

Introduction

Of all the languages invented by British author and philologist J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973), the most popular has always been *Quenya*. It also seems to be the most highly developed of all the languages Tolkien devised. Indeed only two of them – Quenya and Sindarin – are so complete that one can with some ease write substantial texts in them without resorting to massive invention of one's own. Until recently, Sindarin was poorly understood, and its complex phonology may daunt fresh students (especially if they have no linguistic training). My advice to people who want to study Tolkien's linguistic creations would definitely be that they start with Quenya. Knowing this tongue will facilitate later studies of the other languages, including Sindarin, since Quenya represents just one branch of the Elvish language family: The Elvish languages are not "independent" entities, but all evolved from a common ancestral tongue, and in many respects, Quenya stands closer to this primitive original than the other languages.

In reality as opposed to this fictional context, Tolkien knew well what kind of style he was aiming for, and having sketched a "primitive Elvish" language, he cleverly devised sound-shifts that would produce a tongue with the desired flavour: Quenya resulted from his youthful romance with *Finnish*; he was, in his own words, "quite intoxicated" by the sound and style of this language when he discovered it (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 214). However, it should be emphasized that Finnish was an inspiration only; Quenya is in no way a garbled version of Finnish, and only a few words of its vocabulary display any semblance to the corresponding Finnish words. (See Harri Perälä's discussion at http://www.sci.fi/~alboin/finn_que.htm; the writer is a Finn himself.) Tolkien also mentioned Greek and Latin as inspirations; we can evidently add Spanish to the list as well.

The fictional or "internal" history of Quenya is synopsisized in my regular Ardalambion Quenya article (see <http://www.uib.no/People/hnohf/quenya.htm>) and does not have to be repeated in any detail here. Very briefly, within Tolkien's mythos Quenya was the language of the Elves that dwelt in Valinor in the Uttermost West; being spoken in the Blessed Realm, it was the noblest tongue in the world. Later one of the clans of the Elves, the Noldor, went into exile in Middle-earth, bringing the Quenya tongue with them. In Middle-earth it soon fell out of use as a daily speech, but among the Noldor it was ever preserved as a ceremonial language, and as such it was also known to Mortal Men in later ages. Hence in *The Lord of the Rings* we have Frodo delivering the famous Quenya greeting **elen síla lúmenn' omentielvo**, "a star shines on the hour of our meeting", when he and his friends run into some Elves (and the Elves are delighted to meet "a scholar in the Ancient Tongue"). If one studies Quenya as a way to immerse oneself in Tolkien's fiction, it may indeed be best to picture oneself as a mortal student in Middle-earth in the Third Age, about the period covered in *The Lord of the Rings*. (Picturing oneself as an Elvish native speaker in Valinor back in the

First Age may be overly ambitious.) The particular form of Quenya taught in this course is – by intention – precisely the "late Exilic" or "Third Age" variant. This is the kind of Quenya exemplified in *The Lord of the Rings*, with Galadriel's Lament (*Namárië*) as the most substantial example.

Numerous enthusiasts have brought forth a limited, but steadily growing body of Quenya literature, especially since a substantial amount of vocabulary finally became available with the publication of *The Lost Road* in 1987, fifteen years after Tolkien's death. Thanks to this and the fifteen other books of Middle-earth material that Christopher Tolkien in the period 1977-96 edited from the manuscripts his father had left behind, we now know very much more about Tolkien's languages than we ever did during the lifetime of their inventor. We certainly can't sit down and readily translate the works of Shakespeare into Quenya, but we do know a few thousand words and can infer the general outlines of the grammar Tolkien envisioned. Still, you cannot really become "fluent" in Quenya, no matter how hard you study what is presently available. But it is eminently possible to write quite long Quenya texts if one deliberately eschews the unfortunate gaps in our knowledge, and we can at least hope that some of these gaps (especially regarding grammatical features) will be filled in by future publications. In the future, we may be able to develop Quenya into a more fully "useable" language. But we must obviously start by carefully internalizing the information provided by Tolkien's own material, as far as it is available to us.

Many have wanted a regular "course" or "tutorial", with exercises and all, that would allow them to study Quenya on their own with some ease. One such effort has been made before: Nancy Martsch' *Basic Quenya*. All in all, this was certainly a good work; the fact that material that has been published after it was written now reveals certain shortcomings, cannot be held against the author. However, many would like to have a more updated course, and I have repeatedly been approached by people suggesting that I would be the right person to write it. It is of course nice when others call me an "expert" on Tolkienian linguistics; actually I would say that it is difficult to be an "expert" in these matters, due to the scarcity of source material. Nonetheless, I have been so privileged that I have been able to spend much time studying these matters (starting more than ten years ago), and I see it as my duty to record and pass on whatever insights I may have gained. Hence in the end I sat down and started writing this course, intended for beginners. (This conveniently allows me to fill the uncritical, vulnerable minds of fresh students with *my* interpretation of Quenya grammar, which interpretation I inevitably hold to be the best and most accurate. Ha ha ha.) However, this course does not seek to imitate a Linguaphone-like format with long dialogues etc. to help the student to acquire "basic fluency" in various situations relating to everyday life. This would be quite pointless in the case of an "art-language" like Quenya, which is to be used for carefully prepared prose and poetry rather than casual chatting. Rather these lessons take the form of a series of essays on various

parts of Quenya grammar, reviewing and analyzing available evidence in an attempt to reconstruct Tolkien's intentions, with some exercises appended.

Why study Quenya? Obviously not because you are going to Valinor on holiday and need to be able to communicate with the natives. Some may want to study this language to somehow get in better accord with the spirit of Tolkien's authorship. He referred to

...what I think is a primary 'fact' about my work, that it is all of a piece, and *fundamentally linguistic* in inspiration. [...] It is not a 'hobby', in the sense of something quite different from one's work, taken up as a relief-outlet. The invention of languages is the foundation. The 'stories' were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse. To me a name comes first and the story follows. I should have preferred to write in 'Elvish'. But, of course, such a work as *The Lord of the Rings* has been edited and only as much 'language' has been left in as I thought would be stomached by readers. (I now find that many would have liked more.) [...] It is to me, anyway, largely an essay in 'linguistic aesthetic', as I sometimes say to people who ask me 'what is it all about'. (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, pp. 219-220)

In light of such strong statements made by the author, studying his invented languages cannot be dismissed as some kind of silly escapism for romantic teenagers. It must be considered a crucial part of scholarship relating to Tolkien's authorship, or indeed his work in general: The languages constructed by Tolkien are part of his output as a philologist, not necessarily less serious than his writings on pre-existing languages like Anglo-Saxon; notice that he refused to call his "fundamentally linguistic" work a mere hobby. One may call Quenya and the other languages works of art, but no matter what word we use to describe them, in the end it all boils down to this: Tolkien was not just a descriptive linguist, passively exploring and contemplating pre-existing tongues – he was a *creative* linguist as well.

Obviously fluency in Quenya or Sindarin is not a prerequisite before you can say anything intelligent about Tolkien's narratives; yet it is clear that some critics and scholars have woefully underestimated the crucial role of the invented languages, finding themselves unable to take even very clear statements like the one quoted above wholly seriously. To fully appreciate the scope and intricacy of Tolkien's linguistic sub-creation one has to actively study it for its own sake. It should certainly be able to command interest for its own sake. Some years ago, recognized Tolkien scholar Tom Shippey observed that

...it's clear that the languages Tolkien created are created by, you know, one of the most accomplished philologists of all time, so there is therefore something interesting in them, and I think also in them there is poured

much of his professional knowledge and thought. (...) I've often noticed that there are really very valuable observations about what Tolkien thought about real philology buried in the fiction. And I would not be at all surprised if, you know, there were valuable observations buried in the invented languages. So there may be, in fact, something which emerges from it. [From an interview conducted during the Arda symposium in Oslo, April 3-5 1987, published in the journal *Angerthas*, issue 31.]

Even if one does not believe that there are great new philological insights waiting to be unearthed from the structure of Tolkien's languages, I cannot see why conducting detailed studies of these languages should necessarily be seen as escapism, or at best a somewhat silly pastime for people who are too lazy to find something better to do. The languages constructed by Tolkien have been likened to music; his biographer Humphrey Carpenter observes that "if he had been interested in music he would very likely have wanted to compose melodies; so why should he not make up a personal system of words that would be as it were a private symphony?" One may study one of the languages Tolkien painstakingly developed as one may study a musical symphony: a complex work of many interrelated parts woven into intricate beauty. Yet the symphony is fixed in its form, while a language can be infinitely recombined into ever new texts of prose and poetry, and yet retain its nature and flavour undiminished. One of the attractions of Quenya is that we can compose linguistic "music" ourselves just by applying Tolkien's rules, so Carpenter's comparison is too limited: Tolkien did not just make a symphony, he invented an entire form of music, and it would be a pity if it were to die with him.

Of course, others may want to study Quenya to immerse themselves in Tolkien's fiction, with no pretensions of "scholarship" of any kind: Tolkien's vision of the *Elves* (Quendi, Eldar) is no doubt the main achievement of his authorship, and Quenya was – at least in the somewhat biased opinion of the Noldor – "the chief Elvish tongue, the noblest, and the one most nearly preserving the ancient character of Elvish speech" (*The War of the Jewels* p. 374). But one may grope towards "Elvishness" in a deeper sense than just trying to immerse oneself in fiction. Happily abandoning the all too classical idea of Elves as tiny, overly pretty "fairies", Tolkien instead achieved the vision of Elves as something more: "I suppose that the *Quendi* are in fact in these histories very little akin to the Elves and Fairies of Europe; and if I were pressed to rationalize, I should say that they represent greater beauty and longer life, and nobility – the Elder Children" (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 176). The quintessence of Tolkien's vision of "Elvishness" is contained primarily in the languages, "for to the Eldar the making of speech is the oldest of the arts and the most beloved" (*The Peoples of Middle-earth* p. 398). In a way, the study of Quenya can be a quest for this vision of something beautiful and noble beyond the normal capability of our mortal and finite selves: "The Elves represent, as it were, the artistic, aesthetic, and purely

scientific aspects of the Humane raised to a higher level than is actually seen in Men" (*Letters*, p. 176). The seeking for such a "higher level" transcends all fiction. Tolkien's inner vision of this level he translated partly into pictures, much more prominently into narratives, but (to him) more importantly still, into the words and sounds of *language*. In Quenya his vision of Beauty lives on, awaiting those capable of comprehending and appreciating it.

