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The Rise of *The Lord of the Rings*: A Synopsis of the Ancient Annals

Abstract

Attempt to synthesize the material in the Appendixes to *The Lord of the Rings* and other sources available at that time into a single chronological synopsis of events. Useful as an indication of pre-Silmarillion understanding of Middle-earth history.

Additional Keywords

Tolkien, J.R.R.—Settings—Middle-earth—Chronology

The Rise of the Lord of the Rings

A Synopsis of the Ancient Annals

Christine Jones

This is a synopsis of the history of Middle-earth prior to the year 3001 of the Third Age, as it has been revealed by Professor Tolkien. It brings together information given in the Appendices, in the body of *The Lord of the Rings*, and in a few other places such as a published interview with Professor Tolkien, and the professor's comments in Donald Swann's songbook, *The Road Goes Ever On*. This information is presented here in abbreviated, but (I hope) coherent form, and in chronological order.

The Guardians of Middle-earth are the Valar, angelic beings, sons of Eru, the One who rules the world. He keeps a watch on their doings, and aids them when they call upon him, but in the history of the Second and Third Ages as we know it this happened only once. Greatest of the Valar are Manwe and his wife Varda, also called Elbereth. The home of the Valar is in Valinor, a land far to the west of Middle-earth.

Early in the First Age, the Eldar came to Valinor and the nearby island, Eressea. They were of the Elven-folk, who had originated in Middle-earth, but had become divided into two groups: the Eldar or West-elves, and the Silvan or East-elves. Later the Eldar themselves became divided, when one group, the Noldor, left Middle-earth and sailed to Valinor, and the other, the Sindar or Grey-elves, remained on the west coasts of Middle-earth.

Chief of the Noldor was Feanor. He created the Silmarilli, three jewels filled with the light of the Two Trees that illuminated Valinor. But the Silmarilli were stolen and the Trees destroyed by Morgoth, the Great Enemy, an evil Vala. He took the jewels to his fortress Thangorodrim, in Angband in the north of Middle-earth. Feanor resolved to regain the Jewels by force. The Valar opposed this, but many of the Noldor supported him, and he led them in exile back to Middle-earth to make war on Morgoth. The Edain, the Fathers of Men, aided the Noldor, as did their cousins the Grey-elves, but in the war that followed, the elves and the Edain were utterly defeated.

At this time, Beren, a man, and Luthien, daughter of the king of the Sindar, met and fell in love. Together they entered Thangorodrim and seized one of the Jewels from the Iron Crown of Morgoth. Luthien later bore Beren a son, Dior. Then Beren was slain and Luthien gave up her immortality to follow him. But Dior became the father of Elwing, who wedded Earendil, another child of an Elf-human marriage. Elwing gave her husband the Silmaril, and by its light he sailed to Valinor, seeking the aid of the Valar in the war with Morgoth. That aid was given and Morgoth was destroyed, along with a large part of Middle-earth, in a cataclysm that marked the end of the First Age.

Many, though not all, of the Noldor returned to Valinor as the Second Age began, and many of the Sindar went with them. But the Valar forbade one of the Noldor to return. This was Galadriel, a great queen, the only survivor of the Elf-princes and queens who had led the Noldor to Middle-earth--against the will of the Valar, it will be remembered. Galadriel said proudly that she did not wish to return, and with her Sindarin husband Celeborn went to dwell in Eregion, west of the Misty Mountains. Later they crossed the Mountains and became the rulers of the enchanted forest, Laurelindorinan, or Lothlorien. The Elves whom they ruled were mostly of the Silvan folk. (At the end of the Third Age, both the Valar and Galadriel changed their minds, and the great Elf-queen returned from her long exile to Valinor.)

The Valinor had another problem to solve after the downfall of Morgoth. Earendil and Elwing left two sons, Elros and Elrond, who were half-elf, half-human. The Valar offered them a choice: they could be mortal like their human ancestors, or immortal like the Elves, and with the privilege of sailing to Valinor when they wearied of Middle-earth. Elrond chose the fate of the elves, but

remained in Middle-earth. Elros chose the fate of men. As a reward for their courage in the wars with Morgoth, he and the Edain were given a land safe from the dangers of Middle-earth: the Isle of Elenna, not far from Valinor and Eressea. There was founded the kingdom of Numenor.

For many generations the Numenoreans dwelt in peace and in friendship with the Eldar and the Valar. Their kingdom increased in greatness and glory among the realms of the world. They were great mariners, and came often to Middle-earth to trade with its people and to aid the Elves who had remained there. From the Eldar they learned many things, including the Elven languages. But one ban had been placed on them: they were forbidden to sail west out of sight of Numenor, or to set foot upon the Undying Lands. And one thing they lacked: immortality. Yet for many years the Numenoreans were content.

Meanwhile the Valar's apprehension that Middle-earth would not be a safe dwelling-place for Elros and his people was being amply borne out. Though Morgoth was destroyed, some of his servants survived. Among them was Sauron, a being of enigmatic nature, immortal and utterly evil. He did not, unfortunately, look evil at this time, so his true nature was not apparent to all of the Elves of Middle-earth, whom Sauron tried to make allies of. There is no record that Galardiel or Elrond were ever deceived, nor was Gil-galad, heir to the kings of the Noldor, and High-king of all the Elves of the West. But Celebrimbor, ruler of the Elven-smiths of Eregion, was won over. His people were great craftsmen--Celebrimbor was, in fact, descended from Feanor-- and Sauron promised to increase their knowledge and skill. He kept the promise, and under his teaching and guidance the Elven-smiths, in the year 1500 of the Second Age, began to forge the fateful Rings of Power.

