OTHER MINDS

The Unofficial Role-Playing Magazine for J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth and beyond

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**The next Issue of *Other Minds* is not themed, every contribution is eligible!
Submission deadline is October 1 2010**

Editorial: Finally Here!

It has worked! Against the odds *Other Minds, Issue 10* is finally here. As you might have noticed on the various mailing lists and the *Other Minds* website, real life has forced us to miss a regular publication date and thus we continue with *Other Minds, Issue 10* almost exactly six months after Issue 9 came out. Stay tuned for further announcements concerning content, deadlines and general information on our website and Facebook group as well as the fansourcebooks and MERP mailing lists. If you know any other groups, lists etc. that seem appropriate for placing information about *Other Minds*, do not hesitate to pass along the information!

Fortunately, we are happy to greet another volunteer team member who will support us with his skills and experience.

New website

As some of you may already have noticed, *Other Minds* has an entirely new and re-designed website (http://othermindsmagazine.com). The former one was literally falling apart due to old software that was beyond the point of being updatable to a new version. This led to the loss of all the old accounts (the essential data has been saved of course), so they have to be created anew unfortunately. All of you who already had accounts created, please re-register with the new website (http://othermindsmagazine.com/join_form). We are very sorry for the inconvenience, but the increasing in-depth corruption of the old software made any attempts to "simply" update the existing system impossible. On the positive side, the new version is much more stable.

Content

Now on to the most important part of each *Other Minds* Issue – the content. This time we have again a healthy mix of different themes.

We begin with **Balrogs do not have wings – but they do fly!** from first-time author Thomas Gießl. Thomas explores in depth the hotly-debated topic of whether Balrogs have real wings or not. This is a great supplementary work to Chris Seeman's treatment of the broader "Balrog" theme in *Other Hands Issue 22* from July 1998.

Second comes a contribution from me with the title **The problem of Gil-galad and the 'House of Finrod'**. It deals with the history of these important topics that Tolkien revised over and over again. It also provides a proposal for a final family tree based on the conclusions drawn in the text.

The Short History of Story-telling Games, by first-time author Travis Henry, is a really good read if you want to get a very special overview of Tolkien-related gaming in the past. Brace yourselves for a lighthearted view on a matter that is all too often taken quite seriously. Be sure not to miss this one!

I am sure that the next contribution has the potential for greatness – even if its text is rather short. It deals with **The 'Other Hands' Restoration Project**, realised by me and Roland K. This brings you all 34 Issues of *Other Hands Magazine* in a technical quality comparable to what you're used to seeing in *Other Minds*. Enjoy them and look at what great articles were written by the Middle-earth gaming community from 1993 to 2001!

Other Minds is present not only on the web, but also in real life! Thomas Abbenhaus' (again a first-timer with *Other Minds*) contribution **An October weekend in Middle-earth** re-traces the events of a convention in Germany last autumn, where our magazine was

presented for the first time (as far as we know) at a roleplaying convention outside the US.

The final submission this time is Daniel 'Vaco' Vacaflores' article **The Art of Magic** that does justice to this all-time favourite topic by dealing with almost every imaginable aspect of magic in a Middle-earth roleplaying game. The great number of relevant quotes that Vaco assembled for this project shows his firm determination to provide an exhaustive treatment of the matter. This is all the more remarkable as Vaco was working under extremely detrimental conditions in a region hit by widespread strikes in Bolivia to finalise his *magnum opus*. It also expands on Chris Seeman's article about magic in *Other Minds, Issue 1*. On top of all that, Vaco will bring you a gaming system as well, which will probably be realised in our next Issue.

We are also very happy that more great artists gave us permission to use their original art for *Other Minds*. Tuuliky focuses on Elves. If you're interested in more artwork from her, visit http://tuuliky.deviantart.com/. Stephen Hickman's online presence can be accessed at http://www.stephenhickman.com/. Katherine Karina "Kasiopeia" Chmiel you know already, while Olga Kukhtenkova (http://fan.theonering.net/rolozo/collection/kukhtenkova?hide=-3) is seen within the pages of *Other Minds* for the first time.

Gaming News

There is also some news on the game system front. *Other Minds* author José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa alerted us to a new collectable card game (CCG) for Middle-earth. Fantasy Flight Games seems to have acquired a CCG license and is to produce a game called *The Lord of the Rings: The Card Game*. This is all the more interesting since we are also awaiting a new pen-and-paper RPG for Middle-earth (see the Editorial of the last Issue: *OM9*). Have a look at the two URL's below to check out the details of this new CCG. In contrast to the previous licensing policy , the RPG and CCG licenses have now been given to different companies. We would be happy to receive any contribution about this new CCG game (e.g. a review). So, if you're into Middle-earth CCG's, you might have a chance to write the first review for this new game!

For the *Other Minds* team
Thomas Morwinsky

http://www.fantasyflightgames.com/edge_minisite_sec.asp?eidm=129&esem=1
http://www.fantasyflightgames.com/edge_foros_discusion.asp?efid=201&efcid=4&efidt=358780

Balrogs do not have wings— but they do fly!

by Thomas Gießl

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*The question of the (non-) existing Balrog wings is one that has the potential for long discussions and argumentations. Here first-time author Thomas Gießl gives us a detailed explanation why Balrogs should **not** have real wings.*

We hope that this treatment of the matter may give birth to answers or comments, so that the whole complex of "Balrog-wings" can be accessed from each point of view and the reader may build his own opinion on this great wealth of information.

Michael Martinez has previously reviewed this article and maintains steadfastly that the essay Mr. Gießl refers to does not in any way argue for physical or corporeal wings on the Balrogs. There have also been the follow-up articles 'Flying Away On A Wing And A Hair' and 'The Truth About Balrogs (Again)', both of which – according to Mr. Martinez – follow the original essay in saying there were no physical or corporeal wings on the Balrog.

Which line of argumentation is most convincing is – and must – lie with each individual reader to decide. Everyone interested in the topic is encouraged to read all these mentioned sources (both from Michael Martinez and the present one from Thomas Gießl) to make up their own mind about these questions.

*What **is** sure, is the benefit of discussions with differing points of view. As long as these stick to facts and do not become personal we encourage them.*

CORE

Preface

Some parts of the article could appear to be unfair towards Michael Martinez. If this is so, I'm entirely to blame for it, as I have to admit that I was pretty annoyed by the way he argued in 'Do Balrogs have wings? Do Balrogs fly?'. But since then things have cooled down considerable, and as he himself is no longer (or never was) part of the wing faction, there is no reason for any argument. Anyway, I sincerely hope no one takes offense in this article, as none is intended.

Introduction

This article is a new version of a previously unpublished German article about the nature of the forms the *ëalar* known as the Valaraukar, or Balrogs, if you prefer the more common term (I do not, by the way, but still use it here). The question of their physical appearance in Middle-earth, and whether these forms had real, functional wings (i.e., similar to those of birds or bats) attached to them or not, and if these beings were capable of flight with these wings is discussed in earnest.

I mainly refer to Michael Martinez's article "Do Balrogs have wings? Do Balrogs fly?" which can be found at the website given at the end of the article in the section "Readings", to characterize and later refute the position that the Balrog of Moria (and thus all Balrogs) had real physical wings which enabled them to fly. I do this not to start a new debate on this topic with said author, as he himself has declared recently that he no longer cares much about this subject. I respect his new position, but still believe that his old article summarize best the arguments of the Wing-faction, which is why I choose it as model against which I will

argue. Thus this article is to be seen as an example for an argumentation against the "wing-interpretation" rather than a specific person's view. I will also evolve my own position by contrasting it to that espoused by Martinez in said essay. I will summarize for you an alternative view later on. In short, this interpretation says that you are right to call something 'wings' when somebody compares it to 'wings'. The second position differs not so much from the first (as Martinez's main point in said article is that the Balrog of Moria has wings due to the fact that people apparently saw something they dubbed 'wings').

This in fact states that there are no longer 'real' Balrog wings, but still somewhat plays in favor of the wing camp, as Martinez himself introduces a third possible opinion on the matter, dubbed by him as 'Tolkien used the word "wings" to refer to the darkness surrounding the Balrog that extended outward to the walls of the cavern in *The Bridge of Khazad-dûm* chapter'. He explicitly puts this view apart from the position that there are no Balrog wings. This is somewhat confusing to me, as calling something 'wings' when speaking figuratively is very much the same on an ontological level as merely stating that there are no wings.

All accentuations in this article are mine.

A note on terms

There are many terms concerning the beings and entities within Tolkien's fictional world. I deem it necessary to explain my use of these terms in this essay to clarify things, and to point to some problems that come along with that particular use.

First, there is the not so-well-known term *ëalar* (sg. *ëala*) which refers to all

beings within Eä which are by nature bodiless, and thus not necessarily corporeal. It has to be differentiated from *fëar* (sg. *fëa*). An *ëala* is a spiritual being without the need of a physical body. *Fëar* are the spirits (or souls) of corporeal beings which need their bodies, their *hröar* (sg. *hröa*), to be complete as a being. The Eruhíni are made up out of *fëar* and *hröar*; the *ëalar* are complete as spirits. They are just *ëalar*.

We use this term to refer to all spiritual beings within Eä which were formerly known outside Eä as *Ainur* (sg. *Ainu*). *Ainur* refers in my opinion only to their function during the Ainulindalë; and it is also a broader term, as it technically also applies to those *Ainur* who remained outside of Eä, being content with watching the play of Creation rather than taking an active part within it. The *ëalar* within Arda include *Valar*, *Maiar*, and *Úmaiar*. I don't need to talk about *Valar* and *Maiar* here, as the meaning of these terms is well-known among people interested in Tolkien's work, but *Úmaiar* (sg. *Úmaia*) is another matter. It refers to the *ëalar* that served Melkor/Morgoth, independent of whether or not they had once been counted among the *Maiar*; it also includes those *ëalar* which served Melkor even before the distinction between *Valar* and *Maiar* was made. The focus of this essay, the Balrogs, are *Úmaiar*.

To put these definitions to the test, let's see what Melkor and Ungoliant are. Ungoliant and Melkor are both *ëalar*, but they do not fall under either of these categories. Melkor is a former *Vala*, but is no longer counted among these, and Ungoliant once did serve Melkor, and so could be called a former *Úmaia*. We have to keep in mind that categories of *Valar* and *Maiar* are only valid within Arda, but Melkor had followers among the *ëalar* since very long before the building of Arda. There certainly are many *ëalar* within other regions of Eä (and outside) with the same – or even greater power –

than some of the *Valar*, but they are still technically neither Valar nor Maiar (and I do assume that Ungoliant is as powerful – or even more powerful – than some of the lesser *Valar*).

Furthermore we have to talk about the terms *fanar* (sg. *fana*) and *hröar*. It is common practice among Tolkien scholars to refer to *fanar* when referring to not (yet) incarnated bodies of the *ëalar*. We say they wear *fanar* when they are not yet forced to wear these bodies due to the fact that they grew accustomed to them[1], we say they wear *hröar* (as do the Children of Ilúvatar) when they are really incarnated beings, unable to get rid of the body by mere thought. This is technically incorrect, as Tolkien never made this distinction. He introduced the term *fanar* in 'The Road Goes Ever On', but only as a term referring to the bodily appearance of the *Valar*, not to a special form of these bodies. In fact, in the *Ósanwe-kenta* the term *fanar* is not mentioned once. Tolkien discusses the topic of the incarnated *ëalar* by using only the term *hröar*. And, in fact, it makes sense to assume that *fanar* is only the name the Eldar chose for the bodily forms of the *Valar*, but not to describe the special characteristics of these bodily forms during a special period of time (i.e. while they were not yet fully incarnated the way the Children of Ilúvatar are). This is made evident when one of the characteristics of the *fanar* of the *Valar* is described as follows:

> *'The High-Elves said that these forms were always in some degree radiant, as if suffused with a light from within.'*
> **The Road Goes Ever On**

The *fanar* of the *Valar* share the characteristic of emanating light with the bodily form of Gandalf the White – who most certainly was incarnated in real flesh, unable to let go of it, and should thus wear, if we follow our old definition, *hröar*, not *fana*.

I still will use this old definition of *fana* as referring to the artificial body of an *ëala* which is not yet bound to it, and *hröa* referring both the mortal flesh of the Eruhíni and the flesh of an incarnated *ëala* during this essay, but I felt the need to bring this problematic definition to your attention[2].

I should add here my thoughts on the history of the Balrogs, and how they entered into the service of Melkor. Chris Seeman did also discuss this issue in his essay on the Balrogs in OH #22. Since the Balrogs are considered to be *ëalar*, I'd like to see them as the primeval (i.e. first) servants of Melkor, in the same way Seeman sees them, meaning that they were among the *Ainur* that were drawn to Melkor during the Ainulindalë. It seems odd to assume that Sauron should have been among these first followers of Melkor as we know that he was originally a *Maia* of Aulë, and it is strange to assume that someone who fell under Melkor's sway even before Eä was created would leave his service temporarily to become a follower of Aulë.

Unfortunately I can't dig deeper into this issue here.

Sources

There are only a handful of quotes on this topic, so I will give them all, in full length, at the beginning of this article, and then I will refer to them when necessary. Please check the next page for these quotes.

The Balrog of Moria and his alleged wings

First, the main question is the possibility of the Balrog of Moria having real, corporeal, wings which enable him to fly with them. This is the main topic of the debate, as I and most people who share my point of view, are greatly disturbed by the fact that a Balrog should function like some kind of bat, bird, or even a ratite.

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1 The Ósanwe-kenta (VT #39 & #41) discusses this topic in length. You may also wait for my planned essay on the whole problem of ëalarin incarnation in a future issue of Other Minds.

2 I intend to write a whole essay on the topic of bodily incarnation of the *ëalar* where I will fully elaborate on this subject, and maybe present a solution to this problem. Although I'm not sure if the distinction between earthbound ëalarin body and not-yet earthbound body really exists. It's just a matter of degree I think. The nature and characteristics of the bodily form are always the same. The only thing changing is the *ëala*'s capability of discarding the shape.

1) *'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 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 blade like a stabbing tongue of fire; in its left it held a whip of many thongs.'*
The Lord of the Rings.Book II – The Bridge of Khazad-dûm

2) *'His enemy halted again, facing him, and the shadow about it reached out like two vast wings.'*
The Lord of the Rings.Book II – The Bridge of Khazad-dûm

3) *"I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. Go back to the Shadow! You cannot pass."*
The Balrog 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 seen, glimmering in the gloom; he seemed small, and altogether alone: grey and bent, like a wizened tree before the onset of a storm.'
The Lord of the Rings.Book II – The Bridge of Khazad-dûm

4) *'At that moment Gandalf lifted his staff, and crying aloud he smote the bridge before him. The staff broke asunder and fell from his hand. A blinding sheet of white flame sprang up. The bridge cracked. Right at the Balrog's feet it broke, and the stone upon which it stood crashed into the gulf, while the rest remained, poised, quivering like a tongue of rock thrust out into emptiness. With a terrible cry the Balrog fell forward, and its shadow plunged down and vanished.'*
The Lord of the Rings.Book II – The bridge of Khazad-dûm

5) *'But the cry of Morgoth in that hour was the greatest and most dreadful that was ever heard in the northern world: the mountains shook, and the earth trembled, and rocks were riven asunder. Deep in forgotten places that cry was heard. Far beneath the halls of Angband, in vaults to which the Valar in the haste of their assault had not descended, the Balrogs lurked still, awaiting ever the return of their lord. Swiftly they arose, and they passed with winged speed over Hithlum, and they came to Lammoth as a tempest of fire.'*
Morgoth's Ring.
The Later Quenta Silmarillion 'Of the Thieves' Quarrel'[1]

6) *'Thence, seeing that all was lost (for that time), he sent forth of a sudden his Balrogs, the last of his servants that remained faithful to him and they assailed the standard of Manwë, as it were a tide of flame. But they were withered in the wind of his wrath and slain with the lightning of his sword; and Melkor stood at last alone.'*
Morgoth's Ring.The Annals of Aman, §50

7) *'In the margin my father [JRRT] wrote: 'There should not be supposed more than say 3 or at most 7 [Balrogs] ever existed.''*
Morgoth's Ring.The Annals of Aman, Note to §50

8) *'"Long time I fell," he said at last, slowly, as if thinking back with difficulty. "Long I fell, and he fell with me. His fire was about me. I was burned. Then we plunged into the deep water and all was dark. Cold it was as the tide of death: almost it froze my heart."*

"Deep is the abyss that is spanned by Durin's Bridge, and none has measured it," said Gimli.

"Yet it has a bottom, beyond light and knowledge," said Gandalf. "Thither I came at last, to the uttermost foundations of stone. He was with me still. His fire was quenched, but now he was a thing of slime, stronger than a strangling snake.

"We fought far under the living earth, where time is not counted. Ever he clutched me, and ever I hewed him, till at last he fled into dark tunnels."' (The Lord of the Rings.Book III – The White Rider)
The Lord of the Rings.Book III – The White Rider

Secondly, we will discuss the plausibility of the position that it makes sense to call something a "wing" although it is essentially not a corporeal wing at all, but rather some kind of immaterial shadow.[2]

As you can see, most of the quotes are from the *Lord of the Rings'* chapter 'The Bridge of Khazad-dûm' and concern the Balrog of Moria. Evidently, the appearance of this creature will decide whether Balrogs do have wings or not.

But before we do this, let's have a look upon the development of these creatures within Tolkien's *legendarium*

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1   I use the description from *Morgoth's Ring*, as I do believe that this version is Tolkien's final depiction of the events, not the somewhat shortened version in Christopher Tolkien's *Silmarillion*.
2   'Immaterial' in the sense of being not bodily wings, with muscles, sinews, blood vessels etc. attached to them in order to function.

from the *Lost Tales* to *The Lord of the Rings*. **That** there is a development, I agree with Martinez. The Balrogs of the *Lost Tales* are obviously not the same creatures (apart from the name) as the creatures with the same name from the LotR. In my opinion, Martinez's mistake is that he assumes that the description of the Balrog of Moria changed Tolkien's concept of the Balrogs as a whole. Certainly, the description of the Balrog of Moria is much more terrible and frightening than the Balrogs which fought in 'The Fall of Gondolin' back in the *Lost Tales*.[1] The important point about the nature of the Balrogs when the LotR was completed is that the Balrogs still were just numerous demons. They were not yet, in fact, an elite circle of corrupted *ëalar*, which made up Melkor's most dangerous warriors. At least that is Christopher Tolkien's opinion (which I share):

> It is notable that the Balrogs were still at this time, when *The* Lord of the Rings *had been completed, conceived to have existed in very large numbers (Melkor sent forth 'a host of Balrogs'); see p.80, §50*
> **Morgoth's Ring. The Annals of Aman (commentary to §50)**

Christopher Tolkien refers at this point to the description of the attack on the standard of Manwë during the siege of Utumno in the Battle of the Powers; in the first draft of the Annals of Aman Tolkien wrote '[Melkor sent forth] a host of Balrogs', whereas in the latest draft, which is quoted above as Quote 6, he changed 'a host of Balrogs' to 'his Balrogs', making it clear that Manwë and his standard were attacked by all the Balrogs that existed in Arda. This proves that the decision to reduce the number of Balrogs was made much later than the creation of the Balrog of Moria.

Although it seems that this has not much to do with the topic at hand, it is actually pretty important as Martinez

suggested that only two kinds of Balrogs ever existed in his article. First the wingless-Balrogs of the *Lost Tales* existed more or less unchanged until the LotR, and second, the Balrogs with the alleged wings that were created in the chapter 'The Bridge of Khazad-dûm' – the only kind that existed afterward, according to Martinez, whereas it is much more likely (see previous paragraphs) that Tolkien continuously evolved and changed those creatures, as he did with any other thing in his *legendarium* so he did not cease to write about.[2]

I.
Does the Balrog of Moria have corporeal wings which enable him to fly?

If he does not have such wings, the other Balrogs are likely to have no such wings either, as the only Balrog that is really described closely in Tolkien's works is the Balrog of Moria. So his description takes precedence.

Martinez's interpretation of the first three major quotes in his own words concludes with the following:

> 'There [in the Second Hall of Khazad-dûm] the Balrog revealed itself fully, and the darkness with which it cloaked itself expanded. The wings were either shielded by the darkness or formed by the Balrog on the spot or else the darkness (or part of the darkness) was reshaped by the Balrog to take on the form of wings [and thus BECAME wings].'
> **M. Martinez: Do Balrogs have wings? Do Balrogs fly?'**

So his point – and arguably the point of the most members of the Balrogs-have-corporeal-wings-faction is that either the Balrog had hidden his corporeal wings under the darkness that surrounded him, or he had created the corporeal wings out of the shadows that sur-

rounded him, when the Fellowship first came to the conclusion that the Balrog had wings (see Quote 3). Beforehand, the alleged wings were described as vast shadows appearing like wings.

Here Martinez sees the first major mistake of my fellow companions of the Balrogs-are-no-ratites-faction. He claims they say that, considering Tolkien introduces the Balrog-wings as shadows, we make a mistake to take it for granted that this first evaluation is correct. And thus we wrongly conclude that the 'wings' of the later quote are just referring to the 'wing-like shadow' of the first. Instead, he argues, the second description, where the alleged wings are explicitly called 'wings' is the description which describes the real appearance of the Balrog.

This is a viable approach. He is right that Tolkien does speak figuratively during the description of the whole scene, not only when describing the alleged wings of the creature. It is really possible that we are mistaken here. It could be as he writes:

> So, in order for there to be a shadow there must be wings, because later on Tolkien writes "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." The Company of the Ring clearly saw the wings by this point, and what Tolkien was doing with the two similes (and other parts of the passage) was providing a transition from vagueness to clarity. Nothing more.'
> **M. Martinez: Do Balrogs have wings? Do Balrogs fly?'**

But in my opinion we are not mistaken about this point.

Martinez's argumentation needs to assume that the Balrog became much more conspicuous when it approached the Bridge of Khazad-dûm, so that the Fellowship could make out the details

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1   As this article is not a treatise on the history of the development of the Balrogs during Tolkien's work, I'm unfortunately unable to characterize the old Balrog concept in detail. This could be a very fruitful work, though, as there are many differences between the Balrogs from the *Lost Tales* and the Balrogs of Tolkien's later years.

2   For example, we have only very rough impression about the role and personality of Eärendil in the later years, and Tolkien pretty much ceased to rewrite his story in detail since the early stages of the legendarium.

they mistook for shadows when it was farther away.[1]

But this need not be the case. In fact, the text strongly indicates that quite the contrary is true. There are other factors to be considered when trying to stipulate if a visual impression is correct, not just the physical closeness of the object to the observer. Most importantly, there is light to consider.

Let's look yet again at a part of Quote 3:

> *'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 (...)'*

This is the quote from which the Wing-faction draws their assumption that Balrogs do have wings. But it also shows us how the lighting in the Hall changed. The main light source in the cave illuminating the Balrog, the fire within the Balrog itself, disappeared (perhaps due to Gandalf's incantation concerning the 'dark fire'), and the darkness grew, thus obviously preventing the Fellowship from seeing the Balrog as clearly as they had seen it beforehand. There can't be the shadow of a doubt that the main light source which illuminated the Balrog was the fire produced by the thing itself. The outside door was still a hall away, the caverns were not pitch-black dark, as there was the fiery chasm back in the Hall, over which the trolls threw the stone slabs so the the Balrog could pass it properly, but the caverns were still, well, dark, and the Balrog itself did not only provide fire as a source of light (until it didn't anymore), it also produced darkness. A darkness, which, of course, would also have prevented the Fellowship from seeing the Balrog clearly, even if the light would have been considerably brighter.

At this point one could try to make a point out of the fact that '*Gandalf* could [still] be seen, *glimmering in the gloom*'. Gandalf emanated some light, too, at this point, but apparently only enough to be seen by the Fellowship, not enough to push the darkness of the Balrog back, or even illuminate the whole thing like some kind of magic flashlight.

As long as the Balrog still produced fire, the shadow surrounding him (which, of course, is a feature of his shape) appeared wing-like, but not really as a set of corporeal wings. When the fire went out, when the Hall became darker, the Balrog seemed even more threatening, and the shadow surrounding him, formerly still recognizable as a non-corporeal entity, started to appear like a set of physical wings, 'spread[ing] from wall to wall'. The phrase 'from wall to wall' clearly is an exaggeration: With huge corporeal wings of that size, the Balrog would easily have been able to prevent from falling into the abyss by placing said alleged wings on the solid ground surrounding it, or could have used them to drag the complete Fellowship down with him into the abyss. Thus the sheer size of the "wings" even strengthens my point. This exaggeration is used because the people perceiving the Balrog were now, when they could no longer see it as clearly as before, feeling even more threatened by it. The vast shadow surrounding appeared to them as if it had become even huger. Especially as the Fellowship certainly could no longer see from wall to wall – assuming they had seen that far even when the Balrog still emanated fire (which I doubt).

Also, it is likely that the Balrog consciously enlarged the shadows and the darkness surrounding him to appear greater, stronger and more dreadful to Gandalf. It was part of his intimidation technique, just as Gandalf tried to intimidate the Balrog by reciting ancient names.

Most important for my case is that the alleged corporeal wings of the Balrog have obviously disappeared when the creature fell into the chasm:

> 'With a terrible cry the Balrog fell forward, and *its shadow plunged down and vanished.*'

Instead, as you have undoubtedly read, Tolkien yet again talks about the shadow surrounding it. The very fact that this shadow is explicitly mentioned as 'plunging down and vanishing' confirms my opinion stated above that it is a feature of the Balrog's shape, not a normal shadow cast by light.

One might argue that the alleged wings were not seen or described at this point by turning my own argument against me. After all, I said that with the dying of the Balrog's inner fire the Hall must have become much darker, and especially the shape of the Balrog much more blurred. But the lighting changed yet again:

> '*At that moment Gandalf lifted his staff, and crying aloud he smote the bridge before him. The staff broke asunder and fell from his hand.* A blinding sheet of white flame sprang up.'

To be blinding, light needs to be pretty bright (not so much in darkness, though, I admit that, but we already established the fact that the Hall was not completely dark, even with the Balrog's fire gone out), and apparently this sheet of white flame was pretty bright. Bright enough to illuminate the Balrog so that the Fellowship could see that it had no wings whatsoever but was merely surrounded by this vast shadow they had seen beforehand (without stating this very fact explicitly in the text, but it is stated implicitly when the alleged wings are yet again referred to, correctly, as "shadow"). Also, the 'sheet of white flame' obviously did not really blind the observers, or else they could only have reported later on that something happened they could not see, and that Gandalf and the Balrog had disappeared when

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1   For the sake of this whole topic both Martinez and I are forced to work under the assumption that the remainder of the Fellowship of the Ring actually closely remembered what they had seen in Moria, and wrote it down in what became known as the Red Book of the Westmarch, without making further additions, aberrations, omissions, or plain-out lies. And this is, of course, completely unlikely.
  Debates about the actual appearance of completely fictitious entities are a rather weird topic; nonetheless they are pretty much fun, especially Christian Schröder's (lnown from "Mapping Arda" in *Other Minds, Issues #1 & 2*) final word on the Elven-ear-problem.

they regained their eye-sight. This was yet again Tolkien speaking figuratively.

Thus, I think I can honestly conclude that the Balrog of Moria had no real wings at all. Only a feature of its shape, 'the shadow', was falsely described by the people who supposedly tell us the story of wings. But this mistake is corrected in the text.

We could go along speculating why a Balrog with alleged corporeal wings would not use them to fly, and thus prevent its rather unpleasant fall into the bowels of the Hithaeglir. But we do not need to do this, because there are no such Balrog-wings. I will just say that it makes no sense for the Balrog to fall down and risk any damage to its not-so-indestructible *hröa* (we cannot assume that it was still clad in *fana* over 6,000 years after the War of Wrath), if it had the option to fly (but did not do so), and thus could have attacked Gandalf from above with its whip, causing only him to fall into the abyss.

Martinez also writes about this topic, but what he says does not make much sense to me:

> 'Even if there were room in the chasm for the Balrog to fly out, why should it drag Gandalf down with it if it intends to get out of the chasm anyway? Why not just "save" itself and let him fall with the bridge? Because Tolkien didn't write it that way. Obviously he envisioned the Balrog as an active creature, not a reactive one.'
> **M. Martinez: 'Do Balrogs have wings? Do Balrogs fly?'**

The last statement is in my opinion strange, as the Balrog clearly reacted to Gandalf's action of destroying the part of the bridge on which he stood on by casting his whip in a last (successful) effort to drag Gandalf with him. Had he not done that, he would have lost the battle – except, of course, we discuss the possibility that the Balrog would have used his wings to save itself from the fall and continue the fight on safe ground up in the Hall. But exactly this possibility Martinez seems to try to avoid at this point.

In my opinion it makes no sense to assume that Gandalf would try to destroy the bridge to cast his foe into the abyss, if he had known that the Balrog had wings, and could use these wings to fly. If he could fly, he would not fall, and if he would not fall, it made no sense to destroy the bridge at all[1].

There are people out there (I've spoken to some of them) who really believe that beings that can choose their appearance at will, would choose to become creatures which have – non-functional – wings, thus being unable to fly with them. This is, in my opinion, entirely ridiculous.

Before concluding, we have to assess the final battle between Gandalf the Grey and the Balrog atop of Celebdil. Whoever argues in favour of alleged Balrog-wings would have to answer why on earth the Balrog did not use said wings to escape from 'death' when Gandalf cast him down from Durin's Tower. Another point would be that the Balrog could escape from the battle before the end, when he sensed he might lose the engagement. He could simply have leapt off the cliff and flown away. Implying that Gandalf first had attacked the "real" wings, severly wounding them and thus disabling the Balrog's capability of physical flight sounds a bit weak as a counter-argument. Gandalf even describes that the Balrog tries to escape him during the subterrean battle; indicating that the Balrog was clearly aware of the possibility of losing this battle. Thus, flying from the mountaintop would have been an excellent route of escape – beyond the reach of the earthbound Gandalf. One could, of course, argue that the wings did not survive the battle down in the caves (from which the Balrog eventually fled), but the fact that the Balrog rekindled his fire up on the mountaintop strongly implies that Gandalf had to face the Balrog in a shape similar to that he presented himself in on the bridge of Khazad-dûm. Which would mean that he either recreated the corporeal wings which were either removed by him when he transformed into his slimy, snake-like shape,

or which were destroyed by Gandalf during this fight, but yet again recreated by the Balrog when he rekindled his fire. Martinez compares the Balrog to the dying dragons Ancalagon and Smaug (both of which had wings and could fly, I do not doubt that!) which fell out of the sky after they were mortally wounded by their enemies. There is just no textual evidence that Gandalf mortally wounded the Balrog while it was flying. There is, actually, textual evidence to the contrary:

> 'I threw down my enemy, and he fell from the high place and broke the mountain-side where he smote it in his ruin'
> **The Lord of the Rings. Book III, The White Rider**

'High place', I presume, is a reference to an actual place on solid ground, not to the Balrog fluttering about in the sky, trying to attack Gandalf from above. If Tolkien had intended to make the impression that Gandalf killed the Balrog, while the latter was flying in the air, one supposes he would have written 'and he fell from the skies (or the air)' or something like that, not about a 'high place'.

Conclusion: We can say that the Balrog of Moria does not have corporeal wings. Thus, it is proven that the Balrogs as a whole do not have corporeal wings (at least as long as textual basis remains as it is now).

Is the term 'wings' really justified?

Is it appropriate to call some part of the material form of an angelic being, which constitutes his bodily shape wholly by the power of its mind, 'wings'?

Short answer: I daresay no, but I will elaborate on this further.

