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## Gupcwen and Ides Ellenrof – The Old English Warrior Woman as Role Model for Female Characters in Tolkien’s Works

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### Cover Page Footnote

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## Gupcwen and Ides Ellenrof – The Old English Warrior Woman as Role Model for Female Characters in Tolkien's Works

### Introduction: Femininity and Feminism in Tolkien Scholarship

Interest in Tolkien's female characters and their possible role models has grown over time since the 1970s, greatly increasing since the 2000s (Reid 2015, 16-21). This interest reached its peak in *Perilous & Fair* (2014), the first collection of essays entirely focussed on the women in Tolkien's works and life. One of many different aspects explored regarding Tolkien and 'The Woman Question' is the influences of medieval sources on the conception of Tolkien's female characters. For example, Jennifer Neville explores to some degree in 'Tolkien's Women' the influence of Old English literature on the characterisation of Tolkien's female characters and contrasts this characterisation with the Victorian ideal of women in Tolkien's own time. Another example is Amy Amendt-Raduege's 'Revising Lobelia' (2017), in which the author analyses the role models for the 'ordinary women' such as Lobelia Sackville-Baggins (80), the role models of whom can be found in the female characters of Old Norse sagas. Many further works have been written on the non-medieval influences on female characters in Tolkien's works highlighting the impacts of Classical literature, Shakespeare, or World War I (Straubhaar 2004, Lakowski 2007, Smith 2007).<sup>1</sup> Among the scholarship centring on the medieval sources for Tolkien's women, one work stands out in particular: *Tolkien the Medievalist* (2003), a collection of essays edited by Jane Chance focussing on Tolkien's work as a medieval scholar and on the influence of medieval texts and sources on his fictional works.

Leslie Donovan's pioneering essay 'The Valkyrie Reflex in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*: Galadriel, Shelob, Éowyn, and Arwen' (2003) appeared in this collection. Donovan argues that four female characters from *The Lord of the Rings*, Galadriel, Arwen, Shelob, and Éowyn, are indebted to the Valkyrie Reflex, a medieval trope identified first by Helen Damico. These four characters share six major characteristics with Valkyrie figures from Eddic poetry:

- They exhibit an otherworldly radiance, which is sometimes connected with the glittering shine of armour (Donovan 111)
- They possess a physical prowess similar to, or even greater than, the prowess of male characters (Donovan 111)
- They serve ceremonial functions within the hall such as cup-bearing, gift-giving, or sewing heroic garments (Donovan 111)
- They perform prophetic acts or other acts of speech which determine future fate (Donovan 111)
- Their chosen actions are based on their own strong wills (Donovan 111)
- They undergo the loss of something central and precious to their lives (Donovan 111)

In her argument, Donovan demonstrates that all four characters exhibit some of these characteristics, Galadriel and Éowyn embodying more of the Valkyrie traits and Arwen and Shelob fewer. This paper aims to reflect on the approach Donovan takes in 'The Valkyrie Reflex' and to build on a different trope for analysis that draws more specifically on Tolkien's main area of study: Old and Middle English.

In her paper, Leslie Donovan relies on the medieval 'Valkyrie Reflex' trope first identified in Helen Damico's 'The Valkyrie Reflex in Old English Literature' (1990b) and applies it to Tolkien's female characters. Herein, Damico argues that a connection exists between Old English female heroines—mainly Juliana, Judith, and Elene—and Valkyries as portrayed in Old Norse sagas and mythology (1990b, 183). As evidence for her theory, Damico relies on parallels in the description and characterisation of Old English heroines and Old Norse Valkyries. Because of the strong similarities, Damico concludes that the Old English figures must be connected to the Old Norse Valkyries and that both might be related to an earlier

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<sup>1</sup> A recommendation for an overview on scholarship on Tolkien and women is Robin Anne Reid's paper 'The History of Scholarship on Female Characters in J. R. R. Tolkien's Legendarium: A Feminist Bibliographic Essay' (2015). This author is very thankful to the anonymous reviewer for the recommendation. For more literature on Tolkien's works and a connection to Medieval languages such as Old English or Old Norse, see Honegger 2005 and 2011, Chance 2003, Shippey 1982.

concept which she calls ‘the Germanic warrior-woman’ (183). However, while there are important parallels between Valkyries and the Old English warrior women, for example the motif of radiating light and character traits of wisdom and courage, there are also some significant differences (183, 186). One major discrepancy between Valkyries and Old English characters such as Judith or Elene is their differing narrative roles as leaders or followers. While Valkyries are mainly described in serving roles, either working for Oðinn on the battlefield choosing the slain, or as servants in Valhøll for the dead warriors feasting there (Self 2014, 147), Old English heroines take on leadership roles, typically guiding their people. Furthermore, Valkyries are rarely main characters in a story and are usually completely supernatural creatures with no human connection<sup>2</sup>. While these points may weaken Damico’s argument, they stop short of disproving her thesis. Nevertheless, these differences still suggest an alternative perspective to consider regarding Donovan’s standpoint on the Valkyrie Reflex in Tolkien’s women.

Within this paper I will identify and define the Warrior Woman trope, as well as demonstrate how this archetype is more suited to Tolkien’s women, as the Warrior Woman trope is defined partly by features common to the Valkyrie Reflex but additionally incorporates leadership and martial qualities, which are not present in Damico’s Valkyrie Reflex schema. That is, the Warrior Woman trope is based on Old English heroines, who display some influence from the Valkyries, as Damico demonstrates, but who also are portrayed through differing, additional traits, for instance their unifying characteristic as leaders. Thus, building on what Damico and Donovan have pointed out, this paper will refine their arguments regarding Germanic influence on Tolkien’s women, narrowing down the main source of influence. Nevertheless, many possible sources of influence can be ascertained for Tolkien’s women. Tolkien was inspired by many things: classical literature, historical events, his own life experiences, and, of course, his own imagination. Thus, this paper does not claim to provide one single correct interpretation of Tolkien’s women, but, rather, seeks to add a new perspective and fill in a gap in this area of Tolkien scholarship.

