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Symbols of Immortality: A Comparison of European and Elvish Heraldry

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Abstract

Reviews basics of European heraldry and attempts to deduce the rules of Tolkien's elvish heraldry. Finds that elvish heraldry seems to have rules (although less stringently applied) but considerably more artistic complexity.

Additional Keywords

Heraldry, European; Tolkien, J.R.R. Illustrations; Tolkien, J.R.R. The Lord of the Rings—Heraldry; Tolkien, J.R.R. The Silmarillion—Heraldry; Margaret R. Purdy; George Barr

Symbols of Immortality

A Comparison of European & Elvish Heraldry

Margaret R. Purdy

With the publication in the last few years of The Silmarillion and more recently the Unfinished Tales, it has become more than ever apparent how much care and attention to detail was lavished on his Secondary World of Middle-earth by J. R. R. Tolkien. All of his many talents and interests were brought into play in the service of this sub-creation: his lifelong fascination with languages inspired the invention of the Elven tongues; his study of the epics and legends of the Norse, Anglo-Saxons and others provided sources for his own mythology; his scholar's mind produced essays on the technical details of the operation of the palantiri. His artistic skills, too, his eye for color and his talent for drawing and painting, helped to bring Middle-earth to life, for himself and for others. His most striking works in this field are his pictures of places, such as Rivendell, or Taniquetil, or the forest of Lothlórien. But here again the smallest details are not neglected, and one of these details is the heraldry of Middle-earth.

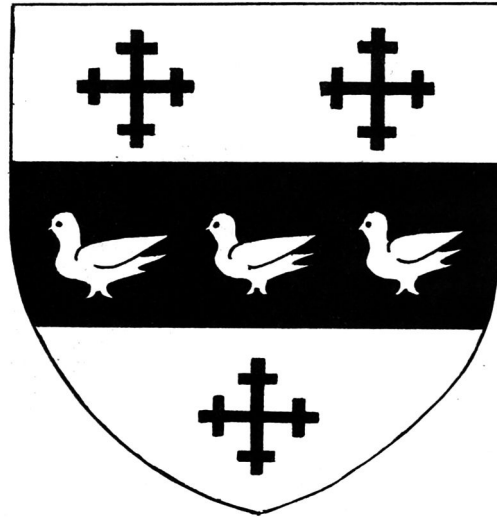
There is evidence that Tolkien had some knowledge of the heraldry of our own world,¹ and the various banners and emblems present in The Lord of the Rings--the white horse of the House of Eorl, for instance, or the swan-ship of Dol Amroth--are indeed similar to the conventional coats of arms of European heraldry. The heraldic devices of the Elves, however (which have appeared in various places, notably in the Silmarillion calendars, and which are collected as the penultimate plate of Pictures by J. R. R. Tolkien²), are strikingly different in style and conception, and it is this Elvish heraldry that I mean to compare with the European heraldry of the Primary World.

I use the terms "Elvish" and "European" advisedly. Though there are emblems shown for Men as well as Elves (e.g. Bëor, Beren, Hador), they are all Men who were closely associated with the Eldar, and these emblems were probably created either by the Elves or under their direct influence. When left to their own devices (if you'll pardon the expression), Men seem more inclined toward the European pattern, as The Lord of the Rings shows. Thus "Elvish": "European" I use to distinguish the Primary-World heraldry I will be discussing (the system developed in Europe during the Middle Ages) from the heraldic systems of the Arabs and the Oriental peoples. It might actually be called, with more accuracy, the "English" system, since the heraldic laws of the Continent vary somewhat from those of England, and it is the English rules that an American heraldic hobbyist such as myself is most likely to be familiar with; however, the differences are negligible as far as the subject of this paper is concerned.

European heraldry has been described both as an art and as a science. The artistic side of heraldry is apparent to anyone who has experienced its colorful displays; the "scientific" side of it becomes rapidly all too clear to the unwary amateur who picks up a textbook on the subject. For European heraldry follows very specific rules, and has a terminology all its own, one as esoteric and specialized, in its way, as that of physics, chemistry or biology. I still remember one of my first encounters with heraldic terminology, in a musty old bound volume of St. Nicholas Magazine. It was part of a puzzle contest: "Argent on a fess between three crosslets sable as many martlets of the field."³ Years later, when heraldry had become a hobby, I was able to go back and decipher that blazon, which describes the arms shown in Fig. 1. The three little crosses with crossed arms, by the way, are more properly called "cross-crosslets."

