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ON J. R. R. TOLKIEN'S ROOTS IN GDAŃSK

(FROM GDAŃSK IN THE 1ST HALF TO COMING TO LONDON IN THE 2ND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY)



from Polish translated by Juliusz Żebrowski

(text from November 2017)

SPECIAL THANKS

My discovery of the Gdańsk and Prussian roots of the famous English scholar and writer **John Ronald Reuel Tolkien** (1892–1973) would not have been possible without the research prior to mine of people whose effort has been most crucial. Those I want to mention are Gerald Aurand, Tadeusz A. Olszański, Linda Winifred Tolkien and Günther-Ulrich Tolkiehn. I am also thankful for encouragement, support and necessary advice to prof. dr hab. Adam Szarszewski, prof. dr hab. Michał Błażejowski (The University of Gdańsk), John Garth (Tolkien Society, Great Britain), Tomasz Gubała (ŚKF), Jan Kołakowski (Gdańsk), dr hab. Michał Leśniewski (The University of Warsaw), Agnieszka Leszczewicz (ŚKF), dr Marcin Niemojewski (The University of Warsaw), Magdalena Słaba (Tolkien Society, Poland), Marcin Stęporok (Gdańsk City Office) and Oronzo Cilli (Italy). I got invaluable help in translation of German texts from Wiltraud Potrawa (Tolkien Society, Germany).

When my friend Tomasz Gubała¹ and I started our journey – which we called ”Tołkiny 2010”² – to Gdańsk and the former Prussia in the summer of 2010, I was guided by curiosity of the places which were far and unknown to me. I was also glad that due to our passion for Tolkien we were on our way again. I could not expect that the quest would last seven years, including some breaks, and that it would result in so many interesting discoveries.

It all started from a small piece of information on English language version of Wikipedia (yes, this tool may trigger a real scientific adventure!), where in the profile of the writer J. R. R. Tolkien I read about an alternative (compared to the official) etymology of the surname and about a certain village Tołkiny in Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship (in the historical land of Bartia in Lower Prussia) that the surname could be related with³.

I am a graduate of the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Silesia in Katowice. My major was history of administrative autonomy (I have always been sure that this kind of interest has also been fuelled by my passion for Tolkien and particularly Hobbits and their autonomous, in a positive sense ”anarchic”, land of the Shire), whereas working with historical sources, texts in old or extinct languages, materials from the North of Europe has always given me plenty of pleasure. Preparations for the ”Tołkiny 2010” expedition involved collection of historical accounts concerning Rastembork – today’s Kętrzyn – and its neighbourhood where Tołkiny is located (presently it is a settlement in the municipality of Korsze), search query of the 14th- and 15th-century Teutonic records (this is where the name and surname Tolk emerges for the first time with the Tolkyn/Token variants and also the place name Tolksdorf/Tolkynen) and insight in Prussian language and mediaeval German of the Teutonic State. The journey took me

1 Tomasz is known among Polish Tolkien fans and researchers as Tom Goold, whereas my nickname is Galadhorn. Since 1997 we have published numerous texts devoted to J.R.R. Tolkien and have been animating the Polish Tolkien fandom, e.g. on the web.

2 The diary of our journey can be found at Elendilion website: <http://www.elendilion.pl/2012/07/13/ekspedycja-tokiny-2010-cz-1/> and <http://www.elendilion.pl/2010/09/09/ekspedycja-tokiny-2010-cz-2/> (access: 1st June 2017)

3 Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien#Family_origins (access: 1st June 2017)

through beautiful and interesting places, allowed me to meet great people and to buy fantastic books that helped me do further research. Visiting Gdańsk I had no idea that probably it had been there that in ca. 1772 the great-great-grandfather of J. R. R. Tolkien and the former's brother had left behind for England to start a new life in London (which commenced the English line of the Tolkien/Tollkühn family of German descent with Professor Tolkien as its future venerable member). That I got to know in December 2016.

I will make an attempt to describe the current state of our knowledge on the origin of the surname Tolkien and on how widely it has been used. Moreover, I want to report on my own research and to present the reconstructed history of J. R. R. Tolkien's ancestors in Gdańsk and London. Some research perspectives for what I called #TolkienAncestry for Internet use⁴ will be described here, too. In another (forthcoming) text I am going to present my findings considering the surname Tolkien's history between the 14th and 18th century and to mention its more prominent bearers.

THE STATE OF RESEARCH

The Tolkiens from England have been aware of their German ancestry. J. R. R. Tolkien himself, however, early isolated from the family of his prematurely deceased father, did not know where and how the Tolkiens had come from to London in the 18th century. As a prominent linguist he supported the view that his surname originated from the German adjective *tollkühn* 'rashbold, fool-hardy'⁵. Since early adolescence Tolkien translated the surname to his favourite languages:

4 All the texts can be found at: <http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/search/label/Tolkien%20Ancestry> (access: 1st June 2017)

5 *Letters*: **letter no. 165** of 1955 („My name is TOLKIEN (not -kein). It is a German name (from Saxony), an anglicization of Tollkiehn, i.e. tollkühn. But, except as a guide to spelling, this fact is as fallacious as all facts in the raw. For I am neither 'foolhardy' nor German, whatever some remote ancestors may have been. They migrated to England more than 200 years ago, and became quickly intensely English (not British), though remaining musical – a talent that unfortunately did not descend to me”), **letter no. 324** of 1971 („Possibly the reason why my surname is now usually misspelt TOLKEIN in spite of all my efforts to correct this – even by my college-, bank-, and lawyer's clerks! My name is Tolkien, anglicized from To(l)kiehn = tollkühn, and came from Saxony in the 18th century. It is not Jewish in origin, though I should consider it an honour if it were.”), unpublished **letter of 1956** to H. Cotton Michin („But names are often not derived from what seem obvious sources. My own name comes ultimately and long ago from German *tollkühn*, and perhaps a trace of the remote ancestral 'rashness' has been

Ruginwaldus Dwalakōneis – Gothic, *Arcastar* – Quenya, *Rashbold* – English. Yet he knew the alternative Baltic etymology as well (Low Prussian *tolk* 'interpreter, negotiator' < Baltic Prussian **tulk-* < Slavic **tǫlkъ* 'sense, translation, interpretation, clarification'), but at least once, in 1973, he expressed his astonishment⁶. In Humphrey Carpenter's biography of J. R. R. Tolkien a certain family legend has been mentioned:

Opinion differed among the Tolkiens as to why and when their ancestors had come to England. The more prosaic said it was in 1756 to escape the Prussian invasion of Saxony, where they had lands. (...)
(*Bio* 27)

The Saxon descent seems to have been particularly attractive for J. R. R. Tolkien. It was the Germanic tribe of Saxons that inhabited Britain and created the Old English language and culture – which for Professor Tolkien was a hobby, field of study and research – during the so called Migration Period, together with Angles, Jutes and Frisians. The important quotation from Tolkien's inaugural speech from 1955 entitled "English and Welsh" and published in *The Monsters and the Critics* says a lot of what Saxony he might have meant:

I am not a German, though my surname is German (anglicized like Cerdic) (...). I have inherited with my surname nothing that originally belonged to it in language or culture, and after 200 years the 'blood' of Saxony and Poland is probably a negligible physical ingredient (*M&C* 170)

A new – Polish – element emerges here, while Saxony (a fairly broad notion in geography and history of Germany) seems to be the Electorate of Saxony or Upper Saxony under the rule of the Wettin house in the times of the Polish-Saxon personal union (1697-1763, except for the years 1706-1709), the reign of Augustus II the Strong and Augustus III. Indeed, I have found out that J. R. R. Tolkien's great-great-grandfather Johann Benjamin Tolkien was born in October 1752 in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ruled by the Saxons, in Gdańsk which at that time was a German speaking city as a whole, yet subject to the Polish kings. Around the year 1772, after the first partition of Poland and the Prussian blockade of Gdańsk (but before the "Prussian invasion"

inherited. But I am a Westmidlander".

[http://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Letter_to_H._Cotton_Minchin_\(16_April_1956\)](http://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Letter_to_H._Cotton_Minchin_(16_April_1956)))

⁶ *Letters* 428-429

of 1793, present in a possibly distorted form in the Tolkien family tradition) he fled to London following his elder brother Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien (1746-1813), where they started a new life (their stay there is authenticated from at least 1777, the year of Johann Benjamin's wedding in one of London's churches). The quoted fragment of "English and Welsh" may suggest that J. R. R. Tolkien suspected that one of his ancestors had come from the 18th-century Poland (perhaps he was aware of some genealogical findings?)⁷.

