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## PROSIMETRUM, THE MIXED STYLE, IN TOLKIEN'S WORK *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*<sup>1</sup>

The study deals with prosimetrum, the mixed style, in the work *The Lord of the Rings* of J.R.R. Tolkien, professor of Old English and Old English literature. The author of this article first briefly demonstrates that prosimetrum occurs in ancient literature in various literary genres and not only in Menippean satire, as has previously been supposed. From ancient literature this phenomenon found its way into medieval literature where it occupied a fixed place; to a smaller extent, prosimetrum can be recognized in modern literature as well. Tolkien's Oxonian education and his academic background guarantee that the existence of prosimetrum, the mixed style, in Greek and Latin literature was nothing new to him. In the book *The Lord of the Rings*, which has ca. 1100 pages, a very large number of verses included in the prose text can be found – altogether 1138 lines in 95 places. The extent of the verse passages considerably varies; we can come across one or two verses as well as extensive passages consisting of several tens of lines. Although the verses in Tolkien are not frequently stylistically incorporated into the prose text, the author shows that the prosimetrum in *The Lord of the Rings* is nevertheless stylistically totally relevant prosimetrum, in which the story unfolds, continues and brings new information.

Prosimetrum, the alternation of prose and verse, is a very old phenomenon, which existed in different national literatures. But what function did this prosimmetrical style perform in ancient Greek and Roman literature? This question interested several scholars, but their opinions were often at variance with each other. As regards the origin of the prosimmetrical style in Greek literature, mainly two opposite views prevail; the prosimetrum is either assumed to be an outcome of local Greek development or a literary phenomenon 'imported' from the Orient.

The point at issue is, however, not only the question of the origin of the prosimmetrical style; not even the basic function of prosimetrum had been satisfactorily defined for a long time. The occurrence of this style in ancient Greek and Roman literature was usually associated with the so-called Menippean satire, a favourite genre in Greece in the post-classical periods, produced particularly by

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the Cynic philosopher of the third century BC Menippus and later by Meleager (ca. 100 BC) and Lucian (author of the second century AD), all of whom were born in Syria. From Greek literature this literary tradition penetrated into Roman writings; prosimetrum is attested in the first century BC in the work of Varro and in the first century AD it reached the final stage of its Roman development in a short, but exquisitely elaborated Menippean satire called *Apocolocyntosis* and ascribed to L. Annaeus Seneca. Besides the works of the above-mentioned authors, prosimetrum appears in the writings of many other men of letters, especially in the later periods of ancient literature; nevertheless, only a small portion of this literary production can be taken for Menippean satire. Prosimetrum later entered medieval literature as well as the works of the Renaissance authors.

This bewildering situation, caused by the lack of broader theoretical approach to these problems, inspired me to carry out a thorough examination of the occurrence of the prosimetrical style in its most typical ancient exemplifications.

Studying the mixed (prosimetrical) style of ancient literature, I explored the methods employed by various authors in incorporating verses into prose contexts ever since the pre-Menippean period, especially after Menippus of Gadara.<sup>2</sup> In this analysis, I focused on writings that can be classed under the heading of Menippean satire as well as on other works which, in my opinion, exhibited characteristics of the mixed style in the most conspicuous way. Particular attention was paid to the mixed style of Plato, Lucian<sup>3</sup> and the Greek and Roman romances (the former including the pseudo-Callisthenes' romance about Alexander the Great, Chariton's romance and those by Heliodorus, Achilles Tatius and Xenophon Ephesius<sup>4</sup>; the latter including *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri* and Julius Valerius' *Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis*, a Latin translation of the pseudo-Callisthenes' romance<sup>5</sup>). I also made an analysis of what is extant of Varro's *Saturae Menippeae*<sup>6</sup>, Petronius' *Satyricon*, Seneca's<sup>7</sup> *Apocolocyntosis*, the work bearing the name of the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, the writings of the Emperor Julian, the encyclopaedic work by Martianus Capella<sup>8</sup> *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* and Boethius'<sup>9</sup> *De consolazione Philosophiae*. Naturally, the list of authors using mixed style is not hereby exhausted. My investigation did not cover philological or historical works; the verses incorporated into them serve mainly the purpose of quotation. Nor were the writings of the so-called encyclopaedists and similar authors included; the very object of these writings 'made' their authors adduce verses of previous poets (Martianus Capella's work, however, received

<sup>2</sup> BARTOŇKOVÁ 1969.

