

## “Before Defended Walls”: Hill-forts and Fortified Sites in northern Eriador in the Second and Third Ages

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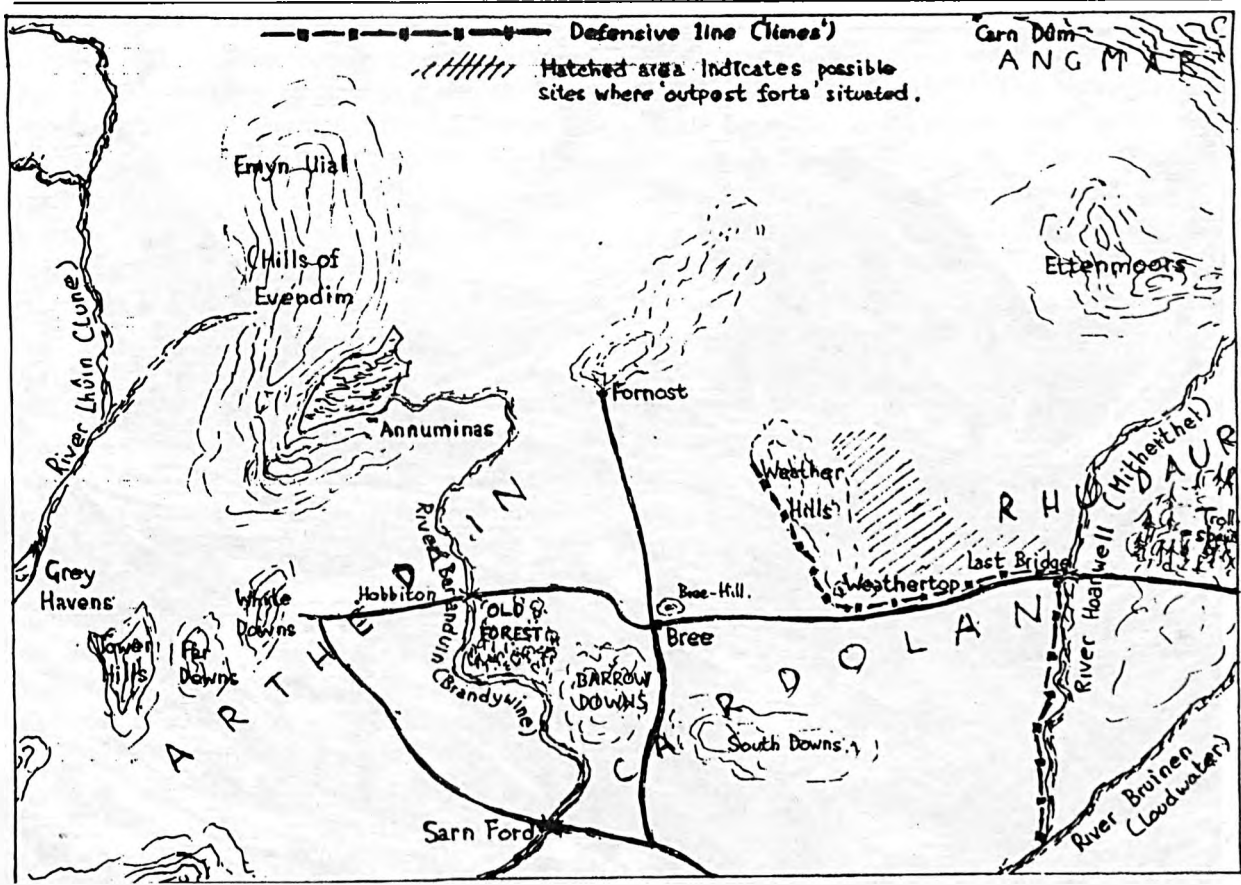
The writings of J.R.R. Tolkien transmit to us certain records, or extracts from such records, which survived as preserved in the Shire, in the royal archives in Minas Tirith, or in other places in Middle-earth. These records constitute our primary written sources for the history of Middle-earth from the First Age to the close of the Third. Archaeology, on the other hand, would seem to provide little or nothing to supplement the written records. It remains narrowly circumscribed by our inability to obtain and evaluate results derived from excavation, or from fieldwork in the normal sense. It can, though, throw some light on the historical record by derivation from another important source, namely the large corpus of illustrations, in many different media, that have accumulated around Tolkien's writings. The value of this material, considered as historical evidence, does of course vary very widely. Tolkien's own art, and that of such careful and industrious observers and transcribers as Ted Nasmith, may be presumed to embody the visions and intentions of the artists in Middle-earth who originally set them down, without avoidable distortion. Many of such illustrations, however, are affected by the degree of artistic licence permitted themselves by the individual artists of our own day, who produced them. Such licence, of course, is a wholly legitimate thing in itself. It nevertheless, because of the subjective element involved, hinders our perception of historical truth. The limitations of the pictorial record, and its variable level of authenticity, have also to be viewed in the context of the original source material, which would have been no less variable.

