

Elenglin - Sword of Westernesse

I imagined this piece as an ancient family heirloom, secreted away in a small family shrine deep in the Angle. Once carried in some last now forgotten defense of doomed Arthedain, it has for long ages lain silent and forgotten. Who can say what magic has preserved it all these long ages? Here now it sings, ready again at the last.



The smithing was performed by Eric of Meuleurgy, once of Albion Swords. The overall form is a marriage of production sword parts according to an illustration I provided - but turned into a working whole by Eric's expert hand.

The final Sindarin etched into the blade is my own attempt, leaning heavily on the works of Mr. Salo and Parf Edhellen. The etching is done from a digital file I provided. A friend carved the scabbard core, which I finished with vinagaroon'd leather and hardware of my own design.

Silver Pennies of the Breelands

From the first time I read of poor Butterbur and the hard blow of twelve silver pennies, I wanted a little pony purse of my own.

First I worked up a design I thought fit the rural idyll of the Shire and Breelands as Tolkien imagined them. The text was much harder, as the men of Bree seemed to have little use for the elven tongues the Professor spent so much time perfecting. The pennies would have to be in the common tongue of Westernesse, as poorly documented as that was.

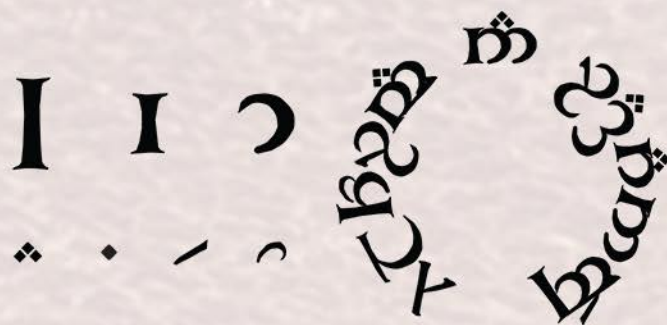
I cobbled "pennyweight" with just a bit of loan-word from Gondor's Sindarin, figuring the Gondorian "tharni" and "castar" were roughly analogous to the ancient British silver penny and groat.

The reverse was easier, even with the limited Westron vocabulary - "Cotman of Apple End" seemed a fitting name for some silversmith set to occasional minting by the town fathers.

The town name was harder, as in the Professor's mind, that Brythonic words "Bree" and "Combe" stood place for a presumably ancient Dunlendish words for "hill" and "valley" respectively. Given we've only a single word of Dunlendish, I at last resigned myself to using Noldroin "tum."

That settled, on to making the pennies real.

I created a vector file for each face of the coin. To make certain it did not look too perfect, I rendered each tengwar character from a discrete set of virtual "punches" rather than simply exporting out from a font.



I sent the file to Pavel of AntiquaNova. He then provided me with a set of dies and mounting frame for hand-hammering the silver coins in medieval fashion. A bit of patina and polish, and now they look a half century old.



Eriador Walking Kit

My own handwork tends toward wool, linen and leather - all crafted in historical fashion. The cloth I sew by hand with linen thread, the leather I dye in walnut powder and dubbin with oil and beeswax.

All I've made is tested by real use in our farm's forest to make certain they're not mere flights of fancy, but rather are workable items that would be not out of place in a "real" Eriador. My own wilderness travels are nothing compared to those of the Fellowship, but over the last several years I've grown quite confident that I've come up with pieces that would be quite at home in the wilds past the Chetwood.



I do cheat a bit with technology when it comes to hardware: although I can hand-cast metal, my daily work simply does not leave me the time to devote the amount of finish work those require. Thus I've taken to using 3D design and printing. The end result is perhaps more mathematically perfect than my own hand could create, but wax cast bronze is wax cast bronze no matter how that master is first made.



A Ranger's Mess

A knife for game, and a pot to cook it in...

By the time I was working on these projects, I was actively trying to get farther from WETA's vision and get close as I could to the Middle-earth of Tolkien's books. While Tolkien says himself in his letters that he tended not to envision the physical accoutrements of life in Middle-earth, I still thought it worthwhile combing over his own doodles and drawings.

Thus the repeating motifs on these pieces faintly echo the flower-sigils of the Professor's own hand. The lines of the cauldron and shape of the blade echo the arcs of his Numenorean carpet.

