

Túrin Turambar and the Tale of the Fosterling

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Introduction

It will be well known to many readers that the story of the children of Húrin was based on the tale of Kullervo in the Finnish *Kalevala* “wholly changed except in its tragic ending”, for this information comes from Tolkien’s own letters (1981, p. 345). It might be assumed that the changes Tolkien referred to arose freely from the storehouse of his imagination were it not for his comment in an earlier letter that “the beginning of the legendarium... was in an attempt to reorganise some of the *Kalevala*, especially the tale of Kullervo the hapless, into a form of my own” (Tolkien, 1981, p. 214). He set out, in other words, with a plan to alter the story, though why he did not say.

As regards the whole *Silmarillion* project, it is worth bearing in mind that Lönnrot, the compiler of the *Kalevala*, found it necessary to tamper with his collected material in order to fuse it into a mythological cycle; even with his alterations, the effect is still very disjointed. It is quite credible that Tolkien wished either to make his own attempt at synthesis and rationalisation or to return to a purer form: he may, indeed, not have seen these two aims as incompatible. I am reminded of T A Shippey’s observation in the *Road to Middle-earth* that many of Tolkien’s “invented” words and poems were in fact “asterisk forms” or reconstructions of the lost ancestors of surviving words and rhymes: even the role of Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings* is a reconstruction of the tale of Froda alluded to in *Beowulf*. Perhaps, then, the object of Tolkien’s reorganisation of *Kullervo* was to reconstruct an earlier form, possibly with the help of related tales from other lands. Lisa Hopkins in *Mallorn* 29 pointed out similarities between the story of Túrin and that of Oedipus; I shall confine myself here to the territory of north-west Europe.

Túrin and Kullervo

Kullervo and Túrin both lost their fathers in battle against evil forces when they were too young to fight. Túrin was eight years old at the time of the Nirmaeth, Kullervo still in his mother’s womb when his father and brothers were slain by the men of his wicked uncle Untamo. Untamo, a combined Morgoth and Brodda figure, seems to have provided Tolkien with the name of Morgoth’s first fortress: *Utumno*.

Kullervo’s pregnant mother was spared but carried away to work for Untamo in his cabins, where Kullervo grew up as a serf. This serfdom of a single family Tolkien transmuted by degrees into the thralldom of the Men of Hithlum under the Easterlings.

Kullervo was sold on to the smith Ilmarinen, where he was badly treated by Ilmarinen’s wife. One day she baked him a loaf so hard that it broke the knife that was his only heirloom from his father. Dreadfully sensitive where such matters were concerned, Kullervo took revenge by killing Ilmarinen’s wife. In *Túrin* this incident was turned into the taunts of Saeros and Túrin’s retaliation, which resulted, albeit accidentally, in Saeros’ death.

Like Túrin, Kullervo responded by taking flight, and wandered, bereft of home and family, brooding on his ill fortune. And, like Túrin, he decided to avenge the past: “to/ go to Untamo’s village/ and avenge his father’s knocks/ father’s knocks and mamma’s tears/ his own ill-treatment” (*Kalevala*, p. 470).

But at that point Kullervo came upon a hag who informed him that his father and mother were still alive, living in a fish-hut on the border of Lapland. This can best be compared to

Glaurung's lying words to Túrin in Nargothrond that his mother and sister were destitute in Hithlum.

However, the hag was speaking the truth to Kullervo, though he came back to an incomplete family, one of his two sisters having been lost in the forest. One day, when returning from an errand in his sleigh he encountered a golden-haired girl skiing on the heaths; he pulled her in with him and seduced her. In the morning he told her his identity, whereupon she realised that she had had intercourse with her own brother. In despair, she "tumbled out of the sledge/ then ran into a river/ into a rapid's steep foam/ into a smoking whirlpool." (*Kalevala*, p. 482). This was the original inspiration for the motif of unwitting incest between Túrin and Nienor, and the sister's means of suicide is identical in each case. Further on in the text of *Kullervo* it is said that "no young grass sprang/ no heather flower grew/ came up in the place/ on that evil spot/ where he had ravished the wench/ and spoilt her his mother bore" (*Kalevala*, p. 495). Similarly, of the spot where Níniel threw herself into Teiglin, Tolkien wrote that "no deer would ever leap there again, and all living things shunned it, and no man would walk upon its shore" (Tolkien, 1980, p. 138).