On their web-pages, the Swedish Tolkien-linguists of the Mellonath Daeron group try to justify their study of Tolkien's languages:

Our activity has been described as the ultimate luxury. We study something that does not exist, just for fun. This is something you can afford when you have everything else; food, shelter, clothes, friends, and so on. The Tolkien languages are well worth studying for their high aesthetic values alone. And knowledge of the languages is a key to a fuller appreciation of the beauty of Tolkien's sub-creation, his world, Arda.

I heartily agree with the last two sentences, but I cannot agree that Quenya or Sindarin "does not exist". Obviously we are not talking about physical, tangible objects, but that goes for any language. These are not fictional languages, but languages as real as Esperanto or any other constructed language. Tolkien himself noted about his languages that they "have some existence, since I have composed them in some completeness" (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 175).

Unlike Esperanto, Quenya is however strongly associated with a *fictional internal history*. (Tolkien once stated that Esperanto had been more successful if there had been an Esperanto mythos to go with it!) The associated mythos certainly enriches Quenya and helps us to understand what kind of linguistic "flavour" Tolkien was aiming for, and the fact that this language has a role to play in the most famous fantasy novels ever written obviously provides it with much "free publicity" that Esperanto can only dream of. Yet it must be emphasized that Quenya does exist as an actual entity in our own world, and as mentioned above, it indeed has a steadily growing literature, mostly in verse: The texts presently in existence must already be hundreds of times more comprehensive than all the Quenya texts Tolkien ever wrote himself. He endlessly refined the structure and imaginary evolution of his invented languages, but he wrote remarkably few substantial texts in them. Though he stated that he "should have preferred to write in 'Elvish'" (see quote above), he actually wrote *about* the "Elvish" tongues rather than in them. "Delight lay in the creation itself," Christopher Tolkien observes (*Sauron Defeated*, p. 440). His father made the languages just because he loved making them, not because he needed to "use" them for any specific purpose. To be sure, Tolkien wrote a number of poems in "Elvish", but they amount to very little compared to the thousands of pages he wrote *about* the structure of his languages.

Tolkien had his fun in sheer invention; that was his privilege as the original creator. However, I daresay quite few people are capable of deriving much

pleasure from mere passive contemplation of the structure of a language, or from reading the grammar of an invented language as if it were some kind of novel. I imagine that most people who want to study Quenya have some intention, however vague, of putting this knowledge to use by writing Quenya texts themselves, or at least by reading other people's texts (at the *very* least Tolkien's own). Really learning any language in any case requires active participation: Even if you wouldn't dream of ever publishing anything in Quenya but rather want to assess Tolkien's "Elvish" for purely academic purposes, you will still have to work yourselves through some exercises to internalize grammar and vocabulary. Such exercises are provided in this course.

My favorite angle on the study of Tolkien's languages is probably this (building on the "musical" analogy suggested by Carpenter): I'd say we are in somewhat the same situation as if a genius composer were to invent a new form of music, writing a great deal about its structure, but making relatively few actual compositions – some of them not even published during the lifetime of the composer himself. Yet these few compositions gain a steadily growing international audience, an audience that would very much like to hear more – much more – music of this kind. The original composer being dead, what are we to do? There is only one way to go: We must carry out a thorough study of both the published compositions and the more theoretical writings, to make out and internalize the rules and principles for this kind of music. Then we can start to compose ourselves, making entirely new melodies that yet comply with the general structure devised by the original inventor.

This, of course, has a rough analogy when it comes to Tolkien's narratives as well. Tolkien's themes and principles of story-telling have been taken over by generations of new authors, resulting in the modern fantasy genre – though it would not be very controversial to say that far from all authors have been able to live up to the high standards set by the master. In somewhat the same manner, the quality of the numerous post-Tolkien Quenya texts varies greatly. In the case of some early attempts, written when very little source material was available, it is now easy to spot various shortcomings and misinterpretations of what Tolkien really intended. Today, with much more material available, I would say it is possible to write texts that Tolkien *probably* would have recognized as at least roughly correct Quenya (though I think reading Quenya texts not originating with himself would have been a strange experience for him; his invented languages were originally something very private).

This course should in any case be useful no matter what your angle on this study may be – whether you want to learn Quenya to immerse yourself in Tolkien's fiction, to better appreciate a crucial side of his authorship, to learn about the intricate creations of a talented linguist, to accept the intellectual challenge of trying to master a sophisticated system, to go on a meditative quest for "Elvishness", or simply to enjoy Quenya aesthetically. None of these are

mutually exclusive, of course. Whatever your angle is, I hope you would like to have a part in making Quenya literature grow and flourish.

Another Tolkien quote may be in place here: "No language is justly studied merely as an aid to other purposes. It will in fact better serve other purposes, philological or historical, when it is studied for love, for itself" (MC:189).

THE QUESTION OF COPYRIGHT

This is an issue I shall have to devote quite a few paragraphs to, though this will probably surprise any fresh, innocent student who has never given much thought to this at all. However, debates revolving around copyright issues have sadly caused a great deal of bitterness among students working in the field of Tolkien-linguistics; such debates essentially blew apart the TolKLang mailing list, leading to the establishing of Elfling instead. If Tolkien's heirs or their lawyers ever read what follows, I hope they are not offended. This really is not about stealing anything from them, but about directing attention to one highly important part of Tolkien's work and help people learning about it, so that it can live and grow and stand as a lasting testimony to his efforts, and as a dynamic memorial to himself. Talking about his father, Christopher Tolkien in a TV interview described Quenya as "language as he wanted it, the language of his heart". Students of Quenya merely want this special part of Tolkien's heart to live on. Nobody is trying to make any money or otherwise profit from this. (If the Tolkien Estate, or rather HarperCollins, might ever want to publish this course in book form, I would be happy to let them do so, and I would not expect to receive any royalties.)

In 1998 and early 1999, on the TolKLang list, lawyer W. C. Hicklin vociferously argued that publishing "unauthorized" grammatical descriptions of a Tolkien-language would be a blatant violation of the copyright of the Tolkien Estate, asserting that any such publication would undoubtedly make the Estate react with "money, guns and lawyers". (One hopes the part about firearms was a figure of speech.) I cannot agree with such an interpretation of copyright law, especially considering that what we know about Quenya we have for the most part learnt by studying the examples we have – not by reading Tolkien's explicit grammars, that still have not been published. I cannot imagine that when studying available Quenya texts, is it *illegal* for us to put our conclusions into words and tell others about them. If this is what copyright means, then all sorts of scholarly commentary and literary criticism immediately go down the drain. While Hicklin said he reported the position of Christopher Tolkien (whom he claimed to know on a first-name basis), the Tolkien Estate itself has so far declined to present its opinion on these issues, even when asked to do so by TolKLang moderator Julian Bradfield. It may be noted that copyright law is not the area Mr. Hicklin specializes in, and I think he pressed the concept of "character" rather far by asserting that every individual word in the invented languages must be considered a literary character of Tolkien's, apparently on par with such characters as

Aragorn or Galadriel. Mysteriously, Hicklin still agreed that it is OK to write fresh texts in Tolkien's languages, though in Hicklin's world this would seem to be the analogy of writing new stories involving Tolkien's characters (which everybody agrees would be a copyright violation).

Hicklin's obvious problems in putting together a consistent argument, as well as subsequent legal inquiries conducted by myself and others, have led me to the conclusion that copyrighting a language as such would be quite impossible. The language "itself" is not to be likened to a fixed text in or about it; it is an entirely abstract system, and for anything to enjoy copyright protection it must first of all have a fixed form to *be* protected. Arguing that the very grammatical structure and vocabulary of the language is its "fixed form" is no use, for this is an abstract *system*, not a "form". Any actual text about (or in) a language is indeed protected, but not the language "itself". To return to the analogy of our genius composer who invents a new form of music: His copyright to his own compositions, and to his writings on this form of music *as fixed texts*, cannot and should not be disputed by anyone. But he or his heirs cannot well assert that publishing entirely new compositions, or wholly original descriptions of the principles of this kind of music, would somehow violate their copyright.

This course is written and published (for free on the Internet) by me as a private person. The Tolkien Estate has not been asked to endorse it or even comment on it, it is in no way "official", and I must take full responsibility for the quality of the contents. No disrespect is intended when I point out that any endorsement by the Estate would not have meant much in the way of a quality guarantee, since certain earlier works on Quenya that *were* published with explicit permission from the Estate can now be seen to contain certain obvious shortcomings and misinterpretations. There is little reason to believe that Estate lawyers or Christopher Tolkien himself are capable of judging the quality of a Quenya grammar (and likewise no reason to hold this against them; learning Quenya from the primary sources is a long and challenging study reserved for the especially interested). In such a situation I hope and believe that the Tolkien Estate respects the right of scholars to carry on their studies undisturbed, and to present the results of such research – especially when the relevant publications are entirely non-commercial. Despite the strong claims made by Hicklin and a very few others, there is presently no concrete evidence that the Estate or Christopher Tolkien see such studies as a violation of their copyright. If they do, let them contact me and we will talk.