Twenty in all of these rings were made: nineteen by the Elves, and one by Sauron alone. With it he hoped to control the wearers of all the others, and to that end he put a great deal of his power into his Ring-- so much that its destruction would render him permanently powerless. This risk seemed small, for the Ring could be destroyed in only one place: Orodruin, the Flaming Mountain of Mordor, Sauron's stronghold in the south-east of Middle-earth. (He had taken this land for his own realm in 1000 SA, alarmed by the growing power of the Numenoreans.)

However, Sauron was only partly successful in his aim with the Rings. Nine of them were given to human beings of Middle-earth; with these rings, which he helped make, Sauron utterly enslaved their nine possessors. They became invisible and almost invulnerable, creatures of nightmare, Sauron's most faithful and terrible servants. Seven rings were given to the Dwarves; these rings too were evil, since Sauron had aided in their making, but they failed to control their wearers. The Dwarves were a sturdy and stubborn people; all that the rings did to them was to increase their greed for gold and other precious things. So this attempt was unsuccessful. Three of these rings Sauron regained, after many centuries; the rest, being more vulnerable than Sauron's own Ring, were destroyed by dragons.

Finally, the Elves, working alone, made three rings for themselves. Undoubtedly Sauron intended to put his evil power on them, but he never got the chance. For when he first put on the Ring that he had forged in the fires of Orodruin, Celebrimbor perceived his from afar, and heard him speak the words that he had engraved on the Ring:

"One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to bind them,
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness
bind them."

Then Celebrimbor knew that he and his people had been Betrayed, and they seized the Three Rings and fled. So the Three remained unsullied, though dependent for their power on the existence of the One Ring. But this power was in works of making, healing, and preserving, not in war or conquest. Such power was soon needed, for war broke out between the Elves and Sauron. Eregion was laid waste, and Celebrimbor died. Elrond, who had been sent to the aid of the Elven-smiths by Gil-galad, retreated north and founded the refuge of Imladris, or Rivendell. Eriador was overrun, and Gil-galad might have been defeated, had not aid been sent by the Numenoreans in 1700. Sauron was driven back, and the West had peace for a long while. But the Dark Lord extended his dominion eastwards, and his power remained so great that these years were called in Middle-earth the Dark Years.

In Numenor, there were years of increasing glory, but of growing evil. For the Numenoreans had begun to long for immortality and, though some remained loyal to the immortal ones, most came to envy and then to hate the Eldar and the Valar. Tar-Atanamir, who took the sceptre in 2251, was the first king to state openly that eternal life was his by right. His successors abandoned the use of the Elven-tongues, and in 1899 Ar-Adunakhor, who called himself Lord of the West (a title formerly given only to Manwe himself) began to persecute the Faithful and to punish those who used the Elven-tongues.

At last, in 3175 there came a king, Tar-Palantir the Farsighted, who repented of the ways of his predecessors and attempted to renew the friendship with the immortals. But his people would not permit this and civil war broke out. The leader of the rebellion was Tar-Palantir's nephew, who usurped the sceptre from the king's daughter and rightful heir. As king he took the name of Ar-Pharazon the Golden. He was the proudest of all the Kings of Numenor, and his desire was the kingship of the world. In 3261 he set sail to Middle-earth, resolving to conquer Sauron. So great was the glory and power of the Numenorean King that none dared to fight him. The servants of Sauron fled, and the Dark Lord humbled himself before the king, doing homage. Then Ar-Pharazon committed a great folly, the greatest ever done by a Numenorean save one. He took Sauron back to Numenor as a prisoner.

As a prisoner; but soon this prisoner was master of the king's counsel. He told Ar-Pharazon that eternal life was his by right, and would belong to him and his people if he conquered the Valar and took possession of the Undying Lands. As the king grew old he listened more and more to these words, and so did his people except for the Faithful. So at last the king committed the greatest folly of all; he built a mighty fleet--it took nine years--and in 3319 he sailed to the West, breaking the ban, and strove to conquer Valinor. The Valar laid down their Guardianship and called upon the One; the fleet was utterly destroyed, and Valinor and Eressea were removed to safety beyond the circle of the world.

Sauron had remained on Numenor, instead of going with the fleet. But he did not escape the catastrophe. For Numenor itself was plunged beneath the Sea, and all its people were destroyed, save only nine ships of the Faithful. Led by Elendil and his sons Isildur and Anarion, they fled to Middle-earth, grieving for Numenor yet also glad, for they believed that Sauron was dead.

But, to their sorrow, they found they were wrong. Their Enemy had indeed been destroyed in body, but an evil spirit of hatred survived and returned to Mordor. For more than a hundred years he lurked there in silence, regaining strength, and taking physical shape once more-- a hideous shape, for never again could he appear fair to

men. Then, enraged at Elendil's survival and at his attempt to found a kingdom on the very borders of Mordor, Sauron attacked. The war that followed was long and bitter. Gil-galad of the Elves came to the aid of Elendil, who had become king of the realm of Arnor in the north of Middle-earth; and together with Elrond of Rivendell they led an army of Elves and men to the Kingdom of Gondor, the one near Mordor, which was ruled by Elendil's sons. Isildur also called upon the men of the White Mountains, whose king had sworn allegiance to him at the founding of Gondor, to aid in the war. But they refused for they had worshipped Sauron in the days of his power. Isildur in great wrath laid upon them a curse, that they should die but never rest until they fulfilled their oath to aid Gondor against Sauron. "For this war shall last through years uncounted," he said, and you shall be summoned once again before the end." The men of the mountains fled and hid themselves, and when they died their lands became haunted lands, shunned by the living.

