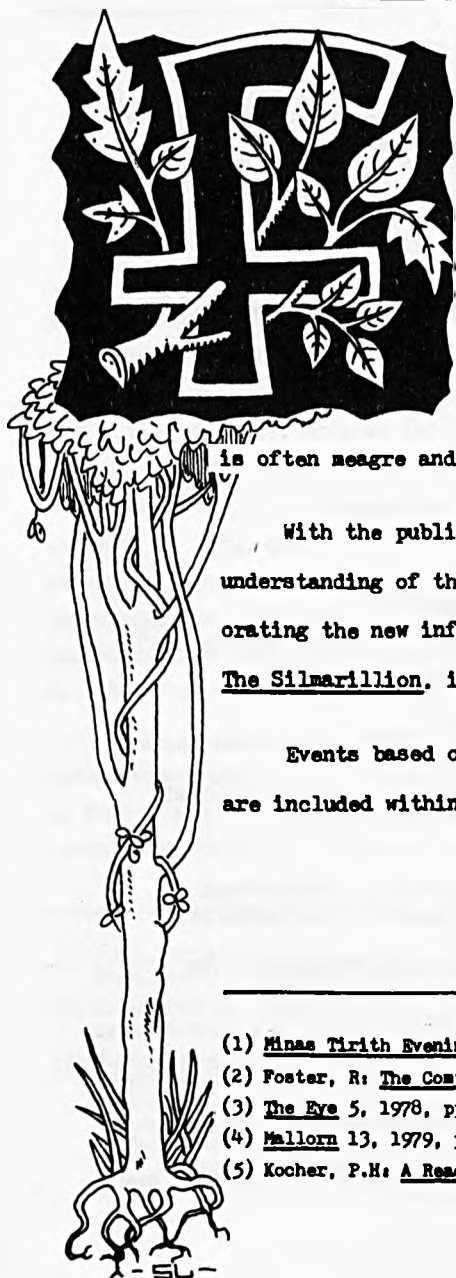




A Chronology of the careers of Túrin and Tuor

Donald E. Brien



Five chronologies of the First Age, based on The Silmarillion, have already appeared in print: D.S. Bratman, 'The Chronology of The Silmarillion'¹; Robert Foster in his Complete Guide²; W. Good, 'The Chronology of the First Age from the Rising of the Sun'³; C. Tolley, 'A Chronology of the First Age'⁴; P.H. Kocher, A Reader's Guide to The Silmarillion⁵. There are some discrepancies amongst these. The contradictions, however, are understandable because the chronological information in The Silmarillion is often meagre and, occasionally, internally inconsistent.

With the publication of Unfinished Tales, it is possible to gain a more precise understanding of the chronology of the careers of Túrin and Tuor. Their careers, incorporating the new information from Unfinished Tales into that which has been available in The Silmarillion, is given in the following pages.

Events based on chronological information are listed without parentheses. Other events are included within brackets for the sake of completeness.



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- (1) Minas Tirith Evening Star, no.7.1, 1977, pp.4-8.
 - (2) Foster, R: The Complete Guide to Middle-earth. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1978, pp.436-441.
 - (3) The Eye 5, 1978, pp.26-31.
 - (4) Mallorn 13, 1979, pp.31-32.
 - (5) Kocher, P.H: A Reader's Guide to The Silmarillion, Boston, 1980, pp.253-264.