<sup>3</sup> BARTOŇKOVÁ 1971.

<sup>4</sup> BARTOŇKOVÁ 1972.

<sup>5</sup> BARTOŇKOVÁ 1973–4.

<sup>6</sup> BARTOŇKOVÁ 1979.

<sup>7</sup> BARTOŇKOVÁ 1977–8a.

<sup>8</sup> BARTOŇKOVÁ 1977–8b.

<sup>9</sup> BARTOŇKOVÁ 1973.

my attention because some books of his work undoubtedly do display features of Menippean satire).

In this treatise, I would like to consider, first of all, what is to be taken for a genuine, stylistically 'totally relevant' prosimetrum. The majority of scholars speak only generally about the alternating of prose and verse or about the mixing of prose with verse. When analyzing their studies, I realized that they included in this phenomenon even mere automatic quotations of verse, e.g. from Homer, Hesiod or Euripides, in a prose context.

In my opinion, it is not possible to level each use of verse in a prose context; on the contrary, in each case it is necessary to consider the function of the inserted lines and the manner of their insertion into the prose narrative. If we approach these problems from a quite formal point of view, we should actually recognize as an instance of prosimetrum even quotations of verse in the most general sense of the word such as citations of various authentic statements in verse, quotations of prophecies, inscriptions in verse, etc. In these cases, however, the author had practically no other possibility because the use of verse was determined by purely factographic reasons.

Thus, the actual beginnings of the stylistically relevant prosimetrical phenomena in prose works are, in my opinion, to be seen only in such cases where the author had, in fact, full freedom to express his ideas in current prose, but for various reasons (emotion, parody, effort to show off learning or for the sake of clarifying his idea) he resorted to verses of previous poets or preferred his own creative poetic work.

On the basis of my long-term research, I arrived at the conclusion that in ancient narrative prose two specific types of prosimetrum can be distinguished, namely poetic quotations of other authors and insertions of verses composed on one's own.

The first type of prosimetrum, which might be termed 'topical', is based on the use of verses of other authors and, with a few exceptions, consists of short poetic passages mostly of only one or a few lines of verse. This kind of prosimetrum – stylistically very often 'totally relevant' – is typical especially of compositions which fully deserve to be termed Menippean satire. Within the scope of Greek literary output we find among them a number of works by Lucian and two satires written by Julian, *Symposion* and *Misopogon*; Latin writings of the discussed type include above all Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* and perhaps the first two books of the encyclopaedic work of Martianus Capella. Last but not least, Varro's *Saturae Menippeae* should also be mentioned at this point.

The second fundamental line of development of the ancient prosimetrum can be traced back to the first century AD; this type of prosimetrum appears in the works of certain writers, in which we find rather extensive poetic insertions, for the most part verses composed by the author himself and as such intended to demonstrate the author's ability to compose poetry. In these passages, frequently only freely appended to the surrounding prose context, we often recognize a mere expansion of various accompanying circumstances of the action; only sometimes

does the action significantly develop there. We first encounter this tendency in the Latin writers of the mid-first century AD, not only in Petronius' work, where this type of prosimetrum decidedly prevails, but also in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, where both types of prosimetrum appear to an almost equal extent. A vital part is also played by such extensive auctorial verse passages in the Latin versions of the romances about Alexander and about Apollonius of Tyre as well as in Martianus Capella's and Boethius' works. On the other hand, in ancient Greek literature this feature is not evidenced earlier than in the *Alexander Romance* by pseudo-Callisthenes, the surviving version of which is assigned to the third century AD. If it were not for this instance, perhaps one could without hesitation suggest that this second type of prosimetrum was a Latin invention, possibly dating back to the days of Varro and in the course of time perhaps also penetrating into some Greek works such as, for example, the above-mentioned *Romance of Alexander* by pseudo-Callisthenes. Some arguments in favour of this hypothesis could be provided by Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* with its prevalence of extensive auctorial verse sections in the Latin prosimetrical passages; the Greek verses are taken exclusively from previous authors.

