



Old English, Old Norse, Gothic: Sources of Inspiration and Creativity for J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*

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Summary. J. R. R. Tolkien was a philologist for over 40 years, and a professor and researcher of Anglo-Saxon and related old Northern European languages at Oxford University. Tolkien's research into old languages, his delight in individual words – especially names, and his application of his specialty in Old English were addressed in his scholarship and lectures, and also incorporated in his mythology and stories of Middle-earth. Tolkien's application of academic philological research gives a feel of familiarity and authenticity to many of the peoples and cultures of Middle-earth. Tolkien thought this was especially the case in his creation of names, place-names, and fantastic creatures, as well as in the depictions of certain cultural practices. He applied his expertise in the direct use of Old English and Old Norse, both in known words, and in the philological methods of deriving modern equivalents. Ents, orcs, hobbits, mathoms, smials, éored, etc., all come from Old English. He also applied his research into Old Norse and Gothic by infusing into his mythology of Middle-earth certain aspects of ancient northern European culture, ethics, and worldview, notably from *Beowulf*, the *Elder Edda*, and other poems, sagas, and legends. I show that he worked in three ways: first, from extant words in the early Germanic languages to the creatures and names of Middle-earth; second, using the rules of comparative philology to constructions that solved philological puzzles or contradictions; and third, from using episodes, themes and other descriptive motifs from the early medieval literature in appropriate contexts in Middle-earth. Finally, I conclude that hobbits, as anachronisms in Middle-earth, are images of modern readers of the medieval literature, and metaphorically open that literature to us.

Keywords: *philology, reconstruction, inspiration, creativity, legendarium.*

1. Introduction

J. R. R. Tolkien has been called the “author of the century” (Shippey, 2002, xvii) due to the immense depth and richness of his heroic romance fantasy, *The Lord of the Rings*, hereafter referred to as *LOTR*. Three elements contribute to the attractiveness and appeal *LOTR* has for many readers: the first is the realistic setting in Northern Europe. Tolkien commented in 1956, a year after the publication of *LOTR*, that “Middle-earth is not an imaginary world. . . . The theatre of my tale is this earth, the one in which we now live, but the historical period is imaginary. The essentials of that abiding place are all there (at any rate for the inhabitants of N. W. Europe), so naturally it feels familiar.” (Tolkien, 2002, 239) Tolkien used flowers, trees, fruits and vegetables, stars, and landscapes normal to Northern Europe in his settings.

The second element has to do with the Tolkien’s Roman Catholic faith, and the Christian metaphysics and morality that permeate the world of Middle-earth. In a letter to a friend in 1953 Tolkien wrote, “*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. . . . [T]he religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism.” (Tolkien, 2002, 172) Stratford Caldecott, Joseph Pearce, and others have written extensively on the Christian symbolism and spiritual vision Tolkien’s legendarium, the term Tolkien used to refer to all his legends and myths of Middle-earth. “Many return to *The Lord of the Rings* again and again for refreshment of soul,” notes Caldecott. (Caldecott, 2003, 5)

The third element, which is the focus of this paper, has to do with the scholarship and linguistic skill that Tolkien applied in writing *LOTR* and the rest of the legendarium.

Tolkien was a professional philologist who started learning foreign languages very young, learning Latin, French, and German from his mother, who died when he was 12 years old. He studied Anglo-Saxon and Gothic as a schoolboy, and first encountered Welsh and Finnish as an undergraduate at Oxford University. After the war he worked for two years on the Oxford English Dictionary, and then became a professor of Anglo-Saxon, teaching at Oxford University for over 30 years.

Foreign languages affected Tolkien in the way music affects most people. He verifies this in several of his letters describing his first encounters with various languages. “Gothic was the first to take me by storm, to move my heart. It was the first of the old Germanic languages that I ever met.” Tolkien, 1963, 191) Next came Finnish with “the discovery, in Exeter College library, . . . of a Finnish grammar. It was like discovering a complete wine-cellar filled with bottles of an amazing wine of a kind and flavour never tasted before. It quite intoxicated me . . .” (Tolkien, 2000, 214). But the truly home language for Tolkien was Welsh. “Welsh is of this soil, this island; the senior language of the men of Britain, and Welsh is beautiful. . . . For many of us it rings a bell, or rather it stirs deep harp-strings in our linguistic nature. . . . It is the native language to which in unexplored desire we would still go home.” (Tolkien, 1963, 189, 194) Feeling this way about language-

es, and being an expert scholar in the old Germanic languages, including Old English (previously known as Anglo-Saxon) and Old Norse, Tolkien used his knowledge and scholarship for inventive and creative purposes, as well as for academic research.

