

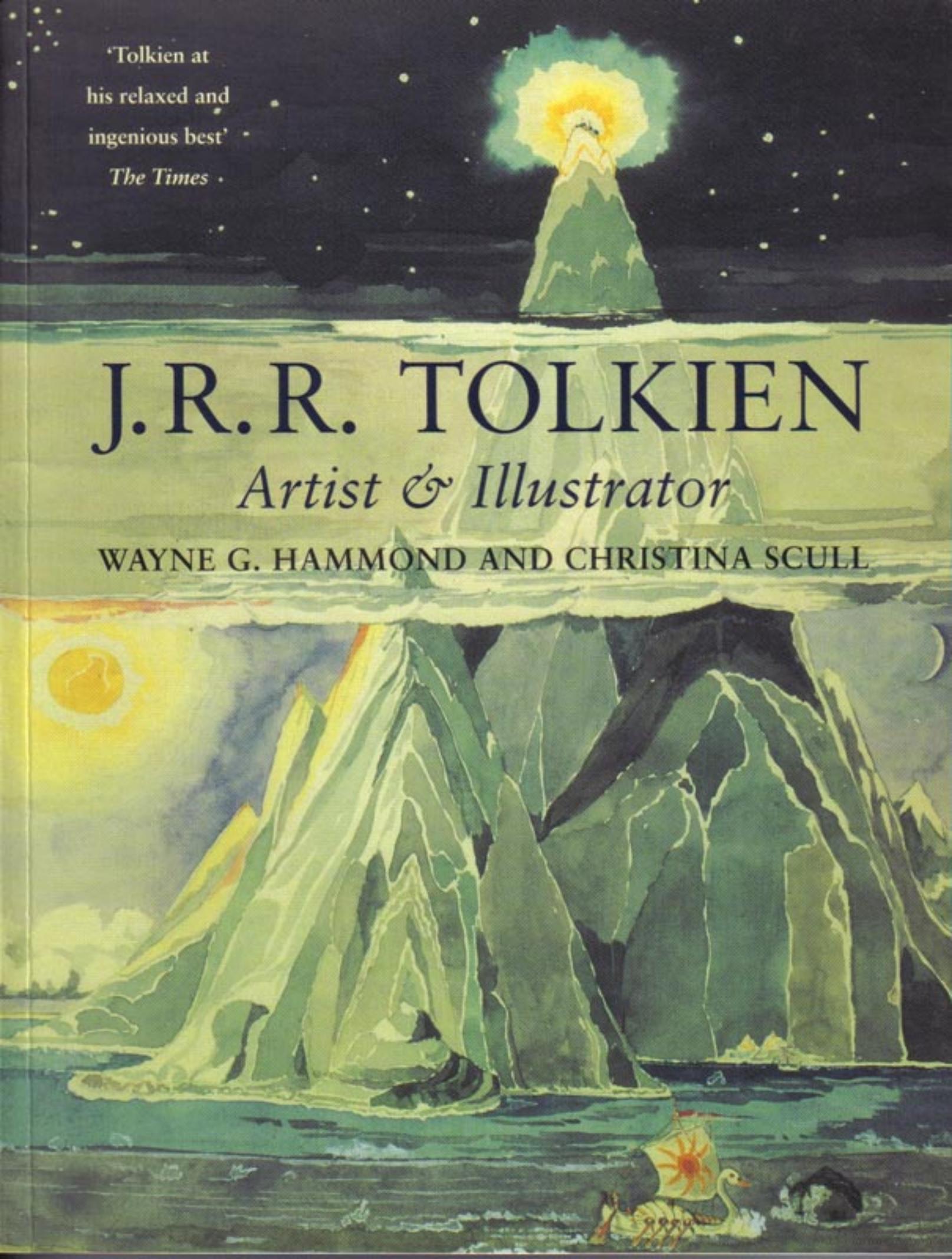
'Tolkien at  
his relaxed and  
ingenious best'

*The Times*

# J.R.R. TOLKIEN

*Artist & Illustrator*

WAYNE G. HAMMOND AND CHRISTINA SCULL



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Frontispiece (fig. 1): *The Hills of the Morning*  
Pencil, coloured pencil, black and red ink

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WE HAVE long felt that Tolkien's art deserves to be as well known as his writings. The two were closely linked, and in his paintings and drawings he displayed remarkable powers of invention that equalled his skill with words. His books have been read by countless thousands; most of his art, however, has been seen only by a very few. Our purpose in this book is to show, as widely as possible, the unsuspected range of Tolkien's art, and to relate it both to his life and to the writings for which he is most renowned. Our scope is much broader than that of Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien (first published 1979): we are concerned not only with his most finished or most mature work, but also with his early art, and with preliminary or alternative versions of pictures, which like his manuscripts provide valuable insights into the ways he thought and worked. However, we have not attempted a catalogue raisonné.

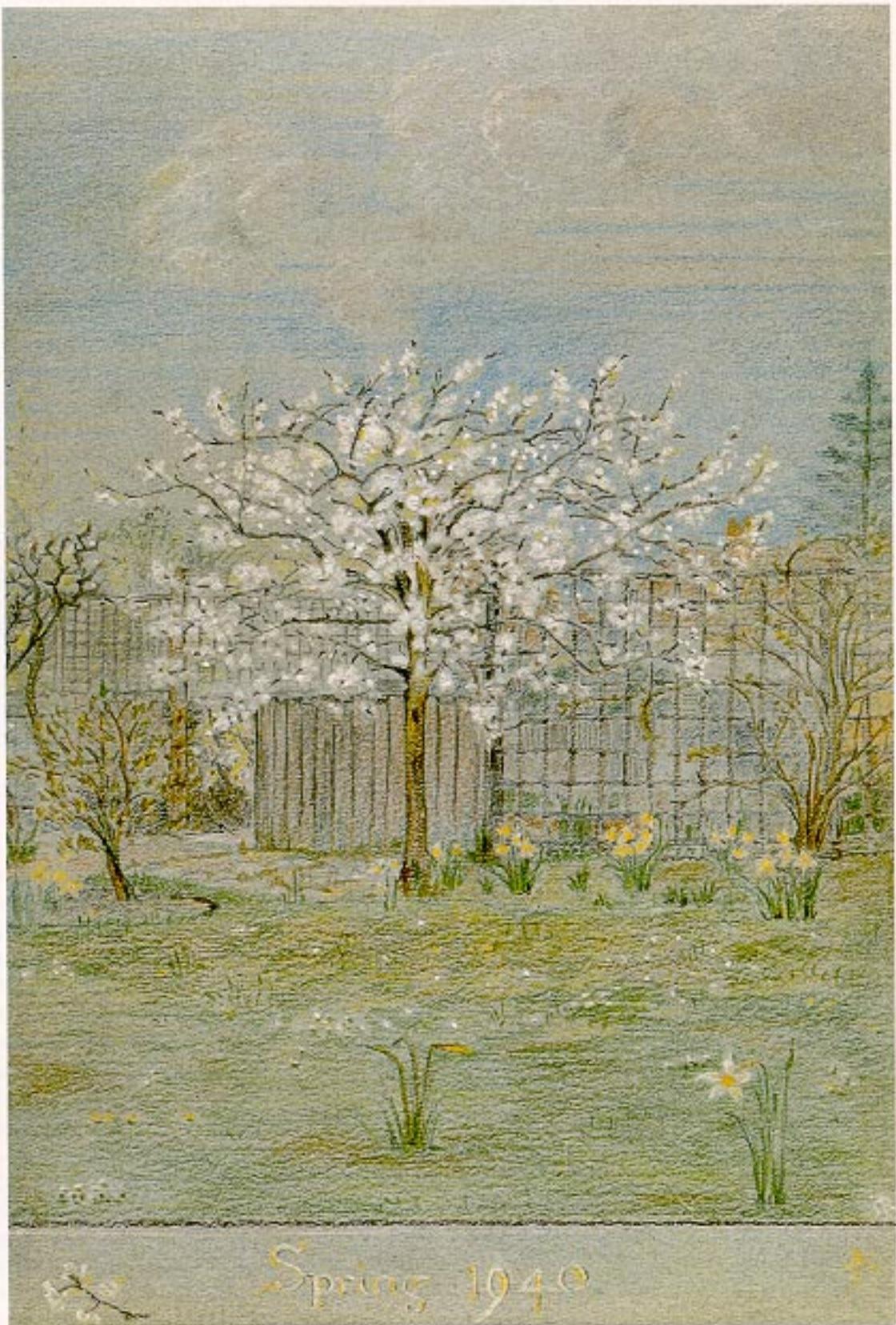
A great deal of Tolkien's art survives. He had an archivist's soul: he seems to have kept almost every scrap of his art -- sometimes literally scraps, drawn on whatever paper was at hand. He preserved some of it carefully in envelopes, and took out pictures long after he had made them, to add inscriptions and dates of execution. But it is the rare archivist who does not discard on occasion. We have found, for example, no preliminary drawings for two of the five watercolours he painted for *The Hobbit*, and only two sketches preceding the finished art for Mr. Bliss though one would expect more; and we know that Tolkien gave away at least three of his drawings as gifts. Today almost all of his art is preserved with his manuscripts in the Department of Western Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, or in the Archives and Special Collections department of the Marquette University Libraries, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In this book we have reproduced no work larger than its original size. Among the works selected, we have printed in colour nearly all of those originally rendered in colour; otherwise, we have described their colours in our text. We have described media in order of execution or of prominence, and have preferred the more precise term 'coloured pencil' to 'crayon' or (Tolkien's own preference) 'chalk'. 'Ink' refers to both line and wash. When we had a choice between a published or an unpublished work of similar quality with which to illustrate a point, we preferred the latter, so that more of Tolkien's art could appear in print; at the same time, we have provided citations to his art reproduced elsewhere, chiefly in Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien. Out of necessity, we have assumed that readers are

The *Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*. 'The Silmarillion' so styled denotes the mythology in all of its stages of writing, *The Silmarillion* the book first published in 1977. Quotations from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are from the first editions, but are cited in a manner convenient to readers of any edition, by chapter for *The Hobbit* and by book and chapter for *The Lord of the Rings* as published. When quoting from Tolkien's writings we have preferred those versions most contemporary with the art under discussion; we have, therefore, made extensive reference to Christopher Tolkien's invaluable *History of Middle-earth*, and on occasion to the original manuscripts. Works by and about Tolkien frequently cited in notes are identified more fully in the selected bibliography. We are very grateful to Christopher Tolkien for asking us to write this book, and for the many helpful comments and suggestions he made in aid of our labour. Our gratitude is due also to other members of the Tolkien family -- Priscilla, John, Joanna, and Michael George -- for their faith in us and for answering our many questions; to Pat and Trevor Reynolds, who went with us to many of the places in England Tolkien drew, through nettles and mud, up fire escapes and down cliffs to determine precisely where he stood or sat; to Denis Bridoux, especially for his suggestions for chapters 2, and 6; and to Carl Hostetter, Arden Smith, Patrick Wynne, and Chris Gilson for their expert advice in all matters linguistic. Judith Priestman and her staff at the Bodleian Library, especially Colin Harris, Nicola Pound, and Martin Maw, Dana Josephson of the Bodleian's conservation department, and Charles B. Elston, Archivist of Marquette University, were always patient and helpful. We are indebted also to Mary Butler, our editor at HarperCollins, and her assistant, Ali Bailey; and to Mary Bailey; Cathleen Blackburn and F.R. Williamson; David Doughan; John Ellison; Mrs Evans, Mrs Clark, and Mr Underhill of Gipsy Green; Charles Noad; John Rateliff and Janice Coulter; the late Taum Santoski; Eileen Terry; Angela Thompson; Peter Thornton; Robert Volz; Andrew Wells; the ladies of Eastbury; and the staffs of the British Library, the Institute of Archaeology, the Staffordshire Local Record Office, the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College, the Warwick Tourist Office, Westminster University Library, the Whitby Archives Heritage Centre, and the Williams College Library. Last but not least, we would like to thank Rayner Unwin for his advice and constant encouragement.

Wayne G. Harmond & Christina Scull

familiar at least with Tolkien's major fantasy writings,



Spring 1940

3 Spring 1940  
Pencil, coloured pencil

## I Early Work

In Tolkien's story Leaf by Niggle the title character is a painter, but 'not a very successful one, partly because he had many other things to do.' Niggle 'had a number of pictures on hand; most of them were too large and ambitious for his skill. He was the sort of painter who can paint leaves better than trees. He used to spend a long time on a single leaf, trying to catch its shape, and its sheen, and the glistening of dewdrops on its edges.'<sup>1</sup> He is often seen as a self-portrait of Tolkien the writer, niggling over a passage or phrase, or of Tolkien the philologist, looking closely at an interesting word.

But Tolkien was also himself an artist, who painted and drew despite many demands upon his time, and who would struggle through several versions of a picture, if needed, to capture his inner vision. He was Niggle-like also in glimpsing, in his mind's eye, far countries, and forests 'marching over the land', and 'mountains tipped with snow', - which he put into pictures as well as into words. And he seems to have genuinely believed of himself the criticism he directed at Niggle, that his ambition in art usually exceeded his talent -- an arguable point, no matter how many times he complained that he could not draw.<sup>2</sup> In his eighty-one years he made many paintings and drawings, some of them from life or nature, but most out of his imagination, related to his epic 'Silmarillion' mythology or *legendarium* and to his other tales of Middle-earth, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. If some of his pictures were ambitious, none were truly large. Invariably he worked small, on paper less than a foot in height or width, often considerably smaller. And he enjoyed the work even if he was critical of the results. It was an integral part of his life which has not been fully appreciated, in fact is usually overlooked,<sup>3</sup> especially in connection with his books. As Christopher Tolkien, his youngest son and literary executor, has remarked,<sup>4</sup> no study of J.R.R. Tolkien's written work can be complete without also looking at his art.

He was by no means a professional artist. But he loved to draw, and found in his pictures as in his writing an outlet for the visions that burgeoned within his thoughts -- another means of expression, another language, as it were, among the several in which he was fluent. He was no dilettante: he did not study art in an academic fashion, nor did he habitually attend art

exhibitions, though at one time or another he must have visited at least the British Museum in London and the Ashmolean in Oxford. His daughter Priscilla recalls going with him in 1955 to galleries in Venice, including an exhibition of Giorgione. Tolkien was moved, she remembers, by the paintings of Giotto, Fra Filippo Lippi, and Botticelli, but disliked later Italian religious art, perhaps because he felt that the artists had used religious subjects for secular purposes. He also admired the skillful portraits of Frans Hals and Van Dyck.<sup>5</sup> He himself was never good at drawing figures, except the comical variety.

This memory of Tolkien, albeit a late one, when he was sixty-three, tells us as much about his tastes in art as anything he left in his own words. His letters, so illustrative in other respects, in this are almost unrevealing. Nor is there much on the subject to be gleaned from the otherwise excellent biography of Tolkien by Humphrey Carpenter. Carpenter mentions that as an undergraduate at Oxford Tolkien bought Japanese prints for his rooms; but such prints were popular at the time, and do not seem to have had much influence on his own art except perhaps to suggest to him, for works such as *Glorund Sets Forth to Seeh Turin* [47], a simplification of natural forms and the use of flat colour for pattern effect rather than for modelling. Carpenter also notes that Tolkien once compared his group of schoolfriends, the 'T.C.B.S.', to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: this is more promising, for it points to an awareness of art in the wide world greater than previously remarked in Tolkien. He is often pictured by enthusiasts as having lived a cloistered life, caring for little beyond his stories and the medieval languages and literatures that were his professional concern. In fact his interests were quite broad. His letters and his miscellaneous writings, especially his essay *On Fairy-Stories*, reveal Tolkien to have been exceptionally well-read and well-informed; but it is to his own paintings and drawings that one must chiefly turn to see the extent of his knowledge of art.

He was certainly aware of the decorative arts that flourished in England during his youth. Tolkien was born in South Africa in 1892 and moved to England in 1895. William Morris died the following year, but the Arts and Crafts movement he helped found, and



<sup>4</sup>  
They Slept in Beauty Side by Side  
Pencil

attendant decorative styles such as Art nouveau, endured into the next century. Their effect eventually was felt everywhere in Britain, most widely in advertising and books, but also in textiles, carpets, furniture, buildings. That Tolkien took note of such designs, and that they were a lasting inspiration to him, is clear in works as widely separated in time as his 'Trees of Amalion' and repeat-pattern friezes of the late 1920s [62,59], the decorative borders on some of his Hobbit paintings of 1937 [108, 124], and the elaborate ornamental patterns he drew in his later years (discussed in chapter 6). It seems clear, too, that he agreed with the underlying philosophy of Morris and his followers, which looked back to a much earlier time: that the 'lesser' arts of handicraft embodied truth and beauty no less than the 'fine' arts of painting and sculpture. One looks for the latter almost in vain in Tolkien's writings (Leaf by Xiggle excepted), but finds a wealth of references to crafts. The carved pillars, floor of many hues, and 'woven cloths' of Theoden's hall in *The Lord of the Rings* spring to mind. So does the iron worked by the Smith of Wootton Major into 'wonderful forms that looked as light and delicate as a spray of leaves and blossom', and especially the gems of Feanor, of all elves in 'The Silmarillion' 'the most subtle in mind and the most skilled of hand'.

The turn of the century, indeed continuing into the 1930s, was also the heyday of illustrators such as Arthur Rackham and Edmund Dulac, Walter Crane and William Heath Robinson, and less familiar but equally

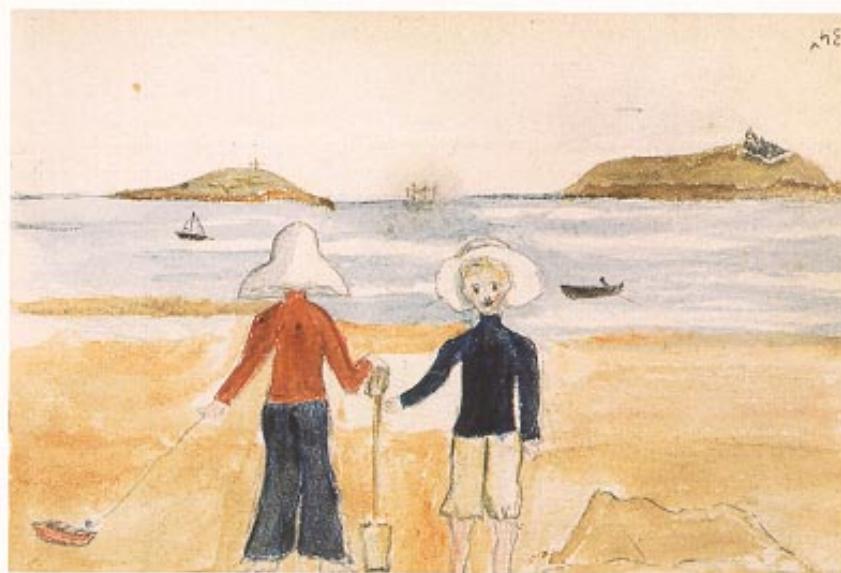
noteworthy artists such as Anne Anderson and Jennie Harbour. The Tolkien household contained many illustrated books; he had lost all of those he had in his own childhood, but made up for it in the libraries he formed for his sons and daughter. As might be expected, he was particularly interested in illustrated fairy-stories and works of romance.<sup>4</sup> One may point with certainty to a few such books from which Tolkien borrowed for his own pictures, for accuracy of detail and for inspiration. He especially admired Arthur Rackham's work, probably because Rackham drew trees with such distinctive character, and trees were one of Tolkien's special passions. His forest scene Taur-na-Fuin [54] for 'The Silmarillion' is in a Rackham-esque vein, as is Old Man Willow for *The Lord of the Rings* [147]. But Rackham seems never to have been a direct influence on Tolkien, only one inspiration among many. Just as Tolkien's fiction came out of a great Cauldron of Story in which Myth and History and many other 'potent things lie simmering agelong on the fire', so his paintings and drawings too were products of a melting-pot, where all of the art he saw was combined. The evidence of his own art together with his writings suggests that he saw a great deal. 'But if we speak of a Cauldron,' Tolkien says in *On Fairy-Stories*, 'we must not wholly forget the Cooks. There are many things in the Cauldron, but the Cooks do not dip in the ladle quite blindly.' Art nouveau was to his taste, and he often brought it out of the 'pot'. So were medieval manuscripts, which he used as models for his formal

calligraphy (see appendix). Late in life he seems to have become interested in Oriental bamboo paintings, which he translated into decorative pictures of grasses [2, 196]. How much he was influenced by contemporary movements or styles in art other than Art nouveau is a matter of conjecture, and ultimately fruitless to pursue. Looking at some of his 'visionary' pictures reproduced in chapter 2, one is tempted to call Tolkien variously a Post-Impressionist, an Expressionist, even a Cubist. In the end his art cannot be neatly classified. He tried on different styles, but most did not suit him and appear in his work only once or twice. They tell us, though, that he had at least a passing familiarity with modern art, even at times an attraction to it. Where did he see it? If not in galleries, he could have found it illustrated in magazines. He could not have escaped hearing about it: exhibitions such as Roger Fry's Post-Impressionist show in 1910 and the International Surrealist Exhibition of 1936 sent shock waves throughout Britain and led to rousing debates. Tolkien himself contributed a minor note to the late 1930s debate over Surrealism, when he rejected the movement in *On Fairy-Stories*:

There is... in Surrealism commonly present a morbidity or unease very rarely found in literary fantasy. The mind that produced the depicted images may often be suspected to have been in fact already morbid; yet this is not a necessary explanation in all cases. A curious disturbance of the mind is

often set up by the very act of drawing things of this kind, a state similar in quality and consciousness of morbidity to the sensations in a high fever, when the mind develops a distressing fecundity and facility in figure-making, seeing forms sinister or grotesque in all visible objects about it.'

So he wrote in 1939; a quarter-century earlier, he had produced art, for example *Beyond* [39] painted in January 1914, with the distinct flavour of surrealisme years before Apollinaire coined the term. Some of these early works, in their construction and spirit, could also be said to belong to the Symbolist movement -- again, if one wished to apply a label. In this case it seems apt to do so, for Tolkien shared some of the Symbolists' motivation, well described by the art critic Philippe Jullian: The last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the spread of a poetic movement across a Europe invaded by machines. The movement resembled a dense forest; its branches sought to hide the factories and the railways, its pungent fruits held the key to 'anywhere out of the world', and its luxuriant blossoms inspired Art Nouveau. The roots of the trees thrust themselves deep into the subsoil of Celtic and Norse legends, while the saplings, taken from exotic species of trees issuing from Florence, Byzantium and even India, produced poisonous blossoms side by side with healthy ones originating in England. Most of the trees had been planted in England by the Pre-Raphaelites, and in Germany by the Nazarenes and, later, by Wagner.



5  
*Untitled  
(Two Boys at the Seaside)*  
Pencil, watercolour

It is an understatement to say that Tolkien had no love for machines, with their smoke and noise. Some of his happiest years were spent as a child in the quiet English countryside, in Warwickshire and Worcestershire. There he and his brother Hilary could explore the fields, pick berries and mushrooms, climb trees. His memories of those years, made more golden with age and by the sadness that the villages he once knew had become overgrown with red brick, infused his descriptions of the Shire in *The Lord of the Rings*. His art too was inspired by Nature -- profoundly so. To look at works such as Spring 1940 [3] is to feel Tolkien's love for flowers and trees. Priscilla Tolkien remembers her father sitting on the lawn drawing this picture, an experiment with coloured paper. The scene is the garden of the Tolkien house at 20 Northmoor Road, Oxford, the tree a Victoria Plum covered with blossom in what must have been a remarkable spring. Tolkien has caught the character of the season and of the day: one almost expects the daffodils to sway in the breeze.

Tolkien's love of Nature emerged at an early age. In part it came from his mother, who taught him botany, among other subjects. It was also she who taught him to paint and draw. He had his first lessons at Sarehole, a village near Birmingham, to which Ronald and Hilary Tolkien moved with their widowed mother in 1896.

Mabel Tolkien was herself a capable artist, from a

family of engravers and platemakers, and wrote an ornamental script which surely inspired Tolkien's interest in decorative writing. Some of young Ronald Tolkien's drawings were made in the back of a sketch-book belonging to Mabel which contained her own youthful art. She was proud of his work: at Christmas 1903, apparently as usual, she sent some of his drawings to his father's mother with a note that 'Ronald has really done his splendidly this year... he has worked hard since he broke up [finished school term] on December 6th, and so have I, to find fresh subjects.... Ronald can match silk lining or any art shade like a true "Parisian Modiste".' But the lessons ended tragically soon. Early in 1904 Mabel Tolkien learned that she had diabetes and went into hospital. Ronald was sent to Hove, Sussex, to stay with Mabel's younger sister Jane and her husband, Edwin Neave. While there he drew scenes from his life to send to his mother. One, made on the back of a card [4] posted in Brighton on 27 April 1904, apparently shows Aunt Jane and her moustached husband in bed. The open door suggests that Tolkien slipped into their room early one morning with his pencil and paper. The title of the work, *They Slept in Beauty Side by Side*, may be an adaptation of a line by the popular nineteenth-century poet Felicia Dorothea Hemans, in her *The Graves of a Household*: 'They grew in beauty, side by side, / They fill'd one



6

*Untitled (Ship at Anchor)*  
Pencil, watercolour,  
black ink

7  
Untitled  
(*Alder by a Stream*)  
Pencil, watercolour

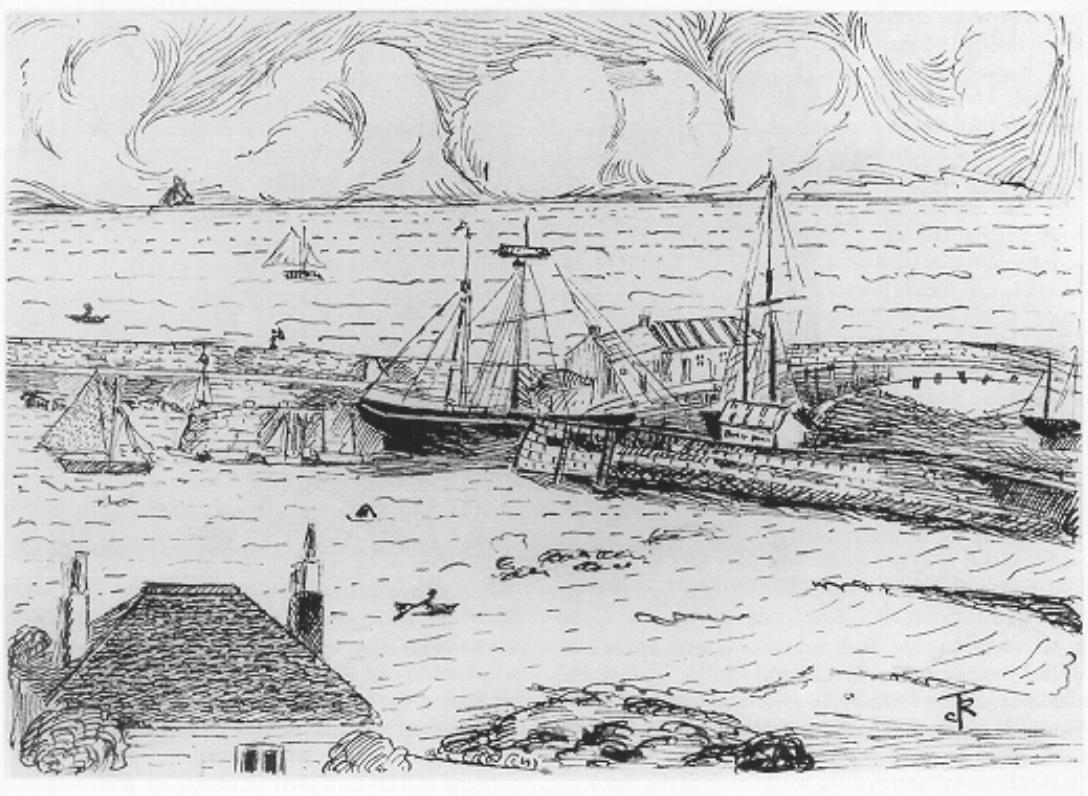


home with glee; -- / Their graves are sever'd, far and wide, / By mount, and stream, and sea.' A 'trade mark' and inscription written by Tolkien on the verso ('Merrs Sambo &. Nephew Series') probably are in imitation of commercial postcards -- an early interest by Tolkien in 'authentication', anticipating works such as the 'Book of Mazarbul' pages for *The Lord of the Rings* [155 -- 156]. None of the Hove pictures show Tolkien to have been an especially skilful artist at age twelve, but they do reveal a sense of humour that was to reappear long after, in the 'Father Christmas' letters and the comic story Mr. Bliss (see chapter 3). In one such drawing, Edwin Neave, an insurance clerk, is seated at a tall desk with a *Guardian Fire Insurance* calendar on the wall and the inscription 'WORKING OVER TIME S.P.Q.R.' In another, inscribed ' "FOR MEN MUST WORK" as seen daily at 9 am', Edwin and Ronald are striding along the promenade towards the *Guardian* office, swinging umbrellas as they go. And in a third, Ronald and Edwin are sitting at home by the fire doing their own darning and mending.<sup>4</sup> One may suppose from the inscription on this domestic scene, 'Show Aunt Jane', that Mrs Neave was visiting Mabel in hospital at the time. The humour of two males fending for themselves is balanced, however, by the title of the drawing, What is Home without a Mother (or a Wife), which is even more poignant in hindsight. Mabel Tolkien died not long after, in November 1904, and Ronald felt her loss for

the rest of his days. He was not quite thirteen when she died, but she had already inspired in him a devotion to the Roman Catholic faith (to which she converted in 1900), a deep and abiding love of language, and a lasting interest in painting and drawing.

Many of Tolkien's early drawings are preserved in a small sketch-book of his own." None of these are dated, but he used the book for several years. The drawings at the front are in watercolour and very childish; the earliest may have been done when the artist was only four or five years old." A few years later, it seems, Tolkien turned the book around and began again from the back, now with more competence. Among the later work is a picture of two boys on a beach [5], probably Tolkien himself and Hilary at about the ages of ten and eight years. If those ages are correct, then the drawing was made about 1902,, possibly at Bournemouth or Poole where the boys spent seaside holidays with Tolkien's godfather. In the centre of the drawing a ship has been rubbed out, leaving a smudge.

Tolkien's technique rapidly improved, and he attempted more ambitious subjects. One seascape [6] is particularly sensitive, and shows his understanding of perspective, defined by the careful placing of markers such as a boat, a jetty, and birds. The sand bar stretching into the water provides a firm foreground, while the curve of the shore carries the eye to the points of action in the view and to near and distant hills. The latter were



8 *Lyme Regis Harbour from the Drawing Room Window of the Cups Hotel*  
Pencil, black ink

always of interest to Tolkien, for they naturally introduce a sense of depth to a picture and raise the question, What lies beyond? His best paintings and drawings have this feature, some avenue of exit into another scene. He expressed the philosophy behind it many years later, in the words of Niggle, whose soul had reached a place of convalescence within one of his paintings made real: You could go on and on, and have a whole country in a garden, or in a picture (if you preferred to call it that). You could go on and on, but not perhaps for ever. There were the Mountains in the background. They did get nearer, very slowly. They did not seem to belong to the picture, or only as a link to something else, a glimpse through the trees of something different, a further stage: another picture."

Another compositional device Tolkien often used made an early appearance in a view of a river [7], also in

the first sketch-book: a tree which leans in from one side, marking the foreground and one plane of the perspective. Buildings provide an accent in the middle distance. The colours, especially the different shades of green, are lively and bright and characteristic of much of Tolkien's art. The tree is probably an alder, which grows close to water. In *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien described The Water, west of Hobbiton, as bordered with leaning alder-trees.

Father Francis Morgan, the priest who became guardian of Ronald and Hilary Tolkien after their mother's death, took them on summer holidays to Lyme Regis on the south coast of England. They stayed at the Three Cups in Broad Street, then one of the town's best hotels, and in good weather roamed the shore and countryside. A sketch by Tolkien [8] dated August 1906 shows the harbour 'from the drawing room window of



9 Whitby  
Pencil



10 Ruins at West End of Whitby Abbey  
Pencil, black ink

the Cups Hotel', over the roofs of houses and towards the breakwater. The view was almost certainly made from a window on the second floor in the rear of the hotel. By now Tolkien was spending more time with his art, was more concerned with details such as clouds, shingles, and stone walls, and had begun to sign his work sometimes with a monogram instead of initials.<sup>18</sup> He made even more painstaking drawings while on holiday in Whitby, Yorkshire, in summer 1910. He was inspired by Whitby's picturesque Old Town, with its busy fishing harbour and buildings clinging to steep cliffs on either side of the River Esk. One view [9], taken from Pier Road at the bottom of West Cliff, looks towards the swing bridge built only two years before his visit. The peaceful water at left contrasts with the lively, cluttered town on the right. The stacked barrels would have contained fish, probably herring. The bridge-keeper's house, the small structure with a conical roof to the right of the bridge, still exists in Whitby, but the other buildings have been replaced. Another drawing,<sup>19</sup> of Whitby's East Cliff, is packed with details so densely applied that the view seems flat, without depth. It shows, among much else, hidden within a tangle of pen

lines, the '199 Steps' leading to the remains of Whitby Abbey on the top of the cliff.

Tolkien made the ascent and drew the ruins as well [ro]. He was attracted to them more than the average tourist: at eighteen he was already interested in the Old English (Anglo-Saxon) language, and the most famous poet in that tongue, Caedmon, had been a monk at Whitby, founded by St Hilda in 657. Also the site would have been particularly significant to Tolkien as a Catholic, because the synod held there in 663 decided that Northumbria should follow the rules of the Roman Church, not the Celtic, for the date of Easter and in other matters. Most of the Abbey ruins date from a rebuilding in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, and the west end drawn by Tolkien is even later, in the Decorated style. His view is of the inside of the west end seen from near the crossing and from a higher vantage point than one can achieve today; perhaps he climbed upon rubble since removed. The perspective is handled well and enhanced by the line of birds at upper right. As in the harbour sketch (and much later, in some of his Hobbit art), Tolkien lettered the title on a 'sign' worked into the composition. In the lower right corner is his rare full signature 'Ronald Tolkien'.

11 Lambourn, Berks.  
Watercolour





12. 'Quallington Carpenter' Eastbury, Berkshire  
Pencil, black ink

Just over a year after his visit to Whitby Tolkien went up to Oxford, having been awarded an Open Classical Exhibition to Exeter College. In 1913 he gave up Classics to read English, specializing in Old and Middle English and Philology. He did not give up his art despite the demands of his studies, and indeed began to draw more often and from deep within his imagination. But he also continued to note what he saw around him. In summer 1912, he went on a walking tour in Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, and recorded some of the places he visited in a sketch-book apparently bought for the purpose.<sup>20</sup> The earliest of this series of paintings and drawings, a view of cottages at Lambourn, is dated 21 August 1912. On 23 August, still near Lambourn, Tolkien painted the landscape in a variety of subtle greens [11]. This is the sort of countryside one associates with the Shire in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*: trees, rolling hills, neat hedgerows. The exclamation marks in the date Tolkien wrote on the painting were probably a comment on the storm approaching over the hills.

By 28 August he reached Eastbury, a picturesque village in Berkshire not far from Lambourn. He drew the high street, and also two cottages whose thatched

roofs sagged with the weariness of time. One of the latter still stands in Eastbury, its roof now repaired but otherwise much as Tolkien drew it. The other cottage burned down long ago, but in his drawing Quallington Carpenter [12] Tolkien preserved its likeness as accurately as a photograph and with more character."<sup>21</sup> Quallington was the owner of the cottage pictured, a carpenter and coffin-maker. Tolkien stayed in Eastbury only one or two days, then returned to Lambourn where he sketched details of the medieval church of St Michael and All Angels. The market town of Lambourn was important in Anglo-Saxon times -- King Alfred had a manor there -- and its church was founded then. Nothing of the original church structure remains; however, its present west doorway is Norman, from the late twelfth century, with a round arch decorated with chevrons and a keystone carved with a skull-like head. On 29 or 30 August 22 Tolkien drew the whole doorway, and on 31 August the keystone by itself. Below the latter drawing he made another, of a gargoyle and a Gothic window on the south side of St Michael's [13]. He took care in depicting the stonework of the church and its window treatment, but was interested mainly in its grotesques, the gargoyle and the keystone-skull.



13  
*Keystone of Door  
 and Gargoyles, South Side, Lambourn  
 Pencil, black ink*

Ronald and Hilary Tolkien moved in 1908 to rooms in Duchess Road, Birmingham. There they met another lodger, a fellow orphan named Edith Bratt. Ronald and Edith became close friends, and a year later, when he was seventeen and she was twenty, they decided that they were in love. Tolkien was working for a scholarship to Oxford, and his guardian feared that romance would distract him from his studies. Father Francis moved him to new lodgings and forbade him to meet or even write to Edith until he was twenty-one. But instead of cooling Tolkien's love, the separation intensified it.

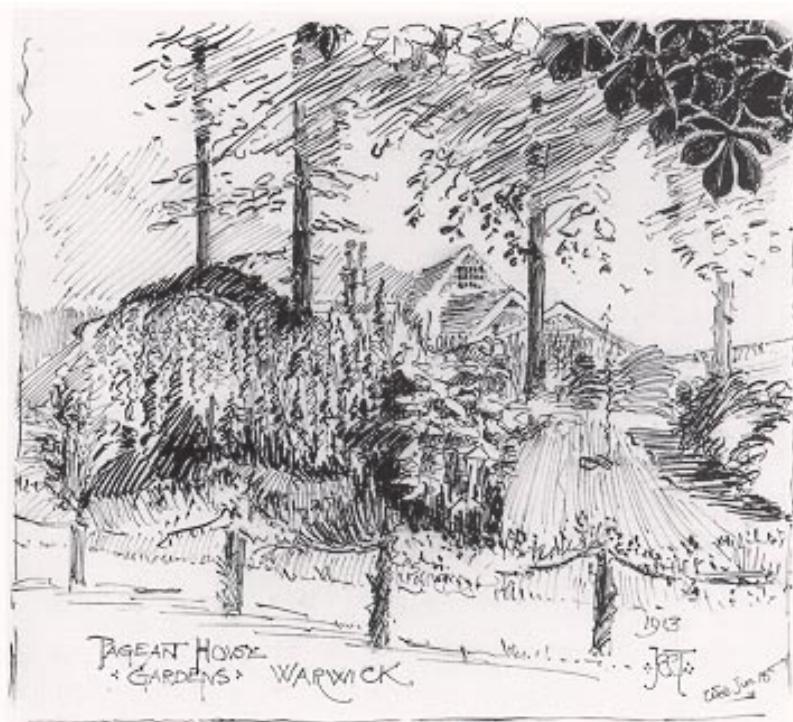
He wrote to Edith the moment he came of age, at midnight on 3 January 1913. Before long he persuaded her to marry him. When she decided also to convert to Roman Catholicism, the relations in Cheltenham with whom she now lived turned her out, and she moved to Warwick with her cousin Jennie Grove. Tolkien visited her there whenever he could. Two drawings of Warwick survive from this important period in his life. The first [14] shows the gardens of Pageant House, a late Georgian building on Jury Street, as they were on 18 June 1913. (They have since been redesigned, and the houses

in the background torn down for road widening.) Tolkien inscribed the sheet on the verso: 'We spent a very happy morning here Mary [Edith's second name]: do you remember in the dear early sweet days of our first liberty.' He found Warwick with its trees, hill, and castle a place of great beauty, and because he associated it with his freedom to meet Edith again, it became dear to him. He even brought it into the mythology he was soon to develop: in *The Book of Lost Tales* Tol Eressea, the isle of the Elves, would become England, and Kortirion, the town at its centre, would become Warwick. In November 1915, while in Warwick on leave from his wartime regiment, Tolkien wrote a poem, *Kortirion arnong the Trees*, which he dedicated to the town. 'Very beautiful was Kortirion and the fairies loved it, and it became rich in song and poesy and the light of laughter.'<sup>23</sup>

His second drawing of Warwick shows the castle seen through the arch of a bridge; Tolkien was standing in Myton Fields, or he may have been in a boat on the river Avon. The castle's great tower rising above trees inspired the one he described in *The Book of Lost Tales*, built in Kortirion by Ingil son of Inwe. The mythology

Tolkien created sprang in large part from his love for England, which he expressed in relationships such as Warwick-Kortirion; it also derived from his interest in language. His earliest known writing that relates to his mythology dates from September 1914, when he was staying with Hilary and their Aunt Jane (now widowed) at Phoenix Farm, Gedling, in Nottinghamshire [15]. (Gedling is now a suburb of Nottingham, and a housing estate has been built over the farm.) Inspired by a line from the *Crist* by the Anglo-Saxon poet Cynewulf, '*eala! earendel engla beorhtast*', Tolkien wrote a poem of his own, *The Voyage of Earendel the Evening Star*. From this small beginning his epic '*Silmarillion*' evolved, which was to occupy Tolkien until the end of his life. Earendel in time became Earendil, a mariner who sails west from Middle-earth to seek the help of the Valar, greatest of the angelic powers, against Morgoth, Lord of Darkness; and with a Silmaril, one of the jewels made by Feanor, is set to sail in the sky as a star, a sign of hope to the oppressed.

But in summer 1913 this development was still in the future, as Tolkien left Edith in Warwick and travelled in Worcestershire. On 8 July 1913 he was on Bilberry Hill



14  
Pageant House Gardens, Warwick  
Pencil, black ink

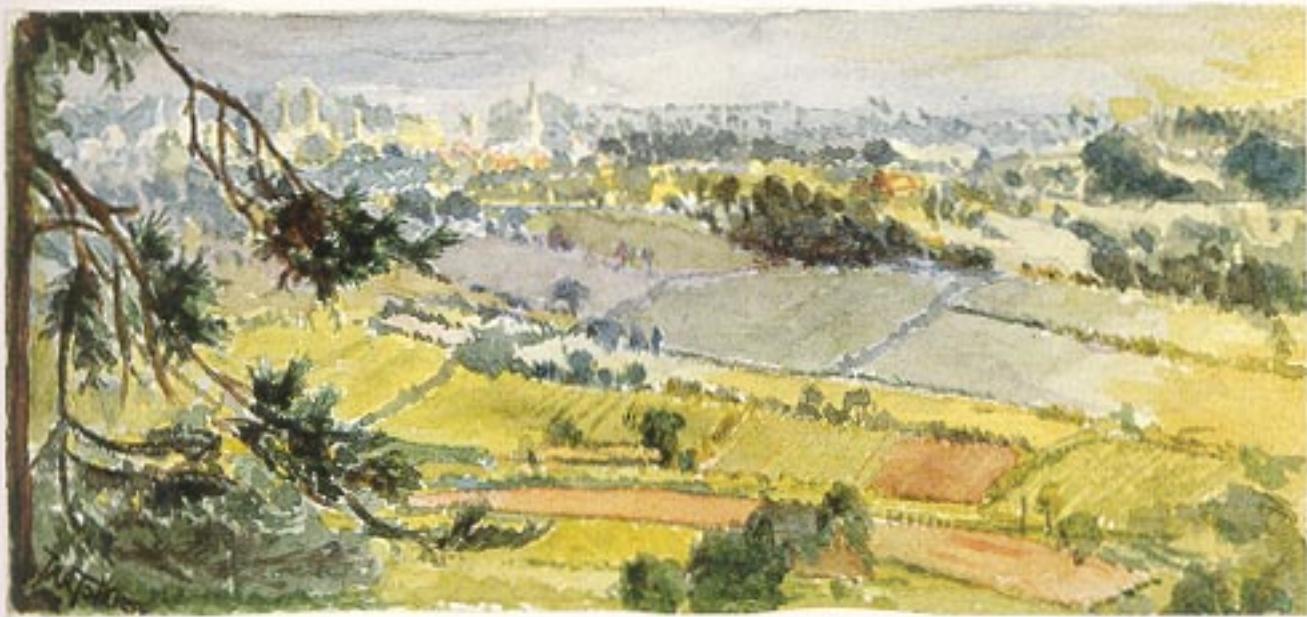
overlooking King's Norton and painted a splendid view [i6]. It might have been no more than a pretty landscape, but Tolkien added a touch of intimacy with the trunk and branches at left, which give one the sense of viewing the scene with the artist from a grove of fir trees. Today the place at which Tolkien painted is a tourist viewpoint, and most of the fields he shows have been built over; but the church spire and chimneys of King's Norton are still visible in the distance, and Scotch Pines still grow on Bilberry Hill. Tolkien knew the country well, for it was close to Rednal, where his mother had spent the last months of her life, and to Barnt Green where his maternal cousins, the Incledons, lived. He had good times at their house, and stayed there often. His cousins Mary and Marjorie made up a language, 'Animalic', which the young Tolkien learned. Later he and Mary together invented another language, 'Nev-bosh'. During the Christmas holidays at Barnt Green in 1912, Tolkien wrote a play, *The Bloodhound, the Chef, and the Suffragette*, which he and his cousins performed. And it was from the Incledons', in January 1913, that Tolkien wrote to Edith ending their long separation.

His art reflects how much he enjoyed his visits to Barnt Green.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the good company of his cousins, he delighted in the woods around their house and in its traditional cottage garden. One thinks of Sam Gamgee in *The Lord of the Rings*, wanting only his small garden and the peace to tend it. In *Foxglove Year* [17], dated 2 July 1913, Tolkien painted the pleasant effect of sunlight filtering through the trees, cool contrasting areas of shade, and glimpses of blue in the distance. Presumably the abundance of foxgloves that year was unusual and worth recording. At lower right is another version of Tolkien's full signature, 'JRRTolkien pinxit'. On 12 July he painted the Incledons' cottage [18], but their garden, glorious in its full bloom, is the true subject of the picture. Among the flowers are delphiniums and still more foxgloves, their bright colours enhanced by the background of dark trees, the blue of the delphiniums echoed in the sky and the windows of the cottage.

As we have said, Tolkien was inspired by Nature, and among his pictures the pastoral landscape is a major subject. Rural architecture interested him also, and he could draw it well -- the cottages of Eastbury, for example, and the village streets and shops illustrated in

14  
Pageant House Gardens, Warwick  
Pencil, black ink

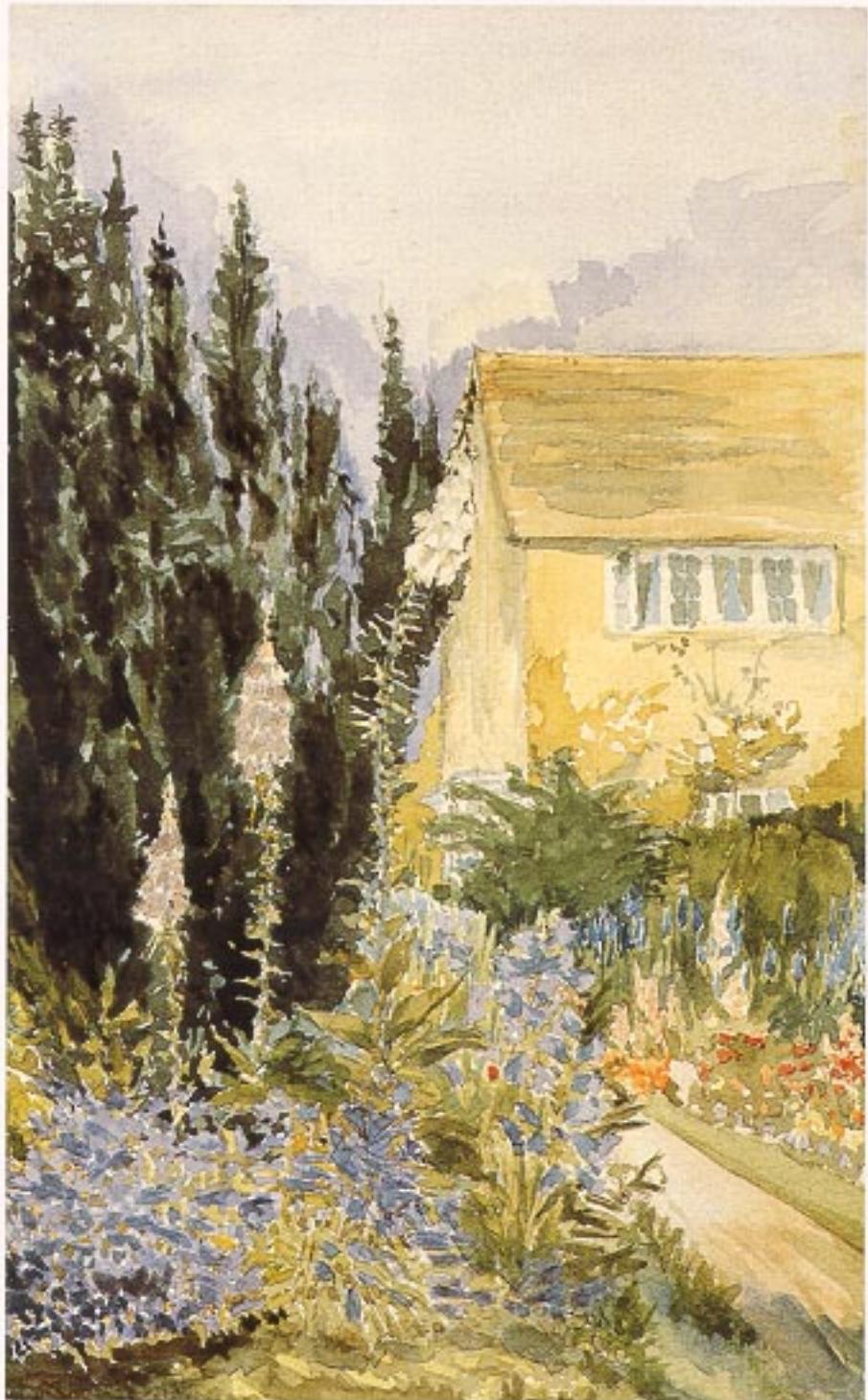




16 King's Norton from Bilberry Hill  
Watercolour



17  
*Foxglove Year*  
Pencil, watercolour

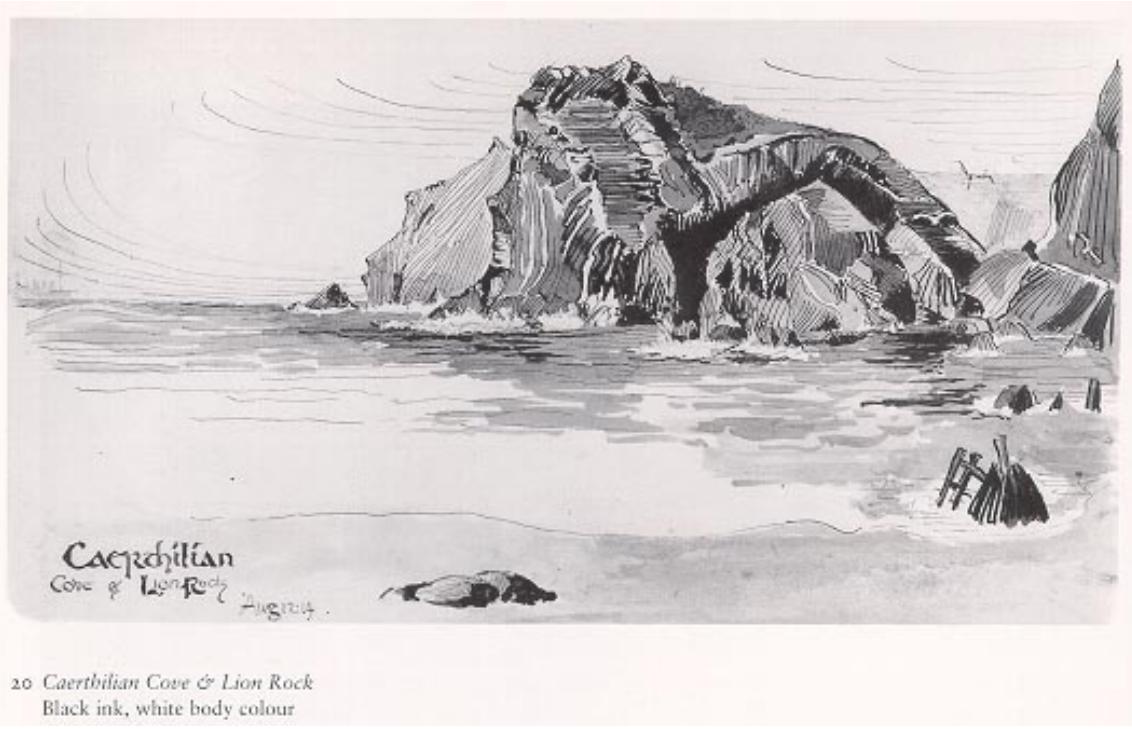


18

*The Cottage, Barnet Green*  
Pencil, watercolour



19  
*Turl Street, Oxford*  
Pencil, black ink



20 Caerthilian Cove & Lion Rock  
Black ink, white body colour

his children's book Mr. Bliss. Urban scenes, however, are rare in his art. Even the streets of Oxford, where he lived for most of his life, a city whose buildings have a great deal of character, are rarely seen in his paintings and drawings. Probably there were too many people there, too many interruptions: Tolkien kept his art largely to himself or within his family. An exception is a view of the Turl in Oxford [19] made about 1913. The wall on the left is Exeter College, from which Tolkien's undergraduate rooms looked out onto the Turl. The high viewpoint of the scene suggests that he drew it from his window, looking across the road and south towards the tower of All Saints' Church in High Street. He drew a similar view for an Exeter College 'smoker' programme cover in November 1913,<sup>25</sup> but omitted the tree and part of a house to make room for titling and for a flight of owls with human heads, representing a Proctor and the University 'police', and at its foot added four well-dressed men dancing unsteadily up the street. The next long vacation found Tolkien far from Oxford, in Cornwall. He stayed with Father Vincent Reade near the Lizard, the southernmost part of England, and they went on long walks together. The Lizard peninsula projects into the English Channel, and on

three sides steep, variously coloured cliffs plunge down into small rocky coves and inlets. The sea over the years has worn away the promontories enclosing the coves, so that often dramatically shaped masses of rock have become detached or tunnels formed. The scenery made a great impression on Tolkien, who described it in a letter to Edith:

We walked over the moor-land on top of the cliffs to Kynance Cove. Nothing I could say in a dull old letter would describe it to you. The sun beats down on you and a huge Atlantic swell smashes and spouts over the snags and reefs. The sea has carved weird wind-holes and spouts into the cliffs which blow with trumpety noises or spout foam like a whale, and everywhere you see black and red rock and white foam against violet and transparent seagreen.<sup>26</sup>

The sea in all its aspects fascinated Tolkien and influenced both his writings and his art. In its calmer mood it can be seen, for example, in his painting Halls of Manwe [52], while its more dramatic moments inspired both a poem and a related illustration, Water, Wind & Sand [42].

Tolkien recorded his impressions of Cornwall also in the sketch-book he had started in 1912. On 11 August



21

*Cove near the Lizard*  
Black ink, watercolour

1914 he was on a hill looking down into Cadgwith, a picturesque fishing village on the east coast of the Lizard peninsula whose appearance today is almost exactly as Tolkien drew it eighty years ago. On 1<sup>st</sup>, August, on the west coast of the peninsula, he sketched the dramatic Lion Rock [20], so called because it looks like a crouching lion with its paws and raised head pointing towards the sea -- if not so clearly in Tolkien's view. Behind it in the drawing are Gull Rock and Asparagus Island on the far side of Kynance Cove. The title Tolkien inscribed on the drawing is only half correct: it is not a view of Caerthilian Cove, but of the sea off Pentreath Beach. From this position, Caerthilian

Cove would have been behind the promontory at Tolkien's back. It was a day of changeable weather: in another sketch Tolkien made on 1<sup>st</sup>. August, of an unidentified cove near the Lizard [21],<sup>27</sup> the clouds now are heavy and the sea is rough, compared with the relatively calm and bright aspect of the Lion Rock picture. Perhaps the light was failing when Tolkien drew; certainly the wind had risen, for the waves are crashing dramatically against the shore. To convey the dark mood of the scene he combined ink and wash. The white of the spray, painted in white body colour for the breakers off the Lion Rock, here was achieved not with paint but by reserving the ground of the paper.



22 *Gipsy Green*  
Pencil, coloured pencil

After these views, and three from a holiday in north Wales," Tolkien seems to have made no more topographical drawings until near the end of the First World War. His experiences at the Front appear after a fashion in his writings, notably in *The Lord of the Rings*, but he did not draw the horrors of warfare. In 1916, after the Battle of the Somme, he returned to England suffering from 'trench fever' and spent the rest of the war in various hospitals and camps. Edith, accompanied by Jennie Grove and, after his birth in November 1917, by the Tolkiens' first child, John, moved around the country to be near her husband. In spring 1918, when Tolkien was assigned to a camp at Penkridge, in Staffordshire, the family found lodgings nearby in a house named

'Gipsy Green'. The house still exists, on the Teddesley Estate, and is little changed. Tolkien was soon reposted to Yorkshire, but while at Gipsy Green made a number of drawings. One [22] shows the house and garden. It is a more than competent depiction, the house drawn in detail down to the ivy on the gable, the recession indicated both by the line of trees and by their change in colour into a distant blue. The trees bordering the garden are reflected in the distance by the four tall chimneys, altogether an interesting pattern of verticals. The chimneys are so prominent as to suggest that Gipsy Green was a source for the House of a Hundred Chimneys at Tavrobel in *The Book of Lost Tales*. In his mythology Tolkien equated Tavrobel with Great

Haywood, another Staffordshire village near Gipsy Green to which he had been posted earlier.

Tolkien did not often draw figures in detail, and portraits by him from life are almost non-existent, but while at Gipsy Green he attempted both. *High Life at Gipsy Green* [23] includes several figures, although very small and for the most part seen only from the back, with no faces visible. The work is a fascinating series of lively, light-hearted sketches recording aspects of the Tolkien household. At the top, just left of centre, is baby John in his elaborate cot; just right of centre is his pram; at bottom centre he is being carried through a garden in Edith's arms. Edith herself appears at least three more times, in naturalistic and even intimate poses. In one scene she is washing herself at a bowl and splashing water left and right; in another she is standing in her petticoat in front of a mirror, arranging her hair; in a third she is playing the piano (captioned 'EMT

[Edith Mary Tolkien] at the Pan'o' -- possibly a reference to someone's inability to pronounce piano). On the right Tolkien drew himself in his army uniform three times. Twice he is riding a bicycle, from the side labelled '8.25 am' and a rear view at '8.27 am'. In a third view he is seen from the rear, standing, with the caption '9 am'. Read in sequence, the three drawings record the journey he made almost daily between home and camp. At upper right is the landlords' tame jackdaw in a tree, and at lower left, watched by a rabbit, their two cats who would dance when Edith played the piano. 'Capt. T.G.' at upper left is presumably a Scots army officer. The girl or woman with a rake, the figure driving a tractor, and the people with the horse and cart cannot be identified, and the fish captioned 'The fish we couldn't get at Swanwicks' is a mystery. The drawing is not dated, but the strawberries and flowers show that it was made in early summer 1918.

23 High Life at Gipsy Green  
Pencil, coloured pencil



24

*Untitled (The Tolkien Family and Jennie Grove)*  
Pencil, blue and green pencil



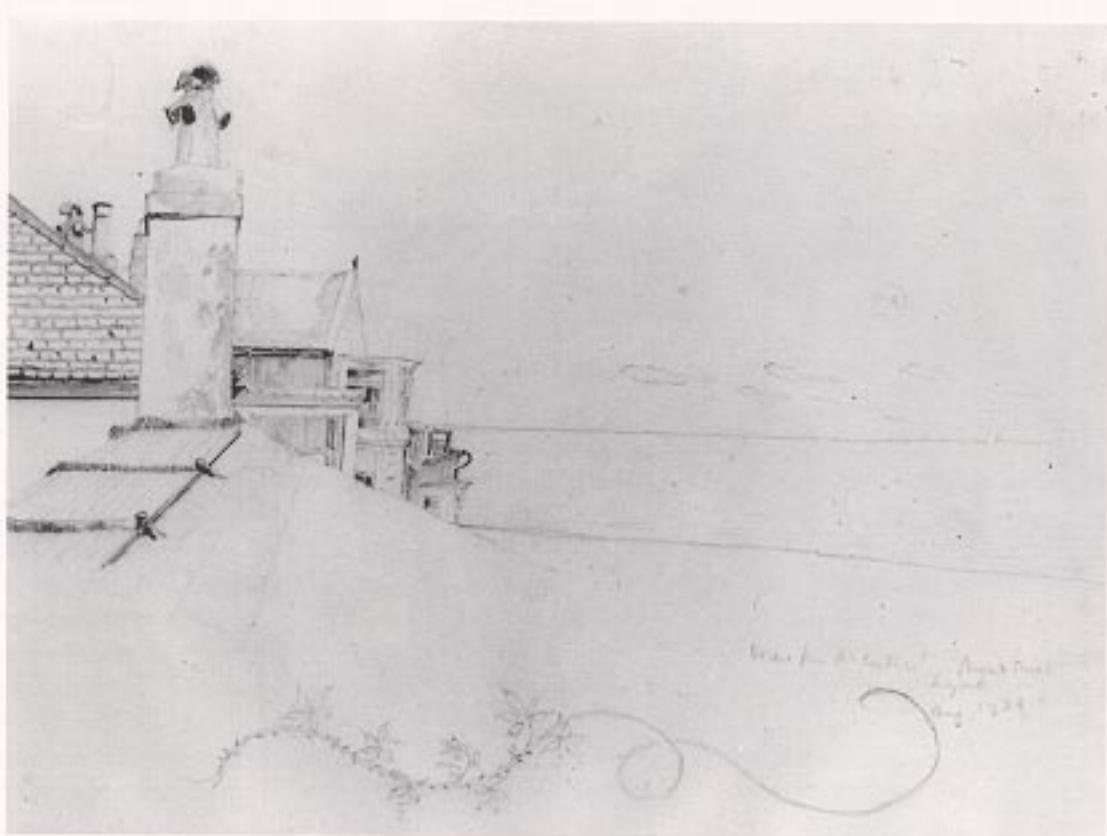
Edith appears again on another sheet of miscellaneous drawings made at Gipsy Green [24], in the same blue dress and in a pose similar to that in High Life in which she is carrying baby John; but here she seems to be holding a flower. Roughly sketched at the top of the sheet (inverted) is another rear view of Tolkien on his bicycle. At the bottom (turned one-quarter anticlockwise) is a faint sketch of John propped up on a chair with a carved back and legs. The tree between Edith and John has green accents and blue shading. The stern profile of a woman is a portrait of Jennie Grove." It is inscribed 'J.G.' and 'M.J. Grove, Auntie Ah-ee at Gipsy Green, Staffs'. Jennie was known in the family as 'Auntie Ie', recorded phonetically in the inscription. She was then a middle-aged woman, only four feet, eight inches tall but with great character which Tolkien caught in her likeness. She was almost a substitute mother to Edith, and in turn a proxy grandmother to the four Tolkien children.

In November 1918 Tolkien and his family moved to Oxford, where he had accepted a post as a lexicographer on the Oxford English Dictionary staff and also tutored privately in the University. In 1920 he was appointed to the English Faculty of the University at Leeds, and the family moved north again. Some five years later they returned to Oxford so that Tolkien could take up a post as Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon. He remained a professor at Oxford University, from 1945 in the different chair of Merton Professor of English Language and Literature, until his retirement in 1959. The Tolkiens lived at first in the north part of Oxford, which was developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to provide homes for dons when changed regulations allowed them to marry. Tolkien painted an impression of it [25] in September 1927, apparently from memory while he was on holiday in Lyme Regis.<sup>31</sup> The title Oh to be in Oxford (North) Now that Summer's There of course is



25 *Ob to be in Oxford (North) Now that Summer's There*

Pencil, watercolour, black ink



26 *View from Mr Wallis' Broad Street, Lyme*

Pencil



27 *Tumble Hill near Lyme R[egis]*  
Pencil, coloured pencil

an ironic twist on Browning, and probably a comment on Oxford weather relative to a more pleasant climate in Dorset. Tolkien brought out his most sombre watercolours to depict a rainy day: brown and greys, relieved only by some pale yellow, orange, green, and blue-green. The Tolkiens lived in North Oxford for twenty-one years, successively in two houses on Northmoor Road; a drawing of the first, at no. 22, appears with two other small sketches Tolkien made apparently for his children [77]. Oh to be in Oxford seems to show a view from the rear window at that address."

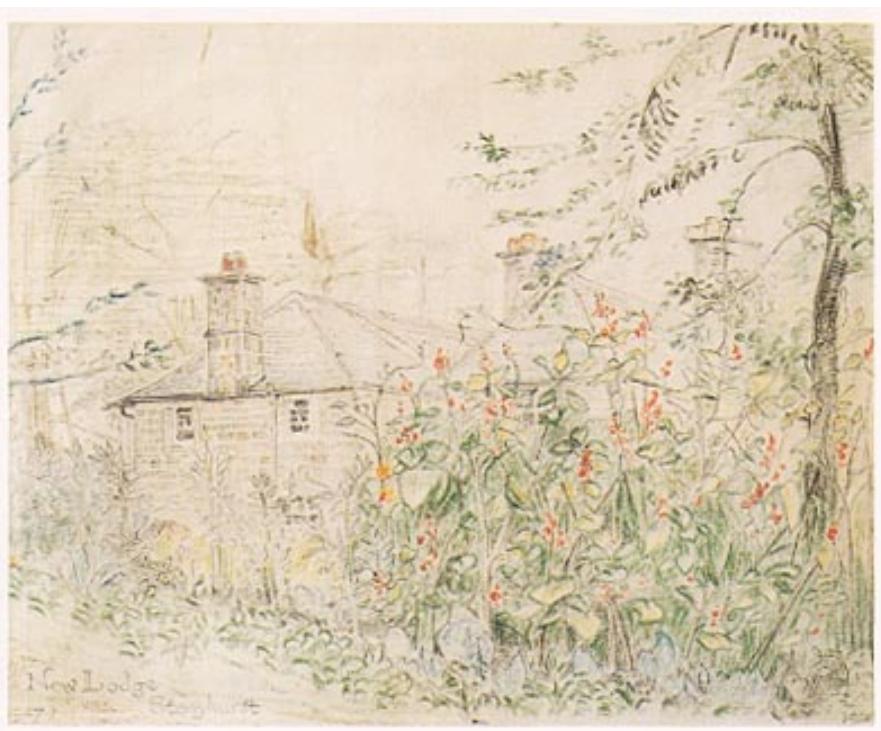
The Tolkiens often spent their summer holidays at the seaside: at Sidmouth, Weston-super-Mare, Milford-on-Sea, or Lamorna Cove, but most notably, as far as

his art is concerned, at Lyme Regis. In summer 1928 the family probably rented rooms from a Mr Wallis on Broad Street in Lyme Regis, as the inscription on one sketch from August of that year suggests [26].<sup>33</sup> Tolkien found the rooftops of the town interesting, as indeed they still are, with their unusual hooded chimney-pots. The sun above the faintly-sketched, perhaps unfinished right-hand portion of the drawing has a face on it, a playful feature otherwise not found in Tolkien's topographical art. The tall, thin trees in another work from August 1928, Tumble Hill, near Lyrne R[egis] [27], are similar to those in illustrations he made for his mythology earlier that summer, *Taur-na-Fuin* [54] and *The Vale of Sirion* [55]. In all of these he took care with

details: ferns, ivy on trunks, the patterning of bark. The leaves sparsely drawn along the top edge of Tumble Hill look ahead to yet another related picture of trees, The Elvenking's Gate for *The Hobbit* [121]. 'Tumble Hill' is almost certainly Timber Hill, as it is called today; 'Tumble' may have been a nickname the Tolkiens used, when possibly one could tumble down Timber Hill. In the 1920s the area was cultivated woodland, with fewer trees and a more open view. In his drawing Tolkien directs the viewer along a narrow path and between two trees bending together to form a tall arch. The spot of yellow in the distance at left is presumably Golden Cap, a promontory further along the coast. Today the trees on Timber Hill are thickly grown, indeed more truly like the Taur-nu-Fuin of Tolkien's imagination than as shown in Tumble Hill; and since this section of the coast near Lyme Regis is gradually collapsing into the sea, the part Tolkien drew may have disappeared in more ways than one.

By 1928, in fact since 1918, almost all of Tolkien's art was related to the fantasy writings that increasingly occupied his thoughts. Only rarely in later years did he draw from nature. He seems largely to have lost interest in doing so, preferring his invented landscapes.

Imagined worlds are usually more interesting than our own, and Tolkien's were unusually well developed. But on occasion Nature still spoke to him, and he responded with no diminution of talent. One fine example of a late topographical picture, from August 1947, is a view of the New Lodge at Stonyhurst in Lancashire. During the Second World War Tolkien's eldest son, John, who was studying for the priesthood at the English College in Rome, was evacuated with the College to Stonyhurst, the famous Catholic school for boys. On several occasions between 1942 and 1947 John stayed at New Lodge with a family who let rooms. Tolkien himself stayed there in spring 1946 and again, with his wife, in summer of the same year. In August 1947 he returned with his daughter Priscilla, and on that occasion made a drawing of the garden at New Lodge looking towards the back of the house [28]. In composition it recalls the view of Gipsy Green made nearly thirty years earlier [22]. Here, however, the house is more firmly drawn, especially compared with the tangled vegetation at right, and in its detailed stonework are greater texture and increased visual interest. In the left foreground runner beans are in full flower, their colour echoed by the chimney pots. Did Tolkien, when drawing this scene,



28  
*New Lodge, Stonyhurst*  
Pencil, coloured pencil

bring to mind Frodo's view from Tom Bombadil's house in *The Lord of the Rings* (book 1, chapter 7)?

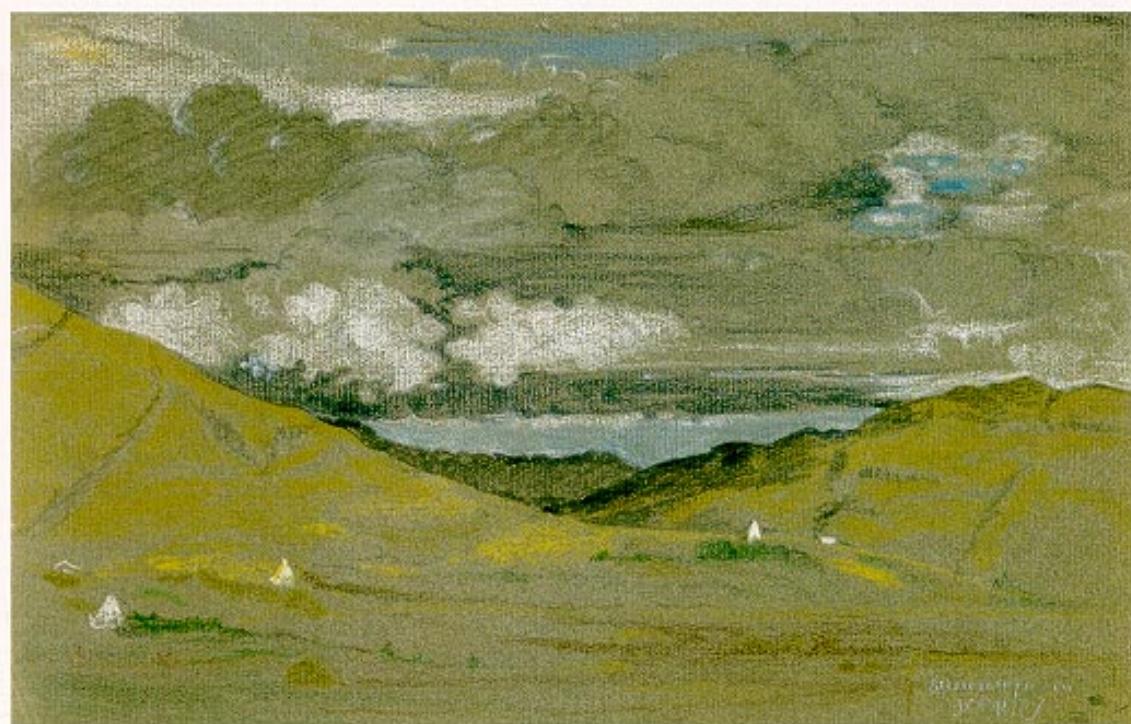
Frodo ran to the eastern window, and found himself looking into a kitchen-garden grey with dew... his view was screened by a tall line of beans on poles; but above and far beyond them the grey top of the hill loomed up against the sunrise.... The sky spoke of rain to come; but the light was broadening quickly, and the red flowers on the beans began to glow against the wet green leaves.

Probably the last topographical drawings Tolkien made date from a holiday in Ireland in August 1952. He seems to have bought a new sketch-book for the occasion," but used fewer than half of its thirty-two leaves. However, he also made some drawings separately and tipped them into the book. Inscriptions on the drawings suggest that he stayed in a hotel or boarding house in Castle Cove, in the west of Kerry on the north bank of the Kenmare River, near the point where it flows into the Atlantic. He drew nine views of the Kerry landscape

during this holiday, more than he made of any other place and more impressionistic than his earlier works. He was particularly moved by the sky and the varying weather. In one unfinished sketch he drew only the sunset above outlined hills. This and other unfinished works in the Kerry sketch-book show that his practice was to draw a rough outline in plain pencil and then to apply coloured pencil, beginning with the sky and working downwards.

Sumrner in Kerry [29] among the finished art is particularly sophisticated in its technique and romantic in its composition. Like Spring 1940 [3] it is on coloured paper, but here Tolkien left much of the grey paper ground unmarked so that it would contribute to the effect of evening light. The shape of the hills is drawn, and they are lightly coloured; the focus of the work, however, is on the clouds sweeping across the sky. In his writings Tolkien often gave detailed descriptions of the sky and weather, but rarely until these late drawings did he seek the same effect in his art.

29 *Summer in Kerry*  
Pencil, coloured pencil





17

Foxglove Year  
Pencil, watercolour

Pencil, watercolour







## 2 Visions, Myths, and Legends

Reading Tolkien's fiction, even (as many do) *The Lord of the Rings* alone, one feels compelled to praise him as a visionary, and in the best sense. Not only did he have visions, strong and affecting, but he made them vivid to others. His invented worlds are wonderfully realized, 'real' while the reader is 'inside' them and evoking a sense of wonder that lasts beyond the reading. Though based upon our 'true' reality, they transcend it. Tolkien looked around him, admired Nature profoundly, even appreciated works of Man, but saw these with a poetic faculty. As he wrote in *On Fairy-Stories*:

For my part, I cannot convince myself that the roof of Bletchley station is more 'real' than the clouds. And as an

artefact I find it less inspiring than the legendary dome of heaven. The bridge to platform 4 is to me less interesting than **Bifrost guarded by Heimdall with the Gjallarhorn.**<sup>1</sup>

From a very young age he was excited by myths and legends - for example, by the story of Sigurd in Andrew Lang's *Red Fairy Book* - and they coloured his views. As a boy he nicknamed the young miller at Sarehole, whose clothes were covered with the white dust of old bones, 'The White Ogre', and the farmer who chased Tolkien for picking mushrooms 'The Black Ogre' (he was partly the model for Farmer Maggot in *The Lord of the Rings*). Once, while on holiday at Lyme Regis, a place rich with fossils, Tolkien found a prehistoric jawbone and imagined it a piece of petrified dragon.

Some visions came to him while awake, others in dreams. The most powerful was an Atlantis-image, a 'dreadful dream of the ineluctable Wave, either coming out of the quiet sea, or coming in towering over the green inlands. ... It always ends by surrender, and I awake gasping out of deep water.'<sup>2</sup> He 'bequeathed' it to Faramir, who speaks of it to Eowyn in *The Lord of the Rings*, and it was the basis of the *Akallabeth*, Tolkien's legend of the fall of Numenor that was an extension of 'The Silmarillion'. The dream recurred throughout his life, but was 'exorcized', he felt, once he had written about it. In this respect, Tolkien was like other men of genius with intense powers of visualization - Blake comes first to mind - who accept the activity as a gift rather than a curse and become its master. His writings were a means of grounding visions that came to him, of laying them to rest (or at least, diminishing their

power to disturb the dreamer) by turning them to a creative purpose. And the same was true about his art.

It is easy to say that Tolkien was a visionary; it is often difficult to explain what his visions mean. Some of them, as painted or drawn, are clearly linked to his writings, but others are isolated images on paper, abstract thoughts, snapshots of Tolkien's psyche. What can one make of the drawing *Before* [30]? Before what? The torches suggest a sacred place, maybe a tomb, but the red and black colours give it a sinister look, and the converging walls make it claustrophobic. Perspective leads the eye helplessly to whatever lies at the end of the murky, lifeless corridor. It has the atmosphere of a Greek tragedy, or brings to mind the night of Duncan's murder in *Macbeth*: 'Now o'er the one half-world / Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse / The cur-tain'd sleep'. The 'megalithic' doorway would later appear also in pictures of Nargothron [57] for 'The Silmarillion' and of the Elvenking's gate in *The Hobbit* [120, 121], and in *The Notion Club Papers* it is one of the symbols mentioned in Michael Ramer's dreams.<sup>3</sup>

*Afterwards* [31] forms a pair with *Before* and probably was drawn on an adjoining piece of paper (now separated).<sup>4</sup> Have we gone through the door (of identi-cal shape) to find a figure moving along a torchlit path? Could *Before* be the entrance to Death and *Afterwards* the soul travelling on its way? The stance of the figure, bending forward with outstretched arm, suggests deep emotion, and again brings Shakespeare to mind: Macbeth's regret at murdering the King, or Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking. And it is a different, more sombre emotion than the one expressed in *Before*, as indicated now by cool rather than warm colours. It contrasts also in its detachment: with a lower point of view, and torches now a barrier rather than a gate, one is not drawn into the scene but remains an observer, watching (in the imagination) as the figure moves slowly away.

*Wickedness* [32] is even less explicable. It is an accu-mulation of details which evoke something far worse than the title describes: an evil, occult place, and impending doom. The hand on the curtain has five fingers rather than four and a thumb; by remarkable coincidence, it prefigures the bogey, Mado, that was imagined and feared by Tolkien's second son Michael, when he was a child [78]. The curtain itself is decorated

with bat-like faces. The columns, spiralled as in *Before*, seem to end in huge paws and to be surmounted by angular creatures. The cusps of the arch appear to be claws reaching towards the hand. We are watched by the skull and by multiple eyes while we cower behind the brazier, afraid to enter the scene. Or do we imagine these things, reading into the picture our own fears? The arch and 'skull' may have been adapted from the west door of St Michael's Church in Lambourn [13].

The image of a mysterious chamber with torches or a brazier, here as in *Before* and *Afterwards*, persisted in Tolkien's imagination, and it is tempting to view these pictures as visual precursors of passages in *The Book of Lost Tales* written a few years later. In the tale of the coming of the Valar the hall 'loved best' by the death-goddess Fui Nienna 'was one yet wider and more dark than Ve', the hall of Mandos, judge of the dead.

**Therein before her black chair burnt a brazier with a single flickering coal, and the roof was of bats' wings, and the pillars that upheld it and the walls about were made of basalt. Thither came the sons of Men to hear their doom, and thither are they brought by all the multitude of ills that Melko's evil music set within the world. Slaughters and fires, hungers and**

mishaps, diseases and blows dealt in the dark, cruelty and bitter cold and anguish and their own folly bring them here;

and Fui reads their hearts.<sup>5</sup>

Later, in the tale *The Chaining of Melko*, the chamber of the renegade Vala in the caverns of the North 'was lit with flaming braziers and full of evil magic, and strange shapes moved with feverish movement in and out, but snakes of great size curled and uncurled without rest about the pillars that upheld that lofty roof.'<sup>6</sup> These are even more chilling pictures than Tolkien's drawings, because we mentally draw the images ourselves in imaginations unbound. Perhaps he realized this at the time; certainly he saw the advantage of text over art by 1939, for he expressed it in *On Fairy-Stories*.<sup>7</sup> But for the time being the artist and writer within him happily co-existed and even worked hand-in-hand.

After the preceding examples, *Thought* [33] seems straightforward, but it could have just as complex a meaning. It is moving and effective: there is a sense of physical presence in the flow of the robe over the figure's shoulders and knees. The attitude of the figure, who may be male or female, sitting with head in hands, is one of deep contemplation, or else of despair or



AFTERWARDS

31

*Afterwards*

Pencil, coloured pencil

32  
*Wickedness*  
Pencil, black and red pencil



sorrow - as we may choose to interpret it. The stars on

the chair and the radiating light suggest that this is some mythic being. It could serve as an illustration of Fui Nienna, who in *The Book of Lost Tales* is 'fain of mourning and tears', or of Varda, the Vala who at the creation of the World 'had thought much of light that was of white and silver, and of stars', or of Manwe, greatest of the Valar, who sat 'upon a throne of won-der'.<sup>8</sup> In later writings Manwe is represented very much as a thinker: for example, in *The Lost Road* Manwe sat now long in thought, and at length he spoke to the Valar, revealing to them the mind of the Father'.<sup>9</sup> *Thought*, dated 1912, precedes the earliest 'Silmarillion' writings by two years; again, Tolkien's art fore-shadowed his texts. It may be significant that on the verso of the sheet is a simple drawing of an enclosed cubic space, entitled *Convention*. Perhaps this represents a prison cell which locks in, just as convention restricts, in contrast to the radiant freedom of thought.

Symbols of freedom recur in Tolkien's art as they do in his writings: a gate or door, a path or road leading

into the distance or up to a gate or a door, a distant

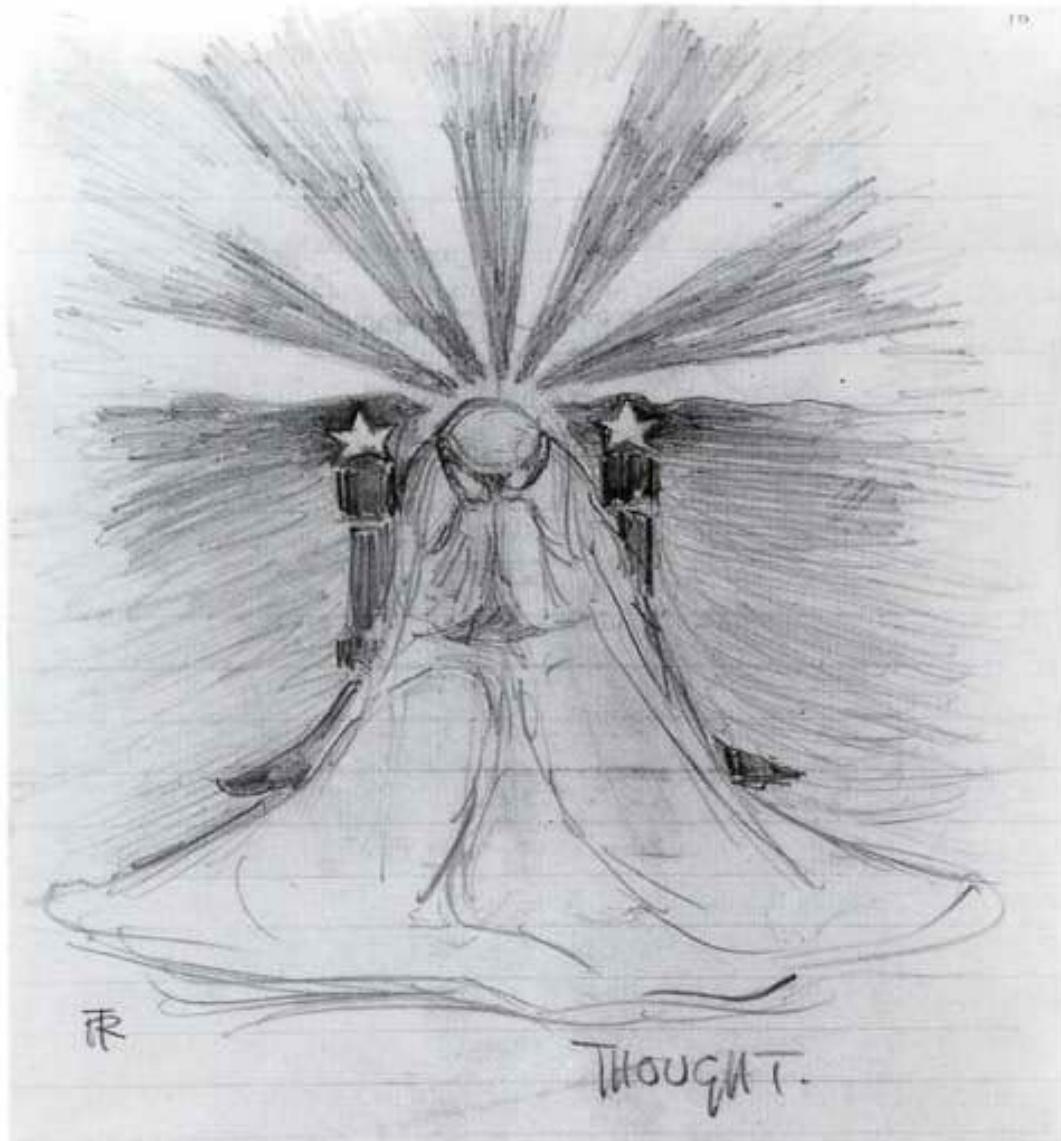
view beyond the immediate landscape. They permit movement and escape, two ideals we inherited from the Romantics and which Tolkien developed fully, and hopefully, by the time of *The Hobbit*.<sup>10</sup> In his early imaginative art he was often not hopeful, and used the same devices in reverse. The atmosphere of *Before* suggests that the path leads to something unpleasant, and the door in *Wickedness* is as unwelcoming as one could imagine. An exception from this period is the intriguingly titled *Undertenishness* [34]. It is attractive, not only because it is abundantly coloured like a flower garden in summer, but also because it is symmetrical, and symmetry always satisfies the human soul. The lines at centre are like a directional arrow, pointing the viewer's way along the central path. One is invited into the landscape, to walk between the trees and up the hill to see what lies beyond. But stand back and look care-fully at the painting, and it dawns that Tolkien has played a visual trick. The 'forest' is also a butterfly, the 'trees' in the distance its 'antennae' and 'eyes'.

Again we ask. What does it mean? Does *Underten-*

*ishness* represent the freedom and vision of youth, when everything invites and colours seem more brilliant than they are in reality - yet with the butterfly standing for an ephemeral nature? Or is it an expression of the joy Tolkien lost just before his tenth year, when he moved from the countryside he loved into the noise and smoke of Birmingham? Whatever its true meaning, it seems to have had a companion, the ink drawing *Grownup-ishness* [35], which may shed light in opposition. This strange amalgam of an elongated, tonsured head with blank eyes, shoes, circles, squares, exclamation and question marks, and two long-fingered hands, above the inscriptions 'Sightless : Blind : Well-Wrapped-Up' and '1913 (summer)', is on the same thick, oblong paper as *Undertenishness*, which suggests that they were made at the same time and, like *Before* and *Afterwards*, thematically related. Could *Grownupishness* show, then, next to the colourful picture of youth, the black and white view of a particular grown-up, or of adults in general - a narrow vision, an inward-looking attitude? Tolkien had himself 'grown up' on his twenty-first birthday only a few months before he made the drawing.

Such speculations, of course, can remain only that. But the pictures say one thing about their young creator which is beyond doubt: that Tolkien experienced dark moods, and at this time in his life they were often reflected in his art. The works we have been looking at so far in this chapter are one side to a coin; on the other side are the quiet topographical sketches of Eastbury and Lambourn, Barnt Green, and so on, discussed in chapter i. Humphrey Carpenter has said that Tolkien was 'capable of violent shifts of emotion ... a man of extreme contrasts. When in a black mood he would feel that there was no hope, either for himself or the world;

and since this was often the very mood that drove him to record his feelings on paper, his diaries tend to show only the sad side of his nature. But five minutes later in the company of a friend he would forget this black gloom and be in the best of humour." Carpenter attributed Tolkien's moodiness to insecurity arising from the death of his mother; for the period 1910 to 1913, one must also consider the trauma of his enforced separation from his beloved, Edith Bratt, relieved in 1913 by their reunion and betrothal. It was a time of mingled joy and uncertainty, which Tolkien expressed in his art as in his



33  
*Thought*  
Pencil, blue pencil

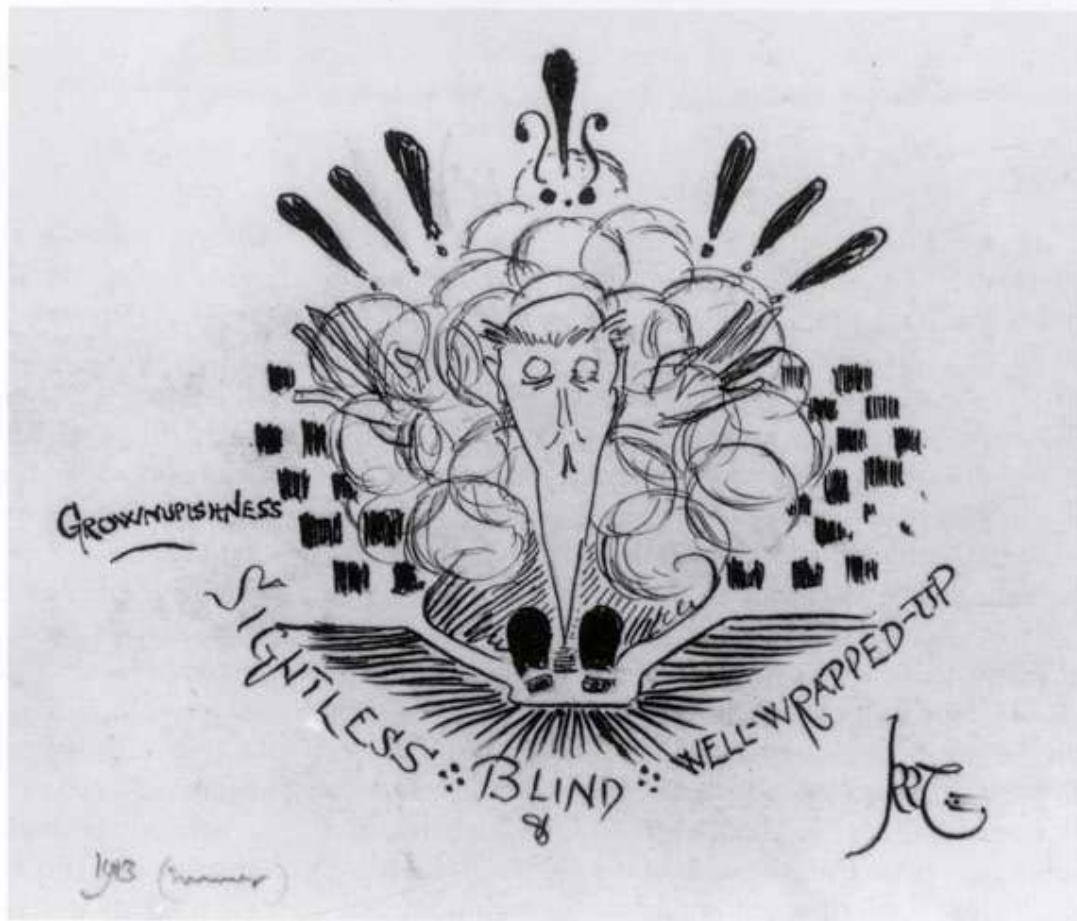
34  
*Undertenishness*  
Watercolour, black ink

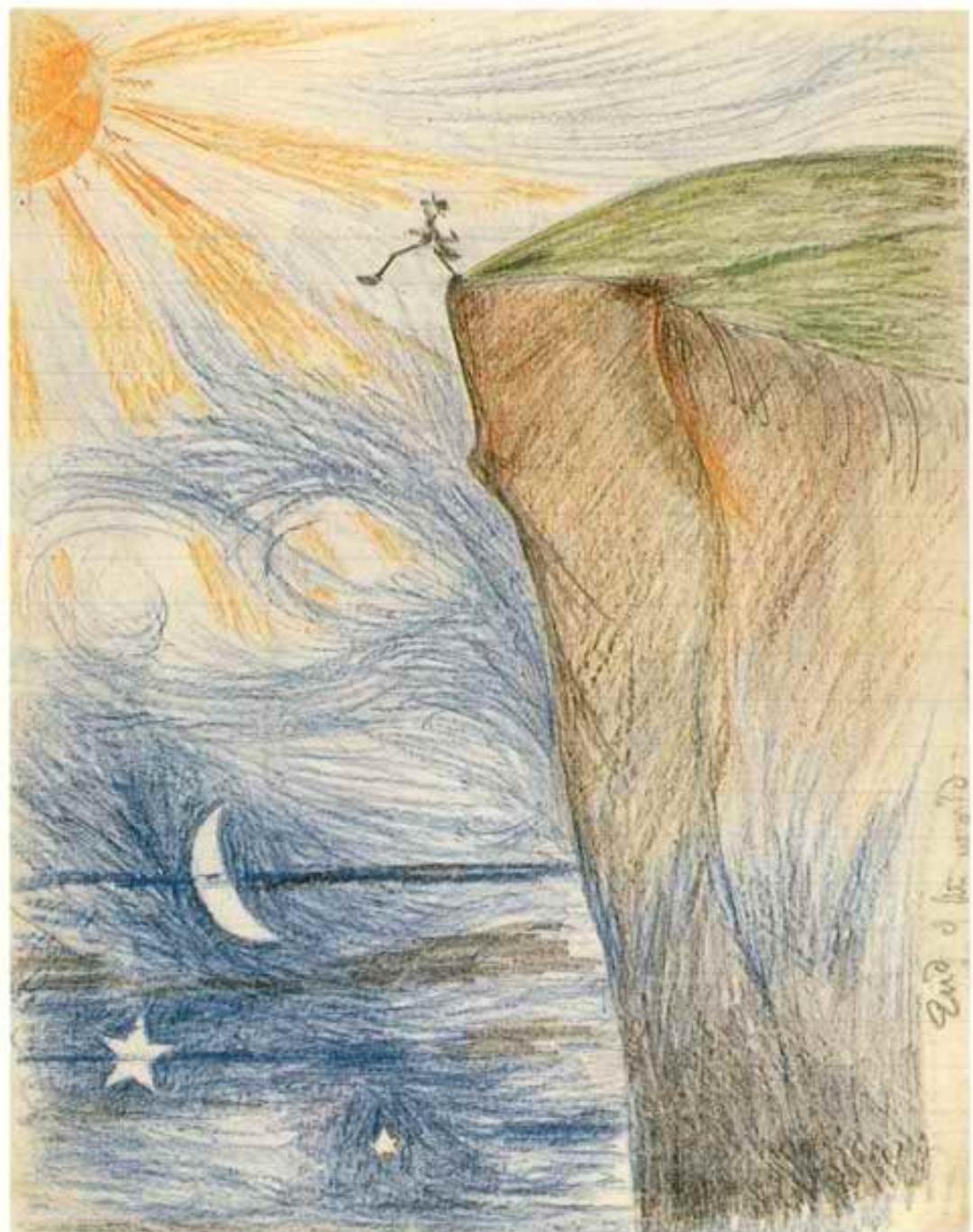


UnterTenishness .