The interpretation of Quenya grammar that it here set out is based on a study of the available sources, mostly analysis of actual Quenya text, and on exegesis of the relatively few explicit notes on grammar that are presently available. I hold it to be obvious that this is primarily a work of analysis and commentary (presented in a didactic fashion), and in terms of copyright, discussing the structure of Quenya cannot be much different from discussing (say) the plot structure of *The Lord of the Rings*: In either case it is clear that

anything I can say must ultimately be based on Tolkien's writings, but the resulting study still is not a "derived work" in terms of copyright law. What we are doing here is not retelling Tolkien's fiction (though I will certainly *refer* to it – but then from the perspective of a critic, or better commentator, to demonstrate how Tolkien's fiction and language-construction interlock). Primarily we will be studying one of Tolkien's languages as an actual rather than a fictitious entity. The fact that this language was first presented to the world in a context of fiction does not make it a "fictional language", and use or discussion of it is not necessarily "derivative fiction". As already mentioned, Tolkien himself observed that his languages as such "have some existence" simply because he had actually devised them – they do not exclusively reside within a fictitious context (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 175).

Much of Quenya vocabulary is not wholly "original"; Tolkien readily admitted that the vocabularies of his "Elvish" languages were "inevitably full of...reminiscences" of pre-existing tongues (*The Peoples of Middle-earth* p. 368). Though usually not so obvious that it is disturbing to those who want to study Quenya as a highly exotic language, the fact remains that the knowledgeable easily discern Indo-European (and sometimes even Semitic) words and stems underlying many of Tolkien's "invented" words. This is not to be seen as some sort of failure of imagination on Tolkien's part; he noted that "it is impossible in constructing imaginary languages from a limited number of component sounds to avoid such resemblances" – adding that he did not even try to avoid them (*Letters*, pp. 384-385). Even where no plausible "real-world" inspiration for a Quenya word can be cited, the fact still remains that there is no legal tradition whatsoever to allow a person coining new words to somehow claim them as his personal property. Tolkien himself was aware that names cannot be copyrighted (*Letters*, p. 349), and then one cannot well copyright common nouns, verbs, adjectives or prepositions either, precluding "unauthorized" use of them. Some words in common use today, such as *robot*, first occurred in a context of fiction. One cannot therefore claim that they are "fictional" words, protected on par with fictional characters, and not to be used, listed or explained without explicit permission from the one who first coined them (or his heirs).

Legal inquiries conducted after Hicklin made his flamboyant claims have confirmed that *words* as such automatically enter public domain the second they are coined, and nobody can monopolize them or claim exclusive ownership to them. You can register a word as a *trademark*, of course, but that is something entirely different: Apple Computers can't stop anyone from using "apple" as an everyday word. It is also irrelevant that the manufacturer of some kind of fantasy game had to remove all references to "balrogs", for here it is not the Sindarin word *balrog*, but balrogs as characters that lie in Tolkien's copyright. The fact that Tolkien coined the word **alda** for "tree" hardly implies that trees are his literary characters. It is not just a tree growing in Middle-earth that can be termed an **alda**;

the word works just as well if I write a Quenya poem about a tree growing outside my house.

I agree, though, that Quenya and the other languages enjoy some protection *in their capacity as parts of the Middle-earth setting*. If anyone were to write new fantasy stories involving Elves speaking a language called Quenya, and there were samples demonstrating that this is indeed Tolkien's Quenya, this would obviously be the same kind of plagiarism as if any fantasy writer were to "borrow" a city called Minas Tirith, and the description in the book made it clear that this city happened to be built on several levels and was overlooked by a white tower. But again: this course is most certainly not intended as derivative fiction. This is about studying and using one of Tolkien's languages largely irrespective of the fictional context as such – though since I also aspire to present Quenya as a part of Tolkien's authorship, I shall of course have to mention, refer to and sometimes even quote the narratives as well as presenting mere technicalities. Nonetheless: It is obviously untrue that Tolkien's languages cannot in any way be separated from his fictional world (as Hicklin seemed to claim). Vicente Velasco was for instance able to write a Quenya poem (*Ríanna*) commemorating Princess Diana after her tragic death, but this does not imply that the accident where she was killed must actually be a plot point in a Tolkien novel. Indeed Tolkien himself made a Quenya translation of the Lord's Prayer, a text that obviously belongs to our own reality and could not occur within the Middle-earth setting.

When discussing copyright issues, we must distinguish very clearly between the fictional context and *actual use* of systems or ideas described within this fiction; the latter is quite irrelevant for a discussion of copyright. By way of comparison: I fully agree that if anyone were to write new fantasy stories involving a race of small people with hairy feet living in underground structures called smials, then this writer would clearly plagiarize Tolkien and possibly even violate his copyright. But I cannot imagine that I violate anyone's copyright if I dig out a smial in my garden – or for that matter, if I have a head-to-feet hair transplant. Similarly, one shouldn't feel free to write fantasy stories about Elves speaking Quenya, but *actually using* the linguistic structures dreamed up by Tolkien to write new texts that by their contents have nothing to do with his fiction cannot be a violation of copyright. The new Quenya texts are copyright to no one but their writers.

Happily, Tolkien's heirs seem to agree to this; at least they have never tried to stop anyone from publishing their Quenya poems. If the Estate has no problems with this, I can only assume that their lawyers also agree that it is perfectly legal for anyone to write Quenya grammars or compile Quenya wordlists. Otherwise we should be left with the rather absurd notion of a language that can be *used*, but not *taught* or in a scholarly way *described*. I cannot imagine that the Estate would assert that the by now quite large number of Quenya texts that are not written by Tolkien and have nothing to do with his fiction cannot be subjected to grammatical or lexicographical studies simply because they happen to be written

in Quenya. This would be an attempt to block and veto certain kinds of scholarship relating to an entire body of literature, and I don't think this could be sustained, legally or even morally. I don't know that Tolkien's heirs disagree.

I have no intention, however, of disputing the Estate's copyright to Tolkien's *actual writings* (on the languages or otherwise), and though it is an interesting exercise to "reconstruct the Elvish original" supposedly underlying some of Tolkien's poems or stories, one should not publish "Elvish" translations of a great amount of continuous Tolkien text. All of his texts lie in the copyright of the Tolkien Estate until it expires in 2023 (or was it 2048?), and publishing substantial translations or close retellings thereof would require the permission of the Estate: No matter how exceedingly esoteric the target-language is, any translation is still directly derived from Tolkien's own, copyrighted text. Neither should one write long stories set in Tolkien's world; that would be a violation of copyright no matter what language you use. However, making translations of a *limited* amount of Tolkien text can probably pass as fair use (but please don't publish your own Quenya rendering of the Ring Poem; there are all too many competing versions already...) Neither is there much reason to believe that the Estate would take any action against *short* Quenya-language novelettes even if they do seem to be set in Middle-earth, since it should be obvious that the real purpose is to demonstrate the use of Quenya, not to write new stories to compete with Tolkien's own (I wouldn't publish even such novelettes in any way that could conceivably be seen as commercial publishing, though). Poems *about* persons or events in Tolkien's world (like Ales Bican's *Roccalassen* or "Song to Éowyn") I think can pass as a branch of commentary or synopsis, as long as you don't include any fresh fiction of your own. But please don't push even that too far; Tolkien's heirs are in their good right when they assert their copyright to his stories.

In exercises made for this course, I have in any case deliberately avoided any direct references to persons, places or events in Tolkien's fictional world (except for *one* reference to the Two Trees because the Quenya word provides such a good example of dual number). Instead of referring to Tolkien's fiction I have in most cases resorted to a wholly generic fantasy world or medieval world; there is nothing to *preclude* the possibility that this is Tolkien's world, but nothing concrete to confirm it, either. There are lots of Elves and Dwarves in these exercises, but though we inevitably use words like *Eldar* and *Naucor* for these peoples when talking about them in Quenya, they are really just "generic" Elves and Dwarves. Feel free to imagine that these "Elves" are Tolkien's Eldar if you like, but there is nothing that definitely ties them to any specific mythos.

Despite the fact that I don't think the Tolkien Estate could *legally* stop people from doing pretty much what they want with Quenya as an actual language (separated from Tolkien's fiction), I urge students to use whatever knowledge they may obtain in a respectful way. We should feel some kind of moral obligation, or even gratitude, towards Tolkien as the creator of this language. Quenya as we know it is the result of decades of painstaking work and endless

refinement; its creator intended it to have an august or even sacred flavour, and it is not to be used for unworthy or downright silly purposes. (Please don't publish your Quenya compositions on toilet walls, for instance.) There is an old TV interview where Tolkien says he would not necessarily mind others knowing and enjoying his invented languages, but he would *not* like to see any of them turned into some sort of "secret" lingo used to exclude others. This is a wish I urge any and all students to respect. As a student and user of Quenya one should also be committed to preserving the integrity of Tolkien's system, taking great care not to distort it or needlessly dilute it. Occasionally we have to coin new words, but in such cases one should eschew arbitrary invention and instead work from Tolkien's own stems, using his methods of derivation.

Wrote Tolkien, "Of course the L[ord of the] R[ings] does not belong to me. It has been brought forth and must now go its appointed way in the world, though naturally I take a deep interest in its fortunes, as a parent would of a child. I am comforted to know that it has good friends to defend it" (*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 413-14). Perhaps he would have felt the same way about the invented languages exemplified in the book he is talking about: They have been brought forth and do already go their "way in the world", studied and even used by many – but now Quenya and the other languages must live their lives independently of their "parent", for he is no longer among us. So let students and users be their "good friends" and "defend" their systems, true to the vision of the man who spent a lifetime developing them. And this brings us back to the structure of Quenya itself.

WHAT IS QUENYA LIKE?

