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Abstract

Discusses the structure of the Angerthas or Cirth, the runic alphabet used primarily for incision in stone or wood. Transcribes passages in runes from *The Hobbit* and a 1947 postcard sent to Katherine Farrer.

Quenti Lambardillion

A Column on Middle-earth Linguistics

Paul Nolan Hyde

The Angerthas & The Hobbit

Tolkien informs us that the Angerthas, or Cirth, was developed in order to allow a scribe to simplify the process of writing a message which needs to be scratched or incised on wood or stone (III, p. 395). Usually it was implemented for rendering names and brief memorials upon hard surfaces. Although the Sindar originally designed the system, they seldom used it themselves. It was the Dwarves who developed the Cirth extensively in order to accommodate their own cacophonous language.

At first sight the Cirth seems quite disjointed and unorganized. However, a careful consideration of the characters and of their linguistic values, in light of what has been given to us concerning the Tengwar, reveals an alternate writing system which is as intriguing as the script form. Table 1 contains the Angerthas as it appears in The Lord of the Rings.

Table 1
The Angerthas

1 P p	21 ʒ gh	41 ʒ hy
2 R b	22 ʒ/n	42 ʒ u
3 ʒ r	23 ʒ kw	43 ʒ u:
4 ʒ v	24 ʒ gw	44 ʒ
5 ʒ hw	25 ʒ khw	45 ʒ u
6 ʒ m	26 ʒ ghw/w	46 ʒ e
7 ʒ (mh)mb	27 ʒ ngw	47 ʒ e:
8 ʒ t	28 ʒ nw	48 ʒ a
9 ʒ d	29 ʒ r/j/g	49 ʒ a:
10 ʒ e	30 ʒ rh/zh/gh	50 ʒ o
11 ʒ ʒ	31 ʒ l	51 ʒ o:
12 ʒ n/r	32 ʒ lh	52 ʒ o
13 ʒ tʒ	33 ʒ ng/nd	53 ʒ n*
14 ʒ dʒ	34 ʒ s/h	54 ʒ h/s
15 ʒ ʒ	35 ʒ s/ʼ	55 ʒ *ʒ
16 ʒ ʒ	36 ʒ Z/N/SS	56 ʒ *ʒ
17 ʒ NJ/Z/X	37 ʒ NG*	57 ʒ PS*
18 ʒ K	38 ʒ ND/NJ	58 ʒ TS*
19 ʒ G	39 ʒ I(Y)	-- ʒ +H
20 ʒ KH	40 ʒ Y*	-- ʒ &

There are a total of sixty different characters found in the Angerthas, formed systematically by a principle explained by Tolkien in a letter to Rhona Beare in June of 1963.

The signs used in the "cirth" are nearly all to be extracted from the basic

pattern, ʒ, the possibilities being decreased by the avoidance of the juncture of a diagonal with the bottom of an upright (the exceptions are few and limited to cases where as in "ʒʒ" (there is also juncture at the top). They are increased by the repetition on the opposite side of an upright of any diagonal appendage, and by repeating half the basic pattern: ʒ hence ʒ ʒ ʒ etc. (L, p. 324-5)

Some characters appear to duplicate other character values because of adaptations which became necessary as the living languages of Middle-earth evolved phonetically and as the Angerthas came to be used more by certain races. The Dwarves, for example, would naturally use the Angerthas more than the Tengwar because of the very nature of their existence, being workers of stone.

The orderliness of the Angerthas can be rightly attributed to the influence of the Tengwar. Letters #1 to #38 represent the major consonants in most Middle-earth languages arranged in a systematic order dependent upon the point of articulation. The labials are all found between #1 and #7. Letters #8 through #12 contribute most of the dental consonants. Letters #13 to #17 are the palatals which did not exist in Sindarin (III, p. 404). Letters #18 through #22 constitute the velars. Letters #23 to #28 are rounded or "labialized" velars which appear in Quenya but not in Sindarin (III, p. 398). Letters #29 to #32 are liquids. Letters #33 to #38 represent various consonants which did not fit into any particular position in the regular order of the Angerthas. Like Sanskrit, every group of five or seven consonants has its own particular nasal which is adapted, generally, to that point of articulation.