For both pieces I prepared drawings and sent them to the best craftsmen I could find for the task. Eric of Meuleurgy crafted the knife, and Jeff of Royal Oak Armory created the cauldron.



Learning the Lore

Until the first set of films came out, I only had fond memories of long ago reading *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Once immersed in Middle-earth again, I was hooked. It was the *Silmarillion* first, then other scraps of writing as one question or another came to mind. I've found the crafting projects particularly have sharpened my research skills, as having a problem to solve makes the hunt so much clearer.

It was in fact my "penny" project that started me on a hunt for of Adunaic, finally running through all I could find in print even contacting the Bodleian Library with questions about the manuscripts before running into the end of public information. Some of that journey I have documented in the Middle Earth Reenactment Society Newsletter article "*The Lore-Keepers of Minas Tirith*" (Spring 2018).

In addition, I've written a more light-hearted piece "*What has it got in it's pockets*" for the Winter 2017 issue. From a handful of small objects I spin a few suggestions of deep stories, each grounded solidly in one of the cultures of Eriador.



<p>Oh Aeglyth, you must see! My heart's music twice renewed and Rhodanwa, you remember her! Cuzie to your music backably!</p> <p>You! With the pretty goblin, that's her, that's her. Why she reminiscent this for me for her birthday, and you believe I do so think the captured the silverflayers in mine, in mine. How do you think she got that blue?</p> <p>I think she was yellowflayer, but Amaranth - you know Amaranth swath, down by the hillside? She says it must be the lightning Now I don't see that - see this shade here, that must be... No, She said what? Oh that can't be right, you surely haven't heard what Aeglyth said about his former Duhin...</p> <p>You don't say.</p> <p>Why come on and have some tea. Please, please, I insist...</p>			<p>I do think! Come look, show my first! It's good to have company at my fire these nights. <i>Enter things about of late - spare things. No snails, but heads just the same. I'll not take my flock north of the road this season, not for a head of silver I want!</i> I had You're those rangers I see... Don't deny it, I know the look, all dark and angry-eyed. Don't think I don't see those words, neither. We'll I have something for you. As if I told me to give this to one of your kind, should I lay eyes on you. As if even! Haven't you seen their kind here in years. All golden-haired one, not like the dark ones you normally see in these hills. Who you see...</p> <p>That's right! Pardon, pardon - don't get much company up here. Don't get much cause for words, on the stream that flows on as it were. Yes, yes...</p> <p>I have 'til! A pretty thing, ain't it? All green and shiny in the fire-like... that if you'd you'd know what it meant. And in say. To say... what was it? You!</p> <p>"The barrow makes for merriment." What's a merriment? Not my business I guess. We'll here you be, here you be, Why - where you off as fast look! Share the first! Share... <i>Enter things this is, no mistake!</i></p>
	<p>No, my friend hobbit. I see where your eye lags. There is no magic in this ring. No magic save that which lets and memory give it.</p> <p>Long years before the first summer of your Shire was made, an elfmaid was this ring, amongst the fair winter's grace of Lin- gon. She was my daughter, and light of my life. I have not seen her smile in an Age of the world.</p> <p>Long since, the Elfmaid has vanished her in the halls of Man- doo. Whether I remain in Middle-earth or sail west, I shall not see her again unless the world end or Mandoo claim me.</p> <p>The one of the most treasured treasures of their doom. I tell you permanently, treasure that which you share with them. It is a gift.</p>	<p>"Pardon your pardon sir... I thank you for the meal and all. The Greenway, it's a hard road, a hard road sir. But could you be telling me where I might find work? 'Tis with the war sir... It's hard down south, hard. The armies burned us out sir, burned us all out...</p> <p>Here, I have this letter I do - I fear I can't read it more, but Master Gandalf, he says it says I'm a hard worker and good hand.</p> <p>And that I am! I can plow all day sir, and that's a fact. And my missus wears a fine pin, and my little ones mind well, and they don't eat much neither. None of us do - we care not keep sir, if you know... if you know where we might go!</p>	

The smallest things can tell a story that illuminates a person. The beauty of Middle-earth reenactment is that the things we choose can be so small and so easily found. An arrowhead that didn't work out, a coin side find