*Anor Issue 48, Lent 2016*

# Anor

## Letter & Preface

Editor's Note

*Mae govannen, mellyn nín!* Welcome, my friends, to Issue 48 of the Cambridge Tolkien Society's *Anor*!

We have a packed edition for you! Inside you'll see that Samuel Cook has finally got round to writing about glaciation in Middle-earth (it had to happen at some point), as well as taking an in-depth look at weapon symbolism. Several years' worth of (some of) James Baillie's ideas have also now made it into written form: the eagerly anticipated *Dwarven Economy and Society V* (part IV was published in *Anor 45* (Lent 2015)), the results of the Middle-earth Presidential Election, a study of Rhovanion and its political geography, an account of Birmingham (aka Isengard) as seen by a certain hobbit, as well as poetry and songs. We also have six of the CTS' favourite *Consequences* from this term, as well as a fabulous piece of artwork by Louise Vincent.

This is, in all likelihood, the last Anor edition that I shall be producing as Daeron. It has been an honour and a privilege to produce seven editions of *Anor* (issues 42-48 inclusive) in the past three years for the Cambridge Tolkien Society, which I have been a member of since Michaelmas 2008! I wish to thank all contributors again and would encourage you all to keep writing, drawing and composing in the future!

*Cuio Anor anann! Andave caruvalmet! Namárië!*

Jamie Douglas, Daeron (Editor of Anor)
Cambridge Tolkien Society
University of Cambridge, Lent 2016

# Contents

# "You have my sword. And you have my bow. AND MY AXE": The Symbolism of Weaponry in Middle-earth

*Samuel Cook*

I am indebted to a post on the TS Facebook group for getting me thinking about this. I only briefly saw the initial post, but it was enough to get this going. Who says the internet is a waste of time? I am also grateful to Daeron for his comments on an earlier version of this article.

Weapons are a big feature of Middle-earth. Everyone who's anyone has their own named form of pointy death to fight off their multifarious enemies, be they good or evil or somewhere in between. The interesting question is why certain characters have certain weapons. I intend to argue that the choice of weaponry serves to reflect some deeper truth about that character or their situation, by focussing on four main kinds of weapon: swords, axes, spears and bows.

Swords are perhaps the most obvious weapon in Middle-earth – most of the major heroic characters have a named sword. Aragorn has Andúril, Éomer has Gúthwinë, Théoden has Herugrim, Gandalf has Glamdring, Thorin has Orcrist, Fingolfin has Ringil, Túrin has Gurthang…. Even if the sword is not named, as with Denethor, Boromir or Fëanor, it is still a prominent part of their character. On the other hand, there is a relative paucity of prominent swordsmanship among evil characters – Eöl bearing Anguirel being perhaps the closest Tolkien comes, though I would argue Eöl is not evil, so much as fatally misanthropic. Why therefore are swords such a prominent heroic weapon?

Essentially, the answer lies in their manufacture. Swords are quite difficult to make and require a civilisation with a good knowledge of metallurgy capable of training skilled smiths. A sword blade needs to be sufficiently hard to cut through things, be able to take and keep an edge and needs to be proof against shattering if something is hit against it (say, a club), as well as being light enough to actually make the sword usable. As such, making a sword from stone is impossible – it would be too heavy to use effectively, would be difficult to sharpen sufficiently well and would shatter on impact[1]. Bone and wood swords would suffer from much the same problems[2] - in other words, swords require metal, which implies a certain level of civilisation having already been achieved. Whilst it is possible to make swords from bronze, really effective swords need the advent of iron technology to become feasible[3]. Even once iron technology is available, making a sword requires a substantial amount of effort and, therefore, costs a lot – the smith needs to be able to create a single large piece of forged and tempered metal free from flaws and attach it to a hilt of some

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[1] Imagine how thin a sword blade is – any piece of stone of the right size and shape (say, a large slate, for instance), would shatter very easily.
[2] Except the weight one.
[3] Bronze is a bit soft, really.

description[4]. Consequently, throughout history, swords have always been an elite weapon, the preserve of kings, knights and professional soldiers[5]. Your average footsoldier throughout ancient and medieval times would likely have been armed with something a lot simpler and probably agricultural in origin[6]. Hence, Tolkien's decision to arm most of his heroes with swords – it reinforces their special (and usually elite) status. The fact that many of the swords are named merely serves to add to their prestige, but it is the fact that they bear a sword itself that already marks them out.

It is also worth noting, with regards to swords, the shape of the weapons. The Orcs, Haradrim and Easterlings, when armed with swords, are usually depicted as having curved, scimitar-type weapons, whereas the Gondorian, Rohirric, Elvish and heroic swords are usually straight(ish)[7]. This is, I think, a cultural matter more than anything – historically, Western Europeans have tended to wield straight swords[8], whereas curved swords have been associated with foreign enemies, such as Saracens, the Barbary Corsairs, Turks and so on. As such, it is only natural that Tolkien would arm the characters and races with which he and the public[9] were supposed to identify with weaponry that was more culturally familiar to them, whilst hostile groups were made to seem more so by their use of "foreign" arms.

At the other end of the weapon complexity spectrum, there is the spear. Fundamentally, a spear is perhaps the simplest "pointy" weapon available[10] - the sole technology required is the ability to sharpen a long stick. Evidently, spears can be made far more complex – you can work out how to get nice, long, straight pieces of wood for the shaft, how to forge and attach metal heads and so on – but, at the most basic level, a spear is available as soon as you work out that pointy sticks are more effective than blunt sticks for killing things. Given chimpanzees have been observed defoliating and sharpening sticks to make primitive spears, it is a fairly safe bet that spears have been around at least as long as humans. As such, historically, spears or similar implements have tended to be the weapon of choice for the bog-standard infantryman, particularly if they were expected to fight in formation. From the hoplites of ancient Greece to the pikemen of later medieval armies, the spear was always popular where a lot of men needed to be armed quickly and cheaply and ready to fight with minimal training. Due to their association with the

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[4] Obviously, there are all sorts of designs, decorations, additional features and techniques that smiths can use on important swords, but, even at a basic level, a sword is quite challenging to make.

[5] Having large numbers of professional soldiers itself implies a high level of civilisation – you can afford to have a substantial proportion of your able-bodied men not contributing to agriculture. Compare Roman legionaries to the Guards of the City in Minas Tirith – both large groups of sword-armed professional soldiery from rich and advanced civilisations.

[6] In the ancient world, probably a spear; in medieval times, something like a billhook or pike.

[7] Based on the films, Elvish swords do have a slight bend, but not to the extent that a scimitar does.

[8] Or at most moderately-curved, as with cavalry sabres

[9] Don't forget, when LOTR was written, Britain was a lot less multicultural.

[10] As opposed to blunt weapons like clubs, which can be obtained by simply picking up a sufficiently large piece of wood or a big rock.

oppressed masses, spears tend not to be prominent heroic weapons[11] - the only prominent example in Tolkien is Gil-galad, wielder of the spear Aeglos[12].

Why, therefore, is Gil-galad alone among Tolkien's characters in choosing to fight with a spear? In the standard heroic mould, it is a named weapon, so that adds a certain cachet not available to the ordinary spearman, but such a plebeian weapon seems an odd choice for a refined elven-king whose ancestors had a positive surfeit of snazzy swords at their disposal. It might be that the spear simply fitted better with Gil-galad's preferred fighting style than a sword. However, I think there is another reason for Tolkien's choice here: Gil-galad's use of a spear, rather than the expected sword, serves to symbolise the fallen greatness of the Noldorin kingdoms. His ancestors ruled a great people over the whole of Beleriand; by the time Gil-galad assumes the high kingship[13], his rule is over a much-reduced remnant confined to the Isle of Balar and, after the War of Wrath and defeat of Morgoth, Lindon and parts of Eriador. Such a fall from grace to a more rustic state is perfectly encapsulated by the replacement of the sword, the high-status product of an elite civilisation, with the spear, the simple weapon of the ordinary footsoldier, available since the dawn of time. There is also the point[14] that the Mirkwood Elves seem to have been largely spear-armed, perhaps suggesting that this was the preferred weapon of the Sindar and Silvan Elves, themselves groups somewhat fallen from grace, which Gil-galad adopted to reflect the fact that they represented a large number of his subjects.

Somewhere in-between the sword and the spear lies the axe. Whilst the line between axe, club and mace, certainly in primitive societies, is a rather blurry one, I'm choosing here to define an axe as having a sharpened blade (perpendicular to the haft), such that it chops, as well as simply bludgeons. As such, an axe is a bit more complicated than a spear – you have to be able to sharpen a bit of rock and then attach it to a stick, rather than just sharpening the stick itself. However, unlike with swords, it is perfectly possible to make axes in a pre-metal society – stone axes are attested on archaeological sites the world over[15]. Equally, once a society has progressed to metal-working, axes are much easier to make than swords – as with spears, the metallic component is a relatively small part of the weapon. Despite being such a common and ubiquitous weapon, though, axes are indelibly-associated in the western mindset with barbarism – most English people, certainly, would probably think "Viking" on hearing "axe". Whilst this does not mean axes aren't used as heroic weapons in fantasy, it does tend to mean that only characters who are going for the

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[11] Despite the fact that a well-trained spearman can be as deadly as a well-trained swordsman. He's got much more reach, for a start. The key point is that most spearmen weren't as well-trained as most swordsman, as the former tended to be peasants and the latter, nobles.

[12] "Snow-point". I always like to think of it as meaning "Icicle".

[13] With the death of Turgon in the fall of Gondolin near the end of the First Age.

[14] No pun intended

[15] Notice that the definition of axes employed here (deliberately) excludes the so-called stone hand axes of early hominids, these tools being simply sharpened rocks. Not that these aren't valid weapons, but I wish to focus on the weapon people think of when they think "axe" – something like a fire axe or tomahawk.

whole Viking/(Northern) Barbarian look tend to be associated with them. Or Dwarves[16]. Blunter, axe-type weapons often tend to be associated more with evil characters – think of Morgoth's mace, Grond, the Hammer of the Underworld, or the Witch-King's flail or the axe-bearing Variags of Khand. However, as with the spear, there is one hero who does wield an axe – Tuor, bearer of Dramborleg[17].

As with Gil-galad and his spear, Tolkien's decision to arm Tuor with an axe is meant to symbolise something, in my opinion, about Tuor's situation[18]. Tuor is a Man living in a city of Elves (Gondolin), specifically (largely) Noldorin Elves who have seen the light of Valinor. He is therefore very much an outsider, a representative of a junior and ruder race, who from an Elvish point of view is barely different from the first primitive humans who wandered into Beleriand some seven or eight generations previously. As such, having him wield an axe fits very well with this – it signifies the less-advanced status of Men as compared to the refined High-Elves[19] and also serves to mark him out as essentially-different from the sword-bearing Turgon or Glorfindel. This isn't to say that Tuor doesn't acculturate very successfully – he marries Turgon's daughter after all – but I think it is Tolkien's way of reminding the reader that Tuor remains a Man and that, no matter how hard they try, Men cannot usurp the gifts of the Elves or become wholly Elvish, something the Númenóreans should perhaps have borne in mind. Elves and Men are different and none save Ilúvatar himself can change this.

There is one other intriguing association of axes in Tolkien – the statues of the Argonath are armed with them. One would expect both statues, being representations of Isildur and Anárion made by Gondor near the height of its power, to, in the usual heroic mould, be sword-armed. Instead, they are given axes, which one would expect to be seen as a rather barbarian weapon in civilised and advanced Gondor. There are several possible reasons for this, all of which I think have some merit – axes are arguably more intimidating than swords, which is important for border markers. There is also perhaps an argument to be made that the other thing axes are associated with, apart from Vikings, is lumberjacks

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[16] Quite why modern fantasy Dwarves, post-Tolkien, have become so inextricably-linked to axes is an interesting question. Gimli wields axes, but many of the other Dwarves don't – Thorin wields Orcrist for a large chunk of *The Hobbit* and the Dwarves of the Iron Hills are expressly said to be armed with mattocks and swords. Tolkienian Dwarves are hardly all axe-fanatics, but later authors seem to have decided "Dwarves" means "axes". One suspects it's partly an echo of Dwarves deriving from Norse (and thus Viking and thus axes) mythology and partly simply a means of marking them out from the (usually) sword-wielding Elves and Men they inevitably end up cohabiting with. To be fair, there are good practical reasons why Dwarves might prefer axes – if you live underground and do a lot of mining (which you do, because you're a Dwarf), an axe's fighting style will seem a lot more natural than a sword or spear's. It also gives you better reach than a sword (useful if you're short) without unduly encumbering you in narrow tunnels (as a spear would).