## The Trope of the Warrior Woman in Old English Poetry

The three heroines in the respective poems *Judith*, *Juliana*, and *Elene* constitute the Old English Warrior Woman trope. These three characters stand out in comparison to other, minor female characters in Old English poetry. They take on roles associated with heroic deeds, and therefore should be understood in the tradition of heroic poetry, beside male characters such as Beowulf (Damico 1990b, 182, Horner 1994, 673). The Warrior Woman trope is comprised of seven aspects:

- **Beauty and Radiance:** Descriptions of the characters focus on their outer appearances, which are described as beautiful, and their beauty is often expressed with imagery prominently connected with light.
- **Wisdom:** The characters demonstrate wisdom and strategic thinking, often an important part of the narrative.
- **Courage:** The characters show exceeding courage and fierceness in seemingly hopeless situations.
- **Strong Will:** Each character takes action based on her own will, which is often in opposition to the norms of society.
- **Leadership:** The characters take roles as leaders in the narrative; leadership here is expressed through 1) giving speeches or making declarations and 2) commanding a multitude of people, often in a military context.
- **Social status:** The characters come from a high social position, giving them even more authority.
- **Combat participant (either physical or mental):** the characters take part in violent conflict, during which they are usually positioned alone against a supernatural evil. Often, they themselves have some kind of supernatural power or strength.

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<sup>2</sup> Some might disagree, arguing that characters such as Sigrun in the Helgi poems are in fact main characters and at the same time called Valkyries, but this argument disregards the differences between Valkyries and shield-maidens. While traditionally the Valkyrie is perceived as a supernatural figure, the shield-maiden is a definitively mortal warrior woman with many similar features. Sometimes scholars use both terms synonymously, merging both figures and their specific features into one (Self 147). In this paper I regard shield-maidens and Valkyries as two distinct tropes, though I am aware of the occasional overlap.

## Warrior Women Characteristics: Beauty and Radiance

In her analysis Donovan argues that one important characteristic is an ‘otherworldly radiance’ of the female characters, which mirrors the Valkyrie-specific traits listed by Helen Damico (Donovan 111). According to this definition Arwen, Galadriel, and Éowyn fulfil this category. While this definition suitably identifies Valkyrie archetypes in the narrative, the Old English Warrior woman is based around figures like Juliana and Judith, who are not otherworldly, per se, but who glow with light and possess great beauty in a more general sense.

Beginning with the outer appearance, beauty makes up an important part of the trope. In *Juliana*, the poem’s heroine is twice described as beautiful: The first time her beauty is noted, a multitude of people is ‘wafade on þære fæmnan wlite’ (l. 162b–163a)<sup>3</sup>. The second time, her beauty remains unharmed after torture in a bath of hot lead (l. 590a). In *Judith*, Judith is said to be a ‘torhtan mægð’ (l. 43a)<sup>4</sup> as well as ‘ides ælfscinu’ (l. 14a), translating the latter literally as ‘the woman, radiant as an elf’.<sup>5</sup> Elene is depicted in terms of beauty as well, as she is presented as ‘geatolic guð-cwen golde gehyrsted’ (l. 331)<sup>6</sup>. These descriptions create a contrast to the other characteristics of the women, characteristics which belong to the heroic poetic diction such as fierceness, wisdom, and participation in violent conflict. This contrast highlights that even though the heroines take on a traditionally masculine role, they do not lose their classical notions of femininity.

Closely connected to the beauty of the characters is their relationship with light or radiance. The heroine who embodies this feature most notably is Juliana. Juliana is not only referred to as light by her suitor Eleusius, ‘min eagna leoht’ (l. 95b)<sup>7</sup>, but she is also compared to the sun itself: ‘Min swetesta sunnan scima, Iuliana! Hwæt, þu glæm hafast’ (166–167b)<sup>8</sup>. The poet further refers to her as ‘seo sun-sciene’ (l. 229a)<sup>9</sup> and ‘wlite-scyne wuldres condel’ (454)<sup>10</sup>. All these descriptions portray Juliana not merely as radiant, but even as light itself. Judith and Elene share the same quality of radiance or luminescence but to a lesser extent. Judith is repeatedly called ‘beohrt’ (l. 254b, 326a, 340a)<sup>11</sup>, and is depicted as ‘golde gehyrsted’ (l. 331b)<sup>12</sup>, which may refer to light reflecting from her golden armour (Damico 1990b, 183). The gold of the armour itself also imitates natural light with its colour.

Similar to their Old English models, Tolkien’s characters are closely connected to beauty and radiance, traits which underline their exceptional status in the narrative and mark them as angelic heroines. I shall begin with Lúthien, with whom in *The Lord of the Rings* Arwen is often compared regarding her beauty: ‘Arwen, daughter of Elrond, in whom it was said the likeness of Lúthien had come on earth again’ (LotR I 298)<sup>13</sup>. Lúthien’s beauty is said to be unique, as she is ‘the most beautiful of all the Children of Ilúvatar’ (S 162). But beauty is not the only the defining characteristic of Lúthien. Rather, she also fulfils the other quality identified in the Old English Warrior Woman trope: radiating light. In the description that follows the quote above, it is stated that in Lúthien’s face ‘was a shining light’ (S 163), and when she stands before the werewolf Carcharoth, she is ‘radiant and terrible’ (S 178). In addition to Lúthien appears Idril, another character mainly found in *The Silmarillion*, who also stands out because of her marriage to the

<sup>3</sup> ‘looking with wonder at the beautiful woman’; all translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>4</sup> ‘bright maiden’

<sup>5</sup> The term ‘ælfscinu’ sparked interest in Tolkien at one time, enough so that he wrote a poem, ‘Ides Ælfscyne’, about a ‘maiden fair as an elf’ or ‘elf-fair maiden’ who lures a young man away, returning him into a land where he is a stranger (see Shippey 317). Thus, Tolkien thought about this term in more detail and understood it probably literally, and with a component of beauty. One could consider elf-maiden in the poem a forerunner to his later character Lúthien.

<sup>6</sup> ‘the ready-equipped warrior-queen, adorned with gold’

<sup>7</sup> ‘light of my eyes’

<sup>8</sup> ‘my sweetest shine of the sun, Juliana! What glow you have!’

