

Early Ilkorin Phonology

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Introduction

One of the elements that characterize the Elvish languages invented by J.R.R. Tolkien is that he gave them a historical background, wherein the two main tongues were developed with complex relations with other languages and dialects, both prehistoric and contemporary to them. Those languages and dialects are frequently referred to in the linguistic essays, charts and word-lists composed by Tolkien. The most prolific and best known examples are probably in the *Lhammas* and the *Etymologies*: the linguistic essay and the etymological dictionary that Tolkien wrote in the middle of the 1930s. But the diversity and historical depth of Elvish languages is also exemplified in earlier writings, although they are not so profuse in examples of languages other than Qenya and Gnomish/Noldorin (or ancient forms of these two), and they have received less attention by scholars.

This article aims to analyze Ilkorin (Ilk.), one of those “minor” languages, as it was conceived in the earliest conceptual phases. The adjective *Ilkorin*, formed from *Kôr* with the negative prefix *il-* (cf. I:255), was used to name “the Elves that never saw the light of Kôr” (I:231, cf. II:9, 64), and thus the language so called is the native tongue of the Elves who lingered in the Great Lands. I will examine the linguistic texts and narrative commentaries on the Ilkorin language published in the *Book of Lost Tales* and in the journal *Parma Eldalamberon* (particularly in the word-lists of no. 13), and follow with an analysis of the facts that are found in them, to show how the concept of that tongue evolved in those years.

This is an interesting but little explored area of research, which only recently has received attention by scholars. The first study published on the matter is Roman Rausch’s comprehensive analysis of the historical phonologies of Ilkorin, Telerin and Noldorin around 1923 (Rausch, 2008). The present article, although composed independently, coincides with a great part of Rausch’s analysis, although this one is focused on Ilkorin alone, and analyzes this language in greater detail, expanding the comparison with historical languages and including its earlier conceptual stages.

Ilkorin facts

Lost Tales period

The first period from which we have some information about Ilkorin corresponds to the composition of the *Book of Lost Tales*, before Tolkien moved to Leeds. In the Historical Sketch of the *Qenyaqetsa*, written no later than 1920 (PE12:xvii), it is said that “the Elves believe and many among men have seen with their eyes and know that (...) there wander yet about the lands scattered bands of the Eldalie, some maybe who straying on the march from Palisor have never seen Valinor” (PE12:2). And it is added next:

These as doth Rûmil hold speak tongues grown from that one Eldarin but albeit it would aid his lore much could he have evidence of the tongues of those who came never to Valinor yet has he never attained to this: but in this has Eriol after succeeded.

(...)

but of the manner of speech of the Elves of England was nought known before the time of Eriol for no man of the English had written or spoken of it, and the fairies of those places hold converse with men, if ever they needs must, in the English speech or other fading speeches of the kindreds of men that have dwelt therein.

The mention of the Elves “who came never to Valinor” reveals that the languages that Rûmil ignored were not only the modern forms of the tongues that he learnt in the Great Lands (that should have changed after he went back to Tol Eressëa), but the Ilkorin tongues, too, which in fact are not mentioned in the rest of the *Qenyaqetsa*. Rûmil also does not speak of them to Eriol in the “Link” between “The Cottage of Lost Play” and “The Music of the Ainur”, which was roughly contemporary, probably written in 1917 or 1918 (PE12:xv). There he does speak of “the lost bands that dwell wandering sadly in the Great Lands”, of whom he tells that “maybe they speak very strangely now” (I:48), but there he seems to be speaking only of the Noldoli who marched from Kôr and still linger there, not of the Ilkorin Elves.

The first positive information (besides Eriol’s knowledge, which is nowhere written down) is found in “Gilfanon’s Tale”, which was written after “The Music of the Ainur” (cf. I:202–3 about the order of the tales and Gilfanon’s appearance in the plot of the *Book of Lost Tales*). There Gilfanon tells: “Now the Eldar or Qendi had the gift of speech direct from Ilúvatar, and it is but the sunderance of their fates that has altered them and made them unlike; yet is none so little changed as the tongue of the Dark Elves of Palisor” (I:232; but Christopher Tolkien notes that that paragraph was marked with queries, cf. I:244). And in the outline of the part of the tale that was not developed we are also told that the Dark Elf Nuin woke the fathers of Men, Ermon and Elmir, and “he taught them much of the Ilkorin tongue” (I:236).

We have few instances of the Ilkorin language in the *Lost Tales*. In GL and QL we find Ilk. **Aryador** ‘Land of Shadow’ (another name for Dor Lómin), adopted in

Gn. *Ariodor*, Q. *Areandor* and other variants (PE11:20; PE12:32). Perhaps *Nuin*, the name of the Dark Elf in the tale of Gilfanon, was in his own language, as well as those of the Men whom Nuin awoke and taught to speak: *Ermon* and *Elmir*; but this is far from certain.

Leeds period

The next period corresponds to the years in which Tolkien worked as a Reader of English Language at the University of Leeds, between 1920 and 1925, after which he returned to Oxford as Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon. There he wrote more linguistic texts, with a greater amount of details on Ilkorin and other languages – actually this was for Tolkien an important and productive period from an academic point of view, too: in these years he composed his *monumenta ad perennis* works with E.V. Gordon, the *Middle English Vocabulary* (1922) and their edition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1925). In the *Early Qenya Grammar* he included an unfinished chapter on “Qenya Phonology” (QP, cf. PE14:60–70) that may be compared with “The Sounds of Qenya” (SQ) in the *Qenyaqetsa*, but is more structured and detailed in the initial historical introduction, where Tolkien now did comment on Ilkorin. But our most important sources of Ilkorin material in this period are the *Noldorin Word-lists* and the *Noldorin Dictionary* (PE13:133–65) wherein Tolkien included many etymological commentaries on the Noldorin words, with reference to prehistoric, as well as to Qenya, Telerin and Ilkorin forms.

Information from the Early Qenya Grammar

The historical introduction of QP, edited by Carl F. Hostetter and Bill Welden as part of the *Early Qenya Grammar* in *Parma Eldalamberon* no. 14, puts Ilkorin as a family of languages derived from Primitive Eldarin, in parallel to Kor-Eldarin languages and dialects (Qenya, Telerin and Noldorin). Its history is told with great detail:

From *Ilkorin* were developed, already before the flight of the Gnomes and the meeting again of Kor-Eldar and Ilkorindi, several distinct and practically entirely mutually unintelligible languages. These were all however distinguished in contrast with the Valinorian [i.e. Kor-Eldarin languages] by the more archaic and rougher type of their consonant systems, and their generally more consonantal character. Their history is obscure since there are hardly any records of the ancient periods, and at no time have they produced any literature or writings comparable to those of the Kor-Eldarin languages, save in the case of Doriath under Thingol. The Ilkorindi, too, usually were and usually remain still nomadic, so that the tendency of the languages was to split up into minor dialects of small extent that were constantly shifting their mutual relationships. (PE14:62)

Then distinct branches of Ilkorin tongues and their geographical areas are mentioned: Western Ilkorin, mainly derived from the Old Ilkorin of Doriath, and spoken in England, Wales and Scotland; a group of “dialects descended from a distinct, but originally closely related, branch of the Western group”, spoken now in the rest of Europe as far as the westerly parts of Russia; and the Southern and Eastern branches, “of which earlier knowledge is scanty, and the present descendants scattered and fading”.

Moreover, a bilateral influence between Ilkorin and Noldorin is explained:

while in appearance [Noldorin] looks more like Ilkorin than Valinorian it has not been much influenced by Ilkorin except in this point of general similarity of development. (...) [The Noldorin speeches of wandering Gnomes] were nearer related to the dialect of Mithrim than of Gondolin; they were particularly liable to influence from Ilkorin and, through the fugitives from Angband, from Orc-speech. (...) Noldorin is still spoken widely as a kind of lingua franca by all the Elfin peoples of the lands of men, and in many cases of tribes of original Ilkorin extraction is tending to oust their Ilkorin language. Noldorin of this type is descended in the main from the dialect of Mithrim with some influence of the dialects of the lesser “fugitive” groups of which the most important was Doriathrin (PE14:61-2).

Thus, Ilkorin is accounted not as a single tongue, but as the varied family of languages and dialects spoken by the Elves all over the world, though many tribes actually speak a type of Noldorin mainly derived from the dialect of Mithrim, which was in its turn influenced by Ilkorin and other languages. However, among the many varieties of Ilkorin dialects, in the records we can expect to find mainly Old Ilkorin, which is “the language of Doriath under Thingol preserved in records brought to Tol Eressëa” (*ibid.*).

