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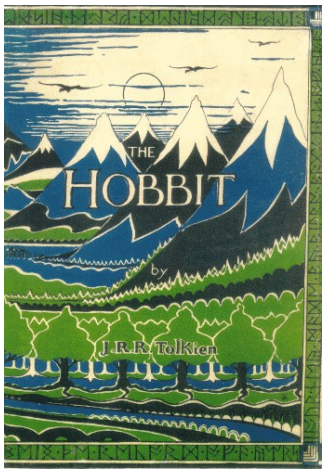
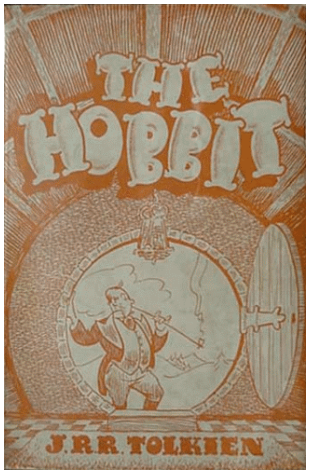
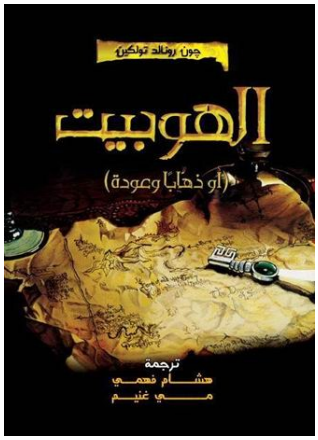
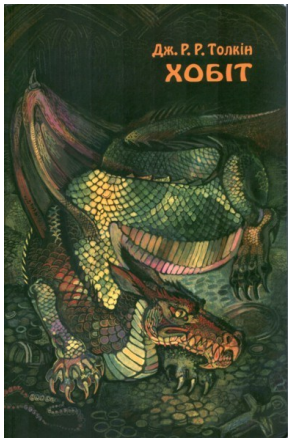


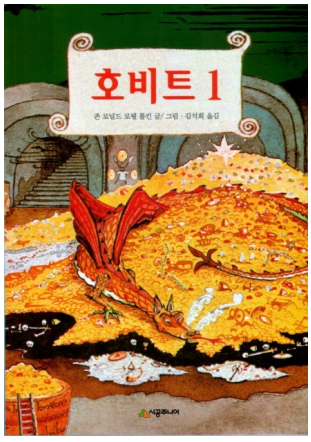


CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF

THE HOBBIT







The Monthly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

VOL. 49 NO. 9 SEPTEMBER 2012 WHOLE NO. 362

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FEATURES

REVIEWS

Cover Art:
The Hobbit, through the Years and across the World, arranged by Jason Fisher.

Reviews, discussion group reports, news items, letters, art work and other submissions for *Mythprint* are always welcome. Please contact the editor for details on format, or send materials to:

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— Editorial —

September, 2012 marks a special moment in the history of J.R.R. Tolkien's masterpiece of children's literature, *The Hobbit*. It was seventy-five years ago this month that the novel first appeared in print, on the 21st of September, 1937. And in all the years since, *The Hobbit* has never gone out of print. Nor is it likely to do so while there are any of us left around to read it. Some of us, I know, have read the book twenty, thirty, forty times. If I may make a bold prediction — though perhaps it isn't really very bold, considering the audience I am addressing — I would go so far as to say *The Hobbit* is not likely to go out of print before books *themselves* go out of style. And I hope none of us are around for *that!*

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of *The Hobbit*, I am happy to present a special issue of *Mythprint*. In the pages that follow, many of us will share our memories of the first time we entered Tolkien's captivating world. I will also be offering book reviews of works dealing closely with *The Hobbit*, as well as an interview with Mark Walker, who has recently published a translation of *The Hobbit* in Latin.

In fact, I daresay that not all of the material I have in store for you is going to fit into a single issue. It's pretty likely we'll still be celebrating *The Hobbit* well into the October issue.

Think of it as a second breakfast, if you like.

And so, without further ado, let the fireworks begin …

— Jason Fisher, Editor

HOBBIT MEMORIES

My grandfather gave me a first edition copy of *The Hobbit* on my seventh birthday. I was not a willing reader at the time, since everything that was deemed "appropriate" for a six year old girl bored me to tears. A battered old book was not my idea of a great birthday present, but since I was in bed with the mumps I started reading it to humor the old man. I did not put that book down until I finished it, nearly eighteen hours later. I have loved Tolkien's writing ever since. This book made me a reader, and it did the same for my children when they grew old enough to enjoy the story.

— Kathryn Colby

I was 11 years old, and a friend who had read *The Lord of the Rings* kept bending my ear about how wonderful it was. I had read books before that she had recommended and not enjoyed them, so I wouldn't undertake to read the larger work without dipping a toe into Tolkien's work by way of something smaller. I took out *The Hobbit* from the library and was immediately swept away by Middle-earth. I loved the story but it was the landscape and cultures that completely enraptured me. Even after just a few chapters I knew the land as though I had known Middle-earth all my life and knew and loved every scent sound and scene of its landscape. It was so vivid. I loved the characters too, Bilbo, Gandalf, Elrond and the Woodland King, Bard the Bowman and the Dwarves. I did then go on to read *The Lord of the Rings* (though to this day my friend has never read *The Hobbit*) and in later years I recall a comment C.S. Lewis made that when we encounter an imaginary world and have such feelings of familiarity it is because we *have* known it before. It is familiar to us because its existence is real, and some part of each of us dwells there, even though we live in this primary reality. It was from Tolkien and Lewis that I first came to understand mythopoeia (even if I can't spell it).

— Gill Bourne

I was 15 years old when my brother gave me *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* for Christmas. It was the Ballatine paperback edition with the bizarro covers. I inhaled the books. I remember reading *The Return of the King* and looking at how many pages were left and thinking, "oh good, I'm not quite done yet!" And then I was so sad to realize I was done, the book was over, and I was faced with a bunch of appendices (at the time they didn't mean much to me).