This paper concentrates on the implications of three such 'survivals' and tries to suggest that

through examining them, and possibly others like them, a limited kind of archaeological "fieldwork" can be carried out. These, "survivals", all depict fortified sites in the north-west of Middle-earth in the Third Ages, or, rather, they purport to do so. They all appear to derive from original works of roughly contemporary date. From the appearances presented by such sites as depicted historians may obtain clues which may assist them in amplifying or throwing light on the written records, brief as these normally are. Such investigation is bound to contain a large speculative element, but may open up some useful lines of enquiry. Perhaps it may be possible to study other important sites in Middle-earth in a similar fashion.

The three "survivals", reproduced here seem to portray the following: the site of Fornost Erain (Norbury of the Kings), viewed from the south (p. 19); the southern end of the Weather Hills with Weathertop itself on the extreme right (p. 22); and a scene from the "Journeys of Frodo" (p. 22). This shows "Strider" with the four hobbits making their way through the difficult and hilly country north of the Road, some days before the encounter with the stone-transformed trolls. The "originals" of these pictures are presumed to have been produced about the time of the War of the Ring, or shortly afterwards. They may even have been the work of Frodo himself, or of one of the other hobbits, although this is pure speculation, as none of them is known to have practised as an artist in any form. All of them show fortified hill-top sites, and two of them also show valley or low-level settlements and fortifications. The Fornost Erain picture especially bears witness to a long and complex archaeological sequence.

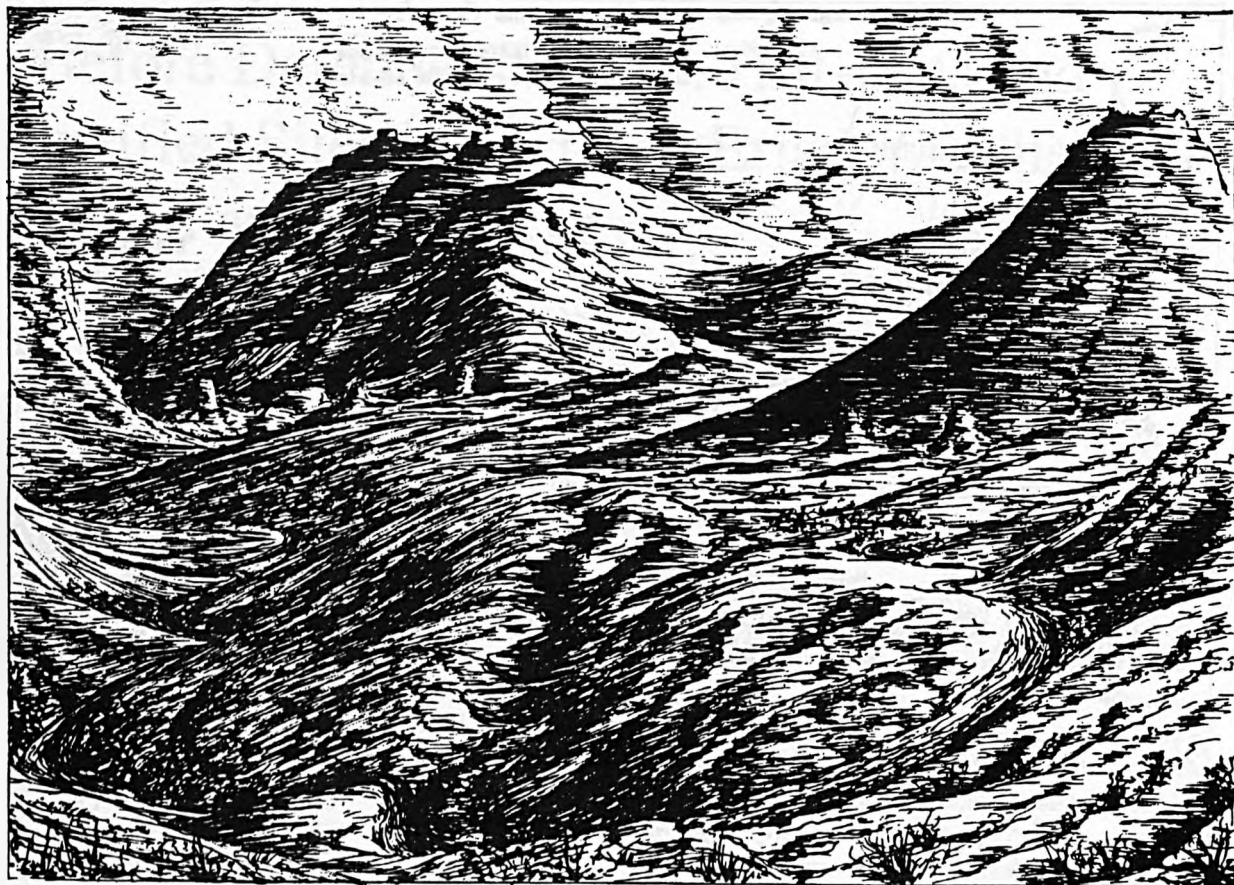
## “Before Defended Walls”