But the aid of the men of the mountains was not called for again in this age of Middle-earth, for the power of Gil-galad had increased in Sauron's absence. Barad-dûr, the Enemy's fortress, was besieged; there Anarion fell, slain by a stone thrown from the Dark Tower. A year later the final battle was fought on the slopes of Orodruin, which the people of Gondor called Mount Doom. There Gil-galad was struck down by the black hand of the Enemy, and Elendil also fell, his sword breaking beneath him. Then Isildur threw down his foe and with the hilt-shard of his father's sword cut from Sauron's hand the Ruling Ring, and in memory of his father and his brother claimed it for his own.

Had he cast it into the flames of Mount Doom where it was made, and where alone it could be unmade, Sauron's power would have been forever destroyed. Elrond indeed advised this very course, but Isildur would not listen to him. He returned to Gondor and left there a description of the Ring as he had taken it, with a copy of the letters that glowed on it, but were fading, away from the burning heat of the maker's hand. This record was later forgotten in Gondor. Then, leaving Anarion's son to rule the South-kingdom, Isildur went north, intending to take his father's place as king of Arnor. But in the Gladden Fields, not far from the great forest Greenwood, he was attacked by a band of orcs, evil man-like creatures. Isildur put on the Ring and was made invisible by its magic power; then he leaped into the Anduin River, thinking to escape. But the Ring betrayed him; it slipped from his finger and revealed him to the orcs, who killed him with their arrows. All those who were with him were also killed, save one man, who escaped and brought back to Arnor and to Isildur's young son the broken sword of Elendil. It was not mended but was treasured as an heirloom by the kings. The Ring, it was believed, was lost for good.

So, in the year of Sauron's defeat, the Third Age of Middle-earth began. The Dark Lord had vanished, and all went well, as the two Numenorean kingdoms-in-exile grew and flourished. The Numenoreans had saved from the downfall of Numenor seven stones, the *palantiri*, gifts of the Elves to Elendil's family. These stones could be used to see events in the past and the present, and to communicate with each other. With them the Dunedain, as the Numenoreans were called in Middle-earth, united and guarded their kingdoms. Four were in Gondor; one in Osgiliath, the capital; one in Minas Ithil on the west borders of Mordor; one in Minas Anor in the White Mountains; and one in the Tower of Orthanc in that valley on the northern border of Gondor called Isengard. The other three were in Arnor: at the capital Annuminas, at the watch-tower on the hill, Weathertop, and in the Tower

Hills near the Gulf of Lune. This last one was unlike the others, for it could look only to Eressea.

It was in Arnor that serious trouble first threatened the Dunedain, and the *palantiri* were in part the cause. In 861, due to dissension among the sons of the king who died that year, the realm was divided into three parts, Arthedain, Rhudaur, and Cardolan. Arthedain possessed two of the *palantiri*; the third, the one at Weathertop, was a cause of strife among the three kingdoms. This seriously weakened the Dunedain of the North.

Gondor remained united, but it had enemies on its borders. In 490 wild men from the East, the Easterlings, attacked, but were defeated without too much trouble. Gondor thus won much territory in the East. The Ship-kings, who ruled from 830 to 1149, extended the nation's borders along the coasts west and south of the delta of Anduin. Hyarmendacil in 1050 conquered Umbar, a great southern cape. It had been ruled by Numenor before the island's fall, and was inhabited now by descendants of Numenorean settlers who had been corrupted by Sauron. They were known as the Black Numenoreans, and they hated Elendil and his people. They were never reconciled to Gondor's rule, but for a time they were subdued. During Hyarmendacil's reign Gondor reached the height of its power, ruling all the lands north to the Celebrant River, west to the Greyflood, east to the Sea of Rhûn, and south to Umbar. Mordor, where evil things still lurked, was never settled by the Dunedain but was guarded.

About this time a shadow of evil fell on the northern forest, Greenwood the Great, and it became known as Mirkwood. The hobbit-folk who lived near the forest began to wander west and south in search of other lands. Some settled near the Gladden Fields. At this time also the Istari, the wizards, came to Middle-earth. There were five of them, three of whom never became important as individuals. The other two were Saruman the White, said to be the greatest of the five in wisdom, who made a special study of the Great Rings; and Gandalf the Grey, called Mithrandir by the Elves, to whom he was closer than any other wizard. When the wizards and the chief Elves, who were collectively called the Wise, learned of the trouble in Mirkwood, they investigated and found that some evil being, later known as the Necromancer, had made a stronghold in Dol Goldur, a tower near the south edge of the forest. They thought it might be one of the Nazgul, the Ringwraiths enslaved by the nine rings Sauron had given to men.

The Wise were mistaken in this matter; it was not one of the Nazgul who dwelt at Dol Goldur. But the nine were indeed arising again. One of them, in 1300 or thereabouts, became king of the land of Angmar, northeast of Arnor. He gathered evil men and orcs, and made war on the Dunedain. Rhudaur, a part of Arnor where the Dunedain were few, allied itself with the enemy. Arthedain and Cardolan held Angmar back for a time with the aid of Elrond of Rivendell and Círdan of the Grey Havens. The latter was now the greatest of the Elves of the West. Then in 1409 a great army came out of Angmar and defeated the Dunedain. Rhudaur was occupied and Cardolan ravaged. Again the Elves came to Arthedain's aid, and the enemy was driven back. Greatly weakened, Arnor nevertheless survived.

Meanwhile, Gondor too was in great danger. The kings of Gondor had shown favor to the Northmen, giving them lands east of Anduin, between Mirkwood and Mordor, to live in. The Northmen thus helped protect Gondor from the invasions of the Easterlings. In order to cement the alliance, Romendacil the regent of Gondor took many of the Northmen into his service, and in 1250 he sent his son Valacar as an ambassador to the King of Rhovanion, most powerful of the rulers of the Northmen. Valacar was to live with the Northmen and learn their ways and lang-

uage. This he did, and more; he married the king's daughter. This shocked the people of Gondor, for the descendents of the Numenoreans were the greatest and longest-lived men in Middle-earth, and it was not thought fitting that an heir to the throne should marry a woman of a lesser race, lest the line of the kings fall from glory. Nevertheless Valacar was accepted by his people as King.

