Mallorn

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The Tolkien Society. Founded in London in 1969 the Tolkien Society is an international organization registered in the UK as a charity (No. 273809) dedicated to furthering interest in the life and works of Professor J. R. R. Tolkien, CBE (1892-1973) who remains its President *in perpetuo*. His daughter, Miss Priscilla Tolkien, became its honorary Vice-President in 1986. As well as *Mallorn*, the society publishes a bi-monthly bulletin, *Amon Hen*. In addition to local gatherings ('Smials') there are annual national meetings: the AGM and Dinner in the spring, Summermoot and the Seminar in the summer, and Oxonmoot, a celebratory weekend held in Oxford in late September. For further information about the society please contact Sally Kennett, 210 Prestbury Road, Cheltenham, Glos. GL52 3ER or visit http://www.tolkiensociety.org.

Guest Editorial: Thoughts on Tolkien

Tanith Lee

Tolkien helped save my sanity (temporarily) when I was about nineteen.

Books were (and remain) my gate of escape from the worst of this world. My excellent and magical mother often bought me, or recommended, books, during one of the worst phases of my life when, a born writer myself, and more or less hopeless at anything else, I despairingly floundered my way through various jobs I did not fit into, despite my best (or worst) efforts.

She too initially read Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* cycle when quite young. She said there was a party at the novel's beginning; weirdly pleasant though it was, the adventure lay soon after. But at nineteen and depressed, a weirdly pleasant party seemed just the necessary thing. So I went. And I loved the party, that eleventy-something birthday. While what followed soon had me by the throat. And then there was Strider …

I raced through the books, caught up by the beauty and bleakness of a Master's extraordinary vision, where landscape is another character, and evil an all-seeing fiery eye that puts our proliferation of surveillance cameras to shame. Tolkien's erudition, and his transposition of those myths to which almost all of us are genetically preconditioned to respond – with awe, delight, inspiration, passion, and with *terror* (and I don't mean mere fear) – was unconsciously perfectly clear to me as I read. No-one does *honour* better than Tolkien. Nor *pure* evil. For the evil of Sauron *is* pure. This monster is like a priest of darkness, worshipping only the lightless depths within himself, faultless in shadow. He puts to shame the antics of his violent minions, the wounded grossness of such a creature as Gollum.

These books, with their combination of momentum and mythic id, their soaring upward, their delving in the earth, are not only an alternate reality, firmly rooted in ordinary truth, but a bardic lay to silence the rowdiest feast hall. And, let it be said, no mean lesson to any fledgling writer on the virtues of structure, and character-casting, how to pause in pleasure or peace, or a song; how to leap forward again at breakneck speed.

I confess, I haven't seen the movies. I tried the first. Despite many of my favourite actors being in them (Christopher Lee, Orlando Bloom) the film seemed too mellifluous, too *clever* and too *beautiful*. No doubt this is my mistake, and I missed a lot. Maybe I'll try again in the future. But most of us acknowledge that sometimes the best movie can't compete with what we already saw inside our minds, those battles on subterrene bridges, those rides beside such a hero-king as Aragorn. Those sorecerous glimpses of supernal otherness and flaming dark.

Years after my first reading of *The Lord of the Rings*, I read *The Hobbit*, and enjoyed every moment. For me its most fascinating character is the dragon, Smaug. I had never (how often have any of us) seen *Dragon* portrayed, as *Dragon* might well be – covetous, smug, an oily businessman of the scalier sort, lying on his hoard, planning a new deal of plunder and (incidental) horrible death. I knew enough then too to compare Smaug with Sauron. A writer of such eloquence and authority as Tolkien was well able to create two such disparate yet *believable* villains, an Unthing of Abyssal dimensions, a primeval monster that speaks like a newspaper magnate (if more elegantly).

A pathfinder, Professor Tolkien. He gave us all the modern key to fantasy, and a peerless lesson on how to open up that new territory.

I have a friend, too, who was once one of his students among the dreaming spires. "He was a wonderful teacher," she told me. George Bernard Shaw estimated that 'Those that can, do; those that can't, teach'. But some that can do can also teach, it seems. While my husband, John Kaiine, has said, ' those that can't do either, *criticize*.'

Let us raise a glass to genius, and to *The Lord of the Rings*.

Tanith Lee's story Calinnen *appears on page 47.*

Letters to the Editor

SIR — In *Demons, Choices, and Grace in The Lord of the Rings* (*Mallorn* **45**, 20-23), Chad Chisholm asserts that Frodo "decided, now and forever, to join himself to the very evil he wished to destroy." But surely this is far too simple a statement? We cannot know what Frodo intended with any certainty. In fact, Frodo's choice in the Sammath Naur is no clear, simple matter at all.

By the time Frodo learns just what he has inherited from Bilbo along with Bag End, it is plain that the Ring has already begun to influence his mind and will. In speaking of Bilbo's claim on the Ring, Gandalf tells him, "Clearly the ring had an unwholesome power that set to work on its keeper at once." (*Fellowship*, 47) We soon see that in some things, Frodo's will, too, is affected, so that it cannot be clearly distinguished from that of the Ring. When Gandalf asks Frodo to give him the Ring, the hobbit feels that it has grown "suddenly very heavy, as if either it or Frodo himself was in some way reluctant for Gandalf to touch it." (*ibid*., 48) We learn that the Ring seeks to protect itself and to return to its master (*ibid*., 54). That Frodo is already bound to it to some extent is shown by his distress when Gandalf tosses it into the fire to reveal its identity by exposing the inscription, and by Frodo's inability only minutes later to do as the wizard has done and return it to the flames. As Gandalf tells him, "Already you too, Frodo, cannot easily let it go, nor will to damage it." (*ibid*., 59). Even this early in the story, the will of the Ring subverts that of its Bearer.

It is largely the fact that Frodo is neither especially forceful nor strong that lets him get to the very Crack of Doom with his burden. For those with more power – Gandalf, say, or Galadriel -- the temptation to use the Ring sooner would have been far greater, had it come into their possession. If these immensely strong, wise beings fear the corrupting influence of the Ring, it is no surprise that Frodo's will is ultimately broken by its unrelenting pressure.

The pressure mounts, indeed, as the hobbits near their goal. "As it drew near the great furnaces where, in the deeps of time, it had been shaped and forged, the Ring's power grew, and it became more fell, untameable save by some mighty will." (*Return of the King*, 880). Frodo's spirit had been further weakened by other hardships – the wound from the Morgul blade that pierced him on Weathertop, and Shelob's bite. By the time he and Sam ascend Mount Doom, he is almost spent. There, at the Cracks of Doom, the last shreds of his strength, no longer supported by the guidance of Gandalf or Galadriel's gift of light, crumble to ashes, and he succumbs.

It is far too simple, therefore, to say that Frodo has willingly embraced evil in this moment. He has chosen the Ring, yes; but he has been caught by the will of its maker, Sauron, in the heart of the Dark Realm. We cannot say with certainty how much, if any, of Frodo's own will remained when he chose to claim the Ring, nor how much that choice was the Ring's own, a final bid to save itself from destruction. Frodo's declaration in claiming the Ring is made "with a voice clearer and more powerful than Sam had ever heard him use" (*ibid*., 924). It may well have been the will of the Ring that conferred on it such surprising and uncharacteristic strength. Of Frodo's final choice, we know only that he chose not to destroy the Ring, but to keep it. What else he intended – whether to join the Dark Lord, or supplant him -- we are not told. It is true that he would eventually have turned to evil; that is the inevitable result of wearing the One Ring, no matter how well-intentioned one is in the beginning. But we cannot say with any conviction that Frodo "has decided … to join himself to the very evil he wished to destroy" (*Mallorn* **45**, 23). If the Ring's will has subsumed the Hobbit's, as seems very possible from what we are actually told, Frodo may have thought of nothing beyond keeping the Ring from the fire.

With the destruction of the Ring, the pressure exerted on the Bearer by its overwhelming instinct to survive is gone and Frodo's own will begins to reappear. Sam is overjoyed to see it: "And there was Frodo, pale and worn, and yet himself again; and in his eyes there was peace now, neither strain of will, nor madness, nor any fear. His burden was taken away." (*Return*, 926).

In the end, Frodo was able to set aside his own pain, sorrow and sense of loss, because he still considered the well-being of others important, and he worked to assure their continued happiness even though his own was broken. The grace he was given did not make him good again; it allowed him to live free of the Ring's corrupting influence, so that he could act on the native goodness that was his true self. Evil found him, and for a brief, terrifying time it took him; but it could not keep him. His light still shone out of the darkness, despite it all, for "though he did not know it, Bilbo (and Gandalf) had thought him the best hobbit in the Shire." (*Fellowship*, 137) Many of us would agree with them. **Patti Benson**

SIR —The great science-fiction writer Sir Arthur C. Clarke died on 18 March 2008. My already considerable interest in science-fiction was greatly encouraged by reading in my childhood, among other books, his novel *Islands in the Sky*; and I went on to read and buy much of both his fiction and non-fiction. Saddened at his death, I recently re-read much of his works that I had in my possession. Among them was the essay *Memoirs of an Armchair Astronaut (Retired)*, published in the 1960s, in which he spoke about his involvement in the British Interplanetary Society (BIS) from the mid-1930s to the mid- 1950s. In this essay, he described a meeting he had in Oxford with C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien.

To understand why the meeting took place, some background is necessary. In the 1930s, before the Second World War, the BIS and its activities were not taken seriously. Clarke said that the organisation's Journal attracted 'a surprising amount of attention and a not surprising amount of amusement'.

> That doyen of scientific publications, the good, grey *Nature* condescended to notice our existence, but concluded its review with the unkind cut: 'While the ratio of theorizing to practical experimentation is so high, little attention will be paid to the activities of the British Interplanetary Society.'

Clarke conceded this, but pointed out that the Society had the equivalent of $2.50 in the till. (Arthur C. Clarke, *Voices from the Sky*: London: Mayflower Paperbacks, 1969, p. 144.) After the Second World War, he said that the BIS was taken more seriously, due to the German V2 rocket. In speaking of those who supported and opposed the Society's aims, he referred to a couple of familiar names, and detailed a meeting with them both:

> Less sympathetic to our aims was Dr. C. S. Lewis, author of two of the very few works of space fiction that can be classed as literature, *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*. Both of these fine books contained attacks on scientists in general, and astronauts in particular, which aroused my ire. I was especially incensed by a passage in *Perelandra* referring to 'little rocket societies' that hoped to spread the crimes of mankind to other planets. And at the words: 'The destruction or enslavement of other species in the universe, if such there are, is to these minds a welcome corollary,' I really saw red. An extensive correspondence with Dr. Lewis led to a meeting in a famous Oxford pub, the Eastgate. Seconding me was my friend, Val Cleaver, a space buff from way back (and now chief engineer of the Rolls-Royce Rocket Division). Supporting Lewis was Professor J. R. E. Tolkien [*sic*], whose trilogy *The Lord of the Ring* [*sic*] created a considerable stir a few years ago. Needless to say, neither side converted the other, and we refused to abandon our diabolical schemes of interplanetary conquest. But a fine time was had by all, and when, some hours later, we emerged a little unsteadily from the Eastgate, Dr. Lewis' parting words were 'I'm sure you're very wicked people – but how dull it would be if everyone was good.' (*Voices from the Sky*, p. 148.)

In another account, quoted in a biography of him, Clarke gave more details of this meeting:

> Val and I stayed at the Mitre, which is a wonderful non-Euclidean building with no right angles to it, no two rooms the same. We met Lewis at the Eastgate, and this little man, whose name I didn't catch, was in the background. Then I found out that his name was Tolkien. (Neil McAleer, *Odyssey: The authorised biography of Arthur C. Clarke*, London: Victor Gonzalez Ltd., 1992, p. 69.)

As many fellow Tolkien fans and fellow Tolkien Society members are also fans of C. S. Lewis and his works in particular, and of science-fiction in general, including that of the late Sir Arthur, I thought that the above accounts would be of interest. **Murray Smith**

SIR—I found Tom Shippey's Guest Editorial (*Mallorn* **45**, 3-5) extremely interesting, and I should like to pick up on a number of points that I found particularly notable.

It is certainly true that a great deal of work is done on Tolkien's sources, but there are two points worth raising here. First, calling those sources 'mythical' perpetuates an old misunderstanding, and obscures the relationship of source-study to something else that Shippey discusses later. Most of Tolkien's source material was not 'myth' – stories about the shaping powers of the world – but 'legend', stories with some sort of historical rooting, even if the tale as we know it is fantastical and wildly unlike any plausible historian's version. We can, for example, argue about precisely how Homer's version of the Trojan War relates to the Late Bronze Age archaeology of the Aegean, but that the legend was inspired by the history, however much else it pulled in, is as certain as any 'literary' argument can be.

This is where Shippey's comments on Tolkien's apparently changing attitude to the historical aspect of *Beowulf* come in. That historical rootedness makes *Beowulf* firmly into 'legend'. It may carry the

débris of myth, but it is not itself one; it can be treated as literature, as a great creative achievement, but it is rooted in reality rather than divorced from it. It would be very interesting to know more about Tolkien's thinking on this matter of history and *Beowulf*, because it has implications for so much else in Tolkien's use of sources.

Second, one of the great problems in any extensive source study is that Tolkien covers his tracks all too well. It is very easy to be misled by minor resemblances in small sections of text; it is very hard to get at deeper patterns. If we look at, say, Wagner's operas, his transformation of medieval material to meet the needs of dramatizing 19th-century ideas is fairly obvious to anyone with even a little knowledge of those areas. Tolkien, on the other hand, does not so much transform as transfigure. Tracking what he is really up to is difficult. The inevitable concentration on *The Lord of the Rings* does not help this, because in that book Tolkien was borrowing so much from his own *Silmarillion*-tradition, in which his sources had already been subjected to thirty or forty years of reworking. To make matters still worse, we are missing precisely the pieces in which that process of transformation could be seen at work. In a speech at the formal dinner at the Tolkien Society's Annual General Meeting in Cambridge in 1990, Rayner Unwin said;

> I hope that … Christopher [Tolkien] can have his sabbatical and get on with some of the other things he needs to do: I want him to do rather - like the book of his father's long non-Middle-earth poems, 'The Fall of Arthur' and the new *Volsungasaga* and a few other things. These exist and they need to be brushed up and put into a volume.

Few after-dinner comments can have been quite so tantalizing as that 'a few other things'! None of this material has as yet seen print, yet it is precisely in these works where Tolkien is dealing directly with medieval material that we stand a real chance of learning how he changes existing material into his own version, which in turn can be changed again. To take an example, there is an unpublished poem, *Sellic Spell*, which was described in an issue of *Beyond Bree* as dealing with 'the folkloric aspects of *Beowulf*'. Now, one of the long-standing mysteries of Tolkien's use of sources is that he was so deeply involved with *Beowulf*, yet the poem seems to have so little influence on Tolkien's writing beyond a few very minor points. *Sellic Spell* shows us Tolkien working directly with the matter of *Beowulf*. What he chose to use there, how he worked with it, would give us a chance to see how (or if) those ideas went on to a life in Tolkien's own 'legendarium'. Any related pieces or notes (and knowing Tolkien there are likely to be some, perhaps many) will expand the area we can study. Without that intermediary step (which Tolkien himself certainly regarded as valid in its own terms since *Sellic Spell* was submitted for publication) we will remain blind to all sorts of connections.

The real point about source studies is in my view that they should be anything but the classic literary-critical mistake of reducing a work to a collection of quotes. What source-study can very valuably provide is an understanding of the process of creative transformation by comparing and contrasting the two end-points, source and new work. Tolkien has, as Shippey says, been a massive influence on modern fantasy (and not just on those who admit influence, but also on those who dislike Tolkien's work and seek to find another path in equal if opposite reaction, such as Moorcock). Understanding creative transformation is a rolling process, which can extend both backwards from Tolkien to his medieval sources, and forwards from Tolkien to later authors. It can also be a useful tool for the working writer, too many of whom follow narrow paths instead of trying for richer imaginative workings.

Picking up on the second major set of points I should like to raise from Shippey's Editorial, the failure to publish Tolkien's non-Middle-earth poems can be seen as the ultimate example of Shippey's very valid point about the neglect of Tolkien's poetry in general. The lack of work on Tolkien's poetry is in my view the inevitable result of its falling between two stools. 'Modern poetry' critics have even less time for such stuff than most of the professional literary critics have for Tolkien's prose. The rest of us come to the poems hampered by the drastic decline in popularity which poetry has suffered in the second half of the twentieth century. Few people nowadays read poetry; fewer write it. Most of us no longer have the tools for understanding European poetry in its classic forms; we are not taught the rules, and can appreciate neither their well-turned deployment nor their daring breakage. Alliterative verse was always a more specialized area, and the restrictions in teaching about it inevitably mean a restriction in informed understanding. What is left is at best a rather vague appreciation and a tendency to read for the narrative, treating poetry as a wilful sort of prose with more love of sound effects than plain expression. At worst, poetry can seem simply inconsequential, surely not something an author would use for serious or important work (a bitterly ironic reversal of early attitudes to the novel!) Even if we go on to learn something of the high traditions of European poetry, we certainly do not feel at ease with the subject in the way that previous

generations did. How then can we tackle Tolkien's poems, whether rhymed or alliterative, intelligently, from an informed understanding and looking at them as part of his total body of work, interacting with his prose writing? With difficulty, is the short answer, and there are so many easier targets. It is no wonder that little work has been done on the poems.

In addition it has to be said that by failing to finish any of his longer poems, or at least leaving large chunks in a presentable and readable form, Tolkien did himself no favours. A.N. Wilson remarks in passing in his biography of C. S. Lewis that Tolkien's *Lay of Leithan* is one of the major poems of the twentieth century but it takes a special sort of stamina just to read the relevant material in *The Lays of Beleriand*, much less come to an aesthetic appreciation or judgment of it. There seems to me to be a strong case for bringing out 'reading editions' of the poetry, with the verse allowed to speak for itself and the notes in the back, exactly as in Christopher Tolkien's fine work, *The Children of Húrin*. That book could not have been produced without the hard work of the *History of Middle-earth*: perhaps the 'long Lays' will yet emerge from obscurity in similarly impressive fashion.

Many of the short poems would benefit from being gathered together, too. Some are simply hard to find, courtesy of obscure journals and short print runs. Others are buried deep in larger texts where they are easily overlooked and the impression of their dependant status and insignificance is reinforced. A fair number of poems both short and long are known to exist but remain unpublished. Better access to Tolkien's poems would help tremendously towards their appreciation and evaluation. **Ruth Lacon**

Reviews: Telling Tales

Anderson, Douglas A., ed. *Tales Before Tolkien: The Roots of Modern Fantasy*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003. ISBN 0-345-45854-0; ISBN 0-345-45855-9. *Tales Before Narnia: The Roots of Modern Fantasy*. Ballantine Books, 2008. ISBN 978-0-345-49890-8.

Rebecca G. Addy

In these two books Douglas Anderson provides a much-needed scholarly approach to the fantasy and science-fiction aspects of the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. Anderson clarifies that *Tales Before Narnia* is "in many ways a companion to *Tales Before Tolkien*; therefore, a consideration of both provides the fodder for many a lively discussion for modern-day Inklings. Anderson's dual consideration of the literary influences on Tolkien and Lewis, direct and peripheral, supply for the serious scholar a hoard from which to choose, and yet, it is not at all inaccessible to the lay reader. Anderson provides a short introduction and head-notes to each story. As a teacher of Tolkien and Lewis, I would have appreciated a more comprehensive set of notes as some of the connections between author and selection will be elusive to the average introductory literature student. However, Anderson points out in his introduction to *Narnia* that "elements from the sources that inspired [Lewis] may at times remain visible, transformed to a greater or lesser extent," so in spite of the sparse commentary, these anthologies present a challenge for students to find and engage with Tolkien and Lewis towards the same transformation of mind and possibility that fueled the imaginations of both.

Anderson's ability as a scholar and as a researcher is evident from the extensive range of oft-neglected materials covered. Frequently, in the case of Tolkien studies, only scholarly texts, such as *Beowulf* and other Old- or Middle English texts, are considered worthy of serious consideration. Whereas many of the works that Anderson presents are discussed, it is primarily by literary critics and not the ever-growing popular culture. Just as Tolkien would not allow a gap between his scholarly and 'popular' self, Anderson's collections encourage the homogeneity of the literary mind.

As an American, and one from the Great Plains of the Midwest, I loved (in *Tolkien*) the inclusion of the story by L. Frank Baum, *The Enchanted Buffalo*. Anderson knows that there are few who have not seen *The Wizard of Oz*, so the inclusion of another of Baum's stories bridges the gap between the known and the unknown – the very fabric of fantasy and science-fiction alike. I am eager to use this story as a way to interest some of my students who do not know Tolkien (yes, they do exist), or who feel fantasy is not their 'thing'.

Tales Before Narnia starts with stories that have obvious connections between real-world writings of the past and the world of Narnia. In the first selection, *Proem: Tegnérs Drapa* there are references to

"the dead sun" (*Magician's Nephew*); and "But out of the sea of Time/ Rises a new land of song" (*Magician's Nephew; The Last Battle*). *The Snow Queen*, by Hans Christian Andersen is clearly where Lewis found inspiration for the White Witch (*The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*), and the story *Undine* by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué has inspiration for the separation of Cair Paravel from the mainland in *Prince Caspian*; the salamanders that lived in the flames of the underworld in *The Silver Chair*; and the underwater world of merpeople in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Some of the later stories are unmistakably related to other of Lewis' writings, such as *The Screwtape Letters*.

Anderson intelligently planned the marketing of both books: *Tales Before Tolkien* was released in 2003 just preceding the 2004 film release of the final film in Peter Jackson's rendering of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Return of the King*. Similarly, *Tales Before Narnia* is released in 2008 – the same year as the second of Andrew Adamson's Narnia films, *Prince Caspian*. In this way, Anderson can appeal to all the unsuspecting movie-goers who simply want to be entertained; as well as the hard-core Tolkien and Lewis fans who will read anything with their beloved icons on the cover. Personally, this is where I enter the relationship of "cultural production." As an instructor of literature, I will use whatever is at my disposal to help my students see a little further and thanks to Douglas Anderson, I now have my two primary textbooks for the fall semester.

