

# QUENYA COURSE

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Typeset by Johan Winge using L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X.

First edition in PDF format, 28 February 2002.

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# Lesson 0

## 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](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 synopsized 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, not 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 stomachable 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).

## 0.1 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 TolLang 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.

## 0.2 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!

### 0.3 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 little of this material is available 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 (but unofficially) referred to as the *Elfconners*, apparently because of their prominence on the “cons” or conventions of ELF, the “Elvish Linguistic Fellowship”.

However, the most outspoken member of the group seems to have convinced himself beyond refutation that the term “Elfconners” was always meant to be derogatory, associating it with “conning” or deception. As pointed out by TolKLang moderator Julian Bradfield, it may be that this member of the group is inventing insults against himself, but currently it is politically correct to refer to this group simply as the Editorial Team,

abbreviated ET. Whatever we call them, the group consists of Christopher Gilson, Carl F. Hostetter, Patrick Wynne and Arden R. Smith (in recent years, Bill Welden has 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.

The very strange and most unfortunate fact is that after they started receiving Tolkien manuscripts for publication, the group's rate of publication dropped disastrously. They began to receive manuscript copies in 1991; a decade later they have managed to get a few hundred pages of new material into print (most of it wordlist material pertaining to the very earliest stages of Tolkien's work, far removed from the LotR scenario). Some of us are not impressed. What little material has appeared has been nicely presented, but with the present rate of publication, the completion of the project must be very far off indeed. In 1996, Christopher Gilson stated that "next year", his group planned to publish "fairly comprehensive" grammars for the two main languages of Tolkien's mythos. In early 2002 they finally published some material relating to certain stages of "Gnomish", an early conceptual ancestor of the language Tolkien later called Sindarin; we are still waiting for a really substantial amount of material about Quenya. Most other deadlines that the members of Gilson's group have set for themselves has proved equally worthless, and since about 1998 they have largely refrained from stating any deadlines at all. Still, we must hope that in ten (or twenty, or thirty...) years, we will know more – but if the Editorial Team is able to ever commence efficient, regular publication of Tolkien's material, they have yet to demonstrate this ability.

We must work, then, from sources already available – sources that often touch 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 chapter VIII (“Farewell to Lórien”) in Book Two in the first volume, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. 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 laitualmet! . . . 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 Endoreenna 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 **a 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 on the samples of Quenya and Sindarin found 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 private 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 LotR as published in the early fifties. (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 the LotR appendices 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. The results of the Editorial Team, scarce but not unimportant, must also be mentioned. The journal *Vinyar Tengwar* (VT), edited by Carl F. Hostetter, had its “golden age” in the period 1988–93, when the editor managed to uphold continuous bimonthly publication. When Hostetter and the other ET members in the early nineties started to receive original Tolkien material of the utmost interest to be edited and published, the rate of publication mysteriously dropped to about one issue a year, and this situation has continued throughout the latter half of the nineties and into the new decade. Not all of the few issues that have been published include any new Tolkien material, and those that do are usually devoted to very short scraps (that are moreover samples of very early material that is often clearly not LotR-compatible).

A few issues do stand out, however, and one of them has already been mentioned: In issue #39, July 1998, Hostetter published the part of *Quendi and Eldar* that Christopher Tolkien left out of WJ, as well as the companion essay *Ósanwe-kenta* (the latter is not strictly linguistic by its subject, but Tolkien nonetheless mentioned quite a few Quenya words). Some useful ma-

terial also appeared in issue #41, July 2000, filling certain annoying gaps in our vocabulary (in particular regarding the verb “can”) and providing interesting new information about the formation of the present tense. In January 2002, various Quenya translations of the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria were published in issue #43; Tolkien the Catholic produced more than one Elvish version of these texts.

The other main results of the ET’s editing efforts for the most part consist of wordlist material: the *Gnomish Lexicon* (GL) and the *Quenya Lexicon* (QL, a.k.a. the *Quenyaqetsa*, abbreviated QQ). The GL also mentions a few “Quenya” words (just like the QL mentions some *Gnomish* words; the languages are not infrequently compared or contrasted). Regarding “Quenya” as opposed to (LotR-style) Quenya, see below. These Lexicons were published in issues #11 and #12 of the journal *Parma Eldalambéron*, 1995 and 1998, respectively. They were originally written during World War I, when the earliest form of Tolkien’s mythos began to take shape: The QL manuscript is usually dated to 1915, the GL to 1917. Substantial excerpts were published already in 1983–84, Christopher Tolkien drawing heavily on the Lexicons in the appendices to LT1 and LT2. Prefixed to each Lexicon, *Parma* also published some related material: a never finished *Gnomish Grammar* in #11, and some phonological descriptions for “Quenya” in #12.

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 the various editions (irrespective of differing pagination).

## 0.4 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 poten-

tially 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. Members of the Editorial Team have indicated that Tolkien’s later manuscripts bear witness to one last phase of intense experimentation, but apparently, no final or definite version of the language ever emerged. 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.

## 0.5 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-wā* “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 **tuksa** “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  $\tilde{n}$ , which should not be pronounced as in Spanish orthography (e.g., as in *señor*). “In the transcription  $\tilde{n}$  [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  $\tilde{n}$  “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  $\tilde{n}$  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 Þ

This is a case somewhat similar to  $\tilde{n}$  vs. **n**: Tolkien imagined that Quenya as spoken in Valinor possessed **þ**, 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 **þ** 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 **þinde** 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 **þelma** 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<sup>1</sup> 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 **Ëa** (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 *Ëar* [the ocean]” – it must be either **Ëarendil**, **Ëar** 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 **Silmarien**). 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.

[As for the English orthography employed in this work, it follows the author’s home-made Mid-Atlantic convention. Therefore you will find British spellings like *flavour*, *colour* (not American *flavor*, *color*) next to American spellings like *analyze* (not British *analyse*). The orthography of my native Norwegian does not in all cases match the pronunciation, but it comes *rather closer* to the spoken language than any variant of English spelling

does. Therefore, please allow me to gently mock the pointless variations introduced by well-meaning reformers of English orthography. It is actually beyond help, so why bother?]

# Lesson 1

The sounds of Quenya.  
Pronunciation and accentuation.

## 1.1 General remarks

Quenya as an actual entity in our own world exists primarily as a *written* language: Quenya enthusiasts tend to be widely scattered and must generally share their compositions via some written medium only (indeed I shall normally refer to users of Quenya as “writers” rather than “speakers”). Nonetheless, any student should obviously know what pronunciation Tolkien imagined, as well as his intentions can be approximated now.

There exist a very few recordings of Tolkien himself reading Quenya texts. In a late TV interview, Tolkien writes out and pronounces the greeting **elen síla lúmenn’ omentielvo**. More notably, he made two different recordings of *Namárië* (sung and spoken). The spoken version is also available on the net: [http://www.salon.com/audio/2000/10/05/tolkien\\_elvish/index.html](http://www.salon.com/audio/2000/10/05/tolkien_elvish/index.html) (under “Poem in Elvish”). A few lines of this version of *Namárië* differ from their LotR counterparts: The recorded version has **inyar únóti nar ve rámar aldaron / inyar ve lintë yulmar vánier** instead of **yéni únótimë ve rámar aldaron! / yéni ve lintë yuldar (a)vánier** as in LotR. The recording was made before the book was published (and hence before the final revisions). A much later recording, with the same text as in the book, also exists. I have not heard it, so I cannot comment further.

The very few extant recordings are interesting, but they are not our chief source of information. Most of what we know about Quenya pronunciation is based on Tolkien’s written *notes* about how his languages should be pronounced, predominantly the information provided in LotR Appendix E. (Indeed Tolkien’s actual pronunciation in the recordings is not always quite flawless according to his own technical descriptions, but then he was not a native speaker of Quenya.)

Any natural language has a *phonology*, a set of rules defining what sounds are used, how they vary and behave, and how they can be combined. This goes for any well-made invented language as well. Quenya is most definitely

not a haphazard jumble of sounds; Tolkien carefully constructed its phonology – both as an evolving entity (classical Quenya gradually developing from Primitive Elvish) and as a “fixed” form (defining the kind of Quenya that was used as a language of lore and ceremony in Middle-earth). Tolkien had Pengolodh, the sage of Gondolin, observe that Elvish tongues tended to use relatively few sounds – “for the Eldar being skilled in craft are not wasteful nor prodigal to small purpose, admiring in a tongue rather the skilled and harmonious use of a few well-balanced sounds than profusion ill-ordered” (PM:398). None of the sounds used in Quenya are particularly exotic from a European viewpoint, but they are combined in an exquisitely tidy manner. Compared to Tolkien’s Elvish, many “real” languages indeed appear rather messy.

## 1.2 Basic terms

Let us get some basic terms into place (people with linguistic training need not spend much time on this section). The sounds of any language can be divided into two broad categories, *vowels* and *consonants*. The *vowels* are sounds made by letting the air stream “freely” through the mouth: Different vowels are produced by modifying the position of the tongue and the lips, but the stream of air is not directly obstructed. If one draws out various vowels, pronouncing **aaaaa...** or **eeee...** or **ooooo...**, it is easy to feel how the air streams quite unhindered through the mouth: One merely configures the tongue and lips to “shape” the desired sound. Vowels can be more or less “open” or “closed”: You only have to notice the position of the tongue and lower jaw when pronouncing **aaah...** as contrasted with their position when you pronounce **oooh...** to understand what is meant by this. The vowel **a** (as in English *part*) is the most open, while the vowel **u** (as in English *rude*) is the most closed. Other vowels fall between. Vowels can also be more or less “rounded”, mainly depending on the position of the lips; the vowel **u** (as just described) is said to be rounded because it is pronounced with the lips pouted. A vowel like **o** (as in English *sore*) is actually pronounced much like the **a** of *part*, but **o** is rounded and **a** is not – making the vowels audibly distinct.

When pronouncing vowels, the stream of air is only *modified* (by means of devices like the ones just described). It is never actually “hindered”. In the case of the *consonants*, the air is however more actively obstructed. Thus, Tolkien can inform us that one early Elvish term for consonant was **tapta tengwë** or just **tapta**, meaning “impeded element” or “impeded one” (VT39:7). In the most “extreme” cases the stream of air may even be completely halted for a moment: This is easily perceived in the case of a consonant like **p**, which is pronounced by bringing the lips into contact, momentarily cutting off the stream of air from the lungs and allowing a



pressure to build up inside the mouth. Then the lips are suddenly parted again, releasing the air in a small explosion – and this explosion constitutes a **p**. Such *plosive* consonants include **t**, **p**, **k** and their counterparts **d**, **b**, **g** (sc. hard **g** as in *gold*, not as in *gin*). They are all formed by halting and then suddenly releasing the air various places in the mouth. Instead of halting the air completely one may also let it “fizzle through” a small opening, as when **f** is pronounced by forcing the air out between the lower lip and the upper teeth; such “friction” sounds are called *fricatives* (or *spirants*) and include consonants like **f**, **th**, **v**. And there are yet other options on how to manipulate the stream of air, such as rerouting it through the nose to produce *nasal* consonants like **n** or **m**.

The concept of *voicing* should also be understood. Humans (and, it would seem, Elves) come with a kind of buzzing device installed in their throats, namely the *vocal chords*. By making the vocal chords vibrate, one may add “voice” to the stream of air before it enters the speech organs proper. The presence or lack of such voicing is what distinguishes sounds like **v** vs. **f**. If one draws out a sound like **ffff**... and suddenly turns it into **vvvv**... instead, one will feel the “buzzer” in the throat kicking in (put a finger on your glottis – what in men is called the “Adam’s apple”, less protuberant in women – and you will actually feel the vibration of the vocal chords). In principle, the device of voicing could be used to double the number of sounds we are able to produce, since they could all be pronounced either *with* vibration in the vocal chords (as *voiced* sounds) or *without* such vibration (as *unvoiced* sounds). In practice, most of the sounds of speech do not appear in unvoiced versions. Many sounds would barely be perceptible without the voicing (**n**, for instance, would be reduced to little more than a weak snort). Normally all vowels are voiced as well, certainly so in Quenya (though in Japanese, vowels may lose their voicing in certain environments). But I have already referred to **d**, **b**, **g** as the “counterparts” of **t**, **p**, **k**; they are counterparts in the sense that the former are voiced and the latter are not. One characteristic feature of Quenya (at least the Noldorin dialect) is the very limited distribution of the voiced plosives **d**, **b**, **g**; they occur solely in the middle of words, and then only as part of the consonant clusters **nd**/**ld**/**rd**, **mb**, and **ng**. Some speakers also pronounced **lb** instead of **lv**. (Possibly Tolkien imagined different rules for the poorly attested *Vanyarin* dialect of Quenya: The *Silmarillion* refers to a lament called **Aldudénië** made by a Vanyarin Elf; this word has puzzled researchers since the middle **d** occurs in a position that would be quite impossible in Noldorin Quenya.)

*Syllables*: Made up of vowels and consonants, speech is not an undifferentiated outburst of sound. Rather it is perceived to be organized into rhythmic units called *syllables*. The shortest possible words are necessarily *monosyllabic*, having only one syllable – like English *from* or its Quenya equivalent **ho**. Words of more than one syllable, *polysyllabic* ones, form longer strings of rhythmic “beats”. A word like *faster* has two syllables (*fas-ter*), a word like

*wonderful* has three (*won-der-ful*), a word like *geography* has four (*ge-og-ra-phy*), and so on – though obviously we can’t go much further before the words would be felt to be impractically long and difficult to pronounce. Some oriental languages, like Vietnamese, show a great preference for monosyllabic words. But as is evident from the English examples just quoted, European languages often employ longer words, and Tolkien’s Quenya makes extensive use of big mouthfuls (as does Finnish). Consider words like **Ainulindalë** or **Silmarillion** (five syllables: **ai-nu-lin-da-lë**, **sil-ma-ril-li-on**). An uninflected Quenya word typically has two or three syllables, and this number is often increased by adding inflectional endings, or by compounding.

### 1.3 The sounds of Quenya

In Quenya, the basic *vowels* are **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u** (short and long). They may also be combined into *diphthongs*, groups of two basic vowels pronounced together as one syllable: There are three diphthongs in **-i** (**ai**, **oi**, **ui**) and three in **-u** (**au**, **eu**, **iu**, though the diphthongs **eu** and **iu** are quite rare). The *consonants* of Third Age Quenya may be listed as **c** (= **k**), **d**, **f**, **g**, **gw**, **h**, **hy**, **hw**, **l**, **ly**, **m**, **n**, **nw**, **ny**, **p**, **qu**, **r**, **ry**, **s**, **t**, **ty**, **v**, **y** and **w** (this listing is not wholly uncontroversial; the consonant system of Quenya can be plausibly analyzed in more than one way). In Elvish writing, the *Tengwar* orthography also upholds the distinction between some consonants that by the Third Age had come to be pronounced alike and thus merged altogether (**þ** merging with **s**, while initial **ñ** fell together with **n** – see the discussion of spelling conventions). In the transcription and spelling employed in this course, the former presence of “lost” distinct consonants is reflected in two cases only: **hl** and **hr**, that were originally *unvoiced* **l** and **r**, but later they merged with normal **l**, **r** (and are therefore not included on the list of Third Age Quenya consonants above). Thus we will spell, say, **hrívë** (“winter”) in this way despite the fact that Tolkien imagined the typical Third Age pronunciation to be simply “rívë” (with a normal **r**).

Though the consonants **hy**, **gw**, **hw**, **ly**, **nw**, **ny**, **ry**, **ty**, and **qu** (and **hr**, **hl**) must here be written as two letters (as *digraphs*), they should evidently be taken as unitary sounds: Their pronunciation will be discussed in greater detail below. The digraphs in **-w** represent *labialized* consonants, while the digraphs in **-y** stand for *palatalized* consonants; again, see below for further discussion of these terms. It should be understood that **qu** is simply an aesthetic way of spelling what would otherwise be represented as **cw** (most people will agree that **Quenya** looks better than **Cwenya**), so **qu**, like **nw**, is a labialized consonant. When counting syllables one must remember that there is no actual vowel **u** in **qu**; “u” here stands for **w**. A word like **alqua** (“swan”) thus has only two syllables: **al-qua** (= **al-cwa**). One must not think “al-qu-a” and conclude that there are actually three syllables. In

Tengwar writing, **qu** is denoted by a single letter, and in most early sources, Tolkien also used the single letter **q** to represent it.

*Double consonants:* Some consonants also occur in *long* or *double* versions; double vs. single consonants may be compared to long vs. short vowels. The “obvious” cases, sc. the double consonants directly represented in orthography, are **cc**, **ll**, **mm**, **nn**, **pp**, **rr**, **ss** and **tt** (e.g. **ecco** “spear”, **colla** “cloak”, **lamma** “sound”, **anna** “gift”, **lappa** “hem of robe”, **yarra-** “to growl”, **essë** “name”, **atta** “two”). The group **pp** is very rare, only attested in material far predating the LotR. In the *Note on Pronunciation* appended to the *Silmarillion*, Christopher Tolkien noted: “Consonants written twice are pronounced long, thus *Yavanna* has the long *n* heard in English *unnamed*, *penknife*, not the short *n* in *unaimed*, *penny*.” Words like **tana** “that” vs. **tanna** “sign”, **tyelë** “ceases” vs. **tyellë** “grade”, **ata** “again” vs. **atta** “two” should be audibly distinct. – It is possible that some of the consonants written as digraphs must also be counted as double consonants when they occur between vowels; e.g. **ny** = long or double palatalized **n** (more on this below).

*Consonant clusters (vs. single consonants):* It is difficult to pronounce many sequential consonants, so the languages of the word generally confine themselves to relatively *small* groups (or “clusters”) of consonants. The most typical word, from just about any language, is a series of vowels and consonants (single ones or relatively short consonant clusters) alternating – the “core” of each syllable usually being a vowel. Tolkien’s Quenya is no exception; this language actually has quite restrictive rules for how consonants and vowels can be combined into syllables and longer words. Even so, consonant clusters are quite common, but they are not distributed as “freely” as in English. While English and for that matter Sindarin allow consonant clusters at the beginning of words, Quenya does not (SD:417–418). A word like *scream*, commencing with a cluster of no less than three consonants, would be quite impossible in Quenya. Tolkien noted that the name that the “Woses” or Wild Men had for themselves, *Drughu*, was adapted to Quenya as **Rú** (UT:385). Quenya could not preserve the initial cluster *dr-* of the original form of this loan-word (even apart from the fact that Quenya could not have **d** in this position). Quenya does allow a limited number of consonant clusters *medially*, between vowels in the middle of words; among “frequent” of “favoured” clusters Tolkien cited **ld**, **mb**, **mp**, **nc**, **nd**, **ng**, **ngw**, **nqu**, **nt**, **ps**, **ts** and **x** (for **cs**). Hence we have such typical Quenya-style words as **Elda** “Elf”, **lambë** “tongue”, **tumpo** “hump”, **ranco** “arm” etc. *Finally*, at the end of words, only five single consonants may occur: only **-l**, **-n**, **-r**, **-s**, or **-t** is permitted in this position (*Letters*:425; however, most Quenya words end in a vowel). Consonant *clusters* or *double* consonants are not normally found at the end of words, though they may occur if a final vowel drops out (is *elided*) because the next word begins in the same or a similar vowel. Hence in LotR we have a “final” **nn** in the phrase **lúmenn’ omen-tielvo** (“on the hour of our meeting”), but only because this is reduced from

**lúmenna omentielvo** (this full form occurring in WJ:367 and Letters:424). The only genuine consonant cluster occurring at the end of a word seems to be **nt** used a specific grammatical ending (*dual dative*, to be discussed in later lessons) – e.g. **ciryant** “for a couple of ships”, formed from **cirya** “ship”. Tolkien’s earliest “Qenya” experiments, as recorded in the Qenya Lexicon of 1915, were more liberal in this respect. “Qenya” allowed more final consonants and even final consonant clusters, but as LotR-style Quenya evolved in Tolkien’s notes, he tightened up the phonology. Thus he gave the language a more clearly defined flavour.

## 1.4 Pronunciation

*Vowels:* Quenya vowels are pure. For people who want to pronounce Elvish vowels with some degree of accuracy, Tolkien recommended Italian vowels as a model (as did Zamenhof for Esperanto, by the way). Speakers of English have an ingrained habit of blurring many vowels, especially when they are not fully stressed; hence in a word like *banana* it is typically only the middle A that comes out as a “proper” A-sound. The two other A’s, that are not stressed, are typically made to sound like a blurred, obscure “reduction vowel” that linguists call a *schwa* (from a Hebrew word for nothingness; English textbooks sometimes prefer the spelling “shwa”). But in Quenya *all* vowels, in *all* positions, must be clearly and distinctly pronounced; any tendencies to “blur” them must be strongly resisted.

As we remember, Quenya has both *long* and *short* vowels, the long ones being marked with an accent: **á, é, ó, ú, í** vs. short **a, e, o, u, i**. Long and short vowels must be kept apart and pronounced clearly distinct. Sometimes vowel length is the only thing that makes otherwise similar words distinct: for instance, **cu** with a short **u** means “dove”, whereas **cú** with a long **ú** means “crescent”.

Long **á** can be sounded as in English *father*: **má** “hand”, **nárë** “flame”, **quáco** “crow”. However, English does not have anything corresponding to Quenya *short a*. It is absolutely necessary to master it, for short **a** is by far the commonest of Quenya vowels. Tolkien noted that it should be more “open” than the long **á**. What we want is a vowel that by its sound (or *quality*) is about midway between the **a**’s of English *father* and English *cat* – but as for its length (or *quantity*), it should by all means be short as in the latter word. The vowel heard in Spanish *padre* will do. Speakers of English may pin down a short **a** by isolating the first part of the diphthong **ai** as in *aisle*.

NOTE: If you have the original *Star Wars* movie available, listen carefully when Harrison Ford first appears about 45 minutes in and introduces himself as “Han Solo”: Ford actually produces a nice Quenya-style short **a** in “Han”, making this syllable sound as it would in Quenya words (e.g. **hanu** “a male” or **handa** “intelligent”; apparently there is

even a Quenya word **han** “beyond”). But later in the *SW* movies, the vowel of “Han” is inconsistently pronounced either with a long *a* as in English *father* or with the vowel heard in English *cat*, which is precisely the vowel to be avoided in Quenya. Linguistic consistency was never the, ahem, force of *Star Wars*. By the way, do you remember **Endor**, the green moon where George Lucas placed his reinvented teddy bears in the third movie? Guess what the Quenya word for “Middle-earth” is! Lucas would surely say that his intention was to pay *tribute* to Tolkien. . .

UPDATED NOTE: Now that Peter Jackson’s *The Fellowship of the Ring* has appeared, I can quote examples from the soundtrack of this movie as well; most people interested in Tolkien’s work will surely have seen it, and many are also going to buy it on video or DVD. Good examples of short Elvish **a** occur in the Sindarin name **Caradhras** “Redhorn” as pronounced by Christopher Lee (“Saruman”) in the scene where his spying crows return to Isengard: “So, Gandalf, you try to lead them over Caradhras. . .” Lee also gets the short **a**’s more or less right in a scene following shortly afterwards, when he stands on the top of Isengard reading a Quenya invocation: **Nai yarvaxëa rasselya taltuva notto-carinnar**. . . (but the last word sounds almost like **cárinna**, the first vowel being long – after all, Chris Lee is not a native speaker of Quenya!)

An extra challenge for speakers of English is to pronounce **-a** as a full vowel at the *end* of words. Where English orthography has a final *-a*, it is normally pronounced like a schwa. Contrast the English and the Spanish pronunciation of the final vowel in a name like *Sara*; in Spanish, the English-style reduction or “blurring” of the *-a* does not take place. In one very early source, Tolkien actually stated that “Qenya”, like English, turned final, unaccented **-a** into a schwa (“as in English *drama*”, QL:9), but there is nothing to suggest that this idea was still valid decades later when he wrote the LotR. Indeed even the early source just referred to has it that there was one important dialect of “Qenya” where the weakening of final **-a** did not take place. So speakers should try to pronounce a full **a** in all positions: neither of the **a**’s in a word like **anna** “gift” should be pronounced as in the English name Anna.

Long **é** is another Quenya sound that does not occur in contemporary English. The long *e* of English became long *i* (like Quenya **í**) centuries ago – though because of this descent it is still often spelt *ee*, as in *see*. Quenya **é** has the value of German *eh* as in *Mehr*. The pronunciation of *ai* in English *air* at least approaches **é**, but this is really a short **e** followed by a schwa. Tolkien notes that long **é** should be closer than short **e** (see LotR Appendix E), so just lengthening the vowel heard in English *end* will not be quite sufficient. The quality of the vowel should be about midway between the vowels heard in English *end* and English *see*, but it should be long like the latter: **nén** “water”, **ré** “day”, **ména** “region”.

Short **e** may be pronounced as in English *end*. In Quenya this sound also occurs in final position. Since word-final *e* is usually silent in English orthography, Tolkien often used the spelling **ë** in this position – and throughout this course, this spelling is employed consistently. This is only to remind

English readers that in Quenya, this letter is to be distinctly pronounced. But since word-final *e* never occurs in spoken English, some speakers tend to substitute *i* or *ey* (following English practice in the rare cases of a final orthographic “e” being sounded, as when *Jesse* is pronounced “jessi”, or *karate* is pronounced “karatey”). Quenya *e* should have the value described above in all positions. It must NOT be pronounced *i*, nor must there be a *y*-like sound creeping after it: **lómë** “night”, **morë** “black”, **tinwë** “sparkle”.

Long **í** is pronounced as in English *machine*, that same as “ee” in English *see*: the Quenya word **sí** (“now”) is similar in sound. Other examples include **nís** “woman” and **ríma** “edge”. This long **í** must be noticeably longer than short **i**, which may be pronounced like in English *pit*: **Titta** “tiny”, **imbë** “between”, **vinya** “new”. In one early source, Tolkien himself quoted the word *pit* as an example of short “Quenya” **i** (QL:8). Later writings suggest that the *quality* of the vowel-sound should be like the **i** of *machine*, in English often spelt “ee” – start with this sound and shorten it. (Before unvoiced stops, as in *feet*, “ee” may be quite short also in English – just make sure there is a distinction of length between **i** and **í**.) Notice that **i** is never pronounced **ai** as in English *fine* = “fain”. (Quenya **finë** “larch” has two syllables, the vowels being those heard in *pit* [ideally a little closer] and *pet*, respectively.) Of course, this also goes for final **-i** (usually a plural ending). If the student will forgive another Star Wars reference, George Lucas’ *Jedi* may be “jedai” = “jed-eye”, but Tolkien’s **Quendi** are most definitely not “quendai”. In Quenya, final **-i** should rather be pronounced as in *Iraqi*, *Mississippi*.

Long **ó** may be pronounced more or less as in English *sore*, but preferably a little tenser and “closer” (midway between the vowel-sounds of English *sore* and English “oo” as in *soon*): **mól** “slave”, **tó** “wool”, **óma** “voice”. Short **o** may be pronounced as in English *for* (when accented), or as in *box*. The quality of the latter vowel may be just a little too open and *A*-like according to Tolkien’s descriptions. Yet this is the pronunciation he himself used in most cases in the recording of him reading *Namárië*; it should perhaps be attributed to his English accent. Some words with **o**: **rondo** “cave”, **olos** “dream”, **tolto** “eight”. Of course, Quenya **o** is never pronounced “ow” as in English *so*, *also*; a word like **tolto** must NOT come out as “tol-tow”. Neither must **o** ever be reduced to a schwa or dropped altogether; be especially mindful of the ending **-on**, often found in masculine names (and also in plural *genitives* like **Silmarillion**; see later lessons). “English-style” pronunciation of a name like **Sauron** would result in what a baffled Elf might try to represent in writing as **Sór’n** (or at best **Sóren**). The final **-on** should sound rather like the first syllable of English *online*, with the vowel fully intact even though it is unaccented in **Sauron**. In the Jackson movie, the actors usually deliver a good pronunciation of this name; especially listen to how “Gandalf” and “Saruman” pronounce it. Good examples of short Elvish **o** also occur in the name **Mordor** as pronounced by the same two

actors.

Long **ú** is the vowel of English *brute*, in English often spelt “oo” as in *fool*: **Númen** “west”, **cú** “crescent”, **yúyo** “both”. It must be distinctly longer than short **u**, which is pronounced somewhat like the vowel of English *put* (NOT like in English *cut*). Ideally, Quenya short **u** should be a little more “rounded” than the vowel of *put*; it should be simply a shorter version of the long **ú** or “oo” described above: **Cundu** “prince”, **nuru** “death”, **ulundo** “monster”. Notice that Quenya **u** is never pronounced “yu” as in English *union*; **ulundo** should not become “yulundo”.

Speakers of English must be especially mindful of their vowels when a combination *vowel + r* occurs. In the combinations **ar**, **or**, many speakers of English have a tendency to *lengthen* the vowel even where it should be short (and many would also let the **r** drop out, especially when it is followed by another consonant). But in Quenya words like **narda** (“knot”) or **lorna** (“asleep”), the vowel before the **r** must be *short*, as indicated by the absence of the accent mark. It is not permissible to let the pronunciation drift towards “ná(r)da”, “ló(r)na”, no matter how tempting this is to people used to English speech-habits.

Where the groups **er**, **ir**, **ur** occur (e.g. in words like **sercë** “blood”, **tirno** “watcher”, **turma** “shield”), speakers of English must take care NOT to pronounce the vowels after the fashion of English *serve*, *girl*, *turn*. (I once had an English teacher who described the vowel of “girl” as one of the ugliest sounds of the English language. She taught English at *university* level, so she should know – though perhaps she wasn’t wholly serious...) Short **e**, **i**, **u** should sound just as described above, wholly irrespective of the following **r**. In LotR Appendix E, Tolkien noted that **er**, **ir**, **ur** should sound, not as in English *fern*, *fir*, *fur*, but rather like *air*, *eer*, *oor* (that is, like it would be natural for a speaker of English to pronounce orthographic “air, eer, oor” – however, it should be understood that this would only be an approximation of the ideal pronunciation). In the Peter Jackson movie, the actors struggle to pronounce the final syllable of the Quenya name **Isildur** correctly, with variable results. In the flash-back scene where Elrond (played by Hugo Weaving) leads Isildur into Mount Doom and urges him to destroy the Ring, Weaving’s pronunciation of the name **Isildur** is very good – following Tolkien’s guidelines to the letter.

*Diphthongs*: In addition to the “basic”, unitary vowel-sounds discussed above (what linguists would call the *monophthongs*), we have the diphthongs – combinations of two basic vowels that are run together into one syllable, in many ways behaving like a unitary vowel for the purpose of word-building: The Quenya diphthongs are **ai**, **au**, **eu**, **iu**, **oi**, and **ui**.

- The diphthong **ai** is the same that is heard in English *aisle*. It is NOT like the one in English *mail*, though English orthographic “ai” usually represents the latter sound (can anyone think of other exceptions than

*aisle*?) The first syllable of **faila** “just, generous” must not pronounced like the English word *fail*, since Quenya **ai** always has the sound of English *I, eye*: **Aica** “fell, terrible”, **caima** “bed”, **aira** “holy”. Of course, the first syllable of the latter word sounds nothing like English *air*!

- The diphthong **au** is pronounced as in German *Haus*, or more or less as the “ow” of English *cow*: **aulë** “invention”, **laurëa** “golden”, **taurë** “forest”. It is never sounded as in English *caught, aura* (in which words “au” is pronounced rather like Quenya **ó**). In his “Note on Pronunciation” appended to the *Silmarillion*, Christopher Tolkien notes that the first syllable of **Sauron** should be like English *sour*, not English *sore*. (However, the diphthong in *sour* is in British English followed by a schwa – a faint reminiscence of the otherwise silent final *r*. This schwa should not be pronounced in **Sauron**.)
- The diphthong **eu** does not occur in English, but it is not dissimilar to the “o” of English *so*. The only difference is that while the first part of the diphthong is a schwa in English, it should be a normal **e** (as in *end*) in Quenya. In particular, some British upper-class pronunciations of English “o” as in *so* come close to Quenya **eu** (but the American pronunciation does not). Quenya examples: **leuca** “snake”, **neuma** “snare”, **peu** “pair of lips”. This diphthong is not very common.
- The diphthong **iu** may be sounded like *yu* in English *yule*, according to the usual Third Age Pronunciation. Tolkien imagined that originally, it had rather been a “falling” diphthong like the other Quenya diphthongs, stressed on the first rather than the last element (LotR Appendix E). However, the Third Age pronunciation would be equally “valid” also within the mythos, and for speakers of English it is easier to achieve. This diphthong is in any case very rare; in the *Etymologies* it is only attested in a handful of words (**miulë** “whining, mewling”, **piuta** “spit”, **siulë** “incitement” and the group **tiuca** “thick, fat”, **tiuco** “thigh” and **tiuya-** “swell, grow fat” – a few more examples of **iu** could be quoted from Tolkien’s early “Qenya” material).
- The diphthong **oi** is easy, corresponding to English “oi” or “oy” as in *oil, toy*: **coirëa** “living”, **soica** “thirsty”, **oira** “eternal”.
- The diphthong **ui** Tolkien sometimes compared to the sound occurring in English *ruin*. This is a rather surprising example, for surely the word “ruin” is not normally pronounced as containing a diphthong, but as two distinct syllables: *ru-in*. Rather think “ooy” as in the English phrase *too young*: **huinë** “shadow”, **cuilë** “life”, **uilë** “(long, trailing) plant”. Notice that the combination **qui** does *not* contain this diphthong; this is just a more visually pleasing way of spelling **cwi** (e.g. **orqui** “Orcs” = **orcwi**).



All other groups of vowels are *not* diphthongs, but simply vowels belonging to separate syllables, to be pronounced distinctly. In linguistic terms, vowels that are in direct contact without forming diphthongs are said to be in *hiatus*. Primitive Elvish apparently did not have such combinations, at least not in the middle of words: Tolkien had Fëanor concluding that “our fathers . . . in building words took the vowels and parted them with the consonants as walls” (VT39:10). But some consonants had been lost in Quenya, so that vowels that were originally so “parted” had come into direct contact (VT39:6). In Quenya we even have polysyllabic all-vowel words like **Eä** (a name of the universe) or **oa** (“away”). The most frequent combinations of vowels in hiatus are **ea**, **eo**, **ie**, **io**, **oa**; each vowel should be sounded “by itself”. Tolkien often emphasizes this fact by adding *diaereses* or “dots” to one of the vowels, and in the consistent spelling here imposed on the material, we regularly write **ëa** (**Eä**), **ëo** (**Eö**), **öë**. Thus there is no excuse for such mistakes as pronouncing **ëa** as in English *heart* or *please*, or **öë** as in *canoe* or *foetus*. (Other distortions are apparently also possible: Cate Blanchett simply reduced **Eärendil** to “Erendil” the one time her version of Galadriel pronounces this name in the Jackson movie: “I give you the light of E[ä]rendil, our most beloved star. . .” Can we have an extra vowel for the Director’s Cut, please?)

In this course we do not use the diaeresis in the combinations **ie** (except when final) and **oa**, but as indicated by the spelling **ië** and **öa** in certain Tolkien manuscripts, the vowels must be pronounced distinctly and not drawn together as in English *piece* (or *tie*), or English *load*. In accordance with this, Christopher Tolkien in the *Note on Pronunciation* that he appended to the *Silmarillion* indicates that the name **Nienna** is to be pronounced **Ni-enna**, not “Neena” as if **ie** were sounded as in English *piece*. (Immediately after the line in which she mangles the name **Eärendil**, Cate Blanchett pronounces the Quenya word **namárië**, “farewell”. I’m glad to say that she did a better job with this word, getting the **-ië** more or less right!) Some words with vowels in hiatus: **fëa** “soul”, **lëo** “shade”, **loëndë** “year-middle” (the middle day of the year according to the Elvish calendar), **coa** “house”, **tië** “path”.

*Consonants:* Most Quenya consonants are easy to pronounce for people used to speaking a Western language. These points may be observed:

- **C** is *always* pronounced **k**, never **s**; indeed Tolkien does use the letter **k** rather than **c** in many sources. **Celma** “channel” or **ciryä** “ship” must *not* come out as “selma”, “siryä”. (This goes for Sindarin spelling as well: When **Celeborn** is pronounced “Seleborn” in the Rankin/Bass animated version of LotR, it clearly shows that the moviemakers never made it to Appendix E.)
- In the groups **hw**, **hy**, **hl**, **hr**, the letter **h** is not to be pronounced separately. These are just digraphs denoting unitary consonants:

- What is spelt **hl**, **hr** was originally *unvoiced l, r*. That is, these sounds were pronounced without vibration in the vocal chords, resulting in what may be described as “whispered” versions of normal **l, r**. (If you can isolate the *l* of English *please*, you will have an unvoiced **l** – though in this case, it is just “incidentally” unvoiced because of the influence from the unvoiced plosive **p** immediately preceding it. English never has unvoiced **l** as an independent sound of speech, as Quenya originally did.) In Quenya, these sounds are quite rare; examples include **hrívë** “winter” and **hlócë** “serpent, dragon”. However, Tolkien stated that by the Third Age, **hr** and **hl** had come to be pronounced as normal voiced **r, l**, though the *spelling* **hl, hr** apparently persisted in writing.
- What is spelt **hw** corresponds to English *wh* in dialects where this is still distinct from normal *w* (e.g., *witch* and *which* are audibly distinct words – American English, as well as northern British English, normally uphold this distinction, though it has been abandoned in the British Received Pronunciation). Put simply, **hw** is a (weak) version of the sound you make when you blow out a candle. **Hw** is not a very frequent sound in Quenya; this seems to be a quite complete list of the known words where it occurs: **hwan** “sponge, fungus”, **hwarin** “crooked”, **hwarma** “crossbar”, **hwerme** “gesture-code”, **hwesta** “breeze, breath, puff of air” (also as verb: **hwesta-** “to puff”), **hwindë** “eddy, whirlpool”.
- What is spelt **hy** represents a sound that may occur in English, but that is not normally recognized as a distinct consonant in this language. **Hy** denotes what by a German term is often referred to as *ich-Laut* or “*ich*-sound”, since it is exemplified by “ch” in the German word *ich* (“I”). To speakers of English it may sound much like *sh* (one imagines Kennedy training long and hard to avoid “Ish bin ein Berliner”). Still, as I said, a (weak) version of the sound in question may often be heard in English as well: In words like *hew, huge, human*, the *h* may be pronounced like an (obscure) **hy**. Cf. SD:418–419, where Tolkien states that in Quenya or “Avallonian”, the sound **hy** is “approximately equivalent to . . . *h* in *huge*”. In LotR Appendix E, Tolkien also pointed out that **hy** has the same relationship to **y** as **hw** (discussed above) has to normal **w**: one is unvoiced, the other voiced. So another way of arriving at **hy** is to start with the sound of **y** (as in *you*) and produce a voiceless, “whispered” variant of it. Once you have the sound pinned down, you only have to strengthen it; it should be pronounced with the same force as English *sh*: **Hyarmen** “south”, **hyalma** “shell, conch”, **hyellë** “glass”. It seems that **hy** mostly occurs at the *beginning* of words; **ahya-** “change” is presently the sole known example of **hy** occurring between vowels in the middle of a word. However, **h** in the combination **ht** following certain vowels should also be

pronounced like **hy**; see below. – In LotR Appendix E, Tolkien noted that speakers of Westron (the supposed “original language” of the Red Book, that Tolkien “translated” into English) often substituted the sound of *sh* for Quenya **hy**. Speakers of English who don’t care about subtle phonological details may of course do the same, turning a word like **hyalma** into “shalma”. This would be a pronunciation that existed also within the Middle-earth setting, though it was not quite like the proper Elvish pronunciation (and it does seem best to aim for the latter!) I guess many speakers of English would hardly be able to tell the difference, though. Incidentally, one can achieve a pretty good **hy** by starting from *sh*; just make sure that your tongue is not raised (you may press its tip against the lower teeth to be certain of that). If you try to pronounce *sh* with the tongue in this position, what comes out ought to sound like **hy**.

- Outside the groups **hw**, **hy**, **hl**, **hr**, the letter **h** does represent an independent sound, but it is pronounced somewhat differently in different positions. It seems that originally, Quenya **h** (at least where it comes from Primitive Elvish *kh*) was typically *stronger* than English **h** – that is, a “breath-**h**” as in **high**. In Fëanor’s day it was apparently pronounced like *ch* in German *ach* or Scottish *loch*, or like Cyrillic *X*. In phonetic writing, this sound is represented as [x]. But later, at the beginning of words, this [x] was weakened and became a sound like English **h**. In LotR Appendix E, Tolkien informs us that the Tengwa letter for [x] was originally called **harma**; naturally this Tengwa was so called because the initial **h** of this word was an example of the sound the letter denoted, [x]. But when [x] in this position eventually turned into an English-style **h**, the Tengwa was renamed **aha**, for in the middle of words, [x] was not weakened. So we can extract these rules: at the *beginning of words* (before a vowel), the letter **h** is to be pronounced like English *h*. But in the *middle* of words, **h** is to be pronounced [x]: as between vowels in **aha** “wrath”, and likewise before **t** in words like **pahta** “closed”, **ohta** “war”, **nuhta-** “to stunt”.

In one late source, Tolkien noted that “in Quenya and Telerin medial [x] eventually became *h* also in most cases” (VT41:9). It may therefore be permissible to pronounce even words like **aha** with an English-style breath-*h*. But the group **ht** must probably always be pronounced [xt]; the weaker breath-**h** would be barely audible in this position.

This rule needs one modification. Likely, **h** before **t** was originally pronounced [x] in all cases. Following any of the vowels **a**, **o**, and **u**, this pronunciation persisted, as in the examples **pahta**, **ohta**, **nuhta-** above. But following the vowels **i** and **e**, the original [x] turned into a sound similar to German *ich*-Laut (German may indeed be Tolkien’s inspiration for this particular development in Quenya phonology).

Thus in words like **ehtë** “spear” or **rihta-** “to jerk”, **h** should be pronounced just like the **hy** described above. Again, Tolkien imagined that human (mortal) speakers of Westron had a tendency to substitute a sound like English *sh* and say “eshtë”, “rishta” instead.

- Quenya **l** “represents more or less the sound of English initial *l*, as in *let*” (LotR Appendix E). Now why did Tolkien specify that Quenya **l** is to sound like an *initial* English **l** (regardless of its position in a Quenya word)? As Tolkien was well aware, British English **l** is pronounced somewhat differently in different positions. An *initial* **l**, as in *let*, is pronounced as a so-called “clear” **l** – and this is the kind of **l** that should be used in *all* positions in Quenya (as is also the case in other languages, like German). But when **l** is not initial, English in most cases employs a so-called “dark” **l**, which differs from the the “clear” **l** in that the “dark” variant is pronounced by arching the back of the tongue upwards: Contrast the pronunciation of **l** in two words like *let* (clear **l**) and *fill* (dark **l**). Compared to the “clear” **l**, the “dark” **l** sounds lower pitched, but this sound is to be avoided in Quenya. This may be something of a problem to Americans, since their **L**’s tend to be rather “dark” in all positions, even initially (at least as perceived by European ears). – Perfectionists should also observe another detail: In Letters:425, Tolkien mentioned **l** among the Quenya “dentals”, sc. sounds that are pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching the (upper) teeth. English normally uses an *alveolar* **l** instead, that is, a sound pronounced with the tip of the tongue further back, above the teeth rather than touching them. This again makes for a somewhat “darker” sound. When pronouncing a Quenya **l**, one should make sure that that the tip of the tongue touches the teeth.
- Quenya **n** is like English **n**. Usually this sound had been **n** all along, but in some cases it represents older **ng** as in English *king*, *ding* (notice that there is no distinct *g* to be heard, despite the spelling). Unlike English, Quenya could also have this sound at the beginning of words. As mentioned in the discussion of spelling conventions, Tolkien sometimes used the letter **ñ** to represent this older **ng**, e.g. **Ñoldor**. In his letters, Tolkien in one case added a footnote to the word **Noldor** (so spelt), informing the recipient that the initial *N* was to be pronounced “ng as in *ding*” (Letters:176). This would however be the “archaic” pronunciation; people speaking Quenya in Frodo’s day would simply say **Noldor**: LotR Appendix E clearly indicates that by the Third Age, initial **ñ** had come to be pronounced like a normal **n**, and therefore the Elvish letter for **ñ** “has been transcribed *n*”. We have adopted the same system here, so the letter **n** in nearly all cases represents normal English **n**, regardless of its phonological history in Quenya. I say “in nearly all cases” because **n** is still pronounced **ñ** before **c** (= **k**), **g** and

**qu.** This is not much of a problem, for it is natural for speakers of English and many other languages to use this pronunciation anyway. In a word like **anca** “jaw” the cluster **nc** is therefore pronounced like “nk” in English *tank*, and in a word like **anga** “iron” the **ng** should be sounded like “ng” in English *finger*. Notice that Quenya **ng** occurring in the middle of words should always be pronounced *with an audible g* (this also goes for the group **ngw**, as in **tengwa** “letter”). It is NOT just the simple  $\tilde{n}$  described above, the “ng” of English *king*, with no distinct *g*. (We are of course talking about a hard *g* here; Quenya **ng** must never be pronounced “nj” as in English *angel*, but always as in *finger*. The sound of “soft” *g* as in English *gin* does not occur in Quenya.)

- Quenya **r** “represents a trilled *r* in all positions; the sound was not lost before consonants (as in [British] English *part*)” (LotR Appendix E). English **r** is generally much too weak for Quenya. Its weakness is precisely the reason why it tends to drop out before consonants and at the end of words (except where the *next* word happens to begin in a vowel – and by analogy, some speakers of English even introduce an R-sound where a word that properly *should* end in a vowel comes before a word beginning in a vowel. That is when *vanilla ice* starts coming out as “vanillar ice” – or, if you like, “vanilla rice”! Of course, this must be avoided in Quenya.) Quenya **r** should be *trilled*, as in Spanish, Italian, Russian etc., or for that matter as in Scottish English. Certain subtleties of Tengwar spelling suggests that in Quenya, **r** was somewhat weaker immediately in front of consonants (as opposed to vowels) and at the end of words. Nonetheless, it should be a properly trilled, wholly distinct sound even in these positions: **Parma** “book”, **erdë** “seed”, **tasar** “willow”, **Eldar** “Elves”. The vowel in front of **r** should not be lengthened or otherwise affected. In the Jackson movie, the actors portraying Gandalf and Saruman normally pronounce the name **Mordor** correctly, with trilled **r**’s and short vowels (whereas Elijah Wood’s “Frodo” invariably says *Módó* with no trace of any **r**’s!) In the movie, – **Mordor** is Sindarin for Black Land, but by its form and pronunciation, the word could just as well be Quenya **mordor** = “shadows” or “stains” (the plural form of **mordo**).

The *uvular r* that is common in languages like French and German should be avoided in Quenya, for LotR Appendix E states that this was “a sound which the Eldar found distasteful” (it is even suggested that this was how the Orcs pronounced R!)

- The consonant **s** should always be unvoiced, “as in English *so, geese*” (LotR Appendix E). In English, **s** is often voiced to **z**, even though orthography may still show “s”. For instance, though the *s* of English *house* is unvoiced, it becomes voiced in the plural form *houses* (for

this reason, Tolkien noted that he would have liked the spelling *houzes* better – see PM:24). When pronouncing Quenya, one should be careful not to add voice to **s**, turning it into **z**: **Asar** “festival”, **olos** “dream”, **nausë** “imagination”. Third Age Exilic Quenya did not possess the sound **z** at all. (Tolkien did imagine that **z** had occurred at an earlier stage, but it had later turned into **r**, merging with original **r**. For instance, UT:396 indicates that the plural of **olos** “dream” was at one stage **olozi**, but later it became **olori**.) Where it occurs between vowels, **s** often represents earlier **þ** (more or less = *th* as in *thin*); the words **asar** and **nausë** mentioned above represent older **aþar** and **naupë** and were so spelt in Tengwar orthography.

- On **v** and **w**: We must assume that **v** and **w** are properly pronounced as in English *vine* and *wine*, respectively (but *initial nw* is strictly not **n** + **w** but simply a so-called *labialized n*; see below). There are some unclear points here, though. LotR Appendix E seems to indicate that in Third Age Quenya, initial **w** had come to be pronounced **v**: it is said that the name of the Tengwa letter **vilya** had earlier been **wilya**. Likewise, Tolkien indicated that the word **véra** (“personal, private, own”) had been **wéra** in what he called “Old Quenya” (PM:340). In the *Etymologies*, the evidence is somewhat divergent. Sometimes Tolkien has primitive stems in **w**- yield Quenya words in **v**-, as when the stem WAN yields Quenya **vanya**- “go, depart, disappear”. Sometimes he lists double forms, as when the stem WÂ (or WAWA, WAIWA) yields Quenya **vaiwa** and **waiwa**, both meaning “wind”. Under the stem WAY Tolkien listed a word for “envelope” as “*w- vaia*”, evidently indicating a double form **waia** and **vaia** (all of these examples are found in LR:397). In LR:398, there are further double forms, but in the case of the verb **vilin** (“I fly”) from the stem WIL, Tolkien curiously *changed* it to **wilin**. Perhaps he suddenly decided to go for the “Old Quenya” spelling rather than actually rejecting one in favour of the other?

The weight of the evidence seems to be that at the beginning of words, **w**- had come to be pronounced as normal **v**- by the Third Age; where Tolkien listed double forms in **w**- and **v**-, the former is apparently to be taken as the more archaic form. However, I have not regularized the spelling on this point, though where *Tolkien himself* used or listed a form in **v**- rather than **w**- (either alone or as an alternative to **w**-), I will use the form in **v**- in this course. (This also goes for **vilin**!) It is possible, though, that according to the Third Age pronunciation *all* initial **w**'s should be sounded as **v**, the original distinction between initial **v** and **w** having been lost in the spoken language. It is unclear whether or not Tolkien meant that this distinction was consistently upheld in Tengwar orthography (as when this writing upheld the dis-

inction between **p** and **s** even after both had come to be pronounced **s**). If so, the letter called (**wilya** >) **vilya** was still used for **v** representing older **w**, while another letter (**vala**) was used for **v** that had been **v** all along. – Other than at the beginning of words, the distinction between **v** and **w** was upheld even in the Third Age. In the case of the groups **lw** and **lv** the distinction could even be emphasized by altering the pronunciation of the latter: “For *lv*, not for *lw*, many speakers, especially Elves, used *lb*” (LotR Appendix E). Hence a word like **elvëa** “starlike” would often be pronounced “elbëa”, and it might also be so written in Tengwar orthography. Though frequent, this would seem to be a non-standard pronunciation, and the spellings employed by Tolkien usually indicates the pronunciation “lv”. Cf. for instance **Celvar** (or “Kelvar”, meaning *animals*) rather than **Celbar** in the speeches of Yavanna and Manwë in the *Silmarillion*, chapter 2. In PM:340 Tolkien quotes a Quenya word for “branch” as **olba** rather than **olva**, though.

- The letter **y** “is only used as a consonant, as *y* in E[nglish] *Yes*”: Tolkien singled this out as one of the few major departures from Latin spelling in the spelling conventions he used for Quenya (Letters:176). The *vowel* **y**, like German *ü* or French “u” as in *lune*, does not occur in Quenya (though it is found in Sindarin).

### The question of aspiration

There is one uncertainty regarding the precise pronunciation the unvoiced stops **c** (= **k**), **t**, **p**: In English as well as some other languages, these sounds, when occurring before a vowel at the beginning of a word, are normally *aspirated*. That is, a **h**-like puff of breath is slipped in after them. In this position they are pronounced a little like genuine sequences **k + h**, **t + h**, **p + h** (as in *backhand*, *outhouse*, *scrap-heap*). The average speaker is not conscious of this at all, not really perceiving the extra **h** as a distinct sound: It is just the way **k**, **t**, **p** is “expected” to sound at the beginning of words. But in some languages, like French, Russian and (perhaps most importantly) Finnish, there is no such gratuitous **h** automatically following these consonants when they occur in certain positions.

Should Quenya **t**, **p**, **c** be aspirated as in English, or should they be pronounced as in French or Finnish? This question is not directly addressed anywhere in Tolkien’s published writings. It may be observed that Quenya **t**, **p**, **c** descend from Primitive Elvish consonants that were certainly not aspirated, for in the primitive language they *contrasted* with distinct aspirated sounds: primitive *th*, *ph*, *kh*, which later became **s**, **f**, **h** in Quenya. (Cf. two wholly distinct primitive words like *thaurâ* “detestable” and *taurâ* “masterful” – the *th* of the first word should be sounded the way a speaker of English would most likely mispronounce the *t* of the latter! The *t* of *taurâ*

should actually be pronounced French-style, with no aspiration.) So were Quenya **t**, **p**, **c** still unaspirated, since they had been so in the primitive language?

Since the primitive aspirated sounds had been changed, adding aspiration to **t**, **p**, **c** would cause no confusion. It should be noted, though, that in the writing system devised by Fëanor, there were originally distinct letters for aspirated sounds: “The original Fëanorian system also possessed a grade with extended stems, both above and below the line [of writing]. These usually represented aspirated consonants (e.g. *t + h*, *p + h*, *k + h*)” (LotR Appendix E). However, these were *not* the letters used to spell Quenya **t**, **p**, **c**. So all things considered, I think Quenya **t**, **p**, **c** should ideally be pronounced without aspiration. For people who are used to automatically slip in a **h**-like puff of breath after these consonants it may be difficult to get rid of it, since they are not really conscious of its presence at all. A phonology teacher once advised me that one way of getting rid of the aspiration is to practice pronouncing **t**, **p**, **c/k** with a burning candle in front of your mouth; the trick is to pronounce these consonants *without the flame of the candle flickering* (because of the puff of breath that constitutes the aspiration).

The *voiced* counterparts of **t**, **p** and **c/k**, namely **d**, **b** and (hard) **g** respectively, are not aspirated in English. For this reason, people who are used to hearing the unvoiced sounds pronounced as aspirated variants may (wrongly) perceive unaspirated unvoiced plosives as their voiced counterparts. Pronounced without aspiration, Quenya words like **tarya** (“stiff”), **parma** (“book”) or **calma** (“lamp”) may sound a little like “darya, barma, galma” to speakers of English (speakers of French, Russian or Finnish would not be confused). When pronouncing such words, one must *not* introduce vibration in the vocal chords to produce actual voiced sounds **d**, **b**, **g**. – But I should add that the whole aspiration issue is not something a student needs to spend much time on; as I said, the exact pronunciation of Quenya **t**, **p**, **c** is nowhere addressed in published writings. If it is indeed wrong to add aspiration to these consonants, at least one will err little more than Tolkien did himself when reading *Namárië*.

## Palatalized and labialized consonants

In Quenya, we find words like **nyarna** “tale”, **tyalië** “play” or **nwalca** “cruel”. From these spellings it would seem that such words begin in consonant clusters: **n + y**, **t + y**, **n + w**. However, this would not agree with the explicit statement made in Lowdham’s Report that “Adunaic, like Avalonian [= Quenya], does not tolerate more than a single basic consonant initially in any word” (SD:417–418). So how are we to explain this?

The solution seems to be that “combinations” like the **ny** of **nyarna** are just single, basic consonants: **Ny** is not a cluster **n + y**, but the same unitary sound that is fittingly represented as a single letter “ñ” in Spanish orthogra-



phy – as in *señor*. Of course, this sounds very much like “senyor”, but “ñ” is really a single consonant. This “ñ” is a *palatalized* version of **n**, an **n** that has been “tinted” in the direction of **y**. English employs one distinctly palatalized consonant, usually represented by the digraph “sh” (which, of course, is not a cluster **s** + **h**); this can be described as a palatalized **s**. By carefully comparing the pronunciation of **s** and **sh** you can perceive the palatalization mechanism operating in your own mouth: A consonant is palatalized by arching the back of the tongue up towards the roof of the mouth (the *palate*, hence the term “palatalized consonant”). The relationship between **s** and **sh** corresponds to the relationship between **n** and Quenya **ny** (or Spanish “ñ”).

Besides **ny**, Quenya also has the palatalized consonants **ty**, **ly**, **ry** (e.g. in **tyalië** “play”, **alya** “rich”, **verya** “bold”); these are palatalized counterparts of “normal” **t**, **l**, **r**. Regarding **ty**, Tolkien wrote that it may be pronounced as the “t” of English *tune* (see for instance SD:418–419 – it should be noted that he is thinking of dialects where this comes out as “tyoon”; this is not the case in all forms of American English). In Gondor, some mortal speakers of Quenya supposedly pronounced **ty** like *ch* as in English **church**, but that was not quite the proper Elvish pronunciation. As for the consonant **ly**, it would be similar to the “lh” of Portuguese *olho* (“eye”). In LotR Appendix E, Tolkien noted that **l** (so spelt) should also “to some degree [be] ‘palatalized’ between *e*, *i* and a consonant, or finally after *e*, *i*”. The wording “to some degree” seems to suggest that we would not have a regular, “full-blown” palatalized **l** in these positions (like the sound spelt **ly**), but in words like **Eldar** “Elves” or **amil** “mother”, the **l** should ideally have just a little tint of palatalizing to it.

Besides the palatalized consonants, we have the *labialized* consonants: **nw**, **gw** and **qu** (= **cw**). These are not really clusters **n** + **w**, **g** + **w**, **c** + **w**. Rather they represent **n**, **g**, **c** (**k**) pronounced with *pouted lips*, as when pronouncing **w**: By the pouting of the lips, the consonant is “labialized” (this word comes from the Latin term for “lip”). Quenya **qu** may certainly be pronounced as in English *queen*, but ideally it should be pronounced as **k** and **w** merged together in a single, unitary sound. (True, there does exist one early source where Tolkien states that **qu**, though *originally* being simply *k* “accomp[anied] by lip-rounding”, “is now sounded practically exactly as English *qu* – a liprounded *k* foll[owed] by a distinct *w* sound”: See *Parma Eldalamberon* #13, page 63. However, I think this idea may be superseded by information from a much later source, indicating that Quenya had no initial consonant clusters: SD:417–418.) **Nw** and **gw** similarly represent “merged” versions of **n/w**, **g/w**. – It should be noted that **nw** is a single, labialized consonant only at the *beginning* of words, where it represents earlier **ngw** (sc. what Tolkien might also spell “ñw”, using “ñ” for *ng* as in *king*). In the middle of words, e.g. in **vanwa** “gone, lost”, **nw** really is a cluster **n** + **w** and is so spelt also in Tengwar orthography. However, the labialized consonants

**qu** and **gw** also occur in the middle of words. In fact, **gw** occurs *only* in that position, and always in the combination **ngw** (not “ñw” but “ñgw”, still using “ñ” as Tolkien did): **Lingwë** “fish”, **nangwa** “jaw”, **sungwa** “drinking-vessel”.

*The question of length:* It may seem that when they occur medially between vowels, the palatalized and labialized consonants count as *long* or *double* consonants (as if the digraphs represented actual consonant clusters after all). Again using the letter “ñ” with its Spanish value of a palatalized **n** (and not, as Tolkien often did, for *ng* as in *king*), one may ask whether a word like **atarinya** (“my father”, LR:61) actually represents “atariñña”. If so, the group **ny** in the middle of words denotes a *long palatalized N*. Then the very word **Quenya** would be pronounced “Queñña” rather than “Quenya”. Another possibility is “Queña”, the **n** being palatalized all right, but there is still a relatively distinct **y**-sound following it (which there would not be when **ny** occurs at the beginning of a word). Tolkien reading a version of *Namárië* at least once pronounced the word **inyar** as “iññar” (but the second time it occurred he simply said “inyar” with **n** + **y**). In any case, the groups **ny**, **ly**, **ry**, **ty** and **qu** (for **cw**) must be counted as either long consonants or consonant clusters for the purpose of stress (see below) – though it is also clear that sometimes they must be analyzed as single, unitary consonants.

## Stress

Whenever a language has polysyllabic words, speakers of this language may enunciate some syllables more forcefully than others. We say that these syllables are *stressed* or *accented*. In some languages speakers don’t normally emphasize certain syllables more than others. For instance, the Japanese put about the same amount of stress on every syllable, resulting in what unloving foreigners have referred to as “machine gun articulation”. But in Western languages, a *varying* amount of stress is common: Some syllables are stressed, others unstressed.

The rules for *which* syllables are stressed vary wildly, though. Some languages have a very simple system; in French, words that are to receive any stress are always accented on the *final* syllable. To the natives, Paris is not “*PARis*” as in English, but rather “*parIS*” (actually the French don’t pronounce the *s*, but that has nothing to do with the accent). The Finns also have a very simple system, stressing all words on the *first* syllable: While some speakers of English may think that Helsinki is most “naturally” pronounced “Hel*SINK*i”, the residents of the city will insist on “*HEL*sinki” instead.

Since the Finnish language was evidently Tolkien’s foremost inspiration, one might think that he would have copied its simple system of accenting all words on the first syllable over into Quenya. In the “internal” or fictional

history of the language, he did indeed envision an early period during which Quenya words were so accented (the so-called *retraction period*, WJ:366). However, this was replaced by a new system already before the Noldor went into exile, so Quenya as a language of lore in Middle-earth employed different accentuation patterns, carefully described in LotR Appendix E. This is the system we must use. (It seems that Tolkien actually copied it from Latin!)

Words of one syllable, like **nat** “thing”, obviously pose no problem; this one syllable is the sole candidate for receiving the stress. The simplest polysyllabic words, those of *two* syllables, are no problem either: In LotR Appendix E, Tolkien noted that “in words of two syllables [the accent] falls in practically all cases on the first syllable”. As this wording implies, there may be a very few exceptions; the only exception known seems to be the word **avá** “don’t!”, that is accented on the final syllable: “aVÁ”. (Even this one word also appears in the alternative form **áva**, stressed on the first syllable according to the normal rule: “ÁVa”.) The name of the Blessed Realm, **Aman**, I sometimes hear people pronounce with the stress on the second rather than the first syllable – but the correct pronunciation must be “AMan”, if we can trust the rules set out by Tolkien. (“AmAN” would be Amman, capital of Jordan!)

Longer words, with three or more syllables, are slightly more complex when it comes to stress. Many of them are accented on the *second to last* syllable. However, in some cases the second-to-last syllable isn’t “qualified” to receive the accent: This syllable cannot be accented if it is *short*. So how do we recognize a short syllable? If it contains no *long* vowel (no vowel marked with an accent), this is obviously one omen. Then the vowel itself is necessarily short. If this short vowel is followed by *only one consonant*, or even *no consonant at all*, this syllable has little chance of receiving the accent. Its one remaining chance of redeeming itself as a long syllable is that instead of a simple short vowel it actually contains one of the Quenya *diphthongs*: **ai**, **au**, **eu**, **oi**, **ui** or **iu**. Two vowels combined into a diphthong count as having the same “length” as a normal, unitary long vowel (marked by an accent). But if there is no diphthong, no long vowel, and not even a short vowel followed by more than one consonant, the syllable in question is irredeemably *short*. If this is the second-to-last syllable in a word of three or more syllables, this penultimate syllable has forfeited all its chances to receive the stress. In such a case the stress moves one step ahead, to fall on the *third* syllable from the end (no matter what *this* syllable looks like). Tolkien noted that words of such a shape “are favoured in the Eldarin languages, especially Quenya”. Examples:

- A word like **vestalë** “wedding” is accented “VESTalë”. The second-to-last syllable cannot receive the stress because its vowel (the **a**) is short and followed by only a single consonant (the **l**); hence the accent moves one step ahead, to the third syllable from the end. Plural forms

like **Teleri** (the Sea-Elves) and **Istari** (the Wizards) I sometimes hear people mispronounce as “Te**LE**Ri”, “Is**TAR**i”; applying Tolkien’s rules we have to conclude that he actually intended “**TEL**eri”, “**IST**ari”. The short penultimate syllables in these words cannot be accented.

- A word like **Eressëa** (the name of an isle near the Blessed Realm) some speakers of English are tempted to accent on the second-to-last syllable (following the stress-pattern of such a place-name as “Eritrea”!) But since in **Er-ess-ë-a** the second-to-last syllable is just a short **ë** not followed by a group of consonants (actually not even *one* consonant), this syllable cannot be accented and the stress moves to the syllable before it: “Er**ESS**ëa”. Other words of the same pattern (with no consonant following a short vowel in the second-to-last syllable): **Eldalië** “the people of the Elves” (“El**DAL**ië – though the word **Elda** “Elf” by itself is of course accented “**EL**da”), **Tilion** “The Horned”, name of a Maia (“**TIL**ion”), **laurëa** “golden” (“**LAUR**ëa”), **Yavannië** “September” (“Ya**VANN**ië”), **Silmarillion** “[The Story] of the Silmarils” (“Silma**RILL**ion”).

But though such words were “favoured”, there is certainly no lack of words where the second-to-last syllable does qualify for receiving the accent. Examples:

- Varda’s title **Elentári** “Star-Queen” is pronounced “Elen**TÁR**i”, since the vowel **á** in the second-to-last syllable is *long*. (If this had been a short **a**, it couldn’t have been stressed since it is not followed by more than one consonant, and the third syllable from the end would have been accented instead: “**ELEN**tari” – but no such word exists.) The names **Númenóre**, **Valinóre** are likewise accented on the long **ó** in the second-to-last syllable (whereas in the shortened forms **Númenor**, **Valinor** the accent must fall on the third syllable from the end: **NÚ**Menor, **VAL**inor).
- Words like **hastaina** “marred” or **Valarauco** “Power-demon” (Sindarin *Balrog*) are accented “has**TAIN**a”, “Vala**RAUC**o” – since diphthongs like **ai**, **au** can be counted as long vowels for the purpose of stress.
- The names **Elendil** and **Isildur** are accented “El**END**il” and “Is**ILD**ur”, since the vowel in the second-to-last-syllable, though short, is followed by more than one consonant (the groups **nd**, **ld**, respectively). A double consonant would have the same effect as a cluster of different consonants; for instance, **Elenna** (“Starwards”, a name of Númenor) is pronounced “El**ENN**a”. (Contrast the adjective **elena** “stellar, of the stars”: this must be accented “**EL**ena” since the second-to-last syllable “**en**” is short and therefore unable to receive the accent – unlike the long syllable “**enn**” in **Elenna**.)

Notice that the one letter **x** represents two consonants, **ks**. Therefore, a word like **Helcaraxë** (a place-name) is accented “Helcar**AX**ë” (not “Hel**CAR**axë” as if there were only one consonant following the **a** in the second-to-last syllable). Cf. the alternative spelling **Helkarakse** in the *Etymologies*, entry KARAK.

As noted above, some combinations should apparently be thought of as single consonants: **qu** (for **cw/kw**) represents *labialized k*, not **k + w**. Similarly, **ny**, **ty**, **ly**, **ry** would be *palatalized n, t, l, r* (the first = Spanish *ñ*). But in the middle of words, for the purpose of stress, it seems that **qu**, **ly**, **ny**, **ty** etc. do count as groups of consonants (double consonants or clusters – we cannot be certain precisely what Tolkien intended). In WJ:407, Tolkien indicates that the compound word **ciryaquen** “shipman, sailor” (made from **cirya** “ship” + **-quen** “person”) is to be accented “cir**YA**quen”. If **qu** (= **cw/kw**) were here thought of as a single consonant, labialized **k**, there would not be a group of consonants following the **a** and it could not receive the accent: the word would then have been pronounced “**CIR**yaquen” instead. So either **qu** here does count as a cluster **k + w**, or it represents a *long* or *double* labialized **k** (or even labialized **kw** followed by **w**). Bottom line is: pronounce “cir**YA**quen” and be relieved that the rest is mainly academic meandering. A few other words including the combinations in question: **Elenya** (first day of the Eldarin six-day week, accented “El**EN**ya”), **Calacirya** or **Calacilya** (a place in the Blessed Realm, accented “Cala**CI**rya”, “Cala**CI**lya”).

*A word of warning regarding the accent mark:* Notice that the accent mark that may appear above vowels (**á**, **é**, **í**, **ó**, **ú**) *only* denotes that the vowel is long. While this symbol is frequently used to indicate the stressed syllable, this is not the case in Tolkien’s normal spelling of Quenya. (Some may have noted that *Pokémon* isn’t accented on the *é* either, so Tolkien isn’t wildly idiosyncratic in this department!) A long vowel will *often* receive the stress, as in the example **Elentári** above, but not necessarily so: If the long vowel does not appear in the second-to-last syllable, its length (and the accent mark denoting it!) is quite irrelevant for the purpose of stress. In a word like **Úlairi**, the Quenya name for the Ringwraiths or Nazgûl, the stress falls on the diphthong **ai**, not on the **ú**. The spelling **palantír** has misled many, making them think that this word is to be accented on “tír”. Here is something Ian McKellen, playing Gandalf in the Peter Jackson LotR movie trilogy, wrote as the film was being shot:

...I have to learn a new pronunciation. All this time we have been saying “pala**nTÍR**” instead of the Old English stress on the first syllable. Just as the word was about to be committed to the soundtrack, a correction came from Andrew Jack, the Dialect Coach; he taught me a Norfolk accent for *Restoration*, and for LOTR he supervises accents, languages and all things vocal. *Palantír*, being strictly of elvish origin should fol-

low Tolkien’s rule that the syllable before a double consonant should be stressed – “paLANTír” making a sound which is close to “lantern”...

Andrew Jack was right. **Palantír** cannot be stressed on the final syllable; virtually no polysyllabic Quenya words are accented in such a way (as I said above, **avá** “don’t!” is the sole known exception). Instead the **a** in the second-to-last syllable receives the accent because it is followed by the consonant cluster **nt** (I should not call this a “double consonant” like McKellen does, since I want to reserve that term for a group of two *identical* consonants, like **tt** or **nn** – but for the purpose of stress, double consonants and clusters of different consonants have the same effect). So it is indeed “paLANTír”. (But in the plural form **palantíri**, where the long **í** suddenly appears in the second-to-last syllable, it does receive the accent: “palanTÍRi”.)

In the case of long words ending in two short syllables, the last of these syllables may receive a weaker *secondary stress*. In a word like **hísimë** “mist”, the main stress falls on **hís**, but the final syllable **-më** is not wholly unstressed. This secondary stress is much weaker than the main accent, though. (Nonetheless, Tolkien did note that for the purpose of poetry, the secondary stress can be used metrically: RGeo:69.)

## Speed

Finally a brief note on something we know little about: How *fast* should one talk when speaking Quenya? The few recordings of Tolkien speaking Quenya are not “reliable” in this matter; he inevitably enunciates quite carefully. But regarding Fëanor’s mother *Míriel* he noted that “she spoke swiftly and took pride in this skill” (PM:333). So fast Quenya is evidently good Quenya. When Tolkien also wrote that “the Elves made considerable use of . . . concomitant gestures” (WJ:416), one remembers that he had a great love for *Italian* – see Letters:223.

## Summary of Lesson One

The Quenya vowels are **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**; long vowels are marked with an accent: **á**, **é** etc. The vowels should be pure, pronounced with their “Italian” values; long **á** and **é** should be noticeably closer than short **a**, **e**. Some vowels may receive a diaeresis (**ë**, **ä** etc.), but this does not affect their pronunciation and is only intended as a clarification for people used to English orthography. The diphthongs are **ai**, **au**, **eu**, **oi**, **ui**, and **iu**. The consonant **c** is always pronounced *k*; **l** should be pronounced as a “clear”, dental L; **r** should be trilled; **s** is always unvoiced; **y** is only used as a consonant (as in English *you*). Ideally, the consonants **t**, **p**, **c** should probably be unaspirated. Palatalized consonants are represented by digraphs in **-y** (**ty**, **ny** etc.); labialized

consonants are normally written as digraphs in **-w** (e.g. **nw**, but what would be **cw** is spelt **qu** instead). **H** is pronounced [x] (German *ach-Laut*) before **t**, unless this combination **ht** is preceded by one of the vowels **e** or **i**, in which case **h** is sounded like German *ich-Laut*. Otherwise, **h** may be pronounced like English **h**; the digraphs **hy** and **hw** however represent *ich-Laut* and unvoiced **w** (like American English *wh*), respectively. The combinations **hl** and **hr** originally represented unvoiced **l**, **r**, but by the Third Age, these sounds had come to be pronounced like normal **l** and **r**. In polysyllabic words, the *stress* falls on the second-to-last syllable when that is *long* (containing either a long vowel, a diphthong, or a vowel followed by a consonant cluster or a double consonant). If the second-to-last syllable is short, the stress falls on the third syllable from the end (unless the word has only two syllables, in which case the first syllable receives the stress whether it is short or long).

## Exercises

As far as the most critical subtleties of pronunciation are concerned, I unfortunately cannot make any exercises; we are not in a classroom so that I can comment on your pronunciation. But regarding *stress* (accent) and the pronunciation of **h**, it is possible to make exercises.

1. Determine which vowel (single vowel or diphthong) receives the accent in the words below. (It is not necessary to indicate where the entire syllable it belongs to begins and ends.)
  - A. **Alcar** (“glory”)
  - B. **Alcarë** (longer variant of the above)
  - C. **Alcarinqua** (“glorious”)
  - D. **Calima** (“bright”)
  - E. **Oronti** (“mountains”)
  - F. **Únótimë** (“uncountable, numberless”)
  - G. **Envinyatar** (“renewer”)
  - H. **Ulundë** (“flood”)
  - I. **Eäruilë** (“seaweed”)
  - J. **Ercassë** (“holly”)

Extra exercise on stress: While we hear many Sindarin lines in the movie, one of the few really prominent samples of Quenya in Peter Jackson’s *The Fellowship of the Ring* is the scene where “Saruman” (Christopher Lee) standing on the top of Isengard reads an invocation to bring down an avalanche in order to stop the Fellowship. He says to the mountain they are attempting to cross: **Nai yarvaxëa rasselya**

**taltuva notto-carinnar!** = “may your bloodstained horn collapse upon enemy heads!” (not translated in the movie). The actor accents the words like this: **nai yarVAXëa RASSelya TALTuva notto-CARinnar**. Are all the words accented as they should be, according to Tolkien’s guidelines? If not, what is right and what is wrong?

2. Where the letter **h** appears in Quenya words as they are spelt in our letters, it may be pronounced in various ways. Ignoring the digraphs **hw** and **hy**, the letter **h** may be pronounced

A) a “breath-**h**” like English **h** as in *high*,

B) more or less as in English *huge*, *human* or ideally like *ch* in German *ich*,

C) like *ch* in German *ach* or Scottish *loch* (in phonetic writing [x]).

In addition we have alternative D): the letter **h** is not really pronounced at all, but merely indicates that the following consonant was unvoiced in archaic Quenya.

Sort the words below into these four categories (A, B, C, D):

K. **Ohtar** (“warrior”)

L. **Hrávë** (“flesh”)

M. **Nahta** (“a bite”)

N. **Heru** (“lord”)

O. **Nehtë** (“spearhead”)

P. **Mahalma** (“throne”)

Q. **Hellë** (“sky”)

R. **Tihtala** (“blinking”)

S. **Hlócë** (“snake, serpent”)

T. **Hísië** (“mist”)



# Lesson 2

Nouns. Plural form. The article.

## 2.1 The Noun

Words that denote things, as opposed to for instance actions, are called *nouns*. The “things” in question may be inanimate (like “stone”), animate (like “person”, “woman”, “boy”), natural (like “tree”), artificial (like “bridge, house”), concrete (like “stone” again) or wholly abstract (like “hatred”). Names of persons, like “Peter” or “Mary”, are also considered nouns. Sometimes a noun may denote, not one clearly distinct object or person, but an entire substance (like “gold” or “water”). So there is much to be included.

In most languages, a noun can be *inflected*, that is, it appears in various forms to modify its meaning, or to make it fit into a specific grammatical context. For instance, if you want to connect two English nouns like “Mary” and “house” in such a way as to make it clear that Mary owns the house, you modify the form of the noun *Mary* by adding the ending -’s, producing *Mary’s*, which readily connects with *house* to make the phrase *Mary’s house*. Or starting with a noun like *tree*, you may want to make it clear that you are talking about more than one singular tree, and so you modify the word to its plural form by adding the plural ending -s to get *trees*. In English, a noun doesn’t have very many forms at all; there is the singular (e.g. *girl*), its plural (*girls*), the form you use when the one denoted by the noun owns something (*girl’s*) and the combination of the plural and this “ownership”-form (written *girls’* and unfortunately not really distinct from *girls* or *girl’s* in sound, but speakers of English somehow get along without too many misunderstandings – rest assured that the Quenya equivalents are clearly distinct in form!) So an English noun comes in no more than four different forms.

A Quenya noun, on the other hand, comes in *hundreds* of different forms. It can receive endings not only for *two* different kinds of plural, plus endings denoting a *pair* of things, but also endings expressing meanings that in English would be denoted by placing small words like “for, in/on, from, to, of, with” etc. in front of the noun instead. Finally a Quenya noun can

also receive endings denoting who owns it, e.g. **-rya-** “her” in **máryat** “her hands” in *Namárië* (the final **-t**, by the way, is one of the endings denoting a *pair* of something – in this case a natural pair of hands).

Having read the above, the student should not succumb to the idea that Quenya is a horribly difficult language (“imagine, *hundreds* of different forms to learn where English has only four!”), or for that matter start thinking that Quenya must be some kind of super-language (“wow, hundreds of different forms to play with while the poor English-speaking sods have to get along with a pitiful four!”) English and Quenya organize the information differently, that is all – the former often preferring a string of short words, the latter rather jumbling the ideas to be expressed into one big mouthful. The hundreds of different forms arise because a much lower number of endings can be *combined*, so there is no reason to despair. It is a little like counting; you needn’t learn two hundred and fifty different numeric symbols to be able to count to 250, but only the ten from 0 to 9.

Most of the endings a noun can take we won’t discuss before in (much) later lessons. We will start with something that should be familiar enough, found even on the puny list of English noun-forms: Making a noun plural – going from one to several.

In Quenya, there are two different plurals. One is formed by adding the ending **-li** to the noun. Tolkien called this the “partitive plural” (WJ:388) or a “general pl[ural]” (see the *Etymologies*, entry **TELES**). Unfortunately, the function of this plural – sc. how it differs in meaning from the more “normal” plural discussed below – is not fully understood. We have a few examples of this plural in our scarce source material, but they are not very helpful. For a long time it was assumed that this plural implied that there were “many” of the things in question; hence **Eldali** (formed from **Elda** “Elf”) would mean something like “many Elves”. There may be something to this, but in several of the examples we have, there seems to be no implication of “many”. It has been suggested that **Eldali** may rather mean something like “several Elves” or “some Elves”, sc. some out of a larger group, *some* considered as *part* of this group: The term “partitive plural” may point in the same direction. However, I will for the most part leave the partitive plural alone throughout this course. Its function just isn’t well enough understood for me to construct exercises that would only mean feeding some highly tentative interpretation to unsuspecting students. (I present some thoughts about the **-li** plural in the appendices to this course.)

For now we will deal with the “normal” plural form instead. Any reader of Tolkien’s narratives will have encountered plenty of examples of this form; they are especially common in the *Silmarillion*. Nouns ending in any of the four vowels **-a**, **-o**, **-i** or **-u**, plus nouns ending in the group **-ië**, form their plural with the ending **-r**. Cf. the names of various groups of people mentioned in the *Silmarillion*:

**Elda** “Elf”, plural **Eldar**

**Vala** “god (or technically angel)”, pl. **Valar**

**Ainu** “spirit of God’s first creation”, pl. **Ainur**

**Noldo** “Noldo, member of the Second Clan of the Eldar”, pl. **Noldor**

**Valië** “female Vala”, pl. **Valier**

For another example of **-ië**, cf. **tier** for “paths” in *Namárië*; compare singular **tië** “path”. (According to the spelling conventions here employed, the diaeresis in **tië** is dropped in the plural form **tier** because the dots are there merely to mark that final **-ë** is not silent, but in **tier**, **e** is not final anymore because an ending has been added – and hence the dots go.) Examples of the plurals of nouns in **-i** are rare, since nouns with this ending are rare themselves, but in MR:229 we have **quendir** as the pl. of **quendi** “Elf-woman” (and also **quendur** as the pl. of **quendu** “Elf-man”; nouns in **-u** are not very numerous either).

This singular word **quendi** “Elf-woman” must not be confused with the *plural* word **Quendi** that many readers of Tolkien’s fiction will remember from the *Silmarillion*, for instance in the description of the awakening of the Elves in chapter 3: “Themselves they named the Quendi, signifying those that speak with voices; for as yet they had met no other living things that spoke or sang.” **Quendi** is the plural form of **Quendë** “Elf”; nouns ending in **-ë** typically form their plurals in **-i**, and as we see, this **-i** replaces the final **-ë** instead of being added to it. In WJ:361, Tolkien explicitly refers to “nouns in *-e*, the majority of which formed their plurals in *-i*”.

As this wording implies, there are exceptions; a few nouns in **-ë** are seen to use the other plural ending, **-r**, instead. One exception we have already touched on: where the **-ë** is part of **-ië**, we have plurals in **-ier**, as in **tier** “paths”. Hence we avoid the awkward plural form **\*\*tii**. Other exceptions cannot be explained as easily. In LotR Appendix E, we have **tyeller** for “grades”, evidently the plural of **tyellë**. Why **tyeller** instead of **\*\*tyelli**? LR:47 likewise indicates that the plural of **mallë** “road” is **maller**; why not **\*\*malli**? It may be that nouns in **-lë** have plurals in **-ler** because “regular” **\*\*li** might cause confusion with the partitive plural ending **-li** mentioned above. Unfortunately, we lack more examples that could confirm or disprove this theory (and so I don’t dare to construct any exercises based on this assumption, though I would follow this rule in my own Quenya compositions). The form **tyeller** confused early researchers; with extremely few examples to go on, some wrongly concluded that nouns in **-ë** *regularly* have plurals in **-er**. The name of the early journal **Parma Eldalamberon** or “Book of Elven-tongues” (sporadically published still) reflects this mistake; the title incorporates **\*\*lamber** as the presumed plural of **lambë** “tongue, language”, while we now know that the correct plural must be **lambi**. Though the error was early suspected and is now recognized by everyone, the publisher never bothered to change the name of the journal to the correct form **Parma El-**

**dalambion** (and so, ever and anon, I get an e-mail from some fresh student wondering why my site is called **Ardalambion** and not **Ardalamberon** . . .) In some cases, Tolkien himself seems uncertain which plural ending should be used. In PM:332, the plural form of **Ingwë** “Elf of the First Clan [also name of the king of that clan]” is given as **Ingwi**, just as we would expect; yet a few pages later, in PM:340, we find **Ingwer** instead (it is there said that the First Clan, the Vanyar, called *themselves* Ingwer, so perhaps this reflects a special Vanyarin usage?) It may be noted that in Tolkien’s earliest “Qenya”, more nouns in **-ë** apparently had plural forms in **-er**. For instance, the early poem *Nargelion* has **lasser** as the plural of **lassë** “leaf”, but in *Namárië* in LotR Tolkien used the plural form **lassi**.

As far as I know, the words in the exercises below all follow the normal rule: Nouns ending in **-ë**, except as a part of **-ië**, have plurals in **-i**.

This leaves only one group of nouns to be considered, namely those that end in a consonant. These nouns, just like those that end in **-ë**, are seen to have plurals in **-i**. A few examples: **Eleni** “stars”, the plural form of **elen** “star”, occurs in *Namárië* (and also in WJ:362, where both the singular and the plural form are quoted). The *Silmarillion* has **Atani** for “Men” (not “males”, but humans as opposed to Elves); this is formed from the singular word **Atan**. According to WJ:388, the word **Casar** “Dwarf” has the plural **Casari** “Dwarves”.

Of these two plural endings – **r** as in **Eldar** “Elves”, but **i** as in **Atani** “(Mortal) Men” – Tolkien imagined the latter to be the most ancient. The plural ending **-i** comes directly from Primitive Elvish **-î**, a word like **Quendi** representing primitive *Kwendî*. The plural ending **-r** arose later: “For the showing of many the new device of *r* was brought in and used in all words of a certain shape – and this, it is said, was begun among the Noldor” (PM:402). In primary-world terms, both plural endings were however present in Tolkien’s conception from the beginning; already in his earliest work on “Qenya”, written during World War I, we find forms like **Qendi** (as it was then spelt) and **Eldar** coexisting. The twin plural endings are a feature that evidently survived throughout all the stages of Tolkien’s development of Quenya, from 1915 to 1973.

NOTE ON THE DIFFERENT WORDS FOR “ELF”: As the attentive reader will have inferred from the above, there is more than one Quenya word for “Elf”. The word with the widest application, within the scope of Tolkien’s fiction, was **Quendë** pl. **Quendi**. This form is at least associated with the word “to speak” (**quet-**), and Tolkien speculated that ultimately these words were indeed related via a very primitive base **KWE-** having to do with vocal speech (see WJ:391–392). When the Elves awoke by the mere of Cuiviënen, they called themselves **Quendi** (or in primitive Elvish actually *Kwendî*) since for a long time they knew of no other speaking creatures. Eventually the Vala *Oromë* found them under a starlit sky, and he gave them a new name in the language they themselves had developed: *Eldâi*, often translated “Starfolk”. In Quenya, this primitive word later appeared as **Eldar** (singular **Elda**). While the term **Eldar** (*Eldâi*) was originally meant to apply to the entire

Elvish race, it was later only used of the Elves that accepted the invitation of the Valar to come and dwell in the Blessed Realm of Aman and embarked on the Great March to get there (the term **Eldar** is also applicable to those who never actually made it all the way to Aman, such as the **Sindar** or Grey-elves who stayed in Beleriand). Those who refused the invitation were called **Avári**, “Refusers”, and hence all Elves (**Quendi**) can be subdivided into **Eldar** and **Avári**. Only the former play any important part in Tolkien’s narratives. So in later Quenya the situation was this: **Quendë** pl. **Quendi** remained as the only truly universal term for all Elves of any kind, but this was a technical word primarily used by the Loremasters, not a word that would be used in daily speech. The gender-specific variants of **Quendë** “Elf”, namely masculine **quendu** and feminine **quendi**, would presumably be used only if you wanted to speak of a specifically *Elvish* (wo)man as opposed to a (wo)man of any other sentient race: These are not the normal Quenya words for “man” and “woman” (the normal words are **nér** and **nís**, presumably applicable to a man or woman of any sentient race, not just Elves). The normal, everyday Quenya term for “Elf” was **Elda**, and the fact that this word *technically* didn’t apply to Elves of the obscure Avarin tribes living somewhere far east in Middle-earth was no big problem since none of them was ever seen anyway. Regarding the compound **Eldalië** (which combines **Elda** with **lië** “people, folk”) Tolkien wrote that when one of the Elves of Aman used this word, “he meant vaguely all the race of Elves, though he was probably not thinking of the Avári” (WJ:374). – Throughout the exercises found in this course, I have used **Elda** (rather than **Quendë**) as the standard translation of English “Elf”, regardless of any specialized meaning it may have within Tolkien’s mythos. As I said in the Introduction, in these exercises I largely eschew specific references to Tolkien’s mythos and narratives.

## 2.2 The article

We have time for one more thing in this lesson: the *article*. An article, linguistically speaking, is such a word as English “the” or “a, an”. These little words are used in conjunction with nouns to express such different shades of meaning as “a horse” vs. “the horse”. Anyone capable of reading this text in the first place will know what the difference is, so no lengthy explanation is necessary. In short, “a horse” refers to a horse that hasn’t been mentioned before, so you slip in the article “a” as a kind of introduction: “Look, there’s a horse over there!” You may also use the phrase “a horse” if you want to say something that is true of any horse, as in “a horse is an animal”. If, on the other hand, you say “the horse”, it usually refers to one definite horse. Hence “the” is termed the *definite article*, while “a, an”, lacking this “definite” aspect, is conversely called the *indefinite article*.

In this respect at least, Quenya is somewhat simpler than English. Quenya has only one article, corresponding to the English definite article “the” (and since there is no indefinite article it must be distinguished from, we may simply speak of “the article” when discussing Quenya). The Quenya word corresponding to English “the” is **i**. For instance, *Namárië* has **i eleni** for

“the stars”. As can be inferred from the above, Quenya has no word corresponding to English “a, an”. When translating Quenya into English, one simply has to slip in “a” wherever English grammar demands an indefinite article, as in the famous greeting **Elen síla lúmenn’ omentielvo**, “a star shines upon the hour of our meeting”. As we see, the first word of the Quenya sentence is simply **elen** “star”, with nothing corresponding to the English indefinite article “a” before it (or anywhere else in the sentence, for that matter). In Quenya, there is no way you can maintain the distinction between “a star” and just “star”; both are simply **elen**. Luckily there isn’t much of a distinction to be maintained anyway. Languages like Arabic, Hebrew and classical Greek employ a similar system: there is a definite article corresponding to English “the”, but nothing corresponding to the English indefinite article “a, an” (and this is the system used in Esperanto as well). After all, the *absence* of the definite article is itself enough to signal that a (common) noun is indefinite, so the indefinite article is in a way superfluous. Tolkien decided to do without it in Quenya, so students only have to worry about **i** = “the”.

Sometimes, Tolkien connects the article to the next word by means of a hyphen or a dot: **i-mar** “the earth” (*Fíriel’s Song*), **i-coimas** “the lifebread” (PM:396). However, he did not do so in LotR (we have already quoted the example **i eleni** “the stars” in *Namárië*), and neither will we here.

The Quenya article is generally used as in English. However, some nouns that would require the article in English are apparently counted as proper names in Quenya, and so take no article. For instance, the sentence **Anar caluva tielyanna** is translated “*the* Sun shall shine upon your path” (UT: 22, 51); yet there is no article in the Quenya sentence. “The Sun” is not **\*\*i Anar**, but simply **Anar**. Clearly **Anar** is perceived as a proper name, designating one celestial body only, and you don’t have to say “the Anar” any more than an English-speaking person would say “the Mars”. The name of “the” Moon, **Isil**, undoubtedly behaves like **Anar** in this respect. It may be noted that both words are treated as proper names in the *Silmarillion*, chapter 11: “Isil was first wrought and made ready, and first rose into the realm of the stars. . . Anar arose in glory, and the first dawn of the Sun was like a great fire. . .”

Also notice that before a plural denoting an entire people (or even race), the article is not normally used. WJ:404 mentions a saying **Valar valubar**, “the will of the Valar will be done” (or more literally \**“the Valar will rule”*). Notice that “the Valar” is simply **Valar** in Quenya, not **i Valar**. Similarly, PM:395 has **lambë Quendion** for “language of the Elves” and **coimas Eldaron** for “*coimas* [lembas] of the Eldar” – not **\*\*lambë i Quendion**, **\*\*coimas i Eldaron**. (The ending **-on** here appended to the plurals **Quendi**, **Eldar** signifies “of”; this ending should not affect whether or not the article has to be present before the word.)

With this usage compare Tolkien’s use of “Men” in his narratives to refer

to the human race as such: “Men awoke in Hildórien at the rising of the Sun... A darkness lay upon the hearts of Men... Men (it is said) were at first very few in number...” (*Silmarillion*, chapter 17.) By contrast, “the Men” would refer, not to the entire race, but only to a casual group of “Men” or humans. Quenya plurals denoting entire peoples or races seem to behave in the same way. In a Quenya text there would probably be no article before plurals like **Valar**, **Eldar**, **Vanyar**, **Noldor**, **Lindar**, **Teleri**, **Atani** etc. as long as the entire race or people is considered, even though Tolkien’s English narratives speak of “*the* Valar”, “*the* Eldar” etc. However, if we replace **Eldar** with its equivalent “Elves”, we see that the article often would often not be required in English, either (e.g. “Elves are beautiful” = **Eldar nar vanyë**; if you say “the Elves are beautiful” = **i Eldar nar vanyë**, you are probably describing once particular group of Elves, not the entire race).

Occasionally, especially in poetry, the article seemingly drops out for no special reason. Perhaps it is simply omitted because of metric considerations. The first line of *Namárië*, **ai! laurië lantar lassí súrinen**, Tolkien translated “ah! like gold fall *the* leaves...” – though there is no **i** before **lassí** “leaves” in the Quenya text. The Markirya poem also leaves out the article in a number of places, if we are to judge by Tolkien’s English translation of it.

## Summary of Lesson Two

There is a plural ending **-li** the function of which we don’t fully understand, so we will leave it alone for now. The normal plural is formed by adding **-r** to nouns ending in any of the vowels **-a**, **-i**, **-o**, **-u**, plus nouns ending in **-ië**. If, on the other hand, the noun ends in **-ë** (except, of course, as part of **-ië**) the plural ending is usually **-i** (displacing the final **-ë**); nouns ending in a consonant also form their plurals in **-i**. The Quenya *definite article*, corresponding to English “the”, is **i**; there is no indefinite article like English “a, an”.