Martinez is right, of course, when he says that the hard core of the Balrog's shape, the 'dark form' amidst the 'great shadow' (see Quote 1) was surrounded by this 'great shadow', but it was exactly that: a great shadow which somehow belongs to the *hröa* of the demons we

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1   And it does not make sense at all to assume that Gandalf the Grey had no intimate knowledge about Balrogs and their shapes!

know as Balrogs. Just as we know that the bodily form of the Úmaia Sauron emanated heat during his fight with Gil-galad and Elendil. It belongs to their particular shapes, or they are at least able to change the attributes of their bodies to create inner fire/heat, or this shadow. The shadow could be a temporary gimmick, something the Balrog conjured up to appear greater, more threatening, darker, but it could also be an integral part of the shape of a Balrog (which is what I believe). They are demons of fire and darkness, and thus this shadow would be a good way to fit this description. Also, it is very plausible to assume that Morgoth and Sauron were surrounded by similar shadows as well, at least in their 'Dark Lord' bodies[1]. But this does not have to be this way. Gandalf confirmed that the Balrog was still able to transform his *hröa*-shape after all, even though he was stuck into it. This becomes clear when we take a close look on the duel between Gandalf and the Balrog after they fell into the abyss. Martinez makes a point out of the fact that they supposedly fell a very long time:

> *'Gandalf's description of the battle with the Balrog also makes it clear that they fought all the way down, and that they fell for a long time.*
> *And then we have to turn to the question of why it took so long for them to reach the water. Some people have argued that it was a LONG way down. Maybe, but if Tolkien knew anything about the rate of falling bodies (and he probably did), then he would understand that Gandalf's words wouldn't make any sense if the wizard and the Balrog really fell at a normal speed.*
> *… So it seems apparent that their rate of descent was slowed, probably by the Balrog […]'*
> **M. Martinez: 'Do Balrogs have wings? Do Balrogs fly?'**

First, there is no reason to believe that the Balrog and Gandalf really fell

unnaturally long. They fell 'long', Gandalf says as much, but there is no indication whatsoever in the text that confirms that this was an unnatural long fall, slowed somehow by the Balrog flapping with its "wings" (or him or Gandalf using some of their powers as *eälar* to slow their fall). It is to be expected of beings like Gandalf and the Balrog to survive a long fall into water, and they did. This is not surprising. Also, Gandalf was able to survive being burned by the Balrog. He did not fight the Balrog during the fall; he was surrounded by its fire, and was burned:

> *"Long time I fell,' he said at last, slowly, as if thinking back with difficulty. 'Long I fell, and he fell with me. His fire was about me. I was burned.'* **(see Quote 8)**

Apparently he was not burned to ashes, as I doubt that he would have survived this, but he was still 'burned'[2]. I'd even say that Gandalf considered the fall to be 'long' as he was in constant pain during it as he was literally on fire! It is no surprise that he remembers it as being long, even after his 'death' and subsequent return to Middle-earth.

Only down in the water did the Balrog and Gandalf start their real fighting (while Gandalf was being burned by the Balrog's fire he did apparently — and understandably — not attack the thing), and there the Balrog demonstrates his ability to change his appearance:

> *'He [the Balrog] was with me still. His fire was quenched, but now he was a thing of slime, stronger than a strangling snake. We fought far under the living earth, where time is not counted. Ever he clutched me, and ever I hewed him, till at last he fled into dark tunnels.'*
> **The Lord of the Rings. Book III – The White Rider**

Thus we can conclude that the Balrog of Moria could change his shape, and is therefore also able to change the appearance of the shadow surrounding him. It might not be even a feature he upholds all the time. It makes therefore little sense to refer to this shadow — which can change its appearance, as can the appearance of the whole creature — as "wings", as it took on a form similar to wings just during his intimidation game with Gandalf.

In most artist's renderings of Balrogs, they show the creature with wings. The picture below is an exception, depicting it more vague and not as easily recognizable "wings".

Conclusion: We should refer to the stuff surrounding the Balrog as shadow, not as wings. Wings can be understood as corporeal wings (and where understood in this sense in both movie adaptations of the LotR), shadows are always incorporeal entities.

© 1993 *'Gandalf and the Balrog'* by Stephen Hickman

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1. The whole 'Dark Lord' business seems at least partially refer to the 'colour' of their bodies, but it is very unlikely that Sauron or Morgoth wore the shape of a black-skinned humanoid. Rather they likely appeared in a similar darkness-emanating, shadow-cloaked body as the Balrog did.
2. There has been much debate about a possible involvement of Narya, the Ring of Fire, in the fact that Gandalf survived being burned by the Balrog's fire. I'm somewhat sceptical about this, as Narya's main use is described as enflaming the hearts of either the peoples of Middle-earth, or Gandalf's own heart during the long years of his mission. This indicates that we should not necessarily understand the fact Narya was the Ring of Fire all too literally. There is no proof that Elrond could conjure up storms with his Ring of Air, nor Galadriel command floods with her Ring of Water.

2.
Balrogs nevertheless do fly!

Now I need to assess the textual evidence of Quotes 5-7 where the Balrogs apparently show the ability to fly. Those I neglected until now, as they had virtually nothing to do with the Balrog of Moria – who obviously did not show the ability to fly.

Most likely you will now assume that I, who more or less eloquently opposed the possibility that Balrogs could have real wings, would also oppose as violently the possibility that Balrogs could fly.

There you are wrong. Of course, Balrogs could fly under certain conditions. All *eälar* can. When they are completely 'naked' (meaning without any physical form or shape visible as such to the Children of Ilúvatar), or when they are wearing only *fanar* and are unhindered by the 'real' physical qualities of their bodies. It may also be possible that *eälar* could fly if they took on the *hröar* of creatures capable of physical flying, but as the Balrogs did not do this, I do not need to consider this possibility here.

Quote 5 above describes how Morgoth called upon his Balrogs when Ungoliant tried to devour him. His call reached them, and they came to his aid:

> *'Swiftly they arose, and they passed with winged speed over Hithlum, and they came to Lammoth as a tempest of fire.'* **Quote 5**

This obviously indicates that they were not running on foot from Angband to Hithlum. If they had done so, they would probably have come too late. It took some time, even in this scenario (the cry had to reach Angband first, and the Balrogs had to cross the distance between it and their master), but they did arrive in time. So how could this be if they did not fly? The short answer is,

they did fly, but not with their alleged wings (as they had none, they could not use them). They flew to Lammoth because there is no reason to assume that they had taken on a corporeal form of the quality of *hröar* since Manwë himself had slain them before (see Quote 6). And it is even dubious, in my opinion, that they were wearing *hröar* back then. More likely they were attacking Manwë's standard wearing *fanar*, as it seems entirely impossible to me that an *eäla* in incarnated form would prove to be even the slightest challenge for the Elder King, let alone even be able to approach him closely enough to experience his wrath. Also, Melkor uses the Balrogs for the first time here, and thus the *eälar* who clad themselves in this particular kind of 'uniform shape' could not have worn these for long (which would prevent them from growing accustomed and thus getting bound to them)[1]. As fire demons they most likely did none of the corporeal things *eälar* wearing these shapes tend to do, meaning eating and drinking (the Valar and Maiar do these things on special occasions together with the Eldar), and reproducing (as Melian did), which almost certainly binds oneself in real *hröa*– thus farther diminishing the possibility that the Balrogs which assaulted Manwë during the War of the Powers were not wearing *fanar*.

In this context we have to take a look at the source as well: For credibility we have to assume that there were eye- (and ear-) witnesses among the Sindar living either in Hithlum or Nevrast who overheard Morgoth's cry and saw this "tempest of fire" crossing Hithlum and arriving at Lammoth. I doubt that anyone was close enough to really watch the ensuing battle between Ungoliant and the Balrogs, but that Ungoliant did not prevail the Sindar could easily deduce from the fact that a dark creature (becoming later known to them as Ungoliant) fled eastward (finally ending at Nan Dun-

gortheb). At the moment, these witnesses are unlikely to have understood the meaning of all these events. It was only later, after the Noldor had entered Middle-earth and communicated with the Sindar, that the observations in Hithlum or Nevrast were likely put into their proper context.

As for the ages between the War of the Powers and Morgoth's return to Middle-earth, there is no reason why they should take on new shapes since their master was captured, and they themselves were defeated and disembodied by Manwë himself. They followed Melkor. He commanded them to take on these particular forms (or they took them by personal choice). There is no reason why they should reappear in a form visible to incarnated eyes unless their master commanded it. Sauron took over the command of Angband eventually after the Valar departed into Aman, but there is no textual evidence that Sauron ever commanded any Balrog, so I gather that they did not do his bidding during the time of Melkor's bondage. Rather, they went to Angband, hid there, and awaited the return of their master. But they did not enact Sauron's commands[2].

The Balrogs continued to remain without form after the War of Wrath, too. They never again recreated their bodies, it seems. This I take as proof that without Melkor's presence or his explicit commands, they did not feel the necessity to create bodies for themselves. The Balrog of Moria obviously escaped from the War of Wrath still clad in his body, or else he would never have chosen to recreate his body under the Misty Mountains (he thus would have been trapped there himself, given that although he may have gotten easily down there without a body, getting out of there within a body would be rather difficult). He escaped the war in his form (which was either *fana* or already *hröa*), and hid in this form

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1 As the Balrogs seem to be some kind of race or group of demons, I gather Melkor odered the *eälar* who made up these group to take on a shape that resembled each other closely enough so that the Eldar later considered them to be of the same type. This I call 'uniform shape'.

2 Sauron was rather busy during these three ages, it seems, rebuilding Angband, and creating Orcs etc.; but Sauron represents an altogether different type of evil than the Balrogs. The Balrogs stand for outright nihilistic destruction (which is also Morgoth's final goal), whereas Sauron is much more of a bureaucrat of evil, as he never intended to destroy everything in the end, but merely wanted to force his own twisted concept of order upon the peoples of Middle-earth. For Morgoth such concepts of order were only a means to his ultimate end, but for Sauron they were the end. Therefore I doubt that Sauron and the Balrogs understood or get along with each other very well. Chris Seeman discussed this in detail in his essay 'Balrogs' in OH #22.

under the mountains, to be woken in the Third Age by Durin VI's Dwarves (then, of course, he was certainly wearing *hröa* – due to the time passing between the end of the FA and 1980 TA).

This should be enough evidence to convince you that the Balrogs which saved Morgoth from Ungoliant were not really wearing physical bodies with a "normal" physiology, they only appeared so. That is why they could reach and aid Morgoth in time. They travelled without a corporeal form, although they did travel with a visible manifestation (the "tempest of fire"). We see a similar phenomenon with the spirit of Sauron, when he returned from drowned Númenor to Barad-dûr in incorporeal form, 'like a dark wind', or how the bodiless Melkor traveled from Valinor to Avathar 'like a dark shadow'. And this is, in my opinion, also the reason why they were able to defeat Ungoliant. Both, Morgoth and Ungoliant, were already trapped in their bodies at this time, so Ungoliant could really harm and destroy Morgoth's *hröa*[1] (thus greatly weakening him, as the Valar did later, when they executed him), but Ungoliant could not attack the Balrogs the same way she attacked Morgoth, as they had no real physical bodies. Furthermore, she as a being which had already become permanently incarnated, would have been more vulnerable to the fiery attacks of the *fanar*-wearing *eälar* that the Balrogs were at this time.

I think the phrases describing these Balrogs as travelling with 'winged speed' and as 'tempest of fire' do only refer to the nature of the quasi-corporeal being (which they remained, to a certain degree, even after they became bound to their bodies, as the Balrog of Moria proves). So we can't but assume that the Balrogs either wore *fanar* already when they flew to Lammoth, or they did so, when they arrived there[2].

Thus, the Balrogs of the ancient times certainly were capable of flying in the way all *eälar* could when they were not bound to the forms which they took on to be visible to the Children of Ilúvatar. But apparently they did not (or could no longer) use this skill during the battles of the later First Age. This can be easily explained: they became permanently incarnated shortly after Morgoth's return to Angband. Morgoth certainly made them the leaders of his armies, and to command Orcs, Trolls and the like, they needed to be as physical as the creatures they led to battle, or else they would not have been efficient commanders. But it is entirely possible that Gothmog and the Balrogs which attacked and killed Fëanor were still not yet incarnated[3]. But during the later wars they did not show any ability to fly – and Morgoth certainly was in need of servants who could fly – else he would not have created dragons with the ability to fly.

Also, we have to assume, as their numbers were reduced greatly in the last phase of Tolkien's writings—to seven individual Balrogs at most (see Quote 7)—that no Balrog was ever slain during the First Age until the Fall of Gondolin, where Gothmog was drowned by Ecthelion, and Glorfindel sacrificed his life to save the lives of Tuor, Idril, and Eärendil[4]. The seven Balrogs certainly fought in all wars of the First Age after Morgoth's return, but as there were only seven of them, they should have made up Morgoth's elite cadre of fighters, which he either used as battle commanders (e.g. Gothmog, the Lord of Balrogs, who at least was in charge of Morgoth's troops during the Dagor Bragollach and the Nirnaeth Arnoediad), or held in reserve in case of an assault on himself (which is how Melkor used the Balrogs during the Battle of the Powers).

Summary

Balrogs have no wings, and never had any. The textual evidence that might be interpreted otherwise in the *Lord of the Rings* can be easily be seen as Tolkien speaking figuratively through his protagonists and the bad lighting conditions in the Second Hall of Khazad-dûm.

Balrogs are, of course, able to fly in their incorporeal form like any other *eälar*. When they flew to Morgoth's aid in Lammoth they probably took on *fanar* once they arrived there and therefore in their shapeless form appeared like a "tempest of fire".

Readings

Martinez, Michael: 'Do Balrogs have wings? Do Balrogs fly?', at: http://www.xenite.org/tolkien/do-balrogs-have-wings.html

Martinez, Michael: 'The Truth About Balrogs (Again)', at: http://tolkien-studies.com/blog/index.php/michael/2009/12/14/the_truth_about_balrogs_again

Martinez, Michael: 'Flying away on a wing and a hair …', at: http://old.merp.com/essays/MichaelMartinez/flyingaway/

Tolkien, J. R. R.: 'The Fellowship of the Ring', Houghton Mifflin Company, New York 1987 (I)

Tolkien, J. R. R.: 'The Two Towers', Houghton Mifflin Company, New York 1987 (II)

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1   Maybe Ungoliant might even have been able of annihilating Morgoth completely; somehow I'm not sure if she did only feed on flesh but on the very being (i.e. the souls) of the things she devoured. Everything she fed on was completely destroyed, and she was even able to transform light into her twisted non-light cobwebs (even Shelob is still capable weaving these twisted things, although hers seem to be not as strong).

2   Under the somewhat problematic assumption that wearing fanar does enable the *eälar* to contradict the natural law to enable them to fly. Technically this might be problematic, but you can easily solve this problem by assuming that the Balrogs did not wear any kind of bodily form while flying. All there was during this time was naked spirit, the Balrogs without the appearance of a bodily form.

3   As they apparently surprised and surrounded him quickly, a feature more easily doable for beings which are not yet bound to their bodies.

4   I deduce this from the fact that in Tolkien's abandoned rewrite of 'Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin' in the UT, Ecthelion still wears the helm with the spike which pierced Gothmog in the *Lost Tales* variant of the story; and the fact that Tolkien revealed in his last writings that he considered the Glorfindel of Gondolin and the Glorfindel living in Imladris in TA the same character, whose first incarnation still dies in his mind in a similar fashion as in the LT.

The problem of Gil-galad and the 'House of Finrod'

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As with so many thing in Tolkien's invented world, the genealogy of the Noldorin kings in Middle-earth was subject to massive change over time. The history as reported in The Silmarillion *gives a false sense of authenticity given its nature as a work patched together by Christopher Tolkien—and in some places even largely written by him rather than by his father.*

The topic of the ancestry of Gil-galad and the House of Finrod in general is such a case where we have to say goodbye to the Silmarillion *version.*

CORE

Introduction

Given that *The Silmarillion* (and perhaps *Unfinished Tales*) appear to give a clear position on Gil-galad's ancestry, to the informed reader it might seem strange to have an article devoted to a supposed problem with it.

Here I will show that this theme is in fact much more complex than a casual glance suggests, and that the ancestry of Gil-galad even touches on other tricky problems with certain genealogies of the Noldor.

The problem

A quick look into *The Silmarillion* suggests that there should be little doubt about Gil-galad's ancestry. That he is the son of Fingon is mentioned in the very first passage about him:

> *Great was the lamentation in Hithlum when the fall of Fingolfin became known, and Fingon in sorrow took the lordship of the house of Fingolfin and the kingdom of the Noldor; but <u>his young son Ereinion (who was after named Gil-galad)</u> he sent to the Havens.* **The Silmarillion.Of the Ruin of Beleriand and the Fall of Fingolfin (my emphasis)**

A look into *Unfinished Tales* seems to confirm this assessment. Here, Gil-galad addresses Meneldur in a letter delivered by Aldarion:

> *Ereinion Gil-galad son of Fingon to Tar-Meneldur of the line of Eärendil, greeting: [….]* **Unfinished Tales.Aldarion and Erendis: The Mariner's Wife**

The sources

The quotes above seem to settle the matter once and for all. Unfortunately, as with so many other things in Tolkien's world, it is not quite this easy. Brian Carlton's essay *Thoughts on the Genealogy of the Noldorin Kings* in *Other Hands, Issue 19* (October 1997) touched on this question. Parts of it provide valuable ideas for my approach, though I focus on a specific context of this greater theme. The primary original source for our question is once more the *History of Middle-earth* series, this time Volumes 11 and 12 (*The War of the Jewels* and *The Peoples of Middle-earth*, respectively). In the latter, Christopher Tolkien's comments entitled *The Parentage of Gil-galad* serve as the main source for my interpretation.

Here we learn that Tolkien indeed had developed many ideas about the lineage of this important figure of Second Age history:

> *Later evidence makes it certain that the notes on the QS manuscript represent a rejected idea for the incorporation of Gil-galad into the traditions of the Elder Days; and the passage just cited from the Grey Annals is to be taken as showing that it had been abandoned. That Gil-galad was the son of Fingon (The Silmarillion p. 154) derives from the late note pencilled on the manuscript of GA (§157), stating that when Fingon became King of the Noldor on the death of Fingolfin 'his young son (?Findor) [sic] Gilgalad he sent to the Havens.' But this, adopted after much hesitation, was not in fact by any means the last of my father's speculations on this question.* **HoMe11.The Later Quenta Silmarillion (p.243)**

So, what should we do about the fact that the idea of Gil-galad as Fingon's son was not Tolkien's final idea on the subject? Tolkien developed the question of Finrod's relatives quite thoroughly:

> In the next stage my father (recalling, apparently, the story in the Grey Annals) noted that Finrod 'had no child (he left his wife in Aman)', and moved Artanaro Rhodothir to become, still in the same generation, the son of Finrod's brother Angrod (who with Aegnor held the heights of Dorthonion and was slain in the Battle of Sudden Flame).
> **HoMe12.The Parentage of Gil-galad**

This line of thought is then developed further:

> The name of Angrod's son (still retaining the identity of 'Orodreth') was then changed from Artanaro to Artaresto. In an isolated note found with the genealogies, scribbled at great speed but nonetheless dated, August 1965, my father suggested that the best solution to the problem of Gil-galad's parentage was to find him in 'the son of Orodreth', who is here given the Quenya name of Artaresto, … Angrod's son was Artaresto, who was beloved by Finrod and escaped when Angrod was slain, and dwelt with Finrod. Finrod made him his 'steward' and he succeeded him in Nargothrond. His Sindarin name was Rodreth (altered to Orodreth because of his love of the mountains ……. His children were Finduilas and Artanaro = Rodnor later called Gil-galad. (Their mother was a Sindarin lady of the North. She called her son Gil-galad.) Rodnor Gil-galad escaped and eventually came to Sirion's Mouth and was King of the Noldor there.
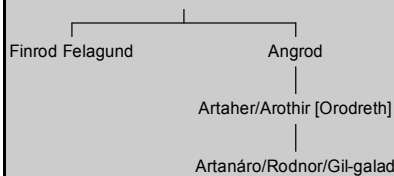> **HoMe12.The Parentage of Gil-galad**

So here we first encounter a descent of Gil-galad from Finarfin. That Angrod had a wife and a son is clearly stated, too, removing doubts as to whether he might have had descendants living in Middle-earth in later times:

> The wife of Angarato was named Eldalote, and his son Artaher … The names of Sindarin form … Angrod (with wife Edellos and son Arothir), …
> **HoMe12.The Names of Finwë's descendants (p.346)**

This idea of Angrod as the progenitor of the line of the High-king of the Noldor in Exile seems to have been retained, and only details changed (such as names):

> In the last of the genealogical tables, Artanáro (Rodnor), called Gil-galad, appears, with the note that 'he escaped and dwelt at Sirion's Mouth'. The only further change was the rejection of the name Artaresto and its replacement by Artaher, Sindarin Arothir; and thus in the excursus (note 23) Arothir [Orodreth] is named as Finrod's 'kinsman and steward', and (note 47) Gil-galad is 'the son of Arothir, nephew of Finrod'. The final genealogy was:
>
> Finrod Felagund   Angrod
> |
>   Artaher/Arothir [Orodreth]
>   Artanáro/Rodnor/Gil-galad
>
> **HoMe12.The Parentage of Gil-galad**

Of special importance here is Christopher Tolkien's view that this was Tolkien's final view on the subject. This alone should be reason enough to dismiss the *Silmarillion* version.

In a note in August 1965, Tolkien suggested that the best solution to the problem of Gil-galad's parentage was to make him the son of Orodreth (*HoMe* 12, p.350).

Orodreth (here a son of Angrod) is a curious character. Tolkien changed his descent over and over again. In *The Silmarillion* we meet him as a brother of Finrod (and therefore son of Finarfin). This version is mainly taken from the *Annals of Aman* (tentatively dated to ca. 1958 by Christopher Tolkien), although the names were still different (Finarfin is still named Finrod and Finrod Inglor).

Later on, in *The Shibboleth of Fëanor* (*HoMe* 12, p. 331ff. dated ca. 1968), in the section on the parentage of Gil-galad, his history is amended twice. First he is moved down a generation, becoming Finrod's son, rather than his brother. Afterwards, Tolkien probably recalled that Finrod was supposed to be childless and he moved Orodreth again—this time within the same generation but to another line (Angrod's).

Christopher Tolkien is then quite consistent in his assertion that this represented the final form of Gil-galad's parentage:

> Since Finduilas remained without correction in the last of the genealogies as the daughter of Arothir, she became the sister of Gil-galad.
> There can be no doubt that this was my father's last word on the subject; but nothing of this late and radically altered conception ever touched the existing narratives, and it was obviously impossible to introduce it into the published Silmarillion. It would nonetheless have been very much better to have left Gil-galad's parentage obscure.
> **HoMe12.The Parentage of Gil-galad**

Now, what is to made of the *Unfinished Tales* statement about Gil-galad's ancestry quoted above? It seems to support the version from *The Silmarillion*. Here the text in *HoMe12* likewise offers insight:

> I should mention also that in the published text of Aldarion and Erendis (Unfinished Tales p. 199) the letter of Gil-galad to Tar- Meneldur opens 'Ereinion Gil-galad son of Fingon', but the original has 'Finellach Gil-galad of the House of Finarfin' (where Finellach was changed from Finhenlach, and that from Finlachen).
> **HoMe12.The Parentage of Gil-galad**

Were it not for Christopher Tolkien's diligent documentation, we would not have known that this change was his editorial change, to ensure consistency with the published *Silmarillion*

version and not something written by his father.

In this context, we encounter another problem—the given name of Gil-galad. In *HoMe 12* it seems to be Rodnor, while in the—original—UT version, he calls himself Finellach. This could be easily resolved as the result of the various names used by the Eldar (see the table on page 21 below).

Summarising all the existing information, it seems clear that the *Silmarillion* version of his ancestry is not sustainable any longer. The editorial decision is summarised by Christopher Tolkien (not his father himself as the primary author) in the following way:

> *Much closer analysis of the admittedly extremely complex material than I had made twenty years ago makes it clear that Gil-galad as the son of Fingon (see XI.56, 243) was an ephemeral idea.*
> **HoMe12. The Parentage of Gil-galad**

Unfortunately, this ephemeral—and preliminary—idea made it into the final *corpus*, making it almost *canon* for everyone not well-acquainted with the *HoMe* series.

Christopher Tolkien's latest editorial work, *The Children of Húrin* is based on his father's work on the Narn (1950s onward). The passage of the Nirnaeth Arnoediad has already been reproduced by him in the *The Silmarillion*, but an important detail was left out—probably intentionally (unfortunately Christopher Tolkien gives no information on that):

> *Then Húrin spoke to Turgon, saying: 'Go now lord. while time is! For you are the last of the House of Fingolfin,…"*
> **The Children of Húrin. The Battle of Unnumbered Tears**

That this pivotal information was left out in *The Silmarillion* is understandable since he used the 'Son of Fingon' version for Gil-galad there, and this would be in conflict with these words. Moreover it shows that *The Silmarillion* version is now objected by C. Tolkien himself.

Galadriel's family

Connected to the question of Gil-galad's parentage is the one of Galadriel's family. In *The Silmarillion*, it is clearly stated that Finarfin had five children:

> *The sons of Finarfin were Finrod the faithful (who was afterwards named Felagund, Lord of Caves), Orodreth, Angrod, and Aegnor; these four were as close in friendship with the sons of Fingolfin as though they were all brothers. A sister they had, Galadriel,…*
> **The Silmarillion. Quenta Silmarillion (Of Eldamar and the Princes of the Eldalië)**

This would be perfectly fine except for the fact that a close look at *Unfinished Tales* reveals a different situation:

> *"Nay," she [Galadriel] said. "Angrod is gone, and Aegnor is gone, and Felagund is no more. Of Finarfin's children I am the last."* [20]
> [20] *[….] my father changed Finrod to Finarfin, while his son Felagund, previously called Inglor Felagund, became Finrod Felagund … It is noteworthy that Orodreth, King of Nargothrond after Finrod Felagund, is not here named by Galadriel among her brothers…*
> **Unfinished Tales. The History of Galadriel and Celeborn**

Normally, the discrepancy would be quite disconcerting, but in light of the material from *HoMe12*, it can be readily understood. Both versions are in accordance with each other—showing that the *Silmarillion* version is the real problem. This emphasises the necessity for a revision of the *Silmarillion* version of these facts. Fortunately, this would not have any far-reaching effects on other events or tales, so the change is quick and easy to integrate.

See the genealogical chart at the end of the article for a comprehensive proposal on this revised ancestry.

The problem of succession

When discussing the ancestry of Gil-galad—and the role of Galadriel—we encounter some questions concerning the rules of succession among the High-kingship of the exiled Noldor. In all recorded instances where a succession is necessary (e.g. the current king is killed while the office endures), the kingship can be seen to pass to the next male relative in the line. This is the case in the succession of Fingon after Fingolfin, Turgon succeeding his older brother Fingon and finally Gil-galad after Turgon. The case of Turgon is revealing: Normally, the king's son becomes his heir (even if not yet full-grown) in case the king is killed. Thus, if Gil-galad was really Fingon's son (as per *The Silmarillion*), Gil-galad should have succeeded him immediately. That it was not so, but Turgon became High-king is indicative that at this point, Gil-galad was no longer Fingon's son in Tolkien's mind. As the king (Fingon) died without a male heir, the crown went to the most senior member of the male line in the House of Fingolfin—Turgon (see the left column for the passage in *The Children of Húrin* on that matter).

So, Gil-galad being the son of Angrod, as in *The Shibboleth of Fëanor*, can be seen as compatible with part of the *Silmarillion*. Only after Turgon died without a heir in the male line, did the kingship pass to the most senior member of the male line of Finarfin. After the Fall of Gondolin and the death of Turgon, this was Gil-galad.

Galadriel

At this time (after Turgon's death), the most senior surviving individual of Finarfin's line is Galadriel. Her brothers Angrod, Aegnor and Finrod are all dead as is Angrod's son Orodreth. Thus we could expect her being the most obvious choice as High-queen of the Eldar. That she is passed over in favour of her grandnephew Gil-galad may be interpreted as evidence of male-only succession in Noldorin (and quite possibly generally in Eldarin) law of high-kingship.

The other possible interpretation of this evidence (that she does not want to take the High-queenship) is unlikely, as at that time, Galadriel was still eager for her own realm to rule in Middle-earth. This is clearly documented in the case of the realm of Eregion, where she would go on to erect an—informal—rule later in the Second Age, and similarly later in Laurelindórinan (Lórien/Lothlórien) after her departure of Eregion. Later in the Third Age she came again there, but then with no formal claim to queenship.

Although it is possible that she could have refused the High-queenship while at the same time still desiring to rule over a smaller realm and a smaller people, it is much more likely that her desire to rule in Middle-earth would have arisen out of her bitterness at being ignored in the succession. It is also plausible to speculate that she gradually grew bitter about the fact that she, as a woman, under Noldorin patrilineal law, was not allowed to inherit any of the realms of her siblings (even though, for instance, she was of an older generation than Orodreth (seen as the son of Angrod) and Gil-galad.

However, during the First Age, all Eldarin efforts were focused on the defeat of Morgoth, and with the looming menace of the Black Enemy, Galadriel would have been unable to lead part of her people away to found a new realm. In fact, as there is no evidence that Galadriel pursued such a desire in the First Age, it would appear that the combination of being overlooked in favour of Gil-galad, as well as the defeat of Morgoth, would form a natural explanation of her movements in the Second Age. It is very conspicuous that Galadriel is—in all the variants of her story in *Unfinished Tales*—always looking for free and wide lands without lords.

In thinking about Eldarin law, it is also possible that the model of male-only succession can already seen in the first "kings" Ingwë, Finwë and Elwë and later re-affirmed by the example of the Valar, from whom we know the Eldar learned much. The King of the Valar was Manwë, and while the question of succession evidently does not arise for the

Valar, it is still very likely that Eldarin succession was modelled on Manwë's enduring rule.

Galadriel's bitterness was therefore likely not to have been directed at Gil-galad personally but at the law itself, and by implication against the Valar. It is also easier to understand her particular status in the Ban of the Valar, and how her similarities with Fëanor manifested themselves—not as the initiator of the rebellion against the Valar, but as its longest adherent.

For individual kingdoms, the rules may be slightly different. We have several examples that might be a pointers to women not being totally excluded in succession laws. Unfortunately, here is not the place to discuss this adequately, but it may be the theme for another article!

For the Noldorin High-kingship, the very strict patrilineal succession is out of the question though.

Historical examples

As we have seen, the most likely solution to the question of why Galadriel did not succeed Turgon is to posit the principle of agnatic (or patrilineal) succession, i.e. male-only inheritance of kingship among the Eldar. In the real world, this has a counterpart, called the *Salic law*. This prevented women from inheriting kingship, other titles, or property, and even from passing the possibility of succession to her male descendants. Such a case was the *casus belli* for the Hundred Years' War between England and France, where Edward III of England claimed kingship of France through the female line, which was disputed by the King of France.

Returning to Middle-earth, we find further evidence in a hint that a thing like *Salic law* existed in the laws of Númenor. Though the Númenóreans had inherited much of their customs from their fathers before these met the Eldar, they were also heavily influenced by the latter's laws and customs. As we know from the tragic story of *Aldarion and Erendis* in *Unfinished Tales*, the original Númenórean law of succession was male-only. This was only changed by Aldarion himself.

The original custom might be seen as taken from the Eldar (or only affirmed by them—if the Edain originally had similar laws). In all of the Edain and Eldar, there are only a few exceptions to male rule. In the First Age, there was no Ruling Queen among the Eldar (although of course we do not know this about the Avari) and among the Edain we only have the case of Haleth among the Haladin. It is interesting to note that only among the Third Folk of the Edain do we have a female leader—and the Haladin and their descendants were only a small minority among the Númenóreans, while the Folk of Bëor and especially that of Hador formed the bulk of the first Númenóreans—thus probably being the main influences in shaping their laws and customs.

In *The Silmarillion*, there is a passage that may be thought to hint towards the possibility of female succession to the throne. In *Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin*, it is said:

> *"for he [Maeglin] desired above all things to possess her [Idril Celebrindal], the only heir of the King of Gondolin."*

This may be seen as proof that a daughter could be eligible as a successor (for a single realm; see previous chapter). However, it is not quite so straightforward, as this whole chapter, as well as the following ones, are largely editorial in nature (written by Christopher Tolkien) and only based on fragments and old versions of his father's work. In the original sources of this chapter (mainly the *Quenta Noldorinwa* in *HoMe* 4) the passage with the "heir" does not exist, and it is most likely an editorial insertion by Christopher Tolkien which contains an unguarded remark that is not based on his father's ideas.

