

Subject of This Talk

- 1969 document: *Common Eldarin Article* (CEA)
 - First published in PE23, Sep 2024
 - PE23/133-140, with draft/addendum PE23/141
 - Many details on Sindarin articles and mutations
- Open question:
 - How much of CEA is consistent with Tolkien's earlier writings, and what is new in CEA?

Separate Topics

- Definite Article
- Soft Mutation
- Nasal Mutation
- Phonology of Nasals + Voiceless Stops
- Not covered in this talk
 - Pre-CEA Genitive Articles (*na, en, in*)
 - Mixed Mutation

Topic 1: Definite Article

- Pre-CEA: *i/in*
 - Early: *in* is pre-vocalic, later *in* is for plurals
- CEA: singular *e(n)*, plural *i(n)*
 - *e(n)* < “emphatic *inā*”
 - *en* pre-vocalic, *e* before consonants
 - Soft mutation borrowed for ancient singular *i*
 - Special case: *i* before *ge* with lost *g*
 - Example: *i* 'êl “the weeping” [**gêl*] vs. *en êl* “the star”
 - Also: *e* 'aladh “the tree” [*galadh*]
- Contradicts LotR: *i estel* “the hope”

Definite Article (2)

- No clear definite singular $e(n)$ other than in CEA
 - Pre-CEA $e(n)$ most likely a genitive marker “of the”
 - Main clue: mutational differences (mixed mutation)
- In 1948, there was primitive “adjectival *inā*”
 - From *The Demonstrative, Relative, and Correlative stems* (DRC) PE23/96-112
 - Possible precursor to emphatic *inā*, but probably originally basis for 1950s genitive marker $e(n)$
- Lack of definite articles in late 1960s makes point of transition difficult to determine

Topic 2: Soft Mutation

- Comparing six things:
 - Welsh mutations (inspiration for Sindarin)
 - 1910s Gnomish Grammar
 - 1920s Early Noldorin Grammar
 - 1930s Comparative Tables (of phonology)
 - 1950s-60s attested Sindarin mutations
 - Vocalic mutations in CEA

Soft Mutation (2)

- **Stops**: Very stable, same in 1910s-1960s, as well as in Welsh
 - $p/t/c \rightarrow b/d/g$; $b/d/g \rightarrow v/dh/$ (Welsh: $f/dd/-$)
- **Voiceless spirants/sibilants**: h not mutated in the 20s, s not mutated in the 10s-20s
 - 1930s+ and CEA: $h \rightarrow ch$; $s \rightarrow h$ (but not in Welsh)
- **Nasals**: m not mutated in 10s-20s, m mutated later but not always in LotR or in CEA
 - 1930s-60s: usually $m \rightarrow v$; Welsh f
 - More details in my talk on Adjective Mutation

Soft Mutation (3)

- **Voiceless Liquids:**

- 1920-30s/Welsh: *lh/rh* → *l/r* (Welsh: *ll* → *l*)
 - This is because historical *l/r* were unvoiced initially
 - “Mutation” actually restores original historical form
- CEA: *lh/rh* → *thl/thr* (archaic), unmutated (modern)
 - In 1950s+, *lh/rh* result of ancient initial *sl/sr*
 - Medial developments: *sl/sr* > *thl/thr*
 - Modern mutations left initial voiceless liquids alone
 - Example: Talath Rhúnen “East Vale” (S/124)
- Hints of CEA system in 1957 notes (PE17/147)

Soft Mutation (4)

- **Nasalized Stops:** Not discussed in CEA
 - Special mutations from ancient *mb-/nd-/ñg-*
 - Examples: *dôr* “land” < NDOR, *bâr* “home” < MBAR
 - Pre-CEA: Sometimes simple *m/n/ñ*, sometimes *mb/nd/ng*
 - Orthographic conventions make things ambiguous
 - In CEA mutated result *m/n/ñ* written *mb/nd/ng*
 - CEA: ancient *ñ-/ñg-* fell in with *g-*
- **gw → w:** Result same as *g* → '
 - Historical causes are different, however
 - Inhibited initial change rather than medial change

Topic 3: Nasal Mutation

- Two features: mutation and prior nasal changes
 - The *n* in preceding *in* also changed (usually lost)
 - *in·elin* “the stars” [êl] vs. *i·mair* “the homes” [bâr]
- Comparing three things:
 - 1920s Early Noldorin Grammar
 - 1950s-60s attested mutations
 - Nasal mutations in CEA
- Nasal mutations mostly not present in 1910s
 - Nothing in 1910s Gnomish Grammar
 - Only hint: *si(n)·Pheleg* “granddaughter of Peleg”

Nasal Mutation (2)