The event that did most to change the course of history, in these parts of Middle-earth no less than elsewhere, was of course the arrival of the Númenórean “Faithful” in the aftermath of the overthrow and drowning of Numénor, together with the formation of the two “realms in exile”, Arnor and Gondor (S.A. 3319-20). Could the new arrivals have brought the practice of hill-top fortification with them? From what we know of the social and political structure of Numénor this seems highly improbable. The practice of hill-top fortification implies the presence of localised centres of authority or commerce, making up a social structure of a tribal or feudalistic kind, with power divided up among tribal chiefs or territorial magnates. Numénor, on the other hand always appears as more or less centralised about the authority of the kings; power thus concentrated at the centre, in its latter days becomes increasingly autocratic and finally totalitarian. If the “hill-forts”, as we may call them, were not the consequence of importation from Numénor, they would have been evolved by the Men of these regions – the descendants of those who crossed into Beleriand during the First Age. Tolkien tells us (1981, p.

154 - no. 131) that in the Second Age these areas were inhabited by Men living a “heroic” tribal and patriarchal kind of existence. With one exception, but that a very important one, there is no written record of historical events throughout the Second Age relating to them. This exception of course is the war of the Elves with Sauron that broke out at the end of the 17th century (S.A.).

The main centre of military operations was Eregion, well away from the areas we are at present concerned with. The actual fighting was followed, however, by a harrying of the whole of Eriador by Sauron’s forces; this was halted with difficulty at the river Lune, west of which lay the realm of Gil-galad. Following this a Númenórean fleet was summoned, and with its appearance Sauron’s armies were routed and expelled from Eriador. We do not know for certain what was the extent of the area affected; it looks as if it was the southern parts of Eriador that suffered most. The likely consequences are worth considering. To begin with, population displacement would be certain to occur, resulting in the movement of fugitives or immigrant groups towards and into lands in the north and west. This would encourage competition, if not



THE WEATHER HILLS

WEATHERTOP.



conflict, for land suitable for settlement. So areas not actually invaded by Sauron's armies, or at any rate those less seriously affected, would all the same experience political anarchy, or at least insecurity; sporadic skirmishing, if not actual warfare between native and immigrant groups, would be a near certainty.