Moreover, we find another passage in *The Silmarillion* (this time originating with J.R.R. Tolkien and also in the sources in *HoMe*) where do we learn something about heirs (see next page):

> *Now King Finrod Felagund had no wife, and Galadriel asked him why this should be; but foresight came upon Felagund as she spoke, and he said: 'An oath I too shall swear, and must be free to fulfil it, and go into darkness. Nor shall anything of my realm endure that <u>a son</u> should inherit.'*
> **The Silmarillion. Of the Noldor in Beleriand** *(my emphasis)*

Finrod speaks only of a male heir, seemingly as a matter of course. Were a female heir a possibility under the laws of the Noldor, he should have been using the neutral words 'child' or 'heir' instead of the unmistakable and gender-specific 'son'.

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, and especially given the positive evidence mentioned above I deem it justified to say that within the dynasties of the Eldar, the succession was male-only—similar to *Salic law*. Moreover, succession was *patrilineal*, so that even a male descendant of a daughter had no legal claim to the throne.

Gil-galad in Nargothrond?

Having solved the question of succession (and why Galadriel was ostensibly never considered as a possible queen in case a Beleriandic realm lost its king), another issue with Gil-galad remains. This is his supposed stay in Nargothrond.

As the son of Orodreth, who ruled there after Finrod's death, he is likely to have found refuge in Nargothrond after the defeat in the Dagor Bragollach and the death of his grandfather. It is still more likely that Orodreth held Minas Tirith for Finrod (as in the published *Silmarillion*), and thus fled from there with his family when Sauron overwhelmed the elven defense of the island and fortress.

According to this version of events, Gil-galad is highly likely to have come to Nargothrond. Since the later history of Nargothrond is well-documented, especially Túrin's arrival there and the tragic sequence of events that led to the sacking of Nargothrond and the destruction of its population, we have to find out how Gil-galad escaped from the disaster.

Below, we can see Tolkien's own thoughts on the matter. Conveniently it mirrors the solution he found when Gil-galad was still conceived as the son of Fingon:

> *Another note on the subject is found in the QS manuscript near the opening of the 'short' (i.e. condensed) version of the tale of Beren and Luthien (see V.293), pencilled rapidly at the foot of a page but clearly referring to the statement in the text that Felagund gave the crown of Nargothrond to Orodreth before his departure with Beren (The Silmarillion p. 170):*
> *But foreseeing evil he commanded Orodreth to send away his son Gil-galad, and wife.*
> **HoMe11. The Later Quenta Silmarillion**

We have to acknowledge that this version was changed again soon afterwards concerning the parentage of Gil-galad, which was not finalised by this stage), but the basic idea is as easy as it is logical: Gil-galad was sent away from Nargothrond to the safety of the Havens before the tragedy of Nargothrond unfolded fully. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Orodreth had similar forebodings as Fingon had in *The Silmarillion* version. This parallelism—sending the young heir away to safety—is so strikingly similar to the version involving Fingon, that it is indeed the most desirable solution to the problem.

The 'House of Finrod'
Gildor Inglorion

Gildor is a somewhat enigmatic figure. We first see him in the *Lord of the Rings* when he encounters the four Hobbits wandering in the forest:

> *'I am Gildor,' answered their leader, the Elf who had first hailed him. 'Gildor Inglorion of the House of Finrod.'*
> **The Lord of the Rings. Book 1 (Three is Company)**

"Of the House of Finrod" is—as Brian Carlton laid out—indicative of a

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more or less close relationship with that family. The question, of course, is what exactly his position in the family could be. A possible solution would be to define "of the House of Finrod" less strictly as not only encompassing natural, but also "adopted" children (see below). This can easily be managed, because—as mentioned above—Finrod is said to have been fond of Angrod's son (Orodreth),

making him, after a fashion, 'of the House of Finrod' too.

Concerning 'The House of Finrod', we could now argue that Orodreth was 'adopted' by Finrod (even if not formally—if such a custom even existed among the Eldar) and thus he and his children considered themselves as belonging to this House at least by custom.

Turning to what we have from *The Silmarillion*, the possibilities are narrowed to the following options.

Name	Notes
Finrod	No issue in Middle-earth
Angrod	Issue unknown
Aegnor	No issue, if the *Athrabeth Findrod ah Andreth* is considered. Otherwise issue unknown
Orodreth	Only child Finduilas killed in First Age
Galadriel	Only child Celebrían well-known.

Taking only the *The Silmarillion* into account, both Angrod and Aegnor would qualify for children and therefore as ancestors of Gildor. If we consider the *Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth* from the HoMe 10, Aegnor, too, is eliminated as a candidate, so that only Angrod remains.

As we have seen, the descendants of Angrod seems to have had a much greater role in the history of the Second and Third Age than is hinted by *The Silmarillion* or *The Lord of the Rings*.

During the development of *The Silmarillion*, the name 'Inglor' was originally given to both Finarfin and later Finrod. Both of these later received the final names we are familiar with, and the old 'Inglor' only lived on in the surname of Gildor. Since he claimed to be "of the House of Finrod", another relative of Finrod with the name of Inglor (as father of Gildor, so that the '-ion' ending that denotes descent from the aforementioned person—here Inglor—has a real meaning) seem to be the most fitting solution. This also offers the possibility to retain the ancient name of 'Inglor' in the family of Finrod, even if not for Finrod himself in this case. This may allow us to speculate that Gildor was a prominent and powerful figure, far beyond the scope of what is shown in *The Lord of the Rings*. The problem, of course, is where exactly among Finarfin's descendants to

insert this new branch. It seems uncontested that Inglor (Gildor's supposed father) must come from the line of Angrod. In my opinion, the two most likely options are:

- Inglor is the son of a sister of Arothir/Orodreth
- Inglor is a further sibling of Gil-galad and Finduilas

I prefer the version in which Inglor is a son of a sister of Orodreth's and therefore a cousin of Gil-galad and Finduilas. Making him a brother of Gil-galad's father Arothir/Orodreth would place Gildor in the same generation as Gil-galad (and in the male line of succession!). However, according to the role given to Gildor by Tolkien, it is more appropriate to place him in a later generation than Gil-galad's, making him at the same time a more inconspicuous and ephemeral figure than the High-king.

Therefore, based on the evidence discussed above, I propose here to make Inglor a cousin of Gil-galad. This solves the problem of the kingship of Lindon (see below) and Gildor's seemingly small role in history.

Tolkien points out in *The Road Goes Ever On* that Gildor and his company were heading eastward after a visit (he calls it a "pilgrimage") to the Tower Hills and the *palantír* in the Elostirion:

> *No doubt Gildor and his companions (Vol. I, Chap. 3), since they appear to have been going eastward, were Elves living in or near Rivendell returning from the palantír of the Tower Hills.*
> **The Road Goes Ever On. 73/74**

If we assume that our conjecture about Gildor's descent above is correct and he really lived in or near Rivendell on his—presumed—eastward journey, he would surely have had to be counted among the more powerful of the Eldar residing there. It might therefore seem strange that he was not specifically mentioned among those that Elrond sent out to look for Aragorn and the Hobbits. However, he was of great help, as he informed Elrond of the dangerous situation, thus causing the latter to send out

assistance from Rivendell to look after the Hobbits:

> *'Elrond received news that troubled him. Some of my kindred, journeying in your land beyond the Baranduin, learned that things were amiss, and sent messages as swiftly as they could. They said that the Nine were abroad, and that you were astray bearing a great burden without guidance, for Gandalf had not returned. There are few even in Rivendell that can ride openly against the Nine; but such as there were, Elrond sent out north, west, and south....'*
> **The Lord of the Rings. Book I (Flight to the Ford)**

Gildor might not have been involved in all this business at all, since the Eldar seldom had direct dealings with non-Elves. This is what is said by himself to Frodo:
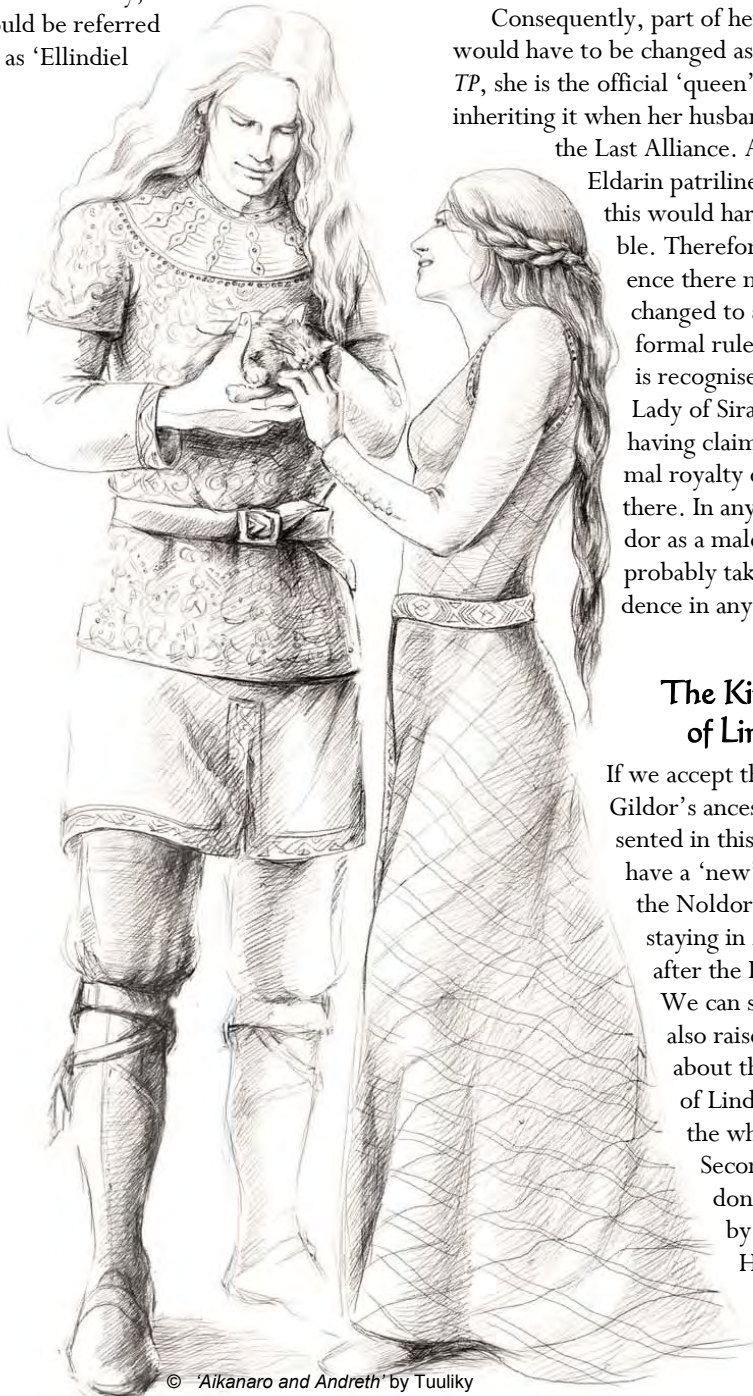
> *The Elves have their own labours and their own sorrows, and they are little concerned with the ways of hobbits, or of any other creatures upon earth. Our paths cross theirs seldom, by chance or purpose.*
> **The Lord of the Rings. Book I ('Three is Company')**

Still, it is hard to imagine that he would stand aside in such a serious situation, given that Elrond was fully aware of what was at stake and the Noldor's awareness of their responsibility in the matter of the Rings of Power. He was however present to give Frodo aid and comfort (and saved him and his fellows from the Black Rider) and give vital intelligence to Elrond. Therefore we can see Gildor's role more as that of the advisor and organiser rather than that of the "warrior". Elrond and Galadriel (albeit on a bigger scale) took similar roles, thus beginning a line of elven lords that smoothly put the hobbits on the right track.

Whatever the case, Gildor's possible absence does not make matters easier, and every GM and reader has to make up their own mind based on the evidence available.

Ellindiel of Siragalë

This is a character introduced not by Tolkien but by ICE in *Arnor: The People* (p.152). There she is portrayed as a granddaughter of Aegnor. This would put her in the same generation as Inglor, Gil-galad and Finduilas. While true of course (according to this supplement), I prefer not to squeeze another character into this generation, but move her to Gildor's generation, making her his sister. In this way, she could be referred to as 'Ellindiel Inglorion, Lady of Siragalë'. Irrelevant for the more academic discussion of the known descendants of Finarfin, she is a good choice for a Third Age character beside her—presumed—brother as the last representatives (beside Galadriel) of the royal family of Lindon. This does not affect her background as detailed in *A:TP* greatly, so I consider it justified to fit her into my suggested reconstruction of this line of Finarfin's descendants as outlined on page 21.

Consequently, part of her story would have to be changed as well. In *A: TP*, she is the official 'queen' of Siragalë, inheriting it when her husband died in the Last Alliance. Assuming the Eldarin patrilineal tradition, this would hardly be possible. Therefore, her presence there might be changed to a more informal rule, where she is recognised as the Lady of Siragalë without having claimed any formal royalty or rule there. In any case, Gildor as a male would probably take precedence in any case.

The Kingdom of Lindon

If we accept the version of Gildor's ancestry presented in this article, we have a 'new' member of the Noldorin royal line staying in Middle-earth after the First Age. We can see that it also raises questions about the kingship of Lindon. During the whole of the Second Age, Lindon was ruled by Gil-galad. He was the last Noldo High-king of the Eldar in Middle-earth. When he fell in combat with Sauron, he had no successor. In the *Silmarillion* version, this is easily understood, as Gil-galad apparently left no heir, and so the kingship of that realm ended with him. Now, these two 'new' close relatives of his (his supposed cousin Inglor and Inglor's son Gildor) make it harder to understand why Lindon had no new king after Gil-galad.

This problem is easily fixed if we remember that royal succession among the Eldar was governed by patrilineal law and assume that both Ellindiel and Gildor traced their ancestry through a sister of Orodreth's, thus preventing them from making a legitimate claim to the kingship. In addition, as a woman, Ellindiel would not have been eligible irrespective of this—even Galadriel, from a much older generation as daughter of Finarfin, was not.

In addition to this formal reason, which is sufficient by its own strength to settle the case, we might look to another example in Tolkien's writings. The northern Dúnedain did not continue their realm after Arvedui's death, even though there was an heir (Aranarth). Here the most likely explanation is that they recognised that the time for a kingdom in the North had passed for many generations, and the Dúnedain might better serve their purpose and preserve their heritage in hiding.

A similar situation may be presumed for Lindon—in addition to the formal one mentioned above. The War of the Last Alliance had cost many lives, and the two greatest leaders of Elves and Men, Gil-galad and Elendil were no more. Now that Sauron was apparently defeated once and for all (only a very small circle knew of the One and that it had not been destroyed), many of the surviving Noldor who had perhaps stayed out of a feeling of duty were finally leaving, weakening the Noldor in Middle-earth, especially those who would support a continued Noldo High-kingship here. Thus it would have been recognised that the time of an an elven kingdom in Lindon—and not just a Noldorin one—had passed away, and since there was no le-

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gitimate claimant available in any case, Lindon was now overseen in the form of a more informal guardianship (rather than a "real" kingdom) by Círdan.[1]

The only possible Sindarin candidates for a Grey-elven kingship – Círdan and Celeborn – were probably either wise enough to recognise the changes and peculiarities of the Third Age (Círdan) or see that the other attempts of kingdom-building had been only partly wise and therefore should be avoided after Gil-galad's death (Celeborn). Thus we see Lindon becoming much more informal in the Third Age, a role that fits the diminishing role of the Eldar in the Third Age in general. Another candidate might have been Thranduil, but he was probably not august enough and already had his own realm in Rhovanion. In addition, many of his subjects were not very comfortable with the Noldor of Lindon (even if now much reduced in number), and thus would probably be quite irritated if Thranduil had claimed any kingship in Lindon. It is highly likely, though, that Gildor remained an exalted figure in Lindon, close to Círdan in status, but with less—formal—power due to his descent through the female line. It is quite likely that he had a personal following (like a "household") that gave him some weight in Eldarin politics in Eriador. He might even have had some saying in Siragalë, where he could have shared authority with his sister (when he was present), giving him a small "realm" at least as an informal lord for some time. As a male, he would probably have had a higher authority than his sister though.

Naming

All the descendants of Finarfin have—as is the custom of the Eldar—a multitude of names. The table at the top of this page lists those that are known. The name under which a person is best known or commonly called, is in bold.

The naming scheme follows the one found in *HoMe10*.

| father-name | | chosen name | | mother-name | | given name | |
Quenya	Sindarin	Quenya	Sindarin	Quenya	Sindarin	Quenya	Sindarin
Findarato*	Finrod						**Felagund‡**
Angarato*	**Angrod**					Angamaite	
Ambarato	Amrod			Aikanaro	**Aegnor**		
Artanis				Nerwende	Nerwen	Alatariel*	**Galadriel**
Artaher †	Arothir †						**Orodreth †**
Artanaro†	Rodnor†		Finellach†		**Gil-galad**		Ereinion†
	Inglorion†		**Gildor†**				
	Celebrían†						
	Finduilas†						

* Name is not true Quenya, but Telerin of Aman
‡ Not a genuine Sindarin name, but a Sindarisation of Khuzdul "felak" and "gundu"
† The classification (father-name, mother-name etc.) of these names is not known for sure

A short excursus on Noldorin dynasties

It is rather interesting how smoothly the solutions developed above fit into an evolving picture of the Noldorin realms in Middle-earth.

At first, the oldest—the Fëanorian—dynasty was held to be the inheritor of the High-kingship. Due to the rapid development of events, Fëanor was never officially crowned High-king, but his position and role in the exile of the Noldor makes it clear that he held the senior position among his brothers. Fingolfin's promise to recognise his half-brother as superior is seen in his words in Aman:

> "Then Fëanor took his hand in silence; but Fingolfin said: 'Half-brother in blood, full brother in heart will I be. Thou shalt lead and I will follow.' "
> **The Silmarillion.Of the Darkening of Valinor**

After Fëanor was slain, the kingship passed to Fingolfin. Maedhros, eldest son of Fëanor and the one with the strongest claim of inheriting the High-kingship deliberately relinquished it in favour of reconciliation among the Noldor (continued next column):

> For Maedhros begged forgiveness for the desertion in Araman; and he waived his claim to kingship over all the Noldor, saying to Fingolfin: 'If there lay no grievance between us, lord, still the kingship would rightly come to you, the eldest here of the house of Finwë, and not the least wise.'
> **The Silmarillion.Of the Return of the Noldor**

In the *Silmarillion* version, the High-kingship in Exile stayed in the House of Fingolfin until its end with the death of Gil-galad.

Now, with the facts assembled above, it is far more likely that it finally passed to the descendants of Finarfin.

This results in a steady development, outlined in the table on the next page.

This seems almost 'inversely proportional': The oldest line has the shortest "rule", while the youngest has the longest and the most stable realm (Lindon). This alone is of course not a real explanation for this development, but the meaning that it evokes is indeed harmonious and fitting.

The fact that Tolkien devoted a lot of effort to designing the details of the descendants of Finarfin indicates their importance, a fact that is often neglected in the tales of Beleriand, where the line of Fingolfin dominates the perception of the High-kingship of the Noldor in Exile.

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1   This view might be supported by the following text (a footnote in the HoMe12): *"The Elf-realm [Lindon] became diminished in the wars against Sauron, and by the establishment of Imladris, and it no longer extended east of the Ered Luin."* **HoMe12.Of Dwarves and Men (Note 75)**
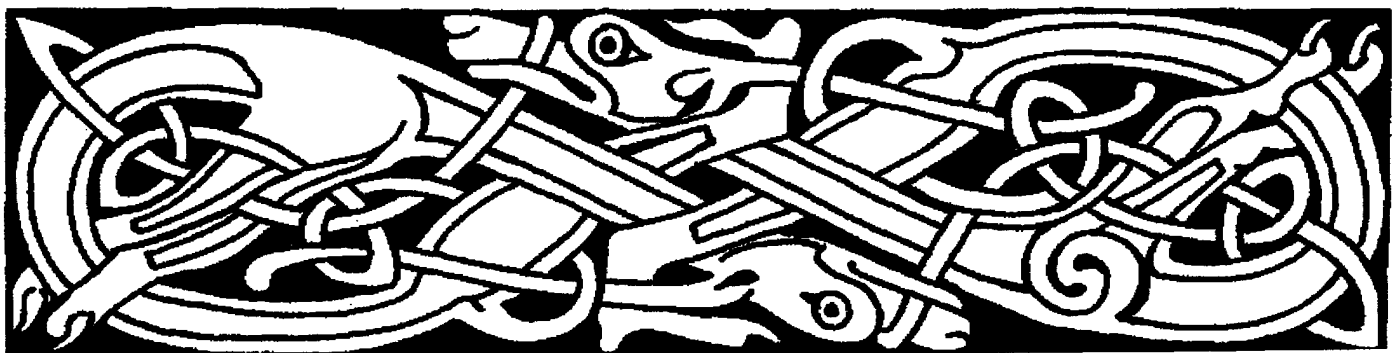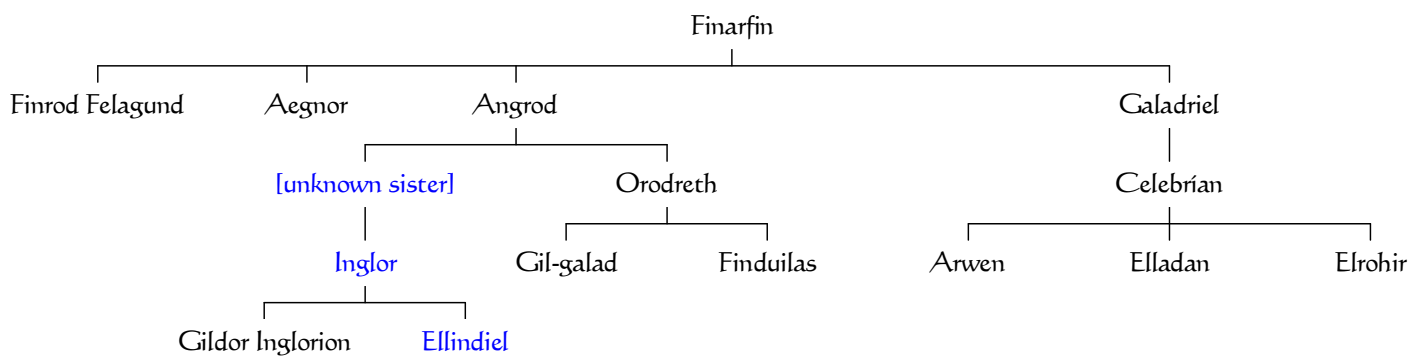
House of ...	Seniority of line	Duration of High-kingship in Exile
Fëanor	Oldest	Shortest
Fingolfin	Middle	Medium
Finarfin	Youngest	Longest

That the line of Finarfin had an immense impact on, and importance for the history of Middle-earth in the Second and Third Ages is another fact, and it was one of the main aims of this article to bring this out.

Revised family tree for the descendants of Finarfin

Below can be seen a proposal for a revised family tree of Finarfin's descendants. For ease of use, the invented characters (or, if you will, those that are not firmly documented in the histories found by Tolkien) are given in blue. Additionally, only the most prominent names are given. See the table above for a more comprehensive listing of all known names.

The descendants of Finarfin

Finarfin

Finrod Felagund — Aegnor — Angrod — Galadriel

[unknown sister] — Orodreth

Celebrían

Inglor — Gil-galad — Finduilas

Arwen — Elladan — Elrohir

Gildor Inglorion — Ellindiel

"Then Ilúvatar said to them: 'Of the theme that I have declared to you, I will now that ye make in harmony to-gether a Great Music. And since I have kindled you with the Flame Imperishable, ye shall show forth your powers in adorning this theme, each with his own thoughts and devices, if he will. But I will sit and hearken, and be glad that through you
great beauty has been wakened into song.'"
- Ainulindalë (The Music of the Ainur)

The Silmarillion

by J.R.R. Tolkien

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A History of Story-telling Games and Other Imaginary Depictions of Middle-earth

by Travis Henry
(traversetravis@gmail.com) © 2010
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Middle-earth related topics are often discussed and analyzed with great scrutiny, a high degree of seriousness—and the associated "flavour" this earnest approach of dealing with it brings with it.

It is really delightful to read articles that deal with Middle-earth but do it from another angle. Good satire or parody is an ennoblement of every work of art or literature. One might think of 'Bored of the Rings' *or* 'The Soddit' *to see that Middle-earth also has received his fair share of this genre.*

Now Travis follows this path as well, but with a focus on games set in this setting.

Preface

The following essay — a history of various imaginary conceptions of Middle-earth — is a translation from the actual Westron language into our modern English. If the text — seemingly from an antediluvian cache — is authentic, then it is a relic (or scribal copy) from long ago in the quiet of the world, when there was less noise and more green, and hobbits were still numerous and prosperous. As far as we know, this text is *not* from the same source that provided J.R.R. Tolkien with *The Red Book of Westmarch* from which he derived *The Lord of the Rings* and his other Middle-earth writings. It is up to each enthusiast of the Middle-Earth legendarium to decide for himself or herself as to the reliability of our source and translation.

Travis Henry

A History of Story-telling Games and Other Imaginary Depictions of Middle-earth

by Guoremor Brandybuck

The first story-telling game (or STG) was made thirty-six years ago, in the year 74 of the Fourth Age. It was entitled *Jewels & Rings: Rules for Fantastic Elder Days' Wargames, Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures* ("J&R" for short) by G. Gossard and D. Arnoldson. In the original rules, there were only three Orders to choose from: Fighting-Hobbits, Magicians, and Clerks. The stories of J&R took place in a world of fancy, and customers were encouraged to make their own imaginary worlds using the J&R rules.

Gossard and Arnoldson founded a hamlet called "Gameton" in the north of Westmarch, next to a picturesque pond they called "Gameton Lake". Gossard's enterprise, TOR (The One Ring), Ltd. grew, and Gameton with it, and the village became the seat of the new STG trade. The two were rumored to be uncanny hobbits. During his 69th birthday party in 4.A. 108, Gossard disappeared like Bilbo Baggins. Not to be outdone, the next year, Arnoldson provisioned a boat on the Brandywine, intent on heading full sail to the Other Side. Where Gossard and Arnoldson met their end, no hobbit can say.

Though there were several editions of J&R and also competing rules sets by other game-crafters from the budding STG trade, the first STG to use our known world of Middle-earth as its setting (rather than a world of fancy) was *Middle-earth Story Telling* (MEST) released in 4.A. 84 by Golden Sceptre Enterprises, Ltd., and based on their (aptly named) Rollmaster rules. MEST was notable for its maps by P. Fenwick. Shire scholars wondered whether the maps — especially the one showing the shape of Rhûn and Harad — were from factual sources (such as reports from Aragorn and Eomer's ventures into the East and South) or were from Fenwick's imagination, or a mix of both. Yet all agreed the maps were beautiful. Also notable were G.S.E.'s simplified *The Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King Adventure Game*, their *Endor Quest story-books* and *Endor GCG* "gatherable card game".

MEST was supported by a chapbook entitled *Other Feet*. *Other Feet*'s editor, C. Lookman was hired to revise Fenwick's conceptions for the second edition of MEST. Despite the quality of the work, business troubles closed Golden Sceptre's doors in 4.A. 100, after sixteen years of game publishing. Soon after, a notice from Messrs. Grubb, Grubb, and Burrowes (representatives of Sackville-Baggins Enterprises) forced *Other Feet*'s cessation as well.

The shoes left from the acroteriasm of *Other Feet* were filled in 4.A. 107 by *Other Wits* chapbook. *Other Wits*, begun by MEST "fanatics" H. Hobinson and T. Morrinson, includes Lookman on its editorial team, and is producing a kind of "third edition" of G.S.E.'s view of Middle-earth.

The MEST conception also continues with the *Endor Play-by-Post* game by Jest Arrangements, Ltd. (JAL), which features a timeline extending a thousand years into the future, to 4.A. 1100. Whether JAL's work comes from foresight or from fancy, that's for future loremasters to decide.

The second STG set in Middle-earth was *The Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King Storytelling Game* (DotLotR&tRotK STG), released in 4.A. 102 by Unriddle, Ltd., using their METTA rules system. Its depictions were based on *The Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King mutograph** directed by A. Dreary, Jr. for New Wine Fruitage, Ltd. It was a lovingly and skillfully crafted work (though with several artistic liberties – my grandfather said Gandalf's hat was blue, not grey! …And some have suggested that the mutograph was so evocative that it threatened to obscure each individual's own vision of the events surrounding the end of the Third Age).

Unfortunately, the Unriddle STG was published for only four years. However, New Wine's conception of Middle-earth continued with Unriddle's card game, with a "toy soldiers game" by Jests Workshop, Ltd., and with several "counting frame games". Counting frame games are a kind of STG whose rules and computations are so complicated, they are packaged with their own toy abacus or "counting frame".

Another notable conception of Middle-earth is the *DOTLOTR&TROTKO* – an "on-wine" counting frame game. This is a drinking game played in taverns by multiple players who gather around a massive table-sized painted playing board which depicts a landscape. There are several playing boards available, thus far depicting most of northern Eriador. These games are called "Massive Multi-Player On-Wine Storytelling Games" or MMOSTGs.

It has recently come to light** that the noted hobbit loremaster J. D. Ratcliff did preliminary game craftwork for two Middle-earth STGs which failed to be published: one by TOR, Ltd. (around 4.A. 91) and another by Magicians of the Beach, Ltd. (scheduled for 4.A. 102). What a pity!

And so, this leads us to the most recent Middle-earth STG from the Gameton community — *Ash Nazg: The Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King Story-telling Game* by Bedroom 7 Fun, Ltd. and Adulterated Games, Ltd. — which is due for release later this year.

In conclusion, it is clear that though we are scarcely a century into the Fourth Age, each game-crafter and mutograph-maker has their own differing conception of the events surrounding the end of the Third Age. Likewise, each philologist, musician, painter, and scribe has their own view of Middle-earth, which is our habitation. And so we offer the hope that each mind and hand of future ages may be free to pick and choose their own sources when shaping his or her own vision of our world.

Guoremor Brandybuck
4.A. 110

© 1998 *'Parapets of Angband'* by Stephen Hickman

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* Footnote about mutographs: The *vistatir* or "mutoscope" was invented some time ago by the Dwarves of Erebor, who conceived it as a toy. It is a device (made by magic or by skill, who can say?) containing a series of illustrations (*vistatengwi* or "mutographs") that vary gradually from one page to the next, so that when the pages are turned rapidly, the pictures appear to animate by simulating motion or some other change. In the early years of the Fourth Age, a trader from Dale sold a mutoscope to the ne'er-do-well Albert Dreary of Bree-land, and the rest is history. Deary built a mutograph viewing parlor in his Bree-land village of Halliwood, which then became the center of a budding *vistatengwë* trade, and provided a fitting career for Deary's scion.

The younger Dreary's depiction of the end of the Third Age was preceded by three other efforts: an identically-named mutograph directed by R. Bagshaw for Reunited Artists, Ltd. in 4.A. 78. (its opening was scandalized by the publicist's omission of "Part One" from the title) and two simple but charming mutographs by Messrs. Randkin and Trout: *There and Back Again: A Hobbit's Holiday* (4.A. 77) and *The End of the Third Age* (4.A. 80).

** Editorial Note: Please see <http://sacnoths.blogspot.com/2008/11/brief-history-of-tolkien-rpgs-part.html>

The 'Other Hands' Restoration Project

by
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(tolwen@gmx.de)
Ronald K. © 2010
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Sometimes old and out-of-print gaming treasures are lost forever once they are discontinued. This holds especially true for fan-based projects, which were not produced in great numbers or as commercial products and therefore are barely available on classic second-hand platforms like ebay.