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Reviews: Of Baggins, Bladorthin and Pryftan

The History of The Hobbit, John D. Rateliff. HarperCollins, London, 2007. In two volumes: *Part One: Mr. Baggins* & *Part Two: Return To Bag-End*. xxxix + 905 pp. Also in paperback, 2008.

Charles Noad

This addition to the understanding of the textual evolution of the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien has been a long time in coming, but the quality (and, indeed, the bulk) of the resulting work at least provides a justification for the long wait. Begun by Taum Santoski, whose tragically premature death in 1991 prevented him from doing much more than lay the foundations of this project, it was taken over by the distinguished Tolkien scholar John D. Rateliff, who has now brought it to completion. As companions to *The History of Middle-earth*, Christopher Tolkien's detailed exposition of the development of his father's invented mythology, including *The Lord of the Rings*, these volumes stand slightly apart, as though to reflect the problematic status of the relationship of *The Hobbit* itself to that mythology – but this is a topic we shall return to.

In essence, this *History* provides a detailed examination of the succeeding 'phases' of the composition of *The Hobbit*, each phase delineated by what appear to be sometimes lengthy pauses (sometimes as much a year) between them. There were also two more phases after the book's first publication in September 1937, one to do with corrections to the text and modifying the chapter on the finding of the Ring; the other with rewriting the whole book in a style closer to *The Lord of the Rings*. For the initial phases, the earliest version of the text is given, accompanied by textual notes, followed by discussions of topics that have arisen in that particular section, accompanied by further notes. Rateliff has not been afraid to explore the various topics involved exhaustively and it must be said that these books are by no means light reading as a result: the exposition is as clear and interesting as it can well be but Rateliff pursues the clues about the origins of various Tolkienian concepts into some very obscure places; but then, that is in keeping with what this history is intended to be.

Rateliff starts off by establishing the dating for the composition of the initial draft of *The Hobbit*. After a careful consideration of the evidence, which is far from consistent, including Tolkien's own writings and interviews, as well as recollections from members of his family, Rateliff concludes that *The Hobbit* was most probably first written between the summer of 1930 and January 1933. (Some confusion may have been caused by the story incorporating elements that were told to the Tolkien children before mid-1930.) The result was the 'home manuscript' which Tolkien circulated to some of his close acquaintances. Here Rateliff corrects Humphrey Carpenter who in his biography stated that Tolkien abandoned the book at one point, leaving it unfinished for several years until only the later interest of Allen & Unwin prompted him to finish it. But this was based on a misunderstanding of the textual evidence. Since Rateliff has spent a very much greater time than Carpenter in considering this evidence, I think his

judgement may be relied upon in this matter. The writing was not performed continuously but in bursts with long gaps between whenever Tolkien's academic and familial responsibilities left him with the spare time. Most of this was carried out in vacation times as those were the only free times he had. I should like to say here that Rateliff's reasoning for the above dates is meticulous and I would humbly suggest that, pending any firm evidence to the contrary, these become the accepted dates for the composition of the book which first brought an obscure Oxford academic to widespread public attention.

The first phase consists of the 'Pryftan Fragment' and the typescript made from it, the 'Bladorthin Typescript' (both editorial titles), which I shall look at in some detail. The former consists of six handwritten pages on three sheets, which are all that now survive of the very first drafting of *The Hobbit*. The first several sheets are missing, and so we do not have the actual first inking of 'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.' In this ur-text, we are already remarkably close to the published text, even down to the phraseology; but there are also differences, notably in naming: our dwarf Thorin here was called 'Gandalf', and the wizard Gandalf, 'Bladorthin'. Both these designations remained well into the writing. The dragon Smaug was called 'Pryftan', a wonderful name but one that only lasted until the typescript. More surprising is the reference to the goblin-king whose forces invaded Bilbo's country as 'Fingolfin', rather then 'Golfimbul'. Fingolfin already existed in the *Silmarillion* as one of the great Eldar, king of Nargothrond, who died fighting against Morgoth himself. The fact that the name is here reused for a goblin shows something of the relationship of Tolkien's projected children's story to the existing legendarium: it was there to be used as a ready-made background, to be plundered for names and places and races, but perhaps little beyond that. Rateliff also draws attention to Fimbulfambi's map of the 'Black Mountain' and surrounding regions, the ultimate ancestor of Thror's map of the Lonely Mountain, which, as Rateliff points out, bears a fair resemblance to the existing 'Silmarillion' maps of Taur-nu-Fuin. It is almost as though Bilbo's adventure is set in a kind of remnant landscape of the Elder Days. Yet at the same time Bilbo refers here to Bullroarer Took's Shetland pony and to 'the Great Desert of Gobi and ... the Wild Wire worm<s> of the Chinese'. (N.B. 'Wire' is the correct form, as it is repeated in the typescript.) We also seem almost to be in this world, although these are the sole references.

Next is the 'Bladorthin Typescript', which Tolkien appears to have made soon after the Pryftan Fragment. This incorporates revisions to the manuscript along with various slight improvements to the wording made in the course of typing. Since this really does begin with 'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit', we may be assured that those really were the first words that Tolkien wrote down. This takes the story not quite to where the Pryftan Fragment reached, the dwarves' discussion of the secret door into the Mountain.

The 'Second Phase' manuscript begins exactly where the Bladorthin Typescript leaves off. This is one continuous text, with no chapter divisions, but, for the sake of clarity, Rateliff presents this manuscript in sections corresponding to the chapters into which it was later divided. This phase continues up to the death of Smaug (now so called) and the activities of Bilbo and the dwarves at the Mountain after Smaug has flown to Lake Town. In the first chapter, while we are still at Bag-End, Bladorthin remarks that Beren and Tinúviel broke the power of the Necromancer. This rather startling reference to a tale that lies at the heart of the *Silmarillion* is treated as though it were fairly recent history, thus reinforcing the notion that

initially *The Hobbit* was set in a sort of immediately post-*Silmarillion* world. Rateliff notes that the dwarves in the present text are treated much more sympathetically than they are in the mythology as it existed at this point.

The note that Thorin leaves for Bilbo tells him to meet the dwarves at the Great Mill. This was later changed to the Green Dragon inn, but the Great Mill must have stayed in Tolkien's visual imagination since the frontispiece to *The Hobbit* depicts both Bag-End and the Great Mill and the road that runs between them, with no Green Dragon in sight. Once the party has got over the Misty Mountains, the enchanted were-bear they meet is called 'Medwed', a name of Slavonic origin. His wonderful animals seem to have been inspired by the 'Doctor Dolittle' stories, which were great favourites with Tolkien's sons.

As with the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien paused now and then to make notes about the details and future direction of the plot. In 'Plot Notes A', written when the party was about to leave Medwed, Tolkien sketches their journey through Mirkwood and the attacks of the spiders, and the dwarves' subsequent imprisonment by the Elven-king. Here it is projected that Bilbo somehow contacts Medwed who is able to call Bladorthin to the Elven-king in order to negotiate the dwarves' release. But this plot-element, like so much else, was changed in the course of actual writing.

Since the Second Phase manuscript does not include it, Rateliff incorporates the episode of the crossing of the Enchanted Stream from the subsequent typescript, following the Mirkwood section, since it constitutes the earliest version of that particular episode. And 'Plot Notes B' now show Bilbo rescuing the dwarves himself from the Elven-king's dungeons, and, omitting Lake Town altogether, sketches the party's arrival at the Mountain, and, most remarkably, has Bilbo killing the sleeping dragon all on his own. Here also the 'Jem [sic] of Girion king of Dale' makes its first appearance. At this time, too, Tolkien contemplated a final battle, but this was to take place on the other side of Mirkwood, between the forest and the Misty Mountains, rather than at the Lonely Mountain itself. It is only when Bilbo and the dwarves arrive at Lake Town that the leader of the dwarves finally becomes 'Thorin' and the wizard becomes 'Gandalf'.

In further Plot Notes, Tolkien resumes the theme of Bilbo killing Smaug but then makes a last-minute emendation: 'Dragon killed in the battle of the Lake'. But it is intriguing that in the ensuing section where Bilbo encounters Smaug directly, the dragon has been dreaming of 'a small warrior, altogether insignificant in size, but provided with a bitter sword'. This remained into the published text as a 'ghost' of an abandoned plot-theme. The shift from Bilbo to the archer, Bard, as the slayer of Smaug may owe much to Tolkien's feeling that dragons should serve as the supreme challenge for any hero, and someone like Bard (who is, as Rateliff points out, very much a prototype of Aragorn) was needed to fit the heroic mould required. Rateliff also observes that the principal dragons of northern legend have their analogues in Tolkien's legendarium: Fafnir in Glorund/Glaurung, the Midgard Serpent in Ancalagon the Black, and the dragon of *Beowulf* in Smaug. I am not too sure about the middle one in this list, but the other correspondences are very plausible.

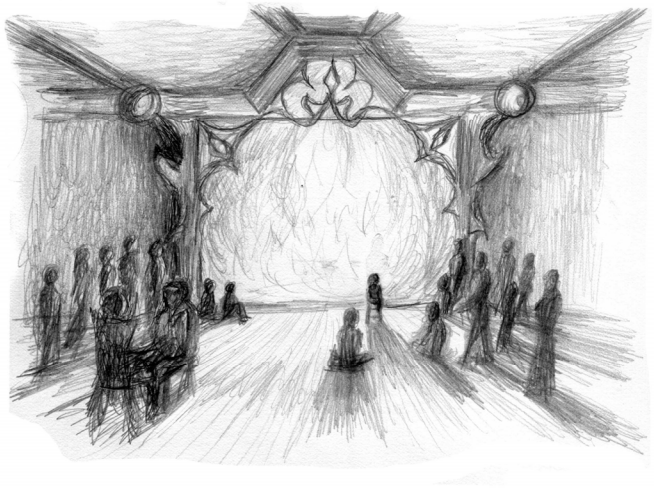
Rateliff discusses the Arkenstone of Thrain, which is what the Gem of Girion has become, as a faux-Silmaril. The published *Silmarillion* had it that one of the Silmarils was lost in the depths of the earth, and the Silmarils themselves are called *Eorclanstánas* in Old English by Ælfwine. It is the Silmaril in that it is a re-used element of the existing mythology, but since (as this reviewer contends), *The Hobbit* was not originally intended as part of that mythology, then it cannot actually be the Silmaril. It is in the course of this discussion that Rateliff deduces, on the basis of a 1981 interview with Tolkien's friend Christopher Wiseman, precisely which 'great big Gothic book' it was that the young Tolkien took with him to Rugby practice and which he would read in snatches when not actually playing. Rateliff is to be congratulated on a brilliant piece of literary detective work. (This also tells us quite a lot about the young Tolkien.)

The Third Phase of composition of *The Hobbit*, which Tolkien returned to after a gap of about a year (not abandoned for years as Carpenter claimed, as noted above), consisted of the First Typescript of almost all the story as it had progressed (not reproduced here except for citations in notes and comments) together with the final manuscript in which the story was concluded. Tolkien now completed the saga of Mr. Baggins in a continuous stretch of writing which was only later marked for division into chapters. The whole ensemble – First Typescript (Chapters I to XII and part of XIV), a 'fair copy' manuscript of what is now Chapter XIII (XIII and XIV were switched by Tolkien), and the Third Phase manuscript constituted a complete text, the 'home manuscript', which Tolkien lent to several friends, including C.S. Lewis and Elaine Griffiths (who was later to tell her friend Susan Dagnell about its existence when the latter visited Oxford to consult Tolkien on behalf of Allen & Unwin about a revision to the Clark Hall translation of *Beowulf*). It might be noted here that Rateliff gives some instances where Tolkien's text seems not to have

been printed correctly in the published version, although any corrections to the text will need some very fine judgement.

So, *The Hobbit* was finished, submitted to the publisher, and presented to the world in September 1937. But that was not the end of Tolkien's work on the book. While composing *The Lord of the Rings* he realized that the matter of Bilbo's finding the magic ring had to be rewritten in order to bring it into line with the later epic. In fact, as Rateliff shows in detail, what happened in September 1947 was that Tolkien sent Allen & Unwin some notes on corrections to the text of *The Hobbit*, as well as what he called, in his covering letter, 'a specimen of re-writing for Chapter V', the Gollum revisions which he had written in 1944. Tolkien wanted the corrections put in without further ado, but when he received proofs for the 1951 reprint he found that everything had been accepted; so the new Chapter V became part of the Second Edition. Also for this edition, he prepared a Prefatory Note. Since only a cut-down version of this was published (enough to fit on one page), it is interesting to have the fuller versions which Tolkien wrote. They state that Bilbo had put down the first (incorrect) version of his gaining the Ring in his diary, but 'notes in his private papers' showed the true version. And the Red Book of Westmarch, 'not long ago rediscovered and deciphered' has its earlier parts 'largely made up of extracts from Bilbo's writings, including the various secret papers that he gave to his heir.' This has implications both for the structure of the textual material on which *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are based, and for their status in the world in which Tolkien is the editor rather than the creator of such material. This would require a whole separate discussion, so I shall say no more.

Rateliff's Fifth Phase is Tolkien's attempt to rewrite *The Hobbit* in the style of *The Lord of the Rings*. This was partly to reconcile the two works in detail, especially in matters of time and location in the journeyings, and partly to adjust the style, as Tolkien came to feel that the original *Hobbit* was far too avuncular in tone. Having completed slightly over two chapters of the revised form, he showed them to a friend for an outside opinion; she told him, more or less, that it was 'wonderful, but it's not *The Hobbit*.' So Tolkien abandoned it.



Associated with the 1960 *Hobbit* are a group of texts concerned with times and dates, places reached on the journey, and corresponding phases of the moon. These get very complicated, and in the end Tolkien was unable to make either *The Hobbit* internally consistent on these points or to reconcile it completely with *The Lord of the Rings*.

Rateliff concludes with some very astute comments on just what type of book *The Hobbit* is especially in comparison with its sequel. *The Lord of the Rings* is very carefully worked out in time and space. Tolkien worked very hard to make consistent its times and places (and even phases of the moon) and generally succeeded. Such precision, with the assistance of maps of the imaginary lands in which the action takes place, are standard elements of much post-Tolkien fantasy. But *The Hobbit* is different. As Rateliff remarks, *The Hobbit* harkens back to an older tradition, where forests seem endless, a period of captivity is a weary long time rather than twenty-one days (August 9th–30th), dragons and goblins destroyed Gondolin "many ages ago" (rather than exactly 6,472 years before to the very day), and it is the passing of seasons rather than the counting of days that mark the passage of time.' (Yes, Rateliff really does calculate the exact time since the fall of Gondolin.) We should accept The Hobbit for what it is, which is a different kind of book from its sequel; we should not ask it questions the way we would of *The Lord of the Rings*.

I have remarked on the rather difficult matter of the relationship of *The Hobbit* to the already existing *Silmarillion* mythology. Rateliff, on the basis of the existence of so many elements in *The Hobbit* having their origin in that mythology, considers the book to be very much a part of the legendarium. I would respectfully beg to differ. My own view is that although Tolkien used the mythology as a ready-made background to the story he was writing, he did not seriously intend the story, when it was first written, to be a part of that mythology. As the story grew more serious in tone then it moved some way to indeed

being incorporated into the mythology, but it didn't quite get there. But it must be conceded that there is a very thin line between using the mythology as background and actually adding to it: it starts to move in and tries to take over. As Tolkien noted in a letter to Stanley Unwin of 24 February 1950,

> ... the *Silmarillion* and all that has refused to be suppressed. It has bubbled up, infiltrated, and probably spoiled everything (that even remotely approached "Faery") which I have tried to write since. It was kept out of Farmer Giles with an effort, but stopped the continuation. Its shadow was deep on the later parts of *The Hobbit*. It has captured *The Lord of the Rings* ...' (*Letters*, p. 136).

It was only when he had embarked on the 'new Hobbit' that Tolkien realized that *The Hobbit*, its sequel, and the existing mythology were all of a piece – and had to be made consistent with each other.

Just one further point on the matter: it was quite a few years ago that I noticed a particular property of the map of Wilderland in *The Hobbit*: it shows the geography of Beleriand but reversed in the West–East direction. The Misty Mountains reflect the Ered Luin, the Great River reflects the Gelion, Mirkwood reflects Doriath (plus Taur-im-Duinath), the Forest River reflects Esgalduin, Mount Gundabad reflects Mount Rerir, and so forth. It is almost as though Tolkien is saying that *The Hobbit* is not the mythology itself but is merely a light-hearted reflection of it. Still, the point is debatable, and Rateliff's considerations on the subject merit serious attention.

The History of The Hobbit is a magisterial survey and exploration of the earliest textual incarnation of the book which brought J.R.R. Tolkien to public notice. Not just a reproduction of the texts, the background elements of the narrative are explored in detail – in fact in far more detail than it has been possible to indicate here. The *History* is an indispensable pair of volumes for the serious Tolkienist, and John Rateliff must be congratulated on having performed such a magnificent job.

Charles Noad is a Gentleman and Scholar

Reviews: 'W' is for 'Words'

The Ring of Words: Tolkien and the Oxford English Dictionary, Peter Gilliver, Jeremy Marshall, Edmund Weiner, Oxford University Press 2006

Carol Brownlow

This book is a gem of Tolkien scholarship. Rarely is so much said in such an economical way, illustrating the erudition of both the book's authors and Tolkien himself. Yet, despite deep scholarship and concision, the book is eminently readable and comprehensible.

It is divided into three sections: 'Tolkien as Lexicographer', 'Tolkien as Wordwright', and 'Word Studies', concluded by a short 'Epilogue'. Sections one and two are conveniently divided under subheadings, enabling the reader to put the book down at strategic points, to pick up again later and continue reading without feeling lost. The convenience of section three, 'Word Studies', speaks for itself. The book has a fair smattering of plates that illustrate Tolkien's work on dictionary slips and final printed entries, which again serve to break up the text. It does not assume prior knowledge and clearly explains technicalities without being condescending. Although it is a rare mixture of learning, comprehensibility and a pleasure to read: a truly philological adventure.

'Tolkien as Lexicographer' briefly relates Tolkien's early interest in making up his own languages and his university education. Then, in 1919, after his war service, William Craigie, one of the then four editors of the OED and Tolkien's former tutor in Old Norse, employed Tolkien to work on Henry Bradley's team of assistants, where, I am sure, he learned that there is much more than meets the eye to working on even a single word, let alone on a whole dictionary. For example, each entry is made up of: etymology, variant spellings, compounds, senses and subsenses. The seemingly simple word *waiter* is given eleven senses. Research was done not only by in-house assistants but was farmed out to individual subeditors around the country to work at various levels on individual words. One such subeditor was the Revd. William Becket of Chelmsford, who was the first person to subedit the early part of 'W' on which Tolkien was working. Becket died in 1901, so Tolkien was working on material first subedited twenty years

previously, which emphasizes the meticulous and long-drawn-out process involved in creating a dictionary of the OED's standard.

'Tolkien as Wordwright' explores more closely philology and Tolkien's impulse towards it. The authors explain the word 'philology' as being "concerned … with the history of word-forms and word meanings" in languages that are "constantly changing". Philology is rather like linguistic archaeology, in which finding fragments can lead to the discovery of ancient cultures, thus leading "the researcher into a wider realm of history or of legend (imaginary history)".

In titling this book *The Ring of Words*, it is not only utilizing the pun of the One Ring but also points to the resonance, the sound of a word. It is pointed out that philology also deals with the sounds of words. Tolkien once referred to encountering a new word that pleased him as being like tasting a new sweetmeat or fine wine (*A Film Portrait of J. R. R. Tolkien*, 1992) and thought that "the sound of words" should be treated as "an independent value in language". He carried this view into his legendarium as an Elvish aesthetic, taking "pleasure in the sounds and forms of words" as illustrated in the Elves' name-choosing ceremony, *lamantyavë*, the name being "considered more important as a mark of individuality even than facial features". Of the words that Tolkien worked on at the OED, I found that *wallop* had a particularly pleasing effect.

Section three, 'Word Studies', lists in alphabetical order many words that Tolkien coined or updated, giving detailed etymologies revealing "a cache of historical and linguistic scholarship hidden beneath". When Tolkien uses "common words made specific", such as 'The Hill', 'The Water' or 'Carrock' – deceptively simple – he utilizes that cache of scholarship in creating the ancient language behind those words. Lake Town is Esgaroth; the Great River is Anduin. This has contributed to that sense of depth and originality in his writing.

As an illustration of just one use of wording Tolkien uses to convey something deeper, I would just like to comment on his use of *un*-words, taking an ordinary word and adding the prefix *un*- as in the *unlight* of Ungoliant, not merely being an absence of light "but a thing with being of its own" (*Silmarillion*, p76). He also uses *unfriend* (not used in this book) to describe Galadriel's relationship with Fëanor after she had refused him a tress of her hair to place inside the Silmarils (*Unfinished Tales*, p230). These words seem to have more resonance than mere 'darkness' or 'enemy' and give a sad slant to their meanings in that they convey that once there had been light, or that once these parties were friends. Something has been lost which once was valued.

Each of these sections is prefaced by a rune inscription which I tried to decipher using Tolkien's runic alphabet from Appendix E of *The Lord of the Rings* and came up with gobbledygook. I have since been informed (Lynn Forest-Hill, *pers. comm.*) that the authors used OE *furthorc*. Therefore, if one has any curiosity as to what the runes say, do not be misled into using Tolkien's runes. I leave you to work out the inscriptions.

What comes across in this book is a love for an obscure branch of knowledge without which there would be no OED. Words are caught and defined; then, evading capture, fly on to mean something new and different, an elusive and wonderful thing. The authors of this book – and Tolkien – have pointed me in a philological direction that has deepened my appreciation and knowledge of the complexity and richness of language.