Such a sequence of events can be expected to have been accompanied by either the fortification of sites *de novo* or the refurbishment or elaboration of sites already existing. Two of the “pictures” reproduced here show elaborate “multivallate” earthworks crowning the hills. Here it is possible to compare a number of sites of the Iron Age in Britain; if these in Middle-earth developed in the same way they would have begun as single rampart-and-ditched enclosures, and acquired their ultimate form by a process aptly described by the late Dorothy L. Sayers as “onionisation”. The sequence of periods at Maiden Castle, Dorset, (which had Neolithic and Bronze Age predecessors (Wheeler, 1943)), is an example from a later Age of the world. All of this, of course, is necessarily speculative; given our very limited information as to the activities of Men in this part of Middle-earth in the Second Age; for the time being it may perhaps be treated as plausible.

The first major settlement that appears in the historical record after the founding of Arnor is represented by a lakeside site; Annúminas by Lake Evendim. This area, at an earlier time, had provided an abode for Celeborn and Galadriel, before they moved eastwards, so perhaps it already had some reputation as an “upmarket”, residential district; (Middle-earth's answer to Hampstead Garden Suburb, or perhaps North Oxford!) The site seems to have been something approaching a town or city, and we hear nothing at all about any defences. Its foundation by the Númenóreans might have been an event comparable to the foundation of a Roman *colonia*, in native territory, though presumably without local opposition and possibly with the full co-operation of surrounding inhabitants. If this was the case, a parallel can be drawn from a later Age of the world; the co-operative stance of the Regnenses tribe of west Sussex following Claudius' invasion of Britain in 43 AD, and the subsequent rapid Romanization of this part of

Britain reflected in a site such as the villa at Fishbourne (Cunliffe, 1971). The Númenóreans would have had to intermarry very extensively with the native population for their civilization to survive for more than a limited period.

Over a period of some hundreds of years the capital at Annúminas is replaced by Fornost at the south end of the North Downs. The sources do not give any special reason, or reasons, for the change, but an important one is, surely, the more defensible nature of the latter site. The eventual replacement, by the eminently defensible site of Minas Tirith, (whose circles themselves suggest its possible origin as a multivallate hill-fort), of the “open”, riverside site at Osgiliath looks like a very similar process. The sequence of periods at Fornost itself, as it seems to present itself in the illustration we have of it here (see p. 19), consists of the following elements (not necessarily in chronological order, but probably so).

(a) A very large multi-rampart hill-fort. There seems to be another one behind, but that may be a subsidiary of the same fortified enclosure. The hill fort most probably represents, as suggested above, several periods of construction. It presumably gave rise to the references in the sources to Fornost as being, “on the North Downs”.

(b) A settlement below the hill, whose most prominent feature, close to the viewpoint, appears to be part of a system of defensive dykes. In this connection, it can be recalled that at the end of the Third Age the deserted site had become known as “Dead-men's Dyke”. There is a seeming parallel to this kind of defence to be drawn from the final, “Belgic”, or “C”, phase of the Iron Age in South-eastern Britain, represented by the sites of Wheathampstead, (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1936) (the capital of Cassivellaunus), pre-Roman Verulamium, (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1936, and Frere 1978) and Camulodunum, (Hawkes & Hull, 1947) (pre-Roman Colchester). This is a type of defence wholly different and distinct from the hill-fort defences which had come to proliferate in southern and western Britain before then.

(c) A heavily occupied area in the middle distance, probably indicative of buried foundations of stone or timber. Apparently overlying this there seems to be a rampart-and-



ditch defence which from its appearance evidently was stone walled. This could represent a sequence of periods of construction, rather than a single one.

(d) Stone fortifications on the hill-top which are surely not contemporary with the earthwork banks and ditches, but represent a subsequent refortification.

