

# OTHER MINDS

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

## OTHER MINDS

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**MAIN FEATURES**

- 2 **Editorial: Surprise!**  
by Thomas Morwinsky
- 4 **Inside Information**  
by Thomas Morwinsky
- 5 **Númenórean Longevity Revisited**  
by Thomas Morwinsky
- 11 **An Unexpected Party**  
by David Daines
- 16 **The Phenomenon of "Eternal Realms" in Middle-earth RPG settings**  
by Thomas Morwinsky
- 23 **Quendi**  
by Daniel "Vaco" Vacaflores



**OTHER FEATURES**

- 54 **Fine Print and Disclaimers**
- 55 **Creative Commons License**

# Editorial: Holding our breath

## The One Ring: Adventures over the Edge of the Wild

Cubicle 7's *The One Ring: Adventures over the Edge of the Wild*® (TOR) is finished and will see the light of the day at Gen Con in early August (held from August 4 to 7). The image below is the game's cover. It will be shipped in a slip-case containing three booklets and a couple of custom dice (see images next page and the game can also be played with regular gaming dice). There are also some bits of the game's mechanics known, but I think it better to discuss these in detail in a review once the whole package is in our hands. This is also good news as well—the game can now be pre-

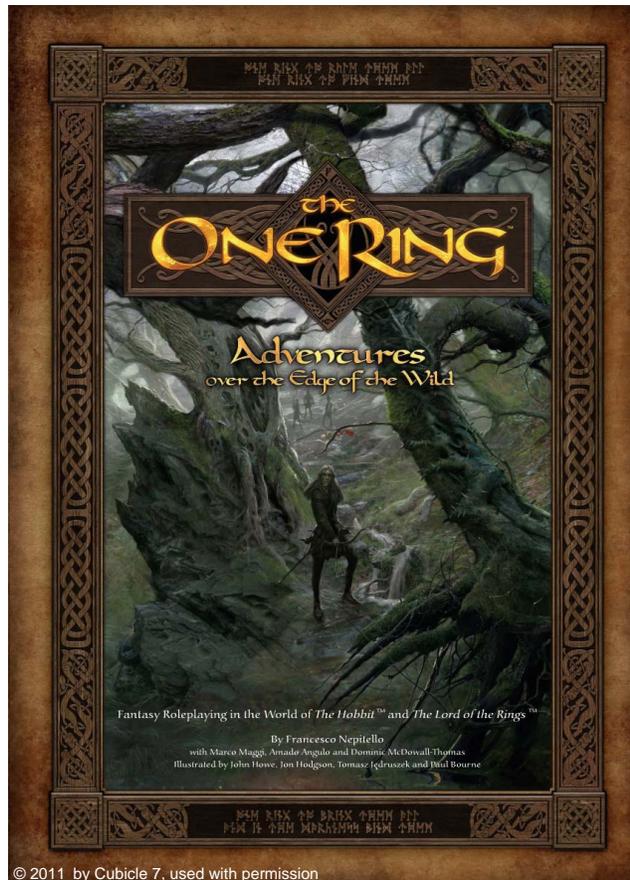
ordered through Cubicle's website (<http://www.cubicle7.co.uk/>). You can either choose priority shipping (more expensive) and you will get your printed copy at the time of Gen Con or regular shipping, due probably late August or early September. In either case, you will get a PDF of the book in early August **in addition** to your printed copies!

The images on the next page show the content of the box. For myself I can say that I'm surely holding my breath since I pre-ordered my copy!

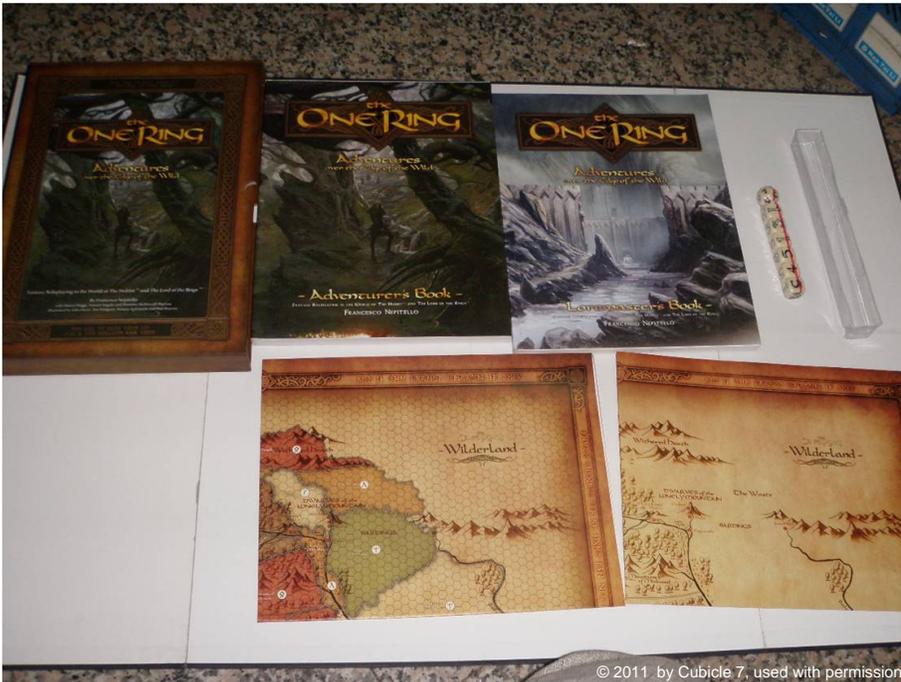
We thought about delaying *Other Minds, Issue 12* to include a first review of the game. But that would have meant postponing even further than we had

already announced. In addition, it would have conflicted with real-life schedules, and likely not be published until the end of September or even later. We have therefore stuck to our original intention and publish it now in early July. We'll see whether we will publish *Issue 13* as planned at the end of the year or add another one to give a special welcome to this latest roleplaying game set specifically in Middle-earth.

Whether this happens depends on the content submitted. If you can contribute a gaming supplement like a (short) adventure, set-



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ting, NPC etc. that would be much appreciated. Then we can look to provide game stats for TOR and publish an adventure shortly after the game itself has been published. So it's up to you whether we can assist TOR in making a good start into the Middle-earth gaming community! We also have some *Other Minds*-related news. You can read it in the *Inside Information* section of this Issue.

## Content

This Issue's content covers a broad range of topics. First comes a contribution by myself. It's called *Númenórean Longevity Revisited* and targets some questions left open by *Númenórean Longevity* in *Other Minds, Issue 6*. The central

problem tackled is the degree of special longevity among Númenóreans of mixed descent.

Second comes a submission from an entirely new quarter, which we are very happy to be able to present here. This is *An Unexpected Party*, the description of the creation of a marvelous diorama with the miniatures of the same name from Mithril Miniatures (<http://www.mithril.ie>). It comes complete with first-class photos accompanying the narrative about its realization. It is an expert miniature diorama of an iconic scene from *The Hobbit*, made by two masters of their trade.

Our third piece again is done by myself. It is called *The phenomenon of "Eternal Realms" in Middle-earth RPG settings* and deals with an observation upon—primarily past—Middle-earth gaming supplements. It is the tendency to devise "eternal" man-nish political entities in the process of fleshing out regions and realms not

described in detail by Tolkien (or entirely original realms/states).

Last, but surely not least is a big contribution by prolific *Other Minds* author Daniel "Vaco" Vacaflores. *Quendi, the Elvish Peoples of Middle-earth* is a detailed description of the various elvish peoples found in Tolkien's world. Groups described by Tolkien, as well as RPG additions, are covered with relevant quotes. Abilities for Vaco's own game system (see *Other Minds, Issue 11*, p. 79pp.) and MERP are provided as well, adding to the immediate usability in a game environment.

## Artwork

Again we are indebted to several artists who allowed us to use their great work to illustrate our magazine. You can find their online presence (in alphabetical order) under the following links:

Catherine Karina Chmiel ("Kasiopea"):

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We hope that this Issue contains something for every one of you and that our selection serves your interests. But now enough of introductory ramblings and on with the content itself. Enjoy *Other Minds, Issue 12* and see you all in #13!

For the *Other Minds* team

Thomas Morwinsky

July 2011



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# Inside Information

## Survey & Feedback

Almost half a year ago we started a survey for *Other Minds*, Issue 11 to get an impression of how all of us who make *Other Minds*—from authors to the editorial team—perform in your eyes. Therefore it is fitting to give you some information on the current state of the survey and the analysis we announced back then. In short, the result so far is somewhat disappointing.

The reason is not criticism that we should do things in a different way from now. This would be a good thing, since it would be real feedback and information. But in the almost 6 months since Issue 11 and the survey sheet came out we received a meagre 12 (sic!) filled-out survey files.

Talking from past experience (our statistics module on the website has been de-activated due to some technical issues for some time now), we estimate about 130 downloads of Issue 11 since it came out. That in turn means that we have a return rate of ca. 10% (perhaps 15-20% if we count some double downloads from the same person). This adds to the disappointment concerning the returns but we hope for an improvement nonetheless.

In light of these numbers, an analysis based on just a dozen answers is hardly representative, so we'll postpone that until a significant number has been reached. For now, we take this lack of feedback as a positive sign that *Other Minds* is doing just fine and things are currently more or less perfectly OK with the vast majority of our readership, and that is an encouraging thought—as Gandalf would have put it.

Our special thanks go to those of you who have actually responded so far, for taking the time to send us back your thoughts!

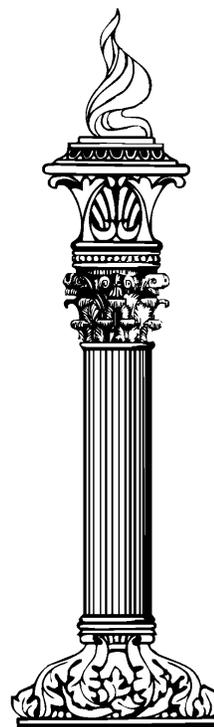
Everyone else, it's not too late to have your say on the direction *Other Minds* will take in the future. Therefore (and to minimize your effort) we include the survey from OM11 again in this Issue. It deliberately does not include the present Issue to make the results comparable.

## Non-English language access

As already hinted at in previous Issues, we are not only interested in attracting English-speaking authors, but also in a wide variety of other languages. The idea is to translate finished manuscripts and publish them in an English version. In addition, the original versions can be published as well, increasing our range among those not able to express themselves in English. Ideally, these individuals can be motivated to submit ideas in their native tongues, and these in turn will be translated when they are fully developed. By now, the *Other Minds* website has been updated with a forum containing non-English sections as well.

As a beginning in the goal of making *Other Minds* known to a wider audience, we decided to begin a cooperation with an established German Tolkien site, which has a considerable reach in the German Tolkien community. This is the 'Tolkienforum' (<http://www.tolkienforum.de>), established almost 10 years ago and still running strong in the German Tolkien-related forums and websites. The exact URL for the *Other Minds* section here is <http://www.tolkienforum.de/index.php?showforum=113>.

Everyone fluent in German is cordially invited to join the community there in order to establish a broader foothold in this first foreign language local branch of *Other Minds*. We hope this serves as an example of what can be achieved by establishing cooperation with established non-English Tolkien communities all over the world. The synergistic effect of getting a broader audience (for *Other Minds*) and adding a new facet for the established online community should give ample room for both to achieve more than would have been possible for either alone. This idea could be taken up by others to create similar projects in other languages, and we encourage everyone out there—go on and do it!



# Númenórean Longevity Revisited

by Thomas Morwinsky

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*Sometimes there are recurring subjects, and the topic of Númenórean*

*Longevity is such a one. Regardless of how diligently discussed an issue was,*

*there is always something more to be done after publication. I am no exception to that and therefore a few "leftovers" from the first article with this theme are clarified.*



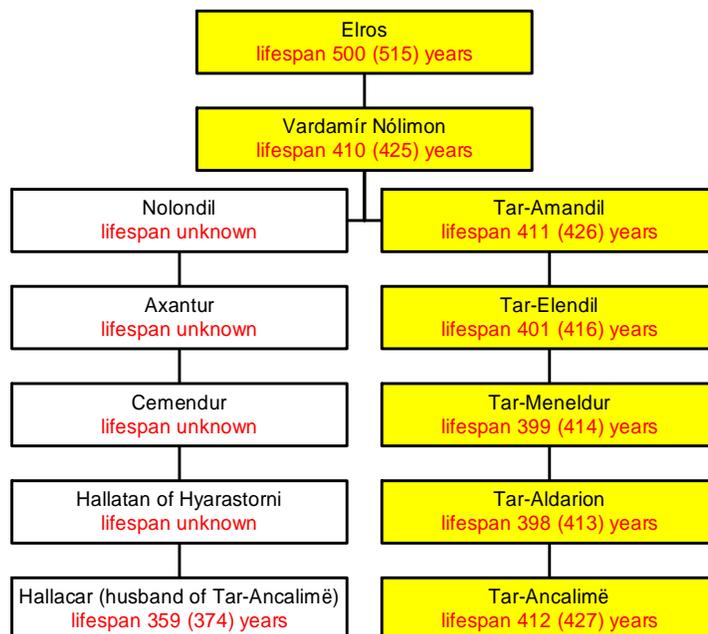
## Introduction

My essay *Númenórean Longevity in Other Minds, Issue 6* discussed many topics of the peculiarities of Númenórean longevity as portrayed by J.R.R. Tolkien. In recent discussions on- and offline I recognized that some aspects of it had not been properly addressed, and this short article remedies that.

## Normal decline of longevity

In *Númenórean Longevity*, I gave some original evidence for the patterns behind the decline of the special Dúnadan longevity, based on the known genealogical tables. The dates provided for Castamir and Eärnil II were especially useful for analyzing cadet branches. Another example of a cadet branch provided by the Professor himself had escaped my attention at that time, and which I now present here. The example is that of Hallacar, member of a cadet branch of Elros' Line (descended from Vardamír) in the Second Age:

Part of the early generations of the Line of Elros



The lifespans in parentheses represent the estimated “total” span, including old age and dotage, while the first number is the “healthy” lifespan, at which these Númenóreans willingly laid down their lives. For Hallacar, his lifespan represents 87.1% of his wife’s (in the same generation as her in the direct royal line). His line is removed five generations from the royal one, representing an average total loss of a bit above 2.5% per generation compared to the same generation in the direct royal line. This is decidedly less than the 4% loss per generation in the cadet branches suggested for the corresponding lines among the royal lines of Arnor and Gondor in Middle-earth (based on the dates for Castamir’s and Eärnil’s lines). This is, however, no problem. Indeed, it fits the overall picture especially well, as will be seen later.

## Purity of the line

An important aspect of the special Númenórean longevity is the “purity” of that line, i.e. the degree to which one’s ancestors are exclusively (or almost so) of pure Númenórean descent. For these cases, the numbers and assumptions outlined in the OM6 article can be taken without further changes.

Often it is not as easy of course. Númenóreans married members of other mannish races and naturally the question of the longevity of the resulting offspring arises. Apart from the social problems for these “mixed” children (e.g. perhaps experiencing difficulties in being accepted as “real” Númenóreans), it is important to judge the longevity of such people.

We know from Tolkien that sooner or later, intermarriage with non-Númenóreans occurred in all the

Realms-in-Exile and accordingly the issue became relevant.

Such mixed descent is a powerful device in roleplaying games in particular, as it creates friction and motivation for individuals to seek an adventurous life abroad rather than taking up the predictable political or military career that might normally be expected of the members of the ruling caste.

Now the question is, what evidence do we have from Tolkien concerning such ‘mixed descent’ (of whatever degree) and its consequences for the longevity of such individuals. Tolkien himself deemed the Númenóreans to be quite knowledgeable of simple genetic laws:<sup>1</sup>

*With regard to Aragorn’s boast, I think he was reckoning his ancestry through the paternal line for this purpose; but in any case I imagine that Númenóreans, before their knowledge dwindled, knew more about heredity than other people. To this of course they refer by the common symbol of blood. They recognized the fact that in spite of intermarriages, some characteristics would appear in pure form in later generations. Aragorn’s own longevity was a case in point. Gandalf I think refers to the curious fact that even in the much less well preserved house of the stewards Denethor had come out as almost purely Númenórean.*

—*Letters.230 (June 8 1961)*

First, this shows that Tolkien was aware of the occasional and unusual re-appearance of characteristics of old as already formulated in *Númenórean Longevity*, and also recognized Númenórean knowledge about the rules of heredity (e.g. perhaps similar to those postulated by Gregor Mendel). The second point is also that the House of the Stewards is described as being of “mixed” origin—though as pure as possible in Gondor at that time. Therefore even this dynasty should be viewed under the assumption of a significant number of non-Númenóreans in the family tree.

The “problem” of intermarriage among Gondor’s people first becomes apparent in the time of king Valacar:

*‘For the high men of Gondor already looked askance at the Northmen among them; and it was a thing unheard of before that the heir to the crown, or any son of the King, should wed one of lesser and alien race. There was already rebellion in the southern provinces when King Valacar grew old. His queen had been a fair and noble lady, but short-lived according to the fate of lesser Men, and the Dúnedain feared that her descendants would prove the same and fall from the majesty of the Kings of Men.*

[...]

*He [Eldacar, Valacar’s son] was handsome and valiant, and showed no sign of ageing more swiftly than his father.*

—*LotR.Appendix A*

This is one of the central quotes for my later extrapolations on the effect of intermarriage of Númenóreans with other men.

The fact that it was widely feared that Eldacar would experience a distinct lesser lifespan seems to indicate that this was one of the first cases of such intermarriages and there existed no previous experience to draw upon.

It is not only the royal house that experienced such intermarriage, but shortly after the conclusion of the Kin-strife it became more widespread among the Númenórean caste in Gondor. It may already have occurred earlier in Arnor, due to its earlier breakup and lessening of Númenórean wisdom and power. This

Dúnadan fear of the waning of longevity after mingling with other men is clearly expressed in the Appendices of *The Lord of the Rings*:

*After the return of Eldacar the blood of the kingly house and other houses of the Dúnedain became more mingled with that of lesser Men [...]*

*This mingling did not at first hasten the waning of the Dúnedain, as had been feared; but the waning still proceeded, little by little, as it had before.*

*For no doubt it was due above all to Middle-earth itself, and to the slow withdrawing of the gifts of the Númenóreans after the downfall of the Land of the Star.*

—*LotR.Appendix A (my emphasis)*

The message of this passage is pivotal of course. It speaks not only of the widespread intermarriage of the Dúnedain with other men, but also of the swiftness of the inevitable loss of their special longevity. It can be argued that intermarriage did not only occur after the Kin-strife (though it was much more common after that time), but also earlier.<sup>2</sup> The quote above says that the blood of the Númenórean families became more mingled with lesser men, meaning that mingling—to a lesser extent—must already have occurred, though this is at variance with the point about Eldacar mentioned earlier.

The other important point is that even though the Númenóreans (due to their “genetic” lore) feared a hastened waning for Eldacar (and probably his descendants) in the end it was not so. The waning proceeded at about the same pace as before.



## Causes of the waning

In any discussion about the loss of Númenórean longevity, it is imperative to explore the *causes* of this waning. *Númenórean Longevity* fell a bit short in this respect, and here it is the place to make up for that.

In Númenor, we see a decrease in the longevity of the kings (and probably the King's Men – the *Ârûwanâi*) due to their increasing distance from the ideals of the original and faithful Númenóreans. The more self-serving, greedy, unjust to subordinates/subjects and disobedient to the commandments of the Valar they became, the more their lifespan waned. The Faithful are not free of the basic fears of the Númenóreans (especially the fear of death) and thus suffer as well, albeit to a much lesser degree. All this has been expressed in numbers in *Númenórean Longevity*.

As for the Dúnedain that founded Arnor and Gondor (which are basically 'Faithful'), the cause for their waning has been named above by Tolkien: Their exile in Middle-earth slowly gnaws at the special Númenórean gifts, sapping their 'Númenórean purity' bit by bit. The logical and most obvious consequence is the slow loss of their special longevity.

So we can deduce that the rate of loss as laid out in *Númenórean Longevity* is exactly this 'normal' loss due to Middle-earth itself, or to their removal from Númenor, and which is unavoidable. In this context, it can be argued that Númenor (which was raised from the ocean floor by Ossë) was largely free of the 'Morgoth-element' that permeated Middle-earth (as laid out by Tolkien in the *History of Middle-earth, Vol. 10: Morgoth's Ring*) and in a way comparable to Aman, which enjoyed a similar status of non-existence of the 'Morgoth-element'. This relative lack of this 'taint' could have contributed to the bliss of Númenor and the longevity of its people.

As shown above, the loss of longevity in royal cadet branches was much less in Númenor (about 65% of the rate in the

Realms-in-Exile) than that in Middle-earth. This is fine, since it shows the importance of Númenor itself in preserving special longevity and stresses Middle-earth as a major factor in the hastening of that process.

Now we have to deal with the already mentioned question of whether intermarriage with non-Númenóreans leads to a drastic increase of this rate of loss. At first glance it is logical to assume that the combination of a long- and a short-lived parent would lead to a child with an intermediate lifespan somewhere in the middle between his parents. So making the arithmetic mean of the parent's life expectancies might be a way to determine the child's provisional lifespan. Alas, it is not that easy! This simple math cannot be applied to Númenórean longevity, as can be seen clearly in the case of Eldacar: His father lived 240 years, while unfortunately we do not know the age of his mother Vidumavi. Assuming an advanced age for a "lesser" man, we can infer a lifespan of about 110 years at most. The arithmetic mean would be 175 years (as the absolute maximum possible!), clearly **very far** from Eldacar's real span of 235 years. Calculating the lifespan of such "half-breeds" (or quarter-, eighth- etc. "breeds") on an arithmetic mean assumes that the life expectancy follows an intermediary inheritance. The fact that this is not the case (see the quote about Eldacar and the other noble houses above), sug-

gests that the longevity of the Númenóreans should be seen as something akin to dominant trait, to use a "biological"-style explanation. That would for one explain the usefulness of Númenórean genetic lore as well as the observation that among the Faithful the intermarriage with "lesser" men did not lead to a quickening of the loss of longevity.

The question remains of course now: What was the cause for the stronger decrease in longevity among Númenórean people if "hard" biological causes can be ruled out as a major factor? That there was such a connection seems evident, as Tolkien describes a hastening of extraordinary loss of Númenórean longevity:

*In Arthedain the line of Isildur was maintained and endured, but the line soon perished in Cardolan and Rhudaur. There was often strife between the kingdoms, which hastened the waning of the Dúnedain.*

—*LotR. Appendix A*

If biological facts are insufficient to fully explain the observed changes in Númenórean longevity after intermarriage, we must broaden our scope and look for other factors. The quote above gives a first hint for another cause. It was the internal strife that hastened the waning of the northern Dúnedain community (regardless of citizenship). Such strife can also be seen as a sign of a fall from the pure path and becoming more like normal men and their follies. Thus a "spiritual" fall (even if only slight) leads to the waning of fortunes in general. This theme is further developed in another passage from the Appendices of *The Lord of the Rings* and seen on the next page.



© 'The Sun Unveiled' by Ted Nasmith, used with permission of the artist

*Now the descendants of the kings had become few. Their numbers had been greatly diminished in the Kin-strife; whereas since that time the kings had become jealous and watchful of those near akin. Often those on whom suspicion fell had fled to Umbar and there joined the rebels; while others had renounced their lineage and taken wives not of Númenorean blood.*

—*LotR. Appendix A*

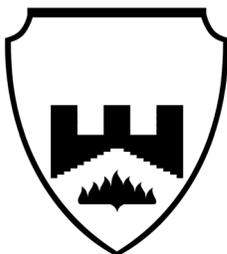
Those Dúnedain falling from favour with the Kings either joined the Corsairs in Umbar, thereby letting go their “faithful” inheritance or taking non-Númenorean wives, wilfully giving up their “faithfulness” as well.

