Musings on *Limlight*

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On the name *Limlight*

Limlight is the enigmatic name of a tributary of the Anduin, that marks Rohan's northern border. There are three primary published texts about it:

- L1.- The corresponding entry in the "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*" (TC:188), in which Tolkien says to translators: "The spelling *-light* indicates that this is a Common Speech name; but [the translator should] leave the obscured element *lim-* unchanged and translate *-light*: the adjective *light* here means 'bright, clear'." The editor (Jared Lobdell) noted that these notes on nomenclature were "composed when only the Swedish and Dutch translations [of LR] had appeared" (TC:153). This provides a narrow span of time for the date of the text, around 1960, since the Swedish translation was published in 1959, and the Polish in 1961.
- L2.- Some notes quoted by Christopher Tolkien in *Unfinished Tales*. One occurs in the chapter "The Disaster of the Gladden Fields" (UT:281 n.14), where the — probably Sindarin — original form ***Limlaith*** is given as an apparent gloss on the English name "Limlight". In another note to "Cirion and Eorl and the Friendship of Gondor and Rohan" (UT:318 n.46), he quotes further alternative forms of the Sindarin name: ***Limlich***, which was emended to ***Limliht***, and ***Limlint***, which is translated as 'swift-light'. In this latter note we are told that the river was "named anew by the Éothéod, being alterations of the older names to fit their own tongue". Except ***Limlint***, all these names were written by Tolkien in the drafts of the texts about the history of Gondor and Rohan, published in those chapters; and Christopher Tolkien dates those texts to about 1969 (XII:293). About ***Limlint***, however, he only says that it belongs to a note "written much earlier than any of the foregoing" (UT:318 n.46).
- L3.- Christopher Tolkien's comment on the geographical notes inserted in the late (c. 1970) typescript of "Maeglin". In one of these he quotes a comment by Tolkien on a river in Beleriand: "*Limhîr* (the clear / sparkling river) — repeated in LR, as were not unnaturally other names from Beleriand — is more suitable for the river ... a clear *slender* stream coming down from the Hill of Himring". And then Christopher Tolkien comments: "The name *Limhîr* does not occur in LR, unless my father was referring to the *Limlight*". (XI:337).

Each text provides different, and in some points contrasting, information about the name of the river. L1, that is not very detailed, but just gives some guidelines for the translation into other languages, could be considered as a general commentary on the name; L2 and L3 provide an extended analysis of it.

L1 seems to partially contradict L2, since L1 states that ***light*** is Common Speech (represented by Modern English), but from the notes in L2 we can deduce that it is a form in the tongue of Rohan (represented by Old English, which therefore should have been ***líht***), although in the representation of the Common Speech the modernized form ***light*** was used. But though conceptually this may seem a dilemma, actually both ideas are compatible (L2 just

being more precise), and anyway in an analysis of the original name we may get around this problem: the Old and Modern English words (*líht* and *light*, respectively) are close enough in shape and meaning, so that the conclusions do not change if we consider one hypothesis or the other. It could also be that the "true" Common Speech and Rohanese words (not their "translations") were likewise similar, although we have no hint of what their actual forms were.

L3 does not provide more data on the matter of the adaptation to Rohanese or Common Speech, since it only deals with the Elvish form of the name. Actually it is not even explictly referred to the Limlight, save for Christopher Tolkien's comment.[1]

Considering now the Sindarin form of the name, the only certain fact is that it starts with *lim*-, as the Common Speech/Rohanese name does. L1 does not specify what the second element is; in L2 we have distinct forms (-*lint*, -*laith*, -*lich* and -*liht*), and a further one in L3, -*hîr*. It is not possible to consider any of these forms as "definitive" in Tolkien's mind. L1, probably the oldest text, has the value of having been carefully prepared for the translators carrying out the delicate task of translating LR, but it is not of more help for learning the Sindarin name than L2 and L3. And these other texts are so close in time and so fluid that they appear to show that Tolkien was experimenting with various etymologies even in those late years, without committing himself to any of them. Taking this into account, let us analyze how each of these variant Sindarin names may be interpreted.

