

# 7<sup>th</sup> Unquendor Lustrum Conference 2016



**Tolkien among Scholars**

**Leiden University, 18 June 2016**



## WORD OF WELCOME BY ORGANISING COMMITTEE

*Dear participant,*

*Welcome to the 7th Unquendor Lustrum Conference 2016: Tolkien among Scholars. An international Tolkien conference, jointly organized by the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society and the Dutch Tolkien Society Unquendor.*

*The conference brings together Tolkien scholars to present their research on Tolkien's place within academia, both as a scholar himself and as the author of fictional works of fantasy that have been the subject of scholarly enquiry since their publication. What impact did Tolkien have as an academic? How was Tolkien's Middle-Earth influenced by his academic interests? How have Tolkien and his fictional work been regarded and studied by scholars, both past and present?*

*This programme booklet features a concise programme, abstracts of all papers and a list of e-mail addresses of all speakers. We hope you will have an enjoyable and inspiring day.*

### **Conference Organising Committee**

Jan van Breda – [jvnbrd@gmail.com](mailto:jvnbrd@gmail.com)

Thijs Porck – [m.h.porck@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:m.h.porck@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Renée Vink – [rvink7@hotmail.com](mailto:rvink7@hotmail.com)

## PROGRAMME – 18 JUNE, 2016

09:30-10:00 - Registration (Lipsius, central hall)

10:00-10:15 - Welcome by the conference organizers (Lipsius/019)

### 10:15-11:15 – Keynote lecture 1(Lipsius/019)

Prof. dr. Paul J. Smith (Leiden University)  
“French connections in Middle-earth”

11:15-11:30 - Break

### 11:30-12:35 – Sessions 1

Room: Lipsius/019	Room: Lipsius/227	Room: Lipsius/228
<p><b>101.</b> Suzanne Took – <i>Concerning Gollum; Pity &amp; death</i></p> <p><b>102.</b> Luisa Paglieri – <i>Tolkien and the academic world in Italy</i></p>	<p><b>201.</b> Hamish Williams – <i>Hospitality in Tolkien’s Faerie: Welcoming xeinoi in On Fairy Stories, The Hobbit, and Smith of Wootton Major</i></p> <p><b>202.</b> David Dodds – <i>‘Tolkien’s Narnia’?: Lit., lang., saints, Tinfaang, and a mythology – or two – for Christmas</i></p>	<p><b>301.</b> Thijs Porck – <i>New roads and secret gates, waiting around the corner: Investigating Tolkien’s other Anglo-Saxon sources</i></p> <p><b>302.</b> Aline Douma &amp; Mariëlle van Rijn – <i>Middle-earth and middangeard: J.R.R. Tolkien and the Anglo-Saxon World</i></p>

### 12:35-14:00 – Lunch (at your own leisure)

### 14:00-15:40 – Sessions 2

Room: Lipsius/019	Room: Lipsius/227	Room: Lipsius/228
<p><b>103.</b> Gazala Anver – <i>A deconstructive reading of Tolkien criticism with special emphasis on The Silmarillion</i></p> <p><b>104.</b> Simon Portegies Zwart – <i>Modern analogies in Tolkien’s cosmology</i></p> <p><b>105.</b> Jan van Breda – <i>Anarchistic societies in Middle-earth?</i></p>	<p><b>203.</b> Renée Vink – <i>A poet’s choices: Tolkien, Heusler, and the gap in the Poetic Edda</i></p> <p><b>204.</b> Lettie Dorst – <i>Tolkien’s style in translation</i></p> <p><b>205.</b> Charlotte Doesburg – <i>Singing, music, and magic in the Finnish epic the Kalevala and in J.R.R. Tolkien’s Silmarillion</i></p>	<p><b>303.</b> Nelson Goering – <i>Old Mercian in Beowulf and in Tolkien’s Rohan</i></p> <p><b>304.</b> Antoine Paris – <i>Unreliable philology in the introduction and appendixes of The Lord of the Rings</i></p> <p><b>305.</b> Łukasz Neubauer – <i>The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth as a dialectic attempt to capture the essence of the “northern heroic spirit”</i></p>

