1. Overview, content-related (particular contributions marked in colour)

**events**
(in-world chronological dating)

- *The Silmarillion* (Ainulindalë – Third Age)
- *The Hobbit* (III 2941–2942 / S.R. 1341–1342)

**relevant witnesses / observers**
(≡ perspectives, oral tradition)

- Elves
- Bilbo
- Frodo
- Merry
- Sam

**process and stages**
of textual tradition

- *Red Book of Westmarch* (also called *Red Book of the Periannath*; original not preserved; handed over to Sam in III 1421 and to Elanor in IV 62)

- *Translations from the Elvish* (by Bilbo S.R. 1403–18)
  (brought by Frodo back to the Shire S.R. 1419)

- Bilbo’s diary containing recounts of his quest for Erebor: *There and Back Again* (brought by Frodo back to the Shire S.R. 1419)

- Frodo’s account of the War of the Ring (written S.R. 1420–21): *The Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King*

- Sam’s additions

**texts by Tolkien**
(writing period / publication date)

- *The Book of Lost Tales, Notes and various texts/versions* (1917–unfinished)
- *The Silmarillion* (1977)
- *Beren and Lúthien* (2017)
- *The Fall of Gondolin* (2018)

**editions by Chr. Tolkien**

- *The Silmarillion* (1977)
- *Beren and Lúthien* (2017)
- *The Fall of Gondolin* (2018)

**copies**

- *Copy: Thain’s Book* (brought to Minas Tirith by Thain Peregrin in IV 64)
  (containing «much that was later omitted or lost»)

- *Copy: Findegil’s Copy* (?)
  (finished by Findegil, King’s Writer, in IV 172 in Minas Tirith and kept in Great Smials)

**original recordings (in Elvish)**

- *original recordings (in Elvish)*
  (in Minas Tirith: much annotations, many corrections, added abbreviated version of *The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen*)

**commentsaries, genealogies, other Hobbit matter**

- *Herboire of the Shire*
- *Reckoning of Years*
- *Yearbook of Tuckborough*

**additions**

- *Thrice a year and a fourth and a half* in Westmarch
- *alternative, »true« account of Bilbo’s journey* (derived from Frodo’s and Sam’s notes)

**composition of the Tale of the Years in Great Smials» with the assistance of material collected by Meriadoc«

**editions by Tolkien**

- 2nd edition
- 1st edition

- *Appendices*

- *The Hobbit* (1930–1933 / 1937)
2. Overview, geographical

Shire

Undertowers (Westmarch)

(8) IV 62 / S.R. 1482
At the Tower Hills, Sam gives the Red Book to Elanor, who keeps it afterwars in Undertowers as heirloom of the Fairbairns.

Hobbiton (West Farthing)

(1) Bilbo brings his diaries with him to Rivendell

(2) III 3002 / S.R. 1402
Bilbo has diaries containing his recounts of his quest for Erebor.

(5) III 3020–3021 / S.R. 1420–1421
Frodo writes down his account of the War of the Ring and adds it to Bilbo’s volume.

(6) III 3021 / S.R. 1421
Frodo hands the current four volumes of the later so-called Red Book of Westmarch over to Sam.

(7) ? Sam makes his additions.

(3) III 3003–3018 / S.R. 1403–1418
Bilbo composes the Translations from the Elvish.

(4) III 3019 / S.R. 1419
Frodo brings the current 4 volumes (Bilbo’s diaries and his Translation from the Elvish) to the Shire.

(10) (before) IV 64 / S.R. 1484
At the request of King Elessar, a copy of the Red Book is made, called the Thain’s Book.

Rivendell

Bilbo brings his diaries with him to Rivendell

(1) Bilbo brings his diaries containing his recounts of his quest for Erebor.

Frodo writes down his account of the War of the Ring and adds it to Bilbo’s volume.

Minas Tirith (Gondor)

(12) after IV 64 / S.R. 1484
Much annotations and many corrections are made; an abbreviated version of The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen is added.

(13) IV 172 / S.R. 1592
Findegil, King’s Writer, finishes making a exact copy of the Thain’s Book.

(14) IV 172 / S.R. 1592 (?)
Findegil’s copy is brought to Great Smials.

(11) IV 64 / S.R. 1484
Thain Peregrin I. brings the Thain’s Book to Gondor.

(9) IV 62–64 / S.R. 1482–1484 (?) A fifth volume, containing commentaries, genealogies, and various other matter concerning the hobbit members of the Fellowships (LotR, 14), is included into the Red Book.

(15) after IV 172 / S.R. 1592
Findegil’s copy is kept at Great Smials, where the Tale of the Years is composed and included.

Tookland (West Farthing)

(15) after IV 172 / S.R. 1592
Findegil’s copy is kept at Great Smials, where the Tale of the Years is composed and included.
3. Timeline and Sources

**Timeline regarding (oral and textual) tradition above:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III 3003 / S.R. 1403</td>
<td>Bilbo begins <em>Translations from the Elvish</em> in Rivendell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III 3018 / S.R. 1418</td>
<td>Bilbo finishes the <em>Translations from the Elvish</em> in Rivendell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III 3019 / S.R. 1419</td>
<td>Frodo brings the <em>Translations from the Elvish</em> (3 volumes) and Bilbo’s diary containing the recountsing of his quest for Erebor (1 volume; designated as <em>There and Back Again</em>) together with »many loose leaves of notes« (LotR, 14) to the Shire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III 3020 / S.R. 1420</td>
<td>Frodo begins writing down his account of the War of the Ring (designated as <em>The Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King</em>) and adding it to the volume Bilbo began.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III 3021 / S.R. 1421</td>
<td>Frodo finishes his part of <em>The Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King</em> and hands the current four volumes of the later so-called <em>Red Book of Westmarch</em> over to Sam (see right side).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 62 / S.R. 1482</td>
<td>Death of Rose; Sam gives the <em>Red Book of Westmarch</em> to his daughter, Elanor the Fair, and goes over the Sea. Now the <em>Red Book of Westmarch</em> can be called thus in a strict sense. Afterwards it is kept by the Fairbairns (the Wardens of Westmarch; descendants of Elanor) in Undertowers in Westmarch. Here to the four volumes is added a fifth volume, »containing commentaries, genealogies, and various other matter concerning the hobbit members of the Fellowship« (LotR, 14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 64 / S.R. 1484</td>
<td>A Copy of the <em>Red Book of Westmarch</em> is made at the request of King Elessar and Thain Peregrin brings this so-called <em>Thain’s Book</em> to Gondor. There are made much annotations, many corrections and an abbreviated version of <em>The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen</em> is added. Only this copy (and its copies) contain the alternative, »true« account of Bilbo’s journey which is derived from Frodo’s and Sam’s notes. Both »seem to have been unwilling to delete anything actually written by the old hobbit [scil. Bilbo] himself« (LotR, 13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 172 / S.R. 1592</td>
<td>Findegil, King’s Writer, finishes making an exact copy of the <em>Thain’s Book</em>. This copy was kept at Great Smials, where the <em>Tale of the Years</em> is composed (and included) »with the assistance of material collected by Meriadoc« (LotR, 15), who »obtained assistance and information from Rivendell, which he visited more than once« (LotR, 15). Only this copy contains »the whole of Bilbo’s ›Translations from the Elvish‹« (LotR, 15).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources**

- LotR, 13–15
- LotR Reader’s Companion, 2f.41
- The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, 29–34 [Preface].
- LotR, 1111 [Appendix D].

**Prop replica:** [http://www.indyprops.com/pp-rb.htm](http://www.indyprops.com/pp-rb.htm)