

# *Ríanna*

A poem in Vinya-Quenya  
with Commentary and Analysis

by

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**Ardalambion**

<http://folk.uib.no/hnohf>

“ARDALAMBION — Of the tongues of Arda” is a website dedicated to the study of the languages created by J.R.R. TOLKIEN

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*RÍANNA* was originally presented as an email posting in the TolLang mailing list, and has become a feature in the *ARDALAMBION* website since 1997, with commentary by Helge Fauskanger. This PDF version is an expanded updated version written by the original poet.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude first and foremost to Helge Fauskanger who made my previous iterations of *Rianna* a feature in his website, and whose comments and suggestions over the years improved the poem and saved me from at least one mistake. Also deserving mention is David Salo for his initial comments on the poem back in 1997, as well as others who have made similar comments through private email, those who have made translations thereof to other languages and made attempts to render it in *tengwar*; the Philippine Tolkien Society for its support; and last but not the least to Johan Winge for his beautiful *Tengwar Annatar* font.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

### 1. GRAMMATICAL

acc.	accusative	pa.t.	past tense
adj.	adjective	perf.	perfect/past perfect
adv.	adverb	pers.	person
BQ	Book Quenya	prn.	pronoun
CQ	Classical Quenya	pl.	plural
conj.	conjunction	poss.	possessive
dat.	dative	Q	Quenya
du.	dual	sc.	<i>scilicet</i> , that is to say
excl.	exclusive	sg.	singular
exclam.	exclamation	subj.	subject
fu.t.	future tense	suff.	suffix
imp.	imperative	s.v.	<i>sub verbo</i> , under the word or heading
intr.	instrumental	<	derived from
lit.	literally	>>	changed to
loc.	locative	*	unattested, hypothetical
neut.	neuter	=	equal to
nom.	nominative		

### 2. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

LR	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> (page references are from the 50th anniversary edition, 2004-5)	X	<i>Morgoth's Ring</i>
R	<i>The Road Goes Ever On</i> (page references are from the 2nd edition, 1978)	XI	<i>The War of the Jewels</i>
S	<i>The Silmarillion</i>	XII	<i>The Peoples of Middle-earth</i>
UT	<i>Unfinished Tales</i>	PE	<i>Parma Eldalamberon</i>
MC	<i>The Monsters and the Critics</i>	VT	<i>Vinyar Tengwar</i>
V	<i>The Lost Road and Other Writings</i>	TS	<i>Tolkien Studies</i>

## FOREWORD

On September 6, 1997 I was watching the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales on television and when I saw and heard Elton John singing “Candle in the Wind”, when I heard the line “It seems to me, you lived your life like a candle in the wind” it struck me that “like a candle in the wind” could easily be rendered in Quenya as *ve líkuma sírinen*. So I have decided then and there to write a short poem about Diana as a tribute. After some false starts and tinkering for several hours that evening, using my resources at hand (most in particular my worn-out copy of *The Lost Road*), I have finished my first version of the poem and posted it in the TolLang mailing list on September 15, 1997 (without translation).<sup>1</sup> On September 17 noted Tolkien scholars David Salo (who made the language translations in Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy) and Helge Fauskanger (the webmaster of the *Ardalambion* website) posted their translations and praised the effort.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently Helge asked for permission to include the poem in his website, and it has been a feature ever since with Helge’s own commentary, which in turn was translated into other languages in various mirror sites.<sup>3</sup>

Changes were made in the intervening years (which are listed for comparison), but the version below is the latest iteration of the poem based on my understanding of Quenya grammar and my own linguistic-taste (Q *lámatyávenya wéra*), as well as a more detailed commentary which recognizes the mutability of Tolkien’s languages, real-world or otherwise. I have rewritten the poem in book-language or *parmaquesta* (although lapsing into spoken Classical Quenya (CQ) or *tarquesta*, or even colloquial Quenya would be inevitable),<sup>4</sup> but it must be emphasized that this should be considered as \**Vinya-Quenya* (or Neo-Quenya) as with any Quenya text not written by Tolkien, and in no way is this officially sanctioned by the Tolkien Estate. Be it as it may, I hope this would help others in learning *i Quenya lambe* and to further its appreciation.