In such cases, the community is often the only way to preserve such achievements for future gamers and aficionados in general. This project is about such an undertaking.

Introduction

The *Other Hands Restoration Project* is a cooperation between the authors of said project. The idea for something like this grew independently in both of us, and in April 2005 there was a chance—(as it might be called in Middle-earth) online meeting during which we discovered that we had a shared interest in producing a high-quality PDF version of *Other Hands*. We quickly agreed that a collaboration would lead to a better final product. Accordingly, a project of creating PDF versions of all *Other Hands* issues, to resemble the printed originals as closely as possible, was begun. Now, 5 years and many interruptions later, this has finally been completed.

History

Many veteran gamers will still be aware of *Other Hands*, a hardcopy magazine that came into existence when the editor-to-be Chris Seeman recognized the need for a magazine dedicated specifically to Middle-earth gaming in all its facets. By that time, the old "universal" magazines had either died or become publisher-focused marketing tools to promote a single game system (e.g. *Dragon Magazine* or *White Dwarf Magazine*). This left a gaping hole for Middle-earth gaming, and the aim was for *Other Hands* to fill that gap.

The first Issue of *Other Hands* was released in April 1993 for that very purpose. The magazine came to an abrupt and unexpected halt on December 17, 2001, when Tolkien Enterprises sent a 'cease and desist' letter to Chris Seeman. If you are interested in further information and background on this event, please have a look at *The Acroteriasm of "Other Hands" in Other Minds, Issue 1*.

It was a long way for *Other Hands* from its inception to popularity within the wider gaming community. During that time, the nascent Internet had its first phase of rapid growth, making international communication much easier. Still, despite these technological advances, *Other Hands* had its roots in the "old" days, initially continuing to be published solely in paper format. Chris produced it in the form of a non-profit venture to cover the costs of printing and mailing (and paying artists). In its later days, a website was also established, with the goal of making more and more content available on-line. This part of the *Other Hands* project had already gained some momentum when the magazine was stopped. The website is still operational and can be accessed at the URL given in the "weblinks" section at the end of this article.

The rate of subscribers grew slowly but steadily: by the fifth Issue (April '94), it had reached 35, although it then dropped to 23 by Issue 8; January '95. At the last count, for Issue #26; June '99, there were 110 subscribers.

Other Hands even had the good fortune of being mentioned in some of the later MERP modules/sourcebooks as a reference. I (Thomas) have to admit that I did not notice this then (I may be partly excused by the fact that the reference was small and quite inconspicuous) and stumbled upon the magazine independently in late '98 through the MERP mailing list. By that time, *Other Hands* had grown into a mature publication with a number of long, almost academic articles on many topics of Middle-earth and gaming in it. Memorable articles included "The Balrogs" (Issue #22), "Oathbreakers and Dunlendings" (Issue #24) or "Dark Undead" (Issue #26), to

name but a few. Together with a large amount of gaming material, such as adventures, house rules, place descriptions, etc., it set a standard that future publications have had to measure up to.

End

As we mentioned above, the end of the magazine came swiftly and unexpectedly. Middle-earth gamers were left without a magazine or other similarly-managed forum. However, the establishment of the fan-sourcebooks mailing list (see links at the end of the article) on Yahoo! groups, as well as the continued presence of the MERP list (which had seen a change in its staff) played a crucial role in providing a communication forum for veteran contributors and readers of *Other Hands*. These were the two primary platforms that continued the *Other Hands* tradition to some degree. It was especially the fan-sourcebooks focus on developing gaming-related material that kept this community together. Over time, many new people joined and added their dedication to their hobby. We are indebted to Eric Dubourg that he established this group shortly after the demise of *Other Hands*.

The inspiration of how important *Other Hands* once was played a pivotal role in the decision to establish a new magazine – this time wholly for free and as a downloadable, web-based PDF document (with, of course, the option for individual printing). The result was *Other Minds* – the magazine you are reading right now (and hopefully also its older issues).
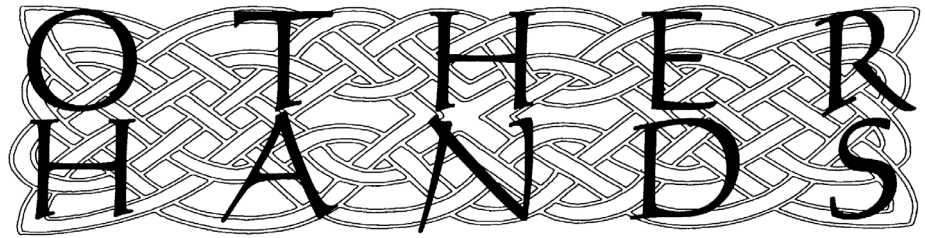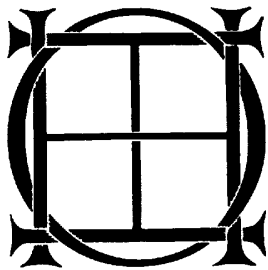
OTHER HANDS

Resurrection

Although some lucky owners possessed the hardcopy versions of the magazine (and perhaps photocopied it for friends), soon people began to wonder whether there were electronic copies (or at least scans) of *Other Hands*, especially when one of the "old guard" would reference some hard-to-come-by *OH* article in more recent online discussions. I (Thomas) experienced this demand personally when I sold a spare copy of *Other Hands, Issue 1* for almost 40 EUR on eBay in early 2006. By 2010, copies seem to have evolved into real collector's items. You can find find shops on the internet that sell original copies at prices ranging from $25 to $250! It seems clear that there is a real need for high-quality electronic versions of *Other Hands*.

Scans of *Other Hands* in PDF form had appeared some time ago, but while they did make *Other Hands* more accessible, their quality was often inferior to that of the genuine article and wholly image-based (i.e., you could neither copy text nor search for text within the magazine). There were then some OCR[1]-scanned issues to provide searchability, but their quality was even worse—it is a hard and time-consuming job to make an OCR-based product really look like the printed original without access to the original files; e.g. having to reproduce the original layout from scratch.

This was the situation when the above-mentioned online encounter led to the idea of sharing the workload of re-creating the magazine in PDF form to a professional standard. The goal was to have as much as possible of the magazine

as text and reduce the image content to the unavoidable minimum. The result would be a product similar in quality and production standards to the PDF versions of *Other Minds* you are used to.

This project hit the ground running, with a comparatively high output of *OH* issues, but real life intervened for both of us, resulting in long gaps of months or even years when not a single character was typed or scan was done for this project. Eventually, we were able to assemble enough motivation, skill (and time) to finalise this project. We hope that all of you out there will have as much benefit from, and fun with this old material as we had when we first held the most recent issue in our hands many years ago!

Considering the release of a new RPG line for Middle-earth at the end of this year (see Editorial in *Other Minds, Issue 9*), we think that the availability of the whole range of *Other Hands* Issues in this quality will be useful for gamers and authors alike, to hopefully fuel the creativity that is at the heart of Middle-earth gaming.

Some technical notes

The Issues of *Other Hands* are provided as high-quality PDF documents. If you prefer reading them as hard copies, you are free to print and perhaps even bind them into a manageable format.

For those of you comfortable with reading electronic documents, we have added some navigational aids. On the left of each document you can see the bookmarks for the individual contributions/chapters.[2] Clicking on one of these will instantly transport you to the beginning of the chapter in question. Likewise, you can use the navigational buttons in your

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1 Optical Character Recognition
2 Should these not be visible upon opening the document, just go to the "View" menu in your PDF reader and choose the entry showing both the pages and bookmarks.

PDF reader software to move backwards and forwards through the document structure.

For an easy overview, and for locating those parts which are of the greatest interest to you more easily, we also provide as a separate file (found in the same directory as the issues themselves) a brief table of contents for all issues of *Other Hands*.

You can find these *Other Hands* files under the same link as this issue of *Other Minds*. To be sure, check the "weblinks" section for the direct link.

Review

Looking back with the knowledge of hindsight, some positive and very encouraging answers to questions previously asked can be given. In the Editorial to Issue #8 (January 1995), Chris wrote:

> So, where is this "role-playing in Middle-earth" thing going anyway? Every game concept (potentially) has a chance for its moment in the limelight, when all the world (or at least the greater part of the gaming world) is seized with sudden interest and excitement at something new, innovative, or striking; when a particular rule system or world achieves notoriety beyond the narrow confines of its introverted cult following; when its adherents feel as though the endless hours of imaginative energy they have invested into that world have become a part of something larger, something of value over and above the simple enjoyment of role-playing. Has this moment already passed for Middle-earth? Was it ever there in the first place? Is there a future for this passion or will it, like us, one day fade into obscurity?

Now, after an additional 15 years, we can surely state that Middle-earth gaming is hardly at an end, even if it now exists on a decidedly smaller scale than in the 1980s and '90s. While other games—especially computer- and net-based games like *World of Warcraft*—have taken over the mass market, there is still a market share for Middle-earth based games even within this genre, as titles

like *The Lord of the Rings: War of the Ring* (Sierra, 2003) and especially *The Lord of the Rings Online: The Shadows of Angmar* (Turbine, 2007) have found a greater audience. There will be even a new pen-and-paper RPG (after Decipher's game was discontinued in 2007) based on Tolkien's books, this time by Cubicle 7 Entertainment (see the announcement in the Editorial of *Other Minds*, Issue 9). The fact that a new Pen-and-Paper game is produced is a great thing in itself.

Now we also see that Chris' thoughts about the future of the Middle-earth pen-and-paper fandom and their devotion to generating new material were up-to-date back then – and now:

> But what of the future, the undiscovered country? There is certainly much work to be done. If Middle-earth gaming has the potential for greatness (or, more modestly stated, the capacity to become something of lasting value to gamers and Tolkien fans alike), then the remainder of this final decade of the century (and, indeed, of the millennium!) will be the time for us to lay the groundwork.

With our current knowledge of the developments of the 2000s we can say with certainty that not only the final years of the 1990s, but also the following decade were full of greatness and highly innovative ideas for Middle-earth gaming. Another quote from Chris' Editorial in *Other Hands*, Issue 8 is a fitting closing thought for this project, and one which unifies the late *Other Hands* and its living successor *Other Minds*:

> **We may be few in number, but we are persistent; and we have a forum that will be around so long as there are voices to fill it.**

An October weekend in Middle-earth

a personal review of the first MittelerdeCon[1] organized by the Phantastische Gemeinschaft Rodgau e.V.[2]

by
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translation by Thomas Morwinsky

Roleplaying conventions are among the most important and interesting events for role-players. The recently held TolkienMoot is an excellent example of this. Here they can find fellow enthusiasts, discuss their favourite themes, listen oral presentations that generally broaden their perception and experience within their hobby. Thus it's no wonder that a Con with a strong emphasis on Middle-earth was held near Frankfurt last year.

See for yourself what was presented at the MittelerdeCon I over the course of two days.

HOUSE

On Sunday, October 24 2009, the portals of the Golden Hall Meduseld opened in proud Edoras, located in the Bürgerhaus Weiskirchen within Rodgau near Frankfurt (Main). By 10 a.m. players began flocking to the first Mittelerde-Con, held within the regular Phantasti-Con. The foyer was filled with the sale tables of mobile traders. The visitors had the chance to take a peek into books by and about Tolkien, and look at the prepared games; be they classic pen-and-paper role-playing games, tabletops or CCGs (see Image 01 right). DVDs and many other fan accessories about Middle-earth were available as well. The Grauen Frankfurten[3] (the local group of the Deutsche Tolkiengesellschaft; DTG[4]) took the chance and presented themselves, as well as the society in general at a special table. The interested gamer or Tolkien aficionado could learn about Frankfurten's activities, like veteran tables where everything Tolkien is discussed, attending Tolkien meetings or making presentations about the life and work of the Professor.

Right in the middle of the great hall there was a big diorama by Dieter Striebig, depicting the Black Gate, which he had set up early in the morning (Image 02 right). Around this great scenery, the playing tables, vied for gamers wanting to take the road towards Middle-earth.

The notice board revealed the broad range of role-playing rounds. Beside the classics like *MERP*, *Rolemaster* and the *Lord of the*

Image 01: Books by and about Tolkien and his creation

Rings Role-playing Game, there was also a MERP-variant published in *Other Minds Magazine, Issue 7*. The settings ranged from mid-Third Age Eriador (amidst the looming war between Angmar and the Dúnedain) to the early Fourth Age. Two mini-campaigns were available, one used the setting of the classic MERP adventure *Phantom of the Northern Marches* as the backdrop for a scenario where the characters had to improvise the defense of

Image 02: 'The Black Gate' diorama by Dieter Striebig

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1   engl.: "Middle-earth Con"
2   engl.: "Rodgau Fantastic Society ("e.V." is "eingetragener Verein", engl. for "registered society")
3   engl.: "Grey Frankfurter" (in german a play with similar sounding words; since the Grey Havens here are the "Graue Anfurten")
4   engl.: "German Tolkien Society"

Nothva Rhaglaw (Image 03 below). The other mini-campaign offered players the chance to take part in Arnor's reconstruction after the War of the Ring and the onset of the Fourth Age.

Image 03: Defense of Nothva Rhaglaw

My own Rolemaster campaign "Orkspuren" ("Orc tracks"), set in the winter of TA 1348 led the group as convoy escorts from Bree to Leet in Rhudaur (Image 04 below). The group, composed of the herb specialist Gernfal Blaumantel (Hobbit), the warrior Ervergil (Dunlander), the Silvan Ranger Talan, and the Khazâd warrior Tollers, found themselves overwhelmed by orcs and had to flee their lair in the Misty Mountains.

Image 04: 'Orkspuren'

Around 4 p.m. the first round ended, and the mini-campaigns were suspended to meet in the small hall for talks and presentations. The first of these "Rollenspiel in Mittelerde – alles andere als Standard"[1] started at 5 p.m. Dr. Thomas Morwinsky, co-editor of the web-based magazine "Other Minds" gave about 30 listeners an overview of the

history of role-playing games set in the most famous of all worlds. To this end, he sketched out the characteristics of both officially licensed games so far — *MERP* and the *Lord of the Rings Role-playing Game*. In his second talk named "Fan-Projekte zum Rollenspiel in Mittelerde"[2] subtitled "Other Minds & Co.", he used maps (found in *Other Minds, Issue 1 & 2*) developed by him and fellow authors, as an example of how fans can contribute to a greater effort of fleshing out Middle-earth for gaming and academic interests alike. After a short break Robert Vogl, expert on fantasy movies and series, talked about the fan-films "Born of Hope" and "The Hunt for Gollum" in his presentation "Mittelerde erwacht zum Leben".[3]

After further discussions and a short break the mini-campaigns continued. The MERP classic "Phantom of the Northern Marches" served another group as a fast-paced adventure. In contrast to the already mentioned mini-campaign where only the setting of Nothva Rhaglaw served as the framework, here the adventures themselves were enjoyed by both the players and the GM. On other tables, play continued as well, but this time Huan was present (Image 05).

Another highlight was the tabletop workshop, where you could learn about building scenes for tabletop games and even practice on your first pieces of terrain décor (Image 06).

After a few hours (in fact not enough) of sleep the programme continued on Sunday, October 25 from 10 a.m. on. There were no more talks this day, but the adventures and mini-campaigns continued. The portal of the Golden Hall closed at 6 p.m. This marked the end of the first "MittelerdeCon" within the greater

framework of the 10th PhantastiCon. The mood was very positive, and many players announced that they would return the following year. Some GMs and players have already reserved participation next year…

The second "MittelerdeCon" will be held on September 18 and 19, 2010 at the same location, again within the PhantastiCon event. Representatives of the DTG have already confirmed their presence as well. Talks that have already been promised will cover the traditions of the Hobbits as well as fortifications in the Peter Jackson movies.

Up-to-date information about the event can be found at website of the "Phantastische Gemeinschaft Rodgau e. V." (www.pgrev.de) and the attached forum (http://www.pgrev.de/forum/viewtopic.phpt=656).
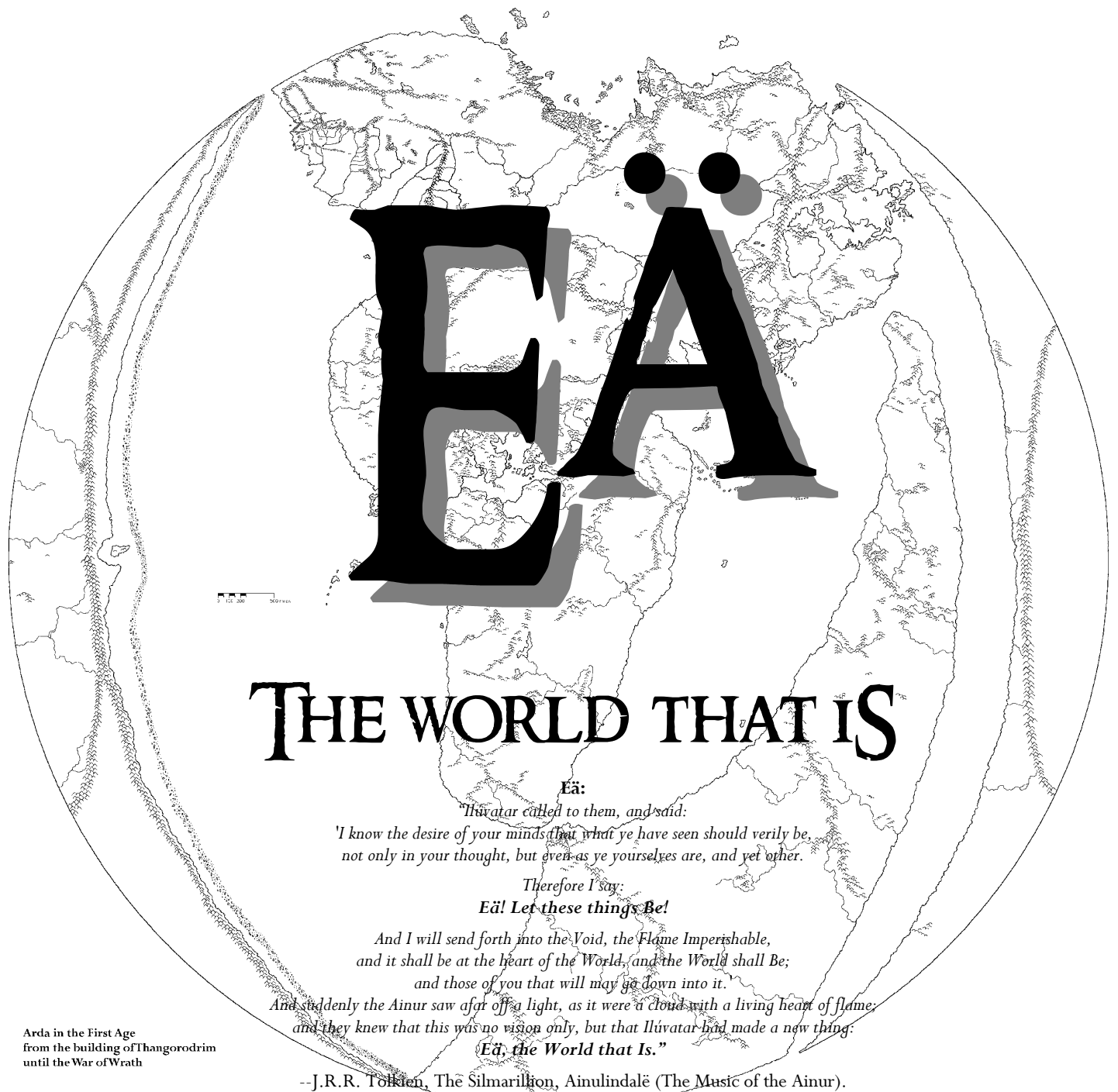

Image 05: Huan watching the Con

Image 06: Tabletop workshop

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1   engl.: "Roleplaying in Middle-earth – far from being standard"
2   engl.: "Fan-projects for Middle-earth RPGs"
3   engl.: "Middle-earth is brought to life"

Eä

The world that is

Eä:

Ilúvatar called to them, and said:
'I know the desire of your minds that what ye have seen should verily be,
not only in your thought, but even as ye yourselves are, and yet other.

Therefore I say:
Eä! Let these things Be!

And I will send forth into the Void, the Flame Imperishable,
and it shall be at the heart of the World, and the World shall Be;
and those of you that will may go down into it.
And suddenly the Ainur saw afar off a light, as it were a cloud with a living heart of flame;
and they knew that this was no vision only, but that Ilúvatar had made a new thing:
Eä, the World that Is."

Arda in the First Age
from the building of Thangorodrim
until the War of Wrath

--J.R.R. Tolkien, The Silmarillion, Ainulindalë (The Music of the Ainur).

The Eä RPG system is dedicated to role playing gaming in J.R.R. Tolkien's universe.

Eä d20 is currently well along in it's development with the "Races & Cultures" tome nearing completion. Eä d20 is the adaptation of the Open D20 (D&D 3.5) role-playing gaming system modified to more accurately fit the "feel" of Tolkien's Middle-earth.

Tomes of lore include:

- Races & Cultures (near completion)
- Magic in Middle-earth (core mechanics complete, conversion charts in progress)
- Destinies & Lore (Classes, Skills, Feats, etc. - in early stages)
- Creatures & Monsters (Ancalagon through Zigurim) (planned)
- Valar & Maiar (Includes Vala, Maia, Istari, Lords and Characters of Renown) (planned)

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The Art of Magic
A Magic system for Middle-earth

by Daniel "Vaco" Vacaflores
(vacofly@yahoo.com) © 2010
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*"Magic" is arguably **THE** most fascinating theme for roleplayers in Middle-earth. The articles that deal with it fill whole volumes—serving almost every taste; from the totally "game"-minded to the Tolkien purist.*

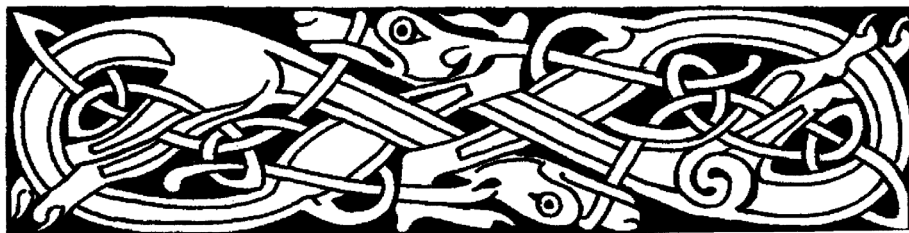*Here Daniel brings us a solidly researched piece that has the potential for laying a groundwork for future work. Enjoy!*

OPTIONAL HOUSE

To Chris Seeman, for his long and fruitful work on *Other Hands*.

A technical note

The nature of the topic of this contribution makes it a bit harder to follow through with only headers indicating the various sub-topics. Therefore a table of contents with page numbers is provided to ease the navigation within this article.

Table of Contents

He chanted a song of wizardry,
Of piercing, opening, of treachery,
Revealing, uncovering, betraying.
Then sudden Felagund there swaying
Sang in answer a song of staying,
Resisting, battling against power,
Of secrets kept, strength like a tower,
And trust unbroken, freedom, escape;
Of changing and of shifting shape,
Of snares eluded, broken traps,
The prison opening, the chain that snaps.
Backwards and forwards swayed their song.
Reeling and foundering, as ever more strong
The chanting swelled, Felagund fought,
And all the magic and might he brought
Of Elvenesse into his words.
Softly in the gloom they heard the birds
Singing afar in Nargothrond,
The sighing of the Sea beyond,
Beyond the western world, on sand,
On sand of pearls in Elvenland.
Then the gloom gathered; darkness growing
In Valinor, the red blood flowing
Beside the Sea, where the Noldor slew
The Foamriders, and stealing drew
Their white ships with their white sails
From lamplit havens. The wind wails,
The wolf howls. The ravens flee.
The ice mutters in the mouths of the Sea.
The captives sad in Angband mourn.
Thunder rumbles, the fires burn—
And Finrod fell before the throne.
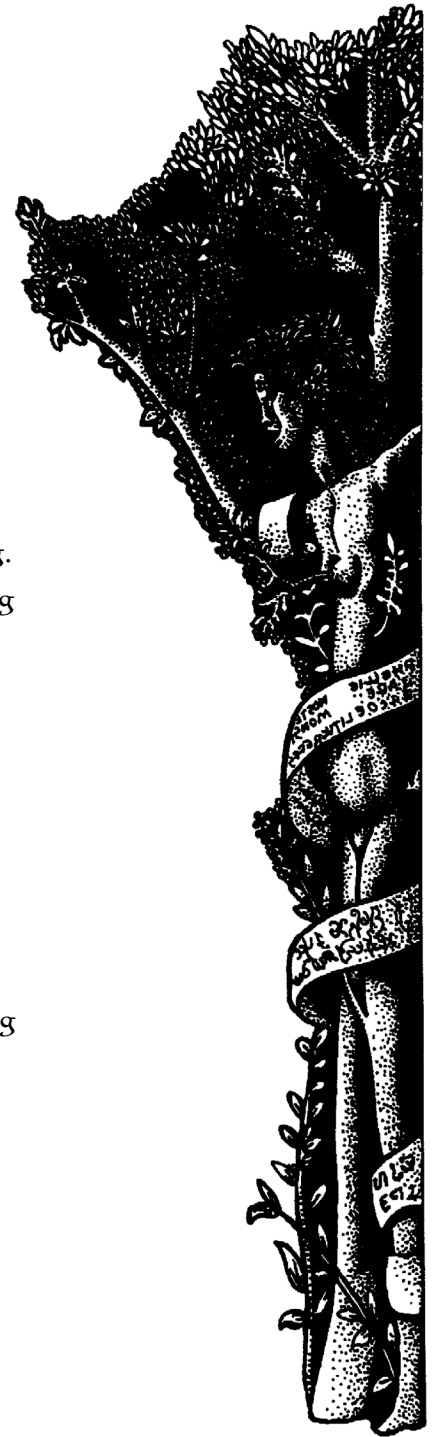
Quenta Silmarillion: Of Beren and Lúthien– pp. 200-201

In Middle-earth magic exists. A subtle but powerful magic that impregnates the essence of life. In *Chronicles of Middle-earth*[1] (my own fan-made role playing game based on the works of Tolkien) the existence of magic is as elemental as the existence of elves and dwarves, the Valar and the Dark Lords.

In this article I am going to explore the magic system of *Chronicles of Middle-earth,* with a detailed description of the magic of Valar. This article is the end result of various thoughts on magic in Middle-earth (including three previous articles)[2]. So it is possible that part of this material was already presented before.

The following is one interpretation of the magic in Tolkien's world. It aspires to be the most faithful to his writings. But it also includes new ideas and interpretations that I hope do reproduce the spirit of Middle-earth.

In *Chronicles of Middle-earth* I try to faithfully reproduce the feeling of magic transmitted by Professor Tolkien's writings. And at the same time I intend to give this roleplaying game an agility, flexibility, depth and coherency.

This article has three parts: 1) a philosophical reflection about magic in Middle-earth, 2) the magic system of *Chronicles of Middle-earth*, and 3) a sample of some different ways of magic, following this interpretation.

Here I should say that even if this article is extremely long (over forty pages), it is after all only a resumé. The magic system is still in a play test phase, and is sure to have aspects that need to be revised or introduced. The five ways of magic that I present are only a small selection of the almost twenty that one could make of the analysis of *The Silmarillion*. And in this article I do not even try to explain religion[3] nor the Dark Lords' arts, which could make volumes by themselves.

Anyway it is my wish that the information that I present in this article be complete by itself, and that it allows those interested to begin immediately to use this magic system in their games. Even when the five paradigms that I present are in the end only part of the complete gamut, I do think that they are enough to begin, and they should satisfy the needs of the majority of characters.

Part one:
Magic in Middle-earth
The Nature of the World

The creation myth of Middle-earth is described in the *Ainulindalë*, in the *Valaquenta* and in the first chapters of the *Quenta Silmarillion*.[4] These tell of the nature of the world in some depth, and are the sources on which I have drawn to establish my particular view of the nature of magic.

To understand magic in Middle-earth it seems necessary to me to understand three basic facets of the nature of the world: 1) the Music of the Ainur, 2) the nature of the Secret Fire (or Imperishable Flame), and 3) the essence of the Valar.

> In the beginning Eru, the One, who in Elvish tongue is named Ilúvatar, made the Ainur of his thought; and they made a great Music before him. In this Music the World was begun; for Ilúvatar made visible the song of the Ainur, and they beheld it as a light in the darkness. And many among them became enamoured of its beauty, and of its history which they saw beginning and unfolding as in a vision. Therefore Ilúvatar gave to their vision Being, and set it amid the Void, and the Secret Fire was sent to burn at the heart of the World; and it was called Eä.
>
> Then those of the Ainur who desired it arose and entered into the World at the beginning of Time; and it was their task to achieve it, and by their labours to fulfil the vision which they had see
> **VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar - p. 15**

The Music of the Ainur represents the essence of the world, and its fate. This essence permeates all the fabric of reality, which is fundamentally divine (magical). The essence and nature of the Ainur themselves is reflected in this Music.

> So great was her [Nienna's] sorrow, as the Music unfolded, that her song turned to lamentation long before its end, and the sound of mourning was woven into the themes of the World before it began.
> **VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar - p. 19**

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1   The *Simplified System* of *Chronicles of Middle-earth* did not make it in time for this issue of OM, but will be ready for OM 11. The reader can refer to it for an explanation of the rules referred to in this article.

2   "Between Canon and Dogma: Human Magic in Middle-earth" (pp. 8-13), "A Journey in the Dark" (pp. 15-18) and "The Ways of Magic" (pp. 19-23), in *Other Minds* magazine #9 (November 2009).

3   In my complete magic system I also include sacrifices and gifts to access to each of these paradigms. But because 1) they do not represent the main theme of this article, and 2) they are about religion in Middle-earth, another area of controversy for Tolkien fandom, I decided to leave them out.

4   Different versions of this same text are to be found in the *History of Middle-earth* series, and some outlines of an alternative version in *Morgoth's Ring*.

This vision has its fulfillment through the Imperishable Flame (the Secret Fire) which is what gives it the very quality of "reality".

> And since I have kindled you with the Flame Imperishable, ye shall show forth your powers in adorning this theme, each with his own thoughts and devices, if he will. [...] ...and Ilúvatar shall give to their thoughts the secret fire... [...] Eä! Let these things Be! And I will send forth into the Void the Flame Imperishable, and it shall be at the heart of the World, and the World shall Be; and those of you that will may go down into it.
> **THE SILMARILLION: Ainulindalë – pp. 3, 4, 9**

The Imperishable Flame seems to be the principle of life. From it the thoughts of the Ainur take shape, from it come living beings and from it grows the capacity of free will of the Children of Eru. The Imperishable Flame is the manifestation of divinity in each of us.

This quote – "so that they are its life and it is theirs" – expresses the principle that the essence of the Powers (the Valar) is in all of creation. If it is true that the Powers do have a differentiated identity, and that the world is described as their "work", I understand their essence to be the "life of the World". And as such their fundamental essence is reflected in every facet of creation.

> Thus it came to pass that of the Ainur some abode still with Ilúvatar beyond the confines of the World; but others, and among them many of the greatest and most fair, took the leave of Ilúvatar and descended into it. But this condition Ilúvatar made, or it is the necessity of their love, that their power should thenceforward be contained and bounded in the World, to be within it for ever, until it is complete, so that they are its life and it is theirs. And therefore they are named the Valar, the Powers of the World.
> **THE SILMARILLION: Ainulindalë; pp. 9-10 [emphasis added]**

The following quote supports this perception:

> But mostly Ulmo speaks to those who dwell in Middle-earth with voices that are heard only as the music of water. For all seas, lakes, rivers, fountains and springs are in his government; so that the Elves say that the spirit of Ulmo runs in all the veins of the world
> **VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar – p. 17 [emphasis added]**

I would like here to make a fine difference between the essence of the Valar in all of creation, and the specific identities of each of them. The essence of the world is not part of its identity and stays free of their direct will, even if in their intimate relationship the Valar can control it and modify it if they deem it necessary.

