

Inklings Forever

Volume 8 A Collection of Essays Presented at the Joint
Meeting of The Eighth Frances White Ewbank
Colloquium on C.S. Lewis & Friends and The C.S.
Lewis & The Inklings Society Conference

Article 2

5-31-2012

C.S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem: A Conjectural Essay

Joe R. Christopher
Tarleton University

Follow this and additional works at: https://pillars.taylor.edu/inklings_forever

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Christopher, Joe R. (2012) "C.S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem: A Conjectural Essay," *Inklings Forever*: Vol. 8 , Article 2.
Available at: https://pillars.taylor.edu/inklings_forever/vol8/iss1/2

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for the Study of C.S. Lewis & Friends at Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Inklings Forever* by an authorized editor of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact pillars@taylor.edu.

INKLINGS FOREVER, Volume VIII

A Collection of Essays Presented at the Joint Meeting of

The Eighth

FRANCES WHITE EW BANK COLLOQUIUM ON C.S. LEWIS & FRIENDS

and

THE C.S. LEWIS AND THE INKLINGS SOCIETY CONFERENCE

Taylor University 2012

Upland, Indiana

C.S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem:

A Conjectural Essay

Joe R. Christopher
Tarleton University

Christopher, Joe R. "C.S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem: A Conjectural Essay." [Inklings Forever](#) 8
(2012) www.taylor.edu/cslewis

C. S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem: A Conjectural Essay

Joe R. Christopher
Tarlton University

When C. S. Lewis was waiting for his first book—*Spirits in Bondage*—to be published, he wrote to Arthur Greeves on [2 March 1919]:¹

I have Layamon's Brut [*sic*] and Wace's[,] translated in the one Everyman volume—or rather the parts of them about the Arthurian period. Wace you remember was 'a French clerke, well could he write' who copied Layamon's poem in French rhyming couplets, with more style but less vigour. (*Collected Letters*, I, 439-440; *They Stand Together* 248)

Actually, Lewis's statement has a factual error and the situation is more complicated than he makes it. Walter Hooper, one may add, does not catch the error in his notes in the *Collected Letters*. Here is the situation. Three important Arthurian sources are inter-related. Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote *Historia Regum Britanniae* [*A History of the Kings of Britain*] (1137). Contrary to Lewis's statement, Wace, a Norman poet, wrote his *Roman de Brut* [*Romance of Brutus*] (1155), retelling Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin in his French; Wace was not copying Layamon. Then Layamon (the "y" should really be a yogh) translated, paraphrased, and expanded Wace into Middle English as *Brut* [*Brutus*] (probably 1205). Lewis had to know the temporal relationship between Wace and Layamon—that Layamon followed Wace, not *vice versa*—

since the passage he quotes about Wace—"a french clerke, well could he write"—is from Layamon (presumably quoted in the introduction to Lewis's Wace and Layamon book), so the misattribution is simply a momentary slip.

These works by these three authors are told as histories of Britain—legendary histories, of course—beginning with the coming of the Roman Brutus and his followers to Britain. The last two-fifths of Geoffrey's work narrate the story of King Arthur, and hence about the same amount of the others do the same. Lewis's copy of *Arthurian Chronicles, Represented by Wace and Layamon*, is a prose translation from French into English and a rendition of Middle English alliterative meter into more-or-less modern English prose of those final, Arthurian parts of Wace and Layamon.

The stories are not entirely the same as the major tradition that comes down through Malory. For one important example, no Lancelot-Guinevere love affair occurs. Near the end of the story, Arthur is in France, having defeated the Roman Empire's army in battle and preparing to invade Rome itself, when Arthur's nephew, Modred, at home, acting as regent, rebels and Guinevere ("Wenhaver" in Layamon) has an affair with that nephew. This tradition occasionally is followed in later writings: for example, in the alliterative *Morte Arthure* (c. 1360) and in Diana Paxson's *The Hallowed Isle* tetralogy (1999-2000).

