This volume brings together seventeen papers presented at the 7th Unquendor Lustrum Conference, organized by the Dutch Tolkien Society Unquendor and the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society. The conference took place in Leiden on June 18, 2016, and featured speakers of various nationalities. The conference’s theme, Tolkien among scholars, was meant, in part, to bring to the fore a number of aspects concerning Tolkien that have escaped popular notice. For one, while Tolkien is primarily known as an author of fantasy fiction, the fact that he worked as a professional scholar at the universities of Leeds and Oxford for a living is not often recognised by the public at large. The impact that his academic interests had on his fictional work underlies much of Tolkien scholarship and this scholarship was another aspect the conference organisers wished to bring to the attention. Tolkien’s fictional works have been the subject of scholarly enquiry ever since their publication and this field is consistently gaining a more solid foothold within the walls of the university. Thus, the speakers at the conference were asked to consider Tolkien’s place within academia, both as a scholar himself and as a literary author whose work deserves scholarly scrutiny. What impact did Tolkien have as an academic? How was Tolkien’s Middle-earth influenced by his academic interests? And how have Tolkien and his fictional work been regarded and studied by scholars, both past and present? This introduction briefly touches upon Tolkien’s scholarly work, provides a cursory glance at the state of Tolkien scholarship and then places the contents of this volume within that context.
J.R.R. TOLKIEN AS A SCHOLAR

Tolkien's biography is often the starting point for a scholarly exploration of Tolkien's works. Indeed, many elements of Tolkien's personal life appear to have echoes in his fictional universe: the spider bite he suffered in his youth in South Africa is reflected in the antagonistic role of such spiders as Ungoliant, the arachnids in Mirkwood and Shelob; his love for his wife Edith inspired his tales of Beren and Luthien; his experience as a soldier in World War I inspired some of the darker aspects of his fiction; and Middle-earth is rife with elements that stem from the languages and literatures that he studied as a university professor in Leeds and Oxford.

Tolkien's academic career started when, after WWI, he became an assistant at the Oxford English Dictionary and worked on the history and etymology of words starting with W, such as waistcoat, wanderer and warlock (Gilliver, Marshall & Weiner 2006). In 1920, he became a Reader in English Language at the University of Leeds and, four years later, he became a professor at the same institution. In 1925, Tolkien successfully applied for the Rawlinson and Bosworth professorship of Anglo-Saxon at Pembroke College, University of Oxford; a position he would retain for the next 20 years. In 1945, he became Merton Professor of English Language and Literature in Oxford and retired from academic life in 1959. Tolkien considered himself a comparative philologist, studying the Germanic languages, their interrelation and development. Primarily, he became an expert in the study of the language and literatures of medieval England.1

By modern standards, Tolkien did not publish a lot. A tally of Tolkien's academic publications by Tom Shippey (2007b) runs up to no more than twenty-five, over a duration of forty years. However, three of his publications 'rocked the collective jaw of academe right back on its spine, and would have done so if he had never published a line of fiction' (Shippey 2007b, 206). The first of these called attention to the so-called AB language; Tolkien revealed that a form of Old English had survived the Norman Conquest and was still being written in the West Midlands of England in the thirteenth century (see Tolkien 1929). Another of Tolkien's academic publications that is often cited is his study of The Battle of Maldon, an Old English poem about a decisive loss of an Anglo-Saxon army led by Earl Byrhtnoth against the Vikings in the year 991. In the 'Home-

1 For more detailed overviews of Tolkien's academic career, see Shippey 2007b, Drout 2007 band Honegger 2014.

coming of Beorhtnoth, Beorhthelm's Son', Tolkien (1953) convincingly showed that Byrhtnoth's decision to allow the Vikings to cross and fight in an open battle was condemned by the early medieval poet through his use of the word ofermóð 'excessive courage, pride'. Tolkien's biggest 'hit', academically speaking, was his Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics, first published in 1936. This study of the Old English heroic poem Beowulf has been heralded as the 'single most important critical essay ever written about Beowulf' (Druot 2011, 1). Indeed, Tolkien's lecture is often regarded as a watershed moment in the study of Beowulf as a work of literary art, albeit not everyone agreed with Tolkien's views (see, e.g., Bremmer 2016).

As with parts of his fiction, some of Tolkien's academic work was only brought to light after he had passed away in 1973. An important contribution in this respect is the edition of two drafts of lectures on Beowulf that pathed the way for Tolkien's important 1936 piece on Beowulf (Druot 2011). Other posthumous publications include editions and translations of Old English texts, such as Exodus (1981), Finn and Hengest (1982) and Beowulf (2014). Commentaries on these and other texts, such as The Wanderer (Lee 2009), were drawn from Tolkien's lecture notes and provide an increased insight into his understanding of the language and literature of medieval England. As reviewers of some of these works have shown, these posthumous notes still represent valuable additions to the body of scholarship surrounding these early medieval texts (Shippey 2007a; Druot 2015). Thus, even more than forty years after his death, Tolkien continues to make his mark, not only as an author of fiction, but as a scholar in his own right.

