

MYTHPRINT

The Monthly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

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See inside back cover

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DEADLINES for receiving material for each issue of Mythprint are the 1st of the preceding month (e.g., June 1st for the July issue.)

Book Reviews: Scholarship

J.R.R. TOLKIEN, *Early Elvish Poetry and Pre-Feano-rian Alphabets*, edited by Christopher Gilson, Arden R. Smith, Patrick H. Wynne, Carl F. Hostetter & Bill Welden. *Parma Eldalamberon* issue 16, 2006. Softcover, 150 pp., \$30 including shipping. Available from the publisher, Christopher Gilson, [REDACTED] net.

The previous five volumes of this annotated documentary study of Tolkien's technical Elvish writings covered the first decade of his work on the Elvish languages, from his undergraduate and war years through to his period teaching at Leeds University, which closed at the end of 1925. Now the industrious scholars of the Elvish Linguistic Fellowship have turned to material mostly dating from the early years of his return to Oxford. Most of the material in this volume dates from the late 1920s, with some possibly from as late as the early 1930s, and a few pieces possibly as early as the Leeds years.

The title of the volume is a bit incomplete, as the material is in three parts: poetry, alphabets, and grammar.

The poetry may be of most interest to non-technical readers. It consists of various alternative texts to three Qenya poems that Tolkien quoted in his 1931 lecture on invented languages, "A Secret Vice" (published in the book *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*). In these texts, we see Tolkien tinkering with the meaning, the grammar, the orthography. He translates from the Elvish into English; he translates back from English into Elvish and it comes out differently. The close aesthetic relationship between Qenya and Finnish is very strong here, and acknowledged by Tolkien, especially when he uses Finnish orthography, its style of spelling. (Qenya in *The Lord of the Rings*, the later version of Qenya, uses a strongly Latinate orthography.) The editors have supplied long and detailed commentaries in the form of glosses and comparisons with earlier usages and lexicons.

The grammars are also of Qenya. A set of word lists is of tremendous interest, not only for new vocabulary since most of them are not new, but for showing which words Tolkien considered of interest and how he classified them, for they are not in alphabetical order. The first word in the list is *lopo*, horse, followed by other animal names, then verbs for motion, then words for writing (including *parma*, book). There are also three names, some adjectives (very much slanted: You can call someone "strong" or "powerful" in Elvish), rhyming words, and words for food and drink. Each entry has notes comparing its equivalent form in the earlier Qenya Lexicon, published in *Parma* 12.

Also in the grammar section are tables of noun declensions and verb conjugations. These would be a headache if you had to memorize them for class, but they're beautiful to read. Here we see the characteristic Elvish distinction between dual and plural, and the distinctive aorist verb form, meaning indefinite or habitual action, the kind of usage Ursula K. Le Guin was trying to convey in her book title *Always Coming Home*. The editors don't cite Le Guin, but they do provide explanations of the usages in terms of technical grammar and of English usage.

All this material is in the Latin alphabet. To write as the Elves would have written you need their alphabets, and that is the remaining section of this book. There are tables of letters and a number of sample texts. Here we see Tolkien being consciously aware of the resemblance of his invented alphabets to the script used to write Sanskrit and other Indian languages, even as he moves away from that and closer to the Tengwar of *The Lord of the Rings*. There are orthographic modes for English as well as for Elvish, some fragmentary texts in Latin (quotes from the *Aeneid*), and an English nursery rhyme, "There was an old woman tossed up in a basket," in whole or in part in three different scripts. In addition to editorial commentary,

there are transliterations of all texts and a list of the phonetic symbols that Tolkien used in his alphabet tables.

Fascinating work by Tolkien; sterling detailed transcription, commentary, and analysis by the five-man editorial team.

Reviewed by David Bratman

ALAN LUPACK, *The Oxford Guide to Arthurian Literature and Legend*. Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2007 [originally published 2005], ISBN 978-0-19-921509-6, 496pp, \$17.95.