I haven't always reread *The Hobbit* when I've sat down to reread *The Lord of the Rings* but what has struck me, rereading it recently, is how very funny it is. Because I love the large sweeping scale of *LotR*, I haven't always appreciated the smaller scale of *The Hobbit* but I do now. Old dog, new trick!

— Lynn Maudlin

When the door of the Coos Bay, Oregon, public library closed behind me that day in (probably) the second half of 1966, my pre-Tolkien world had just moments of existence left.

Once through the doorway, one turned right, to the children's section, or left to the adult section. If, aged 11, I poked around the children's section first, then the moment that day when I crossed over to the adult section (not for the first time) was a turning point in my life.

A memory: the Ballantine Tolkien paperbacks displayed with the Barbara Remington Middle-earth map and/or the "Come to Middle-earth!" poster. The artwork caught my eye. I liked it (still do). It looked science-fictiony.

So I read *The Hobbit*. It connected with my existing love of Scandinavian mythology and folklore. As a boy, Tolkien desired dragons with a great desire. I desired trolls. (Look at the troll-drawings by Werenskiold and Kittelsen, in the Asbjornsen and Moe collection of Norwegian Folk Tales.) True, Tolkien's trolls talk like Cockneys. But they have the authentic troll-qualities of ill-gotten wealth, largeness, stupidity, coarseness, and dangerous appetite. Yes, I relished the hobbit, the dwarves, the wizard, the dragon-talk. It seems people usually don't say much about Bert, William, and Tom, though; but I was delighted: something new for me about trolls.

And in a book displayed in the adult section! Who could have expected such a thing?

— Dale Nelson

My mother had run out of books to read to my youngest brother at bed time. We had been through all the Oz books, both the tattered copies we owned and the ones we could find in the public library. She asked a friend of hers, wife of an Anglophile college professor, for recommendations, and the friend reached into her bookcase and pulled out a green-clad volume she had brought back from one of their trips to England. "Try this," she said. This was long before Tolkien appeared in paperback in the U.S., so this book and its author were completely unknown to us.

So my mother started reading *The Hobbit* aloud to my kid brother, a chapter at a time. Several nights in a row, I stood outside his room (heaven forbid I should even inch a toe over the threshhold!) and listened to this captivating story. I don't remember how long I did this before it finally dawned on me that I could read it myself, without waiting for the next installment! I may have been making good grades in school, but this simple solution seemed to have been slow in penetrating my brain. I borrowed the book and eagerly read ahead to the finish. There I saw the magic words: "If you are interested in Hobbits …"

Fortunately, the same family friend had also brought back from England hardcover editions of *The Lord of the Rings*, so my desire for all things Hobbit was more than satisfied. That is, until I saw the appendices …

— David Emerson

I came to *The Hobbit* a bit later than most. My BS was in English Education, but it was my wife who introduced me to Tolkien. I was teaching middle school English at the time and Fridays were required to be used for spelling, an activity that bored the students as well as myself. After the obligatory test, I would give the students their new word list and assignment for the next week. Because I was bored, I started to read to them. I chose *The Hobbit* for the sixth grade because I thought it would appeal to them. What happened is that week by week we would rush faster through the test to get to the book. Some of the students could not stand the suspense and got the book to read it on their own. The funny thing was that even after finishing the book, they would bring it to class and several of them would gather around to follow along as I read. I don't even remember what I read to the seventh and eighth grade students, and they probably don't either. But, years later when I was teaching at a Laboratory School at Indiana State University, I had a graduate student introduce herself as one of my former students. She told me then that my reading to her in the sixth grade made her want to be an English teacher. That Fridays became magical for her and that the text really drove home the power of language to create new worlds.

— Jim Powell

My mother gave me *The Hobbit* when I was maybe seven or eight. She had read *Tarzan* aloud to my brother and me. He wasn't into it, but I asked for more, both aloud, and to read on my own. There was *Treasure Island*, I remember, and a few others. But then, *The Hobbit*. It was the Ballantine mass market paperback with Tolkien's illustration, *Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves*. This was soon followed onto my burgeoning bookshelves by a boxed set of *The Lord of the Rings* — the silver jubilee edition with the cover illustrations by Darrell K. Sweet, who passed away at the end of this past year. I was always partial to his work, and the 1982 Tolkien calendar with his illustrations hung on my bedroom wall for many years.

I don't know how many times I read and re-read those copies, but *The Hobbit* at least was eventually falling to pieces. I am afraid I no longer have that copy, but its ghost haunts every copy I've owned and read since. In a small way, the ghost of my mother is there as well. She was a voracious reader — in junior high school in the late 1950's, she got a special award for having read every single book the school library had to offer. This was a tiny school in the middle of nowhere, Oklahoma, but it was still a singular accomplishment. I inherited my passion for reading from her.

Reading *The Hobbit* (as I have done every year since I discovered it — and twice some years, such as this one) always takes me back to a particular time in my own childhood, when I was discovering all sorts of new worlds. Alan Garner's Alderley Edge. Lloyd Alexander's Welsh-inspired Prydain. Narnia, of course. I still read these books too, but Tolkien more than any of them.

Somebody once said you can never go home again … He had obviously never been to Middle-earth.

— Jason Fisher

The person I have to thank is my fifth-grade teacher, Miss Lloyd. Along with assigning endless subtraction drills, she had the more admirable habit of spending the last half hour of class, once or twice a week, reading us a chapter from a children's novel. One of the books we got through that year was *The Hobbit*.

This was 1968, so it was near the height of the Sixties Tolkien boom, but as a child in deepest suburbia I knew nothing of that. Nor did I know that the book was "fantasy": I had no such categories in my mind. All I knew was that this story opened up vistas of landscape and adventure deeper and richer than any other book I knew — many of which were, in fact, classic fantasies.

