

# Coining Personal Names to Build Connections among Characters: Lexical Creativity in Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings

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Master's thesis / Diplomski rad

2024

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet**

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Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-08-21**



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UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

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**Coining Personal Names to Build Connections among  
Characters: Lexical Creativity in Tolkien's *The Lord of the  
Rings***

Master's thesis

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Zagreb, 2024

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## **Abstract**

J.R.R. Tolkien's mastery of language, present in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and all his other works belonging to the fictional universe of Middle-earth, has been the subject of numerous articles, books, research papers, doctorates, etc. The key to such a massive popularity and positive reception is found not only in his complex fictional languages but also in the way he manipulated language boundaries to create an intricate network extending throughout his entire universe. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine how Tolkien, in the process of coining names, used various word formation processes and languages to connect characters that share some type of bond. Moreover, it aims to determine the link between the character's name and their role in the story, and how that role contributes to building the characters as individual beings while keeping them closely linked with those around them. The analysis is carried out on 48 names and surnames (from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy) that have some similarities at the level of form (e.g., contain the same element, rhyming) or meaning (e.g., shared feature or role). It consists of determining the word formation process, language, and possible interpretations to see how Tolkien created multiple levels of interconnections between various groups of characters. The results confirm that Tolkien gave all three factors a central role in constructing names and surnames that link closely related characters on one hand and emphasize the character's uniqueness on the other. The study's main contribution is to provide an insight into the complex but wondrous nature of creating fictional names and encourage other linguistics and writers to follow in Tolkien's footsteps and continue to explore the possibilities of human language.

Key words: *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, characters' names, word formation processes, languages, interconnection

## 1. Introduction

When J.R.R. Tolkien published his widely acclaimed novel *The Hobbit* in 1937, he only set the scene for the massive success and popularity that his fantastical universe of Middle-earth would bring in the form of *The Lord of the Rings*. First published in 1954, this fantasy novel consisting of three volumes, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*, quickly became one of the highest-selling books ever written. Despite being fantastical stories written for children, the two genres that were, and still are, considered nothing more than trivial literature<sup>1</sup>, his books became the subject of various research papers, scholarly articles, books, magazines, debates, and doctorates. Moreover, the Middle-earth universe captivated the hearts of millions of readers who became its loyal fans dedicating their whole lives to discovering all its wonders. The reason for such a positive reception can be found in the fantastical universe itself, i.e., in the magical but profound characters such as Hobbits, Elves, Wizards, Dwarves, etc., in the detailed maps that bring a touch of reality, in the thousand years of history hidden behind each character, in the fictional languages that carry their own unique grammars and vocabularies, and so much more. The rich linguistic aspect that Tolkien offers in the way he uses both existing and fictional languages to build a language-based network that permeates and connects his entire universe into one complex unit, was, and still is, a fertile ground for numerous analyses and studies. Therefore, this study aims to examine how Tolkien, in the process of coining names, used various word formation processes as well as languages to connect characters that share some type of bond (e.g., relatives, spouses, members of the same race or gender, etc.) while also focusing on determining the various levels of meanings given to each name and how they reflect the character's role within the Middle-earth universe. Due to the limited scope of this study, the analysis was limited to only those characters whose names share some similarities in form and meaning, i.e., if they rhyme, have the same element, sound similar, etc. The study was therefore conducted on a list of 48 names mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (the characters from Tolkien's other works belonging to the same universe are not dealt with here). The methodology includes determining which method Tolkien applied to connect certain pairs or groups of names/characters, which word formation process and

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<sup>1</sup> The kind of literature that appeals to popular taste, and therefore, is not considered serious or important for further research study or academic discussions. For these purposes, these types of genres are often marginalised by various scholarly and educational institutions.

language he used, and finally, which possible interpretations are hidden behind each of the selected names.

The study is organized as follows: the following section provides an overview of the previous works related to this topic, followed by the *Key Concepts* section in which the most important linguistic terms as well as terms specific to the trilogy are defined. In the fourth section, the aims and hypotheses are presented, while the fifth section focuses on providing a detailed account of the used methodology and literature. This is followed by the analysis of the selected names. Lastly, the *Discussion* further explains and examines the study's findings, whose summarized form can be found in the *Appendix* section at the end.

## 2. Previous Research

There are truly numerous works dedicated to Tolkien and his Middle-earth universe. From various articles, research papers, and doctorates to entire magazines, books, and websites, they all deal with various aspects of this fictional world. Some are more story and character-oriented, thus they deal with possible inspirations, motivations, and symbolism, such as Marjorie Burns' *Perilous Realms: Celtic and Norse in Tolkien's Middle Earth* or Jason Fisher's collection *Tolkien and the study of his sources: critical essays*. Other writers and critics are more focused on Tolkien himself, they study his childhood, campus, and war years to discover to what extent his early life influenced his writing. Some such books are John Garth's *Tolkien and the Great War* and Robert S. Blackham's *Tolkien's Oxford*. There is also a large number of works concerned with the linguistic aspect of Middle-earth. Tolkien's genius in creating new languages, combining and using the existing ones, and his play with words and names generated respect and admiration from both scholars and non-scholars. As a result, various studies and dictionaries were created detailing the grammar, vocabulary, and origins of Tolkien's fictional languages. For example, Ambar Eldaron's dictionaries on Elvish languages, Quenya<sup>2</sup> and Sindarin<sup>3</sup> or Jim Allan's *An Introduction to Elvish* (1978), a book in which he provides dictionaries and backgrounds for all languages found in Middle-earth. More importantly, Allan focuses on the possible translations and interpretations of various names of characters, places, and objects. There are also some explanations for the inflectional and derivational changes in

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<sup>2</sup> *Quenya-English Dictionary English-Quenya Dictionary* (2009); <https://ambar-eldaron.com/telechargements/quenya-engl-A4.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *Sindarin-English English-Sindarin* (2008); <https://www.ambar-eldaron.com/english/downloads/sindarin-english.pdf>

certain fictional languages as well as for the characteristics and unique principles found in the names of different families and groups of beings.

When it comes to the websites developed and maintained by Tolkien fans, the most famous and comprehensive ones are *Tolkien Gateway*<sup>4</sup>, *The One Wiki to Rule Them All*<sup>5</sup>, and *The Thain's Book*<sup>6</sup>. These are the sources where readers can find almost everything that is known about each character, important events, various places, etc., in other words, they encompass information from all of Tolkien's books, guides, articles, and even letters that deal with the Middle-earth universe. All fictional items, terms, geographical places, kingdoms, nationalities, characters, events, and languages are explained, their roles in the universe are described, and their historical backgrounds are provided. Moreover, these websites also contain possible etymologies for a number of names, etymologies which consist of probable inspirations, used languages, constituent elements, translations, and/or interpretations. Another source that touches upon various themes related to Tolkien and his story is magazines such as *The Journal of Tolkien Research*, *Mallorn*, *Parma Endalamberon*, etc. *The Journal of Tolkien Research* is a peer-reviewed journal that aims to provide high-quality research and scholarship based on "multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to Tolkien studies, including gaming, media and literary adaptations, fan productions, and audience reception."<sup>7</sup> *Mallorn: The Journal of the Tolkien Society* is another peer-reviewed journal published regularly since 1970. Although the majority of articles are more focused on the interpretation and inspiration for the characters and the story, a few are concerned with fictional languages and their origins. For example, Bob Borsley in his article "The Languages of Middle-earth" writes about the grammar and the characteristics of Sindarin and Quenya as well as the possible (real) language they were based on. He also briefly introduces the Black Speech, the language of Mordor, and some other Dwarvish languages that were not as thoroughly developed. A journal completely dedicated to Tolkien languages is *Parma Endalamberon* or *The Book of Elven-tongues* (1971). Different articles emphasise specific grammar points of Quenya and Sindarin, with later editions focusing solely on publishing Tolkien's original materials. For instance, some of the subjects that appear are the formation of plural, personal pronouns, directive particles, forms throughout history, vowel shift, glossaries, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Main_Page)

<sup>5</sup> [https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Main_Page)

<sup>6</sup> <https://thainsbook.minastirith.cz/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://scholar.valpo.edu/journaloftolkienresearch/aimsandscope.html>

There are also various works closer to the topic of this study. For instance, a general discussion about the art of naming characters can be found in Burelbach's article "An Introduction to Naming in the Literature of Fantasy" (1982) where he offers some guidelines on how to create names for fictional characters and places. Burelbach uses Tolkien as one of his examples to illustrate his distinction between a "real" and a "secondary" world in which mundane names like Tom, Harry, or Jane do not suffice. Therefore, for this "secondary" world to be persuasive, there needs to be a sense of remoteness from the readers' everyday lives, which is achieved through nomenclature. As Burelbach notes, Tolkien was successful in building various degrees of this remoteness through uniquely characteristic patterns that he used for different groups of beings. "His names for elves and dwarves, for instance, are quite clearly each of a pattern, and the two patterns are distinct from each other." (136) The presence of a pattern is also discussed by Louise E. Keene (1995) who writes that "through focusing on and magnifying the chaotic events in Tolkien's story, one finds consistent patterns, stability, and regularities." (6) Languages are one of the ways in which Tolkien brings order into his fictional world. His deep understanding of how languages work can be felt in the way he plays with them to construct new languages and unique names, which Keene illustrates by analysing characters' names and offering their possible interpretations. This more linguistic approach is fully present in Tsaqila's doctorate "Morphological Process of Neologisms used in The Lord of the Rings Novel" (2001), where he focuses on the type of word formation processes and languages Tolkien used to create his own names of characters and places, that is, neologisms. Through the analysis of 40 names, Tsaqila aimed to demonstrate how analogical formations of neologisms are created and what types can be found specifically in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Following in Tsaqila's footsteps, this thesis will provide similar insight by examining closely related characters' names or surnames as neologisms. The key word formation processes used by Tolkien for this purpose are discussed below.

### **3. Key Concepts**

#### **3.1. Linguistic terms**

##### **3.1.1. Word Formation**

Word formation encompasses all grammatical and lexical processes through which a new word is created. Blending, compounding, coining, derivation, inflection, etc. are all considered word formation processes.

##### **3.1.2. Compounding**



Compounding is the most productive way of forming new words in English, which consists of putting together two elements, “the first of which is either a root, a word or a phrase, the second of which is either a root or a word.” (Plag, 2003, 173) The ending product is known as a compound. Based on the type of word class used, compounds can be classified as noun-noun compounds (e.g., *lunchtime*, *heartache*, *sunscreen*), verb-noun compounds (e.g., *password*, *sweatshirt*, *runtime*), adjective-noun compounds (e.g., *smartphone*, *bluebird*, *greenhouse*), etc. An important property of compounding is the so-called “right-hand head rule”, introduced by Edwin Williams, which states that in compounds the head always appears on the right-hand side. “The compound inherits most of its semantic and syntactic information from its head” (173), meaning that the second element is the one that determines the word class. Some examples of compound names found in Tolkien’s trilogy and discussed in the analysis below are Elrond, Aragorn, Folcwine, Bandobras, etc.

### 3.1.3. Calque

According to Hatim and Munday (2004), a calque or loan translation is “a special kind of borrowing whereby a language borrows an expression form of another, but then translates literally each of its elements.” (149) Throughout history, English has often relied on this type of process to borrow terms and phrases coming from a variety of foreign languages, such as *superman* (German), *fanservice* (Japanese), *forget-me-not* (French), *pineapple* (Dutch), *deep state* (Turkish), *Milky Way* (Latin) or in Tolkien’s case Thorin II (Old Norse), Baggins (Westron), Théoden (Anglo-Saxon), etc.