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Commentary: The Battle of the Eastern Field

Maggie Burns

When the boys at King Edward's School, Birmingham, opened their copy of the March 1911 *Chronicle*[1] there would have been laughter and groans of recognition as they read an anonymous poem: *The Battle of the Eastern Field*. This is a (fragmentary) epic account of a recent rugby match at the school's playing field on Eastern Road. But it is also a humorous parody of one of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* - *The Battle of Lake Regillus*[2].

Almost every boy in the school would have known the poem. Every year since 1891 the Old Edwardians Association had given poetry recital prizes[3]. Originally a competition for all boys in the school, from 1893 it was compulsory for the younger boys in Blocks B, C, and D, and the boys in Block A – the First, Second and Third classes – only took part if they wished to do so. Each block was set a different poem; commonly poems by Milton, Gray, Tennyson and Macaulay. Boys had to learn the set piece by heart and recite it to the Class Master. The two best from each class would then recite to the Head Master, who awarded the prize.

From 1906 onwards the titles of the poems set are given in the King Edward's School Lists[4]. In 1906 – and again in 1908 - the poem for the boys in Block D was part of *The Battle of Lake Regillus*. Hilary Tolkien was in Block D in 1906[5] so his older brother probably heard him practice the poem many times. Some of the lines in the parody were from Horatius by Macaulay, another set poem. In this article Macaulay's poem will be referred to as *Lake Regillus*; Tolkien's, as *Eastern Field*.

It is probable that Tolkien would have read and enjoyed Macaulay's Lays even without the poetry competition. It was so popular that there were many editions following the first publication in 1842. There had even been a previous parody in a *Chronicle*[1] of 1883, about a dinner celebrating the appointment of E. W. Benson (an Old Edwardian) as Archbishop of Canterbury. It bears the title of another of Macaulay's lays; *The Prophecy of Capys*, but mimics the opening of *Lake Regillus*:

> Ho, trumpets sound a war-note!
> Ho, waiters, clear the way!
> Room for the men of Birmingham
> Who dine in state to-day!…

Tolkien could have read the old *Chronicle* in the school library. His father Arthur might have had a copy as he was on the committee of the Old Edwardians Association until he left Birmingham for South Africa in May 1889; the first report of the Association was in the same 1883 *Chronicle*.

The underlying theme of the *Lays*, described by Macaulay in his Preface, would have appealed to Tolkien. Macaulay composed ballads about the ancient history of Rome which he believed must have existed, but had been lost:

> But there was an earlier Latin literature, a literature truly Latin, which has wholly perished… That literature abounded with metrical romances, such as are found in every country where there is much curiosity and intelligence, but little reading and writing.

Tolkien would later write of his own desire to create a 'mythology for England'. In *J.R.R. Tolkien, Author of the Century*[6] Shippey mentions the use of the 'lay' and the 'ballad' to reconstruct imagined history, history that may have actually happened. Macaulay's *Lays* also embody the ideal of the individual who stands up against great forces despite the odds. In his essay *Horatius at Khazad-Dûm* Stoddard shows how closely the story of Gandalf holding the bridge against the Balrog echoes the story of Horatius holding the bridge against the enemies of Rome[7].

The Battle of the Eastern Field was published in the *Chronicle* with a pseudonym. It begins with a brief introduction by 'G.A.B.' – but the Blue Book shows that there was no pupil at King Edward's with those initials. Christopher Wiseman wrote to Tolkien in April 1911 addressing him as 'Gabriel', so the initials suggest Tolkien's authorship. I am indebted to Douglas Anderson for the information that in Tolkien's personal copy of the *Chronicle* he had initialled both the poem and the report on the Latin debate *Acta Senatus* which follows. *Eastern Field* was published again in 1978 in *Mallorn* **12**: Jessica Yates contributed a fascinating article to *Mallorn* **13** (1979) identifying it as a parody of *Lake Regillus*.

G.A.B. begins by giving the source; a script in the waste paper-basket in the prefects' room, and explains that much of it was indecipherable. The tradition of the newly-discovered MS, or of the scrap of paper found by chance, was used several times in the *Chronicle* in the years Tolkien was at King Edward's. The pieces were humorous. In 1907 an article *From Herodotus* was introduced thus: 'The following fragment has been found (by our Special Correspondent) in the sands of Egypt. – Ed.' Early in 1908 there were 'notes on the new play of Aeschylus which has just been discovered' by 'Professor Weckmann'. It takes the form of a critical appreciation with several exchanges between the Author and the Editor. The Editor is reminded of a rhyme about 'a moribund songster'; as in this verse:

> "Who saw him die?"
> "We" said the chorus,
> "When the play began to bore us,
> We saw him die."

Years later Tolkien would use this technique in a short Foreword to the first edition of *The Lord of the Rings*[8]. The first three paragraphs spoke of the story as 'history'. Tolkien gave the sources as '… the memoirs of the renowned Hobbits, Bilbo and Frodo, as they are preserved in the Red Book of Westmarch… information derived from the surviving records of Gondor…' Tolkien regarded this as an integral part of the tale, the 'machinery of the story'. He composed a new Foreword for the second edition stating that he felt by this time that the story itself should not be confused with personal information. He gave some examples of sources for the story from his own life, including the mill and millers at Sarehole, and his First World War experiences. The new Foreword removed any excuse for publishers to assume that legendary stories, supposedly based on ancient manuscripts, were like legendary gold - anyone's for the finding (or publishing).

Eastern Field is a ballad that, like Macaulay's verse, records a historical event. It tells the story of a rugby match between the Richards and Measures house teams – Richards' house wore green, Measures' wore red. It was probably the match described by G.F. Cottrell in the June 1911 *Chronicle*:

> '… won by Richards' by 11 points to 3. This match produced one of the finest games ever seen on the School ground, and will long be remembered by those who had the good fortune to play or to be spectators.'

Measures and Richards had been closely matched that year: this match was the decider. Cottrell was in Richards, Wiseman and Tolkien in Measures.

The house system had been set up in 1903 by A. E. Measures, the assistant Head Master, with the aim of encouraging boys to play football. Rugby matches were played on the school sports field off Eastern Road – hence Eastern Field – two and a half miles to the south of the city centre, off the Bristol Road. The boys travelled there by tram. The field is very close to the present site of the school opposite Birmingham University and is still used for rugby, cricket and athletics.

Tolkien's poem uses the same metre, and like Macaulay's is divided into stanzas. The first stanza is a close imitation of the opening of *Lake Regillus*:

> Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note!
> Ho, lictors, clear the way!
> The Knights will ride, in all their pride,
> Along the streets to-day.
> To-day the walls and windows
> Are hung with garlands all,
> From Castor in the Forum,
> To Mars without the wall.
> Each Knight is robed in purple,
> With olive each is crowned;
> A gallant war-horse under each
> Paws haughtily the ground.
> While flows the Yellow River,
> While stands the Sacred Hill,
> The proud Ides of Quintilis
> Shall have such honour still.

Macaulay's first stanza continues for four more lines; Tolkien ends the direct parody here.

Tolkien skilfully combines the mood of the battlefield with the everyday life of King Edward's School. In the first line of Eastern Field the 'trumpets' have become 'rattles'. The 'windows' hung with 'garlands' of Rome are now 'blackboards', on which there is 'flaunting script'. Photos of the old King Edward's in New Street show 'Atlas on the staircase', a large globe standing at the top of the Masters' staircase. 'Bogey's darkling crypt' - Tolkien had referred to 'one Bogey' in his report of his own speech in the October 1910 debate, one of the school-porters. This was almost certainly the porter mentioned by C.V.L. Lycett in his letter to the *Old Edwardians Gazette*[3] of January 1972: '… Dick the troglodyte, who stoked the furnace, worked in the nether regions, and cleaned our O.T.C. rifles…'

The 'purple' robes of the Knights (line 9) have become the scarlet of Measures' house, the 'olive' crown is now the 'olive green' of Richards' house (line 10). 'Yellow River' (line 13) in both *Horatius* and *Lake Regillus* refers to the River Tiber; see below for a description of Birmingham's river. The 'Sacred Hill' (line 14) has become the 'Great Pavil', or the sports pavilion, an impressive new building on the playing field. In 1901 the *Chronicle* Editor had appealed to the Head Master Cary Gilson for a new pavilion to replace the 'miserable, worm-eaten, tumbledown cowshed': the new one was completed in 1903.

In the second stanza Tolkien sets the scene of the rugby match. This therefore does not parody *Lake Regillus* although the mock-epic tone is sustained; the 'Green-clad Chieftain' asks the 'foe in scarlet dight':

Shall no one wrest the silver grail
Nor dare another fight!

E.B. Alabaster was the captain of Richards (Green-clad), and Tolkien the captain of Measures (foe in scarlet). The 'silver grail' was the Football Cup, donated by Cary Gilson in 1904 to encourage boys to play football. Through the poem Tolkien lifts some lines directly from Macaulay, or adapts them marginally, as in the following examples

Nor without secret trouble
Does the bravest mark his foes
[*Lake Regillus* X, *Eastern Field* III]

His clients from the battle
Bare him some little space
[*Lake Regillus* XVI, *Eastern Field* IV]

… meanwhile in the centre
Great deeds of arms were wrought
[*Lake Regillus* XVII, *Eastern Field* XIII]

Now backward and now forward
Rocked furious[ly] the fray
[*Lake Regillus* XIX, *Eastern Field* XX]

But whereas the Romans pitch their camp:
Hard by the Lake Regillus
[*Lake Regillus* IX]

The rugby captains instruct their players to meet
Hard by Brum's great river
[*Eastern Field* II]

Birmingham's river is the Rea. The Tiber may be a great river, but the Bournbrook, a feeder of the River Rea, is close to its source and is little more than a muddy stream where it runs through Edgbaston. Until 1911 it did mark the county boundary; the playing field was in Warwickshire but if a ball went over onto the opposite bank it would have been in Worcestershire.

After the first match on the field played in October 1872 it was reported in the Chronicle that the ball had to be retrieved from the stream several times, but that this might be avoided in future matches

'with due caution'. Tom Shippey played rugby when a pupil at King Edward's and then later for the Old Edwardians. When I asked whether any kind of barrier – fence or hedge – had been placed so that the ball no longer went in the stream, he commented that the time spent recovering the ball (from the stream) offered a welcome break in the game on occasion.

The opening of stanza III of *Eastern Field* evokes but contrasts with the 'golden morning' of *Lake Regillus*. As the match takes place in February in England the day 'greyly dawns'. The description of the homes of the players also echoes phrases in both *Horatius* and *Lake Regillus*. In Rome the warriors gather

> From Setia's purple vineyards,
> From Norba's ancient wall
> [*Lake Regillus* stanza X]

But in Birmingham

> From Edgbastonia's ancient homes,
> From Moseley's emerald sward.

Edgbaston and Moseley were the two most prosperous suburbs of Birmingham. It should be noted that Moseley was not and is not grimy and industrial, but has many trees, parks and large gardens, so is certainly green, if not emerald.

There is no detailed report on this match in the *Chronicle* – only matches against external teams are described – but it is possible to identify the players. G.F. Cottrell was the School Captain so is the 'Chiefest Lord' of the poem. As *Eastern Field* was a parody of a poem about Ancient Rome Tolkien used some of the Latin names given to boys who took part in the annual Latin debate. Tolkien's report on the 1911 debate, *Acta senatus*, is also in the March 1911 *Chronicle*. He did not give the English equivalents but the Debating Secretaries for the previous and subsequent years did, so some names can be deduced. 'King Mensura' is A.E. Measures; as a housemaster he coached the teams and refereed matches. 'Ericillus of the sands' is L.K. Sands and 'Falco of the bridge' is F. T. Faulconbridge – both in Richards. The 'Corcii of fame' are W.H. Payton, and R.S. Payton, in Measures.

Tolkien would almost certainly have played in this match as the Captain of Measures. His rugby-playing is described in 1910 and in 1911 in the yearly article 'Football Characters' (ref 1). In both 1910 and 1911 Tolkien is described as a light forward, with pace and dash. More information is given in 1911

> '… is a good dribbler. He has done much good individual work, especially in breaking away from the scrum to assist the three-quarters. His tackling is always reliable, and he follows up hard. Has been a most capable and energetic Secretary...'[9].

It is possible that some of the 'blots' noted by G.A.B. mark points where Tolkien was heavily involved in the game and could not therefore describe the scene as an observer.

Some of the names probably depended on jokes then current amongst the boys. I am grateful to Douglas Anderson for telling me of Tolkien's handwritten notes on his own copy of the Chronicle. These identify Cupid as H.L. Higgins, and the Hill-lord as E. L. Hill. In a letter to the *Old Edwardians Gazette*, July 1975, Christopher Wiseman described Higgins as 'a brilliant centre three-quarter'; he was the rugby captain in 1911-1912. Both Higgins and Hill were in Richards. Wiseman with longish blond hair ('flaxen crest') was 'Sekhet', who tackles the 'Green-clad Chieftain'. Sekhet is a female deity, this name could also have derived from a school joke.

In *Lake Regillus* the battle is won for the Romans by the Great Twin Brethren, Castor and Pollux. There is a reference to this in stanza XIII of *Eastern Field*, where Higgins [Cupid] spies the 'Great Twin Posts' and presumably scores a try. Wiseman mentioned in a letter to Tolkien in November 1914 that they had been 'the Twin Brethren in the good old school days before there was a T.C.B.S.'[10]. In Tolkien's reply he agreed that he thought the 'great twin brotherhood' between them had been the origin of the later T.C.B.S.. Tolkien may have had this in mind when writing *Eastern Field*. However we do not know from Wiseman's letter whether the nickname came before the writing of *Eastern Field* – or whether it was inspired by the poem.

The last stanza of *Eastern Field* is not modelled on *Lake Regillus*. It tells of making peace, and of feasting; neither of which occur in the *Lays of Ancient Rome*. At the end of the match Measures invites them to have refreshments in epic language:

Ho, henchmen lade the board,
With tankards and with viands rare

One line 'For never, I ween, shall warriors…' is based on a line in *Horatius* 'Never, I ween, did swimmer…'. There is a wordless comment on the line '… lust of meat and drink (!!! Homer)'. This phrase or its equivalent occurs a number of times in Homer's *Odyssey*.

Throughout the poem the tone shifts between the epic and the everyday. The poet describes the shouts and cheers of the watchers as being

Like the roar of the raucous signal
When the dinner-hour bull blows

After the 'men of war' go to the feast the poem appears to end in praise of battle: there were many cheers for those 'men of heart, to whom brave war is dear'. But this warlike tone turns out not to be the end; the reader is brought back from the heroic to the world of everyday: 'The Ed. won't let me put any more in. Most of them then went home to bed. G.A.B.'

Macaulay did not offer an idealized picture of war in *Horatius* or in *Lake Regillus*. In both he shows the suffering and death of warriors, and those who were close to them mourn their loss. Tolkien may also have had a second type of poem or song in mind when composing the parody, as the down-to-earth comments of G.A.B. and the Editor are a deliberate counterpart to the heroic mood. In the late Victorian and Edwardian period it was common to describe team sports in the vocabulary of the battlefield. The message to schoolboys that war was noble, and that it would be their duty to fight, was often conveyed through songs and poems.

Probably the best-known poem of this type is *Vitai Lampada* by Sir Henry Newbolt, published in 1897. It begins with a game of cricket at school: 'There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight' and ends with the British soldier dying in Africa, his Captain's words in his ears: 'Play up! play up! and play the game!' In a letter to the *Old Edwardians' Gazette* in 1974 Christopher Wiseman referred to himself and Tolkien in the rugby team: 'both being in the scrum we were each in support of the other on the battlefield.' The School Song of the King Edward's (boys) Grammar Schools, written circa 1895, includes the lines:

We sing our living heroes, who learnt the game of life
In cricket's honest warfare and football's manly strife.

In *J.R.R. Tolkien, Author of the Century* [6] Shippey quotes lines from the School Song at King Edward's, 'Forward', first sung at the 1903 Speech Day (Tolkien would have been present):

Oftentimes defeat is splendid, Victory may still be shame,
Luck is good, the prize is pleasant, But the glory's in the game

Shippey suggests that when Bilbo says after the Battle of the Five Armies: 'I have always understood that defeat may be glorious. It seems very uncomfortable, not to say distressing' Tolkien may have had the lines from 'Forward' in mind[11].

Tolkien's ending to *Eastern Field* seems to confirm that he did not think war should be praised as glorious. The poem was written in 1911 three years before the beginning of the First World War. Many of his friends died in the war; including three of those mentioned in this poem: G.F. Cottrell, L.K. Sands, and R.S. Payton[12].

Shortly after the first publication of *Eastern Field* an Old Edwardian, L.H. Salaman gave a talk on 'Parody', which was reported in the May 1911 *Gazette*[3]. In praising the poet's skill he commented on another aspect of the poem:

> … I am glad to see, from the last number of the "School Chronicle" that the School possesses a parodist of great promise, and I am sure that all who have read his quotations have found in him that great quality of the great poets - human sympathy.

Human sympathy is a keynote of Tolkien's stories. Bilbo spares Gollum because of pity, and so unwittingly provides for his nephew Frodo's salvation. Tolkien wrote that of the two moments in *The Lord of the Rings*

which moved him most deeply, one was the point at which Gollum nearly repented. *The Battle of the Eastern Field* is a forerunner of Tolkien's later works in many ways, in the humour, the skill with language, the underlying themes, and the telling of an exciting story.
Maggie Burns is at Birmingham City Library

1. King Edward's School *Chronicle*, the school magazine written and edited by the boys, which appeared twice a term.
2. Macaulay, Thomas Babbington, *Lays of Ancent Rome*. First published in 1842, quotations taken from the reprint edition issued by the Echo Library.
3. *Old Edwardians Gazette*: the magazine for old boys of King Edward's School.
4. King Edward's School *Lists*.
5. King Edward's School *Blue Book* – lists all the pupils in alphabetical order. Then issued twice-yearly in January and September.
6. Shippey, Thomas, *J.R.R. Tolkien Author of the Century*. London: HarperCollins, 2000.
7. www.troynovant.com/Stoddard/Tolkien/Horatius-at-Khazad-dum
8. Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954.
9. In rugby the ball may be carried as well as kicked. A try is when a player manages to touch the ground with the ball behind the line on which the posts stand, scoring 5 points. The player can then score 2 additional points by kicking the ball between the goal uprights. The scrum is formed to restart the match; three rows of the players in the opposing teams face each other and the ball is passed down the tunnel formed in the middle.
10. Hammond, Wayne, and Scull, Christina, *J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide: Chronology*. London: HarperCollins, 2006.
11. Both of the King Edward's Foundation songs are still sung [2008]. The boys who told me this remembered that the grammar-school song said something about football and cricket, but did not appear to have registered the original underlying message.
12. King Edward's School Service Record, compiled by C.H.Heath, first published in 1919, Additions and Corrections 1931. Heath, a master at the school, prepared additional copies with interbound manuscript pages for the school library and for Birmingham Central Library. Those pages show the job of the father and suburb of residence. Given here are the occupations of the fathers of the boys mentioned in the poem, as this gives a good picture of the social mix of King Edward's School: Alabaster – manufacturing jeweller, Sands – Canon, Faulconbridge – linotype operator, Cottrell – secretary, Wiseman – Methodist minister, Payton – merchant, Higgins – foreman at Bournville [Cadbury's], Hill – doctor.

J. R. R. Tolkien: The Battle of the Eastern Field

(On Friday March 31st I found this curious fragment
in the waste paper basket, in the Prefects' room.
Much of it was so blotted that I could not decipher it.
I publish it with emendations of my own. G. A. B.)

I.

Ho, rattles sound your warnote!
Ho, trumpets loudly bray!
The clans will strive and gory writhe
Upon the field to-day.
To-day the walls and blackboards
Are hung with flaunting script,
From Atlas on the staircase
To Bogey's darkling crypt.
Each knight is robed in scarlet,
Or clad in olive green;
A gallant crest upon each breast
Is proudly heaving seen.
While flows our Yellow River,
While stands the great Pavil,
That Thursday in the Lenten Term
Shall be a beanfest still.

II.

Thus spake the Green-clad Chieftain
To the foe in Scarlet dight,
"Shall no-ne wrest the silver grail
"Nor dare another fight!"
And the doughty foeman answer'd –
"Ay, the goblet shall be won,
"And on a famous field of war
"Great deeds of progress done!"
So hard by Brum's great river
They bade their hosts to meet,
Array'd upon the Eastern Field
For victory or defeat!

III.

Now greyly dawns that fatal day
Upon the Eastern Field,
That Thursday in the Lenten Term
With honour ever seal'd

* * * * (!!! G. A. B.)

Nor without secret trouble
Does the bravest mark his foes,
For girt by many a vassal bold
Each mighty leader shows.
Around the Green-clad Chieftain,
Stands many a haughty lord,
From Edgbastonia's ancient homes,
From Moseley's emerald sward;
Towers Ericillus of the sands;
Glowers Falco of the Bridge.
But noblest stands that Chiefest Lord
From the Fountain's lofty ridge.
Among the blood-red ranks were seen
'Midst many and honour'd name
Great Sekhet and those brethren
The Corcii of fame.

IV.

Now straight the shrill call sounded
That heralds in the fray,
And loud was heard the clamour
Of the watchers far away.

* * * (bother ! ! ! G. A. B.)

Swiftly rushed out that Chiefest Lord
And fiercely onward sped,
His corselet girt about his waist,
His close helm on his head.
Now round in thickest throng there pressed
These warriors red and green,
And many a dashing charge was made,
And many a brave deed seen.
Full oft a speeding foeman
Was hurtled to the ground,
While forward and now backward
Did the ball of fortune bound:
Till Sekhet marked the slaughter,
And tossed his flaxen crest
And towards the Green-clad Chieftain
Through the carnage pressed;
Who fiercely flung by Sekhet,
Lay low upon the ground,
Till a thick wall of liegemen
Encompassed him around.
His clients from the battle
Bare him some little space,
And gently rubb'd his wounded knee
And scanned his pallid face

* * * *

(The rest of this scene and most of the remainder of the battle are blotted out. I hadn't time to put in any of my own.
G. A. B.)

XIII.

