

Middle-earth Orc characters

The following is a list of the **Orcs of Middle-earth**, created by fantasy author [J. R. R. Tolkien](#) and considered to be part of the Middle-earth canon, which were given an individual name or title by the author. While the Orcs tend to appear as an anonymous mass in his works, a few individuals among them were mentioned by name or other personal identifying characteristics.

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Azog

Azog was an Orc chieftain until his death in T.A. 2799. He is referred to in a single remark by [Gandalf](#) to [Thorin Oakenshield](#) in *The Hobbit*: "Your grandfather [Thrór](#) was killed, you remember, in Azanulbizar by Azog."^[1]

He precipitated the [War of the Dwarves and Orcs](#) in T.A. 2790 by killing King [Thrór](#), who came to revisit [Azanulbizar](#). By not only killing [Thrór](#) but torturing him for some days, beheading him and branding his name on the Dwarf's head, Azog earned the hatred of all Dwarves, who united in desire to kill him.

In the following years, he was the common enemy of all Dwarves. Gradually the Orcs were driven back until they held only

Azanulbizar. The war Azog started climaxed in the Battle of Azanulbizar, where he killed Náin, but while fleeing back he was caught and beheaded by Náin's son Dáin. After killing Thrór, Azog had given a small pouch of money to Thrór's companion, as payment for him to tell the other Dwarves of the murder. The Dwarves returned the insult by setting Azog's severed head on a stake and sticking the money pouch in his mouth. Azog was succeeded by his son: Bolg.

Films

In *The Hobbit* film series, Azog is depicted as 8 feet 5 inches tall, pale white orc with a white warg as his steed. He is portrayed by Manu Bennett in all three films in an expanded role from the original tale, and is one of the primary antagonists of the films. Azog is also, unlike most orcs, shown to only speak in Black Speech and has sworn to wipe out the line of Durin. He is killed during the Battle of the Five Armies, in which he and Thorin Oakenshield mortally wound each other.

Balcmeg

Balcmeg was one of the Orcs killed in the Fall of Gondolin, according to *The Book of Lost Tales*. Tolkien wrote the story of the fall of the city in 1917 and never fully revised it, and Balcmeg does not appear in the published *Silmarillion*.

Boldog

Boldog is a formidable Orc-captain of a Host of Angband that is sent to attack Doriath and capture Lúthien mentioned in The Lay of Leithian in *The History of Middle-earth* Volume III: *The Lays of Beleriand*.

The name Boldog was used by several Orc chieftains during the First Age. In a note ca.1960 Tolkien suggested that it is possible that Boldog was actually a title, given to lesser Maiar, servants of Morgoth, who had taken an Orkish hröa.^[2]

Bolg

Bolg, an antagonist in *The Hobbit*, was an Orc chieftain who came to power in the Misty Mountains after his father, Azog, was killed in the war with Dwarves. Bolg ruled for some 150 years and led an army of Orcs in the Battle of Five Armies. He was killed by Beorn during the battle: "Swiftly he returned, and his wrath was redoubled, so that nothing could withstand him, and no weapon seemed to bite upon him. He scattered the bodyguard, and pulled down Bolg himself and crushed him."^[3]

Films

Bolg is portrayed by Conan Stevens in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, Lawrence Makoare in *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* and John Tui in *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies*. Originally Conan Stevens was to portray him through prosthetic makeup, but once Lawrence Makoare replaced him, Bolg was revamped into a completely CGI character. Much of the action from the book involving Bolg in *An Unexpected Journey* is instead given to his father Azog, who, in the films, survives the confrontation with the Dwarves. In *The Desolation of Smaug*, when his father is summoned to lead the Necromancer's Orc army, Bolg resumes the prominent role, taking over the task of hunting down Thorin's company. In *The Battle of Five Armies* he leads a separate Orc army detachment raised in Gundabad to join his father's army at Erebor. Arriving with an advance force, he aids his father against Thorin Oakenshield's commando team on Ravenhill, nearly kills the Elf Tauriel, and slays the dwarf Kili when he comes to her defense. Soon afterwards, however, he is confronted and killed by Legolas, who drives one of his battle-knives into his head; Bolg's body subsequently falls off the mountain and is crushed by a boulder falling on top of it.



Boldog and Thingol

Golfimbul

Golfimbul was a chieftain of the Orcs of Mount Gram, who led his band in an invasion of the Shire. He was defeated at the Battle of Greenfields by a force led by Bandobras Took, who knocked off Golfimbul's head with a club and it soared into the air, finally falling into a rabbit hole. According to Hobbit folklore, this inspired the game of golf, which takes its name from the Orc. Golfimbul's name was probably specifically constructed for this pun; *fimbul* is Old Norse for "great".^[4]

Gorbag

Gorbag was an Orc captain in the service of Minas Morgul.^[5] He and his company were based with the Nazgûl in the Dead City.