Many of the fantastic elements found in *LOTR* were not invented by Tolkien, but were found in the Northern European literature of the Middle Ages. Dragons, elves, dwarves, trolls, giants, magic rings and swords were all there, but were reshaped and transformed by Tolkien in ways that would account for inconsistencies in the medieval corpus. Tolkien would look at old, obscure words that gave rise to linguistic questions, and then would invent a narrative or reconstruct a meaning to solve the puzzle. Tolkien said that his legends of Middle-earth were “*fundamentally linguistic* in inspiration,” and that “To me a name comes first and the story follows. . . . All the names in the book, and the languages, are of course constructed, and not at random” (Tolkien, 2000, 219). Tolkien also said that the object he aimed for with *LOTR* was to produce a work that had a strong appeal for readers. “The prime motive was the desire of a tale-teller to try his hand at a really long story that would hold the attention of readers, amuse them, delight them, and at times maybe excite them or deeply move them. As a guide I had only my own feelings for what is appealing or moving” (Tolkien 2004, 223).

One of the things Tolkien found most moving was individual words, and especially names. Because names have meaning, Tolkien enjoyed the implications of the context found in names. One of the most telling examples occurred when he attended the reading of a paper on the heroes of northern legend read by his son Christopher. Tolkien wrote to his son, praising the historical quality of the paper, but followed that saying, “All the same, I suddenly realized that I am a *pure* philologist. I like history, and am moved by it, but its finest moments for me are those in which it throws light on words and names.” His continues, “I find the thing that thrills my nerves is the one you mentioned casually: *atta, attila*. Without those syllables the whole great drama of both history and legend loses savour for me” (Tolkien, 2002, 264). Tom Shippey points out that even though Attila the Hun is an enemy of the Goths, “‘Attila’ is the diminutive form of the Gothic word for ‘father’, *atta*: it means ‘little father’ or even ‘dad’, and it suggests very strongly the presence of many Goths in Attila’s conquering armies who found loot and success much more attractive than any questions of saving the West, Rome, or civilization!” (Shippey, 2003, 16). For Tolkien, the romance of philology consists in uncovering the stories embedded in the names.

Accordingly, my aim here is to show that the appeal of *LOTR* is not accidental, but is a demonstration of Tolkien’s professional knowledge of medieval languages and literature, and of his philological skill in handling them. As philology is the main source of Tolkien’s creativity and means of mythical invention, two basic questions give the means of creatively using old texts. The first asks of old words and names: ‘What would this word [thing, idea] be like if it had survived until our own time?’ What shape would the word have, and what would it mean to us to be using it in everyday speech, or to encounter

it in a story? What could be the story behind this name? The second question goes in the opposite direction. “Given these variants in our modern languages, what would the original in a proto language look like and what would it mean?” Tolkien loved individual words, and their roots and inflections; a great deal of the attractiveness of *LOTR* comes from the sense of realism and authenticity it has through Tolkien’s application of philological knowledge and skill in constructing many of the elements we find in Middle-earth.

2. Northern Germanic Languages: Sources of Inspiration

One of Tolkien’s primary methods of invention was to find words or names in old texts that raised questions about their meaning, or seemed out of place as anomalies. He then would invent a way to account for the anomaly or to answer the question. Due to the researches of medieval scholars well-versed in Old English and Old Norse such as Shippey and Michael Drout, we have a great deal of information about Tolkien’s medieval sources, and how he used them (Honegger, 2005, 54). We know from Tolkien himself that he took the names of his dwarves in *The Hobbit* from the *Völuspá*, the section referred to as the *Dvergatal* (Tally of the Dwarves) in the *Elder Edda* (Tolkien, 2000, 383). But we learn from Shippey what Tolkien did with the anomalies he found there.

