



OTHER MINDS

The Unofficial Role-Playing Magazine for JRR Tolkien's Middle-earth and beyond

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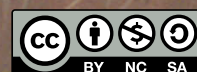
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Cover page illustration

ROHIR WERGILD

This great artwork by Angus McBride first appeared as the cover of MERP's *Riders of Rohan*. Later, it was also included in *Angus McBride's Characters of Middle-earth*¹ together with a short background of what the scene depicts.

In our context, it fits very well with the *Clash of the Viglundings* adventure, which takes place in a Northman setting and also involves orcs as antagonists.

¹ Ney, J. M. 1990. *Angus McBride's Characters of Middle-earth*, Charlottesville, VA, Iron Crown Enterprises.



Fineprint

Submissions

You can submit your contributions by sending them via email to

othermindsmagazine@gmx.net

Please send as plain text for all text contributions. For artwork and maps, please send the files as .PNG or .JPEG/JPG (**please no TIFF or GIF**) at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi and no greater than 600 dpi. If your file is too large to send by email (more than a couple of MB), then you can create an account on the Other Minds website

<http://www.otherminds.net>

and upload your contribution there. Then send us an email notifying us of your submission on the website.

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Other Minds Magazine is an unofficial fan-based publication (both online and sometimes in print) created for those who love to role play in J.R.R. Tolkien's world of Middle-earth (and beyond) using any game system they wish. This magazine provides original scholarly articles of interest to Tolkien enthusiasts – whether they are role playing gamers or not. There is no affiliation between the creators of this publication and any current or previous owners of the Tolkien copyrights, including but not limited to Sophisticated Games, Cubicle 7, Decipher, Mithril Miniatures, The Saul Zaentz Company, Tolkien Enterprises, the Tolkien Estate, New Line Cinema, or any other Tolkien license holders. This publication is 100% free and Other Minds Magazine does not accept any kind of financial reimbursement in any way. Online issues are available in PDF format at <http://www.otherminds.net>

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EDITORIAL:

SUMMER IN MIDDLE-EARTH

Even though it is summertime and many of you out there are on vacation, the OM team is sitting in its office, getting another Issue of Middle-earth goodness out!

This Issue sees a good mix of content: We have seven contributions – in addition to our regular columns – for your use and enjoyment.

A lot has happened in Middle-earth gaming during the six months since the publication Issue #20. See all the details in the *Inside Information* chapter of this Issue.

Now for the most important part of *Other Minds* – the content. Again we are happy to offer you a wide range of it. We have background lore, adventures, rule/creatures options and a review. In terms of mechanics, TOR is the focus, but AME and MERP get their share as well.

We start right off with a piece on lore. ***History of Mount Gundabad*** covers the history of this iconic place in the north of the Hithaeglin. Many years ago it appeared in *Other Hands*, Issue 28 and this is an updated version, incorporating more recent developments and insights. Adventure designed for beginning players.

Next comes a piece by veteran José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa. Many from the old guard may have an old beloved MERP character they want to use with a modern system. His ***MERP-TOR conversion rules*** give you the opportunity to do just this. It is a piece long overdue and I am really thankful this article.

From this we move on to another background article. Thematically it belongs to the North as well. ***History of Angmar*** covers all the key events and developments of the Witch-king's realm from its inception right through its destruction.

Following on its heels is the next instalment of our miniature series. ***Middle-earth in miniature: Orcs*** by our well-known José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa takes us to vast reaches of miniatures produced for the most iconic villain race in Middle-earth. It will greatly help you pick *yrch* for a game (or diorama) true to Tolkien's views on their outlook.

Then it is time for our first adventure which takes place near Bree. ***The Missing Kids of Bree*** by Andreas Erdmann takes the heroes on a quest to save some who have wandered astray children from a gruesome fate. It ties in with hooks presented in TOR's *Bree* supplement thus serves its purpose as a starter adventure perfectly.

This leads over to another instalment on new adversaries. ***Creatures of Middle-earth: Werewolves*** – another instalment in our series describing creatures and monsters for Middle-earth, offers new perspectives with a deep and solid lore background. It offers you the chance to introduce "classic" Werewolves with a good base in Middle-earth lore.

Last, but certainly not least (quite to the contrary - in my opinion a jewel) comes ***Clash of the Viglundings*** by David Cole which leads us into the Northern Vales of Anduin and the final episode of the Viglundings. Here the heroes have a chance to help decide the fate of an entire people. It also comes with rules to handle larger engagements in the TOR system.

That was the content for this Issue. In addition, our regular columns are updated as well to give you a current view of developments in the Middle-earth gaming world. Enjoy your read and see you all in Issue 22!

For the *Other Minds* team

Thomas Morwinsky
August 2019



"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 awakened into song.'"

- Ainulindalë (The Music of the Ainur)

The Silmarillion

by J.R.R. Tolkien

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THE ROAD GOES EVER ON

Certainly it reminds me [Frodo] very much of Bilbo in the last years, before he went away. He used often to say there was only one Road; that it was like a great river: its springs were at every doorstep, and every path was its tributary. "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door," he used to say. "You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to..."

—*The Lord of the Rings. Book I (A Shortcut to Mushrooms)*

There are many paths on the internet waiting to take you somewhere for Tolkien gaming. The vast reaches of the worldwide community harbour numerous roads and paths—some dangerous and some not—but it also has many havens of lore and respite where the weary traveller or loremaster seeking knowledge may find what he is looking for. In order to aid people on their journeys, this column of *Other Minds* (not exactly new, but with a new name) which will be a regular feature from now on offers a quick overview and pointer to potentially interesting Tolkien roleplaying-related websites.

For each site we give you a short description of its primary purpose and content to give you an overview for better judging how it might meet your needs.

The following list does not claim to be exhaustive or representative. In fact, I believe it is only a beginning. All the content of these pages is the responsibility of their owners. They are organised according to their primary gaming focus (e.g. TOR, MERP or whatever else) and, within each category, in alphabetical order.

This listing is intended to be “living”, i.e. constantly evolving and updated. So, **if you know any other sites that present information of value for Tolkien gamers, do contact us at othermindsmagazine@gmx.net so we can include it here for others to enjoy as well.**

The following abbreviations are used:

TOR—*The One Ring* by Cubicle 7 and Sophisticated Gams. The current licensed game from 2011 onwards.

AME—*Adventures in Middle-earth* by Cubicle 7 and Sophisticated Games. The content of TOR re-statted and adapted for D&D 5e

LotRRPG—*The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* by Decipher. Ran from 2002 to 2007.

MERP—*Middle-earth Roleplaying* by Iron Crown Enterprises. The licensee from 1982 to 1999.

TOR AND AME



Abenteuer in Mittelerde: a group for the german translation of AME. Has 72 members as of 03 August 2019.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/418209615569312/>

Adventures in Middle-earth (AME): Cubicle 7 publishes this new game based on the D&D 5th ed. Rules. It translates some core TOR features into this game that serves those who prefer classic D&D for their games. The content of the book so far is the same as in TOR, but with mechanics adjusted to the D&D system.

<http://cubicle7.co.uk/our-games/adventures-in-middle-earth/>

Adventures in Middle-earth (AME) RPGGeek forum: After the demise of the

Cubicle 7 forums this is the place where a some AME-related take place:

<http://rpggeek.com/forums/family/40055/adventures-middle-earth>

Common skills and cultural baseline: some light analysis on the distribution of skills within cultures from the first TOR core book (for link see next page):

<http://thechamberofmazarbuldnd.blogspot.com/2012/02/common-skills-cultural-baseline.html>

El Anillo Unico: A spanish fan-site dedicated to *The One Ring* by Cubicle 7 (see below for their presence).

<http://elanillounico.tumblr.com/>

UPDATED

Facebook TOR group: This has grown further and has now (August 2019) 825 members.

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/222560297824158/>

UPDATED

Facebook AME group: This is an unofficial group for *Adventures in Middle-earth (AME)*, the D&D 5th ed. Version of the TOR supplements. Currently there are 1,025 members (August 2019). <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1855668421386951/>

Glorelendil's online resources: Designed for maximum usability with the PDF's of the TOR supplements as well as an excellent online calculating tools.

<http://nameless-castle-5228.herokuapp.com/>

<http://thawing-shore-2005.herokuapp.com/>

<http://lit-oasis-7482.herokuapp.com/>

The Hall of Fire Webzine: The webzine has moved to a new location. Find it at

<https://mewe.com/group/5bd8b23b7f06b50b80681889>

UPDATED

TOR Loremaster Guild: This is a Facebook group providing information, knowledge and advice for LM's running (or planning to run) TOR campaigns. As of August 2019 687 members.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/TORLguild/learning_content/

UPDATED

The One Ring – Adventures over the Edge of the Wild (TOR): Cubicle 7 publishes this latest instalment of roleplaying games set in Middle-earth. They had great and very active forum as well, but this has been switched off in May (see 'Inside Information' for more details on this).

<http://cubicle7.co.uk/>

UPDATED

The One Ring – RPGGeek forums: A small but active community:

<https://rpggeek.com/forums/family/4395/one-ring>



Truant Spiele: A german publisher who does the german translation of AME:

<https://truant.com/>

LotRRPG

Darkshire: Some useful resources. <http://www.darkshire.net/jhkim/rpg/lordoftherings/>

Facebook LotRRPG sites: First an interest page. Not much to see, but you can "like" it.

The second one is a closed group about actual gaming, but now membership has decreased to 2 people. Both look pretty dead.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Lord-of-the-Rings-Roleplaying-Game/135039343195996>

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/jmezlotrrpgg/>

MERP

I.C.E. product listing: Contains a listing of MERP products for reference.

<http://www.icewebbring.com/ice-products>

UPDATED

Facebook MERP groups: There are several groups/sites dedicated to MERP here.

Middle-earth Roleplaying by Iron Crown Enterprises, now (August 2019) has 413 members and has been merged with the former *Middle-earth Roleplaying* group on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1614785935491947/>

MERP UK is a closed group (August 2019: 62 members) dealing with “untold stories” in Tolkien’s world. You can find it here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/231370666959142/>

UPDATED

It seems I overlooked this one named *MERP*. Nothing new here for years though. Membership has grown by 4 (to 16) since our last Issue.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/5519656692/>

UPDATED

Lindëfirion: A campaign log and resources for a mid-Third Age campaign set in the Northwest. It is now closed though and only an announcement on this subject remains.

<http://www.lindëfirion.net>

Loren Rosson’s Blog “The Busybody”: A blog with reviews (“retrospectives”) of a selection of old and long out-of-print MERP modules. The relevant section is named “Middle-earth Retrospectives” and can be found on the left side of the links section (you have to scroll down a bit). <http://lorenrosson.blogspot.com>

MERP printing edition reference: A great reference for all the editorial changes and different printings of MERP 1st edition. If you are interested in the various editions of MERP up to 1992 (i.e. 1st ed.), this one is for you! Online again at a new site.

http://www.icewebbring.com/MERP_Print_Ref/PrintingEditionReference.html

MERP Wikia: A Wiki-based collection of articles detailing the MERP canon and expanding it.

There is some info on other sources like the LotRRPG (depending on subject), but the focus is the published MERP canon and its expansion by fans. Highly valuable for everyone focussing on the MERP canon. http://merp.wikia.com/wiki/Middle-earth_Role_Playing_Wiki

SYSTEM-NEUTRAL OR MIXED

UPDATED

Fan-sourcebooks: This Yahoo group (formerly fan-modules) was founded in 2001 after the demise of *Other Hands*. Here you can find a great variety of fan-made material for a lot of topics. Game system and canon focus is MERP, though not exclusively.

<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules>

UPDATED

Facebook *Other Minds* group: We are happy to greet new fans, so don’t hesitate to swing by and become a member. Since last Issue, our membership has increased by 27 (total of 610 by 03 August 2019)! <http://www.facebook.com/groups/othermindsmagazine>

Gondica: Blog of former MERP author Anders Blixt with some of his Middle-earth stuff on it.

<https://gondica.wordpress.com/>

Iron Crown Enterprises: Publishers of HARP. Visit their website. The logo is downloaded through Wikipedia under Fair Use:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_\(logo\).png#/media/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_\(logo\).png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_(logo).png#/media/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_(logo).png)

<http://ironcrown.com/>

MERP.com: The site devoted to roleplaying in Middle-earth (though **not** exclusively or even primarily ICE's MERP as the title may suggest). It contains a vast vault of useful information and gaming material. <http://www.merp.com>



Facebook group on Middle-earth tabletop games (in german): A Facebook interest group for tabletop roleplaying games set in Middle-earth, independent of a specific system (115 members as of August 2019).
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/209367129217255/>



Mittelerde-Rollenspiel: A site devoted to tabletop roleplaying games set in Tolkien's Middle-earth for all german speakers exclusively.
<http://www.mittelerde-rollenspiel.de/>

TOLKIEN STUFF IN GENERAL

Ardalambion: One of the best sites dealing with Tolkien's languages. You may need to get used to the colour scheme, though. <http://folk.uib.no/hnohf/>

Compañía, La: A spanish site with a forum and dedicated to Tolkien in general (including books, movies and RPG's). Looks quite good, though due to my lack in Spanish I can't say much about it. <http://www.lacompania.net>



Deutsche Tolkienengesellschaft (German Tolkien Society): Similar to the Tolkien Society (see below), this site is about the furtherance of Tolkien scholarship and analysis in general. <http://www.tolkienengesellschaft.de/>

The Elvish Linguistic Fellowship: A Special Interest Group of the Mythopoetic Society, this (and its journals) is the place for you if you're looking for information and lore about Tolkien's invented languages. <http://www.elvish.org/>

The Encyclopedia of Arda: A good encyclopedic website about Tolkien's world.
<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda>



Gernot Katzer's History of Middle-earth site (German): A good site describing the essentials of the *History of Middle-earth* series. <http://gernot-katzers-spice-pages.com/tolkien/home.html>

Grey Havens, The: One of the oldest reference sites on the web that is still in business.
<http://tolkien.cro.net/>

Tolkienforum (German): A good forum covering all aspects of Tolkien lore and fandom.
<http://www.tolkienforum.de>

Tolkien Forum, The (English): A good English forum on many aspects of Tolkien
<http://www.thetolkienforum.com/>

Tolkien Gateway: A good wiki site with an encyclopedia on many topics about Tolkien and Middle-earth http://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Main_Page

Tolkien Society: The site for everyone interested in the more scholarly and academic treatment of all things Tolkien. <http://www.tolkiensociety.org/>

Wikipedia Portal "Middle-earth": Even Wikipedia has a whole section dedicated to Tolkien and his myth. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Middle-earth>

ARTWORK

- IN THIS ISSUE** **Aegeri:** Find her colourful and inspirational art at:
<https://www.deviantart.com/aegeri>
- IN THIS ISSUE** **Antti Autio:** See his fascinating artwork at <http://aautio.deviantart.com>.
- IN THIS ISSUE** **Sergio Artigas (Artigas):** You can browse through his inspiring art in deviantart.
<http://artigas.deviantart.com/>
- IN THIS ISSUE** **Onur Bakar:** Find more of his art on <http://bakarov.deviantart.com/>
- Steve Bellshaw (Seraph777):** Explore his great characters here:
<https://www.deviantart.com/seraph777>
- Matej Cadil:** Found on deviantart at <https://www.deviantart.com/matejcadil>
- Nacho Fernandez Castro:** Visit his site on <http://www.nachocastro.es/>
- Thomas Cole:** Famous american romantic painter. See
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Cole
- Ralph Damiani (ralphdamiani):** You can find him and his magnificent art here
<https://www.ralphdamiani.com/>
- Liz Danforth:** The famous artists who skillfully illustrated numerous MERP books. You can find her Patreon page (preferred, as it is up-to-date) at
<https://www.patreon.com/LizDanforth> and her webpage (outdated) at
<http://www.lizdanforth.com/>
- Jenny Dolfen (Goldseven):** A great german artist who focuses on the Eldar of the First Age. Her watercolour images are fantastic. You can also buy prints in several versions and sizes as well as originals. <https://goldseven.wordpress.com/> or
<https://www.patreon.com/jennydolfen>
- Nacho Fernandez Castro (NachoCastro):** See his page at
<http://nachocastro.deviantart.com/>
- Katherine Carina Chmiel-Gugulska (Kasiopeia):** Found on
<https://www.facebook.com/katarzyna.chmielgugulska>
- IN THIS ISSUE** **Anke Eißmann:** She is one the greatest Tolkien illustrators. Check her art out at
<http://www.anke.edoras-art.de>
- IN THIS ISSUE** **Olanda Fang-Surdenas (Wynahiros):** See her art on <http://wynahiros.deviantart.com>
- IN THIS ISSUE** **Wouter Florusse (woutart):** Check out his page on <http://woutart.deviantart.com/>
- IN THIS ISSUE** **Caspar David Friedrich:** Famous romantic painter. See the Wikipedia page for examples of his work: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspar_David_Friedrich
- Raymond E. Gaustadness (shockbolt):** You can find his fine work on
<http://www.digitalartwork.no/>
- Olga G (steamey):** Her beautiful art can be found at <http://steamey.deviantart.com/>
- IN THIS ISSUE** **Donato Giancola:** Find more from him at <https://donatoarts.com/online-store/secure-store/Middle-earth-Journeys-in-Myth-and-Legend-p133467821>
- Daniel Govar:** A great artist whose website can be found at <http://danielgovar.com>.
- IN THIS ISSUE** **Gin Hardiarso:** He focusses on a theme popular in Fantasy - Warrior Women. He does it, however, unusually well since his subjects are not bikini-armoured amazons, but realistic heroines. Check his work out under <https://gambargin.deviantart.com/>

John Hodgson: The primary artist and artistic director for *The One Ring*. It's no wonder that the game is so well received (beside the good rules) if you look at his art:
<http://www.jonhodgsondesign.com> and his Patreon page
<https://www.patreon.com/jonhodgsonmaps>

IN THIS ISSUE **John Howe:** The second of the great Tolkien artists that allowed the use of his artwork within our pages. Check out his great index. <http://www.john-howe.com/>

Thomas Jedrusek: One of the illustrators of *The One Ring*. See his page at
<http://www.morano.pl/>

Milek Jakubiec (EthicallyChallenged): Thanks for giving permission to use your work! See more at <http://ethicallychallenged.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE **Pierre Joubert:** A well-known illustrator of youths' books. See his official page (in french) at <http://www.pierre-joubert.org/>

IN THIS ISSUE **Jowita:** Her exceptional work focuses on the darker themes of Middle-earth. Find it at <https://www.deviantart.com/dead01>

Pawel Kardis (KardisArt): Meet his stunning work under
<https://www.deviantart.com/kardisart>

IN THIS ISSUE **Liiga Klavina (LiigaKlavina):** Check out her awesome art at
<https://www.deviantart.com/liigaklavina>

Joona Kujanen (Tulikoura): Find his amazing art at <http://tulikoura.deviantart.com/>

Elena Kukanova: Check it out on <http://ekukanova.deviantart.com/>

Olga Kukhtenkova: You can find her work on the Tolkien Gateway
<http://fan.theonering.net/~rolozo/cgi-bin/rolozo.cgi/collection/kukhtenkova>

Julien Labit (Ilanthar): An inspiring artist whose work can be found under
<https://ilanthar.jimdo.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE **J. Lazarus (JlazarusEB):** Find him and his numerous and diverse historic warriors under
<https://jlazaruseb.deviantart.com/>

Alan Lee: The third of the famous Tolkien artists.
<https://www.facebook.com/alan.lee.5496>

Carl-Friedrich Lessing: A famous romantic painter. See his Wikipedia article at
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Friedrich_Lessing

IN THIS ISSUE **Angus McBride:** The famous illustrator of numerous historical books as well as MERP. The Facebook page of his estate can be found under
<https://www.facebook.com/mcbrideangus/>

IN THIS ISSUE **Turner Mohan:** Find out more of his excellent work at <http://www.mohan-art.com>.

My Clipart Store: The webstore holds many useful designs - one of them being our new background.
https://www.etsy.com/de/shop/MyClipArtStore?section_id=11138275

Ted Nasmith: The official site of renowned Tolkien artist Ted Nasmith, who was so kind in allowing us to use so much of his artwork within *Other Minds*. For more information, see
<http://www.tednasmith.com/>

Nolanos: find here fine artwork on Deviantart:
<https://www.deviantart.com/nolanos>

Gabriel Oliveira: Found at <http://think0.deviantart.com/>



Abe Papakhian: Check out his artwork at <http://abepapakhian.deviantart.com>.

Jereme Peabody (jjpeabody): Find more of this this skilled artist at <http://jjpeabody.deviantart.com>

Pegasusandco: Very well worth a look. <http://pegasusandco.deviantart.com/>

Daniel Pilla: Great stuff. See it at <http://danpilla.deviantart.com/>

Vincent Pompetti: See his celtic-focussed artwork on Deviantart: <https://www.deviantart.com/vincentpompetti>

IN THIS ISSUE

Jan Pospisil (merlkir): One of our “old” artists, whose images we have used already in past issues. Check him out at <http://merlkir.deviantart.com>

IN THIS ISSUE

Bunny Powell: The artist who drew the map for The Black Arrow adventure in this Issue.

IN THIS ISSUE

Peter Xavier Price (peet): See him at www.facebook.com/peterxavierprice

Rolozo: Among the oldest artwork-related sites around <http://fan.theonering.net/~rolozo/cgi-bin/rolozo.cgi/news>

Carlos Gordo Sacristán: A spanish artist, unfortunately by now I have no homepage for him.

Tara Rueping: Find her great work on <http://www.trueping.com>

Sampsa Rydman: He has published fantastic maps and a great campaign, especially maps. See him at <http://www.lindefirion.net/>

John Emanuel Shannon (jeshannon): Find his great artwork on devianart and his page: <http://www.deviantart.com/jeshannon/> and <http://www.jeshannon.com>

IN THIS ISSUE

Matthew Stewart: This talented artist’s work can be found on the following webpage: <http://www.matthew-stewart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Ari Suonpää: Please visit his beautiful art at <https://www.facebook.com/artofarisuonpaa>

Danik Tomy: Another great artist that can be found at deviantart. His section is at <http://danikyaroslavtomy.deviantart.com>.

Angels T.I. (Shyangell): A visit to her very enjoyable page is always worth it. See more at <http://shyangell.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Tuuliky: As a regular OM reader, you will know her great work already. It may be found at <http://tuuliky.deviantart.com>.

Maciej Zagorski: An artists specialising in maps. Find more at <https://www.patreon.com/user?u=2863325>



OTHER STUFF THAT MIGHT BE INTERESTING FOR ROLEPLAYING IN MIDDLE-EARTH

Facebook “Fans of Mithril Miniatures” group: Lots of photos of painted minis plus some awesome dioramas. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/107518272188/>

Elroi’s Mithril: The blog of a highly talented and skilled painter of miniatures. Please make sure you don’t miss out his marvellous versions of Mithril Miniatures’ figurines. Please be aware that this is in Spanish, but the images speak for themselves.
<http://paintingmithrils.blogspot.com/>

NEW **Forge of Doom:** A new miniature company - run by our veteran contributor José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa. Find out more on the next page and his weblink:
<https://forgeofdoom.com/>

Frothers Unite miniature forum: It is related to miniatures for sure!
<http://dearonyblair.blogspot.com.es/>

Games Workshop: If you are interested in miniatures made according to the movie design, then the Games Workshop miniature line (for skirmish-level tabletop wargaming) is for you.
<http://www.games-workshop.com>

Many Mithril Pages: A site run by fans of Mithril Miniatures (see next entry). Here you can find extensive information and fan support for both current and out-of-stock minis.
<http://mmp.faerylands.eu/index.php>

Mithril Miniatures: They have been producing Middle-earth figurines since 1988; thus being one of the oldest still in business. They now have a general line (though diminished in volume compared to earlier times; in fact practically non-existing anymore) and an exclusive fellowship one which anyone can buy too, but the Fellowship members may vote on the next figures to be made. They also have a board, which is mostly miniatures-centred but some general Middle earth related information can be found as well. Recently they have been refurbishing their website and the selection of minis seems to have narrowed down even further. They also have started to switch to 3D-printing for modelling, but as they show CGI of these models rather than the final metal figures, the quality and outlook of these cannot be judged from the website.
<http://www.mithril.ie>
Forum: <http://mithrilfigures.proboards19.com/index.cgi>

Wargames Terrain: Looking for the latest tabletop miniature wargaming and roleplaying news? Make sure to check out the Wargame News and Terrain Blog which is daily covering new miniatures, tabletop scenery and wargame rules from companies worldwide. Venture into the magnificent world of tabletop miniature wargaming and engage in fantasy, science fiction and historical warfare on your miniature tabletop battlefield. Check them out at
<http://wargameterrain.blogspot.com> and Twitter [@wnt_news](https://twitter.com/wnt_news)

Check the full review of the soon to be released Northstar Miniatures plastic Dwarf Infantry and prepare to field epic Tolkienesque and folkloric inspired dwarf armies and roleplaying dwarf adventurers soon.
http://wargameterrain.blogspot.com/2017/04/northstar-miniatures-plastic-fantasy_30.html

Facebook “Wargaming in Middle-earth” group: Lots of photos of painted minis with no default manufacturer or style. In a way, it mirrors *Other Minds*’ approach; only in the field of miniatures.
https://www.facebook.com/groups/151243738922969/?hc_location=group

INSIDE INFORMATION

SECOND EDITION OF *THE ONE RING* ANNOUNCED.

On 17 May Cubicle 7 announced a Second edition of *The One Ring*. You can the official announcement [here](#). Depending on your method of count, it may also be a Third Edition, given that the first one was a slipcase, while the second a book with updated content. But whatever how it is viewed, the upcoming new edition will be a significantly greater change, as C7 announced also some rule changes (though it shall remain compatible with the material hitherto published).

Cubicle 7 is regularly publishing previews of artwork related to this new edition – e.g. on [their Facebook site](#). At the time though, their new edition of *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* seems to be the focus of publications.

HALL OF FIRE NEW ISSUE AND HOME (AGAIN)

In March 2019, a new Issue (Vol. 2, Issue 5) of *The Hall of Fire* webzine has been published. Simultaneously, its location has moved to a new site. Now it can be found [here](#) at MeWe. You have to register to join the group and download the Issues (i.e. it is no longer openly available).

NEW ARTIST: AECERI

Another talented Tolkien artist has permitted us to use her work for illustrative purposes here in Other Minds. Her evocative art can be found on [her deviantart page](#), and we highly recommend checking it out!

NEW ARTIST: DONATO GIANCOLA

We are proud to feature artist Donato Giancola in our pages. He produces outstanding artwork, both for Middle-earth and other settings

and has just published a new book with his art. Check [his page and shop out here](#).

Find out more on the next page!

NEW ARTIST: JOWITA (DEAD01)

The third new artist in this Issue is Jowita, whose art focuses on the darker aspects of Middle-earth and its inhabitants. This impressive art can be found on [her deviantart page](#) and is definitely worth a visit!

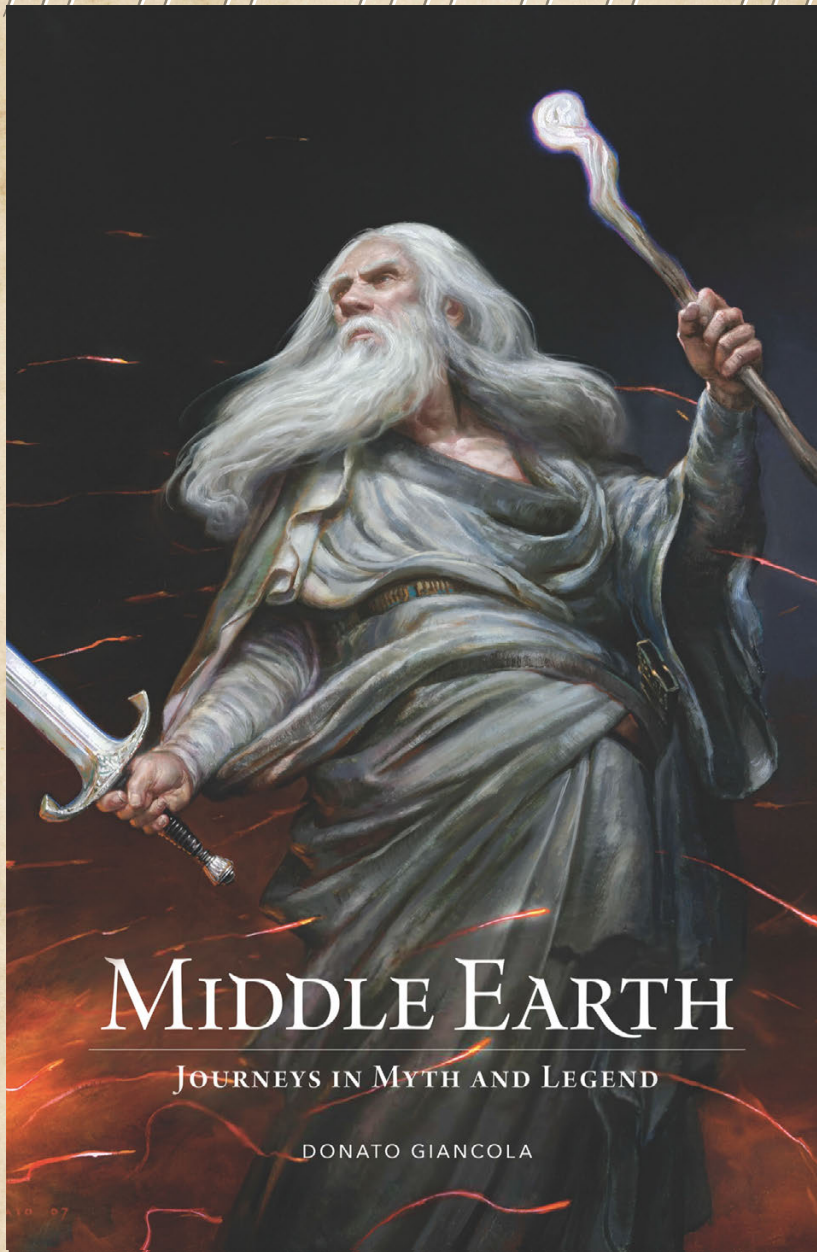
NEWS FROM OVER THE MOUNTAINS

José Enrique usually discusses updates on previously discussed topics in his articles on miniatures. Typically, this includes a new company making cool hobbits miniatures, or a scale reference pic of some elusive Dwarf miniature he finally managed to get hold of. This time however, it is a bit different.

Because he started his own miniature company called **Forge of Doom**. The first line of miniatures is more “Sword and Sorcery” themed (though if things work out, he’ll start a second line of Dark Ages Fantasy miniatures compatible with our favourite setting). However, the current line has some miniatures that could work nicely as Middle-earth types – Haradrim to be more precise. Check-out the full catalogue at <https://forgeofdoom.com/>.



© José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa



Nearly 200 stunningly realistic paintings and drawings bring the greatest fantasy epic of all time to life in this new book. Classical realism unites with contemporary storytelling as artist Donato Giancola explores the mythic grandeur and the iconic characters of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* saga.

Donato has made it his life's work to translate Tolkien's words into compelling visuals, with gorgeous oil paintings and drawings reminiscent of Rubens and Caravaggio. His interpretations of Middle-earth span his entire career - from early fan art, to private commissions, to trading card art, to the 2001 edition of the graphic novel adaptation of *The Hobbit* - all collected in this massive 200 page compendium, a must-have for collectors of Tolkien and fantasy.

"Amazing work from an astounding talent."
- George R.R. Martin

"There's more to Donato Giancola's art than just a pretty face. Underneath the incredibly meticulous surface of his paintings is concealed a love of perspective and form, an intimate understanding of the human body, a historian's knowledge of costume and armour, an infallible sense of implicit narrative, visual storytelling and mythical history. It's just that you're so rapt gazing at all the mind-blowingly pretty bits that you tend to miss it. Look again. There's a lot more to see."
- John Howe



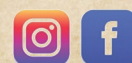
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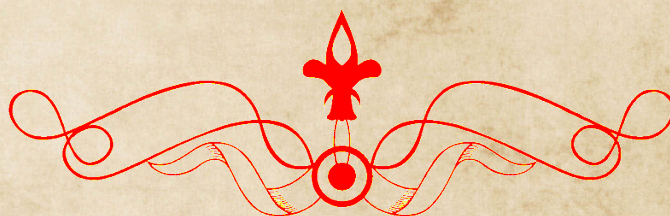
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THE TOLKIEN EMAIL LIST

The eldest of the lists.

This Tolkien discussion group has existed since the
First Age before the world was made round.....

Join and contribute.

Our list has existed since the early 1990s with many
members who have been here for years beyond count....

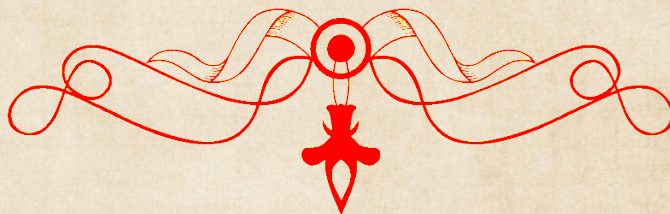
Now we have moved to Google and have become a
private Google Group.

To request to subscribe to this group, please visit
the following page:

http://groups.google.com/group/tolkien_list/subscribe

or contact rossiele@yahoo.com

(Elena Rossi, ½ Listowner)



THE HISTORY OF MOUNT GUNDABAD

Thomas Morwinsky
(tolwen@gmx.de)

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supplementary
stuff



All villains need a lair - and orcs as Middle earth's most numerous and signatory baddies need a proper one too. None embodies the dark power and cruel threat of these creatures better as the infamous Mount Gundabad from whence Bolg sallied forth to claim Erebor and Smaug's hoard.

But things are not always that easy and what you would expect at first glance. Mount Gundabad's history is much more complex than being merely an oversized Goblin-lair.

This article delves deeper into these historical topics rather than resources for immediate gaming.

INTRODUCTION

This article is the update to a previous version that appeared in *Other Hands* #28¹. It incorporates information and developments that have appeared in various articles in *Other Minds* in the previous years. All references cited are shown in footnotes and are added as an alphabetical list at the end of this article.

Its goal is to rectify some chronological and historical discrepancies between Tolkien's writings - most notably the twelfth volume of the History of Middle-earth series: *The Peoples of Middle-earth* - and MERP's *Mount Gundabad*² campaign module. In addition, Jeff Erwin's short text *The Fall of Carn Dûm* also gave me some key inspiration. By now, TOR unfortunately does not provide any dedicated development on this site. The closest you get here is in *Ruins of the North* and *Rivendell*³, but the material is intended for immediate gaming in the Late Third Age and lacks background information - especially on earlier time periods. Of course this offers the opportunity to design some original material to supplement and/or modify the existing official material.

This text also covers events related to but not directly concerning Mount Gundabad or the original module.

¹ Morwinsky, T. 2000. The History of Mount Gundabad. *Other Hands*, Issue 28, page 32 ff.

² Erwin, J. 1999. *The Fall of Carn Dûm* [Online]. Other Hands. Available:
<https://www.otherminds.net/downloads/supplemental-files/the-fall-of-carn-dum-2019-04-22.pdf/>
[Accessed Supplement].

³ Dials, A., Brown, J. R., Harrison, R., et al. 2014. *Ruins of the North*, Cambridge & Oxford, Sophisticated Games Ltd. & Cubicle 7 Entertainment. and Nepitello, F., Ivey, S., Kenrick, A., et al. 2014. *Rivendell*, Cambridge & Oxford, Sophisticated Games Ltd. & Cubicle 7 Entertainment.

