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Paul Nolan Hyde

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Quenti Lambardillion: Turkish Delight

Abstract

Addresses the wealth of material in *The Lost Road and Other Writings*, the fifth volume of *The Histories of Middle-earth*, and uses it to attempt a translation of the "1916 Quenya poem."

Quenti Lambardillion

A Column on Middle-earth Linguistics

Paul Nolan Hyde

Turkish Delight

"It is dull, Son of Adam, to drink without eating," said the Queen presently. "What would you like best to eat?"

"Turkish Delight, please, your Majesty," said Edmund.

The Queen let another drop fall from her bottle on to the snow, and instantly there appeared a round box, tied with green silk ribbon, which, when opened, turned out to contain several pounds of the best Turkish Delight. Each piece was sweet and light to the very centre and Edmund had never tasted anything more delicious. He was quite warm now, and very comfortable. (*The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, p. 32)

There is a point where our desire for that which we like best becomes compulsive. Edmund, in the story above, soon reached that point with the encouragement of the White Witch; I reached that point with the publication of *The Lost Road*. Years ago I determined that I would do everything within my power to ferret out the essence of J.R.R. Tolkien's "linguistic aesthetic", to put in order the intent and implication of every linguistic aspect of the languages of Middle-earth. As the good Professor would say, "my crest has long since fallen"; I am afraid the task is beyond my time and talent. The body of linguistic data has become staggering.

Last fall, Ross and Diana Pavlac visited England and obtained for me Christopher Tolkien's fifth volume of *The History of Middle-earth*. When it arrived in the mail, I was ecstatic. "The Lhammas", "The Etymologies", "The Genealogies", and "The List of Names" were vast treasure troves of heretofore unpublished linguistic material, all contributing substantially to the already enormous morphological corpus in print. I began to catalogue and index the material in "The Etymologies" as I had the other volumes as they had been produced. I have spent six months with those fifty-seven pages and now have a 612-page document to represent my labors. As I typed each entry into my database, my mind would be caught up with the interrelationships with all that I had learned up to that point. There was so much that I wanted to test, to prove out, to write down; but I was compelled to type more and more, to get it all into the computer so I could work with it later (for those with a purient interest in computer technology, the database now stands at 8.7 megabytes). From time to time acquaintances would check up on my progress and I would blather on about how magnificent it all was, how delightful to be awash in an ocean of Elvish. As I look back on it now, I believe that I was very much like

L e e w i s ' E d m u n d :

"At first Edmund tried to remember that it is rude to speak with one's mouth full, but soon he forgot about this and thought only

of trying to shovel down as much Turkish Delight as he could, and the more he ate the more he wanted to eat..." (Ibid.)

A terrible addiction and a terrible addiction! And it is not getting any better.

The rest of the text is rife with nomenclature variations, word and phrase translations, spurious derivations, and subtle hints at the fact that the work is not primarily linguistic in nature. I shudder at the implications. If from fifty-seven pages I have extracted over 6500 defined morphological elements, what yet lies unpublished (or unreadable) in the manuscripts, in the lexicons, and in the margins? I am beginning to sense the "Great Wave, towering up, and coming in ineluctably over the trees and green fields" (L-347)¹ of what I know (or that which I think I know). The whole prospect is a little unsettling.

The "shovelling in of Turkish Delight" has not ceased though I have taken the time to comment on it. I acknowledge that at some point I must comprehensively index *The Lost Road* as I have the other fourteen volumes.² I suspect that this index will be of comparable size to its own and will probably require as much time (eight months) to complete. The immediate distress of that impending task is compounded by the fact that Volume Six of *The History of Middle-earth* is presently in galley-form and will undoubtedly see the light of day before I have the opportunity to finish *The Lost Road*. I fear that "The Road Goes Ever On" and that I will have need of more than a pocket handkerchief before I return from the adventure.

There have been some side benefits from all of this, however. Aside from the reported usefulness of the indexes in locating unusual variants of spelling and the rather dubious notion that "more is better", more precise translations of passages of Elvish (some hitherto untranslatable) have been facilitated. A case in point is what is called the "1916 Quenya poem".