A few months later I had the opportunity to borrow a copy (paperback, with the Remington cover). I seized the chance to revisit this story — and to read chapter 8, which I'd missed from being out sick that day. For years afterwards, that chapter felt different from the rest of the book to me, because it was the only one I didn't first hear orally.

Miss Lloyd had told us there were sequels (that was the way she put it), so when I finished reading the borrowed copy I did something the likes of which I'd never done before. I gathered up $4 of my allowance, rode my bicycle to a nearby bookstore — now long gone — and bought all four volumes for myself. From that point I was lost to the world.

It took another six achingly long years before I met anybody else who'd read Tolkien and wanted to talk about him, and, when I did, I found that many of them tended to ignore *The Hobbit* or even put it down. That intrusive and lecturing narrator, for instance. I actually liked the narrator — I thought he was funny, and his lessons on what dwarves and trolls were like added to the believability of the texture. Gradually, *The Hobbit* has become recognized as a masterpiece in its own right and of its own, distinct kind. Studies of it for its own sake are growing, and now (sigh) it even has its own movie. It's not quite such a little fellow in a wide world after all.

— David Bratman

I first read *The Hobbit* in a paperback edition I doubt I could read with ease now; the dimensions would be too small and the print too tiny. But the story changed me. I remember feeling sorry for Bilbo because he had to leave without all the things that might have made the journey pleasant (at least he got some handkerchiefs later). Now, of course, I understand that's the way it had to be. Overall, the tale gave me a safe place to be for a while: though the story had its scarier moments, the world I lived in with Bilbo — and the adventure — was well-defined, well-spaced, well-paced, and frankly beautiful.

And I needed another world to consider, since my own world as a child was bleak, complicated, and thoroughly unsecure. Maybe enduring Bilbo's trials gave me an anchor, a set place if only on the inside, to endure my own perturbations.

Looking back on my experience, I see that reading *The Hobbit* led to teaching *The Hobbit* and then writing a paper on it, which I read at Mythcon and which was subsequently published in *Mythlore*. I'm looking forward to the new movies. How many are they up to, now?

— Christopher Couch

When my husband and I welcomed our daughter into the world, we knew from the start that we wanted to read to her every day. Our choice for the first book she would ever hear was *The Hobbit*, and the three of us shared reading it together as we created our new family.

— Alana Joli Abbott

My introduction to *The Hobbit*, and the other works of J.R.R. Tolkien, came in the spring and summer of 1978 when I was thirteen. I had just finished T.H. White's *The Once and Future King* and asked my older brother what I should read next. He knew my tastes and told me that I would love *The Lord of the Rings*, but should read *The Hobbit* first, even though he warned me it more of a "kid's" book. I was skeptical, but I was sucked in by the dwarves' songs, just like Bilbo. As the story grew in complexity and Bilbo became a different hobbit, I realized that there was more to this book than I had had initially expected. My Tookish side loved the adventures, but I also began to see the complexities that still make me go back to Tolkien's work. I read *The Hobbit* in a little over one weekend day, and then devoured all three volumes of Frodo's story in rapid succession. Still wanting more, I went to at our local Walden Books and discovered that a "new" Tolkien book had come out recently, *The Silmarillon*. That was a tough book for me at that age, but I plowed through it and was captivated. I reread all five books over the Christmas holiday that year, and stared my annual rereading ritual, always starting with "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit." I still have that same green book with Tolkien's designs on the dust jacket; that was my first encounter with Middle-earth!

— David Oberhelman

I stopped reading speculative fiction when in junior high — as bidden by my English teacher. Consequently, I knew very little about the genre. I was a college freshman at the University of Delaware when The Hobbit appeared on the scene. Everyone was reading it so I borrowed a friend's copy. Tolkien captivated me within the first page or two when he took a moment to describe hobbits. Fascinating! Surely fairy tales hadn't been this interesting when I was a kid?

I zipped through the book so I could return it to my friend, but I really wanted to savor it. It wasn't available at the university bookstore nor did the town bookstore have it. I went to our public library and found it there. But, say what, part of the story was different! Since when did Bilbo get the ring as a birthday present?! I asked other fans but no one knew of a different version. Strange. Anyway, I went back to the library and tried to buy their copy! Of course, they

refused. I left the book with them, but warned them they might have a misprint or an unauthorized version. Much later, I discovered that the library's copy was the original version of *The Hobbit*, published before Tolkien changed Gollum's personality to match his vision of the rest of the saga.

The library must have just put their copy back on the shelf, and naturally "it turned up missing".

— Sherry Thompson

My fondest memory of *The Hobbit* is reading the book to my children during a family holiday in Sweden. We used to drive about a lot, and after coming to a new place in the afternoon, we would explore the place, then make and have dinner and when it would normally have been time for television, I would take out *The Hobbit* and we would all come together in the enchantment of Middle-earth.

— Troels Forchhammer

MEMORIES OF THE HOBBIT IN TRANSLATION

I remember quite well how I first read *Bilbo le hobbit*. I read first it in French, aged 16. It was summer 1979, and on the radio Anita Ward was singing "Ring my Bell": ding, dong, ah.

My high-school term had ended, and I was expecting to pay my first visit to England and London with my mother. We were going to see our English cousin, Roland Joffé, not yet famous, but already a film director. I was (and still am) an avid sci-fi reader. Expecting a long journey and not knowing whether it would be much fun (I did not speak English then, even after five years of English at school), I went to my usual bookstore in Paris, near the train station of Saint-Lazare, to buy a book or two. Today the bookstore has become a clothing store like so many bookstores in Paris. I took the stairs down — sci-fi books were in the basement. After a few minutes down there, a short shop assistant very kindly came to me and asked if I was looking for something. To that sort of question I usually replied "no, thank you", but on that day I was probably seeking something after all. I answered that I did not mind a little help. The little man asked if I had heard of Tolkien (in French it sounds like "tolkyeneh") and *Bilbo le hobbit*. I said no straightaway, I never had. He handed me a pocket edition of a book I still cherish. This is how I bought my first copy of *Bilbo le hobbit*, of which I now have about seven editions in French in my library. Back home I started reading it the same day and finished it the next. I came back to the store asking for more of Tolkyeneh's books (remember I did not speak English). I flew to London reading *Le seigneur des anneaux* in (very bad) French. I had no idea that Tolkien was a famous writer but went everywhere with my books. Having quickly managed to get acquainted with some boys, and even girls (probably because I did not speak English), one fellow invited me home and proudly showed me his English editions of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. This is how it all started.