SOURCES

In MERP's campaign module *Mount Gundabad*¹ (MG) from 1989, Carl Willner proposes a continual orcish habitation of Mount Gundabad since the end of the First Age. While being suitable for the time, Christopher Tolkien's publication of the *History of Middle-earth* volumes has provided us with much additional information on many lore topics of Middle-earth – including some on Mount Gundabad. Of special importance for Mount Gundabad is the twelfth volume, *The Peoples of Middle-earth* (PoME; published 1996). It gives us great insights about the Dwarves of Durin's folk and their relations with the Northmen from the First throughout the Third Age. Here we learn that Mount Gundabad was the Place of Awakening for Durin and therefore sacred to his people. Moreover it tells us that the Orcs occupied it only later, thereby founding the special enmity of the dwarves of Khazad-dûm with the orcs. It seems that on two occasions the orcs controlled the Longbeards' awakening place in the Second Age:

Gundabad was re-taken [during the course of the War of Sauron with the Elves], the Ered Mithrin infested and the communication between Moria and the Iron Hills for a time cut off.

—*The Peoples of Middle-earth.
Of Dwarves and Men
(my emphasis)*

The fact that Gundabad was retaken by orcs around S.A. 1700 implies that it was in their possession at least once before. And there is one chronological evidence for the further historical development:

Mount Gundabad [...] and its occupation in the Third Age by the Orks of Sauron [...]

—*The Peoples of Middle-earth.
Of Dwarves and Men (my emphasis)*

This passage explicitly states that the orcs who began the continuous orcish occupation in the Third Age were in the service of Sauron, obviously after Sauron's re-emergence around TA 1000. Additionally Appendix B of the *Lord of the Rings* tells us:

c. TA 1300 – Evil things begin to multiply again. Orcs increase in the Misty Mountains and attack the Dwarves.

—*The Lord of the Rings.
Appendix B*

This reference combined with the one from *The Peoples of Middle-earth* above and the general development in the northern parts of the Misty Mountains led me to the decision to coordinate the lasting capture of Mount Gundabad with the founding of Angmar.

We also learn that

[...] the Dwarves of different kindreds were in communication, and in the early ages often held assemblies of delegates at Mount Gundabad.

—*The Peoples of Middle-earth.
Of Dwarves and Men (my emphasis)*

Since the Dwarves awoke in the First Age, the plural "ages" implies that they held Gundabad in the First and Second Age (otherwise there would be no need for a plural). Accordingly Mount Gundabad is likely to have been in dwarven hands for nearly the whole of the First and Second Age.

The two references mentioned above indicate that the site was only occupied for longer periods by orcs during the Third Age. Earlier occupations must have been brief (relatively speaking). This influenced my decision to let the orcs rule Mount Gundabad only a total of about 320 years in the First and Second Age combined (although this occupation had far-flung consequences—see the timeline below).

In this context the founding of the orc stronghold at Goblin-gate is placed in the Second Age, in the wake of Sauron's capture of Mount Gundabad. In *Unfinished Tales* we learn in

¹ Willner, C. 1989. *Mount Gundabad*, Charlottesville, VA, Iron Crown Enterprises.



the story about the disaster at the Gladden Fields that the main body of orcs that ambushed Isildur in TA 2 were “the Orcs of the Mountains”. Goblin-gate fills the role as the main orcish base in the Misty Mountains during those times (when the *yrch* were expelled from Gundabad) quite well.

Additionally, MERP’s statement that Mount Gundabad was occupied for a time by Dwarves of Thelór’s tribe¹ (found in *Lords of Middle-earth, Vol. III* - LoME III as well as in MG and the fifth dwarven tribe according to LoME III), should be corrected in light of the information provided by PoME. LoME III suggests that all dwarven fathers awoke in Khazad-dûm (cf. LoME III p. 43), a view that must be corrected according to the information provided by PoME. Instead the fathers awoke in four, sun-dered places:

The first [the awakening place of the Firebeards and Broadbeams - the tribes of Nogrod and Belegost] had been in the north of the Ered Lindon [...] the second [awakening place of Durin of Khazad-dûm] had been Mount Gundabad [...] The other two places were eastward, at distances as great or greater than that between the Blue Mountains and Mount Gundabad: the arising of the Ironfists and Stiffbeards, and that of the Blacklocks and Stonefoots.”

—The Peoples of Middle-earth.
Of Dwarves and Men

This statement makes it clear that the places of awakening for the four remaining tribes must be placed somewhere in the east of Middle earth (and at a roughly similar latitude), preferably near to their later mansions because [continued next column]



¹ Colburn, R. M., Fenlon, P. C., Ruemmler, J. D., et al. 1989. *Lords of Middle-earth Vol. III: Hobbits, Dwarves, Ents, Orcs & Trolls*, Charlottesville, VA, Iron Crown Enterprises. and Willner, C. 1989. *Mount Gundabad*, Charlottesville, VA, Iron Crown Enterprises.

[...] they [the dwarves] were loth to migrate and make permanent dwellings or ‘mansions’ far from their original homes, except under great pressure from enemies or after some catastrophe such as the ruin of Beleriand [...]

—The Peoples of Middle-earth.
Of Dwarves and Men

The latter statement gives the GM flexibility to place dwarven mansions at some distance from their original homes while being true to Tolkien (though the cause for such migrations has to be great indeed). This topic has already been discussed in great depth – together with suggestions for the placement of these mansions – in *A Brief History of the Dwarven Mansions* and *Amending “A Brief History of the Dwarven Mansions”*².

Summing it up, the element of “Thelór’s tribe” residing in Gundabad is not compatible with Tolkien’s information on the matter. Some kind of embassies from other dwarven tribes are likely to be present here, but there is no evidence for any other than Durin’s tribe living here in significant numbers.

The name ‘Gundabad’ itself likely is of Khuzdul origin:

The first [Place of Awakening] had been in the north of the Ered Lindon, the second had been Mount Gundabad (in origin a Khuzdul name), which was therefore revered by the Dwarves, [...]

—The Peoples of Middle-earth.
Of Dwarves and Men

All these insights make it necessary to thoroughly update the history of Mount Gundabad and environs presented by Carl Willner. Despite all this criticism, he still presented a rich and colourful image of the orcs there – and in this respect *Mount Gundabad* still is a very good base for further development.

² Morwinsky, T. 2008. *A Brief History of the Dwarven Mansions*. *Other Minds*, Issue 4, page 11 ff. and Amending “A Brief History of the Dwarven Mansions”. *Other Minds*, Issue 5, page 25 ff.



CHRONOLOGY OF MOUNT GUNDABAD

The First Age

On the site of Durin's awakening the First House of the Naugrim builds a city to remind them of the revered events that have taken place here. It is the first major settlement of Durin and his house. After a couple of years the bulk of the tribe moves southward to the site where Durin chose to make his permanent home. This settlement is later called Khazad-dûm, Hadhodrond in the Grey-elven tongue. Gundabad retains only a fraction of his former population, but it continues to be counted as the most sacred place of the Longbeards (Durin's House) and retains its exalted status regardless of its economic power or number of people living there.

In terms of practical use the city is an important link between the capital at Khazad-dûm and the outlying mining outposts in the North. In this context it is important to keep in mind that Erebor, the Grey Mountains and the Emyr Engrin were not settled (as places to live in) by the Dwarves until late in the Third Age. Therefore Gundabad is the most northerly dwarven city in the area and it flourishes despite its lower population compared to other dwarven mansions.

The following timeline begins with the orkish involvement in the area. Before that, it was an exclusively dwarven site.

Year	Event(s)
520	After the defeat of his last remaining enemy kingdom (Gondolin), Morgoth turns his thoughts on securing a stronghold for the future destruction of all other enemies of his domination. He deems Gundabad a prime candidate, which opens a road from the Northwest into Rhovanion and beyond. He entrusts his most capable underlings with the mission.
527	After seven years of preparation his forces are ready and march against the dwarven citadel. As a means of securing the place after its capture, the Evil One's general has with him the Ulûkai, an evil artefact crafted by Morgoth and possessing some of his foul spirit.
529	In the second year of the campaign, the Dwarves are decisively defeated and Mount Gundabad is taken. The Naugrim however are able to conceal and seal their sacred halls before the orcs breach the defences. Soon after the capture, construction of the dungeon complex with the Chamber of the Ulûkai begins.
535	The Chamber of the Ulûkai is finished. Paranoid by his obsession of it, Mukark kills all who share knowledge about it, keeping it his personal secret.
541	The orkish chieftain Mukarg is made ruler of Mount Gundabad when the majority of the forces are withdrawn to Thangorodrim to halt the invasion of the Host of Valinor in Beleriand. With skill he is able to ward off any dwarven attempts to re-conquer the city.

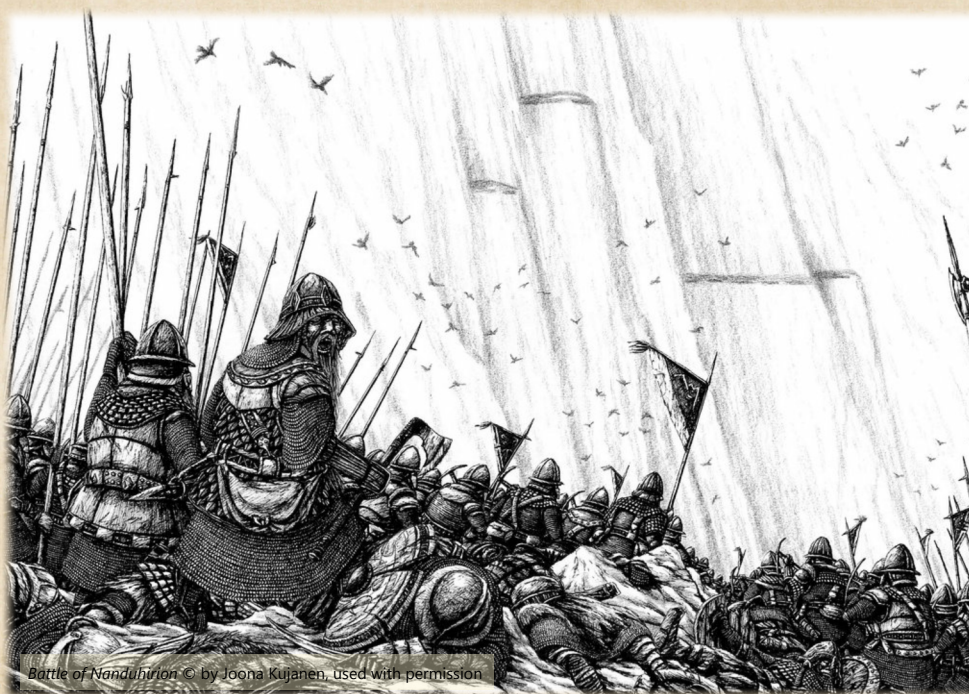
The Seven Houses of the Khazad © by Sergio Artigas, used with permission



The Second Age

Year	Event(s)
c. 40	Knowledge of the Ulûkai is lost with the violent death of Mukarg and his orcs when the Dwarves re-take their city. It does however act as a subtle attractor for evil creatures. Consequently, trouble with them never really ceases for the Dwarves of Mount Gundabad in the future.
c. 10-250	The Dwarves have to fight great numbers of fleeing orcs from the remnants of Morgoth's armies. Hereby they make alliance with local mannish groups. The ferocity and persistence of the orcish attacks upon this region is partially caused by the influence of the Ulûkai. After the defeat of the Orcs the region is safe again but the power of the Ulûkai is an underlying menace waiting for its reactivation at the right moment.
c. 250-1693	The alliance of Durin's Folk and their Northman allies flourish. The Hithaegllir south to Lorinand, the Ered Mithrin, Erebor and Eryn Engrin are Dwarf-territory, whereas all adjacent lands (Vales of the Anduin, lands south of the Ered Mithrin and west of the Eryn Engrin) are considered lands of their mannish allies. The Men provide foodstuffs, husbandry, animals and mounted warriors while the Dwarves contribute their marvellous works of craftsmanship, finished products and the finest heavy infantry. The relationship sometimes even grows into friendship between the two people.
1693	The War of Sauron and the Elves begins and Sauron dispatches a considerable force of orcs to secure the northern routes over the Misty Mountains. Leader of this host is the brilliant orcish general Skorg. The skill of Skorg combined with a few sorcerers dispatched from Sauron soon give him complete control of his forces and forms the mass of goblins into a quite capable and effective fighting machine. The relative vicinity of Sauron wearing the One Ring further motivates the Orcs to an unheard-of discipline. Seeing the strength of the Northman cavalry Skorg is also given the service of a sizable force of mannish cavalry from territories under Sauron's control. Prepared in this manner he marches to battle with the Dwarf-Northman alliance. The latter have mustered their forces as well and meet their foes in the field rather than waiting for them to come and forsaking the initiative.
1694	The first year of the campaign sees only a few minor clashes while both sides try to outmanoeuvre the other. The only major engagement is inconclusive and doesn't change the overall situation.
1695	Sauron invades Eregion. Gil-galad sends Elrond to Eregion. In the North the war becomes a stalemate. Sauron's forces, headquartered in the eastern Eryn Engrin wait for their chance to crush the well-organized defence.
1696	Skorg recognizes the importance of better intelligence and sends out scouts to prepare for the great assault he knows will come. The whole year passes with the preparations.
1697	Finally Sauron is able to decisively breach the elven defence in Eriador. Eregion is laid to waste. Celebrimbor slain. Elrond's army is caught by Sauron's forces and in danger of being overwhelmed. Just in this moment a dwarven army from Khazad-dûm accompanied by Elves from Lorinand fall upon Sauron's rear. Elrond perceives his chance and is able to extricate his forces from Sauron's encirclement (although with heavy losses). Furious, Sauron turns towards the Dwarves and defeats them in a few minor engagements. Their host is able to retreat to Khazad-dûm in good order with only minimal losses. The gates of Moria are shut. Elrond retreats with remnants of the Noldor and founds the refuge of Imladris. To enable this attack upon Sauron's army Durin III of Khazad-dûm is forced to thin out his forces in the North. Skorg perceives his chance and attacks with great strength. Because of his thorough planning, treachery and sheer numbers he is able to overwhelm the defenders in a great battle at the Narrows between Greenwood and the Ered Mithrin. The remaining Dwarves retreat to the main citadel at Mount Gundabad with the remnants of their allies' forces while the remaining Northmen (mostly the old, women and children) are scattered throughout the land. The siege of Gundabad is begun.
1699	In the west Sauron overruns Eriador. At Mount Gundabad Skorg is able to gain access into the city by means of a secret passage revealed by a traitor (the name of this Dwarf is cursed among the Naugrim and not known to other races). The valiant defenders are slain to the man. The holy halls of the Naugrim are so well protected by enchantments and clever craftsmanship that the orcs are unable to enter them. These protective measures were undertaken for just this worst case when the war began. Skorg appoints himself as Ruler of the North. The Ered Mithrin and Hithaegllir are secured by the founding of Orc-strongholds along all strategic locations. The most prominent of these new orc settlements is Goblin-gate at the High Pass above Imladris.
1700	Tar-Minastir sends a great navy from Númenor to Lindon. Sauron is defeated at the Lune and then again at Sarn Ford and Tharbad.

Year	Event(s)
1701	Sauron is driven out of Eriador: The Westlands have peace for a long while. The orcs still rule in Mount Gundabad however. Skorg is able to ward off all dwarven counterattacks. The reason behind this is simple: Mount Gundabad being the only major conquest not lost after Sauron's defeat in Eriador is strengthened by the Dark Lord with what forces are left at his disposal. The ancient dwarven alliance with the Northmen is gone beyond revival with the destruction of most mannish settlements and the killing of their inhabitants. This situation keeps the Dwarves constantly plotting for revenge against the goblins. They start reconnaissance missions instead of fruitless assaults. Eventually the Dwarves are able to establish communication with slaves of the Goblin King. This gives them good intelligence of the situation in Mount Gundabad.
1750	In order to show his power Skorg orders the building of a new gate as the main entrance into Mount Gundabad. This is later known as the Drake Gate. The old dwarven entrance is abandoned.
1930	Skorg dies. He is the only orcish ruler of Mount Gundabad to die non-violently. After his death he is entombed in a hidden dungeon complex (by chance near to that of the still lost Ulûkai). Constant power struggles over his succession weaken the Orcs' strength.
1932	Perceiving their chance, Durin's tribe assembles his forces and an army from Khazad-dûm marches northward, surprises the Orcs and is able to breach the defences by the intelligence gathered about the orcish installations in the past and aided by a revolt of the orcs' slaves. The remnants of the Orcish population retreat to the surviving orc-holds in the Ered Mithrin and wait for a chance to re-claim Mount Gundabad. The Crypt of Skorg remains undetected however. Once again the site of Awakening of the Longbeards is in dwarven hands. The orcish infestation of the Hithaeglin and Ered Mithrin cannot be removed completely though. And there is a price to this victory: As we are told in the Silmarillion the Seven Rings of the Dwarves have a malevolent influence on their wearers (though not according to Sauron's original intentions). This is also true for Durin's Ring. The power and wealth of Khazad-dûm reaches unheard-of heights in this time but the Naugrim become more jealous and reclusive. Additionally their number begins to dwindle. Slowly at first but it is felt nonetheless. From that time onward Mount Gundabad is still revered as a sacred site but the number of its inhabitants remains relatively small because of the King's decision to use his resources primarily otherwise (clearly an effect of Durin's ring). They remain vigilant however and are able to repulse any attacks the orcs make. The new orcish installations (like the Drake Gate) are sealed and/or demolished as far as possible to re-establish the original dwarven character of the place. The rest of the Second Age Mount Gundabad remains in dwarven hands though the influence of Durin's Ring in Moria and the Ulûkai in Gundabad slowly erodes the Naugrim's strength in Gundabad over the years and enables the orcs to hold other settlements (e.g. like Goblin-gate). There are still meetings of delegations of all the dwarven tribes in Gundabad, though less frequently than in past times.
3429-3441	The War of the Last Alliance weakens the orcish strength in the northern mountains seriously. Their remaining elite warriors are killed at the disaster of the Gladden Fields. The northern lands are free from the orc menace for long years although they cannot be evicted totally from the Mountains. The power of Durin's House is also weakened through the losses of war (even though they did not participate with their full force).



Battle of Nanduhirion © by Joona Kuusela, used with permission

The Third Age

Year	Event(s)
1-1200	With the power of Arnor stagnating (and even waning after the split of the kingdom), Gondor being focused on the sea and its own empire and the Dwarves' numbers dwindling, Durin's House becomes ever more centred at Moria. Mount Gundabad is still revered however and attracts constant stream of pilgrims but ever fewer Dwarves are willing to live there (certainly because of the underlying evil influences already mentioned).
since c. 1100	Due to the waning of the people there, most of the outer structures in Gundabad are sealed to compensate for the lessening numbers of warders available. The rising power of Goblin-gate makes communication with Moria much more dangerous for the inhabitants of Mount Gundabad.
Since c. 1250	Orcs begin to multiply again and attack the Meisawi settlements in the North.
spring 1267	A capable Goblin-king in the person of Balcog emerges in the Ered Mithrin, comparable even to Skorg. Having amassed a great number of orcish warriors (and supported by the Nazgûl-lord on his quest to found the realm of Angmar) he attacks Mount Gundabad in force during the summer but is unable to take it immediately. He succeeds though in preventing any message from Gundabad to reach Moria, thereby cutting off any potential relief from the dwarven metropolis. Being aware of their hopeless situation, the Naugrim begin to fortify and hide the sacred places with all the skill their best craftsmen can muster to prevent them from being defiled by the orcs once Gundabad falls.
autumn 1267	The few remaining defenders are hopelessly outnumbered and know it is only a question of days now before the ancient dwarven city will fall, any relief being out of reach. After the final installation of the seals they prepare for the last battle and die to a man in the defence of their sacred citadel.
1268	When news of the fall of Mount Gundabad reach Khazad-dûm (the head of the dwarven commander is sent to Moria with an insulting message to the king), desperation grips the Naugrim. The king decides that he lacks the strength to muster a full-scale assault on a well-prepared orcish fortress (probably a misjudgement due to Durin's Ring mixed with the realization of the emerging Witch-king's strength in the North) and so he contends himself with an oath to hunt orcs forever. He also places an obligation on his descendants to re-claim Gundabad should they ever have the strength to do so. From this time onward Mount Gundabad is held by the orcs. The orcish installations of the Second Age (e.g. the Drake Gate) are repaired or re-constructed and expanded. The seals of the Dwarves in Gundabad are so effective that the Orcs are unable to breach them for a very long time (finally they are able to open a few of them; each GM should take his pick according to his campaign). The most sacred sites are so cunningly hidden that they remain undetected throughout the whole orcish occupation.
1268-1280	Having secured the northern pass over the Misty Mountains, the Nazgûl-lord is able to array his forces for the final stroke against any opposition in his realm-to-be. The dwarven fortress of Barazbizar (Carn Dûm) is taken 1274 ¹ . Secretly, the orcish king at Mount Gundabad is made an ally of Angmar with the establishment of that realm. Officially however, Angmar contains the orcs in the mountains and none are tolerated within Angmar. Until 1280 all the remaining opposition (mainly in form of Meisawi lords not satisfied with the cooperation with the promised new realm) is crushed and the realm of Angmar secured.
1268-1974	Mount Gundabad serves as the principal orcish citadel in the Hithaegllir. The strong position there makes it impossible to evict the goblins from their fortress. Gundabad's strength is used extensively by the Witch-king in his wars against the successor realms of Arnor. At first this is done covertly, but beginning in the mid-19th century, also more openly.
c. 1300	Orcs increase in the Misty Mountains and attack the Dwarves. Their great success at Gundabad emboldens the goblins. For all the Free Peoples, the Misty Mountains (and especially the northern ranges) are again dangerous to travel from this time on. The strong positions of the orcs in Goblin-gate and Gundabad, backed by Angmar (initially hidden and only later open) shatter any hope of the Naugrim of reclaiming their ancient halls.
1976-2790	Even after the fall of Angmar the orcish citadel is strong enough to remain unconquered and poses a threat to all Free Peoples in the North: All orcs who were able to flee from the battlefields of Eriador found refuge in Gundabad; strengthening this greatest stronghold of the Shadow in the North.
2740-2748	Gundabad participates in the invasions into Eriador, though the Goblin King does not allow himself to send his full force to these (for him) secondary targets. His vassal in Mount Gram leads these campaigns.
2794-2795	At the onset of the War of the Dwarves and Orcs Mount Gundabad is besieged by the combined host of Durin's tribe and detachments of all the other dwarven houses. After a one and a half year siege the Dwarves force their way in and slay every orc they can find. Much of the treasure as well as the majority of the females and imps is secured through secret passages though. Durin's tribe leaves a garrison behind, intent on holding their ancient city after one and half millennia of orcish occupation. Immediately measures are undertaken to repair the damage to the old dwarven installations. The intact seals of those locations still known to the Longbeards are not re-opened because of the war and its yet inconclusive outcome.

Year	Event(s)
2799	After the battle of Nanduhirion, the detachments of the other dwarven houses return home. Thráin realizes that the weakened strength of Durin's House alone is insufficient to hold Mount Gundabad after the heavy losses of war. Due to the greater rate of reproduction of the orcs they will replace their losses much quicker than the Dwarves, future orcish attacks are only a question of time. Since these were goblins who lived and built in Gundabad for centuries and built dozens of secret passages still unknown to the Dwarves, holding the site with diminished power is considered hopeless. Thráin contends himself with repairing all the broken dwarven seals, checking on the integrity of the unbroken ones and destroying as much as possible what might be of value for the orcs once they re-occupy the site.
2805	Thráin and his son Thorin leave Gundabad together with the dwarven garrison and make for their homes in Dunland – and after some years the Ered Luin. They block every entrance they know of as best as possible. Feeling ashamed at the loss of Gundabad the king's thoughts wander to Erebor and the treasures lost there; he has lost the ancient citadel of Gundabad but the "minor" halls at Erebor should be reclaimed during his reign for sure! This gnaws at him for many years.
2842	The dwarven measures are so effective that the orcs are only able to decisively breach them after more than thirty years. Gundabad is once more an orcish stronghold. When news of the re-occupation reach Thráin, he finally decides to start a quest to re-capture Erebor from Smaug. His attempt ends with the dwarven king's capture by Sauron in TA 2845 and the loss of the last of the Seven Rings to the Dark Lord.
2941	Bolg leads the host of Gundabad to near victory in the Battle of Five Armies, but is ultimately defeated. Gundabad is severely weakened, precipitating its secondary role in the War of the Ring.

The Fourth Age

After Sauron's fall and the general decline of evil influences, the permanent re-capture of Gundabad by the Dwarves becomes possible. It is up to each GM to decide if and when this happens. The Fourth Age information in *The Heirs of Elessar and the Forth Age in Other Minds, Issue 9*¹ might be a good starting point for such a scenario. The following information is compatible with that article.

Year	Event(s)
70	Capture of Gundabad by a great alliance of Men and Dwarves. The Wizard Radagast plays a pivotal role in detecting an underlying evil influence here. Elladan and Elrohir are instrumental in locating and removing the Ulûkai from its ancient resting place.
325-29	In the Second War of the Dwarves with the Orcs, Gundabad is an important staging and supply point for the Naugrim's forces. It ends with the final re-capturing of Moria.
925	With the emergence of Durin VII a final era of glory begins both for Gundabad as well as for Durin's House in general. Within the next 10 years, the last remnants of orcish pockets are cleaned from both the Hithaeglin and most of the Grey Mountains.
1399	Warriors of Gundabad take place in the storming of the last orc strongholds in the eastern Ered Mithrin. In the following centuries, the Dwarves take less and less part in the affairs of men. The time has finally come for the Naugrim to make place for the Secondborn.
ca. 2150	Last known contact with the Dwarves; presumably in the Gundabad area.



¹ Morwinsky, T. 2010. The Heirs of Elessar and the Fourth Age. *Other Minds*, Issue 9, page 14 ff.

ROLEPLAYING IN AND WITH MOUNT GUNDABAD

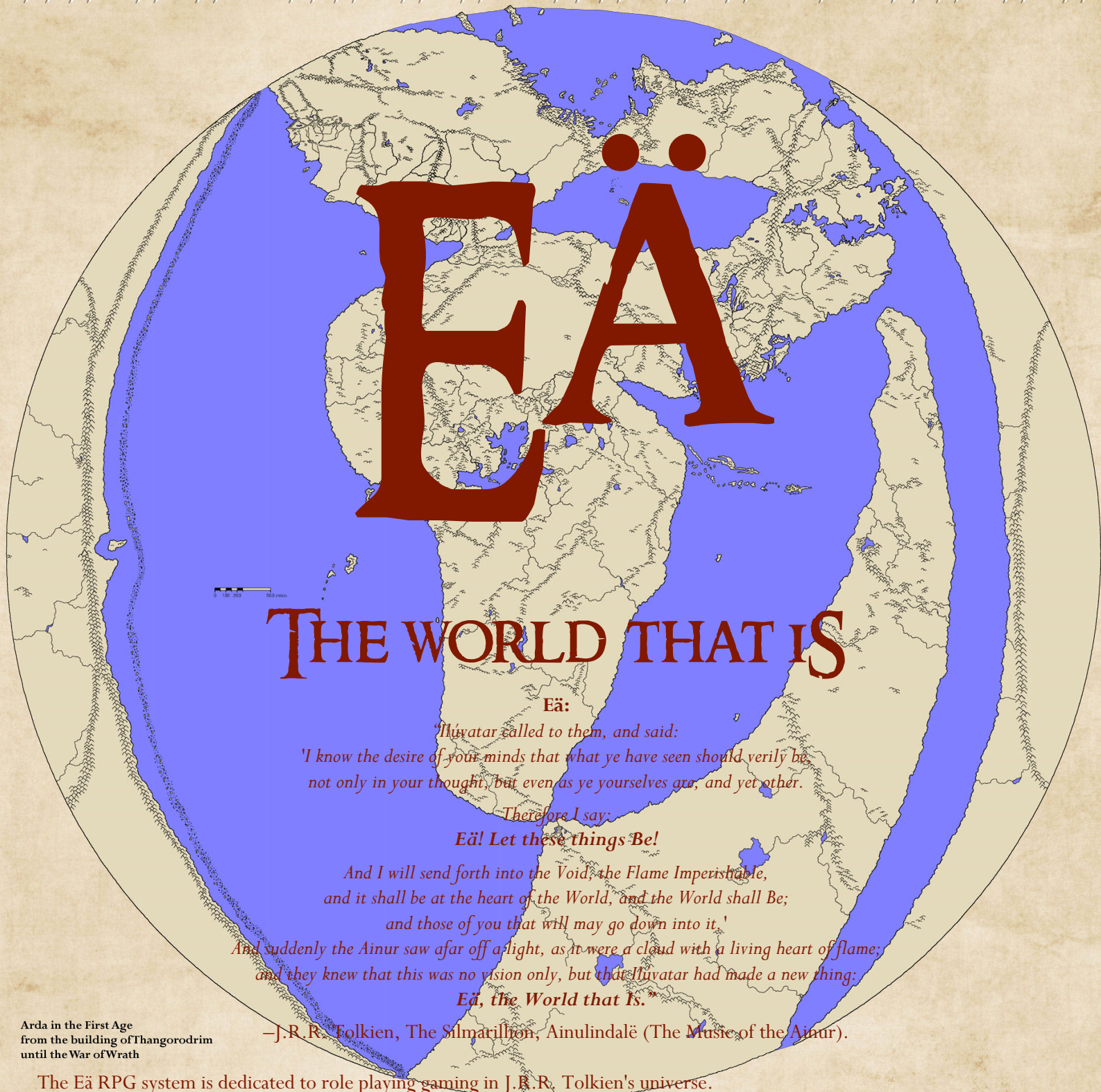
After T.A. 1267 Mount Gundabad is nearly continuously occupied by the Goblins for the remainder of the Third Age. This sets the site as **the** embodiment of an orcish stronghold, since it is almost certain that the vast majority of campaigns is set in this era of orcish occupation. This lasts also into the early Fourth Age, when heroes could participate in the final liberation of Mount Gundabad from the orcs as outlined above (and in *The Heirs of Elessar and the Fourth Age*). The layouts and locations in the *Mount Gundabad* supplement are well suited to be used as a base for further developments of the layouts. Of course one has to add the original dwarven layouts (for reference and adventure-related purposes). This can be achieved through original design or the use (and adaptation) of dwarven layouts from other RPG supplements, which may be used as inspiration. I found Columbia Games' HârnWorld adventure supplement *The Lost City of Kiraz*¹ appropriate for this task. In fact some of the ideas for the timeline above were inspired by this supplement. Another option is to use random dungeon creation rules found both in MERP's *Moria* and LotRRPG's *Moria* supplements.²

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¹ Crosby, N. R. & Hotz, E. 1989. *The Lost City of Kiraz*, Vancouver, Columbia Games Inc.

² Mearls, M. & Seeman, C. 2003. *Moria*, Los Angeles, CA, Decipher, Inc.



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

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

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

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


Tomes of lore include:

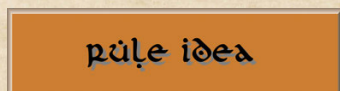
- Races & Cultures (near completion)
- Magic in Middle-earth (core mechanics complete, conversion charts in progress)
- Destinies & Lore (Classes, Skills, Feats, etc. - in early stages)
- Creatures & Monsters (Ancalagon through Zigurim) (planned)
- Valar & Maiar (Includes Vala, Maia, Istari, Lords and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

MERP-TOR CONVERSION RULES

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Middle-earth is a big world and offers many opportunities for gaming. The first campaigns there started even before there was an official game system for it. Since these ancient days, four official game systems for this setting have seen the light of the day. Almost all of us know the experience of switching game systems while sticking to the setting – and the choice either to abandon your beloved old character and build a new one or trying to convert him (or her) to the new system.

This article covers exactly this topic - providing guidelines to convert characters from MERP to TOR (or vice versa). Have fun testing them!

BACKGROUND

MERP (Middle-earth Role-Playing) was the first licensed role-playing game set (1984-1999) in the imaginary world of J.R.R. Tolkien. Back in those days I was not attracted by the cumbersome system and the liberties it took with my beloved Middle-earth canon. It was mainly the excess and abundance of magic-users and powerful enchanted items made it feel too close to D&D for me (no – a fire-ball launching bracelet is not appropriate here!).

Many years have passed since those early days and now I am running a campaign using *The One Ring* (TOR) system. Its rules fit the atmosphere of the late-Third Age setting much better, with core mechanics reinforcing relevant underlying themes like the struggle between Hope and Shadow, and fortunately it refrains from applying such less than heroic fumble tables as in MERP. But as good as the rule system is for the setting, my main issue with TOR is the almost complete lack of world-building – that is the development of a detailed background about societies, politics, realms, economics, demographics, environment etc. for the setting. This is exemplified by a statement I saw online about *The One Ring*: “In this singular aspect, the TOR ‘world-building’ (small as it is) often feels like a theatrical scenery: For immediate gaming everything is there, but once you start to look a bit deeper or beside the pre-defined path, you see the bare wooden struts behind it.”

So, now I find myself rediscovering the treasure trove of background information between those old MERP covers, often magnificently illustrated externally by Angus McBride (not to forget the internal art by Liz Danforth). Despite the crazy magic and the hyper realistic system that feels so far away from the epic stories, the painstaking attention to background detail that went into those modules remains unmatched decades after their release. Of course you have to remove inconsistencies with the canon and then, if you want to use them to add supplementary layers of detail to your TOR

game, you have to take some extra work adapting the temporal setting (MERP's default was TA 1640 – roughly 1,300 years before the TOR setting) and to avoid any contradictions. But nowhere else will you find information about the temperature in Esgaroth during December (called Géolamath by the Lake-men, by the way), or the exact number of guards (plus their names, stats and whereabouts) and a myriad of other details that can enrich your game experience.

It is often objected that the LM can make up this type of information himself, if need be. In a way this is correct of course, but what is the point of a buying a **sourcebook** on a region, if the LM has to develop key **source** information of the region as a functioning political entity and/or society himself? Not everyone will use it of course, but it is part of a comprehensive overview of a given region or location that adds the level of depth to create a dense secondary world. Otherwise you don't need to buy adventures or other supplements either since you can make them up yourself too. No company can please everyone, and particular aspects that one group of people finds essential or otherwise useful, may be more or less irrelevant for the next – and vice versa. But for all those looking for tools to adapt information from MERP and the nearly identical Rolemaster (RM) systems to their TOR adventures, I have devised the following set of conversion rules.

CONVERSION OF NUMBERS

The following paragraphs provide some guidelines for conversions from MERP to TOR. Please keep in mind though, that the two systems are very different. Therefore you should see the results of these conversions as suggestions and framework rather than numbers set in stone. Applying good judgment and filling the gaps, where the systems have no equivalent stats or values remains an integral part for all conversions of MERP characters and creatures to TOR.

Thus this system is geared towards converting MERP creatures, NPC's and especially PC's to TOR adversaries, Loremaster characters and heroes respectively, in order to avoid creating them from scratch again – such as the beloved old MERP player character you always wanted to play in your new TOR campaign.

But keep one thing in mind: **Don't let the written rules – either these or the ones in supplements you bought – limit your own ideas!** This is the one rule that should always be observed!

Sample character

You can always make an NPC's stats up from scratch, using the TOR character concept and description as a guideline (see page 218 of the rulebook, detailing Attribute Levels, Skill ratings and typical Endurance points for the different cultures of the Free Peoples). But what if you know of a very neat character description in MERP that you want to match as close as possible in MERP? As an example for this kind of conversion I chose Beorn in human form from MERP's **Lords of Middle-earth, Vol. II (LoMe II)**. Table 1 on the following lists his MERP stats.