If there are similar rules governing Elvish heraldry,

FIG. 1



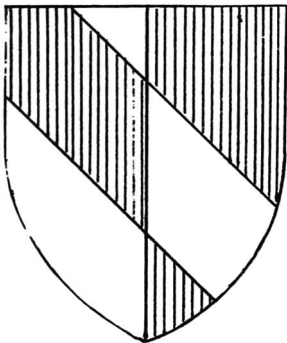
we have no knowledge of them. The heraldic devices depicted by Tolkien are never mentioned by him in any of his published writings; all we have are the devices themselves and whatever inferences we can draw from them. However, the more basic rules of European heraldry can form a model with which we can compare and contrast the Elvish craft.

One similarity between the European and the Elvish heraldic systems is that the shape of the field denotes the sex of the bearer. In European heraldry the man bears his arms on a shield, the most common form of which is the "heater-shape" as in Fig. 1 (though there are many variations upon it, ranging from the simple to the positively rococo). A lady, when her arms are displayed alone (usually when she is unmarried), bears them on a diamond-shaped field called a lozenge. In Elvish heraldry it is the male who uses the lozenge, though the European "lozenge" tends to be narrower in proportion to its height than the square-on-its-point used by Tolkien; the devices of the female characters are circular or disc-shaped (this shape would be called a "roundel" in European terms). The one possible exception to this rule is carefully labeled "House of Haleth."

European heraldry limits itself to a few basic pigments, called "tinctures." There are the five "colors"--gules (red), azure (blue), vert (green), purpure (purple) and sable (black)--the two "metals"--or (gold or yellow) and argent (silver or white)--plus a number of patterns known as "furs" which I will leave aside for the purposes of this discussion.⁴ To these is added the designation "proper," which means, more or less, the natural coloration of whatever is being depicted. In European heraldic art it is considered the best practice to use the brightest and purest possible shade of any particular color, with a minimum of artistic subtleties. In addition to this there is the rule "Color shall not be laid upon color, nor metal upon metal." Thus if the field (background) of a shield is gules, any charge (figure) laid upon it would have to be either argent or or; an argent field could bear a charge of any of the colors but not one of or.

Elvish heraldry, at first glance, does not seem to have these restrictions. Tolkien's pastel shades may be parti-

FIG. 2



CHAUCER: *Per pale argent and gules, a bend counter-changed*



SHAKESPEARE: *Or, on a bend sable a tilting-spear of the field*



ENGLAND: *Gules, three lions passant-guardant or.*

ally due to the medium in which he was working (crayon or watercolor), but the subtle shadings of color in the devices of Beren, and Idril Celebrindal, are a significant departure from the European pattern, as are the several blues in the devices of Melian and Eärendil, and the varying reds in those of Hador and Fingolfin. However, a closer look will reveal that the color/metal rule is followed more often than not, departures from it being most frequent in the devices of the female characters (though the aforementioned subtlety of color sometimes makes it hard to tell, for instance, what is supposed to be silver and what pale blue). Perhaps we could say that the color/metal rule exists as a tendency in Elvish heraldry, rather than as a law.

In neither system of heraldry do there seem to be any restrictions on what the device itself can include. In European heraldry a coat of arms can be a geometric design, a representation of a bird, beast, flower, tree, or practically any other object in the known universe, or a combination of the two. Examples are shown in Fig. 2: the arms of Chaucer are purely abstract; the familiar lions of England are taken from the natural world (although admittedly no real lion ever looked quite like the heraldic variety); and the arms of Shakespeare combine the two forms, the "spear" of the Bard's name being added to the geometric pattern of field and bend. Elvish heraldry shows a similar range of styles: the device of Hador, and the intricate emblem of

Melian, seem to be purely abstract patterns; Lúthien's two devices, and that of Gil-galad, combine such natural objects as flowers and stars in geometric forms; and finally the devices of Beren and Finrod Felagund are basically depictions of natural objects, Finrod's harp and torch being one of the simplest examples of Elvish heraldry. Elvish devices, however, have a strong tendency toward radial symmetry, not unlike the "hex signs" of the Pennsylvania Dutch. Departures from this style are few, Finrod's being the most striking example, and the focus of these is still often the center point of the design (Beren, Hador). European arms, if they are symmetrical at all, will usually be bilaterally symmetrical. The shape of the field probably has a good deal to do with these tendencies.

