Anor Issue 44, Michaelmas 2014

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Editor's Note

Mae govannen, mellyn nín! Welcome, my friends, to Issue 44 of the Cambridge Tolkien Society's *Anor*! This issue is splitting at the seams! In fact, the original was so full I have had to postpone publishing some submissions until Anor 45!

We've got articles on Middle-earth currency, a comparative historical and technological timeline, Elvish language change, the suspicious Treebeard, the Scottish Referendum applied to Middle-earth, the physics of Wizards, a report of a Wizard's visit to Cambridge, and a vividly imagined, not-so-serious story of the nature of political rallies in Middle-earth. Songs and poems also feature in Anor 44, and we've also got a comedy sketch and drinking game for you to boot!

Letters to Daeron can be found at the end – Daeron always likes to receive letters! Hopefully more readers will follow this lead in future!

My thanks go to our contributors: Samuel Cook (the fond-of-footnotes King), James Baillie (current Steward and Dwarf-friend), Jamie Douglas (your humble Daeron) and Jack Fleming (esteemed Archivist of the Tower of Ecthelion), and once again to Heather Douglas for the front cover.

Happy reading!

Jamie Douglas, Daeron (Editor of Anor)
Cambridge Tolkien Society
University of Cambridge, Michaelmas 2014

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[1] Editor's note: apologies to Jack for mistakenly leaving this out of the previous edition of Anor (Anor 43).

Currency in Middle-earth:
Money, Money, Money, Something Funny, in Ennor

Samuel Cook

One thing that may be noticed in the chronicles of Middle-earth is the almost total lack of reference to currency. There are plenty of shiny things – the Arkenstone, the Silmarils, the crown of the Kings of Gondor, Frodo's mithril vest, etc., etc. Smaug, indeed, has an entire hoard of treasure to sit on, but there is very little reference to any use of money (or, when it comes to it, people buying things at all). The only passage that springs to mind is: "Bill Ferny's price was twelve silver pennies … Mr. Butterbur paid for it himself, and offered Merry another eighteen pence as some compensation for the lost animals … thirty silver pennies was a sore blow to him" (LOTR, p.175, *A Knife in the Dark*),[1] so there clearly was some sort of money in use in Middle-earth by the time of LOTR, but Tolkien either omitted to mention it more frequently or it was not widely used (or, perhaps more likely, it was simply not relevant to the story). Here, I aim to explore what sort of currency this might be and how it might be managed. First, though, a brief introduction to why currency is useful and what it does is in order.

Why do we use currency? Consider the main alternative: a barter economy. In other words, if I want something from you, I will trade you something I own of equal value.[2] This works well, provided you're not trading large amounts of goods and you're trading relatively similar products that have an obvious value. If you're a subsistence farmer in a subsistence community, there's no problem at all. For example, you want some seeds to plant next year, so you give another farmer who has some one of your goats (most likely in return for an amount of seed you consider equal to that goat's worth as a food source). Things start getting tricky once more specialised goods arrive. For instance, if a blacksmith sets up in your village and you want to buy a plough, what do you do? He probably doesn't want a goat, or seed or anything you might be realistically able to offer.[3] You might be able to offer food, but then we hit another problem: how much food is an iron ploughshare worth? Two cows? Ten goats? Five hundredweight of bread? It's very difficult to work out. Imagine it's something very low-value that you want to obtain – say a metal fork. That's not worth a whole goat. Unfortunately, goats don't lend themselves very well to being turned into fractions. And what use is 1/10th of a goat anyway? Which tenth? Once you start getting more specialised goods on the market, the concept of bartering becomes very complicated, to the point of uselessness.

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[1] There is also a statement that "Bilbo gave a few pennies away" (LOTR, p.25, *A Long-Expected Party*).
[2] Or, perhaps more accurately, something you perceive to be of equal value.
[3] Assuming you're not a farmer who happens to have a load of iron ore lying around … As a specialised craftsman, the blacksmith isn't generally going to have the time to farm his own land or look after animals, or necessarily even the space to do so. And he's not going to want to acquire a goat on the off-chance he might be able to barter it with someone else further down the line.

Equally, imagine you're trying to buy five hundred ploughshares to set yourself up as a ploughshare dealer to the surrounding area[4] and you've agreed with the blacksmith[5] that one ploughshare is equivalent to five goats. You now need to find 2,500 goats. Even if you do find them, it then becomes a rather large logistical issue to transport them to the blacksmith. Once you get them there, what does the blacksmith *do* with 2,500 goats? [6] Bartering becomes very unwieldy at this order of magnitude. Imagine today if you wanted to barter for a house. You'd probably need several warehouses of assorted stuff to equal the value of the house, the storage and transport of which would probably cost nearly as much as the house. It is fair to say this wouldn't work terribly well.

Using a currency of some form solves both these problems, however. To be clear: a currency doesn't have to be money in the way we think of it today. It just has to be a medium of exchange that has an agreed value so people can trade in it. All sorts of things have historically been used as currency, including salt, beads, shells and feathers. A currency gives you a metric that you can compare the value of different things in; and then you can exchange the easily-portable currency instead of the actual objects. So, if it is generally accepted that a ploughshare is worth 100 cowrie shells and a goat is worth 10, you could easily work out that you should give the blacksmith 10 goats. Even better, you give him 100 shells, representing the value of 10 goats, but without all the inconvenience of having to find and transport 10 goats and then persuading the blacksmith that he wants to branch out into smallholding. Currency in some form, therefore, is arguably required for any civilisation with any degree of urbanisation and specialisation to function well.[7]

A brief note on how currencies work is now required. Historically, most coinage-based currencies[8] have derived their value from the intrinsic worth of whatever the coins are made from. Normally, this is some sort of precious(ish) metal – typically gold or silver, with lower value coins being made of copper, bronze, iron or other metals and alloys as appropriate. In other words, one denarius was worth one denarius[9] because it contained one denarius' worth of metal. Conversion between different currencies was done on the basis of weight – merchants would have sets of scales to assess the precious metal content of any coinage offered and work out how much that made the coins worth. Indeed, the Vikings (among many others) operated what is termed a bullion economy – things made of precious metals could be cut up and bits of them used to buy stuff according to their weight. As long as it was silver, it didn't matter whether it was a coin, a bit of a crucifix or a necklace

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[4] Just go with it. Don't worry about the internal consistency of the metaphor.
[5] Who, one imagines, has moved towards mass production and built a factory at this point. Like I said, ignore that the metaphor is getting rather stretched.
[6] One imagines move into the meat and dairy wholesale market and build a slaughterhouse.
[7] Another possibility would be to have some sort of Communist utopia where everyone gives everything to the government, who then share it all back out again; or where everything is owned in common. The problem with this is that Communist utopias almost invariably turn into dystopias.
[8] I.e. pretty much everything that's been used in Europe and the Near East for the last three millennia.
[9] Replace with your coin of choice.

– they were all worth the same in the Viking economy. More centralised groups promoted the primacy of coinage, as it was something the central government could regulate and control (and tax) more easily, but the principle was the same. The coins were worth what they weighed because of the rarity value of their materials.[10]

This system – commodity money – works quite well up to even quite high values, provided you have the right substances to base your currency on. You need something worth a lot for high-value transactions (in Europe, usually gold) and something worth a lot less that can be used to make coins for your average peasant (some sort of base metal). Historically, some sort of middle ground (typically silver in Europe) is needed for everyday use by better-off members of society and to mediate between really high-value and really low-value coinage. It's just a question of the resources available and scale of coinage required. In theory, you could escalate this to ever higher values and ever rarer substances. Indeed, many countries remained on the gold standard[11] until well into the 20th century.[12] However, there comes a point where this is no longer practical – a major multi-billion pound modern business deal would require an awful lot of gold somewhere if done in this sort of currency. At this point, we're starting to get into theories of money and all sorts of very odd bits of economics, beyond the scope of this article.[13] As Middle-earth does not have any recorded multi-billion pound business deals, or indeed much evidence of an international capitalist economy, some form of commodity money would most likely suffice for its requirements. This is also backed up by the reference to silver pennies earlier – the phrasing implies that the silver-ness of the pennies is the important thing, not that they were issued by some sort of government or bank (such an institution is not mentioned at all). Is this supposition likely to be true and, if so, how might this currency be managed?

In Middle-earth at the time of LOTR, it seems likely that Gondor would require a currency. It is a large, fairly centralised state that clearly has significant manufacturing capacity.[14] It seems unlikely that this would work so well without some form of currency.

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[10] Similarly, non-coin-based forms of currency usually derive value from their rarity, though you have to be careful. Platinum would be no use as a currency as it's just too rare. Trying to pay for things with coins that weigh fractions of a gram would get fiddly. Something too common means you have to carry loads of it around to ensure enough buying power, defeating one of the main advantages of currency. If you're not familiar with it, read the bit about leaf currency in *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* (the second book in the *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series). What you need is something rare enough that an easily-portable amount contains significant value, but that is common enough that you don't get supply issues or coinage that needs to worry about quantum effects.

[11] The idea that the country's central bank would hold gold equal in value to the combined value of its currency and would, in theory, give you an amount of gold equal to the value of your currency if you asked them to, to ensure that the currency had a solid base – this is sort of what the book and film *Goldfinger* is about. This is also where the bit on British notes about promising to pay the bearer on demand comes from. This isn't quite the same as commodity money – the coinage itself does not contain metal equal in value to its face value – but the government promises that it has that metal available if you want it.

[12] The dollar only abandoned all links to gold in October 1976.

[13] And the author's understanding.

[14] All the arms and armour and other military hardware have to come from somewhere. It doesn't seem likely they outsourced it – who to, for a start?

Gondor's level of development seems fairly similar to later medieval Europe, which worked quite happily with commodity-based currencies, so it seems likely that Gondor would use something similar. Given Gondor's previous hegemony over much of the west of Middle-earth and its continued position as the pre-eminent free power, it is likely this currency was in use over all its former domains and the former location of Arnor – this was similarly developed and both kingdoms were Númenórean, so would presumably have had very similar currencies, if not the same. Númenor was certainly advanced enough that it must have required some form of currency, so the idea, if not the actual mechanics, would have been bequeathed to the Realms in Exile.[15] With the fall of Arnor in T.A. 1975, it is unlikely that its currency would have survived in any great quantities up until the events of LOTR and would, in any case, have been largely superseded by a thousand further years of Gondorian currency for anyone who was using it (assuming there were any differences between the two kingdoms' coins). Gondor's currency would also likely have made its way up the Anduin, one of the main trade routes, so would probably be in use by the Men of the Vale of Anduin. In other words, Gondorian/Arnorian currency would probably have been recognised, if not used, everywhere north of Umbar, west of Mordor and south of the Grey Mountains.

Rohan's relationship with Gondor suggests it probably would not have originated its own currency – being on formerly Gondorian land and in perpetual alliance with Gondor, and being a less-developed society, means they would probably have relatively little need for currency[16] and would find it easier to use Gondor's rather than set up their own with all the associated infrastructure, regulations and administration required. Similarly, most of the other Mannish peoples would probably not have achieved a sufficient level of complexity to run their own currency – the Hobbits, the Breefolk, the Beornings and so on do not seem to have had the need or ability to. One possible exception is Dale and Laketown – trading-focussed civilisations with major urban centres. They would certainly have required a currency to facilitate trade. In *The Hobbit,* where we have much description of Laketown, trade with the Elvenking and Smaug's hoard, there is, however, no mention of coinage. There is plenty of talk of "gold", "silver" and "gems", but nothing more specific. This perhaps suggests they were operating a bullion economy, or just that Tolkien did not feel it necessary to give more details on the nature of the precious metals. By the time of LOTR, though, it does seem more likely they may have had a currency, for reasons covered later. Given Gondor's pre-eminence though,[17] it is just as likely they might have used its currency

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[15] One could argue Númenor pre-everything going wrong was some sort of bucolic idyll where no one needed money. One suspects, however, that as things went downhill, people became more and more individualistic, miserly and wealth-obsessed, so money would have made an appearance, if only so unhappy people facing death could sit and count it and derive some consolation therefrom. Given Tolkien's ideas of "good" and "bad" things, that would seem to fit pretty well.

[16] The impression we get of Rohan is that there is an elite warrior class supported by a much larger body of farmers and herdsmen in some sort of vaguely feudal system – there is little evidence of significant urbanisation or specialisation outside the warriors. If indigenous currency was used, it seems more likely that it would be a bullion system.

[17] It was also presumably their main trading partner (excepting Erebor) via the Anduin.

as set up their own. Perhaps they did both – several modern countries have their own national currency but also use the US Dollar.[18] Regardless, the point is they would seem to have needed to use something.