During the War of the Ring they were ordered to patrol towards the fortress Tower of Cirith Ungol where the garrison was commanded by another Orc captain, Shagrat, who was an old acquaintance. Shagrat was leading a patrol back in the opposite direction; when the patrols met they simultaneously discovered the body of Frodo Baggins, who had been paralyzed and cocooned by Shelob. Gorbag, noticing the trail of slime between Frodo's body and a crack in the wall, reasoned (correctly) that Shelob had been bested by an intended victim for the first time in living memory, that it was an Elvish blade that inflicted the wound and that this meant there must have been a trespasser in the area other than just Frodo, but imagined it must have been a warrior Elf with an axe rather than the comparatively unassuming figure of Sam Gamgee armed with the small dagger Sting.



Gorbag in *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*.

The two Orc captains took Frodo back to Cirith Ungol where Gorbag suggested torture, but Shagrat insisted that their prisoner be sent to Barad-dûr for interrogation. While sifting through Frodo's belongings, a dispute began between the two captains after Gorbag claimed ownership of Frodo's *mithril* vest, which escalated into a fratricidal battle throughout the stronghold between the Morgul and Cirith Ungol companies of Orcs. In this fight Gorbag was slain by Shagrat,^[5] who then escaped with the *mithril* shirt.^[6]

In Peter Jackson's movies, Gorbag is played by Stephen Ure.

Gorgol

Gorgol was an Orc chieftain, also called *the Butcher*, who lived in Middle-earth during the First Age. He led the Orcs that slew Barahir and his companions, and took Barahir's hand as a trophy. He was slain by Barahir's son Beren.

Grishnákh

Grishnákh was an Orc captain in a group of Mordor Orcs that joined Saruman's Uruk-hai troops on the plains of Rohan.

After failing to convince Uglúk, the Uruk-hai captain, to lead the expedition east to safety in Mordor, he leaves and returns with 20-40 peers from Mordor, claiming a brotherly desire to help their fellow Orcs. However, Grishnákh's actual plans for the two captives, Merry and Pippin, were in conflict with Uglúk's orders to deliver them to Saruman unharmed. He was killed when the Orcs were attacked by Éomer's Men. He tried to smuggle the Hobbits away from the Uruk-hai and into Fangorn Forest: a Rohirrim rider shot him in the hand before killing him with a spear.

In Ralph Bakshi's animated film *The Lord of the Rings*, Grishnákh is an Orc from Isengard with a fondness for the Uruk-draught that is force-fed to Merry and Pippin.

In Peter Jackson's films, Grishnákh is played by Stephen Ure.

Lagduf

Lagduf was an Uruk of Cirith Ungol under the command of Shagrat. He and Muzgash were killed by Gorbag's troops in the battle

over Frodo's *mithril*-shirt.

Lug

Lug was one of the Orcs killed by Tuor during the Fall of Gondolin, according to *The Book of Lost Tales* (written circa 1917). Lug does not appear in the published *Silmarillion*.

Lugdush

Lugdush was one of Saruman's Uruk-hai and a trusted subordinate of Uglúk. In *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, Lugdush is the Uruk who smells "Man flesh" and warns the others. In the Extended Edition, Mauhúr is the one who smells "Man flesh" instead of Lugdush.

Mauhúr

Mauhúr was an Uruk of Isgard who led a company of reinforcements through the eaves of Fangorn forest to come to the aid of Uglúk, whose company had been surrounded by a group of Rohirrim. When Mauhúr's company attacked, some of the Rohirrim rode to meet them while the others closed in around Uglúk's camp. Uglúk's captives, Merry and Pippin, found themselves outside the circle and were able to escape into Fangorn forest. In the film, Mauhúr is travelling with Uglúk's group from the start. He and all the other Orcs are slaughtered in their confrontation with the Rohirrim, and the head impaled on a pike seen the following morning is apparently his.

Muzgash

Muzgash was an Uruk of Cirith Ungol under the command of Shagrat. He and his comrade Lagduf were killed by Gorbag's troops in the battle over Frodo Baggins's mithril-shirt.

Orcobal

Orcobal was an Orc leader in the Fall of Gondolin, killed by Ecthelion. Tolkien wrote the story of the fall of the city in 1917 and never fully revised it, and Orcobal does not appear in the published *Silmarillion*.

Othrod

Othrod was an Orc leader in the Fall of Gondolin, killed by Tuor. Tolkien wrote the story of the fall of the city in 1917 and never fully revised it, and Othrod does not appear in the published *Silmarillion*.

Radbug

Radbug was an Orc of Cirith Ungol who was killed by Shagrat, his captain, in the battle over Frodo Baggins's mithril-shirt (apparently by strangulation).

The name was used in the Jackson film adaptation for an Orc captain overseeing Saruman's mining operations at Orthanc.

Shagrat

Shagrat was the captain in command of the Uruks at the Tower of Cirith Ungol, a watchtower that guarded a treacherous pass into Mordor. He was an old acquaintance of Gorbag, his equivalent in Minas Morgul.