Unfortunately, this lack is hard to quantify and it remains somewhat ambiguous and hard to grasp. It becomes a bit more palpable in the case of the surviving King’s Men:

*After the fall of Sauron their race [the King’s Men living in Middle-earth] swiftly dwindled or became merged with the Men of Middle-earth, but they inherited without lessening their hatred of Gondor.*

—*LotR. Appendix A*

Given the evidence and extrapolations given above, it is no wonder that the King’s Men lost their longevity much more quickly than the Faithful. It was less a question of racial purity as such, but one of the adherence to the ideals of the original Númenóreans and especially the presence of a rightful king that was a major factor in determining the pace of the dwindling of the special longevity—as already experienced in Númenor in its decline.



*It was the pride and wonder of the Northern Line that, though their power departed and their people dwindled, through all the many generations the succession was unbroken from father to son. Also, though the length of the lives of the Dúnedain grew ever less in Middle-earth, after the ending of their kings the waning was swifter in Gondor; and many of the Chieftains of the North still lived to twice the age of Men, and far beyond the days of even the oldest amongst us.*

—*LotR. Appendix A*

Even though the northern royal line originally had less longevity than that of Gondor, it endured beyond the line of Anárion. Interestingly, the loss of the royal line (and therefore spiritual guidance) led to a hastening of the waning of the remaining Dúnedain in the South. Again, it’s a non-biological cause that strongly influences the development of Númenorean longevity.

*And we of Gondor [said Faramir] grow like other Men, like the men of Rohan; for even they, who are the foes of the Dark Lord, shun the Elves and speak of the Golden Wood with dread. Yet there are among us still some who have dealings with the Elves when they may, and ever and anon one will go in secret to Lórien, seldom to return. Not I. For I deem it perilous now for mortal man wilfully to seek out the Elder People. Yet I envy you that have spoken with the White Lady.’*

—*LotR. II. The Window on the West*

Again we see not only biological causes (or “hard” facts in general) to be responsible for the decline. Even those who call themselves Dúnedain and the heirs of Númenor are only barely aware of their ancient friends and they have adopted a more “mannish” attitude of fear and suspicion concerning them.

Thus in conclusion it is safe to assume that though intermarriage with “Lesser

Men” can have an influence on Númenorean longevity, by means of a biological or scientific cause, it is not a strong enough one and unable to cause a significant hastening of loss of longevity alone. Spiritual causes like a loss of faithfulness (in the Elendili sense) and lack of a rightful king are much more important.

Whether this loss is hereditary is an interesting question. I am inclined to adhere to the position that it is—to a degree. While descendants are burdened with the decreased lifespan of their—failed—fathers, individuals who show themselves to be moral upright (or at least with the potential; see Denethor II) they might show the already mentioned re-appearance of characteristics of old to a higher degree than other individuals of (partly) Númenorean descent.

### Short excursus on Elendil

In *Númenorean Longevity*, I proposed a “healthy” lifespan of about 400 years for Elendil (i.e. similar to the first Kings until Tar-Atanamir). As outlined in the original article, this would have made him about 60 in “physical years” at the time of his death in combat with Sauron on Orodruin. Now, though far from being impossible, it is not so easy to believe that a 60-year-old could engage in physical combat with Sauron in the latter’s ‘Dark Lord’ incarnation and wearing the One.

If we would grant Elendil a special grace and a lifespan similar to Elros (e.g. 500 “healthy” years), his “physical age” at the time of his death would be only about 50 years. Though still not an agile 20-year-old, it is more easy to think of him challenging Sauron together with Gil-galad, Elrond, Círdan and Isildur.<sup>3</sup>

Given Elendil’s special elevated status as the second founder and renewer of a Númenorean realm (as High-king), an elevated lifespan far beyond the norm of his time is not out of the question. Aragorn was a similar case. He renewed the Númenorean royalty as well, though

he began from a much lesser level and thus “only” received gifts equivalent to ordinary Númenóreans of old. Elendil then, being of much more “pure” lineage, would restore the original gifts of Elros in some measure. In his descendants, this gift would quickly be diminished though,<sup>4</sup> stressing Elendil’s greater-than-life status (and almost saintly reverence within the Realms-in-Exile). Throughout Tolkien’s books, especially “pure” and “gifted” individuals have a tendency to be represented by good looks, fair hair and great height. In this context we have to remember that Elendil was especially tall (hence his by-name!). That he was something really special is also hinted at in the Appendix as well:

*‘These were the Stones of Annúminas and Amon Sûl. The only Stone left in the North was the one in the Tower on Emyr Beraid that looks towards the Gulf of Lune. That was guarded by the Elves, and though we never knew it, it remained there, until Círdan put it aboard Elrond’s ship when he left (I, 34, 54). But we are told that it was unlike the others and not in accord with them; it looked only to the Sea. Elendil set it there so that he could look back with “straight sight” and see Eressëa in the vanished West; but the bent seas below covered Númenor for ever’.*

—LotR.Appendix A

Elendil was allowed to glimpse the True West, a grace fitting the founder of Númenor-in-Exile, the like of Elros (at least in impact and status) in later times, and one that would not be repeated ever again.

## Assigning numbers

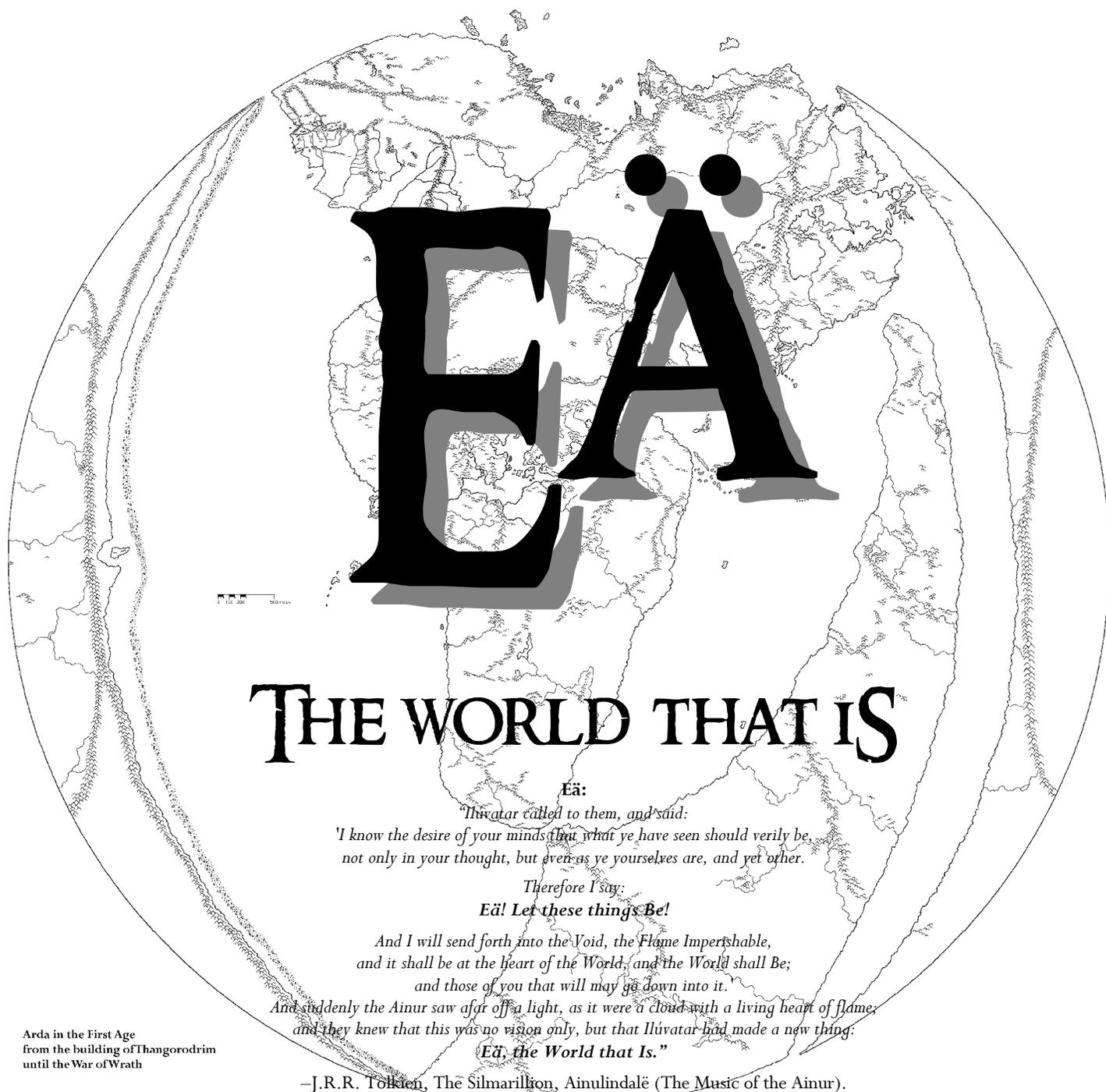
Having discussed the sources and most likely conclusions, it is necessary to assign some numbers to the conclusions presented above. Since the whole subject of “lesser” descent and “blood of less purity”—and especially a fall from the spiritual ideals which is so important—is

hard to grasp by precise numbers, there’ll always be a good deal of personal judgment. The following table is therefore offered as a guideline which can be used to roughly judge the mechanics of men descended from intermarriage of Númenóreans with Lesser Men.

Category	Lifespan	Examples
Dúnedain of pure descent and Dúnedain of mixed descent but “pure” Númenórean ethos and spirit	as in <i>Númenórean Longevity</i>	Eldacar, Denethor II, Faramir
Dúnedain of mostly pure descent, but increasingly failing Faithful standards	cumulative -4% off pure Númenórean lifespan for each generation after the decline begins	Dúnedain of Cardolan or Rhudaur
Dúnedain of mixed descent and failing Faithful standards	cumulative -6% off pure Númenórean lifespan for each generation after decline sets in	Gondorian Dúnedain nobles after the Kin-strife and Great Plague opting for Umbar or non-Númenórean lifestyle in general
Ârúwanâ Númenóreans of pure descent	as in <i>Númenórean longevity</i> for Ârúwanâ of pure descent	Dúnedain nobility in Númenor’s colonies south of Umbar after the Akallabêth
Ârúwanâ Númenóreans of mixed descent and pure Ârúwanâ ideology	as in <i>Númenórean longevity</i> for Ârúwanâ of mixed descent	most Ârúwanâ families in Middle-earth
<b>Note:</b> The decrease in lifespan is always in relation to the pure situation at the time in question as outlined in <i>Númenórean Longevity</i> .		

## Notes:

- 1 “Simple” by the standards of modern genetics, of course, with its advanced knowledge and techniques, enabling the manipulation of the very molecules of the DNA and RNA.
- 2 This can apply to Arnor as well, and here especially for Rhudaur with its presumably small Dúnedain population.
- 3 There are ample examples of men participating in situations of great physical (and psychological) stress even at an advanced age. Prominent examples come from the Military Order of the Hospitallers. Both their Grandmasters d’Aubusson and l’Isle Adam were 57 years of age when they personally led their troops in the thickest fighting at the sieges of Rhodes in AD1480 and AD1522, respectively. Grandmaster de La Valette was even 71 year when he personally led his troops from the front in the most critical phase during the famous siege of Malta in AD1565.
- 4 Meneldil, Elendil’s nearest descendant to die a natural death, “only” reached 280 years of age.



## 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.***

—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.

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Tomes of lore include:

- Races & Cultures (near completion)
- Magic in Middle-earth (core mechanics complete, conversion charts in progress)
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- Valar & Maiar (Includes Vala, Maia, Istari, Lords and Characters of Renown) (planned)

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# An Unexpected Party

A set of collectible metal figures by Mithril Miniatures

by David Daines

(csoldier217@hotmail.co.uk)

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Miniature design, collecting, painting and diorama building (and usage in roleplaying games!) has a long tradition in RPG tradition. Middle-earth is no exception and from the days of MERP, Mithril Miniatures (<http://www.mithril.ie>) has produced such miniatures as collectible items since 1987.

Mithril's products have a long history of being presented in both Other Hands as well as Other Minds (e.g. #5), so we are very glad to to continue this tradition.

We see as a sign that this will continue in the future as well.

Even if Mithril's quantitative output no longer is comparable to the 1990s, it still offers high-quality collectible miniatures, especially in the Gold Fellowship range, where members can influence which miniatures are made. One of these latter is the subject of the following contribution.



*In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.*

—The Hobbit.  
An Unexpected Party

That opening paragraph is for many lovers of the works of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien the first introduction to Middle-earth and the world of the hobbits, elves, goblins and wizards that inhabit it.

It was certainly my introduction and one that I am very glad I made, for the world of Tolkien has become something of a passion, as indeed have the wonderful miniatures sculpted by Chris Tubb, and released by Mithril Miniatures.

Before describing this project further, it may be in order to give a little of my background and to say something

about my relationship with Mithril Miniatures.

*I am not a wargamer nor do I participate in RPG, but I have, since first reading The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, been a great fan and admirer of Tolkien's works on Middle-earth. I first came across Mithril Miniatures in a small shop near Portsmouth in southern England in about 1987/88, soon after they had made their first appearance. I was attracted to some blister packs of figures on a display rack, but what caught my eye, without taking in any of the actual detail, was the grey primer on the figures. I distinctly remember hoping they would be Tolkien-related ... The rest, as they say, is history.*

The 'An Unexpected Party' release is a special customer-commissioned project and is coded MX 535. Mithril Miniatures do the casting, boxing, and promoting of the MX releases and the commissioner will usually sell a certain amount of sets through Mithril Miniatures while retaining some for themselves to dispose of



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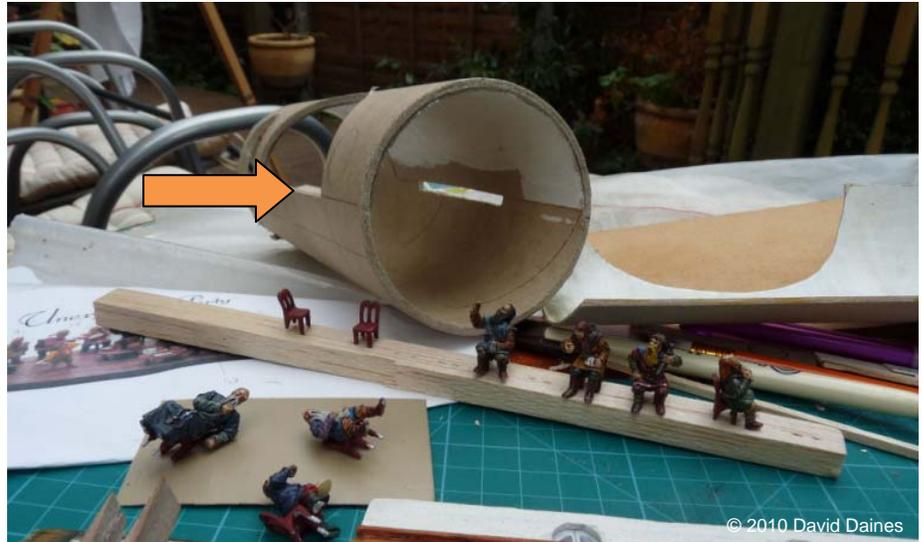
privately, sometimes with an extra casting not available with the general release.

As I assume that readers will be aware of the circumstances of Bilbo's unexpected party, I will not go into detail and will get straight to the object of interest. So what do you get for your money? Well, in a nice blue padded box are eight white metal sprues each containing a pair of figures, dwarves, Gandalf and Bilbo, giving you 15 figures in total; some sprues contain limbs and crockery and one has a chair rather than a second figure attached. You also get two tables (full of food and drink), some accessories such as Gandalf's hat, eight separate chairs, plus a large, semi-circular base engraved to look like a wooden floor. An illustrated guide is also included to explain how to fit the figures in place if you wish.

The downside is that it costs €180, but if you break this down into parts, moulding process, packaging, etc., the price isn't quite as bad as you might have originally thought; plus, there are only 100 sets available!



## The Project



Pretty much from the start, I knew that Bag End would be constructed to house this scene, because I also wanted to incorporate a couple of other little scenes, as well, such as Bilbo and Gandalf's meeting on that fateful morning in the Shire. With this in mind, I started planning the project.

Bag End would be made from a cardboard tube, as this was the right shape, so I cut a length and roughed out where the parlour would be. As I needed viewers to be able to see the scene within, I cut a semi-circular shape from the card (see image above), the bottom edge of which would also form the floor line.

Once this was done, I had to make the floor, and to do this I attached plastic card to a strip of foam-core board. This is basically a foam centre sandwiched between card and is quite a useful, light-

weight product. Below you can see the foam-core partially obscured, but with the plastic sheet floor attached. I went for a stone floor for the sole reason that I did not have any wood effect plastic card and that I did not feel like carving the detail on myself. Also seen is the paper template provided by Mithril Miniatures if you choose to follow their guide (along with the tables), and what will be one of the parlour end walls sculpted by me using Super Sculpey polymer clay (sculpt and bake).

I would like to add at this stage that I regret not being able to use the base part, but it just didn't fit into my project—not even as an 'end-wall'.



Next I needed to model the interior. At one early stage of planning I had intended the viewer to be looking in from the front of Bag End, but that would have ruined the other part of my plan to create the external scene, so instead I decided to have the view looking out 'over The Hill' and over Hobbiton below.

Next came a trial placing of the figures within. Sculptor Chris Tubb had his idea of how the story should unfurl, and I tried to follow this as closely as I could by grouping the figures into their little sub-scenes which Chris had introduced. The main focal point, however, is Bilbo

Baggins Esq., so he was placed dead centre and slightly clear of any other figures. Basically, at this point of the 'party' Mr Baggins is very flustered!

The first image below shows quite well the foam-core base, the end walls and the new outside wall.

Once I was happy with the composition, I inserted the scene into the cardboard tube and glued it into place ready to complete the groundwork.

For the groundwork I had used some insulation material into which the tube was fitted. I then added a wooden frame

around the bottom for display purposes. Once this was firmly fixed and the glue had dried, I built the groundwork using terracotta DAS air-drying clay, which can be easily blended to shape and smoothed with water. For the view looking into the parlour, I had to carefully shape the clay around the opening I had cut, taking care not to let any clay fall inside. For the front, it was a fairly straightforward job of applying clay and smoothing to shape.



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As can be seen from the view above, although I made two 'see-through' windows, the other three were merely depressions in the clay and would be painted in. To the right is Bilbo's shiny green door on which Gandalf scribed a 'queer' sign telling the dwarves that living here was a 'Burglar wanting plenty of

Excitement and reasonable Reward'. I based Bag End on Tolkien's own drawing of The Hill, but did not go for an exact replica.

The lighting was produced by using a set of battery-operated LED Christmas decorations and I positioned the lights to try and produce some nice subtle effects



including a coat of clear red paint for the fire (mostly obscured in the photograph), which had flames created by using a clear water effects gel medium that can be teased into shape. The test results looked good, so I now concentrated on finishing off the diorama.





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This was done using various scenic materials scattered over the base to include pathways, a hedge with an arch (as in Tolkien's painting) and by using some grass matting material to form the top of The Hill.

I also added a Bilbo figure, M393 (this is actually Sam with Bill the pony)

and an early Gandalf figure to depict the scene where Gandalf first comes knocking at Bilbo's door.

As the base is quite big, I also decided to give viewers a starting point with the inclusion of a gardener leaning on his spade, talking to an old gaffer going about his business.

If you could hear them talk, they would probably be discussing Mr Bilbo's strange visitor. Originally, I thought this gardener to be a 'young' Hamfast (Gaffer) Gamgee (remember that this is some years before events in LotR, at which time Hamfast was better-known as Sam's Gaffer), but on reading the story a bit closer Hamfast would have been much younger, so perhaps it is *his* dad!

And that, folks, is that. A most rewarding project that is the start of the journey for most readers of Tolkien.

It took me a lot longer than planned due to lighting issues, but once this was solved I was able to finish it off quite quickly.

Commissioned by Mithril collector Dieter Waltermann, to date this has to be one of Mithril Miniatures's most ambitious releases and it is an excellent expression of the desire by designer Chris Tubb, Mithril Miniatures, and serious collectors alike to bring Tolkien's world to life in the form of 32mm metal collectable miniatures.



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# The Phenomenon of “Eternal Realms” in Middle-earth RPG settings

by Thomas Morwinsky

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*Though MERP has been terminated for 12 years now and the LotRRPG for 4, the supplements developed for them still hold a great influence over the way Middle-earth is viewed in a roleplaying game context. Especially MERP’s numerous campaign and realm supplements stand out premier here and this is also where things might get complicated.*

*This article means to bring forth some thoughts and maybe even spark some discussion (online or in future Issues of Other Minds) on these topics.*



## Introduction

Reviewing the corpus of written supplements for Middle-earth-based roleplaying games, I observe a phenomenon that in my opinion is both understandable and somewhat problematic. It is the tendency of authors to devise “eternal” (or unnaturally long-lived) mannish realms (and cultures) as the norm rather than as rare exceptions.

Looking to the history of our real world, there certainly are examples of realms that have existed for a very long time, making them the models that are generally cited first when the topic is brought up. Egypt (in its various incarnations; but pharaonic Egypt in particular), China or Japan spring to mind here. On the other hand, we have innumerable realms that have existed either only briefly, or for a few centuries, before being merged into new ones, or vanishing altogether without trace. The realm of Akkad is a good example: It existed for only about 200 years, but it left a huge impact on history; having established the world’s first “empire”. Another excellent example for a believable design would be the Byzantine Empire: the word “Byzantine” for the later Eastern Roman Empire (and its people) was coined by western chroniclers with the intention of a derogatory appellation. Thus “byzantine” became a term synonymous with deviousness, scheming and insidiousness to differentiate from the “upright” and virtuous western realms and people. The Byzantines called themselves “Romanoi” (“Romans”) until the very end (AD 1453) and viewed them-

selves as the rightful heirs of the entire Roman Empire, while in modern historiography, the derogatory became the norm due to our cultural background. Concerning “eternal” realms, the “Byzantines” might be the heirs of the ancient empire, continuing many of its traditions, but their culture would still be different, ever evolving over time from their origins and in the end certainly no more “Romans” in the classical sense, though by name they are still “Romans”—in addition as *de iure* by their history.

Judging from this observation, it seems that more or less frequent—major—change in mannish political entities and societies is the norm rather than the exception.

Looking at Tolkien’s own creations, at first glance it seems natural to develop more mannish societies that last for a very long time. The Númenóreans are the primary example of Men creating a lasting cultural and political identity that survives for approximately 6,500 years throughout both the Second and Third Ages (plus probably several centuries or millenia more into the Fourth Age). Thus, it is tempting to devise long-lasting realms on this template for game supplement design. In the context of the Dúnedain, however, we have to take into account their unnatural longevity, which can be seen to cause their cultural and political entities to last for much longer than those of other men. Their special—and close—relationship with the Elves (and indirectly the Valar) must also have played a role here.

## The “supplement writer’s trap”

I use this term to describe the observable tendency of RPG supplements to duplicate the Dúnedain’s achievements of an uninterrupted culture and political entity over many millennia. Given the extensive realm descriptions created during the period of ICE’s MERP line, this tendency is most pronounced there. Decipher’s game did not last long enough to produce any non-Tolkienian sourcebooks about “foreign” cultures—regardless of their intention to ever develop them or not. In almost every MERP sourcebook that deals with cultures or realms not described by Tolkien, we find at least one such realm/culture. Many can be found in *Lords of Middle-earth, Vol 2 – The Mannish Races (LoMe2)* in the section about the Ringwraiths. The following examples illustrate the point:

**The Womaw.** In *Lords of Middle-earth, Vol. 2*, their—rough—history is hinted at in the section about Khamûl the Ringwraith. In S.A. 900, the Womaw already commanded a sizeable empire when they—supposedly—came into contact with the exploring Númenóreans for the first time. Needless to say, the realm endured until the Fourth Age. The length of this uninterrupted existence

would even eclipse the longevity of the Númenórean realms. From the text, it seems obvious that the Womaw Empire represents some kind of “China in Middle-earth”.

**The Nazgûl’s people.** All the Nazgûl (apart from the three Númenórean Nazgûl) descend from cultures and realms that already existed at the time of their birth (mostly around S.A. 1900–2000 as written in *LoMe2*) and that continue to exist in almost the same way right up to the War of the Ring—with almost no interruptions, or any real changes worth mentioning. It is the description of these individuals (and the people and realms they encounter or rule throughout their existence as undead that gives a strong point of “eternal” mannish realms as the norm in MERP’s supplements.

