



*Anor Issue 47, Michaelmas 2015*



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### Editor's Note

*Mae govannen, mellyn nín!* Welcome, my friends, to Issue 47 of the Cambridge Tolkien Society's *Anor*!

The King<sup>1,2</sup> hath returned from two years of toil and tedium in the wide world without. And he hath verily given unto us a monograph that shall enter forthwith into the archives of the City!

Well, not quite a monograph – that would imply some higher degree of coherence, which, as I am sure he will confirm, would be contrary to the essence we have come to expect of Samuel's contributions. But I mean this in the best possible sense. Inside you will find a comparison between Gondor in the Third Age and the Roman Empire in the Third Century A.D., a short treatise on elvish bioluminescence, a plan for a CTS-run Tripos, a Test Match parallel for the First Age, a preliminary cast list for an Akallabêth film, and a report of the CTS' 2015 Puntmoot. Oh, and plenty of footnotes.

Finally, we have two outcomes of *Consequences*, which, by popular demand, have been published here for posterity, and a letter to Daeron. Daeron warmly invites all readers to send him letters, submit contributions, and to record events, poems and various nuggets of miscellaneous nature for inclusion in *Anor* 48 and beyond!

Happy reading!

Jamie Douglas, Daeron (Editor of *Anor*)  
Cambridge Tolkien Society  
University of Cambridge, Michaelmas 2015

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<sup>1</sup> That is Samuel Cook - consult the Red Book for the tale of how he came by this name ... and several others.

<sup>2</sup> A small fountain of footnotes in his honour!

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# Crisis of the Third Age?

## Comparisons between the Third Age and the Third Century A.D.

*Samuel Cook*

A time of decline, where the greatness of empire has waned and its glories lie in the past, as it is beset by enemies and its very existence threatened. Gondor in the later Third Age or Rome in the Third Century A.D.? Whilst there is no indication, to the author's knowledge, that Tolkien particularly drew on classical history for inspiration,<sup>1</sup> there are some undeniable parallels between the two situations.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore proposed to explore the similarities between the two settings, but also to consider the differences and what this reveals about the nature of Gondor. Sources for the material discussed below are Appendix A of LOTR (particularly the section on Gondor) and *The Roman Army: A History 753 BC-AD 476* (by Patricia Southern).

### Background

First, some historical background is in order. It is presumed that anyone reading this has a reasonable understanding of Gondor's position by the time of LOTR and some awareness of its Third Age history, but it will quickly be summarised here for convenience.

After Sauron's defeat by the Last Alliance at the end of the Second Age, Gondor grew in power throughout the first millennium of the Third Age, reaching its zenith in the reigns of Hyarmendacil I (T.A. 1149-1226) and Atanatar Alcarin (the Glorious) (T.A. 1226-1294), when it controlled territory stretching from Umbar in the south to the borders of Mirkwood in the north, from (uninhabited) Mordor in the east to Greyflood in the west. After this point, as Sauron regained strength (though it was long before he declared himself), the situation worsened, with Gondor facing repeated attacks from the East. Three events were particularly catastrophic: the civil war of the Kin-strife, which led to great loss of life, particularly among those related to the royal house; the Black Breath (plague), which killed most of the royal family and depopulated much of the realm further; and the Invasion of the Wainriders, which very nearly led to the destruction of Gondor<sup>3</sup> - even by the time of the Steward, Cirion, 500 years before the events of LOTR, "the reach of Gondor had grown short" (LOTR Appendix A, p.1028). Therefore, by the end of the Third Age, Gondor's control barely extended east of Anduin, north and west of Ered Nimrais and south of Poros. A resurgent Sauron had re-fortified Mordor against them and was a constant menace on their

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<sup>1</sup> The only parallel that comes to mind is the bestowal of classical epithets on some of the Brandybucks in a rejected version of their family tree – see the family trees in History of Middle-earth, Vol. 12, *The Peoples of Middle-earth*, p.85ff.

<sup>2</sup> Not least that they both refer to the Third something.

<sup>3</sup> Gondor was only saved by an unexpected night attack by the Southern Army on the camp of the Wainriders who had crushed the Northern Army and thought themselves safe.

eastern borders, whilst Saruman was a threat in their rear. Moreover, old alliances were sundered or disused. Gondor was indeed in a bleak situation.

Turning to Rome, no such prior knowledge is presumed, so a more detailed explanation will be offered. The Roman Empire reached its territorial apogee in the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98-117), when its power extended from Scotland to the Persian Gulf and from Morocco to Armenia. The marginally-later reign of Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138-161) is generally seen as the golden age of imperial Rome.<sup>4</sup> Towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D., however, the situation began to worsen: after the assassination of the Emperor Commodus in A.D. 192,<sup>5</sup> the civil war of the Year of Five Emperors broke out. This finished when Septimius Severus claimed the throne the following year and some measure of stability was restored. The Severan dynasty, with one small blip in 217-218, kept the Empire together until 235, when its last emperor, Severus Alexander, was assassinated. This is generally held to mark the start of the so-called “Crisis of the Third Century”, when Rome came close to collapse.

The Crisis of the Third Century lasted for 50 years, until the accession of Diocletian in 285, the re-unification of the Empire,<sup>6</sup> and the establishment of the Tetrarchy.<sup>7</sup> During this period, there were 26 “official” Emperors and co-Emperors, as well as several breakaway Empires and Emperors,<sup>8</sup> restricting central control, on occasion, to purely Italy, the Balkans and the Danube and African provinces. Rome was threatened by the Sassanid Persians on the eastern borders and various barbarian tribes to the north and east, principally, at this point, the Goths.<sup>9</sup> Emperors largely died in battle against one of Rome’s enemies or in internal factional struggles – many were assassinated by their own troops or the Praetorian Guard in favour of other contenders. The nadir of the Crisis was probably the capture of the Emperor Valerian by the Persian king Shapur I at the Battle of Edessa in 260,<sup>10</sup> leaving the Empire dangerously exposed, with his son and successor, Gallienus, only in control of a small portion, as both many of the eastern and western provinces had broken away to form the Gallic and Palmyrene Empires.

Evidently, both Gondor and Rome survived their travails and recovered – Gondor (or the Reunited Kingdom), under King Elessar Telcontar, grew to encompass all its former

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<sup>4</sup> At least, according to Cassius Dio (born A.D. 155, so practically contemporary).