I never learned the name of the small man in the bookstore who introduced me to the wonderful world of Middle-earth. May the hair on his toes never fall out!

— Edward J. Kloczko

Bilbo Bessac. This is how Bilbo Baggins will be called in French from now on. But the French history of *The Hobbit* is already long: it goes back precisely to 1937, when Allen & Unwin thought about a translation in French as soon as the book was published in English.

Back then, Tolkien suggested they worked with Simonne d'Ardenne, after she had translated *Farmer Giles of Ham*. Unfortunately, the project did not see the light and a French translation was only published in 1969 — that is to say, 32 years later. It then talked about a Bilbo Baggins, later to be renamed Bilbon Sacquet in the *Lord of the Rings* translation.

Made by Francis Ledoux, translator of Dickens, this translation — *Bilbo le hobbit* being its title — did not benefit from the indications made in the Guide to the names in *The Lord of the Rings* nor from the knowledge of the rest of the legendarium of which most part was still unavailable.

Thus, in order to celebrate the 75th anniversary of *The Hobbit*, Christian Bourgois editors offer us a new translation of the novel, made by Daniel Lauzon, a translator who proved his worth when working on some volumes of *The History of Middle-earth* (*The Lays of Beleriand*, *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, and *The Lost Road*). Among other things, this new translation enhances the qualities of the songs and poem, which is one of the appeals of the English version, and takes care to preserve an inner consistency when translating proper nouns into French. It gives indeed a new strength to the work which both children and adults will enjoy.

Long live the Bessac!

— Vivien Stocker

Danish Tolkien enthusiasts have long wanted a new translation of Tolkien's books, not least *The Hobbit*, and now we hear that one is coming out.

Not that the old wasn't capable of enchanting its childish audience, but a long list of errors had nonetheless crept in along the way. For instance, where the English text talks about Thror, saying that he was "treated with great reverence by the mortal men", the Danish text claims that he was "threatened with deadly revenge by the mortal men". Admittedly, this is one of the graver examples — lesser errors are more abundant, such as inconsistencies in translating "you" because we, in Danish, retain both the formal and the familiar forms of the second person (*you* and *thou*).

My greatest regret in all translation of Tolkien to Danish is, however, that there is no tradition for expressing dialect in writing, nor are Danish children familiar with older forms of our language — thus there is little that can be done to let the Trolls speak the dialect of Vesterbro in Copenhagen, nor to let, in *The Lord of the Rings*, Faramir speak with the gravity of, for example, N.F.S. Grundtvig.

— Troels Forchhammer

An interview with Mark Walker, translator of *Hobbitus Ille: The Latin Hobbit*. [Walker's Latin translation of *The Hobbit* will be reviewed in the next issue of *Mythprint*.]

Let's begin with what is perhaps the most obvious question: why translate The Hobbit *into Latin? What were some of your reasons and goals for such a huge undertaking?*

This was something I had thought about for some time — having seen all the other children's books, like *Harry Potter* and *Paddington Bear* and *Winnie the Pooh* in Latin, I was a bit puzzled as to why no one had taken on *The Hobbit* already. In many ways it seemed to me a more natural candidate for translation than many of the others, specifically because the world of Middle-earth can be (mostly) described using the vocabulary of a standard Latin dictionary: there are no laptops or telephones or cars or TVs and the like, so you don't have to invent or use a whole lot of new words. The difficulty I always had with those other books was the profusion of words that can't be found in a standard Latin dictionary — and none of them come with a glossary, so every now and then you simply have to sneak a peek at the English original. I wanted to produce a translation that stood on its own.

In the end, though, my main thought was simply this: wouldn't it be fun! Fun to do, and fun to read. I feel that we Classicists go to all this trouble to learn Latin — sometimes a pretty painful process — only to be confronted with a fairly limited range of reading material: perhaps, I thought, Latinists don't always want to read the great classics of Ancient Rome, don't always want to be reading Latin for the sake of an essay assignment, perhaps sometimes they might want to relax a bit and read something in Latin just for the sheer pleasure of it.

How did the project evolve? Did you have any difficulty pitching the project to publishers? How did the arrangement with HarperCollins come about?

This was oddly enough the easy bit! Two things happened at about the same time that convinced me the stars were in alignment for this project. The first was Peter Jackson finally going ahead with his *Hobbit* movies — that was the main thing I had been waiting for — the second was HarperCollins republishing Peter Needham's Latin translation of *Paddington* (*Ursus Nomine Paddington*). This was towards the end of 2010 if I recall. I got in touch with HarperCollins, who own the publishing rights to the Tolkien estate here in the UK, and pitched my idea for the Latin *Hobbit*, saying that the time was right to do it now since we could get it out in time to coincide with a peak in Hobbit-mania! It turned out, fortuitously, that the timing was even better than I realised, since 2012 is the 75th anniversary of the publication of the original book. The people at HarperCollins did a bit of research into sales of other Latin titles like *Harrius Potter* and decided that it would indeed be worthwhile.

Can you tell us a little bit about your background, both as a Classicist and as an admirer of Tolkien?

I have an odd background I suppose, but perhaps that's why I was drawn to this project. I didn't have an opportunity to study Latin at school and it wasn't until I was at University that I began to study Classics (though my undergraduate degree is actually in Philosophy). I later took Latin exams and ultimately a Masters in Classics, all done part-time as an adult learner. I think this experience gave me a more eclectic outlook as a Classicist, since as an adult you tend to follow your own whims and curiosities rather than adhere to a set school curriculum — for example, being a bit musical, I became fascinated by those texts like the *Requiem Mass* that are so frequently set to music — and ranged quite widely over Latin literature, medieval and Renaissance authors, and even things like Anglo-Latin poetry, not just the Romans. So in my mind Latin is not solely the language of Ancient Rome, it is just as much the language of a great deal of Western literature right up to the eighteenth century.

