Identifying England's Lonnrot

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Anne C. Petty

Tolkien's fascination with the Finnish national epic, *Kalevala*, created by nineteenth-century physician and folklorist Elias Lönnrot, is well recognized. Anyone who has read his collected letters knows this. In 1914, he wrote the following to his fiancé Edith Bratt: "Had an interesting talk with that quaint man Earp I have told you of and introduced him (to his great delight) to the 'Kalevala,' the Finnish ballads. Amongst other work I am trying to turn one of the stories—which is really a very great story and most tragic—into a short story somewhat on the lines of Morris' romances with chunks of poetry in between" (*Letters* 7). Fifty years later he was still fascinated, as he revealed in a 1964 letter to Christopher Bretherton: "The germ of my attempt to write legends of my own to fit my private languages was the tragic tale of the hapless Kullervo in the Finnish *Kalevala*. It remains a major matter in the legends of the First Age (which I hope to publish as *The Silmarillion*), though as 'The Children of Húrin' it is entirely changed except in the tragic ending" (345). That fascination went further and deeper than the single story idea of the hapless Kullervo, as I intend to show in this study. The attractiveness of the *Kalevala*, according to Michael Branch, in *A History of Finland's Literature*, "lies in the grandeur and universality of its themes, the coherence of its plots, and the splendor of its poetry" (4), qualities that kept Tolkien engaged with the material for many years of his life.

Humphrey Carpenter, Tolkien's official biographer, dates Tolkien's first encounter with the *Kalevala* around 1911 during his final term at St. Edward's School, shortly before his enrollment at Oxford. According to Carpenter, "He wrote appreciatively of 'this strange people and these new gods, this race of unhypocritical lowbrow scandalous heroes,' adding 'the more I read of it, the more I felt at home and enjoyed myself.' He had discovered the *Kalevala* in W. H. Kirby's Everyman translation, and he determined to find an edition in the original Finnish as soon as possible" (57). Thus began Tolkien's long-term association with this Finnish source that would surface in his own work as both content (the Silmarils, and various treatments of Túrin Turambar) and form (the sprawling collection of myths, tales, annals, poems, and chronicles of the Silmarillion proper, as well as Quenya, the Elvish language inspired by Finnish).

In casting his vast world of Middle-earth as England's pre-history, transmitted from fictional sources (Elves of Tol Eressëa) to historical

scribes (Eriol/Ælfwine from *The Book of Lost Tales*), Tolkien assumed the role of mediator, the scholar-scribe who gathers ancient knowledge and shapes it for consumption by later societies. The several guises Tolkien used for this purpose of mediation are well documented in Verlyn Flieger's article, "The Footsteps of Ælfwine," from *Tolkien's Legendarium*. In an ironic case of life imitating art imitating life, Christopher Tolkien, as literary executor, performed for his father's repository of invented mythology and legends the same kind of service Lönnrot accomplished for the Finnish folk epic. Looked at from this perspective, the label of "England's Lönnrot" applies equally well to both father and son, although for very different reasons.

As mediator, according to Tom Shippey, J. R. R. Tolkien was following the model of earlier "philologist-creators" whose great projects of national identity reconstruction were both "literary and linguistic" (*Author* xv). Included in this grouping with Lönnrot and his contemporaries are the German brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, who published three volumes of fairy tales as well as a critically acclaimed German Grammar; Danish cleric, philosopher, reformer, poet, and educator Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig and his son Sven, a University of Copenhagen lecturer and archivist; and Jørgen Moe and his son Moltke of Norway, whose editions of Norwegian tales and legends became the foundation for the Norwegian Folk Archives. The important point of commonality among these figures is their response to the national Romanticism movement sweeping across northern Europe in the 1800s. Thus, for each, a nation's language was recorded through folklore and sanctioned through literature to the point where it "became a means of defining the identity of the nation" and "if the traditions they found appeared fragmentary and deteriorated, it was the task of collectors and editors to 'restore' them" (Kvideland and Sehmsdorf 4). Most influential for Tolkien, of course, was Elias Lönnrot's restoration of Finnish language and folkloric heritage through his creation of the *Kalevala* and *Kantele*. Shippey's notion of the philologist-creator provides three productive ways of looking at the *Kalevala*'s influence over Tolkien's writing: intention, language, and content. Each of these perspectives is explored below.