Beorn © by Anke Eißmann, used with permission

Name	Level	Hits	Armor Type	DB	Shield	Greaves	Melee Bonus	Missile Bonus	M&M	Notes
Beorn	28	165	No	30	N	N	170ba	155cp	30	Beorning Ranger, Lord of the Beornings

Skill Bonuses*: Climb 70, Swim 80, Ride 60, Detect Trap 35, Pick Lock 25, Stalk & Hide 100, Channeling 50, Ambush 21, Adrenal Moves 80, Adrenal Defense 60, Body Development 18, Acrobatics 40, Animal Training/Handling 100, Caving 35, Contortions 30, Cookery 84, Dance 80, Diving 45, First Aid 60, Fletching 30, Foraging 85, Frenzy 100, Herding 80, Meditation 60, Music 50, Navigation 75, Rune Mastery 30, Rowing 25, Signaling 75, Sing 45, Skiing 50, Smithing 40, Star Gazing 70, Subdual 50, Tracking 100, Trading 45, Trap Building 35, Tumbling 30, Weather watching 65, Wood Crafts 75, Crafting 60

* Some of these are RM skills and thus not found in the MERP skill list. This mixture of systems – even though they were very similar – has always been one of the major nuisances which led to inconsistencies.

Table 1: Beorn's abilities in MERP

Furthermore, in LoMe II his stats are:

Stat	Value	Bonus
ST	101	30
AG	99	20
CO	100	25
IG	73	0
IT	100	25
PR	91	10
APP	74	0

Conversion tables

All these will be converted using the following rules¹. You can mostly use the conversion either way - MERP to TOR or vice versa.

Level/Attribute Level

The following table lists the equivalents of level (MERP) and Attribute Level (TOR) for conversion.

MERP/RM level	TOR Attribute Level
1-2	1
3-4	2
5-8	3
9-12	4
13-17	5
18-22	6
23-28	7
29-35	8
36+	9

This places Beorn's Attribute Level at 7, which is well above the average.

Stats/Attributes

As you have seen above, MERP has more basic attributes (called stats) than TOR. I suggest the following guidelines to convert them to TOR:

MERP Stat	TOR Attribute
ST	Body=(ST+AG+CO)/3
AG	
CO	
IG	Wits
IT	Heart=(IT+PR)/2
PR	
APP	None (not used)

In the next step, look up the MERP values from this step to find out the corresponding TOR attribute values as shown in the following table.

MERP stat value	TOR Attribute value
01-20	1
21-30	2
31-50	3
51-70	4
71-89	5
90-94	6
95	7
96-97	8
98-99	9
100	10
101	11
102	12

Example: To calculate Beorn's *Body*, add ST, AG and CO and divide by 3: [ST (101) + AG (99) + CO (100)] / 3 = 100. This translates into an amazing *Body* value of 10 for a TOR Hero. As a TOR Loremaster character (i.e. if you don't need that much detail for the character), the Attribute Level previously calculated will suffice, as NPC's have only a single Attribute Level rather than detailed attributes like Heroes.

¹ Here the stats are labelled "MERP", but due to their great similarity, you can also use this for RM character stats as well.

HITS/Endurance

In MERP, Beorn has 165 hit points (hits). Apply the formulas below to calculate TOR's respective Endurance value and vice versa.

MERP to TOR

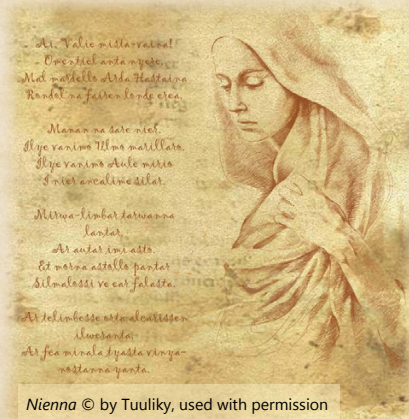
Endurance = (Hits / 5) + TOR Attribute Level

So the mighty Beorn has a TOR Endurance of 40.

TOR to MERP

Hit Points = (Endurance – Attribute Level) * 5

Hate/Hope



There is no equivalent to Hate or Hope in MERP (unfortunately), which is why it does not make sense to invert the formula below to transcribe TOR value back to MERP.

Normally LM characters have no Hope, but in case the LM needs the info, here it is. The amount of Hope or Hate is the same, but of course you only get one of the two – depending on whether this is a “good” character or an “evil” adversary.

MERP to TOR

Hate or Hope = Level / 2 (rounded up; with a maximum of 10 points). This means that there is no further increase beyond 10 for characters or creatures beyond level 20.

So, the TOR version of Beorn (lvl 28) has 10 points of Hope (and not Hate, since he is considered as a “good” character).

Parry

MERP to TOR

Parry = DB * 0.15 (round up; shield included, if any)

TOR to MERP

DB = Parry / 0.15 (round down; shield included, if any)

So, Beorn with his DB of 30 has a Parry of 5 and no shield bonus in TOR.

Armour

According to the specified type.

Beorn wears no armour.

Generally, converting armour is very straightforward and no calculations are needed.

Skills

Depending on the edition or supplement of MERP you are using, you may find the Stats and Skills in the description of the NPC. In that case, it is easy to translate them (including Distinctive Features, Relevant Skills and Specialties). Otherwise work with the description and make good use of the Skill Rating table on the next page.

In case a detailed list of skills is provided for your MERP character, use the next table on the following page to determine which MERP skills correspond to the ones from TOR. Generally, MERP has more specialised skills, whereas TOR's fewer have a much broader individual coverage (though there are exceptions of course). The table assumes the use of the Second Edition of MERP, which is better organised in this respect.

TOR skill	Corresponding MERP skill(s)
Awe	Public Speaking, Acting
Inspire	Public Speaking
Persuade	Public Speaking, Acting
Athletics	Climb, Ride, Swim, Acrobatics, Rowing/Boat Handling, Sailing, Skiing, Contortions
Travel	Weather-watching/Sky-watching
Stealth	Stalk/Hide, Gambling, Trickery, Ambush
Awareness	Perception
Insight	Perception, Appraisal
Search	Perception, Read Rune, Meditation
Explore	Track, Caving, Star-gazing, Weather-watching/Sky-watching
Healing	First Aid, Meditation
Hunting	Foraging, Trap-building, Ambush, Animal Handling, Herding
Song	Music, Dance
Courtesy	Public Speaking, Acting
Riddle	Read Rune, Use Item, Signalling
Craft	Pick Lock, Disarm Trap, Fletching, Rope-Mastery, Smithing, Wood-carving, Cookery
Battle*	Movement in Armour (average of all individual "Movement in Armor" skills), the three best Weapon skills, Body Development
Lore	Star-gazing, Meditation

* Unfortunately MERP does not have an even remotely similar concept for TOR's Battle". Therefore I chose to use a number of combat-related skills as a surrogate. RM has some, such as 'Leadership' and 'Military Organization', but listing them here would stretch this article's scope (MERP, rather than RM) too far.

Table 3: MERP/TOR skill conversion table

Next, add all the total MERP bonuses that correspond to a TOR skill together and divide by the number of involved MERP skills to calculate the average bonus. Apply this average bonus to the following Skill rating Table to determine the number of success dice in TOR:

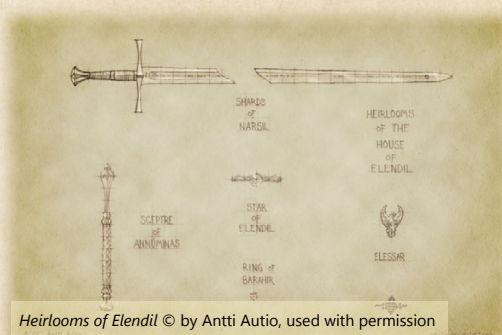
MERP total bonus	TOR success dice
Up to 30	1
31-70	2
71-110	3
111-150	4
151-200	5
201+	6

Example: To determine Beorn's *Hunting* score, look up his MERP skills. For *Hunting* you need Foraging (85 for Beorn), Trap building (Beorn has 35), Ambush (Beorn: 21¹ - bonus of 71), Animal Handling (100), Herding (80). The sum of all these is 371. Divide this by the number of skills involved (5). We end up with an average of 74.2, which equals to 3 success dice in TOR for *Hunting*.

¹ In MERP, for Ambush the number of skill ranks is given instead of the total bonus, which is what we need here. 21 ranks correspond to a "normal" total bonus of 71 (see MERP's rulebook for more on this).

In this context it should be noted that the skill bonuses of NPC MERP characters often seem a bit haphazard and not really fitting to the respective PC creation rules. Thus you should apply some good judgment here whether the numbers you come up with fit or should be adjusted. The result of these calculations should be useful as a general guide for modifications.

Weapons Skill: Use the same procedure as for the other skills. Here you can transfer the bonus directly from the weapon in question. So Beorn with his MERP skill of 175 in Battle-axe would have 5 success dice for a Great axe (the TOR equivalent of MERP's Battle-axe).



You may the easy route and apply the weapon profiles from the TOR rulesbook or tweak them to make your own. Do not forget to check out the Adversaries section of the rulesbook to find possible equivalents.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

First and foremost read the MERP NPC description carefully to get a good feeling, which TOR special abilities might apply to the character. In addition to this, while transcribing the Stats, compare their MERP values to the respective numbers listed below. Especially low or high values should gain the TOR character special negative or positive abilities as follows:

▪ Strength

< 15: Consider reducing one close combat Weapon Skill by one point.

> 90: Consider determining one close combat Weapon Skill as favourite and/or adding *Horrible Strength* or *Savage assault* special rule.

▪ Agility

< 15: Consider reducing Parry by one point.

> 90: Consider increasing Parry by one point or granting *Snake-like Speed* special rule.

▪ Constitution

< 15: Consider decreasing Endurance by 1-5 points.

> 90: Consider increasing Endurance by 5-10 points or adding *Hideous Toughness* special rule.

▪ Intelligence & Intuition

While these are not quite the same, they have the same treatment in the conversion process.

> 75: Increase one Wits-related Common Skill by up to two ranks.

> 90: Consider granting *Wicked Cunning* special rule (from the Rivendell supplement).

▪ Presence

> 75: Increase one Common Skill of the Personality group for up to two ranks.

> 90: Consider granting *Commanding Voice* or *Strike Fear* special rules.

For non-evil NPC's like our valued Beorn, just pick some fitting Cultural Rewards, Traits, etc. from the character creation rules. The Special Abilities in MERP's character creation are few and usually only add bonuses to skills. They are not nearly as refined or diverse as in TOR. Therefore, trying a direct conversion is futile. Here the LM should look up fitting abilities from TOR.

Those pesky MAGIC ITEMS AND SPELLS

The golden rule here is "get rid of as many of them as you can". Both systems are widely different regarding the magic level, so removing all MERP magic items would roughly balance the NPC in TOR. Besides, TOR has its own rules to get magical treasure (presented in the *Rivendell* supplement) and they have nothing to do with looting slain enemies. Additionally, having lots of powerful (and not-so-powerful) magic items lying around after defeating a big bad guy could prove too tempting for our heroes. You can always give your NPC some Special Ability to compensate for the loss of a game-changing magic item or tweak his stats.

But it may happen that the magic items coming with the MERP character have a vital part in the adventure, or that you absolutely need a Necromancer, a Sorcerer or even a mischievous Wayward Elf. In that rare case go for the *Dreadful Spells* special rule or find inspiration in the official material to make your own.


CONCLUSION

The tables and formulas above provide some good rules of thumb for converting. But it cannot be overstated that by design, sometimes you won't be able to find proper corresponding numbers, abilities or other features. In addition, the rules may not fit your vision of the character and thus you should always apply common sense – and your own judgment for what fits best to your game and preferences.

THE HISTORY OF ANGMAR

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background stuff



The Lord of the Rings is set in the closing years of the Third Age, with an overwhelmingly powerful Mordor ruled by Sauron threatening to destroy the last remnants of resistance. It is a tale of faithful heroism against the odds.

When you like to set a game or campaign in the Third Age, but away from these well-trodden paths of the 30th century and look for an antagonist, Angmar is one of the most popular choices. However, in my opinion it is far more complex than a simplistic “mini-Mordor”, and the following article elaborates on this.

INTRODUCTION

Angmar is among the most fascinating realms created by Tolkien: It was the primary antagonist of the Northern Dúnedain for almost exactly 700 years and collapsed shortly after the defeat of Arthedain – the longest-lasting realm of the Faithful in Eriador.

It has also been the subject of several role-playing publications, namely MERP's *Angmar* in its various incarnations¹ and TOR's *Rivendell*². At first glance, this wealth of available material seems to render any further examinations on this topic unnecessary. Especially the comprehensive MERP material offers a vast amount of data available for integration into campaigns during Angmar's existence, while TOR focuses on the time when this realm is long gone. In the latter's timeframe only ruins remain, making campaigning there easier due to the lack of any organised state in the area requiring description. In TOR, it is home to evil creatures and the hitherto published adventures revolve around someone trying to resurrect Angmar.

Regarding the usefulness of information in these official publications, it is – as so often – not that easy, as both gaming lines' products paint a rather stereotypical picture of Angmar – despite pursuing very different approaches to Middle-earth gaming. This is the big “Evil Empire”³, full of Shadow creatures and genuinely evil men. This article will delve a bit deeper into this topic and discuss its various aspects as well as possible solutions.

It is also interesting to note that Tolkien – as the original source – provides us with quite a lot

¹ Kubasch, H. 1982. *Angmar - Land of the Witch King*, Charlottesville, VA, Iron Crown Enterprises. Kubasch, H. & Staplehurst, G. 1989. *Empire of the Witch-king*, Charlottesville, VA, Iron Crown Enterprises. Kubasch, H. & Staplehurst, G. 1995. *Angmar*, Charlottesville, VA, Iron Crown Enterprises.

² Nepitello, F., Ivey, S., Kenrick, A., et al. 2014. *Rivendell*, Cambridge & Oxford, Sophisticated Games Ltd. & Cubicle 7 Entertainment.

³ The second incarnation of MERP's Angmar even had this in its title: *Empire of the Witch-king*.

of information about Angmar in its early years (i.e. from its founding up to TA 1409) and then again for its final phase (c. TA 1850-1975). The more than 400 years in-between sees almost no (documented) activity – apart from the mission of the Barrow-wights. This presents a challenge for developing a consistent picture for the realm throughout its history. On the other hand this also offers some good possibilities for original ideas. These are developed in the following sections.

Sources

This article uses a number of quotes from Tolkien's books as well as several articles from previous Issues of *Other Hands* (OH) and *Other Minds* (OM). These are fully referenced in footnotes and the OH and OM articles can be downloaded from the *Other Minds* website¹ for free.

OUTLOOK OF ANGMAR

Always a "Big Evil"?

The name Angmar itself usually evokes images of an evil realm, full of orcs, trolls and other creatures of the Shadow, ruled by a dreadful and cruel undead sorcerer-lord known as the Witch-king. In a word, it is perceived as some kind of *Mordor in min-*

iature –

only 1,500 years before the War of the Ring and situated in a cool environment rather than a dry volcanic wasteland.

At first glance, this view of Angmar as an all-time evil realm full of orcs is supported by Appendix A, where it is stated :

*'It was in the beginning of the reign of Malvegil [r. TA 1272-1349] of Arthedain that **evil came to Arnor**. For at that time the realm of Angmar arose in the North beyond the Ettenmoors. Its lands lay on both sides of the Mountains, **and there were gathered many evil men, and Orcs, and other fell creatures**. [The lord of that land was known as the Witch-king, but it was not known until later that he was indeed the chief of the Ringwraiths ...]'*

—The Lord of the Rings.
Appendix A



¹ <https://www.otherminds.net/downloads>

This seems to settle the matter very clearly, but in my opinion it is not that easy. First we have to consider the time of the fictional chronicler – a scribe of King Elessar after the latter received the Thain’s book in FA 64¹. This book was in turn copied by King Eldarion’s scribe Findegil in Fourth Age 172. So what we read here is the hindsight of the chronicler who wrote his treatise long after the covered events. Though I am not suggesting that this chronicler consciously manipulated the facts, the great temporal gap makes it is likely to lose such details of contemporary knowledge. This holds even more true when the chronicle is written to record the important parts (i.e. the Nazgûl-lord on Sauron’s mission). This is already hinted at in the quote above when it is said that the nature of the “Witch-king” as a Ringwraith was only recognised “later”. Now, it is not stated explicitly what this means, but the context suggests that it was at the very least much further down in the history of Angmar – perhaps only in its final phase. In my opinion this late phase is also the status described in the quote above – when the nature and identity of the “Witch-king” was finally recognised by the Dúnedain.

The question of the nature of Angmar throughout its existence also touches another point. We know that the Evil in Dol Guldur was early on thought to be a Nazgûl (not true, but near the mark):

c. 1100 The Wise (the Istari and the chief Eldar) discover that an evil power has made a stronghold at Dol Guldur. It is thought to be one of the Nazgûl.

**—The Lord of the Rings.
Appendix A**

Now, if a Nazgûl is suspected at Dol Guldur, and another one in Angmar (in case it is an obviously “evil” realm from the start on) it becomes hard to rationalise that the wise and Númenóreans do not become suspicious of this concentration of high-level evil activity in their vicinity or direct neighbourhood. In the case of Arnor, it is even more pronounced, as this supposed Nazgûl’s realm would be almost immediately start a war against them.

¹ The supposed source of *The Lord of the Rings* – the careful “pseudo-historic” construct that Tolkien uses to add depth to his created world.

Another point is the implied power of Angmar: MERP’s products suggest an almost unstoppable juggernaut filled with fanatical evil men, orcs and other Creatures of the Shadow – bent on destroying the Dúnedain better sooner than later – even in the face of repeated failures. TOR’s *Rivendell* does not go into this depth, but the – little – existing textual hints make a similar view possible.

We also have to consider the purpose of Angmar in the literary context – to present an evil antagonist which threatens (and nearly destroys) the Northern Dúnedain. This needs a looming evil that gnaws on the successor realms of Arnor until nothing is left of them but ruined cities and castles.

In the context of roleplaying games and campaigns set after the destruction of Angmar (like for TOR’s and AME’s² late-Third Age setting)

The lord of that land was known as the Witch-king. [...] who came north with the purpose of destroying the Dúnedain in Arnor, seeing hope in their disunion, while Gondor was strong.

**—The Lord of the Rings.
Appendix A**

this depiction is perfectly sufficient – and probably also the best approach – since it more or less coincides with the era of the fictitious chronicler and his hindsight knowledge. Furthermore, in practice it does not matter anyway, as Angmar is long gone by the time of the usual TOR or AME campaign. For campaigns set during the time of Angmar’s existence however, things are a bit different, as we have to consider the more limited knowledge of the contemporary people living in Eriador at this time – and the picture that Angmar presents to its contemporaries. Especially the following points need some consideration when using this (i.e. TA 1276-1975) timeframe as a backdrop for a campaign.

² *Adventures in Middle-earth* – Cubicle 7’s D&D 5e adaptation for the Middle-earth setting.

The purpose of Angmar

The Witch-king was sent to the North since Sauron deemed the northern Dúnedain to be an easier target due to their disunity:

In turn this also means that Sauron was weak at the time (naturally) and thus he sought to achieve first the easier goal in his quest to rebuild his power. Still despite this weakness, it took his chief servant 700 years to achieve his objective¹, suggesting both a stronger resistance of the Dúnedain as well as clear limitations of Angmar as a power. This somehow qualifies the view of the supposed overpowering might and resources of Angmar.



Angmar's infrastructure

Another interesting question revolves around how Angmar looked like in terms of physical infrastructure: Settlements, roads, administration, taxes and a judicial system etc. are all requirements for a realm to function. A look at the hitherto published official sites shows that the differences in interpretations are significant. Here the design of Carn Dûm as the realm's capital is an excellent example. MERP's approach is a conventional city with a wall², housing areas etc. In addition to this "normal" city above ground, it has an underground complex as well. In contrast, TOR's Carn Dûm as portrayed in *Rivendell*³ looks more like a big dungeon complex. Overall it seems rather small and more designed as a brooding lair of a dark evil. This may be due to the fact that only a cave complex and its entrance fortifications above

¹ And this even incomplete, as the Northern Dúnedain continued to exist in secret.

² See Kubasch, H. & Staplehurst, G. 1995. *Angmar*, Charlottesville, VA, Iron Crown Enterprises.

³ Nepitello, F., Ivey, S., Kenrick, A., et al. 2014. *Rivendell*, Cambridge & Oxford, Sophisticated Games Ltd. & Cubicle 7 Entertainment.

earth are depicted and the rest of the – former – city not being shown. In this way, the maps from both RPG systems could nicely complement each other. The MERP city map is useful for the overall city layout (if you don't like their dungeon design) and the TOR one for the halls below. The only potential issue of the latter is the huge ravine in front of the broken walls that make it look like a fortress on a precipice rather than (part of) a former city.

Depending on what you want, one may be more appropriate than the other. If you are looking for a functioning city in a pseudo-historical context, the MERP version is better suited and much more comprehensive. On the other hand, the TOR one is probably more appropriate if the mood of an ancient fortress of a great evil as a site for adventuring is the primary objective.

Angmar's army

Most of the campaigns of Angmar (at the very least the early ones) against the Dúnedain were probably dominated by Men in its service rather than the stereotypical orcs, trolls etc. usually found in realms of the Shadow. This is exemplified by the experiences of the Hobbits in the Barrow-downs. Though not explicitly stated as such, it is quite likely that they re-lived the last moments of the men buried there:

'Of course, I remember!' he [Merry] said. 'The men of Carn Dûm came on us at night, and we were worsted. Ah! the spear in my heart!' He clutched at his breast.

*—The Lord of the Rings.
Fog on the Barrow-downs*

It is especially important to note that the "men of Carn Dûm" came at night and overwhelmed the defenders. For "evil" realms, orcs are the primary troops for night-time action, given their disadvantages in sunlight and being accustomed to operating in low-light conditions. We also get some insights when these events did happen (see box on next page).

Some say that the mound in which the Ring-bearer was imprisoned had been the grave of the last prince of Cardolan, who fell in the war of 1409.

—*The Lord of the Rings*.
Appendix A

Of course this is slightly qualified by the “some say”, but still it offers the only documented information on the barrow – and by extension on the events of its creation. More on a possible organisation and details on Angmar’s army can be found in *Armies of Eriador*¹ from *Other Hands Magazine* (found on our website).

Over the years, orcs would be used in Angmar’s forces as well – especially in the final war, and to a lesser extent in the one before. In the latter case Angmar still tries to make it appear that the orcs act independently from Angmar, though this ruse is rather weak.

Creatures of the Shadow

For all the reasoning brought forward in the previous paragraphs, there still remains the passage quoted at the beginning, speaking of Angmar gathering evil men and orcs. As discussed, it is somewhat problematic to see Angmar being obviously evil right from the start. Instead, it is more believable (and in my opinion) a better and more refined story plot to have an evolution in Angmar. A key issue here is how and when Angmar makes (obvious) use of *Creatures of the Shadow* like orcs, trolls or werewolves.

From a story perspective, it may be frustrating to ban these altogether from Angmar’s arsenal until its very end. Given the nature of the Witch-king, it is also suggests itself that orcs are used for his purposes. A solution to combine both the needs for secrecy as well as the usefulness of *Creatures of the Shadow* both for story and practical purposes is to make this aspect evolutionary as well. In the begin-

ning and middle phase of Angmar, any connections to such creatures are top secret and only known to a handful of select individuals on whose secrecy and reliability the Nazgûl-lord can count. They serve as his emissaries to make the orcs do his bidding. It is paramount to stress however, that these individuals will not give away their allegiance or service for Angmar to the orcs. This is important since if they are misled themselves as to their ultimate master, they cannot give away (voluntarily or not) this information.

This way Angmar can use Creatures of the Shadow, while still keeping a clean record as to their allegiance. The plot to deflect suspicion away from Angmar is offered by Tolkien himself through the suspected Nazgûl in Dol Guldur quoted above. Along this line, the orcs (and other creatures) are made to believe that their “contacts” are in the service of Dol Guldur. Thus all the orders for Creatures of the Shadow in Eriador would seem to come from Dol Guldur – a supposed Nazgûl intent on making trouble for the Faithful, their mannish allies and the Eldar.

To further strengthen this deception, the occasional orc or troll raid on an Angmarean frontier castle or town is staged to underline that Angmar suffers from such evil creatures as well.

It is only late in the history of Angmar that this ruse collapses and the true nature of the mysterious “Witch-king” and his realm becomes clear.



Orcs debate © by Turner Mohan, used with permission

¹ Morwinsky, T. 2001. *Armies of Eriador*. *Other Hands*, Issue 33/34 (Supplement), page 1 ff.

The intensity of Angmar's threat

After the war of TA 1409, it took Angmar another 442 years¹ to mount another major attack in TA 1851. This is hardly a convincing argument for an overly powerful Angmar. Quite to the contrary, it suggests that after the first two wars (TA 1356 & 1409) within a mere 50 years, the Witch-king's realm had to rebuild and husband its strength in order to have a realistic chance against the Dúnedain on the battlefield. It is also well conceivable that these wars caused severe logistic and demographic problems for Angmar as well. Still it remains somehow odd that we have the major wars relatively near to each other with a huge span of time in-between without major conflicts. It is the task of the world-building in an RPG context to find a consistent and plausible explanation for such a gap.

One possible solution is that the Witch-king realises the inability of Angmar to bring down even the disunited Northern Dúnedain through brute force. Consequently, he devised strategies and means to switch to a campaign of long-term attrition to wear down his enemies – both physical and spiritual – before he would try another major campaign.

In addition we have to consider the possibility of other – smaller – conflicts not directly involving the Dúnedain that may have used up the limited resources of Angmar and represent an achievable goal in this long-term strategy. This concept is followed later in this article. Overall it is advisable to stress Angmar's limited resources, but also keep to it strong enough so that the Dúnedain did not really have the option of going to the offensive and conquering Angmar. Here a well-organised network of border forts and fortifications is a plausible way to deter any Dúnadan invasion.

Conclusions

Based on the topics outlined above, I propose to reconsider the description in MERP's Angmar. For all those interested in more details of the few strengths and – many – weaknesses of the latest iteration of this supplements, have a look at two reviews in *Other Hands*, Issue 12².

Parts of the internal structure and institutions of the Witch-king's realm have already been discussed in previous Issues of *Other Minds*. In Issue 7 you can find a treatment of the mannish people of the realm (*The Angmarrim*)³ while Issue 9 discusses an alternative religious pantheon and system (*Religion in Angmar*)⁴ rather than the stereotypic "Dark Lord" religion presented in MERP's *Angmar* which in my opinion is very unlikely to exist in this era.

The overall approach for such a "re-developed" Angmar is to have it undergo several phases throughout its history. In this way we will be able to stay true to Tolkien's lore and canon, while also addressing the issues presented in the previous treatments of Angmar. The three proposed phases of Angmar last for about 200, 400 and 100 years respectively, and are detailed in the following section.

Each phase will have its peculiar properties and overall they will provide a believable and coherent tale of the major antagonist of the Northern Dúnedain in the Third Age – the great saga of the Northern Wars.



Sword of Darkness © by Liga Klavina, used with permission

¹ See Thomas Giebl's extended *Tale of Years* for an in-depth discussion of this date: Giebl, T. 2011. The Tale of Years. *Other Minds*, Issue 11, page 90 ff.

² Vester, J. 1996. Product Review: Angmar (1). *Other Hands*, Issue 12, page 52 ff. and Seeman, C. 1996. Product Review: Angmar (2). *Other Hands*, Issue 12, page 53 ff.

³ Morwinsky, T. 2009. The Angmarrim. *Other Minds*, Issue 7, page 4 ff.

⁴ Morwinsky, T. 2010. Religion in Angmar. *Other Minds*, Issue 9, page 39 ff.

HISTORICAL PHASES OF ANGMAR

FIRST Phase (ca. TA 1274–1450)

In the days of Argeleb son of Malvegil, since no descendants of Isildur remained in the other kingdoms, the kings of Arthedain again claimed the lordship of all Arnor. The claim was resisted by Rhudaur. There the Dúnedain were few, and power had been seized by an evil lord of the Hill-men, who was in secret league with Angmar. Argeleb therefore fortified the Weather Hills; but he was slain in battle with Rhudaur and Angmar.

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
Appendix A

This era sees the founding and consolidation of Angmar. Before making his move, the Nazgûl-lord is very careful in gathering intelligence, making contacts and allies to build a reliable power base to operate from. In all relations with the indigenous people of northern Eriador (the *Clans of Meisawis*) and the Anduin Vales he is acting exclusively through intermediaries. Thus he avoids undue attention from possible observers looking for “evil” creatures. Before setting out to found Angmar, the Nazgûl-lord carefully studies the situation and deems the *Clans of Meisawis* most useful for his purposes. These had long been at odds with the Númenóreans and see their chance when Arnor is on the verge of breaking up in the mid-9th century. For their support of Prince Galadhrion’s (of later Rhudaur) bid for kingship they demand – and get – their own independence. The next 200 years their relations with the north-eastern successor realm of Arnor are good, but during the reign of Edhelthorn of Rhudaur¹ these deteriorate rapidly. In this time evil creatures in the mountains begin to multiply and harass northern and eastern Rhudaur. Edhelthorn makes the people of Meisawis responsible for not doing enough against these incursions (or even deflect-

ing the attacks southwards) – accusations which are reciprocal. When the Witch-king secretly comes to the North, he finds these tensions an excellent leverage for his purposes. Through clever manipulations his servants fuel the conflict and when the time is ripe he appears – again through intermediaries – as a saviour, offering a solution for protection from the orcs: A powerful unified realm of their own where they would be lords and be able to effectively contain the orcs in the mountains. In addition they would be able to repay any – perceived – injustice by the “haughty” Dúnedain and the greedy Broadbeam Dwarves in Barazbizar (later to be called Carn Dûm) who often got the better of them in numerous deals without the Meisawis (and other men) being able to do much about it. Now when the Meisawis see the chance to get revenge, they are more than willing to support the new power in repaying all the cheating from the past.

It is also the time when Anglór/Angarnas the Prophet is preaching in Cardolan and Rhudaur/Meisawis². Unbeknownst to him, he is also a piece on the board of the Witch-king, as the lore found and developed by him is a carefully prepared ruse to use his genuine goodwill to the Nazgûl-lord’s advantage.

This strategy of careful and subtle manipulation proves very effective and with the crucial support of the Meisawis and Angarnas, Angmar is eventually founded. The capture of Barazbizar and its re-naming into Carn Dûm in TA 1274 marks the beginning of the realm. The lords of the Meisawis clans are granted key positions of power in exchange for their compliance.

By acting through his servants, the Witch-king ensures that no suspicion about the return of his master or one of his major servants arises. One of his most important decisions is to act through his mannish servants, while staying in the shadowy background himself. His basic strategy in this time is to build and represent Angmar as a realm of the Men of Middle-earth, wronged and unjustly suppressed and deprived of their right to rule by the Númenóreans. In a way, it is an ideology of empowerment of the indigenous people, denying any supposed

¹ See Morwinsky, T. 2018. Divided Arnor. *Other Minds*, Issue 19, page 73 ff.

² Morwinsky, T. 2010. Religion in Angmar. *Other Minds*, Issue 9, page 39 ff.

Númenóreans right to rule over them by virtue of their “superior” enlightenment. Of all the intermediaries of the Witch-king, none is of greater importance than the Angûlion – his chancellor – that oversees the running of the realm. In all but name he is the *de facto* ruler of Angmar, while the Witch-king remains in the background, keeping a low profile and overseeing his realm from behind the scenes. This goes so far that many believe this mysterious “Witch-king” to be a non-existent figurehead that is used as a scam for the purposes of those who really wield the power. Thus the Angûlion’s word is the will of the king. He is the one to appear in public and make sure everyone perceives him as a living man and the person responsible for running Angmar. Still the Angûlion appears in public with an ornate mask to give the appearance of an “eternal” figure, though this is designed as being part of the duties of this office.

Whenever an orc tries to raid into Angmar and is caught alive, he is sent to the Razarnî Games for public amusement and to set an example of how Angmar deals with those breaking its laws. Of course, secretly the Witch-king is communicating with the orc-chieftains in Gundabad and Gram and when he sees the need he calls for some “expendable” subjects to be sent to Angmar. Beside this, the orcs occasionally try to make a local raid without previous consent, and this serves the Witch-king’s plans equally well. These attacks serve as the perfect reasoning and pretext for Angmar’s existence – a measure of self-defence against orcs, wolves and trolls. Whenever orcs are caught or killed, the lords make sure this is made known on a broad basis to show that Angmar itself suffers from the Shadow and therefore can “only” be an independent mannish realm.



Castle © by Wouter Florusse, used with permission

A key element in the covering strategy about the nature of Angmar is the openly communicated and widely recognised law that orcs or trolls or other “classic” creatures of Shadow are genuinely banned in Angmar. Actually, the increasing orcish activity in the Hithaeglin is at this time seen as a key event hastening the already ongoing centralisation process that eventually leads to the founding of Angmar as a defence against the orcs. This works very well for about a century, by which time the situation is secure and Angmar no longer is in danger of being crushed by its enemies. This is primarily facilitated by the construction of a well-designed system of border fortifications and castles to make any invasion very costly and lengthy and thus deter any invasion attempts.

It is also in this time that the Church and orders of the violent God of War Azîra (see *Religion in Angmar*¹) gains more influence and provides many of the best troops of the realm. The *Order of the Unfathomed Den* sponsors and organises the “Razarnî Games” – a bloody gladiatorial event that quickly becomes emblematic of a tough Angmar – but which also honours the skill of those who prove themselves in these gory spectacles.

This is also the time of the two first major wars with Angmar’s participation: In TA 1354, Rhudaur (which has been ruled by a Hillman since TA 1346²) allies itself with Angmar. Fore-

¹ Morwinsky, T. 2010. Religion in Angmar. *Other Minds*, Issue 9, page 39 ff.

Hoarwell, while a decoy force takes the “classic” route – fooling the Dúnedain over the main thrust. This is also supported by a surprise attack via a secret route which catches the defenders of the Last Bridge by surprise and secures an Angmarean bridgehead west of the river. Through this, the Angmarean alliance outmanoeuvres the combined forces of Arthedain and Cardolan east of Amon Sûl and brings them to battle on unfavourable terms. As a result, the Cardolanian army is hammered to pieces, the king and his sons retreating with the remnants of their forces towards the Barrow-downs. The greater part of Arthedain’s army is able to retreat in good order though, when the victorious Angmareans are decisively slowed down by the stubborn resistance of Amon Sûl – a key objective for the Witch-king.

The later stage of the campaign sees Arthedain on the brink of defeat, but its young and energetic king Araphor skilfully leads the defence and when the Elves of Lindon send a support force, he is able to decisively defeat the invaders. Meanwhile, the remnants of the Cardolanian army are able to hold the Barrow-downs, though at the price of their king and its sons being killed in the decisive battle there. Even though the invasion is repelled eventually, the price is high, as the Angûlion planned for the defeat of the Dúnadan armies and unleashes the prepared raiding parties into Cardolan after the battle at Amon Sûl. These roam the land almost unchecked (only the Tŷrn Gorthad and Tharbad remained relative secure) – pillaging, plundering and destroying what and whomever they can find. Eventually they are all defeated, but the damage is horrendous. The booty brought back to Angmar after the initial victories is immense and the prisoners entertain the crowds in the arenas for years to come. The final defeat by Arthedain is a setback for the Witch-king, but the annihilation of Cardolan still remains a great success. Despite this partial victory, Angmar suffers catastrophic losses as well. Practically the whole field army is wiped out and only the weakness of the victors and the well-manned border fortifications of Angmar prevent a counterattack

to exploit its own vulnerability. It takes long before its forces are rebuilt to the pre-war state. Ironically, the destruction of Cardolan also leads to a stabilisation of Arthedain due to the immigration of many refugees from Cardolan coming to the last intact realm of the Northern Dúnedain.