* * * *

Meanwhile in the centre,
Great deals of arms were wrought,
Where Cupid ran on cunning foot,
And where the Hill-lord fought.
But Cupid lo! Outrunning
The fleetest of the hosts,
Sped to where beyond the press
He spied the Great Twin Posts:
He crossed the line ….
[he scored a try? G . A. B.]
And … then ….

* * * fly

(bother these blots, G. A. B.)

XX.

Then tenfold from the watchers
The shouts and din arose,
Like the roar of the raucous signal
When the dinner-hour bull blows
(!!! G. A. B.)
Now backward and now forward,
Rocked furious the fray,
When sudden came the last shrill call,
That marked the close of play.

[G. A. B. This is unworthy of the poet: I emend to:
"When sudden from the midmost host
The clarion called for peace."

[Ed. It wasn't a clarion, and "peace" does NOT rhyme with "fray."]

XXI.

Then cried the king Mensura,
"Ho, henchmen lade the board,
"With tankards and with viands rare
"From out thy toothsome hoard:
"For never, I ween, shall warriors,
"Who have fought a noble fight,
"All thirsty and a hungering,
"Depart without a bite.

"So let the war-worn clansmen
"Of banner green or read,
"Sip my steaming cup of peace,
"And friendly break my bread."
So at Mensura's bidding.
Was straight a feast arrayed
And thither limped the men of war,
And thirst and hunger stay'd.
When so, they put forth from them
The lust of meat and drink (!!! Homer)
Though ne'er from food or foemen,
Did any ever shrink,
Before them many a king and lord
Held speech, and many a cheer
Was raised for all those men of heart
To whom brave war is dear.

* * * * *

The Ed. Won't let me put any more in. Most of them then went home to bed. G. A. B.

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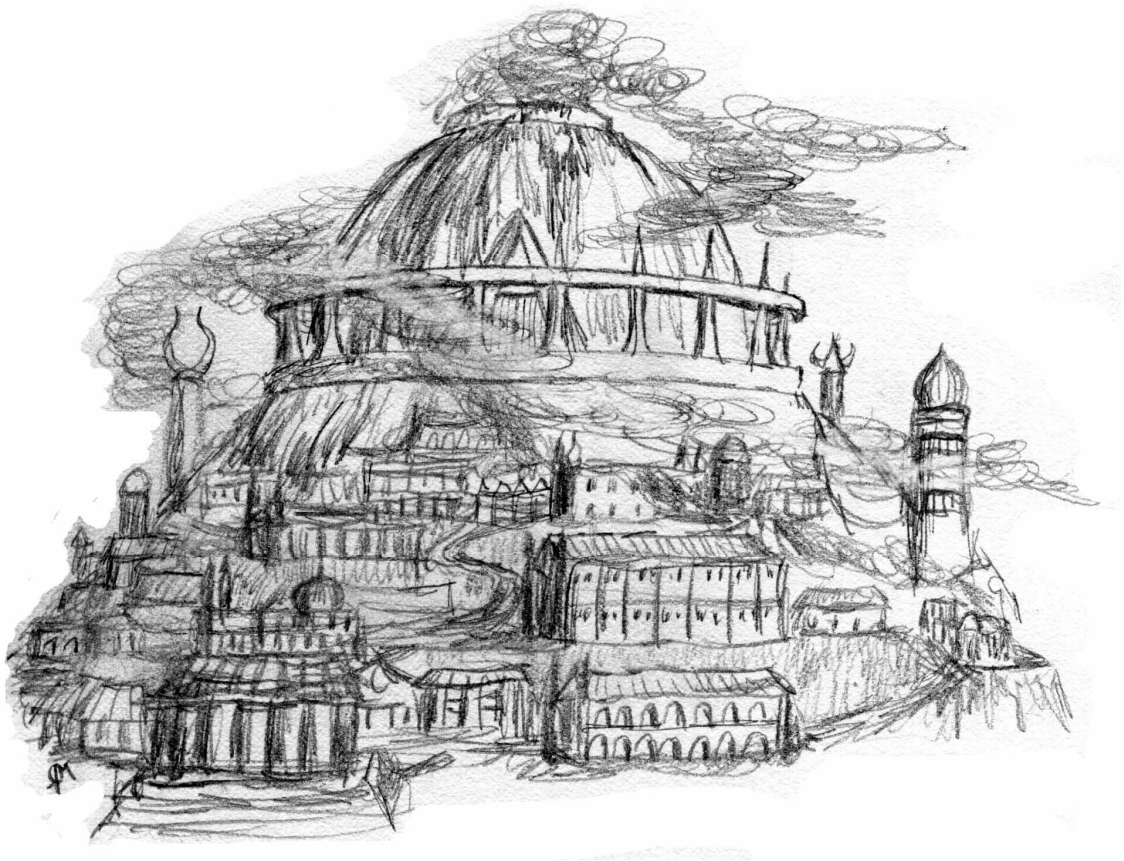

Commentary: 'Seven signatures of witnesses in red ink'

Murray Smith

When Bilbo Baggins left the Shire at the start of *The Lord of the Rings*, he left behind a will with the signatures of seven witnesses, a requirement of Shire law.

Where did this numerical requirement come from? While Tolkien, as he often asserted, based much of the Shire on an English village at the time of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897), in particular Sarehole, where he and his brother Hilary spent a part of their early childhoods in 1896-1900[1] he did not use English law. The Wills Act, 1837, had insisted that the signature of the testator (the person making a will) either had to be made by him or acknowledged by him 'in the Presence of Two or more Witnesses present at the same Time', who shall each sign the will in that testator's presence, a provision that still exists in English law today[2]. Tolkien instead relied on the Roman[3] law of wills, in particular the provisions dealing with the number of witnesses and soldiers' wills.

Here I shall look at the development of the Roman law of wills in these two areas, and will then suggest that Tolkien may have been particularly aware of this law of wills because of his service as a junior officer in the British Army during the First World War. In English law, soldiers' and sailors' wills have been exempt by statute since 1677 from the normal legal requirements for valid wills, something taken directly from the Roman law of soldiers' wills. It will end by suggesting that Tolkien used Roman law in this context to show that the Shire was an 'advanced' society.

The *Institutes* of the jurist Gaius, of around the second century A.D., said that there were two early kinds of will: the *testamentum comitiis calatis* (will before the convocation) and the *testamentum in procinctu* (will in battle-line). The first was made in an assembly of the Roman people which took place twice a year for the purpose of making wills; the second was made when the army was 'drawn up in arms' or in battle order[4].

Another and more important type of will later emerged: the *testamentum per aes et libram* (will by bronze and scales). It was when a person 'facing the prospect of imminent death', who had not made a will of the previous two types, would make a 'pretend' sale of his property to a person, such as a friend, and ask him to 'distribute it according to his instructions after his death'. This will was called one by 'bronze and scales' because it was a pretend version of a property sale called mancipation[4]. According to Gaius, while the person to whom the property was sold, the *familiae emptor* (property-purchaser) was originally the actual heir, to whom the testator gave instructions on distributing his estate after his death, things had changed by his own time. By then, 'one person is appointed heir by the will, and the legacies are charged upon him; another is brought in as the property-purchaser in name only, in imitation of the old law'[4].

The procedure was the same as in the mancipation process, where the testator (instead of the seller) would assemble five adult Roman citizens as witnesses, with another to hold a pair of scales. After writing out his will, he mancipated his property, but sold it in name only. In these proceedings, the property-purchaser was to say:

> I declare that your family and property are in my administration and custody; let them be brought to me with this bronze, and (as some add) the bronze scales, so that you can lawfully make a will according to the public statute.

He was to strike the scales with the bronze and give it to the testator 'as if it were the price'. Then the testator, holding the will, was to say:

> These things, as they have been written on these wax tablets, I thus convey, I thus bequeath, I thus attest; and so you Roman citizens stand witness for me[4].

The reference to 'wax tablets' is to the fact that the text of the will would have been written by a stylus (a pointed instrument) on a wooden tablet partly covered by wax. The use of the scales and bronze was, as explained earlier in the *Institutes*, a legacy of a time when Roman currency only existed in bronze, and was measured in weight not number, so the amount needed to be weighed in any transaction[4].

So we can see that a will needed five witnesses. Also at the transaction was the scales-holder and the property-purchaser, making up seven people, not including the testator.

According to Justinian's *Institutes*, drawn up in the reign of the East Roman Emperor Justinian I (reigned 527-565 A.D.), when Roman law was revised and reached a final form, a fourth type of will emerged, which meant that 'the requirement of a mancipation was dropped; the seals of seven witnesses were enough. State law did not require the witnesses to seal anything'[5]. The requirement of a fictitious sale was abandoned; and the scales-holder and property-purchaser were added to the five witnesses present to produce seven witnesses, who sealed the will with their seals.

It appears that this type of will was a formalization of a tradition that had existed since at least the first century B.C., in the late Republic. The orator Marcus Tullius Cicero, prosecuting a corrupt governor in 70 B.C., quoted from a contemporary praetor's edict, which said:

> If the succession to an estate shall be disputed, and if there shall be produced before me a written will sealed with the full number of seals required by law, I will give possession in accordance with the written will[6].

Gaius later stated that 'if the will is sealed with the seals of seven witnesses the praetor promises estate-possession to the heirs appointed in it'[7]. While the will's validity could be disputed, the heir named in the written will was in the strongest position.

In 439 A.D., an enactment of the East Roman Emperor Theodosius II (reigned 408-450 A.D.) said that the seven witnesses shall be offered the will by the testator 'at the same time' for them to seal and subscribe (i.e. sign), as long as the testator has said in their presence that 'the testament which is offered is his own and before the witnesses he himself has subscribed with his own hand on the remaining part of the testament'. When this has been done and the witnesses 'subscribe and seal it on one and the same day at one and the same time' the testament shall be valid. If the testator is illiterate or cannot sign, 'an eighth subscriber shall be employed in his stead'[8].

By Justinian's time, the type of will used was a *testamentum tripertitum* (three-part will). It was so called because it was derived from

> three sources: from the old state law [will by bronze and scales] witnesses and presence at a single will-making occasion; from imperial pronouncements the requirement that testator and witnesses subscribe; from the praetorian edict the seals and the number of the witnesses.

Justinian decided to 'make wills unassailable and to prevent fraud' by requiring that 'the name of the heir must be expressed in the handwriting of the testator or of the witnesses'[9].

There was a category of Romans whose wills were legally valid even if not made in the correct legal form: soldiers. The second century jurist Ulpian, extracts from whose works were preserved in Justinian's *Digest*, gave the history of how this position came about:

> The deified [Dictator] Julius Caesar was in fact the first to concede unrestricted *testamenti factio* [legal capacity to make a valid will] to soldiers; but that concession was temporary. However, later the deified [Emperor] Titus [r. 79-81 A.D.] first gave [it]; after this Domitian [r. 81-96]; thereafter, the deified Nerva [r. 96-98] conferred the fullest indulgence on soldiers; and Trajan [r. 98-117] followed this, and thenceforth such a chapter came to be inserted in [imperial] mandates[10].

So this form of legal exemption was first granted by Julius Caesar in the first century B.C., more probably during his conquest of Gaul, when he used his power as proconsul to ensure that the wishes of a soldier killed in battle while serving under him were carried out. He could have revived or extended the old 'will in battle-line' to do this. This privilege would have presumably been to ensure his men's loyalty[11].

The Emperors Titus and Domitian, more than a century later, gave this privilege to particular soldiers; but Nerva, perhaps to make concessions to the soldiers angered at the assassination of Domitian, his predecessor, made this privilege a formal one ('the fullest indulgence') and extended it to all soldiers, something followed by his successor Trajan.

While this legal privilege might have been a means for emperors to deal with discontent in the army, compensate for the hardships of military life, and maybe help recruitment, there was the realization that it would help to ensure the personal loyalty of soldiers to their emperor, who was the guarantor of this privilege[11].

Things were changed in Justinian's time. While his *Institutes* discusses the privilege of military wills, it says that it applies 'only when they [the soldiers] are on active service'. Also it points out:

> But the military are not to be encouraged to claim this privilege in times when they are on the march or in their barracks but not actually on campaign. They can then make wills under the general law, by applying the rules just described for civilians[12].

This restriction, to soldiers 'on campaign', would have consequences when this concept of privileged military wills was incorporated into English law.

While the legal requirement for a written will was introduced into English law by the Statute of Wills, 1540[13] it only covered those who wanted to bequeath land held by them under a form of tenure called *socage*[14] and did not cover soldiers. In England, the Roman attitude persisted regarding soldiers, that they should be legally privileged due to their lack of education and to compensate them for the hardships they endured[15]. The Statute of Frauds, 1677[16], among other things, dealt in section 23 with the will of a soldier in actual military service or a mariner or seaman at sea:

> Provided always, that notwithstanding this Act, any Soldier being in actual military Service, or any Mariner or Seamen being at Sea, may dispose of his Moveables, Wages and Personal Estate, as he or they might have done before the making of this Act.

The raw material for that section and others was supplied by Sir Leoline Jenkins (1623-85), a Welsh lawyer and diplomat[17]. Among other positions, he also held that of deputy professor of civil (Roman) law of the University of Oxford, and was regarded as one of the greatest civilian lawyers of his day[18]. Section 23 of the 1677 Statute, as we can see from the Roman law previously mentioned, was obviously influenced by Jenkins's knowledge of such law.

The 1677 exemption of soldiers' and sailors' wills was continued by section 11 of the Wills Act, 1837, which exempted the wills of soldiers and sailors disposing of their personal property from its provisions:

> Provided always, and be it further enacted, that any Soldier being in actual Military service, or any Mariner or Seaman being at Sea, may dispose of his Personal Estate as he might have done before the making of this Act.

The Wills (Soldiers and Sailors) Act, 1918, extended the privileges in the 1837 Act. A member of the Royal Navy or the Royal Marines had section 11 of the 1837 Act extended to them not just when at sea but also 'when he is so circumstanced that if he were a soldier he would be in actual military service within the meaning of that section'.

Soldiers and sailors who died after this Act was passed were also entitled to make dispositions of real property (land) in a will under section 11 of the 1837 Act, even if under age. They also had the power to appoint in their will guardians of their minor children. The expression 'soldier' in section 11 of the 1837 Act was extended to a member of the Royal Air Force[19].

In terms of the interpretation of section 11 of the 1837 Act, and in particular the definition of what was 'actual military service', the English courts until the mid-twentieth century looked for inspiration to Roman law[20]. In particular, they looked at the Latin term *in expeditione*, which a translation of Justinian's *Institutes* quoted earlier in this lecture gives as meaning 'on campaign'.

J. R. R.Tolkien's First World War service as a second lieutenant, later lieutenant, in the British Army in 1915-9, has been well documented[21]. With the distinct prospect of being killed, it is reasonable to presume that Tolkien would have concerned himself with making a will. Before his marriage, he is said to have set 'his affairs in order' to provide for his wife if the worst occurred, during the period *c*. 26 January – 22 March, 1916[22].

It is reasonable to assume that someone of his learning would have been aware that the soldiers' and sailors' wills provision in English law was borrowed from Roman law, which may have made him aware, either then or later, of the Roman law of wills, including the requirement of the signatures of seven witnesses for ordinary wills. But why did Tolkien insist in *The Lord of the Rings* on the Roman requirement of the signatures of seven witnesses, where the law of England – on which the Shire was modelled – only required two?

My opinion is that he did this to show how 'advanced' yet peaceful a country the Shire was. In his discussion of that country in his prologue to *The Lord of the Rings*, in particular in 'Of the Ordering of the Shire', he pointed out that the hobbits began as subjects of the King of Arthedain, and persisted in regarding themselves as such, even after those kings lost their lordship. They attributed to him 'all their essential laws; and usually they kept the laws of free will….' The office of Thain, the royal deputy, became

'a nominal dignity'. The only real Shire official, the Mayor, elected every seven years, had the main duty of presiding at banquets. The only governmental services the Mayor had to bother about were the police and

the post office, the latter being the 'busier' of the two. The police only numbered twelve Shirriffs, with a larger body of Bounders to 'beat the bounds'.

The Shire is, therefore, an idealized society where there is the rule of law, but no need for a lot of written law and institutions of law enforcement such as a courts system; because the hobbits are freely law-abiding. The requirement that seven signatures are necessary for a valid will fits in well with this, the large number indicating that hobbits are willing to ensure of free will that the laws are obeyed, doubtless with a certain ceremony being followed in their execution.

Tolkien's use of Roman law in the manner I have suggested shows another possible influence of his First World War service on his works. Also, it is interesting to see the influence of Roman law still continuing centuries after its revision under Justinian I, in an imaginary country in a work of literature. That emperor, and those who revised the law under him, hoped that their work would survive long after their deaths. I feel that the reference to 'seven signatures of witnesses in red ink' shows that it has; a fragment of Imperial Rome possibly exists in the Shire.

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3. For overviews of Roman law, see Alan Watson, *The Law of the Ancient Romans*, (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1970); and J.M.Kelly, *A Short History of Western Legal Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), Chapter 2.
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5. Justinian, *Institutes*, (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1987), II, 10.2.
6. Cicero, *Against Verres*, II, I, 45, §§ 117, from *The Verrine Orations*, I, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 1989), p. 247.
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8. The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Consitutions, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952), N.Th. 16.2-3.
9. Justinian, *Institutes*, II, 10.3-4.
10. Justinian, *Digest*, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), II, 29.1.1
11. J.B.Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army 31 BC – AD 235*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 210, 228.
12. Justinian, *Institutes*, II, 11, Preface.
13. 32 Henry VIII, c. 1.
14. In the *Statute of Tenures*, 1660 (12 Charles II, c. 24), all freehold tenure became socage tenure.
15. This was influenced by the textbook written by ecclesiastical lawyer Henry Swinburne (c. 1551 – 1624), *A Briefe Treatiese of Testaments and Last Willes*, (London: John Windet, 1590), in particular Part I, Chapter XIV.
16. 29 Charles II, c. 3.
17. Sir William Holdsworth, *A History of English Law*, Second Edition, (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd. and Sweet and Maxwell Ltd., 1966), VI, pp. 382, 384; XII, p. 658.
18. For general biographies of Jenkins, see *Dictionary of National Biography*, (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1908), X, pp. 739-42; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 29, pp. 960-4. For a legal biography, see Holdsworth, *A History of English Law*, XII, pp. 647-61.
19. 7 & 8 George V, c. 58, sections 2-5.

20. See the cases of: Drummond v. Parish (1843) 3 Curt., 522; Gattward v. Knee [1902] P., 99; In the Estate of Gossage, Wood v Gossage [1921] P., 194; In re Booth [1926] P., 118; and Re Wingham, Andrews and Another v. Wingham [1948] 2 All ER, 908.
21. John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle-earth*, (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003), passim, but in particular the postscript (pp. 287-313).
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Commentary: Teaching and Studying Tolkien

Dimitra Fimi

In *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*, Tom Shippey makes a strong case for the inclusion of Tolkien within the established literary canon by means of three main arguments: the 'democratic', the 'generic' and the 'qualitative' (2000: xvii-xxvii; 305-328). The first argument refers to the continuous popularity of Tolkien's work with readers, backed by book polls; the second has to do with Tolkien's role in the establishment of fantasy as a literary genre; and the third one argues for Tolkien's relevance as a twentieth-century writer. That Tolkien is gradually entering the literary canon – following decades of academic snobbery – is demonstrated by an abundance of new academic publications on his work. This short piece aims to look at related academic activity which also marks clearly an author as belonging to the canon: his/her inclusion in academic programs and syllabi. To what extent is Tolkien taught in English Departments in the UK and abroad? Is his work equally included in courses and modules as is the work of Woolf, Joyce, Eliot and others of his contemporaries?

At Cardiff University, where I have been teaching for the past four years, I have introduced a course on Tolkien, entitled *Myth, Language and Ideology in J. R. R. Tolkien's Fiction*, which is offered as a free-standing module. This means that undergraduates from across different departments of the University can take this module as part of their degree programs. Naturally, most of my undergraduate students come from English or the Humanities in general, but I occasionally also have students from the Sciences or Social Studies attending. In autumn 2005 I also started teaching an online course on Tolkien (*Exploring Tolkien: There and Back Again*) open to undergraduate students and adult learners from all over the world. This course affords an excellent opportunity to undergraduates at Universities where Tolkien is not taught, to study and carry out research on their favourite author; and also a chance for adult learners to attend a course without necessarily having to follow an academic scheme. At Cardiff University, apart from myself, my colleague Dr Carl Phelpstead has also been teaching a course on Tolkien, this time at a postgraduate

level. His course, entitled *Tolkien's Medievalism*, is offered as part of the MA in English Literature at the School of English, Communication and Philosophy.

Other UK Universities that teach Tolkien include the University of Central Lancashire, and Royal Holloway, University of London. At the University of Central Lancashire, Dr Brian Rosebury (author of the excellent book Tolkien: *A Cultural Phenomenon*) is teaching the course *Approaches to Tolkien* as part of the English Literature program of the Department of Humanities. At Royal Holloway Dr Jennifer Neville teaches the course *Tolkien's Roots: Old English Literature and Modern Medievalism* for the Department of English.

As for the 'old' Universities, Oxford offers courses on Tolkien from time to time as part of the program offered by the Department for Continuing Education, while Cambridge also offers a course through their Institute of Continuing Education (last year, for example, Dr Elizabeth Solopova taught a short course entitled *From Beowulf to Lord of the Rings: Where did Tolkien find his Inspiration?*).

Apart from whole courses focusing on Tolkien, there are also those that explore a wider theme or subject and include Tolkien's work as part of their syllabus. Tolkien is often included in courses about Children's Literature (e.g. Dr Charles Butler's course *Children's Fantasy Fiction since 1900*, at the Faculty of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences, University of the West of England, Bristol; Dr Bill Gray's course *Other Worlds: Fantasy Literature for Children of All Ages*, at the English Department, University of Chichester; and Dr. Robert Mack's course *Classics of Children's Literature*, at the Department of English, University of Exeter). Also, Tolkien's works are often studied as part of courses on the genres of Science-Fiction and Fantasy (e.g. the course *Back to the Future: Science Fiction and Society* at the School of Historical and Cultural Studies of Bath Spa University; or *Science Fiction, Gothic and Fantasy*, a course taught as part of the MA in English Literary Studies at the School of English at Birmingham City University).