One might add that Joy Chant did a Celtic-emphasized re-telling of Geoffrey's history, with this ending, as *The High Kings* in 1983.

This background is enough to set up the next step. In the letter to Greeves quoted above, Lewis also comments that he did not finish Layamon's version (*CL* 1.440; *TST* 248), but he goes on, still talking about Layamon, to make a contrast between the treatments of King Arthur's burial in Malory and non-burial in *Brut*. No doubt, Lewis skipped some of the material in the middle of Layamon's *Brut* (having already read it in Wace's version)—and hence did not finish it—but he obviously had read the ending. Lewis writes, loosely paraphrasing a passage from Layamon (Wace and Layamon 264):

Brut [. . .] knows better [than Malory about the afterlife of Arthur:] 'They say he abideth in Avalon with Argante the fairest of all elves: but ever the Britons think he will come again to help them at their need'—a great deal of which I copied in a poem rejected by Heinemann—on whom ten thousand maledictions. (*CL* 1.440; *TST* 248,

William Heinemann was the publisher who would fairly soon issue Lewis's book of poems.

This is the lost Arthurian poem by C. S. Lewis.

And this is all that one factually knows about it. The rest of this paper, as the subtitle says, will be interwoven with conjectures.

To begin with, Heinemann rejected five of Lewis's poems, which he considered weak. This is factual. Don W. King, in an essay, quotes the 8 October 1918 letter from Heinemann, in which the editor has gone through the "revised form" of *Spirits in Prison* (the first title of the book) and suggests five poems for omission. The titles are important for

present purposes: "To Philip Sidney," "Ballade on a certain pious gentleman," "Sonnet," "Retreat," and "In Venusberg" (King, "Lost" 195 n15).² The first two of these are certainly poems—perhaps the later versions of poems—that Lewis wrote earlier: "To Philip Sidney" in 1916 and "Ballade on a certain pious gentleman" in 1917. Probably "Sonnet" is one of four sonnets Lewis wrote in the 1915-1917 period. (For the identifications and datings, King, "Lost" 197-98.) But "Retreat" and "In Venusberg" seem to have been written about the time Lewis was preparing his book for submission, in 1918. The reason for this surmise is that the titles do not appear in the copies of Lewis's poems made by his friend Arthur Greeves in 1917 (see King, *C. S. Lewis, Poet*, Appendix Six, 308-310). Therefore, they seem to be later productions.

Before a consideration of these two titles, one further complication needs to be discussed. King, in that essay about Lewis's early poems, says that William Heinemann twice requested the dropping of five poems from the manuscript of *Spirits in Bondage* ("Lost" 195 n15). This might complicate any discussion of the five poems just listed: "What were the titles of the *other* five rejected poem?" one might ask. But the situation—while complicated by a missing letter from Heinemann—is not as murky as that suggests. What seems to have happened is this: about the fifth of September 1918, Heinemann wrote to Lewis accepting his manuscript for publication; he said that he would go through the manuscript later, for he thought a few of the poems were poorer than the majority and after due consideration he might suggest a few for omission. This is the missing letter, and the reconstruction is based on what was said in subsequent letters by Lewis.

Lewis wrote his father and Arthur Greeves about the acceptance of his manuscript on 9 September and 12 September respectively. An important

C. S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem · Joe R. Christopher

passage occurs in the letter to his father; Lewis writes, "Wm. Heinemann thinks it would 'be well to reconsider the inclusion of one or two poems which are not *perhaps* on a level with my best work'. I have sent him some new ones as substitutes for these [. . .]" (CL 1.396, stress added). Since Heinemann uses a "perhaps" in the letter of 8 October about omitting five poems, that seems to be his usual diction in writing poets, in order to avoid hard feelings; Lewis picks it up in this letter and in the subsequent letter to Greeves. Writing to his friend, Lewis indicates more fully what has transpired. He says,