Jec.

35  
Grownupishness  
Black ink





End of the world

36

*End of the World*  
Pencil, coloured pencil

**Tolkien made at least twenty of these 'visionary' pictures between about December 1911 and summer**

diaries, as pessimism. We find it again on the verso of *Undertenishness*, in a drawing of a tall, tunnel-like space with a small figure setting out to walk down a narrow path towards a lighted opening; but he is menaced at the sides by huge figures like chessmen. The title of the work is *Other People*, and the implication is clear that others were preventing Tolkien from reaching his goal - which goal, we cannot say. Yet another picture of this sort is *End of the World* [3 6], in which a tiny stick-figure blithely (or bravely?) steps into the abyss. A pessimistic subject indeed. But what glories lie beyond the world's end: the Sun, the Moon, a star, all essential elements in Tolkien's mythology and frequent motifs in his art, here in a restless sky drawn as if by Van Gogh. On its verso is a complementary image. *The Back of Beyond*, in which a road leads from distant hills to a shuttered window in the foreground, through which a small man peers over the edge of the picture to whatever lies 'below' - peering, but in this case going no further.

1913, during his first two years as an undergraduate at Oxford. University life allowed him time for visions, and for drawing them - time when he was supposed to be reading Classics, but his artistic imagination had caught fire and could not be contained. Many of his pictures made in these years are on ruled paper, which suggests that he was tearing pages from his school exercise books. Later he collected them into an envelope which he labelled *Earliest Ishnesses*.<sup>12</sup> He derived the word *ishness* from the final element in titles such as *Undertenishness*, and it encompassed his depictions of things symbolic or abstract.<sup>13</sup> As he extended his range, the term also referred to any pictures he drew from the imagination rather than from life.

Among the latter was a sketch, made probably in 1913, of Xanadu after Coleridge [37]. From its roughness it seems to have been made quickly, and is on the

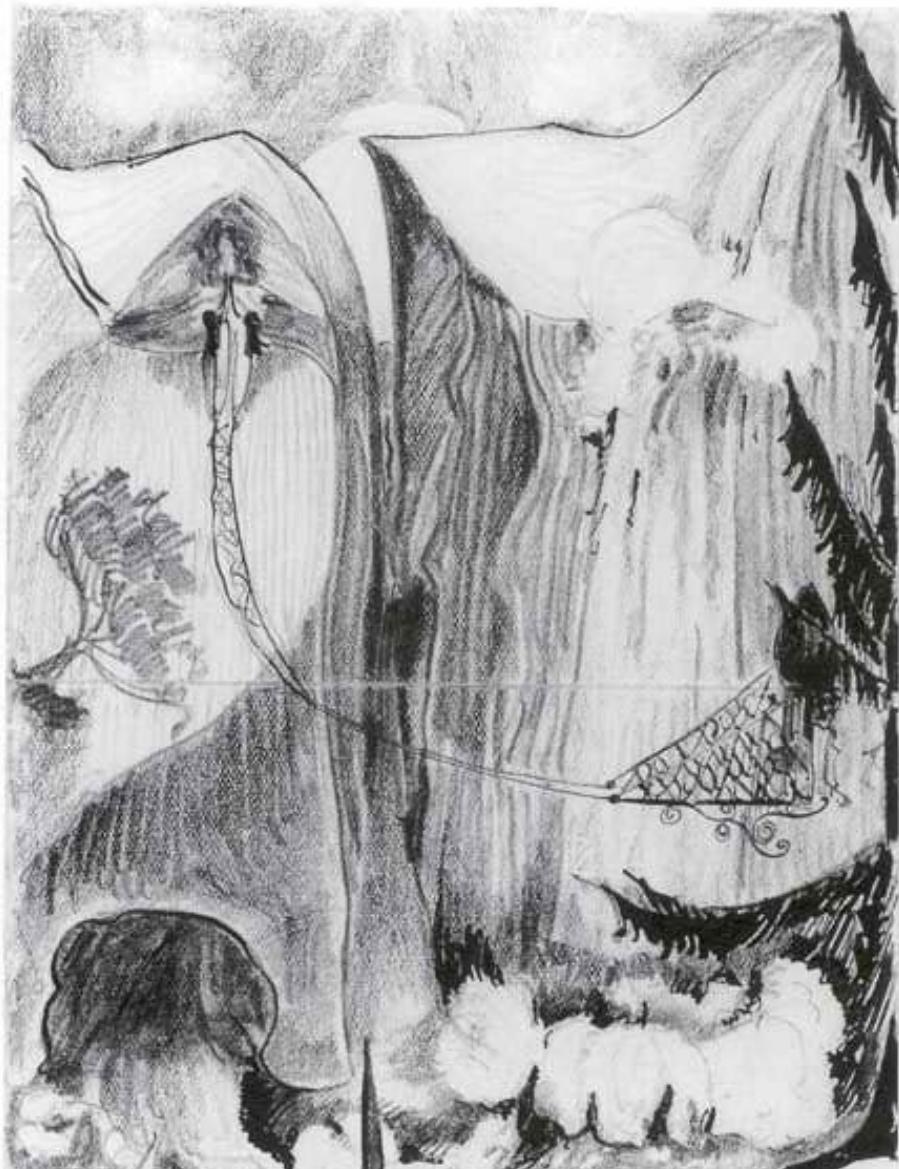
back of a tailor's bill evidently snatched up on the spur of the moment. Tolkien must have been inspired to

draw it as suddenly as Coleridge had been to write *Kubia Khan* when he woke from his dream. It shows the 'chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething' in which a mighty fountain cascades down a cedar-covered slope to form the sacred river, Alph, which flows at lower left into the 'caverns measureless to man'. Behind the cleft is the 'stately pleasure-dome' decreed by Kubia Khan, like a Buddhist *stupa* with a tall finial. The spidery 'bridge' spanning the chasm is not in Coleridge, nor are the two trees or lamps drawn very small just over the tops of the two cliffs; but the latter look ahead to the Two Trees of Valinor in 'The Silmarillion'. *Kubia Khan* and Tolkien's vision of it may also be related to his description of the place where the Elves awoke in Middle-earth: 'Now the places about Koivineni the Waters of Awakening are

rugged and full of mighty rocks, and the stream that feeds that water falls therein down a deep cleft ... a pale and slender thread, but the issue of the dark lake was beneath the earth into many endless caverns falling ever more deeply into the bosom of the world.'<sup>14</sup> The colours of the sketch are fantastic rather than realistic:

light pink on the tops of the cliffs, blue for the shadowed parts, red on either side of the cascading water.

Early in July 1913 Tolkien bought a sketch-book<sup>15</sup> and took it with him on a visit to his cousins at Barnt Green. Most of the book survives in the Bodleian Library, now separated into single or conjugate leaves, but the original order of its pages can be reconstructed with some certainty.<sup>16</sup> It is a fascinating record of Tol-kien's growth as an artist over at least fifteen years, and also helps to document his writing. On its first leaf he put his initials, then together on one page of the next



37

Xanadu

Pencil, coloured pencil, black ink

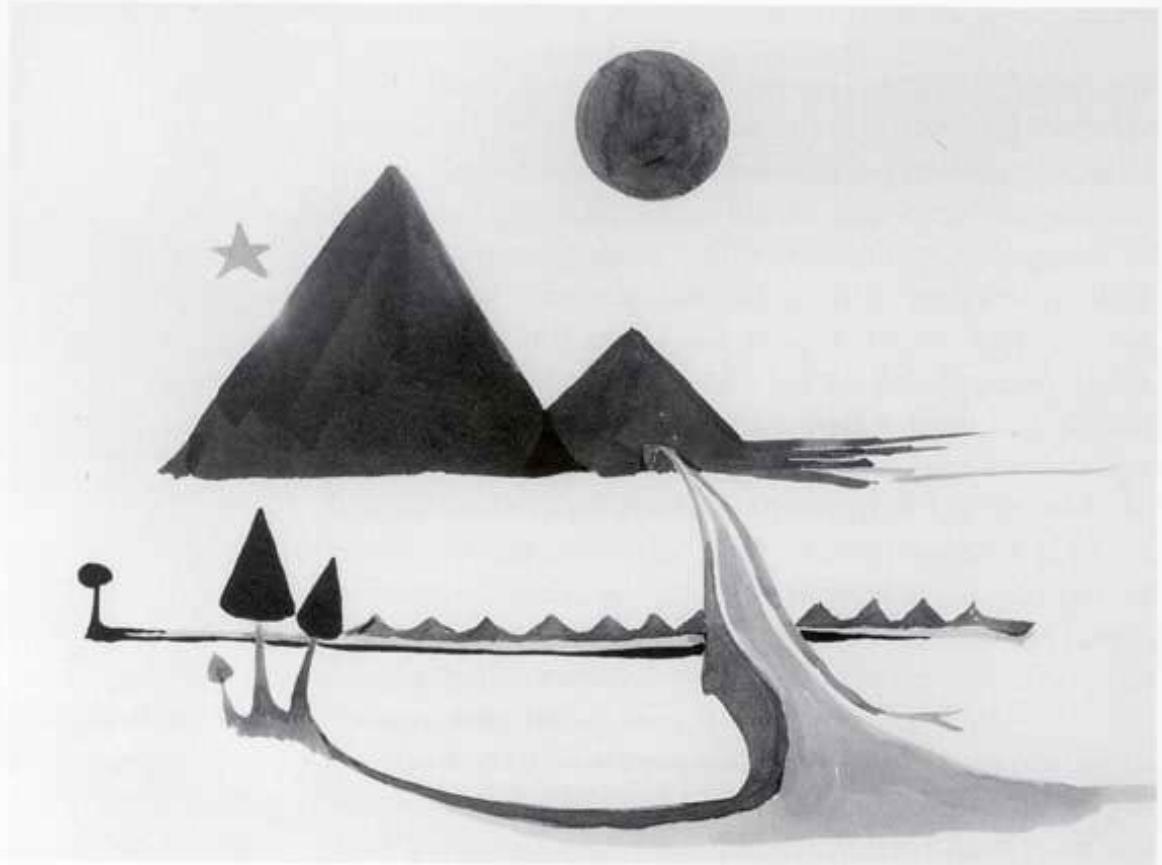




38 *Untitled (Northern House)*  
Pencil

39  
*Beyond*

Pencil, watercolour



leaf, he drew two Oxford scenes, Broad Street and the hall at his college, Exeter, marked 'copied' (that is, traced, presumably after prints or photographs) and dated 8 July 1913. After these, on two leaves, were views of Barnt Green and of Phoenix Farm, Gedling.<sup>17</sup> Tolkien removed the three leaves containing topo-graphical art in late 1913 or early 1914, when he seems to have decided to use the book to continue his 'ishness' series exclusively. He inscribed the front cover *The Book of Ishness*, and on the rear cover drew his mono-gram, curiously in mirror-reverse.

The first new drawing in the book was *Ei Uchnem*, to illustrate the Russian boatmen's song. But except that it includes a boat on a river - a boat with oars, not towed as on the Volga - it is a very free interpretation. Its swirling clouds and vibrant shapes recall Van Gogh again, or Munch. Opposite this in the sketch-book was

a more realistic drawing, dated 6 January 1914, of an unusual building or house [38] with a central smoke-hole and steps that appear to lead to entrances on at least three sides. Rounded walls, a seashell-like roof, and a shaft of moonlight give it the air of a folk-or fairy-tale, and perhaps it was inspired by one. But the ornamental door and windows of the house recall details in real-world architecture, from the period of great decorativeness and romanticism that coincided with Tolkien's childhood. The trees suggest a Northern forest, maybe Finland or Russia. In any case, the image stayed with Tolkien, and was re-used in his art for the first 'Father Christmas' letter in 1920 [64].

Six days after he drew the romantic 'Northern house', on 12 January 1914, he tried on yet another style in the watercolour *Beyond* [39]. Its elements are reduced to basic forms and are brightly painted by



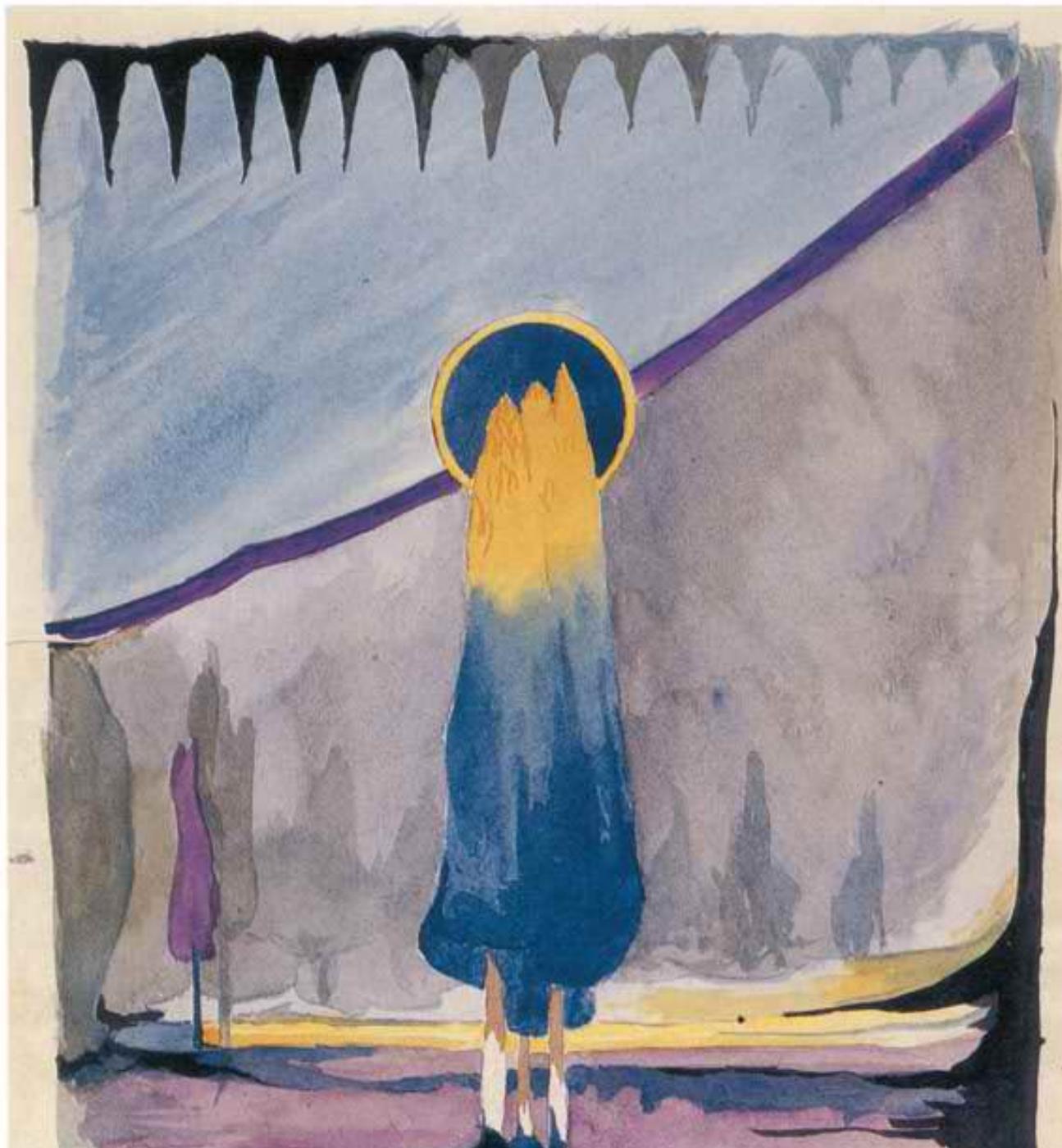
40

*Eeriness*

Pencil, watercolour

EERINESS







A sketch by J.R.R. Tolkien titled 'The Land of Pohja'. The drawing depicts a dark figure with a staff standing on a road, surrounded by tall, mushroom-like trees under a pink sky.

*The Land of Pohja.*

category: pink star, purple moon, indigo mountains, pink road, black mushroom-like trees. It is a strange work, like an other-worldly view of the Pyramids,<sup>18</sup> and it has a puzzling rubbed inscription: 'Alas! [?] in dread-ful mood'. If the artist was under a dark cloud, it is not reflected in his cheerful colours. *Eeriness* [40], painted evidently a day or two earlier,<sup>19</sup> suits a 'dreadful mood' better. Its setting is eerie indeed: tall, straight trees that line and shade the road appear to stretch out menacing arms towards a wizard-like figure with a staff, who seems to cast a circle of light upon the ground around him. To the left, through a gap in the trees, is a view of a distant hill. If Tolkien did not have a story in mind when he made this painting, it easily could be the basis for

one. Who is the figure? Where is he going? And espe-cially, why is there a cat-design (as it appears to be) on the back of his robe? The picture recalls Rudyard Kipling's famous illustration for 'The Cat that Walked by Himself' in his *Just So Stories* (1902); a cat walking down an avenue of trees like Tolkien's (if more carefully drawn), and past mushrooms which look very like the trees in *Beyond*. At the bottom of Kipling's drawing is his 'RK' monogram, with the R backward, mirroring the K; at the foot of Tolkien's is his 'JRRT' monogram now almost in its final form, with the two Rs mirror images of each other.

Tolkien filled a few more pages of the sketch-book with 'ishnesses', all just as odd and inexplicable, until

late in 1914.<sup>20</sup> Then, on 27 December, he painted an illustration which was a preview of things to come both in his art and in his mythology. *The Land of Pohja* [41] emerged from his enthusiasm for *The Kalevala*, the epic poem by Lonnrot based on the folk-poetry of the Finns. Tolkien had discovered that work in Kirby's translation in 1911, while still a schoolboy. It inspired him to study Finnish, which was an important influence on one of his invented 'Elvish' languages, Quenya, and in a paper read in 1912 at Oxford he praised *The Kalevala* as a mythological ballad 'full of that very primitive under-growth that the literature of Europe has on the whole been steadily cutting and reducing'.<sup>21</sup> In 1914, fired also by reading William Morris romances, he began a retelling of the *Kalevala* story of Kullervo in Morrisian prose and verse. It was never completed, but it influenced his tale of Turin in 'The Silmarillion'.

*The Land of Pohja* in fact is two paintings in one, made on two pages of the sketch-book. Tolkien first painted a tree, or perhaps it is three trees growing together, against a background divided by a diagonal line. Then he cut the sketch-book leaf along the diagonal, and on the sheet following painted an alternative upper background, which is visible when the upper part of the first sheet is pulled back. In the first painting the upper background is a rich purple; in the second it is blue-grey with a border of icicles (as shown in [41]). Pohja, or Pohjola, is the land in the North which, near the end of *The Kalevala*, the old magician Vainamoinen fills with music so sweet that the Moon settles in a birch-tree and the Sun in a fir-tree so that they may hear it better. Louhi, the evil Mistress of Pohjola, captures the Moon and Sun and hides them away. Then,

When the moon away was carried, And the sun had  
been imprisoned Deep in Pohjola's stone mountain,  
In the rocks as hard as iron, Then she stole away  
the brightness, And from Vainola the fires, And  
she left the houses tireless, And the rooms no flame  
illumined. Therefore was the night unending, And  
for long was utter darkness.

Frost upon the crops descended, And the cattle suffered  
greatly, And the birds of air felt strangely, All mankind felt  
ever mournful, For the sunlight shone no longer, Neither did  
there shine the moonlight.<sup>22</sup>

There can be little doubt that the painting shows, with the flap closed, the Sun atop the tall fir-tree, and with the flap opened, the land gripped by cold. It is an ingenious work, unique among Tolkien's art - other than this, he did not go in for mechanical effects<sup>23</sup> - and extremely effective. Also it is yet another precursor of his 'Silmarillion' mythology, for the *Kalevala* episode of the theft of the Sun and Moon almost certainly influenced Tolkien's pivotal tale of the destruction of the Two Trees, the theft of the Silmarils, and the Darkening of Valinor.

By the time he painted *The Land of Pohja* Tolkien had begun to write the poems from which 'The Silmaril-lion' evolved (the earliest, as noted in the previous chapter, was *The Voyage of Earendel the Evening Star*, September 1914), and for some of these too he made illustrations. Four of them followed *The Land of Pohja* in *The Book of Ishness*. From this date, with few exceptions, nearly all of Tolkien's illustrative art was inspired by his own writings. The growth of his imagination as he began to create his mythology was almost explosive, and produced art as dramatic as the words behind it. One of the pictures, *Water, Wind @ Sand* [42], is inscribed 'Illustration to Sea Song of an Elder Day', a poem with a complex history. Three versions of the text survive. The inscription on the first, 'The Tides I Dec. 4 1914 I On the Cornish Coast', suggests that it was inspired, at least in part, by Tolkien's visit that summer to the Lizard in Cornwall which impressed him so deeply and produced two seascapes [20, 21]. The longer second version of the poem, entitled *Sea Chant of an Elder Day*, is dated March 1915. The final version, revised and enlarged in spring 1917 as *The Horns of Ylmir* (elsewhere *Ulrno, Lord of Waters*), became the song Tuor sings to his son Earendel in their exile after the fall of Gondolin:

#### I sat on the ruined margin of the deep voiced echoing sea

Whose roaring foaming music crashed in endless cadency On the land besieged for  
ever in an aeon of assaults And torn in towers and pinnacles and caverned in

great vaults:

And its arches shook with thunder and its feet were piled

with shapes  
Riven in old sea-warfare from the crags and sable capes By ancient battailous tempest and  
primeval mighty tide.

While the thunder of great battles shook the World

beneath my rock, And the land wall crashed in Chaos; and Earth tottered

at the shock

Where a Dome of shouting waters smote a dripping

black facade,

And its catastrophic fountains smashed in deafening

cascade.<sup>24</sup>

The painting indeed captures very well the emotional flavour of rock and wave on the Cornish coast when the sea is rough, but as in a dream-vision, stylized and in extraordinarily bright colours. Tolkien had heard the call of the Sea - the music of the Horns of Ylmir, glori-ous and sad - and could convey its darker tones in his art, if he wished.<sup>25</sup> That he did so only a few times, and apparently not after *Water, Wind @ Sand*, suggests that he was uncomfortable depicting violently dramatic sub-jects, or else realized that it was not his forte in art -though he was its master in poetry and prose.

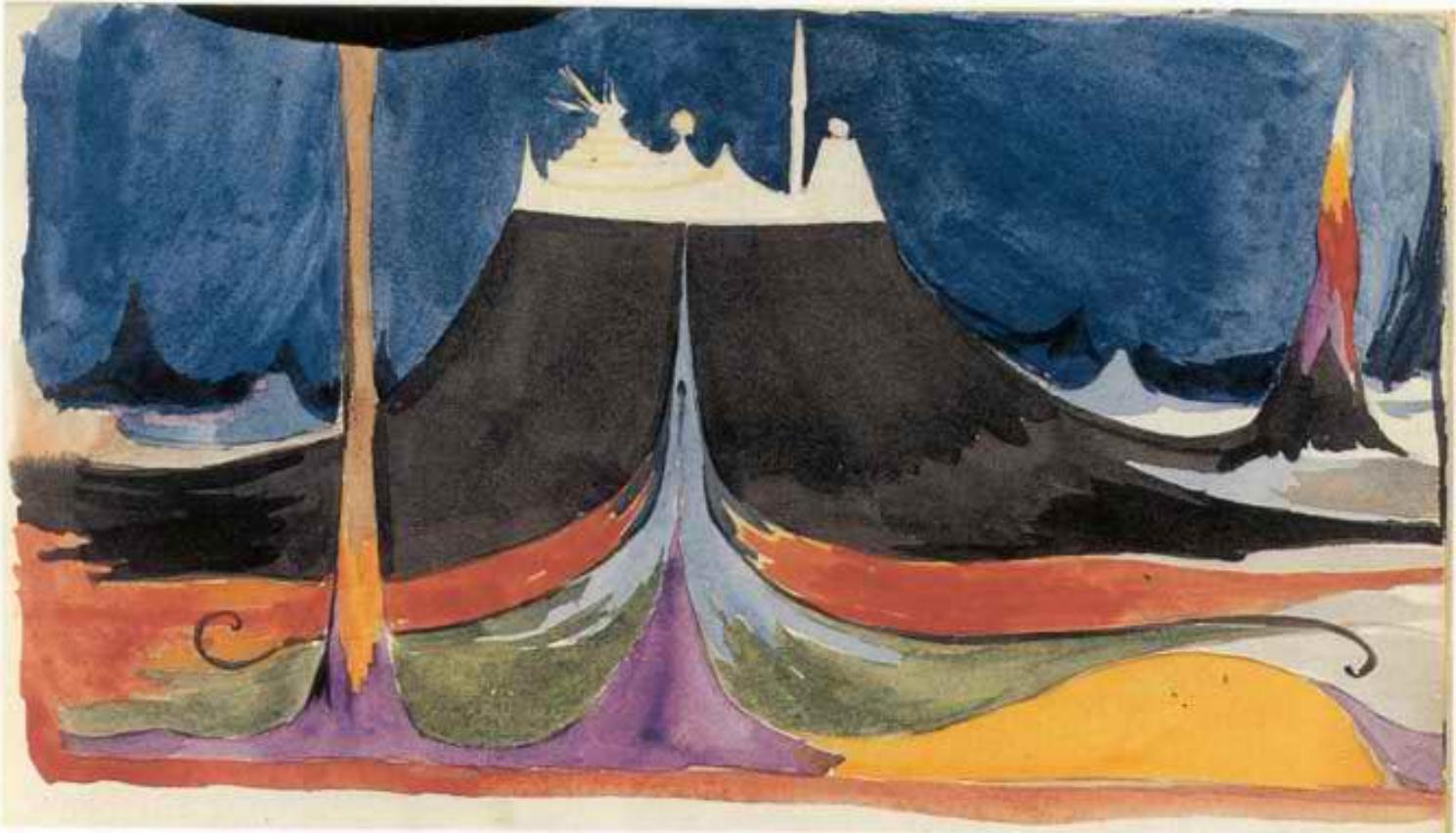
The position of *Water, Wind @ Sand* in *The Book of Ishness* dates it from early 1915. Therefore it must illus-trate one of the two earlier versions of the poem, before that work was appended to 'The Silmarillion' and gained its frame-story of Tuor and 'the visions that Ylmir's conches once called before him in the twilight in the Land of Willows'.<sup>26</sup> But even then, Tolkien must have had in mind the idea of someone transported to the sea in his thoughts and soul but not in body. The small figure in the painting, enclosed in a white sphere, is in the midst of the elements yet set apart from them. Perhaps it is meant to be Tolkien himself, experiencing at close hand the sea's 'deafening cascade' as he did on the Lizard Peninsula; but we cannot discount the possibility that this is the seed from which the frame-story emerged and the poem was absorbed into the



42

*Water, Wind & Sand*  
Pencil, watercolour, white body colour

43  
Tanaqui  
Pencil, watercolour



legend of Tuor. Tolkien's creativity sometimes worked in advance of his consciousness, and the painter occasionally preceded the poet.

This is evident also in *Tanaqui* [43], painted early in 1915, to judge by its position in the sketch-book. Its title appears to be an early form of *Taniquetil*, but the mountain depicted is surely not the one by that name in Tolkien's mythology, 'loftiest of all mountains, clad in purest snow'.<sup>27</sup> Probably *Tanaqui* should be associated with the poem *Kor*, written on 30 April 1915:

A sable hill, gigantic, rampart-crowned  
Stands gazing out across an azure sea  
Under an azure sky, on whose dark **ground**

centre of the picture is probably a poorly drawn road climbing steeply up to the city. Above this appears to be a round-headed tree, perhaps a scion of one of the Two Trees given by the Valar to the Elves of Kor. A similar form appears to the right of the tall tower. The view looks forward to the drawing Tolkien made in 1928 of the Elven city of Gondolin, built of white stone upon the hill Amon Gwareth [58].

Kor also appears in the painting *The Shores of Faery* [44] which illustrates, in fact faced in *The Book of Ishness*, the earliest version of the poem with the same title. The picture is inscribed 'May 10 1915', two months earlier than the date Tolkien mistakenly assigned to the poem.<sup>30</sup> The original text reads:

East of the Moon

Impearled as 'gainst a floor of porphyry  
Gleam marble temples white, and dazzling halls.<sup>28</sup>

Kor in Tolkien's early writings was both the city of the Elves in Eldamar and the hill on which it was built;

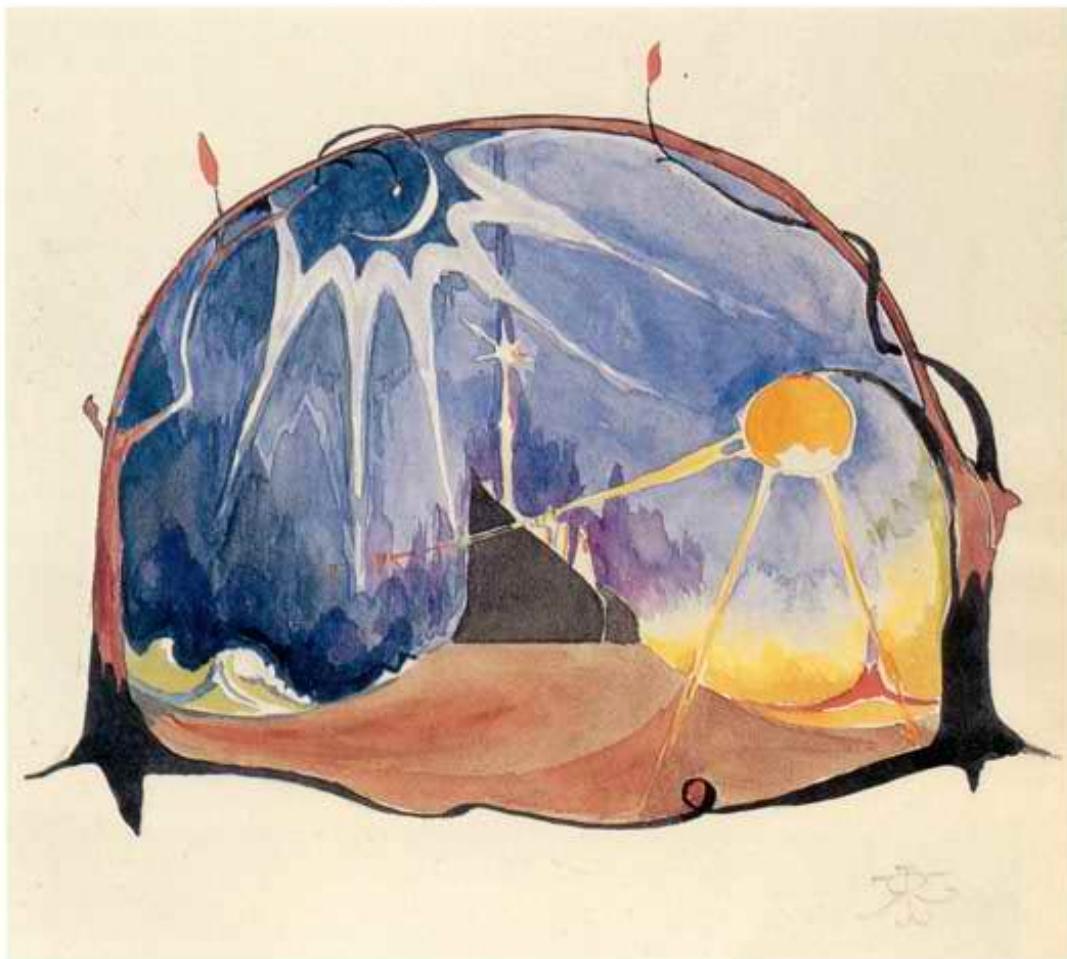
in later accounts it is called Tirion upon Tuna. Again in *Tanaqui*, Tolkien illustrated details not in the related poem but which were later expressed in words, in this case the slender silver tower of the house of Inwe 'shooting skyward like a needle', described in the prose account *The Coming of the Elves and the Making of Kor*.<sup>19</sup> There 'a white lamp of piercing ray' set in the tower 'shone upon the shadows of the bay'; in *Tanaqui* a lamp shines not from the tower but from a tall, tiered building on the left. The pale blue construction in the

West of the Sun

There stands a lonely hill

Its feet are in the pale green Sea

**Its** towers are white & still  
Beyond Taniquetil in Valinor  
No stars come there but **one alone**  
That hunted with the Moon  
For there the two Trees naked grow  
That bear Night's silver bloom;  
That bear the globed fruit of Noon In Valinor.  
There are the Shores of Faery With their moonlit pebbled  
Strand



44

*The Shores of Faery*

Pencil, black ink, watercolour

Whose foam is silver music

On the opalescent floor  
Beyond the great sea-shadows  
On the margent of the Sand  
That stretches on for ever  
From the golden feet of Kor  
Beyond Taniquetil  
In Valinor.  
0 West of the Sun, **East of the Moon**  
Lies the Haven of the Star  
The white tower of the Wanderer,  
And the rock of Eglamar,  
Where Vingelot is harboured  
While Earendel looks afar  
On the magic and the wonder  
'Tween here and Eglamar  
Out, out beyond Taniquetil  
In Valinor - afar.<sup>31</sup>

The phrase 'the Shores of Faery' refers in Tolkien's

mythology to the lands along the great bay on the east coast of Valinor in Aman, in or near which the Elves built their dwellings. The Two Trees, Silpion (later Telperion) and Laurelin, provided light to Valinor, and it

Ungoliant), weaver of darkness, at the behest of Melko (later Melkor, Morgoth), the evil Vala. Before dying, Silpion bore a last silver blossom which became the Moon, and Laurelin a last golden fruit which became the Sun. In the painting, the almost leafless trees frame the view in an Art nouveau manner. The tree on the left has a crescent moon upon the curving branch, and the tree on the right a golden orb. The colours of the work change accordingly from left to right, from dark night to blazing day. The 'lonely hill' in the centre is Kor with its white towers; at its feet are golden sands and 'the pale green Sea'. A prose preface to later versions of the poem makes it clear that the star that 'hunted with the Moon' was Earendel (Earendil), in the painting a bright spot within the Moon's curve.

The Moon was of special interest to Tolkien, and figures in several of his poems and stories. In March 1915 he wrote a poem about the Man in the Moon, who 'had silver shoon / And his beard was of silver thread' and 'longed for the mirth of the populous Earth / And the sanguine blood of men':

Down a filigree stair of spidery hair  
He slipped in gleaming haste,  
And laughed with glee to be merry and free,  
And he faster earthward raced,

was their light also that was captured in the Silmarils, the jewels at the heart of the *legendarium*. But the Trees were poisoned by the giant spider Ungwe Lianti (later

**He was tired of his pearls and diamond twirls,**

Of his pallid minaret  
Dizzy and white at its lunar height  
**In a world of silver set.<sup>32</sup>**

In *The Book of Ishness* Tolkien wrote out the last four lines quoted, opposite an illustration [45]. The picture shows the Man in the Moon, with a long beard and tall hat, sliding earthwards on a thread. In the poem he falls 'like meteors do' into the ocean and is taken by boat to Norwich, so the 'spidery hair' points towards East Anglia. One can identify the British Isles, Europe, India, Africa, and North America on the Earth; but there are unfamiliar continents in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, presumably Atlantis and Lemuria. Tol-kien later told in *The Tale of the Sun and Moon* that when the Valar created the vessel of the Moon from the last blossom of Silpion and gave it into the care of the air-spirits, but before it was lifted into the sky, an aged elf stowed away. He built upon it a little white turret . . . where often he climbs and watches the

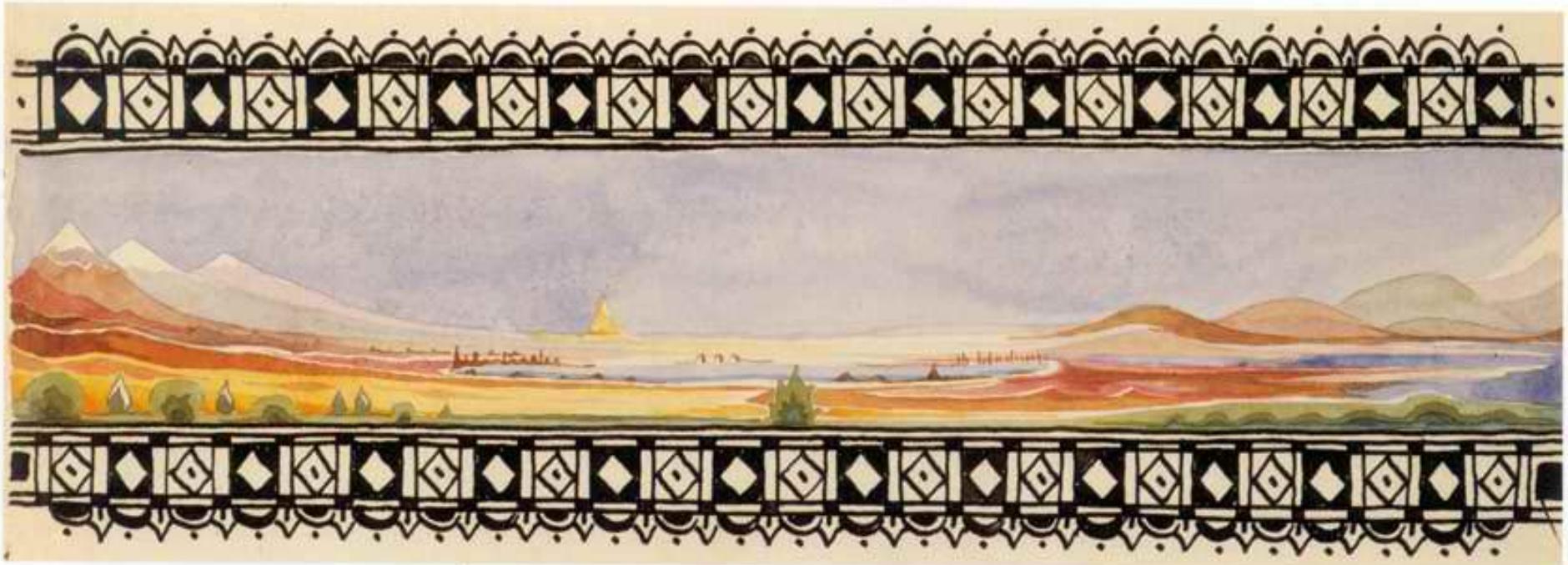
heavens, or the world beneath' and 'some indeed have named him the Man in the Moon'.<sup>33</sup> The appearance of the vessel is not described in the 1915 poem; as told in the *Tale* it seems to have been derived from the illustration: a 'shimmering isle. . . Rods there were and perchance they were of ice, and they rose upon it like airy masts, and sails were caught to them by slender threads. . .'.<sup>34</sup>

In late 1916 Tolkien began to write his mythology as a fully-formed narrative, *The Book of Lost Tales*. Here he developed the history of Aman, the Blessed Realm in the West, and of Middle-earth, in what would become known as the First Age of the World, incorporating ideas he had expressed in his early poems and in his 'ish-ness' drawings. But several years later, before the *Tales* were complete, he left them in order to write the lay *The Children of Hurin*. In 1925 he abandoned this too, but began another poem, *The Lay of Leithian*, and from 1926 also wrote a *Sketch of the Mythology* from which followed the prose 'Silmarillion' proper. It was a busy period in his life apart from his literary inventions:



Two men in the moon  
Pencil, watercolour, silver paint





#### 46 Mithrim

Pencil, watercolour, black ink

#### convalescence from 'trench fever' after military service

in France, work on the *Oxford English Dictionary*, academic appointments at Leeds and Oxford, several moves of house, his earliest publications in Middle English studies, and the birth of his three sons. His art was largely set aside, except for a few topographical works (as described in the previous chapter) and the pictures he made for his children (discussed in chapter 3). He added only four works to *The Book of Ishness* between 1915 and 1922,<sup>35</sup> ending with a small study of his eldest son, John, on the beach at Filey in York-shire. After that, Tolkien abandoned the sketch-book for five years.

Then suddenly, in 1927-8, he was extraordinarily productive. From these years date a long and notable series of pictures, some topographical,<sup>36</sup> others illustrative, most (but not all) in *The Book of Ishness*. His skill was greatly increased. At times he still used bright colours, but now these were

region was the lake, Mithrim, on the opposite shores of

which the divided hosts of the Gnomes (Noldorin Elves) camped on their return to Middle-earth, until their feud was ended and they united in opposing Morgoth. The lake is mentioned in *The Book of Lost Tales* but not described until later: it had 'wide pale waters', it was a 'great lake', its 'mighty waters reflect a pale image of the encircling hills'.<sup>39</sup> Both lake and hills can be seen in the painting [46] Tolkien made in Lyme Regis in 1927.<sup>40</sup> The peak in the distance, left of centre, is probably Thangorodrim: the contemporary *Sketch of the Mytho-logy* implies that the hosts of Gnomes on either side of Mithrim could see the 'vast smokes and vapours . . . made and sent forth from Angband, and the smoking top of Thangorodrim (the highest of the Iron Mountains around Morgoth's fortress).'<sup>41</sup> Except for a few lines to represent trees, Tolkien made no attempt to depict the shoreland woods noted in some of his texts,<sup>42</sup> but the mists that lay around the lake obscured many things.

applied with a mastery and subtlety not seen in his art before. His style remained dynamic but became more painterly, with such drawn outlines as there were now almost invisible. One reason for his improvement was surely the freedom and relax-ation afforded him by family holidays in Lyme Regis in 1917 and 1928.<sup>37</sup> It also may be that his artistic talents responded to a sense of security he now felt in his family and profession, and by now he had explored the world of 'The Silmarillion' for more than a decade, and felt more confident in rendering his invented landscapes.

Among these was the land of Hisilome, also called Hithlum or Dorlomin, the land of shadows.<sup>38</sup> In this

After *Mithrim* in *The Book of Ishness* Tolkien painted *Glorund Sets Forth to Seek Turin* [47], also to illustrate 'The Silmarillion'. He first told the story of Turin and the dragon Glorund (later Glaurung) in about 1919 in *The Book of Lost Tales*. Glorund is described there as 'a great worm' with scales of polished bronze and breath 'a mingled fire and smoke',<sup>43</sup> who destroys the dwellings of the Rodothlim (fugitive Noldorin elves) in caves above a stream. He gathers their wealth into a hoard and takes their home as his lair. Tolkien returned to the tale in *The Children of Hurin* (1920-5), an early alternative title for which was *The Golden Dragon*.

He abandoned the lay before reaching the point where the dragon would have entered, but introduced, in place of the Caves of the Rodothlim, the great Elvish fastness of Nargothrond with its doors of posts and lintels. *Glorund*, though painted somewhat later (September 1927), illustrates the scene Tolkien must have en-visioned at the time of the *Lost Tales*, with a single, cave-like entrance.<sup>44</sup> 'Then leaving the caves and the places of his sleep' Glorund 'crossed the streams and drew into the woods, and they blazed before his face', says the *Tale of Turambar*.<sup>45</sup> In the painting the start of this action is dramatically portrayed. The dragon comes straight at us, fire leaping from its jaws, trees withering in its path. The sun, with a face faintly drawn on it, also blazes mightily. Meanwhile, the serenity of the mountains in the background belies the fierce destruction

occurring on the plain, their cool colours a contrast to the gold and red of Glorund. The figure of the beast, awkwardly foreshortened, has none of the sinuous grace of the other dragons Tolkien drew, but is unsurpassed in fierceness. Its unusual face recalls ceremonial masks from Africa, Asia, or Native American cultures.<sup>46</sup>

Tolkien had been fascinated by dragons since child-hood, when he read Lang's story of Sigurd and Fafnir. He described his feelings long afterwards in *On Fairy-Stories*, where he referred to Fafnir as 'the prince of all dragons':

I never imagined that the dragon was of the same order as the horse. And that was not solely because I saw horses daily, but

never even the footprint of a worm. The dragon had the trade-mark *Of Faerie* written plain upon him. In whatever world he

47 *Glorund Sets Forth to Seek Túrin*  
Pencil, watercolour, black ink





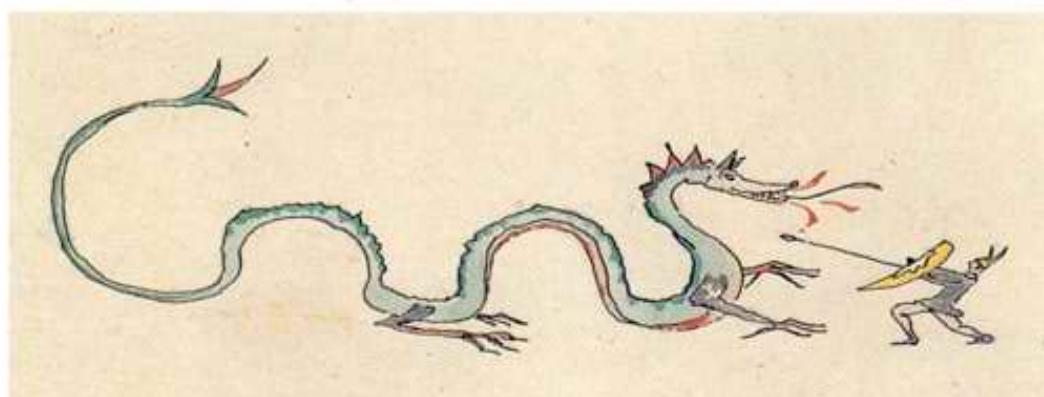
Slópund rats fóorth

to rank Tújun :-



48

*Hringboga Heorte Gefyseð*  
(Coiled Dragon, with  
Two 'Flowers')  
Pencil, watercolour, black ink



49

*Untitled (Dragon and Warrior)*  
Pencil, black ink, watercolour

had his being it was an Other-world. Fantasy, the making or glimpsing of Other-worlds, was the heart or the desire of Faerie. I desired dragons with a profound desire. Of course, I in my timid body did not wish to have them in the neighbourhood. . . . But the world that contained even the imagination of Fafnir was richer and more beautiful, at what-ever cost of peril.<sup>47</sup>

Dragons were to play important parts in his writings:

Glorund (Glaurung) in 'The Silmarillion', Smaug in *The Hobbit*, and Chrysophylax in *Farmer Giles of Ham*, to name only three. He also depicted them in his art many times; several, besides *Glorund*, were in *The Book of Ishness*.<sup>49</sup> One of these is a coiled dragon with a slight grin and a twinkle in his eye [48], inscribed 'hringboga heorte gefyse'. The words are derived from a passage in the Old English poem *Beowulf*: '5a wses hringbogan heorte gefyse / saecce to seceanne' - 'Now was the heart of the coiling beast stirred to come out to fight'.<sup>49</sup> This is in the second part of the poem, in which the aging hero meets his last and most terrible foe, a dragon ravaging his kingdom. 'Now it came blazing, gliding in looped curves, hastening to its fate.' But Tolkien's beast looks more playful than perilous. In appearance it is very unlike Glorund, though also painted in September 1927. Glorund is golden, smooth-skinned, wingless, and segmented. The 'coiled dragon' is green, scaled, winged (though useless for flight), and snake-like except for its head, which is like that of a horse; he has crude cousins in Romanesque sculpture, on the font of St James, Avebury (c. 1100), for example, and on Southwell Minster (the dragon conquered by St Michael). Tol-kien's painting is one of his most beautiful. It shows the masterly use of transparent watercolours of which he was now capable, as well as his skill at design. Creating this asymmetrical yet carefully balanced beast, like a Celtic interlace decoration made naturalistic, was no mean feat.

Tolkien thought hard about what dragons were like, and even discussed the subject in a Christmas lecture for children, on 1 January 1938 at the University Museum, Oxford. He described dragons as of two kinds, 'creeping' (like Glorund) and 'winged', but in general, large, deadly, coiling serpent-creatures. He showed a slide of his 'coiled dragon', saying: 'Here is a nice little worm in an early stage of growth, a newly hatched dragonet, which was pretty (as young things so often are)'. Refer-ring to a story by Saxo Grammaticus in his *Gesta Danorum*, Tolkien noted that Thora, daughter of the Earl of Gothland, kept such a dragonet in her trinket box. 'I think the fabulous dragon, the *old worm*, or *great drake* was of this sort', he said.

A serpent creature, but with four legs and claws; his neck varied in length but had a hideous head with long jaws and teeth or snake tongue. He was usually heavily armoured espe-cially on his head and back and flanks. Nonetheless he was pretty bendable (up and down or sideways), could even tie himself in knots on occasion, and had a long powerful tail. . . . Some had wings - the legendary kind of wings that go together with front legs (instead of being front legs gone queer). . . . A respectable dragon should be 20 ft or more.<sup>50</sup>

If the dragon of [48] is a 'dragonet', perhaps its wings grew as it matured.

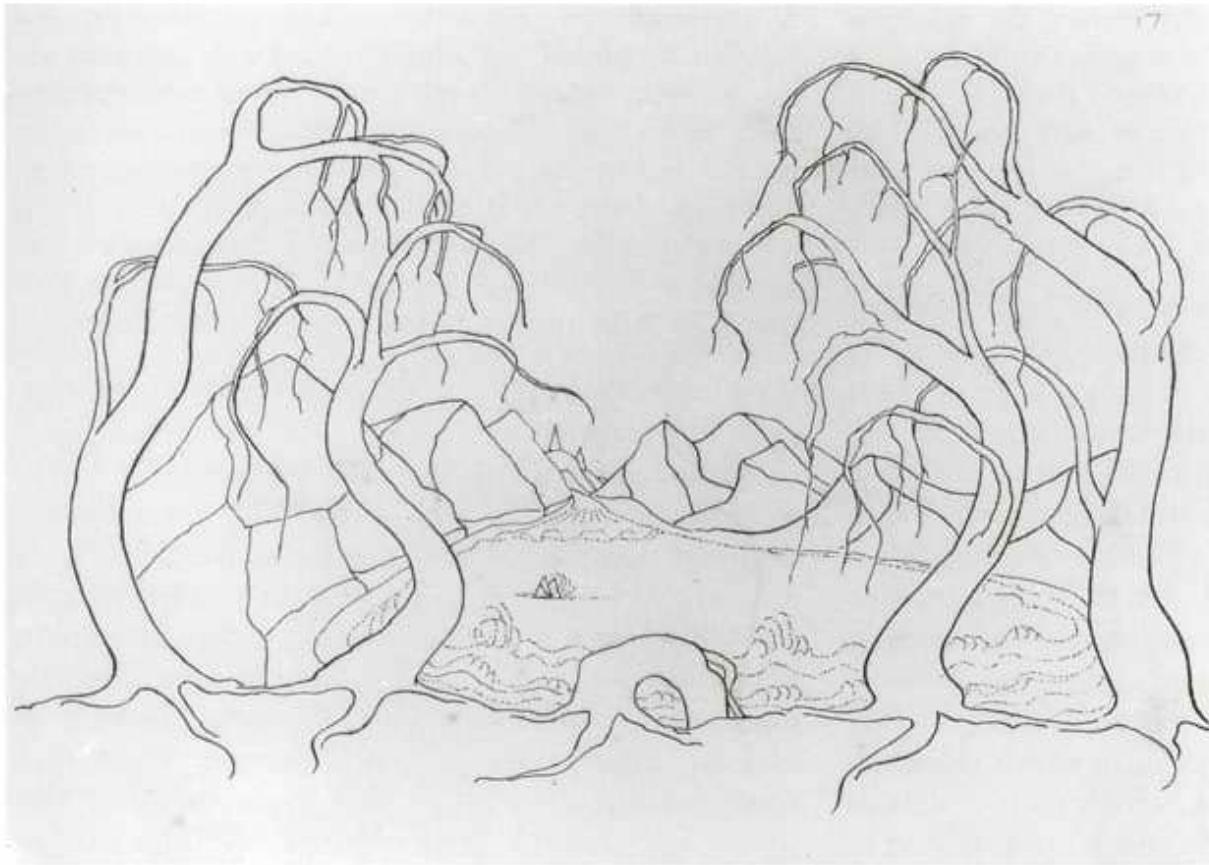
At this time Tolkien also drew a picture of a dragon with its tail coiled around a tree." Its lower body is distinctly serpentine, but its upper part lying flat on the ground looks more like a crocodile. In another drawing, from May 1928, a dragon is in fiery action, contending with a warrior [49]. Tolkien showed this picture too at his University Museum lecture, in relation to how the king and his attendant Wiglaf in *Beowulf* fought their dragon. He remarked that 'this might be called "the wrong way to do it"', and indeed, facing his foe head on led to Beowulf's death even though he won the battle. But the drawing may not have been meant originally as an illustration of *Beowulf*. In the poem the dragon is fought with swords, and shields are described as discs;

Tolkien, who knew the poem well, drew his warrior with an elongated shield and a spear.

He lectured regularly on *Beowulf* at Oxford. Two of his most significant academic publications concerned that work,<sup>52</sup> and its influence can be found throughout his fiction. In July 1928<sup>53</sup> he drew two pictures of Grendel's mere [50, 51], each inscribed 'wudu wyrtum fsest', the 'wood clinging by its roots'. In the first part of the poem, after Beowulf has defeated the monster Grendel, the court of King Hrothgar is attacked by Grendel's mother seeking revenge. Beowulf follows her to her lair, to end the monsters' reign of terror on the Danish court.

In a hidden land they dwell upon highlands wolf-haunted, and windy cliffs, and the perilous passes of the fens, where the mountain-stream goes down beneath the shadows of the cliffs, a river beneath the earth. It is not far hence in measurement of miles that the mere lies, over which there hang rimy thickets, and a wood clinging by its roots overshadows the water.

There Beowulf finds 'mountain-trees leaning o'er the hoar rock, a joyless forest. Bloodstained and troubled water loomed beneath'. Tolkien's drawings are detailed and accurate illustrations of these passages. The stream pours over the cliff, the water below is black, as with blood. The frost-worn trees are deformed and almost



50  
*Wudu Wyrtum Faest*  
(Grendel's Mere)  
Pencil, black ink

anthropomorphic. It is the dark side of Nature, twisted, restless, menacing, what Kenneth dark called (with reference to the same part of *Beowulf*) the landscape of fantasy, an expression of old obsessive fears from the days when men wandered the regions of the North.<sup>54</sup> One looks at these pictures and thinks inevitably of the desolation of Smaug in *The Hobbit* and of Glaurung in 'The Silmarillion', the Emyn Muil and the Dead Marshes in *The Lord of the Rings*, and of course the painfully real blasted landscape Tolkien saw during the First World War.

The most striking of Tolkien's 'Silmarillion' pictures also dates from July 1928, *Halls of Manwe on the Mountains of the World above Faerie* [52]. It is better known as *Taniquetil*<sup>55</sup> after the greatest of mountains in Tolkien's mythology, mentioned already in connection with *Tanaqui* [43]. It was on that height, raised by the Valar in the east of Valinor as a defence against Melko, that their chief, Manwe, and his spouse Varda, Lady of the Stars, dwelt in a house of white and blue marble upon a field of snow. Their halls can be seen in the painting in a glow of light at the summit. At the foot of the mountain is one of the towns of the seafaring Elves, the Teleri. Two of their ships are under sail, each as described by Tolkien, with a carved prow like the upheld neck of a swan, but also in general shape and with oars and square sails like Viking ships. The elves in

the foreground wear pointed caps similar to those of the North Pole elves in the 'Father Christmas' letters [63] and of the sailors in the *Hobbit* picture *Lake Town*

[127].

The painting shows a time in the mythology after the Two Trees had been destroyed. The slopes on one side of the mountain are bathed in sunlight, while those on the other side shine more coldly in the light of a crescent moon. The different layers of air depicted here seem to accord with those described in Tolkien's *Ambarkanta* or *Shape of the World*, written in the 1930s. Usually the pure clear middle air, *Ilmen*, in which were the Sun, Moon, and stars, stretched directly above Valinor, but at times Vista, the lowest air, flowed in from Middle-earth, and 'if Valinor is darkened and this air is not cleansed by the light of the Blessed Realm, it takes the form of shadows and grey mists'.<sup>56</sup> The stars set by Varda in the firmament shine brilliantly; those at top left appear to be the Pleiades.

A drawing [53] made by Tolkien at Lyme Regis one month after *Halls of Manwe* is almost certainly another depiction of Taniquetil, seen from a different angle; and yet it is not Taniquetil, for the mountain now is set in a quiet landscape of field and forest, perhaps a memory of Switzerland from a visit Tolkien made there in 1911. He was a frugal artist, and often reused elements of his pictures that he thought came out well. Indeed, this

mountain appeared again, nearly a decade later, redrawn by Tolkien as one of the Misty Mountains in *The Hobbit* [110].

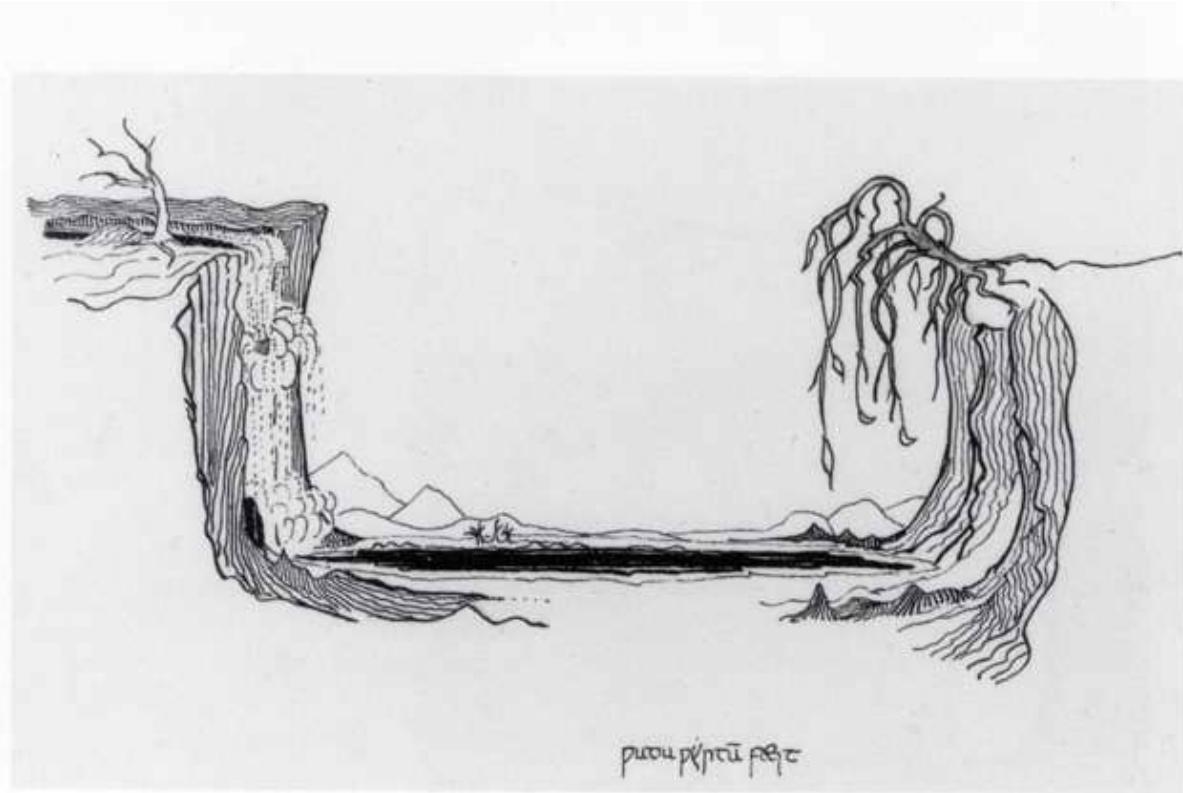
An even more interesting series of reincarnations in his art began with his watercolour *Taur-na-Fuin* or *Beleg Finds Flinding in Taur-na-Fuin* [54], painted in *The Book of Ishness* in July 1928. It depicts the moment in the 'Silmarillion' tale of Turin when Beleg, an elf from Thingol's court, finds Flinding (later called Gwindor), an elf of Nargothrond who has escaped from captivity in Morgoth's stronghold. Flinding lies exhausted beneath an enormous tree, while Beleg with his great sword moves towards him over twisted roots. It is the most detailed rendering Tolkien made of elves in his mythology, though even so they are seen at a distance. Beside Flinding lie a red elvish cap and the lamp whose blue light attracted Beleg, one of the 'little lanterns of lucent crystal/and silver cold' the Elves made with secret craft.<sup>57</sup> Beleg has a short beard; Flinding's face is hidden. Both figures have long black hair and are thin and elongated - tall, one should say, in keeping with Tolkien's conception of Elves in the old English and Germanic tradition, but they are also 'elfin' in the usual sense (one cannot ignore Beleg's pointed red shoes). They appear to be diminutive, however, only in relation to the size of the trees. 'There greyly loomed/of girth unguessed in growth of ages/the topless trunks of trees enchanted', Tolkien says of Taur-na-Fuin in *The*

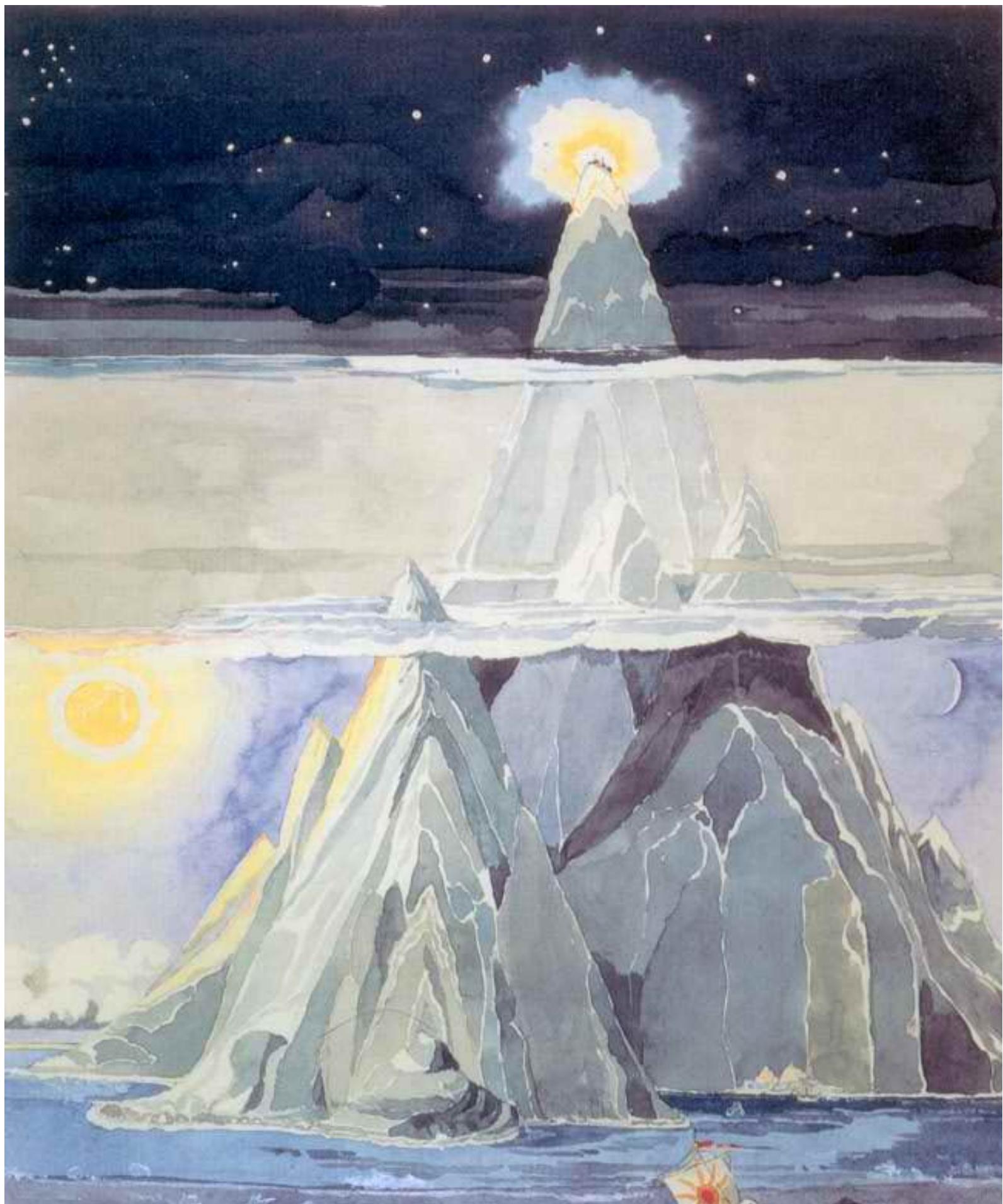
*Children of Hurin*.<sup>58</sup> In the painting the upper margin is reached before any boughs become visible. But the forest is more open and bright than suggested in the texts: in the *Tale of Turambar*, it is 'a dark and perilous region so thick with pines of giant growth that none but the goblins might find a track, having eyes that pierced the deepest gloom'.<sup>59</sup>

*Taur-na-Fuin* found its way into *The Hobbit*, redrawn in ink as *Mirkwood* [8S]. Still later, it was published in *The J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar 1974* (Alien & Unwin, 1973) with Tolkien's consent and with a new title in the artist's hand: *Fangorn Forest*.<sup>60</sup> Tolkien seems to have felt that the 'Silmarillion' picture somehow could do double duty as an illustration for *The Lord of the Rings*, and so this one image was used, in one form or another, to illustrate all three of Tolkien's major works. But in its final context it cannot withstand close scrutiny. Its tall trees and sombre mood suit that part of *The Lord of the Rings* in which Merry and Pippin wan-der through the shadowed wood before meeting Treebeard; but no one for long could mistake these figures for short, shoeless hobbits, who moreover in the story had neither lamp nor sword.

By spring 1928 Tolkien had reached the point in writing the *Lay of Leithian* at which Beren, Felagund, and their companions are captured by Thu (an earlier name for Sauron) and taken to his fortress on an island in the middle of a river:

51  
Wudu Wyrtum Faest  
(Grendel's Mere)  
Pencil, black ink







'desert wide', and on the horizon 'the brooding cloud that hangs and lowers / on Thangorodrim's thunderous

They found the fleet young waters, rippling, silver-pale of Sirion  
hurrying through that vale where Taur-na-Fuin, Deadly Night,  
the trackless forest's pine-clad height, falls dark forbidding  
slowly down upon the east, while westward frown the northward-  
bending Mountains grey and bar the westering light of day.

An isled hill there stood alone amid the valley, like a stone rolled  
from the distant mountains vast when giants in tumult hurtled  
past. Around its feet the river looped a stream divided, that had  
scooped the hanging edges into caves.<sup>61</sup>

All of the details of this passage are recorded also in *The Vale of Sirion* [55], drawn in the sketch-book at Lyme Regis in July 1928. The Sun sinks behind the Eryd Lomin (later Ered Wethrin), the shadowy mountains in the west, opposite the rising Moon at right above the eaves of the forest. In the distance are Dor-na-Fauglith (Anfauglith), 'the fields of drouth, / the dusty dunes, the

towers'.<sup>62</sup> The two birch trees in the foreground frame and emphasize the fortress on the island, above the caves hollowed out by water. Several elements of the picture may have been inspired by an illustration by the Danish artist Kay Nielsen, *List, ah. List to the Zephyr in the Grovel for Felicia or The Pot of Pinks* in Arthur Quiller-Couch's *In Powder and Crinoline* (1913). These include an arched bridge leading to an island with cavernous openings; hanging branches;

a plant at lower right; and especially a cliff which looks as if it was pulled straight up out of the ground. Tolkien rejected Nielsen's ornamentalism, drawing (for example) naturalistic trees where Nielsen drew elongated forms out of Art nouveau (which, however, are not unlike the trees in Tolkien's *The Land of Pohja* [41]). Some of the same pictorial elements, and the flowers profusely blooming in the foreground of Nielsen's illustration, appear also in Tolkien's water-colour *Rivendell* [108] for *The Hobbit*.

At this time Tolkien had not yet developed the idea that the fortress of Thû had once been Minas Tirith, the

52 (opposite)

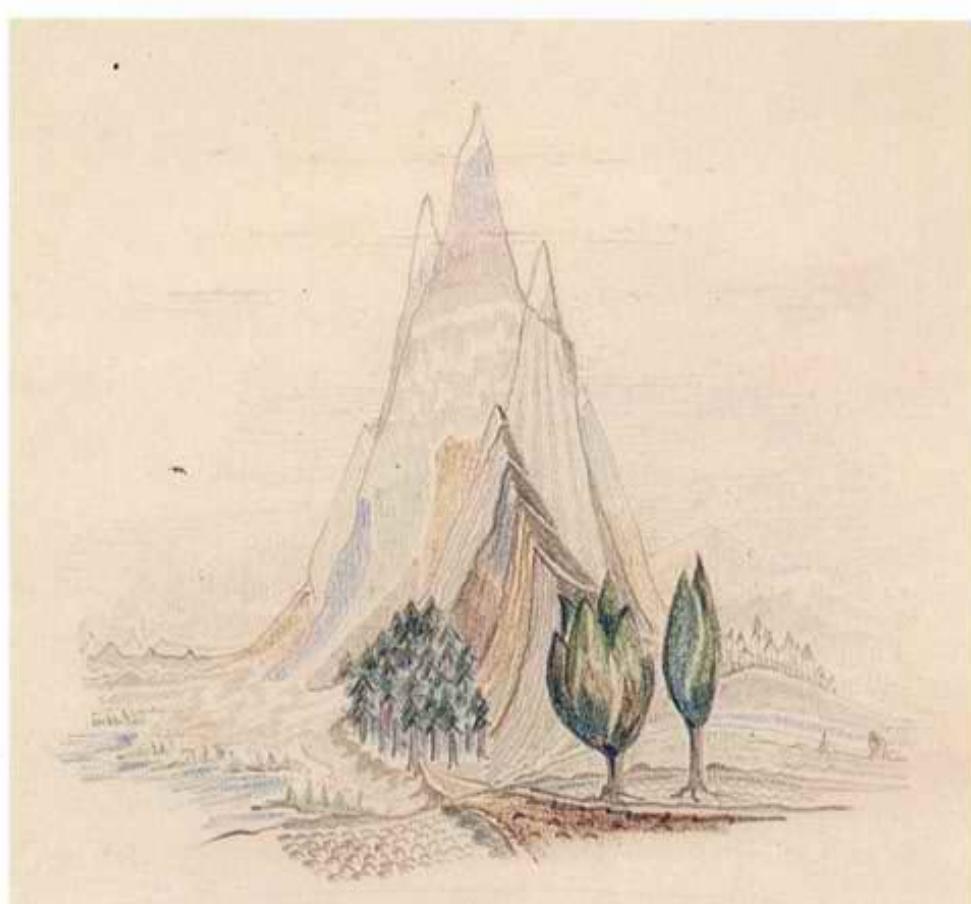
Halls of Manwë (Taniquetil)

Pencil, watercolour, white body colour

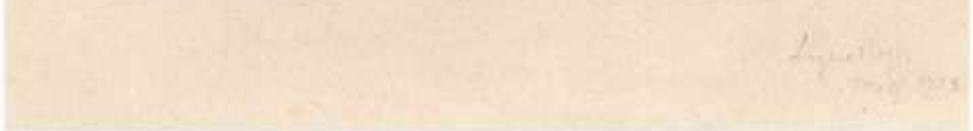
53 (right)

Untitled (Mountain Landscape)

Pencil, coloured pencil



*Untitled (Mountain Landscape)*  
Pencil, coloured pencil





FANGORN FOREST

watchtower built on Tol Sirion by Felagund himself - though 'An elven watchtower had it been, / and strong it was, and still was fair'.<sup>63</sup> Nor had he completed the evolution of Nargothrond, the magnificent underground stronghold of the Noldorin Elves. At its origin in the *Tale of Turambar*, as the caves of the poverty-stricken Rodothlim, its doors were 'cunningly concealed by trees and such magics as those scattered bands that dwelt therein remembered still. Indeed at this time this place had grown to be a strong dwelling of the folk and many a fugitive swelled them, and there the ancient arts and works of the Noldoli [Noldor] came once more to life albeit in a rude and rugged fashion.'<sup>64</sup> Later, in *The Children of Hurin*, it emerged that Nargothrond was founded by Celeborn and Curufin, sons of Feanor, along the river Narog

A spuming torrent, in spate tumbling from the highest hill of the Hunters' Wold clove and crossed it; there of carven stone with slim and shapely slender archway

a bridge was builded, a bow gleaming in the froth and flashing foam of Ingwil, that headlong hurried and hissed beneath. Where it found the flood, far-journeyed Narog, there steeply stood the strong shoulders of the hills, o'erhanging the hurrying water; there shrouded in trees a sheer terrace, wide and winding, worn to smoothness, was fashioned in the face of the falling slope.

**Doors** there darkly dim gigantic were hewn in the hillside; huge their timbers, and their posts and lintels of ponderous stone.<sup>65</sup>

Later still, in *The Sketch of the Mythology*, Tolkien made Felagund and his brothers the founders of Nargo-thrond, and in spring 1928 he wrote in the *Lay of Leithian* of Beren's visit there:

... they [the Noldor] made their lair and cavernous hold  
far in the south.

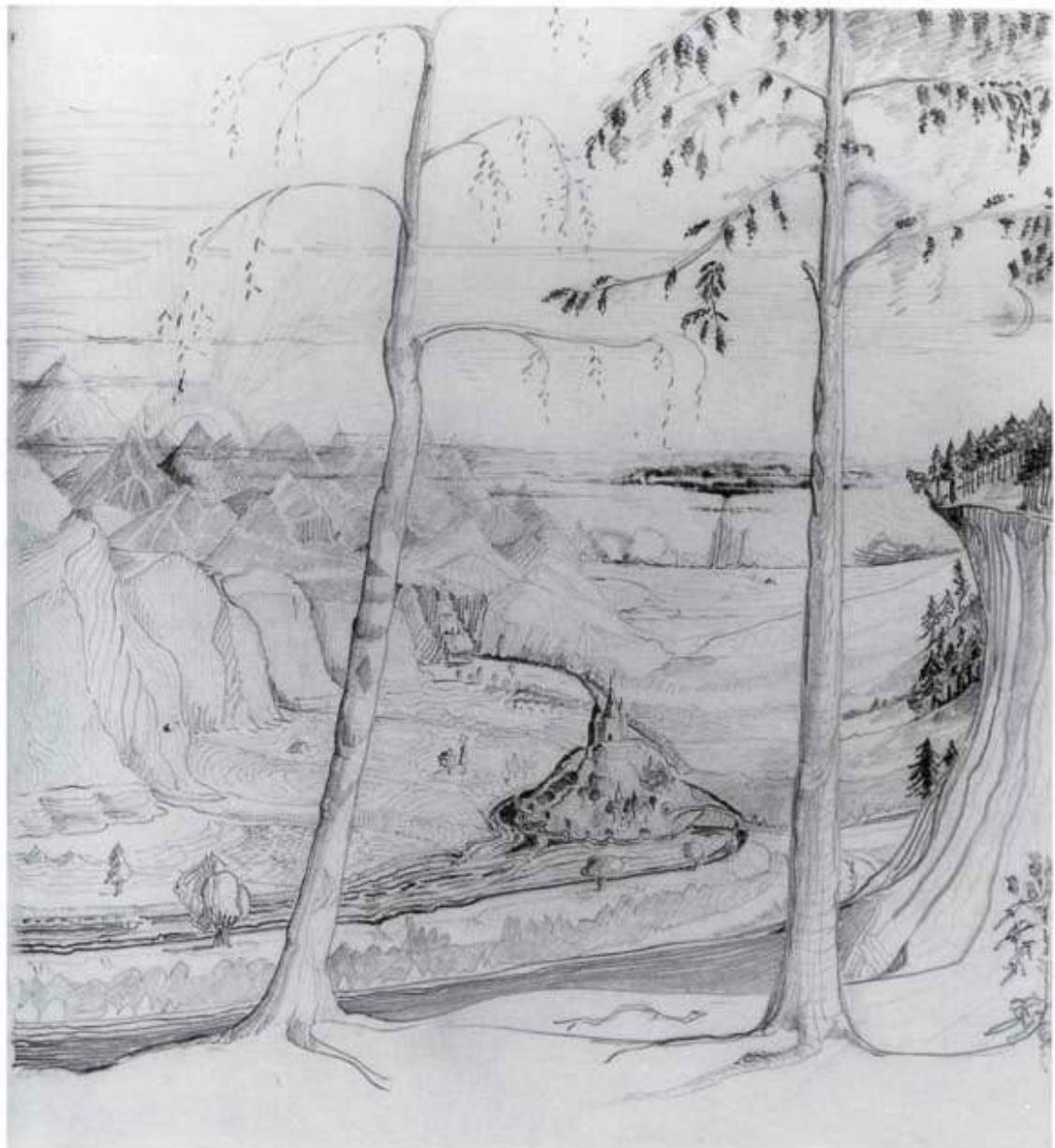
On Narog's towering bank its mouth was opened; which they  
hid and veiled, and mighty doors, that unassailed till Turin's  
day stood vast and grim, they built by trees o'ershadowed dim.

So ere he [Beren] reached the eastward shore of Narog, that doth  
foam and roar O'er boulders black, . . .

Now swiftest journey thence they made to Nargothrond's sheer terraces  
and dim gigantic palaces.

They came beneath a sickle moon to doors there darkly hung and hewn  
with posts and lintels of ponderous stone and timbers huge.<sup>66</sup>

Tolkien made three illustrations of Nargothrond -four, if one includes *Gloround*. Both the pencil version [56], drawn in Lyme Regis in July 1918, and an un-finished watercolour painted in May-July 1928 were in *The Book of Ishness*.<sup>67</sup> The ink drawing [57] was made separately; clearly it is derived from the watercolour, with further details added to complete the picture. All of these illustrations show three doors leading into the fortress, and high hills and tree-covered lower slopes above and behind. In other respects they are quite different from one another.



55  
*The Vale of Sirion*  
Pencil



56  
*Nargothrond*  
Pencil



57

*Untitled (Nargothrond)*  
Pencil, black ink

In [56] the entrances are visibly barred with the huge timbered doors described in the lays: 'Ground and grumbled on its great hinges / the door gigantic'.<sup>68</sup> They look like bunkers built into the hillside. But they do not have the great stone posts and lintels the texts call for. In both the drawing [57] and the watercolour the doorways are correctly in the form of trilithons, pi-shaped with sloping sides. However, they seem to be doorless, merely openings into the hill as in *Glorund*. Also unlike [56], in these there is little attempt at concealment. The bank in [56] is steep and rugged, and the river foams over boulders as described in the *Lay of Leithian*. The scrawny tree clinging to the bank at left is very like the overhanging tree in the second picture of Grendel's mere [51] Tolkien drew just weeks earlier. The watercolour shows three sets of steps cut into the bank, leading to the (undrawn) river. In [57] Tolkien removed the centre steps to include the bridge built by Turin in the last days of Nargothrond, in form like the 'slim and shapely slender archway' over the Ingwil. In [56] the bridge is absent, and one may assume either that the pencil version shows an earlier point in time, or that in summer 1928 Tolkien had not yet conceived of the bridge while writing *The Sketch of the Mythology*.<sup>69</sup>

Which was his final vision of Nargothrond? The arched doorways of [56] in general shape are like the entrance in *Glorund* from 1927; but the evident position of [56] in *The Book of Shness* dates it as (slightly) later than the watercolour of Nargothrond, which has doors as described in Tolkien's texts. Did he re-visualize Nargothrond but put the change only into his art, not into words? Or did he only momentarily change his mind, then return to post-and-lintel gates? The similarity of [57] to the watercolour, though the drawing was made after a pause of some eight years, suggests that this was the picture Tolkien kept in mind. But it may be that he never came to a definite conclusion about Nargothrond, like so much else in 'The Silmarillion'. In a way he was still debating the issue with himself in 1936-7 (hence the fresh drawing [57] probably made at that time) in his series of pictures, conceptually related to those of Nargothrond, for the entrance to the Elvenking's halls in *The Hobbit* [ii7-izi].<sup>70</sup>

This was often Tolkien's manner, and understandable. His mythology was a living thing, always changing and growing. But some ideas came to him early and changed little over the years. One of these was his vision of the hidden city of Gondolin, which is said in 'The

58  
Gondolin & the Vale of  
Tumladen from Cristhorn  
Pencil



'Silmarillion' to have been built in imitation of Kor (Tirion). As depicted in *Gondolin ?y the Vale of Turn-laden from Cristhorn* [58], dated September 1928, it is similar to the city in *Tanaqui* [43], especially in its tall tower and in the steep cliffs of the hill; however, thirteen years later the architecture is more symmetrical - the tower is now in the centre - and the surrounding landscape is more substantive. Gondolin is shown as described in the *Sketch of the Mythology*:

... a broad valley entirely encircled by the hills in rings ever lower as they came towards the centre. Amid this ring was a wide land without hills, except for one rocky hill that stuck up from the plain, not right in the centre, but nearest to that part of the outer wall which marched close to the edge of Sirion. . . . On the rocky hill, Amon Gwareth, the hill of watching, whose sides they polish to the smoothness of glass, and whose top they level, the great city of Gondolin with gates

of steel is built. The plain all about is levelled as flat and smooth as a lawn of clipped grass to the feet of the hills, so that nothing can creep over it unawares.<sup>71</sup>

The wide road on the plain presumably runs between the city and the Way of Escape through the Encircling Mountains, south towards Sirion. Here the pass Cristhorn (the 'Eagle's Cleft', later Cirith Thoronath) is shown to the south, as it was located originally in *The Fall of Gondolin*; but by the time of the drawing Tolkien had moved it in his texts to the mountains north of the city. Cristhorn was the means by which Tuor and Idril escaped the sack of Gondolin, and the drawing recalls how in the *Fall* they looked back as the path wound round the shoulder of the hills and had a last glimpse of the city, burning and half-destroyed. In the picture Gondolin is at its full strength, whole and magnificent.





59

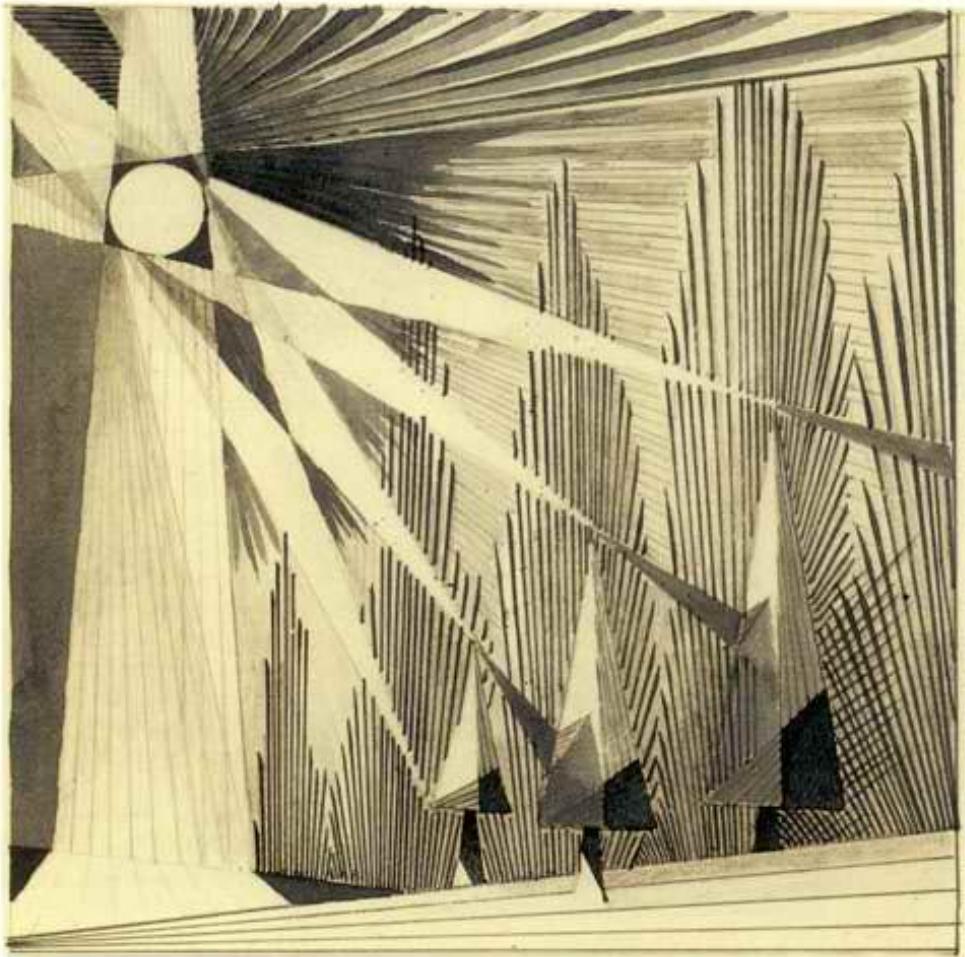
*Untitled (Three Friezes)*  
Pencil, coloured pencil



60 *The Wood at the World's End*  
Pencil, black ink, watercolour

61

*Moonlight on a Wood*  
Pencil, black ink,  
blue watercolour



Throughout most of Tolkien's art from the years 1927 and 1928, two pictorial elements predominate. One was mountains, which he drew in abundance in rugged 'Silmarillion' landscapes such as *Gondolin*. The other was trees, with which he was even more enamoured. He incorporated them not only into dramatic forest scenes such as *Taur-na-Fuin* [54], but also in quieter and more decorative pictures. Trees appear late in *The Book of Ishness*, for example, as stylized elements, with clouds, birds, waves, mountains, moons, and stars, in rhythmic friezes [59] drawn for no purpose except the joy of decoration.<sup>72</sup> Twice, apparently around this time - and never again, for it did not reflect his personality - Tolkien also drew trees in a geometric Cubist style, enhanced by the application of blue-grey wash in blocks. One such drawing, *Moonlight on*

*a "Wood* [6i], is an intriguing work with mythic resonances. It could serve as a set for a modern stage production.<sup>73</sup> Massed together, trees comprise *The Wood at the World's End* [60], its title a commingling of two by William Morris (*The Wood beyond the World* and *The Well at the World's End*). The painting may depict sunset in Valinor, the end of the world west of Middle-earth, or it may be unrelated to Tolkien's mythology; but it is an evident precursor of his dust-jacket art for *The Hobbit* [144].

Tolkien's ultimate tree, however, was the 'Tree of Amalion'.<sup>74</sup> He drew it 'regularly', he said, 'at those times when I feel driven to pattern-designing.' In its several versions it is 'elaborated and coloured and more suitable for embroidery than printing; and the tree bears besides various shapes of leaves many flowers small and





62

*The Tree of Amalion*  
Pencil, coloured pencil

large signifying poems and major legends.<sup>75</sup> In *On Fairy-Stories* he refers to the 'Tree of Tales', which the Tree of Amalion surely represents. It is also undoubtedly related to the Tree in *Leaf by Niggle*. Niggle

wanted to paint a whole tree, with all of its leaves in the same style, and all of them different.

There was one picture which bothered him. It had begun with a leaf caught in the wind, and it became a tree; and the tree grew, sending out innumerable branches, and thrusting out the most fantastic roots. Strange birds came and settled on the twigs and had to be attended to. Then all around the Tree, and behind it, through the gaps in the leaves and boughs, a country began to open out; and there were glimpses of a forest marching over the land, and of mountains tipped with snow.<sup>76</sup>

#### The 'Tree of Amalion\*' drawn in *The Book of Ishness*

[62], dated August 1928, is stylized and carefully balanced, with little variation in leaves but with a multi-tude of unrealistic, highly decorative flowers. Its ground line anchors the composition; at right, the peaks support the overgrown flower and suggest the distant hills painted by Niggle. The drawing recalls sinuous Art nouveau-inspired flora, in particular a 1923 design by C.F.A. Voysey, *The Garden of Eden*, which has a simi-lar if more expressive curving tree with leaves, fruit, and flowers simultaneously. Other examples of Tolkien's 'Tree'<sup>77</sup> by comparison, except his 1964 paperback cover drawing for *Tree and Leaf*, are less consciously designed and convey a greater sense of natural growth

1 *Tree and Leaf*, p. 57.

