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ABSTRACT (English)

The dark, malodorous wetland called the Dead Marshes ranks among the most memorable and enigmatic landscapes in fantasy literature. While one influential line of scholarship connects the passage to Tolkien's experiences in the Great War, this article argues that the Marshes should also be read as a reception of Tacitus's depiction of the Teutoburg Forest. The link between the two texts is both simple and complex. Tolkien read Tacitus, and the latter's influence has been detected elsewhere in *The Lord of the Rings*; yet Tolkien identified William Morris as an even more important source for the Marshes than the Great War, and the relevant passage in Morris is also a reception of Tacitus. It will be shown that Tolkien comes closer to Tacitus than Morris in his vision of the way landscapes manifest—to sight, sound, hearing, and touch—the memory and meaning of military losses. Recognizing this reception both explains Tolkien's ascription of such importance to Morris and offers an important example of a modern author reaching outside his own era and genre to participate in a distinctly Roman tradition of representing war-dead, landscape, and memory.

ABSTRACT (French)

Le marécage malodorant et sombre appelé les Marais Morts se classe parmi les paysages les plus mémorables et énigmatiques de la littérature fantastique. Bien qu'une tendance influente de la recherche rattache ce passage à l'expérience de Tolkien pendant la Grande Guerre, cet article soutient que les Marais devraient également être interprétés comme une réception de la représentation de la forêt de Teutoburg chez Tacite. La connexion entre les deux textes est à la fois simple et complexe. Tolkien a lu Tacite, et l'influence de ce dernier a été détectée ailleurs dans *Le Seigneur des anneaux*; mais Tolkien a identifié William Morris comme une source encore plus importante pour les Marais que la Grande Guerre, et le passage en question chez Morris est également une réception de Tacite. On verra que Tolkien se rapproche de Tacite plus que de Morris dans sa vision de la façon dont les paysages rendent sensible à la vue, à l'ouïe et au toucher, le souvenir et la signification des morts militaires. La mise en évidence de cette réception explique l'importance que donne Tolkien à Morris tout en offrant un exemple important d'incursion d'un auteur moderne hors de son époque et de son genre, pour participer à une tradition nettement romaine dans la représentation des victimes militaires, des paysages et de la mémoire.

Memories of (Ancient Roman) War in Tolkien's Dead Marshes

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I

It is not always easy to know how to talk about the site of a battle. In English, at least, the problem may stem from a lack of vocabulary. The word *battlefield* tends to be assigned to the ground on which two or more armies fight an engagement, regardless of what phase in the history of the site is being discussed. In common parlance, that is, one hears of troops clashing *on the battlefield*; survivors going out *onto the battlefield* to retrieve the wounded and dispose of the dead; tourists visiting *the battlefield* to gain insight into an episode out of their history. The same word would typically be used in all three cases; and not, it must be said, without justification, since a battle site has the same geographic coordinates at every point in time. Yet there is a sense in which tourists visiting a battlefield park enter a different space than that occupied by soldiers in the midst of a battle. And the immediate aftermath of combat—a field of churned-up mud, say, tenanted by the as-yet-unburied dead—offers a third, distinct experience of the same terrain.

This element of experience is inextricably bound up in the relationship between war and space. Kate McLoughlin emphasizes this point in defining her concept of the *war zone*:

> War is fought over and in space, it alters irrevocably the space on and within which it occurs. But it also brings into being a unique situation… as much a product of experience as of geographical factors, transformative, requiring special consciousness… from those within it.[1]

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1   McLoughlin (2011) 83.

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The notion of war as a zone comprising both experience *and* space necessarily brings with it the question of accessibility, too. The war zone, according to McLoughlin, is "transformative" and demands "special consciousness"; those who enter it reemerge with knowledge and "credentials of autopsy" others cannot claim.[2] They may also possess *personal event memories*, vivid recollections that permit them to travel back in time and relive significant moments with multisensory images (e.g., visual, auditory, and olfactory impressions) intact.[3] Such memories may be activated still more powerfully by returning to the location where the events occurred.

But even visiting a battle site cannot trigger memories of the war zone—of the experience of conflict, in that place—in a person who was never inside it. To give an example: I can travel from my home in Philadelphia to the Gettysburg National Military Park in under three hours. But although the National Park Service guarantees me access to the ground on which the Battle of Gettysburg was fought in 1863, neither they nor any other entity short of a time machine can grant me access to the *experience* of the battle or its aftermath.[4] Instead, I must rely on supplements such as guidebooks, plaques, monuments, and guided tours, all of which in turn depend—at least in part and at some remove—on verbal, textual, and graphic records left by eyewitnesses. To such supplements falls the vitally important task of making personal memories of war accessible to nonparticipants. Indeed, for McLoughlin, the principal challenge of war writing is "to convey this charged space, to communicate the complex situation—part psycho-physiological, part geographical—that is conflict."[5]

In what follows, I will explore the complicated relationship between two literary texts that respond to this challenge in startlingly similar ways, despite belonging to different genres and historical periods. Specifically, I will argue that the Dead Marshes episode in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* should be read

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2   Ibid. 83–84, 106.
3   Pillemer (1998) 50–51.
4   Coco (1995) and Sheldon (2003) have amply demonstrated that this last phase of the Battle of Gettysburg—the months-long project of clearing the battlefield, caring for the wounded, and disposing of the dead—was in some ways more grueling and terrible than the fighting itself.
5   McLoughlin (2011) 84.

as a reception of Tacitus's depiction of the Teutoburg Forest in Book 1 of the *Annals.* These texts correspond not in their representations of combat per se—there is only the briefest mention of combat in the Dead Marshes narrative—but to another experience of the war zone, namely the encounter between the living and the dead on or near the site of a battle. Both authors give their readers a vivid, multisensory impression of this 'aftermath zone' as characters within the narrative negotiate the provocations and pitfalls of the charged space through which they move.[6] Charting the hitherto unrecognized influence of Tacitus on this episode in Tolkien will thus shed new light not only on the reception of a Roman historian and the creation of a masterpiece of modern fantasy, but also on a powerful strategy for representing the way landscapes can manifest—to sight, sound, hearing, and touch—the memory and meaning of military losses.

II

The Dead Marshes episode occurs in Book IV of *The Lord of the Rings*—a little over halfway through the second volume, *The Two Towers* (1954)—in a chapter called "The Passage of the Marshes."[7] This section of the narrative follows the hobbits Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee as they travel overland from the river Anduin toward the entrance to the land of Mordor. Having slipped away from their companions following a skirmish with a party of orcs and Uruk-hai, Frodo and Sam now rely on the creature Gollum (formerly known as Sméagol) to help them sneak undetected into the very heart of Mordor, up the slopes of the volcano Mt. Doom. There Frodo plans to destroy the Ring he carries by casting it into the fires in which it was forged.

Their journey is a difficult one, however, and not only because they cannot completely trust their slippery guide. The nearer they come to the fearsome Black Gate, the more blighted the land appears. It is as if either the Dark Lord

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6   Cf. ibid. 105–106: "Movement through anticipatory or intermediary zones is often matched in war texts with an equivalent movement through recovery or aftermath zones…. It may be helpful to conceive the war zone as a series of overlapping circles…: a Venn diagram with battle at its heart but other, related phenomena… converging on it."

7   Tolkien (2004) 620–635; hereafter cited in-text with page-number references in parentheses.

chose to marshal his forces in a setting perfectly attuned to his nature, or else his malign purposes and powers can no longer be contained by the walls of his fortress at Barad-Dûr—or by the mountains ringing Mordor itself. On the third day of their journey, Gollum and the hobbits enter "an endless network of pools, and soft mires, and winding half-strangled water-courses" that even Gollum struggles to navigate (626). Tolkien describes the place vividly:

> It was dreary and wearisome. Cold clammy winter still held sway in this forsaken country. The only green was the scum of livid weed on the dark greasy surfaces of the sullen waters. Dead grasses and rotten reeds loomed up in the mists like ragged shadows of long-forgotten summers.

The trio make their way slowly but steadily through this dispiriting landscape, halting only briefly at the edge of a reed-thicket for Gollum to seek shelter from a sun giving "no colour and no warmth." They come to the center of the fens after nightfall. The land is even wetter here, "opening into wide stagnant meres," and the travelers have even more trouble finding patches of firmer ground where they can step "without sinking into gurgling mud" (627).

But the most terrible aspects of the landscape have yet to be revealed. Suddenly the night grows "altogether dark," and the air seems "black and heavy to breathe." Sam (through whom this scene is focalized) can scarcely believe his eyes when he sees eerie lights begin to swirl and flicker in midair: "some like dimly shining smoke, some like misty flames flickering slowly above unseen candles; here and there they [twist] like ghostly sheets unfurled by hidden hands." He asks their guide to explain what they are seeing. "The tricksy lights," says Gollum; "Candles of corpses, yes, yes. Don't you heed them! Don't look! Don't follow them! Where's the master?"

Sam backtracks at once to find Frodo standing mesmerized by one of the pools, water and muck dripping ominously from his hands. He jolts Frodo out of his reverie, repeating Gollum's warning not to look at the lights, and hurries on again. But, in his haste, Sam trips and falls, plunging his own hands into the stinking slime at the edge of a mere. Beneath the surface, as if through "some window, glazed with grimy glass," he sees *dead faces*.

In response to Sam's shocked outcry, Frodo declares "in a dreamlike voice" that he too has seen the faces (628):

> "They lie in all the pools, pale faces, deep deep under the dark water. I saw them: grim faces and evil, and noble faces and sad. Many faces proud and fair, and weeds in their silver hair. But all foul, all rotting, all dead. A fell light is in them…. I know not who they are; but I thought I saw there Men and Elves, and Orcs beside them."