Gdańsk is mentioned by our contemporary Tolkiens in very surprising contexts. In a 1995 speech in memory of one Patrick Hobson, J. R. R. Tolkien's son, father John F. R. Tolkien said:

In 1939, when Germany invaded Poland, the first Gauleiter of Danzig was a Tollkühn.⁸

I have not been able to verify such a doubtful piece of information (the gauleiter of Gdańsk was Albert Forster and sources available to me are silent about anyone who would precede him there), but what is important in this case is the mention of Gdańsk and the Tolkiens. By the end of WWII many Tollkühns had lived in Gdańsk (such a spelling of the surname began in Gdańsk in the 18th century)⁹.

Humphrey Carpenter wrote in his *Biography* about the generation of J. R. R. Tolkien's grandparents: **John Benjamin Tolkien** (1807-1896) and others unknown to him by their names (he only mentions that the original spelling of the surname was *Tolkiehn*)¹⁰. In *The Tolkien Family Album* by John and Priscilla Tolkien one finds similar information¹¹. In the encyclopaedic book *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide* a representative of an even earlier generation is referred to: father of John Benjamin, **George William Tolkien** (1784-1840)¹².

7 There is another possibility: Tolkien could have drawn some information from German academic textbooks claiming that his surname's earliest records come from the territory where Low German – also called Low Saxon – was used (Hanseatic League and Teutonic State). Perhaps the "Saxon" theory has been built on that, since so far I have not been able to trace any Tolkiens in the 16th- or 17th-century Electorate of Saxony.

8 The information comes from my private correspondence with John Garth, the biographer of J. R. R. Tolkien.

9 During WWII one infamous Karl Tollkuehn, the chief constable of the German occupied Riga, was responsible for the death of ca 700 Jews. He had also been a sportsman, had taken part in the Summer Olympics in Berlin in 1936.

10 H. Carpenter, *Wizjoner i marzyciel*, p. 24 and family tree on p. 241

11 John and Priscilla Tolkien, *The Tolkien Family Album*, HarperCollins Publishers, London 1992, p. 8

12 Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond, *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion & Guide, Reader's Guide*, HarperCollins

Information on the Tolkiens' more distant past was revealed by my acquainted Tolkien fan Tadeusz Andrzej Olszański in his important text of 2010. Using the genealogy website *FamilySearch* and analysing discussions on *TheOneRing* forum he proved that in the second half of the 18th century **Daniel Tolkien** and **John Benjamin Tolkien** lived in London. Although Olszański did not succeed in enclosing the two in Professor Tolkien's family tree, the research gained some speed. According to Tadeusz A. Olszański:

(...) The known documents mention two Tolkiens who were born in those days' Germany and moved to England, nevertheless neither of them was a close relative of the English ancestors of J. R. R. Tolkien (...). **Daniel Tolkien** was born in Gdańsk in 1746. Thus it seems that the Tolkiens were coming to England in a prolonged period of time (...). Apparently there was another **John Benjamin Tolkien** (1846-1883), a journalist, who lived in Birmingham with his wife Agnes and daughter Beatrice, whereas British general censuses add to the list two other **J. B. Tolkiens**, living in the years 1752-1819 and 1788-1859. The repetition of names suggests kinship: perhaps the latter was G. W. Tolkien's brother and the former was their father or uncle? This is not even a hypothesis, though, but a pure speculation.¹³

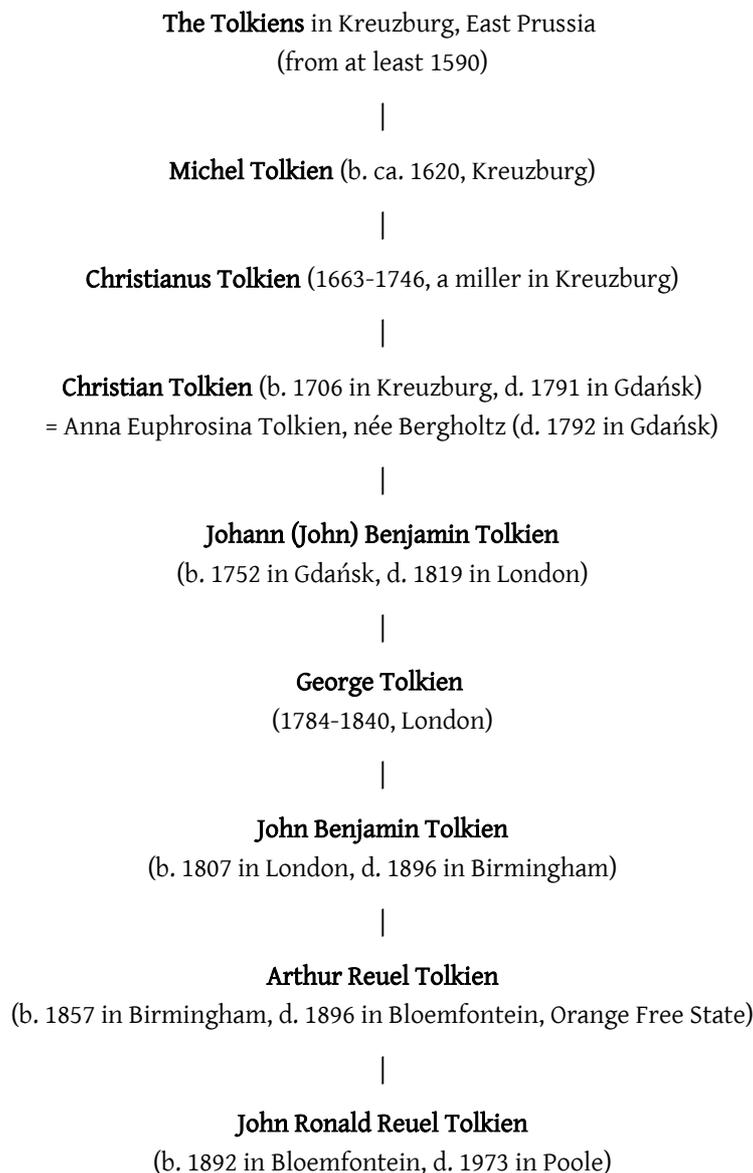
I managed to solve the riddles with the help of online genealogical databases, owing to digital versions of documents from the archives in London in the current decade of the 21st century as well as through countless hours of my hard work (often that was late into the night that I made the most crucial discoveries). I was continuously encouraged to making an even bigger effort by my colleague, historian and prominent Tolkien researcher dr hab. Michał Leśniewski. I am greatly indebted to the data I got from the paid access section of *Ancestry.co.uk* and from the Tolkien family tree made by Ms Linda Winifred Tolkien from Brisbane in Australia (with over two thousand people in the tree so far!). I have had access to all the materials since December 2016.

There I found the information on the first generation of Tolkiens in England and London, i.e. on brothers **Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien** (1746-1813) and **Johann (John) Benjamin Tolkien** (1752-1819), about their London businesses, houses and offspring who were the ancestors of so many modern

Publishers, London 2006, p. 1008.

13 Tadeusz A. Olszański ("TAO"), "Co wiemy na temat przodków Tolkiena (przyczynek)", *Elendilion* of 25th Jan. 2010: <http://www.elendilion.pl/2010/01/25/co-wiemy-o-przodkach-j-r-r-tolkiena-przyczynek/> (access: 1st June 2017)

Tolkiens living in Great Britain, Canada, Australia, RSA and the US (nonetheless in those countries we can also find Tolkiens, Tolkins and Tollkühns who came there from Prussia in different times and circumstances). Owing to a great amount of church, tax and business documents it could be proved that **Johann (John) Benjamin Tolkien** was the great-great-grandfather of J. R. R. Tolkien. Here is the established kinship in the paternal line:



On 16th December 2016 started the correspondence between Gerald Aurand from the US and me, during which I got a piece of groundbreaking information. In September 2008 Aurand had found in the National Archives in Kew a document entitled *The Act of Naturalization of Daniel*

*Gottlieb Tolkien (1794)*¹⁴. The aforementioned **Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien** (1746-1813) applied for British citizenship and was granted this by the parliament. That is a key document for my discovery, since it contains the name of Daniel's place of origin and names of his parents.

Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien originated from... **Dantzic** – so we have Gdańsk here¹⁵! And this fires the imagination drawing us to the conclusion that the ancestors of J. R. R. Tolkien came to London from the most important Polish port town! A quick web database search¹⁶ revealed another Tolkiens from Gdańsk (already in December 2016 I found a second-hand bookseller Christian Tolkien and a vigilante lieutenant Michael Tolkien). For many months I worked hard to confirm my assumption that Daniel Gottlieb and Johann (John) Benjamin were brothers, which turned out to be very difficult. Although clues were clear (Daniel and Johann were guests on each other's wedding ceremonies, baptized children in the same churches, had the same circle of friends, their offspring did not marry the other brother's, exchanged support, joined the early methodist community of John Wesley and his followers and have even been buried at the same churchyard beside Wesley's Chapel on City Road in London), for a long time no document could be traced where John Benjamin would be called Daniel's brother. It had been so until the morning of 22nd May 2017, when I found a reference to Daniel Gottlieb's brother in his testament (even though the name and surname have been covered!). The whole complex investigation has proved that it is much more likely that Daniel and John were brothers than otherwise. I can see the reason why one of the brother's personal data has been covered in the document: the debt of 700 pound sterling that John Benjamin never paid back to Daniel, which today would be worth almost 24 thousand GBP!¹⁷ All this was confirmed on 30th September 2017 when in the documents from St

14 The National Archives (Kew), Private Act, 34 George III, c.17-ref. HL/PO/PB/1/1794/34G3n49- date:1794. Also in *House of Lords Journal Office Main Papers*. Signed as Main Papers-ref. HL/PO/JO/10/7/957- date: 12 Feb 1794-27 Feb 1794. I got the scanned document by e-mail from Gerald Aurand.

15 The German word form *Dantzic* was used by late 18th century, then replaced by *Danzig*.

16 I searched at *Gedanopedia.pl* and easily found Christian Tolkien, a second-hand bookseller.

17 Estimation based on the data from the official website of the National Archives

(<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency>). Testament of Daniel Tolkien of 6th Sept. 1810: Ancestry.com, The National Archives (Kew); Prerogative Court of Canterbury and Related Probate Jurisdictions: Will Registers; Class: PROB 11; Piece: 1546;

Salvator church in Gdańsk I found the acts of baptism of two sons of Christian Tolkien: Daniel Gottlieb (b. 1746) and Johann Benjamin (b. 1752). The last one was J.R.R. Tolkien's great-great-grandfather. Then I found also the act of funeral of Christian Tolkien from 1791. This document helped me to trace the history of the Tolkien family in Kreuzburg, East Prussia from where the Tolkiens came to Gdańsk in 1720s.

Gdańsk fired my imagination not only because I am a Pole. Since 2010 I have been reconstructing the history of the surname Tolkien and promoting on the website *Elendilion* and in the Tolkienist magazine *Gwaihir* the hypothesis that it has its origin in Prussia, more precisely in the settlement and manor Tolkinoy (German: Tolksdorf)¹⁸.

As I have already mentioned, in the biographical entry for writer John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892–1973)¹⁹ on the English language version of Wikipedia there has been information that the surname is related with the place name Tolkinoy in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, in the historical land of Bartia in Lower Prussia. As early as in 2001, on the web forum *TheOneRing*²⁰ appeared a description of correspondence between a certain Almacundo (a Tolkienist nickname) and professor **Günther-Ulrich Tolkiehn** from Wildau (in Brandenburg)²¹. Tolkiehn referred to his own research in the history of his surname. He had tried to find out if he was a relative of the famous English man of letters, which was based on the findings of his grandfather's brother, pastor Heinrich Tolkiehn. He concluded that his male predecessors had come from East Prussia (German: Ostpreußen), the today's Kaliningrad District and the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship. They used the Low German (or Low Saxon) dialect also called Low Prussian (from East Prussia and Gdańsk), used in the Teutonic State since 13th century, prior to which the Old Prussian language (from the Baltic branch of Indo-European languages), completely extinct by 17th century, had

18 A list of the texts has been contained in the bibliographical section.

19 Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien#Family_origins (access: 1st June 2017)

20 Source: <http://forums.theonering.com/viewtopic.php?p=411989> (access: 1st June 2017)

21 The correspondence has been referred to in detail in "Tolkinoy w Barcji gniazdem rodu Tolkienów?" (*Elendilion*: <http://www.elendilion.pl/2010/01/14/tokiny-na-warmii-gniazdem-rodu-tolkienow-ii/> - access: 1st June 2017) and „Another proof of the East Prussian origin of the Tolkien family” (*Tolknięty Blog*: <http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/2017/04/another-proof-of-east-prussian-origin.html> - access: 1st June 2017)

been used there. The oldest known form of the surname is *Tolkien* and only in 19th century it got the spelling *Tolkiehn*. This is a typical surname for East Prussia, where many surnames have the suffix *-ien* (e.g. *Leptien*, *Monien*), although scholars differ in their opinions on its meaning. The word *tolk* and nickname *Tolk* are derived from the Baltic language of the Prussians and were used to denote a bilingual person who could translate or interpret between *prutzisch* (i.e. Old Prussian) and German. According to professor Tolkiehn's research, nowadays people bearing the surname (in many versions: *Tolkien*, *Tolkiehn*, *Tollkühn*, *Tollkuehn* etc.) live primarily in the northern part of the Federal Republic of Germany, where most 1945 German refugees from East Prussia have settled.

Professor Tolkiehn was not able to find proofs of his close kinship with Professor Tolkien from England. He made a wrong assumption that the ancestors of J. R. R. Tolkien came from Lower Saxony which is where he himself had no relatives.

I. ETYMOLOGY OF THE SURNAME **TOLKIEN**

The surname Tolkien's origin from the adjective *tollkühn* 'daring, reckless, rashbold, foolhardy' seems unlikely. The earliest known use of *Tolkyn/Tolkin* as a nickname is of 1378 (*Heynike Tolkyn*) and 1418 (*Ritter... Tolkin*)²². As a surname it has been known since 15th century, in forms *Tolkin*, *Tolckin*, *Tolkyn*, *Tolckyn*, *Tolkien* etc. and as late as the 18th and 19th century saw its slow germanization (being made equal with the German adjective *tollkühn*) and appearance of the following spellings: *Tollkühn*, *Tollkuehn* and *Tolkiehn*. The adjective 'daring, reckless' that I mentioned above does not appear earlier than in 17th century²³, and in earlier sources one finds only the form *ein toller künere man*. Interestingly, in the 15th-century Low German language (spoken in the areas where Tolkiens used to live) *dulkōne* 'reckless, rash' was used, yet there is no similarity here with the contemporary forms of nickname/surname *Tolkin/Tolkyn*.

I advocate the origin of the surname from Low Prussian (Old Low German) nickname *Tolkin*

22 *Regesta Historico-Diplomatica Ordinis S. Mariae Theut.*, II 1052 and II 1934

23 The online etymological German dictionary: <https://www.dwds.de/wb/tollk%C3%BChn#et-1> (access: 18th June 2017)

'son or descendant of Tolk'²⁴ (which has been certified in the 14th- and 15th-century Teutonic documents regarding the Merklingerode family; similarly e.g. in the Skomand family, where the father was Dietrich Skomand and the son was Dietrich Skomantin²⁵), where *tolk* means 'interpreter, negotiator' (< Old Prussian [Baltic] **tulk-* < Proto-Slavic **tǫlkъ* 'sense, translation, interpretation, explanation').²⁶ Matthias (d. 1379), the progenitor of the Low Prussian line of Merklingerode-Tolkien family, was a German-Prussian interpreter and negotiator in the court of Balga commander (three documents of 1356²⁷) and his nickname was Tolk. Thus one can say jokingly that the Tolkien family has strong ties with linguistics for ages.

According to a German linguist Reinhold Trautmann the suffix *-in* equals the Old Prussian *-īn* 'belonging to' or 'son or descendant' transferred to the German dialect of Old Prussian (supposed to be umlaut of the suffix *-ain-* / *-ein-*)²⁸. The same suffix is encountered in many surnames in or around Królewiec (German: *Königsberg*) in former East Prussia, i.e. Brosien, Cattien, Dollien (also Dolin, Dolinn), Englien (also Englin, Englyn, Anglyn), Kadgien (also Kadgiehn), Krepelien (also Krepelin, Krepelihn, Crepelin), Lapsien (also Lapsin, Lapsiehn, Lipsin), Marquien, Stadien, Wosegien (also Wosegihn, Wosegin, Wosegyn, Wosgin, Wisgin, Bosigin) etc. Other suffixes derived from *-ien* are: *-ienen*, *-ehnen*, *-iehn*, *-önen*, *-öhnen*²⁹.