—❧— Chronology —❧—

- 464 Birth of Túrin.
(summer) Beren meets Lúthien in Doriath.
- 469 Túrin 5 years old.
(spring) Urwen 3 years old.
(autumn) Coming of the Evil Breath.
- 472 (Gwaeron) Túrin almost 8 years old.
(Lothron) Húrin sets out for Barad Eithel to fight in the Nirnaeth Arnoediad.
(midsummer) Nirnaeth Arnoediad (Death of Huor; capture of Húrin).
(autumn) Morwen sends Túrin to Doriath.
(late) Birth of Tuor.
- 473 (early) Morwen gives birth to Nienor.
- 472-481 Túrin dwells at Menegroth.
- 481 Tidings of Morwen cease to reach Menegroth.
Túrin 17 years old.
- 481-484 Túrin fights on the marches of Doriath.
- 484 (summer) Túrin returns to Menegroth, 20 years old. (Death of Saeros) Túrin flees from Menegroth (Thingol pardons him).
- 484 (summer)-485 (winter) Túrin lives with an outlaw band.
- 484 (winter)-485 (spring) Beleg searches for Túrin.
- 485 (spring) Túrin kills the outlaw captain Forweg while saving the daughter of Iarnach) Túrin becomes captain of the outlaws. (He leads them into the wild.)
(summer) Beleg speaks with Iarnach. Things go ill for the outlaws. (They capture Mîm) They come to Amon Rûdh. Beleg finds Túrin at Amon Rûdh. (Túrin refuses to return to Doriath. Beleg departs.)
- 485/486 (winter) Beleg returns to Amon Rûdh.
- 486 (spring) Morgoth learns of Túrin's presence on Amon Rûdh.
(autumn) Mîm betrays Túrin. (Túrin is captured, but freed by Beleg and Gwindor) He accidentally slays Beleg.
(autumn-winter) Gwindor leads Túrin to Nargothrond.
- 489 Tuor, 16 years old, is captured by Lorgan.
- 489-492 Thralldom of Tuor.
- 495 (late) Morwen and Nienor depart from Dor-lómin.
- 492-496 Tuor escapes from the Easterlings and lives as an outlaw in Androth.
- 496 (early) Tuor sets out in search of Turgon.
(Sulimë) Tuor enters Nevrast.
(spring) Gelmir and Arminas come as envoys of Ulmo to Nargothrond.
(spring-summer) Tuor dwells in Nevrast.
(autumn) Tuor departs for Vinyamar, led by seven white swans. Sack of Nargothrond⁶. (Deaths of Orodreth and Gwindor. Túrin ensnared by Glaurung) Túrin quits Nargothrond.
(Narquelië) (Tuor meets Voronwë) They set out for Gondolin.
(Hisimë) Voronwë and Tuor approach the Narog and Gondolin. Túrin reaches the pools of Ivrin. (Túrin and Tuor cross paths.)
(late winter) Túrin reaches the path leading into Dor-lómin. (He enters Dor-lómin and learns that Morwen and Nienor are gone to Doriath) He slays Brodda.
- 496/497 Fell Winter, lasting five months.
- 497 (end of winter) News comes to Doriath of the sack of Nargothrond. (Morwen and Nienor quit Doriath. Túrin joins the men of Brethil and learns of the death of Finduilas.)
(early spring) Túrin casts off the darkness due to the death of Finduilas. (He finds Nienor.)
(autumn) Túrin reveals himself as Turambar to Nienor.
- 497 (late summer)-498 (early) Brandir heals Nienor.

(6) I assume, with Foster (p.440), that the sack of Nargothrond took place in 496, and not in 495 (Bratman, Good and Tolley), for 495 years were completed at the beginning of 496.

- 499 (spring) Túrin asks Nienor to marry him.
 (midsummer) Túrin and Nienor wed.
 (end) Glaurung begins to assault Brethil.
- 497-500 Mablung seeks Morwen and Nienor.
- 500 (spring) Nienor conceives.
 (end of spring) Glaurung seeks Túrin. (Deaths of Túrin, Nienor, Brandir, Glaurung.)
- 501 Release of Húrin from captivity of 28 years.



The Silmarillion had provided only one firm date for the time period covering the lives of Túrin and Tuor:

"Now it came to pass, when four hundred and ninety-five years had passed since the rising of the Moon, in the spring of the year, there came to Nargothrond two Elves, named Gelmir and Arminas..." (QS pp. 211-212)⁷

Unfinished Tales provides another firm date:

"But in the four hundred and sixty-ninth year after the return of the Noldor to Middle-earth there was a stirring of hope among Elves and Men ...And in the autumn of that year... there came an ill wind from the North under leaden skies. The Evil Breath it was called...In that year Túrin son of Húrin was yet only five years old..." (UT p.58)⁸

On the basis of chronological data in Tolkien's works, the Nirnaeth Arnoediad has been variously ascribed to different years (Good and Tolley (472), Foster (473), Bratman (472 or 474)). With knowledge of two firm dates within the lifespans of Túrin and Tuor, it is possible to re-evaluate the date of the battle. The reconstructed careers of Túrin and Tuor, as set out in the chronology above, working forwards from 469 and backwards from 496, consistently support the date 472 for the Fifth Battle⁹.