Kullervo, however, did not yet decide to slay himself, but revived his earlier plan to seek vengeance on Untamo. Of all his family, only his mother still loved him and cared that he was risking his life. Single-minded, Kullervo set off and, though news came to him of the death of each member of his family in turn, he would not turn round to bury or to pay his last respects to any of them, not even his mother. These passages seem to echo Túrin's failure to seek Finduilas when he ran on his false errand towards Hithlum mesmerised by the dragon's lies.

Before reaching Untamo's cabins, Kullervo received a sword from the sky god. Túrin's Black Sword also came from the sky, for according to all versions of the tale it was forged of meteoric iron "that fell from heaven as a blazing star" (Tolkien, 1988a, p. 125, note 10). In the original *Turambar and the Foalókë* it was a new sword made for him in Nargothrond. Some time between 1926 and 1930, however, Tolkien revised the tale of Túrin. The fullest

expression of these revisions was to have been in the *Lay of the Children of Húrin*, of which two versions were begun. Neither of these, unfortunately, reached the interlude in Nargothrond, though the prose sketch that Tolkien wrote as background to the *Lays* (contained in the earliest *Silmarillion* – see *Shaping of Middle-earth*) shows that it was at this time that he reinterpreted "Gurtholfin" as Beleg's fateful sword reforged.

Kullervo succeeded in slaying Untamo and his people and laying waste to his cabins, just as Túrin slew Brodda in his hall and later Glaurung; but both heroes found their victories hollow. Túrin learned of his sister's death and his own incest, and realised that he had slain Brandir unjustly; Kullervo, with the battle-lust sated, returned to his father's empty hut and mourned for his sister and the mother he had failed. He took out his sword and asked it would it eat his guilty flesh. Then he "pressed the butt into the heath/ turned the point towards his breast/ rammed himself upon the point/ and on it he brought about/ his doom.../ death/ for the ill-fated" (*Kalevala*, p. 495). In exactly this fashion did Túrin slay himself at the end of his tale.

The Orphans of the Battle

Though each incident in *Kullervo* can be related to a stage in Túrin's history, the details of the events in the two tales are very different. In addition, many motifs in Túrin's history are altogether missing from *Kullervo*, which has, for instance, no dwarves, no dragon, no time spent at a king's court, no faithful friend, no lover other than the sister, and no period of marriage. If we are to argue for any additional sources, then these are the themes that we must seek in them.

Sigurd in the Norse tradition had a start in life very similar to Kullervo's, for his father was killed in battle before he was born and his mother took flight into the wild. This same story is told in Ireland of Finn Mac Cumail; it is told in Wales also of Peredur (the Arthurian Sir Perceval) with the only difference that he, like Túrin, was a young boy at the time of the battle. All these heroes went on, like Túrin, to be fostered and spend time in youth at the court of a king. They all received wonderful swords. Sigurd's was, like Túrin's, an old sword reforged

(his father's), and both his sword and Peredur's were able, like Gurthang, to cleave ordinary iron; Finn Mac Cumail's sword (or perhaps spear) had its own links with the heavens, for its Danaan – i.e. fairy – smith “beat into it the fire of the sun and the potency of the moon” (Sutcliff, 1968, p. 21); it was a fey weapon like Anglachel/Gurthang, bloodthirsty and wayward. Sigurd and Finn both received their swords from the king before setting out on their adventures, and in *The Silmarillion* Anglachel was in a similar fashion bestowed upon Beleg by Thingol; here it is said to have been forged, like the weapon of Finn, by a dark-hearted elven smith (Eöl).

Both Sigurd and Peredur killed a man before leaving the King's court, and afterwards loved two women, like Túrin abandoning the first in utter forgetfulness. Sigurd's marriage to his second lady, the witch's daughter Gudrun, was like Túrin's brought about with the aid of an enchanted forgetfulness and caused his downfall, for the betrayed Brynhild slew Sigurd in her despair and then killed herself. Peredur's betrayal of his first love is unexplained in the text but his subsequent encounter with Angharad Goldenhand was, perhaps significantly, preceded by a sojourn with a coven of witches. A motif of dumbness is attached to the relationship with the Níniel-figure in both *Peredur* and *Finn*. In *Peredur* it was he himself who took a vow of silence; in *Finn* it was the child of the marriage who was dumb.