The nickname (first, then a surname) is inextricably linked with the place name Tołkiny (as

24 According to linguist Georg Gerullis (*Die altpreußischen Ortsnamen*, 1922, p. 184, p. 188 and p. 238) the nickname originates from the reconstructed Old Prussian **tulkas* 'interpreter'. This view is supported by Max Mechow, who sees roots of the surname *Tolkien* in 14th century place name *Tolkynen* (*Deutsche Familiennamen prussischer Herkunft*, 1994, p. 99).

25 G. A. von Mülversted, „Fromme Stiftungen in Preußen“ [in:] *Der neuen preußischen Provinzial-Blätter*, Band IX (LX), pp. 149-151.

26 From this Proto-Slavic word denoting 'interpreter' are derived: Lithuanian *tūlkas*, Latvian *tulks*, Estonian *tulk*, Old Saxon *tolc*, Old Icelandic *tulkr* and Finnish *tulkki*. In modern Russian *tolk* means 'sense, benefit, direction' and *tolkawat'* means 'to clarify, to interpret'. There is also the notable Polish word *tolkun*: 'secular interpreter in Lutheran church translating the words of a German preacher for Polish parishioners' (*Słownik języka polskiego* edited by J. Karłowicz, A. A. Kryński and W. Niedźwiedzki, vol. VII, Warsaw 1900–1927).

27 *Regesta Historico-diplomatica...*, II 858, 865, 867.

28 Reinhold Trautmann *Die altpreußischen Personennamen* (1925), pp. 170-171.

29 Source: http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Endungen_und_Besonderheiten_baltischer_Familiennamen (access: 1st June 2017)

such since 1945). In the 15th century the name had two forms: *Tolksdorf* (1419) and *Tolkynen* (1440; certified as a toponymic surname). Certainly the former has a German meaning of "Tolk's (*Tolks*) village (*Dorf*)" and was an official place name up to 1945. The latter is typical for the lands inhabited from the ancient times by Prussians (and other Baltic tribes), where plural forms of patronymic or dynastic terms have suffixes *-en* (German) and *-ainen* (Old Prussian). *Tolkynen* means 'Tolkiens' and its Polish counterpart is *Tolkiny* or *Tolkiny* (thus the Polish language place name used after 1945 has been reconstructed well)³⁰. This is clearly a place name derived from either the nickname or the surname *Tolkyn*.

II. THE TOLKIENS FROM LONDON (THE 18TH TO 20TH CENTURY)

Forms of the surname in documents: *Tolkien*, *Tollkien*, *Tolkin*, *Tolkein*³¹

The prosperous burgeois couple from a family of furriers from Gdańsk, **Christian** and **Anna Euphrosina Tolkien** had sons named in a Pietistic Lutheran manner: **Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien** (1746-1813) and **Johann Benjamin Tolkien** (1752-1819). Their daughter was **Eleonora Renata Bergmann**, née **Tolkien** (1756-1829) who stayed in Gdańsk. The Gdańsk sources also mention Christian's brother, **Michael** and **Euphrosina Tolkien** whose youngest son was **Christian Tolkien** (1762-1821), a cousin of the brothers in London. From 1777 both brothers were already in London where they set up families and were never to return to Gdańsk. Supposedly they ultimately decided to go abroad because of the Prussian blockade of Gdańsk after the 1st partition of Poland in 1772 and the threat of invasion (which eventually happened in 1793). But from the Methodist sources we can see that their decision was also of religious reason,

In England Daniel Gottlieb used only the name Daniel, sometimes shortening it to Dan, and he anglicized his second name to Godleip³². He brought his craftsmanship from Gdańsk to London

30 Georg Gerullis wrote in *Die altpreußischen Ortsnamen* (1922) that the place name *Tolkynen* comes from the nickname *Tulkin* (which includes the suffix *-in*; see p. 184 and p. 188), whereas the nickname itself originates from the Old Prussian **tulkas* 'interpreter' (p. 238). It is possible that Professor Tolkien knew the work of Gerullis while responding to the question of Ms Ehrhardt (letter no. 349).

31 *Tolkein* is a metathesis, happening also these days in reference to J. R. R. Tolkien.

32 Ancestry.com., The National Archives (Kew); *General Register Office: Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths*

and became a furrier and skinner (written sources call him "Master Daniel Tolkien of Cheapside, London Skinner and Furrier"). At the age of 36, on 7th April 1782 he married Ann Austin in Holy Sepulchre church in Holborn. His best man was John Benjamin (it did not take Johann long to make his name more English) who had married one Mary Warner in the same church only a year earlier (and the bridesmaid was Ann, Daniel's future wife). On 14th February 1794 Daniel, as the elder brother, applied for British citizenship. He succeeded 12 days later³³. It was supposed to help him get a firmer position in the business.

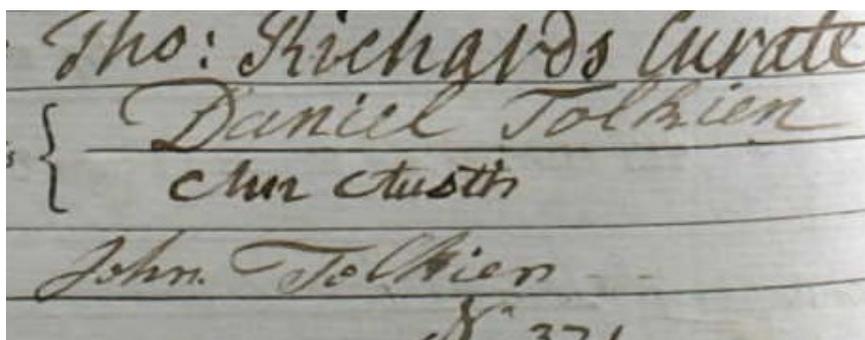
In the years 1784-1800 children of Daniel and Ann were born: **Maria** (1783-?), **Daniel George** (1784-1815), **Ann, Martha** (1788-1819), **Charles** (1789-?), **John Henry** (1795-1820), **Charlotte** (1797-1817) and **James** (1800-?). They were baptized in German Lutheran church in the former Savoy palace. The family lived in the merchant and handicraft part of London, first at **28 Bedford Street** in St. Paul parish near Covent Garden (data from the certificate of naturalisation, 1794 and 1808), later in **Castle Baynard** (1796), at **Ward of Cheape** (1798), then again in St. Paul parish near **Covent Garden** (1808), after that at 60 Cheapside Street close to St. Paul's Cathedral (1808). In 1811 Daniel was the owner of houses at **12 Hoxton Square** and at **7-9 Cumberland Street** in Shoreditch (today's Scawfell Street). In 1799 he accepted his nephew **George Tolkien** (J. R. R. Tolkien's great-grandfather) as an apprentice in his furrier manufacture. He was close to the early methodist community by the house of John Wesley and the chapel on City Road. In 1810 he wrote the testament³⁴, in 1813 he was among the benefactors of the British and Foreign Bible Society. He

surrendered to the Non-parochial Registers Commissions of 1837 and 1857; Class Number: RG 4; Piece Number: 4333; commentary: <http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/2016/12/daniel-gottlieb-and-dan-godleip.html> (access: 1st June 2017)

33 The National Archives (Kew), Private Act, 34 George III, c.17-ref. HL/PO/PB/1/1794/34G3n49- date:1794. Also in *House of Lords Journal Office Main Papers*. Recorded as Main Papers-ref. HL/PO/JO/10/7/957- date: 12 Feb. 1794-27 Feb. 1794. This proves that the certificate of naturalization is of 12th Feb. 1794. Daniel Tolkien is also mentioned in Hackney Archives Department: Small Collections. There is a set of 8 documents at Deeds & Correspondence-ref. M4147/1-8. The description suggests reference to the testament of furrier Daniel Tolkien (d. 1813) and payment to his widow Ann who had a house in Hoxton Town and income from renting apartments at 7-9 Cumberland Street (later Scawfell Street), Hackney Road. The documents include the testament of Daniel Tolkien, his correspondence and bills. Scans of the document and its description: <http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/2017/01/daniel-tolkienes-act-of-naturalization.html> (access: 1st June 2017).

34 The testament of Daniel Tolkien of 6th Sept. 1810, source: Ancestry.com, The National Archives (Kew); Prerogative

died in May of 1813 and had a modest funeral on 2nd June. The family grave does not exist anymore (it was located at the back of Wesley's chapel where new buildings have been raised). Since some information on his life has been revealed and some more is in his last will, he will be remembered as a charitable and righteous man. In the last will he ordered his family to take care of his brother's debt and to take it to court, and considering the good of his wife and children he did not cancel that claim.