What kind of language is this, structurally speaking? It seems that Finnish provided considerable inspiration not only for the sound-patterns, but for the basic structure as well. Tolkien described Quenya as a "highly inflected language" (*The Road Goes Ever On* p. 69). That is, words appear in many different forms depending on their precise function in any given grammatical context. The differing forms are for the most part constructed by employing a plethora of *endings*, endings with meanings that in English would often be expressed as separate words instead. Hence an English translation of a Quenya text will normally consist of more words than the Quenya original: In *Unfinished Tales* p. 22, 51, we learn that three words of Quenya may well require a seven-word English translation: **Anar caluva tielyanna** = "the sun shall shine upon your path". Some may see this as evidence that Quenya is a more efficient language than English, but whether one uses one long word or several shorter words to express a given meaning is not very crucial. (It may be noted that if one counts *syllables* instead of words, it is suddenly English that is the most "efficient" language in the example above: The English text has one syllable less than the Quenya version!) Quenya should be enjoyed for its own qualities, not by comparing it to other languages. But the word **tielyanna** "upon your path"

illustrates the main difference between English and Quenya: small independent words like "your" or "upon" frequently become endings instead – in this example **-lya** and **-nna**, respectively.

Is Quenya a "difficult" language? Speaking of Quenya and Sindarin, the two main languages of his mythos, Tolkien wrote that "both languages are, of course, extremely difficult" (*Letters*:403). Undoubtedly there are many presently unsuspected complexities waiting for us in the vast amount of unpublished material. But as far or short as our knowledge goes today, I certainly wouldn't call Quenya "extremely difficult". It may be an involved and intricate construct, but certainly less complicated than Sindarin, and the acquisition of Quenya as we know it is in no way a superhuman feat. Any devoted student should be able to achieve basic mastery of the grammatical system in relatively short time, weeks or even days rather than months. General knowledge about linguistics would certainly be helpful in such a study, but hardly a prerequisite; in this course I have tried to make the explanations so simple that any reasonably bright teenager should be able to understand what is going on. (Bearing in mind that some people who want to study Quenya are quite young, I have tried to pre-suppose virtually no knowledge about linguistics, and I will explain even elementary linguistic terms – more knowledgeable students may feel that I sometimes go into boring baby-talk.)

It must still be understood that it is not a streamlined Esperanto we are dealing with here. Tolkien deliberately tried to make his languages "naturalistic"; hence there are *some* irregular verbs and the like, though I would say their number is quite manageable. Quenya probably stands about midway between an absolutely regular "Esperanto" and a typical "real" language with its spate of complexities and irregularities, yet perhaps closer to the former. Indeed Quenya is probably too simple to be entirely "credible" as a supposedly non-constructed language, at least if we compare it to the messy languages of Mortal Men in our own age. But then Quenya wasn't really "non-constructed" within the scope of the fictional history either; it was constructed and refined by the Elves, "and the Eldar know their tongue, not word by word only, but as a whole" (*The Peoples of Middle-earth* p. 398). So perhaps the Eldar, being very much conscious of the structure of their speech, would tend to make languages with a relatively tidy grammar. Anyway, from the viewpoint of students it is difficult to regret the absence of more irregular forms to be memorized, so if this simplicity does indeed make Quenya less "credible" as a natural language, Tolkien is easily forgiven!

THE SOURCES

We know that Tolkien wrote literally thousands of pages about his languages. Unfortunately – and here I must ask fresh students to brazen themselves for their first big shock, though the shocking fact has already been alluded to – *very much of this material is still unavailable to us.*

However, Christopher Tolkien has apparently tried to make arrangements for its publication. Throughout most of the nineties, he was sending photo-copies of his father's linguistic manuscripts to a group of Americans often referred to as the Editorial Team, since they are to edit and publish this material. The group originally consisted of Christopher Gilson, Carl F. Hostetter, Patrick Wynne and Arden R. Smith (later, Bill Welden also joined in). Before they started to receive Tolkien manuscripts, these people quite regularly published the Tolkien-linguistic journals *Vinyar Tengwar* (edited by Hostetter) and *Parma Eldalamberon* (edited by Gilson), generally maintaining a high standard. This, we must assume, was the reason why Christopher Tolkien wanted them to publish his father's linguistic manuscripts in the first place.

By 2007, some sixteen years after they started receiving manuscript copies from Christopher Tolkien, the project is unfortunately far from complete, and the publication of new material remains sporadic and irregular. In 2001, when I first wrote this preface to my Quenya course, I did indeed express some frustration that the group had only managed to publish about 200 pages. Some significant progress has happily been made since then, though much work remains: According to one very rough estimate, the group has now published maybe thirty per cent of Tolkien's linguistic material. Most of the writings published in *Parma Eldalamberon* are however very early material (far predating *The Lord of the Rings*). The ideas here expressed are often not compatible with Tolkien's later vision of the Elvish languages.

On the other hand, important clues regarding Tolkien's late ideas have been published in *Vinyar Tengwar*, and issue #49 (June 2007) may deserve special mention for clarifying many details having to do with the pronominal system of Quenya. Furthermore, *Parma Eldalamberon* #17 finally presented a significant amount of post-LotR material, indeed Tolkien's notes on precisely the samples of Elvish occurring in his novel. This important information was unavailable to me when I wrote the first version of this course.

Originally I had to work from sources that often touched on the languages more or less incidentally. The linguistic aspect of Tolkien's authorship luckily permeates his works to such an extent that if you bring together all the scattered pieces of information and analyze them thoroughly, you will be able to figure out much about his languages even without access to his explicit grammars. Unfortunately this method of study will leave many gaps in our knowledge, gaps most irritating to people who try to actually *use* these languages. In other cases, the material is so scarce that we can formulate not just one but all too many theories about what the underlying grammatical rules look like, and we don't have any further examples that would allow us to identify the correct theory. Nonetheless, we do know a great deal about Quenya, though some of our knowledge is more tentative than we would like. A survey of the sources is in place here; at least I should explain the abbreviations used in this work.

The primary narrative works, *The Lord of the Rings* (LotR, 1954-55) and *The Silmarillion* (Silm, 1977) need no further introduction. (Of course, there is also *The Hobbit*, but this book contains little linguistic information, and hardly anything at all about Quenya.) Most of the Elvish names of people and places found in LotR (such as *Aragorn*, *Glorfindel*, *Galadriel*, *Minas Tirith*) are Sindarin, but there are substantial samples of Quenya as well. In LotR, we find one of the longest Quenya texts known, the poem *Namárië* near the end of the chapter VIII ("Farewell to Lórien") in the first volume – or technically in Book Two within that volume. Also known as Galadriel's Lament, this is the poem commencing with the words **Ai! laurië lantar lassi súrinen...**

Various shorter samples of Quenya are also sprinkled throughout LotR, such as Frodo speaking in tongues in Shelob's lair ("*Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!* he cried, and he knew not what he had spoken"), the praise that the Ringbearers received on the Field of Cormallen (part Sindarin, part Quenya), Elendil's Declaration as repeated by Aragorn at his coronation, and Treebeard's greeting to Celeborn and Galadriel. The Quenya parts of the *Cormallen Praise* (as I shall refer to it), as found in volume 3, Book Six, chapter IV ("The Field of Cormallen"), go like this: **A laita te, laita te! Andave laituvamet! ... Cormacolindor, a laita tárienna!** (Cf. *Sauron Defeated* p. 47.) This is translated in *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, p. 308: "Bless them, bless them, long we will praise them." – "The Ring bearers, bless (or praise) them to the height."

In the next chapter (V) we have *Elendil's Declaration*, repeated by Aragorn at his coronation: **Et Eärello Endoreнна utúlien. Sinome maruvan ar hildinyar tenn' Ambar-metta.** This is translated in the text as "out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth I am come. In this place will I abide, and my heirs, unto the ending of the world."

Treebeard's Greeting in the chapter after that (VI) goes **a vanimar, vanimálion nostari**, translated both in *Letters* p. 308 ("o beautiful ones, parents of beautiful children") and *Sauron Defeated* p. 73 ("fair ones begetters of fair ones"; this rendering is the more literal).

Quenya material (though mostly isolated words only) also occur in the Appendices to LotR, in particular Appendix E.

In the *Silmarillion*, we also have a few short Quenya sentences. In chapter 20 there are some battle-cries: **Útúlie'n aurë! Aiya Eldalië ar Atanatári, utúlie'n aurë!** "The day has come! Behold, people of the Eldar and Fathers of Men, the day has come!" – **Auta i lómë!** "The night is passing!" – **Aurë entuluva!** "Day shall come again!" Near the end of chapter 21 there is the cry **Túrin Turambar turun ambartanen**, "o Túrin master of doom by doom mastered" – but *Unfinished Tales* p. 138 indicates that **turun** should rather read **turún'** (evidently shortened from a longer form **turúna**, the final **-a** dropping out because the next word also begins in **a**-). The *Silmarillion* Appendix, "Elements in Quenya and Sindarin names", also mentions many words belonging to these two languages.

In the case of other sources, a more summary survey will suffice, since these books and journals (unlike *LotR* and *Silm!*) have not appeared in too many editions and translations. Hence I can simply refer to the relevant book and page when quoting from them, and that reference will hopefully be precise enough. We will list them by the abbreviations used hereinafter:

✧ RGEO: *The Road Goes Ever On* (our page references are to the Second Edition of 1978, ISBN 0-04-784011-0). The first edition was published in 1968; this is thus one of our very few sources outside *LotR* that were published in Tolkien's own lifetime, which lends it extra authority (for when something had been published, he would normally consider it a fixed and unchangeable part of the mythos). While RGEO is basically a song cycle (Tolkien's poems with music by Donald Swann), Tolkien also included quite extensive notes on two Elvish poems occurring in *LotR*, *Namárië* and the Sindarin hymn *A Elbereth Gilthoniel* (RGEO:66-76). Besides writing them out in Fëanorian script, he also provided an interlinear translation of both; this allows us to know with certainty which word means what. He also rearranged *Namárië* into a clearer "prose" version, as an alternative to the poetic version in *LotR* – providing us with a unique opportunity to compare poetic style and prose style in Quenya. Hence I will sometimes refer to the "prose *Namárië*".