## Vocabulary

Regarding Frodo hearing Galadriel singing *Namárië*, the LotR states that “as is the way of Elvish words, they remained graven in his memory”. This may be a comforting thought to students attempting to memorize Quenya vocabulary. In the lessons proper, while I discuss various aspects of Quenya, I will normally mention quite a few words – but in the exercises, I will only use words from the “vocabulary” list that is hereafter presented at the end of each lesson. Thus, this is all the student is expected to carefully memorize (doing the exercises for the next lessons, you will also need vocabulary intro-

duced earlier). We will introduce twelve new words in each lesson: a fitting number, since Tolkien's Elves preferred counting in twelves rather than tens as we do. A unified list of all the vocabulary henceforth employed in the exercises of this course can be found in Appendix A.

**minë** “one” (from now on, we will introduce one new number in each lesson)

**Anar** “(the) Sun”

**Isil** “(the) Moon”

**ar** “and” (a most useful word that will allow us to have two exercises in one... translate “the Sun and the Moon”, for instance...)

**Elda** “Elf”

**lië** “people” (sc. an entire “ethnic group” or even race, as in **Eldalië** = the People of the Elves).

**wendë** “maiden” (in archaic Quenya **wendë**)

**rocco** “horse” (specifically “swift horse for riding”, according to *Letters*:382)

**aran** “king”

**tári** “queen”

**tasar** “willow” (by its form this could be the plural of **\*\*tasa**, but no such word exists, and -r is here part of the basic word and not an ending. This word occurs, compounded, in LotR – Treebeard chanting “In the willow-meads of Tasarinan [Willow-vale] I walked in the spring...”)

**nu** “under”

## Exercises

1. Translate into English (or whatever language you prefer):

A. **Roccor**

B. **Aran** (*two possible English translations!*)

C. **I rocco.**

D. **I roccor.**

E. **Arani.**

F. **Minë lië nu minë aran.**

G. **I aran ar i tári.**

H. **Vendi.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

I. Willows.

J. Elves.



- K. The kings.
- L. Peoples.
- M. The horse under (*or, below*) the willow.
- N. A maiden and a queen.
- O. The queen and the maidens.
- P. The Sun and the Moon (I promised you that one...)

# Lesson 3

Dual number. Stem variation.

## 3.1 Dual number

The previous lesson covered two Quenya plural forms: the somewhat mysterious “partitive plural” in **-li**, and the “normal” plural in either **-r** or **-i** (mostly depending on the shape of the word). Like quite a few “real” languages, Quenya also possesses a *dual* form, that has no direct counterpart in English. Dual number refers to *two* things, a *couple* of things. The dual is formed with one out of two endings: **-u** or **-t**.

Within the fictional timeline imagined by Tolkien, these two endings originally had somewhat different meanings, and so were not completely interchangeable. A footnote in Letters:427 provides some information on this. The ending **-u** (from Primitive Elvish *-û*) was originally used in the case of *natural pairs*, of two things or persons somehow belonging together as a logical couple. For instance, according to VT39:9, 11, the word **pé** “lip” has the dual form **peu** “lips”, referring to one person’s pair of lips (and not, for instance, to the upper lip of one person and the lower lip of another, which would be just “two lips” and not a natural pair). The noun **veru**, meaning “married pair” or “husband and wife”, has dual form; in this case there does not seem to be a corresponding singular “spouse” (but we have **verno** “husband” and **vessë** “wife” from the same root; see LR:352). The noun **alda** “tree” occurs in dual form with reference, not to any casual pair of trees, but the Two Trees of Valinor: **Aldu**.

Notice that if the ending **-u** is added to a noun ending in a vowel, this vowel is displaced: hence the dual of **alda** is **aldu** rather than **\*\*aldau** – though a word quoted in PM:138, reproducing a draft for the LotR Appendices, seems to suggest that Tolkien for a moment considered precisely the latter form. There is also an old source that has **Aldaru**, apparently formed by adding the dual ending **-u** to the normal plural **aldar** “trees”, but this seems to be an early experiment of Tolkien’s that was probably long obsolete by the time he wrote LotR. In the dual form **peu**, the final vowel of **pé** “lip” is apparently not displaced by the dual ending **-u**. However, Quenya **pé** is

meant to descend from primitive Elvish *peñe*, whereas the dual form **peu** is meant to come from *peñû* (VT39:9) – so the **e** of **peu** was not originally final.

As for the other dual ending, **-t**, it according to Letters:427 represents an old element *ata*. This, Tolkien noted, was originally “purely numerative”; it is indeed related to the Quenya word for the numeral “two”, **atta**. By “purely numerative”, Tolkien evidently meant that the dual in **-t** could denote two things only casually related. For instance, **ciryat** as the dual form of **cirya** “ship” could refer to any two ships; **ciryat** would only be a kind of spoken shorthand for the full phrase **atta ciryar**, “two ships”. However, Tolkien further noted that “in later Q[uenya]”, the dual forms were “only usual with reference to natural pairs”. Precisely what he means by “later” Quenya cannot be determined; it could refer to Quenya as a ritual language in Middle-earth rather than the vernacular of the Eldar in Valinor. In any case, the Third Age Quenya we aim for in this course must certainly be included when Tolkien speaks of “later” Quenya, so here we will follow the rule that *any* dual form must refer to some kind of natural or logical pair, not to two things only casually related. In other words, the dual in **-t** came to have just the same “meaning” as a dual in **-u**. A dual like **ciryat** “2 ships” (curiously spelt “ciri~~a~~t” in Letters:427, perhaps a typo) would not in later Quenya be used with reference to any two ships, but only of two ships that somehow form a *pair* – like two sister ships. If you just want to refer to two ships that do not in any way form a natural or logical pair, like any two ships that happen to be seen together, you would not use the dual form but simply the numeral **atta** “two” – hence **atta ciryar**.

Since the two endings **-t** and **-u** had come to carry the same meaning, some rule is needed to determine when to use which. Which ending should be used can apparently be inferred from the shape of the word itself (just like the shape of the word normally determines whether the *plural* ending should be **-i** or **-r**). In Letters:427, Tolkien noted that “the choice of *t* or *u* [was] decided by euphony”, sc. by what sounded well – adding as an example that **-u** was preferred to **-t** if the word that is to receive a dual ending already contains a **t** or the similar sound **d**. Hence the dual of **alda** is **aldu** rather than **\*\*aldat**. It seems that as far as later Quenya is concerned, **-t** would be your first option as the dual ending, but if the noun it is to be added to already contains **t** or **d**, you opt for **-u** instead (remembering that this ending displaces any final vowels). The duals Tolkien listed in the Plotz Letter, **ciryat** “a couple of ships” and **lasset** “a couple of leaves” (formed from **cirya** “ship” and **lassë** “leaf”) confirm that a words with no **t** or **d** in them take the dual ending **-t**. Perhaps the ending **-u** would also be preferred in the case of nouns ending in a consonant, since **-t** could not be added directly to such a word without producing a final consonant cluster that Quenya phonology wouldn’t allow; unfortunately we have no examples. (If the ending **-t** is to be used anyhow, a vowel would probably have to be

inserted before it, producing a longer ending – likely **-et**. We will eschew this little problem in the exercises below, since nobody really knows the answer.)

It is clear, however, that Quenya has a number of old duals that do not follow the rule that the ending is normally **-t**, replaced by **-u** only if there is a **d** or **t** in the word it is to be added to. The examples **veru** “married pair” and **peu** “lips, pair of lips” are proof of that; here there is no **t** or **d** present, but the ending is still **-u** rather than **-t**. Presumably these are “fossilized” dual forms reflecting the older system in which only **-u** denoted a natural or logical pair. The example **peu** “(pair of) lips” suggests that the ending **-u** is used in the case of body-parts occurring in pairs, such as eyes, arms, legs. (The other ending **-t** may however be used if certain other endings intrude before the dual ending itself; we will return to this in a later lesson.) The word for “arm” is **ranco**; the dual form denoting one person’s pair of arms is not attested, but my best guess is that it would be **rancu**. The compound **hendumaica** “sharp-eye[d]” mentioned in WJ:337 *may* incorporate a dual **hendu** “(pair of) eyes”. The Quenya word for “eye” is known to be **hen**, or **hend-** before an ending (the *Etymologies* only mentions the normal plural **hendi** “eyes”, LR:364). In the case of this word the dual ending would be **-u** rather than **-t** anyway, since there is a **d** in **hend-**. The word for “foot”, **tál**, probably has the dual **talu** (for the shortening of the vowel, see below).

### 3.2 Stem variation

This is a subject we shall have to spend some paragraphs on, since even on this early stage of the course we haven’t been able to wholly eschew it. I will go into some detail here, but students can rest assured that they are not expected to remember all the words and examples below; just try to get a feel for what stem variation is all about.

Sometimes the form of a Quenya word subtly *changes* when you add endings to it. Two such words were mentioned above. If you add an ending to **tál** “foot”, for instance **-i** for plural or **-u** for dual, the long vowel **á** is shortened to **a**. So the plural “feet” is **tali** rather than **\*\*táli**, the dual “a couple of feet” is **talu** rather than **\*\*tálu**. In such a case, **tál** “foot” may be said to have the *stem* **tal-**. Likewise, the word **hen** “eye” has the *stem* **hend-**, since its plural is **hendi** and not just **\*\*heni**. The “stem” form does not occur by itself, but is the form you add endings to. When presenting a gloss, I will represent such *stem variation* by listing the independent form first, followed by a parenthetical “stem form” with a hyphen where the ending goes, e.g.: **tál (tal-)** “foot”, **hen (hend-)** “eye”.

In the case of **tál** vs. **tal-**, the variation is apparently due to the fact that vowels were often lengthened in words of only one syllable, but when the word had endings the word obviously got more than one syllable and so the lengthening did not occur (another example of the same seems to be

**nér** “man” vs. plural **neri** “men”, MR:213/LR:354). Originally, the vowel was short in all forms. It is usually true that the stem form gives away how the word looked at an *earlier* stage in the long linguistic evolution Tolkien dreamed up in great detail. **Hen** “eye” in its stem **hend-** reflects the primitive “base” KHEN-D-E from which it is ultimately derived (LR:364). Quenya could not have **-nd** at the end of a word and simplified it to **-n** when the word stands alone (thus, **hen** in a way *represents* the impossible “full” form **hend**), but before an ending the group **-nd-** was not final and could therefore actually appear. Very often stem variation has to do with clusters or sounds that are not allowed at the end of words, but that may appear elsewhere. Cf. a word like **talan** “floor”. The plural “floors” is not **\*\*talani** as we might expect, but **talami**. The stem is **talam-** because this is the form of the Primitive Elvish root-word: TALAM (LR:390). As Quenya evolved from Primitive Elvish, a rule came into place that only a few consonants were allowed at the end of words, and **m** was not one of them. The closest “permissible” consonant was **n**, and so the old word *talam* was altered to **talan** – but in the plural form **talami** (and other forms that added an ending to the word), the **m** was not final and therefore persisted unchanged. Another, similar case is **filit** “small bird”, that has the stem **filic-** (e.g. plural **filici** “small birds”): The primitive root-word was PHILIK (LR:381), but Quenya did not permit **-k** at the end of a word, so in that position it became **-t**. When not final it remained **k** (here spelt **c**).

In some cases, the “independent” form is a *simplified* or *shortened* form of a word, while the stem form reflects the fuller form. For instance, Tolkien apparently imagined that the word **merendë** “feast, festival” was often shortened to **meren**, but the stem is still **merend-** (LR:372). Hence the plural of **meren** is **merendi**, not **\*\*mereni**. When it stands alone, the word **nissë** “woman” is normally reduced to **nis** (or **nís** with a lengthened vowel), but the double *S* persists before endings: thus the plural “women” is **nissi** (LR:377, MR:213). A similar case is **Silmarillë**, the name of one of the legendary jewels created by Fëanor; this is normally shortened to **Silmaril**, but before endings the double *L* of the full form is preserved (**Silmarill-**); hence the plural is always **Silmarilli**. In the case of *compound* words, sc. words made up from several other words, the second element in the compound is often reduced, but a fuller form may turn up before an ending. For instance, the noun **Sindel** “Grey-elf” (WJ:384) incorporates **-el** as a reduced form of **Elda** “Elf”. The plural of **Sindel** is not **\*\*Sindeli**, but **Sindeldi** preserving the cluster **-ld-** seen in **Elda**. (Since the final **-a** is lost in the compound, we cannot have the plural **\*\*Sindeldar**.)

In some cases a word may be *contracted* when you add endings to it. In such cases the stem-form does *not* reflect the older, more complete form of the word. Such contraction often occurs in two-syllable words containing two identical vowels. For instance, **feren** “beech-tree” is reduced to **fern-** before an ending, e.g. plural **ferni** instead of **\*\*fereni**. WJ:416 likewise

indicates that **laman** “animal” may be reduced to **lamn-** before an ending, hence for instance **lamni** “animals”, though the unreduced form **lamani** was also in use. Occasionally, the contracted forms suffer further change when compared to the unreduced form; as the plural of **seler** “sister” we might expect **\*selri**, but since **lr** is not a permissible consonant cluster in Quenya, it is changed to **ll** – the actual plural “sisters” being **selli** (LR:392).

Another form of stem-variation is very poorly attested as far as nouns are concerned, but there are hints to the effect that the *final vowel* of some words would change when an ending is added. In Quenya, the final vowels **-o** and **-ë** sometimes come from **-u** and **-i** in Primitive Elvish. At one stage of the linguistic evolution, original short **-i** became **-e** when the vowel was final; in the same environment original short **-u** became **-o**. For instance, the primitive word *tundu* “hill, mound” came out as **tundo** in Quenya (LR:395). But since this change only occurred when the vowel was *final*, it is possible that its original quality would be preserved before an ending. The plural “hills” may well be **tundur** rather than **tundor**, though neither form is attested. According to SD:415, the Quenya noun **lómë** “night” has the “stem” **lómi-**, evidently meaning that the final vowel **-ë** changes to **-i** if you add an ending after it. For instance, adding the dual ending **-t** to **lómë** (to express “a couple of nights”) would presumably produce **lómit** rather than **lómet**. This would be because **lómë** comes from Primitive Elvish *dômi* (LR:354), and **-i** never turned into **-e** except when final. Some think certain words in *Namárië*, **lírinen** and **súrinen**, are attested examples of this phenomenon: These are forms of **lírë** “song” and **súré** “wind” (the latter is attested by itself in MC:222; the meaning of the ending **-nen** seen in **lírinen** and **súrinen** will be discussed in a later lesson). If this word originally ended in an **-i** that became **-ë** only later (and only when final), it may explain why in this word **-ë** seemingly turns into **-i** before an ending. We would then say that **súré** has the stem **súri-**.

There seems to be a similar variation between involving the final vowel **-o**, that in some cases descend from final **-u** in Primitive Elvish; again the primitive quality of the vowel may be resurrected if an ending is added to it. For instance, **rusco** “fox” is said to have the stem **ruscu-**, so if we add the dual ending to speak of a “a couple of foxes”, the resulting form should presumably be **ruscut** rather than **ruscot**. However, there is no extensive treatment of this phenomenon in Tolkien’s published writings; indeed the statements made in SD:415 and VT41:10 that **lómë** and **rusco** have stems **lómi-**, **ruscu-** are as close as we get to explicit references to it.

The student should not despair, thinking that all sorts of strange things typically happen whenever you add an ending to a Quenya word, so that there is a great potential for making embarrassing mistakes (or at least very much extra stuff to memorize). Most Quenya words seem to be quite well-behaved, with no distinct “stem” form to remember; you just add the ending and that’s it. Where a distinct stem-form is known to exist (or where we

have good reason to suspect one), this will of course be indicated when I first present the word, if it is relevant for the exercises.

## Summary of Lesson Three

In addition to the plural form(s), Quenya also has a *dual* number used for a pair of things forming some kind of natural or logical couple. (We must assume that two things only casually associated would be denoted by a normal plural in conjunction with the numeral **atta** “two”.) The dual is formed with one out of two endings: **-t** or **-u** (the latter displaces final vowels; the dual of **alda** “tree” is therefore **aldu** rather than **aldau**). One’s first choice seems to be **-t**, but if the word this ending is to be added to already contains a **t** or a **d**, the alternative ending **-u** is preferred instead (for reasons of euphony – if you like, to avoid “crowding” the word with **t**’s or similar sounds!) However, there seems to be a number of old, “fossilized” dual forms that end in **-u** even though there is no **d** or **t** in the word, such as **veru** “married pair” and **peu** “pair of lips”. The latter example may suggest that all body-parts occurring in pairs are denoted by dual forms in **-u** rather than **-t**, regardless of the shape of the word (though the ending **-t** is evidently preferred if other endings intrude before the dual ending itself; more on this later).

Quite a few Quenya words subtly *change* when endings are appended to them, e.g. **talan** “floor” turning into **talam-** in the plural form **talami**. We would then call **talam-** the *stem form* of **talan**. Similarly, the final vowels **-o** and **-ë** sometimes appear as **-u-** and **-i-**, respectively, if some ending is added; thus **lómë** “night” has the stem **lómi-**. In many cases, the stem-form echoes the older shape of words (sounds or combinations that could not survive at the end of a word being preserved where not final), though the stem-form may also represent a contraction.

## Vocabulary

**atta** “two”

**hen** (**hend-**) “eye”

**ranco** “arm”

**ando** “gate”

**cirya** “ship”

**aiwë** “bird”

**talan** (**talam-**) “floor”

**nér** (**ner-**) “man” (adult male of any sentient race – Elvish, mortal or otherwise)

**nís** (**niss-**) “woman” (similarly: adult female of any sentient race)

**sar** (**sard-**) “stone” (a small stone – not “stone” as a substance or material)

**alda** “tree”

**oron** (**oront-**) “mountain”

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

A. **Hendu**

B. **Atta hendi** (*and answer: what is the difference between this and **hendu** above?*)

C. **Aldu**

D. **Atta aldar** (*and answer again: what is the difference between this and **Aldu** above?*)

E. **Minë nér ar minë nís.**

F. **I sardi.**

G. **Talami.**

H. **Oronti.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

I. Two ships (*just any two ships that happen to be seen together*)

J. Two ships (*that happen to be sister ships*)

K. Arms (*the two arms of one person*)

L. Two mountains (*within the same range; Twin Peaks, if you like – use a dual form*)

M. Double gate (*use a dual form*)

N. Two birds (*that have formed a pair*)

O. Two birds (*just any two birds*)

P. Men and women.



# Lesson 4

The Adjective. The Copula. Adjectival agreement in number.

## 4.1 The Adjective

The vocabulary of any language can be separated into various classes of words – various *parts of speech*. Tolkien’s languages were designed to be “definitely of a European kind in style and structure” (*Letters*:175), so the parts of speech they contain are not very exotic, but ought to be quite familiar to any schoolchild in Europe or America. We have already mentioned the *nouns*, which by a somewhat simplified definition are words denoting things. Now we will move on to the *adjectives*.

Adjectives are words that have assumed the special function of *description*. If you want to say that someone or something possesses a certain quality, you can often find an adjective that will do the job. In a sentence like *the house is red*, the word “red” is an adjective. It describes the house. There are adjectives for all sorts of qualities, quite useful if you want to say that someone or something is *big, small, holy, blue, silly, rotten, beautiful, thin, nauseous, tall, wonderful, obnoxious* or whatever the occasion demands.

One often distinguishes two different ways of using an adjective:

1. You can team it up with a noun which it then describes, resulting in phrases like *tall men* or *(a/the) red book*. Such phrases can then be inserted into a full sentence, like *tall men scare me* or *the red book is mine*, where the words *tall, red* simply provide extra information about their companion nouns. This is called using the adjective *attributively*. The quality in question is presented as an “attribute” of the noun, or is “attributed” to it (*tall men* – OK, then we know precisely what kind of men we are talking about here, the tall ones, their tallness being their “attribute”).

2. But you may also construct sentences where the whole *point* is that someone or something possesses a specific quality. You don’t just “presuppose” the tallness as when you speak of *tall men* – you want to say that *the men are tall*, that’s the very piece of information you want to convey. This is called using an adjective *predicatively*: You choose a party you want to say something about, like *the men* in this case, and then add an adjective to tell

what quality this party possesses. The adjective is then called the *predicate* of this sentence.

As the attentive reader already suspects from the example above, there is one more complication: You don't just say *the men tall*, but *the men are tall*. Actually sentences like *the men tall* would be quite OK in a great number of languages (and Quenya may even be one of them), but in English you have to slip in a word like *are* or *is* before the adjective when you use it as a predicate: *The book is red. The men are tall*. This “is/are” doesn't really add a whole lot of meaning here (there is a reason why so many languages manage without any corresponding word!), but it is used to “couple” the adjective with the words that tell us what we are really talking about here – like *the book* and *the men* in our example. Hence “is/are” is called a *copula*. In sentences like *gold is beautiful, I am smart* or *stones are hard*, it can be perceived the prime function of the copula (here variously manifesting as *is, am* and *are*) is simply to connect the following adjectives *beautiful, smart, hard* with the thing(s) or person we are talking about: *gold, I, stones*. The copula is an integral part of the predicate of the sentence. This is one of the most important constructions speakers of English have at their disposal when they want to say that X possesses the quality Y.

Well, let's get down to Quenya here. When compared to the plethora of shapes that a noun can have, Quenya *adjectives* are quite restricted in form. The vast majority of Quenya adjectives end in one of two vowels **-a** or **-ë**. The latter ending is the less common and typically occurs in colour-adjectives: **Ninquë** “white”, **morë** “black”, **carnë** “red”, **varnë** “brown” etc. When an adjective does not end in **-a** or **-ë**, it virtually always ends in **-in**, e.g. **frin** “dead”, **hwarin** “crooked”, **melin** “dear” or **latin** “open, free, cleared (of land)”. The latter adjective is actually listed as **latin(a)** in Tolkien's writings (LR:368), evidently suggesting that **latin** is shortened from a longer form **latina**, both variants occurring in the language. (Perhaps all the adjectives in **-in** are to be considered shortened forms or full forms in **-ina**.) Adjectives that do *not* end in either **-a**, **-ë** or **-in** are extremely rare; there is at least **teren** “slender” – but even this adjective also has a longer form in **-ë** (**terenë**).

Adjectives in **-a** are by far the most common type. The final vowel **-a** may appear by itself, as in **lára** “flat”, but it is often part of a longer adjectival ending like **-wa**, **-na** (variant **-da**), **-ima** or **-ya**. Examples: **helwa** “(pale) blue”, **harna** “wounded”, **melda** “beloved, dear”, **melima** “loveable”, **vanya** “beautiful”. The word **Quenya** itself is in its origin a **ya**-adjective meaning “Elvish, Quendian”, though Tolkien decided that it came to be used only as a name of the High-elven language (Letters:176, WJ:360–361, 374).

In Quenya as in English, an adjective can be directly combined with a noun, describing it. We have many attested examples of adjectives being used attributively like this; they include the phrases **lintë yuldar** “swift

draughts” (*Namárië*), **luini tellumar** “blue vaults” (prose-style *Namárië*), **fána cirya** “a white ship” (*Markirya*), **quantë tengwi** “full signs” (a term used by early Elvish linguists; we needn’t discuss its precise meaning here; see VT39:5). In these examples, the word order is the same as in English: adjective + noun. This is apparently the normal, preferred order. In Quenya, it is however also permissible to let the adjective *follow* the noun. For instance, *Markirya* has **anar púrëa** for “a bleared sun”, literally “(a) sun bleared”, and in LR:47 we have **mallë téra**, literally “road straight”, for “a straight road” (cf. LR:43). Perhaps this word order is used if you want to emphasize the adjective: the context in LR:47 indicates that this is a *straight* road as opposed to a bent one. However, letting the adjective follow the noun may be the normal word order in the case of an adjectival “title” that is used in conjunction with a proper name: In UT:305 cf. 317 we have **Elendil Voronda** for “Elendil the Faithful” (well, the form found in UT:305 is actually **Elendil Vorondo**, because the phrase is inflected; we will return to the ending **-o** here seen in a later lesson). Presumably you could also use the more normal word-order and speak of **voronda Elendil**, but that – I guess – would simply be a more casual reference to “faithful Elendil”, not meaning “Elendil the Faithful” with the adjective used as a regular title. It may be noted that Quenya, unlike English, does not insert the article before an adjective used as a title (not **\*\*Elendil i Voronda**, at least not necessarily).

What, then, about using adjectives as *predicates*, like “red” is the predicate of the sentence “the book is red”? (Contrast the *attributive* use of the adjective in a phrase like “the red book”.) The adjective **vanwa** “lost” is used predicatively in *Namárië*: **Vanwa ná . . . Valimar** “lost is . . . Valimar” (a place in the Blessed Realm that Galadriel thought she would never see again). This sentence tells us that the Quenya copula “is” has the form **ná**. Plural “are” seems to be **nar**, attested in an early version of *Namárië* recorded by Tolkien on tape (see Jim Allan’s *An Introduction to Elvish*, p. 5). It is generally assumed that these copulas would be used as in English, for instance like this:

**I parma ná carnë.** “The book is red.”

**Ulundo ná úmëa.** “A monster is evil.”

**I neri nar hallë.** “The men are tall.”

In this lesson as originally published in December 2000, I slipped in a warning at this point:

I should add, though, that due to the extreme scarcity of examples we can’t be certain what the preferred word order really is. From the example **vanwa ná . . . Valimar** “lost is . . . Valimar” in *Namárië* one could argue that **ná** should *follow* the adjective, so that “the book is red” should rather be **i parma carnë ná**,

“the book red is”. It would be interesting to know if **ná** “is” would still follow **vanwa** “lost” if we relocated **Valimar** to the beginning of the sentence; should “Valimar is lost” be **Valimar ná vanwa**, English-style, or perhaps **Valimar vanwa ná**? In the examples above and the exercises below I have organized the sentences using the “English” word order, but Tolkien *may* have had something more exotic up his sleeve. There is no way of telling before more material is published.

I revise this lesson in November 2001, and this summer a few more examples involving the word **ná** “is” finally became available. There does seem to be a tendency to place **ná** at the end of the sentence, as in the example **lá caritas . . . alasaila ná** (literally, “not to do it unwise is” – VT42:34). Yet the same article that provides this example also cites the formula “A **ná calima lá B**” (literally, “A is bright beyond B”) as the Quenya way of expressing “A is brighter than B” (VT42:32). Notice that this formula employs an English-style word-order, with **ná** “is” preceding rather than following **calima** “bright”. So it seems that sentences like **i parma ná carnë**, word by word corresponding to English “the book is red”, may be possible after all. Therefore I have not revised any of the examples or exercises of this course, all of which employ the “English” word order as far as the copula **ná** is concerned. It seems, however, that the order **i parma carnë ná** “the book red is” must be considered a perfectly valid alternative, and Tolkien may even have intended this to be the more common word order. We must await still more examples.

[New update, January 2002: This month some new examples were indeed published. It seems that the exact word order is simply a matter of taste. The example **elyë na manna** “thou art blessed” from VT43:26 has an English-style word order, and here the copula “is/art” appears in the short form **na** rather than **ná**. I have however maintained **ná** in the exercises of this course; the word **na** has several other, quite distinct meanings. But perhaps the short form **na-** is consistently preferred when some ending is to be added; cf. the plural form **nar** “are”. Of course, the unattested form **nár** could be equally valid for all I know.]

In Fíriel’s Song (a pre-LotR text), the word for “is” appears as **ye** rather than **ná** or **na**, as in **írima ye Númenor** “lovely is Númenor” (LR:72). However, both the *Qenya Lexicon* (QL:64) and the *Etymologies* (LR:374) point to **ná** instead, and in *Namárië* we have this word attested in an actual text. Etym and the QL are earlier than Fíriel’s Song, but *Namárië* is later, so would seem that **ye** was just a passing experiment in Tolkien’s evolution of Quenya. In Fíriel’s Song we also see an *ending* for “is”, **-ië**, appended to adjectives and displacing their final vowel: hence in this song we have **márië** for “(it) is good”, derived from the adjective **mára** “good”. This ending **-ië** is transparently related to the independent word **ye**. I don’t think the

system of using the ending **-ië** for “is” was still valid in LotR-style Quenya, and I wouldn’t recommend it to writers. The ending **-ië** has other meanings in later Quenya.

Another system may well be valid, though: using no copula at all. You simply juxtapose the noun and the adjective, the word “is/are” being understood: **Ilu vanya** “the World [is] fair” (*Fíriel’s Song*), **maller raicar** “roads [are] bent” (LR:47). The formula “A is bright beyond B” = “A is brighter than B” referred to above is actually cited as “A (**ná**) **calima lá** B” in VT42:32. As suggested by the parentheses, **ná** could be omitted. The example **malle téra** “a straight road” mentioned above could also be interpreted “a road [is] straight”, if the context allowed it. The final version of Tolkien’s Quenya translation of the Hail Mary, published in January 2002, leaves out several copulas: **Aistana elyë, ar aistana i yávë mónalyo** = “blessed [art] thou, and blessed [is] the fruit of thy womb”.

We must assume that the copula **ná, nar** is not limited to combining nouns and adjectives, but can also be used to equate nouns: **Parmar nar engwi** “books are things”, **Fëanáro ná Noldo** “Fëanor is a Noldo”. (Notice, by the way, that the proper Quenya form of Fëanor’s name is **Fëanáro**; “Fëanor” is a Quenya-Sindarin hybrid form used in Middle-earth after his death.) Again it may be permissible to leave out the copula and retain the same meaning: **Parmar nati, Fëanáro Noldo**.

*Adjectival agreement in number:* Quenya adjectives must agree in number with the noun they describe. That is, if the noun is plural, the adjective must be, too; if the adjective describes *several* nouns it must also be plural, even if each of the nouns is singular. English makes no such distinction – its adjectives do not change – but it is not surprising that Tolkien built adjectival agreement in number into Quenya, since this was to be a highly inflected language.

We have no examples of what happens if an adjective is to agree with a noun in the *dual* form (or, for that matter, with a “partitive plural” noun in **-li**). It is generally assumed, though, that there are no special dual or partitive plural forms of adjectives, but only one plural (or should we say “non-singular”) form.

How, then, is the plural form of adjectives constructed? From the examples now available, it can be seen that Tolkien experimented with various systems over the years. In *early* sources, adjectives in **-a** form their plural form by adding the ending **-r**, just like nouns in **-a** do. For instance, one very early “map” of Tolkien’s imaginary world (actually depicted as a symbolic ship) includes a reference to **I Nori Landar**. This evidently means “The Wide Lands” (LT1:84–85; the adjective **landa** “wide” occurs in the *Ety-mologies*, entry LAD. Christopher Tolkien in LT1:85 suggests the translation “The Great Lands”.) Here the plural noun **nori** “lands” is described by the adjective **landa** “wide” – another example of an attributive adjective *following* the noun, by the way – and since the noun is plural, the adjective takes

the plural ending **-r** to agree with it. This way of forming plural adjectives was still valid as late as 1937 or slightly earlier; we have already quoted the example **maller raicar** “roads [are] bent” from LR:47, where the adjective **raica** “crooked, bent, wrong” (listed by itself in LR:383) is plural to agree with **maller**.

However, this system cannot be recommended to writers; the evidence is that in LotR-style Quenya, it had been abandoned. Tolkien in a way reached back into the past and revived a system he had used in what may be the very first “Quenya” poem he ever wrote, *Nargelion* of 1915–16. In this poem, adjectives in **-a** form their plurals by means of the ending **-i**. For instance, the phrase **sangar úmëai** occurring in this poem apparently means “throng large” = large throngs; the adjective **úmëa** “large” is listed in the early Quenya Lexicon (QL:97 – but in later Quenya, the word **úmëa** means “evil” instead). Later, Tolkien however introduced one more complication: Adjectives in **-a** had plurals in **-ai** in *archaic* Quenya only. In Exilic Quenya, Quenya as spoken by the Noldor after they had returned to Middle-earth, **-ai** at the end of words of more than one syllable had been reduced to **-ë**. (Cf. WJ:407 regarding the ending **-vë** representing “archaic Q *-vai*”.) So while the plural form of, say, **quanta** “full” was apparently **quantai** at the older stages of the language, it later became **quantë**. This form we have already met in one of the examples quoted above: **quantë tengwi**, “full signs”, where **quanta** appears in the plural form to agree with **tengwi** “signs” (VT39:5).

There is one special case to be considered: adjectives in **-ëa**, such as **laurëa** “golden”. In archaic Quenya, we must assume that the plural form was simply **laurëai**. But when **-ai** later became **-e**, what would be **?laurëe** did not prove to be a durable form. To avoid the cumbersome combination of two concomitant **e**’s, the first of them was changed to **i**. Hence the plural form of **laurëa** in Exilic Quenya appears as **laurië**, as in the first line of *Namárië*: **Ai! laurië lantar lassí súrinen. . .** “Ah! golden fall the leaves in the wind. . .” – the adjective being plural to agree with the noun it describes, **lassi** “leaves”.

As for adjectives in **-ë**, they seem to behave like most nouns of the same shape: **-ë** becomes **-i** in the plural. We don’t have very many examples, but the phrase **luini tellumar** “blue vaults” in the prose version of *Namárië* seems to incorporate the plural form of an adjective **luinë** “blue” (actually not attested in this form, but as observed above, there are many colour-adjectives in **-ë**). Moreover, in the *Etymologies* Tolkien noted that the adjective **maitë** “handy, skilled” has the plural form **maisi** (LR:371). Evidently the plural form was especially mentioned primarily to illustrate another point: that adjectives in **-itë** have plural forms in **-isi**, the consonant **t** turning into **s** before **i**. This particular idea seems to have been dropped later, though: In a much later, post-LotR source, Tolkien wrote **hloníti tengwi**, not **?hlonísi tengwi**, for “phonetic signs” (WJ:395). So perhaps

the plural form of **maitë** could simply be **?maiti** as well.

As for the plural form of adjectives ending in a consonant, such as **frin** “dead”, we don’t seem to have any examples to guide us. It has traditionally been assumed that they form their plurals in **-i**, just like nouns of this shape do, and this still seems reasonably plausible. So, say, “dead men” could be **frini neri**. If any argument can be raised against this assumption, it is that adjectives in **-in** actually seem to be shortened forms of longer adjectives in **-ina**. As pointed out above, Tolkien quoted the adjective meaning “open, free, cleared (of land)” as **latin(a)**, indicating double forms **latin** and **latina**. The plural form of **latina** should obviously be **latinë**, for older **latinai**. But what about **latin**? If this is merely a shortened form of **latina**, perhaps the plural form would still be **latinë** rather than **latini**? We cannot know for certain; in the exercises below I have followed the traditional assumption, using plurals in **-i**. Adjectives ending in a consonant are quite rare anyway, so this uncertainty does not greatly jeopardize the quality of our own Quenya texts.

In what positions do adjectives agree in number? Attested examples like those already quoted, like **luini tellumar** “blue domes”, would seem to indicate that an attributive adjective in front of the noun does show agreement. So does an attributive adjective *following* the noun; the *Markirya* poem has **i fairi nēcë** for “the pale phantoms”, or literally “the phantoms pale” (**nēca** pl. **nēcë** “vague, faint, dim to see”, MC:223). An adjective *separated* from the noun it describes also agrees in number, hence **laurëa** “golden” appears in plural form **laurië** in the first line of *Namárië*, **laurië lantar lassi** “golden fall leaves” (the prose *Namárië* has **lassi lantar laurië** “leaves fall golden”). As for *predicative* adjectives, we lack late examples. In German, adjectives do agree in number when they are used attributively, but adjectives used predicatively do not. Yet the old example **maller raicar** “roads [are] bent” in LR:47 would seem to indicate that in Quenya, adjectives agree in number also when they are used predicatively. In later Quenya we should presumably read **maller (nar) raicë**, since Tolkien changed the rules for how the plural form of adjectives is constructed.

So in short, we can conclude that adjectives agree in number with the nouns they describe “everywhere” – whether they appear before, after or separated from the noun, whether they are used attributively or predicatively. There are a few examples that don’t quite fit in, though. Appendix E of the essay *Quendi and Eldar* of ca. 1960 contains several “well-behaved” examples of plural adjectives that are used attributively with the plural noun **tengwi** “signs”, making up various phrases used by early Elvish linguists when they tried to analyze the structure of their tongue (as I said above, we needn’t concern ourselves with the precise meaning of these terms here). Besides **hloníti tengwi** “phonetic signs” and **quantë tengwi** “full signs” already quoted (WJ:395, VT39:5), we have **racinë tengwi** “stripped signs” and **penyë tengwi** “lacking signs” (VT39:6; the singular of the latter,

**penya tengwë** “a lacking sign”, is attested: VT39:19). In these phrases the adjectives **hlonitë** “phonetic”, **quanta** “full”, **racina** “stripped, deprived” and **penya** “lacking, inadequate” all assume their plural forms, beautifully agreeing with **tengwi** “signs, elements, sounds”. So far, so good. But then we turn to the *draft* material for Appendix E of *Quendi and Eldar*. Here Tolkien did *not* let the adjectives agree in number, and we have phrases like **lehta tengwi** “free/released elements”, **sarda tengwi** “hard sounds” and **tapta tengwi** “impeded elements” (VT39:17). We would of course expect **lehtë tengwi**, **sardë tengwi**, **taptë tengwi**, but these are not found. Unless we are to assume that there are several classes of adjectives, some that agree in number and others that don’t – and I think this is rather far-fetched – it seems that Tolkien in the draft material used a system whereby an attributive adjective immediately in front of its noun does *not* agree in number. But when he actually wrote the Appendix, he would seem to have introduced agreement in this position as well, and so we have for instance **quantë tengwi** rather than ?**quanta tengwi** for “full signs”. Elvish grammar could change at lightening speed whenever Tolkien was in his “revision” mood, so this would not be surprising.

The last version of the *Markirya* poem, which Christopher Tolkien thinks was written at some point in the last decade of his father’s life (1963–73), is also relevant here. In the phrase “fallen towers”, Tolkien first wrote the adjective **atalantëa** “ruinous, downfallen” in its plural form **atalantië**, just like we would expect. Then, according to Christopher Tolkien, he mysteriously *changed* **atalantië** to the singular (or rather uninflected) form **atalantëa**, though the adjacent noun “towers” was left in the plural (MC:222). Again Tolkien seems to be experimenting with a system whereby attributive adjectives immediately in front of the noun they describe do not agree in number, but appear in their uninflected form. A similar system appears in Tolkien’s writings on *Westron*, the “Common Speech” of Middle-earth (a language he only sketched). Perhaps he considered introducing such a system in Quenya as well, and we see this idea flickering on and off, so to speak, in his writings?

However, the system I would recommend to writers is to let adjectives agree in number also in this position. In *Namárië* in LotR we have the phrase **lintë yuldar** “swift draughts”, and in the interlinear translation in RGE0:66 Tolkien explicitly noted that **lintë** is a “pl.” adjective. We must assume, then, that **lintë** represents older **lintai**, the plural form of an adjective **linta**. If an attributive adjective immediately in front of the noun it describes did not agree in number, “swift draughts” should have been ?**linta yuldar** instead. The source where Tolkien explicitly identified **lintë** as a plural form was published during his own lifetime, and moreover as late as in 1968, possibly postdating even the last version of *Markirya*. So his final decision seems to have been that adjectives *do* agree in number with their nouns also when the adjective appears immediately in front of the noun. One suspects that he spent many sleepless nights carefully considering the



various pros and cons in this important question.

NOTE ON ADJECTIVES USED AS NOUNS: As described above, Tolkien at one stage had adjectives in **-a** form their plurals in **-ar**, but later he replaced this with **-ë** (for older **-ai**). However, adjectives in **-a** may still have plural forms in **-ar** if they are used as nouns, because in such a case they are naturally inflected as nouns. Tolkien noted that instead of saying **penyë tengwi** “lacking signs” the Elves might simply refer to the **penyar** or “lacking ones” – “using [the adjective] *penya* as a technical noun” (VT39:19). A more well-known example is provided by the adjective **vanya** “fair, beautiful”; this would normally have the plural form **vanyë** (e.g. **vanyë nissi** “beautiful women”). However, the adjective **vanya** can also be used as a noun, “a Vanya” or “Fair One”, which was the word used of a member of the First Clan of the Eldar. Then the whole clan is of course called the **Vanyar**, as in the *Silmarillion* chapter 3: “The Vanyar were [Ingwë’s] people; they are the Fair Elves.” Using another (but related) adjective “beautiful”, namely **vanima**, Treebeard employed another noun-style plural when he greeted Celeborn and Galadriel as a **vanimar** “o beautiful ones” (the translation given in Letters:308).

Adjectives in **-ë** would however have their usual plural form in **-i** even if they are used as nouns, since most nouns in **-ë** also form their plurals in **-i**.

## Summary of Lesson Four

Adjectives are words used to describe various qualities, such as “tall” or “beautiful”. They can be combined with nouns, making up phrases like “(a/the) red book” or “tall men”, where the adjectives “red” and “tall” describe the nouns “book” and “men” directly; this is called using an adjective *attributively*. But they can also be made to make up sentences like “the book is red” or “the men are tall”, where the whole point of the sentence is to ascribe a certain quality to a noun; here the adjective is used as a *predicate*. In such cases English slips in a *copula*, like “is” or “are” in these examples, to clarify the relationship between the noun and the adjective. Many languages do without this extra device (one would just say what corresponds to “the book red”), and this seems to be permissible in Quenya as well, but the explicit copula **ná** “is”/**nar** “are” also occurs in the material. – Most Quenya adjectives end in the vowel **-a**, some also in **-ë**; the only ones that end in a consonant are a few that have the ending **-in** (apparently shortened from **-ina**). Quenya adjectives agree in *number*; if an adjective describes a plural noun or more than one noun, the adjective must be plural as well. Adjectives in **-a** have plural forms in **-ë** (for older **-ai**); notice that if the adjective ends in **-ëa** it forms its plural in **-ië** (to avoid **-ëe**). Adjectives in **-ë** have plural forms in **-i**; for the few adjectives in **-in** we lack examples, but it is normally assumed that they would add **-i** in the plural.

## Vocabulary

Except for the two first items, all of these are adjectives. Don't worry about the other words occurring in the exercises below; those you have already memorized carefully, following my instructions in Lesson Two. Right?

**neldë** “three”

**ná** “is” (**nar** “are”)

**vanya** “beautiful, fair”

**alta** “great” (= *big*; the word is used of physical size only)

**calima** “bright”

**taura** “mighty”

**saila** “wise” (we will use this form found in late material; a pre-LotR source has **saira** instead)

**úmëa** “evil”

**carñë** “red” (we suspect that Tolkien the Devout Catholic was thinking about *cardinals* with their red attires; the Italian word *carne* = “[red] meat” may also be relevant here. . .)

**ninquë** “white”

**morë** “black” (cf. the first element of Sindarin *Mordor* = Black Land)

**frin** “dead”

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **Morë rocco.**
- B. **Calimë hendu.**
- C. **Neldë firini neri.**
- D. **Vanyë aiwi.**
- E. **Tári ná taura nís.**
- F. **I oronti nar altë.**
- G. **Aran taura** (*two possible translations!*)
- H. **I nér ar i nís nar sailë.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. The white gate.
- J. A great ship.
- K. The floor is red.

- L. One black stone and three white stones.
- M. Wise kings are mighty men.
- N. The mighty man and the beautiful woman are evil.
- O. Elves are beautiful.
- P. The Elves are a beautiful people.

# Lesson 5

**The Verb: Present tense and agreement in number.**  
**Subject/object. The superlative form of adjectives.**

## 5.1 The Verb

As I mentioned at the beginning of the previous lesson, the vocabulary of any language can be separated into various classes of words, or “parts of speech”. So far we have explicitly discussed the *nouns*, which denote things, and *adjectives*, which are words used to describe nouns (linguists would find these definitions rather simplistic, but they will do for our purpose). Actually we have already touched on a three other parts of speech as well, without discussing them in depth. As part of Lesson Two you hopefully memorized the word **nu** “under”, which is a *preposition*; prepositions are small words or “particles” like *under, on, of, to, in, about* etc., often used to provide information about spatial relationships (e.g. “*under* the tree” = **nu i alda**), though frequently they are used in more abstract contexts. With the word **ar** “and” we have also included the most typical representative of the *conjunctions*, words used to connect (or indeed “conjoin”) other words, phrases or sentences, e.g. **Anar ar Isil** = “the sun *and* the moon”. Still, no thorough discussion of prepositions or conjunctions as such seems necessary: in Quenya they seem to behave pretty much like their English equivalents, so for the most part you simply have to learn the corresponding Quenya words. They are not normally inflected in any way.

Another part of speech that we have already touched on is far more sophisticated and intriguing: the *verb*. We encountered one verb in the previous lesson: **ná** “is”, with its plural form **nar** “are”. As verbs go, this one is not very exciting; it is simply used to coordinate a noun with some sort of predicate that tells us what the noun “is”: **Aran ná taura**, “a king is mighty”, **tasar ná alda** “a willow is a tree”. As I said in the previous lesson, the copula **ná** doesn’t really provide much extra information here, except clarifying the relationship between the various elements of the sentence. Most other verbs (very nearly *all* other verbs, actually) are however full of meaning. They don’t just tell us what someone or something “is”, but what someone

or something *does*. The Verb brings *action* into the language.

In a sentence like “the Elf dances” it is easy to identify “dances” as the action-word, telling us what is going on here. And sure enough, “dances” is a form of the English verb *to dance*. This verb may appear in other forms as well; instead of “dances” we might say “danced”, which moves the action into the *past*: “The Elf danced.” This illustrates an important feature of verbs in European languages: the form of the verb gives information about *when* the action denoted takes place, in the present or in the past. Some languages also have special *future* forms. Tolkien built all of these features into Quenya.

The different “time-forms” of the verb are called various *tenses*; we speak of present tense, past tense and future tense. We will only deal with the present tense in this lesson, and return to the others later. (The trinity of present, past and future does not represent a full list of all the tenses there are. We will discuss a total of five different tenses in this course, and I would be very surprised if unpublished material does not describe even more tenses than the ones we know at present.)

Here I should slip in a warning: We don’t have much *explicit* information about the Quenya verb. In the so-called Plotz Letter, that Tolkien wrote to Dick Plotz at some point in the mid-sixties, he set out the declension of the noun. Apparently similar information about the verb was to follow; it never did. This is of course most unfortunate. Not that Tolkien took this information to his grave; we know that he did write about these matters, but the relevant writings have not been published. For the time being, we must for the most part try to figure out the grammatical rules by ourselves if we would like our Quenya poems to include verbs. Regarding the *present* tense, some scraps of information luckily appeared in *Vinyar Tengwar* #41, July 2000. Combining this info with some linguistic deduction, we can probably make out the main features of the system Tolkien had in mind.

As they appear in various sources, Quenya verbs seem to fall into two *main* categories (though there are some verbs in our corpus that don’t readily fit into either, even if we exclude the early “Qenya” material where some really weird things are going on in the verbal system). The first and largest category is what can be termed *A-stems*, for they all end in **-a**. Another term for the same is *derived* verbs, for these verbs never represent a naked primitive “root-word”, but are derived by *adding endings* to this root. The most frequent of these endings are **-ya** and **-ta**; much less frequently we see **-na** or just **-a**. Examples:

**calya-** “to illuminate” (root KAL)

**tulta-** “to send for, to fetch, to summon” (root TUL)

**harna-** “to wound” (root SKAR; primitive initial *sk-* became **h-** in Quenya)

**mapa-** “to grasp, to seize” (root MAP)

(Convention has it that when you list verbal stems as such, you add a

hyphen at the end; Tolkien usually does so in his writings. The “stem” of a verb is a basic form that we start from when deriving other forms, such as different tenses.)

If these A-stems can be termed “derived verbs”, the other category consists of the “non-derived” or *primary* verbs. These are verbs that display *no* such ending as **-ya**, **-ta**, **-na** or **-a**. The verbal stems in question can be termed “primary” or “basic” since they essentially represent a primitive root with no additions. For instance, the verb **mat-** “eat” comes directly from the root MAT- of similar meaning. **Tac-** “fasten” represents the root TAK- “fix, make fast”. **Tul-** “come” can be identified with the root TUL- “come, approach, move towards” (contrast the *derived* verb **tulta-** “send for, summon, fetch” from the same root, derived by means of the ending **-ta**). In the case of the roots MEL- “love” and SIR- “flow”, Tolkien didn’t even bother to repeat the glosses for the Quenya verbs **mel-** and **sir-** (see LR:372, 385).

When discussing Quenya verbs, we sometimes need to refer to the *stem-vowel*. This is the vowel of the root-word underlying the verb as it appears in Quenya. In the case of primary verbs like **mel-** “love”, it is of course easy to identify the stem-vowel, since **e** is the only vowel there is (and sure enough, this is also the vowel of the underlying root MEL-). In the case of derived verbs like **pusta-** “stop” or **ora-** “impel”, the vowels of the added ending (here **-ta** and **-a**) do *not* count as stem-vowels. **Pusta-**, for instance, is derived from a root PUS, and its stem-vowel is therefore **u**, not **a**. In the vast majority of cases, the stem-vowel is simply the *first* vowel of the verb (but not necessarily so, there may be some prefixed element).

With this we have the necessary terms in place and can finally start discussing the formation of the present tense. To start with the primary verbs, what seems to be the present tense of the verb **mel-** “love” is attested in LR:61, Elendil telling his son Herendil: **Yonya inyë tye-méla**, “I too, my son, I *love* thee”. Here we have the verb describing a present or on-going (in this case quite permanent) action. Another example of a present-tense primary verb can apparently be found in the LotR itself, in the famous greeting **elen síla lúmenn’ omentielvo**, “a star *shines* [or, *is shining*] upon the hour of our meeting”. **Síla** would seem to be the present tense of a verb **sil-** “shine (with white or silver light)”, listed in the *Silmarillion* Appendix. **Méla** and **síla** show the same relationship to the simple verbal stems **mel-** and **sil-**: the present-tense forms are derived by *lengthening* the stem-vowel (this is denoted by supplying an accent, of course) and *adding* the ending **-a**. This conclusion is supported by an example from VT41:13: The verb **quet-** “speak, say” there appears in the present tense **quéta** “is saying”.

Though forms like **méla** and **síla** may occasionally be translated using the simple present tense in English, hence “love(s)” and “shines”, it seems that the Quenya present tense properly denotes a *continuous* or ongoing action that is best translated using the English “is . . .-ing” construction, as in the example **quéta** just quoted: this is “is saying” rather than just

“says”. The conclusion that the Quenya present tense properly denotes *continuous* actions is also supported by other evidence: The Quenya present tense of the primary verb **mat-** “eat” is nowhere attested in published material. However, Tolkien stated that *mâtâ* was “the stem of the continuous form”, which could be translated “is eating” (VT39:9; *â* here denotes long *a*, in Quenya spelt **á**). Tolkien actually put an asterisk in front of *mâtâ* to mark it as an “unattested” form, so this should evidently be taken as primitive Elvish rather than Quenya. How Quenya evolved from the primitive language can be inferred from many other examples, so we know that *mâtâ* would come out as **máta**. This form would seem to fall into the same pattern as **méla**, **síla** and **quéta**: lengthened stem-vowel and ending **-a** (and working backwards, we can deduce that Tolkien meant **méla**, **síla**, **quéta** to be descended from primitive Elvish *mêlâ*, *sîlâ*, *kwêtâ*). Presumably these are all “continuous” forms; just like primitive *mâtâ* “is eating” they apparently emphasize the *ongoing* nature of the action: **Síla** may literally be “is shining” rather than just “shines”. Perhaps the lengthening of the stem-vowel somehow symbolizes this ongoing or “drawn-out” action. In the case of **méla** in the sentence **inyë tye-méla**, it is more natural to translate “I love you” rather than “I am loving you”, but the latter would seem to be the most literal meaning.

Then we must consider the second and larger category of verbs, the A-stems. In their case, the information from VT41 is of particular value.

It seems that the A-stems form their present tense by somewhat the same rule as the primary verbs, but the rule needs a little “adaptation” to fit the shape of an A-stem verb. Our sole attested example is the verb **ora-** “urge” or “impel”. VT41:13, 18 indicates that its present tense is **órëa** (“is urging”). As in the case of primary verbs, the stem-vowel has been lengthened and the ending **-a** has been added. There is one complication, though: since the verbal stem **ora-** *already* ended in **-a**, this vowel is *changed to e* so as to avoid to **a**’s in sequence: What would be **óra-a** manifests as **órëa**. Hence we must conclude that verbs like **mapa-** “grasp, seize” and **lala-** “laugh” appear as **mápëa**, **lálëa** in the present tense.

Short A-stems like **ora-** or **mapa-** are however of a rather unusual shape, since they add only the simple vowel **-a** to the original root. As discussed above, A-stems where the final **-a** is only part of a longer derivational ending (most often **-ya** or **-ta**) are much more common. We have already quoted examples like **calya-** “to illuminate” and **tulta-** “to summon” (roots KAL, TUL). Such “complex” A-stems have a *consonant cluster* following the vowel of the original root, like **ly** and **lt** in these examples. We have no actual example of the present tense of such a verb. If we were to apply the pattern we deduce to exist from the example **órëa** “is urging”, it would land us on forms like **?cályëa** “is illuminating” and **?túltëa** “is summoning”. However, there seems to be a phonological rule in Quenya prohibiting a long vowel immediately in front of a consonant cluster. It would seem that a word like

?**túltëa** cannot exist (but frankly I’m not quite sure about ?**cályëa**, since **ly/ny/ry** sometimes seem to count as unitary palatalized consonants rather than consonant clusters). Lacking actual examples, we can only assume that in such a case the lengthening of the vowel would simply be dropped, so that the present tense of verbs like **calya-** and **tulta-** would be **calyëa**, **tultëa** (though as I just indicated, ?**cályëa** *may* be possible for all I know). This would apply wherever there is a consonant cluster following the vowel of the verbal stem. Further examples are **lanta-** “fall”, **harna-** “wound” and **pusta-** “stop”, that would all – presumably – form their present-tense forms in **-ëa**: **Lantëa** “is falling”, **harnëa** “is wounding”, **pustëa** “is stopping”.

We must assume that this system also applies where there is a *diphthong* in the verbal stem, since like a vowel in front of a consonant cluster, a diphthong cannot be lengthened in any way. The present-tense forms of verbs like **faina-** “emit light” or **auta-** “pass” would presumably be **fainëa**, **autëa**.

We now know enough to start building simple sentences:

- **Isil síla** “the Moon is shining” (present tense **síla** formed from the primary verb **sil-** “shine”)
- **I Elda lálëa** “the Elf is laughing” (present tense formed from the short A-stem **lala-** “laugh”)
- **Lassë lantëa** “a leaf is falling” (present tense formed from the complex A-stem **lanta-** “fall”; we cannot have \***lantëa** paralleling **lálëa** because a long vowel cannot occur in front of a consonant cluster)

Some useful terms can be included here. Once you include a verb in the sentence, denoting some kind of *action*, you must normally devote another part of the sentence to telling who is *doing* this action. The party that *does* whatever the verb tells us is being done, constitutes the *subject* of the sentence. In a sentence like **Isil síla** “the Moon is shining”, it is thus **Isil** “the Moon” that is the subject, since it is the Moon that *does* the shining the verb **síla** tells us about. In a sentence like **i Elda máta** “the Elf is eating”, **i Elda** “the Elf” is the subject, since the Elf *does the eating*.

This very sentence, **i Elda máta**, has possibilities. We can add one more element, like the noun **massa** “bread”, and get **i Elda máta massa** “the Elf is eating bread”. Now what is the function of this added word? It is the “target” of the verbal action, in this case what is *eaten*. The target of the verbal action is called the *object*, the passive counterpart of the active subject: The subject *does* something, but the object is what the subject *does something to*. The subject “subjects” the object to some kind of action. This “action” may of course be much less dramatic than “subject *eats* object” as in the example above. For instance, it can be as subtle as in the sentence “the subject *sees* the object” (fill in with other sense-verbs if you like), where the “action” of the subject does not physically affect the object in



any way. That is not the point here. The basic idea of the subject-object dichotomy is simply that the *subject* does something to the *object*, though “does something to” must sometimes be understood in a wider sense.

NOTE: Notice, though, that in sentences with the copula **ná/nar** “is/are”, for instance **i alda ná tasar** “the tree is a willow”, **tasar** “a willow” does *not* count as the object of **i alda** “the tree”. **I alda** is the *subject* all right, since this is the element that “does” what little action there is in this sentence: “the tree *is*...” But **tasar** “a willow” is not the object, for in this sentence “the tree” does not *do* anything to “a willow” – and the hallmark of the object is that something is done to it. Rather than doing anything do a willow, the tree *is* a willow, and that is another thing altogether: **Tasar** is here the *predicate* of **i alda**, as we discussed in the previous lesson. But if we substitute **máta** “is eating” for **ná** “is”, we are right back to a subject-verb-object construction: **I alda máta tasar**, “the tree is eating a willow”. If you are unduly troubled by the fact that this sounds somewhat nonsensical, rest assured that the *grammar* is fine.

In the case of some verbs, there can be no object. In the case of (say) **lanta-** “to fall”, you can have a subject and say **i Elda lantëa** “the Elf is falling”. Here the subject doesn’t do anything *to* an object; it is just the subject itself that is doing something. With a verb like **mat-** “eat”, it is kind of optional if you want to fill out the sentence with an object or not: **I Elda máta (massa)**, “the Elf is eating (bread)”; this works as a complete sentence even without the object. But some verbs by their meaning *demand* an object, and the sentence would be felt to be incomplete without it. If we say **i Elda mápëa** “the Elf is seizing”, this only raises the question “the Elf is seizing *what?*” and we must come up with an object to make the sentence complete.

In the Plotz letter, Tolkien indicated that in one variant of Quenya, so-called *Book Quenya*, nouns would have a special form if they function as objects. Singular nouns ending in a vowel would have this vowel lengthened (for instance, **ciryá** “ship” would become **ciryá** if it appears as the object of a sentence), and nouns that normally employ the plural ending **-r** would switch to **-i** (so “ships”, as object, would be **ciryai** instead of **ciryar**). This special “object” form, in linguistic terms the *accusative* case, was supposedly used in (archaic?) written Quenya. However, this accusative does not appear in any actual texts, such as *Namárië* or even the last version of the *Markirya* poem, which must be almost contemporaneous with the Plotz letter. *Namárië*, sung by Galadriel, is perhaps supposed to reflect the usage of spoken Third Age Quenya. Whatever the case, I do not use the distinct accusative in the exercises I have made for this course (or in my own Quenya compositions). It seems clear that the use of the accusative was far from universal, within or without the fictional context. So I would say **ciryar(r)** for “ship(s)” even if the word appears as the object of a sentence.

With the terms subject and object in place, we can discuss another feature of the Quenya verb. Just like adjectives agree in number with the nouns they describe, *verbs agree in number with their subjects*. Let us have a closer look

at the first line of *Namárië*, **laurië lantar lassi** “like gold fall the leaves”, or literally “golden fall [the] leaves”. Here the adjective **laurëa** “golden” appears in plural form **laurië** to agree in number with the plural noun **lassi** “leaves”, as we discussed in the previous lesson. But the verb **lanta-** “to fall” must also agree with its plural subject **lassi**. The verb **lanta** therefore takes the ending **-r**. (The verb itself appears in the so-called *aorist* tense, to be discussed later; you can think of aorist **lantar** vs. present tense **lantëar** as corresponding to English “fall” vs. “are falling”, respectively.) The plural ending **-r** we have already met in the case of nouns, as in **Eldar** “Elves”, but nouns may also have plurals in **-i**, depending on their shape. In the case of verbs, the plural ending **-r** seems to be universal, no matter what the verb looks like. The ending **-r** is not restricted to the present tense of verbs, but is seemingly used in all tenses, wherever a plural subject turns up.

Essentially we have already met the verbal plural ending in the verb **nar** “are”, the plural of **ná** “is”. (One may ask why **ná** does not turn into **?nár** with the long vowel intact. The latter form may very well turn out to be valid, but **nar** “are” with a short **a** is at least less prone to confusion with the noun **nár** “flame”.)

More than one subject has the same effect on the verb as a (single) plural subject, the verb taking the ending **-r** in both instances:

**I arani mátar** “the kings are eating” (sg. **i aran máta** “the king is eating”)

**I aran ar i tári mátar** “the king and the queen are eating” (if you want the verb **mat-** “eat” to appear in singular present-tense form **máta** here, you must get rid of either the king or the queen so that there is just a single subject)

On the other hand, it has no effect on the verb if we have a plural *object* or *multiple* objects, e.g. **i aran máta massa ar apsa** “the king is eating bread and meat” (**apsa** “cooked food, meat”). The verb agrees in number with the subject only.

It has generally been assumed that the verb has only one plural form, the ending **-r** being universal. In other words, the verb would take the ending **-r** not only where the subject noun appears in the “normal” plural (ending **-r** or **-i**), but also where it is dual (ending **-u** or **-t**) or appears in the “partitive plural” form (ending **-li**). However, we have no actual examples from LotR-style Quenya, and in particular I will not rule out the possibility that there may be a special *dual* form of the verb to go with dual subjects (ending **-t** as for most nouns, like **Aldu sílat** rather than **Aldu sílar** for “the Two Trees are shining”???) The published material allows no certain conclusion in this question, so I will simply avoid dual subjects in the exercises I make for this course.

The last thing we must consider when discussing the verb is the question of *word order*. Where in the sentence does the verb fit in, really? English

sentences generally list the subject, the verb and the object (if there is any object) in that order. The attentive reader will have noticed that most of the Quenya sentences above are organized in the same manner. This seems to be the *most typical* word order in Quenya prose. Examples of the subject and the verb in that order include **lassi lantar** “leaves fall” and **mornië caita** “darkness lies [upon the foaming waves]” – both from the prose version of *Namárië*. But there are also examples of the verb being placed first, e.g. Fingon’s cry before the Nirnaeth Arnoediad: **Auta i lómë!**, literally “Passes the night”, but translated “the night is passing!” in the *Silmarillion* ch. 20. Indeed both of the above-quoted examples of the order subject-verb from the prose *Namárië* instead show the order verb-subject in the poetic version in LotR: **lantar lassi, caita mornië**. In English, fronting the verb is one way of turning a declarative statement into a question, e.g. “Elves are beautiful” vs. “are Elves beautiful?”, but this way of forming questions evidently doesn’t work in Quenya. (**Auta i lómë!** “passes the night!” for “the night is passing!” is perhaps an example of dramatic style or affectionate speech; the verbal action is evidently considered more important than the subject that performs it. I suspect that in a less dramatic context, one would rather say **i lómë auta**.)

*Namárië* also provides an example of a sentence with both subject, verb and object: **hisië untúpa Calaciryó míri**, “mist [subject] covers [verb] the jewels of Calaciryá [this whole phrase being the object]”. Yet word order is again quite flexible, especially in poetry, as further examples from *Namárië* shows. We have object-subject-verb in the sentence **máryat Elentári ortanë**, literally “her hands (the) Starqueen raised” (in LotR translated “the Queen of the stars . . . has uplifted her hands”). The sentence **ilyë tier undulávë lumbulë**, literally “all paths downlicked (*i. e.* covered) shadow”, has the order object-verb-subject (in LotR, Tolkien used the translation “all paths are drowned deep in shadow”). In the prose version of *Namárië*, Tolkien interestingly reorganized both of these to subject-verb-object constructions: **Elentári ortanë máryat, lumbulë undulávë ilyë tier**. This is our main basis for assuming that this is the normal order, preferred where there are no poetic or dramatic considerations to be made.

In general, one must be careful about putting the object before the subject, for this could in some cases cause confusion as to which word *is* the object and which is the subject (since the commonest form of Quenya does not maintain a distinct accusative case to mark the object). Such inversions are however quite permissible when the subject is singular and the object is plural or vice versa. Then the verb, agreeing in number with the subject only, will indirectly identify it. In the sentence **ilyë tier undulávë lumbulë** we can readily tell that it must be **lumbulë** “shadow” and not **ilyë tier** “all paths” that is the subject, because the verb **undulávë** does *not* receive the ending **-r** to agree with the plural word **tier**. Hence this can’t be the subject – but the singular noun **lumbulë** “shadow” can.

## 5.2 More about adjectives

In English and other European languages, adjectives have special forms that are used in *comparison*. In English, adjectives have a *comparative* form that is constructed by adding the ending *-er*, and a *superlative* form that is formed with the ending *-est*. For instance, the adjective *tall* has the comparative form *taller* and the superlative form *tallest*. (In the case of some adjectives, English however resorts to the independent words *more* and *most* instead of using the endings, e.g. *more intelligent* and *most intelligent* instead of *intelligenter* and *intelligentest*, which forms are perceived as cumbersome.) The function of these forms is to facilitate *comparison* between various parties. If we want to say that one party possesses the quality described by the adjective to a greater extent than some other party, we may use the comparative form: “Peter is *taller* than Paul.” The superlative form is used if we want to say that one party possesses the quality in question more than all others that are considered: “Peter is the *tallest* boy in the class.”

In the first version of this Quenya lesson, as published in December 2000, I wrote: “But when it comes to Quenya, there is not much we can say. The published material includes absolutely no information about comparative forms; we don’t even have an independent word for ‘more’...” Since then, the situation has happily changed; during 2001 a little more information appeared in the journals *Tyalië Tyelelliéva* and *Vinyar Tengwar*. Now we do have a word for “more” (**malda**), and we also know a special formula that is used in comparison: “A is brighter than B” may be expressed as “A **ná calima lá** B”, literally “A is bright beyond B” (VT42:32). However, the word **lá** has other meanings beside “beyond”, and it will be more practical to discuss and practice its use in comparison in a later lesson (“The various uses of *lá*”, Lesson Eighteen).

We will here focus on the *superlative* form of adjectives instead. One tiny scrap of evidence has long been available: In Letters:278–279, Tolkien explained the adjectival form **ancalima** occurring in LotR. Translating it as “exceedingly bright”, he stated that this is **calima** “shining brilliant” with the element **an-** added, the latter being a “superlative or intensive prefix”. For this reason, many writers have used the prefix **an-** as the equivalent of the English ending *-est*, to construct the superlative form of adjectives – e.g. **anvanya** “fairest” from **vanya** “fair, beautiful” (but it should be understood that **ancalima** remains our sole *attested* example of **an-** used in this sense).

One may wonder whether the form that is made by prefixing **an-** really is the equivalent of an English superlative, sc. a form of the adjective that implies having the most of the property involved *in comparison with certain others*. It may be noted that Tolkien translated **ancalima**, not as “brightest”, but as “exceedingly bright”. When he describes **an-** as a “superlative or intensive prefix”, he may almost seem to mean ‘superlative or

*rather* intensive prefix’. So perhaps **an-** implies “very, exceedingly” rather than “most” in comparison with others. It may be noted, though, that the context the in which the word is found does seem to imply a certain amount of “comparison”: In LotR, **ancalima** occurs as part of Frodo’s “speaking in tongues” in Shelob’s lair (volume 2, Book Four, chapter IX): **Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima**. No translation is given in the LotR itself, but Tolkien later stated that this means “hail Eärendil brightest of stars” (Letters:385). In Tolkien’s mythology, Eärendil carrying the shining Silmaril was set in the heavens as the brightest of the stars. So here, the meaning does seem to be that of a genuine superlative, “brightest” in the full sense of “brighter than all the others”. In any case, no other information on how to form the superlative appears in published writings, so we have little choice but to use this formation. We must however be prepared that future publications may provide more information about this, involving alternative superlative formations.

The prefix **an-** in this form cannot be mechanically prefixed to *any* Quenya adjective, or consonant clusters that Quenya does not allow would sometimes result. **An-** can be prefixed “as is” to adjectives beginning in a vowel or in **c-**, **n-**, **qu-**, **t-**, **v-**, **w-**, and **y-**:

**an** + **alta** “great (in size)” = **analta** “greatest”

**an** + **calima** “bright” = **ancalima** “brightest” (our sole attested example!)

**an** + **norna** “tough” = **annorna** “toughest”

**an** + **quanta** “full” = **anquanta** “fullest”

**an** + **vanya** “beautiful” = **anvanya** “most beautiful”

**an** + **wenya** “green” = **anwenya** “greenest”

**an** + **yára** “old” = **anyára** “oldest”

Perhaps we can also include adjectives in **f-** and **h-** (no examples):

**an** + **fána** “white” = ?**anfána** “whitest”

**an** + **halla** “tall” = ?**anhalla** “tallest”

What would happen in other cases we cannot say for certain. Either an extra vowel (likely **e** or **a**) would be inserted between the prefix and the adjective to break up what would otherwise be an impossible cluster, or the final **-n** of the prefix would change, becoming more similar (or wholly similar) to the first consonant of the adjective. Such *assimilation* is observed elsewhere in our corpus, so this has to be our favourite theory regarding the behavior of **an-** as well. Before the consonant **p-**, the **n** of **an** would likely be pronounced with the lips closed because the pronunciation of **p** involves such a closure; hence **n** would turn into **m**. (Compare English *input* often being pronounced *imput*.) From **pitya** “small” we would thus have **ampitya** for “smallest”, this being the impossible word **anpitya** reworked

into a permissible form (Quenya does not have **np**, but the cluster **mp** is frequent even in unitary words).

Before the consonants **l**-, **r**-, **s**-, and **m**-, the final **n** of **an**- would probably be fully assimilated, that is, it becomes identical to the following consonant:

**an** + **lauca** “warm” = **allauca** “warmest”  
**an** + **ringa** “cold” = **arringa** “coldest”  
**an** + **sarda** “hard” = **assarda** “hardest”  
**an** + **moina** “dear” = **ammoina** “dearest”

Cf. such attested assimilations as **nl** becoming **ll** in the compound **Númel-lótë** “Flower of the West” (UT:227, transparently a compound of the well-known words **númen** “west” and **lótë** “flower”). As for the group **nm** becoming **mm**, this development is seen in the name of the Vanyarin Elf **El-emmírë** mentioned in the *Silmarillion*: his (her?) name apparently means “Star-jewel” (**elen** “star” + **mírë** “jewel”).

## Summary of Lesson Five

Two major categories of Quenya verbs are the *primary* verbs, that represent a primitive root with no additions, and the *A-stems*, that have added an ending including the vowel **a** to the original root (sometimes **-a** alone, but more commonly some longer ending like **-ya** or **-ta**). The primary verbs form their present tense by lengthening the stem-vowel and adding **-a**, e.g. **síla** “is shining” from **sil-** “to shine”. The A-stems form their present tense by somewhat the same rule, but when the ending **-a** is added to such a stem (already ending in **-a**), what would be **-aa** is changed to **-ëa**. In our one attested example of the present tense of an A-stem, **órëa** from **ora-** “to impel”, the stem-vowel has been lengthened. However, as far as we understand Quenya phonology, a long vowel cannot normally occur in front of a consonant cluster, and most A-stems do have a consonant cluster following the stem-vowel (e.g. **lanta-** “to fall”, **hilya-** “to follow”). Presumably such verbs would form their present tense in **-ëa**, but the stem-vowel would remain short. Only the (relatively few) A-stems that do *not* have a consonant cluster following the stem-vowel can lengthen it in the present tense. – A verb agrees with its subject in *number*, receiving the ending **-r** if the subject is plural: **elen síla** “a star is shining”, **eleni sílar** “stars are shining”.

A *superlative* form of adjectives can be derived by adding the prefix **an**-, as in **ancalima** “brightest” from **calima** “bright”. We must, however, assume that the **n** of this prefix is in many cases assimilated to the first consonant of the adjective, or consonant clusters that Quenya phonology does not allow would arise. For instance, **an-** + **lauca** “warm” may produce **allauca** for “warmest” (**\*anlauca** being an impossible word).

## Vocabulary

**canta** “four”

**Nauco** “Dwarf”

**parma** “book”

**tiuca** “thick, fat”

**mapa-** verb “grasp, seize”

**tir-** verb “watch, guard”

**lala-** verb “laugh” (so according to a late source, PM:359; in earlier material the verb **lala-**, of a quite different derivation, has the meaning “deny”: See the entry LA in the *Etymologies*. We needn't discuss whether one obsoletes the other; here we will use **lala-** for “laugh” only.)

**caita-** verb “lie” (lie horizontally, not “tell a lie”)

**tulta-** verb “summon”

**linda-** verb “sing” (cf. the word **Ainulindalë** or “Music [lit. Singing] of the Ainur”)

**mat-** verb “eat”

**cenda-** verb “read”

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **I nís lálëa.**
- B. **I antiuca Nauco máta.**
- C. **I tári tíra i aran.**
- D. **I analta oron ná taura.**
- E. **I nér tultëa i anvanya vendë.**
- F. **I aiwë lindëa.**
- G. **I Naucor mápëar i canta Eldar.**
- H. **I antaura aran ná saila.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. The woman is watching the greatest (/biggest) ship.
- J. The most evil (/evilest) men are dead.
- K. The Elf is seizing the book.
- L. Four men are lying under a tree.
- M. The wisest Elf is reading a book (*careful*: what probably happens to the superlative prefix when it is added to a word like **saila** “wise”?)

- N. The king and the queen are reading the book.
- O. The birds are singing.
- P. The four Dwarves are watching a bird.



# Lesson 6

## Past tense

### 6.1 The past tense

The previous lesson discussed the Quenya *present* tense, which is typically used to describe an on-going present action. However, Quenya has different tenses covering the entire trinity of past, present and future, and when recounting past events one will normally use the *past* tense.

In English, very many past tenses are formed by means of the ending *-ed*, e.g. *filled* as the past tense of the verb *fill*. In Quenya, most past tense forms are likewise formed by means of an ending added to the verbal stem. As far as we know, all past tense verbs end in the vowel *-ë* (though further endings, such as the plural ending *-r* that is used in the case of a plural subject, may of course be added after this vowel). In many cases, this vowel *-ë* is part of the ending *-në*, that seems to be the most general past tense ending in Quenya.

As discussed in the previous lesson, most Quenya verbs are *A-stems*, meaning that they end in the vowel *-a*. The past tenses of these verbs are typically formed simply by adding the ending *-në*. For instance, the *Etymologies* mention a verb **orta-** “raise” (see the entry *ORO*), and in *Namárië* in LotR its past tense is seen to be **ortanë**. (The simplest translation of **ortanë** is of course “raised”; the somewhat free rendering in LotR employs the translation “has uplifted” instead, but Tolkien’s interlinear translation in *RGEO:67* reads “lifted up” – which is merely an alternative wording of “raised”.) Other examples from Tolkien’s notes:

**ora-** “urge”, past tense **oranë** “urged” (*VT41:13, 18*)

**hehta-** “exclude”, past tense **hehtanë** “excluded” (*WJ:365*)

**ulya-** “pour”, past tense **ulyanë** “poured” (*Etym*, entry *ULU*)

**sinta-** “fade”, past tense **sintanë** “faded” (*Etym*, entry *THIN*)

We may add the verb **ahyanë** “changed” (or “did change”), only attested like this in the past tense, as part of the question **manen lambë Quendion ahyanë[?]** “how did the language of the Elves change?” (*PM:395*). The verb

“change” would seem to be **ahya-**.

Regarding the verb **ava-** (apparently meaning “refuse, forbid”), Tolkien noted that its past tense **avanë** “revealed that it was not in origin a ‘strong’ or basic verbal stem”. The latter seems to be more or less the same as a primary verb. He called **avanë** a “weak” past tense form (WJ:370). That probably goes for all the past tenses so far discussed. (What Tolkien would call a “strong” past tense is not quite clear. Perhaps he would use this term of the past tenses formed by means of *nasal-infixion* – see below.)

We must also consider the “basic” or “primary”, ending-less verbs, verbs that unlike the A-stems do not have a final vowel: verbs like **sil-** “to shine”, **tir-** “to watch”, **mat-** “to eat”.

It seems that the ending **-në** can be used to form the past tense of some primary verbs as well. Tolkien mentioned **tirnë** as the past tense of the verb **tir-** “to watch” (Etym, entry TIR), and he also quoted **tamnë** as the past tense of the verb **tam-** “to tap” (Etym, entry TAM). In these cases, adding **-në** to the verbal stems in question does not produce impossible consonant clusters: Both **rn** and **mn** are permitted by Quenya phonology. For this reason, the ending **-në** can *probably* also be added to verbal stems ending in **-n**, since double **nn** is likewise a wholly acceptable combination in Quenya. For instance, the past tense of the verb **cen-** “to see” is presumably **cennë** “saw”, though we have no attested example of the past tense of a verb of this shape.

But whenever the stem of a basic verb ends in any consonant *other* than just **-m**, **-n**, or **-r**, simply adding the ending **-në** would produce consonant clusters that Quenya cannot have. The past tense forms of verbs like **mat-** “eat”, **top-** “cover” or **tac-** “fasten” cannot be **\*\*matnë**, **\*\*topnë**, **\*\*tacnë**, for clusters like **tn**, **pn**, **cn** are not found in the language. So what happens?

The difficult way of describing what occurs is to say that the **n** of the ending **-në** is replaced by *nasal-infixion* intruding before the last consonant of the verbal stem. What is “infixion”? We have already mentioned *suffixes*, elements added at the end of a word (like the plural ending **-r**, added to the noun **Elda** in its plural form **Eldar**), and *prefixes*, elements added at the beginning of a word (like the superlative prefix **an-**, added to the adjective **calima** “bright” in its superlative form **ancalima** “brightest”). If you want to add something to a word, there are only so many places you can fit it in; if it is not to be *prefixed* or *suffixed*, the final option is to *infix* it, that is, jam it *into* the word. For instance, the verb **mat-** “to eat” has the past tense **mantë** “ate” (VT39:7), an *infix* **n** turning up before the final consonant of the verbal stem (**t** becoming **nt**). Similarly, the verb **hat-** “break asunder” has the past tense **hantë** (Etym, entry SKAT).

Before the consonant **p**, the infix takes the form **m** rather than **n**, so that the past tense of **top-** “to cover” is **topmë** (Etym, entry TOP). Before **c**, the infix appears as **n** (or actually **ñ**, see below), so that the past tense of **tac-** “to fasten” is **tancë** (Etym, entry TAK). The various forms of the infix – **n**,

**m** or **ñ**, depending on the environment – are all *nasals*, sounds pronounced by making the stream of air from the lungs go out through the nose rather than the mouth. Hence *nasal-infixion* is a fitting term for this phonological process.

As I said, that was the difficult way of stating what happens. Put more simply: if adding the past tense ending **-në** to a primary verb would result in any of the impossible clusters **tn**, **cn**, **pn**, the **n** and the consonant before it switch places. **Tn** and **cn** simply become **nt** and **nc**; what would be **np** changes to **mp** to ease pronunciation. (Actually what would be **nc** similarly changes to **ñc**, using **ñ** for *ng* as in *king* as Tolkien sometimes did – but according to the spelling conventions here employed, **ñc** is represented simply as **nc**.) Hence:

**mat-** “eat”, past tense (\*\**matnë* >) **mantë** “ate”  
**top-** “cover”, past tense (\*\**topnë* > \*\**tonpë* >) **tompë** “covered”  
**tac-** “fasten”, past tense (\*\**tacnë* >) **tancë** “fastened”

This, at least, is an easy way to imagine it for pedagogical purposes. We cannot know for certain whether Tolkien imagined this to be the actual development – a form something like **matnë** actually occurring at an earlier stage, but later becoming **mantë** by swapping around the consonants **t** and **n**. The linguistic term for such transposing of two sounds is *metathesis*, and there are other examples of metathesized consonants in the imaginary evolution of Tolkien’s languages (see for instance the *Etymologies*, entry **KEL**-). However, some clues suggest that Tolkien imagined these past tenses to reflect “genuine” nasal-infixion occurring already in primitive Elvish, not merely a later transposition of consonants. After all, he had one of his characters observe that “nasal-infixion is of considerable importance in Avallonian” (SD:433; Avallonian is another term for Quenya). But this is an academic question.

Primary verbs with **-l** as their final consonant must be given special attention. The verb **vil-** “to fly” is said to have the past tense **villë** (Etym, entry **WIL**). This double **ll** probably represents some combination of **l** and **n**. Perhaps **villë** is meant to represent older **wilnë** with the normal past tense ending (notice that in this case, **v** comes from older **w**: root **WIL**), the group **ln** turning into **ll** in Quenya. However, other examples suggest that older **ln** would rather produce Quenya **ld**. It may well be that **villë** is meant to represent older **winlë**, that is, a nasal-infixed variant of the verb **wil-** (since **nl** also became **ll** in Quenya; for instance, the noun **nellë** “brook” is said to come from older *nen-le*: Etym, entry **NEN**). Whatever development Tolkien may have imagined, primary verbs with **l** as their final consonant seem to form their past tense form by adding **-lë**.

NOTE: In *Telerin*, the sister language of Quenya in the Blessed Realm, a verb formed from a root **DEL** (“go”) is said to have the past tense *delle*: WJ:364. As pointed out by Ales Bican, this form probably descends from older *denle* (with nasal-infixion). If it descended

from *delne*, it would likely have remained unchanged in Telerin, since the cluster *ln* is permitted in this language (cf. a Telerin word like *elni* “stars”, WJ:362). This observation supports the view that past tenses with nasal-infixion did occur already in Primitive Elvish.

The system set out above is what I shall consider the “regular” way of forming the past tense of a verb in Quenya. That is, as long as a verb conforms with this system, I will not explicitly list its past tense when I first mention it. All the past tenses in the exercises below are constructed according to this system, so your task this time is to internalize the rules above. Some irregular forms will be discussed in later lessons, but even so, we will here survey certain “alternative” past tense formations (contrasting them with the more regular forms may actually be helpful in memorizing the normal system – but the student is not expected to memorize this survey as such). So do skim through as much as you can take of the stuff below, and proceed to the exercises when you’ve had enough.

The past tense of primary verbs with **-r** as their final consonant is relatively well-attested: Attested examples include **car-** “make, do”, pa. t. **carnë** (Etym, entry KAR), **tir-** “watch”, pa. t. **tirnë** (Etym, entry TIR) and **tur-** “govern”, pa. t. **turnë** (Etym, entry TUR). So above we set out the rule that verbs of this shape have past tense forms that are constructed by adding the suffix **-në**. But a few verbs behave quite differently. The past tense of the verb **rer-** “sow” is not **\*\*rernë** as we might expect, but **rendë**: See Etym, entry RED. The reason for this is precisely the fact that the original root-word was RED rather than **\*\*RER**. Thus the verb **rer-** appeared as **red-** at an earlier stage, and then the past tense **rendë** is actually “regular” enough: it is simply formed from **red-** by means of nasal-infixion + the ending **-ë** (just like such a regular verb as **quet-** “say” has the pa. t. **quentë**). What slightly complicates matters is that in Quenya, original **d** only survived as part of the clusters **ld**, **nd**, and **rd**; in all other positions it was changed, and following a vowel it normally became **r**. Hence **red-** turned into **rer-**, while the past tense **rendë** remained unscathed by the phonological changes. In this perspective, the verb is strictly speaking not “irregular” at all; it just behaves differently because it has a special history – and this goes for very many of the “irregularities” in Quenya: As observed by his son, Tolkien’s linguistic creations “imagine language not as ‘pure structure’, without ‘before’ or ‘after’, but as growth, in time” (LR:342). Tolkien clearly liked leaving in various testimonials to this imaginary age-long “growth”.

We don’t know very many verbs in **-r** that should have past tenses in **-ndë** because of their special history. From the *Etymologies* we must presumably include the verbs **hyar-** “cleave” and **ser-** “rest” (since these come from roots SYAD and SED, see the relevant entries in Etym – but Tolkien did not actually mention the past tense forms **hyandë** and **sendë**). In a post-LotR source we have a verb **nir-** “press, thrust, force”; again no past tense form has been published, but since the stem is given as NID it should presumably

be **nindë** rather than **nirnë** (VT41:17). More attested examples could be quoted from early “Qenya” material, but these writings do not have full authority as regards LotR-style Quenya. For instance, the 1915 Qenya Lexicon seems to include the verb **nyar-** “tell, relate” in this category (past tense **nyandë**, QL:68). But in later material, Tolkien derived this verb from a root NAR (entry NAR<sup>2</sup> in Etym) rather than NAD, so now its past tense would presumably be regular (**nyarnë**).

Some primary verbs are also seen to use a past tense formation that dispenses with any nasal sounds. The verb does receive the ending **-ë**, the vowel displayed by all past-tense forms, but instead of adding a nasal sound (infixing or as part of the ending **-në**), the stem-vowel of the verb is *lengthened*. For instance, the past tense of the verb **lav-** “lick” is seen to be **lávë** (attested in *Namárië* as part of the verb **undulávë** “down-licked”, that is, “covered”). Likewise, the past tense of the negative verb **um-** “not do” or “not be” is said to be **úmë** (Etym, entry UGU/UMU; we will return to this peculiar verb in Lesson Nine). This past tense formation is quite common in the early Qenya Lexicon, and it also turns up in relatively late (but still pre-LotR) sources. *Fíriel’s Song* of ca. 1936 agrees with the 1915 Lexicon that the past tense of the verb **car-** “make, do” is **cárë** (QL:45, LR:72; the spelling used in the sources is **káre**). However, according to the *Etymologies* (entry KAR), the past tense is **carñë** – and that is the form we will use here: The *Etymologies* is, at least in part, slightly younger than Fíriel’s Song. Following the pattern of **cárë**, some pre-LotR sources give **túlë** as the past tense of the verb **tul-** “come” (LR:47, SD:246), but **villë** as the past tense of **vil-** in the *Etymologies* suggests that the past tense “came” could just as well be **tullë** (representing older *tulne* or *tunle*) instead.

It might seem that Tolkien eventually decided to limit the use of the past tense formation represented by **túlë** and **cárë**, though it was never wholly abandoned, as the form **undulávë** in *Namárië* in LotR demonstrates. We might actually have expected the past tense of **lav-** “lick” to be **\*\*lambë** rather than **lávë**. A past tense form **lambë** would be constructed by nasal-infixion of the original root-word LAB (itself listed in Etym): In Quenya, original **b** normally became **v** following a vowel, but **b** persisted unchanged in the group **mb**. The Qenya Lexicon actually lists **ambë** as the past tense of a verb **av-** “depart” (QL:33); this may be an example of this phenomenon. However, **\*\*lambë** as the past tense of **lav-** would clash with the noun **lambë** “tongue, language”; perhaps this is why Tolkien decided to go for the irregular formation **lávë** instead. Or should we generalize from **lav-** and let *all* Quenya primary verbs in **-v** form their past tense after the pattern of **lávë**?

Luckily, these verbs are not very numerous. There is a distinct verb **lav-** meaning “yield, allow, grant” (root DAB, see Etym), possibly a verb **tuv-** “find” (verbal stem isolated from a longer form), plus **tyav-** as the verb “taste” (see entry KYAB in Etym). Should the past tense “tasted” be **tyambë**

or **tyávë**? The latter past tense form is actually attested in the Qenya Lexicon (p. 49), but since the QL is seen to use this formation quite liberally compared to later Quenya, we cannot be sure that the information is valid for the later stages of Tolkien’s conception. (**Tyávë** is attested in a post-LotR source as a *noun* “taste”; whether this argues against the same form being used as a past tense “tasted” is unclear. In the 1915 Lexicon, Tolkien did have similar-sounding nouns and verbal tenses coexisting; see QL:49, entry KUMU.)

There are some curious cases where even longer, derived verbs (A-stems) drop their ending and have **lávë**-style past tenses derived directly from the ending-less root. One early example is the verb **serta-** “tie”, past tense **sérë** (QL:83) rather than **\*\*sertanë** as we might expect. These formations are far from uncommon in the 1915 Lexicon, but the idea was not wholly obsolete in later Quenya either: The *Etymologies* of the mid-thirties records that the verb **onta-** “beget, create” has two possible past tenses: beside the regular form **ontanë** we also have the irregular form **ónë** (Etym, entry ONO).

The simplest A-stems, those that add the short ending **-a** to the root (and not a longer ending like **-ta** or **-ya**), may also drop this ending in some past tense formations. Above we quoted the QL form **tyávë** as an attested past tense of the verb **tyav-** “taste”, but in the 1915 Lexicon, the verb “taste” is actually given as an A-stem **tyava-**: It is not a primary verb **tyav-** as it becomes in later sources (QL:49 vs. Etym, entry KYAB). Within the later system, we would expect an A-stem **tyava-** to have the past tense **tyavanë**, but the validity of either form in LotR-style Quenya is highly questionable. More commonly, the simplest A-stem verbs have past tenses that are “regular” enough – if you pretend that the final **-a** does not exist! Above we quoted **oranë** as an example of the regular past tense of a simple A-stem verb (**ora-** “urge”), but immediately after writing **oranë**, Tolkien actually added **ornë** as a parenthetical alternative (VT41:13). Of course, **ornë** would be a perfectly regular form if it were the past tense of a primary verb **\*\*or-** (cf. for instance **tur-** “govern”, pa. t. **turnë**). In effect, **ora-** may behave as a primary verb in the past tense, discarding its ending and jumping over into another class. The earliest material has examples of the same phenomenon: In the QL, the past tense forms of the verbs **papa-** “tremble” and **pata-** “rap, tap” are given as **pampë**, **pantë** (p. 72), not **\*\*papanë**, **\*\*patanë** as we would expect according to the “regular” system. The nasal-infixed past tense forms would be perfectly “regular” if we assume that in the past tense, the simple A-stem verbs **papa-** and **pata-** are masquerading as primary verbs **\*\*pap-**, **\*\*pat-**. Thus we cannot be certain whether the past tense of the verb **mapa-** “grasp, seize” should be **mapanë** or **mampë**; writers have used both. Since Tolkien seems to imply that the past tense of **ora-** can be both **oranë** and **ornë**, perhaps both are permissible.

NOTE: In QL:59, Tolkien actually listed the past tense of **mapa-** as **nampë** (sic!) In

the 1915 scenario, there were two variant roots, MAPA and NAPA, that shared the past tense **nampë**. Do we dare to assume that this idea was still valid decades later? The verb **mapa-** is listed in the *Etymologies*, but if Tolkien had still imagined its past tense to be as irregular as **nampë**, I tend to think that it would have been explicitly mentioned in Etym as well. Furthermore, in Etym there is no trace of the alternative root NAPA; we only find MAP (LR:371) corresponding to MAPA in the QL. But on the other hand, the form **nampë** is attested, so if you like it better than the unattested forms **mapanë** or **mampë**, feel free to use it.

The verb **lala-** “laugh” is another example of one of the simplest A-stems. It may have the past tense **lalanë**, but it is also possible that it should behave as a primary verb in the past tense. But if so, we must take into account the fact that **lala-** is to be derived from older *g-lada-* (PM:359); this is one of the cases where an original **d** following a vowel turned into **l** rather than **r** (influenced by the **l** earlier in the word). So if **lala-** has a “short” past tense, it should probably not be **lallë**, but rather **landë** – derived from a nasal-infixed form of the original word *g-lada-*. On the other hand, the similar but distinct verb **lala-** “deny” found in the *Etymologies* (LR:367) never contained a **d**, so its past tense may well be **lallë** (unless it is **lalanë**, and I think I lean toward that form).

The *Etymologies* actually provides a few examples of even more complex A-stems that also drop their ending and in effect transform themselves into primary verbs in the past tense. The verb **farya-** “to suffice” is said to have the past tense **farnë** (Etym, entry PHAR); here the whole ending **-ya** drops out in the past tense, which is formed as if this were a primary verb **\*\*fer-**. Based on such a regular example as the one we quoted above – namely **ulya-** “pour”, past tense **ulyanë** – we would of course expect the past tense of **ferya-** to be **\*\*feryanë**. But actually even our “regular” example **ulya-** also has an alternative past tense form **ullë** (Etym, entry ULU), and this is a particularly interesting example, for Tolkien indicated that the two past tenses **ulyanë** and **ullë** were not interchangeable. They had somewhat different meanings. There will be a fuller discussion of this in Lesson Ten; for now it suffices to say that I think most verbs in **-ya** would retain this ending when the past tense suffix **-në** is added. (But **ullë** as one past tense of **ulya-**, formed directly from **ul-** rather than the full form of the verb, would seem to confirm that primary verbs in **-l** normally have past tenses in **-lë**. Except for **ullë**, we only have the example **vil-** “fly”, pa. t. **villë** to go on – so an extra, if indirect, confirmation of this pattern is very welcome!)

Finally we will discuss a strange past tense formation that may occur in the case of verbs in **-ta**. Perhaps it should not be seen as irregular, for Tolkien actually described one such past tense as “regular . . . for a *-ta* verb of this class” (WJ:366). Nonetheless, its formation is less than straightforward. It is exemplified already in the earliest material: The 1915 Lexicon contains a verb **lahta-** (QL:50; the verb is not clearly glossed), but its past tense is not **\*\*lahtanë** as we might expect: Instead we find **lahantë**. In other words, the

verb **lah**ta- is reworked into **lahat**- (the stem-vowel being repeated between the second and the third consonant, breaking up the consonant cluster, whereas the final -a is dropped), and the past tense **lahantë** is then formed from this **lahat**- by means of nasal-infixion and an added -ë, in itself a quite regular process familiar from primary verbs.