How about non-human races? It seems unlikely the Elves would have dirtied their hands with anything as common as filthy lucre. More practically, it would seem the Elves of the Third Age had little need for currency – Rivendell, Mithlond and Lórien were all isolationists and had little contact with most of the outside world.[19] The Mirkwood Elves do seem to have had trading contacts with Laketown, based on the material in *The Hobbit*, which they must have paid for somehow, but it's unclear how – as mentioned above, some sort of bullion economy seems to have been in operation. It is not even certain this was specifically a financial trading arrangement, and not some kind of tribute sent to the Elvenking to maintain good relations.[20] This trade (let's call it that for convenience) seems to have been fairly small-scale and focussed on foodstuffs in any case, so it is possible it was based on bartering. There is no indication the Wood Elves had any other regular trading contacts so, if currency was used, it seems likely the Elves would have just kept reserves of whatever currency was in use in Laketown, rather than bothering to set up and maintain their own for a few barrels of apples and wine a year. It therefore seems unlikely that there was any major extant Elven currency in use in Middle-earth in the Third Age.[21]

The other major non-evil non-human race is, of course, the Dwarves. Here we have a race that is stereotypically fond of metals and that trades,[22] so seems likely to have both the materials for a currency (and the wherewithal to manage one) and the need for one. Certainly, the major Dwarven kingdoms – Erebor, Moria, the Iron Hills[23] – would not have functioned terribly effectively on a barter system. From what we're told, it seems Dwarves generally traded manufactures for food. As described above, this becomes tricky with bartering, as it's rather difficult to directly value a hammer in grain. At a small scale,[24] it might work, but for large kingdoms, this would have been far too unwieldy. It therefore

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[18] Normally because their own currency is worth very little internationally, so it becomes difficult to use it.

[19] Except each other, but you don't need currency for whatever psychic thing Elrond and Galadriel had going on.

[20] Would you want to tick off Thranduil, with his scary face, capricious temper and War Elk?

[21] In the First and Second Ages, of course, things would probably have been very different. The various Elven kingdoms certainly traded with the Dwarves and, presumably, with each other, so it's entirely possible they set up a currency, though, from what we're told in the text, this seems likely to have been some sort of Viking-esque bullion system. Rulers exchanging shiny things, basically. Ultimately, one gets the impression Elves at all times were largely self-sufficient and capable of making/growing anything they needed, on both an individual and collective scale. Therefore they had little need of trade and never really seem to have developed much of an economic system. The possible exception is the Gwaith-i-Mírdain of the Second Age, who were very Dwarf-influenced – more on Dwarves later.

[22] For more on Dwarven economy, trading and everything else Dwarf, consult the excellent series of articles by the current Steward, James II Nanophilos, in this issue, previous ones and, probably, later ones.

[23] You could perhaps add the Blue Mountains in here, but it doesn't feel that they had quite reached the stage of development or population where they would really need a currency.

[24] For example, Thorin's travelling band whilst they were wandering around Middle-earth after exile from Erebor doing odd bits of blacksmithing.

seems likely that the Dwarves (or, at least, most of the Dwarves) would have had to use some sort of currency.

The question then becomes: did they use their own? With the relative decline of the Dwarven kingdoms by the time of LOTR and the newness of the existing ones,[25] the answer is perhaps not. Given the likely existence and widespread distribution of a Gondorian/Arnorian currency and the fact that the two main Dwarvish kingdoms at the time of LOTR were founded during Gondorian pre-eminence in Middle-earth, they may not have bothered setting up their own one. On the other hand, given Gondor's increasing isolation and weakness throughout the last few centuries of the Third Age, it seems likely that supplies of currency would have been severely curtailed north of the White Mountains. It consequently seems reasonable to assume that the Dwarves would have had to produce their own, or copies of the Gondorian one, to ensure the trade critical to their prosperity was maintained.[26]

Overall, it seems three places in Middle-earth at the time of LOTR would have had a pressing need for currency: Gondor, Erebor (and Dale/Laketown) and the Iron Hills. All three places would probably have used some form of commodity currency, given their access to metals.[27] They may have used the same one, or had their own versions, necessitating some use of scales by Middle-earth's merchants, but, due to the lack of detailed information in this area, it is difficult to come to any definitive conclusion on this matter. For the purposes of this article, it is of little import whether the currencies were different – the important thing is that they seem likely to have existed and to have operated on a commodity basis.

Having established this, it is now necessary to look at how this currency might be managed. Before doing this, however, the perspicacious reader will have noticed the omission of Middle-earth's other major civilisation – Mordor and the Orcs. From descriptions in the books, it seems unlikely that Orcs, on their own, would have engaged in trading[28] or reached a sufficiently-advanced stage of economic development where they required currency. Under Sauron's overlordship, one gets the impression Mordor operated something of a planned command economy.[29] Sauron was sent tribute from his various dominions and this was then allocated as needs required. Labourers were all Orcs or slaves, so didn't require wages, and produced all that was required for Sauron's war effort. In

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[25] Erebor refounded was under a century old and the Iron Hills had only been in existence since the middle of the Third Age (being founded by exiles from Moria after that fell in T.A. 1981).

[26] It would also seem likely that Dwarven kingdoms of the First and Second Ages would have had to produce their own, given the likely relative disinterest of the Elves in such matters and the lack of major advanced Mannish kingdoms in Middle-earth at that time.

[27] The White Mountains in Gondor must have had metal deposits. At the very least, Gondor must have had access to significant quantities of iron for weaponry and armour. And Dwarven kingdoms are quite literally built on metal.

[28] As opposed to raiding. They certainly did plenty of that.

[29] In a sense, therefore, Sauron was a Communist.

return, they received food and shelter,[30] so money was not really required to buy anything, partly as there was nothing to buy. It therefore seems unlikely that Sauron or the Orcs would have ever really needed a currency and even more unlikely that one would have been developed. Everyone just did what Sauron said.[31]

Returning to the main thread of the argument, it is now necessary to discuss how any Middle-earth currency might be managed. Given the mention of silver pennies in LOTR, it seems likely that it would have taken the form of coinage. The first thing required for a coin-based currency is some way of ensuring standardised values/weights[32] and shapes are produced and that there is some sort of quality and supply control.[33] Otherwise, it's very easy for forgers to clip bits off coins, produce their own of lower quality and generally wreck the entire system. The main way to ensure this level of scrutiny and control is to set up one or more mints, depending on the geography of the issuing power and the amount of coinage required. Based on its geography and the order of magnitude of its population,[34] it seems reasonable Gondor would have had no more than two or three mints. One (the main one), originally, would presumably have been in Osgiliath; later moving to Minas Tirith as Osgiliath fell into ruin. Whilst the Osgiliath mint was operational, it would seem unlikely that Minas Anor or Minas Ithil would have had one of their own, given their proximity to Osgiliath. It also seems possible that there would have been a secondary mint at either Pelargir or Dol Amroth, the other main population centres of Gondor. Pelargir seems perhaps more likely, given its importance as a port, and, presumably, as a result, as a trading centre. On the other hand, Dol Amroth was almost a separate state, so it seems entirely possible that the Princes would have minted their own design of coins to the Gondorian standard,[35] so it is perhaps best to assume that all three locations would have had a mint. This means the further western reaches of Gondor would have had no mint, but these seem to have been sparsely populated and relatively undeveloped with no major population centres, so demand for currency would have been low.

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[30] Admittedly of awful quality, but the point is they didn't have to buy things.

[31] Thus giving rise to a popular party game, which through the ages and the rise of Christianity, has adopted a less striking name, with its dark and terrible origins being lost in the mists of time. If you lost a game of Sauron Says, you were out, in the sense of being out of life. Sauron didn't like minions incapable of following orders and doing exactly what he said.

[32] Given we're assuming this was commodity money, the two are effectively interchangeable.

[33] It's no good simply minting as many coins as you can, because you'll then devalue the currency. Someone needs to make sure there are enough coins as are required for trade and the economy to function well, but not too few or too many, otherwise the nominal face value of the coin and the actual value of the metal it's made from will diverge, which makes things economically difficult. Of course, with commodity money, the coins may not necessarily have a face value (and certainly don't need one), but you still need someone regulating supply to make sure the coins produced are of a sensible value. You don't want a situation where your top-weight gold pieces are being used by peasants to buy bread; nor one where they represent half the value of the kingdom.

[34] Hundreds of thousands, most likely. I'm not going to start speculating on the population size of Gondor, but given the size of its armies at the time of LOTR, something in the low hundreds of thousands seems most likely.

[35] In the same way that different parts of the UK have their own coin designs.

As far as the Dwarvish kingdoms go, one imagines these would have had one mint each, given that Dwarven populations tend to be relatively low and the kingdoms are spatially compact. It is also conceivable that, with the devastation of Erebor and Dale under Smaug, Laketown may have set up its own mint,[36] depending on whether it received enough currency for its reduced needs through trade with Gondor via the Vale of Anduin or with the Iron Hills down the Carnen.

The next thing required is some means of distributing the currency. It's all very well if it's sat in the mint, but it's not much use to anybody. Equally, it needs to be possible to remove coins from circulation if they're identified as forgeries, have become damaged or if there's an oversupply situation. This is where the real workload in running a currency is – it's relatively easy to set up a mint, but then keeping the whole system running is complex, hence why you need to have reached a certain level of development before undertaking it. There are several ways of doing this,[37] but, given the way Gondor and Dwarvish kingdoms were organised,[38] the main way was presumably through paying state employees[39] for goods and services (and, potentially, paying them wages), royal gifts to the nobility and similar. In turn, these people would pay others and so on, so that the coinage would work its way all the way down the social hierarchy and out across the kingdom and beyond. In terms of collecting and monitoring the supply of currency, the most likely way would be through taxes – these would be paid to the centre, which could then check the coins,[40] replace damaged ones and remove forged ones. This would obviously require a sophisticated administrative apparatus linked to the mints to ensure the coins were distributed correctly, taxes were collected and the supply of coinage was monitored and regulated appropriately. In other words, there must have been a load of Dwarven and Gondorian accountants hidden away somewhere.[41]

This distribution and monitoring model works very well within the kingdoms concerned, but what about outside, in the less-populated, less-centralised and less-economically developed regions of the West of Middle-earth? Specifically, how did those silver pennies[42] get to the Shire? It is of course possible that these silver pennies had

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[36] Presumably, the mint at Erebor would have produced enough for the entire area – it seems unlikely that both Dale and Erebor would have set one up at the same time, given their cordial relations and proximity.

[37] Mainly involving some sort of functioning banking system – somehow, one of those doesn't sound terribly likely in Middle-earth. The Central Bank of Gondor doesn't sound as if it would exist.

[38] I.e. with quite strong centralised monarchies.

[39] E.g. soldiers when called up, the monarch's household, anyone who provided goods to the ruling elite, etc. – not quite so formal as the term perhaps suggests.

[40] Some taxes would likely be paid in kind, but some would be coin-based. Enough for our purposes here, at least.

[41] These might have stood a good chance of being able to convert to, if not lion-, at least dragon- or Orc-taming (if you're staring in puzzlement at this footnote, search for "Monty Python Vocational Guidance Counsellor" on Youtube or similar).

[42] As an interesting aside, the fact that they're only pennies, yet still made of silver, suggests silver was relatively common in Middle Earth and formed the base of the currency system. It would seem likely that there would be higher-value coinage made from gold, but the existence of silver pennies suggests there was not a

survived from the time of Arnor, but it seems likely that not enough currency would have survived to fulfil the needs of the whole of Eriador. The intervening millennium would have meant the coinage would largely have been lost, stolen, hoarded or simply eroded by use over such a long time span without any renewal. There must therefore have been new currency entering the Shire, the Breeland and the surrounding areas.[43] Given that, by this period, Minhiriath and Enedwaith were pretty much desolate, it can't have been by direct trade with Gondor.[44] Indeed, the Hobbits didn't really do international trade. The most likely way the currency flow was maintained to the more remote parts of north-western Middle-earth at the time of LOTR was through the offices of the Dwarves. We know the Dwarves still used the East-West Road to get to their holds in the Blue Mountains[45] and that they passed through Bree and the Shire, so they could certainly have brought some currency with them. At any rate, they would have had to pay for lodgings, food and so on during their journey, so there would have been some currency transfer that way. However, this does not seem likely, on the face of it, to have furnished sufficient quantities of coinage for the entire population of Eriador to use on a daily basis.[46]

On the other hand, neither the Shire nor the Breeland had particularly large populations,[47] and, apart from the Rangers, they seem the only likely groups in Eriador to be using currency. It would also seem the Hobbits, internally, largely traded in kind. We know everyone gave and received gifts on birthdays, implying that transactions largely took the forms of favours and quid pro quos. Saying that, it seems unlikely that all the pubs gave out free drinks to their customers on the expectation of undefined future favours, so there must have been some level of daily cash use. The Breeland (or, at least, Bree), lying as it did on the Greenway and the East-West Road, must also have been more commercially-minded, though the presence of large inns, such as the Prancing Pony, would have led to significant

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lower tier, or, if there was, that it was for very low-value transactions. Bilbo's giving them away as presents to children also suggests the coins were quite common, suggesting currency was well-known and used in the Shire.