**The Variags of Khand.** They are mentioned by Tolkien in the context of the Battle of Pelennor Fields (TA 3019). This mention of course proves that there existed a mannish realm of that name and populated by these people at the end of the Third Age. This was reason enough in the MERP series (e.g. *LoMe2* again) to make Khand a realm that existed at least from the 20<sup>th</sup> century SA onwards continuously until the end of the Third Age, or probably even longer (see “Úvatha”

entry among the Nazgûl in *LoMe2*). In the *The Inland Sea* module,<sup>1</sup> the Variags are mentioned as exactly these people from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century of the Second Age onwards, making their culture almost as long-lived as that of the Dúnedain!<sup>2</sup>

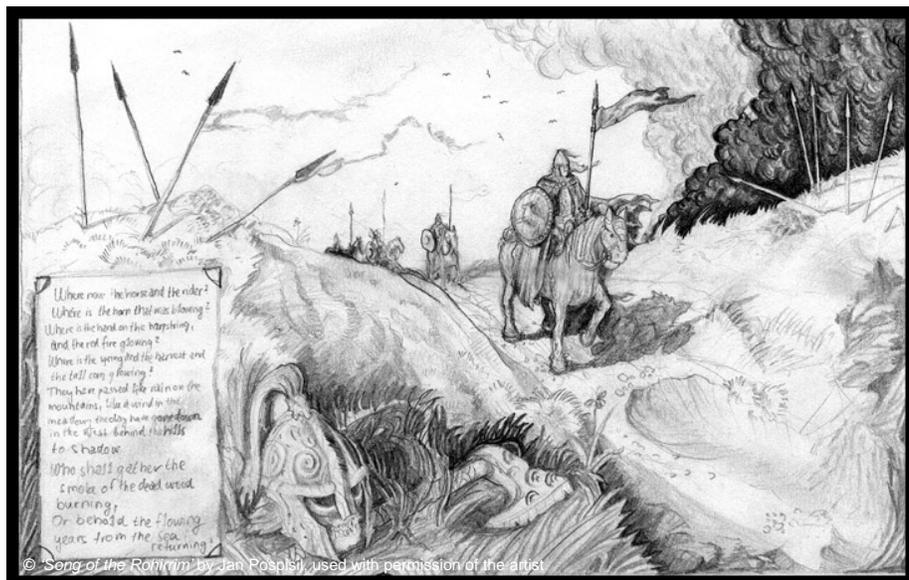
The various city-states of **Sîrayn** (*Greater Harad*) existed almost constantly in the same form and capacity from the 20<sup>th</sup> century SA to the Fourth Age.

According to *Far Harad*, the realm’s **two cities** already existed with their origins “lost in time” when the Númenóreans first landed in the area around SA 1100. From then on, these cities (as the core of the realm there) existed more or less unchanged until the War of the Ring.



While this list is far from complete, it is sufficient to make the following point: In developing original cultures and realms in Middle-earth, it was the norm rather than the exception to make these realms extremely long-lived, sometimes even more enduring than those of the Dúnedain, who themselves experienced a major disruption in their political structure when Númenor was destroyed.

This tendency might be explained by the way the MERP line developed. At first there was a nominal setting (TA 1640) and many authors developed campaigns or adventures set in this time. The main issue here was that there was only this time frame—without a clear concept of a political, economical or historical framework beyond Tolkien’s own meagre ‘Tale of Years’ in *The Lord of the Rings* (as far the mid-Third Age is concerned). This very basic set of parameters was later only imposed on the existing adventure/campaign modules. Accordingly, the framework (or historical picture) became constricted by earlier developments which had not considered a coherent and overarching canvas upon which these adventures were placed. In a sense, the cart was put before the horse, and



the impression of these “Eternal Realms” is one of the consequences.

It was only much later on in the development of the MERP line that there a certain paradigm shift occurred which went some way towards rectifying some of these issues.



## Tolkien's mannish realms

To assess whether Tolkien himself proposed unnatural longevity among mannish realms, it is useful to look at the realms and people devised by him.

**The Edain**—Their realms in Beleriand lasted for only about 200 years at most before finally destroyed by Morgoth's hosts. Afterwards, the survivors established quite distinct “realms”.

**The Númenóreans**—They are well-known and the model for all these long-lasting realms.

**Northmen**—These people play a great role in the histories of the Third Age. Before that, we have no precise information about their realms. Below is a listing of their subgroups.

The Northmen of the Plains of Rhovanion (not named by Tolkien, but called Éothraim in MERP, later Ehwathrumi in *Other Hands*). In the early Third Age they had many small and warring (both amongst themselves and with other people) princedoms. Their first great—and named—lord was Vidugavia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but it seems after him the power of his realm fell into decline. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the rule of these people was destroyed and their remnants re-located to the middle Anduin vales, calling themselves the Éothéod there. After about 100 years there, they removed their homes to the upper Anduin vales in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. There they lived for about 500 years before re-locating to Calenardhon, becoming the Rohirrim (Eorlingas).

They had almost no memories of history beyond the times of their fathers in the upper vales.

The Northmen in northern Rhovanion. They are mentioned for the first time in the context of the Dwarves' return to Erebor in the late 26<sup>th</sup> century, and are described as growing strong and wealthy. This lasted until the mid-28<sup>th</sup> century when Smaug destroyed these communities. It was not until 170 years later that they united after Smaug's death and became strong again.

There are some tantalising hints about the other mannish communities (e.g. the later Dunlendings), but here Tolkien gives us so little information that we cannot say anything sure about whether they had any long-lived political entities. Their most ancient sentiment at the time of *The Lord of the Rings* seems to be a hatred for the Rohirrim whom they hold responsible for “stealing” their land. Since the Rohirrim have been in Calenardhon/Rohan for “only” 500 years by the time of the War of the Ring, this can hardly be called an extraordinarily long-lived “realm” or memory on the same timescale as the other ICE inventions mentioned above.

**Hobbits:** They first lived in the Anduin vales, until by about T.A. 1000 they began their complicated migrations, which ended when the vast majority assembled in the *Shire* from T.A. 1600 onwards. For nearly the first 400 years, they were subjects of the kings of Arthedain, and then for about 1,400 years lived under their own chieftains. This can be seen as another model for men (of whom Hobbits were a subgroup) building such long-lasting realms. In this context, the continuous de-population of Eriador surely was a contributing factor towards the stabilisation of the isolated Hobbit “realm”. We have to be aware, however, that these traditionally-

minded people were extremely unambitious (e.g. unsuitable for “adventurous” campaign backgrounds) and secretly protected from outside influences that could have swept away their communities easily. Thus the *Shire* exists in sheltered and “artificial” conditions not found elsewhere at all.

In summary, Tolkien does not really suggest any special longevity for the majority of mannish realms or societies. The Rohirrim and their ancestry are a good example: They change their homes relatively frequently, adopt new names and have little memories of the times before they inhabited their then current homes. It is only the Númenóreans that exhibit a real and extraordinary longevity in their cultures and realms. Now, this raises two questions:

- First, is it sensible and fitting to design realms and societies in such a way, and
- Second, is it credible to have such an excessive number of long-lasting realms and/or societies?

To answer the first question: It is sensible from an author's point of view. He only has a limited page-count available and needs to develop a background for adventures that is widely usable. In addition, developing several cultures and states, and realms shifting over time, for the same region would increase the amount of work immensely. It is not realistic to expect so much work of a typical FRP author, especially since a great part of this work will not be of immediate use for the primary campaign background or common character knowledge and will only serve as “academic” or “historical” information for the GM. In a practical way, it is no problem to devise an explanation why this and that realm is a “big exception” and why its unusual persistence is absolutely logical and justified. While not wrong, using this on a regular basis in every module, we get such a great number of



such “uniquely extraordinary exceptions” that examples of the short-lived “norm” are conspicuous only by their relative absence.

Having long-lived realms as the norm offers great advantages: You only have to develop a (perhaps detailed) ruling society once, rather than multiple times. In addition, having complex histories with invaders, partial adoption of old customs, with new rulers and new people, etc., might lead to confusion and less clearly-defined distinctions for the players (if they get to know these histories at all). Still, in my opinion, making mannish realms in Middle-earth more closely similar to the majority of realms in real-world history creates a stronger suspension of disbelief than “FRPG standards” with age-old realms as the norm.

This tendency of age-old realms as the norm was also continued in some fan-made projects after the demise of MERP. *The Inland Sea* (as already mentioned originally a MERP manuscript, but published as a fan-realm) is a prominent example. Superbly developed in its own right, in my opinion it suffers from the same basic problem: The realm of *Folyavuld* (the indigenous name for Dorwinion) and all the cultures dealing with it are founded in the Second Age (some already in the early Second Age), and then they all exist more or less unchanged (with changing political fortunes) throughout the Second and Third Age right into the War of the Ring. To a lesser degree, this is true of the Easterling communities in the same area (Rhovanion/Wilderland) for almost the whole of the Third Age, as well.

## Possible solutions

Far from being a niggler who criticises everything without offering solutions, I admire many of the ideas developed in the official MERP series, as well as those in other works (e.g. the *Inland Sea*). Many of the problems mentioned above could be solved if these realms were re-defined temporally rather than spatially. In addition, there were also a few positive examples of ephemeral realms or vanished societies (although I admit that they are hard to find):

In ICE’s *Shadow in the South*, the timeline mentions a man named Jenna Chy who creates an empire by defeating and incorporating many of the older “eternal” realms in the area from TA 2857-79. Soon after his death, this new empire fragments.<sup>3</sup> This history is reminiscent of the exploits of Alexander the Great, who gloriously conquered the Achaemenid empire, died shortly after and left a realm soon falling apart under his successors.

In ICE’s *The Northern Waste*, on several occasions there are hints about and short mentions of a prominent Second Age-culture in the area (the Beadmakers) which have vanished completely from

the region by the Third Age, leaving only legends and some artifacts.

These latter two are excellent examples of how mannish realms should be developed as the **norm**. It gives unrivalled depth to a story or region; much better than the same people living there for centuries or even millennia without any major breaks.

As a suggestion for people willing to **fix already published modules**, the following guideline can be helpful: Re-define the status quo as described in the module for a specific timeframe and be more vague about the past history of the region in question (a few sentences about the rough history with many changes, ethnic groups etc. is sufficient). In this way, these ideas can mostly be retained (perhaps slightly modified) for the primary timeframe, which in my opinion should be the late Third Age due to the tie-in possibilities with *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.<sup>4</sup> The “only” thing that needs to be changed is the history, with more sharp turning-points that reflect the changing nature of cultures, rulers, states and religions in any given area.



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The Oathtaking of Cirion and Eorl – Copyright © Ted Nasmith. All rights reserved.

This is of course easier for **newly-developed modules**, as such more varied histories can be made from scratch.

Ideally, it would be desirable to have at least one complete break in history approximately every four to seven centuries to account for the rise and fall of realms and empires. Even though it is more work, it offers the chance to enrich the setting, as campaigns in different times in the same area can—and will—encounter different cultures and realms there. This might also make for more interesting plots involving characters (PCs or NPCs) from longer-lived races such as Dwarves or especially Elves. Realms and cultures they once knew might have vanished or could have been absorbed into new peoples with a distinctly different outlook.

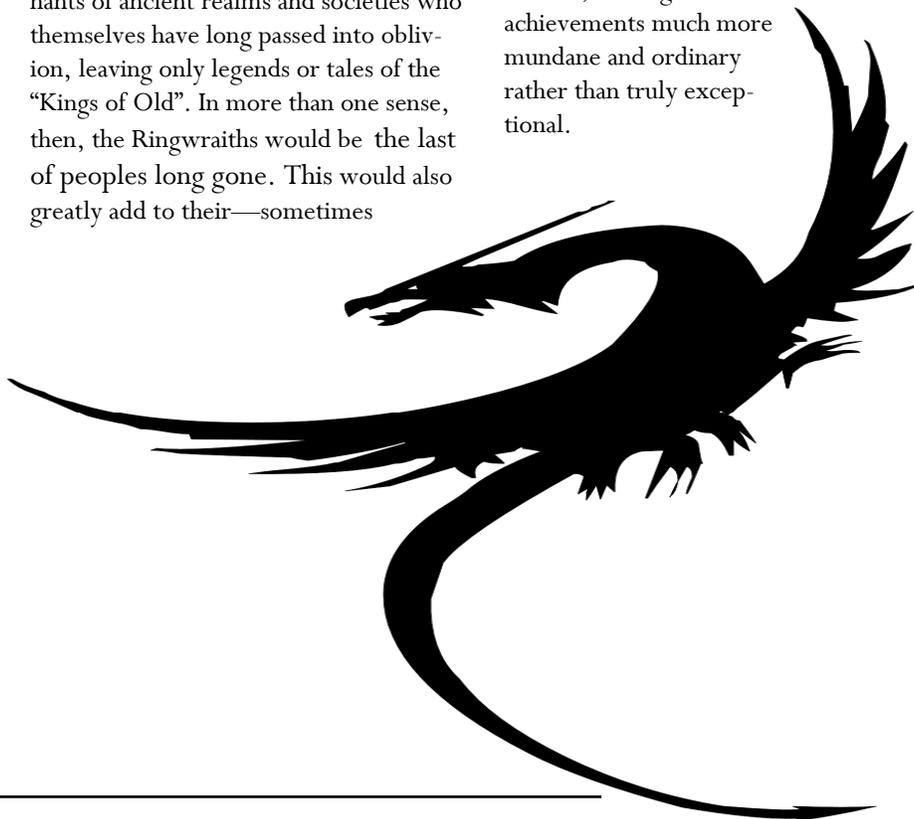
As an option, remnants of the old people or realms might still be present in a new time and fade away only very slowly. Real-world history has many such examples (e.g. the Sumerian religion and language, which survived long after Sumer as a political entity had ceased to exist).

## Conclusion

The case of MERP's non-Númenórean Nazgûl best exemplifies the theme of this article: **All** of their home societies last virtually unchanged for millennia. It seems that non-'eternal' realms are almost non-existent in that part of Middle-earth not described by Tolkien, but only sketched by ICE. In my opinion, it would make for a **far** stronger historical narrative to have the Nazgûl be remnants of ancient realms and societies who themselves have long passed into oblivion, leaving only legends or tales of the "Kings of Old". In more than one sense, then, the Ringwraiths would be the last of peoples long gone. This would also greatly add to their—sometimes

tragic—tales of loss and treachery at the hands of the Dark Lord.

Making the vast majority of mannish realms subject to changes and complete shifts in fortunes, the Númenóreans and their realms with their extraordinary long-lived culture and polity become indeed something very special, which is fitting for the status awarded to them by Tolkien. Otherwise, they would be just one among many long-lived political entities, making their achievements much more mundane and ordinary rather than truly exceptional.



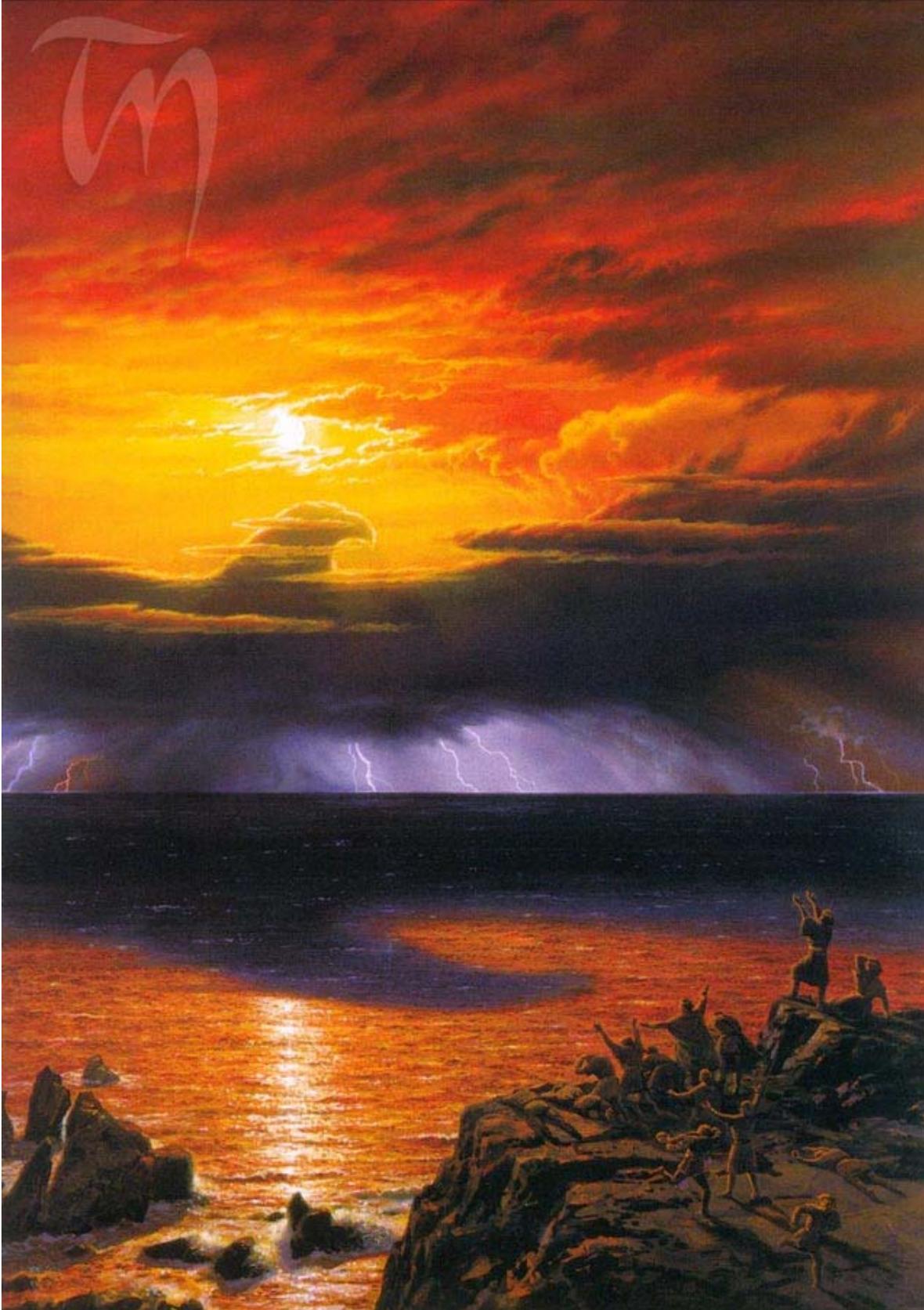
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## Notes

1. This was originally a proposed MERP module which was never officially published. Later the manuscript was edited and published independently and made available as a downloadable PDF document.
2. In *Unfinished Tales*, they are mentioned for the first time by Tolkien in the context of the second Wainrider invasion of TA 1944, hinting that they may have existed at that time. It may be the hindsight of the historians that named these people "Variags", though I am inclined to follow the report as "true". If we assume that the Variags established their realm shortly before this time, it existed for about a millennium at the time of the War of the Ring.
3. Thereafter, all these "normal" eternal mannish realms continue to exist centuries longer as they had before for millennia.
4. Even though I personally prefer a mid-Third Age setting, I recognize that this is probably not a majority position and not realistic under the conditions of the current gaming developments. To get the broadest coverage it seems therefore wise to concentrate on the late Third Age as the primary timeframe for campaign ideas even in fan-made supplements.

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*"Then Ilúvatar said to them: 'Of the theme that I have declared to you, I will now that ye make in harmony together 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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# Quendi

## The Elvish peoples of Middle-earth

by Daniel “Vaco” Vacaflores  
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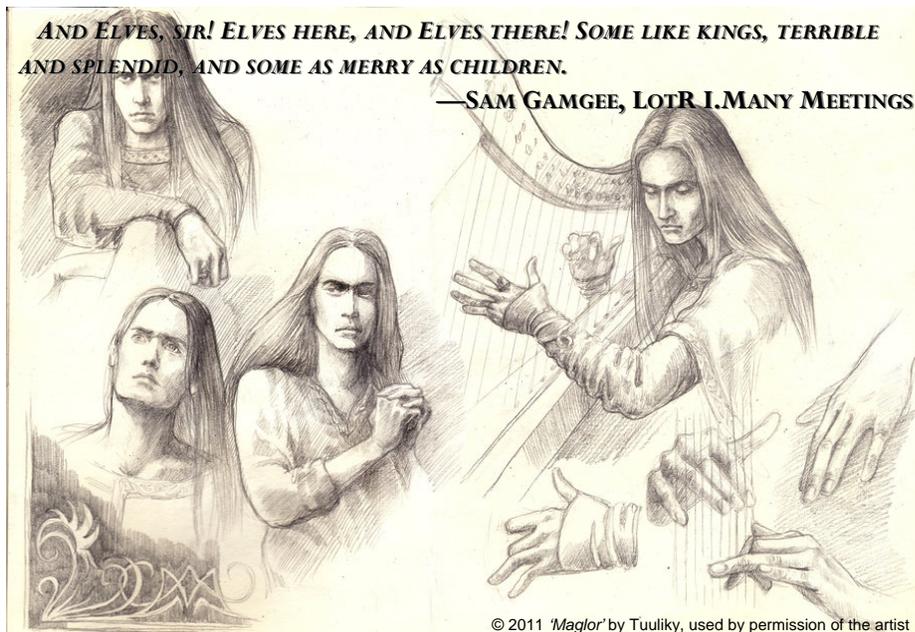
Spanish: Viola de Vacaflores

English: Neville “Osric” Percy

The elvish people of Middle-earth have long been the subject the subject of interest, beginning with the Professor himself, who designed their elaborate languages, histories and all the details associated with them.

In roleplaying games, some of the special characteristics have been addressed by specific bonuses and penalties to their abilities.

Though both MERP and LotRRPG had this topic in their books, it was not treated in the depth found in this article by our veteran author Daniel “Vaco” Vacaflores.



Sam’s words in the above quote describe quite well the variety of elves existing in Middle-earth and the fascination of many Tolkien fans with them.<sup>1</sup> In this article I address the issue of the elves of Middle-earth, their various peoples, their application in RPGs and the challenges involved.

I include a preview of some of my work on game statistics for “Chronicles of Middle-earth – *Quenta Endorion*”<sup>2</sup> and their adaptation to the MERP system.

### The problem of the elvish peoples in role-playing games

Both official Lord of the Rings role-playing games produced so far, MERP and CODA, have the structure of *Noldor*, *Sindar* and *Silvan* for the elven peoples of Middle-earth. This tripartite division has some direct consequences:

The first consequence is that this basic scheme denies a great diversity. It is true that the category “Silvan/wood elves” could cover the *Avari* elves, the *Wood Elves* of northern Mirkwood, the *Galadhrim* of Lothlórien, the *Nandor* of the Anduin and the *Laiquendi* of Ossiriand. But on the other hand, where do the *Falathrim* of Círdan and the *Teleri/Falmari* of Eldamar fit? It would require great good will to include them as “Sindar”.<sup>3</sup>

Especially in the case of the *Sindar* I noted a lack of diversity. The *Noldor* are great warriors and great craftsmen, while the *Wood Elves* are masters of the forest. But... what about the *Sindar*? The *Sindar* are neither fish nor fowl. They are just an intermediate people between the *Noldor* and the *Silvan* elves, without any particular feature that makes them special.

Even Christopher Tolkien’s schema of elven peoples in *The Silmarillion* is a

simplified version which does not very accurately represent the many different elvish peoples appearing in all the writings of Professor Tolkien.

On the other hand it seems at first glance that there is chaos even for Professor Tolkien in his division of the elven peoples. It is difficult to impose order on this sea of names, giving the impression that new “peoples” never cease to appear or that one “people” might have too many parallel names.

This in turn has had its impact on the publishers of Lord of the Rings role-playing games (especially *Iron Crown Enterprises* with its MERP system), leading to the second consequence. In light of the apparently infinite number, chaos and uncertainty in the division of the elven peoples, they proceeded to invent their own new elvish peoples and subdivisions. Among those we have a motley variety of elvish peoples, which are not always clearly organised.