<sup>5</sup> As ahistorically dramatised in the film *Gladiator*.

<sup>6</sup> The Empire was actually reunified, after various different breakaway regions, usurpers, etc., by Aurelian (r.270-275), but it was Diocletian who provided the long-term stability and instituted the necessary administrative reforms to consolidate the Empire.

<sup>7</sup> Literally “Rule of Four” – when the imperial government and administration was reorganised in a more flexible and decentralised manner to better deal with the sheer size of the Empire.

<sup>8</sup> At one point, the Empire split into three: the Gallic Empire in the West, the remnant actual Empire, and the Palmyrene Empire in the East.

<sup>9</sup> But also the Carpi, Alamanni, Marcomanni, Sarmatians, lazyges, Vandals and many others.

<sup>10</sup> Valerian was kept captive for the rest of his life and reputedly used as a mounting stool. Upon his death, his remains were stuffed and mounted in the king’s audience chamber, so Roman ambassadors could be suitably intimidated.

realms (excepting Rohan) and those of Arnor (excepting the Shire), as well as projecting its power further east. Rome, as a unified (if slightly diminished) entity, lasted for another century under a succession of Emperors, until the death of Theodosius I (“the Great”) in 395, when it split irrevocably into a Western and Eastern Empire.<sup>11,12</sup> As can be seen from this very short historical summary, there are some obvious similarities and differences between the two situations. It is to these that attention will now be turned.

## Trajectory

As is obvious from the narrative, both entities followed a similar historical trajectory – an apogee, followed by an extended decline, before a re-stabilisation. This cyclicity is perhaps not so much specific to Gondor or Rome as a general feature of empires or large kingdoms. What is perhaps more interesting here are the differences. Firstly, Gondorian growth and decline were spread out over a far longer timescale than Rome – two millennia, rather than centuries. Whilst this is largely due to the longer lifespans of the Númenorean-descended Gondorian elite stretching historical events out for longer than in our history, it also shows the strength of the Gondorian state. In its entire 3000-year history, Gondor faced one serious internal revolt: the Kin-Strife. Despite centuries of declining power, the later kings and then the Stewards never had to deal with any substantial internal unrest – all their enemies were external. In Rome, on the other hand, a weak Emperor was fair game for any number of plots, assassinations and coups – the majority of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century was a very good example of this.

In Gondor, the legitimacy of weak rulers was never really questioned – the Kin-Strife was about whether the King (Eldacar) had the right to rule, given his mother (Vidumavi) was not of Númenorean blood. Had he been full-blooded Númenorean, no matter how weak he was, it seems unlikely a similar event would have occurred.<sup>13</sup> What this fundamentally reveals is the different sources of political authority in Gondor and Rome – in Gondor, it was very much a case of the Divine Right of Kings (or Mandate of Heaven, if you prefer) – you ruled because you were descended from the right people and were therefore, in some way, divinely-appointed. Questioning the authority of the monarchy was therefore akin to questioning Eru or the whole basis of society. In Rome, however, despite the existence of the Imperial Cult, being Emperor was fundamentally about military power.<sup>14</sup> An Emperor

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that there was nothing inevitable about the split at the time – in hindsight, it seems so, as the different parts of the Empire had been on diverging trajectories for centuries, but there was no realisation that the Empire would never be reunited in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>12</sup> The Western Empire staggered on until 476 (technically 480, but 476 is the traditional date) under a succession of increasingly ineffective Emperors, when it broke up into a succession of “barbarian” kingdoms that laid the foundations for medieval western Europe. The Eastern Empire, which became the Byzantine Empire, did rather better, lasting until 1453 (some successor states survived for a short while afterwards), when it was finally ended by the Ottoman Turks.

<sup>13</sup> For the record, Eldacar was, it would seem, a strong king – he won the civil war, eventually.

<sup>14</sup> As is shown by the name – “Emperor” derives from the Latin “Imperator”, which was a title voted to successful military commanders in recognition of their victories.

without the support of the army was unlikely to last long, no matter who he was descended from.<sup>15</sup> On the flip side, any man with sufficient military support could successfully depose the existing Emperor and set himself up in his place, as happened frequently throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Another point to note is that Gondor, having weathered the Third Age, outshone its former glory, with a greater territorial extent, a rebuilt Minas Tirith and dominion over its neighbours. Rome, however, having survived the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, never really regained its dominant 2<sup>nd</sup>-century position and was constantly harassed by barbarian tribes and afflicted by internal struggles.<sup>16</sup> From the reign of Constantine I (the Great), in fact, power shifted to Constantinople and Rome itself became ever more of a provincial city. This again points to the strength of the Gondorian state and institutions, but perhaps has more to do with Tolkien's vision of Aragorn's role as the Renewer, rather than any deeper historical truth.

Finally, the Crisis of the Third Century, with its collapse of central authority and consequent need for settlements to band together and become more self-reliant, led to the beginnings of the feudal system in Europe, whose impacts are, arguably, still with us today. In Gondor, however, although the state was weakened, there was never any similar long-term collapse at the centre, so a similar move does not seem to have occurred.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, it does seem that Gondor already had a degree of feudalism by the later Third Age, with people being beholden to local lords who were themselves subject to higher lords and so on, but it is difficult to say whether this was an original feature of Gondorian society or something that developed through the Third Age. Therefore, ascribing it to Gondor's parlous situation throughout the later Third Age is perhaps a little unwise, if tempting.

### **Geopolitical Situation**

Both Rome and Gondor faced, to some extent, a similar geopolitical situation – to both could be applied the description of Gondor from the reign of Denethor I (T.A. 2477-2489): “there was never full peace again, and even when Gondor had no great or open war its borders were under constant threat” (LOTR p.1028). Both had major enemies on their eastern borders (Persia/Mordor) and were assailed by barbarians coming from the (north-)east (Goths and other Germanic tribes/Wainriders). Both were also secure to the west, being backed by the ocean.<sup>18</sup> However, to the north and south things differed. Rome was secure to the south, with the Sahara and Arabian Desert forming an impenetrable barrier to

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<sup>15</sup> This was perhaps less true in the Julio-Claudian (early Imperial) era, when the descendants of Caesar ruled, but, by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, there had been enough civil wars and coups that the Emperors had lost the ability to seriously claim divine appointment, even if they continued to identify themselves with various gods – Diocletian took the name of Jovius on his accession to identify himself with Jupiter, the chief Roman god.

