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## Quenti Lambardillion

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### Quenti Lambardillion

#### Abstract

Considers the declension of nouns in Quenya.

# Quenti Lambardillion

A Column on Middle-earth Linguistics

Paul Nolan Hyde

## A Question of Grammar: Declining to Answer

Unfortunately, as all lexicographers know, 'don't look into things, unless you are looking for trouble: they nearly always turn out to be less simple than you thought'.  
(*Letters*, p. 404)

Hardly more apt counsel could be given with regard to the grammar of the languages of Middle-earth. The native speaker of English who has not taken the opportunity to acquire a second language is faced with the almost overwhelming task of learning to deal with Elvish words that seem to defy description, order, and significance. Part of this is due to the rather extraordinary development of the English language itself, which has taken some dreadful turns and frightful bumps linguistically during the past thousand years or so. In addition, J.R.R. Tolkien delighted in the rich grammatical structures which he found during his own academic studies of Old English, Welsh, Old Norse, Finnish, and other languages. Some of these structures, in whole or in part, found their way into his own invented languages, adapted and fused together as to make a new substance. Tolkien's facility for sensing the beauty of syntax, phonetics, and grammar in general escapes most of his fans, to the point, at times, that those of us who heap discussion upon discussion about the gentle nuances of Quenya or the simple Celtic qualities of Sindarin become rather odious to those who love Tolkien's capacity to tell a story wonderfully well. To be frank, many of us who enjoy the linguistic aspects of Tolkien's works even become odious to each other as we express our opinions. Some of us, I fear, simply enjoy being odious. Being somewhat of an authority on odiousness, I have determined to discuss in this issue of *Mythlore* a linguistic topic which almost every native speaker of English who has learned another language, particularly a non-Romance language, can hardly bear to think of without having a mental tremor of some kind: IE., the declension of common nouns.

### Analytic versus Synthetic Languages

In order to really appreciate what a noun declension is (or any other kind of declension for that matter), one ought to have at least a passing acquaintance with the two basic extremes of language structure that exist in the Indo-European family of languages. English is primarily what is called an "analytical" language; that is to say, units of meaning have a greater tendency to be separate words rather than compound words of some sort. Greek and

German tend to be more "synthetic" in their structure; that is, units of meaning are more often stuck together to form large, multi-syllabic words.

Mark Twain, apparently sensing this difference between English and German, produced a somewhat humorous observation about it in his *A Tramp Abroad*:

These things are not words, they are alphabetical processions. And they are not rare: one can open a German newspaper anytime and see them marching majestically across the page and if he has any imagination he can see banners and hear the music too. They impart a martial thrill to the meanest subject.<sup>1</sup>

Although Twain is not entirely fair, the observation does have some merit insofar as it illustrates the analytical-synthetic dichotomy between the two languages.

Ancient Greek has a similar facility for agglutination (as this phenomenon is sometimes called), illustrated by Aristophanes' *Ekkleousai*, in which is given a recipe for a dish which is one word composed of 78 syllables and 171 letters meaning, approximately

a pungent dish of pounded limpet, slices of salt fish and bits of sharks' head, silphion with sea-crayfish, honey poured over it, thrush, blackbird, ringdove, pigeon, roasted cock's head, curlew and dove, hare's flesh dipped in new wine when boiled, and the whole edged with figs.

It can now easily be seen where most linguists pick up their penchant for sadism, and from thence to odiousness. What is in Greek a one-word expression, is in English at least forty-six words (but with 59 syllables and about 225 letters). Greek is, by definition, more synthetic and less analytical than English, and vice versa. As it turns out, Quenya is more synthetic as a language than, say, Sindarin.

Verbs are more obviously conjugated in synthetic languages, while the analytical languages have a tendency toward "helping words", "modals", "verb particles", and the like. Adjectives in synthetic languages are often inflected depending on how they function in a sentence regardless of the word order; analytical languages depend more upon the physical location of the adjective (or any word for that matter) so as to be able to depict subtle nuances. In Spanish, for example, there is a distinct difference in the meaning of a noun preceded by an adjective and the same noun followed by the same adjective. To this degree and in this sense, Spanish is more of an analytical

language than Old English which inflects its adjectives. A noun declension is more likely to be found in a synthetic language.