"Yes, yes," says Gollum:

> "All dead, all rotten. Elves and Men and Orcs. The Dead Marshes. There was a great battle long ago, yes, so they told him when Sméagol was young, when I was young before the Precious came. It was a great battle. Tall Men with long swords, and terrible Elves, and Orcses shrieking. They fought on the plain for days and months at the Black Gates. But the Marshes have grown since then, swallowed up the graves; always creeping, creeping."

Sam objects that the bodies they see cannot possibly date back to a battle that took place "an age and more ago." He proposes instead that "some devilry hatched in the Dark Land" might have conjured them. But Gollum only knows that they cannot be reached:

> "You cannot reach them, you cannot touch them. We tried once, yes, precious. I tried once; but you cannot reach them. Only shapes to see, perhaps, not to touch."

Sam shudders, thinking he can guess why the ever-ravenous Gollum might have tried to reach the marsh-bodies, and expresses his desire to leave the place behind for good. Gollum leads him and Frodo onward, cautioning them to go slowly and carefully—or else "hobbits go down to join the Dead ones and light little candles."

III

The Dead Marshes rank among the most memorable and enigmatic landscapes in fantasy literature. The Mere of Dead Faces has been depicted by some of the most revered illustrators of Tolkien's work, including John Howe, Alan Lee, and

Ted Nasmith; and director Peter Jackson had three 'wet sets' specially built at his Wellington, NZ studios to bring the place to life in his 2002 film adaptation of *The Two Towers*.[8] Nor have scholars proved immune to the Marshes' allure, showing a keen interest in discovering what sources of inspiration might have influenced their creation.[9] I will review these scholarly approaches before making the case for Tacitus as an additional and important source.

Critical inquiries into the sources of the Dead Marshes can be roughly divided into three interconnected strands: folkloric, intertextual, and biographical. A 2005 article by Margaret Sinex represents the richest recent contribution to the folkloric strand. Focusing on what Gollum calls "tricksy lights" and "candles of corpses"—the pale wisps and twisting sheets of flame that appear above the fens at the heart of the Marshes—Sinex traces the influence of two motifs from European folklore: the Hand of Glory and Will o' the Wisp.[10] She attributes particular importance to the Hand of Glory, which refers to a candle made from the hand of a hanged criminal or dead child. The light cast by such a taper was said to induce sleep in any who saw it, while the bearer remained unaffected, making the device especially attractive to thieves.[11] By contrast, a 2006 essay by Mark T. Hooker emphasizes a "hidden allusion" to the Welsh tradition of corpse candles: stationary or moving lights that appear as death omens, either along the route of a funeral soon to take place, or near the spot where a death is destined to occur.[12] Hooker further points out that, according to Welsh folklore, one could ascertain the identity of the person whose death the corpse candle foretold by gazing into water as it passed.[13] The relevance of this tradition to the Mere of Dead Faces is confirmed by Tolkien's outline and first draft of the scene, which contain the idea (absent from the final,

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8   http://www.lordoftherings.net/index_explore_deadmarsh.html
9   Based on correspondence, Christopher Tolkien has shown that his father drafted "The Passage of the Marshes" in South Africa between 12 and 19 April 1944, setting it down "almost to the form of every sentence" as it would later appear in print (Tolkien [2000b] 104–107).
10   Sinex (2005); cf. Tolkien (2000b) 116 n. 10.
11   Sinex (2005) 102–103.
12   Hooker (2006) 148–149.
13   Ibid. 151.

published version) that if a person looked into the pools under the moonlight, they would see their own face reflected back as dead and rotting.[14]

Both of these articles also contribute to the intertextual strand of scholarship on the Dead Marshes. Hooker, for his part, proposes that the faces of the fallen warriors in the Marshes may "faint[ly] echo" an episode in H. Rider Haggard's *She: A History of Adventure* (1886–1887) in which an army loses its way while crossing a swamp; half the soldiers drown, terrified by "the great balls of fire that move about there" in the night.[15] Sinex—again, focusing on the paralytic effects of the marsh-lights—looks further back, discussing possible links to the medieval Icelandic texts *Bárðar Saga* and *Eyrbyggja Saga*. Stuart D. Lee and Elizabeth Solopova adduce another medieval parallel in their 2005 sourcebook *The Keys of Middle-earth*: the description in *Beowulf* of Grendel's mere, where "a terrible wonder may be seen each night, | fire on the water" (ll. 1365–1366).[16] Moving into the Late Middle Ages, Judith Caesar suggests a possible reminiscence of canto 8 of *Inferno*, where Dante and Virgil witness the punishment of the angry and sullen: submersion in a malodorous swamp (*palude*).[17] And Robert E. Morse details the similarities between Frodo's crossing of the Marshes—shadowy, stinking, pathless and birdless—and Aeneas's Underworld journey in Vergil's *Aeneid*, a point briefly taken up again by Annette Simonis in her 2014 article on underworld voyages in contemporary fantasy literature.[18]

It is the biographical approach, however, that has dominated the scholarship, with many critics finding in the Dead Marshes a reflection (or refraction) of the

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14 Tolkien (2000b) 105, 110.
15 Hooker (2006) 151.
16 Lee/Solopova (2005) 240 (discussion), 243 (text and translation).
17 Caesar (2006) 168. The swamp is described most vividly, however, at the end of canto 7 (ll. 103–130).
18 Morse (1986) 10–13; Simonis (2014) 244. Cf. also Eilmann (2015) 408–409; and now Stevens (2017) on the reception of classical underworlds in *The Hobbit*. Regarding the absence of birds in the Marshes (upon which Sam remarks at Tolkien [2004] 626), Domitilla Campanile has suggested to me that Tolkien may also have drawn inspiration from John Keats's ballad "La belle dame sans merci" (1819), in which we find repeated: "The sedge has withered from the lake, / and no birds sing."

author's experiences in the First World War.[19] Tolkien completed officers' training at Oxford while finishing his BA degree; less than a month after graduation, he took up a commission as a second lieutenant in the Thirteenth Lancashire Fusiliers.[20] By early 1916, he had chosen to specialize in signaling, and was eventually appointed battalion signaling officer. Tolkien was transferred to the Eleventh Battalion in June, three weeks before they were sent to the front. They arrived just in time for the commencement of the Battle of the Somme. Throughout that long, bloody series of engagements, Tolkien and his fellow-signalers labored under chaotic working conditions in a bleak landscape of mud, dead trees, and dead men. In November, Tolkien was invalided back to England with a bad case of trench fever. He spent the rest of the war convalescing, never to return to the front.

What must Tolkien have seen and endured during those months on the Somme? His published works provide few details.[21] But Barton Friedman and John Garth have drawn on accounts by other veterans of the Somme to argue that the Mere of Dead Faces may well have been informed by memories of that landscape. Both scholars, for example, cite a passage from Siegfried Sassoon's autobiographical novel *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930), in which the hero, George Sherston, sees "floating on the surface of [a] flooded trench… the mask of a human face which had detached itself from the skull."[22] Friedman also quotes a passage from Max Plowman's memoir *A Subaltern on the Somme* (1927), where the author recalls his battalion crossing a duck-board track laid over a plain pitted with flooded shell-holes. "As I look upon these evil pools," writes

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19   This may be considered part of a larger critical project of exploring the influence of the Great War on Tolkien and his *oeuvre*. Garth (2003) is indispensable, though he mentions the Marshes only briefly (but cf. Garth [2008]); Croft (2002), Livingston (2006), and Bonechi (2012) similarly mention the episode in the course of broader investigations into Tolkien's war experience and its impact on his work.

20   For a concise account of Tolkien's military service, see Carpenter (1977) 85–93; Garth (2003) gives more detail.

21   A reticence bemoaned by, e.g., Croft (2002) 6 and Sinex (2005) 94.

22   Friedman (1982) 115; Garth (2008) 14. Cf. Pat Barker's series of novels *The Regeneration Trilogy* (1993–1995).

Plowman, "I half expect to see a head appearing from each one."[23] And John Masefield, in a passage from *The Old Front Line* (1917)—again, quoted by Friedman—writes of the mine crater at Beaumont Hamel: "liquid gathers in holes near the bottom, and is greenish and foul and has the look of dead eyes staring upward."[24]

For Friedman, the Dead Marshes episode makes a useful point of entry into a wide-ranging comparison of *The Lord of the Rings* and David Jones's *In Parenthesis* (1937) as responses to the war. The 2008 article by Garth, however, offers a more sustained analysis of the Marshes as a product of the author's experiences in France. Garth finds parallels in the trench experience for many aspects of the episode, including the jumbling together of the "evil" and the "noble" dead, the lethal allure of the "tricksy lights" and dead faces, and the "noisome smell" that goes up with a hiss when Sam trips and plunges his hands into the muck at the edge of a mere.[25] He also makes the crucial point that when Gollum talks of the Marshes "swallow[ing] the graves" of a long-ago battle,

> …he reports a phenomenon familiar to soldiers of the Somme winter. The entire, vast battlefield was dotted with makeshift cemeteries and littered with unburied dead, numbered in tens of thousands…. That sodden autumn, Tolkien was posted for weeks at a time in trenches seized from the Germans and often filled with the dead of either side, in various states of decay. Sometimes the earth would reveal older remains, from the previous two years of the war, and they might look as ancient as those that Frodo and Sam see; the memoirist Edmund Blunden described how bones encountered in the trenches might as well date from the defence of

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23   In Friedman (1982) 115–116.

