



Anor Issue 50, Lent 2017

EDITORIAL

Greetings, all, and welcome to *Anor's* semicentennial issue! ¹

There appears to have been a spurt of activity to commemorate this very special occasion—and certainly not because people have had more time over the Christmas holidays—so this is a very large issue, almost thrice the size of the previous one.

Issue 50 starts on a more serious tone than its predecessor, starting with some excellent scholarly articles on aspects of the Professor's world by James Baillie and Jack Fleming which one could somewhat facetiously summarise, for reasons that will become clear, as 'Delving into the Deeds of the Diminutive'. Following that, we segue back to the familiar realms of utter silliness, such as the long-awaited ² continuation of the Middle-earth Expanded Film Universe.

It has been a pleasant year, with plenty of good-humoured Tolkien discussion and socialisation, sometimes even veering beyond hope into the undiscovered country known to the uninitiated as 'on-topic'. The full breadth of history of the several decades of the Society's existence I confess myself less well-equipped to judge, due to the minor problem of not having been here for most of it. Happily, some of those who *were* still show up at Annual Dinners. From their company, in depth of interest, friendliness, curiosity and general irreverence, I should like to think that we are not wholly dissimilar to those who first forged a new fellowship under Cantabrigian spires.

A pleasure, as always, to spend my evenings with you all... and dare I hope that, in another fifty issues' time, another may yet say the same?

With warmest regards,

Daeron

alias Samuel M. Karlin, Editor of *Anor*

¹ Yes, I know, it hasn't been fifty years... but it *has* been fifty issues, and if the cricketers can get away with it for something that lasts days or even hours, we can get away with it for something that has taken us decades, damn it.

² Well, awaited since the issue last term, anyway.

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DWARVEN ECONOMY AND SOCIETY VI: DÁIN IRONFOOT

James Baillie

Of all the Dwarves in Tolkien's works, few had quite so successful a career as Dáin son of Náin, a half-cousin of Thorin Oakenshield. From his family's power-base in the Iron Hills, Dáin played a key role in the War of the Dwarves and Orcs and the Battle of Five Armies before succeeding to the recognised kingship of Durin's folk and, after his death in battle in the War of the Ring, leaving a patrimony to his son Thorin Stonehelm that was far beyond what he himself had inherited. By looking at Dáin's career we can both explore some of the ways that Dwarf power dynamics worked and assess the particular career and presentation of a particularly remarkable individual.

First, we should briefly survey Dáin's appearances and achievements. The few dates available in his potted biography may be given as follows:

2767	Dáin, son of King Thrór's nephew Náin, born.
2799	Battle of Azanulbizar. Dáin becomes <i>uzbad</i> of the Iron Hills.
2866	Dáin's only recorded son, Thorin (later Thorin III Stonehelm), is born.
2941	Battle of Five Armies. Dáin becomes King under the Mountain.
2989	Balin, against Dáin's wishes, attempts to recolonise Moria.
2994	Moria colony destroyed.
3017	Sauron sends ambassadors to Erebor.
3018	Glóin sent as ambassador to Council of Elrond.
3019	Dáin killed at the Battle of Dale, aged 252: Thorin III Stonehelm succeeds him as King under the Mountain.

To move chronologically through his life, we should start with his first significant appearance, at Azanulbizar. As I have argued previously, Dáin's actions after the battle at Azanulbizar are especially notable because they exemplify the more complex, less autocratic power relations notable in the Third Age of Middle-earth between Dwarf "kings" and the hold lords, or *uzbads*, who in practice directly controlled their hold's ability to project power.¹ Dáin is in effective command at the end of the battle, able to dictate to Thráin not only what his troops will do but what

¹ Baillie, J. 'Dwarven Economy and Society: The Structures of Power', *Anor* 42, p.5.

Thráin will do—“You will not enter Khazad-dûm”.¹ Unexpectedly, the logic of kingship is overruled by the logic of power relations. Preserving and retaining power, and growing it by natural rates of increase rather than through dramatic power-grabs, is something at which Dáin succeeded on numerous occasions.

We see the same pattern reflected at the Battle of Five Armies: by birth-right Thorin is King under the Mountain, but despite their being in effectively constant communication Dáin neither concedes command to Thorin nor apparently consults him before committing his troops to battle alongside the Elves and Men who were their erstwhile enemies.² Thorin’s rank, like Thráin’s previously, does not grant him command or lordship over Dáin or his forces, and the Dwarves of the Iron Hills. Dáin acts throughout as a calculating master of his own forces, just as he did at Azanulbizar.

Dáin is, according to Tolkien, fully prepared to garrison Erebor against the armies of Elves and Men—he is no woolly-hearted omnibenevolent—though it is never made clear whether this would mean attempting to renege on trading the Arkenstone for a share of the treasure. It would seem out of character for Dáin to follow Thorin in offensive warfare for such a purpose, although it is his attempt to break through the human lines to reach the mountain that sparks a skirmish before the Goblins arrive.³ Whether he would indeed have broken through, and whether Thorin’s desire for the Arkenstone would have trumped Dáin’s caution and control of the majority of the Dwarf forces, must remain a mystery.

After the battle, Dáin does honour the exchange of a fourteenth share of gold for the Arkenstone, and moreover uses his gold to cement alliances—with the Eagles, notably, though not, at least not on record, with the Elves, whose rewards come indirectly via Bard and Bilbo.⁴ His ability and willingness to use gold in this way perhaps distinguishes him from Thorin, who is constantly seeking to find ways to retain his wealth and indeed sees in Dáin a means of doing so more than anything else in the lead-up to the battle.

¹ *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A, p.1113.

² *The Hobbit*, p.258.

³ *The Hobbit*, p.256.

⁴ *The Hobbit*, pp.266-7.

As an aside on the world in which Dáin operated, at the Battle of Five Armies it is additionally interesting that Dáin's forces are described as being armed in a regular fashion.¹ This may imply some level of centralisation in the production and distribution of weapons at the hold level rather than the family grouping, which would further cement the position of the *uzbad* as responsible for a given hold's ability to maintain and project force. Mattocks are also specifically mentioned as being used by the Dwarves of the Iron Hills in the description of the battle of Azanulbizar.² If this was the case for the Iron Hills, it is less likely that it was later the case for Erebor, where no similar system or regularity of armaments is recorded. It is also, of course, possible that there may be a professional/militia distinction at work, whereby Dwarves usually not equipped for war could be given regularised weapons whereas others, especially wealthier Dwarves like Glóin or Gimli, would carry their own weaponry to battle. Though weighed against that must be the claim that the Dwarves of the Iron Hills were especially strong for Dwarves, suggesting that the mattock-wielders could have been a professional fighting corps built up by Grór and his heirs.

After his becoming king, the only assessments of Dáin recorded by Tolkien are those that come from Glóin and Gandalf. Glóin, talking to Frodo at Rivendell, is the only one who gives significant detail on peacetime in Erebor; Gandalf's comments on the War in the North will be returned to below. The pre-eminence given to stonework, masonry and mining in Glóin's comments is interesting, contrasting with his admission that under Dáin's rule the metalwork of Erebor is inferior to that of the Dwarves' forefathers.³ It is perhaps also worth noting Gimli's comment on the mixed quality of the stonework in Minas Tirith, something he (having lived for a century or so in Dáin's realm) is clearly confident could be improved.⁴ This focus on building, rather than war, occupies many decades of Dáin's rulership.

What, if anything, does this focus on stone signify? The shift in the economy of Erebor to focus more heavily on stone must partly be considered a natural consequence of circumstance. Upon Dáin's accession he had at a minimum nearly three-fourteenths of Erebor's vast hoard available to him (assuming he inherited the combined shares of Fili and Kili, with Thorin's going to Bard, and that Bilbo's claim

¹ *The Hobbit*, p.255.

² *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A, p.1112.

³ *The Lord of the Rings*, 'Many Meetings', p.245.

⁴ *The Lord of the Rings*, 'The Last Debate', p.906.

of the wealth was only a small percentage of the one fourteenth he was due).¹ He was thus rich in metal and gold, but inheriting a long-abandoned set of mines next to a long-ruined human city, both of which needed rebuilding. The rebuilding of Dale and Erebor must have been the work of several decades, providing high demand for masonry compared to other Dwarf crafts.

There may be a deeper meaning, however. Contrast Dáin's stone leitmotif to other Dwarves in Tolkien, whose love, and downfall, is in metal. Dáin, as the ruler under whom stonework takes precedence, therefore has very different associations to the gold-centred story of Thrór and his descendants. Dáin's power is greater and more stable than that of his predecessors, and its derivation more secure, because it does not stray toward that Achilles heel of his people. Stone permits the Dwarven sphere of stewardship (the earth and minerals) and the Dwarven form of subcreation (physical objects) without the Dwarven gold-sickness, making this connection a very powerful, if subtle, statement of Dáin's difference from the house of Thrór.

There is one patch to mar the seventy or so years of Dáin's kingship: Balin's expedition to Moria. Here we see the limits of status as a both hold-lord and king. Doing such a significant expedition clearly required at least Dáin's basic assent as the ruler of Erebor, hence the need for him to "give leave" as Gloin mentions.² However, Balin's desire to go prevailed and Dáin unwillingly gave him leave. Balin, Oin and Ori between them may well have been wealthy enough between them to rival Dáin himself, and so Dáin almost certainly had no leverage over the expedition in terms of resource allocation. Giving leave was thus a question of his blessing rather than his material support, and that was clearly given only reluctantly. It must therefore be emphasised that the role of the hold-lord, even when coupled with the nominal kingship, was not that of an autocrat. Dáin's (rightly) cautious position in this case is nonetheless characteristic of his prudence in most matters.

The final chapters of Dáin's life, as we have them recorded, involve the War of the Ring. Here, again, we see a cautious leader; he asked for time rather than rashly

¹ Whilst we should take the statement in *The Hobbit* that there could be no question of using the original divisions of wealth at face value, we do not know how the other members of the company were rewarded; it thus still seems a reasonable suggestion that the minimum Dáin had available was of this magnitude). The statement that the other Dwarves stayed with Dáin "for Dáin dealt his treasure well" would give far more weight to this assessment, as it would imply that Dáin controlled the *entire* hoard minus Bard and Bilbo's shares.

² *The Lord of the Rings*, 'The Council of Elrond', p.258.

declaring open opposition to Sauron, and fought a fundamentally defensive war.¹ It was a well-chosen strategy, stretching Sauron's patience and in turn allowing the Dwarves to prepare defensively, something they evidently did exceptionally well. The fact that Erebor was ready and strong enough for a siege that even his own death in battle outside its gate did not lead to its capture is perhaps the greatest single testament to the sort of leader Dáin Ironfoot was.² We also perhaps see a distrusting side to his character, as Balin suggests fears that Brand of Dale might give in to Sauron. That said, on the other hand, Dáin does choose to participate in the Council and sends no less a figure than Glóin (at this point probably third in line for the kingship after Thorin Stonehelm and Dwalin). His ability to see the tactical necessity of alliance, even if as at the Battle of Five Armies perhaps born of calculation more than friendship, once again allowed him to provide vital aid to the free peoples of Middle-earth and secure those under his care simultaneously. This pattern—doing the right thing, standing by his word, and yet continually (even if, in the final battle, only for his successor) profiting from it—is thus repeated one last time in a fitting end to Dáin's life.

What should we take from this assessment of Dáin Ironfoot and his time? In purely in-world terms, Dáin should not be thought of primarily as a warrior, but as a politician and general. His abilities and achievements are primarily those that occur off the battlefield, and his greatest strength is in his mind rather than his limbs. Compared to other figures he is a grey genius of a leader; cold in his methods, perhaps too calculating for comfort, but relentlessly putting one iron-shod foot in front of the other and working the stone garden of his realms and people every bit as carefully as Gimli suggests a Dwarf should treat the caves of Aglarond. He uses the tools of a Dwarf leader's trade with the precision of a craftsman, from the direct command and maintenance of force, to the use of that force in negotiation, to the ability to use wealth in a restrained, targeted, political context. The Dwarves of Middle-earth may well have found a Thorin or a Balin, with dreams of great reconquests, a more lovable leader, but through the turbulent end of the Third Age of Middle-earth they were fortunate beyond measure to have a Dáin Ironfoot.

