

EDITORIAL

Come dear folk! Laugh and be merry! Welcome back, old friends; and a warm welcome to any newcomers!

As ever with Anor, there is – I hope – something for everyone here. There are dazzling displays of knowledge in Sam Cook's report on the 2019 Varsity quiz; there is serious analysis of rings and sin, and perhaps less serious analysis of elephants and dragons; and as usual there are poems and songs (indeed, an entire discography...).

May each of you find something to their liking – and may you all be inspired to pen your own contributions to be added to my hoard.

Happy reading!

Daeron (Eleanor Smith)

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THE BATTLE OF THE MEMORIAL COURT

Or: Knowledge Is Power

Samuel Cook

Another year means another Tolkien Varsity Quiz has been and gone. This year, the 22nd time the quiz was fought, we were in Cambridge, in Clare College Memorial Court, which meant we didn't run any risk of repeating last year's perilous journey to Oxford¹. Though the competition itself was imperilled this time – we'd already re-arranged it from February to May, because Taruithorn couldn't get a team together, and, on the day, they turned up with only two people. And hadn't written their half of the questions². Fortunately, Mark stepped up and completed the questions through judicious raiding of the contents of Tinúviel Pursuit and of the archive of questions on the website the night before. So, on the day, we had two teams and sufficient questions. We even gave

¹ Of course, the Oxford team had to travel here and face the perils, but a) we held this year's quiz in May, so a sudden snow shower was much more unlikely and b) they are from the barbarian hellhole that is Oxford, so we assumed they could manage. Though, c), they were coming on the X5, which is undoubtedly perilous.

² I feel they may not have been taking it as seriously as I was.

Taruithorn an extra team member to make it 3v3, rather than 4v2. Though we didn't really have any audience this year, because, what with it being May, there were some things called 'exams' on the horizon and everyone seemed rather concerned about them. Can't imagine why.³

So, with Mark and his glamorous assistant Jacob in the driving seat, we (me, Rhiannon and Cici) faced off against Taruithorn (Greg, Alastair, Sam Reinert⁴), and the quiz began⁵. The first round was on the esoteric subject of transportation methods in Middle-earth. Finally, my hitherto-entirely-useless deep knowledge of boats mentioned once in *Unfinished Tales* came in useful⁶, though I still don't remember Tharbad being explicitly described as the dividing point on the North-South Road where it changes from being called the Greenway (to the

³ This is the best thing about being a PhD student. An ability to completely ignore exams. Of course, you replace the acute stress peak of exam term with a chronic low-level heightened level of stress ALL THE TIME, but, once a year, it does feel the better choice.

⁴ Now known as Maeglin for his turncoat ways. ⁶

⁵ I'm not going to go through all the questions here – they'll end up on the website sooner or later and I don't want this ending up at 3000+ words. If you're really interested and can't wait, you can contact Mark to ask for them.

⁶ I was as surprised as anyone.

north) and becomes the Old South Road (to the south⁷). But, that was the only question that went dead entirely; unfortunately for Taruithorn, all their questions ended up as bonus points for us, so the score at the end of the round was 13-0. This might be described as ominous.

Round two was the first list round, where both teams had to come up with as many of the epithets and titles Bilbo gives himself when talking to Smaug as possible. Worryingly, after initially being a little uncertain, we ended up being able to recall nearly the whole passage word for word, though everyone got a bit in a tangle over 'I came from under the hill and under the hill and over the hill my paths have led'. The end result was 3-0 to us⁸, putting us 16-0 up. The ominousness kept getting more ominous.

We then went back to a more normal round entitled 'Give the Subject', where we had to listen to a description from the book and work out what was being described. This was a much more closely fought affair, though I got another opportunity to display some pointlessly deep knowledge about *Unfinished Tales*, by recognising a description of *The Faithful Stone*⁹. Again, the level of recall

⁷ Surprise.

⁸ As in, we came up with 3 more examples than Taruithorn.