2 Letter to Christopher Bretherton,

16 July 1964, *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 347. In *The Notion Club Papers* (written 1945-6), which is concerned in part with dreams and other visions and their meaning, Tolkien's character Michael Ramer speaks of having had 'some very odd dreams or sleep-experi-ences: painful often, and alarming. Some were quite unpictorial, and those were the worst': dreams of Weight, Speed, Fire, Length (of time). Tolkien himself experienced at least the dream of 'pure Weight'. See *Sauron Defeated*, pp. 182, 215 (note 34).

3 *Sauron Defeated*, p. 221.

4 Torn edges on the two drawings appear to mate with each other.

5 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*,

P. 77-

6 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, p.103.

7 See below, p. 187.

8 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, pp. 66,65,58.

9 *The Lost Road and Other Writings*, p. 213.

10 See below, ch. 4, especially p. 116.

11 *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography*, p. 129.

'ishnesses' were kept is MS Tolkien Drawings 88, fol. 2; its postmark from original use, 14 January 1927, provides a terminus a quo for Tolkien's collection of the works. In their present order, the drawings are: *Silent, Enormous, @ Immense*, dated December 1911, with a sketch for the same work on the verso;

*Before*, with 'ark!' on the verso; *After-wards; Firelight Magic*, dated 1911-12, with a manuscript text on the verso repeating the word 'peppermint';

*Grownupishness*, dated summer 1913 (the season possibly added later by Tolkien), with *Someone Rise Male [and] Female* on the verso; *Wickedness*;

*Sleep*, dated 1911-12; *Thought*, dated 1912, with *Convention* on the verso;

*A Wish*, dated 1912?, with a caricatured head, dated 1911-12, on the verso;

*Xanadu*, dated 1913?; *Undertenishness*, with *Other People* on the verso dated December 1912; and *End of the World*, with *The Back of Beyond*, dated December 1912, on the verso. Queried dates were so marked by Tolkien. A drawing of a monk, with a limerick in manuscript, may also have been an 'early ishness'. Between this drawing and the others, in the present archive, is another drawing by Tolkien dated (as it appears to read) 1916, *The Day after the Day after the Day after Tomorrow*, with another version, *The Day*

13 Mr John D. Rateliff has suggested to us a parallel to *ishnesses* in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a work Tolkien knew well. In chapter 7 the Dormouse tells of three little sisters who 'drew all manner of things - everything that begins with an M ... such as mouse-traps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness - you know you say things are "much of a much-ness" - did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness!'

14 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, p. 232. The drawing unfortunately has suffered from being folded across the middle.

15 A Winsor & Newton 'Sketchers' Notebook, Series 33', with 80 leaves, 278 x 215 mm.

16 The order described here was deter-mined by dates inscribed on some of the art, by the order of the artwork in a photograph sequence made before 'the sketch-book was taken apart for archival storage, and by paper evidence such as tear patterns and offsetting. Some leaves are missing, presumably torn out by Tolkien, and cannot be accounted for; others removed by Tolkien, for example *Taur-na-Fuin* [54] and four illustrations for the story *Roverandom* [73-76], were kept by him separate from the book. Some of the art was drawn on separate leaves and pasted in, but is contemporary with the sketch-book proper. We have assumed that the pages were used sequentially, an assumption not contra-dicted by inscribed dates or other evidence.

12 The 'earliest ishnesses' comprised, it seems, at least those drawings now preserved as fols. 3-16 in Bodleian Library MS Tolkien Drawings 88. All are of the same period: the earliest date inscribed on one of the drawings is December 1911, the latest summer 1913. The envelope in which the

*after the Day after Tomorrow*, on the verso together with *Wrenching a Slow Reluctant Truth*. This sheet, though apparently late in comparison, may have been in the 'ishness' envelope as well.

17 Tolkien later dated the views '213' and

'1913?' respectively.

18 It is dangerous to look for too much in Tolkien's art that prefigures his 'Silmarillion' mythology; yet the narrow road in *Beyond* rising into the air and running to the distant peaks brings to mind the Olore Malle, the Path of Dreams in *The Book of Lost Tales*, a slender bridge 'resting on the air and greyly gleaming as it were of silken mists lit by a thin moon, or of pearly vapours' (*The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, p. 211).

19 *Eeriness* falls in *The Book of Ishness* between the 'Northern house' and *Beyond*, both of which are precisely dated. Two other drawings also may be placed there, *An Osity and Childhood Memories of My Grandmother's House*, both undated; but two leaves of that section, from the centre of the signature, are not extant.

20 The additional drawings were *There;*

*Here; Everywhere; breaking waves;*

*Tarantella; and a five-sided figure.*

21 Quoted in R.R. Tolkien: *A Biography*,

p. 59.

22 Translation by W.H. Kirby (Everyman ed., first published 1907), runo 47, 49.

23 *Thror's Map* as proposed by Tolkien for *The Hobbit* was to have a 'special effect', but not mechanical **in the same** way; see below, p. 93.

24 Quoted from the manuscript of the March 1915 version; cf. *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, p. 2.16.

25 When, in his letter to Christopher

Bretherton of 16 July 1964 (*Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 347) Tolkien wrote of his recurring dream of the 'ineluctable Wave', he recalled that he 'used to draw it or write had poems about it'. He may have been remembering *Water, Wind Cy Sand* and its related (in fact, quite impressive) poem at long remove;

or the drawing of waves in *The Book of Ishness* (see note 20, above).

26 *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, p. 215. In the sketch-book *Water, Wind & Sand* immediately followed *The Land of Pohja*, dated 27 December 1914, and with *Tanaqui* [43] preceded *The Shores of Faery*, dated 10 May 1915.

27 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, p. 68.

28 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, p. 136.

29 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, p. 122.

30 Tolkien later wrote dates of composition on two of the four versions of the poem, '8-9 July 1915' and 'July 1915'. The date on the painting suggests that the poem in fact was written some two months earlier than Tolkien recalled. See *The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two*, p. 271.

31 In lines 1-2 of the manuscript 'East' and 'West' are added above the original 'West' and 'East', but the original words are not crossed out. In line 23 'West' and 'East' are written over the original words 'East' and 'West'. 'East of the Moon/West of the Sun' is a variation on 'East of the Sun and West of the Moon', the title of a Norwegian fairy-story included in Dasent's *Popular Tales from the Norse* (1859), to which Tolkien refers in *On Fairy-Stories*.

32 The first four lines of this quotation, and the words quoted immediately above, are from the first finished text of the poem, 'A Faerie: Why the Man in the Moon Came Down Too Soon', referred to in *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, p. 204.

33 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, pp. 192-3.

34 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, p. 192.

35 Three are undated, the first two pasted in: *London to Oxford through Berk-shire*, a landscape of pollarded trees, or else (despite the title) a memory of wasted No Man's Land in First World War France; another (imaginary?) landscape, weirdly coloured, with a tunnel or covered bridge; and an inexplicable collection of penciled geometric shapes inscribed with the names of various colours and of teas and coffees. The picture of John at Filey is dated 1922.

36 *Golden Cap from Langmoor Gardens Lyme Regis*, dated 10 September 1927;

*Boats, Lyme Regis, September 1927;*

*Oh to be in Oxford* [25], September 1927; and *Tumble Hill* [27], August 1928, all in the sketch-book. A leaf is missing before or after *Golden Cap*.

37 See above, p. 30.

38 See *The Sketch of the Mythology*, p. 22, and the *Quenta*, p. 101, in *The Shaping of Middle-earth*.

39 Prose fragments written after the *Lost Tales*, in *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, pp. 4, 7.

40 A thumbnail sketch for *Mithrim* is on the verso of the 1922 drawing of John at Filey, but is probably contemporary with *Mithrim*.

41 *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, p. 22.

42 See the prose fragments written after the *Lost Tales*, p. 7, and the earliest annals of Beleriand, p. 304, in *The Shaping of Middle-earth*.

43 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two*, p. 84.

44 In *The Book of Lost Tales* the dragon is named *Glorund*. The name first appeared with an accent in the title *Glorund Sets Forth to Seek Turin*, several months before it appeared in that form in a text. Later it became *Glauring*, as used in the published *Silmarillion*. The painting was first reproduced in *The Silmarillion Calendar* 1978 (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977) with the dragon's name relettered to *Glauring* by Christopher Tolkien in his father's Anglo-Saxon script.

45 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two*, p. 103.

46 Tolkien's depiction of *Glorund* is

remarkably similar to a creature illus-trated in *Dragons* by Peter J. Hogarth with Val Clery (London: Alien **Lane**;

New York: Viking, 1979), p. 25. Both dragons have a frontally drawn head with projecting tongue, clawed legs, and a segmented body. The drawing in Hogarth seems to be from a 16th- or 17th-century manuscript on Aztec culture; unfortunately, the picture acknowledgements in *Dragons* are muddled, and the manuscript cannot be traced.

47 *Tree and Leaf*, p. 40.

48 Besides the 'coiled dragon' and 'dragon and warrior' mentioned below, Tolkien drew in the sketch-book a picture of a garden shed and tools, in which a hose turns into a dragon; and the *Roveran-dom* illustration *The White Dragon* [75]. In addition, the picture of a dragon coiled around a tree (see note 51) and one of an interlaced dragon (or snake) were made on separate sheets but laid into the sketch-book. Also in this section of *The Book of Ishness* were three other illustrations for Tolkien's children's story *Roverandom* [73a-c] 74,

76], from 1927-8; a page of black and red ink patterns; and three small fantasy sketches [77] on one page. Five or six leaves from this gathering have been lost.

61 *The Lays of Beleriand*, pp. 226-7.

49 The lines from *Beowulf* in Modern English are from the manuscript of Tolkien's unpublished translation, in the Bodleian Library.

50 The manuscript of the lecture is in the Bodleian Library.

51 See *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, no. 40 (lower left).

52 His British Academy lecture *Beowulf*:

*The Monsters and the Critics*, 1936, which revolutionized *Beowulf* studies, and his prefatory remarks to C.L. Wrenn's revision of *Beowulf and the Finnesburg Fragment: A Translation into Modern Verse* by John R. dark Hall (Alien & Unwin, 1940).

53 Curiously, [50] and [51] are dated 'Vivas July 1928', which raises the question whether Tolkien drew during these examinations, while other members of the usual panel of three were asking questions, or during the examination of his own students, when he would either have left the room or, staying, would not have taken an active part.

54 Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (London: John Murray, 1949), pp. 36-8.

55 On the sheet the title *Taniquetil (Tim-brening)* is partially erased. The Old English form *Timbrening* ties in with the first appearance of that name in *The Sketch of the Mythology*, 1926.

56 *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, p. 236.

57 *The Lays of Beleriand*, p. 35.

58 *The Lays of Beleriand*, p. 34.

59 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two*, p. 78.

60 On the back of the sheet was written, probably at the same time, Tangorn or Entwood'. The painting originally was on a larger sheet, with titling above ('Taur-na-Fuin') and below ('from the Tale of Turin Beleg finds Flinding in Taur-na-Fuin (July 1928)'); later the image was cut from the sheet, but the remnants of titling were preserved.

62 *The Lays of Beleriand*, p. 227. Later Tolkien moved Thangorodrim farther away from Tol Sirion; the version of the drawing coloured by H.E. Riddett (*Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, no. 36) was altered to show the greater distance. The caption on the drawing reads in full: 'The Vale of Sirion, looking upon Dor-na-Fauglith, with Eryd Lomin (the Shadowy Mountains) on the left and the eaves of Taur-na-Fuin on the right.' This is the first appearance of the name *Eryd Lomin* (*Eryd-Lomin*), preceding its use in a text, and 'shadowy moun-tains' was its original meaning; see *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, p. 192 and second footnote.

(in correspondence with the authors) believes is from the period July-August 1915.

63 *The Lays of Beleriand*, p. 227.

64 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two*, p. 81.

65 *The Lays of Beleriand*, pp. 67-8.

66 *The Lays of Beleriand*, pp. 213-15.

67 In *The Book of Ishness* the pencil

version [56] was bound between *Taur-na-Fuin* [54] and *The Vale of Sirion* [55], both dated July 1928. The water-colour (see *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, no. 33, where it is much enlarged) followed the 'dragon and warrior' drawing [49] dated May 1928 and preceded *Taur-na-Fuin*.

68 *The Children of Hurin*, in *The Lays of Beleriand*, p. 68.

69 *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, p. 32, notes i, 5.

70 See below, pp. 126-7.

71 *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, p. 34.

72 The friezes [59] fall between *The Vale of Sirion* (July 1928) and the Tree of Amalion (August 1918) in *The Book of Ishness*. The latest date in the book is August 1928 [*Tumble Hill* and the 'Tree of Amalion' [62]), but there are two undated drawings made on later pages (a set of four, different friezes, and a tree labelled in tengwar 'aid orne'). Most of the final leaves of *The Book of Ishness* are blank, a few are not extant. Tolkien also used the sketch-book, starting from the back, to write a poem. *The Trumpets of Faery*, which Christopher Tolkien

reproduced in *J.R.R. Tolkien: Life and Legend*, p. [5]. Neither is dated, and it is only an educated guess to place them with other work from the late 1920s (where indeed they were placed in the archive of Tolkien art given to the Bodleian Library, accompanying but not part of *The Book of Ishness* sequence). But they seem to belong to that period, if one may judge by the level of artistic skill displayed, and by a degree of stylistic similarity between the drawings and the second of two sets of friezes in *The Book of Ishness*.

74 According to Mr Carl F. Hostetter, on the basis of a manuscript fragment by Tolkien, the name *Amalion* derives from Quenya *amalya*, 'rich, blessed', from *amal*, 'riches, blessing, bliss, good fortune', related to a later form, *alam*, with the same meaning, and also *alam* 'elm-tree' as in *The Etymologies (The Lost Road and Other Writings*, p. 348).

75 Letter to Rayner Unwin, 23 December 1963, *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 342. Tolkien had been asked to provide a tree to illustrate the British paperback cover of his *Tree and Leaf*.

76 *Tree and Leaf*, pp. 75-6.

77 See also *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, no. 41 (colour plate, lower left). Another 'Tree of Amalion', with a bird perched in its branches, was laid into *The Book of Ishness*; see *Pictures*, no. 42 (centre), or *J.R.R. Tolkien: Life and Legend*, p. 77. Tolkien's cover art for *Tree and Leaf* is also reproduced in *Pictures*, no. 41.

1932



A MERRY CHRISTMAS

NC

63 1932 *A Merry Christmas*

Pencil, black ink, coloured ink, watercolour

### 3 Art for Children

Tolkien's imagination seems to have been without bounds, so wide and deep that creating a work as complex as 'The Silmarillion' could not exhaust it. It was also a well-spring of tales to entertain his children:

John, born in 1917; Michael, in 1920; Christopher, in 1924; and Priscilla, in 1929. The stories he told them were simpler than his *legendarium* (though by no means simple), usually humorous, and full of incident, designed to catch and hold a child's attention. They succeeded so well, told extempore, that Tolkien wrote some of them down, and for some he also made illustrations. On occasion, elements from his mythology crept in, but for the most part these stories were inspired by his children's toys and interests and by events in their lives.

The earliest and longest in composition, and unique in that from the start it was (necessarily) written down, was the body of correspondence by 'Father Christmas'. It began just before the holiday in 1920, when three-year-old John received an unusual letter in the post:

Dear John, I heard you ask daddy what I was like 8c where I lived. I have drawn ME 8c My House for you. Take care of the picture. I am just off now for Oxford with my bundle of toys - some for you. Hope I shall arrive in time: the snow is very thick at the NORTH POLE tonight.

It appeared to have been sent by Father Christmas him-self, and was the start of a tradition in the Tolkien family. More such letters arrived late every year until 1943,<sup>2</sup> when Priscilla was fourteen. In each 'Father Christmas' told the children of humdrum, comical, or alarming events at the North Pole, and enclosed one or more illustrations. Many of the letters related the adventures (usually misadventures) of Karhu, the North Polar Bear, Father Christmas's chief assistant, who was accident-prone. In time the letters' cast of characters grew to include Polar Bear's nephews Paksu and Valkotukka, and a host of Cave-bears, Snow-men, Red Gnomes, and **Red and Green Elves**. Also the letters became longer and more elaborate as the North Pole was repeatedly attacked by goblins, who 'are to us very much what rats are to you, only worse'. The emphasis on bears reflected the love all of the children, but especially Priscilla, had for their stuffed toys. Some of the events described, such as Polar Bear's overflowing bath in 1936, were inspired

by occurrences in the Tolkien household. Towards the end, the letters reflected and even referred openly to threatening news in the real world and the effects of the Second World War.

To make the letters seem really to have come from Father Christmas and his helpers, Tolkien 'authentic-ated' his fiction - as he was later to do also in *Mr. Bliss*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*. Each character who 'wrote' the letters did so in a distinctive script. Father Christmas, who was over 1,900 years old, had a very shaky hand. Polar Bear began by writing with his 'fat paw', producing thick letters, but later was more proficient and wrote in 'Arktik' characters, angular and rune-like. Ilbereth, an elf who became secretary to Father Christmas, had a flowing 'secretarial' hand. Often letters written by one character had comments in the margins by others, distinguished by their different handwriting. Father Christmas drew most of the pictures, but Polar Bear and Ilbereth also contributed, in their own styles. Occasionally Father Christmas blamed a smudge or error in his art on Polar Bear having jogged his elbow. The envelopes in which the letters came were addressed with a variety of coloured inks or pencils, and as a finishing touch bore specially painted North Pole 'stamps', make-believe postmarks, and inscriptions urging speedy delivery. A typical 'Father Christmas' envelope [65], sent with a letter to John in 1924, shows that Father Christmas's handwriting could be decorative as well as distinctive. Here it is enhanced by the use of red ink. 'NP' in the postmark and on the stamp stands for 'North Pole', the 'X' probably for 'express'. The stamp depicts the North Pole itself - literally a pole, though shaped like a giant stalagmite - and behind it, the Aurora Borealis, which was to be the major element in the 1926 letter and illustration. The Pole recalls the 'Silmarillion' drawing *Tanaqui* [43], and the blaze of light is similar to the breaking waves in *Water, Wind & Sand* [42].

The 'Father Christmas' illustrations included many details for the children to pore over and compare with the written description of events. Amusing figures, often in scenes of action, and bright colours, variously in ink, watercolour, or coloured pencil, also appealed to Tolkiens young audience. Viewed as a series, these pictures show his increasing proficiency in art and design;

the best, however, are those from the late 1920s and early 1930s, when he was also making outstanding pictures for his mythology and for his story of Roverandom.<sup>3</sup> Later, when he seems to have had less time to play Father Christmas, his illustrations became simpler, probably done in a hurry, and he apologized for them, explaining (in character) that due to various disasters at the North Pole he could not spend much time drawing. The double illustration [64] sent with the first letter to John in 1920 began the series on a high note. It is a detailed and sensitive portrait of Father Christmas, in which Tolkien suggests wind and bitter cold by the

beard and coat blown forward in the same direction as the falling snow, by Father Christmas's reddened cheek and nose, and by the icy snow adhering to his boots. The red of the coat and hood in the upper painting is echoed by the light shining from the lamps and windows in the lower picture, while the calm night sky below reinforces by contrast the snowstorm above. For the picture of Father Christmas's round house under a full moon, Tolkien adapted the Northern scene he had drawn six years earlier [38], except with narrow pointed 'poles' in place of some of the trees - again *Tanaqui* comes to mind, and also the icy lunar 'masts' in *The*



64

*Me and My House*

Pencil, black ink, watercolour,  
white body colour, silver powder

MY HOUSE



Pencil, black ink, watercolour,  
white body colour, silver powder

65  
'Father Christmas' envelope, 1924  
Pencil, black and red ink,  
watercolour



*Man in the Moon* [45]. In 1915 Father Christmas's house was wrecked in one of Polar Bear's accidents and a similar but more splendid version built on top of a cliff.<sup>4</sup>

One of the pictures sent in 1931 [66] was 'by' Polar Bear. Father Christmas explains at the bottom: 'This is all drawn by N.P.B. [North Polar Bear]. Don't you think he is getting better. But the green ink is mine - & he didn't ask for it.' The two personalities are well distinguished by the two styles of writing. The lumpy self-portrait is what one might expect from Polar Bear, but the drawing of the sun behind mountains is not. It is strikingly stylized and carefully built up with numerous lines, dashes, and dots - Karhu was clearly a talented bear, in his quiet moments. Among the 'Father Christ-mas' art this drawing is most like the North Pole stamps - more decorative than illustrative - only larger and more ambitious; but the 'icicles' or frost effect may be found in several of the pictures. Among Tolkien's art in general, it looks both forward and back. The clouds are a more elaborate version of those he drew in his 1910 picture of Whitby Abbey [10], and prefigure skies and smokes in some of his *Hobbit* drawings of 1936-7 [119, 127, 134]. The sun's rays drawn with the absence of line appeared again in the *Hobbit* illustration *The Three Trolls are Turned to Stone* [100]. Earlier, in 1928, Tol-kien had included a similar rayed sun rising above hills

in *The Wood at the World's End* [60]; this is like Polar Bear's drawing also in its colour scheme, predominantly red and green.

The most beautiful and interesting art in the 'Father Christmas' series [63] accompanied the letter for 1932. Tolkien, though ever self-critical, must himself have been pleased with it, for Father Christmas wrote: 'I have tried to draw you some specially nice pictures this year.' The four on one sheet are arranged in tiers like minia-tures in some illuminated manuscripts, and like some of the earlier 'Father Christmas' pictures. Each illustrates an individual episode, and together with the border, the tiers form one unified design. The black ink and restrained decoration of the date at the top suit the dark colours of the art immediately below, and the line of curls echoes the clouds. The night scene is also comple-mented in the margins by a moon, comet, and stars. At the bottom, brightly coloured and more elaborate letter-ing and decorations reflect the merrymaking of the party immediately above.

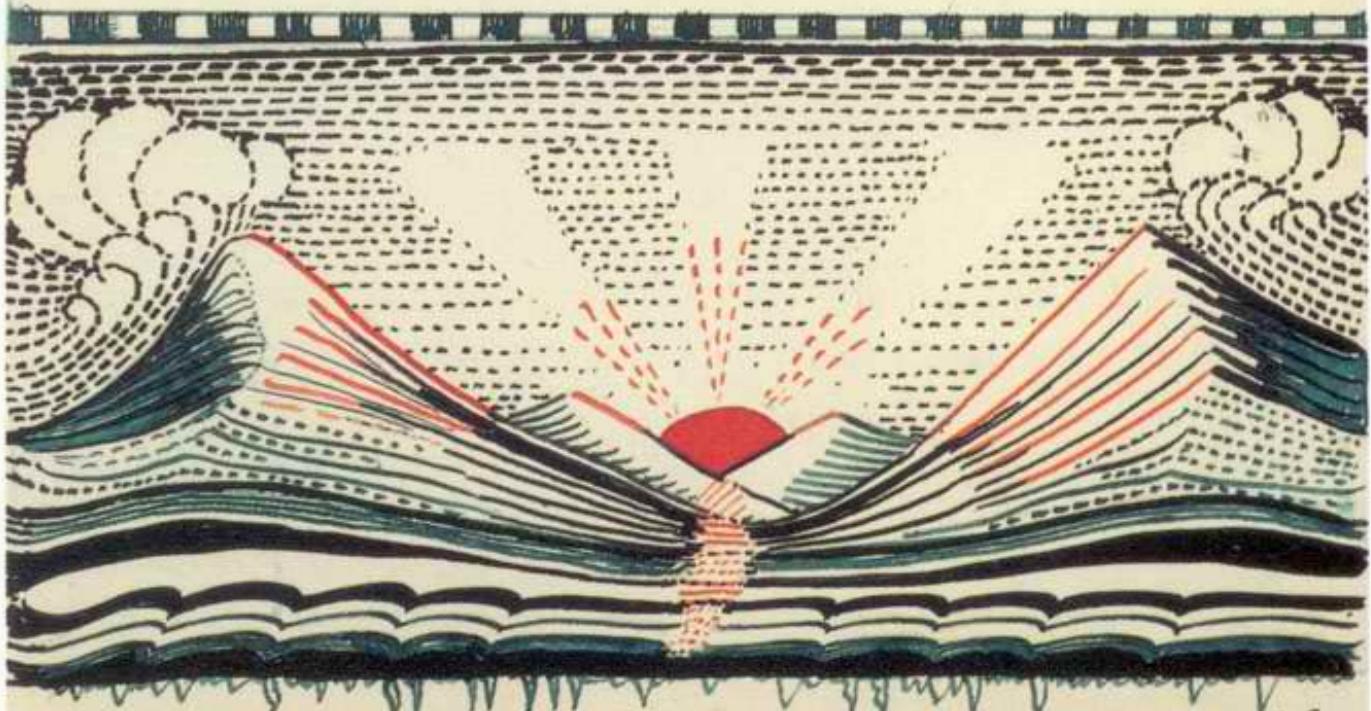
The scene at the top shows the towers and domes of Oxford silhouetted against a night sky, with Father Christmas flying in from the north. He points out in the accompanying letter that his sleigh is drawn by seven pair of reindeer as well as a special white pair he adds when he is in a hurry. 'Your house', he tells the children, 'is just about where the three little black points stick up

1031

N.P.B.

132

KARHU



LOVE FROM KARHV, PAKSV, AND VALKOTUVKKA .