A photograph of a handwritten document, likely a marriage certificate, showing two signatures. The first signature is "Daniel Tolkien" and the second is "John Tolkien". Above the first signature, there is a bracketed note that reads "Tho: Richards Curate" and "cum testib". The document is written on lined paper.

Signatures of Daniel and John Tolkien on the marriage certificate of 7th April 1782

John Benjamin Tolkien did not do as well as his elder brother. At the age of 24 he married Mary Warner (the wedding ceremony was held on 27th April 1777 w St James's Church in Clerkenwell – on the marriage certificate he is signed as "Johann Tolkien"), who died in birth of their second daughter in 1780. He quickly remarried (on 22nd April 1781 in Holy Sepulchre Church in Holborn) with Mary Wall, seven years his senior. From his first marriage he had two daughters: **Anna Maria** (1779-1815) and **Elisabeth** (1780-?), and from the second one three sons: **Benjamin** (1782-1787), **George** (1784-1840 – J. R. R. Tolkien's great-grandfather) and **John Benjamin** (1788-1859). The children were baptized in the German Lutheran church in the former Savoy palace – similarly to Daniel's children.

It is not known what John Benjamin did for a living prior to 1792. He might have been a clockmaker's apprentice. In 1792, aged 39, John Benjamin Tolkien and William Gravell took over

Court of Canterbury and Related Probate Jurisdictions: Will Registers; Class: PROB 11; Piece: 1546; commentary: <http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/2017/05/debt-of-700-and-upwards-due-to-my-by-my.html> (access: 1st June 2017).

the then famous Eardley Norton manufacture (1728-1792)³⁵ at 49 **St John's Street** in London. Then the clocks and watches made by the company started being signed "Gravell & Tolkien". These days one of their finest clocks, commissioned with Norton by the court of tsarina Catherine II is displayed at Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg³⁶. A watch of their making is at the British Museum in London. It seems that Gravell and Tolkien used parts from Eardley stock. Nonetheless after some time Tolkien left the company (from 1820 the clocks and watches were branded "William Gravell & Son" and from 1850 "Robert Rolfe").

In 1799 **George Tolkien**, the son of John Benjamin, had apprenticeship with his uncle Daniel, furrier and City dweller. He resided in **White Lyon Street** in London.

By 1808 in address books there had already been a mention of the company owned by John Tolkien (who was 55 in that particular year): Tolkien & Dancer Watch-movement & Tool-manufacturer at **145 St John's Street**. Perhaps it was then that John borrowed from his brother Daniel the huge amount of 700 pound sterling for his company's start-up. May of 1813 was very hard for John. The sixty-year-old lost his brother (Daniel died on 23rd May) and just a few weeks earlier he had gone bankrupt (in *The News* newspaper of 9th May he was referred to as "china and glass-seller from St Paul's church-yard, London").

John Benjamin's children – Anna Maria and Benjamin – died and on 27th Jan. 1819 at the age of 66 died John Benjamin Tolkien. He and his wife Mary were buried at Bunhill Fields cemetery, opposite John Wesley's Chapel across City Road next to which the family grave of Daniel Tolkien (and his eldest son Daniel George who died in 1815) was located. Both brothers born in Gdańsk were buried in London close to each other. The burial place of John and Mary Tolkien and John Henry (d. 1820), one of Daniel's sons, is very interesting. They share their grave with the composer William Shrubsole, maker of the tune for *Miles Lane* (used by Edward Perronet in the

35 The famous Eardley Norton clock- and watchmaking company was on the market between 1760 and 1792. Norton became a member of Clockmaker Company in 1770.

36 I put a photo of it and a dedication on its back on my blog Tolkniety:

<http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/2017/05/john-benjamin-tolkien-1753-1819-summary.html> (access: 1st June 2017)

hymn *All hail! The power of Jesus' Name*). The lyrics and notes are carved on the tombstone shared by Shrubsole, the Tolkiens and their nephew³⁷.

The descendants of Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien and John Benjamin Tolkien live in Great Britain, Canada, the United States, Australia and other parts of the former British Empire. The links are shown on the family tree maintained by Linda Winifred Tolkien (*Ancestry.co.uk*). John Benjamin's son **George Tolkien** (1784-1840), a tool producer from Islington, towards the end of his life an organist in St. Pancras church, had twelve children with Eliza Lydia (1787-1863), maiden name Murrell. His grave is at St George the Martyr cemetery in Camden.

His other son was **John Benjamin Tolkien** (1807-1896), who married Jane Holmwood (1806-1854) around 1835 and had four children with her, and in 1856 he married Mary Jane Stowe (1834-1915) and the couple had nine offspring, among them Arthur Reuel Tolkien. The 19th-century John Benjamin Tolkien was a piano maker and tuner, he also taught music. In the 40s of 19th century his family moved to West Midlands, near Birmingham. He was buried at Key Hill cemetery in Hockley (Birmingham).

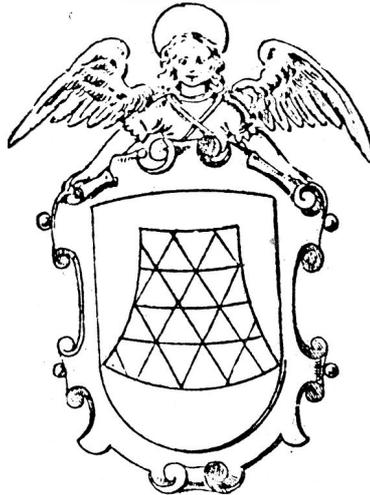
Arthur Reuel Tolkien (1857-1896), father of **John Ronald Reuel Tolkien** (1892-1973), was the second son of John Benjamin. He was born in Birmingham and buried in Bloemfontein in the Republic of South Africa. The life stories of both Arthur and his famous son have been described in detail in biographies (mostly by Humphrey Carpenter and John Garth)³⁸.

III. THE TOLKIENS FROM GDAŃSK (THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY)

The forms of the surname in documents: *Tolkien* (1698, 1765, 1808, 1810), *Tolkiehn* (1766), *Tolckinin* (1783) *Tolckin* (1795), *Tohlkien* (1810), *Tollkien* (1810), *Tolckien* (1810), *Tollkühn* (1748, 1757, 1760, 1817, 1821)

37 The grave may be visited after an advance appointment, it is located in the closed section of Bunhill Fields. The cemetery also contains e.g. the grave of Daniel Defoe: <http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/2017/04/brothers-from-gdansk-buried-close-to.html> (access: 1st June 2017).

38 Humphrey Carpenter, *J.R.R. Tolkien. Wizjoner i marzyciel*, Wydawnictwo Alfa, Warszawa 1997; John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War*, HarperCollins Publishers, London 2003.



Crest of the Gdańsk furrier guild (source: Wikimedia)

As stated before, the two Tolkien brothers from London – **Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien** (1747-1813) and **Johann Benjamin Tolkien** (1752-1819) – were born in Gdańsk, Royal Prussia, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, under the reign of August III Wettin. Probably after the first partition of Poland in 1772, during the Prussian blockade of Gdańsk, when the city was endangered with invasion whereas manufacturing and commerce came to a standstill, the brothers left Gdańsk and headed for London.

The surname Tolkien appears in the Gdańsk chronicles and other sources in late 17th century in reference to a middle class family of furriers (unsurprisingly if one considers the vocation of Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien who came from London) from the Old Town and the Broad Quarter.

In the 18th century Gdańsk (1734) the furrier guild had 51 members. It is likely that among them were the Tolkiens (Michael, Christian?) and the related Übelins and Oyers. There were 31 furriers without apprentices, 11 with one apprentice and 9 with two apprentices. That is a proof that the furriers could not afford to have many apprentices and they tended to work on their own³⁹. In the years 1711-1729 three of them changed the status of their citizenship from a craftsman to a more prestigious merchant (merely ca 10 per cent of all furriers). Only a few

³⁹ *Historia Gdańska*, edited by Edmund Cieślak, Gdańsk 1985, vol. III, part 1, p. 449 and p. 459

people could afford to change their citizenship and to invest serious sums of money. Although most members of the guild lived on the verge of poverty, it was fairly influential in the 17th and 18th century Gdańsk, many of them patroned and animated arts by the Motława river⁴⁰.