### By the Numbers<sup>2</sup>

In terms of the Elvish language Quenya, understanding the nature of the singularity of nouns and the various manners in which plurality can be expressed is vital in order to fully grasp how a noun declension functions.

In English we are generally analytical when we quantify our nouns, although there is some inflection. We can say "I want a bagel", "I want two bagels" (the "s" is an inflection), "I want both bagels" (which is a little different than wanting just two), "I want some bagels" (which most people sense is more than two), "I want many bagels" (a number more generous than "some" but less greedy than "all"), and "I want all the bagels" (whatever for?). If we could somehow append these little quantifiers to the word "bagel" ("bagelboth", "bagelmany", "bagelall", etc.), we would be by so doing creating a synthetic approach to an analytical situation.

Quenya is, in fact, expressly synthetic in this fashion. J.R.R. Tolkien specifically refers to the function and declension of Quenya duals (approximating "both") in a letter to Richard Jeffery on 17 December 1972. The word *ciriati* is cited as an example of a Quenya dual, meaning "two ships", the inflection "-i" being related to the Quenya word for the number "two", *atta*. In a footnote to the letter, Tolkien adds:

Original[ly] the Q. duals were (a) purely numerative (element *ata*) and pairs (element *u* as seen in *Alduya*); but they were normally in later Q. only usual with reference to natural pairs, and the choice of *t* or *u* [was] decided by euphony (e.g. *u* was preferred after *d* or *t* in stem). (L-427)<sup>3</sup>

The natural pairs are obvious in such words as *Alduya* and *maryat* (R-58) because in the former the Two Trees of Valinor are the only ones of their kind and in the latter because Varda has a natural pair of hands which she lifts up like clouds. Another form of dual shows up later in *Namarie* when Galadriel speaks of the great darkness that lies between her and Varda by using the pronoun *met* ("us-two"). When Sam and Frodo are welcomed to the field of Cormallen by the peoples of Gondor, two of the phrases quoted in the narrative are the Quenya *A laita te, laita te! Andave laituwame!* and *Cormacolindor, a laita tarienna!* (III-231), which Tolkien translates for Rhona Beare in 1961 as respectively "Bless them, bless them, long we will praise them" and "The Ring bearers, bless (or praise) them to the height." (L-308). Without going into detail, it is quite apparent that only Sam and Frodo are the Ring bearers being referred to, those to be praised or blessed and that fact is reflected in *laituwame!* which is in the dual form. I think that it is also safe to assume that the word *te* is the dual pronoun translated as "them".

In addition to the dual, there are two other forms that

indicate a state of more than one. The Quenya word *rama* is frequently glossed as "wing" (LR-282, LT2-335) as is its plural *ramar*, "wings" (R-58, MC-239, I-394). In the essay "A Secret Vice", J.R.R. Tolkien gives a form *ramali* which though it apparently means "wings" is odd in its formation. The same plural is used in the name *Telemi* in The Book of Lost Tales to refer to a group of young Elves who dwell in Kor to perfect their arts of singing and poetry (LT-267). In The Lost Road, *Telemi* is glossed as a "general plural", presumably to distinguish it from a simple plural (LR-391). In the Book of Lost Tales, the prefix *li-* is glossed as a "multiplicative" (LT-269); in The Lost Road the suffix *-li* is similarly glossed with the meaning "many". Table 1 summarizes the above discussion.

Table 1 Number Inflection in Quenya			
Singular	Dual	Plural	Gen. Plural
<i>rama</i>	* <i>ramat</i>	<i>ramar</i>	<i>ramali</i>
<i>cirya</i>	<i>ciriati</i>	* <i>ciryar</i>	* <i>ciryali</i>

It would be well to note that the starred words are postulated forms which as yet do not appear in the published works, but which undoubtedly could be part of the corpus.