The characters from #39 to #52 represent the vowel system which was needed by the major languages during the third age of Middle-earth. Not all of the vowel symbols were used in any one language, but they constitute a compilation of the vowel sounds used in different languages. The related vowels, that is, those that fall in the same general area phonetically, are given similar symbols which show their relationship. Usually the major difference between the character signifying a short vowel and that which signifies a long vowel is that the long vowel character has doubled some feature of the short vowel's character.

The characters from #53 to the end of the Table embody the miscellaneous characters which came into the Angerthas after it was formally arranged by Dae-ron. Most of these were introduced by the Dwarves of Moria. (III, p. 404)

Although the Angerthas resembles the ancient runic Futhark (indeed, some symbols appear to have been borrowed from that Germanic orthographic system), its organization and stylistic consistency demonstrate Tolkien's feeling for the Elven races. His determined perfectionism takes a secondary writing system into detailed consideration.

Throughout the first thirty-eight characters of the Angerthas, the Elves designed the letters in such a way as to be consistent with the points of articulation. Each letter consists of a vertical "stem" and a "branch" from that stem (as noted by Tolkien above). The top of the stem represents the front of the mouth and the bottom represents the back. All letters whose articulation take place at the front of the mouth, i.e., the labials and the dentals, have that articulation indicated by the branch being attached to the top of the stem. Thus, Letters #1 to #12 have this branch as a feature of the rune. Letters #23 to #28 have a similar feature because of the lip rounding which takes place in pronouncing these rounded velars. Attachment of the branch at the center of the stem indicates that the articulation of the consonant is at the palatal-velar area of the mouth. Letters #13 to #22 have this configuration. The palatals are distinguished from the velars by the difference in the direction of the branch, the former being identified by the downward branches and the latter by the upward branches. The bent branches on Letters #23 to #28 demonstrate the compromise between the lip-rounding of the "w" and the velar articulation of the main part of the consonant cluster. Half of each type of branch is represented.

Determining whether a letter denotes a stop or a spirant is easy. By merely reversing the character signifying a stop, the branches of which always extended to the right, the writer indicates a spirant. The affricates, #13 and #14 are regarded as a kind of stop. Some difficulties evidently arose with this principle when one of the major languages, Sindarin, developed an aspirated nasal "mh". The bilabial nasal should have been Letter #5, but because it was not reversible, Letters #6 and #7 were supplied to represent these two sounds. Again, the necessity of keeping the system orderly was essential. Other than this slight innovation, the system is quite regular. Thus, Letters #3 and #4 are the aspirated forms of #1 and #2; #10 and #11 are those of #8 and #9; and so on.

Voiced consonants or consonant clusters are denoted by a second branch extending in the same direction parallel with the articulatory branch, much the same way that a second luvá in the Tengwar indicates voicing. The only exception to this feature is the relationship between Letters #34, #35, and #36. The characters #34 and #35 were in free variation in the early languages and were indiscriminately used for the same sound, as the aspirated "s" was represented by #15. The voiced "s", or "z", was arbitrarily formed by a combination of the two. This was consistent only up to a point because the resultant figure could then be possibly confused with the manner of depicting nasals.

With the exception of #6, #7, and #28, all of the vowels are in irreversible forms. That is, the right-hand side of the rune looks just like the left-hand side. Letters #6 and #7 have already been discussed. Letter #28 was invented by the Noldor of Eregion to represent a sound not found in Sindarin (III, p. 404). Because the rounded velars already had a nasal, together with the fact that the "nw" was a fronted form of #27, the Noldor made a character which mirrored from top to bottom rather than from left to right.

The lateral and medial resonants, Letters #29 to #32, have characters which are consistent with the aspiration rules. In the laterals, however, voicing is lost when they are aspirated, and therefore it is not

necessary to show this in the character. The relationship between the laterals and the medial resonants is preserved somewhat in the similarity of their forms, which is unique in comparison with the other group features. The "ng" of the resonant series probably designates the kind of a sound made when a dorsal "l" is nasalized. The "g" stop represents the "l" closing off the oral passage momentarily.