Sigurd and Peredur both defeated dragons, and Finn slew an Otherworld creature which, though humanoid enough to play the harp, had fiery breath and the power of putting men into an enchanted sleep. The figure of Beleg as the best friend and companion-in-arms is fulfilled to some extent by Gwalchmei (Gawain) in *Peredur*.

These are the bald motifs that these stories share with each other and with Túrin. However, there are also motifs common to these three tales that Tolkien rejected. The most important of these is the “gift of wisdom”. Sigurd obtained all wisdom, and the understanding of the tongues of birds, by tasting of the dragon's heart that he was cooking for his tutor Regin; in an almost identical story, Finn tasted of the Salmon of Wisdom whilst cooking it for his druid tutor.

And according to Chrétien de Troyes Perceval was vouch-safed a vision of the Grail. Túrin, however, is allowed no gift of enlightenment: he is as wrongheaded and blind to his fate as Kullervo.

In *Turambar and the Foalókë* Tolkien did allude to the supposed properties of the dragon's heat, but commented: “Few have there been that ever achieved. . . the slaying of a drake, nor might any even of such doughty ones taste their blood and live, for it is as a poison of fires. . .” (Tolkien, 1986, p. 85). Tolkien has, however, allowed each source to contribute particular details of its own, and these I shall now discuss.

Sigurd

Sigurd's dragon Fafnir was the brother of his tutor Regin the smith, and lay upon a hoard that Regin coveted. This hoard had originally belonged to the dwarf Andvari, but when Odin and Loki had killed Otter, brother of Regin and Fafnir, they had wrested it from Andvari in order to pay Otter's ransom to his father. Andvari had cursed the treasure as it was taken from him, in particular one ring which he had begged to keep. This fore-tale was incorporated into the history of Túrin at a late stage in its development, becoming transformed in the *Narn* and *The Silmarillion* into the interlude with Mîm in the House of Ransom¹ (in early versions Mîm was simply the dwarf whom Glórund used to guard his treasure while he was away).

The curse of Andvari's treasure had set to work at once, Fafnir slaying his own father to have it; at the time that Sigurd came to manhood Fafnir lay upon his hoard at the door of his father's ruined hall surrounded by the blasted plain of Gnita Heath. The similarity to the picture of Glaurung at the doors of Nargothrond is very striking.

Regin suggested to Sigurd that the boy might win the treasure for himself. The method of despatch Sigurd used is the same as that employed by Túrin; for he crawled down into the giant rut created by the dragon's passage “and the track was as if a great river had rolled along and left a deep valley” (Lang, 1950, p. 356).

¹Note Túrin's promise to Mîm: “... and if ever I come to any wealth, I will pay you a ransom of heavy gold for your son...” (Tolkien, 1980, p. 101).

When the dragon crawled over the “valley” to the water, Sigurd drove his sword into his heart.

He took from the hoard a magic *aegishjalm* or ‘Helm of Dread’, prototype of Túrin’s dragonhelm. With his dragon-gold, he was now every bit as cursed as Túrin, and by leaving her Andvari’s ring as a love token he brought Brynhild also under the curse.

Peredur Son of Efracw

In *Peredur*, as in *Sigurd*, the battle was a personal one between the child’s father and an enemy lord, and there is no suggestion that a whole people was involved. Chrétien de Troyes’ *Perceval*, on the other hand, mentions no battle as such but does paint a picture of a country oppressed by evildoers. Peredur’s mother, not willing to lose her last son in warfare, brought him up in the wild ignorant of weapons. However, when he was grown, he ignored his mother’s pleas and travelled to King Arthur’s court. Here a strange knight insulted Gwynhwyfar (Guinevere), upsetting her goblet of wine over her head and boxing her ear; then Cei (Sir Kay) taunted Peredur himself for his rustic appearance, and a dwarf couple who hailed Peredur he boxed and kicked for their discourtesy in having until that day pretended to be dumb. Peredur slew the knight who had assaulted Gwynhwyfar and then left Arthur’s court to prove himself, vowing that he would return to meet Cei and avenge the injury to the dwarfs.