I have seen others and myself try and fail to reconcile the writings of Professor Tolkien with these roleplaying interpretations.

In my “Guide to the peoples and cultures of Middle-earth”<sup>4</sup> I solved this problem by including additional elvish peoples, such as the *Falathrim* and *Nandor/Laiquendi*, distinct from the *Sindar* as traditional grey elves and *Avari* as traditional wood elves, each with their own skills. But despite that I remained dissatisfied with the outcome. It did not reflect the variety and richness of Tolkien's writings.

In this article I present a fresh approach to this longstanding problem. My solution is to throw it out and start again, directly from the writings of Tolkien himself.



## The elven peoples of the LotR and The Hobbit

*The feasting people were Wood-elves, of course. [...] They differed from the High Elves of the West, and were more dangerous and less wise. For most of them (together with their scattered relations in the hills and mountains) were descended from the ancient tribes that never went to Faerie in the West. There the Light-elves and the Deep-elves and the Sea-elves went and lived for ages, and grew fairer and wiser and more learned, and invented their magic and their cunning craft in the making of beautiful and marvelous things, before some came back into the Wide World.*  
—The Hobbit. Flies and Spiders

Throughout this process I came to an interesting conclusion: the basic traditional role-playing game division of elves as *Noldor*, *Sindar* and *Silvan* corresponds with the image of the elves in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*. Of course the names “Noldor” and “Sindar” only appear in the Appendices but the main texts refer to “High Elves”, “Grey Elves” and “Wood Elves” [and “Sea Elves”, not considered by the role-playing industry].

Considering *The Silmarillion* and other posthumous books of JRR Tolkien it becomes clear that the “High Elves” are the *Noldor*,<sup>5</sup> and the “Grey Elves” are the *Sindar*.

So from the perspective of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, the division made by the role-playing industry is correct. This is understandable considering Middle-earth Enterprises’ editorial constraints explicitly prohibiting any reference to, or even naming of, other works of Professor Tolkien beyond *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*.<sup>6</sup>

If we follow the logic of the owners of the copyright (and some of the fans) to take into account only *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* and nothing more, then it would be more consistent to talk about *High*, *Grey* and *Wood Elves*.

Now, taking this a little further I want to explore the implications of taking into account two different historical perspectives as a projection of the elven peoples in Middle-earth.

It could be that this simple classification into *High*, *Grey* and *Wood Elves* is the result of an “uneducated” (or “innocent”) perspective from the hobbits regarding an exotic and distant people. One could take this classification as a result of the “ignorance” of the hobbits and many other human peoples who lost contact with the elves with the passage of time.

But there is another alternative interpretation, that this is not “ignorance” on the part of the hobbits, but the real situation of the elves at the end of the Third Age.

Over the years, the elves have been leaving Middle-earth for their final journey to Valinor/ Eldamar, beyond the circles of the Mortal World. In this demographic decline the population of the last elvish refuges and even the “ethnic borders” could have faded, erasing many of the most striking differences amongst the elven peoples of Middle-earth.

In this sense, the survivors and descendants of the *Noldor*, with the passage of time, have become simply *High Elves* (*Aredhil?*). And the heirs of the *Nandor*, *Sindar* and *Laiquendi* would transform into *Grey* or *Wood Elves*.

This seems to me a very interesting alternative. But it has a couple of problems that question its universal validity, as there are two cases which do not fit the model.

The first are the *Galadhrim* of Lórien, though they might very well fit the type of “Wood Elves”. In “The History of Galadriel and Celeborn” (in *Unfinished Tales* pp. 248 ff.) it seems that the special nature of these elves (and of Lothlórien itself) depends on the direct influence of Galadriel. They therefore have all the given conditions to remain as a separate people.

The other case is the *Falathrim* of Círdan the Shipwright. Their particular nature as sea elves, shipbuilders and sailors substantially differentiates them from all the other elves of Middle-earth. And if we rely on the description of ICE and Decipher the elves of Círdan from the Grey Havens are not *Sindar*, unless we consider that the *Grey Elves* are precisely the *Falathrim*, which would finally give them a distinct personality. But then the other “*Sindar*” did transform into *Wood Elves* (normally) or *High Elves* (in the possibly exemplary case of Celeborn, husband of Galadriel and Lord of the *Galadhrim*). I will return to this idea later in this article.

## A new answer for an old dilemma

*I reckon there's Elves and Elves. They're all elvish enough, but they're not all the same. Now these folk aren't wanderers or homeless, and seem a bit nearer to the likes of us: they seem to belong here, more even than Hobbits do in the Shire. Whether they've made the land, or the land's made them, it's hard to say, if you take my meaning. It's wonderfully quiet here. Nothing seems to be going on, and nobody seems to want it to. If there's any magic about, it's right down deep, where I can't lay my hands on it, in a manner of speaking.*

—Sam Gamgee, *LotR I. The Mirror of Galadriel*

After confronting these problems, the final solution, which I offer now as part of “Chronicles of Middle-earth”, is to ignore (nearly) all production by the role-playing industry about the elves in Middle-earth and go back to the original works of Professor Tolkien.

And so I began to systematically collect all entries and direct quotes from Professor Tolkien about the elves in general and the various elven peoples in par-

ticular. And wonder of wonders! Unlike all other approaches everything fits (forgive the pun) like a ring on a finger: a puzzle where the pieces fit together perfectly.

Of course the approach for an RPG is different than for a “simple” literary analysis.

Faced with the immense number of ethnonyms, I decided to consider each one as a distinct people. Only if the alternate use of two or more names referred explicitly to the same people<sup>7</sup> did I take it as such. This simple principle solves the whole problem. The specific quotes from Tolkien give us all the answers we need to create a guide to the Elven Peoples of Middle-earth and Valinor/Eldamar, for anyone who wants to see.

Earlier I mentioned that all Professor Tolkien’s different names for the elven peoples *would seem* to pose the problem of chaos, lack of systematization and an inconsistent structure. But *in fact* when we stop trying to work within the published RPGs’ Noldor/Sindar/Silvan division, we see that Professor Tolkien presents a totally logical and coherent structure on the subject. I sincerely believe all the problems in categorizing the different elven peoples of Middle-earth are due to failures of interpretation, and not the original source.

I am proceeding to put together a guide to all the elven peoples of Middle-earth, based only on Professor Tolkien’s own work, and only after that including other contributions originating from the world of RPGs.<sup>8</sup>

That is my answer to the old dilemma of the variety and consistency of the elven peoples of Middle-earth.



## Game Data

Here I present the results of my work, including an analysis of elvish nature and a description of the elven peoples of Middle-earth. This material is an excerpt and “preview” of the Player’s Handbook from “Chronicles of Middle-earth (Quenta Endorion)”. But as this game system is still in preparation, and therefore is not yet available (although in the last issue of OM and I presented the simplified rules), I decided to include additional information and mechanics for MERP.

Adapting information for MERP would have been easy... except that I had to use the basic logic of ICE, which was not really compatible with my own interpretation. So I had to decide whether to change everything needed, or stay as close as possible to the official rules of MERP. The first option (to change everything that is needed) would have changed everything, in a very similar structure as my own gaming system. And that would not have had reason to be. So finally I decided to keep the official version of MERP with only small changes that I consider essential. The most profound changes, mainly in the description of elvish nature, are presented as suggestions because they would radically change the basic structure.

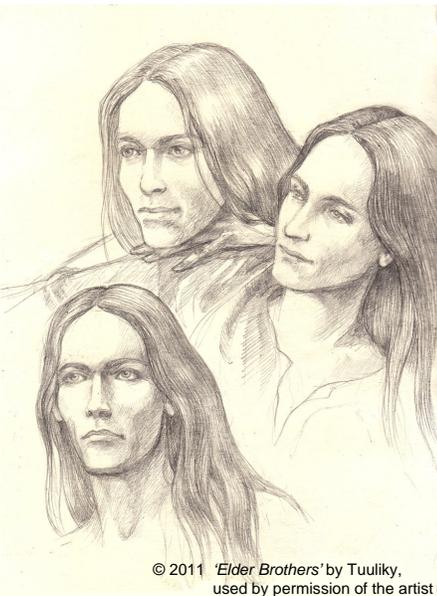
Here I must apologize to the fans of CODA and other, unofficial, RPGs. In the end I could not gather enough energy to provide data for them. I had to decide to leave the necessary adjustments to those systems’ own fandom.

I think there is a need for clarification on this point: The following information represents a systematic review of *The Silmarillion* and *The Hobbit*, and just a quick glance at *The Lord of the Rings*, *Unfinished Tales* and the *History Middle-earth* series. I am still working on the whole.

I must also say that for reasons of space (this is a very extensive article as it is) I do not show the totality of the information that I have systematized. In fact, I

think that the end of this process could very well be writing one of these famous books in the role-playing industry: “The Book of Elves”.

And finally I wish to recall that the following information is in the testing phase of the game. And so, although I have done everything possible to present a balanced game system, it is possible that several details have yet to be adjusted to be fully playable.



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## The elvish peoples

*...the Quendi shall be the fairest of all earthly creatures, and they shall have and shall conceive and bring forth more beauty than all my children; and they shall have the greater bliss in this world. [...] the Elves remain until the end of days, and their love of the Earth and all the world is more single and more poignant therefore, and as the years lengthen ever more sorrowful. For the Elves die not till the world dies, unless they are slain or waste in grief (and to both these seeming deaths they are subject); neither does age subdue their strength, unless one grow weary of ten thousand centuries; and dying they are gathered to the halls of Mandos in Valinor, whence they may in time return.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of the Beginning of Days*

The elves are the first born, the first children of Eru Ilúvatar. They have the gifts of immortality, perfection, language and gaze. They are beings of spirit. They awoke under starlight, and therefore have the blessing of Varda.

*Immortal were the Elves, and their wisdom waxed from age to age, and no sickness nor pestilence brought death to them. Their bodies indeed were of the stuff of Earth, and could be destroyed; [...] the Quendi wandered in the lonely places of the great lands and the isles, and took to the moonlight and the starlight, and to the woods and caves, becoming as shadows and memories...*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of Men*

The gift of **Immortality** has different connotations. The first is that elves can only die in war (by physical injury) or when their spirit is permanently drained (when the level of *Corruption* reaches 0). The second connotation of immortality is that they can always return to “life”. In a high-fantasy scenario

this would mean that they can be resurrected through magic; or they can expect to purify their spirit in the Halls of Mandos and then to come back again into the world.

A secondary aspect of the gift of immortality is their **immunity to diseases**.

Another minor aspect of the gift of immortality and eternal life is their **slow progression**, since they only receive 5 SP (*Skill points*) per year and 1 DP (*Development point*) every 12 years, and progress in their skills one degree less (harder) than normal.<sup>9</sup> This means that even with unlimited time available, virtually an eternity, they master skills rather slowly. The *starting age* for elves is the *base age* ×6. They can also pick the advantage “*Son of the Ages*” to start as an ancient elf.

*...long he [Sauron] sought to persuade the Elves to his service, for he knew that the Firstborn had the greater power...*

—*The Silmarillion. Of The Rings Of Power and the Third Age*

The gift of **Perfection** implies an important bonus to their different *characteristics*, listed in the description of each specific people.

*Now the Eldar were beyond all other peoples skilled in tongues; and Felagund discovered also that he could read in the minds of Men such thoughts as they wished to reveal in speech, so that their words were easily interpreted.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of the Coming of Men into the West*

The gift of **Language** means that *Elves* can learn any language at an amazing speed. Use the lower time scale in the table of language learning.<sup>10</sup>



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*Who calls you hobbits, though? That does not sound elvish to me. Elves made all the old words: they began it. [...] 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.*

—*LotR II. Treebeard*

Quendi, Eldar and Avari (as primal elves) can apply this gift to learning the language of any creature of the animal, vegetable or mineral world (stones, rocks, hills, etc., but not crafted items), “awakening” such creature and giving it the gift of speech with its own language.

*[Fingon] looked eastwards, seeking if he might see with elven-sight the dust of Anfauglith rising beneath the hosts of Maedros.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of the Fifth Battle: Nirnaeth Arnoediad*

*‘Look!’ cried Legolas, pointing up into the pale sky above them. ‘There is the eagle again! He is very high. He seems to be flying now away, from this land back to the North. He is going with great speed. Look!’*

*‘No, not even my eyes can see him, my good Legolas,’ said Aragorn. ‘He must be far aloft indeed. I wonder what is his errand, if he is the same bird that I have seen before. But look! I can see something nearer at hand and more urgent; there is something moving over the plain!’*

*‘Many things,’ said Legolas. ‘It is a great company on foot; but I cannot say more, nor see what kind of folk they may be. They are many leagues away: twelve, I guess; but the flatness of the plain is hard to measure.’*

—*LotR II. The Riders of Rohan*

With the gift of **Sight** elves can see and distinguish things to the horizon. This means that they can make perception rolls to discern the details of any creature, object or situation as far as they can see.

*The elves were the first to charge. Their hatred for the goblins is cold and bitter. Their spears and swords shone in the gloom with a gleam of chill flame, so deadly was the wrath of the hands that held them. As soon as the host of their enemies was dense in the valley, they sent against it a shower of arrows, and each flickered as it fled as if with stinging fire.*

—*The Hobbit. The Clouds Burst*

The elves have a great **Hatred for Orcs**, and cause double basic damage when fighting them (MD+1). This power is spiritual in nature, and manifests itself with a glow (blue or red) around their weapons. This power is added to *elven weapons* of orc-slaying. The downside of this is a penalty of -20% in all social interaction with orcs other than intimidation.

*Elves may see things otherwise. Indeed I have heard that for them memory is more like to the waking world than to a dream.*

—**LotR I. Farewell to Lórien**

*Not that hobbits would ever acquire quite the elvish appetite for music and poetry and tales. They seem to like them as much as food, or more.*

—**LotR I. Many Meetings**

*Legolas took a deep breath, like one that drinks a great draught after long thirst in barren places.*

*‘Ah! the green smell!’ he said. ‘It is better than much sleep.’*

—**LotR II. The Riders of Rohan**

*...but in the waybread of the Elves he [Legolas] found all the sustenance that he needed, and he could sleep, if sleep it could be called by Men, resting his mind in the strange paths of elvish dreams, even as he walked open-eyed in the light of this world.*

—**LotR II. The Riders of Rohan**

Elves are **Creatures of spirit**. Of course they have a physical body, but their nature is essentially spiritual. This means that they are not so dependent on physical sustenance, may feed on “dreams” (their nightly meditation) and can almost completely ignore the need for physical food if they can also share strong and deep positive feelings with other beings (such as singing, love, etc.). It also means that they do not require daily physical rest as normal for other people: with four hours of calm (with no physical activity) and/or an hour of meditation (“sharing” successfully any artistic or social skill) they are as rested as humans after eight hours’ sleep. It also means that elves exist simultaneously in the physical world and the spirit world and can see and interact in both. But this has its price: as they exist simultaneously in both worlds, elves cannot separate their spirit from their body, as is the case of dreaming mortals.

*...elves are lightfooted...*

—**The Hobbit. Fire and Water**

*Only Legolas still stepped as lightly as ever, his feet hardly seeming to press the grass, leaving no footprints as he passed...*

—**LotR II. The Riders of Rohan**

**Light-footed:** Elves can use their ethereal nature and reduce their body weight to a minimum, for example to walk over snow, branches or even on water without sinking. To activate this power they must spend one *Spirit Point* (two if it is water) per round.<sup>11</sup> This power only applies to themselves, being unable to carry or help other creatures.

*...I felt not the horror, and I feared not the shadows of Men, powerless and frail as I deemed them.*

—**LotR III. The Last Debate**

Living simultaneously in the physical and the spirit world they can **interact with spirits** without being vulnerable. This will be fully explained in the “Guide to Middle-earth”. In these basic rules this power manifests itself as **immunity to the terror of spectres**.

*[Elves] have ever loved the starlight, and have revered Varda Elentári above all the Valar.*

—**Quenta Silmarillion.**

*Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

Another feature of elves as creatures of spirit is their **affinity with magic**. While other peoples start with a value of 0% and must abide by certain rituals and taboos in order to progress in the *Paradigms of Magic*, elves have some “free” paradigms, beginning with them like any other skill: with its *characteristics* value and open to spending *Skill Points* in them.<sup>12</sup> All other peoples **must** spend a DP if they want to have been subjected to this ritual and taboo in some specific *Paradigm of Magic*, so that they can spend *Skill Points* in it.

The only exception to this affinity with magic is the *Black Magic* of *Morgoth* and *Sauron*, on which they can not spend any initial DP.

And finally, the **Blessing of Varda**, lady of the stars, is **nightvision**, being able to see in a starry night. This blessing is combined with the gift of sight.

“Elf” is a general category (a template) for all the peoples described below.

The original and generic name for the elves is *Quendi*. The first division of the *Quendi* is *Vanyar*, *Noldor*, *Teleri* and *Avari*, with the first three groups being the *Eldar* (the name given to them by Oromë), for a dichotomous division between *Eldar* and *Avari*.



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## Quendi

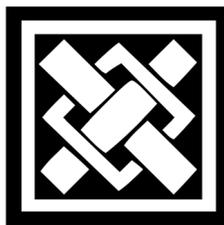
*It is told that even as Varda ended her labours [the making of the stars], and they were long, when first Menelmacar strode up the sky and the blue fire of Helluin flickered in the mists above the borders of the world, in that hour the Children of the Earth awoke, the Firstborn of Ilúvatar. By the starlit mere of Cuiviénen, Water of Awakening, they rose from the sleep of Ilúvatar; and while they dwelt yet silent by Cuiviénen their eyes beheld first of all things the stars of heaven. Therefore they have ever loved the starlight, and have revered Varda Elentári above all the Valar. [...] and the first sound that was heard by the Elves was the sound of water flowing, and the sound of water falling over stone.*

*Long they dwelt in their first home by the water under stars, and they walked the Earth in wonder; and they began to make speech and to give names to all things that they perceived. Themselves they named the Quendi, signifying those that speak with voices; for as yet they had met no other living things that spoke or sang. [...] In the beginning the Elder Children of Ilúvatar were stronger and greater than they have since become; but not more fair, for though the beauty of the Quendi in the days of their youth was beyond all other beauty that Ilúvatar has caused to be, it has not perished, but lives in the West, and sorrow and wisdom have enriched it.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

*Quendi* is the name taken by the first elves awoken at the lake Cuiviénen, at the beginning of the Age of Stars. The *Quendi* are the primordial elves, for as long as they inhabit the lake Cuiviénen before their transformation into *Eldar* and *Avari*. In a way one could think that *Quendi* are only those who “awoke” in Cuiviénen, the first children of Eru Ilúvatar, and not the “children” of the same *Quendi*.

At this transformation all *Quendi* become either *Eldar* or *Avari*. This means that the original state of *Quendi* is only maintained while they live along the Waters of Awakening in Cuiviénen.



*[The handling of individual Elves whose history spans more than one classification over the Ages are discussed in the section The problem of ethnicity changes during the Ages on page 51pp.]*

*[Here it must be made clear that my use of terminology follows the requirement for role-playing games to delineate a group as “definite”. This differs from general usage, in which terms such as “Quendi” and “Eldar” can refer to blurred groups.]*

## Eldar

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:**  
+10 DX, +10 IN, +10 Will, +10 CH

**Free paradigms of magic:**  
Varda (Wizard ●●●●●), Ulmo (Journeyman ●●●) and Irmo (Novice ●●).

**Languages:** elvish (mother-language).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Sing 10%, Perception 10%, Survival 10%.

**Historical presence:** In the beginning of the *Ages of the Stars*, as long as they dwell by the lake *Cuiviénen*.

**Ancestry:** None.

**Descendancy:** Eldar and Avari.

*And Oromë loved the Quendi, and named them in their own tongue Eldar, the people of the stars; but that name was after borne only by those who followed him upon the westward road.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*

*Of the Coming of the Elves and the captivity of Melkor*

The *Quendi* that befriended Oromë and then followed him to Valinor were the *Eldar*. While they almost immediately became *Vanyar*, *Noldor* and *Teleri*, the *Eldar* represent this original state shortly before this new division.

The *Eldar* may (but need not) stay as such until each of these three peoples consolidate themselves, until their arrival into Valinor or at latest at the rising of the sun and moon.

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:**  
+10 DX, +10 IN, +10 Will, +10 CH

**Free paradigms of magic:**  
Varda (Journeyman ●●●), Ulmo (Journeyman ●●●), Irmo (Journeyman ●●●) and Oromë (Journeyman ●●●).

**Languages:** elvish (mother-language).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Bows 5%, Hunting 5%, Singing 5%, Perception 5%, Survival 5% and Tracking 5%.

**Historical presence:** Part of the *Ages of the Stars*.

**Ancestry:** Quendi.

**Descendancy:** Vanyar, Noldor, Teleri.

### Abilities for MERP

**Modified characteristics:**  
+10 AG, +10 CO, +10 IT, +10 PR, +10 APP.

**Languages:** elvish 5.

#### **Childhood learned skills:**

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1; *General skills:* Sky-watching 2, Swim 2, Perception 4, Climbing 1; *Magic skills:* Meditation 2, Magic sense 3; *Influence and interaction:* Empathy 3; *Subterfuge skills:* Stalk/hide 4; *Artistic skills:* Sing 2; *Special skills:* Body development 1; *Magic:* 6; *Development points:* 3.



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### Abilities for MERP

**Modified characteristics:**  
+10 AG, +10 CO, +10 IT, +10 PR, +10 APP.

**Languages:** elvish 5.

#### **Childhood learned skills:**

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1; *Weapon skills:* Missile 3; *General skills:* Sky watching 2, Healing 2, Herbalism 1, Swim 2, Perception 4, Track 2, Climbing 1; *Magic skills:* Meditation 2, Magic sense 3; *Influence and interaction:* Empathy 1; *Subterfuge skills:* Stalk/hide 4; *Craft skills:* Bowcraft 2, Trapmaking 1; *Special skills:* Body development 1; *Magic:* 7; *Development points:* 2.

