

*An introduction to
the Ancient Language*

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1. Introduction

Kvetha fricai maerr,

Hereby, we present the first grammar of the Ancient Language from the Inheritance Cycle by Christopher Paolini. His books take place in the mystical land of Alagaësia, where elves, dragons, dwarves, humans and every other kind of magical creatures can be found. Nowadays, only the elves, dragons and some humans master and use the Ancient Language. Once this language was the language of all creatures in Alagaësia. Unfortunately, it started to die out.

The Grey Folk, however, somehow managed to tie the language to their magic, as a tool for regulating their powers. Significantly, it is impossible to lie in the Ancient Language; everything said in this tongue is irrevocably true. As a result, most of the original material from the books are spells and phrases commonly used in official, formal ceremonies. The bigger one's knowledge of the Ancient Language, the more spells one possesses and the more power they have.

During the creation of the language Christopher Paolini found the word 'brisingr' for fire in an Old Norse dictionary. He loved the word so much (and so do we), he decided to pull many more (if not most) of the lexicon of the Ancient Language from Old Norse. In addition, he pulled the rest of the lexicon from his imagination. For the grammar on the other hand, he chose English as his muse, which is not surprising, since English is Paolini's mother tongue. The combination of Old Norse and English proves to be an interesting one as will discover when attempting to learn this fantasy language.

We, as editors and expanders, were up for the challenge when this assignment was handed to us in our Interlinguistics class at the University of Amsterdam taught by prof. Dr. Frederico Gobbo. We hope that this first version of the grammar of the Ancient Language will satisfy, clarify, and most of all help one get into closer touch with this fantastical, mystical world.

The Editors

2. Phonetics & Phonology

This chapter contains the basic phonology of the Ancient Language.

2.1 Phonetics

2.1.1 Consonants

The ancient language has a consonant inventory consisting of 23 consonants. It has six plosive phonemes, of which the /p/ is very rare word-initially. It occurs in the word pōmnuria, which is formal possessive pronoun. The /b/ does not occur between vowels. The sibilant /ʃ/ only occurs when followed by /il/, otherwise it will show as an /s/. The following 23 consonants exist in the Ancient Language.

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
Plosive	p b			t d			k g	
Sibilant			ʃ					
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
Approximant				r		j	w	
Lateral				l				

2.1.2 Vowels

All vowels can occur short or long, depending on stress. Stressed vowels are longer, whereas unstressed vowels are short.

	Front Vowels		Central	Back Vowels	
	Unrounded	Rounded		Unrounded	Rounded
Close	i	y			u
Close-mid	e				
Neutral			ə		

Open-mid	ɛ				ɔ
Open	a				ɑ

The Ancient Language has several diphthongs. /aʊ/, /eɪ/

2.1.3 Syllable structure

A nucleus is obligatory in the Ancient language. Words cannot occur without a nucleus. The onset and coda are both optional, and both used frequently.

2.2 Phonology

2.2.1 Phonological processes

The ancient language has several phonological processes. One of the most important processes in the lowering of the /e/. The /e/ will lower itself into an /ɛ/ when followed by liquidae. If we compare *ebrithil* /ebriθil/ to *elrun* /ɛlrun/ we can clearly see the lowering of the first vowel. This lowering will happen also when the /e/ is followed by an /r/.

Another, less frequent process is the dentalization of the /s/ before /il/. This will turn the /s/ into an /s̺/.

2.2.2 Stress

In the Ancient Language, lexical stress is phonemic. Stressed syllables are longer than non-stressed syllables, and are also higher in pitch and a bit louder. Stress falls mostly on the antepenultimate syllable, unless, of course, a word consists of only one or two syllable. There are several exceptions of this rule, where the stress falls on the penultimate syllable instead of the antepenultimate. This happens mostly when words consist of three syllables. One of these exceptions is *esterna*, where the stress comes on the second syllable, e.g /estɛʳna/.

2.2.3 List of pronunciation of some words

Alagaësia: /aləgeɪzia/

Skullblaka: /skulblaka/

Adurna /adurna/

Andlát: /antla:t/

Ebrithil : /ebriθil/

Elrun Ona: /ɛlrun o:na/

Brisingr: /brɪsɪŋgər/

Dauthdaert: /daʊθda:rt/

3. A Grammar Guide to the Ancient Language

This chapter contains a basic grammar guide of the Ancient Language. Many topics can be elaborated, but for now this is perfect to get an idea of this language.

The Ancient Language is on most points relatively easy – especially for the English speaking world (and therefore most English speaking actors!). It follows the word order and many other contractions from English. When one knows the basis, this makes it definitely easier to speak and to expand the language.

