

TOLKIEN
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EDITORIAL
by Dick Plotz

This will be my last issue of the Tolkien Journal. I've been talking with Ed Meškys about the transfer of the TSA, and he seems willing and able to continue the Journal, and possibly the button, book, and poster services, with much more consistency than I have been able to provide. The necessity for change is probably evident to many of you whose button orders, sent in months ago, have not yet been processed. There are many reasons for both the delay and the imminent transfer.

Central to the whole problem is the basic setup of the TSA as I conceived it over two years ago. It was a small, one-man organization, designed for no more than a couple of hundred members. Membership was free, the Journal sustained by contributions. I could recognize every member's name for the first few months. Then came the magazine articles and the paperbacks. Circulation jumped from 100 for the first issue to 250 for the second. Ballantine Books unofficially printed the third issue (400 copies) and the fourth (800) when they could not be covered by voluntary contributions. At no time, in fact, did Ballantine imply any obligation or exert any editorial influence. The decision to support and push the Ballantine paperbacks until Ace paid royalties was mine, made before I had any contact with Ballantine.

But a year ago I was forced to charge membership and subscription fees, which turned out to be less if I used my own printer. Dues were \$1.50 at first, and went up to \$2.00 early this year, to keep enrolment down rather than to finance extra costs. But as more people read the Books, more joined. By the end of 1966, there were one thousand dues-paying members; there are another five hundred or so now. The burden is simply too heavy for me to handle. I've enlisted the help of my family, friends, enemies, anyone, but those of who wrote for buttons for someone's birthday in May will find that hard to believe. Imagine this, then: so far this year, I have received nearly ten thousand letters. Generally, mail has come in at the rate of fifty to sixty letters a day. I begin to agree with those who complain that the TSA has become a Sauronic monster.

Unlike some of my harshest critics, though, I do think there is a place for an inclusive organization for Tolkien people. Tolkien's popularity is a bare fact. The Tolkien Society of America had little, if anything, to do with creating that fact. There is no returning to the days when one could write messages on subway walls in Elvish and expect that they would remain confidential. But it is still possible to get immense enjoyment from just reading The Lord of the Rings and talking with a few friends about the hidden ways of Lothlórien. This is the ideal way to know Tolkien, the way of the smial and less. The great need for a large blanket organization, not a smial, is this: there must be one publication that anyone can get, which provides general news and articles. What would it be like having to buy Tolkien Journals from New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Atlanta to get the full picture? And a small, exclusive, yet geographically widespread organization would quickly become narrow and cultish, like the Baker Street Irregulars.

So we have a large organization, publishing four (?) times a year, selling buttons, books, and posters; a one-room plant, appropriated from a house that is lived in; and a Thain who can't be active and in school at the same time. Solution: disband or transfer.

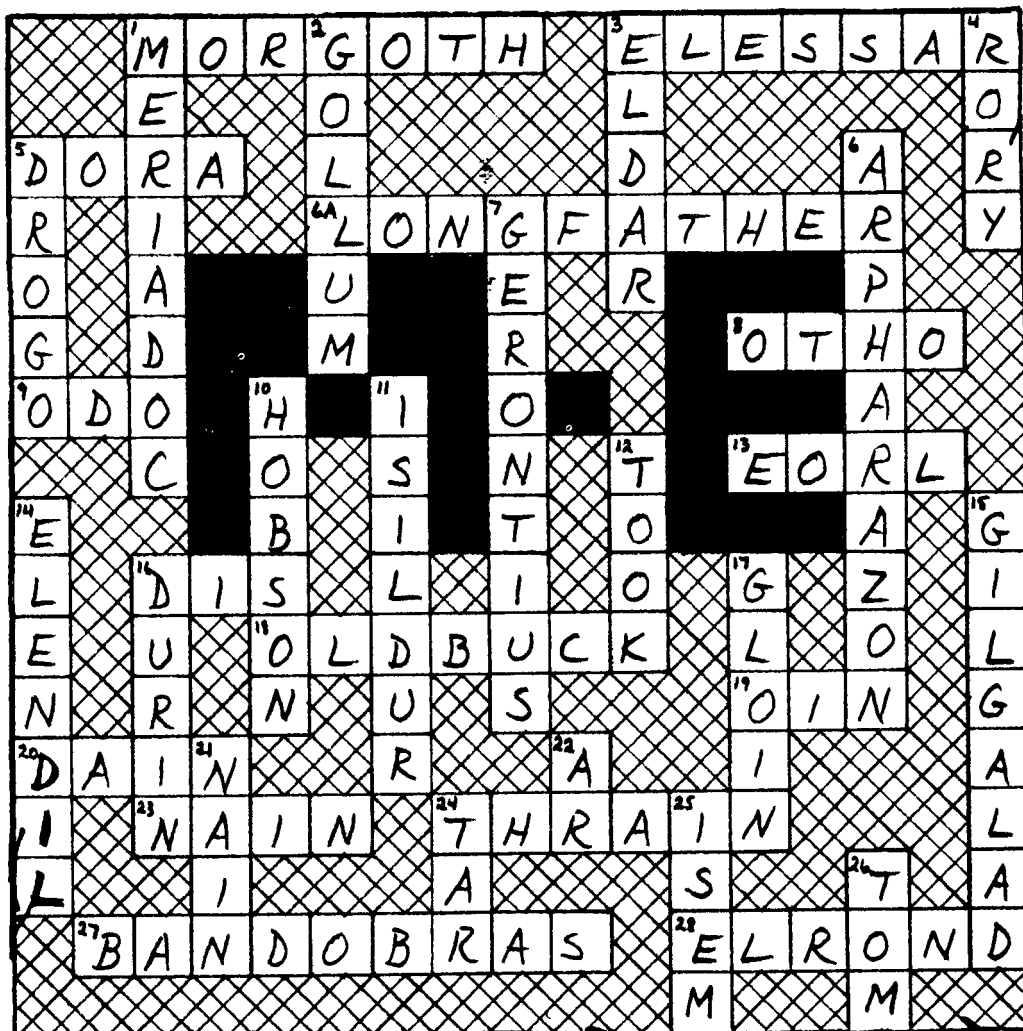
I thought it would be disband, pay you all off, and throw the field open to the dogs, until a week ago when Ed Meškys called. Seems that Belknap College, where he teaches physics, has a new computer which, among other things, prints mailing lists from IBM cards onto mailing la

bels. I would say maintaining the mailing list in proper order was the most harrowing task I had as Thain, and the one I was most reluctant to entrust to lesser hands, aside from editing the Journal. If a machine could do that for Ed, then he, as Thain or whatever, would have that much more time to answer your questions personally or to compile a better Tolkien Journal. Ed hopes to be able to take advantage of other opportunities at Belknap which would enable him to take over most of the functions of the TSA with much less effort. The button-book-poster business may have to go to someone else, but the whole operation will probably be preserved. Meanwhile, I have people working day and night to get your orders to you. That birthday may be long past, but Tolkien is timeless.

All these arrangements must be discussed at the meeting, but it seems fairly certain that the next Thain of the TSA will be Edmund R. Meškys (pronounced Meshkeess, to set you on the right foot at the start). You will be pleased with the new service, which cannot be half so atrocious as it is now, even if the computer breaks down. In anticipation of leaving, I'd like to say that I've enjoyed the Tolkien Society of America, that I look forward to helping out in the future in any small capacity that Ed has for me, and I hope you continue to support it as you have in the past. Eru knows it should tax your patience less. Namárië!