✧ UT: *Unfinished Tales* (1980, ISBN 0-04-823208-4). A posthumously published collection of material supplementing and sometimes fleshing out the stories of *LotR* and *Silm*, though as the title implies, not all of it was ever finished by the author. Of particular interest to students of Elvish is *Cirion's Oath* found in UT:305: **Vanda sina termaruva Elenna·nórëo alcar enyalien ar Elendil vorondo voronwë. Nai tiruvantes i hárar mahalmassen mi Númen ar i Eru i or ilyë mahalmar eä tennoio.** The (not entirely literal) translation given in the text goes: "This oath shall stand in memory of the glory of the Land of the Star, and of the faith of Elendil the Faithful, in the keeping of those who sit upon the thrones of the West and of the One who is above all thrones for ever." Tolkien added some interesting notes about the Quenya words (UT:317), allowing us to analyze the Oath itself.

✧ Letters: *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (1981, ISBN 0-04-440664-9). Edited by Humphrey Carpenter, Tolkien's biographer, this collection of letters also contains some linguistic information. Readers of *LotR* occasionally wrote to Tolkien asking questions touching the samples of Quenya and Sindarin in that work, and this being Tolkien's favourite subject, he often wrote fairly detailed answers. Among other things, *Letters* provides translations of some Elvish samples that are not translated in the *LotR* itself, e.g. **Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima** = "hail Eärendil brightest of stars" (Letters:385; we have already quoted the translation of the Cormallen Praise in Letters:308).

✧ MC: *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays* (1983, ISBN 0-04-809019-0). This book contains Tolkien's essay *A Secret Vice* (MC:198-223), in which he sets out his thoughts and theories about language-construction in

general. He also included some "Elvish" poems, most notably *Oilima Markirya* or "The Last Ark", which is listed in several versions. The version of *Markirya* that is most interesting to people studying the kind of Quenya exemplified in LotR, is found in MC:221-223 (including some valuable annotation).

Having edited and published Silm, UT and MC from the papers his father had left behind, Christopher Tolkien commenced what would become a highly ambitious project. In the period 1983-1996, he published a series of no less than twelve volumes, demonstrating how his father had developed his world-famous narratives over many years. The *History of Middle-earth* series (HoME) presents the many "layers" of manuscripts, chronicling how the *Silmarillion* and LotR as we know them gradually came into being, and also presenting other materials relating to Tolkien's vast mythology. For convenience I will list all the volumes of HoME by their standard abbreviations, though I will not actually quote from each and every one of them:

- ✘ LT1: *The Book of Lost Tales 1* (1983, ISBN 0-04-823231-5)
- ✘ LT2: *The Book of Lost Tales 2* (1984, ISBN 0-04-823338-2)
- ✘ LB: *The Lays of Beleriand* (1985, ISBN 0-04-440018-7)
- ✘ SM: *The Shaping of Middle-earth* (1986, ISBN 0-04-440150-7)
- ✘ LR: *The Lost Road* (1987, ISBN 0-04-440398-4)
- ✘ RS: *The Return of the Shadow* (1988, ISBN 0-04-440669-X)
- ✘ TI: *The Treason of Isengard* (1989, ISBN 0-261-10220-6)
- ✘ WR: *The War of the Ring* (1990, ISBN 0-261-10223-0)
- ✘ SD: *Sauron Defeated* (1992, ISBN 0-261-10305-9)
- ✘ MR: *Morgoth's Ring* (1993, ISBN 0-261-10300-8)
- ✘ WJ: *The War of the Jewels* (1994, ISBN 0-395-71041-3)
- ✘ PM: *The Peoples of Middle-earth* (1996, ISBN 0-216-10337-7)

Each of these books provide clues to the structure of Tolkien's languages, though often in a somewhat incidental fashion (Christopher Tolkien included relatively little of his father's narrowly linguistic writings, which being highly technical would be of limited interest to the general readership). For people interested in Tolkien's languages as they appear in LotR, the most important volumes of HoME are LR, WJ and SD, which any serious student of these languages should have in his or her personal library. The only long Quenya text occurring in HoME, *Fíriel's Song*, is found in LR:72 – but more importantly, these books reproduce three important source documents that I will often refer to simply by name (as do most students of Tolkien's linguistic creation). Therefore, they will be briefly described here. We are talking about the *Etymologies* and the essays *Quendi and Eldar* and *Lowdham's Report*.

1. The *Etymologies* (called "Etym" for short) is found in LR:347-400. (I should mention that there are different editions of LR around, so there is unfortunately more than one pagination; my page references are to the edition

normally used by Tolkien-linguists.) To casual readers undoubtedly the most baffling document in the entire HoME series, this is our most important single source of "Elvish" vocabulary. However, it is not a regular dictionary. It is an alphabetical list of about six hundred primitive "bases" or roots, the various entries listing actual words derived from these roots as they appeared in later Elvish languages (sometimes the actual ulterior "primitive Elvish" form is also mentioned, closely reflecting the "base" itself). For instance, under the entry **ÁLAK** (LR:348), itself defined "rushing", we find this series: "**alk-wā* swan: Q *alqa*; T *alpa*; ON *alpha*; N *alf*." Tolkien's idea is that the Primitive Elvish word **alk-wā** developed into Q[uenya] **alqa**, T[elerin] **alpa**, O[ld] N[oldorin] **alpha** and N[oldorin] **alf**. The *Etymologies* was written in the second half of the thirties, and the spelling and general concepts differ somewhat from the scenario of the finished LotR. (If we were to "update" the sample just quoted, we must read *Sindarin* for Noldorin, and Quenya **alqa** and "Noldorin"/Sindarin **alf** should rather be spelt **alqua** and **alph**, respectively – both words, so spelt, are actually attested in later writings.) Despite the fact that the *Etymologies* in some respects reflects a somewhat "outdated" linguistic scenario, Tolkien undertaking important revisions after he wrote Etym, it is still a gold-mine of information (and as we have just demonstrated, it can to some extent readily be "updated" in accordance with Tolkien's later ideas). Of all the languages Tolkien mentioned in Etym, Quenya is in any case among the tongues that were not very significantly affected by his subsequent revisions. (In the case of "Noldorin", on the other hand, he would tinker with its phonology and imaginary evolution, and drastically alter its internal history, to produce Sindarin as we know it from LotR.)

2. *Quendi and Eldar* (sometimes "Q&E" for short) is found in WJ:360-417. This is ostensibly an essay on the "Origin and Meanings of the Elvish words referring to *Elves* and their varieties. With Appendices on their names for other Incarnates". This ground is certainly covered, but luckily (from our point of view!) there are many digressions, appendices and notes that provide much extra information about the Elvish languages as Tolkien had come to see them in the post-LotR period: This essay dates from ca. 1959-60. Christopher Tolkien felt that one substantial section departed too radically from the stated subject of the essay, and edited it out (see WJ:359, 396). Luckily, the omitted section was later published in the journal *Vinyar Tengwar*, issue #39. When I quote from *Quendi and Eldar*, I will therefore sometimes refer to WJ and sometimes to *Vinyar Tengwar* (VT). "Digressive" though the section that appeared in VT may be, it is of course of immense interest to people studying Tolkien's languages.

3. *Lowdham's Report*, or in full *Lowdham's Report on the Adunaic Language*, can be found in SD:413-440. As the title implies, this report is mainly concerned with another language than Quenya: *Adunaic* (in LotR spelt *Adûnaic*), the vernacular of Númenor. However, a little information about Quenya, which in this report is referred to as "Avallonian", can also be gleaned – the two languages sometimes being compared or contrasted. ("Lowdham" is just a fictional character

of Tolkien's. Tolkien sometimes presented even quite technical information about his languages as if he were merely quoting or referring the observations and viewpoints of various people residing *within* his mythos. Among his favourite fictional "sources" we find *Fëanor*, the greatest but also the proudest of the Noldor, *Rúmil* the sage of Tirion, and *Pengolodh* the loremaster of Gondolin: Many of Tolkien's characters seem to share their author's interest in mysterious scripts and strange languages.)

The sources so far mentioned are the ones published or edited by Tolkien himself or by his son – except for *Letters*, that was edited by Humphrey Carpenter. In addition there are a few works edited and published by others. Some very brief scraps of information can be extracted from *J.R.R. Tolkien – Artist and Illustrator*, edited by Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull.

In addition to these sources we have the journals of the Editorial Team, already mentioned above: *Vinyar Tengwar* (VT), edited by Carl F. Hostetter, and *Parma Eldalamberon* (PE) edited by Christopher Gilson. These are published on an irregular basis. VT mostly presents selected pieces of late material, whereas PE attempts to present Tolkien's linguistic materials more or less in their entirety, and roughly in the order they were written. This project started with the publication of Tolkien's early "Gnomish Lexicon" in PE #11 (1995). PE #17 (2007) is the main exception, since this issue suddenly leaped ahead in time and published Tolkien's notes on the samples of Elvish occurring in the LotR. It remains unclear whether this is to be a lone exception from the general policy of chronological publication, or whether the journal will now go on publishing such late material. The project of "chronological" publication has so far (2007) only reached material dating from the 1920s.

Of the actual Quenya samples so far mentioned, I shall often refer to *Namárië*, *Treebeard's Greeting*, *Elendil's Declaration*, *Cirion's Oath*, *Fíriel's Song* and *Markirya* simply by title or "name", not always providing a reference to book and page. From the discussion above the student will know where they are found (if you feel the urge to check the accuracy of my quotes!) In most other cases I will provide a reference when I quote something, since it will usually be found in one of the sources that do allow a precise reference to book and page (since there is not a spate of different editions with differing pagination around). When I refer to entries in the *Etymologies* (in LR), I simply quote the entry-head, which can easily be located in all editions (irrespective of pagination).

