

The battle of the Pelennor Fields. Tolkien's words in Tomás Hijo's hands.

The words of J. R. R. Tolkien have served as inspiration to numerous painters, musicians, film-makers and writers, to such an extent that he is sometimes seen as the father of the entire genre of high fantasy. Lots of talented people based their works in the images that appeared in their minds while they were reading the novels written by the Professor.

The final aim of this project is to analyze one of these masterpieces: The Battle of the Pelennor Fields by Tomás Hijo. This particular artist shows not only an incredible talent, but also a specific and original vision, at the same time classical and modern. And, from my point of view, that painting in particular is representative of the technical and conceptual quality he displays.

In order to do that, we are going to start by briefly pointing out the historical relationship between painting and literature, followed by the analysis of some concepts about illustration in or about books. After establishing the general framework, we are going to review some of the most important illustrators of Tolkien works, himself in the first place, and finish with some facts about Tomás Hijo, his technique and his art. Finally, we studied the characteristics and interpretations of this particular episode, and compared the descriptions from the Battle of Pelennor in *The Lord of the Rings* and the way the narration is displayed in the painting.

1. Ut pictura poesis

Throughout history, there have been several artists who have shown their commitment to literature. It is thus possible to speak of the confluence between writers and artists and the bidirectional relationship that is generated. Both disciplines nourish each other, stimulating creation sometimes above the conventions established in each historical era.

The relationship between literature and art, especially painting, is a very well known topic. The symbiosis occurs throughout all centuries because the creation of beauty through letters or images is a constant.

According to Plutarch, Simonides of Ceos, representative of the Greek choral lyric of the 6th century, considered poetry as a painting that speaks and painting as a silent poetry. And Aristotle, in his *Poetics* states poets are imitators, like painters.

Until almost the end of the 18th century, Western aesthetics was governed, to a greater or lesser extent, by the principles of Beauty, outlined here and there by Aristotle, mainly in *Poetics*, but also in *Metaphysics*, *Politics*, and *Problemata*. As far as the relationship between painting and literature is concerned, the Latin poet Horace summed up in a lapidary way in his *Epistle to the Pisones* with the formula "ut pictura poiesis": poetry is like painting. Much later, Van Gogh, one of the main exponents of post-impressionism, maintained that: "Art, Literature and Life are the same thing." (Martin: 2013).

However, Lessing added that literature and plastic arts use different resources to provoke catharsis in the viewer. The narrative language of illustration is different from that of text, and not only in its appearance. As Teresa Durán (2005: 243) points out, it is different in the degree of concreteness and the degree of internalization of the message. In the illustration, she states: "the relationship between signified and signifier is much more evident and, therefore, much more impressive and persuasive".

Different means but same intent. In this sense, it is true that both, painting and poetry, translate the world into a new language through metaphors, real and surreal images, fables and sensations. Also both, literature and painting, are a reflection of the time in which they lived, since the theme adapts to the feeling of the moment, to the taste of the public, summing up, to the historical-cultural circumstances of each era.

Furthermore, for painters, literature becomes a great source of inspiration. The literary world has appeared frequently throughout the history of Western art reflected in the plastic arts, but it has been above all in sculpture, engraving and painting where its influence has become most evident.

2. Illustration and graphic arts

Illustration and graphic arts are both in charge of visual communication and, many times, these two professions require similar skills and tools. In fact, often the illustrator and designer work as a team to create a final product.

However, the graphic designer must follow specific guidelines to be precise and deliver a clear image, while the illustrator has the opportunity to deliver his style, in his works sometimes with ambiguity or irony since they are art. When working together, the illustrator makes the visual pieces and the designer arranges them on the page, or modifies the arrangement of some elements of the illustration to harmonize it.

In a report published in Kepes Magazine (2016), there appeared a definition of illustration as a drawing or artistic expression that has an informative purpose, whose main objective is visual communication. Illustration is also responsible for clarifying, illuminating, decorating or visually representing a written text, regardless of its genre. Illustrator Steve Heller (2007) explains that illustration “delivers a visual dimension beyond the scope of the text.”¹

Illustration encompasses images capable of transmitting a message. They usually accompany texts or stories or concepts, although it does not always have to do so. Illustration makes use of two-dimensional images that communicate and transmit an idea.²

To create the illustrations, various techniques, materials and also digital media can be used. There are also different types of illustrators and each one specializes in different techniques and areas but, for the aim of this project, we are only going to focus on two: editorial and book illustrators³.

An editorial illustrator is one of the first that comes to mind when we think of the word “illustrator”. This group of professionals is responsible for creating original images for

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<https://www.esdip.com/blog-escuela-de-arte/diferencias-entre-diseno-grafico-e-ilustracion-que-los-separa-y-que-los-une/>

² <https://valordeley.es/blog/importancia-ilustracion-diseno-grafico/>

³

<https://ebac.mx/blog/que-es-un-ilustrador#:~:text=%C2%BFDC3%B3nde%20trabaja%20un%20ilustrador%3F,tu%20talento%20y%20ser%20contactado.>

books, magazines, and newspapers. The illustrator's task is to add visual information to capture the essence of what is written and help the reader process the information more easily.

Book illustrators are a particular branch among editorial illustrators, usually working specifically for the physical book format. These images not only accompany the text, but take a leading role in other parts of the book: the cover, the back cover and the spine. The book may have pages reserved for illustration, either at the beginning or at the end of chapters. In some novels, these pages serve to keep the reader in that universe, give clues or close concepts.

The traditional concept of illustration in books has been abandoned as a simple ornament that accompanies the text and, today, it is certain that the illustration also transmits information and has a narrative character, so that the interaction between text and image can constitute a powerful ally to communicate ideas, promote love for reading and art, and contribute to a more comprehensive and enriching reading.⁴

Also, following Colomer: «Literature contains images of such force that they are perpetuated in the mind of the reader until a long time after having read the work. Many times, although the argument has been completely forgotten, we continue to remember certain scenes and visions that especially impacted us." (Colomer, 2002:93)

Among the numerous functions that illustrations can fulfill, the five main ones are (Obiols, 2004):

- Redundate the content of the text: Although it involves repeating what you have read, this function can be beneficial since, following García Padrino (2004:12), it serves "to stimulate and enrich their comprehensive capacity in favor of a better and more complete access to the entire message contained in the illustration. Clarification is carried out from text to image and vice versa.
- Show what words do not express: the illustration assumes the mission to show, not only what the text says, but other aspects, such as the appearance or physical features of the characters.

⁴ <https://uvadoc.uva.es/bitstream/handle/10324/32359/TFG-G3128.pdf?sequence=1>

- Decorate and embellish the text when it accompanies it.
- Capture and show some aspects of the world around us: in this way, It functions as a contextualizer of the verbal narrative.
- Enrich the observer: it works as a source of visual information. Through images, we can learn about objects or people that could exist, or not, or move to past or future time.

Nevertheless, Teresa Durán (2006), relying on new trends in narrative and illustration, added these others:

- Poetical expression: the illustrator shows his own poetics and through its creation not only graphically translates the text but also manifests his particular aesthetic. Meanwhile, for the spectator, it becomes a double task: reading the text and, at the same time, seeing the result of the analysis that the illustrator, another reader, has made of the text (p. 96).
- Enchant the reader, achieved by the bond of empathy established between the image and the reader.
- Challenge the reader: the illustration could be presented as “a playful challenge” where riddles are hidden or one can find the presence of false perspectives, anachronisms, caricatures,...