<sup>9</sup> ‘the sun-bright’

<sup>10</sup> ‘beautiful-shining candle of glory’

<sup>11</sup> ‘bright’

<sup>12</sup> ‘adorned with gold’

<sup>13</sup> In quotations below I will refer to the following works by J. R. R. Tolkien as such: *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* as LotR I, *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* as LotR II, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* as LotR III, *The Silmarillion* as S, , *The Book of Lost Tales 1* as LT1, *The Book of Lost Tales 2* as LT2, *The Peoples of Middle-earth* as PM, *Morgoth’s Ring* as MR, and to *Unfinished Tales of Middle-earth* as UT.

human Tuor. Idril is ‘fairer than all the wonders of Gondolin’ (S 121), and her golden hair is compared to the light of the tree Laurelin in Valinor before its destruction (S 121). Idril has a close linguistic connection to the characteristic of radiating light, as her name in Sindarin can be translated into a Sindarin form for ‘sparkling-brilliance’ as Verlyn Flieger (2002) points out (ch. 11)<sup>14</sup>. When Maeglin first comes to Gondolin and meets Idril, ‘she seemed to him as the sun from which all the King’s hall drew its light’ (S 131). This comparison is reminiscent of Eleusius’ statement about Juliana discussed above. Additionally, it should be noted that like Juliana, Idril has in Maeglin an unwanted suitor who becomes her opponent in a violent conflict (LT 2 178).

However, *The Silmarillion* is not the only text to incorporate beautiful and shining characters, *The Lord of the Rings* contains them as well. The elven queen Galadriel is described as beautiful (LotR I 465, 468), and, like Idril, she is repeatedly called ‘fair’ by the narrator (LotR I 474), and by other characters such as Frodo (LotR I 480). Moreover, Galadriel appears to be the personification of light in *The Lord of the Rings*, a device which can be detected in depictions of her in the narrative: ‘for [Galadriel] herself seemed to shine with a soft light’ (LotR III 375). Her golden hair is also connected with light (LotR I 465, cf. UT 229/30). Moreover, Galadriel’s gift to Frodo, the Phial of Galadriel said to contain the light of Eärendil’s star (LotR I 495), makes her a distributor of light (cf. Flieger ch. 19). Éowyn is the last of the Lord of The Rings women to discuss in relation to light, the only human of the women examined. She, like Idril, is called ‘fair’ (LotR II 146, LotR III 290), and her beauty is mentioned by both the narrator (ibid.) and by other characters such as Faramir (LotR III 288, 290). Although she is not said to radiate light herself, as the elven characters do, she does appear in connection with light: her golden hair is gleams with light (LotR III 77, 137), which suggests the appearance of a halo, emphasizing her purity. Thus, all four characters of this analysis are associated with light imagery and depicted as externally beautiful, fulfilling the terms of the category of Beauty and Radiance.

This category is similar to the category of beauty utilised in Donovan’s discussion of the Valkyrie Reflex trope. However, Donovan narrows ‘beauty’ to ‘otherworldly radiance’ (111), and she considers only Galadriel, Éowyn and Arwen to fulfil this category (112/3, 124, 127).

### Warrior Woman Characteristics: Wisdom and Courage

One aspect missing in Donovan’s categories is the characteristic of wisdom, which is another major characteristic of the Old English Warrior Woman. In *Judith*, the female character is repeatedly referred to as being ‘wise’ (‘snotor’ l. 55a, 125a) and ‘ready-witted’ (‘gearoþnocol’ l. 341a). Another term used to describe her as ‘wise’ is ‘gleaw’ (13b, 171a, 333b), and compounds containing the term, such as ‘gleawhydig’ (148a)<sup>15</sup> and ‘ferhðgleaw’ (141a)<sup>16</sup>. Judith’s wisdom is probably one of her key attributes in the poem (Damico 1984a, 31) and relates to her strategic thinking as a warrior (Kaup 2013, 130). This also makes the Old English Judith stand out in comparison to her biblical model, who is mainly described in terms of beauty and sexual appeal, with a lesser focus on her wisdom or military abilities.<sup>17</sup> Juliana is ascribed the term ‘gleaw’ as well (l. 131a), in addition to being described as ‘þristan gēpohtes’ (l.550a)<sup>18</sup>. A similar depiction can be found in *Elene* in which the poet says that she is ‘þriste on gēþance’ (l. 267a)<sup>19</sup>. Both *Juliana* and *Elene* describe their titular heroines as wise and intelligent, emphasizing their inner virtue (Horner 666, Damico 1984a, 31).

Each of the four female characters of Tolkien’s analysed here are described not only as beautiful, but also as intelligent and wise. Therefore, they conform to this character trait of the Old English Warrior Woman as well. Lúthien assists repeatedly in the quest she undertakes together with Beren with her skills

<sup>14</sup> In her book *Splintered Light* Verlyn Flieger examines Tolkien’s works in light of Owen Barfield’s linguistic theory of the fragmentation of meaning, demonstrating how the image of light is used as metaphor for the languages, history and people of Middle-earth (tolkiengateway ‘Splintered Light’).

<sup>15</sup> ‘prudent’

<sup>16</sup> ‘sagacious’

<sup>17</sup> In the biblical book of Judith, her beauty is mentioned six times (Jdt 8:7, 10:7, 10:19), and her wisdom only once (Jdt 11:21).

<sup>18</sup> ‘bold in mind’

<sup>19</sup> ‘bold in thought’

and knowledge of magic, saving Beren several times (S 175, 178, 186). These skills, usually referred to as her ‘arts’ (S 175), show Lúthien’s own creative powers and knowledge, making her equal to her partner Beren (Lewis and Currie 2002, 196). As for Idril, she is the only Noldorin who foresees the fall of Gondolin, because she is ‘wise and far-seeing’ (S 249), which stresses her wisdom. In addition to Idril appears Galadriel, whose wisdom and knowledge are even more emphasized. She is described by several characters to be wise and learned: Frodo says to her, ‘You are wise and fearless and fair, Lady Galadriel’ (LotR I 480), connecting wisdom and beauty, while also mentioning another characteristic, courage. Aragorn has a similar impression of Galadriel, stating that she might be, along with Gandalf and Elrond, the only person in Middle Earth impossible to corrupt with Saruman’s words and wickedness (LotR II 214). For Éowyn, there is no such clear indication for her intelligence or wisdom. However, her behaviour in the narrative does not suggest anything to the contrary. Thus, Lúthien, Idril, and Galadriel are all described as wise or learned. Éowyn is not described in that way, nevertheless there is no indication to assume otherwise.

Related to wisdom, courage is another characteristic that defines the trope of the Warrior Woman. Juliana, for example, is fearless, or ‘unfohrt’, (*Juliana* l. 209b, 601a). When facing the demon, Juliana is unafraid: ‘seo þe fohrt ne wæs’ (258b)<sup>20</sup>. Judith is similarly courageous and fearless. She is repeatedly referred to as ‘ides ellenrof’ (*Judith* l. 109a, 144a)<sup>21</sup>, and she and her servant are ‘ellenþriste’ (133b)<sup>22</sup>. Elene can also be interpreted in this way. In the narrative, she comes into a new country with her men on a mission to find the True Cross (*Elene* l. 211a–219a)<sup>23</sup>. She is not afraid to speak before the Hebrew people and puts them under pressure to do what she asks them (604a–610b). These actions do not speak for a timid character, but rather portray a fearless queen.