V

~~~~ This is all drawn by N.P.B. Don't you  
think he's getting better. But the green  
ink is mine — & he didn't ask for it.

in mine — he didn't ask for it.

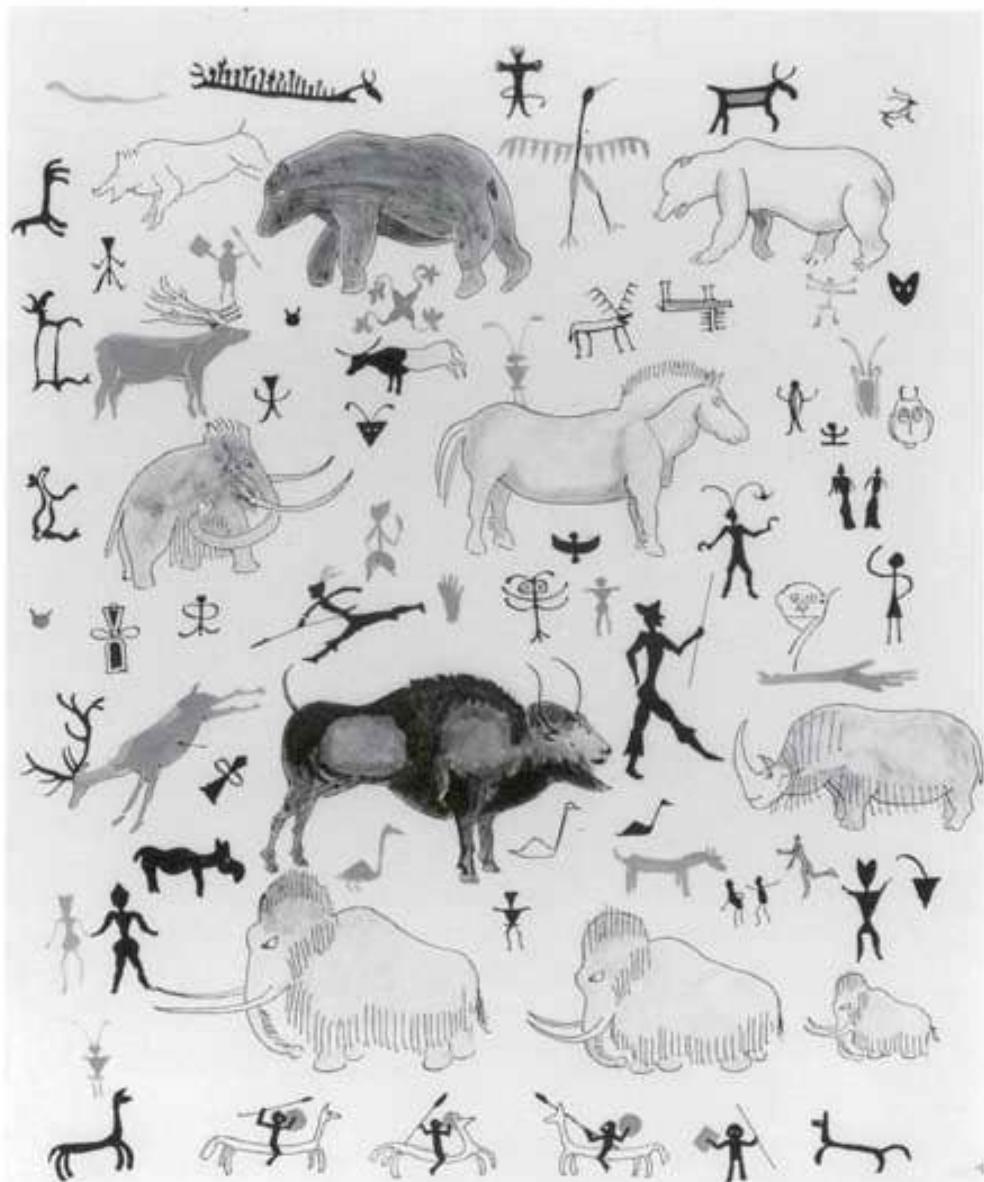
66 1931-32 N.P.B. Karhu

Pencil, black, red, and green ink

out of the shadows at the right.' The Oxford skyline is viewed from the east, probably based on a photograph Tolkien had at hand for reference. The tower and spire in the foreground, left of centre, belong to the University Church, St Mary's, in High Street. To its left, further along High Street, is the tower of the early eighteenth-century church of All Saints, which also appears in Tolkien's view of the Turl [19]. In the centre is the dome of the Radcliffe Camera, which houses part of the Bodleian Library. To the right of this are the tops of the twin towers of All Souls College. Not without reason is Oxford known as the 'city of dreaming spires'.

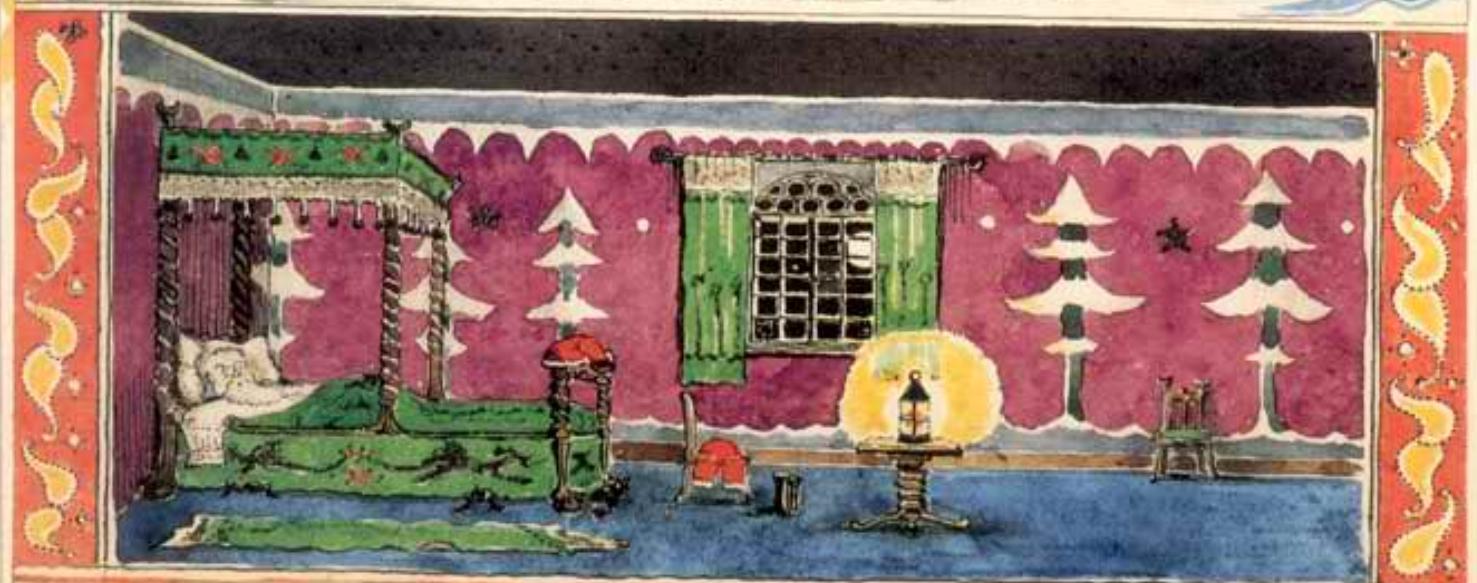
Next in order in the illustrations are two polar scenes. Above ground, it appears to be evening, with an

especially bright star shining in the centre. At right is the North Pole under the constellation of the Little Bear. Below ground (as the letter explains) are the caves in which Polar Bear was lost and threatened by goblins. Father Christmas, Polar Bear, and Cave-Bear are shown discovering paintings that adorned the cave walls. A few goblins are lurking: their arrival at the North Pole in 1932 probably was due to their 'success' in *The Hobbit*, which was first told to the Tolkien children around 1930 and later written down; but only in the 'Father Christmas' letters are goblins illustrated. Cave-Bear is drawn more realistically than Polar Bear, who had acquired his own thin, elongated iconography over the years.



Pencil, black, red, and brown ink

PEACE F.C. PEACE



Christmas 1933

The bottom picture illustrates the party Father Christmas held each St Stephen's Day, when the holiday rush was over. It shows Father Christmas, Polar Bear, Paksu and Valkotukka, Cave-Bear's grandchildren, Snow-babies, and Red Gnome children dancing. The first initial of the signature 'NC' stands for Father Christmas's given name, Nicholas, revealed in the letter for 1930.

Tolkien or his children must have become interested in cave paintings, for Father Christmas described those he found in great detail, and even 'copied' many of them on a separate sheet [67]. 'The walls of these caves', he wrote,

are all covered with pictures, cut into the rock or painted on in red and brown and black. Some of them are very good (mostly of animals) & some are queer, & some bad; & there are many strange marks, signs & scribbles, some of which have a nasty look. . . . Many of the pictures were done by these cave-men -the best ones, especially the big ones (almost life-size) of animals, some of which have since disappeared: there are *dragons* and quite a lot of mammoths. Men also put some of the black marks & pictures there; but the goblins have scribbled all over the place. . . . At the bottom of the page you will see a whole row of goblin pictures . . . goblin fighters are sitting on *drasils*: a very queer sort of dwarf 'dachs-hund' horse creature, they used to use. . . . Doesn't the hairy rhinoceros look wicked?; there is also a nasty look in the mammoths' eyes.



68 (opposite)  
*Christmas 1933*  
Pencil, black and red ink,  
watercolour

69 (right)  
*Rhyme*, first page  
Black and red ink, coloured pencil

Tolkien had his tongue in his cheek when he suggested that some of the paintings are Goblin graffiti. Almost all of them are based on real cave art. Tolkien probably copied the painted animals from *The Art of the Cave Dweller* by Baldwin Brown (1928, reprinted in 1932), where they appear just as in Tolkien's drawing, even to the expression in the eye of the Woolly Rhinoceros from Colombiere, Ain. Sources can be found also for stylized drawings such as the 'goblins on *drasils*', which seem to come from northern Sweden, and the striding figure between the bison and the rhinoceros, which is based on Iberian rock paintings.

Tolkien drew another tiered series of illustrations in 1933 [68], but did not think them as good as those from 1932. 'T don't think my pictures are very good this year', Father Christmas wrote, 'though I took quite a time over them (at least two minutes).' Of course Father Christmas can magically accomplish much in a short time, as he does every Christmas Eve, so the remark has a different meaning for character and author. The composition of the art is less well balanced than that of the previous year, with intensely-coloured upper panels resting heavily upon a light-coloured foundation. In an odd reversal, the panels read from bottom to top. The story begins with Father Christmas woken by goblins

lurking under his bed and riding on bats outside his window. The decor of his bedroom is fantastic, purple and green, with tree, star, and frost patterns on the wall and dragons adorning the bedclothes. The bed itself, with two posts placed halfway along the length rather than at the foot, and a truncated canopy above, is of a design not to be found in the real world. Father Christ-mas rushes downstairs to his storerooms to find, as shown in the upper scene, vast numbers of Goblin invaders, and Polar Bear 'squeezing, squashing, trampling, boxing and kicking goblins sky high & roaring like a zoo'. In the drawing Polar Bear seems to have grown to enormous size - a change inspired, perhaps, by the account in *The Hobbit*, written by December 1933<sup>5</sup> of Beorn's appearance as a gigantic bear in the Battle of Five Armies. The elves in their pointed caps are similar to those in *Halls of Manwe* [52] for 'The Silmarillion' and in the *Hobbit* picture *Lake Town* [127].

In 1938 Priscilla was the only member of the Tolkien family still young enough to receive a letter from Father Christmas. He apologized that year that he had not had the time to draw a large picture, but sent a rhyme instead [69]. This must have taken a long time to craft even so, as the poem has ornamental initial letters and marginal decorations modelled after medieval manu-



70

*A Merry Christmas 1940*

*A Happy New Year 1941*

Pencil, coloured pencil, black ink

71  
*A Shop on the Edge of the Hills of Fairy Land*  
Watercolour, black ink,  
white body colour



scripts, and is annotated in their distinctive styles by the various members of Father Christmas's household. Most of the rhyme is in the hand of Father Christmas, but in places Ilbereth penned a few lines, more elegantly and in red ink. Blots made by Pakku and Valkotukka have been worked into bear shapes.

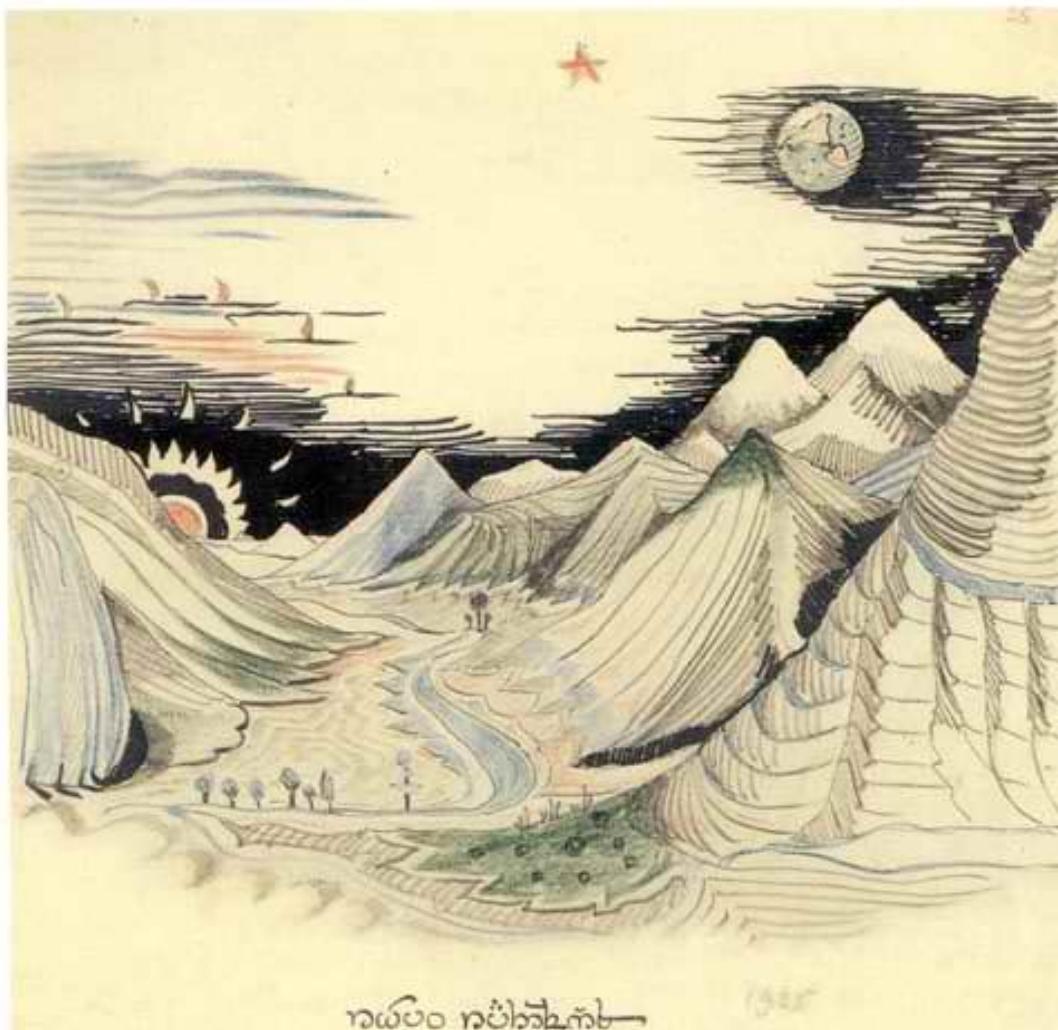
The illustration sent to Priscilla in 1940 [70] is unusual in that it is a more realistic depiction of Polar Bear. Although the picture of him dancing with pen-guins is humorous and not a little cartoonish, all of the figures have a solidity and naturalism that lead one to suspect that Tolkien adapted illustrations from a book or magazine. The accompanying letter tells that the penguins travelled to the North Pole to assist after they heard that Father Christmas had been captured by goblins. They were not of much help, but amused the North Pole residents with dancing games and by imitating Polar Bear's walk, as they seem to be doing in the picture.

Apart from the 'Father Christmas' letters, *The Orgog* seems to have been

fantastic landscape. The watercolour *A Shop on the Edge of the Hills of Fairy Land* [71] is inscribed (years after the events): 'Drawn for John, Darnley Road, Leeds 1924. Torn up by Christopher] accidentally Sept 1936.' Tolkien repaired the painting, but the damage is still visible, especially in the lines of the shop at centre. The word 'Gogs' on the side of the shop offering 'Fruit for Gift' suggests that the drawing is connected with *The Orgog*, though there is no mention of a shop like this in the (unfinished) typescript preserved. Both the drawing and the story, however, date from Tolkien's time at Leeds, and both include blue mountains and an orange sun. The garden and landscape are roughly drawn, but for the shop Tolkien individually placed each tile and stone. The pink glow behind the sun is similar to some of the effects in the 'Father Christmas' illustrations and in the earliest 'Silmarillion' paintings. It looks out of place in this naturalistic setting, though perhaps Tolkien intended a fairy-story atmosphere.

In 1925, while the Tolkiens were on holiday at Filey on the coast of Yorkshire, Michael, who was not quite five, lost his beloved little lead dog on the beach. To comfort him and to explain why his toy could not be

the first of Tolkien's children's stories to have had an illustration. It is a strange, convoluted tale of an odd creature travelling through a



72

*Lunar Landscape*

Pencil, coloured pencil, black ink

found, Tolkien invented *Roverandom*, a story about a real dog, Rover, who annoys a wizard and is turned into a toy. When Rover the toy is lost on a beach by a small boy, a sand-sorcerer sends him to the Moon on the back of a gull along the path of light the Moon makes when it shines over the sea. The Man in the Moon renames him Roverandom, to distinguish him from the Man's own dog, also named Rover, and gives both dogs wings.

The popularity of *Roverandom* with his children, and surely its appeal to the author himself, led Tolkien to write the story down and to make at least five illustrations. One drawing almost certainly made for *Roverandom* [72] is inscribed 'lunar landscape' in a very early form of Tolkien's invented Elvish script *tengwar*.<sup>6</sup> The globe in the sky is clearly the Earth, with the Americas visible. As in so many of Tolkien's drawings, there is one large star in the sky (at top centre), and the Sun is rising or setting

the Earth's surface, including a river, but the unusual colours of the rocks, the blue trees, and the stylized treatment show that this is indeed another world. Tol-kien did not aim for scientific accuracy, but drew according to the needs of his text: '... the moon was all laid out below them, a new white world shining like snow, with wide spaces of pale blue and green where the tall pointed mountains threw their long shadows far across the floor'.<sup>7</sup> In his explorations Roverandom finds that trees on the Moon do indeed have pale blue leaves. The picture seems most closely related to a scene after Roverandom and the Man in the Moon have returned from a trip to the dark side: '... they looked past the cinder valleys where many of the dragons lived, through a gap in the mountains to the great white plain, and the shining cliffs. They saw the world rise, a pale green and gold moon, huge and round above the shoulders of the Lunar Mountains.'

behind mountains. Here the Sun resembles the aurora borealis in the 'Father Christmas' art, and is casting a pink warmth upon the peaks and slopes opposite. The landscape has features similar to

The attractive watercolour *House Where 'Rover' Began His Adventures as a Toy* [73] presumably depicts Rover's first home, where he was turned into a



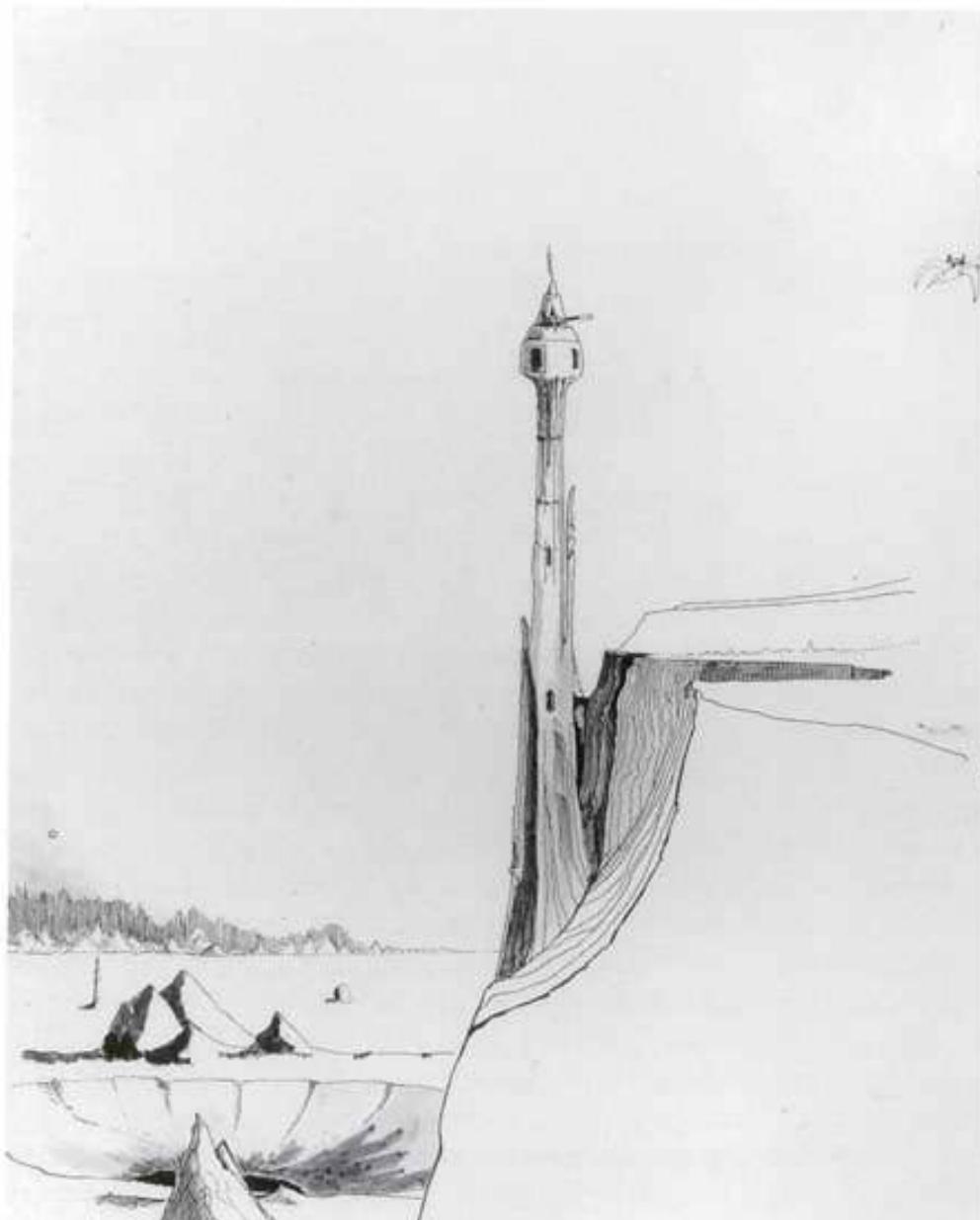
73 *House Where 'Rover' Began His Adventures as a 'Toy'*

Pencil, watercolour, black ink

toy dog, but before his encounter with the wizard, as Rover can be seen at bottom left, white with black ears, walking with pigs. The gull flying overhead and the glimpse of the sea may look forward to Rover's later adventures. It is surprising to see a squirrel walking behind the farmer, and even more surprising that it should be so out of scale with the rest of the figures. The animals may have been put in at the Tolkien children's request, or because Tolkien knew of their interest (one of the presents that Father Christmas brought a few months later was a toy farm and livestock). The miniature of a woman scattering feed to hens is beautifully drawn. The trees are almost identical to those in the contemporaneous *Glorund Sets forth to Seek Turin* [47], while the buildings, haystacks, and

dovecote anticipate elements in some of the *Hobbit* pictures Tolkien made a decade later [97-98, io6].

Like his precursors in the 'Silmarillion' mythology, the Man in the Moon in *Roverandom* lives in a 'min-aret', described as a white tower on the edge of a white precipice, on the top of one of the tallest mountains of the Moon; and like the traditional wizard, he has a pointed hat and jutting beard. In the drawing [74] he is at the top of his tower looking through a telescope, watching Rover arriving on the Moon on the back of Mew, the gull. The barren landscape at left, with a large crater and scattered rocks, very unlike the living land shown in [72], resembles the real Moon's surface. Tol-kien describes a similar view seen by the two dogs when, exploring far from the tower, they wander close to the



74  
*Untitled (Rover Arrives on the Moon)*  
Pencil, black ink.



75  
*The White Dragon Pursues Roverandom & the Moondog*  
Pencil, black ink



dark side: 'tall mountains rising right before them, silent bare and ominous. . . . They were grey, not white, and looked as if they were made of old cold ashes; and long dim valleys lay among them, without a sign of life.'

While the dogs are exploring that distant region, snow begins to fall. They become wet and cold, and seek shelter in an enormous cave. Unfortunately, it is the home of the Great White Dragon, green-eyed and with wings 'like the sails that ships had when they were still ships and not steam-engines'. Roverandom and the Moondog feel its heat and flee just in time, as shown in [75]. The mountains are steeper than those Tolkien usually drew, and are not entirely successful. Though heavily modelled, they seem two-dimensional; only the bend of the dragon's tail around one peak, and its shadow on the central mountain, provide any sense of depth. Giant spiders and dragon-moths, as seen just above the title, are among the lunar fauna described in *Roverandom*. Again, the Americas can be seen on a full Earth. Tolkien mined this drawing for elements - the dragon, the spider, the mountainous landscape - when

making his *Hobbit* illustrations [87-88, no-in, 134-136], and he showed it in his 1938 lecture on dragons:

'This one I had to get from the Moon - a refuge of dragons ... it is I think a Saxon White Dragon that escaped from the Welsh border a long while ago.'<sup>8</sup>

When Roverandom returns to Earth, he goes under the sea inside Uin, oldest of the whales, to ask the wizard who changed him into a toy to undo the spell. His destination inspired one of Tolkien's most accomplished watercolours, *The Gardens of the Merking's Palace* [76]. It is a striking change of scene after Roverandom's adventures on the Moon, a vision of pastel pinks, greens, blues, mauve, and yellow, against which the tendrils of plants and sea anemones, the tentacles of an octopus, and the pennon flying from the tallest dome of the palace curve and curl in Art nouveau splendour. The palace itself shines as if made of porcelain. Uin the whale, at top left, resembles the Leviathan in Rudyard Kipling's illustration for 'How the Whale Got His Throat' in his *Just So Stories*. Roverandom does not appear in the picture; instead, we see (as in the lunar



The Garden of the King's Palace  
the Temple of the Sun

appear in the picture; instead, we see (as in the lunar landscape [72]) a tableau he enters in the course of the story:

Rover walked out to find himself on [a] white path of sand winding through a dim and fantastic forest. . . .

[He] went straight along, as straight as the path would allow, and soon before him he saw the gate of a great palace, made it seemed of pink and white stone that shone with a pale light coming through it; and through the many windows lights of green and blue shone clear. All round the walls huge sea-trees grew, taller than the domes of the palace that swelled up vast, gleaming in the dark water. The great indiarubber tree-trunks of the trees bent and swayed like grasses, and the shadow of their endless branches was thronged with goldfish, and silverfish, and redfish, and bluefish, and phosphorescent fish like birds.

Tolkien was a prolific storyteller to his children. We will never know how many tales he devised for them, nor how many he did not record. One or two that have not survived may have inspired a sheet of sketches [77] probably made in 1927." The house drawn at lower left in pencil and coloured pencil (brown, red, green, and blue) is zz Northmoor Road, Oxford, where the Tolkiens lived from 1925 to 1930."<sup>11</sup> The stern figure drawn in plain pencil at the top may be a giant. The legs of his chair are splayed so wide that it is hard to see how it could bear his weight. The group at lower right is the

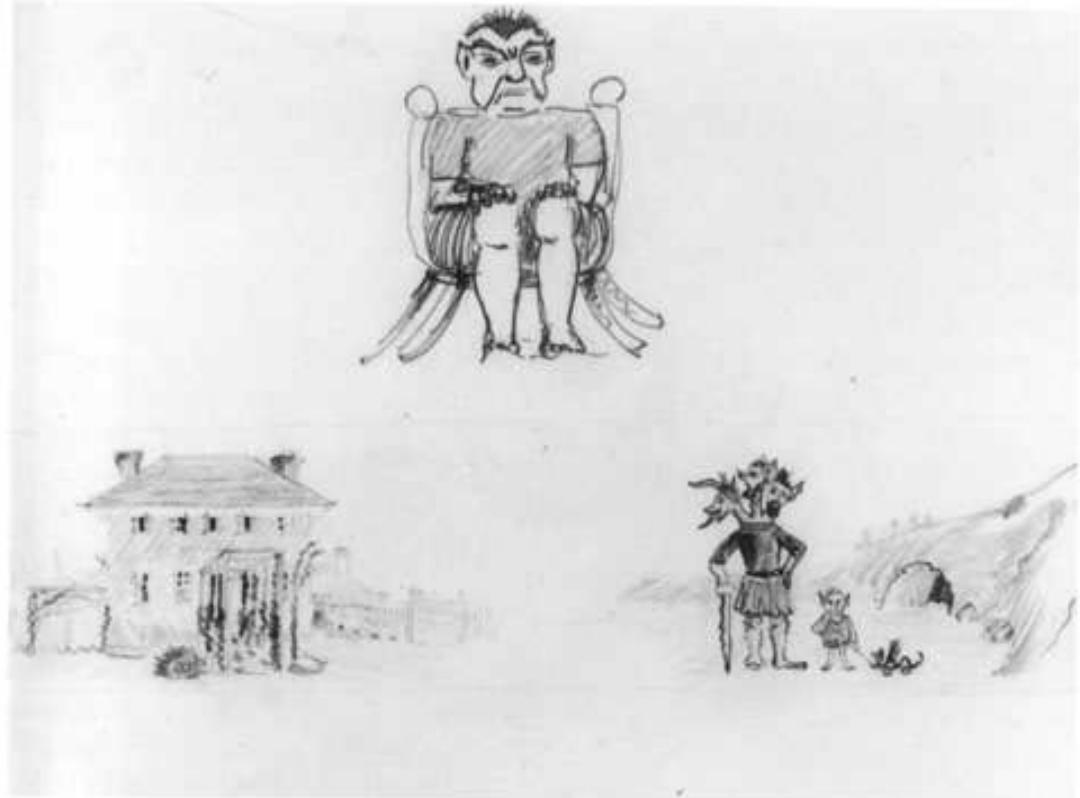
most interesting: an ogre with three animal heads in a blue jersey and red kilt stands beside a child in a pink

jacket who has only one, more human head. The latter has pointed ears, like the figure at top only more exaggerated. The child has an intriguing toy, a green dragon on wheels. What will the ogre do with his serrated blade? Do the two live in the cave in the hills behind them? The drawing invites many questions.

*Maddo* [78] and *Owlamoo* [79], which Tolkien drew in 1918, can be explained more fully, thanks to a later inscription by the artist:

*Maddo* and *Owlamoo* were two of Michael's imagined bo-geys when he was about 6-8 years old. I tried to draw them from his descriptions - which seemed to rob them of terror and leave them merely nursery mythological creatures. *Maddo* was (he said) a gloved hand without an arm that opened curtains a crack after dark and crawled down the curtain. *Owlamoo* was just a large sinister owl-like figure that perched on high furniture or pictures and glared at you.

*Maddo* recalls the hand in *Wickedness* [32] parting a decorated curtain, and in turn may have influenced the one Tolkien drew on the first version of *Thror's Map* for *The Hobbit*.<sup>12</sup> Blood-red nails make Maddo the most sinister of these, and its many curves, echoed by the crescent moon in the window, convey an unsettling fluidity of motion. The eeriness of the subject is empha-



76 (opposite)  
*The Gardens of the  
Merking's Palace*  
Pencil, watercolour, black ink

77 (right)  
*Untitled (Three Sketches)*  
Pencil, coloured pencil



78

*Maddo*

Pencil, black and coloured ink, watercolour



79

*Owlamoo*

Black, red, and green ink

So he turned sharp to the right at the next turning, and ran straight into Mr Day, coming from his garden with a barrow-load of cabbages. This shows what happened.



80 Untitled (*Mr Bliss Collides with Mr Day*)

Pencil, black ink, coloured pencil

sized by the isolation of the window, curtain, and hand, alone on the sheet of paper without other details of the room.<sup>12</sup> Owlamoö seems much less threatening in com-parison, though his eyes do have a disturbing hypnotic effect. The very stylized *Owlamoö* is similar in line and colour to Polar Bear's 1931 picture of mountains [66], but looks forward even more to Tolkien's late patterns (see chapter 6).

*The Hobbit* excepted (which requires a chapter to itself), the last major story that Tolkien wrote for his children was *Mr. Bliss*. In many ways this book is unusual among his work. It is not, in fact, an illustrated story but a picture book in which words and art are equally important. It is in a finished form save for a few emendations, and no drafts of the writing and only two preliminary sketches are known to survive. Tolkien wrote the manuscript text and drew the accompanying illustrations on large sheets, folded and made into a book, inside a cover made from two sheets of coloured paper. He must have planned the layout of the book as

carefully as he drew its pictures, which were begun usually in plain pencil or black ink, then embellished with a wide range of coloured pencils and occasionally with coloured inks.

Humphrey Carpenter suggests in his biography of Tolkien that *Mr. Bliss* was inspired by the mishaps that occurred while Tolkien was driving the automobile he bought in 1932. However, Mrs Michael Tolkien, in a letter to the *Sunday Times*, gave a different account:

The book was in fact written for all the professor's three sons in 1928. . . . My husband . . . was eight years old at the time and the three bears are based on the teddy bears owned then by the three boys. Archie was my husband's bear and survived until 1933. One other interesting point is that the car driven by Mr Bliss was inspired by a toy car complete with driver which was then Christopher's most cherished toy. My husband clearly recalls the tale being told to them and it appears in a diary he kept as a Dragon School [Oxford] summer holiday task in 1928.<sup>13</sup>

But the finished book may not have been written and illustrated at that time. Christopher Tolkien believes that the style of his father's handwriting in the book suggests the 1930s rather than the 1920s.<sup>14</sup> It can be said definitely only that the book dates from before late 1936, when Tolkien submitted it to the publisher George Allen & Unwin as a possible successor to *The Hobbit*. *Mr. Bliss* was so obviously planned and executed as a unity that it must have been accomplished in one short period, probably during a long summer vacation, when Tolkien was freed from many of his academic duties. The summer of 1918 was one of his most productive periods for drawing and painting, and would have been more so if he had produced *Mr. Bliss* then as well. But the summers of 1929–31 are more likely candidates for the work, when Christopher was still young enough to enjoy the story and before Tolkien became more concerned with writing *The Hobbit*.

The characters in *Mr. Bliss* tend to be idiosyncratic and comically exaggerated, and are drawn accordingly. The Dorkinses, for example, are fat in varying degrees, and Mr Bliss wears hats so tall that his house has to have very high ceilings and a tall front door. Possibly the driver of the toy car wore a tall hat; but gentlemen's formal headgear, at least in the days in which Tolkien was a boy, did sometimes rise to great heights. In *Mr. Bliss*, as in the 'Father Christmas' art, the figures are

usually pictured in some sort of activity, sometimes in violent action. And here, too, Tolkien indulged his love for 'authentication' by including in 'facsimile' a note Mr Bliss made in his diary and a bill he sent to the Dorkinses. But the works differ in their approaches to landscape. While the 'Father Christmas' letters contain magical, other-worldly landscapes of the frozen North, usually drawn in bright colours, *Mr. Bliss* is set in a realistic English countryside, with villages, steep hills, hospitable timbered inns, and walled gardens rendered in delicate shades. The landscape of *Mr. Bliss* suggests the West Midlands, or the Cotswolds where Tolkien's brother Hilary had a farm (near Evesham). Perhaps Tol-kien made the book during a visit to Hilary, or soon after such a visit.

Its story tells of the misadventures that befall Mr Bliss after he buys a motor car. In one early scene [80] he collides with Mr Day and a barrow-load of cabbages. Here almost everything is in motion: Mr Bliss is waving his arms, his hat is leaping into the air, the cabbages are exploding out of the barrow, and Mr Day is falling on his back while flailing his arms and legs. The picture has much in common with a 1929 'Father Christmas' illus-tration<sup>15</sup> in which, as a result of Polar Bear opening a window, letters addressed to Father Christmas are blown aloft, Polar Bear assumes almost the same posi-tion as Mr Day, and Father Christmas gesticulates and



81

*Untitled*

(Archie, Teddy, and Bruno)

Pencil, black ink, coloured pencil

*Untitled (Party at the Bears' House)*  
Pencil, black ink, coloured pencil



loses his hat much like Mr Bliss. The car, here and elsewhere in the book, does indeed look like a toy. The

shrub and signpost at left are drawn more realistically and provide an anchor for the rest of the picture. The flying cabbages, together with Mr Bliss's hat, lead the eye upward to the accompanying text.

The three bears Mr Bliss encounters in a wood [81] are obviously toys too: their seams are visible, their eyes are glass, their limbs are unjointed. Their names are those given by the three Tolkien boys to their stuffed bears, and as written left to right, diminish with the size of the toys. The bulging tree trunk at right echoes the teddies' fat stomachs. The bears frighten people and steal fruit and vegetables, but also they provide supper and lodging for most of those involved in Mr Bliss's mishaps. In the illustration of their party [82] Archie has his back to the viewer, Bruno is on his left, and Teddy is at the far end of the table. Mr Day is on the right, next to Mrs Knight, whose donkey cart full of bananas was also upset by Mr Bliss in his car. The other three sitting at the table are members of the Dorkins family. Tolkien gives the room a homely atmosphere with a dresser, hams hanging from the ceiling, a toby jug on the table, and a mop and beer-barrel in the corners. The red curtains and golden glow from the lamp add to the warmth of the picture. It is an intimate scene even though

room is large - anticipating, in subject and composition, *Beam's Hall in The Hobbit* [n6]. The drawing shows the end of the party, when almost everything but the cake had been eaten.

Mr Bliss meanwhile is lost in a wood. As he runs, trying to find his way out, he tears his clothes and bends his hat. At dawn, exhausted, he finds himself on a hill-top looking across a valley to his own house. This scene is depicted in a fine view [83] which shows the light of the rising sun as golden streaks upon the hills, while in the valley the village is still in shade. Our gaze moves gently down the slope from Mr Bliss, skims the church spire and the roofs of the village, and at last finds Mr Bliss's house. There, unexpectedly sticking out of the chimney, is the head of the Girabbit, a hybrid of giraffe and rabbit with a skin of mackintosh, who usually lived in Mr Bliss's garden and probably was inspired by another toy owned by the Tolkien children. The softly coloured fields and trees are anchored and defined by the more strongly drawn figures of Mr Bliss and the Girabbit, and by the tree and fencepost at centre.

The complexity of the colouring of Mr. Bliss delayed its publication for over forty years. Alien & Unwin in 1936-7 were eager for it, but the cost of the photo-graphic colour separations required would have made the book more expensive than the market could bear.

What happened to Mr Bliss? He ran all night without knowing where he was running to, jumping over hedges, falling into ditches, tearing his clothes on barbed wire. When dawn came he was dead tired, and he found himself sitting on the top of a hill. He ought to have been miles and miles away, but he was trudging down into his own village and could see his own house in the distance on a further hill.



'There is either a stag flying from my chimney or else the sweep has got in — though I never ordered him to come' he said to himself.

83: Untitled (*Mr Bliss on the Hillside*)

Pencil, black ink, coloured pencil

Tolkien was asked to redraw his illustrations larger and in only three colours plus black, which the publisher would arrange to have separated by hand. 'Three colours is rather a blight', Tolkien replied. 'Green is essential; the bears require brown. What can one do deprived of two of red, blue, yellow?' In the event, he did not have time to do the work. It is easier to write a story at odd moments than draw', he said, '(though neither are easy).<sup>16</sup> A facsimile edition was published finally in 1982, nine years after Tolkien died. In his later years he came to dislike *Mr. Bliss* except as a private joke, and had resisted its publication. In fact it is an amusing story, and its pictures include subjects rare or unique in Tolkien's art: motorcars, shop fronts on village streets, a country inn - not forgetting the Girabbit.

Tolkien's children fondly remember their father for his stories. They also remember him as an artist and occasionally as their art instructor, a giving and loving man who showed them methods of perspective, or how to draw tables and chairs, or to use Chinese White to good effect. For them, the desk in his study at home was a familiar landscape, with rows of coloured inks (Quink's in particular, because they were washable), sets of sealing-wax in different shades, large supplies of paper, tubes of paint, boxes of Koh-i-Noor coloured pencils, assorted brushes and pens - ingredients of wonder and beauty in Tolkien's hands, and a source of joy to all concerned. 'Just as we were all generously provided with these ourselves', Priscilla Tolkien recalls, 'we knew as we got older that these things gave *him* particular pleasure, and they continued to do so right through his life.<sup>17</sup>

i Most, but not all, of this material

was published in *The Father Christmas Letters* (1976); but quotations from the letters in the present book have been taken directly from the manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. See also *J.R.R. Tolkien: Life and Legend*, p. 80. The 'Father Christmas' illustrations for 192.0 were probably not, however, the first art Tolkien made for his children. That may have been a rebus or 'code-letter' he sent to baby John, c. 1918. He had written one such letter before, in 1904, to Father Francis Morgan; see *J.R.R. Tolkien: Life and Legend*, pp. 13, 17, and *The Tolkien Family Album*, p. 21.

z The letters for 1921 and 192.2 are not extant.

### 3 See below, pp. 77–83.

4 In the 'Father Christmas' illustration for 192.5 the house was still round but had a rectangular rather than a pointed door, and a greater number of windows, all rectangular.

5 That *The Hobbit* was completed by this date is suggested in a letter by C.S. Lewis dated 4 February 1933, in which Lewis says that he has been reading a story by Tolkien, obviously *The Hobbit*, and thinks it good except for the end.

See *They Stand Together: The Letters of C.S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves*, edited by Walter Hooper (London: Collins;

New York: Macmillan, 1979), p. 449;

and *Bilbo Baggins: The History of The Hobbit* by John D. Rateliff, forthcoming.

6 The date '1915' is written (probably later) at the foot of the picture, which places it two years earlier than the other four known *Roverandom* illustrations. Three of those are dated September 1927 on the sheet ([73], also inscribed 'For CRT [Christopher Reuel Tolkien]', [76], and [75], also inscribed 'For John'), while Tolkien was on holiday at Lyme Regis. The other [74] is dated '1927â€”8'. These four were once together in *The Book of Ishness* (see ch. 2). The 'lunar landscape' (72) survived independent of the others, seemingly forgotten as a *Roverandom* drawing.

7 All quotations from *Roverandom* are from Tolkien's unpublished typescript in the Bodleian Library.

8 Quoted from the manuscript in the Bodleian Library; cf. above, p. 53.

9 The date may be guessed from the position of the sheet in *The Book of Ishness*.

10 A photograph in *The Tolkien Family*

*Album*, p. 51, shows a similar view of

the house. n See below, p. 92.

12 The curtain in Michael's room in fact was not decorated with suns, moons, stars, and trees. Tolkien took artistic licence by including his favourite motifs, but in doing so made *Maddo* a more attractive picture. (Conversation with John Tolkien.)

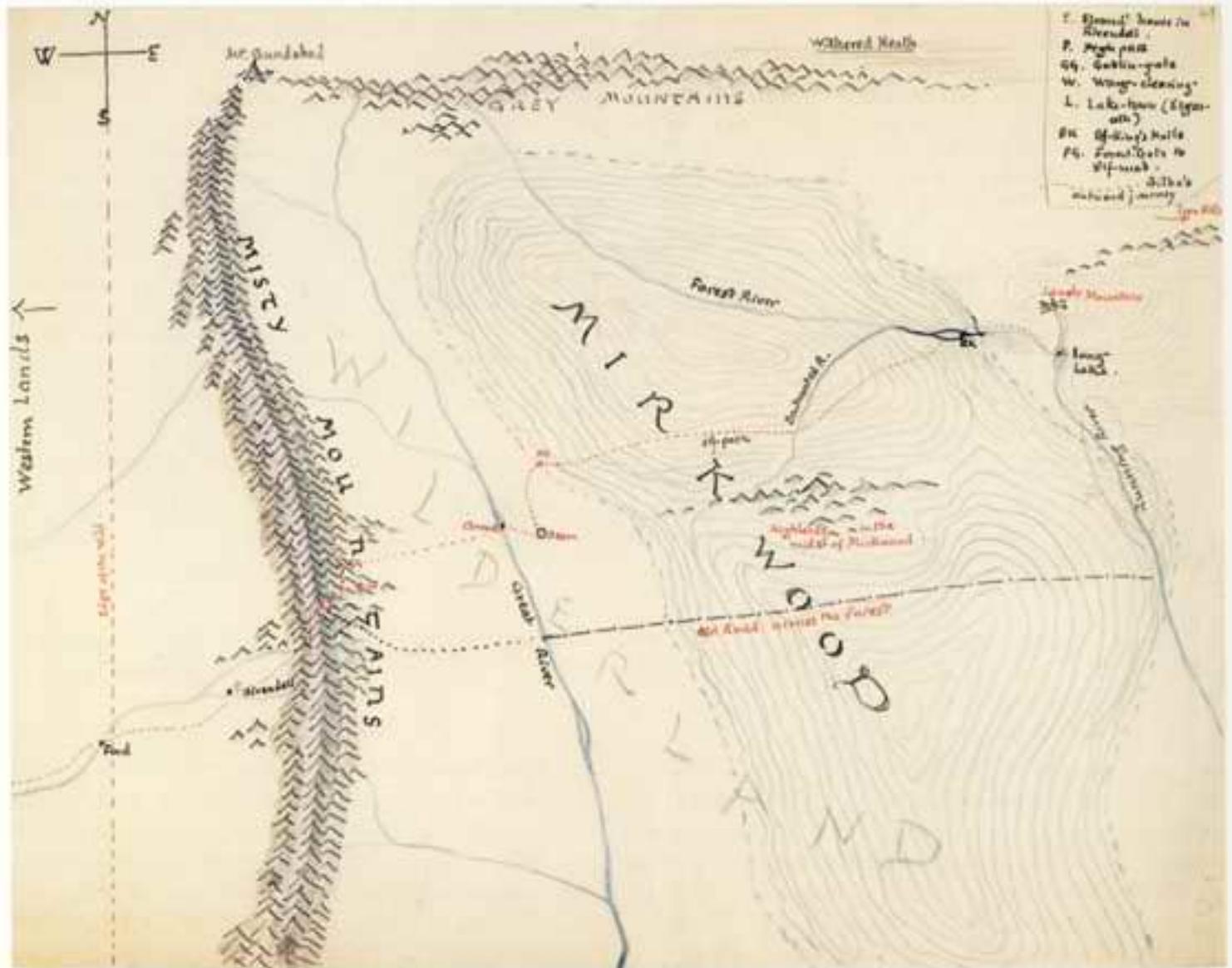
13 'Origin of a Tolkien Tale', *Sunday Times* (London), 10 October 1982, p. 25. Christopher Tolkien does not, however (in correspondence with the authors), recall the toy car referred to.

14 Noted in 'Mr Bliss: Notes on the Manuscript and Story' by Jared C. Lobdell, *Selections from the Marquette J.R.R. Tolkien Collection*, p. [5].

15 *The Father Christmas Letters*, p. [17].

16 Letter to C.A. Furth, 17 February 1937, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive.

17 'My Father the Artist', p. 6.



84 Wilderland, preliminary art  
Pencil, coloured pencil, black and red ink

## 4 The Hobbit

The 1920S and early 19308 stand out as especially productive years for Tolkien as an artist. The variety of the 'Father Christmas' letters, the stretches of imagination in *Roverandom*, the comic absurdities of *Mr. Bliss*, the vivid landscapes of 'The Silmarillion' reveal the wide range of his talents. Of course, none of these pictures, like the writings they accompanied, were meant originally for publication, only for family amusement or private pleasure. But in producing them Tolkien developed a sense of effective illustration and honed his water-colour, pen, and coloured pencil techniques. It was good training for the art he was later to produce for a wider audience, though it does not seem to have helped his self-confidence as an artist when his work came into the public eye.

His turning point as both writer and artist occurred probably in 1930, on a summer's day while he was wearily correcting school examination papers. On one of them he scrawled: 'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.' It was a meaningless sentence, but a fertile seed. Within two years it grew into a heroic children's book, and clear visions of the world of *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* - of Middle-earth, though it is not named in the book - blossomed from Tolkien's brushes and pens. The story of the hobbit Bilbo Baggins, a small, quiet fellow propelled by the wizard Gandalf into an adventure with thirteen dwarves and a ferocious dragon, is now well-known and loved. It was first published in Britain in 1937 and in America in 1938.

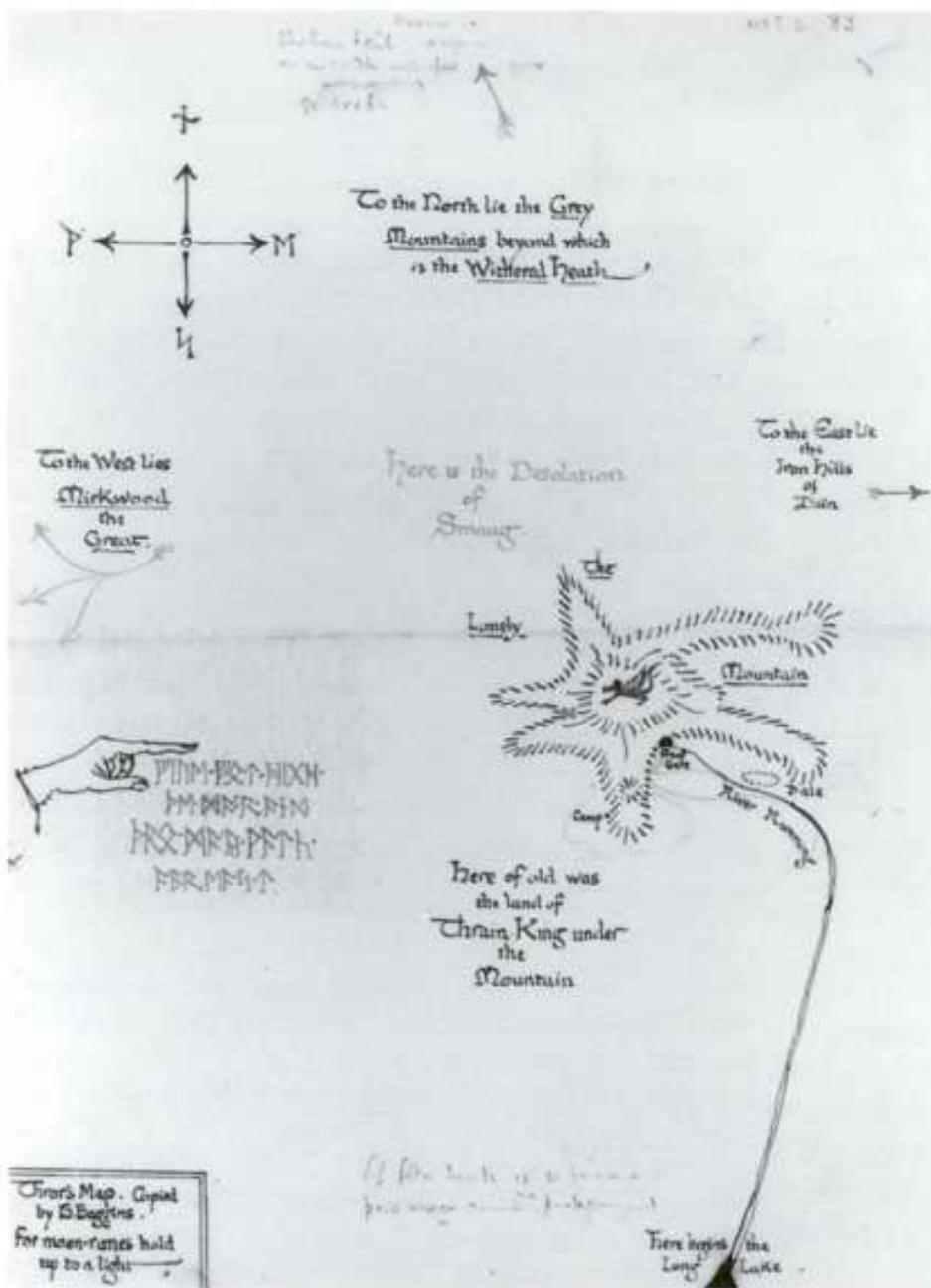
Rayner Unwin, who was later to guide *The Lord of the Rings* into print, at age ten (in 1936) reviewed the typescript of *The Hobbit* for his father, publisher Stanley Unwin of the firm George Allen & Unwin. 'This book, with the help of maps, does not need any illustrations it is good,' he wrote in breathless, boyish style, and at first Tolkien and his publisher seem to have agreed with him. *The Hobbit* was to have no illustrations *per se*, but would have five maps which, with one exception, would trace Bilbo's journey across the wild lands east of his home to the Lonely Mountain, the lair of Smaug the dragon upon whom the dwarves seek revenge. To judge by extant sketches and correspondence, these five were *Thror's Map*; *Wilderland*; and maps of the land between the Misty Mountains and Mirkwood,<sup>1</sup> of the land east of Mirkwood to just east of the River

Running, and of the Long Lake, the last combined with a view of the Lonely Mountain [128]. This would have been their logical order, following the course of the story, and they would have made a neat cartographic parallel to the text. But in the event, their number was reduced to only two.

Tolkien drew at least three of the maps he submitted to Alien & Unwin in multiple colours, chiefly coloured pencil. The publisher's production staff objected to this technique, as it would have required printing the maps as separate plates in colour halftone, an expensive process. They suggested instead that *Thror's Map* and *Wilderland* be printed as endpapers, in any two colours Tolkien liked, and that the remaining maps be printed in only one colour (black), with the text. But first Tolkien would have to redraw the maps to suit reproduction by line-block, and to letter them better. This meant, he was told,

in the Mirkwood map [i.e. *Wilderland* (84)] showing the Misty Mountains and the Grey Mountains only by hatching in one colour, the higher ranges being indicated by closer hatching. The rivers may then be shown by parallel lines. Possibly it will be best to indicate Mirkwood in the same colour as the Mountains, leaving the second colour for all the paths and all the lettering. All that is needed with the lettering is that you should do it a little more neatly. This is indeed the only alteration needed in Thror's map [85]. . . . The Esgaroth map [probably the map of the land east of Mirkwood, centred on the Long Lake] . . . only needs rather more careful lettering. Would it be possible for you to redraw the other Esgaroth map [possibly (128)], which you have done in two colours, in one, indicating the water not by shading as at present, but by three or four parallel lines round the coast, as done by professional cartographers! The Lonely Mountain will then have to be redrawn in one colour with the shading indicated please by fine, but not too fine, lines. Would it be possible to make some sort of ripple effect in line for the river? This question of shading unfortunately also applies to Mirkwood [i.e. the third map], which will have to be indicated by hard lines.<sup>2</sup>

Tolkien tried to do as he was asked, as well as he could, or as well as he felt he could. Two additional schematic drawings of the Lonely Mountain, which Tolkien made over in heavy line, are extant,<sup>3</sup> but neither was used. Within a month he replied to Alien & Unwin that he had redrawn 'the chart [i.e. *Thror's Map*] which



has to be tipped in (to Chapter I), and the general map [*Wilderland*]. I can only hope - as I have small skill, and no experience of preparing such things for reproduction - that they may possibly serve. The other maps I have decided are not wanted.<sup>4</sup> Why omit the three small maps? Not for any lack of skill. Perhaps Tolkien was frustrated at having to redraw them; or he may have seen that most of their details were already present in the 'general map', and if *Wilderland* was now to be an endpaper it would be so handy for reference that no other maps were needed. Both reasons could be true. Also, at this time Tolkien had reconsidered the need for illustrations in *The Hobbit* and had turned his thoughts away from maps, *Wilderland* and *Thror's Map* excepted.

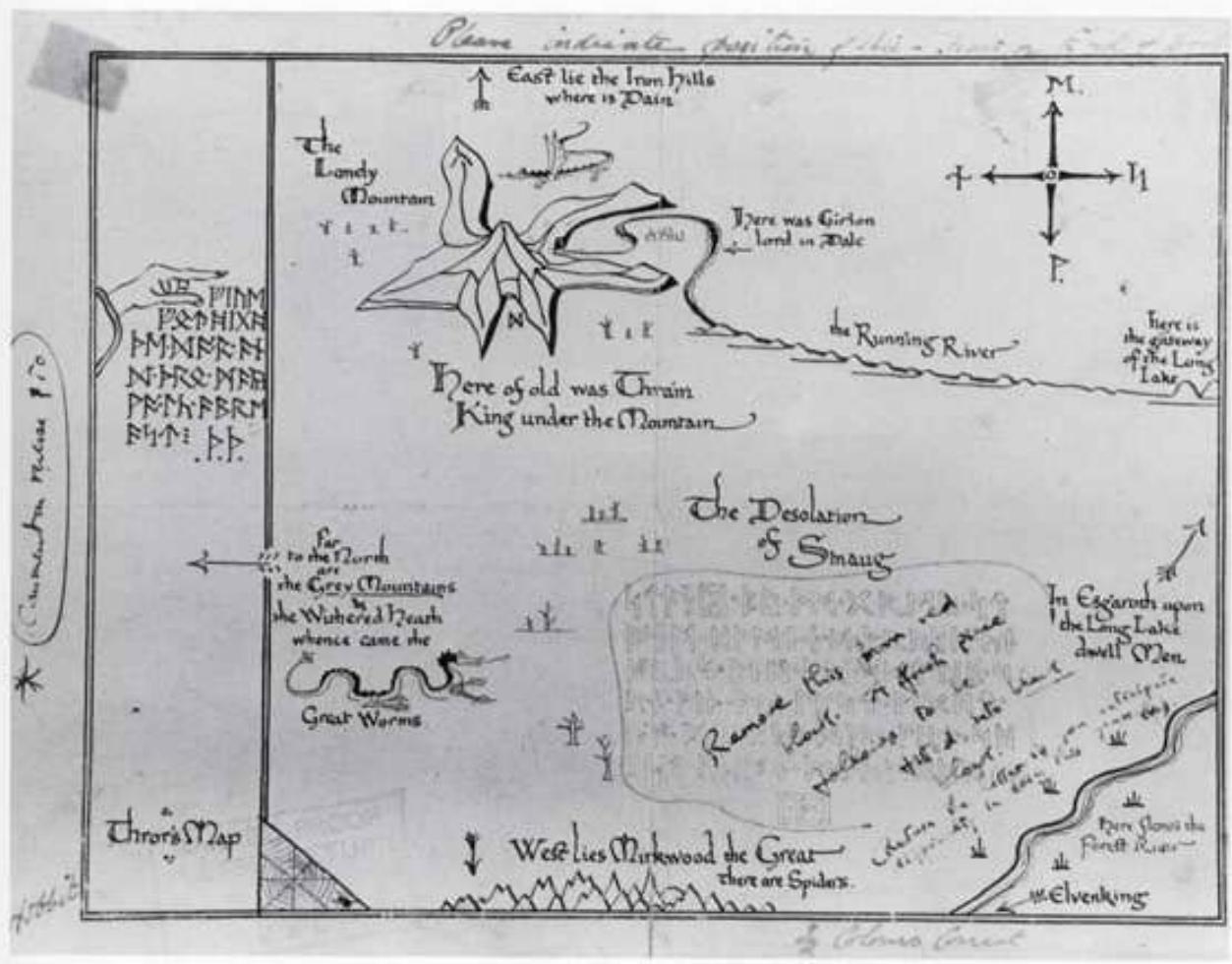
The latter especially continued to hold his attention. He had already laboured on it for years, indeed since he began to write the book. The first sketch of *Thror's Map* appears on the earliest surviving scrap of *Hobbit* manuscript.<sup>5</sup> Many of its final elements were then already present: the mountain, the Withered Heath, the ruins of Dale, the River Running, Mirkwood, the Long Lake. A hand - more sinister than in later versions, with long, sharp nails - points very obviously to the con-cealed 'back door' of the mountain. Drafts of the plain runes ('Five feet high the door' etc.) and of the 'moon-runes', the hidden words that describe the secret entrance, are written below the hand, and at the bottom the Lonely Mountain is roughly drawn again, possibly a sketch for the rejected diagram [128]. In the finished

but not final version of the map [85] the hand has had a manicure and the whole is more formally rendered. It is a poor composition, without graphic unity. Lines of calligraphy float around the Lonely Mountain upon a sea of paper. Compared with the published version [86] - twice the size, with more room for embellishment - it is much less visually interesting. On the other hand, in this simpler form it is a more direct illustration of the 'plan of the Mountain' described in chapter i of *The Hobbit*, and more accurately depicts a dragon 'marked in red on the Mountain' rather than beside it.<sup>6</sup>

Tolkien wanted *Thror's Map* to be inserted in chapter i, at the first mention of it in the text ('a piece of parchment rather like a map'), or else in chapter 3,

when the moon-runes are discovered by Eirond. There-fore he drew it in a vertical format, as if a leaf of the book, not as the horizontal endpaper the production staff had suggested. In addition, he wanted the moon-runes to be printed as a mirror-image on the back of the map (as drawn on the verso of [85], and showing through in the reproduction) so that they could be read correctly through the paper when it was held as directed by the legend at lower left, simulating the effect of the runes as they are revealed to Eirond by moonlight. But Alien & Unwin held firm that the map had to be printed as an endpaper, as a pair with *Wilderland*, to keep production costs down. It could not be specially printed in two colours within a text otherwise in black,

86 *Thror's Map*  
Printed proof



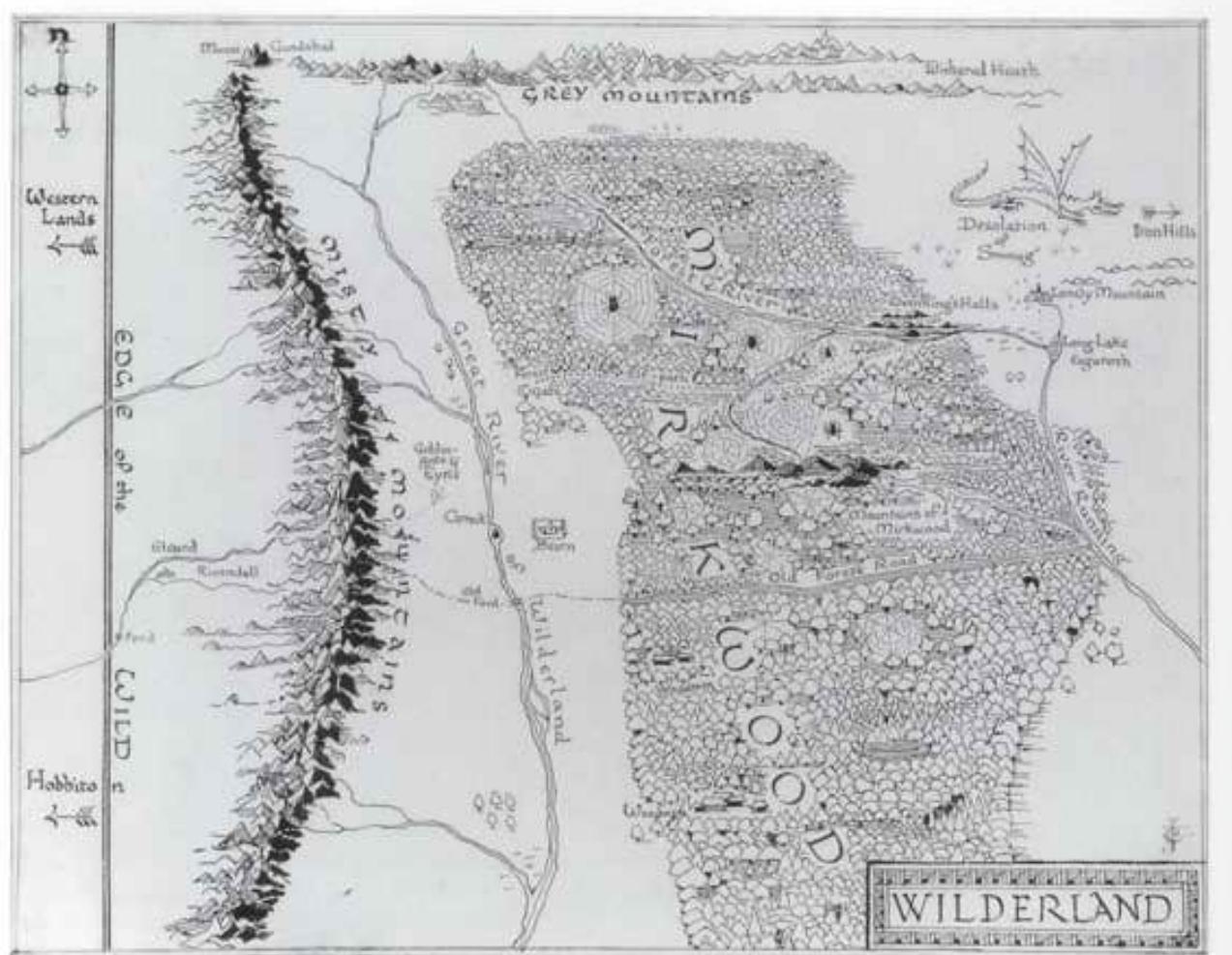
or printed separately and inserted, except at excessive cost, and as a children's book *The Hobbit* had to be sold at a modest price. The matter went back and forth for months, Alien & Unwin proposing to print the moon-runes in a 'cunning' way on the face of the endpaper-map, while Tolkien continued to want a two-sided map in the text as he had conceived it. Although at last he conceded defeat to his domestic publisher, he was still arguing his case when the first American edition of *The Hobbit* was in production, hoping that if Alien & Unwin would not insert *Thror's Map* and *Wilderland* in the text as he still preferred - and print them in their original colours - maybe the Americans would. (They did not.) The 'cunning' method devised by Alien &

Unwin was probably to print the runes in a grey tone;

in the event, they were distinguished merely by having been drawn with a noticeably thinner line.

With regret, Tolkien drew *Thror's Map* again, in blue and red ink, in a horizontal format suitable for an endpaper [86]. This final version, however, is a superior picture, with the elements less fragmented and with more and better detail and decoration. In this form it is very like a medieval topographical map, even down to its orientation with east at the top. The latter is surely a coincidence, merely the result of the earlier north-oriented map being turned on its side, and Tolkien passed it off in the author's note he added to the 1966 third edition as 'usual in dwarf-maps'. But the Lonely

87 *Wilderland*, final art  
Black and blue ink



Mountain, now modelled rather than roughly indicated with hatching, has the look of mountains on some medieval woodcut maps, and the pointing hand, no longer directly in line with the secret gate, recalls the famous hand of the Creator in the *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493. The dragon now more dramatically (if less accurately) flies around the mountain rather than sitting on top of it, and the effects of his presence are indicated both by the legend 'The Desolation of Smaug' and by areas of flame-withered trees like those in *Glorund Sets Forth to Seek Turin* [47]. The River Running now loops around the ruins of Dale and is articulated as it flows south. The Forest River has been added with its marshes and an arrow pointing to the Elvenking's halls. Mirk-wood is represented at the bottom (west) by a row of peaks as well as by a legend, the latter with the ominous words 'there are spiders' reinforced by an adjacent drawing of a spider on its web. A second dragon, at lower left, representing the 'Great Worms' that bred on the Withered Heath to the north, was borrowed from the 'dragon and warrior' sketch [49] Tolkien drew nearly a decade earlier.

In fact, *Thror's Map* does not serve the reader as a map, but as an illustration of a map. Like the 'stamped' envelopes and other features of the 'Father Christmas' letters, it is a painstakingly crafted 'facsimile' meant to give verisimilitude to Tolkien's fiction. It is supposed to be a reproduction of one of the old documents, or of a copy of one of the documents, that the narrator consulted before telling his tale. This is not clear in the first edition of *The Hobbit*, but Tolkien had it in mind. In chapter 11 of the *Hobbit* typescript, when describing the camp of Bilbo and the dwarves on the southern spur of the Lonely Mountain, he wrote (deleted in proof):

'I have marked the place on my copy of Thorin's map, as he did himself, though of course it was not shown there when the wizard [Gandalf] first got it.'<sup>7</sup> And the superseded vertical *Thror's Map* [85] is labelled 'Copied by B. Baggins', which suggests that it was to be Bilbo's copy obtained by the author. In the second (1951) and third (1966) editions of *The Hobbit* Tolkien added author's notes which elaborate on the map and link his book to Bilbo's memoirs (first mentioned at the end of chapter 19), further supporting his pose as an editor of history rather than an author of fiction.

*Wilderland*, in contrast, was meant to be no more than a general map, as Tolkien described it. There is no pretence of it being an old map drawn by Bilbo. It bears Tolkien's monogram, marking it as his own work, and he further distinguished it from *Thror's Map* with a

fuller, less stylized manner of drawing and with small differences in the style of lettering. (The statement in chapter 3, that Bilbo 'liked runes and letters and cunning handwriting, though when he wrote himself it was a bit thin and spidery', connects the hobbit with the deliberately shakier writing on *Thror's Map*.) Even so, Tolkien knew that *Thror's Map* and *Wilderland* were to be printed as a pair, as front and back end-papers, and for the sake of a balanced design he drew a few elements common to both: a double-ruled frame, a vertical double rule near the left edge, arrows pointing beyond the edges of the maps, a drawing of Smaug (the one in *Wilderland* a close copy of the creature in *The White Dragon* [75]). *Wilderland* was already horizontal in draft, so needed no major change in composition when redrawn. But Tolkien made the final version [87] more dramatic, with Mirkwood changed from a series of contour lines into an elaborate body of individually drawn trees, clearings, spider webs, and woodmen's huts as well as the existing rivers and central mountains. He drew the final art in black and blue, a colour scheme he continued to prefer for *Wilderland*, but it was printed, like *Thror's Map*, in black and red.<sup>8</sup>

Although Rayner Unwin had concluded in his reader's report that *The Hobbit* did not need illustrations, Tolkien at length decided otherwise. To its author *The Hobbit* had always been an illustrated book. The 'home manuscript', as he called it - that is, the copy that existed before Alien & Unwin expressed an interest in the work and that Tolkien lent to friends - contained, besides versions of *Thror's Map* and *Wilderland*, an unknown number of illustrations by Tolkien. The text does not depend upon pictures, but it often benefits from them. For example, chapters i and z give the reader only a general idea of Hobbiton, the idealized English country village in which Bilbo Baggins lives in a luxurious hobbit-hole, Bag-End, at the top of The Hill. We know that it is a green land, with trees and flowers. We know that there is a garden in front of Bag-End, and meadows which slope down to a stream. We know that a lane leads from Bilbo's door, past a 'great Mill, across The Water, and so for a whole mile or more' to the village of Bywater. And that is all: as written, it is almost a generic landscape, generically named ('The Hill', 'The Water'). For the most part, *The Hobbit* lacks the detailed descriptions of place one finds in *The Lord of the Rings* and elsewhere in Tolkien's fiction. But his pictures of Hobbiton, and of the Misty Mountains from the Eagles' eyrie, and of other subjects are themselves worth many words.

88 *Mirkwood*

Printed illustration

Tolkien surely continued to think of *The Hobbit* as an illustrated book during the early stages of production in late 1936, and worked towards that end apparently without Alien & Unwin's knowledge. His published black and white *Hobbit* pictures, as well as a number of preliminary versions, seem to have been made all in one great concentration of effort during the holidays of December 1936 and early January 1937. On 4 January 1937, in the letter quoted above, Tolkien informed Alien & Unwin that the five maps would not serve well enough on their own, eliminated the three lesser maps, and enclosed four pictures. 'I have redrawn (as far as I am capable) one or two of the amateur illustrations of the "home manuscript"', he wrote, 'conceiving that they might serve as endpapers, frontispiece or what not. [At the time, he still meant *Thror's Map* to be inserted in the text.] I think on the whole such things, if they were better, might be an improvement. But it may be impossible at this stage, and in any case they are not very good and may be technically unsuitable.'<sup>9</sup> The drawings were *Mirkwood*, which he envisioned as the front endpaper (later it was placed in chapter 8);

*The Elvenking's Gate*, to appear in chapter 8 (later, in chapter 9); *Lake Town*, for chapter 10; and *The Front Gate*, for chapter n.

'In considering the matter,' he wrote to Alien & Unwin two weeks later, 'I see that this concentrates all the maps and pictures, in place or reference, towards the end' - excepting *Thror's Map*, which he momentarily forgot. 'This is due to no plan, but occurs simply because I failed to reduce the other illustrations to even passable shape. I was also advised that those with a geographical or landscape content were the most suitable - even apart from my inability to draw anything else.'<sup>10</sup> In fact, Tolkien had not failed, and enclosed six more pictures with still more profuse apologies for their supposed defects or difficulty of reproduction. These were *The Hill: Hobbiton across the Water*, for chapter 1; *The Trolls*, for chapter 2; *The Mountain-path*, for chapter 4; *The Misty Mountains Looking West*, for chapter 6; *Beam's Hall*, for chapter 7; and *The Hall at Bag-End*, for chapter 19. These six balanced the four pictures previously sent, and together the ten illustrations were now distributed throughout the book.

Alien & Unwin had not allowed any cost margin for illustrations, but were charmed by Tolkien's pictures and felt that they had to include them - thus under-mining though not destroying their fiscal argument against an inserted *Thror's Map*. As Tolkien feared, some of his drawings did indeed present problems. Half of them were horizontal, and had to be turned at a right angle to the text if they were not to be reduced so much that intricate detail was lost; and *Mirkwood* [88] presented a special difficulty because it contained ink washes, which required printing in halftone separately on coated paper.

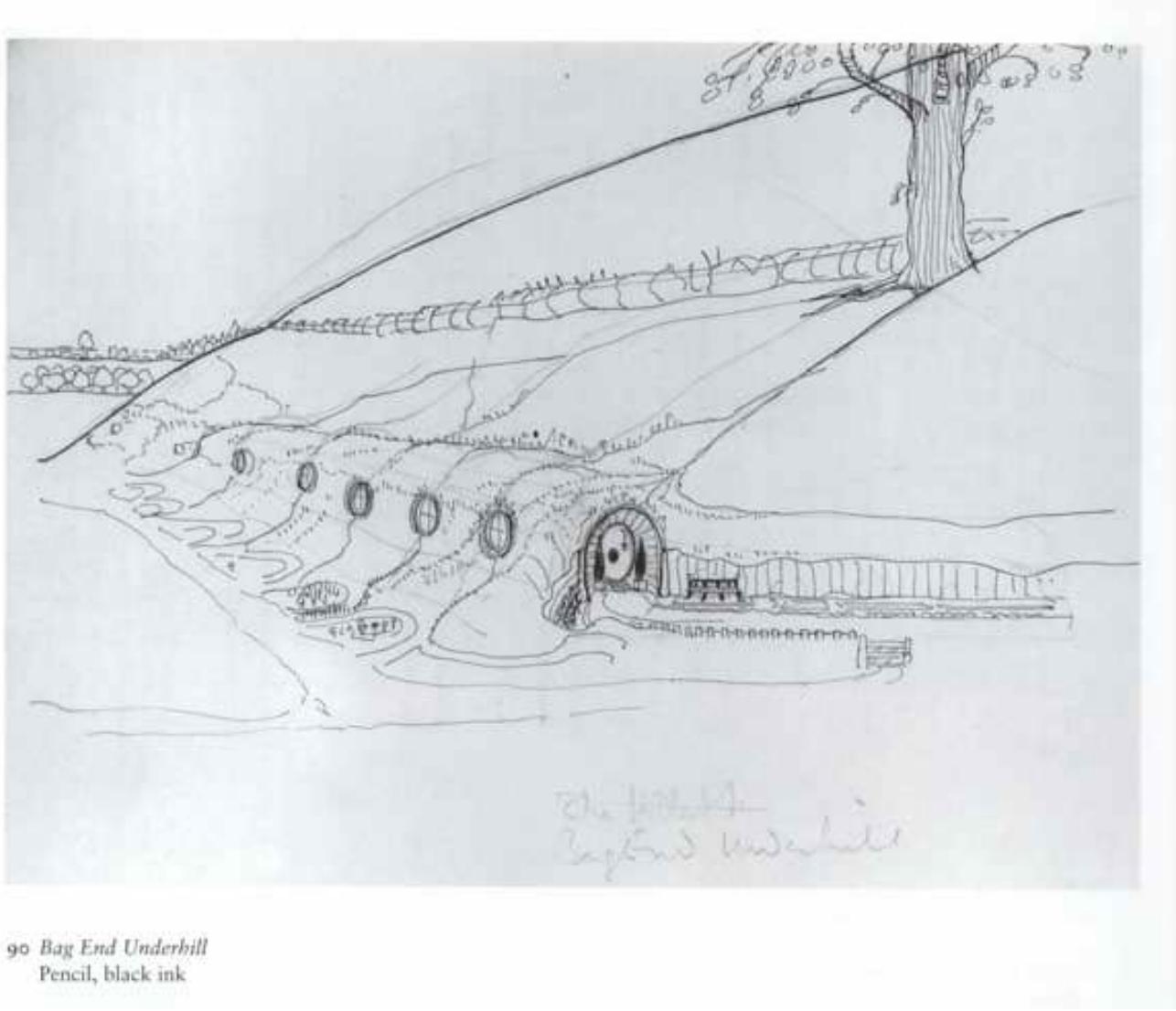
*Mirkwood* was the only inserted plate in the first printing of *The Hobbit* and was omitted after the second printing. It recalls some of Tolkien's early pictures of trees, for example *Foxglove Year* [17] and *Tumble Hill* [27], and his pictures of dark woods in *Mr. Bliss*, and in its pattern of thin verticals it is of a piece with *The Three Trolls are Turned to Stone* [100],

*The Trolls* [100], and *The Elvenking's Gate* [121]. But the drawing was most immediately a reinterpretation of the 'Silmarillion' painting *Taur-na-Fuin* [54]. The great forest of Dorthonion and the forest in *The Hobbit* were closely related in Tolkien's mind. *Taur-na-Fuin* (later form *Taur-nu-Fuin*) was translated by him in the *Quenta Silmarillion* as 'Mirkwood', and in a note to *The Disaster of the Gladden Fields* he referred to 'later days when the shadow of Sauron spread through Green-wood the Great, and changed its name from Eryn Galen to Taur-nu-Fuin (translated Mirkwood).'<sup>11</sup> The large knot in the tree at far right is in both pictures, as is the vine with star-shaped leaves on the tree at centre, the slender fallen tree at right, and some of the mushrooms. The two elves were removed for the drawing, unfortunately along with some of the spontaneity and Arthur Rackham-esque atmosphere of the watercolour. The spider at lower right (after one in *The White Dragon* [75]) seems small compared with the giant



*Quiet of the World*  
Pencil, coloured pencil





90 *Bag End Underhill*  
Pencil, black ink

variety described in *The Hobbit*, but perhaps that is only a trick of scale, with no figures in the drawing for comparison. A border originally at the top of the picture, presumably like the one at the bottom, was cut off in the halftone block without Tolkien's consent.<sup>12</sup> Curiously, in the American edition of *The Hobbit* Tolkien's Mirkwood was replaced by a close and very competent copy by another artist, in which the wash tones became textures drawn in line.

Like most of the published *Hobbit* art, Mirkwood 'sets the stage' for a part of the text. Tolkien shows where the action of the story takes place rather than the action itself- as he had done in his 'Silmarillion' art and as he was later to do in his drawings for *The Lord of the Rings*. Even those few illustrations of particular scenes in *The Hobbit* are more notable as settings than

for what is going on within them. Tolkien provided backgrounds on which readers can paint their own mental pictures, directed by a text but not constrained by too specific an image. More practically considered, it played to his strength, the depiction of landscape rather than figures.