[William Heinemann] writes to say that he 'will be pleased to become [the manuscript's] publisher'. He adds that it may be well to reconsider the inclusion of some of the pieces 'which are not *perhaps* on a level with my best work'. I wrote back thanking him and telling him there were a few new pieces that he might care to use as substitutes for the ones he omits. An answer came back this time from a man called Evans, the managing director[,] asking me to send the new pieces and saying that Heinemann himself was out of town for a week or so. I sent him 5 new poems by return[,] (CL 1.397; TST 230, stress added)

In neither letter does Lewis say clearly that the poems have been dropped. In one, Heinemann suggests "one or two poems" should be reconsidered; in the other, he thinks it may be well to reconsider "some." If Heinemann had named particular poems, surely Lewis would have given a precise number. Heinemann did not respond for about a month. When he returned or when he found time to read the typescript, he wrote Lewis the letter above, of 8 October, in which he names the five poems to omit. He seems to have been

influenced in his choice of the number by the number of new poems that Lewis had already sent. His actual words are these:

I have read through your 'Spirits in Prison' again, in its revised form [presumably with the five additional poems, which Lewis must have sent with suggestions about their placement], and suggest the following numbers might be omitted [*sic*], partly because they do not strengthen the book as a whole, partly because they are less original *perhaps* than the bulk of your work[.] (King, "Lost" 195 n15, stress added).

Thus, the sequence of letters makes sense without the assumption of ten poems being dropped. (The appendix lists the Lewis's correspondence about *Spirits in Bondage*, from submission through publication, to indicate the larger context.)

If the reader tentatively agrees that only five poems were dropped and replaced, that Don W. King is correct in identifying the three of the five poems—two from their titles and the sonnet just with probability as one of the earlier sonnets—and that therefore the Arthurian poem has to be identified as either titled "Retreat" or "Venusberg," then some further conjectures—or, rather, alternate conjectures—can be made.

First, one may consider "Retreat." Since the William Heinemann Company was planning to release Lewis's book as a volume with other books by war poets, one can surmise that a poem titled "Retreat" might raise qualms in the editor. Of course, a poem about being in a military hospital might do well under the title of "Retreat," treating the hospital as a retreat from active war-front life. But could Lewis have used such a title with an Arthurian poem? Actually, several Arthurian possibilities present themselves. First, King Arthur was

C. S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem · Joe R. Christopher

preparing to attack the Roman Empire in Italy before the news of Modred's treachery reached him—then he had to turn to righting things in England. In Layamon, the events are told mainly with dialogue. "[A] brave man" comes riding, with the news of Modred's rebellion and Guinevere's betrayal (258). After some discussion and some quiet depression of the knights, King Arthur announces, "Now to-morrow, when it is day, and the Lord it sendeth, forth I will march in toward Britain; and Modred I will slay, and burn the queen; and all I will destroy, that approved the treachery" (260). With a little helpful revision by the poet, a poem about King Arthur at war in Europe and *retreating* to England could be developed from this. For example, an episode in England could be written this way:

And Modred said, "This war is
 spending lives,
Our young men's lives; each one's
 high dreams it skives;
The general, my uncle, tells them to
 charge,
To die in muddy fields, on muddy
 marge."

Of course, that is just a hypothetical passage, meant to suggest how the material could be shaped to echo World War I. Layamon, who is given to giving large numbers, announces that King Arthur lost "five and twenty thousand" knights in his war with the Roman Emperor while fighting in France (257); that also would have resonance if it were used in an echo of the Great War. (Lewis, who in this period called Siegfried Sassoon "a horrid man" [*CL* 1.403; *TST* 232], doubtless writing as a military officer and a brother of a professional soldier, probably would not have written a parody of King Arthur as a poor general, as suggested above; but he could have found some other application.)

