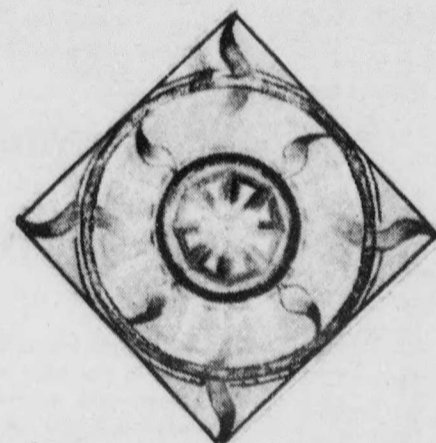
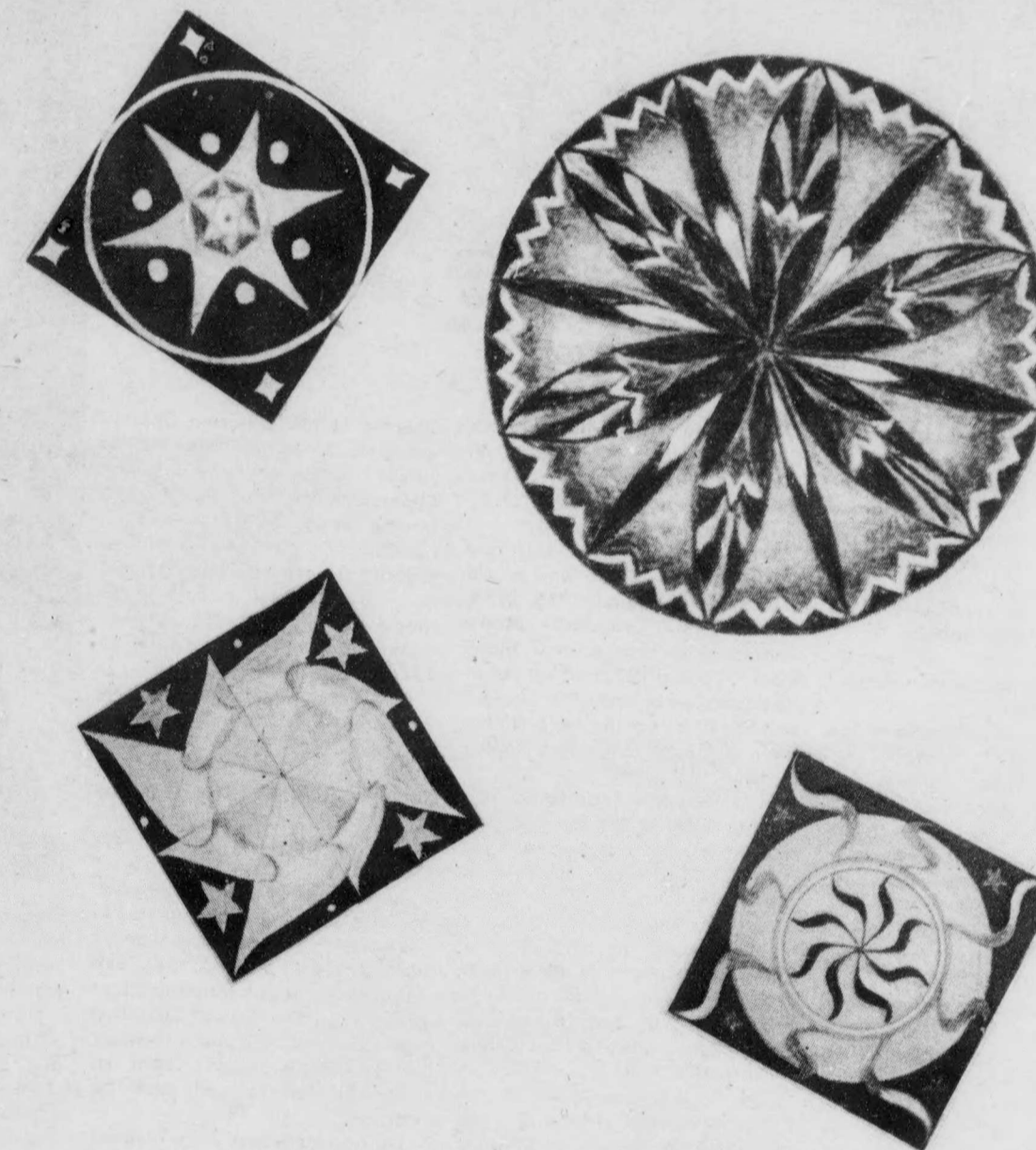