A Working Translation

Humphrey Carpenter writes in his biography of J.R.R. Tolkien and his private languages:

He had been working for some time at the language that was influenced by Finnish, and by 1915 he had developed it to a degree of some complexity. He felt that it was 'a mad hobby', and he scarcely expected to find an audience for it. But he sometimes wrote poems in it, and the more he worked at it the more he felt that it needed a 'history' to support it. In other words, you cannot have a language without a race of people to speak it. He was perfecting the language; now he had to decide to whom it belonged.

When talking about it to Edith he referred to it as 'my nonsense fairy language'. Here is part of a poem written in it, and dated 'November 1915, March 1916'. No translation survives, although the words *Las-*

selanta ('leaf-fall', hence 'Autumn' and *Eldamar* (the 'elvenhome' in the West) were to be used by Tolkien in many other contexts:

Ai lintulinda Lasselanta
Pilingeve suyer nalla ganta
Kuluvi ya karnevalinar
Vematte singi Eldamar.
 (TB, pp. 75-6)

Carpenter's preamble to this poem informs us that these four lines are only a fragment of a larger piece and that the overall language structure is somewhat influenced by Finnish, particularly (as we discover in another place) that dialect in which the *Kalavala* was written. Also, if Carpenter's observation is correct, the languages are still very much in flux, a-perfecting as it were. The difficulty in accurately translating the poem is that the fragment is so small that it is almost impossible to discern the spirit of the piece, much less deal adequately with the vocabulary and grammar. In addition, "The Lhammas" suggests that Tolkien would eventually conceive of more than thirty distinct dialects and languages spoken by the Elves, each with their distinct linguistic identities (LR-169, 170).

Using *A Working Concordance, A Working English Lexicon*, "Appendix A: Glossary of Invented Language Elements" from Volume II of my dissertation, and the unpublished comprehensive lexical index of *The Lost Road* I have worked out the following comparative parsings in order to produce a possible translation of the poem.

1. *ai* -- There are a couple of possible interpretations for this word. In this particular form, it appears in the poem "Namarie" (I-394; R-58; MC-239), in Glorfindel's greeting to Aragorn (I-222; L-448), and in this poem. In "Namarie" it is translated as "Alas!" (R; MC) and "Ah!" (I), the latter interjection apparently having the idea of sorrow (rather than surprise) associated with it. Both Noldorin *nae* and Qenyan *nae* are derivatives from the root *NAV-*, 'lament'. It would seem reasonable to assume that the *ai* of "Namarie" is somehow associated with these. The *ai* of Glorfindel's greeting is similar to the 1916 poem in that there is no exclamation point, perhaps indicating that the interjection is not intended. I have translated his greeting elsewhere as "Hail, be everlasting, West-man" and, in a semi-religious sense, "Be holy forever, West-man". The problem here, of course, is that Glorfindel is speaking in Sindarin rather than Qenya. The Qenya Lexicon records *aye* ("hail") under *Ainur* ("Gods"), thus the interesting relationship between the terms. "Hail" is used to translate Frodo's Qenyan cry at Shelob's lair, *Aiya Earendil Elenion Ancalima* (LT-266), as he calls upon the strength of the star-glass to deliver him from the darkness of the daughter of Ungolithe. *Aiya* and *ai* may well be cognates meaning something like "Behold", a more solemn and reverential greeting than merely "Hail".