All realms invested huge resources in the war and the following decades see only minimal warfare as both sides need to recover. In Angmar, internal power struggles among the surviving lords and religious orders begin, trying to gain favour with the Angûlion and deflecting blame for the failures to others. This period of recovery also leads to the second phase of Angmar’s development.

Middle Phase (ca. TA 1450-1850)

This second and longest era of Angmar’s history spans about four centuries and is characterised by relative calm, regarding major warfare with the Dúnedain. Despite this lack of major wars in the great annals, it sees important events nonetheless. As outlined above, this is an era where the Witch-king shifts to a strategy of slow physical and spiritual erosion of the Dúnedain, rather than brute force through



Barrow-wight © by Olanda Fong-Surdenas, used with permission

major wars. Therefore, this lack of wars is intentional and part of the overall strategy.

In the early 17th century Angmar has recovered to such an extent that it would have been able to mount another major war against the Dúnedain. But due to the aforementioned strategy, this was more hypothetical. In any case, when the Great Plague strikes the Northwest in TA 1635/36, Angmar is hit as well. While the pestilence is of great benefit for the Dark Lord in the long run, the realm of his greatest servant suffers as well. With its troops and peasants dying (even if less so than in the South), its ability to wage another offensive is lost anyway. Thanks to its well-fortified border (and Arthedain suffering from the Plague as well), its defence is never in danger though.

The Plague also has other implications when the last Hillman king of Rhudaur is struck down by it and the Angûlion decides that it is time to fully integrate that realm into Angmar. In addition, Angmar's strength is deemed more than sufficient for this secondary theatre. Thus Rhudaur is made a province of Angmar in TA 1637 and the Hillmen of the river valleys (and especially their lords) gladly join the northern power, seeing benefits in its promises of power and plunder from the Dúnedain. This disposition of these lords is not met with universal acceptance, as the Hillmen of the Highlands – who still lead a very independent lifestyle – feel offended by the heavy new taxation and service requirements levied by Angmar. In TA 1684 a rebellion breaks out that threatens Angmar's access to the key mines in the northern Misty Mountains. After Angmar is able to secure the river valleys early on, the conflict develops into a guerrilla war in the Highlands. Arthedain supports the rebellion as best as possible and it takes Angmar 17 years to finally crush all resistance. Combined with the losses due the Plague, the Hillman Revolt (and the *Banes of Angmar* – see below – that affect the northern realm somehow as well) convinces the Witch-king that Angmar still needs to wear down Arthedain for longer than anticipated and postpones the final phase of the Northern wars for about 100 years more.

Apart from the open warfare, the Witch king looks for other ways in his quest to destroy the northern Dúnedain. Having realised that warfare alone is insufficient, he devises several ways to weaken their spirit. The first is by developing and spreading those blights that were later called *The Banes of Angmar*¹ – diseases and afflictions that were not particularly deadly individually, but combined they served Angmar well in weakening the power of the Dúnedain little by little. These afflictions are universal though, and even Angmar is affected by them if only to a smaller degree.

The second scheme to wear down the resistance of the Dúnedain are the Barrow-wights that the Witch-king sends to the Tyrn Gorthad from the mid-1630s onwards. Even though the Dúnedain contest every infestation, eventually they are losing the battle and by TA 1700, the ancient burial grounds are considered to be no longer safe to travel at night. The Banes and the Barrow-wights are part of the same strategy of attrition to whittle down Arthedain's capability and will for resistance. In addition to this, regular small-scale border warfare continues to both test the Arthadan defence and strategy and constantly sap away on their physical strength.

Internally, the more radical religious convocations in Angmar are slowly allowed to gain influence by the Witch-king² – to them however it seems as if they have to work hard for this increase in influence with the Angûlion. These “middle years” are an era of transformation for Angmar – moving slowly away from its initial goal to be viewed as a “normal” mannish realm contesting the Dúnedain, to one of a more “evil” or cruel outlook. This is also exemplified by the rise of the influence of Mazaralda's church – the evil God of Chaos and destruction. Although it is masked as “just revenge” against injustices perpetrated by the Dúnedain, those with a keen eye, suspect where this is truly leading.

¹ More on these Banes in: Frank, W. J., Kubasch, H., Ruemmler, J. D., et al. 1997. *Arnor: The Land*, Charlottesville, VA, Iron Crown Enterprises. Pahe 18ff. This is also used in Morwinsky, T. 2012. Population and Urbanization in Eriador. *Other Minds*, Issue 13, page 42 ff.

² Morwinsky, T. 2010. Religion in Angmar. *Other Minds*, Issue 9, page 39 ff.

Late Phase (c. TA 1850–1975)

In 1974 the power of Angmar arose again, and the Witch-king came down upon Arthedain before winter was ended.

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
Appendix A

The late phase of Angmar starts with the commencement of the Third Northern War in TA 1851¹. After long preparations, the Witch-king deems the time right to launch another major military campaign to destroy the Dúnedain. This is co-ordinated with his master's plans in Rhovanion, where the Wainriders (Mardumhesta²) attack Gondor's Ehwathrumi (Northmen) allies. This is deliberately chosen in order to avoid mutual assistance for the Númenórean realms and maximise the chances for their destruction or at least severe weakening. Unfortunately for Angmar, the northern Dúnedain have learned from their past mistakes and wage an almost perfect campaign that outmanoeuvres Angmar's forces by luring them into a trap finally defeating them in a great battle near Bree, which the Angmareans tried to capture. Instrumental in this campaign are the mounted archers of Arthedain³. This is also the first time that orcs participate openly on the side of Angmar in a major campaign. Still the Angmarean lords try to make it appear as if the orcs act independently, though suspicions about the nature and background of Angmar strongly increase. When news of this crushing defeat are brought to the Witch-king, he sends several of the surviving leaders to the Games to set an example and increase "motivation" for the others. In an effort to prevent similar problems in the next campaign, he also devises a final *Bane* (the 'Bloodeye Ravish') to counter the horses on which the Arthadan strategy of mobile defence hinges.

Despite the setback of the TA 1851 campaign, the Witch-king finally decides that the

¹ See: Giebl, T. 2011. The Tale of Years. *Other Minds*, Issue 11, page 90 ff. for more on this.

² Morwinsky, T. 2014. Demographics of Rhovanion in the Third Age. *Other Minds*, Issue 14, page 131 ff.

³ See Morwinsky, T. 2001. Armies of Eriador. *Other Hands*, Issue 33/34 (Supplement), page 1 ff.

time is ripe for the final destruction of Arthedain and intensifies his efforts to bring this about during the turn of the century. Realising the failures of the previous campaigns and the limited amount of manpower to Angmar, he now also scales up the use of orcs and other creatures of the Shadow. First he now openly supports the orc tribes in the no-man's land between Arthedain and Angmar (without the need for a ruse or secrecy this is much more efficiently) in order to keep more constant pressure on the Dúnedain. Secondly, he allows the rise of the Church of Mazaralda (see paragraphs below) to power. Together, these events tip the scales in favour of the assertion that a truly evil power is behind the throne in Carn Dûm. Combined with the attacks on Gondor, this insight greatly troubles the king in Fornost. This is also mentioned by Tolkien:

*It was in the reign of Araphant in the North and of Ondoher son of Calimehtar in the South that the two kingdoms again took counsel together after long silence and estrangement. For at last **they perceived that some single power and will was directing the assault from many quarters upon the survivors of Númenor.** It was at that time that Arvedui heir of Araphant wedded Fíriel daughter of Ondoher (1940). But neither kingdom was able to send help to the other; for Angmar renewed its attack upon Arthedain at the same time as the Wainriders reappeared in great force.*

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
Appendix A (my emphasis)

The consequence was the pact of mutual assistance⁴ and the political marriage of Arvedui and Fíriel. The attacks on Arthedain mentioned above occur from the 1940s throughout the '60s. While they are not on the scale of a major all-out campaign, it is a style of constant and increased pressure on the border both by orcs and the Angmarrim that are designed to wear down the border lordships and bind the dwin-

⁴ The reigns of Araphant and Ondoher overlap from TA 1936 to 1944.

dling Dúnadan resources. Around TA 1970 these attacks lessen, but this is only the calm before the great storm.

The already mentioned rise of the *Church of Mazaralda* as the dominant religious convocation in Angmar and its sermons and ideology will later be remembered as emblematic of the Angmar “full of evil men and orcs” as quoted in the beginning of this article. The current Angûilion (usually a Mazaraldan) now openly uses Orcs and Trolls in his strategy of the constant border warfare. This serves several purposes – to keep up the pressure on the border (and conserve the strength of the Men of Angmar) and show their power to the general, not so radical, population (both in Angmar and Arthedain) by using these creatures of the Shadow.

In contrast to the previous campaigns, this final one starts in winter – a highly unusual time for warfare. Despite the disadvantages, the profits outweigh them – especially as Arthedain has major problems provisioning its remaining horses while the orcish Wolfriders can prey on the people they can find as well as the livestock of the people of Arthedain. Finally the Witch-king takes to the field himself for the first time. It is a gamble though, as the stocks of provisions in Angmar are dangerously low due to the effects of the worsening weather and the *Banes* of the Witch-king. This will play a pivotal role in the final downfall of the realm.



The Riders of Rohan © by Anke Eißmann, used with permission

During his absence, the last Faithful in Angmar, who had practiced their adherence to the ideals of the West in secret for centuries, quietly assemble in many places and flee southwards – aided by the wizard Gandalf. Thus they avoid the impending total destruction wrought on their former homeland. Later on this becomes known in the annals of Eriador as the “Women’s March”, as most of their leaders as well as a majority of its overall numbers are women (and children).

This final invasion of Arthedain is very successful, as it both destroys the Arthadan army in the *Battle of the North Downs*, capturing Fornost after a brief but costly siege and sending the remaining Dúnedain and many of their people fleeing westwards. Moreover, later King Arvedui perishes in the Bay of Forochel. Meanwhile the Witch-king occupies Fornost, receiving homage from his underlings on the king’s seat and feasting his triumph. The victory already bears the root for the subsequent defeat though: First many of his best troops perished in the *Battle of the North Downs* against Arvedui, and then the blights that served him well in the past in wearing down the Dúnedain also affect his troops whose supplies run low and who are affected by widespread disease in cramped quarters. The next spring, the remnants of the Arthadan army, the Elves of Lindon and an expeditionary force from Gondor march eastward and meet the Witch-king near the Hills of Evendim. His soaring pride after the victory over the Dúnedain misleads him to critically underestimate the weaknesses of his army in the spring of TA 1975, believing he can defeat his foes on the battlefield again:

In his [the Witch-king’s] pride he did not await the onset of his enemies in his stronghold, but went out to meet them, thinking to sweep them, as others before, into the Lune.

—The Lord of the Rings.
Appendix A

In addition to this, the prevailing issues in the army now are:

- The somehow precarious status of his troops due to low provisions (also caused by the widespread destruction of Arthadan infrastructure and stores) and suffering from diseases – including the *Banes of Angmar*.
- The losses of many of his best troops in the *Battle of the North Downs*, which are irreplaceable during this campaign.

Thus the Witch-king seeks battle rather than waiting for his enemies to come to him. When the forces clash in the *Battle of Nenuial*, initially his troops hold their ground but soon begin to give way and slowly retreat towards Fornost when finally the bulk of the allied cavalry catches them wrong-footed with a bold flanking move and decisively defeat the army of Angmar:

But the Host of the West came down on him out of the Hills of Evendim, and there was a great battle on the plain between Nenuial and the North Downs. The forces of Angmar were already giving way and retreating towards Fornost when the main body of the horsemen that had passed round the hills came down from the north and scattered them in a great rout.

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
Appendix A

Fleeing the battlefield, the remnants of the army are led by the Witch-king himself back to Angmar and its forts, but are eventually caught by the Gondorian cavalry and when he attacks Prince Eärnur, he is confronted by Glorfindel from Imladris and leaves this realm forever :

‘Eärnur now rode back, but Glorfindel, looking into the gathering dark, said: “Do not pursue him! He will not return to this land.”

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
Appendix A

After the flight of the Witch-king, the last remnants of the Angmarean forces – including the last Angûlion – make a final stand and are eventually cut down to the last man by the victorious Gondorians and Arthedain. A fate scarcely less grim befalls the remaining people of Angmar. The Church of Mazaralda had left many priests behind to keep the people in line as supplies were rather low and mostly diverted to the now destroyed army. So the beginning famine is already a problem when word of the disaster reaches Angmar. A short but vicious civil war erupts which brings the Church of Mazaralda into power, but the orcs fleeing from the battlefield cause many losses among the now largely unprotected civilians before the new rulers are able to contain this threat and erect a short-lived rule of religious zeal.

Meanwhile, in order to ensure that Angmar will not rise again, the remnants of Arthedain’s forces together with Eärnur’s corps plan the thorough destruction of Angmar. Once the army has been rested, reorganised and the logistics secured, they march northward to make an end to what is left of Angmar:

Then so utterly was Angmar defeated that not a man nor an orc of that realm remained west of the Mountains.

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
Appendix A

Weakened by the internal conflict, the Mazaraldans can offer little serious resistance and thus the allied armies quickly crush any resistance, as told in the annalistic description above. The only ones to escape the disaster are those few who secretly through the centuries adhered to their faithful beliefs. These assemble in secret can almost all flee in the harsh “Women’s March”¹ – aided by the Wizard Gandalf. They later settle along the Mitheithel, becoming stalwart supporters of the Rangers in the centuries to come.

¹ See Morwinsky, T. 2010. Religion in Angmar. *Other Minds*, Issue 9, page 39 ff. (p. 56)

One by one, the allies capture every Angmarean city and stronghold, showing no quarter² to the people there and from those able to escape many are forced to flee into the northern wilderness, where almost all die from starvation, exposure or predators. Remembering the atrocities done to their land and people, no mercy is granted by the victorious Dúnedain as stated above. Those that manage to flee to the eastern parts of Angmar in the northern vales of the Anduin are almost completely destroyed a few years later by the Éothéod in their search for new land. Again, some escape into other areas and a few may indeed survive. After its people have either been killed or driven into the wastelands beyond, a second phase starts.

In a 20-year effort the survivors of Arthedain and part of the Gondorian forces (those with the

² In effect, including women, children, elderly and civilians. It is a grim time indeed.

necessary skills) systematically dismantle and destroy everything that might be of future used to support any habitation: Castles are razed, cities are put to flames and even the ruins are destroyed. This lasts until TA 1995 when all of Angmar's infrastructure has been destroyed. After this is complete, the last Gondorians leave the North. This departure marks the final end of the realm of the Witch-king. The destruction wrought is so thorough that the ruins offer no shelter or support for other enemies in the following centuries. In addition the Rangers regularly patrol the land to prevent major evil creatures from settling there and trying to re-establish the lost kingdom of the Witch-king. Thus ends not only the tale of Angmar, but also its physical legacy.



The Battle of the Morannon © by Peter Xavier Price, used with permission

TALE OF YEARS - ANGMAR

Year (TA)	Event(s)
1274	Capture of Barazbizar from the Broadbeam Dwarves. The city is re-named Carn Dûm. Official founding of Angmar.
1287	The Great Conclave defines the official pantheon of Angmar. Angarnas the prophet becomes the first Angûlion.
1354	Angmar allies itself as a junior partner with Rhudaur, where a Hillman lord (Dúghnas) has seized power from the Dúnedain.
1355-56	First Northern War. King Argeleb I of Arthedain and Dúghnas of Rhudaur are slain.
1357	Establishment of the Razarnî Games by the Church of Mazaralda.
c. 1360-80	Siege of Imladris, preparation for the reduction of the Angle's border forts along the Great Road.
1405	The last of the Angle's border forts are permanently taken or destroyed.
1409	Second Northern War. King Osthir of Cardolan and Ionall of Rhudaur are slain.
c. 1636	Around this time, the Barrow-wights begin to infest the ancient edainic barrows on the Tyrn Gorthad. Initially the Dúnedain are able to cleanse the barrows from them, but the wights come back more frequently with every year.
c. 1650	The Stream Fever is first seen in Eriador. Orcs start to settle in the no man's lands between Angmar and Arthedain.
1684-1701	The Hillman revolt breaks out in Rhudaur. It is supported by Arthedain, binds many Angmarean resources and causes considerable losses until it is finally crushed.
c. 1700	Crop and Herd Blights begin to affect the yield in Arthedain, though generally they are only problematic in times of hardship where they increase the already critical situation. The Barrow-wights infest the whole of the Barrow-downs and cannot be removed anymore.
1781	The Amok Curse is observed for the first time in Arthedain. It takes almost 60 years to get the spread under control and finally put an end to its further proliferation.
1851	Third Northern War. Crushing Angmarean defeat in the Battle of Bree.
c. 1860	First appearance of the Red Flux and several Wood-blights. The former affects Hobbits the most while the latter reduces crop yields.
1889-91	The Red Flux devastates many Hobbit smials.
c. 1900	The Bloodeye Ravish is first seen in the horse herds of Arthedain.
1908-10	The Great Bloodeye Ravish epidemic in Arthedain. Its spread to Angmar prevents Angmar from a major campaign at this time.
1910	Orcs in the area around the eastern and northern borders of Arthedain increase, supported by Angmar.
1937	Arthedain finally confirm that the mysterious "Witch-king" is indeed a Nazgûl. Coupled with the pressure on Gondor, this sharply increases fears about the attacks on the Dúnedain.
1939	Arthedain renews contacts with Gondor about the threats to both kingdoms. They agree on closer cooperation and regular consultations.
1940	Pact of mutual assistance agreed on by Arthedain and Gondor. This is strengthened by the marriage of Arvedui, son of Araphant with Fíriel, daughter of Ondoher.
1944	Angmar starts to sharply increase pressure on Arthedain's borders, binding its resources. This coincides with the commencement of the Third Wainrider War in the South.
C. 1970	Angmar's pressure on the borders eases somewhat, but a lot of damage has been done.
1974	Fourth Northern War. Fall of Fornost and Battle of the North Downs. Fall of Arthedain. Late in the year the harsh "Women's March" heads southward from Angmar into former Rhudaur, saving those who had kept their faithful ideals throughout all the years.
1975	Battle of Nenuial. The Witch-king deserts Angmar after his complete defeat in war. Outbreak of civil war for control in Carn Dûm, with the Church of Mazaralda emerging victorious. A brief reign of religious terror follows.
1976	Fall of the Church of Mazaralda's reign to the vengeful Dúnedain who put all of Angmar's people and orcs they can get hold of to the sword.
1976-95	The Campaign of Demolition. The remaining Arthadan troops and their Gondorian allies systematically destroy all the physical infrastructure of Angmar.

ROLEPLAYING IN AND WITH ANGMAR

As you can see in the previous chapters, Angmar offers a great variety of roleplaying opportunities. In its early years, your heroes can experience it as a somewhat tough, but still “normal” mannish realm. This has the advantage to put seasoned Tolkien veterans somewhat on the wrong foot, when there is no obvious evil realm there – even they (the players) “know” that the Witch-king is at work. It offers many roleplaying opportunities when the environment does not match to the player’s meta knowledge and it should promote good roleplaying when adapting to the contemporary view of Angmar.

In its middle years, the realm of the Witch-king offers a lot of potential for gaming with a clandestine background or participating in the “forgotten” regional history (i.e. the last stand of the Hillmen) which contributes nonetheless to the eventual downfall of Angmar. Here adventures revolving around uncovering Angmar’s cover offer players the chance to contribute to history.

Later on, during the final years of both Angmar and Arthedain, the Shadow is much easier to pinpoint and it is more of the classic “good vs. evil” scenario. In fact it partly resembles the War of the Ring – only on a much smaller scale.

Whatever era you prefer – Angmar has something in store for everyone’s taste and should offer plenty opportunity for campaigns of various style and tone.

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MIDDLE-EARTH IN MINIATURE V: THE ORCS

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supplementary
stuff



It has been a while since you last saw a contribution by José Enrique leading us skilfully into the realm of Middle-earth miniatures.

But thee wait was worthwhile - here he shows us one of the most iconic people living in Middle-earth - the orcs. These are the most notorious and common servants of the Dark Lord and his chieftains, and dealing with them properly also in terms of miniatures is obvious. Here José Enrique gives a comprehensive overview of the market, providing you ample ideas for your own collection.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In this article, I use the terms “orc” and “goblin” interchangeably. Within Tolkien’s works, they are both used, but reflect a more regional variation in naming or labelling these creatures rather than actual differences in their basic nature.

SPECIAL THANKS

Long time ago, there was a discussion about this very topic on the Lead Adventure Forum and I’ve used (with permission) some very valid points made by the user Hobgoblin. You can check his blog about orcish miniatures at: <http://hobgoblinry.blogspot.com>

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We have finally reached the deep caves where the most common servants of the Enemy dwell, far from the sunlight. Let’s study who they are and how they look like, but do not let them see you, dear reader, or you may end up mining their tunnels as a slave or even in their cooking pots!

SOURCES

The origin of the orcish race is unclear even for the Wise. Probably the best known theory comes from the published *Silmarillion*:

Yet this is held true by the wise of Eressëa, that all those of the Quendi who came into the hands of Melkor, ere Utumno was broken, were put there in prison, and by slow arts of cruelty were corrupted and enslaved; and thus did Melkor breed the hideous race of the Orcs in envy and mockery of the Elves, of whom they were afterwards the bitterest foes.

—*The Silmarillion, Chapter III: Of the Coming of the Elves and the Captivity of Melkor*

But this book was published posthumously by Professor Tolkien's son, Christopher and assembled from various unfinished fragments of his father's manuscripts. Due to their unfinished state, he generally used the most complete versions¹ rather than the most recent ones for this book. The good Professor never stopped working on his mythology and the last he wrote about this topic is that it was unlikely Elves could be the source of the orcs. Then he thought about other possibilities:

(1). *As the case of Aulë and the Dwarves shows, only Eru could make creatures with independent wills, and with reasoning powers. But Orcs seem to have both: they can try to cheat Morgoth [...], rebel against him, or criticize him.*

(2). *? Therefore they must be corruptions of something pre-existing.*

(3). *But Men had not yet appeared, when the Orcs already existed. Aulë constructed the Dwarves out of his memory of the Music; but Eru would not sanction the work of Melkor so as to allow the independence of the Orcs.[...]*

It also seems clear (see 'Finrod and Andreth') that though Melkor could utterly corrupt and ruin individuals, it is not possible to contemplate his absolute perversion of a whole people, or group of peoples, and his making that state heritable. (2) [Added later: This latter must (if a fact) be an act of Eru.]

*In that case Elves, as a source, are very unlikely. And are Orcs 'immortal', in the Elvish sense? Or trolls? It seems clearly implied in *The Lord of the Rings* that trolls existed in their own right, but were 'tinkered' with by Melkor.(3)*

(4). *What of talking beasts and birds with reasoning and speech? [...]*

In any case is it likely or possible that even the least of the Maiar would become Orcs? [...] Melkor had corrupted many spirits - some great, as Sauron, or less so, as Balrogs. The least could have been primitive (and much more powerful and perilous) Orcs; but by practising when embodied procreation they would (cf. Melian) [become] more and more earthbound, unable to return to spirit-state (even demon-form), until released by death (killing), and they would dwindle in force. [...]

It remains therefore terribly possible there was an Elvish strain in the Orcs.(10) These may then even have been mated with beasts (sterile!) - and later Men. Their life-span would be diminished. And dying they would go to Mandos and be held in prison till the End.

—*History of Middle-earth vol. X – Morgoth's Ring. Myths Transformed*



¹ These older versions sometimes were no longer in line with the development of the mythology as the published *Lord of the Rings*.

- Finally, the extremely rare maiar-blooded ones would have seeded bloodlines of chieftains or perhaps the very odd orc priest of Sauron's dark religion, able to dabble into Sorcery or warchiefs like Bolg.
- Finally, keep in mind that you will have a lot of crossbreeding among the orcs, meaning that many will have a mixed ancestry with different foci.

There is a common trend in videogames and RPGs to depict orcs like massive muscular monstrosities. In context with Middle-earth, it is high time to make a clear statement of these interpretations. The following quotes should make this point very clear!

Out jumped the goblins, big goblins, great ugly-looking goblins, lots of goblins, before you could say rocks and blocks.

The passage was low and roughly made. It was not too difficult for the hobbit, except when, in spite of all care, he stubbed his poor toes again, several times, on nasty jagged stones in the floor. "A bit low for goblins, at least for the big ones," thought Bilbo, not knowing that even the big ones, the orcs of the mountains, go along at a great speed stooping low with their hands almost on the ground.

This suggests that the size of goblins ranges from hobbit size to something bigger, but how much bigger?

- Those of animal origin would be something like carnivorous hairless gorillas. Big (for an orc), strong and not very brilliant, with crude weapons made by themselves. These would provide the “muscle” of the armies of Mordor. Overall, they are stupid and strong.
- Orcs of elven origin could be very nimble and fast, great climbers and ambushers and perhaps great Warg-riders as well. Probably the Goblins of the Misty Mountains come from them.
- Then, those having some mannish ancestry would be bigger than the “elvish” Orcs but smaller (and more cunning) than the brutish “animal” ones.



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sive, given that Gollum had had ample exposure to orcs of all shapes and size):

[The Haradrim are] Not nice; very cruel wicked Men they look. Almost as bad as Orcs, and much bigger.

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
The Black Gate is Closed

And last but not least, Gimli has something to add. In the battle at Helm's Deep, together with Aragorn and Éomer and he uses a postern gate to stop the attack of a battering ram on the main gate. Aragorn and Éomer (fine, and some "stout men", let's give some credit to the unsung heroes) defeat the Dunlending rammers while Gimli sits down and watches. He only draws his axe for killing some orcs than come after and this is his reasoning for it:

"I followed you to shake off sleep," said Gimli; "but I looked on the hillmen and they seemed over large for me, so I sat beside a stone to see your sword-play."

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
Helm's Deep

And then, we can read about smaller Orcs:

Over the tunic went a coat of stout ring-mail, short for a full-sized orc, too long for Frodo and heavy. About it he clasped a belt, at which there hung a short sheath holding a broadbladed stabbing-sword. Sam had brought several orc-helmets. One of them fitted Frodo well enough, a black cap with iron rim, and iron hoops covered with leather upon which the evil Eye was painted in red above the beaklike nose-guard.

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
The Tower of Cirith Ungol

So, a short ring-mail for a full-sized orc turns out to be too long for a Hobbit. He can only pass out as a little orc, thus we can only conclude that the smallest orcs are Hobbit-sized

(but are bow-legged and have longer arms). So then, orc height is between Hobbits' and Dwarves' height. That would be (from the tiniest Halfling to the taller Naugrim):

3 feet (0.91 meters) \cong 15 mm

to

5 feet (1.53 meters) \cong 25 mm

Please keep in mind our reference scale is a human of 1.80 meters (5 feet 11 inches), equivalent to a 30 mm miniature (you'll see him in all the pictures — a good image says more than a hundred words).

I can hear you saying "hey, but what about Uruks... and Goblin-men and half-orcs"?



Mithril orc © painted by Elroi, used with permission

Uruks

▪ Mordor Uruks

'There are Orcs, very many of them,' he said. 'And some are large and evil: black Uruks of Mordor.'

[...]

But even as they retreated, and before Pippin and Merry had reached the stair outside, a huge orc-chieftain, almost man-high, clad in black mail from head to foot, leaped into the chamber; behind him his followers clustered in the doorway.

—*The Lord of the Rings.*
The Bridge of Khazad-dûm

Let's go to Moria to meet the Uruks first:

So these Uruks range at the high end of our defined height span for orcs, which still remains below a man's height. And please note that even this a **huge** orc-chieftain which is likely taller and stronger than regular Uruks, is only **almost** of man-height. In turn this makes it very clear that regular orcs (and most Uruks) must be significantly shorter than the average man.

▪ Isengard Uruks

Some are from the North, from the Misty Mountains, if I know anything of Orcs and their kinds.

And here are others strange to me. Their gear is not after the manner of Orcs at all!

There were four goblin-soldiers of greater stature, swart, slant-eyed, with thick legs and large hands. They were armed with short broad-bladed swords, not with the curved scimitars usual with Orcs; and they had bows of yew, in length and shape like the bows of Men. Upon their shields they bore a strange device: a small white hand in the centre of a black field; on the front of their iron helms was set an S-rune, wrought of some white metal.

—*The Lord of the Rings.
The Departure of Boromir*

This quote shows that Isengard Uruks are bigger than common orcs and in this case their gear is quite different as well.



Fighting Uruk-hai © by Jan Pospisil, used with permission

▪ Goblin-men

He emptied Isengard. I saw the enemy go: endless lines of marching Orcs; and troops of them mounted on great wolves. And there were battalions of Men, too. Many of them carried torches, and in the flare I could see their faces. Most of them were ordinary men, rather tall and dark-haired, and grim but not particularly evil-looking. But there were some others that were horrible: man-high, but with goblin-faces, sallow, leering, squint-eyed. Do you know, they reminded me at once of that Southerner at Bree; only he was not so obviously orc-like as most of these were.

—*The Lord of the Rings.
Flotsam and Jetsam*

No doubt these Goblin-men are larger than the other orcs we pictured so far, but as they are primarily Men, this must not be taken as a classic orc feature. That interpretation fits nicely with the other texts, which tell us that Saruman has large orcs that use Mannish equipment (and don't mind the sun at all) and horrible men with faces like those of orcs.

In this case the only difference between this Goblin-men and men is their orcish faces. It is worth noting that Goblin-men and Half-orcs are not the same, but probably related:

There is no doubt that long afterwards, in the Third Age, Saruman rediscovered this, or learned of it in lore, and in his lust for mastery committed this, his wickedest deed: the interbreeding of Orcs and Men, producing both Men-orcs large and cunning, and Orc-men treacherous and vile.

—*Morgoth's Ring.
Myths Transformed*

It seems that the main characteristic that sets the two apart is the degree of mannish and orcish ancestry — respectively. This would mean that “Goblin-men” would have more mannish than orcish ancestry, whereas the latter is higher in Half-orcs.

Orc is the form of the name that other races had for this foul people as it was in the language of Rohan. In Sindarin it was orch. Related, no doubt, was the word uruk of the Black Speech, though this was applied as a rule only to the great soldier-orcs that at this time issued from Mordor and Isengard.

—The Lord of the Rings.
Appendix F

As a conclusion to the quotes and respective conclusion above, the following sketch illustrates many things. First and foremost my inability to draw and second, how I imagine the height and build of the different Orc-breeds.



Man: I think it's fair to estimate the average height of the typical man of Gondor with a good degree of Dúnadan or Northman ancestry as about six feet, though some were noticeably taller (Aragorn at no less than 6'6"). Average men of Gondor (with no or little Dúnadan ancestry) would probably be about 5'7" in height. The Dunlendings and their cousins the Bree-men, who are even smaller, would still be taller than most orcs.

Snaga: I've used this term to refer to the 'standard' orc. As discussed before, Hobbits, at roughly three feet, could pass for small orcs, but even the larger 'standard' orcs would probably have been shorter than Dwarves (at about five feet). So I guess roughly four feet (plus or minus six-eight inches) would be a fair guess for a Snaga's height. We can presume certain regional variations in size, build, and feature

(larger eyes for the orcs of Moria, for example) as well, but the basic build should be the same: large heads, fairly long arms and somewhat bow-legged. Whether the tracker-orcs were just drafted from the smaller members of this breed or a 'sub-species' is unclear.

Black Uruk: these are the soldier-orcs of Mordor, like Grishnakh. Note the long arms, the crooked legs, and the broad shoulders. I've shown them a bit shorter than the Isengard Uruks, but this could be perhaps a matter of posture more than actual height.

Isengard-Uruk: Saruman's soldiery. These are the stocky, straight-limbed orcs at Helm's Deep and Parth Galen. Both types of Uruks are about the maximum dwarven-height, so around

five feet.

Hero: These are the truly enormous orcs, like the Moria Chieftain, Azog, Bolg and perhaps the Great Goblin (not that bloated victim of a massive gamma-ray overdose from the movie of course), and I imagine the orc leaders from the *Silmarillion* and the *History of Middle-earth, Vol 1 and 2 (The Book of Lost Tales)*. I would say they are almost man-high, let's say around 5'5" or 5'6".

Goblin-men: They are basically indistinguishable from men apart from their faces, which vary from simply ugly, squint-eyed and leering to quite horrible and orcish. In all cases, I imagine that orcs are deceptively strong, and that even the smaller, wirier ones are able to 'punch above their weight.'

Appearance

Orc is the form of the name that other races had for this foul people as it was in the language of Rohan. In Sindarin it was orch. Related, no doubt, was the word uruk of the Black Speech, though this was applied as a rule only to the great soldier-orcs that at this time issued from Mordor and Isengard. The Orcs are definitely stated to be corruptions of the 'human' form seen in Elves and Men. They are (or were) squat, broad, flat-nosed, sallow-skinned, with wide mouths and slant eyes: in fact degraded and repulsive versions of the (to Europeans) least lovely Mongol-types.

—The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien.

While this is a quite generic description and we have seen different breeds may vary from the norm, these are the key features we should look after in our miniatures.

This following quote illustrates the variety within the orcish race – featuring bothan Uruk and a common orc:

Presently two orcs came into view. One was clad in ragged brown and was armed with a bow of horn; it was of a small breed, black-skinned, with wide and snuffling nostrils: evidently a tracker of some kind. The other was a big fighting-orc, like those of Shagrat's company, bearing the token of the Eye. He also had a bow at his back and carried a short broad-headed spear.

**—The Lord of the Rings.
The Land of Shadow**

The tracker-orc is explicitly described as “black-skinned”, but that somewhat implies that the Uruk (“a big fighting-orc, like those of Shagrat’s company”) accompanying him is not. Darker skin seems not to be an exclusive trait of Uruks.

Clothes and equipment

Misty Mountains Goblins

There in the shadows on a large flat stone sat a tremendous goblin with a huge head, and armed goblins were standing round him carrying the axes and the bent swords that they use.

**—The Hobbit.
Over Hill and Under Hill**

Bilbo blinked, and then suddenly he saw the goblins: goblins in full armour with drawn swords sitting just inside the door, and watching it with wide eyes, and watching the passage that led to it.

**—The Hobbit.
Riddles in the Dark**

I think it is safe to assume the swords of the last quote should be the bent-swords of the previous one. So, scimitars, axes and heavy armour are typical for the Misty Mountains goblins.

What about missile weapons? It’s a bit unclear if the orcs that killed Isildur were from this region, but they did use arrows:

But to the nighteyed Orcs that lurked there on the watch he loomed up, a monstrous shadow of fear, with a piercing eye like a star. They loosed their poisoned arrows at it, and fled.

**—Unfinished Tales.
The Disaster of the Gladden**

Misty Mountain Warg raiders

There a host of Wargs came ravening and with them came the bodyguard of Bolg, goblins of huge size with scimitars of steel.

**—The Hobbit.
The Clouds Burst**

Here again we see scimitars as the common orcish sword. Please keep the aforementioned

relations in mind when envisioning the “huge size” of the soldiers of Bolg’s bodyguard. They should still be significantly smaller than most humans.

Rams and hammers were beating against it. It cracked and staggered back, and the opening grew suddenly wide. Arrows came whistling in, but struck the northern wall, and fell harmlessly to the floor. There was a horn-blast and a rush of feet, and orcs one after another leaped into the chamber.

—*The Lord of the Rings.
The Bridge of Khazad-dûm*

MORIA COMMON ORCS

Interestingly enough, Moria goblins seem to use hammers (although it is possible that they were used only to break open the door and to later draw their melee weapons).

