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Chapter 1 : Unfinished Tales of NĀšmenor and Middle-earth - John Ronald Reuel Tolkien - Google Books

Unfinished Tales of NĀšmenor and Middle-earth is a collection of stories and essays by J. R. R. Tolkien that were never completed during his lifetime, but were edited by his son Christopher Tolkien and published in

NOTE It has been necessary to distinguish author and editor in different ways in different parts of this book, since the incidence of commentary is very various. The author appears in larger type in the primary texts throughout; if the editor intrudes into one of these texts he is in smaller type intended from the margin e. In the case of the unpublished writings of J. On the other hand, the nature and scope of his invention seems to me to place even his abandoned stories in a peculiar position. The narratives in this book are indeed on an altogether different footing: My father would certainly not have thought them wrong. He said in a letter written in March , before the publication of the third volume of *The Lord of the Rings*: I now wish that no appendices had been promised! I am not now at all sure that the tendency to treat the whole thing as a kind of vast game is really good - certainly not for me who find that kind of thing only too fatally attractive. The construction of the book has been difficult, and in the result is somewhat complex. The narratives are all "unfinished," but to a greater or lesser degree, and in different senses of the word, and have required different treatment; I shall say something below about each one in turn, and here only call attention to some general features. The most important is the question of "consistency," best illustrated from the section entitled "The History of Galadriel and Celeborn. When the author has ceased to publish his works himself, after subjecting them to his own detailed criticism and comparison, the further knowledge of Middle-earth to be found in his unpublished writings will often conflict with what is already "known"; and new elements set into the existing edifice will in such cases tend to contribute less to the history of the invented world itself than to the history of its invention. In content the book is entirely narrative or descriptive: I have imposed a simple structure of convenience by dividing the texts into Parts corresponding to the first Three Ages of the World, there being in this inevitably some overlap, as with the legend of Amroth and its discussion in "The History of Galadriel and Celeborn. I have throughout tried to make it clear what is editorial and what is not. I have, however, included short defining statements with almost all the primary entries in the Index, in the hope of saving the reader from constant reference elsewhere. If I have been inadequate in explanation or unintentionally obscure, Mr. There follow now primarily bibliographical notes on the individual pieces. I Of Tuor and his Coming to Gondolin My father said more than once that "The Fall of Gondolin" was the first of the tales of the First Age to be composed, and there is no evidence to set against his recollection. In a letter to me written in he said: On the basis of this text my mother, apparently in , wrote out a fair copy; but this in turn was further substantially emended, at some time that I cannot determine, but probably in , when my father was in Oxford on the staff of the then still uncompleted Dictionary. In the spring of he was invited to read a paper to the Essay Club of his college Exeter ; and he read "The Fall of Gondolin. In these he apologised for not having been able to produce a critical paper, and went on: It has of course never seen the light before. A complete cycle of events in an Elfiness of my own imagining has for some time past grown up rather, has been constructed in my mind. Some of the episodes have been scribbled down. Much later he began work on an entirely refashioned account, entitled "Of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin. To his reasons for abandoning it there is no clue. This is the text that is given here. To avoid confusion I have retitled it "Of Tuor and his Coming to Gondolin," since it tells nothing of the fall of the city. There is no question, however, that that most remarkable narrative is not suitable for inclusion in this book. It is written in the extreme archaistic style that my father employed at that time, and it inevitably embodies conceptions out of keeping with the world of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* in its published form. It belongs with the rest of the earliest phase of the mythology, "the Book of Lost Tales": Like the tale of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin it goes back to the very beginnings, and is extant in an early prose narrative one of the "Lost Tales" and in a long, unfinished poem in alliterative verse. But whereas the later "long version" of Tuor never proceeded very far, my father carried the later "long version" of

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Turin much nearer completion. There are however great differences in the course of the long Narn in the degree to which the narrative approaches a perfected or final form. The Narn is here at its least finished, and in places diminishes to outlines of possible turns in the story. My father was still evolving this part when he ceased to work on it; and the shorter version for *The Silmarillion* was to wait on the final development of the Narn. I have cited isolated fragments from this part of the projected larger narrative. This overlapping and interrelation between one work and another may be explained in different ways, from different points of view. Again, when all was still fluid and the final organisation of the distinct narratives still a long way off, the same passage might be experimentally placed in either. But an explanation can be found at a different level. Only names or features found on the original have been entered on the redrawing. This does not, so far as I am aware, occur elsewhere.

II Aldarion and Erendis This story was left in the least developed state of all the pieces in this collection, and has in places required a degree of editorial rehandling that made me doubt the propriety of including it. In the present case there are no less than five of these schemes, varying constantly in their relative fullness at different points and not infrequently disagreeing with each other at large and in detail. But these schemes always had a tendency to move into pure narrative, especially by the introduction of short passages of direct speech; and in the fifth and latest of the outlines for the story of Aldarion and Erendis the narrative element is so pronounced that the text runs to some sixty manuscript pages. This movement away from a staccato annalistic style in the present tense into fullblown narrative was however very gradual, as the writing of the outline progressed; and in the earlier part of the story I have rewritten much of the material in the attempt to give some degree of stylistic homogeneity throughout its course. This rewriting is entirely a matter of wording, and never alters meaning or introduces unauthentic elements. The latest "scheme," the text primarily followed, is entitled *The Shadow of the Shadow*: The manuscript ends abruptly, and I can offer no certain explanation of why my father abandoned it. A typescript made to this point was completed in January . At the end of this narrative p. I have endeavoured to give the latest formulation. The forms given in my table I believe to be later. Of events in Middle-earth the records are few and brief, and their dates are often uncertain. It is for this reason that this part of the book is largely made up of short citations, with further material of the same kind placed in the Appendices. There are two versions: The editorial hand has here had little to do.