### 3.1.4. Blending

Blending is a word formation process that combines “two (rarely three or more) words into one, deleting material from one or both of the source words.” (Plag, 2003, 155) The resulting product is known as a blend, a new lexeme whose constituent parts can generally be easily identified. Most often words of similar lengths are combined by taking the “first part of one word and the last part of another.” (Bauer, 1983, 235) Some of the examples are the words *brunch* (breakfast + lunch), *smog* (smoke + fog), *motel* (motor + hotel), *chunnel* (channel + tunnel), or Tolkien’s surname Cotton.

### 3.1.5. Derivation

Through the process of derivation, new words are formed by the addition of derivational affixes onto already existing words. This is a lexical process whose final product is known as a

derivative. There are three types of possible affixes: 1. Prefixes, which are added to the beginning of another word (e.g., *anti-*, *im-*, *un-*, *pro-*), 2. Suffixes, which are added to the end of another word (e.g., *-ly*, *-less*, *-ish*, *-dom*), and 3. Infixes, which are incorporated within another word (e.g., *abso-freaking-lutely*). Apart from Tolkien's names Théoden, Nimrodel, and Galadriel, some other examples of words formed through this process are *unbelievable* (un + believe + able), *joyful* (joy + ful), *happiness* (happy + ness), *kingdom* (king + dom), *impossible* (im + possible), etc.

### 3.2. Trilogy-based terms

#### 3.2.1. Tolkien's languages

There are several fictional languages present in Tolkien's Middle-earth. The most notable and developed ones are the two Elvish languages, Sindarin and Quenya. "Quenya was the ancient language of Eldamar brought to Middle-earth by the High Elves who returned in exile at the end of the First Age." (Borsley, 1970, 13) Although, in the beginning, Sindarin was quite similar to Quenya, it significantly changed (both semantically and syntactically) through the Second Age and slowly took over Quenya as the official language of the High Elves. The second group consists of the Mannish languages, the most significant ones being Adûnaic and Rohirric, languages of the Edain from the First Age. Adûnaic was spoken in Númenor and from it developed Westron, the language of the Dúnedain whose descendants founded Arnor and Gondor. Westron is also known under the name Common Speech since it was considered the universal language of Middle-earth. Rohirric or Rohanese was the official language of Rohan and it was primarily derived from Old English. The relationship between these two languages (Rohirric and Adûnaic/Westron) was created in such a way as to reflect the relationship between Old and Modern English<sup>8</sup>. There is also the language of Dwarves, known as Khuzdul, which was not very developed as it was only spoken amongst the Dwarves themselves. "This was used principally for matters of lore, the Dwarves using the languages of the men among whom they dwelt for day to day use." (Borsley, 1970, 19). It was based on various Semitic languages and consisted of 32 runes<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> "Rohanese." *The One Wiki to Rule Them All*, accessed 23/4/24.

<https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Rohanese>

<sup>9</sup> There are another two less developed languages, Black Speech (the official language of Mordor) and Entish (the language of Ents) but these characters are not part of this study, so their languages are only mentioned here as a side note.

### 3.2.2. Middle-earth

According to Robert Foster (1993), Middle-earth encompasses „the lands of Arda lying east of Belegaer, extending at least as far south and east as Harad and Rhun.” (261) It is a fictional world whose shape and geographical position were supposed to reflect Europe and a world in which he places the events of his books *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and *The Silmarillion*. The history of Middle-earth is divided into three periods: Days before days, Years of the Trees, and Years of the Sun. The last period is then divided into four ages, with the Third Age being the one during which the events of the Lord of the Rings trilogy take place<sup>10</sup>.

#### 4. Aims and Hypotheses

The main aim of this study was to examine how Tolkien, in the process of coining names, used various word formation processes as well as languages, both real and fictional, to connect characters that share some type of bond. This bond could refer to close or distant family relations, belonging to the same race or gender, sharing the same status or physical feature, etc. Due to the limited scope of this study, the data material, i.e., the list of names was limited to only those characters whose names have some similarities at the level of form and/or meaning. Therefore, names that share the same first or last element, rhyming names, phonetically similar names, or names with closely related meanings were all taken into consideration. Furthermore, in the process of analysing each name, the second aim was to determine the extent to which the name reflects the character's part in the story, status, personality or physical traits, previous or future roles, etc. That is, how these roles and features contribute to building the characters as individual beings on one hand, while on the other keeping them closely connected with those in their vicinity. The following hypotheses were tested:

H1 Through the use of various word formation processes, Tolkien created names that connect characters sharing some kind of bond.

H2 The connection, that is, the separation between characters belonging to different groups of beings (Hobbits, Men, Elves, and Dwarves) is further highlighted by using various real and fictional languages.

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<sup>10</sup> “Middle-earth.” *The One Wiki to Rule Them All*, accessed 23/4/24.

<https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Middle-earth>

H3 Each character's name carries unique but also connecting meanings that highlight their roles, ranks, and/or traits within the Middle-earth universe.

The first hypothesis is the basis of this study, it refers to how Tolkien created and used names to connect relatives, spouses, members of the royal line, members of the same race or gender, etc. through word formation processes such as compounding, blending, calquing, borrowing, derivation, etc. How these processes were used, which is the most common one and why, and to what extent they reflect the various bonds between characters are just some of the questions addressed in the analysis. In other words, this hypothesis suggests the complex nature of coining names, a process through which several layers of meanings are formed, each of which carries another type of information as well as a connection with other characters belonging to the Middle-earth universe.

The second hypothesis is concerned with the languages that Tolkien used for each group of beings and how they connect and separate these characters. In the process of creating his universe, some of the names, places, and official languages were based on real, existing languages while others were based on his fictional languages such as Sindarin, Quenya, or Westron. Therefore, this hypothesis takes a deeper look into the possible roles of these languages, how they are used to separate different groups of beings but at the same time keep some of them connected, and what other information they give about the characters' background and overall role in the story.

The third hypothesis refers to the various meanings one name could carry and how they reflect the character. Each name has its own story to tell, some are more obvious while others can only be discovered through the association with some other closely connected characters. Moreover, not all names refer to a single feature, the focus could be placed on physical appearance, personality traits, or some past or future actions. Sometimes a name might even include all three features. By way of explanation, all these meanings and features that one name carries make each character uniquely different, a separate individual, but at the same time it is that exact feature that bonds him with other similar characters.

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1. Choosing relevant names**

Since this study is primarily based on the analysis of the names of Tolkien's characters, the first step in the research process was to go through all the books belonging to the Lord of the Rings trilogy, i.e., *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*. At the

same time, all the characters' names, regardless of their status, importance, or overall role, were taken out and sorted into provisional groups: Hobbits, Men, Elves, Wizards, Dwarves, Ents, Dark Creatures, and Other Creatures. Since this study focuses entirely on the trilogy's story, only the characters mentioned within the story were considered; in other words, names appearing only in the Appendices and Indexes were not part of the analysis. Moreover, other Tolkien's books, belonging to his fictional universe (e.g., *The Hobbit: There and Back*, *Bilbo's Last Song*, *The Silmarillion*, etc.), are also not part of this study so their characters did not find their place in the list of names unless they were mentioned within the trilogy's story (e.g., Nimrodel, Eärendil, Thorin, etc.). When all the books were read and all the names were taken out, what followed was checking the list and looking for any apparent form-based similarities (equal first or last element, rhyming names, or phonetically similar names) between characters connected through blood relation, racial or gender affiliation, marital status, and/or royal lineage. After this selection at the form level, there was a need for a brief analysis of the remaining names to ascertain whether there were any further/deeper connections on the semantic level. This step consisted of looking at the meaning behind each name, that is, studying the process of their creation with the help of some additional literature. For example, Tolkien's personal letters and his nomenclature or Jim Allan's book *An Introduction to Elvish*, in which there is some information on Tolkien's thinking process and inspirations when coining certain names. With these two types of analysis, the list was significantly shortened, leaving about a hundred possible names, a number that is still too big for the scope of this study. Therefore, to avoid repetition, only one example for each type of bond was chosen within each group of beings. Meaning that, if among Men, there were two examples of a father-son bond, emphasized by the same first element, then only one example was used with the choice being based on the character's role in the trilogy. For example, King Théoden played a significantly larger role than King Fréa and his son Fréawine, who were only mentioned by name, thus, Théoden and his son Théodred were put on the list as a representative example of this kind of royal-blood relation. Finally, the list with 48 names, which can be found in the section *Appendix* at the end, was completed and the next major step could take place.

## **5.2. Organising groups**

During the process of analysing and picking relevant names, the original eight groups of beings were changed and reduced to five groups: Hobbits, Men of Gondor, Men of Rohan, Elves, and Dwarves. As can be seen, the category of Men was expanded into two separate groups since two completely different languages were used to emphasize the differences between these two

kingdoms. Moreover, beings such as Wizards, Ents, dark creatures, and other types of creatures were excluded from the list for two reasons. The first reason is that their names do not contain any similarities relevant to this study, at least not within the characters mentioned in the trilogy. The main feature that connects these other characters within their group of beings is the use of the same language, which is a feature that on its own does not satisfy the needed criteria. For this study, language alone is not distinctive enough, that is, there need to be some other factors present to connect two or more characters (e.g., rhyming names). The other reason is once again related to the limited space given by this study. Since some groups only contained a single example of linking characters through their names, they were not included in the final list. That is why, the characters Beorn and Grimbeorn were not included here as this pair was the only example found in the group Other Creatures, moreover, they represent the already examined father-son duo connected by using the same element. To summarize, three conditions had to be met in the process of choosing names and groups, first, the names had to have more than one connecting factor (language and something else), second, within one group there should be no repetition (the exemplary representative should be chosen), and third, the groups had to have more than one representative.

Regarding the order of names within each group, the primary condition is the level of closeness between characters and the level of similarity between their names. For example, a father and son duo whose names share the same element (e.g., Isumbras III and Bandobras) come before an uncle-nephew pair whose bond is expressed in the same manner (e.g., Hamfast and Halfast). Furthermore, an additional condition is seniority and the character's status. For instance, in the group Men of Gondor, first come kings, then stewards, and lastly the "common" men. When it comes to seniority, older members of the family or older kings are put first, which is why in the group Hobbits, Isengrim II and Isumbras III come before Isumbras III and Bandobras. Although the level of similarity is higher in the second pair, following the rule of seniority, the order should be grandfather > father > son.

### **5.3. Analysis**

As was already mentioned, the analysis consisted of two parts, one was at the level of form and the other at the level of meaning. The first part consisted of comparing names, analysing how and to what degree they are similar, that is, connected. Then each name was taken individually to determine what kind of word formation processes (e.g., compounding, blending, translating, etc.) they underwent and what languages were used (fictional or real). These two factors were used to link various pairs of names and discern to what degree they are similar/different, do

they simply share the same component, or were they created based on the same principle and language? In this process, various literature was used as a helping tool, such as Tolkien's guide for translators "Nomenclature of The Lord of the Rings", the already mentioned doctorate by Tsaqila on neologisms, Jim Allan's book *An Introduction to Elvish*, and Robert Foster's *The Complete Guide to Middle-earth*, as well as various dictionaries (e.g., Anglo-Saxon Dictionary<sup>11</sup>, Sindarin Dictionary, etc.) and the two fan websites *Tolkien Gateway* and *The One Wiki to Rule Them All*. After this form-based analysis, the next step was to delve deeper into all the possible meanings that one name could carry and how all those meanings correlate with the characters themselves, their stories and roles, as well as other closely related characters. This included looking at the origins of each name, what possible interpretations and translations it carries, and whether it reflects the character's personality trait, status, or role in the story or refers to some prominent physical feature, future, or past events. Moreover, various sources of inspiration such as medieval literature or contemporary discoveries and events were also taken into consideration as they gave more depth to the characters' personalities and interpretations. Finally, the meanings between each pair or group of names were compared to determine whether they further connect or differentiate the characters, and to what extent they are interconnected. For this part, apart from the already mentioned literature, the compilation of Tolkien's letters by Humphrey Carpenter and Christopher Tolkien as well as *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy were used as additional references.