The inspiration of some of the Elvish devices also seems similar to that of many European arms. Those arms which are not simply a pleasing pattern in somebody's favorite colors are often either puns on the name of the bearer ("canting arms"), or allusions to his deeds or events in his life. Well-known examples of the former are the swallows ("hirondelles" in French) of the Earls of Arundel, and the pike-fish ("luces") of the family of Lucy. As for the latter, a more recent example is the arms of William Herschel, the astronomer, which include a representation of a telescope. Among the Elvish devices we can note the stars in the emblem of Gil-galad ("Star of Radiance") and the flame-patterns in that of Fëanor ("Spirit of Fire");⁵ while the device of Beren, depicting the Silmariil, the severed hand, and the triple peak of Thangorodrim, obviously alludes to the events of the hero's life.

One of the major differences between European and Elvish heraldry lies in the matter of complexity. The patterns used by the Elves can display an intricacy of design and subtlety of coloring that is totally foreign to European arms. Outstanding examples of these qualities are the devices of the female characters, Melian, Idril, and the two emblems of Lúthien Tinúviel. I have reproduced Melian's device twice now for two artistic projects, and I can testify that it is even more intricate than it looks; I have never even attempted to reproduce the delicate shadings of blue in the device of Idril Celebrindal. Many of the male characters, too, go in for fairly intricate abstract designs; Fëanor's device is an example.

European heraldry, on the other hand, at its best remains quite simple in design. The arms shown in Fig. 2 are all examples of this simplicity, both in form and in color. It is only in relatively modern times that more complicated forms have come into existence, and part of the reason for this is sheer population pressure; all of the simple designs have been used already. European heraldry is also complicated by the addition of all sorts of accoutrements to the central shield. A typical heraldic achievement will include a helmet, wreath, mantling, crest, and motto in addition to the shield; if the bearer is noble, there may also be a coronet and supporters, as well as a compartment for the supporters to stand upon. (All of these components of the achievement are governed by rules of their own, of course.) A man may be entitled to more than one crest; he may have a war-cry in addition to his motto; he may be a member of a knightly order (such as the Order of the Garter) whose decorations will be included in his achievement. The coat of arms of the Mythopoeic Society is a good example of a heraldic achievement (see Fig. 3). The Elves seem, perhaps mercifully, to have escaped this sort of complication entirely.

The other great source of complexity in European arms is what is technically known as "marshalling." Marshalling has to do with family relationships and genealogy. It begins with a married couple, both of whom come from armigerous families. If the woman has a brother, and thus is not entitled to pass the arms down to her children (yes, European heraldry is notoriously sexist), the man's shield is simply split down the middle, with his arms displayed on the dexter side of the shield (the right-hand side, from the point of view of a person holding the shield) and his wife's on the other, or sinister side (see Fig. 4a). This is called "impaling." If, on the other hand, the woman has no

brothers, and thus will pass her family's arms down to her children, her arms are displayed on a little shield ("escutcheon") in the center of her husband's (see Fig. 4b). This is called an "escutcheon of pretence." Her children will then "quarter" the arms of their father and mother (see Fig. 4c). So far so good. But the real complications set in when more "armorial heiresses" enter the family line. The English and Continental systems have different methods of handling the multiplicity of quarterings that result (get a herald to tell you about "Grand Quartering" sometime), but in any case after a few generations of this the shield begins to look more like a patchwork quilt than a coat of arms.⁶

Closely related to marshalling is the concept of "differencing." By heraldic law no two living men may bear exactly the same coat of arms, but on the other hand family relationships are stressed in heraldry. Thus every male descendant of a certain family line will bear the same basic coat of arms, but with variations depending on his exact relationship to the senior line. In earlier times this differencing was done in many ways, such as keeping the forms of the ancestral shield but changing the colors, making some alteration in one or more of the charges, and so on. Later on more formal systems were developed for differencing that, if you knew them well enough, would tell you not only what family a man belonged to, but whether he was a first, second, third or whatever son, what the seniority of his father was, and even whether or not he was illegitimate. Modern English and Scottish heraldry still maintain very consistent systems of what are technically known as "cadency marks."