Intention

This first element concerns the compiler's objective, what Lauri Honko refers to as "the collector's purposive role in the making of the text and the editor's impact on the final form" (3). According to F. P. Magoun, Lönnrot's commentaries from his prefaces to both the old and new *Kalevala* clearly state that he intended his rune-collecting work to serve as an ethnic memory of the ancient Finnish people and their language. He feared that the knowledge contained in the runes would disappear and be

lost forever from the national consciousness. In the 1849 Preface to the *New Kalevala*, Lönnrot explained that because "these poems are coming to be the oldest specific memories surviving for the Finnish people and the Finnish language as long as these exist at all, one is called upon to arrange them with all possible care and diligence" (Magoun 374). This is not unlike Tolkien's stated purpose in constructing his history of Middle-earth, which he included in a synopsis of *The Lord of the Rings* sent to editor Milton Waldman at the Collins publishing house:

> I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story—the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendour from the vast backcloths—which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country. (*Letters* 144).

For both men, the perceived goal was not the desire to gain fame as a published author but to render a service to the literary heritage of their individual nations—in other words, to provide historic continuity with the past through an epic that would serve as a mirror of the national soul expressed in its folk poetry, whether performed by Finnish runesingers or Elvish bards. To set this issue in context, this section addresses Lönnrot's role as a folklorist and his achievement in creating the *Kalevala*. From that basis, we can move to the ways in which Tolkien's work reflects Lönnrot's influence, including the fact that Christopher Tolkien ultimately performed Lönnrot's role by collecting and editing his father's vast unpublished material into *The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales*, and *The History of Middle-earth*.

The succinct biographical note appearing in the Everyman's Library edition of W. F. Kirby's 1907 translation, *Kalevala: The Land of the Heroes*, provides these bare essentials: "ELIAS LONNROT. Born 1802. Finnish philologist, poet, and folklorist. Practised medicine in country districts, where he transcribed traditional ballads, among them the Kalevala cycle, which he published from 1838 to 1849. Became professor of Finnish literature at Helsinki, and died 1884" (ii). As one of Shippey's philologist-creators, Lönnrot's abilities as a collector and editor of folklore went far beyond merely transcribing traditional ballads in the unique scheme he developed for that purpose. Encouraged and funded by the Finnish Literary Society, Lönnrot's official collecting forays into the Archangel Karelia region began in 1831 and continued through 1835, although he had done some transcribing of rune singing before this. Inspired both by amateur folklore enthusiasts such as C. A. Gottlund and several highly capable singers having many poem variants at their command, the idea of creating a national epic for Finland was in Lönnrot's mind as

a goal very early in his career (Branch 22), not unlike Tolkien's youthful ambitions concerning his proposed mythology for England.

As significant as *Kalevala* was in establishing Finland's folklore heritage for posterity, it certainly was not the first attempt to study and catalog the structures, myths, and motifs of Finland's native poetry. To set Lönnrot's work in context, one needs to look back at least a century before the 1835 publication of *Kalevala*. As Felix Oinas explains in his *Studies in Finnic Folklore: Homage to the Kalevala*, a number of significant studies and attempts at collection were underway as early as 1700 with Daniel Juslenius' arguments that Finnish folklore demonstrated "the great age of Finnish culture" (10). Of greater importance is the work of Henrik Porthan, especially his five-part *De poesi Fennica* (1766-78), wherein, says Oinas, his "recognition of the significance of folksong variants for establishing the earlier forms of the songs makes him a forerunner of the comparative study of folklore." Another work, *Mythologia Fennica*, written in 1789 by Porthan's contemporary, Christfrid Ganander, provided an encyclopedia of folk beliefs and heroes derived from folk poetry, a valuable resource for Lönnrot and his contemporaries in the Finnish Literary Society of the early 1830s. The published collections of Zachris Topelius in 1822 helped confirm the need for a more aggressive attempt to gather and document these epic-style poems sung mostly in the eight-syllable trochaic line now known as Kalevala-meter. The stage was set for the Finnish Literary Society's choice of Lönnrot as their best emissary in the field, following his completion of a doctoral degree in medicine from the University of Helsinki in 1832.