Some of the scholars of this topic see in illustration a specific language, with its elements, codes, syntax and sequential properties and fully capable of transmitting complete and effective narrative messages (Durán, 2005).

However, illustrators remark on their artistic essence. Miguel Ángel Fernández Pacheco (cited in Durán, 2005: 240), defines illustration as "a branch of painting and drawing that produces works of art intended for the general public". And Obiols (2004: 28-29) considered illustration the art that converts "the verb in color, the phrase in line, poetry in light or the arbitrary in perspective."

Illustrations have their limitations, though. For instance, Roberto Innocenti's words (Durán, 2005: 244) emphasized the inability of illustration to be able to narrate in a intradiegetic way: "The limitation of an illustration, if we compare it with the word, lies

in that it is not capable of narrating from an inner self, in that it is always seen from the outside, never from within."

3. Different perspectives: Tolkien's illustrators

The foremost illustrations of Tolkien's workshop were drawn by the author himself. The 1937 American edition of *The Hobbit* was illustrated by professional draftsmen, but Tolkien was very critical of this work and, in 1946, he rejected illustrations by Horus Engels for the German edition of *The Hobbit* because he found them "too 'Disneyfied' for my taste: Bilbo with a dribbling nose, and Gandalf as a figure of vulgar fun rather than the Odinic wanderer that I think of." (Carpenter, 2000: 119).

In 1948, Milein Cosman was invited by Tolkien's publishers to submit illustrations for *Farmer Giles of Ham*. However, Tolkien felt her impressionistic style did not suit the story, and she was replaced by Pauline Baynes, who later also supplied the illustrations for *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* (1962) and *Smith of Wootton Major* (1967).

Twenty years after that, in 1968, Tolkien was sent some illustrations of *The Lord of the Rings*, mostly in coloured ink, by the English artist Mary Fairburn and that made Tolkien think it could be a good idea to publish an illustrated edition. For various reasons, the project went no further, and Fairburn's illustrations were unknown until 2012 (Tankard, 2012).

Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, an accomplished and critically acclaimed painter, was inspired to create illustrations to *The Lord of the Rings* in the early 1970s, which were published in 1977 in the Danish translation of the book, redrawn by the British artist Eric Fraser⁵. Also, Tim and Greg Hildebrandt⁶ were well-known Tolkien illustrators in the 1950s and 1960s.

Anke Eissmann⁷ is a German illustrator and graphic designer, known especially for her works related to J. R. R. Tolkien's legendarium. During a course in 1991 she learned about the works of J. R. R. Tolkien, a fact that influenced her career as an

⁵ <http://www.royalinsight.net/content/margrethe-henrik-biography>

⁶ https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermanos_Hildebrandt
<http://www.brothershildebrandt.com/>

⁷ https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anke_Ei%C3%9Fmann
http://anke.edoras-art.de/anke_illustration.html

artist. She published illustrations about Tolkien's world on the Internet, becoming known and acquiring the recognition of artists and fans.

Other artists who have found inspiration in Tolkien's works include Inger Edelfeldt, who illustrated the covers of Swedish translations of several of his books, Michael Hague, Tove Jansson, illustrator of Swedish and Finnish translations of *The Hobbit* Paul Raymond Gregory, Tim Kirk, Angus McBride who illustrated Iron Crown's Tolkien-based role-playing games, Jef Murray, Colleen Doran, Jenny Dolfen who has made watercolor paintings of scenes from *The Silmarillion*, Alexander Korotich, who made a series of scraperboard engravings of *The Lord of the Rings*, and Peter Xavier Price.

Special mention is due to Magali Villeneuve⁸, a French illustrator, freelance fantasy artist, and fantasy author, whose art has been used for official games and products set in many large fantasy universes and franchises, including Magic: The Gathering, A Song of Ice and Fire, Star Wars, Warhammer, The Lord of the Rings, and Call of Cthulhu.

Also worth highlighting, Guo Jian⁹ who is a Chinese Australian artist with a colorful, eye-catching style. His illustrations are characterized by the use of color and drawing, reminiscent of medieval stained glass.

Nonetheless, in the 1990s and 2000s, the most known Tolkien illustrators, without any shadow of doubt, are: John Howe, Alan Lee, and Ted Nasmith. Lee for illustrated editions of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, Nasmith for illustrated editions of *The Silmarillion*, and Howe for the cover artwork to several Tolkien publications. Furthermore, Howe and Lee worked as concept artists in the creation of Peter Jackson's film trilogy.

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magali_Villeneuve
http://www.magali-villeneuve.com/?page_id=1074

⁹ <https://caballerodelarbolsonriente.blogspot.com/2015/09/la-tierra-media-vista-por-jian-guo.html>
<https://www.deviantart.com/breathing2004/gallery/30260599/art-of-tolkien>

3.1. Tolkien himself as illustrator¹⁰

Though he often remarked that he had no talent for drawing, Tolkien's art has charmed readers and has been exhibited to large and appreciative audiences. In fact, his talent was far better than he admitted, and his sense of design was natural and keen. However, portraits are conspicuously absent from his work.

From a young age, he became interested in portraiture and landscape, which he learned from his mother. That was a constant in his life that helped shape his most mature and committed literary works. The illustrations he made for *The Lord of the Rings* are subtle works in watercolor and pencil, which go beyond the careful understanding of color and shapes that Tolkien meticulously mastered, to project the magical sensation of those enchanted and mysterious worlds that he narrates in his books.

J.R.R. Tolkien: Artist and Illustrator is a magnificent book that extensively addresses Tolkien's work as an illustrator. It was edited by Tolkien experts Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, and was published by Mariner Books. It consists of 207 pages that include 200 reproductions of his works. They explore Tolkien's art at length, from his childhood paintings and drawings to his final sketches. The author's love for calligraphy, decoration and design is discussed, and the contributions he made to the edition of his books are also highlighted. It is remarkable the pictures Tolkien made for his children (especially in *The Father Christmas Letters* and *Mr. Bliss*), his expressive calligraphy, his love of decoration, and his contributions to the typography and design of his books.

Another great work that addresses this aspect in the writer's life is *The Art of The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien*, another title from the same editors of the renowned writer, who, as indicated, focuses exclusively on the visual work for *The Hobbit*. It was published to commemorate the 75th anniversary of *The Hobbit*. In it, around 100 sketches, paintings, watercolors and maps of the places visited by Bilbo Baggins were compiled.¹¹

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PkDIQhXvRE>
<https://culturainquieta.com/es/arte/ilustracion/item/15206-j-r-r-tolkien-fue-tambien-un-fantastico-ilustrador.html>

¹¹ <https://hipertextual.com/2018/05/tolkien-ilustraciones>

3.2. Pauline Baynes¹²

She was an English book illustrator, whose work encompasses more than 100 books. Among others, she drew maps of Narnia for C.S. Lewis and of Middle-earth for J.R.R. Tolkien.