- **Voiceless Stops:** CEA *p/t/c* → *in·ph/th/ch*
 - Pre-CEA: *i·ph/th/ch* [earlier had nasal-loss]
 - More on this case later
- **Voiceles Spirants:** CEA *f/th/h* → *i·f/th/ch*
 - Ditto pre-CEA [both with nasal-loss]
- **Voiced Stops:** CEA *b/d/g* → *i·m/n/ñ*
 - Ditto pre-CEA [both with nasal-loss]
 - CEA orthographic conventions: *mb/nd/ng*
 - Pre-CEA had *ng* for *ñ* and other confused orthography

Nasal Mutation (3)

- **Nasals:** $m/n \rightarrow i \cdot m/n$ [nasal loss], ditto pre-CEA
 - No clear examples of $\tilde{n}$ in CEA but probably like g
- **Liquids:** $l/r \rightarrow il \cdot l/i\check{d} \cdot r$ (archaic); no examples
 - Modern probably $i \cdot l/i\check{d} \cdot r$ or (perhaps) $i \cdot r$
- **Voiceless Sibilants/Approximants:**
 - $s/h/wh \rightarrow i \cdot s/ch/chw$ [with nasal-loss] < $s/sy/sw$
 - Lots of vacillation on medial developments of sw
 - Pre-CEA: $s \rightarrow i \cdot s$, but no examples of others

Nasal Mutation (4)

- **Voiceless Liquids:** *rh/lh* → *i·thr/i·thl* (archaic)
 - *rh/lh* → *i·rh/i·lh* (modern) < *sr/sl*
 - Ditto pre-CEA based on PE17/147
- **gw** → **ñw** [*ngw*] (modern), *gw* → *nw* (archaic)
 - Pre-CEA ambiguous due to orthographic issues
- **Ancient nasal-stop clusters:** *mb-/nd-/ng-*
 - Not explicitly in CEA, but hints → *i·m/n/ñ*
 - [*m*]bâr → *i·mair* “the homes”; [*n*]dôr → *i·nuir* “the lands”
 - Ambiguous pre-CEA due to orthographic issues
 - At least sometimes the clusters seem to be restored

Topic 4: Phonetics Developments of Nasals + Voiceless Stops

- A major difference between Welsh and Sindarin
 - Both: medial historical phonetics give long nasals
 - Welsh nasal mutations produce (voiceless) nasals
 - Sindarin nasal mutations produce voiceless spirants
- Requires a special explanation for why
- Possible explanations:
 - Pre-CEA: Nasal loss at morpheme boundaries
 - CEA: Changes to medial developments

Phonetic Developments: 1910s-30s

- 1910s: Medial *mph/nth/nch* were retained, so probably *mp/nt/nk* > *mph/nth/nch*
- 1920s: Transitional period, as seen via inflected past tense forms (*Early Noldorin Grammar*)
 - At first: *maint* vs. *manthin* [1st. sg.]
 - Later: *maint* vs. *meinniog* [3rd. sg. masc.]
- 1930s: Further evidence of new system
 - Inflected pasts and medial developments both indicate *mp/nt/nk* > *mm/nn/ng*

Phonetic Developments: 1962

- 1962: Same as 1930s, but with an explicit voiceless nasal stage
 - Similarly in oldest Sindarin *mp*, *nt*, *nc* were preserved ... changes proceeded as in North Sindarin as far as *mph*, *nth*, *ñch* ... medially *mph*, *np*, *ñx* (though for long without change of spelling) became long voiceless *m*, *n*, *ñ* ... in late Beleriandic Sindarin these became voiced *mm* (*m*), *nn*, *ng* (= *ñg*) [PE17/131, with references of *lt* > *ll* removed]
- Full phonetic development:
 - *mp/nt/nk* > *mph/nth/nch* > *mh/nh/ñh* > *mm/nn/ng*

Phonetic Developments: late 1960s

- From *The Rivers and Beacon-hills of Gondor*
 - In the Southern dialects *nt*, *ñk*, *mp* remained when standing finally ... Medially however *nth* (*np*), *nch* (*ñχ*), *mf* (*mp* with bilabial *f*) ... became long voiceless *n*, *ñ*, *m* ... though the old spelling was mostly retained (beside *nh*, *ñh*, *mh*), and among those to whom Sindarin became a language of lore ... the spirant was reintroduced from the spelling. In true Sindarin of the Elves or Elf-friends of the early ages the final form [*mp*, *nt*, *nk*] was often introduced medially (VT42/27).