In addition to the typical names found there, such as Durin, Thorin, Dáin, Náin, Fili, Kili, Bifur, and Bofur (with spellings modernized by Tolkien), two other names were there which do not fit the pattern: *Gandálfr* and *Eikinskjalði* – Gandalf and Oakenshield. Oakenshield seems to be a nickname which evolved into a surname, and Tolkien turns it into one, inventing a story about Thorin using an oak branch as a shield in battle, when his own shield had been broken (Tolkien, 2004, 1074). The word for ‘elf’ in Old English is *alf*, and in Old Norse, *álfr*. It seems highly unlikely that a dwarf would have a name that includes an element meaning ‘elf’. So Tolkien, with the understanding that *gand* means ‘wand’ or ‘staff’, thought it could be the name of a magician or wizard, to those unfamiliar with elves: an elf with a staff. “The name creates the staff, and the staff creates the wizard. What Tolkien did, . . . was to take the *Dvergatal* seriously; to assume that it was a record of something that had had a story attached to it, . . . and a magician, or elvish creature, had been listed wrongly but understandably as a dwarf, when he was really a companion of the dwarves.” (Shippey, 2007, 196) Tolkien informed his publisher that “There are no songs or stories preserved about Elves or Dwarfs in ancient English, and little enough in any other Germanic language. Words, a few names, that is about all. . . . There is no story attached to the name *Eikinskjalði*, save the one that I invented for Thorin Oakenshield.” (Tolkien, 2000, 314) If there were oddities in the ancient texts, and no stories were found to account for them, Tolkien just invented a story himself in a way that would resolve the difficulty.

A second way Tolkien used the ancient languages was to take ordinary common words, and create names and even things from them. Since the land of Rohan was based on Anglo-Saxon culture with war-horses added, the names come from Old English. *Eoh* is the word for ‘war-horse’ or ‘charger’; and so we find Éomer – horse-famous, Éowyn – horse-joy, Éothain – horse-soldier, and Éomund – horse-protector. ‘Théoden’ means ‘king’, *Éothéod – horse-people, and Meduseld, the name of Théoden’s hall, also found in *Beowulf*, means ‘mead-hall’. **Simbelmynë*, the flower that grows on the burial mounds of the kings, means ‘evermind’, with the idea that the memory of their ancestors will always be kept in mind. Tolkien gave these ancestors Gothic names, some of them such as Vidugavia and Vidumavi, are actually found in Gothic texts as Widugauja (‘wood-dweller’) and Widumawi (‘wood-maiden’). (Tolkien, 1980, 325) “*Marhwini* and *Marhari* contain the Gothic word *marh* “horse,” corresponding to the Old English *meah*, plural *mearas*, the word used in *The Lord of the Rings* for the horses of Rohan” (Tolkien, 1980, 325). Gandalf’s horse, Shadowfax, was the greatest of these *mearas*.

There are traces of Old English both in the land of Dale, and in the Shire also. Gollum’s original name Sméagol “is derived from Old English *smygel* ‘a burrow, place to creep into.’ ”(Hammond and Scull, 2005, 86) The dragon’s name, Smaug, also has ties to the same root. “The dragon bears as name – a pseudonym – the past tense of the primitive Germanic verb *Smugan*, to squeeze through a hole: a low philological jest.” (Tolkien, 2000, 31) In Gothic it means ‘he crept.’ The hobbits of the Shire called the great tunnels in which they lived *smials*, a word also derived from *smygel*. They also kept *mathoms*, derived from *máðm*, meaning ‘treasure’ - things they “had no immediate use for but were unwilling to throw away.” (Tolkien, 2004, 5) Tolkien said that these words “have been given forms that lost English words might well have had, if they had come down to our day.” (Tolkien, 2004, 1136) Beorn’s name also has roots in both Old English and Old Norse. In Old English *beorn* simply means ‘warrior.’ But in Old Norse *björn* means ‘bear.’ Tolkien combined both meanings for his character, Beorn, making him a werebear, a man who can change into a bear at need. (Gilliver, et al, 2006, 95). Even the name of Middle-earth itself has its origins in the ancient Germanic languages. “[I]n Old High German *mittin-* or *mittel-gart* (the inhabited lands of Men) = Old Norse *mið-garðr*, and Old English *middan-geard*.” (Tolkien, 1975, 188)

3. Northern Germanic Languages: Sources of Creativity

In addition to being inspired to use or modify what he found extant in the ancient texts of Northern Europe, Tolkien also worked backwards towards the ancient languages and the proto-languages, using the scientific methods of philological reconstruction. Since most of what we have is in the form of fragments, scattered lines in the margins of other works, or damaged manuscripts, the application of the i-mutation, Grimm’s Law, other

sound-shifts, and ablaut-gradations could confidently fill in the gaps. These reconstructed words are preceded with an asterisk ‘*’ to indicate that they don’t exist now in any of the texts left to us, but that they can confidently be inferred to have existed.