Here we have the ingredients of Túrin’s killing of Saeros. Saeros aroused Túrin’s wrath by taunting him for his rustic appearance and, in the early texts, died when Túrin, unaware of his own strength, thrust his wine cup in his face and broke his head. Even in the *Narn* the wine cup is thrown at Saeros, though it is no longer the cause of his death.

Peredur travelled on and at the edge of a forest found the court of the Lame King (alias the Fisher King), surrounded by a rampart. In the story of Túrin a lame woodman has figured from the first. Originally he was called Tamar, then this was changed to Brandir; in *The Silmarillion*

and the *Narn* he finally acquired his ramparted hillfort. Robert de Boron named the Fisher King as *Bron*, which is believed by mythologists to be a corruption of *Bran*, name of a Celtic god. Tolkien’s alteration of *Tamar* to *Brandir* may therefore be intended as a direct reference to the Lame King of *Peredur*. However, Brandir is a young man where the Lame King is “hoary headed”, and in the *Narn* a second lame figure is introduced, old Sador “Labadal”, the maimed woodcutter.²

When the monster-slaying Peredur finally returned to Arthur’s court, a black maiden (Welsh “morwyn du”) came to berate him for failing his family, using words that Finduilas might have applied to Túrin: “Blind was fate when she bestowed favour and fame upon thee... henceforth strife and battle, and the loss of knights, and women left widowed, and maidens without succour, and that all because of thee.” (*Mabinogion*, p. 218). The “morwyn du” is not, of course, Peredur’s mother (she is unnamed). Nevertheless, it is curious that *Morwen* both sounds like Welsh *morwyn* ‘maiden’ and has the same meaning as ‘morwyn du’. Tolkien originally gave Túrin’s mother the name of *Mavwin*, but this was altered at the time of writing the *Lays*. It may be significant that *Morwen* was briefly preceded by *Morwin* of unexplained meaning.³

Finn Mac Cumail

It is the stories of Perceval and Finn Mac Cumail that may have helped Tolkien transmute the oppression of Húrin’s family into the thralldom of the people of Hador, for after the fateful battle not only were Finn’s immediate family killed but his father’s whole clan was broken and reduced to outlawry and servitude. His mother Morna Munchaem fled into the wild to give birth, and then departed, leaving Finn in the care of two Danaan foster-mothers. After long wanderings, she eventually found refuge with a chieftain in Kerry.

The similarity of form of *Morna* and *Morwen* may explain Tolkien’s transference of the name *morwyn du* to the wife of Húrin.

²The name *Labadal* suggests *Labdacus*, grandfather of the lamed Oedipus.

³*Morwen* is suggestive of the Cornish girl’s name Morwenna, also thought to be derived from *morwyn* ‘maiden’.

Munchaem means 'Fair Neck' or 'Radiant Neck' and suggests Morwen's epithet *Eledhwen*, 'Elvenfair' or 'Elfsheen', the latest part of her name to be introduced into the texts.

Finn was raised secretly in the hidden glens of Slieve Bloom until he was old enough to go to the court of the High King Cormac and claim his rights. Cormac made him the leader of the standing army known as the Fianna, and from then on Finn spent his summers in a manner not dissimilar to Túrin, as captain of a war-band, living in the open by hunting, fighting to protect the country at need.

One day Finn was hunting deer when he realised that the hind he was pursuing was making for his own fort on the Hill of Allen. Eventually she dropped down exhausted, but his hounds did not attack, but licked her trembling limbs. He allowed her to enter the stockade with the Fianna, and in the night woke to find himself face to face with a beautiful golden-haired woman. She told him that her name was Sadb and that her deer-form had been due to a spell placed upon her by a dark druid whom she had refused to take as her husband. She had been told that could she reach the fort of Allen her right shape would return to her. Finn fell in love with her, and after a time they were married.

