

Light and Tree

A Survey Through the External History of Sindarin

by Helios De Rosario Martínez

Introduction

There are certain lexical areas in which the Elvish languages created by J.R.R. Tolkien are especially rich. Light and trees, two motifs with a great importance in Tolkien's sub-created world, from either the mythologic or the pictorial point of view, are indeed among these elements with permanent and extensive presence in the Elvish vocabulary.

Moreover, there seems to be some poetical connexion between light and trees. John R. R. Christie notes it in various poems and descriptions of characters and places throughout the entire *legendarium*, where light and trees (and other elements, such as eyes and hair) often interact, like sunlight filtering through leaves and branches, or are metaphorically connected (Christie and Shuttleworth, 2005). See for instance the first version of "Kortirion among the Trees" (1:25–26), where "the twinkle of early stars is tangled" in the bars of the trees and "the seven lampads of the Silver Bear swing slowly in their shrouded hair" (lines 28–31), or "naked elms entwine ... the Pleiades, and long-armed armed poplars bar the light of golden-rounded moons" (lines 98–100). And of course, the mythical conception of the Moon and the Sun as the fruits of the Trees of Valinor may also be considered.

In Elvish linguistics there is also an apparent connexion, at least in some families of words related to light and trees, although in Tolkien's published texts we cannot find explicit etymological links between them. In relation to this, the Sindarin word *galad*, that only in *The Lord of the Rings* occurs as derivations of originally different words with different meanings, in names such as *Galadriel*, *Gil-galad*, *Caras Galadon* or *Galadrim*, was the subject of a thread of discussion in the *Lambenor* list (in Spanish), resulting in the article "El problema de *Galad*", published by this author in July 2001 (and printed in the journal of the Spanish Tolkien Society, *Estel* 38:31–36).

That article dealt chiefly with the Sindarin term mentioned in its title, but one could glimpse a long history behind it, that goes back to the stage of literary and linguistic creation in which the Sindarin tongue did not yet exist, when Noldorin and even earlier Gnomish occupied its place. Encouraged by Carl F. Hostetter, editor of *Tengwestië*, that study has been extended to cover these stages. In Spanish the article "La historia de *Galad*", specifically concerning the term *galad*, was published in April 2004, as a continuation of the previous one. The article published here, however, is not limited to the term *galad*. This is a thorough analysis of the etymological families that include some words with the meanings of 'light' and 'tree', in the evolution of the Elvish language inspired by Welsh, from the early Gnomish as conceived before 1917, to the latest stages of Sindarin in 1972.

This study reflects, through the history of a small set of words, the intricate scheme of the Elvish languages, the complex intertwining of their etymological roots, and how Tolkien's conceptions were permanently flowing around some central immutable items (as the verbal root *gil*- 'shine white or silver' in Gnomish and successive tongues, or the Q(u)enya noun *alda* 'tree'), while most other words and etymologies were in a perpetual state of change, usually subtle, and in some instances striking, like the evolution of the *legendarium* in which these languages were set.

The analysis will be structured in sections, corresponding to three conceptual stages: “Gnomish and early Noldorin”, from the very first texts to approximately mid-twenties (the linguistic material of that stage having been thoroughly published in *Parma Eldalamberon*); “Later Noldorin and early Sindarin” covering the later stage prior to the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* or immediately after (with the *Etymologies* as the main published source of linguistic information of that stage); and “Changes in later Sindarin”, in which some details are noted, on the basis of published information dealing with that stage. After each section there is a chart with selected representative roots related to light and trees, and derived stems and words in Gnomish, Noldorin or Sindarin, as well as in Q(u)enya and the common ancestor to these languages, here labeled as Eldarin (Eld.).

Gnomish and early Noldorin stage

Words for ‘light’

In the earliest conception of the Elvish languages, there were several words related to the light in general, and to certain types of light, but the principal were probably those coming from the roots **kal-** and **gal-**, obviously interrelated. In *The Book of Lost Tales* we may easily find names such as *Kalaventë* ‘Ship of Light’, *Kalormë* ‘Hill-crest over which Sun rises’ or *Galmir* ‘Goldgleamer’ (I:254, 256). Actually the *Qenya Lexicon* (henceforth QL, published in PE12) composed by Tolkien contemporaneously to those tales explicitly included the root **KALA** ‘shine golden’, with many words related to the daytime, the morning, light, etc., among which there is *kala* ‘daytime, (sunlight), 12 hours’ (QL:44). On the other hand, the complementary *Gnomish Lexicon* (GL, published in PE11 together with the *Gnomish Grammar*, GG) had the verbal root **gal-** ‘shine (golden as the Sun)’, from which are likewise derived a number of words related to the daylight, sunrise, daytime, etc. (GL:37). Some of these words are explicitly connected with the Qenya ones, as happens with *gala* ‘light, daylight’ = Q *kala*, and *glâ* ‘day, daytime (time Sun is above horizon)’ = Q *kala* < *kalā* & *kālaʒ*. (According to this etymological note, *glâ* could be interpreted as a syncopated form of earlier **galā*).¹

However, the roots **kal-** and **gal-** were apparently exclusive variants for Qenya and Gnomish, respectively: in this last tongue no word beginning with **cal-** was directly related to the light, day or Sun. It must be noted that there are many other cases of Gnomish words beginning with voiced stops, with cognates in Qenya that begin with its unvoiced counterpart. See, for instance:

- Labial stops: Gn. *Baul* ‘body, trunk’ cp. Q *pūle*, *pulka* in GL:22, and *pulko* ‘body, trunk, bole of tree’ in QL:75.
- Dental stops: Gn. *dâ* ‘high’ (adj. and av.) in GL:29 cp. Q. *tā* (1) adj. † ‘high’ (2) ‘av. high above, high up’ in QL:87.
- Velar stops: Gn. *gobos* ‘haven’ cp. Q *kōpa*, *kōpas* in GL:40, and *kōpa* ‘haven, bay’ cited in QL:47.