Second, Guinevere's flight to a nunnery could also be called a retreat—

and, of course, a possible pun exists on going to spiritual retreats in monasteries or nunneries. Layamon writes,

The queen lay in York; never was
she so sorrowful; that was
Wenhaver the queen, most
miserable of women! She heard say
sooth words, how often Modred
fled, and how Arthur him pursued;
woe was to her the while, that she
was alive! Out of York she went by
night, and toward Kaerleon drew,
as quickly as she might; thither she
brought by night two of her
knights; and men covered her head
with a holy veil, and she was there a
nun; woman most wretched! Then
men knew not of the queen, where
she were gone, nor many years
afterwards man knew it in sooth,
whether she were dead, or whether
she herself were sunk in the water.
(263)

No final meeting of Guinevere and Arthur occurs in Layamon; that was an episode invented by Tennyson for his *Idylls of the King*. ("Guinevere," ll. 398-656)—and Lewis would not have wanted his reviewers to have a direct comparison with Tennyson. Again, a hypothetical rendering:

The queen, afraid of Arthur's
 burning ire,
Afraid of fagots round her, heaped
 for fire,
Chose secretly withdrawing,
 disguised and lost,
In fear *retreating*; fine clothes, fine
 life the cost.
She cried, "I've lived my life for
 moment's bliss;
And war surrounds me now to
 answer this."

Perhaps Lewis, in his pre-Christian days, would not have written quite this moralistically, but the general idea of a

C. S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem · Joe R. Christopher

retreat from the problems one has caused is a theme with possibilities.

Third, an option exists for the treatment of King Arthur's leaving of this world as a retreat. Layamon says that, at the end of the battle between Arthur and Modred, only Arthur and two of his knights were still alive. Arthur was seriously wounded:

And Arthur himself wounded with a
broad slaughter-spear; fifteen
dreadful wounds he had; in the
least[,] one might thrust two gloves!

After a handing on of the kingship, Arthur is taken to Avalon ("Avalun"). Layamon describes the leaving this way:

[T]here approached from the sea
that was a short boat, floating with
the waves; and two women therein,
wondrously formed; and they took
Arthur anon, and bare him quickly,
and laid him softly down, and forth
they gan depart. (264)

Again, it is easiest to present a sample of what could have been made out of this, tied to the title of the poem:

The end of battle came at even tide,
With corbies feasting well on those
who'd died;
And most were dead, across the
meadows strewn,
Beneath the setting sun and
slightest moon.
While left the boat from off the
British shore,
One soldier raised his bugle, clear
notes to soar;
In overtones he played the call
Retreat,
The Sunset call, the end of age to
greet.

Of course, that passage is cheating when it uses "Retreat," an American term for what the British call the nearly identical "Sunset." The youthful Lewis would not

have seen that possibility for a pun, but a "retreat" (so to speak) on Arthur's part to be cured of his wounds would have been a possible topic.

The other title, "In Venusberg," is actually a more likely title for Lewis's Arthurian poem than "Retreat," although it may seem less likely when casually considered. After all, Venusberg is a German myth about an underground world of sexual satisfaction, a Venus-ruled realm beneath a mountain. Would a German myth be allowable in a book of poems at the end of World War I? Lewis obviously thought so, since this is his title (although Heinemann, for whatever reason, did not). Lewis knew the myth from its use in Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser*. Three references to the opera appear in Lewis's letters to Arthur Greeves in the first volume of his *Collected Letters* (116, 129, 281; *TST* 69, 77, 169)—in fact, in the first of the references, Lewis refers to the opera by Wagner's original name for it of *Venusberg* (cf. Walter Hooper's note, *CL* 1.116 n36; not in *TST*). Those who know the opera, or at least know about it, are aware that the opera opens in Venusberg, with Tannhäuser living with Venus; the ballet suggests an orgy, and then Tannhäuser wants to leave—and manages his departure in the middle of the act. The rest of the opera is laid above, in Germany.