TOLKIEN SCHOLARSHIP

Tolkien's work has been studied from various angles. A prominent methodology is the one championed by Shippey in his The Road to Middle-earth (1982; 3rd edn. 2003): viewing Tolkien's fictional writings through Tolkien's own academic, philological lens. A natural extension of this approach is to analyse Tolkien through his academic sources, which remains one of the most common modes of inquiry within Tolkien scholarship (see Fisher 2011). Another im-
important branch departs from the details of the author's life, often on the basis of Humphrey Carpenter's biography and Tolkien's own letters. Other scholars treat Tolkien's fictional work independent of its author and historical context, applying twentieth-century literary criticism on its narratorial techniques, imagery and rhetoric.

Ideally, scholars are dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants: their work builds on the publications by their intellectual predecessors. One often-heard critique from within Tolkien scholarship is the general observation that those who study Tolkien tend to do so without taking into account what has been published before (see Drout & Wynne 2000; Honegger 2016). In part, this is due to the fact that much of the excellent scholarship on Tolkien is published in the periodicals of local Tolkien societies. These local journals tend to be hard to get by for a scholar outside the specific community; in fact, even well-respected peer-reviewed journals, such as *Mallorn, Hither Shore, Mythlore* and *Tolkien Studies*, are rarely seen on the shelves of libraries. Many a Tolkien scholar, left to their own devices, will have to admit, much like Tolkien himself in his *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics,* that they have not been able to read 'all that has been printed on, or touching on' (1983, 5) the topic they study.

Be that as it may, the last decades have seen an increasing professionalisation of Tolkien scholarship. First and foremost, the publication of critical editions of Tolkien's fictional works, ranging from Christopher Tolkien's monumental series *The History of Middle-earth* (1983-1996) to the new edition of *Farmer Giles of Ham* by Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond (2014), allow for a more thorough study of Tolkien's writings, from the first drafts to the finished products. These new editions are graced with a critical apparatus which summarises much of prior scholarship and, thus, form an essential starting place for any future research on Tolkien's fiction. Another sign of the increasingly more professional attitude of Tolkien scholarship is the publication of reference works, such as the *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment* (Drout 2007a) and *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien* (Lee 2014). The publication of these reference works by noted academic publishers is an indication that Tolkien studies is gaining firmer ground within academia. Indeed, university modules on Tolkien are an increasingly more common sight in the course portfolios of various universities: no longer restricted to the US, such courses are also gradually making their way to the UK and even the Netherlands. A final continuing impetus for the academic study of Tolkien's work worth mentioning is the organization of specialist conferences: from special sessions on Tolkien studies at the annual International Congress of Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo to symposia organized by local Tolkien societies, these scholarly meetings keep the field alive and offer an opportunity to test out new theories and insights. The papers in this volume were presented at such a conference and it is the editors' hope that the papers, indeed, prove to be a contribution to existing Tolkien scholarship.

**TOLKIEN AMONG SCHOLARS**

The first two papers focus on Tolkien's concern over heroism. First, Thomas Honegger tries to link Tolkien's WWI experiences to his scholarly probing of medieval poems, such as *The Battle of Maldon*, *Beowulf* and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. As Honegger reveals, Tolkien was preoccupied with questions of heroism and legitimisation of heroic violence in both his scholarly and fictional work. In particular, Tolkien came to reject the solitary hero in search of fame, as found in the medieval texts he studied, and, instead, propagated proactive leadership for the common good and a form of 'cooperative heroism': qualities he must have deemed more suitable for the reality of a twentieth-century battlefield. "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's son' is perhaps Tolkien's most explicit treatment of the topic of heroism. Łukasz Neubauer's contribution to this volume studies the form of this dramatic dialogue between the Anglo-Saxon poet Tidwald and his companion Thorhelm. Neubauer points out that the dialogue is intended as a dialectic exercise, in which the opposing views of the two characters - one romantic; the other more pragmatic - both represent the authorial point of view, provoking questions concerning the limits of heroism and lordly responsibility.

3) As per November 2016, only *Tolkien Studies* was available in four Dutch university libraries; *Mythlore* in only one; the other two were not available in the Netherlands; *Elenwë Extra*, the academic journal of the Dutch Tolkien Society Unquendor, was only available in the Royal Library in The Hague and *Tresoar* in Leeuwarden.