Letters #37 and #38 were later additions by the Dwarves and others who were not as determined to keep the organization begun by the Elves. Other changes made throughout the history of the Angerthas during the Second and Third Ages of Middle-earth are presented on Table 1 also. The values which stand alone, without slashes, parentheses, or stars, constitute the basic Angerthas which was generally in use throughout Middle-Earth. With regard to those values separated by a slash (/), those on the left are those which belong to the Angerthas Daeron and those on the right belonged to the Angerthas Moria. In those cases where there is a third value, the right-most is the value used in Erebor. Jim Allen assigns numbers #59 through #62 to the runic characters used in the Book of Mazarbul for the diphthongs (or digraphs) <ai>, <ou>, <ea>, and <ew> (Intro. p. 286). This is Allen's numbering and not Tolkien's and so they are omitted from the Chart. They will be discussed below. Those values within parentheses were strictly used by Elves and those marked with a star (*) were solely used by the Dwarves. Tolkien indicates that letters #55 and #56 "were in origin a halved form of 46, and were used for vowels like those heard in English 'butter', which were frequent in Dwarvish and in the Westron" (III, p. 404). Besides standing for /ə/ and /a/, they stood for <e> or <a> in spelling, but were not otherwise pronounced as will be seen below.

The use of the Angerthas is limited primarily to the Dwarvish facsimiles in the Middle-earth volumes, except for the runic inscription at the top of the title page of The Lord of the Rings and a short Christmas wish to Hugh Brogan. The runes used in The Hobbit and in his post card to Katherine Farrer, as Tolkien himself states, are the actual Germanic runes used in Scandinavia and Britain in ancient times (H, p. 8). There is much that could be written about the implementation of the Angerthas in Tolkien's writings (and indeed much has been), but inasmuch as this issue celebrates (in part) the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the The Hobbit, it seemed appropriate to discuss Tolkien's adaptation of the runic Futhark to this work.

In The Hobbit and other writings, Tolkien uses another runic system which is not in the mode of either Erebor or Moria. Instead it is basically the Anglo-Saxon runic system. Tolkien says that the runes

used by Thorin and Co., for special purposes, were comprised in an Alphabet of thirty-two letters (full list on application), similar to, but not identical, with the runes of Anglo-Saxon inscription. There is doubtless an historical connection between the two. (L, p. 31-2)

In another place, Tolkien says that the runes were not used "with antiquarian accuracy" (L, p. 21), but a close inspection of the pieces written with them reveals that they are mostly consistent with the ancient "Futhark". Table 2 shows three systems which will be compared with Tolkien's The Hobbit and other writings.

Table 2
Germanic Runic Characters
used in The Hobbit and the Farrer Post Card

	All-Germanic Runic Staves				
	Early A.S.	Later A.S.	Tolkien Characters	Tolkien Value	
1 F	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	g
2 U	u	u	u	u	a, o
3 TH	þ	þ	þ	þ	ps
4 A	ǣ	ǣ	ǣ	ǣ	ew
5 R	ᚱ	ᚱ	ᚱ	ᚱ	b
6 K	<	<	<	<, h	ch
7 G	x	x	x	x	z-n
8 W	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	p
9 H	h	h	h	h	E, Ē
10 N	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	L, Lh
11 I	i	i	i	i	i(y), the
12 J	h	h	h	h	hw
13 S	s	s	s	s	(and)
14 P	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	NW
15 R	ᚱ	ᚱ	ᚱ	ᚱ	n
16 S	s	s	s	s	y
17 t	t	t	t	t	R
18 b	B	B	B	B	m
19 e	M	M	M	M	o:
20 M	M	M	M	M	ng, nj, ou
21 L	l	l	l	l	T
22 ng	ng	ng	ng	ng	u, Z, is
23 o	o	o	o	o	u
24 d	d	d	d	d	ng, nj, ew
25 a	a	a	a	a	o
26 æ	æ	æ	æ	æ	D
27 ea	ea	ea	ea	ea	ngw
28 y	y	y	y	y	ou
29 w	w	w	w	w	ng, nd
30 q	q	q	q	q	
31 k	k	k	k	k	z, nj ↗ =ea
32 st	st	st	st	st	
33 3	3	3	3	3	ng