3.1 Nouns

3.1.1 Gender

Nouns do not have morphologically visible genders. Any information concerning the gender of an entity, for example a *kona* “woman”, can be derived from the semantics or from the context, like in the case of *skulblaka* “dragon”, which is a gender-neutral word from the semantic point of view although dragons definitely have genders.

Consequently, the way you perceive the entity determines the pronoun. *Kona* is referred to with a feminine pronoun, *madr* “man” with a masculine pronoun, *skulblaka*¹ with both (depending on context) and inanimate or “less” animate entities with a neutral pronoun.

Interestingly, there are many instances of words that are equally used for males and females, like *skulblaka* or *elbrithil* “master” or *Shur’tugal* “Dragon Rider”, or of two completely different words for the same profession to emphasise gender equality, like *dröttning* “queen” and *könungr* “king”². This is a huge advantage, for no feminist fan has to something to complain about!

3.1.2 Plurals

Plurals are formed in two different ways, depending on the ending of the noun. Nouns ending on a consonant are pluralised with the suffix *-ar*. For example, *sverd* “sword” becomes *sverdar* “swords” and *Shur’tugal* “Rider” becomes *Shur’tugalar* “Riders”.

However, this becomes a bit of a problem when one attempts to do this with nouns ending on *-r*. After all, *stenrar* as plural of *stenr* “stone” does not really sound that great. Therefore, when these nouns are pluralised, an *-a-* is put between the rest of the word and the final *-r*. So *stenr* becomes *stenar* instead of *stenrar* and *skölr* “shield” becomes *sköliar* “shields”.

¹ Dragons are extremely animate and very intelligent creatures in this world. In earlier times, the Elves made the mistake of not taking them for this – and ended up with a giant war. So, be careful with the notions of “animate” and “inanimate”; you never know who you might encounter...

² A counter-argument is that in English there are also two separate words, even though a queen has a lower status than a king. This would be also true in the Ancient Language, if in the elvish society a queen has a status equal to a king. No one cares about one's gender if the kingdom is ruled well.

Finally, nouns ending on vowels are pluralised by substituting this vowel by the suffix *-ya*. For example, *fricai* “friend” becomes *fricaya* “friends” and *oro* “arrow” becomes *orya* “arrows”.

Of course, there are some exceptions³:

- *Fell* “mountain” becomes *fells* “mountains”;
- *Niernen* “orchid” has *niernar* as plural form, simply because *niernenar* is practically unpronounceable because of the ridiculous amount of “n”-sounds. Besides, in natural languages forms like these are therefore usually shortened anyway after a while;
- Words like *solus* “sun” and *deloi* “earth” do not have plural forms, for reasons related to the world of Alagaësia and the common worldview there;
- *Varden* “guardian(s)” may be as well singular or plural – the semantic meaning therefore depends on the context and/or the speaker;
- The same goes for *grind*, that can be translated as “gate” or “gates”, perhaps because a gate usually consists of two doors.
- *Silbena* “mists” is also a strange exception one simply has to learn.

3.1.3 Articles

There are two types of articles: definite and indefinite articles. The indefinite article is *aí* “a”, and is only used for indefinite singular nouns. The definite article *du* “the” is used for as well singular nouns as plural ones. Indefinite plural nouns do not have articles.

The articles are placed before the noun they belong to, for example: *du sverdar* “the swords” . Leaving the articles out means usually also that it should not be translated. However, when it does not lead to strange, ambiguous sentences, both definite and indefinite articles may be left out – a rule that is perhaps interesting for more advanced speakers, or for fans who want to write poetry in the Ancient Language.

3.1.4 Compound words

Compounds are formed by simply putting two words together. The basic rule for compounds is that the descriptive part comes first. Examples are *Argetlam* “Silverhand”, *blödhren* “blood-oath” and *Weldenvariden* “Forest Guardian(s)”⁴.

3.1.5 Diminutive forms

There is a simple rule for making diminutive forms of nouns, namely by adding *-u* to it. For most consonant-ending noun, this will not cause problems. However, for nouns ending on a vowel or *-r* it may, and therefore will the ending vowel or the ending *-r* be substituted by *-u*. In the process of pluralising, this *-u* will not be deleted but maintained to avoid confusion.

³ They are all material-based, except for *niernar*.

⁴ Although it is usually translated as “Guarding Forest”. However, this is not a literary translation, but a really fancy one that sounds of course better and more dramatic – but it is incorrect.

Example:	<i>dröttning</i>	<i>dröttningu</i>
	queen	queen-DIM
	“queen”	“princess” ⁵
	<i>skulblaka</i>	<i>skulblaku</i>
	dragon	dragon-DIM
	“dragon”	“little dragon” / “baby dragon”
	<i>gram</i>	<i>gramu</i>
	wolf	wolf-DIM
	“wolf”	“young wolf” / “wolf cub”

3.1.6 Negotiation

Nouns are “negotiated” with *né*, that is placed before the noun it modifies.