### Declension and Word Order

Analytical languages such as English have a tendency to rely heavily on word order. For example, there is a distinct difference between "The man wants the bagel" and "The bagel wants the man", the relative position of the nouns "man" and "bagel" determining which noun is "wanting" and which noun is "wanted". In linguistic terms, when a noun is the performer of the action of the verb (the "want-er"), or is the "subject" of the verb, it is said to be in the "nominative case". When a noun is the recipient of the full action of the verb (the "want-ee"), or is the "direct object" of the verb, it is said to be in the "accusative case". The first line of the second stanza of the poem "Oiliima Markirya" found on page 221 of the *Monsters and the Critics* is *Man tiruva fana kirya* ("Who shall behold a white ship?"). Without going into elaborate detail, I will simply assert that the subject of the verb here is *Man* ("Who") and the direct object *kirya* ("ship"). The third and fourth lines of the second stanza of the version found on page 220 reads *kirya kalliere kulukalmalinen* ("The ship shone with golden lights"). Here *kirya* is the subject of the sentence. It can be noticed that the two forms, the nominative and the accusative, are precisely the same. As it turns out, this is a typical occurrence even in inflected languages in the primary world. The major Old English noun declensions make little of the distinction between the two cases. The neuter declensions in Latin seldom, if ever, formally distinguish between the nominative and the accusative cases. There is evidence, however, that Quenya at one time made such a distinction by lengthening the final vowel or by mutating the vowel into a diphthong in the accusative case but in the process of time the forms coalesced with the nominative forms.<sup>4</sup> The identical nature of the forms of the two cases, combined with the English speaker's tendency to

understand a sentence in a subject-verb-object sequence can cause some consternation while translating. For example, the first line and a half of the fifth stanza of *Oilima Markirya* on page 221 of *The Monsters and the Critics* reads *Kaire laiqā'ondaisen kirya*. The position of *kirya* would seem to indicate that it would be in the accusative case, but the translation reads "The white ship lay upon the rocks". *Kaire* is the verb, probably related to the root *KAY-*, meaning "lie down" (LR:363).

Notwithstanding the apparent complexity of the system, the most important thing to remember about the nominative and accusative cases is that their functions focus primarily upon the action of the verb.

### Prepositions versus Inflected Endings

Another typical aspect of analytical languages is that they tend to use prepositional phrases instead of inflected nouns. Of the synthetic languages, Finnish has one of the most complex noun declension systems. In order to have an idea as to the nature of inflection and the degree to which they can represent semantic function in a sentence, Table 2 is offered below.<sup>5</sup> If the italicized English words and phrases were rendered into Finnish, they would be in the indicated case with a suffixed ending. The starred words in hard brackets are my invented Anglo-Finnish words to demonstrate the inflection principle.

Table 2  
Finnish Case System

nominative	Unchanged form of any noun, subject of the sentence: "The <i>bagel</i> is here [ <i>*bagel</i> ]"
accusative	The object receives full action of the verb: "I ate the <i>bagel</i> [ <i>*bagel-t</i> ]"
genitive	Shows possession: "I ate <i>Glen's bagel</i> [ <i>*Glen-n</i> ]"
partitive	The object receives part of continual action of the verb: "I am eating <i>bagels</i> [ <i>*bagel-a</i> ]"
inessive	Same as the preposition "inside": "I am <i>inside the bagel shop</i> [ <i>*bagel-ssa shop-ssa</i> ]"
elative	Same as the prepositions "from" and "about": "I learned about <i>bagels from Glen</i> [ <i>*Glen-sa</i> ]"
illative	Same as the preposition "into": "I walked <i>into the bagel shop</i> [ <i>*bagel-een shop-oon</i> ]"
adessive	Same as the prepositions "at", "on", "with", and "by": "Glen is standing <i>by the bagel shop</i> [ <i>*bagel-lla shop-lla</i> ]"
ablative	Same as the preposition "from": "I got this <i>bagel from Glen</i> [ <i>*Glen-lla</i> ]" (nearby, not from inside!)
allative	Same as the preposition "to": "I went to the <i>bagel cabinet</i> [ <i>*bagel-lle cabinet-lle</i> ]" (nearby, but did not go into the cabinet)

translative Change from one state "to", or "for" another: "Paul and Glen became *old men* eating bagels [*\*old-ksi men-ksi*]"

essive Expresses state of being, tells "as": "Paul posed *as a bagel evaluator* [*\*bagel-na evaluator-na*]"