A special remark should be made on *Doriathrin* (Dor.). Later in the *Lhammas* it would be considered a variety of Ilkorin, distinguished from *Falathrin* or *Falassian* (see the tree in V:170, and commentaries in V:175, 178) and other languages. But here it is called a dialect of the “lesser fugitive groups”, mentioned in a fragment that concerns the Noldorin dialects. Since Old Ilkorin is called elsewhere “the language of Doriath under Thingol” (cf. *supra*), it would be tempting to equate Doriathrin = Old Ilkorin, but this is not correct. In PE14:66 we have a contrasting pair of cognate words in both tongues: Old Ilk. **þakl* and Dor. *þacol* (‘axe’). The fact that the Old Ilkorin form is marked with an asterisk implies that it is an earlier, reconstructed form whence came the Doriathrin one, and *þacol* may actually be seen as a development of **þakl*, in which the nonvocalic syllabic sonorant *-l* developed into *-ol*, and /k/ was spelt *c* (although this does not imply a different phoneme). Therefore, we may consider that *Doriathrin* is the name given to the descendant of Old Ilkorin as spoken by the Elves that fled from Doriath after the ruin, more or less influenced by Noldorin. The spelling of the phoneme /k/ as *c* may actually be a symbol of that Noldorin influence.

The other fact that can be gathered from QP concerns the original consonantal system. The chart of original Eldarin consonants (PE14:63) shows a

set of “spirants” (i.e. fricatives), which include the alveolar voiced /z/ and voiceless /s/, as part of the “dental” series. The truly dental fricatives /ð/ and /θ/ are not in the chart, but then it is said that “evidence from Ilkorin” points to their original existence (/ð/ is spelt as *ð* or *ř*, and /θ/ as *þ*) together with /z/ and /s/, although that distinction “has no importance for Eldarin of Kor”. This implies that two Ilkorin words might show different phonological developments where any other Eldarin language would point to the same phoneme (either /s/ or /z/) in the same context, because in each word the original phonemes were actually different, though only distinguished in the Ilkorin languages.

Lexical corpus

The *Noldorin Word-lists* (NW) and the *Noldorin Dictionary* (ND) provide a large number of Noldorin words with prehistoric and cognate forms in other languages. These texts are part of the *Early Noldorin Fragments*, edited by Christopher Gilson, Bill Welden, Carl F. Hostetter and Patrick Wynne in *Parma Eldalamberon* no 13. All Ilkorin instances are gathered in table 1, generally following an alphabetical order for the Ilkorin terms. There I have added the example from QP commented on above, and the one Doriathrin instance in NW and ND. The inclusion of these cases is justified by the contemporariness of the texts and the direct relation between Ilkorin and Doriathrin.

The first column of the table has the Ilkorin (Ilk.) or Doriathrin (Dor.) term, distinguishing the latter with a dagger (†). The second column shows prehistoric (preh.) forms, which can be generally accounted as “Proto-Noldorin”, but not always Eldarin (Eld.), for in some cases the cognates in other languages imply a slightly different antecedent. The following four columns give those cognates, in Noldorin (N), Old Noldorin (ON), Qenya (Q) and Telerin (T), if extant. In the final columns the gloss of the term and its reference in the texts are given. The prehistoric forms are usually marked with an asterisk, which is omitted in the table and the analysis below; the asterisk is used, however, to mark hypothetical forms not provided by Tolkien. Long vowels in prehistoric forms are normally marked in ND with a macron (ˉ), the acute accent (´) being reserved to mark stress; but in NW Tolkien also uses an acute accent or a colon (:) for long vowels (PE13:135). These marks have been kept in the table as originally published. The meaning of acute accents in the prehistoric NW instances can be disambiguated considering that *t’lépe* obviously features a long *and* stressed *ē*, and that nearly all the other cases come from the manuscript pages where an accent is systematically used for long vowels (ENF 3, 4, 8, and 10). The only exception is *míye*, which occurs in ENF 13 and probably features a stressed (but not long) *i*; actually *dā*, on the same page, marks vowel length with a macron.

Table 1. Ilkorin and cognate words in other languages of the Leeds period

<u>Ilk./</u> <u>†Dor.</u>	<u>preh.</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>ON</u>	<u>Q</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>gloss</u>	<u>ref.</u>
<i>ank</i>	* <i>angā</i> ¹	<i>ang</i>		<i>anga</i>	<i>anga</i>	‘iron’	ND:159
† <i>cath</i> ²	<i>kasla</i>	<i>caul</i>		<i>kalla</i>		‘helmet’	NW:140
<i>fels</i>	<i>pelesa</i>	<i>helai</i>		<i>peles-</i> (<i>peler</i>)	<i>pelera</i>	‘fence’	NW:147
<i>fiss</i>	<i>pisye</i>	<i>hí</i>		<i>pihye</i>	<i>pirie</i>	‘sap, juice’	NW:147
<i>helh</i>	<i>kelekwé</i>	<i>celeb</i>		<i>telqe</i>	<i>celpe</i>	‘silver’	NW:140
* <i>hóp</i> ³	* (<i>s</i>) <i>kantá</i> ⁴	<i>hant</i>		<i>hanta</i>	<i>scanta</i>	‘a blow with an axe’	NW:147
<i>kark</i>	<i>gr:go</i> ⁵	<i>gara</i>	<i>garg</i>	<i>karko</i> ⁶	<i>gargo</i>	‘throat’	NW:144
<i>migg</i>	<i>míye</i>	<i>midh</i>		<i>mie</i>	<i>mire</i>	‘mist, drizzle’	NW:150
<i>molk</i>	<i>mlgo</i>	<i>bliw</i>		<i>millo</i>	<i>milgo</i>	‘oil’	NW:139
<i>seht</i>	<i>siktā</i>	<i>haith</i>	<i>heith</i>	<i>sihta</i>	<i>sitta</i>	‘moist, wet’	ND:163
<i>slíw</i>	<i>sleiwa</i>	<i>lhui</i>		<i>laiwa</i>	<i>líva</i>	‘pale’	NW:149
<i>smíg</i>	<i>smeigé</i>	<i>mui</i>		<i>mie</i>	<i>mige</i>	‘crumb’	NW:150
<i>snór</i>	<i>snóra</i>	<i>núr</i>				‘muscle’	NW:151
<i>stain</i>	<i>stainá</i>	<i>thain</i>		<i>saina</i>	<i>staino</i> ⁷	‘level, even’	NW:153
<i>swat</i>	<i>swada</i>			<i>fara</i>	<i>suada</i>	‘bark’ ⁸	NW:146
<i>swöt</i>	<i>swadwé</i>	<i>fadhw</i>				‘parchment’	NW:146
* <i>tak</i> ⁹	<i>dagá</i>	<i>dá</i>		<i>tá</i>	<i>daga</i>	‘high’	NW:141
<i>tök</i>	<i>dagá</i>	<i>dâ</i>		<i>tá-</i>	<i>daga</i>	‘high’	ND:161
<i>þakl,</i> † <i>þacol</i> ¹⁰	<i>dagla</i>	* <i>tael</i> ¹¹		<i>taila</i>	<i>tagula</i>	‘axe’ ¹²	QP:66
<i>takl,</i> † <i>tacol</i>	<i>dagla</i>	* <i>dael</i>		<i>daila</i>	<i>dagula</i>	‘axe’	QP:66
<i>þah</i>	<i>da’a, dā</i>	<i>daw</i>		<i>tá</i>	<i>dá</i> ¹³	‘hush, be silent’	NW:142
<i>þerr</i>	<i>terar</i> ¹⁴			<i>telar</i>		‘brick’	NW:153
<i>þilf</i> ¹⁵	<i>t’lépe</i>	<i>tlí</i>		<i>telpe</i>	<i>telpe</i>	‘butter’	NW:154
* <i>þilf</i> ¹⁶	<i>t’lépe</i>	<i>tlub</i>		<i>telpe</i>		‘silver’	NW:154
<i>þóh</i>	* <i>tankā</i> ¹⁷	<i>tanc</i>		<i>tanka</i>	<i>tanca</i>	‘firm, steady’	ND:1651
<i>þold</i>	<i>tłtá</i>	<i>tleth</i>		<i>tilta</i>	<i>tolta</i>	‘slade, hillside’ ¹⁸	ND:165

Phonological analysis

Lost Tales period

From the *Lost Tales* period, the only word that may be analyzed is the place-name *Aryador*. Of the other possibly Ilkorin names, *Nuin*, *Ermon* and *Elmir*, we do not have any prehistoric form or cognate in another language, which we could use to do an analysis, and note moreover that the fact that they were names given to Ilkorin speakers does not mean that they should be Ilkorin names: the very king of Ilkorins in Artanor was only referred to by his Qenya or Gnomish names in the tales (*Tinwë Linto*, *Tinwelint*, etc.; cf. I:269).

On the other hand, the entries in GL and QL that account for Ilk. *Aryador* (*Ariodor* and *Areandor*, respectively) are cross-referenced with other entries in both texts, which allow us to reconstruct a hypothetical primitive form **Gar-yað-ndor* when all the information is put together.

The first element **gar-* corresponds to Gn. *gar*, *garth* ‘place, especially an inhabited land’ (PE11:37), and to the Qenya root *ARA* ‘be dry’ whence *arean* ‘deserted place, wilderness’ (PE12:32; an alternative form of the root **ARA* is also given, where the apostrophe indicates a lost consonant, pointing to **GARA*). The entry *Areandor* in QL is actually said to be placed to the right of the group under that root in the manuscript, although the editors of QL state that the origin of the word differs from that root.