As to his place within the legendarium, we can profitably compare Dáin to my assessment of Thorin in the previous article in this series.³ I contended there that

¹ Ibid.

² *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix B, pp.130-131.

³ Baillie, J., 'Dwarven Economy and Society V: The Arkenstone and its power', *Anor* 48, p.12.

Thorin's failure towards the end of *The Hobbit* was not merely a failure of friendship, or greed as such, but a failure of *stewardship*, a concept that is tightly woven through many of the Professor's works. Dáin offers the counterpoint to that, as a Dwarf ruler whose life and successes are built upon the virtue of stewardship of the Dwarves and minerals that are entrusted to him through his various offices. This is, it is implied, at the heart of his power and success. The leitmotifs of stone over gold, discussion over conflict, and prudence over recklessness combine in a specific set of traits that make Dáin both one of the most individual characters, *and* one of the most quintessential representatives of certain aspects of his race, in Middle-earth.

SOME NOTES ON THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHIRE

Jack Fleming

On References: Unlike earlier essays by this author, all references to The Lord of the Rings (hereafter LOTR) are to the three volume George Allen and Unwin second edition, copyright 1966, as this is what the author had at his disposal. References to The Hobbit are to the George Allen and Unwin hardback third edition, also 1966.

Introduction

The political history of the Shire is a topic which has often escaped consideration, much like its inhabitants, the Hobbits, or *Periannath*.¹ With the exception of the Red Book of Westmarch, which provides the central source for this paper, few records from within the Shire have survived down to the modern era, while Hobbits have rarely featured in the annals of Men, meaning that little was recorded of the development of the Shire's political structures.² It will therefore be the aim of this paper to bring together the passing references which are given among the surviving records of the Third Age, and, furthermore, to expand on them, where we may reasonably do so.

This article will begin by charting the roots of the Shire as a political entity, established by King Argeleb II, albeit with minimal royal oversight. Thereafter, it will turn to the political response to the collapse of the kingdom of Arnor, before consider institutions which may have arisen either before or after the collapse of Arnorian overlordship, but which certainly factored in the Shire's civil society.

Royal Allegiance and Power Structures

The history of the Shire as a geopolitical unit begins in T. A. 1601. It was in this year that, the brother Marcho and Blanco Fallohide left Bree with a large following of Hobbits, crossed the Branduin, and settled the land between the river and the Far Downs, beginning the Shire Reckoning.³ This land was granted by Argeleb II, king of Arnor (r. T.A. 1589-1670), on condition that they recognise the overlordship of the

¹ Much further research should be devoted to Shire economy and society in general, following the exemplary pattern laid out by Mr Baillie, in his series on 'Dwarven Economy and Society' (*Anor* 41-43, 45, 48, one in this very issue, and further articles forthcoming).

² *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.2.

³ Thus, Shire Reckoning may be calculated by removing 1600 from the total during the Third Age.

Northern Kingdom, maintain roads and bridges and 'speed the king's messengers'.¹ The borders of the Shire in this early stage were certainly smaller than they were by the end of the Third Age, Buckland not being settled until T. A. 2340 (S.R. 740).² However these smaller borders were clearly defined; it must be remembered that, even if the Hobbits had little interest in external affairs, the Kings of Arnor had granted them part of their kingdom. Such a grant would no doubt have had a legal foundation in royal charter (though the records of the Northern Kingdom have long since been lost). The Hobbits were thus to be counted amongst the king's subjects, with all that such status entails.

In T.A. 1409, the Witch-king of Angmar invaded Arnor, razing the tower of Amon Sul on Weathertop, and killing King Arveleg I. Although the enemy was driven back from Fornost and the North Downs during the reign of Arveleg's son Araphor, Araphor did not die until T.A. 1589, so it is unclear at what point in the intervening years the enemy was driven back. The histories suggest, in fact, that the Northern Kingdom remained on a war footing during this time. It is also true that it was in the days of Argeleb II that plague devastated the southern-most subkingdom of Arnor, Cardolan, and that evil spirits came to dwell in the barrow-downs.³ This left the Greenway from Fornost to Bree as the kingdom's frontier, precipitating the Hobbits to retreat into the kingdom's hinterland. Argeleb's decision to grant such secure and apparently valuable arable land to the Hobbits suggests that his attention remained on his frontier territories, at least in the early decades of his reign.

It is reasonable to assume that Argeleb did not envisage leaving the Shire to be entirely self-governing. The name of the region, the Shire, indicates that the region was initially governed by a Sheriff, from which the Shirriffs probably derived [see below]. The Sheriff would have been a royal appointee, responsible for upholding the king's peace in the Shire. In more recent history, Anglo-Norman kings routinely created Sheriffs to hold regions which they themselves could not focus on directly, to ensure taxes were collected, and law and order maintained.⁴ Such regions only acted independently when the King was especially weak, or the Sheriff especially ambitious.

¹ *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.13; III, Appendix A (ii), *The Realms in Exile*, p.319.

² *LOTR*, III, Appendix B, *Tale of Years*, p.368.

³ *LOTR*, III, Appendix A (iii), *Eriador, Arnor and the Realms of Isildur*, p.321.

⁴ See for example Robin Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles, 1100-1400*, pp.74-85.

Unlike their Anglo-Norman successors, the Arnorian kings seem to have gained little in exchange for their ‘Shire devolution deal’. Relations between the Shire and the kingdom of Arnor were minimal; upkeep of roads and bridges seems to have been the only material burden placed upon the locals, and their self-interest would no doubt have led them to maintain infrastructure even without this royal obligation. Significantly, there is no evidence of royal taxation. Of course, absence of evidence does not necessarily amount to evidence of absence, yet given that other obligations placed on the Shire-folk are recorded, one might expect some records of taxation to survive.

If, then, the Shire was not directly taxed by the Arnorian kings, we must ask ‘why not?’ The Hobbits were hardly a threat to the Arnorian kings, who needed to be placated with lands, nor brave warriors deserving of reward.

In 1601, when the Shire was granted to the Hobbits, Argeleb II was relatively newly crowned, and his kingdom was recovering from a period of war and disorder. At that time the Shire was deserted and desolate; the heartlands of the kingdom lay to the east of the Branduin, stretching from Fornost in the north, through Bree and down the Greenway. Simply reasserting royal authority in the hinterland would have occupied most of Argeleb II’s energies, forcing the Shire to take a back seat. Furthermore, if Argeleb had been concerned about his borders, he would have looked first to east. To the northeast the threat from Angmar, though diminished, remained a consideration, while further south there were Dwarvish settlements in the Misty Mountains, and beyond that, the major allies of Rohan and Gondor. To the west, there was only sea.

Nonetheless, we also know that in earlier times the Shire had been a fertile region, with many royal estates, vineyards and the like.¹ A resettled Shire—effectively taxed—could have yielded significant revenue, which the crown would have been keen to exploit following the long war. Taxation might have been hard to implement effectively, since most Hobbits appear to have been small holders, rather than tenant farmers on larger estates; however, the East Road and Branduin would have allowed for the easy collection of tithes gathered in kind.² I suggest, therefore, that the

¹ *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.14.

² That is not to say that the Shire did not have trade and commerce; tradesmen would certainly have congregated in towns such as Michel Delving. However, since there appears to have been no mining or minting within the Shire, any currency would have had to come from beyond the borders, by way of trade. Such trade as there was may have focused on the unique Pipe-weed of the Shire (which was

settlement is best understood as an attempt to regain revenues from lands previously farmed as demesne by the crown, which it had been forced to abandon.

If this theory is correct, we must ask why the crown was not able to exploit the Shire as planned. There are two likely explanations for this. The first is that other priorities monopolised royal attention; Argeleb II's reign was beset by plague and evil spirits on his frontiers, while, as noted above, his attention would have been drawn east far more than west—Gondor faced significant external threats which might have demanded attention from its allies to the north. The second, more mundane and perhaps more likely explanation is that Argeleb II was not a great administrator. As a rule, the two kingdoms seem to have been focused far more on foreign than domestic policy; certainly this is what dominates the surviving historical record. The failure to exploit potentially valuable estates in the Shire could well be simply another symptom of a kingdom in near fatal decline.¹

Despite the limited direct involvement of the Arnorian kings in the Shire, it is significant that the Hobbits were required to speed the king's messengers. This emphasises the fact that the Shire continued to be under the King's Writ—it was his laws which held sway, though he himself was an absentee landlord, whose powers were held in trust by the Sheriff. It seems likely that, as originally conceived, the role of Sheriff also included a military dimension. Local tradition maintains that Hobbit archers went to the aid of the last king of Arnor, Arvedui (presumably after the unforeseen fall of Fornost to the Witch-king in 1974), while others certainly did join the forces of Eärnur which drove out the Witch-king the following year. Such action is far outside the norm for a timid, peaceable species, and is hard to imagine the Hobbits taking such risks without prompting. The most likely figure to have organised Hobbit support for the king would be his representative, the Sheriff.

The king's law appears to have become thoroughly engrained, suggesting that, in times past, the Sheriff was rather active. Although 1027 years passed between the fall

being exported as far south as Isengard by the Great Years [*LOTR*, II, Flotsam and Jetsam, p.167.]), but even this cannot have provided much of a balance of trade surplus, given the need to import metals and other raw materials. Furthermore, pipeweed was not grown commercially until T.A. 2670 [*LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.17.]. Thus, the Shire's economic life was likely dependent on a high money velocity and a great deal of bartering.

For more on the Shire's Economic Output, see I. Alexander, 'Barter in the Shire', *Anor* 17, pp.4-8; I. Alexander & T. Crawford, 'The Gross Shire Product', *Anor* 14, pp.4-8.

¹ I would welcome further research on this issue.

of Arnor and Bilbo's birthday party, the king's law was still seen as forming the basis of Shire society.¹ The laws were kept largely by the individual volition of the Hobbits, because they were The Rules. This suggests a strong reverence for the idea of royal authority and its inherent 'rightness', albeit one realised largely independently, which must have roots in the era of Arnorian overlordship (perhaps influenced by ideas of sacral kingship). Furthermore, while the Sheriff ceased to be a royal representative and was greatly diminished after the collapse of Arnor, the office did survive the chaos of the kingdom's collapse. By the Great Years, the twelve Shirriffs (three per farthing) represented the civilian police force and, since the Shire was not a region prone to disorder, the role was largely an honorific one. Practical duties consisted primarily of gathering wayward animals, and the roles were known to provide excellent opportunities for socialising.² Nonetheless, the idea of a Sheriff/Shirriff as a force for justice and order was clearly ingrained into the collective psyche of the Shire, and this authority must ultimately be accepted as stemming from that of the crown.

The establishment of the Shire under a Sheriff can be seen as a clear attempt for by the Arnorian kings to reassert their authority, and regain tax revenues from a region which had fallen to waste. While successful in the first endeavour, the second proved more challenging, and as we shall see, the collapse of Arnor had a significant impact on the political shape of the Shire.

The Thaindom and the office of Shirriff

The decline in the office of Sheriff from king's lieutenant to policeman most likely resulted from the collapse of the Kingdom of Arnor in T.A. 1974 and resultant upheavals. In T.A. 1979, Bucca of the Marish acquired the title of 'Thain', which came to be associated with the head of the leading family in the Shire—initially the Oldbucks and subsequently the Took. The duties of the Thain are not recorded in full, but included organising the Shire-moot and being Captain of the Shire-muster and Hobbitry-in-arms, all of which may reasonably be assumed to have previously fallen to the Sheriff, as the king's deputy.³ What happened in the intervening years to

¹ *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.18.

² *LOTR*, III, The Scouring of the Shire, p.281.

A measure of the relative order of the region being that, when Saruman took over, the lockholes used to hold prisoners were in fact storage tunnels—even in such dangerous times, the Shire had no dedicated prisons. *LOTR*, III, The Scouring of the Shire, p.288

³ The most notable moot and muster can be associated with the Battle of Greenfields, in SR. 1147, when Bandobras 'Bullroarer' Took led a Hobbit army which defeated an Orc invasion of the North

precipitate this change we may never know with certainty, however we may make an educated guess.