[17] This is attested in the later version of *The Fall of Gondolin* in *Unfinished Tales*, which, presumably, represents Tolkien's latest thoughts on the matter. Of course, in the published *Silmarillion*, Tuor's weaponry is only described once, when he finds the armament left for him at Vinyamar by Turgon (which included a sword). What weapon he was using by the time Gondolin fell is not recorded.

[18] Of course, it's also a named axe, just to firmly establish Tuor's heroic credentials.

[19] Admittedly, in *The Fall of Gondolin* in *The Book of Lost Tales*, some of the Elves are armed with axes too, but all the major Elves (save Beleg) in the published *Silmarillion* are primarily associated with swords

and forestry, and, by extension, husbandry, land management and so on. The axes could be to make a point that Gondor was not solely a militarised society, which a sword would have implied[20]. Finally, axes are also historically-associated with command and state authority – the fasces (a tied bundle of rods with an axe sticking out of the middle) of ancient Rome symbolised a magistrate's power and authority and (much) later gave us the word Fascism, which is very much associated with a strong state[21]. I'm not entirely sure any of these is wholly-convincing – a sword would certainly have been equally intimidating and at least as representative of authority and kingship, if not more so, and the civilizational argument is perhaps a little tenuous, but, together, I think they indicate why Tolkien might have decided to make his statues axe-bearers rather than sword-bearers.

A final weapon to consider is the bow and arrow. As with axes, simple bows and arrows require more nous than a spear to manufacture, but do not require metal and turn up very early in human history, being also a very handy hunting implement. However, being a ranged weapon, they tend to be associated with a more irregular, impersonal, aloof, even cowardly style of fighting in the popular consciousness. There is still something of a perception that the truly honourable way to fight is up close and personal, rather than shooting people from afar, though this doesn't stop the archer *par excellence*, Robin Hood, being an evergreen icon of resistance to tyranny. However, archers are undeniably a very good move tactically, certainly if you have limited manpower and can't afford to lose men or win a protracted mêlée battle – the Mongols did really rather well out of their skills with the bow, and the slaughter of French knights by English bowmen at Agincourt has entered our national mythology.

As such, the main association of bows in Tolkien is with Elves. They tend to be rather aloof and, certainly by the later First Age, were a dwindling, increasingly-insular people unable to field large armies. As such, focussing increasingly on archery was a very sensible cultural move. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the two heroes who are principally associated with the bow, Beleg and Legolas, are both Elves. Here their choice of weaponry is principally symbolic of their respective homelands, Doriath and Mirkwood, and of the situation of the Elves in general, as discussed above. Both Doriath and Mirkwood are very insular, avoiding engagement with the wider world as far as possible, something a ranged weapon represents rather well – even their enemies are killed silently from afar with no personal interaction (as exemplified among Men by the similarly-humoured Rangers of Ithilien). Notice that the Noldor never seem to have particularly taken to archery, it instead being the Sindar, Laiquendi and Silvan Elves associated with primarily ranged combat[22], which epitomises

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[20] A sword has no non-military use – it is a weapon, pure and simple.

[21] And a few other things, which probably come to mind first, but aren't entirely germane to the argument here.

[22] And the Teleri – when Fëanor attacks Alqualondë, it is recorded that the Teleri only had bows with which to resist the Noldor, which fits with the bow being seen as a more irregular weapon that can be used for other purposes (sport, hunting), whilst the warlike Noldor are "properly" armed with armour and close-combat weapons.

their more retiring nature versus the swordsmanship of the forthright and aggressive Noldor.

One interesting issue surrounding bows is that the Uruk-hai also use them, and, more to the point use yew bows of the same style as Men. Orcs are normally associated with shorter bows. Similarly, it is specifically remarked upon when the Uruk-hai are first encountered at Parth Galen that they had straight swords (though shorter than those used by Men). Here is a strange association of more heroic weaponry with evil. I think it reflects the idea that the Uruk-hai were in some way Man-Orc hybrids and thus Tolkien gave them more Mannish weaponry to reflect their (marginally) more civilised and advanced status versus their fellows. It could also be argued that it is linked to Saruman's technological superiority allowing him to subvert traditional heroic motifs for the benefit of his own soldiers and champions, as further seen by his use of warg riders as a sort of distorted reflection of the Rohirrim. This exemplifies the complexity of Tolkien's treatment of weaponry – it is not simply a case of good guys have swords and bows and bad guys have axes or anything so straightforward. Tolkien instead takes a more nuanced view, exposing some of the shades of grey in Middle-earth.

In conclusion, it seems clear that Tolkien's choice of weapon for his characters is not simply a superficial detail, but always deeply symbolic of how Tolkien viewed that character and how they fitted into their wider situation and society. Swords are the most common heroic weapon, with their association with kingship and elite civilisation, but spears, axes and bows also feature and all are only wielded by characters for whom the choice is in some way significant. Epitomising the importance of weaponry are the Dúnedain – they appear distant, ragged and lowly, bearing spears and bows, yet are also armed with swords, betraying their noble lineage and descent from an advanced culture. Weaponry is much more than just a tool in Middle-earth.

# Dwarven Economy and Society V:
# The Arkenstone and its power

*James Baillie*

The Arkenstone is at the heart of both Erebor and the book in which it appears. It is entirely at the centre of the divide between Thorin's greed and the better nature shown by Bilbo, and is a crucial political device in negotiations between the Dwarves, Men, and Elves. Despite this important role, however, much about the Arkenstone is mysterious or confusing. Why Thorin is so driven to gain it at all costs is fertile ground for discussion, and that is what this paper seeks to provide.

There are a number of possibilities that may be brought into consideration for why this should be the case. Firstly, there is the simple value of the gemstone. Secondly, there are Thorin's familial links to take into consideration and the Arkenstone's status as an heirloom – these first two ideas will be returned to later. More outlandish and entirely separated from the text of *The Hobbit* is the strange idea that the Arkenstone formed a sort of royal sceptre, being a requirement for Thorin's kingship over the dwarves.[1] This, unfortunately, has now been widely popularised. Thinking about the Arkenstone as a mere precursor to other sorts of power is of course inadequate, primarily because there is no inkling of such a function displayed in any of Tolkien's works, and – on a deeper level – because to do so misses what I believe is the crucial symbolic point of the Arkenstone for the Dwarves.

Of all the races of Middle-earth, the Dwarves are associated most strongly with the material world; they were created from the earth, they see Aulë (Mahal) as their creator and patron deity, and throughout Tolkien's works they have a particular affinity with stone and metal.[2] The "optimal state" for Dwarves indeed seems to be focussing on these to the exclusion of, for example, food growing, which tended to be looked down upon as an occupation by the Dwarves.[3] Importantly, as well, the aforementioned optimal state – which we see in Thorin's description of Erebor pre-Smaug – is one that involves exchange.[4]

Contrary to what the examples of the Silmarils or the Rings might suggest, love of the material world is not an inherently bad thing in Tolkien's work or antithetical to good; a noticeable though fine distinction is drawn between acquisitive lust and selfless love of material objects. There is an argument to be made for antithesis in the Silmarillion when Aulë and Yavanna argue, with material creation as a destructive force versus the Ents, created as a "shepherding" force.[5] The dwarves could, however, be considered shepherds in

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[1] See Jackson et al. (2012).
[2] The Silmarillion, p. 44.
[3] Baillie, J. "Dwarven Economy and Society III: Food and Family in the Later Holds Period", *Anor* 44 (CTS, 2014).
[4] The Hobbit, "An Unexpected Party", p. 21-22.
[5] The Silmarillion, p. 46.

their own right, as evidenced by Gimli's speech about the beauty of the caves of Aglarond.[6] In their optimal state as mentioned earlier, they create things for others, and protect the beauty of the mineral world. Indeed arguably that is their role from the beginning of Arda – not the antithesis of the Ents, but their counterparts.

This deep link – the "root" of dwarven character in Tolkien – is both what gives the Dwarves their place and their strength in Arda, but also what threatens their downfall. Indeed, almost all Tolkien's races have similar features. The humble simplicity of the Hobbits that allows them to be the ring-bearers can make others of them shy of travel and unwilling to take on great tasks, and the Elves' great wisdom and grace can make them insular and haughtily dismissive of lesser races. For Men, it is the will to strength and power that allows Aragorn to lead the West to victory and leads Boromir to his death. The fall of the Istari – Radagast's love of nature, and Saruman's drive for learning and the knowledge of creation – is another variant on the same theme.[7]

The intrinsic link between Dwarves and the mineral world is the key, in my view, to understanding the Arkenstone. Its value is vastly greater, as Thorin's "half-dreaming" response to even its memory reveals instantaneously.[8] It poses a test for Dwarves – the battle between the positive side of the link, the ability to create for others and to curate the material world, and its negative side, the lust for acquisition and the selfish love of possessing objects for the sake of possession rather than for the sake of the objects being possessed. The distinction may seem curious, but it is one that explains a lot in the Dwarf psyche.

Thorin's tale of fall and redemption is rooted in this challenge. His expulsion of Bilbo is wrong not just on the level of his broken relationships with those who should have been friends, but in the sense that he fails in the duty that he has been born to; he risks, rather than preserves, the mountain and its treasures. His patrimony is not the treasure itself, it is the mountain and his duty towards it – courting needless war is him failing that duty. His defence of the mountain is, essentially, him rejecting the possessive in favour of the protective attitude towards Erebor and, of course, its heart.

There is a further twist to this story, however, that returns to the idea of the Arkenstone as heirloom mentioned early on in the piece; the Dwarves' numinous sense of ancestry. This is expressed in vague ideas of a Dwarf belief in reincarnation, especially for the seven "Durins". This also perhaps creates the extent to which Durin in particular is mythologised to the extent of occupying a similar place in Dwarf exclamations to that which deities do in real-world cultures.[9] The sense of ancestors never being quite gone perhaps adds an additional facet to the Arkenstone's importance; it is, repeatedly, the Arkenstone *of*

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[6] The Lord of The Rings: The Two Towers, "The Road to Isengard", p. 571.
[7] Unfinished Tales, "The Istari", p. 505.
[8] The Hobbit, "Inside Information", p. 213.
[9] E.g. Thorin's "By the beard of Durin!" in The Hobbit, "Inside Information", p. 252.

*Thráin* – a link, perhaps, to an ancestor who still has very real remembered power for the Dwarves.[10] This sense of ancestry, coupled with his redemption, is what makes it right that Thorin is buried with the Arkenstone at his breast – having died in the act of defending and protecting the mountain, he is entrusted with that duty for all time.[11]

In terms of how Dwarves viewed the Arkenstone, therefore, an analogy can best be made with medieval stories of the Holy Grail or other relics. The point is not to gain the artefact *for a purpose* – to think in this way is to fatally miss the point. The value of possessing the artefact is in its inherent numinous qualities; it is, in itself, sacred. When it is referred to as the "heart of the mountain", this is not simply a tagline, it illustrates the Dwarves' thought patterns about it as an artefact, symbolising the centre of the living sphere of existence that naturally and instinctively fell under their guardianship.

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[10] The Hobbit, "Inside Information", p. 212.
[11] The Hobbit, "Inside Information", p. 264.

# Glaciation in Middle-earth[1]

## *Samuel Cook*

Glaciers, ice caps and ice sheets are not a prominent feature of Middle-earth outside the peripheral and little-described regions of the far north. However, I intend to demonstrate that such features must have existed and how these can potentially explain some characteristics of Middle-earth. First, I will review what evidence there is for glaciated terrain in Middle-earth, then suggest how widespread glaciation might have been outside the far northern regions, before looking at how this would have impacted Middle-earth's inhabitants and landscapes.