## **6. Analysis**

### **6.1. Hobbits**

#### **6.1.1. *Isengrim* II and *Isumbras* III**

*Isengrim* II and his son *Isumbras* III belonged to the Took family, an eminent family of Hobbits that holds the office of Thain<sup>12</sup>. Their high status and wealth are highlighted by being the only family of Hobbits with numbers as part of their names – a practice usually reserved for monarchs and royal families – and bearing strong names that generally allude to battles, weapons, or legends. When it comes to the names *Isengrim* II and *Isumbras* III, Tolkien follows the characteristics mentioned above while introducing additional features to make them more personal and distinctive of the character. Both names are compounds whose first elements may

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<sup>11</sup> <https://bosworthtoller.com/>

<sup>12</sup> Something like a chief who was at the same time "the master of the Shire-moot, and a captain of the Shire-muster and the Hobbitry-in-arms." (Tolkien, 1988a, 19)

differ in form but share the same meaning, i.e., both *isen* and *isum* are Anglo-Saxon words for “iron”. Since the name Isengrim consists of two Anglo-Saxon words *isen* “iron” and *grim* “fierce of spirit,” it can be translated as “Fierce-Iron”, while the name Isumbras was created by combining *isum* “iron” with the Germanic word *bras* “arm” and is interpreted as “Iron-Arm”. In this way, Tolkien succeeded in both reflecting the characters’ warrior-like personalities and hinting at them being close-blood relatives. Moreover, having a closer look at the names’ origins, one can find that both names were taken from various medieval literature. Isumbras comes from the English medieval poem “Sir Isumbras” about a knight who went through various hardships in his life but was able to find peace in his old age. Isengrim on the other hand is the name of a wolf appearing in *Reynard the Fox*<sup>13</sup>, an antagonist that somehow always ends up outwitted. Although not much is known about the two Hobbits apart from the few pieces of information about their greatest achievements, Tolkien could have purposely based them on these medieval characters to bring his readers closer to understanding what kind of figures they were. Two complex “legends” whose merits were the only thing strong enough to endure the test of time, which in a way reflects how people in general remember great heroes or villains, by their actions and long-lasting decisions.

#### 6.1.2. Isumbras III and Bandobras

Another father and son duo from the Took family whose names further show how Tolkien continued to depict various characteristics of the Took family while keeping them personal enough to reflect the characters’ personalities and traits. Just like Isumbras III, Bandobras is a compound between *bando* and the Anglo-Saxon word *bras* “arm”, which refers to his exceptional martial skills. Tolkien highlights their close-blood relation through the shared last part *bras* that is now equal in both form and meaning. This difference between the two pairs could have been used to hint that personality-wise, Isumbras III and Bandobras were much closer, i.e., they were considered more heroic, and Isengrim II more antagonistic as the medieval fables suggested. When it comes to the meaning of the word *brando*, there are a couple of possible interpretations; it may be of Germanic origins and thus refer to a group of soldiers or a band/stripe/banner around an arm (“Arm-Band”), or it may have come from the Middle French word *bander* “to strike”. All three interpretations in different ways pay homage to his greatest military achievement when he routed an invasion of Orcs in the Battle of Greenfields, S.R. 1147 (Tolkien,

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<sup>13</sup> A Middle Dutch beast epic written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Willem, “the story can be defined as a satire in which cleverness triumphs over physical strength and social power.” (Parlevliet, 2008, 108)



1988a, 14). Further depth to this character is also given in the fact that Tolkien was probably inspired by a certain George von Hohenzollern, who “fought on the side of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria at the Siege of Vienna in 1529,” and showed “great daring in leading an unofficial raid against the Turks and capturing the Sultan’s standard.” (Carpenter, 2000, 24) Through the character of Bandobras, Tolkien brings to his story an autobiographical element as the name Tolkien allegedly originated from the name von Hohenzollern (23). Therefore, to him, this certain George held the grand role of a bold ancestor just like Bandobras did to Bilbo and the Took family.

### 6.1.3. *Hamfast* and *Halfast*

Apart from introducing matching elements in characters’ names to indicate a father-son relationship, Tolkien also used this technique to create connections within various family trees. One such example is the Gamgees, an old family of Hobbits from the village of Gamwich, known for having lots of children, being skilled gardeners, and tending to choose comical and disparaging names. Most male members bore quite similar names, like Halfred, Hamson, Holman, Hobson, etc., thus, Hamfast (Sam’s father, better known under the name Gaffer) and Halfast (Hamfast’s nephew and Sam’s cousin) are no exceptions to this rule. Their names not only contain the same element *fast* from the Old English *fæst* “firm/fixed”, but they also differ in a single letter. Both names are modernized versions of Old English compounds, Hamfast from *hám* “home” and *fæst* “firm/fixed”, meaning “Stay-at-Home” or “Home-Fast”, and Halfast from *hāl* “hale” and *fæst* “firm/fixed”, meaning “Fit and Firm”. Hamfast is also a calque, translated from the name Ranugad, which comes from the Westron language. A closer analysis of their names shows that although the shared element *fæst* might be the same in form, it does not carry the same meaning. With Hamfast, the name might refer to his job as a skilled gardener, “in the matter of ‘roots’, especially potatoes, the Gaffer was recognized as the leading authority by all in the neighbourhood” (Tolkien, 1988a, 30) or it might refer to his personality trait of never wanting to stray too far from the Shire. The name Halfast, on the other hand, refers to the Hobbit’s physical characteristics; another possible interpretation is that the term *fæst* refers to his stubborn nature. Hence, once again Tolkien managed to hint at a close-blood relationship between these two characters while keeping big enough of a distance to make readers aware of their names’ uniqueness.

### 6.1.4. *Baggins* and *Sackville-Baggins*

The Baggins and the Sackville-Baggins are cousins known for their mutual hatred, primarily because of Bilbo's wealth and the Sackville's wish to take ownership over Bag End. Wanting to express this family's snobbish and condescending nature, Tolkien decided to give them a rather "aristocratic" English surname, Sackville, which was brought over by the Norman conquest. It is a compound between two French-based words, *sack* and *ville* "place or town", and holds a similar meaning to the one placed within the surname Baggins. According to Tolkien (2005), the first element *sack* is "joined in the story with Baggins because of the similar meaning in English (= Common Speech) sack and bag, and because of the slightly comic effect of this conjunction." (762) There are several interpretations of the surname Baggins, the most popular one being that it is based on a compound bag-end, which is the name of Bilbo and Frodo's house. Another possible solution is that Baggins is a calque, an English translation of the Westron word *laban*, meaning "bag" or it could be a variation on the word Bagshot, "the row of small 'holes' in the lane below Bag End." (765) All three suggestions are valid since they all evoke associations with Bag End, which was Tolkien's main intention when deciding on this surname. However, according to Tom A. Shippey (2003), there also exists a fourth interpretation in which Tolkien "used the name "Bag End" as a calque of "cul-de-sac", to poke fun at the British use of French terms." (66) This explanation stands out from the rest as it further connects the two families by introducing the French language into both surnames and highlighting that the usage of *sack*, the more formal version of the word *bag*, plays a dual role. With these two synonyms, Tolkien wanted to emphasize that the Sackville-Baggins family thought themselves to be above the rest (especially Bilbo and Frodo), but it was exactly this snobbery that turned them into an object of mockery and ridicule.

#### 6.1.5. (Sam) Gamgee and (Rosie) Cotton

Another example of how Tolkien used surnames to connect two characters can be found in the love story between Sam Gamgee and Rosie Cotton, the daughter of farmer Cotton. After Sam's journey to destroy the Ring and the liberation of the Shire from Saruman's control, the two married and had as many as thirteen children. Tolkien hinted at their eventual coming together from the very beginning, i.e., by associating their surnames with each other. As Tolkien suggested in one of his letters, the surname Gamgee is "a 'translation' of the real Hobbit name, derived from a village (devoted to rope-making) anglicized as Gamwich<sup>14</sup> (pron. Gammidge),

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<sup>14</sup> Gamwich is translated from the Hobbitish word Galabas, which means "Game-Village".

near Tighfield.” (Carpenter and Tolkien, 1981, 196) This passage indicates that originally Tolkien planned to call this family Gamwichy, but he was then influenced by the Gamgee Tissue, absorbent cotton wool that functioned as a wound dressing (invented by Dr. Joseph Sampson Gamgee in 1880), which he immediately linked to the Cotton family. For Tolkien, this was a convenient and funny way of connecting not only Sam and Rosie but also their two families who were close friends. The surname Cotton also represents an interesting play with words and word formation processes. Most readers would immediately connect this surname with the common noun “cotton” and conclude that it suggests the family’s line of profession. According to this interpretation, the surname Cotton would be an example of conversion from a common to a proper noun, but this was not what Tolkien had in mind when deciding on names. Cotton is actually a blend between two Old English words *cot* “cottage/hut” and *ton* “town/village” and is thereby another village name (just like Gamgee or Gamwichy). Tolkien counted on this confusion to once again create a meaningful connection between the words Cotton and Gamgee (Tissue) while keeping them unique enough to emphasize that these are two different families coming from different places, one from a cottage village and the other from Gamwich, a village known for making ropes.

#### 6.1.6. *Twofoot*, *Proudfoot*, *Whitfoot* and *Puddifoot*

Many Hobbits are given surnames that reflect their professions (e.g., Bracegirdle, Sandheaver, Hayward, etc.), dwellings (e.g., Underhill, Smallburrow, Longholes, etc.), or prominent physical features. When thinking about the Hobbits’ appearance, one of their most noticeable attributes is their feet, “but they seldom wore shoes, since their feet had tough leathery soles and were clad in a thick curling hair” (Tolkien, 1988a, 11), hence it does not come as a surprise that Tolkien incorporated this word in a number of Hobbits’ surnames. The four surnames mentioned in the headline are all compounds, sharing the same second element *foot*; however, it is through the first element that Tolkien, to varying degrees, incorporates other traits characteristic of each character. Starting from the most obvious one, *Twofoot* consists of the words *two* and *foot*, and it simply refers to the general fact that this Hobbit (and all others) has two feet. *Proudfoot* is a compound between the words *proud* and *foot*, thus describing a Hobbit whose biggest pride is his feet that stand out from the rest, “his name, of course, was *Proudfoot*, and well merited; his feet were large, exceptionally furry, and both on the table.” (Tolkien,

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“Gamwich.” *Tolkien Gateway*, accessed 15/3/24.