Many of Tolkien’s fantastic creatures were constructed philologically. The Orc of Middle-earth would be *orc in Old English, but we have only two Old English words with this element: *orcneás*, the demon-corpses in *Beowulf*, and *orçbyrs*, orc-giants. In Old English the word referred to an evil spirit or demon, but Tolkien transformed it to mean the evil, vicious soldier of the Enemy. Wargs, the evil but intelligent wolves that Orcs rode in battle, were constructed in a similar way. The Old Norse word *vargr* means both ‘wolf’ and ‘outlaw’; there is a related Old English word *wearh* that refers to an outcast or outlawed human being, and an Old English verb *awyrgan*, to worry, to condemn, to bite to death. But Old Norse has another word for ‘wolf’, *úlfr*. This is one of those puzzles that Tolkien used both philology and creative imagination to solve. The wolf, *úlfr*, is left alone, and the other three words are combined to create the Wargs, who can ally with Orcs against men and dwarves.

Dwarves themselves are an intriguing example of Tolkien’s philological expertise. ‘Dwarf’ is of course a very old word. In Old English it is *dweorg* or *dweorh*. Other cognates include Old Norse *dvergr*, Old High German *tverg*, and Gothic **dvaigrs*. The correct plural in 1937 when *The Hobbit* was published, was ‘dwarfs.’ But this is a modern inflection. For very old words that end in –f, such as leaf, loaf, wolf, elf, life, or wife, the plural is –ves. Tolkien had used ‘dwarves’ all throughout *The Hobbit*, but a proofreader at the publishing house had decided it was a grammatical mistake, and changed all 300 instances of it back to ‘dwarfs.’ In 1937 an animated film of the Grimm Brothers’ tale “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” came out, and to avoid association with these modern creatures with names like Happy, Sleepy, and Goofy, Tolkien made the publishers restore his own plural ending. The –ves inflection gives the feeling of antiquity and dignity to his creatures, which the modern inflection does not. ‘Dwarfs’ is still a correct plural, but it is used mostly in contexts of astronomy or biology, rather than mythology and folklore.

The Ringwraiths, the Black Riders, were even more imaginatively created. The word ‘wraith’ is of Scottish origin; its cognates are ‘writhe’ – to twist or contort, to bend out of shape; ‘wrath’ and ‘wroth’ (the adjectival form of wrath) – a twisted kind of anger, and ‘wreath’ – a twisted coil. All of these derive from the Old English verb *wriðan*, to twist or to writhe. Shippey argues that the processes of the early modern Great Vowel Shift gave us the noun ‘wraith’ (Shippey, 2003, 369). The Oxford English Dictionary gives two opposing definitions, both from the same Scottish source: 1) a spectre or apparition of a dead person, and 2) a spectral appearance of a living person. Tolkien combines all of these elements into the Ringwraiths: they are invisible, neither living nor dead; they can ride horses and wield weapons, but they wear robes “to give shape to their nothingness” (Tolkien, 2004, 222); they are twisted with evil, anger, and despair, and they instill terror wherever they go.

Perhaps Tolkien's philological creativity can best be appreciated when considering the hobbits. Hobbits are purely Tolkien's own invention. There is nothing remotely like them in any ancient European language or tale. The origin of the word 'hobbit' is still unknown, and Tolkien actually invented an Old English etymology for it. Since the land of Rohan is especially Anglo-Saxon in character, it is Théoden, their king, who knows the word *holbytlan* (sing. *holbytla*). " 'Are these the Halflings, that some among us call the Holbytlan?' 'Hobbits, if you please, lord,' said Pippin." (Tolkien, 2004, 557). **Holbytla* is a properly formed Old English compound, combining *hol* 'hole and *bytla* 'builder'. Tolkien thought that "*hobbit* provides a word that might well be a worn-down form of *holbytla*" (Tolkien, 2004, 1138), if **holbytla* had existed in Old English, and if it had survived until our time.