When he died, in 1432, civil war broke out in Gondor, for his wife had proved short-lived, and it was feared that their son would be likewise. Eldacar, however, was not willing to give up his crown. So began the Kin-strife, one of the worst evils that ever came upon Gondor. The king was besieged in Osgiliath, and finally had to flee, leaving the city in flames; its palantir was lost in the river. Eldacar then returned to his birthplace in the north, where he gathered his mother's kin and many men of Gondor who supported him over the usurper, Castamir. However, he did not have the strength to attack for ten years, during which time Castamir proved a cruel king; among other things, he had Eldacar's son murdered. In 1447 Eldacar attacked, killed Castamir, and regained the crown. The sons of Castamir and other rebels fled south to Umbar, joining the Black Numenoreans, and that land remained at war with Gondor (on and off) till the end of the Third Age. This was held a sad loss in Gondor, for it was at Umbar the last King of Numenor had landed and humbled the might of Sauron. Folly, evil and tragedy had followed, but even Elendil's descendents remembered that event with pride, and they had set a monument commemorating it at the top of a hill on the coast. It was later destroyed by the rebels.

In the north, the hobbits continued to move westwards. A large group of them, led by Marcho and Blanco of the Fallohide branch, obtained permission from King Argeleb II of Arnor in 1601 to cross the Baranduin River and settle in the pleasant lands between the river and the Far Downs to the west. They named their new home the Shire, and reckoned time from the first year of their settlement in it, so that Shire-reckoning was always 1600 years behind that of the Dunedain. They were officially under the King's rule, but actually managed their own affairs, being required only to keep the roads and bridges in repair, and to speed the king's messengers. They took no part in the great affairs of the world, and had no desire to do so.

Shortly after the settlement of the Shire, a great plague swept out of the east, affecting both Arnor and Gondor. The last of the Dunedain of Cardolan died, but Arthedain was not much affected. In Gondor the results were much worse. The king, all his children, and many of the people died. Osgiliath was partly deserted and began to fall in ruin. Mordor was left unguarded, and the fortresses at the Black Gate, Morannon, and at the pass of Cirith Ungol above Minas Ithil were left unmanned. The king's nephew, who succeeded him, moved the capital to Minas Anor in 1640.

Gondor's enemies also suffered during the plague, and no attack was made for more than two hundred years. Gondor was even able to re-take Umbar in 1810. But in 1856 an eastern people or group of peoples called the Wainriders made a sudden attack on Gondor, having been stirred up against the Dunedain by the Necromancer of Mirkwood. The people of Rhovanion were enslaved, and Gondor had to withdraw its boundaries to the Anduin. The Rhovanions eventually revolted against their conquerors, and were aided by Gondor, so that a great victory was won over the Wainriders in 1899, the eastern territories were regained, and the threat was lessened for a while. But while Gondor's boundaries were shortened the watch on Mordor had been completely abandoned; and, unknown to Gondor, the Ringwraiths, with the exception of the King of Angmar, had re-entered the Black Land.

Forty years later, Arnor and Gondor at last realized that the persistent attacks on Elendil's descendents and their people were not happening by chance or coincidence; a single will was behind them all. It is not recorded whether or not they guessed whose will it was, but they realized that they must fight it together, and, breaking the long silence between them, they formed an alliance. Arvedui, the heir to the sceptre of Arnor, married the daughter of the king of Gondor. However, Gondor was attacked by the Wainriders and the Men of Harad at the same time as Arnor was attacked by Angmar, so that neither could aid the other. The attack on Arnor was not serious, but Gondor was nearly conquered. The king and both of his sons were killed, but Earnil, Captain of the Southern Army of Gondor won the day and drove the enemy out of the lands it had captured.

When peace had been restored, the question arose: who should be king of Gondor? Arvedui of Arnor claimed the crown, as a descendent of Elendil and the husband of the late king's only surviving child. The Council of Gondor refused the claim, supported by the Steward of the late king, Pelendur, who was first of the hereditary line of stewards (though not the first steward; the office had been established in 1621, with Hurin as the first. All the stewards had been chosen from his descendents, and, at this time, 1944, the office began to be passed on from father to son.) Earnil, the victorious captain, claimed the crown, and the Dunedain of Gondor willingly granted it to him, for he was a cousin of the dead king. Arvedui did not press his claim, for he did not wish to dispute the decision of the people of Gondor, nor did he have the power to do so. But his descendents did not forget it.

Soon, however, the ruler of Arnor was deprived of even his own throne. In 1974 Angmar attacked again, and this time won overwhelmingly. The king and some of his guard fled north to the Cape of Forochel, where they were taken in by the men of that icy region. The rest of the surviving Dunedain, including the king's sons, went west over the Lune to the Grey Havens where Cirdan dwelt, and Ardanar, the king's heir, told the Elf-lord that his father had gone north. Cirdan sent a ship to search for Arvedui and he was found, but the ship was wrecked by a storm before it had left the Vay of Forochel. Arvedui drowned, and two of the palantiri of the north were lost in the sea. Cirdan had the third but it looked only to Eressea.

Angmar did not long rule the lands it had conquered. Earnil of Gondor had heard of the danger Arnor was in, and he sent his son Earnur north with a great fleet. It came too late to save Arnor, but not too late to avenge it. Cirdan's people and an army from Rivendell under Glorfindel the Elf-lord joined with Earnur's men, and when the fighting was over not a man nor an orc of Angmar remained west of the Misty Mountains.