We may add that in the advanced stage of the Latin development the debated Latin practice finally led to the formalistic 'framing' of lengthier narrative wholes (books and chapters) with introductory or closing verse passages, a phenomenon encountered frequently in Martianus Capella and with a great degree of regularity especially in Boethius.<sup>10</sup>

Prosimetrum as a useful stylistic instrument has survived in European literature for a long time as a part of ancient cultural heritage, even if the term itself originated only in the Middle Ages.<sup>11</sup>

Although the tradition of prosimetrum, the mixed style, is, as I have tried to demonstrate, age-old, it is nevertheless interesting that we come across this phenomenon to such a great extent in the work entitled *The Lord of the Rings* by the British author of the twentieth century J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1973). This is, however, not so surprising if we take into account the fact that Tolkien graduated in Old English and Old English literature at the University of Oxford, and five years later was appointed professor in this field of study. His career was thus influenced by his academic interest in the older stages of the English language (cf. Tolkien's work *A Middle English Vocabulary*, 1922 or his critical edition of the medieval romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 1925). Tolkien's Oxonian education and his academic background guarantee that he was well familiar with ancient literature and that the existence of prosimetrum, the mixed style, was nothing new to him. After all, this originally ancient phenomenon, as mentioned above, found its way into medieval literature where it occupied a fixed place; to a smaller extent, prosimetrum can be recognized in modern literature too. Let

<sup>10</sup> BARTOŇKOVÁ 1996.

<sup>11</sup> NORDEN 1898, 756; IMMISCH 1921, 409ff. Cf. also DRONKE 1994.

us, therefore, focus our attention on the prosimetry included in *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien.

In Tolkien's work, whose 1969 edition we use in this article has ca. 1100 pages, there is a very large number of verses – altogether 1138 lines found in 95 places. The extent of the verse passages considerably varies; we can come across single verses, which is, however, a rather exceptional case (on p. 49 there is a verse which can also be found on p. 248), as well as passages consisting of several tens of lines. It is necessary to stress that in Tolkien longer verse passages preponderate. Further, several verse sections are not written in English, but in an 'unknown' language, which also contributes to the appeal and mysterious quality of the whole work.

Except for two prosimetrical passages which represent, as will be discussed later, two very fine examples of prosimetry with the verses in question being also syntactically incorporated into the prose text, the verse sections in *The Lord of the Rings* are in terms of syntax separate sentences or compound-complex sentences inserted into the prose context. Because these passages were frequently intended for singing (let us remember the ancient Greek *aidoi!*), the verses are usually introduced with words such as: "... and they began to hum, and then to sing softly: ..." (p. 88); "a deep glad voice was singing carelessly and happily, but it was singing nonsense: ..." (p. 116) or "Even as they stepped over the threshold a single clear voice rose in song" (p. 231). Nevertheless, what should be emphasized at this point is the fact that the discussed prosimetry is, in my opinion, stylistically relevant prosimetry, in which the story continues with different vigour, as we can see it in ancient authors. What cannot be classified as fully fledged prosimetry, as defined above, is only the couplet on p. 644: "*Seek for the Sword that was Broken. / In Imladris it dwells*", which is a quotation of a riddle, and the prophecy on p. 764:

*"Over the land there lies a long shadow,  
westward reaching wings of darkness.  
The Tower trembles; to the tombs of kings  
doom approaches. The Dead awaken;  
for the hour is come for the oathbreakers:  
at the Stone of Erech they shall stand again  
and hear there a horn in the hills ringing.  
Whose shall the horn be? Who shall call them  
from the grey twilight, the forgotten people?  
The heir of him to whom the oath they swore.  
From the North shall he come, need shall drive him:  
he shall pass the Door to the Paths of the Dead."*

A cursory reader could, nevertheless, get the impression that there are other instances of citations too, especially the lines which can be, as mentioned above, recognized as songs. Let us, however, devote attention to the ways, in which the

story in the discussed passages skillfully unfolds and to the manner, in which such verses convey challenges and new information even though, as we have observed, the significance of these messages varies. And so the overall atmosphere is also created, for example, with the help of Bilbo's favourite bath-songs:

“Merry and Fatty went into the kitchen on the other side of the passage, and busied themselves with the final preparations for a late supper. Snatches of competing songs came from the bathroom mixed with the sound of splashing and wallowing. The voice of Pippin was suddenly lifted up above the others in one of Bilbo's favourite bath-songs.

*Sing hey! for the bath at close of day  
that washes the weary mud away!  
A loon is he that will not sing:  
O! Water Hot is a noble thing!*

*O! Sweet is the sound of falling rain,  
and the brook that leaps from hill to plain;  
but better than rain or rippling streams  
is Water Hot that smokes and steams.*

*O! Water cold we may pour at need  
down a thirsty throat and be glad indeed;  
but better is Beer, if drink we lack,  
and Water Hot poured down the back.*

*O! Water is fair that leaps on high  
in a fountain white beneath the sky;  
but never did fountain sound so sweet  
as splashing Hot Water with my feet!*

There was a terrific splash, and a shout of Whoa! from Frodo” (p. 99).

Or “... ‘But Anduin is near, and Anduin leads down to the Sea. To the Sea!

*To the Sea, to the Sea! The white gulls are crying,  
The wind is blowing, and the white foam is flying.  
West, west away, the round sun is falling.  
Grey ship, grey ship, do you hear them calling,  
The voices of my people that have gone before me?  
I will leave, I will leave the woods that bore me;  
For our days are ending and our years failing.  
I will pass the wide waters lonely sailing.  
Long are the waves on the Last Shore falling,*

*Sweet are the voices in the Lost Isle calling,  
In Eressëa, in Elvenhome that no man can discover,  
Where the leaves fall not: land of my people for ever!*

And so singing Legolas went away down the hill” (p. 935).

The verses in Bilbo’s song on p. 35 very impressively evoke the atmosphere of determination:

“... ‘Don’t you worry about me! I am as happy now as I have ever been, and that is saying a great deal. But the time has come. I am being swept off my feet at last,’ he added, and then in a low voice, as if to himself, he sang softly in the dark:

*The Road goes ever on and on  
Down from the door where it began.  
Now far ahead the Road has gone,  
And I must follow, if I can,  
Pursuing it with eager feet,  
Until it joins some larger way  
Where many paths and errands meet.  
And whither then? I cannot say.*

He paused, silent for a moment. Then without another word he turned away from the lights and voices in the fields and tents, and followed by his three companions went round into his garden, and trotted down the long sloping path.”

Cf. Sam’s song on p. 888:

“And then suddenly new strength rose in him, and his voice rang out, while words of his own came unbidden to fit the simple tune.

*In western lands beneath the Sun  
the flowers may rise in Spring,  
the trees may bud, the waters run,  
the merry finches sing.  
Or there maybe ’tis cloudless night  
and swaying beeches bear  
the Elven-stars as jewels white  
amid their branching hair.*

*Though here at journey’s end I lie  
in darkness buried deep,  
beyond all towers strong and high,  
beyond all mountains steep,*



*above all shadows rides the Sun  
and Stars for ever dwell:  
I will not say the Day is done,  
nor bid the Stars farewell.*

‘Beyond all towers strong and high,’ he began again, and then he stopped short.”