<sup>16</sup> The Tetrarchy collapsed in 306, leading to nearly two decades of civil war that eventually saw Constantine the Great come to rule the united empire – later Roman history is then full of self-proclaimed emperors and usurpers.

<sup>17</sup> Admittedly, there is virtually no information on provincial Gondor to assist us here.

<sup>18</sup> Apart from the short-lived Treason of Isengard, which, ultimately, did not prove to be a problem for Gondor thanks to the valour of Rohan.



any prospective invaders.<sup>19</sup> Gondor, on the other hand, had the threat of Umbar<sup>20</sup> and Harad to contend with, which meant that, unlike Rome, it had a navally-powerful enemy to contend with.<sup>21</sup>

To the north, the situations were reversed. Rome had the constant threat of the untamed wilds of central Europe, from which Germanic tribes would raid over the Rhine and Danube frontiers. Gondor, however, apart from some occasional skirmishing with the Northmen of the Vale of Anduin in the mid-Third Age, never really faced a persistent threat from this direction, being buffered by Lórien, Rohan<sup>22</sup> and the wastes of Enedwaith. The only time a real threat came from the north was when eastern enemies crossed Anduin at the Undeeps and advanced down the west bank of the river,<sup>23</sup> but there was never a long-term threat of the same nature as that faced by Rome. Both Gondor and Rome also had nearby allies they could call on for help – Rome had a whole array of client kingdoms it could raise troops from, whereas Gondor had Rohan.

This similar-yet-different geopolitical situation led to some interesting results. At the time period in question, both Gondor and Rome had become very inward-looking, harking back to past glories and attempting to fortify and control their borders. Rome had forts all along the northern frontier<sup>24</sup> whilst Gondor attempted to fortify the line of Anduin, with forts at the Undeeps and the pillars of the Argonath, and, later, a strongpoint on Cair Andros, as well as the massive defences of Minas Tirith and the Pelennor to protect against attacks from the east. This is hardly surprising – faced with limited resources and a succession of enemies, defensive structures are a natural response to maximise the effectiveness of your own troops and hinder attackers as much as possible.

What is perhaps more surprising is the nature of the armed forces themselves. Rome is chiefly remembered as an infantry-based land power (as discussed above, a substantial organised navy had not been a priority for several centuries by the third century) with its heavy-infantry legions and auxiliaries<sup>25</sup> becoming one of the most effective fighting forces of

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<sup>19</sup> Perhaps fortunately for Rome, the Arabs didn't get their act together until the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

<sup>20</sup> Not for the whole Third Age – Umbar only really became a serious threat after the Kin-Strife, when the losing side, under the sons of Castamir the Usurper (who had been Captain of Ships), turned it into their base of operations.

<sup>21</sup> After the final destruction of Carthage in the Third Punic War (2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.), the Mediterranean very much became *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea) from the Roman point of view. Pirates were a recurrent threat, but, after Carthage, Rome never really had to contend with an organised enemy naval power until the barbarian tribes started using ships in the later third century. By then, there were other problems to deal with....

<sup>22</sup> For the last 500 years of the Third Age. Before that, Calenardhon (as the province was) was part of Gondor, but there was still never a long-term threat to the north.

<sup>23</sup> Which happened only once – in the reign of the Steward Cirion (2567-2605) when the Balchoth, a fierce people from the East under Sauron's dominion, settled in the lands south of Mirkwood. Their invasion was only staved off when the Rohirrim arrived in the nick of time to relieve Gondorian forces.

<sup>24</sup> And walls, in places, most famously Hadrian's, across the north of England.

<sup>25</sup> Who also supplied many of the more "specialist" troops, such as archers, skirmishers, slingers, cavalry and mounted archers.

Antiquity.<sup>26</sup> And, given Rome's situation, this made sense – for the static defences of its land frontiers, infantry were the best kind of soldiery for garrison duty. That is not to say Rome did not use cavalry – it did – but they were almost always an adjunct to an infantry force, rather than being the main event, as it were.

Interestingly, Gondor would seem to be much the same. In some ways, this is hardly surprising – it could call on cavalry from Rohan if it needed to, so it made little sense to invest heavily in its own mounted troops.<sup>27</sup> It also had large areas of static defence it needed to man, hence an infantry reliance, though with perhaps more of an emphasis on lighter, irregular troops (e.g. the Rangers of Ithilien or the Archers of Pinnath Gelin and Morthond) than Rome, perhaps due to its relatively-low population and consequent wariness of pitched battles in the later Third Age. What is surprising, however, is the lack of a Gondorian navy in the later Third Age.<sup>28</sup> The Corsairs remained a threat, yet the narrative of LOTR implies they were able to sail freely up to the mouth of Anduin and were only engaged once they made landfall. Earlier in the Third Age (T.A. 2758-9), at the time of Helm Hammerhand in Rohan and the Steward Beren in Gondor, it would also seem that enemies were able to land freely all along Gondor's coastline in a combined attack that came close to destroying both kingdoms.

Consequently, it would seem Gondor had no standing navy – otherwise, we would expect there to have been some record of it either engaging the Corsairs or being destroyed before being able to do so. Yet, Gondor post-Kin Strife clearly could build, equip and man navies – Aragorn led a naval attack on Umbar as Thorongil and several kings are reported to have mounted naval offensives against the Corsairs or elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> Assuming that Gondor did not have the ship-building capabilities of the Venetian Arsenal<sup>30</sup> and a convenient pool of unemployed sailors ready to call up at a moment's notice, the only possibility would seem to be that, when a naval force was required in the later Third Age, all available (merchant) ships and crews were requisitioned and refitted. Once the expedition was over, the ships and crews were presumably released to civilian life. This viewpoint is supported by the description of Aragorn's attack on Umbar in the guise of Thorongil: it is said he “got leave of

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<sup>26</sup> Though it is perhaps necessary to point out that, certainly earlier on in its history, the thing that made Rome militarily successful was not so much that its troops were better-trained or organised than anyone else's, but that it just had more of them. This was due to Rome's system of alliances with neighbours, giving it a much larger manpower reserve than the city itself (or any enemies) could supply.