As for Tolkien, I read *The Hobbit* as a youngster, and as a teenager I made a pact with myself that I would read *The Lord of the Rings* once a year every year — a pact I kept up for quite a few years! So those books were a formative influence on me.

How long did the translation take?

By the time the publishers had agreed to go ahead, I had about a year before the deadline for submitting the finished copy. Trouble was, I was teaching Classics in a school at the time and suddenly realised that I had a big, big decision to make: it became clear to me that I couldn't possibly complete the work while teaching at the same time. So, much to the headmaster's astonishment, I resigned my teaching post. But it wasn't until the summer that I was able to leave, and not until September 2011 that I could really begin work on the translation in earnest. And then, because the publishers decided it would be great to have the book out in time for this September (2012), that is the 75th anniversary of the original book, we agreed to move the deadline forward. Then the pressure really was on! I sat down one day and calculated how many working days I had, and how many pages I had to complete every week. The result was a pretty daunting schedule, with absolutely no slack in it. I just had to crack on.

Were there any particularly thorny passages?

I don't recall anything being particularly worse than the rest, though I used to cheer up when I turned a page to find a lot of dialogue, and sigh when there were seemingly endless paragraphs of description: Chapter 8, for example, the journey through Mirkwood, seemed to go on and on forever! I did scratch my head over the speech of the "cockney" trolls in Chapter 2, and finally had to abandon attempts to do it proper justice: there isn't a dialect equivalent in Latin, at least not one we are ever taught in school, so though I tried to make their speeches sound rough and ill-formed, the trolls still speak "proper" textbook Latin.

My overriding concern always was to make the translation as easily comprehensible as possible — I didn't want readers to feel that they ever needed to look at the English version as a sort of crib for the Latin. My ideal reader has access to a standard Latin dictionary, but should find that otherwise this book is self-contained: hence the glossary and list of proper names at the back.

Tolkien had a marked preference for Germanic, rather than Mediterranean, mythology. This would seem to present certain challenges to a Latin translation. What words, for example, did you settle on to translate "trolls", "wargs", "dwarves", and "elves"?

"Elves" is a good example of one thing I didn't want to do: I didn't want it to be a requirement for my readers to be familiar with the etymology of a word in order to understand the Latin translation. So, in the case of "elf", an email correspondent recommended to me that I should look at the etymology of that name — it comes to us from Old English, and ultimately from a conjectured Proto-Indo-European root related to the Latin word *albus*, "white" — so the suggestion was I should call them *Albi* or something like that. But it seemed to me that the Romans already had a perfectly good name for forest-dwelling spirits, namely *Dryades* ("Dryads"). And just as Tolkien himself took English words like "elf" and "dwarf" and adapted them for his own context, I felt that if there was already a word in a standard Latin dictionary that could be similarly adapted I should use it. So elves are *dryades* and dwarves are *nani*. My rule of thumb was: if there is already a word in the Latin dictionary, then I should try and use it if possible.

Similarly, what did you decide to do about Tolkien's names? The majority of these are Norse in form. How did you decide to Latinize them? Are they "translated", based on their original underlying meanings; did you adapt them phonologically to Latin; or did you just leave them alone? Are they declined? Which declensions are they?

I had a very clear idea about what to do with proper names. There is, fortunately, a very long epigraphical tradition of Latinising names: any old church in Britain or Europe often has Latin epitaphs on its walls, and in those inscriptions you find names like *Rogerus* and *Christopherus* and *Harrius* and *Samuelus* and *Elizabetha* and *Carolina* and so on. That is, names that are easily recognisable. So that was my aim: to make the proper names, just as with the epitaphs, as instantly recognisable as I could — I didn't want the reader to have to puzzle over them, or be forced to consult the glossary in order to remember who is who. And, just like with "elves" and "dwarves", I certainly didn't want the reader to have to know the etymology of the name in order to understand it. So Bilbo is simply *Bilbo, Bilbonis* and Thorin is simply *Thorinus, Thorini* and so on. The exceptions were the obviously descriptive names, like "Oakenshield" (*Scutumquerceum*) and "Bullroarer" (*Taurifremitor*) It's easy to forget, given the great wealth of Tolkien's subsequent output, not to mention all the Tolkien scholarship we have these days, that *The Hobbit* is a book for children. Sometimes the temptation to overcomplicate things ought to be resisted!

Did you have to come up with any interesting neologisms? Care to offer an example or two and explain what went into their making?

Despite not having to use words for cars and telephones, there are plenty of made-up names: which is why the book has a glossary at the back. Some words — like those for fireworks, or a game of skittles — come from Neo-Latin Lexicons. Others are specific to Tolkien: *hobbitus* itself being the most obvious. I also used *orcus* for "orc" (though mostly in the book they are called "goblins", *gobelini*). "Troll" gave me pause — this is a word from Norse mythology without any Roman equivalent, and so I experimented with Latin "monster" words like *monstrum* and *belua* without liking any of them. But I already had *Gollum* as a proper name (neuter: *Gollum, Golli*), so *trollum* (plural: *trolla*) seemed to work OK — it at least had the benefit of again being instantly understandable. In hindsight, *troglodytum* (a late-ish Latin word derived from Greek, hence English "troglodyte") would have worked very well indeed. But I'm stuck with *trollum* now!