A much later example can be found in the *Etymologies*, where the verb **orta**- “rise, raise” is assigned a past tense form **orontë** (Etym, entry ORO), though **orontë** is not there clearly presented as a Quenya form: In Etym, it is actually quite unclear what language it is meant to belong to. However, in some of Tolkien’s earlier drafts for *Namárië*, the past tense of **orta**- did appear as **orontë**, not “regular” **ortanë** as it became in the final version. So what is going on here?

Our only real clue is what Tolkien wrote in WJ:366, where he somewhat surprisingly declared the form **oantë** – the past tense of **auta**- “go away, leave” – to be quite regular “for a -ta verb of this class”. According to the “regular” system we have tried to make out, **oantë** instead of **\*\*autanë** inevitably seems highly irregular. Tolkien derived the verb **auta**- from a root AWA (WJ:365), so its form in the primitive language is probably meant to be *awatâ* (my reconstruction). As primitive Elvish evolved towards Quenya as we know it, the second of two identical short vowels in concomitant syllables was often lost; hence *awatâ* would have been shortened to *aw’tâ* = *autâ*, and this in turn is the direct ancestor of Quenya **auta**-. But it seems that the old past tense of such a verb as *awatâ*, with a vowel immediately preceding the ending -tâ, was formed by nasal-infixion: Tolkien explicitly gave the past tense of the primitive verb as *awantê* (WJ:366; the spelling there used is actually *áwa-n-tê*, the hyphens before and after the *n* apparently emphasizing that it is an infix – whereas the accent on the initial *á* here only means that it is stressed, not that the vowel is long).

In the case of a word like *awantê*, the rule that the second of two identical short vowels is lost could not apply (no **\*\*aw’ntê**), for such loss does not occur immediately in front of a consonant cluster – and the nasal-infixion has here produced a cluster *nt*. The “final” Quenya form of *awantê*, namely **orontë**, is somewhat obscured because the group *awa* later became **oa** in Quenya – but this change has nothing to do with the past tense formation. Now we can explain a form like **orontë** as the past tense of **orta**-. In the *Etymologies*, the original root is given as ORO (LR:379), so Tolkien probably meant the verb **orta**- to be descended from older *orotâ*- after the regular loss of the second vowel. But the past tense of this *orotâ*- was the nasal-infixed form *orontê* (both are my reconstructions), and this produced Quenya **orontë**, the second vowel here being preserved because of the following cluster **nt** (no one wants to say **\*\*orntë**!)

When Tolkien apparently changed his mind and altered the past tense of **orta**- from **orontë** to **ortanë** (a “regular” form according to the system we have set out), this would seem to suggest that he had now decided



that the primitive forms were instead *ortâ-* with past tense *orta-nê*: There was never any vowel immediately in front of the ending *-tâ* after all, and therefore the past tense was not formed by nasal-infixion, but by the independent ending *-nê* (> Quenya **-në**). This is not the only example of Tolkien apparently changing his mind about which verbs actually belong to this exclusive “class”. The *Etymologies* lists a verb **atalta-** “collapse, fall in” (entry TALÁT); no past tense is there mentioned, but in one text we have **atalantë** (LR:56, translated “down-fell”). This would seem to presuppose that the primitive forms were *atalatâ-* with past tense *atalantê* (my reconstructions, but cf. WJ:319 regarding ATALAT as a derivative form of the root TALAT). Yet in Tolkien’s later texts the past tense of **atalta-** becomes **ataltanë** (LR:47 and SD:247), simply formed by adding the normal ending **-në**. So now Tolkien had presumably come to envision the primitive forms as *ataltâ-*, past tense *atalta-nê* (my reconstructions).

If the apparent revisions **orontë** > **ortanë** and **atalantë** > **ataltanë** do not reflect changes in his ideas about the primitive Elvish forms, it may be that he imagined a development whereby the Eldar replaced the more complex past tense formations with simpler, analogical forms. For instance, **orontë** as past tense of **orta-** could have been replaced by **ortanë** because of analogy with such straightforward past tense formations as **hehta-**, pa. t. **hehtanë** (WJ:365). In the *Etymologies*, the form **orontë** is indeed marked with a symbol that indicates that it is “poetic or archaic” (cf. LR:347); is this to suggest that it was ordinarily replaced by the “non-archaic” form **ortanë**? Especially considering how Tolkien later came to envision the history of the Quenya tongue – that it was used as a ceremonial language in Middle-earth, but was no longer anyone’s mother-tongue – we could very plausibly assume that its grammar was somewhat simplified, more complex formations being suppressed and replaced by simpler analogical ones. Indeed **oantë** rather than **\*autanë** as the past tense of **auta-** “to leave” is the only verb I can think of where we “must” use this special past tense formation, unless we are to accept some of the earliest “Qenya” material with no reservations (and I have plenty).

With this we conclude our survey of various strange or irregular ways of forming the past tense; as I said above, the exercises below are meant to reflect the *regular* system instead.

Remember that just like present-tense verbs, a past tense form receives the ending **-r** if it has a plural subject (or multiple subjects). For instance, the simplest past tense of the verb **lanta-** “fall” is **lantanë**, but with a plural subject it becomes **lantaner** (SD:246). Naturally, the diaeresis over the final **-ë** disappears, since the vowel is no longer final when the plural ending **-r** is added after it.

## Summary of Lesson Six

While various irregular formations occur, it would seem that the past tense of Quenya verbs is typically formed according to these rules: A-stem verbs simply receive the ending **-në**. The “primary” or ending-less verbs can also receive this ending if their last consonant is **-r** or **-m**, probably also **-n** (no examples). If added to a primary verb in **-l**, the ending **-në** turns into **-lë** (resulting in a double **ll**, e.g. **villë** as the past tense of **vil-** “fly”). Primary verbs ending in one of the consonants **p**, **t**, **c** have past tenses constructed by adding the ending **-ë** combined with *nasal-infixion* intruding before the last consonant of the verbal stem; the infix manifests as **m** before **p** (hence **toppë** as the past tense of **top-** “cover”), otherwise as **n** (hence **mantë** as the past tense of **mat-** “eat”).

## Vocabulary

**lempë** “five”

**elen** “star”

**harma** “treasure” (noun)

**sil-** verb “shine” (with white or silver light, like star-shine or moon-shine)

**hir-** verb “find”

**cap-** verb “jump”

**tec-** verb “write”

**quet-** verb “speak, say”

**mel-** verb “love” (as friend; no Quenya word referring to erotic love between the sexes has been published)

**cen-** verb “see” (related to **cenda-** “read”, which word is derived from a strengthened form of the same stem and meaning, basically, to watch closely).

**orta-** verb “rise”, also used = “raise, lift up”.

**harya-** verb “possess; have” (related to the noun **harma** “treasure”, basically referring to a “possession”)

## Exercises

1. Translate into English (and practice your vocabulary at the same time; most of the words employed in exercises A–H were introduced in earlier lessons):

A. **I nér cendanë i parma.**

B. **I Naucor manter.**

C. **I aran tultanë i tári.**

- D. Nís lindanë.
- E. I vendi tirner i Elda.
- F. I lempë roccor caitaner nu i alta tasar.
- G. I eleni siller.
- H. I Nauco cennë rocco.

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. A Dwarf found the treasure.
- J. The Elf spoke.
- K. The horse jumped.
- L. The king loved the Elves.
- M. A man wrote five books.
- N. The queen rose.
- O. The kings possessed great treasures.
- P. The king and the queen summoned four Elves and five Dwarves.

# Lesson 7

## Future tense and Aorist

### 7.1 The future tense

In this lesson we will introduce two new tenses of the verb, the *future* and the *aorist*. We shall have to spend quite a few paragraphs trying to define the function of the latter, but the function of the future tense is easy enough to grasp: This tense is used with reference to *future* actions.

English (unlike, say, French) has no distinct future tense. Instead of a unitary, inflectional form of the verb that only refers to future actions, English may fall back on longer phrases involving extra verbs like “shall” or “will”: A past tense form like “came” has no one-word counterpart with future reference that would exemplify a true future tense – we only find circumlocutions like “shall come” or “will come” (or even “is going to come”). It is even possible to use the *present* tense with future reference: “He *comes* tomorrow.” For this reason, linguists may refer to the English “present” tense as a *non-past* tense instead: It actually covers both present and future.

These somewhat asymmetric features of English are avoided in Tolkien’s Elvish. Languages like Quenya and Sindarin do possess true future tense forms of the verb. For instance, the future tense of the verb **hir-** “find” appears near the end of *Namárië*, in the sentence **nai elyë hiruva**, “maybe thou *shalt find* [it]”. The example **hiruva** “shall (shalt) find” includes what seems to be the normal – possibly universal – Quenya future tense marker: the ending **-uva**. This pattern is confirmed by the *Markirya* poem, that includes the examples **cenuva** “shall heed”, **tiruva** “shall watch” and **hlaruva** “shall hear” (verbs **cen-** “see, behold, heed”, **tir-** “watch”, **hlar-** “hear”). In LR:63, Tolkien translates the verb **queluva** as “faileth”, but this is only an example of the English “present” or non-past tense embracing the future as well. The context clearly indicates that the verbal action in question belongs to the future: **Man tárë antáva nin Ilúvatar, Ilúvatar, enyárë tar i tyel irë Anarinya queluva?** “What will Ilúvatar, O Ilúvatar, give me in that day beyond the end, when my Sun *faileth* [literally: shall fail]?”

The examples listed so far exemplify the future tense of “primary” or

ending-less verbs only. It seems that the ending **-uva** is also used in the case of the more numerous A-stem verbs, which however *lose their final -a* before the future tense ending is added (one exception, see note below). In a post-LotR source, the future tense of the verb **linda-** “sing” appears as **linduva** (attested with a secondary ending here removed; see Taum Santoski’s article in the October 1985 issue of the newsletter Beyond Bree). Also, what must be the future tense of the A-stem verb **ora-** “to urge, impel” is apparently given as **oruva** in another post-LotR source (VT41:13, 18; Tolkien actually wrote **oruv·**, but the editor points out that “the dot may be an inadvertently incomplete *a*”: No Quenya word can end in **-v·**.)

NOTE: Notice, however, that a final **-a** does not drop out before the ending **-uva** when this **-a** is also the *only* vowel of the verbal stem. Thus, the future tense form of the copulas derived from the stem **NÂ** “to be” (cf. **ná** “is”) is not **\*\*nuva**, but **nauva**: This word for “will be” is attested in VT42:34.

It may be that Tolkien at one point imagined a somewhat more complicated system regarding the A-stems. Above we quoted a line from the pre-LotR Quenya text usually called *Fíriel’s Song*, including **antáva** as the future tense of **anta-** “give” (LR:63, 72). Here Tolkien seems to be using a system whereby A-stem verbs form their future tense by *lengthening* the final **-a** to **-á** and *adding* the ending **-va** (shorter variant of **-uva**?) However, in light of the later examples **linduva** and **oruva** (instead of **\*\*lindáva**, **\*\*oráva**), we may conclude that Tolkien eventually decided to make **-uva** the more or less universal future tense marker: This ending simply causes the final **-a** of A-stems to drop out. My best guess is that in LotR-style Quenya, the future tense of **anta-** should be **antuva** rather than **antáva**, since Tolkien may seem to have simplified the system.

However, there is one *possible* complication in LotR-style Quenya as well, regarding the primary verbs. In *Namárië* in LotR occurs the future tense form **enquantuva**, “shall refill”. Removing the prefix **en-** “re-”, we have **quantuva** for “shall fill”. This used to be taken as the future tense of a verb **quanta-** “to fill”, related to the adjective **quanta** “full”. Tolkien’s earliest “Qenya” wordlist indeed lists such a verb (QL:78, there spelt **qanta-**). However, about half a decade after publishing LotR, Tolkien in the essay *Quendi and Eldar* seemingly cited the Quenya verb “to fill” as **quat-** (WJ:392). This would seem to be a primary verb, past tense presumably **quantë** (the pa. t. “qante” is actually given in QL:78, but there it is evidently only meant as a permissible shortening of the full form “qantane”; the regular past tense of a verb **quanta-** would be **quantanë** in later Quenya as well). If Tolkien had decided that the Quenya verb “to fill” is actually **quat-**, and its future tense is **quantuva** as *Namárië* would seem to indicate, should we conclude that the same verbs that form their past tense with nasal-infixion + the ending **-ë** similarly form their *future* tense with nasal-infixion + the ending **-uva**? For instance, should the future tense of verbs like **mat-** “eat”, **top-** “cover” and **tac-** “fasten” be **mantuva** “shall eat”, **tompuva** “shall cover”, **tan-**

**cuva** “shall fasten”? (Compare the nasal-infixion in the past tense forms: **mantë**, **tompë**, **tancë**.) Or should we just add the ending **-uva** to the verbal stem without any further manipulations, hence **matuva**, **topuva**, **tacuva** instead? General principles would perhaps suggest the latter, but there remains the curious example of **quantuva** next to **quat-**. If there is to be no nasal-infixion in the future tense forms, we would have to accept that the verb “fill” can be both **quanta-** and **quat-**, with separate future tenses **quantuva** and **quatuva**.

I have used future tense forms with nasal-infixion in certain compositions of my own (and so have some people who put greater trust in my so-called “expert opinion” than they possibly should). But it may well be that Tolkien, mentioning the form **quat-** in WJ:392, actually intended this to be simply the way the underlying root KWATA manifests in Quenya. The exact wording in the source involves a reference to “the verb stem \*KWATA, Q *quat-* ‘fill’.” If **quat-** is merely the way the ancient stem KWATA appears in Quenya, the actual verb “fill” could still be **quanta-** with future tense **quantuva**. (Compare for instance the entry PAT in the *Etymologies*, this root PAT producing the Quenya verb **panta-** “open”. There is also an *adjective* **panta** “open”, exactly paralleling **quanta** “full” next to the verb **quanta-** “fill”; perhaps the verb is derived from the adjective in both cases.)

Alternatively, **quat-** really is the verb “to fill” and not just an underlying root-form, but the future tense **quantuva** *still* presupposes a longer A-stem **quanta-**. Perhaps Tolkien had just plain *forgotten* that he had already published a form of the A-stem verb **quanta-** “fill”, so that he was no longer free to change it to a primary verb **quat-**. (See PM:367-371 for an example of Tolkien working out some elaborate linguistic explanations that he had to scrap because he discovered that they conflicted with something he had already published in LotR – a fatal footnote in an Appendix forcing him to reject his nice new ideas!)

Thus, material presently available does not allow any certain conclusion in this matter. Writers can equally plausibly let verbs that show nasal infixion in the past tense do so also in the future tense (arguing from the **quat-/quantuva** pair that this is how the language works) or choose to explain **quat-** differently and form the future tense of *any* primary verb simply by adding the ending **-uva** (as in **hir-/hiruva**). As users of Quenya we can probably well afford to live with slightly different dialects regarding this detail, until future publications hopefully allow us to pick the right explanation.

It must be assumed that the future tense, like all other tenses, receives the ending **-r** where it occurs with a plural subject (e.g. **elen siluva** “a star will shine”, but plural **eleni siluvar** “stars will shine”).

## 7.2 The Aorist

We have now discussed all the three tenses corresponding to the basic trinity of past, present, and future. Yet the Quenya verb has other tenses as well. One is called the *aorist*. The use of this term with reference to Quenya grammar was long disputed by some, but a Tolkien text that finally became available in July 2000 demonstrates that he had indeed invented a Quenya tense he called aorist (VT41:17).

While even people with no linguistic training readily understand what the past, present and future tenses are “for”, it is hardly equally obvious what function the aorist tense has. (Some linguists would say that the aorist is strictly not a “tense” at all, according to certain definitions of that term; however, Tolkien did use the phrase “aorist tense” in VT41:17. We will not discuss this question here, wholly academic as it is.) So what, really, is an aorist?

To start with the word itself, it comes from Greek and literally means something like “unlimited” or “undetermined”. The word was originally coined to describe a certain Greek form of the verb. In Greek this form contrasts with the past tense or “imperfect”, the latter being used of a past action that *was being done* over a period of time (not just a momentary action). The aorist, on the other hand, has no such implications regarding the “duration” of the action. It just denotes a past action, period, with no further distinctions. When contrasted with the imperfect, the Greek aorist can be used for a momentary or clearly finished (not on-going) action. Another use of the Greek aorist is not especially associated with the past: the aorist could be used to express *general truths* that are not limited to any specific time, like “sheep *eat* grass”.

But this was the Greek aorist; the Quenya aorist is not used in quite the same way. Yet their functions do overlap in some respects, which must be the reason why Tolkien decided to employ this term from Greek grammar in the first place. We will try to determine the *function* of the Quenya aorist before we discuss how it is actually formed. For now, just take my word that the verbs in the examples I cite are aorists.

The Quenya aorist, like the Greek one, can be used to express “general truths”. Our best example is a sentence occurring in WJ:391, where Elves are described as **i carir quettar ómainen**, “those who *make* words with voices”. The aorist verb **carir** “make” here denotes a general habit of the Elves, covering past, present and future, for the Elves were making words throughout their history. The sentence **polin quetë** “*I can* speak” (VT41:6) includes another aorist verb, and again a “general truth” is presented, though in this case it relates only to the speaker: The meaning is of course “I can (always) speak”, presenting a *general* ability, not just something that applies only to the present time (as if the speaker was dumb yesterday and may go dumb again tomorrow). So one important function of

the Quenya aorist is that it is used, or rather *can* be used, of verbal actions that transcend the here and now – rather describing some “timeless” truth or “general” situation. In *Namárië* in LotR, Galadriel describes the gloomy state of Middle-earth using an aorist verb: **sindanóriello caita mornië** “out of a grey country darkness *lies*” (not present tense **caitëa** = “is lying”, as if this were merely a strictly present phenomenon, soon to pass). The first words of *Namárië* also include an aorist: **laurië lantar lassi**, “like gold *fall* the leaves” – but this is not just a here-and-now description of leaves that *are falling* (which would presumably be **lantëar**, present tense): The following lines indicate that Galadriel describes the general situation in Middle-earth, the ever-recurring autumnal decay as she has been observing it throughout **yëni únótimë**, “long years uncountable”. So our example “sheep *eat* grass” is probably best rendered into Quenya using an aorist verb: **mámar matir salquë** (singular “sheep” = **máma**, “grass” = **salquë**). As the example **polin quetë** “I can speak” demonstrates, the aorist can also be used to describe the abilities or habits of a single individual (**i máma matë salquë** = “the sheep *eats* grass”).

It seems, however, that the Quenya aorist is not only used to describe “timeless truths”. In some cases Tolkien himself seems to waver in the choice between the aorist and the present tense, the latter more typically describing an ongoing here-and-now situation. This hesitation on Tolkien’s part suggest that these tenses are to some extent interchangeable. We have an aorist in the sentence **órenya quetë nin** “my heart *tells* me” (VT41:11), which is apparently quite synonymous with the alternative wording **órenya quéta nin** (VT41:13) employing a present tense form instead of an aorist. In the famous greeting **elen síla lúmenn’ omentielvo**, “a star *shines* [or rather *is shining*] on the hour of our meeting”, Tolkien finally decided to use a present tense form – but in earlier drafts, he used an aorist **silë** instead (RS:324). This greeting, having relevance for “our meeting” only, obviously cannot describe any “general truth” transcending time. Yet it is apparently permissible to use an aorist form even in such a context (though Tolkien decided that it was *better* to use the present tense).

It should be noted that the Quenya aorist is generally associated with the present, not with the past as in Greek. As Jerry Caveney wrote about Tolkien on the Elfling list (August 3, 2000):

In what seems to me typical of his creativeness and ‘fun’ in creating languages, he took the idea of the aorist aspect, and said, in effect, ‘What if a language used the aorist to contrast *present* general (unlimited) actions to present continuative actions instead of using it to contrast past general actions to present continuative [as in classical Greek]?’ The result is Tolkien’s ‘present aorist’. :) He thus created a language that could distinguish continuative from general present actions simply, something classi-



cal Greek could not readily do, and which modern English and French, for example, can only do with extra words (*I walk, I am walking; je marche, je suis en train de marcher*). I suspect Tolkien enjoyed the elegance of this basic grammatical distinction, which I am not aware that any ‘living’ language has.

On the other hand, Carl F. Hostetter thinks the Quenya aorist is used to describe an action that is “punctual, habitual, or otherwise durationless” (VT41:15). This is probably correct in most cases, describing the *typical* function of the aorist. Yet some examples suggest that it may be better to say that whereas the present tense explicitly identifies an *ongoing* action, the Quenya aorist is simply *unmarked* as far as duration is concerned. It does not necessarily contrast with the continuative present tense; an aorist *as such* does not signal that a verbal action must be non-continuative or “durationless”. Rather, as Caveney says, it is a “general” form, an all-purpose “present tense” that simply doesn’t address the question of whether the action denoted is continuative, habitual or momentary. As Lukáš Novák observed on the Elfling list (August 1, 2000): “It seems that the aorist is so ‘aoristos’ [Greek: unlimited] that it can express almost everything.”

In the exclamation **auta i lómë!** “the night is passing” (*Silmarillion* ch. 20), the form **auta** would seem to be an aorist (contrasting with the present tense, which is probably **autëa**) – yet Tolkien employs the translation “is passing” rather than “passes”. So it would seem that the aorist can also be used for an *ongoing* action; it just isn’t explicitly marked as such, grammatically speaking. If this is correct, it would be difficult to pin down any case where it is palpably *wrong* to replace the present tense with an aorist. Using the aorist would be simply a rather neutral way of talking about “present” actions – whether such action is actually ongoing, habitual, or merely an expression of “general truths”. (Hence **mámar matir salquë** = “sheep eat grass” could also be understood as “sheep are eating grass”, though for this meaning it is probably better – but hardly mandatory – to use the present tense: **mátar**.) In choosing between the aorist and the present tense, the only hard-and-fast rule one has to go on seems to be that the present tense should *not* be used with reference to entirely duration-less actions: The Quenya present tense is always used about some kind of *continuous* action. (Indeed some students would dispense with the term “present tense” and rather speak of the “continuative” form.) Beyond this one restriction, it seems that writers can choose quite freely between the aorist and the present tense.

*Generally*, however, it seems that the Quenya aorist corresponds to the English simple present (that shows either the ending *-s* or no ending at all, depending on the grammatical context). So Tolkien often translated Quenya aorists: e.g. **topë** “covers” (LR:394), **macë** “hews” (VT39:11), **tirin** “I watch” (LR:394). The Quenya *present* tense, on the other hand, is often

best translated using the English “is . . .-ing” construction: **tópa** “is covering”, **máca** “is hewing”, **tíran** “I am watching”. (The ending **-n** in the examples **tírin/tíran**, as well as in the form **polin** “I can” cited above, signifies “I”: This suffix will be discussed in the next lesson.) In Lesson Five we pointed out that the present tense form **quéta** denotes “is saying” rather than just “says”; conversely, the aorist **quetë** is usually “says” rather than “is saying”. If the Quenya aorist is used somewhat like the English simple present tense, the aorist can be used to describe actions that are perceived as duration-less or habitual. For instance, an aorist like **capë** “jumps” may describe an action that is momentary (“he jumps”) or habitual/characteristic (“any frog jumps”).

Yet we also seem to have examples of Tolkien using the Quenya present/“continuous” tense instead of the aorist where English would still translate the verb in question as a simple present tense form, not as an “is . . .-ing” construction. Consider this line from *Namárië*: **hísië untúpa Calaciryó míri** “mist covers the jewels of Calaciryá”. The present tense form **untúpa** describes a continuous action, more literally “is covering”, but here Tolkien wrote “covers” instead. Presumably it would in no way have been wrong to use an aorist instead. After all, the mist covering the jewels of Calaciryá is evidently perceived as a rather general state of things, not merely as an ongoing meteorological phenomenon that will soon pass! (The aorist would presumably be **untupë** – perhaps this form, stressed on the first rather than the penultimate syllable, just didn’t fit the meter of Tolkien’s poem? Anyhow, the latter element of this verb **untup-** seems to be a variant of **top-** in the *Etymologies*, both verbs meaning “cover”.)

Another example of a present tense where we might expect to see an aorist can be found in Cirion’s Oath (UT:305, 317), in the sentence **i hárar mahalmassen mi Númen** = “those who *sit* on thrones in the West”. This refers to the Valar, and their being enthroned in the West must be considered a “general truth”, just like it is a general truth that Elves *make* (aorist **carir**) words with voices. Yet Tolkien used what seems to be a present tense instead of an aorist: **hára**, here plural **hárar**, apparently suggesting a primary verb **har-** “to sit”. The plural aorist would probably be **harir** instead. It may be noted that while Tolkien translated **hárar** as “sit” in the running English translation in UT:305, he employed the more literal translation “are sitting” in his linguistic discussion in UT:317. Yet this seems to demonstrate that in Quenya, one can use the present tense as well as the aorist to describe also a general state of things. After all, the Valar’s agelong state of being enthroned is also after a fashion “continuous”. Cf. also the sentence **yonya inyë tye-méla**, “I too, my son, I love thee” (LR:61), where Tolkien uses a present tense instead of an aorist: Literally **inyë tye-méla** would seem to mean “I *am loving* you”, but the reference must be to a quite “permanent” emotional state. If anyone else that Tolkien had written this, I would strongly advise the writer to use an aorist (**melë**) instead of **méla** – actually I *still*

think the aorist would be better in this context, even though it was Tolkien who wrote this! But this example confirms that the present tense can also be used to describe “general truths” or more or less permanent situations, though this is *more typically* the domain of the aorist.

I can well imagine that after this discussion, the student wonders if there is any point in maintaining the aorist and the present as distinct tenses, since their functions seem to overlap to such an extent – the only concrete rule being that if some kind of present action cannot in any way be seen as continuous, but is entirely duration-less, one must use the aorist. In just about all other contexts, either tense will apparently do, and the use of the aorist may not necessarily imply that an action *has* to be duration-less: For instance, it could also describe a “general truth”, or indeed an ongoing action (as in **auta** = “is passing”). The context must be taken into consideration.

I can only say that I didn’t make this language (another guy did...) Perhaps future publications will throw more light on whatever subtle distinctions Tolkien had in mind. But in the exercises I made for this course, I have consistently used aorists for the English simple present, whereas I use the Quenya present tense for the English “is . . .-ing” construction. I do think writers transposing English usage to Quenya using this formula would get it right (or rather, wouldn’t make palpable mistakes!) most of the time.

That was the *function* of the aorist, difficult though it is to pin down. Now we must discuss how the Quenya aorist is actually *formed*.

It seems that in Primitive Elvish, the rules for how the aorist is constructed were quite simple: In the case of a “derived” or A-stem verb, the aorist tense is simply identical to the verbal stem itself (irrespective of the fact that the aorist can of course receive such secondary endings as the plural marker **-r**, where such is required). No explicit tense-marker had to be present. Regarding the A-stems, this system persists in Quenya. The aorist of a verb like **lanta-** “to fall” is simply **lanta** “falls” (occurring in *Namárië*, there with the plural ending **-r** to agree with its plural subject “leaves”: **laurië lantar lassî**, “golden *fall* [the] leaves”).

In the case of the “primary” or ending-less verbs like **mat-** “to eat”, they originally (in Primitive Elvish) formed their aorist tense by adding the ending **-i**: “Eats” apparently used to be *mati*. It is somewhat arguable whether the ending **-i** is here strictly an aorist tense-marker. If so, we might have expected to see it in the formation of A-stem aorists as well. Perhaps the rule for aorist formation in Primitive Elvish should rather be stated like this: *The aorist is normally identical to the verbal stem, but in the case of “primary” or ending-less verbal stems, they receive the ending -i as a kind of stopgap to make up for the absence of any other ending.* (I should add that this “simplified” view is not wholly unproblematic, but it works most of the time.) This system essentially persists in Quenya, but the phonological development occurring since Primitive Elvish has added one minor complication: Where final, the short **-i** of Primitive Elvish was

at some point changed to -ë. (For instance, the Quenya noun **rincë** “quick shake” is said to descend from primitive *rinki*: See the entry RIK(Н) in the *Etymologies*. Where *Quenya* has final -i, it is normally shortened from long -î in the primitive language.) Hence the old form *mati* “eats” had turned into **matë** in Quenya. But since this change only occurred where -i was *final*, we still see **mati-** if the aorist form is to receive any ending, such as -r in the case of a plural subject. Hence **Nauco matë** “a Dwarf *eats*”, but with a plural subject **Naucor matir** “Dwarves *eat*”. The ending “shielded” the final -i so that it was not really final at all, and therefore it did not change to -ë.

NOTE 1: There are a few examples of what seems to be aorist forms where the ending -ë persists in the form -e- *even* if the aorist receives an ending. For instance, what must be the plural aorist of the verb **ettul-** “come forth” appears as **ettuler** (instead of the expected form **ettulir**) in SD:290. Perhaps Tolkien at one stage imagined that the primitive ending -i had become -e in *all* positions, even where it was not final – like **ettulir** being altered to **ettuler** on analogy with the ending-less form **ettulë**. But this seems to have been just a passing “phase” in Tolkien’s evolution of Quenya: In our best late source, the essay *Quendi and Eldar* of about 1960, the plural aorist of **car-** “do, make” appears as **carir**, not **\*\*carer** (WJ:391). Hence Tolkien had reestablished the system he had also used a quarter of a century earlier, in the *Etymologies*. – The form **ettuler** is (apparently) translated “are at hand” in SD:290; a more literal translation would presumably be “are coming forth”. This would confirm that it may be permissible to use the aorist also for ongoing actions; this tense is simply *unmarked* regarding the duration of the action, whereas the “present” or “continuous/continuative” tense explicitly identifies an action as ongoing. In our exercises, we will nonetheless use the aorist in the most “typical” way (to denote actions that are momentary or habitual/timeless).

NOTE 2: In the case of primary verbs, the aorist and the present tense differ not only regarding the ending. In the present tense, the stem-vowel is lengthened (**máta** “is eating”), whereas in the aorist, it stays short (**matë** “eats”). Yet there are a very few strange forms in our corpus that look like aorists by their ending, but still show a long stem-vowel, e.g. **tápë** “stops, blocks” (Etym, entry TAP). We would expect **tapë** with a short vowel (it is tempting to believe that the accent above **a** is just an ink-smear in Tolkien’s manuscript. . .) – It may also be noted that a few *derived* verbs (A-stems) include an “intrinsicly” long vowel, e.g. **cúna-** “bend”, **súya-** “breathe” or **móta-** “labour, toil”. To use the latter verb as an example, its aorist would presumably be **móta**, even though this may *look* like the present tense of a non-existing primary verb **\*\*mot-**. (We must assume that the actual present tense of **móta** would be **mótëa**.)

## Summary of Lesson Seven

In Quenya, the future tense is formed with the ending -uva. When added to an A-stem, the -a of the stem drops out before this ending; for instance, the future tense of the verb **linda-** “sing” is **linduva** (not **\*\*lindauva**).

Quenya also has a tense termed *aojist*, which differs from the present tense in that the latter explicitly describes an on-going action. The aorist says nothing about the duration of the action, and while the use of an aorist form does not *preclude* that the action denoted is drawn-out or on-going, it seems that this tense is more typically used to describe duration-less, punctual, habitual, characteristic or altogether timeless actions. An example of an aorist is **quetë** = “speaks”, as opposed to present tense **quéta** “is speaking”. It may be that the Quenya aorist corresponds quite well to the English simple present tense (“speaks”), whereas the Quenya present tense rather corresponds to the English “is . . .-ing” construction (“is speaking”). In the case of A-stem verbs, the aorist is identical to the verbal stem itself (irrespective of any secondary endings the aorist verb may receive). In the case of primary verbs, the aorist tense is formed by means of the ending **-i**, which however changes to **-ë** if no secondary ending (e.g. **-r** for plural) is to follow. Hence the aorist of **mat-** “to eat” is **matë** “eats” if there is no further ending added to the word, but otherwise we see **mati-** + ending (e.g. **matir** “eat” in the case of a plural subject).

## Vocabulary

**enquë** “six”

**ilya**, noun/adjective “all, every” (“every” before a singular noun, e.g. **ilya Elda** “every Elf”, but **ilya** occurring by itself would rather mean “all”). Note that before a plural noun, this word also signifies “all” and is inflected for plural as a common adjective, hence becoming **ilyë** for older **ilyai** (cf. **ilyë tier** “all paths” in *Namárië* and **ilyë mahalmar** “all thrones” in *Cirion’s Oath*)

**rimba**, adjective “numerous”, here used for “many” (presumably becoming **rimbë** when used in conjunction with plural nouns, if it is inflected like any other adjective – hence e.g. **rimbë rávi** “many lions”)

**Atan** “Man” (not “sentient male”, which is **né**, but Mortal Man as opposed to Immortal Elf, or Dwarf. Within Tolkien’s mythos, this word came to be used especially of the Elf-friends of Beleriand and their descendants, the ones called *Edain* or *Dúnedain* in Sindarin. But even within the mythos, the word was originally used simply of humans as opposed to Elves, and so do we use it here. Cf. Ilúvatar’s words in the *Silmarillion*, chapter 1: “Behold the Earth, which shall be a mansion for the Quendi and the Atani [Elves and Men]!”)

**ohtar** “warrior”

**rá** (**ráv-**) “lion”

**Ambar** “the world” (the Quenya word probably does not require the article **i**; it is capitalized and apparently treated as a proper name)

**hrávë** “flesh”

**macil** “sword”

**fir-**, verb “die, expire” (cf. the adjective **firin** “dead”)

**tur-**, verb “govern, control, wield”

**or**, preposition “over, above”

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **Rimbë Naucor haryar harmar.**
- B. **Anar ortuva ar i aiwi linduvar.**
- C. **Enquë neri tiruvar i ando.**
- D. **Ilya Atan firuva.**
- E. **Ilyë Atani firir.**
- F. **Saila nér cenda rimbë parmar.**
- G. **Ilya elen silë or Ambar.**
- H. **I Elda mapa i Nauco.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. Every Elf and every Man.
- J. The Elf will find the Dwarf.
- K. The horse jumps over the Dwarf.
- L. The king controls many warriors and will control (/rule) all the world.
- M. The king and the queen will read the book.
- N. The warrior wields a sword.
- O. All lions eat flesh.
- P. Six lions are eating flesh.

# Lesson 8

Perfect tense. Pronominal endings *-n(yë)*, *-l(yë)*, *-s*.

## 8.1 The perfect tense

Tolkien certainly imagined the Quenya verb to have more tenses than the ones that appear in published material, but only one of these known tenses now remains to be discussed. The last known Quenya tense is the *perfect*. (There are still other *forms* of the verb that we shall have to discuss later, such as the infinitive, the gerund and the imperative, but these don't count as tenses.)

Linguistically speaking, English has no perfect tense, just as English has no future tense. However, just as the language quite regularly expresses the *idea* of futurity by involving extra verbs like “shall” or “will”, so the *meaning* of a true perfect tense is typically achieved by means of a circumlocution involving the verb “have”. For instance, some typical English constructions doing the job of a perfect tense are seen in these sentences: “Peter *has left*”, “the guests *have eaten*” (as opposed to a mere past tense: “Peter *left*”, “the guests *ate*”). The perfect tense thus describes an action that itself is past, but by using the perfect tense one emphasizes that this past action is somehow still directly relevant for the present moment: “Peter *has left* [and he is still gone]”, “the guests *have eaten* [and they are hopefully still satiated as we speak]”, etc. – In English at least, such constructions may also be used to describe an action that started in the past and still goes on in the present moment: “The king *has ruled* (or, *has been ruling*) for many years.”

Quenya, unlike English, does have a true perfect tense – a unitary form of the verb that expresses this meaning, without circumlocutions and extra verbs. Several examples of this perfect tense occurs in LotR. Two of them are found in the chapter *The Steward and the King* in Volume 3. The first example is from *Elendil's Declaration*, repeated by Aragorn during his coronation. It goes, in part: **Et Eärello Endoreнна utúlien** = “Out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth *I am come* [or: *I have come*].” Removing the ending **-n** meaning “I”, we find that the naked present tense “have/has come”

is **utúlië** (according to the spelling conventions here employed, we must add a diaeresis to **-e** when it becomes final). Later in the same chapter, Aragorn finds the sapling of the White Tree, and exclaims: **Yé! utúvienyes!** “I have found it!” (The word **yé** is not translated; it is apparently simply an exclamation “Yes!” or “Yeah!”) **Utúvienyes** can be broken down as **utúvie-nye-s** “have found-I-it”. We are thus left with **utúvië** as the perfect tense of a verb **tuv-** “find”. (This verb is not otherwise attested, unless it can be equated with a verb **tuvu-** “receive” found in very early [1917] material; see GL:71. Whether this **tuv-** somehow differs in meaning from **hir-**, we cannot know. In the exercises of this course, I always use **hir-** for “find”.)

A post-LotR example of a Quenya perfect tense is found in VT39:9, Tolkien mentioning a form **irícië** “has twisted” – evidently the perfect tense of a primary verb **ric-** “twist” (not otherwise attested, but the *Etymologies* lists a primitive root RIK(H)- “jerk, sudden move”). As stated above, the form **utúvië** “has found” seems to presuppose a verb **tuv-** “find”, and **utúlië** “has come” is the perfect tense of a verb **tul-** “come” that is attested in the *Etymologies* (entry TUL-). From these examples it is clear that the perfect tense is formed with the ending **-ië**, but the stem of the verb is also manipulated in other ways. In the case of primary verbs at least, the stem-vowel is *lengthened*: **utúvië**, **utúlië**, **irícië**.

The ardent student will remember that a similar lengthening occurs in the present tense (we would have **túva** “is finding”, **túla** “is coming”, **ríca** “is twisting”), but the perfect tense formation differs from the present tense not only in the fact that the former receives the ending **-ië** instead of **-a**. The perfect, alone of all known Quenya tenses, also receives a kind of prefix. This prefix is variable in form, for it is always the *same as the stem-vowel* (but short). Hence the verbs **tuv-** “find” and **tul-** “come” become **utúvië** and **utúlië** in the perfect (I underline the prefix), since their stem-vowel is **u**. On the other hand, the verb **ric-** “twist”, with the stem-vowel **i**, turns into **irícië** in the perfect tense. Further examples (constructed by me, with underlining of stem-vowel and prefix):

Stem-vowel **A**: **mat-** “eat” vs. **amátië** “has eaten”

Stem-vowel **E**: **cen-** “see” vs. **ecénië** “has seen”

Stem-vowel **I**: **tir-** “watch” vs. **itírië** “has watched”

Stem-vowel **O**: **not-** “reckon” vs. **onótië** “has reckoned”

Stem-vowel **U**: **tur-** “govern” vs. **utúrië** “has governed”

The prefix seen in the perfect tense is usually referred to as the *augment*. It may also be noted that the process of “copying” or “repeating” a part of a word, like the prefixing of stem-vowels seen here, is by a linguistic term called *reduplication*. So to use as many fancy words as possible, one feature of the Quenya perfect tense is that it includes a *reduplicated* stem-vowel that is *prefixed* as an *augment*.

So far we have only used examples involving primary verbs. The evidence



is actually extremely scarce regarding derived (A-stem) verbs. General principles suggest that they would drop the final **-a** before the ending **-ië** is added. For instance, the perfect tense of **lala-** “laugh” or **mapa-** “seize” is presumably **alálië** “has laughed”, **amápië** “has seized”. (Where such a verb has a long stem-vowel, it presumably just stays long in the perfect, where it would have been lengthened anyway. The augment should probably always be a short vowel, though; hence a verb like **móta-** “toil” may have the perfect tense **omótië** “has toiled”.)

However, very many A-stems have a consonant cluster following the stem-vowel, e.g. **rn** following the first A in a verb like **harna-** “wound”. Since Quenya isn’t fond of long vowels immediately in front of consonant clusters, we must assume that the lengthening of the stem-vowels simply does not occur in verbs of this shape. Otherwise the perfect tense would be formed according to the normal rules: reduplicate the stem-vowel as an augment and replace final **-a** with the ending **-ië** (so “has wounded” would be **aharnië**, not **\*\*ahárnië**). We may have some attested examples of *augment-less* perfects that are seen to skip the lengthening of the stem-vowel where there is a consonant cluster following it (see below).

The numerous A-stems that end in **-ya** may be somewhat special. Take a verb like **hanya-** “understand”. According to the rules so far given, the perfect “has understood” should be **\*\*ahanyië** (or even **\*\*ahányië** with a lengthened vowel, for it is rather unclear whether **ny** here counts as a consonant cluster or a unitary consonant – palatalized **n** like Spanish **ñ**). However, such a form is impossible, for the combination **yi** does not occur in Quenya.

We may have one example to guide us: In *Namárië*, there occurs a perfect tense **avánië** “has passed” (actually it appears in the plural: **yéni avánier ve lintë yuldar lisse-miruvóreva** = “years *have passed* like swift draughts of the sweet mead” – notice that the perfect, like other tenses, receives the ending **-r** when it occurs with a plural subject). In the essay *Quendi and Eldar* of ca. 1960, Tolkien explained **avánië** (or **vánië** without the augment) as being the perfect tense of the highly irregular verb **auta-** (WJ:366). But a quarter of a century earlier, in the *Etymologies*, he had listed a verb **vanya-** “go, depart, disappear” (see the entry WAN). It is eminently possible that *when he actually wrote Namárië* in the forties, he still thought of **(a)vánië** as the perfect tense of this verb **vanya-**, though he would later come up with another explanation (perhaps he wanted to eliminate the clash with the adjective **vanya** “fair”, though the words would not be difficult to distinguish in context?) If so, Tolkien gave away how to treat verbs in **-ya**: In the perfect tense, the whole ending **-ya** is dropped before **-ië** is added, and what remains of the verb is treated just as if it were a primary verb. The perfect tense would therefore show both augment and lengthening of the stem-vowel, something like this:

**hanya-** “understand”, perfect **ahánië** “has understood”  
**hilya-** “follow”, perfect **ihílië** “has followed”  
**telya-** “finish”, perfect **etélië** “has finished”  
**tulya-** “lead”, perfect **utúlië** “has led”

Of course, from the perfect forms you cannot determine with certainty what the original verb stem looks like. For instance, **ihílië** could also be the perfect of a primary verb **\*\*hil-** or a short A-stem **\*\*hila-**. In this case, no such verb is known to exist, but **utúlië** would be the perfect not only of **tulya-** “lead”, but also of the distinct primary verb **tul-** “come”. So one must apparently depend on the context to find out whether the perfect **utúlië** is formed from **tulya-** (so that it means “has led”) or from **tul-** (so that it means “has come”). Same with the perfect **ahárië**: this form would mean “has possessed” if it is formed from **harya**, but “has sat, has been sitting” if it is the perfect of **har-** (apparently a primary verb “sit”; only the plural present tense **hárar** “are sitting” is attested: UT:305, 317).

*Verbs including diphthongs:* In some cases it may be somewhat difficult to determine what the stem-vowel is. Where a verb contains a *diphthong* in **-i** or **-u**, it is probably the *first* vowel of this diphthong that functions as an augment in the perfect tense. For instance, the perfect tense of verbs like **taita-** “prolong” or **roita-** “pursue” would probably be **ataitië**, **oroiitië**, and the perfect tense of **hauta-** “cease, take a rest” is presumably **ahautië**. (The stem-vowel can hardly be lengthened when it’s part of a diphthong, so we wouldn’t expect to see **\*\*atáitië**, **\*\*oróitië**, **\*\*aháutië**.) The original roots of these verbs are given in the *Etymologies* as TAY, ROY, KHAW, respectively; thus the proper stem-vowels of these verbs are seen to be A, O, A (again respectively). The final **-i** or **-u** seen in the Quenya diphthongs arise from original consonants *-y* and *-w*, so they cannot count as stem-vowels.

*Unaugmented perfects:* The material contains some examples of perfect-tense verbs that are constructed according to the rules set forth about, except that they do not have any augment prefixed. MR:250 (reproducing a post-LotR source) mentions a form **fírië** “has breathed forth” or in later usage “has died”; the augment is missing, though there is no reason to assume that the “full” form **ifírië** would be wrong. (The actual translation of **fírië** given in MR:350 is “she hath breathed forth”, but no element meaning “she” can be identified; it is evidently understood.) The verb **avánier** “have passed” occurring in *Namárië* was actually **vánier** with no augment in the first edition of LotR; Tolkien supplied the augment in the second edition (1966). Before this, in the essay *Quendi and Eldar* of about 1960, he explained the unaugmented variant as being simply a variant form “appearing in verse” (WJ:366). Adding a syllable, as Tolkien did when introducing the full form **avánier** into the poem in 1966, actually doesn’t fit the meter of *Namárië* very well – but he evidently decided to let grammatical accuracy take priority.

In the other perfects occurring in LotR (**utúlien**, **utúvienyes**), the augment was present also in the first edition of 1954–55. Nonetheless, it seems that the whole idea of augmenting perfect-tense verbs appeared relatively late in Tolkien’s evolution of Quenya. In early sources, the augment is missing. For instance, the phrase “the Eldar have come” appears as **i·Eldar tulier** in Tolkien’s earliest “Qenya” (LT1:114, 270). The perfect of **tul-** here appearing features the same ending **-ie-** as in LotR-style Quenya, but the augment, as well as the lengthening of the stem-vowel, still have not been introduced into the language. Updating this sentence to LotR-style Quenya by implementing Tolkien’s later revisions would probably produce **Eldar utúlier** (with an augmented perfect and no article before **Eldar** when it refers to the entire Elvish race).

In much later, but still pre-LotR, material, we find **lantïë** (with a plural subject **lantier**) as a form of the verb **lanta-** “fall”: LR:56. These forms would also seem to be unaugmented perfects, showing the ending **-ië** characteristic of this tense. True, Tolkien translated these forms as “fell” (**lantïë nu huinë** “fell under shadow”, **ëari lantier** “seas fell”) as if they represent some kind of past tense form – not perfect “has/have fallen”. However, he later noted that “the forms of past and perfect became progressively more closely associated in Quenya” (WJ:366). If this is to mean that Quenya might sometimes use the perfect where English would rather have a past tense, we can explain “fell” rather than “has/have fallen” as a possible translation of **lantïë/lantier**. In SD:310, where Christopher Tolkien discusses a later version of the text in question, he records how his father changed **lantier** to **lantaner** – apparently substituting a true past tense form for a perfect-used-as-past.

If **lantier**, sg. **lantïë**, can indeed be considered a perfect tense form, it would confirm that the stem-vowel cannot be lengthened before a consonant cluster (not **\*lántïë**). Around this stage, Tolkien had certainly introduced such lengthening of the stem-vowel in the perfect; *Fíriel’s Song* has **cárier** for “made” (or “they made”, since the plural ending **-r** is included). This form of the verb **car-** “make, do” would seem to be another perfect-used-as-past, judging from the translation. Since the stem-vowel is lengthened in **cárier**, we must assume that it stays short in **lantier** for purely phonological reasons: no long vowels are allowed before a consonant cluster. – It may be that the absence of the augment in some early sources is simply due to the fact that Tolkien had not invented it yet; in LotR-style Quenya I would recommend **alantïë** as the perfect tense of **lanta-** and **acárië** as the perfect of **car-**.

Nonetheless, the above-cited example **ffrië** “has breathed forth, has expired” from a post-LotR source (MR:250) would seem to indicate that even in LotR-style Quenya, it is *permissible* to leave out the augment, constructing the perfect simply by means of the ending **-ië** + lengthening of the stem-vowel if there is no consonant cluster following it. Possibly unaugmented

perfects are meant to be more common in spoken or informal language, and in poetry one can leave out the augment if the extra syllable would spoil the meter (hence **vánier** for **avánier** in *Namárië*, though Tolkien changed his mind in 1966 and introduced the full form). However, in the exercises I made for this course, all perfect-tense forms do include the augment.

*Verbs beginning in vowels:* Verbs beginning in a *vowel* pose a problem. Where a verb has a prefix beginning in a vowel, the augment may slip in between the prefix and the most basic verbal stem. For instance, the verb **enyal-** “recall, remember” is quite literally **en-yal-** “re-call”, where **yal-** and not **en-** is the basic verbal stem incorporating the stem-vowel; in such a case I would expect the perfect to be **enayálië**. But some verbs begin in a vowel even without any prefixed element, e.g. **anta-** “give”. In such a case the first vowel is also the stem-vowel, here occurring without any consonant in front of it. A verb may also include a prefix that happens to be identical to the stem-vowel, e.g. **onot-** “count up” (formed from **not-** “reckon” with a prefix **o-** meaning “together”, hence **onot-** is literally “reckon together”). Other verbal stems already prefix the stem-vowel as a kind of intensification, e.g. **atalta-** “collapse, fall in” (vs. the verb **talta-** with a somewhat less harsh meaning: “slope, slip, slide down”). In all of these cases, it is difficult to prefix the stem-vowel as an augment in the perfect tense. We cannot well have **a’antië** for “has given”, **o’onótië** for “has counted up”, **a’ataltië** for “has collapsed”. So what do we get instead?

One popular assumption has been that in such cases, the entire first syllable is reduplicated as an augment: Hence the perfect tense of a **anta-** “give” would be **anantië** (**antantië?**), and so on. With the publication of *Vinyar Tengwar* #41 in July 2000, this theory was *almost* confirmed. It turns out that in a late source, Tolkien listed **orórië** as the perfect tense of the verb **ora-** “urge” (VT41:13, 18; actually this form is not explicitly identified as the perfect tense, but it can hardly be anything else). Notice that the entire first syllable (**or-**) is reduplicated in the perfect: By reduplicating the *consonant* following the stem-vowel as well as the stem-vowel itself, the awkward form **\*\*o’órië** is avoided; in **orórië** the reduplicated consonant **r** keeps the augment and the initial vowel of the verbal stem comfortably apart. Well and good – the only problem is that after writing down the form **orórië**, Tolkien *struck it out!* Whether this means that we are back on square one, or whether Tolkien struck out the form **orórië** not because he invalidated it but simply because he didn’t feel like discussing the perfect tense of **ora-** there and then, none can say.

Since it is rather unclear how we should add the augment to most verbs beginning in a vowel, I have simply avoided the perfect tense of such verbs in the exercises I made for this course. But since augmentless perfects seem to be permissible, the easiest solution must be to simply *omit* the augment in the case of such verbs: **anta-** “give” becoming **antië** “has given”, **onot-** “count up” becoming **onótië** “has counted up” (though this is also the

perfect of **not-** “reckon”!), and so on. After the rejected form **orórië**, Tolkien actually wrote **orië**. Was this a replacement perfect tense, with no augment? I would expect **órië** with a lengthened stem-vowel; **orië** looks more like a quite different form of the verb (a *gerund*, to be discussed in later lessons). This word may be worth noticing, all the same.

Before leaving the perfect tense, I should briefly comment on a somewhat strange form occurring in the *Silmarillion*, chapter 20. Here we have the exclamation **utúlie’n aurë**, translated “the day has come”. **Utúlie** (**utúlië**) is clearly the perfect tense of **tul-** “come”, as confirmed by the translation “has come”. However, the added **’n** is something of a mystery. What is this extra consonant doing there? The form **utúlie’n** is reminiscent of **utúlien** “I am come” in Elendil’s Declaration in LotR, but here **-n** is a *pronominal* ending “I” (see the next section). No such ending can be present in **utúlie’n**, given Tolkien’s translation. The apostrophe **’** inserted before this latter **n** probably indicates a different pronunciation as well; in **utúlie’n** the final consonant is perhaps meant to be sounded as a separate syllable. It may be that this **n** is added simply for the sake of euphony, preventing three vowels in sequence (since the next word also begins in a vowel; if you count the diphthong **au** in **aurë** as two vowels, there would even be *four* sequential vowels). If a perfect tense appears with no secondary ending added to **-ië**, and the next word begins in a vowel, should we *always* insert **’n** to avoid too many vowels in hiatus? I have used such a system in at least one composition of my own, but this conclusion is extremely tentative: In the exercises below I have never used this extra **’n**, since no one really knows its function. Some even think it represents an alternative incarnation of the article (which normally appears as **i**): After all, Tolkien did employ the translation “*the* day has come”. Hence **utúlie’n aurë** = **?utúlië en aurë** or **?utúlië in aurë** “has-come *the* day”??? (For a possible attestation of **in** as a Quenya article, see PM:395.) We can only hope that future publications will shed some more light on this. It may be noted that Christopher Gilson, who has access to unpublished Tolkien material, advocates the **’n** = “the” interpretation.

## 8.2 Pronouns

It is time to introduce one of really economic devices of Language, the *pronouns*. (If you know perfectly well what a pronoun is, and you also know about the three different “persons” that personal pronouns are divided into, please scroll down until you see the word *Quenya* in red. I’m not trying to waste anyone’s time here!)

The word “pronoun” is a giveaway; it simply means “for (instead of) a noun”. Pronouns are words (or endings) that can *replace* a noun, often referring back to a noun that has already been mentioned. Thus you don’t

have to repeat the noun itself all the time. Pronouns provide a kind of spoken shorthand, saving the language from utter tedium. Thanks to pronouns, speakers of English can keep up a conversation with another person without having to endlessly repeat the other party's name every time they are being addressed; instead the pronoun *you* is substituted. Instead of having to say "the group just referred to" or "the people presently being discussed" speakers of English have at their disposal the short, snappy word *they*. And try to imagine how you would go about referring to yourself without the pronoun *I*. Phrases like "this person" or "the one who is talking now" get tedious really fast.

There are several kinds of pronouns (even *interrogative* ones like "who"), but the ones most frequently found are the *personal pronouns*, which we will focus on in this introduction. Customarily, they are divided into three different "persons" (not that the pronouns involved only refer to sentient beings; in this context, "person" is just an established term for a pronoun class). In English, this traditional tripartite classification produces a table something like this:

- FIRST PERSON (referring to oneself or one's own group): Singular *I*, as object *me*, of ownership *my* and *mine*; plural *we*, as object *us*, of ownership *our* and *ours*.
- SECOND PERSON (directly addressing another person or another group): Singular and plural both *you*, which is also the object form; of ownership *your* and *yours*. Archaic English also has distinct singular pronouns: *Thou*, as object *thee*, of ownership *thy* and *thine*.
- THIRD PERSON (referring to another person or group): Singular *he*, *she*, or *it* depending on the gender and/or nature of what is being referred to; as object *him*, *her*, or *it* (the latter being the same as the subject form), of ownership *his*, *her* (the latter happens to coincide with the object form, but there is also *hers*) and *its*. In the plural we have *they*, as object *them*, of ownership *their* and *theirs*.

While the concept of these three "persons" as such is near-universal in the languages of the world, it is quite arbitrary what other distinctions languages build into their pronoun tables. The system is not necessarily symmetric, either – certainly not so in English. English pronouns *normally* maintain a distinction of singular vs. plural, e.g. singular *I* vs. plural *we*, but this distinction is suddenly abandoned in the second person, where *you* is used no matter whether the speaker addresses one person or several people. On the other hand, English suddenly becomes very pedantic in the third person singular. Here you have to use *he* if you are referring to a male, *she* if you are referring to a female (or a ship!), and *it* if you are referring to something inanimate or abstract, or to an animal (unless "it" is a pet and you feel

you know “it” so intimately that you must consider saying “he” or “she” instead!)

Such hair-splitting distinctions are not made anywhere else in the English pronominal system, and certain other languages dispense with them. Finnish, ever relevant for this study since it was Tolkien’s foremost inspiration for Quenya, only has a single word (*hän*) that covers both “he” and “she”: The Finns get happily along without making this distinction. On the other hand, other languages may go even further than English. For instance, the Hebrews apparently thought the masculine/feminine distinction was so interesting that it wasn’t enough to have separate words for “he” and “she”. Hebrew also has separate words for “you” (*atta* when speaking to a man, *att* when addressing a woman); the language even carries the principle into the plural by having separate words for “they” (*hem* when referring to a group of men, but with reference to an all-female group, “they” is *henna*... as I understand it, a mixed group is referred to by the “masculine” term *hem*, and then we are left to wonder if a group of 10,000 women and 1 man is still *hem* rather than *henna*).

What, then, about **Quenya**? What pronominal distinctions did Tolkien have his Elves make?

It is somewhat difficult to say anything very definite about the Quenya pronominal system. Even now, with enormous amounts of material still unavailable to scholarship, it is already safe to say that the pronouns of Tolkien’s Elvish languages were rather “unstable” – probably even more so than many other aspects of his ever-fluid linguistic constructs. The pronoun tables seem to have undergone countless revisions, and some think Tolkien never quite managed to sort out every detail. (Personally I think he did – the problem is rather that he did it so *often*!)

We know that the Quenya pronominal system, as Tolkien envisioned it in his later years, makes some distinctions that are not regularly expressed in English. For one thing, just as Quenya has a *dual* form of the noun in addition to the singular and plural forms, so there are also at least some dual pronouns. So in the First Person we don’t find singular “I” and plural “we” only, but also a distinct dual pronoun meaning “you (sg.) and I” or “the two of us”. Another subtle distinction is made in the words for “we”: In Quenya, there are separate words or endings for “we”, depending on whether or not the party that is addressed is included in “we” or not. On the other hand, it seems that Quenya does not always maintain the distinction between “he”, “she” and even “it”; all of these may be covered by a single pronoun.

As this course proceeds, we will discuss various parts of the pronoun table and their associated obscurities, and also return to the special pronominal distinctions made in Quenya. However, let us introduce a few pronouns right away.

One thing should be understood: in Quenya, pronouns typically appear as *endings*, not so often as independent words. (Where a Quenya pronoun

does appear as a separate word, it is often emphatic – producing much the same effect as putting an English pronoun in italics: “*You* [and no one else] did it.” We will return to the independent pronouns later.) In the final lines of *Namárië* we find the word **hiruvalyë**, translated “thou shalt find” by Tolkien. If you have worked your way through all the exercises, you will remember the form **hiruva**, future tense of **hir-** “find”. This **hiruva** “shall find” here appears with the *pronominal ending* **-lyë** attached, denoting the subject of the verb. This ending belongs to the Second Person and signifies “thou” – or using a less archaic translation, “you”. Hence **hiruvalyë** = “thou shalt find”, or “you will find”. The suffix **-lyë** can be attached to any verb to indicate that its subject is “you, thou”.

Having mentioned this pronoun we however run into Instant Obscurity, which is a situation we shall often find ourselves in while discussing Quenya pronouns. It is unclear whether or not this ending **-lyë** covers both singular and plural “you”; in *Namárië* it is singular, as demonstrated by the translation “thou”. In one of Tolkien’s draft texts for the LotR Appendices, he actually wrote that the Elvish languages did not distinguish between singular and plural “you” (no more than English does): “All these languages . . . had, or originally had, no distinction between the singular and plural of the second person pronouns; but they had a marked distinction between the *familiar* forms and the *courteous*” (PM:42–43). The ending **-lyë**, used by Galadriel to address a relative stranger like Frodo, would seem to be a polite or courteous “you”. In *Namárië* it is thus used as a singular “thou”, only one person being addressed, but according to PM:42–43 just quoted it could equally well be plural “you” (so if all the members of the Fellowship had understood Quenya, they still couldn’t be certain whether Galadriel was addressing them all, or Frodo alone).

However, in the essay *Quendi and Eldar* written about half a decade after the publication of LotR, Tolkien did imply the existence of pronominal endings that make a distinction between singular and plural “you” (WJ:364). Here he referred to “reduced pronominal affixes of the 2nd person”, implied to be **-t** in the singular and **-l** in the plural. This **-l** could well be a “reduced” form of **-lyë**, which would then be a *plural* “you”. Even so, Tolkien indisputably used this ending for a *singular* “you” in *Namárië*, since he translated it as “thou” in the text in LotR. This shorter ending **-l** is also attested as part of the verb **hamil** “you judge” (VT42:33), and this may also be taken as a singular “you”, though the context is not conclusive either way. It would seem that in the second half of the fifties, Tolkien had been rethinking the pronominal system. The statement made in the draft text for the LotR Appendices, to the effect that Elvish did not distinguish singular and plural “you”, had not actually made it into the published LotR. Therefore he would not be bound by it. (Whenever we are dealing with Tolkien material that has been published only posthumously, we can never be certain that the information provided is entirely “canonical”: The author



could always change his mind, and so he often did, especially regarding the languages.)

Tolkien had apparently discovered that Quenya possesses distinct pronouns for singular and plural “you” after all. Perhaps the new (ca. 1960) idea goes something like this: **-lyë** and the shorter variant **-l** would *properly* be a plural “you”, but it is also used as a *polite singular*, hence the translation “thou” in *Namárië*. The idea of addressing a single person as if (s)he were several people could be a way of showing respect, emphasizing the importance of the other. Parallels are found in languages of our own world. (A former British PM on occasion carried this system over from the Second Person to the First, referring to *herself* as a plural “we” rather than a singular “I”, apparently to emphasize her own importance. Of course, royals have been using this linguistic device for centuries – and for that matter, even the author of this course sometimes refers to himself as “we”! But actually I tend to include the reader in this “we”, so that you quite undeservedly receive some of the credit for the gradual unraveling of Quenya grammar that “we” are undertaking here. . . ) As for English “thou” vs. “you”, Matthew Skala wrote on the Elfling list (January 4, 2001):

”*Thou*” is second person singular, and “*you*” is second person plural, with the added rule that in formal contexts it’s polite to use plural even when talking to an individual. Much like French “*tu*” (singular/informal) and “*vous*” (plural/formal). In English it has become standard to use “you” for both singular and plural regardless of politeness, but that is a recent innovation; until about 100–200 years ago, English speakers routinely used “thou” in informal contexts. The bizarre situation today is that because of this historical change, most of us only ever encounter “*thou*” in historical and formal contexts, such as the Bible. . . and so now, if you use it you sound like you’re being especially formal and polite. The “formality/politeness” charge has been flipped backwards.

It may be, then, that Quenya **-lyë** or **-l** corresponds to the *original* use of English “you”, before the historical change Skala describes – but because of that change, **-l(yë)** used as a polite singular may now be rendered “thou”, as Tolkien translated it in LotR.

To summarize: the ending **-l(yë)** can *certainly* be used as a singular “you”, and it is *probably* a polite/courteous form rather than a familiar/intimate form. It *may* be that **-l(yë)** also covers plural “you”, this may even be its proper meaning, but this is where things get somewhat obscure. Tolkien probably changed his mind back and forth about the details. In the exercises below, I have simply used the neutral word “you” as the equivalent of **-l(yë)**. Then it is impossible to go wrong.

But we seem to have plunged right into the Second Person; let us return to the First. In the First Person singular, things are luckily crystal clear (well, very nearly so). The pronoun “I” is most often represented by the ending **-n**. (Linguists have noted that in the languages of the world, the term for “I, me” remarkably often includes some nasal sound like N or M. Whatever subtle features of human psychology underlie this phenomenon, Tolkien seems to have liked this association, and worked it into several of his languages. Cf. Sindarin *im* = “I”.) Notice how the ending **-n** is added to the verbs **utúlië** (perfect tense of **tul-** “come”) and **maruva** (future tense of **mar-** “abide, dwell”) in Elendil’s Declaration:

**Et Eärello Endorena utúlien** = “out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth  
*I am come.*”

**Sinomë maruvan** = “in this place *will I abide*”.

However, the ending **-n** for “I” also occurs as a longer variant, **-nyë**. (As noted above, the ending **-lyë** for “you” has a shorter variant **-l**; the variation **-nyë** vs. **-n** for “you” would parallel this.) This longer variant is seen in a word we have already touched on in this lesson, the form **utúvienyes!** “I have found it!” – Aragorn’s exclamation when he found the discovered the sapling of the White Tree. The word **utúvië**, apparently the perfect tense of a verb **tuv-** “find”, here occurs with *two* pronominal endings. The first of them, **-nyë** or “I”, denotes the subject of the verb: **Utúvie+nyë** “have found+I” = “I have found”. However, following **-nyë** we have yet another pronominal ending, the Third Person Singular suffix **-s**, meaning “it”. Thus an entire sentence of verb, subject and object has been telescoped into a single word: **utúvienyes** = “I have found it”.

NOTE: Notice that according to the spelling conventions here employed, final **-ë** loses its diaeresis whenever an ending is added so that it is not final anymore: **utúvië** + **-nyë** = **utúvienyë** and not **utúviënyë**; adding **-s** to **utúvienyë** likewise produces **utúvienyes** and not **utúvienyës**. This is solely a matter of orthography.

We can abstract this grammatical rule: if a verb is to receive *two* pronominal endings, one denoting the subject of the verb and the second the object, the subject ending is attached first and the object ending next. In published material, there are two or three other examples of this, beside **utúvienyes**.

It is then obvious why the long form **-nye-** is preferred here. While **utúvien** would do nicely for “I have found”, the object ending **-s** “it” could not have been added to the short ending **-n**, since **\*\*utúviens** is not a possible Quenya word. So we can formulate another rule: The long form **-nyë** (**-nye-**), NOT short **-n**, must be used for “I” if another pronominal ending is to follow it. (Similarly, for “you” one *must* use the long ending **-lyë** [**-lye-**], not the shorter form **-l**, if a second pronominal ending is to be added: “You have found” could be either **utúviel** or **utúvielyë**, but “you have found *it*” must be **utúvielyes**, since **\*\*utúviels** would be impossible.)

The long ending **-nyë** “I” may however occur even if there is no ob-

ject pronoun following it (as can the long form **-lyë** for “you, thou”, cf. **hiruvalyë** “thou shalt find” in *Namárië*). The form **linduvanyë** “I shall sing” occurs on the frontispiece of the 1975 French bilingual edition of *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* (ISBN 2-264-00913-6). The frontispiece reproduces a manuscript page by Tolkien, including some brief linguistic notes. (Taum Santoski, analyzing these notes in the newsletter *Beyond Bree*, October 1985, read this form as “linduvanya” – but as pointed out by Carl F. Hostetter, Tolkien probably intended “linduvanye” instead. Tolkien was capable of wonderful calligraphy, but his normal handwriting is often a challenge to transcribers!) As long as no second pronominal ending is to follow, it is apparently wholly optional whether one uses the long ending **-nyë** or the short ending **-n** for “I”. We have the long ending in **linduvanyë** “I shall sing”, but Elendil’s Declaration uses the short ending in **maruvan** “I will abide”. Certainly these examples could be scrambled to produce **linduvan**, **maruvanyë** of exactly the same meaning.

It seems, however, that the short ending **-n** is much more common than the longer suffix **-nyë**. We have already encountered this **-n** attached to several verbs, such as **polin** “I can”, **tirin** “I watch” in the previous lesson. Tolkien very often cites primary verbs like this, listing them as they appear in the 1st person aorist (with the ending **-i-** intact because it is followed by an ending and hence not final, so that it would become **-ë**). **Tirin** is an example actually found in the *Etymologies* (entry TIR), but by the standards of this field, examples truly abound: **carin** “I make, build” (entry KAR), **lirin** “I sing” (GLIR) or “I chant” (LIR<sup>1</sup>), **nutin** “I tie” (NUT), **nyarin** “I tell” (NAR<sup>2</sup>), **rerin** “I sow” (RED), **serin** “I rest” (SED), **sucin** “I drink” (SUK), **tamin** “I tap” (TAM), **tucin** “I draw” (TUK), **tulin** “I come” (TUL), **turin** “I wield” (TUR), **tyavin** “I taste” (KYAP), **vilin** “I fly” (WIL), **umin** “I do not” (UGU/UMU). The form **polin** “I can” (VT41:6) is one of several examples from post-LotR sources. Presumably it would in no way be wrong to use the long ending **-nyë** instead (e.g. **polinyë**), but **-n** is the commonest ending in the published corpus. But especially for the purpose of poetry, it is often practical to be able to choose between a long and a short pronominal ending, so that one can include or get rid of a syllable if the meter demands this.

Also notice that the ending **-nyë**, as well as **-lyë** for “you”, cause the accent to fall on the syllable preceding the ending because **ny** and **ly** here count as consonant clusters. Cf. the stress rules set out in Lesson One. If **hiruvanyë** “I will find” (with the accent on **a**) doesn’t sound good in your poem, you can always use the short form **hiruvan** and have the accent land on **i** in the first syllable instead. (Again, we may have the same system in the Second Person: It is entirely possible that in *Namárië*, Tolkien wrote **hiruvalyë** rather than the shorter form **hiruval** simply because the former variant fit his poetic meter better.)

As for the ending **-s** meaning “it”, occurring as an object pronoun in

**utúvienyes** “I have found it”, it seems that it may also be used as a subject. For instance, if **polin** is “I can”, we must assume that “it can” would be **polis**. However, the ending **-s** brings us into the Third Person with its own set of obscurities, which we will save for later (Lesson 15). In the exercises below, **-s** is used in the same way as in the example **utúvienyes**: attached to another pronominal ending to denote the *object* of the verb (just as the first ending added to the verb denotes its *subject*).

## Summary of Lesson Eight

The Quenya perfect tense is formed by adding the ending **-ië** to the verbal stem (if the stem ends in a vowel, it is apparently omitted before **-ië** is added; verbs in **-ya** seem to lose this entire ending). Unless followed by a consonant cluster, the stem-vowel is lengthened. Normally it is also reduplicated as an *augment* prefixed to the verb (**riç-** “twist” vs. **irícië** “has twisted”, **hanya-** “understand” vs. **ahánië** “has understood”). However, there also appear some unaugmented perfects in the published corpus (notably **fírië** rather than **ifírië** for “has expired”), so it may be permissible to leave out the augment and still have a valid perfect tense form. It is somewhat unclear how the augment is to be prefixed to verbal stems beginning in a vowel. – Quenya *pronouns* most typically appear as endings rather than separate words. Among these pronominal endings we have **-n** or **-nyë** “I”, **-l** or **-lyë** “thou, you” and **-s** “it”. Two pronominal endings may be added to the same verb, the first of them denoting the *subject* of the verb, the second its *object*.

## Vocabulary

**otso** “seven”

**seldo** “boy” (actually Tolkien didn’t provide an explicit gloss, but the word is cited in a context where he is discussing Quenya words for “child”, and **seldo** seems to be a masculine form. See the entry **SEL-D-** in the *Etymologies*.)

**mól** “thrall, slave”

**an** “for” (or “since, because”, introducing a sentence giving a *reason*, as in “I rely on him, for he has often been of help to me”.)

**tul-** verb “come”

**lanta-** verb “fall”

**nurta-** verb “hide” (cf. the **Nurtalë Valinóreva** or “Hiding of Valinor” referred to in the *Silmarillion*)

**lerya-** verb “release, (set) free, let go”

**metya-** verb “end” = “put an end to”

**roita-** verb “pursue”

**laita-** verb “bless, praise”

**imbë** preposition “between”

## Exercises

1. Translate into English (and practice your vocabulary; except for the numeral **otso** and the pronominal endings, exercises A–H only employ words you are supposed to have memorized in earlier lessons):

A. **I nér ihírië i harma.**

B. **I rávi amátier i hrávë.**

C. **I aran utultië i tári.**

D. **I nissi ecendier i parma.**

E. **I úmëa tári amápië i otso Naucor.**

F. **Etécielyë otso parmar.**

G. **Equétien.**

H. **Ecénielyes.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

I. The man has come.

J. The seven Dwarves have eaten.

K. The boys have seen a lion between the trees.

L. The six Elves have pursued the seven Dwarves.

M. The Dwarf has hidden a treasure.

N. I have praised the king, for the king has released all thralls.

O. You have fallen, and I have seen it.

P. I have put an end to it [/I have ended it].

# Lesson 9

The infinitive. The negative verb. Active participles.

## 9.1 The infinitive

All of the forms of the verb that we have discussed so far, all the tenses, are what a linguist would call *finite* verb forms. The definition of a finite verb is that it is capable of functioning as the *predicate* of a sentence, the part of the sentence that tells us what the subject does (or *is* – in Lesson Four we pointed out that a phrase made up of copula + noun or adjective also counts as a predicate, e.g. “gold is beautiful”, but here we will deal with more normal verbs instead). In a sentence like **i Elda máta massa** “the Elf is eating bread”, linguists can readily label the roles of all parts of the sentence: just like **i Elda** “the Elf” is the subject and **massa** “bread” is the object, so the verb **máta** “is eating” is the *predicate* of the sentence. And precisely because the form **máta**, present tense of **mat-** “eat”, is able to function as a predicate here, we can tell that **máta** is a *finite* form of the verb.

The infinitive is another story. It is, as the name suggests, in-finite – non-finite. It is not inflected for time, as are the tenses. It does not receive the ending **-r**, even if the subject of the sentence is plural. So by itself, an infinitive is *not* capable of functioning as the predicate of a sentence. An infinitive cannot be directly teamed up with a subject. What, then, is its use?

English infinitives have various uses, but an important function of the infinitive is that it allows *several* verbs to be combined in one sentence. In a sentence like “the Dwarves wanted to eat”, the verb “wanted” is a finite form, appearing in one specific tense (in this case past tense). But the verb “eat” appears as an infinitive, “to eat”, complementing the finite verb to form a longer verbal phrase “wanted to eat”. In English, infinitive verbs are very often marked by inserting “to” before the verb proper, but this “to” is not always included. In a sentence like “I let him *go*”, the verb “go” counts as an infinitive even though there is no “to” before it. (Contrast “I allowed him *to go*”.) Neither is “to” included before an infinitive following certain

verbs like “can” or “must” (e.g. “I must go”, not \*\*“I must to go”).

In Quenya, there seems to be no independent infinitive marker like English “to”, so we don’t have to worry about where to include or omit it. Attested examples of Quenya infinitives most certainly do not abound, but there is the sentence **polin quetë** “I can speak” (VT41:6). Here the verb **polin** “I can” is a finite form, the aorist of the primary verb **pol-** appearing with the pronominal ending **-n** “I” attached – but the word **quetë** must be analyzed as an infinitive. Of course, **quetë** is similar in form to an aorist “speaks”, but as indicated by the translation “speak” as well as the context, the form **quetë** is infinitival here. We can tell, then, that primary verbs like **quet-** have infinitives in **-ë** (undoubtedly representing Primitive Elvish *-i*). The ending may be analyzed simply as a kind of stopgap that is supplied to make up for the absence of any other ending, or **quetë** may be seen as representing an uninflected primitive “I-stem” *kweti*. No matter how we imagine the ultimate derivation and the “meaning” of the ending **-ë**, we probably know enough to actually start using the infinitive form of primary verbs. Here are some (home-made) examples combining infinitives with various finite forms (tenses) of the verbs **mer-** “wish, want” and **pol-** “can”. Finite verbs in **red**, infinitives in **blue**:

**I Elda polë cenë i Nauco** “the Elf **can see** the Dwarf” (*notice that though the verbs pol- “want” and cen- “see, behold” receive the same ending -ë here, the former is an aorist and the latter is an infinitive: The context must decide whether the form cenë is to be understood as an aorist “sees” or an infinitive “[to] see”*)

**I Naucor merner matë** “the Dwarves **wanted to eat**” (*finite verb merner “wanted”, inflected for past tense and plural, + infinitive verb matë “to eat”*)

**I seldo pollë hlarë ilya quetta** “the boy **could hear** every word”

**Polilyë carë ilqua** “you **can do** everything”

**I nissi meruvar tulë** “the women **will want to come**”

What, then, about A-stems? In the *Etymologies*, Tolkien often glossed A-stem verbs as if they were infinitives, e.g. **anta-** “to present, give”, **varya-** “to protect” or **yelta-** “to loathe” (entries ANA<sup>1</sup>, BAR, DYEL). This is not by itself conclusive evidence that a form like **anta** could actually be used as an infinitive “to give” in a Quenya text, for in the tradition of Western linguistics, the infinitive is commonly the form used to name, list or gloss a verb in wordlists. Sometimes this system is carried through even where such a gloss is strictly wrong: A Hebrew-English wordlist may insist that *nathan* means “to give”, though it actually means “he gave” – this being the simplest and most basic form of this verb, the logical form to be listed in a dictionary. However, a form like **anta-** is simply an uninflected A-stem, and Tolkien did refer to certain grammatical circumstances “when the bare stem of the verb is used . . . as infinitive” (MC:223). The general system also seems to suggest that A-stems with no additions can function as infinitives. (Notice that the infinitives of both primary verbs and A-stems seem to be

similar in form to ending-less aorists.) So I guess we can have sentences like the following (and let me just underline the infinitives to avoid too much fancy coloring):

**I vendi merner linda** “the maidens wanted to sing”

**I norsa polë orta i alta ondo** “the giant can lift the big rock”

**Merin cenda i parma** “I want to read the book”

In some cases, English may prefer a form in *-ing* to a regular infinitive, for instance after the verbs “start” and “stop”. I think it is a fair guess that Quenya would use the normal infinitive in such cases as well:

**I nissi pustaner linda** “the women stopped singing” (or, “...ceased to sing”)

Several infinitives can probably be juxtaposed by means of **ar** “and”:

**I neri merir cenda ar tecë rimbë parmar** “the men want to read and (to) write many books”

The discussion above certainly does not cover all there is to say about Quenya infinitives. Some more details are known and will be filled in later in this course, but there are many obscure points. In some very late (ca. 1969) notes, Tolkien refers to “the general (aorist) ‘infinitive’ formed by added *-i*” (VT41:17), but since only brief quotes from this material have been published, we cannot be certain what he means. Is there a specific “aorist infinitive”? We have earlier discussed the distinction made between such forms as **máta** “is eating” (present/continuative tense) and **matë** “eats” (aorist). Does Quenya carry these distinctions over into the infinitive, so that one can somehow distinguish “to eat” (aorist infinitive) from “to be eating” (continuative infinitive)?

Moreover, what does Tolkien refer to by “added *-i*”? Obviously there is an infinitive that is formed by adding **-i** to the verbal stem (of primary verbs at least). But is this ending a contemporary Quenya suffix, or does it represent a Primitive Elvish form? As mentioned above, the attested infinitive **quetë** “(to) say” may be meant to represent a primitive form *kweti*, which would indeed be the root *kwet-* with “added *-i*”. But if this **-i** is a contemporary Quenya suffix, there would be an alternative infinitive **queti** “to say”. How it is used, and whether it is interchangeable with the attested form **quetë**, we cannot even begin to guess. In the essay *Quendi and Eldar*, Tolkien did mention a few verb forms that may seem to exemplify an infinitive in **-i**, namely **auciri** and **hóciri**, both meaning “cut off” (in two different senses, see WJ:365–366). But later in the essay, he quoted the same forms with a hyphen attached (**auciri-**, **hóciri-**), as if these are verbal stems rather than independent infinitive forms (WJ:368). So we cannot be sure of anything, and must await the publication of more material.

As noted above, the infinitive is traditionally used to *name* or *list* verbs, or to give their meaning as a general gloss. From now on we will often



define verbs in such a way, e. g. glossing a verbal stem like **tul-** as “to come” and **lanta-** as “to fall” (rather than simply “come”, “fall”). It must still be understood that the mere stem of primary verb like **tul-** cannot function as an actual infinitive (“**tul**”) in a Quenya text (it must be **tulë** instead). It is simply customary and convenient to give the meaning of a verb by quoting its gloss in the infinitive. In the Vocabulary listings of Lessons 5 through 8, I had to write “verb” in front of the gloss of every new verb to make it crystal clear what part of speech the new word belonged to. Sometimes this was actually necessary: If I defined **lanta-** simply as “fall”, some student would surely manage to overlook the final hyphen of **lanta-** that is meant to suggest that this is a verbal stem, and conclude that “fall” is here a noun – autumn, or something! Finally having introduced the infinitive, I will use this form instead when glossing verbs – like “to fall” in this case.

NOTE 1: In English, infinitives introduced by “to” (or “in order to”) are often used to describe an *intention*: “I came to see you.” In such a context, it seems that Quenya does *not* use the forms discussed so far, but a quite different construction (gerund in dative, to be discussed in a later lesson).

## 9.2 The negative verb

This may be a good place to introduce a somewhat peculiar Quenya verb. Earlier we have mentioned the copula **ná** “is”, which we can now refer to as a tense of the verb “to be”. (Don’t ask me if **ná** is the present tense or the aorist, and the other tenses of this verb are unfortunately even more obscure: The verb “to be” is notoriously irregular in the languages of the world, and Tolkien may well have invented some nice irregularities for Quenya as well.)

Anyhow, Quenya also has a unitary verb meaning “not to be”; you can express this meaning without combining some form of **ná** with a separate word for “not” (though Quenya does have such a negation as well). This verb is listed in the *Etymologies*, entry UGU/UMU, where it appears as **umin** “I am not” (another example of Tolkien’s frequent habit of listing primary verbs in the 1st person aorist). The past tense is also listed, somewhat irregular: it is **úmë**, not **\*\*umnë** as it would have to be according to the simplest “regular” pattern. **Úmë** as the past tense of a primary verb **um-** would seem to belong to the same pattern as **lávë**, pa.t. of **lav-** “to lick” (cf. **undulávë** “down-licked” = “covered” in *Namárië* in LotR). One must take care not to confuse the past tense form **úmë** “was not” with the ending-less aorist **umë** “is not”.

As the *future* tense of this verb, we might expect **umuva**, and this unattested form may well be permissible – but actually a shorter form **úva** occurs in *Fíriel’s Song*. Here we have the phrase **úva . . . farëa**, “will not be enough” (**farëa** = adjective “enough, sufficient”). Possibly, this **úva** is actually the future tense of another verb: Besides **umin** “I am not” from the

root UMU Tolkien also listed a form **uin** of the same meaning – apparently derived from the root UGU. Perhaps **úva** is strictly the future tense of the latter verb. It could represent a primitive form something like *uguba*, whereas **uin** is to be derived from *ugin* (or *ugi-ni* at an even older stage). Between vowels, *g* was lost in Quenya, so that the two **u**'s of *uguba* merged into one long **ú** in **úva**, whereas the **u** and the **i** of *ugin* merged into a diphthong **ui** (as in **uin**) when the disappearance of *g* brought the two vowels into direct contact. Whatever development Tolkien may have imagined, we will here use **úva** as the future tense of **um-** “not to be”, avoiding the unattested (and perhaps somewhat awkward) form **umuva**.

Like **ná**, this “negative copula” can presumably be used to connect a subject with a noun or an adjective:

**I Nauco umë aran** “the Dwarf is not a king”  
**I nissi umir tiucë** “the women are not fat”  
**I rocco úmë morë** “the horse was not black”  
**I neri úmer sailë** “the men were not wise”  
**Elda úva úmëa** “an Elf will not be evil”  
**Nissi úvar ohtari** “women will not be warriors” (*sorry, Éowyn!*)  
Or, using pronominal endings instead of an independent subject:  
**Umin Elda** “I am not an Elf”  
**Úmen saila** “I was not wise”  
**Úvalyë ohtar** “you will not be a warrior”

But above I said that this was a good place to introduce the negative verb. This is because it can probably be combined with *infinitives* as well. We lack actual examples, but in the entry UGU/UMU in Etym, Tolkien indicated that **umin** does not always signify “I am not”. It can just as well mean “I do not”. By combining such a verb with an infinitive, one can probably negate the verbs in question. Home-made examples involving various tenses of the negative verb:

**Umin turë macil** “I do not wield a sword”  
**Máma umë matë hrávë** “a sheep does not eat flesh”  
**I Nauco úmë tulë** “the Dwarf did not come”  
**I neri úmer hirë i harma** “the men did not find the treasure”  
**I nís úva linda** “the woman will not sing”  
**I neri úvar cenë i Elda** “the men will not see the Elf”

We must assume that following the negative verb, as well as in other contexts, *several* infinitives may sometimes be combined, like **merë** and **cenë** in this sentence (the finite verb in **red**, the two infinitives in **blue** and **pink**):

**I Elda úmë merë cenë i Nauco.** “The Elf **did not want to see** the Dwarf.”

Or again, with the infinitives **merë** and **cenda**:

**I Nauco úva merë cenda i parma.** “The Dwarf **will not want to read** the book.”

Presumably the present/continuous tense of the negative verb, which would have to be **úma**, can be used to deny the existence of an *ongoing* action:

**I Nauco úma linda** “the Dwarf is not singing” (just now)

Contrast the aorist: **I Nauco umë linda** “the Dwarf does not sing”. The latter would often (but not necessarily) have a wider application, like “the Dwarf is not a singer”. Anyhow, we will stick to the aorist in the exercises below.

### 9.3 Active participles

The various parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, remain relatively distinct categories most of the time. However, some words fuse the properties of several parts of speech. The *participles* are words with a basically adjectival function, but they are directly derived from verbs, and in the case of active participles, they are still able to take an object.

The participles are subdivided into two categories, often called *present participles* and *past participles*. These terms are somewhat misleading, for the most important distinction between has nothing to do with tenses. The alternative terms *active participles* and *passive participles* are better, and I will try to use them consistently here.

We will save the “past” or passive participle for the next lesson and focus on the “present” or *active participles* here. In English, this form is derived by means of the ending *-ing*. For instance, the verb “follow” has the active participle “following”. This verbal adjective describes the state of something or someone that carries out the action of the corresponding verb: The day that *follows* can be described as the *following* day.

If the verb is able to take an object, so is its corresponding participle. A person who *loves Elves* can be described as a person *loving Elves*.

In English, the form derived from verbs by adding *-ing* is somewhat ambiguous. It can also function as a noun. The active participle of a verb like “kill” is of course *killing*, as it is clearly adjectival in a phrase like “a killing experience”, but in a sentence like “the killing must stop”, it is equally clear that it is used as a noun. But in the latter sentence, “killing” is a *verbal noun*, an abstract noun denoting the action of killing. Here we are only interested in *verbal adjectives* = participles. In Quenya, the two do not coincide in form.

The Quenya ending corresponding to English *-ing* (when used to form participles) is **-la**. There are many examples of active participles in the

Markirya poem. For instance, Tolkien in his annotation indicated that “*ilkala* [is the] participle of *ilka* ‘gleam (white)’” (MC:223). The participle **ilcala** (as we would spell it here) thus means “gleaming”, and so it is used in the poem, in a phrase translated “in the moon gleaming” (MC:215).

It seems that in a Quenya active participle, the stem-vowel is lengthened if possible. In **ilcala** the **i** cannot become long **í** because there is a consonant cluster following it. However, Tolkien in MC:223 also mentioned a verb **hlapu-** “to fly or stream in the wind” (one of the rare *U-stems*, a rather obscure category of verbs). Its participle appears as **hlápula** on the previous page: **Winga hlápula**, translated “foam blowing” (cf. MC:214). We must assume, then, that the participle of a verb like **lala-** “to laugh” is **lálala** (!) “laughing”: The stem-vowel is lengthened. If the verbal stem includes a vowel that is long already, it simply stays long in the participle: The participles of **píca-** “to lessen, dwindle” and **rúma-** “to shift, move, heave” appear as **pícala** and **rúmala** in the *Markirya* poem.

In the case of longer verbal stems where the stem-vowel occurs twice, as in **falasta-** “to foam” (root evidently PHALAS), it seems that it is the *second* occurrence of the stem-vowel that is to be lengthened if possible. In this case it cannot be lengthened, since it is followed by a consonant cluster; the participle “foaming” is attested (in *Markirya*) as **falastala**. The first occurrence of the stem-vowel *could* have been lengthened as far as phonology is concerned (\*\***fálastala**), but this first vowel evidently does not “count” for the purpose of lengthening. (Presumably it is not lengthened in the present tense, either: **falastëa** “is foaming”, hardly ?**fálastëa**, much less \*\***falástëa**.)

The primary verbs are a problem. Adding the ending **-la** to their stems would usually result in consonant clusters not permitted in Quenya. For instance, the participle of the verb **tír-** “to watch” cannot be \*\***tírla** (let alone \*\***tírla**), a quite impossible Quenya word. It has been assumed that in such cases, one may start by constructing the “continuative stem” (similar to the present tense) by lengthening the stem-vowel and adding **-a**, e.g. **tíra** “is watching”, and then derive the participle by adding the participial ending **-la** to *this* form: **tírala** “watching”. *Markirya* has **hácala** as a participle “yawning”; unfortunately the underlying verb “to yawn” is not attested, but if it is a primary verb **hac-**, the attested participial form would confirm such a theory. But of course, the verb underlying the participle **hácala** could just as well be an A-stem **haca-** or **háca-** (cf. **hlápula** “blowing, streaming” from **hlapu-** and **pícala** “dwindling, waning” from **píca-**).

With the publication of *The Peoples of Middle-earth* in 1996, a form that may seem to be the participle of a primary verb became available: PM:363 refers to the root “*it* [as in] *itila* ‘twinkling, glinting’, and *íta* ‘a flash’, *ita-* verb ‘to sparkle’.” But is **itila** really the participle of a primary verb **it-**? Tolkien refers to **it-** as a “stem” or root (cf. PM:346), not as a Quenya verb. The actual Quenya verb in question is listed as **ita-**, a short A-stem meaning

“to sparkle”. Its participle would presumably be **ítala**, not **itila**. If the latter is a participle at all, it is a peculiar one: it shows no lengthening of the stem-vowel (not **\*\*ftila**), and a connecting vowel **-i-** is inserted before the ending **-la**. Since the aorist of a verb **it-** would be **iti-** (becoming **itë** only in the absence of any endings), one may wonder if **itila** is an *aorist participle*. This would mean that Quenya is able to carry the distinction of aorist/present tense over into the participle, so that there are different forms for “doing” (habitually or momentarily) and “doing” (continuously): perhaps something like **carila** and **cárala**, respectively (from the verb **car-** “to do”). But this is speculative, and I cannot recommend such a system to writers; we must await the publication of more material. It may be that **itila** is simply an old adjectival formation that no longer “counts” as an adjective in Quenya. The ending **-la** occurs in adjectives as well, e.g. **saila** “wise”; undoubtedly **-la** is in origin simply an adjectival ending that came to be favoured as the suffix used to derive verbal adjectives = participles.

Even so, Quenya participles seem to have established themselves as formations quite distinct from adjectives, for in one respect their behaviour differs: Unlike adjectives, the active participles apparently do *not* agree in number. For instance, *Markirya* has **rámar sisílala** for “wings shining” (the second word being the participle of the verb **sisíla-**, a longer variant of the verb **sil-** “shine white”). As we remember, normal adjectives in **-a** have plural forms in **-ë** (representing archaic Quenya **-ai**). So if **sisílala** were to be agree in number with the noun it describes, we would have expected **\*\*rámar sisílalë**. Perhaps Tolkien did not want participles in **-la** to agree in number precisely because the plural form of the participial ending would have to be **-lë**: This ending could easily be confused with the prominent *abstract* ending **-lë**, which is added to verbal stems to derive verbal nouns – e.g. **lindalë** “singing” from **linda-** “to sing” (as in **Ainulindalë** “Ainuling”, free rendering “Music of the Ainur”). While **lindala** and **lindalë** both translate as “singing” in English, the latter is a *noun* (“a singing”), whereas the former is “singing” in the *adjectival* sense.

English very often employs the active participle to express the meaning of a continuative tense, combining the participle with a copula like “is” or “was”, e.g. “the boy is laughing”. But regarding present actions at least, Quenya would rather express this meaning by using the genuine present/continuative tense: **I seldo lálëa**. None can say whether the English-style wording **i seldo ná lálala** is a valid Quenya sentence; one suspects that while it would be intelligible, the Eldar (/Tolkien) would not think of it as “good Quenya”.

While we have no attested example of an active participle taking an object, we must assume that it is possible, e.g. **Nauco tírala Elda**, “a Dwarf watching an Elf”.

## Summary of Lesson Nine

The infinitive is a form of the verb that is not inflected for tense and is therefore unable to function as the predicate of a sentence (as a *finite* verb can); an infinitive may be combined with other verbs to form longer verbal phrases. While there are some obscurities, the (or one) Quenya infinitive is apparently identical to the verbal stem itself, except that primary verbs receive the ending **-ë** – e.g. **quet-** “to speak” in the sentence **polin quetë** “I can speak”. This infinitive would seem to be the one used when infinite and finite verbs are combined (as in the example just quoted, where the infinitive **quetë** is combined with a finite form of the verb **pol-** “can”). – The *negative verb* **um-** (past tense **úmë**, future **úva**) can apparently function both as a negative copula (“not be”) and as a verb that may be combined with the infinitive of other verbs to express “not do. . .” something, e.g. **umin quetë** “I do not speak”. – The *active participle*, a verbal adjective describing the state of the one carrying out the action denoted by the corresponding verb, is derived by adding **-la** to the corresponding verbal stem. The stem-vowel is lengthened if there is no consonant cluster following it. It is somewhat unclear how the ending **-la** is to be added to the stems of primary verbs, but one plausible assumption may be that the ending is suffixed to the “continuous” form (with lengthened stem-vowel and ending **-a**, e.g. **tíra** from **tir-** “to watch”, hence **tírala** as the participle “watching”).