[43] As mentioned above, neither the Hobbits nor the Breefolk seem likely to have set up their own mint and attendant central administrative functions. We certainly know the Hobbits had very little in the way of central government and the Breeland seems to have been similarly decentralised. Also, it just doesn't seem right – none of the Hobbit or Breelander characters seem remotely interested in dealing with the complexities of a centralised currency.

[44] There was trade south from the Shire to Isengard, but this was in relatively limited quantity, as far as we can tell. It is still possible some coinage entered the Shire this way, but it wouldn't have been very much, assuming Saruman even paid for things.

[45] These don't seem to have been major enough to have had their own mint, but it is a remote possibility.

[46] The silver pennies used by the Hobbits do not seem to have been anything extraordinary, implying that coinage was a well-known and familiar concept.

[47] Trying to work out Middle-earth populations is a particularly contentious area of debate. Given Saruman's army of 10,000 was, apparently, unimaginably large (in probably more populous Rohan), the population of Eriador was likely on the same order of magnitude. The Breeland was four villages, which could not have had populations of more than a few thousand each, and the Shire, whilst probably more populous, does not seem likely to have been anywhere near 100,000. The Rangers' populations, meanwhile, seems unlikely to have been much over 1000 – the Grey Company of 30 men seems to have been a reasonable portion of their armed strength. The point is, the entire coin-using population of Eriador was probably equivalent to a large town today – somewhere in the range 20,000-70,000.

currency extraction from all travellers (by the time of LOTR, presumably mainly Dwarves). This may well have been enough to supply the relatively limited currency requirements of the area.[48] Going back to the Shire, though, it does seem reasonable that Hobbits would have had a very low level of coin loss. We know they never throw things away, that the Shire was virtually crime-free and that Hobbits rarely left the country, so coins being lost or taken out of circulation must have been very rare. Given what would seem to be very low levels of daily use, wear and tear would also have been limited, so the Shire, even with only low inputs of new currency from Bree and the occasional travelling group of Dwarves, might well have been able to rapidly build up a sufficient quantity of currency and keep it in circulation. Of course, this unregulated and small-scale system (in both the Shire and the Breeland) would have been vulnerable to swings in the value of the currency – for example, if a particularly large and free-spending group of Dwarves passed through,[49] they could depress the currency for a few years – but, given the apparent low levels of monetisation of the economy, this does not seem likely to have caused any major problems. We also know that the Shire and the Breeland appear to have been largely stable and isolated since the fall of Arnor,[50] so it seems likely that currency shocks would have been few and far between.

There is another possibility: the Dwarves had set up a banking system. One imagines they would certainly have been intellectually capable of doing so and, with them sitting on what presumably constituted a significant portion of Middle-earth's exploited metal reserves, they would have been capable of maintaining a stable financial system and currency with plenty of capital lying around to lend to anyone in need. Equally, they would have a great deal of readymade vaults lying around to store all the gold in or hoard currency if oversupply became a problem. Based on the assumption Dwarves minted their own coins (either completely their own or on some sort of licence from Gondor to use theirs), some of the travelling bands of Dwarves could have effectively worked as peripatetic banks, carrying stocks of coins and setting up a bank for a day in any settlements they passed through. And with lots of axe-wielding Dwarves around, security on the road or in the town would hardly have been a problem.[51] Such things are not mentioned at all, but it would provide a plausible mechanism for the distribution of currency to more remote parts of Middle-earth in the greater required quantities than would seem likely to be provided just by paying for room and board. The Dwarves could also collect damaged coins, confiscate forgeries and so on, replacing them with new genuine currency. It therefore seems that we can thank the

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[48] Given something like half of the Breeland's population was made up of Hobbits, who presumably operated on much the same gifts-and-favours basis as their cousins in the Shire.

[49] Singing "Gold, gold, gold, gold" with a chorus of "Gold, gold, gold, gold".

[50] With the exception of the Fell Winter and maybe one or two other incidents.

[51] Neither would debt collection. If you owed money and heard "Baruk Khazâd! Khazâd ai-mênu!" followed by an axe breaking through your door, you'd probably pay up sharpish.

Dwarves, in one way or another, for the spread and maintenance of currency outside Gondor.[52]

In conclusion, based on Middle-earth's population size and level of development, it seems likely that some parts of it would have required a currency, most probably a commodity system. Specifically, Gondor and the larger Dwarven kingdoms (Erebor and the Iron Hills) seem almost certain to have required one, as would have Arnor, before it was destroyed. It is also quite likely Dale/Laketown would have used one. It is possible that everyone was aligned to the Gondorian standard, or that each kingdom set up its own one, but it seems likely that Gondor would have had three mints, with one each in Erebor and the Iron Hills, and possibly another one in Laketown, regardless of the exact relationship between the different areas' currencies. Other regions of Middle-earth (including Eriador, all the Elvish realms and Mordor and affiliates) seem likely to have been too sparsely-populated or too uninterested in trade to have gone to the bother of setting up and maintaining their own currency. Instead, the remaining money-using populations outside these core areas would have been supplied currency through trade. Men in the Vale of Anduin would have trafficked with both Laketown/Erebor and Gondor, whilst the Breefolk, Hobbits and Rangers of Eriador would have been supplied through trade with passing Dwarves (who possibly moonlighted as bankers) going to and from the Blue Mountains. In other words, it seems fair to say that Eriador, at least, was on the Glod Standard.[53]

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[52] If we accept the Blue Mountains had a mint too, then this would maybe provide enough currency for Eriador such that all the above speculation is redundant. However, as stated earlier, the Dwarven settlements there seem perhaps a little bit too small to require a mint. Their growth was also comparatively recent, so wouldn't have been able to provide currency since the fall of Arnor.

[53] Over 6000 words and several hours of work were definitely not an excuse to get that pun in. Definitely not. If you have not read any Pratchett, it will also not make any sense to you. I'm making certain assumptions about the CTS membership here.

Middle-earth and Reality:
A brief comparison of dates and theses

James Baillie

I give here, for interest's sake, a brief comparison of dates between Middle-earth and reality, if we take the assumption that Middle-earth's present corresponds to roughly 1200 AD (those writers on these matters who prefer to assume Middle-earth's society more closely resembles that of the eighteenth century may freely shift these dates 500 years along if they so wish).

Whilst a more detailed argument on my selection of 1200 may need to wait, I shall give a few points of reasoning here. Middle-earth's society appears not only to be pre-industrial, but also essentially medieval. Power in human society is primarily held according to resource control, where the key resource is land; in Hobbit society a similar statement can be made. Dwarven culture has a more commercialised basis, but this is very much the commercialisation of the guild and the artisan not the capitalist and worker. Of course, the analogy is far from perfect and is open to challenge, but I believe it is nonetheless of interest, with the following results:

Middle-earth		Reality-date	Events circa this point
FA 1/1	First Age Starts	5850 BC	
SA 1	Second Age Starts	5260 BC	
SA 600	Voyages of Númenóreans	4660 BC	Late Neolithic begins – wheel and proto-writing exist
SA 1000	Mordor founded		
SA 1200	Númenórean coastal settlement starts	4060 BC	Fertile Crescent civilisations begin
SA 1697	War of Elves and Sauron	3563 BC	Uruk period in Sumer
SA 1800	Númenórean settlements expand	3460 BC	Writing invented
SA 2280	Umbar fortified	2980 BC	Bronze Age, Egyptian First Dynasty, papyrus in use
SA 2350	Pelargir built	2910 BC	
SA 3175	Númenórean Civil War	2085 BC	Xia dynasty in China, earliest known use of steel
SA 3262	Sauron defeated by Númenor	1998 BC	Horses widely domesticated
SA 3319/20	Fall of Númenor, foundation of Arnor and Gondor	1940 BC	
TA 1/2	Third Age starts, Gladden Fields disaster	1818 BC	Alphabet writing in use
TA 500	Easterling invasion	1318 BC	Iron working begins to spread rapidly
TA 861	Division of Arnor	957 BC	

TA 1050	Gondor conquers Harad, height of Gondorian power. Migration of Periannath.	768 BC	Rome founded, first Olympics, Assyrian Empire
TA 1100	Dol Guldur fortified	718 BC	Rise of the Median Empire
TA 1300	Angmar founded, Dwarves attacked in Misty Mountains	518 BC	Roman Republic, Athenian Democracy, Darius the Great in Persia
TA 1432	Kin-Strife in Gondor	386 BC	Aristotle, Wars of Greek City-States
TA 1551	Gondor-Harad war	267 BC	Mauryan Empire
TA 1601	Shire founded	217 BC	Blast furnaces, Great Wall of China
TA 1636	Great Plague	182 BC	Sunga Empire, Punic Wars
TA 1810	Recapture of Umbar	8 BC	Roman Empire, Birth of Jesus, Rome conquers Egypt
TA 1974	Arthedain overrun, Fall of Moria	156 AD	Hadrian, stabilisation of Roman Imperial borders
TA 2050	Stewards rule in Gondor	232 AD	Rise of the Sassanids, Warring States period nears end in China
TA 2510	Celebrant, Calenardhon becomes Rohan	692 AD	Islamic conquest of North Africa
TA 2590	Thror returns to Erebor	772 AD	Viking raids, Charlemagne
TA 2758	Long Winter, end of Rohirric First Line, Saruman in Isengard	940 AD	Ummayad Caliphate, rise of Ottonians in Germany
TA 2770	Smaug destroys Erebor and Dale	952 AD	Battle of the Lechfeld, Otto I becomes Emperor
TA 2890	Haradrim attack Gondor	1072 AD	Normans conquer England; Byzantines defeated at Manzikert, losing Anatolia
TA 2912	Tharbad ruined by great floods	1094 AD	First Crusade preached
TA 2941	Battle of Five Armies, Dol Guldur abandoned	1123 AD	Knights Templar founded, Oxford University founded, First Lateran Council
TA 2951	Reoccupation of Mordor, Ithilien abandoned	1133 AD	Formal creation of Kingdom of Sicily, Stephen & Matilda plunge England into civil war
TA 3018-19	War of the Ring	1200 AD	Third & Fourth Crusades, first Shogun in Japan

There are certainly interesting points this throws up with regard to the long-continued debate over technology in Middle-earth, and so I shall spend the rest of the paper discussing these. Firstly and most importantly, this shows fairly clearly that it is not

necessarily the case that the peoples of Middle-earth should have been banging rocks together for the entirety of the first two ages – copper working existed in reality at a date earlier than the start of the first age, as did domestication of some animals, and advanced polities and settlements. Nevertheless it is obviously the case that Elfin and Dwarven technology in particular greatly outstripped that of human cultures of their relative time periods, most notably in metallurgy.[1] It is hard to clearly say if there were significant advancements outside the realms of weapon-smithing; more discussions of elfin technological development are needed to further this discussion.

The regular human peoples of Middle-earth, with the exception of the Númenóreans, seem to have actually had a much more "realistic" developmental path. Tal-Elmar is our key source here for second age humanity,[2] indicating that clubs and knives[3] were the main weapons for human populations living in small townships; a sword was a rare and prized war trophy.[4] This fits very well with it being at around the time of the founding of Pelargir,[5] where in our equivalent time metalworking was at an early stage. Ironworking and steel weapons would be expected as common by early in the Third Age; again, the Númenórean ruling classes of Arnor and Gondor were probably better equipped than most of their subject peoples, and it may well be the case that, as Númenórean armaments seem to have solely come by ship,[6] metalworking and other key Númenórean abilities may have been heavily reliant upon resources and skills from their homeland with minimal productive capacity in colonies that were primarily used as sources of raw materials and tribute.

In the Third Age, there is far more convergence with the timeline for all humans from about TA 500 – with Middle-earth's usual quirks of slightly more advanced metallurgy taken into account. In terms of social structures, development seems relatively consistent in the Third Age, with the dwindling of the Elves and the population instability of the Dwarves leading to probable losses in the most advanced areas of technology. A few areas are notably still unexplored – mechanisation is hinted at under Saruman, possibly in the form of steam boilers to power simple machinery, but the completeness of the destruction of Isengard's workshops by Treebeard makes this more an isolated blip – a Da Vinci moment rather than something widely adopted.