The story also unfolds in Gandalf’s song on pp. 502–503:

“Gimli strode a pace forward, but felt suddenly the hand of Gandalf clutch him by the shoulder, and he halted, standing stiff as stone.

*In Dwimordene, in Lórien  
Seldom have walked the feet of Men,  
Few mortal eyes have seen the light  
That lies there ever, long and bright.  
Galadriel! Galadriel!  
Clear is the water of your well;  
White is the star in your white hand;  
Unmarred, unstained is leaf and land  
In Dwimordene, in Lórien  
More fair than thoughts of Mortal Men.*

Thus Gandalf softly sang, and then suddenly he changed.”

And let us consider the significance of Merry’s and Pippin’s song for Frodo “made on the model of the dwarf-song that started Bilbo on his adventure long ago, and went to the same tune:

*Farewell we call to hearth and hall!  
Though wind may blow and rain may fall,  
We must away ere break of day  
Far over wood and mountain tall.*

*To Rivendell, where Elves yet dwell  
In glades beneath the misty fell,  
Through moor and waste we ride in haste,  
And whither then we cannot tell.*

*With foes ahead, behind us dread,  
Beneath the sky shall be our bed,  
Until at last our toil be passed,  
Our journey done, our errand sped.*

*We must away! We must away!  
We ride before the break of day!*

‘Very good!’ said Frodo. ‘But in that case there are a lot of things to do before we go to bed – under a roof, for tonight at any rate’” (p. 104).

Frodo understands the verses as a challenge to perform another action and even though Pippin cunningly observes that it was actually a song, the following events make it clear how important a factor in the development of the narrative the quoted verse passage actually was. Cf. also the almost lyric atmosphere of the dialog between two Ents (an Ent and an Entwife) presented as a song:

“... ‘The Elves made many songs concerning the Search of the Ents, and some of the songs passed into the tongues of Men. But we made no songs about it, ... We believe that we may meet again in a time to come, and perhaps we shall find somewhere a land where we can live together and both be content. But it is foreboded that that will only be when we have both lost all that we now have. ... ‘There was an Elvish song that spoke of this, or at least so I understand it. It used to be sung up and down the Great River. It was never an Entish song, mark you: it would have been a very long song in Entish! But we know it by heart, and hum it now and again. This is how it runs in your tongue:

- ENT. *When Spring unfolds the beechen leaf, and sap is in the bough;  
When light is on the wild-wood stream, and wind is on the brow;  
When stride is long, and breath is deep, and keen the  
mountain-air;  
Come back to me! Come back to me, and say my land is fair!*
- ENTWIFE. *When Spring is come to garth and field, and corn is in the blade;  
When blossom like a shining snow is on the orchard laid;  
When shower and Sun upon the Earth with fragrance fill the  
air;  
I'll linger here, and will not come, because my land is fair.*
- ENT. *When Summer lies upon the world, and in a noon of gold  
Beneath the roof of sleeping leaves the dreams of trees unfold;  
When woodland halls are green and cool, and wind is in the  
West,  
Come back to me! Come back to me, and say my land is best!*
- ENTWIFE. *When Summer warms the hanging fruit and burns the berry  
brown;  
When straw is gold, and ear is white, and harvest comes to  
town;  
When honey spills, and apple swells, though wind be in the  
West,  
I'll linger here beneath the Sun, because my land is best!*

- ENT. *When Winter comes, the winter wild that hill and wood shall  
slay;  
When trees shall fall and starless night devour the sunless day;  
When wind is in the deadly East, then in the bitter rain  
I'll look for thee, and call to thee; I'll come to thee again!*
- ENTWIFE. *When Winter comes, and singing ends; when darkness falls at  
last;  
When broken is the barren bough, and light and labour past;  
I'll look for thee, and wait for thee, until we meet again:  
Together we will take the road beneath the bitter rain!*
- BOTH. *Together we will take the road that leads into the West,  
And far away will find a land where both our hearts may rest.'*

Treebeard ended his song. 'That is how it goes,' he said" (pp. 465–466).