## Vocabulary

**tolto** “eight”

**pol-** “to be (physically) able to”, normally translated “can” (where this refers to some physical ability – *not* “can” in the sense “know how to”, referring to intellectual skill, or “can” in the sense “may” = “is permitted to”, referring to freedom from prohibitions. For the two latter meanings, Quenya uses distinct words.)

**um-** negative verb “not to do” or “not to be”, past tense **úmë**, future tense **úva**

**mer-** “to wish, want”

**hlar-** “to hear” (related to Sindarin *lhaw* as in *Amon Lhaw*, the Hill of Hearing mentioned in LotR)

**verya-** “to dare” (from the same root as the Sindarin name *Beren*, meaning bold or daring one)

**lelya-** “to go, proceed, travel”, past tense **lendë**, perfect **[e]lendië** (more about this “irregular” verb in the next lesson)

**pusta-** “to stop”

**ruhta-** “to terrify, to scare” (ultimately related to **Urco** or **Orco**, the Quenya words for “bogey, Orc”)

**coa** “house” (building only, not “house” = “family”)

**mir** preposition “into”

**ter** preposition “through” (a longer variant **terë** also exists, but I have used **ter** in the exercises below)

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **Sílala Isil ortëa or Ambar.**
- B. **I cápala Nauco lantanë ter i talan.**
- C. **Polin hlarë lindala vendë.**
- D. **Minë nér túrala minë macil úva ruhta i tolto taurë ohtari.**
- E. **Mól mápala taura nér umë saila.**
- F. **I tolto rávi caitala nu i aldar ortaner, an i rávi merner matë i neri.**
- G. **Rá umë polë pusta matë hrávë.**
- H. **I ruhtala ohtar pustanë tirë i lië, an i ohtar úmë saila.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. The man pursuing the Dwarf is a warrior.
- J. The king wanted to go.
- K. The maiden did not dare to see the queen.
- L. The laughing women went into the house.
- M. The eight traveling Dwarves can find many treasures.
- N. You did not praise the Elf, you do not praise the Man [**Atan**], and you will not praise the Dwarf.
- O. I want to travel through the world and free all peoples.
- P. A daring man went through the gate and into the mountain.

# Lesson 10

**Adverbs. The pronominal endings *-ntë* and *-t*. Infinitives with object pronouns. The past tense of intransitive verbs in *-ya*. Passive participles.**

## 10.1 Adverbs

Adverbs form a part of speech that is used to provide “extra information” in a sentence. A typical sentence provides information about who does what (to whom), involving a subject, a predicate and if necessary an object. But you may also want to slip in information about *when*, *where* or *in what manner* the verbal action occurs. This is where adverbs enter the linguistic stage.

In many cases, adverbs are to verbs what adjectives are to nouns. Like an adjective may describe a noun, an adverb may describe the *nature of the verbal action* of the sentence. In a sentence like “they left swiftly”, the last word is an adverb describing *how* or *in what manner* “they left”. If we say “she is singing now”, the word “now” is an adverb answering the question of *when* the verbal action is taking place. And if we say “they did it here”, the word “here” is an adverb telling us *where* the verbal action took place.

Some adverbs may be called “basic”, since they are not derived from another part of speech. Just consider such an adverb of time as English “now” and its Quenya equivalent *sí*; neither can be further analyzed. But very many English adverbs are not “basic” in this way. They are transparently derived from adjectives, as in one of the examples we just used: The adverb “swiftly” is obviously based on the adjective “swift”. The Great English Adverb-Former is the ending *-ly*, which can in principle be added to any adjective, turning it into an adverb (producing such pairs as deep/deeply, final/finally, great/greatly, high/highly, swift/swiftly and countless others. . . but preferably not “good/goodly”, since the place of “goodly” is already occupied by the basic adverb *well!*) Since we have only a handful of words that Tolkien explicitly identified as adverbs, but plenty of adjectives, it would be nice if we could pin down a Quenya adverb-former like the English ending *-ly*. Then we could derive our own Quenya adverbs.

We may have such a Quenya ending. It occurs in LotR, as part of the *Cor-*



*mallen Praise* (volume 3, Book Six, chapter IV: “The Field of Cormallen”). As part of the praise received by the Ringbearers we have the two words **andavë laitualmet**, translated “long we will praise them” in Letters:308. Here we have the adverb **andavë**, “long” (here meaning “for a long time”). We know that the Quenya *adjective* “long” is **anda** (cf. Sindarin *and* as in *And+duin = Anduin*, “Long River”). It would seem, then, that this adjective has been turned into an adverb by supplying the ending **-vë** (probably related to the Quenya preposition **ve** “as, like”). In the case of **anda/andavë**, the English translation is “long” in either case, but normally the ending **-vë** would correspond to English “-ly”. So if **alta** is “great”, can we use **altavë** for “greatly”? Since **tulca** is a word for “firm”, would “firmly” be **tulcavë**? Knowing that **saila** means “wise”, can we assume that **sailavë** an acceptable word for “wisely”? By and large, I think such formations are plausible, though the potential application of the ending **-vë** may not be literally limitless. The Quenya adjective “good” is **mára**; one wonders if **máravë** for “well” would sound just as weird as “goodly” in English! (A basic adverb **vandë** “well” occurs in Tolkien’s earliest “Quenya” wordlist [QL:99]; whether this was still a valid word in LotR-style Quenya some forty years later, none can say.)

Like **anda** “long”, the vast majority of Quenya adjectives end in **-a**. The less frequent adjectives in **-ë** in practically all cases descend from Primitive Elvish forms in **-i**, which vowel would be preserved unchanged before an ending or in compounds: Compare **morë** “dark, black” with the compound **Moriquendi** “Dark Elves”. We must assume that the original quality of the vowel would also be preferred before the adverbial ending **-vë** – so if we try to derive an adverb “darkly” from **morë**, it should probably be **morivë** rather than **morevë**. Actually, very few of the adjectives in **-ë** are likely to have any corresponding adverbs; they mostly denote colours. Perhaps we can have **mussë/mussivë** “soft/softly”, **nindë/nindivë** “thin/thinly” and **ringë/ringivë** “cold/coldly” (but in a later source, the word for “cold” appears as **ringa** rather than **ringë**, and then the adverb would simply be **ringavë**).

How the ending **-vë** would be added to the few adjectives in **-n** is quite unclear. The adjective **melin** “dear” (not to be confused with the similar-sounding 1st person aorist “I love”) could have a corresponding adjective **melinvë** “dearly”, for while **nv** does not occur in unitary words, it is a possible Quenya combination (cf. Aragorn’s title **Envinyatar** “Renewer”, where **en-** = “re-”). On the other hand, if the ending **-vë** is related to the preposition **ve** “as, like”, both probably descend from *be* in Primitive Elvish. We could then argue that the original *melin-be* would rather come out as **melimbë** in Quenya. On the yet other hand (if we can postulate even more hands), adjectives in **-in** seem to be shortened from longer forms in **-ina**, and then one could argue that this **a** would be preserved before an ending. Thus, “dearly” could be **melinavë**. (I’d say, forget about **melin** and start

from **melda** or **moina** instead, which adjectives also mean “dear”. Then we can simply have **meldavë** or **moinavë**!)

In English at least, an adverb does not necessarily describe a verbal action. It can also be used to modify the meaning of an adjective (or even another adverb). This is a kind of meta-description, one descriptive word describing another. Whether Quenya adverbs (or specifically the ones in **-vë**) can be used in such a way, nobody knows. For instance: Knowing that **valaina** is the Quenya adjective “divine”, can we feel free to use **valainavë vanya** for “divinely beautiful”? Tolkien provided **aqua** as the adverb “fully, completely, altogether, wholly” (WJ:392 – this is a “basic” adverb *not* derived from an adjective, unlike the English glosses in *-ly* that are derived from the adjectives “full, complete, whole”). It does seem very likely that this **aqua** can modify an adjective, e.g. **aqua morë** “completely dark”. If this is not so, Tolkien ought to have told us...!

It may be noted that in some early sources, Tolkien uses adverbs in **-o** rather than **-vë**. The one attestation of the latter is, as I have pointed out, **andavë** vs. the adjective **anda** “long”. However, there exists an early “Qenya” sentence which translates as “the Elves were lying long asleep at Koviéni [later: Cuiviéni]”; see *Vinyar Tengwar* #27. In this sentence, the adverb “long” appears as **ando**, not **andavë**. Further examples of adverbs in **-o** include **ento** “next” and **rato** “soon” (from an “Arctic” sentence quoted in *Father Christmas Letters* – obviously a form of “Qenya”, though appearing in a context that has nothing to do with Tolkien’s serious literary output). We may even include the adverb **voró** “ever, continually” from such a relatively late source as the *Etymologies* (entry BOR), though in this word, the final **-o** may be simply the stem-vowel reduplicated and suffixed.

The example **ando** “long” (not to be confused with the noun “gate”), which is obviously derived from the adjective **anda**, would seem to indicate that the ending **-o** can be used to derive adverbs from adjectives. May we then have (say) **tulco** “firmly” from **tulca** “firm”, as an alternative to **tulcavë**? Or are we to understand that Tolkien, by the LotR period, had *dropped* **-o** as an adverbial ending? If so he introduced **-vë** as a replacement, not an alternative (changing **ando** to **andavë**).

We cannot know whether **-o** is still a valid adverbial ending in LotR-style Quenya. But when deriving adverbs from adjectives, I would recommend using the “safe” (or at least safer) ending **-vë** instead. In the exercises below, I have not used the ending **-o**, but only **-vë**. On the other hand, at this stage I would not tamper with attested adverbs like **ento**, **rato**, **voró** (changing them to ?**entavë** etc.)

Do adverbs, like adjectives, agree in number? It has been suggested that **andavë** is actually a *plural* adverb, agreeing with a plural verb (**andavë laituvalmet** “long we will praise them” – notice the plural subject ending attached to the verb). If so, **-vë** could be the plural form of a *singular* adverbial ending **-va**, completely unattested. According to this system, we

would have such variation as **i nér lendë andava** “the man traveled long” (singular adverb corresponding to a singular verb) vs. **i neri lender andavë** “the men traveled long” (plural adverb to go with a plural verb). But this is 100 % hypothetical. While nothing can be ruled out at this stage, I tend to believe that this there is no such variation. More likely, the adverbial ending **-vë** is invariable in form, related to the preposition **ve** “as, like” as suggested above.

In closing, I should mention that some Quenya adverbs are derived from other parts of speech than adjectives. In *Namárië* we have **oialë** as the adverb “for ever” (or “everlastingly”, as the interlinear translation in RGEO:67 goes). But the *Etymologies*, entry OY, indicates that **oialë** is properly or in its origin a *noun* meaning “everlasting age”. Apparently this noun is used as an adverb in *Namárië*.

Phrases involving prepositions very often have an adverbial function to begin with, and sometimes unitary adverbs may evolve from them: In *Cirion’s Oath* we have **tennoio** as another Quenya word meaning “for ever”, but in UT:317, Tolkien explains that this form is simply a contraction of two originally distinct words: the preposition **tenna** “up to, as far as” + **oio** “an endless period”.

Finally we have what I have already called “basic adverbs”, not derived from any other part of speech. **Aqua** “completely” and **sí** “now” mentioned above are just two examples; we may also include words like **amba** “up(wards)”, **háya** “far off” (read perhaps **haiya** as the Third Age form), **oi** “ever”, and others.

## 10.2 The pronominal endings **-ntë** and **-t**

In Lesson Eight, we introduced three pronominal endings: **-n** or longer **-nyë** for “I”, **-l** or longer **-lyë** for “you”, and **-s** for “it”. But obviously there are more pronouns, and we will now attempt to identify the pronominal endings of the Third Person Plural: as subject “they”, as object “them”.

*Cirion’s Oath* in UT:305 includes the word **tiruvantes**, in UT:317 translated “they will guard it”. The verb **tir-** “watch, guard”, the future-tense ending **-uva** “shall, will” and the pronominal ending **-s** “it” ought to be familiar to the student by now. We are left with **-nte-** as the element translated “they”. UT:317 explicitly confirms that **-ntë** is the “inflection of 3[rd person] plural where no subject is previously mentioned”. Like most brief linguistic notes of Tolkien’s, this one does require some exegesis. I shall here assume that Tolkien’s intention is this: If a sentence has a plural subject that has been “previously mentioned”, occurring before the verb, the verb would only receive the normal plural ending **-r** (e.g. **i neri matir apsa** “the men eat meat”). But if there is *no* subject “previously mentioned”, the ending **-r** is replaced by **-ntë**, meaning “they”: **Matintë apsa**, “they eat meat”.

Apparently, this ending would still be used if the subject is identified *later* in the sentence; perhaps we can have such a sentence as **matintë apsa i neri** “they eat meat(,) the men (do)”. *Cirion’s Oath* also identifies the subject later in the sentence (**nai tiruvantes i hárar mahalmassen mi Númen** “be it that they will guard it, *the ones who sit on thrones in the west...*”)

*Cirion’s Oath* occurs in post-LotR material, so the information provided in UT:305, 317 was certainly intended to be LotR-compatible. However, a quite different pronominal ending for “they” occurs in Tolkien’s early material. In LT1:114, we find the “Quenya” form **tulielto** “they have come”, including the ending **-lto** for “they”. This ending was current as late as when Tolkien wrote *Fíriel’s Song*, which includes the forms **cárielto** “they made” and **antalto** “they gave” (LR:72). Whether it is also valid in LotR-style Quenya is another matter. The ending **-lto** looks somewhat strange compared to the other known pronominal endings. Of the pronominal endings attested in LotR or during the post-LotR period, *all* the subject endings that constitute a separate syllable end in the vowel **-ë** (six endings in all, if we include **-ntë** discussed above). A suffix **-lto** ending in **-o** doesn’t seem to fit in very well (so some would alter **-lto** to **-ltë** in LotR-style Quenya, though there is no evidence for such an ending). I tend to assume that Tolkien eventually scrapped this ending completely, replacing it with **-ntë**.

The opinion has been voiced that **-lto** is valid all the same. Some would interpret Tolkien’s note about **-ntë** being used “where no subject is previously mentioned” in an *absolute* sense: It wouldn’t be enough that the subject has not been “previously mentioned” in the *same sentence*, as I assumed above. Of course, when the word “they” is used in English, it usually refers back to some group mentioned earlier in the text or conversation. According to the strict interpretation of Tolkien’s note about **-ntë**, this pronominal ending cannot be used for any “they” that refers back to some group mentioned earlier, even if it was in a quite different sentence. The ending **-ntë** would only point *forward*, to some group that is to be identified *later* in the text or sentence (as is the case in *Cirion’s Oath*). “They” referring back to some other group (already mentioned in another sentence) would require a quite different ending, perhaps the **-lto** attested in earlier sources.

I can’t claim that this isn’t a *possible* interpretation of Tolkien’s words or the available examples. However, I still have a bad feeling about using the ending **-lto** in LotR-style Quenya. In the exercises I have made for this course, I have ignored **-lto**, assuming that **-ntë** can be used as a pronominal ending signifying “they” in a general sense. When Tolkien speaks of **-ntë** being used only for a subject that has not been “previously mentioned”, I assume that he means “not previously mentioned *in the same sentence*” (for if a plural subject had already occurred, the verb would receive only the normal plural marker **-r**). Hence we can – presumably – have forms like these, with **-ntë** attached to the various tenses of **pusta-** “to stop”:

Aorist **pustantë** “they stop”  
 Present **pustëantë** “they are stopping”  
 Past **pustanentë** “they stopped”  
 Future **pustuvantë** “they will stop”  
 Perfect **upustientë** “they have stopped”

As indicated by the attested example **tiruvantes** = “they will guard it”, a second pronominal ending can be attached following **-ntë** (**-nte-**), denoting the *object* of the sentence. This brings us over to another question: If **-ntë** is the subject ending “they”, what is the corresponding object ending “them”?

Discussing adverbs above, we have already quoted the sentence **andavë laituvalmet** “long we will praise them” from LotR. Knowing that **laituvalmet** means “we will praise them”, we can easily isolate the final **-t** as the element translated “them”. (The cunning student will also be able to isolate the pronominal ending signifying “we”, but we will save that one for later: Actually Quenya has several endings for “we”, with different shades of meaning.)

As usual, things are not quite crystal clear. The ones being praised here are Frodo and Sam, *two* persons. Some have therefore assumed that this **-t** is a *dual* “them”, even suggesting that **laituvalmet** may be rendered “we will praise both [of them]”. Those adhering to this theory have been encouraged by the fact that there is also a dual ending **-t** (as in **ciryat** “2 ships”; look up Lesson Three again). Nothing can be definitely ruled out at this time, but the ending **-t** “them” would seem to match **-ntë** “they” quite well. I don’t think **-t** is exclusively dual, but in any case, this is *one* ending that can be translated “them”. Hence, forms like the following must be possible:

**Tirnenyet** = “I watched them”  
**Melilyet** = “you love them”  
**Hiruvanyet** = “I will find them”

and even:

**Pustanentet** = “they stopped them”

Likely, this would refer to two different groups. “They stopped *themselves*” is probably expressed in another way (unfortunately we don’t really know how).

### 10.3 Infinitives with object pronouns

So far, we have identified two pronominal endings that can be used as the *object* of the sentence, **-s** for “it” and **-t** for “they”. As is evident from attested examples (**tiruvantes** “they will guard it”, **laituvalmet** “we will praise them”), these object endings may be attached to a finite verb following

another pronominal ending denoting the subject. But what about a longer verbal phrase involving an *infinitive*?

Let us start with a sentence like **i mól veryanë cenë i aran ar i tári**, “the thrall dared to see the king and the queen”. Here we have a finite verb **veryanë** “dared” + an infinitive **cenë** “to see”. Now we want to get rid of the whole phrase “the king and the queen”, replacing it with the object pronoun “them”, hence “the thrall dared to see *them*”. (Notice that I deliberately construct an example that will be compatible with the theory of **-t** “them” being *dual* only, even though I don’t believe this to be the case. . . unnecessary risks are just that, unnecessary!) Well, where do we put the ending **-t**? Quite obviously, it must be attached to the infinitive **cenë** “to see”. **Cenet**, then? Or, since the infinitive **cenë** seems to represent Primitive Elvish *keni* and primitive *-i* changes to **-ë** only when final, one might think that **cenit** is a better choice. So “the thrall dared to see them” = **i mól veryanë cenit**, right?

Wrong! In *Vinyar Tengwar* #41, July 2000, it was revealed that the infinitive of primary verbs is formed with the ending **-ita** if any pronominal endings are to be added (actually the suffix is only **-ta-**, which added to an infinitive like **cenë** = **ceni-** produces **cenita-**). Tolkien in some of his late (ca. 1969) notes refers to “the general (aorist) ‘infinitive’ formed by adding *-i* (not as such capable of any further suffixion; with pronominal affixes it was the stem of the aorist tense); the particular infinitive with *-ita* differing in use from the preceding mainly in being able to receive pronominal object affixes” (VT41:17). He went on to quote the example **caritas**, “doing it” (or probably just as well “to do it”) – an infinitive of the verb **car-** “do” with the object ending **-s** “it” attached.

As I pointed out in the previous lesson, it is unclear whether the reference to an infinitive constructed by “adding *-i*” implies that there is a contemporary Quenya infinitive that shows the ending **-i**. Tolkien may simply refer to the original form of the infinitive ending, e.g. Primitive Elvish *kwet̪i* as the form underlying the contemporary Quenya form **quetë** “(to) speak” (attested in the sentence **polin quetë** “I can speak”). Anyhow, this infinitive was “not as such capable of any further suffixation”, apparently to avoid confusion with “the stem of the aorist tense”. The infinitive of **car-** “make, do” would be **carë** (**cari-**), but if we tried to add an ending like **-s** “it” directly to it in order to express “to do it”, the resulting form **\*\*caris** would look just like the aorist “it does” or “it makes”. The actual form **caritas** is not ambiguous.

In the case of “they make” vs. “to make them”, there would be a distinction even without the extra **-ta-**, since the subject ending for “they” (**-ntë**) differs from the object ending “them” (**-t**). Even so, Tolkien apparently decided to eliminate any possible confusion between aorist forms with subject endings and infinitives with object endings: The infinitives insert **-ta-** between the infinitive proper and the pronominal suffixes. Therefore,

the infinitive “to see” is expanded from **cenë** to **cenita-** when it is to receive any object ending. “The thrall dared **to see them**” must actually be **i mól veryanë cenitat**, the extra **-ta-** intruding between the infinitive and the object ending.

It is unclear whether A-stem verbs behave in the same way. *Vinyar Tengwar* #41 published only a very brief quote from Tolkien’s 1969 notes (the editor apparently needed the space for more important things, like an in-depth article about the optimal Bulgarian translation of the Ring Poem). The quote, reproduced above, apparently only deals with the infinitive form of primary verbs – the ones that have aorists in **-ë** or with endings **-i-**. Some writers have assumed that A-stem verbs functioning as infinitives would similarly add **-ta** before any object pronominal endings are suffixed. So with verbs like **metya-** “to end, to put an end to” and **mapa-** “to seize”, it would work something like this:

**Merintë metyatas** “they want to **end it**”

**I ohtari úvar mapatat** “the warriors will not **seize them**”

Perhaps such sentences are quite OK, perhaps not. Presently there is no way of telling. One may doubt that the ending **-ta** would be added to the stem of a verb that ends in **-ta** already, like **orta-** “to lift up, to raise”. Should “I can **lift it**” really be **polin ortatas**? Generally, Quenya is not very fond of two adjacent similar-sounding syllables, like the two **ta**’s here.

Luckily, we can work around this uncertainty. We can simply avoid attaching object pronominal endings to the infinitives of A-stem verbs, since we know at least some *independent* object pronouns (e.g. **te** “them” instead of the ending **-t** – so for, say, “you wanted to seize them” we can have **mernelyë mapa te** instead of the uncertain construction **?mernelyë mapatat**). We will discuss the independent pronouns in a later lesson. In the exercises below, the infinitives in **-ita** + object suffix only involve primary verbs.

It is interesting to notice that Tolkien translated **caritas** as “doing it” (VT41:17). This may suggest that such infinitives can also function as the *subject* of a sentence, e.g. **cenitas farya nin** “seeing it is enough for me” (**farya-** verb “to suffice, to be enough”; **nin** “to/for me”).

## 10.4 The past tense of intransitive verbs in **-ya**

In Lesson Six, we set out some rules for “regular” past tense formation, but we also touched on various “irregular” forms (that is, past tense formations that don’t readily fall into the most common patterns). Some of these may actually form sub-groups that are “regular” enough according to their own special rules.

Let me first introduce a couple of terms that will facilitate the following discussion: *transitive* and *intransitive*. In linguist terminology, a verb is said

to be transitive if it can have an object. Most verbs readily can, but not all. A verb like “to fall” is not transitive (= *intransitive*). The subject itself may “fall”, but the subject cannot “fall” something else; there can be no object. A typical intransitive verb only describes an action which the subject itself performs, not an action that is, or can be, done *to* someone or something. (I say “typical”, for Quenya actually has some verbs that cannot even have a subject, the so-called *impersonal* verbs – to be discussed in Lesson Eighteen.)

Some verbs form pairs where one verb is transitive, the other intransitive. The subject may *raise* an object (transitively), but the subject by itself can only *rise* (intransitively) – not involving any object at all. Other examples of such pairs include transitive “to fell” vs. intransitive “to fall”, or transitive “to lay” vs. intransitive “to lie”. But in many cases, English uses the *same* verb form both intransitively and transitively, e.g. “to sink”. A subject may *sink* an object (e.g. “the torpedo sank the ship”, transitive verb with both subject and object), or the subject just “sinks” all by itself, so to speak (e.g. “the ship sank”, intransitive verb with subject only – obviously “sank” is used with two quite different meanings here). Such ambiguity may also occur in Quenya; for instance, **orta-** covers both “to raise” and “to rise”, and the context must be taken into account to determine which meaning is relevant. (To be more concrete: check if the sentence includes an object or not! E.g. **i aran orta** = “the king *rises*”, but **i aran orta ranco** = “the king *raises* an arm”.)

Let us then consider some “irregular” Quenya verbs. The verb **farya-** “to suffice, to be enough” is said to have the past tense **farnë**, irregular in the sense that the ending **-ya** of the verbal stem drops out before the past tense ending **-në**: We might have expected **\*\*faryanë**, but the *Etymologies* lists a few more verbs that exemplify the same phenomenon: **Vanya-** “to go, depart, disappear” has the past tense **vannë**. (Likely, Tolkien later replaced the verb **vanya-** with **auta-** of similar meaning, but we may still consider it here.) To these examples from the *Etymologies* (see entries PHAR, WAN) we may add a verb the student is supposed to have memorized as part of the previous lesson: **lelya-** “to go, proceed, travel” from WJ:363. Its past tense is not **\*\*lelyanë**, but **lendë**, seemingly a quite irregular form (though not as wildly irregular as English “to go” vs. its past tense “went”!) The sudden appearance of the cluster **nd** is no big mystery; it arises by nasal-infixion of the original root LED. (This root is listed in the *Etymologies*, though according to a later source, LED is reworked from even more primitive DEL. **Lelya-** is meant to descend from primitive *ledyâ-* [*ledjâ-*], “since *dj* became *ly* medially in Quenya” [WJ:363]. The past tense **lendë** would come from *lendê*, not so dissimilar from the verb *ledyâ-* as these forms later became.) The real mystery here is this: Why do the verbs **farya-**, **vanya-**, and **lelya-** surrender the ending **-ya** in the past tense?

It may be noted that by their meaning, all three verbs are distinctly *intransitive*: To suffice, to disappear, to go. This could be just a coincidence,



of course, but the *Etymologies* provides us with another highly interesting example. In the entry ULU, a verb **ulya-** “to pour” is listed. Tolkien indicated that it has a *double past tense*. If the verb is used in a transitive sense, as in “the servant poured water into a cup”, the past tense “poured” is **ulyanë**. This would be an entirely “regular” form. However, if the verb is used *intransitively*, the past tense of **ulya-** is **ullë** instead (presumably representing older *unlë*, formed by nasal-infixion from **ul-** without the ending **-ya**; cf. **villë** as the past tense of **vil-** “to fly”, though in the latter case no ending **-ya** appears in any form of the verb). So if you want to translate “the river *poured* into a gorge”, the form to use is **ullë**, not **ulyanë**.

It seems, then, that we can discern a pattern here: Intransitive verbs in **-ya** drop this ending in the past tense; the past tense is formed from the ending-less root, as in the case of primary verbs. Or put differently: In the past tense, intransitive verbs in **-ya** surrender this ending to masquerade as primary verbs. In the rare cases where a verb can be both transitive and intransitive, the ending **-ya** is retained when it is used in a transitive sense (as in the pa.t. form **ulyanë**), but dropped when the verb is used in an intransitive sense (**ullë**).

*Why* this should be so is of course entirely obscure. In other tenses than the past, the verb **ulya-** “to pour” would seem to appear in the same form no matter whether it is transitive or intransitive (aorist **ulya** “pours”, present tense **ulyëa** “is pouring”, future **ulyuva** “shall pour” etc.) But it was never Tolkien’s intention to make a new Esperanto, a language aiming to be 100 % regular and logical. Within his mythos, Quenya is supposed to be an ordinary spoken tongue, developed over thousands of years. Hence, Tolkien may deliberately have included what you will find in any natural language: certain features that don’t necessarily make immediate “sense”.

Most verbs in **-ya** are transitive, and would presumably retain their ending in the past tense, before the pa.t. suffix **-në** is added (as in the attested example **ulyanë**). Here are most of the remaining *intransitive* verbs in **-ya**, though Tolkien did not actually mention any past tense forms in their case: **hwinya-** “to swirl, to gyrate” (past tense **hwinnë?**), **mirilya-** “to glitter” (pa.t. **mirillë?** – cf. **ulya-**, pa.t. **ullë**), **ranya-** “to stray” (pa.t. **rannë?**), **súya-** “to breathe” (pa.t. **súnë?**), **tiuya-** “to swell, grow fat” (pa.t. **tiunë?**) The verb **yerya-** can be both transitive “to wear (out)” and intransitive “to get old”. Perhaps the past tense is **yeryanë** in the former sense and **yernë** in the latter sense, just like we have transitive **ulyanë** coexisting with intransitive **ullë** as the past tense “poured”?

I should add that all of this is somewhat hypothetical, since Tolkien did not actually mention the past tense of very many intransitive verbs in **-ya**. But the student should at least notice the *attested* “irregular” past tenses, including the double pa.t. of **ulya-** “to pour” and especially **lendë** “went” as the rather unexpected past tense form of **lelya-** “to go, travel, proceed”.

NOTE: The *perfect* tense of this verb appears as **lendië** in some texts. SD:56 indicates

that in one draft, Tolkien used **lendien** rather than **utúlien** for “I have come” in Elendil’s Declaration (“out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth have I come”). **Lendien** would mean, literally, “I have gone/went/traveled” or something similar. This perfect form is not augmented, possibly simply because Tolkien had not yet invented the augment that is usually prefixed in the perfect tense. I would normally supply it, using **elendië** as the perfect of **lelya-**. I have used this perfect in (the key to) one of the exercises below.

## 10.5 Passive participles

Then we will return to the participles. The logical counterpart of the active participles discussed in the previous lesson is obviously the *passive participles*. They are often called “past participles” instead (just like the active participles are frequently referred to as “present participles”). However, the term “passive participle” is very fitting. This participle is an adjectival form derived from the stem of a verb, and it describes the state that something or someone is left in by being exposed to the corresponding verbal action. For instance: If you *hide* something, it is *hidden*. Therefore, “hidden” is the passive participle of the verb “to hide”. The word “hidden” can be used as an adjective, both predicatively (“the treasure is hidden”) and attributively (“hidden treasure”). The *passive participle* “hidden” contrasts with the *active participle* “hiding”: The latter describes the state of the *subject*, the acting party, whereas the passive participle describes the state of the *object*, the one passively exposed to the verbal action.

In the case of intransitive verbs, where no object can be involved, this participle describes the state of the subject itself *after* carrying out the verbal action in question: If you *fall*, you will thereafter be *fallen*; if you *go*, you will thereafter be *gone*. Here the often-used term “past participle” makes sense; participles like *fallen* or *gone* describe the condition of the subject after carrying out some “past” action. They are seen to contrast with the “present participles” (active participles) *falling* and *going*, which describe the condition of the subject while the verbal action is still “present” or on-going. But as long as we are dealing with transitive verbs – and most verbs are transitive – I still think it is better to speak of “active participles” vs. “passive participles”.

In English, quite a few passive participles have the ending *-en*, as in the examples *hidden*, *fallen* above. But in very many cases, English passive participles are similar in form to the past tense of verbs, though the words have wildly different functions (a form like *tormented* is a past tense verb in a sentence like “they tormented the Dwarf”, but a passive participle in a sentence like “the Dwarf was tormented”). So what do the corresponding Quenya forms look like?

The vast majority of Quenya participles seem to be formed by means of the ending **-na** or its longer variant **-ina**. Some attested A-stem participles

are seen to include the longer ending, the final **-a** of the verbal stem and the **i** of the suffix **-ina** merging into a diphthong **-ai-** (which receives the stress, like any diphthong in the second-to-last syllable). An example is provided by the phrase **Arda Hastaina**, “Arda Marred”, an Elvish term for the world as it is, tainted by the evil of Morgoth (MR:254). This **hastaina** “marred” would seem to be the passive participle of a verb **hasta-** “to mar”, not otherwise attested. However, the verb **hosta-** “to gather, collect, assemble” is attested both in the *Etymologies* (entry KHOTH) and in the *Markirya* poem (MC:222–223). Its passive participle turns up in *Fíriel’s Song*, where it is implied to be **hostaina** (attested in the form **hostainiéva** “will be gathered”; the suffix **-iéva** “will be” is hardly valid in LotR-style Quenya, but the underlying participle certainly is). We can probably conclude that A-stems in **-ta** nearly always have passive participles in **-taina**. Since **anta-** means “give”, the participle “given” would be **antaina**. Since **orta-** means “raise” (or used intransitively, “rise”), the word for “raised” (and “risen”) would seem to be **ortaina**.

Perhaps the ending **-ina** can be added to nearly all A-stems? From a verb like **mapa-** “grasp, seize”, I think we may well derive **mapaina** as the participle “grasped, seized”. (Indirect support for this: The ending **-ina** is also used to derive adjectives, as in **valaina** “divine” – obviously an adjectival formation based on **Vala**, which noun is analogous in form to a simple A-stem like **mapa-**. Indeed it is hinted that the noun **Vala** is originally derived from a simple A-stem *verb* **vala-** “to order, to have power”: WJ:403–4. If it had remained a verb only, **valaina** could have meant “ordered” instead.)

The behaviour of A-stems in **-ya** is slightly obscure. In the *Etymologies*, Tolkien listed a root PER “divide in middle, halve” (cf. Sindarin *Perian* “halfling, Hobbit”). He then mentioned a Quenya word **perya**, evidently a verb preserving the root meaning. Immediately after **perya**, he listed an undefined word **perina**. Is this the passive participle “halved”? I think this is almost certainly the *meaning* of this word, but perhaps we should see it as an independent adjectival formation derived directly from the root, not as the passive participle of the verb **perya-**. (We might have excepted **périna** with a long **é** if it were a passive participle; see below regarding the **rácina** pattern.)

Elsewhere in the *Etymologies*, in the entry GYER, we have a verb **yerya-** “to wear (out), get old”. The same entry also mentions a word **yerna** “worn”. As far as the English glosses are concerned, **yerna** could be the passive participle of the verb **yerya-**. Should we conclude, then, that verbs in **-ya** form their passive participles by replacing this ending with **-na**? Again I think **yerna** is not actually the participle of **yerya-**, but rather an independent adjectival formation. The following facts support this: 1) Tolkien traced **yerna** all the way back to Primitive Elvish *gyernâ*, so it was not derived from the verb later; 2) Tolkien actually listed the form **yerna** *before* he mentioned

the verb **yerya-**, again suggesting that the former is not to be derived from the latter, 3) **yerna** is glossed “old” as well as “worn”, and the first gloss suggests that **yerna** is to be considered an independent adjective, not a participle. Same story as with **perina** above, then. This would also go for a pair like **halya-** “veil” vs. **halda** “veiled, hidden” (entry SKAL<sup>1</sup>): The latter form Tolkien referred to Primitive Elvish *skalnâ* (initial *sk-* becoming **h-** and *ln* becoming **ld** in Quenya). It may well be that in Primitive Elvish, *skalnâ* did count as the passive participle of the verbal root SKAL- “screen, hide”, but its Quenya descendant **halda** has developed into an independent adjective (one of Tolkien’s glosses for this word, “shady”, is also an adjective). Thus, **halda** is not necessarily the passive participle of the verb **halya-** derived from the same root, though it has somewhat the same meaning as the actual participle would have.

So how, really, are we to treat verbs in **-ya**? I think a highly interesting clue is provided in MR:326 (cf. MR:315), where Christopher Tolkien tells us that in a post-LotR text, Tolkien used **Mirruyainar** or **Mirroayainar** for “the Incarnate” (plural). This may seem to be passive participles inflected as nouns: “incarnated ones”. Removing the plural ending **-r**, we are left with **mirruyaina/mirroayaina** as a possible participle “incarnated” – and if we peel away the presumed participial ending as well, the verb “to incarnate” would seem to be **mirruya-** or **mirroya-**. Tolkien later changed the word **Mirruyainar/Mirroayainar** to **Mirroanwi**, not involving any **-ya-** at all, but the rejected forms may still give away what the passive participle of a verb in **-ya** should look like. Such verbs would seem to have participles in **-yaina**, just like verbs in **-ta** have participles in **-taina**. So given that **lanya-** is the verb “to weave”, the word for “woven” may well be **lanyaina**. The regular passive participles of the verbs **perya-** “to halve”, **yerya-** “to wear (out)” and **halya-** “to veil” would similarly be **peryaina**, **yeryaina**, **halyaina** (meaning much the same as the related adjectives **perina**, **yerna**, **halda**, of course, but the latter may not so clearly imply that the described states are *inflicted* – see below regarding **harna-** vs. **harnaina**).

We can probably conclude that nearly all A-stem verbs form their passive participles by adding **-ina**. The only exception occurring in the published corpus is the form **envinyanta** “healed” or more literally “renewed” (MR:405). It would seem to be the passive participle of a verb **envinyata-** “renew” (not attested by itself, but cf. Aragorn’s title **Envinyatar** “Renewer”). This participle is formed by means of nasal-infixion intruding before the ending **-ta**. We cannot know whether the more “regular” formation **envinyataina**, itself unattested, would be a valid form.

However, the ending **-ina** is not only used in the case of A-stems; primary verbs with **c** or **t** as their final consonant also form their passive participles by means of this ending. The *Markirya* poem includes a form **rácina** “broken” (**man tiruva rácina cirya**[?] “who shall see [/watch] a broken ship?”, MR:222). Tolkien explicitly identified **rácina** as the passive

(or “past”) participle of the verb **rac-** “to break” (MC:223). The verb “to reckon, to count” is **not-**, and in *Fíriel’s Song* we have **nótina** as the passive participle “counted”. It seems, then, that primary verbs ending in unvoiced stops like **c** or **t** form their passive participles by *lengthening* the stem-vowel and *adding* the long ending **-ina**. We don’t seem to have any attested example of the participle of a primary verb ending in **-p** (another unvoiced stop), but it would in all likelihood slip into the same pattern: The verb **top-** “to cover” would have the passive participle **tópina** “covered”. (The verb **top-** is listed in the *Etymologies*; the poem *Namárië* in LotR may suggest that Tolkien later changed it to **tup-**. If so, the participle would of course be **túpina** instead.) Perhaps primary verbs in **-v** also form their passive participles according to this pattern, e.g. **lávina** “allowed, granted” from the verb **lav-** “allow, grant” (not to be confused with a similar-sounding verb meaning “lick”). We lack examples, though.

Attested examples don’t exactly abound for other primary verbs either, but most of them probably prefer the short ending **-na** to **-ina**. MR:408 (cf. MR:405) indicates that Tolkien used **vincarna** for “healed”; the more literal meaning is transparently “renewed” or wholly literally “newly-made”: **Vin-** is the stem of the Quenya adjective **vinya** “new”, and **carna** “made” can only be the passive participle of the verb **car-** “make”. So primary verbs ending in **-r** have passive participles in **-rna** (and because of the consonant cluster here arising, the stem-vowel preceding it obviously can *not* be lengthened as in the **rácina** class discussed above). Given that **mer-** is the Quenya verb “to want”, the *Wanted* posters of the Quenya Wild West would evidently read **Merna**. Perhaps **mérina**, **cárina** (following **rácina**) would be possible alternative passive participles of **mer-**, **car-**, perhaps not. I think it is best to let the attested example **carna** guide us here.

For primary verbs in **-m** and **-n**, we only have what may be called indirect examples of their passive participles, but they are probably good enough. The verb **nam-** “to judge” (**namin** “I judge”, VT41:13) seems to have the passive participle **namna**. This form is attested as a *noun* meaning “statute” (as in **Namna Finwë Míriello**, “the Statute of Finwë and Míriel”, MR:258). Apparently the participle **namna**, basically meaning “judged”, is also used as a noun “judgement, juridical decision” and then “statute”. As for primary verbs in **-n**, we may consider such nouns as **anna** “gift” and **onna** “creature” vs. the verbs **anta-** “to give” and **onta-** “to create” (see the entries ANA<sup>1</sup>, ONO in Etym). These are not primary verbs, of course (and in Quenya we would expect them to have the participles **an-taina**, **ontaina**) – but the nouns **anna**, **onna** may descend from primitive participial formations based on the naked root-word, before **-ta** was added to produce the verbs as they appear in Quenya. So **anna** may come from a primitive participle “given”, only later used as a noun “something that is given” = “gift”. **Onna** might likewise represent an original passive participle “created”, later used as a noun “created one” = “creature”. I tend to

think, therefore, that the ending **-na** can be added to the stems of Quenya primary verbs ending in **-n**. For instance, since **cen-** is the verb “to see”, **cenna** may well be the passive participle “seen”. But again, **cénina** may be a permissible alternative formation (perhaps we can also have **námina** for “judged”, for all I know).

What about primary verbs in **-l**, such as **mel-** “love”? If we don’t resort to the pattern of **rácina** once again, using **mélina** for “loved”, the ending **-na** would have to be added directly to the verbal stem. But since **\*\*melna** is not a possible Quenya word, **ln** would become **ld**, just as in one example discussed above (Quenya **halda** descending from Primitive Elvish *skalnâ*). The *Etymologies* actually lists a word **melda**, glossed “beloved, dear”. These glosses are adjectives, but by their meaning they are of course very close to the participle “loved”. So are we once again looking at an original participle that has developed into an independent adjective? Would the actual participle of **mel-** differ in form, precisely to distinguish it from this adjective? If so we might consider **mélina** again. Or is **melda** both the adjective “dear” and the participle “loved”? One may well ask whether there is any point in even trying to distinguish between them, since their meanings would be virtually the same.

Another example may also be considered: The Quenya verb “to bear, to wear, to carry” seems to be **col-**, though it has never been independently attested: Only various derivations are found in our corpus. One of them appears in MR:385: **colla** = “borne, worn” (also used as a noun “vestment, cloak”, considered as “something that is worn”). Is this an example of the past participle of a primary verb ending in **-l**? Can we use **mella** for “loved”, then? I tend to think that **colla** is rather an adjectival derivative – perhaps representing primitive *konlâ* with nasal-infixion of the root KOL (not in Etym). By its original derivation it would then parallel such a Quenya adjective as **panta** “open” (which Tolkien referred to Primitive Elvish *pantâ*, derived from the root PAT listed in Etym). I’m afraid no quite certain conclusion can be reached regarding the passive participles of primary verbs in **-l**, but I think the safest would be to either use the ending **-da** (representing earlier **-na**), or the longer ending **-ina** combined with lengthening of the stem-vowel.

Should passive participles agree in number, like normal adjectives do? In other words, should the final **-a** turn into **-ë** (for older **-ai**) if the participle describes a plural noun? As far as I can see, the corpus provides no example that could guide us. We recall that active participles (ending **-la**) do *not* agree in number. However, I tend to think that passive participles do behave like normal adjectives in this regard. We have just seen that in many cases it is difficult to even determine whether a form is to be considered a passive participle or an adjective, since adjectives may be derived with the same endings. (For that matter, this goes for English as well: An adjective like *naked* could well have been a passive participle by its form; however,

there is no corresponding verb *\*\*nake* “denude”, so we can’t set up a pair *\*\*nake/naked* like we have *love/loved*.) Since adjectives like **valaina** “divine” and **yerna** “old” must be assumed to agree in number, it is difficult to imagine that participles like **hastaina** “marred” or **carna** “made” would not show such agreement. So I would change the final **-a** to **-ë** where the participle describes a plural noun (or several nouns).

In English, past/passive participles are used as part of the circumlocutions which simulate the function of a true perfect tense: “The Dwarf has *seen* the Elf”; “the woman is (or, has) *fallen*”. But here Quenya would simply use the real perfect tense instead: **I Nauco ecénië i Elda; i nís alantië**. Perhaps **ná lantaina** is also permissible for “*is* fallen”, but rendering “the Dwarf has seen the Elf” as *\*\*i Nauco harya cenna i Elda* (copying the English wording directly) only results in nonsense.

A final note: In some cases, forms in **-na** that were originally participial or adjectival have themselves become A-stem verbs. The primitive word *skarnâ*, listed in the entry SKAR in the *Etymologies*, was perhaps originally a passive participle “torn, rent” (since the root SKAR itself is said to mean “tear, rend”). In Quenya, *skarnâ* turned into **harna** “wounded”, probably felt to be an adjective rather than a participle. The funny thing is that **harna-** also came to be used as a verb “to wound”, and if this verb has its own passive participle **harnaina**, we would have come full circle! In English, both **harna** and **harnaina** must be translated “wounded”, but whereas **harna** would merely describe the state of being wounded, **harnaina** clearly implies that the wounds were *inflicted*. Cf. the English adjective “full” (merely describing a state) vs. the passive participle “filled” (implying that the state in question results from the act of filling).

## Summary of Lesson Ten

Adverbs are words used to fill in extra information about the *how*, the *when*, or the *where* of the verbal action described in a sentence. In English at least, an adverb can also be used to modify the meaning of an adjective, or even another adverb. – The Quenya pronominal ending for “they” is apparently **-ntë** (Tolkien probably dropped the ending **-lto** occurring in early material); the corresponding object ending “them” seems to be **-t** (though some think it is dual “the two of them” only). – Primary verbs, which have infinitives in **-ë** (e.g. **quetë** “to speak, to say”), turn into forms in **-ita-** if a pronominal ending denoting the object is to be added (e.g. **quetitas** “to say it”, with the ending **-s** “it”). – Available examples seem to suggest that intransitive verbs in **-ya** drop this ending in the past tense, which is formed directly from the stem instead (as if the verb were a primary verb). For instance, the pa.t. of **farya-** “to suffice” is **farnë**, not *\*\*faryanë*. – Passive participles are adjectival derivatives that usually describe the state that is inflicted on

someone or something by the corresponding verbal action: what you *hide* (verb) becomes *hidden* (passive participle). A-stem verbs seem to form their passive participles in **-ina** (e.g. **hastaina** “marred” from **hasta-** “to mar”). This ending is also used in the case of primary verbs ending in **-t** and **-c**, probably also **-p** and possibly even **-v**; in this class of verbs, the ending is combined with lengthening of the stem-vowel (e.g. **rácina** “broken” from **rac-** “to break”). It may be that the same pattern can be applied to *all* primary verbs, but verbs in **-r** are seen to take the simple ending **-na** instead, with no lengthening of the stem-vowel (**carna** “made” from **car-** “to make”). Primary verbs in **-m**, and probably also **-n**, would similarly take the simple ending **-na** (e.g. **namna** “judged” from **nam-** “to judge”, **cenna** “seen” from **cen-** “to see”). It is somewhat uncertain how we should treat primary verbs in **-l**; if we are to use the simple ending **-na**, it would turn into **-da** for phonological reasons (e.g. **melna** > **melda** “loved” as the passive participle of **mel-** “to love”; **melda** is attested as an adjective “beloved, dear”). Passive participles probably agree in number in the same way as adjectives, changing **-a** to **-ë** if they describe a plural noun or several nouns.

## Vocabulary

**nertë** “nine”

**núra** “deep”

**anwa** “real, actual, true”

**nulda** “secret”

**telda** “final” (adjective derived from the same root as the name of the *Teleri*, the Third Clan of the Eldar, so called because they were always the *last* or hindmost during the March from Cuiviénen – far behind the Vanyar and the Noldor, who were more eager to reach the Blessed Realm)

**linta** “swift” (pl. **lintë** in *Namárië*, which poem refers to **lintë yuldar** = “swift draughts”)

**hosta-** “to assemble, gather”

**nórë** “land” (a land associated with a particular people, WJ:413)

**lambë** “tongue = language” (not “tongue” as a body part)

**car-** “to make, to do”

**farya-** “to suffice, to be enough”, pa. t. **farnë** (NOT **\*\*faryanë** – because the verb is intransitive?)

**ve** preposition “as, like”



## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **Melinyet núravë.**
- B. **Lindantë vanyavë, ve Eldar.**
- C. **Ilyë nertë andor nar tirnë.**
- D. **Merintë hiritas lintavë.**
- E. **Haryalyë atta parmar, ar teldavë ecendielyet.**
- F. **Anwavë ecénien Elda.**
- G. **I nurtaina harma úva hirna.**
- H. **Úmentë merë caritas, an cenitas farnë.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. They have traveled [/gone] secretly through the land.
- J. The assembled Elves wanted to see it.
- K. Written language is not like spoken language.
- L. Five ships were not enough [/did not suffice]; nine sufficed.
- M. I will really stop doing it [/truly cease to do it].
- N. They swiftly gathered the nine terrified Dwarves.
- O. Finally you will see them as you have wanted to see them.
- P. They don't want to hear it.

# Lesson 11

The concept of cases. The Genitive case.

## 11.1 Cases

Lessons 1–10 have mainly been concerned with adjectives and verbs. As for nouns, we have only discussed how their plural and dual forms are constructed. There is, however, much more to say about the inflection the Quenya noun. The second half of this course will predominantly be concerned with the elaborate *case* system of Quenya, which is indeed the most characteristic feature of the language. It is in the treatment of nouns that the grammatical structure of Quenya most clearly reflects two of Tolkien’s inspirations, Finnish and Latin.

What, linguistically speaking, are cases? A noun may have many functions in a sentence. English may indicate what function a noun has by means of word order alone. In a sentence like “the man loves the woman”, it is merely the word order that gives away the fact that “the man” is the subject and “the woman” is the object. The rule that very early slips into the subconscious mind of children exposed to English goes something like this: “The noun in front of the predicate verb is its subject, while the noun that comes after it is normally its object.” Where word order is not enough, English may slip in clarifying prepositions in front of a noun, e.g. “to” in a sentence like “the Elf gives a gift *to* the Dwarf”. There are languages that wouldn’t need to have a “to” here; instead the noun “Dwarf” would occur in a special, inflectional form.

Of course, Quenya also has prepositions, and the student will already have encountered several: **nu** “under”, **or** “over”, **imbë** “between”, **ve** “as, like”, **mir** “into” (which word, by the way, is formed from the simpler preposition **mi** “in”). But it is a characteristic of Quenya that where English would often place a preposition in front of a noun, or rely on word order alone to indicate what the function of a noun is, *Quenya would have a special form of the noun* which by itself indicates its function. These various, specialized noun-forms are called *cases*. For instance, our example above – “the Elf gives a gift **to** the Dwarf” – would translate into Quenya something like **i Elda**

**anta anna i Naucon**, where the *case ending -n* added to **Nauco** “Dwarf” corresponds to the English preposition “to”. (This particular case is called the *dative*, to be fully discussed in Lesson 13.)

Certain prepositions may also demand that the word (noun or pronoun) following them appears inflected for some case – sometimes quite irrespective of the normal, independent function of this case. The relevant preposition is then said to “take” (or “govern”) this or that case. The same phenomenon may be found in English, if one looks closely. While the case system is all but gone as far as English nouns are concerned, many English *pronouns* at least preserve a specific form that is used when the pronoun is the object and not the subject of a sentence. That is why “Peter saw he” is wrong; it must be “Peter saw *him*”, with the object form of this pronoun. (“He” is the subject form instead, and therefore quite proper in a sentence like “he saw Peter”.) But while the primary function of the form “him” is to function as the object of a sentence, very many prepositions also insist on being followed by this form. For instance, “from he” does not sound well; it must be “from him”, though “him” is not the object of a sentence here.

The Quenya noun-forms so far discussed (whether singular, plural or dual) are examples of the *nominative case*. The most important grammatical function of the nominative is that this is the form a noun has when it functions as the subject of a verb. In Lesson Five, we very briefly touched on another form of the noun – the *accusative case*, which is the form a noun assumes when it is the *object* of a verb. Modern English does not preserve any distinction between nominative and accusative in nouns (though such a distinction persists in parts of the pronoun table, like nominative “he” vs. accusative “him” in our examples above). English nouns do not change their form dependent on whether the noun is the subject or the object of the sentence – and neither do nouns in Third Age Quenya. Tolkien imagined an archaic form of Quenya, “Book Quenya”, that did have an accusative case distinct in form from the nominative. The noun “ship” would be **ciryá** (pl. **ciryar**) if it was used as the subject of a sentence, but **ciryá** (pl. **ciryai**) if it appeared as the object: nominative vs. accusative. However, the distinct accusative disappeared from the language as spoken in Middle-earth; the forms **ciryá** (pl. **ciryar**) came to be used both as subject and object. So either you can say that in Third Age Quenya, the nominative and the accusative cases have come to be identical in form, or you can say that the nominative has taken over the functions of the distinct accusative so that in effect, there is no accusative anymore. It boils down to exactly the same thing.

But as far as we know, the accusative was the only Quenya case that was lost among the Exiles. The remaining cases, in addition to the nominative, are the *genitive*, the *possessive*, the *dative*, the *allative*, the *ablative*, the *locative*, and the *instrumental*. (I should add that learning the form and function of the cases is more important than learning their Latin names.) There is also a mysterious case which Tolkien listed in the Plotz Letter, but

without discussing its name or use – so there is little I can say about it here.

In Lessons 11–16, we will work our way through the list of Quenya cases, discussing their functions and how they are formed. Precisely because we have the blessed Plotz Letter, we are now on somewhat more solid ground than we usually find ourselves upon when discussing Quenya grammar. (Tolkien really should have sent Dick Plotz a list of pronouns and verb forms as well!)

## 11.2 The Genitive

We will start our discussion of the Quenya cases with the few Quenya noun forms that actually have a direct English equivalent (sort of). Where Quenya has nine or ten noun cases, English has only two: nominative and genitive. The nominative we have already discussed: In English as in Exilic Quenya, a noun appears in the nominative when it is the subject or the object of a noun. In both languages, the nominative singular may well be considered the simplest form of the noun. There is no special ending or other inflectional element to signal that “this is a nominative form”; rather it is the *absence* of any such element that tells us what case the noun is.

All the other cases – or in English, *the* one other case – do display special endings, though. The one noun case of modern English, except for the nominative, is the *genitive*. (Please notice the spelling; I am tired of seeing “genetive” on certain mailing lists.) In the singular, it is formed by adding the ending *'s* to the noun, e.g. *girl's* from *girl*. In the plural, this ending normally merges with the plural ending *-s*, but its theoretical presence is hinted at in writing by means of an apostrophe (*girls'* for *\*\*girls's...* Gollum would have loved the latter form).

The grammatical function of this case ought to be familiar enough to anyone who is capable of reading this text; already in Lesson Two, we briefly touched on this “ownership form”. As stated in my handy *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, the genitive case is used to indicate “source or possession”. In a combination like *the girl's doll*, the genitive case is used to coordinate two nouns so as to indicate that the former is the owner or possessor of the latter. (This latter word which the genitive form connects with, like “doll” in our example, is sometimes said to be *governed by* the genitive. Conversely, the genitive form itself may be said to be “dependent on” this other word; this is Tolkien's wording in UT:317.) The English genitive does not necessarily connote “ownership” in the strictest sense, but may also be used to describe other kinds of “belonging”, such as family relationships – e.g. *the girl's mother*. As for the genitive suggesting *source*, we can think of such phrases as *the architect's drawings* (the drawings made by the architect, not necessarily owned by him, but *originating* with him). The genitive noun may not even denote a sentient being, e.g. *Britain's*

*finest artists* (the finest artists coming from/living in Britain). The latter example may also be termed genitive of *location*; Britain's finest artists are the finest artists located *in Britain*.

The noun a genitive form is dependent on may well be *another* genitive, which in turn refers to a third noun – e.g. “the queen's sister's house”. In principle we can string up an infinite number of genitives (“the king's father's aunt's brother's dog's... [etc. etc.]”) – though it should not come as a great shock to anyone that people who care about style and legibility normally won't push this too far.

Somewhat like adjectives, genitives can be used both attributively and as predicates. All the examples above are examples of attributive genitives, directly teamed up with a noun which the genitive is then dependent on. A genitive would however function as a predicate in a sentence like *the book is Peter's*. But rather than using genitives as predicates, English often resorts to circumlocutions (like *the book belongs to Peter*).

Quite often, English does not use a genitive, but instead employs a phrase involving a preposition – predominantly *of*, e.g. *the finest artists of Britain* rather than *Britain's finest artists*. In some contexts, “of”-constructions are actually preferred to genitives, e.g. *the end of the road* rather than *the road's end*.

So what about Quenya? The functions of English genitives, as well as English “of”-constructions, are covered by *two* Quenya noun cases; we will discuss the other relevant case in the next lesson. The functions of the case normally referred to as the Quenya genitive are somewhat more limited than the functions of the English genitive. But first of all, let us discuss how the Quenya genitive is formed.

The basic Quenya genitive ending is **-o**. Starting from nouns that should be well known to the student by now, we can derive genitives like **arano** “king's”, **táριο** “queen's”, **vendëo** “maiden's”. If the noun *ends in -o already*, the genitive ending normally becomes “invisible”. In UT:8 we have **ciryamo** for “mariner's”. This is our sole attestation of this noun, but there is no reason to doubt that its nominative form “mariner” is likewise **ciryamo** (this word is obviously derived from **ciryá** “ship”, and the masculine/personal ending **-mo** [WJ:400] is well attested elsewhere: hence **ciryamo** = “ship-person”). A name like **Ulmo** could be both nominative “Ulmo” and genitive “Ulmo's”; the context must decide how the form is to be understood. (However, in the case of nouns in **-o** that have special stem-forms in **-u**, like **curo**, **curu-** “skillful device”, we would probably see **curuo** as the genitive form.)

Nouns ending in **-a** lose this vowel when the genitive ending **-o** is added: Since Quenya phonology does not permit the combination **ao**, it is simplified to **o**. For instance, *Namárië* demonstrates that the genitive “Varda's” is **Vardo**, not **\*\*Vardao**. It follows, then, that a few otherwise distinct nouns coincide in the genitive; for instance, it would seem that **anta** “face” and

**anto** “mouth” both have the genitive form **anto**. The context must be taken into account to determine which noun is meant.

In the *plural*, the genitive ending **-o** is expanded to **-on** (as we shall see later, the plural marker **-n** occurs in several of the Quenya case endings). This ending **-on** is added to the simplest (nominative) plural form of the noun, in **-r** or **-i**. Hence an **r**-plural like **aldar** “trees” has the genitive plural **aldaron** “trees’, of trees” – whereas an **i**-plural like **eleni** “stars” has the genitive form **elenion** “stars’, of stars”. (The normal stress rules still apply, so while **eleni** is accented on the first syllable, the stress must fall on *-len-* in the longer form **elenion**.) Both of these are attested in LotR: *Namárië* has **rámar aldaron** for “wings of trees” (a poetic circumlocution for “leaves”), and Frodo speaking in tongues in Cirith Ungol referred to Eärendil as **ancalima elenion**, “brightest of stars”.

A prominent example of a genitive plural is the very title of the **Silmarillion**, formed from the nominative plural **Silmarilli** “Silmarils”. This title makes good sense considering that it is properly only one half of a longer genitive phrase, found on the title page following the *Ainulindalë* and the *Valaquenta*: **Quenta Silmarillion**, “The History of the Silmarils”. As is already evident, a Quenya genitive is often best rendered as an English *of*-construction, not as an English genitive with the ending *-’s* or *-s’*: “Stars’ brightest” or “the Silmarils’ History” would not be good English.

As for *dual* genitive, Tolkien indicated that its ending is **-to**, combining the dual ending **-t** with the basic genitive ending **-o**. In the Plotz letter, Tolkien used the example **ciryato**, “of a couple of ships”. There is one uncertainty here, not addressed in Plotz: Should the ending be **-to** also in the case of the nouns that have dual forms in **-u** rather than **-t**? Or would the **u** simply replace **t** here, so that such nouns have dual genitives in **-uo** instead? Concretely: if the nominative “(the) Two Trees” is **Aldu**, should the genitive “of (the) Two Trees” be **Alduto** or **Alduo**? A form like **Alduto** would have a *double* dual marker, both **u** and **t**, but then attested *plural* genitives likewise include double plural markers (**elenion**, **aldaron**). Even so, I am not ready to rule out the possibility that genitives in **-u** should have genitives in **-uo**, e.g. **i cala Alduo** for “the light of (the) Two Trees”. But since published material allows no certain conclusions in this matter, I have simply avoided the problem in the exercises below.

The special “stem forms” of some nouns are relevant for the formation of genitives as well. From **rá** (**ráv-**) “lion” we would have the genitive **rávo** “lion’s”; from **nís** (**niss-**) “woman” we would have **nisso** “woman’s”. The plural forms would be **rávion** “lions’, of lions” and **nission** “women’s, of women” – cf. the nominative plurals **rávi**, **nissi**. I am not quite sure about the dual forms; perhaps we can have **ráveto**, **nisseto** (an **-e-** intruding before the ending **-to** so that impossible consonant clusters do not arise; see later lessons regarding attested examples of an extra **-e-** being slipped in like this).

So far the formation of the genitive; now we must return to its *function*. In English, the genitive very often indicates who owns what, as in “the man’s house”. Indeed this is the main function of the English genitive. However, the Quenya genitive case is *not* normally used to describe simple ownership of things. Tolkien expressly noted that properly this case was “not [used] as a ‘possessive’, or adjectivally to describe qualities” (WJ:368).

To understand its function it is often useful to bear in mind its ultimate derivation. Tolkien explained that “the source of the most used ‘genitive’ inflection of Quenya” was an ancient adverbial or “prepositional” element basically meaning *from* or *from among*. According to WJ:368, it originally had the form HO, or as an element added to nouns, *-hō*. The latter was the direct source of the Quenya case ending **-o** (plural **-on**). But according to the *Etymologies*, Quenya also had a regular preposition **ho** “from”, and in WJ:368 Tolkien mentions **hó-** “from, off” as a verbal prefix, e.g. in **hótuli-** “come away” or literally “from-come”.

Even the case ending **-o** may occasionally express “from”, the most basic meaning of the primitive element HO. In the prose *Namárië*, we have the line **Varda . . . ortanë máryat Oiolossëo**, “Varda . . . raised her hands **from** Oiolossë” (essentially the same in the version in LotR, but with a more complicated, “poetic” word order). The translation in LotR goes “Varda . . . from Mount Everwhite has uplifted her hands” – **Oiolossë** “Ever-white” being a name of Taniquetil, the great mountain of the Blessed Realm where Manwë and Varda dwell.

However, **Oiolossëo** is our sole example of the Quenya genitive being used with such a meaning. (For “from”, Quenya regularly uses another case – the *ablative*, to be discussed in a later lesson.) Normally, the ending **-o** is seen to have acquired other, more abstract meanings. Nonetheless, one important function of the Quenya genitive still clearly reflect the idea of something coming “from” something or someone else: The Quenya genitive can be used to describe the *source*, *origin* or *former possessor* of something – so-called “derivative genitives” (WJ:369). Tolkien explained that **róma Oromëo** “Oromë’s horn” refers to a horn *coming from* Oromë, not a horn that Oromë still has, or still had at the time that is being considered (WJ:168). Likewise, **lambë Eldaron** could *not* be used for “the language of the Eldar”, for this would mean “the language coming from the Eldar”; Tolkien added that such a wording would only be valid “in a case where the whole language was adopted by another people” (WJ:368–369). In light of this, the genitive phrase **Vardo tellumar** “Varda’s domes” in *Namárië* may not necessarily imply that the heavenly “domes” were somehow *owned* by Varda, but rather that she made them, that they *originated* with her.

Tolkien also listed “from among” as one of the meanings of the primitive element HO, and this meaning is discernable in Quenya examples of *partitive genitive*, the genitive indicating what something or someone is *part of*. In the phrase **Eärendil Elenion Ancalima** “Eärendil brightest of stars”

(Letters:385), the words **elenion ancalima** actually imply “the brightest one *among* the stars”: After his mythical transformation, Eärendil carrying the Silmaril is himself one of the stars, as indicated by the chapter *The Mirror of Galadriel* in Volume One of LotR (“Eärendil, the Evening Star, most beloved of the Elves, shone clear above. . .”)

It seems that a partitive genitive can denote what something is part of in a wholly physical sense as well: In a phrase translated “the hands of the Powers”, *Fíriel’s Song* uses the plural genitive **Valion** for “of the Powers” (sc. “of the **Valar**” – as indicated by the *Etymologies*, entry BAL, **Vali** is a valid alternative to **Valar** as the plural form of **Vala**). The hands of the Valar, whenever they are incarnated, are physically *part* of the Valar themselves.

The relationship between a *place* and something *located in that place* can also be expressed by means of the genitive case (cf. our own example “Britain’s finest artists”). *Namárië* has **Calaciryó míri** for “Calaciryá’s jewels = the jewels of Calaciryá” (**Calaciryá** “Light-cleft” being a place in the Blessed Realm; notice that as in the case of **Vardo** “Varda’s”, the genitive ending **-o** swallows up the final **-a**). Perhaps this can also be analyzed as a partitive genitive, if something located in a place is somehow considered a *part* of that place. A more abstract, but perhaps basically similar construction is found in *Círión’s Oath*: **Elenna·nórëo alcar** “the glory of the land of Elenna” or literally “(the) Elenna-land’s glory”. If we don’t perceive the **alcar** or glory as being somehow “located” in Elenna (= Númenor), we must think of it as emanating *from* Elenna, so that the genitive denotes *source*. (See the next lesson concerning the comparable case **alcar Oromëo**.)

*Family relationships* are denoted by the genitive case. In Treebeard’s Greeting to Celeborn and Galadriel occurs the genitive phrase **vanimálion nostari**, “parents of beautiful children” (Letters:308) or more literally “begetters of fair ones” (SD:73) – **vanimáli** meaning “fair ones” (genitive pl. **vanimálion**) and **nostari** meaning “begetters”. One could also argue that this example shows that a noun denoting some kind of agent, and another noun denoting the one whom this agent does something *to*, can be coordinated by means of the genitive case (the “fair ones” were *begotten* by the *begetters*). Whatever the case, we have other examples of family relationships described by means of a genitive. In the *Silmarillion* Index, entry “Children of Ilúvatar”, we learn that this is a translation of **Híni Ilúvataro**. Since Ilúvatar (“All-father”) is a title of God, this example is somewhat profound, but the genitive case would certainly also be used in such phrases as “the king’s sons” (probably **i arano yondor**). As long as the genitive case describes *parents’* relationship to their offspring, we could analyze the constructions as derivative genitives, parents being the physical origin of their children. But in the example **Indis i·Ciryamo** “the Mariner’s Wife” (UT:8), the genitive unquestionably describes a family relationship and nothing else, since the “Mariner” is not in any way the source or origin of his wife.



Perhaps we can generalize even further and say that relationships between *people* can be described by the Quenya genitive case. In WJ:369, Tolkien indicated that the genitive would be used in such a phrase as **Elwë, Aran Sindaron** “Elwë [= Thingol], King of the Sindar [Grey-elves]”. Here the relationship is that between a ruler and the ruled. The same construction could however be used with reference to the *area* that is ruled: “King of Lestanórë” would be **Aran Lestanórëo** (Lestanórë being the Quenya name of the land called *Doriath* in Sindarin). The genitive case may also refer to *things* that are ruled: In a booklet which accompanied an exhibition at the Marquette University Archives in September 1983, *Catalogue of an Exhibit of the Manuscripts of JRRT*, Taum Santoski presented Tolkien’s Quenya translation of the title “Lord of the Rings”: **Heru i Million**, which is **heru** “lord” + **i** “the” + what is probably the plural genitive of a noun **millë** “ring”, not otherwise attested. In the LotR itself, the Quenya word for “ring” is given as **corma** instead, Frodo and Sam being hailed as **Cormacolindor** or Ring-bearers (this word occurring in the Cormallen Praise). For “Lord of the Rings” we might therefore have expected **Heru i Cormaron**, but anyhow, the phrase **Heru i Million** confirms that the genitive case can be used to describe the relationship between a ruler and the ruled (people, area or thing).

One of the most abstract meanings the genitive case may take on is *of* = *about, concerning*, as in **Quenta Silmarillion** “the History of (= concerning) the Silmarils”. Another attested example is **quantalë Noldoron** “the history of the Noldor” (VT39:16). It may well be that the genitive can be used in this sense also in connection with verbs like **nyar-** “tell, relate” or **quet-** “speak”, e.g. **nyarnen i Eldo** “I told **about** the Elf” or **i Naucor quetir altë harmaron** “the Dwarves speak **of** great treasures”. We lack attested examples, though.

Sometimes the precise meaning of a genitive is difficult to clearly define. In the famous greeting **elen síla lúmenn’ omentielvo**, “a star shines upon the hour of our meeting” or literally “. . . our meeting’s hour”, the genitive simply coordinates the nouns “meeting” and “hour” to indicate that the “meeting” took place in the “hour”. In the phrase **Heren Istarion** “Order of Wizards” (UT:388), one may ask whether the genitive **Istarion** “of Wizards” implies that the order was *founded* by wizards, that it *belongs* to wizards, that it is *made up* of wizards, that it *organizes* or *controls* (or even *is controlled by*) wizards, etc. In all likelihood, several or all of these shades of meaning could be involved at the same time.

Also consider this passage from LotR, in the chapter *The Houses of Healing* in the third volume:

Thereupon the herb-master entered. ‘Your lordship asked for *kingsfoil*, as the rustics name it,’ he said, ‘or *athelas* in the noble tongue, or to those who know somewhat of the Valinorean. . .’

‘I do so,’ said Aragorn, ‘and I care not whether you say now *asëa aranion* or *kingsfoil*, so long as you have some.’

So **asëa aranion** is the Quenya (or “Valinorean”) for “kingsfoil”, the herb called *athelas* in Sindarin. The word **asëa** refers to some kind of helpful or beneficial plant, but what precise meaning does the genitive plural **aranion** “of kings” express here? The kings didn’t *own* or *originate* the kingsfoil; it was merely *used* by them for healing purposes. Unless this is comparable to a **Calaciryo míri**-construction because the kingsfoil was physically with the kings when they used it for healing (“life to the dying / In the king’s hand lying!”), we must conclude that the genitive can also be used to indicate rather ill-defined states of “belonging”, or mere association.

*Word order:* In the prose version of *Namárië*, Tolkien placed a genitive in *front* of the noun it is dependent on: **Aldaron lassi** = literally “trees’ wings”, **ómaryo lírinen** = literally “in her voice’s song”, **Calaciryo míri** = literally “Calacirya’s jewels” – cf. the interlinear translation in RGEO:66–67. (It should be noted that **aldaron lassi** was altered from **lassi aldaron** in the “poetic” version in LotR.) Above the entire “prose” version, Tolkien also placed the superscript **Altariello nainië**, “Altariel’s (= Galadriel’s) lament”. *Cirion’s Oath* displays the same word order: **Nórëo alcar** “the glory of the land” or literally “(the) land’s glory”, **Elendil vorondo voronwë** “the faith of Elendil the Faithful” or literally “Elendil (the) Faithful’s faith” (the genitive ending being attached to the *last* word in the phrase **Elendil voronda** “E. [the] Faithful”; as usual, the ending displaces a final -a). In LotR we also have **elenion ancailima** for “stars’ brightest [one]” = “the brightest [one] of [the] stars”. So in normal prose, should the genitive always precede, just like the English genitive in *’s*?

Not necessarily, it would seem. Most attested Quenya genitives *follow* the noun they are dependent on, with the same word order as an English *of*-construction. In the case of most of these attestations, we have no reason to suppose the word order is particularly “poetic”: **Quenta Silmarillion** “History of the Silmarils”, **Heru i Million** “Lord of the Rings”, **lúmenn’ omentielvo** “on the hour of our meeting”, **asëa aranion** “*asëa* [helpful plant] of kings” (kingsfoil; the two latter examples are from LotR), **Híni Ilúvataro** “Children of Ilúvatar” (*Silmarillion* Index), **mannar Valion** “into the hands of the Powers” (*Fíriel’s Song*), **Heren Istarion** “Order of Wizards” (UT:388), **Pelóri Valion** “Fencing Heights of the Vali [Valar]” (MR:18), **aran Sindaron** “King of the Sindar” (WJ:369), **Aran Lestánórëo** “King of Doriath” (*ibid.*), **i equessi Rúmilo** “the sayings of Rúmil” (WJ:398), **lambë Eldaron** or **lambë Quendion** “the language of the Elves” (WJ:368/PM:395), **Rithil-Anamo** “Ring of Doom” (WJ:401). Where Tolkien rendered such a construction by employing an English genitive in *’s*, he must of necessity reverse the Quenya word order: **Indis i-Ciryamo** “The Mariner’s Wife” (UT:8).

One potential misunderstanding may be mentioned here: Occasionally people are seen to be completely seduced by English *of*-constructions, thinking that the genitive ending **-o** should appear at the same place in the phrase as the English preposition *of* does. Therefore they end up *attaching the genitive ending to the wrong word* in an hopeless attempt to copy the English order of all the elements in the phrase. Ask ten people to translate “the glory of Aman” into a Quenya genitive phrase, and it is a good bet that several of them will come up with something like **i alcaro Aman**, which actually means “the glory’s Aman” or “Aman of the glory”! What we want is either **Amano alcar** (think “Aman’s glory”) or **(i) alcar Amano**.

As for the word order employed when a *preposition* is used in conjunction with a genitive phrase, the prose *Namárië* provides the strange example **Vardo nu luini tellumar**. Tolkien translated this as “under Varda’s blue domes”. As we see, the Quenya wording is literally “Varda’s under blue domes”, the preposition *following* the genitive noun – a most unexpected order, especially considering that this is supposed to be normal prose. Yet the prose *Namárië* also has **ve aldaron rámar** for “like the wings of trees” (or literally “like trees’ wings”). Here the word order is exactly what we would expect, namely preposition + genitive + the noun it governs (not **\*\*aldaron ve rámar** or whatever!) It is almost tempting to assume that **Vardo nu luini tellumar** is simply an error for **?nu Vardo luini tellumar**. At this stage at least, I would always use the “English-style” word-order exemplified by **ve aldaron rámar**. Perhaps **Vardo nu luini tellumar** is an example of the exceedingly esoteric syntax preferred by the Eldar, whose thoughts are not like those of Mortal Men. . . or perhaps it is just a typo. We must await the publication of more material.

*The use of the article:* A genitive determines the noun it is dependent upon, just like the definite article does: **Indis i-Ciryamo** does mean “the Mariner’s Wife” = “the Wife of the Mariner”. It cannot be interpreted “a wife of the mariner” in an indefinite or undetermined sense, even though the definite article **i** is missing before the noun **indis** “wife, bride”. Same with **lambë Quendion** “the language of the Elves” (PM:395, emphasis added); this cannot be interpreted “a language of the Elves”, for **lambë** is determined by the genitive **Quendion**. Cf. English “the Elves’ language” = “the [not *a*] language of the Elves”, even though there is no “the” before “language” in a phrase like “the Elves’ language”. One must understand that while the first noun of an English *of*-construction may or may not be definite and accordingly receives the appropriate article (*the* or *a*), a Quenya noun connecting with a following genitive is always determined, whether or not the article **i** is used. The system is actually the same as in English, with one minor complication added: whereas an English genitive always *precedes* the noun it is dependent on, a Quenya genitive may come *after* this noun as well. The latter word order inevitably makes one think of English *of*-constructions, but they are strictly not comparable as far as grammar is

concerned – even though Quenya genitive phrases are often best rendered as English *of*-constructions.

Where the genitive *follows* the noun it is dependent upon, the use of the definite article before this noun is apparently optional. The noun is definite anyway, so including the article is in a way superfluous; yet we have the examples **i arani Eldaron** “the kings of the Eldar” (WJ:369) and **i equessi Rúmilo** “the sayings of Rúmil” (WJ:398). **Equessi Rúmilo, arani Eldaron** without the article would have meant precisely the same thing. Conversely, the phrase **indis i ciryamo** “the mariner’s wife” could presumably have been expanded to read **i indis i ciryamo** “the wife of the mariner”, again without altering the meaning.

No attested example of a *preceding* genitive is followed by an article. But if we can choose freely between **i equessi Rúmilo** and just **equessi Rúmilo**, perhaps this principle would still apply if the genitive is moved to the beginning of the phrase? **Rúmilo equessi** “Rúmil’s sayings” is certainly a valid wording, but what about **Rúmilo i equessi**? Would this be equally possible, or would it sound just as weird as “Rúmil’s the sayings” in English? I, for one, would avoid this uncertain and unattested construction.

A few prepositions govern the genitive case. It is said that **ú** “without” is normally followed by genitive, Tolkien mentioning the example **ú calo** “without light” (VT39:14). This **calo** would seem to be the genitive form of a noun **cala** “light” (as in **Calaquendi** “Light-elves” or **Calacirya** “Light-cleft”).

## Summary of Lesson Eleven:

The Quenya noun is inflected for a number of *cases*, special noun-forms which clarify what function a noun has in a sentence. The forms so far discussed are examples of the *nominative* case, used when a noun is the subject or the object of a sentence (a distinct “object” case, the *accusative*, had formerly occurred but fell out of use in Exilic Quenya). The Quenya *genitive* case has the ending **-o** (displacing a final **-a**, where such is present); the plural form is **-on** (added to the nominative plural), whereas dual genitives receive the ending **-to** (but nouns with nominative dual forms in **-u** would possibly have genitive duals in **-uo** rather than **-uto**). The noun governed by the genitive can come either before or after it; **Rúmilo equessi** or **(i) equessi Rúmilo** would work equally well for “Rúmil’s sayings/the sayings of Rúmil”. The Quenya genitive properly indicates source or origin (including *former* possessors), but also covers most relationships between people (like family relationships), as well as the relationship between a ruler and the ruled (people or territory). “**Xo Y**” or “**Y Xo**” may also imply “Y of X” in the sense of Y being a physical part of X, or (if X is a plural word) Y being one of X. Thus Eärendil is said to be **elenion ancálíma** “stars’ brightest”

= “the brightest one of (/among) stars”. The relationship between a place and something located in that place may also be expressed by means of a genitive: **Calaciryo míri** “the jewels of Calacirya”. A genitive can also express “of = about, concerning”, as in **Quenta Silmarillion** “the History of the Silmarils”. Furthermore, the preposition **ú** “without” normally takes the genitive case.

## Vocabulary

**cainen** “ten”

**laman** (**lamn-**) “animal” (the stem-form may also simply be **laman-**, but we will use **lamn-** here)

**yulma** “cup”

**limpë** “wine” (within Tolkien’s mythos, **limpë** was some special drink of the Elves or of the Valar – but in the *Etymologies*, entry LIP, Tolkien also provided the parenthetical gloss “wine”, and we will use the word in that sense here)

**rassë** “horn” (“especially on living animal, but also applied to mountains” – Etym., entry RAS)

**toron-** (**torn-**) “brother”

**Menel** “the firmament, sky, heaven, the heavens” (but the Quenya word is singular. It is apparently not used in a religious sense, but refers to the physical heavens only. Cf. **Meneltarma** “Pillar of Heaven” as the name of the central mountain in Númenor. The word **Menel** is capitalized and apparently treated as a proper name, hence not requiring any article.)

**ulya-** “to pour” (transitive past tense **ulyanë**, intransitive **ullë**)

**sírë** “river”

**cilya** “cleft, gorge” (also **cirya**, as in **Calacirya** “Pass of Light” or “Light-cleft”, which name actually appears as **Calacilya** in some texts – but since **cirya** also means “ship”, we will use **cilya** here)

**anto** “mouth” (possibly representing earlier *amatô*, *amto*; if so it likely comes from the same root as the verb **mat-** “to eat”)

**ú** preposition “without” (normally followed by genitive)

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **Hirnentë i firin ohtaro macil.**
- B. **Menelo eleni sílar.**
- C. **Tirnen i nisso hendu.**

- D. **Cenuvantë Aran Atanion ar ilyë nórion.**
- E. **Coa ú talamion umë anwa coa.**
- F. **I tário úmië torni merir turë Ambaro lier.**
- G. **I rassi i lamnion nar altë.**
- H. **I cainen rávi lintavë manter i rocco hrávë.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. The birds of heaven will see ten warriors between the great rivers.
- J. The king's thrall poured wine into the biggest of the cups. (*"Biggest, greatest" = **analta**. Time to repeat Lesson Five, where we discussed superlatives?*)
- K. The Elf's brother gathered (together) the ten books about stars.
- L. The great river of the land poured into a gorge.
- M. A man without a mouth cannot speak.
- N. I have seen the greatest of all mountains under the sky.
- O. I want to find a land without great animals like lions.
- P. You will see an animal without horns (*dual: a couple of horns*)

# Lesson 12

**The Possessive-Adjectival case. Verbal or Abstract nouns and how they interact with the Genitive and Possessive cases.**

This lesson is mainly devoted to a case that by its function in many ways complements the genitive case. But first of all, let me say that there is no easy answer to the question of what this case should be called. Tolkien listed it in the Plotz Letter, but he did not name it. The case in **-o** or **-on** that we discussed in the previous lesson is referred to simply as the “genitive” in several sources. But in WJ:369, Tolkien refers to the forms in **-o(n)** as “partitive-derivatival genitives”, whereas the other case that we will now discuss is called a “possessive-adjectival [genitive]”. On the previous page, he noted regarding the case with the ending **-o(n)** that “properly it was used partitively, or to describe the source or origin, *not as a ‘possessive’*” (emphasis added). The context indicates that the other case that he went on to describe *is* used as a “possessive”. So simply to have a some suitable designation of this case, I shall adopt the word *possessive* as its name. (Another plausible term is “adjectival case”, which is also used by some students.)

## 12.1 The Possessive

By its function, this case – rather than the case in **-o(n)** which Tolkien normally terms the “genitive” when discussing Quenya grammar – corresponds much better to the English genitive in *-’s*. Even so, in certain contexts this case is also best translated using English *of*-constructions.

The possessive case is formed by adding the ending **-va**, e.g. **Eldava** as the possessive form of **Elda**. In the case of a noun ending in a consonant, the ending probably takes the form **-wa** instead. The assumption that the ending **-va** appears in the variant form **-wa** after consonants is also supported by this fact: The suffix **-va** is in origin a mere adjectival ending, found in some common adjectives as well, and in such cases it is seen to appear as **-wa** following a consonant – e.g. **anwa** “real, actual, true” or **helwa** “pale blue”. In Primitive Elvish, the ending had the form *-wâ*, but in Quenya, *w*

normally became **v** when intervocalic (occurring between vowels). Cf. another common adjective displaying this ending, **tereva** “fine, acute”, which word Tolkien noted had been *terêwâ* in Primitive Elvish (see Etym., entry TER, TERES). Since most Quenya nouns end in a vowel, the *w* of *-wâ* typically became intervocalic when this ending was added, and normally turned into **v** (e.g. *Eldâ-wâ*, *Eldawâ* becoming **Eldava**, just like *terêwâ* became **tereva**). But if we combine this ending with a noun ending in a consonant, e.g. **atar** “father” (unchanged since Primitive Elvish), *atar-wâ* would presumably produce Quenya **atarwa**, original *w* remaining **w** because it is not here intervocalic.

The Plotz Letter lists no *dual* forms of the possessive case, but I can’t imagine why such forms should not exist. Even so, I won’t construct any exercises involving these slightly hypothetical forms, but presumably the simple suffix **-va** would be used after a dual form in **-u** – e.g. **Alduva** as the possessive form of **Aldu** “Two Trees”. The more frequent dual forms in **-t** would likely have possessive forms in **-twa**, a dual like **ciryat** “a couple of ships” becoming **ciryatwa** (accented on the second-to-last syllable because of the consonant cluster **tw**).

Just like the Plotz Letter lists no dual form of the possessive case, Tolkien mentioned no *plural* form either – which fact led some investigators to conclude that this case has no plural at all! But other material does indicate that such a form exists (suggesting that we can also feel free to extrapolate a dual form as we tried to do above: the Plotz Letter does not necessarily include everything). In WJ:368 Tolkien indicates that the possessive has a plural form in **-iva**, combining the simple ending **-va** with the plural marker **-i**. In this case, this ending is used even if the possessive suffix is added to words that would normally have nominative plurals in **-r**, like **Eldar**: The plural possessive is *not* **\*\*Eldarva** or **\*\*Eldarwa** or whatever, but **Eldaiva**, attested in the phrase **lambë Eldaiva** “language of the Eldar” (WJ:369). The plural form **-iva** is said to be an innovation in Quenya, not a form inherited from older stages of Elvish.

When the initial vowel of the ending **-iva** merges with the last vowel of the noun to produce a diphthong, like **ai** in **Elda + iva = Eldaiva**, this diphthong of course receives the stress (*eld-AI-va*). Most nouns in **-ë** would at an older stage have behaved in a similar way, a diphthong *ei* arising; the plural possessive of **lassë** “leaf” may at one point have been *lasseiva* (for even older *?lasseiwâ*, if such a form was ever in use). But the diphthong *ei* eventually became long **í** in Quenya, so perhaps the current form was **lassíva** – with a long **í** still attracting the stress. In the Plotz Letter, such a long **í** is observed in the plural form of another case: **lassínen** as the plural *instrumental*, to be discussed in a later lesson.

It is not quite clear what would happen when the ending **-iva** is added to a noun already ending in **-i**, like **tári** “queen”, or a noun with a stem-form in **-i**, like **lómë** (**lómi-**) “night” (SD:415). Possibly the two **i**’s would merge



into a long *í*, so that “of queens” or “of nights” is something like *?táriva*, *?lómiva* – whereas the singular forms “of a queen” and “of a night” must be *táriva*, *lómiva*. (The pronunciation would be markedly different: these singular forms are accented on the first syllable, the third from the end, while the plural forms would be accented on the second-to-last syllable because of the long vowel that suddenly turns up there – *if* the final *-i* of the noun and the first vowel of the ending *-iva* do indeed merge into a long *í*.) But it is also possible that a form like *táriva* has to do duty for both singular and plural, so that one must rely on the context to distinguish “of a queen” from “of queens”.

There are a few more things to say about the formation of the possessive case (see “Various notes” below), but we will now return to its *function*.

This is the case you use to describe simple *possession*, the typical function of the English genitive. In the previous lesson, we have described how the Quenya genitive is rather used to indicate *source* or *origin*, not simple ownership. If the genitive describes the relationship between owners and the things they own, we are dealing with *former* rather than current ownership. Tolkien nicely explained this by contrasting the genitive and possessive cases, and we can well afford to quote him, recapitulating the function of the genitive in the process:

‘Possession’ was indicated by the adjectival ending *-va*... Thus ‘Orome’s horn’ was *róma Oroméva* (if it remained in his possession) ... but [the genitive phrase] *róma Oromëo* meant ‘a horn coming from Orome’, e.g. as a gift, in circumstances where the recipient, showing the gift with pride, might say ‘this is Orome’s horn’. If he said ‘this *was* Orome’s horn’, he would say *Oroméva*. Similarly [the genitive phrase] *lambe Eldaron* would not be used for ‘the language of the Eldar’ (unless conceivably in a case where the whole language was adopted by another people), which is [rather] expressed ... by ... *lambe Eldaiva*. [WJ:368–369]

So the possessive case may indicate simple *ownership* at the time that is being considered (past or present – whereas *origin*, or *former* possession, is indicated by the genitive case). An example from the *Silmarillion* is **Mindon Eldaliéva**, the “Tower of the Eldalië [= Elf-people]”, meaning simply a tower owned by the Eldalië. (Certainly they had also originated it, but they were still its owners, so a genitive would be less appropriate.) We would also have such phrases as **(i) coa i Eldava** “the Elf’s house”/“the house of the Elf”, **i parmar i vendíva** “the books of the maidens”, **i míri i Naucoiva** “the jewels of the Dwarves”. As for this word order, it should be observed that the noun which receives the possessive ending appears as the *last* word of the possessive phrase in all attested instances: The noun it governs (denoting the thing that is *owned*) comes before it. It may well

be that one could reverse the word order and say (for instance) **?i Eldava coa** with the same word order as in English: “the Elf’s house”. However, I would avoid this construction until we have it attested in Tolkien’s papers.

The noun governed by the possessive form does not receive the article in most of our attested examples; it is already sufficiently determined: **Róma Oroméva** is not indefinite “a horn of Oromë’s”, as if it is first introduced into the story, or it is implied that Oromë had other horns as well. (According to Tolkien, this meaning would be expressed by means of a “loose compound”, the words simply being juxtaposed without involving any case endings at all: **Oromë róma** = “an Oromë horn”.) **Róma Oroméva** is “Oromë’s horn” = “*the* horn of Oromë”, **róma** being determined by **Oroméva**. But we could certainly slip in an explicit article and say **i róma Oroméva** without changing the meaning; as demonstrated in the previous lesson, both constructions are equally valid in a phrase involving a *genitive* noun. An attested example involving the possessive case is the phrase **i arani Eldaivë** “the Kings of the Eldar” (WJ:369; this primarily means “those kings in a particular assembly who were Elvish”, whereas **i arani Eldaron** with a genitive means “those among the Eldar who were kings”, or simply “the kings ruling the Eldar”). The article could probably be omitted without changing the meaning: **Arani Eldaivë** would still mean “*the* kings of the Eldar”, the possessive form **Eldaivë** determining **arani** anyway. (As for why the ending **-iva** here appears as **-ivë**, see below; this probably contradicts some evidence from LotR, so we may read **Eldaiva** instead.)

The possessive case does not always indicate “possession” in the narrowest sense, but may also describe somebody’s relationship to their more-or-less abstract attributes or properties. In such contexts, one can use the genitive as well. Tolkien mentioned that “the splendour (glory) of Oromë” could be expressed in two ways: One may use the possessive-adjectival case and say **alcar Oroméva**, referring to Oromë’s **alcar** or splendour as a *permanent* attribute of his. But one could also use the genitive case; the wording **alcar Oromëo** emphasizes that Oromë is the *source* of the splendour. This could refer to “his splendour as seen at the moment (proceeding from him) or at some point in a narrative” – focusing on the moment rather than on some permanent state (WJ:369). Cirion’s Oath uses the *genitive* in the phrase **Elenna·nórëo alcar** “the glory of the land of Elenna”. If one used the possessive instead, to produce the wording (**i**) **alcar Elenna·nóreva**, it would apparently put the emphasis on the “glory” of Elenna as a *permanent* attribute of the land. In Middle-earth time, Cirion’s Oath was spoken long after Elenna (Númenor) had been destroyed and its “glory” proven to be rather less than permanent, so perhaps this would be inappropriate.

In our home-made example **alcar Elenna·nóreva**, we added the possessive ending to a noun that does not denote a sentient being. This is hardly improper, for we have such attested examples as **Taurë Huinéva** “For-

est of Gloom” and **Nurtalë Valinóreva** “Hiding of Valinor”. Where no sentient is involved, the possessive case obviously takes on other shades of meaning; no “ownership” can be involved, since things or substances can’t own anything. Cf. for instance the first example of this case that was ever published, in *Namárië* in LotR. Here we have **yuldar . . . lisse-miruvóreva** for “draughts of [the] sweet mead” (in the prose *Namárië* in RGEO:68, the words are actually directly juxtaposed as **yuldar lisse-miruvóreva**; in the poetic version in LotR, a number of other words intrude between the two elements of this phrase). For decades, this was the sole available example of the case in **-va**. Here, this case ending implies “(made) of”: The **yuldar** or “draughts” *consist* of **lisse-miruvóre** or “sweet mead”. Following this example, two nouns like **rië** “crown” and **telpë** “silver” can evidently be combined as **rië telpeva**, “crown of silver”. It may be noted that in such a case – the possessive noun denoting a *material* – the noun it governs is not necessarily be determined by it (not “*the* crown of silver”). Otherwise, **yuldar lisse-miruvóreva** would have to mean \*\*“*the* draughts of sweet mead”, but Tolkien did not translate it in this way. – Having only this one example from *Namárië* to work from, early researchers thought the case in **-va** was what they called a “compositive” case denoting what something consists of (is *composed* of). This usage should be noted, but we now know that this is only one of the secondary functions of this case.

Yet the fact remains that the ending **-va** is in origin simply adjectival, so this case may easily take on a “descriptive” function. Regarding the *genitive* case in **-o**, Tolkien noted that properly it was NOT used “adjectivally to describe qualities” (WJ:368): this is rather the function of the case in **-va**. The example **Taurë Huinéva** (Etym, entry PHUY) apparently means “Forest of Gloom”; cf. the nouns **taurë** “forest” and **huinë** “deep shadow, gloom”. One may almost just as well treat **huinéva** as a regular adjective and translate **Taurë Huinéva** as “Gloomy Forest” or “Shadowy Forest”. The idea is that the “forest” is characterized by “gloom”, so the case in **-va** can describe what *characterizes* something or someone. This “characteristic” may also be an *abstract* or *action*: In early material (LT1:14) we find the example **Mar Vanwa Tyaliéva** “Cottage of Lost Play” – the **mar** or “cottage” being characterized by **vanwa tyalië**, “lost play” (one must read the earliest *Silmarillion* manuscripts as reproduced in LT1 and LT2 to understand precisely what this refers to). It should however be noted that the genitive case may also be used in such a context; in the late essay *Quendi and Eldar* we have **Rithil-Anamo** for “Doom-ring” or more literally “Ring of Doom” (WJ:401; the Old Quenya word **rithil** “ring, circle” would probably become **risil** in Exilic Quenya). **Rithil-Anamo** does not refer to Sauron’s Ring, but to the *Máhanaxar*, the circle where the Valar passed judgement. The word **anamo** is not otherwise attested, but must be the genitive of either **anama** or **anan** (with stem **anam-**); it apparently means “doom, judgement, judging” – the activity characterizing or going on in the Circle

(**Rithil**). Perhaps the possessive case could have been used instead (**?Rithil Anamáva** or **?Rithil Ananwa**) without changing the meaning.