⁹ It's a short story embedded in the material on the Drúedain at the end of the book. It's quite fun.

displayed by both teams was faintly concerning. If only we could replicate it for our degrees... But, the round went down 9-6, putting us 25-6 up at the end, and Taruithorn had finally scored some points. The ominosity factor was slightly reduced.

The first Taboo round then began and, after some sterling descriptive work from Cici, we, against expectations¹⁰, were winners, adding a further 3 points to our score, putting the total at 28-6. The ominity was growing again as we headed into the fifth round, on the perennial bête noire of the minor works. Both sides struggled somewhat this round, and it was very clear we could all do with rereading The Father Christmas Letters, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and, completely out of left-field, Sir Orfeo. I mean, as minor works go, it's pretty minor. In a sense, it's not even by Tolkien – it's just a translation of a Middle English poem, rather than an original composition on a theme, as such. But, there we go, that's the Tolkien Varsity Quiz for you. The score line finished up at 6-1, making the running total 34-7 to us. The ominance was starting to run rampant.

A short mid-game break was then taken to give everyone a chance to refresh themselves and prepare for the second half. Which began with the second list round, where we had to come up with all the names given for Men in the

¹⁰ Taruithorn are almost always better at Taboo than us.

chapter in *The Silmarillion* entitled *Of Men*¹¹. Rather unfortunately for Taruithorn, this was a list I'd happened to learn for no good reason several years ago. So we won that round 5-0, making the total 39-7. Doubleplusominning.

Round 7 was specifically on *The Hobbit*. It's such a small book and so straightforward. How much hard stuff can there be to ask about it? Rather a lot, it turns out. Every year, the competitors are always surprised about how ridiculously detailed you can get in The Hobbit - who is called 'O truly tremendous one' and what colour actually are the purple emperors?¹² The surprise was particularly acute for Taruithorn, who recorded another 0 this round, whilst we put up 11 points, taking the score to 50-7. It stopped being ominous, because, at this point, we'd barring essentially won, some mathematically improbable set of events¹³. It was replaced, however, by the increasingly shell-shocked look on the faces of Taruithorn, who were feeling a little outmanoeuvred.

The second Taboo round then took place and, despite some good descriptive work from Rhiannon, Taruithorn ended up narrow winners, gaining a single point. 50-8 to

¹¹ Wildly original titling it ain't.

¹² Clue: it's not purple.

¹³ Realistically, the remaining available points for either side added up to about 35. So, even if Taruithorn managed to max out, we'd still have been a few points ahead.

Minas Tirith, though it was good that Taruithorn had managed to win a round. We then faced the poetry round – hear a line, give the next line – which is again something of a recurrent nightmare. It went better than in previous quizzes, with both teams showing rather worrying recall once more. Taruithorn were particularly pleased to complete 'Ho! Ho! Ho! To the bottle I go' with 'To heal my heart and drown my woe', thinking it apposite to the situation. I was especially pleased to get part of the *Song of Durin*, which I'd also idly learned at one point, because why not? And because anyone who hangs around James too long just sort of picks up Dwarvishness by osmosis. [Editor's note: This is CTS member James Baillie, purveyor of all things Dwarvish.] In the end, the scores were 8-3, giving us a 58-11 lead with one round left.

And this round was a doozy – it was the connecting walls. As in, Round 3 of *Only Connect*. I shan't spoil the walls, in case people want to have a go at them themselves. Suffice to say that one wall was, I think¹⁴, substantially harder than the other. And it was the one we got, so the round went 5-3 to Taruithorn, allowing them to end on a high, though they departed, it's fair to say, rather stunned, dazed and all-in-all a bit bamboozled. The final score line was, therefore, 61-16, which was pleasingly symmetrical. And also the highest winning margin yet seen. Which

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¹⁴ And, I think, everyone else thought.

was a little unfair on Taruithorn – I don't think the gap between the teams was as big as the score suggests. But, it was a resounding win for Minas Tirith and puts us 12-9 up in the all-time stakes¹⁵. So, a successful day for the society. Thanks to Taruithorn for making the effort to come and for being such sporting opponents. Thanks also to James, Avigail and Mark for setting the quiz; and to Mark and Jacob for making sure everything ran smoothly on the day. We all enjoyed it, and look forward to going to Oxford to compete in next year's event!

