, for it seemed that the dark murk the enemy controlled had daunted many, and it was said that they had looked out from their chambers, and muttered 'Bugger this, back to bed I think.'

At length it seemed no more would come, and the Steward called for the company to board the boats. But even now a warning came of the power of the Dark Lord, for one of the craft seemed wild, and wedged itself against the stone of the quay, from where it took many men to free it. And a strange light was in the eyes of the master of that vessel, though few marked it. His true name is not recorded, but he was called Treadaway, as he was renowned for his foresight in battle, that he might perceive before all others the wisdom of retreat.

Nonetheless the company was soon embarked, and the boats at last made their way up the river towards Egladil. They made good speed, for the river was wide, and the malice of the enemy still held off, and at length the mighty falls of Rauros were reached, and the craft hauled with great labour up the ancient portage way, that is called the Rollas. Such was the

might of the men of the expedition that soon they were once more on their way, and clear water lay between them and their journey's end.

But now it was seen that the enemy purposed to assail them here, for the clouds poured forth their waters, and the rains beat upon the men with fury undreamt of. But they were not defenceless, for they had brought with them devices wrought with the ancient craft of Númenor to withstand such a storm of Mordor, and at the Steward's command they unfurled these, like unto many-coloured banners, above their heads, and from the wrath of Sauron they were thus shielded. The company grew glad of heart, and drank mightily of the ale, until all evil seemed conquered. Yet more lay ahead, as the wise among them guessed, for the river narrowed, and many dark and evil trees were set upon its banks, and they seemed to clutch at the boats with thorny branches, and the men shrank into the very bottom of their vessels to escape their clutch. Many of the boats were nigh on lost to these trees, but ever the courage and skill of the folk of Gondor who steered them mastered the peril, and disaster was averted.

The voyage was long indeed, and the company were wearying of ever reaching its end, when at last the chimneys of the inn at Egladil were seen above more wholesome trees, and the Steward's men brought his boats to land by the fair shores of that land. Here they deemed evil could not follow, for the fury of the Storm was abated, and only refreshing drizzle fell on those far green slopes. Yet still the sun was hidden. The expedition here took food, and once more drank mightily, as was their wont. But now the greatest terror struck, for he that was called Treadaway was afflicted with a madness, and his wits deserted him (as did his sense of balance), and the company backed away from him in fear. Some tried to subdue him by pelting him with such provisions as remained, but he took up a paddle from the nearest boat, and swung madly at these missiles, such that many feared for their very lives, lest they be clouted mightily. Yet at length the evil that possessed him faded with weariness, and the expedition was safe. Yet few now had joy in the fields of Egladil, so with heavy heart the Steward gave the word, and all was stowed aboard once more, and the boats departed down the river towards the city, for many were eager to see their homes once again, and they feared lest the Dark Lord's evil strike in some new guise.

Of the return of the Steward to the city little is told. The journey was long and hard, with many hardships, for one of the company was nigh on lost in the cold waters, and one of the boats was shorn by ill fate of that which propelled it, and much labour unsung was needed before it was regained. But at last the white walls of the city drew near, and the men knew their trial was over. They left the boats, and departed to their homes, whilst the Steward mused on the expedition. Egladil had been reached, but what of the future? How could they hope to succeed again next year, with the enemy growing stronger by the day? But now he had need of rest, for the mead and ale of the expedition had taken its toll. Silently he turned his back on Anduin, and strode into the evening mists, towards his city ...

(And if this doesn't sound to you like the puntmoot you were on, tough!)

Mark Sutton

Reviews

Leaves from the Tree: J R R Tolkien's Shorter Fiction, London: The Tolkien Society 1991. 88pp £7.00²

As one of my friends chose to get married on the same day as the 4th Tolkien Society Workshop (24 June 1989), the publication of its proceedings is a long-awaited delight. Tolkien's shorter fiction (not 'minor works'!) is very often overlooked. While the Middle-earth 'Tree-o' (sorry!) of *Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit* and the *Silmarillion* will always dominate the minds of readers, the same quality of writing can be found in Tolkien's 'leaves'. As yet, this territory is little explored (and the editorial policy of the *History of Middle-earth* doesn't help matters), but there are treasures to be found there. This collection of papers gives good reasons why we should all go and look for them.