MORDOR URUKS

Uruks

‘The Morgul-stuff, Gorbag’s gear, was a better fit and better made,’ said Sam; ‘but it wouldn’t do, I guess, to go carrying his tokens into Mordor, not after this business here. Well, there you are, Mr. Frodo. A perfect little orc, if I may make so bold—at least you would be, if we could cover your face with a mask, give you longer arms, and make you bow-legged.’ [...]

—*The Lord of the Rings.
The Tower of Cirith Ungol*

The difference here seems to be the quality of the equipment, but they would wear the same kind of armour and weapons.

MORDOR COMMON ORCS

Sam had brought several orc-helmets. One of them fitted Frodo well enough, a black cap with iron rim, and iron hoops covered with leather upon which the evil Eye was painted in red above the beaklike nose-guard.

—*The Lord of the Rings.
The Tower of Cirith Ungol*

It’s rather curious that a flat-nosed orc would use a beaklike nose-guard. However, historically beaklike guards existed. According to Wikipedia: “the protruding muzzle gave better protection to the face from blows by offering a deflecting surface and it improved ventilation (which was largely afforded the wearer, when the visor was down, through holes in the “muzzle,” such holes being often on the right side of the “muzzle”, with additional holes near the mouth, or on both sides).”

Isengard Uruk-hai

To fit Tolkien’s descriptions of the Isengard Uruk-hai, the basic outlook should be as follows:

- Significantly shorter than Men (enough to make a real difference in combat and to be immediately distinguishable from Man height creatures).
- Yet also larger than most (not necessarily all) other orcs.
- Squat and broad.
- Thick-legged, long-armed and large handed.
- Armed with Man-like, rather than Orcish, equipment: specifically straight, short, broad-bladed swords, long yew bows and large round shields.
- Armoured in mail with badged helmets (to show the ‘S’ rune for Saruman).

Conclusion

Orcs come in many sizes and they are mostly squat, broad, bow-legged, and always shorter than men, unless they are Goblin men. Regarding weaponry, they favour scimitars and a variety of common weapons such as spears, axes and short bows (due to their stature they could not use longbows). Little is known of the shape of their shields, so I'll assume them to be mainly round and they use chainmail (at least the leaders) and helmets.

The MINIATURES

DISCLAIMER: What you are to see contains images of orc skin painted green. Viewer description is strongly advised. Please ignore any green skin for our purposes and pretend it's sallow or black.

For more information please check [this link](#).

Bronze Age

This company has one orc reference that could work for Middle-earth, sculpted by David Soderquist.



Reference: 32ORCS1

Description: They are wiry, with human proportions and of man-height.

Best fit: they will be a good match for Goblin-men or even Uruks. Some of them have exotic crested helmets, perhaps taken over from an Easterling tribe, or the bodyguards of a priest of Sauron's Dark Religion.

Games Workshop

For once, I find some of the "peterjacksonian" Middle-earth miniatures by Games Workshop as reasonably accurate. As usual, they are mostly way overpriced, some are discontinued and watch out for metal plates. In this case the generally smaller scale of the line works in our favour (especially on the early specimens).



Reference: Moria™ Goblin Commanders

Description: They aren't "squat and broad", but slim. However they are bow-legged and have flat noses.

Best fit: The Moria Goblins are good enough for small and less muscular orcs (snagas), at least those without plate armor. I am not a fan of the "fantasy" shields of the plastic ones though.



Reference: Uglûk and Vraskû, Uruk-hai
Captains

Description: The “jacksonian” Isengard Uruks could work for Half-orcs, since they have straight swords, bows (reject those with cross-bows if you want to stay true to the Professor’s descriptions) and are of human proportions and stature. These mix rather well with the Mirlington Half-orcs. I am not a fan of the plate armour, but at least is not articulated.

Best fit: Half-orcs.



Goblin Factory

This company offers a wide range of goblins, unarmoured and armoured, riding wolves or on foot and with a nice variety of weapons. It is not the finest sculpting ever seen, but quite serviceable and not expensive at all.



Reference: GOBSW009

Description: The chap on the previous column has a scimitar, chainmail and round shield, he is certainly squat and bog-legged and kind of broad. And th flat nose and slant eyes are a plus.

Best Fit: I don't have any of these (yet!) so I'm not sure about size. Depending on that they'd make nice Snagas or standard orcs. The unarmoured types would make great "wild" tribes with less resources and poorer equipment, or light troops such as scouts.



Reference: GOBSW009

Description: The same as above applies here, but he is riding a giant wolf. The lack of varied poses for the wolves models is a pity (I think there are about three different models only), but they look reasonably good. The only detail I'm not fond of is that the wolves seem to have crude saddles and bridles.

Best Fit: I'm sure you can figure this one out.

Heresy Miniatures

This company offers some goblin models armed mainly with bows and forming a command group. They are sculpted by Andy Foster.



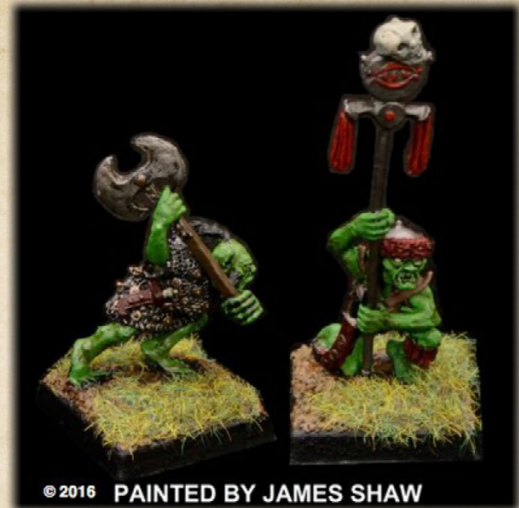
Reference: Goblin Hero with Sword and Shield

Description: These have pretty much human proportions and protruding noses, so I would have ruled them out but there is something about them. I think they are a very good “realistic approach” on the old cartoonish “warhammerish” models we all know and love. If you want a tribe of a strange orc breed for nostalgia’s sake, this is it.

Best fit: They wear fur, so I’d place them in the Misty Mountains, or as a scouts in Saruman’s army.

Iron Wind Metals (former Ral Partha)

This company has some pretty good old Ral Partha references. I’ve picked the orc and goblins from the Chaos Wars range. I think at least some of them were sculpted by Tom Meier.



Reference: Goblin Command Set [98-919]

Description: They are smallish, with flat noses and slant eyes, they seem agile and those with armour wear chainmail. I have a word of caution though, as the “lesser goblins” are too small (unless you want pigmy goblins, or youngsters).

Best fit: This is how imagine the pesky goblins, at least the smaller ones. I’d place them in Moria.



Reference: Orc Warrior with Sword, Pelts [51-106]

Description: A bit bigger and definitively broader than the goblins, with bigger heads, hands a feet.

Best fit: pretty much your standard orc warriors, the mix well with the goblins of the same company so I'd use them together to have size variety with a consistent sculpting style.



Mirlinton (former Grenadier)

This company has the old Grenadier miniatures sculpted by Nick Lund. The style is a bit dated, with chunky weapons and the like, but with a good paintjob they can still stand their ground.



Reference: Group Goblin Personality 1

Description: These goblins come in three sizes. Most of them are medium size and certainly squat, broad, ugly and mean-looking. The sculpting style with broad proportion and crude faces clearly sets them apart as a different race.

Best fit: Regular mountain goblins.



Reference: Half Orc Command Group

Description: They are of man-height, with ugly faces (but not bestial), straight and broad swords, short bows and round shields. They have some crude plate armour and mix well with Games Workshop's Isengard Uruks. By the way, the Half-orc were made by a different sculptor, Mark Copplestone.

Best fit: Saruman's Half-orcs.





Reference: Great Big Orc Warrior 4

Description: Here we have squat and broad brutes , with long arms and flat noses. Wolf-riders mount properly huge and evil-looking wargs although they seem a bit cartoonish.

Best fit: This is pretty much how I've imagined orcs for years uncounted, but I admit I'm biased by nostalgia. If you've bought my multi-species origin theory, these would be the animal-orcs.

Mithril Miniatures

Mithril's orcs come in different sizes, but they all have the same proportions. They have some warg riders but I think most of them are discontinued. They are culpted by Chris Tubb.



Reference: MM541 Orcish fire-squad captain

Description: He has the inaccuracies we have come to expect from this company, such as no small bows, no round shields and no straight swords for Isengard Uruks, but other than that he's a good choice.

Best fit: In my multi-species origin theory, these would be the “Elvish” orcs.



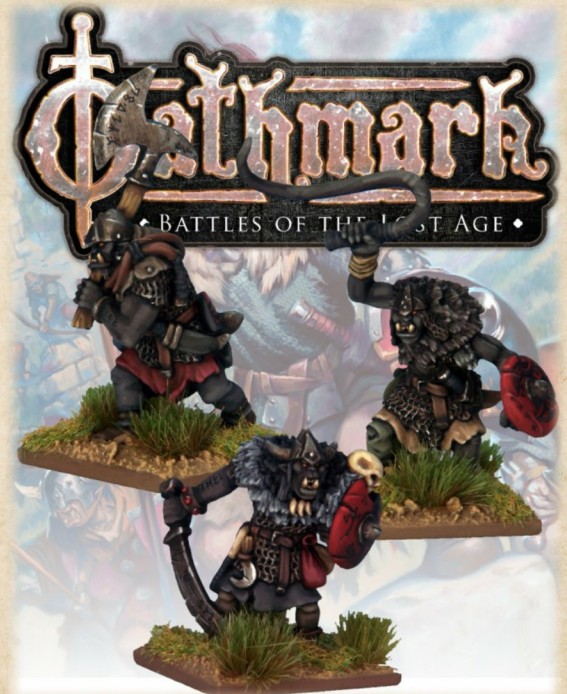
Reference: MM514 Half-Orc thrusting with spear

Description: Again, the shield should be round, but their look fits the part of “men with ugly faces”.

Best fit: Half-orcs.

NORTH STAR

This company has released some plastic multicomponent goblins and metal characters for Oathmark, which are great in my opinion. They're working on wolf-riders as well.





Reference: OAK104 - Goblin Champions

Description: They are clad in mail, with scimitars and crude weapons and do fit for any "huge" orc

Best fit: The yfit Uruks of nearly man height in Saruman's army or elite warriors of a Misty Mountain tribe, because they are very well equipped for war and they wear some fur.

Ral Partha Europe (former Ral Partha)

Strangely enough, there are two companies selling old Ral Partha models, one is the previously discussed Iron Wind Metals (based in the USA) and Ral Partha Europe. They don't offer exactly the same catalogue though, so they deserve separate entries. I'm going to focus in the goblins and Gargantua orcs from the Fantasy Armies range.



Reference: 02-053 Goblin Archers (6)

Description: here we have small goblins with light armour, in this case armed with bows. Noses are not exactly flat, but they're not huge either. Regarding the wolf-riders of the second image, I'm not fond of the wolves (they look more like dogs to me).

Best fit: Small goblins in some regular army, be it Mordor or Isengard.



Reference: 02-261a Orc Light Impaler #1

Description: Here we have more huge brutes with a variety of weapons, some of them with heavy armor (some plates but not the articulated variety). They are bigger than humans and definitely much more massively built.

Best fit: This would fit a rather odd Maiar-blooded warlord, or perhaps a powerful body-guard. This kind of orc should be the exception in your collection, at least for your adventures in the well-known Northwestern Middle-earth. Back in the day, I started working on a project in the fan group extending the MERP background and I had a whole tribe of Maiar blooded orcs protecting the ruins of a temple with a dormant evil Maia amidst a jungle somewhere in the East. The idea came from these models (the unarmoured ones).

Red Box Games

As with their Dwarves, this company has rather nice models but they are tiny. Regarding goblins, they have quite big and protruding noses and straight swords so they are not very “tolkienian”. Here the same as for Heresy goblins applies – they are not the most faithful but nice. This company has some Half-orcs (called Half-blood in their catalogue) as well, which are a better option if you want to stay true to the Professor’s works.



Reference: Goblin Warrior B

Description: The fur cloak, round shield and lack of plate armour and detailed sculpting style redeemed this model. Note the man-like (or even more than man-like) size of the second miniature.

Best fit: Misty Mountain goblins.

Reaper Miniatures

As always, there is something for us in the wide catalogue of this company. In this case, all of their orcs are too big and goblins tend to be “warhammerish”. However, if we stick to sets of 4 miniatures their size is fine, and we can find some nice Half-orcs.



Reference: Rogan, Half-orc thief

Description: This is quite a muscular cloaked assassin with two daggers, leather armour, two daggers and a bestial face. The daggers are chunky, but that’s nothing a little sanding can’t fix.

Best fit: A Half-orc assassin in Saruman’s service.



Reference: Dungeon tribes: orc matron and brood

Description: She is too tall to be a proper orc, but so full of character that I couldn’t let this one out.

Best fit: Perhaps she is a Maiar-blooded orc matron, mother of a powerful line of warlords, protected by many warriors - sounds like a good adventure seed, right?



Reference: Goblin warriors (4)

Description: Four small buggers with long arms, flat nose who carry an assortment of weapons.

Best fit: they're so tiny that they are kind of cute. They make me think of classic fairy tale goblins, singing songs and causing mischief. There is some room for that type of goblins in Middle-earth as well.



Scotia Grendel (former Black Tree)

These are the old models from Black Tree from way back, when they managed to get the license to make a LotR wargame. They have Great Orcs (which are too big to be proper orcs), orcs (which are fine, despite having big heads, hands and feet and chunky weapons and shields) and Half-orcs (too chunky). Their price is quite interesting though.



Reference: GFR0002 - Orcs with Hand Weapons I

Description: They are big and chunky, they could pass for Uruks.

Best fit: As they come with a shield depicting the Eye, they would fit into a Mordor army.

Viking Forge

The oldest by far, these come from the Old Days, when Arda was young and the Sun and the Moon had not been created yet. The sculpting is rather dated, but charming.



Reference: OR-13 Warrior Orc w/Spear

Description: As with some of the older models, proportions are off and they are chunky. But they are crooked, with long arms and certainly squat and broad.

Best fit: They can mix well enough with Mirlinton orcs, to add variety.

Warlord Games (former Wargames Factory)

This company has a multipart plastic set. As you can see in the picture, anatomy is a bit off (the heads are really large...) and detail could be crispier, but they are rather inexpensive.



Reference: Warlords of Erehwon: Orc Warband

Description: These are about man-height, with a variety a weapon (some of them a bit fantastic).

Best fit: Depending on your budget and level of exigency, you can use them as Half-orcs (but they should be armed with straight swords, short bows and round shields). Another possibility is using them as spare part to give more variety to your Oathmark plastic orcs.

CONCLUSION

There is a rich and wide range of choice available, depending of your stylistic preferences and budget.

If you don't mind the dated but charming style, go for Mirlinton (including the wolf riders), Scotia Grendel and add some Viking Forge miniatures for good measure.

However, if you want a more realistic style, go for Iron Wind Metals, Ral Partha Europe, Games Workshop and Red Box Games. For wolf-riders, my pick would have been Thunderbolt Mountain, but sadly they disappeared last year, so Mithril and Goblin Factory will have to take their place.

Also, Oathmark and Mithril can mix well enough with pretty much everything.



THE MISSING KIDS OF BREE

By Andreas Erdmann (Asrath)
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adventure



This adventure is intended for beginners - and especially young ones. It makes use of TOR's Bree supplement, so access to this publication will make things easier for the LM.

It is a short, straightforward scenario intended to introduce new players to the mechanics and style of TOR and overall familiarise them with the setting. It can easily be integrated to any campaign, but using it as the starting adventure of a new group of players is probably the most appropriate use of it.

I am sure you will have much fun running it as it makes the entry into Middle-earth gaming easy and therefore entice young new players.

SUMMARY

- **When:** The adventure is designed to run before the events of *Old Bones and Skin* of the Bree supplement (p. 44-45). It is designed to run in TA 2956, the year when Aragorn and Gandalf first meet. They both have no active part in the story though.
- **Where:** The adventure begins in Bree and leads the company into the Barrow Downs.
- **What:** The company is asked to help finding two missing kids that went to the Barrow Downs and vanished. The two boys found a recently opened tomb that is haunted by a **Wight** and who lured the children into the Barrow.
- **Why:** The Companions sit in the common room of the Prancing Pony when Rose Feather bursts in and pleas for help.
- **Who:** The key character in this tale is the Ranger **Tarry-Mack** (aka **Mallor**). **Hirl-inon** and **Berelas** are mentioned but do not play an active role in this adventure. They are simply mentioned to have an additional hook to the following adventures of the Bree supplement. The GM can follow-up on this (e.g. during the encounter with Mad-Ostley) as he sees fit. **Gandalf** and **Aragorn** are also mentioned in this adventure, but also play no active part. They can be brought into the game as unexpected helpers if the Fellowship struggles heavily fighting the Wight.

ADVENTURING PHASE

Background

Living close to the Barrow-downs has taught the people of Bree caution. Children are forbidden to go near that area and in order to strengthen this message (for children everything that's forbidden holds an irresistible urge to explore), local fairy tales have developed about children getting lost in the Downs and meeting a gruesome fate there. Generally, this is an effective way of preventing children from venturing into this direction, but in spite of this every now and then childish curiosity leads to tragedy. This is the story of such an event.

What happened until now

A couple of weeks ago, **Hirlinon** and **Berelas**, servants to **Gorlanc** the sorcerer, travelled into the Barrow Downs on his bidding to look for the **Ring of Seven Jewels** (Bree p. 72 & 86). They opened several barrows in the Barrow Downs and searched them for valuables. **Berelas** did not find the ring though (she will find it later somewhere in the South Downs or Weather Hills) but when they searched one of the bigger barrows the resident **Wight** attacked the two. Only by swiftness they were able to flee from the scene. **Hirlinon** and **Berelas** will not play any role in this adventure beyond setting this scene.

Some children from Bree played a game of dare in the morning and this escalated and eventually went out of control: They dared each other who would be brave enough to go into the Barrow Downs – despite better knowledge and strict orders from their parents to stay clear (see above “Background”). Sid and Harry, twin brothers at the age of 11 and the only sons to **Rose Feather**, promised their friends to bring some proof back from the Downs before sunset. They went into the Downs and found the open barrow which **Berelas** and **Hirlinon** had searched earlier. They were quickly subdued by the **Wight's** song and put into slumber. The **Creature** will sacrifice them later the same night, unless the Fellowship intervenes.

As the sun starts to set the twins are still missing. **Rose**, concerned by their continued absence, asks the neighbouring kids and they tell her the story about the dare game. With the light fading quickly, she becomes desperate and sees no other way as to run to the Pony and plea for help there.

Shortly before these events, **Gandalf** meets **Aragorn** at Amon Sûl. They soon discover their mutual sympathy and a great friendship begins. They have a long talk about the past and the possible future. **Gandalf** suggests that **Aragorn** travel in disguise throughout the whole North-west, including both Rohan and Gondor under a cover name. This way he will learn a lot about these realms and the woes and concerns of their people. Later they depart the ancient ruin together and head towards Bree. On the way they meet the Ranger **Mallor** (in Bree called **Tarry-Mack**), who accompanies them on their way to the village. There the three visit the Prancing Pony.

LOO CHARACTERS

Ranger TARRY-MACK (aka Mallorn)

The company have never met **Tarry-Mack** before. During this adventure they will learn his reputation: He is a controversial figure, uncommonly ugly and has very few friends. But he is a loyal follower of his Chieftain Aragorn and his friends. He travels alone, journeying back and forth throughout Eriador.

Tarry-Mack carries an old but well-tended sword, a long green coat and a weathered backpack with a brown bedroll with him. Attached to the backpack hangs an ornately carved bird made of wood. (The company will retrieve the backpack in the adventure *Strange men, strange roads* of the Bree supplement).

Tarry-Mack will help the heroes during this adventure. It is important that they get to learn his reputation and himself a little better before they start the adventure *Strange men, strange roads* in the Bree supplement.

Attribute Level Tarry-Mack	
4 (Hope: 13)	
Specialties	
Eriador-Lore, Beast-Lore, Herb-Lore, Rumour of the Earth	
Distinctive Features	
Keen-Eyed, Gruff	
Relevant Skills	
Hunting: 4	Battle: 2
Healing: 3	Awareness: 3
Endurance	
26	



Viking © by Ari Suonpää, used with permission

PART ONE: MISSING KIDS!

Note: Those parts underlaid with parchment style and printed in brown (as this note) are meant to be narrated by the LM directly (or as info for him) in order to set the specific scene and make decision-making and roleplaying easier for the Heroes.

Mad Ostley

White-haired and wide-eyed, Mad Ostley was named so by the Bree-folk. For years he has travelled into the Barrow-downs seeking treasure and riches, but with each failed excavation he returns to the civilised world a bit more unhinged. He journeys out into the Barrow downs each spring, never returning with anything more than madness in his eyes.

While seeming mad most of the time, **Mad Ostley** knows the Barrow Downs better than anyone in Bree. He will be helpful to characters that treat him with respect and honesty.

Mad Ostley watched **Hirlinon** and **Berelas** as they entered the tomb a couple of weeks ago. He knows that they looked for something, but doesn't know what. He also knows that they stirred a **Wight** and fled from that barrow. He also saw the twins leaving the road heading into the Barrow Downs and warned them to stay clear of the Downs, but they only laughed at him. He followed them and watched as they entered the tomb. He has not seen them since.

Attribute Level Mad Ostley	
3	
Specialties	
Old Lore, Tunnelling	
Distinctive Features	
Secretive, Gruff, Hardened	
Relevant Skills	
Search: 3	Explore: 2
Endurance	
15	

The Fellowship is sitting in the common room of the Prancing Pony, enjoying their meal. The inn currently has just a few guests e.g. some Men from Bree, some Dwarves from the Blue Mountains on their way back, a couple of Farmers from Combe, Traders from Archet, ... pick as you see fit. Matthew Mugwort, **Gandalf**, **Strider** (aka Aragorn) and **Tarry-Mack** (aka Mallor) sit together at a table and talk quietly. Suddenly **Rose** bursts into the room.



Lady © by Wouter Florusse, used with permission

She calls *"Help! Help! My kids went missing in the Barrow Downs! Can someone please help finding them?"*

One of the Men from Bree looks up. *"The Barrow Downs? Are you sure?"*

"Yes, yes!" cries **Rose**. *"They went for a dare game, those stupid boys. I'm scared to death!"*

Another men from Bree adds *"Rose, it's already getting dark. Going there now is suicide. We have to wait til tomorrow. And even then it's a perilous task."*

Rose hides her face, crying behind her hands. *As the tears roll down her cheek she says "They will most likely be dead by tomorrow".*

"You could ask Mad Ostley. It is said, he knows some paths in the Downs." someone suggests, but others just laugh.

"Ostley is mad. That's what he is. How could he help me? And he's not here either."

Tearing her hair she gives the crowd in the common room a begging look. *"Isn't there somebody willing to help my little kids? Anybody?"*

If the Companions offers their help:

Rose thanks the Companions deeply. *"The other kids told me, where they left my sons. I can bring you there."*

After talking shortly and quietly to the others at his table **Tarry-Mack** stands up. *"I will go with you."*

A murmur fills the room. *"You?"* Rose asks and gives him a doubtfully look. *"Yes me"* **Tarry Mack** responds, standing tall.

"Judging by the looks of him, he seems to come from there." one comments.

"There's no time for this blather. If we want to save the children we have to go now."

Tarry-Mack presses on. He then leaves the inn, and the Company follows (hopefully!).

If the Companions don't offer their help:

"Please?" **Rose** begs. *"We are not wealthy, but I offer all we have: 1 Treasure for everybody who is bringing my boys back!"*

If the Companions still do not respond, **Tarry-Mack** stands up, after talking briefly and quietly to the two others at his table. *"I will go."*

A murmur fills the room. *"You?"* **Rose** asks and gives him a doubtfully look. *"Yes me"* **Tarry Mack** responds standing tall.

"Judging by the looks of him, he seems to come from there." one patron comments.

Tarry Mack replies *"There's no time for this blather. But truth to be told: I've been to the Barrows before. I know ways in and ways out. But I cannot go alone. I need some brave companions."*

If the Companions still do not respond he addresses them directly:

"How about you. You do not seem to be as inexperienced in using a sword as these muppets here."

The company should agree by now.

"If we want to save the children we have to go now." **Tarry-Mack** presses on.

Tarry-Mack leaves the inn, the Companions (hopefully!) follow.



The Wizard © by aegeri, used with permission

PART TWO: INTO THE BARROW DOWNS

Travel to the spot
with Tarry-Mack, where
the kids left the East Road.

The kids left the road approximately 7 miles east of Bree.

Note: Normally the distance is too short to use travel rolls. But as this adventure is intended as an introductory adventure for beginners, travel rolls are introduced here. To give a reason that fits to the story: due to the time pressure and haste the company has to make the roll to see how they succeed.

Tarry-Mack presses the Companions to hurry up now.

The journey to the spot where the two boys left the road takes about one hour and one **Fatigue TN14** test.

It is almost completely dark, when the rescue party arrives. Here they see the silhouette of a man (**Mad Ostley**) standing on the East Road, watching as they approach.

Encounter with Mad Ostley

Tolerance

Mad Ostley is curious what the Companions are doing here. The starting tolerance for the encounter is 3. Raise the tolerance by 1 if there are any Hobbits in the Fellowship (they always treated him with courtesy) and reduce the tolerance by 1 if there are any men of Bree in the company (they often mocked him).

Introduction

Courtesy with TN12 works best here. Awe or Riddle is harder (TN16).

Interaction: Suggestions are: Persuade (the kids need help), Inspire (you are needed), Explore (the Barrow-downs are a hard terrain and we need some advice), Lore (we know something of the Barrow-downs, can you tell us more?), etc.

Results

- **1:** Ostley tells the Fellowship that he has met some kids around noon today. Two of them left the road about here and went south.
- **2-3:** He adds, that he had warned the kids about leaving the road into the Downs, but they had only laughed at him. He secretly followed the kids to one of the bigger barrows.
- **4-6:** He knows that the tomb is haunted, and didn't dare to go in. The kids have not yet returned. He is willing to show the company the way to the tomb.
- **7:** He adds that the Barrow-Wight living there was recently stirred when a man and a woman opened the grave and stole something from it. He doesn't know what it was or who those people were.

Finding the Barrow

If **Ostley** doesn't show the company the way to the barrow, they will have to find the tracks of the boys themselves and follow them.

Fog is already rising on the Downs and it is dark. It's therefore not easy to find and follow the tracks of the twins.



The Barrow-Wight © by John Howe, used with permission

Search or Hunting both at TN16.

If the group is not able to find any tracks, Tarry-Mack uses his *Rumour of the Earth* virtue to locate and follow the tracks.

If Ostley leads the company to the site, they only have to follow him.

Entering the Barrow Downs at night is a creepy experience. The fog is cold and unpleasant. If you stare too long into the fog, you momentarily think you discovered watchful shadows and angry looks of old kings. Those visions dissolve quickly only to reappear on another place. The Companions feel like being constantly watched.

Roll a **Corruption Test TN14**: Failure means accumulation of 1 Shadow Point.

The barrow is not too far to the south. Still in the fog it takes the company about another hour to reach it. In the mists the company can make out a darker spot that seems to mark an

entrance into a moderately bigger tomb. The big stone that once sealed the entrance lies broken on the ground and simple steps lead down into total darkness.

As the Fellowship approaches the entrance, everybody hears a low chilling song from within (the *Wight* uses its special ability *Wight Song* to lure the Companions into the tomb and put them into an enchanted sleep).

Corruption Test TN16: Failure: The character suddenly feels extremely tired, walks into the tomb and goes to sleep.

A sleeping character cannot be woken, he/she can only be freed from the spell with a successful **Healing TN14** roll.



Shadow of the Past © by Angus McBride, used used with kind permission of the estate of Angus McBride

Inside the Barrow

The small steps lead into a low room.

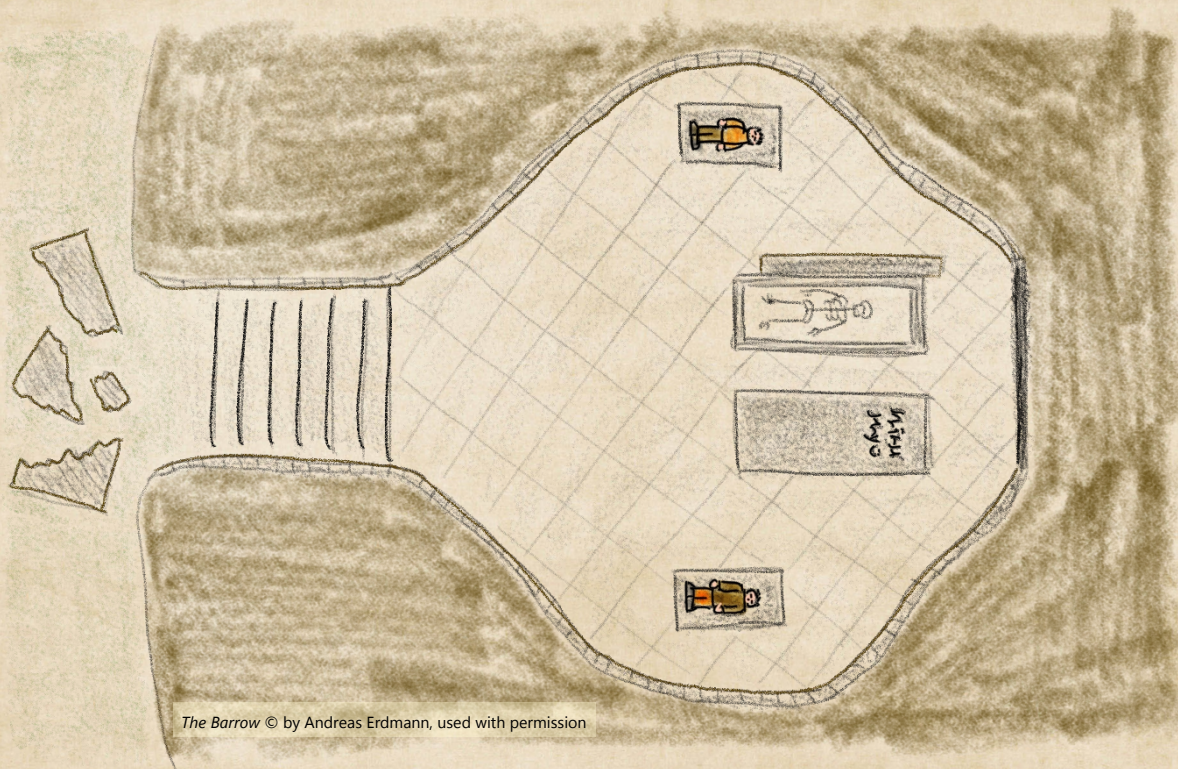
It is pitch dark, so the company has to light something (if they haven't already) to see something.

The floor of the room is covered with plates of grey stone. On the opposite wall of the entrance there hangs a great tablet of stone. The engravings are hard to detect in the flickering light. Before the tables rest two stone sarcophagi. One of them has its lid opened, and lying

inside is a mummified body. There is plenty of gold around the body, and some valuable objects can also be seen. Next to the sarcophagi two smaller, low stone slabs were placed on the ground. On top of each of them lies a boy sleeping.

As the company enters, they realize the temperature is dropping rapidly.

A Barrow-Wight rises from the open sarcophagus, rushes towards the Fellowship and attacks immediately.



Fighting the Wight

The Barrow-Wight can be attacked with normal weapons. For **stats**, use the *Barrow wight* values found in TOR's *Ruins of the North* supplement (p. 140).

There is no time to roll for combat advantages. Also opening volleys are not possible, the barrow's chamber is too small.

If the Wight is reduced to 0 Endurance or wounded once it collapses to the ground.

The boys

The boys are lying on one of the stone slabs each. They feel cold but they sleep and breathe softly. They can be woken with a successful **Healing TN14** roll.

If woken, both boys do not remember much more than hearing a song as they approached the bigger tomb.

They are thirsty but can walk back to Bree after they had a short rest outside the barrow and another one on the road.

The treasure

In the sarcophagus of the Wight the Companions find **50* treasure**.

Searching the treasure might reveal a precious object, a wondrous artefact or even a famous weapon or armour (see the treasure rules in *Rivendell*).

Nevertheless, taking anything from the Wight, may it be treasure or else gives **3 Shadow Points** for plundering. That may still be worth it though.

END

The way back

After saving the boys the Fellowship must get out of the Barrow Downs.

If Ostley is with the company he brings them safely back to the road.

If Ostley is not with the company they will have to find a way, either by **Explore TN16** or simply by following their own tracks (**Hunting TN14**).

Once back on the road, travelling back to Bree is easy. The boys are not that fast, so this takes the company about 3 hours.

As they reach Bree, the gates are closed. But after knocking on them hard and explaining the situation they are allowed to enter.

In the Prancing Pony **Rose** is still waiting. All other guests are gone. **Rose** is overjoyed to have her boys back. She will give every hero **1 Treasure** regardless of whether she had promised it before or not.

Turning towards the boys she says they will have to work very hard to compensate for this loss and the grief and deadly fear they have caused their mother.


Epilogue

Even though the Companions managed to save the boys and defeat the Barrow-Wight, it will not take long for the creature to be replaced by a new one that will plague the Free People. Permanently dispelling the curse upon the barrow might be another adventure for the future, should the Fellowship be interested in providing support for the community of Bree.

CREATURES OF MIDDLE-EARTH: WEREWOLVES (S. GAUR)

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supplementary
stuff



This article continues the series about new creatures for Middle-earth gaming. This time it revolves around one of the most common monsters of Fantasy RPG's (and literature) - the werewolf.

Despite suggesting well-trodden paths, it still has some original traits to it, while still using as much Tolkien lore as possible and applying this to well known folklore and fantasy concepts.

I hope these will enrich your games and provide your players with an additional challenge.

INTRODUCTION

Following the example of previous articles in this series, this *Creatures of Middle-earth* installment provides you with a suggestion on new monsters and adversaries encountered by the heroes of your games without sacrificing a solid base in Tolkien lore.

Werewolves are probably among the most popular monsters (sometimes tragic ones) in RPG's and especially seasoned players tend to deal routinely and very effectively with them (even if their characters aren't that well-versed in this respect). In context with Middle-earth, the typical clichés are somewhat problematic though. Tolkien uses the term in a context very different from the "standard" RPG (and cinematic) usage:

Sauron was become now a sorcerer of dreadful power, master of shadows and of phantoms, foul in wisdom, cruel in strength, misshaping what he touched, twisting what he ruled, lord of werewolves; his dominion was torment.

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

The nature of these *werewolves* is explained in more detail later, and here Sauron is explicitly mentioned as their master and even "creator":

[...] and Sauron brought werewolves, fell beasts inhabited by dreadful spirits that he had imprisoned in their bodies.

—*The Silmarillion.*
Of Beren and Lúthien

Another passage where such wolf-like creatures (here with no reference as to their origin) can be found in the published *Silmarillion* [continued next page]:

[...] the Dwarves became troubled,
[...] Wolves there were, or creatures
that walked in wolf-shapes, [...]

—*The Silmarillion.*
Of Beren and Lúthien

Thus Tolkien's original werewolves are regular (albeit very large) natural wolves in whose bodies "dreadful spirits" were imprisoned.¹ This bears no semblance with the archetypal werewolves we know so well from literary and theatrical presentations. TOR has heeded this special nature and built its own tolkienistic werewolves on this – even if some details are a bit problematic (see *The Werewolf of Mirkwood* in TOR's *The Darkening of Mirkwood* supplement) This seems to preclude the use of "werewolves" in their well-known capacity in Middle-earth. However, there is room for introducing them – based on a case described by Tolkien in some detail. This will be my precedent for the introduction of "classic" shapechanging men as werewolves to Middle-earths, which are still rooted in Tolkien-lore. This article thus presents a reasonable derivation of such mannish shapechangers as evil or at least semi-evil antagonists.