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Solution to Scott Smith's Middle-earth crossword, II:4, amended in III:1.



THE ELDER AGES AND THE LATER GLACIATIONS OF THE PLEISTOCENE EPOCH

by Margaret M. Howes

Until quite recently, it has been almost impossible to place the Second and Third Ages of Middle-earth with reference to the geological evolution of the Earth as a whole, and to the chronology of recent times. Within the past decade, however, the marine studies of Drs Ewing, Ericson, and Wollin of the Lamont Geological Observatory of Columbia University, combined with the remarkable work of Tolkien in translating the ancient records, have enabled us to establish the dating of these periods beyond any reasonable doubt.

Beginning in 1947, Drs Maurice Ewing, David B. Ericson, and Goesta Wollin, with other scientists of the Lamont Geological Observatory, have examined three thousand deep-sea sedimentation cores from various sites on the floor of the Atlantic Ocean. The cores they selected for their interpretation of the climatic history of the Pleistocene contained undisturbed foraminiferal records of the entire Pleistocene era. Here we have, for the first time, a genuinely reliable method of gauging the lengths of the various glacial and interglacial periods; and Ericson and Wollin have been able to develop an accurate chronological chart of these climatic variations. (See Figure 1.)

Notice that the alternating periods of warm and cold appear to follow a fairly regular pattern--with one exception. This one exception appears at the very beginning of the most recent, or Wurm, glacial period. It is a relatively short, "Little Ice Age", lasting some 20,000 years, and followed by a similarly short warm period, called by European glaciologists the Gottweig Interstadial. After this brief interstadial came the main Wurm Ice Age, from which we have just recently emerged. The Ice Ages in general undoubtedly took place, and will take place again, as a result of natural causes. As yet, however, no theory of natural causes can account for the sudden onset and equally sudden recession of ice before the main Wurm glaciation.

Of course, no natural cause will ever be discovered for this period, because no such natural cause existed. This early, or pre-Wurm, glaciation can be explained in one word: Morgoth. Obviously, a more-than-natural power was required to bring about both the tremendous climatic swings and the equally great changes in the contours of the land that took place in what amounted to a very short time, geologically speaking. The record of the continental rocks for this period is faint and difficult to read, the signs of one cataclysm having been almost completely obliterated by another several times in succession. Nevertheless, by correlating the physical evidence carefully with the early age records translated by Tolkien, and with the sedimentation core system to give us our time scale, we can work out an outline of the historical and geological development of that distant time.

On the basis of our time scale, the Ice Age of Morgoth began about 115,000 years before present, and lasted until 95,000 years before present. The Gottweig Interstadial, in which we place the Second, Third, and beginning of the Fourth Ages of Middle-earth, lasted from 95,000 to 65,000 years before present. The Wurm Glaciation lasted from 65,000 to 11,000 years before the present time.

Figure 3 shows the contours of Middle-earth as they existed during the glaciation of Morgoth, as well as the maximum extent of the ice sheet at this time. Also shown are the water bodies formed by glacial melt-water at the time. The glacial sea of Rhûn filled the entire shallow

GLACIAL AND INTERGLACIAL PERIODS

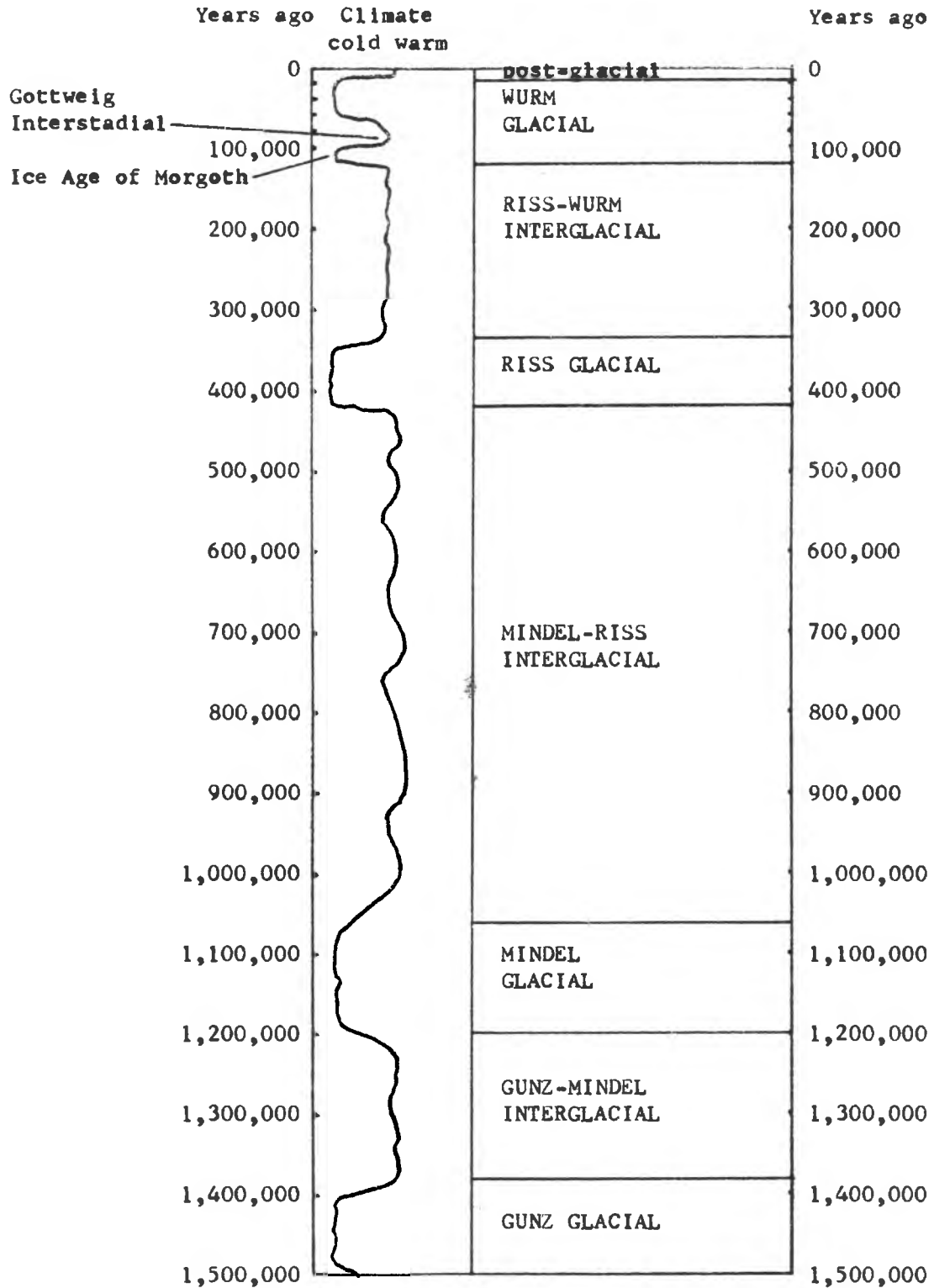


Figure 1. Chart of Pleistocene glacial and interglacial periods; from Ericson and Wollin, The Deep and the Past, page 207.

valley beyond the later channel of the Carnen and below the Iron Hills. Glacial Lake Anduin filled the basin between the Anduin and Entwash channels.