Example:	<i>né haina</i>
	NEG harm
	“no harm”

3.2 Pronouns

3.2.1 Personal pronouns

	Singular		Plural	
<i>1st person</i>	eka edtha ie (seldom used)	I/me	nosu vae	we/us
<i>2nd person</i>	ono	you	ono	you (plural)
<i>3rd person</i>	älfr	he/him	theirr	they/them
	älfrinn	she/her		

⁵ It is stated in the books that *dröttningu* is very difficult to translate, and that the closest equivalent is “princess”. Well, here is finally the reason for it: the diminutive form. Literally, *dröttningu* means “little queen”, or which appeals to the fact that the bearer of this title is 1) the daughter of the reigning queen and 2) *probably* a queen-to-be – the crown princess (which is by the way a completely voluntary “profession”). Considering the fact that married Elvish couples seldom get children, and even if they do there is only one child, this notion will not cause problems – there is always only one princess.

	älf	It		
--	-----	----	--	--

Älf and *theirr* are the only non-original pronouns. Firstly, in Old Norse, the –r is a noun connotation that marks masculinity. Considering *älf* and *älfrinn* it can be concluded that –rinn⁶ is a connotation of femininity. Therefore, a neutral form, being neither feminine or masculine, should have no connotation.

Secondly, considering the fact that the possessive *thierra* comes literally from the Old Norse, it is logical to use the corresponding Old Norse pronoun also. However, the second –r is added to avoid confusion with the English possessive “their”.

Finally, *edtha* and *eka* are used equally frequently. There is no semantic difference between the two words.

3.2.2 Possessive pronouns

	Singular		Plural	
1 st person	iet (informal) pömuria (formal)	my	vaet	our
2 nd person	onr	your	onr	your (plural)
3 rd person	älfrs	his	thierra	their
	älfrinns	her		
	älfs	its		

A possessive pronoun can be placed before the noun it modifies as well as behind it.

Älfs, *vaet* and *onr* (the plural form) are not original. Considering the former paragraph and the forms *älfrs* and *älfrinns*, the reasoning behind *älfs* is clear.

Vaet is based on *vae* and the connection between *ie* “I” and “*iet*” my. *Vaet* was also preferable, because it sounds better than the potential *nosut*.

Onr as singular and plural possessive pronoun of the second person is based on English.

3.2.3 More on possessiveness

Apart from the possessive pronouns, there are two other ways to indicate an explicit possessive relation.

The first way is the genitive, by which possessor is placed after the possessed entity, and –s is added to the possessor.

Example: *du welden älfyas*

D.ART forest Elf-PL-GEN

⁶ That is unfortunately the only instance of a feminine form based on the masculine one.

“the forest of the Elves”

The second way involves the use of *abr* between the nouns. This is only used for “formal” expressions, like books titles, official titles and the naming of ancestry.

- Example:
- 1) *“Domia abr Wyrda”*
dominance of fate
“Dominance of Fate” (a very special book in the series)
 - 2) *ai varden abr Shur’tugalar*
Ind.ART warden/guardian of Rider-PL
“A warden of the Riders”
 - 3) *Eragon, sönr abr Brom*
“Eragon, son of Brom”

3.2.4 Reflexives

In the original material, there is no evidence of the existence of reflexive pronouns. However, one cannot deny their importance; it is impossible to leave them out. Considering the lack of cases and the high, almost unrated diversity of the system of pronouns, we have chosen for applying the Icelandic word *sig* for all reflexive constructions. Because the reflexive pronoun usually refers to the subject, this rule will not cause problematic situations.

- Example: *Udhen du fyrn Galbatorix kallaí sig könungr*
after D.Art war Galbatorix call-PAST REFLX king
“After the war, Galbartorix called himself king.”

3.2.5 Demonstrative pronouns

Singular		Plural	
thornessa	this	thornessar	these
thaët / sem / thorna	that	thornar	those

In order to create a more logical order in the chaotic given system of demonstratives, some substantial changes are proposed.

Of all demonstratives, only *thaët* has an independent substantive use. *Sem* can only be used substantively in certain, yet to be discussed context.

Furthermore, a new equivalent for “that” is proposed, namely *thorna*. This pronoun was originally as equivalent of “those”. However, by choosing *thornessar* as “plural” of *thornessa*, it was more logical to also create the pair *thorna-thornar*.

3.2.6 Interrogatives

The following words are based on their old Norse equivalents, but not exclusively. None of these are original, but considering their importance still quite necessary.