Why would this be appropriate for an Arthurian poem? One should consider two passages in Layamon. First, when Arthur is speaking to Constantine, who will become king after him: Arthur says, in part: "And I will fare to Avalun, to the fairest of all maidens, to Argante the queen, an elf most fair, and she shall make my wounds all sound; make me all whole with healing draughts" (264). And then the narrator's words after Arthur has left in the boat: "The Britons believe yet that he is alive, and dwelleth in Avalun with the fairest of all elves" (264). When Lewis was writing to Arthur Greeves, in

C. S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem · Joe R. Christopher

the passage quoted before, he emphasized the romantic nature of this passage in his paraphrase: “They say he abideth in Avalon with Argante the fairest of all elves[. . .]” But immediately Lewis adds, “a great deal of which I copied in a poem” (440). This phrasing suggests it was either Arthur’s passing or, more likely, his stay in “Avalun” that Lewis described in his poem. One might add that Wace has Arthur going to Avalon but he has no reference to an elfin queen, so the source of Argante, the “silvery” one from her name, is Layamon.

Thus, if one puts these two accounts together, Wagner’s opera and Layamon’s romance, one has a merging of Venusberg and Avalon: obviously a fairy queen should live beneath a fairy mound, and a mountain is but a fairy mound writ large. No doubt in the land beneath the mountain may lie either a plain or an island, called Avalon. For the land of the fairy, and also the realm of Venus—like most lands of the spirit—may be larger inside than outside.

Said Argante the Fair, “Come drink
this draught—
It’s brewed by mine own hands,
with skill and craft.
Your wounds will close, your heart
will also mend;
No longer will Queen Wenhaver
offend.
We’ll spend a night together, only
one,
To celebrate your cure with
payment done;
And if the hours run oddly neath
the soil,
We’ll spend them all in our most
pleasant toil.”

If Lewis wrote such a poem, perhaps even more explicit than this, his love affair, begun with Janie Moore about a year earlier, can be assigned as a partial cause.³ However, William Heinemann

rejected the poem, whether titled “In Venusberg” or “Retreat,” whether amorous or military.

Therefore, Lewis wrote an early Arthurian poem. What happened to the manuscript? Again, conjectures. Perhaps Walter Hooper will eventually pull it, like a rabbit, out of his exhaustless top hat. But probably not; he has already published some early poems found in “The Memoirs of the Lewis Family,” so he probably does not have other original lyrics. What are the other possibilities? Lewis had a tendency to burn manuscripts he thought poor. In his correspondence with Greeves, he tells of such destruction. He writes on [18 September 1919], for example, “On getting back to England [from Ireland] I had the pleasure of looking over my ‘Medea’ of which I told you and finding that it was all hopeless and only fit for the fire! Nothing daunted however I bade it a long farewell—poor still-born [. . .]” (*CL* 1.465-66; *TST* 261). Perhaps, once Heinemann rejected the Arthurian poem, Lewis thought it weak enough to burn, despite his later malediction on Heinemann for the rejection. Or he may have burned all the manuscripts connected to the book once the volume appeared.

A third possibility is that Lewis gave the Arthurian poem to Janie Moore, particularly if it was an amorous treatment of Modred and Queen Wenhaver or of King Arthur and Argante. In that case, the poem was also probably burnt—but far later. According to Jill Flewett Freud, who worked two years in the Kilns for Lewis and Moore before her advanced training in drama,

When [Janie Moore] became ill [in the 1943-45 period,] she took all Jack’s letters, piles of letters she had received from him over a period of about twenty-five years, and I think also the letters from her son, Paddy—Lewis’s great friend

C. S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem · Joe R. Christopher

who was killed in the First World War—and threw them all in the old-fashioned boiler in the kitchen. She burned the lot. (58)

Of course, she was destroying the record of her affair with Lewis; but, if any amorous poems were returned to her, presumably she burnt them with the letters.⁴