The first reports on a Tolkien from Gdańsk come from the reigns in Poland of the Electors of Saxony of the House of Wettin. It is Michael Tolkien (1708-1795), officer of the Broad Quarter, Blue Regiment ("Breitekvartier, Blaue Regiment")⁴¹. He is mentioned in documents regarding vigilante. Command posts as well as prestigious ensignments were commonly the first stage of a career as an official of middle class⁴². It could have been so with Michael as well. Since so far I have not managed to find any earlier Tolkien in Gdańsk, my theory is that Michael's father (whose name possibly was Gottfried) originated from the neighbourhood of Królewiec (perhaps from Święta Siekierka or Krzyżbork), had an easy access to good quality furs brought there from Lithuania, transported to Gdańsk from the port of Labiau⁴³. It could have been the latter man that involved the family with the furrier guild in the city: his sons – Michael, Christian and perhaps others – became the apprentices. Since the Tolkiens were of Prussian origin, that might have been the cause of the migration of the young generation during the blockade of Gdańsk in early 1770s and the career of Christian Tolkien (II) after the incorporation of the city in Prussia. As is known from *Historia Gdańska*, many Prussian citizens of Gdańsk were forced to leave after the first partition of Poland⁴⁴.

The furriers made their mark in the chronicles in the lifetime of Michael's father. On 18th March 1698 August II Wettin had a pompous arrival in Gdańsk. He was honoured with triumphal

40 *Historia Gdańska...*, vol. III, part 1, p. 461

41 Werner Hahlweg, *Das Kriegswesen der Stadt Danzig*, part 1 (1937), p. 200

42 *Encyklopedia Gdańska*, Fundacja Gdańska 2012, entry: STRAŻE OBYWATELSKIE (VIGILANTE), p. 981

43 Lieutenant Michael Tolkien might be related to Michael Tolkihn from Heiligenbeil (Święta Siekierka) in Balga district of the Duchy of Prussia ("Bürger in Heiligenbeil, Amt Balga") mentioned in Sept./Oct. 1717 – Hans H. Diehlmann's, *Erbhuldigungsakten des Herzogtums und Königreichs Preußen, 3. Teil: 1678 bis 1737*, Hamburg 1992, p. 112, p. 247, p. 350

44 "The events in question gave rise to anti-Prussian attitudes and unrest in the city, fuelled concern among the citizens of Gdańsk and caused emigration of a number of people at risk of extradition." (*Historia Gdańska*, vol. III, part 1, p. 580.

arches and parades of members of civic organizations, greeted by lines of citizens, cannonades and dances of furriers and shipwrights (the so called morescas⁴⁵), there were also fireworks and other attractions⁴⁶.

In other documents, i.e. guild diploma and parish documents of the Main Town and the Old Town, Michael Tolkien is called a townsman and a furrier master (*Bürger und Kürschner Meister*⁴⁷). He is the central figure in a group of related people connected with the furrier guild from Gdańsk, who were baptized in St. Mary's Church (today's Co-Cathedral Collegiate Church of the Assumption of Mary) and buried beside St. Catherine Church (which is the oldest church in Gdańsk). He is the first Tolkien from Gdańsk known to me whose surname in the parish documents has the spelling *Tollkühn* (1748, 1757, 1760, 1762), however the *Tolkien* (1765) and *Tolckien* (1744-1795) variants are more frequent. The first document regarding this person that I found was the guild certificate of 1765 where Michael Tolkien and Niklaus Übelin (called *Älteste des Erbgewerks der Kürschner in der Königlichen See- und Handlungsstadt Danzig* – 'the Elder of the Furrier Guild in the Royal Marine and Trade City of Gdańsk') certify that a certain apprentice has been educated by one of the masters. It should not be overlooked that it is of the year 1765 when Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien was 19 and Johann Benjamin was 12 years old.

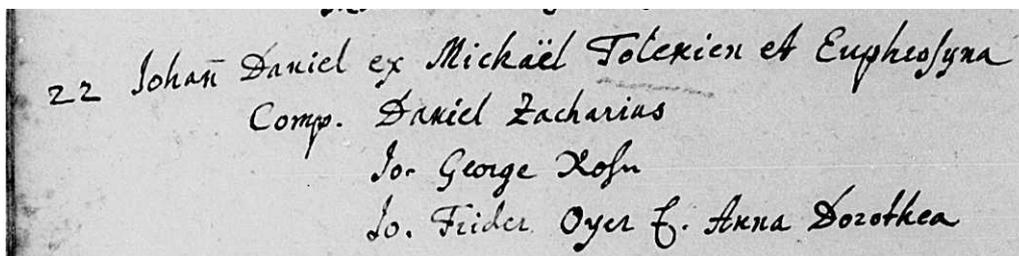
The first wife of Michael Tolkien was **Euphrosina Tolkien**, maiden name Matthießen (d. 1783, buried at St. Catherine cemetery), the second was **Elisabeth Tolkien**, maiden name Klinckerd (she lived for 75 years), who died in Prussia (which may suggest that she remained in an estate of the family outside of Gdańsk, within the area captured by Prussia in 1772, or that she died in East Prussia). The names of the children of Michael and Euphrosina are in the books of baptisms in St

45 Moresca, a quick renaissance dance popular in Europe, e.g. practiced by furriers in Gdańsk. Symbolized fighting with the Moors. Georg Reinhold Curicke had it made into visual artwork in 1698. Moresca is related with the English folk Morris dances.

46 *Historia Gdańska...*, vol. III, part 1, p. 196

47 M. Bogucka, *Życ w dawnym Gdańsku*, Wydawnictwo Trio, Gdańsk 1997, p. 119: "Among the basic requirements for candidates for a master in most guilds was possession of a certificate of legitimate and free birth, diplomas of completion of education, and in the case of foreign apprentices – a certificate from the latest place of service. The candidate had to have civic rights, too, as well as an armour. Some guilds required an additional testimony of a guarantor concerning impeccability of the aspiring master."

Mary's church in Gdańsk. Those are, in order of appearance: (1) **Anna Elisabeth Tolkien** (13th Oct. 1744) – during the ceremony were present Christian Tolkien (I), likely the father's brother, and Daniel Matthießen, possibly the mother's brother; (2) **Euphrosina Regina Tolkien** (22nd March 1746) – only Daniel Matthießen was present; (3) **Dorothea Constantia Tolkien** (30th Jan. 1748); (4) **Johann Gottfried Tolkien** (11th Oct. 1750; his name may hint at what name was borne by his paternal grandfather), (5) **Johann Daniel Tolkien** (22nd June 1752); he might have got the name after his maternal grandfather; J. Friedrich Oyer mentioned later in the text, likely from the family of furriers, was also present in the church; (6) **Michael Tolkien** (8th Dec. 1757); (7) **Benjamin Tolkien** (8th Oct. 1760) and (8) **Christian Tolkien** (9th May 1762)⁴⁸.



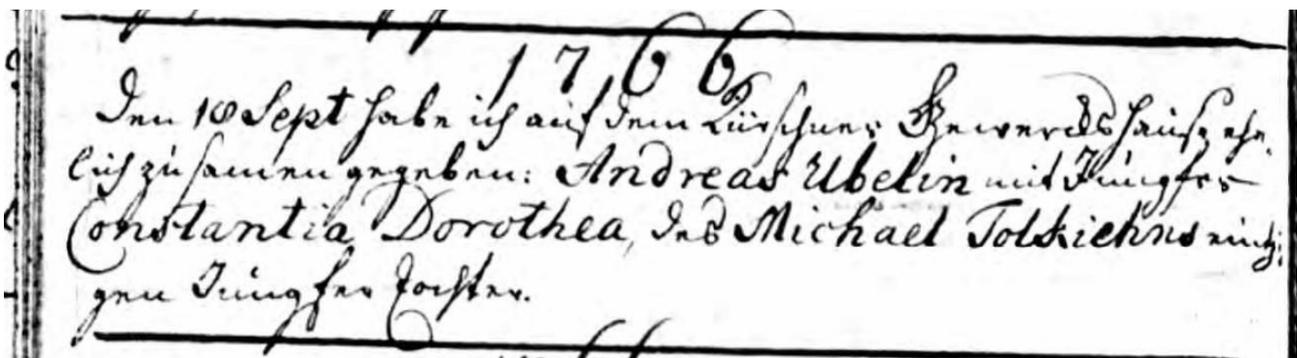
Was Johann Daniel Tolkien (b. 1752) the same person as John Benjamin Tolkien (b. 1752) from London? Very likely so. Both were sons of Euphrosina Tolkien from Gdańsk. Among the witnesses was also furrier J. F. Oyer.