Sadb conceived, but word came to Finn of an invading party of Lochlannaigh (Vikings). Sadb pleaded with him to stay, and grew pale and ill at the prospect of his going out into danger. Finn, however, gently set aside his wife's entreaties and set out, warning Sadb on no account to leave the stockade. She, however, was tricked by what she believed to be the sound of Finn's hunting horn and ran through the gateway, only to encounter the dark druid, who turned her once more into a hind and spirited her away. Long though he searched, Finn was never to find her again.

The story of Finn and Sadb is so similar to that of Túrin and Níniel as expressed in the *Narn* and *The Silmarillion* that only conscious influence can account for it. Those details that link the stories most closely do not appear in any of the early texts. In these Túrin and his band encountered Nienor running from Orcs, but it is only in the final versions that she had discarded her clothing and collapsed. Also, in the early versions, the woodmen with whom Túrin lived

had no hillfort, but only an undefended village in a clearing. The earliest draft was first written with no reference to Níniel's pregnancy: this detail was added to it afterwards. And in none of the early versions was Níniel left behind when the menfolk set out.

In the two final texts Tolkien also introduced a frequent use of deer imagery with regard to Nienor after her enchantment. First, there is Saeros' taunt regarding the women of Hithlum, which foreshadows Nienor's naked flight: "Do they run like deer clad only in their hair?" (Tolkien, 1980, p. 80). This is a change from earlier versions of his insult to Túrin's womenfolk, and was first introduced in the unfinished *Quenta Silmarillion* (see *Lost Road*), the text that immediately preceded *The Silmarillion* and the *Narn*. In the final texts, of course, Saeros himself was killed by being hounded into a ravine that "was wide enough for a deer leap" (Tolkien, 1980, p. 82), and Nienor fled towards Brethil "in a madness of fear, swifter than a deer". The next day she went on "warily as a hunted beast", and lay down on Haudh-en-Elleth "like a wild beast that is dying" (Tolkien, 1977, p. 219). In the *Narn* the spot where she leapt into Teiglin is even called by the name of "the Deer's Leap".

Níniel's dumbness also appeared for the first time in the final drafts. Sadb herself was only dumb while in her deer-shape, but the story of her coming to the fort was repeated seven years later in Finn's finding of a dumb child – their son. Since his mother had raised him alone in the form of a hind he had never acquired human speech and had, like Níniel, to learn it slowly in his new home.

Yet why should Tolkien have identified Sadb, Finn's first wife, as an inappropriate bride? The marriage was not incestuous but exogamous in the extreme, being a union of mortal and fairy-woman; however, there are at least two stories that suggest that Finn's fairy wife may once have been identified as his own sister. The first is a Scottish folktale in which "Finlay the Hunter" went out from his home, warning his sister not to open the window to the north side of the hut and not to let the fire go out. She did both, and was spirited away by giants of the north wind. The second is the tale of Finn's sister Tuireann, who was turned into a bitch by

her husband's druid mistress; the Early Irish word for 'bitch', *sad*, is so close to *Sadb* that a common source for the two tales seems all but certain (cf. the interesting parallel between English *bitch* and French *biche* 'hind').

Finn's next adventure centres upon the *sidhe* or fairy hill of Slieve Gallion, which was the abode of Culann the Smith. Finn was lured to the *sidhe* by Culann's scheming daughter Milucra, who had him dive into the little lake that lay upon the crest of the hill to fetch for her a ring that she said had dropped in the water. But Finn found when he retrieved it that he had turned into a doddering old man. Milucra vanished, and Finn's men had to dig their way into the fairy hill to bring her sister out to cure him.

It seems that the *sidhe* of Culann the fairy smith contributed to the hill dwelling of Tolkien's dwarves. In the *Narn* he specifically described "a clear pool in a rock-hewn basin" (Tolkien, 1980, p. 100) that lay before the door of Bar-en-Danwedh and in which Túrin and his outlaws used to wash; and in outlines for the unfinished sections appears mention of a second hidden entrance passage discovered by the outlaws. The story of Finn and Milucra does indeed share with *Otter's Ransom* a cursed ring, though what probably clinched the identification of the two tales for Tolkien was the fact that Culann, like Sigurd's smith Regin, was associated with a famous tale of "ransom". Long before Finn's time the boy-prodigy Sétanta had been forced to kill Culann's guard dog and had vowed to make reparation by taking the hound's place and guarding Culann's cattle himself; thus he became known from that time on as *Cúchulainn* or 'the hound of Culann'. In the *Narn* and *Silmarillion* Tolkien gave Beleg for the first time the epithet of *Cúthalion*.