The location of the Wood of Laurelindórinan during this period is still something of a mystery. However, fossilized trees have been discovered in the area that would have been, at that time, between the northern and southern ice caps, the Misty Mountains on the east, and the probable area of Greenwood the Great on the west. The age of these fossils has been determined by the potassium-argon method to be at least 100,000, but not more than 200,000 years. They are of a species unknown to modern science, and discovered nowhere else in the world in any deposits; and they are associated with other plant fossils known to require a mild, equable climate. Thus it is probable that Laurelindórinan extended throughout that area between the ice caps, as no other explanation seems possible for the maintenance of a mild, equable climate between two heavily glaciated areas.

The exact outlines of the Beleriand extension of Middle-earth, and of the Western land that was later to be called Númenor, are still uncertain; the boundaries shown here must be considered approximations.

Because of glacial abstraction of water from the sea much of what is now the continental shelf was exposed, forming much of Eriador. After the overthrow of Morgoth and the accompanying destruction of Beleriand, the ice caps disappeared rapidly, and the general climate warmed up quickly. The core studies show that the major retreat of the ice was probably almost complete by the years 500-600 of the Second Age, although a lesser ice cap persisted in the far north and northeast. The coastal outlines remained approximately the same during this period, except, perhaps, for the land mass now called the Iberian Peninsula, which may have been already partly submerged. The rapid melting of the glacier, as well as the subsidence of Beleriand, of course caused a rise in sea level; but this was offset by the eustatic rise of the land as glacial loading was removed. Figure 4 shows Middle-earth, with Númenor, and the sunken plateau which was all that remained of Beleriand, during the Second Age.

Figure 2 is a chart of the Gottweig Interstadial, showing major dates in the Second and Third Ages, and the probable final date of the Fourth Age kingdom founded by the King Elessar.

Figure 5 shows Middle-earth in the now-familiar contours which it wore throughout the Third, and much of the Fourth, Ages. Since eustatic equilibrium had been reached by the end of the Second Age, the subsidence of Númenor at this time caused a rise of sea level along the coasts of Middle-earth, drowning that part of the Harad which is present Northwest Africa, as well as much of the Iberian Peninsula. As we have noted above, this peninsula may have been partially submerged during the Second Age as well. Less research has been done in this area than in any other part of modern Europe, and much more will have to be done, or additional historical records discovered, before the question can be settled.

The Fourth Age kingdom under the descendants of Elessar was ended, and for a long time human civilization was ended, by a third, and greatest, cataclysm. The problem of tracing the geological record of that period is tremendous, and will probably not be completed for some time to come. The cause of that convulsion of the continent is known, however.

It seems that not only Mordor and the Misty Mountains, but also large parts of the rest of Middle-earth, had been honeycombed with huge caverns during the Third Age. Outside of those two major areas, these had been far below the surface, but all were filled with the machines and weapons of Sauron and the various races of orcs. Late in the Fourth Age, Men began to penetrate these caves, and to study--and try out--what

YEARS BEFORE PRESENT		ELDER AGE YEARS
95,000	Overthrow of Morgoth; end of First Age	S.A. 1
94,500	Final retreat of glaciation of Morgoth; Sauron begins to stir	S.A. 500
94,000	Sauron begins building the Barad-dûr in Mordor	S.A. 1000
93,000	About this time the Shadow falls on Númenor	S.A. 2000
92,000	Ar-Adunakhor King in Númenor	S.A. 3000
91,559	Sauron overthrown by Elendil and Gil-galad; end of the Second Age	S.A. 3441
91,000	Turambar King in Gondor; Tarondor King in Arnor	T.A. 559
90,000	Hyarmendacil II King in Gondor; Araphor King in Arthedain	T.A. 1559
89,000	Boromir I High Steward of Gondor; Aragost chieftain of the Dúnedain	T.A. 2559
88,538-40	The Great Years. War of the Ring. End of Third Age.	T.A. 3021
88,000	"THE	
87,000	GOLDEN	
86,000	AGE"	
85,600	Beginning of dissension in Gondor	
85,000	Destruction of Mordor and Gondor. Collapse of the Misty Mountains. End of the first civilization of Men.	
.		
.	THE BLANK YEARS	
.		
75,000	Crustal revolution caused by the Fourth Age disaster was by approximately this time stabilized into the present contours of Europe. Continental shelf submerged.	
.		
.	THE BLANK YEARS	
.		
65,000	Beginning of Wurm Glacial Age in this millennium. Continental shelf exposed again.	

Figure 2. Chart of Gottweig Interstadial.

they found there. Eventually they managed to set off what can only be called a chain reaction, involving the entire substratum of the continent. Mordor itself, and most of Gondor, simply disappeared under the intruding sea. Western Iberia and Northwest Harad were thrust up again in the crustal recoil of the earth. The Misty Mountains, undermined as they were, collapsed in a series of earthquakes. The entire surface of the land was eventually reshaped, the process requiring millennia. It is believed to have stabilized, the continents assuming the contours they have retained until the present, after some eight to ten thousand years.

Figure 6 shows the comparison between the coastal outlines of Middle-earth during the Third Age and at present. In a relief map showing the contours of the ocean floor as well as the land, the remnants of Beleriand can still be seen west of the British Isles as the Faeroe Plateau; what remains of the sunken land of Numenor is now that portion of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge south of Latitude 45, and centered on the mountain peaks now called the Azores. During the Third and Fourth Ages, these islands, too, were below sea level.

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So far, few written records have been found on the history of the Kingdom of Men after the death of the King Elessar. In spite of their scanty detail, however, they indicate that the Men of Middle-earth enjoyed a surprisingly long period of peace, prosperity, and growth under the descendants of Elessar. A minimum of 1500, and a more probable maximum of 3000, years have been estimated for the length of this "Golden Age". Even if one accepts the minimum figure, this represents an era of stability and general well-being without equal in all of human history, and is undoubtedly the original "Golden Age" recalled so persistently, in so many legends, by so many of the peoples of Middle-earth.

Regarding the disaster that finally brought an end to this fortunate time, we have a little more detail. Long before, at the conclusion of the War of the Ring, the King Elessar himself had given many of the former slaves of Mordor the lands about Lake Nurnen, in Mordor, to be their own.(8) In the centuries that passed, apparently the rest of Mordor was also gradually rehabilitated. A manuscript, reliably dated in the year 1232 of the Fourth Age, speaks of the "grassy plains of Gorgoroth, where cattle thrive," and of the "endless pine forests of the Ered Lithui." It also states that the easiest route to the new settlements in Mordor is by way of the Great Road through Minas Ithil.

For a long time, these immigrants into Mordor seem to have been content to stay on the now-pleasant surface of the land. The caverns and passages far below, where the creatures of Sauron had once labored, were still places of legendary horror to be avoided at all costs. But in time it became no doubt a simple matter of familiarity breeding contempt. Centuries passed, while Men lived comfortably above these dark and secret places, and no harm ever came to them; they seem to have become convinced that no harm from this source ever could come to them.

Following is an excerpt from the most complete account we have so far discovered, describing these last events in the history of the Fourth Age Kingdom. As far as we have been able to determine, it was written a generation or two after the destruction. The style is stilted and uneven, obviously an attempt to imitate the polished writing of a previous age; but whatever it may lack in literary quality, there is no doubt of its historical accuracy.