Baynes was J.R.R. Tolkien's chosen illustrator. His opinions about her work were fortunately preserved: "[A] great talent for producing vivid and believable pictures while touching them with a delightful air of fantasy, which is largely imported by her fluid and dexterous line." (Skull, 2006).

In 1949, she illustrated *Farmer Giles of Ham*, followed by cover art for the 1961 Puffin edition of *The Hobbit* and a triptych for the slip-case of the 1964 deluxe edition of *The Lord of the Rings*. In 1962, she illustrated *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, and in 1967, *Smith of Wootton Major*. Before Tolkien's death, she also illustrated two posters: "A Map of Middle-earth" (1970) and "There and Back Again" (based on *The Hobbit*, 1971).

Tolkien's *Farmer Giles* was the morning of a long fellowship and repeated collaboration between author and artist with Baynes decorating Tolkien's posterior books. Indeed, Tolkien had expressed the hope that Baynes would illustrate *The Lord of the Rings*, but the book grew into a gargantuan project that rendered that plan impractical. Nevertheless, she created immaculately drawn and exquisitely coloured versions of the author's maps.

After Tolkien's death, she handed illustrations for *Bilbo's Last Song* lyrics and the collection *Poems and Stories* (1980). She also painted the covers for the British 1973 one-volume and 1981 three-volume paperback editions of *The Lord of the Rings*. The final published appearance of Baynes' Tolkien art was the addition of her map of "The Little Kingdom" to the fiftieth anniversary edition of *Farmer Giles of Ham* (1999).

¹² <https://www.paulinebaynes.com/?what=about>
https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Pauline_Baynes
<https://www.nocloo.com/pauline-baynes-biography/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/aug/06/booksforchildrenandteenagers>
<https://www.williams.edu/feature-stories/feature-stories-archive/pauline-baynes/>

The main influences of her work were, in her words: "firstly, a brilliant elder sister", followed by a catalog of artists whose work she studied and admired: Edmund Dulac, Rex Whistler, Arthur Rackham, Gustave Doré, the Punch artists R.S. Sherriffs and E.H. Shepard, who would become her friend and mentor. And she had a particular graphic hero: the French illustrator Jacque-Marie-Gaston Onfray de Bracville, who signed his work with the pseudonymous acronym "Job".

3.3. Ted Nasmith¹³

This is a Canadian artist, illustrator and architectural renderer. He is best known as an illustrator of J. R. R. Tolkien's works *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*. He is also a songwriter, guitarist and tenor and an important part of his musical work is likewise inspired by Tolkien's writings¹⁴.

Tolkien praised and commented on his early work, something that encouraged him in his career. Since then, he tried to expand Tolkien's imaginarium through his illustrations and recognizes as influences romantic illustrators and painters of the 19th and 20th centuries, impressions from cinema, light effects observed and/or photographed, as well as pictorial reference materials in his files or from the public libraries.¹⁵

In early 1999, representatives for Peter Jackson and New Line Cinema invited Ted Nasmith to join John Howe and Alan Lee to work on conceptual art for *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy, but he refused due to personal reasons.

3.4. John Howe¹⁶ and Alan Lee¹⁷

¹³ <https://www.tednasmith.com/site-map/j-r-r-tolkien/>
https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Ted_Nasmith
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Nasmith

¹⁴ Nasmith is considered a Tolkien scholar, well-read in ancient history, religion, and other areas. He has been a prominent member of two Tolkien-related organizations: the Tolkien Society, and the Mythopoeic Society, and has long subscribed to Mensa's Tolkien journal, *Beyond Bree*.

¹⁵ <https://www.tednasmith.com/site-map/j-r-r-tolkien/>

¹⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Howe_\(illustrator\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Howe_(illustrator))

<https://www.john-howe.com/portfolio/gallery/>

¹⁷ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Lee_\(illustrator\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Lee_(illustrator))

<https://elanillounico.com/tolkienpedia/personas/alan-lee/>

https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Category:Images_by_Alan_Lee

<https://www.wikiart.org/en/alan-lee>

John Howe is a Canadian book illustrator and conceptual designer, best-known for his artwork of J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth. He and Alan Lee served as chief conceptual designers for Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* movie trilogy. Howe illustrated the *Lord of the Rings* board game created by Reiner Knizia, re-illustrated the maps of *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Silmarillion* in 1996–2003.

In his adolescence, Howe read *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and he got "a real spark" from the Hildebrandt calendars, which showed him that the books could be illustrated, so he made his own versions of the scenes depicted in the calendar.

On the other hand, Alan Lee is an English book illustrator and film conceptual designer. He is most known for his artwork inspired by J. R. R. Tolkien's fantasy novels, but he has also illustrated dozens of fantasy books, including some non-fiction, and many more covers. Among the numerous works by J. R. R. Tolkien that he has illustrated are the 1992 centenary edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, a 1999 edition of *The Hobbit*, the 2007 *The Children of Húrin*, the 2017 *Beren and Lúthien*, the 2018 *The Fall of Gondolin*, and *The Fall of Númenor* in 2022.

His style was influenced by the works of the 1950s and 1960s, by illustrators such as Arthur Rackham and Charles Robinson. Like these artists, he opts mainly for watercolors and a classically romantic style.

During pre-production and filming of 'The Lord of the Rings', Howe and Lee shared a studio in Weta's workshop with Richard Taylor's team of designers, creating the creatures, weapons, armor and miniatures needed for the films. During the creative process, Howe, Lee, Taylor, Grant Major, the films' production designer, and Peter Jackson often argued, although Jackson always encouraged Howe and Lee to take a fresh look at the things they had drawn so many times in the past.

Their work was divided almost naturally, with Howe focusing on the darkest and most shadowy elements of Middle-earth: the fierce beasts, the Balrog, the Nazgûl, Barad-Dûr, Minas Morgul, the Black Gate, the den of Shelob and so on, although he also worked on other elements such as the Gamboburg Raft, the Green Dragon inn and the exceptionally detailed interior of Bag End. Meanwhile, Lee went on to illustrate and even to help construct many of the scenarios for the movies, including objects and weapons for the actors.

Two years after completion of *The Lord of the Rings* film series, Lee released a 192-page collection of his conceptual artwork for the project, entitled *The Lord of the Rings Sketchbook* (HarperCollins, 2005) and Peter Jackson said: "His art captured what I hoped to capture with the films." And in 2004, Lee won an Academy Award for Best Art Direction on the film *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*.

For *The Hobbit* films, original director Guillermo del Toro and replacement director Peter Jackson, consulted with both Howe and Alan Lee to ensure continuity of design. Howe also served as a conceptual designer for Amazon's *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power*.

The work of these illustrators, through its dissemination thanks to the films of Peter Jackson, has shaped, for better and worse, the canonical image of Middle-earth.

4. The artist: Tomás Hijo¹⁸

Tomás Sanchez Hernández is an illustrator and printmaker from Salamanca, in Spain, and very well known all around the world as Tomás Hijo. His artwork and style is instantly recognizable. Is it not surprising that his works belong to private collections all around the world, and have been exhibited in many galleries throughout Europe and the United States. He even received the Best Artwork Award from the Tolkien Society in 2015 in recognition of his works about J. R. R. Tolkien's books. A prize well deserved, undoubtedly.