**Break (15:40-16:00)**

### 16:00-17:00 – Keynote lecture 2 (Lipsius/019)

Prof. dr. Thomas M. Honegger (Friedrich Schiller University, Jena)  
“Heroic scholars - scholarly heroes”

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**Prof. dr. Paul J. Smith (Leiden University)**

**Title:** "French connections in Middle-earth "



**Abstract:** Tolkien often expressed his dislike of French language and culture. However, rather unexpectedly, French language and literature appear to be very present in his work, not only in his scholarly editions (Sir Gawain and the Green Knight) and essays (On Fairy Stories), but also in his fictional narratives. Indeed, several names of places (Bag End, Lórien) and characters (Pippin, Merry) seem to have been coined on existing French or Frankish names and words. And, as I shall demonstrate, a comparison of Tolkien's fictional works with French medieval literature (La Chanson de Roland, Marie de France, Chrétien de Troyes) or French existentialism (Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir) provides some unexpected parallels, which are not merely coincidental.

**Paul J. Smith** is Professor of French Literature at Leiden University. His research focuses on 16th-, 17th - and 20th-century French literature, its reception in the Netherlands, French and Dutch fable and emblem books, literary rhetoric and Renaissance zoology.

**Prof. dr. Thomas M. Honegger (Friedrich Schiller University, Jena)**

**Title:** " Heroic scholars - scholarly heroes "

**Abstract:** The atrocities of WW I changed the attitude of an entire generation towards warfare and military heroism and the reverberations could be felt also in academia. It may not be an exaggeration to claim that Tolkien's post-WW I readings of medieval literature, and in particular the depiction of heroes and prowess in battle, was coloured by his own experiences in the trenches of Flanders. It would take a veteran of WW I to write a text like 'The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth' with its stark realism – a realism that is also noticeable in Tolkien's works of fantastic fiction.



It is the aim of my lecture to explore how Tolkien's scholarly work on medieval texts as well as his writing of fiction both reflect his preoccupation with questions of heroism and the legitimisation of heroic violence – and how he comes to champion forms of 'cooperative heroism' over that of the solitary hero who faces his foes as well as wyrd on his own.

**Thomas M. Honegger** is professor of English Medieval Studies at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Germany. He has published widely on Tolkien, Old English and medieval literature. He is also an editor and contributor to Walking Tree Publishers' Cormarë series on Tolkien Studies.

## ABSTRACTS SESSIONS 1 (11:30-12:35)

**Room: Lipsius/019**

**Chair:** Jan van Breda (Independent Tolkien scholar)

### **101. Suzanne Took (Tilburg University) – Concerning Gollum; Pity & death**

In this talk I will elaborate on the relation between death and pity in the Lord of the Rings. I will refrain from giving a metaphysical account of the notion of death and instead focus on the encounters with death in the story. I will focus on those encounters involving Gollum, for his encounters are most relevant to the concept of pity. These are of interest, for example when Bilbo somehow pities Gollum and decides not to kill him in *The Hobbit*. Which turns out to be of incredible importance for the plot. Or when Gollum enters the forbidden pool, and upon entering the forbidden pool stands the death penalty. So why is he not executed? Is pity somehow the exception to the rule? Gollum is equally often despised as he is pitied, so how does this empathy and hatred relate to death, to be more precise in these occasion, decide to kill or not to kill?

### **102. Luisa Paglieri (Independent Tolkien scholar) – Tolkien and the academic world in Italy**

Tolkien and his most important work (*The Lord of the Rings*) were always ignored or undervalued by the academic world in Italy. This was due to political reasons (in Italy Tolkien was seen as a reactionary writer) and to aesthetic reasons (fantasy was considered a minor genre, not engaged in social problems). So Tolkien became the favourite writer of the political right wing. The Italian right parties considered Tolkien almost as a “property”. Tolkien's success among the public obliged the leftist intelligentsia to consider again the question.