But in the hour of his defeat, the Nazgul-king of Angmar appeared on the battlefield, riding a black horse, and in rage rode upon Earnur. The latter would have faced him, but his terrified mount fled beyond control. Glorfindel then rode up, and as night fell the Nazgul vanished. Earnur, returning, heard the Elf-lord say, "Do not pursue him! He will not return to this land. Far off yet is his doom, and not by the hand of man will he fall." These words many heard and remembered, but Earnur was angry and wished only to avenge his shame.

Though Angmar was destroyed, Arnor was not restored, for the Dunedain of the North were now few. They became a wandering folk, guarding all the people of Eriador against evil creatures from across the mountains. Their past glory was forgotten by nearly all in the north, save the Elves of Rivendell, with whom the Dune-

dain maintained their friendship. Nevertheless, the line of the kings of Arnor, which had never been broken, was preserved, and the heirlooms of the house, including the shards of Elendil's sword, were passed on from father to son.

Gondor stood, but the line of its kings soon ended forever. In 2000, the Nazgul--including the former king of Angmar, who had joined his fellows in Mordor--laid siege to Minas Ithil. The city was taken after two years, and was henceforward known as Minas Morgul, the Tower of Sorcery. The palantir of that city was captured, and the rulers of Gondor ceased to use the stone of Minas Arnor, or Minas Tirith, the Tower of Guard, as it was renamed. Eärnur became king in 2043, and the Nazgul-lord sent him a taunting message, challenging him to single combat. Mardil, Eärnur's steward, for a time restrained the king's wrath, but when the challenge was renewed in 2050, the king took a small troop of men and rode off to Minas Morgul. He never came back.

He was the last king of Gondor of the line of Anarion, for he had left no child, and there was no one of pure blood left whom all would support. Fearing a return of the Kin-strife, the people of Gondor gave the governing of the nation to the Stewards and for nearly a thousand years Mardil and his descendents sat in a chair at the foot of the empty throne, holding the white rod of the Stewards, and ruling Gondor "in the name of the King, until he shall return."

Meanwhile, the power in Dol Guldur had continued to grow and increase in evil. The Wise began to fear that it was Sauron taking shape once more. In 2063, Gandalf went to Dol Guldur, and the Necromancer retreated into the east. For nearly four hundred years there was peace--the Watchful Peace it was called. Then the Necromancer returned to Dol Guldur with increased power, and orcs-raids resumed in the Misty Mountains and Eriador. Gondor was left alone for a few more years. Galadriel, the Elf-queen, then called the five wizards together, and the White Council was formed with Saruman at its head. The Elf-queen was not pleased with this arrangement, for she had intended Gandalf to be the head.

At this time, 2463, an event of the greatest importance occurred, one that the Wise were to know nothing of for nearly five hundred years. The Ring, the One Ring of Sauron, was found. The finder was one of the hobbit-fold who lived on the banks of the Anduin, near the Gladden Fields. He found it while fishing in the river, and it proved his doom as it had been Isildur's, for his companion, who was named Smeagol but later nicknamed Gollum, murdered him for it. The murder was never found out, but Gollum nevertheless soon left his home. The Ring made him invisible, but it also made him evil, and he was driven away by the other hobbits. He fled to the Misty Mountains and hid himself in the deep caves beneath them, where he lived for many centuries; the Ring gave him long life. But, being basically a weak-willed creature, he never discovered or made use of its greater powers.

A few years later, orcs came out of Mordor and captured Osgiliath. It was soon retaken by Gondor, but the bridge across the Anduin was broken, and the city was finally left deserted. Then, in 2510, new danger struck from two sources. Men of the East attacked from Rhovanion, which was not inhabited by a fierce people dominated by Dol Guldur; and, at the same time, orcs from over the Mountains attacked. Cirion, the ruling Steward sent for help to his allies, the Men of Eotheid who dwelt in the northern vale of Anduin; but, it seemed, too late. On the Field of Celebrant, between the Rivers Silverlode and Limlight, the northern army of Gondor was about to be destroyed, when out of the North came Eorl the Young with a great host of riders, and

attacked the enemy from the rear. The battle was soon over, and once more Gondor was saved. In gratitude Cirion gave to Eorl and his people the land of Calenard-hon, north of the White Mountains, to be their own; few of the Dunedain had lived there since the plague. Its new owners called it the Riddermark, and themselves the Eorlingas; but in Gondor it was called Rohan, and its people the Rohirrim, the Horse Lords. They were a proud and spirited people, unlearned but wise, great lovers of horses, desiring above all else freedom. Gondor did not govern them but Eorl and Cirion swore an oath of perpetual friendship and alliance.

The oath was fulfilled nearly two hundred and fifty years later, when in 2758 men from the East and the Dunlendings from the west attacked Rohan and overran the land. Gondor could not send help for many months, for it was attacked by three fleets of Corsairs of Umbar and Harad. The Rohirrim took refuge in the White Mountains, defending the fortress of the Hornburg, and there endured a long and terrible winter. Many died of cold and hunger, including Helm, the king, and his sons. But when spring came and Gondor was at last able to defeat its own enemies, the Steward sent aid to Rohan. The invaders were driven out and the land was freed. But the Rohirrim had lost many men, cattle, and horses, and it was long before they recovered their strength. For this reason, when Saruman the White came to the crowning of King Fëalaf of Rohan offering friendship and aid, both Fëalaf and Beren the Steward welcomed him. He asked permission to dwell in the Tower of Orthanc at Isengard, which Gondor owned though it was north of Rohan, and Beren granted it. For many years the great wizard seemed a friend to both lands, but unknown to them his ambition was growing together with his knowledge.