The world has its own life. Even if we could describe the winds and the airs of Middle-earth as the breath of Manwë, they do follow their own independent nature. Manwë can manifest his will through the giant eagles, but it does not mean that every eagle in Middle-earth is a direct manifestation of his will.

The fire of life (the Secret Fire, the Imperishable Flame) is a part of the nature of the Children of Eru Ilúvatar (elves and humans) and every other people of Middle-earth (dwarves, hobbits, orcs, etc.). As a logical consequence of this they all, in greater or lesser part, have in them

> Men have the same faculty as the Quendi [the Elves], but it is in itself weaker, and is weaker in operation owing to the strength of the hröa [the body], over which most men have small control by the will [...] For we speak now of the Incarnate, the Eruhíni [the Children of Eru] whom he [Melkor] most desired to subjugate in Eru's despite. Their bodies being of Eä [of the World] are subject to force; and their spirits, being united to their bodies in love and solicitude, are subject to fear on their behalf. And their language, though it comes from the spirit or mind, operates through and with the body: it is not the sáma [mind] nor its sanwe [thought], but it may express the sanwe in its mode and according to its capacity.
> **VINYAR TENGWAR #39: Osanwe-kenta**

the divine nature, because all have a spirit (fëa).[1]

This last quote, even if it goes on to talk about the capacity of "language", refers to a "mystic" aspect of it, the power of the spirit (fëa). And it says specifically that humans have "the same faculty as the Quendi", weaker but essentially the same.

I think there is a consensus about the magical nature of Elves and Valar/Maiar. To understand the use of magic by humans I propose that humans do have the *potential* for magic.   Humans
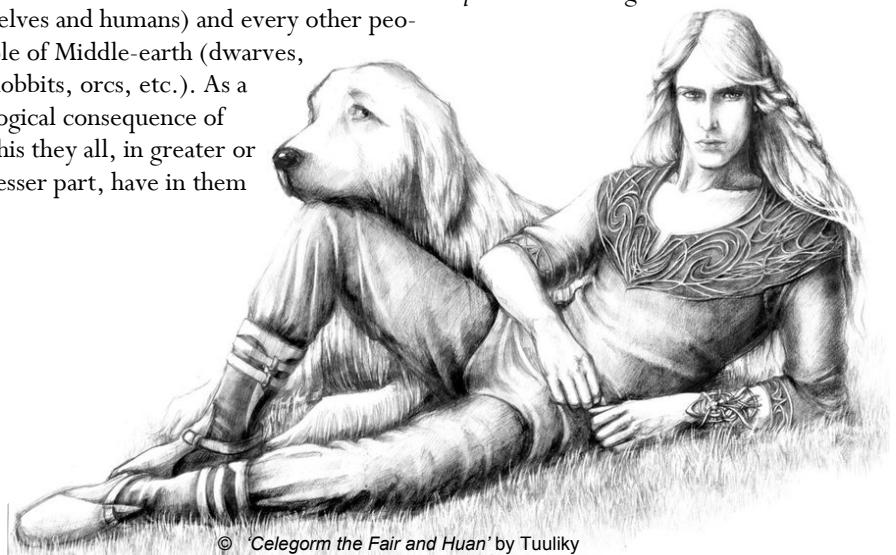
© 'Celegorm the Fair and Huan' by Tuuliky

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1   Even when there are theories about orcs not having a "spirit", these are not definitive and leave a lot of room for interpretation one way or the other.

would be basically "un-magical". But their *potential* means that they <u>could</u> learn to use it (or to awaken their inherent potential).

> Moreover it is doom that the Firstborn shall come in the darkness, and shall look first upon the Stars. Great light shall be for their waning. To Varda ever shall they call in need.
> **QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of the Coming of the Elves – p. 44**

> Manwë and Varda loved most the Vanyar, the Fair Elves; but the Noldor were beloved of Aulë [and of Mandos the Wise].[1]
> **QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of Eldamar – p. 59**

> Ulmo taught them [the Teleri] the craft of ship-building; and Ossë, submitting to Ulmo, brought them as his farewell gift the strong-winged swans.
> **MORGOTH'S RING: The Later Quenta Silmarillion – p. 178**

> Then the Noldor drew away their white ships [of the Falmari after the kin-slaying] and manned their oars as best they might, and rowed them north along the coast. And Olwë called upon Ossë, but he came not, for [he had been summoned to Valmar to the vigil and council of the gods; and] it was not permitted by the Valar that the Flight of the Noldor should be hindered by force. But Uinen wept for the mariners of the Teleri; and the sea rose in wrath against the slayers, so that many of the ships were wrecked and those in them drowned.
> **QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of the Flight of the Noldor – p. 94**

The Valar as paradigms of magic

But even if as I deduce both Elves and Men do have the life's fire that permits them to use (with more ease or difficulty) magic, it's not they who define the *nature* of magic. For that I understand they must have recourse to the basic essence of the Powers (or of the Enemy).

> I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. Go back to the Shadow! You cannot pass.
> **Gandalf in THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: The Bridge of Khazad-dûm – p. 429**

In this way the Valar become *paradigms of magic*[2]. It is not divine power delegated to an earthly representative (such as clerics in other roleplaying games). It is more an affinity with the nature of one or more Valar, and maybe the ancestral heritage of the teachings of these Powers, in a direct way or through intermediaries (Elves, Maiar[3] or other magic users).

This quote does not prove the theory of the *Valar as paradigms of magic*, but points in such a direction. Let's take a look at it. Gandalf defines himself as "a servant of the Secret Fire"; and as we already know the *secret fire* is the name for the Imperishable Flame, the spring of life (and of magic). I think that the reference points more to "a servant of Eru Ilúvatar", and not to "a servant of magic". The explicit mention of the "Secret Fire" is interesting in itself.

Gandalf defines himself also as "wielder of the flame of Anor". *Anor* is the name of the sun. According to the mythology of *The Silmarillion* (if not in the "Myths Transformed" of *Morgoth's*

Ring) the sun is the vessel of *Arien*, an especially powerful Maia of Fire. So Gandalf wields the flame of *Arien*. It is not a direct implication, but the link is there.

Gandalf also mentions the "dark fire", in direct relation to "flame of Udûn". The only reference to Udûn that I have found is in *Morgoth's Ring* (p. 382), where it is used as synonym of *Utumno*, the first fortress of Melkor, the Dark Lord. We all know that Balrogs are spirits of fire, and I think that "dark fire" is a clear enough reference to a corrupted fire, black magic. And the reference to Udûn could (again a supposition) refer to the fire of Melkor, who is strongly identified with fire and ice. Or maybe just to the Balrogs as paradigms of the fire of Udûn.

Following this train of thought, we would have the identification of two ways of magic identified with the Ainur and their dwellings. This need not necessarily be the case, but it is an interesting possibility.

In *Chronicles of Middle-earth* magic stems from the *Imperishable Flame* and materializes through the Valar as *paradigms*. They are not divine blessings nor granted powers. No. Magic exists independent of the Valar. They are not its source, but they represent its paradigms. The Valar are the main "Powers of Arda", and the main paradigms of magic, but not the only ones. There are also the Maiar (reproducing in a lesser way the paradigm of their "lord"; but some of a special nature are themselves *paradigms*) and the Enemy (with black magic).

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1 "and of Melkor the Wise" is found in the version of the same text in Morgoth's Ring: **The Later Quenta Silmarillion – p. 176**
2 This is an interpretation that seeks/claims to reproduce the feeling of magic in Middle-earth. But it is just that: an interpretation. I don't have really "canonical" backup to demonstrate that this would be the correct one.
A paradigm is a fundamental explanation of how the world works, and which defines how we react to it. It has a lot to do with theoretical schools of thinking. Religion is a paradigm, and science is a paradigm. And Christianity is a different religious paradigm than Islamism.
In this perspective we must understand the Valar as paradigms of magic to be the way magic-users in Middle-earth understand how magic works, guiding their own works.
3 Maiar are spirit beings of a lesser category tan the Valar ("gods"), of whom they are servants. Most are part of a "folk".

When they created the World (Arda), the Valar infused their essence into the fabric of reality, and it is to this essence that the "magician" resorts, and not to the Valar themselves.

[Design note: as I already said, the notion of the Valar as paradigms of magic has little real sustenance. I chose it because I do think it is necessary to have specializations within the use of magic so that not just one ability (or two: good magic and black magic) determines the magic capacity of the "magician", and so that there is variety between different "magicians". That is why I chose to present the existence of different paradigms of magic. And I think that basing these paradigms on the Valar reflects the spirit of Middle-earth in a coherent way.]

Part two:
A New Magic System

The Theory of Magic

In *Chronicles of Middle-earth* magic is the skill to work wonders. Magic is a spiritual power made real in the real world. Every being that has a spirit (*fëa*) has the potential to use magic. Only some specific folks (elves, Valar and Maiar) are by nature magical. For them magic is natural, and they can use it like any other mundane skill. All other people (humans, dwarves, etc.) must awaken that potential and learn to use the magical energies of Eä (creation).

To bypass the logic of spells as rigid magic formulae and of a limited number (finite), in *Chronicles of Middle-earth* magic has a near infinite potential. The exercise of magic is only restricted by the *únati*, the fundamental prohibitions that Eru Ilúvatar put on creation. In this way magic can take almost any form that the "magician" wills, limited only by his own willpower and imagination.

Anyway to have a guide in this act of will and spiritual power, the "magician" should use the Valar as paradigms of magic.

So we have a skill for each *paradigm of magic* that the "magician" should develop independently, to master each one. Every one of these skills is developed like any mundane skill, and uses the same rules for success or failure.

Only the "magical" folks have free access to some of these skills. Everyone else must first "awaken" their magic potential in each skill through the use of Development Points (DP[1]). Without "awakening" its potential nobody can develop a "magic" skill.

Not all peoples have the same kind of access to the different "paradigms". It depends on a people's spiritual relationship with each of the different Powers of Arda. Elves have free access to four ways of magic (defined for each specific people). They can learn any other way of magic as normal, except black magic. Humans do not begin with any free way of magic, but they can use any, including good magic and black magic. Dwarves can only learn the ways of Aulë, Tulkas and Eönwë. Orcs can only learn black magic. Hobbits cannot learn any way of magic beyond the "apprentice" mastery level.

Mastery Levels

This "awakening" has different levels. Beginning with a simple apprentice who maybe does not understand that what he really does is magic, over a practitioner who begins to master magic a little more "showy", a "magician" trained in his trade, to come at last to an epic level which includes the greatest magic of the Valar. The *level of mastery* shows the grade of magical effects that can be attempted by the "magician".

In *Chronicles of Middle-earth* this scale is divided into seven progressive levels:

Apprentice (•, medium difficulty [+0%]), Novice (••, hard [-10%]), Journeyman (•••, very hard [-20%]), Magician (••••, extreme [-30%]), Wizard (•••••, absurd [-50%]), Divine (•••••-•, ridiculous [-70%]) and Epic magic (•••••-••, impossible [-100%]).

Besides being able to advance in this scale of mastery the "magician" must have a minimum advancement in the corresponding skill, as is shown in the following descriptions of each mastery level. Thus a character that wants to go up from *Journeyman* to *Magician* must pay four DP, and have a minimum development of 80% in the chosen *paradigm*. To reach this level the character will have paid a total of 10 DP (1+2+3+4=10), a huge quantity of development points.

The penalty to attempting magic of a given *level of mastery* cannot be removed by the spending of Spirit Points (SP[2]). The *penalty for showy effects* is applied to all spells of this way of magic, based on the magician's mastery level, and not on the spell itself. *[Design note: the "extra penalty for showy effects" is a feature that is fundamental to creating an atmosphere of subtle magic. This system not only gives a "background", but also gives the players themselves a real reason to think of ways to make their magic "subtle". This point should be particularly probed in playtesting, and any feedback or suggestions are welcome.]*

Now follows a description of each mastery level in general terms, their costs, penalties, requisites and casting times.

Apprentice

At this level the effects possible are extremely subtle, and mostly all they do is potentiate some mundane skill. These effects are never "overt", and almost all could be considered mere "coincidences".
Cost: 1 DP.
Penalty: medium (+0%).

---

1 Development Points are used to "buy" special abilities and background options (like money, magic items, etc.). Usually a character gets one DP each year of life (including the years previous to its creation), except elves who get one DP each twelve years of life. You could give between one and five DP to each character at creation, and then give out one DP from time to time (each year, or after each adventure as a reward). Elves receive half this DP award, but they also begin with some magic ways open.

2 Spirit Points are a measure of the spiritual power of the character. They are equivalent both to Hit Points (HP) and Magic Points of other RPG systems. The SP scale serves also to track the corruption of the character. SP refresh as HP, with rest, and only at a rate of 1d6 per day. All this is fully explained in the complete rules. For now it is just a reference of how it works in this magic system, so that it can be easily adapted to other games systems.

Extra penalty for showy effects: -20%.
Requisite: the folk of the character must allow the learning of this *paradigm*.
Casting time: 1 round.

Novice

At this level the "magician" masters more of the power of the paradigm. Their effects invariably remain subtle, with few outward signs of the use of magic.
Cost: 2 DP.
Penalty: hard (-10%).
Extra penalty for showy effects: -20%.
Requisite: master the *Apprentice* level, have at least 30% in the paradigm.
Casting time: 2 rounds.

Journeyman

At this mastery level the character probably is already known as a practitioner of magic arts, because he can create more evident and supernatural effects. This is the highest level that humans are used to achieving. **Cost:** 3 DP. **Penalty:** very hard (-20%). **Extra penalty for showy effects:** -10%. **Requisite:** master the *Novice* level, have at least 50% in the paradigm. **Casting time:** 5 rounds.

Magician

The character has attained an exceptional mastery of the paradigm, achieving things impossible to other mortals.
Cost: 4 DP.
Penalty: extreme (-30%).
Extra penalty for showy effects: none.
Requisite: master the *Journeyman* level, have at least 80% in the paradigm
Casting time: 1 minute.

Wizard

This level is the highest achieved by the great elven princes and elven heroes, or by most of the maiar. It includes such mastery of magical energies and of the real world that it is hard for its effects to be mistaken for anything besides "magic". **Cost:** 5 DP.
Penalty: absurd (-50%).

Extra penalty for showy effects: none.
Requisite: master the *Magician* level, have at least 100% in the paradigm
Casting time: ½ hour.

Divine magic

This mastery level is the daily domain of the Valar over their own paradigms, and can only be achieved by the Maiar in their own ways of magic. It represents a complete mastery of the paradigm of magic, excluding the foundational works of the Valar. **Cost:** 6 DP. **Penalty:** ridiculous (-70%). **Extra penalty for showy effects:** none. **Requisite:** mastery of the *Wizard* level, have at least 140% in the paradigm. **Casting time:** 1 hour.

Epic magic

This mastery level can only be achieved by the most powerful Valar. It implies the creation of epic artifacts (like the Two Trees of Valinor, the chain Angainor or the ships of the sun and the moon) or the fundamental alteration of reality (like the making of the stars). The greatest creative feats of the Valar fall into this category, and can only be made once in Eä. To potentiate these unique effects the Valar must sacrifice their spiritual energy, receiving 100 CP (Corruption Points) minus the magic roll. The results of epic magic are unique, and only limited by the *únati* or fundamental prohibitions of Eä. The spiritual cost is variable but very high, and must be determined by the Storyteller, from 1d6 CP to a maximum of 1d100 CP for the greatest works.
Cost: 7 DP.
Penalty: impossible (-100%).
Extra penalty for showy effects:

none.
Requisite: mastery of the *Divine magic* level, have at least 200% in the paradigm.
Casting time: 1 day.

Now, to sum up we have the following magic system:

1. There are different paradigms of magic identified with the Valar.

2. Each of these paradigms is developed as any other skill (the skill to make miracles).

3. Before developing any of these "magic skills" one must first pay 1 DP to "awaken" it.

4. To access more powerful magic one

Total skill – Difficulty = **Success probability**

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must pay more DP, equal to the number of the new mastery level.

The magic roll is made like any other roll:

The *Degree of success* determines the effect of the magic.

So a character is going to have a *skill* (in percentiles), which shows its mastery of the paradigm. This percent only shows the success probability. The *mastery level* determines the nature of the magic to which the character has access. The desired magic effect (plus some other factors) dictates the difficulty of the "magic spell" used.

The Forms of Magic

The major advantage of the magic system of *Chronicles of Middle-earth* is the almost complete freedom of the "magician". This system is not about "spells", but of a gamut of effects that can be personalized by the player to obtain the specific effects wished for.

Think of each *paradigm* as any other mundane skill: the paradigm determines what it can be used for, but one can try anything in this range of possibilities. And one can combine different paradigms to achieve even more complex effects.

The earlier statement applies perfectly here: magic is the art of making miracles.

Magic has its own ways of manifesting the will of the magician in Eä. Showy effects are exceptions, not the norm. Magic has a lot to do with "chance", and has subtle ways of modifying reality to accommodate it to the magician's will. For example, a spell of *shelter* will only "sprout up" a shelter for the characters in unusual circumstances, more usually allowing the characters to find one in the wilderness (even if it is only a hole in the middle of brambles, protected from the wind); the magic that was worked now made the place form itself "naturally" over time until it became the shelter that the characters found.

The objective of this system is to get the magic in roleplaying games of Middle-earth to be a daily but extremely subtle thing. And maybe that is yet something to work on.

Combining Effects

The logic of the magic system of *Chronicles of Middle-earth* is the free combination of effects from different paradigms of magic. So for instance combining the ways of Estë (healing) and Yavanna (plants) could make a magic effect able to heal the hurts of a tree.

Because the rules system requires that only one skill be actively used, I define one primary paradigm to make the corresponding magic roll, and one to progress if necessary. The second (and third…) paradigm is only used as a "requisite", necessary to cast this spell. It is not going to be used in the magic roll, and it is not going to progress for its use. It is possible that these secondary paradigms as requisites do need a minimum level of mastery, noted on the spell description.

Specialization in Spell Lists

The learning of paradigms of magic is a long and difficult process. Even if a magician puts all his time and energies to this purpose, he must wait long years to learn new magic secrets.

And so should it be.

But there is a logical intermediate step in this process that could help satisfy the magician's wish for power: specialization in spell lists.

When a magician masters a new level in a paradigm, he gains access to all its creative potential.

But during this process he could learn some magic as spells of rigid form, without the freedom to choose effects that comes from the deep understanding and intimacy of a full mastery level.

"Hedge mages" who have neither a special inborn potential nor adequate learning, are limited to a ritual and little flexible use of "spells", with no scope for improvisation.

Each level of mastery has a cost of DP equal to its level. To specialize in a spell list the magician must pay a number of DP half the full cost, rounded down: 1 for *novice* and *journeyman*, 2 for *magician* and *wizard*, and 3 for *divine magic* and *epic magic*. At the first mastery level magicians do not specialize in a spell list, because paying the minimum cost of one DP achieves the complete mastery level.

These points are noted normally in the circles for paradigms of magic learning, and could normally be completed afterwards to gain full mastery of that level. In some cases[1] it is possible to have two specializations in spell lists in one level before completing the learning of the full mastery level.

One need not have a full mastery of the previous levels to be able to further progress in the specialization of spell lists in an indefinite form (again, the exception is the first mastery level: *apprentice*). But the spells of superior mastery levels must correspond to the "lesser" versions of previous levels. If one masters the full

previous level this should not be a concern, but it will if one specializes only in specific spell lists.

Creation of Magical Energy Foci

Some spells can achieve bigger effects if they have a magic focus, and others have a focus as a requisite. The staffs of the Istari are good examples of magical foci.

A magical focus is an object, person or specific place "charged" with the magician's spiritual energies, creating an invisible link between the two. This link is very useful for certain magic exercises, as described in each case.

This focus needs the permanent investment of part of the magician's spiritual energy. This is represented by the sacrifice of spiritual energy, with CP subtracted of the total of the character's SP, which cannot be recovered by normal means. These magical focuses are permanent.

Some magical focuses of lesser power can be achieved paying Spirit Points, recoverable in the normal way. Anyway this focuses do have less power and they last no longer than a few days.

Creation of Magic Items

The logic behind magical focuses applies also to the creation of magic items. One must differentiate between magic items, living beings and hereditary powers.

Any wished for magic effect can be made permanent in an item (or living being). These items can be used by any being, independent of its own magic power.

In *Chronicles of Middle-earth* magic items do not provide bonuses to skills. This is achieved by superior masterworks, and is not "magical" by itself. But any other power that transcends the rules of physical reality can only be achieved by magic.

To create a magic item the artisan must sacrifice a certain amount of spiritual energy. That is why there are not

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1 For mathematical reasons: the third and fifth level allow for two specializations before completing the 3 and 5 points for full mastery

too many magic items, and those are closely guarded. The amount of CP to sacrifice is directly related to the effect one tries: apprentice → 1d4, novice → 1d6, journeyman → 1d8, magician → 1d10, wizard → 1d12, divine magic → 1d20. Epic magic has its own costs and unique effects, described further on.

To put a permanent magical effect upon a living being, the magician must pay double said cost. And if he wants to make this effect hereditary then the cost triples, and the recipient itself must also pay the normal amount of CP.

Words of Command

> *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 drum-beats broke out wildly: doom-boom, doom-boom, 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." […] For an instant the door left my control and began to open! I had to speak a word of Command. 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.*
>
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: A Journey in the Dark; p. 423-424, 425**

In "A Journey in the Dark" (*Other Minds Magazine #8*) I already explored the implications of *Words of Command* (with capitals):

> *…a desperate effort by Gandalf, the only thing capable of stopping the Balrog. […] Words can also be specially charged with "power", investing great energy in a desperate act. These would then be "words of Command", of a higher grade than other spells.*
> *(p. 17, 18)*

In the magic system of *Chronicles of Middle-earth* Words of Command are like a magic explosion, unleashing a power that the magician normally could not command. This exacts a great expenditure of spiritual energy, capable of draining the magician and incapacitating him for further use of magic.

In my magic system the concept of *Words of Command* is not yet completely developed. That's why the following rules could yet be modified after further play test. And it could be possible, for example, that the *Words of Command* could be (or should be) learnt as any other special ability.

1) To be able to use a *Word of Command* the character must have been initiated in the specific paradigm of magic that he wants to use.

2) The *Word of Command* must be spoken loudly and clearly, and be accompanied with bold gestures (of at least one free hand or magical focus).

3) The *Word of Command* is immediate. It has a casting time of one round, and it will have immediate effects.

4) The magician can use a *Word of Command* to duplicate any magical effect of a superior mastery level to which he has no access. He can also use a *Word of Command* for a spell that he can already use to cast it in a single round.

5) The character must pay 1d20 SP for each level of difference between his actual mastery level and that of the spell. Or 1d10 for each level that he wants to reduce for the casting time[1].

6) The basic difficulty remains that of the spell's real level.

7) The *fumble ranges* of all *Words of Command* are extended by +5.

Counter-spells

> *The counter-spell was terrible. It nearly broke me. For an instant the door left my control and began to open!*
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: A Journey in the Dark; p. 425**

Counter-spells are another kind of magical exercise: an exercise of personal will against the magic of another magician. Any magician can try it. A counter-spell is not a normal "spell", just the attempt to block the magic force of another. For this it is necessary to have mastery of a paradigm of magic with which to oppose oneself against the original spell: light against darkness, strength against strength, mind against domination, etc. It can be the same paradigm as the spell to block, or one opposed to it, at the Storyteller's discretion.

If this requisite is covered, and the magician begins the counter-spell <u>before</u> the original spell takes effect, then both magicians must make a resisted magic roll affected by the mastery level of the paradigm used: the magician of lesser mastery suffers a penalty equal to the difference of the mastery levels in grades of difficulty.

But if the spell is already cast, and it has a duration that the magician would like to cut down, then he must make a counter-spell to surpass the original magic roll.

In both cases if the counter-spell magician succeeds, then the spell will dissipate. If not, then the spell will take effect normally.

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1   A magician who is reduced to 0 SP loses his ability to perform magic, until he can refresh himself. All SP lost beyond zero are subtracted from the character's hit points.

A Sense of Magic[1]

> *At last reluctantly Gandalf himself took a hand. Picking up a faggot he held it aloft for a moment, and then with a word of command, naur an ed-raith amen!, he thrust the end of his staff into the midst of it. At once a great spout of green and blue flame sprang out, and the wood flared and sputtered.*
>
> *"If there are any to see, then I at least am revealed to them", he said, "I have written Gandalf is here in signs that all can read from Rivendell to the Mouths of Anduin."*
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: The Ring Goes South – p. 380**

Some magicians say that magic is like a great spider web, which extends itself over the whole world, and that casting a spell is like making "tremors" on the spider web, which can be perceived by those who have sufficient sensitivity. Or like a pool of liquid, where one person with a finger in the pool can feel the ripples caused by another person's actions.

In *Chronicles of Middle-earth* there are two skills that have to do directly with this phenomenon: *Magic sense* and *Shrouding*.

Magic sense is the equivalent of *Perception*, but as applied to the spirit world and to magic. Anyone can develop this and have premonitions and sensations that he cannot really explain.

This skill can be used in a premeditated form or an automatic one. To use it in a premeditated form the magician must concentrate for a few rounds and then make a *Magic Sense* roll. The difficulty of the roll never changes, even for the level of the spell which is to be detected, but the distance that one wants to "search" makes the process longer or shorter: for each kilometer in a radius to be "sensed" the magician must concentrate for a whole round. If he wants not to search the whole area round him, but

a relatively small but far away area, then the concentration time is cut to a half.

This skill can also be used in an automatic way, if the Storyteller thinks the situation calls for it (e.g. if a powerful enough magical event occurs close enough that sensitive characters should detect it – perhaps if they're not already concentrating on something else…).

The degree of success determines the clarity of the premonitions and sensations… unless the objective possesses the *Shrouding* skill.

> *I cannot see Gandalf from afar, unless he comes within the fences of Lothlórien: a grey mist is about him, and the ways of his feet and of his mind are hidden from me.*
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: The Mirror of Galadriel – p. 460**

If *magic sense* is the equivalent of *Perception*, *Shrouding* is the equivalent of *Stealth*. The *Shrouding* skill is the ability of making oneself undetectable by magical means. This skill is not open to all, and it must be "awakened" (or "opened") by paying one DP.

If a character possessing the *Shrouding* skill is detected by a *Magic sense* roll, then he can make a resisted roll to keep himself "hidden". This can mean that the shrouded magician would know that "someone" was trying to look for him, but only if the *magic sense* skill was used explicitly to find "him". One can not use *magic sense* to locate another *magic sense* user.

Shrouding can also be used against detection spells.

> *"If there are any to see, then I at least am revealed to them", he said, "I have written Gandalf is here in signs that all can read from Rivendell to the Mouths of Anduin."*
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: The Ring Goes South – p. 380**

Shrouding is normally used in a "passive" mode, while the "magician" exercises no magical energies (like the casting of a spell).

Shrouding can also be used to hide the overt exercise of magical energies, but it must be a concious act of will, requires the expenditure of a lot of spiritual energies, and is far harder than the passive mode. First, the "magician" must clearly state his intention. Second, he must expend 1d6 SP per level of the spell being shrouded. If the expenditure of SP is greater than those available to the "magician", it fails right away (and does not uses the SP). And finally, the *shrouding* roll receives all the penalties of the spell itself: per mastery level and per showy effects.

The *passive mode* is always operative, and is only rolled if someone suceeds in detecting or locating the "magician" through a *magic sense* roll or magic.

Each time *shrouding* is used to hide the exercise of magic all other magic-users are allowed a *magic sense* roll with the *shrouding* success as their penalty. It is supposed that any use of *shrouding* means that there is someone to hide from.

Únati: Eru's prohibitions

> *…únat, a thing impossible to be or to be done… […] [Melkor tried to break all únati for himself] But this he could not do. The únati remained, a perpetual reminder of the existence of Eru and His invincibility…*
> **Vinyar Tengwar #39: Ósanwe-kenta**

Únati are the absolute limits that Eru Ilúvatar put on creation, which cannot be evaded. They are the only absolute barriers in *Chronicles of Middle-earth* to the exercise of magic.

Neville Percy has developed an interesting article where he presents a list of *únati*, and to which I refer the reader for further information. This article will be published in the next issue of *Other Minds*.

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[1]   Neville Percy (a.k.a. Osric) analyzed the phenomenon of magic detectability in *OM #8* ("A Sense of Magic", pp. 4-6, and "Sense of Magic", pp. 6-7).

Adjusting the Level of Magic

How powerful should a magician be in Middle-earth?

This is a difficult question, debated by Tolkien's fans because its answer can achieve (or destroy) the "feeling" that makes Middle-earth precisely *Middle-earth*.

In my article "The Forms of Magic" (*Other Minds #8*) I already presented this dilemma. And I came to the conclusion that there is not just one valid answer, because the way Tolkien himself describes magic in Middle-earth leaves open the possibility of different interpretations. Is Legolas' ability to hear far away events really magic, or is it just an exceptional perception? Is the "fire of Orthanc" magic, or just another way of describing powder work, a secret technology in Middle-earth? And what about the healing arts of Aragorn?

Besides, there is no single answer because each of us experiences Middle-earth in his personal way.

I came to the conclusion that nobody is really wrong, and that it all is about different ways of seeing the same problem.

This magic system is naturally my own interpretation of the nature of magic in Middle-earth. But then, if I have learned something, it is that a magic system that pretends to be "universal" has to recognize these different interpretations as valid, and to include them in its magic rules.

That is my intention in this section.

In the article "The Ways of Magic" I identified five different interpretations of magic in Middle-earth: 1) magic as mundane skills developed to a nearly superhuman level; 2) magic as science and technology; 3) the so called "canon" and a very limited magic; 4) my own interpretation (and the default level of this magic system), with a subtle but common magic, accessible to everybody; and 5) a level of "high fantasy" magic.

The existence of one of these interpretations does not imply the impossibility of the other ones. All could coexist.

But to calibrate the magic level in a specific game it is necessarily to decide upon one's main perspective, which is going to limit the basic aspects of the magic system. The other perspectives can also be true, but they are going to be subordinate to the main one.

Here I want to show certain parameters to allow the Storyteller to adjust the magic level to his own play style. Obviously it is the Storyteller together with the players who must decide this.

1) Magic as the development of mundane skills to a superhuman level: In this case one must ignore all paradigms of magic and use the respective mundane skills normally. For the examples shown in this article we would have: Varda (*Perception* [hearing], *astrology* and social skills), Yavanna (*farming*, *herbalism* and *survival*), Estë (*meditation* and *healing*), Oromë (*survival*, *animal handling*, *riding* and *bows*) and Eönwë (*leadership* and melee weapons).

These skills are to be used normally, but the Storyteller should allow a creative use beyond what simple logic tells, even if some things are absurd or impossible. And sure, the difficulty should correspond (absurd: -50%, ridiculous: -70%, and impossible: -100%).

2) Magic as science and technology: This approximation is the only one that really needs a new system, totally independent of any magic system. In this approximation knowledge and technical abilities take a leading role. Characters could make anything that seems "impossible", so long it agrees with modern science. For this there should be a compendium of available science and technology, showing who could have access to it. One could begin with the explicit references to powder (the "Orthanc fire"), medicine, telescopes and televisions (*palantiri*), goblin mass death and torture machines, warships, long range missiles and firearms of Númenóreans.

But special care should be taken to introduce this kind of "scientific progress" without breaking the mystique

of Middle-earth: maybe the "magician" understands what it is all about, but for everybody else it is going to be pure magic. And it is evident that the *palantiri* are and should always be black and polished round stones, highly resistant to damage, and not just a plastic box with a brittle crystal screen, that can be turned on by pushing a button.

And it is important to note that this vision presumes the existence of lost knowledge, which could be unearthed and/or learned by an intelligent lore master or crafty artisan.

For the possible application of this perspective I want to refer to the "Ebbs and Flows of Númenórean Technology" article, by António Simões, published in Other Minds Magazine #7 (July 2009), which in my view is an almost perfect first step to make such a "technology compendium".

3) Restricted magic: The so called "canon" insists on the exclusivity of magic (allowing it for elves and *istari*, but not for orcs or humans) and on its decrease though the ages of the world.