<sup>27</sup> The Knights of Dol Amroth being an obvious exception – a somewhat different style of cavalry to the Rohirrim.

<sup>28</sup> Gondor clearly had navies at the height of its power – the line of Ship-Kings being the most obvious example. Castamir the Usurper, also, was Captain of the Ships, which indicates a standing navy around the time of the Kin-Strife (T.A. 1437-1447). However, when his side lost the civil war and took the navy with them on fleeing to Umbar, it seems that no one rebuilt it.

<sup>29</sup> Eärnil II, for example, sent shipborne forces under his son, Eärnur, to aid Arnor against the Witch-King (too late, as it turned out) and Telumehtar Umbardacil managed to temporarily retake Umbar (though Appendix A provides no details on how he achieved this).

<sup>30</sup> At its peak, a ship per day – it used prefabricated parts and was arguably one of the very first industrial enterprises.

the Steward and gathered a small fleet” (LOTR, p.1030), which implies that he simply rounded up what he could find rather than that there was a specific naval force available.

However, this does not really explain why such a force had not been created ready to defend Gondor in the War of the Ring or why a permanent navy was seemingly never reinstated. The answer to the first question is presumably that there were no ships available – we are told that ships had largely stopped coming down Anduin some years previously (LOTR, p.381) and it might be that coastal traders remained further west to avoid the warzone – and that there were insufficient resources to build one from scratch. Therefore, focussing on the land forces and dealing with the Corsairs on land may well have been the only real option open to Gondor. As for the second, this is perhaps less explicable – navies are expensive, but one would imagine the means would have been available at some point in the last millennium of the Third Age. It seems likely that it was a general symptom of Gondor’s increasing introversion – navies imply some sort of extroversion, either for trade or territorial expansion, neither of which seem to be particularly-embedded in the Gondorian psyche in the later Third Age.

### **Nature of Opposition**

This is perhaps where the difference between real history and Middle-earth history is most evident and explains why the later trajectories of Rome and Gondor were so different. The Romans were fighting several enemies, but they were all only human. The Gondorians, however, were up against, effectively, one enemy (with many minions), who also happened to be an immortal demi-god committed to evil. Whilst the Romans’ enemies were therefore arguably less formidable, there was no way in which they could win any kind of ultimate victory. They could defeat the Goths, but then another group would show up or the Persians would attack or another usurper would start a revolt. Equally, they could negotiate with their enemies, but, sooner or later, things would break down and conflict would recommence. And, given the multiplicity of Rome’s foes, the area concerned, and the already overstretched nature of the empire, there was no real prospect of taking on and defeating all of them. So, while Rome could temporarily beat its foes, there was no real prospect of any final victory.

For Gondor, on the other hand, whilst it had only one chief foe,<sup>31</sup> there seemed no real chance of them being able to beat him in the later Third Age. The Elves had dwindled, Gondor had declined and Arnor was gone – a repeat of the Last Alliance was impossible. However, if they could somehow defeat and banish Sauron,<sup>32</sup> that would remove the guiding hand behind all their myriad enemies and allow each to be dealt with individually,

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<sup>31</sup> Even if it took until the dying days of Arnor for it to be recognised that a single force (Sauron) was behind all the various different groups that were assailing the two kingdoms.

<sup>32</sup> Not kill. Even at the end of LOTR, Sauron doesn’t die – he just becomes impotent.

whether by negotiation or military action.<sup>33</sup> For Gondor, consequently, some sort of ultimate victory was possible, even if the chances of achieving it seemed fantastically remote. As such, when it did occur with the destruction of the Ring, it suddenly meant Gondor's opposition collapsed and a rejuvenation and expansion were possible. For Rome, however, the best that could be achieved by the Tetrarchy and later rulers was a continuation of the status quo – one enemy might be defeated, but there was no possibility of a similar complete collapse of all opposition. Therefore, Rome was never able to regain the heights of its previous glories and remained embattled until the demise of the Western Empire in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and beyond.

In conclusion, it can be seen that Gondor and Rome, in many ways, faced a similar situation in the Third Age and 3<sup>rd</sup> century, respectively, with regards to their historical trajectory and geopolitical situation. However, the different nature of their governments and of the opposition they faced led to very different long-term outcomes. It would seem fair to call Gondor's situation in the later Third Age the "Crisis of the Third Age", given its similarities with the Roman Crisis of the Third Century and how close the kingdom came to annihilation at several points, even if, ultimately, it recovered and was reinvigorated in a way that was not possible for Rome.

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<sup>33</sup> Once the influence of Sauron was removed, for instance, it would seem likely that the Haradrim and Easterlings (and other human servants of Mordor) would be amenable to a peaceful settlement – their conflicts with Gondor had only ever been at Sauron's instigation.

## Goodness gracious, eyeballs of fire!

*Samuel Cook*

One aspect of Elvish physiology often referenced in Tolkien's work is the "light of their eyes", which seems to become more obvious and bright when they are emotionally stressed, especially when angered or in battle. Among the Noldor of the First Age, new-come from Aman, it seems to have reached great intensity on occasion,<sup>1</sup> with one character, Aegnor (Aikanaro, literally "Fell Fire"), being so named due to the great brightness of his gaze:<sup>2</sup> "in wrath or battle the light of his eyes was like flame" (*The Peoples of Middle-earth*, p. 347). There is also the description of Fingolfin on his ride to his fateful duel with Morgoth: "for a great madness of rage was upon him, so that his eyes shone like the eyes of the Valar" (*The Silmarillion*, p. 153). What seems certain is that the light of Elvish eyes was not simply a poetic figure of speech, but that they were capable of emitting their own ocular luminescence. It therefore seems necessary to try to come up with some biological explanation of how this might happen.<sup>3</sup>

In nature, there are plenty of examples of bioluminescence,<sup>4</sup> but it is unattested in higher terrestrial vertebrates. Whilst many people will have seen the eyes of a fox or cat apparently shining when caught in the headlights of a car, this is merely reflected light, due to the reflective tapetum in their eyes,<sup>5</sup> not self-produced light.<sup>6</sup> As established in the introduction, Elves do seem to be actually producing their own light, so this would indeed seem to be some version of bioluminescence.