A WORD OF WARNING REGARDING PARTS OF THE CORPUS

Scattered in the sources listed above we have a total Quenya "corpus" that would amount to very roughly 150 pages if it were all brought together (though most of this would unfortunately just be unconnected wordlist material; the samples of actual *text* are much rarer and could probably be fitted into no more than two or three pages). But here a word of warning is in place: If you want to learn the kind

of Quenya that you have encountered in LotR, not all of the samples found in this corpus are entirely "reliable" – even though they are certainly genuine Tolkien. To avoid what is potentially a quagmire of confusion, the student should immediately internalize one fact: *The kind of Quenya exemplified in LotR is not the only kind of Quenya there is.* If you start analyzing all the samples of Quenya that we now have, you will soon realize that they do not form a homogenous mass. Most samples certainly "look" much the same, never straying too far from the Finnish-inspired word-shapes, but much of the early material (never published during Tolkien's lifetime) can be shown to employ or presuppose words, inflectional endings and grammatical rules that differ from the system of LotR-style Quenya. By all means, no sample is *entirely* different from LotR-style Quenya – but in material predating the mid-thirties, neither is there any sample that is entirely identical.

Tolkien was, so to speak, all too good when it came to devising languages. Fixing them in one clear-cut and unchangeable form was an almost impossible task for him. There were ever new ideas that he wanted to work into their structure, even if these ideas contradicted and obsoleted things that he had written earlier. We can be sure that his fictional character Lowdham speaks for Tolkien himself (SD:240):

In making up a language you are free: too free (...) When you're just inventing, the pleasure or fun is in the moment of invention; but as you are the master your whim is law, and you may want to have the fun all over again, fresh. You're liable to be for ever niggling, altering, refining, wavering, according to your linguistic mood and to your changes of taste.

With the posthumous publication of many of Tolkien's writings, we got evidence for plenty of 'niggling, altering, refining, and wavering' on his part. It is now evident that Quenya appeared in many incarnations, and while they all share the same general "style" and would probably look the same to a fresh student, they actually differ in many details of grammar, vocabulary and even phonology. A powerful demonstration of the extent of Tolkien's revisions is provided by the *Markirya* poem, which exists in one version dating from the early thirties (MC:213) and another that is about forty years younger, dating from the last decade of Tolkien's life (MC:221-223). Both versions have (almost) the same meaning, but the late version is in the full sense of the word a *translation* of the former, not a mere rewriting: Only a few words and inflectional endings are common to both texts.

Since Tolkien in pre-LotR sources typically used the spelling *Qenya* instead of Quenya (though the intended pronunciation is the same), I and others often use "Qenya" (preferably in quotes) as a name of early variants of Quenya that are more or less different from the form that appears in LotR and later sources. The first version of *Markirya* I would thus call a "Qenya" poem; only the

later version is Quenya as we know it from LotR. Some other poems reproduced in MC (*Nieninqe* and *Earendel*, pp. 215-216), as well as an alternative "Last Ark" poem of another meaning than the classical *Markirya* (MC:221), are also decidedly "Qenya" rather than Quenya. These texts may certainly be enjoyed for their own qualities, but as source-material for students trying to figure out the structure of LotR-style Quenya they exclude themselves.

As we would expect, the language *generally* becomes more and more similar to its "final form" the closer we get to Tolkien's writing LotR. For instance, the relatively late text *Fíriel's Song* is almost, but not quite LotR-style Quenya. However, one should not have a simplistic view of these things, thinking that Tolkien started out in 1915 with a language that was wildly different from the Quenya of LotR and that it "gradually" evolved into LotR-style Quenya in a nice and tidy evolutionary line. The scarcity of published material does not allow us to follow the process in any detail, but it is already evident that Tolkien kept changing his mind back and forth, not only doing revisions but frequently also undoing them later: Indeed some of the very earliest material, written during WWI, gives an overall impression of being *more* similar to LotR-style Quenya than certain "Qenya" poems of the early thirties. It may seem that Tolkien, rather than boldly "progressing" toward LotR-style Quenya, made a series of detours on the way, sometimes venturing off into radical revisions that eventually proved dissatisfying and were rejected. Yet in other cases certain revisions proved durable, Tolkien evidently perceiving them as genuine improvements – but the whole process was wholly unpredictable, for in a game like this there could be no imaginable objective criteria for what constitutes an improvement: As Tolkien had Lowdham saying, "Your whim is law."

Something really close to LotR-style Quenya seems to have made its first appearance in the latter half of the thirties, with the writing of the *Etymologies*. But it is not to be thought that everything was completely settled even after LotR had been written and published in the first half of the fifties; Tolkien indeed used the opportunity to tinker just a little with even the *published* samples of Quenya in this work when a revised edition appeared in 1966 (and even more niggling was certainly going on behind the scenes). Seven years later he died, and there is little reason to believe that he ever managed (or even seriously tried) to fix Quenya and his other languages in *one* definite cut-in-stone form – sorting out every detail. This was not necessarily a "failure", like a composer never managing to finish his great opera: "Unceasing change, often frustrating to those who study these languages, was inherent in this art," Christopher Tolkien observes (SD:440). In another place, he remarks regarding his father's work on the languages that "it seems indeed that they very attempt to write a definitive account produced immediate dissatisfaction and the desire for new constructions: so the most beautiful manuscripts were soon treated with disdain" (LR:342). Insofar as "delight lay in the creation itself", Tolkien *could not* write a definitive account, or his fun would be past and over.

Nonetheless, if compared to Tolkien's intense experimentation in the twenty years from 1915, Quenya does seem to have entered a somewhat "stable" phase in the second half of the thirties. Over the next decade Tolkien wrote LotR, which included some samples of Quenya as it now appeared (most notably *Namárië*). With the eventual publication of LotR in 1954-55, these forms became a "fixed" part of the mythos (despite Tolkien's slight tinkering in the 1966 revision). Having published LotR, Tolkien obviously could not revise his languages anything as freely as he could before. Reportedly, there are hints in his post-LotR manuscripts that he indeed felt somewhat constrained. But this relative stability would later be good news for people wanting to learn or study "the" Quenya, Tolkien's more-or-less final decision on how this language had "really been" back in the remote ages chronicled by his narratives.

Some (including me) have referred to this as *mature Quenya*. Others feel this term to be unduly disparaging to the earlier forms of Quenya or "Qenya", since the inevitable implication is that they were somehow immature and inferior. Artistically, subjectively speaking I do think the "final" form of Quenya is more attractive than Tolkien's earlier experiments, and there can be no doubt that *this* is the kind of Quenya that most students will primarily want to learn – not the earlier variants that Tolkien himself rejected. For that matter, this is certainly the version of Quenya that Tolkien himself would have wanted us to study; if it had been up to him, we would never have seen any other versions! He took the utmost care to ensure that his mythos would remain free from internal contradictions, and he would never have recognized contradictory variants of Quenya as being somehow equally valid. Indeed it should be noted that elderly Tolkien referred to his earliest form of "Qenya" as "very primitive" (PM:379). Hence we have no choice but to treat the early material with considerable caution, and there is little reason to believe that Tolkien would have been greatly insulted if others were to say (or indeed to agree!) that his early "Qenya" variants are not quite as attractive as his later, carefully refined version(s) of the language.

Even so, in this course I have opted to speak, not of "mature Quenya", but rather of *LotR-style Quenya*. The latter term must be wholly uncontroversial. The language that this course teaches is of course LotR-style Quenya, as well as it can be approximated at the present stage – but there is no point in pretending that the various earlier "Qenya" variants never existed. I will indeed refer to some of their features, to give the student some idea of what kind of variations occur in the material. Apart from such academic considerations, the early material is something we may "fall back on" where material closer to (and ideally postdating) the writing of LotR is insufficient for our needs. In particular, we may cannibalize the "Qenya" material for useful vocabulary items, in each case making sure that the words we carry over into LotR-style Quenya fit this tongue (i.e., they must not clash with later words of different meaning, and the shape of the words themselves must fit the phonology and derivational system of the language as Tolkien eventually came to envision it). After all, *all* the incarnations of Q(u)enya

in the entire period from the language was invented in 1915 and until Tolkien's death in 1973 may well be seen as endless variations on somewhat the same themes. Therefore it is in a way only fitting that in our attempts to develop a useable form of Quenya, we take everything into consideration. But as for the overall grammatical and phonological structure, we must give priority to Tolkien's vision as it manifested in LotR and writings postdating this work: If we have any respect whatsoever for Tolkien's intentions, the form of Quenya that we attempt to crystallize must be LotR-compatible.

Little can be easy or clear-cut in this strange corner of Language. Reconstructing the structure of Quenya is like trying to piece together a huge puzzle of far-sundered pieces. Many pieces are simply missing, vast amounts of material being inaccessible to scholars (and to make matters worse, the ones who are supposed to be publishing it often seem far more concerned about concealing it). Moreover, because of Tolkien's frequent revisions you can't even be sure that all the pieces you do find belong to the same puzzle at all. Some clearly do not fit and can be ignored; many other fall in the category of "doubtful", and you don't really know what to do with them.

In this course I will mention some of the variations and present my hopefully qualified guesses as to what we should accept as authoritative and what is probably best ignored. Indeed, due to the general lack of *explicit* grammatical information from Tolkien, I will not always present Quenya grammar with confidence and authority; rather you will often see me review whatever evidence is available and try to make out some rules that we can follow when putting together our own Quenya compositions. But in a way this is precisely what I should like to do anyway, so as to acquaint students with the kind of deductions that the field of Tolkienian linguistics is all about at this stage. Concerning some material I published earlier, I've had (gentle) complaints to the effect that I merely listed my conclusions without showing what they were based on, somewhat dogmatically asserting that "this is how it is, take my word for it". I think this style was unavoidable in a brief presentation, but here I will in many cases avail myself of the opportunity to go back to the primary sources and really *demonstrate* what kind of deductions underlie everything.