Few story telling traditions have had as great an impact on the imagination of Europe--and of the English speaking world in particular--as the Arthurian mythos. The theme of the divinely chosen but flawed king whose noble vision, even as it inspires us, meets with failure; the romance of Lancelot and Guinevere who, despite their adulterous love and its tragic consequences, invite our sympathy; the magical backstage maneuverings of Merlin, Morgan Le Fay and the Lady of the Lake; the quest for the Grail and its ambiguous fulfilment; all these and more have fascinated Western writers and artists for centuries and led to countless retelling, rewordings, and renewed insight into their implications. To attempt a full survey of such a wide range of material is in itself a daunting task, so that Alan Lupack's essential success in this undertaking comes across as all the more impressive. After establishing the beginning of the tradition in Celtic legend and the chronicles of Nennius and Geoffrey of Monmouth, he takes us through its transformations in the continental romances beginning with Chretien de Troyes, and finally to Malory's magnificent and influential synthesis. Subsequent sections explore the important sub-themes of the Holy Grail, Gawain, Merlin, and Tristan and Isolt. In each section Lupack covers not only the seminal medieval works but also the later works that were influenced by them, all the way to the present century. Not content to limit himself to "high" culture, he follows the manifestations of each

of the themes in genre literature, theatre, film, comics, and other forms of popular culture. The sheer comprehensiveness of his treatment--especially as far as English-language literature is concerned--is in itself staggering, and there are hardly any significant works he leaves out. (The two omissions I noted in particular are C.J. Cherryh's *Port Eternity*, an unusual Arthurian-themed science fiction novel and Phyllis Ann Karr's *Idylls of the Queen*, a clever murder mystery with an Arthurian setting.) A final section provides an alphabetized directory of well over a hundred "Arthurian People, Places and Things," with a substantial discussion of each one.

I looked for references to the Inklings and found them well represented. While Tolkien's early (and unpublished) fragments of Arthurian poetry are left out, Charles Williams' Arthurian verse is given a subsection of its own, and his novel *War in Heaven* is described in the Grail section. The works of C.S. Lewis that are included are "Launcelot" from *Narrative Poems*, *That Hideous Strength*, (discussed in the "Merlin" section because of its striking portrayal of that character), and his contribution to *Arthurian Torso*. Even the facetious legal fantasy "Mark vs Tristram" which Lewis wrote in collaboration with Owen Barfield is described here.

If I have one minor criticism of the book, it is the minuscule typeface, which is definitely a strain on the eyes. However, there was probably no other way one could cram so much fascinating material into an inexpensive trade paperback. This new edition should make Lupack's work accessible to a much wider audience, not only as an indispensable research tool, but as an opportunity to browse with pleasure through its riches--which will, no doubt, guide readers to authors and works previously unknown to them.

Reviewed by Alexei Kondratiev

Editor's Introduction

I am delighted to have the opportunity to serve as a guest editor this month and to begin as the editor of *Mythprint* in January. I have put this edition together using a new computer and a new program, so it has been a bit stressful. (Anyone with knowledge of InDesign can become my new best friend, maybe even my heir, if you will let me ask you a host of technical questions.)

I have been a member of the Mythopoeic Society for only a few years, have attended three Mythcons, and have met a handful of you who contribute to and read this newsletter. Reading fantasy literature, however, has been a life long passion. One of my children recently took a picture of me holding a book in one hand and a grandchild in the other. When I saw the picture, I had to go digging in the old scrapbooks for another picture taken in 1977 of me holding one of my own babies in one hand and the same book in the other. I haven't even bothered to buy a new copy. Like most of you, I reread *The Lord of the Rings* frequently. It is this love of fantasy in general and Tolkien in particular that has made me regret not finding this group sooner and joyful for having found it at last. I hope by editing *Mythprint* I can contribute to the delight that good fantasy brings to all of our lives.

I know that several of you have contributed regularly to the newsletter. I hope you will continue sending me reviews, art work, letters, or any other material that will make the newsletter enjoyable and informative. Any of you who have not contributed in the past, I invite you to send ideas, art (I especially need art work) or reviews for future issues. The deadline for the January newsletter is early December, so please think about writing a piece before the holiday season makes you too busy.

You will notice that the newsletter is folded differently this month. The new fold is an attempt to beat the postal increases by making the newsletter small enough to go for letter rates. Let me know if your newsletter arrives unusually beat up or if you have any other ideas about how to make the size of the newsletter conform to the standards required for letters.