The foundation of the North Kingdom, and of Gondor, were followed within a few years by the campaign of the Last Alliance, with its aftermath at the Gladden Fields. As far as Arnor was concerned, the outcome of the crisis was the depletion of the Dúnedain, who nevertheless managed to retain control or suzerainty over the greater part of Eriador for another eight hundred years. The settlement of Fornost seems to have gone hand-in-hand with Annúminas, and developed, perhaps, at a similar pace, but the title taken by the eleventh king, Amlaith of Fornost (TA 861-946) suggests that it may have been during his reign that Fornost's capital status was formalized. The geographical importance of the site, at the south end of the North Downs commanding routes north to south and east to west, besides its defensible nature, is obvious. This would have applied in pre-Númenórean times no less, and is reflected in the size and strength of the earthwork defences on the hill-top, commanding the hills behind and a wide spread of lowland on three sides. How far the earthwork defences had evolved, if at all, at the time of Sauron's invasion of Eriador, is, of course, not known.

The first question is whether the first Númenórean defences can be identified and placed in a historical context. There is no evidence for any such context for the eight centuries following Elendil, and perhaps the settlement expanded peacefully and uninterruptedly. Despite the losses resulting from the war of the "Last Alliance", a considerable degree of prosperity must have existed and been enjoyed for a long period for we know that in the region that later became "the Shire", the king had had "many farms, cornlands, vineyards, and woods." (Tolkien, 1966a, p. 14) It is interesting, though, and perhaps significant, that it is Amlaith's reign, perhaps when Fornost's status as capital becomes formalized,

that serious internal, and later external problems start to develop.

As a result of dissension between the sons of Amlaith's predecessor as king, Eärendur, the sources tell us, Arnor was divided, like all Gaul, into three parts – Arthedain, where the line of Isildur continued, and Cardolan and Rhudaur, where it failed. "There was often strife between the three kingdoms", the sources say, "which hastened the waning of the Dúnedain" (Tolkien, 1966d, p. 320). The principal bone of contention was Weathertop, lying on the borders of all three of the new, divided, provinces, but even before it became so the successful rejection of centralized control from Fornost by two of them can hardly have been accomplished by peaceful means. So it is possible that the provision of the dykes at Fornost (the "first-period" defences, as they might be called, although they may have had predecessors, and were not necessarily all of the same date), was associated with a political, and possibly also a military crisis occurring at this time. In this context there may also be a place for the defence or border which was crossed by the hobbits with Tom Bombadil, after leaving the Barrow-downs on the way to Bree. This apparently represented the frontier between the provinces of Arthedain and Cardolan, and very possibly was marked out or established at the same period. The dyke here was associated with a wall running alongside it, but the two were not necessarily of the same date. This period would also seem to have seen the beginnings of economic decline and a fall in population, as we know that the lands that became the Shire, at the time of settlement by Hobbits in TA 1601, had by then, "long been deserted." (Tolkien, 1966a, p. 14)

All the same, five more centuries were to pass before the whole region experienced a serious crisis again, whatever had been the events that had accompanied the original division of Arnor. The crisis developed quickly over a period of about sixty years, consequent on the establishment of the realm of Angmar as the base of the evil power of the Witch-King. The power of Angmar and its effect on the whole of Eriador, operated through its influence on and eventual control of, Rhudaur, the most degenerate of the Dúnedain states which had succeeded the North-kingdom. The crisis was

focused on the area about Weathertop: the defensive line which had been established to the east of it from Weathertop itself to the last Bridge and the lower Hoarwell (see map, p. 21), collapsed in 1409 under the pressure of a full-scale assault launched from Angmar by way of Rhudaur; Amon Sûl was razed and the *palantir* carried back in the retreat to Fornost. The historical sources make all this seem like a single major campaign, but in reality the crisis must have followed a long period of minor incursions, raids, and the like. It probably reflected the formation, at least temporarily, of a confederacy of hostile tribes in Rhudaur and east of the Weather Hills. One can compare, perhaps, a similar “barbarica conspiratio”, in the combined overrunning of Roman Britain south of Hadrian’s Wall by Picts, Scots and Saxons in 367 A.D. Much of Eriador north of the Great Road was laid waste, but the assault fell short of taking Fornost itself.