24   In ibid. 116.

25   Garth (2008) 14–17. It is worth noting as well Garth's ingenious suggestion that Tolkien may have been primed to think in terms of haunted landscapes by a trip he took to Birmingham in early April 1944 for a school reunion. The school had recently been rebuilt in the suburbs, and the redevelopment of the original site in the city center appalled Tolkien. He wrote to his son Christopher about visiting the old site: "I couldn't stand much of that, or the ghosts that rose from the pavements" (in ibid. 10). As Garth points out, these "ghosts" must surely refer, not merely to memories of Tolkien's school-days, but to the "brutal and tragic" deaths of so many of his classmates in the Great War (ibid.).

> Troy. Yet habit could not entirely inure soldiers to the shock of seeing a more recent corpse. One soldier wrote of walking 'for over half a mile on half-buried German dead. Every step was on ground that yielded to the foot, as the dead body below the layer of yellow clay gave to our weight. Sometimes a boot, removing a clump of earth, disclosed the nose or hand of the corpse below us…. And in a great shell-hole, filled with blood and water, sat a dead Highlander and a dead German, gazing, with sightless yellow eyeballs, into each other's faces.'[26]

It is at this point that Garth cites the passage from Sassoon also cited by Friedman. The context he has given—the ubiquity of the dead at the front, the physical incorporation of human remains into the landscape, the way those remains might appear either grotesquely lifelike or impossibly ancient—illuminates not only Sherston's gruesome discovery, but also the related observations of Plowman and Masefield. In such a landscape, it would almost be more surprising *not* to see human heads protruding from flooded shell craters, nor does it seem quite so fanciful to imagine *as* eyes, the foul pools in which the eyes of the unburied so frequently rotted away.

A 2015 article by Julian Eilmann marks the most recent entry into this strand of criticism. Eilmann approaches the topic from the perspective of the secondary school teacher seeking literary works to help students grasp the social and psychological consequences of mechanized warfare. He argues that Tolkien's novels deserve a place alongside works more traditionally assigned for this purpose, such as Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (*Im Westen nichts Neues*, 1929).[27] Eilmann supports his claim by guiding the reader through the Dead Marshes and other "Great War landscapes" (*Weltkriegsland-schaften*) in *The Lord of the Rings*.[28] His reading closely follows Tolkien's text, and he engages far less with other primary and secondary sources than does Garth. But the overall point is well taken, and Eilmann makes the useful observation that the allusion to the Western Front in the Dead Marshes episode might be apparent to anyone familiar with the photographs or film footage of the

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26   Ibid. 14.
27   Eilmann (2015) 402–403.
28   Ibid. 406–410.

casualties from (inter alia) the Battle of the Somme.[29] In other words, one need not be a veteran or a scholar to 'read' the Western Front in the Dead Marshes; it is an interpretation available to all who have encountered the widely disseminated images of those First World War landscapes.

The three strands of criticism I have identified—folkloric, intertextual, and biographical—are complementary, not mutually exclusive. Indeed, some scholars engage with more than one or even all three in the same book or article. These works are also largely persuasive. The overall picture that emerges from the scholarship is of a literary creation that owes something to many influences, but all to none; a work of imagination that gains additional resonance from its association with folkloric, intertextual, and biographical elements, while never seeming derivative or reducible to any one interpretation.

Yet scholars write most confidently about the connection between the Dead Marshes and the desolate landscapes of the Western Front. This may seem surprising on its face, since Tolkien was famously reluctant to acknowledge biographical or historical influences on his work; as Garth puts it, "his statements on the influence or otherwise of the First World War on *The Lord of the Rings* are few and wary."[30] It happens, however, that one of these rare statements concerns the Marshes in particular. In a letter to his friend Prof. L. W. Forster in 1960, Tolkien writes:

> Personally I do not think that either war (and of course not the atomic bomb) had any influence upon either the plot or the manner of its unfolding. Perhaps in landscape. The Dead Marshes and the approaches to the Morannon owe something to Northern France after the Battle of the Somme.[31]

This grudging admission is quoted by just about every scholar cited in the preceding pages, and more besides. It has been taken to authorize not only the comparison of the Marshes with some of the grislier features of First World War battlefields—leading to the description in *The Two Towers* being treated almost as

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29   Ibid. 409.
30   Garth (2003) 310.
31   Tolkien to Prof. L. W. Forster, 31 December 1960, in Tolkien (2000a) 303.

"a shorthand symbol for the trenches"[32]—but also biographical criticism centered on Tolkien's Great War experiences more generally.[33]

Yet there is something odd in the way scholars handle this excerpt from Tolkien's letter to Forster. The passage does not end with that all-important statement, "The Dead Marshes and the approaches to the Morannon owe something to Northern France after the Battle of the Somme." Tolkien in fact immediately adds: "They owe more to William Morris and his Huns and Romans, as in *The House of the Wolfings* or *The Roots of the Mountains*."[34]

Here the author himself points in the direction of a source he considers even more important than the Western Front for the creation of the Marshes. And yet, I know of no book or article that discusses this part of the letter. Scholars who quote from the letter tend to either omit the sentence about Morris or pass over it without comment.[35] The author of the entry on Morris in the *Tolkien Encyclopedia* even goes so far as to reconfigure the syntax such that Tolkien seems to credit Morris with influencing the "plot and unfolding" of *The Lord of the Rings*, not "the Dead Marshes and the approaches to the Morannon" (which is the logical antecedent of "they").[36]

I am not so cynical as to think that so many worthy scholars would disingenuously attempt to downplay or conceal evidence that might seem to undercut a cherished interpretation of the material. Rather, I believe the reference to Morris goes unacknowledged because it is so unclear what Tolkien meant by it. Even a close reading of the two works by Morris specifically singled out by Tolkien may seem to shed little light on the problem. In a thread entitled "William Morris and Tolkien" on the fan website Tolkien's Ring, an avid reader using the handle Andorinha wrote in 2007:

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32   Garth (2003) 311.

33   For example, note its use by Croft (2002) 6.

34   Tolkien to Prof. L. W. Forster, 31 December 1960, in Tolkien (2000a) 303.

35   Six of the scholarly sources cited so far quote the letter to Forster. Of those, three omit the sentence about Morris (Livingston [2006] 77, Garth [2008] 14, Eilmann [2015] 410); two quote or at least acknowledge its existence, but do not discuss it (Croft [2002] 6, Garth [2003] 310); and one relegates it to a note, calling Tolkien's claim "intriguing," but again declining to discuss it (Sinex [2005] 109 n. 1).

36   Perry (2007) 440. Cf. Lynch (2008) 102 with 114 n. 3.

> Alas, JRRT must have 'mis-remembered' his sources… Having recently read both of these heroic romances by Morris, I'll be pickled if I can find any allusion to a cratered, blasted, diseased land; or any dank-dreary-foul marshes with the dead lying exposed in evil pools.[37]

Needless to say, I do not think we must conclude that Tolkien misremembered anything. Rather, the relationship between his work and Morris's is simply more complex than the letter to Forster might imply. I propose that reading Morris sent Tolkien back to the work of Tacitus, an author we know he studied in the original language. Tolkien studied Latin and Greek at school and read Classics at Exeter College, Oxford, for five terms before switching to English. He likely attended lectures by L. R. Farnell on *Annals* 1–2 at Exeter in May 1912 and was examined on *Annals* 1–4 on 27 February 1913 (although his Tacitus paper does not seem to have impressed the examiners).[38] A Tacitean influence can also be found elsewhere in *The Lord of the Rings*.[39] The Dead Marshes sequence thus represents a double reception, with Tolkien responding simultaneously to Tacitus and to Morris's reception of Tacitus. It remains now to triangulate between the three authors to show what Tolkien *did* take from Morris, and what each of them owes to Tacitus in their manner of representing war dead and landscape.

<center>IV</center>

The House of the Wolfings (1889) concerns an alliance of fictionalized Germanic clans who battle and eventually defeat the Roman army that invades their territory, known as the Mark. The above-quoted assessment by Andorinha is correct; *Wolfings* contains not one "dank-dreary-foul marsh with the dead lying exposed in evil pools." However, the final chapter does feature a landscape in which are laid the remains of soldiers felled on both sides of a conflict. Following their hard-fought victory in the climactic battle against the Romans,

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37   http://tolkiensring.proboards.com/post/6110
38   Lectures: Scull/Hammond (2006) 33; examination: ibid. 37–38.
39   Straubhaar (2004) 101–104; Obertino (2006).

the Wolfings bury their own dead—among them the beloved War-duke Thiodolf—*and the invaders'*:

> A little way from the mound of their own dead, toward the south they laid the Romans, a great company, with their Captain in the midst: and they heaped a long mound over them not right high.[40]

The Wolfings' magnanimity creates a parallel with the battle whose casualties lie in suspended decomposition in the Dead Marshes. Gollum gives only a general description of the battle in "The Passage of the Marshes"—it took place "long ago" and the combatants were "Elves and Men and Orcs" (235)—but Christopher Tolkien's definitive map of Middle-earth locates the Marshes alongside the Dagorlad, also known as the Battle Plain.[41] It was there that the Last Alliance of Elves and Men, led by Gil-galad and Elendil, defeated the forces of Sauron in the year 3434 of the Second Age. The victors buried the dead of both armies before pressing on into Mordor, where Sauron himself was overthrown on the slopes of Mt. Doom.[42]

The Roots of the Mountains (1890) also contains a passage that could have inspired Tolkien in creating the Dead Marshes. *Roots* concerns the folk of Burgdale, another fictionalized Germanic settlement, whose quiet, ordered existence is disrupted by two outside forces: the frontier-dwelling Sons of the Wolf, descendants of the Wolfings from the previous novel; and the Huns or 'Dusky Men' who have driven the Sons of the Wolf from their land. *Roots* is a longer and more varied tale than *Wolfings*, focusing less on warfare than on romance and social integration (as attachments between individuals bring about the merging of the Burgdalers with the Sons of the Wolf). There are no uncanny marshes, nor is there a battlefield cemetery like that in *Wolfings*. But the territory of the Burgdalers does feature something called the Death-Tarn:

> Near the eastern pass, entangled in the rocky ground was a deep tarn full of cold springs and about two acres in measure, and therefrom ran a

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40 Morris (2003a) 162.