For the remainder of this paper, I have outlined a few theses that have been advanced as reasons for the limited technological development of Middle-earth, with a brief analysis of each. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but will provide, I hope, a good basis for potential further discussions.

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[1] Steel use and chainmail being particular first age examples, see Baillie, Dwarven Economy and Society II (Anor 42).

[2] Indeed almost our only one that does not wholly privilege Númenórean perspectives.

[3] The Peoples of Middle Earth, p. 431.

[4] Ibid, p. 424.

[5] Ibid, p. 422.

[6] As with both of Ar-Pharazôn's major expeditions.

The Species-Depression Thesis

This posits the centrality of the Dwarves and, more particularly, the Elves as a factor in restricting technological progress. Elves, clearly, are something of a race apart from Dwarves, Hobbits, and Men; their relatively minimal needs, immunity to disease, and lack of adverse population pressures alleviated the need for significant technological innovation on their part beyond the level needed to fight wars against Morgoth or Sauron. They did, however, undoubtedly engage in significant amounts of trade with their human and Dwarf neighbours or neighbour-subjects, thus potentially depressing the ability or instinct of those neighbours to develop productive capacity for those products. Likewise in Dwarf-dominated polities and alliances, such as the Upper Anduin alliance or the links between Erebor and Dale, human weapon production would have been minimised as a result of Dwarf domination of smithying and similarly high dwarf living standards. The analogies to history can be made in terms of colonial powers, with similar processes in particular in evidence in European-Native American relations whereby reliance on European imports decreased native productive capacity except for crucial trade goods.

Despite the apparent explanatory power of this thesis, it has significant flaws. The Dwarves, unlike the Elves, were not immortal, and thus should be expected to display technological changes and development.[7] Furthermore and most importantly, the Elves were in general few in numbers, and were not in frequent contact with the vast majority of human or dwarf populations (being concentrated after the First Age in a few centres such as Lórien, Lindon, northern Mirkwood, and Eregion/Imladris). Not only that, but the Elves would not necessarily have produced many things useful to humans in agriculture, trade or warfare where those were unnecessary for their own lifestyles.

The Resources Thesis

The essence of this thesis is extremely simple – it posits that Middle-earth simply lacks or is very shot of certain resources that permitted development in our world, with sulphur or saltpetre being major candidates (thus preventing gunpowder being effectively developed). There are some key problems with this, however – not least the clear presence of explosives in the form of fireworks and Saruman's bombs at Helm's Deep, and the presence of highly effective metallurgy in the form of Dwarven work.

In addition, it is very unclear that we should expect natural resources to be a key factor in the *creation* of certain technologies, though it is important to draw a distinction between this and their *adoption*. Saruman's forges in Isengard were fuelled by the deforestation of a vast area of woodland, but given the relative burning speeds of wood and coal this would have been unsustainable in the long term; for a technology to be adopted in

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[7] Which, I would argue, they in fact do, as explained by my theory of eastward drift. Nonetheless this is slower than one might otherwise expect, primarily owing to the lack of specialisation and demographic weakness that tended to be inherent in Dwarf society.

the long run there admittedly does need to be a consistent rather than intermittent supply of relevant resources. This, however, is likely to be secondary to the social necessity of adoption; the political structures of Middle-earth lack the necessary resource control and centralisation to create pressure for the widespread adoption of existing technology.

The Generational Thesis

This restricts the expected speed of technological advancement by linking it to generations rather than time. This is greatly helpful in restricting "effective time", particularly in Númenórean and Elf terms, but is also problematic – if anything, longer lifespan should potentially increase the technologically productive capacity of a species as their greatest innovators will be able to work for longer. This certainly seems to have been the case with human innovators, and so the generational thesis will not suffice unless an argument can be made as to why the Dwarven or Elven psyche should be somehow moribund by comparison.

The Eastward Drift Thesis & Natural Disasters

I am not sure the idea of eastward drift has been suggested previously, so I shall do so here. It is not a full explanation for events by any means, but it may be a useful partial one. Essentially I suspect that there was minimal technological flow eastwards from Beleriand in the First Age. This made the shock of lost technological ability all the greater at the start of the Second Age, coupled as it was with the loss of large numbers of Elf craftspeople. This is particularly of note with regards to Dwarf crafts, where metallurgy and stonework were most needed in the war-heavy regions of the far west of Middle-earth; the caves of Moria were likely still a prosperous but technologically backward culture compared to the trading-focussed Nogrod and Belegost. Beyond the Misty Mountains human cultures were likely to have been predominantly Mesolithic. Moria then gained its technological pre-eminence in the Second Age, but the fluctuations and fragility of Dwarf population structures and a lack of transfer of technological skills to their nearby human auxiliary populations.

Similarly, and more importantly, eastward drift in the Second Age should be considered. Númenórean levels of technology, by this thesis, and as backed up by Tal-Elmar, failed to penetrate into Middle-earth's hinterlands from their coastal fortresses. The populations of Middle-earth seem to have been, at least in the later period, taken as slaves in significant numbers[8] - population drift was therefore westward, with minimal movement of people and ideas inland. The resident populations of much of Middle-earth were stuck with at best minimal metalworking skills, exacerbated perhaps by reliance on imports from

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[8] The Peoples of Middle-earth, p. 427. Hazad Longbeard's theses of sacrifice and food seem highly improbable if we are to place this, as Tolkien does, at the time when the Elendili created permanent havens such as Pelargir. The practice of human sacrifice was very much a feature only of the last days of Númenor. The only reasonably plausible option for large-scale captives must surely be as a labour force, showing a particularly dark side to Númenórean Imperialism.

the Númenóreans, elves, or dwarves. The loss of Númenor destroyed the majority of Númenor's skills base and technological advancement; the early kingdoms of the heirs of Elendil were boosted on a short boom from the transfer of some Númenórean abilities, but without the resources and numbers of skilled craftsmen available in Númenor this could not be maintained or easily replicated. As such, in the Third Age we see the Númenóreans "reverting" towards what can be considered a "natural" rate of human technological development.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined a variety of theses around technological change in Middle-earth, though it is probably somewhat clear that I favour the idea of eastward drift and natural phenomena in restricting the flow of technological progress, perhaps mixed with analyses based upon the social factors in the adoption of particular technologies. It is clear there is a great deal more that could be said on specific aspects of this topic, but I hope that this paper may have given fuel and a broad canvas on which the details of long-term technological development may be sketched.

Manen lambë quendion ahyanë?
How did the language of Elves change?

Jamie Douglas

Introduction

Tolkien called his linguistic invention his 'secret vice'. He is not the only person to have invented one or more languages, but he is unusual in that his languages, and especially his Elvish languages, have an elaborate and detailed history as well. Starting with a series of Eldarin roots, Tolkien could build a lexicon and then apply a series of phonological changes to the system resulting in language change and diversification over apparent historical time. The result is a language or family of related languages and dialects replete with all the regularities and irregularities of extant human languages. Working out the series of phonological changes and the state of the ancestral language from the systematic correspondences of forms in the daughter languages is the task of the historical linguist/philologist.

The strange thing is that the Elves are immortal and have far-reaching memories so would either preserve their language for millennia (Elvish children would have a long time to learn all the subtleties of their parents' language) or be able to remember what their language was like centuries or even millennia ago. For these reasons, the title question was put by Ælfwine the Mariner to Pengoloð the Wise of Gondolin.

A related question is why the discipline of philology and comparative historical linguistics exists among the Elves. We might think that Elvish philology was a matter of introspection or of asking your elders what their language was like (in the Elves' case, there may well have been Elves who were there at the first invention of language!), but Pengoloð denies this. Indeed, Pengoloð's answer (*dangweth Pengoloð*) to Ælfwine's question itself questions the underlying assumption that Elves, being immortal, ought to have an immortal language, which is based on the false equation of immortality (within Eä) with immutability or unchangingness.

In this short piece, I'll summarise Pengoloð's answer and point out what his answer suggests about the nature of Elvish linguistics. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Elvish approach to historical linguistics matches the theories that Tolkien would have been familiar with, but there is an interesting dimension to all of this. Just as Tolkien took modern-day nonsensical nursery rhymes such as Hey Diddle Diddle and reconstructed and fleshed out the 'original', Tolkien not only reconstructs the historical stages of the Elvish languages, he also personifies the changes. The course a language takes through time in his subcreated world is the conscious result of the culture and aesthetic of the people who speak that language. The Elvish languages and Elvish language change thus embody Tolkien's theories of linguistic aesthetic and of the relationship between language and people.

The *dangweth Pengoloð* (Pengoloð's answer) can be decomposed into a number of distinct but interrelated arguments: (1) everything in Eä is inherently changeable, (2) constant artistic invention defends against world-weariness, (3) linguistic changes in Elvish and the tongues of Men are notably similar in appearance but are the result of conscious design in the former and of unknown origin in the latter, and (4) the Elves are constantly translating their memories into their present language, hence do not remember their past manner of speaking and thus, when populations of Elves are sundered, their languages will tend to diverge. Let's consider each of these points in turn.

"Within Eä all things change"

Essentially, the first argument is a syllogism:

Within Eä all things change
Elvish (as the artistic creation of Elves) is within Eä
Therefore, Elvish changes

Pengoloð observes that Men's accents and vocabulary change not just over generations but over individual lifetimes as well. If Men had the lifespans of Elves, Pengoloð suggests that we would be more aware of this aspect of language change. Since Men have comparably short lifetimes, the locus of language change is more readily attributed to children imperfectly learning the language of the older generation (since after a time, the older generation is no longer alive to remind the younger generation how their language used to be). This bias in thinking is still around in conceptual approaches to language acquisition and transmission in modern real-world linguistics.

If, however, we were to focus on linguistic changes within a lifetime, we would see that they are ubiquitous. It is thus unsurprising that the speech of Elves should change over their lifetimes. The question, of course, is what drives such changes.

Weariness of the unchanged

According to Pengoloð, language consists in sound-meaning associations. When these associations become conventionalised, they are essentially "dying and joyless". Pengoloð claims that sounds want to associate with new thoughts and that thoughts want to associate with new sounds. This constant regeneration of the association between sound and meaning is the lifeblood of a living language. After all, a language that does not change is typically dead.

This same principle of constant regeneration applies to slang. Slang words are rapidly created, have a short lifespan and are then replaced by new slang. Slang may not necessarily be deemed as poetic as the things Tolkien/Pengoloð had in mind for Elvish, but the idea is that social groups invent a vocabulary that helps to consolidate their group identity. This, in part, provides the will and drive to associate new sounds with old meanings and new

meanings with old sounds. The will and drive of the Elves is the same even if it has a different, more 'artistic' source. In the words of Pengoloð: "for to Eldar the making of speech is the oldest of the arts and the most beloved".

So, we know now that change is inevitable and results from the drive to constantly renew sound-meaning associations. Such renewals are not random, however, as we know from the regularities in language change. This leads to the next question: what counts as a possible change and why?

Types of change

Pengoloð claims that the Elves wilfully or consciously alter sounds to either more pleasant sounds or to 'unstaled' ones. This differs from typical real-world sound changes. Firstly, there is the problem of what counts as 'more pleasant' since this is inevitably highly subjective. Secondly, there is the problem of conscious sound change. It is true that we are able to consciously change the sounds we use, e.g. when we change or imitate accents, or when we exaggerate an accent to show adherence to a particular social group, but it is unclear whether this actually results in long-lasting change. In fact, Pengoloð claims that Men and Elves may be different in this respect. He observes that the sound changes in the speech of Men and Elves are remarkably similar but that Elves change their speech through conscious choice whilst Men seem to do so unwittingly. He points out that Elves have different theories about this. Some claim that the changes in Men's speech are not completely subconscious and may reflect the idea that Men learned the linguistic art from the Elves. However, others like Pengoloð remain agnostic since the minds of Men are not well understood by the Eldar.

Given this explanation for how Elvish sound change works, we could expect there to be changes in Elvish which are unattested in the languages of Men (on the assumption that Men do not consciously change their speech). We might also be tempted to think that Elvish would be full of random sound changes affecting individual words, but Pengoloð says this is not what is found and proposes an essentially structuralist account of why this is so. He claims that Elves have a great and inherent awareness of the whole system of their language. They also admire "in a tongue rather the skilled and harmonious use of a few well-balanced sounds than profusion ill-ordered". This in fact suggests that Elves consciously make their sound system (their phonology) as economic and efficient as possible. Again, the same is found in real-world languages, but notions such as economy and efficiency are not generally thought to be *conscious* considerations in language design. A related notion is that of functional load. Individual sounds are useful (i.e. have a high functional load) because of the contrasts they establish with one another (this being a key tenet of linguistic structuralism). If two contrastive sounds in a system only serve to contrast a very small number of words, the contrast is not being used efficiently. If this is so, the Elves might be expected either to eliminate the contrast from their language or to start using the contrast more efficiently.