Given Elves are, biologically, a subspecies of *Homo sapiens*,<sup>7</sup> it seems reasonable to assume that their bioluminescence would be caused by the same pathway that nearly all extant bioluminescent species use: namely the reaction of the molecule luciferin with oxygen in the presence of a luciferase enzyme that catalyses the reaction. Quite how a biological pathway, which no other terrestrial vertebrate has succeeded in exploiting and whose closest-living exponent to *Homo* is some sort of deep-sea fish that even a mother would struggle to love, was re-activated in Elves is something of a mystery, but evolution is

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<sup>1</sup> Bringing a whole new meaning to the phrase "megawatt stare".

<sup>2</sup> And, from the description of him in the Shibboleth of Fëanor, due to his blond afro (or possibly Mohican). This was one Noldo you did not want to mess with.

<sup>3</sup> In a sense, this is a long-overdue sequel to the article in *Anor 9* by Colin Rosenthal, where the mechanics of the Elvish ability to see long distances were considered

<sup>4</sup> Most famously, fireflies and deep-sea fish.

<sup>5</sup> A structure present in many animals active at night, which helps make the most of any available light and improves their vision. Humans don't have them.

<sup>6</sup> Otherwise the entire landscape would look something like a really low-powered rave every night. Disco fox!

<sup>7</sup> Tolkien himself admitted (somewhere in his manifold writings) that Men and Elves must be, biologically, the same species; otherwise they wouldn't be able to produce fertile offspring. Admittedly, by making them a subspecies of our own species, I'm being very anthropocentric, but the point remains.

good at reusing old tricks.<sup>8</sup> Given the Elves awakened in low-light conditions (i.e. starlight – no Sun or Moon), there was certainly a selective pressure to develop bioluminescence in order to see anything. Indeed, Eru being presumably aware of the fact that the first of his Children would spend thousands of years in relative darkness,<sup>9</sup> it would certainly have been within his power to endow them with some jellyfish<sup>10</sup> genes. Quite why he didn't go down the path used by other terrestrial vertebrates<sup>11</sup> is another matter. Presumably, even gods get bored sometimes.

It would therefore appear possible that Elves were capable of bioluminescence. It is entirely within biological plausibility that this was restricted to the tissues of their eyes – existing bioluminescence is often restricted to a particular tissue or part of an organism. It is simply a question of which cells produce the luciferin and luciferase. Elvish bioluminescence would also seem to be principally directed towards the red end of the spectrum, whilst most current examples are in the blue-green range, but emission of red wavelengths has been observed in some deep-sea fish,<sup>12</sup> so this is not biologically impossible either.

The remaining issue is the observed increase in intensity and sustained brightness of Elvish bioluminescence. In nature, bioluminescence tends to be either sustained or bright, not both. Partly for energetic reasons – more light requires more energy, which has to come from somewhere, ultimately from the food the organism eats, so sustained, bright light would quickly lead to starvation – and partly due to the obvious increased risk of predation from shining like a torch all the time.<sup>13</sup> Elves, being Elves, don't really have any natural predators, or, given they shine brightest when fighting, it can be argued that their luminescence is as much a defence mechanism, intended to startle anything that attacks them, as anything else.<sup>14</sup> Equally, being bright and shiny once you're already fighting whatever it is that's attacked you is hardly going to matter – it's already found you.

The energy issue is, however, still one to consider. Being larger organisms and having their luminescence restricted to a relatively small area of their body, it seems feasible that Elves would be able to support sustained, bright light. From the description, it is evident that the release of luciferin and/or luciferase is primarily a stress reaction, so in normal life,

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<sup>8</sup> Look at marine mammals – why bother re-evolving fins, when you can just re-purpose arms and hands into flippers? Having said this, bioluminescence would seem to have evolved separately across multiple lineages, but that would just seem to underscore that it's not a particularly difficult or complex adaptation.

<sup>9</sup> In Years of the Sun terms, it was a long time between the Elves awakening (VY 1050) and the Eldar arriving in Valinor (VY 1133 – each Year of the Trees or Valian Year (VY) was 9.58 Years of the Sun). For the Moriquendi, it was then several more millennia before the Sun and Moon were created (VY 1497).

<sup>10</sup> Insert favourite bioluminescent animal here.

<sup>11</sup> Big eyes, tapetum, etc.

<sup>12</sup> Most deep-sea animals being blind to red light, this gives them a significant advantage – red wavelengths are preferentially filtered out by water.

<sup>13</sup> And also the fact that most uses of bioluminescence rely on it being a shock or something out of the ordinary – if it were constant, bright light, it would be ineffective.

<sup>14</sup> This is one of the uses of bioluminescence in nature – many squid and plankton use light to startle or confuse attackers.

Elvish eyes would likely only glow very faintly. However, battles can go on for a long time, so there is potentially still a significant energetic cost to Elvish bioluminescence. Whilst this would be unlikely to significantly affect the performance of a well-fed Elf, it could have been a concern for weakened ones. Regardless, it would seem likely that Elvish warriors must have been accumulated a substantial caloric deficit over the course of each battle, with a concomitant increase in appetite afterwards. Perhaps the Elvish love of feasting was partly a response to their bioluminescence-related energy expenditure?

In conclusion, it would seem entirely possible that Elves did exhibit ocular bioluminescence and that the available evidence is consistent with present-day examples of the phenomenon and its limitations. The most puzzling question remains why Eru should choose to endow his firstborn Children with such a trait, when no other terrestrial vertebrate was so favoured. Unfortunately, this is a question to which no real answer is possible, beyond the usual hand-waving and mumbling about ineffable plans.

## **The Cambridge Faculty of Tolkien Studies**

*Samuel Cook*

It has been suggested that the society, with the publication of all the Varsity Quiz questions we could find from the last decade (500+), is now practically an educational organisation and, as such, could be considered a Faculty of the University.<sup>15</sup> Given this, we should presumably offer a Tripos for undergraduates to study. Set out below is how such a Tripos might be structured. Comments from interested stakeholders on the course structure and teaching provision are welcomed.

### **Part IA**

Five compulsory papers covering all aspects of Tolkien:

- A Very Long History of Time (Dr Fangorn)
- An Introduction to Linguistics and Philology (Dr J. Douglas)
- Literary Criticism (Dr Monster)
- Geography and Demography of Middle-earth (Prof. Strider)
- Poetic Composition and Doggerel (Mr T. Bombadil)

All Part IA candidates will also have four 2-hour lab sessions per term, covering Cookery and Appropriate Meal Provision, taught by Dr S. Gamgee.