Ecthelion slays Orcobal, drawing by Tom Loback

Shagrat and Gorbag were leading separate patrols when they simultaneously discovered the unconscious [Frodo Baggins](#) near [Shelob's Lair](#). They took Frodo to the highest room of Shagrat's tower, as [Sam Gamgee](#) pursued and listened, invisible by means of the [One Ring](#). It was Shagrat who pointed out that Shelob had only paralysed Frodo and not killed him as Sam- and Gorbag- had first thought and so became an unlikely saviour of Frodo from "going in the pot". Shagrat also favoured stripping Frodo of all possessions and documenting them followed by interrogation over Gorbag's proposal of torture. While the two Orc captains were searching through Frodo's things, a dispute erupted over the highly valuable *mithril* shirt. The quarrel led to a battle between their respective units in the tower, where almost all were killed, culminating in Shagrat killing the wounded Gorbag.



Shagrat, leader of the Black Uruks of Mordor in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*.

In [Peter Jackson's](#) film trilogy, Shagrat's role is somewhat confusing. He is portrayed as a large Mordor Uruk and of clearly different stock along with the other Orcs of the tower of [Cirith Ungol](#) from Gorbag, yet he claims Frodo's *mithril* shirt as his own. Shagrat is played by [Peter Tait](#).

After the fight among the Orcs, Shagrat (in both the book and film) smuggled the shirt past [Sam Gamgee](#) and delivered it to the [Dark Tower](#). His fate is not known beyond that point.

Cultural references

[Steve Peregrin Took](#) was credited as "Shagrat The Vagrant" on [Mick Farren's](#) 1970 solo album *Mona – The Carnivorous Circus* and the two formed a band called [Shagrat](#), also featuring guitarist [Larry Wallis](#). Farren soon quit, leaving Took in sole command of the band. Shagrat then recorded three demos at [Strawberry Studios](#) and later played the [Phun City](#) festival, promoted by Farren.

More recently in music history, in [Black metal](#) music, [Shagrath](#) of [Dimmu Borgir](#) and [Ov Hell](#) took his stage name from Shagrat

Snaga

Snaga, translated as "slave" in Appendix F of *The Lord of the Rings*, is not a personal name but a term used by Uruks to describe lesser Orcs. Used among others by [Uglúk](#) to a scout of the [Uruk-hai](#) and by [Shagrat](#) to one of the Orcs of the Tower of [Cirith Ungol](#).

In the film *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* the name Snaga is associated with (though never mentioned by name in the movie) a particular Orc, who is part of [Grishnákh's](#) company, and wants to eat [Merry](#) and [Pippin](#) to sate his hunger. He is decapitated by [Uglúk](#) and cannibalized by the [Uruk-hai](#). He is acted by [Jed Brophy](#)^[7] and voiced by [Andy Serkis](#).

Snaga appears in *The Lord Of the Rings: The Return of the King*, Book VI, chapter 1, "The Tower of Cirith Ungol", as an orc of the company of the Tower of Cirith Ungol. Snaga runs away from Shagrat and is killed by Samwise Gamgee while he is taunting the captive Frodo. {*The Lord Of The Rings: The Return of the King*, published by George Allen & Unwin, 1976}

Ufthak

Ufthak was in the service of the Tower of [Cirith Ungol](#), under the command of [Shagrat](#). He was captured, poisoned, and then forgotten by [Shelob](#). Nonetheless, his fellow Orcs who discovered him made no attempt to rescue him, for they were amused at his paralyzed predicament and did not want to interfere with Shelob. He is later presumed to have perished from starvation.^[8]

Uglúk

Uglúk was the deep-voiced captain of the [Uruk-hai](#) band that attacked the Fellowship at [Amon Hen](#) and captured [Merry](#) and [Pippin](#). The Uruk-hai were accompanied by contingents of Orcs from [Mordor](#) and [Moria](#), but Uglúk and his fellow [Isengarders](#) claimed credit for killing [Boromir](#). He defended Merry and Pippin from [Moria](#) Orcs who wanted to eat them, citing orders to bring the

Hobbits to Saruman in good health. He also objected to accusations of cannibalism made by Grishnákh, the leader of the Mordor contingent. When Grishnákh returned with two or three dozen other Mordor Orcs, Uglúk gullibly accepted their offer of help at face value. Uglúk was usually effective at instilling discipline, although this once required beheading a few Moria dissenters. He and the combined bands were tracked by Éomer's band of Rohirrim on their way to Isengard until, near the eaves of Fangorn forest, they were surrounded and annihilated, Uglúk being slain by Éomer personally.

In Peter Jackson's film version of the trilogy, the captain of the Orc-band is Lúrtz, who is slain by Aragorn at Amon Hen. Uglúk, played by Nathaniel Lees, then took command after his senior's death. When Grishnákh and his Orcs want to eat the hobbits, Uglúk and his Uruk-hai stop them. Uglúk then beheads "Snaga," a smaller Orc who was determined to eat them; his body is then cannibalized. The band is then attacked by Éomer's band and it is assumed Uglúk is slain by them.

See also

Gothmog, the deformed Orc general in Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy

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External links

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- Orcs (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070127115622/http://www.tuckborough.net/orcs.html>) at The Thain's Book (<http://www.tuckborough.net/>)

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