There is in fact some indirect remainder of **kal-** in Gnomish, though it is probably a Qenya influence: Gn. *alc*, *alchor* (‘shrine, fane, temple’) are cognates of Q *alkar*, *alkarin*, themselves seemingly derived from **kal-** after syncope and consonant transposition, cp. *alka* < *ak’lā* ‘ray’ (GL:18, QL:30 s.v. *ĪKL* – *ĪK* or *KAL*). But in contrast, there are Gn. *glarosta-*, *glartha-* ‘to dazzle’, compared to Q *alkar* but apparently developed from syncopated **gal-** directly (GL:39); there are also Gn. *agla* ‘flash’, *aglar* ‘glory’, as probable cognates of Q *alka*, *alkar* (with the prefixed stem-vowel too).

It seems certain that **gal-** was a variant developed from **kal-**. At least in one instance related with these roots, this is actually the type of evolution noted in Tolkien’s texts: “*gâl* < *kalda*, or *gaul* ‘a light’. *kāle*” (see the *Gnomish Lexicon Slips* – henceforth GLS, PE13:114). Such a change might have been influenced by the verbal root **gil-** ‘gleam, shine pale and silver, as of the moon’ – the relation between both roots is noted in the entry *gilm* ‘moonlight, silver light’, which is compared with *gāla*, ‘daylight’; and Gn. *glôr* ‘gold’ and derivatives also might have had some influence. But it could be argued whether **gal-** was a later Gnomish variant, or

the separation an Eldarin development. The first option seems most probable: the voicing *k-* > *g-* is a development parallel to that of the Gnomish soft mutation (cf. Derdzinski, 2004). But it could be that words from both *gal-* and *kal-* coexisted in Eldarin, and each subsequent language adopted only the phonologically preferred words. Patrick Wynne and Christopher Gilson suggest that at least the Eldarin word **galā* could have existed, as it apparently occurs in Q *otsola* ‘week’ < *ot-g’lāta*, cognate of Gn. *ochlad* << *oglad*, an idea supported by the existence of the Q root ALA, a variant of KALA in QL, perhaps originally conceived as cognate with an Eldarin root *GALA (PE14:16–17). This variant would have been developed like Q *‘il* cp. Gn. *gil* (GL:38 s.v. *Gilweth*, QL:42 s.v. *Ingil*).

In writings later than *The Book of Lost Tales*, the language of the Gnomes or Noldoli (>> Noldor) was usually called *Noldorin*, instead of *Gnomish* (or *Goldogrin* or *Noldorissa*). This *Noldorin* language showed significant grammatical and phonological differences from the earlier *Gnomish*, but its vocabulary was very close to that observed in the *Gnomish Lexicon* (cf. PE13:119ff.). Hence the words related to light were still similar, though it is interesting to note that in this stage syncopated forms prevailed: see *agladhren* ‘radiant’, *gladwen* ‘sunshine’, etc. in the *Noldorin Word-lists* (PE13:136, 144), or AGLANN ‘ray of light’, *glavaith* (< **k’lamektā*) ‘a blaze, burning, blazing light’, etc. in the *Noldorin Dictionary* (PE13:158, 162). In fact the only word in this stage that shows the full form of the root is *galad* ‘dawn’ (PE13:144), which as far as we know occurs here for the first time,² and which is very remarkable by itself: in this stage it was only another derivative of *gal-*, but we will see that later it played an interesting role, in conjunction with other words.

Words for ‘tree’

In some texts contemporary to *The Book of the Lost Tales* we can find other *Gnomish* words that begin with *gal-*, but have nothing to do with those related to the light. The *Official Name List* (ONL) connected to the *Lost Tales* includes “*Galdor* lord of *Thlim galdon*” (PE13:104). And the name *Galdor* was also included in the subsequent Name-list to the old tale of “The Fall of Gondolin” (NFG), where the name of his folk was originally written *Nos Galdon*, and it was added that “(*Galdon*) is a tree, and thereto *Galdor*’s name akin”. In emendations of NFG, however, *Nos Galdon* was changed to *Nos nan Alwen*, with a similar note explaining that *alwen* is a tree, though no etymological connection with *Galdor*’s name was then noted (PE15:24).

Let us first examine the versions prior to the change *Galdon* >> *Alwen*. The statement of NFG, that identifies *Galdon* with “a tree” and relates it with *Galdor*’s name, may also be applied to ONL. There the Eldarissa (i.e. *Qenya*) version of *Galdor* is given as *Aldaron* or *Aldar*, that contains Q *alda* ‘tree’ (one of the *Elvish* words that Tolkien never changed), and *Thlim galdon* most likely meant *‘House of the Tree’, the name of *Galdor*’s folk in Gondolin (cf. *thlim* ‘race, folk’ as a suffix in GL:73). *Galdon* was probably a proper name derived from Gn. **gald-* = Q *alda*, with the suffix *-on* that apparently also occurs in Gn. *Baithon* = Q *Vaitya* ‘the Outer-Airs’ (GL:21), Gn. *Ilon* = Q *Ilu* ‘*Iluvatar*, God’ (GL:50), etc.³ In this case, the word for ‘tree’ in both languages should have come from a common Eldarin term, with an initial *g-* lost in *Qenya* as usual.

The change introduced in NFG, however, is a sign of a shift in the etymology of these words. The emended form is consistent with the *Gnomish Lexicon*, where *galdon* does not occur, but *alwen* ‘tree’ does. And it is also a shift towards the *Gnomish Grammar*: according to it, *Nos nan Alwen* accords with the description there of the use of the Gn. article in genitive prevocalic form, *nan-* (GG:9); while its predecessor *Nos Galdon* could not be regularly formed from the word *Galdon* mentioned in NFG. It would be regular if it came from **Galda*, which inflected into genitive would actually give *Galdon* (GG:13); but the wording of NFG seems to indicate that *Galdon* is the nominative form, and according to GG such a noun would be compounded by postposition, either with the genitive prefix, the article or nothing, but always with grammatical mutation, thus yielding **Nos a-Ngaldon*, **Nos na-Ngaldon* or **Nos ‘Aldon*, respectively, but not *Nos Galdon* (GG:8, 12).⁴

On the other hand, Q *alda* is cited in the *Gnomish Lexicon*, but in this case not related to any word with *g-*. The cross-reference is actually from *âl* ‘wood (material)’ – though its semantic cognate was †*alwen* ‘tree’, (GL:19). All related words begin likewise with *a-* (or *o-* <

ā-), and the only ones that begin with *g-* in GL and GLS are *gloth* (GL:41) and *gawlas* (GLS:114), both glossed ‘forest’, but in these cases the *g-* belonged to the collective/intensive prefix *go-*, *ɣwa-* (GG:8).