41 Drawn for the original edition published in 1954–55 (Tolkien [2004] n.p.). Cf. Tolkien (2000b) 111–112, with 118 n. 12.

42 Elrond recounts these events at Tolkien (2004) 242–243.

> stream which fell into the Weltering Water amidst the grassy knolls. Black
> seemed the waters of that tarn which on one side washed the rocks-wall
> of the Dale; ugly and aweful it seemed to men, and none knew what lay
> beneath its waters save black mis-shapen trouts that few cared to bring to
> net or angle: and it was called the Death-Tarn.[43]

Into this black pool the men of Burgdale later deposit the corpses of two marauding thugs caught breaking into a house in the middle of the night and attempting to kidnap two young girls.[44] Neither the Tarn nor the bodies of the miscreants are mentioned again in the novel.

Granted, Tolkien *could* have imagined the Dead Marshes as a kind of nightmarish synthesis of the burial mounds from *Wolfings* and the Death-Tarn from *Roots*. To my mind, however, that would hardly justify the importance he himself attributed to Morris's work as a source *for a particular representation of landscape*. The afterlife of the burial ground on the Dagorlad diverges too sharply from that of the Wolfings' mounds. In the case of the Dagorlad, as Sauron grew strong again following his defeat by the Last Alliance, and as his malign influence spread from Mordor, the swamps of Nindalf presumably spread northeastward onto the Battle Plain, engulfing the graves. This process jumbled the dead together, erasing the distinction between victor and vanquished that must surely have existed at the start, and making the dead both visible and, somehow, less dead than before.[45] In *Wolfings*, on the other hand, nature essentially takes its course, with a positive valence attaching to the only hint of the supernatural:

> As years wore, and the feet of men and beasts trod [the mound] down, it
> seemed a mere swelling of the earth not made by men's hands; and belike

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43   Morris (2003b) 15.

44   Ibid. 135.

45   Sinex (2005) 98: "The confused mingling of adversaries under water might have aroused particular horror among Elves, Dwarves, and Men since these races are at pains to honor their dead in space set aside for this purpose." Cf. Shippey (2000) 217–218. Bonechi (2012) presents a comprehensive survey of military funeral rites and monuments in Middle-earth, including the "ancient 'war cemetery'" in the Dead Marshes (143).

> men knew not how many bones of valiant men lay beneath; yet it had a name which endured for long, to wit, the Battle-toft.
>
> But the mound whereunder the Markmen were laid was called Thiodolf's Howe for many generations of men, and many are the tales told of him: for men were loth to lose him and forget him: and in the latter days men deemed of him that he sits in that Howe not dead but sleeping, with [his sword] Throng-plough laid before him on the board; and that when the sons of the Goths are at their sorest need and the falcons cease to sit on the ridge of the Great Roof of the Wolfings, he will wake and come forth from the Howe for their helping. But none have dared to break open that Howe and behold what is therein.[46]

Unlike in the Dead Marshes, where Elves and Men of the Last Alliance have been mingled with Sauron's Orcs, here the distinction between the Wolfings and their imperialist foes is preserved, both in the landscape and in the commemoration accorded them by subsequent generations. When it comes to the Battle-toft, the mound of earth subsides until the Roman dead live on only in the toponym and in the tale told by Morris's unnamed narrator. The legend transmitted about Thiodolf the War-duke, "that he sits in that Howe not dead but sleeping," imparts an uncanny quality to the mound erected over the graves of the Markmen, and the fact that "none have dared to break open that Howe and behold what is therein" does imply a certain amount of dread on the part of those living "in the latter days." But this legend is still fundamentally positive, as the undead Thiodolf is expected to "wake and come forth from the Howe" only to help his descendants in a time of need. From their perspective (and presumably that of the narrator), he remains a benevolent, if unnerving, force. The dead of the Marshes, by contrast, act on the living in a wholly destructive fashion, tempting them to turn aside from their quest and succumb to lethal, suicidal despair.[47]

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46   Morris (2003a) 162.
47   Shippey (2000) 216–218; Sinex (2005) *passim*.

Enter Tacitus, a key source for Morris in his project of creating idealized Germanic ancestors for himself and his fellow-Britons.[48] Morris used the *Germania* extensively when depicting the character and customs of the Germanic folk—whom he often calls 'Goths'—in *Wolfings* and *Roots*.[49] In *Wolfings*, at least, I argue that he also drew on the *Annals*, specifically the parts pertaining to the Teutoburg Forest.[50] No *exact* historical parallel exists for the battle in which the Wolfings and their allies repel the Romans from their land; but the defeat of Varus at Teutoburg in 9 CE surely provided the template for it.[51] In this encounter, sometimes called the Varian Disaster (*clades Variana*), an alliance of Germanic tribes led by the Roman-educated Cheruscan chieftain Arminius ambushed and massacred the three legions commanded by Publius Quinctilius

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48 And also, perhaps, in his political activities; Morris often referred to Tacitus in lectures and articles from this later period, when he was experiencing a renewed interest in classical literature and history (Salmon [2001] 61–62).

49 Vaninskaya (2010) 50 with 70 n. 2. He may well have read it in the original. Morris, "the great English polymath of the nineteenth century" (Scoville [2005] 93), read both Greek and Latin; published translations of the *Aeneid* (1875) and *Odyssey* (1887), with an *Iliad* left unfinished at his death (Whitla [2004] 75); and included works by eleven classical authors (though not Tacitus) on a list of favorite books compiled for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1886 (Salmon [2001] 62). The view of Boos ([1984] 324) that Morris imbibed his Tacitus chiefly through Gibbon seems to me to sell Morris short.

50 A note on terminology: The conventional name for the battle derives from one possible translation of *saltus Teutoburgiensis* (Tac. ann. 1,60,3). *Teutoburgiensis* translates straightforwardly to 'of *or* belonging to the citadel of the Teutones,' but *saltus* can mean either 'forest' or 'narrows'; indeed, archaeological finds from Kalkriese have convinced most scholars that the battle took place in this narrow pass near Osnabrück (Schlüter [1999]; Harnecker [2004]; VV.AA [2009]).

51 So Oberg (1978) 102; Adams (2011) 200; Riley (2013) n.p.; with *contra* Salmon (2001) 69–70, who grants that "Oberg's theory is attractive because the Battle in the Teutoburg Forest is regarded as the crucial event in the confrontation between the Teutonic peoples and the Romans that prevented the conquest of ancient Germany," but nonetheless prefers a date between the accession of Hadrian in 117 CE and the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 CE. I contend that Morris's emphasis on the treatment of the dead confirms the allusion to Tacitus (and Teutoburg) specifically.

Varus.[52] Suetonius relates the powerful psychological impact this event had on the emperor Augustus (*Aug.* 23):

> *adeo denique consternatum ferunt, ut per continuos menses barba capilloque summisso caput interdum foribus illideret uociferans: 'Quintili Vare, legiones redde!' diemque cladis quotannis maestum habuerit ac lugubrem.*

> In fact, they say that he was so prostrated that he let his beard and hair grow unchecked for several months in a row, and would now and then beat his head against a door, crying out: 'Quinctilius Varus, give back the legions!' He also observed the day of the disaster every year as one of sorrow and mourning.[53]

Nor was the defeat less demoralizing for the population at large. According to Velleius Paterculus, the loss of Varus and his legions was "a most cruel disaster, more grievous for the Romans than any suffered among foreign peoples since the defeat of Crassus among the Parthians" (2,119,1: *atrocissimae calamitatis, qua nulla post Crassi in Parthis damnum in externis gentibus grauior Romanis fuit*).[54]

The *clades Variana* had another important consequence, in that the Romans abandoned their efforts to establish the province of Germania Magna, bordered by the Elbe to the east, and instead fixed the Rhine and the Danube as the boundaries of their power in the region.[55] A dying Augustus may even have cautioned Tiberius against trying to expand the empire beyond its present borders.[56] Germanicus led a successful series of campaigns against Arminius across the Rhine several years later, but that war was undertaken, according to Tacitus, "more to blot out the disgrace on account of the army lost with Quinctilius Varus, than in a desire to extend the empire or in hopes of a fitting

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52   Important ancient sources for the battle and its aftermath include Vell. 2,117–120; Tac. ann. 1,60–62; Suet. Aug. 23; Cass. Dio 56,18–23.

53   The text of Suetonius is taken from Ihm (1907); all translations are my own.

54   The text of Velleius is taken from Watt (1988).

55   Cf. Flor. epit. 2,30,39: *hac clade factum, ut imperium, quod in litore Oceani non steterat, in ripa Rheni fluminis staret* ("The result of this disaster was that the empire, which had not stopped on the shore of the Ocean, stopped on the bank of the river Rhine").

