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Book Notes of: *“Something Has Gone Crack”*: *New Perspectives on J.R.R. Tolkien in the Great War* (ed. by Janet Brennan Croft and Annika Rottinger) and *The Fall of Númenor* by J.R.R. Tolkien (ed. by Brian Sibley)

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Book Notes

***“Something Has Gone Crack”: New Perspectives on J.R.R. Tolkien in the Great War.* Edited by Janet Brennan Croft and Annika Rottinger. Zollikofen: Walking Tree Publishers, 2019.**

This title examines J.R.R. Tolkien’s World War I experience and its profound impact on his body of work. Section one surveys the Great War as a whole, specifically its codes of conduct, strategic blunders, and the concept of total war, all of which are reflected in the wars of Middle-earth. Next, Section two assesses Tolkien’s personal participation in the Great War, focusing on his trauma and recovery. Section three outlines major themes in Tolkien’s legendarium and attributes their origins to his war experiences. Finally, Section four discusses how the World War I shaped Tolkien’s views of race, class, gender, and sexuality and analyzes alterity in his work. This volume’s plethora of perspectives, along with its maps, graphics, and chronologies, will prove essential to future studies on Tolkien and the Great War.

CHLOE DUBOIS

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fall of Númenor.* Edited by Brian Sibley. New York: William Morrow, 2022.

Tolkien enthusiasts will immediately recognize the title of this book as similar to the portion of *The Silmarillion* entitled “Akallabêth,” which is a very abbreviated history of the Second Age of Middle-earth. The climactic moment of the Second Age (although not its conclusion, as Tolkien is careful to note) comes when the wicked king Ar-Pharazôn the Golden sails to Valinor in rebellion against the Valar, and Ilúvatar responds in judgment by pulling down the entire island of Númenor into the oceanic abyss. This book, prepared by Tolkien scholar Brian Sibley, tells the full tale of the Second Age through portions curated from both canonical and extra-canonical texts in Tolkien’s legendarium.

The material in this book comes primarily from *The Silmarillion* and *Unfinished Tales*, with applicable snippets from *The Lord of the Rings* and *The History of Middle-earth* series. As such, there is not much here that will be new to those readers already familiar with *Unfinished Tales*. However, this book is ideal for readers of *The Silmarillion* who wish to delve deeper into the history of the Second Age. The book presents a chronology of the Second Age in

the format of annals, chronicling the line of Númenorean kings and queens, as well as key events in the Second Age such as Sauron and Celebrimbor forging the Rings of Power, the tragic romantic tale of the mariner Aldarion and his wife Erendis, and the early exploits of Sauron and the Ringwraiths in Middle-earth before being defeated by Ar-Pharazôn of Númenor.

This work includes the elegant artwork of illustrator Alan Lee—both his signature pencil drawings as well as several full-color plates. Other portions of the book that this reviewer found particularly delightful include an extensive description of the land, flora, and fauna of Númenor (“The Natural Life of Númenor”), additional details not found in *The Silmarillion* regarding the forging of the great rings, and a long conversation between Elendil the Tall and his son Herendil (a.k.a. Isildur) from Tolkien’s unfinished novel *The Lost Road* (“Appendix B”). This book would be a welcome addition to the collection of any Tolkien enthusiast who also enjoyed the curated editions of “The Great Tales of Middle-earth”: *Beren and Lúthien*, *The Children of Húrin*, and *The Fall of Gondolin*.

JOEL D. RUARK