In some instances one may indeed be in doubt which case to use, the genitive or the possessive; sometimes Tolkien's own choice is slightly surprising. He used the possessive in the phrase **Noldo-quentasta Ingoldova** "Ingoldo's History of the Noldor" (VT39:16) – the Elf Ingoldo being the author of this particular **Noldo-quentasta** or "Noldo-history". Yet the emphasis is hardly on the fact that Ingoldo *owns* this "Noldo-history" (unless copyright was a big issue in Valinor). Ingoldo is just the author or originator, and for this meaning we might expect the genitive case to be used instead, since it frequently describes origin or source. Yet there may be certain conflicting concerns here: Since the genitive case may also signify *about, concerning* (as in **Quenta Silmarillion**), perhaps **Noldo-quentasta Ingoldo** with a genitive instead could easily have been misunderstood as "the Noldo-history *about* Ingoldo".

Anyhow, in one attested example, Tolkien's choice of case certainly amounts to an outright contradiction of what he had written earlier, in the essay *Quendi and Eldar*: We have quoted his explanation of why it would normally be improper to use the genitive in a phrase like **lambë Eldaron** "the language of the Eldar" – this would imply "the language coming from the Eldar, later taken over by others"! One had to use the possessive case instead: **lambë Eldaiva**. Yet *Tolkien himself* used **lambë Quendion** for "the language of Elves" in a very late source (PM:395) – and **Quendion** is unmistakably a plural genitive. The fact that Tolkien here uses another word for "Elf" (**Quendë** instead of **Elda**) can hardly make any difference: According to the system set out in *Quendi and Eldar*, we would expect **lambë Quendíva**, the possessive case being used of current ownership. Perhaps we can resolve the contradiction in "internal" terms, appealing to a linguistic development within the mythos: Tolkien noted that there was an increasing tendency to prefer the genitive case, people sometimes using it instead of the possessive case (WJ:369). So in "late usage" it would perhaps be more natural to say **lambë Quendion** rather than **lambë Quendíva**, the former distinctions fading away. If one is in doubt which case to use, the genitive or the possessive, it is probably best to pick the former.

## 12.2 Various notes

### filling in some details

*NOTE #1: Vowel-lengthening in the syllable preceding the case ending:* The observant student will have noted that sometimes, the last vowel of a noun is *lengthened* when the ending **-va** is added. For instance, **Eldalië** + **va** produces **Eldaliéva** with a long **é** (which must then receive the stress, according to the normal rules). **Oroméva** and **tyaliéva** as the possessive forms

of the nouns **Oromë** and **tyalië** are other examples. Notice that the words **Eldalië**, **Oromë**, **tyalië** all end in two *short* syllables (containing neither consonant clusters, diphthongs or long vowels). If the ending **-va** were added after them and no further changes were made, the extra syllable provided by this ending would make the stress move to what is now the third syllable from the end (cf. the stress rules set out in Lesson One). This would result in the rather awkward pronunciations *\*\*orOMeva*, *\*\*eldaLLeva*, *\*\*tyaLLeva*. So where the ending **-va** is added to a noun ending in two short syllables, and there is no final consonant, the vowel of the last of these syllables is apparently *lengthened* to make sure that it will receive the stress: *oroMÉva*, *eldaliÉva*, *tyaliÉva*. But if the noun ends in a consonant, there is never any need to lengthen the vowel, for where we are dealing with a noun of such a shape, the suffixing of the case ending (probably appearing as **-wa**) will result in a consonant cluster which will make the stress move to the vowel before the new cluster anyhow. For instance, while a name like **Menelmacar** (the Quenya name of Orion) is naturally accented on the third syllable from the end because it ends in two short syllables, its possessive form **Menelmacarwa** would be accented on *-arw-* because of the cluster **rw** here arising: This cluster makes what is now the second-to-last syllable *long*, and therefore it receives the stress.

It is unclear whether the system just sketched – the final vowel of a noun ending in two short syllables being lengthened before the ending **-va** – would still be valid in the case of a word that *only* consists of these two short syllables. Such words are stressed on the first syllable when they occur by themselves, e.g. **lië** “people”. The example **Eldaliéva** shows lengthening of the *é*, but **lië** is here compounded, and **Eldalië** without the case ending is accented on the **a**. It may be that if **lië** occurred by itself, its possessive form would be **lieva** (accented on the first syllable) rather than **liéva** (accented on the *é*). We cannot know. In the case of a word like **Vala**, my gut feeling is that its possessive form should be **Valava** rather than ?**Valáva**. But since there is no way of being certain, I will avoid these problems in the exercises below.

**Huinéva** (instead of *\*\*huineva*) as the possessive form of **huinë** “shadow, gloom” is however a puzzling example. For a while I actually thought final *-ë* is always lengthened before the ending **-va**, but the Plotz Letter indicates that the possessive form of **lassë** “leaf” is **lasseva** (not *\*\*lasséva*). If the **ui** of **huinë** is counted as *two syllables* (**u-i**), not as a diphthong, this example would conform with the rule set out above: **hu-i-në** would have its final vowel lengthened when **-va** is added, producing **huinéva**. But since Tolkien explicitly stated that Quenya **ui** is a diphthong – hence pronounced as *one* long syllable and not as two short ones – this explanation is not satisfactory. Yet **ui** is supposed to be a diphthong in Sindarin as well, but in one Sindarin poem, **ui** occurs where the poetic meter demands two syllables. Perhaps **ui**, although a diphthong, is somehow “overlong” and sometimes

*counts* as two syllables, even though it is perceived as one syllable by the ear. Bottom line is, if the case ending **-va** is to be added to a noun with **ui** in its second-to-last syllable, the vowel in the final syllable is apparently lengthened before **-va** is suffixed. So the possessive form of nouns like **cuilë** “life” or **tuima** “sprout” should evidently be **cuiléva**, **tuimáva**.

As for the *genitive* ending **-o**, there is no similar lengthening when the ending is to be added to a noun ending in two short syllables: The genitive form of **Oromë** is attested as **Oromëo**, not **\*\*Oroméo** (contrast possessive **Oroméva**). The form **Oromëo** must be accented on *-rom-*. It seems likely, then, that nothing special happens when **-o** is added to a word like **huinë** either (genitive probably **huinëo**, hardly **?huinéo**). However, I should like to see an attested example of what happens when the ending **-o** is added to a noun ending in two short vowels in hiatus – most frequently **-ië**, as in **Valië** “female Vala”. **?Valiëo** would have to be accented on **i**, which sounds rather awkward; the same goes for the plural form **?Valieron**. I strongly suspect that in such a case, the vowel in the syllable before the genitive ending would be lengthened, thus attracting the stress: **Valiéo**, **Valiéron**. But once again, there is no way of being certain; we must await further publications.

*NOTE #2: Special stem-forms of nouns:* Where a noun has a special stem-form, it would always appear when the genitive ending **-o** is added. The genitive of **nís** (**niss-**) “woman” or **talan** (**talam-**) “floor” would be **nisso** “woman’s” and **talamo** “floor’s”. Yet the ending **-va** or **-wa** for possessive may sometimes produce more complex results. Adding **-wa** to a noun like **talan**, **talam-** would probably result in **talanwa**, not **\*\*talamwa**, since **mw** regularly becomes **nw** in Quenya. Suffixing **-wa** to **filit** (**filic-**) “bird” would result in *filicwa* all right, but this we must spell **filiqua** according to the normal conventions. I am not quite sure what the possessive form of **nís** (**niss-**) “woman” should be. **\*\*Nisswa** is certainly not a possible Quenya word; perhaps we would see something like **nisseva**, an extra **e** turning up before the ending to break up the impossible consonant cluster (and following a vowel, we would regularly see **-va** instead of **-wa**). – The “stem-form” of some nouns is simply a contraction, e.g. **fern-** as the stem of **feren** “beech-tree”. Surely the genitive would be **ferno**, but the possessive may well be **ferenwa** with no contraction, since other examples indicate that such contraction does not occur before a consonant cluster (**\*\*fernwa** is not a possible Quenya word). Of course we could slip in an **e** here as well, producing **?ferneva**, but I would certainly put my money on **ferenwa**.

*NOTE #3: A Tolkienian rule we can afford to ignore (!):* In WJ:407, Tolkien states that the case derived by adding **-va** never lost its strong adjectival connotations; he actually says that it “was and remained an adjective”. As we remember from Lesson Four, adjectives in **-a** have plural forms in **-ë** (for archaic **-ai**). According to what Tolkien says in WJ:407, a possessive noun (with ending **-va**) that governs a *plural* word would agree with it in

number just like any other adjective, the ending **-va** turning into **-vë**. For this reason, he used **i arani Eldaivë** for “the Kings of the Eldar” in WJ:369: **Eldaiva** “of the Eldar” becomes **Eldaivë** (archaic **Eldaivai**) to agree in number with the plural noun it is dependent on, namely **arani** “kings”.

However, this may be one of the cases of Tolkien revising Elvish grammar without noticing that his new ideas contradicted something he had already published. For in *Namárië* in LotR, we have **yuldar . . . lisse-miruvóreva** for “draughts of sweet mead”, and Tolkien later confirmed this construction in *The Road Goes Ever On*. Since **yuldar** “draughts” is a plural word, **lisse-miruvóreva** should have been **lisse-miruvórevë** according to the system Tolkien later set out in WJ:407. As I said, the likeliest “external” explanation is simply that Tolkien introduced a new rule without noticing that he had already published something that contradicted it. In “internal” terms, we may perhaps assume that the possessive form was still perceived as a kind of derived adjective in the older period, and therefore it also agreed in number like regular adjectives. But as the Ages went by in Middle-earth, the forms derived by means of the ending **-va** came to be perceived more strictly as a noun case only, and by the late Third Age when Galadriel composed her Lament, the adjective-style agreement in number had been abandoned. I do not use it in the exercises I have made for this course.

## 12.3 Verbal or Abstract nouns

and how they interact with the genitive and possessive cases

We have earlier defined nouns as words denoting *things*, whereas verbs are words that denote *actions* – but we have also hinted that linguists would find such definitions rather simplistic. Some nouns do denote actions, and they are appropriately called *verbal nouns*. Since such nouns may interact with the genitive and possessive cases in a way that should be noted, this is a good place to introduce them.

A verbal noun is derived from the stem of a verb; in English, the relevant ending is *-ing*. (This is also the ending used to derive active participles, but they are adjectives, not nouns; the forms merely happen to coincide in English.) *Singing* is the verbal noun corresponding to the verb *sing*; in other words, *singing* is the action you perform when you *sing*.

In Quenya, the stems of some primary verbs are the source of abstract formations in **-më**; some of them seem to have been verbal nouns in origin. For instance, whereas the verb “to love” is **mel-**, the noun “love” (or “loving”) is **melmë**. Some of these may take on more specialized meanings. **Carmë** is used for “art” (UT:439), though this is basically simply a kind of verbal noun derived from the verb **car-** “make, do” – hence literally “making”. (See below regarding **oiencarmë**.)

Primary verbs may also receive the ending **-ië**; the verb **tyal-** “to play”

corresponds to the abstract formation **tyalië** “play, playing” (as noun; cf. the **Mar Vanwa Tyaliéva** or “Cottage of Lost Play” mentioned above). Added to an A-stem verb, the ending **-ië** makes the final **-a** drop out; cf. **naina-** “to lament” producing the abstract noun **nainië** “a lament(ing)”.

Yet another frequent formation is to lengthen the stem-vowel of a primary verb and add the ending **-ë**. The verb **ser-** “rest” corresponds to the abstract noun **séré** “rest, repose, peace”. Very often, the nouns so derived have taken on a somewhat more concrete meaning. From the verb **sir-** “to flow” we have **sirë**, which would basically refer to a “flowing”, but this noun is used = “river”. The noun **nútë** connects with the verb **nut-** “to tie”, but the noun has developed beyond the full abstract “tying, binding” and has come to signify “knot” instead. From **lir-** “to sing, chant” we have **lirë**, used for “song” rather than just “singing, chanting”. Yet the underlying idea of a verbal noun is often still discernible.

The stems of some A-stem verbs, especially in **-ta**, can also be used as abstract nouns with no additions. **Vanta-** is the verb “to walk”, but **vanta** is also used as an abstract: “a walk” (that is, “walking” considered as a noun). Likewise, the verbs **lanta-** “to fall” corresponds to the noun **lanta** “a fall(ing)”. However, the noun may also be **lantë**, as in the name of the song **Noldolantë** or “Fall of the Noldor” mentioned in the *Silmarillion*. In Quenya, abstract nouns indeed show a great preference for the ending **-ë**, either alone or as part of a longer ending.

One such ending is **-lë**, which seems to one of the most versatile Quenya abstract suffixes. It may be that it can in principle be added to any A-stem verb, and the resulting word is basically a verbal noun. The verb **laita-** “to bless/praise” occurs in LotR (in the Cormallen Praise), and the corresponding abstract noun **litalë** “praise” or “praising” occurs in UT:166, 436 (where reference is made to the **Erulaitalë** or “Praise of Eru”, a Númenórean festival). In earlier lessons we have used the verb **nurta-** “to hide”, which is actually only attested as a verbal noun **nurtalë** “hiding” (see below concerning the phrase **Nurtalë Valinóreva** “Hiding of Valinor”).

Then let us return to the genitive and possessive cases. If you combine a verbal noun (or an abstract formation that still clearly connects with a verb) with a noun in the *genitive* case, it suggests that this noun is the “subject” of the corresponding verb. An attested example is **Altariello nainië** for “Galadriel’s lament” (RGEO:66; the Quenya form of Galadriel’s name is **Altariel** with stem **Altariell-**). The genitive **Altariello** “Galadriel’s” governing the abstract noun **nainië** “lament, lamenting” indicates that Galadriel is the one who *does the lamenting*: subject genitive. Perhaps the phrase **i equessi Rúmilo** “the sayings of Rúmil” (WJ:398) may also be analyzed in such a way: Rúmil is the *subject* who originally “said” the “sayings”. An obvious case is provided by the phrase **Oiencarmë Eruo** “the One’s [Eru’s, God’s] perpetual production” (MR:471). Eru is the one who *does* the “perpetual production” (**oi-en-carmë** = probably “ever-re-making”), and this is indi-



cated by the genitive form **Eruo**: subject genitive yet again.

Way back in Lesson Two, I pointed out the error contained in the title of the fanzine **Parma Eldalamberon**; it should have been **Parma Eldalambion** instead. I must now take affair with the title of another (good!) Tolkien-linguistic journal, **Tyalië Tyelelliéva**. This was meant to signify “Play of the Tyelellië” (a folk of little Elves). But since the **Tyelellië** are the *subject* of the abstract noun “play” (the ones who do the playing), it would probably have been better to use the genitive case here: perhaps **Tyalië Tyelelliéo**.

So far subject genitive; what about *object* genitive? This kind of genitive is usually replaced by an *of*-construction in English: “the discovery of America” = the discovery which America was the object of. Subject and object genitive can even be combined in a phrase like “Columbus’ discovery of America” (Columbus is the *subject* who does the discovery, America is the *object* that is discovered).

Our one-and-only attested example of a Quenya object genitive seems to indicate that for this meaning, Quenya uses the case in **-va**. This one example is found in the *Silmarillion*, near the end of Chapter 11: **Nurtalë Valinóreva**, the “Hiding of Valinor” (**Valinóreva** is formed from **Valinórë**, an older variant of the name normally shortened as **Valinor**). The point is that the Valar hid Valinor, so Valinor is the *object* of the **nurtalë** or “hiding”. If one used the genitive case instead, saying **Nurtalë Valinórëo**, it might imply that this is a subject genitive – Valinor *doing* the hiding instead of being its object. This would make little sense, since Valinor is not a person who can “hide” anything. Conversely, **oiencarmë Eruo** cannot be understood as “perpetual production *of* the One” even if some kind of sense could be made of this, for if Eru were the grammatical object that *is produced*, we would evidently see **oiencarmë Eruva** instead.

Probably, the **o**-case could be used for subject genitive and the **va**-case for object genitive within the same phrase; if so it would probably be best to let the former genitive *precede* the verbal noun. **Nurtalë Valinóreva** or “Hiding of Valinor” could then be expanded to **Valaron nurtalë Valinóreva**, “the Valar’s hiding of Valinor”. Or, to use a wholly home-made example:

**Eruo melmë Ataniva** = “God’s love of Men”

and conversely:

**Atanion melmë Eruva** = “Men’s love of God”

## Summary of Lesson Twelve

The *possessive* (or *adjectival*) case is formed by adding the ending **-va** (probably **-wa** after nouns ending in a consonant), in the plural **-iva**. (There is no explicit information about dual forms; presumably the ending **-va** can be

added to nouns with dual forms in **-u**, whereas the case ending might appear as **-wa** when added to a dual form in **-t**.) If the ending **-va** is to be added to a noun ending in two short syllables, and there is no final consonant, this final vowel is lengthened before the case ending is added, so that it attracts the stress: the possessive form of **Oromë** is therefore **Oroméva** (not **\*\*Oromeva**). For some reason, such lengthening also occur if the diphthong **ui** occurs in the second-to-last syllable of the noun; the possessive form of **huinë** “gloom” is therefore **huinéva**. – A possessive phrase like “X Yva” (this is the only attested word order) may mean “Y’s X” or “Y of X” referring to simple ownership, e.g. **lambë Eldaiva** “the language of the Elves” or **coa i Eldava** “the Elf’s house”. The pattern “X Yva” may also refer to a permanent attribute (e.g. **alcar Oroméva** “the glory of Oromë”), or to the prevalent *characteristic* of a place (e.g. **Taurë Huinéva** “Forest of Gloom”). Another use of this case is expressing “X that consists of Y” (e.g. **yuldar lisse-miruvóreva** “draughts of sweet mead”). – *Verbal nouns*, or *abstract nouns* derived from verbs, denote an action viewed as a “thing” or process. Such nouns may be derived in a variety of ways; relevant endings include **-më**, **-lë**, **-ië** and **-ë**. Notice especially the ending **-lë**, which (it seems) may in principle be added to any A-stem verb, as when the verb **linda-** “to sing” produces **lindalë** “singing, music”. When dependent on a verbal noun or an abstract clearly associated with some verb, the genitive case takes on the meaning of a *subject genitive* (as in **Altariello nainië** “Galadriel’s lament”), whereas the possessive case is used for *object genitive* (**Nurtalë Valinóreva** “Hiding of Valinor”).

## Vocabulary

**minquë** “eleven”

**varya-** “to protect”

**alya** “rich”

**seler** (sell-) “sister”

**malta** “gold” (so according to Appendix E of LotR; the *Etymologies*, entry SMAL, gives **malda** instead – but post-LotR sources seem to indirectly confirm that **malta** was Tolkien’s final decision, as when PM:366 cites the Eldarin root yielding words for “gold” as MALAT.)

**engwë** “thing”

**muilë** “secrecy” (including one of the abstract endings mentioned above, **-lë**; in this case it is added directly to the root MUY, here manifesting as **mui-**. Apparently this word is related to Sindarin *muil* as in one place-name occurring in LotR: *Emyn Muil*, possibly meaning something like Hills of Secrecy or Hidden Hills).

**sérë** “peace” (in origin an abstract formation based on the verb **ser-** “to rest”, derived from the same root SED which also produces the name of **Estë** [from *Esdë/Ezdë*], the Valië or “goddess” of rest and sleep)

**ramba** “wall”

**ondo** “stone” (as material, though **ondo** is also used = “a rock”; the Sindarin equivalent *gon, gond* occurs in the names *Gondor* and *Gondolin*, the latter of which is adapted from Quenya **Ondolindë**)

**osto** “city” (according to late sources also used = “fortress”, but we will use it in the sense of “city” here; the word seems to refer primarily to a *fortified* city, so there may not be much of a distinction anyway)

**mornië** “darkness” (cf. **morë** “black”; the word **mornië** is actually an abstract formation based on another adjective derived from the same primitive root MOR, namely **morna** = “dark”)

## Exercises

These exercises involve both the genitive case and the possessive/adjectival case. Make sure to pick the right case in Exercises I–P (though sometimes, either case will do).

1. Translate into English:

- A. **I limpë Eldaron** vs. **i limpë Eldaiva** (and since both phrases may have the same English translation, explain what the difference is)
- B. **Haryalyë yulma maltava.**
- C. **I rocco i Eldava alantië mir i núra cilya.**
- D. **Neri séreva úvar ohtari.**
- E. **Altë rambar ondova nurtaner i coar i cainen analyë neriva i osto.**
- F. **I coa i arano selerwa ná carnë.**
- G. **Minë i mólion amápië i macil i aranwa.**
- H. **I vendëo toron hirnë ilyë i harmar i minquë Naucoiva imbë i canta rassi i ninqui orontion.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. Rivers of wine poured into the man’s mouth.
- J. The boys’ sister [/the sister of the boys] gathered (together) the things of the boys and went into the house of the queen.
- K. The secrecy of the women protected a great treasure of gold.
- L. The eleven warriors could not protect the peace of the city, for a great darkness fell.
- M. They will go through a land of great trees and many rocks, for they want to see the city of the mighty warrior.

- N. A wall of secrecy protected the hidden gold of the city, and I did not find it.
- O. The land of the Elves is a land of many beautiful things; a land without Elves is a land of darkness, for the Men (**Atani**) of the land do not hear the rich language of the Elves.
- P. The king's sister's gathering of books about Elves. (To make an abstract noun "gathering", try adding the ending **-lë** "-ing" to the verb **hosta-** "to gather".)

# Lesson 13

The Dative case. The Gerund. Pronominal endings *-lmë* and *-mmë*. An indefinite pronoun.

## 13.1 The Dative case

Back in Lesson Five, we introduced the concept of grammatical *objects*, the “target” of the verbal action performed by the subject: **I Elda máta massa** = “the Elf is eating *bread*”, **i Nauco hirnë harma** = “the Dwarf found *a treasure*”.

So far in this course, all the objects that we have concerned ourselves with have been, more precisely, *direct* objects. These are objects directly affected by the verbal action. In archaic Quenya, such objects had their own grammatical case, the accusative – but this case no longer had any distinct forms in Third Age Quenya. But there are also *indirect* objects, to which Quenya grammar likewise assigns special case forms. The case marking indirect objects, the *dative*, was still alive and well in Third Age Quenya. But before discussing how dative forms are constructed, let us have a closer look on indirect objects.

An indirect object is, logically, an object *indirectly* affected by the verbal action of the sentence. Thus the indirect object is often the beneficiary of the verbal action (though it may also denote a party that is adversely affected by this action). The archetypal example involves the verb “to give”, which must logically entail three parties: the subject that *does* the giving, the direct object which is the thing that *is given*, plus the indirect object that is the *recipient* of the gift and thus the *beneficiary* of the verbal action:

The man [*subject*] gave the boy [*indirect object*] a book [*direct object*].

Modern English (unlike, say, German) has no distinct dative case, so in the English example above, the noun “boy” receives no extra inflectional elements to explicitly mark it as the indirect object of the sentence. In English, indirect objects may be indicated simply by word order; the indirect object is then jammed into the sentence in front of the direct object, just like “the boy” appears before “a book” in our example above. But just like

English often uses a phrase involving the preposition “of” instead of the genitive case, the absence of a distinct *dative* case is frequently compensated for by means of prepositional circumlocutions: The two prepositions most often used to simulate the function of the dative case are “to” and “for”. So instead of saying “the man gave the boy a book” (word order alone identifying “the boy” as the indirect object), one might say “the man gave a book to the boy”. Examples with “for” could be, say, “we did it for the children”, or “the men work for the queen”.

In Quenya, “the boy”, “the children” and “the queen” of these examples would be considered indirect objects – the parties indirectly affected by the verbal action – and the corresponding nouns would be inflected for the dative case. There would be no need to maintain a specific word order, or to use prepositions like “to” or “for”. Cf. the question occurring in the middle of *Namárië*, where the pronoun **ni** “I” (related to the pronominal ending **-n** or **-nyë** of similar meaning) appears in the dative case:

**Sí man i yulma nin enquantuva?** “Now who will refill the cup for me?”

The element here translated “for” is not a separate word in Quenya; it is simply the final **-n** of **nin** – which **-n** is the Quenya dative ending. Hence **nin** = “**I-for**”, or in correct English: “for me”. In other contexts it could also have been translated “to me” or (where in English the indirect object is identified by word order alone) simply “me”: The verb “to give” being **anta-**, the Quenya equivalent of “you will give me a book” would in all likelihood go something like **antuvalyë nin parma**. The dative pronoun **nin** turns up in the last line of *Fíriel’s Song*, as part of a sentence which Tolkien translated “what will the Father . . . give me. . . ?” (LR:72). Of course, one might also translate “. . . give to me”.

The Plotz Letter confirms that the ending **-n** for dative is not only applicable to pronouns; it can also be attached to common nouns. (Plotz lists **ciryán** as the dative form of **cirya** “ship” and points to **lassen** as the dative form of **lassë** “leaf”.) Thus we can build sentences like **carnelyes i Naucon** “you did it **for** the Dwarf” or **i nér antuva i parma Eldan** “the man will give the book **to** an Elf”. In English, the latter sentence could also be translated “the man will give *an Elf* the book”, word order alone indicating that “an Elf” is to be understood as the indirect object of the English sentence. In Quenya, word order would be much freer (the main advantage of a highly inflected language!), the case ending indicating that the noun in question is the indirect object no matter where the noun occurs in the sentence. This enables the speaker to move the indirect object around to express subtle nuances of emphasis. For instance, we may probably front the indirect object to put special focus on it: **Eldan i nér antuva i parma**, meaning something like “it is to *an Elf* [not to a Dwarf, etc.] the man will give the book”. Whether the direct or the indirect object comes first may not be very

material; while **i nér antuva i parma Eldan** means “the man will give the book to an Elf”, **i nér antuva Eldan i parma** may be translated “the man will give an Elf the book”.

In the *plural*, dative forms end in **-in**. Nouns with nominative plurals in **-i** would in effect simply add the dative ending **-n**; the Plotz Letter points to **lassin** as the dative form of **lassi** “leaves”. The dative plural of a word like **laman** (**lamm-**) “animal” would therefore be **lamnin** = “to animals” or “for animals”. The ending **-in** is however also added to nouns that would have nominative plurals in **-r**; the plural marker **-r** does not appear in dative forms. From the first line of *Fíriel’s Song* (translated “the Father made the World for Elves”), we know what the plural dative of **Elda** would be: **Eldain**. It should be noted that the ending **-in** merges with the last vowel of the noun to form a diphthong, like **ai** in this case. *Fíriel’s Song* also provides the dative plural of “Mortals”: **Fírimoin** (nominative plural **Fírimor**, LR:245; Tolkien later came to prefer the form **Fírimar**, as in the published *Silmarillion*, chapter 12. The dative plural would then become **Fírimain**, of course.)

In the previous lesson I pointed out that “it is not quite clear what would happen when the [plural possessive-adjectival] ending **-iva** is added to a noun already ending in **-i**, like **tári** ‘queen’, or a noun with a stem-form in **-i**, like **lómë** (**lómi-**) ‘night’ (SD:415)”. The same problem arises in the case of the plural dative forms. The dative singular “to/for a queen” would presumably be **tárin**, but when trying to derive a plural dative by adding **-in** to **tári**, we are probably left with **tárin** once again (the final **-i** or the noun and the initial **i-** of the ending simply merging). Conceivably the two vowels might merge into a *long i*, producing **tárin** as the word for “to/for queens”, but this seems a somewhat unlikely word: Quenya rarely has a long vowel in a final unaccented syllable (though there is the word **palantír**). It may well be that **tárin** has to do duty for both singular and plural, so that one must rely on the context to find out which number is meant.

The *dual* dative ending is given as **-nt** in the Plotz Letter, the dual dative form of **ciryá** “ship” being listed as **ciryant** – which would mean something like “for a couple of ships”. Of course, this ending **-nt** simply combines the dative ending **-n** with the dual ending **-t**. Already in Lesson One I briefly mentioned that this **-nt** seems to be the sole example of a final consonant cluster being allowed in LotR-style Quenya. – It may be that only nouns with nominative dual forms in **-t** would have dative dual forms in **-nt**; in the case of nouns with dual forms in **-u**, it may well be that the simplest dative ending **-n** would be employed. Once again using **Aldu** “Two Trees” as our example, the dative form should perhaps not be **Aldunt**, but rather **Aldun** (or possibly **Alduen**; see below concerning **Ar-Veruen**). We lack examples either way, though.

In some instances, a sentence may include an indirect object (in Quenya, a dative object) even though the sentence contains no direct object. In the

Quenya equivalent of “the men work for the king”, the English preposition “for” would be represented by the case ending **-n** added to **aran** (probably producing **aranen**, a helping vowel **-e-** intruding before the ending). There is at least one attested example of a sentence having a dative object, but no direct object: Tolkien in his Quenya version of the *Pater Noster* used a dative form of the pronoun “we, us” when rendering the phrase “. . . those who trespass against us”. (This, by the way, is an example of the dative case being used to identify a party *adversely* affected by the verbal action: The context must decide whether the dative form should be translated “against us” or “for us”. Grammatically speaking, both interpretations would be equally valid, but “those who sin *for us*” would not make sense in this particular context.) The verb “to trespass” or “to sin” can have no direct object, but obviously some party may be indirectly affected by the trespassing or sinning, so there can be an indirect object – aptly presented as a dative object in Quenya.

Dative forms may also turn up in sentences having *no subject*, a grammatical phenomenon virtually unheard of in modern English. Yet such sentences may be compared to phrases like “it seems to me that. . .”, where the formal subject “it” is actually nothing but a grammatical dummy with no real content: In informal speech it may even be omitted, “seems to me that. . .”, and the meaning is quite intact. Such English wordings are comparable to Quenya phrases like **orë nin caritas**, literally “[it] impels **for me** to do it”, expressing the meaning that in English might be worded something like “I would like [or, feel moved] to do so” (VT41:13). Notice that the sentence **orë nin caritas** has no subject, but it does have a dative object: **nin** “to me, for me”. **Or-** or **ora-** “impel, urge” is one of the Quenya *impersonal verbs* which invite such constructions; we will return to these verbs in a later lesson.

*An earlier application of the case ending -n:* In Tolkien’s long evolution of Quenya, **-n** was not always the dative ending. From the perspective of the LotR scenario, one of the few things that are “wrong” with the Quenya of the *Etymologies* (written in the mid-thirties) is that **-n** is here the *genitive* ending instead. For instance, the entry LEP lists the names of various Valinorean weekdays, including **Ar Manwen** = Day of Manwë, or **Ar Ulmon** = Day of Ulmo (cf. the noun **ar(ë)** “day” – though later Tolkien changed the word for “day” to **aurë** or **ré**, as indicated by the LotR appendices).

This use of the ending **-n** is also found in a phrase written in the mid-forties, reproduced in SD:303: **Quenta Eldalien**, “History of the Elves [*Eldalië*, Elf-people]”. In draft versions of the poem that was to become *Namárië*, Tolkien used **Vardan** as the genitive “Varda’s” (see for instance the early version reproduced in TI:284-285). In one of the later manuscripts, Tolkien still wrote **Vardan**, but then he crossed it out and replaced it with **Vardo**. This may seem to pinpoint the moment when Tolkien changed the genitive ending from **-n** to **-o**. Actually the genitive ending **-o** turns up in earlier sources as well; a “Qenya” poem of the early thirties already has



**ciryó** (spelt **kiryo**) as the genitive of **ciryá** “ship” (**langon veakiryó** “the throat of the sea-ship”, MC:216). As for the dative case, the “Quenya” of the pre-LotR composition *Fíriel’s Song* already uses **-n** (pl. **-in**) as the dative ending, as is evident from some examples quoted above. Later, **-n** for a while reverted to being the genitive ending, as reflected by the *Namárië* drafts. It would seem that Tolkien changed his mind back and forth over the decades – but the final resolution, as reflected in LotR and as codified in the Plotz Letter, was that **-o** is to be the *genitive* ending, while **-n** is the *dative* ending.

Some of the obsolete genitives from the *Etymologies* are still interesting as forms. In the entry AY, the noun **ailin** “pool, lake” is said to have the “g.sg.” (genitive singular) **ailinen**. Because of Tolkien’s later revisions, the form **ailinen** must rather be understood as a *dative* singular in LotR-style Quenya – meaning “for a lake” instead of genitive “of a lake”. The example **ailinen** is interesting insofar as it shows us what happens if the case ending **-n** (no matter what case it is assigned to!) is added to a noun ending in a consonant, like **ailin**. Since **\*\*ailinn** is not a possible Quenya word, an **e** is inserted before the ending, producing **ailinen**. Though the ending **-n** had its meaning redefined, the principle of inserting this helping vowel whenever it is required would still be valid.

If the noun has a special stem-form – the final consonant turning into another consonant or a consonant cluster when endings are to be added – such changes occur before this extra **-e-** as well: In the entry LIN<sup>2</sup> in the *Etymologies*, we learn that **Laurelin** (**Laurelind-**), the name of the Golden Tree of Valinor, has the “g.sg.” **Laurelinden**. In LotR-style Quenya, this would be the dative singular instead, but the form as such is presumably valid still. The same goes for **lissen** as a form of **lis** (**liss-**) “honey”; see the entry LIS. We may then assume that a noun like **nís** (**niss-**) “woman” would be treated in a similar fashion: dative **nissen**.

One of the “genitive” forms of the *Etymologies* may even throw some light upon what the later *dative* of dual forms in **-u** should look like. One Valinorean weekday listed in the entries BES and LEP is **Arveruen** or **Ar-Veruen**, the “Day of the Spouses”, referring to the Vala couple Aulë and Yavanna. Here we have **veruen** as the genitive of the dual form **veru** “spouses, married pair”. It should be noticed that the helping vowel **-e-** is employed here as well (somewhat surprisingly: one might have thought that **\*\*verun** would be an acceptable form). *If* this genitive **veruen** would still be a valid form after Tolkien redefined the ending **-n** so that **veruen** is a *dative* form in LotR-style Quenya, it would indicate that nouns with nominative dual forms in **-u** should have dative forms in **-uen**. The dative of **Aldu** “Two Trees” would then be neither **Aldunt** nor **Aldun**, but rather **Alduen**. But I hardly have to say that we are not on solid ground here, and I will not construct any exercises based on such hypotheses.

## 13.2 The Gerund

Most of the time, nouns and verbs are distinct parts of speech. There are, of course, the *verbal nouns* discussed in the previous lesson, but they are unquestionably genuine nouns – abstract formations denoting verbal actions considered as “things”. But verbs have one form, the *gerund*, which almost defies the dichotomy of noun vs. verb. One might say that a gerund is a verb masquerading as a noun.

In Cirion’s Oath occurs the word **enyalien**, literally meaning “for recalling” (that is, “in order to remember”). The prefix **en-** means “re-”, and the final **-n** is the case ending discussed above, the dative marker corresponding to the English preposition “for”. Stripping away these extra elements, we are left with **-yalie-**, **yalië**. In his notes on Cirion’s Oath, as reproduced in UT:317, Tolkien makes it clear that **yalië** is an “infinitive (or gerundial) form” of a verb **yal-**, meaning to call or to summon. Thus we can isolate **-ië** as a grammatical ending used to derive ‘infinitive or gerundial’ forms.

Earlier in this course, we have discussed another kind of infinitive, which is simply the stem of the verb (with **-ë** added, in the case of primary verbs). An attested example is the sentence **polin quetë**, “I can speak” (VT41:6), with **quetë** as the infinitive form of the verb **quet-** “speak”. Since Tolkien clearly identifies **-ië** as an infinitive ending in UT:317, it *may* be that **polin quetië** would have been equally possible (more on this below). In her tutorial *Basic Quenya*, written before the example **polin quetë** became available, Nancy Martsch uses **-ië** as the Quenya infinitival ending throughout. This may not necessarily be wrong; Tolkien definitely imagined an old Elvish infinitive in *-ie*. In the *Etymologies*, entry NAR<sup>2</sup>, the Old Noldorin word *trenarie* “to recount” is explicitly called an “inf.” form (“Old Noldorin” being the language Tolkien might later have referred to as Old *Sindarin*, after he revised his linguistic mythos in the early fifties). However, I think that in many cases, the Quenya verb forms derived by means of the suffix **-ië** are best termed gerunds.

In English, gerunds are derived by means of the ending *-ing*, e.g. “finding” vs. the verb “to find”. Now a form like “finding” can of course also be an abstract noun (synonymous with “discovery”) as well as an adjectival participle (as in “the man finding the treasure”). But what we are interested in here, is rather the word “finding” as it appears in a sentence like “finding the treasure was wonderful”. Here, “finding” in a way behaves like a noun, for it is the subject of the sentence. But we can tell that in some sense, “finding” *is still a verb*, for it has not lost one of the unique characteristics of a verb: the ability to take an object. In the phrase “finding the treasure”, “the treasure” is the object of “finding”. If “finding” had here been an abstract noun, one would have to use an “of”-construction to bring in the thing which is found: “the finding (= discovery) of the treasure”. Cf. our discussion of the Quenya object genitive (as in **Nurtalë Valinóreva**, “Hiding of Valinor”)

in the previous lesson.

Since we are able to tell that in the sentence “finding the treasure was wonderful”, the word “finding” is not a verbal noun, we can conclude that it is actually a *gerund*. A gerund is a form of the verb which can function as a noun, with much the same meaning as a genuine verbal noun. However, a gerund is still capable of taking an object, and this goes for Quenya gerunds as well: Regarding the Quenya gerundial form in **-ië** which Tolkien used in Cirion’s Oath, he noted that it was “governing a direct object” (UT:317).

NOTE: In Quenya as in English, gerunds and abstract nouns cannot always be clearly distinguished. Just like the English ending *-ing* is used to derive both gerunds and verbal nouns, the Quenya ending **-ië** may also be used to derive abstracts, e.g. **tyalië** “play” (as noun) from the verb **tyal-** “to play”. Indeed **-ië** is also used as a general abstract ending, much like English “-ness”, cf. for instance **mornië** “darkness”.

As usual, there is an extreme scarcity of attested examples. But we must assume that in Quenya as in English, gerunds may often function as the subjects of sentences, perhaps something like this:

**Hirië harma caruva nér alya** “**finding** a treasure will make a man rich”  
**Tirië i aiwi anta i vendin alta alassë** “**watching** the birds gives the maidens [**vendin**, dative] great joy”

In these examples we have equipped the gerunds with objects (**harma** and **i aiwi**), but a gerund could certainly function as subject without any further additions, for instance like this: **Matië ná i analta alassë ilyë tiucë Naucoron**, “**eating** is the greatest joy of all fat Dwarves”.

Presumably Quenya gerunds can also function as the *object* of a sentence, comparable to such English constructions as “I love fishing”. The gerund functioning as object may in turn govern its own object: A sentence like “I love **watching the birds**” may perhaps be rendered into Quenya as **melin tirië i aiwi** (“watching” being the object of the phrase “I love”, and “the birds” in turn being the object of the gerund “watching”). Perhaps the latter might also be expressed as “I love **to watch the birds**” = **melin tirë i aiwi** (?), using an infinitive instead of a gerund. Gerunds and infinitives may well be interchangeable in many contexts, in Quenya as in English.

Indeed our terminology may be stricter than the one Tolkien himself used, if we reserve the term *infinitive* for forms like **tirë** “to watch” and insist on calling **tirië** “watching” a *gerund* only: In UT:317, quoted above, Tolkien himself refers to the forms in **-ië** as both “infinitival” and “gerundial”. As we mentioned above, in the “Old Noldorin” of the *Etymologies* one form in *-ie* is explicitly identified as an infinitive. The post-LotR example **polin quietë** “I can speak” demonstrates that **-ië** at least cannot be a universal infinitive ending. Would **polin quietië** be a possible wording, or would this sound about as weird as “I can speaking” in English? And what about “I want to find a treasure”? Would **merin hirië harma** be OK, or would the Eldar find this wording as awkward as “I want finding a treasure” in English? It

may be safer to use the simplest infinitive, **hirë**, in such a context.

When a verbal action is the subject or object of a sentence, one may to some extent choose between the infinitives and gerunds in English: “To err is human, to forgive is divine” = “Erring is human, forgiving is divine”. Especially when a verbal action functions as subject, I think it would be safer to use the gerund (the form in **-ië**) in Quenya. But since we have no actual examples, it is presently impossible to say with any confidence what Tolkien would have thought of as acceptable Quenya in this regard.

There is, however, one important use of the gerund which luckily *is* attested in our tiny corpus. In English, the normal infinitive (marked by “to”) is often used to indicate *purpose*: “They have come *to see* the king.” Whether this could be rendered “directly” into Quenya as **?utúlientë cenë i aran** none can say at present – but I tend to doubt that this is a valid construction. Notice the wording used in *Cirion’s Oath*: **Vanda sina termaruva Elenna·nórëo alcar enyalien**. Tolkien’s translation in UT:305 goes “this oath shall stand in memory of the glory of the Land of the Star”, but more literally the Quenya wording is something like “this oath shall stand for recalling [the] Elenna-land’s glory”. Cf. Tolkien’s comments on the form **enyalien** in UT:317, already quoted in part:

*yal-* ‘summon’, in infinitive (or gerundial) form *en-yalië*, here in dative ‘for the re-calling’, but governing a direct object [namely **alcar** ‘glory’]: thus ‘to recall or “commemorate” the glory’.

So here we have a verb **en-yal-** “re-call” = “commemorate”. Add the gerundial ending **-ië**, and we get the gerund **enyalië**, “recalling”. Since a gerund may be described as a verb functioning as a noun, it may also receive *case endings* as a noun. So Tolkien supplied the *dative* ending **-n** “for” to produce **enyalien** “for recalling”. The word can now function as the indirect object of the sentence, the “benefactor” of the verbal action: The oath **termaruva** “shall stand”, and this action promotes “recalling” (**enyalië**). The dative gerund **enyalien** “for recalling” in turn has **Elenna·nórëo alcar**, “[the] Elenna-land’s glory”, as its object.

Of course, in English one does not say “this oath shall stand for recalling the Elenna-land’s glory”, but rather “this oath shall stand (in order) *to recall* the glory of the land of Elenna”. Nonetheless, this example seems to tell us that English infinitives indicating *purpose* should be rendered into Quenya as gerunds with a dative ending attached. “They have come (in order) to see the king” would then translate into **utúlientë cenien i aran**, literally “they have come **for seeing** the king”. (If we were to slavishly follow the word order Tolkien used in *Cirion’s Oath*, with the gerund at the end of the sentence, we would actually have to say **utúlientë i aran cenien** = “they have come the king for seeing”! However, Quenya word order is in all likelihood quite flexible.) The rule we have tried to make out may be

summarized like this: If in English you can add the words “in order” in front of a infinitive without destroying the meaning (never mind the style!), this infinitive indicates *purpose* and should be rendered into Quenya as a gerund inflected for dative.

*Forming gerunds from A-stem verbs:* All the gerunds so far exemplified have been formed from primary (ending-less) verbs. What happens if the ending **-ië** is to be added to an A-stem verb? We have no direct, explicit attestations to guide us, so I saved this problem for the end. But all the indirect evidence points to one conclusion: the final **-a** should be dropped before **-ië** is suffixed.

The *Etymologies*, entry ORO, lists the Quenya verb **orta-** “rise, raise”, but a form *ortie* is also cited, though this is “Old Noldorin” (/Old Sindarin) rather than Quenya. This word *ortie*, simply glossed “rise”, would be an archaic Elvish form that later involved into a Sindarin infinitive. But it could very well correspond to a Quenya gerund **ortië** “rising, raising”, since “Old Noldorin” is relatively close to Quenya. This would indicate that when the ending **-ië** is to be added to an A-stem verb, the final **-a** drops out before the ending. We have one *possible* attestation of a Quenya form which would confirm this conclusion: Listing various forms of the verb **ora-** “urge”, Tolkien did include **orië** (VT41:13), and while he did not clearly identify this or any other of the forms, **orië** may well be intended as the gerund. Also notice **nainië** “lament(ing)” as a derivative of the verb **naina-** “to lament” (compare RGEO:66 with the *Etymologies*, entry NAY): **Nainië** may be seen either as a gerund or as a verbal noun.

As we have already touched on, **-ië** can also function as a general abstract ending, somewhat like English “-ness”. Where **-ië** is used to form abstract nouns from adjectives, adjectives in **-a** lose this final vowel before **-ië** is added; **mornië** “darkness” is apparently formed from **morna** “dark”. Another attested pair of this kind is **láta** “open” vs. **látíë** “openness”. The abstract ending **-ië** is certainly closely related to the gerundial ending **-ië**; basically it is the same ending we are dealing with (as noted above, the distinction between gerunds and abstract nouns often becomes blurred). If the ending **-ië** causes a final **-a** to drop out when it is added to adjectives, it seems very likely that this also happens when it is added to A-stem verbs. So starting from verbs like **orta-** “raise” and **nurta-** “hide”, we may probably derive the gerunds **ortië**, **nurtië** and build sentences like **ortië Pelóri nurtien Valinor úmë mára noa** “raising [the] Pelóri to hide Valinor was not a good idea”. (It wasn’t – see MR:401, 405 for Tolkien’s critical comments on this move by the Valar!)

In the case of verbs in **-ya**, e.g. **harya-** “to possess”, the entire ending **-ya** would probably drop out before **-ië** is suffixed. Otherwise the gerund would have to be **\*\*haryië**, but **yi** is not a possible Quenya combination. Abstract nouns formed by means of the ending **-ië** from *adjectives* in **-ya** are seen to surrender the latter ending, e.g. **verië** “boldness” from **verya** “bold” (see

the *Etymologies*, entry BER). We may probably assume that **verië** would also be the gerund of the related verb **verya-** “to dare”. So the gerund of a verb like **harya-** “to possess” is most likely **harië** (e.g. in a platitude like **harië malta úva carë nér anwavë alya**, “possessing gold will not make a man truly rich”).

### 13.3 The pronoun “we”

We have been practicing various pronominal endings: **-n** or **-nyë** “I” (the short form must not be confused with the dative ending!), **-lyë** “you”, **-s** “it”, **-ntë** “they” and **-t** “them”. It is time to introduce the endings for the first person plural, corresponding to the English pronoun “we”.

There are actually several Quenya endings for “we”. One of them occurs in the Cormallen Praise: **Andavë laitivalmet**, “long shall we bless them”. Here we have a future-tense verb with pronominal endings for “we” (subject) and “them” (object): **lait·uva·lme·t**, “bless·shall·we·them”. The ending for “we” is seen to be **-lmë** (**-lme-**).

However, in WJ:371 Tolkien discusses the Quenya exclamation **vá**, signaling *refusal* or *prohibition*: in effect “no!” in the sense of “I will not” or “do not!” Tolkien also indicated that this **vá** could receive explicit pronominal endings, such as **-n(yë)** for “I”, producing the form **ván** or **ványë** for “I won’t”. But Tolkien also mentioned the form **vammë**, “we won’t”. So here the pronominal ending for “we” is suddenly not **-lmë**, but rather **-mmë**.

NOTE: Notice, by the way, how the long **á** of **vá** is shortened in the form **vammë**. This is one of the examples indicating that Quenya cannot have a long vowel in front of a consonant cluster or a long consonant – a phonological rule we have repeatedly alluded to earlier in this course. The fact that the vowel remains long in **ványë** suggests that **ny** is perceived as a single consonant, palatalized **n** like Spanish *ñ*, and not as a cluster **n + y**.

The fact that there are two endings for “we”, **-mmë** and **-lmë**, is easily explained once we realize that this part of the Quenya pronoun table makes a distinction not found in English. Tolkien referred to the ending **-mmë** as the “first [person] plural *exclusive*” (WJ:371, emphasis added). The ending **-mmë** denotes an *exclusive* “we”, a “we” that excludes the person(s) addressed. The exclamation **vammë** “we won’t” represents a refusal *as it would be spoken to some other party* (likely the one whose will “we” refuse to obey). This other party is not included in “we”, but stands outside the “we” group. Therefore, the exclusive “we” is proper here.

On the other hand, the ending **-lmë** apparently denotes an *inclusive* “we”: The party being addressed is included in “we”. In the example **andavë laitivalmet**, “long shall we bless them”, the people who are praising Frodo and Sam are addressing one another, not the Ring-bearers. If they had said “long shall we bless *you*” instead, addressing Frodo and Sam directly, they would have had to use an exclusive “we”: ending **-mmë** instead of **-lmë**.

Frodo and Sam would not be part of this exclusive “we”; they would stand outside the “we” group addressing them. (Conversely, a group of people conspiring *among themselves* about refusing an order would have to say **valmë**, not **vammë**, for “we won’t!”)

In written works, the word “we” would normally be exclusive (**-mmë**), unless the writer has reason to believe that the reader will be part of the “we” group referred to. In such a case, **-lmë** for inclusive “we” would be proper.

Back in Lesson Eight, it was noted that while the author of this course may sometimes seem to refer to himself as “we”, this is not (necessarily!) because he has an ego of royal dimensions. The author tends to include the reader in this “we”, as if implying that the author and the readers somehow share this odyssey through the various aspects of Quenya grammar. (You can take it as a friendly gesture, or as a particularly cunning brain-wash technique which the author uses to somehow make you an accomplice whenever he draws conclusions that he should actually take the full responsibility for himself!) Anyhow, in Quenya there could have been no misunderstanding. A royal “we”, excluding the people addressed, could only be **-mmë**. An author using the word “we” to refer to himself *and his readers*, directly addressing them in his text, would have to use the inclusive “we”: **-lmë**.

There is yet another ending for “we”, namely the *dual inclusive*, which is “we” referring to two persons only – in effect “you and I” or “the two of us”. (The ending **-lmë** would refer to an inclusive “we” involving three or more persons.) Unfortunately, the ending denoting dual inclusive “we” must be extrapolated in a two-step operation, and we cannot be quite certain about its form (most likely either **-lwë** or **-lvë**). We will return to this problem later; in the exercises below, we will only practice the endings **-lmë** and **-mmë**.

NOTE: There has been much confusion regarding the Quenya endings for “we”. An earlier interpretation, set forth in Jim Allan’s *Introduction to Elvish* in the late seventies, had it that the ending **-lmë** is exclusive rather than inclusive. The extrapolated ending **-lvë** was thought to be the inclusive “we” (and inclusive it would certainly have to be, but it is a *dual* inclusive form, referring to a “we” of two persons only). The true ending for exclusive “we”, **-mmë**, was unknown until WJ was published in 1994 (providing the example **vammë**). The wrong interpretation haunts many post-Tolkien Quenya texts written before the mid-nineties, and it also made its way into Nancy Martsch’ *Basic Quenya*.

## 13.4 An indefinite pronoun

In English, words like “one” and “you” are often used with deliberately vague or general reference: “One has to earn a living...” or “you have to wonder...” Here, “one” is not the number 1 (Quenya **minë**), and “you” does not refer to the one who is addressed. For such meanings, Quenya

has the pronoun **quen** (WJ:361) – essentially an unstressed variant of the noun **quén**, which simply means “person”. Though ultimately related to **Quendë** “Elf”, these words have no special reference to Elves. As usual, we lack attested examples, but we must assume that **quen** would be used for “one” or “someone” in such sentences as **quen milyanë leryalë** “one longed for release” or **quen hantë i yulma** “someone broke the cup”. Presumably **quen** may also receive case endings, e.g. genitive **queno** “one’s” or dative **quenen** (which in English would often be translated “for you” rather than “for one”: **Matië yávë ná mára quenen**, “eating fruit is good for you” – “you” here meaning “people in general”!)

Most Quenya pronouns usually appear as *endings*, and it may be that Tolkien at one stage even reckoned with a pronominal ending for the indefinite pronoun “one”. There exists an early “Qenya” text where this meaning seems to be associated with an ending **-o**: **Kildo kirya ninqe**, translated “a white ship one saw” (MC:220–221). However, transforming this into LotR-style Quenya would probably require rather more than altering the spelling to **cildo cirya ninquë**: While the two last words would certainly be acceptable, the verb form **kildo** does not seem to fit Tolkien’s later system, and the status of the ending **-o** at the LotR stage is highly doubtful. If we aim for LotR-style Quenya, it is certainly much safer to use the indefinite pronoun **quen** from a post-LotR source.

## Summary of Lesson Thirteen

The Quenya *dative* case identifies indirect objects, the party indirectly affected by a verbal action (often the beneficiary of this action, though the indirect object may also be adversely affected by it). In the singular, the dative ending is **-n** (when it is to be added to a noun ending in a consonant, a helping vowel **-e-** is inserted before it). Nouns with nominative plurals in **-i** have dative plurals in **-in**; this ending **-in** is also used in case of nouns which have nominative plurals in **-r**, so that the dative form corresponding to nominative **Eldar** is **Eldain**. The *dual* dative ending is **-nt**, at least in the case of nouns which have nominative dual forms in **-t**. (Nouns with nominative dual forms in **-u** should perhaps have dative dual forms in **-uen**, if we can put any trust in earlier material where the ending **-n** was actually assigned to the genitive case rather than the dative.) – A *gerund* is a form of the verb which can function almost like a noun, denoting the corresponding verbal action, but unlike regular verbal nouns, gerunds are still able to take objects. Quenya gerunds are formed with the ending **-ië** (also a general abstract ending); if this suffix is to be added to an A-stem, the final **-a** evidently drops out. In the case of verbs in **-ya**, this entire ending is apparently omitted before the suffix **-ië**. English infinitives expressing *purpose* (i.e., infinitives signifying “[in order] to do” something) translate into Quenya as



gerunds inflected for dative, e.g. **hirien** “(in order) to find”. – Quenya has several pronominal endings corresponding to English “we”. One of them is **-lmë**, denoting a “we” that *includes* the party that is addressed, whereas the ending **-mmë** expresses an *exclusive* “we”, used when the speaker addresses a party outside the “we” group that the speaker himself belongs to. – The *indefinite* pronoun “one” or “someone” is in Quenya **quen**. Presumably it can receive case endings, e.g. genitive **queno** “one’s”.

## Vocabulary

In each Vocabulary section, we have first of all introduced a new number. The numbers 1-11 are explicitly mentioned in the *Etymologies*: **minë**, **atta**, **neldë**, **canta**, **lempë**, **enquë**, **otso**, **tolto**, **nertë**, **cainen** and **minquë**. The Elvish way of counting, with base 12 instead of 10, would obviously require a word for “twelve” as well – the last of the basic numbers. However, the *Etymologies* does not mention the Quenya word for “twelve”, and neither is it attested elsewhere. Etym only cites the primitive *root-word* for this number: RÁSAT. “No other forms are given,” Christopher Tolkien notes. However, students of Elvish agree that a Quenya word derived from this root would most likely have the form **rasta** (the complete Primitive Elvish word being something like *rásatâ*, the accent mark here indicating stress rather than length). Some writers have used **rasta** in their own compositions, so it is at least a post-Tolkien Quenya word. To complete our survey of the basic numbers, I have included **rasta** in the vocabulary below – but it must be understood that while this is definitely a plausible word, it is not explicitly given in published material.

?**rasta** “twelve”

**mahta-** “to fight”

**anta-** “to give”, irregular past tense **ánë**. (This past tense is listed in a very old source, the *Qenya Lexicon* p. 31. It is entirely possible that in Tolkien’s later Quenya, the past tense of **anta-** could just as well be regular: **antanë**. However, the Sindarin verb form *ónen* “I gave” occurring in LotR Appendix A would correspond to Quenya **ánen** rather than ?**antanen**. The *Etymologies*, entry ONO, indicates that the past tense of the verb **onta-** “beget, create” may be both **ónë** and **ontanë**; perhaps the past tense of **anta-** may likewise be both **ánë** and **antanë**. We will use the attested form **ánë** here.)

**suc-** “to drink”

**anna** “gift”

**alassë** “joy”

**hroa** “body” (related to a word introduced earlier, **hrávë** “flesh”; Tolkien meant them to be descended from Primitive Elvish *srawâ* and *srâwê*, respectively. See MR:350.)

**noa** “idea”

**cala** “light” (as in **Calaquendi** “Light-elves”, **Calacirya/-cilya** “Light-cleft”)

**mára** “good” (in the sense of “fit, useful” – Quenya has other words for “good” in the moral sense)

**quen** indefinite pronoun “one”, “someone”

**arwa** adjective “possessing”, “in control of”, “having”, followed by genitive (see note)

NOTE ON **ARWA** “POSSESSING, IN CONTROL OF”: This adjective is listed in the *Etymologies*, entry *ƷAR* (though it is derived from a variant root *GAR*). It can be used to form compound adjectives; Tolkien mentioned the example **aldarwa** “having trees” = “tree-grown” (**alda** + **arwa**, “tree-having”). But apparently **arwa** “having, possessing” can also be used by itself, and then it would be followed by a genitive form. (As we have touched on above, the Quenya genitive ending was **-n** when Tolkien wrote the *Etymologies*, but we must assume that the rule as such was still valid when he changed the ending to **-o** later.) So we may probably have phrases like **nér arwa collo**, “a man having/possessing a cloak” (**colla** “cloak”, genitive **collo**). Perhaps this may simply be translated “a man *with* a cloak”, and if we use **arwa** to mean “with”, it would mean that the words for “with” and “without” (**arwa** and **ú**, respectively) are both followed by genitive! Yet **arwa** is said to be an adjective and not a preposition, so **arwa** presumably agrees in number, becoming **arwë** (for archaic **arwai**) when pointing back to a plural word: **Neri arwë collo**, “men possessing a cloak”, **Naucor arwë harmaron** “Dwarves possessing treasures”, **arani arwë ohtarion** “kings in control of warriors”.

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **I nér ánë i nissen anna.**
- B. **Anar anta cala Ambaren.**
- C. **Hiruvalmë i harma, ar antuvalmes i rasta Naucoin.**
- D. **Matië hrávë carë quen tiuca, ar umilmë merë tiucë hroar, an tiucë hroar umir vanyë.**
- E. **Lendemmë mir i osto hirien i sailë nissi, an mernemmë cenitat.**
- F. **Nér arwa márë noaron ná saila ar antuva sérë ar alassë i oston.**
- G. **Utultiemmet quetien rimbë engwion.**
- H. **Sucië limpë umë mára queno hroan.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. Someone gave the warrior a great sword.
- J. Making a house for the boys is a good idea.
- K. We (*inclusive*) fight for peace; fighting does not give the people [any] joy, for we (*inclusive*) have seen the light.
- L. Speaking the Elven-tongue (**Eldalambë**) is a great joy to Men (**Atani**).
- M. The warriors of the two lands will fight for the [twin] peoples (*dual*), and we (*exclusive*) will go through a great darkness to find light.
- N. The men having the good wine wanted cups to drink the wine, and the king's thralls gave the men twelve cups of gold.
- O. We (*exclusive*) want to go into the city to free all Men (**Atani**) and (to) give the gold of the king to the thralls.
- P. The walls of the city are great; we (*inclusive*) have made them to protect the people.

# Lesson 14

The Allative and Ablative cases. *Equë* and *auta*: two peculiar verbs. Possessive pronominal endings: *-nya*, *-lya*, *-lma*, *-mma*.

## 14.1 The Allative and Ablative cases

The *dative* case ending **-n** presented in the previous lesson may sometimes correspond to the English preposition “to”, as when it is appended to gerunds: **enyalien** = “to recall” (UT:317). Yet this is a rather abstract kind of “to”; as we have seen, the Quenya dative may also be translated as phrases involving the preposition “for”, or it may simply correspond to a specific English word order.

However, Quenya does have a special case form implying “to” in the more basic sense of “towards” or “against”; the Latin term for such a case is *allative*. The relevant Quenya ending is **-nna**: In the entry *Eldanna* in the UT Index, Christopher Tolkien identifies this ending as a “suffix . . . of movement towards”. The word **Eldanna** itself is not a bad example; it may be translated “Elfwards” and was used by the Númenoreans as the name of a bay on the west coast of Númenor, thus in the direction of the Blessed Realm where the Eldar dwelt (UT:164). In Elendil’s Declaration, repeated by Aragorn at his coronation, the ending **-nna** carries the full force of “to” with the implication of motion towards: **Et Eärello Endorenna utúlien** = “out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth [**Endor**] I am come.” Cf. also the sentence **Sin Quentë Quendingoldo Elendilnna** (PM:401) – apparently meaning “Thus Spoke Quendingoldo to Elendil” (or perhaps “This Quendingoldo Said to Elendil”; the meaning of the word **sin** is not quite clear). As the allative forms of **ciryä** “ship” and **lassë** “leaf”, the Plotz Letter points to **ciryanna** “to a ship” and **lassenna** “to a leaf”. (Of course, the stress now falls on the vowel of the second-to-last syllable because of the following consonant cluster introduced by the ending **-nna**: *ciryAнна, lassEнна.) So if you want to say “I’ll go to the ship” in Quenya, you don’t normally use a separate word for “to”, but employ the ending **-nna** instead: **Lelyuvan i ciryanna**.*

While the ending **-nna** may sometimes be rendered “-wards” in English, e.g. **Elenna** “Starwards” as a name of Númenor (see below), the English ending “-wards” cannot be freely applied to any noun like the Quenya ending can. But if the day ever comes when **Columbus lendë Americanna** can be translated “Columbus went Americawards”, people thinking this is acceptable English, the language shall have acquired a living allative case.

NOTE: Besides **-nna**, there are also traces of an older allative ending in Quenya. In primitive Elvish it had the form *-da*, later reduced to *-d* (WJ:366). In Quenya, this *-d* became **-z** and later **-r**, and we have already met it in the word **mir** “into” (this is literally **mi-r** “in-to”, cf. **mi** “in”!) Since this ending came to clash with the plural ending **-r**, as in **Eldar**, it only survived in a handful of words indicating motion *to* or *towards* a point. Attested examples include **tar** “thither”, **oar** “away”, **yar** “to whom” and **mir** “into”. Actually “into” can also be **minna** with the normal, “modern” allative ending **-nna**. Likewise, “thither” can be **tanna** as well as **tar**.

In the *plural*, the ending **-nna** changes to **-nnar**, hence **lassennar** “to leaves” and **ciryannar** “to ships” (e.g. **lelyuvan i ciryannar** “I’ll go to the ships”). The final **-r** here appearing seems to be the same plural element that we are familiar with from the nominative.

Since Quenya may express “to, towards” by means of a case ending, the question naturally arises whether there is an ending for “from” as well. There is.

As we pointed out in Lesson 11, the genitive ending **-o** may occasionally take on this meaning, as in one word in *Namárië*: **Oiolossëo** = “from Oiolossë” (Mount Everwhite). However, the idea of “from” is more regularly expressed by the *ablative* case, which is marked by the ending **-llo**. According to Plotz, we can have forms like **lassello** “from a leaf” and **ciryallo** “from a ship” (again accented on the second-to-last syllable, of course). So we may build sentences like **tulin i ciryallo** “I come from the ship”. For a Tolkien-made example, cf. the phrase **métima hrestallo** “from the last shore” in the Markirya poem. Both the ablative and the allative cases are exemplified in the phrase **telmello talmanna** “from hood [telmë] to base [talma]”, that is, “from top to bottom”. (In the entry TEL of the *Etymologies* as reproduced in LR, this expression is actually cited as “*telmello telmanna*”, but this is plainly a typo, for as is evident from the entry TAL, the word for “base, foundation, root” is not **telma**, but **talma**.)

As for the *plural* form of the ablative, there are apparently several options. Just like the suffix **-nna** for allative turns into **-nnar** in the plural, the ablative ending **-llo** may have a plural equivalent **-llor**: In the Markirya poem, Tolkien used **elenillor** as the plural ablative of **elen** “star”, hence “from stars”. However, according to the Plotz letter, the plural ablative is to have the ending in **-llon** instead. Here we have the same plural marker **-n** as in the ending **-on** for plural genitive (the basic genitive ending **-o** + the plural sign **-n**, WJ:407). One of Tolkien’s earlier tables of Quenya case endings lists both **-llor** and **-llon** as possible plural ablative endings. So “I

come from the ships” could evidently be both **tulin i ciryallor** and **tulin i ciryallon**. I generally prefer **-llon**, the Plotz variant, since the Plotz letter is our best late source regarding the Quenya case system – but **-llor** must be considered a valid alternative.

*Dual allative/ablative:* The *dual* forms of the allative and ablative endings include the already-familiar dual element **-t**, which replaces one of the consonants of the suffixes **-nna** and **-llo** to produce **-nta** and **-lto** instead. Thus the nominative **ciryat** “two ships, a couple of ships” corresponds to an allative form **ciryanta** “to(wards) a couple of ships” and an ablative form **ciryalto** “from a couple of ships”. These are the examples Tolkien used in the Plotz letter, but again it is uncertain whether the same endings would be suffixed to a noun that forms its nominative dual in **-u** rather than **-t**. Still using **Aldu** as our standard example, should “to the Two Trees” be **Aldunta** or simply **Aldunna**? Similarly, should “from the Two Trees” be **Aldulto** or simply **Aldullo**? I tend to think of **Aldunna**, **Aldullo** as the likeliest forms, but lacking attested examples we cannot be sure.

*Additional shades of meaning of the Allative and Ablative cases:* While the primary implication of these cases is “to(wards)” and “from”, they may have other shades of meaning as well.

The idea of actual, physical motion towards or from something is not always present. Notice the use of the ablative in a phrase found in *J.R.R. Tolkien – Artist and Illustrator*: **Itarildë Ondolindello**, “Itarildë from Ondolindë”, or using the better-known Sindarin forms: Idril from Gondolin. In English, this is best rendered Idril *of* Gondolin, identifying Idril as a person living in Gondolin; the Quenya wording may not necessarily imply that Idril had actually *left* Gondolin. Possibly, the ablative can also be used in other ways that carry no implication of motion. It may be noted that regarding the Quenya verb **ruc-** “to feel fear or horror”, Tolkien wrote that it is “constructed with ‘from’ of the object feared” (WJ:415). He did not provide any further information or examples, but “from” is regularly expressed by the ablative case in Quenya. So given that the Quenya word for “monster” is **ulundo**, perhaps “I fear the monster” would translate something like **rucin i ulundollo**. (Insofar as the words “from” and “of” express related meanings, this may be compared to such an English wording as “I’m afraid of the monster”.)

As for the allative, it does not always mean “to(wards)”, but may also imply “on, upon”: The meanings are related insofar as an object that rests “upon” something also presses “towards” it, though there is no actual motion. This use of the allative may typically occur in connection with the verb **caita-** “lie”, as in this sentence from the prose *Namárië*: **Mornië caita i falmalinnar**, “darkness lies on the foaming waves” (**falma** “foaming wave”, here not only with the plural allative ending **-nnar** but also the “partitive plural” marker **-li**, in this context possibly implying a great number of waves: In his interlinear translation in RGE0:67, Tolkien analyzed **falma-**

**li-nnar** as “foaming waves-many-upon”). Further examples of allative forms implying “on, upon” are found in the Markirya poem; we have **atalantië mindoninnar** (or, **mindonnar**) “upon fallen towers” and **axor ilcalannar** “on bones gleaming”.

However, the student should also notice that while the allative and ablative cases may not always imply physical motion to or from something, their basic meanings of “to, towards” and “from” may also be *strengthened*. Instead of just indicating motion “towards” something, the allative may also suggest motion “into” it: Attested examples include **ëari lantier cilyanna** “seas fell into a chasm” (LR:56) and **mannar Valion** “into the hands of the Vali [Valar]” (Fíriel’s Song). The ablative may likewise indicate motion “out of” something rather than merely “from” it: The word **sindanóriello** occurring in *Namárië* Tolkien translated “out of a grey country” (though in the interlinear analysis in RCEO:67, he broke it down as **sinda-nórie-llo**, “grey-country-from”).

These additional uses of the allative and ablative cases may lead to some ambiguities: Is **lenden i coanna** to be interpreted “I went to the house” or “I went into the house”? Where confusion may arise, it is probably best to use the independent word **mir** (or **minna**) if “into” is the desired meaning: **Lenden mir/minna i coa**. As for “out of” as opposed to merely “from”, Elendil’s Declaration demonstrates that the word **et** “out” can be placed in front of an ablative form to clarify the meaning: **Et Eärello . . . utúlien**, “out of [or, out from] the Great Sea I am come.” Some would even analyze **et** “out” as a preposition governing the ablative case (like **ú** “without” governs the genitive case).

*Adding the allative and ablative endings to nouns ending in a consonant:* Suffixes like **-nna** and **-llo** and their dual/plural variants can never be added directly to a noun ending in a consonant without creating impossible consonant clusters. For instance, the allative “to Elendil” cannot be **\*\*Elendilna**, for Quenya phonology does not permit the group “lnn”. As is evident from the actual form **Elendilenna** occurring in PM:401, the language may work around this problem by inserting a connecting vowel **e** before the case ending. The ablative and allative forms occurring in Elendil’s Declaration in LotR may be examples of the same: **et Eärello** “out of the Great Sea” (**Eär**: Quenya name of the Ocean), **Endoreнна** “to Middle-earth” (**Endor**: Quenya for “Mid-land” = “Middle-earth”). However, the word **Eär** is also cited in the form **Eäre** (SD:305), and **Endor** is shortened from an older form **Endóre**, so we cannot be absolutely certain that the **e**’s occurring before the case endings in the forms **Eärello**, **Endoreнна** are not simply part of the nouns proper. On the other hand, the example **Elendilenna** almost certainly includes a connecting vowel **e**, for there is no reason to assume that the name **Elendil** ever ended in **-ë**. So the main strategy for avoiding unwanted consonant clusters before case endings is probably to insert an **-e-** before the ending.

It should be noted, though, that in the case of a *plural* noun requiring a connecting vowel, it seems that **-i-** rather than **-e-** is preferred. We have already mentioned that in the Markirya poem, Tolkien used **elenillor** as the plural ablative form of **elen** “star”. In effect, the pl. ablative ending **-llor** has been added to the nominative plural **eleni**. One version of the Markirya poem also had **mindoninnar** as the pl. allative “upon towers” (before Tolkien decided to go for a contracted form instead; see below). Here, the pl. allative ending has been added to the nominative plural **mindoni** “towers”.

NOTE: Notice, though, that nouns in **-ë** with nominative plurals in **-i** (e.g. **lassë** “leaf”, pl. **lassi**) do *not* change their final **-ë** to **-i** before **-nnar** or **-llon/-llor** is suffixed: Plotz indicates that the pl. allative and ablative forms of **lassë** are **lassennar** and **lassellon**, respectively – *not* **\*\*lassinnar**, **\*\*lassillon**. In this respect, the allative and ablative cases differ from the genitive case: A noun that forms its nominative plural in **-i** *always* receives this ending before the genitive plural ending **-on** is added – the genitive plural of **lassë** being **lassion**, *not* **\*\*lassëon**.

If one does not insert any connecting vowel, another way of getting rid of an unwanted consonant cluster is to simply *omit the final consonant* of the noun that is to receive a case ending. Especially where the final consonant of the noun is identical to the first consonant of the case ending, these two consonants may simply merge. As indicated above, Tolkien first used **mindoninnar** as the plural allative of **mindon** “tower”. But then he decided to drop the connecting vowel intruding before **-nnar** and introduced a contracted form instead: **Mindonnar**, which simply represents *mindon-nnar*. As we see, the final **-n** of **mindon** merges with the first **n** of the ending **-nnar**. A more-well known example is **Elenna** (for *Elen-nna*) as a name of Númenor: After following the Star of Eärendil across the ocean to their new land, the Edain “called that land Elenna, which is Starwards” (*Akallabêth*; cf. UT:317: **Elenna·nórë** = “the land named Starwards”). In a similar fashion, perhaps the *ablative* of **Menel** “heaven” could – or even should – be **Menello** (for *Menel-llo*) rather than **Menelello**.

NOTE: We may wonder how certain nouns with special stem-forms would be treated. In the case of **talan**, **talam-** “floor”, the allative “to a floor” or “(up)on a floor” might probably be expressed as **talamenna** with a connecting vowel inserted (the ablative should almost certainly be **talamello**), but perhaps we could also start from **talan** and use **talanna** (for *talan-nna*) as the allative form? And what about a noun like **toron**, **torn-** “brother”? Should “to a brother” be **tornenna** with a connecting vowel **e** inserted between the stem-form and the case ending, or may we simply say **toronna** for *toron-nna*? At this stage, we cannot know what Tolkien would have accepted as correct Quenya. I would not reject any of these alternatives as wrong.

It seems that the final **-n** of the four directions **Formen**, **Hyarmen**, **Rómen**, **Númen** “North, South, East, West” quite regularly drops out before the case endings for allative, ablative and locative (the locative case will be discussed in the next lesson). One haven in the east of Númenor was



called **Rómenna**, literally “Eastwards” (see its entry in the UT index, and cf. LR:47) – clearly because ships sailed eastwards from it. Of course, *Rómen-na* > **Rómenna** as such is just another example of a final consonant of a noun merging with the first consonant of the case ending because they happen to be identical. However, *Namárië* provides **Rómello** “from the East” as the ablative of **Rómen** “East”, and here there can be no doubt that the final **-n** has been omitted to avoid the impossible form **\*\*Rómenllo**. It may be that **Rómenello** with a connecting vowel inserted would also be a valid form, but as I said, contracted forms seem to be normal when the words for four basic directions are to be inflected for allative or ablative.

## 14.2 *Equë* and *auta*: two peculiar verbs

*The verb equë*: We have earlier introduced the Quenya word for “say” or “speak”: **quet-** (aorist **quetë**, present tense **quéta**, past tense **quentë**). Yet this verb is not always used; there is an alternative word that may be used to introduce quotations. In WJ:392, Tolkien refers to

... a curious and evidently archaic form that survives only in the languages of Aman: [primitive] *\*ekwê*, Q[uenya] *equë*, T[elerin] *epe*. It has no tense forms ... being mostly used before either a proper name (sg. or pl.) or a full independent pronoun, in the senses *say / says* or *said*. A quotation then follows, either direct, or less usually indirect after a ‘that’-conjunction [e.g., “Galadriel said that she wants to go to Middle-earth”]

So as far as inflection is concerned, this **equë** may well be the simplest verb in the entire language. “It has no tense forms”, so **equë** may be interpreted either as a past tense “said” or as present tense “say(s)”, depending on the context (perhaps it could even cover the future tense “shall say”!) It is used mainly where the subject is a *full independent pronoun* (to be discussed later in this course) or a *proper name* (not a common noun). Also notice the word order indicated by Tolkien: The word **equë** comes *before* its subject. Tolkien gave us no actual sentences containing the word **equë**, but based on the information he provided, something like the following must be possible:

**Equë Elendil: “Et Eärello Endorena utúlien.”**

Elendil says/said: “Out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth I am come.”

Tolkien glossed **equë** not only as “says”, but also as “say”. Since “say” must be understood as a plural verb in English, it seems that unlike normal verbs, **equë** does *not* receive the ending **-r** even where it has a plural subject or more than one subject. Notice that Tolkien stated that **equë** is typically “used before ... a proper name (sg. or pl.)”. Now proper names normally don’t appear in the plural (except in sentences like “there are many Johns in this town”), so when Tolkien speaks of “pl.” proper names, he probably

means *several* proper names occurring together. So we must assume that a sentence like this would be acceptable:

**Equë Altariel ar Teleporno: “Utúliemmë Valinorello.”**

Altariel and Teleporno [Galadriel and Celeborn] say/said: “We have come from Valinor.”

Tolkien indicated that **equë** rarely received suffixes of any kind, usually not even pronominal endings (WJ:392), though forms like **equen** “said **I**” may also occur (WJ:415).

It cannot be *wrong* to replace **equë** with a form of the verb **quet-**, complete with all the normal inflections (**Elendil quetë/quentë...** “Elendil says/said...”, **Altariel ar Teleporno quetir/quenter...** “Galadriel and Celeborn say/said...”) Where the subject is *not* a proper name or a full independent pronoun, it would seem that a form of **quet-** is usually to be preferred: **I nís quentë...** “the woman said...” Perhaps word order is also significant. Tolkien seems to be saying that **equë** is used to introduce a *following* quotation; if the speaker and the act of speaking is mentioned *after* the quotation, it is perhaps better to use a form of **quet-**, e.g.

**Equë Elendil: “Utúlien.”** = Elendil said: “I am come.”

*but:*

**”Utúlien,” Elendil quentë** = “I am come,” Elendil said.

Also where no direct or indirect quotation is included in the sentence at all, it is probably best to use a form of **quet-**. Cf. the attested example **Sin Quentë Quendingoldo Elendilenna** referred to above (PM:401) – apparently meaning “Thus Spoke Quendingoldo [= Pengolodh] to Elendil”. Perhaps **quentë** could have been replaced by **equë** here as well – but probably not.

*The verb autā-*: This verb means “pass” or “go away, leave (the point of the speaker’s thought)” (WJ:366). Readers of the *Silmarillion* will have encountered it in chapter 20, as part of a battle-cry: **Auta i lómë!** “The night is passing!”

According to the rules so far set out in the course, this verb is quite irregular, though Tolkien may not have thought of it that way: In WJ:366 he refers to its various “regular forms”. Anyway, the past tense of **autā-** is not **\*autanë** as we might expect. There are actually several possible past tense forms. One of them is **anwë**, formed by nasal-infixion of the primitive root-word AWA; the ending **-ta** seen in **autā-** (primitive ?*awatâ-*) does not appear at all in this past tense form. However, the form **anwë** was “only found in archaic language”, so we will concentrate on the “modern” forms instead.

There are *two* sets of past and perfect forms of the verb **autā-**, with somewhat different shades of meaning. If the meaning is “went away” in a purely physical sense, about someone leaving one place and going to another,

the past tense form **oantë** is used. According to Tolkien, this form is “regular for a *-ta* verb of this class” (though most verbs in *-ta* seem to form their past tense simply by adding the ending *-në*). The past tense is supposed to descend from *awantë*, evidently a nasal-infixed form of *awatâ*, and in Quenya, these words regularly developed into **oantë** and **auta**, respectively. (For the shift *awa* > **oa**, cf. one word introduced in the previous lesson: **hroa** “body”, which Tolkien derived from primitive *srawâ*.) – The *perfect* tense of **auta-** used in the same “physical” sense is **oantië** = “has gone away [to another place]”. This perfect form is obviously influenced by the past tense **oantë**. Tolkien noticed that the form **oantië** shows “intrusion of *n* from the past [tense form]” (WJ:366): Normally, nasal-infixion does not occur in the perfect tense.

The other set of past and perfect forms of the verb **auta-** seems no less irregular. The alternative past tense is **vánë**, the perfect **avánië**. The first syllable of **vánë** is apparently the Quenya descendant of the stem *wâ* (WJ:366, apparently another manifestation of AWA), whereas the ending *-në* must be simply the normal past tense ending. (Again, the perfect form seems influenced by the past tense form – the **n** of **vánë** sneaking into the perfect **avánië**.)

The form **vánë** and the corresponding perfect **avánië** have acquired a more “abstract” meaning than the forms **oantë**, **oantië**. **Vánë** does *not* mean “went away (to another place)”, but rather “disappeared”, “passed”. The perfect **avánië** occurs (with the plural ending *-r*) in *Namárië*, in the sentence **yéni ve lintë yuldar avánier** = “long years have passed like swift draughts”. This sentence nicely illustrates the meaning of this perfect form, for obviously the meaning is not that the **yéni** or “long years” have gone away to another place (sc. **oantier**!) They “long years” have simply passed, and now they are gone. Where the subject is more tangible than “long years”, the forms **vánë/avánië** would imply that the subject has *disappeared*, is *lost*, has *died off* etc.

Indeed Tolkien indicated that the meaning of **vánë/avánië** was influenced by the related word **vanwa** “gone”, “lost”, “vanished”, “past and over”. It occurs twice in *Namárië*: **Sí vanwa ná, Rómello vanwa, Valimar** = “now lost, lost [to those] from the East, is Valimar”. In WJ:366, Tolkien calls **vanwa** the “past participle” of **auta-**, though it obviously has no connection with the past or passive participles we have discussed earlier in this course (constructed with the ending *-na* or *-ina*). There is some evidence for an alternative, rarer participle in *-nwa*. However, for all intents and purposes, it matters little whether we call **vanwa** a participle or merely a verbal adjective (as does Nancy Martsch in her *Basic Quenya*).

NOTE 1: As pointed out in Lesson Eight, it may well be that when Tolkien wrote *Namárië*, he thought of the word **avánier** as the perfect form of a verb listed in the *Etymologies*: **vanya-** “go, depart, disappear” (see the entry WAN). We should still accept Tolkien’s post-LotR ideas about the verb **auta-**; it occurs, after all, in such a primary

source as the *Silmarillion*. Interestingly, the adjectival word **vanwa** “gone, lost, over” is found already in the *Qenya Lexicon* of 1915 (QL:99) and was retained throughout all stages of Tolkien’s development of Quenya.

NOTE 2: In the *Etymologies*, entry GAWA, a quite distinct verb **auta-** “to invent” is listed. It would seem that the later verb **auta-** “go away” did not exist at the time Tolkien wrote *Etym*. If we nonetheless accept both verbs as valid Quenya, we can distinguish between them in some tenses, for **auta-** “to invent” may perhaps have the simplest past tense: **autanë**.

### 14.3 Possessive pronominal endings

So far, we have discussed five pronominal endings that may be suffixed to verbs to function as their subject: **-nyë** (often shortened to **-n**) “I”, **-lyë** “you”, **-lmë** and **-mmë** “we” (inclusive and exclusive), plus **-ntë** “they”. We have also pointed out that Quenya pronouns usually appear as endings, not so often as separate words as in English.

Pronouns may also describe possession or belonging. Among the English *possessive pronouns* we have “my” (and “mine”), “your(s)”, “our(s)”, “their(s)”. Quenya has endings for these pronouns as well, though these endings are logically added to *nouns*, not to verbs. For instance, the ending for “my” is **-nya**. Thus, “my house” is **coanya**, while “my land” would be **nórenya**. The accent now falls on the syllable before the pronominal ending: *co-A-nya*, *nó-RE-nya*. All the pronominal endings begin in a consonant cluster, and in accordance with the normal rules, the stress falls on the second-to-last syllable when its vowel is followed by a group of consonants.

Notice that the subject endings that we have already introduced, all end in the vowel **-ë**: **-nyë** “I”, **-lyë** “you” etc. The corresponding possessive pronominal endings can be derived *simply by changing the final vowel to -a*. Here are the attested correspondences:

- nyë “I” / -nya “my”
- lyë “you” / -lya “your”
- lmë “we” (incl.) / -lma “our” (incl.)
- mmë “we” (excl.) / -mma “our” (excl.)

So besides **coanya** “my house” we can have **coalya** “your house”, whereas **coalma** and **coamma** would both translate as “our house” in English.

NOTE: As for the distinction between inclusive and exclusive “our”, it would closely correspond to the distinction between inclusive and exclusive “we”, explained in the previous lesson. Hence “our house” is expressed as **coalma** if the one(s) you are addressing is (are) also among the owners of the house and thus *included* in the word “our”. Conversely, **coamma** is the word to use for “our house” if you are talking to a party that is *not* among the owners of the house and hence is *not* included in the word “our”.

It seems very reasonable to assume that the ending **-ntë** “they” has a counterpart **-nta** “their”, though the latter suffix is not attested in published material. One problem may seem to be that it would clash with the dual allative ending, but in context it would hardly be very difficult to tell whether (say) **ciryanta** is to be interpreted “to a couple of ships” or “their ship”. Presumably the endings could even be combined: **ciryantanta**, “to their couple of ships”! I won’t construct any exercises involving the unattested ending **-nta** “their”, but I think it is safe enough to be recommended to writers.

*Combining pronominal possessive endings with endings for case and number:* Combining these two kinds of endings is what truly makes the total number of forms that a Quenya noun can assume explode. We are left with hundreds of possible combinations, but since they are just that – combinations – the endings involved are not nearly as numerous, and the load on the student’s memory is not so great after all.

Here follows **sambelya** “your room” (**sambë** “room, chamber” + **-lya** “your”) inflected for all the numbers and cases so far discussed in this course. If this list appears somewhat complicated and daunting at first glance, the student will be relieved to discover that it is actually *perfectly regular* and in a way contains no new information at all: Just start from **sambelya** “your room” and treat it as you would any other noun in **-a**, adding the normal endings for number and case. One consequence of this is that the word now has a plural in **-r** (**sambelyar** “your rooms”), though **sambë** “room” occurring by itself would be an **i**-plural (**sambi** “rooms”).

- NOMINATIVE/ACCUSATIVE: singular **sambelya** “your room”, dual **sambelyat** “your couple of rooms”, plural **sambelyar** “your rooms”. (In the archaic form of Quenya that had a distinct accusative, we would presumably see the acc. sing. **sambelyá** and the acc. pl. **sambelyai**, but in this course, we don’t use distinct accusative forms.)
- GENITIVE: singular **sambelyo** “of your room” (*the genitive ending **-o** regularly displacing the final **-a** of **sambelya** even though the **-a** is here part of another ending*), dual **sambelyato** “of your couple of rooms”, plural **sambelyaron** “of your rooms”.
- POSSESSIVE: singular **sambelyava** “of your room”, dual **?sambelyatwa** “of your couple of rooms”, plural **sambelyaiva** “of your rooms”. (*While we here provide the same translations for the genitive and possessive cases, there are of course certain subtle shades of meaning that distinguish them.*)
- DATIVE: **sambelyan** “for your room”, dual **sambelyant** “for your couple of rooms”, plural **sambelyain** “for your rooms”.
- ALLATIVE: **sambelyanna** “to your room”, dual **sambelyanta** “to your couple of rooms”, plural **sambelyannar** “to your rooms”.

- ABLATIVE: **sambelyallo** “from your room”, dual **sambelyalto** “from your couple of rooms”, plural **sambelyallon** (or, **-llor**) “from your rooms”. (*In the case of the allative and the ablative, the accent falls on the vowel in front of the case ending [e.g. sambelyAllo], in accordance with the normal stress rules – which apply for all the forms here listed.*)

NOTE: Elendil’s Declaration includes the words **sinomë maruvan, ar hildinyar** “in this place will I abide, and my heirs”. From the example **hildinyar** “my heirs”, one might argue that plural nouns with plural forms in **-i** (like **hildi** “heirs”) should assume this ending before pronominal endings and secondary plural markers (like the **-nya-** and **-r** of **hildinyar**) are added. If so, “your rooms” should actually be **sambilyar** rather than **sambelyar** as we suggested above. This is possible, but the example **hildinyar** may have its own peculiarities; see below.

Notice that the possessive pronominal ending is added *first*, and endings for number and case are added *after* it: “From your room” is therefore **sambelyallo**, *not* **\*\*sambellolya**. For a Tolkien-made example, cf. the greeting **Anar caluva tielyanna** “the Sun shall shine upon your path” (UT:22, 51): The noun **tië** “path” here appears combined with the pronominal ending **-lya** “your”, and **tielya** “your path” is further expanded with the allative ending **-nna** “upon” to express “upon your path”.

Another example of a noun equipped with both a pronominal ending and a case ending occurs in the most famous Elvish greeting of all, “a star shines on the hour of our meeting”: **Elen síla lúmenn’ omentielmo**, as the version printed in the first edition of LotR went. With this lesson we have finally presented all the grammar one needs to fully understand this sentence: **Elen** “a star”, **síla** “shines” or rather “is shining” (the present/continuative tense of the verb **sil-**), **lúmenn’** or in full **lúmena** “on (the) hour” (the noun **lúmë** “hour” + the allative ending **-nna** “on”), and finally the word that is relevant for our present discussion: **omentielmo**. This must be analyzed as an abstract noun (or gerund?) **omentie** “meeting” + the ending **-lma** for inclusive “our” (WJ:367), and **omentielma** “our meeting” is then equipped with the genitive ending **-o** to express “of our meeting”: Hence **omentielmo**, since the ending **-o** displaces a final **-a**.

*Dual inclusive “our”*: In the revised edition of LotR (1966), Tolkien altered the word **omentielmo** to **omentielvo**, though the translation remained the same: “of our meeting”. Tolkien made up an “internal” explanation for this change, briefly referred to in one of Humphrey Carpenter’s notes on the collection of Tolkien’s letters that he edited (Letters:447, notes on letter #205):

The Elvish language Quenya makes a distinction in its dual inflexion, which turns on the number of persons involved; failure to understand this was, Tolkien remarked, ‘a mistake generally made by mortals’. So in this case, Tolkien made a note that

the ‘Thain’s Book of Minas Tirith’, one of the supposed sources of *The Lord of the Rings*, had the reading *omentielvo*, but that Frodo’s original (lost) manuscript probably had *omentielmo*; and that *omentielvo* is the correct form in the context.

The point seems to be this: In the greeting “a star shines on the hour of our meeting”, the word “our” refers to a meeting of *two* people (Frodo and Gildor, the former speaking to the latter). Therefore, a *dual* “our” is appropriate here – “our” meaning “of you (sg.) and me”. Frodo’s “lost” original manuscript instead had a *plural* “our” (ending **-lma**, or with the genitive ending **-lmo**), but this is the kind of “our” that is used to refer to something belonging to three or more people. It was inappropriate when only 2 persons, Frodo and Gildor, were involved in “our meeting”. Frodo’s little grammatical error was mercifully corrected in the “Thain’s Book of Minas Tirith”, one of the copies of his original manuscript.

This “internal” explanation is of course mere rationalizing on Tolkien’s part. From an “external” point of view, it is obvious what is going on: After publishing LotR, the Professor couldn’t resist the temptation to continue tinkering with the Quenya pronoun table (a process that had already been going on for decades). Tolkien apparently decided to introduce special *dual* forms of (inclusive) “we” and “our”, used when only *two* persons are involved: the speaker and the one who is addressed. Unfortunately, this revision conflicted with a piece of already-published Quenya, but even so, the Professor changed **omentielmo** to **omentielvo** and made up a little story that would explain the discrepancy from an “internal” point of view: Frodo just couldn’t get his grammar right! Gildor’s remark to the other Elves, “here is a scholar in the Ancient Tongue”, suddenly ring rather ironic! Perhaps we are to imagine mocking smiles twitching in their lips – “ah, after all these centuries, mortals *still* can’t get their dual pronouns right. . .”

So let us poor mortals try to figure it out: What, really, is the ending for dual (inclusive) “our” – and the corresponding ending for dual inclusive “we”? The most straightforward extrapolation would go like this: Removing the genitive ending **-o** from **omentielvo** gives us **omentielva**, for surely this pronominal possessive suffix ends in **-a** just like all the other attested endings of this kind. We proceed to isolate **-lva** as the ending for dual inclusive “our”, e.g. **coalva** “**our** house” of a house owned by two persons, one of them speaking to the other. According to the pattern observed in such pairs as **-lya** “your” vs. **-lyë** “you”, we may further assume that our reconstructed ending **-lva** “our” corresponds to an ending **-lvë** “we” – a *dual inclusive* “we” meaning “you (thou) and I”: **Lelyuvalvë i ostonna** “**we** will go to the city [, you and I]”. Notice that the ending for inclusive “we” introduced in the previous lesson, namely **-lmë**, would refer to a group of at least three people.

NOTE: As far as is known, Quenya has no specific ending for dual *exclusive* “we” – sc.

an ending meaning “I and exactly one other person”! It is assumed that **-mmë** is used for exclusive “we”, and **-mma** for exclusive “our”, no matter whether two or more people are involved. Cf. one of our home-made examples above; we put the words **utúliemmë Valinorello** into the mouths of Galadriel and Celeborn. On the other hand, let none be surprised if it turns out that Tolkien actually did invent specific endings for dual exclusive “we” and “our”, to make the pronoun table wholly symmetric.