All four characters of Tolkien also show forms of courage or are depicted as courageous characters. While the text does not directly describe Lúthien as courageous or brave, her deeds and actions speak clearly for her. To free her lover Beren from imprisonment by Sauron, she travels to his aid with her friend, the speaking dog Huan. In Tol Sirion, she is confronted with Sauron himself in the form of a werewolf, who tries to attack and capture her (S 172/3.). However, Lúthien is able to defeat Sauron with the help of Huan, and she frees Beren (S 173/4). Furthermore, she does not only free Beren from captivity. Together with Beren, Lúthien also confronts Morgoth and steals a Silmaril from him: when she stands before Morgoth, Lúthien ‘was not daunted by his eyes; and she named her own name and offered her service to sing before him [...]’ (S 179). This scene portrays her bravery and courage. Later in the narrative, in another example of her bravery, Lúthien goes to the halls of Mandos (the realm of the dead) and persuades the Valar to return Beren to the living (S 186f.). Nonetheless, she must relinquish her immortality to get Beren back (S 187), a sacrifice showing her both her love for Beren and her great courage. In addition to Lúthien, Idril displays similar signs of courage and fierceness. When Gondolin is finally attacked, she is assaulted by Maeglin, but she fights back ‘like a tigress’ (LT2 178). In *The Peoples of Middle-earth*, Galadriel is ‘strong of body, mind, and will’ (337) and ‘proud, strong, and self-willed’ (ibid.) Her story, starting in the narrative of the *Silmarillion* and ending in *The Lord of the Rings*, depicts her as a bold, strong, and self-willed person who gains more and more wisdom and knowledge during her lifetime (Shippey 2012, 283). Along with Lúthien, Galadriel, and Idril, Éowyn shows her own courage and bravery. Her slaying of the Head of the Ringwraiths shows great stout-heartedness (LotR III 137f.). Furthermore, in the complete narrative, she is described by other characters as ‘strong [...] and stern as steel’ (LotR II 146), ‘fearless and high-hearted’ (LotR II 157), and as having ‘spirit and courage at least the match of [Éomer’s].’ (LotR III 169). These scenes and comments emphasize her bravery (Lewis and Currie 216–7). These are probably the most direct descriptions of fierceness for the female characters discussed here, and they demonstrate that Éowyn, together with Lúthien, Idril, and Galadriel, displays the markers of the Old English Warrior Woman.

The aspect of physical prowess in Donovan’s trope might accord with the feature of courage, as well as with the Combat Participant trait described below. Donovan, however, does not consider Galadriel to display traits of physical prowess. That might be due to Donovan’s limiting her discussion to *The Lord*

<sup>20</sup> ‘she, who was not afraid’

<sup>21</sup> ‘courageous woman’

<sup>22</sup> ‘bold in courage’

<sup>23</sup> The poem *Elene* is a rendition of the story of St. Helena and her mission to find the true cross. The poet Cynewulf adapts the Mediterranean source and adds scenes, and details to make the poem Anglo-Saxon (Bjork xvii).

of the Rings, while this paper takes in account all of Tolkien's works in order to achieve a more thorough analysis. There are differences between physical prowess and courage, the former a physical characteristic and the latter a more mental one that precedes physical action. Therefore, the trait of courage incorporates Donovan's criterion, while also applying to further characters. Thus, courage offers more possibilities while staying true to the trope originally proposed by Donovan.

## Warrior Women's Demeanour: Leadership and a Will of their Own

A distinguishing aspect which is shared by all three Old English heroines is their headstrong behaviour. This behaviour is usually expressed through a strong will of their own, and the determination to act according to it regardless of social standards or rules. That category of the Old English Warrior Women can also be identified in Donovan's approach. However, what is missing in Donovan's analysis is the trait of leadership, which is a main feature of the Old English Warrior Woman and provides the main point of contrast to the Old Norse Valkyries, and, thus, to Donovan's approach

The poem *Juliana*, presumed written by the poet Cynewulf, narrates the martyrdom of Saint Juliana from Nicomedia. Juliana refuses the marriage-offer from the wealthy general Eleusius, only to be tortured for her decision, and in the end is beheaded for refusing to abandon her Christian faith. The entire narrative rests on Juliana's decision not to conform with her father's wishes and marry Eleusius, Juliana choosing rather to stay true to her belief; she must then endure torture because of her decision. In lines 41b–44a, Juliana is first introduced to the reader via her rejection of Eleusius, which gives an impression of her opinion and position in the narrative (*Juliana* l. 32–44a). This event is followed shortly after by her first speech, in which she rejects her suitor again (l. 44b–57b). Her decision to stick by her Christian faith until death makes her a model of personal autonomy (Olsen 224, 230). Additionally, the poet portrays Juliana in the tradition of the warrior-martyr type by using formulaic language from the heroic oral tradition, placing her in the category of heroic poetry (227).

Cynewulf's other heroine, Elene, is depicted with similar markers of autonomy. Terms used to describe her, such as 'guð-cwen' (*Elene* l. 254a, 331a)<sup>24</sup> or 'sige-cwen' (260a, 997a)<sup>25</sup>, only appear in Cynewulf's poem *Elene*, as is demonstrable by searching *The Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* for these terms and their various declensions (*Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*). This unique portrayal stresses her exceptional status and describes her as a queen who is in control (Olsen 224, 230). Cynewulf's heroine also differs from her Latin equivalent Helena, who is portrayed as comparatively passive (Olsen 224).

Standard interpretations of Judith, the third hero violating social expectations, often view her as a metaphor for chastity overcoming lust—as embodied by Holofernes—or as a figure of the Church triumphing over Satan and evil (Cooper 2010, 171, Chance 36). Alternatively, she is seen as a personification of the Germanic hero, a role that 'seems to grow out of a conformity with ideal female behaviour in a heroic story' (Lucas 1992, 17). Thus, Judith moves from the typical passive roles assigned to female characters in heroic stories, such as that of the peace-weaver, into the active position of a warrior, defying the female stereotype<sup>26</sup>.