Finally, whatever errors that might arise in this edition are mine and mine alone. *Mea culpa*.

NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY: Note that I used the macron to indicate long vowels in the poem itself as well as in the commentaries; elsewhere I have used the acute accent, except for a couple of examples in Telerin as well as primitive (ulterior) forms. Also, I did not use the diaeresis to indicate disyllabic vowel combinations. I did not standardize the orthography of the poem as far as in matter of *c* and *k* as many have done. The reason for this is that like Tolkien, I would like into consideration the “shape” of the word to see if it looks better as well as its attested form, indicative of my personal *lámatyáve*. For instance, I prefer the form *líkuma* to *lícuma* as Helge had done when he posted the poem in his website. Nevertheless, whether *c* or *k* is used, it would be written the same way in *tengwar*:  $\mathcal{T}j\acute{c}\acute{m}$ .

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### THE POEM

When I first wrote the poem back in 1997, I really did not care about the form of the poem itself as what mattered then was the *content* itself, as making a poem in Quenya is in itself a challenge then and now, because of its many limitations as far as vocabulary is concerned, despite the many details that have emerged in the intervening years. However, because of new information, much of the original poem has changed, but still remained the same.

Here is the text of the latest version of the poem.

### *Ríanna*

*Namārie, vanima Rīanna, Herimelde!*  
*Ānelye mēn melmē yo alassē,*  
3 *ar enyaluvalme sā oiale.*  
*Namārie, vanima Rīanna, Ardalōte!*  
*Coacalinalya fīrie we līkuma sūrinen,*  
6 *nō melmelma lyēn ūva fire indolmassen.*  
*Namārie, vanima Rīanna, Indotāri!*  
*Ā wile sī Nūmenna rāmainen laurie,*  
9 *ar nai fealya seruva oialmaresse.*

Changes made from the original poem and subsequent versions are as follows:

**Line 1:** *Herinilda* >> *Heriméla* >> *Herimelde*

**Line 2:** *Antanelde* >> *Ānelye*; *men* >> *mēn*; *melme ar alasse* >> *melmē yo alassē*

**Line 3:** *enyaluvammet* >> *renuvammet* >> *enyaluvalme sā*

**Line 4:** *Ardalōte* >> *Ardalotse* >> *Ardalōte*

**Line 5:** *Coacalinalda* >> *Coacalinalya*; *fīrne* >> *fīrie*; *ve* >> *we*

**Line 6:** *Nān* >> *Nō*; *melmemma len* >> *melmelma lyēn*; *indommassen* >> *indolmassen*

**Line 8:** *Sī wila* >> *Ā wile sī*

**Line 9:** *fealda* >> *fealya*

**Alternative reading:**

**Line 6:** *lyēn* = *lyenna*



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more appropriately, a nonce word — for “princess”.<sup>9</sup> To those who are familiar with Tolkien’s legendarium, the Sindarin form of the name *Rían* is the name of Tuor’s mother and thus Eärendil’s paternal grandmother.

### Line 1:

**Namārie:** This word has been well analyzed elsewhere so there is no need to repeat that here. It served well as a convenience in the poem.

**vanima:** Although the gloss of this is “fair”, there are two etymologies of this word, depending on connotation. One, it may be derived from √BAN, which while it referred simply to “beauty”, it would have the implication of *blessedness, lack of fault or blemish*. The other is from √WAN, with an emphasis on *fair-haired* (blonde or golden brown), with a secondary meaning of “beauty” (PE17:149-150, cf. XI:383). So no matter the etymology in this case, both would apply to the late princess. However, note that in my Tengwar rendering of the poem, I used the tengwa *vala* (᠃), which represents *v* (< *b*), instead of *vilya* (᠋), which also represents *v* (< *w*). If I use *vilya* instead, it would be written as *wanima* (in *tengwar* ᠋᠋᠋) instead.