He has been linked to the world of publishing and graphic arts for at least twenty years. In this time, he has illustrated more than seventy books and written ten of them, most of which are related to legends, pseudo-medieval fantasy, folklore, and other similar topics.

Recently, he started publishing some Tarot cards with different influences. All started with Tarot del Toro, a deck of cards made in collaboration with Guillermo del Toro.

¹⁸ This epigraph is written based in direct words from Tomás Hijo himself and some interviews and information about the author published on the Internet:
<https://tinyworkshops.com/tomas-hijo-artist-printmaker/>
<https://www.tribunasalamanca.com/noticias/261083/tomas-hijo-expone-su-megagrabado-de-la-batala-de-pelennor-en-la-libreria-shogun>
https://www.behance.net/tomashijo/appreciated?locale=es_ES

But now, we can buy not only that deck, also The Lord of the Rings and others based on Jim Henson's works.

The illustration with which it all began was The Battle of the Five Armies: Scene from The Hobbit. He started to upload photos of the creation process to social networks, then some prominent figures in the world became interested in it, which attracted many eyes and many people interested in this work and other similar ones. Consequently, he set up his online store (www.tomashijo.com) as a result of this experience.

One of the most astonishing things, for me, about Tomás is the fact that he learnt self taught. Nonetheless, he is far from being a person with little educational background. In fact, he even has a Phd in Journalism and Communication, the field which his university studies were more related to.

However, as a student, he made lots of friends in the Fine Arts department, which provided him with a strong informal training. After that, he tried to learn as much about printmaking as possible with tutorials and videos online, and received the help of colleagues who specialized in printmaking at the Faculty of Fine Arts, in the University of Salamanca, where he worked between 2011 and 2022. They taught him everything he needed to know about the process and materials he now uses¹⁹.

¹⁹ Engraving is an artistic discipline in which the artist uses different printing techniques, which have in common drawing an image on a rigid surface, called a matrix, leaving a mark that will later house ink and be transferred by pressure to another surface such as paper. or fabric, which allows obtaining several reproductions of the prints.

The history of engraving dates back to prehistory, when the first men made incisions in various materials to create artistic motifs. In Europe, around the 6th century, the first engravings on fabrics began to be developed.

However, the origin of engraving as we understand it coincides with the arrival of paper and the printing of images on it. Although paper arrived in the West around the year 1151, thanks to the Arabs, engraving in Europe began to emerge at the end of the 14th century and developed even further after the arrival of the printing press.

Since then, the processes have evolved and diversified and, although engraving has remained a medium of reproduction and printing, it has slowly become an art form in its own right.

Depending on the technique used, the matrix can be made of metal, traditionally copper or zinc, wood, linoleum or stone. On that surface it is drawn with sharp, cutting instruments or by chemical processes. Currently, plates made of different synthetic materials are also used that can be engraved in the traditional way with punches or by means of photographic, digital or laser procedures.

<https://ayuntamientofuendetodos.es/el-arte-del-grabado-origen-tipos-y-tecnicas/>

<https://oralaborastudio.es/historia-del-grabado/>

His workshop is in his home, and it is divided into two parts. The first, in his own words, is the “clean” part, where he draws, paints with watercolors, and does all the digital artwork. This room also serves as a library. The other space is where he does the printmaking, and is located in the basement, which was intended to be a wine cellar, that he transformed.

Linocut printing is his main technique, and it is what he has used for his most popular works, which are his own interpretations of Tolkien and Lovecraft. His process is simple but laborious. He first carves with gouges and eliminates the parts that will not come out, leaving the drawing in relief. Then, the wood is inked with a roller, some paper is placed on top and pressed until the paper adapts to the wood, taking on its relief (embossing). Finally, it dries. Sometimes he colors the engraving with watercolors as a final step.

He is recognized to have many inspirations, but the most important for him would be Mike Mignola and Zdeněk Mězl. He is also interested in the way that masters of animation concept art draw their work, especially Nico Marlet, Carter Goodrich and Peter de Sève. As for modern printmakers, his preferred ones are: Mazatl, Sean Starwars, Brian Reedy, Attack Peter, and Kathleen Neeley.

Quoting Eduardo Segura about Tomás:

The tradition visible in the work of Tomás Jr. has the austere face and composition of the Romanesque: the apparent hieraticism and *sympatheia* of the faces, the play with the figures on the plane in happy alternation with isometric perspectives in which, however, life bustles in endless gestures, in an individual inner life that gives meaning to the whole. (...) A closer look at his work reveals a taste for late Gothic, between the previous hyper-expressiveness and the refinement (already too naturalistic for his plastic interests) of what would come later. That transition, spiritualized, indecisive, sometimes clumsy, fascinates him. Perhaps a first look at, for example, his Tolkien-inspired

"The Battle of the Five Armies"—like much of his work—can give an initial impression of that hieratics peculiar to the Romanesque. But his use of perspective, hierarchical although apparently linear, refers to a miscellany of influences in which even Escher appears.²⁰

5. The battle of the Pelennor Fields.

5.1. From the book

The Battle of the Pelennor Fields²¹, the largest battle in the War of the Ring²². It consisted of the defense of the besieged city of Minas Tirith by the forces of Gondor, aided by the cavalry of its ally Rohan, against the forces of the Dark Lord Sauron from Mordor, helped by Haradrim and Easterlings. It took place at the end of the Third Age in the Pelennor Fields, the townlands and the area between Minas Tirith and the River Anduin.²³

Some scholars have compared the battle with the historic Battle of the Catalaunian Fields, where visigoth King Theodoric I was trampled to death by his own men, after he fell from his horse. Elizabeth Solopova notes that Tolkien repeatedly referred to a historic chronicle of the Battle by Jordanes, and analyzes the similarities she found. Both were a confrontation between civilisations from the "East" and "West", and both were described as conflicts of legendary fame that lasted for several generations. Another apparent thing in common is the way the two kings died and, after that, both were carried from the battlefield with his knights weeping and singing for him while the battle still went on (Solopova 2009: 70-73).

²⁰<https://www.desdesoria.es/articulo/buenasartes/toma-hijo-tradicion-y-revolucion/20150524093017518669.html> (translation from the author).

²¹ https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Pelennor_Fields

²² In the book, the development of events develops through several chapters from *The Return of the King*, book 5: ch. 1 "Minas Tirith", ch. 2 "The Passing of the Grey Company" ch. 3 "The Muster of Rohan", ch. 4 "The Siege of Gondor", ch. 5 "The Ride of the Rohirrim", ch. 6 "The Battle of the Pelennor Fields", ch. 7 "The Pyre of Denethor", ch. 9 "The Last Debate".

