In volumes ten and eleven of The History of Middle-earth, Christopher Tolkien recounts from the original texts the evolution of his fathers work on The Silmarillion, the legendary history of the Elder Days or First Age, from the completion of the Lord of the Rings in 1949 until J.R.R. Tolkiens death. In volume ten, Morgoths Ring, the narrative was taken only as far as the natural dividing point in the work, when Morgoth destroyed the Trees of Light and fled from Valinor bearing the stolen Silmarils. In The War of the Jewels, the story returns to Middle-earth and the ruinous conflict of the High Elves and the Men who were their allies with the power of the Dark Lord. With the publication in this book of all of J.R.R. Tolkiens later narrative writing concerned with the last centuries of the First Age, the long history of The Silmarillion, from its beginnings in The Book of Lost Tales, is completed; the enigmatic state of the work at his death can now be understood.

A chief element in The War of the Jewels is a major story of Middle-earth, now published for the first time - a continuation of the great saga of Turin Turambar and his sister Nienor, the children of Hurin the Steadfast. This is the tale of the disaster that overtook the forest people of Brethil when Hurin came among them after his release from long years of captivity in Angband, the fortress of Morgoth. The uncompleted text of the Grey Annals, the primary record of the War of the Jewels, is given in full; the geography of Beleriand is studied in detail, with redrawings of the final state of the map; and a long essay on the names and relations of all the peoples of Middle-earth shows more clearly than any writing yet published the close connection between the language and history in Tolkiens world. The text also provides new information, including some knowledge of the divine powers, the Valar.

My Personal Review: 
Volume XI of the History of Middle-Earth contains JRR Tolkiens writings of the First Age after the Lord of the Rings was published. Most texts date
from the 1950s, but some were written as late as 1970, in the last years of his life. This volume contains the history of Beleriand.

Unlike most other volumes of the History of Middle-Earth, much of Volume XI is *NEW* material that is published nowhere else. It also includes some of the actual texts that Christopher Tolkien used to construct the published Silmarillion.

Not everyone who has read the Silmarillion will enjoy this scholarly work, but if you are a Tolkien scholar, or if you read the Silmarillion and Unfinished Tales and still hunger for more stories and information about the First Age, this book is wonderful. If you dont care for the commentaries, there are still the stories themselves.

The Wanderings of Húrin can be considered the greatest gem of Volume XI, continuing the tragic tale of the Children of Húrin in the tradition of the Narn i Chîn Húrin, and further developing Húrins character. It is a completely new narrative, describing in almost novelistic prose the story of Húrin after he was released from Angband: his travel to Hithlum, and the disastrous fallout of his visit to Brethil. This is a nearly complete story, similar to the narratives in Unfinished Tales.

Quendi and Eldar is a long linguistic work, a completed text focusing on the names for the Elves and their Clans, and the other Speaking Peoples, and many other words, in different Elvish languages. Besides the linguistic material, it also discusses the various Elven clans, as well as telepathy, sign language, the Great March, some information about the Avari and the Petty-Dwarves, and other subjects. Included is Pengolodhs description of the Valars unique language, plus a detailed account of the Elves awakening at Cuiviénen. This section will be essential to any student of the Elvish languages, but is quite valuable for non-linguists as well.

The Grey Annals and The Tale of Years are separate (incomplete) texts from the Quenta Silmarillion, containing different accounts of the history of Beleriand and the stories of the Noldor and Edain. More importantly, the Annals and Tale of Years together give the dates when the events of Beleriands history happened. The Tale of Years also tells for the first time the *real* story of the Nauglamír and the Ruin of Doriath. Silmarillion readers will be surprised!

Of Maeglin traces the development of that chapter in the Silmarillion, and includes several notes and additional writings that shed much new light on the story and character of Maeglin. This material was mostly written in 1970-1.

The Later Quenta Silmarillion is mostly a rough draft in the vein of earlier History of Middle-Earth volumes, but there is also new information about the Edain and Dwarves, including extensive family trees of the Three Houses of the Elf-Friends.
Ælfwine and Dírhavel is the prologue to the Narn i Chîn Húrin, which is not in the Unfinished Tales.

Ents and Eagles contains some notes on chapter 2 of The Silmarillion.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:

The War of the Jewels: The Later Silmarillion, Part Two (The History of Middle-Earth, Vol. 11) - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!