Each paper will be examined by a 3-hour written test in Easter term. Students should expect to receive at least 2 supervisions per paper in both Michaelmas and Lent terms, but the

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<sup>15</sup> The University's point of view on this matter is unrecorded and, indeed, inconsequential.

exact number of, and required work for, supervisions will be at the discretion of the course leader.

### **Part IB**

Candidates have a free choice of any four papers from the selection below. These papers are subject to change, depending on numbers and staff availability.

- Elementary Quenya and Sindarin (Dr U. Mil)
- In(tro)duction to Cults of Middle-Earth (Prof. C.A.Radhras and Dr Smaug)
- Beyond Middle-earth: Other Works by Tolkien (Prof. The Rt Hon. Giles of Ham)
- Middle-earth in Other Media (Mr P. Jackson)
- Diggy-Diggy Hole: Khuzdul and Dwarvish Culture through the Ages (Dr J. Baillie)
- Tolkien the Academic: His Life and Works (Prof. B. O. Wulf)
- The Erúhini: Mannish and Elvish Culture (Prof. Emerit. Eärendil)
- The Caves of the Forgotten: The Importance of Minor Characters (Dr Figwit)
- Theological Enquiry into Tolkien (Dr H. Strachan)
- War and Tolkien (Dr Somme and Prof. J. Garth)

Non-compulsory seminar sessions, covering Elementary Debating Skills, will also be provided by Dr Finrod and Dr Andreth for interested students. Additionally, there will be a practical Wilderness Survival and Walking Skills field trip taught by Dr Boromir and Prof. Strider. Previous destinations have included the Wild (the Fens), Mordor (Oxford) and Isengard (Kendal – Dr Legolas ran this trip in Dr Boromir’s absence).

Each paper will be examined by a 3-hour written test in Easter term. Students should expect to receive at least 2 supervisions per paper in both Michaelmas and Lent terms, but the exact number of, and required work for, supervisions will be at the discretion of the course leader.

### **Part II**

Candidates have a free choice of any four papers from the selection below. These papers are subject to change, depending on numbers and staff availability.

- How Do You Solve a Problem Like Fëanor?: Noldorin History and Legacy (Dr H. Parish and Prof. Finarfin)
- Water, Water Everywhere: Fluvial, Coastal and Oceanic Geomorphology in Middle-earth and its Consequences (Dr S. Cook)
- Advanced Elvish Grammar (Prof. Pengolodh)
- Spotting Tenuous and Tangential Links with Every Piece of Pre-existing Literature and Claiming They Influenced Tolkien (Dr Troll)
- Love, Death and Rurality: Themes in Tolkien (Dr Slack)



- The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: An Exploration of Avari, Orkor and Moratani Culture and Origins (Dr Curumo)
- Anglo-Saxon and Germanic Myth, Language and Interpretation and its Applicability to Tolkien (shared with the ASNAC Department) (Prof. Sigurd and Dr Gudrun)
- Middle-earth's Dark Age: The Second Age and Sauron (Dr Tal-Elmar)
- The Devil and the Deep Blue Sky: Melkor and Manwë Compared with Christian Theology (Prof. The Most Rev. The Rt. Hon. HRH Lord Eru of Eä)
- Tolkien: The Man, The Myth, His Life (Dr C. Tolkien)
- Old Dwarvish: Does it Exist and How Does One Read It? (Dr L. Rond)
- Women in Tolkien: Sidelined or Central? (Prof. R. Wen and Dr A. Owen)
- The Shire(s): Hobbit Life and Pre-industrial England (Prof. Bilbo)
- Farmer Smith of Roverandom by Christmas: The So-called "Minor Works" and What We Can Learn From Them (Dr Niggle)

Students will also be offered non-compulsory practicals in Weapon and Ring-Forging, jointly led by Prof. Telchar and Dr Celebrimbor or Dr Sauron, depending on timetabling.

Each paper will be examined by a 3-hour written test in Easter term. Students should expect to receive at least 2 supervisions per paper in both Michaelmas and Lent terms, but the exact number of, and required work for, supervisions will be at the discretion of the course leader.

Students will additionally be required to submit a 10,000-word dissertation on a subject of their choice within the broad field of Tolkien studies. Proposals will be submitted and agreed, with supervisors allocated, at the end of Part I. Dissertations will then be submitted at the start of Easter term of Part II.

Candidates submitting late dissertations or failing any papers will be borne away to the Houses of Lamentation by Faculty Security (provided by Nazgûl Ltd), where their naked flesh will be shrivelled for all eternity by the withering scorn of the assembled staff. Repeat offenders will be sacrificed in the Great Temple (Main Lecture Theatre) to Melkor, Lord of the Dark (a.k.a. the Chief Examiner).

## The Ashes in Middle-earth

*Samuel Cook*

Now, I know CTS are perhaps not the most sporting-aware group of people, but, hopefully, it has come to people's attention that England are playing Australia this summer in the most recent iteration of the Ashes.<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, the first Test has just started, so I have no idea how the series panned out, but, hopefully, England won 5-0.<sup>2</sup> To expand further and in case anyone isn't aware of the history behind the Ashes: the series has been going on since 1882, when Australia won their first Test on English soil and immediately proclaimed the death of English cricket. It now happens every 18 months when the teams battle over a very small urn symbolically representing the ashes of English cricket's cremated body. As such, it is one of the longest, if not the longest, continuous sporting rivalries on the planet.