¹⁵ One of the previous iterations of the quiz was drawn.

THE RING AS A SYMBOL OF SIN

Martina Juričková (Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia)

Despite Tolkien's strong dislike of allegory, especially when applied to his novels, throughout the years of their subjection to literary analysis, the Ring has been attributed various symbolism, from an addicting technological device to a nuclear bomb. One of the most plausible interpretations and possibly the one most in agreement with Tolkien's intention¹ is that the Ring is a metaphor of vice or sin. This opinion is represented by such scholars as Zimbardo (1968/2004), Caldecott (2003), and Kreeft (2005), and is touched upon also by Nelson (2000).

St Thomas Aquinas (1999, p. 2051), the Doctor of the Church whose ideas make the basis of modern theology, explained why the terms "vice" and "sin" are sometimes used synonymically, even though the term "sin" primarily denotes vicious acts and "vice" habits (hence we can encounter both the phrases *seven capital sins* and *seven capital vices*). It is probably because they are both elements contrary to virtue, just on a different level.

¹ Since he admitted that *The Lord of the Rings* was religious in inspiration, unconsciously in writing, consciously in revision (Tolkien, 2006, p. 172).

The Ring, being just a piece of jewellery, cannot act on its own but it is infused with evil power and ill-will; thus, we cannot speak of it as an embodiment of sin understood as an act but as vice.² This phenomenon is the most extensively discussed by Kreeft who seems to be drawing on the ideas of his predecessors in publication, although he does not acknowledge them nor are they listed among his resources.

They all view the Ring as a source of temptation which works on the characters' major flaws, enhances their greatest vices. On the other hand, as Nelson reminds us, the more virtuous characters can better resist it. But while the Ring seemingly enhances one's powers (e.g. strength, hearing, cunning), it actually wears one's power, or rather substance away. In the invisibility, which helps one conceal their evil deeds, it withdraws individuals from the real world, isolates them from the community and ultimately destroys their identity. Its victims become unreal, entrapped in an inescapable emptiness encircled by its power, symbolized by the shape of the Ring. Consumed by its power, their will is substituted by the Ring's will which is enclosed in upon

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² Caldecott (2003, p. 82) identifies it with the sin of pride, in particular, in a sense similar to Aquinas's (1999, p. 2194) interpretation of pride considered as an inclination to the contempt of God owing to the corrupted human nature, which is then perceived as the root of all sins.

itself; so there is no space for two I's.

Vice has similar effects. The exercise of evil may give some people the impression that they are stronger, especially when they harm others to make themselves superior, but that takes away from their identity as God's children and makes them spiritually and morally weaker. It distances one from others (Wood, 2015, rightly observes that there can be no fellowship based on vice because they eventually start to exercise the vice against each other), withdraws them from love and community, the two essential conditions of a healthy spiritual life pre-imaged in the community of the Holy Trinity. Invisibility is also recalled: people tend to conceal their sins from the world and do them in secret, in hiding, like Adam in the Paradise when he ate the forbidden fruit and hid from God. Moreover, vicious people become isolated in their vice, addicted to it; their vision of the world becomes crooked and unrealistic. It poses for them just as inescapable a circle as the Ring because they become enslaved by their sins and the Evil, which, immaterial as it is, pretty much like the Ring, is unable to operate on its own but needs humans to work through. They lose their free will and freedom to Evil. Withdrawn from God's presence, all there remains is them and their sin; which is metaphorized by the image of Frodo and his ever-present vision of the fiery Eye. Another aspect in which the Ring is similar to sin is that one cannot overcome or destroy it on one's own, but God's grace is needed for it.