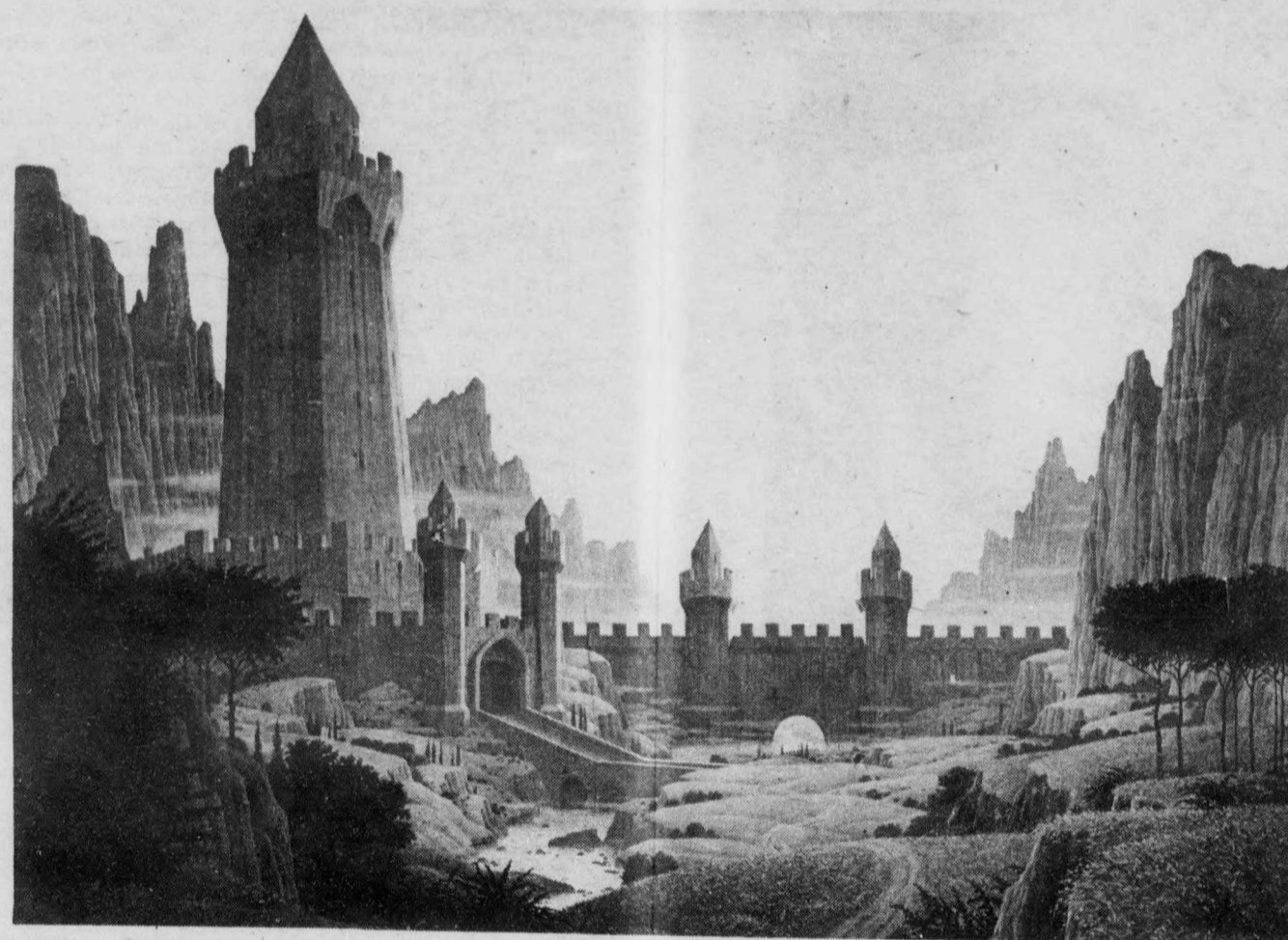