There are several mentions or clear implications of glacial features in Middle-earth. First and most obviously is the Helcaraxë, the Grinding Ice, which Fingolfin and his followers have to cross when leaving Valinor. This lies far to the north and, from descriptions, would seem to be an area of sea permanently covered with sea ice. Second, and similarly northerly, is the Icebay of Forochel (and the adjoining region of Forodwaith), the home of the Lossoth, the Snowmen of Forochel, and the scene of Arvedui's shipwreck. The Bay itself would seem to be seasonally sea-ice-covered, with indications that Cape Forochel itself might well be glaciated, whilst Forodwaith seems to be most likely some sort of Arctic tundra environment. Further south, there are the Mountains of Moria, the description of which certainly seems to imply permanent snowfields at the very least. Further south again, there are the White Mountains. Little information is provided about them, but the name "White Mountains" clearly implies that they have year-round snow cover, if nothing more. It is therefore clear that glaciated terrain exists in the far north of Middle-earth, but a little less straightforward in the populated and narratively-relevant regions of the map.

For glaciation to occur, two things are needed: sufficiently cold temperatures to ensure not all ice melts every year, and sufficient solid precipitation (i.e. snow) to replace losses and build glaciers. A glacier begins to form when fresh snow falls on top of older snow – over time, the pressure caused by the weight of new snow compresses the older snow into ice. Once enough ice has been formed, it can start flowing. The glacier will continue growing until the mass melted off it each year (usually in summer) is equal to the mass added to it each year by fresh snowfall. Glaciation therefore happens preferentially in cold, wet places,[2] such as the windward sides of mountain ranges. As altitude increases, temperatures drop due to reduced convection from the earth's surface.[3] Mountain ranges also force air masses blown towards them to rise, which, as the temperature drops, reduces

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[1] It had to happen sooner or later. I'm amazed I've taken 5 years to write this.
[2] Hence why Siberia is not generally glaciated. It is very cold in winter, but also very dry, so not enough snow survives the short-but-warm summers to generate widespread glaciation.
[3] The rate at which this happens is called the altitudinal lapse rate – it's usually something around 6°C per kilometre of altitude.

their ability to store water vapour, leading to condensation and precipitation.[4] Therefore, mountain ranges tend to be colder and wetter than the surrounding land[5] and, as such, are a preferred site for glaciation to occur.

Given this, where might glaciation be expected in Middle-earth? It is reasonable to assume that the climate is similar to that of NW Europe, with a westerly prevailing wind. This is borne out by work on modelling the climate of Middle-earth undertaken by the University of Bristol, which shows the Shire having a similar climate to Leicestershire and Mordor being hot and arid,[6] with westerly prevailing winds from Eriador southwards.[7] It may have been noticed that NW Europe is not, currently, underneath several hundred metres of ice, with glaciation restricted to mountainous areas, so it seems reasonable to expect something similar in Middle-earth. As such, and confirming the earlier conjecture, the White Mountains seem likely to be glaciated – from a latitudinal point of view, they're more-or-less equivalent to the Alps, which are glaciated, so it seems reasonable to take the name at face value.[8] What about the other mountain ranges of Middle-earth? The problem here is that we have very little idea of the heights of any of them[9] – given the latitudinal range of Middle-earth, mountain ranges under 1500-2000m are unlikely to exhibit significant glaciation as temperatures will simply be too warm. Let's look at each of the major mountain ranges in turn and consider whether they seem likely to be sufficiently tall to generate glaciers.

First, the big one: the Misty Mountains. The impression we're given of the Misty Mountains is that they are the most important and largest orographic feature of Middle-earth, at least on the scale of the White Mountains, with which they merge. It's also clear from the account of the Fellowship's attempts to cross the Redhorn Gate that the upper parts of the mountains are permanently snow-covered, which suggests that the conditions to initiate glaciation are present. As with the Andes, another north-south-trending range, it is likely that glaciation would be much more widespread on the wetter, western sides of the range than the drier eastern slopes. Glaciation would also theoretically be much more

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[4] This is called orographic precipitation.

[5] They can also create a rain-shadow effect behind them (from the prevailing wind's point of view) – by forcing precipitation to occur on the windward side of the range, air on the leeward side becomes very dry, resulting in much reduced precipitation compared to the windward side. This can be seen in South America – the western side of the Andes (the windward side – the prevailing winds are westerly) tends to be very wet (1000s of mm/year of precipitation); the eastwards side is much drier (a few hundred mm/year).

[6] Given it's on an equivalent latitude to Iberia, Italy or Greece, that's hardly surprising.

[7] For those interested in more about the climate of Middle-earth, I recommend the article by Brown (2013), which can be found at the below link:
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/media/press/10013-english.pdf

[8] This also means that the White Mountains must be more-or-less the same height as the Alps – the equilibrium line altitude (i.e. the height above which there is more snow accumulation than melting, allowing glacier genesis) is about 3000m in the Alps (rising all the time with global warming), so the White Mountains have to have large areas above this elevation.

[9] You can try to compare the height of the symbols on the map, but that's so vague, you may as well not bother.

widespread in the northern, colder part of the range, but it seems likely that the entire range has some degree of glaciation – if the more southerly White Mountains do and the Misty Mountains are at least as tall and wet (which seems very likely), they must be at least as glaciated. It thus seems overwhelmingly likely that the Misty Mountains are glaciated.

Secondly, the mountains of Mordor (the Ephel Dúath and the Ered Lithui). These are another relatively well-described region, but there seems no indication of glaciation. The impression we're given is that these are relatively low ranges of bare rock – high enough to be an effective barrier, but not on an Alpine scale – with no mention of ice or snow in any of Frodo and Sam's wanderings. Combined with their more southerly and therefore warmer location, I think it very unlikely that the environs of Mordor exhibit any form of glaciation.

Third, the Iron Hills. We are given very little information on these, but the fact they're called "hills" suggests they're relatively low, perhaps on a Scottish or Welsh scale. Given their latitudinal position is broadly similar to northern Britain, which is not (currently[10]) glaciated and their position in the drier east of Middle-earth, it seems very unlikely that they show any significant degree of glaciation.

Completing the eastern side of the map, we have the Grey Mountains. As with the Iron Hills, we are given virtually no information on this range, beyond that it has lots of Orcs in, which, while useful to know, is not terribly helpful for this article's purposes. However, they are "mountains", not "hills" and lie in a very northerly position on the map, so there would seem to be the potential for glaciation to occur. Countering this is their position east of the Misty Mountains, which would make them relatively drier. The name "grey" also suggests large areas of bare rock, which militates against extensive snow or icefields. The most reasonable answer would seem to be that there could be a limited amount of glaciation on the higher peaks, but that the majority of the range is ice-free.

Turning to the western portion of the map, the only major range[11] is the Blue Mountains. Again, these are "mountains", suggesting a substantial height. With their westerly, coastal location, they are also going to receive high levels of precipitation.[12] And, being relatively far north, colder temperatures will prevail. All told, this would seem to make glaciation very likely. However, this does not fit well with the descriptive evidence we have – large cohorts of Men of the First Age seem to have been able to cross the range (admittedly, further southwards) without great difficulty and there is no suggestion in any of the descriptions of the Shire and its environs, Lindon, or the region's Dwarvish holds that there was a notable degree of snow or ice present. The range, at least in its southern portion, was also largely submerged at the end of the First Age. This suggests that the Blue Mountains were rather lower than the name implies – given the rather subdued topography of eastern

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[10] Go back 20,000 years, however, and things were a whole lot different. Cambridge would have been around the southern edge of the ice sheet covering northern Britain....

[11] Barring the various downs around the Shire and Eriador, which are certainly much too low to be glaciated.

[12] Perhaps explaining why they're "blue".

Beleriand and western Eriador, "mountains" seems likely to have been more a sort of honorific than a real description. It simply indicated they were the biggest prominences around, rather than that they were on the same scale as the Misty Mountains.[13] As with the Grey Mountains, perhaps limited glaciation on the highest peaks existed, but the evidence points to the Blue Mountains being relatively low and, thus, ice-free.

Overall, then, it would seem that significant glaciation outside the far northern regions of Middle-earth, where the Snowmen lived and the Helcaraxë ground its teeth, was probably limited to the White Mountains and the Misty Mountains. Other ranges were too low, too warm or too dry to sustain large-scale ice formation. What does this mean for the environment and inhabitants of Middle-earth? Firstly, it means the White and Misty Mountains probably look much like the Alps[14] - the Misty Mountains might be a little taller, perhaps approaching the scale of the Caucasus. Secondly, it means that most of Middle-earth's rivers are at least partially glacier/snow-fed[15] - nearly all of Gondor's manifold rivers rise in the White Mountains,[16] whilst the Anduin and its tributaries derive from the Misty Mountains,[17] as do the Isen, the Greyflood, and their tributaries. In fact, the only major rivers not to have their sources in either the White or Misty Mountains are the Brandywine and the Lune, and the rivers feeding the Sea of Rhûn.[18] What this means is that it is extremely unlikely that anywhere west of Anduin experiences seasonal water shortages, with snowmelt in the summer and rainfall in the winter ensuring strong river flow all-year-round. This means farming and settled agriculture (with strong irrigation potential) would be an attractive lifestyle for the inhabitants, allowing the growth of cities and states, which might otherwise have been slowed or prevented. So, Gondor might owe its very existence to the glaciation of the White Mountains. Thirdly, it would confirm that both the Misty Mountains and White Mountains would be significant barriers to movement, which supports the narrative of largely separate development between Eriador and Rhovanion that the books present and explains Gondor's apparent isolation at the end of the Third Age, with only sketchy knowledge of events, places and peoples to the north.

To conclude, it seems likely that there was a degree of glaciation in Middle-earth in the Third Age and that this would have played a key role in allowing the formation of large, settled states and in determining their geopolitical interactions.

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[13] In the same way that various areas of large hills in Britain are termed "mountains". Admittedly, there is no hard-and-fast dividing line between a hill and a mountain, but there are only a few areas of Britain that could truly be called mountainous – Snowdonia, the Lake District, the Cairngorms and the Grampians being the most obvious.

[14] And, for those interested, means you could probably go skiing there.

[15] Indeed, the Morthond is described as being icy cold, as is the Silverlode.

[16] The exception being the Poros. And the Anduin itself, obviously.

[17] Except the Greylin, which comes from the Grey Mountains, and tributaries of the Entwash, which flow from the White Mountains.

[18] And the Harnen, but that's less important.

# The Middle-earth Presidential Election

*James Baillie*

**Preamble: The Scenario**

The battle for Middle-earth was over. The defeat of Sauron created a new world and new opportunities; the dawning of the Fourth Age looked like a new dawn for monarchical government. However, two years after Gandalf left for the West, Aragorn unexpectedly died of a disease contracted from a poorly sanitised sword-handle. There was nothing for it but DEMOCRACY. Middle-earth's presidential election was about to begin…

**Part 1: The Campaign**

The initial hustings for the race to be president contained five candidates: Tom Bombadil, Sam Gamgee, and Pippin Took from central Arnor, Quickbeam from Fangorn, and Thorin Stonehelm, recently elected as General Secretary of the Middle-earth Communist Party. They set out their initial platforms, with Sam Gamgee and Pippin competing to be the "authentic" hobbit candidate and Quickbeam rapidly running into trouble as nobody could be bothered to listen to the whole of his speeches. The results of the hustings included a clear block in favour of Thorin's candidacy, with Bombadil and Pippin both getting ballot access by virtue of tying for second place. Sam Gamgee bowed out and went back to his mayoralty in the Shire, whilst Quickbeam started the slow walk home.

The next step was of course the great Presidential Debate, in which voters from across Middle-earth asked the questions they really wanted the candidates to answer, to find out what these candidates would address as president.

Memorable questions included one from the Shire, where voters were suspicious of Thorin's policies as being too close to the "gathering and sharing" regime of Saruman that had recently been replaced by Sam Gamgee's more popular local government. A Rohirric voter angrily asked which candidates would do most to end the "war on riders" and high taxes on oatmeal, to which the response was – at best – muted from all the candidates. Throughout the questioning, the candidates began to set out their differences. Pippin focussed on his experiences as part of the Fellowship, appealing to a strong personal vote, and deftly deflecting policy questions by proclaiming his support for setting up commissions to look into just about everything. Bombadil, by contrast, portrayed himself as the candidate who could fix the environment, though his policy on re-enslaving the orcs went down less well. Thorin, criticised for his excessively combative approach in the debate, fought through criticism of the hereditary nature of his position, whilst pressing for an economic-focussed approach to Middle-earth's problems, massive redistribution of wealth, and emancipation for women.