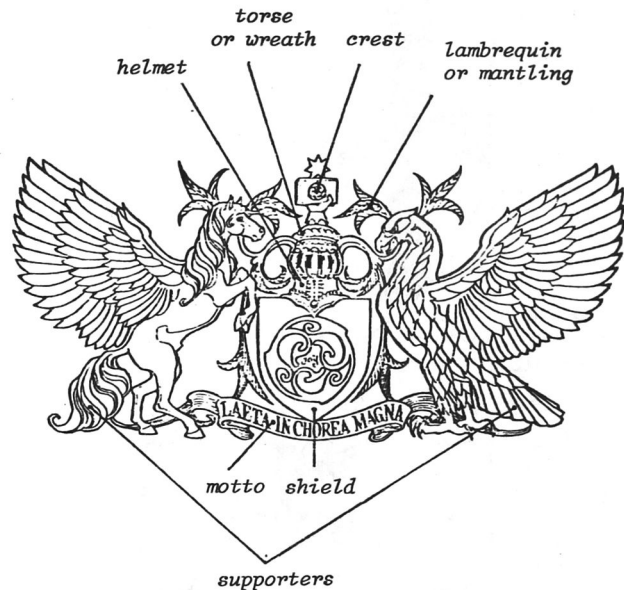
All of these genealogical implications are almost totally missing in Elvish heraldry. There is no indication that Elvish heraldic devices were hereditary; on the contrary, each Elven prince or princess had a personal one. (Note that Elvish heraldry is not sexist.) Fëanor and Fingolfin have their own emblems rather than variations of their father Finwë's, though there is a certain "family resemblance" apparent in the designs. European and Elvish heraldry, in fact, are very different in what they represent. A European coat of arms belongs to and stands for a family; an Elvish heraldic device is the property and symbol of a single individual.

For the reasons behind the great differences between European and Elvish heraldry we must turn to their origins. European heraldry evolved on the battlefield. With the advent of body armor, including helmets that covered the entire head and face, a knight in combat became totally unrecognizable. Some method of identification was needed to allow the fighters to distinguish friend from foe. Thus knights began adopting symbols with which they would adorn their surcoats (hence "coat of arms"), shields, horse blankets, banners, and any other large flat surface that was handy. Since these devices had to be identifiable at very short notice (like between the time an approaching knight spotted you and the time he threw his battleaxe at you or hit you over the head with his mace), they were for the most part simple and straightforward, with bright colors and lots of contrast (hence the rule of color upon metal and metal upon color).

Examples of this sort of heraldic usage appear in The Lord of the Rings, though banners and flags are more apparent than personal arms. The white horse of Rohan floats above the Rohirrim as they make their famous charge in the Battle of the Pelennor fields; the black serpent upon scarlet leads Théoden to his Southron foes; and the White Tree of Gondor and the seven stars of Elendil displayed on the prow of Aragorn's ship proclaim to the forces of the West that their king has returned.

Other components of the heraldic achievement have a similar military origin: the helmet with its decorative crest, the wreath, the mantling or lambrequin (in origin a piece of cloth worn to keep the sun off one's armor), and the martial war-cry. The origin of supporters is uncertain, but one idea is that they represent the fancifully-dressed

FIG. 3: A HERALDIC ACHIEVEMENT



figures who displayed a knight's shield to the crowd at a tournament.⁸

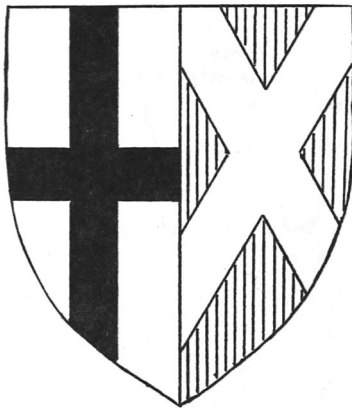
European heraldry did not confine itself to the battlefield, however; if it had, it would most probably not have survived to the present day. It was when it came home from the wars and settled down to a respectable family life that its success was assured. Since it was the nobility and gentry who comprised the knights in armor, the possession of a coat of arms became a symbol of noble or gentle birth. Once it was associated with a man's birth and rank, the next step was making the honor hereditary, and eventually the coat of arms came to stand for the entire family line.