56   Tac. ann. 1,11; Tac. Agr. 13,3; Cass. Dio 56,33. But cf. Ober (1982), esp. 324–328, on the possibility that Tiberius invented the Augustan *consilium* against expansion.

recompense" (ann. 1,3,6: *abolendae magis infamiae ob amissum cum Quinctilio Varo exercitum quam cupidine proferendi imperii aut dignum ob praemium*).[57] Indeed, Tiberius recalled and reassigned his nephew rather than attempt to hold the territory he had regained. The Romans in *Wolfings* learn a similar lesson. They enter the Mark by crossing a "Great River," having already subdued and/or suborned those living on the other side; the watchword in the Roman camp is "no limit," which must allude to the "empire without limit" (*imperium sine fine*) guaranteed to the Romans by Jupiter in the *Aeneid* (1,279).[58] But like the Cherusci and other historical peoples of Germania Magna in 9 CE, the clans in *Wolfings* put paid to that imperial ambition by driving the Romans back across the river. The novel ends: "The tale tells not that the Romans ever fell on the Mark again; for about this time they began to stay the spreading of their dominion, or even to draw in its boundaries somewhat."[59]

Morris's emphasis on the honorable treatment and burial of the Roman dead signals his intention to intervene in the tradition of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest as handed down by Tacitus in particular. Tacitus does not give an account of the battle itself, or at least, not directly; his Teutoburg is, as Victoria Pagán has written, "entirely *post factum*."[60] He recounts a visit made by Germanicus to the battlefield in 15 CE, which affords an opportunity to interpret the battle and its aftermath through physical traces left at the site.[61] In their second year of campaigning across the Rhine, Tacitus says, Germanicus and his army found themselves "not far from the Teutoburg Forest, in which the remains of Varus and the legions were said to lie unburied" (ann. 1,60,3: *haud procul Teutoburgiensi saltu, in quo reliquiae Vari legionumque insepultae dicebantur*). Thereupon the general was overcome by a desire to "fulfill the last honors due the soldiers and their leader," while the men under his command were "roused to pity on account of kinsmen, friends, and finally on account of the fortunes of war and the lot of humankind" (1,61,1: *igitur cupido Caesarem inuadit soluendi suprema militibus ducique, permoto ad miserationem omni qui aderat exercitu ob propinquos,*

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57   The text of Tacitus is taken from Heubner (1994).
58   Great River: Morris (2003a) 56; watchword: ibid. 59–60, with Riley (2013) n.p.
59   Morris (2003a) 163.
60   Pagán (1999) 306.
61   On the probable historicity of the visit to the battlefield, see Woodman (1998) 80.

amicos, denique ob casus bellorum et sortem hominum). Shocking sights awaited them at the battlefield (1,61):

> **1** *praemisso Caecina, ut occulta saltuum scrutaretur pontesque et aggeres umido paludum et fallacibus campis inponeret, incedunt maestos locos uisuque ac memoria deformes.* **2** *prima Vari castra lato ambitu et dimensis principiis trium legionum manus ostentabant; dein semiruto uallo, humili fossa accisae iam reliquiae consedisse intellegebantur. medio campi albentia ossa, ut fugerant, ut restiterant, disiecta uel aggerata.* **3** *adiacebant fragmina telorum equorumque artus, simul truncis arborum antefixa ora. lucis propinquis barbarae arae, apud quas tribunos ac primorum ordinum centuriones mactauerant.* **4** *et cladis eius superstites, pugnam aut uincula elapsi, referebant hic cecidisse legatos, illic raptas aquilas; primum ubi uulnus Varo adactum, ubi infelici dextera et suo ictu mortem inuenerit; quo tribunali contionatus Arminius, quot patibula captiuis, quae scrobes, utque signis et aquilis per superbiam inluserit.*

After Caecina had been sent ahead to explore the secret woodland areas and set up bridges and embankments over watery marshes and treacherous plains, they marched into the mournful site, hideous in appearance and memory. First, Varus's camp, with its wide circuit and measured-out headquarters, displayed the handiwork of the three legions; then, in a half-leveled rampart with a shallow ditch, their already-weakened remnants were understood to have hunkered down. In the middle of the field, whitening bones were scattered or heaped up, according as they had fled or resisted. Nearby lay broken pieces of weaponry and horses' limbs, as well as skulls fastened to the trunks of trees. There were savage altars in neighboring groves, on which they had sacrificed tribunes and centurions of the first ranks. And survivors of this disaster, who had escaped the battle or their fetters, were reporting that here the legates had fallen, there the eagles had been snatched; where the first wound had been inflicted on Varus, where he had met his death at a blow from his own unlucky right hand; from which mound Arminius had harangued, how many gibbets there had been for the captives, which were the burying-pits, and how, in his arrogance, he had jeered at the standards and eagles.

The enigmatic phrase *uisuque ac memoria deformes* ("hideous in appearance and memory") signals the emphasis to be placed on interpretation in this scene.[62] For the survivors of Varus's army, seeing the earthworks, bones, weaponry, and altars triggers memories of the battle and its aftermath, which they communicate to their comrades and commander in a running commentary. The pile-up of deictic words and the vivid evocation of individual episodes (e.g., the wounding and death of Varus) may even suggest a kind of reenactment on the part of these survivors, with the battlefield as their theater. The site and its relics speak for themselves up to a point, after which the veterans must interpret for the newcomers.[63]

The description of Arminius jeering at the legionary standards would have outraged any Roman soldiers, and these had just recovered the eagle of the Legio XIX from the Bructeri (Tac. ann. 1,60,3).[64] But the mistreatment of the captured and the slain seems to elicit an even more powerful emotional response. Certainly, it is on the exposed remains that Germanicus and his men focus their attention and energy (1,62,1):

> *Igitur Romanus qui aderat exercitus sextum post cladis annum trium legionum ossa, nullo noscente alienas reliquias an suorum humo tegeret, omnes ut coniunctos, ut consanguineos aucta in hostem ira maesti simul et infensi condebant. primum exstruendo tumulo caespitem Caesar posuit, gratissimo munere in defunctos et praesentibus doloris socius.*

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62   Seidman (2014) 97–98 notes the dual meaning of *deformis*, which creates a zeugma here: the place is "'unsightly' in the context of *uisu*, and 'shameful' in the context of *memoria*." Cf. also Obertino (2006) 124, who regards the Chamber of Records in Moria (Tolkien [2004] 321f.) as the "counterpart" of the *maestos locos* described here.

63   Pagán (1999) 308–309. Indeed, the *barbarae arae* imply the presence of these tour guides before Tacitus mentions them: since the mere presence of the structures would surely not reveal the use to which they had been put six years before, this sentence assumes a viewer or viewers with more knowledge of the history of the landscape than the landscape itself communicates.

64   It was not until 41 CE that the last eagle was recovered from the Chauci by Publius Gabinius (Cass. Dio 60,8,7). Amazingly, almost ten years later, an army led by Lucius Pomponius rescued several survivors of the defeat who had been living as slaves among the Chatti (Tac. ann. 12,27).

> And so the Roman army that was present six years after the disaster, none of them knowing whether he covered his own family's remains or someone else's, but all both saddened and enraged as their anger toward the enemy grew, buried the bones of the three legions as if they were their close friends or relatives. Caesar placed the first turf for the erection of a mound, in a most welcome duty toward the deceased and sharing in the anguish of those present.

Germanicus's army went to Teutoburg already thinking about the fortunes not only of individual soldiers they knew, but also of soldiers in general and even all humanity; they were primed, in a way, to identify with the men who fought and died there six years before.[65] This sense of identification and personalization intensifies as they handle the remains, behaving as if all the bones belonged to close friends or relatives. They supply the funeral rites any one of them would have wanted—if not quite expected—in the event he was killed in battle.[66] Germanicus too shares in this collective sorrow, placing the first sod on the burial mound. According to Tacitus, Tiberius reacted to his nephew's actions with stern disapproval (1,61,2):

> *quod Tiberio haud probatum, seu cuncta Germanici in deterius trahenti, siue exercitum imagine caesorum insepultorumque tardatum ad proelia et formidolosiorem hostium credebat; neque imperatorem auguratu et uetustissimis caerimoniis praeditum adtrectare feralia debuisse.*

> Tiberius did not approve of this, whether interpreting Germanicus's every action for the worse, or supposing the army had been slowed for battle by the image of the vanquished and unburied and made more fearful of their enemies; and that a commander endowed with an augurate and with the most ancient religious ceremonies ought not to have handled things belonging to the dead.

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65   O'Gorman (2000) 53, who points out that the soldiers' inability to recognize individuals among the bones also establishes the limits of their interpretation, calling into question the extent to which the army "achieves a 'correct' reading of the site."

66   On the funerary practices of the Roman army, see Giorcelli (1995); Hope (2003); Peretz (2005); Hope (2015).

Tiberius's objections are not without merit.[67] Yet Tacitus has presented the scene in such a way that the reader is likely to sorrow along with Germanicus and his men, sympathizing with them too as their anger swells and ignites a burning desire for revenge.[68] It would indeed be difficult, given the importance placed on proper burial in Roman religious thought, to disagree completely with Germanicus's spontaneous decision, or to sympathize instead with those who committed such outrages against the dead.[69]

Morris reverses this polarity at the end of *Wolfings*. Whereas Tacitus has his characters (and, through them, his readers) encounter damning evidence of the Germanic tribes' savagery and contempt for the dead, Morris presents the aftermath of the battle from the Goths' perspective. Far from slaughtering prisoners in cold blood, mutilating their remains, and withholding burial, the Wolfings and their allies minister to wounded Romans, host the captives at a feast, build a separate barrow for the Roman dead, and preserve the memory of their martial courage for years to come.[70] The honorable treatment of the Romans' captain also contrasts with the suggestion in Tacitus that one of the Cheruscans may have abused Varus's corpse (ann. 1,71,1).[71] Morris thus rewrites the Tacitean account to produce a version sympathetic to the Germans, a version in which the Romans appear as rapacious, one-dimensional villains.[72] This view is entirely in keeping with Morris's political sentiments and with the myth of Germania common among Victorian-era English intellectuals, who viewed the tribes and their leader as champions of liberty and as ancestors in

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67 Pelling (1993) 76.