The second element **yað-* corresponds to the Qenya root *YADA-* whence the adjective *yanda* ‘dark, gloomy’ and the noun *yara* ‘a gloom, blight, lowering darkness’ (PE12:105). That root and the words derived from it are cognate with Gn. root *gadh-* (analyzed as < *iādh* in the entry *Garioth*), *gand* ‘dark and gloomy’, and *gath* ‘gloom, blight’. (PE11:37).

Finally, **ndor* ‘land, country’ corresponds to the Qenya noun *nōre* or the suffix *-nor*, *-nōre*, and to Gn. *dōr*, which come from roots with *nd* (PE11:30; PE12:66).

In **Gar-yað-ndor* > *Aryador* we see a loss of the initial **g-* and a reduction of **ōnd* to *d*. These changes resemble those normally found in Qenya and Gnomish, and contrast with Gilfanon’s statement that no Elvish language was “so little changed as the tongue of the Dark Elves of Palisor” (cf. *supra*). Obviously, the phonological evolution of a single word is not a solid ground for the evaluation of a language’s “changefulness”, and we know absolutely nothing of other linguistic features like morphology and grammar. Anyway, the queries at the paragraph that contained Gilfanon’s statement indicated that Tolkien was not sure of its actual validity.

Leeds period

In this section I will attempt an analysis of the phonology of Ilkorin and Doriathrin as they are represented in the instances of table 1. For the sake of simplicity, I have standardized the mode of marking vowel length in all languages, long vowels with macron (ˉ), and short vowels with breve (˘) or left

implicit with no special mark. Likewise, the resonant *l* is spelt *l̥*.

Vowels

Inventory of vowels

In the Ilkorin and Doriathrin words we find *ǎ*, *ě*, *ĩ*, *õ* and *ö*. The lack of long *ā* and *ē*, as well as of *ū* (either short or long), which exist in all the other Elvish languages, is probably due to the limited corpus we are working with.

The phoneme represented by *ö* is uncertain. In German this character is used for the unlauded *o*, representing a fronted /*o*/ (i.e. /*ø*/). But in Ilkorin it only occurs as a reflex of *a* in certain circumstances (in complementary distribution with long *ō*; see below). Therefore, it may rather represent an intermediate vowel between /*a*/ and /*o*/: the open-mid back rounded /*ɔ*/, or the open back rounded /*ɒ*/). Tolkien seemed to refer to the latter when he wrote about the “open *a*-like *ō*” that intervened in the development of *ā* > North Sindarin *ō*, diphthongized in “standard” Sindarin as *au* (XI:400) — but reduced to *õ* in Sindarin unstressed syllables (cf. Gilson and Welden, 1978:119).

Little can be said of diphthongs, which are only represented in the corpus by *ai* (/ai̯/) in *stain*. But again this is most probably due to the small corpus; note that the same is true of Telerin, which we know to have other diphthongs, at least *au* (/au̯/) in T. *austa* ‘summer’ and *aurina* ‘hot weather’ (PE13:137, 160). The only thing that can be said is that preh. *ei* (/ei̯/) was not preserved, but transformed into *ī* (see below).

Vowel loss

There are several vocalic changes. As in Noldorin, original final vowels are normally lost, but in Ilkorin this phenomenon is more generalized: there is no word ending in a vowel in the Ilkorin corpus. Another interesting feature is that disyllabic words, either original (like preh. *terar*) or resultant from the loss of final vowels (like **peles* < *pelesa*), undergo a syncope of the second vowel (*þerr* < **ter’r*, *fels* < **pel’s*, etc.). If *þilf* is not the result of a metathesis from **þlif*, we could assume that such a syncope could occur even if the vowel was stressed, since the preh. form of that word is *t’lépe*, with long and stressed *é*. This favors monosyllables ending in a consonant cluster; most words of the corpus are in fact monosyllables, and many show that pattern due either to the described syncope or to an original consonant cluster after the root vowel. We cannot know how the vowels of prehistoric forms closed trisyllables or longer words developed in Ilkorin.

Vocalization of sonants

On the other hand, as happens in other languages, old sonants *l̥* and *r* (and probably *ŋ* too) normally resolved into vocalic syllables. But while *r̥* became Ilk. *ar* as in other languages (see the row for *kark*), *l̥* became *ol* (see the rows for *mol*

and **bold**), although in other languages, at least in Q., it became **il** or **ul**, cf. PE12:10, P14:70. The sonant **!** could occur in Old Ilkorin as a result of the final vowel loss, as happens in **!pakl**, **!takl** (i.e. **!pak!**, **!tak!**); but the development in Doriathrin was the same: **!pacol**, **!tacol**.

A-mutation

Some Ilkorin words show vowel mutations, but not systematically. The first one to discuss is **ǎ** > **ö**, **ō**: in **swöt** < **swadwē**; **tök** < **dagā**; ***hōp** < **kantā**; **!pōh** < ***tankā**. As commented on above in reference to the phonetic value of **ö**, this mutation may be compared with Sindarin **ā** > **au**, **ō**, which was already a feature of Noldorin in the phase we are studying (cp. N. **mōr** cp. Q. **mā-ra** in PE13:125, or **daw** < **dā** in table 1, among others), and even of earlier Gnomish (cp. Gn. **Edhofon** < **Eđusmāni** in PE11:31, or **Aulas** < **Ālasso** in PE13:125). However, in the Ilkorin instances the original **ǎ** was always short (there is no instance of original long **ā** in non-final position, which we might use to compare its development).

The vowel length, however, should have changed in an intermediate phase, causing the distinct mutation to either **ö** or **ō**: we can see that in the **ō**-cases the vowel was originally followed by a nasal cluster, which was later transformed into a single fricative (cf. the section “Shift of voiceless stops” below). This could have triggered a compensatory lengthening, so that **ǎ** mutated to a long ***ō**, and eventually this could have yielded a close-mid **ō**, while short **ö** kept its open-mid or open articulation point.

This mutation does not happen in all cases. In other instances the original **ǎ** is kept (Ilk. **ank** < ***angā**; ***tak** < **dagā**; **!pah** < **da'a**;¹⁹ **swat** < **swada**; **!pak!**, **!tak!** < **dagla**; and Dor. **cath** < **kasla** or **!pacol**, **!tacol** < **dagla**). If we look for differences between the prehistoric forms that mutate and those that do not, we may observe that in the first group there are three prehistoric words ending in a long vowel and one uncertain case (***tankā**), while in the second group there is another uncertain case (***angā**), and five cases in which the prehistoric word ended in a short vowel, and only one long final vowel (**dagā**). Incidentally, the entry of NW bearing the latter case happens to have been rewritten in the ND, resulting in one of the cases in which there was mutation (**tök** < **dagā**). This would be consistent with a mutation triggered if the final syllable was longer or received the stress.

Other vowel mutations

There are other vowels that mutate in certain cases. The apostrophe in preh. **t'lépe** and **t'lepe**, whence N. **tlī** and **tlub**, respectively, represents a missing vowel in unstressed position, that was kept in the other cognates. Qenya and Telerin, languages in which medial vowel changes were less generalized, show the form **telpe**, pointing to an original **e**. In Ilk. **!pilf** (both entries, although the **f** in the second one is not fully visible in the typescript — see note 16), this **e** would have been raised to **i**. This mutation could have been favored by the absence of stress in that syllable, as occasionally occurred in Qenya (cf. PE12:9). In fact the stress is explicitly marked on the medial syllable in **t'lépe**, and other indicia confirm that

this should have been the accentuation in the Ilkorin development, too (cf. “Shift of voiceless stops”). Other Ilkorin words like *fels*, *helh* and *þerr* show the original *e* unchanged. This difference could be caused by the distinct accentuation; but the instances are too few and their prosodic features too obscure, so we cannot infer any certain hypothesis about the origin of this mutation.

Conversely, *i* > *e* in Ilk. *seht* < *siktā*, although the original *i* is kept in *fiss* and *migg*. And the original *ō* is kept in Ilk. *snōr*, the only instance with preh. *ō* in non-final position. There is no instance with preh. *ū*.

Finally we may note that diphthongs can change, too: *ei* > *ī* in *slīw* < *sleiwa* and *smīg* < *smeigē*; but *ai* is kept in *stain* < *stainā*.

Consonants

Inventory of consonants

Table 2 shows all the consonants found in Ilkorin and Doriathrin words, arranged according to their phonetic distribution. The letters of Ilkorin orthography are used, which normally coincide with the IPA symbols of the implied phonemes, except *þ*, which represents IPA /θ/, and *h*, which albeit normally used in Elvish languages for its IPA value (a glottal fricative), in this case probably represents a velar fricative, i.e. /x/, at least originally; cf. the section “Shift of voiceless stops” below. In addition, the phoneme implied by the geminated *gg* might differ from a mere long /g:/, as explained next. On the other hand, Doriathrin orthography departs from Ilkorin, spelling /k/ as *c*, and perhaps in one case /θ/ as *th*.