## Vanyar

*The Eldar prepared now a great march from their first homes in the east; and they were arrayed in three hosts. The smallest host and the first to set forth was led by Ingwë, the most high lord of all the Elvish race. He entered into Valinor and sits at the feet of the Powers, and all Elves revere his name; but he came never back, nor looked again upon Middle-earth. The Vanyar were his people; they are the Fair Elves, the beloved of Manwë and Varda, and few among Men have spoken with them.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*

*Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

*Manwë and Varda loved most the Vanyar, the Fair Elves [...] As the ages passed the Vanyar grew to love the land of the Valar and the full light of the Trees, and they forsook the city of Tirion upon Túna, and dwelt thereafter upon the mountain of Manwë, or about the plains and woods of Valinor, and became sundered from the Noldor. [...] Finwë was king in Tirion and Olwë in Alqualondë, but Ingwë was ever held the High King of all the Elves. He abode thereafter at the feet of Manwë upon Taniquetil.*

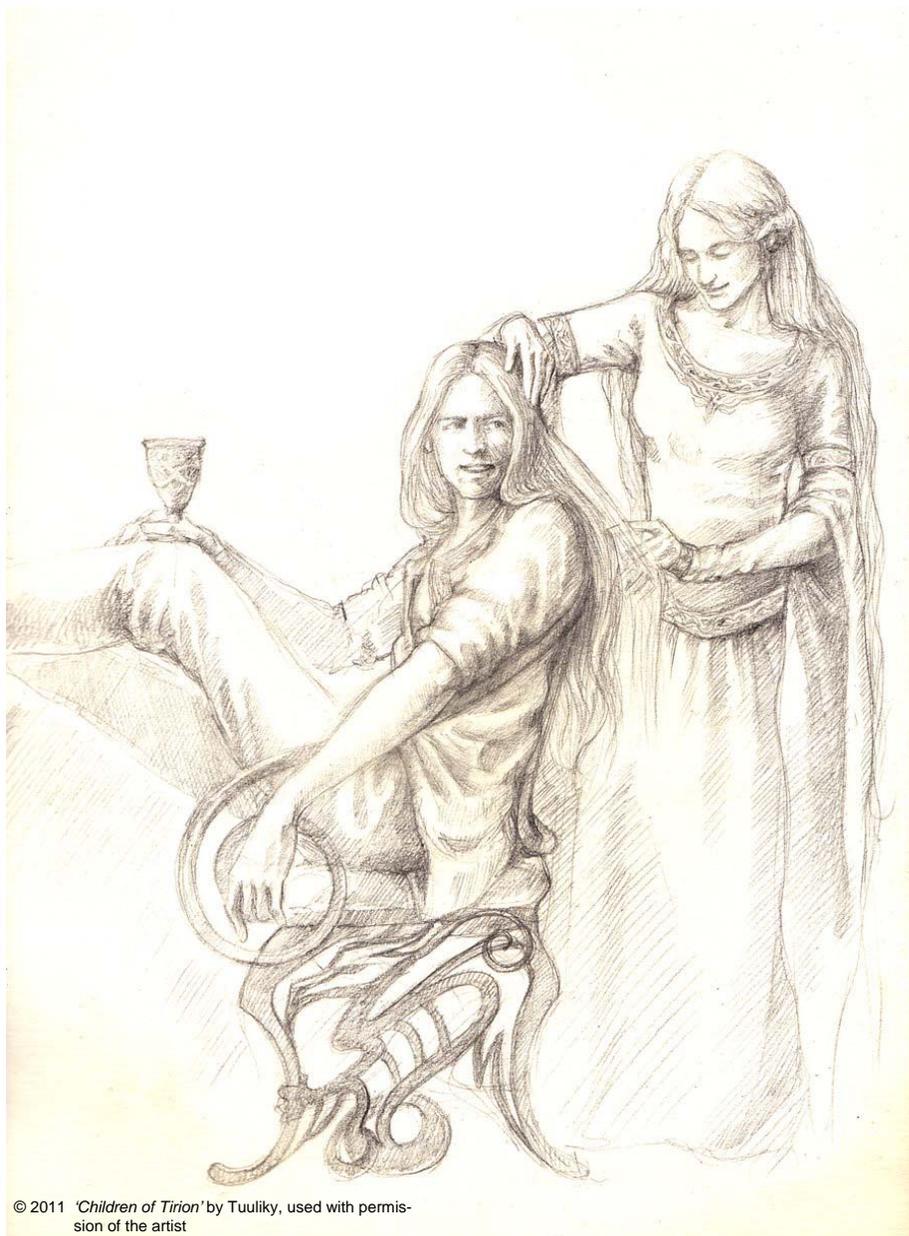
—*Quenta Silmarillion.*

*Of Eldamar and of the Princes of the Eldalië*

*But the host of the Valar prepared for battle; and beneath their white banners marched the Vanyar, the people of Ingwë [...] And the Vanyar returned beneath their white banners, and were borne in triumph to Valinor...*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*

*Of the Voyage of Eärendil and the War of Wrath*



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Vanyar are mainly characterized by living in Valinor with the Powers (the Valar) and by having never returned to Middle-earth.

All Vanyar have the *Calaquendi* advantage,<sup>13</sup> even if born after the destruction of the Two Trees. In addition, to play a Vanya character in Middle-earth at other time than the march to Valinor or during the War of Wrath (or if you decide to stay in Middle-earth after this), the character must take the disadvantage “Stranger”.

## Noldor

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** -5 ST, +15 DX, +0 LO, +15 IN, +20 Will, +25 CH (this includes the bonuses from *Calaquendi*. If not the case [i.e. before their coming to Valinor] the original scores are: -10 ST, +10 DX, -5 LO, +10 IN, +15 Will, +20 CH).

**Free paradigms of magic:** Manwë (Magician ●●●●), Varda (Magician ●●●●) Eönwë (Novice ●●) and Vána (Apprentice ●).

**Free advantages (from Valinor forward):** *Calaquendi*, Beautiful.

**Automatic disadvantages (from Valinor forward):** Pain susceptible, Sincerity, City bird, Fragile 3 (-15 HP), Otherworldly.

**Languages:** Vanyarin (mother-language), Quenya (familiar), Telerin (familiar), Valarin (familiar); Alphabet: Tengwar (familiar). The *Vanyar* that have not yet come to *Valinor* replace “Valarin (familiar)” with “Elvish (mother-language)”.

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Authority 10%, Sing 5%, Empathy 10%, Perception 5%.

**Historical presence:** *Ages of the Stars* and forward (almost exclusively in *Valinor*).

**Ancestry:** Eldar.

**Descendancy:** None.

### Abilities for MERP

#### Modified characteristics:

Before *Valinor*: -10 ST, +5 AG, +5 CO, -5 IG, +5 IT, +15 PR, +15 APP.

Since *Valinor*: -5 ST, +10 AG, +10 CO, +10 IT, +20 PR, +20 APP

**Languages:** Vanyarin 5, Quenya 4, Telerin 4, Valarin 3; Alphabet: Tengwar. The *Vanyar* who have not yet come to *Valinor* replace “Valarin 5” for “Elvish 5”.

#### Childhood learned skills:

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1; *General skills:* Perception 4; *Magic skills:* Read Runes 3, Meditation 3, Magic sense 4, Use Item 2; *Influence and interaction:* Empathy 4, Talk 3, Diplomacy/Etiquette 5, Leadership/Oratory 5; *Artistic skills:* Sing 2, Dance 2, Music 2, Tale-telling 2, Poetry 2; *Special skills:* Body development 1; *Magic:* 10; *Extra languages:* 2; *Development points:* 2 (0 for those that begin with the *Calaquendi* advantage).

*Next came the Noldor, a name of wisdom, the people of Finwë. They are the Deep Elves, the friends of Aulë; and they are renowned in song, for they fought and laboured long and grievously in the northern lands of old.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*

*Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

*Aulë it is who is named the Friend of the Noldor, most skilled of the Elves; and in their own fashion, according to the gifts which Ilúvatar gave to them, they added much to his teaching, delighting in tongues and in scripts, and in the figures of broidery, of drawing, and of carving. The Noldor also it was who first achieved the making of gems; and the fairest of all gems were the Silmarils, and they are lost.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*

*Of the Beginning of Days*



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...the Noldor were beloved of Aulë, and he and his people came often among them. Great became their knowledge and their skill; yet even greater was their thirst for more knowledge, and in many things they soon surpassed their teachers. They were changeful in speech, for they had great love of words, and sought ever to find names more fit for all things that they knew or imagined.

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of Eldamar and the*  
*Princes of the Eldalië*

...the Noldor took delight in the hidden knowledge that he [Melkor] could reveal to them; and some hearkened to words that it would have been better for them never to have heard.

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of Fëanor and the*  
*Unchaining of Melkor*

The Noldor, outnumbered and taken at unawares, were yet swiftly victorious; for the light of Aman was not yet dimmed in their eyes, and they were strong and swift, and deadly in anger, and their swords were long and terrible.

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of the Return of the Noldor*

In many parts of the land the Noldor and the Sindar became welded into one people, and spoke the same tongue; though this difference remained between them, that the Noldor had the greater power of mind and body, and were the mightier warriors and sages, and they built with stone, and loved the hill-slopes and open lands.

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of the Return of the Noldor*

The *Noldor* are the second people of the *Eldar*. They lived both in Valinor and Middle-earth. The eldest knew Valinor in the glory of the Two Trees before they were destroyed by Morgoth. They were particularly influential in Beleriand in the First Age, but lived in Middle-earth until the end of the Third Age of the Sun.

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** +5 ST, +10 DX, +10 LO, -10 IN, +10 Will, +15 CH. Bonus of +20% in *Metal smith*.

**Corruptible:** their corruption rolls are made with a penalty of -20, and for each failure they receive double Corruption Points.

**Free paradigms of magic:** Varda (Magician ●●●●), Aulë (Magician ●●●●), Mandos (Novice ●●) and Eönwë (Apprentice ●).

**Languages:** Quenya (mother-language). Noldor born in *Middle-earth* can speak also Sindarin (perfect) and Adanic (familiar), Adûnaic (familiar) or Westron (familiar), depending on the Age. Those born in *Valinor* speak Vanyarin (familiar) and Valarin (apprentice).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Metal smith 10%, Swords 10%, Lore 10%.

**Free advantages:** Infallibility (*Metal smith*).

**Automatic disadvantages:** Arrogant 3 (-15% in all social skills).

**Historical presence:** *Ages of the Stars, First Age of the Sun, Second Age of the Sun, Third Age of the Sun.*

**Ancestry:** Eldar.

**Descendancy:** Gwaith-i-Mírdain.

### Abilities for MERP

#### **Modified characteristics:**

+5 ST, +10 AG, +10 CO, +10 IG, -10 IT, +15 PR, +10 APP.

#### **Other special modifications:**

Bonus of +20 in *Metal work* and *Use Item*.

**Corruptible:** they receive double Corruption Points.

**Languages:** Quenya 5. The Noldor born in *Middle-earth* speak also Sindarin 5 and Adanic 4, Adûnaic 4 or Westron 4, depending on the age. Those born in *Valinor* speak instead Vanyarin 4 and Valarin 2.

#### **Childhood learned skills:**

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1, Chain 3; *Weapon skills:* 1-H Edged 2, Missile 1, Pole-arms 1; *General skills:* Healing 1, Ride 2, Swim 1; *Magic skills:* Read runes 3, Meditation 3, Magic sense 3, Lore 3, Directed spells 2, Use Item 5; *Influence and interaction:* Intimidate 1, Leadership/oratory 2; *Subterfuge skills:* Appraisal 3; *Craft skills:* Building/engineering 2, Metal smith 5, Mining 3; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 8; *Extra languages:* 10; *Development points:* 1.



## Gwaith-i-Mirdain

*In Eregion the craftsmen of the Gwaith-i-Mirdain, the People of the Jewel-smiths, surpassed in cunning all that have ever wrought, save only Fëanor himself [...] It was in Eregion that the counsels of Sauron were most gladly received, for in that land the Noldor desired ever to increase the skill and subtlety of their works. Moreover they were not at peace in their hearts, since they had refused to return into the West, and they desired both to stay in Middle-earth, which indeed they loved, and yet to enjoy the bliss of those that had departed. Therefore they hearkened to Sauron, and they learned of him many things, for his knowledge was great. In those days the smiths of Ost-in-Edhil surpassed all that they had contrived before; and they took thought, and they made Rings of Power. But Sauron guided their labours, and he was aware of all that they did; for his desire was to set a bond upon the Elves and to bring them under his vigilance.*

—*The Silmarillion.*

### *Of The Rings of Power and the Third Age*

The *Gwaith-i-Mirdain* was a brotherhood of blacksmiths and jewelers who lived in and gave life to the elven kingdom of Eregion during the Second Age of the Sun. Its members were mainly young *Noldor*, but also members of other elven peoples who survived the cataclysm of Beleriand. This is not a people defined by blood heritage, but by choice. Only a few survived the destruction of Eregion, and no *Gwaith-i-Mirdain* were born thereafter.

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** +10 ST, +15 DX, +10 LO, -10 IN, +10 Will. Bonus of +30% in *Metal smith* and *Jewelry*.

**Imperfection:** all the masterworks of the *Gwaith-i-Mirdain* have some kind of flaw that prevents them from being perfect. They have a certain life of their own that has a tendency to imperfection. For example, all the Rings of Power created by the *Gwaith-i-Mirdain* are corrupted by Sauron, causing corruption, and their users can be controlled by the One Ring. This flaw can only be detected by the highest powers; only the greatest of the Wise should have any insight into this imperfections; Gandalf probably has an inkling of this, when he says that ‘all’ (?) items of power are dangerous; Melian the Maia detects the similar ‘curse’ in Eöl’s work.<sup>14</sup> Here are some suggestions for these failures:

**Friend-slayer (weapons):** A fumble with this weapon, besides its normal fumble effects, is a full attack (with all the OB of the possessor) to a friend or ally.

**Own death (weapons):** A fumble with this weapon, besides its normal fumble effects, is a full attack (with all the OB of the possessor) on the carrier.

**Fragile (everything):** This item breaks more easily. For simplicity, consider that it breaks on a fumble. In

*continued on next column*

a more complex scenario, it tends to break when more needed (and it stays firm in any other instance).

**Corruption (everything):** Gives an additional penalty of -10 to *Corruption rolls*.

**Soul-eater (everything):** Consumes daily 10 *Spirit Points* from its possessor to feed (if not its powers will not work).

**Unbalanced (weapons, tools):** Doubles the fumble range in normal use (or only when the object wants it: the more to harm the wearer).

**Free Paradigms of Magic:** Varda (Novice ●●) and Aulë (Divine ●●●●●●●●).

**Languages:** Quenya (mother-language), Sindarin (mother-language) and Khuzdul (a few words).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Metal smith 10%, Jewelry 10%, Appreciate 10%.

**Free advantages:** Infallibility (*Metal smith*), Infallibility (*Jewelry*).

**Automatic disadvantages:** Vulnerability (magic/MD+1), Insensibility 3 (-15% in *Magic sense*).

**Historical presence:** *Second Age of the Sun*, and (limited) onwards.

**Ancestry:** Noldor, Sindar, etc.

**Descendancy:** None.



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**Abilities for MERP****Modified characteristics:**

+5 ST, +10 AG, +10 CO, +15 IG, -10 IT, +10 PR, +10 APP.

**Other special modifications:**

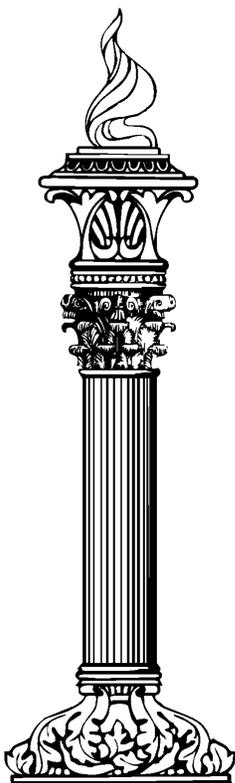
Bonus of +30 in *Metal work* and *Jewelry*.

**Imperfection:** For the MERP system I suggest to increment the fumble range.

**Languages:** Quenya 5, Sindarin 5, Khuzdul 1.

**Childhood learned skills:**

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1, Chain 3; *Weapon skills:* 1-H Edged 2, Missile 1; *General skills:* Ride 2, Swim 1; *Magic skills:* Read runes 3, Meditation 3, Lore 3, Directed spells 2, Use item 5; *Influence and interaction:* Intimidate 1, Leadership/oratory 2; *Subterfuge skills:* Appraisal 4; *Craft skills:* Building/engineering 2, Metal smith 7, Jewelry 7, Mining 5; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 8; *Extra languages:* 10; *Development points:* 1.

**Teleri (Lindar)**

*The greatest host came last, and they are named the Teleri, for they tarried on the road, and were not wholly of a mind to pass from the dusk to the light of Valinor. In water they had great delight, and those that came at last to the western shores were enamoured of the sea.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

*The Teleri learned much of Ulmo, and for this reason their music has both sadness and enchantment.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of the Beginning of Days*

*Long they remained by the coasts of the western sea, and Ossë and Uinen came to them and befriended them; and Ossë instructed them, sitting upon a rock near to the margin of the land, and of him they learned all manner of sea-lore and sea-music. Thus it came to be that the Teleri, who were from the beginning lovers of water, and the fairest singers of all the Elves, were after enamoured of the seas, and their songs were filled with the sound of waves upon the shore.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of Eldamar and the Princes of the Eldalië*

The *Teleri* is the third of the peoples of the *Eldar*, a great people, lovers of music and water. From their abiding on the shores of *Beleriand* they began to turn into *Falmari* (and *Falathrim*), but some remained *Teleri* until they left their home in *Tol Eressëa*.

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of *Varda*.

**Modified characteristics:** +10 DX, +15 IN, -5 Will, +15 CH. Bonus of +10% in *Swim*, +20% in *Music* and *Sing*.

**Call of the Sea:** Once they have seen the sea and felt it (smell it, hear it, feel it on the skin, swim in it), the *Teleri* can not leave it. Every day not at sea they lose 1 HP (Hit Point) and 1 SP (Spirit Point), subtracted from the total maximum, accumulating daily, and eventually dying if they do not return to the sea. All these points lost will be retrieved (at a rate of 10/day) once they return to the sea.

**Free paradigms of magic:** *Varda* (Magician ●●●●) and *Ulmo* (Wizard ●●●●●).

**Languages:** *Telerin* (mother-language). Those *Teleri* born in *Valinor* also speak *Quenya* (familiar), *Vanyarin* (beginner) and *Valarin* (a few words).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** *Music* 10%, *Sing* 10%, *Swim* 10%.

**Historical presence:** *Ages of the Stars*.

**Ancestry:** *Eldar*.

**Descendancy:** *Nandor*, *Sindar*, *Falathrim*, *Falmari*.

## Falmari

### Abilities for MERP

#### Modified characteristics:

+10 AG, -5 CO, +15 IT, +15 PR, +15 APP.

#### Other special modifications:

Bonus of +10 in *Swim*, +20 in *Sing* and *Music*.

**Call of the Sea:** Once they know the sea they receive a +1 adder in PP, but if they get away from it they can not recover PP.

**Languages:** Telerin 5. For those Teleri born in Valinor also Quenya 3, Vanyarin 2 and Valarin 1.

#### Childhood learned skills:

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1; *Weapon skills:* Missile 1; *General skills:* Swim 5; *Magic skills:* Read Runes 1, Meditation 5, Lore 2, Sense of magic 4, Directed spells 1, Use Item 2; *Influence and interaction:* Empathy 1, Talk 1; *Subterfuge skills:* Stalk/hide 2; *Artistic skills:* Sing 8, Music 7; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 6; *Extra languages:* 10; *Development points:* 3.

*In water they had great delight, and those that came at last to the western shores were enamoured of the sea. The Sea-elves therefore they became in the land of Aman, the Falmari, for they made music beside the breaking waves.*

—Quenta Silmarillion.

*Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

*Ulmo, submitting to the will of the Valar, sent to them Ossë, their friend, and he though grieving taught them the craft of ship-building; and when their ships were built he brought them as his parting gift many strong-winged swans. Then the swans drew the white ships of the Teleri over the windless sea; and thus at last and latest they came to Aman and the shores of Eldamar.*

—Quenta Silmarillion.

*Of Eldamar and the Princes of the Eldalië*

The contact of the *Teleri* with the *Valar* and *Maiar*, their arrival in Valinor and seeing the light of the Two Trees caused a spiritual growth in the *Teleri*. They came to call themselves the *Falmari* and became great ship craftsmen.

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

#### Modified characteristics:

+10 ST, +10 DX, +20 IN, +15 CH. Bonus of +10% in *Swim*, +20% in *Music*, *Sing* and *Shipbuilding*.

**Call of the Sea:** The *Falmari* cannot leave the sea. Every day not at sea they lose 1 HP (Hit Point) and 1 SP (Spirit Point), subtracted from the total maximum, accumulating daily, and eventually causing death if the *Falma* does not return to the sea. All lost points will be recovered (at a rate of 10/day) once they return to the sea.

#### Love of their ships:

*'But as for our white ships: those you gave us not. [...] Therefore we will neither give them nor sell them for any league or friendship. [...] these are to us as are the gems of the Noldor: the work of our hearts, whose like we shall not make again.'*

—Quenta Silmarillion.

*Of the Flight of the Noldor*

The *Falmari* invest part of their vital essence (spirit) in the construction of their ships, earning *corruption points* in the process (5 CP for a canoe, 15 CP for a sailboat, 50 CP for a small ship, 100 CP for a medium ship, 500 CP for a large ship). These costs are distributed among all the craftsmen who have taken part in the construction of the vessel, resulting in relatively small cost for each one. If they are separated from their boats for more than one day they get 20 (temporary) CP, until they recover their boats. If their ships are destroyed, then this CP become permanent. That is why the *Falmari* typically build only one boat (plus a canoe or boat) in their life, and become the crew of those vessels.



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**Free paradigms of magic:**

Ulmo (Magician ●●●●), Ossë (Magician ●●●●), Uinen (Novice ●●) and Varda (Apprentice ●).

**Languages:** Telerin (mother-language), Quenya (familiar), Vanyarin (beginner) and Valarin (a few words).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Music 5%, Navigate 5%, Row 5%, Ship building 5%, Sing 5%, Swim 5%.

**Free advantages:** *Infallibility* (Ship building), *Master artisan* (Ship building).

**Automatic disadvantages:**

Otherworldly.

**Historical presence:** *Ages of the Stars* and onward.

**Ancestry:** Teleri.

**Descendancy:** None.

**Abilities for MERP****Modified characteristics:**

-10 ST, +10 AG, +20 IT, +15 PR, +15 APP.

**Other special modifications:**

Bonus of +10 in *Swim*, +20 in *Sing*, *Ship building* and *Music*.

**Call of the Sea:** Once they know the sea they receive a +1 adder in PP, but if they get away from it they can not recover PP.

**Love to their ships:** They get a  $\times 2$  multiplier to PP when manning a ship that they did build, but lose all PP if they are separated from it more than a day. If their ship is destroyed they permanently receive a penalty of -1 PP/level, non-recoverable.

**Languages:** Telerin 5, Quenya 3, Vanyarin 2 and Valarin 1.

**Childhood learned skills:**

**Movement & maneuvers:** No Armor 1; **Weapon skills:** Missile 1; **General skills:** Swim 5, Navigate 8, Row 8; **Magic skills:** Read runes 1, Meditation 5, Lore 2, Sense of magic 4, Directed spells 1, Use Item 2; **Influence and interaction:** Empathy 1, Talk 1; **Craft skills:** Ship building 8; **Artistic skills:** Sing 8, Music 7; **Special skills:** Body development 2; **Magic:** 6; **Extra languages:** 8; **Development points:** 2.



## Sindar (Eglath)

Now when their journey was near its end, as has been told, the people of the Teleri rested long in East Beleriand, beyond the River Gelion; [...] Elwë, lord of the Teleri, went often through the great woods to seek out Finwë his friend in the dwellings of the Noldor; and it chanced on a time that he came alone to the starlit wood of Nan Elmoth, and there suddenly he heard the song of nightingales. Then an enchantment fell on him, and he stood still; and afar off beyond the voices of the lómelindi he heard the voice of Melian, and it filled all his heart with wonder and desire. He forgot then utterly all his people and all the purposes of his mind, and following the birds under the shadow of the trees he passed deep into Nan Elmoth and was lost. But he came at last to a glade open to the stars, and there Melian stood; and out of the darkness he looked at her, and the light of Aman was in her face.

She spoke no word; but being filled with love Elwë came to her and took her hand, and straightway a spell was laid on him, so that they stood thus while long years were measured by the wheeling stars above them; and the trees of Nan Elmoth grew tall and dark before they spoke any word.

Thus Elwë's folk who sought him found him not, and Olwë took the kingship of the Teleri and departed, as is told hereafter. [...] In after days he [Elwë Singollo] became a king renowned, and his people were all the Eldar of Beleriand; the Sindar they were named, the Grey-elves, the Elves of the Twilight, and King Greymantle was he, Elu Thingol in the tongue of the land. And Melian was his Queen, wiser than any child of Middle-earth; and their hidden halls were in Menegroth, the Thousand Caves, in Doriath.

—Quenta Silmarillion.  
Of Thingol and Melian

The kinsfolk and friends of Elwë Singollo also remained in the Hither Lands, seeking him yet, though they would fain have departed to Valinor and the light of the Trees, if Ulmo and Olwë had been willing to tarry longer. But Olwë would be gone; and at last the main host of the Teleri embarked upon the isle, and Ulmo drew them far away. Then the friends of Elwë were left behind; and they called themselves Eglath, the Forsaken People. They dwelt in the woods and hills of Beleriand, rather than by the sea, which filled them with sorrow; but the desire of Aman was ever in their hearts.