Since efficiency and economy make reference to the system as a whole, Elves are argued not to change sounds in individual words but rather in the system as a whole. This gives rise to the Neogrammarian Hypothesis, which Tolkien would have been well aware of. It is one of the founding principles of modern historical linguistics and states that sound change is regular and exceptionless. In other words, sound changes are not random and do not apply on a word-by-word basis (evidently Tolkien/Pengoloð did not subscribe to lexical diffusion models of phonological change!).

Interestingly, Pengoloð also states that very often it is possible to pinpoint the individual who innovated a particular sound shift. This really personifies sound changes. For example, historical linguists will be well acquainted with the sound change known as Grimm's Law, which is a set of reconstructed sound changes mapping the systematic correspondences between Proto-Indo-European stop consonants and Proto-Germanic stop and fricative consonants. Grimm's Law does not refer to the person who initiated this sound shift, but rather to the linguist (Jacob Grimm of the Brothers Grimm) who reconstructed these changes. Given the Elvish ability to identify particular individuals with particular phonological innovations, however, we might imagine an Elf thinking that Grimm's Law was named after the person who was responsible for the sound change itself. Reconstructed phonological changes thus take on a character all of their own in Elvish historical linguistics, in a notably similar way that Tolkien's 'reconstructed' nursery rhymes do.

This leads to the final question: why do Elves need to reconstruct the ancestral forms of their language? Couldn't they just remember how they used to speak?

Coirëa quenya *"living speech"*

The notion of *coirëa quenya* (or 'living speech') is used by Pengoloð to explain why philology exists at all amongst the Elves. If the Elves could simply remember how they used to speak or could simply listen to someone from an older generation to see (or hear) what they sound like, why would Elves need to bother reconstructing their older forms of speech? Pengoloð argues that the Elves adopt a *coirëa quenya* for themselves, i.e. a language for thinking, imagining and remembering. When they recall a memory involving a past form of the 'same' language, the speech of that memory is translated into their current *coirëa quenya* rather than being remembered in its past form. That is not to say that all speech is translated in this way. If it is another language that they have learned in the past, Elves are good at remembering it, but, as Pengoloð says, their memory of the other language is akin to a well-preserved dictionary and grammar book. The language that they use in everyday life is constantly changing so that there is no reference point to go back to. This constant changing of their *coirëa quenya* means that their memories are being constantly translated/updated, thus Elves can no longer access the language they are using as it used to be. This is what makes philology among the Elves a genuine process of (re)discovery.

Furthermore, this means that when populations of Elves are sundered for extended periods of time, their languages will diverge, as expected.

Conclusion

We have seen that the languages of the Elves inevitably change and that these changes are largely part of conscious artistry. However, the Elves cannot be expected to simply remember the order of these changes of the types of changes that were implemented – philology and comparative historical linguistics is required to reconstruct them.

As a final thought, consider what might happen to Galadriel on returning into the West at the end of the Third Age. She has not been in contact with Valinor for about seven thousand years – the language she calls Quenya may thus have changed beyond recognition! Happily for her, though with some bittersweetness, Pengoloð says that for the Elves in the Ancient West "in memory is the greater part of our being: so that now we preserve rather than make anew … here at last in Eressëa our tongues are steadfast". Recall that a language that does not change is no longer a living language. Perhaps this is a metaphor for death, or perhaps the Elves have more literally shifted the goals of their artistry from (sub-)creation to preservation and in doing so feel less at home in the ever-changing world of this Middle-earth.

Can Treebeard be Trusted?
Some Musings on a Shockingly Suspicious Character

Jack Fleming

"The whole wood is full of her spies. Even some of the Trees are on her side." In the world of Narnia, explored in the works of Tolkien's close friend, C.S. Lewis, woods as a whole, and also individual trees (personified as Dryads), are divided between two sides, with clear cut good vs. evil dichotomies. Middle-earth tends to be a little less black and white, but it is obvious that some places can take on an evil nature, woods included (e.g. Mirkwood), while some characters – notably successive Dark Lords and their various henchmen, alongside certain other beings corrupted by Melkor – can be wholly evil, to the extent that their possession of souls has even been questioned. Some characters, however, seem above reproach. I've got news for you. *Nobody* is above reproach.

I take here Treebeard as a case study; an Ent traditionally seen by those studying the histories of the Third Age as one of the great movers and shakers, and as crucial in assisting in the defeat and downfall of Sauron. However, returning to our most vital source for the history of the great days, the Red Book of Westmarch, it becomes clear that Treebeard's character and actions are far more ambiguous than is often remembered.[1]

- Before we are introduced to Treebeard, Celeborn the *Wise* warns that the fellowship should not "risk becoming entangled in the Forest of Fangorn" [*The Fellowship of the Ring*, Farewell to Lórien, p.364]; the Elven Lord is aware of some threat he does not choose to reveal.
- Similarly, Aragorn is aware that there is more to the forest than meets the eye, comparing it to the Barrow Downs [*The Two Towers,* The Riders of Rohan, 431], where the Hobbits were almost killed (and were only saved by the intervention of the *good* Tom Bombadil). Such a comparison must suggest that the two forests are alike in nature and not to be trusted.
- Gimli (who has something of a spider-sense for the unnatural, as made clear by his response to entering the Paths of the Dead [*The Return of the King,* The Passing of the Grey Company, 768-770]) clearly has some misgivings about Fangorn, saying he does "not wish to know" the forest's secrets [*The Two Towers*, The Riders of Rohan, 431-432]. In the same context, the group's horses flee Fangorn. One can't help but wonder what could cause such misgivings.
- Once Merry and Pippin enter the forest, they are beset by a "queer stifling feeling" [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 450], suggesting that the very air they breathe is somehow spoiled. The most that can be said is that, in sunlight, the more optimistic (and youthful) of the two hobbits "almost felt he liked the place".

- Treebeard at last introduces himself, or rather, interrupts the Hobbits' discussion, unannounced in a fashion which is both rude and hasty, (out of character, unless his 'character' is, in fact, a façade). Clearly Treebeard lacks manners, initially refusing to state his name, and only doing so a page later [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 452-3], hardly the hallmark of a hero.

- Furthermore, he has several aliases [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 453], suggesting he is involved in suspicious activities of some form. He obviously has something to hide.

- Similarly, he has several homes [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 455]. How did he afford such large amounts of property – I don't know, but I doubt it was through legitimate business ventures.

- Treebeard makes it obvious that his allegiances are flexible at best, saying "I don't know about *sides*. I go my own way" [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 455 (Tolkien's emphasis)], and further noting that he has "not much troubled about the Great Wars", and that he is "not altogether on anybody's *side*". His guiding principle, if he has one at all, is self-interest.

- His attention does not even extend to the trees he is supposed to guard. Yes, he laments (in sight of the Hobbits, in order to get them on side) the felling of trees by Saruman, but confesses that he has been idle, not doing anything in response until two outsiders come and force his hand [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 462-463].

- At one point, Treebeard even tries to suggest that Lórien is in fact the more dangerous of the two forests [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 456], in a blatant attempt to try to detract attention from his clearly questionable scent.

- After three days of negotiation, the Ents, led of course by Treebeard, finally start to march on Isengard [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 469-474]. Why did they take three days? So, it will become clear, they could hatch a plan to save Saruman.

- Gandalf compares the rousing of the Ents to an Avalanche [*The Two Towers*, The White Rider, 485] – hardly a trustworthy and positive collective identity.

- The Ents' destruction of Isengard is wanton vandalism. They seriously damage an ancient, Gondorian architectural gem, which dated back to the Second Age, but do not in any way harm either Saruman, or his deputy Wormtongue, who held collective responsibility for the destruction of the trees, which was the 'official' reason for the war. Strange that I should think of the 2003 Iraq war at this point …

- In fact, Treebeard "has taken over the management of Isengard" [*The Two Towers*, The Road to Isengard, 543], suggesting that the true motivation was money. Treebeard is, at best, a private military contractor who is lining his bark-pockets.

- The Ents do not, however, break down the door or walls to Orthanc itself. The official story is that the stone is too smooth for them to grip, perhaps because of Saruman's magic [*The Two Towers*, Flotsam and Jetsam, 554]. However, it is basic physics that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Hit Orthanc hard enough, and it will break. Clearly this is just a convenient excuse to save Treebeard from having to do anything to Saruman, his partner in crime.

- After the departure of Aragorn and Company, Treebeard is left in control of Orthanc, being told that "Saruman must not be allowed to escape" by Gandalf [*The Two Towers*, The Voice of Saruman, 572]. Treebeard, however, does not heed this order. At some point between the destruction of Isengard, and the return of the Hobbits west, Saruman was let go by Treebeard, who, when quizzed on the topic, first gave Gandalf an "almost cunning look", and then proceeded to obfuscate at some length before revealing Saruman's release [*The Return of the King*, Many Partings, 957-958]. No doubt he recognised his actions were in violation of his orders from the Rohirric Council of War.

- I suggest that, more than just disobeying order for profit, Saruman's release was part of a grand plot, begun before the march of the Ents. By orchestrating the *apparent* defeat of Saruman at home, Saruman was saved from more serious repercussions after the Battle of Helm's Deep. Saruman clearly gained from this, and was able to take the opportunity to secure control (however short-lived) of the valuable, pipe-weed-producing Shire.

- But what did Treebeard gain from all this, apart from far greater power to the south of his forest? The answer is that Treebeard was motivated by jealous passion. Early on, it is made clear how much Treebeard laments the loss of the Entwives [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 464]. Furthermore, Treebeard suggests that the Entwives would have liked the Shire, desiring "order, plenty and peace", which fits with an environment which has been subject to agricultural development, while there are hints that the Old Forest is at least partly Entish [*The Two Towers*, Treebeard, 461, 464; *The Fellowship of the Ring,* The Old Forest, 108]. Saruman's rule of the Shire was motivated by a desire to find the Entwives, but the overall outcome was serious environmental damage and the death of at least twenty Hobbits.

- There is another draw beyond the general living environment of the Shire which would attract the lithe Entwives away from the stuffy Ents and their homeland. One of the most famous landmarks in Hobbiton, if not the whole Shire, is the Party Tree. The *Party* Tree, a tree which likes to *party*. Like teenagers drawn to a college fraternity, the obvious explanation for the Entwives disappearance is that they ran off to join the Party (Tree). One of the outcomes of Saruman's brief rule was the felling, nay, the *murder* of the Party Tree (alongside many other trees), [*The Return of the King*, The Scouring of the Shire, 993]. By their unholy alliance, Treebeard was able to secure his sought-after revenge on the tree which stole his Entwives, while Saruman was granted a reprieve on repercussion for his grand bid for power over Middle-earth, and was able to continue to play the power-hungry maniac …

Clearly, Treebeard is at best a secretive and untrustworthy fellow with much to hide and some very questionable business enterprises. At worst he is responsible for the deaths of a significant number of Hobbits, and the very trees he ought to protect. His position as a hero is completely untenable.

Secessionary Success?
The Debate on Scottish Independence as applied to Middle-earth

Samuel Cook

As most of the non-troglodytic (Gollumitic?) among you will know, this September sees the long-awaited referendum on Scottish independence take place. After this proved a popular topic of conversation among some of the older members at this year's Annual Dinner, I wondered what we could expect if a similar situation were to occur in Middle-earth. Here therefore is a short piece of even-more-speculative-than-usual-for-me pseudo-historical Middle-earth analysis.

The first thing to consider is which area of Middle-earth most closely resembles the UK in its political structure and where secession could occur.[1] This is made rather difficult by the fact that many "countries" in Middle-earth have rather vague borders, being separated by large amounts of uninhabited wilderness, and also appear to have next to no central government. The Shire would be the obvious choice, as the most quintessentially "English" place in Middle-earth but it suffers from both these problems. Its borders (with the exception of the eastern ones along the Old Forest, the East-West Road and the Brandywine) basically define the area in which the Hobbits live. If some Hobbits move a bit outside the rather vague boundaries for whatever reason, the Shire just gets a little bigger. So, for instance, the establishment of Buckland to the east of the Brandywine was essentially a result of Gorhendad Oldbuck wanting a bigger house, rather than some sort of organised colonisation effort by the Shire's Foreign Office (if such a thing even existed). And, although we are given a very detailed description of how the Shire is governed in all of about two pages, it more or less boils down to this: a particularly large and well-respected Hobbit gets to be in charge of a big party once every seven years whilst everyone goes about their own business in the meantime. And if you really like walking, you get to deliver the post or round up stray livestock.