-TTA Same as the preposition "without": "Paul ate Glen's bagel *without permission* [*\*permission-tta*]"

instrutive Tells how the action is performed: "Glen made that bagel *with his own hands* [*\*his-n own-n hands-n*]"

Comitative Means "with someone": "Paul returned to the bagel shop *with Glen* to buy some more bagels [*\*Glen-ne*]"

Some of the inflection endings ought to look familiar to those who have spent a little time with the languages of Middle-earth, although it would be a mistake to equate them. With a little patience and work, it is possible to identify several inflections in Quenya similar in function to those given above, together with their inflections for number as well.

### The Genitive Case in Quenya

On page 62 of the *Road Goes Ever On*, J.R.R. Tolkien glosses the word *Calaciryo* as the genitive form of *Calaciryā*. The interlinear translation on pages 58 and 59 give other genitive forms as well: *Vardo* for "*Varda's*" and *aldaron* for "*trees-of*". The latter is an obvious plural, but it is not certain whether this is a common plural or a general plural until we find another plural form in the greeting to Celeborn and Galadriel by Treebeard, *A vanimar, vanimalion nostari* (III-259) which Tolkien translates for Rhona Beare as "O beautiful ones, parents of beautiful children" (L-308). *Vanima* is "a beautiful one", *vanimar* is "beautiful ones", and *vanimalion* must be (by analogy to *ramali* given above) "many beautiful ones" in the genitive case. Thus using the model given in conjunction with the discussion on number, the genitive declension would be as indicated in Table 3

Table 3

Genitive Declension			
Singular	Dual	Plural	Gen. Plural
<i>vanimo</i>	<i>*vanimato</i>	<i>vanimor</i>	<i>vanimalion</i>

*Vanimo* and *Vanimor* are both glossed in the *Lost Road* as "the beautiful, the children of the Valar" (LR-351). *\*vanimato* seems likely as a form because it is simply the -*t* dual ending followed by the genitive marker -*o*.

### The Instrutive or Instrumental Case in Quenya

The term Instrutive is a Finnish grammatical term which is comparable to the Old English and German Instrumental case. Both depict how the action of the verb was accomplished with regard to the inflected noun. In the *Silmarillion*, when Nienor recognizes the apparently dead

Turin and recalls her relationship to him, cries in anguish *A Turin Turambar turin ambartanen*. This is partially translated in the narrative as "master of doom by doom mastered" (S-223). *Ambar* is often glossed as "Earth", but the *Book of Lost Tales II* glosses both *amarto* and *ambar* as "Fate". *ambartanen* may be the inflected form of *ambart* in the instrumental case, or of *ambar* in the dual (-i) instrumental case. *-anen* is found also in the sixth line of Fíriel's song, *Ilqainen antar annar lestanen lluvataren*, which is translated "To all they gave in measure the gifts of lluvatar" (LR-72). Without going into detail it is possible to easily identify all of the words in the line through glossing with the exception of *lestanen*, which by the process of elimination must be "in measure" (notwithstanding *lesta-*, "to leave", LR-356). "In measure" obviously functions in the sentence in what the Finns would call an Instructive manner. The inflection would have it read "by measure" however.