This may not at first seem terribly relevant to Tolkien, but I reckon with a few minor<sup>3</sup> alterations to the history of Middle-earth, a similar series is not out of the question. Specifically, Noldor Disunited versus Angband throughout the entirety of the First Age. They would, of course, be fighting over the ashes of Fëanor, after his posthumous self-immolation,<sup>4</sup> representing the death of Noldorin hope. And Elves are temperamentally suited to long, drawn-out sports, such as cricket – when you're functionally immortal, five days of play only to get a draw seems much less of an imposition.<sup>5</sup>

Presented below is what I think the (very simplified) scorecard for the single 600-year match would look like. Incidentally, the Noldor won the toss and chose to bat against what is best described as a very hostile bowling attack. It may also have some vague value in helping people work out what happened in the First Age.<sup>6</sup>

Batsman	Runs <sup>7</sup>	Balls <sup>8</sup>	Strike Rate <sup>9</sup>	How Out	Bowler	Total
Fëanor (c) <sup>10</sup>	0	1	0	Run out (Gothmog)		0
Fingolfin	305	455	67	hbw (hammer before wicket)	Morgoth	305
Finrod	347	468	74	Caught (Werewolf)	Sauron	652
Fingon	50	17	294	Decapitated and hit wicket	Gothmog	702

<sup>1</sup> Just in case you haven't worked it out yet: the relevant sport is cricket.

<sup>2</sup> This is called blind optimism.

<sup>3</sup> Major.

<sup>4</sup> Literally going out with a bang.

<sup>5</sup> Though, personally, I enjoy Test cricket, with all its attendant foibles and frustrations.

<sup>6</sup> This is more blind optimism.

<sup>7</sup> An entirely arbitrary number.

<sup>8</sup> Years reigned (approx.) if High King; years survived (approx.) otherwise.

<sup>9</sup> A subjective measure of success, in this case. It's runs divided by balls times a hundred.

<sup>10</sup> Despite his death, he was still the opening batsman and captain. He was just that arrogant.

Turgon	63	39	162	Stumped (Collapsing Tower)		765
Glorfindel	101	510	20	Retired very hurt (Balrog)		866
Eärendil	300	97	309	Retired (banned from play)		1166
Maedhros	74	600	12	Bowled (into gaping chasm)	Oath of Fëanor	1240
Maglor	59	600	10	Ran off (Oath of Fëanor)		1299
Gil-Galad	3531	3531	100	Caught and bowled (Burning Hand of Sauron)	Sauron	4830
Elrond	7000	6520	107	Not out (eventually retired)		11830
Extras	174nb 890w 93b 79lb					1236
Total						13066
Bowling Figures						
Bowler	Overs <sup>11</sup>	Runs	Economy <sup>12</sup>	Wickets		
Morgoth	1000	3000	3.00	1		
Gothmog	390	500	1.28	1		
Sauron	510	566	1.11	2		
Balrog	214	1899	8.87	0		
Orc	201	8000	39.80 <sup>13</sup>	0		
Oath of Fëanor	2	1	0.50	1		

It's fair to say that, were this an actual Test match, it would comfortably hold the records for longest ever, highest-ever aggregate score (in an innings and across a match), most runs off an over, highest-ever individual score, worst economy by a bowler, best economy by a bowler, most extras, highest strike rate, fastest fifty, fastest century, fastest double century, fastest triple century, at least some of the highest partnerships, slowest fifty (though not slowest century, surprisingly), most boundaries<sup>14</sup> and probably some others that I haven't gone into enough detail to work out. And, obviously, most injuries and deaths.

Obviously, as Angband never got an innings due to the half-time pitch invasion by the Valar and the subsequent death, dismemberment or imprisonment of most of their team, the match technically went down as "No result".

<sup>11</sup> I've just added up all the balls above and arbitrarily divided it among the bowlers based on some vague perception of importance.

<sup>12</sup> The inverse of strike rate, effectively – runs given away per over, on average.

<sup>13</sup> Really terrible at bowling. Hit for six off every ball and kept on spraying it wide, overstepping the line and generally haemorrhaging runs like nobody's business.

<sup>14</sup> Given the totals, economies and strike rates, there must have been a lot of 6s and 4s.

# Akallabêth: The Film

*Samuel Cook*

So, after the most excellent pub quiz last week [editor's note: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015], Daeron and I were chatting about potential further films and agreed that Akallabêth would make a very good one (though there would be a hell of a montage to explain the First Age). We therefore started trying to cast the film and came up with the list below. We'll send it off to New Line Cinema shortly, but thought we'd put it in here first.

Role: Sauron (before he looked all spiky and evil)                      Played by: Mark Strong

Why: Because he does really good, charismatic villains.

Problems: Needs more hair.

Role: Ar-Pharazôn    Played by: Tom Hiddleston

Why: Loki. We know he can play malicious self-aggrandisers prey to manipulation.

Problems: Needs to bulk up a bit. And age.

Role: Amandil    Played by: Anthony Hopkins (or Robert Redford)

Why: He's got the age and gravitas to pull it off. And that slightly holy mien that Amandil probably had.

Problems: None. Would you mess with Hannibal Lecter (or the Sundance Kid/the Bodyguard)?

Role: Elendil    Played by: Colin Firth (or Kevin Costner)

Why: We know he can do a good bit of action from *Kingsman* (or *Robin Hood*) and statesmanship from *The King's Speech* (or *JFK*). Conveniently tall too (or less so).

Problems: Needs to be even taller.

Role: Isildur    Played by: Chris Pine

Why: In my head, Isildur and Kirk are pretty much the same. Not sure why. Go-getting young men with a somewhat dubious streak.

Problems: Would need to avoid confusing his boat with *The Enterprise*.

Role: Anárion    Played by: Taron Egerton

Why: Very impressive in *Kingsman*. I may or may not have watched it recently....

Problems: Maybe a bit too young.

Role: Tar-Miriel    Played by: Kate Winslet

Why: We couldn't think of anyone else.

Problems: Also needs to age.

Role: Manwë    Played by: Morgan Freeman

Why: He probably looks good in blue. And no one else can play (effectively) God.

Problems: Typecasting.

# The Passage of the Anduin Cam

*Samuel Cook*

*In which CTS stage their annual attempt to replicate the boating trip of the Fellowship down the Anduin. Except on a much smaller river. Without rapids. Or Orcs. And in punts. For two hours.*

Sunday June 14<sup>th</sup> marked the occasion of CTS's annual Puntmoot, where as many of the society as are free, awake and sane,<sup>1,2</sup> punt towards Grantchester for as long as they can be bothered to, before turning round again. In past years, Grantchester has been reached and full-blown picnics have happened, but these tales come down to us out of the Darkness from days of yore and can therefore be safely discounted as lies of Morgoth.