More fireworks emerged on the issue of climate change, where Pippin's position of scepticism on the thawing of the Ice Bay led to an angry outcry from Lossoth voters whilst providing a boost for Bombadil's key policy of planting trees everywhere. Núrnen, an area of major ethnic tension and economic depression, was also the focus of debate. Pippin's policy of cultural integration by sending bands to play the locals music was not vastly popular, but Bombadil's sectarian appeal to re-enslave the Orcs may have lost him that key voting bloc, and Thorin, despite his stronger economic appeal, had difficulty getting his message across to the orc voters he needed to win.

A final question provided a last major issue of disagreement; what would the candidates do if Manwë were to finally get round to visiting Middle-earth? Pippin and Bombadil were in favour: they thought it was "a good idea". Thorin, however, made his parting shots in the debate far more aggressive, angrily deriding Manwë as "useless" and claiming that better relations had to start with the Valar rather than the abandoned peoples of Middle-earth.

After the debate, final campaign stops were made, as each candidate attempted to rally their core voters.[1] The first day's campaigning saw Pippin in the Shire, trying to work his home constituency and head off a challenge from Bombadil. Thorin Stonehelm did likewise, speaking at large rallies of miners in the Iron Hills. Bombadil, meanwhile, headed to the much-debated region of Nurnen, to try and get the human voters there behind him. On the second day, Minas Tirith and Pelargir were the focus of much attention, as Pippin met adoring crowds in Minas Tirith whilst Thorin attempted to rally the voters in Pelargir with a forceful speech on the evils of capitalism for the ship-building industry. Bombadil meanwhile made a visit to the Lossoth, galvanising their vote in what was probably his most successful campaigning appearance. On the final day Pippin moved across the river to Ithilien, playing on his reputation in the Fellowship, whilst Thorin made his last appeal to the voters of Núrnen. The fading challenge from Bombadil ended with failed campaign stop in Dorwinion, where he failed to promote his tree-planting policies.

The ballots were cast and counted, and numbers began to flood in…

**Part 2: The Results**

The results of the election, eagerly anticipated, were finally revealed. The overall totals were that Pippin squeaked home in a marginal victory; 89 votes to 82 for Thorin, with Bombadil a clear third place on 47. The picture of seat wins told a further interesting story: Thorin won eight of them, to Pippin's six, with Bombadil winning just three, and one (Cardolan & Bree) being a dead tie. Pippin's victory was achieved by gaining huge percentages of the vote in central Gondor, where his celebrity status catapulted him to victory despite Thorin narrowly gaining key marginals such as Minas Tirith and (unexpectedly) Rhudaur and Eregion.

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[1] For the interested: the candidates could each pick 3 constituencies, secretly, in which to double their vote.

The political map was filled in: Gondor and Rohan were heavily in favour of Pippin, whilst Thorin Stonehelm's support was greatest in the north-east, where not only his home seat of the Riverlands but also central Rhovanion and Dorwinion swung heavily towards him. Bombadil's support was on Middle-earth's fringes; rallying the Lossoth vote won him Arthedain, Luin & Lindon voted in his favour, and Umbar in the far south similarly decided that a more laissez-faire candidate might be a good idea. Eriador had strength for all the candidates; two of Bombadil's seats were there, a stronghold each for the other candidates (Dunland for Thorin and the Shire for Pippin), and Cardolan and the two Misty Mountains seats providing tight natural marginals.

The full results by constituency can be seen here: the bolded & italicised values are where candidates made their campaign stops, and shaded values show which candidate won. Constituencies are arranged by percentage majority, from lowest to highest.

| | Thorin | Bombadil | Pippin |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cardolan & Bree | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Rhudaur & Eregion | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| Minas Tirith | *10* | 1 | *8* |
| Núrnen | *8* | *6* | 3 |
| Upper Anduin | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Luin and Lindon | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Arthedain & Angmar | 4 | *8* | 2 |
| Rohan | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| Mirkwood & Lórien | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Umbar | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| Rhovanion | 7 | 0 | 3 |
| Dunland | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| The Shire | 1 | 4 | *10* |
| Dorwinion | 7 | *2* | 2 |
| West Gondor | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Riverlands | *12* | 1 | 3 |
| Ithilien | 3 | 1 | *12* |
| Dol Amroth | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 82 | 47 | 89 |

**Part 3: Constituency Profiles**

ERIADOR

**Luin & Lindon**

**Population centres:** The Grey Havens, some Dwarf mines.

**Population breakdown:** 45% Elf, 35% Dwarf, 15% Arnorian, 5% Hobbit

**Description:** One of the least human-heavy constituencies, focussed around the Elven havens in Lindon and the Dwarf holds of the southern Blue Mountains. A mixture of Dwarven mineral extraction and industry with Elven intellectuals and seafarers gives this seat an unusual political mixture.

**Politics:** A relatively split, marginal area, with a left-wing Dwarf minority and a large Elf vote galvanised by environmental concerns. Voted for Bombadil, possibly because the Grey Havens Elves wanted someone who'd still be there if they came and visited again in a few millennia.

**Arthedain, Angmar & Forochel**

**Population centres:** Fornost

**Population by species:** 50% Arnorian, 30% Orc, 15% Lossoth, 5% Other

**Description:** A vast northern constituency, with the recently re-settled city of Fornost at its centre. Despite mostly being the centre of human settlement in the North, there are significant minority votes further north with the orcs in Angmar and the Lossoth in Forochel.

**Politics:** Would have been a tied ultra-marginal if not for the strong environmental campaign by Bombadil, who hugely boosted his vote to make this one of his best performances. The Stonehelm campaign challenged here and was in a clear second place, with many Orcs and some Arnorians swinging their way.

**Rhudaur & Eregion**

**Population centres:** Rivendell

**Population by species:** 45% Elf, 30% Orc, 20% Human, 5% Dwarf

**Description:** Whilst including the intellectual centre of Rivendell, most of the rest of the region is rugged forest and hillside, with Orcs and small human settlements making up a deeply conservative population.

**Politics:** This was a surprise win for the Stonehelm campaign, with the relative economic difficulties of the region providing an unexpected win along with some left-wing thinkers in Rivendell. Nonetheless it was a very marginal seat, with only a small margin of victory over the Took campaign who could rely on a strong showing in the Elven and human populations.

**The Shire**

**Population centres:** Hobbiton, Michel Delving, Bywater, Buckleberry, Tuckborough

**Population by species:** 95% Hobbit, 5% Dwarf/Elf/Bombadil

**Description:** An almost wholly rural constituency, this region has a number of small market towns amid a mainly pastoral landscape. Voters here are still reacting to the aftershocks of rapid industrialisation policies under previous leaders.

**Politics:** The Shire turned out as a very safe seat for the Took campaign; the Bombadil campaign would have come relatively close, but the campaign stop made by Pippin here really swung the seat firmly into the Took camp. For both Pippin and Tom, this was their home seat, making Bombadil the only one of the candidates to fail to win at home.

**Cardolan & Breeland**

**Population centres:** Bree, Tharbad

**Population by species:** 45% Arnorian, 30% Breelander, 20% Hobbit, 5% Dwarf/Elf

**Description:** Formed of the southern parts of Arnor, this constituency is relatively agricultural, with a large Hobbit minority. The Breelanders are relatively settled and concerned with immigration, whereas the Arnorians of Cardolan are mainly concerned with trying to revive the regional trade centres such as Tharbad.

**Politics:** The tightest ultra-marginal, tied between the Stonehelm and Took campaigns. This was expected to be a better Took area given the hobbit population, but a strong debate performance on alcohol-related issues and the pub trade may have given Stonehelm a boost here.

<div align="center">RHOVANION</div>

## Upper Anduin

**Population centres:** Gundabad, Moria, The Carrock

**Population by species:** 40% Orc, 30% Man/Beorning, 20% Dwarf, 5% Elf, 5% Giant Eagle

**Description:** The upper Anduin region was once mostly a Dwarven centre, but now it is home mainly to Goblin voters who have been hit hard by the recent downturn in the pillaging industry. The economic redevelopment of the area is high on the agenda, but how this should be done is hotly contested between manufacturing – friendly Dwarves and more protectionist Beornings.

**Politics:** A tight Took/Stonehelm marginal, but won by the Stonehelm campaign given the backdrop of economic deprivation, with the Dwarf vote in particular swinging behind him and some reasonable human and orcish support. The Beornings provided the core of the region's Took voters, which kept this relatively close.

## Mirkwood & Lórien

**Population centres:** Thranduil's Palace, Cerin Amroth

**Population by species:** 60% Elf, 35% Wood-Men, 5% Orc

**Description:** The only majority Elven constituency, Mirkwood and Lórien contains many voters concerned with environmental issues. On the other hand, the minority Wood-Men and Orc populations are generally in favour of greater industrialisation.

**Politics:** As expected, this was one of the weakest seats for the Stonehelm campaign, and something of a disappointment as well for Bombadil as Pippin took it by a clear margin. One of Took's more marginal wins, he nonetheless rallied multiple voting blocks for a clear win over Bombadil in second.

## Dorwinion and Near Rhûn

**Population centres:** Who Knows?

**Population by species:** 75% Dorwinian, 10% Dwarf, 10% Easterling, 5% Orc

**Description:** Rhovanion's most agricultural constituency, focussed on wine growing with side-lines in olives and probably fancy cheese. Generally in favour of markets. Or shops. Or anywhere that they can sell booze to people.

**Politics:** This was a strong safe seat for Stonehelm, despite Bombadil's attempt to campaign here. The mercantile population mattered less in the final result than the sizeable Dwarf minority population and assurances of respect for the value of the local alcohol industry given by Stonehelm. This was the safest Stonehelm seat except for his home seat of The Riverlands.

### The Riverlands

**Population centres:** Dale, Lake-Town, Erebor, the Iron Hills

**Population by species:** 50% Dwarf, 45% Dale-Men, 5% Elf

**Description:** A vibrant constituency with a strong manufacturing heritage. Contains the urban centres of Dale and Lake-town and the manufacturing bases of Erebor and the Iron Hills, making this probably the most Dwarf-heavy and the most industrial constituency.

**Politics:** The safest seat in the Stonehelm camp, though it would have been behind Dorwinion on that score had it not been for strong campaigning here in the final days before the vote. This would have been won regardless, though; it was Stonehelm's home seat, and the strong industrial base and his personal vote ensured that the area turned out heavily in his favour.

### Central Rhovanion

**Population centres:** None

**Population by species:** 30% Dale-men, 30% Easterling, 10% Dorwinian, 10% Dwarf, 10% Elf, 10% Orc

**Description:** A vast constituency with a very transient population, stretching from the Brown Lands to the borders of Rhûn. Most of the settled population is in the north, nearer to Dale along the Celduin valley.

**Politics:** Another very safe Stonehelm seat, this was the only seat with no votes for Bombadil (and one of only two seats where a candidate got no votes, the other being Dol Amroth which gave no votes to Thorin). The transient (and thus economically unsettled) population and closeness of other safe communist areas helped push this in Stonehelm's favour, with few real attempts to court the area from the other candidates.

## Ithilien and Gorgoroth

**Population centres:** Emyn Arnen

**Population by species:** 75% Gondorian, 15% Orc

**Description:** Mostly the reclaimed eastern parts of Gondor, also taking in Sauron's former stronghold region of Gorgoroth – the latter is now largely uninhabitable as a result of the volcanic waste and the end of regular food imports from Núrnen.

**Politics:** An ultra-safe seat for the Took campaign, with last-minute campaigning causing a surge in an already high vote and cementing this as one of the most solid areas in Middle-earth. The previously war-torn region responded extremely well to Pippin's war hero status, and the Orc minority figured little in the final result.

## Núrnen

**Population centres:** None

**Population by species:** 40% Orc, 40% Former Slaves, 20% Khandish

**Description:** The only plurality Orcish region, made up of the more fertile parts of Mordor. Large numbers of former slaves and Orcs are opposed voters here, with the Khandish forming a swing block between them.