Precisely because Tolkien's Quenya is a somewhat fluid entity, fixed in general outline but with endless contradictory variations when it comes to the details, we can to some extent feel free to crystallize our own standard (not making it more difficult than we have to). As long as we piece together a usable system from elements Tolkien provided, even though there is no way we can accept all the known variations within a single, unified system, the resulting language *will* be "real Quenya" – to the extent such a thing can exist.

SPELLING CONVENTIONS

Over the decades, Tolkien's spelling of Quenya varied in certain details. As discussed above, just about every aspect of Quenya was somewhat "variable", but

unlike the unstable grammar, the spelling variations are not very consequential: In theory our alphabet is not the writing native to Quenya anyway. Tolkien was merely hesitating on how to best render into our own letters the supposed "original Elvish script" (the *Tengwar*, also called *Fëanorian* writing – a singularly beautiful script that Tolkien devised with the same loving care as the languages themselves). In this course, a consistent spelling has been imposed on the material, mostly based on the spelling used in LotR (I say "mostly based" because the spelling used in LotR is not entirely consistent either, but it is close!) Concerning the spelling used in LotR, Tolkien wrote: "The archaic language of lore [namely Quenya] is meant to be a kind of 'Elven-latin', and by transcribing it into a spelling closely resembling that of Latin (except that *y* is only used as a consonant, as *y* in E[nglish] *Yes*) the similarity to Latin has been increased ocularly" (*Letters*:176).

I will outline the spelling conventions used in this work. What follows is not something a fresh student needs to carefully internalize. People who want to study Quenya should nonetheless be aware of the major spelling inconsistencies in the primary sources. Guided primarily by the spelling Tolkien used in LotR, I have regularized the following features:

Vowel length indicated by an accent (and no other symbol): In his spelling of Quenya, Tolkien always used some kind of symbol to mark vowels that are to be pronounced *long* (if you don't know what a vowel is, see the first regular lesson). But precisely what symbol he used is somewhat variable. Sometimes he uses a *macron*, a short horizontal line above the vowel; this is especially common in the *Etymologies* and certain other "philological" writings. Sometimes a *circumflex* is used, e.g. **ô** in the word **fôlima** "secretive" from the earliest "Qenya" dictionary (LT2:340/QL:38). But in LotR and most sources postdating it, Tolkien typically uses a normal *accent* to indicate vowel-length, and so will we here: long **á, é, í, ó, ú** as opposed to short **a, e, i, o, u**. So if I ever needed the word **fôlima**, I would spell it **fólima** instead. When quoting Primitive Elvish forms, I will however use circumflexes to mark long vowels. In the sources, macrons are normally used instead: We have already quoted *alk-w*  "swan" from the entry *ÁLAK* in *Etym.*, the macron above the final *a* indicating that the vowel is long. However, writing *alk-wâ* (etc.) instead is safer in a document that is to be distributed over the Internet; vowels with macrons may be replaced by various weird symbols if the software of the recipients is not overly fond of linguistics.

- *C* rather than *K*: If you bothered looking up the reference I gave for the sentence **Anar caluva tielyanna** above (*Unfinished Tales* p. 22), you may have noticed that in the source, the middle word is actually spelt **kaluva** instead. In Quenya, **k** and **c** represent the same sound (pronounced *K*); Tolkien just couldn't make up his mind which letter to use. In pre-LotR sources, such as the *Etymologies* and the

early *Qenya Lexicon*, he mostly used **k** (though in a few cases, **c** pops up in these sources as well). Since the original inspiration for Quenya was Finnish, and Finnish orthography employs the letter **k**, it is not surprising that Tolkien originally preferred that grapheme. But as is evident from *Letters*:176 quoted above, he later decided that in LotR, he would spell Quenya as similar to *Latin* as possible. Guided by Latin orthography, he started to use the letter **c** instead of **k**: "I decided to be 'consistent' and spell Elvish names and words throughout without *k*" (*Letters*:247). For instance, the word for "metal" had been spelt **tinko** in the *Etymologies* (entry *TINKÔ*), but in LotR Appendix E, the same word with the same meaning appears as **tinco** instead. Hence we regularize **k** to **c** throughout. It is a curious fact that Tolkien, even in sources that postdate LotR, in many (indeed most) cases reverted to the use of **k**. His writings are quite inconsistent on this point. A word for "Dwarf" is given as **Kasar** with a **k** in WJ:388; yet on the next page Tolkien switches to **c** when quoting the Quenya name of Moria: **Casarrondo** ("Dwarf-cave" or "Dwarf-hall"). A word for "house" appears as **köa** in WJ:369 (**köarya** "his house"), but in MR:250 the same word is spelt with a **c** in the compound **cöacalina** "light of the house" (an Elvish expression for the soul inside the body). In some late notes published in VT41:10, Tolkien mentioned a word **ruskuite** "foxy" using the letter **k** rather than **c**, but immediately afterwards he wrote down a word **calarus** "polished copper" using **c** rather than **k**. From the posthumously published *Silmarillion* we remember names like **Melkor** and **Tulkas**, but in MR:362, 382 the spellings used are **Melcor** and **Tulcas**. The Quenya word for "horse" is spelt **rocco** in *Letters*:282, but in *Letters*:382 we have **rokko** instead. Imitating Tolkien's persistent indecision in this matter would be quite pointless or even confusing. For instance, the Quenya word for "bed" is given in LR:363 as **kaima**, but in *Namárië* in LotR, the obviously related word "lies" is spelt **caita**. Maintaining the inconsistent spelling out of some kind of misunderstood reverence would obscure the relationship between the words; to go with **caita**, the word for "bed" clearly ought to be spelt **caima**. I should mention that there are those who would regularize the material to **k** instead, discarding the spellings used in LotR in favour of the orthography Tolkien uses in many other sources. This is only a matter of taste, and in the "C or K" question all writers can essentially make their own choice, but I will normally adhere to the LotR spelling. After all, the LotR *is* a rather central work regarding the setting Tolkien placed his languages in.

NOTE: But in the case of the title of the *Markirya* poem, I tend to retain *k* simply because the word **markirya** or "ark" only occurs in the early, "Qenya" version of the poem. It is not found in the later Quenya version, though I don't know what we should otherwise call it. So in this case I will leave the **k** in to mark this as an early "Qenya" word, though a form **marcirya** would surely work in LotR-style Quenya as well – and this is the spelling I would use if I ever needed the word "ark" in an actual Quenya text. I guess I would normally also retain **k** in some names that we are very familiar with from the *Silmarillion*: **Melkor**, **Tulkas**, **Kementári** and a few others. But the *Silmarillion* also employs forms like **Calaquendi** (rather than **Kalaquendi**), so there is little consistency in this work.

- *QU* rather than just *Q*: In most pre-LotR sources, the combination "cw" is represented by the one letter *q*. But in a few early sources (published only posthumously), and more importantly in LotR, Tolkien used *qu* rather than just *q*: Again the inspiration was Latin spelling. This even affected the name of the language; as mentioned above, Tolkien's original spelling was *Qenya*. To quote another example, the word for "feather", spelt **qesse** in a pre-LotR source (Etym., entry *KWES*), became **quesse** in LotR (Appendix E). This is a change that is consistently carried through in Tolkien's post-LotR writings as far as we know them, so we need not hesitate to impose this spelling on the earlier material as well. (Tolkien's own son does so in LT1:170; when discussing the first element of the name **Qerkaringa** occurring in early material, Christopher Tolkien uses the spelling **querka** instead. I would go one step further and write **querca**.)

- *X* rather than *KS* (or for that matter *CS*): Tolkien's spelling of what is to be pronounced "ks" varies. Most sources seem to have **ks**, but occasionally, the spelling **x** is used instead (already in the *Qenya Lexicon* of ca. 1915, p. 95, we seem to have **tuxa** as a variant spelling of **tukxa** "144"). Throughout the *Etymologies*, the spelling **ks** is used, e.g. **maksa** "pliant, soft" (entry *MASAG*). The *Etymologies*, entry *KARAK*, thus gives **Helkarakse** as the name of the arctic area crossed by some of the Noldor when they went into exile. However, this name appears as **Helcaraxë** in the published *Silmarillion*, with **x** for **ks** (and **c** for **k**), and we regularize in accordance with the latter spelling – e.g. **maxa** rather than **maksa**. In published post-LotR sources, Tolkien seems to be using **x** rather than **ks** consistently, e.g. **axan** "commandment" and **nixe** "frost" in WJ:399/417, or **axo** "bone" in MC:223 – so **x** must be seen as his final decision in this matter. In LotR Appendix E, Tolkien refers to "the combinations *ts, ps, ks (x)*, that were favoured in Quenya"; this also seems to suggest that **ks** is to be represented by **x** in normal spelling. (No actual example of a Quenya word containing **x/ks** seems to occur in LotR, but as mentioned above, we have **Helcaraxë** in the *Silmarillion*.)