II Cirion and Boil and the Friendship of Gondor and Rohan I judge these fragments to belong to the same period as "The Disaster of the Gladden Fields," when my father was greatly interested in the earlier history of Gondor and Rohan; they were doubtless intended to form parts of a substantial history, developing in detail the summary accounts given in Appendix A to *The Lord of the Rings*. The material is in the first stage of composition, very disordered, full of variants, breaking off into rapid jottings that are in part illegible. There are, of course, quite a lot of links between *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* that are not clearly set out. They were mostly written or sketched out, but cut out to lighten the boat: It was to have come in I during a looking-back conversation in Minas Tirith; but it had to go, and is only represented in brief in Appendix A pp. I have given them the title "The Hunt for the Ring. The explanation is clearly that they were written after the publication of the first volume but before that of the third, containing the Appendices.

V The Battle of the fords of Isen This, together with the account of the military organisation of the Rohirrim and the history of Isengard given in an Appendix to the text, belongs with other late pieces of severe historical analysis; it presented relatively little difficulty of a textual kind, and is only unfinished in the most obvious sense.

II The Istari It was proposed soon after the acceptance of *The Lord of the Rings* for publication that there should be an index at the end of the third volume, and it seems that my father began to work on it in the summer of , after the first two volumes had gone to press. He wrote of the matter in a letter of . From it I derived the plan of my index to *The Silmarillion*, with translation of names and brief explanatory statements, and also, both there and in the index to this book, some of the translations and the wording of some of the "definitions. For the other citations in this section I have given in the text itself such indications of date as can be provided. I have therefore redrawn it fairly exactly, on a scale half as large again that is to say, the new map as drawn is half as large again as the old map in its published dimensions. The area shown is smaller, but the only features lost

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are the Havens of Umbar and the Cape of Forochel. Some way to the west of it was a larger island named Tol Fuin, which must be the highest part of Taur-nu-Fuin. In general, but not in all cases, I have preferred the Sindarin name if known, but I have usually given the translated name as well when that is much used. It may be noted that "The North em Waste," marked at the head of my original map, seems in fact certainly to have been intended as an equivalent to Forodwaith. Lastly, I would emphasize that the exact preservation of the style and detail other than nomenclature and lettering of the map that I made in haste twenty-five years ago does not argue any belief in the excellence of its conception or execution. I have long regretted that my father never replaced it by one of his own making. However, as things turned out it became, for all its defects and oddities, "the Map," and my father himself always used it as a basis afterwards while frequently noticing its inadequacies. The various sketch-maps that he made, and from which mine was derived, are now a part of the history of the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*. There she would have perished, but the Grey-elves came to her aid. And I beg of you to foster him, and to keep him hidden in your care; for I forebode that great good, for Elves and Men, shall come from him. But I must go in search of Huor, my lord. But with the passing of the years the life of the former folk of Hithlum, such as still remained. Elves or Men, became ever harder and more perilous. And though they loved Morgoth no longer, they served him still in fear, and hated all the Elven-folk; and they despised the remnant of the House of Hador the aged and women and children, for the most part, and they oppressed them, and wedded their women by force, and took their lands and goods, and enslaved their children. Therefore Annael led his small people to the caves of Androth, and there they lived a hard and wary life, until Tuor was sixteen years of age and was become strong and able to wield arms, the axe and bow of the Grey-elves; and his heart grew hot within him at the tale of the griefs of his people, and he wished to go forth and avenge them on the Orcs and Easterlings. But Annael forbade this. Therefore we are resolved at last to forsake it, and to depart into the South; and with us you shall go. Of the Noldor some, maybe, know the way thither, but they will speak of it to none. But their enemies kept watch upon their dwellings, and were soon aware of their march; and they had not gone far from the hills into the plain before they were assailed by a great force of Orcs and Easterlings, and they were scattered far and wide, fleeing into the gathering night. Hard and bitter then was his life; for it pleased Lorgan to treat Tuor the more evilly as he was of the kin of the former lords, and he sought to break, if he could, the pride of the House of Hador. For he was strong and skilful, and Lorgan fed his beasts of burden well, while they were young and could work. But after three years of thralldom Tuor saw at last a chance of escape. The Easterlings hunted him with dogs, but without avail; for wellnigh all the hounds of Lorgan were his friends, and if they came up with him they would fawn upon him, and then run homeward at his command. Thus he came back at last to the caves of Androth and dwelt there alone. And for four years he was an outlaw in the land of his fathers, grim and solitary; and his name was feared, for he went often abroad, and slew many of the Easterlings that he came upon. But he found it not, for he knew not where to look, and such a few of the Elves as lingered still in the mountains had not heard of it.

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Unfinished Tales of NŪmenor and Middle-earth (often referred to, and sometimes published, as just Unfinished Tales) is a collection of stories by J.R.R. Tolkien that were never completed during his lifetime, but were edited by his son Christopher Tolkien and published in

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I read Unfinished Tales again. I should do so more often. It is a fantastic collection of writings, some in more finished form, some less, from J.R.R. Tolkien's hand, collected, edited and commented by his son Christopher.

Chapter 9 : J.R.R. Tolkien: Unfinished Tales of NŪmenor and Middle-earth « On the third side

It belongs with the rest of the earliest phase of the mythology, "the Book of Lost Tales": itself a very substantial work, of the utmost interest to one concerned with the origins of Middle-earth, but requiring to be presented in a lengthy and complex study if at all.