²³ <https://theroadlotr.wordpress.com/the-battle-of-the-pelennor-fields/>

<https://www.glyphweb.com/arda/b/battleofthepelennor.php>

https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Battle_of_the_Pelennor_Fields

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Pelennor_Fields

<https://theredbooknews.blogspot.com/2016/03/the-battle-of-pelennor-fields.html>

<https://neverfeltbetter.wordpress.com/2011/12/04/the-lord-of-the-rings-chapter-by-chapter-the-battle-of-the-pelennor-fields/>

One evident influence, as it happens in other parts of *The Lord of the Rings*, is the Old English poem *Beowulf*,²⁴ that Tolkien studied. They share the elegiac tone (Mahon, 78: 33-36)²⁵, the alliterative verse, and the nature of the armor, which is mostly early medieval-style: chainmail shirts with additions of plate armor.²⁶

Others have related the death of the Witch-King of Angmar to the prophecy of Macbeth: not to die by the hand of man "of woman born".²⁷ And, the crowing of a cockerel, when the morning comes, but also at the moment the Witch-King was about to enter the city, has been related with the cock-crow heralding the resurrection of Jesus at the moment that Simon Peter denied knowing him thrice²⁸.

J.R.R. Tolkien described Minas Tirith in the letter to Milton Waldman, as the "half-ruinous Byzantine City of Minas Tirith" (Scull,2006: 746) and that of Gondor in its history "fades slowly to decayed Middle-Age, a kind of proud, venerable, but

²⁴ Shippey writes that warhorns exemplify the "heroic Northern world", as in what he calls the nearest *Beowulf* has to a moment of eucatastrophe, when Ongentheow's Geats, trapped all night, hear the horns of Hygelac's men coming to rescue them(2001: 212–216).

²⁵ James Shelton writes that Éomer's (and Tolkien's) use of alliterative verse during the battle functions on different levels. After Théoden's death, Éomer declaims "Mourn not overmuch! Mighty was the fallen, meet was his ending. When his mound is raised, women then shall weep. War now calls us!" Shelton notes that Shippey rightly called this "'midway between' a lament and a battle-cry". This both honors the fallen king, and calls for Théoden's last fight to be continued with valor; yet, he writes, in a modern novel, the possibility is opened that Éomer will not live up to that ancient ideal: Éomer "wept as he spoke". This "northern courage" is to go on fighting, even if one knows one will die. Tolkien has thus, in Shelton's view, both portrayed Anglo-Saxon attitudes and humanized Éomer as a man with emotions behind the armor and the tradition (Shelton 2018).

²⁶ Thomas Honegger (2017) highlighted Rohan riders are of Anglo-Saxon knights not French-style *chevaliers*. Tolkien mentioned the prince Imrahil's shining vambrace, that is a piece of plate armor, hinting at a late medieval pattern; but Rohan's army is described more close to those of the Bayeux tapestry, and his explicit mentions of mail shirts, the armor in the battle must mainly have been the earlier *Beowulf*-style mail, with additional plate. By the other hand, Shippey believes Tolkien displayed Rohan both as English, based on their Old English names and words like "eored" (troop of cavalry), and as "alien, to offer a glimpse of the way land shapes people"(2005: 142–145).

²⁷ Julia Andelin pointed out that prophecy in Middle-earth depended on characters' understanding of the Music of the Ainur, the divine plan for Arda, and was often ambiguous. Thus, Glorfindel's prophecy "not by the hand of man will [the Lord of the Nazgûl] fall" did not lead the Lord of the Nazgûl to suppose that he would die at the hands of a woman and a hobbit (Éowyn and Meriadoc) (Drout, 2013: 544–545).

²⁸ Tom Shippey explains that the arrival of Rohan is announced by two calls: a cockerel crowing as the morning comes, and "as if in answer ... great horns of the North wildly blowing". The cock-crow recalls multiple accounts in Western literature that speak, Shippey writes, of renewed hope and life after death: future Christ resurrection; in Milton's *Comus* that would "be some solace yet"; of the cockerel in the Norse *Ódáinsakr*, killed and thrown over a wall by the witch, but crowing to King Hadding a moment later (2005: 242–245).

increasingly impotent Byzantium" (Carpenter 2000: 157). In Spanish chivalric books, a very well known topic is the battle between the christian knights and the pagans, frequently at the doors of Constantinople²⁹.

Nancy Martsch considered that Tolkien's descriptions of battle are vivid and she pointed out that the Professor served in the Battle of the Somme in 1916³⁰. She adds the tale of recovery in the Houses of Healing, "a subject usually passed over in fantasy literature". As for the siege of Minas Tirith, she believed Tolkien could have been influenced by what he had seen of the British attack on Thiepval Ridge, with its fiery night-time bombardment, the fortifications across a river, allied aircraft "scouting and strafing" Nazgûl-like over the German lines (Martsh, 2015).

In the same line, Janet Brennan Croft (2002) pointed out that the battle is seen some of the time through the eyes of the Hobbit, Pippin, who is like "the common soldier in the trenches of World War I". He feels his part to be "far from glorious; there is tedious waiting, a sense of uselessness and futility, terror and pain and ugliness".

David Bel concludes that "the Captains of the West were lucky", as Napoleon had reportedly asked that his generals should be. He added that, if Aragorn had been late, the battle would have been lost. All the same, he appreciated Men were usually bigger and stronger than Orcs, they were arguably better armed and armored and they were motivated by leadership. Meanwhile, the Orcs were "driven to battle"; with the loss of the Witch-King of Angmar, the Orcs were leaderless and demoralized (Bell, 1982, 25-28).

Superseded versions of the battle were exposed in *The War of the Ring*, the third volume of *The History of the Lord of the Rings*. There are some important differences with the final version: Théoden dies by a projectile to the heart instead of being crushed by his horse and Éowyn has cut her hair short, which is revealed when she takes out her helmet. Tolkien also considered Théoden and Éowyn would not survive the battle.

²⁹ Este tema ha sido tratado principalmente por Javier Roberto González (1999-2000), Emilio José Sales Dasí (2002) e Isabel Romero Tabares (2007).

³⁰ She quotes another war veteran, and friend, C. S. Lewis's comment: "[Tolkien's] war has the very quality of the war my generation knew. It is all here: the endless, unintelligible movement, the sinister quiet of the front when 'everything is now ready', the flying civilians, the lively, vivid friendships, the background of something like despair and the merry foreground, and such heaven-sent windfalls as a cache of choice tobacco 'salvaged' from a ruin." (Martsh, 2015).

This particular episode is a crucial part in Peter Jackson's film *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*.³¹ Following *The Telegraph*: "the battle scenes involving the storming of Minas Tirith and the climactic battle of Pelennor Fields are quite simply the most spectacular and breathtaking ever filmed".³² Jackson stated that he had taken inspiration from Albrecht Altdorfer's 1529 oil painting, *The Battle of Alexander at Issus*, depicting the events of 333 BC, with "people holding all of these pikes and spears [against an] incredibly stormy landscape" (Woosnam 2011, 39–167).

Pelennor Fields is an epic battle in which all the races that emerged from Tolkien's imagination confront each other. Sauron's army from Minas Morgul, led by the Witch-king of Angmar (chief of the Nazgûl) outnumbered by far the combined armies of Gondor and its allies. It consisted of tens of thousands of orcs, trolls, and Men who had allied with Sauron: Haradrim Southrons who brought elephantine beasts, Easterlings from Rhûn and Variags from Khand (Foster, 1971: 48-49).

Some companies from the other provinces of Gondor came to Minas Tirith to help in the defense, which amounted to nearly 3,000 defenders. Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth, Denethor's brother-in-law, provides a 700-strong contingent that he leads. Their expected number was bigger, but Gondor's coastal towns were being attacked by the Corsairs of Umbar and they needed to be defended.