<https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Gamwich#Etymology>

1988a, 37) Another descriptive surname is Whitfoot which comes from the compound “white-foot”, and refers to the Mayor of Michel Delving, the fattest Hobbit whose nickname is Flourdumpling. This surname is another example of Tolkien’s play with names as the colour white is directly linked to the Mayor’s nickname (both flour and dumpling are white) and to his first appearance in the book, “Whitfoot, the Mayor, and the fattest Hobbit in the Westfarthing, had been buried in chalk, and came out like a floured dumpling.” (Tolkien, 1988a, 168) The surname that slightly differs from the rest is Puddifoot since it refers to the soft soil of the Marish where this family of Hobbits lives, that is, it comes from the compound “puddle-foot”. With these four surnames, Tolkien used one of the most prominent features of Hobbits, their feet, to connect various characters to each other and to this particular race. Moreover, he introduces other unique features that can refer to more general (Twofoot) or more personal physical traits (Proudfoot, Whitfoot), or they can be descriptive of their habitats. (Puddifoot).

## 6.2. Men of Gondor

### 6.2.1. Elendil, Valandil and Meneldil

With his sons, Isildur and Anárion, Elendil founded the Kingdoms of the Dúnedain (Arnor and Gondor) and became the first High King. He also established the House of Elendil and was the owner of the legendary Narsil, also known as the Sword of Elendil<sup>15</sup>. Elendil originated from Númenor where one of the official languages was the Elvish Quenya language, thus, his name is a compound of two Quenya words *elen* for “elves” and *(n)dil*<sup>16</sup> for “friend/lover”. There are two translations of his name, “Lover of the Stars” and “Elf-Friend” as the meaning of the word *elen* is often mixed between “star” and “elf”. Since Elendil was known for his great friendship with the elven folk, and the battle, in which he and his sons lost their lives, was remembered as the final true league of Elves and Men, the second translation, “Elf-Friend”, is believed to be the intended meaning. Many of his descendants carried this second element *ndil* as part of their names (Eärendil, Anardil, Ciryandil, Minardil, etc.), as did his grandsons Valandil, Isildur’s son and the first sole ruler of Arnor, and Meneldil, Anárion’s son and the first sole ruler of Gondor. Both of their names are compounds consisting of two Quenya words, Valandil between *vala* “Vala” and *ndil* “lover/friend”, meaning “Lover of the Valar”, and Meneldil between *menel* “the

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<sup>15</sup> This sword was used to cut off the One Ring from Sauron's finger, and centuries later it was wielded by Aragorn.

<sup>16</sup> According to Jim Allan (1978), „the combination *nd* reduces to *d* or, more rarely, *n* following *l*, *n*, or *r*” (9) in Quenya language.

heavens” and *(n)dil* “lover/friend”, meaning “Lover of the Heavens”. Not much is known about the private lives of these two characters, so it is hard to ascertain how closely their names reflect their characteristics. Tolkien gave a small hint in one of his letters, in which he wrote that the term *ndil* refers to “the attitude of one to a person, thing, course or occupation to which one is devoted for its own sake.” (Carpenter and Tolkien, 1981, 414-415) Therefore, it can be concluded that the names Valandil and Meneldil describe the characters’ personal likes, interest in astrology (Meneldil), and interest in the Valar (Valandil), the mysterious Powers of Arda that governed the world. Furthermore, the element *ndil* also presents an example of how Tolkien connected the royal line of Elendil while ensuring that each name makes the character stand out as a separate individual.

### 6.2.2. *Vorondil* and *Mardil*

Although *Vorondil* and *Mardil* bear the element *ndil*, which is associated with the royal House of Elendil, they were not its descendants, but Stewards of Gondor who were the first to gain the ruling power and became leaders of Gondor in the long absence of kings. Therefore, Tolkien chose these names to highlight this transition, to show that the stewards’ power was now equal to that of the previous kings and their rule should not be questioned. Having that in mind, the names *Vorondil* and *Mardil* include all the necessary features, i.e., they are both compounds between two Quenya words, in which the shared element *ndil* comes last to express that character’s attitude towards something or someone. Both names express the stewards’ continual devotion to the royal family and Gondor, hence, *Vorondil*’s name can be translated into “Ever/Faithful Friend” from *voro* “friend” and *ndil* “devotion, friend”, while *Mardil* carries the meaning of being “Devoted to the House (of Kings)” from *mar* “house” and *(n)dil* “devotion, friend”. Even though *Mardil* was the first ruling Steward, *Vorondil* still played a significant role in setting the scene for his son to have enough power to eventually “take the throne”. He is responsible for the stewardship becoming hereditary within his house, he was remembered as a great warrior, a hunter of beasts, and the maker of the Horn of Gondor, an heirloom of the Stewards of Gondor. *Mardil* inherited his father’s title and for a short period, he acted as a Steward under Eärnur’s reign who soon lost his life. Since Eärnur never married and had no children, this ruling role fell onto *Mardil*, who was already quite popular amongst the people of Gondor. To sum up, Tolkien has several reasons for choosing the names *Vorondil* and *Mardil*. First, he wanted to highlight this period of change by commemorating Elendil, Valandil, and Meneldil without whom there would be no Kingdom of Gondor. Second, names that stress their devotion to the kings, hint that their rule is only temporary, that they would never be able to

take the throne completely, and that one day the rightful heir would return. Finally, when looking at all the ruling Stewards, one can notice that only these two carry the element *ndil*, which could imply that after the establishment of their rule, the Stewards wanted to solidify their right to the throne by separating themselves from the royal family.

### 6.2.3. *Arathorn* and *Aragorn*

Arathorn and his son Aragorn, true heirs of the royal House of Elendil, were raised by the Elves with their identities hidden from the rest of the world. While Arathorn was only remembered as the fifteenth Lord of the Dúnedain, Aragorn left a much bigger mark not only as a member of the Fellowship but also in uniting the two Kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor under his rule as King Elessar Telcontar. The separation between the royal family and Gondor is shown in the two characters' names as they were not based on Quenya but on the Sindarin language, which the Elves used in their everyday lives as well as in their names. Tolkien himself admitted that the name Arathorn had two possible explanations, in *Parma Eldlamberon 17* he translated it as “Steadfast King,” from the compound *ara(n)*<sup>17</sup> “king” and *thorn* “steadfast” (Tolkien, 2007, 31), while in one of his letters from 1972, he explained that it meant “Steadfast King,” from the compound *ara(n)* “king” and *thorono* “eagle” (Carpenter and Tolkien, 1981, 471). However, since in both works, Tolkien pointed out that the second element *thorn* was an abbreviated form of *borono* “eagle”, the second interpretation, “Eagle King”, will be taken as the intended one. Furthermore, both “steadfast” and “eagle” may similarly reflect Arathorn’s character of being dutiful, firm, and unwavering in times of battle. The name Aragorn is also a compound between *ara(n)* “king” and *gorn* “to be feared, to be honoured”, hence his name is translated as “Revered King”. Unlike Arathorn, this name focuses more on his future status as a king, rather than his character, that is, it announced that Aragorn was to become a legendary persona, a noble king whose greatness was to be both feared and respected. It can be said that Tolkien used the shared element *ara(n)* to connect this father and son duo and hint at their true identity; that their exalted character came from their royal blood and that one day they or their descendants would have to answer the long-awaited call of the king’s duty.

### 6.2.4. *Boromir* and *Faramir*

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<sup>17</sup> According to Tolkien's letter “the *ara* is prob. derived from cases where *aran* 'king' lost its *n* phonetically.” (Carpenter and Tolkien, 1981, 471)

Boromir and Faramir are brothers and sons of the last ruling Steward of Gondor, Denethor II. Boromir, being the eldest son, was supposed to inherit the stewardship role but as a member of the Fellowship, he lost his life trying to protect Mary and Pippin from the orcs' attack. Faramir, after also almost losing his life to orcs, "gave up" the throne to Aragorn and married Éowyn of Rohan, thus becoming the first Prince of Ithilien. Both brothers are connected through the shared element *mír(e)*, which is the Quenya word for "jewel, treasure" and refers to their noble status as potential future rulers/Stewards of Gondor. Although they were similar in both status and appearance, their personalities were quite different, which Tolkien illustrated through the first elements of their names. Boromir is a compound between the Sindarin<sup>18</sup> word *boro* "steadfast, faithful vassal, trusty man" and the Quenya word *mír(e)* "jewel, treasure", thereby it translates as "Faithful Jewel" while Faramir is a compound between two Quenya words *fara* "soft" and *mír(e)* "jewel, treasure" and thus has the meaning of "Soft Jewel". As the name itself shows, Boromir was known for his fierce nature, interest in warfare, and immeasurable loyalty to his people whom he desperately tried to help. This need and sense of duty were his greatest strengths but also his greatest weakness as the temptation to take the Ring from Frodo and use it to bring peace to Gondor eventually became too strong for him. When it comes to Faramir, he was known for his kind and gentle nature, which many, including his father, considered a great weakness. However, he was also a wise and just warrior who recognized the cunning nature of the Ring and thus helped Frodo on his way to destroy it. There is another possible interpretation of Faramir's name, the first element *fara* is believed to come from the Elvish root *far/phar* "sufficient/adequate." This possible meaning reflects Faramir's relationship with his father, who was quite cold towards him, and who nearly pushed Faramir to his death. Although both interpretations refer to Faramir's main traits (his rationality and the need to gain Denethor's approval largely shaped his character), the translation "Soft Jewel" is a greater testament to who Faramir was and his role in the story. Moreover, it better highlights the contrasting nature of the two brothers who, despite their circumstances, were each other's greatest support.

#### 6.2.5. *Beregond and Bergil*

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<sup>18</sup> It was rare for a Gondorian to have a mixed-language name, but Tolkien used it here for grammatical reasons. According to the *Parf Edhellen*, if Tolkien used the Quenya word for "steadfast/ faithful", the final product would have been Borovir since in the process of compounding the letter m from *mír(e)* would have been lost.

Beregond said for himself: “I am no captain. Neither office nor rank nor lordship have I, being but a plain man of arms of the Third Company of the Citadel.” (Tolkien, 1988b, 40) And yet, throughout the story, he has proven to be a great Gondorian warrior and a noble character who not only befriended and helped Pippin but also went against Denethor’s order to save Faramir’s life. For this Aragorn later appointed him as the first captain of the White Company, the guard in charge of protecting the Princes of Ithilien. Beregond is a compound between two Quenya words, *ber* “valiant” and *gond* “stone”, so it is translated as “Valiant Stone”. It is a name that highlights this character’s main traits, the fact that there was once a Ruling Steward with the same name speaks of his integrity (Tolkien equated him with the highest-positioned ruler), while the meaning behind the name reflects his military prowess. Moreover, the use of Quenya is another feature that speaks volumes to the importance of Beregond, and his son Bergil, since this language was only known by the learned and thus present in the names of kings, leaders, and men of great renown. The element *ber* is also found in his son’s name, Bergil, who was only nine years old during the War of the Ring, which did not stop him from showing his courageous, that is, valiant nature when he risked his life by staying in the attacked city and helping the healers as an errand runner. His name carries the meaning of “Valiant Star” and is also a compound between two Quenya words, *ber* “valiant” and *gil* “star”. Almost nothing is known about his life after the War, but his name might hint that he would follow in his father's footsteps and become another heroic figure known for his leadership skills.