Pride of place is given to Professor Tom Shippey's interpretation of *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son*. This is an excellent, thought-provoking piece, delving into the conflict Tolkien felt - both in his own writing and in the Maldon poem - between the traditional Northern heroic spirit and the Christian ethical system which replaced it. In essence, Shippey's case is the same as in his second talk at ConFiction (see *Anor* 23 p.5), but here he concentrates specifically on this poem, and he makes many interesting and important observations. Shippey believes that this conflict provided the foundation for the style of heroism to be found in *LotR*. This spiritual tension underlies all of Tolkien's work, and sets him apart from his imitators. A full discussion is inappropriate in a review such as this, but watch this space ...

Smith of Wootton Major is the subject of the next paper, by David Doughan. He shies away from an attempt to explain the 'meaning' of this complex story, and instead points out some thematic similarities between it and *LotR*. First is the juxtaposition and contrast of the mundane, unimaginative real world and Faery, only glimpsed, and by a fortunate few at that. More important is the grim, defeatist tone of the book. There is no happy ending, no 'progress', no resolution, just change - the 'long defeat'. Allied to this is the theme of renunciation, so important in *LotR*.

John Ellison's paper, 'The 'Why' and the 'How': Reflections on *Leaf by Niggle*', explores the autobiographical aspect of this story, particularly how it reflects the conflict between Tolkien's usual way of working at the time ('nigging' on leaves to the detriment of the 'tree' as a whole) and the requirements of the construction of a work which grew as extensively as *LotR*. Looking at the *Silmarillion* narratives, we can see from the various 'lost tales' that the original shape of the story had been obliterated by Tolkien's meticulous concentration on a few brief tales. Ellison's thesis is that, having developed and become master of his artistic method through *LotR* (the Workhouse), Tolkien was then able to resolve the conflict between

2. £7.50 for a copy signed by Prof. Shippey.

structure and detail and produce the masterly later *Silmarillion* writings, notably the 'Nam I Hin Hurin'. Here, as elsewhere, Ellison compares:

"the essentials of bringing any large artwork to completion, be it poetry, building, symphony or The Lord of the Rings".

Though whether Tolkien would appreciate being compared with Wagner is another question entirely ...

Turning briefly from Faery to the real world, Alex Lewis' paper 'The lost heart of the Little Kingdom' describes the radical changes which so afflicted Oxfordshire between 1938 and 1945 that in 1945 Tolkien felt unable to write a sequel to *Farmer Giles of Ham* - "*the heart has gone out of the Little Kingdom*". The paper is an alarming catalogue of the urbanization and militarization of Oxfordshire during this period, but Lewis also hints at the slow process by which he claims Tolkien recaptured this 'lost heart', a recapture heralded by Smith, but not completed.

Farmer Giles of Ham is the subject of the next paper, by John Rateliff, who gives a brief but tantalizing sketch of the history of the story's composition, from its first draft as a slight children's story, notably lacking in proper names or any of the other features which normally characterize Tolkien's writing, to the full-blown philological play of the published version. Rateliff has a number of observations to make about the story, particularly about the method of dating: I had never noticed that the story is structured around the Oxford academic calendar, and it was nice to be reminded that St Hilarius (of 'Hilary term') is traditionally invoked against snakes. He also points out that the story is a mocking parody of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. There's an article there somewhere ...

Somewhat less interesting (to me, at least) is Christina Scull's survey of the varied literary presentations of Dragons, from Andrew Lang's retelling of Sigurd to Tolkien's Chrysophylax. Endless examples with little substantial comment I find rather wearing. The upshot is that only Lang and Tolkien present dragons as fierce and hostile (even Chrysophylax eats people), whereas the tradition in the early part of this century was to treat them as humorous, almost ridiculous creatures.

If the aspect of Tolkien as a creator of a mythology for England turns you on, then Jessica Yates' 'The Source of *The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun*' will provide fascinating reading. This is an excellent piece of detective work, reconstructing Tolkien's encounter with the story of Clerk Colvill, and exploration of the various analogues in French, Italian, Icelandic, and - most importantly for Tolkien's own poem - Breton. The story, of the love between a mortal man and an elf-woman, had an obvious appeal to Tolkien, and the absence of a (lengthy) English version allowed his creative imagination free rein. Of all the papers in this collection, this one particularly suffers from being too condensed, and merits a much fuller treatment. Alas, I suspect that we must await the publication of a full critical edition of Tolkien's poem, at present languishing in the pages of the *Welsh Review* of 1945³. HoME 247

3. Editor's Note: The relevant copy of the *Welsh Review* can be found in the University Library; and the *Lay* is well worth reading.