In a phrase used above from Oilima Markirya in the *Monsters and the Critics* is found a similar inflection. The last two lines of the second stanza read *kirya kalliere kulukalmalinen*, translated "The ship shone with golden lights" (MC-220). The English phrasing reveals the Instructive usage and the Quenya form suggests the General Plural inflection of *kulukalmalinen*. In the poem Earendel found in the same text, a similar word is used in the seventh line: *wingildin o silgelossean alkantameren urio kalmalinen*; translated "The foam-maidens with blossom-white hair made it shine in the lights of the sun" (MC-216). Although the translation is a little loose, yet it is clear that there must be a relationship between *kulukalmalinen* and *kalmalinen*.

\**kalmalinen* probably means "with many lights" and *kalmalinen* would in turn be the simple plural. The eighth line of Earendel has another Instructive or Instrumental form in the phrase *tyulmin talalinen aigalin kautaron*, translated "the tall masts bent with the sails" (MC-216). This compares favorably with the fourth line of the first stanza of Oilima Markirya, *talainen tinwelindon*, translated "with wings like stars" (MC-220). The phrase on page 216 would more accurately be translated as "the tall masts bent with the many sails". Table 4 suggests possible declension forms of the Instructive or Instrumental case.

Table 4

## Instructive Case

Singular	Dual	Plural	Gen.Plural
* <i>talainen</i>	* <i>talanten</i>	<i>talainen</i>	<i>talainen</i>

One might argue that the logical form for the Instructive dual ought to be *\*talatnen*, and justifiably so in light of the other analogies given above. However, as the orthography of the Tengwar reveals, the sequence "nt" is much more frequent than the sequence "tn", and thus favored even to the point of metastasis.

## The Illative or Allative Case in Quenya

In the index to *Unfinished Tales*, *-(n)na* is glossed as a

suffix meaning "of movement towards", which would be in the Finnish system an Allative usage. In *The Return of the King* (III-245), Aragorn quotes Elendil's words when he first came to Middle-earth, the first part being *Ei Earello Endorenna utulien*, translated on page 246 as "Out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth I am come". The Illative case would require "into Middle-earth"; the Allative case would imply "to the presence of Middle-earth (rather than inside)". The latter case would find the preposition "unto Middle-earth" more appropriate. Gelmir's farewell to Tuor, *Anar kaluvta tieyanna!* (U-22), is translated "The sun shall shine upon your path" (U-51) or "towards your path". The Eressean fragment concerning the Downfall of Numenor has several words with similar forms, but broader translations than what a strictly Allative or Illative case would permit: *numenorennna*, "to-Numenor"; *kilyanna*, "into-chasm"; *numenna*, "westward"; *romenna*, "eastward" (LR-56). "into-chasm" is an obvious Illative and the seeming exception to the rest of the examples. The context of *numenorennna* seems to imply the same as *Endorenna*. In the same Eressean fragment, Numenor "war-made on-powers", *ohetakarie valannar*, provides an obvious plural to this case. In the Namarie interlinear translation, *morrie caita i falma-li-nnar* is glossed as "darkness lies the foaming waves-many-upon (pl.)", a rather simplified way of referring to the Allative/Illative General Plural case. Table 5 summarizes the foregoing.

Table 5

## Allative/Illative Case

Singular	Dual	Plural	Gen. Plural
* <i>falmanna</i>	* <i>falmanta</i>	* <i>falmannar</i>	<i>falmalinnar</i>

## The Locative Case in Quenya

Cirion's oath to Eorl in *Unfinished Tales* (U-305) contains several interesting inflections including *mahalassen*, which Christopher Tolkien glosses in the footnotes as a locative plural of *mahala* "throne" (U-317). The phrase from which the word is taken is *i harar mahalassen*, translated as "those who sit upon the thrones". The closest Finnish declension to the locative is the adessive which is not nearly broad enough semantically to include all that a true locative implies. The inessive and the adessive combined, however, come close to the mark. *mahalassen* is presumably the simple locative plural. The first two lines of the poem Earendel read *San ningerwisse lutier kiryassee Earendil or vea*, translated as "Then upon a white horse sailed Earendel, upon a ship upon the sea" (MC-216). Both *ningerwisse* and *kiryassee* are in the locative singular, both using the English locative preposition "upon". The fourth line of Oilima Markirya on page 222 of the *Monsters and the Critics* reads *ringa sumaryasse*, "in her cold bosom". *sumaryasse* is easily parsed as *suma-rya-sse*, "bosom-her-in". *aurasse* in the thirty-seventh line of the same poem is inflected the same way, meaning "in the morning". In the two versions of Oilima Markirya, the second lines of the fifth stanzas differ: *laiaq ondolissen* (MC-214); *ondolisse morne* (MC-222). Again without giving much detail, the two lines translate basically as "on the green rocks" and "on