Table 2. Ilkorin attested consonants

	<u>Labials</u>	<u>Dentals</u>	<u>Velars</u>
voiced stops		<i>d</i>	<i>g</i>
voiceless stops		<i>t</i>	<i>k</i>
voiceless fricatives	<i>f</i>	<i>þ, s</i>	<i>h</i>
voiced fricatives			<i>gg?</i>
nasals	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	
laterals		<i>l</i>	
vibrants		<i>r</i>	
approximants	<i>w</i>		

Some consonants are missing probably due to the paucity of the corpus. Thus, the general pattern of consonantal shift (cf. “Ilkorin Sound Shift”) would require the existence of *p* at least. We could likewise expect the existence of its voiced counterpart *b*, although it might occur less frequently, as seems to happen with the other voiced stops.

In *migg* perhaps we should read -*gg* as a long velar voiced fricative, or even an

affricate (/y:/ or /gy/). A long stop would be unusual in final position, and the only similar case that I have found is Gn. **bordd** ‘fire place’, that can be compared to N. **bordh** ‘heat, rage’ or **borth** / **bordh** ‘hearth’, where the final consonant is fricative (PE13:116, 139).²⁰ We don’t have evidence of other voiced fricatives, and we cannot be certain about their existence. It has been noted above that Ilkorin accounted for the existence of **ð** (dental voiced fricative) in contrast to **z** in Eldarin, but this does not mean that **ð** or other voiced fricatives were kept in Ilkorin, since they are a group of consonants that tended to change or vanish in other Elvish languages.

Likewise, we need not expect any nasal, lateral or vibrant phoneme different from those that are found in the corpus, since they suffice for other languages, although /l/ could occur in ***calh**, if that form is assumed for published **cath** (cf. “One dubious case: Doriathrin **cath**”). More uncertain is the case of the approximant /j/ (normally spelt y by Tolkien): we have its labial or labiovelar counterpart **w**, but there are other languages that have **w**, too, like Noldorin and its conceptual relatives (Gnomish or Sindarin), and still have no word with **y**. However these languages do have a very similar sound, if not the same, in **i** when it forms a rising diphthong, sometimes spelt with the glide **i̯** (cf. the N. pl. suffix **-iath** in PE13:123). So we cannot say with certainty that any other Eldarin language lacked it. Our corpus has preh. **y** in the ending **-ye**, which disappeared or merged with other Ilkorin consonants; but it could have been preserved in other phonological contexts.

We find no hint of the palatal nor the labiovelar series either (except the approximant **w**, that I have assimilated to the labial series in table 2); in fact it is possible that Ilkorin did not have them at all, or only had their approximants. In other languages like Noldorin or Telerin labiovelar stops were generally transformed into labials (see in table 1 N. **celeb**, T. **celpe** < **kelekwē**, N. **peth** ‘word’ < **qettā** in PE13:164, etc.), and palatal stops into velar (N. **corn** < ***kyurna** ‘cheese’, T. **alacha** < **alakya**- *‘shield, ward off, protect’, PE13:140, 158). And we can see the same development for fricatives in Gn. **fui** ‘dark, murk’ related to the Qenya root **ḤUYU** (PE12:41, where **h** = /χ^w/), and Gn. **hanna**, related to Q. **hyanda** (PE11:48). Our corpus shows that at least the original /k^w/ in **kelekwē** is lost in Ilk. **helh**, too, although the development is not as in Noldorin and Telerin. But again we lack more cases to confirm whether palatals or labiovelars were preserved or generated in other circumstances. For instance, although original labiovelar stops were transformed into labials in Noldorin (and probably the same happened with fricatives, as in Gnomish), this language did have /g^w/, extended from original **w**-: see the entries for **gwadh** ‘bark, skin, peel’, **gwedhion** ‘husband’, **gweg** ‘man’, etc., in PE13:146, 162.

Consonant clusters

All our Ilkorin words are closed monosyllables. Thus, we can tell something about initial and final clusters, but we have no information about clusters in medial position. However, all initial and final clusters would likely be allowed as intersyllabic clusters, plus other combinations that would not exist in extreme

positions.

Initially only clusters with *s-* (*sl-*, *sm-*, *sn-*, *st-*, *sw-*) are observed, but if these clusters, mostly lost in the other languages, are allowed, it is probable that others were possible, too. In final position we find geminated consonants (*-gg*, *-rr*, *-ss*), several clusters of a liquid followed by stops or fricatives (*-rk*, *-lf*, *-ld*, *-ls*, *-lk*, *-lh*), one nasal cluster with the homorganic voiceless stop (*-nk*), and one fricative followed by a heterorganic stop (*-ht*).

Many similar combinations could be allowed finally, but not every one. It seems that liquids cannot share their syllabic units with a *preceding* consonant, at least in Doriathrin, where preh. **-sl* is resolved as *-th* in *kasla* > *cath*,²¹ and *-kl* in Old Ilk. *bakl*, *takl* yields *-col*, seemingly through **/k|/*. Likewise, final nasals with homorganic fricatives are reduced into the fricative alone (cf. this matter in the next section).

Ilkorin Sound Shift

Now we come to one of the principal features of the language: the mutations of stop — and perhaps fricative — consonants. This phenomenon is strikingly similar to the *erste Lautverschiebung* or ‘First Germanic Sound Shift’, generally known as “Grimm’s Law”. So I have labeled it “Ilkorin Sound Shift”, although we will also see some elements of other distinct historical consonantal changes, typical of Germanic languages. Cf. Krahe and Meid, 1967–9.

Shift of voiceless stops

First we can see that Eldarin voiceless stops became fricative in Ilkorin, just as in the development from Proto-Indo-European (PIE) to Proto-Germanic (PGmc.) according to Grimm’s law.²² Thus *p* > *f* in all the instances we have without exception. Likewise, *h* is a regular Ilkorin reflex of preh. *k*, with the only exception of preh. *kasla* > *cath*, where it is unchanged. Assuming that the model of Grimm’s Law is followed, this *h* should be considered the velar fricative /x/, as commented on above (in the “Inventory of consonants”), unless a later change modified its quality (as actually happened in PGmc., where it was eventually smoothed to /h/).

As a peculiarity to this pattern, in **tankā̃* > *ḡōh* we see that the cluster *-nk* has not resulted in **-nh*, but in the single *-h*. This coincides with the historical development of Ingvaemonic (i.e. Saxon and Anglo-Frisian) languages, cf. Lass (1997:251).²³ And **(s)kantā* has resulted in **hōḡ*, without the initial *s-*, but here we are probably not facing another reduction of a cluster: we should rather interpret that the Ilkorin form came from the prehistoric variant without the *s-*, i.e. **kantā* (see note 4).

Finally, we also have normally *t* > *ḡ*. There are more exceptions to this shift in the corpus, but most can be explained in accordance with regular Germanic developments:

- *stainā* > *stain*, and *siktā* > *seht*. Here the *t* is retained. But PIE voiceless

stops immediately following another obstruent were not affected by Grimm's Law either (Ringe, 2006:97).²⁴ Therefore, the Germanic model is also followed in these cases.

- **tłtā** > **bold**. The first **t** is normally transformed to **þ**, but the second one becomes **d** instead. Notice that in Germanic phonology, Verner's Law caused certain PIE voiceless stops to become voiced (rather than spirantized per Grimm's Law) when they were neither initial nor preceded by the Indo-European accent.²⁵ The spelling of preh. **tłtā** shows that the second **t** is exactly in this context; so this may also be a regular feature. Incidentally, this would confirm that the prehistoric form of Ilk. **pilf** was stressed as indicated in **t'lépe**, in the syllable before the **p**; otherwise the development expected by the model of Verner's Law would have been ***þilb**.
- Finally, there is yet another apparent exception in the text that gives **hōb** as the result of ***(s)kantā** (see note 3), where the cluster **-nt** seems to be transformed into **-b**. However, Tolkien must certainly have intended ***hōþ**, where **-nt** > ***-þ**, just like we have seen that **-nk** > **-h**. There are other cases in the typescript of NW where Tolkien made a **þ** out of a **p** modifying it by hand, or typing a **b** and a **p** together (**þah** and **þerr**, in NW:142, 153). Actually Patrick H. Wynne reports that in the entry we are discussing Tolkien at first typed "Ilk. **hþ**", with the **þ** rendered as a typed **b** altered in ink, although he immediately struck **hþ** out and replaced it by **hób**; and that in fact there are a couple of slight marks under the ascender of the **b** that might be interpreted as a cursory attempt to modify it to **þ** (Wynne, 2008). All these indicia are the reason to assume throughout the article that the intended form was actually ***hōþ**.

Grimm's Law also applied to the labiovelar voiceless stop: **/k^w/** > **/h^w/**. Our only case of such an original consonant in the corpus is in preh. **kelekwē**, transformed into Ilk. **helh**. There the labial quality of the consonant has been lost, but the fall of medial ***/h^w/** < ***/k^w/** is a normal Germanic development, too. This phoneme was normally preserved in initial position, but medially was only kept in Goth., while systematically lost in Anglo-Frisian and Norse, and in other languages changed to **/-h-/**.²⁶ The case of Ilk. **helh** resembles the latter development, although we lack instances to ascertain whether **/k^w/** was retained or changed in initial position.