First is the question of magic use by humans (and dwarves, orcs and hobbits), to which the Storyteller must answer with a clear yes or no.

The second step in applying this perspective is to consider the limitations on each people's ability to learn magic to be absolute.

Thirdly, the *Magic sense* skill is not open to everybody, but must be "awoken" like the *Shrouding* skill paying one DP.

And finally maybe it is best that no player-character can begin the game with magic knowledge beyond that known to his own people, so that they should go through the long process of learning it through personal experience and learning.

In fact any magical incident in a character of a non-magical people (i.e. not an elf) could be considered a "divine intervention". Myself I think such a thing has nothing to do with a magic system as such, and would be better represented by Destiny or Luck Points.

4) <u>Subtle magic:</u> This perspective sees magic as a natural part of Eä present in the fabric of reality, only most people don't realize this, and explain it as "chance". All living beings and intelligent peoples (who have a spirit) can use magic, aware or unaware of it, limited only by the paradigms of magic to which they have access.

On the other hand the limits on different peoples' paradigms of magic are <u>not</u> to be taken as absolute. It is not usual to transcend them, but it is possible. The Storyteller should authorize each time the magician is ready to learn a new mastery level (that means deciding, for example, whether the mastery levels of *divine* and *epic magic* are ever going to be open to a player character).

Here the emphasis should be on the farmer able to produce exceptional harvests and to bless his neighbors' lands; the Dúnadan healer who knows the secret of herbs and can use them to heal extreme hurts; the Rohirrim warrior who can call his mount a league away with just a whistle; or on the innkeeper who people say can see through a brick wall.

5) And lastly, <u>high fantasy magic:</u> In the "The Ways of Magic" article I said that even high fantasy magic is valid for Middle-earth. In this perspective one takes Gandalf, Fingolfin, Túrin Turambar and Lúthien Tinúviel as examples of what player characters could some day become.

But this is also maybe the most criticized perspective by Tolkien fandom. The main objection is to the "importating" of magic systems from other games, with powers not in accord with Middle-earth's mythology (like "teleport"). My proposal was to advise great care in passing any "imported" magic system through a filter. (A good reflection on this point is in "The Power of Spells in Middle-earth" by Dirk Brandherm, Other Hands magazine #10/11.) The best option would be to use a magic system born direct from Middle-earth. The CODA system is a good example, and now also this proposal from *Chronicles*

of Middle-earth. Sure, if a native magic system of Middle-earth <u>is</u> used, then this process would become unnecessary.

To be able to play in a high fantasy milieu consistent with Middle-earth, use the following rules: a) definitely allow all peoples to use magic, but with the normal limitations on the kind of paradigms of magic (in the case of humans, it is considered that Gandalf, Saruman and Radagast can use magic <u>as humans</u>, and not just as maiar); and b) on this frame all limits on the mastery level are to be ignored. Players could in time even achieve mastery of *divine* and *epic magic*.

Magic such as "teleport", "fire ball/ray" and "resurrection" should not be usable daily. But the freedom principle of this magic system makes them possible. In any case they should never become standard "spells", and should only be used in special circumstances justified by the inner logic of Middle-earth. The only absolute limitations that are to be kept are the *únati* of Eru Ilúvatar.

Part three: The Paradigms of Magic

This section contains descriptions of a selection of ways of magic, inspired by the Valar and Maiar. These descriptions include plentiful quotes of the use of magic in Middle-earth, with only a few exceptions (especially for the way of Eönwë), where quotes of possibly "mundane" episodes are used to exemplify the magic effects being described.

The following are only a selection of the different *paradigms of magic* of Middle-earth, because the complete compendium would far exceed the space in a magazine like Other Minds.

Varda (Elbereth), the Lady of the Stars
(Will-dependent)

With Manwë dwells Varda, Lady of the Stars, who knows all the regions of Eä. Too great is her beauty to be declared in the words of Men or of Elves; for the light of Ilúvatar lives still in her face. In light is her power and her joy. Out of the deeps of Eä she came to the aid of Manwë; for Melkor she knew from before the making of the Music and rejected him, and he hated her, and feared her more than all others whom Eru made. Manwë and Varda are seldom parted, and they remain in Valinor. Their halls are above the everlasting snow, upon Oiolossë, the uttermost tower of Taniquetil, tallest of all the mountains upon Earth. When Manwë there ascends his throne and looks forth, if Varda is beside him, he sees further than all other eyes, through mist, and through darkness, and over leagues of the sea. And if Manwë is with her, Varda hears more clearly than all other ears the sound of voices that cry from east to west, form the hills and the valleys, and from the dark places that Melkor has made upon Earth. Of all the Great Ones who dwell in this world the Elves hold Varda most in reverence and love. Elbereth they name her, and they call upon her name out of the shadows o Middle-earth, and uplift it in song at the rising of the stars.

VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar – pp. 16-17
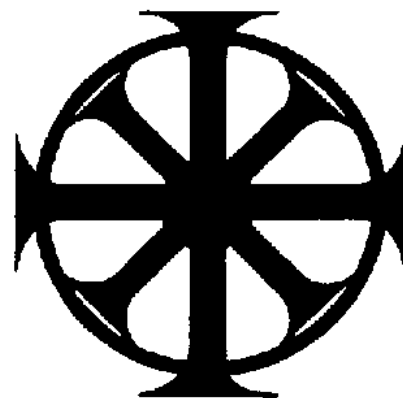
> *At that moment Frodo threw himself forward on the ground, and he Heard himself crying aloud: O Elbereth! Gilthoniel! At the same time he struck at the feet of his enemy. [...] "Look!" he cried; and stooping he lifted from the ground a black cloak that had lain hidden by the darkness. A foot above the lower hem there was a slash. "This was the stroke of Frodo's sword," he said. The only hurt that it did to his enemy, I fear; for it is unharmed, but all blades perish that pierce that dreadful King. More deadly to him was the name of Elbereth.*
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: A Knife in the Dark – p. 263 & Flight to the Ford – p. 265**

Apprentice (•)

The first thing that a character learns in the Way of Varda is to understand to a basic level the messages of the stars, to master the power of light at an elementary level, and he begins the process of sharpening his hearing. He is also able to receive the blessing of the Lady of the Stars.

Effects: The character can orient himself by the stars[1]; he must be in the open and be able to see the stars. He can also call on the *"light of the stars"*, bringing diffused light to a single static location[2] for a time; this light is almost not visible (one cannot see it if one does not look for it), and whilst it is enough to be able to use *night vision*, it is not enough to prevent any other character suffering the penalties of absolute darkness; it can be invoked even underground or inside of

buildings. The character can also invoke the *"Blessing of Varda/Elbereth"*, which affects only himself[3]; often this effect is achieved by crying aloud the name of *Elbereth*. And last the character begins to sharpen his hearing[4], in honor of Varda, the Lady of the Stars.

Novice (••)

> *Before long the Elves came down the lane towards the valley. They passed slowly, and the hobbits could see the starlight glimmering on their hair and in their eyes. They bore no lights, yet as they walked a shimmer, like the light on the moon above the rim of the hills before it rises, seemed to fall about their feet.*
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Three is Company - p. 118**

> *There like jewels sunk in the deep shone glinting stars, though sunlight was in the sky above. Of their own stooping forms no shadow could be seen*
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Lothlórien – p. 434**

In this mastery level one learns to understand accurately the messages of the stars. The character continues extending his control over the gift of light, even if still very limited. His hearing capacity increases even more. And he is capable of bringing forth a brief vision of Varda's beauty.

Effects: In this mastery level, and <u>in conjunction with Manwë</u>, the character can read in the stars general information

> *"Where sight fails the earth may bring us rumour," said Aragorn. "The land must groan under their hated feet." He stretched himself upon the ground with his ear pressed against the turf. He lay there motionless [...] "The rumour of the earth is dim and confused," he said. "Nothing walks upon it for many miles about us. Faint and far are the feet of our enemies. But loud are the hoofs of horses."*
> **THE TWO TOWERS: The Riders of Rohan – p. 27**

about far away places[5]; the character can choose if getting a general description from the Storyteller, like a fleeting view in the night; or to make some general questions[6] with a "yes" or "no" answer. Also together with the observing of the stars, and <u>in conjunction with Námo</u>, the character can consult the stars in search of answers to his deepest questions: only one question per night, with a "yes" or "no" answer, and which must be directly related to his actual situation[7]. None of the last "star reading" powers implies any visual impression. In this level the effects of *light of the stars* get better, reducing the effort necessary to maintain it[8] and allowing the area of light to move with the "magician". The character can significantly sharpen his hearing[9]. And he can apply his hearing perception with his ear pressed against the ground, to perceive the movements in the area[10]. The character can invoke the *"beauty of Varda"* (over himself or some other), giving him the gift of beauty[11].

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1   Simple **magic roll** in the Way of Varda.

2   Simple **magic roll** in the Way of Varda; **duration** x1/10 rounds [if the percentile roll is successful, divide it by 10, rounded up]; it has an **area of effect** of approximately 3 m radius ; **cost:** 1 SP/round; this light cannot be used in any kind of magic darkness.

3   Bonus of +1/10 to any action; immediate **effect**. Its use, even if theoretically unlimited, is at the discretion of the Storyteller, who can allow it only in dramatic moments.

4   *Perception* +1/10, applicable to any *Perception roll* that could benefit from hearing; **duration:** one single roll.

5   With a **simple magic roll** in the Way of Varda.

6   In a number equal to ×1/20 [maybe such questions could be <u>additional</u> to the general description of the Storyteller].

7   With a **simple magic roll** in the Way of Varda.

8   The character must spend 1 SP to activate its effects for the whole duration, being able to maintain it indefinitely at the cost of 1 SP per additional round after the basic time (but it is probable that he is going to want to cast the spell again).

9   Perception +1/5; applicable to any Perception roll that could benefit from hearing; has a **duration** of ×1/10 rounds.

10   Directly with a **simple perception roll**; only applies to great numbers of individuals, or creatures at least the size of a horse, its area is equal to the roll result in tens of meters (×10m); this power does not grant vision. [Note: this is an improved version of an ordinary skill: it can be achieved with a simple Perception roll, but with a -30% penalty, and an area equal to the roll result in meters (and not in <u>tens</u> of meters)].

11   Charisma +1/10.

Journeyman (•••)

Gandalf struck a blue light on the end of his magic staff, and in its firework glare the poor little hobbit could be seen kneeling on the hearthrug…
THE HOBBIT: An Unexpected Party - p. 29

But the wizard was taking no risks. He lit up his wand — as he did that day in Bilbo's dining-room that seemed so long ago, if you remember-, and by its light they explored the cave from end to end.
THE HOBBIT: Over Hill and Under Hill - p. 67

It was already dark, but I could see the rider's face clearly: it seemed to shine, and all his clothes were white
THE TWO TOWERS: Flotsam and Jetsam – p. 555

"Halt!" cried Gandalf, who appeared suddenly, and stood alone, with arms uplifted, between the advancing dwarves and the ranks awaiting them. "Halt!" he called in a voice like thunder, and his staff blazed forth with a flash like the lighting.
THE HOBBIT: The Clouds Burst – p. 265

So far there had been no sign or sound of pursuit that the hobbits could see or hear; but often Glorfindel would halt and listen for a moment, if they lagged behind, and a look of anxiety clouded his face.
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Flight to the Ford – p. 283

Step by step the character increases his mastery and his arts begin to be evident. His mastery over light grows in such a manner that he can "create" light through "magic". The character begins to develop some qualities as a "son of the stars", that have to do with seeing and hearing. He can affect the nightly weather so that he can see the stars (or that the stars can see him). And lastly he is able to invoke the "*Immaculate light of Varda*" to protect himself from creatures of darkness and magical powers of darkness.

Effects: At this mastery level the character can create a clear but soft light that helps any creature to see normally (even if not enough to impair the vision of orcs and other creatures of darkness), centering its effect in an area or an object[1]. As a good child of the stars he can see in the night, obtaining a temporal "*Night vision*"[2]. His hearing improves to almost superhuman level[3]. He can "*call the stars*" so that the (non-magical) clouds part; he can use this effect to be able to use those powers that need clear sight of Varda's stars. And with the "*Immaculate light of Varda*" his body shines with a defensive light aura[4] that protects him from corrupt creatures[5] and black magic ("*Shield of light*"); this aura is barely perceptible and can pass totally unseen in midday. In conjunction with Manwë the magician can show himself in the middle of any situation (even in a fight to the dead), and with a loud shout and a thunder force everybody (including himself) to stop their aggressive actions and to pay attention for a short time.[6]

Magician (••••)

…and then we rested a while. But soon Aragorn arose, saying: "Lo! already Minas Tirith is assailed. I fear that it will fall ere we come to its aid."
THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Last Debate – p. 857

…and would pause at whiles to listen as if some ancient art his ears might hear thunder of hoofs on the plains far away.
THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Siege of Gondor – p. 800

Faint to my ears came the gathered rumour of all lands: the springing and the dying, the song and the weeping, and the slow everlasting groan of over-burdened stone.
THE TWO TOWERS: The White Rider – p. 491

All of a sudden you gave one of your blinding flashes, and we saw the goblins running back yelping.
THE HOBBIT: Out of the Frying-pan into the Fire - p. 98

With a quick movement Gandalf stepped before the narrow opening of the door and thrust forward his staff. There was a dazzling flash that lit the chamber and the passage outside.
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: The Bridge of Khazad-dûm – pp. 420-421

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1   **Simple magic roll**; it has an **area** of 5 meter of radius and a **duration** of ×1/10 minutes; normally the light is created in a static area, but the magician can invoke this spell on a magical focus on which he has invested at least 1 CP (see "Creation of magical energy focus").

2   **Simple magic roll**; it has a **duration** of ×1/5 minutes.

3   *Perception* +1/3; **duration** of ×1/5 minutes.

4   DB and Resistances +1/5; **effect area** oneself; **duration** ×1/10 rounds; **casting time** 1 round.

5   This includes those peoples who are corrupt in their deepest nature: orcs, trolls and Nazgûl, for example. For any other creature it only applies to those with a complete corruption in their spiritual scale.

6   **Simple magic roll**; **duration** ×1/50 rounds; there is no resistance against this power.

> *There indeed at the bottom was a coil of the silken-grey rope made by the folk of Lórien. [...] He could see the grey line as it came dangling down, and he thought it had a faint silver sheen. [...] "I could see nothing, nothing at all, until the grey rope came down. It seemed to shimmer somehow." [...] He stood over Gollum, while Sam tied the knot. The result surprised them both. Gollum began to scream, a thin, tearing sound, very horrible to hear. He writhed, and tried to get his mouth to his ankle and bite the rope. He kept on screaming.*
>
> *At last Frodo was convinced that he really was in pain; but it could not be from the knot. He examined it and found that it was not too tight, indeed hardly tight enough. Sam was gentler than his words. [...] "It hurts us, it hurts us," hissed Gollum. "It freezes, it bites! [...] Take it off us! It hurts us!"*
> **THE TWO TOWERS: The Taming of Sméagol – pp. 594, 595, 603**

> *Cold and hard it seemed as his grip closed on it: the phial of Galadriel, so long treasured, and almost forgotten till that hour. As he touched it, for a while all thought of the Ring was banished from his mind. He sighed and bent his head.*
> **THE TWO TOWERS: The Stairs of Cirith Ungol – p. 691**

> *...when goblins came to grab him, there was a terrible flash like lightning in the cave, a smell of gunpowder, and several of them fell dead. [...] "Several of our people were struck by lightning in the cave, when we invited these creatures to come below; and they are as dead as stones."*
> **THE HOBBIT: Over the Hill and Under the Hill - pp. 68, 71**

The character has internalized so much the secrets of the Way of Varda that he is able to show a great range of "magic" powers in his daily life. He begins to use the immaculate light of Varda in an offensive way. He can extend his hearing perception to great distances. In this mastery level he begins to control thunder and lightning bolts as an elemental attack. And he learns to uncover the powers of the union of Varda and Manwë.

Effects: In this mastery level the character can cause a light explosion (flash) that stuns all creatures in the area (including the magician himself[1]). He can also share with his companions the "*Immaculate light of Varda*"[2]. He can create a light zone that impairs creatures of darkness[3]. In conjunction with Námo the magician can consult directly with the stars to answer a question[4]. The character can hear far away incidents, independently of his physical presence and of physical barriers[5]. He can include "sight" in conjunction with Manwë to all powers of the previous levels[6]. The magician can "*Purify*" (or perform "*Lesser Hallowing*" on)

an object (sacrificing 1 CP in the process), so that it becomes extremely uncomfortable for any "evil" creature to touch it[7]; this item is going to have then a subtle silver aura, not to be seen in the middle of the day. In conjunction with Aulë he can also, at the cost of 2 extra CP, give an item purified by Varda the capacity to allow a repetition on all *corruption rolls* on which the character could be considered innocent; This power can be used independently of Aulë, but it would affect only one person and for a limited time[8]. The magician can throw a "*lightning bolt*", affecting targets one meter away[9].

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1. *Stun* attack taking the *Way of Varda* as basic skill; **DF (Damage Factor)** x1/20 in rounds of stun [orcs and other creatures of darkness receive a DF x1/10]; the spell centers on the magician; and it has a **range** of x1/10 meters; its effects are **immediate**.
2. DB and Resistance +1/5; **effect area** x1/10 individuals; **duration** x1/10 rounds; **casting time** 2 rounds.
3. -1/5 to every action of orcs and other creatures of darkness affected by sunlight [note: this is an immaculate light, but not the light of the sun, so it is not going to turn a troll into stone]; **effect area** 10 meter radius; **duration** x1/10 rounds.
4. Any "rational question" with a concrete answer – if not extensive – from the Storyteller, once each night.
5. The range is equal to the roll result in meters; to focus the effect the magician must achieve a *simple perception roll*; it has an indefinite **duration**, each round the magician must overcome a *simple Varda roll* to maintain concentration.
6. It prolongs the casting time and basic difficulty to this mastery level ("magician"); it could be used with any hearing spell of at least one mastery level lower than the actual mastery level of the magician; this means that this power could be used with higher level spells, but then the difficulty level (casting time and difficulty) is going to be one level higher than the improved spell [cf. "spells combination"].
7. Evil/corrupt creatures receive ×1/10 damage per round. This damage will be applied first to the SP of the creature, but once their SPs are gone it will be applied to its HP. This power can not cause death, and can not be used as an offensive weapon forcing the contact with an evil/corrupt creature.
8. One person, with a **duration** of ×1/5 rounds.
9. **Attack roll**; **DF** ×1/10; **Critical** Electricity (normal) and Stun (×1/20 rounds); **range** 1 meter; for each target after the first, the difficulty increases by -10%, and can only be applied to enemies inside the radius of one meter; if the magician wants not to affect allies within this area the penalty increases by an extra -10% per ally.

Wizard (•••••)

At that moment he caught a flash of white and silver coming from the North, like a small star down on the dusky fields. It moved with the speed of an arrow and grew as it came, converging swiftly with the flight of the four men towards the Gate. It seemed to Pippin that a pale light was spread about it and the heavy shadows gave way before it […] But now the dark swooping shadows were aware of the newcomer. One wheeled towards him; but it seemed to Pippin that he raised his hand, and from it a shaft of white light stabbed upwards. The Nazgûl gave a long wailing cry and swerved away; and with that the four others wavered, and then rising in swift spirals they passed away eastward vanishing into the lowering cloud above; and down on the Pelennor it seemed for a while less dark. […] one rider outran them all, swift as the wind in the grass: Shadowfax bore him, shining, unveiled once more, a light starting from his upraised hand.

The Nazgûl screeched and swept away, for their Captain was not yet come to challenge the white fire of his foe.
THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Siege of Gondor –pp. 791, 792, 802

His Hood and his grey rags were flung away. His white garments shone. He lifted up his staff, and Gimli's axe leaped from his grasp and fell ringing on the ground. The sword of Aragorn, stiff in his motionless hand, blazed with a sudden fire. Legolas gave a great shout and shot an arrow high into the air: it vanished in a flash of flame.
THE TWO TOWERS: The White Rider – pp. 483

And then Gelmir brought forth one of those lamps for which the Noldor were renowned; for they were made of old in Valinor, and neither wind nor water could quench them, and when they were unhooded they sent forth a clear blue light from a flame imprisoned in white crystal. […] crystals hung in a fine chain net, the crystals being ever shining with an inner blue radiance
UNFINISHED TALES: Of Tuor and his coming to Gondolin – p.

For a moment it glimmered, faint as a rising star struggling in heavy earthward mists, and then as its power waxed, and hope grew in Frodo's mind, it began to burn, and kindled to a silver flame, a minute heart of dazzling light, as though Eärendil had himself come down from the high sunset paths with the last Silmaril upon his brow. The darkness receded from it, until it seemed to shine in the centre of a globe of airy crystal, and the hand that held it sparkled with white fire.
THE TWO TOWERS: Shelob's Lair – p. 704

Then Gandalf climbed to the top of his tree. The sudden splendor flashed from his wand like lighting, as he got ready to spring down from on high right among the spears of the goblins. That would have been the end of him, though he would probably have killed many of them as he came hurtling down like a thunderbolt.
THE HOBBIT: Out of the Frying-pan into the Fire - p. 110

Glamdring shone with a pale light, and Sting glinted at the edges [because the presence of orcs].
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: The Bridge of Khazad-dûm – p. 420

The character was chosen by Varda, and is capable of great mastery over this paradigm. Besides improving many of the previous powers, the magician can make effective use of the immaculate light to protect himself and to destroy darkness and corrupt creatures of shadow.

Effects: In this mastery level and in conjunction with Aulë the character can give bright light to a crystal[1]; this light pierces any kind of magic darkness [only the darkness of Ungoliant is immune to it]; if the magician does not know the Way of Aulë he can still cast this spell over an area, with a static light radius[2]. The character can choose to hear sound in any known location regardless of the distance ("*Varda's ear*")[3]. An aura of beauty protects the magician, so that he can add his Charisma to his DB[4]. He can ask for the "*Blessing of the stars*"[5]; obviously he must be able to see the stars to ask for this blessing. The character can summon a "*Light's armor*", an improved version of Varda's immaculate light[6]. He can also use the immaculate light of Varda in a "*Light dart*"[7]. Even if he can throw no lightning bolts, the wizard can charge himself (or his staff, or his hands) with great electric energy, turning himself in a "*Lightning rod*", ready to discharge on his enemies[8]; when discharging this energy, all creatures in a radius of ten meters in contact with the ground are going to receive its full discharge, and even the wizard himself is subject to the energies loosed. In conjunction with Aulë he can give daggers and swords [blades] the power to detect orcs, through their corrupt nature, making a blade shine with a soft blue light; this power can only be made at the time of creation of the weapon, and its costs[9] are in addition to any other power given to it.

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1   **Simple magic roll** in the Way of Varda; **effect area** 15 meters; **duration** ×1/10 rounds; the crystal must have received part of the spiritual essence of the magician (1 CP).
2   It has the same effects and difficulty as if cast on a crystal of Aulë.
3   A **magic roll** is needed for each location to be "heard"; if successful the character must make *perception* rolls to hear; 1 SP must be invested for each minute of "hearing". It is a requisite that the magician is personally familiar with the location specified
4   This is a permanent effect if the character wishes so. He must cast the effects with a **magic roll** each night, under the light of the stars.
5   Like "*Blessing of Varda*", for all actions and for one whole night.
6   DB and Resistances +1/2 against creatures of darkness and black magic; **effect area** oneself; **duration** ×1/10 rounds; **casting time** 1 round.
7   DF ×1, holy critical; **range** 100 meters; **casting time** 1 round; only affects corrupted spirits (demons, Nazgûl, undead). It is ineffective against living beings, however corrupt.
8   **Attack roll**; **DF** ×1/2; **Critical** electricity, unbalance and stun (×1/5 rounds); **range** 10 meter radius; the magician does not receive the ground damage, but the same critical effects as his opponents.
9   1 CP.

Divine Magic (••••••-•)

> *Varda hallowed the Silmarils, so that thereafter no mortal flesh, nor hands unclean, nor anything of evil will might touch them, but it was scorched and withered…*
> **QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of the Silmarils – pp. 68-69**

> *Those that looked up from afar [the battle of Gandalf and the Balrog] thought that the mountain was crowned with storm. Thunder they heard, and lightning, they said, smote upon Celebdil, and leaped back broken into tongues of fire.*
> **THE TWO TOWERS: The White Rider – p. 491**

At this level the magician has absolute mastery of the different powers of the Way of Varda, and he is also distinguished by being able to hallow and bless certain items and situations so that they repel any impurity.

Effects: On this mastery level the character can reproduce any effect from lower levels, but now without any kind of limitations[1]. In conjunction with Aulë the character can imbue a hallowed gem with permanent light[2]; it is said that Fëanor used this power in a great quantity of gems, creating the "Fëanorian lamps"; most of these lamps were stolen and destroyed by Morgoth and Ungoliant, but many had already been given as gifts to other Noldor elves, so that they survived and later came into Middleearth. The character can also hallow an item so that it is unusable by creatures of darkness ("*Hallowing of Varda*")[3]. In conjunction with Eönwë he can make a "*Sword of light*", giving the weapon a holy aura that helps him in just combat against

creatures of darkness[4]. In conjunction with Manwë lightning bolts can be called/ thrown[5] [lightning storm?]; this spell is highly destructive, but requires a great spiritual energy.

Epic Magic (••••••-••)

> *Then Varda went forth from the council, and she looked out from the height of Taniquetil, and beheld the darkness of Middle-earth beneath the innumerable stars, faint and far. Then she began a great labour, greatest of all the works of the Valar since their coming into Arda. She took the silver dews from the vats of Telperion, and therewith she made new stars and brighter against the coming of the Firstborn; wherefore she whose name out the deeps of time and the labours of Eä was Tintallë, the Kindler, was called after by the Elves Elentári, Queen of the Stars. Carnil and Luinil, Nénar and Lumbar, Alcarinquë and Elemmírë she wrought in that time, and many other of the ancient stars she gathered together and set as signs in the heavens of Arda: Wilwarin, Telumendil, Soronúmë, and Anarríma; and Menelmacar with his shining belt, that forebodes the Last Battle that shall be at the end of days. And high in the north as a challenge to Melkor she set the crown of seven mighty stars to swing, Valacirca, the Sickle of the Valar and sign of doom*
> **QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of the Coming of the Elves – pp. 44-45**

This mastery level is only used to change fundamental aspects of reality, including the stars and the state of purity of physical items. The changes are permanent, but require a great expenditure of spiritual power.

Yavanna Kementári, the Giver of Fruits and Queen of the Earth

(Intuition-dependent)

> *The spouse of Aulë is Yavanna, the Giver of Fruits. She is the lover of all things that grow in the earth, and all their countless forms she holds in her mind, from the trees like towers in forests long ago to the moss upon stones or the small and secret things in the mould. In reverence Yavanna is next to Varda among the Queens of the Valar. […] Kementári, Queen of the Earth, she is surnamed in the Eldarin tongue*
> **VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar – p. 18**

> *In that time the Valar brought order to the seas and the lands and the mountains, and Yavanna planted at last the seeds that she had long devised. […] Then the seeds that Yavanna had sown began swiftly to sprout and to burgeon, and there arose a multitude of growing things great and small, mosses and grasses and great ferns, and trees whose tops were crowned with cloud as they were living mountains, but whose feet were wrapped in a green twilight.*
> **QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of the Beginning of Days – pp. 27, 27-28)**

Apprentice (•)

The first things that a follower of Yavanna Kementári learns are to use the wild and cultivate the fruits of nature, and to understand the subtle secrets of Yavanna Kementári.

Effects: The character is able to invoke "*Yavanna's blessing*"which can manifest itself in three different ways: 1) po-

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1   The only limitations are those that the Storyteller (representing the will of Eru Ilúvatar), who must determine whether an effect is appropriate to the story or not; even then the spell effects would not fail, but they might not work out as the character imagined.

2   The effects are the same to the spell in the wizard mastery level, only that the light is eternal.

3   A hallowed item causes 1 HP/round to any corrupt creature (orcs, undead, utterly corrupt humans, etc.) with whom it comes into voluntary physical contact [that is, it cannot be used to "torture" anybody nor as an offensive weapon]; for the hallowing the magician must use part of his spiritual energy (1d6 CP).

4   Against evil/corrupted creatures the weapon gets a DM [Damage Modifier] +1 and an additional *holy* critical; it must be cast on a physical and unprofaned weapon [with which was never committed a murder], on which "*hallowing of Varda*" has been cast; **duration** roll result ×10 minutes.

5   The *Way of Varda* is used as a combat skill; **range** equal the magic roll in meters; DF ×3 [it can be distributed between different objectives, each additional one reduces the DF by one level], electricity critical; **cost** ×1/2 SP; **casting time** 1 round.

tentiating the skills of the character with wild fruits[1], crops[2] and the power of herbs[3]. With "*Yavanna's blessing*" crops can also be blessed. The character learns to differentiate useful plants from poisonous ones[4].

Novice (••)

"I wish that there were leisure now to walk among them [among the trees]: they have voices, and in time I might come to understand their thought."
THE TWO TOWERS: The Road to Isengard – pp. 534

"I wish that there were leisure now to walk among them [among the trees]: they have voices, and in time I might come to understand their thought."
THE TWO TOWERS: The Road to Isengard – pp. 534

For you little gardener and lover of trees," she said to Sam, "I have only a small gift." She put into his hand a little box of plain grey wood, unadorned save for a single silver rune upon the lid. "Here is set G for Galadriel," she said; "but also it may stand for garden in your tongue. In this box there is earth from my orchard, and such blessing as Galadriel has still to bestow is upon it. It will not keep you on your road, nor defend you against any peril; but if you keep it and see your home again at last, then perhaps it may reward you. Though you should find all barren and laid waste, there will be few gardens in Middle-earth that will bloom like your garden, if you sprinkle this earth there. Then you may remember Galadriel, and catch a glimpse far off of Lórien, that you have seen only in our winter. For our spring and our summer are gone by, and they will never be seen on earth again save in memory."
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Farewell to Lórien – p. 486

With that leaf she staunched Beren's wound, and by her arts and by her love she healed him
QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of Beren and Lúthien – p. 209

Many of the trees seemed asleep, or as unaware of him as any other creature that merely passed by; but some quivered, and some raised up their branches above his head as he approached.
THE TWO TOWERS: Treebeard – p. 456

"I do not think the wood feels evil, whatever tales may say," said Legolas. He stood under the eaves of the forest, stooping forward, as if he were listening, and peering with wide eyes into the shadows. "No, it is not evil; or what evil is in it is far away. I catch only the faintest echoes of dark places where the hearts of the trees are black. There is no malice near us; but there is watchfulness, and anger."
THE TWO TOWERS: The White Rider – pp. 479-480

"These are the strangest trees that ever I saw," he said; "and I have seen many an oak grow from acorn to ruinous age."
THE TWO TOWERS: The Road to Isengard – pp. 533

The dwarves then noticed that they had come to the edge of a ring where elf-fires had been. Whether it was one of those they had seen the night before, they could not tell. But it seemed that some good magic lingered in such spots, which the spiders did not like. At any rate here the light was greener, and the boughs less thick and threatening, and they had a chance to rest and draw a breath.
THE HOBBIT: Flies and Spiders – p. 162

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1   *Survival* +1/5; **area of effect** oneself; **duration** one roll (that may last some hours).
2   *Agriculture* +1/5; **area of effect** oneself or one crop land; **duration** one extended roll (days, weeks, or even months).
3   *Herbalism* +1/5; **area of effect** oneself; **duration** one roll (that may last some hours).
4   **Simple magic roll**; **area of effect** oneself; **duration** one roll. This effect only serves to understand the basics: if they are *useful* or if they are *poisonous* (even if the character doesn't know any similar plant), but nothing more specific.

Following the logic of fertility the character can double the quantity of plant-based food harvested with his own hands ("*Yavanna's nourishment*")[1]. He learns to hear the "*Voices of the plants*"[2]. At this level the character learns to walk without the plants preventing it[3]. He can take maximum advantage from herbs[4]. And he makes plant-based food especially nutritious[5]. In conjunction with Varda he can bless a clearing or similar natural place so that corrupt creatures cannot enter it[6].