47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62
 s j o u r n e y m a d e b y b
 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78
 i l b o b a g g i n s o f h o b
 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94
 b i t o n c o m p i l e d f r
 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108
 o m h i s m e m o i r s b y
 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121
 j r r t o l k i e n a n d
 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134
 p u b l i s h e d b y h o
 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147
 u g h t o n m i f f l i n
 148 149 150 151 152 153
 a n d c o

At first glance this usage seems to be strictly in accordance with the Anglo-Saxon runic system. Because of the nature of the orthography of modern English, though, Tolkien had to devise some runes of his own. Phonetically, the word "back" (#19-#22) ends in a single voiceless velar stop, /k/. Yet, Tolkien provides two symbols, one for the <c> and one for the <k>. The redundancy is necessary for spelling purposes, but in the process Tolkien adapts another symbol to represent the <k> (#22 and #115) which did not exist as such in Anglo-Saxon runes, a "later Anglo-Saxon" character for <p> [1]. Oddly enough, this rune appears nowhere else in The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, or in any of the other Middle-earth volumes, even where the spelling could require it. It is used, however, in the runic letter to Katherine Farrer. Tolkien also uses the runic symbol for <i> to be used for the spelling of words with <j> (#49 and #109) even though there was a separate Anglo-Saxon rune for both. This may be a reflection of Tolkien's awareness of a similar orthographic convention in Latin. The remainder of the transcription is consistent with the Anglo-Saxon system.

Transcription 1 is taken from the dust cover of the Houghton-Mifflin edition of The Hobbit. The inscription on the Allen & Unwin edition differs slightly.

Transcription 1
Dust Cover of The Hobbit

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
 t h e h o b b i t : o r t h e r e
 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
 a n d b a c k a g a i n b e i
 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46
 n g t h e r e c o r d o f a y e a r

Thorin Oakenshield's map in The Hobbit contains two messages written in Anglo-Saxon runes. The one in Transcription 2 contains the "moon-runes" which Elrond read in Rivendell during the Company's quest of the Lonely Mountain.

Transcription 2
Runic Moon Letters on Thorin Oakenshield's Map in The Hobbit

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
 s t a n d b y t h e g r e y s t o n e
 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35
 h w e n t h e t h r u s h k n o c k s

ƒ † ☒ ʒ M ʒ M † † i X ʒ ʒ † † i †
 a n d t h e s e t t i n g s u n w i t h
 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52

† M ʒ ʒ ʒ † i X ʒ † ʒ ʒ ʒ R i
 t h e l a s t l i g h t o f d u r i
 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69

† ʒ ☒ ʒ ʒ † i † ʒ ʒ i † M ʒ K ʒ †
 n s d a y w i l l s h i n e u p o n
 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87

† M ʒ M ʒ ʒ † M †
 t h e k e y h o l e t h
 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97

This transcription has several interesting items. There are two spelling characters for the letter <d>, #5 and #38 as compared with #66 and #72, which may reflect an orthographic convention due to their position in the word itself or to their proximity to other consonants. The character used in #5 and #38 is a variant of the Anglo-Saxon rune for <d>. On page 8 of *The Hobbit*, Tolkien copies #5 and #38 from the map using the character in #66 and #72. Ruth Noel, however, includes the character in #5 and #38 in her own list of Anglo-Saxon runes [2]. The character used for <k> in #30, #34, and #90 is a different form than that used in Transcription 1; the character used here is a "later Anglo-Saxon" form for <k>. In Transcriptions 1 and 2, the early Anglo-Saxon form for <k> is used for <c> regardless of its phonetic value. (Tolkien clarifies this discrepancy on page 8 of *The Hobbit* by showing that #30, #33, #34, and #90 are all the same character, the map notwithstanding. The spelling of "when" as <hwen> may be due to phonetic spelling, but more than likely it is the result of an appeal to an archaic spelling. The only real oddity is character #56 which is character #25 in Table 1 as distinguished from character #26 used in #3, #36, and #73. The Anglo-Saxon distinction is that between /a/ and /ae/. So far as the vowels go, this is the only appeal to phonetic value in this transcription. The "thorn" at the end of the message probably stands for either Thrain or Thror, the grandfather and father of Thorin.