We can notice that in the long verse passages of songlike quality the protagonists usually relate the life stories of others (see pp. 227–230, 187–189, 330–332 or 831).

We shall draw attention to the impressive five verse sections occurring in the prose text close to each other; in the discussed verses, songs alternate with monologues:

"In a small desperate voice he began: *Ho! Tom Bombadil!* and with that name his voice seemed to grow strong: it had a full and lively sound, and the dark chamber echoed as if to drum and trumpet.

*Ho! Tom Bombadil, Tom Bombadillo!  
By water, wood and hill, by the reed and willow,  
By fire, sun and moon, harken now and hear us!  
Come, Tom Bombadil, for our need is near us!*

There was a sudden deep silence, in which Frodo could hear his heart beating. After a long slow moment the heard plain, but far away, as if it was coming down through the ground or through thick walls, an answering voice singing:

*Old Tom Bombadil is a merry fellow,  
Bright blue his jacket is, and his boots are yellow.  
None has ever caught him yet, for Tom, he is the master:  
His songs are stronger songs, and his feet are faster.*

There was a loud rumbling sound, as of stones rolling and falling, and suddenly light streamed in, real light, the plain light of day... Tom stooped, removed his hat, and came into the dark chamber, singing:

*Get out, you old Wight! Vanish in the sunlight!  
 Shriveled like the cold mist, like the winds go wailing,  
 Out into the barren lands far beyond the mountains!  
 Come never here again! Leave your barrow empty!  
 Lost and forgotten be, darker than the darkness,  
 Where gates stand for ever shut, till the world is mended.*

At these words there was a cry and part of the inner end of the chamber fell in with a crash. ... Raising his right hand he said in a clear and commanding voice:

*Wake now my merry lads! Wake and hear me calling!  
 Warm now be heart and limb! The cold stone is fallen;  
 Dark door is standing wide; dead hand is broken.  
 Night under Night is flown, and the Gate is open!*

To Frodo's great joy the hobbits stirred, stretched their arms, rubbed their eyes, and then suddenly sprang up" (pp. 138–140).

The role of the fully fledged prosimetrum in *The Lord of the Rings* is, of course, assumed by those verse passages that are not songs, but constitute component parts of the speeches of individual characters. In Tolkien many such places can be counted. Let us mention at least some of them. For example, on p. 72 we can find Frodo's verse reflection on the further development of the journey, which has a fixed place in the ensuing argumentation in prose:

"'Do Elves live in those woods?' he asked. 'Not that I ever heard,' said Pippin. Frodo was silent. He too was gazing eastward along the road, as if he had never seen it before. Suddenly he spoke, aloud but as if to himself, saying slowly:

*The Road goes ever on and on  
 Down from the door where it began.  
 Now far ahead the Road has gone,  
 And I must follow, if I can,  
 Pursuing it with weary feet,  
 Until it joins some larger way,  
 Where many paths and errands meet.  
 And whither then? I cannot say.*

'That sounds like a bit of old Bilbo's rhyming,' said Pippin. 'Or is it one of your imitations? It does not sound altogether encouraging.' 'I don't know,' said Frodo. 'It came to me then, as if I was making it up; but I may have heard it long ago. Certainly it reminds me very much of Bilbo in the last years, before he went away. He used often to say there was only one Road; that it was like a great river: ...'

The verses closing Gandalf's letter to Frodo can to a certain extent remind us of Sophocles' reflections that can be found in the choruses of his tragedies. Cf. Tolkien, p. 167:

*“PS. Do NOT use It again, not for any reason whatever! Do not travel by night! PPS. Make sure that it is the real Strider. There are many strange men on the roads. His true name is Aragorn.*

*All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost;  
The old that is strong does not wither,  
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.  
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,  
A light from the shadows shall spring;  
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,  
The crownless again shall be king.*

*PPPS. I hope Butterbur sends this promptly. A worthy man, but his memory is like a lumber-room:  
thing wanted always buried. If he forgets, I shall roast him.*

*Fare Well!”*

Aragorn addresses Gondor first in prose and then in six lines:

“ ‘Gondor! Gondor!’ cried Aragorn. ‘Would that I looked on you again in happier hour! Not yet does my road lie southward to your bright streams.