4) An example of a Tolkien course in the UK was the Tolkien Spring School offered by the University of Oxford in March 2013; my own course *Middle-earth and middenageard: J.R.R. Tolkien and the Anglo-Saxon World* (2015-2016) was the first Tolkien course offered at an MA level in the Netherlands.
The next set of papers belong more squarely to the realm of source criticism. My own contribution ‘New roads and secret gates, waiting around the corner: Investigating Tolkien’s other Anglo-Saxon sources’ outlines briefly the methodology of studying Tolkien’s sources and then attempts to move beyond the early medieval English sources that have so often been the topic of research, such as Beowulf and The Battle of Maldon. The paper proposes hitherto unnoticed links between Tolkien’s fiction and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, Old English law codes and early medieval English archaeology. Mariëlle van Rijn’s paper is a clear extension of this approach. Her in-depth discussion of the literary correspondences between The Lord of the Rings and the Old English poems Guthlac A and Guthlac B reveal that these poems, albeit rarely studied within this context, clearly belong to the canon of Tolkien’s primary sources. Aline Douma’s paper on the representation of the monster Grendel in Beowulf and the various undead characters in The Lord of the Rings demonstrates the value to source-criticism of the posthumous publication of Tolkien’s academic works. Taking Tolkien’s treatment of Grendel in the recently published Beowulf translation and commentary as point of departure, Douma convincingly shows that the tension between physicality and intangibility Tolkien found in the early medieval poem influenced his description of the Army of the Dead, the barrow-wights and the corpses in the Dead Marshes.

David Llewellyn Dodds’ ‘“Tolkien’s Narnia”? Lit., Lang., Saints, Tinfang, and a Mythology – or Two – for Christmas’ also departs from the inspiration Tolkien drew from Old English literature. In particular, Dodds tries to reconstruct the manner in which the young Tolkien was inspired by the lines ‘Eala Earendel engla beorhtast / ofer middangeard monnum sended’ of the Old English poem Christ. Dodds demonstrates that this line can be linked not only to Tolkien’s ‘The Voyage of Eärendel the Evening Star’ but also to two poems about the fairy-tale figure Tinfang, as well as to the Father Christmas letters.

Moving away from literary papers to a more linguistic contribution, Nelson Goering’s ‘Old Mercian: From Beowulf to Tolkien’s Rohan’ closely examines Tolkien’s use of Old English in Tolkien’s representation of the language of the Rohirrim. Goering’s philological tour de force on the dialectal distribution of the sounds ëa, ë and æ in Old English leads to the identification of an early stage of Old Mercian as the dialect most resembling Rohanese. Goering also manages to pinpoint some of the texts that Tolkien drew on for this particular dialect form.

It should come as no surprise that Beowulf is among these texts. Tolkien did not only draw inspiration from the languages and literatures of medieval England, as the next three papers illustrate. Paul Smith’s contribution provides an overview of parallels between The Lord of the Rings and medieval French language and literature. Tolkien’s use of French loanwords, as well as the intertextual links Smith draws with the Chanson de Roland and the works of Chrétien de Troyes, reveal that Tolkien’s professed gallophobia may need to be taken with a grain of salt. Renée Vink’s paper probes a more well-known additional source of Tolkien: Old Norse literature. In particular, Vink discusses the potential influence of Andreas Heusler’s analysis of the Old Norse Volsung material on a number of poetic choices in Tolkien’s Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún. Both Heusler (in a scholarly article) and Tolkien (in an imaginative lay) tried to reconstruct the lays and fragments on the eight leaves that went missing from the Codex Regius manuscript of the Poetic Edda. Vink demonstrates that Tolkien knew Heusler’s article and then analyses the extent to which Tolkien was willing to accept the conclusions drawn by a fellow philologist. Charlotte Doesburg, lastly, discusses the correspondences between Tolkien’s Silmarillion and the Finnish national epic the Kalevala. Both works, as Doesburg illustrates, share an extensive use of singing, music and magic as alternatives to warfare and bloodshed.

The next two contributions take a less source-centred, literary critical approach to Tolkien’s fiction. Antoine Paris considers the philological construction of the frame-narrative of The Lord of the Rings: its existence as a translation and compilation of the Red Book of Westmarch and its various manuscript copies. Paris shows that this paratext is much more than a philological pastiche: it has important literary implications in coming to terms with the ambivalence between reality and fiction in The Lord of the Rings. In the next paper, Hamish Williams explores Tolkien’s representations of home and hospitality, of welcoming strangers and being welcomed. As Williams illustrates, hospitality is central to Tolkien’s conceptualization and realization of Faërie.