	AL	EN
<i>Pronouns</i>	hverr	who/whom
	hvaët	what
<i>Determiners</i>	hvorna	which/what (singular)
	hvornar	which/what (plural)
	hverrs	whose
	hvert	quantifier: how much/how many, etc.
<i>Adverbs</i>	hvar	where (location)
	hvan	whence (source)
	hvaðin	where/wither (direction/goal)
	hvenaer	when (time)
	hvé	how (manner)
	hvésu	how (by what means)
	hví	why/wherefore (reason)
	hvárt	whether (choice)

Questions are formed in the same way as in English. One only has to remember that determiners are places *after* the noun they modify, just like adjectives (see next chapter for more information).

An interesting suffix is *-ki*, which is the equivalent of the English *-ever* or *-soever*.

Example:	<i>hvaëtki</i>	<i>hverrki</i>	<i>hvarki</i>
	“whatever”	“whoever”	“wherever”

Of course, considering the relation between *thaët* and *hvaët*, one may guess how other complementary words like this are formed.

Example:	<i>hvaët</i>	<i>thaët</i>
	“what?”	“that”

<i>hvar</i>	<i>thar</i>
“where?”	“there”
<i>hvenaer</i>	<i>thenaer</i>
“when?”	“then”

3.2.7 Indefinite pronouns

The category of indefinite pronouns in English is a complete mess. Therefore, we will not elaborate too much on this subject; this section will only provide a slight taste of the system of indefinite pronouns in the Ancient Language.

negative		universal		assertive existential		elective existential	
no one	<i>neinn</i>	everyone	<i>alleinn</i>	someone	<i>sumeinn</i>	anyone	<i>anneinn</i>
nobody	<i>néhverr</i>	everybody	<i>hverrall</i>	somebody	<i>hverrsum</i>	anybody	<i>hverrann</i>
nothing	<i>néhvaët</i>	everything	<i>hvaëttall</i>	something	<i>hvaëtsum</i>	anything	<i>hvaëttann</i>
none	<i>né</i>	all	<i>allr</i>	some	<i>sumr</i>	any	<i>annr</i>

Finally, one could guess how “anywhere”, “somewhere”, “nowhere” and “everywhere” are formed.

Example:	<i>hvar</i>	<i>néhvar</i>	<i>hvarall</i>
	“where”	“nowhere”	“everywhere”

This table is slightly based on old Norse, but most of it is made up, because the original material does not provide any clue on this matter. Only *allr* is original, and then only used once in one sentence. The row of *neinn* till *anneinn* does not need much explanation, as well as *né* to *annr*. The other two perhaps do. These rows are inspired by *hvar*, *néhvar*, *hvarall*, etc. that consist of the root *hvar* “where” and an affix. Because “-body” refers to a person and “-thing” to a thing, the roots *hverr* “who” and *hvaët* “what” are used. Of course, the use of the affixes in the other rows implies that these are prefixes, but because *hverrall* sounds in our opinion better than *allhverr* the first option was preferred. The same goes for *hvaëttall*, *hvarall* and other potential indefinite words formed this way.

3.3 Adjectives

3.3.1 General information and word order

The system of adjectives does not know gendering or cases as well. So, to determine which noun an adjective belongs to, one has to look after the noun that is modified; an adjective is always placed after the noun it modifies.

Examples: *du skulblaka ramr*

D.ART dragon strong

“the strong dragon”

du brisingr galba skulblakas

D.ART fire great/big dragon-GEN

“the dragon’s great fire”

aí brisingr galba skulblakas

Ind.ART fire great/big dragon-GEN

“a dragon’s great fire”

du brisingr galba skulblakas ramr

D.ART fire great/big dragon-GEN strong

“the strong dragon’s great fire”

du brisingr galba un böetq skulblakas ramr

D.ART fire great/big and broad dragon-GEN strong

“the strong dragon’s great and broad fire”

3.3.2 Degree – comparatives and superlatives

In the original material, there is no evidence for the existence of comparatives or superlatives. However, one may consider them as quite necessary, and therefore will now follow a rule how to build them. This rule is based on Old Norse and on Germanic languages.

To get a comparative, one adds –r to the adjective. To get a superlative, one adds –st to the adjective. When it leads to strange consonant clusters, like –ss-st, a –a- is added between the stem and the connotation.

Example:	<i>kvaedhí</i>	<i>kvaedhír</i>	<i>kvaedhíst</i>
	poetic	poetic-COMP	poetic-SUPR
	“poetic”	“more poetic”	“most poetic”
	<i>bjart</i>	<i>bjartr</i>	<i>bjartst</i>
	bright	bright-COMP	bright-SUPR
	“bright”	“brighter”	“brightest”
	<i>ramr</i>	<i>ramrr</i>	<i>ramrst</i>
	strong	strong-COMP	strong-SUPR
	“strong”	“stronger”	“strongest”
	<i>hvass</i>	<i>hvassar</i>	<i>hvassast</i>
	sharp	sharp-COMP	sharp-SUPR
	“sharp”	“sharper”	“sharpest”

aí sverd älfas er hvassar thön sverd onr

Ind.ART sword elf-GEN is sharp-COMP than sword your

“An elf’s sword is sharper than your sword/ yours.”