Other portions of Thorin's map show other examples of phonetic influence, though they are not totally consistent with the rest of the map.

Transcription 3
Runes on Thorin's Map

† i ʒ M ʒ † † i X ʒ † M ☒ ʒ
 f i u e f e t h i g h t h e d o r
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

† † ☒ † R ☒ ʒ ʒ † ʒ ʒ † ʒ †
 a n d t h r e m a y w a l k a b
 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

R M ʒ ʒ † † ☒ M ʒ † †
 r e a s t t h t h d e s w n
 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43

There are several new character usages introduced in these little inscriptions. In #3 the symbol for <u> is used for <v> (perhaps another Latinism). Double or long <e> and <o> have separate characters in #6, #15, and #22. Tolkien has Thror and Thrain spell out the vowel sequence <ea> in #33 and #34 even though there is a character for that combination in the Anglo-Saxon runic system which was used on the dust cover (see Transcription 1: #45. Tolkien says that

#32 on Table 1 could have been used for #35 and #36, but the scribe apparently opted not to (H, p. 8). There is a distinction made between the <a>'s in #17, #24, #30, and #34 and the <a> in #27. Tolkien, however, copies the character for #27 identical to the others in the gloss for the map on page 8 of *The Hobbit*. The early Anglo-Saxon value for that character was <o>. #39 is the character marking the location of the "door" at the Lonely Mountain. Characters #40-#43 are the points of the Dwarf compass with East at the top, South to the right, West at the bottom, and North to the left. Character #37 and #38 are the initials of Thror and Thrain. A quick review of the facsimile of the Gold Vase Inscription (Pictures, #17; *ML* 35, p. 27) will reveal Tolkien's use of those same initials in the picture.

The erudite gloss on page 8 of *The Hobbit* actually causes more problems than it clears up and might be Tolkien's scholarly joke on pedantry. This kind of elaborate academic humor comes to full blossom in his introductory material to "Farmer Giles of Ham" (*Reader*, p. 7-8)

In November of 1947, Tolkien wrote a post card in Anglo-Saxon runes to Katherine Farrer which follows the system designed for *The Hobbit* (L, p. 125).

Transcription 4
Katherine Farrer: Runic Post Card

† R ☒ M ʒ ʒ ʒ R R K ☒ ʒ ʒ
 t h r e m a n o r r o (a) d s u n
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

☒ ʒ ʒ ʒ ʒ ʒ M ʒ M R † M † i
 d a y n o v e m b e r t h e t h i
 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

R † i M † ☒ ʒ R M R ʒ ʒ ʒ R
 r t i e t h d e a r m r s f a r r
 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43

M R : ʒ ʒ † ʒ ʒ R ʒ M i † i M
 e r : o f c o u r s e i w i l
 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58

† ʒ i X ʒ ʒ ʒ ʒ † ʒ ʒ ʒ ʒ
 l s i g n y o u r c o p y o f
 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73

† M ʒ ʒ ʒ i † : i ʒ ʒ ʒ ʒ
 t h e h o b b i t . i a m h o n
 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87

ʒ ʒ R M ☒ ʒ ʒ † M R M † † M
 o u r e d b y t h e r e q u e
 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101

ʒ † : i † i ʒ X ☒ ʒ
 s t . i t i s g o o d n
 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112

M † ʒ † † † † † M ʒ † ʒ
 e w s t h a t t h e b o o k
 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123

i ʒ ʒ ʒ † ʒ i ʒ ʒ †
 i s o b t a i n a b l
 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134

M ʒ X ʒ i ʒ : † M ʒ M
 e a g a i n t h e n e
 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145

* ↑ B A K P I T T M
 x t b oo k w i ll o o(n)
 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155

↑ T I X M R M M ↑
 t a i n m o r e d e t
 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166

A I T M X I X P R M
 a i l e d i n f o r m
 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177

A ↑ I K X A B K T ↑ R
 a t i o n a b o u t r
 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188

T X M Y T X X M R
 u n e s a n d o t h e r
 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199

A T P T B M ↑ Y I X R
 a l p h a b e t s i n r
 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210