However, some reinforcements arrived but later, led by Aragorn, who came with a small force of rangers, representing the lost kingdom of Arnor. By his side, Rohan contributed with a 6,000-strong cavalry army but they were heavily outnumbered by the Haradrim alone.

On the morning of 14 March of 3019, although it was still dark due to the Storm of Mordor, the Pelennor valley appeared filled with thousands of enemies in their encampments. These warriors remained out of range of Minas Tirith's defenders, preparing themselves for the siege of the city.

The assault began when the engines of Mordor started to fire against Minas Tirith. The projectiles burst into flames as they landed, so the Gondorians were more pressed to fight the fires behind their walls than the enemy in front of them. At the

³¹ <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/SHOWBIZ/Movies/03/29/movie.battles/index.html>

³² <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/3607867/Its-the-biggest-and-the-best.html>

same time, the branded heads of defeated soldiers of Gondor were shot over the defenders of the city. In the meanwhile, the Winged Nazgûl circled through the skies, bringing despair and terror with their hideous cries.

At the same time, Denethor abandons all hope and pretends to burn himself and his unconscious son Faramir in a pyre. As a consequence, Gandalf is forced to take up the command of Minas Tirith's defense alongside Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth. And, Peregrin Took had to flee through the city seeking Gandalf trying to avoid Faramir getting burnt alive.

Before midnight, Sauron's forces started the assault on the walls with siege engines, towers and Mûmakil, but for breaking the Great Gate they reserved an immense battering ram named Grond, aided by the sorcery of the Lord of the Nazgûl. After that, the Witch King rode through the broken gateway, and the terror that went before him caused the defenders to flee, so that only Gandalf remained to stand against him. But at dawn, the sound of the horn announcing the arrival of the Rohirrim makes the King ride off to command his armies against the new threat, liberating Gandalf, who went to rescue Faramir.

The Rohirrim were able to claim much of the northern part of the field, profiting from their surprising attack, but the larger army of the Haradrim still held the south. Théoden led his Riders in a charge, breaking the force from the Harad and defeating their commander. Nevertheless, his horse Snowmane was slain by a dart and fell on his rider while the Witch-king descended from the sky to finish him off. However, it is him who dies fulfilling Glorfindel's prophecy.

Eomer is now the leader of the Rohirrim. His force had driven into the lines of the Haradrim, but their horses were too afraid to approach the Mûmakil, and new companies of Easterlings and Variags moved to cover the rear of the cavalry leaving them surrounded by the enemy. Meanwhile, from Minas Tirith, Imrahil led a sortie to help Éomer's army, but apparently a new force of enemies entered the field from the river. So, at this point, the battle was being fought on two fronts.³³

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Pelennor_Fields#/media/File:Battle_of_the_Pelennor_Fields.svg

Fortunately, while the defenders were surrounded and hard pressed, the ships of the Corsairs were seen on Anduin, but showing the ancient royal standard of Gondor: the white tree on black. These ships had been captured by Aragorn with the aid of the Dead Army, and were full of Northern Dúnedain and Gondorians from the river.

Finally, Imrahil led his swan-knights eastward across the field, forcing the invaders back towards the river, while Éomer and bore southwards, pushing the enemy towards the docks. From there, Aragorn's army fought northwards, until the two commanders met in the midst of battle. By sunset no enemies remain in the Pelennor Fields.

5.2 To the painting³⁴

On December the 9th, 2015, the Shogun bookstore started to host an exhibition with, at these moment, the latest of the works of Tomás Hijo, adding several of his most notable works based on the Lord of the Rings books and, along with them, others dedicated to the Ninja Turtles or the cinematographic fantasy of Guillermo del Toro. Even though any exhibition of Tomás work needed no excuse, the author himself explains that it had been organized to show the public his latest work and masterpiece, the largest engraving of his works about Tolkien: "The Battle of the Pelennor Fields".

From the initial carving, a craftsmanship that took around 120 hours to complete, 150 impressions have been made, all of them unique because they are printed by hand, one by one, with a press that is also artisanal and each one has its personal marks.

We could compare the final version with some of the sketches³⁵. Obviously, the main composition remains, but there is a significant improvement in details. For example, we find less smoke in the lower right corner and the addition of a sculpture next to the man in pajamas. Besides, in the previous one, some elements are missing: the trolls that push Grond, the door to the walkway and the figure peeking out from level four of the wall and the person with the bird cage. Others are less detailed: Eowyn and Merry were not distinguishable, the Mumak were partially covered by other

³⁴ The picture: <https://blog.tolkiendili.com/entrevista-tomas-hijo-ab5fc5698547>

³⁵ Drawing: <https://www.deviantart.com/tomashijo/art/Battle-of-the-Pelennor-Fields-sketch-566288274>

figures (the legs were not visible), the title composition was simpler and the dawn and ships were less defined and less integrated into the general composition.

But, there is another engraving that is tempting to be compared with: "The Gates of Minas Morgul"³⁶. Both share similar aesthetics in architecture and style of the Nazgûl and orcs, stacking of figures, and the cared and detailed differentiated expressions. However, in *The Battle of Pelennor Fields*, we appreciate more clarity in lines and design and more detail and expressiveness, while in the *Black Gate* fewer mini scenes are shown. Furthermore, there are no animals except the crow that observes the scene in the upper right and the title is displayed below and outside the work instead of integrated with elements of the composition. A funny detail is the signature with his initials on an orc shield at the bottom right. In comparison with "The Battle of Pelennor Fields", we find an evident development and evolution in composition and technique.

"The Battle of the Pelennor Fields" has to display, in an only image, some events that happened at different moments in the book. To do so, the artist had to make compromises and chose the facts more relevant for the idea he wanted to transmit. We explain, through this article, how it is done and why by being unfaithful to the text, the final work is more accurate to the meaning of Tolkien words.

The picture shows the sun clearly rising over the mountains and clearing the dark of the night and the treacheries of Mordor. Undoubtedly, it is the morning of the 15 of March of 3019. We know, at this moment in Tolkien's tale, the Gates of Minas Tirith are already broken and the Witch King is entering the city only challenged by Gandalf. Nevertheless, we could see Grond's flaming head recently pushed by the trolls behind, while the Lord of the Nazgûl waited, patiently, on horseback. He appeared headless with a beaked crown floating and carrying a flaming sword with his skeletal hands. He wears large black robes and rides a black horse.

The other two Nazgûl were flying on winged creatures over the city to create chaos by bringing terror, which is clearly shown in the faces of the defenders looking at them in the walls of Minas Tirith. They are similar but different from the Lord and between them. The three share black in their clothings and mounts and red in the barding, the symbolic colors of the evil of Mordor. Their hoods are different and these

³⁶ <https://www.pinterest.es/pin/725642558702042036/>

two have skeleton heads. The monsters mounted appear to be a mixture of bird and reptile, and both are screaming, but one is flying over the city, while the other is attached to the top of the highest level of the wall.