Tolkien arranged his ten black and white illustrations for *The Hobbit* to begin and end the book with depictions of the 'quiet life'. That is, the first is set in peaceful Hobbiton, and the last inside Bag-End with a view of Hobbiton through an open door. Bilbo's comfortable home is the focal point of the story, the place from which and to which the hobbit goes 'there and back again', and to which his thoughts often turn during his journey. Tolkien knew the place well in his imagination, and made many pictures of it. Perhaps the earliest

of these was the sketch *One Morning Early in the Quiet of the World* [89].<sup>13</sup> It depicts the opening scene of

*The Hobbit:*

By some curious chance one morning long ago in the quiet of the world, when there was less noise and more green, and

the hobbits were still numerous and prosperous, and Bilbo Baggins was standing at his door after breakfast smoking an enormous long wooden pipe that reached nearly down to his woolly toes (neatly brushed) - Gandalf came by.

The wizard, in his tall pointed hat, is coming up the path at left. The picture is in plain pencil with green and light brown coloured pencil in the foreground and green and blue pencil in the middle ground and on the horizon. The pencilled shape near the top that looks like an eagle's head is probably a sketch of Gandalf's hat, made with the sheet turned sideways.

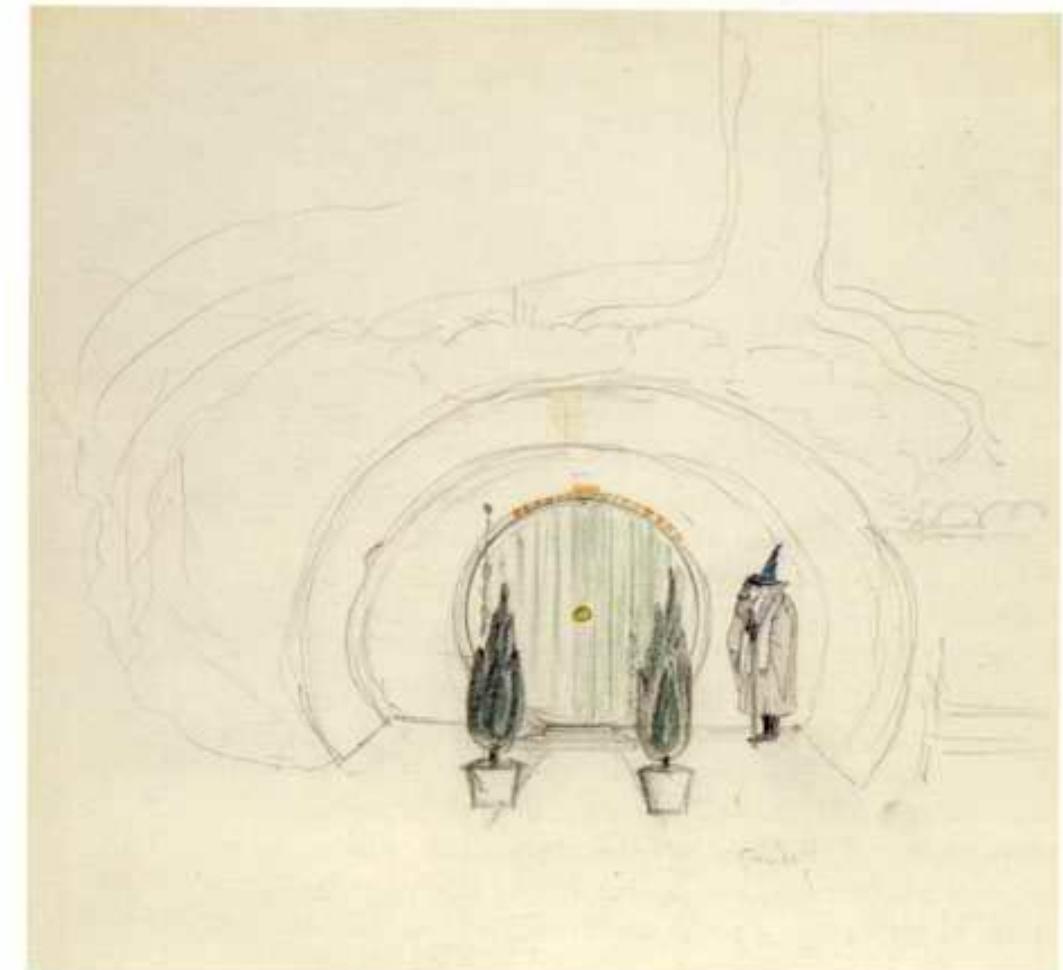
*One Morning* is roughly drawn, and may have been a visual aid to Tolkien in working out the story. It is one of several pictures in which he drew Bilbo. He knew what he wanted:

I picture a fairly human figure, not a kind of 'fairy' rabbit as some of my British reviewers seem to fancy: fattish in the stomach, shortish in the leg. A round, jovial face; ears only slightly pointed and 'elvish'; hair short and curling (brown). The feet from the ankles down, covered with brown hairy fur. Clothing: green velvet breeches; red or yellow waistcoat;

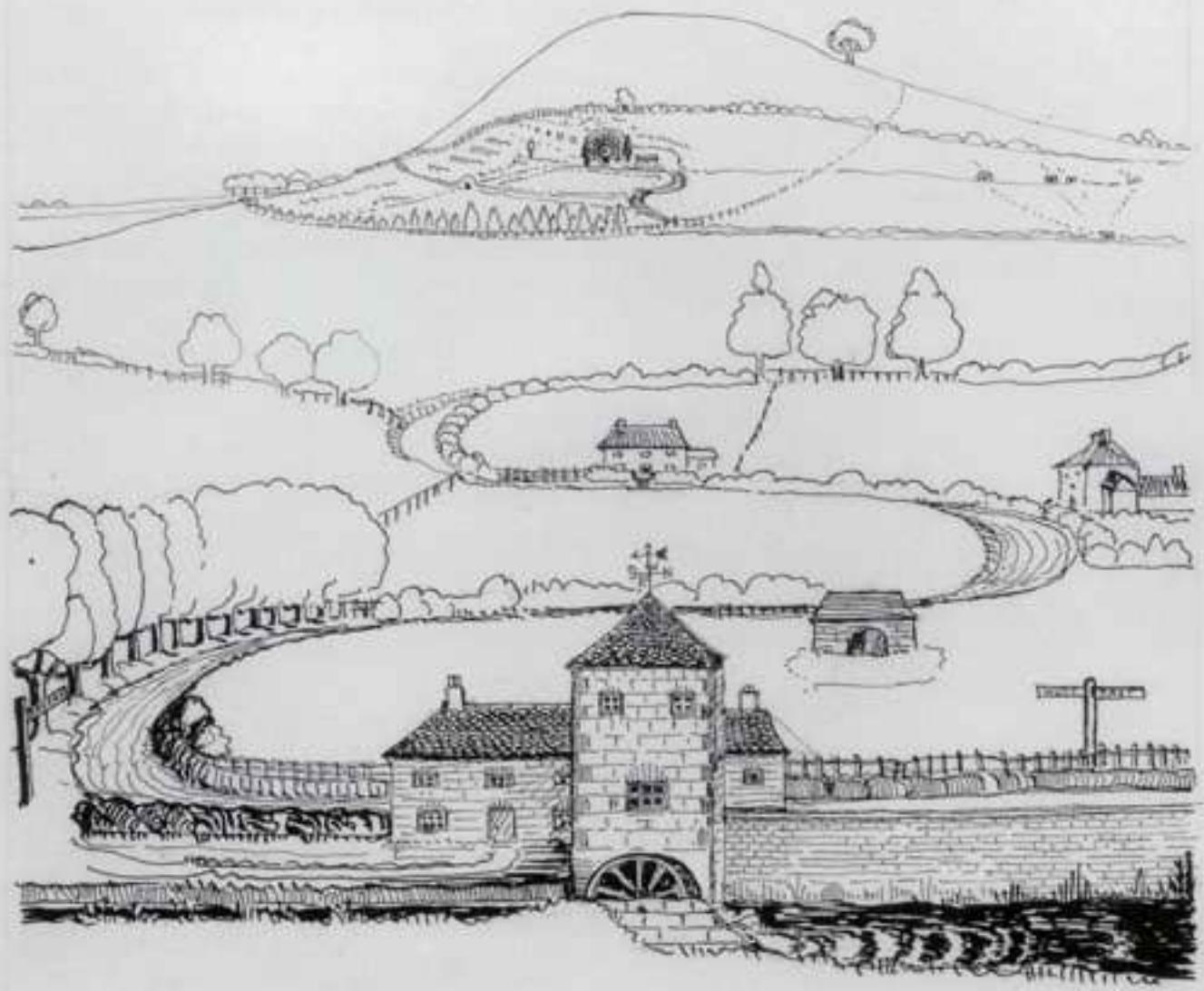
brown or green jacket; gold (or brass) buttons. . . ,<sup>14</sup>

But he was never confident with drawing the figure. When, in March 1938, his American publisher cabled to ask him to supply some drawings of hobbits for advertising, he replied that he was not competent to do so, and to prove it (to himself) he drew on the telegram a very inadequate pencil sketch of a hobbit dressed like Bilbo in *One Morning*, arms akimbo, with the face left blank and with ears rather more than 'slightly' pointed.<sup>15</sup>

*Bag End Underbill* [90] is another early sketch, made by Tolkien before he had settled on the 'architecture' of Bag-End and the appearance of the surrounding land-scape. The slope of the hill is defined tentatively with several lines. The tree at the top is close to the door;



91  
*Gandalf*  
Pencil, coloured pencil



The Hill-Hobbiton

**The earliest long view of Hobbiton is probably the drawing *The Hill: Hobbiton* [92]. In style it is a curious**

later Tolkien moved it farther away, and in some sketches removed it altogether. Part of Bilbo's garden can be seen at lower left. The bell pull is on the right in the doorway. Along the wall at right are additional round windows drawn in pencil but not inked, in contradiction to the published text: 'The best rooms [of Bag-End] were all on the left hand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden, and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river.' This line was added in the revised typescript of the book, which suggests that *Bag End Underbill* dates from the original writing of chapter i (the manuscript for that part of the chapter is unfortunately lost).

A drawing of Gandalf [91] appears, from its style, paper, and colour palette, to have been made at roughly the same time. In this the bell pull is to the left of the door, its final position (as in *The Hall at Bag-End* [139]). The tree is almost on top of the entrance and makes the hobbit-hole look rather too like Peter Rabbit's home, dug in a sand-bank beneath the root of a very big fir-tree. Only the door, the shrubs, and the figure were drawn in detail before the picture was abandoned. The wizard matches the text perfectly: 'a little old man with a staff ... a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak, a silver scarf over which his long white beard hung down below his waist, and immense black boots.' The mark placed by Gandalf on the door -the runes B and D with a diamond, which mean 'Burglar wants a good job, plenty of Excitement and reasonable Reward' - can be read next to the right-hand shrub. The figure of Gandalf was inspired by a painting of an old man in a cloak and wide-brimmed hat, *Der Berggeist* ('The Mountain-spirit') by the German artist Josef Madelener (1881-1967). Tolkien kept a picture-postcard reproduction of the painting in a paper cover labelled 'origin of Gandalf'.<sup>16</sup>

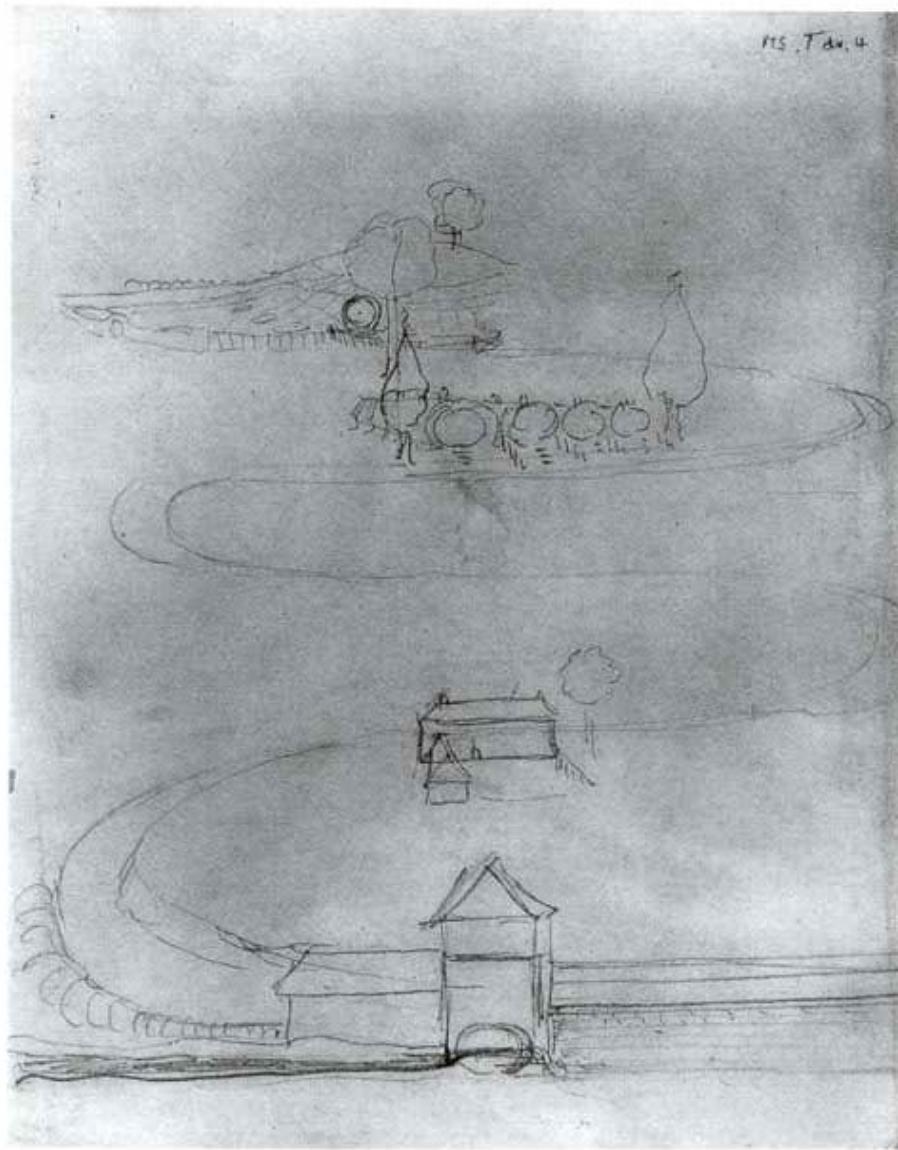
92

*The Hill: Hobbiton* Pencil, black ink

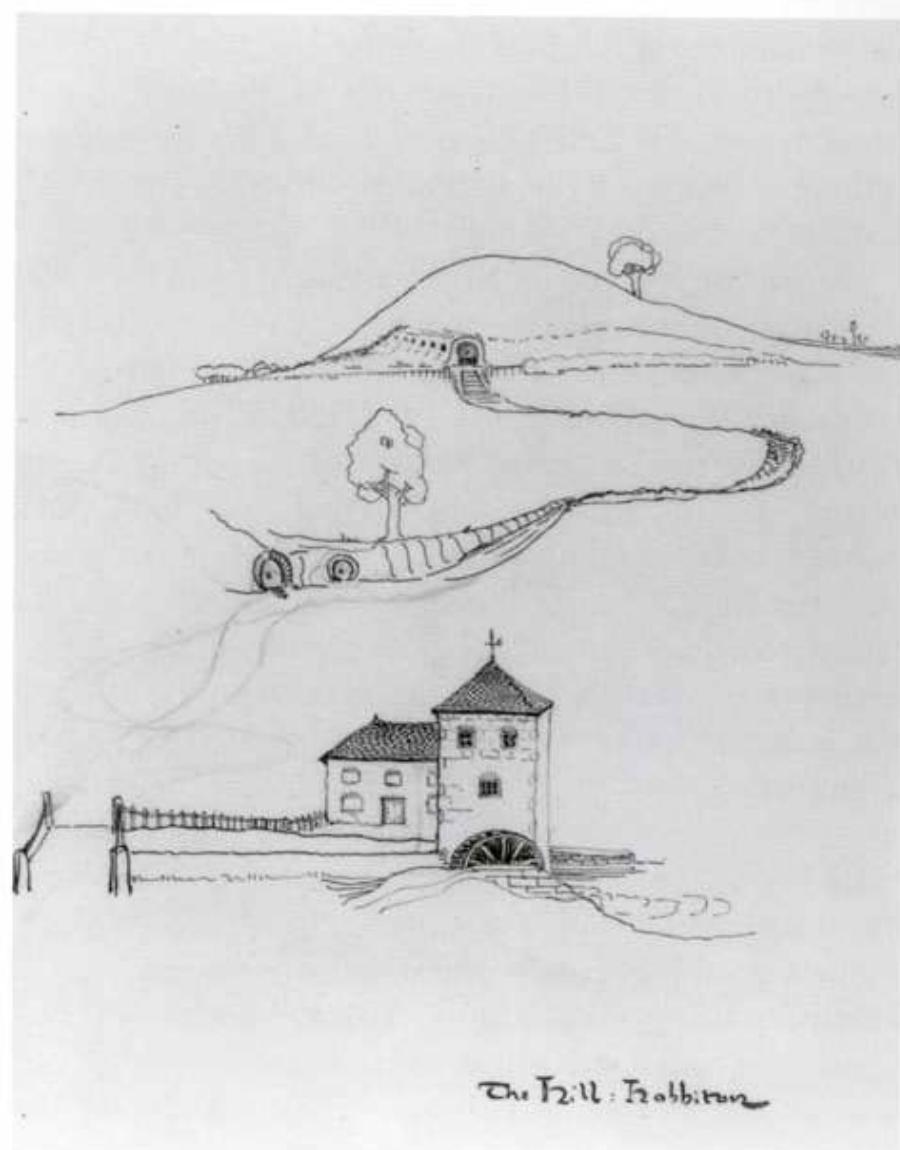
picture: some parts are only sketched, others are rendered with great care, yet it seems to be finished. It incorporates *Bag End Underbill*, much reduced, omitting only the tree above the door and lengthening the path between the door and a gate. The larger landscape now began to grow, outward from Bag-End to the south: more hobbit-holes, and houses, a long winding lane for Bilbo to run down at the beginning of chapter 2, and the 'great Mill' at bottom. The signpost at lower left points the way to Bag-End, suggesting the importance of the Baggins residence in the neighbourhood. The lane follows an exaggerated course down the hill, curving four times before it leaves the scene at lower right.

The several later sketches of The Hill were made presumably when Tolkien redrew the picture for publication. In all of these he stretched the composition upward into a shape better suited to the published book. Their order of drawing was most likely as described below. In the sketch [93] Tolkien retained the essential elements of Bag-End at top and the mill at bottom, still connected by a sinuous path; but the lane now has a regularity to its curves which seems artificial. At the top, Tolkien began to draw large trees and additional hobbit-holes with round doors, but stopped probably as soon as he realized that he was obscuring Bag-End in the process.

This sketch was followed by one [94] in which the lane is much altered and simplified. Now it leads from Bag-End down a flight of steps, no longer through a gate, and more naturally along the curve of the hill, past a tree and two hobbit-holes, until it leaves the picture across a bridge newly constructed at bottom left. A still later version [95] closely approaches the final drawing [97] in composition, but Tolkien misjudged the relative proportions of its parts. The lane is straighter - too straight, and seems a hard, steep climb up to Bag-End or a dangerous descent coming down. The steps in front of Bilbo's home have vanished for good, and his gate has returned. Three hobbit-holes on the side road (Bagshot Row) below Bag-End now appear, as do the buildings and dovecote (with dove in flight) at centre, and several large trees. At the mill the tower has been moved to the left of the structure and made taller, the side door has been closed in, and the windows have been halved in number and redesigned. The bridge is no longer in the extreme bottom left corner, but closer to the mill and positioned to lead more directly out of the front of the picture.



93 *Untitled (Sketch for The Hill)*  
Pencil

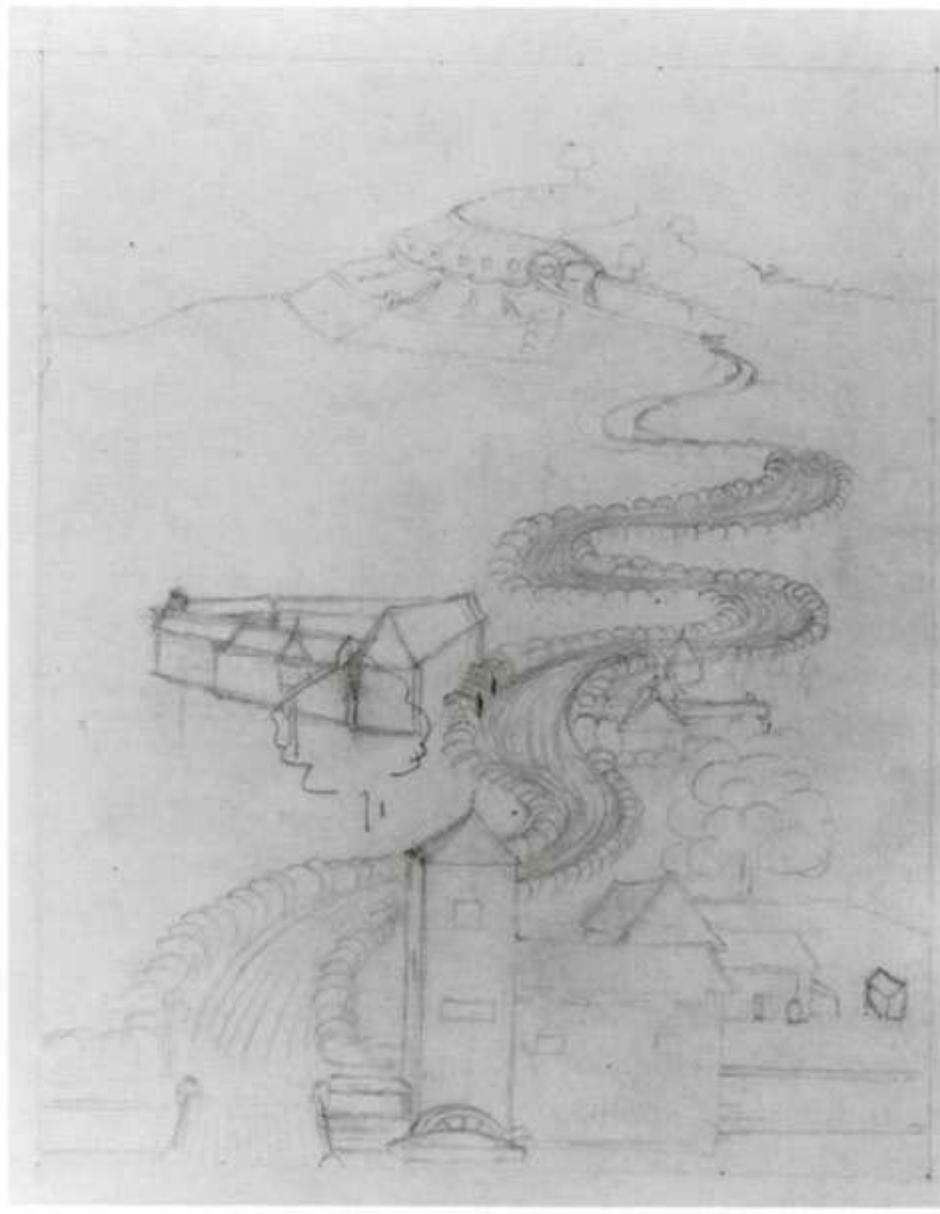


94 *The Hill: Hobbiton*  
Pencil, black ink



95 *Untitled (Sketch for The Hill)*

Pencil



96 *Untitled (Sketch for The Hill)*

In another drawing [96] Tolkien returned to a snake-like lane, much to excess. Hedges line almost its entire length. The building in the middle ground (the Old Grange) and the house across the road from it are more developed, and the mill has acquired outbuildings. The landscape at the very top of The Hill is now close to its final form, with the large tree crowning the composition.

At last, in *The Hill: Hobbiton across the Water* [97] Tolkien achieved the balance of proportions and the gentler course of the lane he had been aiming for. It is one of the most interesting pictures he ever made, and one of the most meticulously drawn. It brings the Hobbit village to life, and directly influenced the description of Hobbiton in *The Lord of the Rings*, where Bagshot Row, the Old Grange, and the party tree '(in the field just below Bag-End), among other details, are first mentioned in a text. The bridge, since [96] with its bottom edge exactly at the edge of the frame, is perhaps the most significant feature of the drawing: not only is it the way Bilbo follows out of his comfortable, circumscribed world onto the road to adventure, it is also symbolically a bridge between the world of the reader and the world of *The Hobbit*, an invitation to enter the picture and the story.

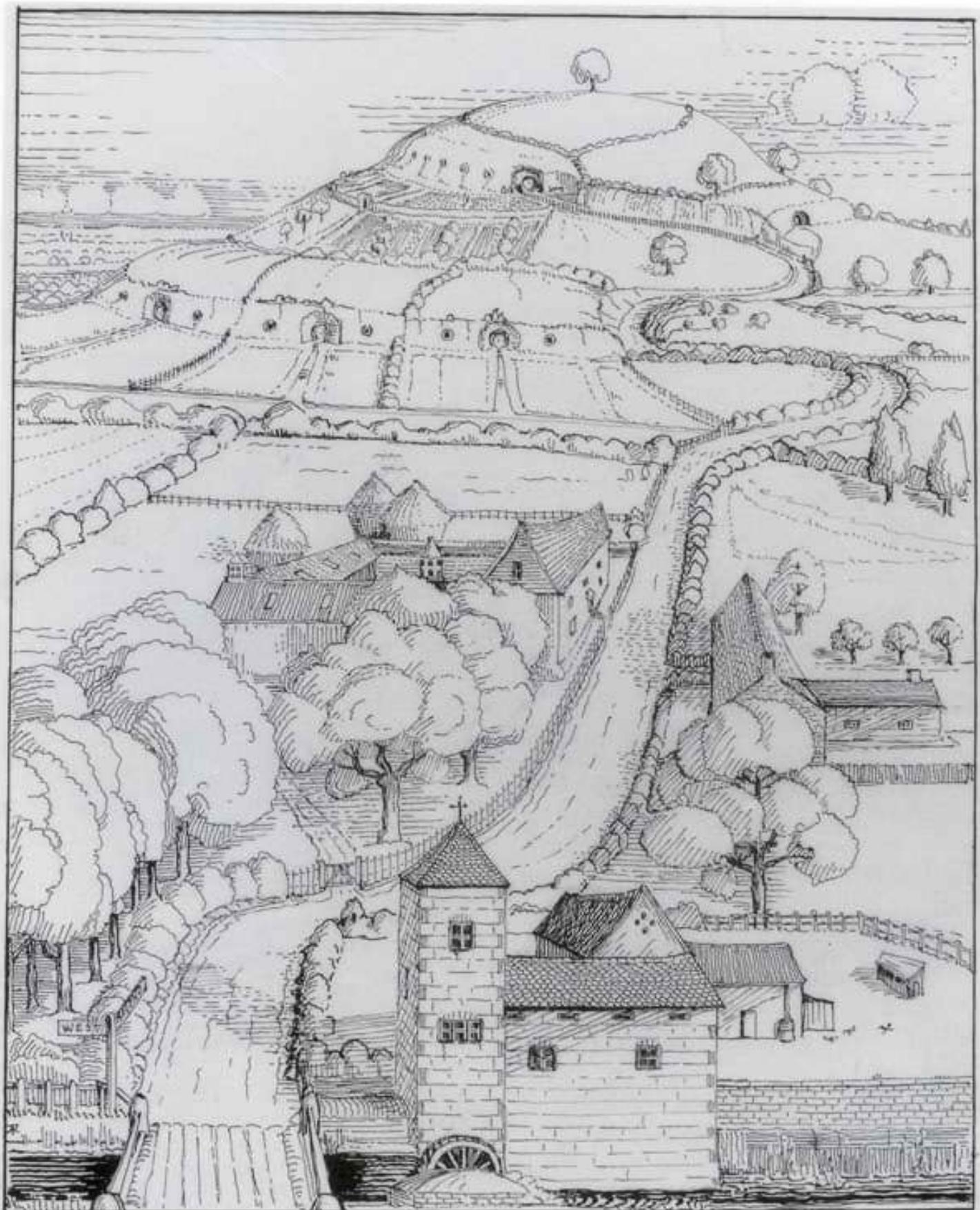
The signpost still points the way to Bag-End, and the eye naturally follows the lane to the top of The Hill, where *The Hobbit* begins. Since the previous sketches, trees and hedgerows have grown everywhere, fences have been built, haystacks raised behind the grange. The flying dove has landed somewhere out of sight, but there are now chickens in the yard behind the mill. The part of the grange facing the lane, with its slightly curved roof and its dovecote, recalls the building at left in the *Roverandom* picture *The House Where 'Rover' Began His Adventures as a Toy* [73]. The drawing is further enhanced by a fully rendered sky and a glimpse of a more distant landscape at upper left.

This version of *The Hill* was used only once, as the frontispiece to the first British printing of *The Hobbit*. It was replaced in the second printing, and in the American edition, with a superior rendering in water-colour, one of a series of paintings Tolkien made at the request of his American publisher. The Houghton Mifflin Company wanted to include in their edition of *The Hobbit* colour illustrations by American artists in addition to Tolkien's line drawings. Alien & Unwin suggested to Tolkien that it would be better if all of the illustrations were by him, and asked that he send, to be forwarded to Houghton Mifflin, five or six of the paintings he was known to have on hand. Tolkien

replied that he was 'divided between knowledge of my own inability and fear of what American artists (doubtless of admirable skill) might produce', and he felt also that 'professional pictures would make my own amateurish productions look rather silly'. The paintings he had 'tucked away', as Alien & Unwin's art director recalled, in fact were not for *The Hobbit*, Tolkien pointed out, but scenes from the 'Silmarillion' mythology 'on the outskirts of which the Hobbit has his adventures'. He offered to make five or six colour illustrations for the Houghton Mifflin *Hobbit*, as his Oxford teaching schedule allowed; but that if time was of the essence, he wondered if, 'rather than lose the American interest', Houghton Mifflin should be allowed to 'do what seems good to them - as long as it was possible ... to veto anything from or influenced by the Disney studios (for all whose work I have a heartfelt loathing)'.<sup>7</sup>

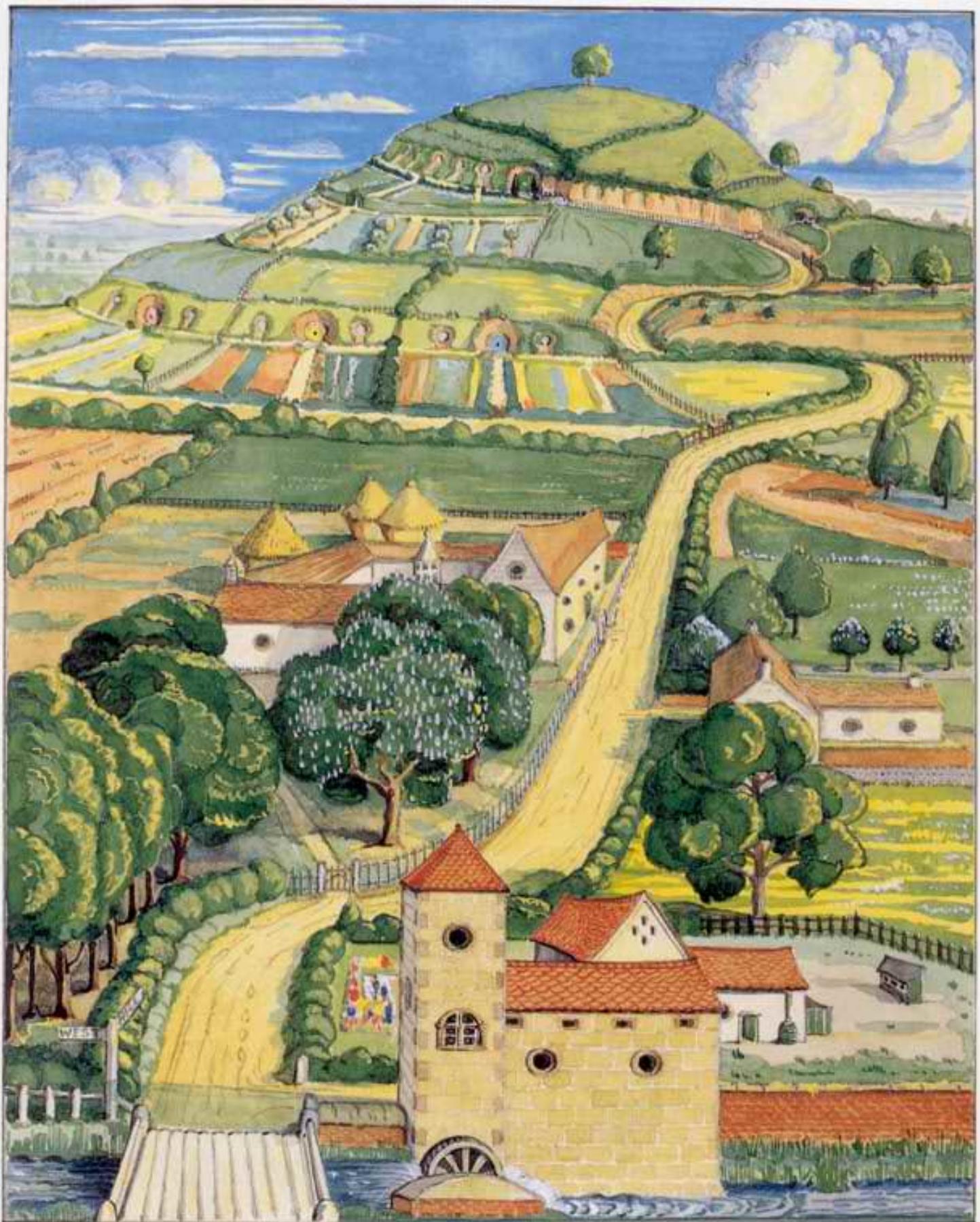
Without Tolkien's permission, Alien & Unwin passed along his remarks to Houghton Mifflin, which led him to feel 'even greater hesitation in posing further as an illustrator'. But he resolved to try, and sent Alien & Unwin three paintings as samples of his work. 'I can-not do much better', he wrote,

and if their standard is too low, the H.M.Co can say so at once and without offence. . . These are casual and careless pastime-products, illustrating other stories. Having publica-tion in view I could possibly improve the standard a little, make drawings rather bolder in colour & less messy and fussy in detail (and also larger). The Mirkwood picture [i.e. *Taur-na-Fuin*] is much the same as the plate in *the Hobbit*, but illustrates a different adventure. I think if the H. M.Co wish me to proceed I should leave that black and grey plate [*Mirkwood*^ and do four other scenes.<sup>18</sup>



The Hall-Hall, Hall, Hall, Hall, Hall

The Hill: Hobbiton across the Water.



The hill : hobbiton-across-the Water

衆



In the end he produced five paintings: *The Hill*:

### *Hobbiton-across-the Water*, a new version of the

frontispiece; *Rivendell*; *Bilbo Woke Up with the Early Sun in His Eyes*; *Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves*; and *Conversation with Smaug*. Remarkably, these were made all within one or two weeks in mid-July 1937 (again, during a university vacation), except *The Hill*, which was completed by 13 August. The scenes were selected, Tolkien said, 'so as to distribute illustration fairly evenly throughout the book (especially when taken in conjunction with the black-and-white drawings).'<sup>19</sup> Alien & Unwin added all of the new illus-trations except *Bilbo Woke* to the second printing of their edition; Houghton Mifflin chose to print all except *Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves*, and without exception cropped or otherwise altered the colour art.<sup>20</sup>

For the watercolour *The Hill* [98] Tolkien traced the final ink drawing<sup>21</sup> and transferred it to a fresh sheet. Most of the details of the ink frontispiece therefore were retained in the watercolour, but a few changes were made as the painting progressed. In the field just below the door of Bag-End, where three trees had stood there is now only one, but another has grown at the end of a fence below Bagshot Row. The skylights in the grange have disappeared, and its windows, previously rectangular, are now circular like the doors and windows of the hobbit-holes. The formerly generic deciduous trees nearby have become specifically the chestnuts Saruman cuts down in *The Lord of the Rings*. The mill has lost its weathervane, and its windows too have changed, from all rectangular to a variety of shapes. The water in the millstream, enhanced by white body colour, now appears to be really rushing along. In the yard of the mill Tolkien has planted a flower garden. Beside the bridge the signpost now points not to Bag-End, but more generally to The Hill.

98

*The Hill: Hobbiton-across-the Water* Pencil, watercolour, black ink, white body colour

It is a striking picture, not only for its details. Here even more than in his 'Silmarillion' art, Tolkien used his marvellous sense of colour and combined paints, ink, and body colour with great skill and delicacy. He was able to work quickly in this fashion; why, then, did he paint almost no watercolours after the *Hobbit* paintings? Later he preferred coloured pencil almost exclusively. Perhaps he no longer had enough patience for watercolours, or enough confidence in their use. In any case, he painted the *Hobbit* series superbly. In *The Hill* colour adds another dimension to the view. The yellow sunlight, blue sky, rolling white clouds, and orange roofs, the pink, yellow, and blue doors along Bagshot Row, and the brightly-coloured flowers in the mill garden suggest a cheerful spring day far better than Tolkien achieved in pen and ink. The landscape in the distance was also improved: what had been indistinct in black and white, as if under a low-lying mist, in colour is distinctly a wooded plain leading to an echo of Bilbo's Hill on the far horizon. Later Tolkien put a name to it: Bindbale Wood, in that part of the Hobbit country called in *The Lord of the Rings* the North Farthing; in *The Hobbit* it is only the land 'over The Hill'.

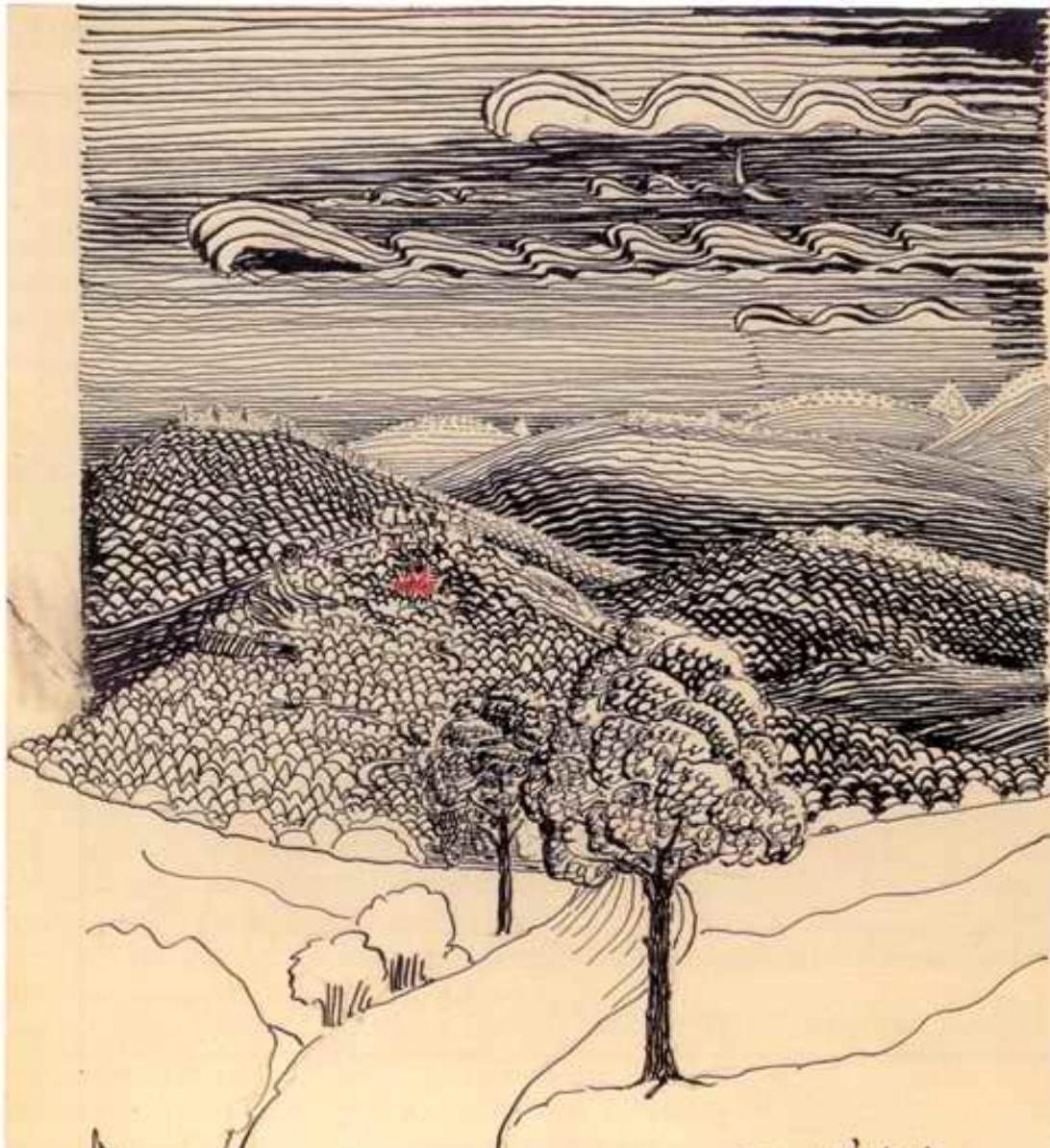
The heavy pen style of *Trolls' Hill* [99] marks it as an early drawing for *The Hobbit*. Like *The Hill: Hobbiton* [92] it is a combination of detailed rendering with an area (at bottom) only roughly sketched. It illustrates a scene in chapter 2: 'There was a hill some way off with trees on it, pretty thick in parts. Out of the dark mass of the trees they could now see a light shining, a reddish comfortable-looking light, as it might be a fire or torches twinkling.' It is a literal illustration, but is raised above the ordinary by the flash of fire-red ink in the midst of the thick, black forest. However, this would have required two colours to reproduce, and since the *Hobbit* illustrations had to be printed in black only, *Trolls' Hill* as drawn could not be included in the published book. Tolkien does not seem to have tried to redraw it in one colour when assembling pictures for publication. If he considered *Trolls' Hill* at that time, no doubt he saw that the firelight would be too hard to pick out within the mass of trees if it were not printed in red.

At some point he also illustrated the moment in chapter 2 when the three trolls who have captured the dwarves are tricked by Gandalf into remaining above ground at dawn: 'For just at that moment the light came over the hill, and there was a mighty twitter in the branches. William never spoke for he stood turned to stone as he stooped; and Bert and Tom were stuck like

rocks as they looked at him.' Two finished versions of this picture are extant. In the first the figures of the trolls and some of the foliage are crudely drawn, and at lower right only the trolls' cooking pot and two jugs appear, too obviously 'arranged' by the artist. The second version [100] is very close to the first in style of drawing - so close that it seems likely to have been drawn immediately afterward - but is much improved. The vessels at bottom are more naturally placed, and have been joined by the trolls' 'barrel of good drink'. Gandalf now holds his staff more commandingly. And the trolls themselves, though still poorly drawn, now have appropriate looks of surprise on their faces and appear troll-like and stone-like at the same time.

*The Three Trolls are Turned to Stone* is a very interesting picture, as it shows Bilbo's face at left and the complete figure of Gandalf at right. Also it is certainly the image of this scene that Tolkien kept in his mind's eye, for in the third edition of *The Hobbit* he changed the text so that Gandalf steps from behind a tree (rather than bushes) to help Bilbo out of a thorn-bush (rather than a tree), as shown in the illustration. Unfortunately, Tolkien applied an ink wash to the trolls and to Gandalf's cloak, and the picture would not have reproduced well by line-block.

Finally, Tolkien drew a third illustration for chapter 2, of an earlier scene, but wholly in line and with striking graphic effects atypical of his pen work.



99  
Trolls' Hill  
Pen and black ink and wash



Trolls' Hill

*Trolls' Hill*  
Pencil, black and red ink

*The Three Trolls are Turned to Stone*  
Pencil, black ink



*The Trolls* [102] depicts the arrival of one of the dwarves in the trolls' glade. His shoulders and head, with the distinctive dwarf-cap that appears elsewhere in *The Hobbit* art (for example, in the sketch [i03]<sup>22</sup>), are visible in outline at bottom. A 'very large fire of beech-logs' is blazing, and the trolls are hiding among the trees just beyond the circle of firelight, waiting to pounce. It is a beautifully sinister scene, so unlike *The Three Trolls are Turned to Stone* where the sun is rising and all is safe again. The trees, strong verticals as in *Mirkwood*, frame and concentrate the action. They suggest the bars of a cage, which is appropriate, as the clearing is a trap for the dwarves. The utter blackness between the trees, and the glowing eyes of the trolls which stare chillingly straight at the viewer, further heighten the mood of danger.

The basic composition was borrowed from an illus-tration for *Hansel and Gretel* by Jennie Harbour [loij], in a book of fairy tales<sup>23</sup> that was in the Tolkien house-hold. Tolkien also took from her picture the flames 'drawn' by the absence of black - the same technique by which the sunlight in *The Three Trolls are Turned to Stone* and the lightning in *The Mountain-path*

he did not slavishly copy. His picture is more structured than Harbour's, his woods more menacing, his flames and smoke more animated. Also his drawing is more distinctly Art nouveau, especially in its sinuous, stylized smoke and sharp contrasts of black and white. It is a technically brilliant illustration. The white dots were not formed with paint, but are areas allowed to remain without ink in an otherwise black drawing. The only white paint on the original is on the obtrusive arm of the troll at right, applied as a correction. The fineness of the dots and lines is impressive, but was almost too fine for the printer, who had to ink the block very carefully lest details be lost in reproduction.

The fair valley of Rivendell, like Hobbiton, was more fully developed in Tolkien's pictures than in his text. *Riding Down into Rivendell* [104] seems to be the earliest extant view of the place, as early as *The Hill*:

*Hobbiton* [92] and *Trolls' Hill* [99], to judge by the style of penwork and lettering. It is a curious picture. The figure on the horse or pony appears to be Gandalf, with his pointed hat; but nowhere in Tolkien's writings does the wizard wear a red cloak. He is certainly descending into a valley; but the view does not give the sense of a hidden valley such as Rivendell is said to be, nor is it as deep as described in chapter 3: 'They

[109] were formed - as well as the elaborate dot-patterned textures on the trees and around the campfire. However,

saw a valley far



101

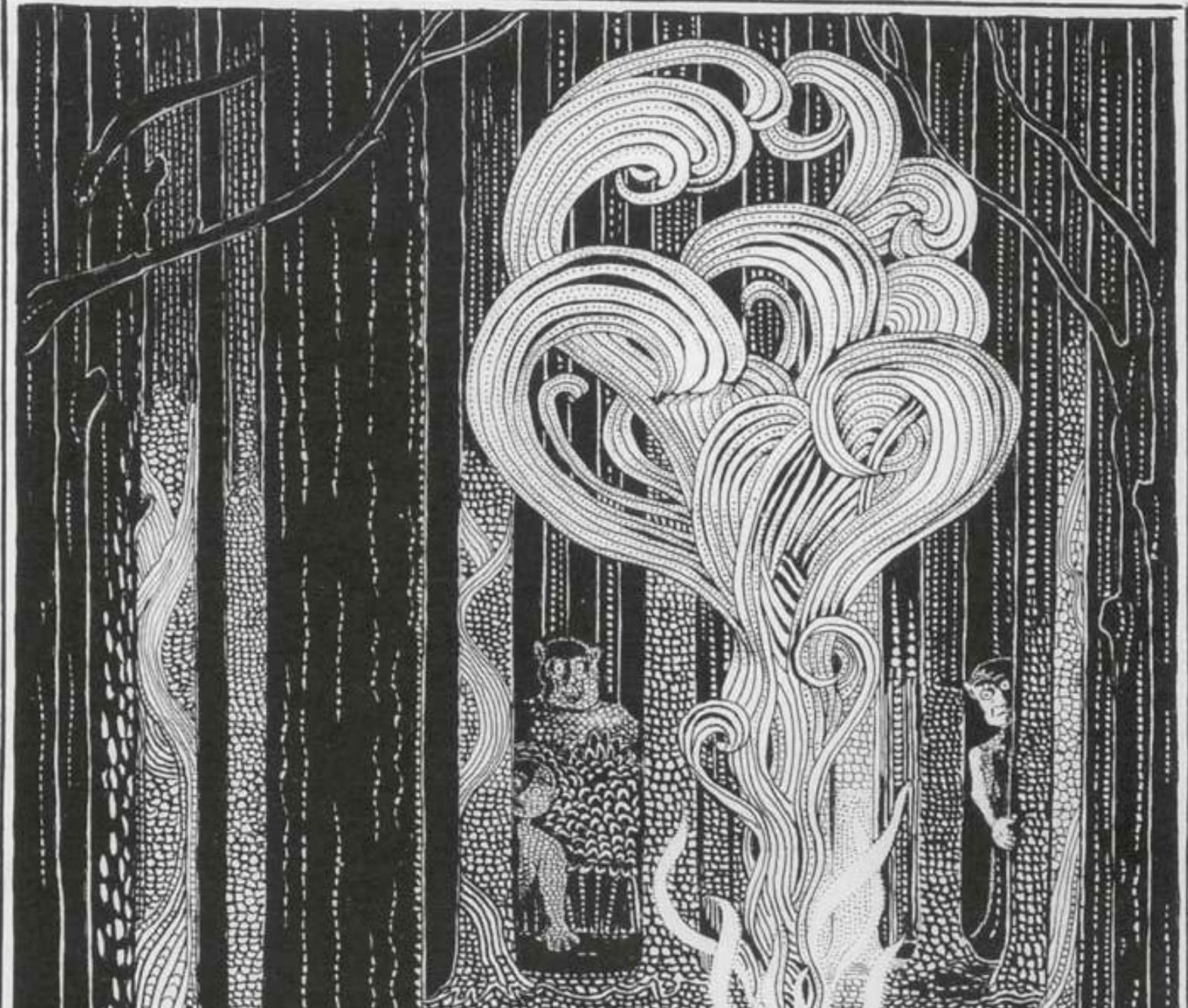
Jennie Harbour,  
*Hansel Comforted His Sister*  
Printed illustration

below. They could hear the voice of hurrying water in a rocky bed at the bottom. . . .' As drawn, it is too open and too shallow. Surviving separate sketches of Eirond's house, presumably made in advance of any of the larger drawings of the valley, show that Tolkien designed it originally extending well to the back. In one sketch it has a classical appearance, as if the entrance to a museum or civic building. Its porch is similar to the one in *The House Where 'Rover' Began His Adventures as a 'Toy'* [73], and as variously drawn had five or eight columns. *Riding Down into Rivendell* adds a second, smaller building next to the main house.

The drawings *Rivendell Looking West* [105] and *Rivendell Looking East* [106] follow the text more closely. In both the valley appears quite deep, with the surrounding mountain walls rising to great heights, and in the second Eirond's house is at least partly hidden by trees. The pictures were

1930s: their textures, chiefly built up with lines made with the pencil point, are closer to some in the 'Silmaril-lion' art of the late 1920s than to the blended shading Tolkien came to prefer in the later 1930s and in the following decade for *Old Man Willow* [147] and other drawings for *The Lord of the Rings*. Despite their titles, both of the Rivendell views are oriented to the east. *Rivendell Looking West* appears to be facing in that direction only if one accepts the sketch of Eirond's house on the near side of the river and compares the picture to *Rivendell Looking East* or to the watercolour *Rivendell* [108]; but then the river would be flowing down from the west, which the *Wilderland* map shows it did not. However, in *Rivendell Looking West* there is another, fainter sketch of the house on the far side of the river among the trees, which suggests that Tolkien was experimenting with its placement. When, perhaps years later, he added 'Looking West' to the original title

drawn probably in the early





.The Trolls.

102 *The Trolls*

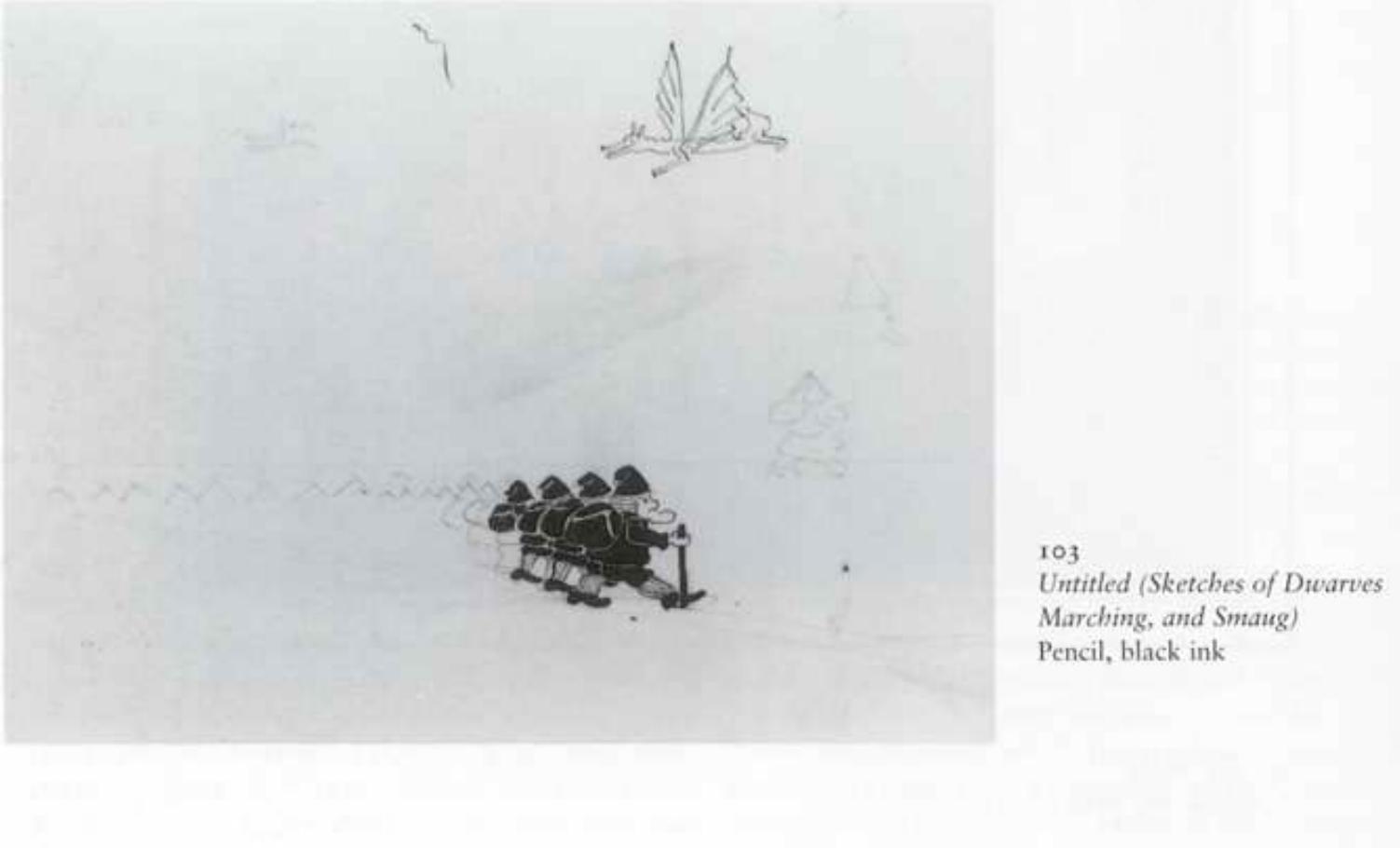
Black ink, white body colour

*Rivendell* - variations in the manuscript on *East* and *West* show that neither title was written all at once - he seems to have noticed only the more prominent house and labelled the view incorrectly.

*Rivendell Looking East* is a virtuoso work: Tolkien used at least seven colours as well as grey, and achieved a great variety of textures. The view down the length of the valley and towards the far mountains is stunning. But the picture is unfocused; its scope is too wide, and the eye does not have enough guidance. One looks now at the mountains, now at the tall cliffs (whose modelling anticipates the crags of *The Mountain-path* [109]), now at the house, now at the foreground. The picture ultimately fails there, at the steps and at the bridge (here uniquely with three arches rather than one), which are drawn with poor perspective and are out of scale, and at lower left where (even allowing for paper damage) the path up the hill leads frustratingly not to the house but off the edge of the sheet.

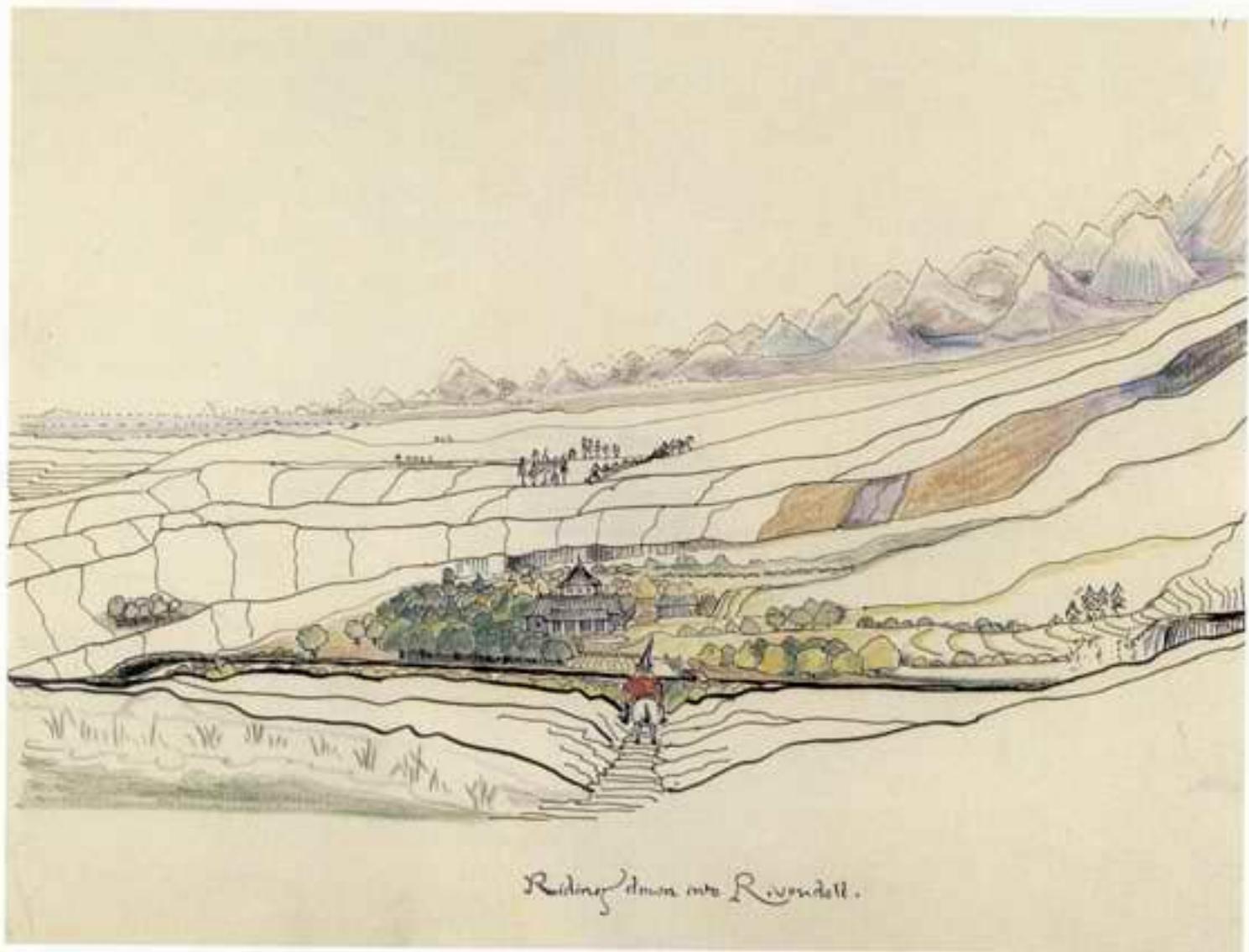
In his splendid painting of Rivendell [108] Tolkien combined the best elements of *West* and *East*, possibly by way of a rough sketch [107], and greatly improved the composition. The eye is drawn into the view now at bottom right, led by a lone birch to a flight of steps like those in *Riding Down into Rivendell*, and naturally down to a clearly visible path, across a simple bridge, up more steps, and so continuously to the house, following the route of the company as described in chapter 3:

On they all went, leading their ponies, till they were brought to a good path and so at last to the very brink of the river. It was flowing fast and noisily, as mountain-streams do of a summer evening, when sun has been all day on the snow far up above. There was only a narrow bridge of stone without a parapet, as narrow as a pony could well walk on; and over that they had to go, slow and careful, one by one, each leading his pony by the bridle. . . . And so at last they all came to the Last Homely House, and found its doors flung wide.

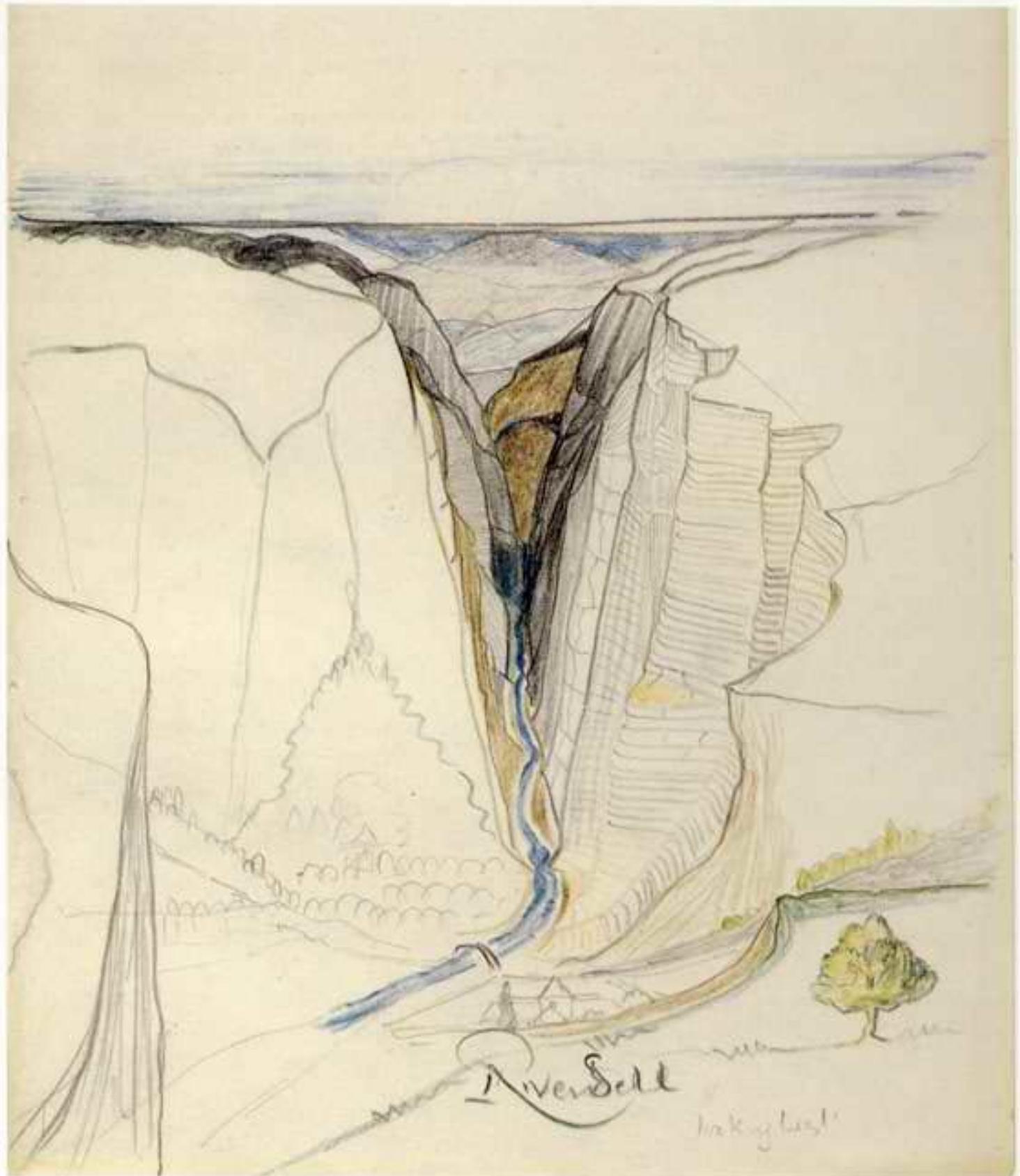


103

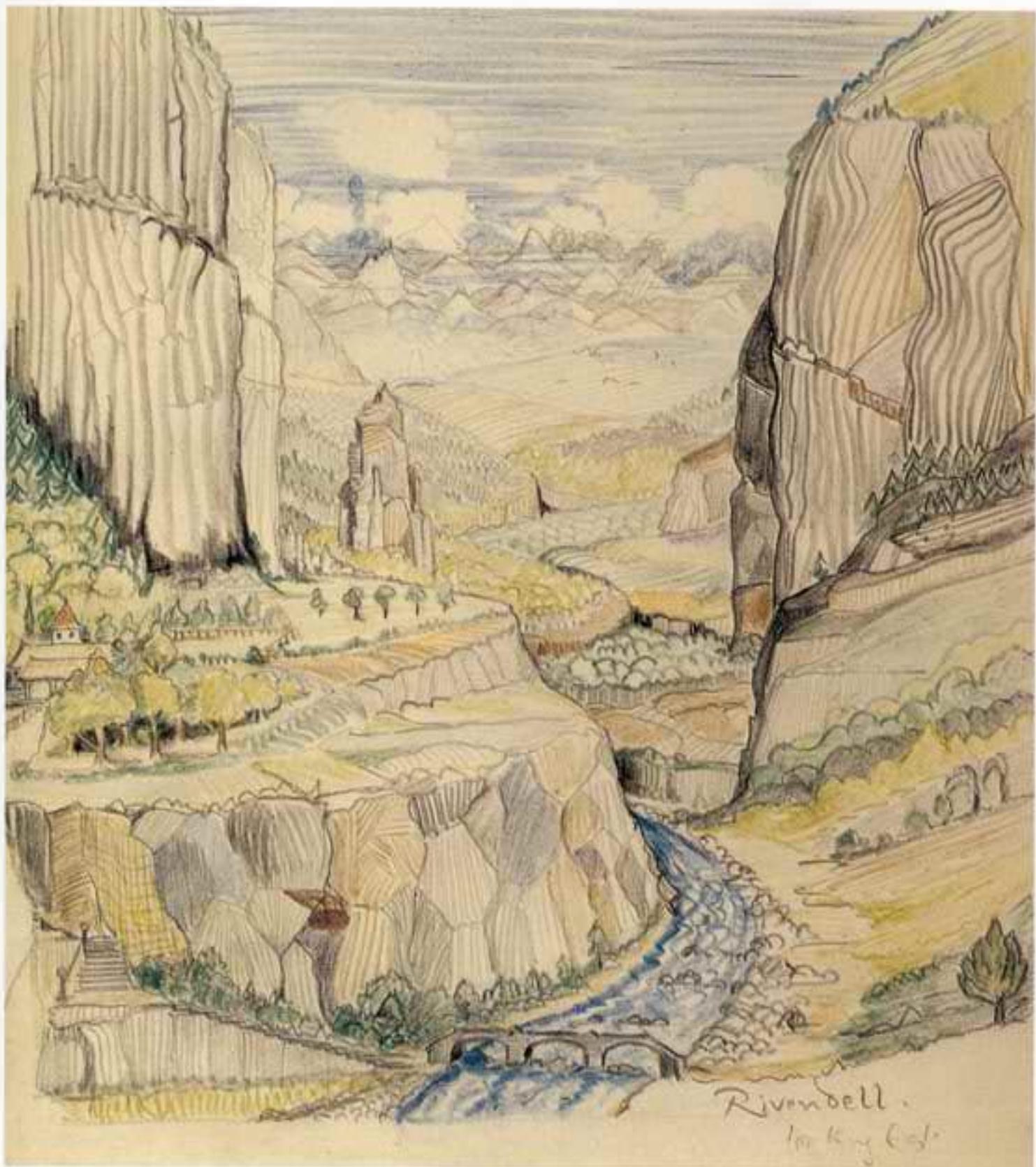
*Untitled (Sketches of Dwarves  
Marching, and Smaug)*  
Pencil, black ink



104. *Riding Down into Rivendell*  
Pencil, black ink, coloured pencil



105 *Rivendell Looking West*  
Pencil, coloured pencil



106 *Rivendell Looking East*  
Pencil, coloured pencil



Rivendell

107  
*Rivendell*  
Pencil, coloured pencil

The rushing water also beckons. Guided as well by the curving cliffs and the line of trees along the bank, one follows the river upstream until it bends out of sight. Beyond that point is the realm of the imagination, which the painting by design invites us to enter. 'Still round the corner there may wait/A new road or a secret gate', Tolkien wrote in *The Lord of the Rings*, and the same anticipation is at work in much of his art. His best pictures have some device to lead the eye into the scene - a river, as here or in *Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves* [124], or the bridge and lane in *The Hill* - as well as a way out, over a hill, or around a bend, or through a door or a mountain gap. In this way he suggests depth, adds interest, and provides a sort of visual narration, deliberately guiding the viewer through the painting or drawing. In *Rivendell* the courses of the river and path and the converging cliffs point the way east to the Misty Mountains, the direction the story is heading. The titling at bottom also has a narrative function: its water motif echoes the river and, no doubt by coincidence, looks ahead to Eirond's power over the Bruinen in *The Lord of the Rings*.

*The Hobbit* very early in its writing became attracted to Tolkien's 'Silmarillion' mythology, a 'dominant construction' in his mind which caused the tale 'to become larger and more heroic as it proceeded.'<sup>24</sup> The art for

*The Hobbit* was influenced also. *Mirkwood*, as already noted, was derived from *Taur-na-Fuin*; and the painting of *Rivendell* owes a debt to the pencil drawing *The Vale of Sirion* [55], similarly with a birch tree in the fore-ground, a river, and a single-arch bridge. Also as noted earlier, both *The Vale of Sirion* and *Rivendell* seem indebted to an illustration by Kay Nielsen for *In Powder and Crinoline*.<sup>5</sup> *Rivendell* in turn influenced the landscape described in *The Lord of the Rings*, specifically a passage in book 2, chapter 2:

[Frodo] walked along the terraces above the loud-flowing

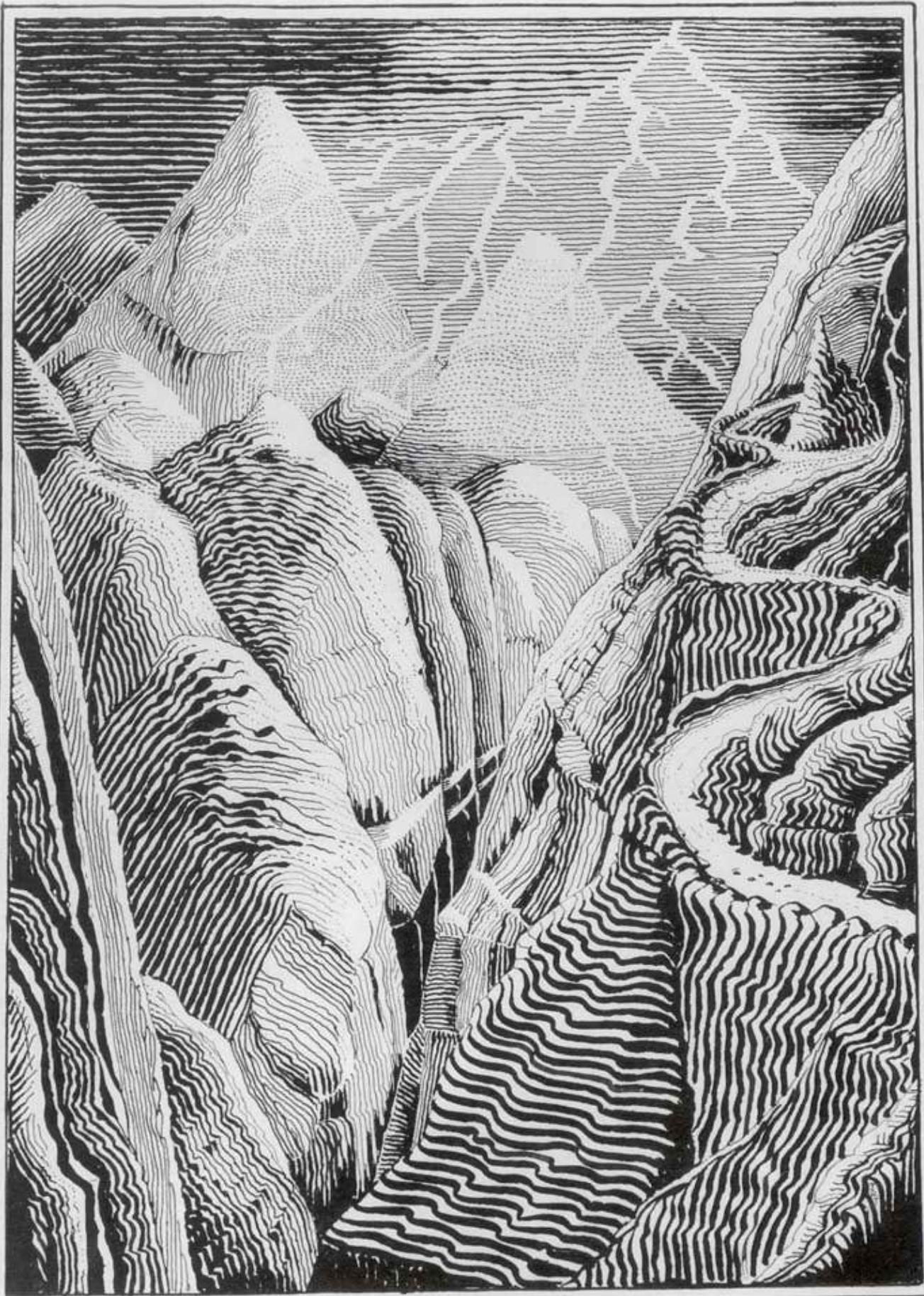
Bruinen and watched the pale, cool sun rise above the far mountains, and shine down, slanting through the thin silver mist; the dew upon the yellow leaves was glimmering, and the woven nets of gossamer twinkled on every bush. Sam walked beside him, saying nothing, but sniffing the air, and looking every now and again with wonder in his eyes at the great heights in the East. The snow was white upon their peaks. . . . 'I should like to get into those pine-woods up there.' He [Frodo] pointed away far up the side of Rivendell to the north.

Tolkien knew the Misty Mountains, far to the east in *Rivendell*, in some form even before he began *The Hobbit*. He painted a small watercolour of them [zoo] in an early style, with one of his characteristic roads running into the distance: possibly a view of the Swiss



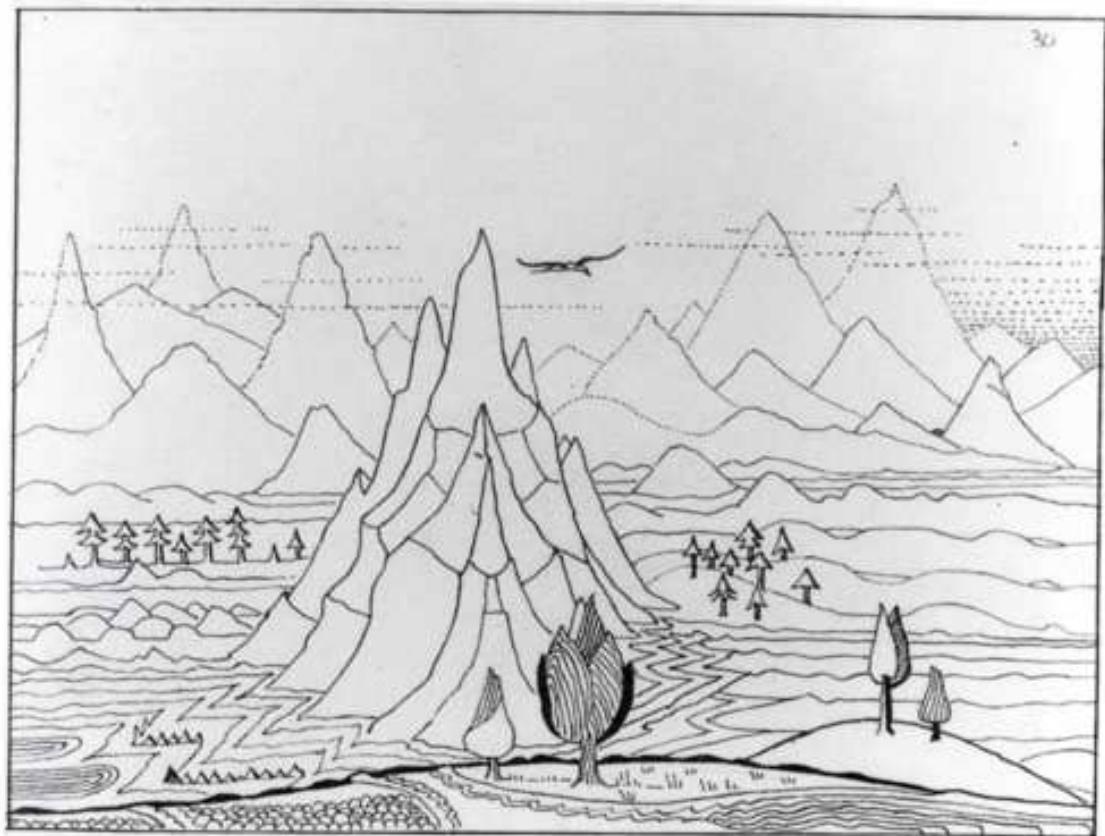
108 *Rivendell*

Pencil, watercolour, black ink



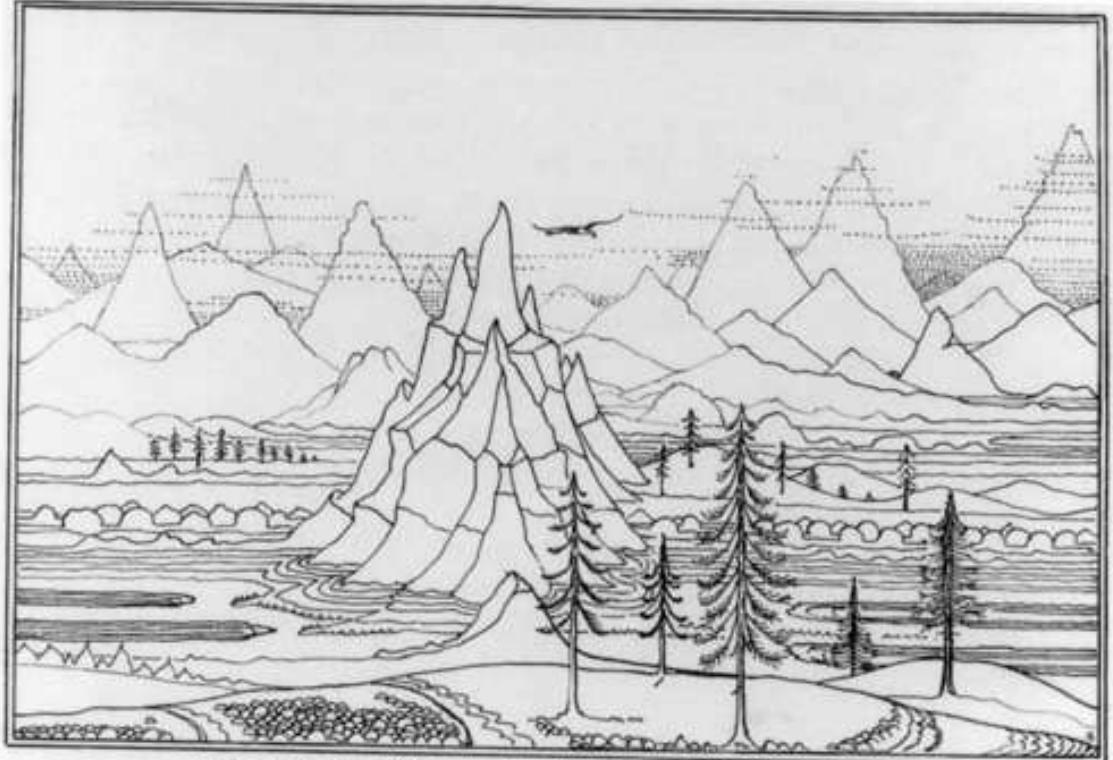
# The Mountain-path

109 *The Mountain-path*  
Pencil, black ink



110

*The Misty Mountains  
Looking West from the Eagles'  
Eryie towards Goblin Gate*  
Pencil, black ink



III  
*The Misty Mountains  
Looking West from the  
Eyrie towards Goblin Gate*  
Black ink

*The Misty Mountains looking West from the  
Eyrie towards Goblin Gate*



112

Alexander Thorburn,  
*Golden Eagle (Immature)*  
Chromolithograph

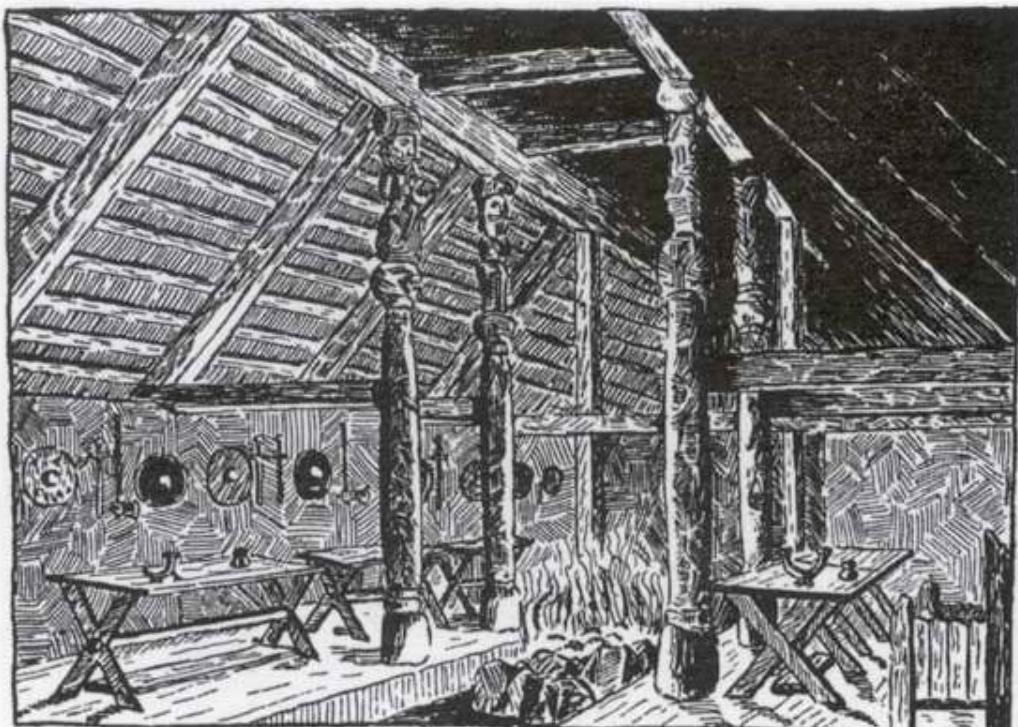
Alps from his holiday there in 1911, or thoughts of them later recalled. 'The hobbit's (Bilbo's) journey from Rivendell to the other side of the Misty Mountains, including the glissade down the slithering stones into the pine woods, is based on my adventures in 1911', he wrote in a letter to his son Michael.<sup>26</sup> His memory of the Alps also influenced his *Hobbit* drawings *The Mountain-path* [109] and *The Misty Mountains Look-ing West*. The earliest of two extant versions of the latter drawing [no] is a translation into ink, with an elaborated background and an eagle in flight, of the sketch of Taniquetil Tolkien made in 1928 [53] - an interesting demotion of the highest peak in Arda into merely one of the Misty Mountains. For the version redrawn for publication [in] Tolkien widened the view and made the trees and contours natural rather than stylized. Goblin Gate, the 'back door' through which Bilbo escapes at the end of chapter 5 of *The Hobbit*, is shown in both drawings as a shaded spot beneath the smaller peaks at upper right.<sup>27</sup>

Tolkien also depicted the Misty Mountains in the third of his *Hobbit* watercolours [113]. This dramatic painting expands upon the opening moment of chapter 7: 'Bilbo woke up with the early sun in his eyes.' In the picture he has not yet 'jumped up to look at the time and to go and put his kettle on' but is still lying on the Eagles' 'wide shelf of rock on the mountain-side' in his dark brown coat, red waistcoat, dark green breeches,

grey stockings, dark green cloak - and black boots, though there is (by mistake) no mention in the text of Bilbo, a typically shoeless hobbit, having acquired them. The mountains, beautiful but menacing with their jagged, snow-covered peaks, stretch range upon range to the dim horizon. We are looking along the length of the Misty Mountains, which the *Wilderland* map shows continue a long way. It is a cold place, but Tolkien lessens the chill and, perhaps, suggests hope for Bilbo's quest by sunlight spreading in warm yellow bands across the landscape, pushing back the shadows. 'The sun was still close to the eastern edge of things. The morning was cool, and mists were

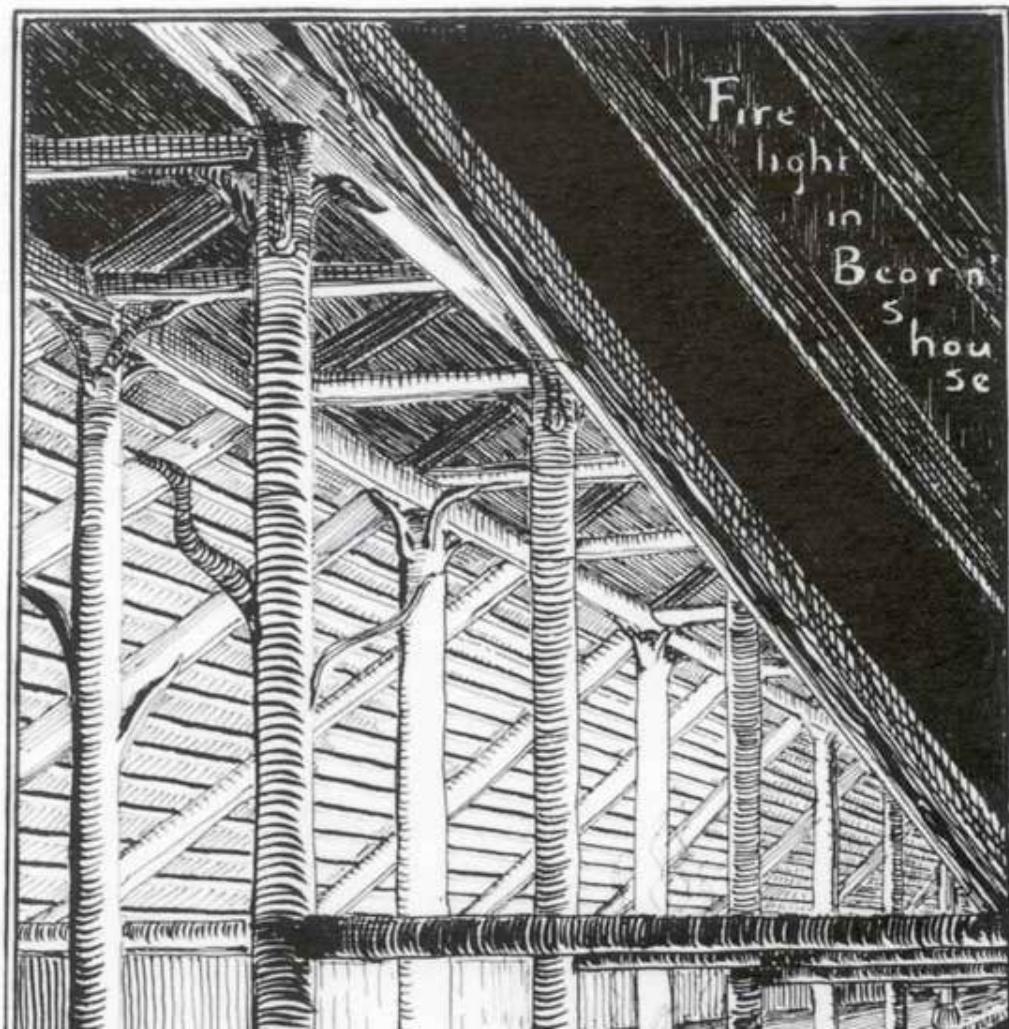


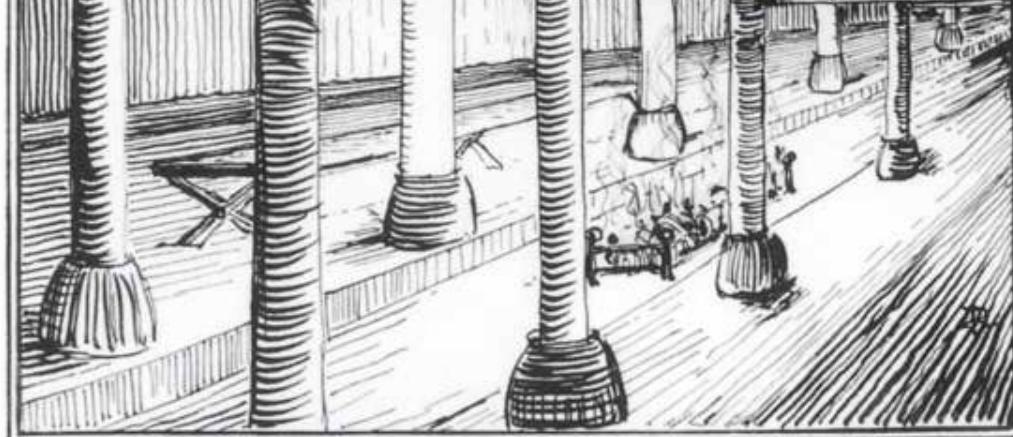




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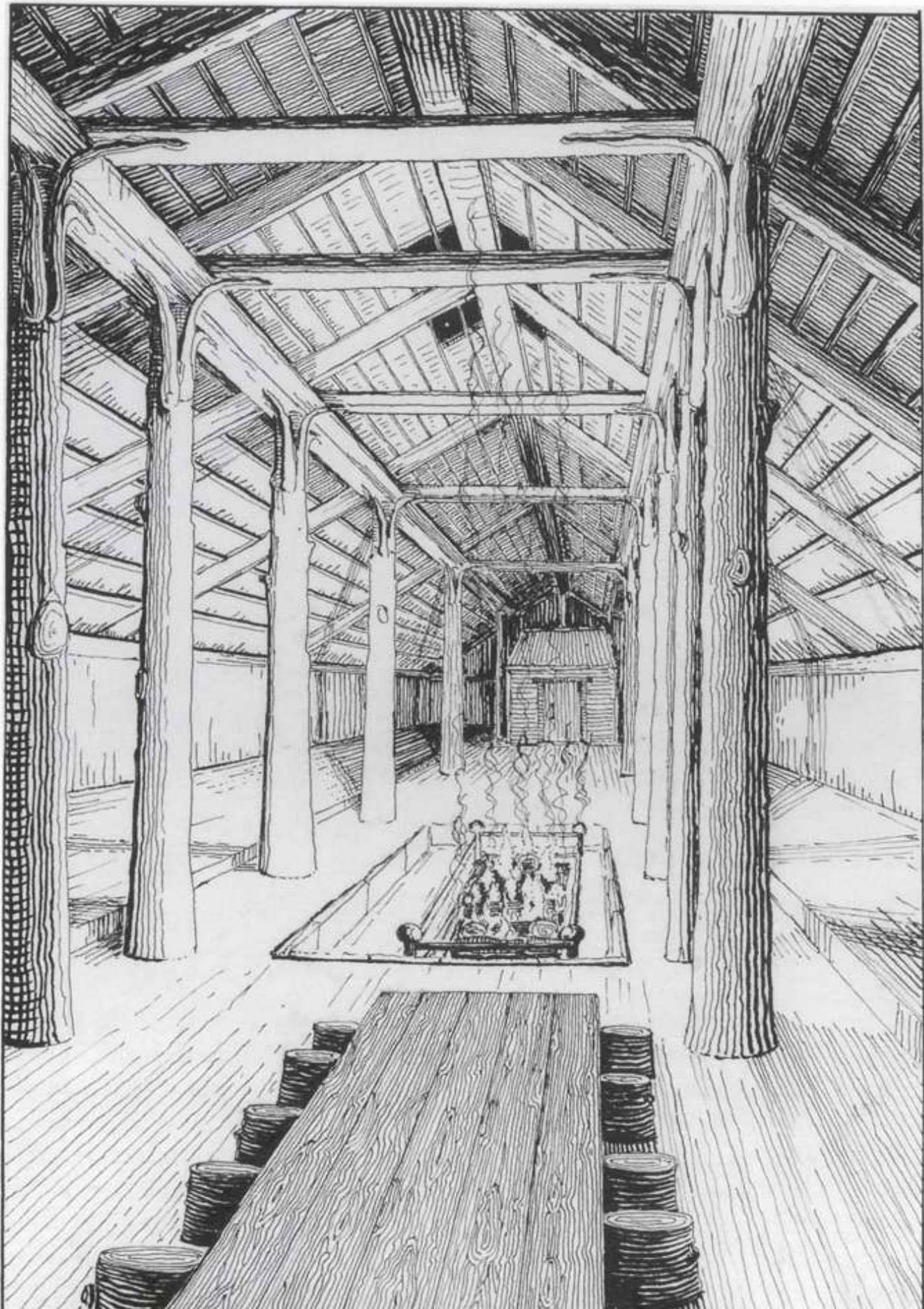
E.V. Gordon,  
*Untitled (Interior of a Norse Hall)*  
Printed illustration

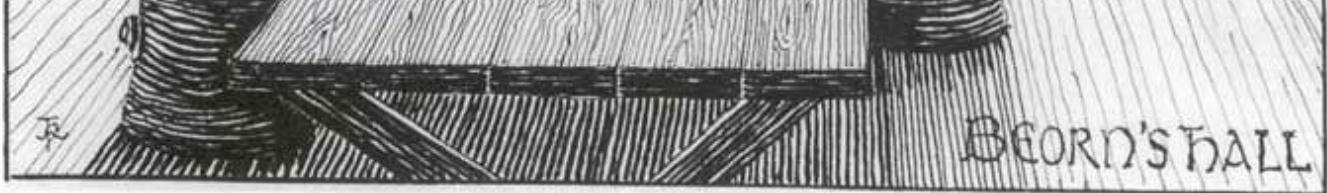




115

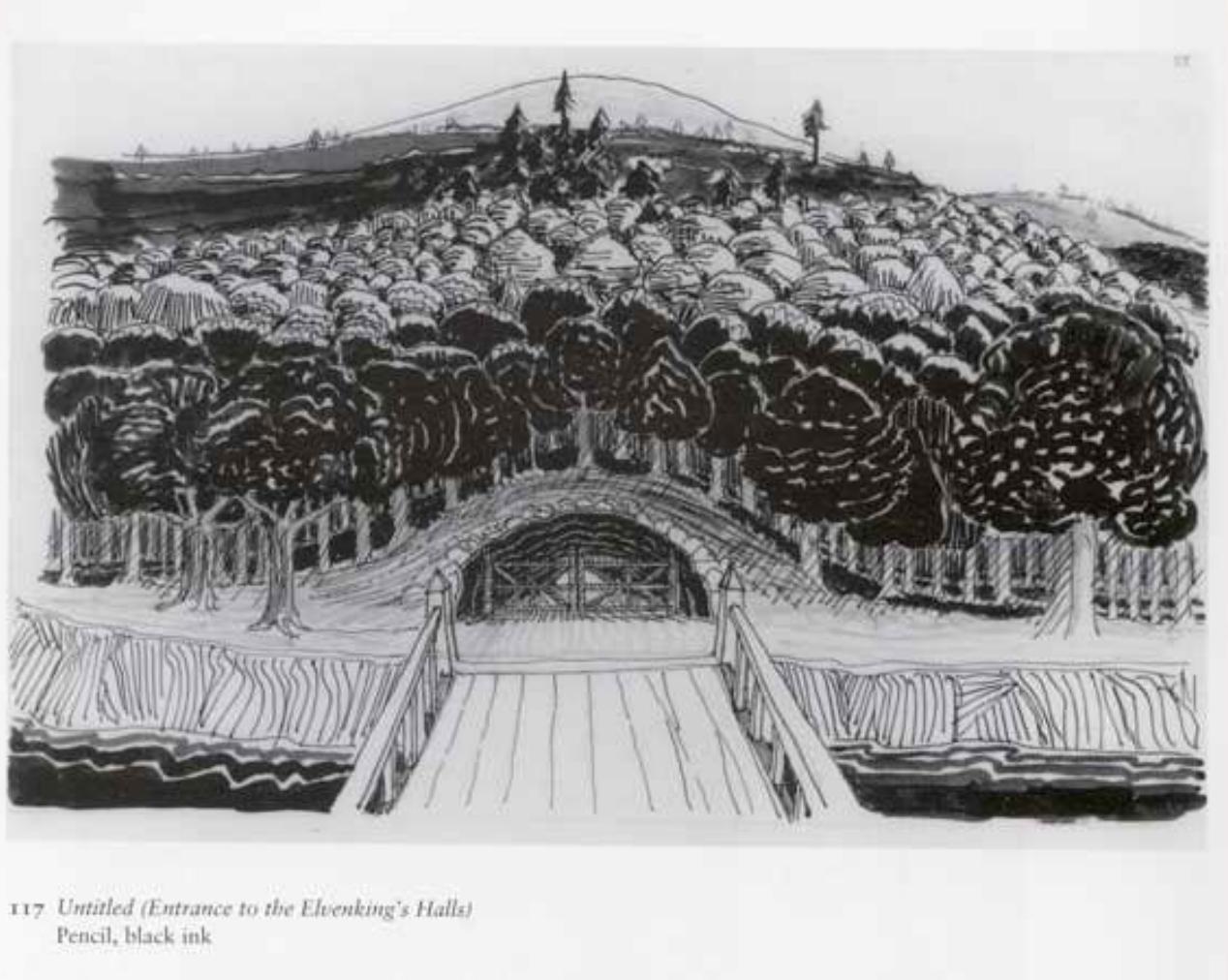
*Firelight in Beorn's House*  
Pencil, black and red ink





116 *Beorn's Hall*

Pencil, black ink



117 Untitled (Entrance to the Elvenking's Halls)

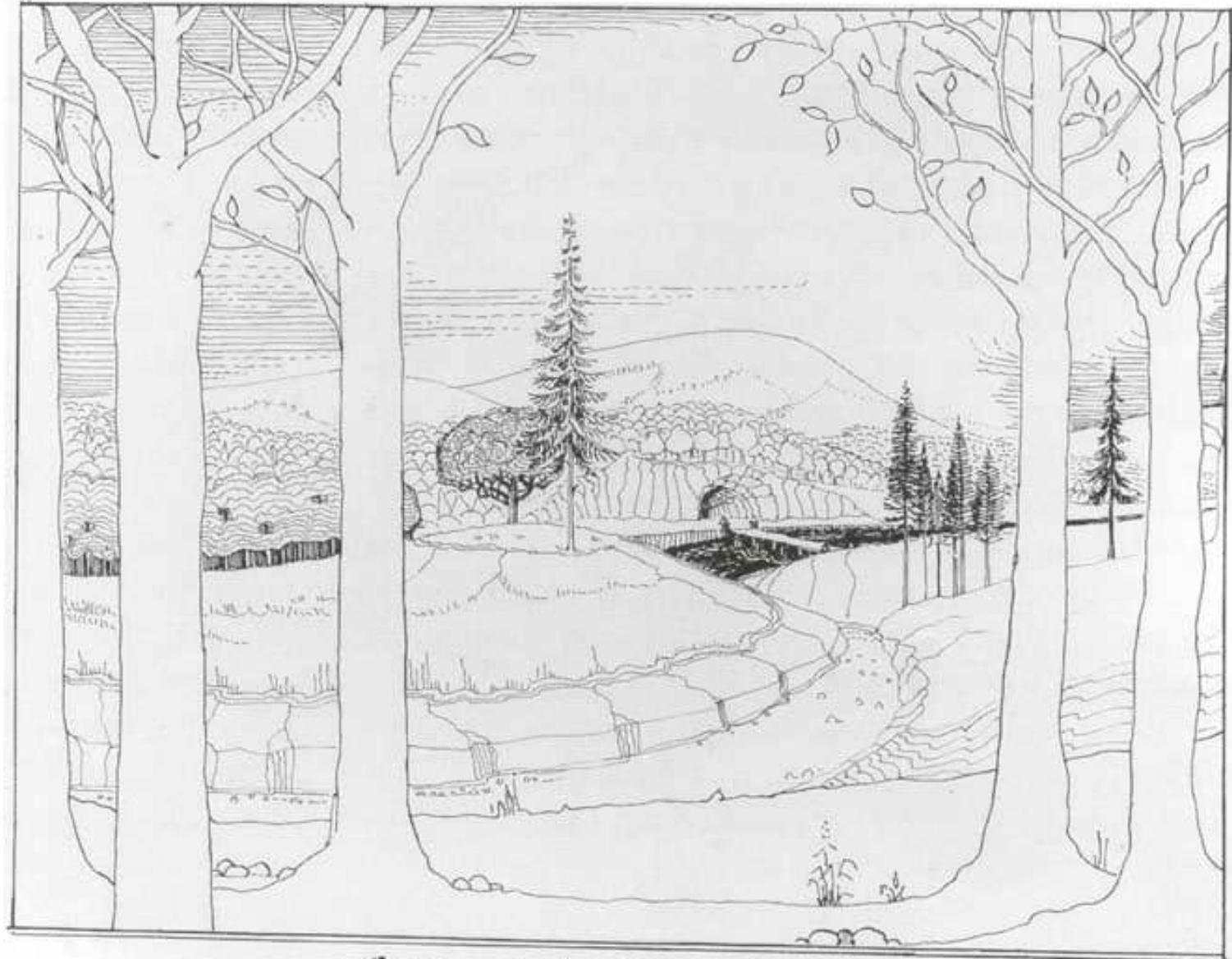
Pencil, black ink

hollows and twined here and there about the peaks and pinnacles of the hills.' In the painting the swirling mists and clouds are white body colour liberally applied. Tolkien adapted the eagle, with stylized feathers and brighter colours, from a picture of an immature Golden Eagle in T.A. Coward's *The Birds of the British Isles and Their Eggs* (first series, first published 1919), necessarily omitting the eagle's dead prey. An avid natural historian since childhood, he was concerned to draw the bird accurately, and turned to one of his sons' *Wayside and Woodland* books for reference. The ultimate source of the eagle, reprinted by Coward, is a chromolithograph made by Alexander Thorburn [112] for Lord Lilford's *Birds of the British Islands* (1891).

It has long been recognized that Tolkien modelled the house of the shape-shifter, Beorn, whom Bilbo and company meet in chapter 7 of *The Hobbit*, on a Viking structure: 'a wide hall with a fire-place in the middle.

Though it was summer there was a wood-fire burning and the smoke was rising to the blackened rafters in search of the way out through an opening in the roof.' Probably his earliest drawing of it was *Firelight in Beorn's House* [115], which he must have made after completing the first typescript of the book, in which Beorn is still called by his earlier name, *Medved*. He may have based the picture on a drawing by his colleague, the medievalist E.V. Gordon,<sup>28</sup> printed in Gordon's 1927 *An Introduction to Old Norse* [114]. The sloping roof in Tolkien's illustration at upper right, upon which the title is lettered, and the braces to the side are the most obvious similarities between the drawings. Like the veranda later described in *The Hobbit*, Beorn's hall is 'propped on wooden posts made of single tree-trunks', which in these drawings are set into rounded bases. Tolkien did not furnish the room as fully as Gordon, only with a bench or table, and he narrowed

118  
*Entrance to the Elvenking's Halls*  
Pencil, black ink

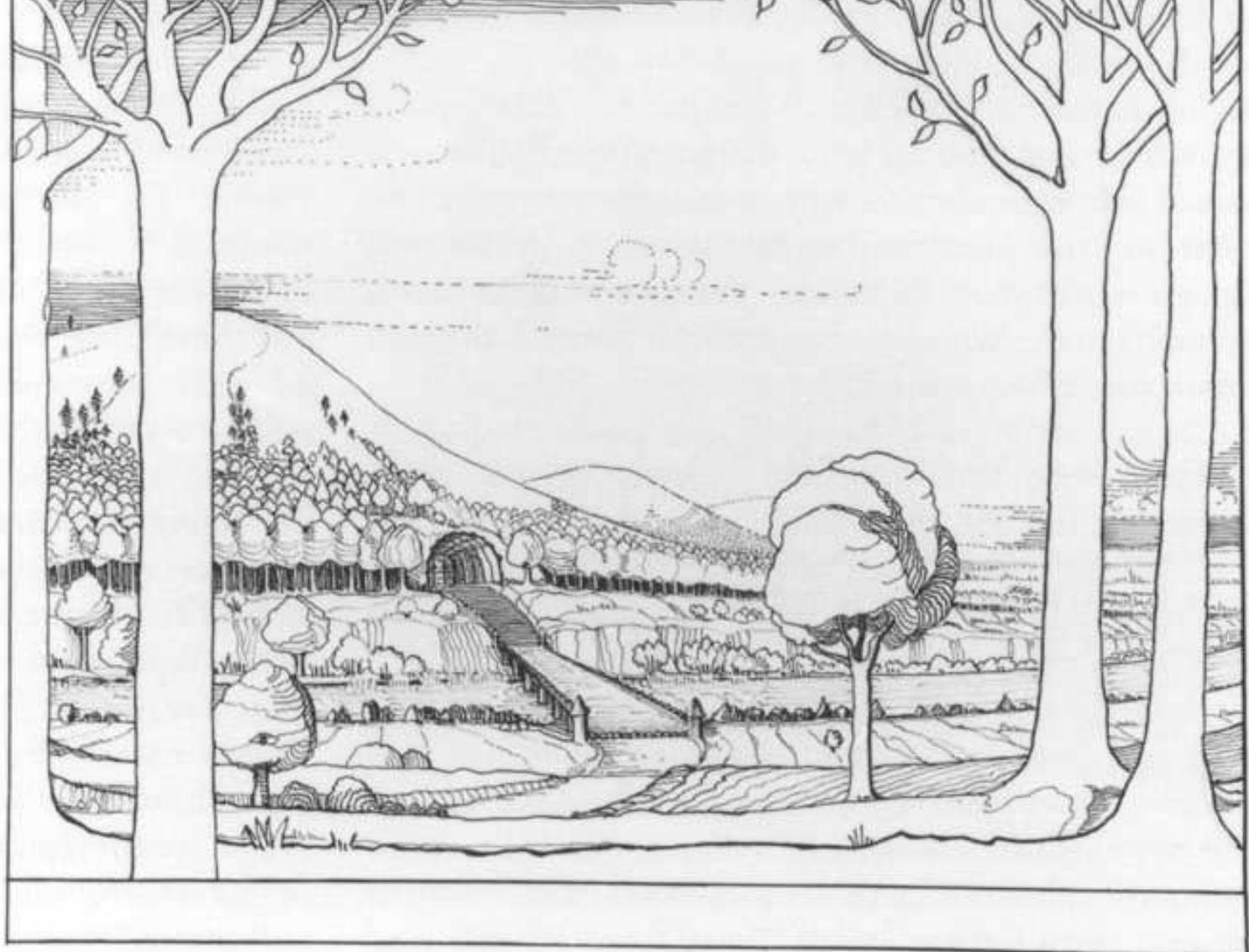


. Entrance to the Elvenking's Halls.

119

*Untitled (Entrance to  
the Elvenking's Halls)*

Pencil, black ink



the focus. "With less of the structure to see, it is as if one is in a forest, as in *The Trolls* [102.], and here again Tolkien played with the effect of firelight on trees.

The redrawn picture *Beam's Hall* [116] is brighter and more open than *Firelight in Beorn's House*, without the braces and the black wedge of roof in the corner. Tolkien moved the point of view to the left, just off-centre, and enhanced the perspective - worked out in preliminary sketches apparently with a triangle and straightedge - so that the viewer is drawn into the picture and along the line of posts; in *Firelight*, one feels crushed against the wall and barred by post and brace. The table (it is now inarguably a table) in the fore-ground is flanked by some of the low, 'round drum-shaped sections of logs, smoothed and polished' on which Bilbo and most of the dwarves sit in chapter 7. The central fire is nicely animated, though the tendrils of smoke appear artificial.

Tolkien's visions of his fictional world seem always to have been clear in the larger view but variable when it came to details. Sometimes he could not easily bring his mental picture into focus, and reached a 'true' image only by trial and error. His Hobbiton and Rivendell pictures demonstrate this; so does the series of sketches and final art he drew of the entrance to the Elvenking's halls, to illustrate chapter 9 of *The Hobbit*. The order of these sketches is not certain, but can be guessed from differences in style and the changing features of road, trees, and gate. All are on identical paper and probably were made in quick succession. The earliest, because the least developed, may have been the drawing [117] in which, as in the later versions of *The Hill*, the bridge begins at the bottom edge of the picture, drawing the eye within and leading it to the entrance. The way is barred by a pair of open framework gates, a very crude affair for the home of an Elvenking. It is daytime, though in the text Bilbo and the dwarves, the latter prisoners of the Wood-elves, approach the halls through a dark forest by torchlight:

#### **Suddenly the torches stopped, and the hobbit had just time to**

catch them up before they began to cross the bridge. This was the bridge that led across the river to the king's doors. The water flowed dark and swift and strong beneath; and at the far end were gates before the mouth of a huge cave that ran into the side of a steep slope covered with trees. There the great beeches came right down to the bank, till their feet were in the stream.

The symmetrical composition of trees and a central mountain (whose curve echoes the curve of the entrance) recalls the painting *Wood at the World's End*

[60] and anticipates Tolkien's art, somewhat altered and stylized, for the *Hobbit* dust-jacket [144].

Tolkien then pulled back, as if to a more distant vantage point. In *Entrance to the Elvenking's Halls* [n8] the gate is seen from the edge of the forest. Fore-ground, middle ground, and background are each so precisely defined as to appear artificial, giving a good sense of depth but calling attention to technique rather than to the scene. The trees are so obtrusive that they distract from the subject of the picture, the entrance itself, which is drawn very small and unimposing. The drawing, like *Rivendell Looking East* [106], fails also because the eye, blocked by a bend in the road, cannot satisfactorily follow a path from the bottom of the view all the way to the gate. Tolkien began an ink and watercolour version of much the same composition,<sup>29</sup> with a better focus on the gate and (uniquely in this sequence) set at night, in accord with the text. A full moon illuminates the scene. But the picture has many faults - the bridge, for example, seems only a few feet long - and was abandoned when only half done.

Trees still appear in the foreground of an apparently later, untitled drawing [119], but one has been removed and the ground between the trees and the gate is less wild, almost (as it seems) professionally trimmed. Only one large, rounded tree remains obtrusively in the middle ground. The path from the edge of the forest to the entrance is now visible in full, and a flight of steps has been built before the gate. The doorway is barred, perhaps with iron (in the text 'the great gates of the king closed behind them with a clang'). The point of view has moved to the right and closer to the gate.

In a subsequent rough sketch Tolkien removed the foreground trees and raised his vantage point so that the view of the entrance and the hills beyond would be unobscured. Then, it seems, he made the drawing *Gate of the Elvenking's Halls* [120]. As Christopher Tolkien has shown, this was based in part on his father's vision of Nargothrond in the 'Silmarillion' mythology, and he refers to the watercolour (*Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, no. 33) and pencil drawing [56] his father made of the entrance to that place. 'The two,' he writes of the entrances to Nargothrond and the Elvenking's halls, 'were visually one, or little distinguished: a single image with more than one emergence in the legends.'<sup>30</sup> However, *Gate of the Elvenking's Halls* is most closely related to the developed view of Nargothrond [57]. That drawing is on the back of a discarded leaf of philological manuscript, and since Tolkien drew three of his *Hobbit* illustrations on leaves from the same manuscript (the marching dwarves [103], a watercolour



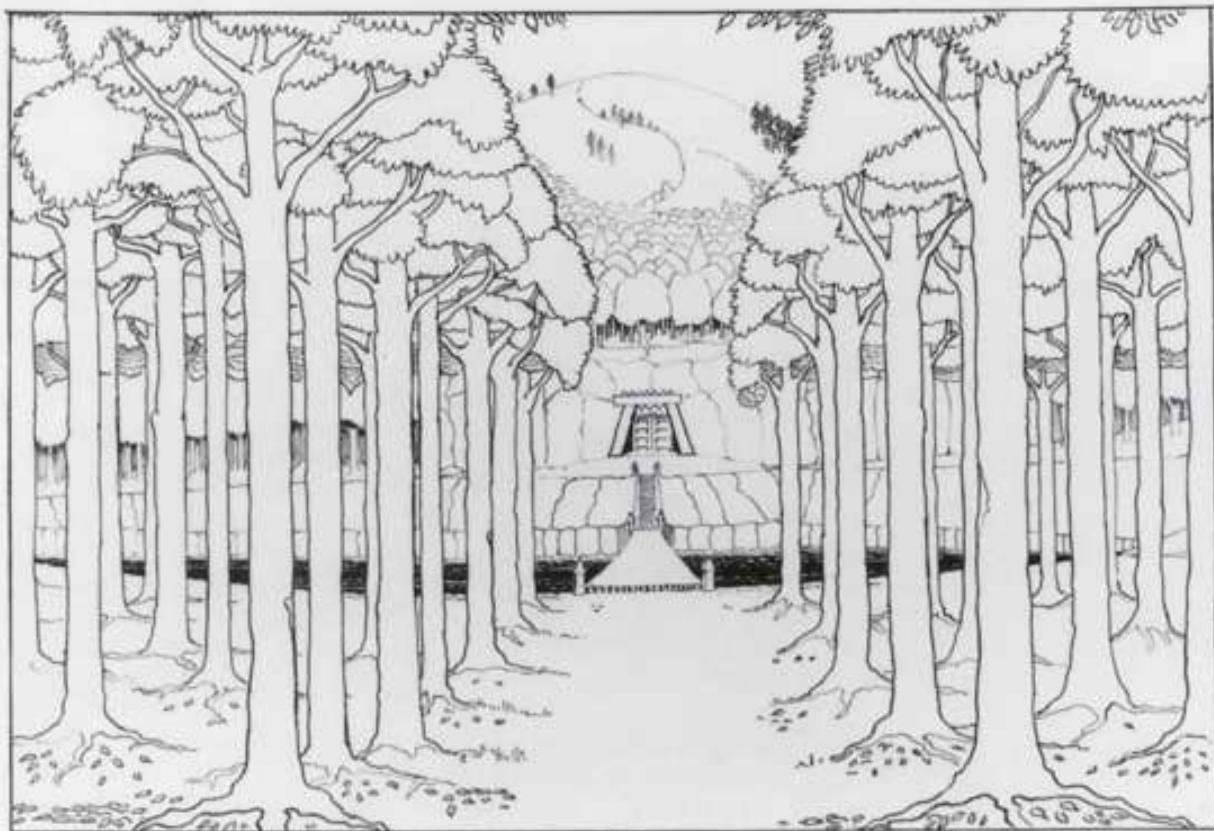
120 *Gate of the Elvenking's Halls*  
Pencil, black ink

*Smaug Flies Round the Mountain*, and *The Front Door* [134]), [57] presumably dates from the same time, certainly in the 1930S, most likely with the bulk of the *Hobbit* art in late 1936 or early 1937. One may imagine Tolkien wrestling with the image of the Elvenking's gate, his thoughts turning naturally to the underground Elf-kingdom he had already created, his pen now completing in ink the picture of Nargothrond he had left unfinished in watercolour - before or after drawing *Gate of the Elvenking's Halls*, no one can say.

The scene in [57] is now fully drawn, with the river and a bridge with a single arch as at Rivendell. The hills in the *Hobbit* picture are roughly the same as in [57], and the single gate to the Elvenking's halls now has the same 'megalithic' shape as the triple doors into Nargo-thrond. Indeed, if not for the latter [57] could have served as well for *The Hobbit* as for 'The Silmarillion'. In the Elvenking's gate of [120], at last, are doors that

deserve to be called 'great'. The steps leading up to them are less pronounced, and though they survived into the final drawing they are never mentioned in the text. Here, and nowhere else (except [57]), the beeches' feet are clearly in the stream.

*Gate of the Elvenking's Halls* was technically suited to the published book. Although not entirely line art, its areas of wash translate well into black, and though its light pencil shading and pencil-sketched sun and clouds (over an erasure) make the sheet rather messy, these would have been invisible to the block-maker's camera. Yet Tolkien redrew the scene once again. As both author and artist of *The Hobbit* he was sensitive to even the smallest nuances of its design, and may have felt that *Gate of the Elvenking's Halls* was too peaceful a view to illustrate such a tense moment in the story - as indeed it is. In the end he returned to the head-on view he seems to have begun with, revised the scene with the



## The Elvenking's Gate.

121 *The Elvenking's Gate*.  
Pencil, black ink

alterations he had developed in the intervening versions, further embellished the gate, and pulled back to again include part of the forest.

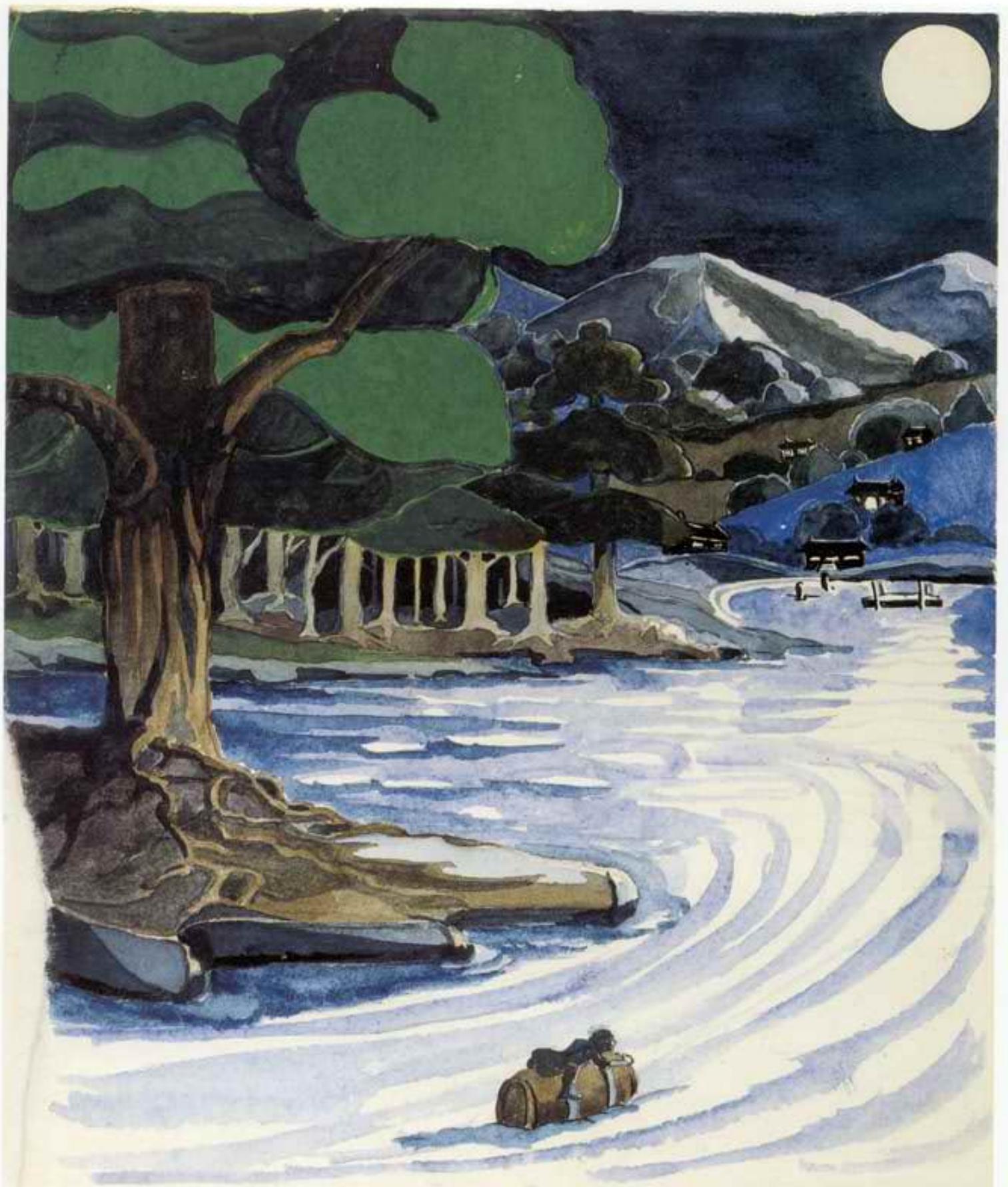
Now, in the final art [izi] the trees do not obscure the entrance but direct the eye to it along a central avenue. The channelling effect is like that Tolkien achieved with lines of posts in *Beorn's Hall*, and is made even more effective in *The Elvenking's Gate* by the open patch of stark white at bottom which points the way. The tall, thin, vaguely Art nouveau trees march like soldiers to the river, which cuts a dark swath through the centre of the view. It is a tremendously energetic picture. The rhythmic pattern of the trees, the sudden contrast of black water among largel

thrusting trees and the horizontal river cutting across them as if through lines of force, the gentle S-curve that carries the eye above the gate and over the distant hill -all of these generate a vitality greater than in any of the earlier drawings of the scene.

The river flows past (and under) the Elvenking's halls towards the east, and it is by this route that Bilbo and the dwarves make their escape. The dwarves are within barrels, Bilbo on top of one. At length, the casks fetch up on a shore where they are collected by elves onto a raft for further shipment:

... Mr Baggins came to a place where the trees on either

hand grew thinner. He could see the paler sky between them. The dark river opened suddenly wide, and there it was joined



Philip the Fair River 1923

**122 Sketch for the Forest River**

Pencil, watercolour, black ink

to the main water of the Forest River flowing down in haste from the king's great doors. There was a dim sheet of water no longer overshadowed, and on its sliding surface there were dancing and broken reflections of clouds and of stars. Then the hurrying water of the Forest River swept all the company of casks and tubs away to the north bank, in which it had eaten out a wide bay. This had a shingly shore under hanging banks and was walled at the eastern end by a little jutting cape of hard rock.

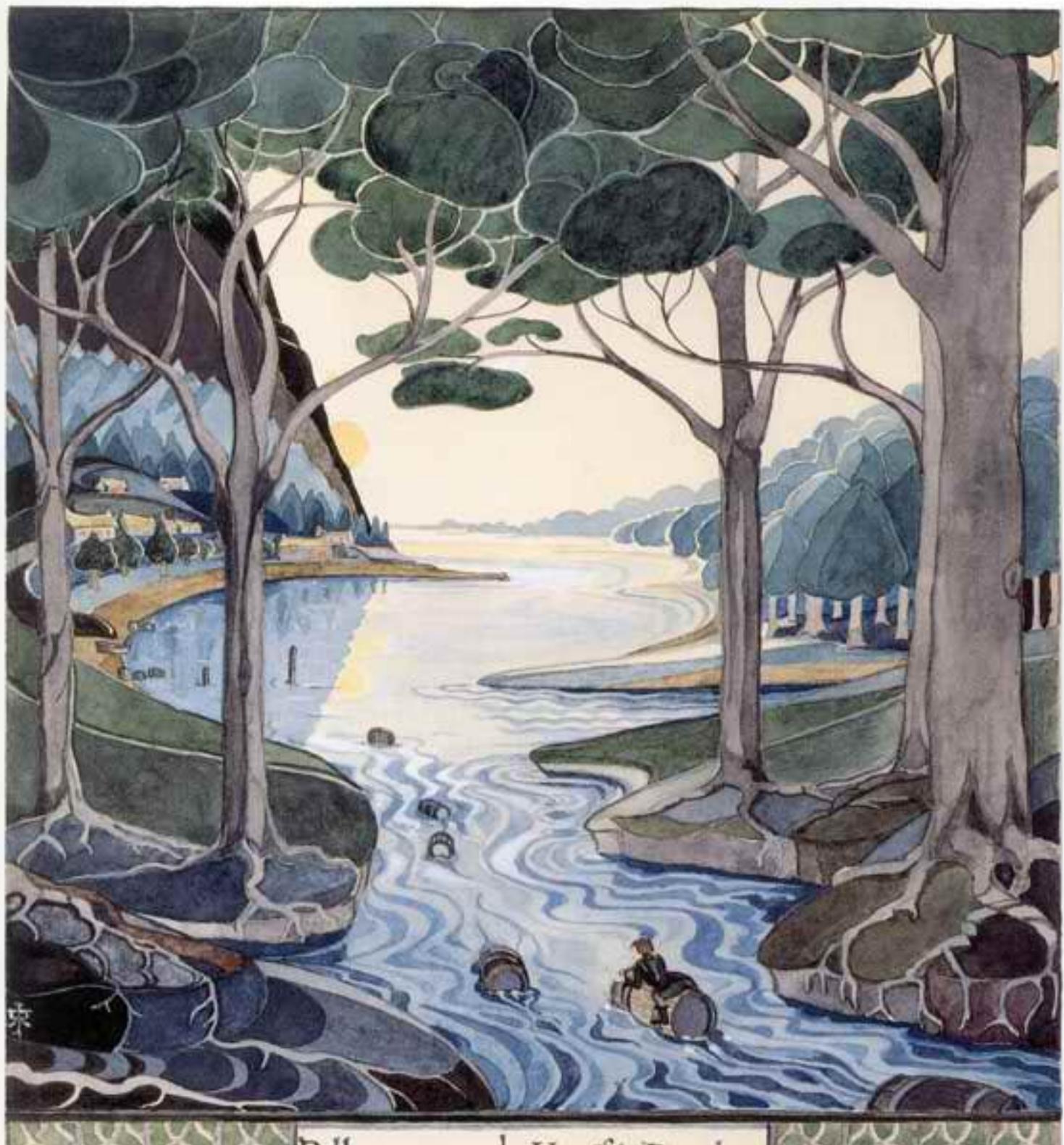
Tolkien illustrated this scene in chapter 9 in a rough watercolour he inscribed 'Sketch for the Forest River' [izz]. The effect of moonlight on water is nicely done, incorporating the white of the paper - though the text does not mention a full moon. But it is a confusing picture. If Bilbo is correctly in the 'barrel-stream' (the northern of the two branches of the river as shown on the *Wilderland* map), heading east, then the 'wide bay' must be at left rather than (as it would seem) at

upper right, unless the moon is to rise impossibly due north. If one ignores the problem of the moon, and the northern bay is indeed below the huts at right, then why do the curving lines suggest a sharp wrong turn to the left (west)? On the other hand, it may be that Tolkien incorrectly drew Bilbo on the southern branch (the 'main water'), and that this is joining the 'barrel-stream' flowing in from the left. If this is so, then the moon is still a problem, and the direction in which the river continues is not clear. In any case, the massive tree overbalances the view, and Bilbo is strikingly alone on the water: where are the rest of the barrels?

Tolkien developed an alternate and superior version of the picture in several sketches. In the most detailed of these [123] the geography is straightforward: the 'barrel-stream' enters the picture at lower right and flows east, past the entrance of the 'main water' at right, around a bend into the distance. With this arrangement

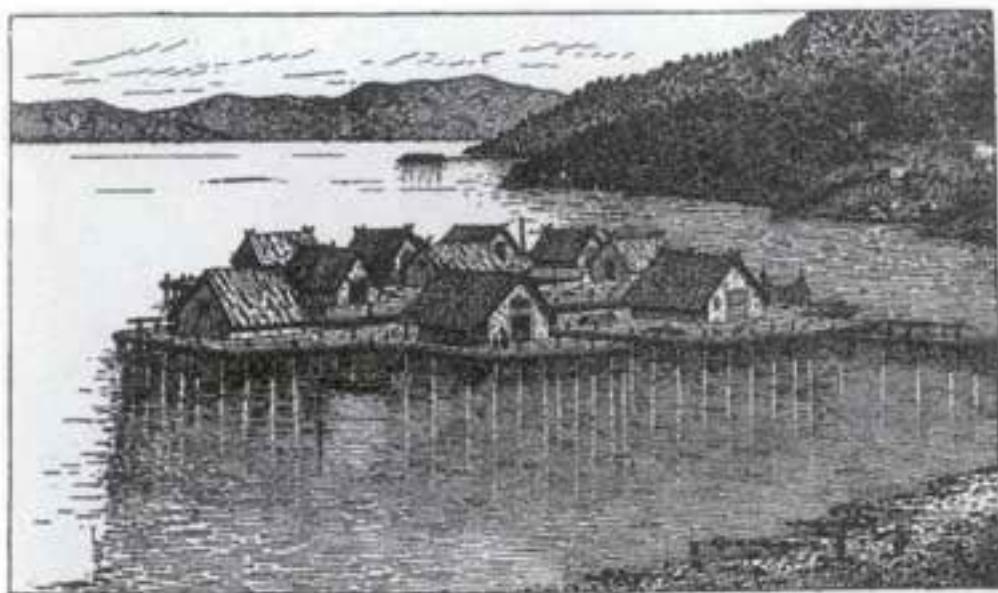


123  
*Untitled (Sketch for  
Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves)*  
Pencil, coloured pencil



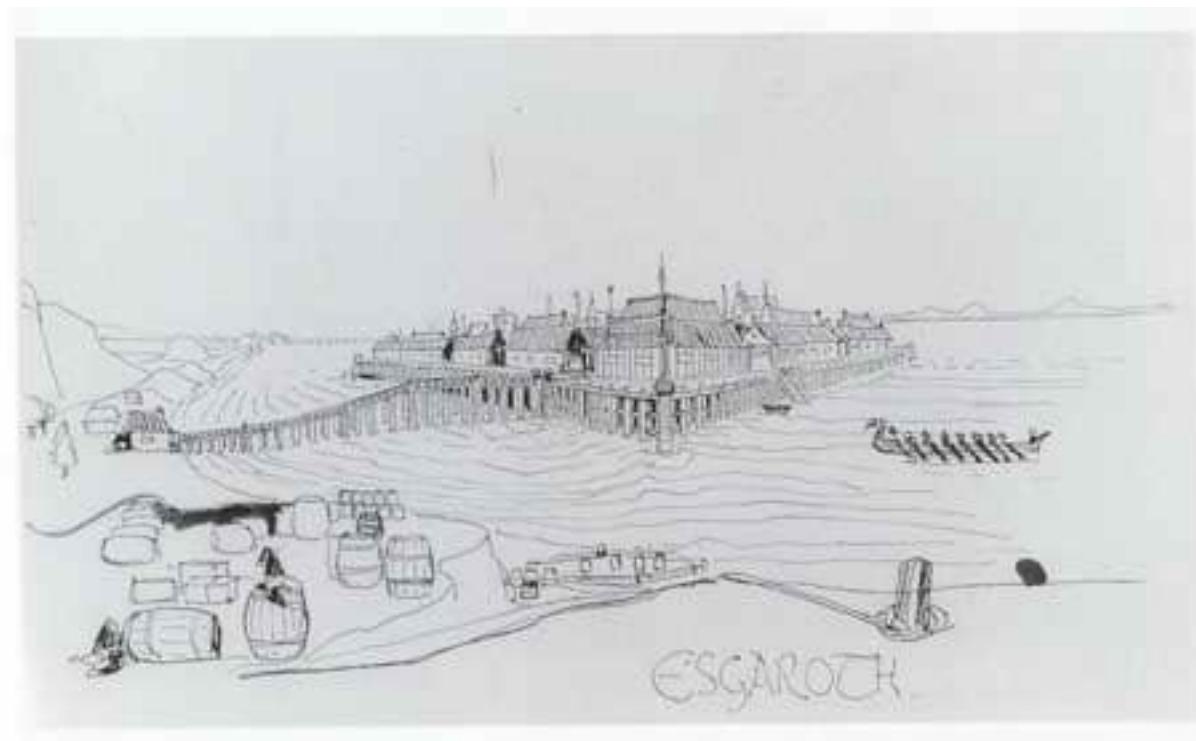
Bilbo comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves

124 Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves  
Pencil, watercolour, black and blue ink, white body colour



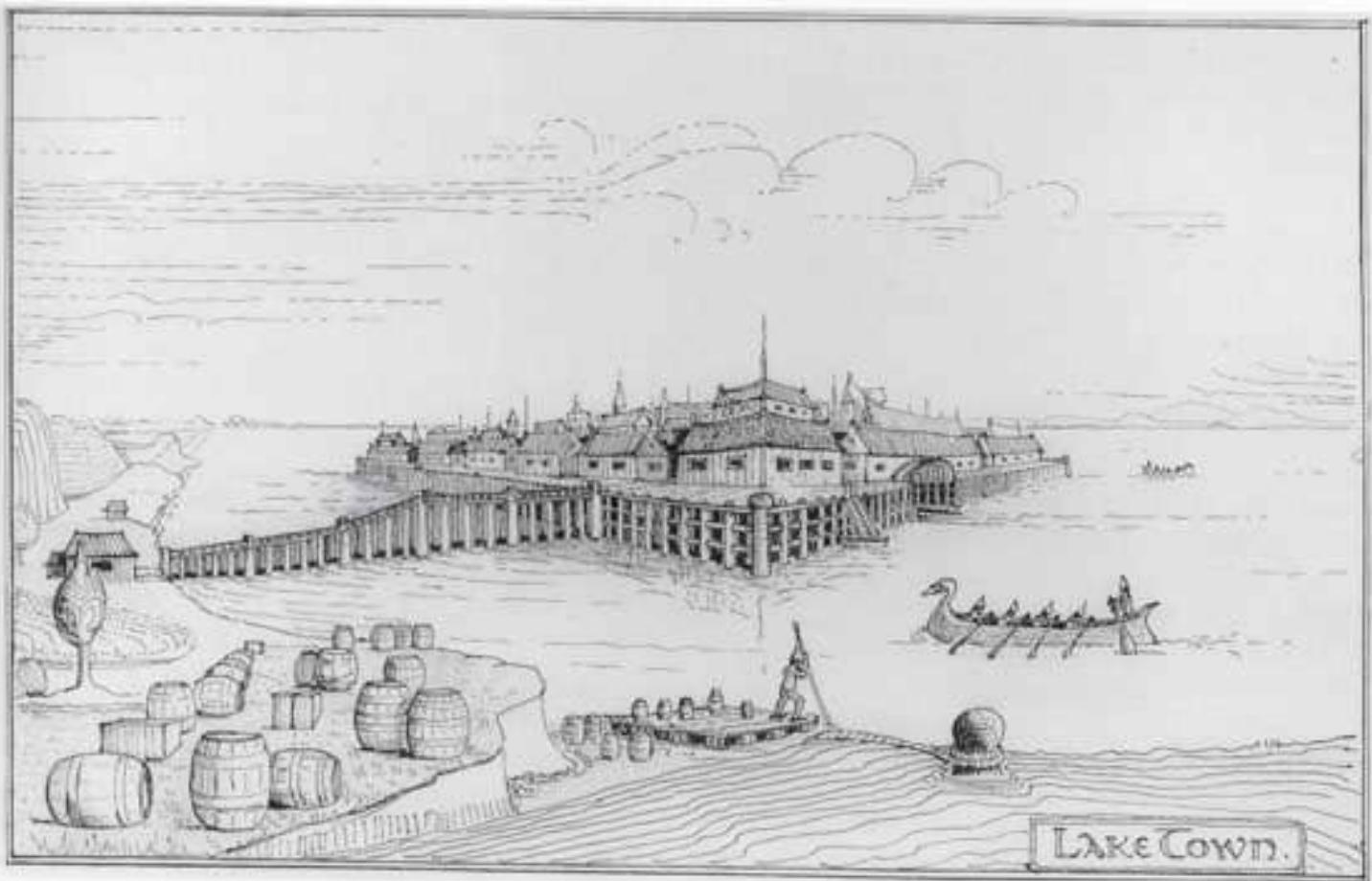
125

Robert Munro after  
A. de Mortillet, *Untitled*  
(Reconstruction of a Lake Village)  
Printed illustration



126

*Esガroth*  
Pencil, black ink



127 *Lake Town*  
Pencil, black ink

The Lonely Mountain.



- SO Secret Door above the green western Valley
- C First Camp
- R Ravenhill
- R.R. RiverRunning
- FG Front Gate
- D Ruins of Dale





*The Lonely Mountain*  
and map of the Long Lake  
Pencil, red and black ink,  
coloured pencil

one has no doubt that the casks will be swept towards the northern shore, where indeed some already lie. On the point extending into the river is a beacon drawn in pencil, its first and only appearance. The sliver of a tree at left probably was meant to suggest the forest from which Bilbo has just come and to help frame the picture, but it does neither of these well, and in the end diverts the eye from its natural movement through the scene beginning with the figure of Bilbo on his barrel.

In *Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves* [12.4], the fourth of his colour illustrations for Houghton Mifflin and his personal favourite among his art,<sup>31</sup> Tolkien resolved all of the problems that remained with the subject. It is a superbly effective work, at once dramatic, decorative, and romantic. One can almost smell the freshness of the air and hear the movement of the water.

As in the pencil sketch [12.3] the river clearly winds out of the forest and around a great hill, but now with rhythmic curves, convex and concave on opposite banks. The sun has risen, contrary to the text, but the picture is so good that one can forgive the artistic licence, and the arrival of Bilbo and the dwarves at the raft-elves' village is a more triumphant moment seen by daylight. The rising sun suggests, perhaps, the 'rebirth' of the company after their confinement in the Elven-king's halls. It also attracts the eye, already guided through the picture by swirls of blue water and by perspective, to the cape and beyond, where the river and the story continue. Bilbo is now in the company of five other barrels, the one to the right only partly in the frame and thus suggesting more to come. The shrinking size of the casks as they move from right to left aids

the perspective and further suggests depth. The arch of stylized, Art nouveau trees is yet another 'gate' in Tolkiens art, and the most impressive; the motif of arching trees above water is repeated in the title border. The colours of the painting are skilfully combined, cool blues and greens complemented by the yellow of the sun in sky and water and the orange lights in the windows of the houses, and once more Tolkien made expert use of body colour, especially in the white water around the barrels. The bright morning sky is simply the paper left bare.

The Forest River continues to the east and empties into the Long Lake near the town of Esgaroth. Its site, south of the Lonely Mountain, is best found on the rejected close-scale map of the area paired with a dia-gram of the Mountain [128], delicately drawn in blue (the lake, streams, clouds, smoke, and the River Run-ning), green (marsh tufts, the bay leading to the Secret Door), and brown (other shading, with plain pencil). According to chapter 10 of *The Hobbit*, Esgaroth

was not built on the shore, though there were a few huts and

buildings there, but right out on the surface of the lake, protected from the swirl of the entering river by a promontory of rock which formed a calm bay. A great bridge made of wood ran out to where on huge piles made of forest trees was built a busy wooden town, not a town of elves but of Men, who still dared to dwell here under the shadow of the distant dragon-mountain.

In Tolkien's pictures it resembles a prehistoric lake village like the one shown as [125], and probably was inspired by this (in Robert Munro, *Les Stations lacustres d'Europe aux ages de la pierre et du bronze*, 1908) or a similar artist's conception. In the early illustration *Esgaroth* [126] the town is drawn with moderate care, but the lake and landscape are only roughly sketched. Two of the dwarves are crawling out of barrels at the end of their river journey. Bilbo, invisible thanks to a magic ring, is presumably at work cutting loose from the raft more of the casks containing his friends. The picture departs from the text, however, in showing men still out on the lake rather than at their evening meal, and in being set in daylight (in the text 'the shades of night had fallen').

The finished drawing *Lake Town* [127] illustrates an earlier moment in *The Hobbit*, or else a generic scene:

As soon as the raft of barrels came in sight boats rowed out from the piles of the town, and voices hailed the raft-steerers. Then ropes were cast and oars were pulled, and soon the raft was drawn out of the current of the Forest River and towed

away round the high shoulder of rock into the little bay of Lake-town. There it was moored not far from the shoreward head of the great bridge.

In the text of chapter 10 Bilbo does not begin to cut loose the barrels containing the dwarves until after the raft-elves and men have gone away to feast. Presumably the barrels on the shore are to be taken back upriver to the Wood-elves' realm. The scene is now more carefully drawn, though there is still a problem of scale with the mooring post and cable at bottom right, and the tree at left is a lonely specimen. An elf is at work steering the raft, the crew of the boat in the foreground has been reduced from nine to five, and a second boat can be seen in the distance. The swan-headed boats are simplified versions of those in the 'Silmarillion' painting *Halls of Manwe* [52]. There is now a water-gate into the town at right, and a second stair to the water at left. The surface motion of the lake is more delicately rendered, and with the finely drawn clouds suggests a breezy day. Extraneous pencil shading here and there either dropped out during reproduction in *The Hobbit*, or where darker (as on the mooring post) turned to black.

Bilbo's journey to the East ends at the Lonely Mountain, in chapter 11 of *The Hobbit*. *The Front Gate* [130] is a view of the main entrance to the mountain, a 'dark cavernous opening in a great cliff-wall' out of which came the waters of the River Running as well as 'a steam and a dark smoke'. It is the least successful of Tolkien's finished illustrations. The rendering is too laboured, with too many textures too consciously drawn. The gnarled tree, which refers back to those Tolkien drew in miniature on *Thror's Map*, is a close copy of a sketch he made in July 1928 [129], probably related to his pictures of Grendel's mere [50-51]; but the original is more clearly anthropomorphic. Some of the roughness of *The Front Gate* as published in *The Hobbit* is due to a dark grey wash Tolkien applied to the river and to the lower part of the mountain, above the gate, which in the block-making process became black. The dark wedge on the hill at left, also solid black in the published illustration, in the original is a grey wash over hatching.