We know that the Hobbits were forced into temporary hiding by the war, and no doubt had their lands ravaged. Given his position as the king's lieutenant, we can assume that the Sheriff would have taken responsibility for defence and security during this period, and having done so, might have asserted a position at the top of Shire society. That the Shirriffs of the later Third Age were little more than police indicates that somehow the role was eclipsed. We can only postulate at the reason—perhaps the serving Sheriff proved ineffective, fled his responsibilities after the collapse of the kingdom, or was slain in battle. Without a king to appoint a replacement, the great and the good of the Shire may have looked to Bucca to take on what were previously royal responsibilities, either due to his local standing or perhaps on the back of a significant role played during the crisis. Thus the title of Thain was born from a recognition that there ought to be someone in charge, but that there was no longer a king around. With a Thain on hand, rather than a king far away, the role of the Sheriff/Shirriff, which was always secondary, did not need to be so substantive.

An alternative theory is that, when news of the fall of Arnor reached the Shire, local elites decided that the time had come to throw off the yoke of Arnorian suzerainty, bringing about a political conflict, intrigues, or perhaps even open conflict. In this scenario, the end result of this crisis was a victory for the landed elites, leading to the establishment of the Thaindom. The Shirriffdom, meanwhile, was weakened so as to prevent it becoming a threat to the Thain. This explanation, however, does not fit well with Hobbits' general respect for The Rules, nor with their generally peaceable, straightforward ways.

Regardless of the route by which it was achieved, by T.A. 1979, the age of the Sheriff was over, and that of the Thain had begun.

Associated with the Shirriffs of the Third Age were the Bounders, who were responsible for paroling the borders of the Shire. The Bounders numbers were greater, and varied in response to need. While little is known of their history, I believe they are likely to have been a late innovation in the infrastructure of the

Farthing, and in so doing invented golf. Bandobras was the younger brother of the then Thain Ferumbras II, and no doubt served as his general on the expedition.

Shire. Certainly, while the region was part of the kingdom, there would have been little cause for a border patrol.

Only on one occasion prior to Battle of Bywater (in S.R. 1419) has a battle occurred within the boundaries of the Shire. Specifically, in S.R. 1147, the Battle of Greenfields saw a Hobbit army defeat an Orc band in the North Farthing. By the time of the Battle of Bywater 270 years later, the Bounders were well established. I believe their existence is the direct result of the earlier battle, for two reasons. First of all, the fact that the Orcs made it into the Shire without resistance suggests the Bounders did not exist in S.R. 1147. Secondly, while the North Farthing does not represent the core of Hobbit settlement, it includes Oatbarton, while several other settlements, including Overhill, Brockenborings and Needlehole lie close to its borders. A force which penetrates into the north farthing could potentially have done serious damage to the heartland of the Shire. Such a traumatic event seems the most likely spark for the creation of the Bounders. Indeed, I suggest that it was those Hobbits who proved particularly adept during the battle of Greenfields who were first organised into a larger border force.

We are developing a clear picture in which a Thain, close at hand, took on the authority previously held by the king and exercised in trust by the Sheriff. This in turn reduced the power of the Sheriff. Later disruption resulted in the establishment of the Bounders. To use a military analogy, the Bounders were the private soldiers to the Shirriffs' officer class. The Thain was commander-in-chief. This picture, however, is complicated by an unexpected democratic streak in Hobbit society.

The Mayoralty and Local Government

Middle-earth in the Third and Fourth Ages was not renowned for its vibrant democratic institutions. Esgaroth can be seen as an early example of a mercantile city-state, run by a Master accountable, at least in part to the townsfolk and the corporation of the city, somewhat like the Doge of Venice or another maritime republic. However it is not clear who elected the Master, nor for how long.¹

We may then be surprised that the Shire, which had little cause for any large-scale state infrastructure, seems to have developed a fledgling democracy, with its own directly elected mayor. It is not clear at what point this developed, as no record

¹ *The Hobbit*, A Warm Welcome.

survive of the Mayors prior to Will Whitefoot (who was Mayor during the Great Years of T.A. 3018-19).¹ We do, however, know something of the Mayor's powers and the structures by which he was elected.

The Mayor of the Shire (more accurately the Mayor of Michel Delving), was an elected position, held for a fixed term of seven years.² It is recorded that the Mayor was elected at the Midsummer Fair, held on the White Downs. This suggests that the position was elected by a caucus of those present. It is not clear whether voting was limited to certain sectors of society, though it may be supposed to have been limited to Hobbits who had 'come of age'.³ Nor do there seem to have been any necessary qualifications, except for the support of your peers. Samwise Gamgee, who until the Great Years had been nothing more than a gardener, was elected Mayor seven times between 1427 and 1469 S.R.

For a post which required no specific skills or experience, the role of Mayor was undoubtedly significant. Though primarily responsible for presiding at banquets, the Mayor also held the posts of First Shirriff and Postmaster, giving him direct control over law and order and communication in the Shire.⁴ This power was exploited by Lotho Sackville-Baggins and subsequently by Sharkey (as Saruman was known in the Shire). During his seizure of power, Lotho had been resisted by Mayor Whitefoot, who he had arrested and whose authority he had usurped. This allowed for a dramatic expansion of the Shirriff's office, and for the utilisation of the postal network to gather information.⁵ It is clear that, while restrained by certain norms, the power of the Mayor was substantial.

¹ The poem 'Perry-the-Winkle', from *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* mentions 'Old Pott the Mayor', however it is not clear if Old Pot was Mayor of Michel Delving or somewhere else, where in the chronology he or she may fall, or even if he or she actually existed. The poem may be read via <http://www.councilofelrond.com/poem/perry-the-winkle/> [retrieved 29/01/2016].

² *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.19.

There is clearly some allowance for stepping aside due to ill health or other factors. Will Whitefoot did not immediately reclaim the Mayoralty following his imprisonment by Sharkey et al., but rather allowed Frodo Baggins, to serve as Deputy Mayor for some eight months before being re-elected in 3020. This has led some to propose that he had previously been elected in 3013, so that 3020 represented the next fixed election, however given the trauma he, and his community had undergone, it seems reasonable that the Shire would want to re-confirm his authority at the earliest possible date, casting doubt on whether 3020 was in fact meant to be an election year or not. *LOTR*, III, The Grey Havens, p.301, Appendix B, p.377.

³ Hobbits 33 years and above were deemed to be 'of age'. *LOTR*, I, A Long-Expected Party, p.38.

⁴ *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.19.

⁵ *LOTR*, III, The Scouring of the Shire, pp.281-282.

Much of this authority seems to occupy the space which a royal Sheriff might once have dominated, and which, in later years, one would expect the Thain to control. It is certainly the case that, in periods of crisis, the Thain took key duties on himself as master of the Shire-moot, and captain of the Shire-muster and Hobbitry-in-arms. However, it seems that the day-to-day running of public services was too onerous a burden for the leading family of Hobbit society to concern themselves with. Given the menial nature of the Shirriffs office in times of peace, and even more so that of the Postal service, it is no great surprise that the Shire aristocracy (for that is what the families of Oldbuck, Brandybuck and Took which held the Thaindom were), should have little interest in running them. Nor could they stand to gain much. Their social status was secure, and the potential for mismanagement (resulting in the loss of sheep or, worse, letters), could only damage public perceptions. Instead, by allowing free elections, the leading families encouraged some social mobility, thus broadening the circle into which they could reasonably marry (always a concern for aristocrats), and ensuring that the wider Hobbit population remained docile.

There remain some questions as to why Michel Delving, rather than Hobbiton or Bywater, should have become the leading town in the Shire, and the base for the Mayoralty, the Shirriffs Office and the Postal service. One plausible explanation is that, despite its outlying location, it was the largest settlement in the Shire (Michel Delving literally meaning Great Excavations). Of course, it is not clear if Michael Delving was elevated to administrative centre based on the town's large population, or if its population grew due to its administrative significance. More importantly, it was relatively secure, being located a long way from the North Downs (from which invasion had previously been mounted) and the Branduin. Its location on the White Downs probably afforded it a natural defensive position, while the East Road offered trade links. On the rare occasions when there was a need to secure livestock, or even Hobbits for a prolonged period of time, the old storage tunnels could serve as make-shift prisons. Similarly, the Mathom-house could, in severe situations, serve as an armoury.

All that being said, its peripheral location might have limited the effectiveness of the Mayor in responding to crisis, and effectively administering the postal service. The later was certainly inefficiently run, and in need of reform — a major event such as a birthday party had the potential to incapacitate multiple post offices, and required

recruitment of additional postmen.¹ Such events would have posed a smaller challenge if the bureaucracy of the Shire were not so isolated.

As mentioned above, the lockholes and Mathom-house were both to be found in Michel Delving. It is unclear whether these were administered by the Mayor or privately run. However, I suggest that the lockholes at least would have been under Mayoral control. The primary purpose of the lockholes was that of a grain store, suggesting that mechanisms existed for collecting excess grain in years of good harvest, which could be set aside against later famines—a form of early social security, as it were (foreshadowing the story of Joseph and Pharaoh from the Jewish tradition). Such a system might well have been implemented following the disastrous experiences of the Long Winter and the Days of Dearth in T.A. 2758-60.² If the lockholes were indeed designed with such a system in mind (rather than being simply the store for one family or store), this system must have been centrally run, either by the Thain, or more likely the Mayor at the Thain's behest.

The Mathom-house was more likely a private enterprise. Although it contained items which might form the basis of an armoury in dire need, all its contents continued to belong to individual Hobbits; the Mathom-house, whilst described as a museum, was not an asset. Nor, one imagines, would it bring in enough revenue to cover running costs (since the best museums are free). Without direct taxation on a large scale, this kind of public service is unlikely to have developed (and is particularly unlikely to have existed in a setting where public health or education were non-existent).³ Given the interest many Hobbits had in antiquities, it seems likelier that a Hobbit with independent means (perhaps from one of the old families) acted as voluntary curator, on hand to keep records of what was owned by whom.⁴ Such a curator would no doubt be willing to make loans of items, such as a sword or mail-coat, if the situation demanded, but would not have been under the authority of the Mayor.

¹ *LOTR*, I A Long-Expected Party, p.34.

² *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.14.

³ We have no evidence of public healthcare in the Shire, while Hamfast Gamgee's comments on the education of his son, Samwise in literacy by Bilbo Baggins may be taken as evidence for the exceptional nature of such an endeavour among the lower levels of Hobbit society; *LOTR*, I, A Long-Expected Party, p.24.

⁴ A Library system model along similar lines probably emerged in the Fourth Age. Shire records proliferated in the period following the War of the Ring, particularly among many of the members of the greater families, who would likely have begun to endow libraries in their wills. See *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.23.

While the Thain was the head of Hobbit society, it was the Mayor of Michel Delving who exercised day-to-day leadership of the core functions of the Shire's public sector. This included acting as chief of police and post master, as well as organising the fledgling social security system. We can only wonder what public services might have been established under the auspices of the Mayor of Michel Delving as Shire society continued to develop.

The Warden and the Master

There remain two major positions or titles in the Shire which, as yet, have not been considered, and which seem to have developed as a result of expansion of the Shire beyond its initial borders.

The first of these was the Master of Buckland (or the Master of the Hall), who was recognised as holding authority in Buckland (the region east of the River Branduin and west of the Old Forest) and the Marish (the low-lying flood-plain of west of the Branduin and east of Woody End, including the towns of Stock, Rushy and Deephollow). The Marish had fallen inside the borders of the Shire since it was granted to the Hobbits by King Argeleb II. However, since, of the three ethnic groups of Hobbits, only the Stoors were at ease on or near water, and given the peripheral, marshy nature of the region, it seems likely that the Marish was, at least initially, under-populated.¹ The decision of Gorhendad Oldbuck to cross the Branduin in S.R.740 (T.A. 2340) and settle in what later became known as Buckland no doubt made the Marish a more appealing region in which to live. Almost overnight, the Marish became a key link between the heartlands of the Shire and the new frontier region, where settlement was being actively pursued. During that same period, the title of Master of Buckland (or Master of the Hall) was given to, or acquired by the head of the Oldbuck/Brandybuck family, and subsequently passed down through a loose system of primogeniture, much like the Thaindom which the family previously held.²

As is often the case with marches, the authority of central government (embodied by the Thain, Mayor and Shirriffs) would have been weaker in Buckland – if it was felt

¹ *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.15.