### **6.3. Men of Rohan**

#### **6.3.1. Fréawine, Goldwine, and Folcwine**

Just like one can find many parallels among the names of Gondor kings, the same pattern can be noticed when talking about the royal House of Eorl from Rohan. For example, the Old English word *wine* for “friend/protector” presents one of the many shared elements found in the names of Rohan kings. Fréawine, Goldwine, and Folcwine all ruled over the Rohirrim and as the second part of their names suggests, they were mostly remembered as righteous kings, true protectors of their people. All three names are compounds created out of two Old English words, Fréawine (“Lord-Friend”) from *fréa* “lord, king” and *wine* “friend/protector”, Goldwine (“Gold-Friend”) from *gold* and *wine*, and Folcwine (“Friend of the People”) from *folc* “people, folk, nation” and *wine*. Despite his royal status as the fifth King of Rohan, Fréawine was regarded as a close friend to his people, a ruler whose reign was marked as a time of peace and prosperity. His son Goldwine continued this peaceful rule, and although his name might carry a negative connotation, a “protector of gold”, the word *gold* in his name does not refer to his



greed but to Rohan coming into great wealth during his reign. Finally, one of their descendants Folcwine (the fourteenth king) earned his reputation as the people's protector by removing the Dunlendings from threatening Rohan's borders and aiding Gondor in defeating Haradrim's invasion at the cost of losing his two sons. In short, Tolkien's primary reason for using the element *wine* was not to indicate that these individuals belonged to the royal family but to focus on their shared characteristic of being good, fair rulers whose reigns, in different ways (as specified through the first part of their names), brought great prosperity and power to the Rohirrim.

### 6.3.2. *Théoden* and *Théodred*

During the War of the Ring, Théoden was the present King of Rohan and another beloved ruler despite the dark period of his rule when he was placed under Saruman's evil spell. Just like Folcwine, Théoden not only succeeded in defending his people and kingdom from the enemy's attack (Saruman's army of blood-thirsty orcs), but he also sent an army to help Gondor in a battle where he lost his life. Théoden is a calque taken from the Anglo-Saxon word *þeoden* meaning "lord" and is believed to be related to the Old Norse word *þjóðann* which translates as the "leader of the people". Therefore, this interpretation directly reflects Théoden's role in the story, i.e., his royal status. However, his name could also have been created by adding the suffix *-en* to the Old English word *ðeod* "nation, people" through the process of derivation. The word *ðeod* has a close meaning to the word *folc* "people, folk, nation", which directly connects him to his ancestor Folcwine and the royal House of Eorl. This element also links him to his only son and heir Théodred, who died young in the battle at the Fords of Isen. Since not much is known about him, we can only wonder what kind of a person he was and what Tolkien wanted to express through the name Théodred, which is a compound between two Old English words, *ðeod* "nation, people" and *ræd* "advice, counsel, wisdom". While the first part evidently connects him with his royal lineage, the second part is less clear. It might describe his main personality trait or refer to his refusal to succumb to Gríma<sup>19</sup>'s traitorous words and turn his back on his enchanted father. It could allude to his military skills since it is known that he was successful in opposing Saruman's army of Orcs, proving him a skilled, wise warrior who respected his comrades and heeded their council.

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<sup>19</sup> Théoden's chief counsellor and Saruman's right hand. He continually poisoned the king's mind and worked on separating Théoden from his son and nephew Éomer.

### 6.3.3. Éomund, Éomer, Éowyn and Éothain

Rohirrim is a Sindarin word for Horse-lords, a popular name for the people of Rohan who were widely known for their supreme horsemanship. Their entire culture was built upon the business of breeding and trading horses (primarily for war purposes); therefore, it was only natural for Tolkien to incorporate this animal into the names of royal members. Éomund, Éomer, and Éowyn did not directly belong to the line of Rohan rulers as Éomund was married to Théoden's sister with whom he had Éomer and Éowyn. Not much is known about the fourth character Éothain except that he was Éomer's cousin and part of his Éored, a group of well-trained Rohan soldiers. All four characters share the same first element in Old English *eoh* for "war-horse", emphasizing their blood relation and linking them to their roots, country, and culture. Therefore, Éomund is a compound between two Old English words *eoh* and *mund* "guardian, protector", a reference to his role as the guardian of the Eastfold horses and his duty of protecting Rohan's borders from the increasing raids by Orcs. Éomer means "Horse-Famous", it is a compound between the Old English words *eoh* and *maere* "famous, renowned", and it describes a person with exceptional riding as well as warrior skills. Moreover, the name itself was taken from Beowulf<sup>20</sup> where Éomer was King Offa's son, which was Tolkien's indirect hint that Éomer would be the one to inherit the throne of Rohan and once again bring peace and prosperity to the kingdom. His sister Éowyn was widely known for her beauty and fighting spirit, "very fair was her face, and her long hair was like a river of gold. Slender and tall she was in her white robe girt with silver; but strong she seemed and stern as steel, a daughter of kings." (Tolkien, 1988c, 119) Her name is a compound between two Old English words, *eoh* and *wyn* "delight, pleasure", which can be interpreted in two ways. It could simply refer to her having an interest in horses ("Delight in Horses"), that is, battle and war-related matters, or the two elements could be explained separately, which is the more likely intention. This way, *wyn* refers to her captivating appearance while the first element *eoh* equates her with the male royal members and presents her as a strong female character who played a crucial role in the battle for Gondor when she killed the leader of the Nazgûl. Finally, the name Éothain ("Horse-Back Warrior") is a compound between *eoh*, which highlights his blood connection with the rest of the family,

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<sup>20</sup> According to Encyclopædia Britannica, Beowulf is an Old English epic poem that follows the hero Beowulf's journey, written by an unknown author and set in Scandinavia in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. It is considered the oldest surviving long poem of Old English and the highest achievement of its literature.

and *thain* “a warrior in service of the king”, which in a way “lessens” his status by signaling that he is “just” a soldier in the king’s army rather than a person in line to the throne.

#### 6.3.4. Déorwine and Gléowine

Since these two characters carry the element *wine* in their names just like the aforementioned kings of Rohan (Fréawine, Goldwine, and Folcwine), it would not be unusual for the readers to assume that Déorwine and Gléowine also belonged to the royal House of Eorl. However, Déorwine was a warrior, the chief of the King’s Riders who fought and died in the War of the Ring while Gléowine was King Théoden’s minstrel<sup>21</sup> whose last written song was that of his king’s fall. Both names are compounds between two Old English words, Déorwine between *deor* “brave, bold, fierce” and *wine* “friend/protector”, thus meaning “Brave Friend”, and Gléowine between *gleo* or *gliw* “music, mirth” and *wine*, which translates as “Music-Friend”. As can be seen from the analysis, the element *wine* has a different function from the one in the names of Rohan kings. Here it focuses on the characters’ personalities (a brave soldier) and likes (being fond of music) rather than indicating someone’s status as a ruler, the people’s protector, and friend. In other words, since the meaning of *wine* differs, instead of connecting characters, Tolkien now used the same element to do just the opposite, he wanted to separate the status of Déorwine and Gléowine from the royal one while keeping his original intent on wanting to use similar names to create individuals with unique identities and traits.

### 6.4. Elves

#### 6.4.1. Elrond, Elladan & Elrohir, Undómiel

Elrond was a Half-elven and the Lord of Rivendell, which he founded during the Second Age as a peaceful refuge for those under Sauron’s persecution. “Venerable he seemed as a king crowned with many winters, and yet hale as a tried warrior in the fulness of his strength. He was the Lord of Rivendell and mighty among both Elves and Men.” (Tolkien, 1988a, 239) His name comes from Sindarin and Tolkien gave it two possible meanings, “Star-Dome” and “Elf of the Cave”. According to the first interpretation, Elrond is a compound between the words *el* “star” and *rond* “a vaulted or arched roof, the heavens”, which alludes to his noble status and reputation of being one of the most respected and wisest characters. The second interpretation focuses more on his past. As Tolkien explained, Elrond and his brother Elros (children of

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<sup>21</sup> According to the Longman Dictionary, a minstrel is a singer or musician from the Middle Ages, it comes from Old French *menestrel* meaning “servant, minstrel”.

Eärendil and Elwing) were left in a cave with a waterfall after the last feud between the high-elven houses over the Silmaris<sup>22</sup>. When they were found, Elros was splashing in the water while Elrond was still inside the cave, hence his name is considered to be a compound between *eld/ell* “Sindarin term for the High-Elven exiles” and *rond* “cavern” (Carpenter and Tolkien, 1981, 297-298). Elrond had two twin sons Elladan and Elrohir as well as one daughter, Arwen Undómiel who later married Aragorn, King Elessar. About the twins’ names, Tolkien mentioned that they “refer to the fact that they were 'half-elven': they had mortal as well as Elvish ancestors on both sides (...). Both signify elf+man.” (298) Elrohir’s name carries the meaning of “Elf-Knight” and is a compound between two Sindarin words, *el* “elf/star” and *rohir* “knight/horse-lord”, while Elladan’s name means “Elf-Númenórean” and is a compound between *el* and *Adan* which was “the Sindarin form of the name given to the 'fathers of men', the members of the Three Houses of Elf-friends, whose survivors afterwards became the Númenóreans, or Dúnedain.” (298) All three names (Elrond, Elladan, and Elrohir) are not only interconnected through the shared element *el*, but they are also linked to their origins, that is, at the same time they refer more generally to the story of Elves and also more specifically to the history of the House of Elrond. When it comes to Arwen, unlike the rest of her family, she chose to “give up” her elven heritage and become a mortal, which could be a reason why there is no element *el* in her first name. However, the link to her origins can be found in the name Undómiel, her honorary title in Quenya with the meaning of “Evenstar”. It was created by merging *Undómë* “evening twilight” and *el* “star”, with *undómë* also consisting of two words, *und* “falling” and *dómë* “shadow”, thus making Undómiel a three-word compound. Although the element *el* “star” comes from Quenya, it still has the same meaning and form as the Sindarin word *el* “star/elf”, and therefore ties Arwen to her family, while the full meaning of her title pays tribute to her unparalleled beauty, “the braids of her dark hair were touched by no frost; her white arms and clear face were flawless and smooth, and the light of stars was in her bright eyes, grey as a cloudless night; yet queenly she looked, and thought and knowledge were in her glance.” (Tolkien, 1988a, 239)

#### 6.4.2. Nimrodel, Galadriel, and Undómiel

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<sup>22</sup> Three powerful jewels made by Fëanor from the essence of the Two Trees of Valinor before the First Age. “Silmaris.” *The One Wiki to Rule Them All*, accessed 20/4/24.

<https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Silmarils>

Nimrodel, Galadriel, and Undómiel were three of the most powerful and most beautiful Elf-maidens in Tolkien's universe. Nimrodel lived in Lothlórien during the First Age but after the death of her beloved King Amroth, every trace of her gets lost. Her name comes from Sindarin and translates into "Lady of the White Grotto", which is a reference to her dwelling near the Nimrodel River (named in her honour). Nimrodel was created by adding the element *el* to the compound *nimrod* (*nim* "white" and *rod* "grotto"); however, in this example, *el* does not mean "elf" or "star" but functions as a feminine suffix meant to signify her role as a daughter or a woman; therefore, her name was created through the process of derivation. Galadriel, also known as the Lady of the Golden Wood or the Lady of Light, ruled over the kingdom of Lothlórien with her husband Celeborn. The name Galadriel comes from Sindarin and translates as "Maiden Crowned with a Garland of Bright Radiance" or "Maiden Crowned with Gleaming Hair", a reference to her almost unmatched beauty which, alongside her great power and wisdom, commands respect among those surrounding her. It was also created through the process of derivation, i.e., by adding the suffix *el* to the compound *galadri* (*galad* "radiance" and *ri* "crown"). As can be seen, in both names, the suffix *el* was used not to indicate the existence of any family ties (Nimrodel was not related to Galadriel and her granddaughter Undómiel) but to highlight them being female characters whose power surpasses the majority of other (male) characters. Furthermore, since the element *el* appears in other elvish names with the meaning of "elf" or "star", it could also be used to connect these She-elves to their Silvan Elves origins. When it comes to Arwen Undómiel, although her name comes from Quenya, it shares many of the characters found in the names of Nimrodel and Galadriel. It was created by using three different elements, a feature found in just a few names and thus used to make these three characters stand out even more. Moreover, although the final element *el* does not carry the same meaning or language, their forms are equal, so Tolkien could have purposely introduced it to connect Arwen with this group of formidable female characters while also staying true to her family and place in Rivendell.