The contingent having assembled at the designated time and place,<sup>3</sup> Glaurung, in an uncharacteristic move, dispensed some of his treasure so that we could hire a worthy vessel for the venture<sup>4</sup> from the Teleri at their haven of Scúdamor. This proved to be a large craft of solid construction and great stability, if great mass and low manoeuvrability. Exactly what was required for a stately and tranquil progression towards Grantchester.<sup>5</sup> The weather, in the best traditions of summer in the land of Luthany,<sup>6</sup> was overcast and cool. Anor was presumably riding high somewhere above the lowering wrack, but no gleam of her radiance escaped to lighten our path. Despite the threatening clouds, it was, however, dry, and remained so throughout the expedition. Manwë, at least, was smiling on us.

We therefore set off, with Glaurung taking the first turn as the combined helmsman, steersman and oarsman, due to the strange nature of the Telerin ship. We passed swans, but none seemed inclined to offer any propulsion assistance. Neither, though, did they attack our well-armed and provisioned party,<sup>7</sup> so this could be considered a no-score draw. Many lesser fowl, especially ducks, were also spotted, many with young in tow, at which the Society dutifully cooed.

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<sup>1</sup> Given much of the membership will just have finished exams/dissertations, this is usually quite a small number.

<sup>2</sup> Though describing any of CTS as sane at the best of times is rather stretching the word to breaking point.

<sup>3</sup> Except Newly Ex-Smaug, who was half an hour late and had to be prevented from steaming off upriver to catch us whilst the rest of the party watched him, puzzled, from the embarkation point. By the standards of his own personal timezone, this, however, counts as early.

<sup>4</sup> The vessel was never officially named, so it will be known as Alcaramilotessambar, thus covering all the notable boats of the First, Second and Third Ages.

<sup>5</sup> I suppose, to borrow Daeron's thoughts from *Anor 45* on providing Elvish versions of placenames, Grantchester could be something like "Lokyost", i.e. "fortified place on the bendy river".

<sup>6</sup> In earlier versions of the mythology, a name for Britain.

<sup>7</sup> By which I mean we had much cake and some paddles.

As we continued, we passed the Sluice of Rauros, which has consumed many unfortunate travellers and their vessels. Due to Glaurung's expertise controlling Alcaramilotessambar,<sup>8</sup> however, we passed them by safely and carried on.

Eventually, having passed several bridges<sup>9</sup> and many other travellers, Glaurung grew tired and was replaced at the tiller by Farmer George of Cam, a Man of the City of Minas Tirith. George, whilst a worthy member of the company, was not used to the Telerin boats, and progress became more wayward as he accustomed himself to the task. At this point, disaster struck, as Alcaramilotessambar ran aground in the shoals, and was only saved by the valiant efforts of Gondil,<sup>10</sup> another Man of the City, who thrust off manfully with his blade.<sup>11</sup> At this time, and at many times thereafter, the fellowship were pleased to make the acquaintance of several tree-ified Ents who overhung the banks and wished to wrap us in their leafy embrace. We, needless to say, nobly refused, and with much ducking and twisting, avoided the ensnaring branches without further incident.

After himself tiring, Farmer George was replaced by the ex-Keeper of the Red Book, Rachel (who is sadly leaving the city this year to journey into the Wild), who in turn passed the baton<sup>12</sup> on to Newly Ex-Smaug, who punted us with great fury round Deadman's Corner and on up to the Willow-Meads of Tasarinan.<sup>13</sup> At this point, having been afloat for a little over an hour, the decision was made to turn around and head back to the City, chiefly to ensure that the Steward would be able to take receipt of a large delivery of goods from Seinsbrîz the grocer for a great feast to be held that afternoon. Newly Ex-Smaug therefore punted us about with aplomb, before flying off on his own errands, at which point the Steward himself took command and began the return to the city.

With the current aiding us, this was much swifter than the outwards journey. There is little to note of this part of the moot, as we retraced our steps. Some points may be noted, however: Gondil climbed low Galeniant and returned safely to the boat, at which the rest of the company were much cheered; and the inevitable game of Contact occurred, as the Society's collective brain defaulted to its standard activity. The author would like to apologise at this point for picking wilfully-obscure words that no one knew.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, Glaurung took the helm once more, and guided us to safe harbour at the haven, where the company disbanded and went their separate ways, until they meet again.

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<sup>8</sup> That is, "ability to keep in a straight-ish line and not veer off at 90° straight into a large metal thing on the bank". It's harder than it sounds with a punt, as the author can attest.

<sup>9</sup> Goniant, lantern and Galeniant; the Bridges of Stone, Wood and Green.

<sup>10</sup> "Peter". Sort of means "Lover of Stone"....

<sup>11</sup> Well, paddle.

<sup>12</sup> Or, in this case, large pole.

<sup>13</sup> Or Grantchester Meadows, as they are called in these later days.

<sup>14</sup> So the Axe of Tuor is only named once, in the notes to *The Tale of Tuor* in *Unfinished Tales*. That's not obscure, is it?

## Consequences

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

Two of our best from Michaelmas 2015:

- (1) Glóin met Elrond in Mordor.  
Glóin said to Elrond: "Nice sword."  
Elrond said to Glóin: "If that's your attitude you might as well become an elf princess."  
So they ransacked the Prancing Pony of all its furniture.  
And the hobbits inherited the earth.
- (2) Bill the Pony, esq., met Saruman's pizza delivery boy at the Barad-dûr school for troubled orclings.  
Bill said to the delivery boy: "Hey, sugar."  
The pizza delivery boy said to Bill: "I'm sorry, I don't think I'm that comfortable around you yet."  
They stormed the gates of Angband, but were defeated by the Balrogs.  
As a result, second breakfast was cancelled.

## Letters to Daeron

Dear Daeron,

It is heartening to see such scholarly and entertaining missives from such far lands being published in *Anor* (though one is concerned at the apparent predilection for whips displayed in the last issue). Entirely accidentally, it would seem CTS has become an international organisation; something further strengthened by its recent appointment of North American ambassadors.

Given this, I would like to know if the committee has prepared a plan for the world domination that it is so clearly embarking on? At the very least, I hope the secret underground volcano base is near completion.

I look forward to the day that all the dispersed kingdoms of Men are united in eternal peace under the benevolent rule of the King, Steward and Captains of Gondor.

Yours crackpottedly,

Thurin Morchaidil Lomion

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