**Herimelde:** “Dear lady”. The previous forms *Herinilda* and *Heriméla* have *heri* “lady” and *nilda* and *méla*, both meaning “friendly, loving, affectionate” (V:378 s.v. NIL-, NDIL- and VT39:10). Ultimately, I have decided to change it to *melde* (personalized form of *melda*) “dear, beloved” (PE17:56,109). In Quenya compounds, esp. in names, the adjectival element usually appears as the first part of the compound following the older Eldarin order (XI:414). However, as pointed out by Fauskanger, the reverse is by no means impossible, e.g. the name *Herumor* (S:363) and *Herunúmen* (S:330). *Herimelde* and the words it substituted would be taken as later formations.<sup>10</sup>

### Line 2:

**Ānelye:** I have chosen to substitute *antane*, the pa.t. of *anta-* “to give” with the archaic/poetic preterit *āne*, as *antane* is the form used in spoken or colloquial Quenya. I have combined *āne* with the 2nd pers. sg. formal/polite subj. prn. suff. *-lye*. In the original version of the poem, I used *-lde* instead as I was led to believe that it meant the same thing as *-lye*, as seen in *Aran Meletyalda* “Your Majesty” (XI:369). However, in the latest Quenya pronominal scheme (c. 1968), *-lde* became the plural of *-lye* (VT49:51).

**mēn:** Dative of *mé* 1st person pl. excl. pronoun “us”, meaning “we (not including) you” sc. Diana.

**melmē yo alassē:** The long *e* at the end of *melme* and *alasse* indicates that both are in the accusative in BQ, as Tolkien indicated in the Plotz Letter. In normal spoken Quenya the distinction between the nom. and acc. is not observed but can be determined by context.<sup>11</sup> Although *ar* is the usual Quenya word for “and”, it is better suited as a link between sentences and phrases, as in Line 3. More appropriate however is *yo*, a reduced form of *yu* < *yū* “both”. This was often used between *two* items that were by nature and custom closely associated; so it literally means *both...and*, as in (*both*) *love and joy* (PE17:70). In the same vein, I did consider the conj. suff. *-ye* as an alternative; in Quenya it was normally used for pairs usually associated with each other, such as *Sun and Moon*; *Heaven and Earth* (as in the attested sentence *Imbi Menel Kemenye mene i Ráno tie*, “between Heaven and Earth goes the path of the Moon”); *Land and Sea*; *fire and water*; etc. (VT47:31). Thus it is equally and appropriately applicable to express *love and joy* as a pair, but I ultimately chose *yo* instead.

**Line 3:**

**enyaluvalme:** *enyal-* is attested “to recall”, a compound of *en-* “re-, again” and *yal-* “to summon”, thus “to remember” (UT:305,317); I changed this to *\*renuva* as an experimental form, but while the verb *\*ren-* is not itself attested in Quenya, the base from which it is derived,  $\sqrt{\text{REN}}$  “recall, have in mind” (XII:372) is attested.<sup>12</sup>

*Enyaluvalme* is the future tense of the verb with the addition of the 1st pers. pl. excl. subj. prn. suff. *-lme*. I have previously used *-mme* because that was how Tolkien described the pronoun (XI:371), and indeed such was the case before he changed it to *-lme* upon the publication of the 2nd edition of *The Lord of the Rings* (see VT49:51). This has since become the 3rd pers. excl. du. form.

**sā:** *sā* is the separate form of the 3rd pers. pl. neut. prn. “them” (sc. *melmē yo alassē* “love and joy”).<sup>13</sup> Previously, I had assumed that *-t* or *te* (CQ *tē*) applied to both animate and inanimate objects; thus I had modeled it on the attested Quenya phrase *A laita te, laita te, andave laituvalmet* “Praise them, praise them, long we will praise them” (LR:953).<sup>14</sup> However, *sā* is also singular as seen in the example *eke nin kare sa* “I can do it (lit. “it is open for me to do it”)” (VT49:34) as well as the reflexive pronoun *insa* “\*itself” (VT47:37); the distinction between singular and plural in this case may be determined by context.