On the first element, *lim*-

Only L3 gives an explicit meaning of *lim*-: 'clear, sparkling', specifically applied to a 'slender stream'. With regard to this, it is interesting to note the occurrence of *glim* 'gleam, glint (usually of fine slender but bright shafts of light)' in the same bundle of papers as L3 (XI:337). It is strongly probable that in fact *lim*- and *glim* were variants with the same etymological origin.

We also see that one of the suggested forms in L2, *Limlint*, is translated as 'swift-light', but this leaves us with plenty of doubts, since we cannot ascertain whether *lim*- would be 'swift' or 'light', and in the latter case, whether it is a noun or has any of the adjectival meanings of 'light' ('bright', 'clear', 'unweighty', 'nimble' ...).

The first possibility is that *lim*- corresponds to the first element of the English name, i.e. 'swift'. This may be supported with another well-known occurrence of that element, the cry of Glorfindel to Asfaloth: "*noro lim*" (LR:208). There *noro* is obviously some imperative (probably *'run', *'go'..., cp. *nor*- 'run, roll' in GL:61), and *lim* must have an adverbial meaning, that might be similar to 'swift'.[2]

But the alternative could be also true, that 'swift' is the gloss of -*lint* (see below), and therefore *lim*- corresponded to 'light'. In which of the meanings of that word remains uncertain, though two possibilites are favoured: It could be an adjective with the sense of 'clear, sparkling', just as in L3; or perhaps it had the sense of 'moving with ease and nimbleness', which in fact is similar to that of 'swift', and would keep the possible relation with *noro lim*. However, the fact that the Common-Speech form of the name contained the word -*light* with the meaning 'bright, clear', most probably noting a marked feature of the river, makes the former possibility more appealing.

An interesting thing in the explicit gloss of L3 is the relation of *lim*- to streams. A similar relation with streams or another kind of waterflow (either for its brightness or its light movement) may also be present in the alternative meanings of *lim*- that have been suggested, and it may give us a hint of the possible etymology of that element. There are various possible origins of it, that would be related to some extent with water:

- **limb*- (with reduction of *mb*, cf. LR:1089), from the root LIB[1]- 'drip' with nasal infixion. Cp. Q *limba* 'a drop' in the *Etymologies*, q.v.
- **lingw*- (with the change *ngw* > *mb*, cf. *Etym.* s.v. ING-, and eventually > *m*), cp. N *lhimb*, *lhim* < **liñwi* 'fish' in *Etym.* s.v. LIW-.
- Some bare root **LIM*-, that could share with many other roots beginning with LI- their relation to water.[3]

Finally, it can be noted that the other forms of L1 and L2 provide no information about the meaning of *lim-*, except that it was forgotten in the Common Speech, and remained "obscured" (as Tolkien describes it). If a possible relation of this obscured element to 'light' is accepted, it could be noted, beyond the possible pun, that the repetition of its sense in the second element of the Common-Speech name would be comparable to other cases of Middle-earth place-names, as **Bree-hill** or **Chetwood**, where the meaning of the native element (in these cases *bree* 'hill', *chet* 'wood', cf. LR:1109) had become forgotten, and then repeated in later forms.

On the second element

We have four variant forms to consider as the second element, two of which are of uncertain meaning:

In L3 it is -**hîr**, which undoubtedly means 'river'.[4]

In L2 various alternative forms are suggested:

L2A, -**lint**, is the earliest form, occuring already in the "Gnomish Lexicon", where it is glossed as 'quick, agile, nimble, light' (PE11:54). Indeed, the association between the sound **lint** and such a sense goes back even farther in Tolkien's linguistic invention; concerning the languages he invented in his youth, he wrote: "I can also remember the word *lint* 'quick, clever, nimble', and it is interesting, because I know it was adopted because the relation between the sounds *lint* and the idea proposed for association with them gave *pleasure*" (MC:205). As the gloss of **Limlint** in L2A is 'swift-light', the simplest explanation is that here -**lint** was 'light', in the sense of 'nimble'. However, 'swift' could be also a gloss with the same sense; cp. Q **linta* 'swift' in such a well-known text as the "Namárië" poem (in **lintë yuldar**, 'swift [pl.] draughts', cf. R:66). This latter possibility would leave the element '-light' of 'swift-light' as the gloss of **lim-**, perhaps with the sense of 'bright, clear' mentioned in L1 (see above). Summarizing, there would be three possible analyses of the translation of **Limlint** as 'swiftlight':

- **lim-** = 'swift', -**lint** = 'light (nimble)'. The simplest explanation for both elements.
- **lim-** = 'light (nimble)', -**lint** = 'swift'. A reversal of the previous explanation, possible but not more probable.
- **lim-** = 'light (clear)', -**lint** = 'swift'. Another option, in which the elements in the Elvish and English names are likewise reversed, but that conveys the feature of 'bright, clear' of the Common-Speech name as explained in L1.

L2B, -**laith**, does not occur in any other name, and its meaning is unknown.[5] However, it has quite a regular shape as a Sindarin word. According to the patterns observed in the evolution of the Elvish languages, a great deal of Sindarin and Noldorin words ending in -**Dth** (where *D* represents a diphthong) came from earlier forms ending in -**Vktā** (where *V* is some vowel) in Primitive Quendian or Eldarin, usually from roots ending in -**k** to which the common suffix -**tā** is added. So it is quite likely that this **laith** came from some primitive word with the form **lVktā*. The following possibilities may be especially highlighted:

- **lektā*.[6] In the *Etymologies* we find the base **LEK-**, with the meaning 'loose, let loose, release', and the Ilkorin derivative **legol** 'nimble, active, running free', connected to the river-name **Legolin**. This sense of 'running free' could be partially due to the relation of that root with **LED-** 'go, fare, travel', explicitly noted in *Etym*. If -**laith** came from **LEK-**, it could have a meaning similar to that of the mentioned Ilkorin word, itself similar to that of -**lint** discussed above. Therefore, the name **Limlaith** could be analyzed in the same manner as **Limlint**.
- **laktā*.[7] Phonologically this is the most dubious option, though the base **LAK**[2]- occurring in *Etym.* with the meaning 'swift' is specially appealing. Note however that, opposite to the previous cases in which the term 'swift' has been discussed, here 'fleetingness', 'promptness' or 'nimbleness' is not implied, but rather 'hurry', 'impetuosity', as may be judged by the cross-reference of **LAK**[2]- to **ÁLAK-** 'rushing'.

- *liktā.[8] LIK- occurs in *Etym.* as an alternative form of the base LAIK- 'keen, sharp, acute'. The words under this base are chiefly general adjectives, though one has specific reference to keeness, acuteness of perception. On the other hand, by blending with LÁYAK-, and with a metaphorical sense, it is also related to the Ilkorin word *laig*, glossed among other things as 'fresh, lively', and possibly as 'swift' too (though this gloss is deleted in the manuscript, see V:368 and VT45:25). It might also be possible, according to the rationale suggested in note 3 below, that there was a base *LIK- related to water (for instance to running water, which would fit quite well again with a sense of 'swift'). Especially interesting in this connection is the occurrence of the base LIQI- in the "Qenya Lexicon" with two glosses: (1) 'flow, water, etc.' and (2) 'clear, transparent'. According to the spelling used by Tolkien in later writings, this same base would likely have been written *LIKWI, which could indeed be a variant of this putative *LIK-, since there are other attested Q(u)enya roots ending in -k that, even in the Common Eldarin stage, were suffixed with -*w* + the root-vowel, though it is not evident that this happened also in Sindarin.[9] Supporting this idea, in the *Etymologies* we have the base LINKWI-, with derivatives related to 'wet' and 'moisten', that might well be a nasal-strengthened variant of *LIKWI- (and for which there actually are Noldorin derivatives, as *lhimp* < *linkwē*, cp. Q *linqe* 'wet').