Shift of voiced stops

Again as in Grimm's Law, primitive voiced stops normally became voiceless in Ilkorin.²⁷ We may see that preh. **g** is systematically unvoiced to Ilk. **k** in all positions except in **smeigē** > **smīg**, where it is preserved.

Likewise, preh. **d** becomes Ilk. **t** in five cases, but **þ** in two other cases. At least one of these cases may be justified as a change in Tolkien's ideas on the phonology of the words, incompletely represented in the texts: preh. **dagla** > Old

Ilk. **þakl**, Dor. **þacol**, as explained in note 10, is the result of the rewriting of a text that originally accounted for preh. **dagla** > Old Ilk. **takl**, Dor. **tacol** (which did follow our “Ilkorin Sound Shift”). When Tolkien modified the initial consonant of the words in all languages, except preh. **dagla**, the consistency with this model was lost, but also with the normal development of the other languages. The new Noldorin and Telerin forms suggest that the prehistoric form should also have been changed to ***tagla**, and this would be again consistent with the Old Ilkorin and Doriathrin forms **þakl**, **þacol** (see above). Therefore, we can infer that the inconsistency is in the prehistoric form, which should be ***tagla**, not **dagla**.

The other exceptional case, preh. **da’a**, **dā** > Ilk. **þah**, is more problematic: the Telerin form, typed just before the Ilkorin one, was originally **tā** (see note 13), as if it came from a primitive word with **t-**, not **d-**. The idea of an original word with **t-** would explain why he wrote the Ilkorin form with **þ-**, and perhaps Tolkien emended the error in the Telerin form when he detected it, but accidentally left the Ilkorin form unchanged. Still, maybe he only changed the Telerin form because it was actually the only wrong one, and another explanation should be found for Ilk. **þ-**. An interesting distinct solution is suggested in the next section.

Now, if this devoicing of voiced stops was generally applied to all consonantal series, as it seems to be, **b** (lacking in our corpus) should mutate to ***p**, which is the reason for expecting this consonant to exist in Ilkorin, as commented on in the inventory of consonants. On the other hand, according to Grimm’s Law, PIE /g^w/ > /k^w/, but as seen in the previous section, the development of labiovelars in the Ilkorin Sound Shift is uncertain.

Other Germanic-like consonant shifts

If we use Grimm’s Law as a model of the Ilkorin Sound Shift, we should infer a change from original voiced aspirates (/b^h/, /d^h/, /g^h/, /g^{wh}/) into voiced fricatives, eventually merged with voiced stops. But the early treatises on Eldarin phonology (SQ and QP) do not reveal the existence of primitive aspirates, although there were voiced “spirants” (i.e. fricatives). The chart in QP (PE14:63) has /β/, /z/, /j/, /ɣ/, and accounts for the existence of /ð/ as distinct from /z/, according to “evidence of Ilkorin”, although in other languages these two phonemes were conflated into one; SQ in PE12:15 has all these voiced fricatives (including the conflating pair /ð/ and /z/, although Ilkorin is not mentioned there), plus /v/ as an alternative to /β/, the palatalized alveolar /zʲ/ as an alternative to /j/ and the labiovelar /ɣ^w/. I represent them here with their IPA values for the sake of clarity, because Tolkien did not follow a consistent convention in these writings.²⁸

Whether these voiced fricatives merged with voiced stops as in PGmc., or experienced any other kind of shift, we cannot know, because we lack clear instances with prehistoric voiced fricatives. But there is yet another phonological development related to Grimm’s Law that can be discussed in relation to Elvish languages in general and Ilkorin in particular. OHG shows a *zweite Lautverschiebung* or ‘Second Sound Shift’, which transformed voiced stops into voiceless (like the First Shift), and voiceless stops into geminated fricative

stops or affricates in certain circumstances. According to some scholars, this is an effect of a general tendency of Germanic languages to repeat consonantal phenomena over time; in fact, modern languages of this family like English aspirate the pronunciation of voiceless stops at the beginning of tonic syllables, which can be compared to their fricativization or affrication in the First and Second Shifts (Ramal, 1998). And it is interesting to see that the Ilkorin Sound Shift also maintains some resemblance to a root strengthening process described in QP:

[In medial position] Originally probably only the voiceless stops were geminated (or lengthened) *kk*, *tt*, *pp*. The equivalent modification in the case (i) of spirants, was to stop them or nasalise them, giving an alternation between *ʒ*, *j*, *z*, *w* [= /ɣ/, /j/, /z/, /β/] and *ŋ*, *nj*, *n*, *m* and *g*, *d*, *b*;²⁹ (ii) of voiced stops, to unvoice them, producing a variation between *k*, *t*, *p* and *g*, *d*, *b*. (...) This strengthening of spirant to voiced stop, and voiced stop to voiceless stop, also clearly took place initially. (PE14:64)

This phenomenon, which I will call “Root Medial Strengthening” (although it could also occur in initial position), cannot be classified as a “sound shift”, because it did not occur systematically, but just in certain cases to create new roots; and unlike the Ilkorin Sound Shift, it affected nasals and liquids, too. But it is interesting to see that its effect on voiced stops was identical to the Ilkorin Sound Shift, and that the gemination of voiceless stops in the Root Medial Strengthening is not very far from their spirantization under the Ilkorin Sound Shift: at least in Gnomish and Noldorin geminated stops eventually became fricatives; cf. Gn. *laf* cp. Q. *lappa* ‘loose end’ (PE11:52), N. *noth* < *notta* ‘number’ (PE13:151), or N. *crech* ‘spittle’ < *kàrekka*, *inter alia*. Notably, in the Root Medial Strengthening we have two different developments of Eldarin voiced fricatives, which can be used as a basis for discussing what happened to them in the Ilkorin Sound Shift.

If we compare the Root Medial Strengthening with historical “echoes” of Grimm’s Law, we can also find a special resemblance with the Second Shift of High German: voiced stops were unvoiced in both phenomena, and the geminated fricative or affricate reflexes of voiceless stops in OHG may be compared with the gemination of voiceless stops in Eldarin. However, the Root Medial Strengthening cannot be related with the Ilkorin Sound Shift as the First and Second Germanic Sound Shifts at all: as noted above, the Root Medial Strengthening is not even a regular sound shift, and moreover it should have been older than the Ilkorin Sound Shift, which was applied to formed words, not to their roots. Nonetheless, the parallelism between their effects on voiced and voiceless stops is remarkable, as shown in table 3.

Table 3. Shift patterns of stops

<u>Original consonants</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>g</u>
First Gmc. Sound Shift	f	θ	x	p	t	k
Second Gmc. Sound Shift	ff, pf	zz, ts	hh, kx	p	t	k
Root Medial Str.	pp	tt	kk	p	t	k
Ilkorin Sound Shift	f	θ	x	p	t	k

This repetition of consonant shifts also provides a possible explanation for the problematic **p-** < **d-** in Ilk. **ḡah** ‘hush, be silent’ < **da’a**, **dā**. First, we must consider that the prehistoric form that lies behind the Ilkorin one should have been **da’a**, and not **dā**; a development from the latter would have required a shortening of the vowel and the rising of a new final consonant from nil; and especially the latter would be a rare development. More precisely, the actual prehistoric word whence **ḡah** came should have been the “full” form of **da’a**, including the missing sound indicated by the apostrophe. The apostrophe is a common symbol for the glottal stop (/ʔ/), but Tolkien normally uses it to represent any primitive phoneme, either vocalic or consonantal, that has been lost. Now, in this case between two vowels it should have been some consonant, and although we do not have any explicit indication of its value in this case, in Gnomish and Noldorin the missing consonant indicated by an apostrophe is usually **g**, which frequently disappears in medial position in the Eldarin languages (cf. PE12:16). And if **da’a** actually represented ***daga**, under the Ilkorin Sound Shift it would have normally yielded ***tak(a)** (with or without the final vowel, depending on the chronology of the phonological phenomena), and a repetition of the consonant shift in both consonants plus the final vowel loss would eventually produce ***tak(a) > ḡah**.

Of course, it is possible that the apostrophe represents some other lost consonant.³⁰ But the final step of the proposed theory, ***tak(a) > ḡah** is especially attractive, if we compare it with PIE. ***/tak-/** ‘be silent’ > Goth. **ḡahaip** ‘is silent’ (Ringe, 2006:132), nearly identical in phonology and meaning to our case.³¹ Why this word would have undergone a “double” consonant shift cannot be said. Perhaps it was favored to prevent the coalescence with preh. **dagá** > ***tak** ‘high’, which has also been cited above. Or it could be just a dialectal development.