However, we do find in GL some words beginning with *c-* such as the noun *caltha-* ‘a plant, herb’ or *calw* ‘green shoot, sapling, sprout’ (GL:25), that may be compared with the noun *altha* ‘shoot, sprig, scion, sapling’ and the other *a-* words for ‘tree’ previously mentioned. They are not the only words with *c-* (or *k-* in Qenya) with variants where this consonant is lost. There are also Gn. *caithl*, ‘source, fount, origin’ and *aithl* ‘a spring’ (cp. Q *kektele* and other words under KEKE⁽¹⁾ or KELE, KELU- and *Ektele* ‘fountain’, in QL). And more interesting, Q KALA is equated with ALA ‘light’ in QL:29. This last case virtually coincides with that of the Gn. *cal-* vs. *al-* words related to plants and trees; therefore we find that, though Tolkien experimented with diverse families of Gn. words cognate with Q *alda*, all of them (*gal-*, *al-* and *cal-*) could be confounded with one or another Gnomish or Qenya root for ‘light’ (*gal-*, ALA or KALA, respectively).

Was this coincidence intentional? There was no apparent reason for an etymological or semantic connection. According to QL, the basic gloss of the root ALA⁽²⁾ that yielded the words related to trees had nothing to do with light, but meant ‘spread’, and was related to broad things (cp. LAHA), such as the broad of the back (see Q *aldo*, *aldamo*, QL:29, or Gn. *alm*, GL:19, GLS:109). It was metaphorically related to trees, as growing things; cp. in GL the noun *altha* ‘shoot, sprig, scion, sapling’, and in GLS the verb *altha-* ‘to shoot up, grow (high)’ or the adjective *alw* ‘lofty, of living things: trees, men’. And there was also a name for a specific tree, the elm (a broad tree, in fact), derived from it; see Q *alalme* and Gn. *lalm*, etc. in QL:29, GL:52. A similar metaphor was probably behind the other Gn. word for ‘tree’, *orn* (GL:62, GLS:115), cp. *or-* ‘on, onto, up, in addition to, etc.’ and following entries in GL, and ORO⁽¹⁾ in QL:70. But nothing of this seems to be related to the light.

If there was some connection between ‘tree’ and ‘light’, it perhaps was of a mythical type: note that the words cited related to light did not refer to any kind of light, but specially to the golden light of the Sun, which was (as the Elves knew) the last light of the Golden Tree of Valinor. However, nothing in the published texts points to this direction or to any other one.

In the later *Noldorin Word-lists* and *Noldorin Dictionary* the presence of these Gnomish words denoting trees and growing things decreases. In fact, the only entry glossed ‘tree’ is *orn* (PE13:151, 164), and the words similar to *alwen*, etc. are reduced to *alt* ‘branch’, *aulos* ‘forest’ (both deleted), and the base ALT ‘bough, branch’, that in fact is equated with Q *alda* (PE13:136, 137, 159). *Ólin* ‘elm’ (PE13:151) is probably also related.

This could be an indication of a progressive change in the conception of the Noldorin etymology of these words. There is also a remarkable case that points to this direction, though it is only indirectly related to the words about trees. In the *Noldorin Word-lists* there was the entry *all* ‘wide, broad’ < **aldá*, equated to Q *alda* (PE13:136). It was doubtless related to that sense of ALA explained in QL. But it was then deleted and replaced by *gall*, which had the same gloss, while its etymology also changed to **zaldá*, and the Q cognate to *halda*. We will see in the next section how this type of change was subsequently extended, and the *g-* finally reintroduced.

Selected roots, stems and words for ‘light’ in this stage

<u>Roots</u>	<u>Stems and Words</u>
Gn. <i>gal-</i> ‘shine (golden as the Sun)’	Gn. <i>gala</i> ‘light, daylight’; <i>glâ</i> ‘day, daytime’; N. <i>gladwen</i> ‘sunshine’; <i>galad</i> ‘dawn’.
Q KALA ‘shine golden’	Q <i>kala</i> ‘daytime (sunlight)’; <i>kalma</i> ‘(day)light’; <i>kalta-</i> ‘kindle, set light to’; <i>kalaina</i> ‘serene’.
Eld. <i>*KAL-</i>	Probable origin of terms from Q KALA and Gn. <i>gal-</i>
Eld <i>*GALA</i>	Eld. <i>*g’lāta</i> in <i>ot-g’lāta</i> , Gn. <i>ochlad</i> , <i>oglad</i> , Q <i>otsola</i> ‘week’.
Gn. <i>gil-</i> ‘gleam’, shine pale	Gn. <i>ailm</i> ‘moonlight’

Selected roots, stems and words for ‘tree’ in this stage

<u>Roots</u>	<u>Stems and Words</u>
—	Gn. <i>Galdon</i> ‘a tree’; <i>Galdor</i>
Gn. *AL-, cp. Q ALA	Gn. <i>alwen</i> ‘tree’; <i>âl</i> ‘wood (material)’; perh. <i>altha-</i> ‘to shoot up, grow (high)’, ‘alw’ ‘lofty, of living things: trees, men’.
Q ALA ‘spread’	Q <i>alda</i> ‘tree’; <i>alalme</i> ‘elm (tree)’.
—	Gn. <i>caltha-</i> ‘a plant, herb’; <i>calw</i> ‘green shot, sapling, sprout’.
—	Gn. <i>orn</i> ‘tree’

Later Noldorin and early Sindarin. The matter of *galad*

Words for ‘light’