2. *lintulinda* -- The major problem with compound words is that one can never be sure exactly where one element ends and another begins, particularly in Qenya and the other highly inflected languages. Is the first element *li*, *lin*, *lint*, or something else? Does the second element begin with the first *n* or the *l*? Is there overlap between the elements so that they share letters? Are there elisions that result from compounding? There are examples of all of these in other passages with explicit translations. Both *li* and *lin* are multiplicative prefixes which translate roughly

as "many" (LT-269; LR-269). *Lint* in Gnomish means "quick, nimble, light" (LT-269); *linte* in Qenya means "swift" (MC-239; R-58); *limint* means "swift-light" (U-318). *Linda* means "one of the Singers" (*Lindar*, U-286), "sweet-sounding" (LR-386), "fair, beautiful" (LR-269), "fair (especially of the voice)" (LR-369); *lin* (LT-258) and *linde* (S-359) make reference to "melody" and "singing, song". It is possible that there is also a medial *-tul-* between the two elements discussed above. The root *TULU* in the Qenya Lexicon (LT-270) means "fetch, bring, bear; move, come" and has a derivative verb *tulu-* with the same meaning. "The Etymologies" list *TUL-* meaning "come, approach, move towards (point of speaker)". *-in* often appears as a 1st person verbal marker. Using many of the possible elements, *lintulinda* could mean "many-swift-bearing-sweet-sounding-melody" or "I come swiftly bearing sweet-sounding melody".

3. *Lasselanta* -- This compound has been glossed in several places as "leaf-fall", "Fall", or "Autumn" (III-386, 389; L-382; LT-254; R-62; LR-353, 367). *Lasse* is variously glossed as "leaf" and "ear" (LR-367) (this latter due to the leaf-shape of the ears of the Elves). *Lanta* is specifically "a fall" (LR-354, 390). *Lasselanta*, then, could be both a "leaf-fall" or an "ear-fall"; that is, something coming quickly to the hearing. An interesting side-note is that *lasse* also contains the declension suffix *-sse* which means, loosely, "from". A "leaf-from", then, likely means a leaf that is no longer attached to the tree.

4. *Pilingeve* -- *Pilin* is glossed in *The Lost Road* as "arrow" from the root *PILIM-* (LR-382). *-in*, however, is almost universal as a verb conjugation suffix for the first-person singular present tense. As given above, *lin* can be either "swift" or "sing". The *ng* combination often alternates with *n* initially or finally in morphological elements, although just as frequently they are separate consonants. Therefore *Pilin* could very well be *Piling* and *veve* could be *ngeve*, but there is not much evidence for this possibility. *Nive*, which could very well be related to *ngeve* is possibly a form of "pale" (MC-213). *-eve* may also be a form of the ablative case ending *-eva*, meaning roughly "out from inside of". *Nef* ("on this side of", R-63) or *nif* ("face, front", LR-378) may be related, but it is unlikely. "Pale-swift-singing-arrows-out from" could be a possible translation of *Pilingeve*.

5. *suyer* -- Qenyan *suva-* appears in *The Lost Road* as "breathe" (LR-393), being derived from the root *THU-*. The Noldorin form is *thuka*. The Qenya Lexicon has the root *SUHYU* meaning "air, breathe, exhale, puff" (LT-266). *Yerya* as a derivative of *GYER-* is glossed as "to wear (out), get old", with related form *yerna* meaning "old, worn" (LR-360). There is some indication that *-er* may be part of a noun declension system, perhaps indicating a third-person dual of some sort. I, myself, proposed in 1982 a rather elaborate parsing of *suyer* that appears in my dissertation (PNH-302): *su(r)-y(a)-e-r* meaning "wind-which-(pladj.)-(pl.)". I imagine there will be quibbles about this, but that is what linguistics is all about!

6. *nalla* -- Sindarin *nallon* ("I cry") is found in Sam's invocation at Cirith Ungol (II-339; R-64). From the Qenya Lexicon, glossed in *The Book of Lost Tales* as "dale, dell", is *nalle* or *nal* from the root *NALL-*. *The Lost Road* "Etymologies" records a root *NGAL-* (subsequently changed to *NGYAL-*), meaning "talk loud or incoherently" with derivatives *nalme* ("clamour", LR-377) and *ngalambe* ("barbarous speech", LR-377). The ablative suffix, *-llo*, appears frequently in other

settings. The present tense marker *-a* has been identified in similar circumstances. *Nalla* could be interpreted as "cry-out-of" or "out of the dale" or a combination of the two.