And then, at last, in 2850 came verification of what the Wise had long feared. Gandalf the Grey once more entered Dol Guldur, and learned beyond a doubt that the evil inhabitant was Sauron. His power was so great by this time that Gandalf was in grave danger, and barely escaped. When he left the tower, he had with him two gifts, a key and a map, which had been given to him by a prisoner of Sauron, a dwarf named Thrain, who had been the unfortunate possessor of the last of the Seven Dwarf-rings.

The history of the Dwarves is a story in itself, which can only be told briefly here. From earliest times till 1980 T.A. they had dwelt in the great halls of Khazad-dûm, called Moria by the Elves, deep under the Misty Mountains. They were never allied to, or much influenced by, Sauron; they were too tough to be mastered by the Great Rings, and their deep halls were unconquerable--from without. But in 1980 there came from the depths of Moria a Balrog, a terrible creature of fire and shadow, that had fled there from the ruin of Thangoridrim and lain hidden ever since. Durin VI, the King of Khazad-dûm, was slain by it, with his son. The Dwarves fled Moria, and most of them went north.

Some went to Erebor, the Lonely Mountain, northeast of Mirkwood, and remained there for a time before going on to the Grey Mountains further north. Then dragons came upon them, and they retreated. Many went to the Iron Hills in the east, but some, led by Thrór, returned to Erebor, where they lived in peace and great prosperity until 2770. Then Smaug the Dragon attacked and drove them out again. Most of the survivors joined the Dwarves of the Iron Hills, but Thrór, his son Thrain, and his grandson Thorin went south with some kinsfolk and followers. Thrór and Thrain had escaped from Erebor by a secret door known only to themselves. Thrór had a map and a key to that door--and the last of the Seven.

Twenty years after Smaug's attack--twenty bitter years of homeless wandering--Thror gave his son the map, the key, and the ring, and with one companion set out for Moria, hoping it was safe now. It was not; orcs had taken it over, and they killed Thror. His companion escaped and brought word to Thrain. The latter gathered dwarves from all parts of Middle-earth and made war on the orcs, a war that culminated in 2799 in the terrible battle of Azanulbizar, where the Dwarves won a costly victory. They drove the orcs out of Moria, but they could not reclaim their ancient home, for the Balrog, Durin's Bane, was still there. So the allies returned to their lands, and Thror's fold, now led by Thrain, journeyed to the Ered Luin in the west, where they settled for a while.

But Thrain, remembering the lost gold of Erebor, became discontented, and in 2841 he set out for the Lonely Mountain, taking with him a few friends, the key, the map, and the ring. For four years he struggled on, but the Necromancer knew of his journey; orcs, and wolves, and other evil creatures pursued him; at last he was captured.

Five years later Gandalf found him in Dol Guldur. The ring had been taken from him, and he had been tortured. He was dying, and remembered neither his own name nor his son's. But he remembered the key and the map, which, for some reason, Sauron had not taken, and he gave them to Gandalf. The wizard then made his escape. A year later when the White Council met, he urged an attack on Dol Guldur, but Saruman overruled him. The White Wizard had begun to search the Gladden Fields for the Ruling Ring, and hoped it might reveal itself, seeking its master in nearby Dol Guldur, if Sauron were left alone. He did not, of course, have any suspicion that it had already been found. In his search for information about the Rings of Power, he went, at some unknown time, to Minas Tirith, and there found the forgotten record which Isildur had left, describing the Ring.

Thorin and his people remained in the Ered Luin, no more content than Thrain had been. They longed to return to Erebor. By chance one day, early in 2941, Thorin and Gandalf met for the first time at Bree, a town just east of the Shire. Gandalf was worried about the danger in which the north lay from the ambitions of Sauron. He feared that the Enemy might gain control of Smaug the Dragon, who still guarded the treasure of Erebor, and make terrible use of him. When Thorin introduced himself to Gandalf, the wizard realized that the Dwarves would eagerly help him destroy Smaug. He realized also that here was the rightful owner of the key and the map.

So, soon after that meeting, Gandalf and thirteen Dwarves met at the home of a hobbit named Bilbo Baggins, whom Gandalf, apparently by sheer intuition, had chosen to join them in the adventure. Bilbo, being more adventurous than most hobbits, astonished himself by agreeing to go to the Lonely Mountain. They went, and through many dangers came at last to Erebor; as is told in *THE HOBBIT*, Smaug was slain, the Battle of Five Armies was fought, and the Dwarves regained their treasure. Thorin, however, was killed in the battle, and his cousin Dain of the Iron Hills became King under the Mountain.

But during this adventure, two events of great portent occurred. Gandalf left the group for a time, before they reached Erebor, and went south to a meeting of the White Council. The wizards had agreed to drive Sauron out of Mirkwood. Saruman gave in mostly because Sauron's servants had begun to search the Gladden Fields for the Ring, and the wizard did not care for that sort of competition to his own search. So the Council, at last in agreement, was able by the Wisdom of Saruman to drive the Enemy from Dol Guldur. At least, they thought it

had been done by the wisdom of Saruman, but actually Sauron had not attempted to resist them. He had made his plans, and from Mirkwood he went to Mordor, where the Nazgûl awaited him. For ten years he was quiet, gathering his strength, then he proclaimed himself openly, and began rebuilding all that had been destroyed in his absence, including Barad-dûr. No one opposed him.

Still, this was not the more important of the two events. The other one, in the long run, had even more dramatic results. As told in *THE HOBBIT*, Bilbo Baggins, on his way to Erebor, found and kept the Ring, which, instead of killing him as it had Isildur, saved his life by hiding him from the enraged Gollum. The invisibility it conferred was useful to Bilbo and his friends in their later adventures, but Bilbo, oddly, did not tell the Dwarves the true story of how he obtained it. Gandalf, however, insisted on the truth, and Bilbo finally told it to him.