When Tolkien wrote the *Etymologies* at the end of the thirties, some significant changes had been made. In *Etym.* we find two entries to GAL- glossed as variants of KAL-, one deleted, glossed ‘shine’, and another (probably its substitute) accompanied by the extended form GALÂN- and glossed ‘bright’ (VT45:13). The Noldorin derivatives are very close in form and meaning to the Gnomish words in *gal-*, *gla-* referring to the light, and specifically to the sunlight, daytime, etc. The great difference with the earlier conception is that in *Etym.* KAL- and GAL- are not limited to one tongue; both Qenya and Noldorin (and even other languages as Doriathrin) have derivatives from both roots. There was, for instance, Q *ala* ‘day’ from GAL¹-;⁵ and conversely under KAL- we find N *calad* ‘light’ (likely < **kalatā*) or *calen* ‘bright-coloured = green’ (< *kalina*). Both would become well-known Sindarin terms as well: *calad* occurs for instance in the “Narn i Chîn Húrin”, as a part of the cry of the Edain “*Lacho calad! Drego morn!*” (UT:65); and *calen* is part of names such as *Calenardhon*, *Calenhad* — and in lenited form *Parth Galen*, etc. — occurring in LR, among other places. The difference between GAL- and KAL- might be semantic: the terms under KAL- are not so related to the daylight as some under GAL¹-, and in fact the basic gloss of KAL- is ‘shine (general word)’. The fact that this more specific meaning of GAL- was developed (or retained), was perhaps influenced by the root GLÁWAR-, the N variation of LAWAR-, ‘light of the golden Tree *Laurelin*’; cp. earlier LAURE (‘LOURI-, Gn. *glôr*) in QL:51; though there it was rather related to the metal, not to the light of the Tree. However, Christopher Tolkien noted that the idea that GAL- was a Noldorin variant of KAL- was rejected in the text under this last base, and as he points out, “it is not clear at this stage how these roots were related”.

But regardless of the precise relation between the roots, it is especially interesting to compare the aforementioned *calad* with *galad*, which occurs also glossed as ‘light’ under the deleted base GAL-. The lenited form of *calad* would be virtually indistinguishable from *galad*, as happens in two compounds found in *Etym.*: *gilgalad* ‘starlight’ (s.v. the base GIL- ‘shine (white or pale)’, virtually the same as the Gnomish root mentioned above) and *Cilgalad* (N cognate of Q *Kalakilya* ‘Pass of Light’, cf. KIL-).⁶ The consonant mutation pattern in Noldorin as observed in *Etym.* is a complex matter that concerns various types of phonological changes, many possible circumstances that may condition their development, and many irregularities, either real or apparent. Therefore, no easy rules may be defined in order to ascertain whether *gilgalad* and *Cilgalad* are formed by unmodified *galad* or lenited *calad*. However, the second option is for various reasons the most probable in both cases.

In the case of *gilgalad*, there is another compound morphologically alike, and even semantically very similar, that is therefore a reliable instance for making comparisons. It is *gildin* ‘silver spark’; and its occurrence under the base TIN-, just after N *tinw* ‘spark, small star’, *tint* ‘spark’ positively indicates that the second part of the compound underwent the

lenition *t* -> *d*-. Hence, it is most likely that *gilgalad* here also has lenited *calad*.

Regarding *Cilgalad*, comparisons with other cases are also favourable to the hypothesis of lenited *calad*. First, its Kenya cognate *Kalakilya* shows *kala-*, though parallel names in different languages may have different etymologies. But the comparison with the case of *gilgalad* also gives phonological support to this idea: both compounds share the same suffixed element (*-galad*), and the prefixed elements differ only in the first consonant, probably even in their primitive form — most likely **kilya-* and **gilya-* (cp. primitive **gilya* for N *gîl* ‘star’ s.v. **GIL-**, and Q *kilya* ‘kilya cleft, pass between hills, gorge’ before N *cîl*); so the phonological development of the suffixed element should be the same in both compounds. And from a syntactical view, it may be noted that similar compounds, with the modifier element positioned after the modified noun (a normal pattern in Noldorin, though less frequent than the opposite, at least in *Etym.*), also show soft mutation of the second element, in the vast majority of cases (cp. *Dagor Vregedûr* ‘Battle of Sudden Fire’ s.v. **BERÉK-**, *Amon Uilos* ‘Mount Everlasting-snow’ s.v. **GEY-** or *Eredwethion* < *ered* + *gwethion* *‘Mountains of Shade’ s.v. **WATH-**, *inter alia*).

After *The Lord of the Rings* was completed, Noldorin was replaced by Sindarin, but though this was a great change in the conception of the Elvish languages, it does not seem to have substantially altered *galad*, *calad* and other related words. This can be observed in the linguistic explanations that Tolkien gave in the late fifties of the names of two important Elves: *Galadriel* and *Gil-galad*.

Regarding the first one, he wrote in a note to the later version of the *Quenta Silmarillion* that it meant ‘Lady with garland of sunlight’, and in its primitive form had been *galata-rîg-elle* (X:182). From this we may corroborate that the noun *galad* still existed in Sindarin, and that it was derived from **galata*. Note also that the meaning ‘sunlight’ is more specific than the bare gloss ‘light’ in *Etym.*, though it is consistent with other words derived from the same root (see above), and such an idea goes back to the terms derived from *gal-* in the Gnomish Lexicon.

Regarding *Gil-galad*, Tolkien wrote to Rhona Beare in 1958 that it meant ‘star-light’, and that it was a case of “grammatical change or *k, c > g* in Grey-elven, seen in the initials of words in composition or after closely connected particles” (L:279), which basically coincides with the meaning and etymology suggested above for *gilgalad* in *Etym.* In that letter he also wrote about the stem *kal* used for words referring to light, and about the “more or less synonymous stem *gal* (corresponding to *gil* which only applied to white or silver light)”, all of them concepts identical to those found in *Etym.*

Words for ‘tree’

When comparing *Etym.* with the earlier lexicons, a major change of a number of interconnected roots and derived terms is observed, in the middle of which are Q *alda* ‘tree’ and *alalme* ‘elm’, virtually untouched since they first emerged in the Kenya Lexicon (see above), while everything around them was rearranged into a new set of roots.