**Politics:** This was an extremely close seat that saw heavy campaigning by Bombadil and Stonehelm, with voters unenthused by any of the major campaigns. Stonehelm converted his advantage on the economy into a narrow win here, but it was a seat he probably had to take by a far larger margin to secure an overall victory.

## Umbar & Harondor

**Population centres:** Umbar

**Population by species:** 60% Umbarine, 30% Haradrim, 10% Gondorian

**Description:** The southernmost constituency, largely centred around the metropolis of Umbar, but also taking in the debatable and desert land of Harondor. The Umbarines tend to vote strongly for looser legal codes!

**Politics:** The only seat that could reasonably be described as safe for Bombadil, though mostly on the grounds that the other candidates were probably actively offputting here. Pippin came a respectable second, with the communist manifesto being firmly rejected by the relatively libertarian voters here.

## Dunland & The Isen

**Population centres:** Isengard

**Population by species:** 65% Dunlendish, 15% Entish, 10% Rohirric, 10% Arnorian

**Description:** Dunland is a relatively poor region, with the majority Dunlendish often unhappy about Rohan's comparative wealth. There is a strong pro-environmentalist vote in the Entish minority population.

**Politics:** The strongest seat outside Rhovanion for the communists, with no clear challenger as the other candidates tied on votes. The economic depression of the area and opposition to the more affluent areas in Rohan undoubtedly contributed to the heavy communist support here.

## Rohan

**Population centres:** Edoras

**Population by species:** 55% Rohirric, 30% Dunlendish, 5% Gondorian, 5% Entish, 5% Dwarf

**Description:** An open, pastoral constituency, mostly based around farming of sheep and goats among other things. A Rohirric/Dunlendish ethnic divide is still noticeable, with the Rohirrim being the more prosperous party.

**Politics:** A reasonably safe seat for Pippin, though not monolithically so. Like in Dunland, the Dunlendings swung behind the Stonehelm campaign, but this was insufficient to prevent the Rohirric majority solidly backing the Took campaign.

## West Gondor

**Population centres:** None

**Population by species:** 90% Gondorian, 10% Drúedain

**Description:** This region contains the poorer and more rugged parts of Western Gondor; whilst the vast majority are Gondorian, this area is both less wealthy and has been less focussed on war than the core parts of the country.

**Politics:** One of the three extremely safe Gondorian seats (along with Dol Amroth and Ithilien) that really secured victory for the Took campaign. The other candidates had poor vote totals and were far behind, with a runaway victory for Pippin.

## Dol Amroth & The Coasts

**Population centres:** Dol Amroth, Edhellond

**Population by species:** 90% Gondorian, 5% Umbarine, 5% Haradrim

**Description:** The core of Gondor, with many coastal regions where raiders and traders from further south make up a small minority of voters. Most people here, however, are Gondorian through and through, and relatively prosperous.

**Politics:** The ultra-safe seat to end all ultra-safe seats, with a massive 80% majority for Pippin and no votes at all for Thorin. Its status as perhaps the poshest seat in Middle-earth undoubtedly contributed to its solid rejection of Stonehelm, and even despite Pippin not campaigning the margin of victory was staggering.

### Minas Tirith & Pelargir

**Population centres:** Minas Tirith, Pelargir

**Population by species:** 85% Gondorian, 10% Drúedain, 5% Rohirric

**Description:** The most urbanised constituency, centred on the two major population centres of Minas Tirith and Pelargir. The urban poor are a strong swing vote, often tempted by populist leaders but also in favour of greater services and jobs being available.

**Politics:** An extremely valuable and tightly fought marginal where both Pippin and Thorin made campaign stops. This was the only part of Gondor proper where Pippin failed to win, with Thorin eking out a narrow victory – though the failure to really rally the urban masses and the dock-workers of Pelargir into a solid communist voting block perhaps spelt ultimate doom for the Stonehelm campaign; keeping this close was, in turn, instrumental to the Took campaign's victory.


**Part 4: The Aftermath**

After Dol Amroth's late declaration, the huge 80% majority they gave to Pippin meant that the initially optimistic Stonehelm campaign was running out of options. Despite turning out to have a political style and position somewhere between Arnold Schwarzenegger and George W. Bush, Pippin's heroism in the War of the Ring had been rewarded at the ballot box. The argumentative, dour communism of Thorin Stonehelm had been successfully defeated, if relatively narrowly in the end. Bombadil graciously conceded that "Hey, flocks, goldilocks, they trashed me at the ballot box" and went back to playing accordion badly. The communists, for their part, grudgingly conceded defeat and plodded back to Rhovanion muttering something about bourgeois capitalists.
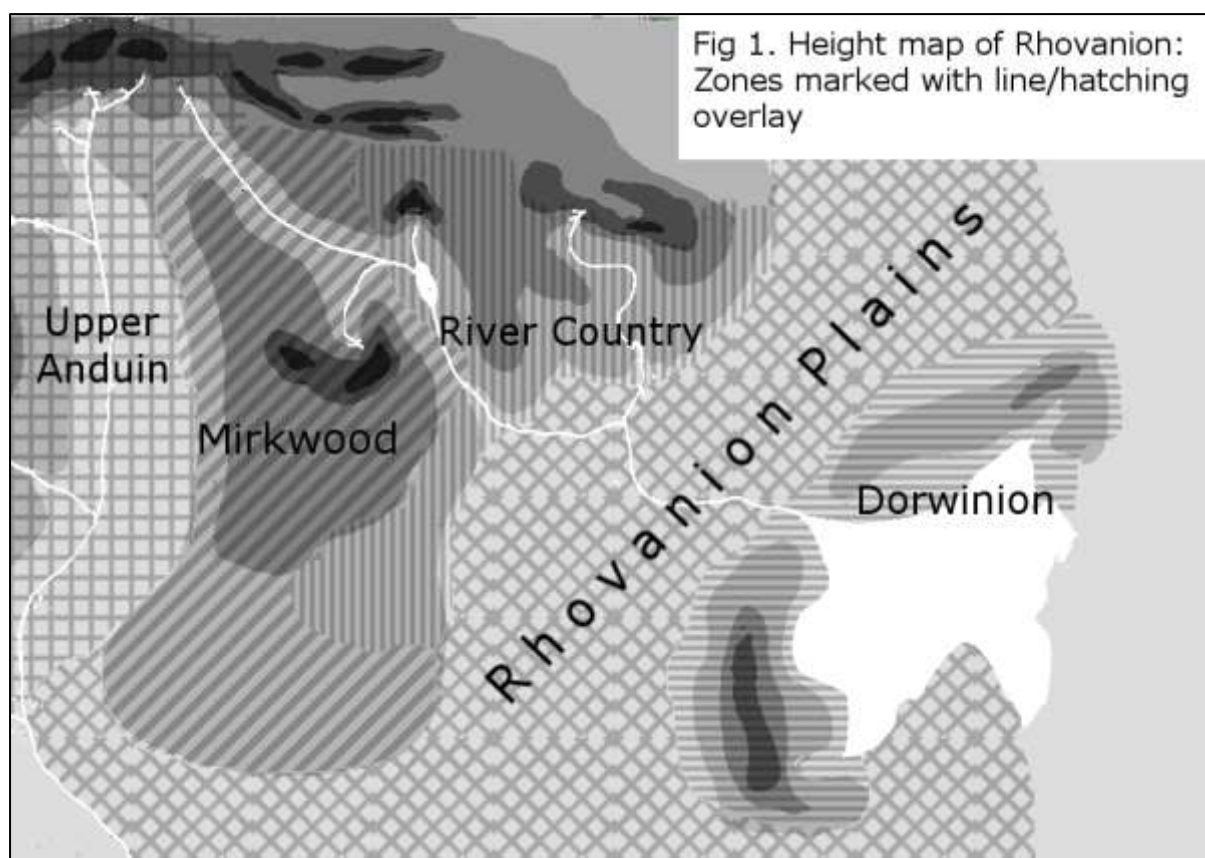
As President Took took office, Middle-earth was politically divided: many of the most troubled regions had voted for Stonehelm. The election had been won, but many challenges lay ahead…

# Rhovanion and its political geography

*James Baillie*

Rhovanion, much like Eriador or other large subcontinental regions of Middle-earth, is portrayed as a diverse landscape; some areas of it we see in sharp detail through the eyes of Bilbo or the recounting of Glóin, other parts of it are skimmed over in historical notes. It is nevertheless, I feel, useful to scholars of Middle-earth's history more generally to have a clearer idea of what Rhovanion consists of and how it is divided up. I am going to use this paper to, with the aid of diagrams, set out what I believe to be the key geopolitical features of Rhovanion as a region, focussing especially on those more easterly parts that have not hitherto received due attention.

**The Basics of the Landscape**



Fig 1. Height map of Rhovanion: Zones marked with line/hatching overlay

As the first part of this paper, I will simply go over the basics of the landscape, dividing Rhovanion into a set of geographically distinct regions that are also politically important. These, shown in Fig. 1, are as follows:

<u>The Upper Anduin</u>

Probably the area that received the most attention from Tolkien, this area was essentially a huge river valley, with continual if mobile human settlement, notably including the proto-

Rohirric realm of the Éothéod for around 700 years and, far back into the Second Age, the Dwarf-Human Upper Anduin Alliance. Politically the region tended to be strongly influenced by the Misty Mountains – both in terms of Dwarf cultural dominance and political turbulence as a result of frequent confrontations with Orcs. I shall avoid giving it too much attention here; whilst it bears important similarities to lands further east, the Greenwood largely isolated it from the broader political patterns of "Rhovanion proper".

Mirkwood

The huge forest of Mirkwood, I am going to suggest, should be thought of more as an upland region than a forest region; its mountains are a rolling southern spur of the grey mountains, and this spur broadens as a wide, forested hilly belt that divides the Anduin valley from the Rhovanion plains. A further point with regards to Mirkwood is that it should not be thought of as purely an Elfin domain. Northern Mirkwood, along the uppermost navigable stretches of the Forest River, was the centre of Thranduil's realm, which whilst nominally large probably had a relatively low population with few real centres and thus could not effectively control most of Mirkwood.

Dale/River Country

The area east of Dale, essentially encompassing the hilly river valleys of the Carnen and Celduin, I shall refer to as the "River Country". My envisioning of this region is that it extended a good deal south, including the Eastern Bight of Mirkwood – including it, indeed, precisely because my belief is that therein lies the key to understanding the region. I see this area as being populated and thus deforested, having in primeval Middle-earth been a continuous forest that extended Mirkwood a great many miles to the east. Spreading human settlement up the river valleys, making use of trade with the woodland Elves and lying on important eastward Dwarven trade routes, meant the gradual deforestation of this region at some point during the Second Age (or perhaps the late First). This fits with the Eastern Bight, explained by Tolkien as a region deforested by the Northmen.[1]

The Rhovanion Plains

This region can be assumed to be grassy steppe country, cut across by the Celduin, forming a wide, flat, semi-arid belt of land south of the hills and north of the Sea of Rhûn over which nomadic invaders periodically threw themselves across the map.

Dorwinion

Dorwinion must perhaps be the most under-explored area of Rhovanion. South and east of the plains, the terrain became hillier and more wooded around the shores of the sea of Rhûn. This area was clearly suitable for viticulture, as will be discussed later; we can perhaps

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[1] Unfinished Tales, Cirion and Eorl, p.373.

imagine a landscape of high hills or low mountains, with small fertile wooded valleys and shoreline plains in a warm and sheltered climate to their south.