However, it is not only the Ring's victim who is weakened by it, but also its maker Sauron who put part of his power into it. Kreeft (2005, p. 187), recalling Hegel's master-slave dialectics³, remarks that modern society works on the same principle. People invest their power into making things that are supposed to increase their power, such as technological devices, but by their constant use we become addicted to and dependent on them so much, that we lose our abilities the devices were made to help us with. Instead, addiction to these devices, such as smartphones, isolates us from the real world and friends and is a source of several sins from laziness to idolatry. The seemingly helpful devices, if not used reasonably, become our Rings.

The Ring also unnaturally extends life and hinders death by which it breaks the natural order of things in two ways. First, conserving things and taking them out of the circle and effects of time disturbs the universal harmony which consists in permanent change. Second, by hindering death, which in Tolkien's opinion is God's gift to humans (Tolkien, 2006, p. 205), it hinders

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³ It is the master who needs and is dependent on the slave, not the slave on the master. So the masters are actually slaves to their own slaves because without them they would not be in their current position. In other words, without a slave there is no master.

God's children from coming back to Him, to Heaven as the place of ultimate happiness. These effects of the Ring are thus sins against God's world order.

Resources:

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Martina Juričková is a doctoral student, the subject of her research being the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. Previously, she focused on the motif of friendship in his Middle-earth stories and currently she is researching his depiction of virtues and vices.

HOW THE OLIPHAUNT GOT ITS BULK

Or: 'There Be Dragons!'

Samuel Cook

The idea for this came out of a meeting on matters zoological in Middle-earth. Specifically, assuming the biota of Middle-earth is subject to the same sort of evolutionary laws as in our world¹, how on Middle-earth did the Mûmak get so big?

From what we're told in the books, there's no doubt the Mûmak is just a somewhat-upscaled version of an elephant. We're not given any exact dimensions² – the best we get is that the one Sam sees in Ithilien is as 'big as a house' (*LOTR* p. 646). However, this is from Sam's diminutive viewpoint in a moment of shock. But, given that the average African bull elephant stands about 3.2 m tall at the shoulder, that makes them considerably smaller than a house – maybe the size of a summer house or particularly large hut, but somewhat smaller than even a modest bungalow. And, from what we're told of Hobbit dwellings, by the time of *LOTR*, they'd mainly switched to living in Mannish-style houses, though with an

¹ A dangerous assumption, it could be argued.

² Obviously. This is Tolkien.

aversion to upstairs storeys, so the size of a modest bungalow is perhaps what we should take as our reference point for the size of a Mûmak. So, maybe double the size of a modern elephant, but probably not the titanic colossi depicted in the films.

So, it's big; definitely bigger than a modern elephant. Why? After all, being so big does come with substantial disadvantages, mainly that you need *a lot* of food. African elephants can get through up to 150 kg of food a day. Assuming a Mûmak has a similar kind of metabolism and biology, and that, if we've doubled all the surface dimensions, the volume of the Mûmak has octupled³, your average Mûmak might well be getting through over a tonne of food per day. Assuming that's even biologically and ecologically possible⁴, what possible reason could it have for being so gigantic?

In herbivores, size is usually a defensive strategy. If you're way bigger than the predators, you can pretty much ignore them, after all. Until the predators get bigger

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³ Because volume changes with the cube of surface dimension change.

⁴ I mean, eating that much food will take a long time. Would a Mûmak even have any spare time left over to sleep, reproduce, etc. or, perhaps more pertinently, any energy to do so, let alone be used as a war beast? And the forests and savannah of Harad must be *really* fast-growing or the Mûmak population very sparse to ensure enough food availability.

too. After all, a cat won't have much luck against a gazelle or a zebra – they're far too big for it to be able to harm them. Which is why leopards exist. Obviously, this arms race can only go on so long, limited both by food availability within the available ecological niche and the mechanical constraints of size⁵, so, rather than getting bigger, animals on both sides start to team up, hence why you have elephants and lions. So, with Mûmakil, assuming they display the same sort of behaviour as elephants and evolved from them – i.e. they travel around in large matriarchal herds, with adult males being more solitary – we can assume that the herd strategy wasn't sufficiently defensively effective and that the proto-Mûmak elephant population came under some renewed evolutionary pressure to get bigger.