The December *Mythprint* will be Ellie's last. I want to thank her for the newsletters that helped me learn what this group is all about, and I especially want to thank her for the patient help she has given me while I have been trying to figure out how to get the November edition together.

Ginger McElwee

Second Call For Papers

Wroclaw 2008

Theme: Relevant across Cultures: Visions of Connectedness and World Citizenship in
Modern Fantasy for Young Readers

Contact: Dr. Marek Oziewicz, Assistant Professor of Literature
Institute of English Studies
University of Wroclaw, Poland

Discussion Group Activity Calendar

Marion VanLoo

Membership & Discussion Group Secretary

Prospective Groups

CALIFORNIA

San Diego: Lothlorien

Linda Sundstrom,

FLORIDA

Tampa Bay: Hobbiton

Paul S. Ritz,

North Central Florida: Eryn Galen

B.L. McCauley,

INDIANA

Central Indiana: Cerin Amroth

Ellen Denham,

MISSOURI

St. Louis: The Khazad

Gary & Sylvia Hunnewell

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte: The Carolina Tolkien Society

Matt & Renita Peeler

OHIO

Akron

Web site:

Chartered Groups

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles/Pasadena: Mydgard

Lee Speth,

December 16: Millions by Frank Cottrell Boyce 2:30

Host: Carol Jacobsen, 205 Malcolm Dr., Pasadena

Oakland: C.S. Lewis Society of California

David J. Theroux,

Web site:

San Francisco Bay Area: Khazad-dûm

Amy Wisniewski & Edith Crowe,

com Web site:

December 1: Annual Reading & Eating Meeting.

Hosts: Edith Crowe & Amy Wisniewski

COLORADO

Denver area: Fannidhol ("Cloudy Head")

Patricia Yarrow,

or

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Washington & Suburbs: Knossos

Mimi Stevens,

December 16: Christmas Party, 2:30 p.m. Sir Walter

Raleigh Restaurant,

College Park, MD Contact: Brent Warner

HAWAII

Oahu: Sammath Naur

Steve Brown, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

ILLINOIS

Peoria: The Far Westfarthing smial

Mike Foster, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

IOWA

Decorah: Alfheim

Doug Rossman, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge: Roke

Sally Budd, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor area: Galadhbremmin-Ennorath

Dave & Grace Lovelace, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis-St. Paul: Rivendell

David Lenander, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

December 8: Annual "Readings from Rivendell"
discussion.

NEVADA

Reno: Crickhollow

Joanne Burnett, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

NEW YORK

New York: Heren Istarion

(The New York Tolkien Society)

Anthony Burdge & Jessica Burke, The New York
Tolkien

Society, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

Dates TBA: The Silmarillion; The Children of
Hurin;

current or forthcoming Inkling titles (academia);
fiction and poetry inspired by Inklings; work of SK
Thoth

OREGON

Mid-Willamette Valley Area

Donovan Mattole, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Portland: Bynwater Inklings

Gary Lundquist [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

PENNSYLVANIA

Lancaster Area: C.S. Lewis and Friends

Neil Gussman, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SOUTH CAROLINA

Columbia: The Columbia C.S. Lewis Society

Nina Fowler, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

WASHINGTON

Seattle: Mithlond

John D Rateliff, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Web site: [REDACTED]

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee: The Burrahobbits

Jeffrey & Jan Long, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

November 27: Gilgamesh by Stephen Mitchell, ed.

7:00 p.m. Hosts: Jan and Jeff Long

December 1: Don & Rich's Ab Fab Christmas Party.

7:00 p.m.

January 6, 2008: The King in the Window by Adam

Gopnik. 6:00 p.m. Host: Sue

Online Discussion Groups

Mythsoc E-List

Society activities and general book-related discussion. Sign up: [REDACTED] / [REDACTED]

mythsoc/ or contact Joan Marie Verba: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

LiveJournal Mythopoeic Society discussion forum

Society activities and general book-related discussion, especially the works of JRR Tolkien, CS Lewis, and Charles Williams. It is also a place to talk about The Mythopoeic Society and to post Society News.