3.3.3 A small notion on some suffixes

Two important suffixes has to be discussed yet.

- -(s)ja is used to modify adjectives. It derives from *sjon* “to see/to look”. It is possible translate it with “looking”.

Example: *ramr* *ramrsja*

“strong” “strong-looking”

hvass *hvassja*

“sharp” “sharp-looking”

aí knífr hvassja

Ind.ART knife sharp-SJA

“a sharp-looking knife”

Thäet er aí knífr hvassja

that is Ind.ART knife sharp-SJA

a) “that is a sharp-looking knife”

b) “that knife looks sharp”

Translation b) shows us why this suffix matters: a form of *waíse* “to be” plus an adjective ending on *sja* is the elvish equivalent of this “look”-construction in English. It is one of the unique construction in the Ancient Language.

- *-leikr* is one of the ways to make from nouns adjectives.

Example: *dauthr* *dauthrleikr*

death death-LEIKR

“death” “mortal”

(compare Dutch “sterfelijk” or German “sterblich”)

3.4 Titles, ancestry and honorifics

In the world of Alagaësia, society is an hierarchic system. It is very important to know who you are and what your place is in this system. Besides, in a world without healthcare-systems or other forms of governmental support, your family is the most important relation you have; belonging somewhere means safety and help in times of need.

This is mostly true for humans and dwarfs, but for elves and dragons not so much. After all, dragons are so mighty and powerful that they have no trouble with looking after themselves.⁷

The elvish society works differently. Every elf is an independent, individual creature with equal rights and an own responsibility. Of course, this does not mean there is no hierarchy– after all, there are existing notions of “king”, “queen” and “nobles” - but by far not as much as in other Alagaësiian societies, and the “not so high” elves are certainly not “lesser beings”. Besides, such a title one has to deserve because of one’s deeds, or by being elected for a position by other elves (like the status of “king” or “queen”). Therefore is “honor” the most important concept in this society, even more than in the others.

Titles, acknowledgements of ancestry and honorifics are placed after the name of the person that is described.

- Examples:
- 1) *Arya Dröttningu*
 - 2) *Hrothgar Könungr*
 - 3) *Eragon Shur’tugal*
 - 4) *Eragon Argetlam*⁸
 - 5) *Saphira Bjartskular*⁹
 - 5) *Eragon, sönr abr Brom* ¹⁰

These examples are “internationally” used; now will follow a list of unique, elvish honorifics.

Honorific	Meaning & Use	Example
<i>elda</i>	gender-neutral suffix of great praise	<i>Oromis-elda</i>
<i>vodhr</i>	male suffix of middling praise	<i>Däthedr-vodhr</i>
<i>vadhr</i>	female suffix of middling praise	<i>Rhunön-vadhr</i>
<i>nann</i>	common, very neutral suffix between equals	<i>Lifaen-nann</i>
<i>fohrn</i>	suffix for an unfamiliar, praise-worthy person (formal speech)	<i>Earnë-fohrn</i> ¹¹
<i>mar</i>	diminutive, gender-neutral suffix for a young, usually cute person	<i>Dusan-mar</i>
<i>nur</i>	gender-neutral suffix for a younger person	<i>Alanna-nur</i>
<i>finiarel</i>	suffix for a young man of great promise	<i>Eragon-finiarel</i>
<i>finiaril</i>	suffix for a young woman of great promise	<i>Arya-finiaril</i>
<i>vor</i>	male suffix for a close friend	<i>Eragon-vor</i>
<i>var</i>	female suffix for a close friend	<i>Arya-var</i>

⁷ Although Saphira really appreciates it when she finally is told the names of her parents. However, this bares more relation to the fact that she is an orphan.

⁸ “Silverhand”: a special honorific for Riders; it refers to the silver-coloured sign on a Rider’s palm.

⁹ “Bright Scales”: a special honorific for dragons.

¹⁰ In the human language, the equivalent is *Eragon Bromsson*.

¹¹ Earnë was an elvish poet who lived a very long time ago.

<i>svit-kona</i>	formal honorific for an elf woman of great wisdom	<i>Islanzadí svit-kona</i>
<i>svit-madr</i>	formal honorific for an elf man of great wisdom	<i>Däthedr svit-madr</i>
<i>ebrithil</i>	Honorific meaning “master”; can be used separately	<i>(Oromis) ebrithil</i>

Only six honorifics are original, the rest is made-up. Especially the female honorifics were neglected. Other expansion is based on the Japanese honorific system. However, only some definitions are transferred; these sounds bear no resemblance to the Japanese ones. The choice of the sounds is perfectly random and based on what sounds “nice”. This may be strange and unprofessional, but the original honorifics are made-up in this same way by Christopher Paolini himself, which justifies our method too.