How much of a challenge was it to translate the songs and poems in The Hobbit*? Did you attempt to imitate Tolkien's meter and rhyme schemes, or did you adapt the songs into Classical Roman forms? Can you talk a little bit about the process?*

They were both the hardest and the most fun things to do, and they were for me one of the principal attractions of the translation. I didn't try to copy exactly Tolkien's metrical patterns, but I did try to keep as much as possible to the general shape, and certainly to the spirit, of his verses. I had originally planned to render all the verses in classical quantitative metres, but quickly discovered that wouldn't quite work. Immediately in the first chapter this issue comes up, when the dwarves first of all sing an impromptu ditty about smashing Bilbo's crockery, then just a page or so later go on to sing a very solemn and ancient dwarvish song. That old song went nicely in quantitative measure (in this case, Asclepiads, which have the same four-line stanza pattern as Tolkien's original) but the dish-smashing song demanded a different treatment. Hence I made a distinction between off-the-cuff ditties and more serious verses. The former are rendered in accentual (rhythmic and rhyming) style, the latter in classical form. The goblins sing in a stamping trochaic beat modelled on things like the *Dies Irae*; but when the elves of Rivendell tease Bilbo and his party they do it in lilting iambics. In Chapter 10 the folk of Lake-town sing an old song about the return of the king under the mountain in an Horatian lyric metre; then again in the very last chapter, just like the first, we have both rhythmic (iambics) and quantitative verse (Sapphics) from the elves.

Did you do anything special with the riddles?

Those riddles (*aenigmata*) are the exception to the rule of thumb I've just mentioned, since although they are composed on the spot, Tolkien tells us this is an ancient game with strict rules. There are also extant Latin examples of such riddles (e.g. by Aldhelm) in hexameters or elegiac distichs, so it seemed only natural to use those as a template.

One of wonderful things about Tolkien's works is that they are so suited for reading aloud. If we were to read your Latin translation aloud, do you prefer the Classical or the Ecclesiastical pronunciation? Any particular reason(s)?

There seem to be lots of different ways to pronounce Latin, depending very much on context — if you are singing in a choir, for example, you won't be using the same pronunciation as when you read Catullus. As far as *Hobbitus Ille* is concerned, I don't want people to pretend it has somehow fallen through a crack in space-time from Ancient Rome and is in some way supposed to have been written by a Roman author. Not at all: it is what it is, a modern translation for a modern audience. That said, my editorial house style was to use the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* for definitions, examples of syntax and word usage, as well as for orthography (so "i" not "j" and "u" not "v"). And that is very decidedly a classical Roman Latin dictionary, the core vocabulary and grammar of which is derived from Cicero, Caesar *et al.* So I suppose if someone

were to read *Hobbitus Ille* aloud I'd expect them to use the restored classical Latin pronunciation we find recommended by scholars like W. Sidney Allen in his *Vox Latina*.

Can we expect a Latin translation of The Lord of the Rings *one of these days?*

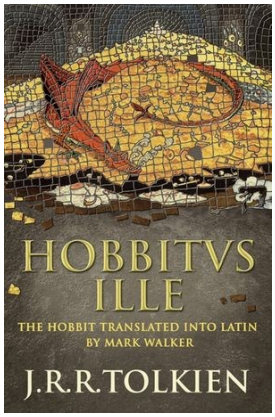
Yes, but not from me! In fact, I recently met a lovely guy called Richard Sturch, who has been working on this very thing for a number of years — as a hobby, you understand, not because he has a publisher ready to take it on. I said I envied him because he has no deadline to meet and can take just as long as he likes; but at the same time I told him that I think he's completely barmy to tackle such a massive task! I wish him all the best of luck with this, but I certainly won't be rushing out to try and compete with him!

Rhythmic verse: Goblin's Song (Chapter 4: "Clap! Snap! The black crack!"). Rhythmic trochaic.

plaude! frange! rima atra!
rape, fuge! et furare!
ita ad orcorum castra
nunc descende, mi amice!

crepa! strepa! fracta pressa!
et include et contunde!
pulsa, pulsa longe infra!
ho-hi, ho-hi! mi amice!

uerberate, flagellate!
percutite et ferite!
laborate, nec cessate!
orci potent et cachinnent
circum, circum longe infra,
longe infra, mi amice!



Classical verse: Song of the Lake-men (Chapter 10, "The King beneath the mountains"). Trochaic dimeter / iambic trimeter (catalectic) q.v. Horace *Ode* ii.18.

ille Rex sub arduis
et saxeisque montibus relictis,
rector ille fontium
argenteorum, qui suis redibit!

et corona tollitur
et sarciuntur nunc lyrae senectae,
aureaeque personent
aulaeque uersibus nouis senectis!

arboresque montibus
herbaeque nunc sub sole fluctuabunt,
fluuiis opes fluent,
in amnibus nunc aureis fluentes.

riuuli fluunt, lacus
item libenter fulgurantque laete,
sic maligna sidera
cadentque montis rege nunc reducto!

The Mythopoeic Society would like to thank Mark Walker and HarperCollins for their permission to reprint these two selections from *Hobbitus Ille*. The material is protected by copyright.

Reflecting on the Opening to *The Hobbit*.
By Mike Foster.

The first chapter of *The Hobbit* does in microcosm all that J.R.R. Tolkien will do in macrocosm in the mastery and the manufacture of his Middle-earth. In twenty pages, the author creates a paradigm of the techniques and tactics that will illuminate *The Hobbit*'s sequel, his magnificent *The Lord of the Rings*. Feigned history, invented languages both spoken and runic, back-story, word play and word coinages, genealogy, a sensory *pousse-café* of sight, taste, sound, being the dwarves' colorful garb, demands for food, and instrumental orchestration respectively foretell Tolkien's fictive gift. Here are songs both comical and historical, maps and legends, word coinages, broad humor, riddles, tones both buoyantly childish and gravely adult, and more.

Paramount is the creation of Gandalf. "Gandalf! If you had only heard a quarter of what I have heard , and I have heard only very little of what all there is to hear, you would be prepared for any sort of remarkable tale" (13). The wizard is one part mysterious guide and one part Marxian (Groucho) flim-flam man. He arrives too late and departs too soon, as he will in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, published seventeen years later. Discussing who or what he is runs second only to Tom Bombadil in causing hotel house detectives to interrupt scholarly discussions after midnight.