**Geopolitical divisions and the Northmen of Rhovanion**

The big division in Rhovanion in terms of culture and politics appears to be between the people of its plains and those of its upland regions. The plains often had nomadic tribes from further east flung across them in large migrating groups; the Wainriders and Balchoth being notable examples. These peoples frequently attempted to militarily dominate, with some success, the more settled populations in the hills. The hill-peoples of the river country and the Upper Anduin appear to have had significant commonalities of culture, although not of language; Northmen names are always given in Gothic form (e.g. Marhwini), whereas Rohirric names are in the Old English form. It seems probable that the Northman-style language family predominated east of Mirkwood and the Rohirric equivalent in the Upper Anduin. The language of the Dorwinians is unknown, but was possibly not wholly alien to these given their apparent ease of trading upriver across the plains. Nevertheless I think it is correct to treat the Northmen as essentially a separate cultural group from the Dorwinians, given their geographical and cultural distinction.
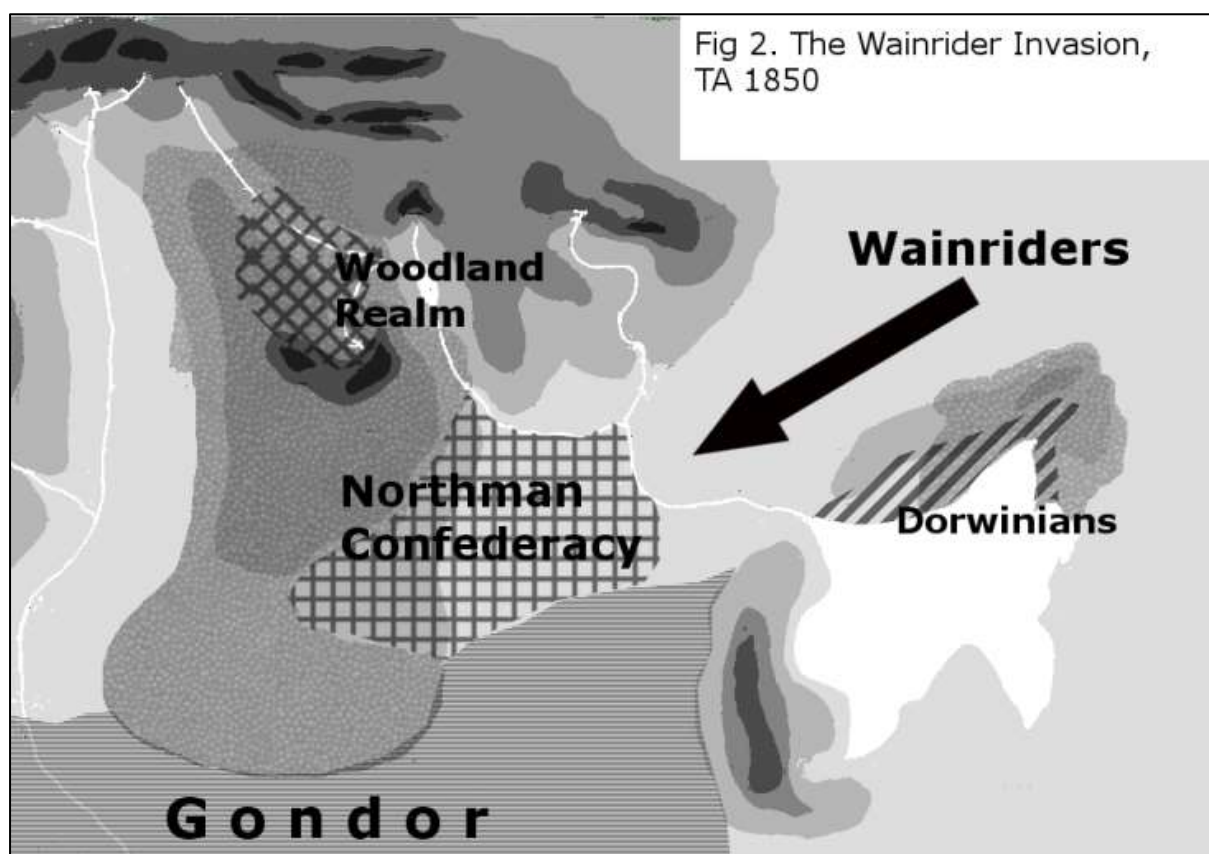
It is to the Northmen and their successor peoples that I think it is now important to turn, being a people about whom our records are reasonable but ill-explored and also being the prism through which much of our further knowledge of the East is filtered. In political terms, the Northmen seem to have had a far wider diversity of structures than the monolithically monarchic post-Númenórean realms. The Northmen are referred to as a "confederation", implying a number of smaller political units in some sort of unison.[2] This does not seem to have prevented certain powerful individuals occasionally gaining dominance, and Vidugavia apparently at one point claimed the title of "King of Rhovanion". No other holders of this title are mentioned, however, and it may have been simply an honorific that died with its holder. The landscape of hill and river valley lent itself to this loose political system; local towns and centres could not be easily connected or centralised as a result of the rough terrain, necessitating both the use of sturdy horses for communications and the relatively localised, if confederate, political structure. We should not necessarily think of the confederation as having any sort of well-articulated political structure, at least in Vidugavia's time (the 1400s); there was a broad group identity among various princes and leaders, but no clear structure of governance is obvious.[3]

Economically, the Northmen of the confederation were presumably mostly pastoralists and woodsmen; they lived around the southern parts of what I have termed the "River Country", though culturally similar groups were to be found under Gondorian rule in

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[2] Unfinished Tales, Cirion and Eorl, p.373.

[3] Indeed, the use of the words "he called himself" for Vidugavia's title claim are revealing here.

the lands south of Mirkwood (or Greenwood, as it was known then).[4] They were crucial to Gondorian politics for some centuries; their allegiance was not wholly towards the south, and retaining some level of influence in the region was a major goal of Gondor's policy in the area - they formed a vital buffer to potential attackers coming from the northeast (as shown in Fig 2). Northmen were heavily involved in the kin-strife, harbouring Eldacar (or, as he was known to them, Vinitharya), providing a large part of the forces with which he re-took the throne in TA 1447, and subsequently migrating southwards to where they seem to have been particularly favoured at his court.[5]



Fig 2. The Wainrider Invasion, TA 1850

The Confederacy, such as it was – and my assertion would be that it probably was not in any sense a political unit, rather more likely a succession of changing political units seen from the long-termist and static view of Gondor's Númenórean rulers – seems to have enjoyed nearly two centuries of relative peace thereafter, before it was dramatically weakened by plague in the TA 1630s.[6] The suggestion is given that this was a major feature of their subsequent weakness when faced by the Wainriders, though given the Wainrider invasions were a full two centuries later, the plague would have needed to be somewhat recurrent to keep the population so low. The invasion seems to have ended in something

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[4] Lord of the Rings, Appendix A, p. 1082. This is especially interesting as it is of course a precedent, albeit a millennium earlier, for the resettlement of the Éothéod in Calenardhon; Gondor's northeast frontier had thus been guarded primarily by auxiliaries for many years.
[5] Lord of the Rings, Appendix A, p. 1084.
[6] Unfinished Tales, Cirion and Eorl, p.374.

approaching a stalemate, with a cycle of rebellion and warfare leading to large scale population movements and a high death toll, and ultimately the creation of the Éothéod, the forerunner society to the Rohirrim of later days.

In the "post-confederacy era" of very low populations and only low-level political organisation, the balance of power in the River Country was very much changed. The people further north in Dale, already in existence as a separate entity/sub-group of Northmen from the Confederacy (the fact that they "crossed the Celduin" to get there may mean that we can place that river valley as the Confederacy's northern limit), were swelled in numbers by refugees.[7] However, being so much further north and isolated by Wainrider dominance to the south and the depths of Mirkwood to the west they were cut off from the ebb and flow of Gondorian politics (and the strong Dwarf presence in more northerly regions would not exist for another 150 years). There was no longer even a semblance of central organisation or allegiance, and with Gondor's plains territory effectively abandoned east of the Anduin the south was far less accessible. Some Gondorian influence may still be suggested by the presence of Rhovanian cavalry in Eärnil's forces when Angmar was defeated in the TA 1970s, but it seems to have lessened.[8] With the resettlement of the Éothéod in Rohan in TA 2510 the Stewards very finally moved the border south, with Calenardhon rather than Rhovanion providing a new buffer region.[9] As far as we can tell, regular southwards trade also more or less ceased, with the lack of political organisation in the Brown Lands and the upper Anduin regions creating a large barrier to would-be travellers.

The loss of Gondorian influence was counterbalanced, from around TA 2000 onwards, by the migrations of Durin's folk into the east after the fall of Moria; much as had been the case with their allies in the Anduin regions, the riders and traders of the Northmen made useful auxiliaries for the dwarves, especially in Erebor. It seems quite likely that despite the region's far smaller population, the early period of Dwarf rule in Erebor may have been a good one for nearby humans; the shifting of Dwarf migrations further north after around TA 2200 would however have once more sorely reduced demand for human labour. Around TA 2500 the appearance of the "Balchoth" nomads probably meant further raiding and damage.[10] From the TA 2580s, however, the Dwarves returned south, driven by the dragons further northwards, with a separation between the sons of Dáin I ultimately leading to two major centres, in the Iron Hills and in Erebor.[11]

Erebor once again seems to have been the primary focus of human interaction with the Dwarves, probably as a result of better links to Mirkwood and south towards Dorwinion via the Celduin river system. Two centuries of relatively stable trade continued, with the rise to pre-eminence of the Barding clan as leaders of Dale and increasingly of the region as a

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[7] Ibid.
[8] Lord of the Rings, Appendix A, p. 1088.
[9] Lord of the Rings, Appendix A, p. 1090-91.
[10] Lord of the Rings, Appendix A, p. 1090.
[11] Lord of the Rings, Appendix A, p. 1124.

whole, until the huge exogenous shock provided by the coming of Smaug. This probably had less of an economic impact than the Dwarf migrations of TA 2200, however, as both Dwarven production in the Iron Hills and human trade links via Lake-town remained intact. Some level of dislocation in the trade system no doubt resulted, of course; around 150 years passed, during which Lake-Town became the pre-eminent trade entrepôt of the region, before that passed back to a re-founded Dale and a restored Barding supremacy after the TA 2940s, which survived the wars with Sauron apparently without serious political disruption.

It is worth shedding some ink briefly here on the subject of the political structures in this region in the third millennium of the Third Age. Lake-town was unusual if not unique in Middle-earth for its elective leadership, though this should probably be assumed to be more an election among the property-holding classes, perhaps with ratification by wider acclamation, than a genuine popular democracy.[12] This contrasts significantly with the dominance of the Barding house in Dale's politics, which fitted more closely to Gondorian or Númenórean ideals of kingship. The more elective nature of the rulers of Lake-town could possibly be a result of more easterly influences, as discussed below in the section on the Dorwinians.

To sum up some conclusions from this section: Middle-earth is generally seen as being unusually politically static, but this should not necessarily be taken to apply outside the Númenórean or Elven influenced regions. The Northmen of Rhovanion seem to have had a far more varied succession of polities, most of them too small or insignificant to be considered in Tolkien's work – they are generally referred to as a *people*, not as a polity. The divided nature of the landscape is of vital importance in these considerations; the divided river valleys of the hilly regions of northwest Rhovanion would create naturally divided political spaces, in which extending centralised authority beyond a single settlement and its environs would be inherently difficult. A further point to note is the geographic shift in focus; we can place the Gondorian alliances of Vidugavia's day around the fringes of southern Mirkwood, with a largely self-sufficient system in which surplus was absorbed by a Gondorian-influenced elite, whereas later on Dale was far more northerly with a focus on supplying Erebor and taking advantage of its production in long-distance trade. The Northmen, in this reading, reacted to the external political situation in ways that shaped the relationship between them and the lands they inhabited.

**Nomads**

The nomadic peoples of the Rhovanion plain seem to largely move in an east to west direction; these open, grassy areas, whilst travelled over by mounted Northmen, are largely mentioned as being the path of nomads. Northmen of various sorts – from the southern

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[12] The Hobbit, "Fire and Water", p.231.

borders of Mirkwood in earlier times, and later the resettled Rohirrim – formed the buffers against these for Gondor.