Although Lönnrot was a meticulous compiler who kept copious notes and transcriptions, the fact that he was also a composer of his own Kalevala-meter verse, which he wove into the fabric of the original material, was not immediately apparent when the first version of the epic was published (Kuusi, Bosley, and Branch 30). Perhaps to understand the dilemma created by this fact, it should be stated what the *Kalevala* is *not*. The cycle of 50 *runos* (runes or verses) is not a single long epic with a continuous plot that has been handed down intact from ages past. As a compilation of verses sung by many different runesingers over many generations, the *Kalevala* cycle is also not the work of a single poet, and yet, in one sense, it is, which presents the problem of what Lauri Honko calls the "oral/literary paradox." In the preface to his 1988 translation, Eino Friberg stated the problem in this way: "The ambiguity between the *Kalevala* as a published work and the *Kalevala* as an oral folk expression through the runo-singers has, of course, been a general feature in discussion of the work ever since Lönnrot's day" (11). Although the verses were collected from mostly uneducated rural singers, Lönnrot himself determined the arrangement of the verses into a kind of loose history of

two warring territories (Kaleva's region and the land of Pohjola). This was arbitrary on his part and bears little resemblance to the context in which he may have heard and collected the runes. It must also be taken into account that he composed the opening and closing lines himself, to establish a symmetrical framework for the story groupings. He had absorbed the style and spirit of the authentic verses, but in content and placement these verses are clearly his own work, added to create a framework for the organization he planned to impose on the collected material. Summing up Lönnrot's role, Matti Kuusi states, "While in terms of its basic components the *Kalevala* has its origin in folk poetry, its overall shape and structure are the work of Elias Lönnrot" (30). In a similar vein, Tolkien liked to say that he was merely recording the events of *The Lord of the Rings* instead of creating the book.

Temperament and creativity had an effect on both Lönnrot's and Tolkien's output that was similar. In the face of their far-reaching aspirations, both men were endless revisers, each expressing real fears that his work might prove overwhelming and never see the light of day. Both authors found themselves plagued by self-doubt regarding the worth of their efforts due in large part to consistency issues and the compulsion toward perfection. As he struggled to complete *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien worked backward through the continually evolving *Silmarillion*, trying to maintain consistency within his steadily developing mythology. Similarly, Lönnrot's arrangement of the runes consumed years of his time as he tried to visualize a somewhat consistent storyline that could also encompass the many magic charms, runes of domestic rites and ceremonies, and stand-alone tales such as that of Kullervo. "Dubious, to say the least," wrote Lönnrot in his Preface to the 1835 *Old Kalevala*, "of my ability to produce something suitable, I have occasionally been plagued with doubt to such an extent that I have been on the verge of throwing the whole thing into the fire. This temptation arose because I did not believe it in my power to edit these songs as I wanted to" (Magoun 374). Tolkien wearily confessed to his publisher that instead of writing a simple sequel to *The Hobbit*, he had instead created a monster. Both authors seem to have experienced recurring creative burnout, as evidenced in letters to friends and colleagues that describe each pouring over stacks of manuscripts late into the night, often foregoing food and sleep in an attempt to finish the work to his own satisfaction. Like Tolkien, Lönnrot was a copious letter writer, documenting his process and concerns over his work to friends, relatives, and academic associates. The practice served both men, who were very private and cerebral, with a means of dealing with their frustrations and reaching out to others of like mind. "I begin to feel a bit desperate: endlessly frustrated," Tolkien wrote to his son Christopher in 1969 and several months later echoed

those sentiments, "When you pray for me, pray for 'time!'" in a letter to his son Michael (*Letters* 401, 404). For posterity, the collected letters of both authors have proved invaluable in the study of their art and intentions.