The point is that seceding from the Shire would be both very easy and very hard. As there is no real central authority or organised government, no one is really going to stop you. On the other hand, as there is no real central authority or organised government, no one is really going to notice or care either. Hobbits would still be Hobbits and any self-declared independent state would probably just be gradually absorbed back into the ethno-culturo-geographical zone that is the Shire. In many ways the Shire is more an idea than a nation-state, as we would understand it in the modern world. This also gives me a perfect opportunity to quote *Hotel California* by The Eagles: "You can check out any time you like,

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[1] Why people secede is something I covered in third-year geography. Essentially, secessionism develops because a group of people who self-identify as a group are unhappy for some reason. Normally, you see this in the case of economically/politically-marginalised ethno-cultural minorities. So the pro-independence lobby in Scotland argue that the Scots (as a minority distinct from the English) are being marginalised, both politically and economically, by the England- (and, specifically, London-) focussed government of the UK.

but you can never leave" describes the Shire perfectly. You would have to get a very great deal of un-Hobbitish Hobbits to generate any sort of real secessionist movement. And in Middle-earth, un-Hobbitish Hobbits are very rare.[2]

So, if not the Shire, where else could we look? Rhovanion is right out – although we know of several peoples there, they all seem to be pretty much organised into ethnically-homogeneous kingdoms that all get on with each other, and all of which suffer from the "vague border" problem. So there seems little opportunity for secessionist sentiment there. Rhûn, Khand, Mordor and Harad are discounted by virtue of us not really knowing enough about the societies that live there apart from that they're evil and nasty, with a penchant for spikes. This is really all you need to know – one can imagine that any sort of secessionist movement among the chiefs of the Haradrim or the Orcs would result in a bloody civil war. Though, again, whether there's any central government to secede from is something of a moot point. All the land west of the Misty Mountains, south of the Shire and north of the White Mountains (so, Minhiriath, Enedwaith, Eregion, Drúwaith Iaur and so on) is discounted as no one who really matters apparently lives there.[3] For the same reason, we can also essentially dismiss Eriador outside the Shire, any land north of the Misty Mountains and the Grey Mountains.[4] Any of you familiar with the map of Middle-earth[5] will realise that this, unsurprisingly, just leaves us with Gondor and Rohan.

Both of these can be seen as large federated kingdoms (which is essentially what the UK is), so could serve as models. I would argue that Gondor is better, because the Rohirrim are all one people. The only secessionist minority they've got are the Dunlendings and after Helm's Deep they would probably think twice before seceding again. Also, they don't really live in Rohan. They're more of a hostile bandit neighbour. So Gondor is our best bet. For a start, it has several well-defined regions, each with their own ethno-cultural character. It's a monarchy focussed on an area well-removed from the geographical centre of the kingdom. It's even got some upland areas that probably look a bit like Scotland. Though I don't remember any of the Captains or their men who turn up to defend Minas Tirith described as wearing kilts….

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[2] Also, why would you even want to secede from the Shire? Let's face it, it would be a pretty much ideal place to live. Bugger all work, nice weather (generally), lots of food, friendly people. Perhaps not much to do if you're into clubbing, engineering or technology, but, if you're reading this, you'd probably be prepared to put up with the lack of those.

[3] Apart from a few Dunlendings and possibly some Drúedain. But there certainly aren't any big well-organised states.

[4] There are a few Dwarves wandering round some of these places, but Dwarves essentially seem to follow what you might call "the bee model" of state formation – they settle down somewhere and, when they've reached a certain level of opulence and success, a load of them gather round some charismatic new leader and head off somewhere. Alternatively, a honey badger (dragon) turns up, destroys the hive (kingdom), and all the survivors have to find somewhere new before they die trying to live in the big wide world. They don't really secede from each other. There are also the Rangers in Eriador, but there aren't really enough of them to secede from each other. They're also too busy fighting evil things. The remaining Elves in Middle-earth can also be ignored for the same reasons.

[5] Which, after my period of Stewardship and the quiz this year, should be everybody.

So, let's imagine Lamedon got unhappy. They feel the Minas Tirith-centric government is ignoring the needs of upland areas and trampling on their ancestral culture. They decide they'd quite like not to be part of Gondor anymore. We're assuming here, of course, that anyone in Middle-earth who isn't irredeemably twisted and evil would think of disobeying the legitimate monarch. But let's assume that is the case. What happens next?

(a)   The people of Lamedon hold a peaceful referendum and vote to secede. Gondor, as a modern progressive state recognises that the will of the people has been expressed and quickly recognises the new state, under King Angbor, setting up peaceful relations. Everyone lives happily together and it's all great.

(b)   The King/Steward raises an army and crushes the incipient rebellion, which must have been stirred up by agents of Sauron.

(c)   The King/Steward makes a personal visit and, because he's so amazing, everyone wonders how they could ever have thought of seceding and swears a new oath of fealty on the spot.

(d)   Gondor gets invaded again by Generic-Evil-Men-from-the-South-or-East and any thoughts of secession are quickly forgotten as everyone bands together against the new threat. Afterwards, enough people are dead that no one's really thinking about it anymore.

Given the history and culture of Gondor, (b), (c) and (d) are all distinct possibilities. Under Aragorn, one imagines (c) would happen, whereas under, say, Eärnur or any of the kings whose names ended in –dacil, (b) would happen. (d) is just an occupational hazard of living in Gondor. What would definitely not happen is (a). For a start, democracy doesn't really exist in Middle-earth. The entirely-symbolic Mayor of the Shire is elected and that's about it for democracy. There are a few moments of Macedonian-style almost-popular acclaim (like Bard becoming King of Dale and Eärnil II getting the crown of Gondor), but those acclaimed are always the rightful rulers anyway. Middle-earth is very much on the side of the Divine Right of Kings.[6]

Indeed, looking at Gondorian history, the only serious bit of attempted secessionism was the Kin-strife. And that wasn't really secession; it was a civil war for control of the throne and Gondor as a whole. And, as it turned out, the anti-Eldacar lobby were bad men being influenced by Sauron, so killing them all was fine. There wasn't really any geographically-delimited bid for independence by a region of Gondor as such.

So what can we conclude from all this? Two things: firstly, some sort of bid for secession or independence would not happen in Middle-earth because that would involve defying your legitimate monarch. And, secondly, if it did happen, you'd either be crushed as secret servants of Sauron or brought back into the fold by the monarch's personal charisma.

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[6] Needless to say, Oliver Cromwell would not have existed in Middle-earth. He'd probably have been the one getting his head chopped off.

And let's not forget what is probably the most obvious example of a struggle for independence in Tolkien: the Flight of the Noldor from Valinor. That ended really well.[7] I think it's safe to say the Scottish are lucky that this isn't Middle-earth and might not all die horribly if they vote for independence.[8]

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[7] For a given value of well, where "well" is defined as everyone dying pointlessly.
[8] And if they do, they might encourage the Welsh. And if Labour win the next election, that means we'll have someone called Edward in charge. And the last time there was an independent Wales and Scotland, and England was ruled by someone called Edward, it ended really well for both smaller countries (look up Edward I, Hammer of the Scots)….

On the Physics of Wizards
Or, An Attempt to Discover the Laws of Nature through the Study of Falling Objects

Samuel Cook

Rewatching the LOTR films recently for the nth time,[1] I was struck suddenly by the slightly odd physics of a particular scene. It's the start of *The Two Towers.* We are shown a re-run of Gandalf fighting the Balrog. He does his whole "You Shall Not Pass" thing, breaks the bridge and sends the Balrog plummeting into the abyss. He turns away, relieved. The Balrog, however, is not done yet. He cracks his whip and catches Gandalf's leg, dragging him to the brink. At this point Gandalf drops his sword, which clatters onto the bridge and also falls into the chasm. Gandalf hangs from the edge of the bridge, trying vainly to pull himself back on for a few seconds. He realises his situation is hopeless, cries the famous line "Fly, you fools!" and himself plunges into the tenebrous, unplumbed depths.

So far, so LOTR-normal. And physics is happy. Apart from the fact that Gandalf's managed to shatter a millennia-old stone bridge with a bit of wood. And apart from the giant flamey demon of evil that may or may not have wings. Apart from that, physics is satisfied.

Until now. Now we see Gandalf falling off the bridge and, after a few seconds, *catching up with his sword that fell off a few seconds previously*.

Anyone who has any grasp of physics will quickly realise how odd this is. In a vacuum, objects all fall at the same rate. In an atmosphere,[2] at its simplest level, the velocity of a falling object is determined by the interplay of gravity, time and air resistance. This is why, in a vacuum, where there is no air resistance, all objects fall at the same rate. Contrary to intuition, heavier objects do not fall at a faster *rate*. What they do have is a higher terminal velocity. One of the most basic equations of physics is F = ma. Force = mass x acceleration. In this case, acceleration is equal to the gravitational constant, g, which, on Earth, is equal to $9.81ms^{-2}$. As g is constant,[3] as m goes up, all that means is F (i.e. the downwards force acting on the object) also goes up. *The acceleration or rate of fall does not*. What it does mean is that a much greater air resistance is required to balance the weight of the falling object. In other words, heavier objects are slowed down less by air resistance so appear to fall faster. All that is actually happening is that they are continuing to fall at $9.81ms^{-2}$, whilst a lighter object might be rapidly approaching its terminal velocity, where its

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[1] Where n is an integer that satisfies the inequality $0 < n < \infty$.

[2] I'm assuming that the abyss crossed by the bridge of Khazad-dûm doesn't have a vacuum at the bottom of it. Given that I'm writing this article on the premise that Middle-earth vaguely obeys physics, an abyss with a vacuum at the bottom of it is right out. Everyone would have been sucked off the bridge for a start.

[3] The abyss might be deep, but compared to the diameter of the Earth, it's still not that big. If Gandalf and the Balrog were falling from space, or all the way to the core, we might need to do something about g. They're not, so we can treat it as constant.

acceleration falls to 0. Heavier objects have a higher terminal velocity, assuming their shape and size are constant. If you've been skydiving, or seen any of the numerous films involving people jumping out of planes, you'll know the main determinant of air resistance is surface area.[4] So, a heavier thing might not necessarily have a higher terminal velocity than a lighter thing, if the heavier thing is shaped like a piece of paper and the lighter thing is a sphere or a downward-facing wedge or similar.

To bring this back to LOTR, from the above very brief explanation, it can be seen how odd it is that Gandalf is able to catch up with his sword. To do so, he must either be able to distort time, making it flow faster for him than the sword; distort gravity, making it stronger for him than the sword; reduce his air resistance to much lower than the sword; or be much heavier than the sword. Otherwise, being a few seconds behind the sword and being less aerodynamic than it, there's no way he'd have been able to catch it up and start hitting the Balrog with it.

Let us take these possibilities in order: first, if Gandalf could distort time, he could effectively make himself accelerate faster than the sword (up to the point at which he would reach his terminal velocity), catching it up. This seems unlikely, as nowhere does Gandalf show any temporal warping powers.[5] And, let's face it, there are plenty of places where they would have been useful. Such as every fight he's in, where being able to move a lot faster than everyone else would be really handy. Seeing as this doesn't appear to happen, we can safely conclude this is an extremely unlikely explanation.

Second, if Gandalf could locally increase g, this would also allow him to catch up the sword by increasing his own acceleration. Again, such abilities are not demonstrated anywhere in the canon and seem even more unlikely than being able to warp time. Seeing as g is based on the mass of the object you're falling towards (in this case, Arda), it seems rather unlikely that Gandalf could affect the mass of the entire planet in such a way as to increase g only for him and not the sword.

Third, reducing his own air resistance to less than that of the sword would mean Gandalf would be less slowed than the sword as his fall velocity increased, effectively allowing him to fall faster. To do so, Gandalf would have to have a lower surface area than the sword. As the more observant among you will have noticed, swords are quite a bit smaller and more aerodynamic than people, and will present a smaller cross-section for air resistance to act upon, regardless of the position in which the sword and the person are falling. As there is no evidence Gandalf can shape-shift to make himself smaller and/or more aerodynamic, we must dismiss this possibility too.

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[4] It's a bit more complicated than that, but, for the purposes of this article, that'll suffice.
[5] Though, arguably, Shadowfax travels fast enough that he and Gandalf attain significant fractions of the speed of light and, as such, can be treated as relativistic particles.