At the site of Fornost itself, if the “picture” we have of it can be relied on at least to a certain extent, the dyke system seems to have been replaced by a narrower defensive circuit, apparently stone-walled, though the wall could of course have been an insertion in front of an earlier earth or earth-and-timber rampart. These defences, as they appear in the illustration here, raise a further problem in that they appear to overly buried features which seem to represent earlier buildings. This would suggest that the inhabited area had been larger at an earlier period in the site’s history, and had contracted; this would be a natural outcome of the economic decline noted above. It is a hypothesis of course, but, it may be thought a reasonable one on the limited evidence we have, to attribute this “reorganization of the defences” of Fornost to the crisis period, covering approximately the years 1356-1409. These defences could, of course, like the dykes have had a considerably longer history, and could reflect a much longer period of insecurity. (This period also sees the establishment of a defensive *limes* in the Weather Hills and further east, as referred to below). There is an alternative possibility to consider, namely that the provision of stone wall defences at Fornost represented a reaction to events not before, but after the crisis had passed. This would parallel the situation in Roman Gaul

in the late third century A.D., when such town walls were provided at a number of towns following sackings and destruction that had taken place in the course of a major defensive collapse and of barbarian incursions occurring just previously (Butler, 1959).

There is a further interesting point in the written sources. Araphor, the son of Arveleg (who was killed in the campaign of 1409) “with the aid of Círdan ... repelled the enemy from Fornost and the North Downs.” (Tolkien, 1966d, p. 321) This implies that the hills themselves, as well as the city site, were held in defence, and that provides a possible context for the reoccupation of the hill-fort site, and others which must have existed further north, and may explain the presence of stone fortifications the remains of which are clearly visible in the illustration. Further confirmation is provided when the chronicler goes on to say, “A remnant of the faithful among the Dúnedain of Cardolan also held out in Tyrn Gorthad [the Barrow-downs], or took refuge in the forest behind” (Tolkien, 1966d, p. 321). Clearly there was a stronghold of some kind in the Barrow-downs (and most probably also on Bree-hill) the exact site of which has not been identified; it was very likely, a reoccupied hill fort like that at Fornost. It will be remembered that the last prince of Cardolan, who was likewise killed in 1409, was said to have been interred in the very barrow in which the hobbits were imprisoned in the aftermath of their sojourn with Tom Bombadil; “the men of Carn Dûm came on us at night, and we were worsted” (Tolkien, 1966a, p154). The fort site was probably not far away.

After the crisis was over, order was restored in the north-west of Middle-earth. This was achieved, it seems, largely with Elvish assistance, both from Lindon, and from Elrond bringing help across the Misty Mountains from Lórien. The great plague of 1636, which devastated Gondor, is said to have spent most of its force by the time it reached the north-west, and its impact may have been relatively small. The Hobbits, who were fairly recent arrivals at that time, suffered greatly, as it is recorded, but possibly had lower resistance to disease than Men had. It may seem surprising at first that five centuries and a half passed before the final act took place – the sudden onset of Angmar in

1974, when Fornost fell at last. In fact it is clear that, as in 1409, there had been a long period of raiding and insecurity before the final assault, as the sources state that Angmar renewed its attacks at the same time as the Wainriders renewed theirs on Gondor, some thirty years before then. However there were some four hundred miles of open and seemingly barren territory separating Carn Dûm from Fornost, and a major direct assault may have been impractical before then owing to the impossibility of maintaining supply lines for such a large force over such a distance. It may not have been till the 1900's T.A. that orc-training techniques were developed that made it possible to move large detachments of troops, and war material, with the speed and tirelessness that we know of from the description in *The Two Towers*, of the forced march across Rohan; Saruman looks like an innovator in this connection<sup>1</sup>. Once again there is reference in the source to the king (Arvedui), holding out, "upon the North Downs", after Fornost itself had been overrun; it would seem that the hill-top sites were still in a condition in which they could, at least to some extent, be defended. The loss of Fornost was followed by a short occupation of whatever was left of it by the Witch-King and the armies of Angmar, before they were routed by the combined forces of Elves and Men of the North-kingdom and of Gondor, in the year following. Whether they left traces in the archaeological record, and to what extent, and whether there was any further occupation of the site subsequently, are questions that must remain open in view of the impossibility of testing them by means of actual excavation.