Language

The two-fold meaning of language in the context of this paper reflects the dichotomy of the philologist/creator: (1) the creation of language (as original invention, in Tolkien's case, or its elevation to official status and national symbol, as fostered by Lönnrot), and (2) the actual word choice employed by both men in the writing of their literary creations. The philologist part of the equation, language creation, was one of Tolkien's most astonishing abilities and provides a direct link to the *Kalevala*. Evidence from his letters reveals that he was captivated by both the sound and look of Finnish:

> The archaic language of lore is meant to be a kind of "Elven-latin." . . . Actually it might be said to be composed on a Latin basis with two other (main) ingredients that happen to give me "phonaesthetic" pleasure: Finnish and Greek. It is however less consonantal than any of the three. This language is High-elven or in its own terms *Quenya* (Elvish). (176)

The above excerpt from Tolkien's 1954 letter to Naomi Mitchison establishes the initial connection between Quenya and Finnish, and in his letter to W. H. Auden the following year, that connection is further revealed:

> Most important, perhaps, after Gothic was the discovery in Exeter College library, when I was supposed to be reading for Honour Mods, of a Finnish Grammar. It was like discovering a complete wine-cellar filled with bottles of an amazing wine of a kind and flavour never tasted before. It quite intoxicated me; and I gave up the attempt to invent an "unrecorded" Germanic language, and my "own language"—or series of invented languages—became heavily Finnicized in phonetic pattern and structure. (*Letters* 214)

In *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*, Shippey confirms the aural appeal Finnish had for Tolkien, explaining that "again and again in *The Lord of the Rings* he has characters speak in these languages without bothering to translate them. The point, or a point, is made by the sound alone—just as allusions to the old legends of previous ages say something without the legends necessarily being told" (xiv).

The pleasure Tolkien derived from Finnish was not limited to its phonaesthetic qualities; there is evidence that he also found it visually pleasing. The visual aesthetic of Finnish as written out likely played an important factor in Tolkien's development of the tengwar or script for Quenya. The notion that Tolkien's artistic eye loved the look of letters on the page as well as the sound of the language, the "allusive as well as communicative qualities," is established by Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull. A masterful calligrapher, Tolkien "knew the beauty of a page fully written in tengwar" (201), for example, as shown in Aragorn's letter to Sam, included by Christopher Tolkien in *Sauron Defeated*. As Hammond and Scull describe it, "It is a beautiful manuscript even to those who cannot read the words—rhythmic, graceful, and exotic, like the movements of a dancer" (201). It is not difficult to see where the suggestion for these beautiful rows of *em* curves and graceful descenders could have first appealed to Tolkien. Printed Finnish with its limited number of consonants and doubled, umlauted vowels produces a very similar effect. Look, for example, at lines 335-40 at the end of Runo 1 from the untranslated *Kalevala* (SKS 2000 edition):

> Polvin maasta ponnistihe,
> käsivarsin käännältihe.
> Nousi kuuta katsomahan,
> päiveä ihoamahan,
> otavaista oppimahan,
> tähtiä tähyämähän. (6)

It is not necessary to understand the language in order to appreciate the unique visual effect of printed Finnish. For comparison, the script running across the title pages of all three volumes of *The Lord of the Rings* provides a good example of how the shape and flow of *tengwar* characters echoes passages from the *Kalevala*.

The second meaning of language listed above concerns the issue of *textualization*, the rendering of core epic ideas into words, whether oral (primary) or written (secondary), a wordsmithing process of prime importance to both Lönnrot and Tolkien. In Lönnrot's case, his objective was to transform his codification of various oral performances into written, literary form, thereby creating a master version of the epic in question, preserving the flavor of the singers' individual performances while combining them into one coherent version. According to Honko, although this approach was completely acceptable in Lönnrot's day, it has been looked on with disfavor from later folklore scholars concerned with accuracy in reporting and preservation. Current thinking has shifted yet again, coming to a realization that "what we experience as literary value or beauty is there in the original oral textualization and is merely

magnified, not created, in the written codification. The linguistic power of the oral genre becomes accentuated in the new non-oral form capable of living on as a piece of literature proper" (Honko vii). In Tolkien's case, the oral epic and lyric poetry of his legendarium give the illusion of collected folk poetry handed down orally and eventually textualized in the pages of such records as the Quenta Silmarillion and the Red Book of Westmarch. In this way, the poetry of Middle-earth supplies the depth of authenticity required in Tolkien's mythmaking process.

