

A MYSTERY IN THE SILMARILLION

Professor Corey Olsen
Mythgard Institute

A Mystery in the Silmarillion

1. Calculating Time Frames

Original	Revised	Event
2000-2100	2000-2010	Teleri on shores of Beleriand
2100-2200	2010-2110	Teleri in Tol Eressëa
2200	2111	Teleri to Valinor
2990-1	2998	Destruction of Trees
2991	2998-3000	Rebellion of Fëanor
2992	SY 29991	Kinslaying
2993	SY 29992	Doom of Mandos
2994	SY 29994	Burning of the ships
2995	SY 29995	Camp in Mithrim
2996	-----	Battle Under Stars
2997	SY 29996	Capture of Maidros

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2. A Florid Summary

In **2993** it is said they came to a place where a high rock stands above the shores, and there stood either Mandos or his messenger and spoke the Doom of Mandos. For the kin-slaying he cursed the house of Fëanor, and to a less degree all who followed them or shared in their emprise, unless they would return to abide the doom and pardon of the Valar. But if they would not, then should evil fortune and disaster befall them, and ever from treachery of kin towards kin; and their oath should turn against them; and a measure of mortality should visit them, that they should be lightly slain with weapons, or torments, or sorrow, and in the end fade and wane before the younger race. And much else he foretold darkly that after befell, warning them that the Valar would fence Valinor against their return. (267)

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3. More Than Summary

The Valian Year **2000** is accounted the Noontide of the Blessed Realm, and the full season of the mirth of the Gods. Then did Varda make the stars and set them aloft, and thereafter some of the Valarindi strayed into the Middle-earth, and among them was Melian, whose voice was renowned in Valmar. But she returned not thither for many ages, and the nightingales sang about her in the dark woods of the Western Lands.

At the first shining of the Sickle of the Gods which Varda set above the North as a threat to Morgoth and an omen of his fall, the elder children of Ilúvatar awoke in the midmost of the World: they are the Elves. (264)

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4. An Inadequate Replacement

In the Valian Year **500**: Morgoth destroyed by deceit the Lamps which Aulë made for the lighting of the World, and the Valar, save Morgoth, retired to the West and built there Valinor between the Outer Seas that surround the Earth and the Great Seas of the West, and on the shores of these they piled great mountains. But the symmetry of land and sea was first broken in those days. (263)

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5. A Very Inadequate Replacement

Morgoth now completed his designs and with the aid of Ungoliantë out of Arvalin stole back into Valinor, and destroyed the Trees, escaping in the gathering dark northward, where he sacked the dwellings of Fëanor, and carried off a host of jewels, among them the Silmarils; and he slew Finwë and many Elves and thus defiled Valinor and began slaughter in the World. (265-266)

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6. The Key! The Key!

The first version given here is certainly the oldest, and is perhaps earlier than the Modern English. (281)

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7. A Comparison

I. Þeos gesegen wearþ ærest on bókum gesett of Pengolode þám Úpwtan of Gondoline ær þám þe héo abrocen wurde, ⁊ siþþan æt Sirigeones Hýthe, ⁊ æt Tafrobele on Toleressean (þæt is Ánetíge), æfter þám þe he eft west cóm; ⁊ héo wearþ þær gerædd and geþíedd of Ælfwine, þám þe ielfe Eriol genemdon.

Frumsceaft Hér ærest worhte Ilúfatar, þæt is Ealfæder oþþe Heofonfæder oþþe Beorhtfæder, eal þing. (281)

(These and the *Annals of Beleriand* were written by Pengolod the Wise of Gondolin, before its fall, and after at Sirion's Haven, and at Tavrobel in Tol Eressëa after his return unto the West, and there seen and translated by Eriol of Leithien, that is Ælfwine of the Angelcynn.)