This, of course, creates a lot of freedom. If one of these honorifics do not satisfy, it can still be changed on the set during the production of the first season.

3.5 Numerals

In the books, there is no evidence of the existence of a numeral system. But considering the fact that Elves definitely are able to count (and the fans also), a new system is created. It is divided into cardinal numbers (one, two, three, etc.) and ordinal number (first, second, third, etc.). It is based on the system of Old Norse, but more regularised. Some numbers are also changed or at least adapted in order to avoid a one-to-one copy.

Cardinal numerals behave like nouns. Ordinal numerals behave like adjectives.

	Cardinal	Ordinal
1	einn ¹²	fyrsti
2	tveirr	tveirri
3	thirr	thirri
4	fjör	fjóri
5	Fimm	fimmi
6	sett	setti
7	sjött	sjötti
8	atta	atti
9	Níu	níundi
10	tan	tandi
11	fyrtn	fyrntandi
12	tveirrtan	tveirrtandi
13	thirrtan	thirrtandi
14	fjörtan	fjörtandi
15	fimmtan	fimmtandi
16	settan	settandi

¹² As we have seen, this can also be used as a root for “no one”, “someone”, etc.

17	sjöttan	sjöttandi
18	attan	attandi
19	níutan	níutandi
20	thugun	thugundi
21	thugun-un-ein	thugun-un-fyrsti
22	thugun-un-tveirr	thugun-un-tveirri
23	thugun-un-thirr	thugun-un-thirri
24	thugun-un-fjör	thugun-un-fjörði
25	thugun-un-fimm	thugun-un-fimmi
<i>Etc.</i>		
30	thrigun	thrigundi
40	fjörgun	fjörgundi
50	fingun	fingundi
60	settun	settundi
70	sjöttun	sjöttundi
80	attun	attundi
90	nífunun	nífunundi
100	hundra	hundri
200	thu-hundra	thu-hundri
1000	thúsund	thúsundi

Additionally, the multiplicative adverbs “once”, “twice”, “trice”, etc. are built from the number plus *-var*. This construction is inspired also inspired by Old Norse and Icelandic.

Example:	einn	einnvar
	one	one-MPAdv
	“one”	“once”

3.6 Prepositions

There are many prepositions in the Ancient Language. They follow the same principle as in English. In the dictionary a list can be found.

3.7 Adverbs

Unfortunately, the original material does not contain any adverb. Invention is therefore necessary – again. Its following rules are loosely based on Old Norse grammar rules concerning adverbs. However, the connotation *-an* is also used simply because it is not used yet.

Adverbs are formed mostly from adjectives by adding *-(a)n*.

Example:	<i>ramr</i>	<i>ramrn</i>
	strong	strong-Adv
	“strong”	“strongly”
	<i>bjart</i>	<i>bjartn</i>
	bright	bright-Adv
	“bright”	“brightly”
	<i>aëнора</i>	<i>aënoran</i>
	broad	broad-Adv
	“broad”	“broadly”

- An exception is *ilia* “happy”, because the corresponding noun is already *ilian* “happiness”.¹³ Therefore is the corresponding adverb *ilianan* “happily”.
- Another exception is *frëma* “more”, that can be used in this form as well as an comparative adjective as an adverb. The superlative is by the way again regular: *frëmast*.
- Adverbs are placed in the same place in the sentence as in English.
- Adverbs can also be constructed from comparatives, superlatives and ordinal numbers in the same way.
- Adverbs can be negotiated by the word *né*. This word is placed after the adverb it modifies.

3.7 Verbs

Most of the information in this chapter is derived from the original source material.

3.7.1 Agreement

The regular verbs in the Ancient Language do not know any form of agreement: every person, singular or plural, agrees with the same verb form.

Only the irregular verb *waíse* “to be” knows some forms of agreement.

¹³ Both words belong to the original material.

3.7.2. Tense

There are three tenses in the Ancient Language: present, past and future.

3.7.2.1 The present tense

The present tense consist of the “basic form” of the verb, namely the one you can find in the dictionary.

Example: *Du skulblaka flauga*
D.ART dragon fly
“the dragon flies” / “the dragon is flying”

Depending on its place in the sentence, it can also be translated as an imperative form.

Example: *Skulblaka, flauga!*
dragon fly
“Dragon, fly!”