4. Poems, Sagas, Legends: Presenting Ancient Northern Culture in a New Light

A third way Tolkien applied the northern medieval classics to *LOTR* was in how he incorporated motifs, or cultural events and situations into his narratives. These correspondences and parallels can be found, not only by the medieval scholars in these languages, but also by anyone reading *Beowulf*, the *Poetic Edda*, the *Prose Edda*, and other works in translation. As a professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, Tolkien taught *Beowulf*, *The Poetic Edda*, and other medieval Germanic texts for over 30 years; he was able to recite large sections of them by memory, and in 1936 he wrote what many consider to be the definitive and seminal work of *Beowulf* criticism in the 20th century: "The Monsters and the Critics." In 2014, Tolkien's own translation of *Beowulf* was published together with his comments and lecture notes. Given this background, readers have expected and continue to find for themselves many allusions to this body of literature in *LOTR*.

The first time readers noticed a correspondence between *The Hobbit* and *Beowulf* was in 1938, the year after *The Hobbit* was published. A reader wrote to Tolkien, asking if the episode of Mr. Baggins stealing a goblet from Smaug's hoard was based on a similar episode in *Beowulf*. Tolkien wrote a reply which was published in *The Observer* that year: "*Beowulf* is one of my most valued sources; though it was not consciously present to the mind in the process of writing, in which the episode of the theft arose naturally (and almost inevitably) from the circumstances." (Tolkien, 2002, 31) *Beowulf* is an important source for concepts as well as episodes in *The Hobbit*. I will single out one example: the dragon-sickness caused by the spells on the dragon's hoard. Tolkien said this "was in fact inspired by a single line of ancient verse: *iúmonna gold galdre bewunden*, 'the gold of men of long ago enmeshed in enchantment (*Beowulf* 3052)." (Tolkien, 2000, 312). The dragon-sickness is a kind of bewilderment or confusion that makes one so greedy for the gold that one would rather starve to death rather than give any of it up; it also causes a

decay of one's honor for keeping one's word. Dwarves and men are especially susceptible to it. Both Thorin Oakenshield and the Master of Laketown succumbed. I have also noticed (and have not seen in print anywhere) that Galadriel, the Elf-ruler of Lothlórien in *LOTR*, is able to give Gimli the Dwarf an immunity to it. "I say to you, Gimli son of Glóin, that your hands shall flow with gold, yet over you gold shall have no dominion." (Tolkien, 2004, 376)

A more extensive correspondence occurs between warriors in *Beowulf* and the éored (troop of cavalry) in the land of Rohan. There are two instances of such correspondence. The first is the scene in *Beowulf* where the coastguard challenges Beowulf to identify himself and his errand, and then allows him with his followers to go on to see the king (*Beowulf*, lines 229–300). This is closely paralleled in *LOTR* in the scene where Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli meet the Riders of Rohan (Tolkien, 2004, 431–439). In both episodes the coastguard in *Beowulf* and Éomer in *LOTR* challenge the newcomers and demand an account of them. After a bit of verbal altercation and bravado, both the coastguard and Éomer offer not only to let the newcomers pass but to aid them.

The second correspondence occurs when the newcomers approach the hall of the king. The description in *Beowulf* reads: "[T]he timbered hall rose before them, radiant with gold. . . its light shone over many lands." (*Beowulf*, lines 307–308, 311) Legolas' description of Théoden's hall almost sounds like a translation of these lines. "[T]here stands aloft a great hall of Men. And it seems to my eyes that it is thatched with gold. The light of it shines far over the land." (Tolkien, 2004, 507) Also in both cases, when the newcomers arrive at the king's hall, they are required to leave their weapons outside before going in to see him.