This essay has traced the Arthurian poem's creation time, its submission and rejection, and its destruction, all with plentiful conjectures. And now an epilogue: one final conjecture may end this discussion, for a report of the poem, a discussion, may have had an after life. As is well known, C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien influenced each other, particularly in the 1930s. The most famous of these is their agreement to write thrillers with meanings—which resulted in Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet* and Tolkien's unfinished "Lost Road" and, finished, "The Fall of Númenor," the latter the forerunner of "Akallabêth" (cf. Glycer 58-59; Scull and Hammond 558-565, 665-679). That one is a fact, not a conjecture; but one may add a probability for a second example: in Tolkien's *Beowulf and the Critics* (not the same as his lecture "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics"), Tolkien quotes two poems about dragons side by side, his own "Íúmonna Gold Galdre Bewunden" (A Text 56-57, B Text 110-112) and C. S. Lewis's "The Northern Dragon" [sic] (the first dragon poem in *The Pilgrim's Regress*) (A Text 57-58, B Text [where it is titled "Atol inwit gæst," probably by Tolkien] 113-114).⁵ Tolkien says that the two poems are "important for *Beowulf*-criticism," but his afterpiece to them is ironic (in the B Text only), and probably his claim for their importance is partly so. At any rate, his quotation of both poems suggests that they were written deliberately by the friends, whether by agreement or by one influencing the other. In a parallel way, one can also conjecture that the two

unfinished Arthurian poems by Tolkien and Lewis were also begun by friendly agreement: Tolkien's "The Fall of Arthur" and Lewis's "Launcelot" were both written in the early 1930s (for Tolkien, Carpenter 168-69; for Lewis, Hooper's Preface to Lewis's *Narrative Poems* xii). But Lewis's earlier Arthurian poem, through Lewis's reference to it in discussions with Tolkien, may have influenced Tolkien's choice of topic. Again, a hypothetical:

And Lewis said, "A decade past I
tried,
In youthful folly, to write as
couplets glide
Of Arthur's days when spent in
Avalon—
A failure this, so burnt to oblivion.
I should have writ of Guinevere the
Beauty,
But didn't understand her—her
loss of duty.
Was Mordred hotter? Did Arthur
fail in bed?"
Then, in a higher register, he said,
"Dear wife, I'm sorry, sorry, you'll
do without it!"
And Tolkien: "Hardly heroic! . . . I'll
think about it."

What is known of Tolkien's poem—mainly from Humphrey Carpenter's biography, with the quotation of a few snippets—indicates that Arthur was at war in Europe when Mordred attempted his coup. Mordred was troubled by lustful desire for Guinever (Tolkien's spelling); she was a "fell minded" woman, not a woman moved by *eros*. Thus Tolkien, writing in the alliterative meter, seems to be in the tradition of Layamon and the later Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, both in verse form and in the omission of Launcelot. Although Tolkien late in life was still talking of finishing the poem (Carpenter 169), he never did. So twice a modern poem in the tradition of Layamon was not successful—Lewis's poem was

editorially rejected and seems to have been destroyed, Tolkien's was never finished.

This is an essay of conjectures, made even more conjectural with its hypothetical passages of a type of poem Lewis *might* (to a degree) have written, but it begins from and elaborates on a fact: Lewis wrote a poem about King Arthur based on Layamon's *Brut*. And a second fact: the poem is lost.

Appendix A Chronology of Letters

The following chronology of the references in Lewis's letters to the publication of *Spirits in Bondage* by Wm. Heinemann is meant to reinforce the explanation of the probable omission of only five poems from the original typescript; it also puts the reference to the lost Arthurian poem into the sequence of discussion, before the book itself was published. The dates of Lewis's letters are from Walter Hooper's dates of them in the first volume of *Collected Letters*, brackets are as in the book; however, some minor variations in Lewis's usages—e.g., "27th," not "27," in no. 12—have been regularized here.

(1) Lewis writes Greeves that Macmillan has rejected his manuscript of poems and that he is sending the manuscript to Heinemann next. Wednesday [7 August 1918].

(2) Lewis writes to Greeves about his reason for not sending his poems to Maunsel of Dublin for consideration. [31 August 1918].

(H) William Heinemann's lost letter to Lewis, accepting the poems for publication and stating he might want to omit some poems upon a more carefully re-reading. Conjectural: about 3 September 1918.

(3) Lewis writes his father that his manuscript has been accepted for publication. "Wm. Heineman thinks it would 'be well to reconsider the inclusion of one or two pieces which are not perhaps on a level with my best work'." 9 September 1918.