**Line 4:**

**Ardalôte:** “Flower of the Realm”. *Arda* of course means “region realm, kingdom”, and I applied this to its strictest sense, as suggested by the phrase “England’s rose” in Elton John’s song. However, this can be applied in the broadest sense as the World itself (XI:402, cf. X:349). For *lôte* “large single flower” see VT42:18 and PE17:160.<sup>15</sup>

**Line 5:**

**Coacalinalya:** The fifth line was actually the first line of the poem which I wrote, and it gives both homage and parody to “Candle in the Wind”. *Coacalina* “light of the house” is an Elvish metaphor for the indwelling spirit (*fea*) within the body (*hroa*)(X:250); the *-lya* is the possessive equivalent of *-lye*. It would seem fitting therefore that death would be like the light of a house extinguished “like a candle in the wind”.

**firie:** “hath expired”. Note that I have changed the verb tense of *fir-* “to expire, breathe forth” from past tense *\*firne* to the unaugmented perfect tense *firie* (this is in fact attested in X:250). Although the augmented perfect is more often than not used in normal speech (e.g. *ifirie*), the unaugmented form can be usually found in verse, so is the case in this poem.<sup>16</sup>

**we likuma sūrinen:** As I mentioned earlier, the fact that I was able to render “like a candle in the wind” into Quenya was what set me on the way in composing this poem. However, note that I have used CQ *we* “as, like” in lieu of its colloquial descendant *ve* (PE17:189).

**Line 6:**

**Nō:** This replaced *nán* “but, on the contrary, on the other hand” in *The Etymologies* (V:375 s.v. NDAN-); *nó* occurs in the sentence *ore nin karitas nó namin alasaila* “I would like / feel moved to do so but I judge it unwise” (VT41:18); related are the forms *one* and its variant *ono* (VT43:22).



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**melmelma lyën:** “Our love for thee”. The form *-lma* is the possessive equivalent of *-lme* (cf. *-lye* and *-lya* above); see **enyaluvalme** above regarding the switch from *-mm-* to *-lm-*.

The form *lyén* is the dative of the separate pronoun *lyē* (see **antanelye** in Line 1). However, the allative form *lyenna* “towards thee” is acceptable as an alternative reading.<sup>17</sup>

**ūva fire:** This was based from a suggestion by Ivan Derzhanski in his critique of Nancy Martsch’s book *Basic Quenya*.<sup>18</sup> He wrote that:

Some of the constructions in the book aren’t really derivable from the corpus, yet [Nancy Martsch] doesn’t present them explicitly as her own guesses. An example is the negation of verbs by prefixing *ú-*, as in \**útiruva* ‘won’t watch’; there is no evidence of such a construction in the Quenya corpus, and in fact in *The Lost Road* and *The War of the Jewels* there is evidence pointing towards \**ūva tire* (Emphasis in the original).<sup>19</sup>

This critique proved to be valid, as it turned to be the way how to express “shall not die” in archaic Quenya or verse. According to Tolkien:

Q *ú-* could be used (especially in verse) as a verbal prefix; but the normal way of expressing verbal negation was by verbalizing the stem *ú-*, = *ua-*, which was then followed by the impersonal tense form. So *uan care, carne, cára, caruva* etc. I do not make, did not make, am not making, shall not make, etc.<sup>20</sup> (PE17:144).

But in archaic Quenya or verse,

...*ua* could be completely conjugated, in which case the actual verb remained in impersonal aorist form. *uan, únen, úvan*, future, *uien* perfect (*ibid.*).

**indolmassen:** Locative plural of *indo-lma* “our heart”. For *-lma* see **melmelma lyén** in Line 5, for *indo* see next entry.