But when Elwë awoke from his long trance, he came forth from Nan Elmoth with Melian, and they dwelt thereafter in the woods in the midst of the land. Greatly though he had desired to see again the light of the Trees, in the face of Melian he beheld the light of Aman as in an unclouded mirror, and in that

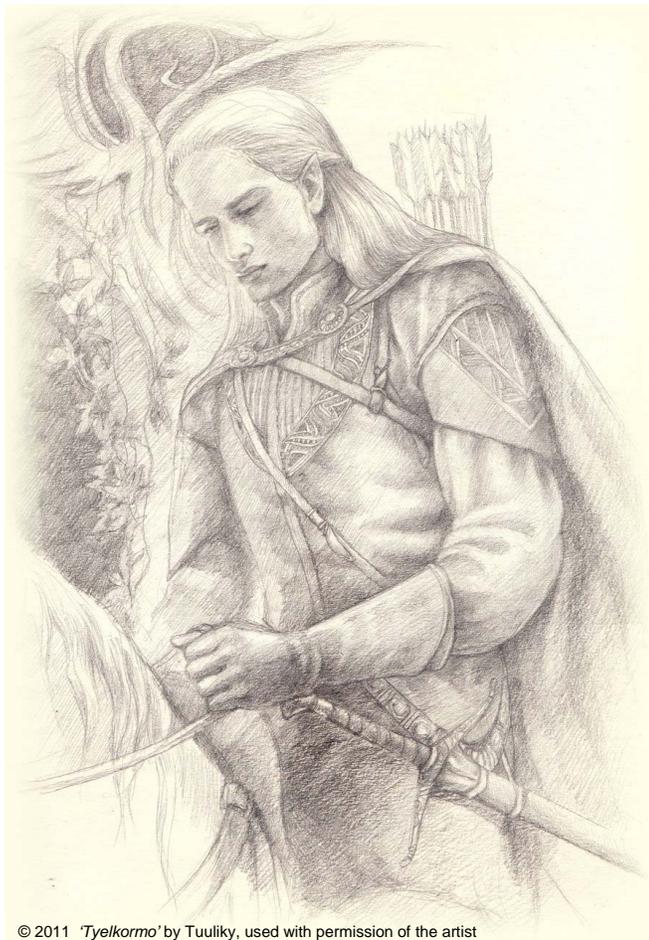
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light he was content. His people gathered about him in joy, and they were amazed; for fair and noble as he had been, now he appeared as if were a lord of the Maiar, his hair as grey silver, tallest of all the Children of Ilúvatar; and a high doom was before him.

—Quenta Silmarillion.  
Of Eldamar and the  
Princes of the Eldalië

They are called the Sindar, the Grey-elves of starlit Beleriand; and although they were Moriquendi, under the lordship of Thingol and the teaching of Melian they became the fairest and the most wise and skilful of all the Elves of Middle-earth. [...] Their [the Dwarves'] smithcraft indeed the Sindar son learned of them...

—Quenta Silmarillion.  
Of the Sindar



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*But the Sindar had the fairer voices and were more skilled in music, save only Maglor son of Fëanor, and they loved the woods and the riversides; and some of the Grey-elves still wandered far and wide without settled abode, and they sang as they went.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of the Return of the Noldor*

*Only in the realm of Doriath, whose queen Melian was of the kindred of the Valar, did the Sindar come near to match the Calaquendi of the Blessed Realm.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of Men*

*...for though the Grey-elves were less in skill and knowledge than the Exiles from Valinor, in the ways of the life of Middle-earth they had a wisdom beyond the reach of Men.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of Túrin Turambar*

The *Sindar* were characterized by their love of the forest, for their skill in singing and music, and for living under the reign of Elu Thingol and Melian the Maia.

They learned much from dwarves, including the art of building and the art of smithing. However these skills, although known to them, did not become part of their more fundamental being.



**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:**  
+10 DX, +5 IN, +5 Will, +10 CH.  
Bonus of +10% in *Music, Sing, Track, Stealth* and *Survival*.

Melian's blessing (only in Doriath): The blessing of Melian gives all characters who live in Doriath a permanent increase of +5 IN, +5 Will and +5 CH.

**Free paradigms of magic:**  
Varda (Journeyman ●●●), Melian (Journeyman ●●●), Oromë (Journeyman ●●●) and Yavanna (Journeyman ●●●).

**Languages:** Sindarin (mother-language) and Adanic (familiar), Adûnaic (familiar) or Westron (familiar), depending on the era.

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Music 5%, Sing 5%, Stealth 5%, Survival 5%, Swim 5%, Track 5%.

**Automatic disadvantages (only in Doriath):** Dark destiny.

**Historical presence:** Ages of the Stars, First Age, Second Age, Third Age, Fourth Age.

**Ancestry:** Teleri.

**Descendancy:** Gwaith-i-Mírdain, Galadhrim.

### **Abilities for MERP**

**Modified characteristics:**  
+10 AG, +5 CO, +5 IT, +10 PR, +15 APP.

**Other special modifications:**  
Bonus of +10 in *Sing, Music, Track, Stealth* and *Survival*.

**Languages:** Sindarin 5 and Adanic 3, Adûnaic 3 or Westron 3, depending on the era.

**Childhood learned skills:**  
*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1, Hard leather 3, Chain 1; *Weapon skills:* 1-H Edged 1, Missile 3, Pole-arms 1; *General skills:* Foraging 1, Hunting 1, Sky watching 2, Herbalism 1, Ride 1, Swim 3, Track 3; *Magic skills:* Read Runes 1, Meditation 3, Lore 2, Sense of magic 2, Directed spells 1, Use Item 2; *Influence and interaction:* Empathy 1, Talk 1; *Artistic skills:* Sing 5, Music 5; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 6; *Extra languages:* 8; *Development points:* 2.



## Falathrim

*When many years had passed, Ulmo hearkened to the prayers of the Noldor and of Finwë their king, who grieved at their long sundering from the Teleri, and besought him to bring them to Aman, if they would come. And most of them proved now willing indeed; but great was the grief of Ossë when Ulmo returned to the coasts of Beleriand, to bear them away to Valinor; for his care was for the seas of Middle-earth and the shores of the Hither Lands, and he was ill-pleased that the voices of the Teleri should be heard no more in his domain. Some he persuaded to remain; and those were the Falathrim, the Elves of the Falas, who in after days had dwellings at the havens of Brithombar and Eglarest, the first mariners in Middle-earth and the first makers of ships. Círdan the Shipwright was their lord.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of Eldamar and the Princes of the Eldalië*

*There Fingon was outnumbered; but the ships of Círdan sailed in great strength up the Firth of Drengist, and in the hour of need the Elves of the Falas came upon the host of Morgoth from the west.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion. Of the Ruin of Beleriand and the Fall of Fingolfin*

The *Falathrim* are descendants of the *Teleri* and siblings of the *Sindar*. They love the sea and are the best boat builders of all Middle-earth. They exchanged the gift of music for the arts of navigation and all other secrets of Ossë and Uinen. They have learned to defend themselves, being able to go to battle when necessary.

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** +10 DX, +15 IN, +5 CH. Bonus of +30% in *Ship building* and *Navigate*.

**Call of the Sea:** The *Falathrim* cannot leave the sea. Every day not at sea they lose 1 HP (Hit Point) and 1 SP (Spirit Point), subtracted from the total maximum, accumulating daily, and eventually dying if they do not return to the sea. All these points lost will be retrieved (at a rate of 10/day) once they return to the sea.

**Free paradigms of magic:** Ossë (Magician ●●●●), Uinen (Journeyman ●●●), Ulmo (Journeyman ●●●) and Varda (Novice ●●).

**Languages:** Sindarin (mother-language) and Adanic (familiar), Adûnaic (familiar) or Westron (familiar), depending on the era.

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Navigate 10%, Ship building 10%, Swim 10%.

**Historical presence:** Ages of the Stars, First Age, Second Age, Third Age, Fourth Age.

**Ancestry:** Teleri.

**Descendancy:** None.

### Abilities for MERP

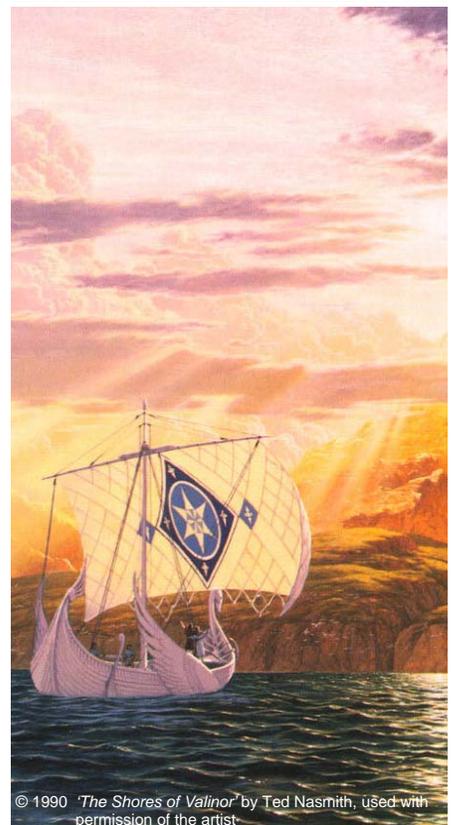
**Modified characteristics:** +10 AG, +15 IT, +5 PR, +15 APP.

**Other special modifications:** Bonus of +30 in *Ship building* and *Navigate*.

**Call of the Sea:** Once they know the sea they receive a +1 adder in PP, but if they get away from it they cannot recover PP.

**Languages:** Sindarin 5 and Adanic 2, Adûnaic 2 or Westron 2, depending on the era.

**Childhood learned skills:**  
*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1;  
*Weapon skills:* Missile 1; *General skills:* Swim 5, Navigate 8, Row 8; *Magic skills:* Read runes 1, Meditation 3, Lore 2, Sense of magic 3, Directed spells 1, Use Item 2; *Influence and interaction:* Empathy 1, Talk 1; *Craft skills:* Ship building 8; *Artistic skills:* Sing 6, Music 6; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 6; *Extra languages:* 8; *Development points:* 2.



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## Nandor

*Then one arose in the host of Olwë, which was ever the hindmost on the road; Lenwë he was called. He forsook the westward march, and led away a numerous people, southwards down the great river, and they passed out of the knowledge of their kin until long years were past. Those were the Nandor; and they became a people apart, unlike their kin, save that they loved water, and dwelt most beside falls and running streams. Greater knowledge they had of living things, tree and herb, bird and beast, than all other Elves.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

*Now as has been told, one Lenwë of the host of Olwë forsook the march of the Eldar at that time when the Teleri were halted by the shores of the Great River upon the borders of the westlands of Middle-earth. Little is known of the wanderings of the Nandor, whom he led away down Anduin: some, it is said, dwelt age-long in the woods of the Vale of the Great River, some came at last to its mouths and there dwelt by the Sea, and yet others passing by Ered Nimrais, the White Mountains, came north again and entered the wilderness of Eriador between Ered Luin and the far Mountains of Mist. Now these were a woodland people and had no weapons of steel, and the coming of the fell beasts of the North filled them with great fear, as the Naugrim declared to King Thingol in Menegroth.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of the Sindar*

The Nandor lived in the valleys and forests of the Anduin and its tributaries, or in its mouth, but always by the river. In a way they could be held as “River Elves”. They are experts in the arts of forests and rivers, but not of war. Most likely it was they who founded the elvish port of Edhellond.

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** -5 ST, +10 DX, +20 IN, -5 Will, +10 CH. Bonus of +15% in *Hunting*, *Herbalism*, *Swim* and *Row*. They have a slight tendency to claustrophobia, and get a 5% penalty to *actions* when in confined spaces (caves, buildings, cages, etc.).

**Free paradigms of magic:** Varda (Journey-man ●●●), Ulmo (Journeyman ●●●), Oromë (Journeyman ●●●) and Yavanna (Journeyman ●●●).

**Languages:** Nandorin (mother-language) and Telerin (familiar).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** *Hunting* 5%, *Herbalism* 5%, *Swim* 5%, *Weather knowledge* 5%, *Row* 5% and *Survival* 5%.

**Historical presence:** Ages of the Stars, First Age, Second Age, Third Age, Fourth Age.

**Ancestry:** Teleri.

**Descendancy:** Laiquendi, Galadhrim, Tawarwaith.

### Abilities for MERP

#### **Modified characteristics:**

-5 ST, +10 AG, -5 IG +20 IT, +10 PR, +10 APP.

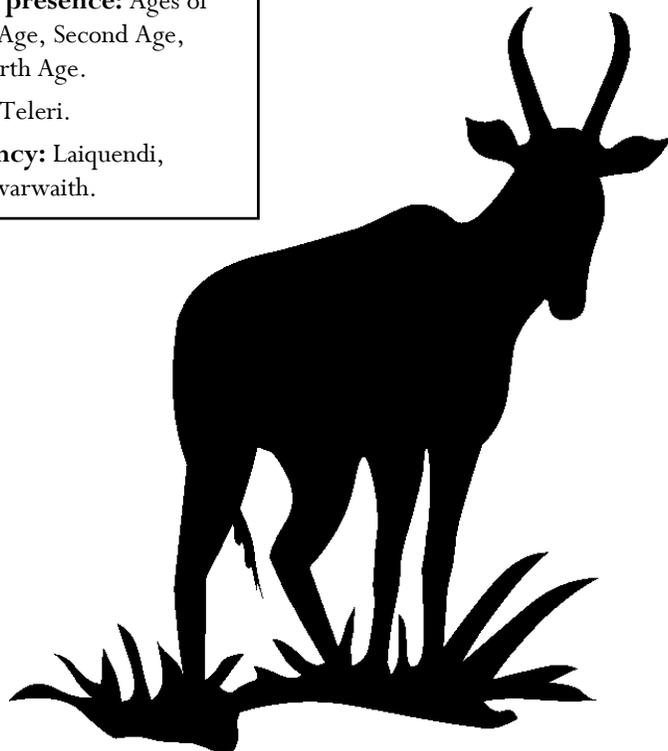
#### **Other special modifications:**

Bonus of +15 in *Hunting*, *Herbalism*, *Swim* and *Row*. They have a slight tendency to claustrophobia, so they receive a penalty of -5 to *actions* when in confined spaces (caves, buildings, cages, etc.).

**Languages:** Nandorin 5 and Telerin 3.

#### **Childhood learned skills:**

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1; *Weapon skills:* Missile 3, Pole-arms 1; *General skills:* Foraging 3, Hunting 3, Sky watching 3, Herbalism 3, Swim 5, Navigate 1, Row 4, Track 3; *Magic skills:* Read runes 1, Meditation 3, Lore 2, Sense of magic 2, Use item 2; *Subterfuge skills:* Stealth 3; *Influence and interaction:* Empathy 1; *Craft skills:* Ship building 2; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 6; *Extra languages:* 8; *Development points:* 3.



## Laiquendi

*In after years Denethor, son of Lenwë, turned again west at last, and led a part of that people over the mountains into Beleriand ere the rising of the Moon.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

*...Denethor was cut off and surrounded upon the hill of Amon Ereb. There he fell and all his nearest kin about him, before the host of Thingol could come to his aid. Bitterly though his fall was avenged, when Thingol came upon the rear of the Orcs and slew them in heaps, his people lamented him ever after and took no king again. After the battle some returned to Ossiriand, and their tidings filled the remnant of their people with great fear, so that thereafter they came never forth in open war, but kept themselves by wariness and secrecy; and they were called the Laiquendi, the Green-elves, because of their raiment of the colour of leaves.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of the Sindar*

*In Ossiriand dwelt the Green-elves, in the protection of their rivers; for after Sirion Ulmo loved Gelion above all the waters of the western world. The woodcraft of the Elves of Ossiriand was such that a stranger might pass through their land from end to end and see none of them. They were clad in green in spring and summer, and the sound of their singing could be heard even across the waters of Gelion; wherefore the Noldor named that country Lindon, the land of music, and the mountains beyond they named Ered Lindon, for they first saw them from Ossiriand.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of Beleriand and its Realms*

*...the Green-elves of that land lit no fires, nor did they sing by night.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of the Coming of Men into the West*

*Thus it came to pass that when the Dwarves of Nogrod, returning from Menegroth with diminished host, came again to Sarn Athrad, they were assailed by unseen enemies; for as they climbed up Gelion's banks burdened with the spoils of Doriath, suddenly all the woods were filled with the sound of elven-horns, and shafts sped upon them from every side.*

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
*Of the Ruin of Doriath*

The *Laiquendi* have all the ranger legacy of the *Nandor*, and in their own way they have gone well beyond in the art of the forest.

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** -10 ST, +20 DX, +10 IN, +10 CH. Bonus of +10% in *Bows*, *Hunting*, *Track* and *Survival*, bonus of +30% in *Stealth*. The *Laiquendi* are strongly xenophobic so they receive a penalty of -20% on all social rolls with other peoples.

**Free paradigms of magic:** Varda (Novice ●●), Ulmo (Novice ●●), Oromë (Journeyman ●●●), Yavanna (Journeyman ●●●) and Nessa (Journeyman ●●●).

**Languages:** Nandorin (mother-language) and Sindarin (familiar).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Bows 5%, Hunting 5%, Track 5%, Stealth 10%, Survival 5%.

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**Historical presence:** No one knows what happened to them after the destruction of Beleriand, but it is entirely possible that some survived in the realm of Lindon, and remained in Middle-earth until the Fourth Age.

**Ancestry:** Nandor.

**Descendancy:** Unknown.

### Abilities for MERP

**Modified characteristics:** -10 ST, +20 AG, +10 IT, -5 PR, +10 APP.

**Other special modifications:** Bonus of +10 in *Missile*, *Hunting*, *Track* and *Survival*, bonus of +30 in *Stealth*. The *Laiquendi* are highly xenophobic, so they receive a -20 penalty on all rolls for *influence* and *interaction* with other peoples.

**Languages:** Nandorin 5 and Sindarin 3.

### **Childhood learned skills:**

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1; *Weapon skills:* Missile 5, Pole-arms 1; *General skills:* Foraging 3, Hunting 3, Sky watching 3, Herbalism 3, Swim 5, Track 5; *Magic skills:* Read Runes 1, Meditation 3, Sense of magic 2, Use Item 2; *Subterfuge skills:* Stealth 8; *Craft skills:* Bowcraft 2; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 2; *Extra languages:* 0; *Development points:* 3.



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## Galadhrim

...the Elves of Lórien (who were mainly in origin Silvan Elves and called themselves Galadhrim)...

—*Unfinished Tales.  
The Names of  
Celeborn and Galadriel*

It is told that she [Nimrodel] had a house built in the branches of a tree that grew near the falls; for that was the custom of the Elves of Lórien, to dwell in the trees, and maybe it is so still. Therefore they were called the Galadrim, the Tree-people. Deep in their forest the trees are very great. [...] 'Yes, they are Elves,' said Legolas; 'and they say that you breathe so loud that they could shoot you in the dark.' [...] Out of the shadows a ladder was let down: it was made of rope, silver-grey and glimmering in the dark, and though it looked slender it proved strong enough to bear many men. [...] They were clad in shadowy-grey, and could not be seen among the tree-stems, unless they moved suddenly. [...] We seldom use any tongue but our own; for we dwell now in the heart of the forest, and do not willingly have dealings with any other folk. Even our own kindred in the North are sundered from us. [...] We have not had dealings with the Dwarves since the Dark Days. They are not permitted in our land. [...] the woodland folk were altogether noiseless in their movements. [...] He gave a call like the low whistle of a bird, and out of a thicket of young trees an Elf stepped, clad in grey, but with his hood thrown back; his hair glinted like gold in the morning sun.

—*LotR I. Lothlórien*

...they were tall and clad in grey mail, and from their shoulders hung long white cloaks. [...] They had not seen the Lord and Lady again, and they had little speech with any of the Elven-folk; for few of these people spoke any but their own silvan tongue.

—*LotR I.  
The Mirror of Galadriel*

The *Galadhrim*, the people of the trees, live in the kingdom of Lothlórien, on the banks of Anduin the Great. They are a people who live isolated from the outside world. Its nature is defined by the *Sindar* and *Noldor* influences, the government of Galadriel and Celeborn and its proximity to Moria and Dol Guldur. They are known for their elven ropes, cloaks, bows and boats.

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** +20 DX, +10 IN, -10 LO, +10 CH. Bonus of +15% in *Bows*, *Perception*, *Stealth* and *Weaving*. The *Galadhrim* are xenophobic so they receive a penalty of -10% on all social rolls with other peoples. They have problems especially with Dwarves, with whom they get a penalty of -20% on all social rolls.

**Free paradigms of magic:** Varda (Novice ●●), Ulmo (Journeyman ●●●), Oromë (Journeyman ●●●), Yavanna (Novice ●●), Vairë (Novice ●●) and Nessa (Novice ●●).

**Languages:** Nandorin (mother-language), Sindarin (familiar) and Natural sounds (familiar).

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**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Bows 5%, Swim 5%, Perception 3%, Row 5%, Stealth 5%, Weaving 5% and Climb 2%.

**Historical presence:** Second Age, Third Age, Fourth Age.

**Ancestry:** Nandor.

**Descendancy:** Unknown.

### Abilities for MERP

**Modified characteristics:** +20 AG, +10 CO, -10 IG, +10 IT, +10 PR, +10 APP.

**Other special modifications:** Bonus of +15 in *Missile*, *Perception*, *Stealth* and *Weaving*. The *Galadhrim* are xenophobic so they receive a penalty of -10 to all rolls of *influence and interaction* with other peoples. They have problems especially with Dwarves, with whom they get a penalty of -20.

**Languages:** Nandorin 5, Sindarin 3 and Natural sounds 4.

**Childhood learned skills:**  
*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1, Soft Leather 2; *Weapon skills:* 1-H Edged 1, Missile 4, Pole-arms 1; *General skills:* Foraging 2, Hunting 2, Sky watching 2, Herbalism 2, Swim 5, Track 3, Row 3; *Magic skills:* Read Runes 1, Meditation 3, Sense magic 3, Directed Spells 1, Use Item 1; *Subterfuge skills:* Stealth 5; *Craft skills:* Bow-craft 2, Weaving 5; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 4; *Extra languages:* 2; *Development points:* 3.