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1 The magician receives a DM +1 to the food quantity harvested with the skill *Survival*.
2 With a **simple magic roll** he can understand the conversations of nearby plants, and so understand what themes are of interest. One should remember that plants have very alien logic and interests to a human being, and that most of this information is going to be of no help for an adventurer. Anyway he can learn that the trees begin to feel the proximity of winter or spring, the presence of woodcutters or orcs (which for the trees are the same thing), some kind of corruption or sickness affecting plants, etc.
3 **Simple magic roll**; **duration** ½ hour; **area of effect** oneself; all penalties for moving through vegetation are ignored.
4 **Simple magic roll**; he gets two uses per dose, which cannot be further multiplied with this effect.
5 **Simple magic roll**; there are two servings per ration, but these cannot be multiplied again with this effect.
6 **Area of effect:** ×1/10 meter radius; **duration:** ×1/5 days. Any corrupt creature that enters this area takes the same damage as with the "*Purify*" spell of the Way of Varda ("Magician" level). A *Sense of magic* roll is enough to understand the nature of this clearing.

Journeyman (•••)

"It is rather a strange and sad story," he went on after a pause. *"When the world was young, and the woods were wide and wild, the Ents and the Entwives — and there were Entmaidens then: ah! the loveliness of Fimbrethil, of Wandlimb the lightfooted, in the days of our youth! — they walked together and they housed together. But our hearts did not go on growing in the same way: the Ents gave their thought to other things, for the Ents loved the great trees, and the wild woods, and the slopes of the high hills; and they drank of the mountain-streams, and ate only such fruit as the trees let fall in their path; and they learned of the Elves and spoke with the Trees. But the Entwives gave their minds to the lesser trees, and to the meads in the sunshine beyond the feet of the forests; and they saw the sloe in the thicket, and the wild apple and the cherry blossoming in spring, and the green herbs in the waterlands in summer, and the seeding grasses in the autumn fields. They did not desire to speak with these things; but they wished them to hear and obey what was said to them. The Entwives ordered them to grow according to their wishes, and bear leaf and fruit to their liking; for the Entwives desired order, and plenty, and peace (by which they meant that things should remain where they had set them). So the Entwives made gardens to live in. But we Ents went on wandering, and we only came to the gardens now and again. Then when the Darkness came in the North, the Entwives crossed the Great River, and made new gardens, and tilled new fields, and we saw them more seldom. After the Darkness was overthrown the land of the Entwives blossomed richly, and their fields were full of corn. Many men learned the crafts of the Entwives and honoured them greatly; but we were only a legend to them, a secret in the heart of the forest. Yet here we still are, while all the gardens of the Entwives are wasted: Men call them the Brown Lands now."*
THE TWO TOWERS: Treebeard – pp. 464-465

On the further edge of this broad hill-back they stayed their march and crawled for hiding underneath a tangled knot of thorns. Their twisted boughs, stooping to the ground, were overridden by a clambering maze of old briars. Deep inside there was a hollow hall, raftered with dead branch and bramble, and roofed with the first leaves and shoots of spring.
THE TWO TOWERS: Journey to the Cross-roads – p. 683

I can give you a drink that will keep you green and growing for a long, long while.
Treebeard in THE TWO TOWERS: Treebeard – pp. 455

They still have voices, and can speak with the Ents — that is why they are called Huorns, Treebeard says — but they have become queer and wild. Dangerous. I should be terrified of meeting them, if there were no true Ents about to look after them.
THE TWO TOWERS: Flotsam and Jetsam – p. 551

At this mastery level the character learns to enhance the growth of plants[1]. He can actively communicate with plants[2]. The character can triple the plant-based food harvested with his own hands[3]. He can identify/detect the kinds of plants in an area for four hours[4]. He can increase the yield of healing herbs that he uses[5]. He can see and look through the plants in his immediate surroundings, as if his senses were transferred to the leaves and roots[6]. The journeyman can also give (natural) forms to a small group of plants, so that they serve him and his friends as shelter or hideout[7]. He can *"Entangle"* his enemies with the vegetation of the place[8]. He can try to calm down one or more Huorns, so that they don't attack him or his friends[9]; this spell could be also be used to counteract other violent spells of the Way of Yavanna.

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1 **Simple magic roll**; it reduces the growing time of a plant to a half; **area of effect** one plant.
2 **Simple magic roll**; **duration:** one conversation; **area of effect:** oneself; the character can converse "normally" and exchange information with any plant; remember that plants have different perceptions of time and reality from humans; the character talks in his own language, but he gets the answers in form of whispers of the leaves, a creaking of the branches or even through the vibration of the bark or of the ground.
3 **Simple magic roll**; **area of effect:** oneself; **duration:** one roll; DM +2 to *Survival* (for harvesting food).
4 **Simple magic roll**; **area of effect:** one zone that the character can traverse in four hours; he receives information of a number of plants equal to his magic roll ×1/10, beginning with the simplest (but differentiating which are of interest to the character: herbs, trees, flowers, food, etc.); this roll can always be repeated, but its result are not cumulative [that is, one can improve on a roll, but not add to the previous results].
5 **Simple magic roll**; he gets 3 applications per dose, but these cannot be multiplied again with this effect.
6 *Perception* +1/3; **range:** oneself; **area of effect:** ×1/10 meters radius (there must be plants in the area); **duration:** one perception roll.
7 *Stealth* +1/3.
8 **Area of effect:** ×1/10 meters radius; **duration:** ×1/5 rounds; every affected creature suffers a penalty to its movement (MV) of ×1/10, and to its activity of ×1/3; the plants do not "move" to grasp the victims, it's effect is more subtle, where branches and roots hang on the clothes, feet, arms and hair of the victims, impairing their actions.
9 Huorns are by nature aggressive, and will attack anything they consider a menace (including "two legged beings"). The character can use this spell as a "social skill" to calm down the Huorns he meets.

Magician (••••)

Inside it [the box of Galadriel] was filled with a grey dust, soft and fine, in the middle of which was a seed, like a small nut with a silver shale. [...] "There is not much here, and I expect every grain has a value.

So Sam planted saplings in all the places where specially beautiful or beloved trees had been destroyed, and he put a grain of the precious dust in the soil at the root of each. He went up and down the Shire in this labour; but if he paid special attention to Hobbiton and Bywater no one blamed him. And at the end he found that he still had a little of the dust left; so he went to the Three-Farthing Stone, which is as near the centre of the Shire as no matter, and cast it in the air with his blessing. [...] Spring surpassed his wildest hopes. His trees began to sprout and grow, as if time was in a hurry and wished to make one year do for twenty. [...] Altogether 1420 in the Shire was a marvelous year. Not only was there wonderful sunshine and delicious rain, in due times and perfect measure, but there seemed something more: an air of richness and growth, and a gleam of a beauty beyond that of mortal summers that flicker and pass upon this Middle-earth. [...] The fruit was so plentiful that young hobbits very nearly bathed in strawberries and cream; and later they sat on the lawns under the plum-trees and ate, until they had made piles of stones like small pyramids or the heaped skulls of a conqueror, and then they moved on. And no one was ill, and everyone was pleased, except those who had to mow the grass.

In the Southfarthing the vines were laden, and the yield of 'leaf' was astonishing; and everywhere there was so much corn that at Harvest every barn was stuffed. The Northfarthing barley was so fine that the beer of 1420 malt was long remembered and became a byword. Indeed a generation later one might hear an old gaffer in an inn, after a good pint of well-earned ale, put down his mug with a sigh: 'Ah! that was proper fourteen-twenty, that was!'
THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Grey Havens – pp. 999-1001

"The Tree in the Court of the Fountain is still withered and barren. When shall I see a sign that it will ever be otherwise?"

"Turn your face from the green world, and look where all seems barren and cold!" said Gandalf.

Then Aragorn turned, and there was a stony slope behind him running down from the skirts of the snow; and as he looked he was aware that alone there in the waste a growing thing stood. And he climbed to it, and saw that out of the very edge of the snow there sprang a sapling tree no more than three foot high. Already it had put forth young leaves long and shapely, dark above and silver beneath, and upon its slender crown it bore one small cluster of flowers whose white petals shone like the sunlit snow.
THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Steward and the King – p. 950

Merry and Pippin dragged themselves forward and lay down their backs to the willow-trunk. Behind them the great cracks gaped wide to receive them as the tree swayed and creaked. [...] Frodo was in the water close to the edge, and a great tree-root seemed to be over him and holding him down [...] The crack, by which he had laid himself, had closed together, so that not a chink could be seen. Merry was trapped: another crack had closed about his waist; his legs lay outside, but the rest of him was inside a dark opening, the edges of which gripped like a pair of pincers
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: The Old Forest – pp. 164, 165, 166

"No, no!" said Gimli. "Let us leave them [the trees]! I guess their thought already: hatred of all that go on two legs; and their speech is of crushing and strangling."
THE TWO TOWERS: The Road to Isengard – pp. 533

Treebeard lifted two great vessels and stood them on the table. They seemed to be filled with water; but he held his hands over them, and immediately they began to glow, one with a golden and the other with a rich green light; and the blending of the two lights lit the bay, as if the sun of summer was shining through a roof of young leaves. Looking back, the hobbits saw that the trees in the court had also begun to glow, faintly at first, but steadily quickening, until every leaf was edged with light: some green, some gold, some red as copper; while the tree-trunks looked like pillars moulded out of luminous stone. [...] The drink was like water, indeed very like the taste of the draughts they had drunk from the Entwash near the borders of the forest, and yet there was some scent or savour in it which they could not describe: it was faint, but it reminded them of the smell of a distant wood borne from afar by a cold breeze at night. The effect of the draught began at the toes, and rose steadily through every limb, bringing refreshment and vigour as it coursed upwards, right to the tips of the hair. Indeed the hobbits felt the hair on their heads was actually standing up, waving and curling and growing. [...] He poured them out two full bowls from a Stone jar; but from a different jar. The taste was not the same as it had been the night before: it was earthier and richer, more sustaining and food-like, so to speak.
THE TWO TOWERS: Treebeard – pp. 459, 460, 467

It was the Huorns, or so the Ents call them in "short language". Treebeard won't say much about them, but I think they are Ents that have become almost like trees, at least to look at. They stand here and there in the wood or under its eaves, silent, watching endlessly over the trees; but deep in the darkest dales there are hundreds and hundreds of them, I believe.
THE TWO TOWERS: Flotsam and Jetsam – p. 551

At this mastery level the character can grow a plant in only a few hours[1]. He can also awaken a tree for a short time ("*Short Huorn*")[2]. He can see and hear through the plants of the place[3]. He can also discover by "chance" a normal herb or fruit that he knows in an appropriate location not previously searched[4]. The character can also let loose the "*Ire of Yavanna*", making the trees "attack" his enemies with their branches[5]. The character can "*Call Ents*"[6]; to summon an Ent who lives in a given wood to come to the magician after a certain amount of time; the image would be Treebeard blowing his "horn". And he can also create for himself any weapon of wood or branches[7].

> From the ear [of the Corn of Yavanna] to the wafer [Lembas] none were permitted to handle this grain, save those elven-women who were called Yavannildi (or by the Sindar Ivonwin), the maidens of Yavanna; and the art of the making of the lembas, which they learned of the Valar, was a secret among them, and so ever remained.
> **THE PEOPLES OF MIDDLE-EARTH: Of Lembas – p. 404**

Special ability: Baking of Lembas (•)

Once the character achieves the "magician" mastery level in the Way of Yavanna, she can learn the secret of the making of *Lembas*. Once learnt, this secret can be used like any other spell of the Way of Yavanna of the magician mastery level. For this the *Yavannildi* must use the *Corn of Yavanna* (produced with the "*holy crop*" spell in the Wizard mastery level) as the chief ingredient.

Cost: 1 DP.

Requisites: to be an elven-woman, to be a *Yavannildi*.

Wizard (•••••)

> Some of my kin look just like trees now, and need something great to rouse them; and they speak only in whispers. But some of my trees are limb-lithe, and many can talk to me. Elves began it, of course, waking trees up and teaching them to speak and learning their tree-talk. They always wished to talk to everything, the old Elves did.
> **Treebeard in THE TWO TOWERS: Treebeard – p. 457**

> Inside it [the box of Galadriel] was filled with a grey dust, soft and fine, in the middle of which was a seed, like a small nut with a silver shale. [...] The Little silver nut he planted in the Party Field where the tree had once been; and he wondered what would come of it. All through the winter he remained as patient as he could, and tried to restrain himself from going round constantly to see if anything was happening. [...] In the Party Field a beautiful young sapling leaped up: it had silver bark and long leaves and burst into golden flowers in April. It was indeed a mallorn, and it was the wonder of the neighborhood. In after years, as it grew in grace and beauty, it was known far and wide and people would come long journeys to see it: the only mallorn west of the Mountains and east of the Sea, and one of the finest in the world.
> **THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Grey Havens– pp. 999, 1000**

> Now and again they thought they Heard an answer, a hum or a quiver of sound, that seemed to come out of the earth, or from boughs above their heads, or perhaps from the boles of the trees…
> **THE TWO TOWERS: Treebeard – p. 468**

> He [Treebeard] began to pull down a bit more of the walls, in a leisurely sort of way, just to amuse himself.
> **THE TWO TOWERS: Flotsam and Jetsam – p. 555**

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1 **Simple magic roll**; the character must stay by the plant all the time, talking to it and singing magic words; **cost:** 1d20 SP.
2 **Area of effect:** one tree; **range:** 1 meter; **duration:** ×1/10 minutes; after 1d10 rounds of "waking up", the tree is to be treated like a Huorn under the control of the character; the power of the Huorn depends on the magic roll and the size of the affected tree.
3 *Perception* +1/3; **range:** oneself; **area of effect:** a radius equal to the magic roll in meters (there must be plants in the area), this area moves with the character as center; **duration:** the magic roll in minutes; this is an improved version of the spell of the previous level , its effects extending over a greater area and lasting for its whole duration; this improved perception will not impair the direct perception of the character, but he cannot use this improved perception if he needs to concentrate in his immediate surroundings.
4 **Simple magic roll**; to end this spell a character must make a new *perception* roll with an Absurd difficulty (-50%); this spell can be used together with "*Holy tree*", described in the next mastery level (Wizard), as in the case of the White Tree discovered by Aragorn and Gandalf.
5 **Simple magic roll**; a Concussion attack ×1/3 to each enemy; **duration:** ×1/10 rounds; **area of effect:** 5 meter diameter.
6 **Simple magic roll**; the Ent presents himself after 1d12 hours; the Ent has no compunction to obey commands from the magician, who must convince it if he wants any kind of service.
7 **Simple magic roll:** ×1/5 rounds; this weapon has no extra magic bonuses, but works as any "normal", even metal weapon (like a sword); the difficulty to create the weapon is added to the normal spell difficulty.

There is a great power in them [the Huorns], and they seem able to wrap themselves in shadow: it is difficult to see them moving. But they do. They can move very quickly, if they are angry. You stand looking at the weather, maybe, or listening to the rustling of the wind, and then suddenly you find that you are in the middle of a wood with great groping trees all around you. [...] the Ents with all their rustling Huorns behind. We could not see them, of course, but the whole air was full of creaking. It was very dark, a cloudy night. They moved at a great speed as soon as they had left the hills, and made a noise like a rushing wind. The Moon did not appear through the clouds, and not long after midnight there was a tall wood all round the north side of Isengard.
THE TWO TOWERS: Flotsam and Jetsam – p. 551

In this mastery level the character can wake up a "*Huorn*" permanently[1]. The character can wake a sleeping Ent ("*Waking of the Ent*")[2]. The character can duplicate the effects of any herb he knows[3]. He can also break rocks with his hands as if they were roots ("*Ent roots*")[4].

He can bless specific seeds so that they grow to be "*holy trees*"[5]. The "*holy crop*" spell allows the character to grow the *Corn of Yavanna*, used for the baking of *Lembas*[6]. The character can turn his skin into bark ("*Barkskin*") to protect himself from physical damage[7]. The magician can turn himself into a plant and regenerate himself by drawing on the strength of the earth[8]. He can communicate with far away plants[9] and send messages at a distance ("*The Face in the Trunk*")[10]. And finally he can raise up a "*Hawthorn hedge*"[11]; this power can only function if there is an apt soil for plant life (even if it is arid: if some kind of plants can grow there, it can be used).

Divine magic (•••••‑•)

In the form of a woman she is tall and robed in green; but at times she takes other shapes. Some there are who have seen her standing like a tree under heaven, crowned with the Sun; and from all its branches there spilled a golden dew upon the barren earth, and it grew green with corn; but the roots of the tree were in the waters of Ulmo, and the winds of Manwë spoke in its leaves.
VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar – p. 18

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VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar – p. 18

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1   **Area of effect:** one tree; **range:** 1 meter; **duration:** permanent; the Huorn is not under the control of the character.

2   **Simple magic roll**; to use this spell the character must first identify a sleeping Ent, and cast the spell on it; he must overcome a resisted roll from the Ent if it does not wish to be awoken; if the character succeeds the Ent will "wake up" after 1d20 hours (with a penalty to its activity of -30% until it wakes completely).

3   **Simple magic roll**; the difficulty to find the herb is added to the normal spell difficulty.

4   After making an initial **simple magic roll** he can use his magic skill as an attack (DF ×1/3), this spell ignores any damage reduction; common rock has 20 HP per cubic foot, with a DR [Damage Reduction] of 3 and is immune to critical damage (open-ended rolls do not get a new roll in the critical table, but add to the base damage, ignoring the DR for this attack).

5   **Simple magic roll**; **area of effect:** one seed; the tree grows normally, but it is immune to any kind of normal sickness that could affect it; it is susceptible to physical damage like any other tree; this tree has the blessing of Yavanna, and represents a tree without the taint of Morgoth, so long as it is not intentionally desecrated by the Shadow; for the yavannildi a holy tree of this kind is the equivalent of an altar or a potent magic focus; any magic from the Way of Yavanna invoked under the crown of this tree receives +1% for each 10 years of live of the tree, to a maximum of 500 years (+50%); its growing cannot be quickened without tainting it.

6   The corn grows in a three month period, like any other corn. This time can not be speeded without desecrating it. At the end of this period the character must make a **simple magic roll** to see if the process was successful.

7   DR +1 (not cumulative with artificial DR), *Stealth* +1/3; **area of effect:** oneself; **duration:** ×1/5 rounds.

8   Regeneration 1 HP/minute; the character cannot take any action while the spell is in effect; **duration:** concentration.

9   **Simple magic roll**; **range:** equal to the magic roll in km. If he has previously invested 1 CP into a specific tree, this range multiplies ×10. The communication is basic, with an intelligence limited by the plant nature of the tree. It can also be used for communication with individual Ents or Huorns. It does not help in "detecting" Ents or Huorns.

10   Paying 1d10 SP per sentence (round), the magician can use the powers of the previous spell. In this way an image of his face forms in a tree trunk (a living tree in the correct place is needed), and he can "talk" to the creatures present. To locate specific persons the magician must make a *Sense magic* roll with a -70% penalty.

11   **Simple magic roll**; **range:** 10 meters to the central point; **area of effect:** a hedge of one meter deep, two meter high and as many meters wide as the roll ×1/20; the hawthorn hedge can have any form the magician wills, if it is physically possible; **duration:** permanent, but it can be destroyed like any plant hedge and will dry out if there is not enough moisture; the hawthorn hedge grows slowly, and only reaches its final size and form at the end of the casting time of the spell; the magician must concentrate this whole time, or besides stopping growing, it will dry out immediately and become brittle, breakable with bare hands (even if this causes a DF ×1/10 to unprotected skin).

At this mastery level the character can turn himself into an "*Ent*"[1]. He can awaken a whole "*forest of Huorns*"[2]. The character can cover his skin with thorns ("*Thornskin*")[3]. The magician (usually only Yavanna herself and the Maiar in her service) can turn his body into spores and so to travel with the wind (using the way of Manwë the character can control the direction and speed of the wind, increasing the effectiveness of this spell).

Epic magic (••••••-••)

Before its western gate [of Valmar] there was a green mound, Ezellohar, that is named also Corollairë; and Yavanna hallowed it, and she sat there long upon the green grass and sang a song of power, in which was set all her thought of things that grow in the earth. […] And as they watched, upon the mound there came forth two slender shoots; and silence was over all the world in that hour, nor was there any other sound save the chanting of Yavanna. Under her song the saplings grew and became fair and tall, and came to flower; and thus there awoke in the world the Two Trees of Valinor. Of all things which Yavanna made they have most renown, and about their fate all the tales of the Elder Days are woven.
QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of the Beginning of Days – p. 31

"All have their worth," said Yavanna, "and each contribute to the worth of the others. But the kelvar can flee or defend themselves, whereas the olvar that grow cannot. And among these I hold trees dear. Long in the growing, swift shall they be in the felling, and unless they pay toll with fruit upon bough little mourned in their passing. So I see in my thought. Would that the trees might speak on behalf of all things that have roots, and punish those that wrong them!"
QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of Aulë and Yavanna – p. 40

The two great works of epic magic from Yavanna were the creation of the Two Trees of Valinor, and the creation (with the permission of Eru Ilúvatar) of Ents.

Estë, the Gentle
(Intuition-dependent)

Estë the gentle, healer of hurts and of weariness, is his spouse [of Irmo]. Grey is her raiment; and rest is her gift. She walks not by day, but sleeps upon an island in the tree-shadowed lake of Lórellin.
VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar – p. 19

The way of Estë is the way of the healers and that of restfulness.

In many of the healings described by Tolkien, healing herbs play a central role. Even if not always taken together in one spell, the coordinated use of the *Way of Estë* and that of *Yavanna*, and of the *healing* and *herbalism* skills, can (and do) achieve amazing effects.

Whilst the *Way of Estë* usually applies only to flesh and bone creatures, in conjunction with Yavanna it can be also used on plants. It must always be a living being, and there must always be at least a tiny spark of life still present.

Requisite:

For instance, the arts of healing, and all that touches on the care of the body, are among all the Eldar most practiced by the nissi [elven women]; whereas it was the elven-men who bore arms at need. And the Eldar deemed that the dealing of death, even when lawful or under necessity, diminished the power of healing, and that the virtue of the nissi in this matter was due rather to their abstaining from hunting or war than to any special power that went with their womanhood.
MORGOTH'S RING: Laws and Customs of the Eldar – pp. 213-214

This magic way is special because it is opposed to the way of the warrior. Any

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1   **Simple magic roll**; **duration:** ×1/10 minutes; the transformation takes the whole conjuring time; the modified characteristics of the character are: Size category +1 (this implies more HPs), DR 3, ST +20, AG -10 (minimum 1, this modifies also the MV and Initiative), fist damage ×1 (Size category *Big*), concussion or constriction critical, he causes the same structural damage as with the spell "*Ent roots*", fire vulnerability.

2   The same as "*Huorn*", but he can wake a number of Huorns equal to the magic roll ×1/3; obviously it is needed enough trees for this spell to function.

3   DR +1, *Stealth* +1/2 and extra piercing critical in unarmed combat.

healer that exercises physical violence against another creature, regardless of whether it is a child, an orc or a deer, is going to lose *Advancement Points* (AP)[1] both in the *Way of Estë* and in the *healing* skill. If he kills a creature he will lose 1d6 in <u>each</u> of these skills; but if he only wounds it, he is going to lose just one AP in each.

[<u>Design note:</u> This article interprets the "hands of the king" spoken of by Ioreth in "The Return of the King" not to be the magic healing ability of Aragorn, but the gift to become a great healer at the same time as being a great warrior.]

Apprentice (•)

> *The dwarves revived him, and doctored his scorches as well as they could; but it was a long time before the hair on the back of his head and his heels grew properly again…*
> **THE HOBBIT: Inside Information – p. 217)**

> *"You have talked and reckoned more than is good for you," said Gandalf. "How do the side and shoulder feel now?"*
> *"I don't know," Frodo answered. "They don't feel at all: which is an improvement, but" — he made an effort — "I can move my arm again a little. Yes, it is coming back to life. It is not cold," he added, touching his left hand with his right.*
> *"Good!" said Gandalf. "It is mending fast. You will soon be sound again. Elrond has cured you: he has tended you for days, ever since you were brought in."*
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Many Meetings – p. 292**

The first thing that the character learns is to use "*Estë's blessing*" in his healing praxis[2]. The character can diagnose the condition of normal physical wounds after one round of examination ("*Wisdom of Estë*")[3]. And he has the gift of recovering in half the normal time[4], if he sleeps (it does not matter if this is in a king's bed or in a camp; what is important is the rest in sleep).

Novice (••)

> *Then finding that his hand was burned she washed it with tears and bound it about with a strip of her raiment, and she kissed him and cried on him again to awake.*
> **QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of Túrin Turambar – p. 267)**

> *Next morning they set out again soon after the sunrise. There was frost in the air, and the sky was pale clear blue. The hobbits felt refreshed, as if they had a night of unbroken sleep.*
> **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: A Knife in the Dark – p. 249**

> *They were too eager to be surprised at the remarkable way in which the cuts and sores of their captivity had healed and their vigour had returned.*
> **THE TWO TOWERS: Treebeard – pp. 451-452**

At this mastery level the character achieves a restful sleep and needs only half the normal sleep time[5]. The character heals twice the HP of his patients[6] and reduces to half the recuperation time for broken bones, etc. The "*Wisdom of Estë*" improves in two ways: first the magician can understand the physical condition of a patient[7], and second he is able to diagnose diseases[8]. The character keeps his senses alert even when he sleeps, so that he can make normal *perception* rolls in such circumstances.

© *'Estë'* by Olga Kukhtenkova

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1   Like "ranks of skill" in other role playing games.
2   *Healing* +1/5.
3   With a **simple magic roll** the magician knows <u>either</u> the amount of HP that the creature has lost , <u>or</u> the total HP of the creature (at this mastery level one cannot learn <u>both</u> facts, even by repeatedly casting the spell).
4   2d6 HP/day instead of 1d6, etc.
5   Four hours instead of eight, applicable only to himself.
6   DM +1 in *Healing*.
7   In reference to HP: maximum and lost HP. It can also be applied to check wounds to the skin, bones and muscles, to check the condition of broken bones, sprains and burns, including the recuperation time and activity penalties, but not to diagnose the condition of inner organs nor of blood flow.
8   The disease's difficulty adds to the basic spell difficulty.

Journeyman (•••)

With that leaf she staunched Beren's wound, and by her arts and by her love she healed him.
QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of Beren and Lúthien– p. 209

Sam's cut was burning like fire, and his head felt light. […] Aragorn tended Sam and Frodo. Sam's wound was not deep, but it looked ugly, and Aragorn's face was grave as he examined it. After a moment he looked up with relief.

"Good luck, Sam!" he said. "Many have received worse than this in payment for the slaying of their first orc. The cut is not poisoned, as the wounds of orc-blades too often are. It should heal well when I have tended it. Bathe it when Gimli has heated water."

He opened his pouch and drew out some withered leaves. "They are dry, and some of their virtue has gone," he said, "but here I have still some of the leaves of athelas that I gathered near Weathertop. Crush one in the water, and wash the wound clean, and I will bind it. […] While the others set the food ready, Aragorn bathed the hurts with water in which athelas was steeped. The pungent fragrance filled the dell, and all those who stooped over the steaming water felt refreshed and strengthened. Soon Frodo felt the pain leave him, and his breath grew easy: though he was stiff and sore to the touch for many days. Aragorn bound some soft pads of cloth to his side.
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Lothlórien – pp. 435, 435-436, 436-437

So at last Faramir and Éowyn and Meriadoc were laid in beds in the Houses of Healing; and there they were tended well. For though all lore was in these latter days fallen from its fullness of old, the leechcraft of Gondor was still wise, and skilled in the healing of wound and hurt, and all such sickness as east of the Sea mortal men were subject to. Save old age only. For that they had found no cure…
THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Houses of Healing – p. 842

As the evening drew on, Frodo woke up again, and he found that he no longer felt in need of rest or sleep, but had a mind for food and drink, and probably for singing and story-telling afterwards. He got out of bed and discovered that his arm was already nearly as useful again as it had ever been.
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Many Meetings – p. 297

In the last few days the poor beast had improved wonderfully; it already seemed fatter and stronger, and had begun to show an affection for its masters, specially for Sam.
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Flight to the Ford – p. 267

Enchantment healed his weary feet That over hills were doomed to roam…
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: A Knife in the Dark – p. 259

It was clear as spring water and had no taste, and it did not feel either cool or warm in the mouth; but strength and vigour seemed to flow into all their limbs as they drank it.
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Flight to the Ford – p. 282

Aragorn went first to Faramir, and then to the Lady Éowyn, and last to Merry. When he had looked on the faces of the sick and seen their hurts he sighed. "Here I must put forth all such power and skill as is given to me," he said.
THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Houses of Healing – p. 845

At this mastery level the character improves his healing skill even further[1]. His "*Wisdom of Estë*" reaches new levels, being able to diagnose poisoning[2]. He can heal diseases[3]. The character regenerates three times as fast as normal if he sleeps or rests normally. The magician is able to heal weariness in others, as though the subject had a complete night's rest[4]; this power can only be used once before the subject really sleeps. And the magician is able to take care of the health of a great quantity of people[5].

Magician (••••)

"Men of Rohan!" he cried. "Are there no leeches among you? She is hurt, to the death maybe, but I deem that she yet lives." And he held the bright-burnished vambrace that was upon his arm before her cold lips, and behold! a little mist was laid on it hardly to be seen.
THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Battle of the Pelennor Fields – p. 827

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1 *Healing* + 1/3.
2 Only after identifying the poison (taking into account its difficulty) the magician can try to counter it with a *Herbalism* roll (again taking into account the corresponding difficulties).
3 Applying the corresponding difficulties. It is an **extended magic roll** measured in days. The *Way of Estë* is applied and not the *healing* skill.
4 **Simple magic roll**; the subject recovers as if he had had ×1/10 hours of uninterrupted sleep.
5 For this he can make an extra roll in the *Way of Estë*. In this mastery level the number of people he can take care of at the same time is determined by this second roll, with a DF of ×1/50. Each superior level this multiplier reduces by one level (×1/20, ×1/10, ×1/5 and ×1/3).

He searched the wound on Frodo's shoulder with his fingers, and his face grew graver, as if what he learned disquieted him. But Frodo felt the chill lessen in his side and arm; a little warmth crept down from his shoulder to his hand, and the pain grew easier. The dusk of evening seemed to grow lighter about him, as if a cloud had been withdrawn. He saw his friends' faces more clearly again, and a measure of new hope and strength returned.
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Flight to the Ford – p. 281

Strangely enough, Frodo felt refreshed. He had been dreaming. The dark shadow had passed, and a fair vision had visited him in this land of disease. Nothing remained of it in his memory, yet because of it he felt glad and lighter of heart. His burden was less heavy on him.
THE TWO TOWERS: The Passage of the Marshes – p. 620

Then suddenly he caught him as he swayed, and lifting him gently, carried him to the bed and laid him there, and covered him warmly. At once he fell into a deep sleep.
THE TWO TOWERS: The Window on the West – p. 666

At this mastery level the character improves his healing skills yet again[1]. The "*Wisdom of Estë*" improves also, being able to diagnose diseases and wounds in the inner organs. The use of the *healing* skill gets a truly magical touch, making possible the almost immediate healing of normal wounds[2]. If the magician asks for the protection of Estë[3] and sleeps for a full twelve hours, he receives a +50% temporary bonus to his HP[4]. And finally he can induce a restful sleep that triples the healing speed of his patients ("*Rest of Estë*").