Another academic field within which Tolkien is taught is the study of Medievalism, or Neo-Medievalism, such as Dr Markus Klinge's course *Romance, Ballad and Fairy Tale* at the School of English, University of Leeds; and Dr C.S. Jones's *Mediaevalism* at the School of English, University of St Andrew's. A very different approach to Tolkien, though not less fitting, is included in Dr Nick Groom's course *Englishness* (Department of English, University of Bristol), which looks at the question of the English national identity – on which Tolkien has indeed a lot to say.

I should make it clear here that this short piece does not aspire to be the definitive guide of Tolkien in UK Universities. My data come from University websites, which tend to allow access only to courses currently taught (academic year 2007-2008: at the time of writing University webpages had not been updated for the academic year 2008-2009). I am sure that there are course titles and lecturers whose names are not cited above, either because their course does not run this academic year, or because the websites of their universities are not very helpful in letting people know about them. Still, the courses that are cited give us a good indication of how much and in what context Tolkien's work is taught in higher education in the UK.

And as for worldwide, the same trends seems to prevail. At the moment there are numerous academic courses around the world focusing on Tolkien. A quick search shows at least 100 courses on Tolkien taught in academic institutions in other English-speaking countries (USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), and at least another 50 courses that do not focus solely on Tolkien but include a selection of his works on their syllabi. More than three quarters of these courses are taught in Universities in the United States.

When talking about courses in the US, I guess I should start with some of the usual (and eminent) suspects. For example, at the Department of English of Saint Louis University, Professor Tom Shippey (who is retiring soon) has been teaching the course The Oxford Christians, mainly concentrating on Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. At the English Department of the University of Maryland, Professor Verlyn Flieger teaches two courses that strongly feature Tolkien's work: *Medieval Modes and Modern Narrative*; and *Studies in Mythmaking*. Both Professor Michael Drout and Professor Jane Chance teach a course simply entitled *J.R.R. Tolkien* at the English Department of Wheaton College and the Department of English of Rice University respectively.

Apart from these Tolkien scholars, whose names most Tolkien fans will know, there are numerous other courses on Tolkien, some of which are taught at the most high-ranking universities in the USA. For example, Professor David Damrosch teaches the course *Modernism and its Enemies*, which includes Tolkien's response to modernism, at the Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University. Dr Michael Murrin, of the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of

Chicago, teaches the course *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, which includes Tolkien. Also, Professor Samantha Zacher teaches the course *Roots of Tolkien* at the College of Arts and Sciences of Cornell University.

The fact that some of the most prestigious Universities in the world offer courses on Tolkien clearly shows that the trend of regarding Tolkien as outside the literary canon is changing. As noted above, this change of mood within the academic world is also demonstrated by recent publications. Tolkien scholarship has had a long history, but there is a sense in academic circles that it has started afresh during the last few years. New publications, books, collections of articles and individual ones, as well as revised editions of older studies undertaken by established and newer Tolkien scholars, have set a different tone on teaching and researching Tolkien's fiction. As a result there is not only more respect bestowed upon the field, but also new analyses and approaches have appeared, enlightening Tolkien's work in fresh and unexpected ways, free from prejudices and concerns that trapped much of previous criticism within strict borders and monotonous and repetitive topics.

A student of mine once remarked that if Tolkien was to become an established canonical author, then his work would be conceived as conventional, 'literary' and – in fact – boring. Though I seriously doubt that Tolkien can ever be considered as any of these things, I understand this concern. However, teaching and researching Tolkien need not mean dissecting and labeling: it should – and it seems it does – mean illuminating, discussing, and understanding. The spread of University courses on Tolkien, or including Tolkien, shows that more and more students have the chance to share their thoughts and ideas about Tolkien's work and to enjoy his fiction.

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Commentary: A Dialogue of Worlds

Frank Wilson

In the *Klavierbüchlein* that Johann Sebastian Bach compiled for his son Wilhelm Friedemann there is a *Menuett* by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel, for which, as a companion piece, Bach himself composed a short trio movement. Stölzel's dance is charming enough, but Bach's trio is a little gem. The counterpoint is richer, and a mere harmonic pattern in the one is transformed in the other into a simple, but exquisite melody. Because both works are miniatures, a comparison of them enables one to see at a glance something of what happens when a great artist takes inspiration from a lesser one. Bach obviously liked the Stölzel piece, and not just because he could make better use of its material. He liked it for itself.

C.S. Lewis liked David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus*, which he called "shattering, intolerable, and irresistible." He cited Lindsay's book as a principal inspiration for his own novels of space adventure, *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*. In a 1947 letter to his friend Ruth Pitter, Lewis said that it was from Lindsay that "I first learned what other planets in fiction are really good for; for spiritual adventures. Only they can satisfy the craving which sends our imaginations off the earth. … My debt to him is very great." Lewis expanded on this in his essay *On Stories*:

> [Lindsay's] Tormance is a region of the spirit. He is the first writer to discover what 'other planets' are really good for in fiction. No merely physical strangeness or merely spatial distance will realize that idea of otherness which is what we are always trying to grasp in a story about voyaging through space: you must go into another dimension. To construct plausible and moving 'other worlds' you must draw on the only real 'other world' we know, that of the spirit.

One does not have to believe in 'spirit' in the sense in which Lewis did to understand what he is talking about, any more than one needs to believe in ghosts in order to order to enjoy a ghost story. The subtle but crucial point he is making is that, in writing of 'other worlds', verisimilitude cannot be achieved merely by inventing an exaggerated version of this world. Nor can the details of that other world simply exist in order to illustrate some ideational framework. Instead, the details of that world and the ideas attached to it must derive from — embody, as it were — the details and ideas inhabiting and animating what one might call the author's own interior landscape and drama.

For the author, Lewis says, "is recording a lived dialectic." It is that which draws the reader in and holds his attention. So in *Arcturus*, "the physical dangers, which are plentiful … count for nothing: it is we ourselves and the author who walk through a world of spiritual dangers which makes them seem trivial."

'We ourselves and the author' — the phrase is telling. Lewis is very much aware that the author is as dependent on the imagination of his readers as they are on his. To borrow a notion from the Schoolmen, the reader actuates the imaginative potency the author provides. This is the reader's own 'lived dialectic', and it explains why Lewis objected to the film version of Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*. In the original, "the heroes are awaiting death entombed in a rock chamber and surrounded by the mummified kings of that land." The film substitutes a volcanic eruption followed by an earthquake. This, Lewis says, took away "the whole sense of the deathly (quite a different thing from simple danger of death) — the cold, the silence, and the surrounding faces of the ancient, the crowned and sceptred, dead."

It is a common enough experience to be disappointed in a film version of a favorite novel. Lewis here puts his finger on the source of that disappointment: A film is unlikely to portray the scenes in a novel as the reader of that novel has imagined them on his own. The novel, as adapted for the screen, simply is not the novel one read in private. This intensely personal nature of reading is important to bear in mind when considering how one work can influence another, for if the reader is also a writer, that 'lived dialectic' is where such influence is going to play out.

In a conversation with Kingsley Amis and Brian Aldiss recorded the year before Lewis's death, Aldiss says to Lewis that "I would have thought that you constructed *Perelandra* for the didactic purpose." "Yes, everyone thinks that," Lewis replies. "They are quite wrong." As Lewis had already pointed out, "the starting point of … *Perelandra* was my mental picture of floating islands." But isn't there a contradiction here? Are not floating islands just an exaggeration of a terrestrial phenomenon? Actually, no; they are not. Terrestrial islands do not float, period. They are simply smaller versions of fixed land masses.

To imagine, of course, means to form images, and those who read *A Voyage to Arcturus* must spend a good bit of their imaginative energy forming images of landscape. Therein, in fact, lies much of the book's appeal, and on this level alone that 'lived dialectic' would have engaged Lewis entirely. He was perfectly aware, as any reader must be, of Lindsay's shortcomings as a writer. But he understood that these are beside the point: "Unaided by any special skill or even any sound taste in language, the author leads us up a stair of unpredictables. In each chapter we think we have found his final position; each time we are utterly mistaken. He builds whole worlds of imagery and passion, any one of which would have served another writer for a whole book, only to pull each of them to pieces and pour scorn on it."

Published in 1920, Lindsay's book met with little success and was out of print when Lewis first heard of it. It took him two years to track down a copy. It is a peculiar and peculiarly dark tale, offputting and compelling almost in equal measure. It opens with a séance attended by a large bearded fellow named Maskull and a companion of his called Nightspore. A medium conjures an apparition of a young man with a "mysterious but fascinating smile." No sooner does the figure stand up than a "thick shortish man" with a "beardless yellow face" bursts in and proceeds to twist the apparition's neck. It falls to the floor and its expression changes "to a vulgar, sordid bestial grin, which cast a cold shadow of moral nastiness into every heart."

The shortish man turns about be named Krag and he tells Maskull that the apparition was from a planet named Tormance, which circles the star Arcturus, the third brightest in the night sky. He invites Maskull and Nightspore to accompany him on a journey there. After a brief interlude in Scotland, the three take off into space in a "torpedo of crystal." When Maskull awakens on Tormance, however, he is alone.

In Lindsay's novel, Arcturus is a double star (it is in fact a red giant). This means Tormance has two suns. One is named Branchspell, the other Alppain. Maskull's point of arrival is at the south of the planet, where Branchspell dominates the sky. During his five days on the planet he will journey northward to where Alppain can be seen.

On this journey, Maskull encounters all manner of strange landscapes and creatures, the latter ranging from the innocent through the predatory, the inquiring, and the aspiring, most of whom prove be deluded, some of whom Maskull feels driven to kill. Ultimately, Maskull meets up again with Krag and Nightspore, who turns out to be a sort Maskull-in-waiting, the person Maskull will become after he is killed by Krag.

A Voyage to Arcturus is a fiction, but it is not really a novel. The characters are types, not people. It is one of those philosophical adventure tales, like *Rasselas* or *Candide*. Lindsay's originality lies in having devised a way to present a metaphysics solely in terms of imagery and action. His aim does not

seem to have been to initiate for the reader a chain of logic leading to a rational conclusion, but rather to bring about at the profoundest level a change in perspective that will in turn prompt a kind of metanoia. Hence, to explicate the book abstractly is to do it a disservice by treating it as something it goes out of its way not to be. Still, some stab at describing that change of heart the book aims to bring about must be made. One key term is 'Muspel', which would seem to be the *Urstoff* of being. Lindsay borrowed the term from Norse mythology, where it is a realm of primal fire governed by a god called Surtr. Not surprisingly, one of the names in Arcturus for the creator of worlds is Surtur.

Crystalman would seem to be the name for the being behind being. (The grin on the face of the apparition when Krag strangles it is the "Crystalman grin." It disfigures everyone's face at death.) But Crystalman, like Lindsay's fictional Arcturus, is double: One aspect is called Shaping, and is symbolized by Branchspell; the other is Surtur, symbolized by Alppain. At the very end of the book, Krag reveals that he himself is Surtur and that on earth his name is pain. So the point would seem to be that pain is truer and more powerful, if not better, than pleasure, because pleasure is simply a lure to trick us into thinking that life is good. As Nightspore, in the end, comes to realize:

> Muspel was no all-powerful Universe, tolerating from pure indifference the experience side by side with it of another false world, which had no right to be. Muspel was fighting for its life — against all that is most shameful and frightful — against sin masquerading as eternal beauty, against baseness masquerading as Nature, against the Devil masquerading as God …

Lindsay's is a grim and deeply pessimistic worldview and it is hard to think that it was his imagined landscapes alone that held Lewis's attention. Given that Lewis thought that Arcturus bordered on the diabolical, it is altogether likely that what he found most compelling about it was something akin to that "sense of the deathly" that Rider Haggard managed to convey in *King Solomon's Mines*. *Out of the Silent Planet* can easily be viewed as a merely set of variations on Lindsay's other-world inventions, but *Perelandra* is surely something else: It seems a direct response to the challenge posed to Lewis's Christian faith by Lindsay's bleak "worlds of imagery and passion."

Though they involve space travel, neither Lindsay's nor Lewis's books are, strictly speaking, science fiction, there being very little science in either. In *Out of the Silent Planet*, Lewis makes an ever-so-slight gesture on behalf of scientific verisimilitude when he has the scientist Weston explain how the space ship works: "If it makes you happy to repeat words that don't mean anything — which is, in fact, what unscientific people want when they ask for an explanation — you may say we work by exploiting the less observed properties of solar radiation."

The hero in *Out of the Silent Planet*, Ransom, is drugged and kidnapped by Weston and his accomplice Devine (a former schoolmate of Ransom's) and taken with them to Mars, called Malacandra by its inhabitants (Weston and Devine know this because they have been there before). Malacandra turns out to be an old and dying planet, whose inhabitants know and accept that. The inhabitants include three races of intelligent creatures. The Sorns are tall, thin humanoids. The hrossa are like very large otters. And the pfifltriggi are frog-like. But the principal characteristic of Malacandra is that it is an unfallen world. Its inhabitants are free of sin. So the main difference between the creatures Lewis invents for Malacandra and those Lindsay invents for Tormance is that Lewis's are benign. Lindsay's are either simply odd, like Leehallfae, who is neither male nor female but something else altogether — Lindsay invents a new pronoun, *ae*, to refer to it — or malevolent, like the shrowks, huge and insect-like, which hunt with their wills. Apart from the imaginary creatures, the most obvious parallel between *Planet* and *Arcturus* is landscape. Shortly after Ransom escapes his captors he notices "a vista overhead" of "greenish white objects."

> They were enormously high, so that he had to throw back his head to see the top of them. They were something like pylons in shape, but solid; irregular in height and grouped in an apparently haphazard and disorderly fashion. Some ended in points that looked from where he stood as sharp as needles, while others, after narrowing towards the summit, expanded again into knobs or platforms that seemed to his terrestrial eyes ready to fall at any moment.

This bears comparison with Lindsay's "bright, stupendous crags of Discourn" — "a long succession of mountain islands in a sea of clouds" that "loomed up for a thousand feet or more." In Ifdawn, one of the regions of Tormance he travels through, Maskull remarks, "Those mountains have the most extraordinary shapes. All the lines are straight and perpendicular — no slopes or curves." The woman Oceaxe tells him, "All over the Marest you'll find patches of ground plunging down or rushing up." Similarly, Ransom

suddenly grasps the "perpendicular theme which beast and plant and earth all played on Malacandra — here in this riot of rock, leaping and surging skyward like solid jets from some rock-fountain …"

Nevertheless, in *Out of the Silent Planet* Lewis does not seriously engage Lindsay's metaphysics. In *Perelandra*, he does. A single detail at the start makes that plain. In *Arcturus*, Maskull, Krag and Nightspore travel naked in "a torpedo of crystal." In *Perelandra*, Ransom travels to Venus — naked — in "a large coffin-shaped casket" made of "some white material, like ice," so cold it burns the fingers. Moreover, just as Maskull is not invited to visit Tormance by an inhabitant of Earth, but by Krag, so, in *Perelandra*, Ransom travels to Venus because he has been ordered to go there by the Oyarsa (the archangel) who governs Malacandra.

Whatever else it may be, *A Voyage to Arcturus* is an attempt to deal with the origin and nature of evil. Lewis's first attempt to deal with that subject had been in his 1940 book *The Problem of Pain*. But in 1942, the year before he published *Perelandra*, he had published *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, his classic study of Milton's epic. This seems to have given him what he needed to take on Lindsay's dark vision head-on: *Perelandra* is Lewis's attempt to "justify the ways of God to man." In doing so, he pulls out all the stops.

There is, for example, a good deal of discourse in both books, but Lewis is far and away the superior dialectician and the discussion of evil in *Perelandra* is always lucid and often persuasive. He is also the superior stylist, but what is interesting is the precise way in which he turns this to his advantage. Lindsay is practically an anti-stylist, his prose often graceless and redundant. But for that very reason it lends a sense of urgency — and conviction — to his tale: It gives the impression of someone lacking skill in speech trying as best he can to get across something of utmost importance. It sounds genuine. To counter it with hi-jinks and dazzle would not work. So Lewis is careful to keep his own prose clear, simple and euphonious. Style there is in abundance, to be sure, but only to draw attention to the story, not itself. And, just as Bach improved Stölzel with counterpoint and melody, so Lewis counters Lindsay's types with well-rounded characters and his step-by-step narrative with something more suspenseful and dynamic. Malacandra is an old planet that was long ago tempted but did not succumb. Perelandra is a new planet about to face temptation. The Green Lady Ransom meets shortly after his arrival is a counterpart to Eve. She is also a counterpart to a woman Maskull also meets shortly after his arrival in Tormance. Her name is Joiwind and she is the only really attractive character on the planet. But Joiwind's sweetness derives from an almost willful *naïveté*. The Green Lady is genuinely innocent — and in his depiction of her Lewis pulls off one the hardest things a writer can attempt: He makes goodness both believable and interesting.

> [H]er purity and peace were not … things settled and inevitable … they were alive and therefore breakable, a balance maintained by a mind and therefore, at least in theory, able to be lost.

Looking at her, Ransom "knew … what the old painters were trying to represent when they invented the halo. Gaiety and gravity together, a splendour as of martyrdom yet with no pain in it at all, seemed to pour from her countenance."

The tempter in Perelandra is the same one who tempted Eve in the Garden, only here he takes on the form, not of a serpent, but of Ransom's old antagonist, the scientist Weston. Whether or not the Green Lady will give in to temptation is, of course, the problem set in the book, but the problem's resolution centers almost entirely on the confrontation between Ransom and what is left of Weston. For Weston is no longer himself. His body has been taken possession of by the tempter. His voice is a croak. He doesn't sit, he squats. His face, "the colour of putty," wears "a fixed and even slightly twisted grin." He bears, in fact, a striking resemblance to Lindsay's Krag.

For the confrontation between Ransom and the Un-man (as Lewis calls the possessed Weston) is also where Lewis directly confronts the challenge posed by Arcturus. Lewis understood that Maskull may be the protagonist of Arcturus, but the dominant figure is the maleficent Krag. Indeed, in Arcturus, Joiwind tells Maskull that Krag is "the author of evil and misery —whom you call Devil." So Ransom sees

> … a man who was certainly Weston, to judge from his height and build and colouring and features. In that sense he was quite recognisable. But the terror was that he was also unrecognisable. He did not look like a sick man; but he looked very like a dead one. The face … had that terrible power which the face of a corpse sometimes has of simply rebuffing every conceivable human attitude one can adopt towards it. The expressionless mouth, the unwinking stare of the eyes, something heavy and inorganic in the very folds of the cheek, said clearly: 'I have features as you have, but there is nothing in common between you and me.'

It is easy to see how Lewis's response to Lindsay began with a "mental picture of floating islands." The vast ocean of Perelandra is filled with an archipelago of floating islands. It is on these that the Green Lady lives. But there also a fixed land, which Maleldil (God) permits her to visit, but has forbidden her to remain on after nightfall.

For *Perelandra*, exactly like *A Voyage to Arcturus*, presents its metaphysics in terms of imagery and action. That is why — and how — it leads its readers, not to an intellectual conclusion, but to a mode of sensibility, one quite contrary to the kind Arcturus is likely to inspire. To read Lewis's book shortly after finishing Lindsay's is like walking out of a theater into cheery sunlight after seeing a very scary movie. The movie was fun, and you're glad you saw it, you enjoyed the terror of it, but the sunlight reminds you that even in this fallen world of ours there is a good deal more to life than unrelenting gloom.

Frank Wilson recently retired as the book-review editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer. *Email him at PresterFrank@gmail.com or visit his blog at http://booksinq.blogspot.com.*

Commentary: Strange Visions of Mountains – the Montane Motif in Tolkien's Fiction

Maria Rafaella Benvenuto

Even a cursory glance at a map of Middle-earth will show how Tolkien's fictional world looks all but studded with mountains of every description: massive ranges and isolated peaks, gently sloping hills and fiery volcanoes. However, their role in the narrative is not merely geographical: they are the abode of monsters and the repository of fabulous treasures; they function as beacons, walls, places of observation, and many other things. Indeed, Tolkien's mountains often act as impenetrable walls, preventing intruders from trespassing into places where, for one reason or another, strangers are not allowed. The Echoriath, the Encircling Mountains, hide the Elven realm of Gondolin from the outside world; while the forbidding Ephel Dúath and the dreary Ered Lithui effectively fence Mordor off the rest of the world.

However, in spite of their clearly paramount importance in Tolkien's narrative, it is quite difficult to find actual references to this motif in the vast body of secondary literature currently available on his work. Whereas Karen Wynn Fonstadt's The Atlas of Middle-earth and articles of similar content describe the various mountains and ranges from a geological point of view and sometimes compare them to real features of our primary world, they do not deal with the topic in its many implications as a narrative motif.

If one thinks that Britain's highest mountain would be considered little more than a hill elsewhere, Tolkien's fascination with mountains is rather intriguing. Even though he was born in South Africa, home of massive mountain ranges, it is quite unlikely that he saw any of them before he left the country at three years of age. Moreover, as an adult Tolkien did not travel extensively: his only real experience with mountains at close quarters was in 1911, on the occasion of a trip to the Swiss Alps with a group of 12 people which included his aunt, Jane Neave. The sight of those magnificent peaks in all their glory (not to mention the physical effort and the dangers inherent to the trip) was to leave a deep impression on the 19-year-old Tolkien: in fact, in his first published work of fiction, *The Hobbit*, a huge, imposing range, to whom he had given the Old Norse name of Misty Mountains[1], played a very important narrative role.

As Anderson remarks in *The Annotated Hobbit*, Tolkien's drawings of both the Misty Mountains and the Lonely Mountain are alpine in both shape and form, bringing to mind the profile of such well-known peaks as the Matterhorn[2]. The author's trip to the Swiss Alps left him with such a strong impression that he recalled it over 50 years afterwards, when writing to his son Michael in 1967 (*Letters* #306), giving a very detailed account of the excursion. In another letter (#109), written in 1947 to his publisher, Stanley Unwin, Tolkien declared that he longed "to see the snows and the great heights again!" As Hammond and Scull point out, these words are echoed by Bilbo in the first chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*, when he is preparing to leave the Shire forever[3].