The Kalevala textualization existed in three different versions, each more filled out and ambitious than the one before, as Lönnrot observed and recorded more songs during his years traveling through East Karelia. His Proto-Kalevala contained sixteen verses but was not published. Sensing that much more could be gathered, Lönnrot made further forays into the White Sea Karelia district, which brought him into contact with singers that greatly changed his ideas about the epic he was compiling (Oinas 33). He observed that the highly talented singers possessed a mental catalogue or vocabulary of poem segments and phrases for particular characters' storylines and could spontaneously arrange them while performing. Thus, no one performance of a given epic segment, of "Väinämöinen" or "Lemminkäinen," for example, was ever the same. The mini-epics he heard were fluid in content and detail, while remaining constant in theme and general storyline. This special folksong language in which many standard expressions are known to the singers of the epics is referred to as the "epic register," and an individual singer's ability to use this epic register becomes his or her "epic idiolect" (Honko 21). It was not possible to completely predict in what way any given version or arrangement of epic elements would be performed; part of their creativity was to draw spontaneously from their mental store of poem segments—their inherited epic register. Lönnrot realized that he could consider his collection of thousands of poetry lines as his own epic register and the two versions of the *Kalevala* as the product of his own epic idiolect. The *Old Kalevala* (as it later became known), which appeared in 1835 and contained thirty-six songs, was followed fourteen years later by the *New Kalevala*, Lönnrot's 1849 compilation that became the "official" version. It consisted of fifty verses organized into fourteen mini-epics. As well as epic poems, the *New Kalevala* also contains numerous charms, spells, lyric folksongs, festival songs for weddings and feasts, and maxims. A sense of the wider pool of folk poetry available to Lönnrot in shaping his epic can be found in the anthology *Finnish Folk Poetry: Epic,* compiled and translated by Matti Kuusi, Keith Bosley, and Michael Branch.

This concept of epic register is applicable to Tolkien as well. Both epic register and idiolect are useful in characterizing the language of Tolkien's poetry and his formal "high" narrative style, often described

as biblical. For example, the phrases "beyond all hope" or rescue "unlooked for" appear frequently through all his fiction, and especially at moments of high emotion and epic drama, indicating that these are significant entries in his personal epic register. A random sampling from the *Silmarillion* finds the phrases occurring in the tale of the Fifth Battle, "For unsummoned and unlooked for Turgon had opened the leaguer of Gondolin" (190); in the return of the Noldor to Middle-earth where the Elves of Beleriand express amazement at "their mighty kindred, who thus returned unlooked-for from the West in the very hour of their need" (108); after Beren's first encounter with Lúthien Tinúviel, "[b]eyond his hope she returned to him where he sat in darkness" (166); in the overthrow of Morgoth during the War of Wrath, where the slaves imprisoned in Angband "came forth beyond all hope into the light of day" (252). In *The Lord of the Rings*, we find the phrase spoken by Aragorn at Gandalf's appearance in Fangorn, "Beyond all hope you return to us in our need!" (*TT*, III, v, 98); he speaks a variant when the Rangers arrive after the battle of Helm's Deep, "Of all joys this is the least expected!" (*RK*, V, ii, 47); at the battle of the Pelennor Fields, Éomer speaks the phrase to Aragorn, "Yet twice blessed is help unlooked for, and never was a meeting of friends more joyful" (*RK*, V, vi, 123). A variant of this register entry can be found in both *The Hobbit* and *The Return of the King* when rescue comes unexpectedly from the eagles. Both Gandalf and Bilbo utter the same cry: "The Eagles are coming! The Eagles are coming!" (*H*, xvii, 345; *RK*, V, x, 169). Marjut Huuskonen's article on the 1999 symposium on oral and traditional epics at the University of Turku (occurring on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the *New Kalevala*) states that Lönnrot was acknowledged not only as "a collector, a scribe and a compiler but as a singer with a mental text of an epic in his mind" (Kuusi, Bosley, and Branch 21). As has just been demonstrated, this assessment applies equally well to J. R. R. Tolkien.