As I said, the most *straightforward* reconstruction based on the form **omentielvo** “of our meeting” would lead us to extrapolate the inclusive dual endings **-lva** “our” and **-lvë** “we”. This reconstruction may well be correct, and the student should notice these forms, for many writers have used them. Yet there are other possibilities as well. If we are to isolate the specifically *dual* element of the word **omentielvo**, it has to be the **v**, that must somehow be related to the dual ending **-u** (as in **Aldu** “Two Trees”). But if **u** were to be transmuted into a consonant, we would rather expect it to become **w**, which is the corresponding “semi-vowel” – the vowel **u** used as a *de facto* consonant. Therefore it has been suggested that the ending for dual inclusive “our” may not be **-lva** after all, but perhaps rather **-lwa**. According to this theory, adding the genitive ending **-o** produces **-lvo** instead of **\*\*lwo** for the simple reason that **wo** (unlike **wa**) is not a possible Quenya combination. Therefore, **w** (the consonant corresponding to **u**) here becomes **v** before **-o**. A possible phonological parallel is provided by some of the names quoted in PM:352–353. One example is **Telufinwë** “Last Finwë”, which is said to have a shorter form **Telvo**. This is apparently the initial element of the full name, **telu-**, + the suffix **-o** (here functioning as a masculine ending). Notice how the **-u** of **telu-** has become a **v** in the name **Telvo**, evidently because of the following **-o**. Perhaps we are to imagine a development whereby a form “Teluo” is reduced to two syllables by pronouncing it “Telwo”, and this form in turn has to be altered to **Telvo** to get rid of the unwanted combination **wo**. Similarly, “omentielwo” could plausibly transmute into the attested form **omentielvo**.

If the ending for dual inclusive “our” is actually **-lwa** rather than **-lva**, we may also assume that the ending for dual inclusive “we” is **-lwë** rather than **-lvë**. But extrapolating from a form that is itself reconstructed is of course a risky business.

*Adding pronominal endings to nouns ending in a consonant:* To avoid impossible consonant clusters, an extra vowel **-e-** may be inserted before the pronominal ending where necessary. As we remember, this extra vowel may also turn up before case endings. Combining **atar** “father” with **-lya** “your” to express “your father” would probably produce **atarelya** (since **\*\*atarlya** is not a possible Quenya word). “Our father” would be **ataremma** (exclusive “our”) or **atarelma** (inclusive “our”) – and either **atarelva** or **atarelwa** if “our” is a dual inclusive pronoun (“the father of the two of us”). It may be that if the noun is *plural*, one would use **i** as the connecting vowel, if pronominal endings and case endings behave in the same way. Cf. Tolkien’s **elenillor**



for “from stars”. Thus, “your stars” might similarly be **elenilyar**, and “our (excl.) fathers” should evidently be **atarimmar** rather than **ataremmar**. (Of course, it is primarily the final **-r** which functions as a plural marker here, so there can be no misunderstanding regarding the number anyway.) It may be that **hildinyar** “my heirs” from Elendil’s Declaration is an example of this, if the noun “heir” is ?**hil** with a stem **hild-**, hence pl. **hildi**.

However, the ending **-nya** “my” seems to be somewhat special. Where a connecting vowel is required, it apparently *always* prefers **-i-**, whether the noun it is added to is singular or plural. It seems that this connecting vowel reflects the vowel of the primitive root producing the Eldarin 1st person pronouns, namely **ni**<sup>2</sup> (listed in the *Etymologies* and simply defined “I”). Fíriel’s Song has **Anarinya**, not **\*Anarenya**, for “my Sun”. Similarly, “my father” is **atarinya** (LR:61) rather than ?**atarenya**; we cannot know whether the latter form is valid at all. The (nominative) plural “my fathers” would of course be **atarinyar**, so the singular and plural remain distinct. In the same fashion, the singular form of **hildinyar** “my heirs” would perhaps be **hildinya** “my heir” with the same connecting vowel **i**, since it is always preferred by the ending **-nya**. In the case of another ending, like **-mma** “our”, we might conceivably see a variation between **hildemma** (?) “our heir” and **hildimmar** “our heirs”; in the latter case, the **-i** is the normal nominative plural ending used as a connecting vowel. (The *Etymologies*, entry **KHIL**, lists precisely such a plural form **hildi** – there glossed “followers”, close enough to “heirs” in meaning.)

It has been suggested that the ending **-nya**, added to a noun in **-ë**, would also displace this **-ë** with **-i-** (much like the plural ending **-i** displaces a final **-ë** when added to a noun). However, one Tolkien example that was published in the summer of 2000 demonstrates that this is not so: VT41:11 has **órenya**, not **\*órinya**, for “my heart” (**óre**: “heart” in the sense of “inner mind”). According to the system we are trying to sketch, even the plural “my hearts” would be **órenyar** rather than ?**órinyar**, since **óre** ends in **-ë** and thus requires no connecting vowel before suffixes anyway. Cf. the Plotz Letter: **lassennar**, not **\*lassinnar**, as the plural allative of **lassë** “leaf” – though the nominative pl. is **lassi**. In a similar fashion, we would probably see **lassenya** “my leaf” vs. **lassenyar** “my leaves” (hardly **\*lassinyar**). The connecting vowel **-i-** only turns up where plural nouns ending in a *consonant* are to receive endings; singular nouns have **-e-** instead, except in the case of the ending **-nya** “my” which prefers **-i-** whether the noun it is added to is singular or plural. (If it is plural, this will be sufficiently indicated by the secondary endings for number and/or case that are added *after* the ending **-nya**.)

NOTE: Of course, we must assume that nouns in **-ë** that have *stem-forms* in **-i-** would appear in the latter form when endings are to be added. So if **lírë** (**líri-**) means “song”, “my song” would evidently be **lírinya** (plural **lírinyar** “my songs”). But this is actually a quite different matter, for here we would evidently see **líri-** before *any* suffix, for pronoun

or case (**lírilya** “your song”, ablative **lírillo** “from a song”, etc.)

In some instances, *contracted* forms are used instead of inserting any connecting vowel. UT:193 provides the form **aranya**, untranslated but apparently meaning “my king” (Erendis uses this word when addressing the King of Númenor). This is apparently **aran** “king” + **-nya** “my”, the impossible form **\*arannya** being simplified to **aranya**. Possibly **?araninya** would also be acceptable Quenya, but when the noun ends in the same consonant as the pronominal ending begins in, it may be permissible to let the last consonant of the noun and the first consonant of the ending merge – a phenomenon also observed where case endings are involved. (Cf. **mindonnar** rather than **mindoninnar** as the pl. allative of **mindon** “tower”; perhaps “my towers” would be **mindonyar** rather than **mindoninyar**.)

Especially where the ending **-nya** “my” is concerned, contracted forms may turn up even where no contraction would be “necessary” to achieve a permissible Quenya word. The High-elven word for “son” is **yondo**, so “my son” might simply be **yondonya**, and there is little reason to doubt that this is a valid form. Yet in LR:61 Elendil addresses his son as **yonya**, apparently a contracted variant of **yondonya**. Perhaps **yonya** would be used for “my son” primarily when *addressing* the son concerned. If so, it would parallel another example: One Quenya word for “child” is **hína**, or **hina** with a short vowel – the latter only being used when “addressing a (young) child” (WJ:403). Tolkien went on to note that this **hina**, used as a form of address, often appeared in the form **hinya** “my child” – the latter being contracted from **hinanya** (still WJ:403).

## Summary of Lesson Fourteen

The Quenya *allative* case has the ending **-nna** (plural **-nnar**) and expresses the basic idea of “to, toward”, e.g. **ciryanna** “to a ship”. In certain contexts, this case may also express “on, upon” or “into”. The *ablative* case has the ending **-llo** (plural **-llon**, alternatively **-llor**) and signifies “from”, e.g. **ciryallo** “from a ship”; sometimes the ablative may also imply “out of”. The *dual* forms of the allative and ablative endings are **-nta** and **-lto**, respectively (at least in the case of nouns with nominative dual forms in **-t**; it may be that nouns with nominative dual forms in **-u** would rather have the basic endings **-nna** or **-llo** following this vowel). If a noun ending in a consonant is to receive the case ending for allative or ablative, a connecting vowel (in the singular **-e-**, in the plural **-i-**) may be inserted before the case ending to avoid an impossible consonant cluster; otherwise, a contracted form is used (e.g. **Rómello** “from the East”, for *Rómen-llo*). – The verb **equë** is a peculiar form that is not inflected for tense and rarely receives endings of any kind; it means “said” or “says” and is used to introduce quotations where the subject (which follows the verb **equë** and precedes the quotation) is a proper

name or an independent pronoun. – The verb **auta-** “pass, go away, leave” has rather surprising past and perfect forms: **oantë** or **oantië** if the verb refers to physically leaving one place (and going to another), but **vánë** and **avánië** if the verb refers to disappearing, being lost, or dying off. – Quenya *possessive pronouns* are normally expressed as endings added to the relevant noun (the thing that is owned). These suffixes include **-nya** “my”, **-lya** “your”, **-lma** “our” (inclusive), and **-mma** “our” (exclusive). Notice that these possessive endings correspond to the subject pronominal endings suffixed to verbs, the former ending in **-a** whereas the latter end in **-ë** (therefore the unattested ending for “their” may well be **-nta**, corresponding to **-ntë** “they”). There is also a specific ending for *dual inclusive* “our”, but its form cannot be confidently reconstructed (either **-lva** or **-lwa**; only **-lvo** with the genitive ending added is attested). Where required, connecting vowels may be fitted in before the noun and the pronominal ending, probably by much the same rules that apply to the case endings **-nna** and **-llo**, except that the ending **-nya** “my” seems to consistently prefer the connecting vowel **-i-**. Once a noun has received a possessive pronominal ending, this noun may be further inflected for number or case just like a regular noun in **-a** would be.

## Vocabulary

We have now exhausted the basic numbers 1–12 (including the extrapolated number **rasta**). Higher numbers are unfortunately rather uncertain, though we have some clues. I may add some thoughts about this later, but in this and the next couple of lessons we will introduce the attested *ordinal* numbers – showing order or position in a series, like English “first”, “second”, “third” etc.

**minya** “first” (cf. the number **minë** “one” and the adjectival ending **-ya**. The original name of the First Clan of the Elves was **Minyar**, literally “Firsts”, though the Noldor later called them Vanyar or “Fair Ones” instead [WJ:380, 382–383].)

**equë** “say(s), said” (tense-less verb introducing quotations)

**auta-** “to leave, to go/pass away” (past tense **oantë** and perfect **oantië**, alternatively **vánë** and **avánië**, the latter two forms referring to *disappearing* or *dying off* as explained above). The “past participle” of **auta-** is said to be **vanwa** “lost, gone, passed, vanished” – but this word may be treated almost as an independent adjective.

**menta-** “to send”

**ruc-** “to feel fear or horror”; “to fear” (said to be constructed with “from” of the object feared, presumably meaning that what would be the direct object in English appears in the ablative case in Quenya)

**ambo** “hill”

**mindon** “(great) tower” (cf. the **Mindon Eldaliéva** or “Great Tower of the Eldalië” mentioned in the *Silmarillion*. The first syllable of **mindon** is related to the number **minë** “one”, since a **mindon** is an *isolated* tower, not part of a larger structure.)

**Númen** “West” (cf. **Númenor**, **Númenórë** “Westernesse” or “West-land”: **núme(n)-nórë**). It seems that the names of the basic directions are treated as proper names, capitalized and not requiring the article; cf. **Rómello** in *Namárië* (which Tolkien translated “from the East” even though there is no **i** in the Quenya text).

**sambë** “room, chamber” (Sindarin *sam*, *samm-*; cf. the *Sammath Naur* or “Chambers of Fire” inside Mount Doom)

**yondo** “son”

**haira** “far, remote”

**et** “out” (followed by ablative to express “out of”)

In addition to our traditional list of twelve new glosses we will also introduce a couple of proper names, required in these exercises. In accordance with our established policy we will avoid explicit references to Tolkien’s mythos in these exercises, so no proper names coined by him will appear here. Yet we can readily coin new names using his principles. The ending **-(n)dil** often occurs in masculine names and signifies “friend” or “lover”, e.g. **Eärendil** “Sea-friend” or **Elendil** “Star-friend” (but also implying “Elf-friend” since the words **elen** and **Elda** are ultimately related and were even confused by the Edain: WJ:410). So we can venture, say, **Calandil** “Friend of Light”. As for feminine names, one observed pattern is that an adjective in **-a** can be turned into a fem. name by changing the ending to **-ë** (not to be confused with the plural form of the adjective). For instance, one of the queens of Númenor was called **Ancalimë**, transparently formed from the superlative form **ancalima** “brightest, exceedingly bright”. (Similarly, *masculine* names can be made by changing the ending **-a** to **-o** or **-on**, cf. **Sauron** vs. the adjective **saura** “foul, putrid” – one suddenly understands why the Dark Lord didn’t permit his servants to use the name the Elves had given him!) Starting from a suitable adjective like **nessima** “youthful”, we can derive a plausible woman’s name **Nessimë** “Youthful One”. However, the meaning of the names **Calandil** and **Nessimë** is of no importance for the exercises.

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **Lelyuvalmë i mindonello i coanna.**
- B. **Ilyë Eldar avánier Ambarello.**
- C. **I Naucor utúlier i orontillon; elendientë i coannar ar súcar limpelma.**
- D. **I úmië ohtari mapuvar i malta lielmava mentien harmalmar haira nórenna.**
- E. **I nís oantë coanyallo ar lendë i sírenna.**

- F. **I minya cirya tuluva Númello.**
- G. **Quen rucë i rávillon, an amátientë i aran liemmo, ar úvantë auta nóremmallo.**
- H. **Equë Nessimë Calandilenna: “Yondonya avánië sambenyallo!”**
2. Translate into Quenya (and notice that inclusive “our” is meant to be a plural pronoun throughout, since the exact form of the ending for *dual* inclusive “our” cannot be reconstructed with certainty):
- I. Calandil said to Nessimë: “Your son has gone out of the house, for all the boys went to the hill.”
- J. From heaven [**Menel**: the sky] the sun is giving light to our (*inclusive*) world, and the darkness has passed.
- K. Calandil said to the evil king: “You have sent your warriors to the tower to find my sons. My thrall will protect the boys, and they will not be lost!”
- L. The man having [**arwa**] the ships wanted to leave, and all the ships went away west[wards].
- M. We (*exclusive*) went to a two-room apartment [*dual of sambë!*], and the man from the hills gave your son a great sword, saying [**quétala**]: “The sword comes from a remote land, out of the outermost West.” (*“Outermost”*: use the superlative of *haira*.)
- N. All trees died and disappeared from our (*incl.*) land, and Calandil and Nessimë said: “We (*excl.*) will send our (*excl.*) thralls to find a land with [*or, ‘having’ = arwa*] many trees.”
- O. The maiden said to the animal: “I fear [/I’m afraid of] your big horns (*dual*).”
- P. I went to our (*incl.*) room to gather my things, for I wanted to give my brother my first book; the book lay [/was lying] on the floor.

## Additional exercises

involving Quenya nouns combining pronominal endings with suffixes for number and/or case

(Students may check the keys to the exercises above before proceeding to these exercises.) These exercises above include several examples of nouns with both pronominal endings and case endings, e.g. **lielmava** “of our people”. A skilled Quenyaist would be able to extract the meaning of such forms at a glance, indeed perceiving a single word like **ostolmallon** as something

like a single meaning, “from our cities”, without having to consciously break this down into **osto-lma-llo-n** “city-our-from-plural”. Of course, a skilled Quenyaist would also be able to readily *produce* such words, combining the relevant endings without hesitation.

3. Translate the following list of single Quenya words into English phrases.

NOTE: In the keys to this exercise, the following simplified “equivalents” are used: genitives and possessive-adjectival forms are all turned into “of”-constructions, dative forms are represented as prepositional phrases in “for”, whereas allative and ablative forms are represented as phrases involving the prepositions “to” and “from”, respectively. The same system is used in the English-to-Quenya exercises below, with specification of whether “of” is to be rendered as a genitive (*gen.*) or a possessive-adjectival (*poss.*) form. – In these exercises, there are also a few examples of the suffix for dual inclusive “our”, though conveniently always with the genitive ending attached, since we know with certainty (from the attested example **omentielvo**) what form it then assumes.

- |                       |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| a) <b>Coalmallon</b>  | b) <b>Hroanyan</b>    | c) <b>Hroalmain</b>  |
| d) <b>Lambelmar</b>   | e) <b>Nórellyanna</b> | f) <b>Engwemmar</b>  |
| g) <b>Aranelyallo</b> | h) <b>Mólinyo</b>     | i) <b>Mólinyaron</b> |
| j) <b>Ostolmannar</b> | k) <b>Lielvo</b>      | l) <b>Yondolyava</b> |
| m) <b>Sambemmat</b>   | n) <b>Sambenyant</b>  | o) <b>Sambelyato</b> |
| p) <b>Sambelmanta</b> | q) <b>Sambelyalto</b> | r) <b>Lienyava</b>   |
| s) <b>Yondolmaiva</b> | t) <b>Tárilyan</b>    | u) <b>Liemmaiva</b>  |
| v) <b>Nerinyaiva</b>  | w) <b>Nerinyava</b>   | x) <b>Seldonyain</b> |
| y) <b>Ciryammalto</b> | z) <b>Yondolvo</b>    |                      |

4. Translate into single Quenya words (“of” = genitive or possessive as further specified, “for” = dative, “to” = allative, “from” = ablative):

- To your hills
- For our (*excl.*) peace
- Your two-volume book (*use a dual form of **parma***)
- To your tower / To your towers (*translate the sg. and pl. separately*)
- Of (*poss.*) our (*excl.*) queen
- Of (*poss.*) my sisters
- From my sister
- Of (*gen.*) our (*incl.*) gifts
- Of (*gen.*) our (*incl.*) gold
- For our (*incl.*) joy
- Of (*gen.*) your wine

- l) From your world
- m) Of (*gen.*) my sun
- n) For my king
- o) Of (*poss.*) our (*excl.*) son
- p) Of (*gen.*) our (*excl.*) cups
- q) For your pair of birds (*use a dual form of aiwë*)
- r) To our (*excl.*) double walls (*use a dual form of ramba*)
- s) From our (*incl.*) double walls (*same*)
- t) From your lands
- u) Of (*gen.*) my [two twin] sisters (*use a dual form of seler, sell-*)
- v) Of (*gen.*) our (*excl.*) treasures
- w) To our (*incl.*) horses
- x) Of (*gen.*) our (*dual incl.*) house (= “of the house of the two of us”)
- y) For my brother
- z) To our (*excl.*) trees

# Lesson 15

The ending *-rya* and more about possessive pronominal endings. The Locative case. Relative sentences. Third Person obscurities.

## 15.1 More about possessive pronominal endings

(plus a slightly digressive inquiry into the true nature of the combinations *ly, ny, ry, ty*)

In the previous lesson we introduced a series of possessive pronominal endings that can be added to nouns: **-nya** “my”, **-lya** “your”, **-lma** “our” (incl.) and **-mma** “our” (excl.); furthermore, there is an ending for *dual* inclusive “our”, either **-lva** or **-lwa** (only attested in the form **-lvo** with the genitive ending **-o** added). Ignoring a strange variant of the ending **-lya** “your” (**-lda**, to be discussed later), only one of the attested pronominal endings remains to be mentioned: **-rya**. It occurs twice in *Namárië*. The first time it is followed by the genitive ending, regularly producing the form **-ryo**: The relevant word is **ómaryo**, translated “of her voice”, the genitive form of **ómarya** “her voice”. The word **óma** “voice” is attested by itself elsewhere (Etym., entry OM; VT39:16).

The second time **-rya** occurs in *Namárië*, it also has another ending following it, in this case the dual marker **-t**: the word **máryat** is translated “her hands”, referring to a natural pair of hands (the word **má** “hand” is also attested by itself). Anyhow, the ending **-rya** is seen to mean “her”, and from the *Namarië* examples it is clear that it can be used and combined with other endings just like any of the other pronominal suffixes we have already discussed and practiced (**samberya** “her room”, **samberyan** “for her room”, **samberyanna** “to her room”, **samberyallo** “from her room”, **samberyo** and **samberyava** “of her room”... and so on with plural and dual forms: **samberyar** “her rooms”, **samberyat** “her couple of rooms/her two-room apartment”, etc. etc.)

For thirty years, from *The Fellowship of the Ring* (with *Namárië* in it) appeared in 1954 until Christopher Tolkien published *The War of the Jew-*



*els* in 1994, “her” was the sole known meaning of the ending **-rya**. In the meantime, we had one more example of **-rya** = “her” in the Markirya poem, which was published in *The Monsters and the Critics* in 1983 (though in Markirya, “her” does not refer to a person, but to a ship). But when WJ appeared in 1994, it became evident that the suffix **-rya** actually covers not only “her”, but also “his”: **Coarya** is shown to be the Quenya for “the house of him” or “his house” (WJ:369, there spelt **köarya**). Of course, the form **coarya** as such could just as well mean “her house”, and conversely the *Namárië* forms **máryat**, **ómario** could in another context mean “his hands” and “of his voice”: We have to conclude that Quenya simply does not make a distinction between “his” and “her”. Indeed it is entirely possible that **-rya** covers “its” as well (see below) – so that there is one single ending for the entire third person singular in the table of possessive pronouns. The English translation would depend on the context, of course.

There is more to learn from the two examples of **-rya** in *Namárië*. Notice the dual form **máryat** “her (pair of) hands”. As described in Lesson Three, Quenya developed a system whereby **-t** is the normal dual ending, ordinarily replaced by **-u** only where euphonic concerns demand this, as when the word that is to receive a dual ending already includes **t** or **d** (Letters:427, footnote). But in Lesson Three we also argued from the example **peu** “(pair of) lips” that body-parts occurring in pairs occur in “fossilized” dual forms, always taking the ending **-u** – “reflecting the older system in which only **-u** denoted a natural or logical pair”. Nonetheless, the student may also remember a parenthetical warning to the effect that “the other ending **-t** may however be used if certain other endings intrude before the dual ending itself; we will return to this in a later lesson”. It is time to have a closer look on this.

It has often been assumed that removing the ending **-rya** “her” from **máryat** “her hands” would simply leave us with **mát** “(a pair of) hands”. Yet since the dual form of **pé** “lip” is attested as **peu**, we might reasonably assume that the dual form of **má** “hand” is likewise **mau** “pair of hands”, though the latter form remains unattested. If the noun that normally has a dual form in **-u** is to receive a possessive pronominal suffix, it seems that the dual ending **-u** is suppressed and duality is instead expressed by means of the ending **-t**, suffixed *after* the pronominal suffix – as in **máryat**. Though the dual “(pair of) lips” is **peu**, we can assume that “her (two) lips” would be constructed by starting from the singular form **pé** “lip” and adding **-rya** for “his/her” and then **-t** for dual number, so that as a parallel to **máryat** we would see **péryat**. (It then follows that the genitive is **péryato**, the dative **péryant**, the allative **péryanta**, the ablative **péryalto**, etc.) **Aldu** may be the normal dual “pair of trees”, but “her pair of trees” would *perhaps* be constructed from the singular **alda** with the appropriate suffixes, producing **aldaryat**. Even so, we may suspect that the dual ending **-u** could function as a connecting vowel where one is needed – just as the *plural* ending **-i**

is known to function in certain instances. The word for “foot” is **tál** with stem **tal-**, so perhaps the dual “(pair of) feet” is **talú**. Adding a possessive pronominal ending to **tál**, **tal-** would however require a connecting vowel before we can even think about adding **-t** as a dual marker at the end of the word. Should “her pair of feet” perhaps be something like **taluryat** with double dual markers, **-u-** and **-t**, just like there would apparently be double *plural* markers (**-i-** and **-r**) in a plural word like (say) **talimmar** “our feet”? If so, this would be an exception to the apparent rule that the dual marker **-u** is not used before a possessive pronominal suffix. As usual, we lack attested examples, but since Elendil’s Declaration indicates that “my heirs” is **hildinyar**, it would not be wildly implausible to assume that a corresponding dual form would be something very much like **hildunyat**. (Or maybe the rule that **-nya** “my” prefers **-i-** as its connecting vowel would prevail, producing **hildinyat**, but we might still see **-u-** as a connecting vowel before other pronominal endings, e.g. **hilduryat** “her pair of heirs”.)

Another thing to be learnt from the *Namárië* examples **máryat** “her hands” and **ómaryo** “of her voice” has to do with whether **ry** here counts as a consonant cluster (**r + y**) or as a single consonant: palatalized **r**. What we learn is however somewhat paradoxical. We touched on these problems already in Lesson One, but a new inquiry may be in place here, since the combinations in **-y** (like **ry**, **ly**, **ny**, **ty**) occur in several of the possessive pronominal endings. Tolkien repeatedly indicated that **ómaryo** is accented on the **a** in the second-to-last syllable (in one of his *Namárië* transcripts in RGE0, he indicated all major and minor stresses in this song, and we also have *two* actual recordings where he is heard to use this accentuation). For **ómaryo** to be accented in such a way, **ry** must count as a consonant cluster, not as a single consonant. If **ry** were a single consonant, the normal rules dictate that the stress would not land on the vowel before it, but on the third syllable from the end.

Yet we have repeatedly referred to another observed rule of Quenya phonology: there cannot be a long vowel in front of a consonant cluster. Thus the long vowel of **má** “hand” is logically shortened in the plural allative form **mannar** “into . . . hands”, attested in *Fíriel’s Song*. **\*\*Mánnar** would not be a possible Quenya word. So if **ry** is also a consonant cluster as we thought we had just established, why is **á** not shortened in the form **máryat**? Why don’t we see **?maryat** as a parallel to **mannar**?

Frankly, I can’t think of any obvious explanation. Apparently we must simply accept that **ry** – as well as **ly**, **ny**, **ty** – count as consonant clusters for the purpose of stress, but a preceding long vowel does not have to be shortened. Thus we would have **márya** “his/her hand”, **mánya** “my hand” and **málya** “your hand” with the preceding long vowel intact. Before the other attested pronominal suffixes, it would have to be shortened, since these endings unquestionably introduce a following consonant cluster: **malma** and **mamma** = “our hand” (inclusive and exclusive). **\*\*Málma**,

\*\***mámma** would hardly be possible Quenya words. Such variations would closely parallel a couple of attested forms we have referred to earlier, though they involve subject endings (-**mmë** for “we” and -**nyë** for “I”) rather than the pronominal possessive endings added to nouns: The exclamation **vá** signifying refusal has its long vowel *shortened* before the cluster **mm** in **vammë** “we won’t”, but the long vowel is seen to *persist* in **ványë** “I won’t” (WJ:371). So we can tell that while **mm** is unquestionably a cluster, **ny** may well count as a single consonant – palatalized **n** like Spanish *ñ*.

There are only a handful of nouns that can be affected by these variations in vowel-length, words of a single syllable that end in a long vowel: Besides **má** “hand”, only **cú** “bow”, **pé** “lip”, **ré** “day” (24 hours) and **lú** “time, occasion” spring to mind – if we don’t bring in Tolkien’s early “Qenya” material as well. Of course, the long vowels of these words would also be shortened before *case endings* introducing a following consonant cluster, as indicated by the plural allative **mannar** “into hands” in *Fíriel’s Song*. But “into *your* hands” would evidently be **mályannar**, or **mályanta** as a dual form – since **ly**, **ny**, **ry**, **ty** do not count as consonant clusters for this purpose.

On the other hand, there is also some evidence suggesting that these combinations *should* be taken as clusters. In a *Namárië* manuscript reproduced in RGeo:76, Tolkien split the word **ómaryo** into its constituent syllables and seemingly indicated that -**ar-** and -**yo** are separate syllables – as if **ry** is a genuine consonant cluster after all, not just palatalized **r**. (Sure enough, **r** would probably be palatalized before **y**, but if **y** is also to be sounded as a distinct consonant, we would still have a cluster.) Likewise, Tolkien split the words **fanyar** “clouds” and **ilyë** “all” into **fan/yar**, **il/yë**. If **ry**, **ny**, and **ly**, and by implication **ty** as well, really are to be taken as consonant clusters when they occur in the middle of words, that would explain the observed stress patterns. But then we are left with the problem of why long vowels are not shortened before these combinations. Luckily, these seeming inconsistencies cause no problems to people trying to *write* in Quenya, since we can simply imitate the system or systems that Tolkien used.

Even so, I haven’t bored the student with the paragraphs above only as an academic exercise, for there remains the problem of how **ly**, **ny**, **ry**, **ty** occurring in the middle of words should really be pronounced: Are we dealing with *single*, unitary palatalized consonants, *long* palatalized consonants, or single consonants *followed* by a distinct **y**? It seems that we can’t reach any definite answer based on what has been published so far. When Tolkien in RGeo:76 syllabified **fanyar** as **fan/yar**, it seems to demonstrate that he at least can’t have the pronunciation *\*\*fañ-ar* in mind, though palatals like **ny** and **ty** must always be pronounced as single, unitary consonants when they occur initially (as Quenya cannot have consonant clusters at the beginning of words: SD:416–417). The choice apparently stands between *fañ-ñar* (with a long or double palatal *ñ*) and *fan-yar* or rather *fañ-yar* (a

distinct *y* being sounded). In either case, a word like **atarinya** “my father” (that is, *atarĩñña* or *atarĩnya*) would then logically be accented on the **i** according to the normal rules. Why this combination **ny**, as well as **ly**, **ry**, **ty**, apparently lack the power to make a preceding long vowel become short remains a mystery. If they are pronounced with a distinct **y**, as I tend to think, these combinations may not be counted as regular consonant clusters because **y** is a “semi-vowel” rather than a quite “proper” consonant.

*Possessive pronominal endings used with infinitives:* In Lesson Ten we described how infinitive forms of verbs have an extended form in **-ta** which is used when the infinitive is to receive a suffix denoting an object pronoun: thus **carë** (**cari-**) “to do”, but **caritas** “to do it” or “doing it”. To such an extended infinitive it is also possible to add a pronominal ending denoting the *subject* of the verbal action. Our attested example is **caritalya(s)**, which Tolkien translated “your doing (it)” (VT41:17). “You” is here the subject of the verbal action (that is, the “doing”), and this is expressed as a *possessive* pronominal ending **-lya** “your”. A second pronominal ending, denoting the *object*, may then be added at the end of the word: **caritalyas**, “**your** doing **it**”, **tiritanyat** “**my** watching **them**”. Such a phrase can probably be used as a noun, functioning, for instance, as the subject or object of a sentence. Perhaps “I want you to watch them” would be expressed something like **merin tiritalyat**, literally “I want your watching them”. The object of the infinitive could certainly be an independent word as well, e.g. **merin tiritalya i seldor**, “I want you to watch the boys” (“I want your watching the boys”).

By their meaning, such infinitives would come very close to gerunds. Indeed we must assume that regular gerunds (in **-ië**) may also receive possessive pronominal endings, e.g. **tulierya** “his coming” (**tulië** “coming”). It is, however, uncertain whether a second pronominal ending denoting the *object* may then be suffixed (?**carieryas** “his doing it”).

## 15.2 The Locative case

In connection with the forms **mir**, **minna** “into” we have referred to the Quenya preposition **mi** “in”, which is sometimes combined with the definite article to produce the form (**mi** + **i** =) **mí** “in the”. It occurs in *Namárië*, in the phrase **mí oromardi**, translated “in the high halls” (so in RGEO:66, at least – the text in LotR has **mi** with a short vowel, though this should be a simple “in” with no article incorporated, and indeed the translation provided in LotR goes simply “*in* lofty halls”).

Yet Quenya often dispenses with prepositions, using special case forms instead, as when “to, towards” is normally expressed by the allative ending **-nna**, whereas “from” is usually expressed by means of the ablative ending **-llo** – though Quenya does have separate prepositions that could express

the same meanings. It should be no surprise, then, that Quenya instead of using a preposition like **mi** often prefers a specific case form in order to express the meaning of “in” (or “on, upon”). The relevant case is called the *locative*, marked by the ending **-ssë** (probably inspired by the Finnish ending *-ssa, -ssä* of similar meaning). For instance, “in a house” can be expressed as **coassë**, “in the house” could be **i coassë**, “in my house” would be **coanyassë**, etc. (Of course, the stress moves to the vowel immediately preceding the case ending, since the ending begins in a consonant cluster.) The locative can refer to “location” in *time* as well as space: In an early version of the greeting “a star shines on the hour of our meeting”, Tolkien had the noun **lúmë** “hour” appearing in the locative case (**lúmessë**, RS:324).

NOTE 1: Students should notice that the ending **-ssë** is not *always* a locative marker, meaning “in” or “on” wherever it occurs. Sometimes **-ssë** functions as an abstract ending. We have already introduced the noun **alassë** “joy, merriment”. **Entulessë** is attested as the name of a ship, said to mean “Return” (UT:171; **entul-** would be the verb “to re-come” = “to return”). **Caimassë** could be the locative form of **caima** “bed”, but **caimassë** is also used as a noun “lying in bed” = “sickness”, and this is even the basis of the adjective **caimassëa** “bedridden, sick” (Etym., entry **KAY**). Sometimes **-ssë** as a noun ending is not abstract, but it is seen to maintain the connotations of *locality* that it also has when used as a locative ending: The noun **aicassë** “mountain peak” is derived from the adjective **aica** “sharp”, so the term **aicassë** basically refers to some kind of ‘sharp place’. The ending **-ssë** also turns up in the names of a couple of the months of the Elvish calendar, listed in LotR Appendix D: **Víressë** and **Lótessë**, roughly corresponding to April and May. The meaning of the word **Víressë** is uncertain, but **Lótessë** certainly connects with **lótë** “flower” and would seem to mean essentially “In Flower”, a fitting description of the month of May. – Whether the locative ending **-ssë** could or should be attached to a noun already ending in **-ssë** is uncertain. **Lótessessë** does seem like a rather cumbersome way of expressing “in May”, and **aicassessë** for “on a mountain peak” is not much better. Instead of adding the locative ending to nouns of such a shape, it may be better to use the preposition **mi** “in”: **Mi Lótessë, mi aicassë**.

NOTE 2: As we remember, the *allative* case in **-nna** does not always denote motion towards something, but may also express the idea of “on, upon”. In some contexts, it would perhaps be permissible to use either the locative or the allative, resulting in pretty much the same meaning (**caitan caimanyassë** = “I lie **in** my bed” / **caitan caimanyanna** “I lie **on** my bed”). Yet Tolkien sometimes translated a Quenya locative form using the English preposition “upon”. Cf. for instance **ciryassë** “upon a ship” (MC:216, there spelt **kiryasse**); cf. also **mahalmassen** below.

In the *plural*, the simple locative suffix **-ssë** is expanded with the same plural element **-n** that is also seen in the plural forms of the endings for genitive (**-on**) and ablative (**-llon**). Thus, plural locative forms end in **-ssen**. The plural locative of **mahalma** “throne” occurs in Cirion’s Oath, where the Valar are referred to as **i hárar mahalmassen mi Númen**, “those who sit upon [the] thrones in the West”.

The *dual* locative ending is formed by substituting the dual element **t**

for the first of the **s**'s of the ending **-ssë**. The resulting ending **-tsë** is not attested in any actual Quenya composition by Tolkien, but he listed it in the Plotz letter, so presumably we can have forms like **sambetsë** “in a two-room apartment” or **ciryanyatsë** “on my [two sister] ships”. (These words may be seen as the simplest dual forms **sambet**, **ciryanyat** with the locative ending **-ssë** attached, though it is simplified to **-së** to avoid the impossible combination **\*\*tssë**.)

Of course, endings like **-ssë**, **-ssen**, **-tsë** can never be added directly to a noun ending in a consonant without producing impossible consonant clusters. Lacking attested examples, we can only assume that connecting vowels would be fitted in by much the same rules as the ones that are seen to apply in the allative and ablative cases: **-e-** is used as a connecting vowel in the singular, whereas plural forms have **-i-**. Hence presumably **elenessë** “in a star”, **elenissen** “in stars”. The dual “in a couple of stars” might prefer the connecting vowel **-e-** (?**elenetsë**). Contracted forms may also turn up, e.g. **elessë** for *elen-ssë*. The directions **Formen**, **Hyarmen**, **Númen**, **Rómen** = North, South, West, East would almost certainly surrender their final **-n** in the locative, just as they are seen to do in the allative and ablative cases. Hence probably **Formessë** “in the North”, etc. *Fíriel's Song* has **Númessier** for “they are in the west”. This strange form seems to include the ending **-ië** “is”, pl. **-ier** “(they) are” which Tolkien probably dropped later. Even so, an underlying locative form **Númessë** “in the West” must in any case be presupposed here. Since the noun **Númen** “West” also appears in the shorter form **Númë**, we cannot be certain that a final **-n** has dropped out here, but this locative form may be noted all the same.

Would nouns with dual forms in **-u** also form their dual locatives in **-tsë**, or does this ending occur only where we are dealing with nouns that have nominative dual forms in **-t**? We may well wonder what the locative form of **Aldu** “Two Trees” would be. **Aldussë** with the simplest ending **-ssë**, because duality is already sufficiently expressed by **-u**? **Aldatsë** formed from the uninflected form **alda**? **Aldutsë** with double dual markers, **-u** and **-t**? Personally I lean toward **Aldussë**, but I would like to see a Tolkien-made example.

The locative ending(s) can of course be combined with possessive pronominal endings just like the other case endings we have discussed. The Markirya poem has **ringa súmaryassë** for “**in her** cold bosom” (**ringa** “cold”, **súma** “bosom”; the reference is to the “bosom” of a ship).

### 15.3 Relative sentences

In LotR, there is one single example of a Quenya locative. The ending **-ssen** for plural locative occurs in *Namárië*, in the phrase **Vardo tellumar...**, **yassen tintilar i eleni** = “Varda’s domes..., wherein [or, in which] the

stars twinkle. . .”

The word **ya** “which”, here appearing with the locative ending **-ssen** to imply “in which”, is a *relative pronoun*. It can be used to build *relative sentences*, that is, sentences embedded in other sentences as a kind of descriptive phrases. Two sentences like “the treasure is great” and “you found it” can be combined as “the treasure *which you found* is great”. Notice that the pronoun “it” of the sentence “you found it” is replaced by “which”. This relative pronoun is capable of referring back to the words “the treasure”, and “which I found” now becomes a descriptive phrase providing extra information about “the treasure”. The probable Quenya equivalents of these examples:

**I harma ná alta** “the treasure is great”  
+ **hirnelyes** “you found it”  
= **i harma ya hirnelyë ná alta** “the treasure which you found is great”

As a relative pronoun, English may also use “that” (“the treasure that you found. . .”)

In German, the definite articles *der, das, die* (all = English “the”, for various genders and numbers) are also used as relative pronouns. The Quenya article **i** may likewise take on this function. This is evident from Cirion’s Oath, the last words of which exemplify **i** used first as article, then as relative pronoun: . . . **i Eru i or ilyë mahalmar äa tennoio**, “**the** One **who** is above all thrones forever”. Since “the One” (Eru, God) is a person and not a thing, the relative pronoun must here be translated “who” rather than “which”. If there is any distinction in meaning between **i** and **ya** used as relative pronouns, this may indeed be it: **i** refers back to a person (English “who”), while **ya** refers back to a thing or a situation (English “which”). Notice, by the way, that these glosses have nothing to do with the *question-words* “who” and “which”: The word **i** cannot be used for “who” in a question, like “who are you?” The Quenya word for “who” in this sense is quite different (**man**).

NOTE: This “who/which” distinction is not the only possible interpretation of our scarce examples. By another suggestion, **i** is used when the relative pronoun is the *subject* of the relative sentence, while **ya** is used when it is the *object*: **Elda i tirë Nauco** “an Elf who watches a Dwarf”, but **Elda ya tirë Nauco** “an Elf whom a Dwarf watches” (English uses “whom” as the object form of the relative pronoun “who”). We need more examples before we can pick the right interpretation with confidence.

The word **i** is in Quenya the “indeclinable article ‘the’” (*Etymologies*, entry **i**). That is, **i** = “the” cannot be declined; it cannot receive any case endings. We must assume that this is still true when **i** functions as a relative pronoun “who” instead. However, **ya** is perfectly able to receive case endings, as indicated by the example **yassen** “in which” from *Namárië*. The locative ending is plural because the relative pronoun refers back to a plural word,

**tellumar** “domes”; in the case of a single **telluma** or “dome”, the relative pronoun referring back to it would likewise be singular: **yassë**. Likewise with other nouns: **coa yassë** “a house in which...”, but plural **coar yassen**... “houses in which...”

Besides the form **yassen** in *Namárië*, we have one more example of **ya** occurring with a case ending. An early Elvish poem by Tolkien includes the words **tanya wende ... yar i vilya anta miqilis**, translated “that maiden ... **to whom** the air gives kisses” (MC:215, 216). This is not quite LotR-style Quenya, so I don’t regularize the spelling, but the form **yar** “to whom” is interesting. The final **-r** here suffixed to **ya** seems to be the old allative ending, as in **mir** “into”; hence **yar** = “whom-to”, “to whom”. The examples **yassen** “in which” and **yar** “to whom” suggest that if you need a relative pronoun to receive case endings, such endings are always attached to **ya-**. Even if **ya** means “which” and **i** means “who” as we theorized above, a form like **yassen** may well cover both “in which” and “in whom” (since we can’t have a distinct form **\*\*issen** for the latter meaning if **i** is indeclinable). We must assume that **ya** can receive all the various endings for number and case, being inflected like a noun in **-a**, as in these examples:

- DATIVE: **i nér yan ánen annanya** “the man **to whom** I gave my gift”, plural **i neri yain**... “the men **towhom**...” (*The attested form **yar** “to whom”, occurring in a context involving the verb “give”, may evidently also take on dative-like functions – but **yar** is properly an archaic allative, and generally I think **yan**, pl. **yain**, is to be preferred.*)
- GENITIVE: **i nís yo yondo cennen** “the woman whose [= **who’s**] son I saw” (*we must assume that **ya** + the genitive ending **-o** would produce **yo**, a final **-a** being displaced as usual*), plural **i nissi yaron**... “the women whose [= **who’s**]...” (*for a form like **yaron**, cf. **aldaron** as the plural genitive of **alda** “tree”*)
- POSSESSIVE: **i aran yava malta mapuvan** “the king whose [= **who’s**] gold I will seize”, plural **i arani yaiva**... “the kings whose [= **who’s**]...”
- ALLATIVE: **i coa yanna lenden** “the house **to which** I went / the house whither I went / the house that I went to”, plural **i coar yannar**... “the houses **to which**...”
- ABLATIVE: **i coa yallo tullen** “the house **from which** I came / the house whence I came / the house that I came from”, plural **i coar yallon** [alternatively, **yallor**]... “the houses **from which**...”
- LOCATIVE: **i coa yassë marin** “the house **in which** I live / the house that I live in / the house where I live”, plural **i coar yassen**... “the houses **in which**...”

In the nominative singular, the simple form **ya** is of course used: **i parma ya etécien**, “the book **which** I have written”. It may be that this would



become **yar** (with the plural ending **-r**) when referring back to a plural word: **i parmar yar**... “the books which...” (Distinguish the attested relative pronoun **yar** “to whom”, MC:215, 216; this form includes the old allative ending **-r** instead.) Where **i** is used as a relative pronoun, it receives no plural ending, since **i** is indeclinable: **Eldar i lindar** “Elves who sing”.

We have listed no *dual* forms, but they would presumably be quite regular: nominative **yat** (e.g. **i peu yat**... “the [pair of] lips that...”), dative **yant** (e.g. **i veru yant**... “the [married] couple to/for whom...”), genitive **yato**, possessive **yatwa** (?), allative **yanta**, ablative **yalto**, locative **yatsë** (e.g. **i sambet yanta/yalto/yatsë**... “the two-room apartment to/from/in which...”)

It should be noted that in some grammatical contexts, a case ending that could have been added to **ya** may be omitted and understood. For instance, given that the word for “night” is **lómë** (**lómi-**), we could presumably have a sentence like **lómissë yassë cennyes** “in [the] night in which I saw it” = “(in/on) the night when I saw it”, but it is also permissible to let **ya** occur by itself: **Lómissë ya cennyes**, a construction paralleling English “in [the] night that I saw it” (very frequently, English would drop the initial “in”, but in Quenya the locative ending should probably be included).

Notice that the article may be dropped before the first noun (**lómissë** in our example); it is perhaps sufficiently determined by the following relative phrase. Tolkien employed such a construction in his Quenya translation of the Hail Mary (he paraphrased “in the hour of our death” as “in [the] hour that we shall die”).

Usually, a relative pronoun refers back to a noun so that the following relative sentence provides information about that noun, as in all the examples above. Notice, however, the example **i carir quettar** “those who form words”, quoted as a description of the Elves (WJ:391). **I carir quettar** by itself is a relative sentence, and we could certainly connect it with a noun and let the relative sentence refer back to it, e.g. **Eldar i carir quettar** “Elves who form words”. However, it appears that **i** can be put in front of a verb to express “the one who” (if the verb is singular) or “those who”, “the ones who” (if the verb is plural, marked by the ending **-r**). Cirion’s Oath provides another example: **i hárar mahalmassen mi Númen** “those who sit upon thrones in the West”. We can probably feel free to build sentences like these:

**I lindëa ná nís** “[the one] who is singing is a woman”

**I hirner i malta nar alyë** “[the ones] who found the gold are rich”

**Hiruvan i suncer limpenya** “I will find [the ones] who drank my wine”  
(singular ... **i suncë limpenya**, “[the one] who drank my wine”)

If **ya** can also be used in such constructions, and we are right to assume that **i** signifies “who” while **ya** means “which”, there may be distinctions in meaning like **ecénien i túla** “I have seen [the one] who is coming” vs.

**ecénien ya túla** “I have seen what is coming” (literally, “I have seen [that] which is coming”). The sentence “what I want is wine” would perhaps translate something like **ya merin ná limpë** (i. e., “[that] which I want is wine”).

*Word order:* Some languages employ a special word order in relative sentences. German insists on placing the verb last, so that we have constructions like “the man who there stands” (*der Mann der dort steht*) for “the man who stands there”. For a while I wondered if Quenya employed a similar system; the verb **ëa** “is, exists” appears near the end of the relative sentence concluding Cirion’s Oath: **i or ilyë mahalmar ëa tennoio**, literally “who over all thrones is forever”. However, as we see, the verb is not absolutely final; an entirely “German” word order would require “who over all thrones forever is”.

In *Namárië*, the verb actually follows immediately *after* the relative pronoun in the relative sentence **yassen tintilar i eleni** “wherein the stars twinkle”, literally “in which twinkle the stars”. We might think that this is just a “poetic” word order, but Tolkien did not change it in the prose *Namárië* in RGEO:66–67. Does it make any difference that this is a relative pronoun with a case ending attached? Would it be *wrong* to say **yassen i eleni tintilar**, with the subject of the verb preceding rather than following the verb? We cannot tell. Especially in the case of **yasse(n)**, **yanna(r)**, **yallo(n)** “in/to/from which”, I would imitate our attested example and let the verb immediately follow the relative pronoun: **I osto yassë marë i nér** “the city in which the man dwells”, **i tol yanna círar i ciryar** “the island whither the ships are sailing”, **i nóri yallon tulir i ohtari** “the lands whence the warriors come”. Otherwise, I will not try to make out any hard-and-fast rules for what word order Quenya relative sentences should have.

## 15.4 Third Person obscurities

Above we introduced the possessive pronominal ending **-rya**, covering “his” and “her”. So what is the corresponding subject ending, meaning “he” and “she”?

Since the ending **-lya** “your” is known to correspond to an ending **-lyë** “you”, many researchers, starting from **-rya** “her”, have extrapolated an unattested suffix **-ryë** as the subject ending = “she”. If, as indicated by *Namárië*, the Quenya for “you will find” is **hiruvalyë**, “she will find” would then be **hiruvaryë**. Nancy Martsch uses this extrapolated ending **-ryë** “she” throughout her *Basic Quenya* – and it may well be correct. Now that it is known that **-rya** covers “his” as well as “her”, we would have to assume that **-ryë** may similarly signify “he” as well as “she”.

The subject endings of the Third Person Singular – the endings for “he”, “she”, and “it” – however belong to one of the more obscure parts of the

Quenya pronoun table. In material closely related to *Fíriel's Song*, one ending for “he” is seen to be **-ro**. It occurs in the form **antaváro** “he will give”, attested in the question **e man antaváro?** “what will he give indeed?” (LR:63). **Antáva** as the simple future tense “will give” occurs on the same page (and in the full text of *Fíriel's Song* as printed in LR:72). This may not be quite LotR-style Quenya; as we argued in Lesson Seven, the future tense of **anta-** should perhaps be **antuva** rather than **antáva** according to the system Tolkien decided upon later. Even so, the form **antaváro** nicely illustrates one apparent property of the ending **-ro**: For some reason, the vowel immediately preceding this ending is *lengthened*, **antáva** becoming **antaváro** when **-ro** is added (and the original long vowel of **antáva** is *shortened* to avoid the form **\*\*antáváro**: It may be that Quenya cannot have a long vowel in the syllable immediately preceding the vowel receiving the main accent except when this syllable is also the first syllable of the word). Should we update **antaváro** to something like **antuváro** in LotR-style Quenya?

This ending **-ro** also turns up in a “Qenya” poem reproduced in MC:220, there added to a couple of verb forms including the past-tense ending **-ně**, and again the vowel preceding **-ro** is lengthened so that it receives the accent. One of them is **laustanéro**, which would seem to be a verb **lausta-** “make a windy noise” (cf. MC:216) + the past tense ending **-ně** + the ending **-ro** “he” (and “it”?) The whole phrase goes **súru laustanéro**, translated “the wind rushed” (literally perhaps “[the] wind, he/it [-ro] rushed”). Since this is “Qenya” rather than LotR-style Quenya, we shouldn’t put too much emphasis on the details, but Tolkien does seem to be using an ending **-ro**, that may mean “he” (but also “it”?), and that has the strange power of making the preceding vowel long. It has been suggested that the vowel rather *remains* long in this position because Tolkien imagined it to have been long in Primitive Elvish. If so, the vowel **-i-** seen in the aorist of primary verbs (e.g. **tulīn** “I come”) should not be lengthened, since this vowel was never long (?**tuliro** rather than ?**tulíro** for “he comes”).

Where would this ending **-ro** for “he” come from, and what is the ending for “she”? The entry *s-* in the *Etymologies* throws some light on what Tolkien imagined. Various Elvish words for “he, she, it” are there discussed. One primitive word for “he” is cited as *sô* or *so*, “cf. *-so* inflection of verbs” – apparently meaning that the primitive Elvish language might express “he” by means of an ending *-so* added to verbs. This *-so* could be the origin of the Quenya ending **-ro**, for in Quenya, *-s-* occurring between vowels was normally voiced to **-z-**, which later became **-r-** (the sound **z** merging with original **r**). In the *Etymologies*, Tolkien went on to cite one primitive word for “she” as *sî* or *si*, “cf. *-se* inflexion of verbs”. If *-so* produces **-ro** as a Quenya ending for “he”, we would have to assume that *-se* similarly yields **-rë** (earlier **-zë**) as an ending for “she”. This **-rë** is possibly directly attested in the “Qenya” phrase **kirya kalliére**, translated “the ship shone” (MC:220,

221) – literally “[the] ship, she shone”? Turning the form **kalliére** into LotR-style Quenya would probably take more than just altering the spelling to **calliérë**, but it may be noted that the ending **-rë**, like **-ro**, seems to prefer the company of a *long* vowel in the preceding syllable.

Many writers have used the endings **-ro** = “he” and **-rë** = “she”, so students of Quenya should certainly memorize them – but as far or short as we know, they are only attested in material predating the writing of LotR. In 1994, there finally turned up a tiny scrap of evidence regarding Tolkien’s post-LotR ideas about the pronominal ending for “he, she”. In the essay *Quendi and Eldar*, in the discussion of the tense-less verb **equë** “said, says”, Tolkien noted that while this form normally does not receive endings of any kind, it may occur with certain pronominal endings. He cited two examples of this: **equen**, translated “said I”, and also **eques**, translated “said he / she” (WJ:414) or “said he, said someone” (WJ:392). So here we have an ending **-s** that covers both “he” and “she” (or even “someone”). In the post-LotR period, Tolkien demonstrably used the ending **-rya** for both “his” and “her”, so it is not surprising that he might have decided that Quenya used one ending for both “he” and “she” as well (cf. also the Finnish gender-neutral pronoun *hän*.) Actually this ending **-s** must also cover “it”, for it can hardly be kept apart from the ending **-s** that we have already met in object position – as in **tiruvantes** “they will keep it” (*Cirion’s Oath*) or **caritalyas** “your doing it” (VT41:17). So **eques** could probably mean “it said” just as well as “(s)he said”. Conversely, **-s** may probably refer to *people* in object position as well: Perhaps **tiruvantes** might also mean “they will keep [or, watch] him/her”.

A form like **tulis** would have to be translated either “he comes”, “she comes”, or “it comes” depending on the context. The existence of such an ending does not necessarily contradict the references Tolkien made to primitive “-so inflexion” and “-se inflexion” of verbs in the *Etymologies*: Normally, the final short *-o* and *-e* of primitive Elvish have been lost in Quenya, so primitive forms like *tuli-so* “he comes” and *tuli-se* “she comes” might well merge as **tulis** “(s)he comes”. Where this would leave the longer, gender-specific endings **-ro** and **-rë** found in early material is unclear. Tolkien may have meant them to descend from variant endings with long vowels (*-sô* and *-sê*), final *-ô* and *-ê* becoming **-o** and **-ë** in Quenya. Perhaps the gender-specific endings would be used where the short, general 3rd person ending **-s** “he, she, it” is not specific enough? But there is every reason to believe that Tolkien repeatedly changed his mind about the details; we can’t even rule out the possibility that the long endings **-ro** “he” and **-rë** “she” were dropped altogether.

Anyhow, if **-s** is to be the ending for “(s)he”, where does this leave the unattested ending **-ryë** that some students have (plausibly) extrapolated from the possessive ending **-rya** “his, her”? The ending **-ryë** may still be valid. Perhaps the ending for “(s)he” alternates between **-s** and **-ryë** just

like the ending for “I” may appear as either **-n** or **-nyë**. (While the endings **-s** and **-ryë** may seem less similar than **-n** vs. **-nyë**, it should be understood that **-ryë** would come from earlier *-sye*: Following a vowel, the combination *sy* turns into **zy** and then **ry**. Cf. the *Etymologies*, entry *SUS*; from this root, Tolkien derived the Quenya word **surya** “spirant consonant”, which must be understood to come from *susyâ* in the primitive language.) The longer ending **-ryë** would be used primarily when a second pronominal ending denoting the *object* is to be added, e.g., **tiriryet** “(s)he watches **them**” – whereas “(s)he watches” by itself could be either **tiris** or **tiriryë**, but more commonly the former. But writers who want to avoid the unattested ending **-ryë** may opt for the gender-specific endings **-ro** and **-rë** instead, to bring in a connecting vowel: **tirirot** “he watches **them**”, **tiriret** “she watches **them**”.

In the exercises below, we will however avoid all speculative endings and constructions and concentrate on the only known facts we have at our disposal regarding the 3rd person singular of the pronoun table: In Quenya as Tolkien had come to see this language in the post-LotR period, the ending **-s** may be used for “he, she, it”, whereas **-rya** covers “his” and “her”. (We may plausibly assume that **-rya** covers “its” as well: Notice that in the phrase **ringa súmaryassë** “in her cold bosom” cited above, the reference is actually to a ship, so “its bosom” would seem to be an equally appropriate translation.) The long endings **-ro** and **-rë** are not used in the exercises or the keys, since their status in LotR-style Quenya is slightly uncertain (not that I necessarily discourage writers from using them).

## Summary of Lesson Fifteen

The Quenya pronominal possessive ending for “his, her” is **-rya**, behaving like the other endings of this kind (endings for number or case may be added after it). If a *dual* noun is to receive a pronominal ending, its duality is indicated by **-t** added to this ending (cf. **máryat** “her [pair of] hands” in *Namárië*), apparently even in the case of nouns that would otherwise receive the alternative dual marker **-u** instead. – The extended infinitives in **-ta** which may receive pronominal endings denoting the *object* (e.g. **caritas** “to do it”) may also receive possessive pronominal endings denoting the *subject*, e.g. **caritalya(s)** “your doing (it)”. – Nouns ending in a long vowel, e.g. **má** “hand”, would shorten this vowel before a consonant cluster; thus the plural allative is attested as **mannar** (for the impossible form **\*\*mánnar**). Curiously, long vowels are *not* shortened before **ry**, **ly**, **ny**, **ty**, though these combinations do count as consonant clusters for the purpose of stress. – The Quenya *locative* case has the ending **-ssë**, plural **-ssen**, and dual **-tsë** (at least in the case of nouns with nominative dual forms in **-t**; nouns with nominative dual forms in **-u** may simply add **-ssë**). These endings express the idea of “in”, “on”, “upon”, e.g. **ciryassë** “(up)on a ship”, **coassen**

“in houses”. – Quenya *relative sentences* may be formed using the relative pronoun **ya** “which, that”. **Ya** may also receive endings for case and number, cf. the plural locative **yassen** “in which” or “wherein” occurring in *Namárië* (plural because it refers back to a plural word). The article **i** “the” may also be used as a relative pronoun, cf. **i Eru i or ilyë mahalmar äa tennoio**, “**the** One **who** is above all thrones” in *Cirion’s Oath*, but **i** apparently cannot receive endings for case or number. In front of a verb, **i** can be used by itself to express “the one(s) who do(es)” whatever the verb expresses, e.g., **i carir quettar** “the ones/those who form words”. – The pronominal endings for “he” and “she” are somewhat uncertain. Early material contains verbs with the endings **-ro** “he” and **-rë** “she” (often combined with lengthening of the vowel of the preceding syllable). In post-LotR material, we have one attestation of **-s** as an ending covering both “he” and “she”, and since the same ending is attested with the meaning “it” elsewhere (as object), we may assume that **-s** is a general ending covering the entire 3rd person singular, as subject or object. One educated guess has it that this **-s** alternates with a longer form **-ryë** (plausibly extrapolated from the possessive ending **-rya** “his/her”), but only the attested ending **-s** is used in the exercises below.

## Vocabulary

**tatya** “second” (The original name of the Second Clan of the Elves was **Tatyar**, literally “Seconds, Second Ones”, though the Eldarin branch of that clan would later be called **Noldor** instead [WJ:380–381]. A variant form of **tatya** is **atya** [attested, compounded, in VT41:10], which connects more clearly with the basic number **atta** “two”. As will be explained in Lesson 17, “second” was later expressed as **attëa**, but students should know the archaic form **tatya** as well, and we will use this form here.)

**mar-** “to dwell, abide”; to “live” somewhere in the sense of dwelling there (cf. Elendil’s Declaration: **sinomë maruvan** = “in this place will I abide”) **ya** relative pronoun “that, which”, often with case endings; as relative pronoun alternating with **i** (= “who”, referring to people and used when no ending for case or number is to be added?)

**aurë** “day” (the actual daylight period, not a full 24-hour cycle) **veru** “(married) couple, man and wife, pair of spouses” (an old dual form apparently lacking any singular; there are only the gender-specific words **verno** “husband” and **vessë** “wife” from the same root)

**má** “hand”

**pé** “lip”, nominative dual **peu** (so according to VT39:9, reproducing a post-LotR source. Earlier, in the entry PEG of the *Etymologies*, the word **pé** had been glossed “mouth” instead – which would be pure plagiarism of the *Hebrew* word for “mouth”! But Tolkien apparently thought better of it: in LotR Appendix E, the Quenya word for “mouth” is given as **anto** instead, which word we introduced in Lesson Eleven.)

**mallë** “road, street” (nominative pl. **maller**, LR:47, 56; SD:310 – as we theorized in Lesson Two, nouns in **-lë** may regularly have plural forms in **-ler** rather than **-li**.)

**hrívë** “winter”

**apa** preposition “after” (only attested compounded; cf. **Apanónar** “the Afterborn” as an Elvish name of Men, the Elves themselves being the Firstborn – see the *Silmarillion*, near the beginning of chapter 12. We will here assume that **apa** may also function as an independent preposition.)

**Hyarmen** “the South”

**hyarya** adjective “left”

NOTE: As suggested by their shapes, the words for “south” and “left” are closely related. As explained by Tolkien in LotR Appendix E, the four directions **Númen**, **Hyarmen**, **Rómen**, **Formen** = West, South, East, North were normally listed in that order, “beginning with and facing west” – apparently because that was the direction of the Blessed Realm. It may be no coincidence that the directions are listed counterclockwise so that the North is named last, for in the First Age when this convention was presumably established, North was the direction of Morgoth’s stronghold (Angband or Thangorodrim). Our imaginary speaker facing the West would have the South on his left hand, and Tolkien explained that **Hyarmen** means basically “left-hand region”. As Tolkien also noted, this system is “the opposite to the arrangement in many Mannish languages”, which tend rather to use the East (the direction of the sunrise) as the starting-point “faced” by the speaker. Thus the words for “south” and “right” may be associated or identical – cf. for instance Hebrew *yamîn*.

## Exercises

1. Translate into English (the pronominal ending **-s** may have various English equivalents):
  - A. **Tuluvas i tatya auessë.**
  - B. **I hrívessë rimbë aiwi autar marien Hyarmessë; apa i hrívë autantë Hyarmello ar tulir nórelmanna.**
  - C. **Hiritarya malta i orontissen ánë alassë lieryan, an hiritaryas carnë lierya alya.**
  - D. **Tatya hrívessë ya marnes i coassë hirnes harma nu i talan.**
  - E. **Quetis lambelma, an maris nórelmassë.**
  - F. **Eques: “Cennen macil i ohtaró hyarya massë.”**
  - G. **I nér i hirnë i harma nurtuva i engwi yar ihíries samberyatsë.**
  - H. **I ambossë cenis i veru yat itíries coaryallo, ar yant ánes annarya.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. She saw a couple in the street.
- J. I found the woman who lives in the house between the rivers, and I watched her lips (*dual*) and her hands (*dual*); in her left hand I saw a book.
- K. I saw his cup in his hands (*dual*), the cup from which he poured wine into his mouth.
- L. The ones who dwell in the towers to which the man is going are warriors.
- M. His drinking the wine was not a good idea, for what he did after his drinking it was not wise.
- N. After we (*excl.*) went away [pa. t. of **auta-**] from our (*excl.*) land in the South, we have seen many Dwarves on the roads.
- O. The towers on the hills are great; the one who owns [**harya** = possesses] the greatest tower, from which one [**quen**] can see the Elven-land [**Eldanóre**], is the richest man in the city.
- P. A people whose king is wise will dwell in peace in a good land which they will love deeply.



# Lesson 16

The Instrumental case. Verbs with an unaccented vowel + *-ta*. The imperative. The *nai* formula.

If we accept the information provided in the Plotz letter as Tolkien's definite version of Quenya case system, we have now discussed all the Quenya noun cases except two. One of them is somewhat obscure; Tolkien supplied no further information about it, not even telling us what this case is called. The relevant ending is *-s*, plural *-is*. The Plotz lay-out suggests that this "Mystery Case" is simply a shorter, alternative version of the locative: The word exemplifying this case is listed in a parenthesis below the locative form of the same word. So instead of **coassë** "in a house", plural **coassen** "in houses", one may perhaps use the shorter forms **coas**, pl. **coais**. However, since we cannot be entirely confident regarding the function of this case, I will not construct any exercises involving it. On the other hand, the function of the last Quenya case we will discuss in this course is relatively well understood. We are talking about:

## 16.1 The Instrumental case

The rule for how the instrumental case is constructed can (for pedagogical purposes!) be stated very simply: Just add **-en** to the dative form! So where the dative has the ending **-n**, corresponding to plural **-in** and dual **-nt**, the instrumental has the endings **-nen**, plural **-inen**, dual **-nten**. Before discussing the function of this case, we will fill in some more details about the instrumental forms as such.

We must assume that the basic instrumental ending **-nen** can be added directly to nouns ending in **-n** and **-r** without creating impossible clusters, so that we could have **elennen** as the instrumental form of **elen** "star", or **Anarnen** as the instrumental of **Anar** "Sun". (These instrumental forms would of course be accented on the second-to-last syllable because of the consonants cluster **-nn-** or **-rn-** now following the vowel of this syllable.) Nouns ending in **-s** with stems in **-r-** (for older **-z-**) would probably also show **-rn-** in the instrumental, e.g. **olornen** as the instrumental form of

**olos, olor-** “dream”. Nouns in **-n** with stems in **-m-** must be assumed to have instrumental forms in **-mnen**, e.g. **talamnen** as the instrumental form of **talan, talam-** “floor”. But from this point, we can’t be sure. Since the group *ln* regularly becomes **ld** in Quenya, it could be that the instrumental form of (say) **estel** “trust, hope” should be **?estelden** for older *estelnen*. Otherwise, as in the case of nouns in **-t**, it becomes even more difficult. What is the instrumental form of a noun like **nat** “thing”? Since **\*\*natnen** is not a possible Quenya form, would it turn into **?nanten** with metathesis **tn > nt**, or would a connecting vowel (possibly **-e-**) materialize to produce a form like **natenen**? In the case of nouns with special stem-forms ending in consonant clusters, a connecting vowel *must* be inserted before the ending **-nen**; the instrumental form of **nís** (**niss-**) “woman” may be something like **nissenen**.

Some otherwise long-lost final vowel may also be preserved before case-endings, as when **ambar** “fate, doom” is seen to have the instrumental form **ambartanen** (the relevant example is further discussed below). The stem of **ambar** may be given as **ambart(a)-**: Presumably the word did end in *-rta* way back in primitive Elvish, but except when shielded by grammatical endings, the final vowel and (later) the *-t* had been lost.

If the plural ending **-inen** is added to a noun ending in one of the three vowels **-a**, **-o**, or **-u**, the initial **-i-** of the ending merges with the last vowel of the noun to form a diphthong. Constituting the new second-to-last syllable, it naturally attracts the stress. Thus WJ:391 has **ómainen** as the plural instrumental form of **óma** “voice”, the form **ómainen** being accented on the diphthong **-ai-**. Nouns ending in **-ë** may originally have behaved in a similar fashion, so that **lassë** “leaf” once had the plural instrumental form *lasseinen*, accented on the diphthong *ei* – but in Quenya, older *ei* eventually turned into a long **í**, and the Plotz letter points to **lassínen** as the current form. Of course, this long **í** still attracts the stress, like any long vowel occurring in the second-to-last syllable of a word. It is possible that nouns ending in **-i**, like **tári** “queen”, would also show **í** in their plural instrumental forms, *tári+inen* manifesting as **tárínen** since two short **i**’s would merge into one long **í**. This plural form **tárínen**, accented on the **í** in the second-to-last syllable, would then contrast with the singular **tárinen**, accented on *tár-*. Nouns in **-ë** with stem-forms in **-i** may behave in a similar fashion. The singular instrumental form of the noun **lírë**, **líri-** “song” is attested in *Namárië* as **lírinen** (this would be simply *líri+nen*); perhaps the plural form would be **lírínen** (for *líri+inen*).

For the last time in the course proper I must bore the student with the question of dual forms: *Some* dual instrumentals have the ending **-nten** as indicated by Plotz, but the dual element is obviously the **t**, intruding into the simplest instrumental ending **-nen**. So is the ending **-nten** peculiar to nouns with nominative dual forms in **-t**, so that nouns with nominative dual forms in **-u** would rather add the simplest ending **-nen** after this **-u**? I tend

to think so; the instrumental form of **Aldu** “Two Trees” would then be **Aldunen** rather than ?**Aldunten** (or ?**Aldanten** or whatever).

As the name suggests, the *function* of the instrumental case is to identify the “instrument” (in a wide sense) by which some action is achieved. The best example available is probably the phrase **i carir quettar ómainen** “those who make words with voices” (WJ:391). This description of the Elves, involving the plural instrumental form of **óma** “voice”, identifies their voices as the “instrument” or means by which they make words. Lacking an instrumental case, English often uses the preposition “with” instead, as in Tolkien’s translation of **ómainen**: “with voices”. However, it should be understood that the Quenya instrumental endings correspond to English “with” only where this preposition means “using” or “by means of” (**i carir quettar ómainen** could also be translated “those who make words using voices”).

It is highly unlikely that the endings marking the instrumental case can be used for English “with” in the sense of “together with” (and please allow me to dwell on this point for a moment, for some writers have actually misapplied the Quenya instrumental case in such a way!) A sentence like “I saw them with an Elf” can hardly be translated as **\*\*cennenyet Eldanen**, for to the extent this makes any sense at all, it implies that the Elf is the instrument by which “I saw them”! On the other hand, in a sentence like “I saw them with my binoculars”, it would be quite all right to use the instrumental case for the English preposition “with”. (Unfortunately, I can’t reconstruct the actual Quenya wording, for Tolkien doesn’t seem to mention any Elvish word for “binoculars” anywhere: Perhaps the far-sighted Elves just didn’t need such artifices!)

The Quenya instrumental endings may also be rendered into English by means of other prepositions than “with”. The two instrumental forms occurring in *Namárië* Tolkien translated as phrases involving the preposition “in”; yet it is clear from the context that the instrumental does not really intrude on the area otherwise covered by the locative. The first instrumental form occurs at the end of the first line of the song: **Ai! laurië lantar lassí súrinen**, “ah! like gold fall the leaves in the wind”. Despite Tolkien’s translation, the context indicates that the “wind” (**súre**, **súri-**) is here thought of as the “instrument” *which makes the leaves fall*: “In the wind” actually implies “by means of the wind”, or simply “because of the wind”. This example shows that the Quenya instrumental case may indicate simply the *reason* why something happens (the instrumental ending marking the noun denoting *what* makes it happen). The second example of the instrumental case in *Namárië* is similar, involving the noun **lírë**, **líri-** “song”: Quoting from the prose version in RGE0, reference is made to **Vardo . . . tellumar, yassen tintilar i eleni ómaryo lírinen**, that is, “Varda’s . . . domes, in which the stars twinkle by the song of her voice” (**ómaryo lírinen** = “her voice’s song-by”). So the song of Varda’s voice is *what makes the stars twinkle*, and the word for “song” is accordingly marked with the instrumental

ending **-nen**.

Another instrumental ending translated “in” by Tolkien is found in *Fíriel’s Song*, one line of which says that the Valar gave everyone the gifts of Ilúvatar **lestanen** = “in measure”. Here the instrumental noun tells us something about *how* the verbal action was accomplished.

The *Markirya* poem includes the plural instrumental form (ending **-inen**) of the word **ráma** “wing”, the sails of a ship being poetically referred to as its “wings”: The ship is described as **wilwarin wilwa . . . rámainen elvië**, meaning something like “fluttering like a butterfly . . . on starlike wings” (or, “with starlike wings”, “by means of starlike wings”). We could imagine a less poetical example using the same plural instrumental form, e.g. **aiwi vilir rámainen**, “birds fly with (or, using) wings”. Talking about a single bird we could use a *dual instrumental* form: **aiwë vilë rámanten**, “a bird flies with [a pair of] wings”.

One (actually the only) example of an instrumental form occurring in the *Silmarillion* is particularly interesting. Near the end of chapter 21, *Of Túrin Turambar*, Níniel refers to her brother as **Turambar turun ambartanen**, “master of doom by doom mastered”. UT:138 indicates that the more proper reading is **Turambar turún’ ambartanen**. This sentence is peculiar for several reasons. The word for “doom” (= “fate”) is here **ambar** with stem **ambart(a)-**, as in the name **Turambar** “master of doom” and the instrumental form **ambartanen** “by doom”. Other sources point to **umbar** as the Quenya word for “fate, doom” (it is even mentioned in LotR Appendix E as the name of a Tengwa letter). **Ambar** elsewhere occurs with the meaning “world”, as in Elendil’s Declaration in LotR (where reference is made to the **Ambar-metta** or “end of the world”), but **ambar** “doom” only partially coincides with this noun, since the stem-form **ambart(a)-** is distinct. Conceivably the “proper” Quenya word for “doom” was **umbar**, but the variant form **ambar** appeared in Exilic Quenya because of influence from the corresponding Sindarin word (*ammarth* or *amarth*). We must have faith: perhaps Tolkien explains the seeming discrepancies in some still unpublished note.

Another peculiar feature of Níniel’s cry is the word **turun** or more properly **turún’**, translated “mastered”. The translation would seem to indicate that this is a passive participle, and the complete form must be **turúna**, the final **-a** here dropping out because the next word (**ambartanen**) begins in the same vowel. This form **turún[a]** “mastered” must be related to the verb **tur-** “govern, control, wield” that we introduced in Lesson Seven. However, according to the rules for the formation of passive participles set out in Lesson Ten, the participle of **tur-** ought to be **turna** (cf. **carna** “made” as the attested passive participle of **car-** “make”), or less likely **túrina** (cf. **rácina** “broken” as the attested participle of **rac-** “break”). The form **turún[a]** is quite perplexing. It could belong to some peculiar phase in Tolkien’s evolution of Quenya, an experiment later abandoned. Since we are

dealing with posthumously published material here, we can never be certain that all the linguistic samples represent the Professor’s definitive decisions on what Quenya grammar was “really” like.

We must hope that future publications will throw more light upon the strange form **turún[a]**, but if we accept it as some kind of passive participle, we can make out one important grammatical rule from Níniel’s cry: Following a passive participle, the *agent* who brought about the condition described can be introduced as a noun in the instrumental case. In our attested example, Túrin Turambar was “mastered”, and since Níniel wanted to add information about what it was that “mastered” her brother, she used the instrumental form **ambartanen** = “by doom”. A less gloomy example could involve, say, **técina** “written”, the passive participle of the verb **tec-** “to write”: We could build a phrase like **i parma técina i Eldanen**, “the book written by the Elf”. Following a participle, the instrumental form could surely also assume its more basic function of denoting an *instrument*, so that we could have a phrase like **técina quessenen** “written with a feather [pen]” (**quessë** = “feather”).

We must assume that the instrumental endings can be added to the relative pronoun **ya-** to express “by which”, “with which”: Singular **i cirya yanen lenden amba i sírë** “the ship **by which** I went up the river” (**amba** = “up”), plural **i ciryar yainen**. . . “the ships **by which**. . .”, dual **i ciryat yanten**. . . “the couple of ships **by which**. . .”

Though our attested examples involve other cases, there is no reason to doubt that also instrumental endings can be combined with possessive pronominal endings – producing forms like **mányanen** “with my hand”, “using my hand” (**má-nya-nen** “hand-my-with”).

Combined with a *gerund* (ending in **-ië**), the instrumental case may perhaps express the idea of “by doing so and so”, e.g. **tiriénen** “by watching” (for instance, in a sentence like “I found out by watching”). When the instrumental ending is added to nouns in **-ië**, the vowel in front of the ending would likely be lengthened, thus receiving the accent (a quite awkward stress-pattern being avoided): Hence I go for **tiriénen** rather than **?tirienen**, which would have to be accented on the second **i**. We have no attested example involving the instrumental case, but cf. Tolkien’s **tyaliéva** as the possessive form of **tyalië** “play”. The instrumental would likely be **tyaliénen**, then. Such vocalic lengthening – apparently to avoid cumbersome stress-patterns – is also observed in other parts of speech, as we will discover in the next thrilling section:

## 16.2 Verbs with an unaccented vowel + *-ta*

We have earlier discussed what must be the main categories of Quenya verbs. There are some minor sub-groups of verbs that may have their own peculiar

features, but our knowledge is very limited since (the litany of Tolkienian linguistics:) we have so few examples. All the same, a few observations about some of these sub-categories may be made, and we will deal with one of them here.

In some of my examples and exercises I have combined the verb **car-** “make, do” with an adjective, e.g. exercise C in the previous lesson: **Hiritaryas carnë lierya alya**, “his finding it made his people rich”. I should point out that we have no Tolkien-made example of an adjective being combined with **car-** in such a way, and it may be that I am here imposing an English idiom on Quenya. Now this may not be such a disaster: If we are ever to develop a usable form of Quenya, it would almost inevitably become somewhat coloured by modern usage (and if the Eldar return from Valinor to protest against their language being mistreated, that would not be a bad thing, either). Even so, it may be noted that Quenya vocabulary includes what may be termed *causative verbs derived from adjectives*; perhaps fully “idiomatic” Quenya would rather use such formations.

These verbs express, in a single word, the idea of “making” an object have the properties described by the corresponding adjective. The student should already be familiar with the ending **-ta**, which occurs in many Quenya verbs (e.g. **pusta-** “to stop”). Often it is just a verbal ending with no particular implications, but occasionally it may take on a *causative* meaning; compare the primary verb **tul-** “to come” and the derived verb **tulta-** “to summon” (= to *cause* to come). Added to *adjectives*, it seems that this ending may similarly be used to derive causative verbs. We have only a handful of examples, but the adjective **airë** “holy” apparently corresponds to a verb **airita-** “to hallow” – that is, “to *make holy*”. (The final **-ë** of **airë** “holy” appears as **-i-** in **airita-** because the **-ë** of **airë** descends from **-i** in the primitive language, and it changed to **-ë** only when final. Cf. the similar variation in the aorist: **silë** “shines”, but with a plural subject **silir** “shine”, because if you add any ending the final vowel is no longer final at all.)

The one form of the verb **airita-** that is actually attested is the past tense. It reportedly appears as **airitánë** in an unpublished Tolkien manuscript stored at the Bodleian: According to a footnote in *Vinyar Tengwar* #32, November 1993, p. 7, the manuscript page in question “dates to c. 1966 and gives much information about Quenya verbs. It will be published in an upcoming issue of *Vinyar Tengwar*.” Eight years and nine *Vinyar Tengwar*s later, we are unfortunately still waiting to see this apparently highly interesting document – but at least VT#32 cited the past tense **airitánë**. It obviously includes the well-known past tense ending **-në**, but it should be noted that *the vowel of the ending -ta- is here lengthened* when the past tense ending is added. In this way, the now long syllable **-tá-** attracts the stress. **\*\*Airitanë** with no lengthening would have a rather awkward stress-pattern (accented on *-rit-*), and it is perhaps for this reason the lengthening occurs. This may also imply that if some further ending is added after **-në** so

that the stress would not threaten to land on *-rit-* after all, the lengthening of *-ta-* may not occur: Perhaps, say, “we hallowed” is **airitanelmë** rather than ?**airitánelmë**, since the stress must here fall on *-ne-* and *-ta-* receives no stress at all. Some think Quenya cannot have a long vowel in a wholly unaccented syllable unless this syllable is also the first one of the word.

Whatever the case may be, we can apparently infer this rule: As long as the past tense form of such a verb (that is, a verb with an *unaccented vowel* in front of the verbal ending *-ta*) is not to receive any further endings that may shift the stress, the ending *-ta* is lengthened to *-tá-* when the past tense ending *-në* is added after it: Thus **airitánë** as the pa.t. of **airita-**. Of course, not all endings that may be suffixed to *-në* have the power to shift the stress, and then the lengthening of *-tá-* must remain to prevent the accent from going someplace it shouldn't: **Airitáner** “hallowed” (with a plural subject), **airitánes** “(s)he hallowed”, **airitánen** “I hallowed”. But quite possibly, it should be **airitanenyë** with no lengthening of *-tá-* if you use the longer form of the ending for “I” – so that the stress moves to *-ne-*, and *-ta-* becomes a wholly unaccented syllable.

In the *Etymologies*, Tolkien listed at least one more verb that seems to belong to this class. The entry NIK-W- provides a verb **ninquitá-** “whiten”, i.e. “make white”, derived from the adjective “white”: **ninquë** (stem **nin-qui-**; the primitive form is given as *ninkwi*). By writing **ninquitá-**, Tolkien obviously suggested that the final vowel is often long, and we may safely assume that the past tense is **ninquitánë**.

NOTE: In the entry NIK-W-, Tolkien also listed a verb **ninquita-** “shine white” that would probably inflect otherwise: perhaps the past tense would rather be ?**ninquentë** with nasal infixion (allow me to state explicitly that this is speculation!) In the aorist, the two verbs must probably coincide as **ninquita**, the context determining whether this is to be interpreted “whitens” or “shines white”.

We may be able to tell one more thing about this class of verbs: how the passive (or “past”) participle is formed. The evidence is widely scattered, though.

In *The Houses of Healing*, Chapter 8 of Book Five in *The Return of the King*, Tolkien has Aragorn saying that “in the high tongue of old I am *Elessar*, the Elfstone, and *Envinyatar*, the Renewer”. The Quenya title **Envinyatar** = “Renewer” is interesting. As for the final *-r* seen here, this ending may be added to (A-stem) Quenya verbs with much the same meaning as the English agent ending *-er*, so **Envinyatar** “Renewer” points to an underlying verb **envinyata-** “to renew”. The prefix **en-** means “re-”, and **vinya** is the Quenya adjective “new”, so apparently we are looking at another verb derived from an adjective by means of the ending *-ta*.

Interestingly, what may be seen as the passive participle of this verb **envinyata-** “to renew” is attested in MR:405, in the phrase **Arda Envinyanta**. This Tolkien translated “Arda Healed” (the reference is to a future world healed from the consequences of the evil of Morgoth). Compar-

ing it with Aragorn’s title **Envinyatar** = “Renewer”, we can tell that **Arda Envinyanta** more literally means “Arda Renewed”. It should be noted how the passive participle is formed: by *nasal-infixion* intruding before the **t** of the ending **-ta** of the verb **envinyata-**. The resulting form **envinyanta** differs from the passive participles of “normal” verbs in **-ta**, which seem to have participles in **-taina**. (Compare **hastaina** “marred” from the same text that provides the example **Arda Envinyanta** “Arda Healed”: **Arda Hastaina** or “Arda Marred” was the world as it actually appeared, marred by Morgoth. See MR:405, cf. 408, note 14. It is important to notice that these divergent types of participles occur in the same source text, allowing us to know with certainty that the different formations do belong to the same version of Quenya: Otherwise, it would be tempting to dismiss some of the formations as representing merely a certain stage in Tolkien’s evolution of the language – ideas he later abandoned.)

If **envinyata-** “to renew” has the passive participle **envinyanta**, we may plausibly assume that the pass. part. of **airita-** “to hallow” is similarly formed by means of nasal-infixion: **airinta** “hallowed” (rather than **?airitaina**, though perhaps this form would also be acceptable). And if **airita-** has the past tense form **airitánë** with lengthening of **-ta-** to **-tá-**, we can probably assume that **envinyata-** “to renew” becomes **envinyatánë** in the past tense. Similarly, if **ninquitá-** is the verb “to whiten”, with the past tense **ninquitánë**, the participle “whitened” may well be **ninquinta**. (The forms **envinyanta**, **airinta**, **ninquinta** would of course agree in number like adjectives in **-a**, changing this final vowel to **-ë** in the plural.)

We have mentioned pretty much all the very few known verbs that may tentatively be assigned to this sub-class. There is no direct evidence for how they would behave in other forms than the past tense and the passive participle. (As for the *active* participle in **-la**, we would almost certainly see the same lengthening of the ending **-ta** as we observe before the past tense ending **-në**: hence **airitála** “hallowing”, **envinyatála** “renewing”. Again, the “motivation” for lengthening the vowel of **-ta** would be to achieve euphonic stress-patterns.)

It is of course difficult to know to what extent we should feel free to derive new Quenya verbs ourselves by adding **-ta** to adjectives (remembering that adjectives in **-ë** change this vowel to **-i-** before endings, as in **airita-** “to hallow” from **airë** “holy”). To return to the sentence we started with, **hiritaryas carnë lierya alya** “his finding it made his people rich”, perhaps this might better be expressed as **hiritaryas alyatánë lierya**? We then assume that the adjective **alya-** can be used as the basis for a verb **alyata-** “make rich” or “enrich”, with past tense **alyatánë** (and passive participle **alyanta**). In this as in other matters, people who want to write in Quenya face a difficult choice: Should we try to make the language work using solely the words Tolkien himself provided, introducing unattested idioms or long circumlocutions where necessary to work around gaps in the Tolkien-made



vocabulary? Or should we feel free to derive new words from Tolkienian elements by applying the Professor's principles as far as we understand them, something that may be perceived as diluting Tolkien's actual linguistic output with "fake" elements (however cleverly constructed)? Some post-Tolkien creativity must unquestionably be allowed if we are ever to develop Quenya into anything like a useable language, but there are no easy answers here.

### 16.3 The imperative

The *imperative* is a form of the verb used to express commands or requests. In English, imperatives are often preceded by the word "please" to make them more polite, but it should be understood that an imperative form as such is not necessarily to be taken as a blunt *order*. In Tolkien's Quenya rendering of the Lord's Prayer, several imperatives occur, and such a prayer as "deliver us from evil" is of course just that – a prayer, not an attempt to order God around.

According to Tolkien, the primitive Elvish language had an *imperative particle* that could be used in conjunction with a verbal stem to indicate that it was to be taken as an imperative. The particle had the form *â*, and it was "originally independent and variable in place" (WJ:365). Sometimes it was placed *after* the stem, and in such cases it came out as an ending **-a** in Quenya. WJ:364 mentions an "imperative exclamation" **heca!** meaning "be gone!" or "stand aside!" – and on the next page, this is suggested to come from the primitive phrase *hek(e) â*. There is also the primitive exclamation *el-â*, "lo!", "look!", "see!", which is supposed to be the very first thing the Elves ever said as they awoke at Cuiviénen and first saw the stars (WJ:360). In Quenya, this word came out as **ela!** It was "an imperative exclamation directing sight to an actually visible object" (WJ:362).

If we were to be guided by examples like **heca** and **ela**, we would have to conclude that in the case of primary verbs at least, imperatives may be formed by adding **-a** to the verbal stem. For instance, **tir-** "to watch" would have the imperative **tira!** "watch!", representing primitive *tir-â* or *tir(i) â*. The corresponding Sindarin form *tiro!* is actually attested. (Notice that the imperative **tira** "watch!" would be distinct from the present/continuative form **tíra** "is watching", since in the latter form, the stem-vowel is lengthened.) This may be one way of constructing Quenya imperatives, but it is also possible that exclamations like **heca** and **ela** are to be taken as "fossilized" forms descending from earlier stages of Elvish.

As for the typical "modern" way of forming imperatives, there is some evidence that a descendant of the original particle *â* was still treated as an independent word: it was placed *in front of* the verbal stem instead of being suffixed as an ending. In the LotR itself, an example is provided by the Cormallen Praise, the crowd hailing Frodo and Sam with the words **a laita**

**te... Cormacolindor, a laita tárienna!** “Bless them... The Ring bearers, bless (or praise) them to the height” (translated in *Letters*:308). Notice how the verbal stem **laita-** “bless, praise” is here preceded by the imperative particle **a** to form an imperative phrase **a laita!** “bless!” or “praise!” The particle **a** also appears in the long form **á**, directly from primitive *â*, as in the exclamation **á vala Manwë!** “may Manwë order it!” (WJ:404). Here, the verb **vala-** “rule, govern” (the origin of the noun **Valar** and in later usage therefore referring to “divine” power only) is combined with the imperative particle **á**: The literal meaning of **á vala Manwë!** is transparently something like “do rule Manwë!”, if we make an effort to translate **á** as a separate word. Incidentally, this example demonstrates that the subject of the imperative (the one who is to carry out the “order” or request) may be explicitly mentioned after the imperative phrase proper.

Is there any reason why the imperative particle appears in the short form **a** in **a laita**, but in the long form **á** in **á vala**? It has been suggested that **á** is shortened to **a** whenever it occurs in front of a *long syllable* (like **lai-**, because of the diphthong **ai**), but we cannot be sure. Perhaps **á** vs. **a** is just an example of random variation: Presumably being unaccented, the particle could well tend to become shortened if speakers don’t enunciate with care (the ecstatic crowds at Cormallen, hailing the hobbits who had saved the world, hardly did!) I would normally prefer the long form **á**, avoiding confusion with **a** as a particle of *address*, like English “o” (as in Treebeard’s greeting to Celeborn and Galadriel: **a vanimar** = “o beautiful ones”, *Letters*:308). For instance, since the verb “to go” is **lelya-**, the imperative “go!” would be **á lelya!**

The imperative particle **á** can also be combined with the negation **vá** to form the word **áva**, used in *negative* commands: **Áva carë!** “Don’t do [it]!” (WJ:371). This example also gives away how *primary* verbs behave in imperative phrases: they appear with the ending **-ë**, just like they do when they are used as infinitives (and ending-less aorist forms). So from a primary verb like **tir-** “watch”, we can probably form a command like **á tirë!** “(do) watch!” – negative **áva tirë!** “don’t watch!”

## 16.4 The *nai* formula

If one does not want to issue a *command* (however polite), but is merely expressing a *wish* that something will be done or will happen, Quenya has a special “wishing formula”.

Near the end of *Namárië*, we find these lines: **Nai hiruvalyë Valimar! Nai elyë hiruva!** In LotR, this is translated “maybe thou wilt find Valimar! Maybe even thou wilt find it!” The word **nai** is here rendered into English as “maybe”, but elsewhere, Tolkien indicated that this Quenya word does not merely imply that something is *possible*. He noted that **nai** “expresses

rather a wish than a hope, and would be more closely rendered ‘may it be that’ (thou wilt find), than by ‘maybe.’” (RGEO:68) We may wonder why he used the “misleading” translation *maybe* in the first place; possibly there are some “conceptual developments” involved here (i. e., Tolkien changed his mind about the precise meaning of a Quenya text he had already published!) Anyway, his final decision on the meaning of the phrase **nai hiruvalyë Valimar** was that it is to be interpreted “be it that thou wilt find Valimar” or “may thou find Valimar”. **Nai elyë hiruva** likewise means “be it that even thou wilt find [it]”. (The word **elyë** “even thou” here occurring is an emphatic, independent pronoun corresponding to the ending **-lyë** “thou, you”, whereas **Valimar** here stands as an alternative to **Valinor**: Galadriel singing *Namárië* thus expresses a wish that Frodo will eventually “find” or come to the Blessed Realm – and as we remember, both he and Galadriel herself went over the Sea in the end.)

We have one more attestation of the **nai** wishing-formula. It occurs in *Cirion’s Oath*, Cirion expressing a wish that the Valar will guard the oath: **Nai tiruvantes**, “be it that they will guard [/watch over] it”. Tolkien noted that this is the equivalent of “may they guard it” (UT:305, 317).

As for the basic meaning of the word **nai** itself, Tolkien implied that it is quite literally “be (it) that”: He derived Quenya **nai** from earlier *nâ-i* (RGEO:68). The *nâ* part would seem to be the element meaning “be!”, undoubtedly closely related to the Quenya copula **ná** “is”, itself a form of the verb “to be”. The final *i* must be the element corresponding to the “that” of “be (it) that”, and this *i* is certainly meant to be related to the Quenya article **i** “the”.

Whatever the precise origin or basic meaning of **nai** may be, it is a useful word that can apparently be put in front of any sentence including a future-tense verb, turning a simple statement about the future into a *wish* about what the future may bring:

- **Elda tuluva coalmanna** “an Elf will come to our house” > **Nai Elda tuluva coalmanna!** “be it that an Elf will come to our house!” = “(I) wish that an Elf will come to our house!” or “may an Elf come to our house!”
- **Hiruvan i malta** “I will find the gold” > **Nai hiruvan i malta!** “be it that I will find gold!” = “wish that I will find the gold!”
- **Caruvantes** “they will do it” > **nai caruvantes!** “be it that they will do it!” = “wish that they will do it!”

In our attested examples, **nai** is combined with the future tense, but since we have only three examples, it certainly cannot be ruled out that **nai** may be used in conjunction with other tenses as well. (One may even say we have only *two* examples, *Cirion’s Oath* + *Namárië*, since the two examples of the **nai** formula near the end of *Namárië* are very similar.) Perhaps **nai**

can also describe the speaker’s hope that a certain wish is already being fulfilled, or has been fulfilled in the past – the speaker still not knowing whether the wish came true or not. If so, we could have constructions like **nai tíras** “be it that (s)he is watching” = “I hope (s)he is watching” (with the present or continuative tense of **tir-** “watch”), **nai hirnentes!** “be it that they found it” = “I hope they found it” (with the past tense of **hir-** “find”), or **nai utúlies** “be it that (s)he has come” = “I hope (s)he’s come” (with the perfect tense of **tul-** “come”). However, in the exercises below, **nai** is only combined with the future tense – as in our attested examples.

## Summary of Lesson Sixteen

The *instrumental* case has the basic ending **-nen**, plural **-inen**, dual **-nten** (at least in the case of nouns with nominative dual forms in **-t**; nouns with dual forms in **-u** may just add the simplest ending **-nen** to this vowel). The instrumental ending is added to nouns denoting the “instrument” or means by which some action is done or accomplished, as when Elves are described as making words **ómainen** = “with voices” (**óma** “voice”). The instrumental ending may correspond to such English prepositions as “with” or “by” where these words mean “using”, “by means of”. Sometimes the instrumental ending may mark a noun simply indicating *what* makes something happen, as when the first line of *Namárië* says leaves fall **súrinen** = “in the wind”, i.e., because of the wind. Following a passive participle, a noun in the instrumental case may indicate who or what brought about the situation described, as when Túrin is described as **turún’ ambartanen**, “mastered *by doom*”. – Verbs including an unaccented vowel + the ending **-ta** seem to have past-tense forms in **-tánë** (notice the long **á**) and passive participles in **-nta**. Attested examples include **airitánë**, past tense of **airita-** “to hallow”, and **envinyanta**, passive participle of **envinyata-** “to renew, heal”. These verbs are *causative* formations derived from adjectives by means of the ending **-ta**, as when **airë** (**airi-**) “holy” is the basis of the causative verb **airita-** “to make holy” = “to hallow”. – Quenya *imperatives* are marked by the particle **á** (variant **a**, negative **áva** “don’t”), which is placed in front of the verbal stem: **A laita** = “(do) praise!”, **á vala** “(do) rule!” In this grammatical context, the stem of primary verbs assume the ending **-ë**, as in the negative command **áva carë** “don’t do [it]!” A few (old, fossilized?) imperative forms are seen to replace the independent imperative particle **á** or **a** with the corresponding *ending* **-a** (**ela** “lo! behold!”, **heca!** “be gone!”) – The word **nai**, meaning “be it that. . .”, can be placed at the beginning of a sentence to express a *wish*: **Nai tiruvantes** “be it that they will guard it” or “may they guard it” (cf. **tiruvantes** “they will guard/watch it”). In our attested examples, **nai** is placed in front of sentences including a future-tense verb; whether **nai** can be combined with other tenses is unclear.