#### 6.4.3. Eärendil and Elendil

Eärendil was a legendary Half-elf, the first to voyage to Valinor or the Undying Lands, and the one carrying the Evening Star<sup>23</sup> across the sky at the end of the First Age. He was the father of Elrond, Lord of Rivendell, and Elros, first King of Númenor, and thus symbolizes a link

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<sup>23</sup> Also known as the Star of Eärendil, it is a powerful light created by the Simaril. A small part of it was given to Frodo by Galadriel to protect him and guide him in times of need and darkness.

between the Elves and Kings of Gondor. His name is a compound between two Quenya words, *eär(e)* “sea” and *ndil* “lover/friend”, which translates as “The Lover of the Sea”, a reference to his love of sailing and his great mariner skills. The second element *ndil* appears in various names of Gondor Kings (e.g., Anardil and Valandil) and later Stewards (Vorondil and Mardil); however, their connections were already explained and analysed under the heading Men of Gondor, so the focus here will be put on how the link between the race of Men and Elves was linguistically expressed through the names Eärendil and Elendil. As was already mentioned, Elendil was the founder of Arnor and Gondor as well as the House of Elendil, and as the name itself suggested, he was also Eärendil’s descendant (from Elros’ line). Not only do they share the same element *ndil* but also one of the possible meanings behind the name Elendil is “Elf-Friend”, which suggests the closeness between these two races and families. What is more, Tolkien further emphasized this connection by using Quenya, the language predominantly used by Elves in the early times and therefore in Gondor, in the names of kings, stewards, and men of renown.

## 6.5. Dwarves

### 6.5.1. Thrór, Thráin II, and Thorin II

Thrór, Thráin II, and Thorin II belonged to the royal family of Durin’s Folk that ruled over Erebor in the Lonely Mountain. Tolkien borrowed these names from the Old Norse poem *Völuspá*<sup>24</sup>, which mirrors the tragic lives of these three characters as well as the rise, fall, and eventual rebirth of their kingdom. All three names are therefore calques from Old Norse. Thrór comes from the word *Þrór* meaning “burgeoning/expanding/flourishing”, a name that refers to his reign during which the kingdom came to great prosperity and wealth. This attracted Dragon Smaug who attacked Erebor, forcing the dwarves into almost a century-long wandering. Thrór was later killed by Azog, an Orclord, in the Mines of Moria, leaving the throne to his son Thráin. His name comes from the word *Þráinn*, which translates as “stubborn” or “craver” and alludes to Thráin’s obstinate nature of wanting/craving a vengeance for his father and his people, but ultimately failing to do both. He was captured and tortured by the servants of Sauron after which he went mad and soon died. The kingdom was left in the hands of his son, Thorin Oakenshield, later known as the King Under the Mountain, whose name was derived from the Old Norse

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<sup>24</sup> According to the World History Encyclopedia (2021), *Völuspá* is a medieval poem consisting of 65 stanzas from the Poetic Edda. It tells the story of the world's creation and possible ending from the perspective of Norse mythology.

word *thora* “to dare”. The meaning behind Thorin’s name reflects his bravery in gathering a fellowship and departing on the hopeless journey of reclaiming his homeland, i.e., on the Quest for the Lonely Mountain. He eventually defeated Smaug and reclaimed his kingdom but soon lost his life in the Battle of Five Armies. In short, three levels of meaning are hidden behind these three names. The first level can be found in the names themselves as each tells the character’s story, highlighting their most prominent feature/characteristic. The second level can be found when phonetically comparing the three names. As they share a similar root, the names sound very similar which Tolkien used to indicate the close-blood relation between these three characters. The final level of meaning is found in the poem *Völuspá*, which from the very beginning foretells their tragic faith.

#### 6.5.2. Dori, Nori and Ori

Brothers Dori and Nori as well as their cousin Ori were part of Thorin’s fellowship on the Quest for the Lonely Mountain. Their names were also borrowed from the medieval poem *Völuspá* and are therefore taken to be calques from Old Norse. Dori comes from the word *Dóri* meaning “to bore”, which refers to his pessimistic viewpoint and grumbling nature. Nori means “little bit of something” from the Old Norse *Nóri*, a word that describes his small and frail physical appearance. Ori comes from the Old Norse word *Óri* “delirious”, which could refer to his last moments in the Chamber of Mazarbel (in Moria), where he was locked with his companions. There he tried to frantically write down his last thoughts in the Book of Mazarbel (later found by the Fellowship of the Ring) before the Orcs broke in and killed them all. Just like with Thrór, Thráin II, and Thorin II, there are multiple levels of meaning given to the names Dori, Nori, and Ori. They are unique enough to highlight each character’s trait but at the same time, the obvious rhyming pattern and great similarity keep them closely interconnected within a story that is preordained by the events written in *Völuspá*.

## 7. Discussion

### 7.1. Hobbits

Among the group of Hobbits, Tolkien used three kinds of techniques to connect his characters, the use of the same element (3), different forms that carry the same meaning (2), and association (1). The types of bonds he wanted to signify ranged from a more general one (e.g., belonging to the same race) to a close-blood relation (e.g., father and son or uncle and nephew). The level of similarity between names does not correspond to the level of closeness between the characters, for instance, in the last group, the names share the same element *foot* to signify their

affiliation with the Hobbits, while in the previous example, the husband-and-wife bond (closer connection) is expressed through association (lower level of similarity). However, Tolkien used another feature to distinguish the level of closeness, that is, he used first names to connect more closely related characters (e.g., father and son) while he used surnames to connect more distant relations (e.g., cousins or spouses). Moreover, when choosing appropriate Hobbit names, Tolkien mostly relied on two-word compounds (11 out of 13 names) since they allowed him to use one element to connect the characters and the other one to separate them. For example, Isumbras and Bandobras are linked through the shared second element *bras*, while it is the first element that marks them as unique individuals. However, Tolkien's play with names goes much deeper as some names could be interpreted in different ways and therefore go through different word formation processes. One such example is the surname Cotton, which seemingly appears to have been created through the process of conversion. This interpretation would make sense since its meaning "cotton" Tolkien used to create associations with the Gamgee family and in this way connect these two spouses. However, Cotton is actually a blend whose meaning is completely separated from the surname Gamgee, the only connecting factor being that both surnames refer to the villages these two families originated from. Through these 13 names, Tolkien showed how various word formation processes can be used to create multiple levels of meaning, which simultaneously connect his characters and separate them.

Language is another important factor that Tolkien used to add additional layers to the characters' names. The connecting factor for the Hobbit names is Old English/English, i.e., the use of a real language and the existing English names. Even before he started writing *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien already knew that he wanted to create some sort of mythology for England. As Humphrey Carpenter (2000) writes, "the heart of the book was to be found in the inns and gardens of The Shire, Tolkien's representation of all that he loved best about England." (217) Through the world of Hobbits, Tolkien wanted to evoke in his readers the image of England, its toponymy, history, and culture. For the large part, he managed to achieve this linguistically, i.e., through the use of specific names that hold within themselves the story of England's history. For example, Isengrim, Isumbras, and Bandobras are Anglo-Saxon names taken from medieval literature, which not only further describes what kind of characters they were supposed to be but also adds autobiographical elements to the story. "A large proportion of the poetry and prose of Anglo-Saxon and early medieval England was written in the dialect that had been spoken by his mother's ancestors. In other words, it was remote, but at the same time intensely personal to him." (149) Moreover, Tolkien also managed to incorporate his



disdain for French influence over England and the English language. This is illustrated through the surname Sackville, where Tolkien ridiculed the English use of French words to sound posher and more high-class, which is also something that the Sackville-Baggins family tried to do throughout the story. Therefore, Tolkien had two main reasons for using Old English for this particular group. First, it represents a link that connects Hobbits into a single unit while keeping them separated from the rest of the beings. Second, the various cultural elements Tolkien incorporated in Hobbit names give depth to each character, making them more complex and realistic, that is, unlike with the majority of other characters, the readers can identify themselves with Hobbits the most since they are nearest to the real world.

Finally, alongside word formation processes and languages, the meanings hidden behind each character's name is the third feature through which Tolkien connects and separates his characters. In this group, the names refer to Hobbits' personalities and skills (6), prominent physical characteristics (5), and/or habitats (5). There is some overlapping since one name can refer to more than one feature, such as the name Puddifoot (emphasizes Hobbits' feet and the type of soil where this family lives) or Halfast (one interpretation is more oriented on his looks, the other on his stubborn nature). Each name has its own story to tell, each layer unravels another feature that either further connects different characters or completely separates them. For example, when comparing Baggins and Sackville, the use of similar words *bag* and *sack* not only connects these two families but also reflects another notable characteristic of Hobbits, their houses built like holes underground. However, the distance between these two words serves as the separating factor as Baggins can also be a reference to Bilbo's house Bag End, the object of Sackville's envy and desire.

## **7.2. Men of Gondor**

There are two techniques that Tolkien used to build connections between the first names of characters belonging to this group, the use of the same element (11) and the use of the same forms with different meanings (5). All eleven names are two-word compounds that share the same first or second element to signify bonds between fathers and sons or two brothers or to signify belonging to the royal, that is, the ruling line. Once again Tolkien relied on the process of compounding to use one component as the connecting factor and the other as the separating one. However, unlike with the Hobbit names, here, Tolkien did not play with forms and various word formation processes, but rather he entered a deeper semantical realm where he played with the various meanings of words. The most prominent example is his use of the Quenya morpheme *-ndil*, which appears in the names of important (fictional) historical figures, founders

of Arnor and Gondor, that is, kings and stewards of Gondor. In the names Elendil, Valandil, and Meneldil, this last element has a slightly different meaning than in the names Vorondil and Mardil since it refers to the character's personal likes, while in the second group of names, it refers to the Stewards' dedication and relation with the royal house of Gondor. Therefore, Tolkien used the same form of a word to connect, first, the two sole rulers of Gondor and Arnor (Meneldil and Valandil) with the founder of these two kingdoms (Elenedil) and second, the two Stewards (Vorondil and Mardil) with the royal family. At the same time, he introduced two different meanings of the morpheme *-ndil* to signify that there does exist some distance between these two families, that is, he highlights the Stewards' devotion to the royal line, rather than their belonging to it. There is also another very important role of this element, it appears in the name of a Half-elven Eärendil and thus serves as a link between Elves and Men. Through these examples, Tolkien showed how much power a single morpheme can hold, and how its meaning can be extended and transformed to denote different things.