Another important document, of 1766, is of the calvinist church of St. Elizabeth (possibly the groom was a calvinist) and refers to a wedding of Andreas Übelin with a lady named **Constantia Dorothea Tolkien**, the youngest daughter of Michael Tolkien. She is definitely the same person as Dorothea Constantia marked (3) above, so she was 18 years old on the day of the ceremony, which took place in the "Kürschner Gewerkshaus" than in my opinion and according to my research may be the baroque tenement house that is called Gildehaus, today at the corner of Kuśnierska Street and Długi Targ. There was one **Anna Maria Übelin** in the city as well, who might have been akin to the Tolkiens (perhaps a sister of Daniel Gottlieb and Johann Benjamin who married the master furrier Johann Daniel Übelin, 1751-1813), because until her death in 1809 she lived at **Klein Schirmmachergaße no 3**, exactly where another important **Tolkien, Christian (II)** (1762-1821) lived

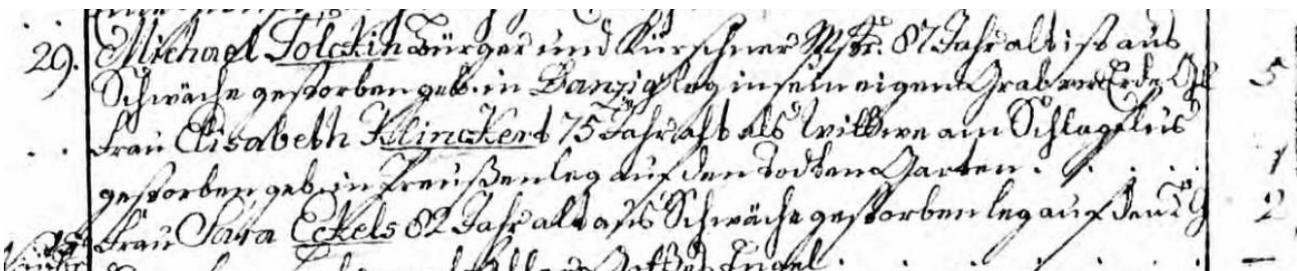
⁴⁸ Baptism registries of 1702-1779, the Church of St. Mary in Gdańsk (microfilms available in the Mormon Family History Center in Wrocław)

later, the second-hand bookseller and municipal clerk in Prussian times, the youngest child of Michael (II) i Euphrosina, baptized in St. Mary's church (see above, the eighth child).

The furrier master, townsman of Gdańsk, Michael Tolkien died in 1795 at the age of 87 (one of many longeval Tolkiens). His grave is in St. Catherine church in the Old Town, whose churchyard, as shown by the *Steinbuch 1700-1815* that I have had access to⁴⁹, has been a sort of a necropolis for the Tolkiens from Gdańsk (e.g. Johannes Hevelius was buried there as well!). *Steinbuch* or 'display of tombstones' is a register of all tombstones in that church. Under the stones no 37 ("Mich. Tolkien"), 48 ("fr. Euph. Tohkin") and 84 ("nebst familie Tollkien", "Florentina Dorothea Tolckin") there are ashes of members of one family of furriers from Gdańsk.



Constantia Dorothea, Michael Tolkien's "youngest daughter" married Andreas Ubelin in "Kürschner Gewerkshaus" in Gdańsk on 10th Sept. 1766



The 1795 funeral of Michael Tolkien, "Bürger und Kürschner M[e]ist[er]"

49 Ancestry.com. *Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1567-1945* based on *Lutherische Kirchenbücher, 1567-1945*; commentary: <http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/2017/04/more-tolkiens-in-st-katharinen-danzig.html> (access: 1st June 2017)

A very important character that I found in the parish documents is **Euphrosina Tolkien**, maiden name Matthießen (ca 1727-1783), wife of Michael Tolkien (II)⁵⁰. Is she the same Euphrosina Tolkien who is mentioned in the act of naturalization of Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien issued in London in 1794? None of her children baptized in St. Mary's church bears the name of either of the brothers from London. There are a few possibilities here, of which two I find most likely: either Christian Tolkien, Michael's brother, married some other Euphrosina and the couple had sons Daniel Gottlieb and Johann Benjamin (and so their acts of baptism are still somewhere in the parish documents in Gdańsk) or Daniel (born in 1747) was a son of Christian (I) and of an unknown wife who died in childbirth. Perhaps Christian (I) died soon afterwards, and Michael and Euphrosina adopted Daniel. He might have treated Euphrosina as his mother, yet he always knew Christian (I) was his real father. Thus Johann Daniel would not be called Daniel anymore, and the more meaningful name Benjamin would be used instead⁵¹. Such a status of Daniel in Michael's family could have been a source of conflicts and could have pushed the former to emigrate to England.

I have found the funeral certificate of Euphrosina Tolkien of 10th April 1783 (her two sons had lived in London for several years then), which is an interesting document. It reads e.g. "here is Mrs **Euphrosina Tolckinin** from the Dam [German: Damm], her bier has been placed under the middle-class tombstone no 48, [the fee for] the ground and bells – 5 florens"⁵². I have examined all tenement houses in Grobla Street (I.-IV.). With a very big help from the register of architectural heritage of Biblioteka Gdańska of Polska Akademia Nauk that contains the historical records and characteristics of the buildings I discovered that only in the tenement house at **Grobla II Street no 16** there was a furrier's place (such a workshop requires special conditions). "There is no mention of any previous building on the site. The tenement house was reconstructed in 1651. Johann

50 This was not a rare name in 18th century Gdańsk. It denotes joy in Greek and is connected with Euphrosyne, one of the Three Graces of the Greek mythology.

51 Perhaps Benjamin (b. 1760), the son of M. and E. Tolkien, died prematurely, and his name stuck to Johann Daniel, who in turn was no longer called his original name? Benjamin ("beniaminek" in Polish) is a term to describe the favourite youngest son in the family.

52 The *-in* suffix noun form is typical for old German language church records (e.g. *Ms Wolf = Wolfin*).

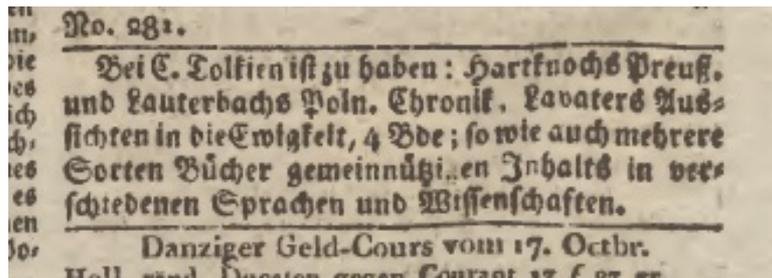
Heinrich Oyer bought the building in 1790. In 1808 it was still in possession of **furrier** Johann Oyer. (...) The building was destroyed in 1945, rebuilt to the design by Tomasz Kempinski, with the mid-17th-century façade⁵³. If the Tolkien family had lived there earlier, after the possible disability of Michael Tolkien and death of his wife the house could have been sold in 1790 to other furrier Johann Heinrich Oyer – who was among the witnesses at the baptism ceremony of Johann Daniel Tolkien (the possible great-great-grandfather of J. R. R. Tolkien).

Daniel Gottlieb Tolkien's father is supposed to have been **Christian Tolkien (I)** (ca 1727-?). I have not been able to find any trace of him other than that in the act of baptism of Anna Elisabeth (13th Oct. 1744), where he is featured as the godfather. I have got on my list a few other Christian Tolkiens of that time (e.g. Krzyżbork townsman – 1714, shoemaker from Tapiaw – 1778, inhabitant of Kondradswalde – 1793 etc.; all the places are in the area around Königsberg). Christian (I) could have been a brother of Michael (II) or his cousin (which is less likely, considering the fact that the Tolkiens in Gdańsk seem to have been a small family clustered around Michael). I have not yet found where he died and where he has been buried. The late 18th and the early 19th century was a very turbulent period of wars, revolutions, other social unrest and epidemics.