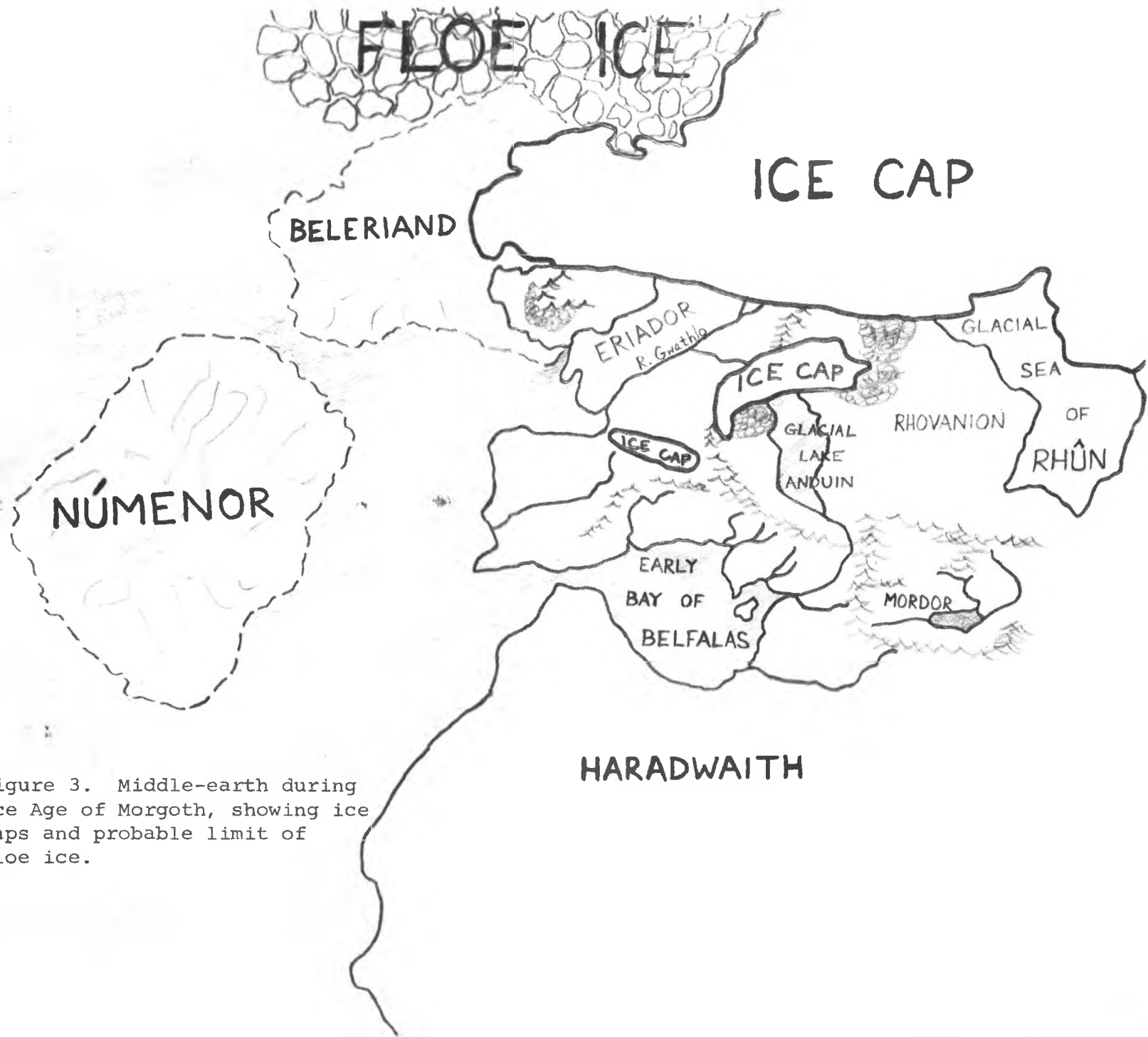


Figure 3. Middle-earth during Ice Age of Morgoth, showing ice caps and probable limit of floe ice.

In their confidence they even began to explore the vast caverns, the work of Sauron, that penetrated the very foundations of the earth below Mordor. At first they still went fearfully, with swords drawn and every sense alert, as men do who enter a dangerous and forbidden ground. But the mighty machines of the Dark Lord stood rusting in the silence, and those of his creatures who still survived had grown witless and feeble; there was no longer any great danger for Men--at least not for their bodies--and they grew easy and lighthearted as they traveled ever deeper to satisfy their lustful curiosity. This was the beginning of dissension, and finally of disaster, for Gondor. For two factions grew up, as they had in Númenor of old. One, supported by the King and his counsellors, urged that the caverns be sealed up, both in Mordor and in the Misty Mountains. Study of these caves, and of the half-ruined devices remaining in them, could only bring ruin, they said, as ruin had come before. Better to seal off both caves and contents, so completely that no power could ever reopen them, and in time even the knowledge of their existence might be forgotten. The other faction denounced this as the advice of cowards. There was no harm in any knowledge, they said, and Men should never turn away from knowledge of any kind; the harm came only when the knowledge was used for harmful ends; and whatever they learned, they said, would be used for good. And this faction won, and gained permission from the King to continue their study of everything left by Sauron and the fell race of orcs.

At first perhaps they were sincere, and some benefit came to Men from their labors; water was brought to waterless places, and rocky hills were leveled, and other great works accomplished. But in time they came to seek only the increase in their own power, and in the end, in their arrogance, they let loose forces they could not control. The whole of Middle-earth was shaken by catastrophe; Mordor itself, and the very land of the King, sank as the waters of the Sea rushed in; the long range of the Misty Mountains collapsed in terrible thunders; everywhere there was terror, and destruction, and death.

Nothing is left now but decay, and a few who try to preserve something of the old learning; but lesser Men multiply in the ravaged lands, Men who have come to distrust all learning. No man knows where the heirs of the line of the King Elessar are sheltered, nor indeed if any of that line survive. The Elven-kind are estranged from us, and hide themselves from us, and there is no help for us from them. The race of dwarves...

The rest of this manuscript is lost. It does not give the name of the king who allowed the dangerous research, or indeed the names of any participants in this final episode. The phrase "Men who have come to distrust all learning" is a clue to why no subsequent civilization ever developed. The actual reshaping of the continent after the disaster took millennia, as we have seen; the survivors and their descendants would have been constantly reminded of the results of ill-applied learning, and reinforced in their belief that all learning, of any kind, was dangerous. In addition, as new hills rose, and gradually built up into mountains, and new rivers flowed, and so on, all the old landmarks were obliterated--cities, roads, everything. In time, knowledge of the old days would have been forgotten, or simply told as stories that had nothing to do with the everyday life of Men.

