

TOLKIEN'S TENGWAR TEXT OF *THE LAY OF LEITHIAN*

Ronald Kyrmse

J.R.R. Tolkien wrote *The Lay of Leithian* about Beren and Lúthien in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The latest texts are given in *The Lays of Beleriand*, Vol. III of *The History of Middle-earth*. Below is a transcription of Tolkien's tengwar manuscript – with Latin-style punctuation – of lines 3994-4027 (page 299), with the phonetics corresponding to the tengwar and a list of scribal errors. The text in the Latin alphabet reconstructed from the tengwar is given at the end, with the readings appearing in the most recently composed version added between brackets.

ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ, ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ~
ᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ!
ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ, ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ!
ᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ¹ ᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ.
ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ?
ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ² ~ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ?

ᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ:
ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄᓄᓄ³ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ.
ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ, ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ⁴ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ⁵.
ᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ⁶ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄ⁷ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ.

so^w lu^wθien, so^w lu^wθien –
ə la^y la^yk ðl elv_s əⁿd men!
yet welk_əm, welk_əm tu ma^y hōl!
a^y hæv ə yu^ws fou evri θrōl.
mot n^yu^w_s əv θiⁿgol in hiz howl
ʃa^y læukɪŋ la^yk ə timid vo^wl?
mot foli frēʃ is in hiz ma^ynd
hu^w kanot ki^yp həz ofspring blaynd
from stre^yɪŋ ðas – or kan diva^yz
no^w betu ka^wnsɪ for həz spa^y_s?

ə mo^wm_ə^{nt} ðen ʃi ste^yd hɪ son:
ð we^y o^w kiŋ wz wa^yld əⁿd loŋ
bɪt θiⁿgol seⁿt mi not nou no^w_s.
mot ro^wd həz ribel^yəs dōtu go^w_s.
yet evrə ro^wd əⁿd pāθ dɪθ li^yd
nouθwd ət lāst, əⁿd hi^yɪr əv ni^yd
a^y tre^mblɪŋ kɪm wið hu^mbl bra^w
əⁿd hi^y bifou ða^y θro^wn a^y ba^w.
fɪ lu^wθien hæθ meni aʊt_s
for soles swi^yt əv kiŋglə haʊt_s.

𐌸𐌹 𐌶𐌹𐌺𐌸⁸ 𐌶𐌹 𐌹𐌶𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌶𐌹𐌹𐌹
 𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹, 𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌶𐌹 𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹 ~
 𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹, 𐌸𐌹 𐌹𐌶𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌶𐌹 𐌹𐌹
 𐌶𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹 𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹 𐌹𐌶𐌹𐌹.
 𐌶𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹 𐌶𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹⁹ 𐌸𐌹𐌹
 𐌶𐌹 𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹? 𐌶𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹¹⁰
 𐌸𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹
 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹? 𐌶𐌹 𐌶𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹
 𐌶𐌹 𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹. 𐌶𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹 𐌶𐌹𐌹𐌹
 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹¹¹ 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹¹², 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹 𐌶𐌹𐌹¹³,
 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌶𐌹𐌹𐌹, 𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹,
 𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌶𐌹𐌹 𐌶𐌹𐌹.

ənd hiɹ əv niʏd ða^w ʃælt rimeʏn
 na^w lu^wθien, in joʏ or peʏn –
 or peʏn, ð miʏtu du^wm for ðl
 rebəl ənd ʌpstaut we^{ntʃ} ənd θröl.
 maʏ ʃud yi not in a^w ʃeʏt ʃeɹ
 əv wo^w ənd træveʏl? maʏ ʃud aʏ speɹ
 tu slendɹ lim ənd bodi freʏl
 brɐʏkən tɔɹment? əv mot eveʏl
 hiɹ dʌst ða^w diʏm ðaʏ bæbliŋ sɔŋ
 ənd fu^wliʃ lāftu? minstrəlɐ strɔŋ
 ar æt maʏ kōl. yet aʏ wil giv
 ə respaʏt briʏf, ə maʏl tu liv,
 ə litəl maʏl, ðo^w pæʏtʃæst diɹ,
 na^w litəl lu^wθien iz hiɹ.

Notes:

1 𐌶𐌹𐌹 [häv] for 𐌶𐌹𐌹 [hæv]

2 𐌹𐌹𐌹 [θas] for 𐌹𐌹𐌹 [ðas]

3 𐌸𐌹𐌹 [dʌt] for 𐌸𐌹𐌹 [bʌt]

4 𐌶𐌹𐌹 [həɹ] for 𐌶𐌹𐌹 [hiɹ]

5 𐌸𐌹𐌹 [da^w] for 𐌸𐌹𐌹 [ba^w]

6 𐌹𐌹𐌹 [meɹi] for 𐌹𐌹𐌹 [meni]

7 𐌶𐌹 [əð] for 𐌶𐌹 [əv]

8 𐌶𐌹𐌹 [həɹ] for 𐌶𐌹𐌹 [hiɹ]

9 𐌹𐌹𐌹 [θeʏt] for 𐌹𐌹𐌹 [feʏt]

10 𐌹𐌹𐌹 [ster] for 𐌹𐌹𐌹 [sper]

11 𐌶𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 [restaʏt] for 𐌶𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 [respaʏt]

12 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 [vrif] for 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹 [brif]

13 𐌶𐌹𐌹 [hiv] for 𐌸𐌹𐌹 [liv]

'So Lúthien, so Lúthien, a liar like all Elves and Men! Yet welcome, welcome[,] to my hall! I have a use for every thrall. What news of Thingol in his hole shy lurking like a timid vole? What folly fresh is in his mind[,] who cannot keep his offspring blind from straying thus – [?] or can devise no better counsel for his spies?'	3995
 A moment then [She wavered, and] she stayed her song:[] 'The way o king ['The road,' she said, '] was wild and long[,] but Thingol sent me not[,] nor knows what road [way] his rebellious daughter goes. Yet every road and path doth [will] lead Northward at last, and here of need I trembling come with humble brow[,] and here before thy throne I bow.[:] For [for] Lúthien hath many arts for solace sweet of kingly hearts.'	4005
 'And here of need thou shalt remain now[,] Lúthien, in joy or pain – or pain, the meeter [fitting] doom for all[,] rebel and upstart wench and [for rebel, thief, and upstart] thrall. Why should ye not in our fate share of woe and travail? Why [Or] should I spare to slender limb and body frail breaking torment? Of what avail here dost thou deem thy babbling song and foolish laughter? Minstrels strong are at my call. Yet I will give a respite brief, a while to live, a little while, though purchased dear, now little Lúthien is here. [to Lúthien the fair and clear,]	4010
	4015
	4020
	4025