# J. R. R. TOLKIEN - THE OLD TESTAMENTS OF ERU



By JAMES BURNES

"Tolkien is dead"

I remember that night in September 73 when Steve, Rodney and I were sitting in the Mayfair Tavern discussing as usual, THE LORD OF THE RINGS. Our talk weaved through Tolkien's fabulous works and finally dwelled upon the GREAT mystery - THE SILMARILLION. All we, and the many other Tolkien fans, knew was that this was a complete chronology of the First and Second Ages of Middle Earth. All else was speculation. And speculate we did - was it a complete narrative similar to LORD OF THE RINGS but running ten to twelve volumes or was it like the appendices, stories, and geneologies embroidered therein to create a world more complete than our own. None of us knew,

though we were longing to find out.

Now, four years after that night, THE SILMARILLION has been edited and published by Tolkien's son, Christopher. It's not a narrative, nor is it a collection of appendices. It consists of one complete volume with not only the "Quenta Silmarillion" proper, but also the "Ainahinhe", the "Valaquenta" the "Akallabeth" and "of the Rings of Power and the Third Age."

As always, an extensive set of tables has been included. These tables cover the geneologies of the important houses of the First and Second Ages, the sundering of the Elves, and index of names, and an appendix of the elements in the languages of Quenya and Sindarin.

Anwíndale, or the Music of Ainur, is the story of creation. Eru, the Holy One, thinks, and his thoughts become the Ainur his offspring. To each he gives a theme, wishing them to be in Harmony and make music. Their

music was so complete that it rose to great Light and Beauty.

In this great Harmony was Malkor, later known as Morgoth. He was strong and wanted to divert from Eru's themes. Eru's music was the stronger though, and Malkor could not overcome it.

Then Eru created a vision of the world for his offspring to behold and they had great Joy in it. Eru presented this vision to the Ainur to live in and to create with. Malkor was bitter, wanting the creation for his own and tried to distort or destroy what the others created with this world.

The second section, "Valaquenta" continues the story of the Valar (Ainur) and gives their names and their elements. This story and the following "Ainsulingala" are elaborate primers for the core of the work, "The Quenta Silmarillion".

"The Quenta Silmarillion" is the complete First Age. It tells of the beauty of the World created by the Valar, of the war Melkor started and of his

subsequent capture and imprisonment.

"And as they watched, upon the mound there came forth two slender shoots and silence was over all the world in that hour... the saplings grew and became tall and fair and thus there awoke in the world the Two Trees of Valinor.

"The one had leaves of dark green that beneath were as shining silver and from each of the countless flowers a dew of silver light was ever falling. The other bore leaves of young green, their edges were of glittering gold. Flowers formed upon the branches in clusters of yellow flame, each spilling a golden rain upon the ground."

Then the Dwarfs and Elves were created by the Valar, who persuaded the Elves to come to Valinor, across the sea, to live. The elves came and grew wise, strong and noble. They dwelt with the Valar like brothers.

Among the Elves was one who was above the rest, Feanor - most learned and skilled of his

race. With his talents, he captured the Light of the Two Trees in three gems that he wrought. So came into being the Silmarillions. So overwhelming was the beauty of these gems, that Feanor hid them away.

Meanwhile, Melkor had been released from his prison and had put on a face of repentance. Under this guise, he plotted and spread black rumours against the Valar, slowly corrupting the bliss of Valinor. When his plans were ripe, Melkor came to Valinor and poisoned the Two Trees causing them to lose their light and wither, never to sprout again.

After murdering the Trees, Melkor fled to Feanor's dwelling and stole the three Silmarillions, then fled to Middle Earth.

Feanor, enraged, pursued Melkor (now called Morgoth). Declaring revenge at any cost, he, along with a horde of Elves, set out for Middle Earth never to return. A prophesy of sorrow and hardship was laid upon them by the Valar.

The battles that ensued between the Elves and Morgoth were many and tragic. The heroic deeds of this war are too numerous to recount. Of all the heroes, the greatest was Beren, who with Luthien, crept in Morgoth's lair and wrested a single Silmarillion from his iron crown.

When all looked bleak for the Elves, they steered a single ship back towards Valinor, using the Silmarillion as their beacon. The Valar sympathized with the Elve's plight and agreed to help them. Mustering all their forces, the Valar, in one sweep, overthrew Morgoth and broke the foundations of his fortress. So ended the First Age.

Akallabeth, the Second Age, begins after the fall of Morgoth and deals chiefly with the Numanoreans and the Edain (the fathers of men).

The Numanoreans were never to set foot on Valinor (the Undying Land). However, their lust for immortality blackened their hearts, causing them to

challenge the ban of the Valar. This so enraged the Valar, that they destroyed Numanor.

"Of the Rings of Power", the last section, is the most familiar to Tolkien readers. It narrates the tale of the rings, their creation and how their power was corrupted by Saoron. The mighty struggle of the Elves and men against Saoron is portrayed as are the heroic deaths of Gil-galad and Elendil in the feat of overthrowing Saoron. Elendil's brother cuts the ring from the dead Saoron's finger, but loses it when he himself is killed by Orks.

This takes the reader to the episode in "Lord of the Rings" where Frodo brings the ring of Power to the Cracks of Doom. Thus ends the lay of the Rings.

THE SILMARILLION is Tolkien's parallel to the Old Testament; generations pass in a paragraph, wars are won and lost in a page. The book is much more complex and intricate than this synopsis leads one to believe. THE SILMARILLION definitely demands more than one reading.