Development of y

There are other consonant changes that cannot be accounted for by Grimm’s Law, and thus do not fall under what I have called the “Ilkorin Sound Shift” and related phenomena. First is the change of the approximant **y**, found in preh. **pisye** > Ilk. **fiss** and preh. **míye** > Ilk. **migg**. In both cases, the ending **-ye** has disappeared, and the new final consonant in the Ilkorin word is long: **ss** in **pisye** > **fiss**; and **gg** in **míye** > **migg** (for which however there was no original consonant before original preh. **-ye**).

Each development resembles a distinct Germanic sound change. In West Germanic languages, all consonants except /r/ were geminated before /j/, and

this /j/ could disappear depending on the language and its phonological context, just as happens here in *pisye* > *fiss*.³² And in Old Norse (which is not a West Germanic language, however), sometimes /j/ was lengthened to /jj/ according to Holtzmann's Law (Prokosch, 1939: §33c),³³ and eventually hardened to /gg/, as here in *míye* > *migg*.

Similar sound changes may account for the development of Ilk. *fiss* and *migg*. The ending *-ye* could correspond to a rising diphthong (*-*ie*) in Ilkorin history: cp. *-iā* in prehistoric Gnomish or Noldorin words, cognate with Qenya forms with *-yā*: Q. *murya* 'close, muggy' cp. *mburiā* and *mbúria* 'hot, raging' (PE13:139, 160), Q. *purya* 'fire place' cp. *búriā* (PE13:116), *venya* 'womanly' cp. *uēniā* (PE13:118), Q. *minyā* 'slender' cp. *miníiā* (PE13:164), etc. The semivowel *-*i* (phonetically the approximant /j/) could then cause the lengthening of preceding sounds, as in West Germanic. But when a vowel preceded it may be that the /j/ acquired a consonantal quality (Tolkien would spell it *y*, cf. PE12 8, 11–3) and lengthened itself, as in Holtzmann's Law for Old Norse. Alternatively, it may be that if the preceding vowel was *i*, this vowel assimilated the consonantal quality (cp. PE12:12, where the change *-ī* > *iy* is discussed for Qenya). Then *y* changed to *g*, as in Old Norse and in some West Germanic languages. Ilkorin words then lost the entire prehistoric ending *-ye*, as would be consistent with its proposed diphthongal character if we assume that the loss of final vowels could affect both its segments, perhaps in two different stages.

Thus, the development of these words may have been as follows: **pisie* > **pissie* (lengthening) > *fiss* (regular Ilkorin changes — loss of final vowels and Ilkorin Sound Shift); and **míie* > **miyie* (consonantalization of *i*) > **miyyie* (lengthening) > *migg* (loss of final vowels and *y* > *g*). Or if Ilkorin behaved like Old Norse, **míie* > **miyye* (Holtzmann's Law) > *migg* (as above).

On the other hand, the *gg* of *migg* may have arisen by a stress-dependent development of *y*, like that observed in other Elvish languages. In pre-tonic position, that sound is kept (although it may become vocalic), but in post-tonic position it is transformed into *ð* in Noldorin and into *r* in Telerin (Rausch, 2008). Likewise, Ilkorin could have developed pre-tonic **pisyé* > **pisié*, etc. as above, and a distinct post-tonic *míye* > **migge* > *migg*. Notice that both Noldorin *midh* and Telerin *mire* may share a common ancestor **miðe* (through loss of the final vowel in Noldorin and rhotacism of *ð* in Telerin, cp. the Qenya development of this consonant in PE12:24). Therefore, it is possible that the same form was also an ancestor of Ilk. *migg*. The shift from dental to velar consonants is rare in Elvish languages, but possible in certain environments (cf. **eð* > *eg* before *l* in PE11:31 s.v. *edh*).³⁴ In this case the long quality of the new consonant can be compared with the long fricative *dd* and the affricate *dð* in analogous Gnomish developments: *búriā* > *bordd* 'fire place', and *taliēiūn* > *-eijūn* > *-oiðun* > *-uiddhon* 'mockery' (PE13:116). If this comparison is suitable, the phonetic value of *-gg* could be long *g* (/g:/), long fricative (/ɣ:/), or even affricate (/gɣ/); see the "Inventory of consonants" above. But in any case it may be assumed to be a velar consonant.

Development of w

The other approximant, **w**, is in the initial cluster **sw-** of preh. **swada** and **swadwē** kept unchanged in Ilk. **swat** and **swöt**; and it also occurs after **d** in the second instance, where it has vanished. The Noldorin cognate **fadhw** reveals an earlier form ***swaduē** in which the second **w** was interpreted as a semivowel that was fully vocalized independently of the previous consonant. In Ilkorin this diphthong ***-uē** vanished like ***-je** in the examples of the previous sections (without effect on the previous consonant), and the rest of the word was developed according to previously commented processes.

There is also preh. **kelekwē** > Ilk. **helh**, which could be analyzed just as the previous case, but note that the cognates of other languages, N. **celeb**, Q. **telqe** and T. **celpe**, imply that **kw** was in this case a single labiovelar consonant (/k^w/, preserved in Qenya and changed to a labial in Noldorin and Telerin, as usual). So either this consonant changed its point of articulation in the Ilkorin development — at least when it was final (cf. “Shift of voiceless stops” above), or it developed as **ku-** only in Ilkorin.

Yet another conclusion is that if the palatal approximant **y** behaved like **w** in other positions than the final syllable, initial ***sy-** might be kept in Ilkorin, although we don't have any actual case to confirm it.

One dubious case: Doriathrin **cath**

The only phonological change that has not been yet discussed is **-sl** > **-th** (= **-þ**) or ***-lh** in Dor. **cath** or ***calh** (cf. note 2). If **cath** is the correct reading, the relation between the resulting **th** and the original **s** is clear (both are voiceless fricatives with a near articulation point, normally assimilated in Qenya); but we don't exactly know how the **l** disappeared. Perhaps it was assimilated to the previous consonant in the cluster (> ***-st**, ***-sþ**?), before both consonants merged into one. However, we have no parallel case to compare.

On the other hand, ***calh** would be closer to the development observed in N. **caul** and Q. **kalla**, where the preh. **l** is retained (and in Qenya it is lengthened). This form could be derived from ***kals(a)** or ***kalþ(a)** by early metathesis of **kasl(a)** (before the loss of the final vowel, or before the sonant **l** was expanded to **ol**). In that case it would likely represent ***/kał(i)/** rather than ***/kałx/**. Note that in medial position (although not finally) Southern Sindarin also had ***/ħ/** (spelt **lh**, **lth**, **lþ** or **ll**) from a similar environment, cf. Hostetter (2003).

Conclusions

The data that has been gathered in this article shows that Tolkien conceived the existence of Ilkorin languages and dialects very early in the first stages of his linguistic invention, but in the earliest texts he didn't develop such a concept apart from a few names, and some vague commentaries about the language, of which the Elves of Tol Eressëa knew little. Among these commentaries it may be highlighted that Ilkorin was supposed to be the germ of the languages of Men, and that it changed less than the other tongues of the Elves. But this last idea contrasts with the scarce factual evidence we have of Ilkorin (which shows the

same kind of changes as other languages), and with the general notion implied in Tolkien's tales, of the Great Lands as a place where things grow and change faster than in the Blessed Lands.

When Tolkien worked on new linguistic texts, during his stay in Leeds, he expanded the information on Ilkorin considerably, with a longer commentary on its history, characteristics and geographical variants in the chapter on "Qenya Phonology" of the *Early Qenya Grammar*, and most importantly, with twenty-six instances of Ilkorin words, and their cognates in other languages, included in the *Noldorin Word-lists*, the *Noldorin Dictionary* and the "Qenya Phonology" itself.

In these texts we learn that Ilkorin was not a single tongue, but a large set of languages and dialects, of which Old Ilkorin was the speech of Doriath in the time of Thingol, and the best preserved one, and Doriathrin was the variant spoken by the fugitives of that kingdom, very influenced by Noldorin (just as some Noldorin variants were much influenced by Ilkorin). Therefore, the great bulk of Ilkorin words in the extant corpus might be regarded as the Old Ilkorin of Thingol, although we also have a few instances of Doriathrin, which are differentiated from the others in its more Noldorin-like orthography, with *c* for /k/ and (perhaps occasionally) *th* for /θ/, spelt in Ilkorin as *k* and *þ*, respectively. Moreover, one of the Doriathrin instances (***þacol*** / ***tacol***), when contrasted with the Old Ilkorin cognate (***þakl*** / ***takl***), shows that the marked "consonantal character" of Ilkorin was decreased in the development of Doriathrin.

That consonantal character is corroborated in the Ilkorin words of the corpus, which regularly lost all final vowels, syncopated medial ones, and kept initial consonant clusters (at least those in *s*-), although like other Elvish languages it resolved sonants by incorporating new vowels before them.