M Y K R Y M ↑ M A
 e s p o(n) s e t o m a
 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220

X A M X T P I R I M Y
 n y e n q u i r i e s
 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231

o I X T M X Y X ↑ I A M
 i n t h e m e a n t i m e
 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243

T H I T M T M X R Y ↑ T
 w h i l e t h e g r e a t w
 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255

R R K I Y B M I X P I X
 o r k i s b e i n g f i n
 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267

I N M X I T M X M R I
 i s(h) e d i w o n d e r i
 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279

F A M U P O N X I Y
 f v o u l d l i k
 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291

M A K R K M R T M A ↑
 e a p r o p e r k e y t
 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303

O T M Y K M T I A T X P
 o t h e s p e c i a l d w
 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315

T R A I N T X A R ↑ T ↑
 a r v i s(h) a d a p t a t
 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327

I R X R Y T M M X T I N
 i o n o f t h e e n g l i s(h)
 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339

R N X I T T P T B M ↑
 r u n i c a l p h a b e t
 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351

R X T A K T R ↑ R P Y H
 o n l y p a r t o f w h
 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363

I T H T X M R Y I X T M
 i c h a p p e a r s i n t h e
 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375

H R W I ↑ I X K T T X I
 h o b b i t i n c l u d i
 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387

X T M Y R A M R ... P M M
 n g t h e c o v e r w e e
 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399

X I R E M X T P Y ↑ X R
 n j o y e d l a s t m o
 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411

X X T E M T M X I X A M
 n d a y e v e n i n g v e
 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423

R A X T T H T X X H R K M
 r y m u c h a n d h o p e
 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436

P R R T R M ↑ T R X M T ↑
 f o r a r e t u r n m a t
 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449

T H Y A X : E R T R Y Y I
 c h s o o n . y o u r s s i
 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462

X T M R M T E I R R ↑ R A
 n c e r e l y j r r t o l
 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475

K I M X
 k i e n
 476 477 478 479

This runic post card displays a more sophisticated implementation of the runes, typical of Tolkien's personal use of his invented writing systems. All of the characters are used as above in Transcriptions 1 and 2 with the following additions and exceptions. A subscribed dot (#78, #153, #368, and #378) indicates a doubling of the character. A superscripted dot (#269 and #320) indicates the orthographic <h>. The dot is absent in #339, unless the dot separating the words "English" and "runes" suffices (though in all honesty, the missing dot is probably a scribal error). Character #369 is a digraph combining on a common leg the characters for <e> and <a> even though rune #27 from Table 1 is used in #238 and #35 for the same phonetic value. #58 and #59 are unique allographs for <l> (see #134, #153, #169, #201, #247, #289, #313, #337, #346, #354, #384, #406, #468, and #475). The spelling consonant cluster "ph" is spelled <f> where it has the value /f/ (#202 and #347), clearly a phonetic motivation because the word "alphabet" was not introduced into the English language until the late sixteenth century and is not glossed in the OED with any alternate spelling as is given here. Character #10, which was used in Transcription 2:#56, is maybe a scribal error for phonetic /o/, as in #7, or perhaps a special character for <oa>. #22 has the value <mb>, in other transcriptions it has the value ; the words "contain" (#154-#159) and "response" (#210-#216) are spelled without an <n> after the <o>, although there are many instances where the <n> is included (#182, #275, #330, #353 #412, and #454). #146 uses rune #29 from Table 1 for <x> rather than #21 which Tolkien says is the rune to be used for <x> (H, p. 8).

ings illustrating The Hobbit, some in color, some not, usually on recto pages; Carter gives a brief summary, on the opposing verso pages, of the action of the story. Sometimes, no doubt due to the difficulty of placing the color printing, the story gets disjointed. For example, the double-page color print, "Thorin Finds a Lock for his Key," depicting the finding of the entrance on Lonely Mountain (44-45, with Carter's text on 43), is placed between "Spiders and Swords in Mirkwood" (41; text 40) and "Strange Cargo for River Running" (47; text, 46). Carter's text is often simplistic; for "Moon Mysteries at Rivendell," a picture with Elrond holding up the map to the window, Carter only mentions that Bilbo, Gandalf, and the dwarves had "a friendly host to describe the way to the Lonely Mountain where the treasure lay concealed" (21; text, 20). But the interest of the book is in the drawings: Wenzel has a two-page map of the action (6-7), eight single-page color prints (17,21, 24, 29, 33, 41, 48, 52), ten