*Gondor! Gondor, between the Mountains and the Sea!  
West Wind blew there; the light upon the Silver Tree  
Fell like bright rain in gardens of the Kings of old.  
O proud walls! White towers! O wingéd crown and throne of gold!  
O Gondor, Gondor! Shall Men behold the Silver Tree,  
Or West Wind blow again between the Mountains and the Sea?*

Now let us go!’ he said, drawing his eyes away from the South, and looking out west and north to the way that he must tread” (p. 412–413).

Cf. also the challenge on p. 820:

*“Arise, arise, Riders of Théoden!  
Fell deeds awake: fire and slaughter!  
spear shall be shaken, shield be splintered,*

*a sword-day, a red day, ere the sun rises!  
Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!*

With that he seized a great horn from Guthláf his banner-bearer, and he blew such a blast upon it that it burst asunder. And straightway all the horns in the host were lifted up in music, and the blowing of the horns of Rohan in that hour was like a storm upon the plain and thunder in the mountains.

*Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!*

Suddenly the king cried to Snowmane and the horse sprang away. ”

As well as on p. 825:

“ ‘Hail, King of the Mark!’ he said. ‘Ride now to victory! Bid Éowyn farewell!’ And so he died, and knew not that Éowyn lay near him. And those who stood by wept, crying: ‘Théoden King! Théoden King!’ But Éomer said to them:

*Mourn not overmuch! Mighty was the fallen,  
meet was his ending. When his mound is raised,  
women then shall weep. War now calls us!*

Yet he himself wept as he spoke.”

And on p. 942:

“And before the Sun had fallen far from the noon out of the East there came a great Eagle flying, and he bore tidings beyond hope from the Lords of the West, crying:

*Sing now, ye people of the Tower of Anor,  
for the Realm of Sauron is ended for ever,  
and the Dark Tower is thrown down.*

*Sing and rejoice, ye people of the Tower of Guard,  
for your watch hath not been in vain,  
and the Black Gate is broken,  
and your King hath passed through,  
and he is victorious.*

*Sing and be glad, all ye children of the West,  
for your King shall come again,  
and he shall dwell among you  
all the days of your life.*

*And the Tree that was withered shall be renewed,  
and he shall plant it in the high places,  
and the City shall be blessed.*

*Sing all ye people!*

And the people sang in all the ways of the City.”

The passage on pp. 48–49 is a unique case; there are to be found two verse sections, one of which is a 2-line inscription on a ring that soon becomes more elaborate; the great importance of the inserted lines becomes evident in the ensuing prose passage where the author paraphrases the debated verses – the integral parts of the action – in prose:

“ ‘... Give me the ring for a moment.’ ... ‘Hold it up!’ said Gandalf. ‘And look closely!’ As Frodo did so, he now saw fine lines, finer than the finest pen-strokes, running along the ring, outside and inside: lines of fire that seemed to form the letters of flowing script. They shone piercingly bright, and yet remote, as if out of a great depth. ‘I cannot read the fiery letters,’ said Frodo in a quavering voice. ‘No,’ said Gandalf, ‘but I can. The letters are Elvish, of an ancient mode, but the language is that of Mordor, which I will not utter here. But this in the Common Tongue is what is said, close enough:

*One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.*

It is only two lines of a verse long known in Elven-lore:

*Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,  
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,  
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,  
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne  
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.  
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,  
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them  
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.’*

He paused, and then said slowly in a deep voice: ‘This is the Master-ring, the One Ring to rule them all. This is the One Ring that he lost many ages ago, to the great weakening of his power. He greatly desires it – but he must *not* get it.’ Frodo sat silent and motionless.”