the dark rocks". It is obvious that both words are in the General Plural form of the locative, but one ends with an "-n" and the other does not. It may very well be that both forms are acceptable. In the seventh line of the fifth stanza of Ollima Markiyya found on page 221 of the *Monsters and the Critics* can be found the simple plural of the locative: *alkarissen oillimain* translates as "in the last rays of light". Table 6 summarizes the Locative declension.

Table 6

## Locative Case

Singular	Dual	Plural	Gen. Plural
<i>kiryasse</i>	<i>*kiryatse</i>	<i>*kiryassen</i>	<i>*kiryalissen</i>

The speculative form of the dual is derived by analogy to *kiryat* given above and the fact that "is" combination was favored in Quenya (III-400).

## The Ablative Case in Quenya

The interlinear translation of Namarie contains the ablative singular *sinda-norie-llo*, given as "grey-country-from" (R-59). *hrestallo* ("from the shore", MC-221), *Mardello* ("from the Earth", LR-70), and *Eareello* ("from the Great Sea", III-245) are a few other examples of this form. Although there are no extant examples of the dual and plurals in the published works, it is probably safe to assume that they would form in a similar fashion as the other cases. Table 7 represents that speculation.

Table 7

## Ablative Case

Singular	Dual	Plural	Gen. Plural
<i>hrestallo</i>	<i>*hrestalto</i>	<i>*hrestallon</i>	<i>*hrestalillon</i>

## The Dative Case in Quenya

In *Unfinished Tales*, *alcar enyalien* (U-305) is glossed as "en- 'again', yal- 'summon', in infinitive (or gerundial) form *en-yalie*, here in dative 'for the re-calling', but governing a direct object, *alcar*: thus 'to recall or 'commemorate' the glory" (U-317). This is a bit complex overall, but it does suggest that Quenya did have a dative aspect. Finnish does not have a dative case per se or anything that approaches it. In Latin, the dative case generally denotes the person who benefits, the one for whom something is done, or to whom something is given, said, or shown.<sup>6</sup> In English, the dative aspect is usually referred to as the indirect object of the verb. The glossing in *Unfinished Tales* does not indicate what part of the word is the dative inflection. In the ninth line of Namarie is found the word *nin*, a personal pronoun meaning "me-for" (R-59), syntactically in the dative. In the Lost Road, *NI-* is glossed as the pronoun "I", suggesting that the dative is formed by simple adding an "-n". This may have bearing on the glossing for *enyalien* given above. In the *Silmariillion*, the title *Aldudenie* is translated as "The Lament for the Two Trees" (S-314). *Aldu* is obviously the "Two Trees" and *-nie* may have something to do with the root *NAY-* "lament" (LR-374). In any event, we have very little to go on to even be able to speculate.

## The Partitive Case in Quenya

In the interlinear translation of Namarie *ve linte yuldar lisse-miruore-na* is rendered "like swift (pl.) draughts sweet-nectar-of" (R-58). In Finnish terms, this is a perfect example of a partitive. There appears to be a similar form in *Mindon Eldalieva*, "Lofty Tower of the Eldalie" (S-341), and equally so in *Mar Vanwa Tyalieva*, "The Cottage of Lost Play" (*tyalie*, "play"; LT-260, LT-287). How the partitive would work in the dual or plural forms is difficult to say. It might be possible to think of the General Plural as all of the parts of the whole, but the dual partitive and the simple plural partitive would not make much sense. Table 8 reflects this speculation.