Finally, Gandalf could be a lot denser than you would expect. If this were the case, he would be slowed less quickly by air resistance than a normal person, and might be able to fall quicker than the sword. However, the sword, being a sword, is made of metal. Now, Glamdring is an Elvish weapon, so could be made of something odd,[6] but, for the sake of argument, let's assume it's made of some sort of steel. This will give it a density of about 8,000 kg/m^3. In other words, quite a high density. For their size, things made of metal are generally quite heavy. People, on the other hand, have a density of a little over 1,000 kg/m^3, i.e. very close to that of water. This is why people more or less float and things made of solid metal don't.[7] Consequently, Gandalf would have to be over eight times denser than a normal person (and would therefore weigh over eight times as much). This seems unlikely – as far as we know, the Istari, physically, were just normal Men and didn't have metal bones. We might also have noticed when Gandalf tried to sit on Shadowfax and crushed him, on account of weighing over half a tonne. Of course, Gandalf might be able to selectively alter his density, but this comes under the same class of powers as shape-shifting, so seems rather unlikely.

In conclusion therefore, we are left with four equally unsatisfactory possibilities that all seem equally improbable:

1. Gandalf is a Time Lord.
2. Gandalf is some sort of super-Higgs boson.
3. Gandalf is a Polymorph.
4. Gandalf is Wolverine. Or the Terminator.

Or:

5. The scene makes for good cinema and PJ is not a man to let something small like the basic laws of physics get between him and his art.

On balance, this seems to be the answer. And I agree, the scene is a good one. If filmmakers attempted to be entirely consistent with physics, the whole fantasy/superhero/sci-fi genre would be rather less visually spectacular and enjoyable than it is. But still, such apparent inconsistencies provide enjoyable discussion points. And make you realise you've watched the films far too many times if you're picking up on them.

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[6] Like the breath of trees alloyed with the sound of water or something equally hippy-esque.
[7] Depending on the metal, the object might also catch fire. Group 1 metals are fun. Top tip: if someone ever gives you a potassium bracelet, don't wear it in the shower. There are plenty of videos on Youtube showing what happens if a bit of caesium or rubidium is dropped in a bath.

He Arrived Precisely When He Meant To:
Being a brief account of the visit of
Ian McKellen, Kt, C.H., C.B.E., B.A., DLitt *honoris causa*

Jack Fleming

In the seventh age of Middle-earth,[1] in the noble city of the Tower of the Guard, it came to pass that there was held a held a time of feasting and revels in high summer, neither a week long, nor in the month of May, so inevitably known as May Week.

By CR31 (2014 in the common reckoning), as was the tradition of long years, the Captains of Gondor and their esteemed guests held court for a day upon the river of the city, to celebrate the annual defeat of the twin beasts of Finalesse and Triposse. But, in this year, far greater forces were felt in the City of the Kings, for, in those days of Maying, Mithrandir, by some called Gandalf or Magneto, by others Sir Ian McKellen or Our-Greatest-Living-Shakespearean, was seen in our fair lands, as had not been since before the restoration of the Ruling Stewards.

It was said that his arrival was greeted with a waving of flags, all the colours of the rainbow. Some doubted his presence, while others were wary of his transience and sought to capture his essence, leading to the blight of the #GandalfSelfie. His time was not, however, devoted only to such trivial matters. Though his visit was brief, his time was richly filled; here follows an account of those great days.

Upon the day of his arrival, returning to a place which had long ago served as a home for him, The College or Hall of Saint Catharine the Virgin in the University of Cambridge, the Wizard spent much of the day rediscovering his *alma mater*, which greeted him as an old friend. In the evening, in the hall of McGrath, he recounted past glories to eager young listeners, both in person, and, by great feats of magics, to those denied his presence. Later that night, while enjoying the pastural-perambulation privileges afforded his rank by his fellow Fellows, the Wizard came upon a certain archivist, who, lost in contemplation in the long watches of the night, had found himself confined within the barred gates and impassable walls of the same Hall of Saint Catharine. The great Wizard, recognising the plight of the young wayward, called to mind a spell of unlocking, releasing the archivist from his confinement.

Throughout the second day of his brief sojourn in the White City, rumours spread of his wanderings, with many claiming to have been in his presence and received his wisdom. It is known that, at the close of day, the Wizard took up position upon the Parade of the King, disregarding the threat from Chronophage, which constantly sought to approach him, and steal his greatest years. From this bold salient, the Wizard cast his eye upon the pinnacle of

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[1] By the reckoning of the 'notable' Dirk Vander Ploeg.

the Magic of Minas Tirith, the sky-fires of the College of St John the Evangelist of the University of Cambridge, and it was later said that he held them in high regard, though himself known for his ability to conjure Dwarf candles, Elf fountains, Goblin barkers and even dragons for the amusement of his friends, acquaintances and admirers.

It was upon the third day, however, that the reasons for his presence in the city became clear. Upon that day, the most fabled and secretive order of the General Congregation of the University of Cambridge did assemble in House of Governance, and therein welcome eight great leaders of the realms of men into their most esteemed ranks. This noble fellowship witnessed the great endeavours of man, from those who struggled for the free people of oppression of Apartheid in the far lands beyond Harad, to those who cast theirs eyes upon the Elven Stars and pondered the great sundering and changes of the world since the Elder Days. Then came the Wizard's turn. His deeds were recounted to the assembled company in a bold oration. His great battle and victory over Durin's Bane was highly praised in tongues of both Men and Elves, much aided by a former Captain of Gondor, the erudite Pip Steele, whose work is most deserving of praise (and who cannot be blamed for a perennial misidentification of the Northern Kingdom of Middle-earth with its Sun). After the secrets of the order where revealed to him, the Wizard and his compatriots were amused by the musicians of the City, before escaping the testing heat of the House of Governance for refreshment of the highest quality (though perhaps somewhat too refined and compact for certain races of Middle-earth to appreciate). Thereafter the Wizard again regaled the people with his stories of the days before the return of the Stewards to Minas Tirith, when the people of the City and the whole kingdom were not free to live as they saw fit, but were subject to harsh oppression and unjust abuses for their lives and loves.

As his time on these shores drew to a close, the inexorable call of duty drew the Wizard onwards. Before leaving the city, however, the Wizard was last seen once more in the Hall of Saint Catharine, in the company of many of the Dionysian revellers of May Week, embracing the festival, and still enchanting the flocks who followed his train.

Here ends the account of the visit of Mithrandir to the City of Minas Tirith in the year 31CR, 2014 in the common reckoning, and in the time of Maying, in the Month of June. What is written is the true witness of the Archivist of the Tower of Ecthelion to the Great Days of the Wizard.

A Party Political Broadcast from the Rohirric National Party:
A Very Silly Short Story

Samuel Cook

The King blames the Steward and Daeron for helping him come up with this superlative piece of silliness and suggesting it be published. The authors accept no responsibility for crimes against Tolkien, literature or good taste.

Hama[80] stood on the walls of the Hornburg, looking out over the sea of upturned faces. Many people were carrying the green-and-gold flags of the RNP, the recently-formed movement that agitated for Rohirric rights within the newly-formed People's Democratic Republic of Greater Gondor.[81] No one was quite sure why the Lord Aragorn had dissolved the monarchy and declared himself President-for-life,[82] nor why he had started wearing sunglasses and permanent over-decorated military uniform and smoking large cigars. One of his teeth had turned gold too. It was probably some Elvish magic or something. But, Hama reflected, it had certainly changed things in Middle-earth. Only yesterday, the People's Front of Dunland had attempted to kidnap Queen Lothíriel by tunnelling into Meduseld. It was just fortunate that the Dunland People's Front had attempted exactly the same thing from the other direction at the same time. When they bumped into each other, they instantly started fighting over their divergent interpretations of "What have the Rohirrim ever done for us?", so all the guards had to do was clear up the bodies.

Snapping back to the present, Hama mused that it had been a good rally. There'd been lots of cheering, at least. And people holding placards with drawings of him in his Party Chairman uniform. That probably meant they liked him, though he was worried why his left arm kept on wanting to salute after every cheer and his moustache had shrunk to this small square patch. Probably the pressures of leadership, he thought. However, it was evening now, which meant the real business began. The Party.

He walked over to where his mixing deck stood,[83] put on his headphones and turned on the sound system. The RNP flags had disappeared, replaced with lighters, glowsticks and banners reading "WE <3 U MC HAMA".[84] It was going to be a good rave. You didn't even need to buy disco balls when you had Aglarond to hand. It was insane in there. The best lightshow west of the Anduin. But first, he had the main stage to run …

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[80] Yes, I know he's theoretically dead in any post-LOTR world, but you may have already gathered that accuracy, consistency and realism are not major concerns here.

[81] The realm formerly known as the Reunited Kingdom.

[82] Not even the writers. If anyone can come up with a convincing explanation why Aragorn would do this, please tell us.

[83] Apparently, acoustics and electronics have also happened. We don't know how either.

[84] The authors would like to apologise for that terrible pun.

… As the final beats of Hama Time[85] faded away, the crowd roared ecstatically. Suddenly, a light appeared at the end of the Deeping Coomb. On the breeze a faint sound was heard "Untz, untz, untz, untz".

"S**t!" thought Hama. They'd forgotten to invite Thranduil again! And if there was one thing Thranduil liked, it was a party. Especially a big party, where he could show off his moves to as many people as possible. And if you really wanted to annoy Thranduil, the best thing to do was not to invite him to your big party. After they'd forgotten to invite him to the AGM, it had taken Legolas weeks to calm him down and persuade him that setting fire to the Wold was not a proportionate response to an unintentional social snub. How could they have forgotten again? Judging by how bright that light was and the volume he must have cranked his boombox up to for it to be audible from here, he was *PI**ED.* This was going to get messy.

And Thranduil was moving fast. He'd already passed the Dyke and Hama could see people at the back of the crowd getting flung aside as the racing sphere of light enveloped them. "He must be on that bloody elk of his", thought Hama. "At least that explains the light. He's probably put a lighting rig on its antlers again. He really means business." By now, the sphere of light had reached the base of the wall on which Hama stood, leaving a trail of trampled revellers in its wake. "UNTZ, UNTZ, UNTZ, UNTZ." It was so loud, it had passed beyond the realm of sound into one more commonly occupied by earthquakes, volcanoes and Sauron snoring.[86] The lights dimmed and music quietened, allowing everyone to see Thranduil properly for the first time. There was a collective "Oooooh." He. Just. Looked. So. Shiny. And so attractive. Expensive jewellery glittered everywhere, with emeralds in pride of place. And that robe and collar. The very epitome of Greenwood style, all topped off by a simply stunning floral crown. The crowd swooned at his sheer magnificence. Hama could feel himself going weak at the knees. He'd forgotten what Thranduil in full party regalia could do to you. The elf practically oozed style.

The effect was slightly spoiled by Thranduil speaking in a rather petulant tone of voice:

"Hama. I demand an explanation. Everyone knows I am the Party King of Middle-earth. Even Belegaras, my trusty steed, has more moves in his front-right hoof than the entirety of Rohan." There was a collective intake of breath, which Thranduil silenced by turning a stare of such iciness and superciliousness on the crowd that they just accepted the truth of what he said when faced with such an obviously superior being. "Can it be that you do not think I am worthy to come to your party? I challenge you to a dance-off, as you obviously think yourself superior to me!"

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[85] And that one. You must have guessed it was coming. For reference: "Duh, duh-duh-duh, Can't touch this, can't touch this".

[86] Why do you think he was all alone at the top of Barad-dûr?

Hama blanched. No one had ever survived a dance-off against Thranduil. And when the Elvenking was this riled, he wouldn't hold back. But … that … stare … those clothes … Hama felt himself falling under Thranduil's spell and knew he'd do anything to be allowed to gaze adoringly at him for all time.

The next morning, Hama was buried with all due ceremony. It turns out that trying to breakdance whilst juggling knives with your own head up your bottom in order to attempt to beat Thranduil's Quintuple Smash Freestyle Bodypop[87] routine is surprisingly fatal. The survivors of the display[88] maintained that it had been the best party ever. The moves had been like Dirty Dancing on steroids with a side order of Footloose.[89] Thranduil rode away, beatbox still blaring, satisfied that his position as Party King was secure and that no one would ever forget to invite him again. Haleth, son of Hama, became leader of the RNP, and led it on to become a peaceful nature-loving movement with flowers in its hair in tribute to Thranduil.

The moral of this story: do not snub aggressively exhibitionist capricious Elvenkings by not inviting them to your parties. Or maybe you will hear the dreaded sounds of "Untz, Untz, Untz, Untz" pursuing you across the fields of Middle-earth …[90]

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[87] These are just a random collection of words. I have no idea what it would resemble either.
[88] I.e. those whose brains hadn't simply liquefied under the sheer style Thranduil exuded.
[89] Obviously, the Rohirrim didn't express it quite like that. I'm translating for the convenience of modern audiences. By modern, I of course mean "people alive in the 80s," based on those film references.
[90] That ended up way darker than I originally envisaged.