Tom Bombadil is, by general admission, an enigma. It is then fitting that the three short discussion papers which round the collection off are devoted to him (but it is a shame that the discussions themselves are not reported, however briefly). Christina Scull charts the development of Tom Bombadil from initial conception to his portrayal in both *LotR* and 'The Adventures'. To close, she gives some interesting examples of how Tolkien used other experiences of his own family in his writings.

Charles Noad presents us with a select list of speculations on the nature of Tom Bombadil. Less than gripping reading, but it is useful to have this material collected together. (Unfortunately, the list was compiled before my article on the subject in *Anor 19* saw the light of day - Thanks Mike!) The brief discussion which follows is rather inconclusive and unsatisfactory, perhaps because it is intended to incite further discussion. The interpretation in terms of the book's own cosmology ('an incarnation of some aspect of Nature'), aside from being almost identical with the allegorical interpretation ('disinterested Nature') is so vague as to be meaningless. Certainly it's not a very helpful statement. Now if only I'd been there ...

On the extra-literary level, I guess we are all aware that Bombadil is based directly on a Dutch doll that once belonged to Tolkien's children. But have you ever wondered what a Dutch doll is? Well, now you can find out. Patricia Reynolds not only gives us a brief but well-researched description, she even gives us a picture of one, attired very like Tom Bombadil, from Queen Victoria's collection!

On the whole, this is an excellent collection. Not only do the papers contained herein inspire further comment on Tolkien's shorter fiction; it is also pleasing that members of the Tolkien Society can produce criticism of such a high standard, and present it in an accessible and readable form. I found many of the papers inspiring, and I hope others find the same.

Steve Linley

'Tehanu: The Last Book of Earthsea' Ursula K. Le Guin

[Editor's Note: I believe this book is now available in the UK. Unfortunately both Monica and I bought imported copies of the American edition so we don't know the publication details.]

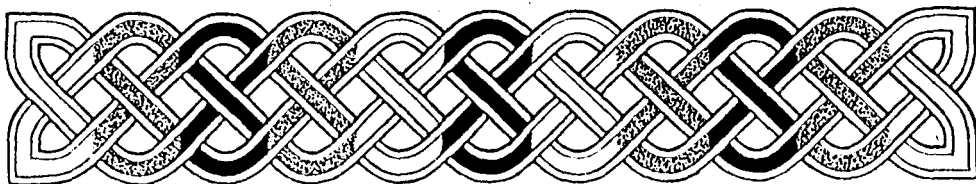
Ursula Le Guin's *Tehanu* is in the nature of a sequel or postscript to the *Earthsea* trilogy, written some twenty years after the publication of the first three books. Writing 'the fourth book in a trilogy' is always a risky business, and Le Guin partly succeeds and partly fails. *Tehanu* does not, in my opinion, achieve the near-perfection of its three predecessors, yet it is nevertheless an interesting novel in its own right, and offers an intriguingly different perspective on the world portrayed in the earlier books.

The action of the novel begins just before the end of *The Farthest Shore*. Tenar, the priestess who aided Ged in his quest for the ring of Erroth-Akbe in *The Tombs of Atuan*, is now a middle-aged widow, living on the island of Gont. Ged returns to the island, mounted on the

dragon Kalessin, and is nursed back to health by Tenar. The story revolves around their relationship with each other, and with the people of Gont, good and bad, as Ged comes to terms with his loss of power, and the aftermath of the bad years preceding the success of Ged and Arren's quest works itself out amongst the islanders. At the centre of events is the child Therru, adopted by Tenar after she has been horribly mistreated and abandoned by her parents, who soon turns out to have mysterious powers of her own.