We do not know the origins of Elvish heraldry; however, it is a safe guess that it was not on the field of battle. In all the descriptions of battles in The Silmarillion there is no mention of coats of arms, only a few references to banners and only one mention of their colors;⁹ furthermore, the text does not seem to indicate that Elves or Men ever wore helmets that concealed their faces (the Dwarves did wear masks in battle, as did Túrin at one time, and this was noted as unusual¹⁰). It would not be difficult, in any case, to tell an Elf from an Orc or a Balrog. Add to these indications the fact that Elvish heraldry does not share the European variety's penchant for simple designs and bright, flat, primary colors and it would seem that instant recognition in combat was not the original goal of these devices. One can imagine them, perhaps, meticulously embroidered on a cloak, or inlaid in the walls of a great hall, or even as stained-glass windows. The devices of the male characters, at any rate, may eventually have come into use as shields or banners, especially in Middle-earth, which may partially account for the fact that their devices are in general not as complex as those of the female characters. The stars of Gil-galad do seem to have migrated to his shield, at least by the Second Age ("The countless stars of heaven's field/Were mirrored in his silver shield"¹¹), though the field of the device shown is blue.

Exactly when some of the devices were invented is something of a puzzle, too; if the emblem of Finwë is indeed, as Christopher Tolkien claims,¹² a winged sun, then it must have been devised after the death of Finwë himself, since the Sun was not even in existence during Finwë's lifetime. It is not unknown for later heralds to devise posthumous arms for historical figures, however—even Adam had arms attributed to him by medieval heralds—and

FIG. 4: MARSHALLING

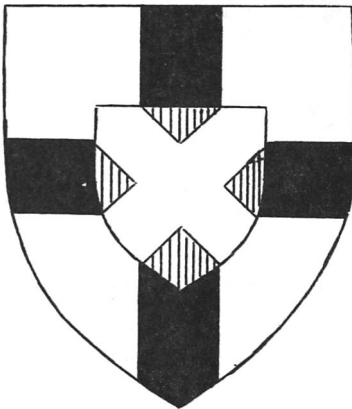
A. IMPALED ARMS



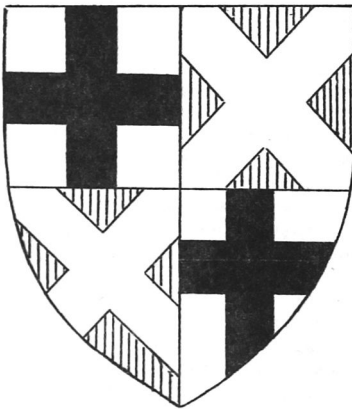
Husband's
arms

Wife's
arms

B. ESCUTCHEON OF PRETENCE



C. QUARTERED ARMS



something of this sort may have occurred in Finwë's case. We must also keep in mind the fact that Elves can be reincarnated.

Many of the devices shown are those of Noldorin Elves, and since the Noldor were skilled in crafts it is not inconceivable that the maker's mark may have been one of the forerunners of Elvish heraldry; either the lozenge or the round shape would be eminently suitable for a stamp or imprint. Seals were a factor in the development of European heraldry, and they may have contributed to the genesis of Elvish heraldry as well. There is really no evidence to support these notions, however, and neither would account for the subtle use of color in the Elvish devices. Perhaps the most likely origin for Elvish heraldic devices is simply the wish to have one's own identifying symbol, a thing of beauty that will also express something about oneself to

whoever sees it. That is certainly much of the motivation behind the requests I get, as an amateur herald, to help devise coats of arms for people.

The stress placed on the individual rather than the family line in Elvish heraldry is much easier to explain than the origins of the devices themselves; it is in fact supremely logical for an immortal race. Under normal circumstances, generations of Elves do not succeed one another in the fashion of mortal races; they co-exist as equal adults for ages unbounded. An Elf's potential immortality resides primarily in himself, and only secondarily in his or her offspring. The only immortality a Man can be certain of (since his fate after death is unknown) lies in his children and his children's children. It is possible that the devices made by the Elves for their friends among Men were sometimes later adopted as family symbols: the designation "House of Halëth" seems to suggest this.