68 Seidman (2014) 96, 110.

69 Kyle (1998) 128–133 gives a brief but incisive account of Roman funerary customs and beliefs.

70 Morris (2003a) 155, 162.

71 Cf. Hannibal's alleged burial of Lucius Aemilius Paulus, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, and other Roman military leaders during the Second Punic War. The Carthaginian earned praise from Valerius Maximus and Plutarch for his actions, although Livy exudes skepticism on the matter and Silius Italicus, cynicism; see discussion in Hope (2015) 165–166. Morris included Plutarch's *Lives* in his list of favorite books for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1886, citing its value as "traditional history" (n. 49, above).

72 Adams (2011) 200–201; Riley (2013) n.p.

both the genetic and the spiritual senses.[73] To give but one example, Sir Edward Shepherd Creasy wrote in his *Fifteen Decisive Battles That Shaped the World*: "Arminius is far more truly one of our national heroes than Caractacus: and it was our own primeval fatherland that the brave German rescued, when he slaughtered the Roman legions eighteen centuries ago, in the marshy glens between the Lippe and the Ems."[74]

And so when Tolkien came to the final chapter of *Wolfings*, he would have encountered an episode both familiar and strange.[75] On the one hand, he would have recognized the Wolfings' battle against the Romans as a version of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, and realized that Morris knew his Tacitus. But Tolkien would equally have seen that Morris had read Tacitus against the grain, as it were, creating a new narrative in which the Goths, with their love of liberty, emerged as sympathetic heroes while the Romans were cast as ruthless imperialists only partly redeemed by their valor. Tolkien's literary response to this Victorian reception of Tacitus is intriguing. The Wolfings' magnanimity as regards the treatment of the dead finds an echo in the behavior of the victors after the Battle of the Dagorlad, who bury the bodies of Sauron's orcs along with their own fallen. But Tolkien was discussing *landscape in particular* when he ascribed such importance to Morris in the 1960 letter to Forster. If the Dead Marshes are compared to and contrasted with the analogous landscapes in Tacitus and Morris—i.e., the Teutoburg Forest and the burial mounds of the Wolfings—it will soon become apparent that Tolkien's creation more nearly resembles the Roman model than the Victorian. That is, the Dead Marshes feature key elements that Morris chose not to take from Tacitus.

I will now delineate the three most significant correspondences I see between Tolkien's Dead Marshes and Tacitus's depiction of the *saltus Teutoburgiensis*: a negatively marked marshy setting; the presence of human remains left over from a long-ago battle, which captivate travelers but may be dangerous to see or touch; and a surreal mode of description involving distortions of space and time.

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73   Oberg (1978) 102; Salmon (2001); Vaninskaya (2010) 88–114; Adams (2011) 200–201.

74   Creasy (1852) 179–180.

75   *Wolfings* was one of several books Tolkien bought with his prize money when Exeter College awarded him the Skeat Prize for English in the spring of 1914 (Scull/Hammond [2006] 51).

Then, in a concluding section, I will briefly propose a fourth, more speculative correspondence, namely a link between the visibility of the dead and ongoing sociopolitical problems.

Marshy setting. Germanicus's visit to the site of the Varian disaster is bracketed by the passage of marshes explicitly characterized as loathsome and dangerous. Before Germanicus leads his army into the heart of the *saltus Teutoburgiensis*, he sends his legate Aulus Caecina Severus on ahead "to explore the secret woodland areas and set up bridges and embankments over the wet part of the marshes and the treacherous plains" (1,61,1; quoted above). The Romans then clash twice with the Cherusci in the fens right after leaving the site of the earlier battle. Tacitus relates these events in such a way as to emphasize the dismal nature of the marshy environment and the hazards it poses to the Romans, both physically and mentally.

In the first, briefly narrated encounter, Germanicus and the main body of his army fight an inconclusive engagement against Arminius in which the swampy ground seems to conspire with the Cherusci against the invaders: "[the Romans] were driven into a marsh that was known to those on the winning side, but disadvantageous to men ignorant of it" (1,63,2: *trudebantur… in paludem gnaram uincentibus, iniquam nesciis*). The second marsh battle is narrated at greater length. This time, it is Caecina who comes under attack, having been ordered to take a section of the cavalry and make for the Rhine by a different route. Their journey takes them "through desolate marshes" (1,63,4: *uastas inter paludes*) on the so-called Long Bridges (*pontes longi*), a narrow footpath constructed some years earlier by Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus. Besides this rickety structure, "the rest was a mire, clinging with heavy muck and unstable because of small streams" (*cetera limosa, tenacia graui caeno aut riuis incerta erant*).[76] The Cherusci surprise Caecina's force and occupy the wooded slopes around the slough as the Romans struggle to repair broken sections of the causeway.

Caecina encamps on the spot so that some of his men can work on repairs while the rest prepare for the Germans' attack. The ensuing battle taxes the

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76   *Limus* is a relatively neutral word, but *caenum* connotes loathsomeness (Lewis/Short [1879] s.v. *caenum* I).

Romans to the utmost. The marshy terrain proves every bit as hostile to them now as it did when Germanicus and Arminius fought to a draw just a short time before (1,64,2):

> *cuncta pariter Romanis aduersa: locus uligine profunda, idem ad gradum instabilis, procedentibus lubricus; corpora grauia loricis; neque librare pila inter undas poterant.*

> Everything alike was against the Romans: the ground, with its deep, marshy quality, unsteady to stand on, slippery to those advancing; their bodies weighed down by their cuirasses; nor could they balance their javelins amid the waves.

The Cherusci, on the other hand, are used to marsh-fighting (*sueta apud paludes proelia*) and put the Romans at an even greater disadvantage after nightfall by diverting streams to flood the area around their repairs. Things go from bad to worse in the morning when the legions posted to the flanks abandon their positions to occupy a patch of ground "beyond the wet areas" (1,65,3: *umentia ultra*). Arminius takes in the scene—including the Roman baggage-train "mired in the muck and the trenches" (1,65,4: *haesere caeno fossisque*)—and signals the attack, "repeatedly shouting 'Behold! Varus and the legions, enchained once more in the same doom!'" (*clamitans 'en Varus [et] eodemque iterum fato uinctae legiones!'*).

Tacitus continues to draw attention to the swampy setting as the battle unfolds. The Romans' mounts slip "in their own blood and the marsh-slime" (1,65,5: *sanguine suo et lubrico paludum*), while standard-bearers struggle to plant their eagles "in the muddy ground" (*limosa humo*). Toward evening, the Germans at last leave off their butchery to collect spoils, and Caecina is able to withdraw his troops to solid ground. But even there—lacking tools, tents, and dressings for the wounded, and forced to divide "rations tainted with muck or blood" (1,65,7: *infectos caeno aut cruore cibos*)—the soldiers bemoan the "deathly gloom" (*funestas tenebras*) of the place along with the likelihood of their imminent demise. When Caecina rallies them for one last great effort—a desperate defense of the rampart that now shelters them—he warns that flight would only mean "more forests, deeper marshes, and the cruelty of their enemies" (1,67,1: *plures siluas, profundas magis paludes, saeuitiam hostium*). His appeal succeeds: the Romans meet

the Germans' dawn attack in force and turn the tide of the battle, "reproaching them that here be neither woods nor marshes, but impartial gods on even ground" (1,68,3: *exprobantes non hic siluas nec paludes, sed aequis locis aequos deos*).

Together, these passages demonstrate that the *saltus Teutoburgiensis* was as much a marsh as a forest. Moreover, Tacitus portrays this marshland as not only dismal, dangerous, and demoralizing in itself, but also an ally of Rome's savage enemies.[77] The cry of Arminius—"Behold! Varus and the legions"—implies too that the Romans' discomfort with marsh-fighting factored into the *clades Variana*, and that the sites of all three engagements may be understood as different sections of a single battleground.

The allure of the dead. Both the Dead Marshes and Teutoburg contain the remains of soldiers killed in battle some time before, remains that hold a perilous allure for travelers. Gollum repeatedly warns both hobbits not to follow the marsh-lights that illuminate the Mere of Dead Faces; to do so would be suicide. But the danger is greatest for Frodo, who feels the pull of the Mere most strongly and around whose neck hangs the Ring that must be destroyed to save Middle-earth. For him to succumb to the allure of the dead would mean both his own death by drowning and the forfeiture of the quest. As to why the sight of the dead should elicit such despair, T. A. Shippey emphasizes that "in Frodo's vision even the 'noble faces' are 'sad', and they are all not just 'rotting' but 'foul'; they all have a 'fell light' in them."[78] This ominous sameness—the fate apparently shared by both Sauron's servants and the Men and Elves who once defeated them on the Dagorlad—has "several unvoiced implications":

> That the whole thing has been for nothing (a thought never too far away
> from the living characters' sense of 'ultimate defeat'); that Sauron, though
> defeated in battle, has somehow managed to take his revenge on the dead,
> and now holds them in his grip; perhaps worst of all, that all the dead are
> hostile to the living, that they have learned something in death that they
> did not know alive…. Sam in fact suggests that this 'is some devilry
> hatched in the Dark Land', an illusion, a sending intended to do just what

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77   Cf. Van Broeck (2016) on "wily wetlands" in the Batavian landscapes of Tacitus's *Histories*.
78   Shippey (2000) 217.