The men who managed to preserve the written records of the earlier

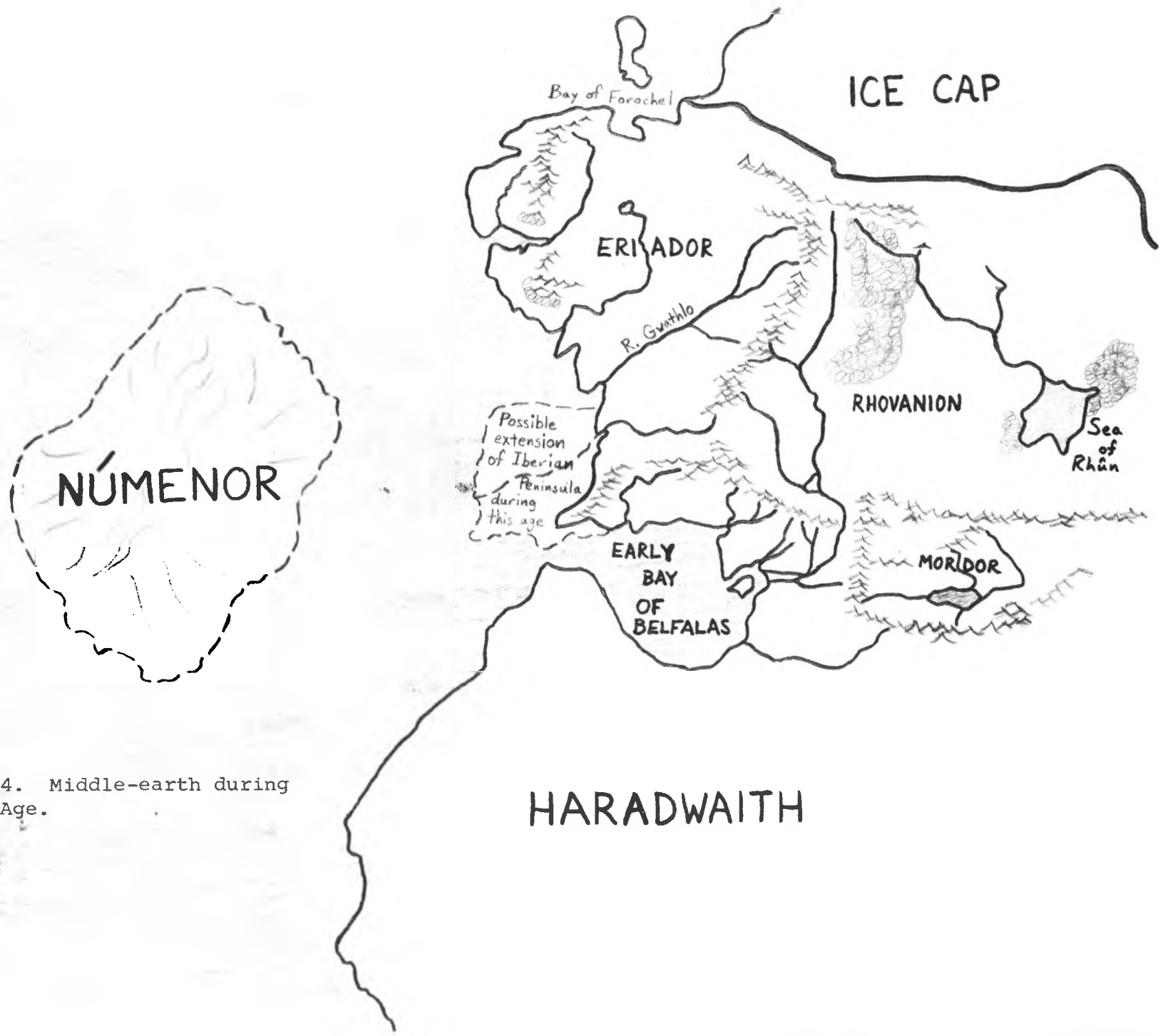


Figure 4. Middle-earth during Second Age.

ages were apparently too few in number and too lacking in influence to begin the building of another civilization. They must have spent most of that long stretch of blank years in hiding, handing down whatever they had retained of their ancient knowledge from father to son, copying and recopying the ancient volumes, often using crudely tanned skins for paper; throughout the Wurm Ice Age that followed at the end of this interstadial, in fact, that was the only material available to them.

It was also some time during those blank years that Eressea, like the Undying Lands before it, was removed from the circles of the world. The legend of a wonderful land or island, far to the west, persisted of course, even to the beginnings of the present civilization of Men.

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Physical evidence of Men and their works at this early age is scanty. Such evidence as exists is also misleading, and has been liberally misinterpreted, not only in popular articles and fiction, but also in the works of many presumably reputable anthropologists. We are given a picture of a brutish, low-browed, subhuman race supposedly existing at this time, shambling about in cave-bear skins. The gross inaccuracy of this picture has been made clear by the recent, monumental work of Carleton S. Coon.

His researches show that true Homo Sapiens appeared in the central part of Middle-earth during the last, or Riss-Wurm (see Figure 1) interglacial period (2), between about 350,000 and 115,000 years ago, according to our time scale. The most significant paleontological find for this period was the discovery near Fontcheuvade, in Charente, of two skulls, dated by fluorine testing at early in the glaciation of Morgoth. The left parietal of skull no. 1 contains a hole with depressed edges, suggesting death by violence; the age is estimated at forty to fifty years. According to Vallois, "The essential fact of skull no. 1 is the absolute absence of a supraorbital torus; the glabella and the brow ridge are less developed than in the Upper Paleolithic Europeans, or even the majority of Europeans today. They recall, in their configuration, skulls of female Europeans; there is no nasion depression, and the brow ridge does not extend down to the upper border of the orbit." In skull no. 2, also, enough of the frontal bone is present to indicate that the skull lacked the massive brow ridges of the more primitive types of Men. (2)

In fact, these were some of the Edain, the Fathers of Men. From the location where their bones were discovered, it seems apparent that these individuals were among those making their way west, towards Beleriand, because of the glaciation of Morgoth.

Few of their remains have been found. The bodies of those who died in the war against Morgoth were lost when Beleriand itself was drowned and broken; the bodies of most of their descendants were lost with the destruction of Numenor; but here we have the unmistakable testimony of their existence.

The lesser Men who inhabited Middle-earth at this time have suffered most from anthropological misconceptions. The first remains of these Men to be unearthed in modern times were located in the Neanderthal valley of Germany, and their race has since become famous as Neanderthal Man. They have been described as crouching, stooping, squat, brutal creatures, with huge jaws, little or no forehead, and a low grade of intelligence. As Coon has demonstrated, this popular image is wrong, and was largely the result of unskillful attempts at restoration and articulation of the skeletal and skull fragments.

These people appeared in Middle-earth sometime during the Ice Age of Morgoth and settled in the western and southern portions of the land.

AEARON



Figure 5. Middle-earth during Third Age.
(Scale slightly larger than in Figs. 3, 4, and 6.)

They had, in fact, large brains, with capacities ranging from 1300 to 1640 cc., well within the modern range of approximately 1200 to 1800 cc. "It is commonly stated that Neanderthal Man could not have stood or walked erect because his foramen magnum, the hole in the base of the skull through which the spinal cord passes into the cervical vertebrae, was slanted backward. But this anatomical observation is not true; and even if it were true, the position of the foramen magnum would not have affected his posture." They had rather prominent noses, which can be seen to this day in people of that area. The average height of the men was about five feet five, the women being considerably shorter. They had large heads, deep chests, heavy bones, and large feet, and were rather heavy for their stature, probably a good 160 pounds or more. "People built more or less like these 'Neanderthals' may be seen today in the Abruzzi mountains, in the Alps, and in Bavaria." (2) This agrees with the brief description of the Men of Bree given in the old records: "...brown-haired, broad, and rather short..." (7)

Coon also confirms the old records which state that few of these people survived the turmoil of the Elder Days: "Without doubt the 'Neanderthal' population of Western Europe was greatly reduced by the end of the Wurm I glaciation"--that is, the glaciation of Mergoth.

From this stock came the Dunlendings and the Dead Men of Dunharrow, as well as the Men of Bree; these Men were also the original inhabitants of Gondor and Calenardhon, before the kings came back from over the seas at the end of the Second Age. It is paradoxical that of all the great works of these early ages, nothing has survived; only the most primitive and humble tools and artifacts of the lesser Men have come through the Fourth Age disaster and the later Wurm glaciation. Thus it is understandable that this period has been referred to as the Stone Age, with the assumption being made that nothing else, of any kind, was being produced during this time.