Examples from Late-1960s System

- Result: *mp/nt/nk* > *mph/nth/nch* > *mh/nh/ñh* but no mention of voicing to *mm/nn/ng*
- Variant spellings of “fourth”, “sixth”, “eighth”
 - *cantui, canhui, canthui* “fourth” (VT42/10, 25)
 - *encui, enchui* “sixth” (VT42/10, 25) [no *eñhui*]
 - *tolhui, tollui, tolthui* “eighth” (VT42/10, 25, 27)
- Note conspicuous absence of *nd* and *ng*

Nasal-loss in Mutations Pre-CEA

Back to topic of nasal mutation and n-loss

- Pre-CEA nasal-loss $p/t/c \rightarrow i\cdot ph/th/ch$ is inconsistent with medial developments
- Salo's theory: conditioned nasal-loss
 - At morpheme boundary or before main stress
 - $in\cdot t > in\cdot th > i[n]\cdot th$ stopping further medial changes
- Also seen in some compounds:
 - $\bar{in}+pant > ifant$ “year-full”
 - $aran+thorn > Arathorn$ “Steadfast King”

Lack of Nasal-loss in CEA

- CEA: *p/t/c* → *in·ph/th/ch* but *f/th/h* → *i·f/th/ch*
- Two distinct historical phases:
 1. Early nasal-loss before original voiceless aspirates, which later became voiceless spirants
 2. No nasal-loss with later voiceless spirants resulting from nasals + voiceless stops
- No mention of voiceless nasal stage in CEA
 - There is explicit mention of voiced stops + nasals becoming voiced long nasals

The Two CEA Phases

- The first change was one common to T. and S. and so very ancient. After the loosening of the aspirates to spirants a preceding nasal was lost, and the vowel before the nasal was nasalized and lengthened. The nasality was later lost.
- The spirantalizing of stops after a nasal was however very much later: a purely S. change only affecting the medial stops and not those that had become final after the loss of all original CE final vowels (-*mp*, -*nt*, -*ñk* remained); the nasal was therefore not phonetically lost before the new spirant.

Evidence from CEA Past Tenses

- Inflected past tense forms in footnote show *nch* rather than *ng*:
 - Change differently *in·chelair*, later, as in *tancher* > *tanker* “they fixed”; *tanchen* “I fixed”; 3 s[g.] *tanc*, *adanc* ... Keep *nch* in sp[elling] S. pronounced this with nasal vowel, but *nc* often [ʔcame] in from final, as *adancer* for *adancher*.
 - Note *tanker/adancer*, possible restorations from final *nc*
- Some ambiguity when Tolkien said “S. pronounced this with nasal vowel”
 - Unclear whether this was *ṇŋχ* or *āχ*

CEA Phonology Summary

- CEA very likely shows a revised phonetic development for nasals + voiceless stops
 - Historical development ends at *mph*, *nth*, *nch*
- The makes nasal mutations identical to the medial phonetic developments
 - Fully explains lack of nasal-loss in CEA for nasal mutation of voiceless stops
 - The result is distinct from nasal-loss seen in the pre-CEA system

Other Late Examples

- CEA is not the only place indicating this change
 - Inflected past: *echanthel* “*you shaped” (1969, VT47/38)
 - Verb *glintha-* (1970, WJ/337)
 - Variant ordinals *canthui*, *enchui* vs. *cantui*, *canhui*, *encui* (late 1960s, VT42/10, 25)
 - Deleted inflected past forms {*rithantem*, *rithantin* >>} *rithanen* (1966-67, PE17/167)
- Verbs with voiceless nasals in mid-1960s:
 - *anha-* and *fanha-* (PE17/93, 174)

An Even Earlier Example

- Odd example from 1957 also hints *nt* > *nn* was (briefly?) abandoned
 - √STEN-. Since *nt* &c. no longer are held to yield *nn* &c., the word for “short” should be *Vstenna*, √STEN- “cut short, limit, confine, cramp”. Q *thenna/senna*. S *thenn*, *esten* (PE17/185)
 - Probably refers to *Ann-thennath* “long shorts”
 - If *nt* > *nn* no longer applied, another explanation is needed for the class plural *thennath*
 - Thus a new etymology is needed for *thent* “short”
 - Credit to Vyacheslav Stepanov for this example

Possible Timeline

- 1910s: $mp, nt, nk > mph, nth, nch$
- 1920s: transitional period
- 1930s: $nt > nth > nh > nn$
- 1957: $nth > nh > nn$ (briefly?) abandoned
- 1962: $nt > nth > nh > nn$ restored except in North Sindarin
- 1965-68: $nt > nth > nh$ but not $nh > nn$
- 1969-70: $nt > nth$ but not $nth > nh > nn$

Overall Conclusion

- CEA is mostly compatible with pre-CEA except:
 - Singular definite article was *e(n)* instead of *i*
 - No nasal-loss from nasal-mutated *p/t/c*
 - Sometimes *m* did not undergo soft mutation
 - Discussed more in Saturday talk
 - Ancient nasal+stop cluster become simple nasals, with some orthographic ambiguity
 - Mutated *m/n/ñ* represented orthographically as *mb/nd/ng*
 - Possibly a cheat to mask earlier conceptual differences
 - *nt* > *nth* but not *nth* > *nh* > *nn*