A level of isolation from the main part of Hobbit society would go some way to explaining the unique dialect of the residents of the Marish and Buckland.

² *LOTR*, III, Appendix C, Brandybuck of Buckland, p.382.

at all—so it comes as little surprise that the Oldbucks (who subsequently changed their names to Brandybuck), also began to take powers normally reserved to the central government.

The most obvious example of this is that the Masters of Buckland began to organise their own defence of the borders. Not long after the settlement was established, the Brandybucks planted and grew the High Hay, a great hedge which bordered their land to the east, and which served as a protective wall, both against invasion and the darker forces which dwelt in the Old Forest. Buckland also developed its own specific way to rouse the citizenry in case of invasion or disaster. The Horn-call of Buckland—AWAKE! FEAR! FIRE! FOES! AWAKE!—was known across the region as a sign of alarm.¹ Although Buckland had no particular border force, it seems likely that this would have had the effect of rousing the Hobbits into an *ad hoc* militia, the organisation of which must have fallen to the Master of the Hall.

The title of Master may also suggest another aspect of the Brandybucks' authority in the region. The Master of Lake-town was responsible not only for law and order, but for managing Esgaroth's trading relationships with the wider world; the Wood-elves of Fangorn, the Men of Dale and the Dwarves of Erebor. Given the importance of the Branduin as a trading route, and given that the residents of Buckland were, in the main part Stoors, and thus more at ease with the river than other Hobbits, it is reasonable to assume that the Master of Buckland may have held prime authority over trade along the river. That being said, the title of Master may simply have referred to their leadership of their family estates at Brandyhall, while a role in the maintenance of law and order may have been *de facto*, rather than *de jure*.

A similarly ambiguous position existed at the other geographical extreme of the Shire. In S.R. 1452, King Elessar expanded the Shire, incorporating the lands from the Far Downs to the Tower Hills into the territory. This was likely intended to reward the Hobbits whom the king had come to know during the War of the Ring and to demonstrate that the return of the king should not be seen as a threat by the Shire. The land incorporated in the Westmarch was settled swiftly by 'many Hobbits'.² Existing infrastructure would have struggled to keep pace with such dramatic demographic shifts. It is therefore unsurprising that the position of Warden of Westmarch was created in 1455, and granted to Fastred of Greenholm, son-in-law of

¹ See *LOTR*, I, A Knife in the Dark, pp.188-9; III, The Scouring of the Shire, p.286.

² *LOTR*, III, Appendix B, p.338.

Samwise Gamgee, who was then serving as Mayor of Michel Delving. Fastred's family, the Fairbairns of the Towers, quickly became established as the leaders of the Westmarch, living at Undertowers on the Tower Hills.

At the beginning of the Great Years, the three White Towers from which the Tower Hills took their names fell beyond the borders of the Shire, and had not been climbed by any Hobbit. However, with the expansion of the Shire in S.R.1452, these would have fallen on the region's western border, and it seems likely that King Elessar would have intended the Warden of Westmarch to take command of the Towers and organise the defence of the West from any forces attacking via sea.¹ This would certainly explain how Fastred's family came to be known as the Fairbairns of the Towers, and would have given them a similar role to their opposite numbers, the Masters of Buckland.

Questions remain, however, over the power dynamics of the Shire after the re-establishment of the Northern Kingdom. In S.R.1427, the king issued an edict which forbade men from entering the Shire (a decision which must have had far reaching impacts on regional trade, though these are not recorded), and defining the Shire as a Free Land, under the protection of the Northern Sceptre. In other words, the Shire might be seen as an autonomous republic, much like certain Soviet states, or as an independent state which relied on a crucial close ally for military support (similar to the status of city states such as Monaco). The latter picture seems more likely in light of subsequent events.

In S.R.1434, Aragorn took the decision to make the Thain, the Master of Buckland and the Mayor of Michel Delving counsellors of the Northern Kingdom, highlighting that he recognised a continued responsibility to the region, but leaving the nature of that responsibility unclear. More significantly, in S.R.1436, the king rode north as part of a royal progress, but did not enter the Shire, instead meeting his friends at the Brandywine Bridge, suggesting that he recognised the Shire as a territory outside his jurisdiction.² This picture was confirmed when the Wardenry of Westmarch was established in 1455. It was established at the request of the Mayor of Michel Delving, who clearly recognised that he was unable to effectively exercise his authority over

¹ Although the White Towers had been built by the Elves in earlier ages, King Elessar would have known that their departure to the Undying Lands would have left the Towers unguarded, explaining why he passed the obligation on to the Hobbits. *LOTR*, I, Prologue, p.16.

² *LOTR*, III, Many Partings, p.260; Appendix B, pp.377-8.

the newly settled region, but significantly it was the Thain of the Shire, rather than the King of Arnor, who granted the Mayor's request. By S.R.1455, the Hobbits were being left to manage their own affairs.

Whether or not the king's assessment was correct is another question. Although the Hobbits had, for a long time, been electing their own Mayors (in something akin to a constitutional monarchy, with Thain as nominal head of state), it is telling that neither the Master of Buckland nor the Warden of Westmarch were elected roles. Rather, they passed down the generations of leading families through primogeniture. This might be excused on the grounds that frontier regions need clear leadership, and that regular elections could disrupt that, but, given the peace and order which the Shire generally experienced, such an explanation may be overly accommodating.

It is also worth noting that the Wardenry of Westmarch was first granted to the son-in-law of the serving Mayor, who had already completed four terms in office, and who showed no signs of being removed from power, or even facing a serious electoral challenge; there were clear weaknesses to democracy in the Shire. Even worse, it was the Mayor who asked for the Wardenry to be established, by going directly to the Thain, who was an old friend of his (Peregrin Took). Peregrin had been Thain since 1434, while Samwise had been Mayor since 1427. The last great office was held by another member of the same close circle; Meriadoc Brandybuck was Master of Buckland from 1432. With the establishment of the Wardenry, all the great offices were held by members of the Fellowship of the Ring, or their immediate families, only one of whom was democratically accountable. All of this underlines the point that the Shire's fledgling democratic institutions were vulnerable to corruption, nepotism and other abuses.

Conclusions

We have seen how the Shire owed its existence and much of its subsequent expansion to acts of royal patronage. The first was likely the first stage of an unsuccessful plan to enhance the tax revenues of the failing kingdom. The second was intended to reward the loyalty of the Hobbits who supported Aragorn II during the War of the Ring, and to put the Shire at ease regarding the return of the king. We have also seen how the shire developed its own structures of governance, with the Sheriff acting as a proxy for royal authority initially, and the Thain taking on royal powers after the collapse of the Kingdom. These *de facto* powers encompassed

upholding law and order, securing the borders, maintaining communications, and running a fledgling social security programme, and were confirmed in perpetuity in S.R. 1427, following the return of the king. We have also seen how expansion beyond the Shire's initial borders led to the establishment of marcher lordships to uphold law and order to the east and west of the Shire, while at the centre of the region, security led to early examples of democratisation, in the form of an elected mayoralty.

Despite this clear progress, it should be remembered that the Shire remained deeply undemocratic. The majority of senior positions were held by leading families, passed down through primogeniture, and were also open to abuse, corruption and nepotism. There seems to have been little in the way of active participation in civil society by lower-class Hobbits, perhaps because a majority of Hobbits were uneducated, limiting communication to the leading families. Nor is there any evidence of a desire to increase education or provide health care, welfare or other support for the citizenry. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that the political development of the Shire in the Third and Fourth Ages shows the seeds of the democratisation which would come to define the later ages of Middle-earth.

A CAFFEINATED CONUNDRUM

Proof that There Is Trade in Middle-earth

Samuel Cook

As you may have guessed if you've been paying attention to what I've been writing over the last few years, this article stems from another inconsistency that I spotted on one of my re-reads of the central texts of Tolkien: why does Bilbo have coffee that he is able to offer Thorin and Company when they stage their sit-in of Bag End? As it says on page 21 of *The Hobbit*, 'A big jug of coffee had just been set in the hearth' and some of the Dwarves specifically ask for it, suggesting its presence wasn't unusual. This is distinctly odd. Admittedly, coffee seems a fairly normal thing to have lying around in a dwelling. It's been fairly common in Britain since the late 18th century, when the first London coffee houses opened. Bilbo having it in Tolkien's idealised version of early-20th-century rural England must surely be therefore unexceptional? Indeed, it would be, if Bilbo were actually living in an idealised version of early-20th-century rural England. However, he lives in the Shire of the Hobbits in Middle-earth, so how does he get coffee?

Let me explain: coffee beans come from plants of the genus *Coffea*, the commercial varieties of which grow best at relatively high elevations in tropical areas, and are native to tropical Africa. Crucially, they do not tolerate frost, meaning that all commercial coffee-producing countries lie in the Tropics. Therefore, to get coffee in Britain, you have to engage in trade for it/conquer the countries that can produce it. As the Shire is meant to be analogous to Britain in climate, this means there's absolutely no way Hobbits could be growing coffee locally¹. They have to have got it from outside the borders of the Shire. This means they have to have been engaging in trade for it, given the Hobbit aversion to imperial expansion.

This doesn't mean they were necessarily engaging directly with the growers—indeed, this seems unfeasible for reasons I'll describe shortly—but some sort of chain of merchants or traders must have been in existence to link the Shire to the growers. Something similar to the networks that conveyed spices overland to Europe from India before Europeans worked out how to build big ships and empires seems most

¹ Remember, this is the place where the whole Brandywine once entirely froze over in the particularly cold Fell Winter. That was an exceptional winter, but if it can get that cold, you can't grow coffee there.

likely. This is because, as I mentioned above, coffee only grows in tropical regions. In Middle-earth, this either means it's coming from Far Harad or somewhere way east and south that we don't even get given a name for¹. In other words, the places full of wild and/or evil Men, with whom Hobbits can't have been in contact.

So, how could it possibly be getting to the Shire? And, in sufficient quantities to make it appear to be a fairly commonplace commodity for an upper-class Hobbit to have in his pantry? As I said, some sort of network of trade, passing through several middlemen, seems most likely. One presumes the kingdoms of the Harad traded with each other when they weren't at war. It doesn't seem impossible that there could then be some sort of coastal (or even overland) trade from Harad to Umbar and thence to Gondor². Harondor (southern Gondor) is recorded as a debatable border zone for much of the later Third Age, so there could have been discreet trading links across this, despite any official state of war³. And one can imagine some small neutral havens existed on the coast between Umbar and the Ethir, acting as *entrepôts* for all sorts of things. If coffee were coming from further east and south, then it might have ended up coming in by the same routes, or might have been channelled via Khând towards Harondor or Ithilien. It therefore seems reasonable to expect that coffee could have reached Gondor. Of course, something else would have had to be flowing the other way to pay for all these exotic commodities. In medieval and Early Modern Europe, this was silver. In Middle-earth, it is perhaps likelier that Gondor might have been exporting high-quality arms, armour, horses and tools, given its preoccupation with all things martial.

The coffee would then, of course, have had to reach the Shire from Gondor. It seems unlikely that there would have been trade across Enedwaith and Minhiriath, as they were seemingly deserted⁴. Instead, trade would most likely have been through a

¹ As I discussed in *Anor* 40, if you project the map of Middle-earth onto a world map, and assume Hobbiton is equivalent to Oxford, Mordor ends up being in southern Italy/Greece. So, coffee would only grow much further south than this.

² The Corsairs of Umbar have to have had something to engage in piracy on. The existence of pirates presupposes the existence of pirates, i.e. merchants.

³ To put it less politely, smugglers.

⁴ The bridge at Tharbad had been entirely destroyed for at least a few decades by the time of *The Hobbit* (the exact date is uncertain; Appendix B says one thing; *Unfinished Tales* suggests another) and Boromir's journey to Rivendell to reach the Council of Elrond, taking that route, seems to have been regarded as extraordinary. Also, everyone is very puzzled when pipeweed turns up after the Ents sack Isengard, suggesting that there can't have been any regular trade in this direction.

succession of merchants up the Vale of Anduin¹. It would then have to have crossed the Misty Mountains and reached the Shire. As I discussed in *Anor* 44, with regard to the Shire's coin supply, this would most likely have to be through the agency of Dwarves going between the Iron Hills and Ered Luin². Certainly by the later Third Age the impression we get is that Dwarves were pretty much the only semi-regular users of the Great West/East Road, so trade towards the Shire feels unlikely by any other means. Whether this means that there were dedicated Dwarf merchants is debatable; given Thorin and Company's disdain for such menial tasks as mining, one suspects that becoming a merchant would very much be seen as settling for tenth-best. It is obviously difficult to say how far Thorin and his band were representative of Dwarvish popular opinion, but the writing we have on the Dwarves very much lends itself to the ideas that any Dwarf not engaged in smithcraft was letting the side down³.