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## Tawarwaith (Silvan Elves)

*The Silvan Elves (Tawarwaith) were in origin Teleri, and so remoter kin of the Sindar, though even longer separated from them than the Teleri of Valinor. They were descended of the Teleri who, on the Great Journey, were daunted by the Misty Mountains and lingered in the Vale of Anduin, and so never reached Beleriand or the Sea. They were thus closer akin to the Nandor [Laiquendi] (otherwise called the Green-elves) of Ossiriand, who eventually crossed the mountains and came at last into Beleriand. [...] but they still remembered that they were in origin Eldar, members of the Third Clan, and they welcomed those of the Noldor and especially the Sindar who did not pass over the Sea but migrated eastward. Under the leadership of these they became again ordered folk and increased in wisdom. Thranduil father of Legolas of the Nine Walkers was Sindarin, and that tongue was used in his house, though not by all his folk.*

—*Unfinished Tales.*  
*The Silvan Elves and their Speech*

*The Silvan Elves were hardy and valiant, but ill-equipped with armour or weapons in comparison with the Eldar of the West; also they were independent, and not disposed to place themselves under the supreme command of Gil-galad. [...] [Thranduil] had not the arts nor the wealth nor the aid of the Dwarves; and compared with the Elves of Doriath his Silvan folk were rude and rustic. Oropher had come among them with only a handful of Sindar, and they were soon merged with the Silvan Elves, adopting their language and taking names of Silvan form and style. This they did deliberately; for they (and other similar adventurers forgotten in the legends or only briefly named) came from Doriath after its ruin and had no desire to leave Middle-earth, nor to be merged with the other Sindar of Beleriand, dominated by the Noldorin Exiles for whom the folk of Doriath had no great love. They wished indeed to become Silvan folk and to return, as they said, to the simple life natural to the Elves before the invitation of the Valar had disturbed it.*

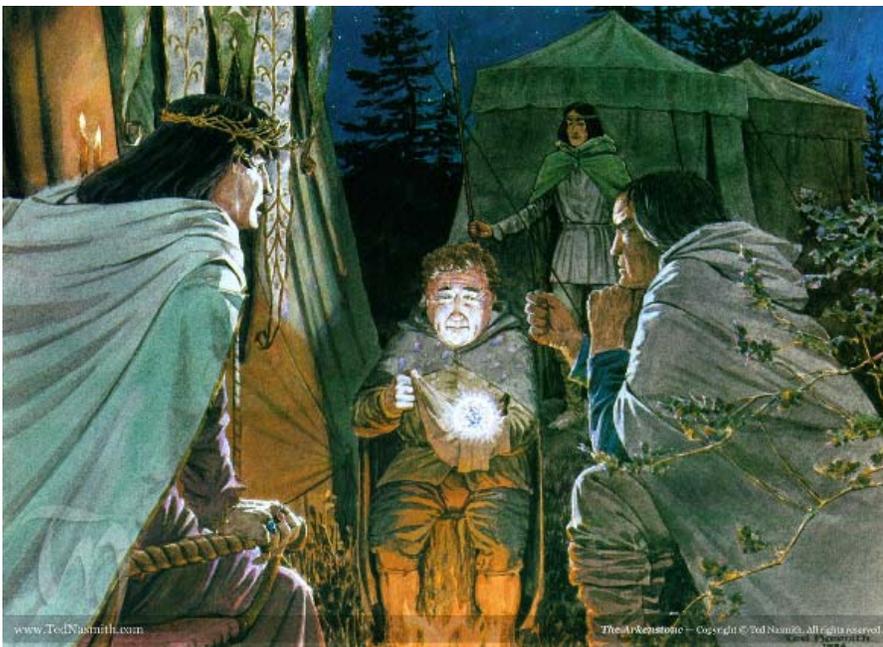
—*Unfinished Tales.*  
*The Sindarin Princes of the Silvan Elves*

*At times they heard disquieting laughter. Sometimes there was singing in the distance too. The laughter was the laughter of fair voices not of goblins, and the singing was beautiful, but it sounded eerie and strange, and they were not comforted, rather they hurried on from those parts with what strength they had left. [...] There were many people there, elvish-looking folk, all dressed in green and brown... [...] some were harping and many were singing. Their gleaming hair was twined with flowers; green and white gems glinted on their collars and their belts; and their faces and their songs were filled with mirth. [...] The feasting people were Wood-elves, of course. These are not wicked folk. If they have a fault it is distrust of strangers. Though their magic was strong, even in those days they were wary. They differed from the High Elves of the West, and were more dangerous and less wise. For most of them (together with their scattered relations in the hills and mountains) were descended from the ancient tribes that never went to Faerie in the West. [...] In the Wide World the Wood-elves lingered in the twilight of our Sun and Moon but loved best the stars; and they wandered in the great forests that grew tall in lands that are now lost. They dwelt most often by the edges of the woods, from which they could escape at times to hunt, or to ride and run over the open lands by moonlight or starlight; and after the coming of Men they took ever more and more to the gloaming and the dusk. Still elves they were and remain, and that is Good People. [...] His people neither mined nor worked metal nor jewels, nor did they bother much with trade or with tilling the earth.*

—*The Hobbit.*  
*Flies and Spiders*

*'I will climb up,' said Legolas. 'I am at home among trees, by root or bough...'*

—*LotR I. Lothlórien*



The *Wood Elves* (*Tawarwaith*) are the *Nandor* who lived in the Great Green Forest of Rhovanion, which were increased by the exiles of Beleriand during the Second Age of the Sun (and a possible *Avari* presence). Theirs is the Forest Kingdom and their kings were (and are) Oropher, Thranduil and Legolas. They are masters of the forest life, but also have a deep bond with Ulmo and the sea.

[For the specific case of *Legolas*, see the rules for multiple ethnicities at the end of this article.]

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:**  
+5 ST, +20 DX, -5 IN, +10 CH.  
Bonus of +10% in *Sing* and *Stealth*.

*'Look!' he cried. 'Gulls! They are flying far inland. A wonder they are to me and a trouble to my heart. Never in all my life had I met them, until we came to Pelargir, and there I heard them crying in the air as we rode to the battle of the ships. Then I stood still, forgetting war in Middle-earth; for their wailing voices spoke to me of the Sea. The Sea! Alas! I have not yet beheld it. But deep in the hearts of all my kindred lies the sea-longing, which it is perilous to stir. Alas! for the gulls. No peace shall I have again under beech or under elm.' [...] 'Alas for the wailing of the gulls! Did not the Lady tell me to beware of them? And now I cannot forget them.'*

—*LotR III. The Last Debate*

**Sea-longing:** Wood Elves have a particularly strong spiritual draw to the sea, which is activated at the slightest contact with it or by seeing or hearing seagulls. These trigger the following effects: when they view the sea they receive a bonus of +5% to activity and recover Spirit Points three times faster, or +2% to activity and Spirit Point recovery twice as fast when able to see or hear gulls. But they may never again be at peace away from the sea, and will receive a penalty of -10% to activity and recover Spirit Points at half the normal rate.

*So to the cave they dragged Thorin – not too gently, for they did not love dwarves, and thought he was an enemy. In ancient days they had had wars with some of the dwarves, whom they accused of stealing their treasure. It is only fair to say that the dwarves gave a different account, and said that they only took what was their due, for the elf-king had bargained with them to shape his raw gold and silver, and had afterwards refused to give them their pay.*

—*The Hobbit. Flies and Spiders*

**Antipathy to Noldor and Dwarves:** Wood Elves feel a strong antipathy for the Noldor elves, whom they accuse of destroying Doriath; and for the Dwarves, because an old war for treasures (which may or may not be the looting of Doriath related in *The Silmarillion*). They receive a penalty of -10% on all social rolls with Noldor and Dwarves.

*Wood-elves were not goblins, and were reasonably well-behaved even to their worst enemies, when they captured them. The giant spiders were the only living things that they had no mercy upon.*

—*The Hobbit. Flies and Spiders*

**Hate for giant spiders:** Wood Elves have a deep hatred for all the giant spiders (of any kind, not only found in Mirkwood), against which they cause the double base damage (DM +1).

*...the arrows of the [Wood-]elves that could hit a bird's eye in the dark.*  
—*The Hobbit. Barrels Out of Bond*

**Keen arrows:** Wood Elves are known for their skill with the bow, so they get a +30% bonus to bow attacks.

*...for the Wood-elves, and especially their king, were very fond of wine, though no vines grew in those parts. [...] It must be potent wine to make a Wood-elf drowsy...*  
—*The Hobbit. Barrels Out of Bond*

**Resistance to wine:** Wood Elves are resistant to wine, so they receive a bonus of +20 on its rolls of *Resistance* (wine).

**Free paradigms of magic:** Oromë (Wizard ●●●●●), Varda (Novice ●●), Ulmo (Novice ●●) and Yavanna (Novice ●●).

**Languages:** Nandorin (mother-language) and Sindarin (beginner).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Bows 5%, Hunt 5%, Sing 2%, Track 5%, Stealth 5%, Survival 5%, Climb 3%.

**Historical presence:** Second Age, Third Age, Fourth Age.

**Ancestry:** Nandor, Sindar (and probably *Avari*).

**Descendancy:** Unknown.

**Abilities for MERP**

**Modified characteristics:**

+5 ST, +20 AG, +5 CO, -5 IG, -5 IT, +10 PR, +10 APP.

**Resistance Rolls:** RR vs. Poison +10.

**Other special modifications:**

Bonus of +10 in *Sing* and *Stealth*.

Sea-longing: when in sight of the Sea they get a bonus of +5 to *activity* and recover PP three times faster, or +2 to *activity* and a double PP recovery when in sight/earshot of seagulls. But they may never again be at peace away from the sea, and will receive a penalty of -10 to *activity* and recover PP at half the normal rate.

Antipathy to the Noldor and the Dwarves: they receive a penalty of -10 in all *Influence* and *interaction* rolls with Noldor and Dwarves.

Hate for giant spiders: they receive a bonus of +10 OB against giant spiders.

Keen arrows: they receive a bonus of +20 OB to bow attacks.

Resistance to wine: they receive a bonus of +20 on RR's vs. poison when it comes to resisting the effects of wine.

**Languages:** Nandorin 5 and Sindarin 2.

**Childhood learned skills:**

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1, Soft Leather 2; *Weapon skills:* Missile 4, Pole-arms 1; *General skills:* Foraging 2, Hunting 5, Sky watching 2, Herbalism 2, Swim 2, Track 5, Row 3; *Magic skills:* Read Runes 1, Meditation 3, Sense of magic 2, Use Item 1; *Subterfuge skills:* Stealth 5; *Craft skills:* Bow-craft 2, Weaving 5; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 4; *Extra languages:* 4; *Development points:* 3.

**Avari**

...many refused the summons [of the Valar], preferring the starlight and the wide spaces of Middle-earth to the rumour of the Trees; and these are the Avari, the Unwilling...

—Quenta Silmarillion.  
*Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

Many Elves dwelt there indeed, as they had dwelt through the countless years, wandering free in the wide lands far from the Sea; but they were Avari, to whom the deeds of Beleriand were but a rumour and Valinor only a distant name.

—The Silmarillion.  
*Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age.*

The Dark-elves are they, and many are their scattered tribes, and many their tongues.

—The Shaping of Middle-earth.  
*Quenta Noldorinwa*

The Avari are the reluctant, who did not follow the call of the Valar at the beginning. Instead they chose to remain in the forests of Middle-earth, under the starlight. Unlike the Eldar who began their journey west, the Avari developed more deeply their "ethereal" nature. Avari elves are a reserved people, wandering unseen through the woods and forests of Middle-earth.

The physical appearance of the Avari is diverse and always changing, grotesque and beautiful at the same time. They have the diversity of traditional fairies. The smallest are five feet tall.

[Design Notes: There seems to be a general consensus on the Avari being "Wood elves" -even by Christopher Tolkien himself-, though I found no reference to it in the writings of Professor Tolkien. I have shown that the stereotypical image of "Wood elves" would be the Laiquendi, Galadhrim and Tawar-

waith. Without getting completely away from this idea I consider it fundamental that the Avari have a differentiated nature from the Eldar. I also find interesting the notion of "scattered tribes", and its air of anarchy and chaos, especially in their denial of the protection of the Valar. I thought that in the absence of direct references they are perfect for the development of broad categories of Elves (like "Desert-", "Mountain-", "Marsh-", "Snow-", "Meadow- [hunters]", "Jungle- [wild]", "Dark-" and "Wind-" Elves), not organized around political realms but in general trends. In addition it seems to me important to give them a more "wild" and "exotic" air. Avari elves should represent a generic category from which may have developed all their other elven peoples]

[Others in the 'fan-sourcebooks' Yahoo! Group are working on the Avari elves and on the delimitation of their different tribes. I have not yet had the opportunity to read their work, or actually identify the few references in the texts of Tolkien on which they base it.]

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** +10 DX, +10 CH.

Ethereal nature: Avari elves receive an extra +10 bonus to any one characteristic and a +30% to any one skill. They can apply these bonuses to any other characteristic and/or skill once a day, after four hours of meditation "in the spirit world". To do this they must make a successful *Dream* roll at normal difficulty for one of them (in a single day), or a very hard difficulty for the two (on the same day). If they fail the "very hard" roll but if they do exceed the "normal" one, then they get to change just one of these. This "ethereal nature" is also reflected in their physical body, which changes a

**continued on next page**

bit (very subtly) each time they change. For every day that they do not change any of these bonuses they tend to get “petrified”, increasing its difficulty in one degree, until the change becomes practically impossible.

*Beautiful and Grotesque:* Avari elves have an exotic appearance, which blend beauty and grotesquery. They receive a +10 bonus or a penalty of -10 to all social rolls. The bonus or penalty will be determined randomly for every encounter, even if they know their partner (any die: even the bonus, odd the penalty).

#### Free paradigms of magic:

Varda (Journeyman ●●●), Oromë (Journeyman ●●●), Yavanna (Journeyman ●●●) and Irmo (Journeyman ●●●).

**Languages:** Avarin (mother-language).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** Bows 5%, Hunt 5%, Track 5%, Stealth 5%, Survival 5%, Dream 5%.

**Historical presence:** Ages of the Stars, First Age, Second Age, Third Age, Fourth Age.

#### Ancestry:

Quendi.

#### Descen-

**dancy:** Lossidil, Moriquendi, Desert elves, Mountain elves, Marsh

#### Abilities for MERP

##### Modified characteristics:

+10 AG, +10 PR, +10 APP.

**Resistance Rolls:** RR vs. Poison +10.

##### Other special modifications:

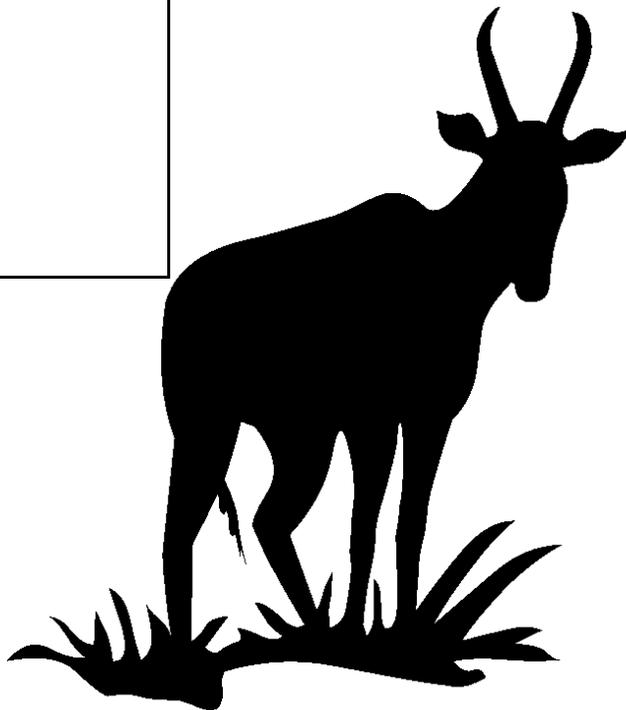
*Ethereal Nature:* As above, including bonuses (+10 to a characteristic and +30 to a skill).

*Beautiful and Grotesque:* Same as above, including the bonus or penalty to *Influence and interaction:* +/-10.

**Languages:** Avarin 5.

##### Childhood learned skills:

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1, Soft Leather 1; *Weapon skills:* 1-H Edged 1, Missile 4, Pole-arms 1; *General skills:* Foraging 4, Hunting 4, Sky watching 4, Herbalism 4, Swim 4, Track 3; *Magic skills:* Read Runes 1, Meditation 5, Sense of magic 4, Use Item 1; *Subterfuge skills:* Stealth 6; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 4; *Extra languages:* 6; *Development points:* 3.



## Lossidil

*The Lossidil (Los. “Snow-elves”, sing. Lossedel) [...] Men know little of these deathless dwellers in the north, but legends whisper of an enchanted city of ice, far out upon the Landless Land, where their mistress guards the source of the mysterious radiance that illuminates the night skies of the northern world.*

*[...] Yet the Snow-elves, now as always, are under no compulsion to submit to their lady’s command’s; if they choose to abide by their own will only, they are free to depart Helloth’s walls, for a season or permanently, and wander the Northlands at their pleasure. [...] Beyond Helloth, small companies of Lossidil wander the northern waste at will, sojourning never long in one place. [...] Apart from Oromë’s visitations in the Elder Days, Ulmo is the only Vala that the Lindi [Lossidil] have ever encountered [...] the spiritual life of the Snow-elves consists primarily in the discernment of that echo [of the Music of the Ainur in the sound of water], and its manifestation in their relations to one another and to the world around them. [...]*

*Ice itself the Lossidil refer to as Ulmo’s “frozen voice,” whence comes their joy in its shaping. [...] For the most part, their weapons and skills are oriented toward the hunt. [...] the Snow-elves have relied most on defense and withdrawal tactics, rather than outright confrontation. The founding of Helloth generated new demands for the concerted defense of fortified walls, and this novelty has led to the development of armor as well as new weaponry. The guardians of Helloth don hauberks crafted from interlocking pieces of ivory, sewn together with whalegut and hardened by an enchanted lacquer-like coating, the art of whose making the Lossidil alone possess.*

—The Northern Waste.  
pp 5, 13, 32, 33, 68

*The Lossidil are a graceful and beautiful people. Most are extremely fair of skin, with hair color ranging from silver to a pale blond; russet tones are uncommon, but not unheard of. Most Snow-elves have [wholly] blue eyes, though some have shades of amethyst, grey or light green. Both sexes wear their hair long; women usually have many braids swept up with carved pins or bands of woven hide. [...] The Lady of Hellot is beautiful, even by Snow-elfen standards. Her skin glistens like polished ivory, her hair so fair as to rival the white snow, her eyes a deep, dark, ocean-green.*

—*The Northern Waste.*  
pp 33, 68

The *Lossidil* are wild-looking elves that live on the Landless Land, in the permafrost of the north. Offspring of the *Avari*, they entered the north, where *Utumno* once stood, in the Ages of the Stars. They are immune to cold, they do eat ice (or frozen food) and wear little or no clothing.

[*Design notes: I changed the original Lossidil version of Randy Maxwell in the following ways: 1) they do not descend from the Nandor, but from the Avari, 2) they are not just more resistant to cold, they are immune to it, 3) they are more "wild" and "inhumane", and 4) they entered the northern permafrost not in the Second Age, but much earlier in the Ages of the Stars, becoming an integral part of the mystical sense of the Northern Waste*]



**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** -5 ST, +10 DX, +10 IN, -5 LO, +10 Will, +10 CH; bonus of +10% in *Hunt, Sculpt, Music* and *Stealth*. *Vulnerability* to fire and warm.

**Immunity to cold:** Snow elves are immune to cold and ice. Any such attack will cause base damage reduced by one FD (MD -1), and ignore any cold critics.

**Ice Sculptures:** the *lossidil* have the ability to “magically” sculpt ice with their hands. For this they make a standard *Sculpt* roll.

**Spirit of ice:** any melee attack by a snow elf causes an additional ice critical [of the same severity as the main critical].

**Free paradigms of magic:** Aulë (Journeyman ●●●), Irmo (Journeyman ●●●), Ulmo (Journeyman ●●●) and Varda (Journeyman ●●●).

**Languages:** *Lossidilrin* (mother-language) and *Avarin* (beginner).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** *Hunt* 5%, *Sculpt* 5%, *Music* 5%, *Stealth* 5%, *Survival* 5%, *Spears* 5%.

**Historical presence:** Ages of the Stars, First Age, Second Age, Third Age, Fourth Age.

**Ancestry:** *Avari*.

**Descendancy:** Unknown.

**Abilities for MERP**

**Modified characteristics:**

-5 ST, +10 CO, +10 AG, +10 IT, -5 IG, +10 PR, +10 APP.

**Resistance Rolls:** RR vs. Poison +10; Immunity to cold attacks; RR vs. Fire and Warm -20.

**Other special modifications:** bonus of +10 in *Hunting, Sculpt, Music* and *Stealth*.

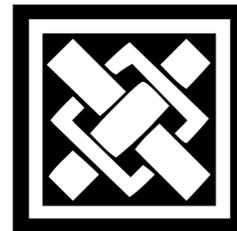
**Ice Sculptures:** the *lossidil* have the ability to “magically” sculpt ice with their hands. For this they make regular *Sculpt* rolls.

**Spirit of ice:** any melee attack by a snow elf causes an additional ice critical [of the same severity as the main critical].

**Languages:** *Lossidilrin* 5 and *Avarin* 2.

**Childhood learned skills:**

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1; *Weapon skills:* Pole-arms 4, Thrown 4; *General skills:* Foraging 3, Hunting 3, Sky watching 3, Swim 3, Track 3; *Magic skills:* Read runes 3, Meditation 3, Sense of magic 4, Ray spells 1, Use item 1; *Subterfuge skills:* Stealth 5; *Artistic skills:* Sculpt 6; *Athletic skills:* Ice skating 5, Skiing 5; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 4; *Extra languages:* 3; *Development points:* 3.



## Moriquendi (Hisildi)

...and there Eöl dwelt, who was named the Dark Elf. Of old he was of the kin of Thingol, but he was restless and ill at ease in Doriath, and when the Girdle of Melian was set about the Forest of Region where he dwelt he fled thence to Nan Elmoth. There he lived in deep shadow, loving the night and the twilight under the stars. He shunned the Noldor, holding them to blame for the return of Morgoth, to trouble the quiet of Beleriand; but for the Dwarves he had more liking than any other of the Elvenfolk of old. [...] he would at times go and dwell as guest in the deep mansions of Nogrod or Belegost. There he learned much of metalwork, and came to great skill therein; [...] But Eöl, though stooped by his smithwork, was no Dwarf, but an Elf of a high kin of the Teleri, noble though grim of face; and his eyes could see deep into shadows and dark places. [...] For though at Eöl's command she must shun the sunlight, they wandered far together under the stars or by the light of the sickle moon [...] Then Eöl looked into the eyes of King Turgon, and he was not daunted, but stood long without word or movement while a still silence fell upon the hall; and Aredhel was afraid, knowing that he was perilous. Suddenly, swift as serpent, he seized a javelin that he held hid beneath his cloak and cast it at Maeglin [...] though the wound had seemed little, and she fell into the darkness, and in the night she died; for the point of the javelin was poisoned, though none knew it until too late.

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
Of Maeglin

Then Beleg chose Anglachel; and that was a sword of great worth, and it was so named because it was made of iron that fell from heaven as a blazing star; it would cleave all earth-delved iron. One other sword only in Middle-earth was like to it. That sword does not enter into this tale, though it was made of the same ore by the same smith; and that smith was Eöl the Dark Elf, who took Aredhel Turgon's sister to wife. He gave Anglachel to Thingol as fee, which he begrudged, for leave to dwell in Nan Elmoth; but its mate Anquirel he kept, until it was stolen from him by Maeglin, his son.

—*Quenta Silmarillion.*  
Of Túrin Turambar

The *Moriquendi* (“dark elves”) are *Avari* elves who were so enamored of the night and the stars that they not only refused the Call of the Valar, but hid from the gaze of the Sun. When the sun came out for the first time at the beginning of the First Age they hid in dense

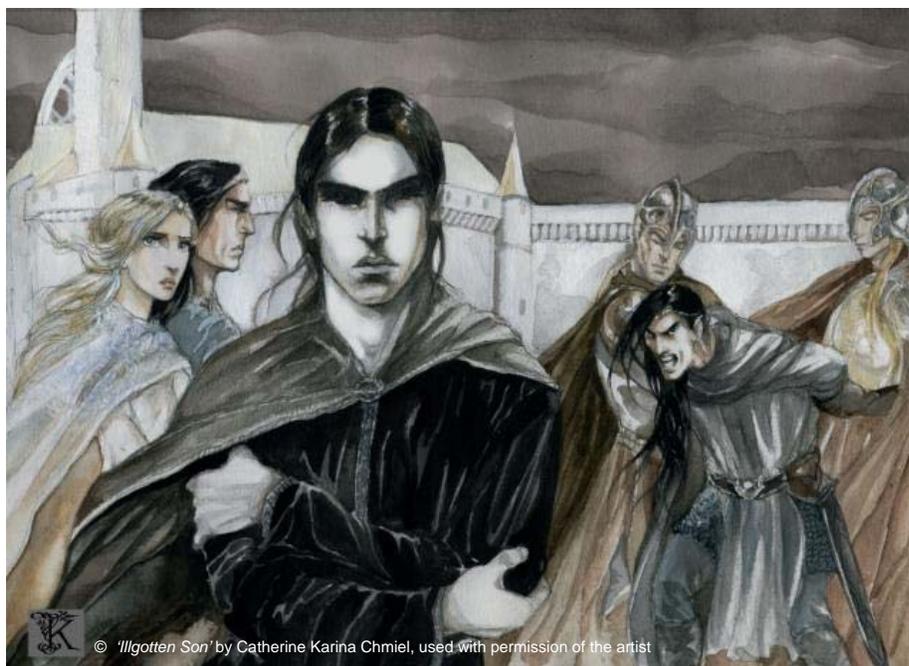
forests where no sunlight entered. But mostly they sought refuge in the caverns of the underworld.

From the beginning they were great friends of Dwarves (regardless of their alliances with the Free Peoples or Sauron), and these taught them the secrets of the forge and opened for them the gates of the Underdeeps, with their caverns and underground streams. This knowledge served the *Moriquendi* particularly well when they hid from the light of the sun.

*Moriquendi* are accustomed to starlight and deep dark caverns, and they can see in the dark. On the other hand they cannot endure sunlight and are uncomfortable in the light of the full moon. They are good smiths and miners. They are also known for their snake-like speed and their knowledge of poisons.