It is necessary to examine afresh Túrin's career after the fall of Nargothrond. According to Foster and Kocher, Túrin's death occurred five years after the sack of Nargothrond; and accord-

ing to Bratman, Good and Tolley, four years after. I will attempt to demonstrate that Túrin did, in fact, die four years after the sack. Tolkien writes:

"...when three years were passed since the sack of Nargothrond Turambar asked Niniel again (i.e. to marry him)..." (QS p. 220)

and elsewhere he says that Túrin asked her in the spring (UT p.125). The simplest interpretation is to assume that the event took place three years numerically after the year of the sack, in 496 plus 3, that is in the spring of 499. Túrin and Nienor were wedded at the mid-summer of the same year (QS p.220; UT p.125). By the end of 499, "the third of Turambar's dwelling among the wood men", Glaurung began his assault on Brethil (UT p. 125; cf. QS p.220). Nienor conceived in the spring of 500, the following year (QS p.220; UT p.127). By the end of the spring of this year, Glaurung began to search for Túrin (UT p. 127). Túrin's death followed shortly afterwards in 500, that is, four years after the sack of Nargothrond.

Concerning Húrin's release from captivity, Tolkien writes:

"...a year was now gone since the death of Túrin his son. For twenty-eight years he had been captive in Angband..." (QS p.227)

Therefore, he was released in 501, and his captivity began in 473. Either the date 473 refers to the beginning of his captivity in Angband and not to the date of the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, as determined above; or, if it refers to the date of the battle, it is a chronological error.

Foster "assumed that the year begins in the spring, following the example of the Eldarin loa in providing dates"¹⁰ for his chronological system

(10) Foster, p.436.

(7) J.R.R. Tolkien; The Silmarillion. George Allen & Unwin, London, (ed. Christopher Tolkien), 1977.

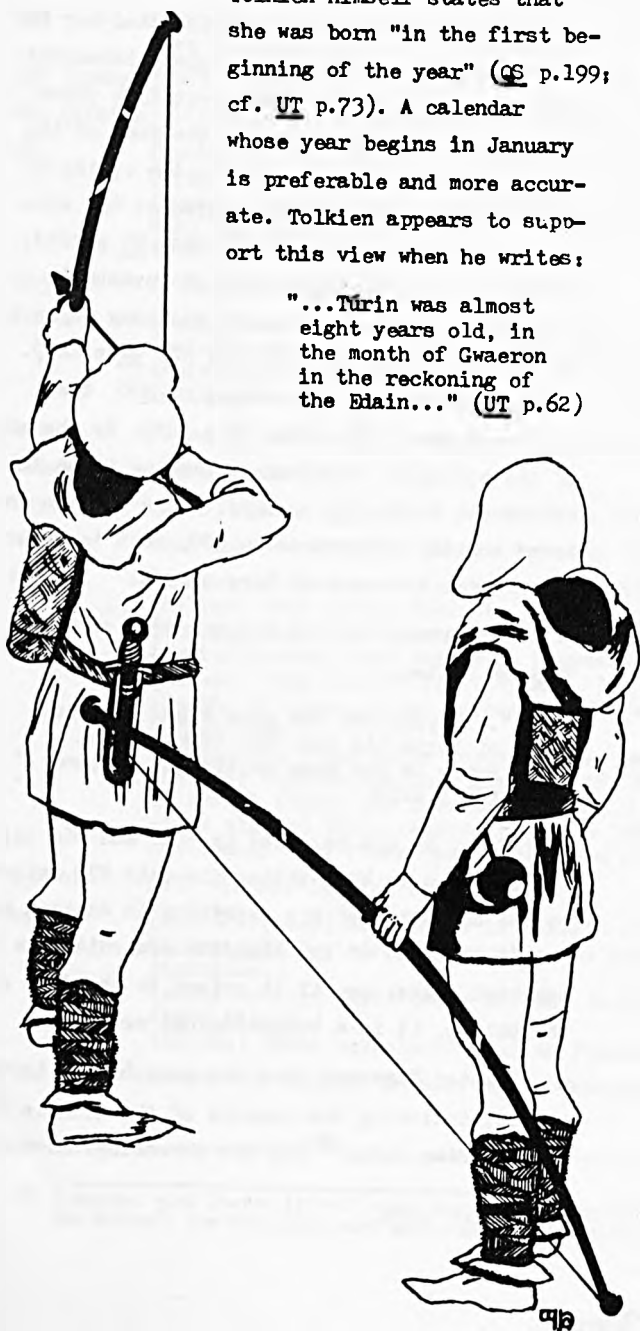
(8) J.R.R. Tolkien; Unfinished Tales. George Allen & Unwin, London, (ed. Christopher Tolkien), 1980.