The Wainriders are the earliest mentioned group of such nomads, with their power lasting from roughly the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries of the Third Age.[13] Their name gives their most significant feature: the use of horse-drawn wagons or carts in war. This perhaps developed from being a normal mode of transport in peacetime; nomadic groups would pack wagons with their goods, perhaps with covers to allow them to double up as makeshift shelters, and keep moving across the plains. The Balchoth should probably not be seen as obviously distinct from the Wainriders, except chronologically, with around 700 years between the heyday of the two groups; they were a later, but culturally similar, nomadic group. "Balchoth" is simply a pejorative Gondorian term for them.[14]

The extent and direction of nomadic advances are, once again, bounded by topography. The open plains ahead, into the Brown Lands and Rohan, offered grass for horses and movement space for the wains. This gave a strong incentive to push forwards into those regions, forming a sort of "channel" down towards the northern border-lands of Gondor. The reverse was true elsewhere. In the hills and valleys of the River country or Dorwinion, let alone the thick forests of Mirkwood, carts would have been unwieldy and difficult to fight from. We know of no settlements created by the Wainriders or Balchoth, or indeed occupied by them on a permanent basis, though the apparent "enslavement" of Northmen after the first Wainrider invasions indicates that at this stage the Wainriders were able to at least take some form of regular tribute from conquered peoples.[15]

The Balchoth and Wainriders, just as much as the Northmen in the hills, thus existed in a relationship with their landscape. It both created the opportunity for, and restricted, their systems of wealth extraction from conquered populations, and shaped other features of their lifestyle, especially their characteristic reliance on draft animals and wains but also perhaps the relatively low quality of their armaments, lacking as they were in long-term settlements in which to produce higher quality goods.[16]

**Dorwinion**

We can say relatively little about the peoples of Dorwinion, but I am going to do my best to stretch what we can say as far as possible, if not further. We know that the Dorwinians were wine-growers, producing particularly strong and "heady" drink.[17] They traded up the Celduin to provide Erebor, the Northmen, and Thranduil's realm in Mirkwood with wine.[18] If the presence of vines and the location give us a good idea of the climate, a similarity to the

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[13] Lord of the Rings, Appendix A, p. 1085-6.
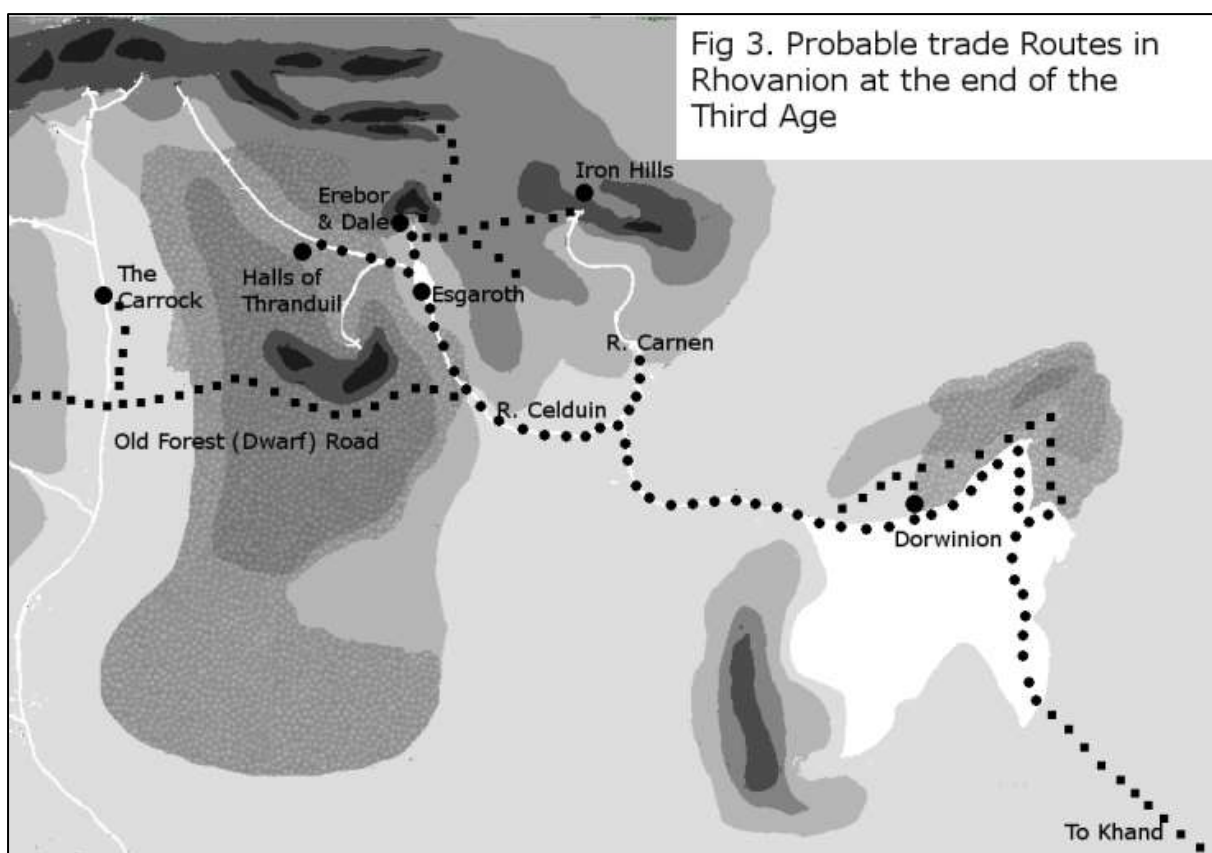[14] Literally "horrible horde" - see Unfinished Tales, "Cirion and Eorl", note 24.
[15] Unfinished Tales, "Cirion and Eorl", p.375.
[16] Unfinished Tales, "Cirion and Eorl", p.375.
[17] The Hobbit, "Barrels out of Bond", p.164.
[18] The Hobbit, "Barrels out of Bond", p.163.

Caucasus may be imagined – subsistence grain crops providing a large percentage of agricultural activity, with wine as the major export followed by nuts, fruit, and other such products. The much colder climate in the River country to the north, both as a result of latitude and of the lack of the hills of Dorwinion, would have made these goods valuable exports. Wine might also have been traded with nomads and exported to the east, where the more centrally continental regions of Khand and Rhûn might also have lacked the settled populations, skills, and climate for wine production. With the lack of routes to Gondor open in the late Third Age, goods passing through Dorwinion to the southeast might have been one of the main long-distance routes for high-value goods from the triangle of Erebor, the Iron Hills, and the Woodland Realm, with their shared entrepôt at Esgaroth (see Fig 3).



Fig 3. Probable trade Routes in Rhovanion at the end of the Third Age

Politically, it seems uncertain who controlled Dorwinion at various times. The Dorwinians were probably often semi-independent, likely changing their allegiances when larger powers dominated the nearby area. Given we have no record of Dorwinian armies at any point, their trading and goods may have frequently brought them a precarious independence as a tributary state of Mordor, Gondor, or perhaps Khand. It seems unlikely that the region was wholly defenceless, given the presence of nomadic raiders, but defence could be organised on a primarily local level.

An additional note worth making is that this view cannot stand alongside the idea that Dorwinion was in majority or plurality an Elf culture by the Third Age. Whilst the

Sindarin name and certain notes in other parts of Tolkien's work give the possibility that a Dorwinian Elven culture had existed at one point, and perhaps that small numbers of Elves still resided in the region, the absolute opposition between Elves and the works of Sauron surely precludes any possibility that a state led by Elves could come to any sort of effective arrangement or even ceasefire with Sauron and his eastern allies. We should thus reject the idea that Dorwinion was primarily inhabited by Elves, though the arguments for earlier states in the area being Elfin are worth serious consideration.[19]

These features imply a culture similar to early Greece or, for a closer comparison, Phoenicia – dominated by trading links, with local defences and possibly urban centres being the primary focus of political organisation. Indeed, this model could bear some similarities with that adopted in Lake-town as one of their most significant trading partners. A lack of individual, powerful kings may have meant that the Dorwinians' territorial ambitions were lacking, but on the other hand could have been a blessing for the region's prosperity – strong enough to ward off attackers, but without the tendency to project power that would have made them a threat to Sauron or other dominant regional factions.

**A few conclusions**

Having sketched out what I see as the basic features of the landscape and how it functions, I hope that in the second half of the paper I have achieved two things. Firstly and most obviously, the reconstruction of Rhovanian history through its own lens – these peoples, continually referred to in Tolkien's work, are almost only ever seen through histories of the Gondorians or Dwarves, or their later descendants in Rohan. I hope this paper, collecting the material in a single place, goes some way to rectifying that and can be of use to future scholars. Secondly, I hope that explaining the political development of the Northmen in particular has shown why geographic distinctions are a useful tool of analysis.

This analysis functions on two important levels, the second leading on from the first. The top level is that the methodology of this paper is applicable not only to Middle-earth but also to the history of the real world. Historical societies do not exist outside the context of their location, and nor do those in Arda – similar studies of Beleriand, Eriador, or Gondor would surely be of considerable interest. Those seeking to create any sort of "historicised" construction extending beyond Tolkien's immediate concerns could potentially use this technique to considerable effect.

The second level, and the one which gives perhaps a deeper insight into studying Tolkien's work, is that it is precisely by creating a landscape to which topographical study can apply that Tolkien's world gains a great deal of its power. Societies and polities do not and cannot exist in vacuums disconnected from landscape and the physical environment; we as readers rightly hold associations about the nature of political and social organisation

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[19] Martinez, M. (2011): http://middle-earth.xenite.org/2011/10/19/was-dorwinion-an-elf-kingdom/

in an area depending on its geography. This holds true everywhere from the city-states of classical Greece, curled up in the isolating valleys of the Greek peninsula or the bays of the Aegean, to modern politics, where sharp regional gaps based on industry and urbanisation still provide a reminder that the political landscape is very much a real one. Tolkien, whether consciously or not, could not help but use these associations in creating his world – the places and the politics fit together with a direct association, which helps maintain the willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader. This furthermore allows the reader to mentally fill in any blanks; maps do not just create a sense of geography but provide additional depth because of the social and political projections we place onto the physical world. Thus, even where the details of polities in Tolkien's thought are minimal, they are grounded in the reader's head in a very literal sense by the fabric of the landscape around them.

# A Hobbit in Isengard: Reports on Tolkien in Birmingham

*James Baillie*

So, as most of you at the time of writing will know, I'm now living in Birmingham, aka Isengard, so I thought I should report back to the City upon my wanderings in these far western lands. As such, I present the following short reports on Tolkien-related stuff around Birmingham as I have witnessed it thus far!

**Sarehole Mill**

I visited Sarehole Mill on a spare weekend day not long after arriving; it's down in the Hall Green area of Birmingham, and a 10 minute or so walk from the station there. For anyone who doesn't know, it's notable for being somewhere that Tolkien knew and played around as a child when he lived in Sarehole (then a hamlet, since swamped by the advancing tide of Birmingham). He personally contributed to its restoration in the 1960s, and it now functions as a working museum mill with an attached Tolkien exhibition.

I'd definitely recommend visiting, though it's a small museum; even with the hour or so each way it took to get there (taking the train into the town centre and out again), it was a relatively short day out. The working machinery is very well worth watching, and there's plenty of interpretative material around in a relatively unobtrusive form which is nice. The Tolkien exhibition includes a well-made video segment that details a lot of Tolkien's connections with the mill and other parts of the local area, and some exhibition boards about his life (which taught me at least one thing I didn't know, namely that "Gamgee" is a Black Country term for cotton wool). The tearoom is very worth visiting, and one can buy the milled flour there, which some CTS members may remember made its way to a meeting when I visited in my reading week.

Sarehole does larger events at some times of year; I'll hopefully go to one or some and report back when I do. All in all it was a nice day out and a nice place to wander around.

**Smials**

Birmingham to some extent boasts three smials, with a fourth in Coventry according to the TS website though I can give no further information on that one. My impression is that two of the three are functional/active, namely Eregion (in Wolverhampton) and Middle-earth Soc at the University. Isengard, the central Birmingham smial, seems to be going through quieter times; Eregion is still doing monthly meetings.

The university society is a lovely bunch of people, tending towards film-watching considerably more than Minas Tirith. Being at a university in a large city that has a proper SU seems to make a considerable difference to societies and their activities; with the larger blocks of space available, fandom craft activities and film watching are perhaps easier here.

On the other hand, the relative lack of cosy-sized pubs and squishy things to sit upon makes the homely discussion session, the CTS' core meeting format, something extremely difficult to replicate here.

**The Yulemoot**

This was a national-level TS event, essentially a pubmoot in central Birmingham, with a booked-out alcove in the Old Contemptibles. Whilst in general a nice venue, the pub was somewhat noisy and somewhat packed; the arrival of a veritable host from Bristol meant that the TS alcove was rather cosy, and had any other university managed a similar contingent we would simply have been unable to fit. The only other negative I would note was that the bar was busy to the extent of being thrown into confusion, with a couple of mistakes in taking food orders and long waiting times to obtain cider. All that aside, the company was excellent, and I sincerely hope more such central Birmingham events can be organised in future; the present author was given a whole new range of people to rant at about the problems of the recent works on Dáin Ironfoot by Jackson et al., and a good range of Eregion, Bristolian, and former Isengardian Tolkien fans were around.