The problem of textualization applies as well to Christopher Tolkien's published form of the *Silmarillion*. Did his father intend the tales to be ordered in that way or for those versions to become the published ones? No one knew his father's mind better than Christopher regarding the state of the Silmarillion material, yet even so, there is no way to know for certain, given the elder Tolkien's penchant for revision and reworking, what a final version would have looked like. Like Lönnrot, Christopher Tolkien was required to make executive decisions, some small (punctuation and spelling consistency) and some larger (arrangement and sequencing), in order to publish a "master" version from many different versions and fragments available.

Content

Entire books have been written about the organization and content of Lönnrot's *Kalevala*, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate all the ways in which *Kalevala* influence can be found in Tolkien's works. One can cite, for example, the cosmological runes (Tolkien's "Ainulindalë"); epic themes such as doomed lovers (Beren and Lúthien, Túrin and Finduilas) or a magical object that holds the fate of the realm (the Silmarils and the One Ring); episodic stories grouped into larger sections (the tales of the Quenta Silmarillion); character archetypes (the wise shaman as Gandalf and the god of the underworld as Melkor, Morgoth, or even Shelob); stylized poetic conventions (repetition, redundancy, epithets, the power of three); native language of the epic (the evolving lexicon of Quenya); magic revealed in the power of song (Lúthien's song that conquers the stronghold of Angband or Yavanna's singing that calls into being the Two Trees of Valinor); or the landscape of mysterious islands bordered by misty coasts and inland waterways (the topography of Middle-earth and Númenor). For the purpose of this study, the field of discussion has been narrowed to the elements that most directly link Tolkien with Lönnrot, in other words, those aspects of the *Kalevala* that earn Tolkien the label of England's Lönnrot. Where content is concerned, this means the tale of Kullervo and the core epic of the Sampo.

We know that Tolkien borrowed the idea of Lönnrot's amalgamated character Kullervo because he states this fact in his letters, as mentioned above. As Lönnrot had done with his source runes, Tolkien applied his own textualization to the story elements he found in the *Kalevala*. Using his own epic register, he reforged the Finnish material into a tragedy that would fit into the larger scheme of the Quenta Silmarillion, which included villains such as Morgoth and Glaurung and helpers such as Beleg and Gwindor (in the published edition of the *Silmarillion*). In the same way, Lönnrot had found a kernel of a story in many separate lines of collected poetry, about the ill-fated youth whose behavior brings him to ruin, that particularly appealed to Lönnrot's sense of tragedy. Unlike Tolkien's skillful blending of Túrin into the Silmarillion backstory, Kullervo's tale does not fit seamlessly into the other mini-epics of Väinämöinen, Lemminkäinen, and the Sampo, but sits within the larger framework of the *Kalevala* in runes 31-36. Kullervo's story begins with the invocation to tragedy, when his doom is recognized at birth (in W. F. Kirby's translation):

> "Presently when I am bigger,
> And my body shall be stronger,
> I'll avenge my father's slaughter,
> And my mother's tears atone for."

> This was heard by Untamoinen,
> And he spoke the words which follow:
> "He will bring my race to ruin,
> Kalervo reborn is in him." (71)

In similar fashion, from the *Silmarillion*, Tolkien began his tale "Of Túrin Turambar" with the explicit statement that here is an account of high tragedy involving a doomed youth: "Here that tale is told in brief, for it is woven with the fate of the Silmarils and of the Elves; and it is called the Tale of Grief, for it is sorrowful, and in it are revealed most evil works of Morgoth Bauglir" (*S* 198). Randel Helms' treatment of the *Silmarillion* includes a lengthy discussion of Tolkien's use of the Kullervo story, observing that the idea of the tale "bubbled slowly in the back of his mind, waiting to attach itself to a larger, more comprehensive theme" and that "it is a tale that begs to be transformed" (6), which coincidentally describes Lönnrot's reaction to the story as well.