The "old castles with an evil look", which struck Bilbo Baggins' attention with such force shortly before his encounter with the trolls, as recorded in *The Hobbit*, are not necessarily the same as those encountered by Strider and the four hobbits when they recalled Bilbo's experiences seventy-seven years later. They do, however, no doubt represent the same kind of site, and provide an opportunity to look at the history of the North-kingdom, "from the opposite side of the fence", the predominantly hostile province of Rhudaur, which fell under the shadow of Angmar, and through which, in the

earlier crisis at the end of the 14th century TA, Angmar operated, The "picture" we have reproduced here shows two such "castles", sited on prominent crags or hill-tops; each such stronghold was presumably placed to dominate a particular slice of territory. No doubt earthwork camps or hill-forts in the western parts of Eriador would have been similarly placed; here though, the nature of the terrain and the available building materials dictated stone fortifications, probably from the first. We have no actual dating evidence, but sites such as these may reflect a social and political structure in this corner of Middle-earth that had probably changed very little over a period that had already lasted for centuries before the arrival of the Númenórean exiles. Rhudaur, after its separation from Arthedain, was always the most backward of the Dúnedain states, and the least susceptible to "western" influences. The local geography, have assisted the formation and subsequent flourishing of a congeries of local tribes, ruled by petty chieftains whose main concerns would have lain in such pursuits as cattle-raiding and in feuding with or terrorising their neighbours. The task of persuading this rabble to give up internecine strife and combine against a common enemy in the west, must at most times have been an impossible one for the evil power in Angband to deal with successfully, dependent as it was on its allies in Rhudaur. However the circumstances of the crisis of 1356-1409 are interesting; the sources tell us (Tolkien, 1966d, p. 320) that at that time power in the whole region "had been seized by an evil lord of the Hillmen, who was in secret league with Angmar." At this time, the sources also say, "the kings of Arthedain again claimed the lordship of all Arnor. The claim was resisted by Rhudaur", where the Dúnedain were few. The political situation seems to have been exceptional; two major invasions occurred over a period of more than one thousand years after the division of Arnor; at this period and finally in 1974 TA, but during the remainder of those years Arthedain, even in its weakened state, seems to have enjoyed relative peace. Probably the politically fragmented state of Rhudaur explains why; it only presented a serious military threat if a single personality or authority arose

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<sup>1</sup>In this connection note the contemptuous taunting of the Northern orcs by those of Isengard (Tolkien, 1966b, p. 56), "Maggots! You're cooked." etc. Had Saruman managed to improve on earlier training methods?

powerful enough to make a united front possible, at least temporarily. It also provides an interesting and perhaps revealing commentary on the failure of Sauron's strategy at the time of the War of the Ring. The orcs, evil Men and other creatures making up his armies seem to have been equally prone to internal disputes; to take a tiny but illuminating example, the orcs' quarrel overheard by Frodo and Samwise in the Morgai, "If this nice friendliness would spread about in Mordor, half our trouble would be over", as the latter says (Tolkien, 1966c, p. 203). Perhaps, after all, it was; the fissiparous nature of the societies under his sway may well have hindered Sauron from delivering the devastating stroke he essayed to deliver at the time of the final battles, much earlier than he did.

The remaining picture comprises an area on the west side of the Weather Hills, close to Weathertop itself. There is a brief description in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, referring to the "walls and dykes", seen by Frodo, Strider and the others prior to their ascent of Weathertop itself; had they been field archaeologists we might have had a more detailed account. The importance of this area is greatest in relation to the years 1356 to 1409, when the power of Angmar first arose, and the Weather Hills, for long disputed between the three states, became the centre of conflict. As with the Fornost site, there are indications of a long sequence of occupations, visible on Weathertop itself, and on the hills to the north and east. (It is possible that the conical shape of Weathertop itself has been somewhat over-emphasised, for pictorial effect, either by the original artist or his present-day successor). As at Fornost itself, the multiple rampart-and-ditched enclosures crowning the hills probably belong to pre-Númenórean times, when Weathertop and the nearby hills would no doubt have been as important strategically as they were to become later on. The watchtower raised to hold the palantir of Amon Sûl represented by the "wide ring of ancient stonework", found by the hobbits and Strider as described in the account in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Tolkien, 1966a, p. 198), can be clearly seen above the earlier banks and ditches.