Indeed, the Misty Mountains are possibly the single most important element in Tolkien's fictional landscape. For sheer size alone, this mighty range is doubtlessly one of the most striking features in Middle-earth, therefore its crucial role in Tolkien's geography should not come as a surprise. In the third chapter of *The Silmarillion*, the Misty Mountains look so forbidding that their very sight frightens the Teleri and prevents them from pursuing their journey towards Beleriand:

> [...] beyond it were mountains whose sharp horns seemed to pierce the realm of the stars, [...] But the mountains were the Hithaeglir, the Towers of Mist upon the borders of Eriador; yet they were taller and more terrible in those days, and were reared by Melkor to hinder the riding of Oromë.

In *The Hobbit*, the three chapters (4, 5 and 6) dedicated to the crossing of the Misty Mountains are central to the development of the plot, since the range acts as a border between the (relatively) civilized lands of the West and the dangers of Wilderland. In fact, the motif of the crossing of mountains should be quite familiar to keen readers of adventure fiction, being almost a constant in many books of the genre. Even more than rivers or deserts, mountains are the obstacle *par excellence* for the heroes to overcome in order to reach their goal. Mountain journeys can be encountered in many classics of 19th-century adventure fiction, such as Rider Haggard's novels, as Green points out:

> Mountains loom in the background, near but far [...]. The hungry journey over a perilous plain toward visible but distant mountains, like so much in The Hobbit, echoes a situation in King Solomon's Mines – in this case the trek across the African desert toward mountains[4].

In such episodes, we can see humans struggling against the brute, uncontrolled forces of nature and ultimately gaining the upper hand, even at a great cost. Mountains are equally a recurring motif in fairy tales, with very similar connotations: they are a literal representation of the difficulty associated with a journey, a quest or, more generally, a task. Imposing and insuperable as they appear, mountains are perfectly suited to representing both isolation and physical impediment[5].

Since many of Tolkien's stories are travel-based quests, it is not surprising to find that mountains feature prominently in the role of barriers, though not in an exclusively physical sense. As an essential narrative device in Tolkien's fiction, they do not only stand on the path of the heroes as very material obstacles, but somehow appear as agents of a sort of 'rite of passage' for some of the main characters in the stories. After crossing the Misty Mountains, Bilbo is a changed person: his frightening adventure in the underground caves is a turning-point for him. His finding of the Ring and subsequent encounter with Gollum lead to the development of quite a different personality from the one he had at the beginning of the book, as well as helping him to gain the Dwarves' respect. Then, in *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf dies and is brought back to life with enhanced powers after his fall from the bridge of Khazad-dûm and the battle with the Balrog on the highest peak of Celebdil. Frodo himself is first made aware of the pursuit of his 'double', Gollum, during the journey through Moria; he also undergoes a kind of apparent death after his passage through Shelob's Lair, which is the only way for him and Sam to cross the Ephel Dúath into Mordor. The crossing of mountains is here connected to the motif of the underground journey, which has often been dealt with in the secondary literature on Tolkien's work.

The final goal of the quests in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* is, in both cases, an isolated peak surrounded by a wasteland, which can be only reached after a long, dangerous journey. However, as shown by the quote I have chosen as a title for this essay, Tolkien's fictional mountains do not only represent the lurking dangers of the outside world: they are also a powerful symbol for adventure and change, the very image of the beauty and majesty of untamed nature. Even though his adventures in the Misty Mountains and in Erebor have almost cost him his life not one, but several times, Bilbo still longs for them, as he exclaims in 'A Long-Expected Party': "I want to see mountains again, Gandalf – mountains; and then find a place where I can rest". Years later, in 'The Shadow of the Past' Frodo "found himself wondering at times, in the autumn, about the wild lands; and strange visions of mountains that he had never seen came into his dreams".

Just like the author himself, Tolkien's characters cannot escape the fascination of mountains, although at times they can feel dwarfed, almost crushed by the sheer might of their presence. In 'The Muster of Rohan', during his journey through the White Mountains with the host of Théoden, Merry (who "loved mountains, or he had loved the thought of them marching on the edge of stories brought from far away") feels "he was borne down by the unsupportable weight of Middle-earth".

Besides their role as physical impediments, and the obvious dangers posed by landslides, avalanches, bad weather and such, mountains can be a hazard on account of the dangerous beings which they sometimes hide. In Chapter 4 of *The Hobbit*, the passes of the Misty Mountains "were cheats and deceptions and lead nowhere or to bad ends; and [...] were infested by evil things and dreadful dangers". As a matter of fact, fictional mountains are frequently described as harbouring anything from giants and

dragons to thieving, murderous humans; accordingly, many of Tolkien's mountains are the abode of an interesting variety of highly dangerous creatures: Orcs, the Balrog, Smaug, Gollum, Shelob.

Volcanoes are obviously the most dangerous mountains of all: frighteningly unpredictable, in their depths lurk the destructive powers of Earth's fiery core. Though Tolkien had no first-hand experience of volcanoes, he was probably familiar with the Icelandic Journals of William Morris, who was one of his major influences. Marjorie Burns draws an interesting comparison between Morris's report of his trip to Iceland and Tolkien's imaginary landscapes. The Iceland connection appears particularly strong in the description of the desolate volcanic wastes surrounding Mount Doom, as well as the mountain itself. Furthermore, even when they are not real volcanoes, mountains can harbour terrifying creatures connected with fire, as Burns aptly points out:

> Tolkien's mountains [...] have fire at their core. This is even true of the Lonely Mountain, where Smaug, with his fiery breath and mountain-shaking wrath, awakes like an 'old volcano' which has 'started eruptions once again' [...] Moria has its red, burning fissure out of which flames and smoke emerge.[6]

However, in its main function as Sauron's forge, Mount Doom evokes a powerful figure of Greek mythology: the blacksmith god, Hephaistos, from whose Latin name of Vulcanus the word volcano originates. In fact, volcanoes were associated with him and his work: in particular, Mount Aethna in Sicily was reputed to be the forge where the god and his monstrous helpers, the one-eyed giants called Cyclops, created marvellous objects such as weapons, jewellery, and even automated statues. The character of Sauron undoubtedly shares some of the features of Hephaistos, who also endowed his creations with a magic power which gave him a hold over whoever used them[7].

Volcanoes are also frequently associated with human sacrifice: in the religions of peoples who lived in volcanic areas, such as South-east Asia, human sacrifices used to be made in an attempt to avert the wrath of the mountains. In *The Lord of the Rings*, at first it is the One Ring that must be 'sacrificed' in the fiery chasm, but at the end it is a living creature that ends up as a victim to the fiery mountain. Even Gandalf's fate suggests a sort of self-immolation: as he tells Wormtongue in 'The King of the Golden Hall', he has passed through fire and death.

However, not all the dangerous dwellers of Tolkien's mountains are creatures related to fire, or even flesh-eating monsters like Shelob or the slimy yet pitiable Gollum. The sinister Dwimorberg, Dunharrow's Haunted Mountain, is without any doubt one of the most fascinating of Tolkien's creations. Though it appears all but briefly in the narrative, its function as an essential turning point of the story cannot be discounted. Of the many barriers that the members of the Fellowship find on their path, the Dwimorberg seems to be even more impenetrable than the others. In 'The Passing of the Grey Company', only the courage and motivation of Aragorn and his followers are able to overcome it, as in this case the danger is not related to the very physical threat of being killed or eaten, but rather to the terror of the unknown:

> The light was still grey as they rode, for the Sun had not yet climbed over the black ridges of the Haunted Mountain before them. A dread fell on them [...]. There under the gloom of black trees that even Legolas could not endure they found a hollow place opening at the mountain's root, and right in their path stood a single mighty stone like a finger of doom.

The Haunted Mountain strongly hints at all kinds of evil happenings, with its dark, forbidding appearance and the mysterious door from which "fear flowed [...] like a grey vapour", suggesting black magic and unnameable cults in a more than oblique way.

Mountains are not only haunted: they may also be holy. Tolkien's work contains very few direct references to religion, resulting, among other things, in a definite lack of actual places of worship. The only one explicitly mentioned, however, is situated on top of the mountain of Meneltarma, which stood at the very centre of the island kingdom of Númenor. On several occasions (namely *Letters* #153 and 156), Tolkien stated quite clearly that this place was not by any means a temple as we intend it: nevertheless, in the Akallabêth it is said that it was "hallowed to Eru Ilúvatar, and it was open and unroofed, and no other temple or fane was there in the land of the Númenóreans." This sacred place was neglected in the years of the kingdom's decline; at the end, though, it is the mountain itself which shows the first signs of the wrath of the One at Ar-Pharazôn's sacrilegious enterprise: "Then suddenly fire burst from the top of the Meneltarma, and there came a mighty wind and a tumult of the earth [...]". The doomed Queen, Tar-Míriel, seeks sanctuary in the holy place at the top of the mountain, but to no avail: "Too late she strove to ascend

the steep ways of the Meneltarma to the holy place; for the waves overtook her, and her cry was lost in the roaring of the wind". Like the rest of the island, the mountain is swallowed by the sea; but, according to legend, "The summit of the Meneltarma [...] was not drowned for ever, but rose again above the waves, a lonely island lost in the great waters; for it had been a hallowed place, and even in the days of Sauron none had defiled it."

Interestingly, at the end of the Akallabêth, it is related that sometimes mariners managed to get within reach of the Undying Lands, meeting a fate which is sharply reminiscent of Dante's *Ulysses* when he comes in sight of the mountain of Purgatory: "[...] and so had come to the lamplit quays of Avallónë, or verily to the last beaches on the margins of Aman, and there had looked on the White Mountain, dreadful and beautiful, before they died". In 'The Steward and the King' there is also mention of a hallowed place on the slopes of Mindolluin: "[...] they found a path made in ages past that few now dared to tread. For it led up on to the mountain to a high hallow where only the kings had been wont to go". In this secluded place Aragorn, guided by Gandalf, finds a seedling of the White Tree, a symbol of hope and regeneration for the realm of Gondor.

Not surprisingly, mountains are traditionally considered as a link between Heaven and Earth, as proved by the meaning of Meneltarma's very name, the Pillar of Heaven. They are places where the gods dwell, and human ascension is limited. In many mythologies, particularly (but not exclusively) in the Far East, mountains are seen as images of Paradise, which can only be reached after a long process of spiritual training and purification. The same is also true for Dante's mountain of Purgatory, whose top (the Earthly Paradise) can only be reached after having gone through all the stages of purification from the seven deadly sins. Tolkien drew on this imagery in *Leaf by Niggle*, when casting the Mountains as the next highest stage in Niggle's spiritual growth[8]. After a disciplinary stay in the workhouse for having left his painting unfinished, the protagonist of the story is finally free to travel towards the mountains which he had originally painted as a background to his Tree:

> He was going to learn about sheep [...] and walk even further and further towards the Mountains, always uphill. Beyond that I cannot guess what became of him. Even little Niggle in his old home could glimpse the mountains far away, and they got into the borders of his picture; but what they are really like, and what lies beyond them only those can say who have climbed them.

While the workhouse stands for Purgatory, the mountains clearly represent Paradise, the ultimate reward, though difficult to reach: "There were the Mountains in the background. They did get nearer, very slowly [...], a glimpse through the trees of something different [...]"

Another widespread motif in many of the world's mythologies is the mountain as abode of the gods. As a devout Catholic, Tolkien was obviously familiar with the religious implications of mountains in both the Old and the New Testament. On the other hand, the dwelling of the ruling pair of the Valar, Manwë and Varda, on the pinnacle of Taniquetil, the White Mountain, is Valinor's answer to the Greek Mount Olympus. As described in the first chapter of *The Silmarillion*, the lord of the winds and the lady of the stars could not live anywhere else but on the highest mountain of Arda, where "spirits in the shapes of hawks and eagles flew ever to and fro from his halls; and their eyes could see the depths of the sea, and pierce the hidden caverns beneath the world".

It has often been noted that Tolkien's mountains possess an almost sentient quality. When referring to this peculiar aspect of Tolkien's natural landscape, Brisbois calls it "Active nature", which has "a level of intelligence, if not outright sentience, in its processes"[9]. Furthermore, as Burns observes, both Tolkien and Morris refer to their mountains by using terms normally associated with the shape and movements of the human body: "Like Morris, Tolkien gives life to his landscapes through active, watchful verbs and through the use of human form (through 'shoulders', 'heads', 'arms', 'limbs', 'knees', and 'feet' of mountains or hills [...])[10]". The two ranges surrounding Mordor "swung out long arms northward" at their meeting point, the Haunted Pass; the sinister fortress of Minas Morgul stands "some way between the valley's arms [...] high on a rocky seat upon the black knees of the Ephel Dúath"; the peak of Caradhras, seen from afar, "stood up like a tooth tipped with snow". The Lonely Mountain has a 'heart', the Arkenstone, a white gem of inestimable value, whose well-meaning theft by Bilbo is decisive for the conclusion of the story.

In several instances, Tolkien's mountains even seem to have a personality of their own, showing what Patrick Curry calls "evidence of an active animism, a natural world that is literally alive"[11]. In 'The Ring Goes South', even from a distance, the formidable Caradhras, the highest of the Mountains of Moria,

looks disturbingly ominous to the members of the Fellowship: "On the third day Caradhras rose before them, a mighty peak, tipped with snow like silver, but with sheer naked sides, dull red as if stained with blood." Later in the book, it unleashes its anger at the Fellowship with a heavy snowfall which endangers the lives of the smallest members of the group. On such evident malevolence towards humans rests the mountain's bad reputation, as Gimli points out: "Caradhras was called the Cruel, and has an ill name [...]". When the Fellowship's attempts to cross the Redhorn Gate are violently rejected, Gimli again comments: "It is no ordinary storm. It is the ill will of Caradhras. He does not love Elves or Dwarves [...]" Accordingly, Brisbois maintains that Caradhras is one of the forms taken by "Wrathful nature" which endangers the good as well as the bad[12].

In Chapter 10 of *The Hobbit*, Bilbo's first glimpse of the Lonely Mountain, when riding a barrel down the Forest River towards Lake Town, is equally suggestive of its potential dangers: "And far away, its dark head in a cloud, loomed the Mountain! [...] All alone it rose and looked across the marshes to the forest. [...] [Bilbo] did not like the way the Mountain seemed to frown at him and threaten him as it drew even nearer." Then, after the destruction of the Ring, even Mount Doom, in the eponymous chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*, comes across as a living creature in its death throes, as if it were an extension of Sauron himself. The description of the mountain's agony is strikingly, intensely tragic: unlike Caradhras, Orodruin is not purposefully cruel. It just dies as it lived, loudly and violently, having exhausted its primary function:

> [...] even as they passed towards the Mountain's quaking feet, a great smoke and steam belched from the Sammath Naur, and the side of the cone was riven open, and a huge fiery vomit rolled in slow thunderous cascade down the eastern mountain-side. [...] Behind them the Mountain was convulsed. Great rents opened in its side.

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3. Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull, pp. 69-70 in *The Lord of the Rings. A Reader's Companion*. London: HarperCollins, 2005.
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5. Gian Paolo Caprettini (ed.)., pp. 250-1 in *Dizionario della fiaba italiana*. Roma: Meltemi, 2002.
6. Marjorie Burns, p. 80 in *Perilous Realms. Celtic and Norse in Tolkien's Middle-earth*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005.
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10. Burns, p. 85 in *Perilous Realms*, cit.
11. Patrick Curry, p. 110 in *Defending Middle-earth. Tolkien: Myth and Modernity*. London:HarperCollins, 1998.
12. Brisbois, p. 212 in 'Tolkien's Imaginary Nature: An Analysis of the Structure of Middle-earth', cit.

Fiction: Solstice

John Gilbey

The interminable conference sessions wandered on into the hot summer afternoon, broken only by the briefest respite for darkly institutional tea and biscuits. As I dunked my already soggy digestive and slurped the lukewarm tea I gazed out of the foyer windows at the town below.

It had all sounded very promising when I'd received the invitation. 'Cultural Indicators of Climate Change' it called itself, and I admit that I had been flattered to be asked to provide a plenary paper. I hadn't realised at the time just how badly my statistical landscape analysis work would stand out against what the rest of the bunch were presenting. I consider myself to be a serious scientist, and I was frankly appalled to find myself sharing a stage with such a dodgy crowd of weave-your-own-folklore hangers-on.

You see, I deal in numbers: heights of raised beaches, particle size distributions, trend surface analyses and other stuff like that. I know the confidence limits, I know what the story tells me. This lot, God help them, with their leather bags and homespun cotton, were pinning all their hopes on tarnished bits of old myth that – by their own admission – weren't written down until hundreds, maybe thousands, of years after they were first told. Some might call that academic research – but not me. I mean, would you believe that race memory can entrain sea level changes and other geomorphologic events that happened thousands of years ago – by keeping myths alive in children's stories? No? I thought not.

Yet here they were, using the conference to bid for serious research money – so that they could use my sort of tools to prove once and for all that the old folk tales of the 'lost kingdom under the sea' were based on real historical events. I could have understood it if they were looking for oil or gold – but for a few old stones and maybe some bits of wood? Don't make me laugh – I don't go for Old Testament-style tales of inundation and mayhem. But, of course, in the current financial climate if they did get all that funding then maybe I could become a bit more amenable – so I judged it was worth staying polite to them at least.

The drinks event at the end of the afternoon session came as a great relief – and I suspect that I was not the only one to feel that way. The Vice-Chancellor gave us a nice little address of welcome, then while the wine and nibbles circulated the rather fetching young post-doc responsible for the social program told us where to be for the coach to the beach barbeque – which promised to be the best part of the whole event, as long as the weather stayed fine. I grabbed another couple of full glasses, and decided that it would be well worth getting to know her.

By the time the coach wheezed to a halt in the village car park Beth and I were best friends. She had spent the past hour confiding to me just how important it was that the research project went ahead, reinforcing her statements of obvious conviction with frequent emotional appeals from her large, dark eyes. I kept nodding, smiling and filling her glass up – I was almost sure that the conference wasn't going to be a complete waste.

As everyone stumbled off the coach I had a look around. A small country village in summer: hanging baskets outside cottage front doors, a few tourists wandering awkwardly around with cameras, and an ancient pub with tables outside. The wine had worked its magic on my kidneys, so while Beth went off to marshal the troops I nipped into the pub and found the Gents – then, because it would be rude not to, I sat at the bar with a few of the locals and had a quick pint. Outside, the sound of ambling conference delegates faded until only the ticking of the clock in the bar, and the odd bleating sheep far away, was audible. I had another pint – it was really good stuff – and asked the barman what they had to take away.

Clutching my gallon of farm cider ("Try not to shake it up too much…") I headed off up the street, wrestling with the instructions the landlord had given me for getting to the beach ("Left past the church, over the second gate on your right and you can't miss it…"). I was feeling pretty merry by now, and the evening sky was dark red towards the west – although there was still plenty of light for navigation. After struggling along a track for what seemed like an age, being followed by various forms of interested livestock and getting bitten by most of the insects in Western Europe, I emerged suddenly into the open on a cliff-top path.

A great expanse of sea was spread out before me, with the setting sun and an array of Technicolor™ clouds as a backdrop. Nothing in the directions mentioned whether to turn north or south, so

I took a wildly incorrect executive decision and headed left. By the time the sun was below the horizon I had worked out that no beach was going to appear.

The cliff was lower here, and had become little more than an earth bank that trailed into the sea from the meadow above. I sat on a conveniently placed log and took a long, restorative pull at the cider. The route back was uphill, and I figured I would need all my strength.

The sound of the small waves lapping the foreshore, and the warmth of the evening, ganged up on me – and I think I must have nodded off. When I came to I was sitting on the ground with my back against the log – my right hand still clutching the handle of the cider keg. It was nearly dark, with a line of purple showing where the horizon lay far out in front of me.

Along the path came a shambling figure – who could well have been one of the farm hands I had shared the bar with earlier. I raised a hand in salute, and he wandered over with the deliberate steps of the half-stewed, dropping himself heavily down next to me.

He had a regional accent so thick and guttural that you could have sold it to Disney, and was slurring badly from drink, so I didn't catch his name - but he had a grip of iron and when he slapped me companionably across the shoulder I thought I would lose teeth. He was at least as merry as I was, and expressed delight when I invited him to share the cider.

As we drank and tried – with limited success – to chat, I became more aware of the stillness of the evening. The sound of the waves had merged into the sound of wind through the hay crop behind us, and the warm coconut scent of gorse hung over us. The breeze carried earthy hints of wood smoke and manure – somewhere, far away, a dog barked.

We sat musing, and I asked my companion where he lived. He waved vaguely out in front of us, and I realized it was probably time I stopped drinking – for I had thought I'd ended up facing the sea, but now I saw perhaps a mile ahead a few isolated lights of habitation and something that could be a bonfire. It looked tranquil and bucolic in a timeless and infinitely appealing way, and I was tempted – in my drunken state - to wander down and see if they had any jobs. Leave the lab and just go and kick back for a few years.

My friend was becoming gradually more garrulous and started to point out and name various landmarks – using terms that, I have to say, meant nothing to a town dweller like me. He waved a blunt hand towards the distant lights, then to himself and announced himself proudly to be the Steward – as though that was some sort of high rank. I tried to look impressed, but I'm not sure how successful I was – because he then went into a long, rambling list of all his duties and responsibilities which included – get this – making sure the gates were shut. I fell back on my nodding and smiling routine.

The sudden clap of thunder and the strong, cold wind that followed it had a startling effect on the Steward. He lurched to his feet and stared ahead of us into the gloom. The hiss of the wind over the fields slewed around us – then a new, deeper, growling roar came out of the horizon. I looked out, hopelessly disoriented, towards the farm lights and saw behind them a rapidly approaching line of white. Beyond all reason, steep angry surf driven by the sudden squall was rolling towards us. One by one, the lights of the settlement were going out.