## Vocabulary

**nelya** “third” (The original name of the Third Clan of the Elves was **Nelyar**, literally “Thirds, Third Ones”, though the Eldarin branch of that clan would later be called **Lindar** or **Teleri** instead [WJ:380, 382].)

**á** imperative particle (variant **a**, but we will use **á** here)

**áva** “don’t!” (i.e., the imperative particle combined with a negation. Also in the form **avá**, the sole attested two-syllable Quenya word that is definitely known to be accented on the *last* syllable [WJ:371] – but we will use **áva** here.)

**rac-** “to break”

**envinyata-** “to renew”

**airita-** “to hallow”

**harna-** “to wound” (and the passive participle is evidently also **harna**, defined as “wounded” in the entry *SKAR* in the *Etymologies*. The adjectival or participial formation **harna** “wounded” is the primary derivative from the original root; eventually **harna-** also came to be used as a verbal stem “to wound”. Of course, if this word were to go like a regular A-stem verb, the passive participle should then be **?harnaina**. But the ending **-ina** is just a longer variant of the ending **-na** which is present from the beginning, and suffixing it twice to the same word should hardly be necessary!)

**namba** “hammer”

**ehtë** “spear”

**yána** “holy place, sanctuary”

**nilmë** “friendship”

**Rómen** “the East” (the initial **ró-** is ultimately related to the **or-** of the verb **orta-** “rise”, since the Sun rises in the East.)

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **Utúlies Rómello ninquë rocconen.**
- B. **I nér harnanë i rá ehtenen, ar eques: “Áva matë yondonya!”**
- C. **Quentemmë i Eldanna: “Nilmelma ná envinyanta analyanen!”**
- D. **I nelya auressë quentes i vendenna: “Á carë ya merilyë!”**
- E. **Quen umë polë hirë harma nurtaina Naucoinen, an Nauco melë núravë i malta ya haryas.**
- F. **I nér ná harna rassenten i lamno; nai úvas firë!**

G. **Lindëas alassenen.**

H. **Á lelya i ostonna ar á quetë i taura tárinna: “Nai varyu-valyë nórelma i úmië ohtarillon!”**

2. Translate into Quenya (consistently using the independent imperative particle rather than the ending **-a**, which possibly only occurs in fossilized forms):

I. He said to the Dwarf: “Break the cup with a hammer!”

J. By ship I went away [past tense of **auta-**] to a remote land in the East.

K. The city is protected by great walls, and warriors who fight with spears cannot break the walls.

L. Calandil said to his wounded son: “Don’t die!”

M. May your queen find the sanctuary hallowed by the Elves!

N. The king and the queen went to my house and renewed our (*excl.*) friendship with great gifts.

O. She seizes the boy with her hands (*dual*), and she says: “Don’t go to the river!”

P. The woman who lives (/dwells) in the third house in the street said to the Elf: “Watch the men who are coming from the sanctuary that you see on the hill, the ones who go to the east.”

# Lesson 17

The demonstratives: *Sina, tan(y)a, enta, yana*. Inflecting the “Last Declinable Word”. U-stem nouns. Ordinals in *-ëa*.

## 17.1 Quenya demonstratives

”Demonstratives” are such words as English *this* or *that*, with the corresponding plural forms *these* and *those*. Thus, they have a stronger meaning than the mere article *the* (though in the languages of the world, many definitive articles descend from older demonstratives that were overused so that their meaning faded). The demonstratives may be used together with nouns, producing phrases like “this house” or “that man”.

In LotR-style Quenya we have only one demonstrative attested in an actual text: Cirion’s Oath commences with the words **vanda sina**, translated “this oath”. The Quenya word order is actually “oath this”, **sina** being the word for “this”: The root *SI-* has to do with *present* position in time or space (cf. such words as **sí** “now” or **sinomë** “in this place” = “here”, the latter from Elendil’s Declaration in LotR).

A word for “that” appears as **tanya** in an early “Qenya” text published in MC:215, which has **tanya wende** for “that maiden”. Here, the word-order is “English-style” with the demonstrative first and the noun it qualifies following it – the opposite of the word order seen in Cirion’s Oath. Perhaps the word order is free, so that **vanda sina** could just as well be **sina vanda** – and conversely, **tanya wende** could also be **wende tanya**? Be that as it may, we cannot be quite certain that the word **tanya** is still valid in LotR-style Quenya. The *Etymologies* lists *TA* as the Elvish “demonstrative stem ‘that’,” and the actual Quenya word for “that” is given as **tana**. Since this form seems like a perfect counterpart to **sina** “this”, we will here use **tana** rather than **tanya** as the word for “that” (though it is also possible that the “Qenya” form **tanya** survived into the later stages of Tolkien’s conception). So given that **vanda sina** is “this oath”, we must assume that “that oath” would be **vanda tana**. Maybe we should update the “Qenya” phrase **tanya wende** “that maiden” to LotR-style Quenya **wendë tana** (or **wendë tana** with the older form or archaic spelling of the word for “maiden”). Then we

also implement the word-order seen in Cirion's Oath, with the demonstrative *following* rather than preceding the noun it connects with: In the entry TA in the Etym, Tolkien actually described **tana** an *anaphoric* word for "that", meaning that it refers back to something already mentioned.

However, **sina** "this" and **tan(y)a** "that" are not the only Quenya demonstratives known. Though not actually observed in any Quenya texts, other demonstratives are mentioned in Tolkien's notes. Another word for "that" is **enta**, mentioned in the entry EN in the *Etymologies* and there described as an adjective meaning "that yonder". The root EN itself is said to be an "element or prefix = over there, yonder". Still letting the demonstrative follow the noun it connects with, we may perhaps construct a phrase like **coa enta**, expressing "that house" in the sense of "yonder house", "that house over there".

It may be that Tolkien meant Quenya to distinguish *three* degrees of nearness or remoteness, as do certain languages of our own world. English typically only distinguishes two degrees, "this" and "that": To simplify matters rather drastically, we may say that "this" refers to something near the speaker, whereas "that" refers to something away from the speaker. But in some languages, the position of the *listener* is also considered. There are two words for "that", one referring to something away from the speaker but *near* the person addressed ("that thing over by you") and another word referring to something that is not close to either the speaker or the listener ("that thing we see over there"). Could it be that in Quenya, **tana** as a word for "that" refers to something close to the person addressed, whereas **enta** refers to something that is remote from *both* the speaker and the person (s)he addresses? There is presently little or no evidence to back up such a theory, but we can at least be certain that the word **enta** clearly connotes the idea of "over there", "that yonder", of something separated from the speaker by *physical distance*. It may be noted that one Sindarin word for "there", namely *ennas* (SD:129 cf. 128), is understood to represent an older locative form that could correspond to a Quenya word **entassë** = "in yonder [place]". (Perhaps **tana** is simply a more general word for "that", merely focusing on the special identity of someone or something: "*that* one" as opposed to any other.)

Yet another word for "that" is **yana**, mentioned in the entry YA in Etym: After the gloss "that", Tolkien added a parenthetical specification: "(the former)". Perhaps **aran yana** would mean "that king" with the implication that we are talking about a former king, now dead or at least no longer ruling. There may be interesting contrasts between **yana** and **enta** as words for "that": In the *Etymologies*, Tolkien noted that the root YA signifies "there, over there; of time, ago". He added that EN, the root producing **enta**, "of time points to the future". So "that day" may translate as **aurë enta** if we are talking about some *future* day, not yet come, whereas **aurë yana** is "that day" with reference to some day in the *past*. (A "neutral" wording,



with no special implications, may be **aurë tana**.)

As for *plural* demonstratives, like English “these” and “those”, we have no attested Quenya forms. Yet the words **sina** “this” and **tana, yana** “that” do look like adjectives by their form (-**na** being an adjectival or participial ending), and **enta** “that yonder” Tolkien explicitly identified as an adjective (Etym, entry EN). So in all likelihood, we can inflect all of these words as adjectives, and then we can derive their plural forms simply by changing the final -**a** to -**ë**:

**vanda sina** “this oath” / **vandar sinë** “these oaths”  
**nís tana** “that woman” / **nissi tanë** “those women”  
**coa enta** “that house [over there]” / **coar entë** “those houses”  
**aurë yana** “that day [in the past]” / **auri yanë** “those days”

As in the case of normal adjectives with the ending -**a**, the plural forms in -**ë** would represent archaic forms in -**ai** (**vandar sinai** etc.) Indirect evidence confirms that demonstratives could receive the plural ending -**i** in older Elvish: In LotR, in the inscription on the Moria Gate, occurs the Sindarin phrase *i thiw hin*, translated “these runes”. Tolkien would have meant this to represent something like *in teñwâi sinâi* at an older stage – and in Quenya, an old plural demonstrative *sinâi* “these” would first become **sinai** and then **sinë**.

It is not clear whether the demonstratives discussed above could occur by themselves, independently, and not only in conjunction with nouns. Can we use **sina** for “this” in a sentence like “this is a good house”? (And if we needed a plural form “these”, should we inflect **sina** as a *noun* when it occurs by itself, so that the plural would now be **sinar** rather than **sinë**?) In PM:401, we have the sentence **sin quentë Quendingoldo**. Tolkien provided no translation, but it must mean either “this Quendingoldo said” or “thus spoke Quendingoldo”. The latter interpretation has it that **sin** is an adverb “thus”, but if **sin** means “this”, it would be what we may call a *demonstrative pronoun* – corresponding to **sina**, the latter however being an adjective only occurring in conjunction with a noun. By this interpretation, it would be **sin**, rather than **sina**, we should use in sentences like “this is a good house” or “I have seen this”. (And should the independent word for “these” be something like **sini**, then?) As for the other demonstratives, we have **ta** as an “independent” form of “that”, corresponding to the adjective **tana** (see Etym, entry TA). Of other such “independent” forms, little or nothing is known, and in the exercises below, we will concentrate on the adjectival demonstratives **sina, tana, enta, yana** used in conjunction with nouns.

## 17.2 Inflecting the “Last Declinable Word”

Now that we have presented all the Quenya cases, we may also point out that the various case endings are not always attached to the noun they logically “belong” to. Where that noun is part of a longer phrase, like when the noun is followed by an attributive adjective describing it, the case ending may be added to the *last* word of the phrase.

Cirion’s Oath provides the classical example. It includes a reference to **Elendil Voronda**, “Elendil the Faithful”, **voronda** being a Quenya adjective meaning “steadfast, faithful”. Wrote Tolkien: “Adjectives used as a ‘title’ or frequently used attribute of a name are placed after the name.” (UT:317; as we have pointed out earlier, Quenya here differs from English by *not* inserting a definite article between the name and the adjective – hence not **Elendil i Voronda**, at least not necessarily).

In Cirion’s Oath, the name-and-title phrase **Elendil Voronda** is to appear in the genitive case: The Oath includes the words **Elendil Vorondo voronwë**, “Elendil the Faithful’s faith” – or (as it is translated in UT:305, with an English-style word order) “the faith of Elendil the Faithful”. Notice that the genitive ending **-o**, which we underlined, is added to the *adjective* **voronda** (regularly displacing a final **-a**) rather than to the *noun* Elendil. In a way, the adjective following the noun is treated as an extension of the noun proper, and so the case ending is added at the end of the whole phrase. Tolkien commented on the construction **Elendil Vorondo**: “As is usual in Quenya in the case of two declinable names in apposition only the last is declined” (UT:317). **Voronda** “faithful” here stands in apposition to “Elendil” as an additional “name” or title, and only the latter “name” is declined (inflected for case).

This principle would work with all the various cases. The allative of **Elendil** when the name occurs alone is attested as **Elendilenna** “to Elendil” (PM:401), but “to Elendil the Faithful” would apparently be **Elendil Vorondanna**, the last word of the phrase receiving the case ending.

Where a proper name followed by some epithet (like **Voronda** in this case) is concerned, the system of adding any case endings to the *last* word of the phrase may be more or less universal. Yet common nouns, not just proper names, may also be qualified by adjectives *following* rather than preceding the noun. Cf. for instance a phrase like **mallë téra** “road straight” = “a straight road” (LR:47). If we were to add the locative ending to express “*on* a straight road”, to what word should it be attached? Should we apply the “last declinable word” rule again (**mallë télassë**) or attach the locative ending to the noun (**mallessë téra**)?

It seems that both constructions would be permissible. The *Markirya* poem provides a string of examples of noun-phrases where the noun proper is followed by an adjective (in most cases a participle). Three consecutive examples involve the noun **isilmë** “moonlight” combined with various partici-

ples (**ilcala** “gleaming”, **pícala** “waning”, **lantala** “falling”), and all three noun phrases are inflected for the locative case by attaching the locative ending to the *last* word of the phrase:

**isilmë ilcalassë** = “in gleaming moonlight”

**isilmë pícalassë** = “in waning moonlight”

**isilmë lantalassë** = “in falling moonlight”

(Tolkien’s more poetic translation in MC:215 goes “in the moon gleaming, in the moon waning, in the moon falling”.)

Another phrase, again involving the participle **ilcala** “gleaming” but here combined with the allative case, is particularly interesting:

**axor ilcalannar** = “upon gleaming bones”

Notice that the noun **axo** “bone” is here *plural*. The plural allative “upon bones” occurring by itself would of course be **axonnar**. But here, where the plural allative ending **-nnar** is attached to the *last* word of the phrase instead, the noun **axo** itself receives only the simplest plural ending **-r**. Normally, **axor** would be taken as a nominative plural, but actually the **-r** merely marks the word as a plural form in the simplest possible way: The actual case marker follows later in the phrase. Words with nominative plurals in **-i** would of course receive this plural marker instead, e.g. **vendī lindalaiva** = “of singing maidens” (home-made example involving the possessive case, but the principle would be the same for all the cases: dative **vendi lindalain**, allative **vendi lindalannar**, etc.) We must assume that *dual* nouns would also appear in their simplest (normally “nominative”) form at the beginning of the phrase: The noun would merely assume the dual ending **-u** or **-t**, and the full dual *case* ending would follow later in the phrase. To construct a Tolkienesque example: **Aldu caltalanta** = “upon [the] shining couple of trees”.

However, it is apparently not a hard-and-fast rule that you *must* attach a case ending to the last word of the entire phrase rather than to the noun proper. *Markírya* contains examples of phrases where an attributive adjective follows the noun it describes, and yet the case ending is added to the noun, not the adjective. The first example involves a plural instrumental form (ending **-inen**), whereas the second example involves the locative case (the ending **-ssë** being added to a noun that is inflected for the somewhat obscure “partitive plural” marked by the ending **-li**):

**rámainen elvië** = “on [/with] starlike wings”

**ondolissë mornë** = “on dark rocks”

Of course, the adjectives **elvëa** “starlike” and **morna** “dark” are here plural (**elvië**, **mornë**) to agree with the plural nouns they describe. It could be that in both instances, the case ending is not added to the adjective because the adjectival plural inflection and the case inflection would somehow

collide. (In the phrase **axor ilcalannar** “upon gleaming bones” there is no collision even though “bones” is plural, since participles in **-la** apparently do not agree in number.) It is less than clear how an ending like **-inen** could be added to a form like **elvië** anyway: **?elviëinen** seems like an unlikely and awkward form, prone to collapse into the quite obscure word **\*\*elvínen**. Perhaps that is why Tolkien preferred to add the case ending to the noun **ráma** instead, even though this noun is not the last word of the phrase.

Yet the system of inflecting the “last declinable word” does seem to be a common phenomenon in the language. It seems that sometimes, only the last item on a *list* receives case endings that actually apply to all the nouns that are listed. **Namna Finwë Míriello** is translated “the Statute of Finwë and Míriel” (MR:258). Not only is the conjunction **ar** “and” that would have separated the two names omitted, but the genitive ending **-o** “of” is added to the *last* name (**Míriel, Míriell-**) only. The “full” construction would presumably have been **Namna Finwëo ar Míriello**, but it was apparently permissible to strip the phrase down to basics to provide the “Statute” with a more concise title.

Though we have no attested examples, the *demonstratives* listed above would seem to be good candidates for receiving case endings, if the word order observed in the phrase **vanda sina** “oath this” is normal. For instance, if we were to add the instrumental ending to express “by this oath”, it would perhaps be best to say **vanda sinanen**. However, **vandanen sina** would probably also be permissible – and in the *plural* (nominative presumably **vandar sinë** “these oaths”), consistently adding the case ending to the noun would be the safest course: “By these oaths” would then be **vandainen sinë** rather than **?vandar sinëinen** or **sinínen** or whatever.

### 17.3 U-stem nouns

Apparently in the latter part of the “Common Eldarin” stage of Tolkien’s simulated evolution of his Elvish languages, two parallel changes occurred, affecting what had earlier been short final *-i* and short final *-u*: they now turned into *-e* and *-o*, respectively. However, since this change only occurred where these vowels were *final*, they remained *-i-* and *-u-* whenever some ending or other element followed. We have already alluded to this phenomenon earlier in this course; in particular, the student will remember it from the variation observed in the aorist of primary verbs: **silë** “shines”, but pl. **silir** “shine” (because original *-i* did not change to *-e* when there was a following ending, like the plural marker **-r** in this example). Similar variation may be observed in nouns and adjectives: We have already mentioned the noun **lómë** “night”, which has the stem-form **lómi-** (SD:415) because it descends from earlier *dômi-* (see the entry **DOMO** in Etym). We must assume that (say) the locative form “at night” would be **lómíssë**. The adjective **carnë**

“red” descends from primitive *karani* (see Etym, entry KARÁN) and therefore has the stem-form **carni-**, for instance in a compound like **Carnistir** “Red-face” (PM:353).

The behaviour of these “*i*-stems” of course finds its parallel in the *U*-stems, words that end in **-o** when this vowel is absolutely final, but preserve an original **-u** where some element follows this vowel. Such words seem to be predominantly (perhaps exclusively) *nouns*. One example of a *U*-stem noun is **ango** “snake”: Its stem-form **angu-** is directly observed in the compound **angulócë** (simply glossed “dragon”, but actually combining the word for “snake” with the word normally translated “dragon”, **lócë**: see the entry LOK in Etym). In the *Etymologies*, Tolkien derived **ango** “snake” from older ANGU (or ANGWA, which would become *angw* and then *angu*), so the final **-o** of this word does indeed represent an older **-u**. Whenever the noun **ango** is to receive endings for case or pronoun, it would apparently assume the form **angu-**, e.g. dative **angun** “for a snake”, ablative **angullo** “from a snake” or with a pronominal ending e.g. **angulya** “your snake”. The genitive would presumably be **anguo** “of a snake”. (As we have demonstrated earlier, “normal” nouns ending in **-o** do not have distinct genitive singular forms; the genitive ending **-o** simply merges with the final vowel.)

Where *U*-stem nouns end in either **-go** or **-co**, they assume a peculiar form in the nominative plural. Normally, nouns ending in **-o** would of course have nominative plural forms in **-or**. However, where **-go** and **-co** represent older *-gu* and *-ku*, it seems that adding the primitive plural ending *-î* made the preceding *u* become *w*, so that the plurals came to end in *-gwî* or *-kwî*. Probably *w* merged with the *g* or *k* preceding it: The combinations *gw*, *kw* are evidently best taken as unitary sounds, *labialized* versions of *g* and *k* (that is, *g* or *k* pronounced with poised lips – look up Lesson One again). In Quenya, these labialized sounds persisted, though by convention, *kw* is spelt **qu**. Bottom line is, when we are told that **ango** “snake” has the stem **angu-**, we can also deduce that the plural form is neither **\*\*angor** nor **\*\*angur**, but **angwi**! The *Etymologies* confirms this; the plural form **angwi** is explicitly mentioned in the entry ANGWA/ANGU.

An example of a **-qui** plural is provided by the word **urco** “bogey”, which has the plural **urqui** (= *urcwi*). Regarding this word, Tolkien noted that “as the plural form shows”, **urco** must be derived from either *urku* or *uruku* in the primitive language (WJ:390). Thus, **urco** is definitely a *U*-stem noun, its final **-o** representing older *-u*, and we would still see **urcu-** in compounds and before most inflectional endings.

NOTE: The word **urco** “bogey” is akin to Sindarin *orch*, “Orc”. In WJ:390, Tolkien notes that in the lore of the Blessed Realm, the word **urco** “naturally seldom occurs, except in tales of the ancient days and the March [of the Eldar from Cuiviénen], and then [it] is vague in meaning, referring to anything that caused fear to the Elves, any dubious shape or shadow, or prowling creature. . . It might indeed be translated ‘bogey’.” Later, when the Noldor returned to Middle-earth, the word **urco** pl. **urqui** was primarily used

with reference to Orcs, since the kinship (“though not precise equivalence”) of this Quenya term to Sindarin *orch* was recognized. In Exilic Quenya, a Sindarin-influenced form also appeared: **Orco**, the plural of which could be either **orcōr** or **orqui**. The plural form **orcōr** occurs elsewhere as well (MR:74), but if one prefers **orqui**, one should probably let **orco** “Orc” function as a U-stem in all respects. For instance, if one were to coin a compound “Orc-language”, it should be **orcūlambë** rather than **orcōlambë**. In the *Etymologies*, far predating the source reproduced in WJ:390, Tolkien also gives the relevant word (glossed “goblin!”) as **orco** pl. **orqui**: stem ÓROK. In Etym, there is no hint that this word was borrowed into Quenya from another language; **orco** is referred to a primitive form *órku*. Tolkien’s precise ideas about the history of the Quenya word for “Orc” were apparently subject to change, but the basic idea that nouns in **-co** derived from primitive forms in *-ku* should have plurals in **-qui** rather than **-cor** is seen to persist. – In accordance with our policy of avoiding specific references to Tolkien’s mythos in the exercises, we will not refer to “Orcs” here, but we can use the word **urco** in its sense of “bogey” (it will occur in the exercises appended to Lesson Eighteen).

We will try to survey the words involved (excluding the earliest “Qenya” material). **Ango** “snake”, pl. **angwi**, seems to be our sole entirely certain example of a **-gwi** plural. In the *Etymologies*, there was also **lango** “throat”, pl. **langwi** (see the entry LANK). The form **langwi** is for some reason marked with an asterisk, which would normally indicate that this form is unattested, but possibly it has another meaning here. Anyway, Tolkien decided to change the word for “throat”, turning it into **lanco** instead. It is entirely possible that this is also a U-stem, so that its plural should be **lanqui** rather than **lancor**, though we have no explicit information to this effect.

One certain U-stem is the word for “arm”, **ranco** (primitive form explicitly given as *ranku*). Just as we would expect, the plural form is **ranqui**; see the entry RAK in Etym. A word meaning “arm” would presumably often appear in its *dual* form to signify a natural pair of arms. We may wonder whether the dual form of **ranco** would be **rancu** (with the dual ending **-u**, quite unrelated to the original final *-u* that later became **-o**) or **rancut** (i. e., the U-stem noun **ranco**, **rancu-** with the dual ending **-t**). As we have argued from the attested example **peu** “pair of lips”, nouns denoting body-parts occurring in pairs may consistently have “fossilized” dual forms in **-u**, since it was this ending that originally denoted a natural or logical pair. Once a pronominal ending is added, we may at least safely suffix **-t** to indicate a dual form. Indeed, without this ending there would be no distinction between **ranculya** “your arm” and **ranculyat** “your (pair of) arms”, no matter what the dual of **ranco** may be when the word occurs by itself: Before endings, **ranco** must become **rancu-** anyway.

Another U-stem is **rusco** “fox”; in our source, Tolkien mentioned both the stem-form **ruscu-** and the plural **rusqui** (VT41:10).

Not all U-stems end in **-co** or **-go**, of course. One example is the word **curo** “a skillful device” (VT41:10, last word of gloss uncertain due to Tolkien’s difficult handwriting). Tolkien cited the stem-form **curu-**, and it apparently

also occurs in Saruman’s Quenya name: **Curumo** (UT:401). This name seems to combine the element **curu-** with the masculine ending **-mo** “that often appeared in names or titles” (WJ:400). We may wonder what the nominative plural of **curo**, **curu-** would be. Could it be **curwi**, paralleling **angwi** as the plural of **ango**, **angu-** “snake”?

Anyhow, the special nominative plurals ending in **-wi** (spelt **-ui** when part of **-qui**) would also be reflected in the genitive plural and the dative plural: If the nominative plural of **rusco** “fox” is **rusqui** (= *ruscwi*) the corresponding dative and genitive forms can hardly be anything else than **rusquin** (= *ruscwin*) and **rusquion** (= *ruscwion*), respectively. One would think that we would also see **rusquiva** (= *ruscwiva*) as the plural possessive, and **rusquinen** (= *ruscwinen*) as the plural instrumental. There is one form that can be cited against the two latter assumptions: the related adjective **ruscuitë** “foxy”, mentioned in the same source that gives us **rusco**, **ruscu-** pl. **rusqui** (VT41:10). In the word **ruscuitë**, which includes the adjectival ending **-itë**, there is *no* development **cui** > *cwi* = **qui**; we don’t see **\*rusquitë**. The ending **-itë** may by its shape resemble the case endings **-iva** and **-inen** for plural possessive and plural instrumental. So if we have **ruscuitë**, perhaps we would – as phonologically parallel forms – also see **ruscuiva** and **ruscuinen** rather than **rusquiva**, **rusquinen**? We cannot know. I will not construct any exercises involving the plural form of the possessive and instrumental cases.

In the other cases, where the plural case endings do *not* include the vowel **-i**, all one has to remember is to change the final **-o** of a U-stem noun to **-u** before adding whatever ending is relevant. Using **ango**, **angu-** “snake” as our example, we would for instance have the plural allative **angunnar** “to snakes” (not **\*angwinna** or **\*angwinnar** or whatever; cf. the singular **angunna** “to a snake”). Likewise we would have the pl. ablative **angullon** or **angullor** “from snakes” (sg. **angullo** “from a snake”), pl. locative **angussen** “in snakes” (sg. **angussë** “in a snake”). As the corresponding dual forms, we would presumably see **angunta**, **angulto**, **angutsë** = “to/from/in a pair of snakes”. Pronominal endings would also be added to the stem-form **angu-**, and any further endings for number or case would then be added after the pronominal ending as described in earlier lessons: **angulya** “your snake”, plural **angulyar** (hardly **\*angwilyar**!) “your snakes”, dual **angulyat** “your pair of snakes”, dative **angulyan** “for your snake”, plural dative **angulyain** (hardly **\*angwilyain**!) “for your snakes”, etc. etc.

NOTE: Nonetheless, the nominative plurals in **-wi** (**-gwi**, **-qui**) must be seen as the most striking feature of U-stem nouns. In at least one instance, this plural formation apparently spread to another noun by analogy: According to the *Etymologies*, entry **TÉLEK**, the noun **telco** “leg” has the plural **telqui**, but this plural is said to be “analogical”. Presumably, Tolkien’s idea is that **telco** is not a “true” *u*-stem noun (it does *not* come from Primitive Elvish *teleku* or *telku*, but rather descends from something like *telekô*, *telkô*). Therefore, its plural “should” have been **telcor**, and the actual form **telqui** is merely due to influence

from such pairs as **ranco** pl. **ranqui** or **urco** pl. **urqui**. However, **telco** seems to be exceptional in this respect. I don't think we should replace (say) **Naucor** as the plural form of **Nauco** "Dwarf" with **\*\*Nauqui**.

## 17.4 Ordinals

We have already introduced three *ordinal* numbers, **minya** "first", **(t)atya** "second" and **nelya** "third". All three include the frequent adjectival ending **-ya** (occurring in the word *Quenya* "Elvish" itself). However, it turns out that most ordinals end in **-ëa**, displacing the final vowel of the corresponding *cardinal* number. Thus we have the following correspondences between cardinals and ordinals:

**canta** "four" vs. **cantëa** "fourth"  
**lempë** "five" vs. **lempëa** "fifth"  
**enquë** "six" vs. **enquëa** "sixth"  
**otso** "seven" vs. **otsëa** "seventh"  
**tolto** "eight" vs. **toltëa** "eighth" (also **toldëa**, presupposing **toldo** as a variant word for "8")  
**nertë** "nine" vs. **nertëa** "ninth"

This table is based on an account of Eldarin numerals written by Tolkien in the late sixties, published in VT42:24–27 (also see the editorial notes on pp. 30–31). Tolkien indicated that the word for "fifth" had earlier been either **lemenya** or **lepenya** (with the same ending as in **minya** etc.), but this "irregular" form was later replaced by **lempëa** by analogy with the simple cardinal **lempë** "five". Tolkien's notes present varying views as to when this substitution occurred (whether already in pre-Exilic times, or later), but it is at least clear that in Frodo's day, **lempëa** would be the word to use when you need to express "fifth".

Even the words for "second" and "third" could have the ending **-ëa** instead of **-ya**. The ordinal **(t)atya** "second" was "early replaced" by **attëa**, which would be a "regular" formation compared to the cardinal **atta** "two". Similarly, **nelya** as the word for "three" could also be replaced by **neldëa**, more clearly reflecting the cardinal **neldë** "three" (but in this case, nothing is said about **neldëa** wholly *replacing nelya*).

VT42:25 also lists a word for "tenth", **quainëa**, but this presupposes another word for "ten" than the form **cainen** mentioned in the *Etymologies*. A root **KAY-** having to do with the number "ten" seems to have haunted Tolkien's imagination for at least thirty years, so I hesitate to throw it overboard just because a divergent form turns up in one late manuscript – but this is not the place to discuss what forms we should accept as "valid" or "canonical". The ordinal corresponding to the cardinal **cainen** could be either **cainenya** or **cainëa** (but hardly **?cainenëa**).



Over the next three lessons, we will work our way through the attested ordinals, starting with the word for “fourth” (**cantëa**).

## Summary of Lesson Seventeen

Quenya demonstratives include **sina** “this”, **tana** “that” (one early source also has **tanya**), **enta** “that (yonder)” (apparently with emphasis on spatial position, though it may also refer to something that lies in the *future*) and **yana** “that (former)” (of time used of something that lies in the *past*, the opposite of **enta**). It may be assumed that the corresponding *plural* forms (the words for “these” and “those”) end in **-ë** rather than **-a**, since these demonstratives probably behave like adjectives. Demonstratives are, or may be, placed *after* the noun they connect with; Cirion’s Oath has **vanda sina** for “this oath” (we cannot know whether the English-style word order **sina vanda** would be equally valid, and the word order observed in Cirion’s Oath is consistently employed in the exercises below). – Where there are *several* declinable words in a phrase, as when a noun is followed by an attributive adjective (or participle) describing it, a case ending may be added to the *last* word of the phrase. The noun itself, if not singular, would receive only the simplest endings for number (the endings normally associated with the nominative case, like **-i** or **-r** in the plural): The case ending that follows later in the phrase would still determine what case the entire phrase is. – U-stem nouns originally ended in the vowel **-u**, which in Quenya has become **-o** when the word occurs without endings, but where not final, the vowel remains **-u-**. Thus a word like **ango** “snake” appears as **angu-** in a compound (e.g. **angulócë** “snake-dragon”), and no doubt also before endings for pronoun or case (e.g. **angulya** “your snake”, or allative **angunna** “to a snake”). The nominative *plural* of U-stem nouns is formed with the ending **-i** (rather than **-r**), and at least where the noun happens to end in **-go** or **-co**, the final vowel representing an older *u* turns into **w** before the plural ending. Thus the nominative plural of **ango**, **angu-** is **angwi**, and the plural of **ranco**, **rancu-** is **ranqui** (this spelling representing *rancwi*). These special plurals may also be reflected in the other cases that have plural case endings involving the vowel **i**, certainly the genitive plural (**angwion**, **ranquion**) and dative plural (**angwin**, **ranquin**). – The *ordinal* numbers from “fourth” to “ninth” are formed by replacing the final vowel of the corresponding cardinal number with **-ëa**, e.g. **cantëa** “fourth” from **canta** “four”. Even the ordinals (**t**)**atya** “second” and **nelya** “third” may be replaced by **attëa**, **neldëa** (cf. the cardinals **atta** “two”, **neldë** “three”).

## Vocabulary

In addition to learning these new words, the student should notice that the noun **ranco** “arm” (introduced in Lesson Three) is a U-stem: **rancu-**.

**cantëa** “fourth”

**tana** demonstrative “that”

**enta** demonstrative “that [yonder]”, “[the one] over there” (of time referring to some future entity)

**yana** demonstrative “that” = “the former” (of time referring to some past entity)

**sina** demonstrative “this”

**ango** (**angu-**) “snake”

**sangwa** “poison”

**lómë** (**lómi-**) “night”

**polda** adjective “strong, burly” (of physical strength only; the verb **pol-** “can” is probably related)

**halla** adjective “tall”

**forya** adjective “right”

**Formen** “(the) North” (cf. **Formenos**, the “Northern Fortress” constructed by Fëanor in the Blessed Realm; the final element **-os** is reduced from **osto** “fortress; city”.)

This concludes our listing of the four directions **Númen**, **Hyarmen**, **Rómen**, **Formen** = West, South, East, North (this being their proper “Middle-earth” order). Just as **Hyarmen** “South” is related to the adjective **hyarya** “left”, so **Formen** “North” is related to the adjective **forya** “right”, since the reference-point is that of a person facing *West* (looking towards Valinor).

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. Engwë sina ná i macil hirna Calandil Hallanen.
- B. Ilyë lamni avánier nóre sinallo.
- C. Ango harnanë forya rancurya, ar eques: “Nai ilyë angwi firuvar!”
- D. Lómë yanassë hirnentë Nauco tana ambo entassë.
- E. I hallë ciryar oantier Formenna; ciryar tanë úvar tulë i nórennar Hyarmeno.
- F. I cantëa auessë tári yana firnë anguo sangwanen.

G. **I poldë ranqui i nerion Formello polir mapa i ehti ohtari mahtalallon.**

H. **Hrívë yanassë marnentë i cantëa coassë mallë tano.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

I. Watch that Dwarf, and don't watch this Elf!

J. A land without snakes is a good land, for many Men [**Atani**] have died by (*instrumental*) snake-poison.

K. During (*locative*) the fourth night I saw a terrifying warrior on that road, and I raised my arms (*dual*).

L. Wish that [= **nai**] the strong son of Calandil the Tall will come to this land, for he will protect these cities in which we (*inclusive*) dwell!

M. That tower (*or, yonder tower*) is the fourth tower made by Elves in this land.

N. Those books are gone [**vanwë** the pl. of **vanwa**]; they have disappeared from your room.

O. On that day you shall see your son.

P. On that day they came from that [/yonder] mountain and went to this house.

# Lesson 18

Independent pronouns. Impersonal verbs. U-stem verbs.  
The various uses of *lá*.

## 18.1 Independent pronouns

(inevitably entailing a discussion of certain

Second Person obscurities)

All the pronouns so far discussed have been *endings*. However, Quenya also has pronouns that appear as independent words. Some of them are emphatic; the pronoun appears as a separate word to put special emphasis on it. These emphatic pronouns we will discuss in the next lesson. Here we will concentrate on the simplest independent pronominal elements.

We have already cited Quenya sentences including the dative pronoun **nin** “for me”. The dative ending **-n** is here appended to an independent word for “I”, **ni**, attested by itself in the “Arctic” sentence mentioned in *The Father Christmas Letters*. (Though this posthumously published work of Tolkien’s has nothing to do with the Arda mythos, the “Arctic” sentence is transparently a form of Quenya.) The relevant part of the sentence goes **ni véla tye**, “I see you”. The verb “see” is here apparently **vel-** rather than **cen-** (perhaps **vel-** is “see” in the sense of “meet”?), but more remarkable is the fact that for the subject “I”, the independent pronoun **ni** is used instead of the ending **-n** or **-nyë**. There seems to be no obvious “reason” for this deviation from the normal system. It has been suggested that since the intended audience for *The Father Christmas Letters* was Tolkien’s young children, he may have “simplified” the language to make it easier for them to figure out which word means what. However, since the latter part of the “Arctic” sentence employs a quite complex grammatical construction which is certainly not the literal counterpart of the English translation provided, we should hardly think of the language as “simplified”. For “I” as subject, the ending **-n(yë)** added to the verb is normally to be preferred, but the independent word **ni** may be a valid alternative. It may be noted that in one of Tolkien’s draft versions for Elendil’s Declaration, the word that ended

up as **maruvan** “I will remain/dwell” appears as **nimaruva**, Tolkien using **ni-** “I” as a prefix: SD:56. (It may be, however, that the idea of subject *prefixes* was dropped; no post-LotR evidence of such prefixes has ever been published. If I were to use the independent pronoun **ni** instead of the ending **-n**, I would let it stand as a separate word: **Ni maruva**.)

Besides **ni**, we have a handful of other independent pronouns attested. One such pronoun is **ta**, meaning “it” or “that” (see Etym, entry TA – the demonstrative **tana** “that” is of course related). One relatively early source suggests that it can receive case endings. The ten-word *Koivienéni* sentence published in *Vinyar Tengwar* #27 is not LotR-style Quenya in its entirety, but the short phrase **Orome tanna lende** (translated “Orome came thither”) may well have remained a valid wording after “Qenya” evolved into Quenya as we know it from later sources. The word **tanna** “thither” seems to be **ta** “that, it” with the regular allative ending **-nna** attached, hence “to that [place]” = “thither”.

In *Namárië*, one independent pronoun occurs in the phrase **imbë met** = “between us”. This is a *dual* pronoun, referring to Galadriel and Varda, so **met** appropriately receives the dual ending **-t** (also known from nouns) to indicate that two persons are concerned. Removing the dual ending leaves us with **me**, probably covering both “we” (subject form) and “us” (object form). In our example, this is an *exclusive* “we/us”, corresponding to the ending **-mmë**, which is obviously closely related. The party addressed is not included (Galadriel was singing *to* Frodo *about* herself and Varda). **Me** is also attested in its *dative* form, with the dative ending **-n** attached: **men** = “for us, to us”.

The ending **-lyë** “you” corresponds to an independent pronoun **le**, which was apparently present already in early forms of Elvish (WJ:363). In Sindarin it had been lost, but it is precisely this circumstance which allows us to say with certainty that it survived in Quenya: In his notes on the Sindarin hymn *A Elbereth Gilthoniel*, Tolkien stated that the reverential 2nd person pronoun **le** occurring in this Grey-elven text had been *borrowed* from Quenya (RGEO:73).

At Cormallen, the crowds hailed Frodo and Sam with the words **a laita te, laita te**, translated in Letters:308 as “bless them, bless them”. Thus we have **te** as an independent *object* pronoun “them”. (For this meaning, the Cormallen Praise also provides us with the already-discussed *ending* **-t**, as in **laituvalmet** = “we shall bless them”. Presumably the pronoun **te** and the ending **-t** are related.) Whether this **te** can also be used as a subject form (“they”) is unfortunately unclear.

This **te** is possibly related to the word **ta** “that, it” discussed above: It may well be that **ta** early received the plural ending **-i**, the resulting form **tai** being as it were the plural form of “that” – hence meaning something like “those [ones]” or indeed “them”. By this theory, the attested form **te** is simply the unstressed variant of **tai** (cf. adjectives in **-a** having plural forms

in **-ë**, simplified from older **-ai**). A direct attestation of a form **tai** eventually turned up in VT42:34, and the context allows the interpretation that it may literally mean “those”; see below. Interestingly, the dative form “for them, to them” is apparently attested as **tien**. This could very well represent older *taien*, which would be **tai** “those” + the connecting vowel **-e** + the dative ending **-n**. In this position, the diphthong *ai* is reduced to *e*, and as *taien* consequently morphs into *te'en* = *tëen*, this rather unstable form becomes **tien** by exactly the same mechanism that also turns (*laureai* >) *laurëe* into **laurië** (the plural form of the adjective **laurëa** “golden”). We may assume that the allative “to(wards) them” would likewise be **tienna**, whereas the ablative “from them” would be **tiello**. These forms would coincide with the corresponding case forms of the noun **tië** “path”, but in context, one should normally be able to figure out what the intended meaning is.

Another attested object pronoun is **tye**, translated “thee” or “you”. We have already quoted the phrase **ni véla tye** “I see you” from the “Arctic” sentence. Other attestations come from a source that is more definitely Quenya or at least “Qenya”: In LR:61, Herendil addresses his father Elendil with the words **atarinya tye-melánë**, “my father, I love thee”, and Elendil answers, **a yonya inyë tye-méla**, “and I too, my son, I love thee”. There are a few strange things here (like **-në** rather than **-nyë** or **-n** being used as the pronominal ending “I” in the first sentence), but it is at least clear that **tye** is the object pronoun “thee”, and this is probably a valid form in LotR-style Quenya as well.

At this point it should be noted that Quenya has (at least) *two* sets of pronouns in the second person. The object pronoun **tye** is not “compatible” with the ending **-l(yë)** or the corresponding independent pronoun **le**, though all of these may be translated “you” in English. We must distinguish between the “L” forms, represented by the ending **-l(yë)** and the independent pronoun **le**, and the “T” forms, represented by the object pronoun **tye** and also by the verb ending **-t** exemplified in WJ:364 (more about the latter in the next lesson; it is not to be confused with **-t** = “them” as in **laituvalmet** = “we will bless them”). All of these pronouns and endings have to do with the idea of “you, thou, thee”, but Tolkien seems to have been changing his mind back and forth as to what the basic distinction between the T-forms and the L-forms really consists of. Back in Lesson Eight, we quoted a passage that was originally meant to go into the LotR appendices, but which was not in the event included there: Tolkien stated that “all these languages . . . had, or originally had, no distinction between the singular and plural of the second person pronouns; but they had a marked distinction between the *familiar* forms and the *courteous*” (PM:42–43).

Within this scheme, the “L” forms would represent a polite and courteous “you”, whereas the “T” forms signal a familiar/intimate “you” used to address close friends and family members. This would agree well with the evidence: In *Namárië*, Galadriel naturally uses “L” forms when politely

addressing a relative stranger like Frodo, and in Sindarin, the Quenya borrowing **le** is used as a reverential singular “thee” (as in the hymn *A Elbereth Gilthoniel*, where Varda is the party addressed). On the other hand, Herendil would obviously use a “T” form (**tye**) when addressing his own father. When Tolkien translated **tye** in the latter example as “thee” rather than “you”, he probably meant it to be an intimate rather than an overly solemn form (though confusingly, he might also use “thou/thee” to represent a formal or polite “you”; indeed this is how he rendered the “L” forms of both *Namárië* and *A Elbereth Gilthoniel*).

What does not agree so well with this reconstruction is the fact that in WJ:364, Tolkien seems to imply that the “L” forms represent a *plural* “you”, whereas the “T” forms stand for a *singular* “you” – sharply contrasting with his earlier statement to the effect that Elvish (just like English) fails to distinguish between sg. and pl. “you”. Moreover, “L” forms are unquestionably used in a singular sense in *Namárië*, since Tolkien translated them using the distinctly *singular* English pronoun “thou”. I think the only solution that comes close to incorporating all the material would be to assume that the “T” forms properly denote singular “you” whereas the “L” forms properly denote plural “you” – but the latter forms are also used as a *polite singular* “you” (so in *Namárië*). Bottom line is, one should *not* use the object form **tye** for “you, thee” if one otherwise uses “L” forms like the ending **-lyë** or the pronoun **le**: We are apparently dealing with two different kinds of “you” here, and the “T” forms are hardly interchangeable with the “L” forms.

Based on the object pronoun **tye** “you = thee” (*not* subject “thou”), some writers have ventured to extrapolate a First Person object form **nye** “me” (cf. **ni** “I”). Apparently the form **nye** actually appears in Tolkien’s papers, so we will adopt this **nye** = “me” here. It should be noted, however, that any case endings are added to the simplest form of the pronoun, that is, what functions as the *subject* form when it occurs by itself – in this case **ni** “I”. Case endings are not added the *object* form **nye** “me”: The dative form “to me” is not **\*\*nyen**, despite the English translation. As we know, the actual form is **nin** (**ni-n** = “I-for”). “For you/for thee” should likewise *not* be **\*\*tyen**, for then we would be adding case endings to the object form again. Unfortunately, it is not clear what the subject form corresponding to **tye** “thee” really is, so the long-suffering student must forgive yet another batch of Second Person Obscurities: Mechanical extrapolation based on the attested **ni/nye** pair would of course land us on **?ti** as the subject form “thou”. However, the story is almost certainly more complicated than this. The *Sindarin* pronominal ending for “you” is said to be *-g* or *-ch*, indicating that these endings appeared as *-k-*, *-kk-* in earlier Elvish. In Quenya, a final *-k* would turn into *-t* (cf. for instance **filic-** as the stem-form of a noun meaning “small bird”, closely reflecting the root PHILIK; but when this noun appears without any endings, its Quenya form turns into **filit**). If the above-mentioned ending *-t* “thou” likewise comes from an original *-k*, we must

also assume that the object pronoun **tye** represents earlier *kye* (initial *ky-* regularly turns into **ty-** in Quenya, cf. for instance the entry KYEL in Etym, from which root Tolkien derived the verb **tyel-** “end, cease”). It is, then, this *kye* we must start from when trying to extrapolate the corresponding subject form. Its Quenya form would likely be **ci** (**ki**) or perhaps rather **ce** (**ke**): In the pronouns, the vowel **i** may seem to be peculiar to the 1st person (**ni** “I”), whereas **e** is more frequent (**le** “you”, **me** “we” etc.) Thus, the dative form “for you, for thee” may be something like **?cen**, and likewise in the other cases, e.g. ablative **cello** “from thee”. If this is correct, what we have called the “I” forms must rather be termed the “C/T” forms, since the original *k* may be preserved in some Quenya forms as well (spelt **c**). But of course, we have now crossed over into the realm of Speculative Extrapolation. In the exercises below, only the attested object form **tye** appears.

To summarize, we have **ni** “I” (object form **nye** “me”), **le** “you” (plural or polite singular; the object form is likely also **le**), **tye** object form “thee, you” (intimate; the subject form that could also receive case endings is unfortunately uncertain, perhaps **?ce** or **?ci**), **me** “we” (exclusive; probably this can also be used as the object form “us”), **te** object form “them” (the subject form “they” is uncertain, but perhaps identical; in any case, it may be that this pronoun appears as **tai** when stressed, and before at least some case endings it assumes the form **tie-**). This does not add up to a complete pronoun table; I hope to discuss what little can be inferred about the gaps in an appendix to this course.

As for the *functions* of these pronouns, the examples cited above will already have provided the student with vital clues. These words (except the distinct object forms) can receive case endings; the dative form **nin** “for me, to me” is particularly well attested. Presumably we can also have allative **ninna** “to(wards) me”, allative **nillo** “from me”, locative **nissë** “in me” and perhaps even instrumental **ninen** “by me”. It should be noted that pronouns normally receive “singular” case endings, even if the pronoun is “plural” by its meaning; thus **me** “we” takes the singular dative ending **-n**, not plural **-in** even though the word **me** is “plural” insofar as “we” must refer to several people. The *dual* ending **-t** can however be added to independent pronouns, as indicated by the example **met** “[the two of] us” in *Namárië*. Then any case endings would presumably also be dual: dative **ment**, allative **menta**, ablative **melto**, instrumental **menten**. (Another plausible dual form could be **?let** = “you two”.)

Another function of the independent pronouns would be to appear following prepositions, as in the example **imbë met** “between us [two]” in *Namárië*. In English, prepositions are followed by the object form (accusative case), hence for instance “as me” rather than “as I”. If this applies to Quenya as well, the equivalent would be **ve nye**, but we cannot be certain; perhaps the Eldar would actually say **ve ni** = “as I”. The attested example **imbë met** “between us [two]” is of no help in this matter, since **me** (with or



without the dual ending **-t**) likely covers both the subject form “we” and the object form “us”. At least we can’t go wrong as long as we are dealing with **me** and **le** (and **te?**), since these pronouns don’t seem to have distinct subject/object forms.

The function of the *object* forms (the attested words **nye** “me”, **tye** “you/thee”, **te** “them” + the probable non-distinct forms **me** “us” and **le** “you” just discussed) would obviously be to appear as the object of a sentence. After all, pronominal objects can’t always be expressed as one of the two attested object endings **-t** “them” or **-s** “it” (though the full list of object endings is likely somewhat longer). These object endings may be added to extended infinitives in **-ta** (**caritas** “to do it”) or to verbs that also has a subject ending (**utúvienyes** “I have found it”), but this grammatical environment is not always present. The independent object pronouns may for instance be used in imperative phrases, as in the attested example **a laita te** “bless them” already cited. Presumably such pronouns can also be used following gerunds inflected for dative (e.g. **utúlien cenien tye** “I have come [in order] to see you”). We may also have to use independent object pronouns where the verb has no *subject* pronominal ending to which an *object* pronominal ending can be added – because the subject is expressed as a separate word. So while “we will bless them” can be packed into one word as **laituvalmet**, a sentence like “the people will bless them” must perhaps be **i lië laituva te** with a separate word for “them”. (We can’t know whether it is permissible to say **?i lië laituvat** with the ending **-t** added to the verb even though it has no subject ending; using a separate word for “them” is therefore safer as well as clearer.)

The preferred word order is somewhat uncertain. Quenya may seem to prefer placing independent pronouns in *front* of the verb. Sometimes Tolkien even prefixed the object pronoun to the verb by means of a hyphen, as in the example **tye-melánë** “I love thee” cited above. (Compare French *je t’aime*, literally “I you love” with the object preceding the verb instead of following it – though French, as well as Quenya, normally has the object following the verb.) So perhaps sentences like “I have come to see thee” or “the people will bless them” should rather be **utúlien tye-cenien** and **i lië te-laituva**, respectively? Sometimes, Tolkien even placed *dative* pronouns in front of the verb, as in the question occurring in the middle of *Namárië*: **Sí man i yulma nin enquantuva?** = “Now who will refill the cup for me?” (notice how the Quenya word-order differs from that of the English translation). We even have one extreme example, involving the verb **lumna-** “lie heavy”, where a dative pronoun is not only prefixed to the verb but the dative ending **-n** is *assimilated* to the initial **l-** of the verb itself: **Mel-lumna** is translated “us-is-heavy” (LR:47), sc. “is heavy for us”; this must be the dative form **men** “for us, to us” + the aorist form **lumna** “lies heavy”. The underlying, unattested form **men-lumna** apparently had to be altered because **men** completely glued itself to the following word and came to be

perceived as *part* of it – and then there was suddenly a de facto cluster **nl** which Quenya phonology did not permit, so it had to become **l-l** instead. Yet such extra complications are apparently avoidable, for other examples indicate that independent pronouns may also *follow* the verb. In VT41:13 we have the sentence **órenya quéta nin** = “my heart is saying to me” (variant **órenya quetë nin**, page 11). Presumably **órenya nin quéta** (or even . . . **nin-quéta**) would have been equally possible, but it is apparently not “necessary” to employ such a word order, or indeed to prefix object/dative pronouns directly to the verb.

As for the “subject forms” discussed above, they may of course appear as the subject of a sentence, like **ni** “I” in **ni véla tye** “I see you”. Nonetheless, here Quenya would more frequently use pronominal endings (like **vélan** or **vélanyë** in this case – assuming that the verb ?**vel-** “see” is valid in LotR-style Quenya!) For poets trying to maintain some meter it may be useful to be able to choose between independent pronouns and pronominal endings. However, the “subject forms” discussed above would most often be encountered, not as grammatical subjects, but with case endings attached! Even so, it is probable that pronouns like **ni** or **le** would frequently function as the subject of sentences when the copula “is/are/am” is left out and understood: **Ni aran** “I [am] king”, **le halla** “you [are] tall”, etc.

## 18.2 Impersonal verbs

Having investigated independent dative forms like **nin** “for me, to me”, we can fully understand our very few attested examples of sentences involving so-called *impersonal* verbs. In UT:396, Tolkien cites a verb **óla-** “to dream”, adding a brief remark to the effect that this verb is “impersonal”. Precisely what he meant by this was long obscure, but now we have at least one example that may be helpful in this regard.

The sentences in question involves the primary verb **or-** “urge, impel, move” (elsewhere also given as an A-stem **ora-**). The regular aorist **orë** “urges, impels, moves” occurs in the sentence **orë nin caritas**, translated “I would like to do so” or “I feel moved to do so”. Literally it means “[it] impels for me to do it”. Notice that this sentence has *no subject* (though in our attempted literal translation, we had to fill in the dummy-subject “it” to achieve something like passable English – “it” has no real meaning here!) Quenya by its very grammatical construction indicates that the “urge” perceived by the speaker impacts on him from the outside, so to speak. *Feeling moved* to do something is not a deliberate “act” carried out by a subject; this feeling rather *affects* the person involved, and in Quenya this is appropriately denoted by the *dative* case. In our attested example, a dative *pronoun* is involved, but we must assume that it could just as well be a regular noun: **Orë i Eldan lelya** = “[it] impels for the Elf to go” = “the

Elf feels moved to go”. The verb is the first word of the sentence; normally the subject would come first, but here there simply isn’t any subject.

As for the impersonal verb **óla-** “to dream”, we must assume that the underlying idea is the same: Dreaming is not an “act” *done* by a subject, rather it is something that *happens* to you; your dreams come to you quite independent of your own will, and therefore the dreamer is best presented as a person *affected* by his or her dreams: Hence dative for the dreamer! Tolkien gave us no examples involving **óla-**, but “the maiden dreams about Elves” could perhaps be rendered something like **óla i venden Eldaron** (notice that **vendë** “maiden” here appears as a dative form, indicating that “the maiden” is perceived as the receiver of the dreams rather than as their maker – cf. the use of the dative to denote the recipient in connection with the verb “to give”).

Such constructions, even in connection with the verb “to dream”, are not unheard of in the languages of our own world. As David Kiltz wrote on the Elfling list (April 25, 2001): “The dative has many more functions than just that of an indirect object. It can . . . denote the ‘subjective experiencer’ as in . . . German *mir ist kalt* ‘I’m cold’ where you [would] use a nominative for the logical subject in English but not in many other languages.” *Mir ist kalt* means “to-me [it] is cold”; the German dative form *mir* corresponds to Quenya **nin**. Given that the Quenya word for “cold” is **ringa**, it is entirely possible that *mir ist kalt* can be rendered directly into Quenya as **nin ná ringa** (or perhaps rather **ná ringa nin** “[it] is cold for me”).

We don’t know very many Quenya verbs that invite such constructions, though. In the entry MBAW- in the *Etymologies*, Tolkien mentioned that the “Noldorin” verb *bui* “compel” is impersonal (“Noldorin” being the conceptual predecessor of the *Sindarin* language exemplified in LotR). The Quenya verb corresponding to “Noldorin” *bui* is given as **mauya-**. If this can also function as an impersonal verb (though it can probably occur with an explicit subject as well), we may have a clue as to how “I must” or “I need to” would be expressed in Quenya. Perhaps “I must go” would (or at least could) be expressed as **mauya nin lelya** = “[it] compels for me to go”.

In some cases, it may not even be necessary to complement an impersonal verb with a dative noun or pronoun. Regarding a “Noldorin” form of the verb corresponding to Quenya **ulya-** “pour”, namely *oeil* or *eil*, Tolkien noted that it was used for “it is raining” (Etym, entry ULU). Again, English by grammatical necessity fills in a dummy-subject “it”, but here there is obviously no real subject which actually “does” rain. Perhaps Quenya **ulya**, or continuative **ulyëa**, can likewise be used for “[it] is raining”: The naked verb would be a full sentence in itself.

### 18.3 U-stem verbs

This is an obscure sub-group of verbs; having discussed U-stem nouns in the previous lesson, we may explore U-stem verbs now. Our data being very limited, this discussion must by necessity consist mainly of speculation.

Verbal stems with the ending **-u** are not uncommon in Tolkien's early "Qenya" material, but as the decades went by, he may seem to have cut down their number. Of the well over 1,200 Quenya words mentioned in the *Etymologies*, there is only one single U-stem verb, namely **palu-** "open wide, spread, expand, extend" (and even this verb has an alternative form **palya-** with the much more common verbal ending **-ya**: see the entry PAL). Around 1960, in his essay *Quendi and Eldar*, Tolkien mentioned the verb **nicu-** "be chill, cold" with reference to weather (WJ:417). Some years later, he also used a few U-stem verbs in the latest version of the *Markirya* poem: **fífiru-** "slowly fade away" (elaboration of the simpler verb **fir-** "die, fade"), **hlapu-** "fly or stream in the wind", **nurru-** "murmur, grumble" (MC:223).

How are these verbs to be inflected? *Markirya* as printed in MC:222 indicates that the active participle of **hlapu-** is **hlápula**, indicating that the active participle is formed by adding the normal ending **-la** and lengthening the main vowel if possible (**hlapu-** becoming **hlápu-**). The participle of **nurru-** "murmur" is attested as **nurrula**; here the vowel could not be lengthened because of the following consonant cluster (\*\***núrrula** being an impossible Quenya word). The formation of the active participle is just about the only thing we can be quite sure about regarding this class of verbs (and therefore also the only thing I touch on in the Translate-into-Quenya exercises below).

The *passive* participle is problematic. The normal ending **-na** or its longer variant **-ina** would presumably be applied somehow. Some have argued that we *may* have an attested example of the passive participle of a U-stem verb. We have earlier referred to the mysterious form **turún'** (obviously shortened from **turúna**) in Nienor's cry: **A Túrin Turambar turún' ambartanen**, "[o Túrin] master of doom by doom mastered" (UT:138). A primary verb **tur-** "wield, control, govern" does occur in Tolkien's material, but we would expect its passive participle to be **turna** (cf. **carna** "made" as the attested passive participle of **car-** "make, do"). Could the strange form **turúna** "mastered" actually be the passive participle of a variant *U-stem* verb **туру-** "to master"? However, is not clear why adding the ending **-na** to **туру-** would produce **turúna** with a *long* vowel – and other indirect evidence points in another direction. As has been pointed out by some, the ending **-(i)na** that is used to derive passive participles also turns up in other parts of speech, and we have at least one example demonstrating what happens when it is added to a *noun* stem in **-u**: The adjective **culuina** "orange" is derived from a root KUL, KULU "gold". Here a diphthong **ui** arises when the final **-U** of the stem is combined with the ending **-ina**. Carrying this principle over to

U-stem *verbs*, we could argue that the passive participle of **palu-** “expand” should be **?paluina** “expanded”. Analogy with A-stem verbs would point in the same direction (cf. **hastaina** “marred” as the attested participle of **hasta-** “to mar”) – but lacking attested examples, we cannot be sure.

The *infinitive* is quite problematic. It ought to be a stem with no additions. In the previous lesson we pointed out that U-stem *nouns* originally ended in a short **-u**. This original vowel is preserved unchanged whenever some ending follows, but in Quenya it had turned into **-o** when it was absolutely final. Applying the same principle to U-stem *verbs*, the infinitive of **palu-** “expand” could conceivably be **?palo**. Of course, we would still see **palu-** before endings, for instance if this class of verbs may also have extended forms in **-ta**: hence **?paluta**, or with an object ending **?palutas**, “to expand it”.

The *aurist* is little less obscure. As we remember, primary verbs assume the ending **-i**, preserved as such before further endings, but turning into **-ë** when final (**silë** “shines”, but pl. **silir** “shine”). Since the phonological shift that makes an original final short **-i** become **-ë** closely parallels the shift that turns an original final short **-u** into **-o**, we could plausibly argue that **palu-** “expand” ought to have the aorist **?palo** “expands” (identical to the infinitive), preserved as **?palu-** before any ending (e.g. **palur** “expand” with a plural subject, **palun** or **palunyë** “I expand”, **palus** “he/she/it expands”, etc. etc.) However, one piece of evidence diverges from this scenario: After mentioning the U-stem verb **nicu-** “be chill, cold”, Tolkien also cited the form **niquë**, which he translated “it is cold, it freezes” (WJ:417). Is this verb **niquë** to be understood as the aorist form of **nicu-**? Are we to understand that just as in the case of primary verbs, the ending **-i** was added to the U-stem as well, and that a development *nicui* > *nicwi* ensued? After the change of final short **-i** to **-ë**, this would indeed produce the attested form (*nicwe* =) **niquë**. If so, the aorist of **palu-** could be **?palwë**, or with endings **?palwi-**. However, we may wonder why U-stem verbs take the aorist ending **-i** when A-stems do not. This would not be encouraging for our nice little theory that the ending **-i** is applied to primary verbs merely as a kind of stop-gap to make up for the lack of any other ending (for U-stem verbs obviously *do* have another ending – the **-u** itself!) Indeed it was the form **niquë** I was thinking of when I warned the student back in Lesson Seven, “This ‘simplified’ view is not wholly unproblematic, but it works most of the time.” We have now reached the point where it may not work anymore.

While the aorist of **palu-** may plausibly be assumed to be **?palwë** or with endings **?palwi-**, perfectly paralleling (*nicwe* =) **niquë** as the aorist of **nicu-**, we can only wonder how verbs like **hlapu-** or **nurru-** would behave if they received the ending **-i** already in the primitive language. They could hardly evolve into **\*\*nurrwë** or **\*\*hlapwë**, which would be quite impossible Quenya words. Perhaps the original diphthong **ui** would be preserved in all positions, and we would see **?nurrui** and **?hlapui** with no change of **-i** to

-ë even where the vowel is absolutely final? However, I hardly have to tell the student that we have now entered the realm of Extreme Speculation.

The *present* tense must also be speculative, but Tolkien provided one excellent clue. It should be remembered that the present tense (e.g. **síla** “is shining”) actually represents a kind of “continuous” or “continuative” verbal stem, derived by lengthening the stem-vowel (if possible) and adding the ending **-a**. In the very last version of the *Markirya* poem, Tolkien replaced one of the participles with what would seem to be a continuative stem: As is evident from Christopher Tolkien’s annotation in MC:222, his father altered **nurrula** “mumbling, murmuring” to **nurrua**. Here, the continuative stem in effect functions as a participle (still meaning “mumbling”), and the revision actually seems quite pointless, but at least Tolkien gave away that the ending **-a** may be added to a U-stem verb. In another context, **nurrua** could presumably have functioned as the present tense “is murmuring”. In this case, the stem-vowel could not be lengthened because of the following consonant cluster, but the present tense of a verb like **palu-** “to expand” would in all likelihood be **pálua** “is expanding”.

In the *past* tense we can be reasonably certain that the regular past tense ending **-në** would be added. At least this was the case in Tolkien’s earliest “Qenya”: The Qenya Lexicon of 1915 lists **allunë** as the past tense of the verb **allu-** “wash” (QL:30). I use this system in the exercises below (but only in the *Translate-from-Quenya* section, so at least I won’t seduce my students into constructing uncertain Quenya verb forms themselves!)

The *perfect* tense is obscure. The augment (the prefixed stem-vowel) would presumably be prefixed as usual, while the vowel would – if possible – be lengthened in its normal position. So the perfect tenses of **palu-**, **nurru-** would presumably commence as **apál-**, **unurr-**. But what comes next is anybody’s guess. How can the ending **-ië** that is associated with the perfect tense be added to a U-stem verb? Would the initial **-i-** of the ending merge with the final **-u** of the verbal stem to form a diphthong **-ui-**, so that we would see **?unurruië** for “has murmured”? The perfect tense “has expanded” could hardly be **?apáluië**, for the new diphthong **ui** would attract the stress and leave the syllable immediately before it completely unaccented. Then the long **á** could hardly survive, for there seems to be a phonological rule prohibiting a long vowel in a completely unstressed syllable unless this is also the first syllable of the word – and here it is not. Would we see **?apaluië** with a short vowel, then? However, as we have argued earlier, the ending **-ië** that is used in the perfect tense apparently displaces the final **-a** when added to an A-stem verb, so it is entirely possible that it would also displace the final **-u** of a U-stem. From **nurru-**, **palu-** we would then simply see the perfect-tense forms **unurrië** “has murmured”, **apálië** “has expanded”. (Likely, **-ië** as a *gerundial or infinitival* ending would likewise displace the final **-u**, so that we could have **?nurrië** for “mumbling”. But “mumbling” as a mere verbal noun could almost certainly be **nurrulë**, though attested

examples of the abstract ending **-lë** “-ing” involve A-stems instead.)

In the *future* tense we would presumably see the usual ending **-uva**. However, we can only speculate as to whether the initial **-u-** of the ending would simply merge with the final **-u** of the stem, so that the future tense of **palu-** would be **paluva**, or whether the two **u**’s would combine to form one *long ú*, so that we would see **palúva** instead.

## 18.4 The various uses of *lá*

In Lesson Nine, we introduced the negative verb **um-** “not do, not be” (past tense **úmë** according to Etym., future tense **úva** according to *Fíriel’s Song*). In all examples and exercises so far, we have used this verb + infinitive whenever a sentence is to be negated. However, using the negative verb is not the only option available in this regard. Like English, Quenya does have a separate word for “not”, namely **lá** (or **la** when unstressed). This word may also be used for “no”.

The negative verb **um-** and the separate negation **lá** clearly coexist in the language, since both were listed in the *Etymologies* (entries UGU/UMU vs. LA). There are hardly any very specific rules for when to use one or the other. If one uses the negative verb **um-**, it apparently takes the relevant endings for tense and pronoun, while the verb it negates presumably appears as an infinitive: **Úmen lelya**, “I didn’t [*first person past tense*] go [*inf.*]”. If one uses the separate negation **lá**, the verb that is to be negated would itself receive all relevant endings, just as if no negation were present: **Lenden** “I went” could be negated as **lá lenden** or = “Not I went” = “I didn’t go”. (Our few examples suggest that the preferred word order is to place **lá** *before* the verb that is to be negated, though for all we know, **lenden lá** “I went not” would also be acceptable. But one should not use an alternative word-order where ambiguity can arise; see below.)

This is obviously an easier way to negate a sentence than using the negative verb + infinitive; one simply starts with the non-negated sentence and slips in one extra word. Indeed I introduce the word **lá** this late in the course partly because I didn’t want to “spoil” my students with this easy-to-construct negation before they had the chance to get familiar with the negative verb. In many cases, using the negative verb may seem like the more elegant method of negating sentences, and sometimes the word **lá** “not” should perhaps be avoided because a similar form also has a quite different function (see below). Yet in some contexts it may be best to use **lá** instead of the negative verb. In particular, it may seem strange to construct the verb **um-** as a present or “continuative” form, corresponding to the English “is . . .-ing” construction. The form would be **úma**, but should “the Elf is not watching the Dwarf” be translated **i Elda úma tirë i Nauco**? I guess anything is possible, but think I would rather start with the positive

sentence **i Elda tíra i Nauco** and negate it by slipping in **lá** in front of the verb: **I Elda lá tíra i Nauco**. Likewise, it may be best to use the negation **lá** in the *perfect* tense, especially since it is slightly uncertain what the perfect form of **um-** would be: ?**úmië** with no augment since the stem begins in a vowel, or perhaps ?**umúmië** with the entire initial syllable repeated? In any case, “I have not come” is perhaps best expressed as **lá utúlien**. Though **(um)úmien tulë** should be intelligible, it seems like a rather weird construction.

Translating from Quenya to English one must sometimes take care to connect the negation **lá** with the right verb. Notice the sentence **alasaila ná lá carë tai mo navë mára**, translated “it is unwise not to do what one judges good”. (VT42:34; **mo** is there said to be an indefinite pronoun “somebody, one”, apparently an alternative to **quen**. More obscure is the form **tai**, which as we argued above may be a plural form of **ta** “that, it”, hence “those”. If so, the sentence literally means “unwise [it] is not [to] do those [things which] one judges good”. Notice the element **ala-** “un-” here prefixed to **saila** “wise”; it is of course related to the negation **lá**.) For a person used to English word order, it might be tempting to interpret the words **ná lá** as a connected phrase “is not” and mistranslate \*\*“it is not unwise to do what one judges good”. However, if one bears in mind that **lá** connects with the *following* verb, in this case the infinitive **carë** “to do”, the misunderstanding can be avoided: The phrases are correctly divided as **alasaila ná** “unwise [it] is” + **lá carë**... “not to do...” (etc.)

As this example shows, **lá** may be used to negate infinitives as well, and another example from VT42:34 indicates that it makes no difference if the infinitive is extended with the ending **-ta** to receive an object suffix: **lá caritas, navin, alasaila ná** – literally “not to do it, I deem, unwise is”. Tolkien himself offered the translation “not doing this would be (I think) unwise”. In one example, Tolkien even used **lá** to negate an extended infinitive in **-ta** that has *no* pronominal object ending attached: **lá carita i hamil mára alasaila ná**, “not to do what you judge good would be [literally ‘is’] unwise” (VT42:33). Here the extended infinitive **carita** takes on the meaning of a *gerund*, the entire relative sentence **i hamil mára** “that [which] you judge good” being its object. It seems, then, very likely that **lá** can also be used to negate also the more regular gerund in **-ië**. We have no examples, but perhaps **lá carië i hamil mára**... would be an equally possible wording.

As for the *unstressed* variant of the negation **lá**, namely its shorter form **la**, our sole certain attestation of it occurs in the sentence **la navin caritalyas mára**, “I don’t judge your doing it good” (VT42:33; this is a way of expressing “I do not advise you to do so”). Here the main stress presumably falls on the first syllable of the verb **navin** “I judge”, the negation **la** receiving no stress. One would think, however, that an important word like the negation (totally reversing the meaning of the sentence!) would normally



receive some stress, and in the exercises below, I have consistently used the long/accented form **lá**.

The short form **la** would however have one thing to recommend it, namely that it would not clash with a quite distinct word **lá**, which is used in phrases having to do with *comparison* (though material appearing in *Tyalië Tyellelliéva* #16 seems to indicate that this second **lá** may also occur as a shorter form **la**). According to Bill Welden’s article *Negation in Quenya* (VT42:32–34), Tolkien was indeed somewhat troubled by this clash, and for a while he actually abandoned the negation **lá** “no, not”. However, in the last years of his life he reintroduced it, so we must live with the double function of this word. In context, it is hardly difficult to distinguish between the two **lá**’s.

According to a otherwise unpublished Tolkien manuscript cited by Welden in his article, the formula “*A* (**ná**) **calima lá B**” can be used for “*A* is brighter than *B*” (notice that the copula **ná** “is” may be left out and understood). If we want a full sentence with no algebra, we may fill in *A* and *B* to produce (say) **Anar ná calima lá Isil**, “[the] Sun is brighter than [the] Moon”. However, this English translation differs from the actual Quenya wording in these respects: **Calima** is the simple adjective “bright”, not the comparative form “brighter” (we are still not certain what *that* would look like), and **lá** does not really mean “than”. We are told that this **lá** is properly a preposition “beyond”, so the Quenya sentence actually means “the Sun is bright beyond the Moon”.

We can certainly imagine sentences including **lá** occurring with both its meanings: **I mindon lá ná halla lá i oron**, “the tower is **not** taller **than** the mountain” (literally “. . . tall beyond the mountain”). Here the negative verb would certainly be preferable, if only for stylistic reasons: **I mindon umë halla lá i oron**. It may be possible to circumvent the ambiguities. We are told that instead of **lá** “beyond” in phrases of comparison, one may also use the preposition **epë** “before” – erroneously glossed “after” in Welden’s article. Irrespective of this error, there actually is some evidence suggesting that **epë** or a similar form did mean “after” at one point of Tolkien’s ever-evolving linguistic scenario (apparently it was a variant of the **apa** introduced in Lesson Fifteen). Because of the uncertainties relating to **epë**, we will let it rest in peace here, and use **lá** despite its ambiguity.

## Summary of Lesson Eighteen

In addition to the pronominal *endings* discussed earlier in this course, Quenya also has various *independent* pronouns (see Vocabulary section below). A pronoun like **me** “we” or “us” can receive endings for case (e.g. dative **men** “for us, to us”) or, where two persons are concerned, dual endings (e.g. **met** “[the two of] us”). – Some Quenya verbs are *impersonal*, requiring no

subject, but where someone is nonetheless affected by the verbal action, this someone can be mentioned as a *dative* form: **Ora nin** = “[it] impels for me” = “I feel moved [to do something]”. – Quenya *U-stem* verbs, like **hlapu-** “fly [in the wind]”, form a particularly obscure group of verbs. The only thing that is known with full certainty about such verbs is that the active participle is formed by means of the normal ending **-la**, combined with lengthening of the main vowel of the verb (unless it has to remain short because of a following consonant cluster; thus the participle of **nurru-** “grumble” is simply **nurrula**, though the participle of **hlapu-** is **hlápula**). Early material suggests that the *past tense* of *U-stem* verbs is formed by adding the past tense ending **-ně**, though we have no examples from the more LotR-compatible forms of Quenya. – The word **lá** has various uses. It can be used as a negation “not” (apparently placed in front of the word, usually the verb, that is to be negated). **Lá** is also a preposition “beyond”, and as such it is used in phrases having to do with *comparison* – VT42:32 citing the formula “A **ná calima lá** B” for “A is brighter than B” (literally “A is bright beyond B” – notice that the adjective **calima** “bright” appears in its simplest form, with no ending corresponding to the *-er* of “brighter”).

## Vocabulary

To cover all the attested ordinal numbers, we will introduce two at a time in this and the last two lessons.

**lempëa** “fifth”

**enquëa** “sixth”

**urco** (**urcu-**) “bogey”

**lá** 1) negation “not”, 2) preposition “beyond”, also used in comparison

**ni** independent pronoun “I”, object form **nye** “me”

**le** independent pronoun “you” (plural *or* polite singular), probably unchanged when used as object

**tye** independent object pronoun “you”, “thee” (intimate singular)

**me** independent pronoun “we” (exclusive, cf. the ending **-mmë**), probably unchanged when used as object “us”

**ta** independent pronoun “it” or “that”, probably unchanged when used as object; the allative **tanna** may be used = “thither”. This pronoun may have the plural form **?tai** “those”, of which **te** “them” could be an unstressed form (alternatively, *tai* may be an archaic form which had evolved into **te** in all positions; we will only use the attested form **te** here). This plural pronoun assumes the form **tie-** before case endings (or at least before the dative ending **-n**)

**palu-** “to expand”

**or-** (also **ora-**) “to urge, to impel” (impersonal verb; used with a dative form to express “[someone] feels moved [to do something]”)

**óla-** “to dream” (impersonal verb; the dreamer is apparently introduced as a dative form)

## Exercises

Notice that in the exercises below, as well as in the keys, we use “you” as the English equivalent of Quenya “L”-form pronouns (plural, or polite singular, “you”), whereas “thee” is used as the equivalent of the intimate singular object form **tye**. – As for *negations*, we will here practice the independent negation **lá** instead of using the negative verb. – We do not here use independent *subject* pronouns, only the pronominal endings discussed earlier.

1. Translate into English:

- A. **Utúlientë cenien me, lá cenien tye.**
- B. **Nai óluva len Eldaron!**
- C. **Neldë neri lelyuvar tanna, ar i Naucor tiruvar te, an i neri haryar harma i ná alta lá malta.**
- D. **I enquëa auressë ornë tien tulë ninna.**
- E. **I enquëa aran i nórëo ná saila lá atarerya i lempëa aran.**
- F. **Palunes coarya, cárala ta i analta coa i mallëo.**
- G. **Carnelyes tien; lá carnelyes men.**
- H. **Cennemmë le i cilyassë nu me, an lantanelyë mir ta.**

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. My right arm is stronger than my left arm.
- J. Summon them to [*allative*] me!
- K. The bogies are watching me, for I fear them [*Quenya*: “fear from them”, *ablative*].
- L. We [*exclusive*] will not come to see thee in the night.
- M. The boy will not dream about [*genitive*] bogies.
- N. The two women said: “Your king did not want to give us [*dual dative*] the things taken [or, “seized” – **mapainë**, pl.] from us [*dual ablative*] by his warriors.”
- O. The man expanding his house is doing that [or, it] (in order) to make many rooms for [*dative*] all his things.

P. The sixth day will be [**nauva**] better than the fifth day, and we [*exclusive*] will not feel moved to leave [**auta**]. [*“Better than” = “good beyond”!*]

# Lesson 19

Pronouns in imperative phrases. Emphatic pronouns.  
Question-words: *Man, mana, manen*. Postpositions.

## 19.1 Pronouns in imperative phrases

Imperative phrases may include pronominal elements. These pronouns may refer either the *subject* of the imperative phrase (the party that is asked or ordered to do something), or to the direct or indirect *object* of the requested action.

Optional subject pronouns may be slipped in to make it clear whether the speaker wants *one* or *several* persons to do something. Starting from the imperative exclamation **heca!** “be gone!” or “stand aside!”, Tolkien noted that this word “often” appeared in an extended form “with reduced pronominal affixes of the 2nd person” (WJ:364). If a *single person* is the addressee of an imperative, it can receive the suffix **-t** (doubtless related to the singular object pronoun **tye** “thee”). So whereas the imperative **heca!** may be directed at one person or several, the extended form **hecat!** is explicitly marked as singular. It may be translated “get thee gone!” (Perhaps Fëanor’s harsh dismissal of Melkor when the latter came to Formenos, translated “get thee gone from my gate” near the end of Chapter 7 of the *Silmarillion*, went something like **hecat andonyallo** in the original Quenya?) Tolkien further noted that in the plural, the simple imperative **heca!** could receive the ending **-l**, so **hecal!** is an order with *several* addressees: “Be gone, [all of] you!” These examples also demonstrate that when he wrote this, Tolkien had come to see the distinction between the “T”-forms and the “L”-forms of the Second Person as being primarily a distinction between singular and plural “you”. Of course, matters are slightly muddled by the fact that “L”-forms like the ending **-l** or **-lyë** also function as a *polite singular* “you” (translated “thou” in *Namárië*). Of course, none can say whether the ending **-l** could be used in an imperative phrase to denote a “polite” order with a single addressee.

**Hecat!** sg. and **hecal!** pl. are our only attested examples of this use of the endings **-t** and **-l**. The imperative **heca!** is perhaps not a very typical imperative. As outlined in Lesson Sixteen, instead of the ending **-a** an inde-

pendent imperative particle **á** (or **a**) is normally employed, combined with a following verbal stem. Attested examples include **á vala!** “rule!” and **a laita!** “praise!” If the endings **-t**, **-l** are to be slipped into such a phrase, they must probably be attached to the verbal stem, e.g. **a laitat!** “praise!” (to one person), **a laitall!** “praise!” (to several persons).

**Laita-** “bless, praise” is of course an A-stem. Primary verbs like **car-** “make, do” appear with the ending **-ë** in such commands, as is evident from the negative imperative **áva carë!** “don’t do [it]!” (WJ:371). This **-ë** almost certainly comes from an earlier **-i**, and before endings we would still see **-i-**, just as in the aorist of these verbs. Hence probably **áva carit!** “don’t do [it]!” (to one person), plural **áva carill!** “don’t do [it]!” (to several persons). Or with a positive command like **á tulë!** “come!”, we could likewise have **á tulit!** if one person is asked to come, whereas **á tulil!** would refer to more than one: “Come ye!”

An imperative phrase may also include pronominal elements referring to the direct or indirect *object* of the requested action. In the previous lesson we referred to various independent pronouns. **Nye** “me”, **me** “us”, **le** “you”, **tye** “thee”, **ta** “it” and **te** “them” can all appear as independent words; indeed our sole attestation of **te** “them” involves an imperative phrase where this word occurs by itself: **A laita te, laita te!** “bless them, bless them!” (from the Cormallen Praise). However, Tolkien’s Quenya rendering of the Lord’s Prayer indicates that object pronouns may also appear *suffixed* to the imperative particle **á**. The principle can be illustrated by a home-made example: Consider a simple imperative phrase like **á tirë!** “watch!” If we want to say “watch them”, slipping in the object pronoun **te**, it would be possible to let it follow the verb (as in the attested example **a laita te** “bless them”), hence **á tirë te**. However, it would apparently be equally permissible to let the object pronoun come before the verb, in which case it glues itself to the imperative particle **á**. “Watch them!” could therefore be **átë tirë!**

NOTE: Since **te** “them” now becomes the final syllable of a word of several syllables, the spelling conventions we have adopted require that the final **-e** is here spelt with a diaeresis: **-ë**. The same would apply to the final **-e** of the object pronouns **nye**, **me**, **le**, **tye** if they were directly suffixed to **á** – e.g. **ámë tirë** “watch us”. Of course, this is just an orthographic complication that has nothing to do with the structure of the language: In many texts, Tolkien does not use the diaeresis at all.

Also *dative* pronouns (like **nin** “to/for me”, **men** “to/for us”, **tien** “to/for them”) can be directly suffixed to the imperative particle **á**; at least Tolkien’s Quenya Lord’s Prayer contains an example of **men** being so suffixed. A phrase like, say, “sing for us!” could thus be rendered **ámen linda!**

What happens if an imperative phrase contains two pronouns, denoting both the direct and the indirect object? We have no Tolkien-made example to guide us, but the imperative particle can hardly receive more than one pronominal suffix, and the example **a laita te** indicates that a pronoun does

not necessarily *have* to be suffixed to the particle. So it would certainly be permissible to let one of the pronouns, for either direct or indirect object, remain an independent word and suffix only the other pronoun to the particle **á**. “Do *it* for *me*!” could then be either **á***nin* **carë** **ta!** or **á***ta* **carë** **nin!**, according to preference. (Perhaps one could also say **á***nin* **caritas!**, using an extended verbal stem **carita-** and the suffix **-s** for “it”.)

Tolkien’s translation of “do not lead us into temptation” in his Quenya Lord’s Prayer reveals that the negated form of the imperative particle (“do not!”) can also receive pronominal affixes. By ca. 1960, in *Quendi and Eldar*, Tolkien used **áva** as the negative imperative, combining the particle **á** with the negation **vá** (**-va**). In his earlier Lord’s Prayer rendering he used a slightly different word for “do not” (incorporating the negation **lá** instead of **vá**), but there is no reason to doubt that pronouns denoting the direct or indirect object can be attached to the later form **áva** as well. So while “watch us!” could evidently be translated **ámë** **tirë!**, the negative command “don’t watch us!” may probably be translated **ávamë** **tirë!**

## 19.2 Emphatic pronouns

In the previous lesson, we discussed a number of independent pronouns (also mentioned in the section above). There also exist certain other pronouns that likewise appear as separate words, though they are closely related to the corresponding pronominal endings. These words function as *emphatic* pronouns.

Consider the final lines of *Namárië*: **Nai hiruvalyë Valimar! Nai elyë hiruva!** In LotR, Tolkien provided the translation “maybe thou shalt find Valimar! Maybe even thou shalt find it!” Of course, **hiruvalyë** means “thou shalt find” – “thou” being expressed by means of the pronominal ending **-lyë**. But then this is repeated as **nai elyë hiruva**, “maybe even thou shalt find [it]”. Notice how the ending **-lyë** is replaced by the independent word **elyë**, which is obviously closely related. **Elyë** means simply “thou” or “you”, but with special emphasis on this pronoun. Using such an independent form is like italicizing the pronoun in English: “Maybe [none other than] *thou* shalt find.” Tolkien used the translation “even thou”, adding an extra word, to bring out the emphatic quality of the pronoun. (The shorter independent word for “you, thou”, **le**, is apparently not emphatic.)

Another independent emphatic pronoun is **inyë** “I” – or, since it is emphatic, rather “I myself” or “even I”, “I and no one else”. In LR:61, Herendil tells his father Elendil that he loves him, and Elendil responds in Quenya: **A yonya inyë tye-méla**, “and I too, my son, I love thee” (the initial **a**, apparently translated “and”, would seem to be a variant of the more usual word **ar** – though **a** can also be a particle of address). Here the pronoun **inyë**, translated “I too” by Tolkien, gives special emphasis to Elendil’s own

identity: “I love you [just as you love me]”. **Inyë** is more emphatic than the shorter form **ni**, just like **elyë** is more emphatic than **le**.

The form **inyë** is obviously related to the pronominal ending **-nyë**, and *Namárië* clearly demonstrates that **elyë** corresponds to the ending **-lyë**. (Draft versions of *Namárië* have the pronoun **ellë** and the ending **-llë** instead. Some think this has another meaning, perhaps plural “you” instead of singular “thou”, but I tend to believe that Tolkien simply revised the form of the pronoun without altering the sense.) It is evident from these examples that emphatic pronouns can be derived from the corresponding pronominal endings by adding the ending to some vowel. But what vowel? We have an **e-** in **elyë** “you”, but an **i-** in **inyë** “I”. This emphatic word for “I” may be exceptional in preferring **i-** as its initial vowel. The student may remember that the ending for “my”, **-nya**, seems to prefer **-i-** as its connecting vowel where one is required (as in **atarinya** “my father”, LR:61). The close association of these First Person pronominal forms with the vowel **i** seems to reflect the stem-vowel of the most basic stem **NI** “I”, listed in the *Etymologies*. We may tentatively conclude that the other emphatic pronouns show the initial vowel **e-**, as in **elyë**. This is supported by Tolkien’s Quenya version of the Lord’s Prayer, where he used **emmë** as the emphatic pronoun corresponding to the pronominal ending **-mmë** for exclusive “we”. It occurs in his translation of the line “and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”. Here, the pronoun is emphatic to draw special attention to it (stressing the parallelism: “we” want God to forgive us just like *we* in turn forgive others). It feels natural to let this pronoun be emphatic in English as well, though this is indicated merely by putting extra stress on it, and the distinction is not represented in writing (unless one uses italics!) The Quenya system of using distinct emphatic pronouns is undeniably more elegant.

While **inyë**, **elyë** (changed from **ellë**) and **emmë** are all the emphatic pronouns occurring in published and soon-to-be-published material, we can confidently extrapolate at least some more forms. The *exclusive* emphatic pronoun for “we”, **emmë**, would obviously correspond to the *inclusive* variant **elmë** (just like the exclusive ending for “we”, **-mmë**, corresponds to the inclusive ending **-lmë**). Possibly the ending **-ntë** for “they” would correspond to an independent word **entë**.

Other forms are somewhat less certain. The ending for dual inclusive “we” is uncertain, but if it is **-lwë**, we would expect **elwë** as the independent emphatic pronoun. The form **elyë** can function as a singular “you”, as is evident from Tolkien’s translation “even thou” in his LotR rendering of *Namárië*. As I have suggested earlier, the “L” forms of the Second Person may seem to indicate either a *polite singular* “you” or a *plural* “you”; perhaps **elyë** could assume the latter sense as well. The “T” forms of the Second Person, exemplified by the object pronoun **tye** and the ending **-t** that may be used in the imperative, seem to denote an *intimate* and usually *singular*



“you”, but it is uncertain what the emphatic form would be. It depends on how we reconstruct the longer form of the ending **-t**. If it is **-tyë**, the emphatic pronoun would most likely be **etyë**. But I have also given some reasons for believing that Tolkien meant **-t** to represent an older **-k**, in which case the longer variant of the ending might well be **-ccë** – and then emphatic pronoun would probably be **eccë**.

Things are also rather obscure in the Third Person. It is clear that the emphatic pronouns are derived from the *long* forms of the pronominal endings. The word **inyë** “I” corresponds to the long subject ending **-nyë**, not its shorter (and more common) form **-n**; likewise, **elyë** “thou” corresponds to the long ending **-lyë**, though this ending may also appear in the shorter form **-l**. There are hardly any short emphatic pronouns **\*\*in**, **\*\*el** to go with the short endings. Our problem is that in the Third Person, the *short* ending **-s** is the only form attested in material Tolkien certainly intended to be LotR-compatible. We have earlier theorized that **-s** *may* correspond to a longer ending **-ryë** (for earlier **-syë**, **-zyë**); it would then have the same relationship to the ending **-rya** “his, her” as the ending **-lyë** “you” has to the ending **-lya** “your”. If such an ending **-ryë** exists, it could correspond to an emphatic pronoun **?eryë** “(even) he/she”. But when we start extrapolating from extrapolations, the risk of losing contact with Tolkien’s actual intentions obviously becomes acute.

We know a few more things about the emphatic pronouns, though. They can receive case endings; in Tolkien’s Quenya rendering of the Lord’s Prayer, the emphatic pronoun **emmë** “we” once occurs with the dative ending **-n** attached: **Emmen**. (This also confirms that pronouns take the simplest case endings, that is, the ones used with singular nouns – even if the pronoun is plural by its meaning: “We” must refer to several persons, but the simplest dative ending **-n** is used instead of the plural form **-in**.) As pointed out in the previous lesson, the 1st person dative form **nin** “to me, for me” is particularly well attested, but if one wants to say “for *me* myself”, “for *me* [and no one else]”, it would be better to start from the emphatic form **inyë** and derive the dative form **inyen**.

We have already cited the final lines of *Namárië*, where part of one sentence is repeated with special emphasis on the pronoun: **Nai hiruvalyë Valimar! Nai elyë hiruva!** From this example it appears that if a pronominal ending is replaced by an independent pronoun, the ending is removed from the verb (not **nai elyë hiruvalyë** with both an independent pronoun and the corresponding ending still attached to the verb). Yet in the draft version, when the pronoun **elyë** was still **ellë**, Tolkien did use precisely that system: **Nai ellë hiruvallë**. He apparently decided that this version was somewhat over-complete, and writers should probably avoid this system.

Yet the verb following an emphatic pronoun should perhaps receive at least the plural ending **-r** if the pronoun is plural. If we want to transform (say) **hiruvammë** “we shall find” into two words to put special emphasis on

the pronoun “we”, I guess the resulting phrase would be **emmë hiruvar**, not **\*\*emmë hiruva**. If the pronoun **elyë** does denote both singular polite “you/thou” as well as plural “you”, the following verb may then reveal in what sense it is used. In **nai elyë hiruva!** the pronoun must be singular (“thou”) since there is no **-r** attached to the verb. Perhaps **nai elyë hiruvar!** would also be a possible sentence, but here it would be clear that a plural “you” is intended. If this is so, Frodo could after all be certain that Galadriel addressed *Namárië* to him alone (“thou”), not to the entire Fellowship (“you”) – though the pronoun **elyë** as such is perhaps ambiguous in this regard.

As pointed out above, the emphatic pronouns can receive case endings, as can the shorter independent pronouns discussed in the previous lesson. It is, however, somewhat uncertain whether the endings for genitive and possessive should be added to such independent pronouns. Obviously, some kind of independent words for (say) “mine” or “yours” would be required to have a fully functional language. The ending **-lya** can be used to express “your”, as in **parmalya** “your book”, but how do we say “the book is yours”? Published examples of Quenya provide no clues.

It has long been theorized that not only the subject endings that may be suffixed to verbs, but also the possessive endings that may be added to nouns (like **-nya** “my” or **-lya** “your”), have corresponding emphatic forms. This has never been explicitly confirmed. However, given the fact that the ending **-lyë** “you, thou” corresponds to an independent form **elyë** “you” (emphatic), it certainly seems plausible to assume that the ending **-lya** “your” could correspond to an independent form **elya** “yours”. This word could then be used in a sentence like **i parma ná elya**, “the book is yours”. But it could also be used for special emphasis, so that while **parmalya** means simply “your book”, **elya parma** would mean “*your* [and no one else’s] book”.

If the theory holds, other emphatic possessive pronouns would be **erya** “his, her”, **elma** “our” [inclusive] and **emma** “our [exclusive]” – of course corresponding to the endings **-rya**, **-lma**, **-mma**. The attested word **elya** for “your, thy” would be either a plural “your” or a polite singular “your” (or “thy”); the intimate singular “your” could be something like **ecca** or **etya**. If the ending for dual inclusive “our” is **-lwa**, we could have **elwa** as the corresponding emphatic pronoun. An even bigger “if” relates to the emphatic word for “their”, since it must be extrapolated in two steps: *Assuming that* the ending **-ntë** for “they” corresponds to an unattested ending **-nta** “their”, we may *assume* that it this ending in turn corresponds to an emphatic possessive pronoun **enta**. As for the independent form of the possessive pronoun “my”, corresponding to the ending **-nya**, we would probably expect the form **inya** (since the subject ending **-nyë** corresponds to an independent form **inyë**).