- *N* rather than *Ñ*: In many sources, Tolkien uses the symbol *ñ*, which should not be pronounced as in Spanish orthography (e.g., as in *señor*). "In the transcription *ñ* [is used for] the Fëanorian letter for the back nasal, the *ng* of *king*" (MR:350). Unlike English, Quenya could originally have this *ng* at the beginning of words (as well as in other positions where it may also occur in English). A prominent example is the word **Ñoldo**, plural **Ñoldor**, which is so spelt in many sources. But in LotR Appendix E, Tolkien wrote that this *ng* or *ñ* "has been transcribed *n* (as in *Noldo*) according to the pronunciation in the Third Age". The list of Tengwar names in the same Appendix confirms the development Tolkien hinted at here: the pronunciation of certain symbols of Tengwar writing was slightly changed as the long Ages of Middle-earth went by. The letters that were originally called **ngoldo** and **ngwalme** (= **ñoldo**, **ñwalme**) were later called **noldo** and **nwalme** instead; since the letters were named after actual Quenya words containing the

sound denoted by the letter, this reflects a development whereby initial **ñ**- becomes normal **n**-. Already in the *Etymologies* of the mid-thirties, Tolkien hinted at a similar development: In the entry *ÑGAR(A)M*, the word for "wolf" was listed as "*ñarmo, narmo*", which is evidently to be understood as an older and a later form. MR:350 mentions a word **ñólë** "lore, knowledge" that is spelt with initial **ñ**- in the *Etymologies* as well (entry *ÑGOL*, where it is glossed "wisdom"), but in the *Silmarillion* Appendix (entry *gûl*) it is spelt **nólë**. This would be the later, Third Age form. We go for the Third Age form everywhere, regularizing **ñ** to **n** throughout. (Notice, though, that in *Tengwar* writing the distinction between the symbols transcribed **ñ** and **n** was upheld even after they had both come to be pronounced "n". But this is not a problem as long as we write Quenya in our normal alphabet.) Undoubtedly the combinations **ng** and **nc** in the middle of words are also technically **ñg** and **ñc**, as in **anga** "iron" or **anca** "jaw", but this pronunciation comes naturally to speakers of English and does not have to be expressly represented in writing. As far as is known, Tolkien never used the letter **ñ** before **g** or **c** in Quenya words, but only **n**.

- *S* rather than *p*: This is a case somewhat similar to **ñ** vs. **n**: Tolkien imagined that Quenya as spoken in Valinor possessed **p**, more or less like the sound spelt *th* in English *think*. (In Valinorean Quenya it was strictly a little more *s*-like than the English sound, pronounced with the tip of the tongue against the upper teeth only, not between the upper and lower teeth as in English.) However, in the dialect of the Noldor, this *s*-like **p** eventually turned into normal *s*, merging with preexisting *s*'es (a change Fëanor vehemently but vainly opposed: see PM:331-339 for an eminent example of how intertwined Tolkien's languages and narratives can be). Quenya as a ceremonial language in Middle-earth always had *s*, since only the Noldorin dialect was known there. In WJ:484, Tolkien mentions **pinde** as the Quenya word for "grey, pale or silvery grey", but adds that in the Noldorin ("Ñ") dialect, this became **sinde**. In WJ:319, we find **pelma** as a word for "fixed idea, will"; in this case the later Noldorin form **selma** is not mentioned there or elsewhere, but we would still use the latter form here, since we are aiming for the kind of Quenya that was used in Middle-earth in the Third Age.

The diaeresis: In many cases, Tolkien adds a *diaeresis*, two dots, above a vowel, for instance **ä, ö, ë** in the names **Eärendil, Eönwë**. This is only to clarify the pronunciation, primarily for readers used to English orthography. It should be emphasized that the diaeresis is not in any way "necessary" to write correct Quenya. Tolkien wrote about the spelling **ë** that it is "only a device of transcription, not needed in the original" – that is, in the supposed "original" Tengwar writing (PM:343). It is not really "needed" in the transcription either – Tolkien never used it in the *Etymologies* – and it can safely be left out in e-mail. Indeed some scholars advocate leaving it out altogether in all media, perceiving it as a superfluous graphic encumbrance useful only to people who don't know the

first thing about Quenya (and to people used to the orthographies of such languages as German, Swedish or Finnish, it can be downright misleading). But I don't know; I guess I like to see the diaeresis in carefully presented texts, even if it doesn't tell me anything I don't know beforehand. It adds an exotic tint to the texts, and also represents a nod in the direction of the visual impression made by written Finnish, since Finnish orthography employs letters like *ä* and *ö* – that however denote sounds distinct from normal *a*, *o*, which is not the case in Quenya spelling.

If we are to use the diaeresis, it should however be used in a consistent way. In WJ:425, Christopher Tolkien comments on his father's "very variable" use of it, so some regularization is required. (Christopher Tolkien himself has been regularizing his father's spelling in some quotations; for instance, in PM:371 he cites the Quenya word **rossë** "fine rain, dew" from the entry *ROS*¹ in Etym., but there the word is actually spelt **rosse** with no diaeresis.)

The final *-ë* in (say) **Eönwë** is meant to remind the reader that final *-ë* is not silent, as it usually is in English orthography. "Final *e* is never mute or a mere sign of length as in English," Tolkien noted in LotR Appendix E (this very sentence providing two examples of this feature of English spelling, namely *mute* and *mere*). He added that "to mark this final *e* is often (but not consistently) written *ë*". As he says, this spelling is not used consistently, whether in LotR or in other sources – cf. some of the words already quoted: **quesse**, **sinde**, **nixe**. Hereinafter, we will however be consistent about this: **quessë**, **sindë**, **nixë**. (Notice, however, that the diaeresis is not used in words where the final *e* is also the *only* vowel, as in short words like **te** "them" or **ve** "as, like" – both of which occur in LotR. From time to time I see some overeager dot-fan produce spellings like **të** and **vë**, but while this is not in any way "harmful", it is quite superfluous: Tolkien never uses such spellings.)

Since only a *final -e* receives the diaeresis, the dots normally go if you add an ending to the word (or use it as the first element in a compound), since the *-e* is then no longer final. An attested example of this is provided by the word **lámatyávë** "sound-taste" (individual pleasure in wordforms), the plural of which is spelt **lámatyáver** (MR:215-216). We do not see ****lámatyávër**, for because of the plural ending *-r*, the vowel *e* before it is not final anymore. (Throughout this course, a double asterisk ****** is used to mark a wrong form.) Appendix D in LotR likewise indicates that the plural form of **enquië** (the Eldarin six-day week) is to be spelt **enquier** rather than ****enquiër**.

Besides final *ë*, we shall use the diaeresis to clarify the pronunciation of the combinations **ea**, **eo** and **oe** (sc. to indicate that both vowels are to be pronounced clearly separate: *e-a*, *e-o*, *o-e*; hence for instance **ëa** is *not* to be drawn together like *ea* in English *heart*). In the case of **e + a** and **e + o**, the diaeresis is placed above the **e** as long as it appears as a lower-case letter: **ëa**, **ëo**. If, however, it is to be capitalized, the dots move to the next letter instead: **Eä**, **Eö** (as in **Eärendil**, **Eönwë**). Tolkien's own writings are not consistent in this matter; we adopt the

spelling used in LotR and the *Silmarillion*. Sometimes he places the diaeresis above a capital letter as well; for instance, the Quenya name of the universe in some texts appears as **Ěa** (e.g. MR:7), though according to the system we just sketched it should be **Eä** – as in the published *Silmarillion*. (Gross inconsistency is seen in Letters:386, where Tolkien refers to "the attempt of *Eärendil* to cross *Ěar* [the ocean]" – it must be either **Ěarendil**, **Ěar** OR **Eärendil**, **Eär**!)

Conversely, Tolkien sometimes places the diaeresis over the second vowel in the group even when the first vowel is *not* capitalized, resulting in spellings like **eä** (UT:305, 317); we would rather spell it **ëa** (as Tolkien himself did elsewhere; see VT39:6). In a footnote in MR:206, Christopher Tolkien observes that his father wavered between **Fëanáro** and **Feänáro** (the Quenya form of the name *Fëanor*); according to the system here outlined, it should be **Fëanáro**.

In the case of **oe** (a very rare combination), we place the diaeresis over the **ë**, as in the example **loëndë** in LotR Appendix D (this is the name of the middle day of the year in the calendar of the Elves). In Appendix E, Tolkien explicitly stated that the fact that **oe** is disyllabic is "often indicated by writing...*oë*".

In some sources, the combination **ie** is also broken up with a diaeresis, resulting in spellings like **Niënna** (name of a Valië or "goddess"), for instance in MR:49. Yet this spelling is not used in the published *Silmarillion*, that simply has **Nienna**. The LotR itself is somewhat ambiguous on this point. In Appendix A we have the names **Telperiën** and **Silmariën** so spelt (though *Unfinished Tales* p. 173 has **Silmariën**). However, the most substantial Quenya text in LotR, *Namárië*, does not use the diaeresis in this combination – this text has **tier**, not **tiër**, for "paths" (though the latter spelling occurs in RGEO:67). In accordance with this example, as well as **Nienna** in the *Silmarillion*, we will not use the diaeresis in the combination **ie**. If, however, the group **-ie** occurs at the *end* of a word, the **e** receives the diaeresis because it is final (wholly irrespective of the fact that it is also part of the combination **ie**), in accordance with the rule established above. Hence **Namárië**, **Valië** rather than **Namárie**, **Valie**, and if the first element of **Nienna** occurs by itself, we will spell it **nië** – this is the word for "tear". Removing the plural ending **-r** from **tier** "paths" likewise produces **tië** "path", since **-ë** becomes final.

In many post-LotR sources, Tolkien also started to break up the combination **oa** by means of a diaeresis (apparently to warn the reader that "oa" is not drawn together as in English *load*). Hence we have spellings like **hröa** "body" (MR:350 and passim). Cf. also some of the words quoted above: **köarya**, **cöacalina**. However, in LotR Tolkien simply wrote **oa**. Contrast the spelling **loa** used in LotR (Appendix D: "The Eldar also observed a short period or solar year...usually called *loa*") with the spelling **löa** in MR:426 (where the word occurs in the plural: "*löar* upon *löar*" = years upon years). Regularizing in accordance with the system

used in LotR, we will not use the diaeresis in the combination **oa**. Hence we will here use spellings like **hroa** "body", **coa** "house" etc. **Hroa** without a diaeresis is actually found in MR:399-400 (and VT41:13), so we are not "tampering" with Tolkien's spelling, just crystallizing a standard by choosing one of the options his writings provide and carrying it through consistently. This, as I have tried to demonstrate, is true of all the regularization I impose on the material.

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