Compared to Hobbits, the world of Gondor is completely remote from the real world as all the names are based on Tolkien's fictional languages, Quenya (9) and Sindarin (2), which are Elvish languages. In this group, language plays several important roles. It serves as an additional connecting factor between Elves and Men, pointing out that once upon a time these two races were one. In the First Age, Quenya was still the main spoken language of the Elves, and it was during this time that the separation between these two groups began. This separation is then further reflected in the languages themselves, while Quenya still remained active in Gondor, it was almost completely replaced by Sindarin among Elves. Another role of the Quenya language can be found in the fact that it was primarily used in the names of the royal family, leaders, and heroes. Although Westron was the spoken language in Gondor, Quenya was still considered one of the official languages spoken mainly by the higher class and royalty, therefore, Tolkien used it to signify the importance of these characters and to separate them from the rest of the common people. Moreover, as can be seen from the analysis, only Arathorn and Aragorn are Sindarin names, which makes them stand out from the rest of the characters. Despite their royal blood, both of these men were raised by elves with no true wish to take the throne of Gondor. Just like the Elves distanced themselves from the Men of Gondor, the same way the royal line separated themselves from their birthright. However, the use of Sindarin has another function, it also signifies the reunification of these two groups through Aragorn, his accession to the throne of Gondor, and his marriage to the Half-elven Arwen.

The various meanings of the characters' names and their roles are another important factor in Tolkien's creation of the complex network present within this group. When looking at the words that are combined to create names, one can notice a certain pattern and similarity in the way they reflect the characters. All eleven names refer to the characters' personalities, likes, and statutes. What is more, not only are the characters connected through the shared element but also the other halves of their names have some similarities. Tolkien used words like "star", "king", "jewel", etc., to connect all eleven characters and signify their noble status and blood but also to show that there does exist a clear hierarchy. To create his interconnection, he introduced similar adjectives like "steadfast" or "valiant", different words that carry the same meaning such as *ndil* and *voro* ("friend") or *elen* and *gil* ("star"), and same words that carry different meanings like *ndil*. Through this group, Tolkien showed all the linguistic charms of his fictional language(s). His range of meanings was purposely reduced to make connections among the characters and yet he managed to deliver unique names that tell stories, specific to each character and thus simultaneously achieve the opposite effect.

### 7.3. Men of Rohan

Just like in the previous group, there are two main techniques that Tolkien used to connect closely related characters, the use of the same element (11) and the use of the same form carrying different meanings (5). However, the types of bonds are slightly more diverse. There is a family bond (father, son, daughter, and cousin), a father-son bond, belonging to the royal line, and the existence of a duty-related connection with the royal family. Moreover, there are ten compounds and one derivation, which once again shows that Tolkien found compounding to be the most convenient process when it comes to creating names that at the same time connect characters and separate them. The prevailing presence of compounds also signifies that for this group of Men, Tolkien once again chose to play with words on the semantic level, rather than with various word formation processes. One such example can be found in the element *wine* "friend", which appears in the second part of Fréawine, Goldwine, and Folcwine to connect the three kings of Rohan. Here, the word *wine* refers to the shared characteristic of these kings, their kind nature and complete dedication to their people, in other words, they were remembered as "friends of the people". This word also appears in the names Déorwine and Gléowine where it carries the same meaning of "friend"; however, it does not reflect their royal bloodline or their personalities but rather it refers to their duties. Déorwine and Gléowine were two men in the service of King Théoden, that is, they were "friends with the royal family", Déorwine as a soldier and Gléowine as a minstrel. What is more, the word *wine* carries another important

connection with the Men of Gondor, since its meaning is closely related to the meaning of *ndil*. In this way, Tolkien not only connected the two royal families but also the people of these two kingdoms, thus pointing out their similarities and the fact that they were close allies, which was further emphasized through the marriage of Faramir (Gondor) and Éowyn (Rohan).

When comparing the names of the Rohirrim with Gondorian names, one can notice that, in terms of remoteness, these appear much closer, i.e., more realistic. The reason for this is found in their official language Rohirric, which is completely based on Old English. Tolkien greatly admired the Anglo-Saxons, especially their epic poem *Beowulf*, so it does not come as a surprise that this nation and this piece of literature greatly inspired the Rohirrim. “The Anglo-Saxon values expressed in war poetry appear in *The Lord of the Rings* through the language and behaviour of the Rohirrim, who feast together in mead halls and value bravery and loyalty above all.” (Mathers, 2021, 2) Their most prominent characteristics such as their blond looks, love for horses, and great warrior skills also come from these Germanic/Anglo-Saxon roots. Through this closeness with the real world, Tolkien brought this group closer to Hobbits, which is further emphasized by the fact that “Rohirric was closely related to the former language of the northern Hobbits.” (Foster, 1993, 335) Thus, Tolkien introduced two factors to connect these two groups, their closeness with nature and their use of Old English; however, when comparing their names one can notice that there also exists a difference in their proximity to the real world. Although based on an existing language, Rohirric names sound more remote since “they are to be pronounced with the same letter values given for Elvish, but this results in deviations both from the pronunciation of Old English as generally reconstructed and from the pronunciation of Modern English.” (Allan, 1978, 212) To sum up, on one hand, Tolkien connected the Men of Rohan and Gondor semantically, through the use of words with similar meanings and based on the same word formation principles. On the other hand, he highlighted the distance between them through different languages, one fictional and the other real. Furthermore, he used Old English to signify similarities between Hobbits and Men of Rohan, while introducing enough Elvish, i.e., fictional elements, to constantly remind his readers that they are dealing with two completely different groups of beings.

Another similarity with the group Men of Gondor can be found in the fact that all eleven names refer to the characters’ personalities, likes, and duties. Almost all the characters belong to the royal family, but their bond is not highlighted through the same element but through the use of words that share similar meanings. For instance, Théodred and Théoden contain the word *ðeod* “nation, people” which carries the same meaning as the word *folc* “people, folk, nation” from

Folcwine, or the element *mund* “protector, guardian” from Éomund has a similar meaning to the word *wine* “friend, protector”. Moreover, their royal status is emphasized by the part of their names that in different ways refers to their connection with the people and culture of Rohan. For Théodred and Théoden that is the already-mentioned element *ðeod*, for Fréawine, Goldwine, and Folcwine the element *wine* and for Éomer, Éothain, Éomund, Éowyn the element *eoh* “war-horse”. This last group of names slightly differs from the first two as it does not refer to them coming from the people but them generally coming from Rohan since horses are an important part of their culture. This more general connection was placed by Tolkien to signify that this family does not directly belong to the ruling line, but they do belong to the king’s family and could one day take the throne (as Éomer eventually did). Ironically, the two characters (Déorwine and Gléowine) who are not of royal blood, share the same element as the former Kings of Rohan. However, when looking at the meaning behind their names, one can see that different principles were used, i.e., they primarily refer to the duties they held in their service to the King, a principle that is also present in the name of Éothain, a distant family member who has no right to the throne.

#### 7.4. Elves

Following the principles from the two previous groups of Men, Tolkien once again leaned on the usage of the same elements (8) and elements with the same form but different meanings (3), to signify the existence of a bond between the eight characters belonging to this group of Elves. Six compounds and two compound-derivation combinations were used to reflect family bonds (father, brothers, sister), belonging to the same gender (3), and connection between two races (Elves and Men). This group also brings another novelty in the form of three-word compounds, that is, three-word compound-derivation combinations, in the names of the three She-elves. Apart from playing with mixing words and their meanings, Tolkien also experimented with the two-word formation processes (compounding and derivation), which can be seen in the example of the name Undómiel, a female character whom Tolkien simultaneously connected with her father and brothers but also with other female characters. All six characters contain the element *el* as part of their names; however, while in Elrond, Elladan, Elrohir, and Undomiel this element was added through the process of compounding, thus it can stand on its own, in Galadriel and Nimrodel, the element *el* was added through derivation, and as such cannot stand on its own. In other words, in the first group of names, *el* is a free morpheme, while in the second group, it is a derivational suffix, i.e., a bound morpheme. Therefore, Tolkien used these two processes to at first glance connect not only the three females but also signify that all six characters belong

to the race of elves as the morpheme *el* carries the meaning of “elf” or “star”. Moreover, since Galadriel, Nimrodel, and Undómiel stand out from the rest of the characters for containing three constituent parts and having the shared element placed at the end, readers would naturally assume that all three names were created based on the same principles, and thus put them in a single group. That is, they would connect Undómiel with Galadriel and Nimrodel sooner than with Elrond and her brother. This example, therefore, shows how Tolkien toyed with word formation processes to create deceptive names, names that connect certain characters on the form level and completely different ones on the semantic level.

There are two Elvish languages present in this group, Quenya and Sindarin, which means that this world and group of beings are placed far away from the real world, just like the group Men of Gondor. The majority of names come from Sindarin (5), which falls in line with the fact that Sindarin was the main spoken language of Elves since it replaced Quenya somewhere near the end of the First Age. Therefore, Quenya was only used on special occasions and in honorary titles or nicknames, such as in the name Undómiel. As can be seen, the first name of Arwen Undómiel does not share any similarities with the Sindarin names of her father or brothers, at least not on the form level, but the shared element can be found in her Quenyan title Undómiel. Although these names come from two different languages, the word *el* has the same meaning in both Sindarin and Quenya, thus, Tolkien used this element to once again hint at the duality of her relationship with her family. Although she decided to leave her mortal life and marry a man, she still stayed loyal to her origins and loved her family dearly. Quenya is also present in the names Eärendil and Elendil, a half-elf and a man who founded Arnor and Gondor. Therefore, as was mentioned before, language is another important factor that connects these two groups. It holds within itself the history of both the development and changes in languages as well as the story of Gondorian origins.

The meaning behind the words and their reflection on the characters’ roles and stories is yet another way through which Tolkien connected not only all eight characters belonging to this group but also Elves and Men of Gondor. Once again, the element *el* “star” or “elf” has an important role here since it appears in four Elvish names, in another two with a different meaning, and in Elendil who belongs to the race of men. The dual meaning of the morpheme is also important as it allows for different interpretations, thus extending the amount of information it can carry about a certain character. Moreover, it allows the simultaneous connection of the four family members on the form level and their separation on the semantic level. In other words, the element *el* signifies that they all belong to the race of Elves, but closer

analysis shows that, for example, the name Elrond can be translated as “Star-Dome” and thus be more character-specific. A similar principle is also present in the names Nimrodel and Galadriel, interpretation at the level of form connects them with the Elven people, but further analysis shows that the names refer to their gender (suffix *-el*) and their most prominent features (Galadriel), that is, their place of residence (Nimrodel). Finally, the morpheme *el* serves as another connecting factor between the Elves and Men of Gondor, as it comes in pair with the word *ndil* meaning “friend” in the name Elendil, that is, the first part of his name appears in the majority of Elvish names while the second part of his name appears in a number of Gondorian names.

### 7.5. Dwarves

Among the five groups analysed in this thesis, Dwarf names stand out the most. All six names are calques taken from Old Norse and the two principles that Tolkien used to connect closely related characters are rhyming names and phonetically similar names. Since these names do not consist of two or three elements, Tolkien had to lean on different factors to signify the character’s uniqueness as well as the connection with those surrounding them. What all Dwarves have in common is that their names are relatively short (especially when compared with other groups), that is, they consist of a single element, and they are all calques, which is something that immediately separates them from the rest of the groups where this process is present in few names or not present at all. Therefore, this prevented Tolkien from playing with the meanings of words and various word formation processes, leaving the only option available, which is the form. In this group, alongside calquing, the form of these names was the main connecting factor, similar names were given to family members, grouping them together and separating them from the rest of the Dwarves. Moreover, even within each group of similar names, Tolkien managed to introduce some differences to reflect close and distant relatives, like with the names Dori, Nori, and Ori. In this example, all three names rhyme but the last one slightly differs from the first two to signify that Dori and Nori are brothers, while Ori is their cousin.