Thus, unlike its predecessors, *Tehanu* does not deal with deeds of high heroism and wizardry, but with the everyday concerns of people who, if not ordinary, are at least leading a more normal life than the mages and princes of the earlier books. We see Earthsea from a very different angle here, and it is a great testimony to the strength of Le Guin's creation that it is able to sustain this kind of writing as well as the high fantasy of the trilogy. *Tehanu* does not have the mythopoeic power of its predecessors, which I have always felt to be surpassed only by Tolkien in this respect. I know of no other author who has so successfully combined the atmosphere of heroic legend with the creation of such human and sympathetic characters. But Le Guin is clearly attempting something different in *Tehanu*. The issues she addresses here are not the great questions of life, death, power and freedom, but the more mundane matters of social relationships, particularly the relation between the sexes. Le Guin adapts her style accordingly, and the work is altogether on a less elevated plane than its predecessors. (It is also, incidentally, definitely not a children's book, unlike the *Earthsea* trilogy, which has attained the rare good-fortune of appearing in both the adults' and children's sections of many bookshops). On its own terms, it is reasonably successful, and its author has much of interest to say about the world she has created, and the world in which we live. But as a conclusion to the trilogy, I found it a little disappointing. Though the relationship between Ged and Tenar is sensitively and convincingly portrayed (and the reviewer, for one, had often wondered what became of them 'in the end!'), the difference in tone is simply too marked for the books to sit comfortably together. Le Guin's handling of names also seems less sure than in the earlier books, and I found the construction of the plot slightly lopsided, with most of the 'action' (in the narrow sense of the word) concentrated in the last two chapters. These criticisms aside, however, *Tehanu* is well worth reading, both as a complement to the original trilogy, and as an intriguing novel on its own account

Monica Gale



Narnia - A Different Fantasy

Have you ever wished you had lots of money to spend on books? I used to, until October. Then I was given some. I started with a list of titles I wanted. I bought them. I wandered round the bookshops of Cambridge and found more volumes which took my fancy. I bought them too. Then I discovered I had £20 left, and no idea what to spend it on.

I can tell you it was no joke. When you have bought thirty books in one week, inspiration is hard to find. In desperation I tried a children's bookshop. There I came across the *Chronicles of Narnia*. As a boxed set it was the right price. And somehow I felt I should buy it to go with my Tolkien collection. After all, the two authors used to hang out together.

Of course, having bought thirty books, it took some time getting to read them all. Narnia was not high on my agenda. But I got there. Once started it was quick going. There are seven volumes, but all are slim. This was the first difference I noted between these and Tolkien's major works. Even *The Hobbit* dwarfs Lewis' books (or should that be dwarves?).

In fact I had read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* before. But that was at primary school, long enough ago to have no memory of the story. The recent television productions were more memorable but I had not seen enough to try to compare the films with the original. However, they gave me a clear preview of the plots.

I had also heard a great deal about Narnia down the years. Many people equate Narnia with Middle-Earth, just as they put J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis in the same pigeon-hole as writers. They both write 'Fantasy' stories - set in worlds which, in the conventional sense, are not real. But (if you had not guessed from my title) I would disagree with anyone who claimed there was much similarity.

Firstly, Narnia was a series written for children. Even if the dedication in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* had not made the matter clear, the style is unmistakable. You may argue that *TH* was a book for children too. But Middle-earth existed long before Bilbo Baggins came on the scene:

'The Hobbit was originally quite unconnected [to Middle-Earth], though it inevitably got drawn in to the circumference of the greater construction' (Letters #163).

I cannot claim that adults will not enjoy the *Chronicles of Narnia*. After all, I enjoyed them. But at times they will seem childish.

As his principal characters, Lewis takes children from our world. Narnia is seen as being parallel to this world - we too could go there if Aslan chose to call us. It is important for the message of Narnia that we should identify ourselves with Lucy, Edmund, Susan and Peter. In contrast, Middle-earth is our own world, albeit in an earlier and more noble age. Thus we have less in common with those we read about. (Although the hobbits perform a similar literary function to Lewis' children - Ed.)

Narnia is far more 'magical' than Middle-earth. There is a great variety of races such as fauns and centaurs. In addition there are the talking animals - common in folklore (and

Victorian 'fairy-tales'), but of minor importance in Tolkien's creation. Even the stars of Narnia are portrayed as people. There are no ents as such, but trees are indwelt by dryads and similar spirits.