The next paper, by Lettie Dorst, explores the style of The Hobbit from the field of stylistics, the relatively young academic discipline that defines style as a matter of linguistic choice. In doing so, this paper fills a void in Tolkien scholarship noted by Brian Rosebury (2007): ‘Analysis of Tolkien’s style, or styles, is still underdeveloped and is likely to be enhanced by sensitive application
of the techniques of contemporary linguistics' (654). By considering Tolkien's linguistic choices, Dorst shows how Tolkien's style creates realism, as well as influences the readers' response to specific passages and characters. Dorst's analysis is not limited to the original work itself, but also examines how Tolkien's linguistic choices are handled in the Dutch translation of *The Hobbit* by Max Schuchart. As Tolkien well knew, matters of style may be lost in the act of translation and Dorst's analysis shows that Tolkien had good reason to be concerned about such matters.

The contribution by Jan van Breda is another illustration of what happens when scholars bring their own particular expertise to Middle-earth. Van Breda's knowledge in the field of law enlightens his discussion of Tolkien's self-proclaimed political leaning toward anarchy (Letters 52). After a legal-theoretical discussion of anarchy, van Breda shows how Tolkien depicted the Shire as an idealistic, social anarchy, which combines both heteronomous and autonomous rules.

The last two papers of this volume consider Tolkien's reception within academic circles. Luisa Paglieri considers the case of Italy and discusses how *The Lord of the Rings* tended to be ignored or undervalued by academics. She attributes this scholarly disinterest to political as well as aesthetic reasons. Geared by the rejection of Tolkien by the leftist academia, Tolkien came to be embraced by Italian right-wing parties. Paglieri traces the development of this situation and notes how Tolkien's success among the public now forces the intelligentsia to reconsider the question of Tolkien's place within academia. As Paglieri notes, rejecting ideological readings of Tolkien's works appears to offer new opportunities, in this respect. Gazala Anver's paper, finally, attempts to redress another way of how Tolkien's fiction has been read in the past. In particular, Anver focuses on those critics who have read *The Silmarillion* as a work which explores the classic battle between Good and Evil. Her post-structural, deconstructive reading of Tolkien criticism seeks to free the reader from prescriptive pathways to arrive at interpretations that range beyond the prescribed approaches to understanding Tolkien's literary art (that is: *The Silmarillion* should be read like the Bible), and beyond the author's biography (i.e., Tolkien's Roman Catholicism). Freed from such restraints, Anver argues, Tolkien's fiction is opened up to various interpretational possibilities as well as new modes of scholarship.

'I am not a model of scholarship,' Tolkien once wrote, with feigned modesty (Letters, no. 214). Indeed, his scholarship has mostly escaped the public eye. Undeservedly so. As this volume attempts to illustrate, Tolkien may be best understood 'among scholars'. It is to be hoped that these contributions, written by a mix of professional Tolkien specialists, students and enthusiasts, will inspire some readers to consider Tolkien in a new light and, thus, expand the circle of scholars around Tolkien.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Scholarly Heroes, Heroic Scholars

THOMAS HONEGGER

INTRODUCTION

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien’s life can be seen as a life dedicated, on the one hand, to scholarship¹ and literature and, on the other, to providing for and bringing up a family together with his teenage-sweetheart and later wife Edith (née Bratt). All of this was threatened by the catastrophe of WW I² and, less so, by the effects of WW II. While Tolkien the Family Man would certainly deserve, and still awaits, an in-depth investigation,³ Tolkien the Author has received his fair share of publicity from the hands of numerous researchers.

Tolkien the Scholar lies somewhere in between. Although this aspect of Tolkien’s œuvre has been treated as a central element for understanding his literary creation,⁴ and though we have some important recent publications on Tolkien’s academic work, the subject has remained largely the province of specialists such as Tom Shippey or Michael Drout. It is therefore all the more pleasing (to a medievalist at least) that these publications have had an impact that belies their origin in a specialized area.

I have discussed Tolkien’s scholarly publications and their relevance for his lit-

¹ My use of the term includes also the social aspects connected with Tolkien’s academic life, such as his regular meetings with colleagues and friends in various academic societies as well as the more informal reading- and discussion groups – of which the Inklings and the Kolbitar are the most important ones.

² The standard biography of Tolkien up to and including WW I is, of course, John Garth’s masterful study Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle-earth (2003).

³ Humphrey Carpenter was the first (and to date last) biographer who had (full?) access to Tolkien’s private papers and who would have been qualified to write about this more private aspect of Tolkien’s life. Even the most recent and comprehensive biography by Raymond Edwards cannot go beyond Carpenter’s study in this aspect. The public got a brief glimpse into Tolkien’s family life in John and Priscilla Tolkien’s The Tolkien Family Album (1992).

⁴ See, of course, Tom Shippey’s ground-breaking and still unsurpassed The Road to Middle-earth.