Cúchulainn is a sort of reverse Beleg in having unwillingly killed two people very dear to him, his own son and his foster-brother Ferdia. *Cúchulainn's* verses of lament for Ferdia may even have suggested to Tolkien the *Laer Cú Beleg*.

Other Fosterlings

There are a few fosterling stories that do not perfectly fit the pattern described above but that do seem to have been included by Tolkien in his tree of Túrin-tales. The chief of these is the legend of King Arthur. The Emperor Arthur of medieval fancy is clearly a long way removed from the outlaw figure of Túrin but has some very recognisable "Túrin" motifs attaching to him. Firstly there is the matter of his birth, for his apparent father was killed in battle against Uther Pendragon (his real father) on the night he was conceived.

The name *Uther Pendragon* (Welsh *Uthr Bendragon*) has been interpreted in various ways. Geoffrey of Monmouth, however, translated *Pendragon* literally as "dragon head", explaining that Uther had been given this name because he was wont to carry into war with him the figure of a golden dragon (Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1966, p. 202). It is notable that the helm of Túrin in the earliest versions of the tale was neither a family heirloom nor crested with a dragon's head. By the *Narn*, however, it had become the Helm of Hador and "the dragonhead of the North" (Tolkien, 1980, p. 76).

Arthur, like Túrin and the other heroes, was fostered, but his was a more complicated fostering than theirs. Firstly, we may count the marriage of his mother to King Uther Pendragon during her pregnancy. His first true foster-father, however, was Merlin, who took the newborn Arthur from the castle gates for Sir Ector's wife to nurse.

The strange figure of Merlin, foster-father of Arthur and guardian of his realm during his kingship, may perhaps be compared to Melian, foster-mother of Túrin whose magic girdle guarded the realm of Thingol. The name *Melian* itself comes from Chrétien's *Perceval*, where "Mélian de Lis" is a knight of Tintagel.⁴ In the earliest texts, Thingol's⁵ wife was called Wendelin > Gwendeling > Gwedheling; this was probably suggested by *Gwendolen* or "Guendoloena", which according to Geoffrey of Monmouth was the name of Merlin's wife.⁶

⁴The name *Mélian* may originally have been only a corruption of *Merlin* which was often written *Merlion*.

⁵Thingol himself was originally named *Linwë Tinto*.

⁶Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Life of Merlin*. Tolkien may have abandoned this name because of its lack of authenticity, for Geoffrey fancifully based his "Gwendolens" on a misreading of the Welsh masculine name *Gwendoleu*.

One thing that all our heroes have in common so far is the gift of a sword that is said to have come from the skies or to be able to cleave ordinary iron. Arthur is no exception. It was by drawing a sword from a steel anvil that he won the kingship. And the name *Excalibur* is a corruption of the Welsh *Caledwylch* comprising *caled* 'hard' and *bwlch* 'flash'. O'Rahilly interprets it as a lightning sword but it might as easily have been forged of the iron from a shooting star.

Arthur, unlike Túrin, had three sisters, Morgause, Elayne and Morgan le Fay, but these are almost certainly the vestiges of a Celtic trinity, the triplication of a single entity like the three sisters Brigid of Irish myth. The incident that links Arthur most closely with Túrin is his incest with Morgause. Having been brought up apart from her, when they first met he did not know who she was, but "cast grete love unto hir and desired to ly by her. And so they were agreed, and [he] begate upon hir sir Mordred. And she was syster on the modirs syde Igrayne unto Arthure. So there she rested hir a monthe, and at the last she departed."

"Than the kynge dremed a mervaylous dreme whereof he was sore adrad... But thus was the dreme of Arthure: hym thought there was com into hys londe gryffens and serpentes, and hym thought they brente and slowghe all the people in the londe; and than he thought he fought with them and they dud hym grete harme and wounded hym full sore, but at the last he slew hem." (Malory, p. 27-28).