Sign up: [REDACTED]

soc or contact Lisa Deutsch Harrigan: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Coinherence

Online discussion of Charles Williams.

Sign up: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

com

Book Reviews: YA Literature

Lloyd Alexander, *The Golden Dream of Carlo Chuchio*. Henry Holt, 2007. ISBN 0-8050-8333-2, hc, 306 pp. \$18.95.

"Who but lovers dream alike?" These words, spoken to the title character by the enigmatic Kirkasigirl, Shira, form one of the central parts in Lloyd Alexander's wonderfully satisfying final novel--final because the author died this past May, three months before *The Golden Dream of Carlo Chuchio* made it to bookstores.

The story begins in a bustling Mediterranean town, Magenta, on the island of Serrano, off the coast of Campania. Though never identified explicitly, the geography, as well as many of the words and names, suggest we may be in Italy. The action centers on the antic misadventures of Carlo Chuchio-- "Carlo the jackass. The dimwit. Carlo the chooch." But though it may be true that every family has its "chooch" (in Italian, a *cinco* is a jackass), Carlo himself gradually outgrows this epithet as the novel progresses. In this way, Carlo is very representative of Alexander's most engaging protagonists.

The encounter that sets the story in motion--and which will, in one form or another, be repeated several more times during the course of Carlo's travels--occurs when Carlo meets a bookseller in the local marketplace. The bookseller gives Carlo a very old volume of tales (free of charge, since Carlo has no money), in which Carlo finds a hidden treasure map. Stirred into a frenzy to seek this fortune ("Carlo the Donkey? No. Carlo Milione."), he sets out for adventure, making his way into Parzya (Persia) and lands further east toward Cathai (China) along the dangerous but dazzling trade route known as the Road of Golden Dreams.

Carlo is hotheaded and green, cut from the same cloth as Taran in the *Prydain Chronicles*. But as in Alexander's other novels, it is usually brains that pre-

vail over brawn, words over swords. There are also some scenes of violence reminiscent of Alexander's middle Westmark novel, *The Kestrel*. And Chuchio has it villain, too. Charkosh is every bit as wicked as any of Alexander's usual bandits, scoundrels, and corrupt politicians, if not quite as purely evil as his conception of Prydian's Arawn Death-Lord. There is, in fact, much of Alexander's previous work nestled here and there in *Chuchio*, making the novel all the more satisfying a bookend to a remarkable and prolific career.

Along the way, Carlo attracts a series of fellow travelers, Alexander's usual cast of misfits: Baksheesh, the "world's worst camel-puller;" Shira, a mysterious, beautiful girl whom Carlo first meets disguised as a boy called Khargush; Salamon, a wandering philosopher and eternal optimist; a retinue of camels; and one very proud donkey. Each looks to Carlo, who has little choice but to grow into a genuine leader. Fortunately for everyone, he rises to the challenge.

The bookseller also reappears--or seems to reappear--again and again; first as an anonymous public storyteller in a local souk; then as the strange painter, Cheshim; finally as Khabib, proprietor of the Bazaar of All Dreams, where one can be custom-fitted for amazingly vivid (and reusable) dreams at very reasonable prices. In each of these encounters, the story of Carlo and Shira's burgeoning love is echoed, reinforced, and reinterpreted.

Does Carlo ever find the treasure? That would be telling, wouldn't it? Those familiar with Alexander's previous books, and with YA fantasy literature in general might be able to venture their own guesses, but the philosopher Salamon may be on the right track when he advises Carlo to remember that the "journey is the treasure," advice which applies equally well to the journey of the reader. As Shira also tell us, "stories should all have happy endings." Luckily, we have Lloyd Alexander to help with that.

Reviewed by Jason Fisher

Yolen, Jane. *Troll Bridge: a Rock 'n' Roll Fairy Tale*. Starscape, 2006. 231 pp. hc. \$16.95.

If you've ever visited the Minnesota State Fair, you've probably seen the princess heads carved from butter displayed there. Other states often do butter sculptures, too. Author Jane Yolen and her son, Adam Stemple, have taken the idea of the twelve dairy princesses and their butter heads and worked them into this fairy tale-like story, along with the idea of the troll bridge from the *Three Billy Goats Gruff* and the princesses from the fairy tale of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.