(4) Lewis writes Greeves that Heinemann has accepted his poems for publication and has suggested "some" poems be omitted ("some" is Lewis's word). Lewis continues by saying that he replied offering some "new" poems and was answered by Charles Sheldon Evans; Lewis has sent him "5 new poems" [. . .]. Among other topics, he mentions Heinemann is "out of town for a week or so." [12 September 1918].

(5) Lewis writes his father to thank him for sending a telegram celebrating the forthcoming book. 14 September 1918.

(6) Lewis thanks his father for a letter, evidently celebrating the book; he discusses questions his father has raised about the (first) title, the subtitle, and the (first) pseudonym. 18 September 1918.

(7) Lewis writes his father about the subtitle again and about the use of a pseudonym. Postmark: 3 October 1918.

(8) Lewis writes Greeves, "I told you that Wm. Heinemann was away for a fortnight, but he should be back now and I am expecting to hear from him any day now." [6? October 1918].

(H) Heinemann writes Lewis, "I [. . .] suggest the following numbers might [. . .] be omitted [*sic*], [. . .] partly because they are less original perhaps than the bulk of your

C. S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem · Joe R. Christopher

work." Five titles follow. 8 October 1918.

(9) Lewis tells Greeves that he is not correcting his proofs—he has heard nothing more from Heinemann. (This lack of communication, following the letter from Heinemann immediately above, is explained in the next two letters.) Sunday [13 October 1918].

(10) Lewis writes Greeves that he "got Mrs Moore's sister in town to call on Heinemann[']s, which she did on Wednesday last and they said they'd written the day before, but it must have been lost." Teusday [*sic*] [15 October 1918]. The previous Wednesday was 9 October, and the day before was 8 October, which matches the Heinemann letter.

(11) Lewis writes his father, "I have just had a letter from Heineman's which has taken some time to come round through Ashton Court [Lewis's previous military stationing]. He accepts some new pieces I had sent him and mentions a few he wants rejected." He also mentions some stylistic suggestions from Heinemann that do not appear in the portion of Heinemann's letter reprinted by King in "Lost." He discusses the second title and the second pseudonym for his poems. 18 October 1918.

(12) Lewis tells his father about his visit to Heinemann to sign the contract for the book, with a fairly full discussion of the contract's terms. Heinemann promised the proofs in approximately three weeks. 27 [26?] October 1918.

(13) Lewis describes to Greeves his visit to Heinemann and Company, with different emphases than in his

account to his father. Saturday [2 November 1918].

(14) Lewis writes his father again about the financial terms of his contract with Heinemann; he also covers Heinemann's terms of praise. 10 November 1918.

(15) Lewis mentions to his father that he expects the proofs of his book "any day" and it should be out by Christmas. (The book actually appeared on 20 March 1919.) [17? November 1918]. Lewis usually dated letters to his father, but not always (as here).

(16) Lewis tells Greeves that his book may be reviewed in the Christmas issue of the *Bookman* although the proofs have not come yet. Monday 2 [December 1918].

(17) Lewis writes his father, "Surely Heinemann will get my book out before the next quarterly season begins? [. . .]?" [16?] December 1918.

(18) Lewis comments to Greeves, "I wish I could hear anything of my [book]: I am sure I will be white haired before it sees daylight!" [9 February 1919].

(19) Lewis mentions to Arthur Greeves that Heinemann rejected Lewis's poem based on Layamon's Arthurian account. Sunday [2 March 1919].

(20) Lewis writes to his brother, "Did you see the 'very insolent' review of me on the back page of the Times Literary Supplement [*sic*] last week?" [2? April 1919].

Notes

¹The dates in brackets are as supplied by Walter Hooper in Lewis's *Collected Letters* and *They Stand Together*.

²King is quoting the surviving copy of the letter, which appears in Warren Lewis's typed history of the Lewis family (6.49).

³The present author has provided evidence for Lewis's affair with Janie Moore in Section II of "From Despoina to Δ," 28-30.

