



I am a French reader of *The Lord of the Rings*, so the first time I read it, it was only in translation. I had previously read *The Hobbit* in French, and was shocked to see that all the names which had not been translated in *Bilbo le Hobbit*, had been 'French-ized': Bilbo had become 'Bilbon', Frodo 'Frodon', Baggins 'Sacquet', Bag End 'Cul-de-Sac'. In the beginning it seemed very strange, but the translator had seemed to make some effort in his translation; for example, the Loudwater became the 'Sonoronne', the Entwash became the 'Entalluve'.

But then I didn't know the original edition. When I read that, I saw that in reality the translator had produced a number of inaccuracies. For example, he translated the 'Passing' (departure) of Elrond and Galadriel as the 'Passing' (death); 'wains' were translated 'camions' (trucks), Hall (palace) became Hall (room). And the typography was disastrous. In *The Return of the King* I found: 'Findigal' (Findegil), 'Elendal' (Elendil), 'Eomir' (Éomer), 'Oradruin'/'Oroduin' (Oroduin), 'Brebtor' (Erebor), 'Arvedvi'/'Arvedin' (Arvedui), 'Goïn' (Glóin), 'Elessor' (Elessar), 'Denebbor' (Denethor), 'Thengal' (Thengel), 'Derhelm' (Dernhelm), 'Halifieren' (Halifirien), 'Mirinimon' (Minrimmon), 'Belargir' (Pelargir), 'Dammath Naur' (Sammath Naur), 'Erassëa' (Eressëa), 'Cormellan' (Cormallen), 'Nürven' (Nürnen), 'Fria' (Fréa), 'Niphridil' (Niphredil), and a lot more.

Furthermore, the translator doesn't seem to have understood that *Ered* is the plural of *Orod*, and *Emyn* is the plural of *Amon*. For him, *Emyn Muil*, *Ered Lithui*, *Ered Nimrais*, *Ered Luin*, *Pinnath Gelin*, *Argonath*, and many others, are singular. In the "Tale of Aragorn and Arwen" (first page), Arador, Arathorn and Aragorn are confused and taken for one another. Merry, thinking of Pippin in "The Ride of the Rohirrim", is taken for him. In "The Battle of the Pelennor Fields" the Lord of the Nazgûl, fighting with Éowyn, is feminine! And so on.

The French edition doesn't include the Appendices, except for the "Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen", so that when people read about the First and Second Ages they lose themselves in the labyrinth of names. Now it has appeared in a paperback edition, and all the errors of translation and typography persist. We can't let the French misunderstand Tolkien because of a bad translation! Moreover the French editor seems to be rather interested in making money with it - the French Deluxe edition, which exists only on paper now, will cost £7; and he is better known as a political, erotic and horror editor. The books *Tree and Leaf*, *Smith of Wootton Major* and *Farmer Giles of Ham* have also been translated by the same man, in a single volume entitled *Faërie*. The translation doesn't look too bad, but on the back of the book it is stated that the book was only produced in anticipation of the "*Cimarillon*"! You've read it - what a horror! If the translator is unable to write the "*Silmarillion*" correctly, I fear for the translation.

Another and final point, but the worst one. *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* has also been translated by the same editor. As soon as I saw the book I bought it: £4.25. The first two pages were a delight, for the Tolkien family had kindly sent two manuscript pages of *The Lord of the Rings* written by Tolkien himself. If only they had known! The translation is awful. When you read that *Fíriel* ('The Last Ship') has become "*Fierette*", and that all the rest is as bad, or worse, you simply have to tear out the two pages of Tolkien's manuscript and put the book into the fire. The translator uses a pseudonym, but in fact is a pot-boiler writer of erotic thrilling detective stories.

After such disasters, I think that one of the purposes of the Tolkien Society should be not only to spread the knowledge of Tolkien's work in the world, but also to protect it from poor translations. So - what are we waiting for?

Bilbo le Hobbit is published by Stock, Hachette Bibliothèque Verte and J'aillu Editions.

Le Seigneur des Anneaux is published by Christian Bourgois and "Le Livre de Poche".

Faërie and *Les Aventures de Tom Bombadil*, are published by Christian Bourgois.



A Changeling's Words to Mrs. V. Chapman

*Belladonna Took,
fair enchantress of the quill,
your words run like a river
all pure and free,
May the Stars do your will,
May no cold wind blow,
may your spring be fair
with elanor aplenty to adorn your hair.
And may the mellyrn trees grow
where you wish them to go.
High grew the oaks in the Land of Song
But our people are gone, scattered and rare
Yet you reach us still, though exiles we be
And I, Amathaon the Changeling, bow to thee.*

Gordon MacLellan