Argeleb I (1349-56), "fortified the Weather Hills", before being killed in battle against Rhudaur. Under Arveleg, his successor, "Arthedain and Cardolan held in force a frontier along the Weather Hills, the Great Road, and the lower Hoarwell." (Tolkien, 1966d, p. 320). This line is described in *The Fellowship*, the account in which mentions the path that pursues a course (seen in the illustration), as far as possible hidden from the west and from the hills themselves, "made to serve the forts along the walls", as Strider says. Two of these forts are visible in the illustration, below the hills. They have much the sort of appearance one would expect; rectangular stone structures with corner towers, perhaps contemporary with the stone town walls at Fornost. The written source suggests that they were part of a defensive *limes* of considerable length, sited so as to control approach from Rhudaur along its frontier, as marked on the map. There should therefore have been a series of such forts strung out along the Road as far as the Last Bridge (where there must have been a major troop concentration), and then down to the confluence of the Hoarwell and the Loudwater.

This raises a whole series of questions and problems, of which the first one is, why was the line of defence situated *behind* the Weather Hills, and not in front of them, directly facing Rhudaur?<sup>2</sup> Possibly the intention was to employ it as a "fall-back" in association with outposts on the far side of the hills to the east, and to the north of the Road; there would have been provision for rapid communication between these and the principal line of defence itself, to give warning of any signs of trouble, and of any likelihood of the outposts being overrun. (There is perhaps a parallel to be found in the "advance outpost", forts to the north of Hadrian's Wall, represented by sites such as High Rochester, Risingham, or Netherby (Frere, 1978)). Then there are further, related, problems; how many forts were there along the Road? Were they isolated, or supported by intermediate features or by a wall or vallum? How far north along the Weather Hills did they extend? And, how were they garrisoned, and by whom? And finally, did they, or some of them, continue in occupation

<sup>2</sup>The author of this article is indebted to Ms Anne Haward for suggesting the possibility outlined in this paragraph.



and use after the crisis of 1409 and the restoration of order with the help of Elrond? These queries seem to echo quite a lot of both what is known and what is speculative about the defensive system, or succession of systems, in northern Britain from the second to the fourth centuries AD.

The stone fortification which crowns the hill in the rear of the picture, and which no doubt represents a reoccupation of the hill-fort at some subsequent period, raises further questions. The principal defensive scheme is clearly that in the foreground and middle distance, below the hills, the "forts along the walls", and the connecting trackway. The siting of this trackway, and the effort which is described in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Tolkien, 1966a, p.197), to conceal it with lines of boulders where it crosses open ground, imply that it was not expected that the hills themselves would be held, at least for any length of time. That would also mean that the outpost forts to the east of the hills, if they existed, had been destroyed or overrun. There are a number of possibilities; it may have been the case, for instance that the forts to the east were indeed overrun, and that the stone fortification represents possession of the hills by Rhudaur, either temporarily or for a longer period or periods. However it could just as well represent a reoccupation under Argeleb, when the Weather Hills were fortified, according to the sources; in that case the subsequent abandonment of the hill

summits would indicate a change of plan. Or it could represent a reoccupation of the hill-fort, and possibly others, by Arthedain, after the crisis of 1409 was over, and order had been restored in the West.

Almost any archaeological investigation, even one as limited in scope and inadequate in means as the present one, is liable to raise fresh problems, rather than to solve existing ones. More orthodox methods would involve, say, surveying to identify, if possible, the sites of forts along the Great Road and the river Hoarwell, (there must have been an important one close to the Last Bridge), followed by excavation within them with a view to determining the sequence and dating of their occupations. But if there were such sources as *The Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Gondor*, or *The Transactions of the Shire Field Club*, they have, sadly, not come down to us. But by collation of the written sources with the indications we have, in the text of *The Hobbit*, or of *The Lord of the Rings*, of actual field monuments, and also, where appropriate, by analogies with comparable historical processes and physical remains in the world as we know it, we may be led to conclusions which, tentative though they may be, may illuminate and enrich that peculiar interaction of myth and legend with language, history and landscape that determines the special appeal that Tolkien's world makes to us today.

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