L2C, -*lich*, changed to -*liht*. The first form, -*lich*, has an unusual shape; there are few Sindarin words similar to it, chiefly *lach* 'leaping flame', that occurs in **Dagor Bragollach**, 'Battle of the Sudden Flame',[10] and *roch*, 'horse'; and this last word is in several places related to Q *rokko* and primitive *rokkō* (*Etym.* s.v. ROK- and L:282, 382). This similarity would point again to the root *LIK- commented on before, from the primitive form with the final consonant fortified, *likkV*, where *V* is some vowel. The second form, -*liht*, is even more difficult to explain, since the cluster **ht** is unfitting in a Sindarin word. However, it resembles the Quenya words derived from the primitive union of **k** + **t**. If we took that pattern, we would have the hypothetical *liktā* (suggested above as a possible antecedent for -*laith*) again, but it would remain unexplained why the Sindarin form took such an odd shape as -*liht*, unless we regarded the evolution *liktā* > S *lith* according to the pattern of the *Etymologies*, (see note 8), in which case the form *liht* could be an orthographical corruption under the influence of the Old English term, or just a slip by Tolkien.

And now that we have seen all the possible Sindarin forms of the second part of the name, there remain nearly as many doubts as at the beginning. Only the form in L3, based on a well-known Sindarin element, provides clear information. But it is distinct from the forms in L2, most of which were written one or two years earlier. Among these, the meaning remains obscure, apart from the fact that some possible etymological reconstructions could be interpreted as 'swift' or (as with -*hîr*) related to running water. However, their forms do have something in common: -*laith* and, to a lesser extent, -*lint* have some resemblance to the corresponding element of the English name, -*light*; likewise, -*lich* and even more so its corrected form -*liht* resemble the form it would have had in the tongue of Rohan, -*líht*, as L2 tells. Therefore we can quite certainly conclude that when Tolkien experimented with the names attested in L2, he was trying to find a satisfactory word that justified the adaptation of the original name **Lim-** + a Sindarin element to Common Speech (reflecting Rohanese) **Lim-light**, or *Lim-líht*; and that the main objective was that the Sindarin word resembled the Common Speech adaptation, its meaning being a secondary aspect, although not unimportant.

English parallelisms: the river *Skirfare*

Above we have discussed the duality between the element **lim-** in a river-name, indirectly glossed by Tolkien in L3 as 'clear, sparkling', and the probable adverb **lim** *'swift' (in **noro lim**). Intriguingly, quite a similar thing happens in English with the element *skir-* in the name of the river Skirfare and the verb *skirr* .

The Skirfare is a river of North Yorkshire, whose course runs about thirty miles northwest from Leeds. The influence in the geography of Middle-earth (specially the Shire) of the

English landscapes known by Tolkien has been widely discussed by various authors. And in a commentary about the Withywindle river in Tom Shippey's *J.R.R. Tolkien, Author of the Century*, the Skirfare, glossed as the 'bright-runner', is mentioned, as the river in which drowned Professor Moorman, Tolkien's predecessor in Leeds (p. 63). In this study, however, the relevant matter is the comparison between the name of this river and the previous discussion about **Limlight**.

The *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* accounts for the etymology of Skirfare:

> … 'Bright stream.' The elements are O[ld]Scand[inavian] *skīrr* 'bright, clear' and a word for 'brook' derived from OScand *fara* 'to go'. Cf. the O[ld]N[orse] river-name *Fara*.