Other phonetic developments have been detected and analyzed. The most important finding is a set of regular rules for the development of consonants, which has been called the "Ilkorin Sound Shift" after the name of the "First Germanic Sound Shift" defined by Grimm, because it bears a great resemblance to that historical linguistic phenomenon and to other sound laws of Germanic languages. Characteristic developments of different Germanic branches are observed, like the Ingvaemonic reduction of final nasal + fricative clusters and the OHG retention of medial /h/ < /k^w/. The typical "Second Sound Shift" of OHG is also recalled by the Root Medial Strengthening that was applied in early stages of Eldarin languages (not only to Ilkorin), and by the "double" shift that the word ***þah*** seems to have undergone; moreover this word has a striking semantic and phonological parallel in Gothic. The evident Germanic inspiration for consonant shifts also casts some light on the observed vowel mutations. Only partial patterns of vowel changes have been found, but some of them can be related to typical Germanic developments, like *ei* > *ī*, as well as *ǣ* > *ö/ō* (in certain cases), which can be connected with the qualitative merger of /a/ and /o/ in PGmc. (Ramal, 1998).

The effects of the phonetic changes that have been detected are not independent, and therefore some must have occurred earlier than others. Some sonants that developed a previous vowel were produced by the loss of final vowels; the changes observed in words prehistorically ending in *-ye* should have

occurred while that ending was still present; the mutation of vowels, which involved lengthening in some cases, could not have been completed before the following nasal consonant clusters were reduced by the Ilkorin Sound Shift; and the instances of Old Ilk. *þakl* / *takl* vs. Dor. *þacol* / *tacol* clearly show that the resolution of sonants was later than the Ilkorin Sound Shift. Putting all this together, we see that the changes triggered by *-ye* were older than the loss of final vowels, while such loss and the Ilkorin Sound Shift were certainly older than the resolution of sonants and the mutation of vowels (or at least older than their completion). Moreover, the Ilkorin Sound Shift implies different developments that could be ordered as in historical linguistics. Only the medial syncope of vowels is independent of other changes in the instances that we have, but in the lack of further evidence, it could be connected with the loss of vowels in final position.

The phonetic developments that have been analyzed are fairly consistent and comprehensive in relation with the available corpus. The Ilkorin Sound Shift alone can explain the development of nearly all primitive stops (which produced new voiceless stops and fricatives, perhaps what is meant by the “rougher type of consonantal system” of Ilkorin), and it reveals a probable slip in the typing of the *Noldorin Word-lists* (*hób*, where we should most probably read **hóp*). And with other hypotheses about the development of other sounds, including the approximants *y* and *w*, the consonantal evolution of nearly all words has been described. In some cases the analysis has revealed that the primitive terms from which the Ilkorin words came were different from the prehistoric forms given for the Noldorin entries. The only words that have eluded a successful historical analysis are:

- *smeigē* > *smīg*, in which the original final *g* has been kept, instead of shifting to *k*, as would be expected in the Ilkorin Sound Shift. But note that in historical linguistics this kind of sound law often has exceptions or is combined with other phenomena that sometimes obscure its reflexes, as happens with Verner’s Law in combination with Grimm’s.
- *kasla* > Dor. *cath* or perhaps **calh*. The initial *k-* is not shifted either, and the development of the final consonants is unique in the corpus. Moreover, the analysis of this word is further complicated by the uncertainty of its actual reading.

A question arises about Tolkien’s intentions regarding the Ilkorin phonological developments. Did he mean to relate them with the historical phonology of Germanic languages, or did he use the Germanic model only as an inspiration, with no intended connection between fiction and history? Of course Ilkorin was not partaking of the *same* changes as Germanic languages, as it belongs to a family of languages distinct from the speeches of Men. But we should consider that in the previous stage Tolkien conceived that Men were taught to speak by the Ilkorin Elves, and still in a later stage would write that the Mannish languages “that live still in the North of the earth” were akin to the speeches of Men in Beleriand, influenced of old by the tongues of the Dark-elves and later on by those of the Green-elves (V:179). So it is reasonable to think that Tolkien used

the oldest features of Germanic languages (and some elements of particular families, like Ingvaemonic, West Germanic, Old Norse, Gothic, and especially High German), to make Ilkorin contrast with the other Eldarin languages as the languages of the North contrast with other Indo-European languages, and thus give it a characteristic “flavor” that made it a suitable ancestor or relative of the Northern Mannish languages. Or perhaps Tolkien meant to go further, and imply that Proto-Germanic was related to the language of Men who dealt with the Ilkorins in the Elder Days, and that the changes in the tongues of those Men and Elves were mutually influenced.

The conception of Ilkorin would evolve further during the next decade, as the *Lhammas* and the *Etymologies* show. But we can see that, a few years after Tolkien started to develop his great Elvish linguistic invention, Ilkorin became more than a mere “minor” language, and Tolkien thought on it more than what at first sight might be perceived.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to José Andrés Alonso de la Fuente, from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, whose works on the fragmentary languages invented by J.R.R. Tolkien have been an inspiration, and who contributed valuable ideas (especially the comparison with OHG phonology and the hypothetical reading of *cath* as **calh*), bibliography and examples from historical linguistics to this article. And I also heartily thank Arden R. Smith and Carl F. Hostetter for helping me to find the Germanic model discussed in the section “Development of *y*”.

Notes

1. No prehistoric word is given in ND. Q. and T. *anga*, the most conservative languages, imply the form given in the table, but the length of the final vowel is uncertain. Since short final vowels vanished in Qenya nouns (cf. PE14:42), it should have been originally long. But there are examples of Qenya nouns in which older short final vowels were kept, like Q. *tyuka* ‘cud’ < *tyúka* (PE13:140).

2. Marked as a Doriathrin word. The editors of NW note that it was “added in very faint writing, and the reading is uncertain” (PE13:140). The reading **calh* cannot be ruled out either (Wynne, 2008). See the section “One dubious case: Doriathrin *cath*” for further discussion on this matter.

3. Actually published as *hób*, but probably the form intended by Tolkien was **hóp*. See below in “Shift of voiceless stops”.

4. It is published plainly as *skantá*. But after the Ilkorin form is written “from *k-*”. This compressed note (written at the extreme right edge of the sheet, as the editors note) might mean that it comes from a variant Eldarin form starting in *k-*, i.e. **kanta*.

5. The editors of NW comment on this form: “Note that in the etymological forms **r* has a resonant or semi-vocalic pronunciation, and **r*:

represents a lengthened variety of the same sound.”

6. The Qenya form *karko* is not directly cognate with the other words listed here (which derive from *gr:go*), but rather with N. *griw* ‘alimentary canal’ (which derives from **grgu-*). I have nonetheless included it here for the record.

7. The Telerin form is given after a semicolon, with the gloss ‘a plain’. This may mean either that it comes from the same prehistoric adjectival form as those in the other languages, but developed a substantival meaning in Telerin; or that it derived from a related but distinct substantival form.

8. The gloss ‘bark’ only applies to the Ilkorin word. Q. *fara* is ‘fur, fell’, and T. *suada* is ‘hide’.

9. The Ilkorin form is given as *ta[k]*, with the editorial note: “The end of the Ilkorin cognate is lost off the right edge of the sheet”. But there is no reason to think that it should be longer than **tak*.

10. *Pacol* is marked as a Doriathrin form, after Old Ilk. *þakl*. All the forms of this row, except preh. *dagla*, arose as emendations of those that are given in the following row.

11. Written with the definite article as *i-dael*; but in Noldorin the article causes soft mutation of the initial consonant, so the form without article **tael* is seemingly implied (cf. PE13:120–1). Likewise, **dael* in the following row is implied in the form with article actually written: *i-dhail*.

12. The gloss ‘axe’ (here and in the following row) only applies to the Doriathrin, Ilkorin and Noldorin words. Q. *taila* is ‘blade’, and T. *tagula* (<< *dagula*) is ‘heavy woodman’s axe’.

13. The Telerin form was first written as *tá*.

14. Roman Rausch interprets in his article that Ilk. *þerr* comes from *tésare*, the primitive form of the N cognate *teiar*, instead of from *terar* (whence Q. *telar*). In fact all these words are given in the same entry of NWL, and it is likely that *terar* < *tésare*. But preh. *terar* seems to be closer to the Ilkorin form, both by phonology and by their relative position in the entry of NWL.

15. Of the words in this row, only N. *tlí* is without doubt cognate to the prehistoric syncopated form *t’lépe*. All the other forms are given as a side reference for comparison.

16. As in the previous row, only N. *tlub* is doubtless cognate to prehistoric *t’lépe*. The whole entry was struck out (probably to be replaced by the previous one). The *f* of Ilk. **þilf* is only partly visible at the edge of the sheet (editors’ note).

17. No prehistoric word is given in ND. Q. *tanka* and T. *tanca* imply this form, although the length of the final vowel is uncertain; cf. note 1.

18. The gloss ‘slade, hillside’ only applies to the Ilkorin word. Q. *tilta* is ‘slanting’, N. *tleth* is ‘sloping, slanting, leaning’, and T. *tolta* is ‘leaning, tottering’.

19. The text gives two prehistoric forms for Ilk. *þah*: *da’a* and *dā*. The former is probably nearer to the origin of Ilk. *þah*, although the exact word from which it came could be different (see below in “Other Germanic-like consonant shifts”). But this would not affect the current discussion about vowel mutations.