These extrapolations are not entirely unproblematic. Some of these forms

actually occur in Tolkien’s published writings, but with quite different meanings. **Inya**, for instance, is mentioned in the *Etymologies* – but there it is not an emphatic word for “my”, it as an adjective “female”, of a quite different derivation (see the entry INI). **Erya**, which we have suggested as an emphatic word for “his” or “her” (corresponding to the ending **-rya**), would coincide in form with the adjective **erya** “single, sole” (Etym, entry ERE). The student may already have noticed that **enta** as an emphatic word for “their” would clash with the demonstrative “that, yonder” (Etym, entry EN). Since demonstratives may seem to *follow* the noun they connect with (cf. UT:305: **vanda sina** = “this oath”), we could perhaps distinguish **coa enta** “yonder house” from **enta coa** “their house”. As for our extrapolated forms **inya** and **erya** coinciding with Tolkien-made adjectives of quite different meaning, what can I say? Some, no doubt, would feel that this throws considerable doubt on this whole business of extrapolating emphatic possessive pronouns to go with the attested subject pronouns. Actually I think these extrapolations are about as plausible as any forms not directly attested can be. Given the fluid state of the Quenya language in general and its pronouns in particular, different stages of Tolkien’s ever-changing conception are quite likely to involve coinciding word-forms of different meaning. However, in the exercises below, I focus on the better-attested *subject* pronouns, like **inyë** and **elyë**.

### 19.3 Question-words

Many English words frequently used in *questions* show an initial *wh-*: “who?”, “what?”, “where?”, “which?”, “whose?”, “why?” etc. In Tolkien’s Elvish, an initial **ma-** has similar connotations; he referred to the “Eldarin interrogative element *ma, man*” (PM:357). This “element” Tolkien seems to have borrowed from Semitic languages; cf. for instance Hebrew *ma* = “what?”

We have nothing like a complete list of Elvish interrogative words, but some of them do occur in published material. Best attested is the word for “who”, **man**, which occurs in a question in the middle of *Namárië*: **Sí man i yulma nin enquantuva?** “Now who will refill the cup for me?” **Man** = “who” occurs repeatedly in the *Markirya* poem, e.g. in the question **man tíruva fána cirya[?]** “Who will heed [/watch] a white ship?” (In one out of five occurrences, *Markirya* as printed in MC:221–222 has **men** instead, but this must be a misreading of Tolkien’s manuscript; there seems to be no grammatical variation that could explain the variant form.) Perhaps **man** can receive case endings, so that we can have (say) the genitive form **mano** = “whose?”

If **man** is “who” (referring to people), what is the word for “what” (referring to things)? In LR:58, Tolkien apparently lets **man** cover “what?” as well: **Man-ië?** is translated “what is it?” This is hardly LotR-style Quenya;

the ending **-ië** = “is” was almost certainly abandoned later. *Fíriel’s Song* also uses **man** in the sense of “what”: **Man . . . antáva nin Ilúvatar[?]** = “What will the Father [Ilúvatar, God] give me?” Whether Tolkien at one point intended **man** to mean both “who” and “what”, or whether he simply changed his mind back and forth regarding the precise meaning of **man**, cannot be determined now. Turning to a post-LotR source, we find the question **mana i-coimas Eldaron[?]**, which is translated “what is the *coimas* [“life-bread” = Sindarin *lembas*] of the Eldar?” (PM:395; a variant reading occurs in PM:403). How are we to interpret this word **mana**, that would seem to correspond to “what is” in the translation? It could be a word **ma** “what” (which would be a direct borrowing from Hebrew!) + the copula **ná** “is”, here directly suffixed and shortened to **-na**. However, the form **ma** is known to have at least two different meanings in Quenya (see the next lesson), so I tend to doubt that Tolkien intended it to mean “what?” as well. Rather **mana** is simply a word for “what”, and there is no explicit copula “is” in the sentence **mana i-coimas[?]** = “what [is] the life-bread?” It may be that **mana** “what” can receive case-endings. Published material provides no word for “why?”, but by one suggestion we can work around this gap by adding the dative ending **-n** to **mana** – the resulting form **manan** meaning literally “what for?”

By its form, **mana** resembles the demonstratives **sina** “this”, **tana** “that” and **yana** “that (yonder)”. Since **vanda sina** means “this oath” (UT:305, 317), perhaps **vanda mana?** would mean “what oath?” or “which oath?” **Mana vanda?** would rather mean “what [is] an oath?”, given Tolkien’s example **mana i-coimas[?]** = “what [is] the life-bread?”

The same late document that provides this example also includes a word for “how?”, appearing as part of the question **manen lambë Quendion ahyänë[?]** = “How did the language of Elves change?” (PM:395). Interestingly, this word **manen** “how?” seems to include the instrumental ending **-nen**, added to the “interrogative element” **ma-** (PM:347). **Manen** could mean, literally, “what by?” (it may even be a contraction of **mananen** for all we know). It seems highly plausible that other case endings than that of the instrumental can be added to **ma-**. Perhaps we can have locative **massë?** “where?”, ablative **mallo** “whence?/where from?” and **manna** “whither/where to?”, filling further gaps in our vocabulary. However, the exercises below only involve the attested forms **man** “who?”, **mana** “what?” and **manen** “how?”

## 19.4 Postpositions

We have introduced various *prepositions*, such as **nu** “under”, **or** “over” or **ve** “as, like”. Prepositions are so called because they are typically “positioned” before (*pre*) the word(s) they connect with. In Quenya and English

alike, one would say **nu alda** “under a tree” – not **\*\*alda nu** “a tree under”. (Of course, the word order may be quite garbled in poetry, as when the LotR version of *Namárië* has **Vardo tellumar nu luini** “Varda’s domes under blue” for “under Varda’s blue domes”. Here, we are rather discussing the normal, non-poetic word order.)

There are also *postpositions*, similar in function to the prepositions, but coming after (*post*) the word or words they connect with. In English, the word *ago* may be seen as a postposition, since it comes at the end of phrases like “three years ago”. Some languages would use a preposition instead, expressing this meaning something like “before three years”. Interestingly, a word simply glossed “ago” is mentioned in the *Etymologies*: **Yá**. It is not mentioned or exemplified elsewhere, and since its English gloss is all we have to go on, we may assume that **yá** is a postposition in Quenya as well. If so, “three years ago” could be translated directly as **neldë loar yá**.

At an older stage, Elvish apparently had many postpositions. Tolkien stated that at the oldest stage, “prepositional” elements were normally “attached” – apparently meaning *suffixed* – to noun stems (WJ:368). Many of the Quenya case endings Tolkien clearly meant to represent originally independent elements that had merged into the noun they followed. For instance, the ending **-nna** for allative is obviously related to the preposition **na** or **ana**, likewise meaning “to, towards”. Yet Quenya had at least a few postpositions that had not evolved into case endings, but still appeared as independent words. Whereas **yá** discussed above is only attested as an isolated word mentioned in Etym, the word **pella** “beyond” appears in actual Quenya texts, and it does seem to be a postposition. *Namárië* has **Andúnë pella** for “beyond the West”, and this is apparently not just another example of a poetic word order, for Tolkien did not alter this phrase in his prose version of the song. (The word **Andúnë** “West” is an alternative to the more usual word **Númen**. **Andúnë** may also be defined as “sunset” or even “evening”.) **Pella** is used as a postposition in the *Markirya* poem as well, where it connects with a noun inflected for plural ablative: **Elenillor pella** is translated “from beyond the stars” (literally “from stars beyond”).

Whether **pella** could also be used as a preposition, just like its English gloss “beyond”, is impossible to say. Another word for “beyond”, the **lá** that is also used in comparison, does seem to be a preposition (and perhaps the final syllable of **pella** is meant to be related to this **lá**). Even so, I would use **pella** as a postposition only, employing the word order observed in *Namárië* and *Markirya* alike.

## Summary of Lesson Nineteen

Imperative phrases may in various ways include pronouns. If an order has one single addressee, the ending **-t** (basically meaning “thou”) may be added

to the verb of the imperative phrase; if several people are asked to do something, the ending **-l** (basically meaning “you”, plural) may be used instead. Pronouns denoting the direct or indirect object of the imperative may glue themselves to the imperative particle **á**. – The (long forms of the) pronominal subject endings that may be suffixed to verbs may also be used to derive independent *emphatic pronouns* by adding the relevant ending to **e-**. For instance, the subject endings **-lyë** “you, thou” and **-mmë** “we” correspond to the independent emphatic pronouns **elyë** “(even) thou” and **emmë** “(even) we”. The emphatic word for “I”, corresponding to the ending **-nyë**, however shows **i-** rather than **e-** as its initial vowel: **inyë**. – Quenya *interrogative* words apparently show an initial **ma-**; attested examples are **man** “who”, **mana** “what” and **manen** “how”. – *Postpositions* are similar in function to prepositions, but follow rather than precede the word(s) they connect with. The word **pella** “beyond” seems to function as a postposition; *Namárië* has **Andúnë pella** (not ?**pella Andúnë**) for “beyond the West”. The word **yá** is glossed “ago” (Etym, entry *YA*), so perhaps it functions as a postposition just like its English gloss.

## Vocabulary

**otsëa** “seventh”

**toltëa** “eighth” (In a late document Tolkien actually changed this form to **toldëa**: VT42:25, 31. Apparently he considered changing the word for “8” from **tolto** to **toldo**. We may accept **toldo** “8” and **toldëa** “8th” as valid variants, but in the exercises below I prefer **toltëa** – to go with **tolto**, the form of the word “8” as listed in the *Etymologies*.)

**inyë** “I” (emphatic pronoun)

**elyë** “you, thou” (emphatic pronoun)

**emmë** “we”, exclusive (emphatic pronoun)

**elmë** “we”, inclusive (emphatic pronoun). (This form is not directly attested, but since it forms the logical counterpart of **emmë**, this extrapolation from the ending **-lmë** seems so plausible that I will use it in the exercises below.)

**man** “who?”

**mana** “what?” (according to one interpretation of the sentence where this word occurs)

**manen** “how?”

**pella** “beyond” (postposition)

**yá** “ago” (postposition like its English gloss?)

**írë** “when”

NOTE on the word **írë** “when”: This is (almost certainly) not an interrogative word, despite its English gloss. A question like “when will you come?” can hardly be translated **\*\*írë tuluvalyë?** No Quenya word for “when?” as a genuine question-word has been published, though it may be possible to work around this gap – for instance, we could use a circumlocution like **lú mana(ssë)?** = “(at) what time?” The word **írë** is used for “when” in the sense that it *introduces information about when something occurs*; it is attested in Fíriel’s Song. The relevant phrases are not quite LotR-style Quenya, but the use of **írë** may be noted all the same: **Yéva tyel ar i-narquelion, írë ilqua yéva nórina** = “there will be an end and the Fading, when all is counted”; **man . . . antáva nin Ilúvatar . . . írë Anarinya queluva?** = “what will the Father give me . . . when my Sun faileth?” At present we have no later attestation of such a word, and since it is highly useful, we may well adopt **írë** “when” into our attempted Unified or Standard Quenya. Many post-Tolkien writers have used it already. It has been suggested that the initial **í-** of **írë** is related to the definite article **i** “the”, whereas the final **-rë** can be equated with the word **ré** “[24-hour] day” (the word **aurë** refers to the daylight period only). If so, **írë** basically means “the day” – and of course, “what will the Father give me . . . the day my Sun faileth” would still make sense. However, it may seem that the word **írë** “when” existed long before the word **ré** “day”; the latter apparently emerged as Tolkien was writing the LotR Appendices. I wouldn’t hesitate to use **írë** for “when” in general (not limiting its application to “the day when. . .”)

## Exercises

As described above, Tolkien sometimes added extra words when translating emphatic pronouns, e.g. **elyë** = “even thou” (to bring out the emphatic quality of the word). However, in the keys to the exercises below, as well as in the “Translate into Quenya” section, we have adopted the simpler system of *italicizing* emphatic pronouns (e.g. **elyë** = *you*; by the way, we will use this translation rather than “*thou*” since the “L”-form pronouns may seem to be ambiguous as to number, just like English “you”).

1. Translate into English:

- A. Man marnë i coassë cainen loar yá, írë inyë lá marnë tassë?
- B. Mana elmë polir carë?
- C. Áta antat nin, ar ávata nurtat nillo!
- D. Man elyë cennë i otsëa auressë?
- E. Antuvantë ilyë i annar inyen ar lá elyen!
- F. Mana i neri hirner i nóressë i oronti pella?
- G. Manen elyë poluva orta i alta ondo írë inyë úmë polë caritas?

H. Sellemma marë coa yanassë; emmë marir i toltëa coassë  
mallë sinassë. Á tulil ar á cenil coamma!

2. Translate into Quenya:

- I. Who has done that [**ta**]?
- J. What did *you* find in the seventh room when you went there [or, “thither” = **tanna**]?
- K. When *you* have come, *I* want to leave [**auta**].
- L. Give us the wine! (*an order explicitly addressed to several persons*).
- M. Give the wine to *us* and not [**lá**] to the warriors! (“*Us*” is *exclusive here*. “*To*” = *dative, not allative*. *This order is explicitly addressed to emphone person only.*)
- N. The seventh warrior has come from beyond the great mountains.
- O. Beyond [or, behind] the eighth door [or, “gate”, **ando**] *you* found a great treasure; *we* [exclusive] who came after you [**apa le**] did not find a thing!
- P. How did the evil Dwarves find them seven days ago?



# Lesson 20

The obscure verb “to be”. *Ma* as a possible interrogative particle. *Sa* introducing nominal clauses.

We are now fast exhausting the reasonably certain “facts” about Quenya (though as I have tried to make clear, even many of the “facts” must be considered tentative deductions). This last regular lesson is already moving far into the twilight zone of linguistic obscurities.

## 20.1 The verb “to be”

(including some remarks on the form *ëa*)

The various forms of the verb “to be” have always been a problem. The LotR version of *Namárië* includes the copula **ná** “is”. A draft version of the same poem combines the copula with a plural subject, resulting in the form **nar** “are”. In July 2001, the future-tense form **nauva** “will be” finally turned up in *Vinyar Tengwar* 42 p. 34. We have mentioned and practiced all of these forms before.

Several tense-forms, as well as the infinitive, are missing. To start with the infinitive, what is “to be” in Quenya? We have no other clue than the apparent fact the infinitive of A-stem verbs is identical to the verbal stem itself, with no additions. In Etym, **NÂ** is listed as the “stem of [the] verb ‘to be’ in Q[uenya]”. So *conceivably*, **ná** may also function as an infinitive: “I want to be an Elf” = ?**Merin ná Elda**. But of course, Tolkien may have imagined something entirely different.

Another question lacking a clear answer: Can **ná**, **nauva** and other tense-forms be combined with pronominal endings? We *may* have one example to guide us. In the very early (some would even say *first*) “Qenya” poem *Nargelion*, written in 1915 or 1916, Tolkien used the form **náre**. Since there is no straightforward Tolkien-made translation of this poem, we cannot be entirely certain what it means. Christopher Gilson, analyzing the entire poem in light of the almost contemporaneous Quenya Lexicon, concluded that **náre** may mean “it is” (VT40:31). A 3rd person marker **-re** (or if you like, **-rë**) was perhaps present in Tolkien’s later forms of Quenya as well, though at

the later stages we might expect it to mean “she” rather than “it” – see Lesson 15. If the regular pronominal endings can be attached to **ná**, we would expect forms like the following:

**nán** or **nányë** “I am”

**nát** “you [intimate singular] are”, perhaps also with a longer form (**naccë** or **nátyë**???)

**nál** or **nályë** “you [plural *or* polite singular] are”

**nás** “he/she/it is”, conceivably with a longer form **?naryë**; there may also be gender-specific forms **náro** “he is”, **nárë** “she is” (the latter being attested, sort of, in *Nargelion*)

**nammë** “we [exclusive] are”, **nalmë** “we [inclusive] are”, and perhaps something like **nalwë** “we [dual inclusive] are”

**nantë** “they are”

Notice that the long **á** of **ná** would be shortened whenever a consonant cluster follows, as when the endings **-mmë**, **-lmë**, **-lwë**, **-ntë** are attached. I assume that the endings with a consonant + **y** (**-nyë** and **-lyë**, plus the two extrapolated endings **?-tyë** and **?-ryë**) would *not* have the power to shorten a preceding vowel. Compare the **á** of **má** “hand” remaining long before the possessive pronominal ending **-rya** “her” in *Namárië*: **máryat** “her hands”, dual. (The future tense **nauva** “will be” would be able to receive all pronominal endings with no modifications: **nauvan** or **nauvanyë** “I will be”, **nauvalmë** “we will be”, etc.)

Perhaps the verb **ná** can even receive *two* pronominal endings, for subject and predicate, e.g. **nányes** = “I am he”. (Compare the Tolkien-made form **utúvienyes** = “I have found it”, the second ending denoting the object.)

But of course, all of the above may be nonsense. The word **ná** “is” and pronominal endings like **-n** “I” are attested separately, but combining them to produce **nán** for “I am” could for all we know be just as wrong as saying “I is” in English. In the case of the verb “to be”, Tolkien may very well have dreamed up some wonderfully irregular forms, which only his unpublished manuscripts can ever reveal.

Luckily, there is a way to get around the whole problem, and that is to simply use an independent pronoun and leave out the entire copula “to be”: It is understood. When translating “blessed art thou” in his Quenya rendering of the *Hail Mary*, Tolkien simply wrote the word for “blessed” immediately followed by the pronoun **elyë** “thou”. There is no copula “art” in the Quenya text. So we can apparently feel free to build copula-less sentences like **inyë Elda** “I [am] an Elf”, **elyë úmëa** “you [are] evil” or “thou [art] evil”. (If a plural “you” is intended, the adjective should probably be pl.: **úmië**.) The shorter, less emphatic pronouns would presumably work just as well: **Ni Elda**, **le úmëa**, etc.

Yet we can’t always do without the verb “to be”, and another problem has to do with the past tense “was”. We have no certain attestations of it. Adding

the normal past-tense marker **-në** to the stem *NÂ* would of course produce something like *?nánë*, but this awkward form seems most improbable. In all likelihood, Tolkien actually envisioned an irregular form. A form **né** “was” has long been rumored to occur in Tolkien’s unpublished papers. The closest we have ever got to having this assumption confirmed would be Christopher Gilson’s analysis of the same very early “Qenya” poem referred to above, *Nargelion*. In *Vinyar Tengwar* #40, page 12–13, we find Gilson trying to decipher what he calls an “especially enigmatic” phrase from the poem. It incorporates the form **né**, and Gilson argues (p. 13):

The preterite [= past tense] of the verb ‘to be’ is not given in [the] Q[enya] L[exicon], but this tense-form is listed for many verbs, and frequently identified as such. The Qenya preterite has a variety of formations, but one of the familiar types is seen in *kanda-* ‘blaze’, pret. *kandane*... It is possible that forms like *kanda-ne* actually arose as a construction with the verb-stem plus a form of the verb ‘to be’, i.e. that a meaning like ‘blazed’ derived syntactically as in English phrases like ‘was blazing’ or ‘did blaze’, with an originally tenseless form of the stem *kanda-* ‘(to) blaze, blazing’ combined with the past tense expressed in the ending *-ne* ‘was’... The present tense of the verb ‘to be’ is given in QL as *ná* ‘it is’... and if the preterite is *né* or *ne*, there would be a parallel with certain other verbs where the present vs. preterite is marked solely by a change of *-a* to *-e*, as in *panta-* ‘open, unfold, spread’, pret. *pante*, or *sanga-* ‘pack tight’, pret. *sange*.

Since it so happens that Mr. Gilson has access to virtually all of Tolkien’s linguistic papers, he must know perfectly well whether a form **né** “was” occurs in the material or not. We may assume, then, that Gilson feels that he would be violating somebody’s copyright if he were to say loud and clear that “**né** is the Qenya word for *was*” – and so he has to pretend that he is merely deducing this word from already published material. Remembering that Tolkien must surely have discussed the various forms of “to be” in the vast amount of linguistic manuscripts that he left behind, and combining Gilson’s article with more recent statements made by his group to the effect that they would not write something they *know* to be wrong, we can apparently treat **né** = “was” as an as-good-as-attested word.

However, even if such a word did exist in the early forms of “Qenya”, it may of course have been abandoned in the more LotR-compatible forms of the language that emerged decades later. It may be noted, though, that the past tense ending **-në** was never abandoned – and if Gilson’s theory that there is a connection between this ending and the verb “was” does reflect Tolkien’s actual ideas, the word **né** “was” may have survived into LotR-style Qenya. Anyhow, writers can hardly do without a word for “was”, and

currently we have no better alternative than **né**. Some writers have used it, and based on the pair **ná** “is” / **nar** “are”, people have also extrapolated a form **ner** “were” to be used in conjunction with plural or multiple subjects.

If the present tense **ná** “is” can be combined with pronominal endings, this would presumably be true of **né** as well (it would then be reduced to **ne-** with a short **-e-** before the endings **-mmë**, **-lmë**, **-lwë**, **-ntë**, just like we must assume that **ná-** is shortened to **na-** before these endings). But rather than being combined with pronominal endings, it may well be that the copula would most often simply be omitted in the past tense as well, an independent pronoun being used instead of an ending: **Elyë úmëa** = past tense “you [were] evil” or present tense “you [are] evil”, according to context. (However, I suspect that the future-tense copula **nauva** “will be” would rarely be omitted like this.)

Five Quenya tenses are attested: Present (or continuative), aorist, past, future and perfect. The verb “to be” may not make any distinction between present and aorist (**ná** “is” covering both); the past tense “was” may be **né** as discussed above, and the future tense is attested as **nauva** “will be”. This leaves only the perfect tense – “has been”. Normally, the perfect is formed by prefixing an augment similar to the stem-vowel, lengthening the stem-vowel in its normal place and adding the ending **-ië**, e.g. **utúlië** “has come” from the stem **TUL** “come”. However, it is less than clear how the stem **NÂ** could be fitted into this pattern. A form **?anáíë** would be quite unstable; the group **ái** would tend to become a normal diphthong **ai**. Yet **?anaië** still does not strike me as a particularly likely form, and I could recommend it to really desperate writers only. Presently it is simply impossible to tell how the Eldar would say “has been” (presumably a very frequent word, since Tolkienian Elves “were ever more and more involved in the past” – VT41:12!)

The *imperative* of **ná** is also a matter of conjecture. It is far from obvious how to say “be!” as in “be good!” I have used the form **ána**, combining **ná** (**-na**) with a prefixed variant of the imperative particle **á**. By its form, this imperative **ána** “be!” would have the same relationship to **ná** as Tolkien’s word **áva** “don’t!” has to the simple negation **vá** “no!” Yet **ána** remains an extrapolation, and if we could have asked Tolkien what he actually had in mind, I would have been somewhat surprised if this had been his answer. So please think of **ána** as a form which would fit into Tolkien’s general system, but which is not (as far as I know!) Tolkienian as such.

In addition to the “N” forms of the verb “to be” (**ná/nar**, **né**, **nauva**) a few entirely different forms of related meaning occurs in the material. The pre-LotR text *Fíriel’s Song* has **ye** for “is” and **yéva** for “will be”. Instead of appearing as independent words they may also be turned into *endings*, **-ië** and **-iéva**, attested in such forms as **márië** “is good” and **hostainiéva** “will be counted” (cf. **mára** “good”, **hostaina** “gathered, countered”). However, as I pointed out in Lesson Four, Tolkien may seem to have abandoned such

forms. The ending **-ië** has so many other meanings (gerundial ending as in **enyalië** “recalling”, abstract ending as in **verië** “boldness”, feminine ending as in **Valië** “female Vala”) that Tolkien may have decided that it should not be burdened with the meaning “is” as well. A few writers have used the ending **-ië** “is”, but my advice would be to let these formations from *Fíriel’s Song* rest in peace.

Another verb we should consider is definitely not a word Tolkien abandoned, for it is found in writings postdating the publication of LotR – with *Namárië*, incorporating the verb **ná** “is”, in it. Thus it is clearly meant to coexist with **ná**, and probably expresses a somewhat different shade of meaning. We are talking about the verb **ëa** (or with a capital E, **Eä**).

Readers of the *Silmarillion* will remember this word from Tolkien’s creation myth. God, Eru Ilúvatar, grants objective existence to the Music of the Ainur with this word: “I know the desire of your minds that what ye have seen should verily be . . . even as ye yourselves are, and yet other. Therefore I say: *Eä!* Let these things Be!” (*Ainulindalë*). Tolkien explained that **Eä** as a name of the universe is not originally a noun, but actually a verb: “The Elves called the World, the Universe, *Eä* – It is” (footnote in Letters:284). “This world, or Universe, [the Creator] calls *Eä*, an Elvish word that means ‘It is’ or ‘Let it Be’” (MR:330).

So **ëa** can be either the present (or aorist) tense “[it] is” or the imperative “let it be!” (In the latter sense it would parallel such one-word imperatives in **-a** as **heca!** “be gone!” or **ela!** “look!”) How does **ëa** “is” differ in meaning from **ná**? It has been suggested that one of these verbs means “is” referring merely to some particular instance, while the other refers to a permanent or habitual state. In a sentence like “the man is drunk”, one word for “is” would simply indicate that “the man” is drunk right now, whereas the other would imply that he is a drunkard by habit. Parallels to such a system can be found in Spanish (a language Tolkien loved).

Given the extreme scarcity of source material, nothing can be ruled out at this stage, but I would put my money on another theory. It should be noted that Tolkien translated **ëa** not only as “is”, he also used the rendering “exists” (VT39:7). This suggests that **ëa** has a more *absolute* meaning than **ná**. The verb **ëa** is related to the noun **engwë** “thing” (see below), a “thing” being perceived as “something that exists”. It may be that **ná** is a mere copula used in phrases describing the *state* of something, introducing a noun (**sambë sina ná caimasan** “this room is a bedchamber”), an adjective (**sambë sina ná pitya** “this room is small”) or even a prepositional phrase (**sambë sina ná ve i sambë yassë hirnenyet**, “this room is like the room where I found them”). On the other hand, **ëa** refers to the solid, independent *existence* or *presence* of some subject, and it can perhaps be used with no other additions than this subject (e.g. **Eru ëa** = “God exists”). Tolkien informs us that the word **ëala**, by its form obviously the active participle of **ëa**, was also used as a noun “being” – denoting a spirit whose natural state is

to exist without a physical body. Balrogs, for instance, were **ëalar** (MR:165). Basically, the word only refers to “existing” ones. At the beginning of a sentence, the verb **ëa** may possibly be used in the same sense as English “there is”, to assert the *existence* or *presence* of something: **Eä malta i orontissen** “[there] is gold in the mountains”, **ëa nér i sambessë** “[there] is a man in the room”, **ëar neldë nissi i coassë**, “[there] are three women in the house”.

However, all the sentences in the previous paragraph were constructed by me. One of our very few Tolkien-made examples of **ëa** occurring in an actual sentence forms part of Cirion’s Oath. **Eä** turns up as the verb of a relative sentence: **i Eru i or ilyë mahalmar ëa tennoio**, “the One [God] who is above all thrones forever”. Since the literal meaning could well be that Eru *exists* in this sublime position, this does not contradict the interpretation set out above. It should be noted that **ëa**, rather than **ná**, is the verb to use when describing the *position* of something (the position being specified either by a phrase including a preposition, like **or ilyë mahalmar** “above all thrones” in the sentence above, or by a noun appearing in the locative case). Perhaps we could have sentences like **i sambë yassë ëa i harma ëa or i sambë yassë ëa i nér sí** “the room where the treasure is, is above the room where the man is now” – referring not so much to mere states as to *existence*, *presence*, *position*. This is the best the present grammarian can do with so few examples.

How is **ëa** inflected? **Eä** itself would seem to be the present or aorist form; the imperative (used by Eru in the *Ainulindalë*) is identical. Perhaps **ëa** can also function as the infinitive. The future tense could be something like **euva**. The perfect “has existed” seems impossible to reconstruct with even a shadow of confidence. As for the *past* tense, there are several possibilities. The regular form would of course be **ëanë**, which form I might well use myself.

Another possibility is suggested by material published in *Vinyar Tengwar* #39, pp. 6–7. Tolkien discusses the sound he represented as  $\tilde{n}$  (= the *ng* of *king*, a sound that in Quenya had been lost between vowels) and how it may be possible to deduce where it had occurred earlier: “The former presence of intervocalic  $\tilde{n}$ , later lost in Quenya, could be detected by consideration of the relations between *tëa* ‘indicates’ and *tengë* ‘indicated’, *tengwe* ‘sign’, and comparison with *ëa* ‘exists’ beside *engwe* ‘thing’.” Tolkien’s point is that before *w*, the sound  $\tilde{n}$  had been strengthened to **ng**, and this combination was not lost. The Quenya word **tengwë** “sign” is explicitly said to represent primitive *teñ-wê* (VT39:17), and we are clearly to understand that **engwë** “thing” likewise comes from *eñ-wê*, though Tolkien did not explicitly mention this primitive form. Thus it can be established that the original roots are **TEÑ-** and **EÑ-**, respectively, though in the verbs **tëa** “indicates” and **ëa** “exists” the  $\tilde{n}$  has been lost because it occurred between vowels: These words are obviously meant to descend from primitive *teñâ*, *eñâ*. What is

interesting is that Tolkien also mentioned the form **tengë** “indicated”. Unfortunately, this English gloss is ambiguous. Is this “indicated” as the past tense of “indicate”, or “indicated” as the passive participle of the same verb? The Quenya form could be a kind of adjective of similar meaning, since many Quenya adjectives end in **-ë**. But if **tengë** “indicated” is to be understood as the past tense of **tëa** “indicates”, we must conclude that the past tense of **ëa** “exists” should probably be **engë** rather than **ëanë**: Perhaps **tengë** is meant to come from *teñ-nê* – i.e. the root **TEÑ-** + the past tense marker *-nê*, the combination *ñn* evolving into a long or double *ññ* which was not lost even between vowels, but came out as **ng** in Quenya. If so, a primitive past tense *eñ-nê* “existed” might likewise produce Quenya **engë**.

The verb **ëa** can presumably receive pronominal endings like any other verb, e.g. **ëammë** “we exist”.

## 20.2 *Ma*: An interrogative particle?

In the previous lesson, we introduced the words **man** “who?”, **mana** “what?” and **manen** “how?” They can be used to construct certain kinds of questions, but the commonest kind of question is not exemplified in published material: How do we construct the kind of question that may be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”?

English uses various procedures to get from a simple assertion to a *question* about whether something is actually true. Assertions like “it is so” or “he has come” can be turned into a questions by fronting the verb: “Is it so?”, “Has he come?” However, in contemporary English, this procedure only works with a few verbs. An assertion like “he wrote the book” is turned into a question by adding a form of the verb “to do” at the beginning of the sentence and turn what used to be the finite verb into an infinitive: “Did he write the book?”

Obviously, the simplest way of turning an assertion (a *declarative statement*) into a question would be to simply slip in some kind of particle that merely signals, “This is not an assertion that something is so and so, but a question about *whether* it is so and so.” Many languages of our own world do employ such particles (e.g. Polish *czy*), and this simple and elegant way of constructing yes/no questions seems to have considerable appeal to language-constructors as well. Esperanto has the interrogative particle *chu* (*cxu*), apparently based on the Polish word, and the sentence “he wrote the book” – *li skribis la libron* – is turned into a question “did he write the book?” simply by adding *chu* at the beginning: *Chu li skribis la libron?*

But what about Quenya? Still clinging to this example, how do we turn the declarative statement **tences i parma** “(s)he wrote the book” into a question? Does Quenya have an interrogative particle we can slip in?

In PM:357, quoted in the previous lesson, Tolkien refers to *ma* or *man*

as an “Eldarin interrogative element” (PM:357). **Man** is the Quenya word for “who”, but may the shortest possible “interrogative element” **ma** function as an interrogative particle? Some writers have made this assumption. It may be noted that one Quenya verb for “ask” is **maquet-** (past tense **maquentë**, PM:403). Since **maquet-** transparently means “*ma*-say”, it may be suspected that in some way or another, Quenya questions often involve the element **ma**.

It has come to my knowledge that there is a Tolkien manuscript which does refer to **ma** as an interrogative particle. If Tolkien meant a particle like Polish *czy* or Esperanto *chu*, we may apparently turn a declarative statement into a yes/no question simply by slipping in a **ma**, most likely at the beginning of the sentence (no attested examples):

**Tences i parma** “(S)he wrote the book” > **Ma tences i parma?** “Did (s)he write the book?”

**Nís enta ná Elda** “That woman is an Elf” > **Ma nís enta ná Elda?** “Is that woman an Elf?”

**Eä malta i orontessë** “[There] is gold in the mountain” > **Ma ëa malta i orontessë?** “Is [there] gold in the mountain?”

**I nér caruva coa** “The man is going to build a house” > **Ma i nér caruva coa?** “Is the man going to build a house?”

Conceivably **ma** might also be used in so-called *dependent* questions, with the force of English “whether”: **Umin ista ma utúlies**, “I don’t know whether (s)he has come.” This is speculation, however, and it must be emphasized that we have yet to see the interrogative particle **ma** in *any* actual Quenya sentence written by Tolkien. The manuscript in which he refers to **ma** as an interrogative particle is apparently quite early, so this particle may well belong to some variant of “Qenya” rather than the more LotR-compatible forms of Quenya.

Even assuming that the system I presupposed when constructing the examples above does indeed correspond to Tolkien’s intentions at some stage, he may very well have decided upon something else later. Indeed certain fragments of post-LotR Quenya material includes a word **ma** of a quite different meaning: it functions as an indefinite pronoun “something, a thing” (VT42:34). Whether this implies that **ma** as an interrogative particle had been abandoned is impossible to say (PM:357 at least confirms that *ma* as an interrogative “*element*” survived into the post-LotR period). Whether the two **ma**’s can coexist in the same version of Quenya is a matter of taste, unless it turns out that Tolkien actually addressed this question in some manuscript (and I wouldn’t hold my breath). Presently, the system sketched above is probably the best we can do when it comes to constructing yes/no questions in Quenya.



## 20.3 *Sa* introducing nominal clauses

We have introduced several words that may be translated “that”: the pronoun **ta** and the demonstratives **enta** and **tana** (**tanya**).

There is, however, another kind of “that” as well – very common in any substantial text. We are talking about “that” as a particle introducing so-called *nominal clauses*.

As we know, nouns can take on various functions in a sentence. Very often they appear as the subject or object of a verb, as when the noun **Elda** “Elf” functions as the object of the verb **ista-** “know” in the sentence **istan Elda** “I know an Elf”. Sometimes, however, it is useful to treat an entire sentence as a noun, so that it can take on noun-like functions in a sentence. Consider a simple sentence like “you are here”. If we want to treat this sentence as a noun and slip it into a longer sentence to function as (say) the object, English may signal the noun-like status of the words “you are here” by placing the word “that” in front of them: “That you are here”. Now this entire phrase, a so-called *nominal clause*, can function as the object of a verb: “I know that you are here”. It could also be used as the *subject* of a sentence, as in “that you are here is good”. (But in the latter case, English would often prefer to slip in a meaningless dummy-subject “it” at the beginning of the sentence and place the true subject at the end: “It is good that you are here.”)

What, then, is the Quenya equivalent of “that” as a particle forming such nominal clauses?

Our sole attestation of this important particle comes from a rather obscure source. A few years ago, a person who called himself Michael Dawson made a posting to the Tolkien Internet mailing list. He claimed to be quoting at two removes from an old Tolkien letter which could not be dated more precisely than “years” earlier than 1968. It was a Quenya greeting including the words **merin sa haryalyë alassë** – which is supposed to mean, literally, “I wish that you have happiness”. (The initial **merin** actually appeared as “meriu” in Dawson’s post; lower-case **n** and **u** are often very difficult to distinguish in Tolkien’s handwriting. “Meriu” would be a quite meaningless form, and the translation provided settles the matter.) As we see, the word **sa** is here used as a particle turning the sentence **haryalyë alassë** “you have happiness” into a nominal clause, so that it can function as the object of the verb **merin** “I want/wish”.

There are several questionable points here. For one thing, not everyone is convinced that the “Merin” sentence, as it is often called, is genuine at all. I am told that various efforts to get in touch with this Michael Dawson have so far proved futile, and it is somewhat disturbing to notice that his posting was made on April 1. On the other hand, Carl F. Hostetter (who has seen nearly all of Tolkien’s linguistic manuscripts) briefly commented on this sentence in VT41:18 and apparently recognized it as genuine, though

he has later specified that it does not occur in any manuscript he knows of. The word **sa** is not inherently implausible; it could mean basically “it” (related to the ending **-s**), so that **merin sa haryalyë alassë** originally or basically signifies “I wish it [, namely that] you have happiness”. But of course, even if the word **sa** is genuine Tolkien, it is impossible to say what stage of Q(u)enya it belongs to. Assuming that the Merin sentence is actually written by Tolkien, I would say that it is probably quite early, since its vocabulary corresponds so well to that of the *Etymologies* (of the mid-thirties – notice the use of the verb **harya-** “have, possess”, otherwise only attested in Etym). So given the ever-changing nature of Tolkien’s conception, **sa** as a particle forming nominal clauses may well have been abandoned by the time Tolkien published LotR. Yet writers can hardly do without this important word, and presently **sa** is our sole alternative.

Accepting **sa** as a word for this meaning, our example above – “I know that you are here” – could perhaps be rendered into Quenya something like **istan sa äalyë sinomë** (cf. **ista-** “to know”, **sinomë** “in this place; here” – and above we theorized that **ëa** rather than **ná** is the word used for “is” when a certain *position* is discussed). “That you are here is good” could presumably likewise be rendered **sa äalyë sinomë ná mára**. “It is good that you are here” could correspond to something like **ná mára sa äalyë sinomë** (if the verb **ná** “is” can be fronted). In this or any other context, Quenya would hardly need a dummy-subject like the “it” of the English sentence, so I would not expect to see **nás** or whatever.

In (slightly archaic) English, a “that”-clause may describe an *intention*; here is a Tolkienian example: “The titles that [the Vala Oromë] bore were many and glorious; but he withheld them at that time, that the Quendi should not be afraid” (WJ:401; modern idiom would slip in a “so” before “that”, but the meaning remains the same). It would be interesting to know whether a Quenya **sa**-clause can be used in this sense. If not, we do not really know how to express this meaning in Quenya.

## Summary of Lesson Twenty

The verb “to be” is poorly attested in Quenya. **Ná** means “is”; it has been hinted that **né** is the word for “was”. Possibly, **ná** “is” can receive the regular pronominal endings to express “I am, you are, he/she/it is” etc. (if so, it should be shortened to **na-** before endings including consonant clusters, and **né** would likewise become short **ne-**). This may be a reasonable assumption, but it should be emphasized that there is little or no evidence to confirm that this is what Tolkien intended. It may be safer to simply use independent pronouns and leave out the copula “to be” altogether, as in certain attested examples. Another verb also translated “is” is **ëa**, which more properly means “exists”: it would be used for “is” in contexts discussing

the *presence, existence* or *position* of something (in the latter case **ëa** may connect with a prepositional phrase, as in the attested example **i or ilyë mahalmar ëa** “[God,] who is above all thrones”). – According to certain pieces of evidence, Quenya (or at least some variant of “Qenya”) had an interrogative particle **ma**. Presumably it can be added (at the beginning?) of declarative statements to turn them into yes/no questions. – According to one (possibly dubious) source, the form **sa** can be used for “that” as a particle introducing nominal clauses (as in “I know that you are here”, “he said that this is true”, etc.)

## Vocabulary

**nertëa** “ninth”

**quainëa** “tenth” (So according to a text on Eldarin numerals published in VT42. This presupposes another word for “ten” than the form **cainen** occurring in the Etymologies – perhaps **quainë**, not attested by itself. Maybe **cainen** would correspond to an ordinal “tenth” something like **cainenya**, and perhaps writers should use either **cainen/cainenya** or **quainë7quainëa**, but to complete our list of Quenya ordinals 1st–10th we will use the attested form **quainëa** here.)

**ma**, *possible* interrogative particle

**sa**, “that” introducing nominal clauses (according to a source of somewhat questionable value)

**nómë** “place”

**sinomë** “in this place” or simply “here” (apparently combining **si-** as in **sina** “this” with **-nomë**, a shortened form of **nómë** “place”, hence **sinomë** = “[in] this place”)

**tenna** preposition “until, as far as”

**ëa** verb “is” = “exists” (past tense either **ëanë** or **engë**, future tense perhaps **euva**)

**nan** conjunction “but”

**né** has been hinted to be the past tense of **ná** “is”, hence “was”

**ista-** “to know” (notice irregular past tense **sintë** instead of **\*\*istanë**; perhaps the perfect “has known” should similarly be **isintië**)

**lerta-** “can” in the sense of “be allowed to” (English often uses “may” in this sense; see note below)

NOTE on the Quenya verbs for “can”: As explained in a Tolkien manuscript published in VT41, at least three Quenya verbs can be used to express the idea of “be able to”. The verb **pol-** that we have introduced earlier primarily means to be physically able to do something (cf. the adjective **polda** “[physically] strong”, apparently related to this verb). The verb **lerta-** means to be *allowed* to do something, to be *free* to do something because there is no prohibition – though in some contexts it may also be interchangeable

with **pol-**. The verb **ista-** “to know” (pa.t. **sintë**) may be combined with an infinitive to express “can” in the sense of “know how to”, referring to *intellectual* ability. Thus **istas tecë** would mean “he can write [because he knows the letters of the alphabet]”. **Polis tecë** would be “he can write” in the sense of “he is physically able to write [because his hands are not paralyzed or tied up or something]”. **Lertas tecë** would mean “he can write” in the sense of “he may [= is allowed to] write”.

## Exercises

1. Translate into English:

- A. **Elyë Nauco, lá Elda.**
- B. **Cennen sa i nero ranco né rácina.**
- C. **I aran né taura, nan i tári né saila lá i aran.**
- D. **Ma sintelyë sa nu i coa ëa nurtaina harma?**
- E. **Ma lertan lelya nómë sinallo?**
- F. **Áva sucë, an ëa sangwa yulmalyassë!**
- G. **Ma euvantë sinomë i quainëa auressë írë tuluvan?**
- H. **Istammë sa ëa nulda sambë coa sinassë, nan lá ihíriemes, ar tenna hirimmes úvammë ista mana ëa i sambessë.**

2. Translate into Quenya (for convenience using L-forms rather than T-forms to translate “you”):

- I. I was rich [*several possible translations*].
- J. The king said: “You may not go to the place whence [**yallo**] you have come”, but I know that I will go thither [**tanna**].
- K. I can [= know how to] read, but I cannot read in the darkness.
- L. We (*incl.*) know that Elves exist.
- M. Did they dwell [**mar-**] here until the ninth year when the warriors came?
- N. We (*excl.*) know that the men could speak the Elven-tongue [**Eldalambë**], but not the Dwarf-tongue [**Naucolambë**].
- O. The women said that you have seen the great worm [**ango**] that is in the mountain.
- P. On the tenth day the Sun was bright.

# Appendix A

## Keys

### Lesson One

1. Marking the accented vowel or diphthong:

- A. Alcar
- B. Alcarë
- C. Alcarinqua
- D. Calima
- E. Oronti
- F. Únótimë
- G. Envinyatar
- H. Ulundë
- I. Eäruilë
- J. Ercassë

As for Christopher Lee's accentuation **nai yarVAXëa RASSelya TALTuva notto-CARinnar**, the words **yarvaxëa** and **taltuva** are correctly pronounced. However, **rasselya** should have been accented **rassELYa** rather than **RASSelya**, and **notto-carinnar** should have been **notto-carINNar** rather than **notto-CARinnar**. Perhaps we are to assume that "Saruman" in this scene uses some special meter employed in magical invocations, discarding the normal stress rules?

2. K. **Ohtar**: C (*ach-Laut*)
  - L. **Hrávë**: D (*hr originally denoting unvoiced r, later becoming normal r*)
  - M. **Nahta**: C (*ach-Laut*)
  - N. **Heru**: A (*English-style breath-H, though in Valinorean Quenya it had been ach-Laut*)

- O. **Nehtë**: B (*ich-Laut*)
- P. **Mahalma**: In early Exilic Quenya probably C (*ach-Laut*), but by the Third Age it had evidently become A (*breath-H*).
- Q. **Hellë**: A (*breath-H*)
- R. **Tihtala**: B (*ich-Laut*)
- S. **Hlóccë**: D (*the group hl originally denoting unvoiced l, later becoming normal l*)
- T. **Hísië**: A (*breath-H*)

## Lesson Two

1. A. Horses
  - B. Either just “king”, or “a king” with an indefinite article, depending on what English grammar demands in the context where the word occurs.
  - C. The horse
  - D. The horses
  - E. Kings
  - F. One people under one king.
  - G. The king and the queen.
  - H. Maidens
2. I. **Tasari**
  - J. **Eldar**
  - K. **I arani**
  - L. **Lier**
  - M. **I rocco nu i tasar.**
  - N. **Vendë ar tári.**
  - O. **I tári ar i vendi.**
  - P. **Anar ar Isil** (*probably not i Anar ar i Isil, since in Quenya the words denoting these celestial bodies seem to count as proper names, requiring no definite article*)

## Lesson Three

1. A. (Two) eyes, (natural pair of) eyes.
  - B. Two eyes (= **atta hendi**, referring to “two eyes” only casually related, like two eyes of two different persons, one eye from each. The dual form **hendu**, on the other hand, refers to a natural pair of eyes.)

- C. Two trees.
  - D. Two trees (= *atta aldar*, referring to any two trees. *Aldu*, on the other hand, refers to some kind of closely related pair of trees, like the Two Trees of Valinor in Tolkien's mythos.)
  - E. One man and one woman.
  - F. The stones.
  - G. Floors.
  - H. Mountains.
2. I. **Atta ciryar.**
- J. **Ciryat.**
  - K. **Rancu** (if the example *peu* "pair of lips" holds, the dual ending *-u* rather than *-t* is always used in the case of bodyparts occurring in pairs, even where there is no *d* or *t* in the noun)
  - L. **Orontu** (since *oron* "mountain" has the stem *oront-*, a *t* turning up in the word, the dual ending would be *-u* rather than *-t*)
  - M. **Andu** (ending *-u* rather than *-t* because of the *d* occurring in this word)
  - N. **Aiwet.**
  - O. **Atta aiwi.**
  - P. **Neri ar nissi.**

## Lesson Four

- 1. A. A black horse.
- B. Bright eyes (*hendu* = a natural pair of eyes)
- C. Three dead men.
- D. Beautiful birds.
- E. A queen is a mighty woman.
- F. The mountains are great.
- G. Best interpreted "a king [is] mighty", the copula being left out and understood, but it could also mean "a mighty king" with a somewhat unusual word-order (an attributive adjective would more often come *before* the noun it describes: **taura aran** rather than **aran taura**).
- H. The man and the woman are wise.

Theoretically at least, exercises A, C, and D could also be interpreted "black [is] a horse", "bright [are] eyes", "beautiful [are] birds", the copula being left out just as in Exercise G. But when the adjective

comes immediately in front of the noun it describes, it must normally be assumed that it is used attributively and not predicatively. On the other hand, when the order is noun + adjective, as in G, a copula “is/are” may well be left out.

2. I. **I ninquë ando.**
    - J. **Alta cirya.**
    - K. **I talan ná carnë.**
    - L. **Minë morë sar ar neldë ninqui sardi.**
    - M. **Sailë arani nar taurë neri.**
    - N. **I taura nér ar i vanya nís nar úmië.**
    - O. **Eldar nar vanyë.**
    - P. **Eldar nar vanya lië.** (*Notice that here, the adjective agrees in number with the singular noun lië “a people”, which it describes attributively. It does not agree with the plural noun “Elves”, as in the previous exercise.*)
- (In exercises K, M, N, O, P, the copula **ná/nar** may be left out and understood.)

## Lesson Five

1. A. The woman is laughing.
  - B. The fattest Dwarf is eating.
  - C. The queen is watching the king.
  - D. The greatest mountain is mighty.
  - E. The man is summoning the most beautiful maiden.
  - F. The bird is singing.
  - G. The Dwarves are seizing the four Elves.
  - H. The mightiest king is wise.
2. I. **I nís tíra i analta cirya.**
  - J. **I anúmië neri nar firini.**
  - K. **I Elda mápëa i parma.**
  - L. **Canta neri caitëar nu alda.**
  - M. **I assaila Elda cendëa parma** (*an-saila becoming assaila by assimilation*)
  - N. **I aran ar i tári cendëar i parma.**
  - O. **I aiwi lindëar.**
  - P. **I canta Naucor tírar aiwë.**



## Lesson Six

1. A. The man read the book.  
B. The Dwarves ate.  
C. The king summoned the queen.  
D. A woman sang.  
E. The maidens watched the Elf.  
F. The five horses lay (/were lying) under the big willow.  
G. The stars shone.  
H. The Dwarf saw a horse.

As suggested in F, it may be that it is also permissible to translate Quenya past tenses using the “was/were ...-ing” construction, e.g. B) “the Dwarves *were eating*”, D) “a woman *was singing*”, F) “the five horses *were lying*”. However, Quenya may well have distinct verb forms for this meaning. Published material provides no clues in this matter.

2. I. **Nauco hirnë i harma.**  
J. **I Elda quentë.**  
K. **I rocco campë.**  
L. **I aran mellë Eldar** (*or ... i Eldar with the article if the phrase “the Elves” is taken as referring to some particular Elves rather than the Elvish race in general*)  
M. **Nér tencë lempë parmar.**  
N. **I tári ortanë.**  
O. **I arani haryaner altë harmar.**  
P. **I aran ar i tári tultaner canta Eldar ar lempë Naucor.**

## Lesson Seven

1. A. Many Dwarves possess treasures.  
B. The sun will rise and the birds will sing.  
C. Six men will watch (/guard) the gate.  
D. Every Man (= *non-Elf human*) will die.  
E. All Men die.  
F. A wise man reads many books.  
G. Every star shines above the world.

H. The Elf seizes the Dwarf.

In A, B, E, F, and G, the aorist tense is used to describe various “general truths” that are more or less timeless. In H, the aorist is used to describe a momentary, duration-less action.

2. I. **Ilya Elda ar ilya Atan.**  
J. **I Elda hiruva i Nauco.**  
K. **I rocco capë or i Nauco.**  
L. **I aran turë rimbë ohtari ar turuva ilya Ambar.**  
M. **I aran ar i tári cendubar i parma.**  
N. **I ohtar turë macil.**  
O. **Ilyë rávi matir hrávë.**  
P. **Enquë rávi mátar hrávë.**

In K, the aorist describes a momentary, duration-less action. In L and N, the aorist (**turë**) describes a general characteristic or “habit” of an individual: the king (always) controls many warriors, the warrior (generally, habitually) wields a sword. In O, the aorist describes a “general truth” about lions, contrasting with the present (continuative) tense in P (**mátar** = “are eating”), describing the *ongoing* activity of some *particular* lions instead.

## Lesson Eight

1. A. The man has found the treasure.  
B. The lions have eaten the flesh.  
C. The king has summoned the queen.  
D. The women have read the book.  
E. The evil queen has seized the seven Dwarves.  
F. You have written seven books.  
G. I have spoken.  
H. You have seen it.
2. I. **I nér utúlië.**  
J. **I otso Naucor amátier.**  
K. **I seldor ecénier rá imbë i aldar.**  
L. **I enquë Eldar oroitier i otso Naucor.**  
M. **I Nauco unurtië harma.**  
N. **Alaitien** [or, **alaitienyë**] **i aran, an i aran elérië ilyë móli.**  
O. **Alantiel** [or, **alantielyë**], **ar ecénienyes.**  
P. **Emétienyes.**

## Lesson Nine

1. A. [The] shining moon is rising over the world.  
B. The jumping Dwarf fell through the floor.  
C. I can hear a singing maiden.  
D. One man wielding one sword will not terrify the eight mighty warriors.  
E. A thrall seizing a mighty man is not wise.  
F. The eight lions lying under the trees (a)rose, for the lions wanted to eat the men.  
G. A lion cannot stop eating [/cease to eat] flesh.  
H. The terrifying warrior stopped watching [/ceased to watch] the people, for the warrior was not wise. (*Another possible interpretation: “stopped guarding” instead of “stopped watching”.*)
2. I. **I nér roitala i Nauco ná ohtar.**  
J. **I aran mernë lelya.**  
K. **I vendë úmë verya cenë i tári.**  
L. **I lálala nissi lender mir i coa.**  
M. **I tolto lelyala Naucor polir hirë rimbë harmar.**  
N. **Úmel(yë) laita i Elda, umil(yë) laita i Atan, ar úval(yë) laita i Nauco.**  
O. **Merin(yë) lelya ter Ambar ar lerya ilyë lie.**  
P. **Veryala nér lendë ter i ando ar mir i oron.**

The key to Exercise K (“the maiden did not dare to see the queen”) is the only possible translation using the vocabulary I have provided to far, but I cannot say for certain that **cen-** “to see” can also be used in the sense “to meet”, which is how an English-speaking person would normally interpret this word used in such a context. But then “see” = **cen-** may of course be used in its most basic sense, so that **i vendë úmë verya cenë i tári** may be interpreted “the maiden did not dare to *look at* the queen”.

## Lesson Ten

1. A. I love them deeply.  
B. They sing beautifully, like (the) Elves.  
C. All nine gates are watched.  
D. They want to find it swiftly.

- E. You have two books, and finally you have read them.
- F. I have really [/truly/actually] seen an Elf.
- G. The hidden treasure will not be found. (*Possibly, the Quenya wording **úva hīrna** would suggest: "...will not have been found", referring to some future situation.*)
- H. They did not want to do it, for seeing it was enough [/sufficed].
2. I. **Elendientë nuldavë ter i nórë.** (*Surely you understood that "have gone" was to be rendered by the perfect form of the verb **lelya-**, or did you start messing with **lelyaina** or something, desperate to bring in a separate word for "gone"? No need...*)
- J. **I hostainë Eldar merner cenitas.**
- K. **Técina lambë umë ve quétina lambë.**
- L. **Lempë ciryar úmer farya; nertë farner.**
- M. **Anwavë pustuvan** [or, **pustuvanyë**] **caritas.**
- N. **Lintavë hostanentë i nertë ruhtainë Naucor.**
- O. **Teldavë cenuvalyet ve emériel(yë) cenitat.**
- P. **Umintë merë hlaritas.**

The word order is certainly somewhat flexible; the adverbs in M, N, and O could probably also *follow* the verb (e.g. **hostanentë lintavë** for "they swiftly gathered"). Cf. my own key to I. But when an object or an infinitive is to follow, I find it slightly awkward to separate it from the finite verb by inserting an adverb between them. Of course, you can always have the adverb at the *end* of the sentence as well.

## Lesson Eleven

1. A. They found the dead warrior's sword. (*Genitive of former possessor.*)
- B. The stars of heaven are shining. (*Genitive of location: the stars are in heaven.*)
- C. I watched the woman's eyes (*dual*). (*Partitive genitive: the woman's eyes are physically part of her.*)
- D. They shall see the King of Men and (of) all lands. (*Genitive describing the relationship between a ruler and the ruled – people or territory.*)
- E. A house without floors is not a real house. (*The preposition **ú** "without" is followed by genitive, hence **ú talamion** in Quenya.*)
- F. The queen's evil brothers want to rule the peoples of the world. (***I tário úmië torni**: genitive of family relationship. **Ambaro lier**: genitive of location – the peoples are in the world.*)

- G. The horns of the animals are big. (*Partitive genitive, as in Exercise B above.*)
- H. The ten lions quickly ate the flesh of the horse. (*I rocco hrávë “the horse’s flesh” – genitive of source, the flesh coming from the horse. Notice that the noun rocco “horse” is unchanged in the genitive singular, since it ends in -o already.*)
2. I. **Menelo aiwi** [or, **(i) aiwi Menelo**] **cenuvar cainen ohtari imbë i altë síri**. (*Menelo aiwi “the birds of heaven” – genitive of location.*)
- J. **I arano mól** [or, **(i) mól i arano**] **ulyanë limpë mir (i) analta i yulmaron** [or, **mir i yulmaron analta**]. (*I arano mól “the king’s thrall” – genitive denoting the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, or various relationships between people in general. Notice ulyanë as the past tense “poured” in the transitive sense. [I] analta i yulmaron or i yulmaron analta: “the biggest of the cups”, partitive genitive – the biggest cup being one of all the cups mentioned. Cf. Tolkien’s elenion ancalma “brightest of [among] stars”.*)
- K. **I Eldo toron** [or, **(i) toron i Eldo**] **hostanë (i) cainen parmar elenion**. (*I Eldo toron “the Elf’s brother”: genitive of family relationship. Notice that when the genitive ending -o is added to a noun like ending in -a, like Elda, it displaces this final vowel. (I) cainen parmar elenion “the ten books about stars”: the genitive being used in the sense “about, concerning”. Perhaps the word order elenion cainen parmar is also possible, but it feels less natural.*)
- L. **(I) alta sírë i nórëo** [or, **i nórëo alta sírë**] **ullë mir cilya**. (*[I] alta sírë i nórëo “the great river of the land” – genitive of location. Notice ullë as the past tense “poured” in the transitive sense; contrast ulyanë in Exercise J above.*)
- M. **Nér ú anto umë polë quetë**. (*The preposition ú is followed by genitive, but here it the genitive ending is “invisible”, since the noun anto “mouth” ends in -o already.*)
- N. **Ecénien (i) analta ilyë orontion nu Menel**. (*Partitive genitive; cf. Exercise J above.*)
- O. **Merin hirë nórë ú altë lamnion ve rávi**. (*The preposition ú is followed by genitive; hence lamnion here.*)
- P. **Cenuval(yë) laman ú raseto**. (*Genitive after ú; raseto dual genitive of rassë “horn”.*)

## Lesson Twelve

1. A. Both phrases may be rendered “the wine of the Elves”. However, the genitive phrase **i limpë Eldaron** implies “the wine coming

from the Elves”, sc. wine somehow originating with or obtained from the Elves. On the other hand, the possessive phrase **i limpë Eldaiva** implies “wine owned by the Elves” at the time which is being considered, irrespective of the origin of the wine.

- B. You have (/possess) a cup of gold. (**Yulma maltava** “cup of gold”: the possessive-adjectival case used in its “compositive” sense, denoting what something is made of.)
- C. The horse of the Elf [/the Elf’s horse] has fallen into the deep gorge. (**I rocco i Eldava** “the Elf’s horse”: possessive case used of current ownership. One could argue that Tolkienian Elves seem to be so close to their horses that to them, their steeds are more like family members than possessions, and then it would be more appropriate to use the genitive case: **i rocco i Eldo** or **i Eldo rocco**. But as I said in the Introduction, the “Elves” of these exercises are not necessarily Tolkienian Elves.)
- D. Men of peace will not be warriors. (**Neri séreva** “men of peace”: possessive-adjectival case used of a permanent characteristic.)
- E. Great walls of stone hid the houses of the ten richest men of the city. (**Rambar ondova** “walls of stone”: compositive -va. **I coar i cainen analyë neriva** “the houses of the ten richest men”: possessive case used of current ownership. [**neri**] **i osto** “[men] of the city”: genitive of location, the men being in the city. Notice that the word **osto** is here inflected for genitive, though the ending -o is invisible since this noun already ends in -o. Cf. also Exercises L and N below.)
- F. The house of the king’s sister [or, the king’s sister’s house] is red. (In the phrase **i coa i arano selerwa**, the genitive **i arano** “the king’s” is dependent on **selerwa** “sister’s”, which possessive form in turn points back to **i coa** “the house”. The genitive refers to a family relationship, the possessive to the current ownership of the house. **I coa i selerwa i arano**, “the house of the sister of the king”, would be a clearer wording.)
- G. One of the thralls has seized the sword of the king. (**Minë i mólion** “one of the thralls”: partitive genitive; **i macil i aranwa** “the sword of the king”: the possessive case used of current ownership. Of course, if the thrall runs away with the sword of the king, it eventually turns into **i macil i arano** instead, the genitive indicating former possession. If the rebellious thrall kills the king with his own sword, this action would produce the same effect immediately, the king instantly being reduced to a former possessor: **I macil i aranwa** enters the king’s chest, **i macil i arano** comes out through his back.)
- H. The maiden’s brother found all the treasures of the eleven Dwarves between the four horns of the white mountains. (**I vendëo toron** “the maiden’s brother”: genitive of family relationship; **i harmar i minquë Naucoiva** “the treasures of the eleven Dwarves”: possessive case denoting

current ownership. **I canta rassi i ninqui orontion** “the four horns of the white mountains”, either partitive genitive if the horns are perceived as being part of the mountains, or genitive of location if the horns are thought of as being in the mountains.)

2. I. **Síri limpeva uller mir i nero anto** [or, **mir (i) anto i nero**]. (*Síri limpeva* “rivers of wine”: compositive -va. **I nero anto** “the man’s mouth”: partitive genitive, the man’s mouth being part of him. Also notice **uller**, not **ulyaner**, as the intransitive past tense of **ulya-** “to pour”.)
- J. **I seldoron seler** [or, **(i) seler i seldoron**] **hostanë (i) engwi i seldoiva ar lendë mir (i) coa i táriva**. (*The genitive phrase i seldoron seler* “the boy’s sister” refers to a family relationship; the possessive forms **seldoiva** and **táriva** have to do with current ownership of the “things” and the “house”, respectively.)
- K. One possibility: **(I) muilë i nissiva varyanë alta harma maltava**. (*In the phrase harma maltava* “treasure of gold”, the -va case is used in the same sense as in Exercise B above – but “the secrecy of women” can be rendered in various ways. Using the possessive-adjectival case as suggested here, it refers to “the secrecy of the women” as a more or less permanent attribute of theirs. But one might also use the genitive, **i nission muilë** or **(i) muilë i nission**, focusing rather on the women’s “secrecy” at the particular time in the past which is being related. One might even interpret it as a kind of subject genitive, “the women” being the ones who are secretive and thus the subjects of the secrecy.)
- L. One possibility: **I minquë ohtari úmer polë varya (i) sérë i osto** [or, **i osto sérë**], **an alta mornië lantanë**. (*Rendering “the peace of the city” as i sérë i osto*, using the genitive case, would focus on the “peace” of the “city” as its attribute at one specific time – the peace emanating from the city, so to speak. Conceivably it could also be interpreted as a genitive of location, the peace being in the city. Certainly one might also say **(i) sérë i ostova**, using the possessive case, but then we are rather talking about peace as a permanent attribute of the city, and the message of this sentence is that the peace did not prove to be quite permanent after all. But a Quenya-speaking Mayor, expressing a pious wish “may the peace of the city last forever”, might well say **ostova**.)
- M. One possibility: **Lelyuvantë ter nórë altë aldaiva ar rimbë ondoiva, an merintë cenë (i) osto i taura ohtarwa**. (*Nórë altë aldaiva ar rimbë ondoiva* “a land of great trees and [of] many rocks”: the possessive-adjectival case describing characteristic features of the “land”. **(I) osto i taura ohtarwa** is the most natural translation of “the city of the mighty warrior” if we imagine him to be still alive, somehow “owning” the city where he dwells. But of course we may also be talking about a long-dead warrior who has brought fame to the city where he once lived, and then it

would be more natural to use the genitive case, denoting a former possessor: (i) *osto i taura ohtarō* or *i taura ohtarō osto*. This wording might also be appropriate if the “warrior” happens to have founded the city in question, since the genitive case may denote an originator – living or dead.)

- N. One possibility: **Ramba muiléva varyanë (i) nurtaina malta i osto** [or, **i osto nurtaina malta**], **ar úmen hiritas**. (*Ramba muiléva* “a wall of secrecy”: the *-va* case is used in its compositive sense, the metaphorical wall being “made of” secrecy. Notice the lengthening of the final vowel in *muilë* “secrecy” when the ending *-va* is added, as seems to be characteristic of words with *ui* in their second-to-last syllable; cf. the attested example *huinéva* “of gloom”. – If we translate “the hidden gold of the city” using a genitive as suggested here – (i) *nurtaina malta i osto* – it would probably be a genitive of location: the “hidden gold” is in the “city”. But if we take the word “city” as referring primarily to the people of the city, we might rather use the possessive case of current ownership: *i nurtaina malta i ostova*.)
- O. (I) **nórë (i) Eldaiva ná nórë rimbë vanyë engwíva; nórë ú Eldaron ná nórë morniéva, an i Atani i nórëo** [or, **i nórëo Atani**] **umir hlarë (i) alya lambë (i) Eldaiva**. (Possibly *Eldaiva* should here receive the article *i* in both of its occurrences, since the reference may not be to “Elves” as a race, but rather to “the” particular Elves living in a particular country. Anyhow, these possessive forms refer to current ownership of the land [*nórë*] and the language [*lambë*]. In the phrases *nórë rimbë vanyë engwíva* “a land of many beautiful things” and *nórë morniéva* “land of darkness”, the possessive-adjectival case describes characteristic features of the “land”; cf. Exercise M above. Notice the long vowels of *engwíva* and *morniéva*. The former represents earlier *engweiva* [*engwë* + *-iva*], the diphthong *ei* later becoming long *í*, whereas in *morniéva* the final *-ë* of *mornië* “darkness” is lengthened because the word ends in two short syllables. – In the phrase **ú Eldaron** “without Elves”, the preposition **ú** regularly governs the genitive case. – In accordance with Tolkien’s usage in one late source, one might also use the genitive in the phrase “language of the Elves”, hence *Eldaron* instead of *Eldaiva*, but this would contradict what Tolkien wrote elsewhere.)
- P. **I arano sello hostalë parmaiva Eldaron**. (*I arano sello* “the king’s sister’s”: the first genitive refers to a family relationship, but **sello hostalë** “sister’s gathering” is an example of subject genitive: the king’s sister is the subject carrying out the “gathering”. **Parmaiva** “of books”: the possessive-adjectival case here takes on the function of object genitive, the “books” being the objects of the “gathering”. **Eldaron** “of Elves” or “about Elves”: the genitive case is used in its most abstract sense of “about” or “concerning”, as in the attested example *Quenta Silmarillion* = “the Story of the Silmarils”).



## Lesson Thirteen

1. A. The man gave the woman a gift.  
B. The sun gives light to the world.  
C. We (*inclusive*) will find the treasure, and we (*inclusive*) will give it to the twelve Dwarves.  
D. Eating flesh makes one fat, and we (*inclusive*) don't want fat bodies, for fat bodies are not beautiful.  
E. We (*exclusive*) went into the city (in order) to find the wise women, for we (*exclusive*) wanted to see them.  
F. A man having good ideas is wise and will give [or, bring] peace and joy to the city.  
G. We (*exclusive*) have summoned them (in order) to speak of/about many things.  
H. Drinking wine isn't good for one's body.
2. I. **Quen ánë i ohtaren alta macil.** (*Notice the helping vowel -e- intruding between ohtar and the ending -n, to avoid the impossible form \*\*ohtarn.*)  
J. **Carië coa i seldoin ná mára noa.** (*Here the gerund carië "making" takes both a direct and an indirect object – coa and i seldoin, respectively.*)  
K. **Mahtalmë séren; mahtië umë anta i lien alassë, an ecénielmë i cala.**  
L. **Quetië i Eldalambë ná alta alassë Atanin.** (*Possibly alta alassë is not a perfect translation of "great joy", since the adjective alta primarily means "great = big" with reference to physical size – but we have no word for "great" in a less concrete sense.*)  
M. **(I) ohtari i atta nórion [or, i atta nórion ohtari] mahtuvar i lient, ar lelyuvammë ter alta mornië hirien cala.** (*Alternatively "the two lands", not just "the [twin] peoples", might also be expressed as a dual form here: i nóret, genitive i nóreto, instead of i atta nórion.*)  
N. **I neri arwë i mára limpëo merner yulmar sucien i limpë, ar i arano móli áner i nerin rasta yulmar maltava.** (*Notice genitive following arwa [here pl. arwë], hence limpëo.*)  
O. **Merimmë lelya mir i osto lerien ilyë Atani ar antien (i) malta i aranwa i mólin.** (*Notice that while the phrase "we want to go" certainly expresses a purpose, "go" should here be rendered as a simple infinitive lelya, not as a gerund in dative, since \*\*merimmë lelien = "we want [in order] to go" would make no sense. On the other hand, the "in order" test reveals that the verbs lerya- "to free" and anta- "to give" should appear as gerunds in dative, sc. lerien and antien: "We want to go into the city [in order] to free all Men and [in order] to give the gold of the king to the thralls."*)

P. **(I) rambar i osto** [or, **i osto rambar**] **nar altë; acárielmet varien i lië.** (*Varien: dative gerund of varya- “to protect”.*)

(In these keys we do not list all the possible variations in word order, like saying **acárielmet i lië varien** instead of **acárielmet varien i lië.**)

## Lesson Fourteen

1. A. We (*inclusive*) will go from the tower to the house. (*Alternative interpretation: “out of the tower”, “into the house”.*)  
B. All Elves have passed [/disappeared] from the world.  
C. The Dwarves have come from [or, out of] the mountains; they have gone to [or, into] the houses and are drinking our (*incl.*) wine.  
D. The evil warriors will seize the gold of our (*incl.*) people [in order] to send our (*incl.*) treasures to a remote land.  
E. The woman went away from my house and went to the river.  
F. The first ship will come from the West.  
G. One fears the lions [*Quenya: “...feels fear from the lions”*], for they have eaten the king of our (*exclusive*) people, and they will not go away from our (*exclusive*) land [or simply: “...will not leave our land”.] (*Since rá “lion” has the stem-form ráv-, and \*\*rávillon is not a possible word, the plural ablative would presumably require a connecting vowel, which is -i- in the case of plural words: Hence we used rávillon as the pl. ablative of rá. Also notice liemmo as the genitive of liemma “our people”.*)  
H. Nessimë said [or, says] to Calandil: “My son has disappeared from my room!”
2. I. **Equë Calandil Nessimenna: “Yondolya elendië [or, oantië] et i coallo, an ilyë i seldor lender [or, oanter = “went away”] i ambonna.”** (*The word et may be omitted, since the simple ablative i coallo can express “out of the house” by itself – but without et, the ablative might just as well be interpreted “[away] from the house”.*)  
J. **Menello Anar antëa cala Ambareلمان [dative!], ar i mor-nië avánië.** (*Perhaps Menelello with a connecting vowel -e- would also be a valid ablative form of Menel. Notice that “to our world” should in this context be a dative rather than an allative form; cf. Exercise B in Lesson Thirteen above. But perhaps allative Ambarelmanna would also be possible, the meaning being: “the Sun is giving [out] light [which is going] to our world”. The dative and allative cases are closely related; the lay-out of the Plotz letter*

suggests that the dative in *-n* may have originated as a shorter variant of the allative in *-nna*.)

- K. **Equë Calandil i úmëa aranna: “Ementiel(yë) ohtarilyar i mindonna hirien yondonyar. Mólinya varyuva i seldor, ar úvantë vanwë!”** (Alternative allative forms of *aran*, *mindon* might be *aranenna*, *mindonenna*. Notice how the ending *-nya* always prefers *-i-* as its connecting vowel where one is required, hence “my thrall” = *mólinya*. On the other hand, *ohtarilyar* “your warriors” shows *-i-* only because the word is plural, cf. also *mólimmar* “our thralls” in Exercise N below. According to the system we have tried to make out, the singular forms would be *ohtarelya* “your warrior”, *mólemma* “our thrall”. – Possibly “my sons” could also be expressed as a contracted form *yonyar* [instead of *yondonyar*], but *yonya* “my son” [LR:61] may primarily be used as a form of address.)
- L. **I nér arwa i ciryaron mernë auta, ar ilyë i ciryar oanter Númenna.**
- M. **Lendemmë sambenta, ar i nér i ambollon [or, ambollor] áně yondolyan [dative!] alta macil, quétala: “I macil tulë haira nórello, (et) anhaira Númello.”**
- N. **Ilyë aldar firner ar váner nórelmallo, ar equë Calandil ar Nessimë: “Mentuvammë mólimmar hirien nóré arwa rimbë aldaron.”** (Notice that the verb *equë* does not receive the ending *-r* even where it has multiple subjects.)
- O. **I vendë quantë i lamnenna: “Rucin(yë) altë rasselyalto.”** (Since *vendë* is a common noun and not a proper name, the special verb *equë* should not be used here. As for the “fear” = “feel fear from” construction, cf. Exercise G above. An alternative allative form of *laman* “animal” might be *lamanna* as a contraction of *laman-nna* [instead of involving the stem-form *lamn-*, necessitating the addition of a connecting vowel before *-nna* can be added].)
- P. **Lenden(yë) sambelmana hostien engwenyar, an mernen(yë) anta torninyan minya parmanya; i parma caitanë i talamenna.** (“My brother”: we go for *torninya* [here with the dative ending *-n*], formed from *toron*, *torn-* “brother” with the connecting vowel *-i-* that is preferred by the ending *-nya* “my”. Perhaps *toronya*, for *toron-nya*, would also be possible [dative *toronyan*]. *Talamenna* as the allative of *talan* “floor” takes into account the stem-form *talam-*, but perhaps *talanna* for *talan-nna* would also be an acceptable form.)

Additional exercises:

3. a) From our (*incl.*) houses
- b) For my body

- c) For our (*incl.*) bodies
  - d) Our (*incl.*) tongues (*nominative*)
  - e) To your land
  - f) Our (*excl.*) things (*nominative*)
  - g) From your king
  - h) Of my thrall
  - i) Of my thralls
  - j) To our (*incl.*) cities
  - k) Of our (*dual incl.*) people [= “of the people of the two of us”]
  - l) Of your son
  - m) Our (*excl.*) two-room apartment (*nominative*) (*Translating dual forms of sambë “room” as “two-room apartment”!*)
  - n) For my two-room apartment
  - o) Of your two-room apartment
  - p) To our (*incl.*) two-room apartment
  - q) From your two-room apartment
  - r) Of my people
  - s) Of our (*incl.*) sons
  - t) For your queen
  - u) Of our (*excl.*) peoples
  - v) Of my men
  - w) Of my man
  - x) For my boys
  - y) From our (*excl.*) [two sister] ships (*dual*)
  - z) Of our (*dual incl.*) son [= “of the son of the two of us”]
4. a) **Ambolyannar**
- b) **Séremman**
- c) **Parmalyat**
- d) **Mindonelyanna / mindonilyannar** (*Notice how -e- functions as a connecting vowel in the singular, whereas -i- is used in the plural.*)
- e) **Tárimmava**
- f) **Sellinyaiva**
- g) **Sellinyallo** (*Notice how the ending -nya “my” prefers -i- as its connecting vowel even in the singular, as here following seler, sell- “sister”. Cf. also exercises M, N, U, Y below.*)

- h) **Annalmaron**
- i) **Maltalmo**
- j) **Alasselman**
- k) **Limpelyo**
- l) **Ambareyallo**
- m) **Anarinyo**
- n) **Aranyan** (*for **aran-nya-n**; alternatively **araninyan** with a connecting vowel inserted*)
- o) **Yondommava**
- p) **Yulmammaron**
- q) **Aiwelyant**
- r) **Rambammanta**
- s) **Rambalmalto**
- t) **Nórellyallon** [alternatively, **nórellyallor**]
- u) **Sellinyato** (*we assume that the ending **-nya** “my” prefers **-i-** as its connecting vowel in dual forms as well*)
- v) **Harmammaron**
- w) **Rocolmannar**
- x) **Coalvo**
- y) **Torninyan** (*or perhaps **toronyan** for **toron-nya-n**, irrespective of **torn-** as the normal stem-form of **toron** “brother”*)
- z) **Aldammannar**

## Lesson Fifteen

1. A. (S)he [or, it] will come on the second day.
- B. In the winter[,] many birds go away to dwell in [the] South; after the winter they go away from [the] South [or, leave the South] and come to our (*incl.*) land.
- C. His/her finding gold in the mountains gave joy to his/her people, for his/her finding it made his/her people rich.
- D. In [the] second winter that (s)he lived in the house[,] (s)he found a treasure under the floor.
- E. (S)he speaks our tongue, for (s)he dwells (/lives) in our (*incl.*) land.
- F. (S)he says/said: “I saw a sword in the warrior’s left hand.” (*Notice the shortening of the long vowel of **má** before a consonant cluster: locative **massë.***)

- G. The man who found the treasure will hide the things which he has found in his two-room apartment (...if we continue to translate dual forms of *sambë* “room” as “two-room apartment”, that is. Notice that the second *i* of the Quenya sentence is the relative pronoun “who”, not the article “the”. The relative pronoun *ya* “which” here appears in the form *yar*, a plural ending being attached, because it refers back to the plural word “things”: We assume that *ya* is inflected as a noun in *-a*. This *yar* should not be confused with the attested form *yar* “to whom”, which is not plural but has the old allative ending *-r* [as in *mir* “into”] attached.)
- H. On the hill[,] (s)he sees the couple whom (s)he has watched from his/her house, and to whom (s)he gave his/her gift. (We assume that the relative pronoun *ya* would appear with dual endings when referring to a dual word: *yat*, dative *yant*.)
2. I. Cennes veru i mallessë.
- J. Hirnen(yë) i nís i marë i coassë imbë i síri, ar tirnen(yë) péryat ar máryat; hyarya máryassë cennen(yë) parma. (Notice that the second *i* of this sentence functions as a relative pronoun “who”, not as an article. Cf. exercise G above: *i nér i...* “the man who...”)
- K. Cennen(yë) yulmarya máryatsë, i yulma yallo ulyanes limpë mir antorya (or, *antoryanna*, using a simple allative instead of the preposition *mir*).
- L. I marir i mindonissen yannar lelyëa i nér nar ohtari. (Notice the word order: the verb immediately follows *yannar* “to which”, just like it immediately follows *yassen* “in which” in our attested example in Namárië. But it may well be that ... *yannar i nér lelyëa* would be equally possible.)
- M. Sucitarya i limpë úmë mára noa, an ya carnes apa sucitaryas úmë saila. (Maybe the initial *sucitarya* could just as well be *sucierya* – the pronominal ending being attached to the gerund of *suc-* “to drink”.)
- N. Apa oantemmë nóremmallo (i) Hyarmessë, ecéniemmë rimbë Naucor i mallessen.
- O. I mindoni i ambossen nar altë; i harya i analta mindon, yallo polë quen cenë i Eldanóré, ná i analya nér i ostossë. (...*yallo polë quen cenë*, literally “from which can one see”: I assume that in a phrase like *polë cenë* “can see”, with a finite verb followed by an infinitive, it is only the finite verb that is relocated to immediately follow a relative pronoun like *yallo*. But we lack attested examples, of course; perhaps it should be *yallo polë cenë quen* with the subject following the entire verb phrase. And for all I know, *yallo quen polë cenë* with an “English” word order may also be permissible.)

- P. **Lië yo aran ná saila maruva séressë mára nóressë ya meluvantë núravë.** (If **ya** can really be inflected in the same way as a noun in **-a**, as suggested by the example **yassen**, the genitive “whose” would in the singular be **yo** – the group **-ao** being simplified to **-o** as usual.)

## Lesson Sixteen

1. A. (S)he has come from the East on a white horse. (Of course, the instrumental form in **-nen** does not really mean “on” but implies “by means of” – the horse being identified as the means of travel. It is not entirely obvious how **rocconen** is best translated in English, so the precise wording of the translation is unimportant as long as the student clearly grasps the meaning of the instrumental form itself. One might well translate: “. . . riding a white horse”, though no element actually meaning “riding” is present.)
- B. The man wounded the lion with a spear, and he said: “Don’t eat my son!”
- C. We (*excl.*) said to the Elf: “Our (*incl.*) friendship is renewed by your gift!”
- D. On the third day (s)he said to the maiden: “Do what you want!” (*. . . ya merilyë = “[that] which you want”.*)
- E. One cannot find a treasure hidden by Dwarves, for a Dwarf loves deeply the gold that he possesses.
- F. The man is wounded by [the] horns (*dual*) of the animal; wish that he will not die! (*literally: “be it that he will not die!” Possible, but rather less probable interpretation: “. . . that it will not die!” – referring to the animal! If the ending **-s** is to cover both “he”, “she” and “it”, one can’t always be quite certain where the sympathies of the speaker really lie. . . )*
- G. (S)he is singing with joy (*/because of joy*).
- H. Go to the city and say to the mighty queen: “May you protect our (*incl.*) land from the evil warriors!” (*Nai varyuvalyë nórelma. . . = literally “be it that you will protect our land. . .”*)

NOTE ON **EHTĒ** “SPEAR”: In exercise B, I used **ehtenen** as the instrumental form of this noun. In the Etymologies, Tolkien first derived this word from EKTE, but according to a note by the editor, a variant reading EKTĪ was also introduced. If we accept this latter version, so that Quenya **ehtë** “spear” is to be derived from primitive Elvish **ekti**, the Quenya word should probably have the stem-form **eh̄ti-** so that the instrumental form would be **eh̄tinen** rather than **ehtenen**. But the plural instrumental form should probably be **eh̄tinen** (as in Exercise K below) no matter which “etymology” we prefer, since **eh̄tinen** could represent both **eh̄ti+inen** (two short **i**’s merging into one long **ī**) and **eh̄te+inen** (**ei** regularly becoming long **ī**).

2. I. **Eques** [or, **quentes**] i **Nauconna**: “**Á** racë i yulma nambanen!”
- J. **Ciryänen oanten(yë)** haira nórenna Rómessë.
- K. **I osto ná varyaina altë rambainen**, ar ohtari i mahtar ehtínen umir polë racë i rambar.
- L. **Equë Calandil harna yondoryanna**: “**Áva firë!**” (*Alternatively: Calandil quentë harna yondoryanna. . .*)
- M. **Nai tárilya hiruva i yána airinta (i) Eldainen!**
- N. **I aran ar i tári lender coanyanna ar envinyatáner nilmemma altë annainen.**
- O. **Mapas i seldo máryanten**, ar eques [or, **quetis**]: “**Áva lelya i sírenna!**”
- P. **I nís i marë i nelya coassë i mallessë quentë i Eldanna**: “**Á tirë i neri i túlar i yánallo ya cenil(yë) i ambossë, i lelyar Rómenna.**”

## Lesson Seventeen

1. A. This thing is the sword found by Calandil [the] Tall. (*Calandil Hallanen* “by C. [the] Tall”: notice how the case ending for instrumental is added to the last word of the phrase.)
- B. All animals have disappeared from this land (*nórë sinallo* = “from this land”; again notice how the case ending, here for ablative, is added to the last word – the demonstrative *sina* “this”. However, *nórello sina* would perhaps be equally possible.)
- C. A snake wounded his/her right arm, and (s)he said: “Wish that all snakes will [or, would] die!” (*Rancurya* = “his [or, her] arm”; notice how *ranco* “arm” appears in the form *rancu-* before endings, since it is a U-stem. Possibly, the dual “pair of arms” would also have the form *rancu*, but if that form were intended here, we would also see the extra dual marker *-t* following the ending *-rya*. Cf. *máryat* = “her (pair of) hands” in *Namárië*.)
- D. That night, they found that Dwarf on the hill over there [literally: on yonder hill]. (*Lómë yanassë* = “in that night”, but English would simply say “that night” in such a context. *Yana* may signify “that” of something that existed formerly or in the past, and since the reference is to a night in the past, this word is appropriate here – if we have reconstructed Tolkien’s intentions correctly! Cf. also *hrívë yanassë* “in/during that winter” in exercise H below. *Nauco tana*: “that Dwarf”, the word *tana* “that” simply focusing on individual identity. *Ambo entassë*: “on yonder hill, on the hill over there”: the word *enta* apparently means “that” with emphasis on spatial position.)



- E. The tall ships have passed away north(wards); those ships will not come to the lands of (the) South. (*Ciryar tanë* “those ships”: we surmise that *tana* “that” can have the plural form *tanë* “those”, the demonstrative behaving like an adjective.)
- F. On the fourth day, that queen died by [/from] the poison of a snake. (*Tári yana*: “that queen” of a queen who is dead, *yana* being used of something that is past – but “that queen” could probably also be *tári tana*, merely focusing on personal identity.)
- G. The strong arms of the men from (the) North can seize the spears from fighting warriors. (*Ohtari mahtalallon* “from fighting warriors”: notice how the word *ohtari* “warriors” receives only the simplest plural ending, normally associated with the nominative case, but the plural ablative ending *-llon* added to the participle *mahtala* “fighting” indicates that the whole phrase is in the ablative case. – The word order *mahtala ohtarillon* would be equally possible: Here the ablative ending is added to the noun “warriors”, since it is now the last word of the phrase.)
- H. That winter, they lived (/dwelt) in the fourth house of that road (/street). (*Hrívë yanassë*: locative “during/in that winter”; cf. Exercise D above. *Mallë tano* “of that road”, genitive of *mallë tana* “that road” – the genitive ending *-o* displacing a final *-a* as usual.)
2. I. **Á tirë Nauco tana, ar áva tirë Elda sina!** (Alternatively *Nauco enta* = “yonder Dwarf” = “that Dwarf over there”.)
- J. **Nórë ú angwion ná mára nórë, an rimbë Atani ifrier angusangwanen.** (*Ú angwion* “without snakes”: as the student hopefully remembers, the preposition *ú* “without” governs the genitive case. *Angusangwanen* “by snake-poison”: notice how the U-stem noun *ango* “snake” appears as *angu-* in a compound.)
- K. **I cantëa lómissë cennen(yë) ruhtala ohtar mallë tanassë, ar ortanen(yë) rancunyat.** (Alternatively *mallë entassë* = “on yonder road”, “on that road [over there]”. *Rancunyat* “my arms” is here unmissably dual, because of the dual ending *-t* following the pronominal ending *-nya* “my”. Compare/contrast Exercise C above.)
- L. **Nai Calandil Hallo polda yondo [or, . . . i polda yondo Calandil Hallo] tuluva nórë sinanna, an varyuvas ostor sinë yassen marilmë!** (As in Exercise A above, the case ending is added to the last word of the phrase *Calandil Halla* “Calandil [the] Tall”, and as in the attested example *Elendil Vorondo* “of Elendil the Faithful [Elendil Voronda]”, the genitive ending displaces a final *-a*.)
- M. **Mindon enta ná i cantëa mindon carna Eldainen nórë sinassë.**
- N. **Parmar tanë nar vanwë; avánientë sambelyallo.**

- O. **Aurë entassë cenuval(yë) yondolya.** (Alternatively *aurë tanassë*, but *enta* can refer to something that lies in the future, and as is evident from the phrase “shall see”, the reference is here to a future day.)
- P. **Aurë yanassë tullentë oron entallo ar lender coa sinanna.** (Alternatively *aurë tanassë* again, but *yana* can refer to something that lies in the past, and as is evident from the past tense verb “came”, the reference is here to a day in the past. – In some texts, Tolkien uses *túlë* rather than *tullë* as the past tense “came” [LR:47, SD:246], but *tullë* is attested elsewhere and fits the general patterns better. Cf. some forms discussed earlier: *villë* “flew”, *ullë* “poured”.)

Insofar as the system of adding case endings to the “last declinable word” is not necessarily obligatory, the endings could probably be added to the relevant nouns as well, e.g. **mallessë tana** (or, **enta**) rather than **mallë tanassë** (or, **entassë**) for “on that road” in Exercise K.

## Lesson Eighteen

1. A. They have come to see us, not to see thee.  
 B. May you dream about Elves! (Wish that you will dream about Elves!)  
 C. Three men will go thither, and the Dwarves will watch them, for the men possess a treasure that is greater than [lit. “great beyond”] gold.  
 D. On the sixth day they felt moved to come to me. [Lit. “... (it) impelled for them to come to me.”]  
 E. The sixth king of the land is wiser than [”wise beyond”] his father the fifth king.  
 F. (S)he expanded his/her house, making it [or, that] the biggest house of the street.  
 G. You did it for them; you did not do it for us. (Alternatively, “you made it for them; you did not make it for us”: *Car-* covers both “do” and “make”.)  
 H. We saw you in the gorge under us, for you fell into it.
2. I. **Forya rancunya ná polda lá hyarya rancunya.**  
 J. **Á tulta te ninna!**  
 K. **I urqui tírar nye, an rucin(yë) tiello.**  
 L. **Lá tuluammë cenien tye i lómissë.**  
 M. **Lá óluva i seldon urquion.**

- N. **I atta nissi quenter: “Aranelya lá mernë anta ment i engwi mapainë melto ohtariryainen.”**
- O. **I nér pálula coarya cára ta carien rimbë sambi ilyë engweryain.**
- P. **I enquëa aurë nauva mára lá i lempëa aurë, ar lá oruva men auta.**

Other word-orders would apparently also be possible, such as prefixing some independent pronouns to verbs: K) **nye-tírar** rather than **tírar nye**, L) **tye-cenien** rather than **cenien tye**, N) **ment-anta** rather than **anta ment**, O) **ta-cára** rather than **cára ta**, P) **men-oruva** rather than **oruva men**.

## Lesson Nineteen

1. A. Who lived [or, “dwelt”] in the house ten years ago, when *I* did not live in it?
  - B. What can *we* [inclusive] do?
  - C. Give it to me, and don’t hide it from me! (*The ending -t in antat, nurtat indicates that only one person is addressed.*)
  - D. Who did *you* see on the seventh day?
  - E. They will give all the gifts to *me* and not to *you*!
  - F. What did the men find in the land beyond the mountains?
  - G. How will *you* be able to lift the great stone when *I* could not do it?
  - H. Our sister lives in that (yonder) house; *we* live in the eighth house in this street. Come and see our house! (**Á tulil ar á cenil** = “come and see”; the ending *-l* indicates that several people are being addressed.)
2. I. **Man acárië ta?**
  - J. **Mana elyë hirnë i otsëa sambessë írë lendel(yë) tanna?**
  - K. **Írë elyë utúlië, inyë merë auta!** (*If elyë can function as a plural pronoun and it is interpreted as a plural “you” here, the verb should perhaps also be plural: elyë utúlier.*)
  - L. **Ámen antal i limpë!**
  - M. **Á antat i limpë emmen ar lá i ohtarin!**
  - N. **I otsëa ohtar utúlië i altë orontillon (or, -llor) pella.**
  - O. **I toltëa ando pella elyë hirnë alta harma; emmë i tuller apa le úmer hirë [or, lá hirner] engwë!** (*Alternatively elyë hirner*

if the pronoun is taken as plural; cf. Exercise K above. Notice that the “who” of the relative sentence “we who came” is translated by means of the relative pronoun *i*: The word **man** denotes a different kind of “who”, used in actual questions.)

- P. **Manen i úmië Naucor hirner te [or, te-hirner] otso auri yá?**

## Lesson Twenty

1. A. You [or, emphatic *you*] are a Dwarf, not an Elf. (*Elyë Nauco*: the copula “are” is left out and understood. Perhaps **nályë Nauco** would have been a possible alternative, if **ná** can receive pronominal endings.)
  - B. I saw that the man’s arm was broken.
  - C. The king was mighty, but the queen was wiser than the king.
  - D. Did you know that under the house [there] is a hidden treasure?
  - E. May I leave [literally, go from] this place?
  - F. Don’t drink, for [there] is poison in your cup!
  - G. Will they be here on the tenth day when I come [literally, when I shall come]?
  - H. We (*excl.*) know that [there] is a secret room in this house, but we have not found it, and until we find it we shall not know what is in the room.
2. I. “I was rich” can be translated in several ways. The “safest” solution would perhaps be to leave out the copula and use an independent pronoun (**ni** or **inyë**) for “I”: **Ni alya** or **inyë alya**. Of course, this may just as well mean “I *am* rich”, since there is no tense-marker. If we want to include one, we must use the not entirely well-attested form **né** “was”. Assuming that it can receive pronominal endings, “I was rich” could be rendered **nén(yë) alya**.
  - J. **I aran quentë [or perhaps equë]: “Lá lertal(yë) lelya i nó-menna yallo utúliel(yë)”, nan istan(yë) sa lelyuvan(yë) tanna.** (*Alternative translation of “you may not go”: umil(yë) lerta lelya.*)
  - K. **Istan(yë) cenda, nan lá polin(yë) cenda i morniessë.** (*Alternative translation of “I cannot read”: umin(yë) polë cenda. Notice the difference between ista- “can” = “know how to” and pol- “can” = “be physically able to”: The speaker knows how to read, but is unable to read in the dark.*)
  - L. **Istalmë sa Eldar ëar.**
  - M. **Ma marnentë sinomë tenna i nertëa loa írë i ohtari tuller?**

- N. Istammë sa i neri sinter quetë i Eldalambë, nan lá i Nau-  
colambë.
- O. I nissi quenter sa ecéniel(yë) i alta ango i ëa i orontessë.
- P. I quainëa auressë Anar né calima.