Its second part might be compared with the possible sense of *-laith* if coming from **lektā*, related to Q *lehta* (specially in its tentative relation with LED-, 'go, fare, travel'). But besides this, we have the first element *skir-*. The nearest Modern English word found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the rare or dialectal *skire*, meaning 'clear (of), free (from) something morally bad', 'pure, clear (of water)' or 'clear, bright (of colours)', itself a variant of *shire* 'bright, shining'. Both *skire* and *shire* are cognates of Old English *scír* 'clear, bright', though the first form shows the influence of its Old Norse analogue, *skīrr*, as *sk-* is characteristic of Norse borrowings or variants — modern words directly derived from OE *sc-* usually show *sh-*. In Tolkien's *A Middle English Vocabulary*, he also glossed some ME cognates of these words: "*Scere*, adj. 'bright, pure'", and "*Schyre, Shire …*, adj. 'bright, clear, fair, lovely'". All these terms related to *skir-* in the river-name recall the concepts of brightness, clearness and beauty connected to some of the possible meanings of **lim-** commented on above, and below in note 3.

On the other hand, near to *skire* in the OED there is the verb *skirr*, a rare variant of *scour* (not in the sense of cleansing, but 'to move about hastily or energetically'). Its origin is stated to be doubtful, but it likely comes from another Old Norse word, *skúr*, meaning 'storm'. The first definition of this verb is 'to run hastily (away), to flee, make off', and the third is 'to pass or go rapidly over (a stretch of land or water), esp. in search of something or someone; also to ride rapidly through'. Both of these definitions recall intensely the scene of the flight of Frodo on Asfaloth after the "*noro lim*", though there are divergences between the meanings of *skirr* and that suggested in this article for **lim**: the English term is a verb, not an adverb, and its third definition (the one that makes reference to riding) has the sense of riding *after* someone, while Frodo was rather escaping.

It is not proven that Tolkien deliberately created the contrast between **lim-** in **Limlight** and **lim** in **noro lim** in order to match the cases of *skir-* in *Skirfare* and the verb *skirr*. And the tentative coincidence between the meaning of the Elvish name of the **Limlight** and *Skirfare*, which depends on a chain of hypotheses, is not enough basis to state that this river of the Middle-earth was inspired by the Yorkshire stream. However, the coincidence is striking, so further research should be done on the matter, be it through linguistic, geographical or even biographical study, in order to test the plausibility of these suggestions.

Notes

This article is adapted by its main author for *Tengwestië*, from the original Spanish "Divagaciones sobre **Limclaro**", first published in *Lambenor* (June 2002), and subsequently extended with the valuable comments of Javier Lorenzo, which enhance the importance of LIK- as possible root of the second part of the name **Limlight**. The commentary about the coincidences found with the name of the river Skirfare is added in this version, as an original contribution for *Tengwestië*.

1. But there is another point that Christopher Tolkien does not note: although the name **Limhîr** actually does not occur in LR, **Linhir** is once mentioned (LR:857), and it is found on the detailed map of Gondor, at the mouth of the Gilrain. J.R.R. Tolkien might have been thinking on that name when he wrote L3, changing by mistake the **n** to an **m**; and if so, L3 would not add anything new to this analysis. However this is not very likely: in fact **Linhir** is not a river-name, but of a city or village, and moreover, even if its meaning was related to rivers (something that must not be discarded), it would have a too evident meaning for

such a slip to occur: -*hir* would mean, of course, 'river', and *lin*- has always been a stem related to music and water (see below). Therefore, Christopher Tolkien's hypothesis is more likely, and as I comment below, the meaning that L3 ascribes to *lim*- appears to relate it to the Limlight. Accepting the risk of error, I work on that hypothesis in this article.

2. Some have argued or assumed that the meaning of **noro lim** is conveyed in Glorfindel's immediately previous utterance in English, "Ride on!" (see for instance Ryszard Derdzinski's comment to *lim* in http://www.elvish.org/gwaith/roadgoes.htm). But the broader context of the scene suggests a different idea:

> "Ride forward! Ride!" cried Glorfindel to Frodo.
> He did not obey at once, for a strange reluctance seized him....
> "Ride on! Ride on!" cried Glorfindel, and then loud and clear he called to the
> horse in the elf-tongue: *noro lim, noro lim, Asfaloth!*

In this context it seems certain that "Ride on!" is a reiteration of the previous exhortation in Common Speech to the rider, Frodo, while "*noro lim*" is a distinct one, directed in Sindarin to the horse, Asfaloth, when Glorfindel realized that Frodo would not obey.