It is also interesting that on p. 49 the author employs one verse which also appears on p. 248.

As we have noted at the beginning of this study, verse passages incorporated into the prose context in terms of syntax are rather exceptional in Tolkien's work. Nevertheless, as a fine example of this type of prosimetrum we can adduce the passage on p. 572 where the compound subject is expressed by means of a quatrain, whereas the predicate is in prose:

“ ‘Yes, we must go, and go now,’ said Gandalf. ‘I fear that I must take your gatekeepers from you. But you will manage well enough without them.’ ‘Maybe I shall,’ said Treebeard. ‘But I shall miss them. We have become friends in so short a while that I think I must be getting hasty – ... I shall not forget them. I have put their names into the Long List. Ents will remember it.

*Ents the earthborn, old as mountains,  
the wide-walkers, water drinking;  
and hungry as hunters, the Hobbit children,  
the laughing-folk, the little people,*

they shall remain friends as long as leaves are renewed. ...’ ”

An equally remarkable example is also the prosimetrical passage on p. 606 where the object is expressed in prose:

“He seemed greatly delighted to feel the water, and chuckled to himself, sometimes even croaking in a sort of song.

*The cold hard lands  
they bites our hands  
they gnaws our feet.  
The rocks and stones  
are like old bones  
all bare of meat.  
But stream and pool  
is wet and cool:  
so nice for feet!  
And now we wish —*

‘Ha! ha! What does we wish?’ he said, looking sidelong at the hobbits.”

It is interesting that the prosimetrical passages occur to a greater degree in the first third of Tolkien's work. I would not like to speculate why it is so, whether it was an auctorial intention or the author was simply already tired. In any case, the romantically poetic subject matter of the whole work certainly provided plenty of room for versification in all passages of Tolkien's extraordinary work, even



though not all the protagonists of the story have the same taste for old rhymes and proverbs:

“At last the wizard passed into a song of which the hobbit caught the words: a few lines came clear to his ears through the rushing of the wind:

*Tall ships and tall kings  
Three times three,  
What brought they from the foundered land  
Over the flowing sea?  
Seven stars and seven stones  
And one white tree.*

‘What are you saying, Gandalf?’ asked Pippin. ‘I was just running over some of the Rhymes of Lore in my mind,’ answered the wizard. ‘Hobbits, I suppose, have forgotten them, even those that they ever knew.’ ‘No, not all,’ said Pippin. ‘And we have many of our own, which wouldn’t interest you, perhaps ...’” (pp. 582–583).

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## RESUMÉ

Studie si klade za cíl pojednat o prozimetru, smíšeném stylu, v díle profesora staroanglického jazyka a literatury J.R.R. Tolkiena *Pán prstenů*. Autorka nejdříve ve stručnosti ukazuje, že se prozimetrum v antické literatuře vyskytovalo v nejrůznějších literárních druzích, tedy nikoliv jen v menippské satíře, jak se dříve často soudilo. Z antiky tento fenomén přešel do literatury středověké, kde našel své pevné místo, a v menší míře se s ním setkáváme i v literatuře moderní. Tolkienovo oxfordské vzdělání i jeho odborný profil zaručují, že existence prozimetra v řecké a římské literatuře pro něho nebyla novinkou. V knize *Pán prstenů*, která má asi 1100 stran, nacházíme v prozaickém textu velmi vysoký počet veršů – konkrétně 1138 veršů, a to na 95 místech. Rozsah jednotlivých veršových partií je různý – od jednoho či dvou veršů až po rozsáhlé pasáže čítající několik desítek veršů. I když syntaktické zapojení veršů do prozaického textu není u Tolkiena častým jevem, autorka dokumentuje, že přesto jde velmi často o plnohodnotné prozimetrum, neboť děj se ve verších s různou intenzitou posouvá dopředu, pokračuje a přináší nové informace.

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