His cry has haunted me ever since. As he ran towards the farm he gave a long shout of such utter horror and hopelessness that tears started in my eyes and the ache of loss pulled at my stomach. I was still crying when Beth found me. She looked at me, then at the empty cider flask, and kneeled down close in front me. I guess I was babbling, talking rubbish, pointing in different directions and trying to get over the point that there was a bloke somewhere out there in the waves. She held my hands, and eventually she teased the story out of me. Then, as I pleaded with her to phone the Coastguard, or someone – anyone – she sat up and wrapped her arms around me. It felt warm, comforting and right, but with none of the passion I had dreamt of.

She was silent for long moments, then recounted the tale I would have known if I had bothered listening to the presentations that afternoon. The folk legend spoke of sinking land and rising water – of gallant defences built against the invasion of the sea. Then, in a night of sudden storm, there was the ultimate betrayal of the settlement by a drunkard. The gates that protected them from the sea – his key duty – were left unsecured, and the rising water took hold before the sleeping community could protect itself. All were lost.

Beth seemed oddly proud of what I had seen. A vindication, she said, of the whole project and the need for funding. She talked earnestly of spirit of place, of the rightness of my vision, of the significance of it being the solstice – of how well it all fitted in with the tradition of landscape, folk memory and the cultural imperative.

I eased her arms from around me and kissed her gently on the forehead, suddenly aware of how little we had in common. All I could think of was that I had stopped a man who was hurrying along on his way home to finish his evening tasks – I had given him more drink and critically delayed him. By whatever quirk of time or circularity of dimension it was my fault, mine alone, that the settlement had been drowned. Somehow, I have got to find a way of living with that.

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Fiction: In the Shadow of the Dragon's Wing

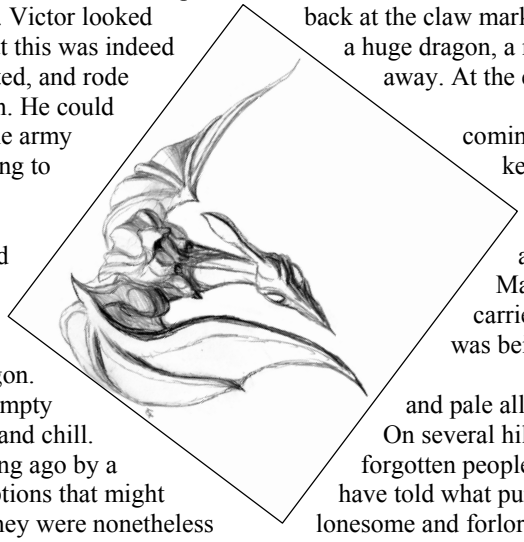
Jeff Crook

Victor rode slowly through the gutted, burned-out shell of Tolford. These were fires caused by panic, overturned lanterns and candles. There hadn't even been a fight. So he moved on, for nothing here interested him, and the greasy stench of the place lingered in his nostrils.

He led his mule down the slope and crossed the stream at the ford. From there, he followed the road to Breg. When he rode through here two weeks ago, ripe corn bordered the road on either side, making a thick walled lane eight feet high. Now blackened stalks stubbled the flat grey land as far as the eye could see. A cold wind blew over it from the north, raising clouds of ash and whistling softly through the taller stalks, making the silence of the empty land all that more profound.

Later in the morning, he reached the ruins of Breg, the first village attacked by the dragon. This place was much better than Tolford; a fine testament to the full might and power of this dragon. There were no crops to burn here, only pastures and livestock. Lost cattle and sheep wandered the ruins, lowing, bleating miserably, some of them still bearing the festering wounds of the dragon's fire. Victor dismounted, leaving his mule, Auda, to wander among the animals. As he approached the outer wall, he came upon a heap of slag and charred bones that had once been a group of armored defenders. He made a sign over them, then walked on.

Near the centre of town, he found a large claw mark in the sandy soil, and some distance away a toppled but still-intact wall burned black where the dragon had breathed its fire at someone. He counted thirty paces between the claw mark and the wall, where a clear, human shape – a reversed shadow of someone with his hands raised – had been etched into the stone. As he stood over it, looking down at the lingering reflection of the last moment of this person, he could still smell the brimstone, even though it had rained twice since the attack. Victor looked back at the claw mark and noted the distance, his heart pounding, realizing that this was indeed a huge dragon, a massive creature. Then he walked back to Auda, mounted, and rode away. At the edge of the village he paused, listening, and then hurried on. He could already hear the sounds of the army coming up. Victor spent most of the remainder of the day trying to keep ahead of the army and its scouts. The Grand Duke of Tarrasq had sent a large force of warriors and war wizards to deal with the invading dragon before it had a chance to find its way to a large city, like Tarrasq or Marque. Victor wasn't afraid of being captured. He carried a Ducal Pardon in his saddlebags. What he feared was being stopped and sent back before he could find the dragon.



The sky remained empty and pale all that day, the forests dark and silent, the moors barren and chill. On several hilltops stood great slabs of stone that had been raised long ago by a forgotten people, but the wind and rain had long since erased any inscriptions that might have told what purpose they served. They didn't look like tombs, but they were nonetheless lonesome and forlorn. Victor rode past them on the west side to prevent their shadows from falling across his path.

As evening approached, the wind shifted around to the west, blowing steadily now and smelling of rain. He knew the army would stop for the weather, so he made his camp beneath a rock overhang before the rain started. A storm came in the night with a hollow roar across the heath. He was glad to be dry, but he built no fire and the night grew cold. He wrapped himself like a mummy in his blankets and drifted off,

trying not to think until sleep came, and when it finally came, he slept hard and dreamlessly. Once, during the night, he woke with the impression that someone lay beside him, but he immediately fell back to sleep. Victor awoke when the rain stopped, Auda standing over him and snuffling his face with his big black nose. It was still some hours before dawn, but he couldn't sleep. He lay awake and watched the clouds break up and the stars come out icy and distant.

He thought about the old woman at the ferry, and about the boy.

He had liked the boy, had seen a great deal of himself in him. In another life, the boy could have been his own son, but he had no sons, no children at all. He had Auda, he had his memories, but he had not seen any of his old friends for many years, not since he was expelled from the Order. He was breaking their law just being here, but he was already cursed and under anathema; he didn't care. All he cared about was finding the dragon before the army did, finding it and fighting it. He wasn't afraid of fighting it, only of arriving too late. This was his last chance. A dragon like this only came along every hundred years or so, when the great dragons of the dragon isles drove out their young to make room for new hatchlings.

There were many things he feared.

He feared an ignoble death, but he did not fear death itself. He feared growing old. He feared sickness and infirmity and failure. But he had learned to use his fears to his advantage. In the long years of training to do this thing he did, in his long apprenticeship to his master, he had learned that fear could give him the power to do extraordinary things. But alone at night, when fear came, there was very little he could do about it. Like right now, he was afraid of dying. He hoped that soon, tomorrow perhaps, he would meet the dragon. He could almost feel the dragon, feel himself moving toward that moment when fate would decide if his curse would end and he would be free at last.

And then he felt it. He looked up and saw a shadow pass high overhead, like a tiny dark cloud scuttling across the sky. Auda snorted and stamped. It was the dragon. He cowered down in his cloak and almost hid his head. Although the dragon was very high and could not possibly have seen him, he could still feel that cold nauseating wave of dragon awe pass over him. But when it had passed, he leaped up and threw off his cloak. He watched it glide away, so high it looked almost amongst the stars. Then it dove, plummeting like a falling star itself. Soon he could no longer see it.

He was alone, just as he preferred, moving towards the dragon, to face it alone, to die alone or to conquer alone. He gathered his things in the dark and set out, leading Auda down the hill. Dawn found him at the edge of a forest with a barren waste of hills before him.

An hour before sundown, Victor stopped at the crest of a hill. Behind him, the dust of the army rose like a tendril of smoke on the horizon. He had gained almost a day on them. Below lay a hidden fold of the land that had escaped the dragon's desolation. It was the place he had sought all day; he could not have wished for a better place, an area of open fields divided by woodlands. The ground closest to him was on a higher level than the one beyond the woods. He wasn't seeking the dragon's lair, it didn't matter where the dragon had its lair. He wasn't interested in fame or the treasure of the dragon's hoard. He only wanted the dragon, to meet it in battle on ground of his own choosing.

Victor rode Auda down the hill, across the meadow and into the woods. He dismounted, then set to work. Now that there was the job to do, he felt better, free, relieved to be about it at last. First he unlashed his fighting lances and laid them out carefully on a level space of ground. He covered them with a blanket so that the dew would not get to them. Then he took his sword and sheathed it and strapped it to his side, and he took his axe from the thong on the saddle and stuck it in a fallen log. Then he unsaddled Auda and brushed him down.

"Brave Auda," he said to the mule as he brushed. "Tomorrow we meet the dragon. You are not afraid, are you, Auda? Nothing frightens my brave Auda. Brave, noble Auda. I saved an apple for you." He didn't feel ashamed talking to the mule so tenderly. The mule nudged him with its nose.

"Brave Auda," he said. "You saved me from them and condemned me as you condemned yourself. But tomorrow, I think it will be over. Tomorrow, it ends. This is the dragon we have sought for ten long years, my friend."

He finished brushing down the mule in the dark, working by feel until it was done. Then he took his axe from the log and walked off into the woods. He didn't hobble the mule; he knew Auda would not stray far from their camp.

At the bottom of the woods, he worked as silently as he was able, cutting only the branches he could reach and dragging them out into the lower meadow where he would lure the dragon. He gathered a good quantity of dry wood to kindle the bonfire he was building, but he wanted the green wood to make it smoke. The smoke would draw the dragon to him. He hoped the dragon would come to his bonfire and

ignore the dust of the army. He hoped that he would prove a more tempting target. But he cut only the smaller branches, lopping them with one slice of the axe because he didn't want the dragon to hear the obvious man-noise of an axe in the woods. He didn't know how close its lair might be, and he didn't want to draw the dragon to him until he was ready, especially not now, not until the morning. He worked quickly and carefully in the dark. The makings of the bonfire rose in the moonshadows of the lower field. He didn't light it when it was finished. That would wait until daylight.

Victor walked back to his camp, finding his way in the dark by the mule's stomping and blowing. Then he built a small fire, and by its light, he tended to the edge of his fighting lances, honing them carefully. He ate a little dried meat and fruit, chewing slowly and getting all the juice out. He spread his blanket over Auda's broad black back, and then he rolled himself in his cloak. It was warmer here in the woods than under the rock shelter last night. The fire helped. The fire felt warm on his back and he quickly fell asleep. He slept in the deep loam of the forest wrapped in his cloak

Auda listened to his breathing, waiting for Victor's breath to even out in sleep. He was glad that Victor could sleep, tonight of all nights, because he couldn't, and he wanted to see Victor with his own eyes one last time. He was glad for the blanket Victor had spread over him, for even after all these years away from his native desert, he still hated the cold. He waited for Victor to fall asleep. At last, he fell asleep and Auda changed.

Auda was a man, a eunuch.

Auda was made a eunuch and sold into slavery when he was thirteen. His first master taught him how to provide carnal pleasures and charged money for his services. When he was sixteen, he was sold to a warlord who had grown very fond of him. The warlord taught him about weapons and battle. At nineteen, he was captured in battle, and then his captors sold him to the Temple of the Free Order of Draconic Lancers in Tarrasq, where he was made a squire to a warrior monk named Haldrad, who died of plague. Then he was passed on to a promising young monk named Victor to be his squire and lance bearer. Already Victor was the best Free Lancer in Tarrasq and over the years as his record of dragon kills grew, many considered him to be among the best Free Lancers to have ever worn the helm.

And Auda became Victor's lover. It was not uncommon for a squire and his lord monk to develop such a relationship. The Temple didn't encourage it, but they rarely punished it. The relationship between the monk and his squire was forged in dragonfire, for the Free Lancers were first and foremost dragon fighters. The Temple usually looked the other way if the monk and his squire did not flaunt their relationship.

Auda was unique among squires in that he was a eunuch and a slave rather than a free man. Most squires were free men in training to become Free Lancers themselves. As a slave, Auda would never have been allowed to become a squire, but his extensive training in war made him too valuable to spend his days cooking rice and washing robes at the Temple. He had killed his first dragonrider and dragon before he was eighteen, a feat that would have made him a Free Lancer in his own right had he not also been a slave. But even though he was a squire to the finest Free Lancer in the land, he was still the property of the Order. Eventually, they sold him to the Grand Duke of Tarrasq to guard his harem. Victor had protested, but it was a political gesture to the Grand Duke. The Duke had in fact asked for a Free Lancer to guard his harem, but the Temple couldn't agree to that, so they gave him the next best thing – they gave him Victor's famous squire. The Grand Duke had begun following the Aranian custom several years before and already had a large harem and a palace just for his wives. Auda was made captain of his harem guard. Even so, Victor came for him.

Victor broke with the Order for love of him. He entered the harem palace one night searching for Auda and was captured by the guards while Auda slept. For entering the harem palace, he was sentenced to die, and Auda vowed never to sleep again. No one but Auda knew that Victor had come not to steal one of the Grand Duke's wives, but to steal the captain of his harem guard.

And so Auda used his authority to gain entrance into Victor's prison the night before his execution. He killed the guards and helped Victor escape, but in the melée at the prison gates, his horse was killed and he was captured, while Victor, sorely wounded, rode away.

He was, of course, tortured and forced to confess his love for the disgraced Free Lancer. The Grand Duke had his war wizards concoct a curse to punish him and Victor both. The curse was as old as the world itself, but unique in its application and its particular effects. They transformed Auda into a mule. As long as Victor was awake, Auda remained a mule; but whenever Victor slept, Auda resumed his former shape. Then they sent him to Victor along with a Ducal Pardon, so that they both could live in peace for the rest of their days, the man, and the mule, together and forever apart.

Auda sat by the small fire, naked save for the blanket that he wrapped tightly around his shoulders, quietly watching Victor sleep. Usually he never spoke for fear of waking Victor, but tonight, he whispered, half to himself, half to Victor.

"You expect to die tomorrow, don't you? You sought this dragon with the hope that it would kill you," he said. "Because you want to die, but you want to die in battle as a Free Lancer. With your death, my curse will be broken. But I would rather remain an animal and serve you than see you die, my love, my night, my eyes."

Auda lay down next to Victor, facing him, but not touching, and he watched him sleep because he could not sleep himself. He watched him until dawn, and then as Victor began to stir, he rose to his feet and waited for the mule to return.

Victor awoke in the gray of dawn, angry with himself for oversleeping and angry with Auda for not waking him. The campfire had nearly died, so he blew on it and added twigs to it until he had a small blaze. He knew he should eat something, but now that he was awake with the morning facing him, he felt no hunger. Only thirst, but he knew that could not be quenched until the dragon was dead. Still, he should eat. He would need it all today.

He toasted some bacon on sticks over the fire and ate it, and he drank a little water from his flask. Then he took the apple from his pack and split it in half with his dagger, and he gave half of the apple to Auda and the other half he ate himself.

"You will not begrudge me half of this apple, will you Auda?" he asked, watching Auda slobbering over his half of the apple.

Victor dropped the apple core into the ashes of his fire, then he placed the saddle on Auda's back and cinched it, checking the straps for wear and damage. He eased the bit into Auda's mouth and let the reins hang to the ground. Then he dumped a double-handful of oats on the ground. He poured the last of his water into his helm and let Auda slurp it up.

With Auda taken care of, he opened his pack and laid everything in it out on the ground. There was a torch, and the bandages and medicines that the old woman had given him, and a needle and thread and a sharp skinning knife. He removed and unrolled his fighting cape and laid it across a bush. He laid out a quiver of arrows and his bowstring and checked the heads of all the arrows before placing them back in the quiver. They were strange arrowheads, long and hollow and sharply-pointed, like the tooth of a viper. Then he opened a box that contained little balls of what looked like clay and dumped them into the pouch at his belt. Each one was just small enough to be squeezed into the hollow point of an arrowhead. He fitted one arrow with a ball of the clay, careful not to let the point prick his finger. Then he strung his long bow, and he took the torch and lit it in the fire and walked down through the woods to the lower meadow. He had two jobs to do today – to kill the dragon and to die in the effort. To do one without the other would be to fail. If he just wanted to die, he could simply wait for the dragon and let it kill him. But instead he wanted his death to buy the death of the dragon as well, to pay for the villages it had burned and the people it had killed. He'd been born in Tolford.

He walked out of the trees into the meadow where the bonfire waited. He thrust the torch into the bonfire and stepped back to watch the black smoke pillow up against the morning sky. There was no wind, so it would carry high and be seen from far away. The army would see it, of course, but he hoped the dragon would see it first. He watched the sun rise up over the top of a hill, then walked back to the edge of the wood and squatted in the undergrowth, the bow held ready with the doctored arrow on the string, and from here he could see a broad stretch of the sky in the direction from which he thought the dragon might come, and he also had an unobstructed view of the bonfire, and a clear path of retreat away from it into the woods. He settled down and waited, sucking on a pebble to assuage his thirst.

He was well hidden in the woods, with his olive-green cape wrapped entirely around his body, only his face showing and the hood pulled well down over his eyes. He leaned the bow against a tree so his hand wouldn't make the grip sweaty and slick before the time came. He waited for what seemed a long time, too much time really because it allowed him time to think, and he was becoming nervous and wishing the dragon would come and also wishing that it would never come, that he might never see it. Try as he might, he could not turn his fear to his advantage, he could not make it work for him; he wanted to run now, he wanted to get up and fling it all away and go back to Auda and ride away, and he knew what it was then: it was the dragon awe working on him, and then he knew that the dragon was near and he was all right. Then he felt the eyes of the dragon pass over him. He felt the malignant stare cross his face without stopping. He had not been seen, not yet anyway, but now he knew the dragon was there, somewhere, watching.

He eased forward a little, gently lifting aside a small leafy branch, and looked all around, scanning the sky and the clouds building low on the western horizon, the edges of the meadow and the hills beyond. He could not see it anywhere, but he knew it was there because he felt the tightness in his chest and tasted the coppery taste in his mouth. Sweat dribbled down his forehead and nose. And then he saw it, but only because it moved; its dull mottled-red scales blended perfectly with the rocky outcrop of red granite upon which it perched some three miles away. He saw the wings rise as it maintained its balance on the windy pinnacle of the hill, while it studied the fire and the meadow. From this distance, the dragon looked tiny, like a toy magically brought to life.

Victor saw the dragon lift its head and sniff the air. He was content for now to watch the beast as it tried to appraise the bonfire. The dragon had not as yet made any sound. It knew that there was a man about, or so it seemed as Victor watched it silently lift its wings and leap into the air. The dragon rose up, hovering on the warm currents rising of air, moving upward as if by power of thought. It circled higher and wider around the distant hill, until it was but a tiny speck against the sky. For a moment, Victor lost it in the sun. "He is smart," he said aloud. Then he saw the dragon straighten out and begin to drop very slowly. As it dropped, it grew perceptibly larger. Victor saw it glide now in a shallow dive, its wings tucked in close to its body so that it rode only on the tips, just as a falcon. He saw the long, spined tail working like a rudder, holding its course straight as it dove at the bonfire. Victor took hold of his bow and nocked the arrow to the string. He held it crosswise over his knees, but he did not stand.

Not yet.

The dragon came on now, growing ever larger as its speed increased, and dipping lower to the ground, so that now it skimmed just over the summit of the hill on which it had perched.

Not yet.

It dropped quickly and levelled off and began to drop again, becoming larger, huge, monstrous and beautiful in flight.

Not yet.

When it reached the edge of the meadow, Victor said *now* and stood and drew back the bowstring until the fletching tickled the corner of his mouth, leading the dragon now as it came on, not slowing, gaining in speed now, its mouth open just a little so that the sword-long fangs whistled in the wind of its speed and its in-drawn breath. Victor took a deep breath, held it as the dragon soared within two hundred yards, let it out a little between clenched teeth.

The dragon must have sensed him then because it turned and looked him straight in the eyes. He saw the red fires burning in those eyes and he held his shot. The huge wings beat three times, braking in the air, and the dragon screamed so that the wind of its rage blew the hood of Victor's cloak from his head. He heard the great leathery wings cracking like sails in a storm. Black smoke fanned, swirled round, dust billowed in the air, blinding him momentarily, and the dragon was gone. He stood still for a moment, releasing the tension on the bow. He returned the arrow to the quiver, looked around one last time, and then began to run, slapping branches out of his way.

The meadow was already blazing behind him, the bonfire spread by the dragon's wings. Victor looked back over his shoulder and saw the dragon race headlong out of the smoke, its mouth open wide and full of fangs. It breathed, incinerating the place where Victor had lain in ambush, the great serpentine head arching down and behind as the dragon passed over, scorching his hiding place with its fiery breath. Victor changed direction, darted left, circling back toward his camp, and above the treetops the dragon glided like a thunderstorm. Now it was hunting him.

Victor circled around and came down on his camp from the north, scrambling down through the vines and leaves. Auda stood there, his mule eyes rolling white and glaring in his black face, pawing at the ground. The dragon passed overhead with a noise like a forge, the great tail plowing through the treetops, a

cascade of leaves and broken limbs raining in its wake. Victor dropped the long bow and draped his red fighting cape over his shoulders, and then he slung the bow across his chest. He picked up his three fighting lances, grabbed Auda's reins, and vaulted into the saddle. He dug in his heels and, holding the reins in one hand, the fighting lances in the other, bent low over Auda's neck as he crashed up through the forest, mounting the slope to the upper meadow, the second stage of the fight.

He reached the edge of the forest and reined in. The sky was empty save for the smoke drifting up from the lower meadow. He took each lance and stuck it into the soft soil about twenty yards apart, just under the eaves of the forest. Then he chose the third one, the stoutest of the three, with a broad serrated blade, and rode out to the center of the meadow. He sat upon Auda's quivering back and waited in open challenge.