7. *ganta* -- Under the root *NGAN-* in *The Lost Road*, there are several derivatives which might be related forms: *ganno* ("play a harp", LR-377), *gannel* ("a harp", LR-377), *talagant* ("harper", LR-377). Unfortunately they are all Noldorin in form, the Qenya cognates being rendered with initial *n* rather than *g*. In *The Road Goes Ever On*, Tolkien says that *g* (in Sindarin at least) was often used as an "augmentative" or intensifier. If this is the case in other languages, the operative word is *anta*. Feanorian letter #13 (first series, fourth grade) is called *anta* ("mouth", III-401). To my knowledge, this is the only place that this appears. The closest semantic value is found under *ANA-* in *The Lost Road*, *anta*, meaning "face" (LR-348). Under *GAS-* is glossed Qenyan *assa* meaning "hole, perforation, opening, mouth" (LR-357). *etsir* meaning "mouth" is familiar to many readers, but in this case the etymology literally renders *etsir* as "out-river" or "out-flow" and probably has little or nothing to do with *anta*. All other similar forms (*ant*, *anta*, *ante*) are all glossed under *ANA-*, having to do with "presenting" or "giving" (LR-348). There is some alternation of *g* and *k* in related entries which, if applicable in this case, could render *kanta* ("shaped", LR-262). However, the alternation is not evident initially and probably does not figure in the present entry. The probable definitions of *ganta* are "great-opening", "great-mouth", "great-gift", or a combination.

8. *Kuluv* -- The sequences *kul* and *kulu*, together with their alternate spelling with initial *c*, are almost universally associated with the metal "gold" and the colors "red", "golden-red", "orange", and other "flame-colored" shades. In *The Book of Lost Tales*, *kulu* is glossed as the ordinary name of the metal gold while *laure* is referred to as its "magical" name (LT-100). The Name-list from "The Fall of Gondolin" states that *Culu*, and *Culon* (from Elfin *KULU*) were "poesy" forms of Gondolin *Glor* with reference to "gold" (LT-341). In the Qenya Lexicon the root *KULU* is the source for many derivatives having a common reference to the metal gold (LT-258). The morpheme *-luri* has some difficulties. Those familiar with the Feanorian Tengwar are aware that the curved part of the letters is called the *lura* as the straight part is called the *telco*. As far as I can tell, *lura* ("bow") is unique to *The Lord of the Rings*. The morphological elements for "bow" vary depending on whether reference is made to the weapon or other crescent-shaped objects (*brant*, *rantha*, *qinga*, *peng*, *cu*, etc.; LR-356, 366) or to the formal act of respect (*NDUR*, *NUR*, LR-376). All other entries of similar or related spelling (*lurier*, *luru*, *lure*, *lum*, etc.; LR-259) have meanings associated with "clouds", "dark weather", "overcast", "lower, brood", etc. If *Plungeve* is glossable as "arrow", *luri* may have something to do with a "bow", by metaphorical association. *The Lost Road* has an entry, *uve* (with related *uvea*), which is derived from the root *UB-*. The meaning is "abundance, great quantity". In this case, the *-i* would probably be a pluralizer. It is likely that *Kuluv* translates as "great quantities of golden-red clouds".

9. *ya* -- Jim Allen glossed this years ago (*Introduction to Elvish*, p. 42) as a relative pronoun, "which", and its suffixal form *-ya* as "associated with". My translations have tended to follow his lead in this particular (PNH-303, 570, 628). *The Lost Road*,

however, includes *ya* ("formerly, ago") as a derivative of the root *YA-* ("there, over there; of time, ago"; LR-399). As a side-note, the root *EN-* with its derivatives means "there", but pointing to the future (LR-356, 399).