The stone culture of this time is called the Mousterian; it began among the so-called 'Neanderthals'--the non-Edain people--at about the beginning of the last inter-glacial, some 350,000 years ago. The tools of this type represent a flake culture of highly developed technique, and they continued to be made throughout the Ice Age of Mergoth. The Edain, learning from the Elves during this time, developed metal working to a very fine art; but little or nothing of this seems to have been passed on to the other Men of Middle-earth. These continued to work in stone throughout the Second Age as well, and even in the Third Age there were still groups of Men making and using stone tools: the Dunlendings, the Pukel-men of the Drúadan Forest, and the poorer classes of Men in several areas. After the Disaster, the higher culture was lost, and Men went back entirely to the working of stone; in that turbulent period it may have become impossible for them to do anything else. This same Mousterian type of stone-work continued until some 60,000 years ago, during the Wurm glaciation, when the long cultural paralysis was somehow broken, and new techniques and materials began to come into use again.

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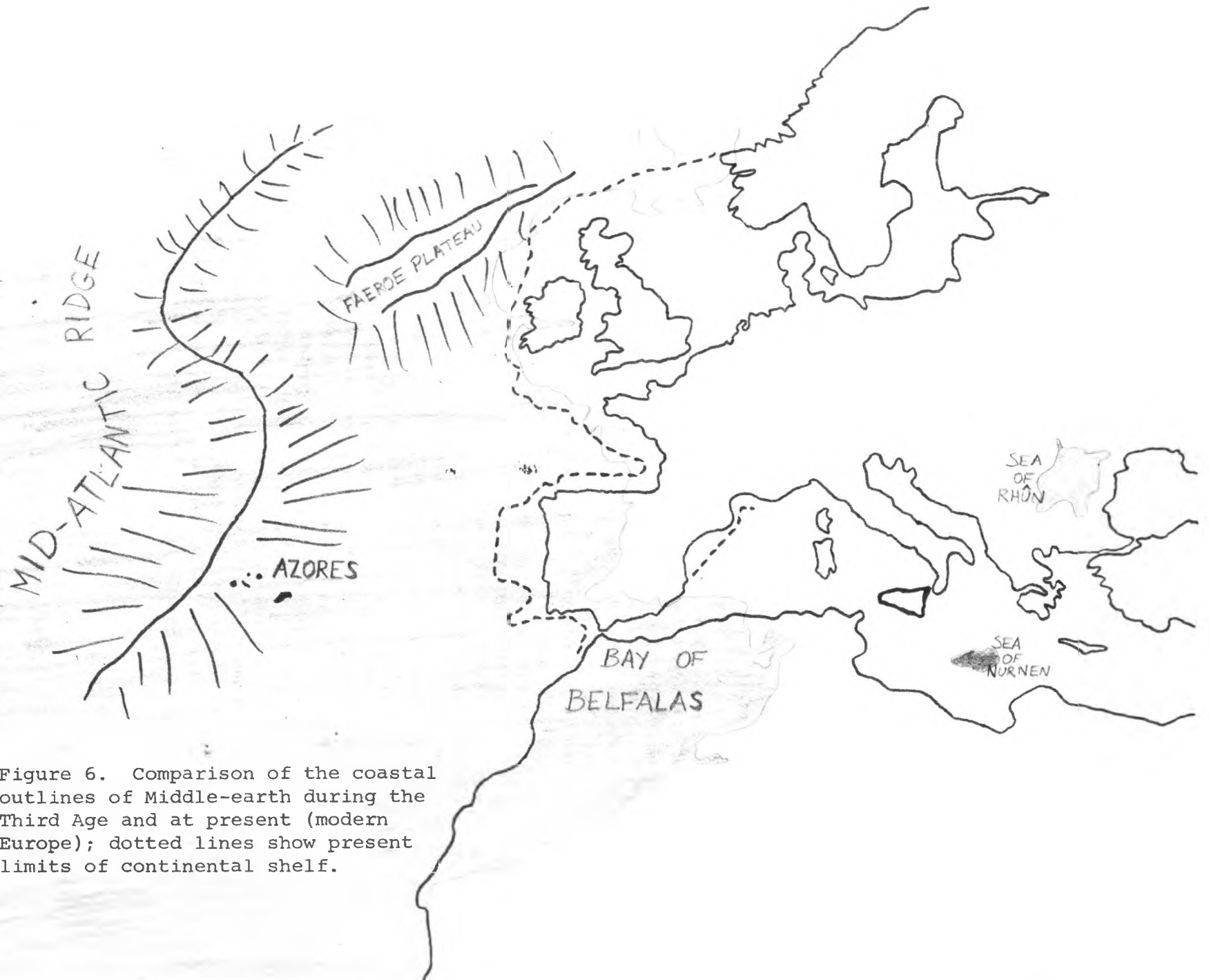


Figure 6. Comparison of the coastal outlines of Middle-earth during the Third Age and at present (modern Europe); dotted lines show present limits of continental shelf.

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10. Woodbury, David O., The Great White Mantle, New York, Viking, 1962

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LIST OF TRANSLATIONS AND PUBLISHERS
 of J.R.R. Tolkien's books
 from Geo. Allen & Unwin Ltd
 (sent in by Karl Weber)

Farmer Giles of Ham--

Polish--Panstwowe Wydawnictwo "Iskry", ul. Smolna 11/13, Warsaw
 Swedish--Almqvist & Wiksell/Gebbers Forlag, AB., 26 Gamla Brogatan,
 Stockholm C
 Hebrew--M. Newman Publishing Co., 38 Lilienblum Str., P.O.B. 1632,
 Tel Aviv

The Hobbit--

Dutch--Uitgeverij Het Spectrum, P.O.B. 2073, Utrecht.
 German--Paulus Verlag, Lohrhofstrasse 10, 435 Recklinghausen
 Japanese--Iwanami Shoten, 3 2-chome, Kanda Hitotsubashi,
 Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo
 Polish--Panstwowe Wydawnictwo "Iskry"
 Portuguese--Americo Franga Lamares, Livraria Civilizacao, Rua
 Alberto Aires de Gouveia 27, Porto
 Spanish--Compania General Fabril Editoria, Lavalle 1527, Buenos
 Aires
 Swedish--Raben & Sjogren

The Lord of the Rings--

Dutch--Het Spectrum
 Polish--Spoldzielnia Wudawnicza "Czytelnik", ul Wiejsk 12, Warsaw
 Swedish--Almqvist & Wiksell

SAMWISE--HALFWISE?
or
WHO IS THE HERO OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS?
by Jan Wojcik, S.J.

Clouds of an interesting controversy gather on the Tolkien horizon. In smoke-filled rooms nervous little men whisper that perhaps Samwise Gamgee is the true hero of The Lord of the Rings. The air crackles with pro-Frodo denials. The Samwise-Hero group refers to the subtle growth of Sam's character throughout the trilogy, from an early description of him kissing the beer barrel good-bye in the cellar to the heroic heights the gardener reaches fulfilling the quest in the final moments before the **Crack of Doom**.