Just as the Old English heroines make their own decisions, so too do Tolkien's women. Concerning self-assuredness, Lúthien is probably the best character to start with—Lewis and Currie note that, 'like any father's nightmare', Lúthien desires autonomy and rebels against everything expected of her (196). She

<sup>24</sup> 'warrior-queen'

<sup>25</sup> 'victory-queen'

<sup>26</sup> The term 'peace-weaver' is derived from the Old English 'freoðuwebbe' or 'friðuwebba', a term that appears three times in Old English poetry, once in a masculine form and twice in feminine form (Cavell 355). It is usually used in scholarship to refer to women such as Wealhtheow in *Beowulf*, who are female characters in high social positions, and make or 'weave' peace by mingling their blood with other, opposing, tribes by marriage (Chance 1). Additionally, it is generally used for female characters who take on the diplomatic role via counselling and eloquence or passing the mead-cup in the hall, specifically excluding them from actual fights (1, 5).



defies her father's will: he does not want her to marry Beren and later flees from Doriath to look for Beren and save him (S 165–9). Galadriel displays a will of her own by leaving Valinor behind after the revolt of the Noldor, and although she was pardoned by the Valar after the final overthrow of Morgoth, she stayed in Middle-earth (S 74; PM 338). Only after the destruction of the One Ring and her last test through Frodo's offer of the Ring does she decide to return to Valinor (LotR I 480; PM 338). Idril also decides whom she wants to marry (Tuor) and rejects other suitors, showcasing a will of her own by going against social expectations (S 134). Éowyn too shows a strong will of her own by disregarding her uncle's and brother's commands not to go to war and abandoning her position as Théoden's deputy (LotR III 62–3., 88).

As discussed above, a key difference between Valkyries in Old Norse texts and the warrior women in Old English texts is the presence or absence of leadership qualities of the individual characters. Old English warrior women act as leaders, while Valkyries fulfil supporting or serving roles. This character trait is missing in Donovan's approach because it is also not contained in the Valkyrie Reflex as defined by Helen Damico. As argued above this is one of the main differences between both tropes and therefore also between Donovan's analysis and the suggested approach in this paper.

For the purposes of this paper, leadership qualities are expressed by characters through public speaking or commanding others, as well as through high status. All three Old English heroines frequently give speeches to a multitude of people, advising which decisions to make and the manner in which characters are to lead their lives<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, Old English warrior women do not merely advise large groups of people, but in the case of Judith and Elene, they take command, positioning themselves in the role of war-leaders (Kaup, 303/4).

Not only does the poet term Judith 'æðele' (*Judith* l. 176a, 256a)<sup>28</sup>, but he also presents her in contrast to another leader, the general of the Assyrians, Holofernes. The poet depicts Holofernes as a perverse version of a leader with his comitatus (Godden 1991, 220). Then, in contrast, he portrays Judith's supportive and loyal relationship to her people, and depicts her receiving the war-gear of Holofernes after her victory over the Assyrians, a gesture that emphasizes her military status as war-leader (221). Furthermore, Judith gives two speeches (*Judith* l. 152b–158b, 176b–200b). In the first, she speaks about God and the victory given to her from Him, and in the second, she publicly displays the head of Holofernes and instructs the crowd to go to war against the Assyrians. This second speech positions her in the role of a war-leader of her people by portraying her actively commanding them what to do next, calling the warriors to battle: 'Nu ic gumena gehwæne þyssa burgleoda biddan wylle randwiggendra þæt ge recene eow fisan to gefeohte, syððan frymða god, árfæst cyning, eastan sende leohtne leoman.' (Kaup 165/6; l. 186b–191a)<sup>29</sup>.  
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Elene is likely the character with the clearest connections to leadership. Her leadership qualities are not limited to the mere fact that she is a queen and thus has a high social status (e.g., *Elene* l. 247b, 384b, 847b). Rather, she specifically addresses crowds, and she travels with a troop of warriors (*Elene* l.229/8.) as their leader ('idese lædan' l. 241b<sup>31</sup>). Like *Judith*, *Elene* focusses on the connections between of group identity and leadership, although in *Elene* only positive leadership-figures are presented: Elene herself and her son, Emperor Constantine (Kaup 312). Like Judith, Elene makes several speeches, five in total (l. 286b–319b, 332a–376b, 404a–410b, 643a–654b, 686a–690b). These speeches underline her authority and leadership status. Furthermore, four of her five speeches are introduced with forms of the verb 'maðelian' (l. 332a, 404a, 642a, 685b), which translates to 'make a speech, declaim' (Bosworth-Toller, s.v. 'maðelian'). This verb is used in only three other poetic narratives (*Genesis A,B; The Battle of Maldon;*

<sup>27</sup> For this paper I define speech as following: It must be a longer part of direct speech (more than three lines), which is given in front of a crowd or multitude of people, addressing them in the speech.

<sup>28</sup> 'noble'

<sup>29</sup> 'Now I ask each shield-warrior, each man of this city, to prepare for war, be ready to fight as soon as the God of creation, the Glorious King, sends light from the east' (Nelson 21)

<sup>30</sup> Scholars such as NAME Lucas have argued that in these lines Judith is not commanding her people but asking them (Lucas 22), like the term 'biddan' (l. 187b) can suggest, as it is mostly used in context to mean 'to ask' or 'to pray' (DOE 'biddan'). However, the word 'biddan' can also be translated as 'command' (DOE 'biddan'), when used with a *þæt*-clause (DOE 'biddan', 5. a. ii.). This is for example also the case in *The Battle of Maldon* (l. 20, 128, 257), in which a battle is occurring, just as in *Judith*.

<sup>31</sup> 'leading woman'

*Beowulf*), and only for male characters in similar positions of leadership, for example *Beowulf's* King Hrothgar or its titular hero (l. 1687a, 405a). This word choice depicts Elene clearly as warrior and leader. Additionally, Elene not only makes speeches, but also commands her troop of warriors (as their leader, as well as the inhabitants of Jerusalem (*Elene* l. 411a–412b; 240b–242b; 254a–255b). This depiction demonstrates the scope of her power extending to Jerusalem, where her authority is recognised, and her commands are followed (Kaup 305).

In *Juliana*, the heroine makes one main speech: shortly before her beheading, she preaches to the people about God and advises them in matters of religious observance (l. 641a–696a). This speech puts Juliana in the leadership position of a preacher delivering a homily, teaching listeners about God and other religious matters (Chance 45). Additionally, the demon in Juliana's cell calls her 'hlæfdige min'<sup>32</sup>, assigning to her a queen-like status (*Juliana* l. 539b, Chance 44).

