Rare Lord of the Rings Page Proofs for auction

Tolkien Collecting News

Posted by: UrulÃ¶kÃ©

Posted on : 2007/10/9 9:40:00

Bloomsbury Book Auctions just announced that they have a set of all three volumes of *The Lord of the Rings* in proof state - the copies sent to noted author Arthur Ransome for review.

This set is incredibly important for at least two reasons (beyond the scarcity of proof copies in general). From the dated letter to Arthur Ransome, the *Fellowship* proof can be identified as the second earliest proof copy known (only predated by the page proofs sent to Tolkien himself.) Also, the *Two Towers* proof copy has the incredibly scarce proof map included.

Please read on below for the full announcement.

Our sale "Important Printed Books and Manuscripts" (on 24 October 2007 at 2.00pm in New York) will include some material which may be of interest to you.

Viewing beforehand on
Thursday 18 October from 10.00am to 5.00pm
Friday 19 October from 10.00am to 5.00pm
Saturday 20 October from 10.00am to 4.00pm
Monday 22 October from 10.00am to 5.00pm
Tuesday 23 October from 10.00am to 7.00pm
Wednesday 24 October from 10.00am to 1.00pm

Link to auction item at Bloomsbury website

111. TOLKIEN, John Ronald Ruel (1892-1973).
.The Lord of the Rings London: 1953 - 1954 - 1954. 3 volumes, 8vo. Original brown paper wrappers, volumes I and II in individual grey cloth four-fold chemise by R. Patron of Hollywood, California, the two volumes contained within a single purple morocco slipcase, also by Patron?, tooled in gilt and blind.

very rare set of proofs: vols.i and ii page proofs, preceding the first edition, bound in wrappers and sent out by the publishers as early review copies. vol.iii dated a year earlier than the first edition. vol.i accompanied by a letter from the publisher to Arthur Ransome soliciting a review; vol.ii with an unbound proof copy of the map.

The individual volumes are as follows:

The Fellowship of the Ring. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953. 8vo (8 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches; 218 x 140mm.). Brown paper wrappers, white paper label applied to upper cover with typed title â€œThe Fellowship of the Ring / by / J.R.R. Tolkienâ€•, with manuscript note â€œNot less than 21/-

/ nor more than 25/-â€œ (small splits to joints). With a laid in TLS from the publisher Stanley Unwin to Arthur Ransome, dated 14 December 1953, â€œI am sending you a set of uncorrected proofs (minus runes and maps" and asking for a review.

Arthur Ransomeâ€™s copy. These page-proofs are in their earliest state, with the title page before the borders were added, and pp.16 and 21 incorrectly numbered, and p.319 was not printed at all. In addition, there are five spelling corrections in red ink (on pp.30; 56; 74; 263; 268), one spelling correction in pencil, on p.315, and there is one alternative textual reading in red ink: p.306 (â€œhobbits & other friendsâ€• for â€œmenâ€•). The date of the covering letter makes this the earliest recorded copy of vol.I, other than the copy sent to Tolkien on 29 September 1953. Ransome (1884-1967) is now best known for his long-running series of â€œSwallows & Amazonsâ€• children's books, he also worked as a journalist for the Manchester Guardian.

The Two Towers. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954. 8vo (8 1/2 x 5 51/2 inches; 222 x 142mm.). 1 folding proof map printed in brown/red and black laid in. Brown paper wrappers, white paper label applied to upper cover with typed title â€œThe Two Towers / by / J.R.R. Tolkienâ€•, with a second small applied paper label â€œanout [sic., i.e. about] 21s.â€œ Condition: small splits to joints.

proof pages in their earliest state with pp.9-10 blank but for the word â€œSynopsisâ€• on both pages. Copies of this first issue were printed in February 1954 (Tolkien received his copy on March 4), and the present example includes the rare proof map, folded but unbound, and has pencilled underlinings, each with a marginal note on pp.165 and 257; and pencilled spelling corrections on pp.190 and 307.

The Return of the King. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954. 8vo (8 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches; 215 x 138mm.). Two paper stocks: browner cheaper paper make up pp.[1]-256, cream wove paper used for pages 257-416. Oatmeal thick paper wrappers made up from three sheets of paper, one for each cover with a third wrapping around from the upper to the lower cover and forming the backstrip, wove free endpapers and pastedowns. Condition: brown spot affecting the outer edges of most pages.

proof, dated the year before the official publication date, without the maps (not called for), but with early settings of pp.376 (with four pieces of type set upside down in the form so that they print as black bars) and 388, 393; 414 (each with one piece of type set upside down).

Estimates $15000 - $20000