In other words, the apex predator in Harad was or is⁶ big and bad enough to be able to attack a herd of normal elephants head on and win. It might be that there is some

⁵ There comes a point where you're just too big to support your own weight on land. Which is why the biggest animals are always found in the oceans where supporting your weight isn't an issue.

⁶ It's possible said predator remains extant, or that they no longer exist, but were around for long enough to force gigantism on the Mûmakil, and until recently enough that there hasn't been enough time for the Mûmakil to reduce in size. In Middle-earth terms, this probably means the Mûmak predator must have existed until at least into the First Age.

sort of super-lion in Harad, but I think there is a more pleasing possibility: dragons. Or, more specifically, proto-dragons. I say proto-dragons because we know that the actual dragons were only created by Morgoth in the course of the First Age, which, at a remove of only 7000odd years from the events of *LOTR* is almost certainly far too short on an evolutionary timescale for what we can presume are long-lived and slow-breeding animals for them to become so gigantic. There also seem to have been too few dragons that survived the War of Wrath and could have reached Harad for them to exert effective evolutionary pressure on an entire species. Besides, from what we can tell, dragons are rather intermittent predators – they turn up, kill everything, and then sit in a cave on a bed of gold for a few centuries – which would further diminish their efficacity as selection pressures.

But, Morgoth must have bred the dragons from something. It doesn't seem too far-fetched to suggest that, roaming the savannah and forest of Harad, is some sort of giant lizard-type thing – I'm imagining something along the lines of a super-sized Komodo Dragon – that is capable of taking down multiple elephants and fending off the rest of the herd. Not a dinosaur – from how they're described, dragons clearly have their legs out to the side and have their bodies low to the ground, much more like lizards or crocodiles than dinosaurs, which generally seem to have had their legs underneath their bodies – but

something just as ferocious and terrifying as a Tyrannosaurus. Neither would they be winged – the first dragons – viz. Glaurung – weren't winged, with the wings only coming in at a later stage – Dragon 2.0, if you will – so we can assume the original breeding stock were similarly wingless. The predations of such a beast would certainly encourage the elephants to get bigger and become Mûmakil. And, one imagines, when Morgoth or his agents found out about the existence of such a beast, there would be a rather strong push to capture a few and use them for nefarious ends.

Of course, it may simply be that Mûmakil are the result of selective breeding of captive elephants by the Haradrim, in which case all this goes out the window. But, that seems far too straightforward.

So, there you have it: Mûmakil are the result of evolutionary pressure exerted on standard elephants by some sort of giant lizard predator that Morgoth then used to breed dragons from. Another Middle-earth mystery solved. Two of them. And the forests of Harad have just dropped a looong way down my list of places to visit....

THE DISCOGRAPHY OF MIDDLE-EARTH

Samuel Cook

With MC Blingol's¹ stunning victory in the 'Most Annoying Character' Eagle Debate recently [*Editor's note: See Anor 54*], I started wondering what other musical acts might be on the Middle-earth music scene. The results are below, with artist first and hit song in brackets. Entirely notional and non-redeemable points for working out who they're all based on in reality.

- Effie F (It's My Shiny)
- Mithril Fell Beast (Straight Road To Valinor)
- The Eagles (Hotel Lothlórien)
- Ainulindalë (Manwë He Knows Me)
- Wizzards (I Wish It Could Be Mereth Aderthad Every Day)
- Dragonforce (The Flame of Mount Doom)
- Red Hot Dwarven Smiths (Erebornication)
- Michael, son of Jack, Wielder of the One White Glove, etc. (Beat Up)
- The Artist Formerly Known as Túrin, Formerly Known as Turambar, Formerly Known as

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¹ Not forgetting his hit single: I've Got 99 Problems, But A Silmaril Ain't One.