### Line 7:

**Indotāri:** “Queen of Heart(s)”. Another borrowing from “Candle in the Wind”. I based the gloss “heart” from *The Etymologies* (V:361 s.v. ID-, cf. *indo-ninya* “my heart” in V:72) in contrast to *hón* “heart (physical)” (V:364 s.v. KHÖ-N-). However, this has become problematic as *indo* refers variously to “mind or mood”, “state of mind”, “region/range of thought”, “inner thought, in *fea* as exhibited in character or [?personality]” or “resolve” or “will”, the state of mind leading directly to action, thus “the mind in its purposing faculty, the will”.<sup>21</sup> This rather complicates matters because of the range of meaning of this word, and at one time I considered *óre* “heart (inner mind)” (LR:1123, VT41:11) as the alternative to *indo*, but according to Tolkien,

[H]ear’ is not suitable, except in brevity, since *óre* does not correspond in sense to any of the English confused uses of ‘heart’: memory, reflection, courage, good spirits; emotion, feelings, tender, kind and generous impulses (uncontrolled by or opposed to the judgments of reason) (VT41:11).

In the end, therefore, with some hesitation, I have decided to keep *Indotāri*.

### Line 8:

**Ā wile:** The previous versions have *wila*, which I based on the imperative exclamations *ela!* “behold!” (XI:362) and *heka!* “begone! stand aside!” (*ibid.*, p. 364). However, the normal way to express the imperative is by placing the independent imp. particle *á* in front of a form similar to the simplest infinitive or the bare aorist (PE17:93). So from the aorist form *wile* combined frontally with the imperative particle *á* would mean “fly, sail” (imp.). The phrase *A laita te* mentioned above has the short unstressed form of *á*, which is actually colloquial Quenya.

**sī Nūmenna:** “now to(towards) the West”. *Nūmenna* is the allative form of *Númen*.

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**rāmainen laurie:** I have patterned this from *rāmainen elvie* “on wings like stars” in Tolkien’s post-LR version of “The Last Ark” (MC:222). *Rāmainen* is the intr. pl. of *rāma* “wing” and *laurie* is the pl. of the adj. *laurea* “golden”.<sup>21</sup>

### Line 9:

**Nai:** “May it be that”, formed from imp. *nā* “be it” and conj. *i* “that”. In Quenya, a wish expression is formed by combining *nai* with the fut. tense of a verb, as in *Nai elye hiruva* “may it be that thou shalt find (it)” in *Namárie*. However, the exception to the rule is the expression “God bless you” which uses the pres. cont.: *nai Eru lye mánata* (VT49:39; PE17:75).

**fealya:** “your spirit”, analyzed as *fea-lya*. See **Coacalinalya**.

**seruva:** Impers. fu.t. of *ser-* “to rest”; see **Rianna** for etymology.

**oialmaresse:** Loc. sg. of *oialmare* “everlasting peace/bliss”. *Oialmare* is a neologism (Q \**vinyakarme*), a combination of *oi* “ever” and *almare* “bliss”, which I modeled on the attested form *oienkarme* (*Eruo*) “the perpetual production (of Eru)” (X:329).

