



*Since when do you exist as a Tolkien Society? How was the beginning of it? Was it especially tough or pretty easy?*

The association was founded in 1999. At that moment it was exclusively a Tolkien-society, and had gathered a faithful group of members who meet on a regular basis during numerous and diverse activities, which made Elanor so unique.

Peter Jackson did a lot of the hard work by making the films, it was quite easy to attract people. Mainly young people wanted to join our group.

At that moment we had already an active group of swordsmen. Their costumes were handmade and exclusive.

*How many members do you have right now?*

Much less than in the beginning. A lot of the early members got married, have young children and have no time anymore for this hobby. We now have around 50 members, but not all participating regularly in our activities. We also have an active Facebook community, with much more participants. And we have a YouTube -channel, 'Palantir TV', where we communicate about our activities.

*In Spain we are divided in „Smials“, groups of members who live in the same town or surroundings, and they meet to get to know each other and to discuss Tolkien's works, do you have a similar model?*

Belgium is a small country and our society has only members in the region of Flanders (Dutch speaking region). There is no similar model like yours. We have no subdivision by region but try to organize our activities in different cities so it's not always the same people who have to travel far.

But some sub groups around specific activities exists, for those who wanted to learn sword fighting or 'De Barden' (the Bards), bringing together members especially interested in storytelling.

*Do you have, like us, a "Rangers" group? (Members who don't belong to the "Smial" of any town)*

No, not really, due to our structure. Maybe it's more like the Facebook members?

*Do you organize any activities? If you do, are they usually just for members or for anyone interested in attending?*

We do indeed. If Tolkien would want to give a message to our unimaginative world, then it would be that he doesn't want us to become like Nokes in 'Smith of Wootton Major'. Elanor gives everyone a chance to enter Faery with a star on your brow!

By providing a large variety of activities to everyone's taste, anyone can enthusiastically partake, tell stories, discuss and compare with stories by authors such as Robin Hobb or Terry Goodkind.

Most activities have as main purpose having fun and talking free and easy about our common hobby. Every year this is possible at the Tolkien Birthday Toast on January 3, the Tolkien Reading Day in March, the quiz at the end of Mai and the games nights.

## Interview for Sociedad Tolkien Española



The Inklings-evenings on the other hand are meant to discuss Tolkien's literary works in earnest. Only members receive free drinks, but everyone who is interested is welcome.

Some years we also organize an extra, bigger event for members, like an extended film marathon or our visit to the Greisinger museum in Switzerland in 2018.

Libraries can contact us for a collaboration to set-up an exposition around Tolkien and his work. Of course, the main goal of such expositions is to reach as many people as possible.



*Do you have an annual meeting where people from all over the country meet?*

The member's day in August concludes our year's activities. Like a real hobbit party there is plenty of food and drinks in the form of a barbecue. There is entertainment too: our Bards perform a fragment from Tolkien's books adapted by ourselves.

*To which aspects of Tolkien's work do you dedicate a greater effort of research and divulgation?*

If any, it must be the elven languages, especially Quenya. Look for it on our website <http://www.elanor.be> and more specific <http://quenya.skynetblogs.be/>. Some of our members are also participating in Omentielva.

We have also thought about bringing together a group of people who, just like the former TCBS, read out and judge each other's texts.

*Do you have any songs or dances of your own? And publications such as books or magazines?*

No songs or dances, but in Lothelamor, our magazine, you'll find reports of activities we organized ourselves or have attended. This way all our members remain closely involved in the functioning of our association. Also, it contains Tolkienistic explanations that illuminate a certain aspect of Tolkien or his works and provides a place for fantasy stories.

Sometimes it copies interviews or explanations by other writers or illustrators from other periodicals or book reviews of fantasy writers who enjoy rather less interest or deserve extra attention. But the majority of our articles are written by our own members – Lothelamor is a publication made for and by our members!

*Are you satisfied with the translations of Tolkien's works into your language?*

Max Schuchart did the translations of Tolkien's main works, so they are pretty consistent. He was an excellent translator and worked with J.R.R. Tolkien for the translation of 'Lord of the rings' in the 50's, in particular for the names. There have never been big complains about these translations. There have been some revisions but the current editions are still his wording.

For more recent publications, Renée Vink is involved in most of the translations. She is not only an experienced translator, but also a huge Tolkien fan and has a profound knowledge of his sources.



*Has the responsible publisher ever taken your comments or suggestions into account for new editions?*

No translation is ever perfect and corrections have been suggested. The publisher made promises to take them into account, but so far not all corrections have been included.

*Any curiosity regarding the translations you want to share?*

In the Hobbit when Gandalf and Bilbo go back home they stay a little while at the home of Beorn. Some editions mention that it is 'Joel' and others 'Kerst'. 'Kerst' (= Christmas) feels very out of tune as it is such a strong reference to our current Christian holiday and does not really fit in Middle-earth. Joel is not so common in Dutch but it refers to mid-winter, which makes more sense. May be 'Kerst' was preferred because it was a book for children and it would be more familiar for them?

*Do you have a star issue that you always end up arguing about? (Like for example, do Balrogs have wings?)*

Ha, ha yes we have ! Does a winged dragon have four limbs? Or two?

It's not really a discussion point but more a running gag. Our host in the Greisinger Museum had a very long argumentation about the representation of Smaug in the Hobbit films. His point was that Smaug with only 2 legs is all wrong because in the paintings of Tolkien Smaug has 4 limbs. (a valid point, of course)

Since our visit there, every time someone mention a dragon, whatever the context may be, first thing that will pop up is: "And, how many limbs does it have?"

*Do you have any email contact in case a Spanish Tokiendili traveler wants to meet you in person?*

Tricky! You can always send it to [info@elanor.be](mailto:info@elanor.be). Who knows?

(Don't worry, this mailbox is well tended, just don't expect immediate answer, worst case, it can take a few days before you get a reaction.) You also can visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ElanorVZW/> and leave a message there.

*Finally, tell us anything you want to share with us, whether they are curious Tolkien stories related to your country (if there's any), anecdotes that you remember with special affection, etc.*

Well, there is a connection between Tolkien and Belgium! In 1954 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Liège, (city in Wallonia, the French speaking region in Belgium). He was nominated by Simonne D'Ardenne, a Belgian medieval philologist who studied under Tolkien during the 1930s in Oxford.

As a society, we have a good relationship with Unquendor, the Dutch Tolkien society. Two years ago, we organized our first feast together, a hobbit themed week-end in the woods. That was so much fun, it asked for a follow-up.

Unfortunately, Corona (Covid-19) poisoned our gathering this year in Ieper. This city in Belgium was badly destroyed during World War I and would have been a great background for the theme of this meeting: 'J.R.R. Tolkien and W.W. I'. Hopefully we will succeed in 2022.