Tolkien also sketched the 'back door' on the west side of the mountain [131]. The picture illustrates at once several scenes in chapter 11:

Silently, clinging to the rocky wall on their right, they went in

single file along the ledge, till the wall opened and they turned into a little steep-walled bay, grassy floored, still and quiet. ... **It was not a cave and was open to the sky above; but at**

its inner end a flat wall rose up that in the lower part, close to the ground, was as smooth and upright as mason's work,

but without a joint or crevice to be seen. ... In the meanwhile some of them explored the ledge beyond the opening and found a path that led higher and higher on to the mountain. . . . They had brought picks and tools of many sorts from Laketown, and at first they tried to use these. But when they struck the stone the handles splintered and jarred their arms cruelly, and the steel heads broke or bent like lead. . . . Now they all pushed together, and slowly a part of the rock-wall gave way. Long straight cracks appeared and widened. A door five feet high and three broad was outlined, and slowly with-out a sound swung inwards.

In the drawing one dwarf swings a pick some distance away from the (open) door, to no apparent purpose.

Another, at bottom left, is lowering a rope to a camp down the mountain. The dwarf at bottom centre resembles the figure in Tolkien's 1912 painting *The Back of Beyond*.<sup>31</sup> Later Tolkien elaborated the rudi-mentary *pi* form of the door, in the fashion of the Elvenking's gate, on his art for the *Hobbit* dust-jacket [144]. On the verso of [131] is a rapidly sketched view from the 'back door' looking west to the setting sun [132]. An outline of the door is superimposed over the rocks. On the same page is a sketch for a late revision of one of the discarded small maps, showing the Lonely

Mountain with the river looping around the ruins of Dale. The marshes along the Forest River are sketched at bottom.

Near the end of his New Year's Day 1938 lecture on dragons Tolkien showed a slide of the last of his *Hobbit* watercolours, *Conversation with Smaug* [133]. 'This picture was made by my friend Mr Baggins or from his description', he said. 'It is not very good - but it shows a powerful lot of treasure.' He used it to illustrate *draco fabulosus*, 'a serpent creature ... 20 ft or more'.<sup>33</sup> The dragon is described more theatrically in chapter 12 of *The Hobbit*:

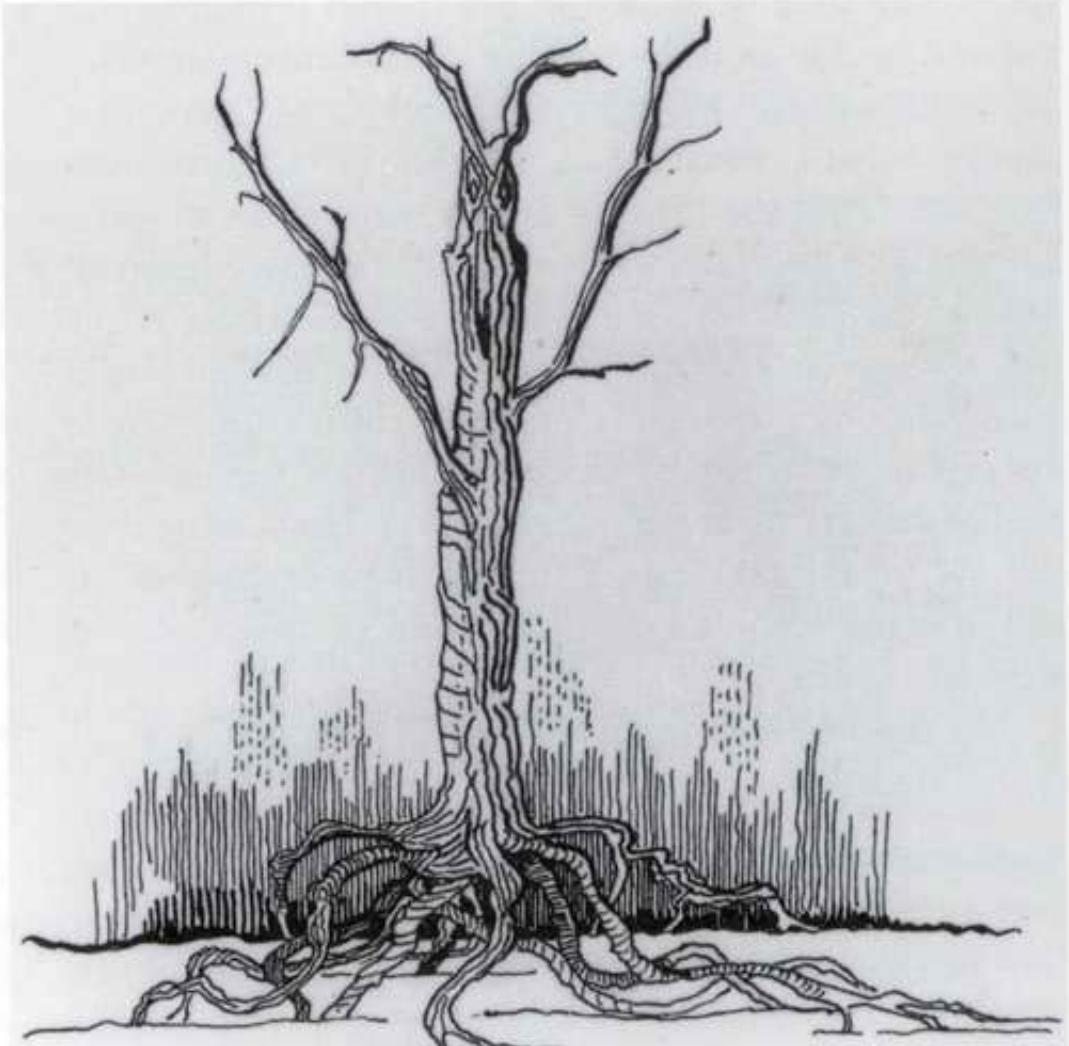
Smaug lay, with wings folded like an immeasurable bat,

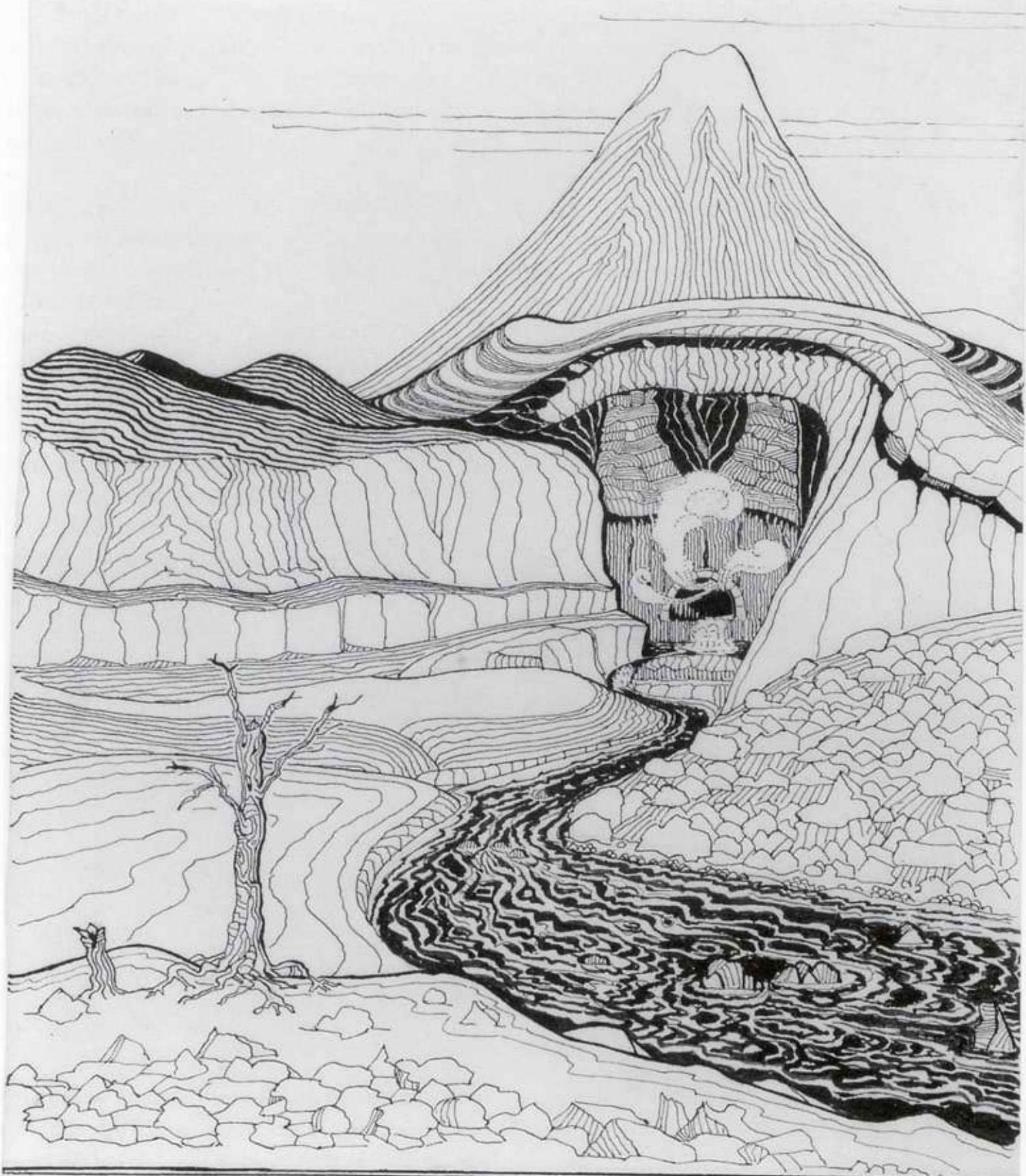
turned partly on one side, so that the hobbit could see his underparts and his long pale belly crusted with gems and fragments of gold from his long lying on his costly bed. Behind him where the walls were nearest could dimly be seen coats of mail, helms and axes, swords and spears hanging; and there in rows stood great jars and vessels filled with a wealth that could not be guessed.

Tolkien wrote that there were no words to express Bilbo's reaction upon seeing Smaug's treasure 'since Men changed the language that they learned of elves in the days when all the world was wonderful.' Instead, he painted a picture of it, a huge mound of shining riches

129

*Untitled (Gnarled Tree)*  
Pencil, black ink





. The Front Gate .

130 *The Front Gate*  
Pencil, black ink



131  
The Back Door  
Brown

The Back Door  
Pencil

but ominously littered with the remains of its defenders. Just to the left of Smaug's fleur-de-lys tail is, perhaps, the emerald necklace of Girion, Lord of Dale, mentioned in chapter 12. The gem blazing at the top of the hoard is almost certainly the Arkenstone, to the Dwarves the most precious of treasures. The great jar at bottom left bears a curse against thieves written in the Elvish script *tengwar*.

*Conversation with Smaug* actually depicts a scene slightly later in the text than the passages just quoted. Bilbo is visiting the dragon's lair for a second time;

his invisibility, while he is wearing his magic ring, is suggested by a billowing vapour around him. The figure

of the hobbit, Tolkien admitted, is '(apart from being fat in the wrong places) enormously too large. But (as my children, at any rate, understand) he is really in a separate picture or "plane"' while invisible.<sup>4</sup> Smaug and the treasure-mound are painted or drawn in very bright colours, red, orange, and gold, with a little green on Smaug's head, claws, and body. These are mostly warm, even hot colours, suited to a fire-breathing dragon and to an enticing mound of wealth, and appear even brighter and warmer set against the grey and black washes of walls, ceiling, and floor. Smaug's body curves like a spring, tensed to strike; above him, bats circle like vultures waiting for a kill. Despite Smaug's slightly

humourous face, the picture is fraught with danger. Scattered bones and battle-gear leave no doubt that the dragon is not to be trifled with. Tolkien shows three possible exits from the scene, through the archways behind Smaug, two of which have stairs to the levels above the dwarves' dungeon-hall. Black fumes issuing from one of the doorways add to the dark mood of the picture; these, as well as the smoke from Smaug's nostrils, are echoed in the curlicues at the corners of the title frame.

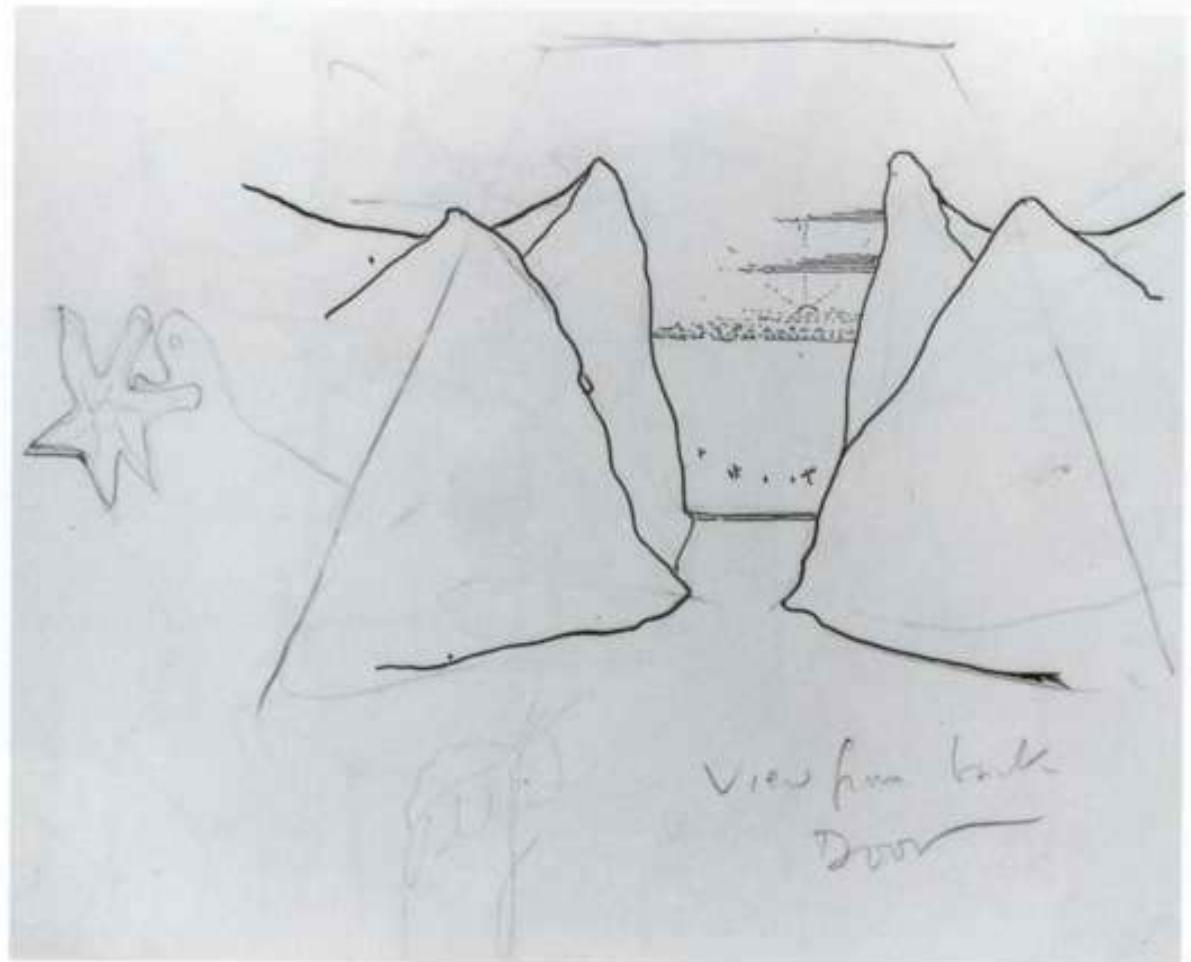
Smaug also appears, very small, in drawings of the Lonely Mountain and adjacent lands. Although Tolkien brought two of these to a finished state, they were not published in *The Hobbit*. The scene is an elaborated form of one shown stylized on *Thror's Map*. Its basic composition was settled in an early, ink-blotted sketch [134]: the mountain, its outlying 'arms', withered trees, the first stretch of the River Running, the ruins of Dale, and the dragon in flight. Like *The Front Gate* it has too many and conflicting textures, and is nearly over-whelmed by an elaborate sky. Against these the tiny figure of Smaug is hard to pick out, though it is solid

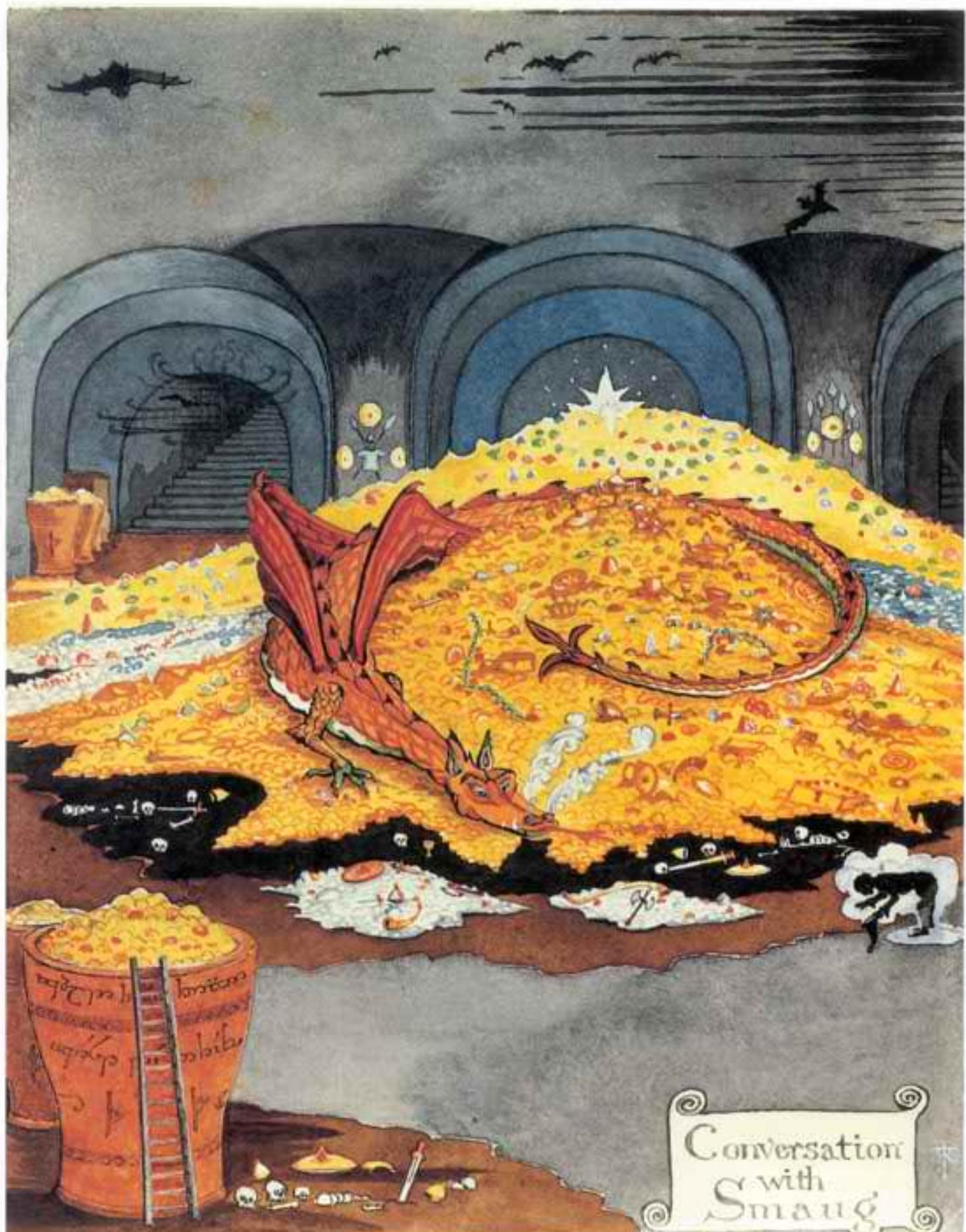
black. The drawing is set apparently in daylight, though the two occasions in the book in which Smaug leaves his lair occur at night (the first, however, lasting until dawn). Tolkien made a similar sketch in ink and water-colour, *Smaug Flies Round the Mountain*,<sup>35</sup> in which the sky is painted in wide bands of grey with a full moon, and Smaug, in gold and red, is better distinguished from the mountain. Both *Smaug Flies Round the Mountain* and the sketch [134] are on versos of the philological manuscript referred to earlier; presumably one followed closely on the other.

Tolkien made the two finished drawings apparently very late in the production of the book. In these the river does not simply curve once upon leaving the front gate and then flow out of the picture to the right, but makes a more interesting bend around Dale and (like the lane in the revised versions of *The Hill*) runs towards the viewer at the bottom of the frame. The elaboration of the river's course, previously not described in *The Hobbit*, was a last-minute addition by Tolkien to chapter 11 in page proof:

132

*View from Back Door*  
Pencil, black ink





Conversation  
with  
Smaug



Smaug

There the river, after winding a wide loop over the valley of Dale, turned from the Mountain on its road to the Lake,

flowing swift and noisily. Its bank was bare and rocky, tall and steep above the stream; and gazing out from it over the narrow water, foaming and splashing among many boulders, they could see in the wide valley shadowed by the Mountain's arms the grey ruins of ancient houses, towers, and walls.

Tolkien first drew the new course of the river as a pencilled addition to [134]. *The Front Door* [135], a night scene lit by a full moon, includes features both of that sketch and of *Smaug Flies Round the Mountain*. The central peak and surrounding hills are modelled now not only in black line but also in three shades of grey wash. Smaug, in white outlined in black, is even more lost against the drawn textures. The decorative part of the title border appears also in Edward Johnston's calligraphy manual *Writing Àf y Illuminating, ?y Lettering*, a copy of which Tolkien owned.<sup>36</sup>

In the other drawing of this scene, *The Lonely Mountain* [136], there is no doubt that night has fallen. The contrast of black and white between the sky and shadows and the moonlit land is dramatic. The hills are more effectively modelled in solid black and white, the remaining built-up textures restrained and even decorative. Smaug is now more clearly seen flying a short distance to the right of the mountain rather than in front of it. The river is a white ribbon, unmarked by boulders, but still seemingly in motion and carefully drawn near its source to match the curves of that part of the river shown in *The Front Gate* [130]. On Ravenhill, the height at lower left, can be seen the steps leading to the old guard post mentioned in the text. The elements in the title border, used also around the title of the final *Wilderland* map [87], suggest that *The Lonely Mountain* was itself the last of a series.

Why was this drawing not published in *The Hobbit*? It is a superior view of the mountain, and that is its main subject - hence the two changes of title, no longer *Smaug Flies Round the Mountain* as in the watercolour sketch. *The Front Gate* is not as well drawn. But *The Lonely Mountain* would have proved difficult to print with its large area of solid black, converted into a line-block and printed, as *The Hobbit* was originally, by letterpress.

Tolkien seems to have drawn a coloured sketch depicting Smaug's death [137] as an aid to working out the scene in chapter 14 of *The Hobbit* in which the bowman, Bard, shoots Smaug above Lake-town as it burns. Tolkien sent it to Alien & Unwin in 1965 as a help or inspiration to a cover artist for the 1966 Unwin paperback edition of the book, with comments:

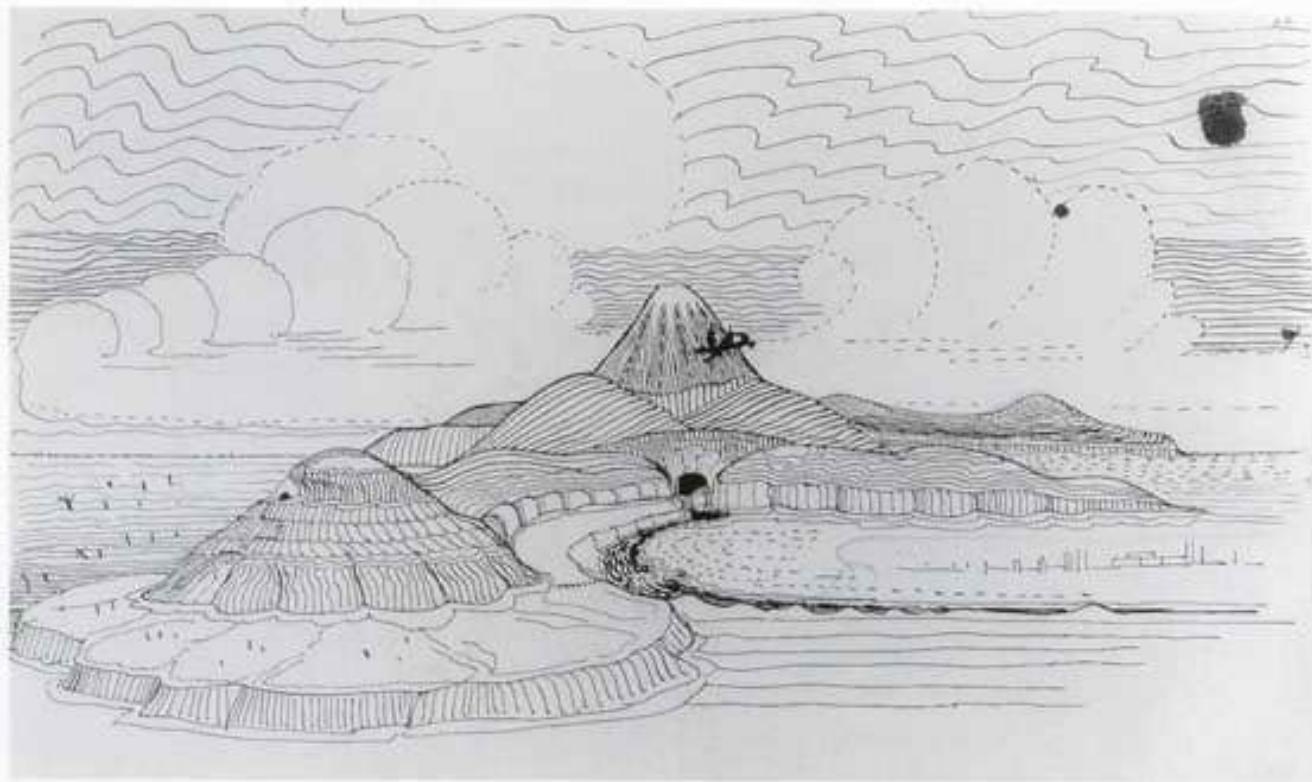
The moon should be a *crescent*: it was only a few nights after

the *New Moon* on 'Durin's Day'. Dragon should have a white *naked* spot, that the arrow enters. Bard the Bowman should be standing after release of arrow at

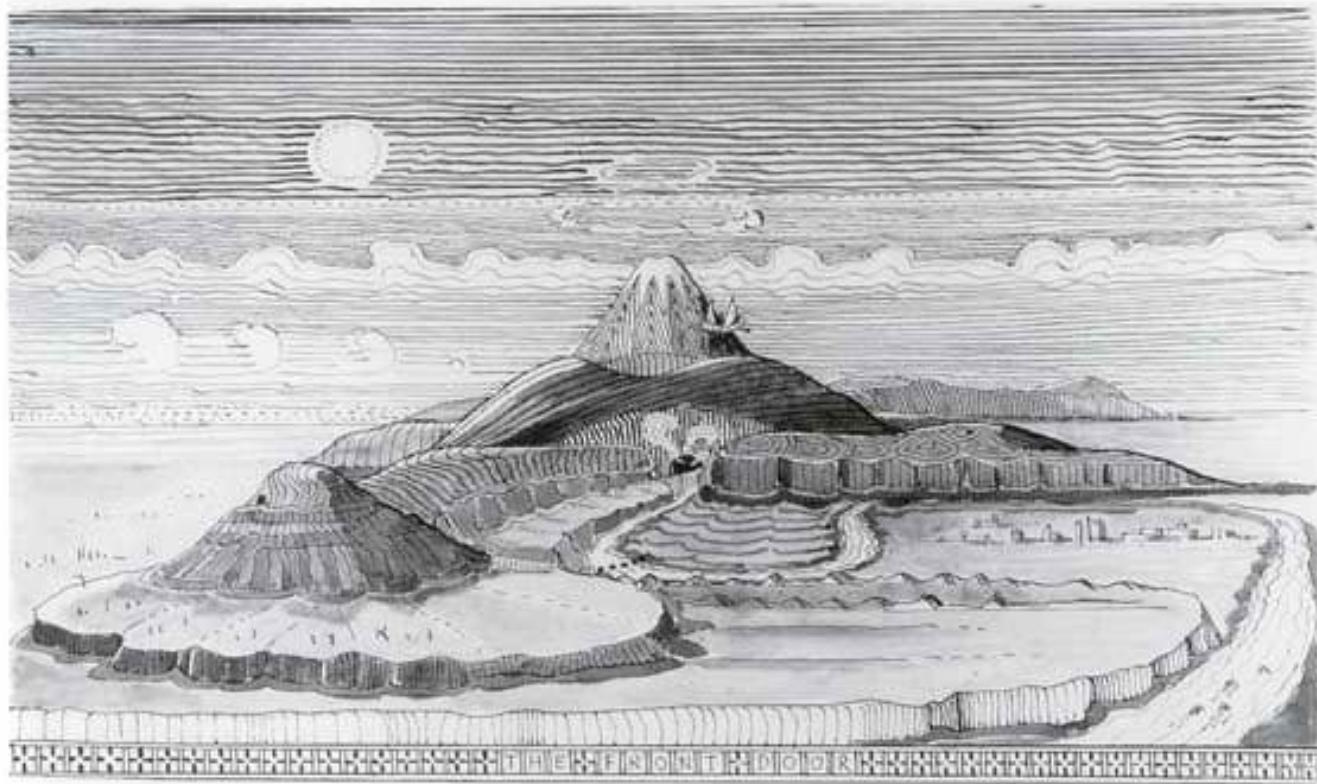
extreme left point of the piles.

But Alien & Unwin chose to publish the sketch itself. Tolkien thought that the scene was beyond his skill, and the picture a scrawl, 'too much in the modern mode in which those who can draw try to conceal it. But perhaps there is a distinction between their productions and one by a man who obviously cannot draw what he sees.'<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, it is an impressive picture, full of interest. The Lonely Mountain is almost invisible in pencil shading below and behind Smaug, with smoke rising and blending into the background and just a hint of fire at the top. The buildings do not quite match those in *Lake Town* [127], but the shape of Smaug is true to Tolkien's other drawings of him. Bard's arrow is shown at the moment before it vanishes, 'barb, shaft and feather', into the unarmoured hollow by the dragon's left breast.

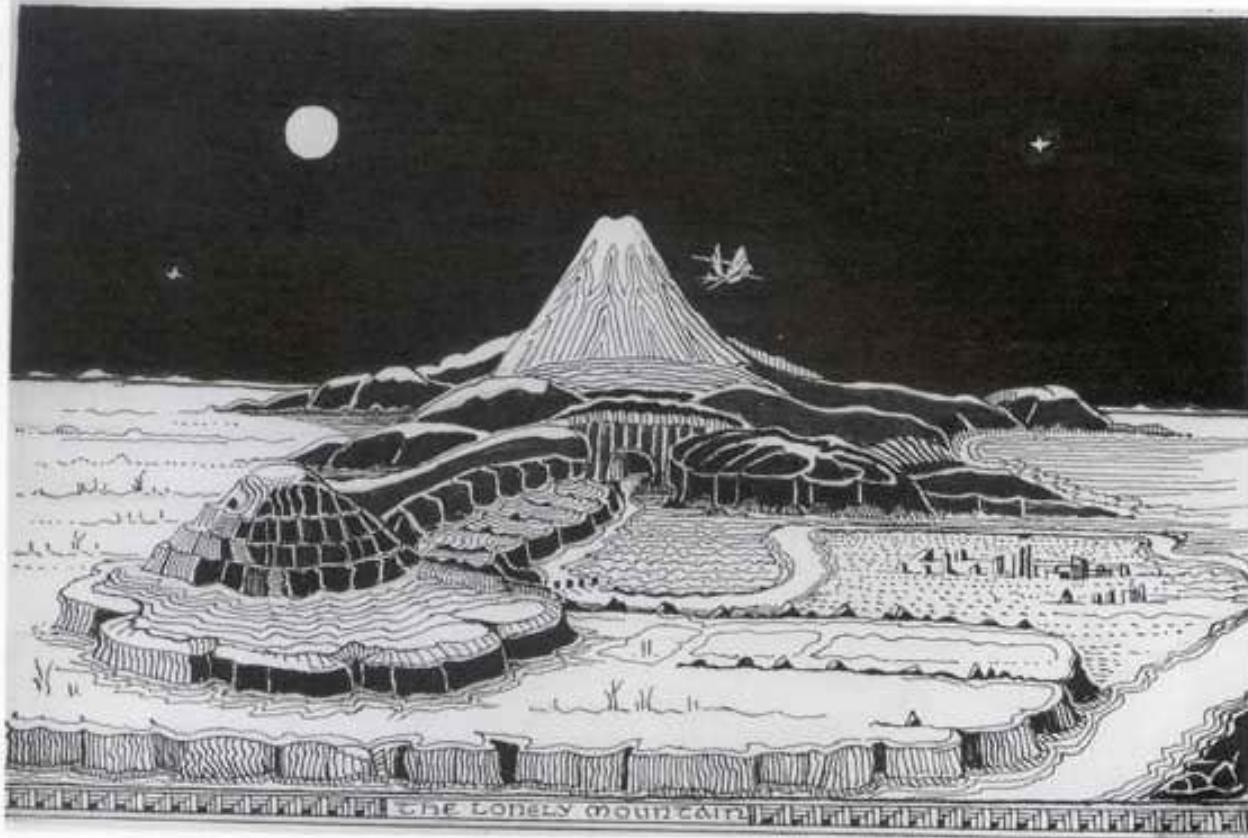
Tolkien was less artistically inspired by the final chapters of *The Hobbit*, which are full of action or which retrace Bilbo's road as he returns to Hobbiton. The extant drawings for chapters 15 to 19 include only *The Coming of the Eagles* [138] and *The Hall at Bag-End* [139]. The first of these is a very rough sketch for the scene at the end of chapter 17 in which the Eagles of the Misty Mountains arrive to join Dwarves, Elves, and Men against a Goblin army. 'The eagles were coming down the wind, line after line, in such a host as must have gathered from all the eyries of the North.' The figure seen from behind in the foreground could be Bilbo, dressed in helm and mail-shirt: "'The Eagles! the Eagles!' Bilbo cried, dancing and waving his arms.'



134 *Untitled (Smaug Flies around the Lonely Mountain)*  
Pencil, black ink



135 *The Front Door*  
Pencil, black ink



136 *The Lonely Mountain*  
Pencil, black ink

The title in tengwar at the head of the drawing reads 'The Coming of the Eagles'.

*The Hall at Bag-End*, the last illustration in the book, is an intriguing interior. Tolkien enthusiasts have made many deductions about Hobbit culture and crafts from its contents. Tolkien himself was not happy with it: he confessed to Alien & Unwin that he had misguid-ediy put a shadow in wash behind the door, which in the line-engraving became all black and obscured a key in the lock. He said nothing to his publisher about the proportions of the door relative to Bilbo, but surely, as drawn the hobbit would have had to stand on a chair to reach the knob. The drawing has other odd features as well, for example the two framed mirrors on opposite sides of the door, one curved against the wall, the other flat and upright. But these are incidental faults, and they do not detract from the important aspect of the picture:

its strong perspective along the lines of the tube-shaped

hall to, and through, the open door. It says, on the one hand, that Bilbo is home again, comfortable and (to judge by his paunch) well-fed; but it also says, Look: the door is wide open, and there is the lane beginning just outside, going down The Hill and 'ever ever on' (as Bilbo says in chapter 19), towards the horizon and adventure. Indeed, in less than a year after this drawing was made, Bilbo went once more into the east, in the sequel to *The Hobbit* Tolkien began to write in December 1937: *The Lord of the Rings*.

George Alien & Unwin were very accommodating to Tolkien during the production of *The Hobbit*. They recognized not only the quality of his writing and art but also that he had a natural talent for design. They asked (and acted upon) his advice on the typography of the book, and encouraged his participation in the design of its binding and dust-jacket. The binding case of *The Hobbit* as originally designed by the Alien & Unwin

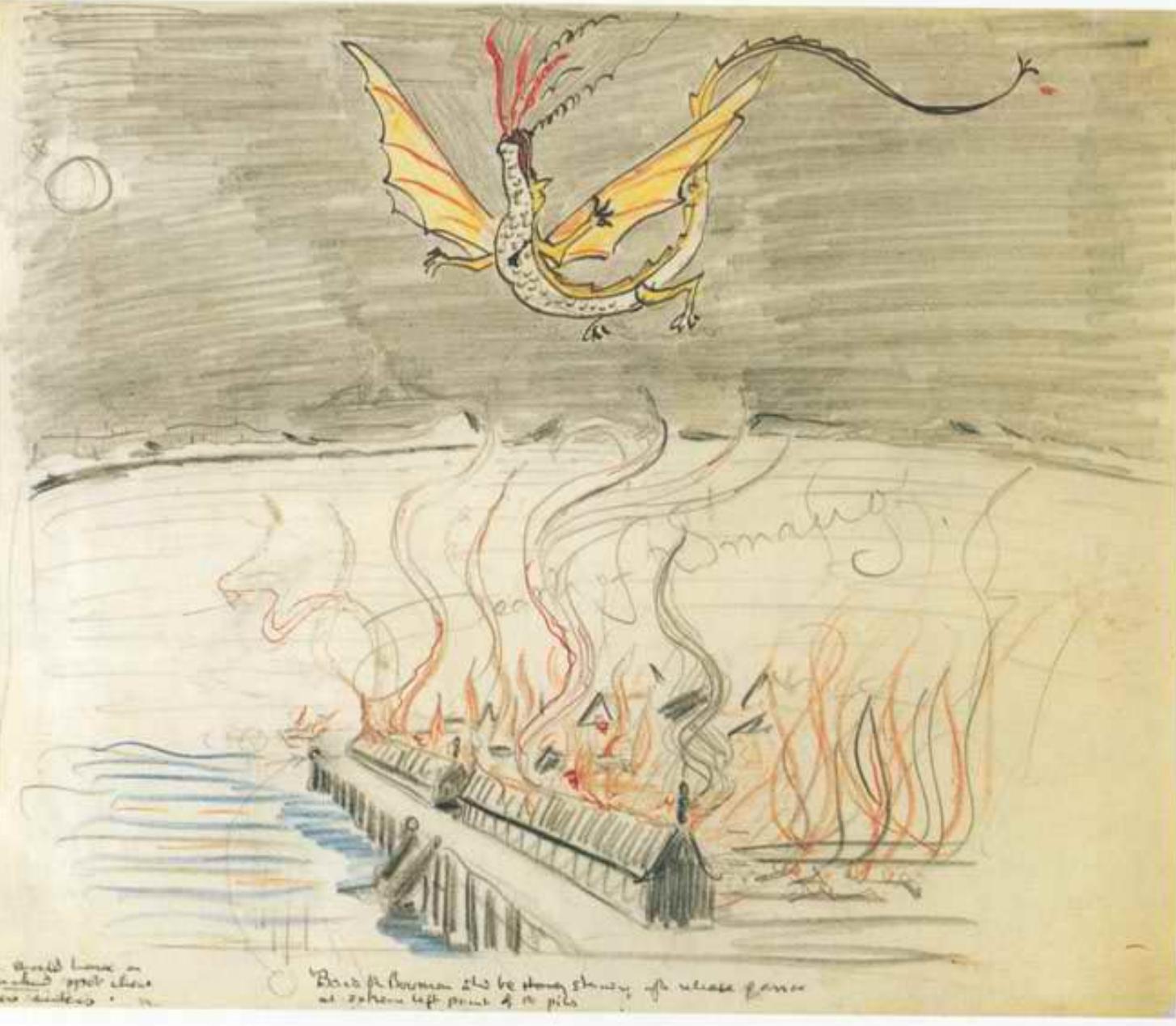
The moon should be a crescent.  
at the New Year on December Day.

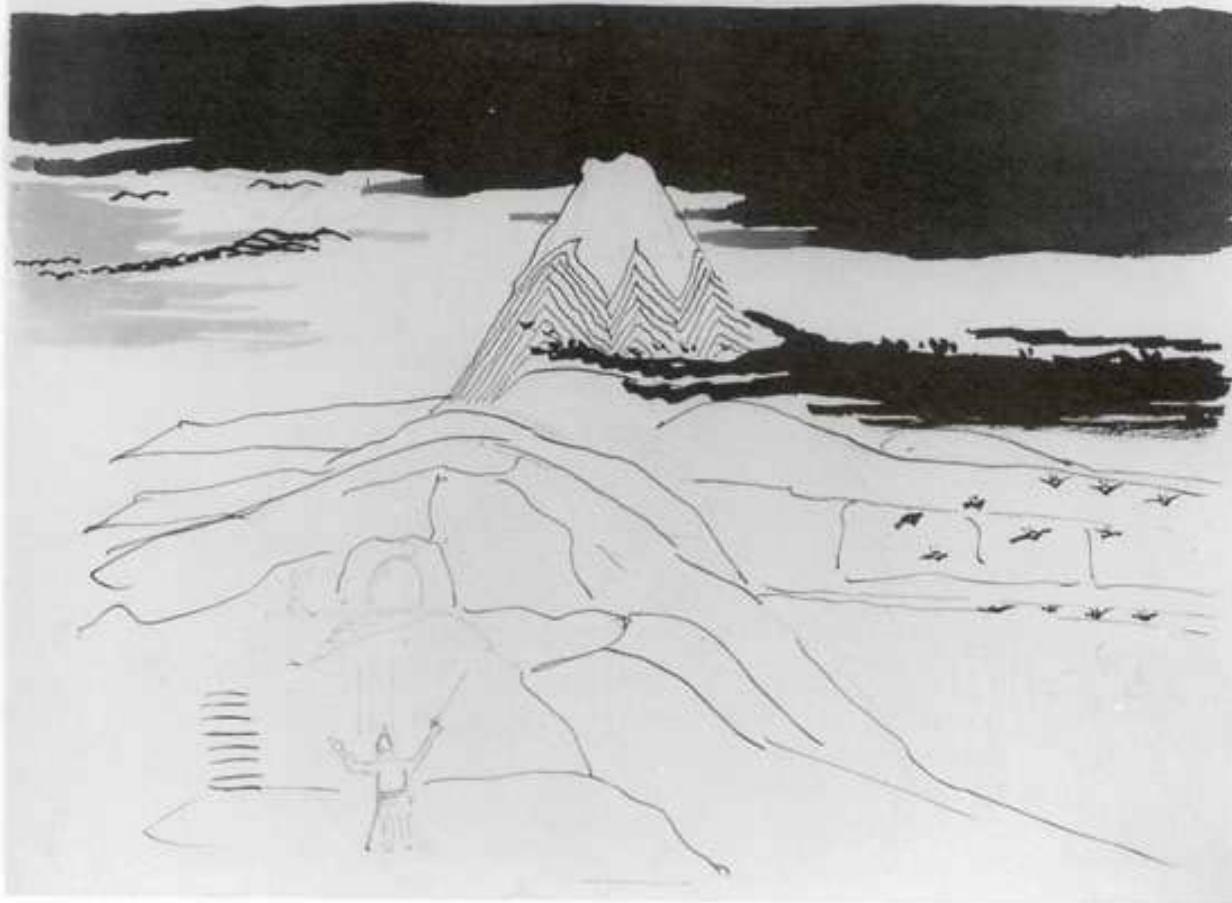
Dragon should have  
whole ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> front above  
in corner ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> below.

Box platform should be strong  
at extreme left point of a pillar

### 137 Death of Smaug

Pencil, coloured pencil, black and red ink





138 *The Coming of the Eagles*  
Pencil, black and red ink

production staff featured two wavy lines wrapping around the covers and spine at top and bottom, perhaps

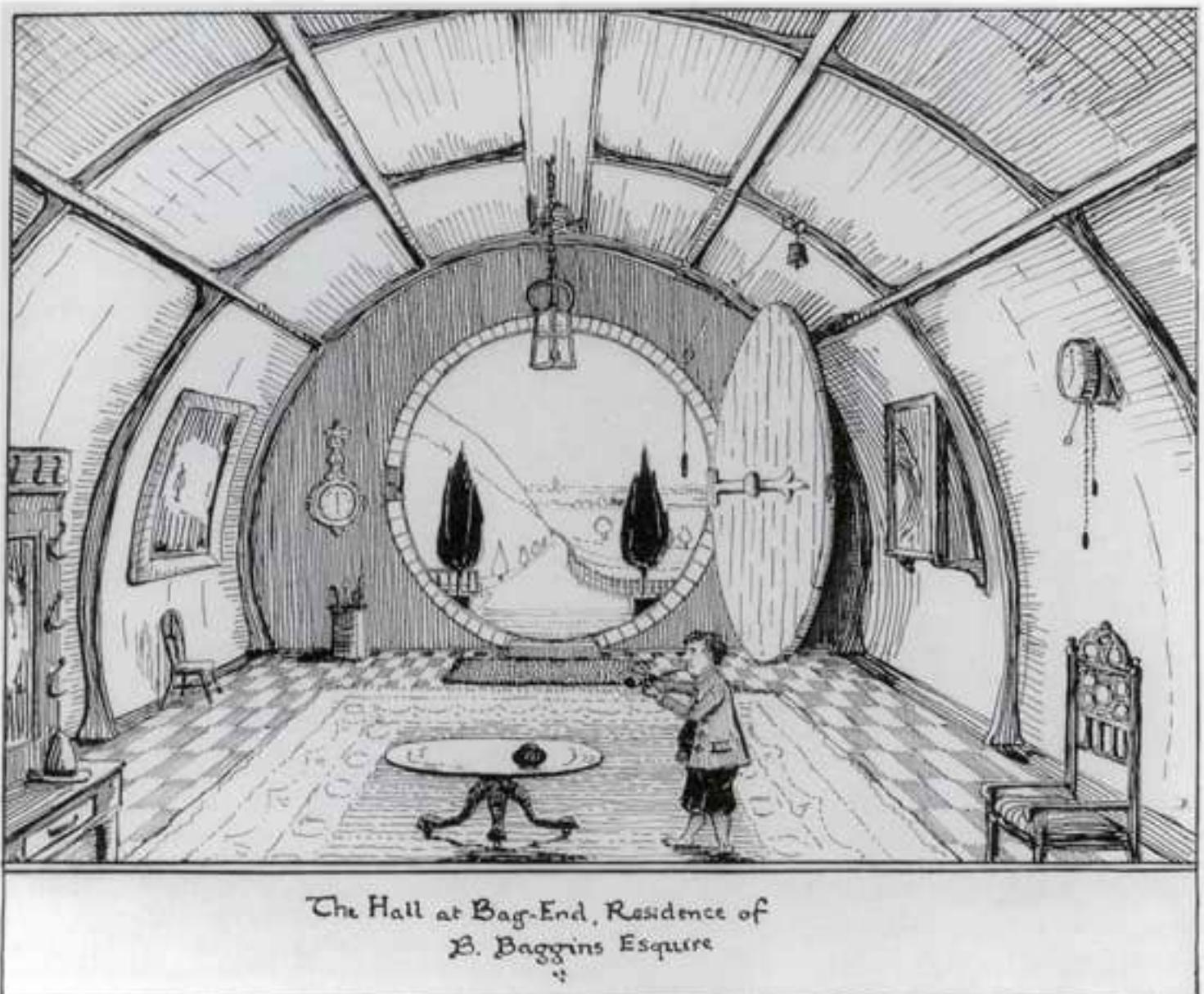
to suggest mountains. *'The Hobbit'* was stamped in italic type asymmetrically in two lines on the upper cover, and two more wavy lines were stamped below the title. On being sent samples of the suggested case, Tol-kien asked that the title be centred and that upright rather than italic letters be used, and he felt strongly that 'the wavy line at edges and (especially) under title is bad. None or straight? A small design would be an improvement. I suppose it must be in black blocked in or thick outline. I will try one at once.'<sup>38</sup>

Alien & Unwin agreed to remove the wavy lines under the title, but wanted to leave those at the edges, **without** which the publisher felt that the binding would look bare. Sent a revised binding case still not to his liking, Tolkien responded with designs of his own:

I thought the wavy line might be transformed into something significant; and tried to find an ornamental dragon-formula.

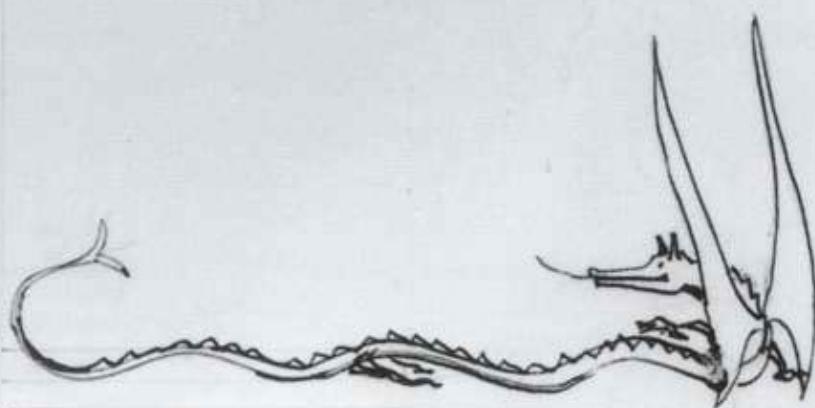
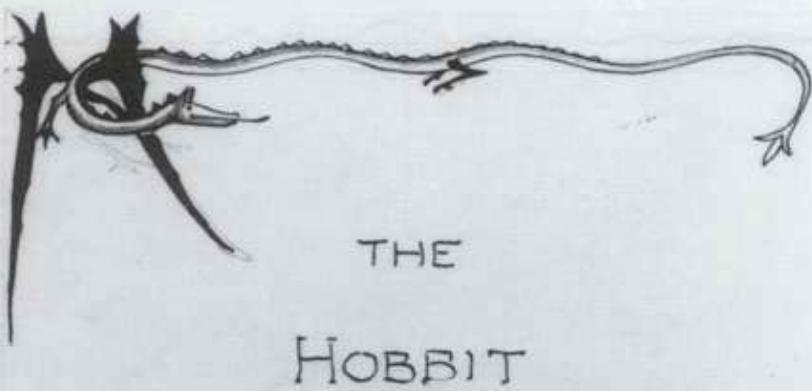
The one intended for the bottom right hand corner might possibly have been of use in some way. The wavy mountains could have appeared at bottom or top, according to the dragon selected. But the whole thing is too elaborate. I never had a chance of reducing it. The revised cover, which I return, will do - though I still hanker after a dragon, or at least some sort of rune-formula such as I have put on the centre of back.<sup>39</sup>

Apart from Tolkien's interest in dragons, noted already in previous chapters, the large presence of Smaug in *The Hobbit* made it appropriate that a dragon be represented on the binding and jacket. Tolkien's final design for the front binding [140] included a choice of two. He envisioned one stamped at the top or bottom of the cover, with a separate decoration at the bottom or top. The lower dragon, redrawn, appeared on the covers of the finished binding [142] as mirror images. The



The Hall at Bag-End, Residence of  
B. Baggins Esquire

139 *The Hall at Bag-End*  
Pencil, black ink



140 (left)

*The Hobbit*, design for upper binding  
Pencil, black ink, white body colour

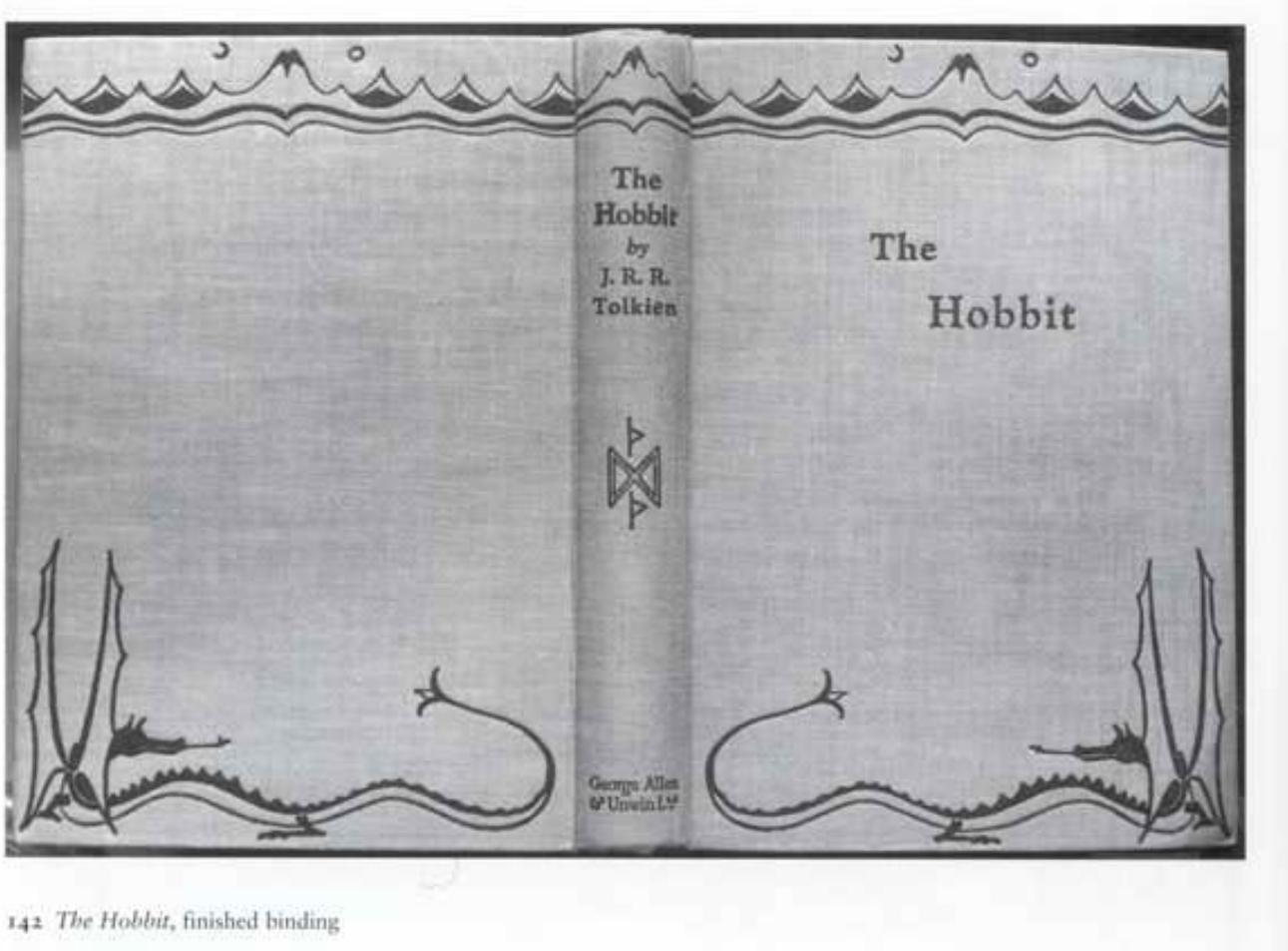


The  
Hobbit  
by  
J.R.R.  
Tolkien

George Allen  
& Unwin Ltd



141 (right)  
*The Hobbit*, design for spine  
and lower binding  
Pencil, black ink



142 *The Hobbit*, finished binding

words 'wavy mountains' in Tolkien's letter refer to the wraparound decoration that appears at the top of the finished binding; a segment of the design can be seen in one of Tolkien's sketches for the spine and back cover [141]. The 'rune-formula', two TH runes (for the Dwarf rulers Thorin and Thror) above and below a squared D rune (like that marking the secret door on *Thror's Map*), appears on a second design for the spine and back cover, centred between a dragon and 'wavy mountains'. A less compressed form of the device was stamped on the spine of the finished binding. Only the simplest of the suns and moons drawn in the sketches were used, above the line of mountains, in the sort of 'magical' conjunction Tolkien had already used to decorate some his 'Father Christmas' letters ([63] is one example) and which also laterally connects to his story of the Two Trees from which the Sun and Moon were made in the 'Silmarillion' legends.

Tolkien devised several dummy dust-jackets for *The Hobbit*, almost all of which have been lost. Only one

fragment is preserved [143], possibly the earliest of the designs, as it seems never to have had the runic border present in the first version Tolkien sent to his publisher. It is now so fragile that it has been mounted on Japanese paper. Tolkien drew it in black, green, brown, and red inks, the latter for the dragon and title. Of the first submitted sketch, he wrote to Alien & Unwin:

I discovered (as I anticipated) that it was rather beyond my craft and experience. But perhaps the general design would do?

I foresee the main objections.

There are too many colours: blue, green, red, black. (The

2 reds are an accident; the z greens inessential.) This could be met, with possible improvement, by substituting *white* for *red*;

and omitting the sun, or drawing a line round it. The presence of the sun and moon in the sky together refers to the magic attaching to the door [in the Lonely Mountain, at the centre of the design].

It is too complicated, and needs simplifying: e.g. by reducing the mountains to a single colour, and simplification of the jagged 'fir-trees'.

The lettering is probably not clear enough. . . . The design *inside* the runic border is of the size of the model you gave me. . . . Though magical in appearance [the runes] merely run: *The Hobbit or There and Back Again, being the record of a year's journey made by Bilbo Baggins;*

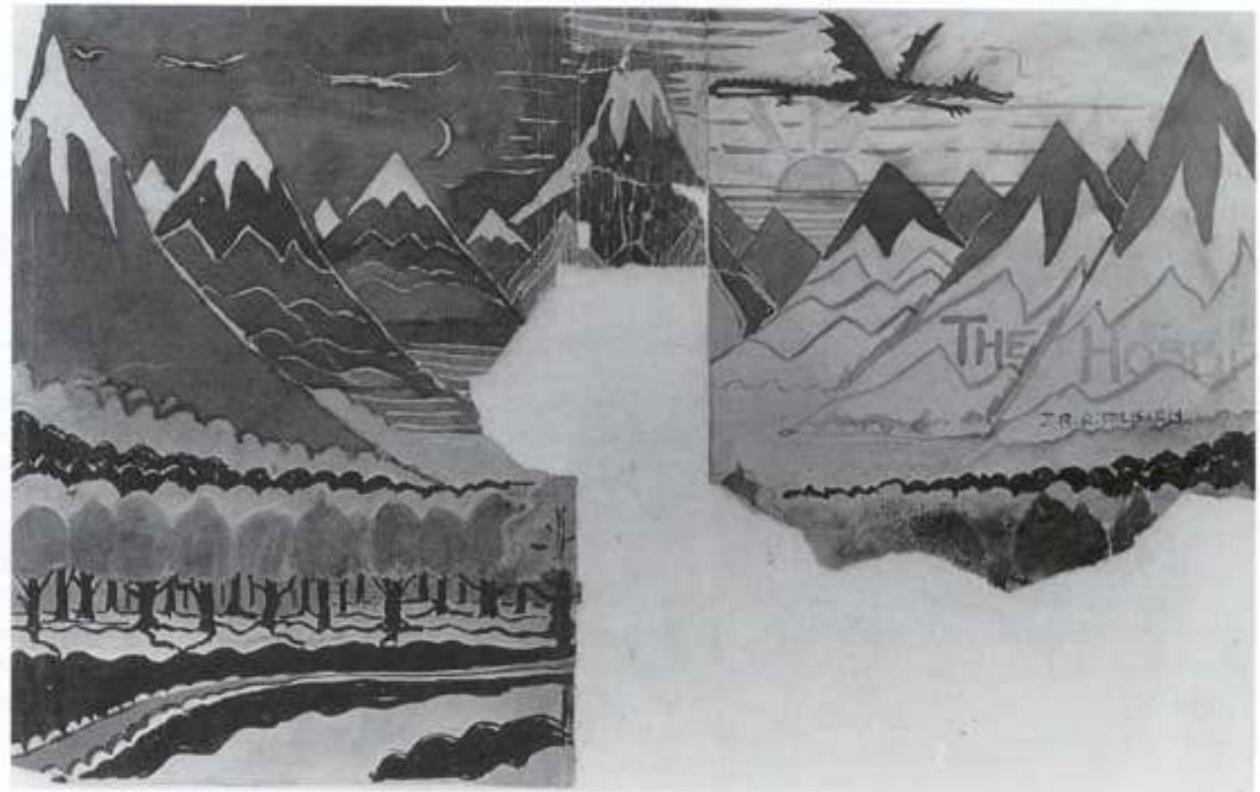
*compiled from his memoirs by J.R.R. Tolkien and published by George Alien and Unwin. . . w*

Working with his publisher, Tolkien reduced the number of colours in his design to just blue and green, along with black and white. A third colour, red, was omitted by Alien & Unwin because of cost, and the sun printed in outline as Tolkien suggested. This was, he said, his 'chief sorrow, but I realise that it cannot be helped. A slightly finer outline would have been better but it is a small point.<sup>41</sup> In fact it was a fortunate result, as the jacket for the Unwin Hyman 1987 anniversary edition of *The Hobbit* shows. There by way of celebration Tolkien's design was printed at last with a bright red sun and dragon, and these grasp the attention rather too firmly: the eye is drawn to those elements rather than to the design as a whole.<sup>42</sup> The finished art [144] had a red (or rather, pink) dragon and sun, with marginal instructions by Tolkien when he was still hopeful that a third colour could be added.

Tolkien's *Hobbit* dust-jacket is as eye-catching today as it was in 1937. It attracts not by colour but by its

graphic energy. Mountains march rhythmically across the spread, their snowcaps brightly contrasting with dark lower slopes. Jagged lines like lightning bolts pass across the mountains and pulsate at their feet. Tree trunks along the bottom of the picture flash alternately black and white. Like so many of Tolkien's pictures it is designed around a central axis, here the long road through the forest to the Lonely Mountain. Its content is also symmetrical: on the back are night, darkness. Evil in the shape of the dragon; on the front are day, light, Good in the form of eagles that come to the rescue twice in the story.

Unfortunately, in most later printings the dust-jacket no longer fits the proportions of the book, or rather, the book no longer fits the jacket. The volume became taller and narrower than in the first printings, for which Tolkien had carefully sized his design, the leading edges of the jacket wrapped around onto the flaps, and part of the continuous runic border was concealed. Also, some-time between 1972. and 1975 the lettering on the jacket, except the runes, was professionally redrawn. The letters are now straighter, with heavier lines, 'cleaner' and better suited on the spine to a slimmer profile (more recent printing papers have less bulk than in 1937). But the new lettering lacks the charm of the original drawn by Tolkien, and is less well balanced and placed.



143

Dust-jacket design  
for *The Hobbit*  
Pencil, black ink,  
watercolour

1 A preliminary pencil sketch for the third map is reproduced in *J.R.R. Tolkien*:

The Hobbit Drawings, Watercolors, and Manuscripts, p. 31.

2 Susan Dagnall, letter to Tolkien, 4 December 1936, Tolkien-Alien &:

Unwin archive. 'The other Esgaroth map' would seem to be [128], but that drawing is in three, not two, colours, in addition to plain pencil.

3 One is reproduced, with some loss of detail, as fig. 4 in the foreword to some fiftieth anniversary editions of *The Hobbit* (London: Unwin Hyman;

Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) and in *The Annotated Hobbit*, introduction and notes by Douglas A. Anderson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988;

London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 218.

4 Letter to Susan Dagnall, 4 January 1937, *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (hereafter *Letters*), p. 14. Tolkien had drawn maps and diagrams of his invented world while writing 'The Silmarillion', see *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, pp. [219]-61; but these were only roughly drawn, for the author's reference, not finished for publication.

5 Reproduced in the foreword to some fiftieth anniversary editions of *The Hobbit* (cf. note 3 above), and in *The Annotated Hobbit*, p. 29.

6 The pencilled notes at top are a version of the text of the plain runes written in Noldorin, a precursor of Tolkien's invented Elvish language Sindarin:

'Lheben teil brann i'annon ar neleldh [ncledie]>| neleldhi gar |golda> goelend>] godrebb' (literally perhaps 'Five feet high the gate and three by three they go through together'). At bottom is roughly the same text in Old English: 'Fif fot a heah is se duru ond prie ma-g samod [?] purhgangend' ('Five feet high is the door and three may go through together'). The Old English plain runes are identical to those on the final endpaper map, except that the TH-rune initials of Thror and Thrain are lacking.

7 From the typescript of *The Hobbit* in the Marquette University Library, Department of Archives and Special Collections.

8 In the first printings of the American edition, the endpaper maps were printed entirely in red.

9 *Letters*, p. 14. Tolkien's reference to 'one or two' illustrations would mean, if taken literally, that two or three of the pictures he sent Alien & Unwin on 4 January were not redrawn, but taken as they were from the 'home manuscript'. This may have been true of 'the long narrow drawing of Mirkivood', which Tolkien says, in a letter of 17 January (*Letters*, p. 15), 'was at the beginning [of the "home manuscript"]', and perhaps also of *The Front Gate*. We have found no earlier version of either drawing.

10 Letter to C.A. Furth, 17 January 1937, *Letters*, p. 15.

11 *The Lost Road and Other Writings*, p. 282; *Unfinished Tales of Numenor and Middle-earth*, p. 281.

12 'The top border has been omitted

(rather a pity)' (letter to Susan Dagnall, 23 January 1937, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive).

13 None of the *Hobbit* pictures are dated, but can be roughly ordered by style and technique, and sometimes (if less reliably) related by the paper on which they are drawn or painted. Tolkien used a variety of papers for the *Hobbit* pictures, usually inexpensive muted white, laid sheets. *One Morning Early in the Quiet of the World* [891], *Gandalf* [911], and the Rivendell picture 1107] are on the same laid paper. Three of the versions of *The Hill* [93-95, the first two on the same sheet] and *Trolls' Hill* [99] are on wove paper watermarked 'King of Kent Extra Fine'. The two Rivendell pictures [105-106], the 'Raft-elves' sketch [123], and the diagram/ map [128] are on the same laid paper, with a slightly smoother surface, and share the same coloured pencil technique.

14 Letter to the Houghton Mifflin Co., March or April 1938, *Letters*, p. 35.

15 See further, John D. Rateliff, *Bilbo Baggins: The History of The Hobbit*, forthcoming.

16 See *The Annotated Hobbit*, p. 12.

17 Letter to C.A. Furth, 13 May 1937, *Letters*, p. 17. Ms Jessica Yates has shown, in 'The Other 50th Anniversary', *Mythlore* 16, no. 3, whole no. 61 (Spring 1990), pp. 47-50, that at the time of this letter Tolkien could have seen only the relatively cruder comic cartoon films by Disney, several months before the release of his masterly *Snow White*.

18 Letter to Alien & Unwin, 28 May 1937, *Letters*, p. 19.

19 Letter to C.A. Furth, 31 August 1937, *Letters*, pp. 19-20.

20 In the American edition the title borders of *The Hill* and *Rivendell* were excised, and the integral title piece of *Conversation with Smaug* was removed and the spot made grey to match the surrounding area. All four pictures were cropped into the image as well, and titles were printed in type below: 'The Hill':

'Hobbiton across The Water' (without hyphens); 'The Fair Valley of Rivendell':

'Bilbo Woke up with the Early Sun in his Eyes'; and "'O Smaug the Chieftest and Greatest of Calamities'". Tolkien supplied the latter three titles on separate sheets of paper. *Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves* was also entitled on a separate sheet, as 'The dark river opened suddenly wide'; this title, and the others, were printed also in the table of contents of the second British printing (the illustrations themselves, however, retained their integral titles).

21 The tracing was mistakenly printed in place of the ink frontispiece as no. 1 in the first edition of *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien* (1979).

22 On this one page are a sketch of Smaug, another of Smaug's head, and miscellaneous sketches of dwarves.

23 *The Fairy Tale Book* [by Edric VredenburgI, illustrated by Jennie Harbour (London: Raphael Tuck & Sons, [c. 1920]), in *The Golden Gift Series*. The similarity between Harbour's picture and *The Trolls* was first noted by Mr Brian Alderson in *The Hobbit 50th Anniversary* (Oxford: Blackwell's; London:

Unwin Hyman, 1987).

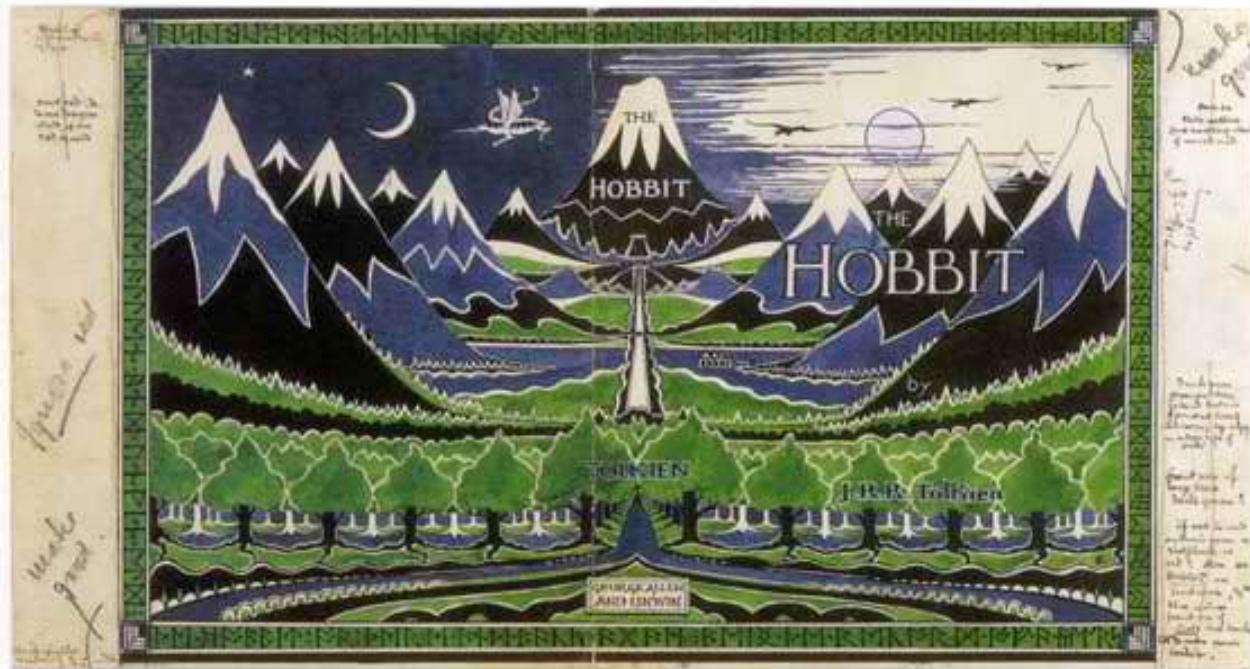
24 Letter to Christopher Bretherton, 16 July 1964, *Letters*, p. 346.

25 See above, p. 57.

26 Letter to Michael Tolkien, [1967-8], *Letters*, p. 391.

27 Tolkien also began a variant of this picture with the landscape stretching far into the distance and a large flying eagle entering the view at lower left, but he abandoned the attempt after sketching only a few details.

28 This connection was first suggested by Prof. J.S. Ryan in 'Two Oxford Scholars' Perceptions of the Traditional Germanic Hall', *Minas Tirith Evening-Star* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1990), pp. 8-11.



144 Dust-jacket for *The Hobbit*, final art  
Pencil, black ink, watercolour, white body colour

Tolkien may also have seen a similar hall illustrated by James Guthrie as the frontispiece to *The Riding to Lithend* by Gordon Bottomley (Flansham, Sussex: Pear Tree Press, 1909).

2.9 Reproduced as no. 11 in *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, where it is considerably enlarged, and the colour values are not true. The original is predominantly grey, with no browns or yellow cast, and the water is a vivid blue.

30 Foreword to *The Hobbit*, fiftieth anniversary edition (London:

Unwin Hyman, 1987, pp. viii-ix).

31 *The Tolkien Family Album*, p. 57.

32 See above, p. 40.

33 From the manuscript in the Bodleian Library.

34 Letter to the Houghton Mifflin Co., [March or April 1938], *Letters*, p. 35.

35 Reproduced as no. 18 in *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*. However, the colour values of the reproduction are not true to the original.

36 Tolkien's copy of *Writing dy Illuminat-ing, ey Lettering* is in the possession of Christopher Tolkien. See also below, appendix on calligraphy.

37 Letter to Rayner Unwin, 15 December 1965, *Letters*, p. 365.

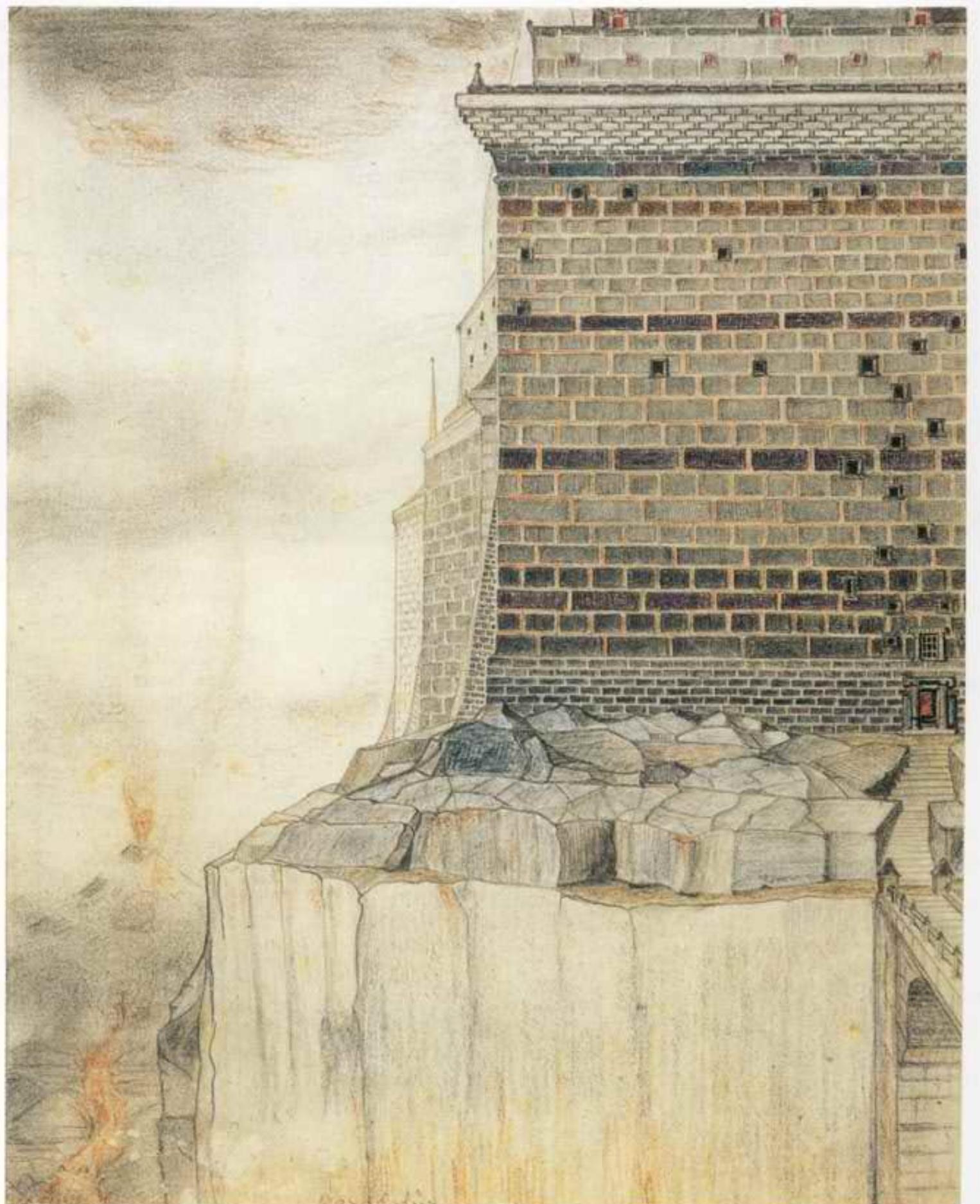
38 Letter to Alien & Unwin, 18 May 1937, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive.

39 Letter to Alien & Unwin, [9? July] 1937, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive.

40 Letter to Alien & Unwin, 13 April 1937, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive (cf. *Letters*, pp. 16-17).

41 Letter to Alien & Unwin, 28 May 1937, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive.

42 The sun and dragon were printed in red even earlier, on the covers of the reset Unwin Books edition of *The Hobbit*, 1975. There the design is balanced by the title and author's name also printed in red on the front cover and spine; but red lettering was not part of Tolkien's intent.



145 *Barad-dûr*

Pencil, coloured pencil, black and red ink

## 5 The Lord of the Rings

The first printing of *The Hobbit* sold out within three months of publication, and a second was rushed to press to satisfy growing demand. On the whole, critics gave the book good reviews, though when it came to Tolkien's drawings opinion was mixed. In the *New Statesman and Nation* Richard Hughes praised *The Hobbit* but regretted 'that the author's own illustrations ... show no reflection of his literary talent and imagination.' The reviewer in the *Oxford Magazine* also found the pictures not up to the standard of the text, though she felt that they were 'redeemed by the two nice maps'. On the other hand, C.S. Lewis, in reviewing *The Hobbit* for the *Times Literary Supplement*, found Tolkien's illustrations and maps 'admirable', and in the *New York Times Book Review* Anne T. Baton echoed Lewis's adjective and called the pictures 'a perfect accompaniment to the text'.<sup>1</sup> Each, of course, to his own taste - and especially in the field of children's books, tastes are divided by a great yawning gap.

Tolkien's most severe critic, however, was always himself. He wrote to his publisher that he felt 'rather crushed by Richard Hughes on the illustrations, all the more so because I entirely agree with him.' Stanley Unwin replied that he had sent Hughes an advance set of the superb colour plates to be added to the second printing of *The Hobbit*, which he thought would make Hughes feel happier.<sup>2</sup> Tolkien was probably not so easily soothed. In his letters to Alien & Unwin he wrote of his *Hobbit* art almost always with self-effacement. It was 'indifferent', 'defective', 'not very good' - quite the opposite view of his publisher and of the vast majority of Tolkien's readers to date. He wanted to be as meticulous and thorough in his art as he was in his writing, especially if the public was going to see it. If he could have spent more time practising and developing his art, he might have thought better of it; but he could not. He was not, after all, an illustrator by profession, any more than he was a professional writer of fantasy. He explained to Stanley Unwin in October 1937: 'I have spent nearly all the vacation-times of seventeen years examining, and doing things of that sort, driven by immediate financial necessity (mainly medical and educational). Writing stories in prose or verse has been stolen, often guiltily, from time already mortgaged, and has been broken and ineffective.'<sup>3</sup> And as we have seen,

many of his paintings and drawings, including the *Hobbit* illustrations, were made in spurts of activity during university holidays.

Tolkien need not worry about reviews, Unwin told him; general consensus had already proclaimed *The Hobbit* a classic. Moreover, a sequel was wanted. Unwin predicted in a letter to Tolkien of October 1937 that 'a large public' would be 'clamouring next year to hear more from you about Hobbits!'<sup>4</sup> Tolkien would rather have pursued 'The Silmarillion', which continued to thrive in his thoughts. But those tales were dis-ordered, and difficult compared with *The Hobbit*, not what was wanted for a children's book to be published the following Christmas. Tolkien agreed to write something new. In the event, the sequel - *The Lord of the Rings* - did not see print for seventeen years, and was longer, darker, and more complex than Tolkien foresaw when he wrote its first chapter in December 1937. Half-comical Hobbits became representatives of the Common Man, and Gandalf the wizard, also carried over from *The Hobbit*, emerged as a figure of great power, in fact one of the angelic powers of Tolkien's mythology. By October 1938 it was clear to Tolkien that the book had become 'more terrifying than [*The Hobbit*] . . . The darkness of the present days [before the Second World War] has had some effect on it'.<sup>5</sup> It was also influenced by 'The Silmarillion', which he found he could not set aside, but built upon its existing foundation of history, landscape, and legend. The new story was no less epic in scope, centred on the magic ring used by Bilbo in *The Hobbit* only to become invisible, now revealed to be the all-powerful One Ring with which the Dark Lord, Sauron, would become master of the world. Around this link Tolkien wove a tale many times the length of its predecessor, telling of a quest by Bilbo's nephew, Frodo Baggins, to destroy the Ring, and of Sauron's war against the free peoples of Middle-earth.

The tale 'grew in the telling', and it grew slowly.<sup>6</sup> Inspiration waxed and waned, and from the start other matters vied for Tolkien's attention. In January 1938 he gave his University Museum lecture on dragons, and also that month read, to the Lovelace Society at Worcester College, Oxford, a then-unpublished fantasy story, *Farmer Giles of Ham*. It seems remarkable that Tolkien, by his own admission,<sup>7</sup> never tried to illustrate *Farmer*

*Giles*, which he wrote in several drafts at about the same time that he was writing, and illustrating, *The Hobbit*. The story concerns a dragon, which he could have drawn with ease, and it is set in the countryside near Oxford which he knew well. But he did not attempt it;

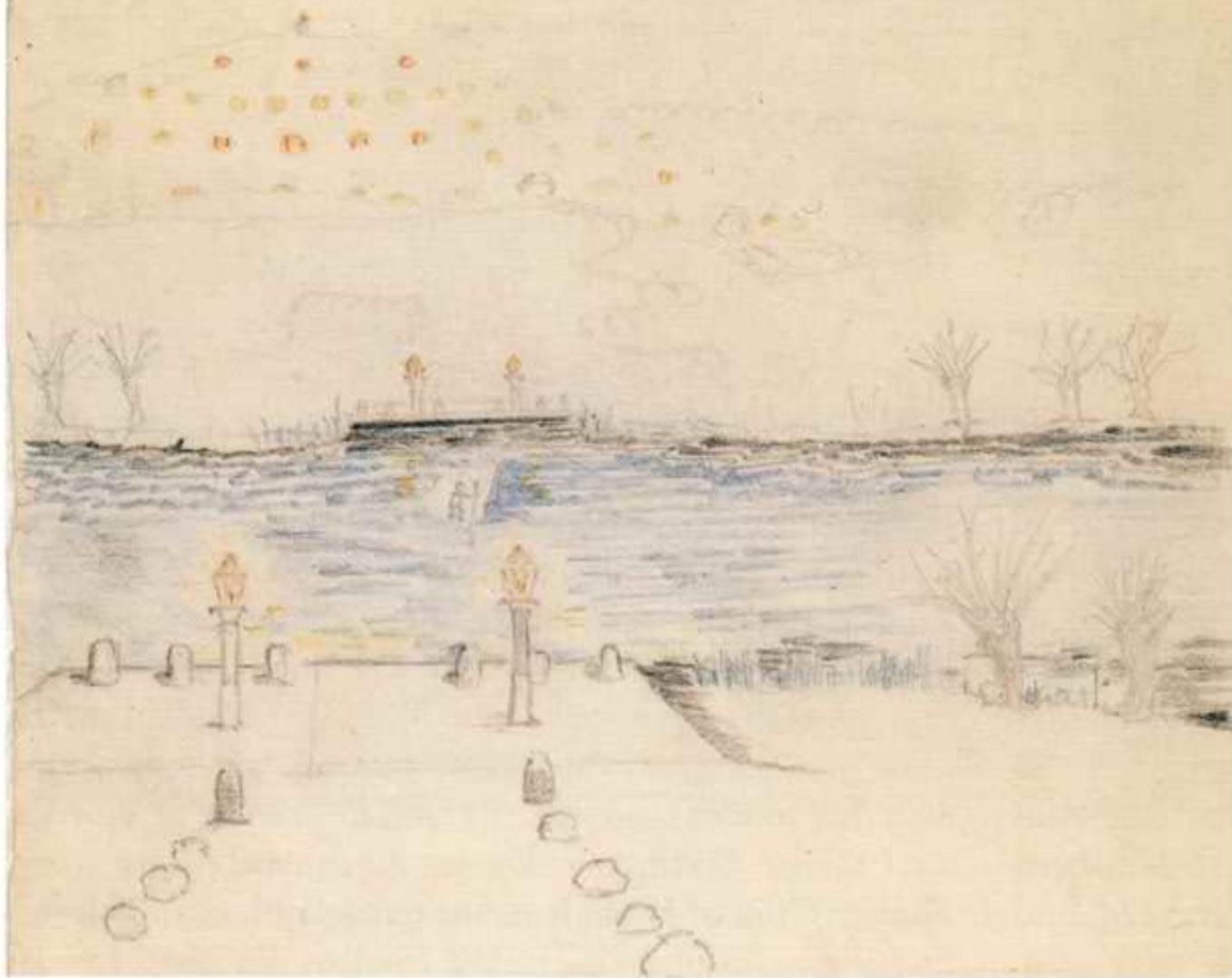
probably he just did not have the time. When *Farmer Giles* was published at last, in 1949, it was illustrated not by Tolkien but by the artist Pauline Baynes.

In February 1939 Tolkien wrote to Alien & Unwin that he might be able to finish *The Lord of the Rings* by the following June - a wildly optimistic prediction, even without the other obligations with which he was burdened. But, he added, although he thought he could finish a text, 'I should have no time or energy for illustration. I never could draw, and the half-baked intimations of it seem wholly to have left me. A map (very necessary) would be all I could do.'<sup>8</sup> So he said; yet before the writing was complete many years later, he

had made numerous drawings for *The Lord of the Rings*, some of them very fine - for example, the frontis-piece to this chapter, *Barad-dur* [145]. However, he seems never to have intended these for publication, or at least never suggested to his publisher that *The Lord of the Rings* be an illustrated book like *The Hobbit*, with pictures drawn by himself.<sup>9</sup> It would have been a daunting task, given the great length of the new book, and also much too expensive for a publisher in Britain's wartime or immediately postwar economy. Alien & Unwin took a financial risk just printing Tolkien's text, in three volumes over a period of months in 1954-5 to spread the cost, and could afford to include only a few essential blocks - maps, inscriptions, and tables of Elvish alphabets - all in line.

Tolkien drew or painted most of his illustrations for *The Hobbit* after its text was complete, when it was to be published or reprinted. In contrast, his pictures for





146  
*Untitled (Brandywine Ferry)*  
Pencil, coloured pencil



147 *Old Man Willow*  
Pencil, coloured pencil

The *Lord of the Rings* were drawn while that work was being written, and for the most part are quick, rough sketches made in aid of the writing. One of the earliest of these sketches, and one of unfortunately very few pictures Tolkien made of the Hobbit lands in Middle-earth, depicts the Buckland ferry over the river Brandy-wine [146], from a scene in book i, chapter 5 of *The Lord of the Rings* in which Frodo and his companions are travelling east to Crickhollow. The original manu-script reads thus:

They [the four hobbit travellers] went down a path, neat and well-kept and edged with large white stones. It led them quickly to the river-bank. There there was a landing-stage big enough for several boats. Its white posts glimmered in the gloom. The mists were beginning to gather almost hedge-high in the fields, but the water before them was dark with only a few curling wisps of grey like steam among the reeds at the sides. The Brandywine River flowed slow and broad. On the

#### **other side two lamps twinkled upon another landing-stage**

with many steps going up the high bank beyond. Behind it the low hill loomed, and out of the hill through stray strands of mist shone many round hobbit-windows, red and yellow. They were the lights of Brandy Hall, the ancient home of the Brandybucks. . . .

Marmaduke helped his friends into a small boat that lay at the stage. He then cast off and taking a pair of oars pulled across the river.<sup>10</sup>

In the published book 'a large flat ferry-boat' is moored beside the landing and 'white bollards near the water's edge glimmered in the light of two lamps on high posts.' Merry (replacing Marmaduke in revision) leads the other hobbits, Frodo, Sam, and Pippin, onto the boat and pushes 'slowly off with a long pole'. On the oppo-site side of the river 'the bank was steep, and up it a winding path climbed from the further landing.' Like the rest of the *Lord of the Rings* art the sketch [146]

bears no written date, but clearly it postdates the earliest text. The boat in the picture is propelled with a pole, not with oars, and there are lamps on the near shore as well as on the landing opposite. The sketch also shows, not 'many steps going up the high bank', but a winding path leading to the hall. Tolkien revised the text to include these features in summer 1938. The hobbit holding a pole is also sketched separately, very small, at the top of the sheet. This drawing was the last, among all of Tolkien's extant art, in which he drew the human figure.

On occasion he made more careful drawings for *The Lord of the Rings*, for his own pleasure as well as for reference, as he had done earlier for 'The Silmarillion'. *Old Man Willow* [147] is a fine example. The Old Forest, on the far side of Buckland, is a dark, nightmarish place in book i, chapter 6, but Tolkien chose not to draw it as such, possibly because the result would have been too like *Taur-na-Fuin* [54] or *Mirkwood* [88]. Instead he illustrated the (deceptively) tranquil scene the hobbits come upon suddenly out of the gloom of the trees:

As if through a gate they saw the sunlight before them. Coming to the opening they found that they had made their way down through a cleft in a high steep bank, almost a cliff. At its feet was a wide space of grass and reeds; and in the distance could be glimpsed another bank almost as steep. A golden afternoon of late sunshine lay warm and drowsy upon the hidden land between. In the midst of it there wound lazily a dark river of brown water, bordered with ancient willows, arched over with willows, blocked with fallen willows, and flecked with thousands of faded willow-leaves. The air was thick with them, fluttering yellow from the branches; for there was a warm and gentle breeze blowing softly in the valley, and the reeds were rustling, and the willow-boughs were creaking.

A 'huge willow-tree, old and hoary' dominates the picture. With a little imagination one can see a 'face' on the upper right part of the trunk. 'Enormous it looked, its sprawling branches going up like reaching arms with many long-fingered hands, its knotted and twisted trunk gaping in wide fissures that creaked faintly as the boughs moved.' Enormous, maybe, to one of the hobbits looking at it, but in the picture the willow does not seem unusually large. 'Willow-man' antedated *The Lord of the Rings* by several years, having first appeared in Tolkien's poem *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* published in 1934. In that work it is Bombadil, not Merry and Pippin, who is caught in a closing crack of the great willow - an idea, Tolkien said, that probably came to him in part from Arthur Rackham's drawings of gnarled trees." John Tolkien thinks that his father's drawing was inspired by a fully grown willow on the

banks of the Cherwell near Oxford, distinct from others

because it was not pollarded.<sup>12</sup> .

Tolkien drew no pictures for the long stretch of story between the hobbits' encounter with Old Man Willow and the arrival of the Fellowship of the Ring at the west gate of Moria. Of course, he had already depicted Rivendell in *The Hobbit*, and his verbal descriptions of the geography of Middle-earth were now much more extensive, and more evocative, than they had been in his children's book. When he came to Moria, however, his inspiration rose. He had mentioned that ancient home of the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* but had not yet explored it. Now he was delayed by fascination with its entrance on the west, the Doors of Durin, whose image he sought to perfect. In a very faint early sketch he drew an ornate doorway, with a short flight of steps and spiralled columns. The design of the latter recalls the columns in *Before* [30] and on either side of the sinister entrance in *Wickedness* [32]. The doorway stands out, partly (it seems) in relief, set into a low wall of rock beyond which hills and mountains march into the distance. The entrance is similarly shown in the finished picture *Moria Gate* [148-149], which Tolkien drew on the verso of the sketch. The scene is now closer to his description in the earliest manuscript of book 2, chapter 4, written in the latter part of 1939:

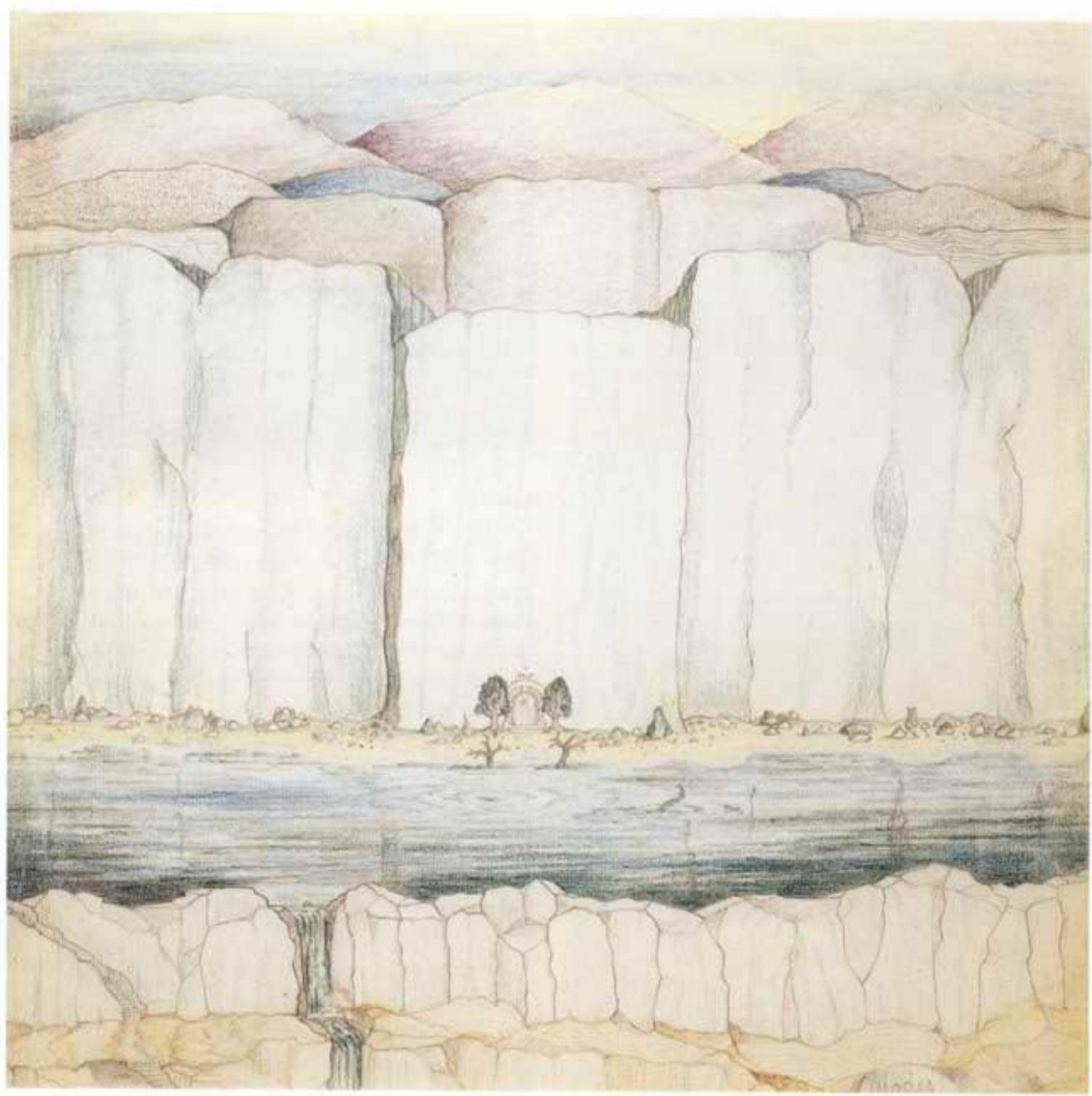
They [the Fellowship of the Ring] trudged on with their weary feet stumbling among the stones, until suddenly they came to a wall of rock some thirty feet high. Over it ran a trickling fall of water, but plainly the fall had once been much stronger....

The moon was now sinking westwards. It shone out brightly for a while, and they saw stretched before their feet a dark still lake, glinting in the moonlight. The Gate-stream had been dammed, and had filled all the valley. Only a trickle of water escaped over the old falls, for the main outlet of the lake was now away at the southern end.

148

*Moria Gate*, upper section Pencil, coloured pencil

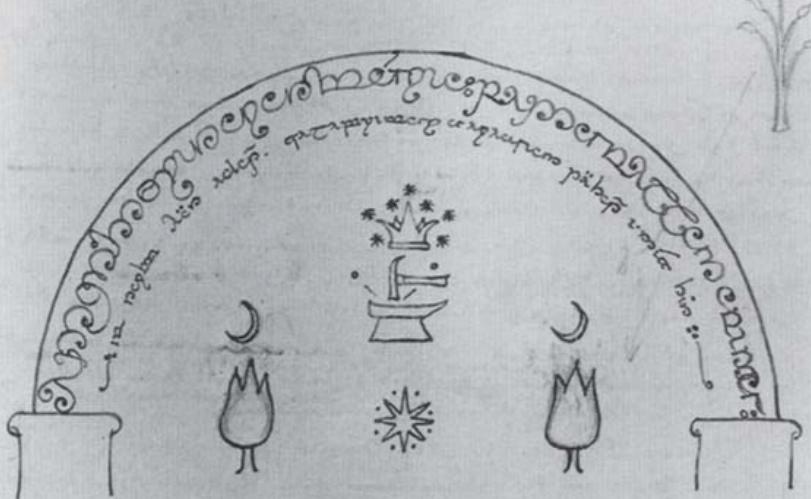
149 *Moria Gate*, discarded bottom section Pencil, coloured pencil





"What does the writing say?"  
"To decipher the arch of letters? I thought I knew the script  
to decipher the inscription on the arch! I thought I knew the elf letters, but I  
these are all entangled and cannot read these."

"The words are in the elf-tongue of good friends in West of  
Middle-earth in the Elder Days," said Gandalf. "But they do not  
say any phrase of importance to us. For that we need to the opening  
spell, and that they do not reveal. They say only: The Doors of  
Durin Lord of Moria: Speak, friend, and enter. And underneath  
small and faint is: Nani made them. Celebrimbor of Hollin  
drew these signs."



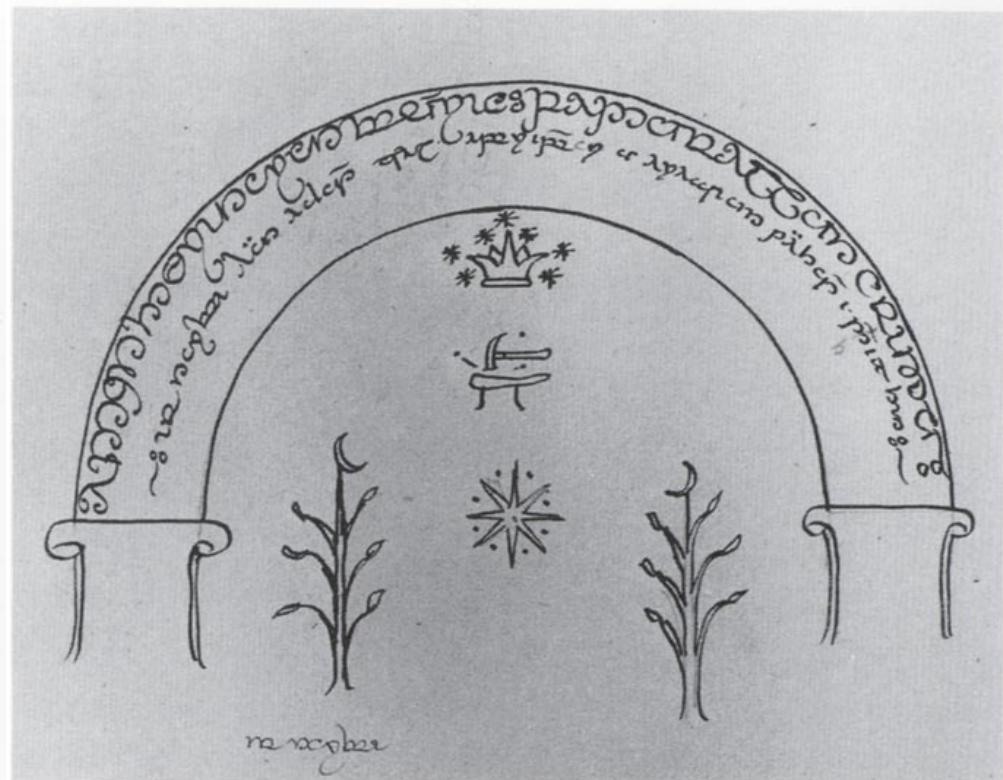
λαργον· λογον· εγον· λειχε: παροε παττενες εννεμε:  
[ μα νεραι λον αλοφ. οπτα παγιωαρη εγγερηνες παλοφ  
λειχε λονα ].

This is another use of the elvish character; spelling:

ENNIN DURIN ARAN VÓRIA: PEDO MELLON A MINNO:

im Nani hain echant. Celembribor o Eregion teithant i-andew thin.  
(K)

150 (left)  
Untitled (Doors of Durin)  
Pencil, black ink

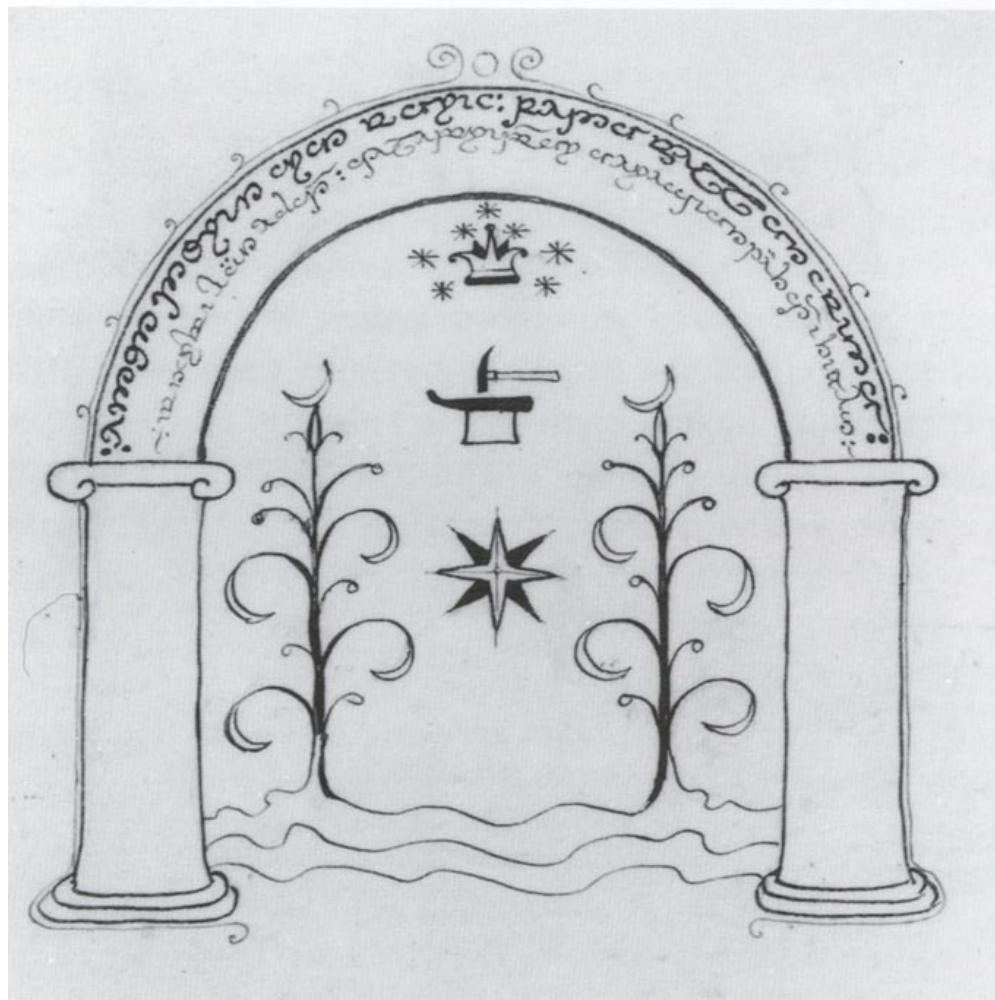


151 (above)  
Untitled (Doors of Durin)  
Pencil, blue ink

152 (below)

Untitled (Doors of Durin)

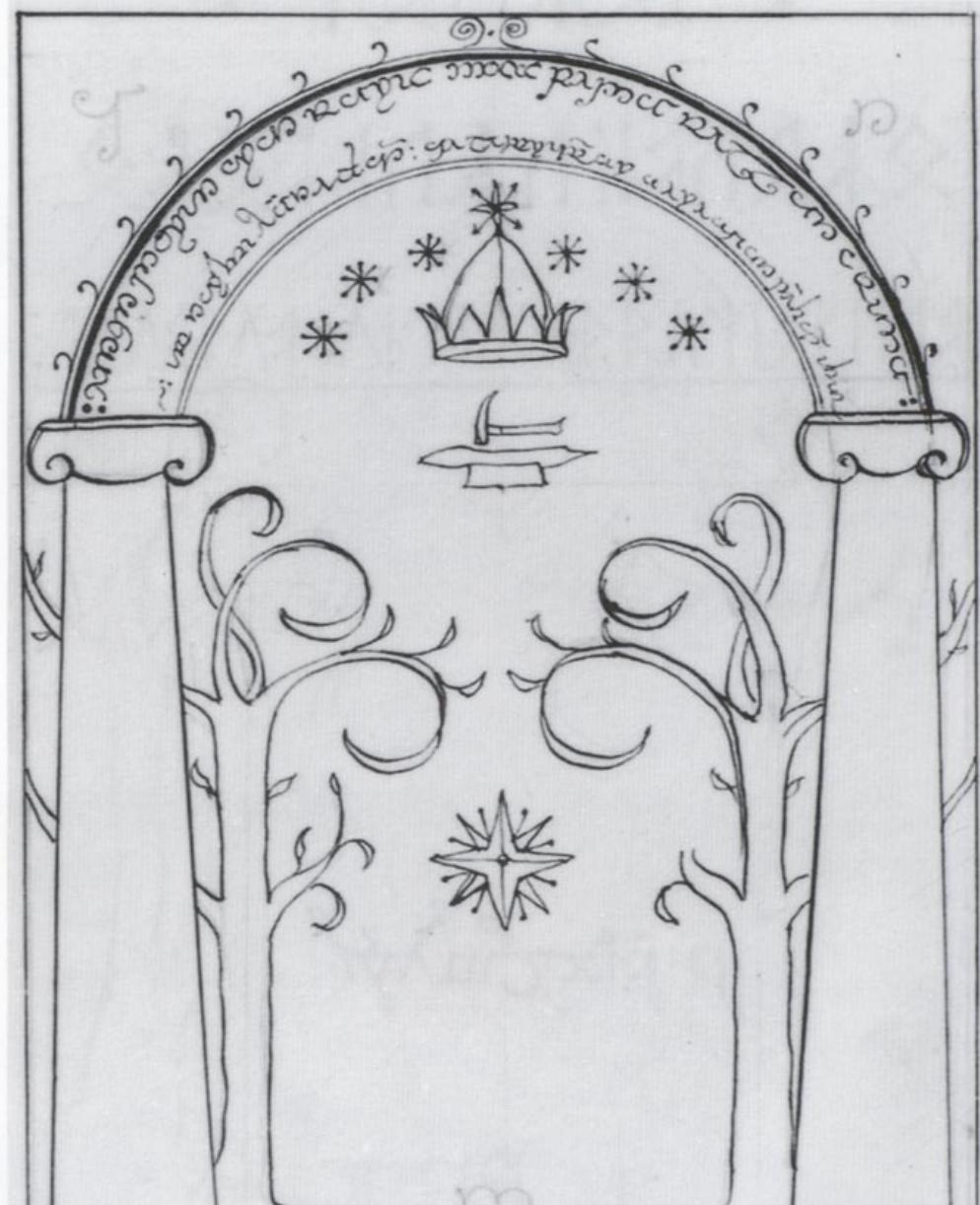
Pencil, black ink

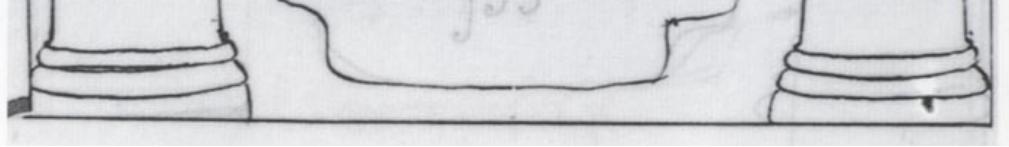


153 (right)

Untitled (Doors of Durin)

Pencil, black ink





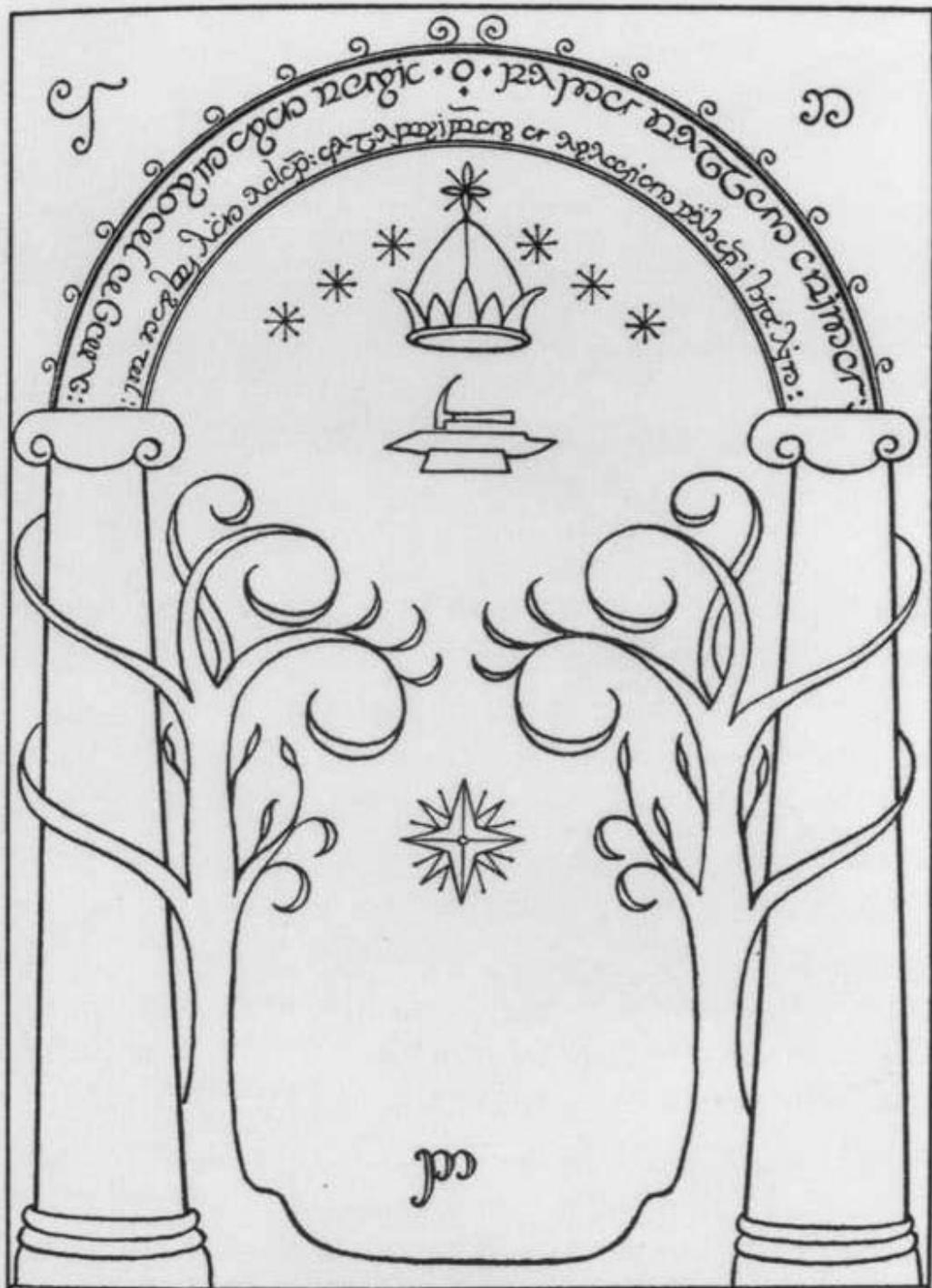
He drew the Doors of Durin alone, in whole or in part, at least four times before settling on their final design. As he described them in the first manuscript of book 2, chapter 4, they had, at the top, 'an arch of inter-lacing letters' in tengwar; 'below it seemed (though the drawing was in places blurred and broken) that there was the outline of an anvil and hammer, [deleted: and of a crown and of a crescent moon above a tree] and above that a crown and a crescent moon. More clearly than all else there shone forth palely three stars with many

Before them, dim and grey across the dark water, stood a cliff. The moonlight lay pale upon it, and it looked cold and forbidding: a final bar to all passage. Frodo could see no sign of any gate or entrance in the frowning stone. . . .

The strip of dry land left by the lake was quite narrow, and their path took them close under the face of the cliff. When they had gone for almost a mile southward they came to some holly-trees. There were stumps and dead logs rotting in the water - the remains of old thickets, or of a hedge that had once lined the submerged road across the drowned valley. But close under the cliff there stood, still living and strong, two tall trees with great roots that spread from the wall to the water's edge. . . .

There was a smooth space right in the middle of the shade of the trees. . . . The sun shone across the face of the wall, and as the travellers stared at it, it seemed to them that on the surface . . . faint lines appeared like slender veins of silver running in the stone. . . .<sup>13</sup>

Closer, but still with notable differences. The doorway, now elaborated even more with an added keystone, is hardly the almost invisible gate of which Tolkien writes, the water by the stairs is obviously more than a 'trickle' as it pours over the cliff and falls foaming into a rushing stream below, and the roots of the holly-trees do not appear to spread across the narrow strip of land to the water. The drawing, and so the preliminary sketch as well, very probably depicts the approach to the west gate of Moria as Tolkien conceived it before he wrote any of the relevant text. He later cut off the bottom quarter of the drawing [149], with a columned title panel echoing the design of the gate, apparently in an attempt to salvage most of the picture by removing the more active part of the Stair Falls. The rippling water immediately in front of the gate is related to another passage in the draft manuscript: 'Suddenly in the silence Frodo heard a soft swish and bubble in the water as on the evening before, only softer. Turning quickly he saw faint ripples on the surface of the lake. . . .' Moments later, Frodo is seized by 'a long arm, sinuous as a tentacle, . . . pale green-grey and wet'.<sup>14</sup> To the right of centre in the drawing is a tentacle raised into the air, one of the many arms of the Watcher in the Water. Here Tolkien merely suggests the presence of the creature among the forest of drowned trees; in the preliminary sketch he drew the Watcher much like the Loch Ness Monster as it is popularly conceived, with two segments of a coiled serpentine body above the water.



Here is written in the Fëanorian characters according to the mode of Beleriand: Enyn Durin Aran Moria: pedo mellon a minno. Imliarvi hain echant: Celebrimbor o Eregion teithant i thiwhin.



One page of the Book of Moria



rays.<sup>15</sup> This description was little changed in the first revision of the chapter, made probably in late 1940, which was accompanied by an illustration. The reproduction [150] shows the drawing as Tolkien later revised it: he removed the moon above the crown, surrounded the crown with seven stars, and erased two of the central stars, which he replaced with shrub-like trees surmounted by thin crescents.<sup>16</sup> The latter change left a single star shining in the centre of the door, as he had envisioned in [148]. Branching trees such as the one drawn in pencil at upper right in [150] replaced the 'shrubs' in a subsequent sketch [151]. In a still later drawing [152.] Tolkien added decoration above the arch (developed from that drawn in [148]), made the trees more elaborate and the columns more fully formed, and eliminated the sparks thrown off by the anvil. The central elements now briefly had dark accents; in his final drawing [153] Tolkien made them wholly linear and better suited to his final text:

The Moon now shone upon the grey face of the rock; but they could see nothing else for a while. Then slowly on the surface, where the wizard's hands had passed, faint lines appeared, like slender veins of silver running in the stone. At first they were no more than pale gossamer-threads, so fine that they only twinkled fitfully where the Moon caught them, but steadily they grew broader and clearer, until their design could be guessed.

At the top, as high as Gandalf could reach, was an arch of interlacing letters in an Elvish character. Below, though the **threads were in places blurred or broken, the outline** could be seen of an anvil and a hammer surmounted by a crown with seven stars. Beneath these again were two trees, each bearing **crescent moons. More clearly than all else there shone forth in the middle of the door a single star with many rays.**

The doors are embellished with the emblems of Durin, the most ancient of Dwarves; the Tree of the High Elves; and the Star of the House of Feanor, the great Elvish artificer of 'The Silmarillion'. They are

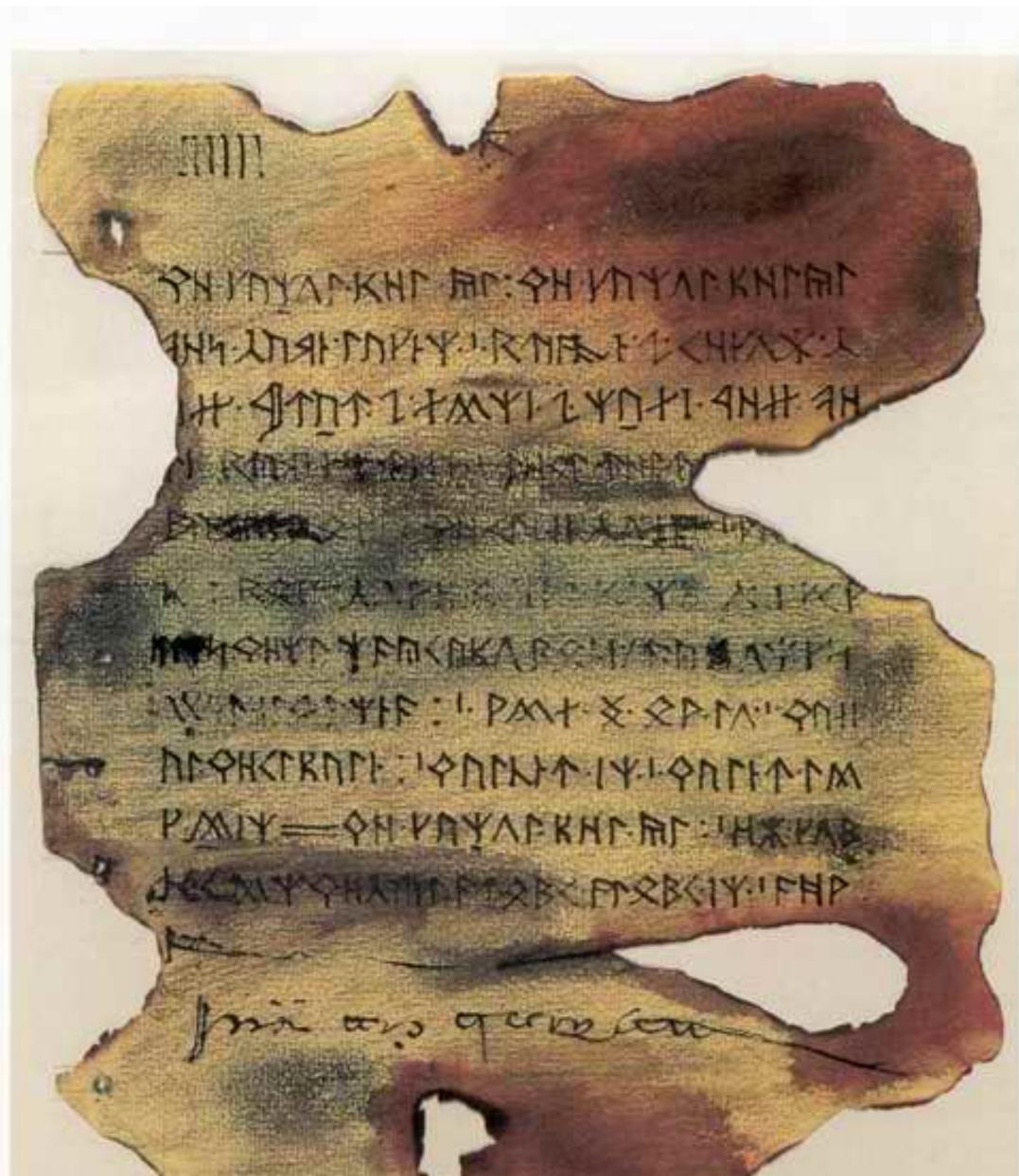
'wrought of *ithildin* that mirrors only starlight and

moonlight, and sleeps until it is touched by one who speaks words now long forgotten in Middle-earth'. And although they are vividly described in his text, Tolkien felt that they should be illustrated as well - along with the Ring inscription in tengwar (book i, chapter 2.) and the runes inscribed on Balin's tomb (book i, chapter 4) - for the same reason that he had illustrated the 'moon-runes' in *The Hobbit*, because the letters were unusual and interesting. At one point he remarked to his publisher that the Doors of Durin picture 'should of course properly appear in white line on a black background, since it represents a silver line in the dark-ness.'<sup>17</sup> But Alien & Unwin felt that such a heavy block

would be too noticeable in the middle of the text,

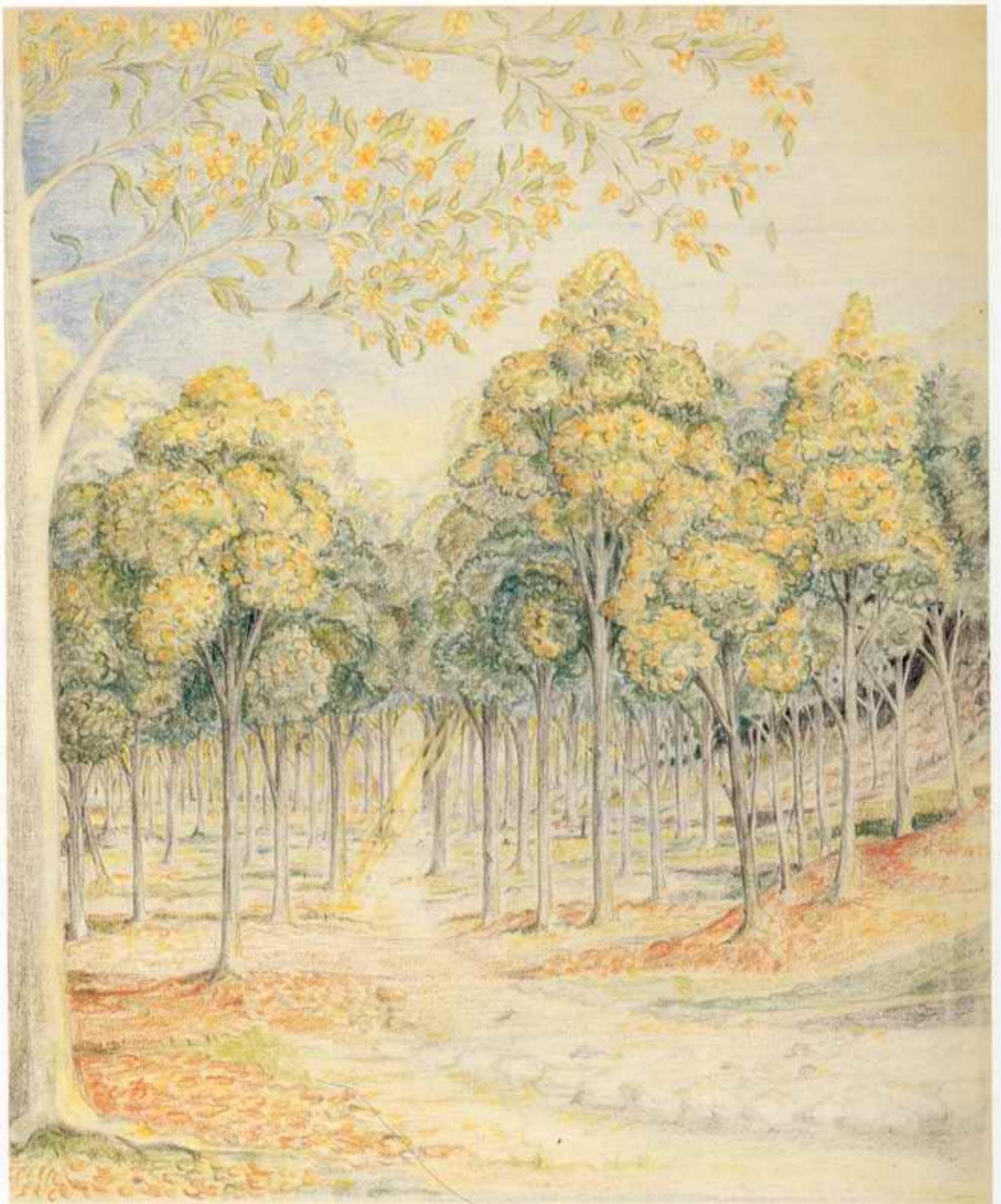