However, dedicated merchants are not necessary—it seems far more feasible that Dwarf bands passing between their various holds might simply buy up goods to trade along the way; partly as a means of bartering for things they actually needed⁴ and partly as a way of making the whole enterprise a little more profitable. If there's one thing Dwarves love, it is, after all, gold⁵. The Dwarves, of course, would have had no problem getting hold of coffee or any other relatively rare commodity in trade—Dwarf-made gadgets, weapons and armour would almost certainly have been in high demand, and thus expensive, all along the Vale of Anduin, let alone their services as engineers and masons.

One final link needs to be made, though: how were the Hobbits paying for the coffee? It seems extremely unlikely that they would have large quantities of money

¹ Overland from Gondor to Rohan and thence by the Anduin up to the Long Lake seems the most likely route.

² Remember, at the start of *The Hobbit*, Erebor and Dale aren't extant, neither were there any Beornings, so trade by them can't be the reason. It's nominally possible that the Wood-elves traded over the mountains with Rivendell, but this seems distinctly unlikely—as far as we can tell, the Wood-elves didn't even visit their relatives in Lórien any more, let alone the alien Noldorin settlement of Rivendell. *The Hobbit* also informs us that the Wood-elves did not 'bother much with trade' (p.208), so arguing that they're actually a major mercantile force seems a little perverse.

³ I'm thinking particularly of Appendix A, *Durin's Folk*, where, in a discussion of Dwarf women, it is recorded that 'As for the men, very many also do not desire marriage, being engrossed in their crafts.' (*The Lord of the Rings*, p.1053)

⁴ Food being the obvious one.

⁵ Gold, gold, gold, gold...

or metals lying around¹, so they would most likely have had to be offering payment in kind². Furnishing Dwarves with sufficient provender would go some way towards resolving this, but it seems most likely that the Hobbits would have had to have been offering something more to pay for what by this point would be a very expensive commodity³. There is only one possible thing that the Shire could have been providing that would fit the bill: pipeweed. As far as we're told, pipeweed was only grown commercially in the Shire and the Breeland, and the product from Bree was, according to Butterbur, a patriotic Breelander by all accounts, 'not the match of Southfarthing' (*The Lord of the Rings*, p.969). With what most likely amounted to a virtual monopoly on much of the pipeweed market, one suspects the Hobbits were able to comfortably pay for the import of luxury goods not available locally, no matter how far they had to come. After all, one assumes pipeweed is at least mildly addictive⁴, so they would have had reliable demand for their leaf. Pipeweed sales would therefore also explain why Bree and the Shire continued to have circulating coinage despite the lack of any local source of new coins for at least a millennium⁵.

This scenario would also explain why Bilbo had tea to offer the Dwarves, which would, similarly, not be possible to produce locally. However, 'tea' is a quite generic term—you can make forms of it from dandelions, nettles, burdock—pretty much anything botanical that you can steep in boiling water when it comes to it. In which case, it might be a local product, but, assuming it is true tea, then much the same mechanism seems likely to have been in operation.

In conclusion, it does seem possible that coffee could have made it from Far Harad to the Shire, however unlikely this may seem, through a network of traders operating

¹ Certainly if the Dwarves were also their main source of coinage.

² This may have been direct barter, but, given the existence of coinage, one imagines this would have been used as the medium of exchange. My point is that the Hobbits would have had to be providing something to sell that the Dwarves wanted, beyond just food, to generate sufficient exchange value.

³ The coffee would have to be carried a long way overland and, before industrialisation, transport on land was very expensive. The price would therefore have been vastly inflated by the time it reached the Shire.

⁴ The prologue to *The Lord of the Rings* suggests that it's probably a variety of *Nicotiana*, in which case it's definitely addictive. It also states that the practice of smoking, starting among Hobbits in the Shire and Bree, spread from Bree to people who passed through the town regularly, such as Rangers, Wizards and, crucially, Dwarves, who could then have spread it to their own kingdoms further east (*The Lord of the Rings*, page 8). If this seems unlikely, remember that Gimli, who we may assume to be representative of a late-Third-Age Dwarf of Erebor, smokes—he borrows a pipe off Pippin when they are reunited after the sack of Isengard (*The Lord of the Rings*, pp.548-9).

⁵ For a fuller discussion of this, see my article on the Shire's coin supply in *Anor* 44.

across the breadth of Middle-earth. How fresh it would have been by this time is a moot point, but it does seem plausible. There would appear to be sufficient specialisation at each link in the chain for there to be a benefit to trading with, ultimately, the rest of the world's smoking habit paying for the Shire's caffeine one.

THE MIDDLE-EARTH EXPANDED FILM UNIVERSE 3: FILM WITH A VENGEANCE

James Baillie and Samuel Cook

After the smash hits that were *The Middle-earth Expanded Film Universe* and *The Middle-earth Expanded Film Universe 2: Film Harder*, comes the third instalment in the blockbuster series of this age of the world: THE MIDDLE-EARTH EXPANDED FILM UNIVERSE 3: FILM WITH A VENGEANCE. Definitely not made to cash in on the solid box-office gold that is unthinking franchise loyalty, *The Middle-earth Expanded Film Universe 3: Film With A Vengeance* will have you on the edge of your seats as you experience a rollercoaster of emotions, actions, special effects and carefully crafted nostalgia designed to make you give us all your money. Watch it now and for the rest of the millennium, five times a day in pointless 3D, in an *Anor* near you now!

The Legolas Movie

This zany concept film features every character and every bit of scenery being played by Legolas, who is in turn played by Orlando Bloom. Watch as characters from all your favourite franchises are recreated in Legolas-animation! Legolas (Orlando Bloom) is just an ordinary guy in Legolasland—but discovers that beneath the apparent order of Elvenhome there are wellsprings of creatively restating the obvious waiting to burst forth. Follow Legolas (Orlando Bloom), Wyldstyle (Legolas (Orlando Bloom)), Gandalf (Legolas (Orlando Bloom)), and Batman (Legolas (Orlando Bloom)) as they venture to discover if Legolas really is the Special Elf.¹ The theme song “Everything Is Elven” will be stuck in your head for days!²

Big Hirluin Six

Hirluin of Pinnath Gelin (Jason Isaacs³) invents an amazing new shade of green that will revolutionise the Gondorian fashion industry⁴, but the secret is lost when the venue for Minas Tirith Fashion Week mysteriously burns down. Unbeknownst to

¹ Also featuring a pirate (Legolas (Orlando Bloom)) who looks strangely like he’s done this film before, and a random space guy (Legolas (Orlando Bloom)), who excitedly builds a spaceship. The spaceship is played by Legolas (Orlando Bloom).

² Everything is Elven! Everything is cool with a pointy-eared theme! Everything is Elven! When your quiver’s a meme...

³ Hello to.

⁴ Hitherto rather in hock to the ‘Travel-stained Soldier’ school of dress.

Hirluin, his mentor, an unscrupulous Umbarian¹, had stolen the secret before setting the blaze and faking his own death. Hirluin only becomes suspicious once items dyed in that particular shade start appearing on the high street² at knock-down prices, at which point he recruits other Captains of Gondor (Forlong, Angbor, Imrahil and Duinhir) to form an all-star crimefighting team, each with their own particular specialism³. Hirluin also uses his crafting abilities to re-purpose a load of peaceful weaving equipment into a fighting automaton that has the personality of a child, Weftmax (voiced by Alan Tudyk). Together, they hunt down the counterfeiter, only to be amazed when it turns out to be Hirluin's old mentor, who was only doing it because one of his children had been captured by some ransom-hungry Haradrim. But, what with Denethor not being exactly merciful⁴, he gets executed anyway. The team are celebrated for saving Gondor's clothing industry from the cheap Umbarian imports and everyone is happy. Except the Umbarians. But they're canonically evil, so who cares?

DrogoCop

After being drowned, along with his wife, by a mysterious group of pipe-weed smugglers, Drogo Baggins unexpectedly reawakens to find that his mind has been encased in a metal body. He has become part of a programme by Saruman Industries to create a “super-shirriff”. He returns to life – and duty – as the bow-slinging, hyper-tough DrogoCop! Follow DrogoCop’s struggles to come to terms with his changed body and identity, and his battles against both the pipe-weed crime gangs of the streets of Hobbiton and the corrupt executives at Saruman Industries who are plotting to take over the whole Shire...

The Valmartian

Matt Damon (Matt Damon) is part of a crew of astronauts exploring somewhere or other when some totally impossible disaster happens, catapulting him across time and space to Valmar⁵. He has to learn how to survive in this new land full of friendly people, superabundant food, angelic beings and aesthetic splendour, something made even harder by being adopted by Finarfin (Jeremy Irons), who's feeling a bit sad what with all his family being dead/exiled/dicks⁶. Meanwhile, back on Earth,

¹ Is there any other kind?

² Which, in Minas Tirith, was a more literal description than usual.

³ Duinhir: Ranged attack. Imrahil: Close combat. Angbor: Suicidal fearlessness. Forlong: Eating.

⁴ This is a man who egged his son on to go on a suicidal mission, remember.

⁵ Or Valimar. Pick your preferred spelling. Tolkien didn't.

⁶ Or all of the above in the case of Fëanor.

NASA are desperately trying to put together a rescue mission (codenamed Glorfindel), leading to the USA spending even more money than it already has on saving Matt Damon. When the ship full of Matt's old crewmates reaches Valinor through some handwavey science¹, though, he doesn't want to be saved, not being, in fact, in any real danger, hardship or distress. Unsure how to react to this uncharacteristic situation, ~~Ar-Pharazôn~~ President Trump ~~the Golden~~ (Alec Baldwin) tries to nuke Valinor², leading to North America being sunk by a vengeful Eru³. And all the people rejoiced. Except the ones that were dead⁴.

Thorondorbirds

From their secret base high in the Misty Mountains, disguised as a luxurious private eyrie, the birds of Taniquetil Rescue stand ever-ready to go out and rescue innocent lives.⁵ The film features Gwaihir as the superfast ThorondorBird One, Landroval as the giant ThorondorBird Two, Meneldor as the high-flying ThorondorBird Three, and a randomly selected penguin from the Father Christmas Letters as ThorondorBird Four.⁶ When they get a distress signal from a volcanic eruption, can the team work to rescue two trapped travellers before time runs out?

Ben Húrin

The 5-hour epic cinematographic version of the Narn i Hîn Húrin, following the trials and tribulations⁷ of Túrin ben Húrin and his family. Betrayed by all his friends⁸, Túrin becomes a slave to Morgoth. For no apparent reason, to regain his freedom, Túrin has to defeat Glaurung through the medium of a chariot race⁹, which he does. He then sets out to seek revenge and find his mother and sister. He also accomplishes this, slaying countless servants of the Enemy, and accidentally-on-

¹ Something something wormhole something string theory something something extra dimensions negative mass radiation tachyons something SCIENCE.

² Let's just assume there were some stashed on the ship for just such an eventuality.

³ As the tsunamis engulfed the land, the earth shook and all the volcanoes erupted, it would at least console the Americans that this really did make them the Chosen Race. 'Chosen' is value-neutral after all.

⁴ But there was still science to be done on the ones who were still alive.

⁵ Just as long as the timing is crucially plot-important and they don't have anything else to do that day.

⁶ Sea eagles do admittedly exist, but they're a different species, swim less well, and this is funnier.

⁷ Understatement.

⁸ At least, so he thinks.

⁹ Which wasn't actually that hard. Dragons are a bit heavy for chariots.

purpose destroying a large chunk of Beleriand on the way¹. Unfortunately, his mother runs away and he only finds out his wife is his sister after she commits suicide by jumping off a cliff, making his vengeance rather hollow. He then dramatically commits *seppuku*². In an epilogue, the shade of Túrin returns at the End of Days and kills Morgoth³, eventually achieving salvation and being reunited with his family as Men join in the Second Music of the Ainur⁴.