(9) Foster assumed that the Nirnaeth Arnoediad took place in 473 and was thereby compelled to remove a year from Tuor's enslavement in Hithlum (pp.438, 440). Kocher assigned the battle to 495. This is erroneous. In fact, his chronology of the First Age after the Dagor Bragollach accelerates at a pace not warranted by the evidence in The Silmarillion.

of the First Age. Such a system entails the dislocation of known chronological data. He assumes that Tuor was born in January, because Rían and Huor were wedded two months before mid-summer. From the Unfinished Tales, however, we know that Húrin set out for the battle in the month of Lothron, that is, in May, after Huor had already left. Hence Huor and Rían were probably married in March, and Tuor would have been born in December. A January calendar system preserves Tolkien's statement (QS p.238) that Tuor was born in the same year as the battle. Moreover, the Eldarin calendar necessitates that Nienor be born in the same year as the Nirnaeth Arnoediad.

Tolkien himself states that she was born "in the first beginning of the year" (QS p.199; cf. UT p.73). A calendar whose year begins in January is preferable and more accurate. Tolkien appears to support this view when he writes:

"...Túrin was almost eight years old, in the month of Gwaeron in the reckoning of the Edain..." (UT p.62)



The calendar year, in the reckoning of the Edain, began in January.

Can we justify the adoption of a January calendar system if the writers of the original tales in the Quenta Silmarillion used an Eldarin calendar? To answer this question, we must examine the provenance and interrelationships of the tales "Of Tuor and his Coming to Gondolin" and "Narn i Hîn Húrin" and of the relevant portions of the Quenta Silmarillion. The origin of the first tale is not known and consequently we cannot pass judgement on its significance with respect to datable events in The Silmarillion.

The "Narn i Hîn Húrin" was composed by Dírhavel, a man who lived in the days of Eärendil (UT pp.7,146). In view of the date of its composition and because it was written in the Grey-elven tongue (UT p.146) it can be assumed that Dírhavel used an Eldarin calendar in the tale. The tale as we have it, however, utilizes a January calendar system. Presumably, at some time in the manuscript tradition of the tale, a scribe modified temporal references by translating them into a January calendar system.

What relevance does this last hypothesis have with regard to the Quenta Silmarillion? The "Narn i Hîn Húrin" stands in close relationship to the relevant parts of the Quenta Silmarillion and the latter may be a condensation of the former (cf. QS p.8; UT pp.7,146). Unlike the 'Narn i Hîn Húrin', however, datable events in The Silmarillion are never specified by the name of a month. Consequently we do not possess a direct proof of the use of a January calendar in the Quenta Silmarillion. As it has been stated above, however, a January calendar suits the chronology of the events in The Silmarillion and avoids inconsistencies that would have occurred if an Eldarin calendar were used. In consequence it is best to assume that the tales of Túrin and Tuor in the Quenta Silmarillion employ the January calendar system, introduced by a scribe either in the Narn i Hîn Húrin manuscript tradition (which was a source for the tales in the QS), or in the manuscript tradition of the Quenta Silmarillion itself.