This element of leadership can in fact be identified in all four female characters analysed in this essay. After Lúthien's confrontation with Sauron appears the element of speech-giving and an of leadership behaviour:

Then Sauron yielded himself, and Lúthien took the mastery of the isle and all that was there; and Huan released him... Then Lúthien stood upon the bridge, and declared her power; and the spell was loosed that bound stone to stone, and the gates were thrown down, and the walls opened, and the pits laid bare... (S 173)

Here Lúthien takes on the typical characteristics of a war-leader winning a battle by seizing command. She becomes the master of the territory she won by her defeat of the opposing war-leader, and she declares her power in a speech to all<sup>33</sup>. Later, when Lúthien, together with Beren, is about to confront Morgoth to steal one of the Silmarils from his crown, component of the trope surfaces: commandment.

But suddenly some power, descended from old from divine race, possessed Lúthien, and casting back her foul raiment she stood forth, small before the might of Carcharoth, but radiant and terrible. Lifting up her hand she commanded him to sleep, saying; 'O woe-begotten spirit, fall now into dark oblivion, and forget for a while the dreadful doom of life.' And Carcharoth was felled, as though lightning had smitten him. (S 178/9)

Lúthien here successfully commands Carcharoth, a great werewolf. Light is a key element of Lúthien's power of commanding others, in that she is 'radiant and terrible', and Carcharoth falls 'as though lightning had smitten him' (S 178/9). Therefore, the light shining from her is somehow connected with her commanding power. This visible expression of her power is reminiscent of Juliana's indirect fettering of the demon and her subjugation of him with words, both having a physical consequence as well.

While Lúthien appears with her leadership-qualities in the role of a war-leader—similar to Judith or maybe even Juliana fighting the demon—Galadriel is depicted as a queen and wise counsellor, more resembling Elene. Galadriel gives several speeches in *The Lord of the Rings*, two of which have an advisory character. The first of these advisory speeches is given together with her husband in front of the Fellowship after they arrived in Lothlórien (LotR I 466–469). The second is given at the passing of the Fellowship in which she again gives them advice, together with gifts which are to help during their quest (LotR I 492–495). Her third speech is her refusal of the One Ring which is offered to her by Frodo. Here a short vision portrays a Galadriel who, possessing the One Ring, would be even more powerful: 'She lifted up her hand and from the ring that she wore [Nenya] there issued a great light that illumined her alone and left all else dark' (LotR I 480). Again, power and light are connected, just as they are for Lúthien. Regarding the element of command, Galadriel is the Lady of Lothlórien and by merit of that, is in command of its troops. The warriors of Lothlórien almost always name only Galadriel as their ruler, rarely mentioning her husband Celeborn (LotR I 450, 458, 460). In fact, they introduce the couple by stating 'Here is the city of the

<sup>32</sup> 'my lady'

<sup>33</sup> The OED defines the verb 'to declare' as 'To make known or state publicly, formally or in explicit terms; to assert, proclaim, announce or pronounce by formal statement or in solemn terms', among other definitions ('declare, v.'). This definition appears to fit best the application of this term in the context above. It also recalls the connotations of the Old English 'maðelode'.

Galadhrim where dwell the Lord Celeborn and Galadriel, the Lady of Lórien.’ (LotR I 463), which gives the reader the impression that only Galadriel is perceived as the ruler of Lórien (see also UT 237). Explain how this gives that impression because I had to read the example a few times to see how you could read it that way. “The warriors specify Galadriel to be the ‘lady of Lorien’, while Celeborn’s title lacks...”

Idril makes no speeches as such, but she nevertheless issues commands, as she is responsible for the building of secret passages out of Gondolin in case of emergency: ‘Therefore in that time she let prepare a secret way [...]’ and together with her husband, they ‘led such remnants of the people of Gondolin as they could gather in the confusion of the burning down the secret way which Idril had prepared;’ (S 249, S 251). Hence, Idril also conforms with parts of the leadership element of the Warrior Woman, even though she does not explicitly take on an oratory role in the narrative.

Éowyn’s leadership qualities are less clearly shown. Yet, when she stands before the Ringwraith, she makes the following declaration:

But no living man am I! You look upon a woman. Éowyn I am, Éomund’s daughter. You stand between me and my lord and kin. Begone, if you be not deathless! For living or dark undead, I will smite you, if you touch him. (LotR III 136/3)

This short speech is given during battle and technically also before a multitude, as there is more than one person present on the battlefield. This scene’s connection to Éowyn’s command over others is clear. As Théoden makes her his deputy when he goes to war, she receives automatically command over Rohan (LotR II 157). At a further point in the narrative, her commanding nature is again apparent at the muster of Rohan, where she greets King Théoden and informs him that all is prepared for the upcoming battle, implying that until his arrival, Éowyn took on leadership of the army (LotR III 77)<sup>34</sup>.

Moreover, all four women have a high social status. Lúthien, Idril, and Éowyn are princesses due to their ancestries (S 161, 182, 246; LotR II 146). Galadriel, on the other hand, is a Lady ruling over her own realm in Lothlórien (LotR I 469). Thus, Lúthien and Idril, as well as Galadriel and Éowyn, demonstrate the aspects of leadership which are crucial to the Warrior Woman trope.

## Warrior Women in Battle

In their individual conflicts, the three Old English warrior women share some important similarities: they are involved in literal violent conflicts, either physical or mental; they find themselves alone in their confrontation with evil, often supernatural, counterparts; and they display supernatural abilities in the fight.

Two Old English characters who engage in physical, literal battles, Judith and Juliana, fight completely unaided by others. Judith is alone in the tent with Holofernes, after his retainers have led her there (*Judith* l. 69b – 73a), stays alone to behead Holofernes with his own sword (74b – 121b), and only meets with her servant after the actual fight is over (125a – 132a). Juliana is in a similar situation when she meets her demonic opponent. After she refuses Eleusius’ offer of marriage, he locks her alone in a prison cell, and it is here that she does battle with the demon (*Juliana* l. 236a – 238a).