Radagascar

In this animated adventure for all the family, a menagerie of animals from across Tolkien's works find themselves unexpectedly stranded on the east bank of the Anduin, near Rhosgobel. Will they be able to cope without the safety of their correct literary settings? How will the local animals, led by the wizard Radagast (Sylvester McCoy) and his hedgehog Sebastian (Sacha Baron Cohen) greet and welcome the new arrivals? Includes a memorable squad of penguins from the Father Christmas Letters⁵, an Oliphant voiced by Chris Rock, and Ben Stiller as a cowardly but loveable warg.

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them

Valinor. Where else? A zoological documentary where Oromë (Dwayne 'the Rock' Johnson, dubbed by David Attenborough) shows the viewer around Valinor and its more esoteric fauna, before showing off all the dead ones he's hunted through the ages, in his personal hunting palace complex⁶. A map, bestiary and handy identification guide is included for the avid animal spotter/collector/annihilator.

Gothmog Day

This heartfelt comedy plays out when Gothmog, Lieutenant of Morgul (Bill Murray), wakes up in Osgiliath and goes out to besiege Minas Tirith. He shows his utter contempt for the pathetic human defenders and butchers all of them with his perfect planning... then wakes up in Osgiliath, on the same day, as if it had never happened. As Gothmog discovers himself stuck in a time loop, fighting on the

¹ I mean, he knew he was being a dick, but he still acted like one and Doriath, Hithlum, Nargothrond and Brethil all came out of it rather the worse for wear.

² There's no Jesus-based redemption in First Age Middle-earth. Especially if you're Túrin.

³ Tolkien's vision of the Apocalypse is a bit odd, hence why it got left out of the published *Silmarillion*.

⁴ The only time anything involving Túrin ends happily.

⁵ Except the one who we had to steal to play Thorondor Bird Four.

⁶ Having had rather a lot of ages, a lodge wasn't really big enough anymore.

Pelennor day after day after day, can he develop his character and learn the secrets of being a true antagonist?¹

The Sound of Maglor

After chucking his Silmaril into the Sea, Maglor (Oscar Isaacs) finally wends his way to the Misty Mountains to go and sulk in a rehab clinic run by some Avari². He lifts them from their base and savage ways and brings joy and music into their lives with his singing and harp-playing³, despite the repeated incursions and raiding of the local ~~Nazi~~ Goblins. Whilst there, he falls in love with the daughter of the local Avari chieftain (Felicity Jones⁴). Eventually, he leads them over the mountains to escape, where they join up with the Wood-elven kingdom in Mirkwood. In a brief epilogue, Maglor is banished for his refusal to join in with the sick party choons of Crown Prince Thranduil (Sacha Baron Cohen), and goes none know whither.

¹ In other words, “ballsing everything up so the heroes can win”.

² Rather taking the whole ‘back to nature detox’ idea to a whole new level. Mmmm, moss, skins and huts.

³ Somehow. Even though all he played were laments. That’s how terrible being Avari was.

⁴ The daughter, not the chieftain.

THE QUIZMASTER'S TALE

Being a lately discovered and never-before-seen part
of the works of the great poet, Geoffrey Chaucer

Transcribed and translated by The Hon. Lord King of Lókyanta¹

Recently discovered as padding inside a sarcophagus in the crypts of Westminster Abbey, I have the pleasure of here presenting the first edition for public consumption of a heretofore-missing part of *The Canterbury Tales*, the great work of medieval English literature by the peerless poet, Geoffrey Chaucer. There are some puzzling discrepancies with the other parts of the manuscript, as well as references to unknown English folk legends and parts of medieval culture, but it is hoped that these will be explained by the discovery of other missing tales, a search for which is being now conducted with all speed and diligence in crypts throughout the land. Chaucer's exact source for this tale is thus unknown, so it may be that this represents the poet's invention in full flow, though it is more likely that the source has simply not come down to us. The present text has been copied as faithfully as possible, considering the poor state of the parchment, with only the editorial intervention necessary to render it comprehensible in modern usage. Needless to say, any errors are the transcriber's own.

—*The Hon. Lord King, Cambridge, Year of our Lord 1872.*

PROLOGUE

"Grand mercy, Sir Franklin", said our good Host,
"For your tale, of note more worthy than most.
But I hear now the sound of hooves behind
Someone rides hard to overtake our ride."
The rout all stopp'd and awaited the wight
Who hurri'd so that he join them might.
As he came near, our Host hailed him loud:
"Good Sir, pray stop thy trot, what ailest thou?"
The rider halted and said, "Praise Jesu!
I have found you at last; I heard of you
And much desir'd to travel with a rout

¹ I apologise greatly for the following and the ensuing crimes against Chaucer and English Literature. The more archaic terms and meanings are in the glossary at the end.

Of such nonpareils as ne'er seen about."
"Know thou then of our hest?" rejoin'd our host.
"Indeed my will and intent uppermost
Was for just such a reason you to find.
I have a tale of rare skill in mind."
"Ben'dicite!" cried our Host, most cheer'd.
"Fain are we to such tales of renown hear;
We await from thee much goodness to lear',
Proceed, and we shall unstoppen our ears.
But first, mine good Sir, pray tell us thy craft;
Who thou art, whereso doth thou wirchest hard?"
"Quizmaster I am y-clept, and in'th East,
At Cambridge, won I, these years twenty-three;
Of towns not the least in beauty or art;
Questions I pose to knowledge impart,
And for to clerks befuddle and baffle."
"My faith, I trow we have here a marvel
Of subtlety and sleight most excellent.
Good sir, we to thine tale fully consent."

THE TALE

"Two dragons there were, Tirith and Taruth;
The one white as snow, t'other blake as smoke,
Of foes most implacable that e'er lived
To shend each other was all that they list.
Aye they had fought with nary a winner
Till sicker it seem'd that death would them capture.
"Wisly there must be a much better way,
Could we not settle our contest with brains?"
"Yea", said Taruth, "I do with thou agree.
My lust in battle is all y-gone be."
"Then let us hence take our separate ways
And return in a year to this ilk place."
Return they did as had fitted their hest,
An enchanter in tow, who could them best
Ask fiendish questions, which had him thought,
Help'd by his meinie, who serv'd as they ought.

Of halflings he riddl'd, and Elves and Dwarves;
 History, kings, Men who had y-built wharves;
 Heroes and farmers, writers and devils,
 Bears, dogs and goblins, blacksmiths and jewels,
 Till Tirith and Taruth were mazed full.
 Tirith said "This is far bet than battle
 I trow verily, and am most content.
 Say, Taruth, do you my mind comprehend?"
 "Indeed, Sirrah, my thought is with you on'd,
 I trow there is nought bet in this lond.
 Tho' it seemeth that we both be too lewd
 To choose a winner from one of us two.
 Dan Enchanter and Tirith, if you list,
 Shall we in a year in this place re-tryst?
 Maybe then we shall a judgement obtain
 As to which of us is best, by my fay."
 "I would indeed be full lief." Tirith cri'd.
 The Enchanter: "Even lever am I".
 And so now nine-and-ten times have they met,
 Some Tirith wins, others Taruth is bet.
 In the latest encounter, two months gone,
 Rounds were there eleven, 'fore they were done
 The first on a book hight Lord of the Rings
 The second on all things known of Halflings;
 Taruth took the erst, Tirith the secon'.
 Then came a great roll of mummers Dwarven,
 Follow'd by the world's history and myths,
 Afore they passed on to round the fifth.
 Taruth was ascendant, Tirith failing;
 (All his meinie had gone without warning)
 Then came the fifth round, Taboo it was named,
 And Tirith went down in flames of great dread,
 For Taruth had of words the mastery,
 Whilst Tirith was tir'd and of heart heavy.
 His corage he reviv'd, six rounds yet remain'd.
 Algates he look'd ahead, his heart to raise.
 Round six was the tongues of the world wide

And eke the life of writers of great pride;
Seven was the most recondite of lore,
Taken from scribbl'd manuscripts of yore;
But, forsooth, it availed Tirith not;
He did not this curs'd year suffisant wot.
Then came the names of him most blake accurs'd:
Sauron the Deceiver, of fiends the worst.
The contest shifted quickly back and forth,
Word for word, blow for blow, for all they're worth.
The roll was finished, as was the round,
Tirith was sickerly for defeat bound.
A win he needed, a draw not at all,
Lo! God was not to him favourable.
Poetry was announc'd, then more Taboo.
Tirith was beaten, strong waxed Taruth.
Finally the last challenge rais'd its head,
Most perplexing of all, Only Connect.
Neither did well, both were mazed entire,
But it matter'd not, Tirith was in t'mire,
Taruth did stand tall and his potence cry,
For he was the winner, I do not lie.
Ended it was for another year full,
The score nine all with one draw remark'ble.
Stoop'd then did Taruth and Tirith he rais'd:
"Once more are we equal, once more we'll play,
Till next year good sir, may the game ne'er end,
For now be we tway the closest of friends."
"Forsooth, 'twas a most worthy battaile,
I rue only that I fully did fail
To make it a close match, mayhaps next year
I'll requite this defeat and run you near."
"I shall await you with my heart full lief,
Here, take my hand, we shall in friendship leave."
Then parted they in wondrous amity,
And so had great hate turned to great glee.
The enchanter was well-pleas'd in his heart:
His designs had proved of superb art;

Ended was this rivalry damagin'
 That threaten'd the lond and all those therein.
 Now to great good it had indeed turned,
 All would profit from these friends compacted.
 Now he had but to scribe rounds for next year;
 A small price it was for peace free from fear.

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Al gates	Always
Aye	Forever
Ben'dicite	Well said, or words to that effect
Bet	Better
Blake	Black
Clept	Called
Clerk	Scholar
Corage	Heart, courage
Dan	Lord (cognate with Spanish <i>Don</i>)
-ed	Should be pronounced as a separate syllable at the end of words
Eke	Also
Erst	First
Fain	Like/want/glad
Fay	Faith
Hest	Promise
Hight	Named
Ilk	Same
Lever	Happier, gladder
Lewd	Ignorant
Lief	Happy, glad, content
List	Wanted, desired
Lond	Land
Lust	Pleasure
Meinie	Retinue, household
Oned	United
Rout	Crowd
Shend	Destroy
Sicker(ly)	Certain(ly)
Suffisant	Enough
Trow	Believe
Tway	Two, twain
Very, verily	Truly
Wight	Man, person
Wisly	Surely
Won	Live (German: wohnen)
Wot	Know
y-	Past tense

THE TWO COWS THEORY: MIDDLE-EARTH EDITION

James Baillie

For those unaware of the Two Cows Theory, it is based on the premise of explaining, in simple and humorous terms, any socio-economic system through the simple paradigm of an individual who has two hypothetical cows. Examples might include “Communism: You have two cows. The state takes both and gives you some milk.” or “Bureaucracy: You have two cows. The state takes both, requires you to fill in a seventy page form to reclaim them, and when you have done so, gives you back a goat.”

Such an elegant tool of analysis, of course, should doubtless be applied to our favourite locations and peoples in Middle-earth, and as such I present the following Middle-earth edition of the Two Cows Theory, for your edification, entertainment, and delight.

BREE

You have two cows. You milk them and consider selling the milk, then decide you don't trust outsiders with your milk. You drink the milk yourself.

THE CARROCK

You have two cows. You sell the milk to travellers at extortionate prices.

DUNLAND

You have two cows. You blame their scrawny appearance on the Rohirrim, and invade Rohan. You lose, and the Rohirrim take your cows.

EREBOR

You have two cows. You evict the cows from your mine and buy milk from someone else.

THE ETTENMOORS

You have two cows. You eat them.

LOTHLÓRIEN

You have two cows. You shoot them for eating your magical shrubs, then go back to veganism.

FANGORN

You have two cows. You take several hours to realise that they are not talking to you. You let them go free and write a poem about them.

FOROCHEL

You have two cows. They die of frostbite.

GONDOR

You have two cows. You complain about their inadequate contributions to the war effort.

HARAD

You have two cows. They die of heatstroke.