Moira, a sixteen-year-old classical harpist, is one of twelve dairy princesses. She is running late for a public appearance at the Trollholm Bridge, where the butter heads are normally left after the fair. This year, environmentalists have decided that the melting butter pollutes the stream, so the princesses are sent in person instead of their facsimiles in butter. What no one knows is that long ago there was a pact with the trolls on the other side of the bridge. As long as they received the butter, they left people alone. Now they have captured the eleven princesses who arrived on time for the photo shoot.

The princesses are to become brides of the three sons of Aenmarr the troll. Fossegrim, an enchanted fox, says that if Moira helps retrieve his fiddle from the trolls, he will help her free the sleeping princesses. Meanwhile, the three Griffson brothers (Griff-Gruff, get it?), members of a popular rock band, are taking a well-deserved vacation from touring when they happen upon the Trollholm bridge. Aenmarr hangs the three boys upside down in his larders as meat for dinner. Jakob, the youngest Griffson, escapes and teams up with Moira to try to save his brothers and the princesses.

The two young musicians use the power of music and its effects on the trolls in their rescue strategies. The story builds to an exciting climax, with lots of humor and plot twists along the

way. Lyrics from Griffson songs related to the story and comments from television reporters about the disappearance of the girls appear throughout the book. Readers who love music, folklore, and modern retellings of fairy tales will enjoy this book.

If you haven't read the other book in their Rock'n'Roll fairy tale series, *Pay the Piper*, based on *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, you will want to search it out after reading this book.

Reviewed by Laura Krentz

Alma Alexander, *Worldweavers: Gift of the Unmage*.
New York: Harper Collins, 2007. ISBN
978-0-06-083955-0, hc, 400 pp., \$16.99.

We're all familiar with stories of a young person set apart from peers by a mysterious ability that others don't share and don't trust. In *Worldweavers: Gift of the Unmage*, Alma Alexander reverses that trope with her teenaged protagonist, Thea Winthrop. In an alternate universe where magic is normal, Thea is set aside by her utter inability to learn magic. In an illustrious family of mages, Thea is a double disappointment: not only is her adored father a first-class mage, but as the seventh child of two seventh children, Thea herself ought to have been a prodigy by all known rules of magic. Instead she is a prodigious failure.

As she prepares to transfer to the Wandless Academy, a special school for those who share her disability, Thea is summoned across a time portal into the past, where she spends a summer as disciple to an Anasazi tribal elder. She expects the elder, like all her prior teachers, to drill her in magic arts—but he has other ideas. Under his influence, she learns that even her apparent incompetence has a purpose, preparing her for a coming battle against a world-devouring force that swallows mages without a trace.

From European fairy tales to Native American mythology, Alexander combines an eclectic mixture of familiar story-elements in unfamiliar ways.

At times the transitions between different

elements of the story might have been smoother. Most of all, I wonder why the author waited so long to introduce the threat that drives the story's climactic conflict, shifting the focus abruptly from a personal coming-of-age story to an epic struggle. Introducing the global threat earlier might have given readers more time to savor Thea's transformation from depressed teen to hero.

Nonetheless, Alexander's underdog heroine will win many readers' hearts. This portrait of an underachieving teen who discovers her inner strength may well strike a sympathetic chord with young readers still searching for their own gifts and their own callings.

Reviewed by Pauline J. Alama

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Bridgwater, Sue, [REDACTED]

Mythprint is the monthly bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society, a nonprofit educational organization devoted to the study, discussion and enjoyment of myth and fantasy literature, especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams. To promote these interests, the Society publishes three magazines, maintains a World Wide Web site and sponsors the annual mythopoeic Conference and awards for fiction and scholarship, as well as local and written discussion groups.

Mythopoeic Society Web Site:

www.mythsoc.org

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| Overseas (air) | \$16/year additional for postage | \$36/year |

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Mythopoeic Society Orders Department

Submissions for *Mythprint*

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:

Ginger McElwee

The Mythopoeic Society



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Number on label is whole number of your final issue.