Nor are there elves in Aslan's world. Along with most other Northern creatures, they are supplanted by those from Classical mythology. To the true Vikings among us this is a disappointment. It is also surprising, given the following remark by Carpenter:

'Since early adolescence Lewis had been captivated by Norse mythology, and when he found in Tolkien another who delighted in the mysteries of the Edda ... it was clear that they would have a lot to share.' (Biography p. 148)

Lewis does not seem to have used many plot devices from myths (with one major exception, to which I return below), in contrast to Tolkien's readiness to re-use old stories. The main exception is *The Voyage of the Dawntrader*, which reminded me of the Odyssey with its journey from island to island. *The Horse and his Boy* has parallels with Oedipus Rex. A child has a prophecy made about him, and is then presumed killed. In this case his return has beneficial rather than tragic consequences.

Not only is Narnia more magical, but also less solid than Middle-earth in other ways. There is none of the depth of history and language which Tolkien toiled over. The names Lewis coins are agreeable enough, but without etymology they lack interest. There are few countries which appear in the stories, so little variety in the setting. To me the depth of Middle-earth is its greatest strength: conversely, Narnia's shallowness is its greatest weakness.

Compounding this weakness are a number of 'anachronisms', for want of a better word. There is a lamp-post in the woods of Narnia (although this is well justified retrospectively). Father Christmas shows up. The children grow up in Narnia for years, and then return to this world at their original age. Middle-Earth is not free from anachronisms, but none jarred with me as much as these.

Lewis frequently makes jibes at the modern world, such as those about schooling in *The Silver Chair*. Although these comments are made explicitly as the author's and there are similar intrusions in *TH*, for the most part Tolkien is not attempting to give an explicit message. This helps the credibility of Middle-earth. It is easier to suspend disbelief when the story is not interrupted by the real world.

This leads me to the major difference between Narnia and Middle-earth. In his foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien says:

'As for any inner meaning or "message", it has in the intention of the author none. It is neither allegorical nor topical.'

And despite many attempts, no-one has proved otherwise. But the Chronicles of Narnia have an unashamedly Christian message.

It is remarkable that there should be such a difference. Both men were strong Christians, albeit of different denominations. Yet in his major works, although his Christianity is sometimes reflected, Tolkien is not actively promoting a Christian theme or message. It is only in *Leaf by Niggle* that he uses allegory to express his beliefs. In contrast, the books for

which Lewis is remembered are Christian, whether explicitly or allegorically.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is an account of the Christian gospel ('good news'). Edmund the traitor deserves death (as all men do for their rebellion against God). Aslan the Lion (representing Jesus Christ) agrees to die instead, allowing Edmund to go free. When all seems lost with Aslan dead, he is restored to life again.

The Magician's Nephew tells of the creation of Narnia, and how evil came there. Thus it corresponds to the early chapters of Genesis. Similarly *The Last Battle* corresponds to Revelation. It recounts the destruction of Narnia, the judgement which follows, and the beginning of the eternal Narnia, but in a more accessible style than Revelation.

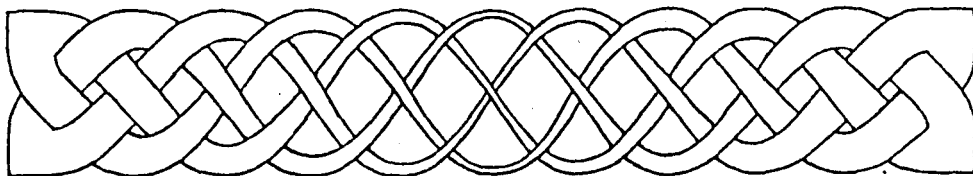
The remaining books have no direct parallels with the Bible, but they still contain many Christian ideas. Much attention is paid to people's characters, and the way their behaviour is affected after siding with Aslan. On several occasions the Narnians are overwhelmed by the forces of evil. As soon as Aslan appears on the scene, victory is sure and quick. This is conspicuous in *Prince Caspian*.

In what he set out to do, Lewis succeeded. Narnia is not a solid world based on history and language, as Middle-earth is. But it was never intended as such. It was designed to teach Christian truth in a format which would appeal to children. If the two authors were not close friends, I do not think many would have tried to equate Narnia with Middle-earth.

That does not mean that a person will not enjoy both worlds. But do not assume if you admire Tolkien's works that you will necessarily like Lewis'. After all, Tolkien himself did not:

'It is sad that "Narnia" and all that part of C.S.L.'s work should remain outside the range of my sympathy, as much of my work was outside his.' (Biography p. 204)

Jeremy King



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