Juliana’s battle is one against a supernatural enemy. While she waits in her cell, she is visited by a demon sent by the devil. This demon disguises himself as an angel, and he tries to convince Juliana to marry Eleusius and renounce her faith. This opponent represents a clearly supernatural evil, as he is called

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<sup>34</sup> As I already pointed out earlier, the Warrior Woman trope might be a possible source of influence for Tolkien. This does not exclude any other options. In the case of Éowyn one might also think of the real-life Queen Æthelflæd who ruled the kingdom of Mercia after her husband’s death (Lewis and Currie 213). Unfortunately, the scope of this paper does not allow to take a more detailed look into historical female Anglo-Saxon models who might have influenced Tolkien’s conception of female characters as well. However, it should be noted that historical role models also can be seen as an influence on literary models in their own time, meaning that maybe fictional characters such as Judith or Elene also were inspired by women like Æthelflæd and by that brings it full circle. See above. Be judicious with these and try to keep them on the shorter side. The third sentence here, for example, should be deleted. Don’t abuse footnotes or I’ll revoke your footnote license!

‘hæleða gewinna’ (243b)<sup>35</sup>, ‘gæst-geniðla’ (245b)<sup>36</sup>, and ‘helle hæftling’ (246a)<sup>37</sup>; thus, he is a demon from hell. Judith additionally has an opponent who has been ascribed a demonic side. Although it is made clear that Holofernes is a human general, ‘se gumena baldor’ (*Judith* l. 9b)<sup>38</sup>, he is frequently described with demonic adjectives, such as ‘se bealofulla’ (48b, 63b, 100b, 248a)<sup>39</sup>, ‘deofulcunda’ (61a)<sup>40</sup>, and ‘feondsceaðan’ (104a)<sup>41</sup>, descriptions that are partly used in other poems to describe actual demons (cf. *Christ A, B, C*)<sup>42</sup>.

Despite the fact that Elene does not battle any enemies herself, she nevertheless faces a demon at the side of Judas, her friend and mentee who converted to Christianity because of her. Hence, in an indirect fashion, Elene faces a supernatural opponent as well and is part of the conflict, just as Juliana and to some extent Judith.

Additionally, all three warrior women have divinely inspired or, more generally speaking, supernatural abilities. The poet describes Judith as ‘nergendes þeowen’ (l. 73b-74a)<sup>43</sup> and after her prayer, God gives her courage (‘mid elne onbryrde’ l. 95a)<sup>44</sup> to enable her to slay Holofernes (97b-117a). But Judith is not only God’s handmaiden, she is also ‘ides ælfscinu’ (l. 14a), ‘snoteran idese’ (54b)<sup>45</sup>, ‘beorhtan idese’ (58b) and ‘ides ellenrof’ (109a). Judith Kaup suggests that the term ‘ides’ denotes a partly superhuman and female being, in between ordinary women and goddesses (115). She argues that the term, especially in connection with ‘ælfscinu’, evokes supernatural or divine connotations, placing Judith in a category above the ordinary human being. The same term that is applied to Judith can be identified in *Juliana* and *Elene*, describing their individual female characters (*Juliana* 116a, *Elene* 229b, 241b, 405b). Furthermore, it is a voice from above that tells Juliana to seize the demon that confronts her (282b–288b), a confrontation in which she succeeds, as later utterances of the demon clarify (l. 430b–434a). Thus, Juliana also demonstrates supernatural abilities, as she can bind the demon and subject him to her will (Damico 1984a, 39), in addition to the poet’s terming her ‘idese’ (116a). Elene shows similar associations with the supernatural. Not only is she described as ‘ides’ three times, but she also has a connection with God, who helped her to achieve her goal of finding the True Cross (*Elene* l. 1149b–1152a)<sup>46</sup>.

To be considered a warrior (woman), one must be, or have been, involved in some type of war or combat situation. Judith is presumably the heroine with the most readily recognisable combat experience, involved in an armed conflict which results in the death of one participant. Judith kills Holofernes by cutting off his head with his own sword (*Judith* l. 98b–111a). Juliana and Elene are both involved in a mental or physical conflict, though the circumstances of the battle are less typical. As a matter of fact, Juliana is involved in physical as well as in a mental conflict, but the mental conflict takes up more space in the narrative. As the section quoted above shows, Juliana binds the demon successfully in fetters (*Juliana* l. 430b–434a) physically subjecting him to her will (Horner 670). Alongside the fettering, Juliana subjects the demon mentally by fighting a verbal battle with him, a battle which she wins through her spiritual strength (Horner 672, Kaup 321). Even Elene uses physical violence to subject Judas to her will. In an

<sup>35</sup> ‘enemy of heroes’

<sup>36</sup> ‘demon-enemy’

<sup>37</sup> ‘captive from hell’

<sup>38</sup> ‘the lord of men’

<sup>39</sup> ‘the baleful one’

<sup>40</sup> ‘kin of the devil’

<sup>41</sup> ‘fiend-enemy’

<sup>42</sup> This method, ascribing negative, non-human characteristics to a human being, and by that placing this human in the category of animals or demons, is called dehumanisation. By referring to Holofernes as ‘the kin of the devil’ (‘deofulcunda’ l. 61a), the poet takes away his humanity, contrasting the sides portrayed in the poem, and underlining the righteousness of Judith’s cause. This term also gives Holofernes another dimension as it can mean not only ‘kin of the devil’, but also ‘devilkind’, which would mean he is a devil, and not only similar to one. This is not relevant enough to your paper to stay here.

<sup>43</sup> ‘the lord’s handmaiden’

<sup>44</sup> ‘stimulated with strength’

<sup>45</sup> ‘wise woman’

<sup>46</sup> These supernatural abilities do not make these women into Valkyrie-like figures. Rather, they speak against that theory, as Valkyries are completely supernatural beings with no human parts (when focussing on the definition on Valkyries, excluding shield-maidens as a different category). Here we see human, or human-like heroines, who have powers which are supernatural, an important difference.

interrogation, she threatens Judas's life in order to find out the destination of the True Cross (*Elene* l. 604a–607a), intimidating him with threats of torture (Kaup 308). In her dispute with the Hebrew men, and especially with Judas, she also fights a mental or spiritual fight. Many scholars interpret Elene as a metaphor for the church in spiritual warfare (Nelson 1991, 195, Kaup 307), her debates with the Hebrews as a battlefield, and her words as her weapons (Chance 48). Hence even Elene can be read as a warrior.

Just as the battles of the Old English warrior women are divided into physical and mental, so are the conflicts of Tolkien's women. In the case of the heroines from Middle-earth, all four women participate in a violent *physical* conflict or battle, while aspects of *mental* conflict are additionally present for the characters Lúthien and Galadriel. Furthermore, most of these heroines are put in an isolated position during their fights and often call upon supernatural abilities.