Regarding Tolkien's use of the Sampo legend, the connection is by inference rather than direct borrowing. For one thing, the sampo—the object itself—was never defined by Lönnrot or his source singers in either version of the *Kalevala*, which leaves its use as inspiration for subsequent authors wide open. According to K. Börje Vähämäki, this mysterious object is the "single most studied and explored element" of *Kalevala* research, including such efforts as Julius Krohn's *Finnish-language Poetry During the Era of Swedish Rule* (1862), E. N. Setälä's *The Sampo Riddle* (1932), Matti Juusi's *The Sampo Epos* (1949), and Juha Pentikainen's *Kalevala Mythology* (1989), which comes down to Vähämäki's assessment that the "options are endless" (Karni and Jarvenpa xvi). The Sampo cycle, common to many collected folksongs, was incorporated by Lönnrot "as the nucleus for the *Kalevala*," according to Oinas, consisting of "three main episodes: the creation of the world, the forging of the Sampo, and the theft of the Sampo" (38). How this basic pattern was woven into Tolkien's legendarium can be seen in the history of the Silmarils. In his in-depth explication of the Sampo/Silmaril connection, "What Tolkien Really Did with the Sampo," Jonathan B. Himes asserts that as an "object of mystery," the Sampo provided ample fuel to Tolkien's creative fire such that he incorporated its properties into several mythical objects of cosmic importance: the three jewels forged by Fëanor, and the Two Trees sung into existence by Yavanna. Randel Helms asserts that "in many of its details the story of the Silmarils is a recasting of the story of Ilmarinen, Wainamoinen, and the Sampo" (44).

Indeed, there are numerous clues in Tolkien's Silmarillion material, both in the *Silmarillion* and in *The War of the Jewels*, that lead back to the *Kalevala* and the Sampo. A general list could include the inspiration to create an object of power (Runo X:96-100); its forging by a smith/artisan

of great skill (X:270-422); its theft by deception and spell casting, especially by one who had a part in the inspiration to create it (XL:65-170); the thief and his accomplice making a fast getaway with the Sampo, leaving its owners behind in a stunned state (XLII:171-260); the fight to recover the Sampo resulting in its breaking into several pieces (XLIII:259-294); a curse uttered on the heads of all who would steal the Sampo's parts (XLIII:305-330); the effects of the curse being felt throughout the region; the sun and moon being stolen by the agent of darkness (XLVII:1-40); the supreme power replacing the stolen light with a new sun and moon (XLVII:41-82); a piece of the celestial light/fire being swallowed by a creature (XLVII:248); when the creature's belly is split open, the fire burning the hands of the one who retrieves it (XLVII:201-248); a great war fought to retrieve the objects of light from the dark stronghold where it is hidden (XLIX:111-230); and finally, departure of a sky-ship bearing the sage/shaman who offers hope of another Sampo (L:480-500). The leap is not far to envision Fëanor's creation of the Silmarils from the celestial light of the Two Trees, the theft of the Silmarils by Melkor and his accomplice Ungoliant through surprise and a spell of darkness, Fëanor's fateful oath that brings doom on the heads of his lineage and all who take possession of the Silmarils, the way in which the Silmarils burn the hands of all who touch them with less than pure intent, the separation of the three jewels when Beren and Lúthien take one from Morgoth's iron crown, the march of the Valar on Thangorodrim to overthrow Morgoth and regain the jewels, and Eärendil's appearance in the heavens in his sky ship with the Evening Star (Silmaril) on his brow.