10. *karnevalinar* -- The morpheme *karne* is glossed as "red" (LR-362) as a derivative of *KARAN-*. It is translated as "red" in "Ölisma Markirya" (MC-214, 221). As derived from *KAR-* (*KYAR-*), *karne* means "I make, build". The alternate spellings of *karne* with initial *c* are all translated as "red". In *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix F, *Karningul* is given as a true Westron translation of *Imladris* ("Rivendell"; III-414). As to which portion of the word means "cut" and which means "valley" is anybody's guess. A possible related name is *Carn Dum*, the fortress capital of *relatista*. *Dum* is glossed both as "secret, not to be spoken" (LT-262) and in Dwarvish as "excavations, halls, mansions" (S-337). In either case, not much light is shed on the meaning of *Carn* in the name. The possibilities for *nev* were given above under *Plungeve*. Forms of *-eva* as an ablative case marker have been discussed above. Among the derivatives of *VALA* is listed *valin* ("happy"; LT-272) having direct reference to the "blessedness" of the Powers or Gods. The sequence *val* has almost universal translation as "power" or "god". The morphemes *li* and *lin* were discussed above. *Nar* is frequently glossed as "fire" (S-362; L-425) and as "sun" (U-455). The Qenya Lexicon lists a root *MARA* with derivatives referring to woodlands, the country, and dryads (LT-261). There may be a suffix *-ar* indicating nominative plural. A simple translation could be "red powers of the sun" or "out from the edifice of the sun". Combinations even more elaborate are possible.

11. *Vematte* -- Often the apostrophe indicates that which would be a glottal stop or a uvular *g* (*lorol*, LT-245; *vamweg*, LT-266; *grib*, LT-239). In other instances it is an indication of a vowel elision. Consider, for example, two of the derivatives of the root *BARAD-* (*b'randa*, *b'radi*; LR-351) or others where the first and second vowel in the root are the same (*b'ras-se*, LR-351; *b'retha*, LR-352; *b'ritte*, LR-353; *b'rona*, LR-353). Another kind of elision takes place when vowels are juxtaposed in articulation, even across word boundaries. The most notable case is Frodo's greeting to Glorfindel near Woodyend, *Elen sila lumenn' omentielvo* (I-90). In the *Letters*, Tolkien renders the latter part of this as *sila lumenna omentielvo* (L-425). Whether due to an accent on the part of Frodo or a simple case of elision due to proximity, the effect is the same. *Vo* is glossed in several places as "like" or "as" (R-58, 59; MC-213). It is also used in reference to "death" and Mandos (LT-296). There is some indication that *vea* and related forms refer to the "ocean" (MC-213, 214, 216). *Vo-* is a form of the patronymic *bo-*, meaning "son" (LT-236). Qenyan *mat* ("eat"; LR-371) is listed as a derivative of the root *MAT-*. The entries *ma* ("hand", LT-239) and *maite* ("handed", U-460) and similar forms are more likely to have bearing on this passage. When Frodo and Sam are cheered into Minas Tirith, the crowds exclaim *la ita te*, *la ita te* (III-231) which J.R.R. Tolkien glosses as "Bless them, bless them" (L-308). *te* and its related forms are dual pronouns meaning "those two". A questionable translation for *Vematte*, but a good guess would be "like those two hands". But even "son of those two hands" or "those two hands of the sea" are possible.

12. *singi* -- The problem here may involve vowel or consonant mutation. *s* can alternate to *th*, *ng* can

alternate between *g*, *nn*, *nt*, *nd*, *y* alternates with *g*. In *The Lost Road*, *sin* is glossed as the plural of "new" (SI-, LR-385), and as "now" (SI-, LR-385). *Sinose* is translated in *The Lord of the Rings* as "in this place" (III-245, 246). *sinve* from *THIN*- glosses as "evening" (LR-392). *Singollo* (S-349), *Thingol* (U-468), and *Sindacollo* (S-348) are all translated as "grey-cloak". *collo* is glossed in *The Silmarillion* as "cloak", therefore *sin*, *thin*, and *sinda* would all be acceptable forms of "grey". The latter two are so glossed (S-365). *Singi* could be "greyneesses", "newneesses", or something to do with "present-ness" ("here and now").