From the first, Gandalf wondered about the nature of this ring. He even tried to find Gollum, who had left his dark caves to look for Bilbo and the Ring. However, in 2953 the White Council met again, and Saruman told the other wizards that the One Ring had been carried down the Anduin to the Sea. Gandalf believed him and stopped tracking Gollum, having found that the latter had turned aside from Bilbo's trail and was making his way south, drawn no doubt by the evil in Mordor.

Three years later, Gandalf met Aragorn, the young heir of the Kings of Arnor, Chieftain of the Dunedain of the North. He had been raised in Rivendell, and had fallen in love with Arwen, daughter of Elrond; now, hoping to defeat Sauron and restore the two kingdoms, he was beginning his journeys and adventures, helping Gondor and Rohan in their wars. He learned much wisdom from Gandalf, and they became the closest of friends. In disguise and under another name, he served King Thengel of Rohan, then went to Gondor where he aided Ecthelion the Steward. He was loved by all in Gondor, with the exception of Ecthelion's son Denethor. Possibly Denethor guessed who this stranger was, and feared that someday he would claim the crown of Gondor, and the rule of the Stewards would end. Denethor wanted no king to supplant him.

In 2980, Aragorn went to Lothlórien, and there met Arwen again. She was visiting her grandmother, Galadriel. Now she returned his love, and they plighted their troth. Arwen pledged to give up her immortality even as Luthien had done. This was a grief to Elrond for it meant that he would be parted from his daughter forever. He loved Aragorn like a son, but he decreed that Arwen could not marry him until he became king of both Gondor and Arnor.

In this same eventful year, Gollum came to the borders of Mordor and met Shelob, the monstrous spider-creature that guarded the pass above Minas Morgul. And in Rohan, Thengel died and was succeeded by his son Theoden. Rohan was by this time endangered by the wizard Saruman, though the king did not come to know it yet. For Saruman had begun to fortify Isengard, and to call to his service orcs and evil men.

Four years later Denethor became Steward of Gondor. He was a wise and valiant man, a masterful ruler, and subtle in mind. He married a woman of Dol Amroth, the coastal fief of Gondor, but she died young in 2988, leaving Denethor two sons, Boromir and Faramir. Her death grieved Denethor deeply. It seems to have been after this that the Steward first dared to use the palantir of Minas Tirith. No one had done this since 2002, when the Nazgûl took Minas Ithil and its palantir. With the stone, Denethor gained much knowledge of what went on in other lands, but the use of it aged him greatly, for to make the stone obey him, he had to pit his will

against the will of Sauron, who held the palantir of Minas Morgul. He was less successful than he realized. Sauron could not make the palantir lie, but he could make it show only part of the truth. So he showed Denethor the growing power of Mordor, and the Steward came to think of Gondor -- and himself -- as the only protection for the West against the might of the Dark Lord. Of those who opposed Sauron, he trusted only those who served Gondor and its Steward -- and this did not include Gandalf and Aragorn.

In 2989, a group of Dwarves from Erebor, led by Balin, went to Moria to try to retake their ancient realm. For five years they seemed to be succeeding. They drove the orcs out, and were not troubled by the Balrog. Balin became Lord of Moria, and his folk prospered. Then orcs, and probably the Balrog too, attacked in force, and the colony was destroyed.

In this year also, Bilbo Baggins of the Shire adopted young Frodo Baggins, "his first and second cousin, once removed either way," to be his heir. Frodo was part Took and part Brandybuck -- two unusual and (compara-

fantasy set in this century (motor cars were once mentioned in passing) which really defies description. It is about a unicorn who suddenly realizes she is probably the last one in the world and sets out on a search for others that might have survived. The closing chapters have the bitter-sweet feeling of eucatastrophe that Tolkien has spoken of. It is, I think, a very powerful story and is to be strongly recommended. I also read his short story, *Come Lady Death* in Terry Carr's anthology *New Worlds of Fantasy* [Ace book A-12, 1967, 75c] which I liked even more than *Unicorn*.

SMIAL DIGGINGS & SUCH

I have decided to confine Smial lists to the GREEN DRAGON for they, too, change frequently. But I do want to mention now a very active independent group, The Middle Earth Universal Foundation located at 4601 Noyes St, Charlestown WV 25304.

Tho the TSA has only a few members outside of the US & Canada there are three foreign Smials... and all are in Australia! Addresses are, Miss E Westwater, 36 Stanburry St, Gladsville NSW 2111, Paul Novitski, 50 Jensen St, Hughes, Canberra, ACT 2605 and Sydney University Tolkien Society, Box 140, The Union, U of Sydney, NSW.

Another organization of interest, but which isn't directly related to Tolkien, is the Society for Creative Anachronism. The main organization is at 1585 Arch St, Berkeley CA 94708, while the NY chapter is care of Mrs Marion Breen, 15 Urbana St, Staten Island NY 1030. There is also an LA chapter but I do not have its address. The Anachronists have the Middle Ages as a hobby and like to dress up in costumes... They hold Medieval Revels, Feasts & Tournaments several times a year at which a costume of any culture or era before 1650 is necessary for admission. (Middle-earth costumes do count.) There is singing, dancing, fighting, food, etc at these events. The Berkeley group holds frequent lessons in Medieval dance and fighting, and I suppose that if there is sufficient interest the NY chapter might do likewise. The Berkeley group now has well over a hundred members (this is one reason the TSA has no Berkeley Smial... those who would organize one are busy with the Anachronists!) some of whom are professors or graduate students with a professional interest in the Middle Ages.