But above all, the philologist professor creates a new noun that earned him a place in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (and paid him back for long labor in his first post-war scholastic job) — "hobbit". Those who've read this far may know that Tolkien was doing the necessary academic swink of grading examination bluebooks when: "On a blank leaf I scrawled 'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.' I did not and do not know why. I did nothing about it for a long time … [b]ut it became *The Hobbit* in the early 1930s" (vi).

Although daughter Priscilla says he enjoyed Walt Disney's *Snow White*, nothing Dopey about these dwarves exists, although there is plenty of Grumpy here, mostly exemplified by headman Thorin Oakenshield. Balin, the most sympathetic dwarf, steps right out of England's imperfect myth, *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Oddly fitting, inasmuch as James Joyce's hand-corrected typescript *Ulysses* lurks in Marquette's Special Collections treasury, a classic example of a literary epiphany is here.

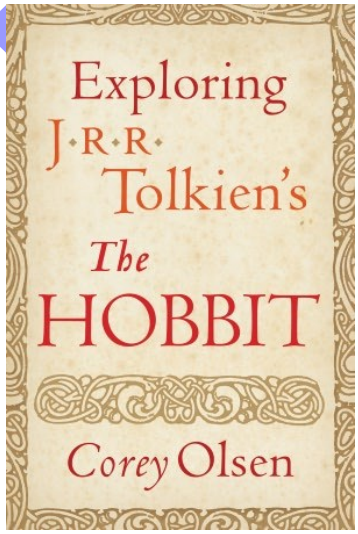
> "As they sang the hobbit felt a love of beautiful things made by hands and by cunning and by magic moving through him, a fierce and a jealous love, the desire of the hearts of the dwarves. Then something Tookish woke up inside him, and he wished to see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and explore the caves, and wear a sword instead of a walking-stick. He looked out of the window. The stars were out in a dark sky above the trees. He thought of the jewels of the dwarves shining in dark caverns. Suddenly in the wood beyond The Water a flame leapt up—probably somebody lighting a wood-fire—and he thought of plundering dragons settling on his quiet hill and kindling it to flames. He shuddered; and very quickly he was plain Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Underhill, again.
>
> "He got up trembling." (22)

That bifurcation of human character between the adventurous and the sedate also strikes the key chord of both *Peter Pan*, a prime inspiration for Tolkien's book, and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*: the warring desires to experience great perils and be safely home in bed by dark. The evolution of Bilbo Baggins from lightweight to leader illustrates W.H. Auden's "Six Qualities of a Quest" and Joseph Campbell's "monomyth" in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

In its first chapter, this book has the air of a tale being told, with interjections from the author to his three sons and, once published in 1937, to his presumably juvenile readers. Like Charles Dodgson's story of Alice spun on a picnic with the three Liddell girls on July 4, 1865, or J.M. Barrie's invention of Peter Pan told to the four eldest day Llewellyn-Davies boys in Kensington Gardens, this tale is enriched by being spoken, as the bards of bygone days did, before it was written.

Later, with the introduction of Bard, Aragorn's antecedent, it assumes a more adult voice, perhaps due to the fact that Tolkien had shared the tale with C.S. Lewis and the Inklings. The handwriting of the manuscripts of *The Hobbit* in Marquette University's Raynor Library suggests that these final chapters, all shorter than the earlier ones, were written more straightforwardly — indeed, hastily — than the meandering earlier parts. Bilbo Baggins becomes peripheral and the deeper, darker world of the masterpiece sequel *The Lord of the Rings* glimmers into view.

At 75, *The Hobbit* is still as sprightly as a lively grandfather. George Sayer reminisced about Tolkien's delight in playing Thomas the Train Engine on the floor with his grandsons. That silvered spirit of serious play that will spark this 1937 fiction and the masterpiece that would come after it. ≡



Corey Olsen. *Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit*. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 336 pp. $25. Reviewed by David D. Oberhelman.

Corey Olsen is no doubt known to many *Mythprint* subscribers for his lively podcasts in The Tolkien Professor series and for the online lecture courses he and other scholars provide through the Mythgard Institute. Indeed, Olsen, an assistant professor at Washington College in Maryland, has devoted himself to bringing Tolkien scholarship to the public, offering entertaining yet highly penetrating analyses of Tolkien's work for a general audience of readers. Olsen uses his talents as a lecturer in his first book, *Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit*, in which he offers a chapter-by-chapter analysis of *The Hobbit*, approaching Tolkien's first novel for children on its own terms and not as a mere prequel to the grander narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Olsen focuses his discussion on the original 1937 edition of *The Hobbit*, what he terms the "solo stage", and the "revision stage" of the book published in 1951 (i.e., the second edition) in which Tolkien, who was deep into the subsequent story of the One Ring, made some crucial changes to the text — most notably the "Riddles in the Dark" chapter — to bring the earlier work in line with the later one. Olsen does not extend his discussion into the "assimilation stage" of *The Hobbit* and consequently steers clear of Tolkien's later writings on the adventures of Bilbo and the dwarves which place those events into the context of the War of the Ring and the earlier history of Middle-earth. Indeed, readers looking for a comprehensive overview of *The Hobbit* in relation to the body of Tolkien's writings about his secondary universe may be somewhat disappointed; those readers might start with Douglas Anderson's *The Annotated Hobbit* and John Rateliff's *The History of The Hobbit*, which both provide comprehensive investigations into the different stages of composition and the relationship of the *Hobbit* material to the legendarium as a whole. Yet for those who want insightful commentary on *The Hobbit* as a work that stands on its own as a valuable contribution to children's literature, Olsen will be an enjoyable and astute guide.