Wizard (•••••)

Gandalf moved his chair to the bedside, and took a good look at Frodo. The colour had come back to his face, and his eyes were clear, and fully awake and aware. He was smiling, and there seemed to be little wrong with him. But to the wizard's eye there was a faint change, just a hint as it were of transparency, about him, and especially about the left hand that lay outside upon the coverlet.
"Still that must be expected," said Gandalf to himself. "He is not half through yet, and to what he will come in the end not even Elrond can foretell."
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: Many Meetings – pp. 294-295

Would that there were kings in Gondor, as there were once upon a time, they say! For it is said in old lore: The hands of the king are the hands of a healer. And so the rightful king could ever be known. [...] Now Aragorn knelt beside Faramir, and held a hand upon his brow. And those that watched felt that some great struggle was going on. For Aragorn's face grew grey with weariness; and even and anon he called the name of Faramir, but each time more faintly to their hearing, as if Aragorn himself was removed from them, and walked afar in some dark vale, calling for one that was lost. [...] Suddenly Faramir stirred, and he opened his eyes, and he looked on Aragorn who bent over him...
THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Houses of Healing– pp. 842, 847

The character can double his effectiveness as a healer[5] and he is able to heal wounds and damage to the inner organs, eyes and brain[6]. He can "*Lay on hands*", even if their powers are limited[7]. In this level the character can recover his entire HP after one night (day) of rest[8]. He can cause normal diseases in himself or in others to be cured after a single night of sleep[9].

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1 *Healing* +1/2.
2 Applies only to lost HP, and not to other kinds of wounds or diseases; the magician must make a **simple magic roll** in the Way of Estë, and spend 1d6 SP.
3 **Simple magic roll**.
4 ×1/10 hours.
5 For a total of DM +2 in the HP recovered with the *healing* skill.
6 The corresponding difficulties apply. It is an **extended magic roll** measured in days. As in previous levels, for diseases, the *Way of Estë* is to be used and not the *healing* skill.
7 Reproduces the "immediate" healing of HP of the previous level, but its effects are truly immediate, reducing the casting time to one round; the character must pay 1 SP per use.
8 This is not automatic: he must make a **simple magic roll** in the *Way of Estë*.
9 With a **simple magic roll**; note the requisite that they must be "normal" diseases.

Divine magic (•••••-•)

> Then the fruit was planted in secret, and it was blessed by Amandil; and a shoot arose from it and sprouted in the spring. But when its first leaf opened then Isildur, who had lain long and come near to death, arose and was troubled no more by his wounds.
> **AKALLABÊTH: The Downfall of Númenor – p. 327**

At this mastery level the character can perform the laying on of hands, making miraculous healings of diseases (of any kind) and poisoning[1]. The character can incite a miraculous state of regeneration[2]. The effectiveness of his *healing* skill is tripled[3]. He is able to heal any kind of afflictions (broken bones, diseases, etc.) after one night (day) of sleep. With a successful *healing* roll he can heal permanent afflictions (blindness, deafness, lameness, paralysis, etc.)[4]. And finally he can "*return to life*" a dead body, so long as the spirit has not departed to the *halls of Mandos*[5]; in conjunction with Námo he can "*resurrect*" any being (except humans, because it contradicts their nature, and is an *únat*), no matter how much time has passed since its death[6]. The "*resurrection*" power depends on the judgment of the stern Námo, which the Storyteller may deem to be refused.

Epic Magic (•••••-••)

> But when at last the Valar learned that the Noldor had indeed passed out of Aman and were come back into Middle-earth, they arose and began to set forth in deeds those counsels which they had taken in thought for the redress of the evils of Melkor. Then Manwë bade Yavanna and Nienna[7] to put forth all their powers upon the Trees. But the tears of Nienna availed not to heal their mortal wounds; and for a long while Yavanna sang alone in the shadows. Yet even as hope failed and her song faltered, Telperion bore at last upon a leafless bough one great flower of silver, and Laurelin a single fruit of gold.
>
> These Yavanna took; and then the Trees died, and their lifeless stems stand yet in Valinor, a memorial of vanished joy.
> **QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of the Sun and Moon and the Hiding of Valinor – p. 109**

Maybe the greatest epic magic that Estë (in conjunction with Yavanna and Nienna) ever performed was the silent and anonymous healing of the Two Trees of Valinor.
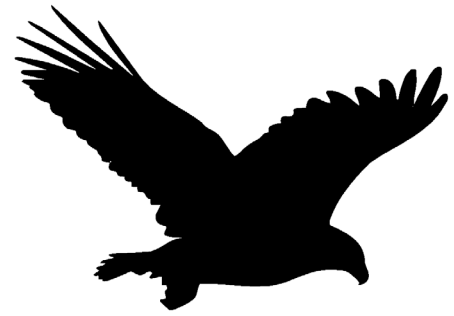
Oromë (Aldaron, Tauron, Araw), the Lord of Forests
(Agility-dependent)

> Oromë is a mighty lord. If he is less strong that Tulkas, he is more dreadful in anger; whereas Tulkas laughs ever, in sport or in war, and even in the face of Melkor he laughed in battles before the Elves were born. Oromë loved the lands of Middle-earth, and he left them unwillingly and came last to Valinor; and often of old he passed back east over the mountains and returned with his host to the hills and the plains. He is a hunter of monsters and fell beasts, and he delights in horses and in hounds; and all trees he loves, for which reason he is called Aldaron, and by the Sindar Tauron, the Lord of Forests. Nahar is the name of his horse, white in the sun, and shining silver at night. The Valaróma is the name of his great horn, the sound of which is like the upgoing of the Sun in scarlet, or the sheer lighting cleaving the clouds. Above all the horns of his host it was heard in the woods that Yavanna brought forth in Valinor; for there Oromë would train his folk and his beasts for the pursuit of the evil creatures of Melkor.
> **VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar – p. 20**

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1   The character pays 2d10 SP for the use of lay on hands; the difficulties of diseases and poisons are added to the normal spell difficulty.
2   Recovering 1 HP/round for as many rounds as the magic roll result.
3   For a total of a DM +3 in the HP recovered by *healing*.
4   **Extended magic roll**, measured in weeks.
5   With a cumulative penalty of -10%/round after death; only one roll is allowed; the casting time is **immediate**.
6   In this case the casting time is the normal for this level; the absence of a physical body in good condition (that is, not yet decomposed) increments the difficulty by a 50%.
7   In this scene Tolkien talks about "Nienna" (the lady of the tears), and not of "Estë" (the lady of rest and healing). In my opinion this is probably a confusion. But as "healing" is in any case a domain of Estë, we may suppose that she played an unsung role (in conjunction with Yavanna and Nienna) in making possible the impossible healing of the Two Trees of Valinor.

And Oromë tamer of beasts would ride too at whiles in the darkness of the unlit forests; as a mighty hunter he came with spear and bow, pursuing to the death the monsters and fell creatures of the kingdom of Melkor, and his white horse Nahar shone like silver in the shadows. Then the sleeping earth trembled at the beat of his golden hooves, and in the twilight of the world Oromë would sound the Valaróma his great horn upon the plains of Arda; whereat the mountains echoed, and the shadows of evil fled away, and Melkor himself quailed in Utumno, foreboding the wrath to come. But even as Oromë passed the servants of Melkor would gather again; and the lands were filled with shadows and deceit.

QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of the Beginning of Days – pp. 34-35

Apprentice (•)

Folca. He was a great hunter, but he vowed to chase no wild beast while there was an Orc left in Rohan. When the last orc-hold was found and destroyed, he went to hunt the great boar of Everholt in the Firien Wood. He slew the boar but died of the tusk-wounds that it gave him.

APPENDIX A: The House of Eorl – p. 350

The first things a character on the *Way of Oromë* learns are to ride[1], to track[2] and to use the bow[3]. He learns the art of hunting (for this he must blow a hunting horn in the beginning of the hunt)[4] and to understand the ways of horses and hounds[5].

Novice (••)

"Did you hear them, Legolas? Did they sound to you like beasts in terror?"
"No," said Legolas. "I heard them clearly. But for the darkness and our own fear I should have guessed that they were beast wild with some sudden gladness. They spoke as horses will when they meet a friend that they have long missed."

THE TWO TOWERS: The White Rider – p. 477

Gandalf whistled and called aloud the horse's name, and far away he tossed his head and neighed, and turning sped towards the host like an arrow.

THE TWO TOWERS: The King of the Golden Hall – p. 513

…he seized a great horn from Guthláf his banner-bearer, and he blew such a blast upon it that it burst asunder. And straightway all the horns in the host were lifted up in music, and the blowing of the horns of Rohan in that hour was like a storm upon the plain and a thunder in the mountains.

THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Ride of the Rohirrim – p. 820

At this mastery level the character is able to understand forest animals (mammals) ("*Animal ear*")[6]. He can also "*Summon*" his mount, and if it is within hearing distance it will respond[7]. The character learns the art of stealth[8] and he improves his ride[9], hunt[10] and track[11] skills. In conjunction with Eönwë he can use the sound of his war horn to enhance the effects of his leadership[12].

Journeyman (•••)

Legolas laid down his paddle and took up the bow that he had brought from Lórien. Then he sprang ashore and climbed a few paces up the bank. Stringing the bow and fitting an arrow he turned, peering back over the River into the darkness. […] Suddenly the great bow of Lórien sang. Shrill went the arrow from the elven-string. Frodo looked up. Almost above him the winged shape swerved. There was a harsh croaking scream, and it fell out of the air, vanishing down into the gloom of the Eastern shore. The sky was clean again.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: The Great River – p. 501

So clear and piercing was the note that the others stood amazed to hear such a sound com from those old bearded lips. Three times he whistled; and then faint and far off it seemed to them that they heard the whinny of a horse borne up from the plains upon the eastern wind. They waited wondering. Before long there came the sound of hoofs, at first hardly more than a tremor of the ground perceptible only to Aragorn as he lay upon the grass, then growing steadily louder and clearer to a quick beat. […] "I bent my thought upon him [Shadowfax], bidding him to make haste; for yesterday he was far away in the south of this land. Swiftly may he bear me back again!"

THE TWO TOWERS: The White Rider– pp. 492-493, 493

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1   *Ride* +1/10.
2   *Track* +1/10.
3   *Bows* +1/10.
4   *unting* +1/10.
5   *Animal handling* +1/10.
6   The use of this power requires a successful **simple magic roll**.
7   **Simple magic roll**.
8   *Stealth* +1/10.
9   *Ride* +1/5.
10 *Hunt* +1/5.
11 *Track* +1/5.
12 DM +1 in *Leadership*.

...a great horn of the wild ox of the East, bound with silver, and written with ancient characters. That horn the eldest son of our house has borne for many generations; and it is said that if it be blown at need anywhere within the bounds of Gondor, as the realm was of old, its voice will not pass unheeded.
THE TWO TOWERS: The Window on the West– p. 651

Then suddenly with a deep-throated call a great horn blew, and the blasts of it smote the hills and echoed in the hollows, rising in a mighty shout above the roaring of the falls.
"The horn of Boromir!" he cried. "He is in need!" He sprang down the steps and away, leaping down the path.
THE TWO TOWERS: The Departure of Boromir– p. 403

Magician (●●●●)

He spoke a word to Shadowfax, and like an arrow from the bow the great horse sprang away. Even as they looked he was gone: a flash of silver in the sunset, a wind over the grass, a shadow that fled and passed from sight. Snowmane snorted and reared, eager to follow; but only a swift bird on the wing could have overtaken him.
THE TWO TOWERS: Helm's Deep – p. 516

"We go at once to Meduseld, the hall of your master, Théoden," said Gandalf, addressing them gravely. They bowed their heads. "Times presses, so with your leave, my friends, we will ride. We beg you to use all the speed that you can."
THE TWO TOWERS: The White Rider – p. 493

Helm had a great horn, and soon it was marked that before he sallied forth he would blow a blast upon it that echoed in the Deep; and then so great a fear fell on his enemies that instead of gathering to take him or kill him they fled away down the Coomb. [...] men said that the horn was still heard at times in the Deep and the wraith of Helm would walk among the foes of Rohan and kill men with fear
APPENDIX A: The House of Eorl – pp. 347-348

And then, sudden and terrible, from the tower above, the sound of the great horn of Helm rang out.
All that heard that sound trembled. Many of the Orcs cast themselves on their faces and covered their ears with their claws. Back from the Deep the echoes came, blast upon blast, as if on every cliff and hill a mighty herald stood.
THE TWO TOWERS: Helm's Deep – p. 528

At this mastery level the character turns himself into a master bowman[1] and improves his *Animal handling*[2]. The character is completely competent in forest life[3]. He can summon his mount with a thought, even from great distances[4]. He can summon a dog to his aid[5]. If he concentrates the character can detect water[6]. The character can use his horn to summon help[7]. In conjunction with Manwë he can cast the spell "*Far arrows*"[8], in conjunction with Tulkas "*Power arrows*"[9] and in conjunction with Varda "*Light arrows*"[10].

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1   *Bows* +1/5.
2   +1/5.
3   *Survival* +1/10.
4   **Simple magic roll**; his horse "hears" him and responds to his summoning if it is within a range equal to the magic roll in kilometers.
5   It does not turn up magically; there must be one close enough. A higher version (in the next mastery level) would play with the rules of reality, and accommodate for a dog to "casually" being near at the moment of the casting.
6   **Simple magic roll**, it has a range of ×1/10 km.
7   A total of ×1/10 allies (or ally groups) will hear the call, regardless of distance, and will speed to his help as best they are able; a *Fool's luck* roll determines if they are close enough. The magician must pay 1d10 SP.
8   Doubles the shot range; affects ×1/10 shots attempted within ten minutes.
9   DM +1; affects ×1/10 shots attempted before ten minutes.
10 The attack and damage is normal, but once shot it bursts into a bright light clearly illuminating a 30 meter radius, and continuing to glow for 2 rounds after hitting its objective; only one arrow is enchanted, which must be used before one hour.

At this mastery level the character can double the speed of his horse for a short time[1]. He can walk unrestricted through forest and mountainous terrain. He improves his art of stealth[2] and can summon a pack of hounds[3]. He can "*Find shelter*"[4]. He is able to talk with forest animals (mammals) ("*Animal tongues*")[5]. The character can walk without leaving tracks[6]; summon a horse from the spirit world (an Oromëan maia that is in the spirit world nearby is persuaded to manifest a temporary physical body to use to aid the magician)[7]; improve as a rider[8], as a tracker[9], as a ranger[10] and as a tamer[11]. He can have visions of the creature that left a particular track[12]. And lastly the character can make a *fear* attack with his horn[13]. In conjunction with Arien he can shoot "*Flame arrows*"[14], in conjunction with Irmo "*Dream arrows*"[15] and in conjunction with Yavanna "*Tangle arrows*"[16].

Wizard (•••••)

…but Théoden could not be overtaken. Fey he seemed, or the battle-fury of his fathers ran like new fire in his veins, and he was borne up on Snowmane like a god of old, even as Oromë the Great in the battle of the Valar when the world was young. His golden shield was uncovered, and lo! it shone like an image of the Sun, and the grass flamed into green about the white feet of his steed.

THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Ride of the Rohirrim — p. 820

At this mastery level the character can blow his hunting horn to inspire heroism in his followers ("*Little Valaróma*")[17], he can extend his ability to pass without restrictions nor tracks to his followers and mount[18], and can maintain the improved speed of his mount for longer[19]. He improves his skills of archery[20] and ambush[21]. The character can transform himself into a hound[22]. After a period of training he can give an animal a basic capability of understanding

The stay in Rivendell had worked a great wonder of change on him: he was glossy and seemed to have the vigour of youth. It was Sam who had insisted on choosing him, declaring that Bill (as he called him) would pine, if he did not come.

"That animal can nearly talk," he said, "and would talk, if he stayed here much longer. He gave me a look as plain as Mr. Pippin could speak it: if you don't let me go with you, Sam, I'll follow on my own." So Bill was going as the beast of burden, yet he was the only member of the Company that did not seem depressed. […] "Bill, my lad," he said, "you oughtn't to have took up with us. You could have stayed here and et the best hay till the new grass comes." Bill swished his tail and said nothing.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING: The Ring Goes South — pp. 366, 366-367

and communication[23]. In conjunction with Nessa the character can shoot an "*Arrow rain*"[24] and in conjunction with Varda "*Thunder arrows*"[25].

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1 MV [Movement] ×2; **duration:** ×1/10 rounds.

2 *Stealth* +1/5.

3 ×1/5 hounds; like before, they do not appear from nothingness and must be in the area.

4 **Simple magic roll**; the higher the roll the bigger, better and more hidden the shelter.

5 **Simple magic roll**; **duration:** a "normal" conversation.

6 **Simple magic roll**; **duration:** ×1/20 hours; the magician prevents anyone from following his tracks.

7 The horse appears magically and only stays for a time equal to ×1/10 hours; it has the same characteristics as a Meara.

8 *Ride* +1/3.

9 *Track* +1/3.

10 *Survival* +1/3.

11 *Animal handling* +1/3.

12 After making a normal *track* roll he can invoke this power; he will receive one item of information for each ×1/20.

13 Affects all enemies of the character within a radius in meters equal to the magic roll; the way of magic is used for attack, causing fear and stun in his enemies ×1/20 rounds, and causes spiritual damage of DF ×1/3. The magician must pay 1d10 SP to activate this power.

14 Extra fire critical; affects ×1/10 shots attempted within 10 minutes. The arrows burst into flame after being shot.

15 Causes no physical damage, but the victim falls into a deep slumber for ×1/10 minutes; the victim can add his Resistance (sleep) to his normal DB; affects ×1/10 shots attempted within 1 hour, The arrows dissipate in the air after hitting the target (that is, they go into the spirit world).

16 Causes no physical damage, but the victim suffers an immediate Entangle critical; affects ×1/10 shots attempted within 10 minutes. The arrows transform into tangle weeds when they hit, entangling some part of the victim's body.

17 +1/5 Heroism Points; affects the magician and his followers.

18 **Simple magic roll**; can extend this power to ×1/10 subjects.

19 MV ×2; ×1/5 minutes.

20 *Bows* +1/3.

21 Stealth +1/3.

22 Assumes the form and all the physical characteristics of a dog, but keeps his mental and spiritual capabilities; he can communicate with other dogs, but not speak in normal language; this spell has a **duration** of ×1/10 minutes.

23 First the magician must make an **extended roll** in *Animal handling*, measured in weeks, then make a **simple magic roll**; the animal will be able to understand his master's tongue, and be able to communicate through gestures and looks.

24 Only one arrow is shot, but then it will "multiply" and cause ×1/10 hits (one attack for each "arrow"); different targets can be attacked, but they must be in the same general direction, in which case each attack gets a -30% penalty; this arrow must be used within 1 hour.

25 Extra electricity critical; affects ×1/10 shots attempted within 10 minutes.

Divine Magic (•••••-•)

"I did not know you rode bare-back, Gandalf," he said. "You haven't a saddle or a bridle!"

"I do not ride elf-fashion, except on Shadowfax," said Gandalf. "But Shadowfax will have no harness. You do not ride Shadowfax: he is willing to carry you – or not. If he is willing, that is enough. It is then his business to see that you remain on his back, unless you jump into the air."

"How fast is he going?" asked Pippin. "Fast by the wind, but very smooth. And how light his footfalls are!"

"He is running now as fast as the swiftest horse could gallop," answered Gandalf; "but that is not fast for him. The land is rising a little here, and is more broken than it was beyond the river."

THE TWO TOWERS: The Palantír – p. 582

At this mastery level the character is able to maintain the great speed of his mount for long journeys[1]. In fact he is also able to give the hoofs of his horse some "ethereal" qualities, so that in certain moments it seems to "fly"[2]. He can summon from the spirit world a pack of "*Hounds of Oromë*"[3]. The character can transform himself into a horse[4] and hide a whole group5. In conjunction with Námo he can shoot a "*Death arrow*"[6].

Epic Magic (•••••-••)

I do not know any epic creational act from Oromë. This does not mean that he is not able to fundamentally alter reality in relation to forests and its animals.

Eönwë, Manwë's Herald
(Presence-dependent)

…Eönwë, the banner-bearer and herald of Manwë, whose might in arms is surpassed by none in Arda.

VALAQUENTA: Account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar – p. 21

"Hail Eärendil, of mariners most renowned, the looked for that cometh at unawares, the longed for that cometh beyond hope! Hail Eärendil, bearer of light before the Sun and Moon! Splendour of the Children of Earth, star in the darkness, jewel in the sunset, radiant in the morning!"

That voice was the voice of Eönwë, herald of Manwë, and he came from Valimar, and summoned Eärendil to come before the Powers of Arda. […] But at the last the might of Valinor came up out of the West, and the challenge of the trumpets o Eönwë filled the sky […] Then Eönwë as herald of the Elder King summoned the Elves of Beleriand to depart from Middle-earth.

QUENTA SILMARILLION: Of the Voyage of Eärendil and the War of Wrath– pp. 298-299, 301-302, 303

Eönwë is the standard-bearer and herald of Manwë. With a might in arms surpassed by none in Arda, he has the authority of the Valar. He is the ideal of "knight": a "knighthood" different from that which is classic in heroic fantasy worlds: simpler and direct, of honor and courage in combat.

Apprentice (•)

A song of victory they sang with clear voices…

THE TWO TOWERS: The Road to Isengard – p. 533

The first things that a character on this way of magic learns are to improve his skill at arms[7] and speed in melee[8]. The character can instill the "*Glory of Manwë*" into a banner[9].

Novice (••)

Down from the wall leapt Gimli with a fierce cry that echoed in the cliffs. "Khazâd! Khazâd!" He soon had work enough.

"Ai-oi!" he shouted. "The Orcs are behind the wall. Ai-oi! Come, Legolas! There are enough for us both. Khazâd ai-mênu!"

THE TWO TOWERS: Helm's Deep – p. 523

At this level the weapon mastery of the character improves[10]. The character gets even speedier with melee weapons[11]; and he can invoke a "*Glorious image*" of Eönwë himself[12]. He can force one enemy into an individual duel with an open challenge[13].

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1   MV ×2; **duration:** ×1/10 hours.

2   The spell lasts for a whole day, during which the horse can attempt "impossible" actions, like running over water, leaping over chasms, etc.; each time the character must make a **simple magic roll** in the *Way of Oromë*, or the attempt will fail; this action must not last more than two rounds, or this effect will cancel itself automatically.

3   ×1/10 hounds with improved stats that appear as if by magic.

4   He assumes the form and all physical stats of a Meara, but keeps his own mental and spiritual abilities; he can communicate with other horses, but he cannot speak normal tongues; this spell has a **duration** of ×1/10 minutes.

5   *Stealth* +1/5, to be applied to a whole group of individuals whose number must not be over the magic roll result.

6   The victim will die immediately unless he makes a resistance roll against death; the arrow must be used within 1 hour. If the blood of the victim can be incorporated the enchantment of the arrow, may last for up to 1 week; only one such arrow can exist at a time.

7   Any melee weapon +1/10.

8   *Initiative* +1/20.

9   *Leadership* +1/5, affects all members of an army who have an unobstructed line of sight to the banner.

10   Any melee weapon +1/5.

11   *Initiative* +1/10.

12   *Intimidate* +1/5.

13   A **simple magic roll** versus the *Resistance* of his opponent.

Journeyman (•••)

Slowly Théoden stretched forth his hand. As his fingers took the hilt, it seemed to the watchers that firmness and strength returned to his thin arm. Suddenly he lifted the blade and swung it shimmering and whistling in the air. The he gave a great cry. His voice rang clear as he chanted in the tongue of Rohan a call to arms.

Arise now, arise, Riders of Théoden!
Dire deeds awake, dark is it eastward.
Let horse be bridled, horn be sounded!
Forth Eorlingas!

THE TWO TOWERS: The King of the Golden Hall – p. 506

At this mastery level the character improves his command of melee weapons[1] and he can instill the "*Glory of Manwë*" into a banner ("*Glory banner*")[2]. In addition the "*Glory of Eönwë*" warrants his life as a hero[3].

Magician (••••)

The two swords flashed from the sheath as one.
"Gúthwinë!" cried Éomer. "Gúthwinë for the Mark!"
"Andúril!" cried Aragorn. "Andúril for the Dúnedain!"
Charging from the side, they hurled themselves upon the wild men. Andúril rose and fell, gleaming with white fire. A shout went up from wall and tower: "Andúril! Andúril goes to war. The blade that was Broken shines again!" […] Three times Aragorn and Éomer rallied them, and three times Andúril flamed in a desperate charge that drove the enemy from the wall.

THE TWO TOWERS: Helm's Deep – pp. 521, 523

At this mastery level the character is able to instill a divine glory into his weapon ("*Holy weapon*")[4]. He is able of radiate a "*Just wrath*" that intimidates his enemies[5]. The character improves his combat initiative even more[6]. His personal aura gives him great natural leadership ("*Aura of glory*")[7]. His attacks are sure and penetrate the armor of his enemies[8].

Wizard (••••••)

Sam did not wait to wonder what was to be done, or whether he was brave, or loyal, or filled with rage. He sprang forward with a yell, and seized his master's sword in his left hand. Then he charged. No onslaught more fierce was ever seen in the savage world of beasts, where some desperate small creature armed with little teeth, alone, will spring upon a tower of horn and hide that stands above its fallen mate.

THE TWO TOWERS: The Choices of Master Samwise – p. 711

Aragorn threw back his cloak. The elven-sheath glittered as he grasped it, and the bright blade of Andúril shone like a sudden flame as he swept it out. "Elendil!" he cried. "I am Aragorn son of Arathorn, and am called Elessar, the Elfstone, Dúnadan, the heir of Isildur Elendil's son of Gondor. Here is the Sword that was Broken and is forged again! Will you aid me or thwart me? Choose swiftly!"
Gimli and Legolas looked at their companion in amazement, for they had not seen him in this mood before. He seemed to have grown in stature while Éomer had shrunk; and in his living face they caught a brief vision of the power and majesty of the kings of stone. For a moment it seemed to the eyes of Legolas that a white flame flickered on the brows of Aragorn like a shining crown.

THE TWO TOWERS: The Riders of Rohan—p. 423

At this mastery level the character gets an additional attack per round with a melee weapon, and his "*Glory banner*" can improves his bonuses[9]. The character gets the power of "*Weapon master*"[10]. "*Eönwë's leadership*" increases his capability as a commander[11].

1   Any melee weapon +1/3.
2   +5% morale bonus to the actions of a whole army.
3   "Heroism Points" ×2 so long as he wields a melee weapon.
4   Extra *holy* critical.
5   *Intimidate* +1/3.
6   *Initiative* +1/5.
7   The magician can use his *leadership* skill as a free action, without stopping any other action in this round.
8   DR -1.
9   +10% bonus to the activity.
10   All melee skills are considered as one skill – including *Two weapon combat* and *Blind fighting* – all melee weapons can be used with the same skill, and all attack rolls count for just one progression.
11   *Leadership* +1/3.

Divine Magic (•••••-•)

> *At that sound the bent shape of the King sprang suddenly erect. Tall and proud he seemed again; and rising in his stirrups he cried in a loud voice, more clear than any there had ever heard a mortal man achieve before:*
> *Arise, arise, Riders of Théoden!*
> *Fell deeds awake: fire and slaughter!*
> *Spear shall be shaken, shield be splintered,*
> *A sword-day, a red day, ere the sun rises!*
> *Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!*
> *With that he seized a great horn from Guthláf his banner-bearer, and he blew such a blast upon it that it burst asunder. And straightway all the horns in the host were lifted up in music, and the blowing of the horns of Rohan in that hour was like a storm upon the plain and a thunder in the mountains.*
> *Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!*
> **THE RETURN OF THE KING: The Ride of the Rohirrim**
> *– pp. 819-820*

At this mastery level the character gets a second extra melee attack. And he is able to completely ignore the armor of an enemy[1]. In addition, his "*Glory aura*" gives all his immediate allies a +10% bonus to their melee attacks. And he changes his additional *holy* critical to a *deadly* one ("*Deadly weapon*").

Epic Magic (•••••-••)

Eönwë is a Maia, and has not the primordial power of the Valar to act as a shaper of the structure of reality.

A curious coincidence

Something curious happened while I was working on this article ("The Art of Magic"): I learned to see Gandalf with new eyes. All this started me thinking about the structure of my magic system.

When I started developing this system, I took my inspiration almost exclusively from the descriptions of the Valar and Maiar found in the *Valaquenta*. And from this small start there sprouted a great quantity of magic effects. I was sure that a lot of these were my own invention, even if I liked to think I was following Tolkien's inspiration, and staying faithful to the original even where I went further. It was clear to me that further on I would want to (and must) compare my interpretation with concrete examples of the use of magic in Tolkien's own writings. But that was not my priority yet. I had clear in my head everything I had read from Tolkien, but I can see that it wasn't focused enough.

Conscious of my limitations, for the time being I remained comfortable with this first approximation.

The compilation and systematization of quotes to complete this magic system was an interesting work. Titanic and hard, but interesting.

In fact, in reworking the *Way of Varda* I was surprised to find so many examples of magic wonders that coincided with my first interpretation. And even more surprised to find that Gandalf seemed to be the exemplar of so many of them.

Gandalf, the envoy of Varda: Most of the examples of light, hearing and purity magic come directly from Gandalf.

And I thought that it was a curious coincidence. How good it would be if this theory of mine had captured the essence of magic in Middle-earth! "A good dream", I said to myself.

Until I decided to examine the relationship between Gandalf and the Valar.

As is well known in the book "Unfinished Tales" there is a whole chapter dedicated to the *Istari* (the "Wizards" [with capital], the order of magicians which included Gandalf, Saruman and Radagast). In this chapter Tolkien discusses their nature, and makes relationships between each of them and one or more Valar. So for example Saruman belongs to the people of Aulë, and Radagast was an envoy of Yavanna, as is to be seen in the next quote. In the same way Tolkien talks about the nature of Gandalf ("Olórin") and his election by two Valar (see next page for quote):

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> *…a council of the Valar, summoned it seems by Manwë ("and maybe he called upon Eru for counsel?"), at which it was resolved to send three emissaries to Middle-earth. "Who would go? For they must be mighty, peers of Sauron, but must forgo might, and clothe themselves in flesh so as to treat on equality and win the trust of Elves and Men. But this would imperil them, dimming their wisdom and knowledge, and confusing them with fears, cares, and wearinesses coming from the flesh." But two only came forward: Curumo [Saruman], who was chosen by Aulë, and Alatar, who was sent by Oromë. Then Manwë asked, where was Olórin? And Olórin [Gandalf], who was clad in grey, and having just entered from a journey had seated himself at the edge of the council, asked what Manwë would have of him. Manwë replied that he wished Olórin to go as the third messenger to Middle-earth (and it is remarked in parentheses that "Olórin was a lover of the Eldar that remained," apparently to explain Manwë's choice). But Olórin declared that he was too weak for such a task, and that he feared Sauron. Then Manwë said that he commanded Olórin—[1]. But at that Varda looked up and said: "Not as the third;" and Curumo remembered it.*
>
> *The note ends with the statement that Curumo [Saruman] took Aiwendil [Radagast] because Yavanna begged him, and that Alatar took Pallando as a friend. […] There are also some rough tables relating the names of the Istari to the names of the Valar: Olórin to Manwë and Varda, Curumo to Aulë, Aiwendil to Yavanna, Alatar to Oromë, and Pallando also to Oromë (but this replaces Pallando to Mandos and Nienna).*
>
> **UNFINISHED TALES: The Istari – p. 410**

The relationship of Olórin with Manwë is explicit, and only in a more subtle way with Varda. But in the second part Tolkien associates both Valar (Manwë and Varda) directly with Gandalf (Olórin). So to talk about Gandalf as an envoy of Varda… exactly hits the mark.

And sure, I have not yet made the meticulous work with the *Way of Manwë* that I have with *Varda's*. Because of that it is (still) speculative how Gandalf will stand in his relationship to Manwë.

But Gandalf and his relationship with the *Way of Varda* is surprising, and it is more still that this coincide so well with what was written by professor Tolkien about Gandalf as a direct envoy of the Queen of the Valar (Varda).

This *could be* an indirect confirmation of my theory of the Valar as paradigms of magic. But even if attractive, I sincerely think it is still early to make any kind of conclusion, and I suggest caution.

Let's say, for now, that it is a curious coincidence.

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1 (illegible words follow that seem to contain the word "third")

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