Table 8

## Partitive Case

Singular	Dual	Plural	Gen. Plural
<i>Eldalieva</i>	—	—	<i>*Eldalieleva</i>

To summarize and review all of the above, Table 9 is proffered. Just the significant suffixes are included.

Table 9

## Quenya Noun Declension

	Sing.	Dual	Plural	Gen. Plural
Nom.	-t	-r	-li	-li
Acc. (leng.)	-t	(diph.)	-li	-li
Gen. -o	-to	-ron	-lion	-lion
Inst. -nen	-nten	-inen	-linden	-linden
All. -nna	-nta	-nnar	-linnar	-linnar
Loc. -sse	-tse	-ssen	-lissen	-lissen
Abl. -llo	-lto	-llon	-lillon	-lillon
Dat. -n	?	?	?	?
Part. -va	?	?	-liva	-liva

## Conclusion

Some of you were hoping for a Conclusion, but "The Road goes Ever On" and we shall have need of more than a pocket handkerchief before we are done. I have tried to present this material in a somewhat light-hearted way; I hope that you do not feel that you have been beaten about the head and shoulders. Case systems of all kinds are extraordinarily difficult to come to grips with, but are well worth while even only for the purpose of understanding a little bit more about how our own native language works. Needless to say, we are speculating here, but the indications are that J.R.R. Tolkien's passion for language transcended idle curiosity. Although we may have different tastes from his, yet part of understanding a man's creative genius sometimes involves delving into the odious in order to perceive the sublime.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Both this quote and the quote immediately following are quoted in and extracted from Irach J.S. Taraporewala, *Sanskrit Syntax* (Delhi, India: Murshirram Monoharlal, 1967) p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> The following discussions on the grammar of Quenya were facilitated by the use of my series of indexes and glossaries of the works of J.R.R. (Continued on page 57)

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, adapted and performed by Rob Inglis (London: Chanticleer, (1987)), 1 audio cassette.

Tolkien took a dim view of dramatized fantasy, in particular of his own works of fantasy transformed by screenwriter or playwright. He argued in "On Fairy-Stories" that fantasy is "best left to words, to true literature," that it hardly ever succeeds as Drama. The 1955-56 BBC radio production of *The Lord of the Rings* justified that opinion as far as its author was concerned. More recently the animated films of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* have been notable triumphs of Cash over Art. But other adaptations of works by Tolkien have not been without merit. Among these are the BBC *Hobbit* radio play, first broadcast in 1968 and now available on cassette, and the solo *Hobbit* by Rob Inglis, first performed at the Edinburgh Festival and recently recorded in studio.

The BBC production fits most of *The Hobbit* into roughly three and one-half hours' running time. It is a skillful abridgement which does a minimum of damage to its source. Even so, many details in the book are omitted from the play, and others are unaccountably made different. To cite only a few examples in the play, the riddle contest is initiated by Gollum spontaneously, without the threat of Bilbo's sword, and is reduced from ten riddles to only four; Gollum does not shriek but states his answer, "String, or nothing!"; Balin, not Dori, drops Bilbo in the goblins' cave; Thorin and Nori, not Thorin and Dori, approach Beorn's house together; there is no auction at Bag-End.

Incidental narration is read in the first person by Bilbo – an appropriate device if *The Hobbit* is derived from Bilbo's diary – or in the third person by the "Tale Bearer" (Anthony Jackson). The introduction describing hobbits is cleverly shared by Bilbo and the Tale Bearer in conversation. Paul Daneman plays Bilbo superbly; good-natured, exuberant, with a childlike innocence and tendency to prattle, he is a quintessential hobbit. Heron Carvic as Gandalf is properly overbearing but has an annoying nasal quality to his voice which seems ill-matched to an old and powerful wizard. The remaining voices are adequate except for the smaller birds'; these, electronically processed to sound birdlike, instead sound merely electronic. Gandalf is pronounced variously gān-dālf, 'gān-dālf, or 'gān-dālf, Thorin is thōr-ēn though Bilbo lapses into thōr-in and through 'ba-lin, 'dwa-lin, etc. *Gondolin* gān-dō-lēn, *Beorn* 'bē-ōrn, *Gollum* gā-lūm! The music by David Cain, performed by voices and instruments, is sympathetic to the tale. The BBC dwarves sing with appropriately deep throats but off key.