⁴A variant of this third possibility is that all the materials involved in *Spirits in Bondage* may have been given to Mrs. Moore and later burnt by her. Lewis had Arthur Greeves send to Janie Moore soon after 31 December 1917 the majority of the poems which appear in that book (*CL* 1.350; *TST* 205). Lewis obviously had them back as he worked on his book, but two of the poems—the Despoina poems ("Apology" and "Ode for New Year's Day")—were written about her, if somewhat indirectly. (For an argument to this effect, see this author's "From Despoina to Δ.") Thus, because of the two poems, the book to some degree was "hers" and the materials may have been given to her.

⁵The title "The Northern Dragon" is taken by Drout from the chapter in *The Pilgrim's Regress* in which the poem appears (email from Michael D. C. Drout)—Bk. 10, Ch. 8—not from a manuscript nor from a separately published version of the poem.

Works Cited

- Carpenter, Humphrey. *Tolkien: A Biography*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
- Chant, Joy. *The High Kings*. Illustrated by George Sharp. New York: Bantam Books, 1983.
- Christopher, Joe R. "From Despoina to Δ." *Mythlore* 30:3-4 (No. 117-18) (Spring-Summer 2012): 27-53.
- Drout, Michael D. C. Email of 29 May 2012.
- Freud, Jill. "Part B: With Girls at Home." In *In Search of C. S. Lewis*. Ed. Stephen Schofield. South Plainfield, New Jersey: Bridge Publishing, 1983. 55-59.
- Glyer, Diana Pavlac. *The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community*. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2007.
- King, Don W. *C. S. Lewis, Poet: The Legacy of his Poetic Impulse*. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2001.
- . "Lost but Found: The 'Missing' Poems of C. S. Lewis's *Spirits in Bondage*." *Christianity and Literature* 53.2 (Winter 2004): 163-201.
- Lewis, C. S. *Collected Letters: Volume 1: Family Letters: 1905-1931*. Ed. Walter Hooper. London: HarperCollins [sic], 2000.
- . *Narrative Poems*. Ed. Walter Hooper. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1969.
- . *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity[,] Reason and Romanticism*. 3rd ed. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1943. Book 10, Ch. 8, "The Northern Dragon," is on pp. 191-194.
- . *They Stand Together: The Letters of C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves (1914-1963)*. Ed. Walter Hooper, London: Collins, 1979.
- Lewis, Warren Hamilton. "Memoirs of the Lewis Family: 1850-1930." Typed, in 11 volumes. Available in the Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

C. S. Lewis's Lost Arthurian Poem · Joe R. Christopher

Paxson, Diana. *The Book of the Cauldron. The Hallowed Isle*, No. 3. New York: AvonEos, 1999. (Another source says Avonova, 2000.)

—. *The Book of the Spear. The Hallowed Isle*, No. 2. New York: AvonEos, 1999. (Another source says Avonova, 2000.)

—. *The Book of the Stone. The Hallowed Isle*, No. 4. New York: AvonEos, 2000. (Another source says Avonova.)

—. *The Book of the Sword. The Hallowed Isle*, No. 1. New York: AvonEos, 1999. (Another source says Avonova.)

Schmidt, Laura. Email of 23 May 2012.

Scull, Christina, and Wayne G. Hammond. "The Lost Road," "The Lost Road and Other Writings," and "Númenor." *The J. R. R. Tolkien Companion and Guide: [Vol. 2] Reader's Guide*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 558-565; 665-679.

Tennyson, Alfred. "Guinevere." In *Idylls of the King*. Many editions are available.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *Beowulf and the Critics*. Ed. Michael D. C. Drout. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, Vol. 248. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002.

Wace and Layamon. *Arthurian Chronicles, Represented by Wace and Layamon*. Intro. Lucy Allen Paton. Trans. Eugene Mason. Everyman's Library, No. 578. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, [1912]. *Note*: This is Lewis's edition, cited by Walter Hooper (Lewis, *Collected Letters*, 162 n9). The 1962 edition, with an introduction by Gwyn Jones, has the same translation with its same pagination.