No direct successor of the root **ALA** ‘spread’ from QL is found in *Etym.*, but there is the pair of interconnected bases **AL-** and **GAL-** (cf. VT45:5). The first one is unglossed but includes words related to riches, good fortune and bliss. The second one is glossed ‘grow’, ‘spread’, ‘increase’, ‘thrive’, ‘prosper’, ‘be healthy’, ‘be glad’, etc., depending on the version.⁷ ‘Spread’ is in fact among these glosses, but the other meanings of the new bases do not resemble so much those of the old **ALA**, but rather those of the Gn. root **gwal-** ‘fortune, happiness’ (a blessed fortune, related to the Valar, whose Gnomish name *Gwala* came in that stage from such a root; cf. GL:44). It is not certain whether the underlying root **GAL(A)-** was a Noldorin variant of **AL(A)-** with a “false *g-*” (as was usual in that language), or conversely **AL(A)-** was a Kenya variant of **GAL(A)-**. A deleted note under **GALÁS-** explicitly states the former, but the apostrophe in Q *’al* after **GALA-**, apparently the Kenya cognate stem, suggests the latter. Another evidence for assessing this question would be the base **LAR-**, **LAS-**, originally related to bliss and fortune, though later only to richness and fatness (VT45:26). However, this is also a contradictory clue: it is cross-referenced to **GALAS-** (marked with a question mark), but a variation characterised by the loss of the entire first syllable is rare, and it could be also

expected to come from ***ALAS-** (cp. **ALA-**, **LA-** ‘no, not’; **ĀLAK-**, **LAK**²- ‘rushing’ and ‘swift’; etc.).

Other roots and words that in the earlier stage were related to **ALA** were still present in *Etym.*, though such a relationship was now less evident, if it existed at all. Q **alalme** ‘elm-tree’, for instance, is found in QL, but in *Etym.* its root was **LĀLAM**, and apparently bore no direct relationship to the previous ones.⁸ **LAHA** and other roots related to open spaces, moors, to spread, extend, etc. (QL:50) are reflected in the variants **DAL-**, **LAD-**, **LAT-** in *Etym.*, but no relation with **ALA** was noted at this later stage. It is also interesting to see the evolution of another word that years before had started its own course: N **all** >> **gall** ‘wide, broad’ and its primitive form ***zaldá** (see above) are probably the predecessors of the root **KHAL**²- in *Etym.*, here glossed ‘uplift’, whose derivatives include the N adjective **hall** ‘exalted, high’ < ***khalnā**. No relationship to the other roots in *Etym.* is noted for this one, either.

But among these exceedingly mutable roots, there was **GĀLAD-** ‘tree’, the one to which we have been leading. The relation with the abovementioned bases is clear from words such as **galw** ‘growth’, **galas** ‘growth, plant’ or **galo-** ‘to grow’, in both deleted and retained versions of **GAL-**, **GALA-**, and some explicit cross-references. But in comparison with the others, this root was quite stable and simple. It was written down in two very similar versions, though neither was deleted or altered, and together only comprised one word for ‘tree’ in each of Qenya, Noldorin and Doriathrin: **alda**, **galadh** and **gald**, respectively; and some nouns or names that contained it. One of these names is **Galdor** (which in the contemporary *Quenta Silmarillion* was a Man’s name), which shows how this root beginning with **g-** was a shift back to the old conception, when the Gnomish word for tree was **galdon**.

And the fact is that at least Q(u)enya **alda** and Noldorin >> Sindarin **galadh** ‘tree’, and their newly devised etymology, would be kept for many years; in fact there is no sign of further change in the published materials. In *The Notion Club Papers* (c. 1945) Arundel Lowdham reproduces Alboin Errol’s explanation about these Elvish nouns (V:41), providing moreover their primitive form, **galadā**, which would fit perfectly in *Etym.*, though it is not recorded there. Q **orne** and N **orn** (pl. **yrn**), the other word for ‘tree’ (cp. Gn. and early N **orn** above), is also explained in *The Notion Club Papers*, as coming from **ornē** (pl. **ornei**), and specially applied to “smaller and more slender [trees] like a birch or rowan” (IX:302); in *Etym.* the forms coincide, but it was rather applied to a ‘high, isolated tree’ (s.v. **ÓR-NI-**). This linguistic explanation of **galadh** and **orn** (and their Quenya cognates) would be repeated in later texts, with identical primitive forms, and only slight variations concerning the type of tree that each term described: In UT:266 Christopher Tolkien mentions that in the latest writings his father noted that “**ornē** was originally applied to straighter and more slender trees such as birches”, and **galadā** ‘great growth’ to “stouter, more spreading trees such as oaks and beeches”; but that the former fell out of use in Sindarin, and hence all trees came to be called **galadh**. Similarly, in L:426 (as late as 1972) Tolkien explained that **galadā** came from **GAL** ‘grow’, and **ornē** from **OR/RO** ‘rise up, go high’.

Selected roots, stems and words for ‘light’ in this stage

<u>Roots</u>	<u>Stems and Words</u>
Eld. KAL- ‘shine (general word)’	N calad ‘light’, N gilgalad , S Gil-galad ‘starlight’; calen ‘bright-coloured, green’; Q kala ‘light’; kalma ‘a light’; kalta- ‘shine’; kalina ‘light (adj.)’.
Eld. GAL- ‘shine’, variant of KAL-	N galad ‘light’; glan ‘clear’ and ‘daylight’; Eld. gala , Q ala ‘day’; Q alan ‘daytime’; Eld. galata ‘sunlight’ in S Galadriel .
Eld. GIL- ‘shine (pale or white)’	Eld. gilya , N gil ‘star’, cf. gilgalad ‘starlight’. Q Ilma ‘starlight’.

Selected roots, stems and words for ‘tree’ in this stage

Roots

Eld. GÁLAD- ‘tree’, perh. related to GAL(AS)-, GALÁS- ‘grow, thrive, prosper, be glad, etc.’

Eld. ÁLAM-, LÁLAM- ‘elm-tree’

Eld. ÓR-NI- ‘high tree’

Stems and Words

Eld. *galadā* ‘tree’, N, S *galadh*, Q *alda* ‘tree’; S *Galad(h)rim* *‘tree-folk’.

N *lalf*, *lalven*, *lhalwen*, Q *alalme*, *lalme*.

Eld. *ornē* ‘tree (small and slender)’, N, S *orn*, Q *orne* ‘high isolated tree’.