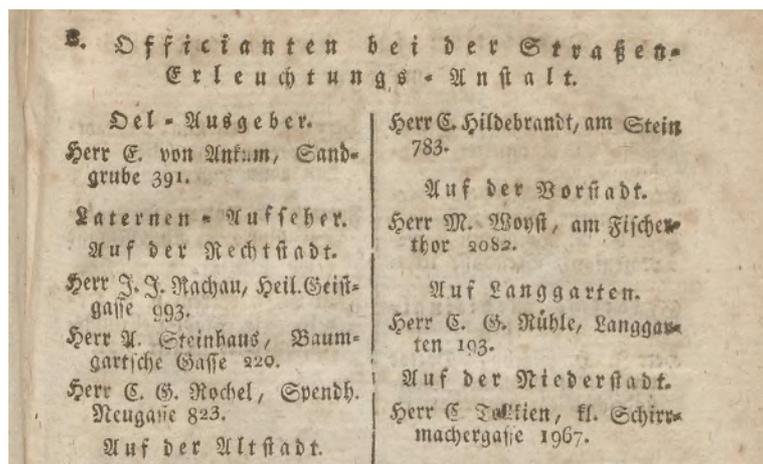
Another member of the family was **Christian Tolkien junior (II)** (1862-1821). He bears the same name as his probable uncle and his daughter's name is after his mother Euphrosina. He was Michael's youngest son, baptized in St. Mary's church on 9th May 1762. If the brothers emigrated in the period of 1772-1777, he must have been between 10 and 15 years old then. Around the year 1783 Christian married Anna Elisabeth Freyberg. In 1784 their daughter **Dorothea Elisabeth Tolkien** (who was later married to Salomon David Pelikan and died in Oliwa) was born, then **Euphrosina Tolkien (II)** (1794-?) and **Florentina Dorothea Tolkien** (1798-1803, buried in grave no 84 at St. Catherine cemetery). Most probably Christian (II) had no son who survived beyond his childhood. Christian Tolkien has marked his life in Gdańsk mainly through his bookselling activities. According to *Gedanopedia* (the online version of *Encyklopedia Gdańszczan*) **Christian**

53 Source: <http://wenus.bgpan.gda.pl/Bazy/Kartoteka/wypisz.php> (access: 1st June 2017)

Tolkien had a second-hand bookshop "Tolkien" at **11 Tagnetergaße** (presently Tandeta Street; the house has not been rebuilt after 1945) in 1808 and at **3 Kleine Schirmmachergaße** (or **Scharmachergaße**; today this is an extension of the so called Old Pharmacy by the Old Armoury) in 1817⁵⁴. In the years 1808-1812 Christian Tolkien had at least three lists of books for sale published in the periodical *Danziger Zeitung* circulating in Gdańsk (a very interesting reading from Napoleonic times!)⁵⁵.



A newspaper ad for the second-hand bookstore of Christian Tolkien from *Danziger Zeitung* (Oct. 1812)



Page from the Gdańsk address book of 1817

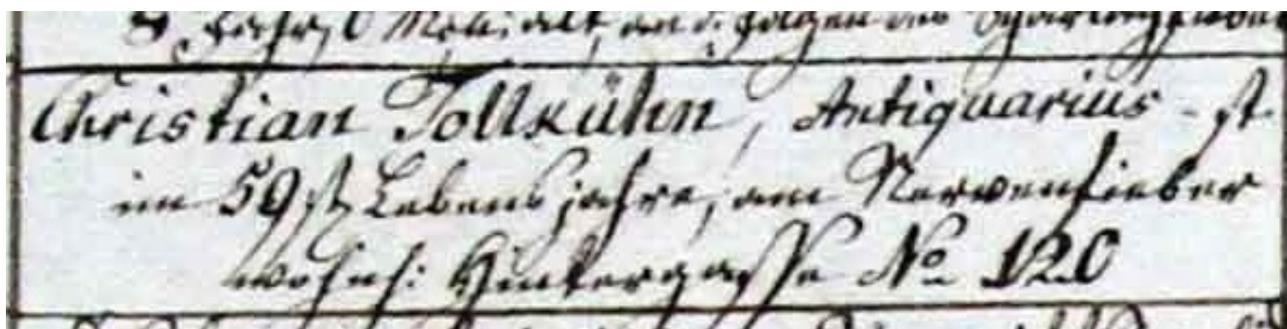
When the Prussians captured the city in 1793, the independent council was replaced with a magistrate appointed by the authorities of the West Prussia province, which remained effective by Nov. 1817. At that time the second-hand bookseller Christian Tollkühn occupied the post of a

54 According to *Historia Gdańska*, vol. II, p. 521, certain tanners from Gdańsk switched to bookbinding. It sometimes quite close from animal skins to books then. In fact, tanners and bookbinders in Gdańsk bound books in a special local way and also sold them.

55 Pomorska Biblioteka Cyfrowa, *Danziger Zeitung*, no. 76 (25th June 1808), no. 77 (27th June 1808) and no. 167 (19th Oct. 1812). Digital pictures of the adverts can be found here: <http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/2017/04/tolkien-antiquary-in-danziger-zeitung.html> (access: 1st June 2017)

clerk responsible for street lighting in the Lower Town (German: *Offiziant bei der Straßen Erleuchtungs-Anstalt auf der Niederstadt*) in the deputation for special administration of economic districts (German: *Deputation von Raths und Staatsbürgerschaft für spezielle Management-Geschäftsbereiche*)⁵⁶. In older German legal nomenclature the *Offiziant* was a lower level clerk.

Thus we have the opportunity to get to know the new address of Christian Tollkühn (Tolkien), which is **Klein Schirmmachergaße no 3**, where his new second-hand bookshop ("Buchhandlung-Antiquariat") was located. This is the same address that one comes across in the context of Anna Maria Übelin, possibly the eldest sister of Tolkien brothers who was married to a furrier master Johann Daniel Übelin (1751-1813) and lived at **Klein Schirmmachergaße no 3** until her death in 1809. The alternative street name and number here (since the end of the 18th century some street names and addresses of particular buildings in Gdańsk have been changed several times) is **Hintergaße no 120**, which is to be found e.g. in the papers from St. Mary's church in Gdańsk concerning the funeral of Christian Tollkühn of 16th April 1821⁵⁷:



Excerpt from the parish documents of St. Mary's church in Gdańsk

The book of funerals contains the following note: "**Christian Tollkühn**, second-hand bookseller, died in the 59th year of his life from typhoid fever (*Nervenfieber*), lived at Hintergaße no 120". At the funeral were present: Christian's widow **Anna Elisabeth Tollkühn** (maiden name Freyburg) and his daughter **Euphrosina Tollkühn** (the daughter's age has been understated, since according to different sources she was born in 1795 instead of 1799). Christian Tollkühn's grave was

⁵⁶ Pomorska Biblioteka Cyfrowa, *Adreß-Buch für das Königlische Danziger Regirungs-Deputement* (1817).

⁵⁷ Ancestry.co.uk, *Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1567-1945, Lutherische Kirchenbücher, 1567-1945*.

probably at the cemetery beside St. Mary's church created in the years 1819-29 at today's 8 3 Maja Street (the remains of its outline can be seen in the park alongside the parking lane by the employment office). The cemetery was closed in 1956.

It is very likely that after Christian Tolkien's death the family line in Gdańsk extinguished (although in the 19th century, since ca 1860, other Tolkiens were coming to the city, working class immigrants from East Prussia, descendants of Franz Tolkien; that family line, settled in or around the New Port, would live in Gdańsk by 1945)⁵⁸.

In the Gdańsk sources I also found **Eleonora Bergmann**, maiden name **Tolkien** (1756-1829) and **Elisabeth Tolkien** (1769-1827, buried beside the hospital church of St. Lazarus). The dates of the birth suggest that they could be the daughters of Christian Tolkien (I).

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES AND IMPORTANCE OF THE DISCOVERY

My experience of working with the parish documents and other papers from Gdańsk and East Prussia has given me a lot of hope for more remarkable discoveries and adding more generations to the Tolkien family tree. The 18th-century lists of the city residents, court records and furrier guild documents kept in the State Archives in Gdańsk still await careful examination. The archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (i.e. mormons) contain interesting and inaccessible anywhere else parish documents of the 18th century. It should be possible to find tombstones (or at least their fragments, photographs or some other images – I expect to find the Lusian coat of arms that the Tolkiens bore in Prussia) of the Tolkien family from St. Catherine church. I have also been looking for the family's guild sign called gmerk.

Although the discovery may be a mere curiosity for the public, it definitely drawn the attention of the Tolkien family (I have been in contact with them, therefore I know that my findings from Gdańsk and Prussia have surprised them very pleasantly). This is also something

58 See: <http://tolkniety.blogspot.com/2017/04/tolkiens-from-albrechtstrasse-106.html>.

that counts for people from Gdańsk and Tolkińy. Finding the ancestors of such a renowned writer J. R. R. Tolkien in Poland, discovering his Gdańsk and "Masurian" (Prussian) roots is a good contribution to the records of the European migration, to the history of handicraft and trade on the Baltic and on the North Sea. The Tolkiens are a good example how members of one family may change their identity, language and culture over the centuries.

Translated by Juliusz Żebrowski

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