3. See XI:391-392 concerning KWEN ('person') and KWET ('speak'), where it is said that the Eldarin stems were originally monosyllabic, and those which had the same first consonant and vowel were probably derived from the same stem, and related to each other. This appears to be true also in the case of the roots beginning with LI- throughout the corpus: In QL we have the bases LINI-, LIPI, LIQI or LIŘI, for instance (QL:54), that yield an amount of words with metaphorical or literal meanings related to water, as 'gentle', 'run or flow smoothly', 'drop', 'water', 'song', 'musical voice', 'tune', etc. (for the close relationship among the concepts of water, beauty and music in the Elvish languages, see the commentary to the name *Lindar* in XI:381-382, and the two definitions of *lin* in the Appendix to *The Silmarillion* — S:437). Many of these words and meanings were still present in the *Etymologies*, as well as some variations of them, under LIB^1-, LIB^2-, LIN^1-, LIN^2-, LIND-, LINKWI-, LIP- and LIR^1-, some of which are commented on above as possible alternative origins of *lim*.

4. This element occurs in many river-names, as plain *sîr*, *sir*- (*Sirion*, *Ossiriand*...) or with the usual mutation *s > h* in medial position (cf. S:441, and other names as *Glanhir*, *Minhiriath*, etc). The association of *sĭr* with 'river' is another of the earliest and most stable ones: see the early Qenya root SIŘI- (QL:84). In the entry to *sîr* in the appendix of *The Silmarillion*, Christopher Tolkien explains this etymology and the medial transformation of the *s* using the information from some entries of the *Etymologies*, including SIR- (V:385).

5. There is the name *Lalaith* 'Laughter' (UT:57), Túrin's early deceased young sister, but in this name the root seems to be **lal(a)-*, 'laugh' (see also XII:343, 359, on Finwë's daughter called *Lalwen*), followed by the suffix -*aith*; although in other texts (XI:234-5, 314) *Lalaeth* occurs instead, where it could be due to the feminine suffix -*eth*. In any case, there is no suffix -*laith* here, despite the appearances.

6. In the *Etymologies* there are many Noldorin words with -*eith* derived from roots ending in -*ek* and cognate with the Quenya ending -*ehta*, so we can deduce the evolution **-ektā* > Q -*ehta*, N -*eith*. Compare N *teitho* ('write') and *teith* ('mark'), < TEK- whence also Q *tehta* (**tektā*); and N *leithia*- ('to release') and *Leithian* (the noun 'release', as in the title "The Lay of Leithian") < LEK-, whence also Q *lehta* ('loosen, slacken', **lektā*); *lehta* is also attested as the adjective 'free, released' in VT39:17. Notice that this last hypothetical primitive form is the same as that suggested here as underlying -*laith*. In the later development of Sindarin after the *Etymologies* we can deduce that the diphthong *ei*, at least in monosyllables and final syllables, was in some circumstances changed to *ai*. For example, N *andeith* 'long mark' (< ON *andatektha*; V:391 s.v. TEK-) corresponds to S *andaith* (LR:1096). Note too S *naith*, applied to 'any formation or projection tapering to a point' (UT:282 n.16), which is said to derive from the root *nek* ('narrow'), and to correspond to Q *nehte* (cf. also S *dírnaith* = Q *nernehta*, apparently < **nektā*).