***Galad* vs. *galadh*: an orthographical vacillation**

Galadh would be the cause of further false occurrences of *galad*. There should not be reason for such a confusion, since *d* and *dh* represent different phonemes in the Elvish languages; but when the first edition of LR was published, Tolkien leveled their spelling to *d*, since he thought that readers would find *dh* or *ð* uncouth, and for instance he wrote *Caras Galadon* and *Galadrim*, though their regular spelling would have been *Caras Galadhon* ‘City of the Trees’ and *Galadhrim* ‘Tree-folk’. This levelling may also be observed in the drafts of the Appendices to LR, in names that were not finally published: In XII:260 it is explained that the queen Vidumavi (an adaptation from Gothic *Widumawi* ‘Wood-maid’, cf. UT:311) was called *Galadwen* in Gondor, although we would have expected it to be **Galadhwen*. This could also be the reason for the name of *Galador*, the son of Imrazôr and Mithrellas, and first Lord of Dol Amroth (UT:248, XII:220–221); there is no actual evidence that this name is related to *galadh*, but it is interesting to compare it with *Galadhon* in *Etym.* s.v. GALA- and GÁLAD- (although here it is not meant to be related in any way with the Lord of Dol Amroth, a place whose existence was not yet conceived).

But at least for *Caras Galadon* and *Galadrim*, an *inner* explanation was also provided by Tolkien. According to the Appendices, *Caras Galadhon* was not a genuine Sindarin name, but the *Sindarinization* of a Silvan name (LR:1101). And in X:182 we learn that *galad* was the Silvan cognate of S *galað*. From this we may infer that *Caras Galadon* would not be an irregular spelling, but the actual Silvan name. Had *Galadwen* and *Galador* been published in the Appendixes, a similar explanation could also have justified their apparently heterodox spelling, for they could be Gondorian variants, even influenced by the Silvan tongue in these cases of a woman from Rhovanion and the son of a Silvan maid.

In the note concerning Silvan *galad* ‘tree’, however, Tolkien’s intention was not to explain why *galad* occurred in names that should have *galadh*, but the opposite. The name to which this happened was *Galadriel*, which, as stated above, actually contained Sindarin *galad* ‘light’ according to that note. Elsewhere Tolkien noted that many associated her name with that of the Galadhrim’, so that “among those whose memories of the ancient days and Galadriel’s history had grown dim her name was often altered to Galadhriel” (UT:266, cp. S:436). But in fact what Tolkien was describing was his own experience! In the first drafts in which the Lady appeared, her name was changed from *Finduilas* to *Rhien* >> *Galdrien* >> *Galaðrien* < *Galaðrhien*, meaning ‘(tree)-lady’ (VII:249). And though in the manuscripts of LR it was subsequently changed to *Galadrien* and finally to *Galadriel*, in later texts such as “The Annals of Aman” the form *Galaðriel* is found instead. Moreover, J.R.R. Tolkien. *Life and Legend* shows a draft of the annotated “*Namárië*” later published in *The Road Goes Ever On* (p. 84), in which the subtitle reads “*Aldariello nainië Lóriendesse*”, translated as “Galaðriel’s lament in Lórien”, in contrast with the published subtitle “*Altariello nainie Lóriendesse*”, “Galadriel’s lament in Lórien”. Therefore, the note where Tolkien mentions the Silvan variant *galad* seems to have been written as an attempt to resolve this doubt about the name of Galadriel.

Changes in later Sindarin

Though future publication of later texts may reveal subsequent changes here unnoticed, we

have seen that nothing substantial was apparently altered about the words for ‘tree’, after the great change observed in *Etym*.⁹ And the words for ‘light’ were not much changed in form either (the names of *Galadriel* and *Gil-galad* were in fact set in stone, as it were, by their publication in LR); but their etymology did undergo some revision.

In “The Shibboleth of Fëanor”, a text of the late sixties or early seventies that dealt with many names of the Noldor, we see that the root of the first part of *Galadriel* was no longer **GAL**, but **ÑAL** (*ñ* being used for the sound [ɲ]), and from this we can reconstruct the Primitive form **ñalatā-rīg-elle*. With this variation Tolkien perhaps intended to make the roots for ‘light’ and ‘tree’ more different than before. On the other hand, the meaning of **ÑAL** was specifically ‘shine by reflection’ (XII:347); so, in this modern version, the meaning of *Galadriel* is also different, ‘Maiden crowned by a garland of bright radiance’, not by ‘sunlight’ as before. Likewise, the etymology and meaning of the root **GIL** and the word *gil* ‘star’, which had previously been stated to be related to **GAL**, was also reset: according to another late text, Sindarin *gil* came from the root **ngil** ‘silver glint’, which would correspond to a base **ÑIL* (X:388). This shift **GIL** >> **ÑIL*, identical to that of **GAL** >> **ÑAL**, seems to reveal that *gil* kept its former relation to other terms related to light, although the form of the stems was modified; its meaning was then ‘sparkle with silver light’, very similar (although some subtle difference may be found) to previous ‘shine white or pale’.

Note also that such a shift would not affect the Sindarin forms substantially, since both **g**- and **ñ**- at the beginning of a Primitive word give **g**- in Sindarin (except in compounds and other constructions); but it is different in Quenya, since in this tongue **ñ**- gave **n**-. So related words in Quenya should start with **n**-, as seen in the *true* Quenya name of Galadriel, stated to be *Ñaltariel* (in post-exilic Quenya it would be *Naltariel*, as *Ñoldor* became *Noldor*, etc.), although she was given the name *Altariel* by influence of *Alatāriel(lë)*, its form in Telerin, the language in which her name was first devised.

Finally, we must also comment on a change suffered by the name *Gil-galad*: In the same text in which it is said that *Galadriel* came from the stem **ÑAL**, it is also noted that this stem is likewise present in *Gil-galad*. So this name’s structure was essentially changed, because now it was not ‘Starlight’ (being *gil* ‘star’, the modifier, and *calad*, the main element), but ‘Star of radiance’ (*gil* ‘star’ as main element, modified by *galad* ‘radiance’). On the other hand, in this modern version of the name no lenition occurs to the initial consonant, as it did before. This was also explicitly commented on by Tolkien in the letter of 1972 mentioned above: there he said that there was no mutation, among other cases, “when a name is virtually an adjective, as in *Gil-galad*” (L:426). This does not mean, of course, that *calad* and other words related to the root **KAL** were not retained in the Elvish vocabulary, but simply that they do not occur in these specific names.