Prizes were (unexpectedly) awarded for best costume (with first, second and third), and best T-shirt, waistcoat, and Christmas jumper. My travelling cloak (as made by our former Gwaihir), jacket and waistcoat combination were doubly unexpectedly sufficient for a third place prize, which given I'd mostly worn the cloak on grounds of practicality in the cold rather than attempted cosplay was a nice bonus for the evening. The far more deserved second place went to Maggie Bailey, who came in proper silly-sleeved Númenórean splendour, and the extremely impressive first place was given to Rhys Hennessey, who turned up in full gear as a ranger of Ithilien (and unlike me managed to keep his cloak on all evening despite the rather warm and crowded atmosphere)! Bristol took both the jumper and T-shirt prize, the latter going to their fearless leader Nicky, and Dave Corby won best waistcoat.

The CTS contingent was, a little surprisingly, second largest of the university societies present, comprising myself and the Archivist of the Tower; one rider of RoHo was there, and eight Bristolians, with myself doubling up as Birmingham University's contingent. Topics covered in conversation ranged from the films, to the other films, to the other other films, to *that* film of the Hobbit; we also had a long debate on the topic of "which real-world year is the best analogy for the time of The Lord of the Rings", and I spent a goodly while discussing the histories of CTS and Taruithorn with Ian Collier. All in all, a fun evening, and as I said, something I hope the TS will repeat.

So there you have it, a hobbit's thoughts on Isengard and what to do in its vicinity. As one final point to visit, do give me a shout if you're going to be in the area; as long as I'm living here there will always be at least one hobbit-hole where you'll be welcome for tea.

# Azanulbizar

### *James Baillie*

Fourteen thousand dwarves
Marched upwards from the plain,
The exiled king fighting,
To avenge his father's pain
The youngest lord among them he was
      Dáin
And he saw ancient Mirrormere and in its
      pool the shining
Of the stars

So the battle raged like wildfire,
In the valley of the stars,
Dwarf and goblin fell,
In dark Azanulbizar,
And across the field the goblin chief did
      roam;
And he killed all that came near him so
      they'd never make it home
To see the stars

Dáin stepped up, iron-shod,
And the battle he did win,
There he took revenge,
For the slaying of his kin
He roared his name so all his foes would
      know
And then he went on to the gate that was
      abandoned long ago
Under the stars

And then at last he got there and

He looked right through the door
The one that closed behind
His ancestors long before
He looked into the gate and caught his
      breath;
He saw the fire that burned there and he
      knew that it meant death
Under the stars

And those that pushed on upwards
He turned them back below
"It's still down there", he said,
"Into the dark we cannot go"
"I'm no coward, but if there's one thing I
      see
It isn't yet the time for us to set these
      mountains free"
And claim our stars"

Revenge is sweet for soldiers
And its fire burns us cold,
But life is sweeter still and
Worth more than a hoard of gold,
Take what justice you can find, my friends,
      today;
But for each life we lose a world of killing
      cannot pay,
Nor will the stars

Nor will the stars
Set on Azanulbizar.

# Bilbo Baggins (to the tune of *Matty Groves*)

*James Baillie*

A holiday, a holiday
And the first one of the year
The wizard Gandalf met Thorin over
A pint of the Pony's beer.

And when the meeting it was done
He cast his eyes about
And there he saw little Bilbo Baggins
Walking in the crowd.

"Come meet these Dwarves, little Bilbo
        Baggins,
You'll feast with them tonight.
Come meet these Dwarves, little Bilbo
        Baggins,
And leave with the morning light."

"Oh, they can't come home, they won't
        come home
And feast with me tonight
For they will break my cups and plates
And their manners are frankly s**te."

"But Bilbo, you are of Tookish blood,
And destined now to roam,
And steal from a dragon's hoard
That's many a mile from home"

And then the company set forth,
They'd many a long mile yet,
To reach the door by Durin's day
Before the sun could set.

And in their hurry they fled past trolls
From wolves they turned and ran
And when they came to Mirkwood's
        stream
In barrels they bobbed and swam.

Then Bilbo found the secret door,
And in there he did creep
Until he came to Smaug's great hall
And stood there at his feet.

Smaug said, "How d'you like my golden
        bed?
Do you fear my dragon's heat?
How do you like the Arkenstone
Which Thorin is wont to keep?"

"Oh, well I like your golden bed
And I fear the dread fire's heat,
But best I like the Arkenstone,
Which Thorin is wont to keep."

"Well, come out, come out", the great
wyrm cried
"For to be burned by me,
It'll never be said in Arda fair,
I let a thief run free."

"Oh, I can't come out, I won't come out
I can't come out for my life
For you have claws like burnished steel,
And I but a pocket knife."

"If flames I cannot bring to you,
Who stole from my own purse
Then I shall burn the Dale-men's homes
And all shall suffer worse."

Well Bard he shot an arrow first
As Smaug flew o'er the town
Well Bard he shot his black arrow last
And fell the dragon down.

Then Bilbo snuck from the mountain tall
And there hurt Thorin sore
He gave the men the Arkenstone
For to avert a war.

And then great Thorin in a rage
Decked in his finery,
Said, "Curse this hobbit who now shall die
And curse all Wizardry!"

And then up spoke the wizard Gandalf
Never heard to speak so free
"If you don't like my burglar
Then give him back to me."

Then the goblins soon arrived
And loudly they did brawl;

Both Fíli and Kíli were struck in the heart
And Thorin he did fall.

"A grave, a grave," bold Thorin cried
"To bury all my kin,
Tell Bilbo it would be a merrier world
If we were more like him."

# Party in the Second Age (to the tune of *Party in the USA*)

*James Baillie*

I hopped on the ship at Rómenna
With some troops and a load of swords
Came from the land of Númenor,
With infantry on board,

Jumped on a horse,
Middle-earth for the first time
Look at the land and decide that it's all
　　　mine
This is all so mad
Just got to meet Gil-galad.

My tummy's turnin' and I'm feelin' kinda
　　　sea sick
Gotta disembark, take this place over
　　　quite quick,
That's when the local Elves did a welcome
　　　show,
Saying welcome to Lindon
Help us please Aldarion,
'cos we're being killed by Sauron

[Chorus:]
So I put my shield up
My sword was soon drawn,
We're fighting both night and day.
I'm slayin' the Orcs like yeah
Chilling with Elves like yeah
Killing trolls too,
I'm blessed by the One
I know I'm gonna be OK
Yeah, it's a party in the Second Age

Yeah, it's a party in the Second Age.

Orc with a club in Hithaeglir
And I just struck him down,
Said, "Stopped that attack now let's get
　　　back
To Vinyalondë town."

So hard with my Erendis not around me
It's definitely not an Armenelos party
'Gotta get my dad to send men
Defend this Elf and human haven

My tummy's turnin' and I'm feelin' kinda
　　　nervous
Gotta go and get some men into my
　　　service
That's when the Easterlings came on a
　　　raid
And they burned Calenardhon
And I fought with Fingon's son,
And pretty soon the orcs were gone.

[Chorus]

Feel like staying home someday (home
　　　someday)
Back with Erendis I'd stay (I'd stay)
But the sea calls me away (away)
To Middle-earth and another orc to slay!

[Chorus 2x]

# Flappy (with almost sincere apologies to Pharrell Williams)

*James Baillie*

*[Verse 1:]*
It might seem crazy what I'm about to say
Gandalf just called, let's do a prison break
Don't need no air balloon that can go to space
I rule the air, like I don't care; the eagles are on the way

{Uh}

*[Chorus:]*
Because I'm flappy - Flap along if you're living in an eyrie without a roof
Because I'm flappy - Flap along if you feel like you should usually stay aloof
Because I'm flappy - Flap along if you know what deus ex machinas are meant to do
Because I'm flappy - Flap along 'cos if you serve Manwë you might be flappy too

*[Verse 2:]*
Here come the heroes doing this and that, yeah,
Well, at loose plot points you know we've got their back, yeah,
Well, I should probably go and get in the air and start to fly, yeah,
You know some hobbits need us to get to Gorgoroth on time,

*[Chorus]*

{Hey, Go, Uh}

*[Bridge:]*
(Happy)
Help refugees out
In Gondolin
Bring dragons down
We're flying so high
Watch Númenor drown
Do nothing
Can't bring me down
We did (let me tell you now)
Carry Dwarves down
Pines burning
Fly over Laketown
When battle draws nigh
Radagast says
Fetch Olórin
Get Frodo and Sam
I said

*[Chorus x2]*

# Let It Go (Grey Havens Edition)

*James Baillie*

**GANDALF**

The snow glows white on Meneltarma
    tonight
As we watch the sea slip past
A kingdom just like heaven,
And it looks like silver glass.

So no more dark lords, no more things I
    can't abide,
That was quite rough, I literally died.

Always wandering east from the sea,
Being the wizard I always had to be
Old Saruman he failed, it's true
And as for the blues…

Let us go, let us go
I'm not in Middle-earth anymore
Let us go, let us go
For I finally beat Mordor.

I will have
Words with Manwë
He let the war rage on,
The Balrog never bothered him anyway.

**FRODO**

It's funny how some distance
Makes Barad-dûr seem small
And the ring that once controlled me
Can't get to me at all.

I think I've done all I can do
Even if Gollum helped see it through
No burdens left to bear for me
I'm free.

Let us go, let us go
As we metaphorically die
Let us go, let us go
Leave Samwise there to cry

Here I am
And here I'll stay
Let the Shire sleep on.

I never liked Longbottom Leaf anyway.

**GALADRIEL**

My power flows with me and leaves
    Lórien's ground
The elves will surely dwindle now that I
    am not around
I hope the woods will still be safe with
    Radagast…
But I'm never going back,
The past is in the past.

Let us go, let us go
And I'll shine like the morning sun,
Let us go, let us go
As we lose sight of Lindon.

**ALL**

Here we stand
In the light of day
Let the earth move on,
The Ring never bothered us anyway.

# Consequences

### *Various members of the Cambridge Tolkien Society*

(1)

Bob Geldof met Galadriel at the Green Dragon (now under management by Starbucks).
Bob Geldof said: "That is a very fine sword."
Galadriel replied: "Not as big as yours though!"
They initiated the fourth kinslaying, then stopped for lunch.
As a result, Manwë face-palmed really hard.

(2)

The Eye (and Eyebrows) of Sauron met the entire race of eagles on a man in the Mines of Moria.
The Eye (and Eyebrows) of Sauron said: "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?"
The entire race of eagles on a man replied: "It's fine! The eagles will save us in the nick of time!"
Then they eloped and went on a romantic cruise on a lava-flow in Orodruin.
And so the Age of the Orc began.

(3)

Glaurung met a representative from the Tolkien Estate beneath the Bridge of Khazad-dûm.
Glaurung said: "Why?"
The representative from the Tolkien Estate said nothing, just turned and walked away.
They went and burned everything.
As a result, Sauron decided that he'd had enough.

(4)

Sauron (in the form of a were-wolf) met Sauron at Orthanc.
Sauron (in the form of a were-wolf) said: "What have you done with the Silmarils?"
Sauron replied: "I've got a ring – don't mess with me!"
They ran a half-marathon because that's totally a logical thing to do.
As a result, they were accidentally trodden into the ground by an Ent who thought he'd seen an Entwife while drunk on Entwash.

(5)

Tauriel met the Witchking at Samwise's hobbit hole.
Tauriel said: "Hellllo, handsome."
The Witchking replied: "How dare you talk to me! Heathen!

They built a ship of Mallorn plywood.

As a result, the Valar granted them both immortality, then they sailed away and were never heard of again.

(6)

Fingon met Quickbeam on a giant Tinúviel Pursuit board.

Fingon said: "Well, I'm not entirely sure what to do about this."

Quickbeam replied: "I concur."

They engaged in a homoerotic sword fighting montage.

As a result, Saruman ate the hobbits.

**Gandalf and the Balrog**
*Louise Vincent*