7. This hypothesis fails on phonological grounds. The Noldorin examples from the *Etymologies* suggest that **-laktā* would have yielded **-laeth* in later Sindarin: **maktā*- > Q *mahta*, N *maeth* ('fight', from MAK-); Q *nahta*, N *naeth* ('biting, gnashing of teeth', probably from **naktā*, in NAK-); and **yaktā*- > Q *yaht*-, N *iaeth* ('neck', from YAK-). Especially important is the example of N *naeth*, which was kept in later Sindarin with no changes, in such significant names as *Nírnaeth Arnoedidad*, 'Unnumbered Tears', and in *Sigil Elu-naeth*, 'Necklace of the Woe of Thingol' (XI:258), though it cannot be assured that the etymology

remained the same.

8. This hypothesis may be more consistent with Sindarin phonology. Had Sindarin followed the pattern of the Noldorin attested in the *Etymologies*, a primitive word such as **liktā* perhaps would have yielded **lith* (with a meaning having nothing to do with the homonym meaning 'ash'): see the example of Q *rihta-*, N *rhitho* < **riktā*, 'jerk, sudden move' (s.v. RIK(H)-), or N *critho*, 'reap' < *k'riktā* (s.v. KIRIK). However, in *Parma Eldalamberon* 13 we find a different behaviour for primitive words ending with **-iktā*, which yielded Noldorin words in *-aith*: *gwaith* < **wiktā* (PE13:162), or *haith* < **siktā* (PE13:163). Although it is not explicitly stated, it seems that in these Noldorin words the final *a* caused a change in the preceding vowel: *i* > *e* (a phenomenon found also in Welsh), the development thus being **-iktā* > **-ektā* > **-eith* > *-aith* (in final syllables), so that *-laith* could eventually come from **liktā*. Against this hypothesis it could be argued that the referred text is very old (of the twenties), and therefore the evolution suggested in the *Etymologies* (of the thirties) should be regarded as closer to Sindarin. However, it is possible that Tolkien returned to the previous phonological model for the later Sindarin. If so, this might explain the precise etymology and meaning of the word *edraith* 'saving', attested in Gandalf's fire-spell: *naur an edraith ammen!* ('fire (be) for saving of us'; LR:283, 291, translated in VII:175). *Edraith* could come from **etriktā* thus: **et-rik-tā* > **etrekta* > **edreith* > *edraith*, being the primitive word formed by:

- *et-*, an element clearly related to the stem in *Etym.* ET- 'forth, out'.
- **rik-*, a stem related to the root in *Etym.* RIK(H)- 'jerk, sudden move, flirt'. The relation of the meaning of these glosses with 'saving' is not obvious. However, the sense of 'snatch', occurring for the Noldorin verb *rhitho* derived from this stem, is suggestive: in the OED, the seventh definition of 'snatch' is: "To save or rescue *from* or *out of* danger, etc, by prompt or vigorous action" (emphasis added.)
- **-tā*, an ending used, although not very frequently, for Primitive Elvish nouns: **bestā* > Q *vesta* 'marriage' (V:352, s.v. BES). (It is on the other hand very common as a verbal ending.)

This interpretation of the Sindarin verbal noun *edraith* may be compared with the Quenya verb *etelehta* 'deliver' very probably related to the verb *lehta-* 'loosen, slacken' and the adjective *lehta* 'free, released' mentioned in note 6 (cf. VT43:23), both being synonyms of 'save'. The literal meaning of *edraith* would in this case be **'snatching out'*, with the sense of saving by means of a sudden action, as Gandalf's spell could be seen to be.

9. For instance, the stem for 'six' *en-ek(w)* yielded *eneg* in Sindarin, while the equivalent Quenya word was *enque* (VT42:24, cp. Q *enqe*, N *eneg* in *Etym.* s.v. ÉNEK-).

10. In the appendix to *The Silmarillion* the entry *lhach* occurs (S:437), although it should have been rather **lach*, as attested in *Bragollach*, *Anglachel* and *Lachend* 'Flame-Eyed' (the name by which the Sindar called the Noldor, according to XI:384).

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See also the general *Tengwestië* Bibliography.

Change Log

- 2008-11-08 14:27:54: Formatting changes only: converted text to Gentium/Basic, deprecated all Gentium tags, converted combining diacritics to

modifiers where possible