> it does, to cause fear and demoralization, and that is the comforting answer. The right thing to do is what the hobbits do, press on regardless. But the stain of the vision remains…. The Dead Marshes provide a memory of all that has to be defied.[79]

This last observation recalls a line from Tolkien's earliest notes for the chapter: "Gollum says it is said that [the faces] are memories (?) of those who fell in ages past in the Battle before… the Gates of Mordor in the Great Battle."[80] In this fantastical conception of landscape and memory, the site itself manifests recollections of past slaughter using the remains of the dead, which then trigger recognition and interpretation by the one member of the party with knowledge of the historical event (i.e., Gollum). At the same time, the episode hints at the availability of multiple interpretations and responses. The hobbits prove their strength of will when they choose to persevere, leaving the Mere behind and pressing on into Mordor proper.

The Teutoburg Forest is a very different site, in a very different text; yet many of the same ideas and concerns appear here. Tacitus thematizes the dangerous charisma of mortal remains at two points in the narrative. The first of these, of course, is the visit to the site of Varus's defeat. Tacitus makes "the unburied remains of Varus and the legions" (1,60,3) the implied source of Germanicus's "desire… to fulfill the last honors due the soldiers and their leader" (1,61,1). Proximity to the remains is thus also linked to the feeling of pity universally experienced by the men in the army. Unlike Frodo and Sam, these are professional soldiers, and the battle in the Teutoburg Forest occurred recently enough that they can count friends and relatives among the dead; they feel a personal connection to these bones and relics. But the men also feel a more generalized pity for "the fortunes of war and the lot of humankind" (1,61,1), implying that—like the bodies in the Dead Marshes—these remains may provoke reflections about mortality that could in turn lead to destructive

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79 Ibid. 217–218.
80 Tolkien (2000b) 105.

emotions like fear or despair.[81] Tacitus even raises the possibility that such considerations might undergird Tiberius's disapproval of his nephew's actions.[82]

How, then, do the dead of Teutoburg impact the visitors they have in a sense summoned? Seeing the bones and relics, taking in the interpretations offered by veterans in their ranks, allows even newcomers to the site to access memories of the Varian Disaster. Indeed, Jessica Seidman has observed that "the place itself seems to be holding on to the memory of what happened there," a remark recalling Tolkien's characterization of the faces in the Mere as "memories."[83] The Romans then engage physically with the dead as they collect and inter the bones "as if they were their close friends or relatives" (1,62,1). Whatever the longer-term consequences of viewing and handling the remains may be—and it cannot be ruled out that seeing evidence of human sacrifice, for instance, contributes to the soldiers' panic in subsequent battles against Arminius—the immediate effect is sorrow parlayed into rage against the enemy. Tacitus paints Germanicus as being in perfect sympathy with his men here, sharing in their anguish and helping to build the mound.

But this "most pleasing duty toward the deceased" (1,62,1) is hardly unproblematic. For one thing, Roman religious custom forbade priests like Germanicus (who was, Tacitus has Tiberius remind us, an *augur*) from "handling things belonging to the dead" (1,62,2), lest they incur ritual pollution.[84] For another, Germanicus's own thirst for vengeance, intensified by his contact with the dead, carries its own costs. His further campaigning across the Rhine will result in no lasting territorial gains, only more lives lost and resources expended. Therefore, whereas identification with the dead of the Dagorlad tempts Frodo to surrender his life and abandon his seemingly impossible quest, many of

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81 Cf. Tac. hist. 2,70,3 on Bedriacum (see below): *et erant quos uaria sors rerum lacrimaeque et misericordia subiret* ("And there were those whom inconstant fortune and tears and pity overcame").

82 He would certainly have been neither the first nor the last to fear the effects of viewing war dead on the morale of the living; see, e.g., App. civ. 1,5,43.

83 Seidman (2014) 97. Cf. Pagán (1999) 308.

84 Lennon (2014) 141 with ch. 4 generally. As Pagán (1999) n. 42 points out, according to Suetonius, Germanicus actually helped to gather the remains with his own hands (Cal. 3,2; *reliquias… colligere sua manu et comportare*).

Germanicus's soldiers will end up paying the price for their commander's transgressive contact with the dead of Teutoburg, as well as for his own exorbitant quest to transform that humiliating defeat into Roman victory.[85]

A second incident during the battle of the Long Bridges further illustrates the dangers of identifying with and especially touching the dead. Tacitus writes that the first night of the battle is an unquiet one: the Germans are in high spirits after their success in the afternoon's fighting, while the Romans inside their rampart either lie scattered around feeble campfires or wander between tents, "wakeful rather than watchful" (1,65,1; *insomnes magis quam peruigiles*). Their leader, Caecina, passes a still more dreadful night (1,65,2):

> *ducemque terruit dira quies: nam Quinctilium Varum sanguine oblitum et paludibus emersum cernere et audire uisus est uelut uocantem, non tamen obsecutus et manum intendentis reppulisse.*

> And an ominous vision struck fear into the general: for he seemed both to see Quinctilius Varus—besmeared with blood, raised up out of the marshes—and to hear him, as if he were summoning him. However, he did not (he imagined) yield to the other's will, and even repelled his hand as he was stretching it out to him.

This terrifying vision represents another inversion of the scenario in the Dead Marshes: instead of someone risking their life in a futile attempt to reach corpses submerged in a pool, here a dead man rises from the depths and unsuccessfully attempts to drown one of the living.[86] Again, too, the unexpected appearance of

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85 Pagán (1999) suggests that Germanicus's attempt to resolve the moral transgression enacted by the Germans at Teutoburg (i.e., when they deny burial to the Roman dead) in fact leads to further deviations, as he transgresses both the outer limits of the Roman empire and even the boundary between life and death. She discusses his 'exorbitance' in the etymological sense of the word, arguing that "[his] continual desire to transgress boundaries on the periphery of the Roman world—geographical and moral—poses a threat to the stability of Rome" (ibid. 313).

86 Annemarie Ambühl has rightly suggested to me that this gesture could also be interpreted as Varus stretching out his hand for Caecina to pull him from the swamp; in that case, Caecina would be seen to overcome, not an evil spirit's attempt on his life, but rather an initial, futile impulse to help his fallen comrade.

the dead tests the will of the person who encounters them. As Gregor Weber has observed, Caecina's refusal to obey this summons—his determined rejection of Varus's grasping hand—highlights his strength of mind and parallels his refusal to accept the predicted future; his valiant efforts during the next day's fighting then lay the groundwork for the Romans' eventual victory.[87] The specter of the undead Varus thus challenges Caecina to choose determination over despair and to separate his fate from that of the dead. In defiance of Arminius's taunt, Caecina will *not* become a second Varus, "enchained… in the same doom" (1,65,4). This challenge is similar to the one Frodo faces in the Marshes. Indeed, in a possible allusion to Caecina's *quies*—a word often translated as 'dream'—Tolkien has Frodo respond to Sam's urging "as if returning out of a dream," then speak "in a dreamlike voice" about the faces he has seen in the Mere (235).

Surreal mode of description. Both the Dead Marshes episode and the Teutoburg section of the *Annals* feature surrealistic elements involving distortions of space and time. One common element is the fuzziness or dissolution of boundaries. The Marshes owe their existence to the erasure of the border between Nindalf and the Dagorlad as the former has invaded the latter. This erasure forms a part of a larger process whereby the evil once confined within Mordor has spread outward to contaminate surrounding areas. The creeping marshes have also erased other spatial distinctions, in that they have jumbled up the battlefield burials and mingled Elves and Men with Orcs. It is as if the careful work of identification, collection, and interment never took place; as if the corpses lay once again where they fell in the battle. Meanwhile, time has been turned back, then frozen beneath the surface of the Mere. The bodies should have decayed completely after so many centuries. Yet here they are, apparently stalled in an early stage of decomposition, not unlike the Iron Age bog bodies found in Denmark and elsewhere in Northern Europe.[88] Moreover, the dead can be seen but not touched, implying some sort of illusion or enchantment.

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87   Weber (2000) 444 n. 173; cf. Benario (2003) 401.
88   A similarity remarked in passing by Madsen (2013) 116.

The Teutoburg Forest is also a place of fuzzy boundaries and chronological anomalies. This region of Germania is not part of the empire, but Germanicus and his army call its status into question by their continued presence there; and the ramshackle causeway commemorates an earlier failed attempt to bring the area under Roman control. Meanwhile, Tacitus repeatedly describes the terrain as unstable, even hostile to the Roman invaders. The reader may recall this characterization when Tacitus reveals the fate of the tumulus erected for Varus and his legions: the Chatti will demolish it within a year, and Germanicus will choose not to rebuild it (ann. 2,7,2–3). His attempt to transform a site of grief and disgrace into a monument thus succeeds only temporarily, as the uncertain and unfriendly landscape will not hold the impression of Roman authority for long. Caecina's "ominous vision" (1,65,2) complicates things further. The spirit of Varus seems to be restless, despite having received the funeral honors that should have granted him peace. What does his appearance imply for Caecina? Could Varus's spirit have been turned to the enemy's dark purposes, as Shippey suggests in the case of the marsh-bodies with a "fell light" in their faces? The rational explanation, of course, is that Caecina is only dreaming. As Christopher Pelling notes, "it is precisely the sort of dream which a man in terrifying danger might have: it has been stressed how much Varus is in everyone's minds."[89] But Tacitus leaves the question open, and in the end, the reader has no more insight than Caecina into the source or workings of the vision.[90]

Altogether, Germanicus's attempt to overwrite the defeat of Varus in the Teutoburg Forest—to literally and figuratively bury the traces of its disgrace—comes off as well intentioned but problematic and ultimately unsuccessful. The veterans' evocation of the aftermath zone at Teutoburg may in one sense be, as Pagán says, "but a momentary materialization, evaporated into the mist, a chimera leaving no trace"; certainly, it takes both characters and readers out of narrative time and into a period not covered by the *Annals*.[91] But that vivid flashback, those memories activated by the relics on the battlefield, remains the most memorable literary tribute to the disaster to have survived from antiquity.