Sam accompanied Frodo down the river after the breakup of the Fellowship when Frodo was too bravely foolish to want companionship. Sam wears the Ring after Frodo is captured, and he is the only Ring-bearer in the book who is never seriously tempted to its power. Sam is given the privilege of reciting what many consider the eucatastrophic climax of the whole story: "What's happened to the world? Is everything sad going to come untrue?" Sam plants the Shire anew with the fertile dust of Galadriel and thus climaxes the recurrent desolation-fertility contrast that weaves its way throughout the story. In so doing, Sam symbolizes the final victory of rich good over evil sterility. Finally, Sam closes the history of the great war for us with the breathtakingly simple understatement to Rose: "Well, I'm back."

The nervous little men are pounced on by righteous orthodox, the upholders of the obvious: Frodo is Ringbearer, Aeneas, Hero, God. He is the literary quest-hero, brother to Ulysses and Don Quixote. He spares Gollum who saves the quest; of him Gandalf remarks more than once: "There is more to you than meets the eye." He it is who is honored by the multitudes with great praise after the battle, with buttons on contemporary lapels.

The most startling exegesis I have yet heard in defense of Frodo-as-the-hero is a theory of name derivation. According to one zealot, Fröd, the Old English word for "wise", is the source of Frodo's name, whereas the Old English sām-prefix that modifies adjectives with the sense of "half" gives the name Samwise the sense of Half-wise. Whatever you might think in the controversy, you admit that it is another example of the fascinating power of the work, and its unique complexity, that such a topic should ever come up for discussion. The argument is certainly possible on the bull-session level described above; Frodo and Sam can both be called hero: Sam with subtle, Frodo with obvious references. But our interest can delve deeper into the heart of the story and still thrive.

The guidelines for our delving will be Tolkien himself. In his essay on fairy stories Mr. Tolkien describes the heart of such a tale as a eucatastrophe, the turn for good that gives us a "catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart;" and he goes on to say that such a heart has the same pulse in it that the Divine Comedy has: that is, the pulse of joy that came into the world with the eucatastrophe of the human history--the incarnation--and bloomed in the eucatastrophe of the incarnation--the resurrection. The whole tale, if it is a good one, is a setting for the central event of the eucatastrophe; we judge the worth of fairy tales in proportion to the grace and beauty and fittingness of the setting to the eucatastrophe and of the eucatastrophe to the setting. So, a study of Sam's part in bringing about the central "turn" might make a little clearer the claims that acclaim him hero of The Lord of the Rings.

Sam, we can show, is the focal point of two main motifs in the work, those of friendship and gifts, the two things without which Frodo's quest would have died in the bowels of Old Man Willow or on the mithril-resisted spear-thrust in the Halls of Moria; and these two motifs blossom into the eucatastrophe. The choices of Frodo to accept cosmic responsibility despite the mystery and danger that surround it would not be enough for him to gain success for his quest without external and spiritual aids: things and fellows. Before going on to a study of Sam's role and giftbearer and friend, recall the extent of these two motifs.

Frodo gets the Ring, Sting, mail, rope, bread, cloak, a phial of light. All gifts are given to him in affection, and all become indispensable and all appear to be obviously more than mere "things". What is important is that the fated gift burden of the Ring is accompanied by the gifts of love along the way that make the burden bearable. The mithril causes Gandalf to cry twice: "There is more to you than meets the eye." Sting and the phial glow in the presence of evil; the courage that they reflect from the heart of Frodo is enough to fill Shelob with fright for the first time in her life. The lembas of the elven-folk "fed the will, and gave it strength to endure, and to master sinew and limb beyond the measure of mortal kind." This is just a partial list, yet it makes clear that the gifts of love alter and enrich the life of the receiver. Without them the quest would never have begun, proceeded, or succeeded.

The motif of friendship is so obvious to you that to labor the point would be to exasperate. Gandalf the Grey becomes white, Strider becomes king, Gimli and Legolas become heroes, Merry and Pippin, with whom we all like to identify because they are such simple children of light and music, through the power of friendship do heroic things beyond the strength of mortal beings. Even Boromir and Gollum are companions of great worth, for they alter the plans of the quest in a way that assures its success.

But let us look closely at Sam. He is the humblest in origin of the Fellowship, and has really only one virtue: love that gives birth to all his heroism. What could be more fitting in a tale told round a Christian eucatastrophe and that recovers for us a fresh wonder for the powers of gifts and friendship than to have a little man become a hero through his power to love?

"Come, Mr. Frodo," said Sam, "we can't stay here."

"All right," said Frodo in a remote voice, as of one speaking half asleep. "I will try." Wearily he got to his feet.

He never had any real hope in the affair from the beginning; but being a cheerful hobbit he had not needed hope, as long as despair could be postponed. Now they were come to a bitter end. But he had stuck to his master all the way; that was what he had chiefly come for, and he would still stick to him.

Sam becomes the body and legs of the exhausted Frodo on the final stage of the quest. Both their wills together accomplish the final task. He himself bears the Ring for a time, rages against foes, spares the hated Gollum himself after the manner of Frodo, literally carries Frodo up the mountain of Doom.

But it is two events--one before and one on the Plateau of Gorgoroth--and one event on the foot of the Crack of Doom that climax the motifs and underline strongly the place of Sam in the trilogy and give fuel to the fire celebrating his role as the true hero of the work.

Before a bridge-pass into the land, Frodo and Sam hid at the sudden appearance on the bridge of a Ringwraith, and Frodo felt a tremendous command to use the Ring. The lure took his hand slowly

and moved it forward to the ring hung around his neck. "Then his own will stirred; slowly it forced the hand back and set it to find another thing, a thing lying hidden near his breast...the phial of Galadriel, so long treasured, and almost forgotten until that hour. As he touched it, for a while all thought of the Ring was banished from his mind." The wealth here for study is overwhelming. All the magnificent power of Mr. Tolkien to create things, to uplift things, to sanctify things with meaning, lies before us. The gift of light and love can in simplicity resist the terrible complexity of evil. But for us now, unable to pursue it, this passage still throws great light on the significance of a future act of Sam when a parallel lure is felt by Frodo. For later, Frodo's will is again tempted to use the Ring and reveal himself in almost the same way. But this time he cries "Help me Sam, hold my hand! I can't stop it." Sam took his master's hands and laid them together palm to palm and kissed them; and then he held them gently between his own." Here we can say without exaggeration that the simplicity of Sam's love undoes the last attempt of the complex powers of evil to unravel the universe. The necessity of gifts and fellowship is intensified in the love of Sam for his master.

In the climactic scene of The Lord of the Rings these two patterns are woven together. Their presence reflects backward to all the things, events and choices in the story that have made the eucatastrophe of the happy ending possible. Frodo almost ritually strips himself of all the clothes and weapons and gifts and goes up the final distance to the crack without Sam. Sam has carried him here; gifts have won the way thus far; now it is only a hobbit and a ring and the universe. Frodo speaks in a clear voice, "I don't choose now to do what I came to do..." Now it is the fate that Frodo has chosen through his many acts of mercy to Gollum that ultimately tears the Ring away with a piece of the person of Frodo; gifts and friends have been used well; fate is kind.

The fading of emphasis on Frodo now blends for the rest of the tale with the increasing light around the person of Sam. Sam, as was said, sums up the eucatastrophe when he awakes before the risen Gandalf: "Is everything sad going to come untrue? What's happened to the world?" He plants the Shire. He is the man whose love and courage became indispensable complements to the courage and cosmic responsibility of his master and whose practical trade of a gardener refructifies the world furrowed into peace by war. He comes "back" from the quest as Frodo never does, and lives in the redeemed world meaningfully, while Frodo's lot is now mysteriously beyond the normal mortal ken.