## NOTES

1. The original message can be found in this URL: <http://tolklang.quettar.org/messages/Vol26/26.06>.
2. Their response can be found at <http://tolklang.quettar.org/messages/Vol26/26.09>, and my own comments at <http://tolklang.quettar.org/messages/Vol26/26.12>.
3. Examples of translations are in Spanish in the Lambenor website (<http://lambenor.free.fr/ardalambion/rianna.html>), Italian (<http://ardalambion.immaginario.net/ardalambion/rianna.htm>) and Brazilian Portuguese (<http://www.ardalambion.com.br/rianna-vicente-velasco/>). There is also a Czech version, made as a PDF file, which was also rendered in *tengwar* (<http://dil.kx.cz/vlastni/Namarie.pdf>). For a French version, see <http://www.lespoemes.com/poeme/forum/poeme-32956.html>.
4. Compare Tolkien’s assessment of Galadriel’s Lament (*Namárie*) being in the colloquial, “although with some archaisms (dual) and poetic words” (PE17:76). As for the distinction between *parmaquesta* and *tarquesta*, see PE 18:25, 75.
5. Tolkien is not above adapting real-world names to Quenya. Consider *María* (Mary) and *Hristo* (Christ) in his Quenya translations of *Ave Maria* and the Litany of Loreto (VT43:28 and VT44:15 respectively).
6. In CQ the *r* in *sére* is an untrilled spirantal *r* (as commonly heard in English *dry*), not fully trilled as in the colloquial, thus written as \**séře* (PE17:71,134).
7. Before c. 1968, Tolkien had attached two meanings to *lelya-*. See XI:360,363 and PE17:151: the definition in *The War of the Jewels* can be regarded as the later conception. However in notes that he wrote on “Fate and Free Will” in c. 1968, he gave a third definition:  
?DEL: Q. *lèle*, v[erb] *lelya* (*lelinyē*). To *will* with conscious purpose, immediate or remote. To be willing, to assent, consent, agree—quite different, for it partakes of *will* but is an additional [?accident]. A man may say ‘I [?wish], I agree, I will’ to some proposition of another without special purpose of his own (but he may also have reflected that it fits in with some design of his own and so agree to it as he might not otherwise have done) (TS 6 (2009):188 note 5).
8. According to Tolkien, initial (primitive) *d* became *n-*, not *l-*, “by assimilation to an *n* occurring later in the word”, thus \**Niána* would be more likely (XI:403-4, cf. PE17:17).
9. Strictly speaking, the Q word for princess is *aranel* (UT:434), analyzed as *ar(an)-anel* “\*king’s daughter”. For *anel* see PE17:170.
10. There are two other considerations: (1) in Sindarin at least, the order can be shifted for euphonic reasons (PE17:36) Cf. the Sindarin place name *Novrod* “hollow delving” and its later variant form *Grodnof* (XI:414), and *morgul* “black arts, sorcery” and *guldûr* (PE17:36). Also the names *Findarâto* and *Angarâto*, which are actually

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Telerin in form, as compared to their true Quenya equivalents *Artafinde* and *Artanga* respectively. (2) The shapes of the words at the end of lines 1, 4 and 7 are similar (˘˘˘˘): *HerimELda*, *ArdalÓte*, *IndotÁri*.

11. For a description and text of the Plotz Letter, see Jorge Quiñonez, “A brief note on the background of the letter from J.R.R. Tolkien to Dick Plotz concerning the Declension of the High-elvish Noun”, VT6:13-14.

12. It is from this root that the second element of the name *Elurín* “Remembrance of Elu” is derived (S:290,292).

13. The original has *sa* (unstressed), although this is almost certainly a casual slip.

14. It is now known that the form *te* is “low” or colloquial Quenya.

15. I briefly had Helge change *Ardalóte* to *Ardalotse*, modeling it from *ambalotse* (XI:318), but he pointed it out that it would not be appropriate as *lotse* refers to smaller flowers, which is not what I had in mind (VT42:18, PE17:160), so I reverted back to *Ardalóte*. I briefly considered using *indil* instead of *lóte*, but found it rather awkward. For *indil* see XI:399.

16. Compare the forms *vánier* (in the 1st edition of *The Lord of the Rings*) and *avánier* (2nd edition) in *Namárie*, and Tolkien’s explanation in XI:366 and PE17:63)

17. For an attested use of *lyenna*, see VT49:40-41.

18. See the article in <http://www.elvish.org/articles/BQ.html>.

19. I believe Derzhanski was referring to the line *Nan úye sére indo-ninya símen, ullume* “But my heart resteth not here for ever” in *Fíriel’s Song* (V:72), and the privative phrase *áva kare!* “Don’t do it!” in *Quendi and Eldar* (XI:371).

20. As a note to the preceding, Tolkien wrote:

Note the distinction (quite clear in other persons than 1st) between *uan caruva*, I am not going to make (statement about future) and *ván (vanye) caruva*, I will not (do not intend) to make.

21. See PE17:155,179,189, VT39:23, VT41:13, 17.

22. However, the form *laurie* in *Namárie* is an adv. meaning “goldenly”; it also occurs as a noun, “goldenness” (PE17:61).