The first section (Definitions) is about the background and related Tolkien-lore, while the second (Mannish Werewolves) details the original background and the stats of these creatures for various gaming systems.



Sauron brought Werewolves © by Peter Xavier Price, used with permission

¹ The nature of these spirits is an entirely different debate and beyond the scope of this article.

DEFINITIONS

The pivotal case for the existence of skin changing men is of course Beorn in *The Hobbit*. Here he is a powerful force for the Free People, though dangerous and not easy to deal with even for other Free Folk. Gandalf characterises him this way:

"If you must know more, his name is Beorn. He is very strong, and he is a skin-changer." [...] "He changes his skin; sometimes he is a huge black bear, sometimes he is a great strong black-haired man with huge arms and a great beard." [...]

At any rate **he is under no enchantment but his own.**

—*The Hobbit. Queer Lodgings*
(my emphasis)

The last emphasised sentence is especially important as it strongly suggests that this ability is innate and not something granted or provided by another power or being in Middle-earth or Arda.² Thus it should be seen as an innate ability (i.e. in effect granted by the maker – Eru) possessed by some select people as such. Following this example, the original human *werewolves* were men being able to change their shape into that of a wolf – rather than a bear as in Beorn's case. It is very important that this started out as an original ability totally unconnected to the Enemies – though of course they were able to corrupt and bend it to their purposes (as they could do with all things).



Beorn in Battle © by Peter Xavier Price, used with permission

² In my opinion, the decision to make this ability something granted by the Valar (specifically Oromë *incognito*) in C7's canon in the TOR (and AME) game line (as presented in *Bëorn's Quest* in TOR's *The Darkening of Mirkwood* – or *Mirkwood Campaign* for AME) could be problematic. As it has no evidence in Tolkien lore (even though it makes for a nice story), it should be abandoned if a close alignment with Tolkien's Middle-earth lore is important in your game.

NOMENCLATURE

The naming of such shape-changing were-creatures is a very tricky issue. In the closer sense, the name *werewolf* is clearly and unmissably defined by Tolkien in the way detailed earlier (animals possessed by “dreadful spirits”). However, there is still some room for manoeuvring.

Those skilled in the lore of the old days and the creatures of the Enemy are aware of the “true” meaning and definition of “werewolf” as outlined above. However, among common folk and people of less sophisticated and highly specialised lore, these creatures and those of human nature being able to transform into a wolf have become mixed and blurred. This is hardly surprising, as it is really difficult to tell the two apart when you encounter them and in some regions only one or the other exists. Thus the terminology has become very unspecific even among Loremasters of the West.

This makes things much more difficult as the use of the term *werewolf* of a person in the game-world is very likely to be not precise in the true sense unless he (or she) is a Loremaster highly specialised in this field of scholarship. Most PC’s/heroes (and even NPC loremasters) are unlikely to be able to differentiate this as well. It is suggested that at the most they could aware that there might be different creatures that are called *werewolves* and thus things are likely to be tricky.

In the Northwest, these creatures are known to skilled Loremasters (which is hard in itself to come by) under several names:

- “Man-wolf” (S. *bengaur*)
- “Hound of Sauron” (S. *hûgorthaur*, pl. *huigorthaur*)
- The “natural” werewolves (i.e. who have inherited the ability) are also called “Great werewolves” (S. *belegaur*) while the “created” ones “Little werewolves” (S. *pîngaur*).

In the following text, *bengaur* and man-wolf are used interchangeably for these individuals. Both terms are valid and should be used when speaking about these people/creatures.

THE MANNISH WEREWOLVES (S. “BENÇAUR”)

The Beginnings

Soon after Men arrived in Eriador (and later Beleriand) in the First Age, Sauron sent out spies to learn more about these people and how he might use them to further the cause of his master. Soon he learned of a special line of lords among an Easterling folk, whose chieftains were able to transform into wolves. This kindled his interest immediately – he being the Master of Werewolves after all.

These new men are mentioned as “Easterlings” in ancient annals:

It is told that at this time [after the Dagor Bragollach] the Swarthy Men came first into Beleriand. Some were already secretly under the dominion of Morgoth, and came at his call; but not all, for the rumour of Beleriand, of its lands and waters, of its wars and riches, went now far and wide, and the wandering feet of Men were ever set westward in those days. These Men were short and broad, long and strong in the arm; their skins were swart or sallow, and their hair was dark as were their eyes. Their houses were many, and some had greater liking for the Dwarves of the mountains than for the Elves.

[...]

There was small love between the Edain and the Easterlings, and they met seldom; for the newcomers abode long in East Beleriand, but Hador’s folk were shut in Hithlum, and Bëor’s house was well-nigh destroyed.

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

The tale of Varan

GM Note: The following tale is for the information of the GM/LM. In its fullness, it is highly unlikely to be known in the West. If the GM/LM wants his heroes to gain more knowledge on the mannish werewolves, parts of it might be accessible in the form of tales and legends or bits of lore. In any case, these pieces should be hard to come by and their retrieval might be the goal of an epic quest in themselves. It is suggested that only parts of it be available in more poetic tales rather than a full descriptive text.

The Folk of Tan was a tribe of Easterlings that arrived in Beleriand after the Dagor Bragollach and served Maedhros in the defense of Himring and the Aglon. After their arrival Varan, the second son of the chieftain Gonar entered the service of Mahros to earn glory and renown. His hope was to prove his ability to become the next lord when his prowess as a warrior would override his status as the Second-born. It was largely his valour that allowed Maedhros the win back the pass of Aglon and temporarily closed it for Morgoth's servants as reported in the tales of old:

Thus the great fortress upon the Hill of Himring could not be taken, and many of the most valiant that remained, both of the people of Dorthonion and of the east marches, rallied there to Maedhros; and for a while he closed once more the Pass of Aglon, so that the Orcs could not enter Beleriand by that road.

—The Silmarillion.

Of the Ruin of Beleriand and the Fall of Fingolfin

So Varan spent two long years in the service of Maedhros and returned home with great honours and gifts from his elven lord. When all the elders and lords of his people were assembled to hear his tale of the war against the Enemy in the North, his father Gonar announced the decision to pass on the chieftainship to his elder son Kalin, who was renowned for his wisdom and judgment. What he lacked was skill as a warrior, and here Gonar asked his second son to be the strong supporting arm of

his elder brother – providing those skills that the former lacked. Upon hearing this, Varan's hopes of becoming chief by virtue of his battle prowess went to pieces.

At the bidding of his father he pleaded his fealty to his brother – as if in trance – and immediately after he ran from the hall, full of desperation and loss of direction. Soon he came to his senses and left again for the battlefields of the North – having foregone all hope and sense of living among his people he at least hoped to die an honourable death worth of great tales. He had become a mighty warrior – the greatest his folk had ever seen. So, when he and his comrades chased a large band of orcs and wolves that tried to sneak around the Pass of Aglon, his party came ever closer to Dorthonion – but Varan suffered no pleas to call off the hunt. Finally they caught up with their prey and ran down the orcs, but then got ambushed by a large pack of wolves, led by a truly terrifying beast. His companions were slain as was Varan's horse. When it looked like he would be overcome by the closing wolves, to his great surprise he transformed himself into a huge wolf. In this form he slew the entire pack and wounded its leader who managed to flee. Now it was his turn to give chase and he followed the beast up the slopes, deeper into once-fair Dorthonion. Finally he caught up and challenged him, when another – even mightier – wolf emerged. An epic battle ensued until Varan was finally forced to surrender to the wolf who revealed himself as Sauron – master of werewolves. Instead of killing him right away or sending him to Angband, he found interest in this man who could assume wolf-form. He spoke to him of power and glory, words that fell on fertile soil. He put him under his spell and let him swear an unholy oath of loyalty to the *Master of Werewolves*. With this he let him go, and reminding him of his new ultimate master and the rewards he would receive if he served him faithfully.

Later he returned to the Aglon where his tale of the chase and destruction of the orcs and his survival in perilous Dorthonion brought him the admiration of all the men there as well as great honour from Maedhros. Soon after he asked for leave and departed for his father's hall. Full of confidence through his newfound

powers, he planned to confront his brother and claim what he deemed to be his birthright. Thus he arrived at his father's hall on the day of the new moon.

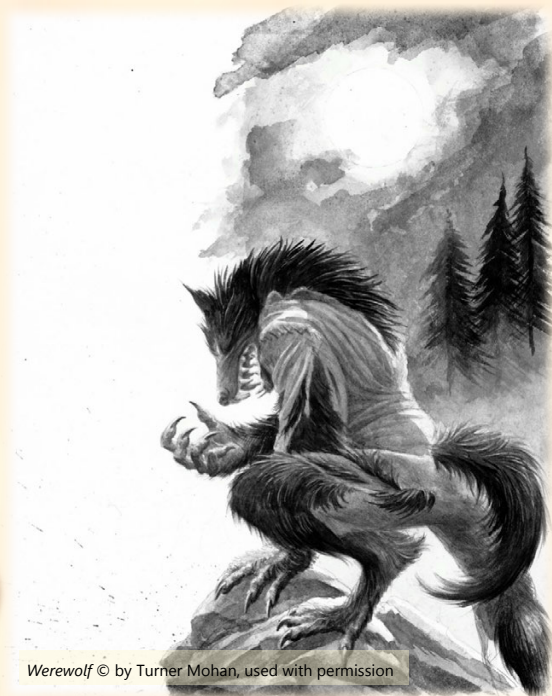


Saxon Thegn © by JIazarus EB, used with permission

Here he found Kalin in the company of his father and all the elders of the tribe. Stepping into their midst, he spoke of his great deeds in the North, protecting the homes and families of his people, while others stayed back home in comfort. With fair but strong words he demanded to be declared heir by virtue of his great deeds and strength. Though he was honoured for his deeds the lords pointed out that the laws of their people were against this as long as there is a chieftain. An argument erupted and finally Kalin left the hall in order to let hot heads cool down and prevent further strife. Varan followed his brother and in the dark night his anger overcame him and he transformed into a wolf and attacked him. The cries alerted the other men and then witnessed a huge wolf ripping open the throat of Kalin. Immediately, the men approached him with weapons drawn, cornering the beast which they recognised as Varan by the remnants of his clothes as well as the chain of honour he had received from Maedhros. With a mighty leap the man-wolf managed to break out of the encirclement and fled into the woods – forever an outcast and fugitive among his people.

The following weeks he spent in the wild, hunting for survival and learning to hone the skills of his wolf-form. Eventually, he found his

way to Tol-in-Gaurhoth where he entered the service of Sauron, who taught him many more secrets, but who also altered the natural talent of Varan by making his condition communicable. In Sauron's service, he also looked for other men with his ability and found them among the relatives of his people. Varan's knowledge of his folk proved invaluable to gather also most of these into the *Lord of Werewolves* following.



Werewolf © by Turner Mohan, used with permission

After the First Age

When the Host of the Valar landed in Middle-earth to overthrow Morgoth, the *bengaur* fought long for the Dark Lord, but eventually they were destroyed almost completely. Those that survived hid in dark places and eventually found ways to flee Beleriand and return to the East. Here they encountered wild men of lesser power and wisdom and it was easy for them to establish themselves as masters by using their superior skills and abilities learned in the service of their Dark Master. Thus several *belegaur* dynasties were founded among the Easterlings.

In later Ages these were often found among the enemies of the Númenóreans even after Sauron's final fall.

They were never very numerous, but spawned the more numerous lesser werewolves which in turn entered the folk-tales of many people even in the West.

NATURE AND ABILITIES OF THE BENGAUR

The fate of men (i.e. mortality) is no different for the *bengaur*, so that they eventually grow old and die. It turned out however, that they could pass their ability on to their descendants¹. Sauron took great care to further strengthen his influence over these people. Their personal power grew through his training, but it also tainted them forever – perverting their natural gift into a tool of terror and domination over others. After some time, when tales about such men began to spread, they were called *bengaur* (S. “Man-wolves”)

In order to achieve his changes, Sauron used the concentrated *mordo* of his master, bringing the man-wolves forever under his Shadow – even if they were later not under his direct command but pursued their own goals. The shadow that he brought upon their ancestors was still alive even in the Third Age and possibly beyond.

The most important new “feature” gained through Sauron’s machinations is the capability to make new werewolves through the attack of a natural werewolf – only much weaker than the latter. Still they are useful nonetheless for their masters: They will freely submit themselves to a “natural” werewolf and thus strengthen his ruling power as a lord. But in the presence of Sauron, every *gaur* – regardless whether “natural” or “created” will submit in turn. In addition, Sauron had servants of the same order as himself – only of lesser power – that would also be able to command any *bengaur*. The Master of Werewolves also devised sorcerous spells to dominate any *bengaur*, though they are dangerous to use as the *bengaur* loathe such domination and will take the slightest chance to exact a cruel and very painful revenge on their would-be master.² Eventually, some bits of knowledge about these “created” werewolves became known among Loremaster in the West and thus the differentiation between the “natural” Werewolves (S. *Belegaur* – “Great werewolves”) and the *Pîngaur* (S. “Little werewolves”) was devised.

¹ This is not automatically inherited and a LM/GM may decide in which generation it manifest.

² Similar to Ogres. See *Other Minds*, Issue 20 for these creatures.

Despite all their might and characteristic to transfer their ability, the *bengaur* (of both kinds) are always encountered in relatively low numbers after the First Age. One reason is the weakening of the overall *mordo*, which was much more concentrated in northern Beleriand which sank after the War of Wrath. This seems to have weakened the chance of transmitting the ability and thus create *Pîngaur*. In addition, a victim has to survive the vicious attack of the werewolf – a rather unlikely event. Finally, these creatures were also most often hunted down once the number of such unusual attacks increased – even in Easterling lands. Almost always, the *Pîngaur* are hunted in this way, since they are less able to control the transformation (and thus avoid undue attention) and also less powerful and more easy to kill by a capable team of hunters.

Transmission of the ability

Transmitting the ability to shapechange into a wolf is a key element of Sauron’s perversion of the gift of Varan and his likes. This is facilitated by the bite of a *belegaur* or *pîngaur*, though the chances of transmission are lower for the latter. It assumes a “real” wound and not just the loss of superficial hit points. The following table 1 shows the chances. This assumes that the attack is survived by the victim.

Transmission of the ability for various systems			
Bite by ...	MERP	TOR	AME
belegaur	RR vs. 20th lvl disease	Body test (TN16)	TN12 CO save
pîngaur (1st gen)	RR vs. 10th lvl disease	Body test (TN14)	TN10 CO save
pîngaur (2nd gen+)	RR vs. 5th lvl disease	Body test (TN12)	TN8 CO save
pîngaur (1st gen): a minor werewolf “created” by a “greater” werewolf			
pîngaur (2nd gen+): a “minor” werewolf created by another “minor” werewolf			

Table 1: Chance of transmission

If the victim is affected – and survives the attack – the first transformation will take place at the time of the next new moon.

GM note: Please keep in mind that knowledge about the man-wolves is not very common and needs to be delved and unearthed by the characters.³ Finding someone knowledgeable in this should be an adventure in itself.

³ In contrast to seasoned players who often put up a routine “anti-werewolf approach” due to their experience. Good – and bad! – roleplaying should be considered in XP distribution.

General characteristics of the *bengaur*

- They are able to act during day and night without limitations. During times when the great lights of the Valar (sun and moon) are not visible, the drive for transformation is strongest. Thus the “wolfish” personality is at its height during new moon.¹ Similar to natural wolves, man-wolves howl at the moon in their bestial form, but this is a consequence of their touch by the *mordo* that causes them to howl at the moon in scorn and mockery.
- Even in their human form, man-wolves are generally more commanding and aggressive (like an alpha-wolf dominating the pack) unless a higher ranking *bengaur* is present. They also tend to have more and stronger body hair.
- Basically they are vulnerable against all weapons. However, silver – being a material relatively “pure” and free of *mordo* – does more damage. Details can be found in the stat section below.
- The transformation from man to wolf takes about a minute. In this time the creature is prone and unable to act. Any clothing or armour worn will fall to the ground or be ripped apart – depending on circumstances. Experienced *bengaur* can control the degree of transformation and assume human, wolfish or a hybrid form. This may be attempted only once per transformation and the result will last until the scheduled re-transformation.
- Natural wolves recognise a *bengaur* immediately even in its human form and act cooperative or even submissive. Game-specific mechanics can be found below in the stat section. Other animals tend to become uneasy in the presence of a *bengaur*. The specific reaction depends on the animal: predators become more aggressive (or submissive) while herbivores are more likely to flee or avoid the person.
- *Bengaur* are not immortal or unnaturally longeval. They age (and die) as anyone else from their folk.

The hybrid man-wolf form

As already mentioned, experienced *bengaur* are able to control the degree of transformation and thus assume a hybrid form of man and wolf. This allows them to combine the advantages of both forms – albeit also with some – minor – disadvantages.

The outlook of this intermediate form is still basically humanoid (i.e. bipedal and able to grab objects with an opposed thumb), but the overall physiognomy and anatomy is already very wolfish (e.g. an elongated snout with carnivore teeth and strong claws). The GM/LM may also develop additional part-wolfish characteristics of this form as appropriate. Gaming details can be found in the stat section. The modifications in the following list apply to the regular abilities and skill bonuses of the *bengaur* of their mannish form.



¹ And not full moon as in the usual cliché and also a good way to catch seasoned gamers “off-guard”.

Advantages

- *Sense of Smell* – The creature has an excellent wolfish sense of smell (MERP: +50 *Perception* or *Track* for smell maneuvers, TOR: -4 TN *Hunting* roll when tracking by scent, AME: -10 DC for *Survival* when tracking by scent).
- *Hearing* – Similar to smell, hearing increases dramatically. System modifiers as for *Sense of Smell*, but applies to all maneuvers involving hearing.
- *Opposable thumb* – the creature still possesses an opposable thumb and may grab items or wield weapons – albeit less efficiently. Treat this as following: MERP -10 all manipulation with hands (including melee weapons), TOR: +2 to all manual TN's (including melee combat)
- *Clawed hands and bite* – The claws and wolf-like teeth can be used as effective weapons. Treat as claws and bite of a natural wolf of your game system.
- *Natural armour* – the fur of this hybrid form is more resistant to blows and counts as light armour (Soft Leather or equivalent) of your game system.

Disadvantages

- *Vulnerability* – as the wolf-form, the hybrid form is also susceptible to the herb *aconite* as well as to silver and *mithril* weapons. Apply the same vulnerabilities as described there.

Control while in beast form

While in bestial form, the *bengaur* may attempt to control his actions (rather acting with bestial instincts as would be exhibited by an aggressive wolf). Modifiers should be handled according to the situation. The following table 2 gives some examples for various systems.

The difficulty depends on the situation. If several options apply, use the one with the highest difficulty. The following is not exhaustive (and should not be), but intended to provide you with a framework from where to judge other situations.

“Creature” here means the *bengaur* in beast form.

In a night of new moon (see table below), an initial check should be made, whether the creature transforms. If the check is successful, the *bengaur* may still choose to transform, but he does not need to.

Difficulty			Examples
MERP mod.	TOR (TN)	AME (DC)	
30	10	5	The closest friend, love or lifetime goal of the man-wolf is in danger
10	12	10	A close friend of the man-wolf is endangered
±0	14	15	The creature is hungry
-10	16	20	The interests of the creature are in jeopardy (this depends on the personality of the man-wolf); A night of new moon.
-20	18	25	The creature is in danger of being wounded
-30	20	30	The characteristics of the human form are in stark contrast to the – aggressive and dominant – bestial form (e.g. a gentle, calm, compassionate and/or prudent man).
-70	22	35	The creature is in a life-threatening situation.
Applicable skills for control of transformation:			
MERP: Use Animal Mastery secondary skill			
TOR: Make a Heart test			
AME: Make a Charisma Ability Check			
Note: If the creature is a <i>belegaur</i> , modify all checks by +50 (MERP), -4 TN (TOR) or -10 DC (AME)			

Table 2: Control while in beast form

Weaknesses

Silver

Both “normal” silver and *mithril* are considered to be almost free of *mordo* in general and thus are very effective against creatures strongly touched by it – like the *bengaur*. The following table 3 lists the effects for each system covered here. It refers to hits in combat against a man-wolf in bestial or part-bestial form.

Note: *Magic weapons are not automatically treated as “silver” for these purposes. By default they are “normal” weapons, but without damage penalties of “real” ordinary weapons.*

	Game system		
	MERP	TOR	AME*
Normal silver	+ 5 to all crits	+3 damage	+2 damage
Mithril	+10 all crits	One extra damage rating (minimum 4)	+4 damage

All of these effects come on top of those resulting from normal combat rules and special abilities/talents and items of the character hitting the *bengaur*.

* No damage reduction against silver/mithril (see stat blocks below)

Table 3: Effects of silver weapons

Aconite

This is a plant that is commonly known as wolfsbane. This comes from the fact that natural wolves avoid this plant – perhaps due to its intensive scent – though it is harmless to them. For *bengaur* on the other hand, it is a real threat: Touching its leaves causes the wolf- or hybrid form minor burns (MERP: ‘A’ heat critical with an extra -10 on the roll, TOR: +1 damage, AME: 1 HP damage). Its true power is only revealed though when its leaves and stem are made into a thick paste by a skilled herbalist. Applied to a weapon, the first time it hits a *bengaur* and causes damage, consult this table:

Game system		
MERP	TOR	AME*
Treat as a “slaying” critical	Add two extra damage ratings (minimum 8)	+8 damage

All of these effects come on top of those resulting from normal combat rules and special abilities/talents and items of the character hitting the *bengaur*.

Table 4: Effects of aconite

An average plant provides sufficient raw material to cover a weapon the size of a longsword. The same amount can also treat 10 arrowheads.



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Game stats

The following section provides you with game stats for the bengaur in their beast forms. If suitable creatures already exist in your game system of choice, they are referenced where appropriate.

MERP

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Melee OB	Melee Ob	MovM	Skills	Notes
Pingaur	7	130	SL	50	70MBi	60SCI	VF	Tracking (scent) 80	
Belegaur	20	350	SL	70	140LBI	140LCI	BF	Tracking (scent) 140	Takes criticals as 'Large' creature
Note: Both types are unaffected by 'stun' and 'hits per round' results unless magical, silver or better weapons are used.									
* Followed by a 160HBa in the same round if claw attack yields at least an 'A' critical									

TOR

Attribute Level - Pingaur				
6				
Endurance	Hate			
45	8			
DARRY	ARMOUR			
7	<u>4D*</u>			
Skills				
Personality ♦♦	<u>Survival</u> ♦♦♦			
<u>Movement</u> ♦♦♦	Custom ♦			
Perception ♦♦♦	<u>Vocation</u> ♦♦			
Weapon Skills				
Bite ♦♦♦	Rend ♦			
Special Abilities				
Denizen of the Dark, Hideous Toughness, Savage Assault, Great Leap (all per CB)				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	AL**	10	14	N/A
Rend	AL**		14	N/A
Special				
* 3D vs. silver, 2D vs. Mithril, 1D vs. Aconite				
** AL: Attribute Level				

Attribute Level - Belegaur				
9				
Endurance	Hate			
75	12			
DARRY	ARMOUR			
10	<u>5D*</u>			
Skills				
Personality ♦♦	<u>Survival</u> ♦♦♦♦			
<u>Movement</u> ♦♦♦	Custom ♦			
<u>Perception</u> ♦♦♦	Vocation ♦♦♦♦			
Weapon Skills				
Bite ♦♦♦♦♦	Rend ♦♦			
Special Abilities				
Denizen of the Dark, Hideous Toughness, Savage Assault, Great Leap, Great Size, Strike Fear (all per CB)				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	10	8	16	N/A
Rend	AL**	10	15	N/A
Special				
* 4D vs. silver, 3D vs. Mithril, 2D vs. <i>Aconite</i>				
** AL: Attribute Level				

Píngaur Chaotic Evil
STR 15 (+2) DEX 13 (+1) CON 14 (+2) INT 10 (+0) WIS 11 (+0) CHA 10 (+0)
Armor Class 12 (hide armour) Hit Points 58 (9d18+18) Speed 40'
Saving Throws. Strength +7, Constitution +6, Wisdom +3 Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3 Senses Passive Perception 14, the creature has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks for hearing or smell. Languages as in human form (understanding only) Challenge 3: 700 XP
Damage Resistance: Subtract 2 from all hits (except from silver/mithril or aconite). Reckless. As per LM book (p. 118). Savage Assault. As per LM book (p. 118).
ACTIONS Bite: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target with 1d8+2 piercing damage. Human victim must save vs. DC 10 Constitution saving throw or contract the ability. Claws (Hybrid Form only): +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one creature with 2d4+2 slashing damage. Multiattack: As per LM book (p. 117). Denizen of the Dark. As in the LM Book (p. 119). No Quarter. As in the LM Book (p. 120). Snake-like Speed. As in the LM Book (p. 118).

Belegaur Lawful, Neutral or Chaotic Evil
STR 16 (+3) DEX 14 (+2) CON 18 (+4) INT 14 (+2) WIS 12 (+1) CHA 14 (+2)
Armor Class 14 (hide armour) Hit Points 110 (13d18+52) Speed 50'
Saving Throws. Strength +7, Constitution +6, Wisdom +3 Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5 Senses Passive Perception 16, the creature has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks for hearing or smell. Languages as in human form (understanding only) Challenge 7: 2,900 XP
Damage Resistance: Subtract 4 from all hits (except from silver/mithril or aconite). Reckless. As per LM book (p. 118). Savage Assault. As per LM book (p. 118).
ACTIONS Bite: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target with 1d8+3 piercing damage. Human victim must save vs. DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract the ability. Claws (Hybrid Form only): +9 to hit, reach 5ft., one creature with 2d4+3 slashing damage. Multiattack: As per LM book (p. 117). Denizen of the Dark. As in the LM Book (p. 119). No Quarter. As in the LM Book (p. 120). Snake-like Speed. As in the LM Book (p. 118). Hideous Toughness. As in the LM Book (p. 119). Vicious Wounds. As in the LM Book (p. 120).

CLASH OF THE VIGLUNDINGS

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adventure



Like many Loremasters, I struggled with what to do with the Viglundings in my Darkening of Mirkwood campaign. I never liked Viglund as an antagonist and, coincidentally, through a series of events that took place “off screen” in our game, he was killed. This paved the way for his son, Viglar, to power. Having met Viglar in the past, some of my players had a real hatred for him and were itching for a chance to confront him again. This adventure was born out of their desire to deal with the Viglunding menace once and for all. Utilizing some of the excellent material from *The Heart of the Wild*, I thought it more interesting to pit sister against brother, with each’s radically different views of how power should be wielded, for control of the Viglundings.

I recommend reading the sections in *The Heart of the Wild* that describe the Viglundings and their lands. The Darkening of Mirkwood campaign also has a wealth of information on them and their eventual fate. Should your Fellowship undertake this adventure, it could drastically alter the timeline as described in *The Darkening of Mirkwood*.

Also, in this adventure I needed a way to manage a large skirmish while giving the Fellowship some means of affecting the outcome. To that end, I developed the system for determining and utilizing a force’s Fighting Strength which you’ll find in the appendix to the adventure.

Finally, if you want to give the orcs encountered in Part Six a bit more personality, I recommend utilizing the ideas in José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa’s article, “Orc Tribes of Wilderland”, found in *Other Minds* Issue #20. It provides many great suggestions on ways to give an otherwise generic orc tribe some fantastic detail.

As always, I hope you enjoy the adventure and I welcome any feedback or constructive criticisms.

Beorn indeed became a great chief afterwards in those regions [...]; and it is said that for many generations the men of his line had the power of taking bear’s shape, and some were grim men and bad, but most were in heart like Beorn, if less in size and strength. In their day the last goblins were hunted from the Misty Mountains and a new peace came over the edge of the Wild.

— The Hobbit.
The Return Journey

- **When:** This adventure works best during summer between the years 2953 and 2968. If the Fellowship is playing through *The Darkening of Mirkwood* campaign, then some time should be devoted to establishing the hostilities between the Beornings and the Viglundings prior to this adventure.
- **Where:** The East Middle Vales, Beorn’s Home, the East Upper Vales, Viglund Hall, and the North Ford.
- **What:** Viglund is dead. His son, Viglar, now rules the lands with violence and indifference. Under his rule, skirmishes between the Viglundings and the Beornings have reached a boiling point. Promising peace, Viglund’s eldest daughter, Aestid has sought out the assistance of Beorn hoping that he will aid her in overthrowing her brother’s rule. Beorn honors her request and tasks the Fellowship with travelling north into Viglunding lands to implement a desperate plan that everyone hopes will bring an end to the hostilities between the two cultures once and for all.
- **Why:** Beorn has long sought a resolution to the conflict between the Viglundings and his people. The frequent skirmishes between the two have taken a toll on their respective cultures. If the Fellowship can bring an end to the hostilities and lay the groundwork for future peace, then the Viglundings may one day join the Free Folk in their fight against the shadow growing in the south. The Fellowship may even earn the respect of Beorn in the process.

- **Who:** The Fellowship will have an opportunity to assist Beorn with a matter of great importance and may come to know Viglund's eldest daughter Aestid and the enigmatic Hill-man guide Hwalda. They will also encounter Viglar, his simpering goblin lackey Saviga and a host of others who call the East Upper Vales home.

Many of the major players in this tale are taken from *The Heart of the Wild* sourcebook. It is strongly recommended that Loremasters familiarize themselves with the sections detailing the East Upper Vales and the Viglundings. For your convenience, page numbers that detail specific information are provided throughout this adventure.

ADVENTURING PHASE

What Came Before

This adventure follows the kin strife that has taken place among the Viglundings after the death of their leader, Viglund¹. The exact circumstances for his death are a matter for your personal discretion. He may have died in battle, been assassinated by his son Viglar, or fled into the wilderness and simply vanished. What matters is that in his absence his son Viglar has assumed leadership of the Viglundings and that his rule has been a disaster. Unlike his father, Viglar is ill suited for command and prefers to spend his days drinking while relegating his responsibilities to others. As a result, the community is fracturing between those who remain loyal to Viglund's memory and those who are tired of standing by idly, while Viglar brings their people closer to ruin. Loyalties have begun to be questioned and whispers of rebellion have begun. Without some form of intervention, the Viglundings will soon tear themselves apart. Seeing the havoc that Viglar's rule has brought on her people, Aestid has chosen to take matters into her own hands.

¹ More information on Viglund, including his stats, can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, pg. 29.

Using Viglund

Substituting Viglund for Viglar in this adventure can be done rather easily. However, Viglund is a much stronger personality than his son and some consideration should be given to how he would react to Aestid's uprising. Viglund is no fool. He is far more competent and decisive than his besotted son.

Part One - Beck and Call

Beorn summons the Fellowship to a meeting at his home where he assesses their trustworthiness to undergo a mysterious task. Aestid, Viglund's eldest daughter, has secretly come to him seeking his support in overthrowing her brother. Together, they have devised a plan that they hope will depose Viglar and secure a lasting peace between their two peoples, while avoiding needless bloodshed. It now falls upon the shoulders of the Fellowship to see their daring plan through.

Part Two - A Secret Harvest

Aestid's March begins. Accompanied by the Fellowship, she moves northward in secret to meet with several of the most-prominent free cottars in the Viglund lands north of the Elfwood. It will take some clever negotiating to convince the various elders to join Aestid's cause. Though many only wish for peace and prosperity, not everyone is to be trusted and a wary Fellowship must be careful not to let Viglar discover their presence too soon.

Part Three - The Hunt for Allies

Word has come to Aestid that one of her kin's mightiest warriors, Thunar, and a band of hunters from Viglund Hall have entered Mirkwood north of the Forest Gate. Due to a betrayal in their past, it is no secret that Thunar's loyalty to Viglar has begun to waver. Aestid hopes that the companions can track him down within the forest and convince him to join her cause. Both the respect he commands, and his strength of arms would be a great boon to her efforts in overthrowing Viglar.

Part Four - Strike the Chains

The Viglundings have long been known as slavers, but under Viglar they have taken on a new level of cruelty. As part of her commitment to abolishing this practice and the need to grow her numbers, Aestid asks the Fellowship to free a large group of slaves who toil endlessly in the Viglundung fields near the river. It is Aestid's hope that Viglar may be convinced to step down upon seeing his former slaves arrayed against him outside his gates.

Part Five - Sibling Rivalries

The time has come. Aestid marches a host of her supporters straight to the gates of Viglund Hall and challenges Viglar for leadership. A battle of wills plays out for all to hear, but Viglar will not be easily bested. Through his

goblin jester, Saviga, he has set in motion a series of events that he is certain will bring him victory, but may ultimately doom them all.

Part Six - A Host of Betrayals

Word comes to Viglund Hall that Saviga leads a host of goblins from the mountains against the Viglundings. Saviga has been a spy of the Enemy these many years and he has now played Viglar for the fool. Mordor has no intention of allowing an alliance to form between the Beornings and the Viglundings. They would rather see the Viglundings destroyed than lend their strength to the Free Peoples of Wilderland. The fate of the Viglundings now rests in the hands of the Fellowship. Will the actions of the companions culminate in a new peace between the Beornings and the Viglundings? Or, will all fall to ruin?



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- PART ONE - BECK AND CALL

In Part One, the Fellowship is called to Beorn's home where they meet Aestid, the late Viglund's eldest daughter. She explains that the rule of her brother, Viglar, is failing and that the people are becoming restless. Whispers of rebellion have begun and she fears that her people will descend into years of bloodshed and infighting if nothing is done to stem the tide of discontent. To that end, she has come to Beorn to ask for his aid in overthrowing her brother. She hopes a bloodless transition of power will be possible and thus avert greater misfortune. In exchange for his help, Aestid has promised peace between the Viglundings and the Beornings once she is in power.

In the early summer, when the cool mountain breezes have dwindled and the full heat of the season bears down on Wilderland, Beorn sends word that he wishes to speak with the Fellowship. Word of this can come through any number of means:

- While crossing the Old Ford a toll-collector recognizes the Fellowship and informs them that Beorn has urgent need of their aid.
- Any number of wanderers or adventurers could cross paths with the Company.
- The Fellowship could overhear some gossip while relaxing at the Easterly Inn.
- A Beorning messenger arrives in town, looking for the Fellowship.

ARRIVAL AT BEORN'S HOME

The meadows that surround Beorn's home are in full bloom and the buzzing of his bees fills the air as they effortlessly float from flower to flower. A tall hedge of oak and thorns encircles Beorn's small compound. It comprises a long hall, a guest house, and several outbuildings. Hounds trot out of the front gate to warily sniff at the heels of the Fellowship as they pass through Beorn's gardens to arrive at his front door. Several farm animals stop their daily chores and watch the companions, a curious intelligence in their eyes.

Hwalda answers the door. She stands with one hand on the hilt of a dwarven-forged sword and the other resting comfortably against the door. A heavy, black warg-hide cloak hangs over her shoulders giving her an imposing silhouette as she looks each companion in the eye before finally gesturing them inside.

If the companions have encountered Hwalda before, then she greets them gruffly and beckons them inside to a seat at the long table. If this is the first time they have encountered Hwalda, she will treat them well enough, but not cordially. She offers them honey with cream and vegetables to eat, then explains that Beorn will arrive soon.

If the companions wish, they may take some time to get to know Hwalda. If not, then she sits quietly up against the wall, passing the time by sharpening her sword or whittling small animal tokens from scraps of firewood.

Meeting Hwalda, the Hill-man Guide



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Hwalda¹ is a free-spirited and adventurous guide who owes allegiance to no one, but who has earned the respect and trust of nearly everyone she has met. She is known to be a hard woman and an even harder negotiator. Aestid and she met many times throughout the years and they have become good friends. Given Hwalda's reputation for being fair-minded and forthright, Aestid asked her to accompany her

¹ More about Hwalda, including her stats, can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, pg. 15 and *Ruins of the North*, pgs. 20-21.

during her visit to Beorn in hopes that her presence would help assuage any of his misgivings about meeting her.