3.7.2.2 The past tense

The past form is formed by adding a certain vowel to the basic form. Which vowel this is, depends on the ending of the verb. Verbs can be divided three groups:

- 1) verbs ending on -a;
- 2) verbs ending -ir/-er/-rr/-vr/-ldr/-thr/-th/-rst;
- 3) the rest of the verbs, a very small group that mostly consist of verbs ending on -l/-m/-n and vowels other than -a.

In the past tense, group 1 ends on -í. To the verbs in group 2, the vowel -o is added, and in the last group it depends on the word.

Example: *du skulblaka flaugái*
D.ART dragon fly-PAST
“the dragon flew” / “the dragon has flown”

du skulblaka eldhrimmero fastan

D.ART dragon grow-PAST fast-Adv

“the dragon grew fast”¹⁴

du skulblaka verrunsmalí du sundavrbłaka

D.ART dragon fight-PAST D.ART shadow-flapper

“the dragon fought the shadowbird”/

“the dragon have fought the shadowbird”¹⁵

3.7.2.3 The future tense

The future form consists of the verb *weohnata* “will” and the basic (present) form.

Example: Eka weohnata flauga medh Saphira

I will fly with Saphira

“I will fly with Saphira” / “I am going to fly with Saphira”

ái älf a weohnata ae thorta du ilumëo

Ind.ART elf will always speak D.ART thruth

“An elf will always speak the truth”

There is another form of “will” that can be used as well, namely *wilae*. However, this form is seldom used, and appears in general only in poetry.

3.7.3 The verb “to be”

Wáise “to be” is the only truly irregular verb in the Ancient Language.¹⁶ It is also the most important verb, if not the most important *word*: it refers to the essence of things, of what they truly are – which is one of the aspects of the Ancient Language. The present inflection goes like this:

¹⁴ Those who have read the books know how fast a dragon can grow.... And that they keep growing throughout their entire lives!

¹⁵ *Sundavrbłakya* are a species inherent to the island of Vroengard. Also, the first – horrible- Eragon-movie, the Shade Durza created from shadows a dragon-like creature that was also called a *sundavrbłaka*.

¹⁶ Alright, apart from *varda* “watch over”. The past tense is, according to the original material, *vardo* and not *vardaí*.

<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
eka eddyr	I am	nosu eru	we are
ono eru	you are	ono eru	you are
älfr/älfrinn/älf er	he/she/it is	theirr eru	they are

This verb has a very small connection to its Old Norse equivalent. It is more likely that it is a product of Christopher Paolini himself. Because Paolini usually copies the English structures, it is here done also.

The past tense goes like this:

<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
eka ero	I was	Nosu erí	we were
ono erí	you were	Ono erí	you were
älfr/älfrinn/älf ero	he/she/it was	Their erí	they were

The verb *ero* is original; *eri* is not. It based on the other past connotation –í, and the earlier named method of Paolini.

3.7.4 The passive

Now the inflections of *waíse* are clear, it is time to explain the passive. It is formed with a form of *waíse* “to be” followed by the form of the past tense.

Example: *Älfr **er sköliro** fra du brisingr skulblakas*

He be-PRST shield-PAST from fire dragon-GEN

“he is shielded from the dragon’s fire”

*Älfr **ero sköliro** fra du brisingr skulblakas*

He be-PAST shield-PAST from D.ART fire dragon-GEN

“he was shielded from the dragon’s fire”

3.7.4 The subclause

There are two types of inflection that still have to be discussed. The first type concerns the sub clause. In the Ancient Language, *sem* “that” is also used as demonstrative. In order to avoid confusion a special inflection is used to distinguish the noun with the demonstrative and the that-clause from one another.

- Example: 1a) *Eka hórnaí sem ono havar aí sverd.* (Basic form: *havr*)
 I hear-PAST that you have-SUBCL Ind.ART sword
 “I heard that you have a sword.”
- 1b) *Eka hórnaí sem ono malabrar nosu haina.* (Basic form: *malabra*)
 I hear-PAST that you mean-SUBCL us harm
 “I heard that you mean us harm”
- 2) *Brakka du vanyali sem huilдар eka!* (Basic form: *huildr*)
 Reduce D.ART magic that hold-SUBCL me
 “Reduce the magic that holds me!”

The second sentence can also be phrased in a different way:

- Example: *Brakka du vanyali du huilдарs eka!* (Basic form: *huildr*)
 Reduce D.ART magic D.ART hold-SUBCL2 me
- a) “Reduce the magic that holds me!”
 b) “Reduce the magic holding me!”

3.7.5 Other important verbs.

Another important verbs to remember are:

- *atra* “may/let”;
- *sé* “may”;
- *weohnataí* “would”;
- *ach* “do/does”.

These are all followed by the present form when used in a “modal” sense.

3.7.6 Negotiation

Verbs are negotiated by *néiat*. It has to same position in the sentence as in English.