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89   Pelling (1997) 207.
90   Ibid. 201.
91   Pagán (1999) 310.

The "mournful site, hideous in appearance and memory" (1,61,1) would also appear, in a bizarre twist, to have left its mark on the future. Tacitus patterned this scene in part on his own account of a visit made by Vitellius to the corpse-strewn battlefield of Bedriacum in 69 CE (hist. 2,70).[92] Tacitus's gruesome description of the site suggests its transformation into something like a 'secondary swamp,' marked by decay and devastation.[93] The allusion implies that Germanicus's soldiers will not be the last Romans to witness—indeed, to reenact, or even surpass—such a terrible scene.

<div align="center">V</div>

Morris's representation of a battlefield cemetery in *Wolfings* lacks all three elements discussed in the previous section: the Battle-toft is not associated with a marsh; the war-dead are buried and stay buried, since even the legend of the sleeping Thiodolf cannot tempt the local people to open the howe; and the mode of description is more realistic than surrealistic. Morris has taken what Edward Adams calls "the most frightening episode among many by Tacitus" and eliminated the frightening elements.[94] The changes make sense given

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92   Scholarly discussion of 'self-imitation' in this passage was initiated by Woodman (1979 = 1998), who viewed it as little more than a recycling of material for the sake of entertainment. Later scholars have accepted the existence of these correspondences, but disagreed on their implications; Morgan (1992), for example, sees an attempt to improve upon an earlier effort, while Pagán (1999) 307 finds evidence of a longstanding authorial preoccupation ("when [Tacitus] came to write of the defeat at Teutoburg, such images of desolation had been haunting him for many years"). My own view (set out in preliminary form at Makins [2013] 84–103) is that Tacitus composed these parallel incidents to invite readers to compare the behavior of the principal characters. Damon (2006) 245 offers a model for this kind of reading: "the presence of parallel incidents in two or more principates enables, and indeed encourages, the reader to measure one *princeps* against the others." Cf. also Manolaraki (2005), Joseph (2012) ch. 3 on Tacitus's accounts of the two battles of Bedriacum.

93   Tac. hist. 2,70: *lacera corpora, trunci artus, putres uirorum equorumque formae, infecta tabo humus, protritis arboribus ac frugibus dira uastitas* ("There were mangled corpses, severed limbs, and the rotting forms of men and horses; the soil was tainted with putrefaction; what with trampled-down trees and crops, the devastation was awful"). I owe this point to Annemarie Ambühl.

94   Adams (2011) 200.

Morris's agenda. In order to rehabilitate the Germanic peoples to whom Tacitus ascribes such savagery, Morris has the victorious Wolfings behave with perfect decency toward the Roman dead, removing the transgression that makes visiting the Teutoburg Forest so irresistible and so harrowing. Were Germanicus not haunted by the knowledge that the remains of Varus and the legions still lay exposed on the battlefield, would he and his troops have felt compelled to go there? Would they even have crossed the Rhine in the first place? Perhaps; but Tacitus implies that the denial of burial to the Romans, along with the material traces of that act, helped bring these events about.

I believe Tolkien derived some of his inspiration for the Dead Marshes from probing the gulf between Morris's idealizing reception of Tacitus and its source. Morris offers a vision of war's aftermath in which the dead lie quiet, their presence barely detectable in the landscape or in the memory of the people who inhabit it. His is a vision of conflict resolved.[95] But that scenario, so radically different from the Tacitean model, did not fit the story Tolkien needed to tell in April 1944. He had Frodo and Sam traveling through a kind of No Man's Land on the way to carrying out a mission across enemy lines, a mission so dangerous, they had scant hope of returning.[96] They hoped to end a war that had been thought to have ended generations before. In "The Passage of the Marshes," Tolkien brought the Ringbearer face to face with losses suffered in an earlier stage of the conflict and forced him to contemplate the same sobering things that confront Germanicus and his men in the Teutoburg Forest—"the fortunes of war, the lot of humankind." Both authors show how difficult it can be to cope with the emotions (fear, anger, despair) that may arise from such an encounter. Frodo needs the help of his companions to resist the pull of the faces in the Mere; Caecina demonstrates his own strength of will by resisting the more literal pull of Varus's grasping hand, while the grief-fueled rage Germanicus shares with his men leads indirectly to both official censure and further loss of life. Both authors thus employ surreal modes of description to dramatize the

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95   One might think of the analogous strategies employed by Maphaeus Vegius and other authors of Renaissance supplements to the *Aeneid*, who resolved the famously abrupt ending of the poem by (among other things) providing for Turnus's burial; cf. Brinton (1930).

96   Tolkien even gave the name 'Noman-lands' to the arid moors between the Dead Marshes and the mountains of black rock forming Mordor's outer fence; see Fonstad (1991) 90, 93.

very *real* challenges inherent in confronting the aftermath of conflict, challenges that test and reveal much about character. Their aftermath zones are 'thin places,' as it were, where travelers encounter vivid manifestations of a past that impacts all too closely on their present and, therefore, their future.

This shared emphasis on 'what happens next' brings up a fourth and final correspondence between the Dead Marshes and Tacitus's Teutoburg, namely an association between the unexpected visibility of war-dead in landscape and ongoing sociopolitical problems. This association operates on more than one level, outside as well as inside the text. The superficial link between war-dead and ongoing conflict could scarcely be clearer in each case: the Dead Marshes come into being as Sauron's power increases; the unburied state of the legions at Teutoburg signals a transgression that must be avenged. The sight of war-dead from earlier battles reminds living combatants in both texts not only what sort of enemy they face, but also why they must continue to fight. On a subtler level, too, both authors connect the visibility of the dead to the role of individual leadership decisions in resolving or perpetuating conflict. Sauron's ability to regenerate after the War of the Last Alliance stems from the failure of Isildur, Elendil's heir, to destroy the Ring after cutting it from the Dark Lord's hand.[97] In a sense, then, Isildur's weakness and lust for power lead to the graves of his comrades and subordinates being disturbed by the Marshes centuries later. The Mere of Dead Faces thus serves to warn Frodo about the price of the Ring's power. Were he to give in to temptation, repeating Isildur's mistake, the cycle could begin again. The hobbits may or may not make this connection while crossing the Marshes, but it is available to any reader who recalls the tale told by Elrond at the Council.

Similarly, Tacitus's self-allusion to hist. 2,70 at ann. 1,60–61 suggests that the fundamental challenge at issue in the latter text—the response of a (potential) *princeps* to the provocation of Roman war-dead—will recur to test the mettle of other Roman leaders under other circumstances. Indeed, scholars have argued

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97   In the original draft of "The Passage of the Marshes," Gollum says of the Battle of the Dagorlad that "they took It from the Lord then, Elves and Men took It" (Tolkien [2000b] 112). The final version has Isildur taking the Ring (and thus dispersing Sauron's spirit) later, during the siege of Barad-Dûr; but the draft shows how closely Tolkien associated the Marshes with the act that should have eliminated Sauron as a threat forever.

persuasively that the ambiguous characterization of Germanicus in this scene and elsewhere forms a part of a more general commentary on the principate, the very nature of which (to quote Kathryn Williams) "challenged integrity and good judgment."[98] Entering the aftermath zone—confronting, interpreting, and responding to the traces of past military loss—might have struck Tacitus as a scenario that could help make this larger point about the form of government that was relatively new in the time of Germanicus and Tiberius, but under which he himself still lived and wrote. He was, in a sense, living with the consequences of his long-dead characters' choices.

Tolkien too had cause to think about history as a cyclical affair. *The Lord of the Rings* is not a history of our world; it cannot, for instance, be reduced to an allegory of either World War. If anything, Sauron should probably be taken to represent war in the abstract, rather than a single individual or group.[99] But Tolkien was a World War I veteran writing during World War II. He may well have looked back and discerned at least some of the causes of the Second World War in the conduct and conclusion of the First. Moreover, the war that had failed so spectacularly to 'end war'—as H. G. Wells and others had predicted it would—ended up lending landscapes to its sequel, as soldiers in World War II fought over some of the same ground and reused bunkers, defenses, trenches, and hospital sites left over from the Great War.[100] It should perhaps not surprise us, then, if Tolkien found greater inspiration for his own landscapes of loss in the *Annals* of Tacitus, than in Morris's idealized reception of that text.[101]

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98 Williams (2009) 129; cf. Pelling (1993), who takes a similar line despite arriving at different conclusions.

99 Manni/Bonechi (2008) offer a stimulating discussion of Tolkien's complex ideology regarding war, focusing on the World War II years.

100 Cf. the conflation of Pharsalus and Philippi in Roman poetry (e.g., Verg. georg. 1,489–492; Luc. 1,693–694).

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