Tolerance

If the companions wish to speak with Hwalda, perhaps to gain information about her or to ask the reason as to why Beorn summoned them, then set her initial Tolerance equal to the highest Valour in the Fellowship. As a Hill-man and independent spirit, it is highly unlikely that anyone has any Standing that she would honor.

Make a *Lore* test (TN 14) to determine how best to address Hwalda and to gain any bonus die.

Introduction

Both *Courtesy* and *Awe* work well when introducing themselves to Hwalda. She is well-travelled and is familiar with many different cultures. As such, she is not easily offended. *Riddle* may also be used; but, given that the Fellowship should be looking to establish trust, they may wish to tread carefully if attempting to be sneaky or shrewd.

Interaction

As a lone-traveler and guide, Hwalda is somewhat insular in nature and does not readily trust strangers. Even if successful in their use of *Persuade*, *Insight*, *Courtesy*, *Riddle*, or *Awe* to try and glean information from her, she will always give terse answers. Below is some of the information that Hwalda is willing to share. She is reluctant to speak directly about Aestid since she feels that Beorn should discuss the matter with the Fellowship. However, an Extraordinary Success may convince her to let a few details slip. Use the list to the right for possible answers and choose those that fit best to the situation.

The Viglundings

A suitable *Lore* or *Riddle* test can reveal some of the following information about the Viglundings.

Success: They are Northmen who accepted the hard rule of Viglund and settled under the eaves of northern Mirkwood. Their frequent disputes with the Beornings over territory around the Forest Gate are well known.

Great Success: As per a Success and including that their founder, Viglund, is gone and his son Viglar has taken his place. Viglar is a drunkard and his rule is failing. There is discord among his people. The Viglundings are also known slavers.

Extraordinary Success: As per a Great Success and including that there are rumors suggesting Viglar consorts with goblins and has isolated himself from many of those who were once loyal to his father.

- Hwalda hails from the Hill-men lands in the shadow of Mount Gundabad, but she owes them no allegiance. She is a free woman who comes and goes as she pleases.
- She has known Beorn for many years and considers him a trusted friend.
- She escorted a Viglunding friend here to speak with Beorn in private, but she can say little else at the moment.
- Beorn asked her to wait here in case the Fellowship arrived in his absence. He is off tending to business and will be home soon.
- She is here at Aestid's request to give what weight she can to the words Aestid came to share with Beorn.
- She has no interest in being a player in whatever Aestid has planned. Once her part is done, she plans to leave.

Meeting Beorn

It is well past midnight when Beorn finally arrives. He enters the room with purpose, gives a nod to Hwalda, stokes the fire, and then takes a moment to survey the Fellowship. Standing up to his full height before the fire, he looks down upon each of them with a grim expression on his face. After some silence, he addresses the Fellowship in a deep, resonating voice.

"It took you long enough to answer my summons. Let's hope you're not as slow-witted as you are afoot. I summoned you because there is a task that needs doing. And no simple task at that. It will require good folk who are not only wise but brave as well. Perhaps more so. But we shall see to that in a moment."

"You may have heard that our enemy to the north, the Viglundings, are weak. Broken from within by a drunkard and fool who shares none of his father's bearing. We may soon see an end to them if you can play your parts. But first, I need to know your full measure. Are you the sort that I can trust to act wisely when counseled by fools? Can you be patient when your blood yearns for action?"

Beorn is looking for the Fellowship to relieve any misgivings he may have about sending them on such an important errand. If they already have an established relationship with Beorn, so much the better.

Tolerance

In this matter, Beorn prefers Wisdom over Valour. He is looking for a Fellowship that is not eager for a fight, but instead can be mindful of the delicacies needed to help bring about a lasting peace that does not cause any innocent to suffer needlessly. Be sure to add the Standing of any Beorning to his Tolerance rating. Decrease his Tolerance by one if there are any Dwarves in the Fellowship.

Test *Lore* (TN 14) to determine the best means of addressing Beorn and to gain any bonus die.

Introduction

Beorn will insist that the members of the Fellowship introduce themselves individually. *Courtesy* works best with Beorn, but he will also respond to *Awe*. Though he is not easily impressed by boasting, Beorn recognizes it as a prevalent trait among his followers and so tolerates it. A companion had best make sure his accomplishments are truly noteworthy if they seek to impress Beorn.

Interaction

Beorn is looking to be assured that he can put his faith in the Fellowship to act wisely in the task he plans to lay before them; however, he will avoid discussing the matter directly until he trusts them. *Persuade* works best for this, but they may also employ any variety of means that the Loremaster deems appropriate.

Use the following guidelines to determine the results of the encounter:

- **0 Successes:** All hope is not lost if the Fellowship fails to convince Beorn of their integrity. At the Loremaster's discretion, he may require them to complete a lesser task first in order to prove their trustworthiness to him. Such a task could be to track and kill a pack of wolves that is harrying his flocks or any other task the Loremaster deems appropriate.
- **1-5 Successes:** Beorn is satisfied that he chose correctly in assigning this task to the Fellowship. He sends Hwalda to fetch Aestid who then explains what is to come.
- **6-7 Successes:** As above, but Beorn will also provide the companions with some Twice-baked Honey Cakes to aid them on their journey. Rules for Twice-baked Honey Cakes can be found in *The One Ring Rulebook*, pg. 106.
- **8+ Successes:** As above, but Beorn will also ask Baldur, one of his intelligent hounds, to assist the Fellowship. Treat the dog as a *Hound of Mirkwood* with the *Harass Enemy* ability. The rules for the *Hound of Mirkwood* can be found in *The One Ring Rulebook*, pg. 112.

Meeting Aestid, Eldest Daughter of Viglund

Tall, dark-haired and of regal-bearing, Aestid¹ shares many of her late-father's physical characteristics, but fortunately none of his cruel-heartedness. She is dressed inconspicuously with a simple axe hanging from her belt, but her eyes are fierce, and she speaks with authority.



Eowyn, Defender of Rohan © 2019 by Donato Giancola, used with permission

"You have my thanks for agreeing to hear my plea. My name is Aestid and I am the eldest daughter of Viglund, he who founded the Viglundings and built the great hall of our people. In the absence of my father, my brother Viglar rules, but he lacks wisdom and temperance. The people have begun to grumble under his authority and I fear that without a strong leader feuds will soon erupt among my people. I have come to Beorn with a proposal that I hope will see us both prosper – and put an end to the conflict between our people."

Aestid's Plan

Aestid plans to overthrow her brother and assume leadership of the Viglundings, but she cannot do it alone. She came to Beorn for help and rather than involving himself directly, he has chosen to enlist the aid of the Fellowship. In the coming days, Aestid and the Fellowship will leave Beorn's home and travel to the lands north of the Elfwood to meet with the most prominent elders of the free cottars. She hopes to convince them to support her claim and march with her to Viglund Hall to confront her brother openly. As she continues her march north, the Fellowship will be sent ahead to free

as many slaves as they can to increase her ranks and to locate and recruit those warriors whose loyalty to Viglar is questionable.

Aestid hopes that by the time they reach the gates of Viglund Hall, her numbers will be sufficient to challenge her brother and depose him without further violence.

Here are some additional details that she will share with the Fellowship:

- Aestid has arranged a meeting with the free cottar elders, which will take place in a few days at Wulfert's farm to the north. This is the first stop on her march home.
- As a part of their agreement, Aestid has agreed to free all of the Viglundings slaves and abolish the practice, which she abhors anyway. She is hoping however, that the slaves will support her claim and lend strength to her numbers.
- Slaves are kept in crude huts close to fields beside the river southwest of Viglund Hall. They are typically tied together in pairs and watched very closely by the slave masters. Close to one hundred slaves live and work there.
- A hunting party of Viglar's warriors are scheduled to enter Northern Mirkwood for boar hunting in a few days. Thunar, a mighty warrior whose loyalty to Viglar has been shaken, is among them. She hopes that the companions can track down the hunting party and convince them to join her cause.
- Though she despises her brother and his rule, she does not wish to see him killed. It is her wish that he be sent into exile and that the change of power be as peaceful as possible.
- Timing is crucial. It is inevitable that Viglar will hear of their march eventually, but the longer they remain undiscovered the better. She does not want him to have time to plan a military response.
- The rumors of Viglar consorting with goblins is true. He retains a goblin jester named Saviga that whispers dark words in his ear. His presence makes many uncom-

¹ More information on Aestid, including her stats, can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, pg. 31.

fortable and Aestid would like to see the creature put to the sword.

The following are suggested skill test results when discussing the matter with Beorn and Aestid:

Persuade: No persuasion is needed for Aestid to trust the Fellowship. Beorn is convinced of their capabilities and that is sufficient for her.

Riddle: Failing a *Riddle* test in Beorn's presence angers him and causes him to suspect the companion's true intentions. He will admonish them for their rudeness rather bluntly. A Success with Aestid indicates that she is withholding something personal. A Great Success indicates that she is in love with a Beorning. An Extraordinary Success reveals that her father promised her to a Viglunding named Othbald, whom she despises.

Insight: A Success indicates that Beorn really hates the Viglundings, but that he is sincere in his desire to avoid bloodshed. A Great Success indicates that the conflict between the Beornings and the Viglundings weighs heavily on his heart and he strongly desires an end to it. An Extraordinary Success indicates that Beorn has a soft spot for Aestid, though it would be foolish for a companion to mention this publicly.

Once the Fellowship's questions are answered, Aestid will ask them to prepare for an early start next morning for their march to the free cottars beyond the Elfwood. Later that night, Hwalda will quietly leave.

Love is in the Air

In The Darkening of Mirkwood campaign, Beorn marries a woman of the North in 2968 who gives birth to his son Grimbeorn the following year. Aestid is also rumored to be in love with a Beorning. If you choose, Beorn could marry Aestid as a means of merging their people together under one ruler. Such a deed would surely strengthen the Free People of Wilderland against the coming shadow.

Aestid's March

The approximate time-table for her march, from the time she leaves Beorn's home to the time she arrives outside of Viglund Hall, is detailed below. The Loremaster should feel free to adjust the schedule to suit their campaign's needs. However, it is important to maintain a sense of urgency throughout the adventure. The companions should always feel that time is against them and that their untimely discovery by Viglar's men would be ruinous.



Beorn's Home to Wulferd's Farm

It will take 5 days at 20 miles per day to reach the free cottars at Wulferd's farm north of the Elfwood.

It will take an additional 4 days before everyone arrives and the meeting concludes.

Wulferd's Farm to Viglund Hall

Aestid's March towards Viglund Hall resumes while the Fellowship is sent to rescue the slaves and find Thunar's hunting party. At a steady pace, it will take her at least another five days before she reaches Viglund Hall.

Convincing Hwalda to Help

In short, Hwalda will not join Aestid's march. If the Fellowship attempts to press her to join them, she will rebuff their efforts stating that it is not her place to meddle in the affairs of others.

"My part in this tale is over. Though Aestid has my admiration and support, I will not see myself entangled in her family's troubles. No, I will leave before the morning's light so that I will be well clear of these lands in the coming days. Good fortune to each of you. Farewell."

- PART TWO - A SECRET HARVEST

In Part Two, the Fellowship will escort Aestid to the Elfwood to meet with several of the most respected free cottar elders in the hopes of persuading them to support her in overthrowing Viglar. Though Viglar is a drunken tyrant, his wrath is greatly feared and not everyone is so eager to challenge him. It is up to the Fellowship to assist Aestid in convincing those in attendance that their best interests lie in throwing their support in with her. Sadly, not everyone came to the meeting with the purest of intentions.

Early the next morning, the Fellowship sets out from Beorn's house to travel north for their meeting at Wulferd's farm. Aestid has arranged a meeting between the elders of the most influential free cottar families close to the Elfwood. Desiring secrecy, Aestid insists they stay out of sight of the river and avoid travelling in the open whenever possible. The first leg of Aestid's march has begun.

Beorn's Hall to Wulferd's Farm

Travelling discretely through the tall grasses and gentle rolling hills east of the Great River, the Fellowship makes easy progress towards the Elfwood. The journey to Wulferd's farm is 90 miles and will take five days requiring one Fatigue test only (TN 14).

To avoid being seen by other travelers or local farmers, the Scout should make an Explore test (TN 16) to find the most secretive route through East Middle Vales.

ENCOUNTER-Hwalda's PARTING GIFT (Optional)

If the Scout fails their *Explore* test to remain unnoticed, then despite their best efforts, the Fellowship is discovered as they pass through the lands of the astute Beornings. Curious herders and farmers will approach the Fellowship and inquire about their business in these lands. Upon seeing Aestid, they mention rumors they have recently heard of a great queen of the Viglundings who is returning from afar to usurp her evil brother's rule. Their tale describes a strange woman dressed in warg-skin who passed this way a few days ago heralding the great queen's coming. Many of these Beorning families have lost loved ones to the Viglunding slavers and will happily send someone to aid in their return.

Wulferd's Farm

Atop a small hill north of the Elfwood lies the fortified homestead of one of the most respected elders in Viglunding lands. Outside the earth and wooden palisade, sheep and cattle graze on the lush grasses. Vegetable gardens that Wulferd's family has tended for decades flourish in the sun. Should the Fellowship approach cautiously, they will see nothing out-of-the-ordinary. In fact, given the children working in the fields and shepherding the sheep, it appears to be business-as-usual on the farm.

Wulferd welcomes the Fellowship warmly, but ushers them inside quickly. Though he is friendly to Aestid and wishes to support her claim, he is no fool. He knows that his actions could cost him his life and the lives of his family. Regardless, his hospitality is generous and his family, particularly the children, are curious to hear of the Fellowship's many adventures. A successful *Song* test would achieve a great deal to ease the tension and warm the family to the strangers in their home while they wait for the others to arrive.

Wulferd is also one of the elders referred to in the next section.

The Free Cottars

Aestid has summoned four elders from the most-respected free cottars in these lands to treat with them hoping that she can gain their support to overthrow her brother. It will not be an easy task, and she will need the Fellowship's guidance to manage the negotiations in order to win them over.

Each of the elders is described below, together with their general attitude and any demands they may make toward Aestid. The Fellowship should feel free to help Aestid as she negotiates for the elder's favor.

Wulferd

Wulferd has witnessed many changes in the Eastern Vales over the past fifty years and the frequent skirmishes with the Beornings have spilled over onto his lands more than once, costing him his lower leg. He is the most prosperous and respected elder among the farmers close to the Elfwood. Wulferd has never been particularly fond of the manner in which Viglund ruled and he abhors the practice of slavery.

- Target Numbers when speaking with Wulferd begin at 14. Though a fair man, recent experiences with the Beornings have caused him to distrust his neighbors to the south. Increase his Target Numbers by two if there are any Beornings in the Fellowship.

Position: At heart, Wulferd is a man of peace. He has lost more than one family member to Viglund's ambitions and he now sees an even worse tyrant in Viglar. Of all the families present, his is the most predisposed to assisting Aestid.

Demands: Wulferd can see the end of his days in the near future and only desires to see his legacy and his family taken care of. To that end, he will offer Aestid his full support, so long as she agrees to grant him a hereditary title and take his family under her protection upon his passing. Evoric will be opposed to Wulferd's receiving of a title, as he covets one for himself.

Black Tom¹

A free cottar that hails from the West Upper Vales, Black Tom is known in these parts only by his reputation. However, Aestid asked him here because Viglar has made clear his intentions to absorb the settlers of the Western Vales into Viglunding lands. Black Tom is used to getting his way and has little patience for negotiations.

- Target Numbers when speaking with Black Tom begin at 12 if they agree to his terms. If not, the Target Number leaps to 20.



Beorning Warrior © by JIazarus EB, used with permission

Position: Black Tom is fiercely independent and has no intention of serving anyone. He is only here to ensure that Aestid understands that any support he may lend is to gain total freedom for the West Upper Vales.

Demands: Black Tom will agree to support Aestid, so long as she swears unconditionally never to attempt usurping the lands of the West Upper Vales. Evoric wishes to receive a large land grant from Aestid in the West Upper Vales and will oppose this demand vehemently.

¹ More information on Black Tom can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, pg. 25.

Heva

As evening approaches, Heva arrives. She is a hard-working, weathered woman in her late 30's who has been taking care of her family since her husband was enslaved by Viglund for failing to meet his quota of crop production. She is angry and hates Viglar more than his father but is afraid to do anything that may put her family in jeopardy. Her participation is contingent upon the return of her husband. Her middle daughter, Freja, traveled with her.

- Target Numbers when speaking with Heva begin at 16.



Grumpy Romanian Lady © by Gin Hardiarso, used with permission

Position: Heva despises Viglar and wishes to see him ousted, but she is cautious and requires assurances that her family will be protected.

Demands: Heva's only demand, other than assurances for her family's safety, is that Aestid promises the return of her husband, Kael. He is currently being forced to work the fields along the river to the north. Freeing him is something the Fellowship may accomplish in Part Four. Offering her sanctuary in Beorning lands or something similar will help alleviate her concerns for her family's safety. Wulferd is distrustful of Beornings and will counsel against this.

Evoric



Zaporozhian cossacks © by Onur Bakar, used with permission

The following afternoon, Evoric arrives with his youngest son, Eirik, who is twelve. Evoric is rather portly for a farmer who claims to work in the fields all day. This is because he purchased two slaves from Viglund several years ago and has put them to work in his stead. Though the Viglundings are known slavers, most of the free cottars frown on the practice. Evoric cares little for their opinion of him, however. He aspires to become the most-prominent farmer in these lands one day. Evoric is a schemer who is not particularly loyal to Viglar but is not willing to risk losing all he has gained over the past few years by sticking his neck out for Aestid. However, if she can convince Evoric of her victory, then he will put his weight behind her – as long as it advances his goals.

- Target Numbers when speaking with Evoric begin at 18.

Position: Evoric is selfish. He will accept a risk if there is something greater to be gained by it. He is also perfectly happy to report Aestid's activities to Viglar if that will benefit him more.

Demands: The Fellowship will have to negotiate a lengthy list of ever-changing demands that range from more land grants in the West Upper Vales to lower taxes on his crops to the retention of his slaves to him receiving a title. Evoric will offer more material support than Wulferd has available on the con-

dition that he be the only one who receives a title. His demand for lands west of the river will not sit well with Black Tom. Heva will insist that Evoric frees all of his slaves, the very suggestion of which he will scoff at. Aestid's first impulse will be to reject most of Evoric's demands outright, but she can be persuaded otherwise if it serves a greater good in the end. Though his list of demands is long, Evoric is willing to negotiate so long as he feels there is still more to gain.

The Spy

After the discussion is over and everyone has settled down for the night, Evoric's son will attempt to slip out and warn Viglar of Aestid's plans. If the Fellowship posted a watch, then the Look-out may make an *Awareness* test (TN 16) to notice someone exiting the compound in the dark of night. A Great Success or better reveals that it is Eirik, Evoric's son.

Catching the Spy

Eirik has a *Stealth* of 2 and an *Athletics* of 2. He is unarmed but carries a hastily bundled bag of provisions.

If the companions catch Eirik, he will curse them as traitors and his father too if the Fellowship has managed to convince Evoric to join Aestid's March. A successful *Insight* / *Riddle* test when questioning Eirik reveals that he admires

Viglar and longs to be a part of his entourage. Evoric will insist that the Fellowship immediately return his son to him so that they may leave.

Now the Fellowship has a hard choice to make. If they allow Evoric to leave, then Eirik will surely escape his father to warn Viglar. Holding them captive will create tension among the elders and Aestid. It is up to the Fellowship to come up with a resolution that everyone can live with.

- Should the Fellowship kill Eirik, Evoric would revoke his support and leave to warn Viglar of Aestid's treachery.
- Kidnapping, imprisoning, or killing anyone would be considered a Misdeed given the circumstances. It is up to the Fellowship to decide whether such dark deeds are necessary in order to bring about a brighter future.

The Spy Escapes

If Eirik manages to escape unnoticed or elude the Fellowship, then word of Aestid's march comes to Viglar much sooner than they had hoped. Viglar will send Saviga for aid giving the goblin forces more time to reach Viglund Hall before they can be intercepted. They will already be across the North Ford and into Viglunding lands before anyone realizes they are coming (see Part Six).



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Measuring the Outcome

The Fellowship will not know how successful their efforts have been until they arrive outside the gates of Viglund Hall and they can gauge Viglar's reaction for themselves. Details of how their efforts in this part of the adventure will affect the outcome are pictured in Part 5 under "Convincing the Crowd".

As dawn breaks the next day, Aestid gives the Fellowship their next two objectives. They may complete them in any order they choose.

The first is to find Thunar's hunting party in Northern Mirkwood and convince them to support Aestid's claim. Thunar despises Viglar, but has remained loyal in honor of his father's memory. Aestid hopes that he will join her cause if presented with a better alternative. As a respected warrior, Thunar's loyalty would bring many others to her side. His hunting party enters the forest through a deer path north of the Forest Gate. Aestid can describe the general whereabouts of the trail's entrance.

The second task is to free the slaves who tend the fields close to the river bank to the northwest. This is the highest concentration of slaves found in Viglunding lands. The Fellowship needs to free them, arm them if possible, and convince them to support Aestid's cause. No small task given the circumstances.

As they part ways, Aestid will remind the Fellowship that she will soon resume her march to Viglund Hall and intends to gather as many additional Free Folk as she can muster along the way. She should reach the gates in five days. That is the next time they will meet.

- Be sure to track how long it takes the Fellowship to complete each task, as arriving late or early can have consequences. If they get behind, they can always make a Forced March to try and make time up but arriving tired out.

Once the Fellowship chooses the task they wish to complete first, move on to Part Three or Part Four as appropriate.



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Hazard Episode: Viglunding Patrol

All Companions - Dangerous Meeting

Despite their best efforts to remain hidden, the Fellowship stumbles upon a Viglunding patrol. Have the companion that caused the Hazard Episode make an Awareness test. On a failure, the companions do not spot the patrol in time to avoid a Combat Encounter. Use the stats for Viglunding Slavers and their Hounds in Part Four.

~ PART THREE ~ THE HUNT FOR ALLIES

In Part Three, the Fellowship journeys into Northern Mirkwood to track down Thunar's hunting party in hopes to leverage the bad blood between Viglar and him into a new alliance with Aestid. However, a great evil lurks in the shadows of the forest and threatens to consume them all. The Fellowship will be forced to contend with one of the great spiders of Mirkwood, the Stone Recluse, if they are to have any hope of saving Thunar and convincing him to aid their cause.

- If the Fellowship chose to undertake this task first, then they will have an opportunity to save all of the hunter's lives, bolstering Aestid's numbers, nearly assuring that Thunar will join her cause.
- If the Fellowship chose to undertake this task second¹, then many of the hunters will have been slain already, reducing the numbers they can contribute and making it harder to convince Thunar to join her cause.

The deer path that the hunters use to enter Northern Mirkwood lies about half a day's travel northeast of Wulferd's farm. A suitable *Explore* or *Hunting* test (TN 16) can be used to locate the path a few miles north of the Forest Gate.

Once the path is located, the Fellowship can track the hunters by succeeding on a Prolonged Action *Hunting* test (TN 16) requiring three Successes. The trail leads the Fellowship east through the forest for most of the day. It traverses tree-covered hills that rise and then fall into damp valleys whose slippery sides are made all the more treacherous by years of fallen leaves.

¹ Alternatively, if the LM deems this scenario too tough for the Fellowship, the decimation of Thunar's party may depend on the heroes' previous actions and decisions.

One Poor Soul

Deep in the forest, the Fellowship comes across one of the hunters, fallen beside the trail. He is unmoving and his lips are covered with froth, an expression of terror written across his unmoving face. At first, the man seems dead, but a successful *Medicine* test reveals that he is paralyzed. The clothing around his left shoulder has been torn away and the flesh underneath is rotting and weeping. A companion with *Enemylore* (*Spiders*) or a successful *Hunting* (TN 18)/*Medicine* (TN 16) test reveals that the poor man is suffering from the effects of a rare type of spider venom.

- Without treatment, the man will soon die. Only someone skilled in the arts of countering the effects of poison (such as a companion with the Woodmen Cultural Virtue-Herbal Remedies) can hope to save his life. Otherwise, the Fellowship watches as the last ray of light fades from the poor man's eyes.
- If the Fellowship came to rescue the hunters after first saving the slaves, then this man has been dead for many days.

Not twenty feet away the Fellowship will discover the scene of an attack. A successful *Hunting* or *Battle* test reveals that the group came under attack while they were camping for the night. Multiple drag marks leave the path and head north into the forest.

As they follow the trail, the Fellowship will periodically come across discarded items and clothing that was torn away by the underbrush, before finally coming upon the ruins of a rotted wooden cabin that was built against a cliff face. Thick underbrush has overgrown and nearly consumed what was once a large single-room cabin. The roof has collapsed, and the front wall looks to have been torn away revealing a hollowed-out shell of damp, rotten boards. Where there was once a wooden porch, now a wide, low tunnel bores into the forest floor. The drag marks lead straight into the muddy mouth of the cave.

The Stone Recluse

Beneath the cabin lies the home of the Stone Recluse, a lesser descendent of one of Shelob's children who has remained hidden in the northern forest for hundreds of years. During the day, he remains in the darkness of his shallow cave and at night he hunts. Not as large as Tauler or as thin as Tyulqin, the Stone Recluse squeezes his swollen frame into his shadowy home, filling most of the main chamber with his bulk. The walls are earthen but have been worn slick by the spider's bulbous body over the years. A small dugout holds any food that the spider may be saving for later.

The Spider's Lair



1. **Main Chamber.** This room is not much larger than the spider itself and its sole function is to give the Stone Recluse somewhere to rest and shielding from the sunlight. The walls and floor are slick with mud giving any physical actions taken here a Minor Hindrance (+2 Difficulty to all tests). Pressed into the mud and detritus can be found 20* worth of treasure.

- Skin of the Langflood (Notable Item): Buried in the mud beneath the spider's belly is a small waterskin that was stitched long ago with stylized images of the flowers and grasses found through-

out the Anduin Vales. Those who drink from it say that its waters tastes just as flower's nectar would to a hummingbird. Drinking from the waterskin grants a bonus Success die to *Travel* tests made to resist Fatigue during a journey. It holds enough water for one companion to use each journey.

2. **Muddy Hollow.** In the side of the main chamber the spider has dug a hollow that it uses to store food. Piled into this shallow dugout are the paralyzed bodies of six hunters, plus Thunar, who are waiting to be eaten. If the Fellowship came here after rescuing the slaves then only two hunters remain, plus Thunar. All of the hunters are currently paralyzed by the spider's venom and will have to be carried from the cave. However, the poison should wear off within an hour or so of their rescue.

Rescuing Thunar's Hunting Party

Rescuing the hunters is best done when the spider is not present. The Stone Recluse is a formidable foe and the Fellowship should think carefully before deciding to attack it, especially at night.

Here are some possible ways the Fellowship could avoid a direct confrontation with the spider:


- A cautious Companion could sneak into the spider's cave during the day while he is sleeping. However, rescuing the prisoners with the spider present would require extraordinary skill since the spider's body fills most of the room's space.
- Another option would be to lure the spider away while the companions quickly rescue the hunters. The spider will not, under any circumstances, leave his cave voluntarily during the day.
- The Fellowship may choose to avoid the Stone Recluse altogether by waiting until he leaves his lair at night to hunt. If this is the case, have the Companions make *Stealth* tests (TN 16) to avoid detection by the avid hunter. While inside the cave, any test that a companion fails with an "Eye", can result in the spider returning early!

Fighting the Stone Recluse

The Stone Recluse does not spin webs or dangle from trees like his brethren. Instead, he prefers to hunt at night and stalk his prey from beneath the layers of rotten leaves that cover the forest floor. He abhors the sunlight and spends his days sleeping and digesting his meals underground. Possessing both Paralytic and Necrotic

poisons, he can be a potent foe. When hunting, the Stone Recluse prefers to paralyze his prey to feast on it later; however, when threatened, he will use his Necrotic poison to quickly dispatch his enemies.

The spider prefers to fight at night when he is most dangerous. If Wounded or reduced to zero Endurance, he will flee into the woods.

Attribute Level - The Stone Recluse				
5				
Endurance		Hate		
66		6		
DARRY		ARMOUR		
8		3		
Skills				
Personality ♦♦		Survival ♦♦♦♦		
Movement ♦♦♦♦		Custom ♦		
Perception ♦♦♦		Vocation -		
Weapon Skills				
Beak ♦♦♦♦		Stomp ♦♦		
Special Abilities				
Thing of Terror (TN16), Denizen of the Dark, Great Size, Seize Victim, Abhors Sunlight, Deadly Elusiveness, Poisons				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	6	10	1	Poison
Stomp	Attr. Lvl		14	Pierce
Special				
<p>1. Abhors Sunlight: Creature loses 1 point of Hate at the end of every round that it is exposed to direct sunlight, flees if reduced to zero Hate as a result of exposure to sunlight.</p> <p>2. Poisons: as a Called Shot, may use either Greater Spider-Poison or Necrotic Poison. <u>Greater Spider-Poison</u> functions as per the rules. In addition to suffering the normal effects of poison, a companion struck by <u>Necrotic Spider-Poison</u> has his Body characteristic lowered by one immediately, followed by an additional point every day thereafter. When his Body score reaches zero, the companion dies. A <i>Medicine</i> test (TN16) will stop this effect, but will also inflict a Wound as the healer cuts away the necrotic flesh. The companion's Body score will return to normal until he fully recovers both his Wounds and Endurance.</p>				



Shelob © by Olanda Fong-Surdenas, used with permission
CREATED "WYNA HIBON" FONG-SURDENAS

Meeting Thunar¹

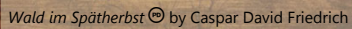
Once the hunters have been rescued, a weakened Thunar will thank the Fellowship and comment on how fortunate it was that they arrived just in time. Convincing Thunar to join Aestid's cause requires a Prolonged Action at TN 20 with five Successes. Reduce the Target Number by one for each hunter that survived. Be sure to include the hunter the Fellowship found on the trail if they managed to save his life. Thunar ends the conversation abruptly and admonishes the companions for questioning his honor if they fail three tests before achieving five Successes.

- If the Companions succeed in convincing Thunar to join them, he agrees to return to Viglund Hall and await their arrival. He will bide his time, gather other like-minded warriors to his side, and prepare to act when the time is right.
- If the Companions fail to convince Thunar to join them he will not lend his strength to their cause, but he agrees not to act against them either, such is his hatred for Viglar. To facilitate this, he will take his men back to Viglund Hall via a longer route so that

¹ More information about Thunar, including why he hates Viglar, can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, p. 30.

- If the Companions fail spectacularly, without gaining any Successes or rolling an “Eye” while failing, then Thunar rebuffs their attempts to turn his loyalty and returns home to warn Viglar of Aestid’s intentions.

- Be sure to deduct the time it took to rescue Thunar and his hunters from the five days the Fellowship has to meet Aestid at the gates of Viglund Hall.



~ PART FOUR ~ BREAK THE CHAINS

In Part Four, the Fellowship travels to the banks of the Great River where the Viglundings have established a large farm that is worked by the many slaves they have captured over the years. It is up to the Companions to free as many of the slaves as possible. However, more challenging than freeing the slaves will be convincing them that their interests are best served by aiding Aestid's rebellion.

The Slave Farm



The fields where most of the unfortunate enslaved souls are forced to work are located along the eastern banks of the Great River about 15 miles northwest of Wulferd's farm. During this time of the season, four large fields of wheat and corn have grown to a modest height but are not yet ready for harvest. Herds of sheep and some cattle graze in the meadows surrounding the fields.

1. Slaver Cabins. To the north and south of the fields are two wide log cabins that house the slave-masters and their hounds. Each cabin is comprised of a large single-room. There are eight sleeping mats scattered around a central fire pit that vents through the roof. Six short bows and

several quivers of arrows are set along one wall with additional storage for personal affects. Each cabin houses eight slavers and six hounds. The dogs typically sleep on the porch where they can keep a wary eye on the slaves.

2. Fields. The corn and wheat fields will be ready for harvest in a few weeks. Sneaking through these fields provides a great deal of cover. Decrease the Target Number of any Stealth test by two while moving inside the fields.
3. Slave Huts. There are ten slave huts located along the eastern and western edges of the fields. Typically, five slaves are quartered in each of the very cramped, low-ceiling huts. The huts are mud and stick structures that do little to keep the weather out. There are no doors. In front of each row of huts is a communal fire pit that the slaves use to cook their food.
4. Forge. Along the river bank is a crude forge that is used to repair farming tools and other simple items. It is little more than a covered shelter that is nestled against a small stream, which the builders diverted from the Great River. Usually, one of the Dwarven slaves is found here.

To be a Slave

Viglundung slaves come from many cultures, but most are captured Beornings or free-cottars from neighboring lands. They are tied together in pairs with a rope about 4' apart. The slaves have no rights. Below are some typical rules that the Viglundings enforce.

- Any slave found to be unbound to his partner forfeits both their lives.
- Any slave found not to be working to a master's satisfaction will be beaten.
- Any slave who is found outside his work area forfeits his life.
- Any slave who raises his hand or voice to a master may be beaten or killed to its master's liking.

During the Day

Slaves are expected to be in the fields before sunrise. They take a one hour break at noon before returning to work the fields until after dark. Four slavers from each cabin (8 total) patrol the fields with their hounds all day, while four slavers and the remaining two hounds stay close to the cabins. These shifts rotate every four hours.

At Night

The slavers continue their patrols, though many become less attentive in their duties. They will periodically douse the cooking fires of their slaves in order to keep them low.

Rescuing the Slaves

It is up to the Fellowship to determine how best to free the slaves. A particularly blood-thirsty group may have no qualms about killing the slavers; however, though they are cruel men, attacking them unprovoked could be considered a Misdeed.

The Fellowship could choose to infiltrate the camp, free the slaves, and lead them in a revolt against their captors. If this happens, the slavers will fight until they lose half their numbers, then flee towards Viglund Hall.

Avoiding detection by the patrols while freeing all of the slaves would be very difficult. A Companion's *Stealth* test should be opposed by the *Perception* of the Viglunding Hounds.

The Slaves

There are currently over 80 slaves toiling in the fields, tending to the herds, or working any variety of menial tasks. Most of them are Men who were captured by one of the many raiding parties that Viglar has sent into the neighboring lands. Beornings, Woodsmen, Hill-men, and even a few Dwarves can be found among the slaves. However, there are no Elves present. Even Viglar is not so foolish as to risk Thranduil's wrath.

Many of the slaves are weak due to malnourishment and constant exposure to the elements. Several are sick and would benefit greatly from a *Healing* test. This will take time considering their number, but it would certainly help establish trust with the Fellowship.

The slaves will be skeptical of anyone trying to free them. A Companion will need to succeed on a *Persuade* test to convince them that this is not one of Viglar's tricks.



Viglunding Slaver				
Attribute Level				
3				
Endurance		Hate		
14		2		
DARRY		ARMOUR		
4		2D		
Skills				
Personality ♦♦		<u>Survival</u> ♦♦		
Movement ♦♦		Custom ♦		
<u>Perception</u> ♦♦♦		Vocation ♦♦		
Weapon Skills				
<u>Spear</u>	♦♦	Bow	♦♦	
<u>Axe</u>	♦♦			
Special Abilities				
Craven, Hatred (Beorning)				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Spear	5	9	14	Pierce
Axe	5		18	Break Shield
Bow	5	10	14	
Special				



Viglund Hound				
Attribute Level				
2				
Endurance		Hate		
11		1		
DARRY		ARMOUR		
5		3D		
Skills				
Personality ♦		<u>Survival</u> ♦♦		
Movement ♦♦♦		Custom —		
<u>Perception</u> ♦♦♦		Vocation —		
Weapon Skills				
<u>Bite</u>	♦♦			
Special Abilities				
Fear of Fire, Great Leap, Seize Victim				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Bite	Attr. Lvl	10	14	Pierce

Arming the Slaves

Aside from farm implements, the only weapons available are those in the possession of the slavers or found in their cabins. Each slaver is armed with a spear or axe and a dagger.