Even though there are no tales concerning dwarves in the Old Norse corpus, Tolkien found in Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda* a reference to dwarvish character, displayed in the swords they made. "Too late have you made this offer of coming to terms, for now I have drawn Dáinsleif which the dwarves made, which must kill a man every time it is drawn, and never turns in the stroke, and no wound heals where it makes a scratch." (quoted in Shippey, 2003, 138). Dáinsleif is a sword whose name means 'heirloom of Dáin', one of the dwarves listed in the *Dvergatal*. The qualities this sword has are the same kind of qualities Tolkien gave to his dwarves, strong, loyal, stubborn, revengeful, etc. Also Tolkien gave his dwarves many of the qualities the Icelandic dwarves had: they were great miners, stonemasons and builders, craftsmen and artists in gold, silver, and precious gems. One thing Tolkien's dwarves were, which the Icelandic dwarves were not, is great fighters.

There are many more corresponding motifs between the literature of the Middle Ages and Tolkien's fiction. One of them includes parallels between Jordanes account of the Battle of the Catalaunian Fields between the Huns and the Goths, recounted in the *Getica*, and the Battle of the Pelennor Fields in *LOTR*. Others draw similarities to Tolkien's elves with the fairies in the Old English poems *Sir Orfeo*, *Pearl*, and *The Seafarer*. The theme of courage in Tolkien is very similar to that in *The Battle of Maldon*. Tolkien also based his story *The Children of Turin* on the tragic story of Kullervo in the *Kalavala*. The

books by Elizabeth Solopova are an excellent source for those interested in the medieval literature Tolkien drew on.

5. Conclusion

One reason why *LOTR* is so popular with readers all around the world is that hobbits are modern, whereas Dwarves, Elves, Rohirrim, and Gondorians all have the attitudes, values and behaviors of the heroes of ancient heroic sagas and legends of Northern Europe. We see this especially in the case of Bilbo Baggins giving the Arkenstone to Bard, Gandalf, and the Elvenking to aid in negotiating with Thorin at the end of *The Hobbit*. Bilbo puts on “his best business manner”; he relies on a written contract for his fourteenth share of the treasure; he calls his share “a share in the *profits*, mind you”; to Bard and the Elvenking he says, “Personally I am only too ready to consider all your claims carefully, and deduct what is right from the total before putting in my own claim.” (Tolkien, 1966, 256). This way of thinking, with terms such as ‘profits’ and ‘claim’ and ‘deduct’ shows that he thinks of the demands of Bard and the Elvenking almost like overhead expenses. Shippey comments that “No character from epic or saga could even begin to think or talk like Bilbo.” (Shippey, 2003, 85). Shippey points out that hobbits “function in the ancient world as our representatives” (Shippey, 2003, 72), but it must be made clear that the ancient world spoken of is the ancient world of fiction, not of history. It is the legends, sagas, and poetry to which we gain entry, not actual history and actual culture. John Keats wrote a sonnet entitled “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer.” In this poem, a geographical metaphor is used, which compares reading literature to traveling through a world in which various realms are held by poets and authors under the rule of Apollo, the god of literary inspiration. These are the beginning lines:

*Much have I traveled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.*

The rest of the poem describes the thrill of the discovery that Homer is one of these realms of gold, and that to read Homer, even in translation, is to travel in that realm. The hobbits in *The Hobbit* and *LOTR*, also travel in realms of gold through Middle-earth; modern characters with modern parochial sensibilities and modern small-town smugness, who return with enlarged vision and wisdom (Tolkien, 2000, 329,159).

By sending hobbits on a quest through Middle-earth, Tolkien has brought the ancient poems and legends much closer to us, and made them more accessible. Just like the anachronistic hobbits in Middle-earth outside the Shire, we can understand and cope with the medieval sensibilities, values, and attitudes encountered in the old poems and sagas more easily for having read *LOTR*.

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Senoji anglų, senoji skandinavų ir gotų kalbos: Dž. R. R. Tolkino knygų *Hobitas* ir *Žiedų valdovas* įkvėpimo ir kūrybos šaltiniai

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Anotacija

Džonas Ronaldas Reuelis Tolkinas – gerai žinomas „Žiedų valdovo“ autorius, filologas, senosios šiaurės Europos kalbų specialistas. Jo akademinų pasiekimų poveikis kūrybai ir Viduržemės aprašymui nėra tinkamai įvertintas. Tolkinio filologinės žinios ir gebėjimai pasitarnavo kaip įkvėpimo ir kūrybos šaltiniai kuriant Viduržemės kultūras ir fantastines būtybes, aprašytas „Žiedų valdove“.

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