ISENGARD

You have two cows. You decide that cows are boring and experimentally crossbreed them with rhinos to make them stronger. It goes badly for everyone.

LAKE-TOWN

You have two cows. They cause your boat to sink.

MORDOR

You have two cows. You whip them until they produce milk, and then give the milk to Sauron. He doesn't appreciate it.

MORIA

You have two cows. They are frankly the least of your worries right now. You start working out how long you can survive in a locked, barred room with two cows and no other sustenance. It doesn't help.

THE OLD FOREST

You might have two cows. Or you might not. You're not really sure. You give Goldberry some milk. You think it came from the cows. You're not really sure.

RHOSGOBEL

You have two cows. They are your friends.

RIVENDELL

You have two cows. You sing to them in exchange for milk. You think this is a good deal all round. The cows do not.

ROHAN

You have two cows. You begrudgingly send one to Gondor, and get annoyed with the other for refusing to wear a saddle.

THE SHIRE

You have two cows. You make more milk and cream than it should be physically possible for you to eat. You eat it anyway.

UMBAR

You have three cows. None of them technically belong to you. You milk them anyway.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN THE MINES OF MORIA

Samuel Cook

CTS has determined, through long study of entirely-fictitious early drafts by Tolkien, what really happened in the Mines of Moria when the Fellowship entered. Here follows the text, starting from page 315 in Chapter V (The Bridge of Khazad-dûm) of the paperback edition of The Lord of the Rings and carrying on to the end of the chapter (page 323).

Gandalf had hardly spoken these words¹, when there came a great noise: a rolling *untz* that seemed to come from depths far below, and to tremble in the stone at their feet. They sprang towards the door in alarm. *Untz, untz* it rolled again, as if huge hands were turning the very caverns of Moria into a vast boombox. Then there came an echoing blast: a great whistle was blown in the hall, and answering whistles and harsh cries were heard further off. There was a hurrying sound of many feet.

‘They are coming!’ cried Legolas.

‘We cannot get out!’ said Gimli.

‘Trapped!’ cried Gandalf. ‘Why did I delay? Here we are, caught, just as they were before. But I was not here then. We will see what—’

Untz, untz came the bass and the walls shook.

‘Slam the doors and wedge them!’ shouted Aragorn. ‘And keep your packs on as long as you can: we may get a chance to body-pop our way out yet.’

‘No!’ said Gandalf. ‘We must not get shut in. Keep the east door ajar! We will go that way, if we get a chance.’

Another harsh whistle blast and shrill cries rang out. Feet were coming down the corridor. There was a ring and clatter as the Company drew their glowsticks. Glamdring shone with a pale light, and Sting glinted at the edges. Boromir set his shoulder against the western door.

¹ The Fellowship have just found Balin’s tomb and read the Book of Mazarbul.

'Wait a moment! Do not close it yet!' said Gandalf. He sprang forward to Boromir's side and drew himself up to his full height.

'Who comes hither to disturb the dancefloor of Balin Lord of Moria?' he cried in a loud voice.

There was a rush of hoarse laughter, like the fall of sliding stones into a pit; amid the clamour a deep voice, that of the DJ, was raised in command. *Untz, untz, untz* went the bass in the deep.

With a quick movement Gandalf stepped before the narrow opening of the door and thrust forward his disco-ball-topped staff. There was a dazzling flash that lit the chamber and the passage outside. For an instant the wizard looked out. Light strobed down the corridor as he sprang back.

'There are ravers, very many of them,' he said. 'And some are large and stoned, rave addicts of Mirkwood. For the moment they are hanging back, but there is something else there. A great rave troll, I think, or more than one. There is no hope of escape that way.'

'And no hope at all, if they come at the other door as well,' said Boromir.

'There is no sound outside here yet,' said Aragorn, who was standing by the eastern door listening. 'The passage on this side plunges straight down a stair: it plainly does not lead back towards the hall. But it is no good flying blindly this way with the pursuit just behind. We cannot block the door. Its key is gone and the lock is broken, and it opens inwards. We must do something to calm the ravers first. We will make them fear the Chamber of Mazarbul!' he said grimly, feeling the edge of his glowstick, Andúril.

Heavy feet were heard in the corridor. Boromir flung himself against the door and heaved it to; then he wedged it with broken truncheons and splinters of neon-painted wood. The Company retreated to the other side of the chamber. But they had no chance to fly yet. There was a blow on the door that made it quiver; and then it began to grind slowly open, driving back the wedges. A huge arm and shoulder, with a dark skin of greenish scales daubed with neon pink highlights, was thrust

through the widening gap. Then a great, flat, toeless foot in the largest platform boots ever seen was forced through below. There was a dead silence outside.

Boromir leaped forward and break-danced with all his might to intimidate the rave troll, but his efforts faltered and he fell back aghast, his glowstick bent.

Suddenly, and to his own surprise, Frodo felt a hot wrath blaze up in his heart. 'The Shire!' he cried, and springing beside Boromir, he performed such an eye-watering array of moves that the troll's tiny brain, shrunken and scarred by decades of heavy substance abuse, overloaded, making its head explode messily over the ravers gathered outside. There was a bellow and the body fell back, nearly wrenching Sting from Frodo's arm. Black drops dripped from the doorframe and ceiling, and smoked on the floor. 'Man, that troll had really been on the heavy stuff,' thought Frodo. Boromir hurled himself against the door and slammed it again.

'One for the Shire!' cried Aragorn. 'The Hobbit's moves are sick! You have a killa headspin, Frodo son of Drogo!'

There was a crash on the door, followed by crash after crash. Rams and hammers were beating against it. It cracked and staggered back, and the opening grew suddenly wide. Light came strobing in, but the Fellowship all had their shades on ready, so it did not blind them. There was a whistle-blast and a rush of feet, and ravers one after another leaped into the chamber, whilst the bass continued to pulsate with maddening insistency. *Untz, untz, untz, untz.*

How many there were the Company could not count. The contest was tight, but the ravers were dismayed by the fierceness of the defence. Legolas's natural agility, honed by many years in the court of Thranduil his father, the Party King of Middle-earth, was unmatched and had ravers literally tying themselves in knots trying to keep up with him. Gimli's Dwarvish death-spinning was taking out ravers by the dozen as their legs simply vanished from underneath them. Boromir and Aragorn's whirling glowsticks created such nightmarish patterns that the rest fled shrieking, leaving the defenders unharmed and masters of the dancefloor, except Sam, who had a burst eardrum from the relentless bass. A fire was smouldering in his brown eyes that would have made Ted Sandyman step backwards, if he had seen it.

'Now is the time!' cried Gandalf. 'Let us go, before more appear!' But even as they retreated, and before Pippin and Merry had reached the stair outside, a huge rave-chieftain, very definitely high, clad in black Lycra from head to foot with blue lightning bolts scattered across the material, leaped onto the dancefloor; behind him his followers clustered in the doorway. His broad, flat face was swart, his eyes were like coals, and his tongue was red; he wielded a great glowstick. He wormed his way past a stunned Boromir, entranced Aragorn with a magnificent display of Big Fish, Little Fish, Cardboard Box, quick as a striking snake, and then aggressively Night-Fevered in front of Frodo, who was thrown backwards and stunned by the sheer force of his thrusting. Sam, with a cry, grabbed the glowstick and broke it in half. But even as the raver flung it down and swept out his next move, Andúril smacked him full in the face and he went down like a ton of bricks. His followers fled howling, as Boromir and Aragorn pulled off a perfectly-synchronised Robot.

Untz, untz continued the bass. The DJ's voice rolled out again.

'Now!' shouted Gandalf. 'Now is the last chance. Run for it!'

Aragorn picked up Frodo where he lay by the wall and made for the stair, pushing Merry and Pippin in front of him. The others followed; but Gimli had to be dragged away by Legolas: in spite of the peril he lingered by Balin's tomb with his head bowed. Boromir hauled the eastern door to, grinding upon its hinges: it had great iron rings on either side, but could not be fastened.

'I am all right,' gasped Frodo. 'I can dance. Put me down!'

Aragorn nearly dropped him in his amazement. 'I thought you were danced out!' he cried.

'Not yet!' said Gandalf. 'But there is no time for wonder. Off you go, all of you, down the stairs! Wait a few minutes for me at the bottom, but if I do not come soon, go on! Go quickly and choose paths leading right and downwards.'

'We cannot leave you to hold the door alone!' said Aragorn.

'Do as I say!' said Gandalf fiercely¹. 'Glowsticks are no more use here. Go!'

The passage was lit by no shaft and was utterly dark. They groped their way down a long flight of steps, and then looked back; but they could see nothing, except high above them the faint glimmer of the wizard's disco ball. He seemed to be still standing on guard by the closed door. Frodo breathed heavily and leaned against Sam, who put his arms about him. They stood peering up the stairs into the darkness. Frodo thought he could hear the voice of Gandalf above, muttering lyrics that ran down the sloping roof with a sighing echo. He could not catch what was said. The walls seemed to be trembling. Every now and again the bass throbbed especially hard: *untz, untz*.

Suddenly at the top of the stair there was a stab of white light. Then there was a dull rumble and a heavy thud. The bass upped the tempo: *untz untz untz untz untz untz*, and then stopped. Gandalf came flying down the steps and fell to the ground in the midst of the Company.

'Well, well! That's over!' said the wizard, struggling to his feet. 'I have done all that I could. But I have met my match, and have nearly been destroyed. But don't stand here! Go on! You will have to do without light for a while: I am rather shaken. Go on! Go on! Where are you, Gimli? Come ahead with me! Keep close behind, all of you!'

They stumbled after him wondering what had happened. *Untz, untz* went the bass again: it now sounded muffled and far away, but it was following. There was no other sound of pursuit, neither tramp of feet, nor any voice. Gandalf took no turns, right or left, for the passage seemed to be going in the direction that he desired. Every now and again it descended a flight of steps, fifty or more, to a lower level. At the moment that was their chief danger; for in the dark they could not see a descent, until they came on it and put their feet out into emptiness. Gandalf felt the ground with his staff like a blind man.

¹ He was really annoyed at not getting the drug supply deal for the illegal rave they'd encountered. He was the man who had taken a quaint Hobbit custom and introduced it to new markets and races, enriching himself massively in the process. Someone else (Saruman, as it would later turn out) had obviously muscled in on his supply monopoly.

At the end of an hour they had gone a mile, or maybe a little more, and had descended many flights of stairs. There was still no sound of pursuit. Almost they began to hope that they would escape. At the bottom of the seventh flight Gandalf halted.

'It is getting hot,' he gasped. 'We ought to start thinking about taking off all our clothes and we should be down at least to the level of the Gates now. Soon I think we should look for a left-hand turn to take us east. I hope it is not far. I am very weary. I must rest here a moment, even if all the ravers ever spawned are after us.'

Gimli took his arm and helped him down to a seat on the step. 'What happened away up there at the door?' he asked. 'Did you meet the DJ?'

'I do not know,' answered Gandalf. 'But I found myself suddenly faced by something that I have not met before. I could think of nothing to do but to try and twerk the door shut. I'm very good at that move; but to do things of that kind rightly requires time, and even then the door can be broken by a well-executed Wrecking Ball.

'As I stood there, I could hear inane rave-voices on the other side; at any moment I thought they would burst it open. I could not hear what was said; they seemed to be talking in their own hideous language. All I caught was *ghâsh*: that is "fire". Then something came into the chamber—I felt it through the door, and the ravers themselves were afraid and fell silent. It laid hold of the iron ring, and then it perceived me and my frantic twerking.

'What it was I cannot guess, but I have never felt such a challenge. The counter-move was terrible. It nearly broke me. For an instant the door left my control and began to open! I had to throw in a Moonwalk. That proved too great a strain. The door burst in pieces. Something dark as a cloud was blocking out all the light inside, and I was thrown backwards down the stairs. All the wall gave way, and the roof of the chamber as well, I think.

'I am afraid Balin is buried deep, and maybe something else is buried there too. I cannot say. But at least the passage behind us was completely blocked. Ah! I have never felt so spent, but it is passing. And now what about you, Frodo? There was not

time to say so, but I have never been more delighted in my life than when you spoke. I feared that it was a brave but dead Hobbit that Aragorn was carrying.'