DEPARTMENT OF ETERNAL CONFUSION

Turning the TSA mailing list over to professionals has helped me considerably by giving me more time to get other things done, but has had its complications. They made two kinds of goofs in preparing the addressograph stencils. In many cases they ignored the number on the file card and stencilled TSA 9, which means that the membership is to expire with the 9th (current) TJ. I will try to catch as many of these as possible, but if you feel you have more issues coming than indicated on the label please drop me a post card to be SURE that I caught it. Also, I will almost definitely catch the error when I process your renewal. (If you want a reply, please include an addressed postal card.)

Also, I do not keep Mr., Mrs or 'Miss' on my file cards and they added them to the stencil guessing is some arbitrary fashion which should be used. This has led to several major blunders. For example, both Leslie Turek & Cory Seidman were listed as Mr! At least we are fortunate that the error was made for both of them as they are room-mates! Anyhow, if there is such an error in your stencil please let it stand unless you find it absolutely intolerable. Mention the fact when you renew your dues and I will have the correction made then.

One member misunderstood the meaning of Address Correction Requested on the Conference flyer. If you move the PO will destroy your third class mail, but will send me your new one and charge me a dime. If I put Return Requested they will return it too, and charge 16c. Then I have to pay Lee Letter Service 25c to change your stencil. If something goes astray because you didn't notify me, I will NOT send you a replacement copy. This is getting to be such a nuisance that I am thinking of also reducing your membership by one issue.

tively) adventurous families among the hobbits. He was at that time twenty-one.

About the year 3000, Saruman of Isengard began to use the palantir of the Tower of Orthanc, and found himself in communication with Sauron. The Wizard, alternately persuaded and intimidated by the Dark Lord, became a traitor to Sauron; his ambition was to find the Ring and rule Middle-earth himself. Whether Sauron knew this but was contemptuous of Saruman's power, or whether he actually trusted the wizard as an ally was never clearly known; but he seemed to have no fear of Saruman. The reverse, for a time at least, was also true; and for several years Saruman, the double traitor, was able to keep the trust of the West and the alliance of the East, while increasing his personal power by gathering armies in Isengard, and poisoning the minds of Theoden and Denethor against Gandalf, whom he hated. Meanwhile, he continued to search for the Ring -- as did Sauron, of course.

And meanwhile, in 3001, Bilbo Baggins, the holder of the Ring, gave his last birthday party and said farewell to the Shire.

REPORT FROM QUEENS COLLEGE

For some time the student & faculty dining halls at Queens College, Flushing NY, have been tempting palates by offering once a week a menu from a different foreign country. In line with this practice, and in observance of Frodo's & Bilbo's birthday, the Queens College Dining Halls presented last Sept 21 the following: Hobbit Mushroom soup, Sam's Fish & Chips, Coney Stew (beef & rabbit), Troll's Roast Breast of Mutton, Bacon & Mushrooms of the Shire, Prancing Pony Plate (cold meat, ripe cheese & mushrooms), Gandalf's Platter (cold chicken, eggs & pickle), Steak Uruk-hai (steak tartare), Gollum's Delight (pickled herrings), Carrotses, Parsnips, Lambas (shortbread), buttered scones & raspberry jam, Seed Cake Balin, Apple Tart Bifur, Pippin's White Cake, Beorn's Honey Cake (Baclava), Apples, Cheeses & Ent Draught (a fruit punch).

Both student & faculty dining halls were decorated with facsimiles of LotR book jackets, maps, Middle-earth posters and replicas of newspaper and magazine reviews of LotR, all of which were supplied by Ballantine Books. In addition, there were hand-lettered posters bearing such legends as Happy Birthday Bilbo & Frodo, Frodo Lives and Go Gandalf Go. All members of the dining room staff wore Middle-earth buttons (and bemused expressions).

Credit for the event goes to Mr. George Bineth, Lecturer in English at the College, and Mrs Kay Kuipers, Director of the College dining halls. They researched LotR thoroughly, along with *The Hobbit & Tolkien Reader*, for every possible mention of food.

Food-wise, the birthday celebration was a success, at least in the faculty dining hall. A very cursory examination of greasy paper plates on the tables in the student cafeteria revealed more remains of burgers & fries than of anything else. Interestingly, more of the faculty seemed to know what was going on than did the students, most of whose reaction to the novel cuisine was a thumping *Hus?* It was unfortunate that the Middle-earth menu was offered on the first day of the semester, thus precluding any opportunity to publicize it in advance.

Claire Howard.

WRITING IN TENGWAR

I get many request, especially from younger members, for information on how to write in Tengwar (the script-like form, as opposed to the Runic Cereth). The information IS in the appendices of LotR but is confusing because there is more than one way of using it and none are perfectly suited for English. It is like an Egyptian asking how to write his language in Roman letters. How should he use the 'J' for instance? To represent an H sound (as in Spanish), a Y sound (as in German), or a Dž sound (as in English)? Tengwar was used for Sindarin & Quenya, different languages containing different sounds, and the characters had different values in these languages... just like J. Also, there were two modes... systems for placing vowel marks. [Tengwar, like Hebrew, is not a true alphabet for it has no vowel characters. See Diringer's Book, *The Alphabet, Philosophical Library*] In one the tehtar (vowel marks) are placed over the preceding consonant, in the other over the following. One or the other can be used, but they should NEVER be mixed the way they were on some bad buttons originating on the West Coast.

Thus it takes a lot of determination to write, successfully, using Tengwar. A lot of arbitrary decisions must first be made, and even then one can't just use a chart and say that (always) C goes to I. Among other things, the Tengwar is phonetic while English spelling isn't.

John Closson, who designed the good buttons, is working on the problem of what system would be best for English, and comparing the countless systems that have been proposed. He will eventually write an article for TJ suggesting one uniform system for interested members to use in communicating with one another. (But please don't write to me in Tengwar for I cannot read it & must send it to Bob Foster or Cory Seidman for translation.)