When all is said, perhaps the beauty of Mr. Tolkien's complex creation of a world of heroes is too meaningful to abstract into the normal categories of quest myths which normally have a central hero. The Lord of the Rings is unique and so are Frodo and Sam, but maybe someone could print up another button to wear on the other lapel. When we see "Frodo Lives" we would be reminded that "Samwise Loves and Gardens".

* * * *

--We hear from Allen & Unwin that since a Green Beret translated LoTR into Vietnamese for the benefit of the natives, a division of the South Vietnamese Army has adopted the Eye of Sauron for its emblem.

LETTER

Dear Dick-

Here it is comment time again. Faced with the choice of discussing everything briefly or W.H. Auden's piece in depth, I choose the latter. I'm still not sure I, a lowly college student, am allowed to disagree with, or worse, critically analyze, one of the pillars of American literature. But anyway.

First, Mr Auden's linking moral choice and speech seems to me to imply that moral choices can only be made within the framework of a society. This is by no means an original idea (Aristotle started it), but when applied to Middle-earth seems to present some problems. Even in the Primary World there are numerous standards of morality; of course one can find a Kant-type absolute standard. But in a world with different species how can one determine a moral code applicable to all? I will admit that the races "both good and evil", as well as the elves, may be given a more or less common standard, but what of the evil beings? I do not agree with Mr Auden that Sauron "is an incarnation of absolute Evil", or at least with the implication that he has always been incapable of (our) good, and thus he can be included in this common standard. (This interpretation is unassailable if one agrees that Sauron, like Morgoth, is a fallen Vala, but I do not do so, as I shall show below.) But what about orcs and trolls? Why can't they have been created--or at least bred--by Morgoth or Sauron? It's a common enough futuristic science fiction idea to have specially bred groups, and special training is even more common an idea (even a practice: brainwashing); why can't so powerful a being as Morgoth have the power to breed a race and ensure that they are forever obedient? Remember, Sauron's trolls were "filled with the evil will of their master," and this is what accounted for their mental superiority. (Regular trolls were dull, lumpish creatures and, in the beginning, "had no more language than beasts." In the earlier world of Middle-earth it is likely the intelligence spectrum was more continuous than it is now; the extinction of the trolls was one cause of the current gap between man and beast.) After Sauron's fall they became insane and non-functioning. To deny Sauron's mental powers is to deny much of the grandeur of LotR.

The linking of speech and morality is certainly true now and was probably true then. But should the morality one judges orcs by be the same as that one uses to discuss elves? I think not. If a race has an instinct for (our) evil, it cannot be called wicked. Its extermination is probably justified, but that is the only value judgment we can make.

As regards Mr Auden's point about irredeemable wickedness, for the above reasons we cannot compare Germans and orcs.

Also, all this in no way lessens Eru's stature. Morgoth and Sauron have not created; they have changed. (The creation, but not the cross-breeding, of even an animal would cast doubt on Eru's claim to be the One. Incidentally, the flying steed of the Lord of the Nazgûl is conjectured to be the "last untimely brood" of something of an older world, not a beast cross-bred by Sauron.)

The second half of the article I agree with thematically, but I have a few disagreements with specific facts. For one thing, Gollum does not immediately arouse pity in Sam and Bilbo. In Bilbo's case, pity replaces curiosity, fear, and self-interest; Sam doesn't pity Gollum very much ever.

Also, a tentative quarrel about Mr Auden's discussion of the lust for domination. He says this lust makes one oblivious of physical passions, etc. Yet the dwarf-rings, tainted with Sauron's evil, inspire in

the indomitable dwarves a lust for gold. Perhaps this is for them a domination; dwarves seem to have the underground very close to their origins. Perhaps--and probably--there is a different explanation.

No, Sauron's greatest triumph was not "his seduction of the great wizard Saruman," but rather the corruption of Numenor.

I have doubts as to whether LotR is a fairy-tale, even if it does have a eucatastrophe, but I am unready to defend this now.

Finally, Mr Auden should have added that any Fourth Age Sauron will be less powerful. The history of Tolkien's world(s) is one of not exactly deterioration, but shrinking. Sauron is less than Morgoth, Aragorn less than Beren, and Arwen less than Tinuviel. Would that I could sing the sword-song in Beleriand or walk the courts of Numenor in the days of its glory.

But I can't, so I might as well tell why Sauron isn't a rebellious Vala. For one thing, Bombadil says the Dark Lord came from "Outside" (Bal. I-182). It is possible that Morgoth is meant by the "Dark Lord," but I think not. More seriously, "Outside" to Bombadil could mean Valinor as well as (for lack of a better name) Chaos. But I think not. For one thing, if Sauron were a rebellious Vala, wouldn't he have been destroyed with his master? And, as such, would he not have knowledge of Good? Morgoth was defeated by superior force, not strategy, to apply Mr Auden's statement about the relative abilities of Good and Evil to know each other. Finally, would a Vala, when defeated, go up in a cloud of smoke but remain spiritually alive in a weaker form? I don't know enough about the Valar, but I doubt it. [This is probably a specious argument, Bob. Not all the Valar are the same. For instance, the Istari are Valar of a sort.]

The most likely explanation, I feel, is that Sauron is some sort of minor pre-creation or very-early-in-creation Spirit of the Void. (For an explanation of the Void, see Michael Moorcock's Stormbringer or even Paradise Lost.) Or he could be an evil spirit of the earth. (Not Middle-earth, which seems to have an eastern boundary not too far from the Sea of Rhun.) [You know better than that, Bob. Men were created "somewhere near Lake Baikal."] That Sauron is basically a spirit is proven from the account of the fall of Numenor on Bal. III-393; he "assumed" shapes. Perhaps he was born with one of his own, but even this is uncertain.

(Incidentally, I just realized that the fall of Numenor has several striking parallels with the Eden story, especially the evil-spirit-causing-disobedience-of-the-one-command aspect.)

And one final incidental. The simile on Bal. III-279-80 about the defeat of Mordor by the Army of the West, "As when death smites the swollen brooding thing that inhabits their crawling hill and holds them all in sway, ants will wander witless and purposeless and then feebly die, so the creatures of Sauron...", is a perfect Homeric simile. The phrasing is perfect, the wording strongly reminiscent of the Lattimore Iliad's handling of such things, and the use of nature as the source of the simile also authentic. There's only one problem, what's the swollen brooding thing" in the ant-hill.

Somehow I get the idea I've written enough.

Y.m.h.a.e.s.

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Maps in geological article
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Addendum to Mrs Howes's article.

"...I want you to make it clear to readers that when I speak of the
 machines of Mordor and of the orcs, and of a kind of chain-reaction caus-
 ing the collapse of the Fourth Age Kingdom, I don't mean to imply any-
 thing on the order of atomic power or anything resembling it. The power
 involved was the same type of thing that was involved in a collapse of
 all the works of the Dark Lord when the Ring was destroyed; power of a
 kind that we in this age cannot possibly fully understand, let alone du-
 plicate, and that even the men of that age were using without fully com-
 prehending it. I might point out, too, that even though I have attempted
 to explain how Elessar's kingdom may have come to its end, I have no desire
 to see the story worked out in any greater detail, in a full-length novel,
 for instance. We knew that it did come to an end, of course, and human
 history eventually developed into what we have today; but as Dainis Bisen-
 ieks has said, having the full story would simply be too sad. The more
 realistic it was, the more heartbreaking it would seem."

--Margaret M. Howes