Selected roots, stems and words for ‘light’ in this stage

<u>Roots</u>	<u>Stems and Words</u>
Probably Eld. KAL -, as previously	See previous stages.
Eld. ÑAL ‘shine by reflection’	Eld. <i>*ñalatā</i> in Q <i>Ñaltariel</i> , S <i>Galadriel</i> ; S <i>Gil-galad</i> .
ngil , <i>*ÑIL</i> ‘silver glint’	S <i>gil</i> ‘star’, cf. <i>Gil-galad</i> .

Selected roots, stems and words for ‘tree’ in this stage

<u>Roots</u>	<u>Stems and Words</u>
Eld. GAL ‘grow’	Eld. <i>galadā</i> , S <i>galadh</i> , Q <i>alda</i> lit. ‘great growth’, ‘tree, stouter and more spreading’.
Eld. OR/RO ‘rise up, go high’	Eld. <i>ornē</i> , S <i>orn</i> , Q <i>orne</i> ‘tree, straighter and more slender’.

Complications in the Appendix of *The Silmarillion*

Probably, one of the first approaches of any Tolkien reader to Elvish linguistics is, after the *Appendices of The Lord of the Rings*, the Appendix on “Elements in Quenya and Sindarin names” of *The Silmarillion*. When comparing that book with the raw material in *The History of Middle-earth* from which it was edited, it becomes quite clear that Christopher Tolkien tried to represent the latest conceptions, both of historical and linguistic motifs when possible, in order to “produce the most coherent and internally self-consistent narrative” (S:vi). But this was quite difficult, especially when dealing with elements so thoroughly interconnected and complicated as the names we have studied here and their etymologies.

We may mention first the case of the entry *alda*, related to the Sindarin form *galadh*, where the names *Caras Galadhon* and *Galadhrim* were spelt in the first editions *Galadon*, *Galadrim*, as his father wrote them in the first edition of LR. However, this mistake Christopher Tolkien noted in UT and emended in later editions.

But more subtle is the case of the entry *kal-* (*gal-*). It is not really inconsistent with the latest conception described in the previous section, but is nearer to the conception of the early stages of Sindarin, for the primitive form *ñal-* (or *ngal-* with the orthography used in that Appendix) was not given for the Sindarin variant *gal-*; and the explanation about *Galadriel* was adapted by Christopher Tolkien from the note of the *Quenta Silmarillion*, in which it was told that “her High-elven name was *Altariellë*” (referred to primitive *galata-rīg-elle*). In fact, studies prior to the publication of *The History of Middle-earth* deduced from this entry that the Common Eldarin form of *al(a)ta* “was most likely **galatá*” (PE6:9), which matches the conception in the early stages of Sindarin, but not the latest.

However, the explanation presented in *Quenta Silmarillion* was slightly changed in the Appendix of *The Silmarillion*, obviously pointing to the latest conception: the terms and glosses of the elements (especially *alata* ‘radiance’) are taken from the later discussion of this name in “The Shibboleth of Fëanor”, and *Altariellë* was replaced in the Appendix by *Al(a)táriel*, reflecting together Telerin *Alatāriel(lë)* and its form as adapted into Quenya, *Altariel*, as given in the “Shibboleth” (though the Quenya form in the “Shibboleth”, *Ñaltariel*, was not mentioned). It may be noted that the adaptation of the earlier explanation of the name is especially canny in keeping the term “High-elven” for the language of the alternative form of the name (*Altariellë* in the original, *Al(a)táriel* in the adaptation). In the original version “High-elven” most certainly meant Quenya, as it means throughout the whole narration of *The Silmarillion* (see S:418, s.v. *Quenya*), but in the adapted explanation of the Appendix it could be interpreted as either Quenya or Telerin.

One may wonder why Christopher Tolkien chose to adapt an earlier text about Galadriel’s name to represent the latest conception, instead of directly citing the latest text. There are various possible reasons: maybe it was just a matter of simplicity, since with the note from the *Quenta Silmarillion* he was able to elude the entire matter of the root *ÑAL* and its distinct evolution in the Elvish languages, not needed for a coherent and self-consistent account of the published forms of the name (Sindarin *Galadriel*, and Quenya *Altariel* in R:66 — actually its genitive form *Altariello*). But it could also have been for contextual reasons, since *The Silmarillion* to which the Appendix was attached was to a great extent based on the *Quenta Silmarillion*, from which the note was adapted, while “The Shibboleth of Fëanor” was a purely philological essay, a source of interesting details that were added to the narrative, but not a primary source.

Notes

1. The entry *glâ* was rejected in the pencil layer of the manuscript. For further discussion about this see PE14:16, and *Lambengolmor* list messages 702–704.

2. *galad* could conceivably have existed prior to the Noldorin Word-lists. In GL:62 we can find the abovementioned term *ochlad* ‘week’, formerly written as *oglad*, for which Tolkien also provided its older form *ot-glāta*. Wynne and Gilson explained in PE14:16 that the precise reading of the etymology is in fact *ot-g'lāta*, and that it probably means ‘(a period of) seven days’, while deducing that the second part of the word, *g'lāta*, came from earlier **galāta*, or maybe even older **kalāta*. It may be seen that, had a variant with different accentuation or lengths of the vowels existed, the root-vowel could have been

preserved, and the resultant word would have been actually *galad*.

3. The *Gnomish Grammar* gives distinct grammatical functions to the suffix *-on*: a genitive morpheme for nouns ending in a vowel (GG:13), and a plural ending of adjectives ending in *-a* or *-u* (GG:15). However, in the *Gnomish Lexicon* it is revealed as a far more productive element. Among other functions, here we see that it characterised some proper names, perhaps of ancient or poetic motifs: *Sirion* is glossed in GL:67 as ‘triver — properly name of the famous magic river...’, cp. *Sîr* simply glossed as ‘river’.