and suggested that it be printed instead in a grey tone. Later Tolkien asked that it appear in two shades of grey with the crescent-shaped leaves on the trees left white. In the end it was printed only in black line. The picture of the Doors of Durin [154] reproduced in *The Lord of the Rings* was made by a blockmaker's copyist after Tolkien's final design [153]. The trees, now nearly the height of the columns, were revised one last time, with Tolkien's consent, so that their outer arms curve more elegantly outside the pillars.

Once inside Moria, Tolkien left its interior to his readers' imagination except for the inscription on Balin's tomb, also drawn in its final form by a copyist.



Untitled (Dove of Migration),  
third page, final art  
Black ink, coloured pencil,  
watercolour

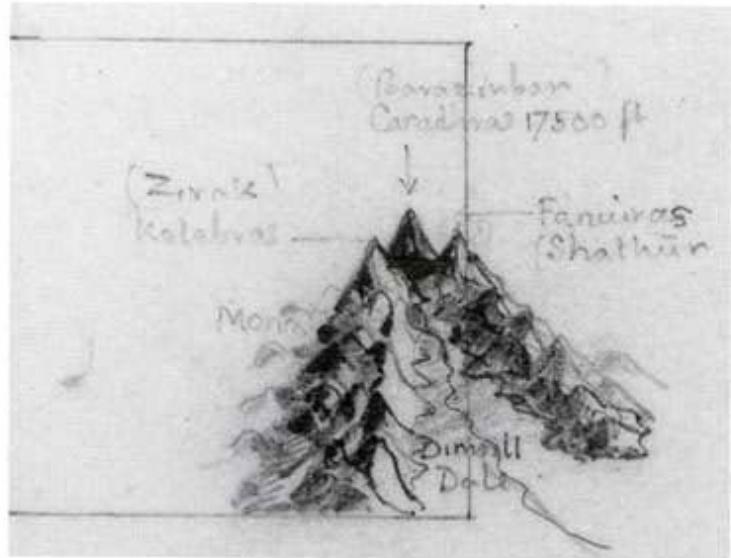




The Forest of Lothlorien in Spring

158

*Untitled (Dimrill Dale and Mountains of Moria)*  
Pencil, coloured pencil



He was more interested in the three 'pages' from the fragmentary record-book of the Moria Dwarves found by the Fellowship in book 2, chapter 5. Of all the art he attempted for *The Lord of the Rings*, nothing occupied his attention more than these three 'facsimiles', and his efforts to include them in his book rivalled his earlier battle with Alien & Unwin over *Thror's Map*. The Dwarves' book is described thus in *The Lord of the Rings*, a tattered witness to their war with the Ores:

It had been slashed and stabbed and partly burned, and it was so stained with black and other dark marks like old blood that little of it could be read. Gandalf lifted it carefully, but the leaves crackled and broke as he laid it on the slab. He pored over it for some time without speaking. Frodo and Gimli standing at his side could see, as he gingerly turned the leaves, that they were written by many different hands, in runes, both of Moria and of Dale, and here and there in Elvish script.

This is a vivid scene. Gandalf resembles a scholar like Tolkien himself, enthralled by old manuscripts. Perhaps in writing this passage Tolkien was thinking of the Cottonian *Beowulf* manuscript, which was scorched and made brittle by fire in 1731 and further damaged

by attempts at restoration. As a philologist, he was in his element, and the 'Book of Mazarbul' gave him the opportunity again to 'authenticate' his fiction, to support with 'facsimiles' the pretence he set up in his fore-word to *The Lord of the Rings*, that he had derived his text from ancient records.

He made at least four preliminary sketches of the first of the three pages, and at least one sketch of each of the other two, chiefly in coloured pencil. The first version of the first page is only roughly drawn, on the final manuscript leaf of the original Moria chapter, written in late 1939; the other, more careful sketches for all three pages date from a later period of writing, begun in the latter part of 1940.<sup>18</sup> Tolkien drew the later sketches systematically: the second sketch of the first page [155], for example, is built upon a pencilled grid with numbered lines, the easier to inscribe the text in runes and devise areas of loss. The bottom right corner of the 'page' is detached; in the manuscript of *The Lord of the Rings* contemporary with the drawing, much of the Dwarves' book 'was missing or in small pieces'.<sup>19</sup> In the third<sup>20</sup> and fourth versions of the page, and in the final art, the corner is not broken off but almost 'torn through', as suggested by a dark line.

The three finished 'facsimiles' were made, Christopher Tolkien recalls, before March 1947.<sup>21</sup> They are masterpieces of fabrication [156]: their tears, losses, and burn marks are genuine, and 'binding holes', through which the leaves of the 'real' book had once been sewn together, are stabbed along the side. Tolkien planned that the three pages would be reproduced at the beginning of book 2, chapter 5 of *The Lord of the Rings*, where Gandalf attempts to read their text. Unfortunately, the 'facsimiles' were too expensive to print as colour halftones, and Tolkien was unwilling to convert them into plain line as his publisher suggested. At last they were omitted altogether, much to Tolkien's

157 (opposite)

*The Forest of Lothlorien in Spring*

Pencil, coloured pencil

Rauros Falls  
at the Tindrock

14



159

Rauros Falls & the Tindrock  
Pencil, coloured pencil

disappointment, for they had come out so well. 'The "burned manuscripts" . . . have disappeared,' he wrote to Alien & Unwin, 'making the text of Book ii, Ch. 5 at the beginning rather absurd, and losing the Runes which seem a great attraction to readers of all ages (such as are foolish enough to read this kind of thing at all).'<sup>22</sup>

As we saw in the previous chapter, on occasion Tolkiens took artistic licence - for example, changing night into day for Bilbo's arrival at the Raft-elves' village. But for the most part he was careful - notably so with the 'Book of Mazarbul' pages - that his words and pictures should be in complete accord. By this token, many of his large coloured pencil illustrations for *The Lord of the Rings*, however fine, could not have accompanied the final book. Most, for example *Moria Gate* [148-149], were made inaccurate as Tolkien wrote or revised his text from his initial conceptions. The rest, such as *Old Man Willow* [147], seem to be appropriate to the final *Lord of the Rings*, at least in most respects - though one

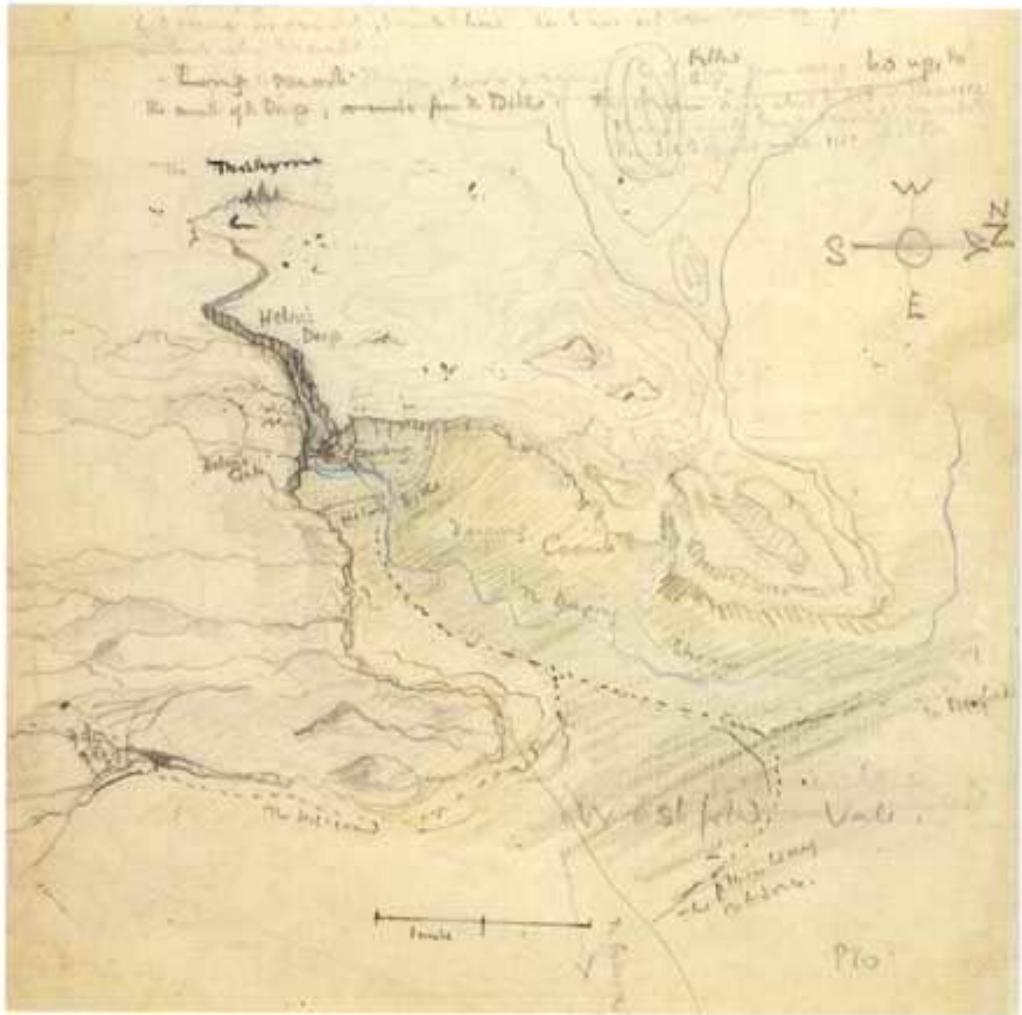
wonders, knowing Tolkien's tendency to self-criticism, if he felt that they matched his inner visions. 'Alas!' he wrote to a correspondent in 1954, apropos of *The Lord of the Rings*, '[I] can only draw v. imperfectly what I can, and not what I see.'<sup>23</sup> For one picture it was a task worthy of an old master; but could any artist, however skilled, convey the sublime Elvish beauty of the mallorn-trees of Lothlorien? Tolkien attempted to do so in *The Forest of Lothlorien in Spring*, probably around late 1940. It was then that he began to write of the dream-like land of the Elves east of Moria, and the resemblance of the title border of the drawing [157] to that of *Spring 1940* [3] further suggests that it dates from early in that decade. The picture closely illustrates spring in Lothlorien as described by the elf Legolas in book 2, chapter 6:

'There lie the woods of Lothlorien!' said Legolas. 'That is the

fairest of all the dwellings of my people. There are no trees like the trees of that land. For in the autumn their leaves fall not, but turn to gold. Not till the spring comes and the new green opens do they fall, and then the boughs are laden with yellow flowers; and the floor of the wood is golden, and golden is the roof, and its pillars are of silver, for the bark of the trees is smooth and grey.'

But it is not an illustration of an actual scene in *The Lord of the Rings*, for the Fellowship visit Lothlorien not in spring but in winter. It is a fine example of Tolkien's mature coloured pencil technique, very delicately drawn; but except for the gently swaying branches at top, a few leaves suspended in mid-air, and an awkward shaft of sunlight, the golden wood seems without life.

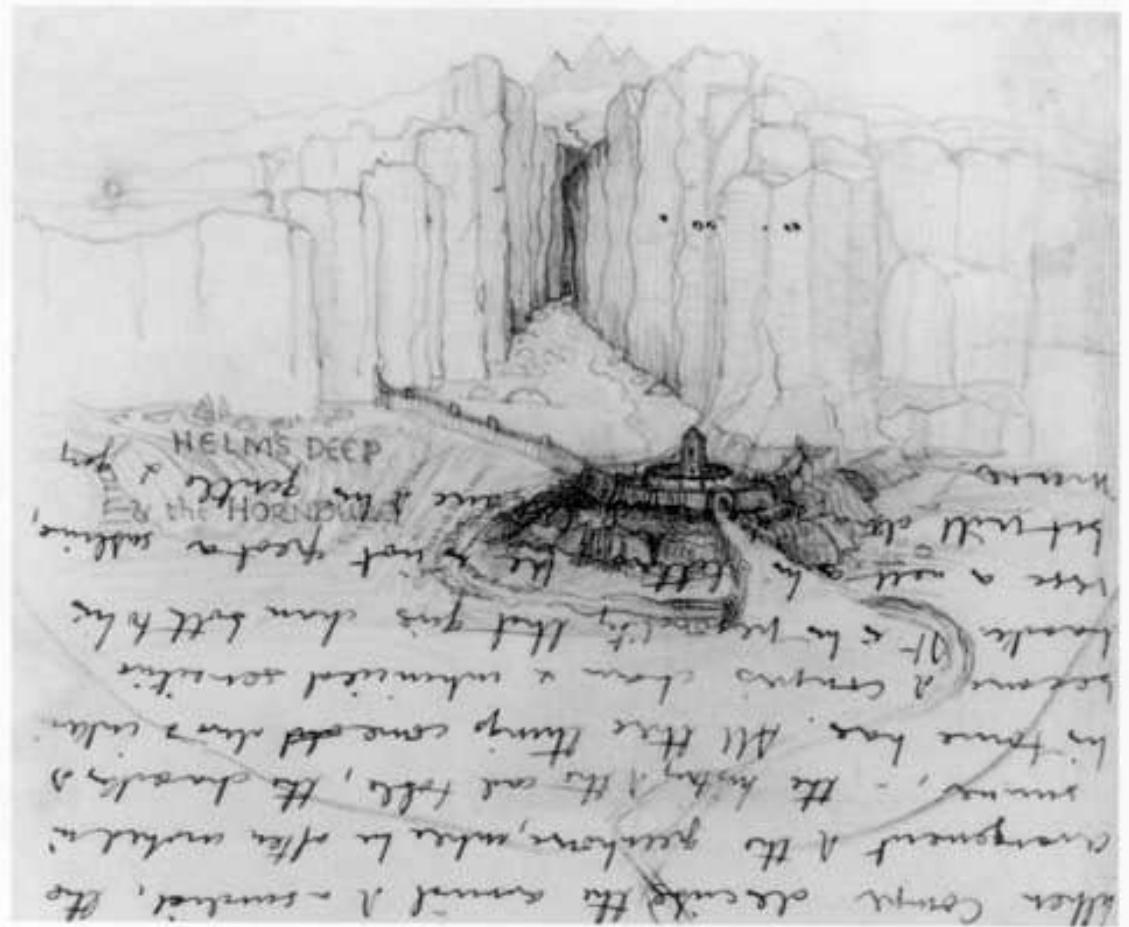
Throughout the writing of *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien found it essential to draw maps, plans, and views as working guides to the complex geography he was creating. 'For of course in such a story', he told his publisher, 'one cannot make a map after the narrative,



160

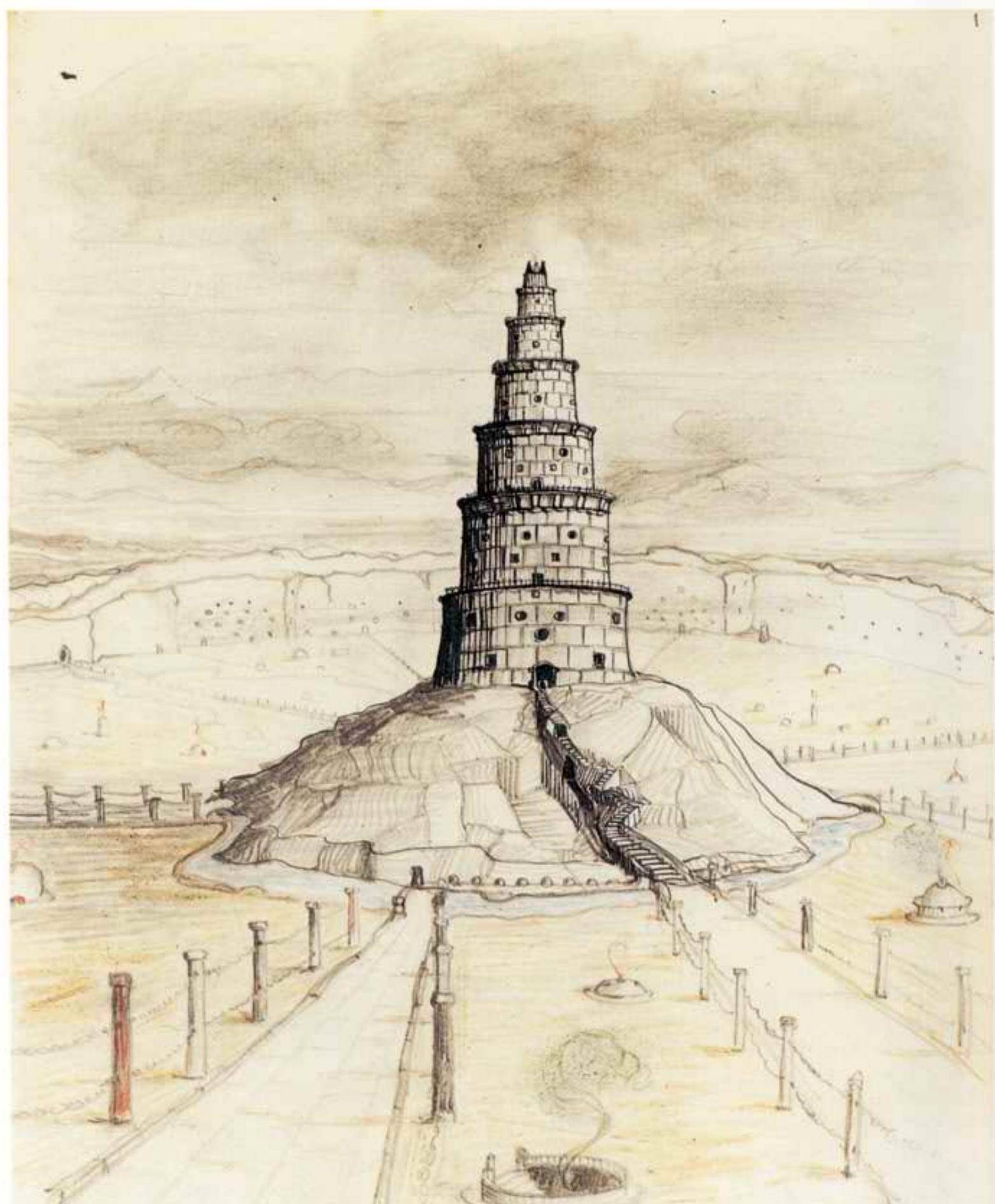
*Untitled (Helm's Deep)*

Pencil, coloured pencil, black ink



161

Helm's Deep & the Hornburg  
Pencil, coloured pencil

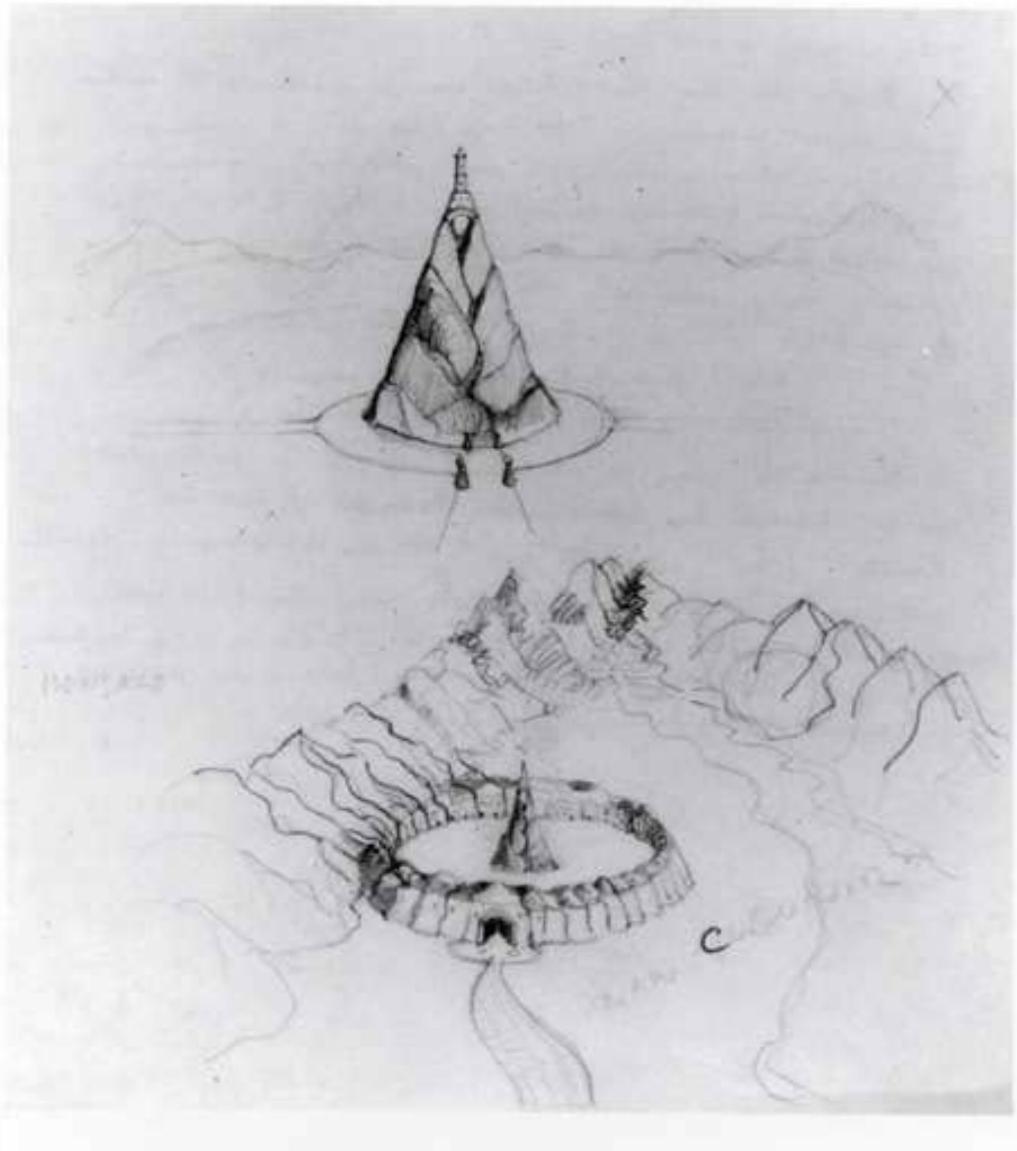


ORTHANC (1)

162 (opposite)  
Orthanc (1)

Pencil, black ink, coloured pencil

163 (right)  
Isengard/Nan Curunir  
Pencil, blue pencil



'but must first make a map and make the narrative agree'.<sup>24</sup> The small aerial view [158], for example, shows the Mountains of Moria, northwest of Loth-lorien, sketched in pencil and green, blue, and brown coloured pencil. Here the peaks are identified as Kelebras (with the Dwarvish name *Zirak* bracketed), Caradhras (Barazinbar) with a height of 17,500 feet, and Fanuiras (Shathur). Also indicated are Moria itself, and the Dimrill Dale across the range, within which the River Blackroot (later named Silverlode) flows down from the Mirrormere. The three great mountains enter *The Lord of the Rings* in book 2, chapter 3, in which the dwarf Gimli speaks of them:

'... I know them and their names, for under them lies

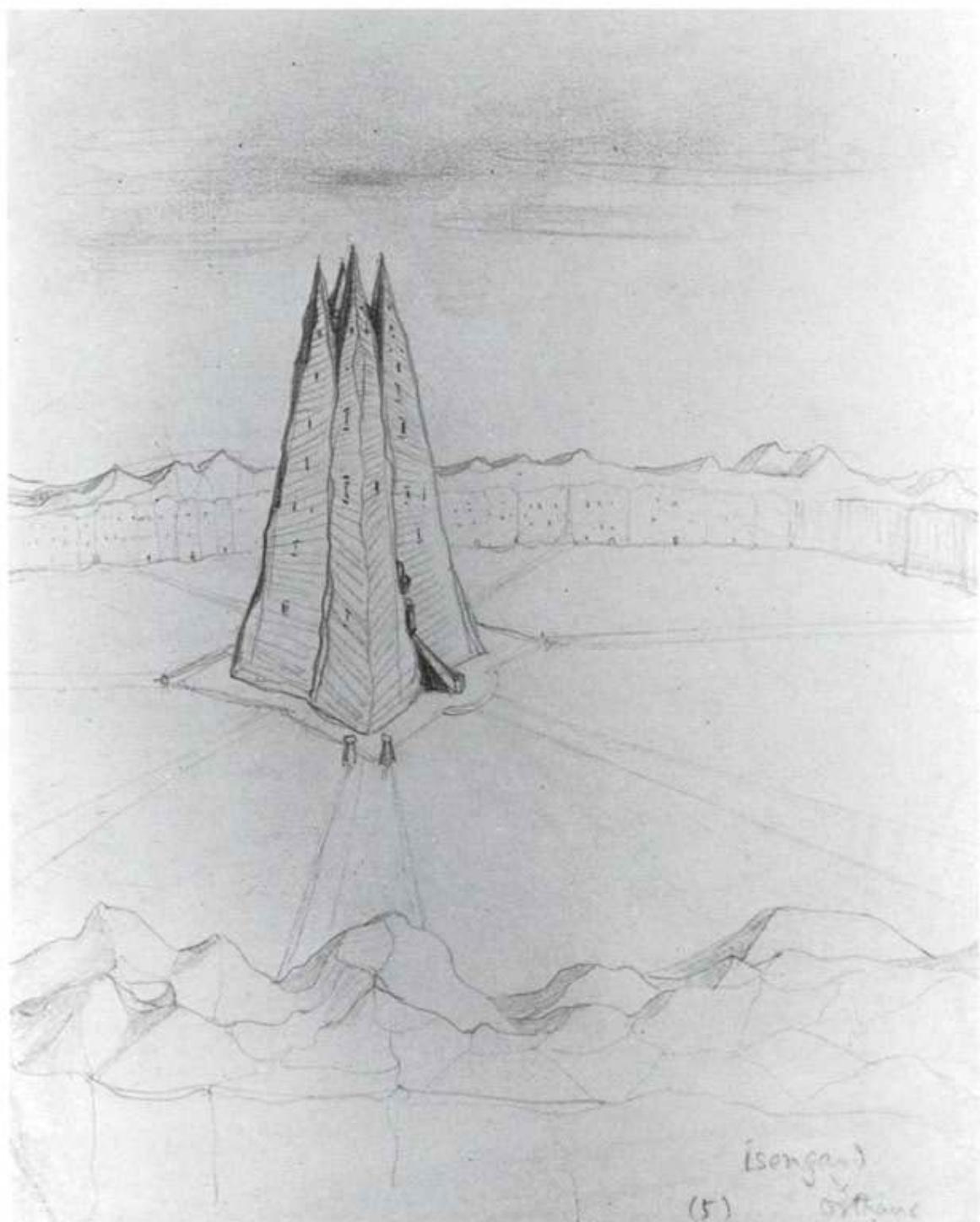
Khazad-dum, the Dwarrowdelf, that is now called the Black Pit, Moria in the Elvish tongue. Yonder stands Barazinbar, the Redhorn, cruel Caradhras; and beyond him are Silvertine and Cloudyhead: Celebdil the White, and Fanuidhol the Grey, that we call Zirakzigil and Bundushathur.

'There the Misty Mountains divide, and between their arms lies the deep-shadowed valley which we cannot forget:

Azanulbizar, the Dimrill Dale, which the Elves call Nan-duhirion.'

The names written on the sketch date it to about late 1940, contemporary with the manuscript in which two of the three mountains were first named,<sup>25</sup> and before the amendments to the typescript that followed soon after, in which Kelebras was renamed *Kelebdil* and *Fanuiras* was altered to *Fanuidhol*. The sketch may already have existed when Tolkien described the Mirrormere in the manuscript of book 2, chapter 6, in perfect accord with the picture, as 'long and oval, shaped like a great spear-head that thrust up deep into the northern glen'.<sup>26</sup>

In another aerial view [159] Tolkien devised the geography of Rauros Falls and the Tindrock, which the Fellowship reach at the end of book 2 of *The Lord of the Rings*. The place is first described, however, earlier



164  
Isengard & Orthanc  
Pencil  
(5)

in book 2 (chapter 8) by Celeborn, lord of the Elves in Lothlorien: ' . . . the River [Anduin] flows in stony vales amid high moors, until at last after many leagues it comes to the tall island of the Tindrock, that we call Tol Brandir. There it casts its arms about the steep shores of the isle, and falls then with a great noise and smoke over the cataracts of Rauros down into the Nindalf, the Wet-wang as it is called in your tongue.' In the view two circles mark the Argonath, great carved pillars of stone that flanked a narrow part of the river. Below them is a 'long oval lake, pale Nen Hithoel, fenced by steep grey hills whose sides were clad with trees. . . At the far southern end rose three peaks. The midmost stood somewhat forward from the others and sundered from them, an island in the waters, about which the flowing River flung pale shimmering arms' (book 2, chapter 9).

Tol Brandir is in the centre, and on either side are Amon Lhaw and Amon Hen, the Hills of Hearing and of Sight.<sup>27</sup> Originally *Rauros* was *Rhain*, *Rosfein*, or *Dant-ruin*, and *Tindrock* was *Tolondren*, then *Eregon* and *Brandor*. The final names entered in revisions to a manuscript written in late 1941, and are present in a fair copy Tolkien completed in August 1942. It seems likely that he made the drawing during this period.

The geography of Helm's Deep, the stronghold of Men in the land of Rohan, required even more careful planning. In preparation for the fierce battle fought there in book 3, chapter 7, Tolkien drew (within one of the draft manuscripts of the chapter) a combination aerial view and map showing the fortifications and adja-cent lands [i60].<sup>28</sup> In his final text he described the fastness:

... on the far side of the Westfold Vale, a great bay in the mountains, lay a green coomb out of which a gorge opened in the hills.<sup>29</sup> Men or that land called it Helm's Deep. . . . Ever steeper and narrower it wound inward from the north under the shadow of the Thrihyrne, till the crowhaunted cliffs rose like mighty towers on either side, shutting out the light.

At Helm's Gate, before the mouth of the Deep, there was a heel of rock thrust outward by the northern cliff. There upon its spur stood high walls of ancient stone, and within them was a lofty tower. Men said that in the far-off days of the glory of Gondor the sea-kings had built here this fastness with the hands of giants. The Hornburg it was called, for a trumpet sounded upon the tower echoed in the Deep behind, as if armies long-forgotten were issuing to war from caves beneath the hills. A wall, too, the men of old had made from the Hornburg to the southern cliff, barring the entrance to the gorge. Beneath it by a wide culvert the Deeping Stream passed out. About the feet of the Hornrock it wound, and flowed then in a gully through the midst of a wide green gore, sloping gently down from Helm's Gate to Helm's Dike. Thence it fell into the Deeping Coomb and out into the Westfold Vale.

The view bears the name *Thrihyrne*, written in ink over *Tindtorras* (which form survived at least into 1944) by the mountains in the upper left quadrant. The earlier name of the mountains, the name *Eodoras* written twice in labels at bottom right rather than the later *Edoras*, and the name *Heorulf* in the manuscript rather than the later *Erkenbrand* date the page to the early writing of the chapter. Here Helm's Deep winds inward from almost due east rather than from the north as Tolkien placed it on other maps.

*Helm's Deep ey the Hamburg* [161] seems to have been drawn at roughly the same time as the view [i6o], with which it shares the same palette of coloured pen-cils, on the verso of the same sheet, a discarded leaf of examination script. Its title, however, reflects the names that emerged as Tolkien revised his early draft of book 3, chapter 7 - *Helm's Deep* for *Heorulf's Clough* (and later *Helmshaugh*) and *Hornburg* for *Heorulf's Hold* â€ and may have been added at a later date. The drawing provides a closer look at the fortress and the Deeping Wall and a splendid perspective view of the gorge with the three peaks of Tindtorras (Thrihyrne) in the distance. The Deeping Stream snakes around the Hornburg, under the causeway, and out through a gap in a curved line at the bottom of the drawing which is surely meant to indicate Helm's Dike.

Tolkien arrived at this picture almost at once, and changed only the related nomenclature as his writing progressed. In sharp contrast, he laboured through an extraordinary series of drawings and changes of text to achieve his final vision of Orthanc, the tower of the

renegade wizard Saruman within the fortress of Isen-gard, whose forces the men of Rohan defeat at the battle of Helm's Deep. In the first manuscript of book 3, chap-ter 8 Orthanc is described as 'a pinnacle of stone' at the centre of a series of chained paths. 'The base of it, and that two hundred feet in height, was a great cone of rock left by the ancient builders and smoothers of the plain, but now upon it rose a tower of masonry, tier on tier, course on course, each drum smaller than the last. It ended short and flat, so that at the top there was a wide space fifty feet across, reached by a stair that came up the middle.'<sup>30</sup> Tolkien illustrated this tower [162] on the blank verso of a leaf of examination script in 1942. Its design recalls a ziggurat of ancient Mesopotamia, though circular rather than rectangular, with echoes of the Tower of Babel as drawn by artists such as Bruegel. It differs from the first description only at the top of the tower, which has three 'teeth' or 'horns' instead of open space.<sup>31</sup> Around the tower is a moat, and behind it is the 'great ring-wall of stone, like towering cliffs' that encircled Orthanc and had many 'chambers, halls, and passages' cut into the walls 'so that all the open circle was overlooked by countless windows and dark doors' (final text, book 3, chapter 8). Vents dot the plain around Orthanc very like those on modern indust-rial buildings, above shafts that ran to Saruman's 'treasures, store-houses, armouries, smithies, and great furnaces. Iron wheels revolved there endlessly, and hammers thudded. At night plumes of vapour steamed from the vents, lit from beneath with red light, or blue, or venomous green.'

In the next, revised manuscript Orthanc became 'marvellously tall and slender, like a stone horn, that at the tip branched into three tines; and between the tines there was a narrow space where a man could stand a thousand feet above the vale.'<sup>32</sup> Tolkien now redrew the tower, with five tiers rather than seven, rising almost organically out of a black rocky mound with a long, straight stairway climbing to the tower door. But his vision continued to change: 'The rock should be steeper and *cloven*', he decided, 'and the tower should be founded over an *arch* (with greater "horns" at top).'<sup>33</sup> He drew this conception also, once more with seven tiers, and with stairs cut into the base on the north and south sides. A variant appears twice on another sheet [163]. Now the base is as tall as a mountain, the tower has only three tiers, its 'horns' are smaller, and the stairs follow a winding course. Tolkien tentatively began to colour the pool in light blue pencil. In the lower drawing Orthanc is seen from the air within the Circle of Isengard and the larger 'Wizard's Vale', Nan Gurumr

(corrected on the drawing to *Nan Curunir*). At this point Tolkien had not yet rejected the idea he first presented in the manuscript, that the Circle intersected the mountain-wall on the west, but he had already abandoned a northern gate through which the stream (shown here in blue pencil coming out of the hills) flowed in 'many carven channels'.<sup>34</sup> At the bottom of the view is the great south arch of Isengard, in the ruins of which Merry and Pippin awaited King Theoden and company in book 3, chapter 9.

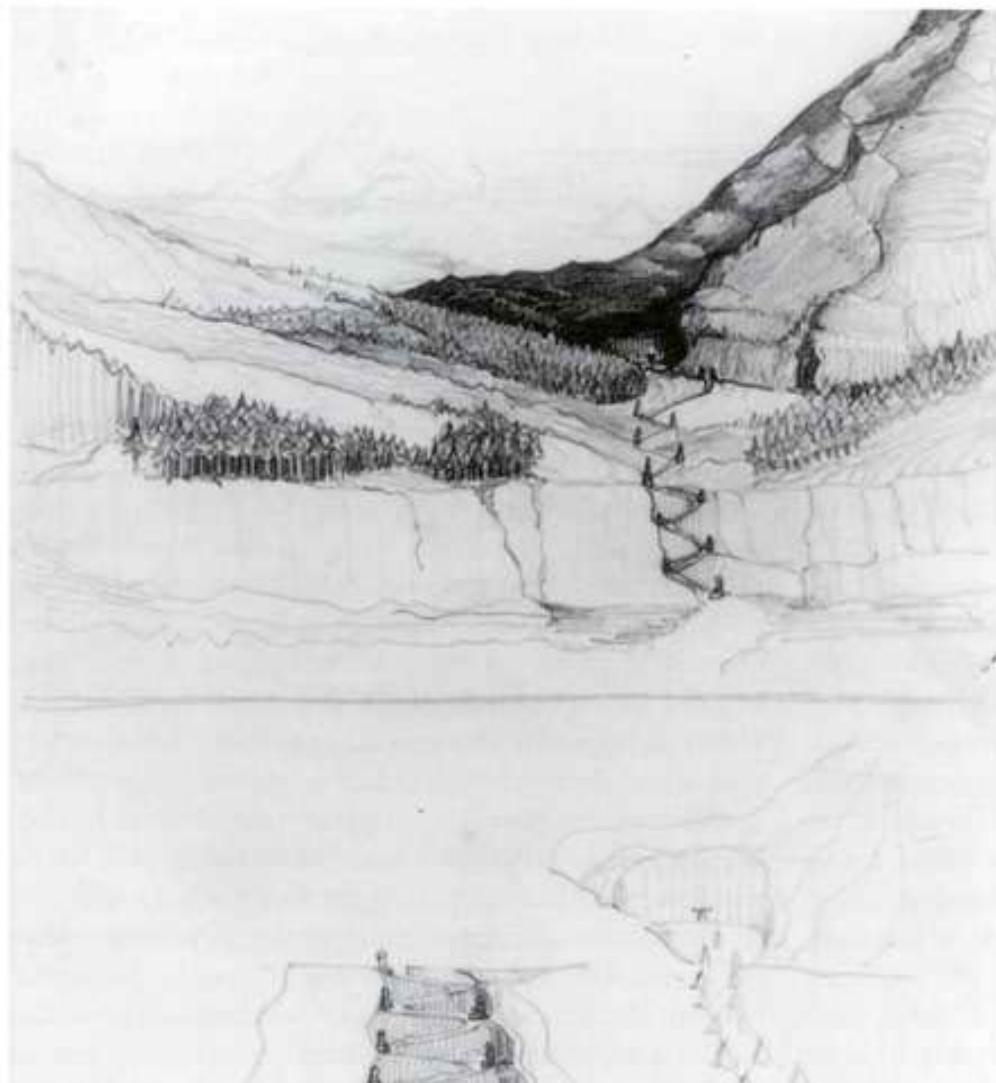
After these drawings Tolkien immediately moved the stairs to the east and west sides of the tower, leading directly to the arch without division, and illustrated this new design in two diagrammatic sketches. But the enormous base he had drawn in [163] led him to consider the tower as a conical extension of the base, forming one huge cone with 'horns' at the peak. From there it was a short, brilliant step to his final vision of

Orthanc as a tower carved out of stone, as if its builders had excavated a mountain.<sup>35</sup> In the published text (book

3, chapter 8) it is

a tower of marvellous shape. It was fashioned by the builders of old, who smoothed the Ring of Isengard, and yet it seemed a thing not made by the craft of Men, but riven from the bones of the earth in the ancient torment of the hills. A peak and isle of rock it was, black and gleaming hard: four mighty piers of many-sided stone were welded into one, but near the summit they opened into gaping horns, their pinnacles sharp as the points of spears, keen-edged as knives.

In Tolkien's drawing [164] Orthanc looks remarkably like a modern skyscraper: interesting in its form but alien and forbidding. It was black, and the rock gleamed as if it were wet. The many faces of the stone had sharp edges as though they had been newly chiselled' (book 3, chapter 10). At its base - now as



115  
*Untitled (Three Sketches of Dunbarrow)*  
Pencil, black ink



166 *Dunharrow*  
Pencil, coloured pencil

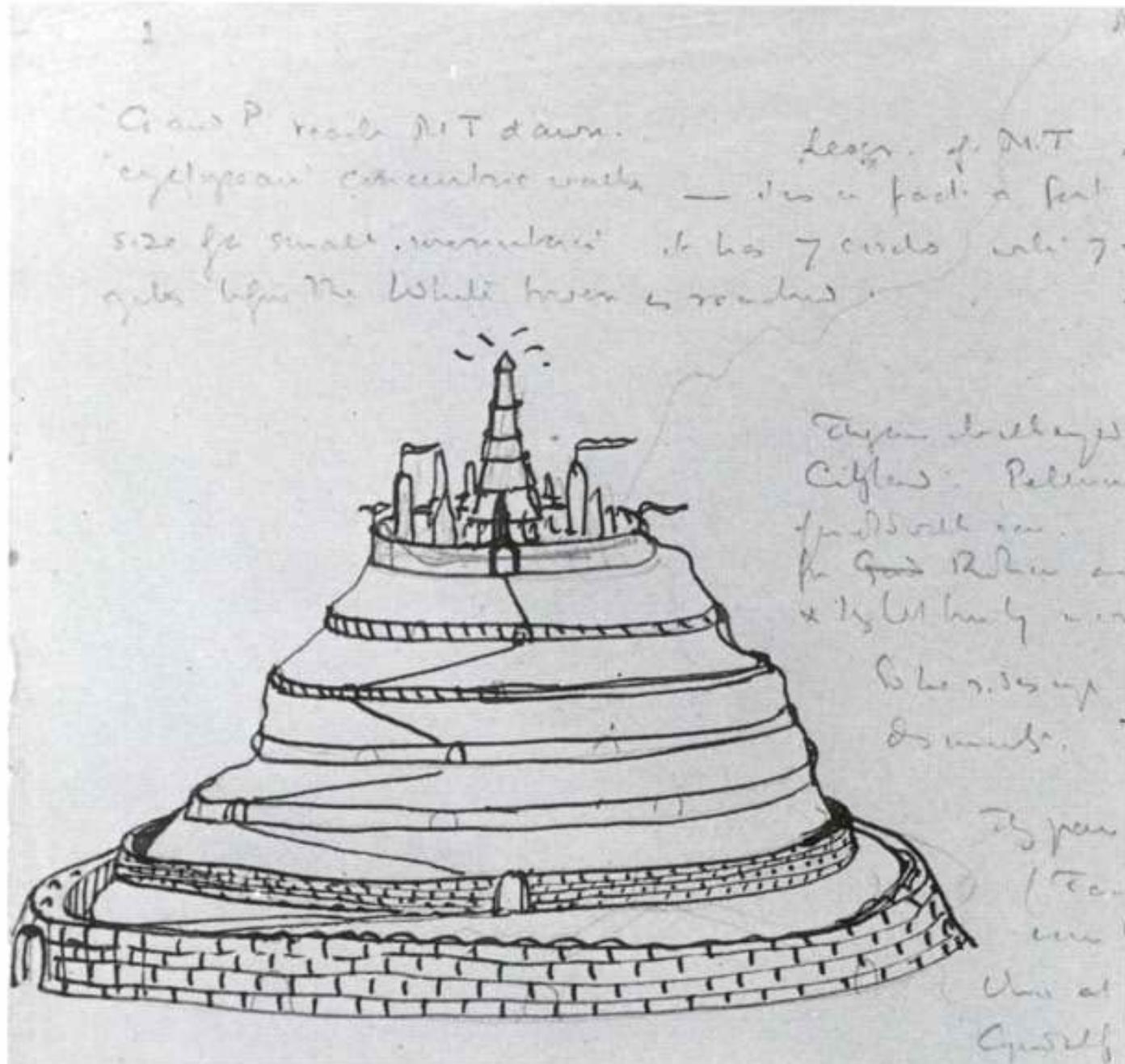
sharp-angled as the tower itself - is the 'flight of twenty-seven broad stairs' that led to the only entrance to Orthanc. Above this is the 'balcony hedged with iron bars' from which Saruman speaks to Gandalf and Theoden, and elsewhere 'many tall windows were cut with deep embrasures in the climbing walls: far up they peered like little eyes in the sheer faces of the horns.'

Near the beginning of book 5 of *The Lord of the Rings* Theoden and his men muster at Dunharrow, a mountain refuge, before riding to war in Gondor. Like Orthanc, Dunharrow underwent several interesting changes of conception in Tolkien's mind, though none so visually dramatic in his art. At first he envisioned a

grassy plateau reached by a winding path up a mountain slope, beyond which was a natural rocky amphitheatre

and caves in the walls beyond. He sketched its geography twice, from different angles, within the first manu-script of book 5, chapter 3, which dates from the end of 1944.<sup>36</sup> In a more developed draft he described the plateau as

a green mountain-field of grass and heath above the sheer wall of the valley that stretched back to the feet of a high northern buttress of the mountain. When it reached this at one place it entered in, forming a great recess, clasped by walls of rock that rose at the back to a lofty precipice. More than a half-circle this was in shape, its entrance a narrow gap between



167  
*Untitled (Minas Tirith)*  
 Pencil, black ink

sharp pinnacles of rock that opened to the west. Two long lines of unshaped stones marched from the brink of the cliff towards it, and in the middle of its rock-ringed floor under the shadow of the mountain one tall menhir stood alone. At the back under the eastern precipice a huge door opened, carved with signs and figures worn by time that none could read.<sup>37</sup>

By this point in drafting the chapter Tolkien had drawn for reference at least six more sketches of Dunharrow, each a slightly different conception or with different aspects emphasized.<sup>38</sup> In one example, the upper drawing of [165], the winding path is guarded by 'Pukel-men', 'great standing stones . . . carved in the likeness of men, huge and clumsy-limbed, squatting cross-legged with their stumpy arms folded on fat bellies' (book 5, chapter 3). Towards the top of the path in [165] these markers become pointed stones, but not yet the two lines of 'unshaped stones' that traversed the upland. The drawing at left, below, is a detail of the 'Pukel-men' but with the incline of the path less steep than in the upper drawing. At bottom right the lines of stones now appear, leading past 'one tall menhir' to the door in the mountain's wall.

Tolkien developed the upper drawing more fully in coloured pencil [i66], including the avenue of stones,

and from a different viewpoint so that the amphitheatre is invisible beyond its entrance. But his conception of Dunharrow soon changed again, and he inscribed the picture on the verso 'no longer fits story'. He abandoned the caves delved into the mountainside and made the refuge simply the upland, the Firienfeld. The lines of stones remained, but now they marked the road to 'a huge doorway in the side of the black hill of Firien', beyond which, in later writing, were the Paths of the Dead within the Dwimorberg.<sup>39</sup>

Once one begins to look closely at Tolkien's drawings of towers and strongholds in Middle-earth, many similarities become apparent. For example, the first sketch of Minas Tirith [167], from October 1944, recalls the ring-wall of Isengard and the tower of Orthanc as drawn in tiers. It also looks back to much earlier pictures by Tolkien, of the shining city Kor upon a hill [43-44], and of the towers of Tol Sirion [55], also named (in 'The Silmarillion') Minas Tirith. The sketch accompanied Tolkien's first, very preliminary description of the fortress, bulwark against the forces of Sauron: 'huge "cyclopean" concentric walls - it is in fact a fort and town the size of a small mountain. It has 7 circles with 7-6-5-4-3-2-1 gates before the

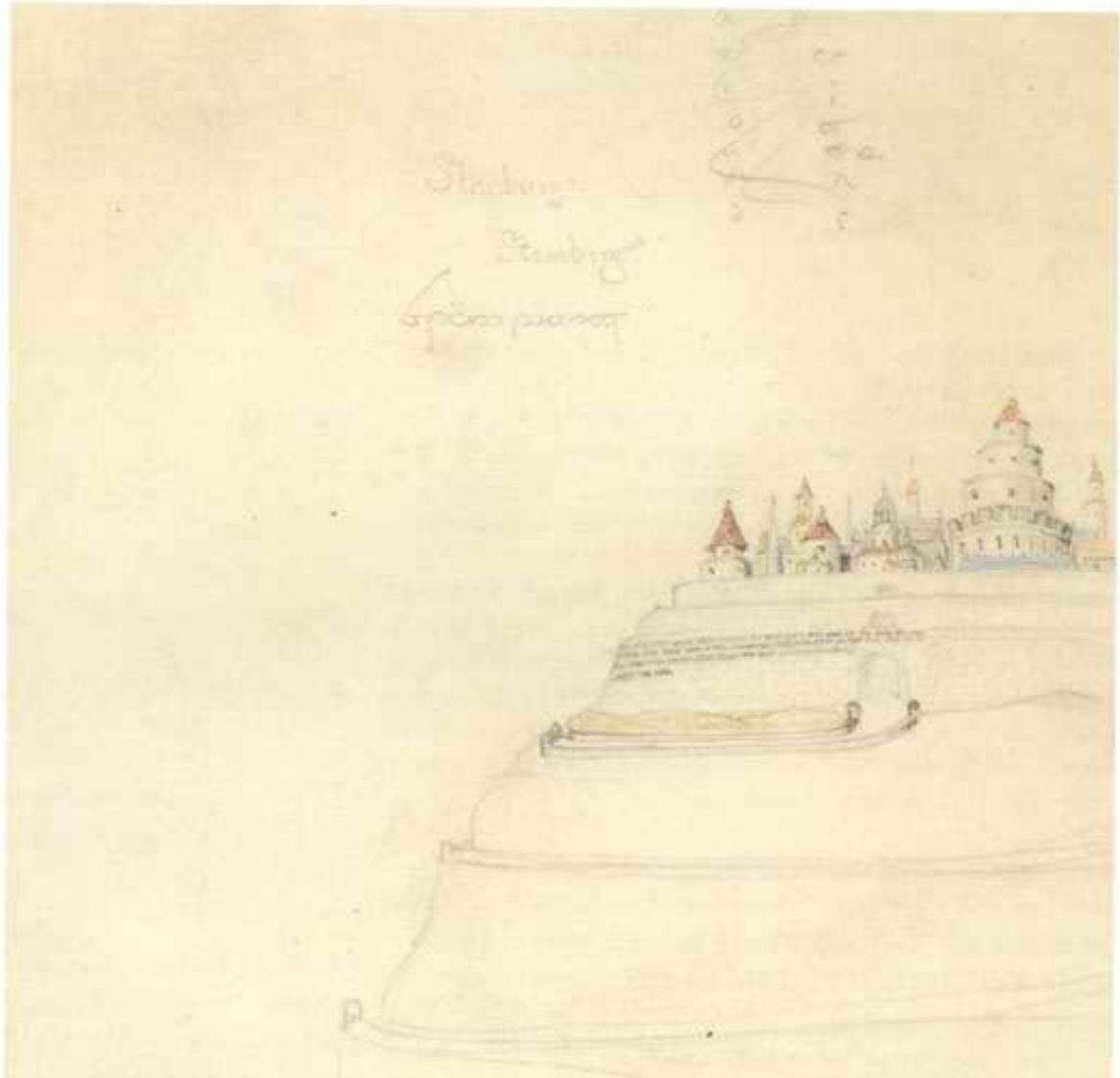
**White Tower is reached.<sup>40</sup> The Tower shines in the**

centre of the sketch, almost as it is seen by Pippin cross-ing the Pelennor in the final text of book 5, chapter i:

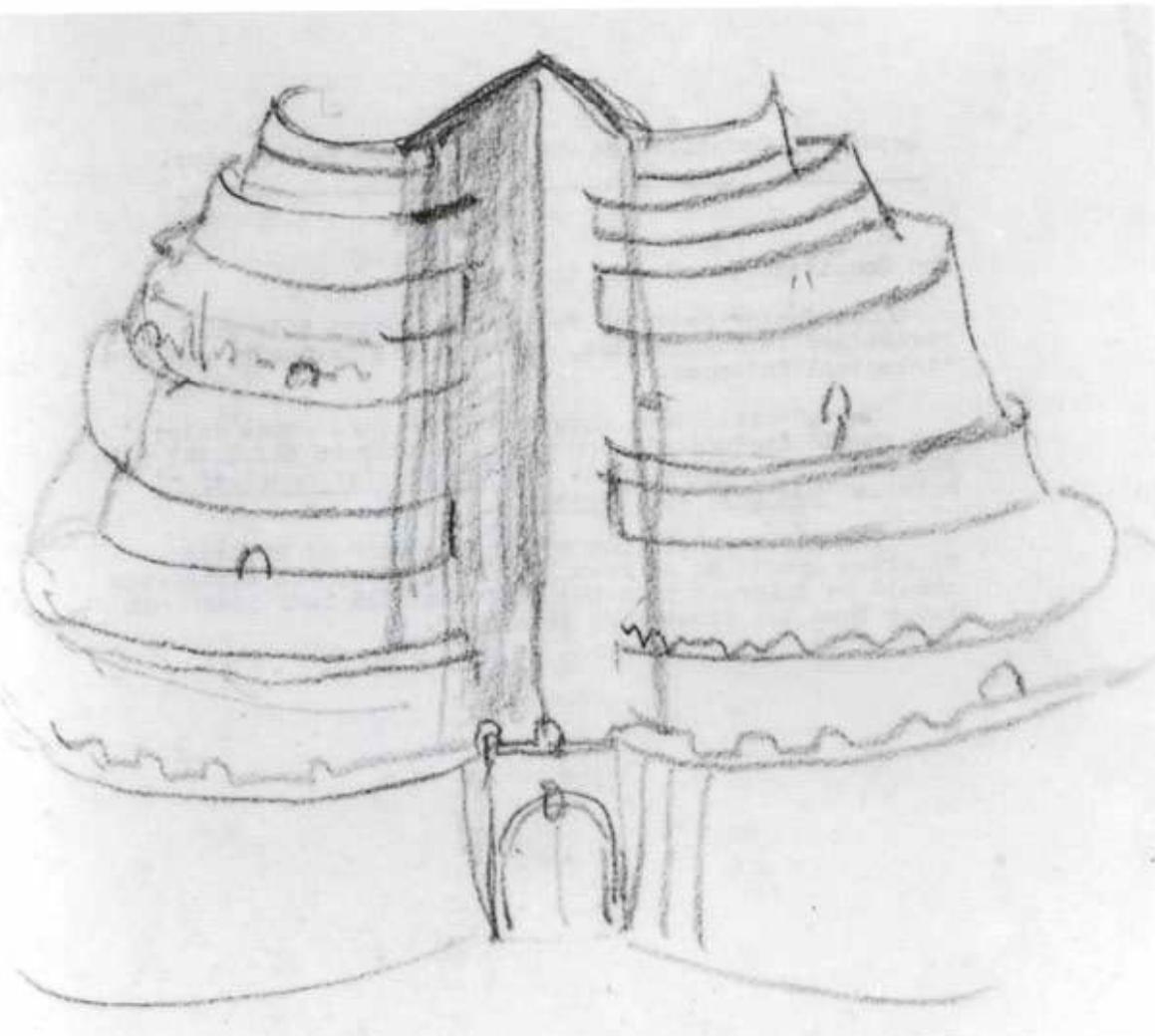
'tall and fair and shapely, and its pinnacle glittered as if it were wrought of crystals; and white banners broke and fluttered from the battlements in the morning breeze'. The jagged line to the right of Minas Tirith indicates the mountain behind the city, Mount Mindolluin; its name is written across the summit. *Stanburg or Steinborg<sup>41</sup>* [168] clearly was meant to be a more careful rendering of [167], but Tolkien had only sketched in its form and begun to fill in the grey of the stonework when he abandoned the attempt, probably

because his mental picture of the city had changed. The buildings are distinctly European in appearance, and have a medieval character, especially the tower with a crenellated battlement. The pencil sketch at bottom right appears to be a preliminary drawing of the upper walls.

Tolkien made numerous diagrams and sketch-maps of Minas Tirith as seen from above, to work out the sequence of its gates and its connection with Mount Mindolluin.<sup>42</sup> He also roughly sketched it from ground level, before the main gate of the city [i69].<sup>43</sup> In book 5, chapter i of the final text he described Minas Tirith as built upon the 'out-thrust knee' of the mountain







169  
*Untitled (Minas Tirith)*  
Pencil

on seven levels, each delved into the hill, and about each was set a wall, and in each wall was a gate. But the gates were not set in a line: the Great Gate in the City Wall was at the east point of the circuit, but the next faced half south, and the third half north, and so to and fro upwards; so that the paved way that climbed towards the Citadel turned first this way and then that across the face of the hill. And each time that it passed the line of the Great Gate it went through an arched tunnel, piercing a vast pier of rock whose huge out-thrust bulk divided in two all the circles of the City save the first. For partly in the primeval shaping of the hill, partly by the mighty craft and labour of old, there stood up from the rear of the wide court behind the Gate a towering bastion of stone, its edge sharp as a ship-keel facing east.

In [169] the seven circles of the city thrust out on either side of the 'keel'. In the centre is the Great Gate breached by Sauron's army, beyond which Gandalf stood firm against the Lord of the Nazgul (book 5, chapter 4).

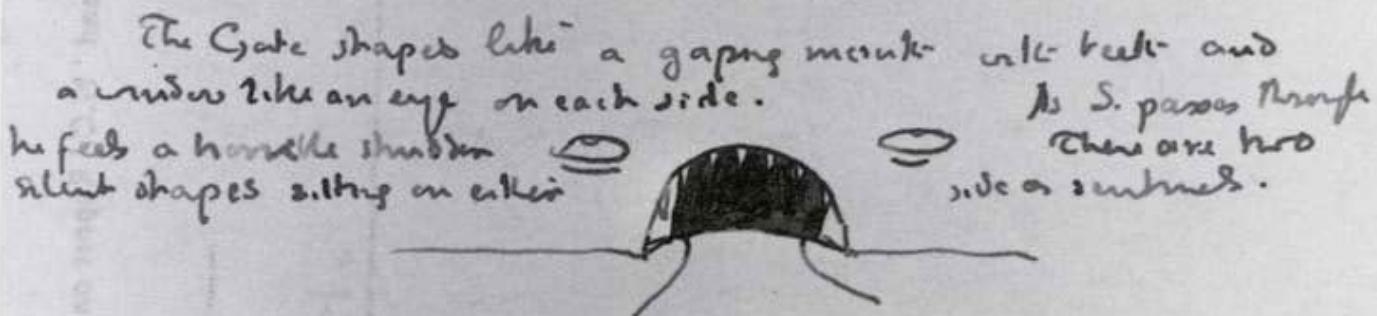
The counterpart of Minas Tirith in Mordor, Minas Morgul, the Tower of Sorcery, was first described by Tolkien as a place of defilement: 'on every stone and corner were carved figures and faces and signs of hor-ror'. But this, he decided, was too tame. He wrote on an early draft: 'Minas Morgul must be made more horrible. The usual "goblin" stuff is not good enough here'. He

drew its gate [*t/o*] 'shaped like a gaping mouth with teeth and a window like an eye on each side', and he imagined 'two silent shapes sitting on either side as sentinels'.<sup>44</sup> At this point in the writing Frodo was taken to Minas Morgul after his capture in Cirith (Cirith) Ungol, then the main pass into Mordor; in later drafts Cirith Ungol became a narrow cleft in the mountains near Minas Morgul but guarded by its own Tower, to which Tolkien transferred the horrific sentinels, though not the mouth-shaped gate.<sup>45</sup>

The way through Cirith Ungol was originally 'a stair and path leading up into the mountains south of the pass . . . and then a tunnel, and then more stairs and then a cleft high above the main pass . . .'.<sup>46</sup> Tolkien drew this conception on a page of an early draft of book 4, chapter 8 [171]:

The road opened out now: it still went on up, but no longer sheerly. Beyond and ahead there was an ominous glare in the sky, and like a great notch in the mountain wall a cleft was outlined against it - so [*here is drawn a small sketch*]. On their right the wall of rock fell away and the road widened till it had no brink. Looking down Frodo saw nothing but the vast darkness of the great ravine which was the head of Morgul dale. Down in its depths was the faint glimmer of the wraith-road that led over the Morgul pass from the city. On their left sharp jagged pinnacles stood up like towers carved by

Minas Morgul must be made more horrible. The usual "goblin" stuff is not good enough here.



Sketchbook something of the foll. sort for p.

170 Untitled (Minas Morgul Gate)

Black ink

Look! the road goes on now; it has wound up beyond and ahead lies over an ominous glare in the great notch in the mountain wall a cleft was cut in

On your right the walls of rock fell inward till it was no brim. Looky down Red orange flames of greater and greater heat were head of the depths were the flames of crack-holes had led away on your left sharp jagged pinnacles stood up like big trees, and between

precipices and cliffs

on the left side soft

twisted (knoty)

trees and the east jet

: I don't

that's said

upper passing

remember the

the orno. D'ya

feel hem — over as

No, I don't think so:

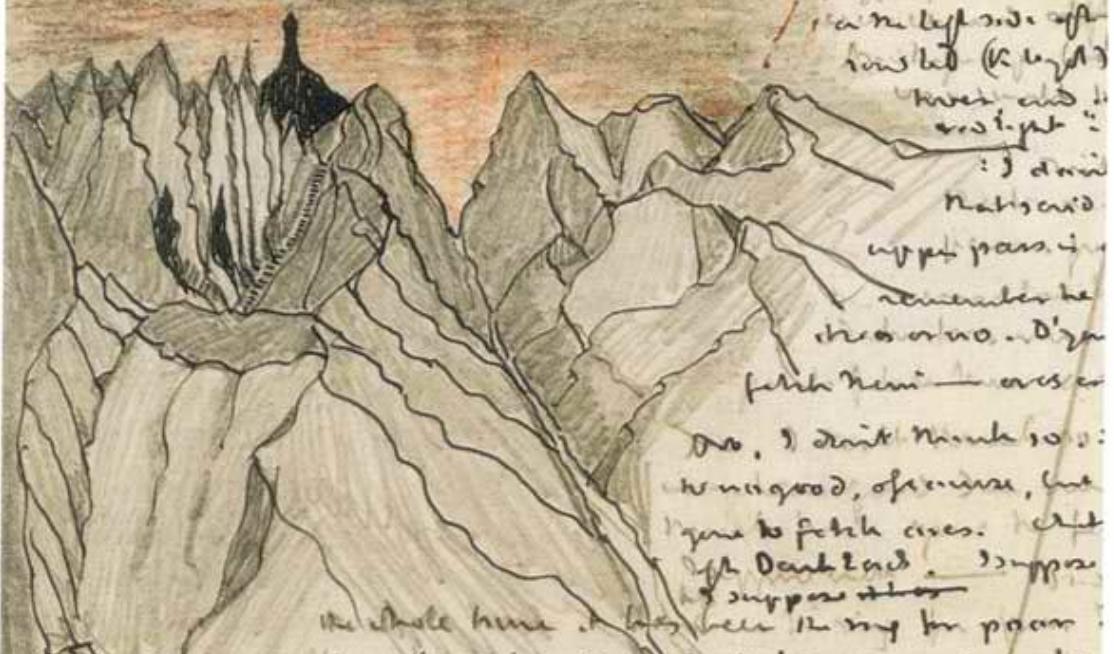
isn't good, otherwise, but

you to fetch axes. At

left Dark land. I suppose

I suppose so

the whole time it has been living the poor





Shelob's Lair

the whole time it has been trying to poison  
him by scheme. But how coming up her  
I can't guess.

Frodo went forward now — the last step — a  
last strength. He felt that if ever he could  
it pass and look over into the Nondes Land  
accomplished something. Sam followed. He  
would have. He knew that his Lord walked into  
He had sheathed his sword, but now he drew it once  
for a moment, and stepped to pick up his staff

171

*Shelob's Lair*

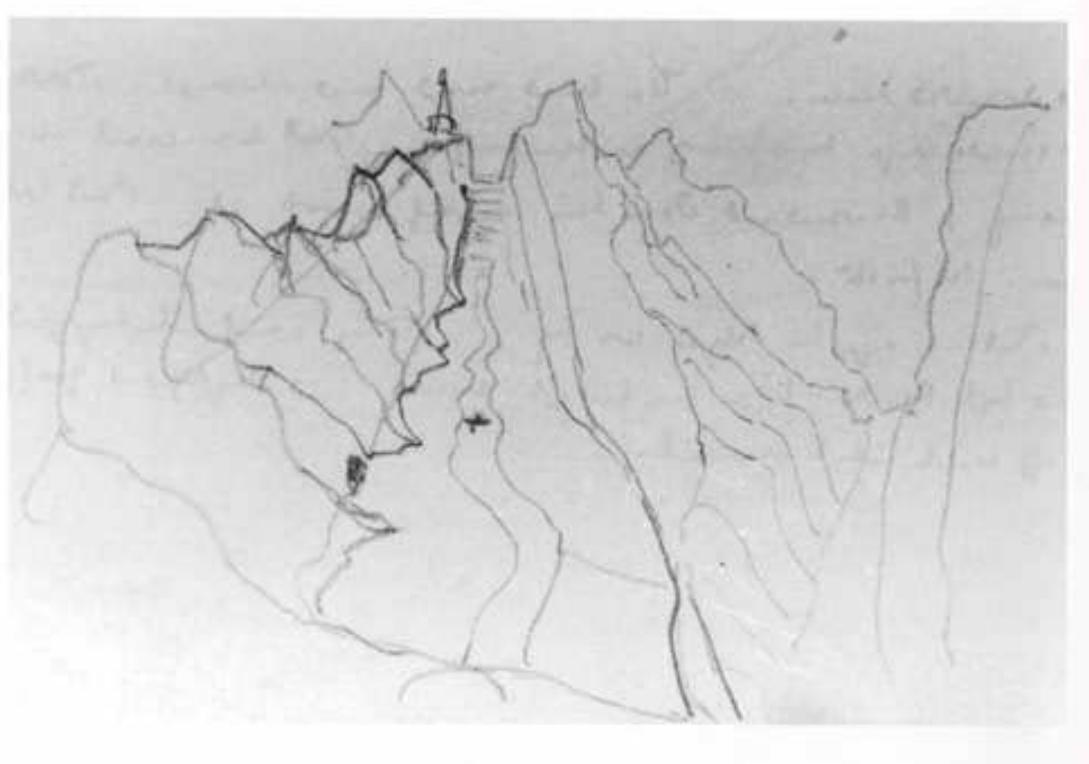
Pencil, black ink, red pencil



172

Untitled (Kirith Ungol)

Pencil, black ink, red pencil



173

Untitled (Kirith Ungol)

Pencil

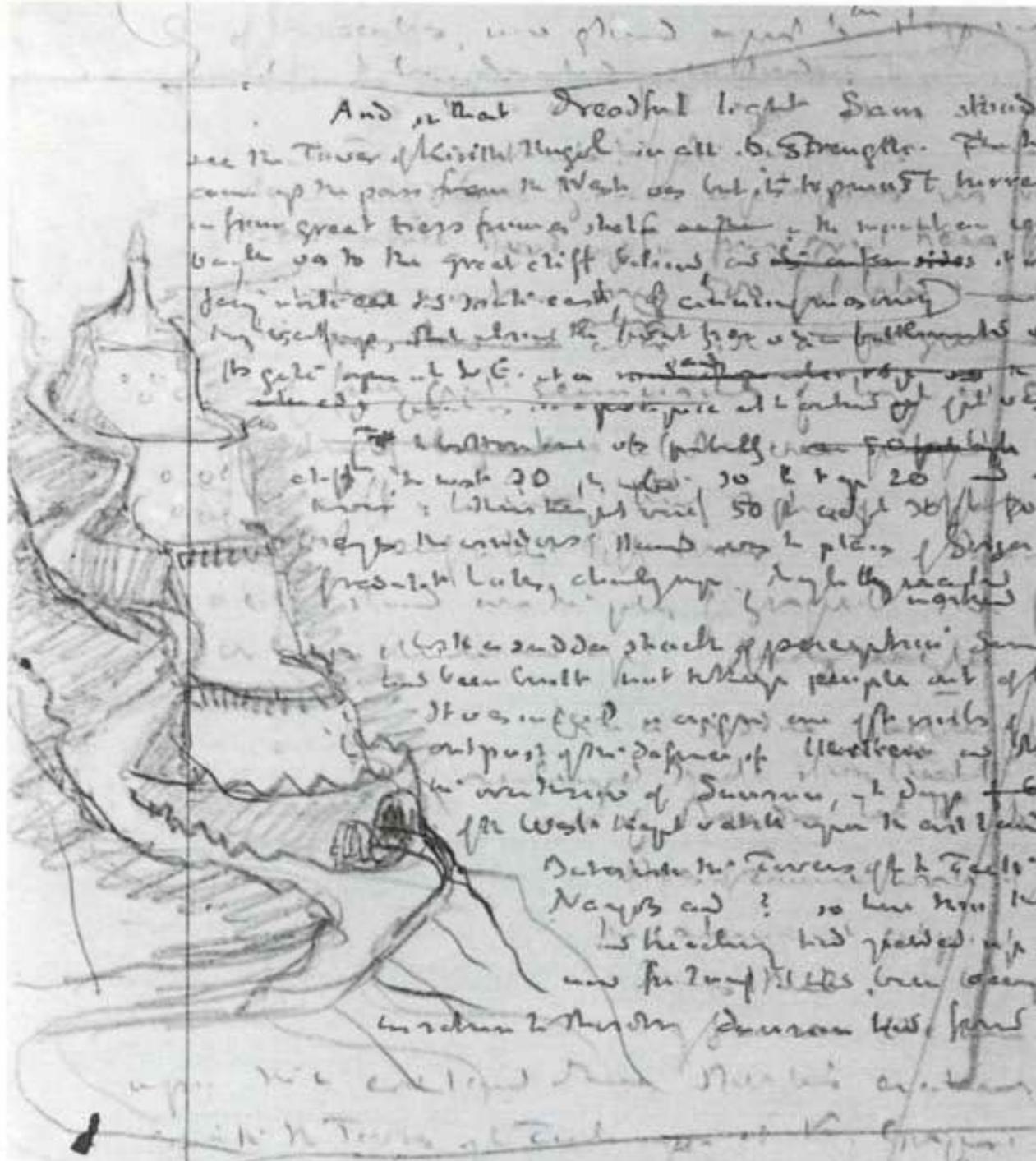
biting years, and between them were many dark crevices and

clefts. But high up on the left side of the cleft to which their road led (Kirith Ungol) was a small black tower, and in it a window showed a red light.<sup>47</sup>

Tolkien later added the title 'Shelob's Lair' below the First Stair at left. At the time of the picture and manu-script the great spider Frodo and Sam encounter in the pass was named Ungoliant.

Soon after drawing [171] Tolkien found that the story demanded a change in the design of the path, that it 'must be stair - stair - tunnel'.<sup>48</sup> Again he drew a sketch within the manuscript [172], in which the view now is from the head of the second. Winding Stair, towards the mouth of the tunnel leading to the spider's lair, a dark opening within 'a great grey wall, a last huge upthrusting mass of mountain-stone' (book 4, chapter 9). Beyond, 'against the sullen redness of the eastern sky

a cleft was outlined in the topmost ridge, narrow, deep-cloven between two black shoulders; and on either shoulder was a horn of stone. . . . The horn upon the left was tall and slender; and in it burned a red light, or else the red light in the land beyond was shining through a hole. . . . a black tower [was] poised above the outer pass' (book 4, chapter 8). As the story developed, Shelob's lair became a maze of passages, which required two sketch-plans to aid in the writing.<sup>49</sup> Tolkien also drew, twice, on the recto and verso of a manuscript page, the final approach to the cleft, 'a dim notch in the black ridge, and the horns of rock darkling in the sky on either side' (book 4, chapter 9). In one of these drawings [173] the opening in the cliff-wall from which Shelob came is shown at left, and an X on the path marks the spot where Frodo was attacked (book 4, chapters 9-10). At right, at the bottom of the ravine, is the wraith-road from Minas Morgul to the Morgul Pass. Another open-



And what dreadful sight Sam stood  
in the Tower of Kirith Ungol in all its strength. The light  
came up the pass from the West as bright as noonday but  
was hidden in great trees from a shelf above - the sunlight could  
barely reach the great cliff below, and the dark sides of the  
fog-shrouded mountain cast long shadows over the valley  
below, that closed the tower high and buttressed by  
its gate open at the East. And in the shadow of the tower  
the darkness of the forest grew and gathered.

\* \* \* \* \* ~~The tower of Kirith Ungol~~

c1-1st The width 30 ft. height 30 ft + top 20 ft.  
Area: This tower will hold 50 ft width 30 ft top  
by the number of hands and places of design  
providing labor, clearing up, lightly reaching  
worked

After a sudden attack of pneumonia Sam  
had been sent back through people out of  
the village or camp on first roads to  
outpost of the defense of Minas Tirith as  
the writings of Sauron, 1 day +  
for West kept visible upon the hill land

Determined to turn off to Gollum  
No way and? so here now he  
is heading his ground up  
now for 2 months from away  
and when I return down here, found

ing into the cliff is drawn very small by the stairs at the summit of the cleft, below the Tower. This is shown more closely in the second drawing on the sheet, but it is not mentioned in the published *Lord of the Rings*.

All of these drawings can be dated, with the draft manuscripts of the relevant chapters, to spring 1944,<sup>50</sup> after which Tolkien abandoned the story of Frodo and Sam in Mordor for more than three years. In 1948, when he began to write book 6, chapter i, the fortress of Kirith Ungol was fully revealed in a drawing [174] and accompanying text:

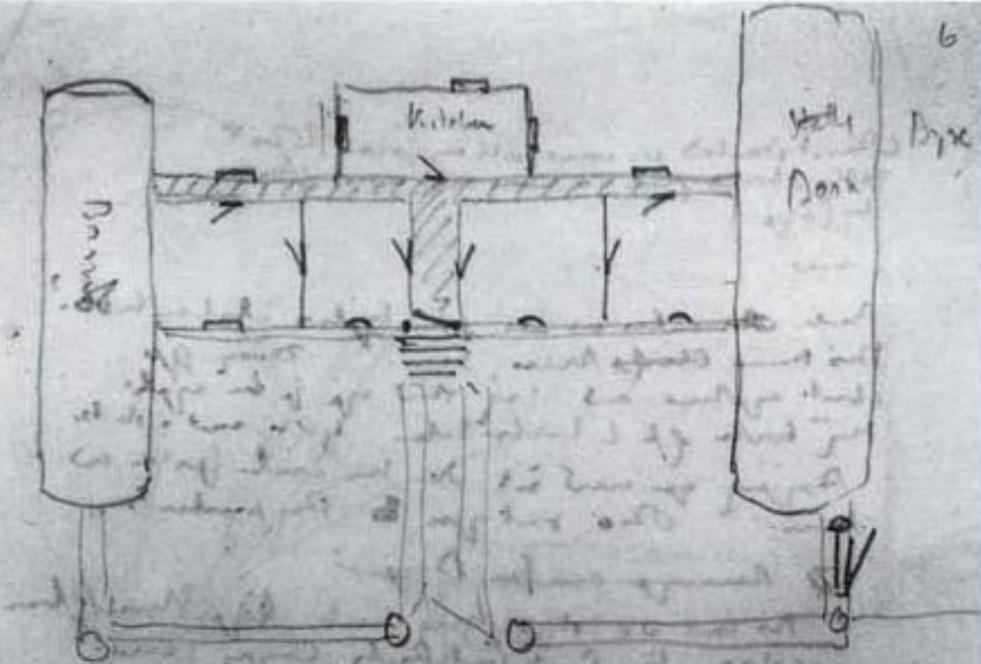
And in that dreadful light [of the volcano Mount Doom] Sam stood aghast; for now he could see the Tower of Kirith Ungol

in all its strength. The horn that those could see who came up the pass from the West was but its topmost turret. Its eastern face stood up in four great tiers from a shelf in the mountain wall some 500 feet below. Its back was to the great cliff behind, and it was built in four pointed bastions of cunning masonry, with sides facing north-east and south-east, one above the other, diminishing as they went up, while about the

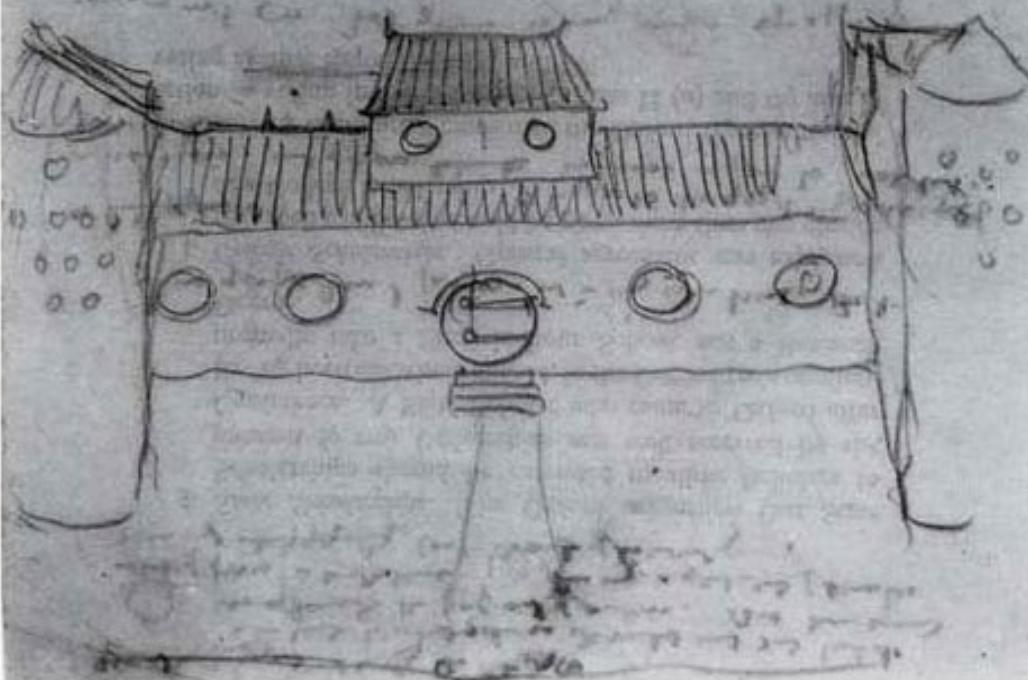
lowest tier was a battlemented wall enclosing a narrow court-yard. Its gate open[ed] on the SE into a broad road. The wall at the [?outward] . . . was upon the brink of a precipice.<sup>51</sup>

The arrangement of the tower in tiers recalls the earliest conceptions of Orthanc and Minas Tirith. Here it is more natural, like a terraced hillside - but with its lower course 'toothed' like the jaw of some ferocious beast. The gate is slightly amended in blue pencil. In the final text the Tower is built in 'three great tiers', **not** four.

Probably the last, and the most striking, of Tolkien's finished pictures for *The Lord of the Rings* is a view of Sauron's fortress in Mordor, Barad-dur 1145]. He drew it no earlier than October 1944, the earliest possible date for a sketch on its verso, a preliminary version of *Stanburg/Steinborg* [168]; he is unlikely to have drawn on the back of finished art, but would have had no hesitation in using the blank side of a sheet on which there was a rejected sketch. Sauron's stronghold is impeccably drawn and coloured, if with some odd perspective past the near wall, and is made more fore-boding by the glowing red door and upper windows,



Place of Farmer Cotton's house



175

Plan of Farmer Cotton's House  
Pencil

as if the interior were as fiery as Mount Doom, the volcano at the end of Frodo's quest to destroy the Ring. Even the mortar between the blocks of stone runs red, as if with fire or blood. Only a corner of the fortress is seen, suggesting a larger complex better imagined from the text than shown in its entirety: 'towers and battlements, tall as hills, founded upon a mighty mountain-throne above immeasurable pits; great courts and dungeons, eyeless prisons sheer as cliffs, and gaping gates of steel and adamant' (book 6, chapter 3). Its closest relation in our world is indeed a prison, or else the headquarters of some officious government agency. Its severity is relieved, but also emphasized, by the decorative posts along the bridge (those at the end like those in *The Elvenking's Gate* [121]) and by the columned doorway and window. Mount Doom itself can be seen to the left of the fortress with a flowing river of lava, very like Frodo's vision on Amon Hen in book 2, chapter 10: 'Fire glowed amid the smoke.'

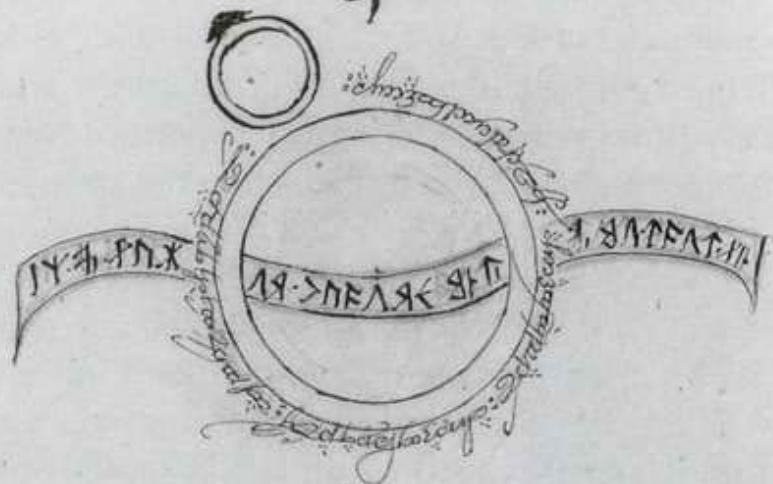
Mount Doom was

burning, and a great reek rising.' Here the volcano is drawn rather squat; in sketches Tolkien made in 1948 when drafting book 6, chapter 3, Mount Doom had a 'tall central cone, like a vast oast or chimney capped with a jagged crater'.<sup>52</sup>

Tolkien made only a handful of drawings during the final years of writing *The Lord of the Rings*, from 1948 until he corrected the last proofs of the third volume in July 1955. By then, with one exception, he knew the landscape of his book so intimately that he had little further need of sketches to guide him in writing, and of course in the final chapters of *The Lord of the Rings* the hobbits return home to the Shire through lands already crossed in the early part of the story. The exception was Farmer Cotton's house near Bywater east of Hobbiton. In book 6, chapter 8, Sam rides to Cotton's farm to alert him to the hobbits' revolt against the ruffians occupying the Shire. In the published text Sam's visit is brief and to the point, but in drafts of the chapter the farm is the site of a short, fierce battle between hobbits and ruffians. A plan of Farmer Cotton's house and a sketch of the front exterior, together on one sheet [175], undoubtedly were drawn when Tolkien was writing of the battle of Cotton's farm and needed to visualize its layout and appearance. The published *Lord of the Rings* leaves it little described, no more than a 'large round door at the top of the steps from the wide yard'. In the first draft of the chapter the house has a second storey ('They knocked on the door, twice. Then slowly a window was opened just above and a head peered out.') a kitchen at the back reached by a passage, and stairs by the front door. All of these features except the last are shown in the plan.<sup>53</sup> The house is linked to farm buildings at left and right and has enclosed yards in the front, more details than even the draft chapters required. In its architecture Cotton's house is a late echo of the Hobbiton Grange shown in *The Hill* [98]. Another, rougher sketch of the house is on the verso of the same sheet.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: PART I.

The Fellowship  
of



the

RING

by

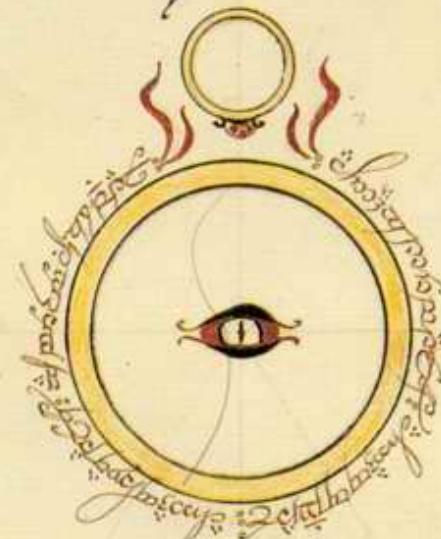
J.R.R. TOLKIEN



THE LORD OF THE RINGS

PART  
I

The Fellowship



of the

Ring

by

J.R.R. TOLKIEN



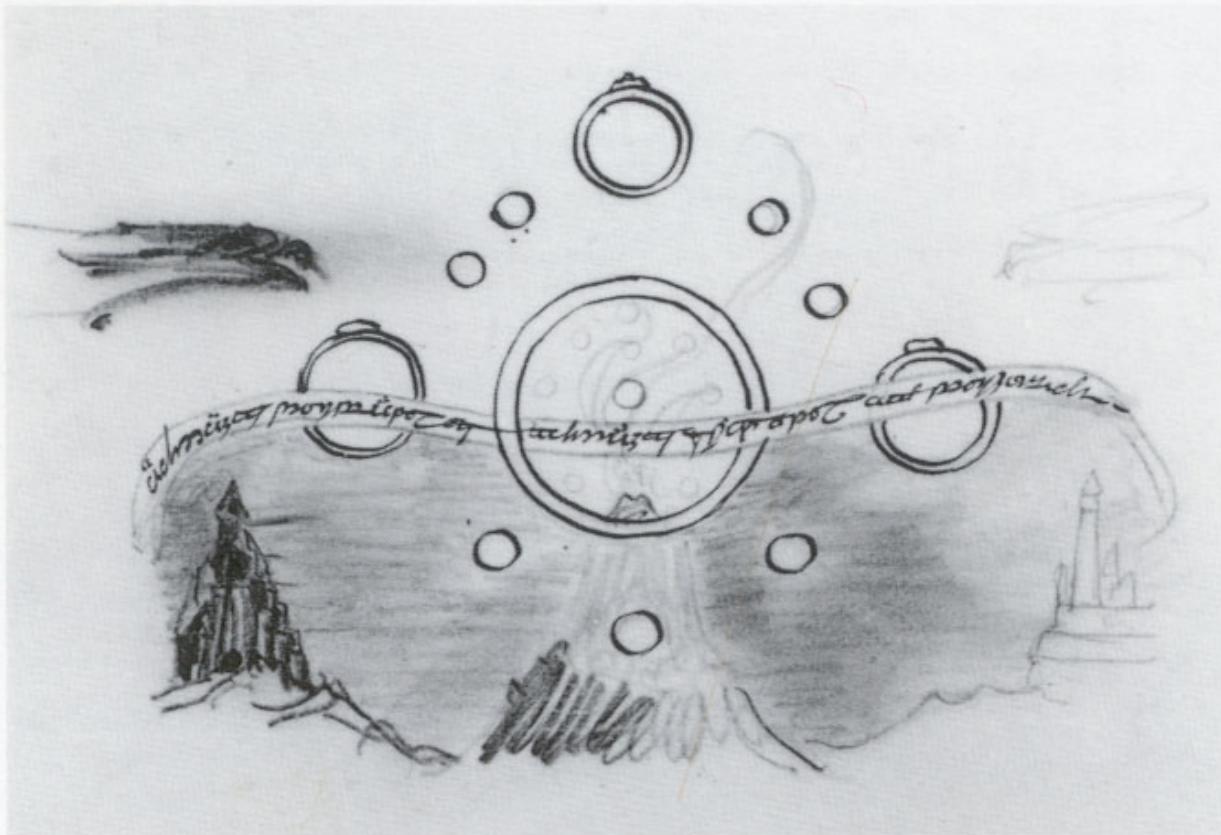
176 Dust-jacket design for *The Fellowship of the Ring*  
Pencil, black and red ink, red and blue pencil

177 Dust-jacket design for *The Fellowship of the Ring*  
Pencil, black and red ink, coloured pencil

In January 1954, six months before the first volume of *The Lord of the Rings* was published, Tolkien was asked by Alien & Unwin to suggest a dust-jacket design for the book. He replied, late in February, that he was 'without both time and inspiration',<sup>54</sup> but before another month had passed he produced two 'notions' for jackets of the first two volumes, *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Two Towers*. 'I can hardly call them more' than notions, he wrote, 'owing to their technical deficiencies. But someone might be able to rectify them or produce something on their lines. (I have indicated the precise form and significance of the 'elvish' letter-ing.) [The *Fellowship of the Ring* jacket] is in various forms.'<sup>55</sup>

Five designs by Tolkien for the *Fellowship of the Ring* jacket are extant. One [176] differs from the rest in

that a ribbon outlined in black ink and blue pencil runs behind the central ring (representing Sauron's Ring), and the upper, red-jeweled ring (meant to be Narya, the ruby Ring of Fire worn by Gandalf, in symbolic opposition to Sauron) is offset from the centre. The runic text on the ribbon reads 'In the land of shadows where the Mordor lie', *shadows* and *Mordor* curiously inverted. The text in red tengwar around the centre Ring is, with minor differences, the Ring inscription in the Black Speech, as published in book i, chapter 2: 'Ash nazg durbatuluk, ash nazg gimbatui, ash nazg thrakatuluk, agh burzum-ishi krimpatul.' At bottom left and right are the other two of the three Elven rings, Nenya and Vilya, the Rings of Water and Air, set with adamant and sapphire. Of Tolkien's other designs for the *Fellowship* jacket, [177] is representative.<sup>56</sup> Another was drawn on



178 (top)

Dust-jacket design for *The Two Towers*  
Pencil, black ink, blue and red pencil

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

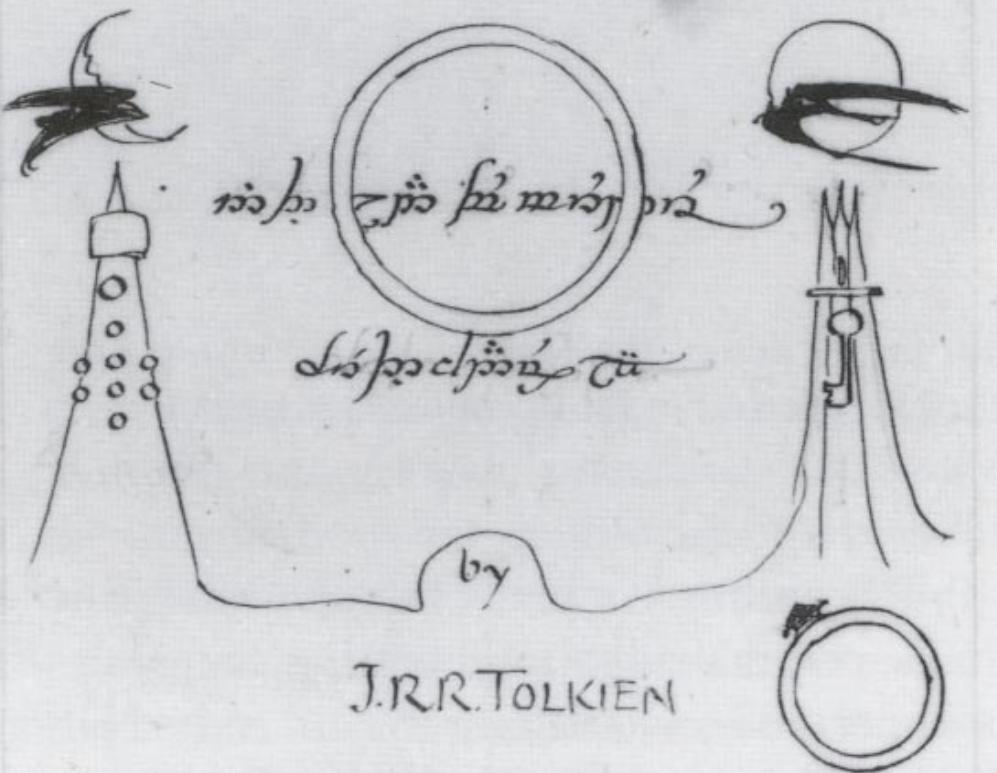
PART

II

black paper, with lettering in red and gold, and a third on grey-brown paper, uniquely among the variants excluding the two rings at bottom. In [177] the central device is almost fully realized: Narya suspended between stylized flames above the One Ring, within which floats the Eye of Sauron (later, upon a field of black), and around which the Ring inscription is written in fiery tengwar.

Tolkien's proposed jacket for *The Two Towers* was even more elaborate. At first he played with a design [178] incorporating the One Ring at centre and the three Elven rings again in triangular opposition, but also with the seven rings given by Sauron to the Dwarf-lords and, within the One Ring to which they were bound, the nine rings of the Nazgul. Again a ribbon bears the Ring inscription, but the words are written in a tengwar mode substantially different from that used in the published book. Roughly sketched at left and right are flying Nazgul, above renderings of, probably, Barad-dur<sup>57</sup> and Minas Tirith. From the top of the Dark Tower a red glow stabs into the gloomy sky. In the centre of the picture is Mount Doom, drawn in grey and blue with red fire.

# The Two Towers



179 (bottom)

Dust-jacket design for *The Two Towers*

Tolkien quickly developed this idea into a more care-fully balanced and less cluttered design with added titling [179]. The jacket now featured the towers of Minas Morgul at left and Orthanc at right. Clustered upon the former, the headquarters of the Nazgûl, are the nine rings of the Ringwraiths. Towards the base of the tower can still be seen, despite its erasure, a circle of nine rings rejected by Tolkien in favour of the cluster above. Orthanc is in its later form, like welded piers of stone, but appears to have three 'horns' as in its earlier designs. Upon Orthanc are, presumably, the staff of Saruman (laid horizontally) and the Key of Orthanc.<sup>58</sup> Two Nazgûl are in the air above the towers. In the centre is the One Ring with a text in tengwar, Tn the la[n]d of Mordor where the shadows lie'. The ring at lower right has a red gem, and so must be Narya, per-haps symbolizing Gandalf's opposition to Saruman at the door of Orthanc. Sketched twice below the ring is Saruman's emblem, the white hand.

Tolkien's final rendering of his Two Towers jacket [180] is a moody painting in black, red, white, and grey on grey-brown paper, with sharp contrasts of dark and light. He simplified the composition of [179], omitting one of the Nazgûl, the staff and key upon Orthanc, and the single ring, but added further symbolic details. The crescent moon above Minas Morgul, as in [179] with an ominous jagged curve, may be a reference to the earlier name of the tower, before it was taken and defiled by

Pencil, black and red ink

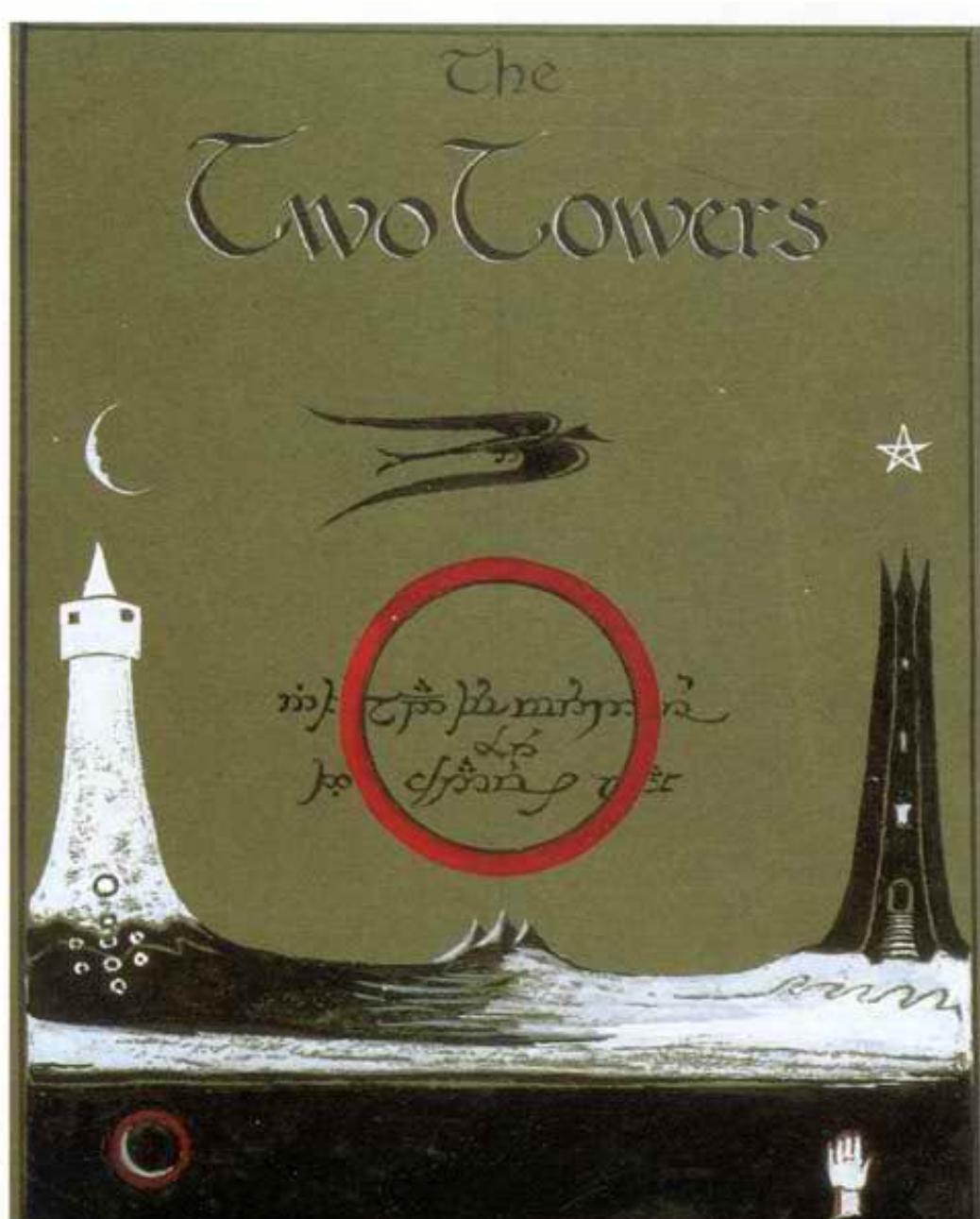
Alien & Unwin liked the theme of the *Fellowship of the Ring* jacket designs, but felt that most of them needed too many colours to distinguish three Elven

Sauron's forces: Minas Ithil, Tower of the Moon, once fair and radiant; but now its light was 'paler indeed than the moon ailing in some slow eclipse' (book 4, chapter 8). The image is reinforced by a drawing of an eclipse below Minas Morgul in the lower panel. Above Orthanc is now a five-pointed star, a wizard's pentacle, symbolizing Saruman, who is also represented below by the white hand, here edged and tipped blood-red.

;s. However, the version with only two rings, those

rm

of Gandalf and Sauron, suited the purpose perfectly. Rayner Unwin suggested that the same design - the central device combined with titling - be used on all three volumes, varying the colour of the background paper for each volume, and lettering in type rather than calligraphy. Tolkien replied that he was



Dust-jacket design for  
*The Two Towers*  
Pencil, black ink, red, white,  
and grey body colour



J.R.R.Tolkien

A close-up photograph of a dark, textured dust jacket. In the center, the name "J.R.R.Tolkien" is written in a stylized, handwritten font. The letters are primarily white or light grey, with some red and black ink used for the 'T' and 'R'. The background of the jacket has a subtle, mottled texture.



181

Sketch for dust-jacket,  
for *The Return of the King*  
Black and red ink

willing that you should do whatever seems suitable. I only sent the things in as suggestions.

I have done a sketch for Vol in; but I won't bother you with that, as I think the same device for each volume is, quite apart from expense, desirable: the whole thing is one book really, and it would be a mistake to over-emphasize the mechanically necessary divisions.

I am not quite clear which is the variant that you preferred. I hope it is the one with three subsidiary rings, since the symbolism of that is more suitable to the whole story, than the one with a black centre and only the opposition of Gandalf indicated by the red-jewelled ring.

As for the title lettering, could not that be in a simple form of Black Letter type, which accords better (I think) with the design and the elvish script than Roman<sup>59</sup>

Alien & Unwin's production staff disagreed; Black Letter would be illegible, they felt. Rayner Unwin suggested instead 'some bold typeface that doesn't look too Roman but at the same time has a better display value than black letter.'<sup>60</sup> The Ring

Tolkien saw the *Fellowship* dust-jacket in proof, apparently on the three different papers, and wrote to Alien & Unwin that he thought it

very ugly indeed. . . . What the jacket looks like is, I think, of much less importance now than issuing the book as soon as possible; and if I had had nothing to do with it, I should not much mind. But as the Ring-motif remains obviously mine (though made rather clumsier), I am likely to be suspected by the few who concern me of having planned the whole.

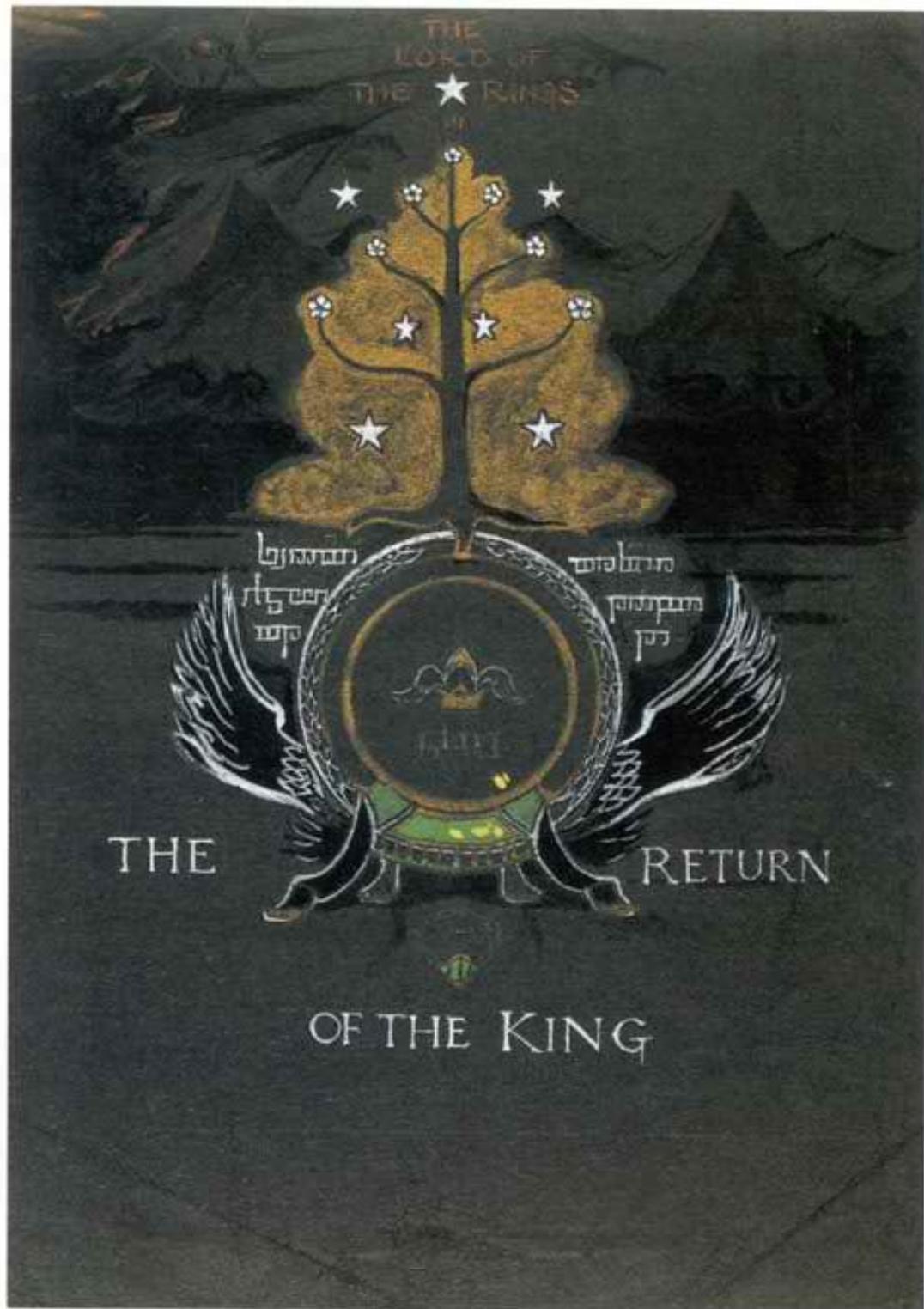
I think the lettering on the page is unusually ugly. It has no affinity at all to 'Black Letter', being not decorative but bru-tally emphatic: the f e R g and J might be singled out for special condemnation. (It is much less unpleasant when smaller, but even then the e stands out as an ill-designed letter.)

A normal serifed uncial (capital) type would be indefinitely preferable, I think.

I also think that the balance of the whole is wrong. The centre of the Eye should be at or above the centre of the page (as in the drafts). And the colours chosen are to my taste both ugly and unsuitable. To be effective, of course, the back-ground should be black or

device was redrawn by a printer's artist, and plans were made to print the jacket of volume i on green paper, volume 2 on blue, and volume 3 on grey.

very dark, and the same as the filling of the Ring. But at any rate I hope that something other than the blue, and especially the sick-green can be found.<sup>61</sup>



182

Dust-jacket design for  
*The Return of the King*  
Black ink, white, green, and  
red body colour, gold paint

'Tasteless and depressing', he concluded: a hard knock to the production department, but he had his way. On the proofs the Alien & Unwin staff had used Albertus, a 'chiselled' typeface designed in 1935-7 with the bold expressiveness of the Thirties. The final dust-jackets for *The Lord of the Rings* were printed uniformly on grey paper, with titling in Perpetua, a roman typeface of classical design which Tolkien pre-ferred (though it was, in fact, too weak in concert

with the Ring-motif and lacked the decorative character of his lettering).

Among Tolkien's dust-jacket designs the one he drew for the third volume, *The Return of the King* [182.], was the most impressive, but would have been impossibly expensive to reproduce even if technically feasible. Drawn and painted on black paper, it features the empty throne of Gondor awaiting the return of the King. Within the circle of the throne - in place of

the One Ring, destroyed in the course of the volume -is the winged crown of Gondor, 'shaped like the helms of the Guards of the Citadel, save that it was loftier, and it was all white, and the wings at either side were wrought of pearl and silver in the likeness of the wings of a sea-bird, for it was the emblem of kings who came over the Sea . . .' (book 6, chapter 5).<sup>62</sup> With this in tengwar are the initials L ND L, the monogram of Elendil, the first High King of Arnor and Gondor. His words upon coming to Middle-earth, 'Sinome moruvan ar hildinya tenn'ambar-metta' ('In this place will I abide and my heirs until the World's end'), are inscribed in tengwar to the left and right of the throne. Above the seat is the White Tree of Gondor with seven flowers, and the Seven Stars that were the emblem of Elendil and his heirs. Below the throne is a green jewel which represents the coming of the new King, Elessar, the 'Elfstone'.

A simplified version of this design was stamped on the binding of the 1969 deluxe edition of *The Lord of the Rings* published by Alien & Unwin. It omitted not only Elendil's words, but the most remarkable detail of

the original design above and behind the throne: the Shadow of Mordor given gigantic human-like form. The long arm of Sauron reaches out across red and black mountains, its clawed hand like the mouth of a hungry beast, sharp with teeth. Once again, and for the last time, a sinister hand featured prominently in Tolkien's art, the descendant of hands in *Wickedness* [32] and *Maddo* [78] and on the original *Thror's Map*. It proved impossible to adapt the design to binding stamps, and indeed even in Tolkien's original art the face and form of Sauron are difficult to make out in the upper back-ground. Fortunately a preliminary sketch [181] survives, in which the features of the Shadow are clearly seen.

And as the Captains gazed south to the Land of Mordor, it

seemed to them that, black against the pall of cloud, there rose a huge shape of shadow, impenetrable, lightning-crowned, filling all the sky. Enormous it reared above the world, and stretched out towards them a vast threatening hand, terrible but impotent: for even as it leaned over them, a great wind took it, and it was all blown away, and passed. . . . (book 6, chapter 4)<sup>63</sup>

Richard Hughes, 'Books for Pre-Adults',

*New Statesman and Nation*, 4 December 1937, p. 946; J.L.P., 'Dons in Fairyland', *Oxford Magazine*, 18 November 1937, p. 188; C.S. Lewis, 'A World for Children', *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 October 1937, p. 714;

Anne Thaxter Eaton, *New York Times Book Review*, 13 March 1938, p. 12. Tolkien, letter to Stanley Unwin, 16 December 1937; Unwin, letter to Tolkien, 2.0 December 1937, both in the Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive. Letter to Stanley Unwin, 15 October

1937. *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (hereafter *Letters*), p. 24. Quoted in *Letters*, p. 23. Letter to Stanley Unwin, 15 October

1938. *Letters*, p. 41. Foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*, second edition (1966). The evolution of the work is traced in close detail by Christopher Tolkien in vols. 6-9 of *The History of Middle-earth: The Return of the Shadow, The Treason of Isengard, The War of the Ring, and Sauron Defeated*. His monumental study enables one to see the precise context in which many of the *Lord*

7 Letter to Stanley Unwin, 30 September 1946, *Letters*, p. n.8.

8 Letter to C.A. Furth, 2 February 1939, *Letters*, pp. 42-3.

9 In December 1949 Tolkien wrote to Pauline Baynes (letter in The Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College) that he had two books soon to begin production - *The Lord of the Rings* and 'The Silmarillion', which he wanted to publish in conjunction with each other -and that he hoped that Baynes could have a hand in their illustration. Pauline Baynes recalls (conversation with the authors) that Tolkien had in mind a series of pictures in the margins.

10 *The Return of the Shadow*, pp. 99-100. n J.R.R. Tolkien: *A Biography*, p. 162.

11 Correspondence with the authors.

13 *The Return of the Shadow*, pp. 446-9.

14 *The Return of the Shadow*, ? 452.

15 *The Return of the Shadow*, p. 449, with the deletion noted in the manu-script at Marquette University.

16 In the reproduction the dark line between the moon

17 Letter to Rayner Unwin, n April 1953, *Letters*, p. 167.

18 See *The Return of the Shadow*, p. 467, and *The Treason of Isengard*, pp. 457-9, 465. The fourth version of the first page is demonstrably later than the rest, though how much later it is impossible to say. Its text is in a slightly different runic alphabet, one also used in the final art.