A symbol, too, you see, is potentially immortal; like a memory, it can live on long after the death of the one who inspired it. The heraldry of our world symbolizes our immortality through generation, and serves as a remembrance of bygone ages. Likewise the heraldry of the Elven peoples preserves the memory of the vanished heroes of the Eldar, though they come no more to these Hither Shores.

Footnotes

¹ See Miriam Y. Miller, "The Green Sun: A Study of Color in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*," in *Mythlore* 27, Winter 1981 (Los Angeles: The Mythopoeic Society, 1981): pp. 5-6 for examples of Tolkien's use of heraldic language.

² J. R. R. Tolkien, with Foreword and Notes by Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979): Plate No. 47. According to Christopher Tolkien, all sixteen devices also appeared in *The Silmarillion Calendar 1979* published by George Allen and Unwin. Since it is impossible to reproduce these devices adequately in black and white, it would be most helpful for the reader to have one of these sources available.

³ "Books and Reading," *St. Nicholas Magazine*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, January 1901 (New York: The Century Co., 1901): p. 262.

⁴ And yes, for the heraldic purists among you, I am also leaving out the rare colors "sanguine" and "tenné," as well as the Continental "cerulean."

⁵ Mentioned by Christopher Tolkien in *Pictures*, in the notes to Plate 47

⁶ A good example of the genesis and results of such a "patchwork" appears in *Simple Heraldry Cheerfully Illustrated* by Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk, B.T., O.S.T.J., Ph.D., F.S.A., Advocate, Albany Herald of Arms and Don Pottinger, O.S.T.J., M.A.(hons), D.A., Unicorn Pursuivant of Arms (New York: Mayflower Books, 1979): pp. 23-25. The book is one of the liveliest, most colorful and most painless introductions to heraldry that I have run across.

⁷ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965): pp. 112, 114-115, 118, 123.

⁸ A. C. Fox-Davies, *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1978): p. 407. The story may not in fact be true, as Fox-Davies points out, but even that it was suggested is indicative of the atmosphere surrounding the development of heraldry.

⁹ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977): p. 108.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 193, 210

¹¹ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Boston:

undergo in order to become ingestible by humans, requires time and knowledge. Its consistency alters from hard to fluid; its color, from black to red, similar to Vainamoinen's nervous system which was heated and bruned with ardor for love of Louhi's daughter. The redness or fire of passion he felt in her presence had aroused sparks within him, influencing his countenance as well as his actions. Its incandescence had liquefied what had once been solid within him, spreading chaos, blindness throughout his system. So sightless had he become that when felling the tree to make his ship, he failed to pay complete attention to his task. His thoughts, like ductile metallic elements, flowed toward the object of his passion, the girl. The anima figure, unpredictable as an autonomous force in his unconscious, had caused him great harm. The joint that allowed him to walk, run, jump through life on a steady keel had been injured. Now he would have to apply particles of iron in their flaming state to his wound, to cauterize it and staunch the flow of blood. Only then will he contain the life force within him and purify the noxious and debilitating powers that caused such damage.

In time, Vainamoinen learns the secrets of iron. He returns to the Old Man and tells him: "I know the origin of iron" (p. 47). Satisfied with Vainamoinen's progress, the senex figure evokes the charm which checks the flow of blood. He also prepares an ointment that will "exorcise" the pain experienced during the healing process. Not only are pain and discomfort to be reckoned with in the physical sphere, when bones and flesh are mending; they are also part of the psychological process--as the split in the personality gradually fuses. To test the efficacy of the unguent, the Old Man mends some huge boulders, seals crevices in the mountains. He then bandages Vainamoinen's knee with strips of silk.

Then old Vainamoinen already felt a real relief. He soon got well, his flesh grew fair... healthier than before, finer than in the past (p. 54).

Vainamoinen raises his "eyes upward" in gratitude. The pain of the ordeal he has experienced has taught him that bravado and arrogance nearly severed his knee--his personality. What he has not yet understood, however, is that despite the iron's hardness and strength, it rusts and flakes when exposed too long to the elements. So too the anima, when projected indiscriminately and unconsciously onto another person, can likewise lead to a fragmented psyche.