I Just Can't Wait To Be King

Jack Fleming

(To the tune of *I Just Can't Wait To Be King* by Tim Rice and Elton John, from Disney's *The Lion King*)

To be sung by Aragorn, Sauron, Arwen and the Elves of Rivendell.

Aragorn:
I'm gonna be a mighty king,
So Barad-dûr beware!

Sauron:
Oh, the Dúnedain are dying out,
Whyever should I care?

Aragorn:
I'm gonna be the main event,
A king like Elendil.
Use Narsil's shards to fight my way,
Reforged as Andúril.

Sauron:
Thus far a rather uninspiring thing …

Aragorn:
Oh, I just can't wait to be king!

Elrond:
You've rather a long way to go, young master,
If you think –

Aragorn:
No one saying "Do this."

Arwen:
No one saying "Wash your hair."

Aragorn:
No one shouting "Strider!";
I'm Isildur's heir.

Free to range around all day!
Free to rule them all my way!

Sauron:
I think it's time that you and I chat by Palantír.

Aragorn:
Sure we can chat, but I don't think you'll like what you will hear.

Sauron:
If this is where Middle-earth is headed, count me out.
Beyond the doors of midnight, where Morgoth is chilling out.
This ranger seems to know about my ring!

Aragorn:
Oh, I just can't wait to be king!

I'll be ruling Arnor, I'll be ruling Gondor.
When my lands are peaceful, I'll wage war to grab more.

Sauron:
Not yet!

Elves of Rivendell:
Let's all hang out in Rivendell, write poetry and sing.
A fellowship of nine will destroy Sauron's ring.
Elrond's daughter can marry the new King.

Aragorn:
Oh, I just can't wait to be king!
But I'll finally get to be king!
Oh, I just can't waaaiiiiit
To be king!

Far Over the Misty Turbines Cold
(Or, I'm a massive Tolkien nerd with this song stuck in my head and needing a break from Excel)

Samuel Cook

(Based on "Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold")

Far over the misty turbines cold,
To thermal power stations old,
We must away ere break of day,
To ensure the power is sold.

The men of yore made mighty halls,
To house the gleaming turbines tall,
In places flat where water laps,
They put West Burton on the map.

For ancient kings and PMs past,
There many a shining boiler vast,
They shaped and wrought, and light they sought
To put in wires hanging taut.

On silver soaring stacks they strung,
The FGD, like crowns it hung.
The coal's fire: in twisted wire,
They meshed the light of plant and dung.[1]

Far over the misty turbines cold,
To thermal power stations old,
We must away ere break of day,
To collect our power-based gold.

Cottam they built there for themselves,
And West Burton, where many delved,
There stand they years, and many a tear,
Was shed unseen by those most near.

The fans were roaring out of sight.
The pipes were moaning in the night.
The fire was red, it flaming spread.
The plants like torches blazed with light.

[1] Because coal is made from plants. And dung's biomass.

The bells were ringing all around,
And men looked up, with furrowed brows.
Then water's ire, more fierce than fire,
Laid low their boilers and turbines proud.

The stations smoked beneath the moon.
The men they heard the crash of doom.
They fled their halls to gasping fall,
Beneath the stacks, beneath the moon.

Far over the misty turbines dim,
To thermal power stations grim,
We must away ere break of day,
To quickly start them up again!

Under the stations dark and tall,
The men have come unto their halls,
Their foe is dead, the leak of dread,
And ever so shall faults be solved.

The saw is sharp, the wrench is long,
The fixing swift, the arm is strong,
The heart is light that sees stacks bright,
The men no more shall suffer wrong

The men of yore made mighty halls,
To house the gleaming turbines tall,
In places flat where water laps,
They put West Burton on the map.

On silver soaring stacks they strung,
The FGD, like crowns it hung.
The coal's fire, from twisted coir,[1]
The heat and light of flame they wrung.

The seized-up mill once more is freed.
O National Grid, the summons heed.
Turn on! Turn on! Pan-Albion,
The Grid and customers have need.

Now call we over turbines cold:
Come unto the stations old!
At the gates, the men await.

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[1] It's a fibre made from coconuts so it's biomass.

Their hands are rich with fuel and gold.

The men have come unto their halls,
Under the stations bright and tall.
The leak of dread is slain and dead.
And ever so shall faults be solved!

Lothlórien Dreamin'

Samuel Cook

(To the tune of "California Dreamin'")

All the leaves are brown and the sky is grey
Since Galadriel did go far away.
And Celeborn too, he soon went the same way.
Lothlórien dreamin' on such a winter's day.

Stopped in to Cerin Amroth along the way.
Well I got down on my knees and I did weep all day.
The golden leaves lie in mould.
It's gone, the mellyrn's day.
Lothlórien dreamin' on such a winter's day.

All the leaves are brown and the sky is grey
Since Galadriel did go far away.
All things under this Sun do so wear away.

Lothlórien dreamin' on such a winter's day.
Lothlórien dreamin' on such a winter's day.
Lothlórien dreamin' on such a winter's day.

Will You Follow Me One Last Time?

James Baillie

Will you follow me one last time?
Will you follow me one last time?
In my last, darkest hour, this one thing I ask;
Will you follow me one last time?

Remember how our tale began,
Under hill, with the mark on the door?
Now remember the road that we strode down so bold,
And give me your trust this once more.

Remember the lands we have seen?
The mountains of grey, streams of blue,
Through forests and moorlands and all of our foes,
Our company still has stayed true.

Remember the dragon's dark fire?
Our kindred all scattered and slain?
Remember our songs that we sang to bring hope,
And sing them with me once again.

There's a fire in your eyes and a fire in your hearts,
A tale that has yet to be written or told,
Let this be the song that the minstrels will sing,
A bond that shines brighter than wildfire and gold.

Will you follow me one last time?
From shadow and into the light?
For all I've done evil, for all I've done wrong,
This battle's my last one to fight.

Will you follow me one last time?
Will you raise my banner, my friends?
Come forth from the mountain to war's blackest storm
And find out how my story ends …

Mastermind

Jamie Douglas

(An homage to the *Two Ronnies* sketch "Mastermind", written by David Renwick)

Q = Questioner
C = Contender

Q is seated behind the question desk. C enters and takes the black chair.

Q: And so to our first contender. Good evening. Your name, please?

C: Good evening.

Q: In the previous round you chose to answer the question before it was asked, this time you have chosen to answer the question before last. Is that correct?

C: Charlie Smithers.

Q: Good luck, your time starts now. Did Elrond Halfelven choose to become Elf or Man?

C: Yes, absolutely correct.

Q: Correct. The healers of Minas Tirith tended to the soldiers' what?

C: Elf.

Q: Correct. What did Frodo receive from the Witchking on Weathertop?

C: Cuts and bruises.

Q: Correct. What did the Rangers of the North give to their Lord Aragorn when they met him on the fields of Rohan?

C: A surprise in the dark.

Q: Correct. What did Arwen give to Aragorn on the bridge in Rivendell?

C: [Hesitates]

Q: I need an answer.

C: Umm … a large pole wrapped in thongs.

Q: Correct. What did the Dark Lord Sauron most wish to eradicate in the Third Age?

C: Uh … Love?

Q: Correct. What did Frodo ascend with Haldir upon Cerin Amroth?

C: The line of succession to the throne of Gondor.

Q: Correct. In the 'Scouring of the Shire', what new feature marred its skyline?

C: A great big Mallorn tree.

Q: Correct. To the surprise of the hobbits, Saruman was fond of smoking what?

C: Chimneys.

Q: Correct. What did Tom Bombadil sometimes take a trip on?

C: It must have been weed.

Q: Correct. What was Sam embarrassed by when he rescued Frodo from the Tower of Cirith Ungol?

C: His old Fatty Lumpkin.

Q: Correct. What does Galadriel rarely mention about Gandalf's rescue from Caradhras?

C: His nakedness.

Q: Correct. What is Celeborn's High Elven name?

C: Umm … Galadriel planned it herself.

Q: Correct. With what image did Sauron finally drive Denethor to madness and despair?

C: Teleporno.

Q: Correct. Bilbo told Gandalf he'd left the Ring for Frodo, where?

C: With the might of Mordor.

Q: Correct. Where did Golfimbul's head go after the Battle of Greenfields?

C: On the mantelpiece at Bag End.

Q: Correct. Gandalf warned Thorin Oakenshield and his Company to stick to the forest path in case they what?

C: Fell down a rabbit hole.

Q: Correct. What was [timer goes signalling the end of the round] -- I've started so I'll finish -- what was the last thing Frodo said to his beloved companions as they stood together at the Grey Havens?

C: Get lost!

Middle-earth Drinking Game[1]

Jack Fleming

Does Peter Jackson drive you to drink?

Then the **Middle-earth Drinking Game** may be for you.

Ideally to be accompanied by ale or mead (though we are not picky), the following rules should work nicely for both *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* films, albeit with something of an LOTR bias, since they are based on my own house rules for those films.

Drink whenever:

- There is a close-up of the ring.
- There is a motivational pre-battle speech.
- We see the Eye of Sauron.
- Merry and/or Pippin do/say something stupid.
- There is sexual tension you could cut with a knife.
- A character of importance passes away, as a sign of respect.
- Legolas is a deadly prancing nancy.
- Frodo falls over.
- There is an Elf vs. Dwarf moment.
- Somebody smokes a pipe.
- You see a statue or ruins thereof.
- A character's lineage is given (e.g. Aragorn son of Arathorn).
- There is painfully bad CGI (drink enough to kill the pain).
- Sam calls Frodo "Mr. Frodo".
- Someone says "my precious".
- Legolas explains things for the people who haven't read the books.
- A name is said in an ominous fashion.
- Cinematography is suitably epic.
- Aragorn's Super-Secret Journal would read 'still not king yet' (e.g. 'Today I fought off four Ringwraiths on Weathertop. Still not king yet' or 'Today I was pulled over a cliff by a Warg. Everyone thought I was dead, until I made a dramatic entrance into Helm's Deep. Still not king yet').
- Something is NOT CANON.

The Middle-earth Drinking Game. Because Peter Jackson should not be given nice things.

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[1] Editor's note: apologies to Jack for mistakenly leaving this out of the previous edition of Anor (Anor 43).

Letters to Daeron

Dear Daeron,

I have much enjoyed recent issues of Anor, and have been following in particular the Steward's series on *Dwarven Economy and Society*. However, I do have one minor point I should like clarified. In part three, Mr. Baillie argues that the 60% of Dwarves who are unmarried at any one time "were less likely to rise to positions of power within [a chieftain's family-grouping] given Tolkien's statement about chieftains having a high tendency to marry" (Anor 43, p.9). This seems to be circular. I accept Mr. Baillie's argument that Dwarf women were, shall we say, picky in their choice of husbands, and were more likely to choose husbands from the upper echelons of Dwarven society (the Dwarves with really massive ... hordes) who were deemed to be more attractive as husbands (and better able to provide for wives). However, it does not follow that initially unmarried dwarves of low status could not rise in the social hierarchy, accrue a reasonably sized horde and thereafter marry.

Of course, Mr. Baillie notes that the ratio of Dwarf men to women stood in the region of 2:1, so it may be the case that not all dwarves who do rise to a higher social level are able to find brides. However, the absence of brides does not limit the potential for upward mobility among the Dwarven lower classes as his comments imply. In other words, social mobility need not be linked to a Dwarf's ability to find a bride.

Yours faithfully,

Peregrin the Pedantic

Dear Daeron,

Following his article in Anor 43, I would be interested to know the opinion of our glorious King and your readership on the omission of the Scouring of the Shire within his schema for assessing the Peter Jackson films. For me, only the changes to Faramir's character are more saddening. Though the time constraints of the medium could provide good reason for the omission, and while (despite its foreshadowing presented in the Mirror of Galadriel) the omission is plausible within Jackson's created world, I would argue the film is weakened by the absence, in a way not applicable to, for example, Tom Bombadil's omission. The Scouring of the Shire is the only first-hand evidence within the main narrative that the War of the Ring impacted the wider world beyond Gondor and Rohan, since (as Ar-Pharazôn points out) we get no sense of the conflicts around Lórien, Erebor and the like. The scouring of the Shire serves to provide evidence of this wider conflict. It brings home the longer-term repercussions to the Hobbits, for whom the Shire had remained emblematic of the unhurt world for which they were fighting, and also for the wider audience.

I would therefore like to suggest one further criterion for assessing differences between films and their source material. Not only should the plausibility and justifiability of the changes be taken into account, but it should also be considered whether the changes diminish or enrich the wider film. I hope this criterion can add to further discussions of the films. It certainly provides a justification for my objections, particularly to Mr. Jackson's most recent offering.

Best wishes,

An Alienated Archivist