Neithan, Formerly Known as Mormegil, Formerly Known as Thurin, Formerly Known as Adanedhel, Formerly Known as Agarwaen, Formerly Known as Gorthol, Formerly Known as Wildman Of The Woods (When Teleri Cry)

- Galvornica (Enter Lórien)
- Arwen (Die Another Age)
- Sheep Shearer (Some Drivel)
- Snoop Wargg (Gin and Mirúvor)
- Bored of Mandos (Aulë Has The Right To Children)
- The Undeeps (The Legolas Greenleaf Preservation Society)
- Jethro Took (Thick As A Brandybuck)
- Orcs Aloud (Sound of Angband)
- Eriador (The Finwë Countdown)
- Sindar Sisters (I Don't Feel Like Harpin')
- Middle-earth, Wind and Fire (Bilbo Wonderland)
- Valinor (A Pony With No Name)
- The Baggins Boys (Turf-Settin' the Shire Way)
- Beorn Gees (More Than A Bear-man)
- Iron Morannon (The Fallen Maia)
- Mushroom (Hungry Like A Hobbit)
- White Saruman (The Wizard)
- Simply Rohan (For Your Horses)
- Barad Nimras Family (Belegaer Drive)
- Swords N' Elanor (Welcome To The Mines Of Moria)

- Fëanor Fighters (Burn Away My Body)
- Westronlife (Swear The Oath Of Fëanor Again)
- Rick Astley (Never Gonna Give This Ring Up)²

² You're welcome.

THREE WISE ELVES

James Baillie

(With entirely insincere apologies to James Blunt)

Galadriel said to me, "A fear has passed from me –

Won't you tell me that the Dark Lord's dead?"

His boss was cast from heaven,

He claimed the Nine and Seven

All the rings that he could find

But the One Ring escaped from view

Elves hid the Three they knew,

Then the One fell in a lava spout...

Nine friends are happy now with what they've done

They were a fellowship just trying to fight Sauron;

They're going home now

Arda's free, from Khand to Bree;

But now those elves

Must take a grey ship o'er the sea...

I wanna ask an elf a question

Where are they now?

I wanna ask an elf a question

Where are they now?

And they're not sorry now

Although they know

When the rings pass, Elrond too will go,

With the ringbearing hobbits off out to the west,

Because Arda's marred but still Aman is blessed.

Out over the sea so blue,

Sailing a straight path true

Even Cirdan's clearing out

But those friends aren't sorry still for what they've done

They were a fellowship, they had to fight Sauron;

Look who's alone now

Sam Gamgee, Sam Gamgee

Cos Frodo went

And got a grey ship o'er the sea

I wanna ask an elf a question

Where are they now?

I wanna ask an elf a question

Where are they now?

Look who's alone now

(Not Gamgee; he's found Rosie)

And three wise elves

They've got a grey ship o'er the sea

I wanna ask an elf a question

Where are they now?

I wanna ask an elf a question

Where are they now?

POEMS OF THE EAGLE DEBATE

Various members of the Society

The poems are from the Easter Term Eagle Debate, the topic of which was 'Most Aesthetic Character'.

Yanbo Yin on Glaurung the Golden:

There once was a young dragon from Angband

Who burnt the halls of Finrod Felagund

He acquires the most beautiful things

And great misery he brings

Surely all that's better than wings?

Samuel Reinert on Sauron:

The horror! The horror!

It's me.

I am the horror.

The black land burns

- fire! shadow! death! -

What is the dawn?

Sinking in torment

Sacrificed to the depths

III

Eye!

Fire!

Brigid Ehrmantraut on Saruman of the many-coloured cloak

Three cloaks for the elves – too grey to see

Seven for the dwarfs, in darkness delven deep

Nine for mortal men doomed to moths, to useless lie

One cloak for Saruman the White to shine

One cloak to rule them all, one cloak out-shines them,

One cloak one-ups them all, and with the rainbow blinds them

^{*}note to self: eye, fire – remember that

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