Both physical and mental confrontations mark Lúthien's battle with Morgoth (S 178–180.). After Lúthien and Huan have defeated Carcharoth, Lúthien stands before Morgoth 'stripped of her disguise' (S 178/9). As she begins to sing for him, he becomes distracted, and she is then able to elude his sight (S 179). Her song develops into one of 'blinding power', so that Morgoth is momentarily blinded (S 179.). Lúthien can then put him to sleep with her magic cloak, and he falls from his throne (S 179). Lúthien's fight against Morgoth is therefore somewhere between physical and mental. She does stand before him, is in physical danger, and her magic also shows physical consequences. However, she does not fight with weapons as such, but rather, she utilises her magical powers in order to defeat Morgoth (Seaman 396). The other criteria regarding of the warrior woman's conflict are met as well: Lúthien is positioned alone against Morgoth, since Beren, in the form of a wolf, is hidden beneath Morgoth's throne, and she stands against a supernatural evil, as Morgoth is a Vala, fallen from grace after his revolt against Ilúvatar (S 179; Schneidewind 2016, 413). Furthermore, Lúthien is equipped with supernatural abilities since she defeats Morgoth with her magical powers, as previously noted.

Idril is involved in a direct physical conflict. As mentioned above, during the fall of Gondolin, Maeglin, her rejected suitor, attacks Idril, but 'she fought, alone as she was, like a tigress for all her beauty and slenderness' (LT2 178). The physical nature of the conflict is here apparent, as well as Idril's situation, namely that she stands alone and unaided against Maeglin. However, Idril does not fight against a supernatural evil, nor does she have magical connections. Maeglin is an ordinary elf with no reported magical powers, and Idril does not use any supernatural power herself, which lessens her participation in this supernatural aspect of the warrior woman trope.

Galadriel, on the other hand, fulfils both categories, participating in physical as well as in mental conflict. During the revolution of the Noldor against the Valar, she fights side by side with her mother's kin against Fëanor, and later against Morgoth, the latter battle leading to his final destruction (UT 230/1). Moreover, in the Third Age, she and her husband help to defeat Sauron: 'They took Dol Guldur, and Galadriel threw down its wall and laid bare its pits, and the forest was cleansed' (LotR III 472). This sort of battle resembles Lúthien's conflict with Morgoth in its overlap of the physical and mental-supernatural means of making war. That is, the quote suggests that she brings about the destruction of Dol Guldur via her magic, which adds the mental aspect to the attack, but with real, physical consequences as the site itself is completely destroyed. Likewise, this also shows that Galadriel is endowed with supernatural abilities, and since only Galadriel is mentioned in connection with the destruction of Dol Guldur, she is presumably isolated from others on the battlefield.

Moving on, Éowyn incorporates almost all criteria regarding the Warrior Woman's battles... Additionally, she is the only woman of the four who identifies herself as a female warrior, namely a shield-maiden (LotR III, 62). This title suggests a strong Norse influence, as also identified by Donovan (121–123). As stated already further above, shield-maidens and Valkyries are overlapping figures, sometimes differentiated into supernatural/goddess-like women (Valkyries) and mortal warrior women (shield-maidens). However, these terms are occasionally used interchangeably, which leads to confusion in literature as well as in scholarship over whether these two terms denote one and the same being or two different ones.

Éowyn likely participates in the most traditional form of a fight, a man-to-man duel with traditional arms. In her fight against the Ringwraith, Éowyn first kills the Ringwraith's steed by decapitating it (LotR

III 137). She then fights against the Nazgûl himself, finally killing him with a thrust of her sword (138). During this fight, she is almost alone; Merry partakes only as an observer and point-of-view character for the reader (136–138). Only in the last phase of the fight does Merry stab the Ringwraith from behind and help Éowyn to defeat him (138). Moreover, Éowyn must battle a supernatural evil, as the Ringwraith is the ‘Witch-lord of Angmar’ (LotR I 6), and her victory takes on a supernatural character, as it is the fulfilment of an old prophecy.

Therefore, all four of these characters of Tolkien take part in violent conflicts and are all positioned alone against evil, often with supernatural aspects as part of the conflict. This aspect of battle and violent conflict is incorporated in Donovan’s approach by the aspect of physical prowess. There are similarities in this paper’s discussion of battle traits and Donovan’s; however, by relying on a definition of *physical* prowess, Donovan restricts her approach to considering mere physical battles, leaving out the important variant of mental battles such as those of Lúthien and Galadriel described above. Although these are less physical than the battles of Éowyn, these martial conflicts still take similar positions in the narrative and have comparable results. Furthermore, the specific description of the battles—matched alone against a (supernatural) evil, sometimes with supernatural powers of its own—provides another striking parallel between the Old English Warrior Women and the four characters from Tolkien. The effect is also similar: The character and his individual actions are heightened, and the supernatural components emphasize the distinctiveness of the character.

### Additional Aspects from Donovan’s Approach: Ceremonial Functions and Loss of Something Important

Two aspects that are missing in the Warrior Woman trope but that exist in Donovan’s trope based on the Valkyries are the ceremonial functions and the loss of something central to a character’s life. The four characters discussed in this paper, Lúthien, Galadriel, Idril, and Éowyn, all conform with some of these aspects. All characters undergo the loss of something central to their lives: Lúthien loses her immortality, Idril loses her home with the fall of Gondolin, Galadriel loses her first home through her exile from Valinor, and Éowyn experiences the motif of loss through her conflicting loyalties between herself and society, as well as the death of her uncle and her unrequited love for Aragorn (Donovan 125–6).

Galadriel and Éowyn both portray the motif of ceremonial functions. Both perform the ritual of cup-bearing as well as gift-giving (Donovan 115–6, 124–5). However, neither Lúthien nor Idril take part in the cup-bearing motif, nor do they give their heroes any symbolic gifts. One could argue that Lúthien’s loss of immortality constitutes such a gift, but this loss is not comparable to the tradition of gift-giving associated with the Valkyries.

### Conclusion: Warrior Women in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*

After a thorough examination of Lúthien, Idril, Galadriel, and Éowyn, the four major female characters in Tolkien’s works, many parallels surface between them and the trope of the Old English Warrior Woman. In comparison with the analysis by Donovan, this new reading shows that her approach lacks in some aspects, as it does not fully consider the important character facets of leadership, individual will, and battle. Overall, a Germanic heritage is conclusively present in a majority of Tolkien’s main female characters. Examining this Germanic influence more closely shows not only strong influence from the trope of the Old English Warrior Woman, but also many influences from other Germanic literary traditions, including that of Old Norse. However, the Old English influence on the female characters in Tolkien’s work stands out in particular.

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