Gandalf is not in front of the door waiting to confront the Witch King. On the contrary, he is on the third level, below the flying Nazgûl. He is riding Shadowfast, without any harness, as is written, and carrying Peregrin Took, coming to Faramir's aid. The wizard is as described in the first chapter of *The Hobbit*: an old man with long gray hair and beard but, at this point of the tale, he wears white clothes. He also carries the sword Glamdring and the wooden staff that shows his rune at the tip. Obviously, like any hobbit³⁷, Pippin is smaller, and we could imagine he is wearing the same Gondor uniform as the other soldiers, but he has no helmet or shoes so we can appreciate his curly hair in both places.

They are on their way to reach the scene that is taking place two levels up. Faramir, unconscious, but alive, is carried by three Gondor men to the place where Denethor plans to burn himself and his son, as if he were a corpse, dressed ceremonially and porting his sword in his hands. He looks in peace, while the Stewart, behind them, and dressed in black with fur trim, raises his hands and shows his face with an expression of madness. That door is the only one in the picture that has a lock, a detail very important for Beregon to delay the retinue and avoid Faramir's death. A crow on a perch on the door seems to be contemplating the spectacle, as does a man leaning out of a semicircular window, maybe Beregon himself waiting for Pippin and Gandalf.

The City of Minas Tirith³⁸ consisted of seven circular levels, each higher than the next and enclosed by a strong stone wall, with the top level being 700 feet above the ground. On the front or eastern side of the Hill of Guard, a bastion of stone rose from behind the Great Gate up to the seventh level. This stone outcropping bisected the second through sixth levels, and arched tunnels were carved into it to allow the main roadway to pass through. On the seventh level, the top of the stone outcropping

³⁷ He looks like the other hobbits in "The prancing Pony"
<https://twitter.com/tomashijo/status/1247942723459600387/photo/1>

³⁸ https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Minas_Tirith
<https://thainsbook.minastirith.cz/minastirith.html#:~:text=The%20City%20of%20Minas%20Tirith,was%20especially%20high%20and%20thick.>

formed a battlement, which at the far end, had an opening in the wall and a stone seat where people could look down at the Great Gate and out over the Pelennor Fields.

That description is thoroughly followed, but on a small scale, with a notable exception. The Great Gate on the first level faced eastward, but the other gates were not aligned with it, in order to make the fight more difficult for an attacker. The gates on the second through sixth levels faced alternately southeast and northeast, while the gate of the seventh level faced eastward. Each gate had its own passwords and the main roadway zigzagged from gate to gate up to the seventh level. Nevertheless, this is not followed in the picture because we can see the door between second, third and fourth levels and they are identified with different drawings in the key. Tomás knows perfectly the disposition of the doors in the book and why, so he decided not to follow the text probably based on esthetical purposes. He chooses to design the doors to make the aspect of the city walls more appealing and to show there is a connection between the levels, evident even for the spectators that have not read the book.

The main wall on the first level, the City Wall or Othram, was especially high, thick and with a surface smooth and dark, similar to that of Orthanc, while the other walls were made of white stone. It is shown in the colored version of the engraving, using dark grey for the first level and more pale and whitish for the other six.

In the absence of Gandalf, a group of soldiers heads to the Great Gate to defend it. Their boss seems to be haranguing them, while one of them is ordering to stop a man who comes out of the door of his house with a knife in his hand. In that house, there is a person looking out of a small window on the roof that looks very scared. The soldiers wear winged helmets and black capes and carry long spears. The soldiers from the towers defending the gate appear to be dead or seriously wounded, even the barefoot banner bearer porting the silver tree with the stars in a white field, the same symbol that is present in every uniform that we can see.

On the left of the composition, the defenders seem to be overwhelmed by the enemies with orcs climbing to the lower walls by a ladder, hardly being repelled by the men of Gondor: one throws a stone, another fires a bow and yet another pushes

the ladder while driving an ax through the head. The last one, with no helmet and long hair, strings a spear to an orc's mouth that carries a curved sword.

The second level is the one that shows the effects of the igneous projectiles of Mordor the most, maybe because between the first and second level is where the more luxurious houses are placed, the ones with round arch windows covered by lattices, balconies... On the upper floor of one, there is a man looking through a spyglass and, on the side, a blonde woman leaning out of the window looking scared, while above her an orange cat seems to be unaware of the danger, even if the roof on its right is on fire and the soldiers fight on the left.

Some details remark the effects of the war on the population of the City: there is an abandoned wooden rocking horse in the balcony but even more, a man in pajamas and clearly terrified, is running towards the enemy carrying his dog with him.

The tower in this level has a wooden parapet with three soldiers in it. The one carrying the banner, with the swan in the blue field of Dol Amroth, has been hit by an arrow in the face, his companion in a green hood reacts screaming, while the other is signaling the arrival of the Witch King at the Great Gate. There is also a reinforcement soldier entering through the tower door. At the foot of the building, there is a kennel with a dog that has a bone on the ground. You can also see the sign for the tavern or blacksmith shop.

The wall of the third level has been severely hit by the projectiles of the catapults, both stones and the severed heads of the soldiers of Gondor (also in the fifth). On that level and on the upper one, there are soldiers hiding, reflecting the terror produced by the Nazgûl that flies between both levels. The expressions of fear increases upwards while the fighting goes downwards. On this parapet, we have men of Gondor putting out fires with a bucket, shooting a bow, wounded by an arrow and, at the end, one shouting and another blowing a horn to warn those below or those in the tower. At the bottom there is a man carrying spears.

On the wall of the fourth level, there is a great variety of attitudes. On the far left, a man looks out of the door with a cat at his feet and, next to him, what looks like a nobleman observes with curiosity one of the stones from the catapult that has crashed against the wall. The tower next to the gate is partially destroyed and shows

dead soldiers inside while a soldier carries buckets of water. Above the semicircular arch that acts as a fort and bridge to the next level, you can see the remains of the destroyed tower and a black cat. At the bottom of this, a man leans out while behind him there are two frightened men, one of them with a spear, and a woman carrying a baby, maybe trying to leave the siege.

On the wall of the sixth level of the city, instead of battlements and ramparts, there is a water channel. The painting shows a man with a face reminiscent of Munch's *Scream* trying to close the wooden shutters of the window to avoid the vision and hearing of the Nazgûl. At the same time, another man opens a cage so his red bird can escape the siege. Freedom and caring in a single image.

Finally, in the last level, we see the shape of a ship's prow where the Nazgûl perches, like an horrific bird, and in the circular yard, two of the guardians of the dry white tree of Gondor, wearing their distinctive uniform with winged helmets, armor and blue capes and porting spears.

The composition is divided into two parts separated by the diagonal marked by the structure of Minas Tirith, which occupies approximately two thirds of the work. The other third shows the battle in the valley with an imponent Mumak nearly in the center of the picture. In fact, the Mumak catches the eye first when the spectator approaches the picture. Then, following the diagonal marked by its tusks, we find the main menace: the Witch king leading the destruction of the Great Gate.