Convincing the Slaves to Help

Once the Fellowship has managed to free the slaves, they must be convinced to join Aestid's march. This can be done in several ways.

- Honorable Companions may convince them to seek justice (*Persuade*).
- The Fellowship could seek to inspire a sense of revenge for the wrongs the slaves have suffered at the hands of the Viglundings (*Awe* or *Inspire*).

- The Companions may argue that attempting to get home safely would be better accomplished after they lent their help (*Persuade*).
- The Fellowship may seek to scare the slaves by instilling a sense of fear at being recaptured by Viglar should Aestid fail (*Awe*).
- If the Fellowship convinced Heva to join Aestid's march and promised to free Kael, then they could seek to enlist his help by invoking Heva's pledge of support.

It is possible that the Fellowship will simply take pity on the slaves and allow them to return to their respective homes. If they do so, then Aestid's numbers will be sorely depleted when she confronts Viglar in Part Five, and the forces at their disposal to repel the goblins in Part Six will be diminished.

Moving On

When the Fellowship is ready, advance to Part Three to find Thunar's hunting party or to

Kael, Heva's Husband

Kael is well-respected among the slaves. Finding him and invoking Heva's commitment to seeing Viglar overthrown will greatly assist in convincing the slaves to join their cause.

Part Five if they have already done so.

Be sure to deduct the time it took to rescue the slaves from the five days the Fellowship has to meet Aestid at the gates of Viglund Hall.

- PART FIVE - SIBLING RIVALRIES

In Part Five, Aestid's march ends at the gates of Viglund Hall. It is time to see if the Fellowship's efforts will bear fruit or if all their hard work has only served to lay their throats bare. Viglar will use all of his cunning to undermine his sister's efforts and delay her as long as he can. Unknown to the Fellowship, he learned of their intent days ago and sent his goblin lackey, Saviga, to summon their allies. Viglar will do his best to delay the Fellowship in order to gain time for his allies to arrive and crush Aestid and all those who support her. However, unknown to even Viglar, Saviga is bringing an altogether different doom upon them all.

As Aestid and the Fellowship approach the gates of Viglund Hall, curious onlookers gather from the fields and assemble outside the gates to see what is happening. A small entourage of armed warriors escorts Viglar to greet Aestid.

"Dear sister! Home at last, but not alone. Could it be that you've come to our father's gates with ill-intent? Surely not, since we are born of the same blood. Come inside and let us speak of what affront I've committed to warrant such an inhospitable visit."

Aestid responds for all to hear.

"Perhaps the same blood, but our hearts are very different, dear brother. Your leadership has failed our people and your weakness will bring us to ruin. I say you are unfit to rule and I challenge you for the right to lead our people! Leave peacefully so that you may yet live. I have no desire to spill the blood of my kin in our home."

Who are Viglar's Allies?

Who precisely Viglar's allies are is a matter for your personal campaign. They could be some of Mogdred's men from Tyrant's Hill or Hill-men allies from the Vales of Gundabad. They may even be orcs from Mt. Gundabad if Viglar was foolish enough to accept the friendship of Mordor.

Viglar's! Goals

Viglar learned of Aestid's plans to oust him days ago and has set a plan in motion to utterly destroy her forces. He sent his goblin jester, Saviga, to summon their allies with plans to trap Aestid's people between the gates and the approaching army. However, he has heard no word from Saviga since he left days ago and he is now forced to stall the Fellowship as long as he can in order to give his reinforcements time to arrive. Viglar will not risk attacking his sister openly so long as he believes help is on the way.

Convincing the Crowd

It is now time for the Fellowship and Aestid

Saviga the TRAITOR

Unbeknownst to Viglar, Saviga has long been an agent of Dol Guldur. The honeyed words that he has been whispering in Viglar's ear have always been designed to make the people restless and to stir up conflict with the Beornings. With the death of Viglund and the coming of Aestid, Saviga sees all of his work being undone. When Viglar sent him for aid several days ago, Saviga decided instead to bring a host of goblins from the mountains to destroy the Viglundings. Better to destroy them than to allow them to join the Free Peoples against his dark master.

to do their best to sway the hearts and minds of the people to reject Viglar and his cruel ways. The more people brought in support of her cause, the easier it will be to win the argument. The base Target Number for any test to convince the crowd begins at 20 and is reduced for each task the Fellowship successfully completed. These reductions to the Target Number are cumulative.

- For each family that joined Aestid in Part Two, decrease the Target Number by one.
- If the slaves joined her cause, then decrease the Target Number by two.

¹ More information on Viglar, including his stats, can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, pg. 30.

- If all of Thunar's men survived and joined her cause, then decrease the Target Number by two. If the Fellowship arrived late and only a few survived, then decrease the Target Number by one.
- If there are any Beornings in the Fellowship or if any Beornings joined Aestid's March in Part Two, then increase the Target Number by two. Viglar will use their presence to argue that Aestid is merely a puppet of Beorn in order to inflame the people's prejudices.

Viglar will counter their arguments by invoking the name of his father, his hereditary right-to-rule, and the people's irrational fear of their Beorning neighbors. At all times, he is trying to draw out the process for as long as possible in order to give Saviga time to return with their allies.

- Treat the argument as a Prolonged Action that takes place over several minutes with the Fellowship needing seven Successes.
- A truly awe-inspiring speech that succeeds with an Extraordinary Success should be rewarded with the replenishment of one of the Fellowship's Hope Pools.

Winning the Argument

If the Fellowship's arguments sway the crowd to accept Aestid, then Viglar will attempt to delay the inevitable by insisting on a trial-by-combat, as is his right. If she is destined to rule, he reasons aloud, then surely she can best his champion. Aestid will agree to a trial-by-combat if she believes it will avoid unnecessary bloodshed.

Should the Fellowship refuse the trial-by-combat, then Viglar will once again attempt to delay things by agreeing to Aestid's demands, but he will ask for time to organize his affairs.

If the crowd is not convinced, then Viglar gives them one opportunity to leave before he orders his men to attack. This is a ruse, as he does not have enough men to guarantee victory. A successful *Riddle* or *Insight* test can determine that he is bluffing. A clever Companion may be able to talk him into offering the trial-by-combat as a mean of avoiding a direct confrontation.



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Trial by Combat

If the Fellowship agrees to a trial-by-combat, Viglar will call a stop to the argument and acknowledge them as guests of his house for the duration of their stay. He knows that by doing so he is afforded the same protections it bestows upon Aestid. As with everything he does, the offering of guest rights is a show meant to demonstrate his generosity to the people. He has no intention of honoring it. Viglar declares that the trial will take place at noon the following day.

That Night

Aestid's people will be asked to camp outside while the Fellowship and she are expected to stay inside as guests. Viglar hopes that his allies will arrive by dawn, when they will crush Aestid's people between the gates and their forces. His men will then kill Aestid and the Fellowship.

Viglar will provide plenty of food and drink and pleasant enough accommodations to Aestid and the Fellowship. He will take no hostile action against them until his allies arrive. Then he plans to assassinate them while her people are massacred outside the gates.

If the Fellowship convinces Aestid to stay outside the gates with her people, Viglar will feign offense, but take no further steps. He is content to have his allies kill them for him outside the gate.

If the Fellowship stays inside Viglund Hall, they may wish to speak with some of the residents.

- A successful *Riddle* or *Courtesy* can be used to learn that Saviga left Viglund Hall several days ago and has not been seen since.



The following day, Viglar is escorted from the long hall to the gates where the trial is scheduled to begin. Hundreds gather to watch the trial-by-combat that will determine who leads the Viglundings.

What if it All Goes Wrong?

Should the situation escalate to the point that a Companion attacks Viglar unprovoked then all bets are off. There will be a massive melee inside the compound with both sides tearing each other apart and causing hundreds of unnecessary deaths on both sides. It will also make their defeat by the goblin horde in Part Six all but a foregone conclusion. If this happens, reduce the Viglundings' initial Fighting Strength to zero in Part Six.

The Champions

Viglar will first choose Thunar¹ (if present) as his champion.

- If the Fellowship managed to convince Thunar to join their side or stay out of the fight, then he declines the honor, shocking both Viglar and the crowd. Viglar is then forced to choose Jaakko, an inferior warrior. Viglar will be visibly unsettled by Thunar's refusal and his behavior becomes erratic.

Aestid will choose her champion from among the Fellowship.

The Rules

The rules are quite simple. The champions fight until only one is left standing. Typically, no weapons would be permitted in such a duel, but Viglar insists upon it, another sign of his dark-heartedness. Viglar's champion will do his best to kill his opponent, though an honorable Companion should not do likewise.

- Should the Fellowship lose the trial-by-combat, then Viglar will proclaim it as proof that his father Viglund intended him to rule. He will feign benevolence and ask Aestid to surrender herself before revealing his plan.

¹ Thunar's stats can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, pg. 30.

- Should the Fellowship be victorious, Viglar will not honor his word. It is now that he will reveal his plan.

Sibling Treachery

When Viglar is no longer able to stall the proceedings, loses the trial-by-combat, or believes he has the Fellowship at a disadvantage, he will reveal his scheme.

"It seems that our time together is finally coming to an end. You see, any moment, my trusted Saviga will return with a host of our allies to bring punishment to you. Would you like to surrender now or wait until they arrive? Never mind, here he comes now."

Jaakko				
Attribute Level				
4				
Endurance	Hate			
17	2			
Darry	Armour			
4+1 buckler	2D			
Skills				
Personality ♦♦	Survival ♦♦			
Movement ♦♦	Custom ♦♦			
Perception ♦♦	Vocation ♦♦♦♦			
Weapon Skills				
Axe	♦♦♦	Bow	♦♦	
Special Abilities				
Suspicious, Wrathful, Smoking, Great Size, Snake-like Speed				
Weapons				
Name	Damage	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Axe*	5	♂	18	Break Shield
Bow	5	10	14	
Special				
* Cultural Reward				



A man staggers through the gates and collapses exhausted before the crowd. It is clear he has been running all night.

"Goblins!" He gasps. "A host of goblins. Hundreds, so many... nearing the North Ford. With your lackey at their head!"

He levels an accusatory finger at Viglar who seems genuinely shocked and terrified by his words. He is as stunned by Saviga's betrayal as everyone else. Murmurs erupt within the gathered crowd and things quickly begin to deteriorate into chaos.

Aestid gives the Fellowship a determined look. If there is any hope of surviving the coming tide, they will have to join forces with Viglar.

~ PART SIX ~ A HOST OF BETRAYALS

With the treacherous Saviga leading the way, a goblin host from the Misty Mountains descends into the Anduin valley to finish off the Viglundings. There is no time to call for aid. The Fellowship must act quickly if they are going to rally the fractured Viglundings in time to fight for their very survival.

- If the Fellowship managed to prevent Viglar from being alerted early, then the goblin host is still west of the North Ford, giving the allies time to muster their forces in time to meet them at the river bank.
- If the Fellowship did not capture and prevent Eirik from warning Viglar or if Viglar was warned by some other means, then the goblins will have already crossed the ford into Viglunding lands.

Rallying the People

It is up to the Fellowship to rally the people to fight and to convince Viglar that his interests are best served by helping preserve his people's lives. It will take an *Inspire* test (TN 16) to sway the people to fight. *Persuade* or *Awe* will work best at convincing Viglar to lend his men to the coming battle.

There is no time to rest or to send for aid. The North Ford is twenty miles away. It will take the remainder of the day to march their combined forces there if they wish to reach the ford before nightfall.

- If the Fellowship advises on waiting until the goblins arrive so that they can fight them at Viglund Hall, have Aestid remind them of what a host of goblins will do to all those who lay in their path as they raze the lands between the river and Viglund Hall. She will not settle waiting for the orcs to come.

The Goblin Horde

A goblin horde is headed for the river crossing at the North Ford. During the height of summer, the river is at its lowest and the ford is the only place the orcs can easily cross with speed. The goblins hail from a tribe in the Misty Mountains¹. Though not a true army, there are more than enough of them to overwhelm the weakened Viglundings.

The goblin forces are comprised of a mixture of Goblin Archers who act as scouts and skirmishers, Orc Soldiers who make up the bulk of the force, and several Orc Guard lieutenants. The horde is led by Chief Gromkil, a Black Uruk who has two Hill Trolls as his bodyguards.



Servants of Sauron © by John Howe, used with permission

¹ Stats for Misty Mountain Orcs can be found in *The One Ring Rulebook*, pg. 239.

Battle at the North Ford

The Misty Mountains begin to cast their long shadow across the river valley as your forces hurriedly assemble at the North Ford. The goblin host gathering across the river is not as big as you were led to believe, but it is sufficient to overrun the weakened and scattered Viglundings. Viglar gives Aestid an unsettled look. Slipping the axe from her belt, she steps forward to lead her people on what may well be their final fight.

Over the Ford

If the goblins make it across the North Ford, then the Fellowship will be forced to confront them in the open or from behind the walls of Viglund Hall. Either way, repairing the destruction the goblins cause to the East Upper Vales will take decades.

To represent the Fighting Strength of each force, a system to numerically track their health and fighting ability is being used. This method allows the Fellowship to participate in the battle from afar, as commanders, or deep in the midst of the melee, as warriors, if they choose so. You can find an example of how to run the engagement in the Appendix to this article.

Fighting Strength

An army's *Fighting Strength* is a measure of its tactical capabilities, as well as, its number of troops. It has no direct influence on the rolls, but is an abstract measure of its remaining fighting power. Mechanically, it works similar to *Tolerance* in a social encounter: Once you reach zero (or fall below a certain number) after a number of successive tests, you have lost. Therefore, the goal is to conserve your force's *Fighting Strength*, while trying to reduce the opposing force's by as much as possible.

The starting *Fighting Strength* of the Viglundings is 3, due to their low numbers and poor organization. To this you have to add any allies the Fellowship has managed to recruit. Unless a Companion takes command of the Viglunding forces, leadership falls to Aestid by default, who has a *Battle* of 2 (though possessing a fierce

spirit, she is not a seasoned commander). If Aestid is not leading their forces, then she will insist on fighting beside her people.

Additionally, modify the Fighting Strength by the following values:

- Add +1 to the Viglunding's Fighting Strength for each elder's household that joined Aestid's cause in Part Two. Black Tom will not join the fight as he is too concerned with returning home to check on his people's welfare.
- Add +1 to the Viglunding's Fighting Strength if any Beornings from Part Two joined Aestid's march.
- Add +1 to the Viglunding's Fighting Strength if the rescued slaves agreed to fight.
- Add +2 to the Viglunding's Fighting Strength if the Fellowship saved all of Thunar's hunting party. Add +1 to the Viglunding's Fighting Strength if the Fellowship arrived late and saved only a few of the hunters.

The starting Fighting Strength of the Goblins is 8. Chief Gromkil commands the goblin forces with his *Battle* of 3.

Forming a Strategy

As the forces size each other up from across the field, the Fellowship may construct their plan of attack. Each army's commander tests *Battle* (TN 14) to gain advantages over the enemy from the outset. A Successful test gives the army +1 to its Fighting Strength, a Great Success gives the army +2 to its Fighting Strength and an Extraordinary Success gives the army +3 to their Fighting Strength for the remainder of the battle. This represents the soundness of the commander's tactical assessment and their strategy for the upcoming fight. Chief Gromkil also tests for his army. This test is only done once before the battle begins.

Testing Battle to determine the development of Fighting Strength

Once the battle commences, the Viglunding and Goblin commanders will make four *Battle* tests over the course of the engagement to determine how well their army is faring. Below is a list for the *Battle* Target Numbers that the Viglunding commander may choose from. The commander chooses the difficulty of the test from the chart below and adds any modifiers he may receive from a Fighting Strength Advantage to the test results. Higher TN's give a better net result, but of course they are harder to achieve.

If the Viglunding commander's *Battle* test succeeds and the defending army fails to counter their maneuvers (see below), then apply the result from the bulletpoints below:

- **TN 14 or less:** Your forces hold their own but gain little ground. Both forces reduce their *Fighting Strength* by 1. Add +2 to your next *Battle* Test.
- **TN 16:** Your troops are fighting well and maintaining their formations. Reduce enemy *Fighting Strength* by 2 and your own by 1.
- **TN 18:** You brilliantly maneuver your forces to outflank the enemy. Reduce enemy *Fighting Strength* by 1 while yours remains unchanged. Add +2 to your next *Battle* Test.
- **TN 20:** You lead your forces on a devastating charge. Reduce the enemy's *Fighting Strength* by 3 and your own by 1.

The goblin forces get an opportunity to respond and counter the Viglunding's actions. If the enemy commander can succeed on a *Battle* test with a result that is equal to or higher than the result of the Viglunding commander, then their forces are evenly matched, and each force reduces their *Fighting Strength* by 1 instead of applying the results from the table.

If the Viglunding commander fails the *Battle* test, then his troops suffer the casualties that they would have inflicted on the enemy had their roll succeeded (i.e. reduction of *Fighting Strength*). This represents their plan being poorly executed and resulting in severe casualties.

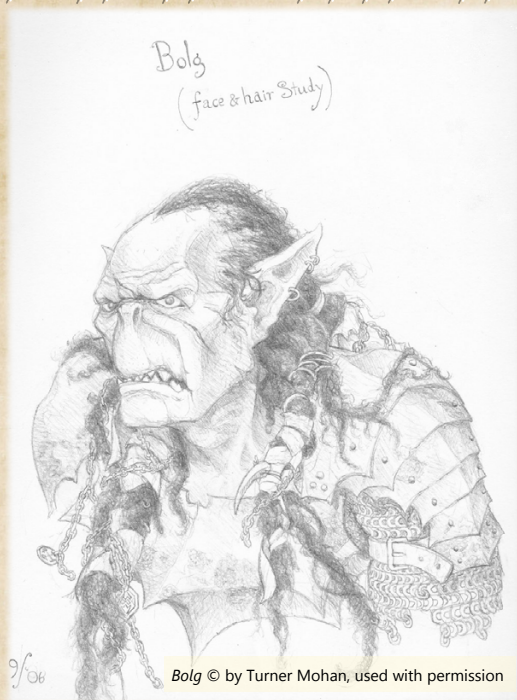
Fighting Strength Advantages

Between each *Battle* Test, give the Fellowship an opportunity to take actions that may affect the outcome of the battle or engage in melee if they choose. If one of the Fellowship has taken command of the Viglundings, this Companion may not engage in these actions as he is responsible for coordinating the whole of the battle line. It is necessary that the whole Fellowship decides on one action as a group, rather than splitting up and trying individual actions based on individual strengths.

If the Companions wish to enter the melee, then they can fight as many goblins as they please. However, the bulk of the battle will be decided by the commander and bonus actions the Fellowship takes to give their commander an advantage.

There are several ways in which the Companions can give the Viglundings a tactical advantage. Only one of these actions may be attempted prior to each *Fighting Strength* Test.

- **Killing Chief Gromkil:** Chief Gromkil leads from the rear and is guarded by two Hill-Troll bodyguards. The Companions will have to fight through two waves of Orcs to reach him. Each companion attempting to reach Chief Gromkil should roll a *Feat* die for each of the waves that pass by. They will encounter a Goblin Archer on a 1-2, two Goblin Archers on a 3-4, an Orc Soldier on a 5-6, two Orc Soldiers on a 7-8, an Orc Guard on a 9-10, and two Orc Guards on an "Eye" or "Gandalf". Once they are through the waves of orcs, both Hill-Trolls will move to intercept the Fellowship before they can reach Chief Gromkil. The Fellowship must complete the "Take the Lead" *Fighting Strength* Advantage before attempting to Kill Chief Gromkil. If Chief Gromkil is slain, then an Orc Guard assumes command. The *Battle* skill of an Orc Guard is 2. The orc's next *Battle* test for *Fighting Strength* is made at -4. Even if they fail to slay Gromkil and must retreat, the diversion caused by them reduces Gromkil's next *Battle* roll by -2.



Gromkil the Hunched				
Attribute Level				
5				
Endurance		Hate		
32		5		
Darry		Armour		
4		3D		
Skills				
Personality ♦♦♦		Survival ♦♦		
Movement ♦♦		Custom ♦♦		
Perception ♦♦		Vocation ♦♦♦		
Weapon Skills				
Hvy Scimitar (2H)		♦♦♦		
Orc-axe		♦♦♦		
Special Abilities				
Commanding Voice, Horrible Strength, Hideous Toughness, Savagae Assault				
Weapons				
Name	Dmg	Edge	Injury	Called Shot
Hvy. Scimitar (2H)	7	10	14	Break Shield
Orc-axe	5		16	
Special				

- **Flanking the Enemy:** A Prolonged Action of four Successful *Athletics* tests (TN14) allows the Companions to gather a group of skirmishers and maneuver them to flank the enemy. Each companion that participates makes one *Athletics* test and adds their contribution to the Prolonged Action results. Success (of whatever level) grants +2 to their commander's next *Battle* roll.
- **Rally the Troops:** A Successful *Inspire* or *Song* test to rally their forces grants them +1 to their commander's next Fighting Strength Test or adds +2 to their commander's test to prevent their troops from fleeing the field.
- **Take the Lead:** If the Fellowship takes the fight to the enemy and leads the battle from deep inside the melee, then they must survive four waves of enemies per the rules under "Killing Chief Gromkil". If they survive, then add +2 to their commander's next *Battle* test to test *Fighting Strength* and reduce the goblin's *Fighting Strength* by one.
- **Hold the Line:** Holding back the enemy at all costs comes at a great price. All of the participating Companions are made *Wearied* for the remainder of the battle as they doggedly hold the goblin horde at bay. As a result, the Viglundings do not lose any of their *Fighting Strength* this round regardless of the test's results. This Advantage may only be undertaken once.
- **Defend Aestid:** If the Fellowship chooses to defend Aestid, then they will not be surprised if Viglar makes a move to assassinate her during the battle (see below). Grant the Fellowship two bonus Combat die to use during their battle with Viglar's men.

During the Battle

Throughout the fight Aestid will inspire and lead her people either in battle or as their commander. Viglar will lead his people to the conflict but will reserve his best warriors to defend himself. Being a nefarious schemer, Viglar will attempt to turn the circumstances to his favor in one of two ways:

- If the Viglundings have less *Fighting Strength* than the goblins after the third *Battle* test to determine *Fighting Strength*, Viglar will find Saviga¹ on the battlefield and implore him to call off the attack. Saviga refuses and Viglar and his men are overwhelmed by goblins. Reduce the *Fighting Strength* of the Viglundings by one due to the slaughter of Viglar and his men.
- If the Viglundings have more *Fighting Strength* than the goblins after the third *Battle* test to determine *Fighting Strength*, Viglar will attempt to betray his sister and assassinate her in the heat of battle. If a Companion leads the forces, then a successful *Battle* test will notice Viglar's men leaving their positions and moving to attack Aestid. Companions in the midst of the melee will need to pass an *Awareness* test (TN 18) to notice what is happening. If the Fellowship chooses to intervene then they forfeit their next *Fighting Strength* Advantage to affect the next test for *Fighting Strength*. Viglar is defended by two Viglunding Warriors for each companion. If Viglar succeeds in assassinating Aestid, he will then move to kill the Fellowship. If the Fellowship does not intervene, reduce the *Fighting Strength* of the Viglundings by two as Aestid's followers lose confidence.

Resolving the Conflict

After four *Battle* tests for *Fighting Strength* have been made over the course of the engagement, check each force's current *Fighting Strength* against the following table and apply the results:

- If a force has half or less *Fighting Strength* remaining than that of the enemy, they will flee unless their commander succeeds on a *Battle/Inspire/Awe* test (TN 18) to prevent his forces from retreating. If Gromkil is dead, the orcs automatically fail their test and will flee the field.

- Once a force's *Fighting Strength* is reduced to zero, this side has lost the battle and the survivors must flee the field.
- If there is no clear winner after the fourth round, resume the battle, but check for "Resolving the Conflict" at the end of each round.



After the Battle

If the Fellowship loses the battle, their best hope for survival is to flee south to Beorning lands. The orcs will not risk an encounter with Beorn and will return to the mountains once Viglund Hall has been sacked. Aestid and the remaining survivors will have to hope for Beorn's hospitality to stay in his lands. The Viglundings are no more.

If the Fellowship wins the battle, then the survivors will return to Viglund Hall to recuperate and then celebrate their victory with Aestid, the Viglunding's new leader. During the celebration she will grant them the honorary title of Húskarl along with a parcel of land of their choosing (Rating 9 Holding), 5 Treasure each and a leather vambrace bearing their titles and her house's new coat of arms.

If Viglar is still alive, then the Fellowship will have to decide what to do with him. Aestid will favor banishment from Wilderland. However, if he attempted to kill her during the Battle of the North Ford, she will behead him outside the gates of Viglund Hall for all to see.

¹ More information on Saviga, including his stats, can be found in *The Heart of the Wild*, pg. 30.

~ Epilogue ~

Months after Aestid accepts leadership of the Viglundings, Beorn will host a folk-moot at the Carrock for the elders of the Woodsmen and the Beornings. There, he will introduce them to Aestid and formally recognize her as the leader of the Viglundings. For her part, Aestid remains true to her word. She abolishes slavery and initiates a lasting peace with the Beornings. Further, she removes any reference of her father's name from her people, renaming them and their great hall in the process.

APPENDIX

Reward Options

The following Rewards may be granted by the Loremaster to the Fellowship:

- Receive Title: Húskarl (Protector of Aestid).
- Open Sanctuary: Viglund Hall.
- 5 Treasure for each member of the Fellowship.
- Rating 9 Holding within Viglunding lands.
- May take Beorn as a Patron.
- Increase Standing with Beornings.
- Any Beorning in the Fellowship may opt to become a Thane of Beorn, instead of Húskarl, so long as they also take Beorn as a Patron.
- Restore 1 Hope to each companion if Aestid assumes leadership of the Viglundings and initiates peace between her people and the Beornings.

Viglunding Timeline according to events in *The Darkening of Mirkwood*

The following timeline is taken from the events described in *The Darkening of Mirkwood* and is meant to give the Loremaster a sense of how this adventure can best fit into that narrative. Needless to say, the events in this story will greatly alter this timeline.

Year (TA)	Event(s)
Before 2941	Sometime before the Battle of Five Armies, Viglund the Cruel establishes his household in the East Upper Vales and begins to bring those in the surrounding lands under his control.
2952	Viglund tries to seize the Forest Gate, but the attackers are scared off upon seeing a bear on the outskirts of the battle.
2953	Skirmishes between the Beornings and the Viglundings continue.
2955	An unseen Bowman attacks a group of Viglunding men causing tensions to boil over again.
2956	As the frequency of the skirmishes intensify, men from Woodland Hall come to the aid of the Beornings. Beorn refuses to go to war, but his people continue to attack the Viglundings regardless. The matter is discussed at the Council of Lake-town, but they refuse to act. Beorn assures them he will take direct action if the Viglundings provoke him again.
2959	The Messenger of Mordor visits the Viglundings and offers the friendship of Mordor if they agree to seize the Old Ford.
2960	The Viglundings attack several Beorning homesteads and capture many slaves. As a result, more skirmishes erupt. Thranduil sends a group of Elven warriors to aid the Beornings. The Messenger of Mordor commands the orcs of Mount Gundabad to aid the Viglundings against the Beornings.
2961	The Woodmen elders formally discuss joining the Beornings in their fight against the Viglundings. The Beornings defeat the Viglundings at a battle near the Forest Gate. The Viglundings retreat, but Beorn cannot pursue them because his forces are immediately counter-attacked by a group of orcs and trolls from Mount Gundabad.
2962	The Beornings attack Viglund Hall. A great battle is fought and six of Viglund's sons are killed. Viglund flees and escapes west over the mountains.
2963	Gandalf travels north after suspecting that the Enemy was behind Viglund's actions.
2964	Gandalf and Beorn return from the North. Beorn considers whether to accept the remaining Viglundings into his protection or to drive them from Wilderland for good.
2965	The surviving Viglundings migrate to and settle in the south, some as far as Tyrant's Hill.
2968	Beorn weds
2969	Beorn's son, Grimbeorn, is born.

Fighting Strength Example

In order to help clarify the rules used to track the battle at the end of *Clash of the Viglundings*, the following example of how to run combat is provided.

Before the Battle

Step 1: Determine Fighting Strength

Fighting Strength is the value that is assigned to each force to represent both its size and combat capabilities.

The Fighting Strength of the goblin force is set at 8.

The Fighting Strength of the Viglundings begins at 3 and is modified based on the actions of the Fellowship throughout the adventure.

- In this example, the Fellowship convinced both Heva and Wulferd to lend their strength: +1 Fighting Strength each
- They rescued only a portion of Thunar's hunters: +1 Fighting Strength
- The rescued the slaves and convinced them to help: +1 Fighting Strength

Adding these bonuses to the Viglunding's initial Fighting Strength of 3 gives them a starting total of 7.

Therefore, when the battle begins, the Goblins have a starting Fighting Strength of 8 and the Viglundings have a starting Fighting Strength of 7.

Basic Fighting Strength	
Viglundings	Goblins
7	8

Step 2: Form a Strategy.

Next, each commander tests *Battle* (TN 14) to determine the soundness of their strategy and how best to utilize their forces. The measure of their success can affect their Fighting Strength. A Successful test gives the army +1 to its Fighting Strength, a Great Success gives the army +2 to its Fighting Strength and an Extraordinary Success gives the army +3 to their Fighting Strength for the remainder of the battle. This represents the soundness of the commander's tactical assessment and their strategy for the fight to come.

- In our example, a Fellowship member with a *Battle* skill of 4 assumes command of the Viglundings at Aestid's direction. The Fellowship member passes their *Battle* test with a Great Success granting the Viglundings another +2 to their Fighting Strength bringing their Fighting Strength up to a total of 9!
- Likewise, the Loremaster rolls a *Battle* test for Chief Gromkil using his *Battle* skill of 3. Gromkil achieves a normal success granting the Goblin forces a +1 to their Fighting Strength, bringing their total to 9 as well.

Starting Fighting Strength	
Viglundings	Goblins
9	9

Both sides have now taken the measure of the other and formed their strategy of attack. Thankfully, the strategy of the Viglunding's superior commander has helped to even the odds.

During the Battle

It is now time to join in battle! The battle consists of four rounds during which the commander and the Fellowship members will attempt to outsmart and outmaneuver their enemy. The commander will make one *Battle* test each round as he directs the Viglunding forces to attack the goblins. The measure of his success determines how much Fighting Strength both his forces and the goblin forces lose each round. The commander chooses the difficulty of the *Battle* test as described under the section in Part Six titled "Testing Fighting Strength". However, he does not complete the test until the Fellowship has had an opportunity to affect its outcome by selecting and completing a Fighting Strength Advantage as described in Part Six. These advantages grant a bonus to the outcome of the commander's *Battle* test.

Step 3: Fight for Four Rounds

Round 1: The Viglunding commander is feeling ambitious and declares a headlong charge into the goblins, selecting a Target number of 20 for their *Battle* test (as described in Part Six).



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Since the commander is feeling bold, the Fellowship chooses the Fighting Strength Advantage “Take the Lead”, which they easily complete, granting the commander a +2 to his *Battle* test and also reducing the Goblin Fighting Strength by 1.

The commander now rolls a *Battle* test at TN 20 and includes the +2 bonus from the Fellowship completing “Take the Lead”. However, the test is failed with a total of 16. This means that instead of reducing the Goblin’s Fighting Strength by 3, the Viglundings reduce their Fighting Strength by 3 as the goblins anticipated the charge and the Viglundings’ break upon the enemy forces like waves against the shore. There is no need for Chief Gromkil to attempt to counter the Viglundings commander’s test since it was a failure.

So, at the end of Round 1 the Viglundings’ Fighting Strength has been reduced by 3 from a starting total of 9 to a current total of 6. The Goblin forces would have only been reduced by 1 from receiving their charge, but because the Fellowship selected “Take the Lead” and succeeded, they further reduced the Goblin forces by another 1, leaving them with a total of 7.

Fighting Strength after Round 1	
Viglundings	Goblins
6	7

Round 2: Having lost a third of their forces to a disastrous charge, the Viglundings commander decides to play-it-safe and selects a Target Number of 16 for the next *Battle* test.

Riding the success of their last Fighting Strength Advantage, the Fellowship decides to go straight at the heart of the goblin forces and attempts “Killing Chief Gromkil”. It is a desperate fight, but they succeed and Chief Gromkil falls under the blades of the Fellowship. The commander issues a sigh of relief since the Goblin force is now commanded by an Orc Guard with an inferior *Battle* skill of 2 and the Goblin’s next *Battle* test will be reduced by 4.

The commander tests *Battle* at TN 16 and succeeds with an 18, plus a Great Success! The Goblin’s attempt to counter the test’s results with their own *Battle* test and roll an 18, plus a Great Success also. But because of the -4 penalty that the Goblin force receives for the sudden death of their commander, they fail with a 14. The Viglundings commander wins and the Fighting Strength of the Goblins is reduced by 2, whereas the Viglundings forces only reduce their Fighting Strength by 1. Both forces now have even Fighting Strength again, but the battle should swing in the Viglundings favor with the death of Chief Gromkil.

Fighting Strength after Round 2	
Viglundings	Goblins
5	5

Round 3: After the success in Round 2, the commander decides to stick with what worked best and selects TN 16 for the next *Battle* test.

The Fellowship is running low on Endurance and some of them are Wounded so they opt to avoid combat this round and select “Flanking the Enemy” as their Fighting Strength Advantage. Sadly, their Weary Hobbit is unable to contribute anything to their efforts and they fail the task, conveying no bonus to the commander’s *Battle* test.

The commander succeeds on his TN 16 *Battle* test with a 17. Whew! Unfortunately, the Orc Guard who now commands the Goblins tests *Battle* and somehow manages an 18. So both sides reduce their Fighting Strength by 1.

Fighting Strength after Round 3	
Viglundings	Goblins
4	4

Round 4: Fortune favors the bold, so the Viglundung commander decides that now is the time to rally the troops and charge into the enemy. The commander selects a Target Number of 20 for the *Battle* test. The Man from Dale in the Fellowship foresees disaster.

The Fellowship decides to hedge their bets and opts to “Hold the Line”, just in case things do turn out for the worse. Each Companion becomes *Weary* as they hold back the goblins, but the Viglundings will not lose any Fighting Strength as a result of their sacrifice.

Everyone closes their eyes and holds hands as the commander makes his *Battle* test at Target Number 20. He succeeds by rolling a 23 and a Great Success! The Orc Guard rolls a *Battle* test to try and beat the Viglundung commander but fails. There is great rejoicing as the Goblin’s Fighting Strength is reduced by 3 and the Viglundung’s Fighting Strength suffers no reductions because of the Fellowship’s efforts to “Hold the Line”.

Fighting Strength after Round 4	
Viglundings	Goblins
4	1

The End of the Battle

Since four rounds have now passed, it is time to check and see if either army is routed from the field. Consult the table at the end of Part Six and apply the results.

Step 4: Resolving the Conflict

Since the Goblins currently have less than half the Fighting Strength value of the Viglundings, their commander must succeed on a *Battle/Inspire/Awe* test (TN18) or the goblins will flee the field. However, since the Fellowship killed Chief Gromkil, the Goblins automatically fail their test and retreat back to their caves in the mountains.

The Viglundings claim victory over the field and cries of celebration erupt from the Fellowship!