In the story, Dwarf names are translations of their secret Khuzdûl names, but in reality, most names were taken from the Old Norse poem *Völuspá*. As can be seen, Tolkien was greatly influenced by Germanic literature and mythology when creating the world of Dwarves, which does hold some similarities with Hobbits and Men of Rohan. All three groups were based on real languages and real cultures, but what separates the group of Dwarves from the rest is the word mythology. The poem only provided Tolkien with the names, so he had to reach for

various Norse myths that deal with these fictional beings to create their culture and most prominent characteristics. Therefore, although their names are based on a real language, they are placed in a world that is far more remote than the worlds of Hobbits or Men of Rohan, but still much closer than the worlds of Elves and Men of Gondor.

All six names refer to the dwarves' main personality traits, which are an important dividing factor between the characters. There is no obvious difference between the names of royal members and the names of common dwarves, and there is no indication that a certain dwarf belongs to the ruling family. This points to the fact that, unlike in other groups, here, Tolkien did not rely on the meaning of words and the characters' roles to connect but rather to strictly separate his characters. In other words, the link was created on the form level and through the use of a single word-formation process as well as language, while the distance was created on the semantic level. On the other hand, in other groups, both semantic and form levels were used to simultaneously connect and separate the characters within and outside various groups.

#### **7.6. Limitations and relevance**

Due to the limited nature of this thesis, the analysis was conducted on a small number of all the names that appear in The Lord of the Rings trilogy. The focus was placed only on the names that have some kind of apparent, form-based similarities and links; therefore, the main limitation is that this study does not include all the names and groups of beings (e.g., wizards, Ents, dark creatures, etc.) in which Tolkien could have used other types of less apparent techniques, that is, different word formation process and languages, to connect his characters. Moreover, names and characters that appear in his other works belonging to this fictional universe, could also bring some other interesting findings, new information, or different types of linking principles. In other words, the complete picture of how and to what extent Tolkien used various word formation processes, languages, word meanings, and characters' roles as his main instruments in coining names that at the same time connect and separate his characters, is not possible. However, this study does offer a closer look at how language, words, and meanings can be manipulated for various purposes. Therefore, the main relevance lies in providing an insight into the linguistic nature of creating names that contain multiple levels of meanings and interconnections, which could open the door to further studies of the endless possibilities possessed by human languages. Furthermore, it could inspire present and future writers to follow in Tolkien's footsteps and venture into the exploration of all the linguistic wonders that a fictional world and fictional names might offer.



## 8. Conclusion

J.R.R. Tolkien's passion, knowledge, and understanding of how languages work and to what extent they can be manipulated are present throughout his entire fictional universe. This linguistic richness is one of the main reasons behind the massive scholarly and non-scholarly interest despite the fact that this trilogy (and the majority of other Tolkien's works) has been presented as children's fantasy books. Following in the footsteps of a number of previous studies and research papers, the aim of this study was to take a step further and examine how Tolkien leaned on his vast linguistic knowledge to build various connections between characters solely based on their names or surnames. In other words, to uncover which method, word formation process, and language Tolkien used to create multiple levels of meanings as well as links between two closely related characters, and between characters and their overall role, status, and/or achievements in the story. The analysis of 48 names and surnames shows that there does exist an intricate network that connects different characters based on multiple factors. First, Tolkien played with various word formation processes to signify a close bond between a certain pair or group of characters on one hand and to emphasize the characters' uniqueness on the other. To achieve this duality, the analysis has shown that Tolkien predominantly relied on compounding (39 out of 48 names). Second, Tolkien not only used various languages to separate these five groups of beings, but he also differentiated them according to the level of remoteness, that is, for some groups he used existing languages while for others he used his fictional ones based on how closely these characters represented real life and real people. Moreover, languages also had an important connecting function, primarily within a certain group of beings but in some examples, they were also used to denote the existence of some sort of deeper relation between characters belonging to different groups (e.g., Elves and Men). Finally, the characters' names and surnames reflect their roles, personalities, or notable features, which once again Tolkien devised in such a way as to signify the characters' connecting point and their main separating characteristic.

Despite the limited scope of this study, which enabled the analysis of only a small number of names and groups of beings, it still provided a profound insight into Tolkien's meticulous and methodical way of naming and creating not only his characters but also his entire fictional universe of Middle-earth. No name or surname was created at random, Tolkien applied all of his creativity and linguistic understanding to each character no matter how significant their role in the story was. Furthermore, he demonstrated the power and wonders of pushing the boundaries of human languages, which is also the main contribution of this study. The analysis

of these 48 names shows various ways in which language can be manipulated to create multiple links between characters at the level of form and meaning. However, this is just the beginning as there are still numerous other names whose possible meanings and interconnections are waiting to be discovered. Therefore, the findings of this study would hopefully encourage other researchers to continue the exploration of Tolkien's language genius as well as other linguists and writers to continue probing the wondrous possibilities of languages.

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## Appendix

Tables containing the summarized form of 48 examined names

### Hobbits

NAME (13)	WORD FORMATION PROCESS	LANGUAGE	MEANING
Isengrim II	Compounding: <i>Isen</i> + <i>grim</i>	Anglo-Saxon + Anglo-Saxon	Fierce-Iron
Isumbras III	Compounding: <i>Isum</i> + <i>bras</i>	Anglo-Saxon + Germanic	Iron-Arm
Bandobras	Compounding: <i>Bando</i> + <i>bras</i>	Germanic/Middle-French + Germanic	Arm-Band
Hamfast	1. Compounding: <i>Ham</i> + <i>fast</i> 2. Calque: <i>Ranugad</i>	1. Old English + Old English 2. Westron	Stay-at-Home/ Home-Fast
Halfast	Compounding <i>Hal</i> + <i>fast</i>	Old English + Old English	Fit and Firm
Baggins	1. Compounding: <i>Bag</i> + <i>End</i> 2. Calque: <i>Laban</i>	1. English + English 2. Westron	Bag-End
Sackville – Baggins	Compounding: <i>Sack</i> + <i>ville</i>	French + French	Sack-Town
Gamgee	Translation: <i>Gamwich</i>	Hobbitish	Game-Village
Cotton	Blending <i>Cot(tage)</i> + <i>to(w)n</i>	Old English + Old English	Cottage-Town
Twofoot	Compounding: <i>Two</i> + <i>foot</i>	English + English	Two-Feet
Proudfoot	Compounding: <i>Proud</i> + <i>foot</i>	English + English	Proud-Foot
Puddifoot	Compounding: <i>Puddle</i> + <i>foot</i>	English + English	Puddle-Foot
Whitfoot	Compounding: <i>White</i> + <i>foot</i>	English + English	White-Foot

## Men of Gondor

NAME (11)	WORD FORMATION PROCESS	LANGUAGE	MEANING
Elendil	Compounding: <i>Elen</i> + <i>ndil</i>	Quenya + Quenya	Love of the Stars/ Elf-Friend
Valandil	Compounding: <i>Vala</i> + <i>ndil</i>	Quenya + Quenya	Lover of the Valar
Meneldil	Compounding: <i>Menel</i> + ( <i>n</i> ) <i>dil</i>	Quenya + Quenya	Lover of the Heavens
Vorondil	Compounding: <i>Voro</i> + <i>ndil</i>	Quenya + Quenya	Ever/Faithful Friend
Mardil	Compounding: <i>Mar</i> + ( <i>n</i> ) <i>dil</i>	Quenya + Quenya	Devoted to the House (of Kings)
Arathorn	Compounding: <i>Ara(n)</i> + <i>thorn/thorono</i>	Sindarin + Sindarin	Steadfast King/ Eagle King
Aragorn	Compounding: <i>Ara(n)</i> + <i>gorn</i>	Sindarin + Sindarin	Revered King
Boromir	Compounding: <i>Boro</i> + <i>mír(e)</i>	Sindarin + Quenya	Faithful Jewel
Faramir	Compounding: <i>Fara</i> + <i>mír(e)</i>	Quenya + Quenya	Soft Jewel
Beregond	Compounding: <i>Ber</i> + <i>gond</i>	Quenya + Quenya	Valiant Stone
Bergil	Compounding: <i>Ber</i> + <i>gil</i>	Quenya + Quenya	Valiant Star

## Men of Rohan

NAME (11)	WORD FORMATION PROCESS	LANGUAGE	MEANING
Fréawine	Compounding: <i>Fréa</i> + <i>wine</i>	Old English + Old English	Lord-Friend
Goldwine	Compounding: <i>Gold</i> + <i>wine</i>	Old English + Old English	Gold-Friend
Folcwine	Compounding: <i>Folc</i> + <i>wine</i>	Old English + Old English	Friend of the People
Théoden	1. Calque: <i>peoden</i> 2. Derivation: <i>ðeod</i> + <i>-en</i>	1. Anglo-Saxon 2. Old English	Lord/ Leader of the People
Théodred	Compounding: <i>ðeod</i> + <i>ræd</i>	Old English + Old English	People-Counsel

Éomund	Compounding: <i>Eoh</i> + <i>mund</i>	Old English + Old English	Horse-Guardian
Éomer	Compounding: <i>Eoh</i> + <i>maere</i>	Old English + Old English	Horse-Famous
Éowyn	Compounding: <i>Eoh</i> + <i>wyn</i>	Old English + Old English	Delight in Horses
Éothain	Compounding: <i>Eoh</i> + <i>thain</i>	Old English + Old English	Horse-Back Warrior
Déorwine	Compounding: <i>Deor</i> + <i>wine</i>	Old English + Old English	Brave Friend
Gléowine	Compounding: <i>Gleo/gliw</i> + <i>wine</i>	Old English + Old English	Music-Friend

## Elves

NAME (7)	WORD FORMATION PROCESS	LANGUAGE	MEANING
Elrond	Compounding: <i>El</i> + <i>rond</i> or <i>Eld/ell</i> + <i>rond</i>	Sindarin + Sindarin	Star-Dome/ Elf of the Cave
Elladan	Compounding: <i>El</i> + <i>Adan</i>	Sindarin + Sindarin	Elf-Númenórean
Elrohir	Compounding: <i>El</i> + <i>rohir</i>	Sindarin + Sindarin	Elf-Knight
Undómiel	Compounding: <i>Und</i> + <i>dómē</i> + <i>el</i>	Quenya + Quenya + Quenya	Evenstar
Nimrodel	Compounding + Derivation: <i>Nim</i> + <i>rod</i> + <i>-el</i>	Sindarin + Sindarin + Sindarin	Lady of the White Grotto
Galadriel	Compounding + Derivation: <i>Galad</i> + <i>rî</i> + <i>-el</i>	Sindarin + Sindarin + Sindarin	Maiden Crowned with a Garland of Bright Radiance/ Maiden Crowned with Gleaming Hair
Eärendil	Compounding: <i>Eär(e)</i> + <i>ndil</i>	Sindarin + Sindarin	The Lover of the Sea

## Dwarves

NAME (6)	WORD FORMATION PROCESS	LANGUAGE	MEANING
Thrór	Calque: <i>Þrór</i>	Old Norse	Burgeoning/ Expanding/ flourishing
Thráin II	Calque: <i>Þráinn</i>	Old Norse	Stubborn/ Craver
Thorin II	Calque: <i>Thora</i>	Old Norse	Dare
Dori	Calque: <i>Dóri</i>	Old Norse	Bore

Nori	Calque: <i>Nóri</i>	Old Norse	A Little bit of Something
Ori	Calque: <i>Óri</i>	Old Norse	Delirious