The battle in the valley shows the Rohirrim's first charge heralding for the horns, one of them being blown at that moment by a warrior in the extreme of the formation, the only one that shows the horse of Rohan in his shield. The distribution of the riders and the enemies is perfect to transmit the chaos and the pushing of this strategy. The standard bearer is placed at the center of the formation and King Theoden by his side, leading the charge with Herugrim, his sword, drawn and carrying a nordic decorated shield in the other hand. A bearded warrior wearing a Viking yelm and mounting a horse, Snowmane, the only one completely armored. Furthermore, in the coloured version, red is his predominant color while green is the chosen one for the rest of Rohan. Behind him, as should be, Eowyn rides with Merry, coming to battle with the rest of her people, and the only ones among them without a thick beard.

Rohirrim are clearly better equipped than their foes, they wear scale armor or chain mails, helmets, long lances and wooden round shields, whereas Sauron's forces go to battle barely more than naked but with more variety in weaponry: axes, curved swords, spears. Some of them are shown surprised or even scared, trying to flee, especially in the first line of the confrontation with the riders. We can see not only orcs and goblins, also trolls, rude bearded men or the exotic Haradrim mounted over the Mumak. They are four men dressed with golden yellow and orange Arab-type clothing, armed with pointed spears and inside a wooden castle decorated with skulls. They carry the red snake on black background, banner and symbols of the eye of Mordor on the elephant's forehead and the fabrics that hang on its side.

The machinery that is destroying the city is also deployed. A troll is operating a catapult and about to release the stone, like the others, marked with the symbol of the eye of Sauron. Besides, there is also a siege tower full of warriors, pushed by a troll. Some other goblins are hiding behind the tower to avoid the arrows of the defenders.

At the top, partially covered by the title, three corsair ships sail the Anduin approaching the battle. It depicts the moment before they show Aragorn and not the enemy arriving.

As we said, on the upper left there is an intricate cartouche identifying the name of the painting, the literary affiliation of the work and the author of the work in English. The left side is for Rohan, so it is decorated with a horn, helmet, round shield and horse but also a red-on-black eye symbol of Mordor surrounded by flames at the bottom. In the center a sword and an ax intersect, reinforcing the structure of a panoply. On the right Gondor is represented: there are arrows, a winged helmet, rolled scrolls, skulls and flowers (probably athelas) around a heraldic shield with the drawing of the Tree of Gondor with the seven stars around it.

I find astonishing the extraordinary level of detail Tomás Hijo achieved. For example, there is a complete range of expressions in the faces: fear, doubt, sadness, death, aggression. Especially compelling is the black sad face from the figure next to the mumakil, maybe remembering that not all the soldiers of Mordor were there of their own free will, some of them were slaves or worse.

And, even though it is a battle, there is some space for funny characters like the goblin on the roof of the siege tower, holding the bridge rope and carrying a knife in its mouth; or the one whose nose is pierced by a spear. Also remarkable are some elements from daily life in Minas Tirith like a barrel, a sign in the interior of the Great Gate, a rockin horse in the balcony, or even the pets. However, it is noticeable the conspicuous absence of the rooster.

6. Conclusions

Tomás Hijo is one of the most talented and innovative among the illustrators that based their work on Tolkien's words. But, he is only a link in an infinite chain of artists that feel inspired by Middle Earth, the landscape, their characters or their adventures.

Nevertheless, his particular vision, at the same time modern and traditional, opens a door, showing a different world than the one originated by Peter Jackson films, based on Nashmith, Lee and Howe designs. We could clearly see the similarity of the canonical architecture of Minas Tirith or the Mumak, the Nazgûl and so on, because all of them came from the same description in the books and share influences and interests. But there are similarities too with the style of Tolkien's drawings, for example "The mountain path"³⁹ or "Conversation with Smaug".

Apart from that, the first artist that came to my mind when I looked at his work, and more with this illustration, was Brueghel⁴⁰. In this case, especially "The Toren van Babel"⁴¹, inescapable source for the very specific conformation of urbanism in Minas Tirith, with shared classical architectural elements, the vicinity of a great river, the presence of mechanical engines, or the fact that it had been partially destroyed.

³⁹<https://hipertextual.com/2018/05/tolkien-ilustraciones>

⁴⁰ Pieter Bruegel, the Elder, byname Peasant Bruegel, Dutch Pieter Bruegel De Oudere or Boeren Bruegel was the greatest flemish painter of the 16th century, whose landscapes and vigorous, often witty scenes of peasant life are particularly renowned. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Pieter-Bruegel-the-Elder>

⁴¹

[https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_torre_de_Babel_%28Brueghel%29#/media/Archivo:Pieter_Bruegel_the_Elder_-_The_Tower_of_Babel_\(Vienna\)_-_Google_Art_Project_-_edited.jpg](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_torre_de_Babel_%28Brueghel%29#/media/Archivo:Pieter_Bruegel_the_Elder_-_The_Tower_of_Babel_(Vienna)_-_Google_Art_Project_-_edited.jpg)

However, it also reminded me of “De Triomf van de Dood”⁴², by the same author, with its differentiated detailed scenes, some brutal and comical at the same time, or the impression of chaos and battle. Generally speaking, more or less, we can appreciate some influences of the Netherlandish painting school in many of Tomás' drawings. And, of course, medieval painting in general, more romanesque than gothic, as it is already said by Segura, but also medieval woodcut with similar technique, compositions, symbolic presence of the buildings and other architectural elements, the treatment of faces and the general style.

In the sense of the feeling of the chaotic, it reminds me of the “Guernica”, by Picasso, in some expressions and attitudes or the way daily life is affected by the war. Even some faces bring to mind the picture “Skrik”, by Edvard Munch or other expressionism painters, especially in their graphic works. They share the strength of the line, expressiveness of the groove opened by the gouge, and the importance of black and contrast.

Last but not least, we should mention the presence of elements from comics and graphic novels, such as the combination of different perspectives, the humor style or the narrative technique, among others.

Undoubtedly, there are lots of other influences that could be mentioned but the objective is not to elaborate an exhaustive list but to show the main ones to point out Tomás' work is the result of a long way tradition. He is, and it shows in his drawings, classic and modern at the same time. His art comes from a vast tradition of illustrators and artists, but he provides a new perspective, a new vision and new techniques.

On the other hand, analyzing “The Battle of the Pelennor Fields” from the point of view of the functions that an illustration should fulfill, even though it does not accompany the text, it achieves all goals. It redounds the content of the text but at the same time, shows what words can not express, such as details or side characters. It serves also to decorate and embellish or show some aspects of the world around us that are not in the original and, in this way, enrich the observer or

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https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_triunfo_de_la_Muerte#/media/Archivo:The_Triumph_of_Death_by_Pieter_Bruegel_the_Elder.jpg

serve as poetical expression of the author. Finally, it contributes with enchantment and challenges to the reader with hidden details or caricatures.

As we have already proven, Tolkien words are always present in this picture but Tomás has added his own vision and understanding of them. He has translated the story into image and doing so, he has to show in just one picture various moments and situations and also fill in the blanks that are not told in the tale. He has enriched the argument and has brought to us a new conception, different from the canon of the Peter Jackson films, but without breaking abruptly with it. It is distinct but in a better way.

Fortunately, thanks to Tomás, the works based on Tolkien words have grown showing all the knowing, the respect and the love that he has towards the Professor and his production. This is one sample of the masterpieces that he has made and hopefully there will be more in the future. Thus the legacy is carried away once more.

by Ana María Mariño Arias

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