Of particular interest to this discussion is Christopher Tolkien's undertaking in assessing and assembling the Silmarillion materials. Charles E. Noad's article, "On the Construction of 'The Silmarillion,'" emphasizes the nature of the task Tolkien left behind for his literary executor and son. According to Noad, Christopher Tolkien's own introduction to the Silmarillion material admits of the "underlying textual complexity at which the published version did not hint." This returns to the same *Kalevala* dilemma discussed in the beginning of this paper, that the source material is "an assemblage of texts, each with its own history and provenance, and, by implication, a relationship between the world in which it is a text and the world of which the text itself speaks" (32). Christopher Tolkien's Foreword to the first volume of *The Book of Lost Tales* neatly sums up the many daunting challenges of his role as both executor and philologist-creator. In addressing both his own doubts and those of noted scholars about the publication of the 1977 single volume titled the *Silmarillion*, he noted the following:

> It is certainly debatable whether it was wise to publish in 1977 a version of the primary "legendarium" standing on

> its own and claiming, as it were, to be self-explanatory. The published work has no "framework," no suggestion of what it is and how (within the imagined world) it came to be. This I now think to have been an error. (*Lost Tales I* 5)

As Christopher Tolkien headed into what could be considered his life's work, *The History of Middle-earth*, he could not foresee then how many volumes and years it would take to adequately rein in the massive repository of his father's imagination. Like Lönnrot before him, he expressed doubt that such a compendium would even be possible: "I have applied to this present book an 'overriding' title intended to cover also those that may follow it, though I fear that 'The History of Middle-earth' may turn out to have been over-ambitious" (9). As it turns out, his ambitions were equal to the task and, like Lönnrot, the "fearsome textual jigsaw puzzle" became a widely acclaimed product that could only have been rendered by the unique combination of philological expertise and creative desire to learn and embrace a thing for its own sake.

The Legacy of Lönnrot's *Kalevala* and Tolkien's Legendarium

"Epic is about heroes making history, or what passes for history," wrote Keith Bosley in the introduction to his 1988 *Kalevala* translation (xiv). This exactly describes the nature of the argument this paper has investigated. The *Kalevala* and the mythology of Middle-earth were both compiled and invented by their authors, each of whom created a fictional framework upon which to hang their tales. Tolkien's invented world is presented with such authenticity and depth of detail that readers can easily imagine his having collected and transcribed the histories of Arda from ancient sources, which was his expressed intent: "I have long ceased to *invent*. . . . I wait till I seem to know what really happened. Or till it writes itself" (*Letters* 231). Where Lönnrot is concerned, one must be prepared to recognize both his tenacious skills as a collector and objective recorder of native folk poetry and his literary skill in fashioning an authentic cohesive framework for the epic from the raw materials of oral verses.

In attempting to create a mythology for England, ostensibly to replace that which was lost during the Norman invasion and onward (*Letters* 144), Tolkien joined the ranks of other scholar/authors who wished to access national spirit through both research and literature. While it is clear that both Finland's language and national epic were among Tolkien's earliest sources of literary inspiration, what may not be as apparent are the ways in which temperament and creative output further connect all three philologist-creators under examination here. Like Lönnrot's massive collection of over 65,000 lines of folk poetry (according to University

of Helsinki Professor Matti Kuusi), the material comprising Tolkien's legendarium, including its underpinning mythology and evolving languages, threatened to spill out of his control (*Letters* 333). It would, in fact, prove to be greater than one person could master, eventually pulling son Christopher into its shaping as well.

What readers absorb from these author/editors is a vision—a sense of ancient times, told with realistic depth and detail—that reflects universal themes and motifs of exuberance, contentiousness, warlike aggression, loyalty versus deception, wickedness and guilt, generosity and trust, innocence and the ensuing heartbreak over its loss. The heroes of these works seem real and flawed, which makes their fate compelling. The longevity of both the *Kalevala* and J. R. R. Tolkien's published fiction attests to the talents (as well as the obsessions) of these two similar authors, and, through the efforts of Christopher Tolkien, readers will likely be devouring the majesty of the Silmarillion tales and the desperation of the Ring quest, as well as the mystery of the Sampo, well into the new millennium.

Comparison of Lönnrot and Tolkien as mediators of literature and language reveals scholars with a similar obsessive attention to detail and a similar taste for epic sweep and high tragedy. Although Lönnrot succeeded in completing what most consider his masterwork during his lifetime, and Tolkien did not (if you consider the Silmarillion material his life's work), the challenges and difficulties each encountered were driven by the same grandiose vision of a literary epic drawn from the national character of their respective countries. By adding Christopher Tolkien's twelve-volume *History* into the mix, the cycle is now complete.

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