13. *Eldamar* -- This as an entry is almost universally translated as "Elvenhome" (*elda* + *mar*).

Translation 1
1916 Quenya Poem

<i>Ai</i>	<i>lintulinda</i>	<i>Lasselanta</i>
1	2	3
Hail; Behold	I come swiftly singing	Fall, the Autumn
<i>Pilingeve</i>	<i>suyer</i>	
4	5	
I shoot out swift singing arrows	winds which	
<i>nalla</i>	<i>ganta</i>	
7	8	
cry from a great mouth		
<i>Kuluvi</i>	<i>ya</i>	
8	9	
great quantities of golden-red clouds	which	
<i>karnevalinar</i>		
10		
I build with the red powers of the sun		
<i>V'ematte</i>	<i>singi</i>	<i>Eldamar</i>
11	12	13
with both hands here in this place	Elvenhome	

I fully expect a mail truck packed with correspondence from those who have differing views. The thing to keep in mind is, of course, this is but a fragment of the original and the spirit of the poetry is not quite perceivable.

At last the Turkish Delight was all finished and Edmund was looking very hard at the empty box and wishing that she would ask him whether he would like some more. Probably the Queen knew quite well what he was thinking; for she knew, though Edmund did not, that this was enchanted Turkish Delight and that anyone who had once tasted it would want more and more of it, and would even, if they were allowed, go on eating it until they killed themselves. But she did not offer him any more. Instead she said to him, "Son of Adam, I should so much like to see your brother and your two sisters. Will you bring them to me?"

"I'll try," said Edmund, still looking at the empty box. (*The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, p. 33)

NOTES

- The coding for the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and related writings are as follows: (I) *Fellowship of the Ring*, (II) *The Two Towers*, (III) *The Return of the King*, (S) *The Silmarillion*, (U) *Unfinished Tales*, (LT) *The Book of Lost Tales*, (LT2) *The Book of Lost Tales Volume 2*, (LB) *The Lays of Beleriand*, (SM) *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, (LR) *The Lost Road*, (MC) *The Monsters and the Critics and other Essays*, (L) *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, (TB) *Tolkien: A Biography* (Carpenter), (R) *The Road Goes Ever On*, (PNH) *Linguistic Techniques used to Develop Character in the Writings of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Paul Nolan Hyde).
- Paul Nolan Hyde, *A Working Concordance: being a compilation of names, places, things, and language elements together with volume and page number of every occurrence in the... works of J.R.R. Tolkien*. (July, 1987).
- Paul Nolan Hyde, *A Working English Lexicon: being a compilation of the English words used to translate invented language elements together with volume and page number of every occurrence in the... works of J.R.R. Tolkien*. (January, 1988).
- At present there is only one printed copy of this document. I would need a lot of encouragement to have it duplicated before I have all of the available material in the same format.
- There are a multitude of holograph documents from Marquette University which shed light on the case systems of the Elvish tongues. Many of these have been hand copied and privately distributed, some dating back to Jim Allen's first visit to the Archives at Marquette. Someday these will undoubtedly be published in whole or in part by Christopher Tolkien. In the meantime I feel compelled to avoid extensive citations from the documents and to allude to them only sparingly.

An English Lexicon by PNH

A Working English Lexicon, the second volume of Dr. Paul Nolan Hyde's comprehensive indexes of the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien, is now available and is being offered to the general membership of the Mythopoeic Society and other interested parties. It is an alphabetical listing of the English words used to translate invented language elements, together with volume and page numbers of (almost) every occurrence in all of the published writings of J.R.R. Tolkien including *The Lost Road*. It is soft-bound, spiral bound, 107 pages, double column format. The first volume, *A Working Concordance*, a comprehensive alphabetical listing of non-English language elements (including Old English passages) with complete listings of their references, is still available.

Copies of either index may be obtained by sending \$20.00/copy plus \$2.00 shipping and handling to Paul Nolan Hyde, 2661 E. Lee, Simi Valley, CA 93065.