19 *The Treason of Isengard*, p. 191.

20 The third version of the first page is reproduced in Nancy-Lou Patterson, 'Tree and Leaf, p. [10].

21 Correspondence with the authors. Christopher Tolkien clearly recalls seeing the finished drawings in his father's study at 10 Northmoor Road, Oxford, from which address the Tolkiens moved in March 1947 (to 3 Manor Road, Oxford). The three 'facsimiles' are reproduced as no. 24 in *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, second edition.

22 Letter to Alien & Unwin, 9 October

1953. *Letters*, p. 171.

23 Letter to Hugh Brogan, 18 September

*of the Rings* drawings were made.

and tree at left is the shadow of an erasure combined with bleed-through from the other side of the sheet.

1954. *Letters*, p. 186.

36 *The War of the Ring*, p. 239.

37 *The War of the Ring*, pp. 245-6.

24 Letter to Rayner Unwin, n April 1953, *Letters*, p. 168. Several of his rapidly sketched maps for *The Lord of the Rings* have been published in *The History of Middle-earth*: see *The Return of the Shadow*, plate facing half-title, pp. 335, 439, and *The War of the Ring*, pp. 181, 201, 225, 258, 180. See also *The Manuscripts of JRRT*, p. ii. Christopher Tolkien very fully analyses the first general *Lord of the Rings* map in *The Treason of Isengard*, pp. [2951-323], and the second general map in *The War of the Ring*, pp. [4331-9].

25 *The Treason of Isengard*, p. 166, and p. 174, n. 21.

26 *The Treason of Isengard*, p. 219.

27 Cf. the sketch-plan in *The Treason of Isengard*, p. ^8^, which shows the approach to Tol Brandir from the point of view of the Fellowship of the Ring.

28 Tolkien also drew a small sketch of **Helm's Deep** in the earliest draft manuscript of the chapter, later cut out of the manuscript and now preserved with Tolkien's art in the Bodleian Library; cf. *The War of the Ring*, p. 23, note 9.

29 This sentence has been corrected according to the final manuscript;

see *The War of the Ring*, p. 12.

30 *The War of the Ring*, pp. 31-2.

31 Four sketches by Tolkien of the roof of Orthanc are reproduced in *Sauron Defeated*, p. 139 ('Orthanc n' and 'Orthanc ill').

32 *The War of the Ring*, p. 3 z.

33 *The War of the Ring*, p. 33. Reproduced on this page is a sheet containing the revised drawing, the subsequent version, and the two diagrammatic sketches noted in the next paragraph.

34 *The War of the Ring*, pp. 43-4, note 23.

35 See the illustration 'Orthanc ill' in *Sauron Defeated*, p. 139, which shows Orthanc as a tower and base together forming a cone, flanked on the left by a three-horned 'tower' with no door or windows, and on the right by a version of Orthanc very like [64] but with three piers of stone rather than four. The latter drawing is also reproduced in *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, no. 27. Cf. also Orthanc as drawn on Tolkien's dust-jacket designs for *The Two Towers* [179-180].

38 One of these, reproduced in *Sauron Defeated*, p. 140, depicts an alternate, fleeting conception, never described in a text, in which the path begins at a 'megalithic' gate (like the entrances to Nargothrond [57] and the Elvenking's halls 1119-1201) and winds up the mountain unseen within the cliff.

39 *The War of the Ring*, p. 251. A sketch by Tolkien of the mountains around Dunharrow - Starkhorn, Dwimorberg, and Irengald - is reproduced in *The War of the Ring*, p. 314.

40 *The War of the Ring*, p. 260.

41 'Stone-city', i.e. Minas Tirith. The name *Steinborg* is inscribed also in tengwar.

42 See *The War of the Ring*, pp. 280, 290, and *The Manuscripts of JRRT*, p. 21. An additional diagram is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

43 Tolkien drew this sketch, and a similar, less detailed picture of Minas Tirith from the front, on the versos of circulars concerning Oxford fellowships, issued from internal evidence between 1 January and 20 May 1954.

44 *The Treason of Isengard*, pp. 333, 340. The sentinels do not appear in the sketch, but Tolkien drew them diagrammatically: see *Treason*, p. 348, note 33.

45 Sketches made by Tolkien while

working out the geography of Kirith Ungol are reproduced in *The War of the Ring*, pp. 108, 114.

46 *The War of the Ring*, p. 124.

47 *The War of the Ring*, p. 195.

48 *The War of the Ring*, p. 199.

49 *The War of the Ring*, pp. 201, 225.

50 See *The War of the Ring*, pp. 183 ff.

51 *Sauron Defeated*, pp. 19-20.

52 See *Sauron Defeated*, pp. 39-40, 41. One of the sketches is reproduced (with Barad-dur) as no. 30 in *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien*, and in *Sauron Defeated*, p. 42. Another sketch of Mount Doom is on the same sheet, labelled 'Mt Doom from the North'. Christopher Tolkien describes another, rejected sketch of the mountain in *Sauron Defeated*, p. 41, note 4.

53 *Sauron Defeated*, pp. 84-6; see also pp. 96-7.

54 Letter to W.N. Beard, 23 February 1954, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive.

55 Letter to W.N. Beard, 23 March 1954, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive.

56 Another design is reproduced in *J.R.R. Tolkien: Life and Legend*, p. [2].

57 In a letter to Rayner Unwin of 22

January 1954 (*Letters*, p. 173) Tolkien wrote: 'I am not at all happy about the title "the Two Towers". It must if there is any real reference in it to Vol n refer to Orthanc and the Tower of Cirith Ungol. But since there is so much made of the basic opposition of the Dark Tower and Minas Tirith, that seems very misleading.' *The Lord of the Rings* also sets up opposition between Minas Tirith and Minas Morgul, but the latter was a white tower, not black like the tower at left in [178].

58 In book 3, chapter 10, Gandalf says to Saruman: 'But you will first surrender to me the Key of Orthanc, and your staff. They shall be pledges of your conduct, to be returned later, if you merit them.' In the first drafts of the chapter, *key* is not capitalized. Its later capitalization suggests that the Key of Orthanc had some special significance, and was not merely a key to the front door; but Tolkien never developed the idea.

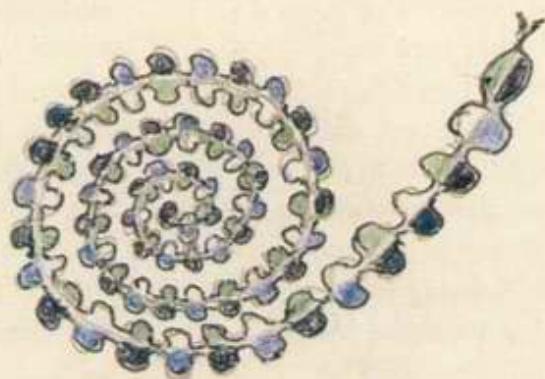
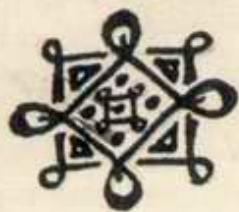
59 Letter to Rayner Unwin, 26 March 1954, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive.

60 Letter to Tolkien, t April 1954, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive.

61 Letter to Alien & Unwin, 3 June 1954, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive (partly printed in *Letters*, p. 182).

62 A drawing of the crown of Condor by Tolkien is reproduced in *Letters*, p. 281.

63 The sketch is on the verso of a printed proof of a work concerning the German elections of 1953.



183 *Untitled (Patterns)*

Pencil, coloured pencil, black and coloured ink

## 6 Patterns and Devices

In this book we reproduce some two hundred paintings and drawings by Tolkien. Remarkably, for he was a busy Oxford professor, writer, and family man, these represent less than one-quarter of his surviving art, including rough sketches and scribbles. He was a surprisingly prolific artist, especially in his retirement years from which about a third of his drawings can be dated. Most of these later works are brightly coloured patterns and devices, drawn by Tolkien purely for his own pleasure. That he had long enjoyed pattern-designing is evident in works such as the exuberant friezes in *The Book of Ishness* [59], the 'stamps' on his 'Father Christmas' letters [65], and his several Trees of Amalion [62,]. Now, in his later years, he drew decorative rather than illustrative designs almost exclusively.

This was no sudden change of course. In his lecture *On Fairy-Stories*, delivered in March 1939, Tolkien made a brief but profound statement on the relationship of illustration to fantasy fiction:

In human art Fantasy is a thing best left to words, to true literature. In painting, for instance, the visible presentation of the fantastic image is technically too easy; the hand tends to outrun the mind, even to overthrow it. Silliness or morbidity are frequent results. . . . However good in themselves, illustrations do little good to fairy-stories. The radical distinction between all art (including drama) that offers a *visible* presentation and true literature is that it imposes one visible form. Literature works from mind to mind and is thus more progenitive. It is at once more universal and more poignantly particular. If it speaks of *bread* or *wine* or *stone* or *tree*, it appeals to the whole of these things, to their ideas; yet each hearer will give to them a peculiar personal embodiment in his imagination. Should the story say 'he ate bread', the dramatic producer or painter can only show 'a piece of bread' according to his taste or fancy, but the hearer of the story will think of bread in general and picture it in some form of his own. If a story says 'he climbed a hill and saw a river in the valley below', the illustrator may catch, or nearly catch, his own vision of such a scene; but every hearer of the words will have his own picture, and it will be made out of all the hills and rivers and dales he has ever seen, but specially out of The Hill, The River, The Valley which were for him the first embodiment of the word.<sup>1</sup>

Reading this last sentence, one cannot help but think of *The Hobbit*, published less than two years earlier. The passage is almost certainly self-criticism. Tolkien

seems to be asking himself, Should *The Hobbit* have been illustrated? Was it a disservice to readers to have done so? (And of course, reading between the lines:

Were the pictures really good enough to have been published?) As we have said, the *Hobbit* illustrations are a good compromise between a depiction of actual scenes in the text, and general views in which the reader can bring his own imagination to bear, guided by the author's words. Tolkien's statement in *On Fairy-Stories* suggests that he now thought that this was not enough, or rather, that words themselves were enough; and as first published, *The Lord of the Rings* seems to have been tailor-made to this philosophy, containing no illustrations, strictly speaking, only maps and inscriptions (including, in the latter category, the Doors of Durin picture). If Tolkien had had his way, it would have included his 'Book of Mazarbul' pages also, but these would have been 'documents' to support the text as 'history', not pictorial illustrations. There is wisdom in what Tolkien says in *On Fairy-Stories* about illustration; but he did not wholly subscribe to it. He drew pictures for *The Lord of the Rings* regardless, even if he did not put them forward for publication, and at one point he did indeed, very briefly hope that *The Lord of the Rings* could be illustrated - not by himself, but by Pauline Baynes, who had illustrated his *Farmer Giles of Ham* (1949) much to his satisfaction.<sup>2</sup> Baynes provided the art for several of Tolkien's later books, releasing him from the responsibility of painting or drawing for publication, which *The Hobbit* had proved to be such an emotional as well as a physical burden.

After *The Lord of the Rings* appeared in 1954-5, many of Tolkien's readers wrote to ask him for more information about Middle-earth, and to press him to complete 'The Silmarillion'. Alien & Unwin were eager for 'The Silmarillion' too, and hoped that with his retirement from Oxford in 1959 Tolkien would not take long to prepare a final text. But he found it hard to discipline himself into working regularly, and as always he had many obligations: unfinished academic works, and the care of his wife, who was in poor health. He himself was in his mid-sixties and naturally feeling the effects of age. Even when he did find time for 'The Silmarillion' progress was slow. He considered a radical change in its cosmology to bring it closer to that of our

own world, and as the many questions sent to him by readers of *The Lord of the Rings* raised further queries his mind, he became enmeshed in working out

changes and all their consequences.

At times he preferred to write long letters to correspondents, or to doodle elaborate designs on whatever paper was at hand, often on the blank backs of letters written to him, on the front, back, and inside of envelopes, on compliment slips, on invitations, at least once on a paper napkin, and on old newspapers, the latter usually while he was solving the crossword. Some of these he later redrew more carefully on fresh sheets. Several hundred of his doodles are preserved. Theoretically it should be possible to date all of the designs he drew on newspapers; however, Tolkien himself added a

date to about a fifth of these, and in almost every case it is two to three months later than the date on which the paper appeared. His son John recalls that Tolkien habitually kept a pile of newspaper crosswords to work on when he had the time.<sup>3</sup> Most of the extant news-papers on which he drew date from February to November 1960 and from February to September 1967, with some from 1957-8 and single examples from 1965 and 1971.<sup>4</sup> Only a few of his designs not drawn on news-papers are directly dated, most from 1960 and 1967, others as late as October 1972.

In style many of these drawings recall some of Tolkien's much earlier work. Ultimately they look back to the decorative arts current in his youth, especially to the more naturalistic forms of Art nouveau or of Art



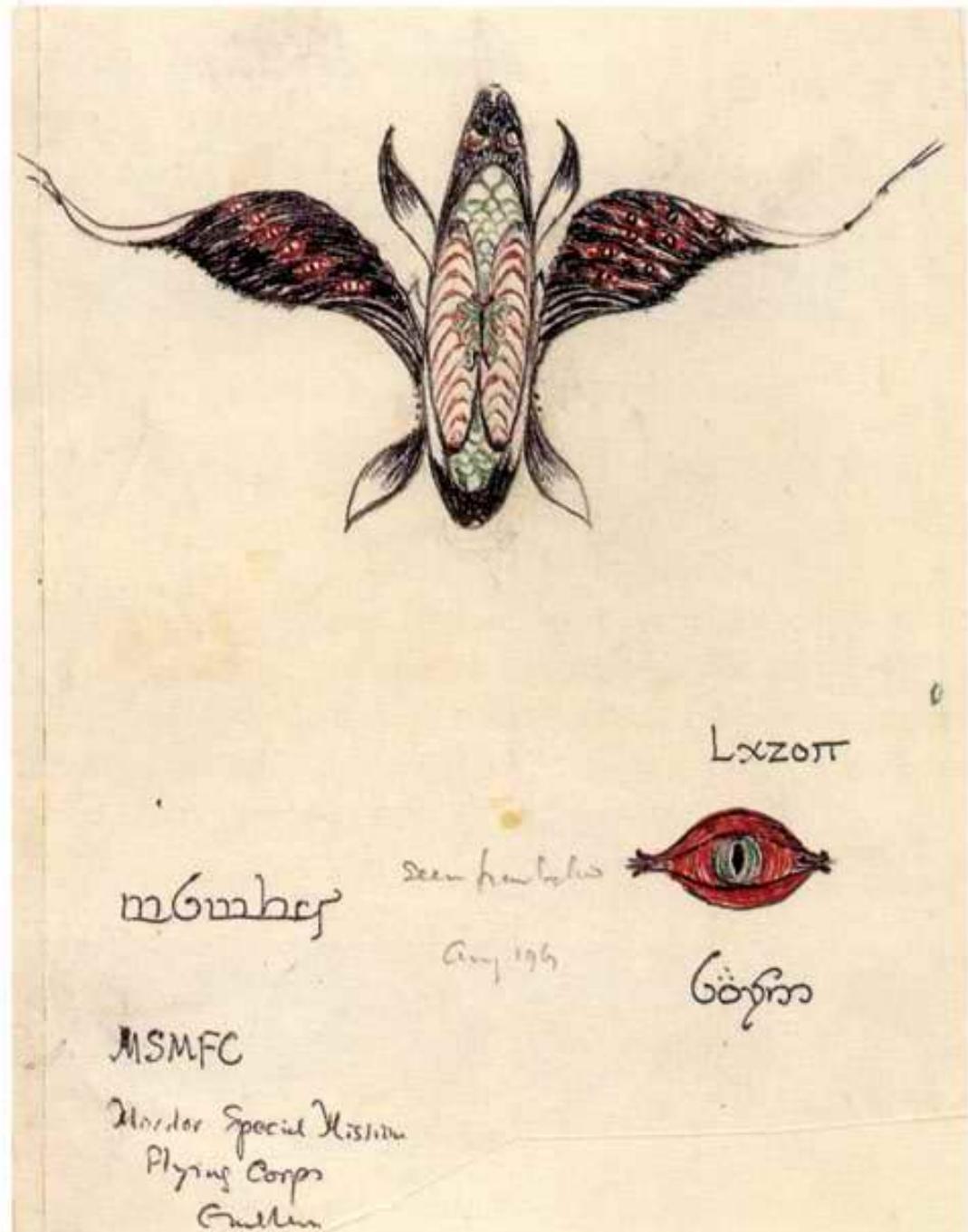


184

*Untitled (Doodles)*

Black and coloured ink, pencil, coloured pencil

185  
*Mordor Special Mission Flying Corps Emblem*  
Pencil, black, red, and green ink

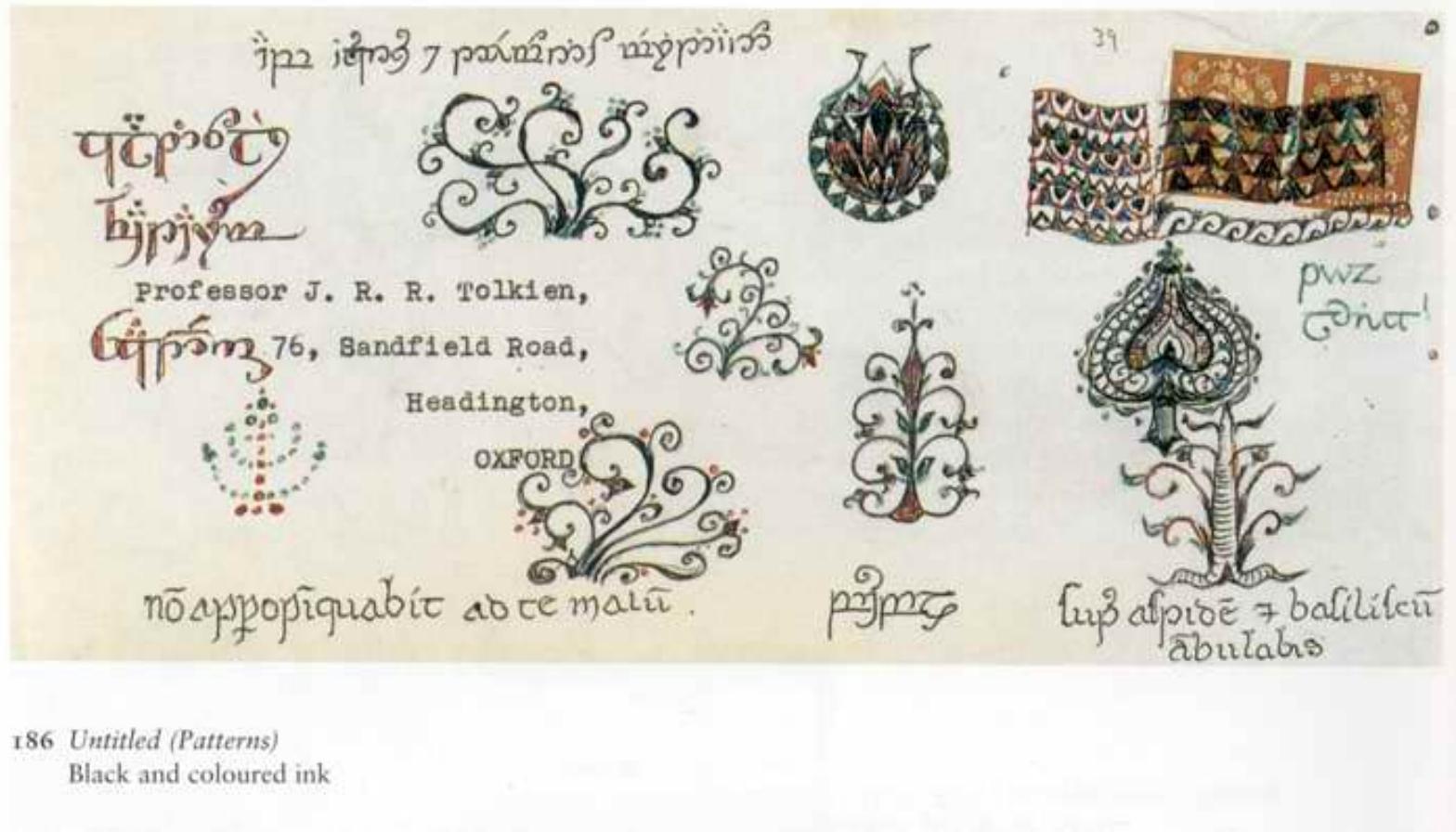


nouveau-inspired decoration, and to a lesser extent, perhaps also to geometrical patterns such as appeared in English printing in the 1920s and 1930s, designed by artists such as Paul Nash. But a few of Tolkien's designs from the 1960s are absolutely contemporary, copying the 'op art' then in fashion. He was modern also in his tools: in his later years he often used coloured ball-point pens. They were convenient, especially while he was sitting with his newspaper, and they made an attractive line. But he preferred pencil, coloured pencil, water-colour, or coloured inks applied from a bottle when he aimed for very delicate effects.

Usually he made only one or two drawings on a newspaper. On the example [184], however, he worked for two successive days on a variety of designs. The elaborately coloured flaming half-circle at upper left, and some of the sketches in the third column, may be prototypes for heraldic devices related to his mythology, in particular the one for Finwe [191]. Tolkien frequently drew paisley motifs, as in the first and fourth columns, often with patterned interiors.<sup>5</sup> Occasionally he transcribed newspaper headlines into tengwar, or made related comments in Elvish script.

Even while doodling next to a crossword instead of writing 'The Silmarillion', Tolkien's thoughts were never far from his mythology. Some of his doodles, he decided, were not doodles but drawings of artefacts. Among the earliest of these was a Numenorean helmet or *karma*, dated March 1960.<sup>6</sup> An inscription tells that it belonged to 'a captain of the Uinendili', and that its helm was 'made of overlapping enamelled plates of metal, the "fish crest" of leather embossed and coloured'. At about the time that he made this drawing, Tolkien was writing the story of Aldarion,<sup>7</sup> the sixth King of Numenor, who founded the Guild of Venturers to which the hardiest and most eager mariners belonged. They were called the *Uinendili*, 'lovers of Uinen', one of the Maia or lesser powers of Arda. Uinen calmed the waves and restrained the wildness of her husband, Osse, master of the seas.

Another doodle related to his fiction [185], from August 1967, may have begun as a stylized flower drawn in the previous month.<sup>8</sup> But its resemblance to an aviator's badge suggested another meaning to Tolkien, at once sinister and amusing, within the context of his stories: the 'Mordor Special Mission Flying Corps'



186 Untitled (Patterns)

Black and coloured ink

Emblem'. The MSMFC - Tolkien wrote the initials on the sheet both in ordinary capitals and in tengwar - are undoubtedly the Nazgul, Sauron's most powerful and terrible servants in *The Lord of the Rings*. Towards the end of the War of the Ring they were mounted on giant winged creatures of a fantastic kind. The caption at the centre of the sheet, 'seen from below', suggests that the drawing represents an actual view from the ground of one of the winged beasts - though it is more likely that Tolkien was just being playful. At lower right is the Eye of Sauron, much as it appeared on the dust-jackets of *The Lord of the Rings* [177]. It is labelled 'Sauron' twice, in tengwar (below) and in the New English Alphabet, another lettering system Tolkien devised.

The envelope [186] is a good example of Tolkien's frugality in drawing on any available scrap of paper. It was probably posted to him in 1964 or 1965, and drawn on soon after he received it.<sup>9</sup> Even the postmark and stamps (bearing the image of Queen Elizabeth) are covered with doodles. Beneath the stamps Tolkien wrote 'poor queen' in his New English Alphabet, as an act of contrition. The curvilinear plant motifs recall the 'Tree of Amalion' as well as decorations one finds in many fifteenth-century manuscripts and printed books.<sup>10</sup> At left Tolkien sketched a seven-branched candlestick, and here and there inscribed lines from the Latin Psalm 90/91." At the top of the envelope,

in tengwar, is 'ab incursu et daemonic meridiano'; at the foot, in medieval script, is 'non appropinquabit ad te malum' at left and 'super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis' at right. The three words in tengwar above the candlestick are also in Latin but do not come from the Psalm: 'claedioulas' ('Pgladiolus'), 'fatarum', and 'scandens'. The word in tengwar at bottom centre seems to read 'bubis' (? English 'bubbles'). The bands beside and below the stamps are typical of such designs Tolkien drew in his later years, sometimes in flexible, curving shapes.<sup>12</sup> He decided that these were Numen-orean belts. Stylistically related, and drawn at almost the same time as the earliest 'belts' in autumn 1960, are a series of decorative borders incorporating both floral and geometrical forms, many in delicate colours.<sup>13</sup> In December 1960 Tolkien combined some of these with other motifs in two larger patterns he labelled 'Numen-orean carpets' [187].<sup>14</sup>

Variety is the hallmark of many of Tolkien's sheets of doodles, for example [183], drawn with relative pre-cision. Here are a 'sunburst', a spiral, a snowflake, and paisley 'teardrops'. But especially interesting on this sheet is the apparent precursor of the heraldic devices of Finwe and Fingolfin [191-192], not yet set in a lozenge. Tolkien first mentioned heraldic devices in his mytho-logy in *The Fall of Gondolin*, in *The Book of Lost Tales*. The devices he described there are representational,

bearing a swan, an arrowhead, a rainbow, a harp, or -for King Turgon - a red heart, commemorating his re-covery of the heart ores had cut from his father's body.<sup>15</sup> Similar pictorial devices appear in *The Lord of the Rings*, including Rohan's white horse on a field of green and the white tree, crown, and seven stars on black of the House of Elendil [182]. But except for the descriptions in *The Fall of Gondolin*, and that of the badge of Finarphain in *The Lay of Leithian* and elsewhere,<sup>16</sup> references to Elvish heraldic devices are rare and brief in Tolkien's works. He provided no written descriptions to match in exquisiteness the series of heraldic devices, for the most part decorative rather than representational, that he drew in 1960-1 for leading figures in his mythol-

ogy-

He explained his rules for Elvish heraldry in a note:

Women within a circle personal

Men within a lozenge     "  
general (impersonal) designs or  
emblems of a family *square*  
(or [?] once, circular).  
The rank was usually held to be  
shown by number of 'points' which

reached the outer rim  
four was prince) 6-8 kings  
the great ancestors  
sometimes had as many [as] 16 as in

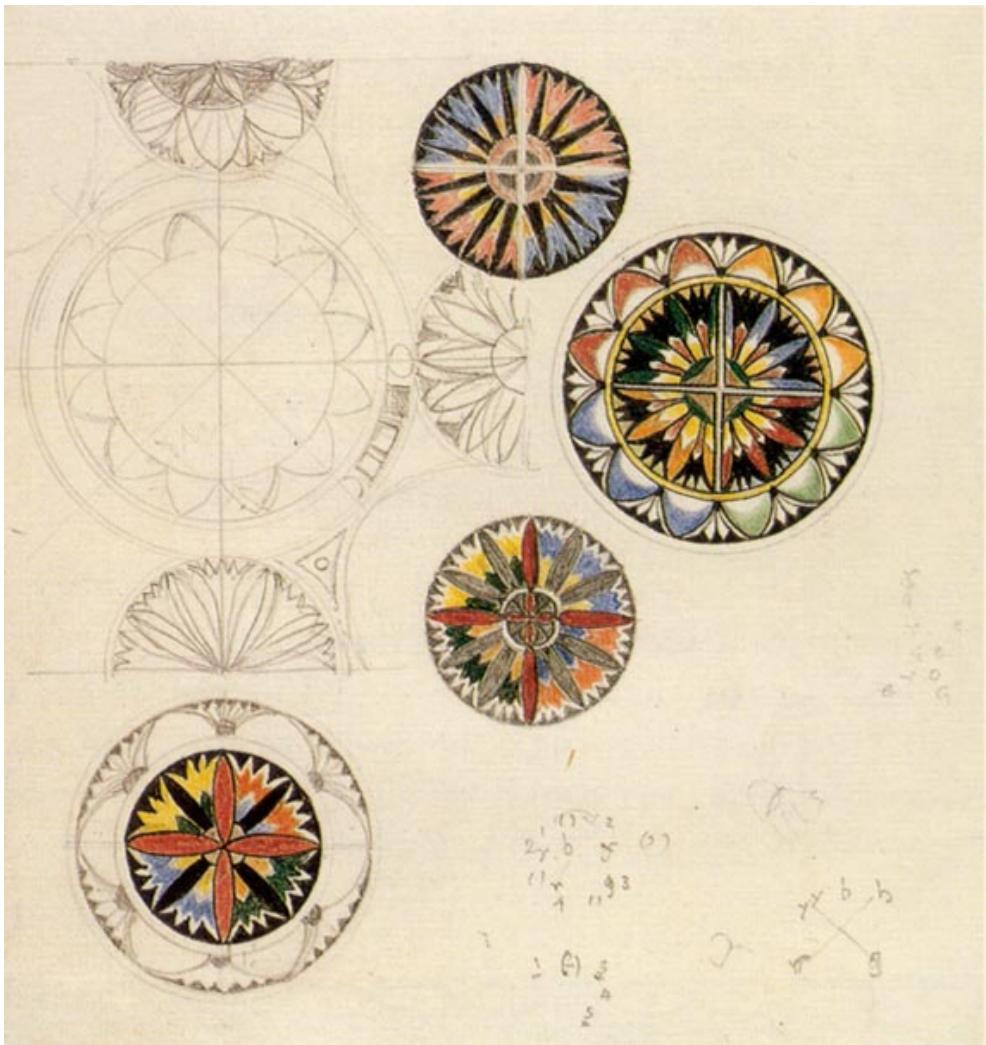
House of Finwe.<sup>17</sup>

This protocol is demonstrated in the devices [188-195]. Those of female characters are indeed placed within a circle [188-189, 193-195], the device of the Noldorin House of Finwe [191 top] is within a square, and those



*Númenórean Carpet*  
Pencil, coloured pencil,  
black and coloured ink





188 (top)  
Untitled (Devices of Idril)  
Pencil, coloured pencil, black and coloured ink

મનુષ્યાં જીત્રો હોલ્ડિંગ



Idril's Device  
The 'Confluent' pattern  
Menethil.  
Origin of (after  
Dobrod) Numerical  
circular patterns

Engraved plaque  
preserved from Gondolin  
by descending from Earendil  
to Númenor, whence it was  
sewed by Elendil to his robe  
Gondor.

189 (right)

*Idril's Device*

Pencil, coloured pencil

of individual males are lozenge-shaped [190, 191 *bot-tom*, 192]. Family relationships are often marked by similarities in design: for example, among the devices of the House of Finwe [191 *top*], of Finwe himself and his eldest son Feanor,<sup>18</sup> and of his second son, Fingolfin [192 *bottom*] - but this is not always the case. Apparently a new device was sometimes made to mark an important event in its bearer's life. The device of Finrod, son of Finarphain,<sup>19</sup> bears a harp and torch, probably to commemorate his meeting with the first Men to enter Beleriand, when he sang to them with harp accompaniment. Tolkien may have meant to suggest that this device was created for Finrod by Men, as it is closer in design to the devices of Men he described in *The Lord of the Rings* and drew in the early 1960s, than it is to the other, geometrical Elvish devices he created at the same time. The latter are usually symmetrical on every axis, which often imparts a sense of perpetual rotation, perhaps intended to suggest the immortality of the Elves

within the circles of the world. In contrast, the devices of Men tend to be symmetrical only on either side of the vertical axis, and often have a strong horizontal axis as well. In these<sup>20</sup> the movement is not circular, but extends from the centre outward towards the frame with an impetus to thrust beyond it.

The device that Tolkien drew for the Human hero Beren<sup>21</sup> represents the threefold peaks of Thangorodrim which stood above the stronghold of Morgoth, the Sil-maril that Beren and Luthien recovered from Morgoth's crown, and the hand that Beren lost in that adventure. Tolkien meant the device to have been designed post-humously, to commemorate Beren's exploits: he inscribed the original drawing of the device 'Beren Gam-lost ["empty-handed"], historical plaque'. Tolkien also designed such a 'plaque' [189], dated 14 December 1960, with the device of Idril Celebrindal, the daughter of Turgon, King of the Noldorin Elves, who ruled the hidden city of Gondolin in the First Age of Middle-

earth. The tengwar inscription on Idril's plaque is in Quenya, the High Elvish tongue: 'Menelluin Irildeo Ondolindello' ('Cornflower of Idril from Gondolin'). Nothing in Tolkien's writings explains why the corn-flower should have been associated with Idril. Perhaps it comes from an association of the blue flowers growing in golden corn, for Idril's hair was said to be 'as the gold of Laurelin ere the coming of Melkor'.<sup>22</sup>

The design of the plaque can be seen as twelve large blue cornflower florets against a black ground, with smaller florets and leaves, or as a blue ground against which are drawn twelve black petals containing small blue florets which form a cornflower in the centre. Under Tolkien's rules for Elvish heraldry, the twelve flowers or points reaching the edge of the circle may reflect Idril's position as a king's daughter. The inscription at bottom left tells that the plaque was held by the descendants of Idril, 'preserved from Gondolin & descending from Earendil to Numenor, whence it was saved by Elendil & taken to Gondor'. The other inscription suggests that it was much copied: 'Idril's Device. The "Cornflower" pattern Menelluin. Origin of (often debased) Numenorean circular patterns'. Tolkien had drawn a 'Numenorean tile' immediately before drawing [189], which while not actually 'debased' is more stylized and, in contrast to the latter (which really does

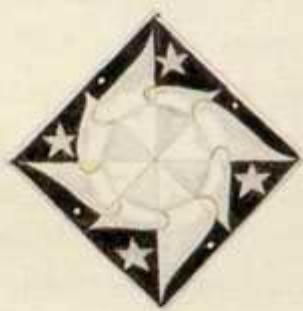
suggest a delicate cornflower), has many more colours, of a greater intensity.<sup>23</sup>

Idril's device also appears on a sheet of similar drawings [188]. These are in various states of completion, and so illustrate Tolkien's method: compass, protractor, and straightedge were essential tools for the job. The two smaller devices are close in design to the plaque, but have the same variety of colour as the tile. The larger coloured devices, and the complete and partial devices in pencil, are also very like the tile in its interior designs. At lower right are Tolkien's notes for colours: b[ue], g[reen], r[ed], y[ellow], o[range].

He spent much time working on devices for Earendil, to judge by the number of extant examples. The son of Idril and Tuor had escaped the sack of Gondolin, and later married Elwing, who inherited the Silmaril that her grandparents, Beren and Luthien, had wrested from Morgoth's crown and with which Earendil sought the help of the Valar against Morgoth's oppression. Earendil's device, as drawn on the front of an envelope [190] posted to Tolkien on 13 December 1960, seems to incorporate a Silmaril and blazes like the star Earendil became. On the back of the envelope is a rough, apparently earlier design for Earendil's device, containing a six-pointed star with two long points reaching to the top and bottom corners of the lozenge and four shorter

190  
Earendel and Gil-galad  
Pencil, black and blue ink,  
coloured pencil





191

*Finwë and Elwë*

Pencil, coloured pencil, black ink

points extending to the centres of the four sides. The device in [190] is more elaborate, with the star set against a series of concentric circles (suggested, perhaps, by the medieval notion of celestial spheres) and with the phases of the moon decorating the points of the lozenge. Its soft colouring and the division of the outer circle into twelve, by six points reaching out to the edge of the larger circle and six reaching in towards the centre, recall the device of Earendil's mother, Idril.<sup>24</sup>

The other two devices in [190] belong to Gil-galad, an Elf-king in the Second Age of Middle-earth. 'The countless stars of heaven's field / were mirrored in his silver shield', says *The Lord of the Rings* (book i, chapter n), suggesting poetically that Gil-galad's shield bore a device filled with stars. The device on the right in [190] is the more dramatic of the two, with an elongated star pointing to each corner of the lozenge in an explosive pattern. Possibly Tolkien preferred it, as it was under this design that he placed a label; also, its symmetrical form is more consistent with his

[> Finrod] I descending to High Kings I Fingolfin -Fingon I Turgon. Those I descended from Finarphin I used blue star'. Finwe led the Noldorin Elves on the Great Journey west from Middle-earth to Aman. In later versions of 'The Silmarillion' he had three sons, Feanor, Fingolfin, and Finarphin. Fingon and Turgon were the sons of Fingolfin. Tolkien's later deletion of the name *Finwe* on the drawing and its replacement by *Finrod* cannot be explained. When he assigned this device to Finwe Tolkien would have had in mind his late reworking of his 'Silmarillion' cosmology, in which the Sun and Moon existed from the beginning of the world, and so during Finwe's lifetime. In most early versions of his tales Finwe was slain before the Sun and Moon were created from the Two Trees.

The drawing has a hole in its centre, left by a com-pass point, and a framework of horizontal, vertical, and diagonal guidelines as in [188]. Sixteen

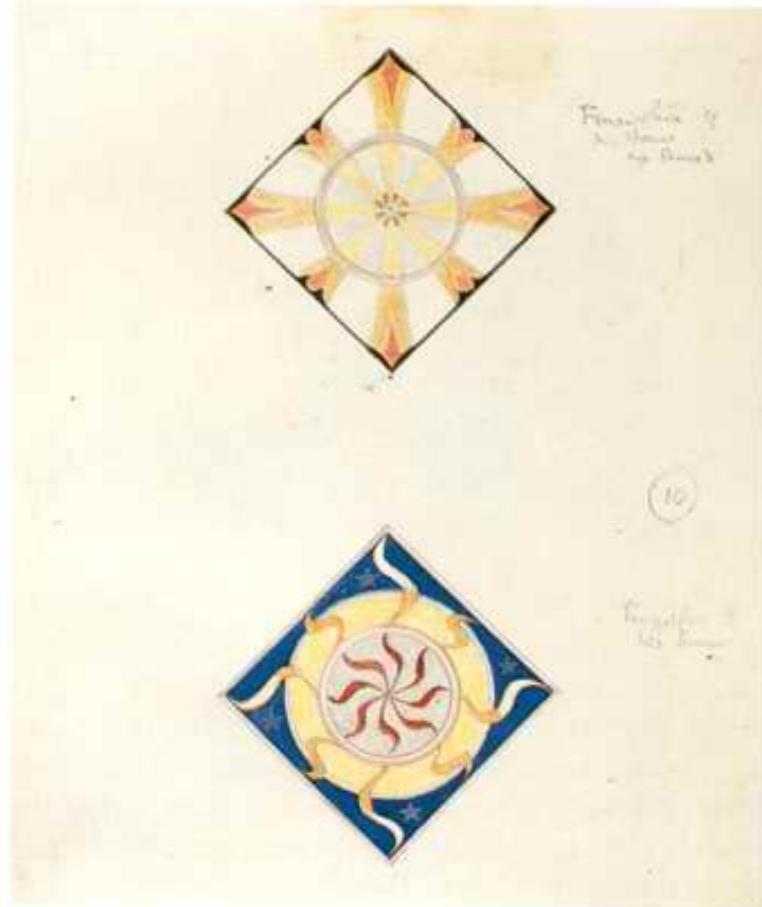
other Elvish devices. Both drawings, however, are only preliminary, without the precision of Tolkien's more finished work.

The upper device in [191] represents the House of Finwe. It is inscribed: 'Winged Sun I House of Finwe

'points' or 'wings' extend to the rim of a square, as appropriate for the High King of the Noldor in Aman. The dark crescents on the 'wings' mark another sixteen points, and within the central 'sun' are eight yellow 'petals' set against or interspersed with eight more in pale orange. Tolkien drew an almost identical personal device for

*Finarphín and Fingolfin*

Pencil, black, red, and blue ink, coloured pencil



Finwe,<sup>25</sup> but turned ninety degrees to form a lozenge. He also created devices for Finwe's three sons, in two of which only eight points reach the rim. The exception is the device of Feanor,<sup>26</sup> which has eight subsidiary points in addition to eight 'flames'. Tolkien said of Feanor, the eldest son, that 'his spirit burned as a flame' and that 'he it was who, first of the Noldor, discovered how gems greater and brighter than those of the Earth might be made with skill'.<sup>27</sup> At the centre of his device is a Sil-maril, his greatest creation.

The device of Finwe's second son, Fingolfin, is drawn at the bottom in [192], inscribed 'Fingolfin & his house'. In colouring it is similar to that of Finwe, but its eight points are more like the 'flames' of Feanor. The silver stars on a blue ground are probably related to his blue and silver banners, or to his shield 'with field of heaven's blue and star / of crystal shining pale afar'.<sup>28</sup> At the top is the device of Finwe's youngest son, Finarphín, inscribed 'Finarphín & his house esp Finrod'. His device has a superficial similarity to his brothers', with a central circle and eight radiating points, but it has only one circle, not two, and his flower-like points are almost at rest compared with the 'flames' of his brothers. The calm mood of his device is appropriate to Finarphín,

who remained in the peace of Aman rather than go to war in Middle-earth with his kinsfolk to recover the Silmarils Morgoth stole. Finarphín's device is probably a stylized version of the crown of golden flowers on his badge as described in the story of Beren and Luthien:

'For this [Felagund's] ring was like to twin serpents, whose eyes were emeralds, and their heads met beneath a crown of golden flowers, that the one upheld and the other devoured; that was the badge of Finarfin and his house.'<sup>29</sup> But the colours of his 'flowers', orange and red, relate more closely to the device of Fingolfin, his full brother, than to those of his half-brother Feanor.

The lower device in [191] is that of Elwe (Thingol), the first leader of the Telerin Elves. On the Great Journey of the Elves to Aman, Elwe was enchanted by the voice of Melian the Maia as she sang with the nightingales. He stayed with her in Middle-earth, and together they ruled the realm of Doriath. Beside Elwe's device Tolkien wrote: 'Winged Moon I on black with stars I Elwe'. There is no particular reason why Elwe should have the Moon in his device; but the 'Winged Moon' contrasts with the 'Winged Sun' of Finwe in the context of this sheet. The colours of Elwe's device also contrast, cool rather than warm, grey, pale yellow, and faint blue



Melian

193 (left)

Melian

Pencil, blue pencil, silver pencil, black and blue ink

194 (opposite, right)

Lúthien Tinúviel

Pencil, coloured pencil, black and green ink

195 (opposite, far right)

Lúthien Tinúviel

Pencil, black ink, coloured pencil

rather than the orange and yellow of Finwe. The former is a 'lesser' device also in its eight rather than sixteen points - four large and four small wings - and in the interior division of the Moon into eight parts as opposed to the sixteen-part Sun of Finwe's device.

Melian's device is shown in [193]. It is one of the most complex of Tolkien's heraldic devices, with a succession of different shapes - concave and convex squares, radiating petals, circles and stars - superimposed on each other but with no feeling of confusion and no impression that they are overelaborated. Its complexity may reflect Melian's nature as a Maia. Tol-kien wrote that in her face Elwe 'beheld the light of Aman as in a clouded mirror'.<sup>30</sup> Again, a compass hole and unerased guidelines reveal Tolkien's method of lay-ing out a framework before applying various media to brilliant effect.

For the daughter of Melian and Elwe, Lúthien Tinuviel, whom Tolkien closely associated with his wife Edith, he drew two especially beautiful devices [194, 195] based on flowers. Lúthien was 'the fairest maiden that has ever been among all the children of this world', and at her birth 'the white flowers of *niphredil* came forth to greet her as stars from the earth'.<sup>31</sup> In *The Lay of Leithian* her dancing and singing herald the return of spring, 'and snowdrops sprang beneath her feet'<sup>32</sup> When, in *The Lord of the Rings* (book 2., chapter 6) the Fellowship visited Cerin Amroth in Lothlórien, 'the green grass was studded with small golden flowers shaped like stars. Among them nodding on slender stalks were other flowers, white and palest green'. The elf Haldir tells Frodo: 'Here ever bloom the winter flowers in the unfading grass: the yellow *elanor* and the

pale *niphredil*'. In a letter of November 1969 Tolkien wrote, referring to a book on the flowers of the Cape Peninsula:

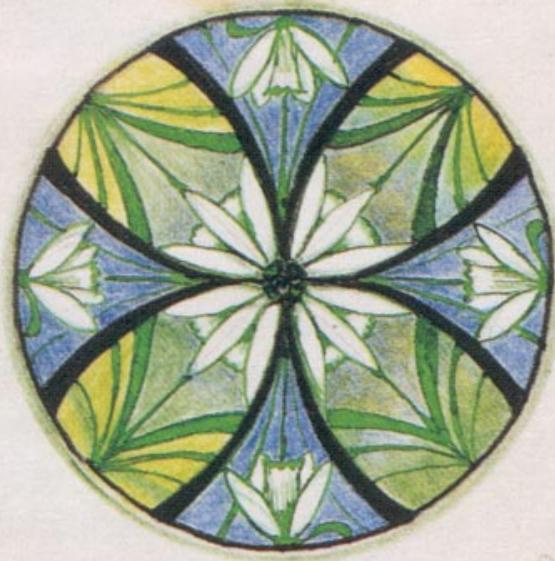
I have not seen anything that immediately recalls *niphredil* or *elanor* or *alfirin*: but that I think is because those imagined flowers are lit by a light that would not be seen ever in a growing plant and cannot be recaptured by paint. Lit by that light, *niphredil* would be simply a delicate kin of a snowdrop;

and *elanor* a pimpernel (perhaps a little enlarged) growing sun-golden flowers and star-silver ones on the same plant, and sometimes the two combined.<sup>33</sup>

Although *elanor* is nowhere mentioned in connection with Lúthien it is probably this flower that appears in the second of her devices [195]. She is unique in having two quite distinct devices, though related, each with four arms radiating from a central flower. They may reflect her dual nature, half Maia, half Elf. The first [194] approaches that of her Maian mother [193] in complexity and echoes some of its shapes. Its centre part can be seen either as a flower with twelve white petals against a green shaded concave square, or as four snow-drops radiating from the centre. But the second device of Lúthien [195] is similar to that of her Elven father [191 bottom] in its stars on a black ground and in its white petals which recall Elwe's 'Winged Moon'.

Tolkien's devices for Elves and Men should not be seen as merely pastime products of his retirement: they were an important extension of his *legendarium* and a refinement of his vision. Of course they are also beautiful works of art in their own right, lovely kaleidoscope patterns, impeccably coloured, or like superb specimens of stained glass. For years Tolkien had experimented

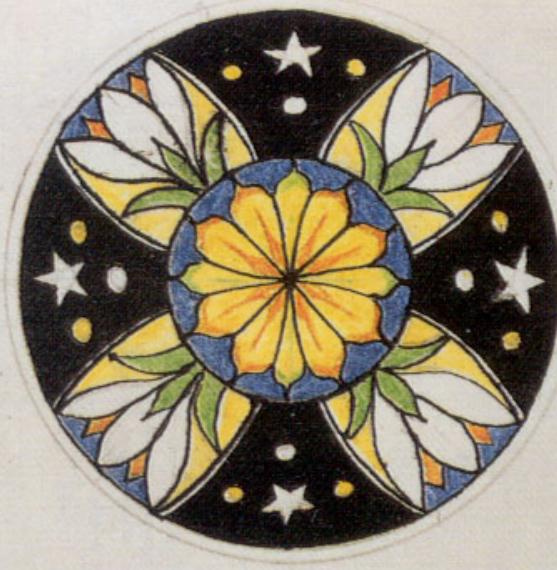
દ્વારા પૂર્વિકા



સિલ્વિન  
ટાઈલો

દ્વારા

ગાળિયર્ટ



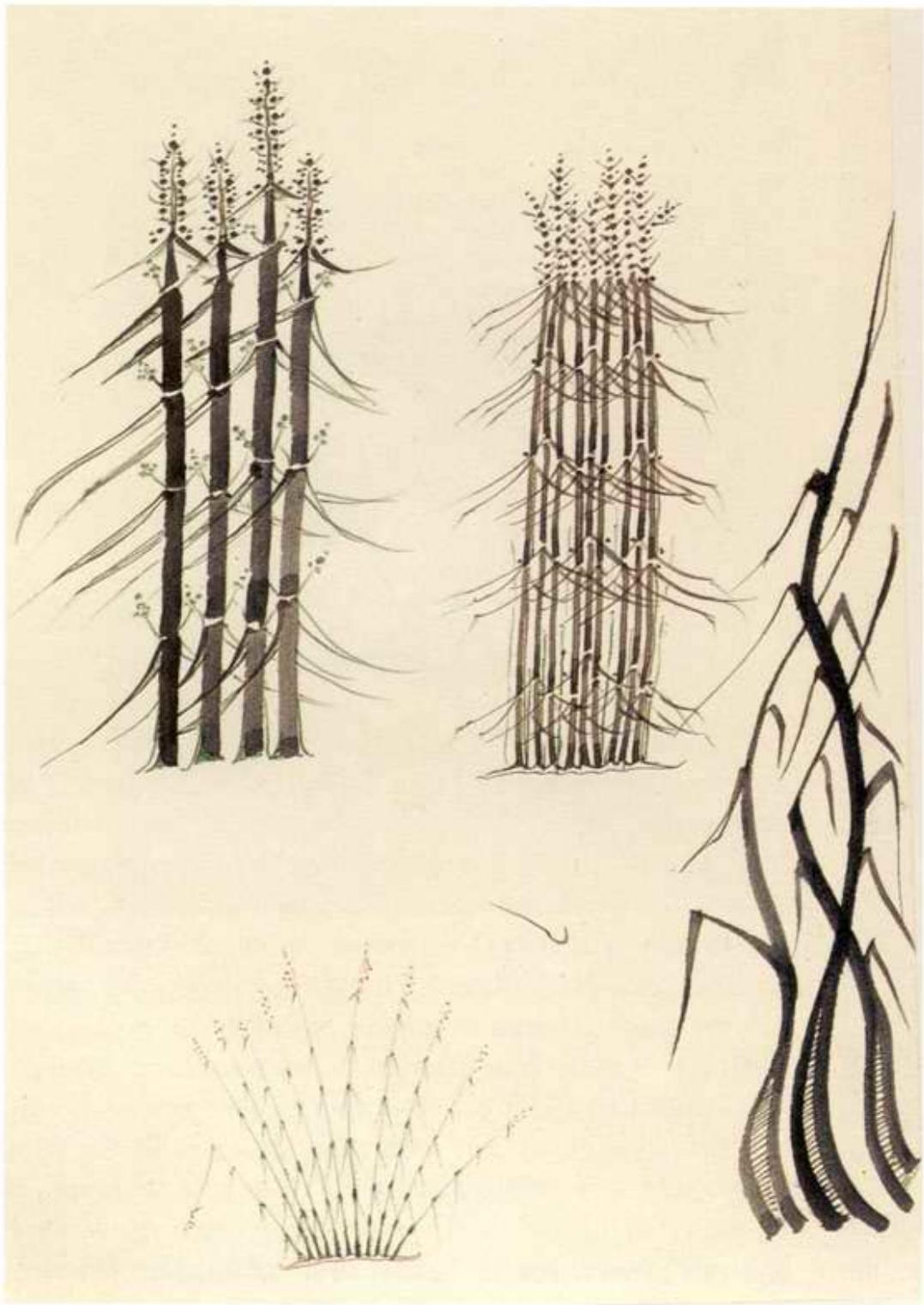


with watercolours, inks, coloured pencils. At last, he learned to combine media in perfect proportions - in [194], for example, he used coloured pencil with green and black inks - and achieved results with which even a harsh self-critic like Tolkien must have been pleased.

Also among his later work is a series of drawings of naturalistic and stylized plants, mainly rushes, grasses, and reeds, in the manner of Oriental bamboo paintings but drawn with metal nibs and ball-point pens. None are dated, but they may be contemporary with two rough sketches of similar plants Tolkien drew on news-papers of April and July 1967. One particularly striking example [z (opposite the foreword)] would have been called Art nouveau a half-century earlier; Tolkien called it 'Goosegrass', possibly *bromus mollis*. He had felt considerable affection for marshy areas and river banks since his youth at Sarehole, and he described such places in his written works: for example, the valley of the Withywindle in *The Lord of the Rings* (book i, chapter 6) in which 'everywhere the reeds and grasses were lush

and tall'. Inevitably he linked some of his late *flora* to his mythology by giving them Elvish names. On the sheet [196], in style very close to Tolkien's Oriental inspiration, and unusually for this series drawn with added colour, the clusters of bamboo-like plants at the top are *linque surisse*, probably translated as 'grass in the wind', and the tuft of radiating grass at bottom is *suriquesse*, probably 'wind feather'.<sup>34</sup> The twisted speci-men at right is not named.

Although in his later years Tolkien drew many plants, devices, artefacts, and miscellaneous designs for his mythology, after his illustrations for *The Lord of the Rings* he produced only one view of Middle-earth, *The Hills of the Morning* [i (frontispiece)].<sup>35</sup> It is inscribed twice, once in tengwar, with the Quenya name *Ambarona*, which Tolkien translated in his *Etymologies* as 'uprising, sunrise', from *amba* 'upwards' and *rona* 'east'. But the name also includes the sense of *ambaron* 'Earth', the world, from *mbar-* 'dwell, inhabit'.<sup>36</sup> Remarkably, although it was drawn very late. *The Hills*



196  
*Untitled (Grasses)*  
Black and coloured ink

*of the Morning* reflects the older version of Tolkien's cosmology, in which the vessel of the Sun set in the west, travelled beneath the flat world during the night, then rose above the eastern mountains and brought light to Middle-earth again. In his later conception the world was round, and the Sun was similar to our own, so that it rose on the horizon, not from the middle of the sea. The viewpoint of the drawing must be from beyond the Outer Sea in the East, looking west to the Hills as the Sun rises from the waters in the middle ground. And it is a composite view, both a cross-section of the sea and the waves upon its surface, and a landscape of mountains rolling towards the distant night. The stylized sun is very like the heraldic device of Finwe [191 *top*] or some of the doodles on the newspaper [184]. The ocean scene

includes plants, spirals, and 'snowflakes' one finds in Tolkien's other drawings of the period (notably [183]), but also looks back to the undersea forest in *The Gardens of the Merking's Palace* [76] for Roverandom.

*The Hills of the Morning* is a masterly design. Its many horizontal lines are enlivened by the diagonal rays of the sun, the tiny flames, and the sinuous verticals of the marine plants, and its colours are smoothly gradated from the coolness of the ocean depths to the warmth of the morning sky. Earth, sea, and sky: here is the whole of Tolkien's creation at once, and the most hopeful of scenes, under the watch of a single star at upper left, surely Earendil and his Silmaril - serene and powerful. If this was indeed the last picture Tolkien made for his mythology, it was a fitting end.

i *Tree and Leaf*, pp. 46, 70. z See above, p. 184, note 9.

3 Conversation with the authors.

4 The gaps of months or years suggest that Tolkien made such drawings only now and then, but it is possible that not all of the papers were saved or that some were lost in Tolkien's difficult move to Bournemouth in 1968, when an injury prevented him from super-vising the sorting and packing of his possessions.

5 Cf. *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien* (hereafter *Pictures*), nos. 43, 44.

6 Redrawn versions of the helmet were reproduced on the dust-jackets of the British and American editions of *Unfinished Tales* (1980).

7 *Unfinished Tales*, pp. 173 ff.

8 An upright oval adjoining two paisley motifs at left and right, each part filled with decorative patterns, drawn on the verso of a sheet of doodles which is dated on the recto July 1967.

9 Four pence postage would not have been sufficient after 1965, and too much before 1964 unless the contents were heavier than a normal letter.

10 He also drew such designs **more** carefully: see *Pictures*, no. 45.

11 Psalm 90 in the Vulgate, Psalm 91

in the Authorized Version. 12. See *Pictures*, no. 44 (centre).

13 Some of these are reproduced in *Pictures*, nos. 44 (top and bottom) and 45 (border).

14 The 'carpet' [187] is dated 4-7 December 60. See *Pictures*, no. 46, where it is reproduced together with a later 'carpet', dated 7-9 December 1960.

15 *The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two*, pp. 171–4, and p. 200, note 27.

16 *The Lays of Beleriand*, p. 191. See also *The Silmarillion*, p. 167, and below, p. 194. Tolkien made many changes to the names of his characters. The name of the third son of Finwe was changed from *Finrod* to *Finarphain* to *Finarfin*;

while his eldest son was given many names: *Inglor*, *Felagund*, and *Finrod*.

17 Tolkien Papers, Bodleian Library. Probably the note was written after Tolkien had already drawn many or all of his Elvish devices, to judge by the 'exceptions' built into the rules.

30 *The Silmarillion*, p. 58.

18 Reproduced in *Pictures*, no. 47.

31 *The Lord of the Rings*, bk. i, ch. n;

19 Reproduced in *Pictures*, no. 47.

*The Silmarillion*, p. 91.

20 For example, the devices of Beren, Hador, and the House of Haleth;

32 *The Lays of Beleriand*, p. 179.

see *Pictures*, no. 47.

33 Letter to Amy Ronald, 16 November 1969, *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 402.

21 Reproduced in *Pictures*, no. 47. 22. *The War of the Jewels*, p. 100.

23 See *Pictures*, no. 46, top. The design is dated 10-13 December 1960.

24 According to the inscriptions, Tolkien briefly considered giving Earendil's device instead to Elwing, or to Eirond, Earendil and Elwing's son. Another, simpler device Tolkien drew for Earendil (reproduced in *Pictures*, no. 47) combines elements from both drawings on the envelope.

25 Reproduced in *Pictures*, no. 47.

26 Reproduced in *Pictures*, no. 47.

27 *The Silmarillion*, pp. 60, 64.

34 The names are found not on [196], which bears no inscriptions, but on other drawings by Tolkien of the same plants. The element *linque*, which appears in several of Tolkien's Elvish plant names, may be related to Quenya *linque* 'wet', but in its floral connection probably means 'grass, reed', from *slin*-fine, delicate' (see the *Etymologies* in *The Lost Road and Other Writings*, p. 386). See also Tolkien's drawing (*Pictures*, no. 45) of *pilinehtar*, the name probably derived from Quenya *pilin* 'arrow' and *ehtar* 'spearman', from the shape of its stems.

28 *The Lays of Beleriand*, p. 284.

35 In *J.R.R. Tolkien: Life and Legend* Dr Judith Priestman reads the date written by Tolkien on *The Hills of the Morning* as 'November 1961'. But Tolkien's handwriting, in pale orange pencil, is rubbed, and may read instead 'November 1969'. A 1961 date seems more likely, as that would place the drawing close to the heraldic designs which are of a similar quality. If it does in fact date from 1969, it is a unique final flowering of Tolkien's artistic talent.

29 *The Silmarillion*, p. 167 (see *The Lost Road and Other Writings*, especially p. 299). On the same sheet as the 'belts' reproduced in *Pictures*, no. 44, Tolkien made a rough drawing in ink and coloured ball-point pen of a ring in the form of two crested heads holding a circle of stylized flowers. This may represent the ring described in the story of Beren and Luthien, in the quote given.

36 *The Lost Road and Other Writings*, PP. 348, 372..



197 Untitled (Floral Alphabet)

Pencil, coloured pencil, black and coloured ink

# Appendix on Calligraphy

Tolkien first learned calligraphy, as he learned drawing, from his mother; her father, John Suffield, had been a talented penman, and her own script was ornamental.<sup>1</sup> Later Tolkien learned also from Edward Johnston's indispensable manual *Writing ey Illuminating, ey Letter-ing*, first published in 1906. No doubt it was Johnston's 'foundational hand', based on tenth- and eleventh-century models, that was the basis for the formal script Tolkien sometimes used in writing out his fiction [198].<sup>2</sup> He also looked at original manuscripts, especially from the medieval period, as part of his studies and in his profession. Of course philologists must look at manuscripts, but not all learn to appreciate the beauty of the scripts and decorations they see, or themselves take up the pen. Tolkien was interested in the craft of calligraphy as well as in its utilitarian purpose, and in its allusive as well as communicative qualities - for example, in the 'Father Christmas' letters, in which he wrote to his children in a variety of hands, each appropriate to a different character [69]. His calligraphy had a wide range, from the formal to the very playful. An alphabet of the latter sort [197], probably from the 1960s, is a garden of decorated letters, some of them floriated, others filled as if with jewels or pearls, a few formed by trees or vines.

For Tolkien an interest in calligraphy naturally paralleled his interest in language. He was not content to invent languages, such as the Elven tongues Quenya and Sindarin, without also inventing alphabets in which they could be written, and moreover, letters pleasing to the eye.<sup>3</sup> Various mythologies have held that Man was given writing by the gods; similarly, Tolkien wrote in *The Book of Lost Tales* that Aule, the Vala who is master of crafts, 'aided by the Gnomes [Noldorin Elves] contrived alphabets and scripts, and on the walls of Kor were many dark tales written in pictured symbols, and runes of great beauty were drawn there too or carved upon stones. . .'.<sup>4</sup> In the more developed *legendarium* the *tengwar* were first devised by the elf Riimil, later re-invented by the craft of Feanor, and brought by the exiled Noldor to Middle-earth. The runic *certar* or *cirth*, on the other hand, were devised in Middle-earth by the Sindarin elves, in particular by Daeron, 'the minstrel and loremaster of King Thingol [Elwe] of Doriath'. It is a measure of the importance of letters to Tolkien that

they appear so often in his stories, from the runes on Thror's Map in *The Hobbit* to the tengwar inscription above the Doors of Durin in *The Lord of the Rings*.

As the creator of the tengwar and the cirth, and as a practicing calligrapher, Tolkien spoke with unusual authority about the quality of lettering reproduced in *The Lord of the Rings*. He was concerned that the words written on the title-pages of the three volumes, in the Ring inscription, in the picture of the Doors of Durin, and on Balin's tomb should have 'lightness and style' as proper 'elvish work'. He felt that the reproduction of the runes on Balin's tomb, redrawn from his own rendering by a blockmaker's copyist, was

neater and firmer than the original; but I should have preferred a much closer copy. The style of the original has not been caught. The heavy strokes are now far too heavy, and irregularly so. . . . The characteristic thickening at some of the acute angles has been removed, making the letter-forms look much more 'ordinary' and modern. In placing and weight the copy remains, to my mind, much to be preferred, in spite of its slight unsteadiness, which I hoped that a younger hand might have removed with more delicacy.<sup>6</sup>

But his own hand was not ancient, and even in his later years his calligraphy was more than competent. He

especially excelled at writing in tengwar, many small examples of which are interspersed with his late patterns and devices, for example [189, 194-195]. But he knew the beauty of a page fully written in tengwar, and a few times wrote formal manuscripts of his verse in that alphabet alone.<sup>7</sup> By varying the width of the pen nib, he varied the effect of his Elvish calligraphy: now like fine copperplate script, now like Black Letter.

He also used tengwar in one more attempt to create a 'document' for *The Lord of the Rings*, a 'facsimile' of the letter that Aragorn, the King Elessar, writes to Sam Gamgee in the rejected epilogue to the book (finally published in *Sauron Defeated*). Three versions are extant, in varying tengwar modes. The second [199] is less well known than the others<sup>8</sup> but similar in form, with the text in English and Sindarin in parallel columns and pen flourishes at the top representing the winged crown of Gondor. It is a beautiful manuscript even to those who cannot read the words - rhythmic, graceful, and exotic, like the movements of a dancer.

Dangweth Pengolod.  
the  
Answer  
of  
Pengolod.

to Aelfwine who asked him how came it that the tongues of the Elves changed and were sundered

**D**ow you question me, Aelfwine, concerning the tongues of the Elves, saying that you wonder much to discover that they are many, akin indeed and yet unlike; for seeing that they die not and their memories reach back into ages long past, you understand not why all the race of the Quendi have not maintained the language that they had of old in common still one and the same in all their kindreds. But behold! Aelfwine within Ea all the things change even the Valar; for in Ea we perceive the unfolding of a History in the unfolding: as a man may read a great book, and when it is full-read it is rounded and compleat in his mind, according to his measure. Then at last he perceives that some fair thing that long endured: as some mountain or river of renown, some realm; or some great city; or else some mighty being, as a king; or maker, or a woman of beauty and majesty, or even one, maybe of the Lords of the West; that each of these is, if at all, all that is said of them from the beginning even to the end. From the spring in the mountains to the mouth of the sea, all is Sirion; and from its first upwelling even to its passing away when the land was broken in the great battle, that also is Sirion, and nothing less. Though we who are set to behold the great History, reading line by line, may speak of the river changing as it flows and grows broad, or dying as it is spilled or devoured by the sea. Yea, even from his first coming into Ea from the side of Glauruk, and from the young lord of

Ulyttagessia Gojrhava  
Mytholomew Genewiwa  
bogacina: tistar hmtqalva  
en jra Tlagonay jra Cura  
ja jra ongadqas, ojca  
jyctes jra jyfjra  
ja jyfjra jra ca t ha  
tello jra jra bryitt|| cry  
ja cly i yafjra jra  
tqen jra jra tafyit|| jra  
lambda i jra tpyapka  
xw tpgi i byfayz: jra  
lambda i jra tpyapka  
erha mctopra i vtmok  
utjen jra cly jra Vesa  
Mordor: jra lambda i v  
cry: tter tpa i tpa: jra jra  
tter tpa i tpa: jra jra  
yafjra: wavy: jra jra: jra  
lambda i jra tpyapka  
T.A.

Ulyttagessia Gojrhava  
Mytholomew Genewiwa  
bogacina: tistar hmtqalva  
en jra Tlagonay jra Cura  
ja jra ongadqas, ojca  
jyctes jra jyfjra  
ja jyfjra jra ca t ha  
tello jra jra bryitt|| cry  
ja cly i yafjra jra  
tqen jra jra tafyit|| jra  
lambda i jra tpyapka  
xw tpgi i byfayz: jra  
lambda i jra tpyapka  
erha mctopra i vtmok  
utjen jra cly jra Vesa  
Mordor: jra lambda i v  
cry: tter tpa i tpa: jra jra  
tter tpa i tpa: jra jra  
yafjra: wavy: jra jra: jra  
lambda i jra tpyapka  
T.A.

198 Page from the *Dangweth Pengolod*  
Black and red ink

199 King's Letter, second version  
Pencil, black ink

Tolkien also devised a 'Goblin alphabet';

see *The Father Christmas Letters*,

appendix.

*The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*,

p. 141.

the Ring inscription (book i, chapter

See *J.R.R. Tolkien: Life and Legend*, pp. 8-10,

and *The Tolkien Family Album*, p. 17.

E (n); but also *The Treason of Isengard*,

pp. 45311., and *The War of the Jewels*,

p. no, note 31, and p. 396.

Letter to W.N. Beard, 13 September

1953, Tolkien-Alien & Unwin archive.

In *The Lord of the Rings* the title-page

inscriptions, the lettering for the Doors of

Durin, and Balin's tomb inscription were

all relettered by a copyist. Only

2.), and the *tengwar* and *angerthas* tables in Appendix E (n),  
were reproduced from Tolkien's original calligraphy.

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92, fol. 5 (fig. 29); 93, fol. n (fig. 185); 93, fol. 39 (fig. 186); 94, fol. 40 (fig. 184); 98, fol. i (fig. 162); and 102 (fig. 136). Fig. 184 is reproduced also with permission of *The Daily Telegraph*. Figs. 80-83, 86, 143, 150-151, 155, 164, 167, 170, 172-174, and 199 are reproduced with permission of the Department of Archives and Special Collections, Marquette University Library, from their Tolkien holdings. Fig. 112 is reproduced courtesy of the Chapin Library of Rare Books, Williams College. Fig. 198 is reproduced courtesy of Christopher Tolkien. Fig. 28 is reproduced with permission of the anonymous owner



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