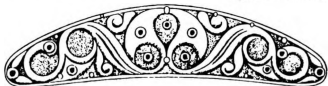
Rob Inglis, with only one hour and one set of vocal cords at his disposal, reduces large parts of Tolkien's book to narration by Bilbo. The encounters with trolls, the elves at Rivendell, goblins, wolves, eagles, spiders and Beorn, and the death of Smaug, are abridged to only a few sentences. The "unexpected party," the riddle contest, the escape from the wood-elves, Bilbo's conversation with

Smaug, and the Battle of Five Armies, however, are played relatively intact. Though Inglis omits much detail he retains and even accentuates *The Hobbit*'s charm and wit. "What a cheek, in me own house," says Bilbo, preferring like his fellow characters *me* for *my*.

As five of the thirteen dwarves Inglis is wonderfully versatile. The voice of Thorin is vaguely Churchillian, those of Fili and Kili comically octaves apart. Thorin and company even sing together by the magic of tape overdubbing. As Gollum Inglis is whining and sibilant but fails to "gollum" in his throat. As Smaug (pronounced smōg) he has "rather an overwhelming personality" indeed. He speaks, he growls, he guffaws, and after a meal of dwarf-ponies he burps contentedly! Inglis-Smaug's conversation with Inglis-Bilbo is faithful to the book, the dialogue extracted nearly verbatim, and is performed as Tolkien wrote the scene, with more humor than fire. In contrast, the BBC Smaug is merely ill-tempered; all of his banter about delivery, and cartage, and armed guards and tolls left out of his script.

It would be unfair to compare the two recordings further. They are both legitimate if very different interpretations of *The Hobbit*, each within its limits of time and cast. Both capture at least the substance and spirit of the book, though little of its vividness and beauty. Either recording will provide the listener with an hour or more of entertainment – and perhaps also a desire to read Mr. Baggins adventures yet again.

— Wayne G. Hammond



(Quenti Lambardillion, continued from page 30)

Tolkien including *A Working Concordance*, *A Working English Lexicon*, *A Working Tolkien Glossary* (7 vols.), *A Working Reverse Dictionary* (2 Vols.), and *Unpublished Materials Index*. For the benefit of the Elvish Linguistic Illuminati (ELI): yes, I did have the Richard Plotz letter in front of me as I worked through this article, using it as a guide but not depending upon it. I really wish that someone would get permission from RP and the Tolkien Estate to publish the letter in its entirety together with the noun declensions of *cirya* and *lasse*. There are some problems with it, however, in terms of the bracketed linguistic terms, in its present form, and the holograph ought to be carefully presented.

3. Abbreviations for the works of J.R.R. Tolkien follow my usual convention: *The Hobbit* (H), *Fellowship of the Ring* (I), *Two Towers* (II), *Return of the King* (III), *The Silmarillion* (S), *Unfinished Tales* (U), *Book of Lost Tales* (LT), *Book of Lost Tales, Vol.2* (LT2), *The Lay of Beleriand* (LB), *The Shaping of Middle-earth* (SM), *The Lost Road* (LR), *The Return of the Shadow* (RS), *The Monsters and the Critics* (MC), *The Road Goes Ever On* (R), *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (L).

4. The letter from J.R.R. Tolkien to Richard Plotz includes a declension which shows this to be the case.

5. The material on Finnish Grammar was taken from classroom materials developed for the Language Training Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints located in Provo, Utah. Most of the information used is in a section entitled "Finnish Grammar". I take personal blame for the "bagel-Glen-Paul" examples.

6. David Breslow, et al. *Latin: Our Living Heritage Book I* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1968), p. 30.