As he progresses through the chapters of *The Hobbit*, Olsen traces certain themes such as Bilbo's choices, luck and providence in his adventures, and the changes in tone as the stakes become greater throughout the course of the novel. Olsen combines insightful commentary on the action with close readings of significant passages, especially of the songs that play an important role in the narrative which far too many readers unfortunately gloss over or skip altogether. His discussion of the "silly" singing elves of Rivendell highlights the differences between these High Elves and the lower ones of Mirkwood, and illustrates how "we are experiencing something fundamentally outside human experience" (296), though some readers may be left wanting the rest of the story about those unusual beings. Olsen gives an excellent account of the "Riddles in the Dark" exchange between Bilbo and Gollum, showing how the riddles they tell reflect their vastly different experiences but also the common ground that unites them. Here Olsen notes the changes this chapter underwent from 1937 to the second edition, but does not dwell upon the transformation of Gollum into the conflicted, Ring-afflicted character we meet in *The Lord of the Rings*. This commentary does not focus on the earlier, discarded versions of the tale (as John Rateliff does in his detailed examination of the various stages of composition for *The Hobbit*), but Olsen nevertheless does discover how in the catalogue of epithets Bilbo gives himself during his conversation with Smaug vestiges of an abandoned episode with the spiders of Mirkwood peek through the later revisions. Such moments of critical insight mixed with Olsen's conversational style will appeal to Tolkien novices and even experts, making this companion worth the shelf space in even the most discerning *Hobbit* specialist's library.

As an introduction to *The Hobbit*, Olsen's book, like his successful podcasts, helps make Tolkien accessible to the general public and shows how one can appreciate the charms and messages of this classic without regarding it as merely a lesser part of the larger cycle of Middle-earth. Olsen will not overwhelm new readers with too much information, but hopefully will leave them wanting to discover more of what Tolkien has to offer them. ≡

CALL FOR PAPERS

Mythopoeic Society Conference 44
Kellogg Conference Center, Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI – July 12-15, 2013

[redacted]

Green and Growing:
The Land and its Inhabitants in Fantasy Literature

Author Guest of Honor: Franny Billingsley
Franny Billingsley is the author of children's and young adult fantasy novels *The Folk Keeper* (winner of the 2000 Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Children's Literature), *Well Wished*, and *Chime*.

Scholar Guest of Honor: Christopher Mitchell
Christopher Mitchell is the Director of the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College, Illinois, a major research collection of materials by and about seven British authors: Owen Barfield, G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, George MacDonald, Dorothy L. Sayers, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams.

How does mythopoeic literature address the relationship between the land and its inhabitants, between the wild and the cultivated? What are their respective moral values, their dangers and delights? Tangled forests, majestic trees, ordered fields, carefully tended gardens; or untamed, wild beauty: each offers a different kind of bounty to those who would live off the land. What role do advocates and protectors of the land play in fantasy literature, particularly as personified in characters such as Yavanna, Radagast, Sam Gamgee and, of course, Tom Bombadil.

Our theme also voices many a cautionary tale — Tolkien's Dead Marshes, the scouring of the Shire, the desolations of Smaug, Saruman and Sauron, the unnatural winter in Narnia — inviting eco-critical approaches to mythopoeic literature. From the whimsical wild places of Baum, Seuss and Sendak; to the mysterious and often tutelary landscapes of Orwell, Garner and Burroughs — not to mention those of our favorite Inklings — we invite papers on any aspect of the green and growing land in mythopoeic writing.

Papers and panels dealing with the conference themes (or other themes sparked in your brain by this topic) are encouraged. As always, we especially welcome proposals for papers and panels focusing on the work and interests of the Inklings (especially J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, and Charles Williams), of our Guests of Honor, and of other fantasy authors and themes. Papers and panels from a variety of critical perspectives and disciplines are welcome.

Individual papers will be scheduled for one hour to allow time for questions, but should be timed for oral presentation in 40 minutes maximum. Two presenters who wish to present shorter, related papers may also share a one-hour slot, in which case please indicate this on your proposal. Panels will be scheduled for 1.5-hour time slots and normally will include 3-5 presenters who will speak briefly on the subject (usually 10 minutes or less), leaving substantial time for discussion with the audience.

Paper and panel proposals (250 word maximum), along with contact information, should be sent to the appropriate Papers or Panels Coordinator at the following email addresses by 30 April 2013. AV and technology requests must be included in your proposal.

Papers Coordinator
Dr. Leslie A. Donovan
Associate Professor, University of New Mexico
[redacted]

Panels Coordinator
Dr. Judith J. Kollman
Professor Emerita, University of Michigan- Flint
[redacted]

Recently Released from the **Mythopoeic Press**

Mythlore Index Plus

Edited by Janet Brennan Croft and Edith Crowe
with Artwork by Tim Kirk and Sarah Beach
$10.00; 273 pages; Altadena, July 31, 2012

Available only as a digital PDF file through the Mythsoc web site at: [redacted]

Just in time for Mythcon 43, the Mythopoeic Society Press (MythPress) released a newly, updated edition of the *Mythlore Index*. This third edition of the index is published only as a digital file in PDF format to allow researchers to easily search its citations. *Mythlore Index Plus* not only indexes works from *Mythlore's* issues 1-118, but also has been expanded to include bibliographic references for all articles and reviews published in the *Tolkien Journal* (an earlier Mythopoeic Society venture published from 1965 through 1976), Mythcon Conference Proceedings (the 1969 Narnia Conference; Mythcon 1, 2, 3, 16, 23 [the 1992 Tolkien Centenary Conference], and 29 [the 1998 Lewis Centenary Conference]), and the Mythopoeic Press Essay Collections (*Tolkien on Film*, *Past Watchful Dragons*, and *The Intersection of Fantasy and Native America*).

Articles in *Mythlore Index Plus* are indexed by author, title, and subject. The section for articles indexed by author includes annotations. Reviews are indexed by author of the review as well as by the author of the item reviewed. In addition, *Mythlore Index Plus* is illustrated with classic black and white artwork from early issues by Tim Kirk and Sarah Beach. This essential reference in mythopoeic studies will be updated by addenda published on the Society's website after the publication of each *Mythlore* issue.

The Mythopoeic Society

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