Here begin the Annals of Valinor

0 At the beginning Ilúvatar, that is 'Allfather', made all things . . .
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8. Glancing at the Big Picture

And even as they came the First Ages of the World were ended; and these are reckoned as 30000 years or **3000** years of the Valar; whereof the first Thousand was before the Trees, and Two Thousand save nine were Years of the Trees or of the Holy Light, which lived after and lives yet only in the Silmarils. And the Nine are the Years of Darkness or the Darkening of Valinor. (269)

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9. A New Thing

But towards the end of this time as is elsewhere told the Gods made the Sun and Moon and sent them forth over the World, and light came unto the Hither Lands. And Men awoke in the East of the World even at the first Dawn.

But with the first Moonrise Fingolfin set foot upon the North; for the Moonrise came ere the Dawn, even as Silpion of old bloomed ere Laurelin and was the elder of the Trees. But the first Dawn shone upon Fingolfin's march, and his banners blue and silver were unfurled, and flowers sprang beneath his marching feet, for a time of opening and growth was come into the Earth, and good of evil as ever happens. (269)

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10. Nienna's Journey Begins

To Vê Fui came not much, for she laboured rather at the distilling of salt humours whereof are tears, and black clouds she wove and floated up that they were caught in the winds and went about the world, and their lightless webs settled ever and anon upon those that dwelt therein. Now these tissues were despairs and hopeless mourning, sorrows and blind grief. The hall that she loved best was one yet wider and more dark than Vê, and she too named it with her own name, calling it Fui. Therein before her black chair burnt a brazier with a single flickering coal, and the roof was of bats' wings, and the pillars that upheld it and the walls about were made of basalt. Thither came the sons of Men to hear their doom, and thither are they brought by all the multitude of ills that Melko's evil music set within the world. Slaughters and fires, hungers and mishaps, diseases and blows dealt in the dark, cruelty and bitter cold and anguish and their own folly bring them here; and Fui reads their hearts. Some then she keeps in Mandos beneath the mountains and some she drives forth beyond the hills and Melko seizes them and bears them to Angamandi, or the Hells of Iron, where they have evil days. Some too, and these are the many, she sends aboard the black ship Mornië, who lieth ever and anon in a dark harbour of the North awaiting those times when the sad pomp winds to the beach down slow rugged paths from Mandos. (77)

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11. Nienna Promoted

Vana was his spouse, the Queen of Flowers, the younger sister of Varda and Palúrien, and the beauty both of heaven and of earth is in her face and in her works. Yet mightier than she is Nienna who dwells with Nefantur Mandos. Pity is in her heart, and mourning and weeping come to her, but shadow is her realm and night her throne. (Quenta 1, 79)

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12. Nienna's Apotheosis

Of these Manwë and Melko were most puissant and were brethren, and Manwë was lord of the Valar and holy; but Melko turned to lust and pride and violence and evil, and his name is accursed, and is not uttered, but he is called Morgoth. The spouses of the Valar were Varda, and Yavanna, who were sisters; and Vana; and the sister of Oromë, Nessa the wife of Tulkas; and Uinen lady of the Seas; and Nienna sister of Manwë and Melko; and Estë. (263)

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13. Divine Nepotism

In **2900** Morgoth sued for pardon, and at the prayers of Nienna his sister, and by the clemency of Manwë his brother, but against the wish of Tulkas and Aulë, he was released, and feigned humility and repentance, obeisance to the Valar, and love and friendship for the Elves, and dwelt in Valinor in ever-increasing freedom. But he lied and dissembled, and most he cozened the Noldoli, for he had much to teach, and they had an over-mastering desire to learn; but he coveted their gems and lusted for the Silmarils. (265)

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14. Anticipating Nargothrond

But Fëanor hardened his heart and held on, and so also but reluctantly did Fingolfin's folk, feeling the constraint of their kindred and fearing for the doom of the Gods (for not all of Fingolfin's house had been guiltless of the kin-slaying). Felagund and the other sons of Finrod went forward also, for they had aforetime great fellowship, Felagund with the sons of Fingolfin, and Orodreth, Angrod and Egnor with Celegorm and Curufin sons of Fëanor. (267)