single-page black-and-white drawings (19, 23, 27, 31, 39, 46, 51, 55, 57, 59), three double-page color drawings, the third being the same as the wrap-around cover of the book (36-37, 44-45, 60-61), and several smaller black-and-white drawings, one repeated (1 and 15; 3; 34; 42; 62 [the latter a self-portrait]). A biographical sketch by Charles M. Collins of Centaur Books mentions that Wenzel had been a comic book artist, as well as a children's book illustrator and advertising lay-out person (63); the drawings suggest a sophisticated comic-book artist, with an extremely good colorer. Gollum (27) is drawn in a pure comic-book style; but the other drawings are not so obvious in their tradition and Wenzel's declared influences, including Arthur Rackham (63), have an influence. One complaint is that Wenzel is not consistent about the size of Bilbo's head in comparison to his body; in some of the drawings, Bilbo looks like a human dwarf.

Quenti Lambardillion, continued from page 43

The seeming scribal errors might be attributed to the haste with which Tolkien dashed off the post card or it might simply reflect his overall attitude toward the runic system, inside and outside of Middle-Earth. It did not "appear" elegant, nor was it in its use.

The last question which ought to be asked in a study like this is "How much does Tolkien borrow from the runic systems of the Germanic languages?" Table 3 answers that question.

Table 3
Tolkien's Use and Invention of Runes

1	wen	A.S.	21	rev.	19 Tol.	41	rev.	40 O.Nor
2	rad	A.S.	22	calc	A.S.	42	epel	A.S.
3	rev.	1 Tol.	23	invent.	Tol.	43	ing	Tol.
4	rev.	2 Tol.	24	vos	A.S.	44	n	A.S.
5	gear	A.S.	25	invent.	Tol.	45	invent.	Tol.
6	beorc	A.S.	26	rev.	24 Tol.	46	haegel	A.S.
7	rev.	6 Go.	27	ear	A.S.	47	haegel	A.S.
8	lagu	A.S.	28	peorth	A.S.	48	ur	A.S.
9	aesh	A.S.	29	varient	A.S.	49	invent	Tol.
10	tyr	Nor.	30	invent.	Tol.	50	ur	A.S.
11	rev.	9 Go.	31	nyd	A.S.	51	invent.	Tol.
12	tir	A.S.	32	ar	Nor.	52	y	A.S.
13	naud	O.Nor	33	mm	O.Nor	53	invent.	Tol.
14	invent.	Tol.	34	rev.	35 Tol.	54	invent.	Tol.
15	ar	O.Nor	35	k	Gold. Horn	55	naud	O.Nor
16	invent.	Tol.	36	gyfu	A.S.	56	ar	O.Nor
17	yr	O.Nor	37	gar	A.S.	57	thorn	A.S.
18	kann	O.Nor	38	man	A.S.	58	rev.	57 Tol.
19	feoh	A.S.	39	is	A.S.	--	invent.	Tol.
20	invent.	Tol.	40	sigel	A.S.	--	e	A.S.

All of those runes which have "Tol." after them are either completely or partially invented characters. "Rev." means that a legitimate runic symbol has been reversed by Tolkien to take on a different value. Those runes with "(A.S.)" after them are Anglo-Saxon

runes. Those with "(Nor.)" are Northern Runes. "(O.Nor)" means that the rune is from Old Norse. "(Gold.Horn)" and "(Gold.Brac.)" refer to famous artifacts found in Norse burial mounds which were engraved with runes. "(Go.)" refers to Gothic runes.

Even though there seems to have been an excessive amount of borrowing from these runic alphabets, to criticize Tolkien without considering what he has done with them would be unfair. Tolkien has recreated the runic system so that it seems to many to be more believable than the original; his world has given them new life.

NOTES

[1] F. Ballhorn, Grammatography (London: Trubner and Co., 1861), 75-6.

[2] Ruth Noel, Languages of Middle Earth (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1980), p. 42.

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