Morgause performs the function of Níniel, though the name *Níniel* is suggestive rather of Elayne. Their necromantic sister Morgan le Fay, however, has more in common with Morgoth. The names *Morgause*, *Morgan* and *Mordred* all resemble *Morgoth*, and *Morgan le Fay* is suggestive also of *Morwen Eledhwen*, for *eledhwen* could as well mean "elfmaid" as "elfsheen".⁷ In the later drafts of *Túrin* Morwen was credited by the Easterlings with being, like Morgan, a witch.

None of the heroes discussed so far have, however, been outlaws. Medieval English literature abounds in tales of outlaws – Robin Hood, Hereward the Wake, etc. – but it seems

that for this aspect of Túrin's history Tolkien drew chiefly upon a lesser-known fourteenth-century poem the *Tale of Gamelyn*. Gamelyn was early left fatherless and in the care of a wicked elder brother who wasted his lands and withheld them when Gamelyn came of age. This brother is analogous to Brodda in the tale of Túrin, and, like Túrin, Gamelyn sought vengeance on him by physical attack. However, the wicked brother succeeded in getting Gamelyn under control by fettering him to a post in the dining hall where, chained hand and foot, he was left without food or drink. This incident reflects Beleg's capture by the outlaws who, as we are told in the *Narn*, left "Beleg tied to a tree without food or water..." (Tolkien, 1980, p. 93). Gamelyn was rescued by an old servant named Adam, and took revenge by mounting a second attack in his brother's hall and breaking his brother's back. He was now declared an outlaw and "his wolf's head was cried"; for the price on an outlaw's head was the same as that upon a wolf. With his faithful Adam, he was forced to flee into the forest.

The name *Gamelyn* was preserved in the early drafts of *Túrin* as *Gumlin* > *Gamling*, initially given to one of Túrin's escorts into Doriath and then transferred to Húrin's father. According to the *Narn*, the outlaws of Beleriand were known as the *Gaurwaith* or "wolfmen".

Conclusion

Much more might be written on the subject of *Túrin's* relationship to this family of fosterling tales; I have, however, dealt with the major themes, which are enough to demonstrate that the influence of these additional sources was both strong and deliberate. Indeed, from c.1926 onwards the drafts show an increasing tendency for Tolkien to draw in nomenclature and details from these tales, almost as if laying clues.

However, it would be a mistake to assume that even these stories number all the strands in Túrin's mythological web. Many of the minor figures in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, for instance, are from the same general mould, and details from their stories have been drawn into the tale

⁷Christopher Tolkien notes: "In the narrative texts... the name *Eledhwen* was interpreted as 'Elfsheen'...; on the other hand under ELED the translation was changed from 'Elf-fair' to 'Elf-maid'" (Tolkien, 1988b, p. 398).

of Túrin. In addition, Túrin seems to owe a debt to tales of doomed siblings such as the Irish *Fate of the Children of Tuireann* and *Children of Lir*; it is this Tuireann (alias Tuirill), rather than Finn's sister, who was probably the original source of Túrin's name.⁸

This deliberate reinforcement of the links with traditional tales forces me to the conclusion that Tolkien's dislike of the search for his sources was not as wholehearted as has at times

been assumed. After all, identification of these does provide us with an insight into Tolkien's own interpretation of European myth. From our study of *Túrin* we perceive connections between a whole group of European tales, and are directed towards the link between Finn's sister and his first wife. It may not be going too far to suggest that theories that Tolkien failed to express in learned papers may lie buried in these tales.

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⁸Finnguala (from earlier *Findgúala), daughter of Lir, seems to have provided Tolkien with the name *Finduilas*, first introduced in the *Lays* (in *Turambar and the Foalókë* her name was simply "Failivrin"). The probable logic was: enchanted swan-maiden Finnguala = enchanted swan-maiden Brynhild = Túrin's first love. Finduilas was herself the grand-daughter of the swan-maiden of Alqualondë. The story of Tristan and Isolde also has a bearing on *Túrin*, as do the French tale of Melusine and some of the Robin Hood legends.