When Vainamoinen finally reaches home he suggests to Ilmarinen, Master Smith and beater of iron, that he make a Sampo. Second in rank to the shaman, the smith in northern medieval times was constantly at work in the community to ward off evil spirits. Since he handles fire, forging instruments of war as well as for sorcery, he was believed to be a seer able to penetrate inner realms where metal is born and evolves.¹⁹ The Kalevala gives the entire history of iron, from its creation and gestation to the finished product. Identified with intelligence the forge and the smith--Ilmarinen in this case--were frequently associated with the fire of thought and meditation, and with the libido as well. That a forger succeeded in hammering a finished article out of a formless mass, made him a miracle worker and his forge, a theophany in primitive societies.

Ilmarinen arrives at North Farm and goes to work to bring the Sampo into existence. In a breathlessly exciting as well as terrifying interlude, the reader is shown the smith at work. The fire blazes, burns, and glows. From within its flowing embers, which Ilmarinen observes with extreme attention, there first emerges the bow of a boat. He removes it from the flames, examines it, is dissatisfied, smashes it, and throws it back. The same thing happens with other forms that he shapes: a heifer with golden horns, a plow with silver handles. A perfectionist, only a flawless object will satisfy his creative urge.

Then on the third day he came upon a marbled stone, a big block of rock. There the craftsman stopped, the smith built a fire; one day he made a bellows, the next he set up the forge, the craftsman Ilmarinen, eternal smith,

thrust the things into the fire, his work down to the bottom of the forge (p. 59).

Ilmarinen's forge is reminiscent of the great furnaces worked by the Taoist masters, those organizers of the created world, fashioners of so many wonder-working instruments. It also recalls the Nibelung dwarfs who shaped the magic helmet, Tarnhelm, and the mysterious sword, Nothung, in Wagner's *Ring* cycle.²⁰ As the fire blazes, the bellows sound, the anvil rings, so the Finnish counterpart of the Grek Goid Hephaestus, indulges in the alchemical dictum: *Solve et Coagula*--nothing substantial and valuable can be made until the hardest of elements can be made to flow like water; only then are new unions and alloys brought into existence; psychologically speaking, a reconstituting of views and attitudes toward life.

Ilmarinen's forging of the Sampo ushers in a whole new dimension into The Kalevala: the personification of metals, the humanization of inanimate forces. Nature, both within and without the earth seems to awaken, to tingle with life and activity, energized as if by some spectacular force. As the fire burns and glares, the molten metal acquires an audible voice. The shriek of the metal as it burns, and then is hammered and shaped, is again symbolic of the difficulties involved in trying to change one's life course, in altering the accustomed thrust of certain habits and relationships. The Sampo, like the Philosopher's Stone, is a complexio oppositorum. Within its essence lies a treasure, a mysterious alliage, a meditative device similar to a mandala, healing those who see into it and learn from the experience.

Ilmarinen, the Master Smith, brings the Sampo into being on the third day.

He bent down to look at the bottom of his forge; he saw that a Sampo was being born, a lid of many colors forming. Then craftsman Ilmarinen, eternal smith, taps away fast, pounds away spiritedly. He forged the Sampo skillfully: on one side a grain mill, on the second side a salt mill, on the third a money mill. Then the new Sampo ground away, the lid of many colors went round and round; it ground a binful in the dawn, one binful of things to eat; it ground a second of things to sell, a third of household supplies (p. 60).

The Sampo incarnated the needs of a culture, of a people whose lives were arduous and whose future was always precarious. As such, it brought happiness and prosperity to North Farm. It was composed of commodities of all types, foods and staples that were lacking in the workaday world. The Sampo fed both spiritually and physically, the hungry and starving communities. As a hierophany, it answered a deep-seated desire: humankind's wish to be connected with celestial and earthly spheres, thereby empowering them to block out and immobilize evil forces. Winter snows and iced-over waterways that made hunting and fishing so difficult were some of the nearly overwhelming odds against which these northern peoples struggled. The Sampo's presence developed in the people a new sense of belonging that helped them stave off melancholy, feelings of loneliness and alienation which corroded their beings during the long bleak winter months. The Sampo represented activity, fertility, and hope for those who believed in its power.

Footnotes

18. The occult and Curative Powers of Precious Stones, p. 468.
19. Shamanism, p. 470.
20. Robert Donnington, Wagner's 'Ring' and its Symbols, p. 98.

continued from page 22

Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965): p. 198

¹² Pictures: notes to Plate 47