20. Welsh also uses *dd* to represent a voiced dental fricative (/ð/), and it is

possible that Tolkien was imitating to some extent this spelling when he wrote **bordd**; see more evident examples of Welsh-like spelling of Gnomish in **Tynwfiel** (II:41), **ffwyg** (PE13:114) or **Fwyor** (PE15:14), and a discussion of how Tolkien used certain features of Welsh orthography in Hostetter (2003). Welsh does not however have /ɣ/, so Tolkien could only have used *gg* in this sense by analogy, if he did.

21. Or as **-lh** if the correct reading is **calh*; cf. note 2 and “One dubious case: Doriathrin **cath**”. If the form is actually **cath**, this would be the only case in which the phoneme /θ/ is spelt *th*, not *þ*. Although Doriathrin orthography departs from Ilkorin in the spelling of /k/ following the convention of Noldorin (Ilk. *k*, Dor. *c*), in Dor. **þacol** we still see /θ/ spelt as *þ*. But certainly *th* should not be interpreted as the cluster /tx/: it would be phonologically unsupported, and moreover the Doriathrin word **cath** with its meaning ‘helmet’ and pronounced [kaθ] seems to be a reminiscence of Gn. **cathol**, **cathwar** ‘helmet, head-ward’ as the editors of NW mention in the text.

22. E.g. in PIE **/pórkos-/* ‘pig’ (cp. Lat. *porcus*, Gk. *πόρκος*) > PGmc. **/farhaz/* ‘piglet, farrow’ > OE *fearh*, OHG *farah*. And also PIE **/treies/* ‘three’ (cp. Lat. *trēs*, Gk. *τρεις*, Skr. *trayas*, Lith. *trýs*) > PGmc. **/θrīz/* > Goth. *þreis* OE *þrī*, OHG *drī*, ONor. *þrír*.

23. E.g. PIE **/h₁dónt-/* ‘tooth’ (cp. Lat. *dens* – *dent-s*, Gk. *ὀ-δόντης*) > PGmc. **/tanþ-/* > Goth. *tunþus*, OHG *zand*, but OE *tōþ*, OFris. *tōth*.

24. See parallel historical examples in PIE **/stéigheti/* ‘is walking’ (cp. Lat. *ve-stīgium* footstep, trace, Gk. *στειχειν* ‘to go’) > PGmc. **/stīg-/* ‘to climb’, whence Eng. *stair*, German *steigen* ‘to rise, climb’; and PIE **/oktōw/* ‘eight’ (cp. Lat. *octō*, Gk. *οκτώ*, Skr. *aṣṭáu*) > PGmc. **/ahtōu/* > Goth. *ahtau*, OE *eahta*, OHG *ahto*.

25. E.g. PIE **/ph₂tér/* ‘father’ (cp. Lat. *pater*, Gk. *πατήρ*, Skr. *pitár*) > PGmc. **/fadēr/* > OE *fæder*, OHG *fater*, ONor. *faðer*. It is accepted by scholars that Verner’s Law was applied to the reflexes of Grimm’s Law, transforming voiceless fricatives into voiced, which eventually merged with voiced stops (i.e. PIE **/ph₂tér/* > **/fabér/* > **/faðēr/*, **/fadēr/*), as it also affected to /s/ > /z/. If the Ilkorin development were like that, we should expect Eld. *s* after unstressed syllables becoming *z*; but we do not have instances that confirm it.

26. See the initial retention in PIE **/k^wé-k^wl-o-s/* ‘wheel’ (cp. Gk. *κύκλος*, Lat. *cycl-us*) > PGmc. **/h^weh^wlaz/* ‘wheel’ > ONor. *h^wél*, OE *h^weōl*. But the distinct medial development in PIE **/léik^w-/* ‘to leave’ (cp. Lat. *re-linguō*, Gk. *λείπω*) > PGmc. **/lih^wana^z/* ‘to lend’ > Goth. *leihyan*, OHG *lih^wan*, OE *līon*. Or post-PIE **/ák^w-eh₂/* ‘(running) water’ (cp. Lat. *aquā*) > PGmc. **/ah^wō/* > Goth. *ah^wa*, OHG *ah^wa*, OE *ea*, ONor. *â*.

27. For the development of voiced stops in PGmc., see the example of PIE **/h₁dónt-/* > PGmc. **/tanþ-/* in note 23. Also PIE **/leb-/* ‘lip’ (Lat. *labium*, Hitt. *lilipai* ‘(s)he licks’) > PGmc. **/lepaz/* and **/lipjian-/* > OHG *leffur* and OE *lippa*, respectively. Or PIE **/yugóm/* ‘yoke’ (cp. Lat. *iugum*, Skr. *yugám*) > PGmc. **/juk^a/* > OE *geoc*, Goth. *juk* ‘yoke (of oxen), pair’.

28. Tolkien wrote /β/ as **þ**, and in QP indicated that it was normally written *w* in Qenya phonology; /ð/ was written *ð* in SQ; /j/ was *j* in QP, and **ǰ** in SQ; but **z** (without the diacritic) he normally used for /ɣ/, as he did in QP, although in SQ he used **ɣ** for the velar and labiovelar voiced spirant. The remaining voiced fricatives he spelt with their current IPA symbols, although

he marked the “palatalized” and “labialized” quality of /zʲ/ and /ɣʷ/ with an arch, not a superscript, i.e. **zy** and **ŷw**, respectively. Notice that there are some IPA symbols that Tolkien used with a different value. Thus, IPA [ʒ] is the palato-alveolar voiced stop, but Tolkien normally used it as its velar counterpart (in Middle English the velar voiced stop was actually spelt with the letter *yogh* – ȝ –, very similar to *ezh* – ȝ). Likewise, IPA [j] and [w] are approximants, and though Tolkien often used them just as IPA, in QP he used them to represent fricatives, probably for convenience, since that text was a typescript (cf. PE14:38) and he would have found it easier to type those simple characters than other combinations with diacritics, or than writing other symbols by hand *ad hoc*. I normally follow Tolkien’s spelling in this article, but the IPA values are used where there might be some risk of confusion.

29. For the phonetic values of the “spirants”, cf. note 28. Notice that no voiced stop reflex of **j** is given. It probably merged with **g**; the chart of Eldarin consonants in PE14:63 shows **ȝ** and **j** grouped together. On the other hand, it should be noticed that Eld. **ð** is not mentioned in that text, probably because it was not distinguished from **z** in the phonological development of Qenya, which is the language there discussed. But these two phonemes were perhaps “strengthened” differently in Ilkorin, because it is this tongue that revealed their original distinction (see above, in “Information from the Early Qenya Grammar”).

30. A likely alternative would be the voiced velar fricative, which is commonly lost in intervocalic position in many languages; cp. N. **gwaist** < **wa-ȝist** (PE13:146), the Qenya root **UȝU** = **Ū** (PE12:96), and especially Gn. **gwaid** ‘kinsman, relations’ < **gwa’ed** < **ȝuazet-**, PE11:43. Incidentally, if this were really the case, we would then have our first example to discuss the evolution of voiced fricatives in Ilkorin. But this tentative proposal is too little evidence to reach a conclusion about this matter.

31. This parallel is only in Gothic. The reflex of the PIE verb derived from */tak-/ in PGmc. showed */pag-/ due to Verner’s Law, because the stress was not carried by the first syllable: PIE */takəyé-/ > PGmc. */pagai-/ (cf. OHG *dagēt* ‘is silent’, etc.).

32. E.g. PIE */méðhyos/ ‘middle’ (cp. Skr. *máðhyas*, Lat. *medius*) > PGmc. */midjaz/ > Goth. *midjis*, but OE *midd*.

33. E.g. PIE */priya-/ ‘dear’ (cp. Skr. *priyā* ‘wife’) > PGmc. */frija-/ > OHG *Fria* (name of the goddess), but North Gmc. **frijja* > ONor. *Frigg*.

34. In the first version of this article, the different accentuation of preh. **pisye** and **miye** was not considered, and it was assumed that **y** could have changed to ***ð** in either case. Additionally, the possible shift from dental to velar in **migg** was compared with Gn. **feigien** ‘worse’ < **faiðn** (PE13:114). But Roman Rausch demonstrated in *Lambengolmor* list message #1068 that those words probably do not exhibit the proposed development, and highlighted the generalized stress-dependent development of **y** in Elvish languages (comparable with Welsh phonology). This section has been modified accordingly, to incorporate some of Roman’s ideas.

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See also the general *Tengwestië* Bibliography.

Additional Commentary

- *Lambengolmor* list message 1068 (Nov. 12, 2008)
- *Lambengolmor* list message 1069 (Nov. 21, 2008)

Change Log

- 2008-11-21 09:58:39: Revised discussion of development of *y*
- 2024-10-24 22:03:18: Formatting changes only: converted text to Gentium Plus, inlined all combining diacritics

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First published on November 8th, 2008

Last modified on Thursday, October 24th, 2024 10:53 pm UTC