**Room: Lipsius/227**

**Chair:** Renée Vink (Independent Tolkien scholar)

### **201. Hamish Williams (University of Cape Town/Leiden University) – Hospitality in Tolkien's Faerie: Welcoming xeinói in On Fairy Stories, The Hobbit, and Smith of Wootton Major**

In this paper I shall explore Tolkien's representations of home and hospitality, of welcoming strangers and being welcomed, both in those literary works where he approaches Faerie as well as those academic essays and private correspondences where he articulates a reception of the mysterious other. More than simply showing that this absolute, and perilous, hospitality of the other is central to Tolkien's conceptualization and realization of Faerie, I am also interested in interrogating the authority behind such a hospitality, whether it be magical (pointing to nature) or mystical (pointing to supernatural or the divine) in essence.

## ABSTRACTS SESSIONS 1 (11:30-12:35)

### 202. David Dodds (Independent Inklings scholar) – ‘Tolkien’s Narnia’?: Lit., lang., saints, Tinfang, and a mythology – or two – for Christmas

The seed of Tolkien’s 1936 case for ‘folk-tale’ *Beowulf* surpassing an analogous saint’s life may already inform his 1914 Éarendel poem. For, if he argues that Old English poem, in adapting Latin Advent antiphon, addresses St. John the Baptist, instead of Christ – as ‘Éarendel’ – Tolkien’s own Éarendel is a fairy-tale mariner. A 1915 fairy-tale figure, Tinfang, soon interacted complexly with a world-famous St. Nicholas poem. Within five years, Tolkien wrote his first Father Christmas letter. Here, instead of ‘replacing’ saints, Father Christmas – and “his green brother” – are “both called Nicholas after the Saint”. While his *legendarium* became a ‘mythology toward Christmas’, are these letters ‘Tolkien’s Narnia’?

<b>Room: Lipsius/228</b>
<b>Chair: Thijs Porck (Leiden University)</b>

### 301. Thijs Porck (Leiden University) – New roads and secret gates, waiting around the corner: Investigating Tolkien’s other Anglo-Saxon sources

One of the most popular scholarly approaches to the works of Tolkien has been source criticism (e.g. Fisher 2011) and Tolkien’s most widely studied sources are those deriving from Anglo-Saxon England. Most scholars, however, have focused mainly on Old English poetry, neglecting other Anglo-Saxon sources that may have inspired Tolkien. This paper consists of two parts: an analysis of previous scholarship into Tolkien’s Anglo-Saxon sources (where have they looked; for what reason and to what effect?) and an investigation into other potential Anglo-Saxon sources (Old English prose and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, art and architecture), which yields some new examples of potential Anglo-Saxon influence on Tolkien’s fiction.

### 302. Mariëlle van Rijn (Leiden University) & Aline Douma (University of Groningen) – Middle-earth and *middangeard*: J.R.R. Tolkien and the Anglo-Saxon world

Two students of the MA-course *Middle-earth and middangeard: J.R.R. Tolkien and the Anglo-Saxon world* (Leiden University/Utrecht University, 2015/2016) will present their new research into the relationship between Tolkien’s fictional work and his academic interests in the field of Old English, particularly the poem *Beowulf*. Together, the short presentations in this session will provide new insights into Tolkien’s understanding of the Anglo-Saxon world and its literature, and how this impacted his creation of Middle-earth. The two students are:

Aline Douma (University of Groningen): “A Fell Light is in Them”: The Ontological Ambiguity of Grendel and the Undead in *The Lord of the Rings*

Mariëlle van Rijn (Leiden University): God’s Chosen Warrior and the Ring-bearer: Old English *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B* as sources of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*

## ABSTRACTS SESSIONS 2 (14:00-15:40)

**Room: Lipsius/019**

**Chair: Suzanne Took (Tilburg University)**

### **103. Gazala Anver (Women's Christian College, Chennai) – A deconstructive reading of Tolkien criticism with special emphasis on *The Silmarillion***