They have no internal organization, nor a capital city. They are vagabonds of the underworld, and Eöl could have been the closest thing to a “prince” of the *Moriquendi*.

The *Moriquendi* are “dark”. Many have gray or black skin. And even those with fair skin have a pale tint. Their hair is usually white. They are tall but not slender.



© 'Illgotten Son' by Catherine Karina Chmiel, used with permission of the artist

[*Design notes:* This is an example of a totally invented Avari elvish people, though one that uses as its example a creation of Professor Tolkien himself. I have chosen the name “Moriquendi” because it fits well, though not in its original context. One must remember also, that Eöl is not just a Dark Elf, but the Dark Elf; and that even if Dark Elves are all those who did not see the light of the Trees, it is also thus that this term seems to be applied specifically for certain Avari elves back in Palisor. According to Professor Tolkien the Moriquendi were the counterparts of the “Calaquendi” elves, those who never saw the light of the trees. In my scheme the Calaquendi have a specific function, but their opposite (the Moriquendi) do not, because they would be “all the others”. And in that sense it is a “lost” term. That’s why I decided to give it essence as a “people”. The detailed development of the culture of the Moriquendi remains for further work. We also have to consider that the character on which I rely for this description –Eöl– was supposedly of Teleri and/or Sindarin origin, as expressed explicitly in *The Silmarillion*. What is more, he would be a “relative” of Elu Thingol. My explanation is as follows: Eöl is a biological relative of Elu Thingol (perhaps the same Nelyar “family”), but who stayed in Cuiviënen, becoming an “Avari”. In this context he developed into a “Moriquendi”. By the end of the Ages of the Stars he wandered alone through the caverns of the Underdeeps and came to Beleriand, where he was reunited with his “relative”. And there he lived and died, as the sole representative of his people in Beleriand. He maybe even adopted a new ethnic identity as “Sindar”, but we must still come to that concept further on. And his “hatred” of the Noldor, without being a characteristic shared by all his people, could come from the blood (or love) ties with the Teleri killed by these.]

[I’m not the first to experiment with Eöl and the “dark elves” as a distinct elven people. See José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa’s “The Eöldrim” in OM 6, pp. 23-27; and Jeff Erwin’s “Tatyarin Avari: the Dark Elves” in OH 28, pp. 6-10]

**Elven attributes:** Immortality, immunity to diseases, slow progression, perfection, the gift of language, elven sight, hatred for Orcs, creatures of spirit, light-footed, interact with spirits, immunity to the terror of spectres, magic affinity, blessing of Varda.

**Modified characteristics:** +15 DX, +10 Will, +5 CH; bonus of +30% in *Metalsmith*, and a bonus of +10% to *Perception* and *Stealth*.

**Darkvision:** The Moriquendi can see up to 50 meters in total darkness, and can distinguish details up to 10 meters. They also possess night vision as typical for elves.

**Weakness to daylight:** They receive a penalty of -30% to *activity* in full daylight and a penalty of -10% to *activity* in heavily overcast days, indoors or under the direct light of the full moon.

**Friendship with the Naugrim:** A moriquendë receives a bonus of +20% on all social rolls with dwarves.

**Free paradigms of magic:** Aulë (Magician ●●●●), Irmo (Novice ●●), Nessa (Journeyman ●●●) and Varda (Journeyman ●●●).

**Languages:** Avarin (mother-language), Khuzdul (beginner).

**Childhood learning (30 free points):** *Metalsmith* 15%, *Perception* 5%, *Stealth* 5%, *Survival* 5%.

**Historical presence:** Ages of the Stars, First Age, Second Age, Third Age, Fourth Age.

**Ancestry:** Avari.

**Descendancy:** Unknown.

**Abilities for MERP**

**Modified characteristics:**

+10 CO, +15 AG, +5 PR, +10 APP.

**Resistance Rolls:** RR vs. Poison +10; RR vs. Light attacks -30.

**Other special modifications:**

bonus of +30 in *Metalsmith*, and a bonus of +10 in *Perception* and *Stealth*.

**Darkvision:** The Moriquendi can see up to 50 meters in total darkness, and can distinguish details up to 10 meters. They also possess night vision as typical for elves.

**Weakness to light:** they receive a penalty of -30 to *activity* in full daylight and a penalty of -10 to *activity* in heavily overcast days, indoors or under the direct light of the full moon.

**Friendship with the Naugrim:** a Moriquendë receives a +20 bonus on all rolls of *Influence* and *interaction* with Dwarves.

**Languages:** Avarin 5, Khûzdul 2.

**Childhood learned skills:**

*Movement & maneuvers:* No Armor 1, Chain 2; *Weapon skills:* 1-Handed Edged 2, Missile 1, Pole-arms 1, Throwing 2; *General skills:* Perception 2; *Magic skills:* Read Runes 3, Meditation 3, Lore 3, Sense of magic 3, Directed Spells 2, Use Item 5; *Influence & Interaction:* Intimidate 1; *Subterfuge skills:* Appraise 3; *Craft skills:* Metalsmith 5, Mining 3; *Special skills:* Body development 2; *Magic:* 4; *Extra languages:* 6; *Development points:* 3.



While this article was in revision I found an obscure but interesting quote in relation to the *moriqendi*. I find it important to give it here:

...yet was that not all of the race of the Eldalie that marched from Palisor, and those who remained behind are they whom many call the Qendi, the lost fairies of the world, but ye Elves of Kôr name Ilkorins [...] Of these some fell out upon the way, or were lost in the trackless glooms of those days, being wildered and but newly awakened on the Earth, but the most were those who left not Palisor at all, and a long time they dwelt in the pine-woods of Palisor, or sat in silence gazing at the mirrored stars in the pale still Waters of Awakening. [...] Now the tale tells of a certain fay, and names him Tû the wizard [...] wandering about the world he found the [Dim] Elves and he drew them to him and taught them many deep things, and he became as a mighty king among them, and their tales name him the Lord of Gloaming and all the fairies of his realm Hisildi or the twilight people. [...] ...the issue of the dark lake was beneath the earth into many endless caverns falling ever more deeply into the bosom of the world. There was the dwelling of Tû the wizard, and fathomless hollow are those places, but their doors have long been sealed and none know now the entry. [...] the eyes of the Hisildi were becoming exceeding keen, and they might follow very faint paths in those dim days.

—The Book of Lost Tales I.  
The travail of the Noldoli and  
the Coming of Mankind

This quote comes from Tolkien's first writings in relation to Middle-earth, some 30 or more years before the Lord of the Rings, in a very archaic and primitive form. This material went through successive layers of revision before it came to the "late" version that we know from *The Silmarillion*. This obscure reference to the *Hisildi* never again reappeared, and is lost in the late *Silmarillion* Mythos.

This quote gives us a look into an elven people that live underground, with especially keen sight attributed to the dim conditions of their abode. And especially important, it gives us a name for them: the *Hisildi*.

But what it does not give us is any connection to Eöl, the prototype character for the *Moriqendi* as a folk. If we make him a part of this folk, it is just because we want to.

Anyway we got a people which fit in the *Moriqendi* role in a broad sense, and that do not deny what I did write for the *Moriqendi*. So, in this light we can modify the background info for the *Hisildi* in the following way: Their origin is directly related to Tû the Wizard, an incarnate Maia, and his underground home. After a while they, as people, did become lost to the (sunlit) world. Tû is their king, but surely there is place for Eöl to be a prince for his people. Their underground wanderings, their friendship with the dwarves and their kinship with Eöl are things that can be accepted without denying anything from the original quote for the *Hisildi*.

And so we have a new people for our Middle-earth games, the *Hisildi*, representing for the western elves the prototypical Dark Elves of legend.

[*Editorial note: We know from elsewhere in HoMe that "Thu" (surely the same as Tû) was the early name for Sauron himself.*]

[*Author's note: I would think that it is a great argument for those who would like to see the Hisildi as evil, like the Drow from D&D. I myself don't really like the idea of elves of any type as willing servants of the Shadow.*]



## The problem of ethnicity changes during the Ages

Now you question me, Ælfwine, concerning the tongues of the Elves, saying that you wonder much to discover that they are many, akin indeed and yet unlike; for seeing that they die not and their memories reach back into ages long past, you understand not why all the race of the Quendi have not maintained the language that they had of old in common still one and the same in all their kindreds. But behold! Ælfwine, within Eä all things change, even the Valar...

—The Peoples of Middle-earth. Dangweth Pengolodh

The idea that I use about elven ethnicity (the membership to a particular people) is dynamic. Ethnicity changes over time and with new situations.

As we already saw in section 6: "The Elven Peoples", Elves have a special character that distinguishes them from the other peoples of Middle-earth. They are not just beardless human(oid)s with long pointy ears and high bonuses to their characteristics.

No.

They are fundamentally different. And this difference translates into the game's mechanics.

Immortal, within Eä, are the Eldar, but since even as Men they dwell in forms that come of Eä, they are no more changeless than the great trees, neither in the forms that they inhabit, nor in the things that they desire or achieve by means of those forms. [...] this change comes above all from the very changefulness of Eä [...] But to the changefulness of Eä, to weariness of the unchanged, to the renewing of the union: to these three, which are one, the Eldar also are subject in their degree.

—The Peoples of Middle-earth. Dangweth Pengolodh

Change. Elves are subject to change with the passing of the Ages. And I relate this change to their ethereal nature.

Just like the other Children of Eru and Aulë (humans, dwarves, and eventually hobbits) Elves are made of both body and spirit. But the first-born (Elves) are primarily spirit (*fëa*). Their physical form (*hröar*) is important and they need it to live, but it is not their fundamental feature. Elves are spirit beings, living both in the physical and the spirit world, of a more fluid and malleable nature, capable of exceeding the limits of matter as other mortals know it.

*... whereas the change that goes long unperceived, as the growth of a tree, was indeed slow of old in Aman ere the Rising of the Moon, and even in Middle-earth under the Sleep of Yavanna slower far than it is now among Men, yet among the Eldar this steadfastness was offset by the changes that come of will and design: many of which indeed differ little in outward seeming from those of unwitting growth.*

—*The Peoples of Middle-earth*. Dangweth Pengolodh

This also means that while they have bloodlines and a concrete lineage (so to speak, “the genetic factor”), they are not limited by them. This has two consequences:

First, although the different elven peoples of Middle-earth come to be mainly family and kinship groups, they are not bound by that. In fact for them their social environment (the people with whom they grow up and live) and their free will play a greater role.

This means that although there are many marriage unions between different elven peoples, their children are not looked down on as “half-castes” but are full members of one of the peoples of their parents, usually determined by with whom the individual grew up with and reached maturity. They cannot choose to be part of both peoples, having to choose one. But this decision depends more on

their own free will than on their blood or any law of genetics.

The elven spirit (and body) is fluid but not erratic. The elves will shape their reality through will, but cannot go back and change all its essence. Once they have chosen to belong to a particular people they must stay as such, and cannot go back and choose another one.

This brings us to the second consequence, that if they cannot undo what has been done, they can keep on developing themselves. If we start from the premise (basic in role-playing games) that each people has its own characteristics common to all its members, distinguishing them from other peoples, then the logical consequence is that each specific people is mutually exclusive with the others. And if we accept that each specific name used by Tolkien is a new people (which as I said is the notion that I use), then it follows that its population renews and replaces itself.

But especially in the case of Elves, as immortal beings, we have many and varied cases where specific individuals living through long Ages participate in different kingdoms and historical processes in Middle-earth. For example we have Círdan and Elwë (later known as Elu Thingol) who were born as “Quendi”, but soon they became “Eldar” and “Teleri”, and eventually ended up as leaders of the “Falathrim” and “Sindar” respectively. It is not just an (apparent) continuous change of ethnicities, but that these individuals are so fundamental to the identity of their respective peoples that they cannot be imagined without them.

One could interpret this from a static perspective where each of these individuals would have their original people (in this case “Quendi”), being just the originators or part of these new peoples, without ceasing to be what they originally were. But for this it would be necessary that these primitive peoples contain within themselves each of the (many) peoples that followed them. That

is, that the original peoples would be more and the others less. Although this fits perfectly with the logic of degeneration (which many ascribe to Tolkien himself in his work on Middle-earth), I personally do not like it and I prefer not to use it (as it has serious “racist” and “evolutionism” connotations).

The solution I offer, staying as close as possible to my ideals and staying in the logic of Middle-earth, is that the elves with their ethereal nature cannot be what they are not, but can continue to develop. And in this specific case this means that without letting go of their old ethnic identities, elves can take new ones depending on the situation.

Without losing any bonuses or penalties of their original people(s), they gain the bonuses and penalties of their new people. Of course this is about the primary characteristics and not of the childhood learned skills (which they have not gone through). The only special case would be the bonuses to their characteristics (ST, DX, LO, IN, CH and Will) which do not increase but are replaced [note: this should be play tested. Maybe it would be better to use the highest bonus or penalty, no matter the ethnic strata].

Of course this can be a great benefit for the individual, but there are conditions. To begin with, the character cannot take any ethnicity of his choice. He must participate in the process of completion of the new people. That is, one cannot be “Noldor/Sindar”, but “Quendi/Eldar/ Teleri/Sindar”.

Secondly, the approval of the Storyteller is needed. It is him who decides whether the process is justified or not. For this in addition to the first condition mentioned above I suggest that frequent changes should not be allowed, but a maximum of one per millennium or per Age of the world, and only in specific cases.

And finally, if you meet these first two conditions, the character must pay a certain amount of DP (Development Points), determined by the people in question. Typically this change takes years. But Elves have time. If you want to develop some skills and features gradually as you pay the cost in DP, then the Storyteller must decide on a case by case basis. But one should think that the first DP provides no benefit, and the disadvantages are manifested faster than bonuses. Only an Elf who completes the process may be considered a true member of the new people.

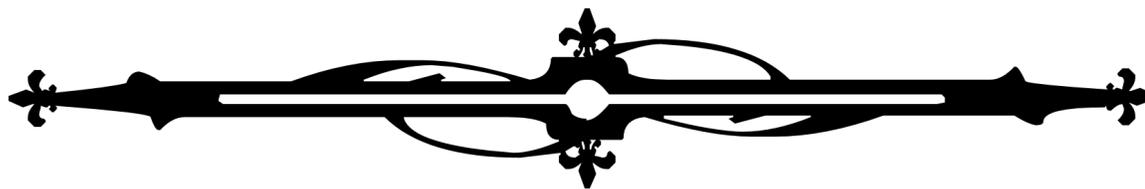
For the MERP system, it strikes me that one could choose different ethnicities only in the character creation process, paying a DP by ethnicity. To this limitation it can be added that one can only take by one people every 5 experience levels. Assuming further ethnicities, in the absence of DP to spend, could be equated to 10.000 XP (equal to a level in the first 5 levels).

Elves are not required to take new ethnicities, and may very well stay with their original ethnicity throughout their lasting existence in Arda.

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## Notes

1. Even if it is also true that many others – like good stubborn dwarves – feel antipathy towards them.
2. Not yet published. An outline of this system sufficient for an understanding of the game stats in this article was included in OM11: ‘Simplified System—Chronicles of Middle-earth’.
3. In the logic of role-playing games, obviously, and not as an ethnic sub-division in the original sources.
4. “*Guía de pueblos y culturas de la Tierra Media*” in its original Spanish name. (Available on the Internet at: <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules/files/>)
5. It could be said that really the “High Elves” would be the Vanyar, and that the Noldor would be the “Deep Elves”.
6. See “The Acroteriasm of Other Hands” in OM1, pp. 3-5.
7. Like *Teleri* and *Linda*, but not *Falmari* nor *Falathrim*.
8. I refer here only to official RPG products. I do not (yet) know the amateur products Fan-Sourcebooks.
9. Tip: in MERP they should need double experience points to advance a level. When the PCs begin at higher levels, Elves receive only half the level of their mortal companions.
10. Tip: in MERP points in languages should cost half for Elves.
11. Tip: in MERP they use PP (Power Points), and in CODA they make resilience rolls each round.
12. Tip: in MERP this means that elves can use magic at double their current level. But if used in conjunction with the rule that the elves are usually half the level of their fellow mortals, then this is not balanced. In this case we consider 1) that elves can learn magic without limitation per class (up to the level of magic that can be used), but only those magic lists available to their class, and 2) that the classes without any limitation (magicians and animists) can use spells up to three times their reduced level.
13. *Calaquendi* is an advantage (in the *Advantages and Disadvantages* system in the complete rules) which the characters that did see the light of the Two Trees can buy with DP. But in this simplified system it is better restricted to the Vanyar.
14. I thank Neville Percy for this observation.



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# Table of Contents

## Other Minds Magazine, Issues I-12

What you see before you is a comprehensive table of content for all Issues of *Other Minds* published so far. It will be regularly updated as new Issues become available. If you need a more flexible tool, please visit our website at <http://othermindsmagazine.com/>. There you can find a simple spreadsheet with an option to filter for several criteria.

The Issue listing below should be largely self-explanatory. The “page” column lists the beginning page of the contribution in question.

### Issue 1, July 2007 (49 pages)

Title	Author	Page	Game System
Editorial: Here we are!	Thomas Morwinsky, Hawke Robinson	2	any
Opinion – The Acroteriasm of Other Hands	W.A. Hawke Robinson	3	any
The Battle Over Role Playing Gaming	W.A. Hawke Robinson	6	any
Mapping Arda	Thomas Morwinsky, Stéphane Hoerlé, Gabriele Quaglia, Oliver Schick, Christian Schröder	9	any
Of Barrow-wights – Part One	Neville Percy	21	any
Magic in Middle-earth	Chris Seeman	28	any
Thoughts on Imladris – Part One	Thomas Morwinsky	31	any

### Issue 2, January 2008 (75 pages) – Focus theme: Númenor

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: Ready for Round Two!	Thomas Morwinsky, Hawke Robinson	2	any	
Other Minds Conventions	Thomas Morwinsky	3	any	
J.R.R. Tolkien’s love of Trees and the Environment	W.A. Hawke Robinson	6	any	Core
Númenóreans in Endor	Gabriele Quaglia, Stéphane Hoerlé, Thomas Morwinsky	10	any	Optional
Númenórean Maritime Technology	Thomas Morwinsky	26	any	Optional, House
A Response to ‘Mapping Arda’	Eric Dubourg	37	any	Optional, House
Mapping Arda - Reloaded	Thomas Morwinsky, Stéphane Hoerlé, Gabriele Quaglia, Oliver Schick, Christian Schröder	41	any	Optional

### Issue 3, May 2008 (45 pages)

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: Third time is a charm	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
Of Barrow-wights – Part Two	Neville Percy	5	any	Core
J.R.R. Tolkien, Words, Phrases & Passages in The Lord of the Rings – A Game Designer’s Guide to Parma Eldalamberon 17	Chris Seeman	9	any	Core
The Rings of Power – History and Abilities	Thomas Morwinsky	15	any	Core, Optional
The Palantíri	Chris Seeman	31	LotR RPG	House
The Venturers and the colonies of Númenor	Eric Dubourg	34	any	House

### Issue 4, July 2008 (49 pages) – Focus theme: Dwarves

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: Baruk Khazâd – Khazâd ai-mênu	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
Whither MerpCon	Hawke Robinson	3	any	
The Problem of Dwarven Women	Neville Percy	6	any	Optional
A Brief History of the Dwarven Mansions	Thomas Morwinsky	11	any	Optional
A Dwarven Runic Cryptogram	Neville Percy	22	any	House
Swept Off By Your Feet...	Thomas Morwinsky	24	any	House
Outer Names for the Western Dwarves	Neville Percy	25	any	House
The Giant Armoured Moldewarp	Neville Percy	28	MERP	House
The Sword of Aulë	Tom Davie	30	MERP	House

### Issue 5, March 2009 (35 pages)

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: Back for good	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
Tolkien and Transformational Thought	Michael Martinez	3	any	Core
Tolkien's Impact on Beowulf	W.A. Hawke Robinson	6	any	Core
Thoughts on Imladris - Part Two	Thomas Morwinsky	9	any	House
Minas Ithil Name Glossary	Chris Seeman, David Salo	13	any	Optional
Mithril and MERP	Chris Seeman	18	any	House
Amending "A Brief History of the Dwarven Mansions"	Thomas Morwinsky	25	any	Optional

### Issue 6, May 2009 (77 pages)

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: Back on track!	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
Clad in Mail	Oliver Hauss	4	any	Core
White Hand Rising	Lev Lafayette	8	any	House
Númenórean longevity	Thomas Morwinsky	10	any	Optional
The Eöldrim	José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa	23	any	House
Tharbad Map Name Changes	Chris Seeman, David Salo	28	any	Optional
Banks of the Northern Anduin	Johannes Lomborg	30	MERP	House
Born of Hope – An Overview	José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa	58	any	House
Book Review – "Isildur"	Thomas Morwinsky	60	any	Core

### Issue 7, July 2009 (42 pages)

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: A Magical Number	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
Inside Information	Thomas Morwinsky	3	any	
The Angmarrim	Thomas Morwinsky	4	any	Optional
The Other Side	José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa	10	any	Optional
MERP Supplementary Rules	Thomas Morwinsky	16	MERP	House
The Ebbs and Flows of Númenórean Technology	António Simões	26	any	House

**Issue 8, November 2009 (39 pages) – Focus Theme: Magic**

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: Surprise!	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
A Sense of Magic	Neville Percy	4	any	Core
Sense of Magic	Neville Percy	6	MERP	House
Between Canon and Dogma	Daniel “Vaco” Vacaflares	8	any	Core
A Journey in the Dark	Daniel “Vaco” Vacaflares	15	any	Core
The Ways of Magic	Daniel “Vaco” Vacaflares	19	any	Optional
The Nine Nazgûl	António Simões	24	any	House
The Age of Sauron – Preview	Padraig Timmins	32	any	House

**Issue 9, February 2010 (65 pages) – Focus Theme: The Fourth Age**

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: The Dominion of Man	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
Inside Information	Thomas Morwinsky	4	any	
The Age of Sauron	Padraig Timmins	5	any	House
The Heirs of Elessar and the Fourth Age	Thomas Morwinsky	14	any	House
A Fourth Age Chronology	Tom Davie	29	any	House
Religion in Angmar	Thomas Morwinsky	39	any	House

**Issue 10, August 2010 (69 pages)**

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: Finally Here!	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
Balrogs do not have wings –but they do fly!	Thomas Gießl	4	any	Core
The problem of Gil-galad and the ‘House of Finrod’	Thomas Morwinsky	13	any	Core
A History of Story-Telling Games and other Imaginary Depictions of Middle-earth	Travis Henry	23	any	House
The ‘Other Hands’ Restoration project	Thomas Morwinsky and Ronald K.	25	any	House
An October weekend in Middle-earth	Thomas Abbenhaus	28	any	House
The Art of Magic – a magic system for Middle-earth	Daniel “Vaco” Vacaflares	31	house system	Optional/House

**Issue 11, January 2011 (126 pages)**

Title	Author	Page	Game System	Category
Editorial: A belated Christmas and New Year’s present	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
Inside Information	Thomas Morwinsky	4	any	
Agazlam	Severin, Isildur’s Heir	6	any	House
Roleplaying Battles in Middle-earth	José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa	77	any	House
Simplified System—Chronicles of Middle-earth	Daniel “Vaco” Vacaflares	79	own system	House
Moldewarp stats for LotRRPG	José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa	87	LotRRPG	House
Things a PC should know	Tom Davie	89	any	Optional/House
The Tale of Years	Thomas Gießl	90	any	Core
Únati and Axani	Neville ‘Osric’ Percy	107	any	Core

**Issue 12, July 2011 (57 pages)**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Game System</b>	<b>Category</b>
Editorial: Holding our breath	Thomas Morwinsky	2	any	
Inside Information	Thomas Morwinsky	4	any	
Númenórean Longevity Revisited	Thomas Morwinsky	5	any	Core
An Unexpected Party	David Daines	11	any	House
The Phenomenon of “Eternal Realms” in Middle-earth RPG settings	Thomas Morwinsky	16	any	Optional
Quendi	Daniel “Vaco” Vacaflares	23	own system & MERP	Optional