



High Towers and Strong Places: A Political History of Middle-Earth

Timothy R Furnish

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Dr. Timothy R. Furnish applies Primary World analysis-political, cultural, social, and economic- to Middle-earth's 7,000 years of recorded history in High Towers and Strong Places. Steering clear of literary criticism, the standard approach to Tolkien for the last six decades, this book instead uses Tolkien's writings to examine each of the major races of Middle-earth in some detail. It then delves into how each speaking people's anthropological traits informed the political systems they devised. Middle-earth's many states, Beleriand to Barad-dur and Utumno to Umbar, from First through early Fourth Ages, are compared and contrasted with Primary World examples such as Rome/Byzantium; the Carolingian Empire; and the Islamic caliphates before being classified as monarchies, aristocracies or democracies. High Towers and Strong Places also offers a grander geopolitical analysis, looking at the international relations and balance-of-power politics over millennia of Middle-earth's history. Particular attention is paid to little-studied issues: Numenor's Second Age imperialism; the longue duree planning of immortal beings such as Sauron and Galadriel; and Gondor's role as Third Age hegemon. Morgoth and Sauron, powerful but ultimately failed god-kings, receive specific scrutiny-especially the relationships with their minions, both major (Balrogs, Dragons) and minor (Goblins, Orcs and Trolls). High Towers and Strong Places: A Political History of Middle-earth can be read as a stand-alone volume or as an introductory work to the upcoming Bright Swords and Glorious Warriors: A Military History of Middle-earth. Fans of fantasy books and movies, as well as gaming fans will find High Towers and Strong Places a fascinating read as well as a valuable resource."

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