They saw the dragon coming in low over the treetops, its mouth shut tight, its claws extended to kill. He attacks like an eagle, Victor thought. And I am the fish? Auda snorted and stamped. They waited there, waited for the claws to draw closer, the dragon to drop lower, skimming at head height above the grass of the meadow. The dragon's wings spread out, catching every particle of air, slowing but not too slow, to catch the man on the end of its claws and snatch him from the saddle.

When the dragon was so near that Victor could see the grooves full of rotting meat in the extended claws, he dug in his heels. Auda snorted and charged directly at the dragon, Victor tilting the lance upward as the two, mounted man and monster, hurtled together. The dragon saw the broad, toothy blade lifting up towards it throat, so it backed air, its wings buffeting, fighting to gain altitude, but it stalled and collapsed to the ground. Victor rode out beneath its tail, turning as he did so.

He crossed the dragon's front, arrogantly riding with the lance held high, balanced in his right hand, and the dragon, seeing his foolish arrogance, breathed its fiery breath. But Victor had measured the distance back at the village of Breg, and as they galloped away, the fire exploded harmlessly behind them. He rode to the edge of the forest and stopped. This dragon will not make that mistake again, he thought.

He stuck the lance in the ground and almost with the same motion swung the bow over his shoulder. He pulled the arrow from the quiver, nocked it, drew, aimed, released. The arrow winged across the air as the dragon gathered itself to spring. The arrow buried itself deep in the shoulder-joint of the dragon's left wing. The little poison pellet hidden in the head of the arrow dissolved quickly in the dragon's hot blood, and the wing, suddenly robbed of all feeling and strength, slumped uselessly to the ground. The dragon tossed its head about, looking at it as though betrayed.

Victor rode further to his left and nocked another arrow, this one without poison. He drew and fired, purposefully missing this time, but drawing the dragon around until it faced him. He plucked the second lance from the ground near his hand and readied it, tossing aside his bow as he did so. This lance had a longer shaft, with a thick head like a wedge made for splitting wood.

"Now for it, dear Auda, let us die upon this dragon together," Victor shouted, urging Auda into a charge, lowering and leveling the lance at the dragon. The dragon gathered it legs under its body, claws digging into the soil, and arched its head back like a snake, exposing the broad field of its chest, drawing the man onward, opening itself to the lance while it sucked in air through its nostrils, filling its lungs with fire. Victor leaned forward in the saddle, bracing himself, the tip of the lance piercing the bright air before him, the mule's hooves pounding, head tossing as it ran in its sturdy, short-footed gallop.

And so, as Victor leaned ever farther over the neck of the mule, the lance quivering towards the heart of the dragon, the dragon's head snapped forward like a striking snake, jaws gaping, the fire of its breath boiling up its throat so near that Victor could see it and smell the brimstone. And at the same time, Victor stood in the saddle, lifting the lance toward the dragon's heart place -- and Auda plunged into the narrow ravine that crossed the meadow and was hidden by waist-high grass. A river of fire roared above them, spilling down a little into the trench that hid them, setting the grass on fire. They moved quickly down the ravine to avoid being engulfed. Victor tossed aside his now-useless lance; the steel head was melted like a candle, the wooden shaft blazing almost down to his hand.

"Auda, what have you done?" Victor shouted. Auda snorted and galloped toward the forest.

For a moment, the dragon stood silent, puzzled, wondering if the warrior was also a wizard, and then it saw the manner of the trick. With a scream of rage that shook dirt loose from the sides of the ravine, it hurtled across the meadow, following the mule and rider galloping away in the bottom of the ravine towards the forest. It charged into the trees, trunks snapping as it blew into them, and became entangled by the useless wing dragging behind it. Auda scrabbled up out of the ravine and galloped into the forest.

They rode out on the other side of the meadow and stopped. Victor tugged a lance from the ground and propped its butt on the stirrup. Across the meadow, the dragon waited just at the edge of the trees, waited for the man to come out. It did not see him.

Victor felt soiled by Auda's deception. He had made the dragon look like a fool, and this was a tragic thing, for dragons are the noblest of creatures, graceful and proud. This did not lessen his desire to kill it, but the killing should be done well and with dignity.

"Do not try that again," Victor said as he urged Auda into a trot. He steered him away from the ravine. Auda was winded now, but still strong, and his heart would not quit until the battle was over. At the sound of his hooves, the dragon whirled and charged out of the forest. Victor lowered the lance and couched it under his arm, leaned forward in the saddle. The dragon came on, head low, claws gouging and throwing dirt and clumps of grass, tail snaking behind it.

Victor tilted the lance low to bring the dragon's head up. It lifted its head to avoid the sharp serrated blade and at the same time sought a riposte, but Victor turned Auda sharply to the left, keeping the lance between him and the dragon. The dragon followed the tip of the lance, its neck curling around, the good wing lifting to maintain its balance and exposing its side. Victor drove in under the wing, swinging the lance around and standing in the stirrups, leaning in, burying the lance into the dragon's shoulder and with the force of the charge lifting him momentarily from the saddle until Auda came under him again, and they rode out from under the wing, dragging the lance out, severing muscles and tendons from the shoulder. Turning left again, Auda nimbly avoided the great spiked tail that whipped down to smash them, and they rode out across the dragon's front. Victor swung the lance to his left and pointed it at the dragon.
The dragon, seeing the lance again leveled at him, performed a lightning riposte, head dipping under and around the blade dripping with its own blood, driving in and snapping the lance into splinters mere inches from Victor's shoulder. Victor tossed aside the broken haft and circled back to his third lance. The dragon was anchored now and could not follow him.

He stopped beside the lance and looked at the dragon. Its eyes narrowed to slits and seemed to stare through him, seeking the marrow of his life. Despite his desire to die with this dragon, he was unable to suppress a shudder at the vision of his own death in the dragon's eyes. But he didn't hesitate. He grasped the third lance and yanked it from the ground. This lance had a narrow haft, a long, thin, delicate-looking blade, and a wide crossbar about an arms-length from the head, much like a boar spear. He rode out to the center of the meadow and saluted the dragon. The dragon growled low, bubbling, a little blood dribbled between its teeth and fell smoking to the grass. He will not avoid the lance this time, Victor thought, but will seek me through it. He will not breathe fire until he is sure of hitting me.

He knows now that he is dying.

Victor prodded Auda into a trot, taking his time now and still holding the lance erect. He circled left to check on the condition of the shoulder. The dragon favored it and tried not to move, only following the man with its eyes. But the head drooped perceptibly. He's getting tired now, can't hold his head up, Victor thought. Or he wants me to think that. Victor sawed the reins and turned the mule to the right, at the same time kicking it into a charge.

Victor crossed the lance to his left, put the reins in his teeth, and held onto the lance with both hands. He charged across the dragon's front, to the right, driving in, turning the dragon on its wounded leg. The dragon recognized the tactic and tried to back away, but its dead wing dragging on the ground slowed it. And by that time, Victor was already upon it, the lance dipping in, plunging in between the shoulder and neck where the great artery lay, the man leaning up and against the lance, driving it deeper with his weight and the mule turning in toward the dragon adding its power to the thrust so that the lance sank to the crossbar in the dragon's scaly flesh.

The dragon made no sound; it clamped its jaws tight trying to hold in its life. Ignoring the agony of its right shoulder, it drove against the lance, trying to reach the man, blood spuming, drenching the man and mule, but the mule turned with the dragon, kept the dragon away from the man.

"Breathe!" Victor groaned through clenched teeth. "Here I am! Kill me! Give me your fire!" The dragon tried lift its leg to strike with its claws. It was off balance, the left wing dead, the right foreleg destroyed, and it could only drive itself upon the lance to reach the man, and then it could not even do that. The great head, the great spine-crested neck, sank, lay gently upon the ground.

Victor withdrew the lance. He dismounted slowly, painfully. He drew his sword from the saddle sheath. The dragon lay quivering, huge before him, breathing out its last, its blood flowing like a hot wellspring from the wound in its neck. The eyes followed him as he walked towards it.

"Why did you refuse, grandfather?" he asked the dragon. "Why not kill me as I killed you?" The dragon didn't answer.

He lifted the sword high, and the dragon closed its eyes. He brought the sword down at the base of the dragon's skull, neatly cutting the spinal cord and killing it instantly. Slowly, the dragon's taut muscles relaxed in death, cracking and groaning as the great body collapsed upon itself, sounding very much like a ship sinking. Victor sank against the hot, bloody scales of its neck and the sword fell from his fingers.

Victor walked Auda down to a little brook that flowed through the woods. He lay on the bank with his face in the water, drinking as the mule drank, sucking the water straight into his mouth from the living earth. Then he rose and shook himself. Auda followed him as he walked back to the meadow where the dragon lay enormous in the sun. Victor looked up at the sun and saw that it was only midday.

"I've failed again," Victor said.

The dragon's good wing had fallen half-folded so that it formed a sort of high arched roof beside the body. The sun shone through the thin membrane of the wing, shedding a pale light the color of blood. Victor walked into this cathedral and sat in the blood-wet grass. He put his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands and he sat there. He felt empty, drained, not only of strength but of emotion. The passion was gone and he wondered if anything could replace it. Even his own desire for death was gone. He was lost in the death of the dragon.

"What will I do now?" he asked Auda. Auda twitched his tail and said nothing. He knew the army would be here any time now. They couldn't miss the smoke rising all around him. Victor lay back in the blood-soaked grass and, exhausted, fell asleep in the shadow of the dragon's wing.

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Fiction: Calinnen

Tanith Lee

As Calinnen was riding back from the northern war, he saw a woman in a green gown standing by the track. Her hair was pale as lint, her eyes grey as the rain; she was much younger than the day.

"Sir," she called to him, as the horse drew level, "are you from the battle-place?"

"Yes. And now I am going home." She lowered her eyes. Due to their colour, and the downpour, he could be certain if she wept – or did not.

"Some there are," she said, "who never will come home from there."

"True," he answered coldly. "One of these was my brother. My tidings ride pillion behind me, heavier than my arms and armour."

"I regret your trouble," she said. "But I must ask you, do you know anything of the fate of one named Calinnen?"

Calinnen started. His name was not very common. How odd and unlucky-sounding this, that the woman should inquire of him after his namesake, that man probably being dead, for most were returned by now; he himself was one of the last.

"I have heard the name," he told her, with hidden irony. "No more than that can I vouch for."

"Alas," she said, "Alas." And turning instantly away she went back among the trees that fringed the road.

Disturbed and peculiarly alert, he sat on the horse and watched as she climbed the slope of the wood, and vanished into its shadows above. He thought to make out a stone house there, but was unsure. It was late summer, and all the trees in full leaf, and the rain too made it difficult to confirm. Nor did he think any accompanied here, either to wait on her to guard her. Perhaps she had lost everyone.

At this point he was, he had reckoned, only two days journey from his own estate. It was true he had not ridden this particular track before, since going out he had travelled with the king's army, on wider roads. He did not want now to lose either his time or his way, for in another hour or so the sun would set. He touched his horse's neck. They rode on.

The estate was in poor condition. Many of the men who had worked it were, of course, dead in the war. Others, who had run away, did not now venture back. Calinnen's wife and his steward had held the

place together as best they might. Calinnen's old father, a frail beetle, was little use for anything, and besides, Calinnen had the awful news to tell him. To his horror and distressed relief, Calinnen's father seemed not to take in the fact of his second son's death.

"Ah, there," he said, in a sad, pitying tone, "poor lad." And then, "We are to have a roast boar at the dinner. Why should that be?"

"I think they do it to welcome me," Calinnen said quietly.

"Ah, good, good. This is good."

That night Calinnen and his wife wept together, and later they were lovers. Both had remained faithful, or they had after a reasonable fashion. He guessed she had spent a little time with his steward, but their acts were discreet. Calinnen had naturally, now and then availed himself of women on the march. Neither spoke of these things. Near dawn he roused from a broken sleep to hear her murmur, "I wish I might bear you a son, my lord." But she was barren; they both knew this, though did not discuss it.

Despite that he lapsed into a sort of dream, and dreamt that after all she was with child of him, and bore it, and it was a boy. And they named this son with his own name, Calinnen. And in twenty more years, when he, Calinnen himself was dead, the youth fought in another of the king's wars and was slain. And in the woods two days from his lands, his young mistress waited in a green gown, and sometimes ventured to the road to ask of returning warriors: "Do you know anything of the fate of one named Calinnen?"

When he woke fully at sunrise, Calinnen found this dream stupidly haunted him. He took his wife aside and said to her, "If ever it happens I am gone and yet you bear me a son, never name him after me. "Every man should have his own distinct name, so I believe." She nodded, but looked at him a while, silently. She did not remember what she had murmured in the dark before dawn, and perhaps asked herself if he now reprimanded her for her barrenness, or even her infidelity, and he never had in the past.

Days and nights elapsed, and he saw to the business of his house and land, but thoughts of the war still came to him. Sometimes he had terrible dreams. But he spoke of neither, and pushed them from him. War was an evil essential of the world, yet one more of the curses brought down on Man by his earliest disobedience. It must be endured, and where necessary embraced, but never invited back, as some men did, like a friend of long-standing, to the hearth of his mind.

One day, when he asked the old father how he did, the ancient man said sombrely, "I mourn for my son. He died in the war." This surprised Calinnen slightly, for until then he had been unconvinced he father grasped the tragedy. But that night Calinnen dreamed it was his brother and not himself who had ridden home and, in tears, told the household that Calinnen had perished in battle. While in the woodland two days from the house, a witch in a green gown had warned men that Calinnen's ghost was also on the road, mounted on a phantom horse, for neither of them knew that they had died.

Waking from this dream, Calinnen felt of his hands and arms and face. Getting up he examined his whole body, even staring at himself finally in his wife's mirror of Eastern glass.

"Am I much changed?" he asked her. She shook her head, but he saw in that moment she thought him older, and less strong.

Calinnen now began to dwell, not on the war, but on the woman in green he had encountered. He found it hard to shift her from his inner eye. And, so, he began to dream of her often. In these dreams nothing much happened, it was only that he saw her there over and over, by the track, in the falling rain that was like her eyes. Had she been some witch? If so, he should go back and see what she was at, for maybe she had put a hex upon him. He felt always misplaced now, tired and uneasy, and no new thing, let alone any old one, gave him pleasure.

There came a day when it was not unsuitable he should go.

He told his wife and the steward he had a promise to keep, an old comrade he must visit to the north. He should be gone only four or five days. No one questioned this. It seemed to him his wife and the steward certainly would not miss him.

The year was turning, and the woods when he came in among them were dreary sallow yellow, and the leaves fell always down like a reminder of dying. On the first night of the journey, when he sheltered at a small ruined chapel, the dream he had was unlike all the others, although the woman again was in it. During the dream he had at first been required to search for her, since the stone house he thought he had glimpsed up the slope did not exist. In the end he found a house made of mirror glass, which was almost impossible to discover, as it reflected all the wood back into itself. But a magpie flew over, reflected

also, and perched on the roof, and that way Calinnen saw through the deception. He knocked on the mirror door, where his own image now showed. The door smashed in pieces, and so therefore did his image. Within, three women waited in a line. Their hair was pale as lint, their eyes not grey, but yellow as the fox-eye colour of the dying leaves. It was she, three times over.

"Sir," they said, as one, "do you come here to have your doom retold? You know it well."

"You lie," he said. "What doom is that? I survived the battle. I am alive."

Then only the first woman spoke. She said: "Your doom is threefold. First of your doom is that your wife does not love you."

The second spoke next. She said: "Second of your doom is that you have no son to follow you."

The third spoke – and at this he raised his hand to slay her, but it was too late. She said: "Third of your doom is that you do not die."

"Poor man, you are alive," they said, all three together. "Alas, alas."

Calinnen woke, and drew his sword in the darkness. It was still sharp. She was a witch and he would hill her.

On the following night he only dreamed of the battle, and how he had almost been slain, yet the hail of blades and axes missed him; but then he found his brother, handsome and kind, and younger than he, hacked to scarlet on the earth.

It was an hour after sunrise when he reached the place on the track where she had waited. Now the sun slanted a different way. He saw at once, very clearly, all up the slope to where stood a building of stone. He rode past two gates which hung wide, and dismounting, thundered his fist on the wooden door. Presently a servant came.

"Where is your lady? She with the white hair."

The man's eyes widened, and Calinnen thought he would say: Oh, she is dead these twenty years, but her spectre haunts the road and curses men.

Instead the servant took Calinnen into a hall, and there left him. After a little the woman came, white-haired and grey-eyed, but on this occasion a tall man walked beside her. Other things were changed also, for she wore today a red gown not a green one. And she smiled and was happy. It was the man who asked him, cordially enough, what he wanted.

"I would have a word with her," said Calinnen. "She spoke to me some months ago, as I rode home from the war. She inquired of me if I had heard of, and new the fate of another particular man."

"That was I," said the other man, and he too smiled at Calinnen. "She was part man with fear for me, and would stray out to the road. Is this not so, my love?" he added, turning to her gently.

With a calm dignity she replied, speaking equally to him and to Calinnen, "I do not deny it. Mad I was. But one evening as I waited there, I saw at last my beloved husband riding home, and in the instant sanity came back to me with my joy. Here he stands now. But you, sir, are most generous to have returned to learn my fate and his."

Calinnen assumed then that they, in their mutual gladness, mistook his purpose. But even thought he put on a civilized face for them, his disquiet and rancour did not go away. He spoke to the man at her side.

"It is of interest to me," said Calinnen, "that you and I, sir, bear the same name."

"Ah, do we so?" asked the man. And the woman laughed as a child does, pleased at life's sweet absurdity, its charity and hopefulness.

But Calinnen could not slough his anger. Harshly he said to them, "How was it then that my name of Calinnen was given also to you?"

At this a pause came on the hall. A shadow fell there too, some taller tree, perhaps, that hid the progress of the sun.

"That is not," said the other man, "my name."

"No, nor is it," said the woman. "My lord is called Cadran. And so I asked all who passed if they knew anything of the fate of one so named."

"Calinnen was the name you spoke to me," he said.

"Cadran was the name I spoke. The name of my angel husband. Maddened I might be, but that I would not forget."

And the man came to Calinnen and mildly drew him back across the hall, where one or two other armed men stood watching them, until they reached the outer door.

"How could I mistake—" Calinnen asked, weary at last.

"It is easily done. Some fever in the ears. The sough of the wind perhaps, or falling rain. Farewell. May you be blessed. Do not return here ever."

Then through the weeping woods, over the neglected lands, to the spoiled estate, and desert of a wife, a sneering steward, and cobweb father, and the dark, rode Calinnen, knowing not any answer at all, or knowing all, all and too much. And night after night he dreamed of nothing. Not of the woman, or of his son or his brother, nor even of the battle.

Of nothing, Calinnen dreamed, of nameless nothingness.

The writer of Birthgrave *is she / And the* Flat Earth *books - 'tis Tanith Lee./ Now with hundred books written, / (And two cats, not* quite *kitten),/ She lives with her love by the sea.*

Well, I'm Back: Tibbles, Fauna of Mordor

David Doughan

'The Fauna of Mordor': that is how Tolkien described Siamese cats (*Letters* #219), and he obviously had problems with cats in general. Domesticated animals overall do not figure much in Tolkien's writing, apart from horses and ponies; dogs and other animals get very short shrift. Cats, however, are more frequently found, and by no means in a good light. The first mention that the beginning Tolkienist is likely to come across is that of the cats of Queen Beruthiel, which are obviously good at getting home on a dark night (like most cats). More is revealed about this lady and her unpleasant cats in *Unfinished Tales*. However, by the time readers have got to the *Book of Lost Tales*, they discover that these are not by any means the first nasty felines around; the first forerunner of Sauron is actually a cat: Tevildo, Prince of Cats, or, in Goldogrin, *Tiberth Bridhon Miaugion*. At this stage some will hear a bell ring – a Shakespearean bell, to be precise.

It is well known that Tolkien found Shakespeare's reference in *Macbeth* to Birnam Wood coming to Dunsinane a disappointment, and he is not alone in feeling that Macduff claiming to be "not of woman born" by virtue of a Caesarian birth is a real cop-out (C. Scull and Hammond, W., *J.R.R. Tolkien: Companion and Guide: Reader's Guide,* pp. 24-25). In *The Lord of the Rings* he finally devised something more satisfactory, as the trees, under the control of the Ents, really do march to war; and the Witch-King's doom is encompassed by a woman and a hobbit, not a man. I suspect that in the *Book of Lost Tales* he may also have taken a Shakespearean reference that he found inadequate and given it his own interpretation. This is in *Romeo and Juliet* (Act 3 Scene 1), when there is the following exchange between Mercutio and Tybalt:

> *Mercutio*: Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?
> *Tybalt*: What wouldst thou have with me?
> *Mercutio*: Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives ….

Now why should Mercutio call Tybalt "king of cats" and "rat-catcher"?

The answer lies in popular culture of the time. In such medieval and early modern fables as the *Roman de la Rose* and *Reynard*, which continued in popularity long after their composition, animals have conventional names: the bear is *Bruno*, or *Bruin*; the wolf is *Isengrim*; the rooster, *Chantecler*; the fox, *Reynard*, and so on. In the majority of these the cat is called *Tibert* or *Thibert* , probably derived from *Theudebert*, the name of a couple of Merovingian kings of France; sometimes however this becomes *Tibalt*, or *Tybalt*, from *Theobald*. Whichever version you choose, a common abbreviated name for a cat is *Tib*, or *Tibby*. An exception to this is in the version of the *Roman de la Rose* retold by Chaucer, where the cat is called *Gib*, or *Gilbert*, hence *gib-cat*, usually meaning a neutered beast; but an uncastrated cat was usually known as *Tib*, *Tybalt*, or *Tibert*.

From here it is obviously a short step to the name *Tiberth* of the *Book of Lost Tales*; and *Tybalt* by fairly straightforward phonetic changes can be made into Quenya *Tevildo*. Hence Tolkien has once again taken Shakespeare and made his throwaway reference something significant.

That, I think, explains why we have a Prince of Cats. Unfortunately, it does nothing to explain Tolkien's ailurophobia (if that is what it is). All further suggestions welcome!

David Doughan is a Gentleman of Leisure whose fondness or otherwise for cats is neither here nor there.