This post-structuralist reading of Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* (1977), focusses on how critical readings which parallel Tolkien's text to theological texts like The Bible confine and impoverish interpretation. By deconstructing these critical readings and exposing the undecidabilities found in Tolkien's text, this deconstructive reading aims to look into interpretational possibilities that go beyond singular, fixed interpretations. By highlighting the undecidability of the godhead in Tolkien's universe, and the subsequent influence on his creations like Melkor, the Valar, Elves and Men and the landmass of Arda itself, this study aims to expand the scope of Tolkien criticism beyond the author's biography, particularly his religious background and the critics' preconceived notions.

### **104. Simon Portegies Zwart (Leiden University) – Modern analogies in Tolkien's cosmology**

When Arda was created the two lamps of the Valar, Illuin and Ormal, illuminated Middle-earth. When Melkor ruined the lamps an all destructing flame scorched Arda and the idyllic island of Almaren was destroyed. As a side effect two seas, Helcar and Ringil, resulted from the carnage.

The analogy between Tolkien's cosmology and our modern view on the formation of the Solar System and Earth is remarkable. When the Sun was young, it was surrounded by other stars (Illuin and Ormal), they perturbed the Solar system and caused water to be brought to Earth, which initiated life. The discretion of these stars in violent supernovae enriched Earth with radioisotopes Al27 and Fe60, which are still to be found in the Sun's surrounding planetesimals.

### **105. Jan van Breda (Independent Tolkien scholar) – Anarchistic societies in Middle-earth?**

In his well-known letter no. 52 (Carpenter, *The letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*) to his son Christopher, Tolkien declared: "My political opinions lean more and more to Anarchy ... or to 'unconstitutional' Monarchy." Although this letter has to be handled with care, the political stance seems genuine. It might therefore be interesting to investigate whether these political views are reflected in Middle-earth societies. For that purpose, the governmental organization of two societies, the Shire and the community of the Ents, will be analysed.

## ABSTRACTS SESSIONS 2 (14:00-15:40)

**Room: Lipsius/227**

**Chair: Nathalie Kuijpers (Independent Tolkien scholar)**

### **203. Renée Vink (Independent Tolkien scholar) – A poet's choices: Tolkien, Heusler, and the gap in the *Poetic Edda***

With *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún* Tolkien tried, among other things, to reconstruct the lays and fragments on the eight leaves that went missing from the Codex Regius manuscript of the *Poetic Edda*. He was not the first: in 1912 the German philologist Andreas Heusler attempted the same thing in a scholarly article that remains a milestone in the field of Norse studies. Tolkien knew Heusler's article, but did it influence him in any way, or did he make his own, different choices?

### **204. Lettie Dorst (Leiden University) – Tolkien's style in translation**

In this talk I will analyse a number of passages from Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* introducing key characters – Bilbo, Gollum, Gandalf, Aragorn – using the frameworks for stylistic analysis as developed by Leech & Short (1981/2007) and Simpson (2004/2014). I will then discuss how the stylistic features of these passages are lost, retained, or compensated for in the Dutch translations. As pointed out by Boase-Beier (2006), style in translation remains an under-researched area of Translation Studies, despite the fact that style is often mentioned as the crucial characteristic of literary works, be they Prose with a capital P or popular fiction.

Note: I kindly encourage anyone attending this paper to bring translations into other languages for comparison and discussion.

### **205. Charlotte Doesburg (University of Helsinki) – Singing, music, and magic in the Finnish epic the *Kalevala* and in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Silmarillion***

The national Finnish epic the *Kalevala* has inspired numerous artists since its first publication in 1849 by its collector Elias Lönnrot. J.R.R. Tolkien found the epic in his early years and it remained an inspiration throughout his life. I'll discuss some of Tolkien's reimagining of the *Kalevala*'s themes, characters, motives and plots in *The Silmarillion*. Structure parallels, namely harmony-disharmony, antiquity-modernity and remembrance-invention, will form an essential part in comparing the *Kalevala* with Tolkien's *Silmarillion*. Because of these parallels, it is possible to obtain a deeper understanding of the interaction between the *Kalevala* and *The Silmarillion*.