4. This indicates that the original version of NFG may have been written before GG and GL, though there cannot be much difference in time between their composition, if they were not contemporary: Tolkien was working on GL already in 1917 (PE11:4), while the manuscript of ONL, the predecessor of NFG, physically follows the *Poetic and Mythologic Words of Eldarissa* (PE13:100), which must have been composed after 1916–17 (PE12:xxi). There are other changes in NFG that suggest that the first layer of NFG preceded the *Gnomish Grammar*. See for instance *Los Glōriol* >> *Los ’lōriol* (II:216, PE15:25): both variants of the name transparently mean *‘Golden Flower’, the name of the House of Glorfindel; cp. *lôs* ‘a flower’ and *glōriol* ‘golden, like gold’ in the *Gnomish Lexicon*. However, GG:12, 15 indicate that adjectives postpositioned to nouns are usually mutated, which in NFG occurs only in the emended forms. *Amon Gwareth* >> *Amon ’wareth* ‘hill of vigilance’ (PE15:20), or *Falas a-Gwilb* >> *Falas ’Wilb* ‘beach of peace’ (PE15:24) are changes of the same type.

5. And in the title page of *Etym.* there is “**gala* ‘day’: Q *ala* ‘a day’.” (VT45:13). Cp. this primitive form with the Eldarin **galā* > **g’lā* > Q *-la* *‘a day’ in *otsola* ‘week’, as suggested by Wynne and Gilson and mentioned in the previous section.

6. In V:362 s.v. **KAL-** we find a cross-reference to the name *Gilgalad*, next to *calad*; this would lead one to think that this name shows a lenited form of *calad*. However, in A&C Hostetter and Wynne note that the cross-reference in the MS is in fact to *Glingal* (VT45:19).

7. It is difficult to follow the trail of this root, repeatedly revised in the manuscript. Apart from the cross-reference in **AL-**, we can find two rejected versions of **GAL-**: one marked with a superscript “2” (apparently for distinguishing it from **GAL**¹- mentioned in the previous section), glossed ‘grow, spread, increase’, and a longer one that was changed to **GAL(AS)-**, and originally glossed ‘grow, thrive, prosper, be healthy, be glad, etc’. The contents of the latter were nearly as many as those of **AL-**. All these mentioned roots were rejected, and some contents of **GAL(AS)-** were marked for incorporation into the replacement root **GALA-**, the only one included by Christopher Tolkien in *The Lost Road*. Obviously related, there was also **GALÁS-** with some derivatives glossed ‘joy’, that was included by Christopher Tolkien too (VT45:13–14).

8. It is interesting to see that Gn. *lalm*, cognate of Q *alalme*, occurs also in *Etym.*, though it is not a Noldorin word, but Doriathrin. On the other hand, **LÁLAM-** does have an *indirect* relation to **AL(A)-**, etc.: about its variant **ÁLAM-** it is said that “some hold it related to **ALA-** since the elm was held blessed and beloved by the Eldar”.

9. Only in the secondary Elvish tongues do we find new forms, due to the changes in the history of the languages. For instance, Telerin became more important for its great relation to Sindarin; and of this tongue Tolkien wrote that the cognate of Q *alda* and S *galadh* was *galla* (VT39:7).

Bibliography

- Christie, John R.R. and Rebekah Shuttleworth. “*Galadhremmin Ennorath*”. Lecture at Tolkien 2005 — The Ring Goes Ever On. August 14th, 2005. Birmingham.
- Derdzinski, Ryszard. “Consonants mutations in conceptual evolution of Noldorin/Sindarin phonology”. Published in *Gwaith-i-Phethdain*, April 14, 2004. http://www.elvish.org/gwaith/pdf/consonant_mutations.pdf.
- De Rosario, Helios. “El problema de *Galad*”. Published in *Lambenor*, July 2001, last revised in February 2004. <http://lambenor.free.fr/docencia/galad.html>.
- “La historia de *Galad*”. Published in *Lambenor*, April 2004, last revised in July 2004. http://lambenor.free.fr/docencia/historia_galad.html.
- “What did replace *glâ* in GL?” Post to the *Lambengolmor* list, message no. 702, June 28, 2004. Reply by Christopher Gilson in message no. 704.
- “*calad* or *galad*?” Post to the *Lambengolmor* list, message no. 706, July 4, 2004. Various replies by David Kiltz in message no. 709 and following.
- Hostetter, Carl F. and Patrick H. Wynne. “Addenda and Corrigenda to the *Etymologies*”.

- Published in *Vinyar Tengwar* 45 and 46, Nov. 2003 and July 2004.
- Priestman, Judith, ed. *J.R.R. Tolkien. Life and Legend. An Exhibition to Commemorate the Centenary of the Birth of J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973)*. Bodleian Library. Oxford. 1992.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. "Early Noldorin Fragments". Edited by Christopher Gilson, Bill Welden, Carl F. Hostetter and Patrick Wynne. Published in *Parma Eldalamberon* 13. 2001. 92-165.
- "Name-list to *The Fall of Gondolin*". Edited by Christopher Gilson and Patrick H. Wynne. Published in *Parma Eldalamberon* 15. 2004. 19-29.
- Welden, Bill. "The Role of Telerin in the Development of Sindarin". Published in *Parma Eldalamberon* 6. 1983. 6-14, 28.

See also the general *Tengwestië* Bibliography.

Change Log

- 2008-11-08 14:27:38: Formatting changes only: converted text to Gentium/Basic, deprecated all Gentium tags, converted combining diacritics to modifiers where possible

Copyright ©2005 Helios De Rosario Martínez

Quotations from the works of J.R.R. or Christopher Tolkien are the copyright of their publishers and/or the Tolkien Estate, and are used here with their kind permission. The word TOLKIEN is a registered trademark of The J.R.R. Tolkien Estate Limited. The characters and scripts of Tolkien's invented languages and works in those languages are the copyright of the Tolkien Estate.

URL: <http://www.elvish.org/Tengwestie/articles/DeRosarioMartinez/lightandtree.phtml>

First published on November 22nd, 2005

Last modified on Saturday, November 8th, 2008 2:06 pm PST