'What about me?' said Frodo. 'I am alive, and whole I think. I am bruised and in pain, but it is not too bad.'

'Well,' said Aragorn, 'I can only say that Hobbits are made of a stuff so tough that I have never met the like of it. Had I known, I would have spoken softer in the Inn at Bree! That Night-Fever would have skewered a wild boar!'

'Well, it did not skewer me, I am glad to say,' said Frodo; 'though I feel as if I had been caught between a hammer and an anvil.' He said no more. He found breathing painful.

'You take after Bilbo,' said Gandalf. 'There is more about you than meets the eye, as I said of him long ago.' Frodo wondered if the remark meant more than it said.

They now went on again. Before long Gimli spoke. He had keen eyes in the dark. 'I think,' he said, 'that there is a light ahead. But it is not daylight. It is red. What can it be?'

'*Ghâsh!*' muttered Gandalf. 'I wonder if that is what they meant: that the rave got so out of hand on the lower levels that they are literally, not just metaphorically, on fire? Still, we can only go on.'

Soon the light became unmistakable, and could be seen by all. It was flickering and glowing on the walls away down the passage before them. They could now see their way: in front the road sloped down swiftly, and some way ahead there stood a low archway; through it the growing light came. The air became very hot.

When they came to the arch Gandalf went through, signing to them to wait. As he stood just beyond the opening they saw his face lit by a red glow. Quickly he stepped back.

'There is some new devilry here,' he said, 'devised for our welcome, no doubt. But I know now where we are: we have reached the First Deep, the level immediately below the Gates. This is the second hall of the Old Moria Club; and the Gates are

near: away beyond the eastern end, on the left, not more than a quarter of a mile. Across the Bridge, up a broad stair, along a wide road, through the First Hall, and out! But come and look!

They peered out. Before them was another cavernous hall. It was loftier and far longer than the one in which they had slept. They were near its eastern end; westward it ran away into darkness. Down the centre stalked a double line of towering podiums. They were carved like boles of mighty trees whose boughs upheld platforms for the dancers with a branching tracery of stone. Their stems were smooth and black, but a red glow was darkly mirrored in their sides. Right across the floor, close to the feet of two huge podiums, a great fissure had opened. Out of it a fierce red light came, and now and again flames licked at the brink and curled about the bases of the podiums. Wisps of dark smoke wavered in the hot air.

'It seems the latrine has caught fire.' said Gandalf. 'It probably hasn't been emptied for centuries, and all that waste gives off a fair amount of gas. Good thing it has caught fire—we would have been overcome by the smell otherwise. If we had come by the main road down from the upper halls, we should have been trapped here. Let us hope that the fire now lies between us and pursuit. Come! There is no time to lose.'

Even as he spoke they heard again the pursuing bass-beat: *Untz, untz, untz*. Away beyond the shadows at the western end of the hall there came cries and whistles. *Untz, untz*: the podiums seemed to tremble and the flames to quiver.

'Now for the last race!' said Gandalf. 'If the sun is shining outside, we may still escape. After me!'

He turned left and sped across the smooth floor of the hall. The distance was greater than it had looked. As they ran they heard the beat and echo of many hurrying feet behind. A shrill yell went up: they had been seen. There was a ring and clash of glass. A bottle flew over Frodo's head.

Boromir laughed. 'They did not expect this,' he said. 'The fire has cut them off. We are on the wrong side!'

'Look ahead!' called Gandalf. 'The Bridge is near. It is dangerous and narrow.'

Suddenly Frodo saw before him a black chasm. At the end of the hall the floor vanished and fell to an unknown depth, into the largest mosh pit ever built. The outer door could only be reached by a slender bridge of stone, without kerb or rail, that spanned the pit with one curving spring of fifty feet. It was an ancient defence of the Dwarves against any that might evade the bouncers and try to gain unauthorised entry to the main club. They could only pass across it in single file. At the brink Gandalf halted and the others came up in a pack behind.

'Lead the way, Gimli!' he said. 'Pippin and Merry next. Straight on, and up the stair beyond the door!'

Firecrackers fell among them. One struck Frodo and sprang back. Another set fire to Gandalf's hat, but was quickly put out by the smouldering wizard. Frodo looked behind. Beyond the fire he saw swarming black figures: there seemed to be hundreds of ravers. They brandished glowsticks and water bottles, which shone red as blood in the firelight. *Untz, untz* rolled the thumping bass, growing louder and louder, *untz, untz*.

Legolas turned, confident in his dance mastery. He lost his poise, however, and gave a cry of dismay and fear. Two great rave trolls appeared; they bore great slabs of stone, and flung them down to serve as gangways over the towering excremental inferno. But it was not the trolls that had filled the Elf with terror. The ranks of the ravers had opened, and they crowded away, as if they themselves were afraid. Something was coming up behind them. What it was could not be seen: it was like a great shadow, in the middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and to go before it.

It came to the edge of the fire and the light faded as if had a cloud had bent over it. Then with a rush it leaped across the fissure. The flames roared up to greet it, and wreathed about it; and a black smoke swirled in the air. Its streaming mane kindled, and blazed behind it. In its right hand was a glowstick like a stabbing tongue of fire; in its left it held a whip of many thongs¹.

'Groovy light show!' spoke Pippin, rapturously, entirely ignoring their peril.

¹ Not the kind of thongs usually associated with whips. Well, not outside the world of *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

'Ai! Ai!' wailed Legolas. 'A Prima Ballerina! A Prima Ballerina is come!'

Gimli stared with wide eyes. 'Durin's Bane!' he cried, and letting his glowstick fall he covered his face.

'A Prima Ballerina,' muttered Gandalf. 'Now I understand.' He faltered and leaned heavily on his staff. 'What an evil fortune! And I am already weary.'

The dark figure streaming with fire raced towards them. The ravers yelled and poured over the stone gangways. Then Boromir raised his horn and blew. Loud the challenge rang and bellowed, like the shout of many throats under the cavernous roof. For a moment the ravers quailed and the fiery shadow halted. Then the echoes died as suddenly as a flame blown out by a dark wind, and the enemy advanced again.

'Over the bridge!' cried Gandalf, recalling his strength. 'Fly! This is a foe beyond any of you. I must hold the narrow way. Fly!' Aragorn and Boromir did not heed the command, but still held their ground, side by side, behind Gandalf at the far end of the bridge. The others halted just within the doorway at the hall's end, and turned, unable to leave their leader to face the enemy alone.

The Prima Ballerina reached the bridge. Gandalf stood in the middle of the span, leaning on the staff in his left hand, but in his other hand Glamdring gleamed, cold and white. His enemy halted again, facing him, and the shadow about it reached out like two vast wings. It raised the whip, and the thongs whined and cracked. Fire came from its nostrils. But Gandalf stood firm.

'You cannot pass,' he said. The ravers stood still, and a dead silence fell. 'I am a master of the pelvic thrust, wielder of the brightest glowstick evs. You cannot pass. The arabesque will not avail you, Blackest of Swans. Go back to the dance school! You cannot pass.'

The Prima Ballerina made no answer. The fire in it seemed to die, but the darkness grew. It stepped forward slowly on to the bridge, and suddenly it drew itself up to a great height, and its wings were spread from wall to wall; but still Gandalf could be

seen¹, glimmering in the gloom; he seemed small, and altogether alone: grey and bent, like a wizened tree before the onset of a storm.

From out of the shadow a red glowstick swept, leaving patterns of what seemed very fire burning on the retinas of all watching.

Glamdring glittered white as a magnesium flare in answer, temporarily blinding all the onlookers. This was a dance-off of epic proportions.

There was a ringing clash and a stab of white fire. The Prima Ballerina fell back and its glowstick flew up in molten fragments. The wizard swayed on the bridge, stepped back a pace, and then again stood still.

'You cannot pass!' he said.

With a graceful bound the Prima Ballerina leaped full upon the bridge. Its whip whirled and hissed.

'He cannot dance alone!' cried Aragorn suddenly and ran back along the bridge. 'Elendil!' he shouted. 'I am with you, Gandalf!'

'Gondor!' cried Boromir and leaped after him.

At that moment Gandalf lifted his staff, and crying aloud he smote the bridge before him with a series of thunderous stomping moves. The staff broke asunder and fell from his hand, the disco ball on top falling into the mosh pit, twinkling fitfully in the light of the myriad of glowsticks arrayed on and about the bridge. A blinding sheet of white flame sprang up as Gandalf finished his ultimate combo and smashed Glamdring. The bridge cracked under the repeated furious pounding. Right at the Prima Ballerina's feet it broke, and the stone upon which it stood crashed into the pit, while the rest remained, poised, quivering like a tongue of rock thrust out into emptiness.

With a terrible cry the Prima Ballerina fell forward, and its shadow plunged down and vanished. But even as it fell it swung its whip, and the thongs lashed and curled

¹ It was a very bright glowstick.

about the wizard's knees, dragging him to the brink. He staggered and fell, grasped vainly at the stone, and slid into the pit. 'Jive, you fools!' he cried, and was gone.

The fires went out, and blank darkness fell. The Company stood rooted with horror staring into the pit. Even as Aragorn and Boromir came flying back, the rest of the bridge cracked and fell. With a cry Aragorn roused them.

'Come! I will lead you now!' he called. 'We must obey his last command. Follow me!'

They jived wildly up the great stairs beyond the door. Aragorn leading, Boromir at the rear. At the top was a wide echoing passage. Along this they fled. Frodo heard Sam at his side weeping, and then he found that he himself was weeping as he ran. *Untz, untz, untz* the bass carried on behind, mournful now and slow; *untz!*

They jived on. The light grew before them; great shafts pierced the roof. They jived swifter. They passed into a hall, bright with daylight from its high windows in the east. They fled across it. Through its huge broken doors they passed, and suddenly before them the Great Gates opened, an arch of blazing light.

There were bouncers crouching in the shadows behind the great door-posts towering on either side, but the gates were shattered and cast down. But they weren't paid to stop people coming out of the rave and so ignored the Company and the Company ignored them, continuing its rather uncoordinated progress¹ through the Gate and down the huge and age-worn steps, the threshold of Moria, the greatest club of the ancient world.

Thus, at last, they came beyond hope under the sky and felt the wind on their faces.

They did not halt until they were out of bottling range from the walls. Dimrill Dale lay about them. The shadow of the Misty Mountains lay upon it, but eastwards there was a golden light on the land. It was but one hour after noon². The sun was shining; the clouds were white and high.

¹ With no beat to guide them, the various members of the Company had adopted rather different tempos and, indeed, dance styles by this point. Imagine a May Ball silent disco at about 03:00 in the morning and you get the idea.

² That's what you call committed clubbing.

They looked back. Dark yawned the archway of the Gates under the mountain-shadow. Faint and far beneath the earth rolled the heavy bass stacks: *untz*. A thin, black smoke trailed out. Nothing else was to be seen; the dale all around was empty. *Untz*. Grief at last wholly overcame them, and they wept long: some standing and silent, some cast upon the ground. *Untz, untz*. The bass faded.

CONSEQUENCES

Various members of the Society

Shelob met Bandobras 'Bullroarer' Took on top of an Oliphaunt.

Shelob said: "You're wearing my technicolour dreamcloak!"

Bullroarer Took replied "Who ate all the lembas?" and glared at Shelob.

They got drunk on too much Ent-draught and sang eighteen verses of 'A Wizard's Staff Has a Knob on the End'.

As a result, Eru was so moved that he threw out all of his rules about the Gift of Men and allowed them to live forever.

Saruman met Carcharoth in Orthanc.

Saruman said: "I tell you, I am the most fabulous and many-coloured."

Carcharoth replied: "I just can't hold it in any more—I love you!"

They travelled long and far to nowhere, for no reason.

As a result, the world was young, the mountains green...

Bombur met Mayor Gamgee in a nasty, cold, wet hole in the ground, quite unlike a Hobbit-hole.

Bombur said: "So, Mayor Gamgee, we meet at last. As the prophecy foretold."

Mayor Gamgee replied: "Against the power that arises in a nasty, cold, wet hole in the ground, quite unlike a Hobbit-hole, there can be no victory."

They ate a Silmaril.

And that is how the game of golf was *really* invented in Middle-earth.

Published by the Cambridge Tolkien Society

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