## ABSTRACTS SESSIONS 2 (14:00-15:40)

**Room: Lipsius/228**

**Chair: Thijs Porck (Leiden University)**

### **303. Nelson Goering (Oxford University) – Old Mercian in *Beowulf* and in Tolkien's Rohan**

Tolkien was deeply interested in the language of *Beowulf*, which he felt to be in an archaic form of the Mercian dialect of Old English, the oldest of the West Midlands dialects which Tolkien felt so connected to. I take Tolkien's philological engagement with *Beowulf*, particularly as seen in his newly published Commentary, as a starting point for reassessing the claim that the Rohirrim speak Old Mercian. Many forms said to be 'Mercian' in Tolkien studies are not actually so, but Tolkien nonetheless appears to have put a particularly archaic, 'Beowulfian' form of Mercian into the mouths of the Rohirrim.

### **304. Antoine Paris (Sorbonne & Université de Quebec) – Unreliable philology in the introduction and appendixes of *The Lord of the Rings***

Besides Tolkien's important contribution as a scholar, *The Lord of the Rings* is related to philology since it is presented as the translation of an imaginary book and since, to that extent, its introduction and appendixes make it look like the translation of a real ancient book. However this fictional paratext include what would appear to a serious philologist as inaccuracies and discrepancies. Far from just mocking the scholarly habits, these phenomena have important literary implications. By undermining the credibility that such a fiction of translation could provide, they emphasize the purely imaginary nature of *The Lord of the Rings*.

### **305. Łukasz Neubauer (University of Koszalin) – *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth* as a dialectic attempt to capture the essence of the "Northern heroic spirit"**

In its purest Platonic form the word *dialectic* denotes a discussion by means of question and answer, in order to examine a concept or phenomenon. "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth" may not automatically qualify as a *bona fide* dialogue of Platonic inspiration. Nonetheless, the spirited discourse between Torhthelm and Tídwald, is often interpreted as a projection of the two conflicting sides of Tolkien's inner dialogue, the idealistic and the realistic. The paper seeks to examine its the principles and their application in the two characters arguing about the nature and ethics of what the Oxford professor refers to as the "northern heroic spirit".

## A LIST OF SPEAKERS' E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Gazala	Anver	Women's Christian College, Chennai	gazala.anver@gmail.com
David	Dodds	Independent Inklings scholar	daviddod@xs4all.nl
Charlotte	Doesburg	University of Helsinki	charlotte.doesburg@icloud.com
Lettie	Dorst	Leiden University	a.g.dorst@hum.leidenuniv.nl
Aline	Douma	University of Groningen	a.a.douma@student.rug.nl
Nelson	Goering	Oxford University	nelson.goering@ling-phil.ox.ac.uk
Thomas	Honegger	Friedrich Schiller University, Jena	tm.honegger@uni-jena.de
Lukasz	Neubauer	University of Koszalin	lukasz_neubauer@poczta.onet.pl
Luisa	Pagliari	Independent Tolkien scholar	paglieri.luisa@libero.it
Antoine	Paris	Sorbonne & Université de Quebec	antoine7.paris@wanadoo.fr
Thijs	Porck	Leiden University	m.h.porck@hum.leidenuniv.nl
Simon	Portegies Zwart	Leiden University	spz@strw.leidenuniv.nl
Paul J.	Smith	Leiden University	p.j.smith@hum.leidenuniv.nl
Suzanne	Took	Tilburg University	suzannetook@gmail.com
Jan	van Breda	Independent Tolkien scholar	jvnbrd@gmail.com
Mariëlle	van Rijn	Leiden University	marielle.van.rijn@hotmail.com
Renée	Vink	Independent Tolkien scholar	rvink7@hotmail.com
Hamish	Williams	University of Cape Town/Leiden University	hamishwilliams25@gmail.com

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