3.7.7 A small notion on derivation

It is very difficult to say anything on the subject of derivation. Often, words with linked semantic meanings are morphologically completely different from one another and have no traceable

relation. Only three certain things can be said concerning derivation from verbs to nouns in the Ancient Language, based on the original material.

- Some verbs and nouns have the same form when they have a linked semantic meaning. For example, *haina* means as well “to harm” (verb) as “harm” (noun), and *celöbra* as well “to honour” (verb) as “honour” (noun). This rule can be applied to many verbs. A notable exception is this rule is *vard* “guard/watch” and *varðen* “guardians”, both from *varda* “watch over”, not only because of the form, but also because the corresponding nouns describes an agent or a “doer”, which is very rare.
- Agents that are directly derived from verbs are formed by adding *eld* separately in front of it. For example, *hórna* “hear/listen” (verb) becomes *eld hórna* “listener” that can also be pluralised to *eld hórnya* “listeners”. These substantivized verbs have slightly a semantic meaning of “vagueness”. For example, when Eragon uses *eld hórnya* in his anti-eavesdropping spell, he does not mean a particular listener, but a potential one.
- The last example is *vergandí* “slayer”, derived from *vergarí* “slay/kill” (verb), as used in Eragon’s special honorific *Sundavar-Vergandí* “Shadeslayer”¹⁷. The ending *-rí* is replaced by *-ndí* to reform the verb into a “doer”-noun. For example, *celöbra* “honour” (verb) could be reformed into *celöbrandí* “honourer”. This is a very direct way of derivation, and should only be used when there is not already a satisfying noun available.

3.8 Spells, wishes and other special formulations

Magic is an essential part of the world of Alagaësia. Every race has the potential of performing it, for it is linked to the innate capacity of energy. However, the “capacity” of magic is distributed differently: dragons are the creatures with the greatest potential. They are even linked to the “source of magic” – their decline (i.e. the dragon killing by Galbatorix) has caused also a weakening of the general potential of every race.

Dragons are directly followed by Elves. Dwarfs and humans have a much weaker potential for magic. Also within a race the potential is distributed differently; some have a greater potential than others.

This innate capacity can be restricted by certain spells – for example, an unknown spell of Morzan “broke” something inside Oromis, and now even the most simple, “low-costing” spells exhaust him. It can also be increased. Firstly, by training it, but this is possible until a certain limit. Going beyond one’s limits – i.e. using too much energy - can cause death. Secondly, by seeking an outside source, like a Dragon (Eragon’s capacity is “increased” by Saphira), the flowing energy in the surroundings (from other creatures, or potentially even from a flowing stream of water), or stored energy in certain objects (like gems). Thirdly, there are hints of the existence of a dark spells that may increase it, but this is highly dangerous and unnatural.

¹⁷ Literally: “Shades-Slayer” or “Shadows-Slayer”. A Shade is a sorcerer possessed by demonic spirits. A notorious example is Durza, a mighty Shade-servant of Galbatorix, and who is killed by Eragon in the first book.

Magic is not the same as the Ancient Language. It is a save way to articulate magic, at least saver than just thinking the spells. Thoughts of magic seem to be overruled by the words of the Ancient Language, but it is still possible to perform magic through thoughts.

However, thinking or speaking, everything thought or spoken is very powerful in the Ancient Language – blessings and even just wishes are stronger. So, one has to be really careful; one mistake can unintendedly ruin someone's life, like in the case of Elva, who was accidentally cursed by Eragon due to a grammatical mistake.

In the following section are summed up several ways to formulate spells, blessings, wishes, farewells and battle cries in the Ancient Language.

1. *Just nouns.* “Address” the object. Its consequence is that one will be shown the true form of the thing (remember: the true names!). One can summon fire, or reform the form of a silver ring to the true form of silver, like Arya did in the first book.

Example:	<i>Brisingr!</i>	<i>Arget!</i>
	“Fire!”	“Silver!”

2. *Imperative sentences.*

- a. One “addresses” directly to the object, which is followed by the basic form of the verb.

Example:	<i>Adurna reisa!</i>
	“Water, rise!”

- b. One pronounces the basic form of the verb that may be followed by the object.

Example:	<i>Jierda!</i>	<i>Jierda thierra kalfya!</i>
	“Hit/break!”	“Break their calves!”

3. *Sentences with atra or sé.* These sentences have to same structure as the “may”-sentences in English. These constructions are used for spells, but also for blessings, wishes, etc.

Example: 1) *Atra nosu waíse vardo fra eld hórnya.*

“May we be guarded from listeners.”

(A spell against eavesdropping and spying¹⁸)

¹⁸ For those who are interested: the spell for eavesdropping is *thverr stenr un atra eka hórna* “traverse stone and let me hear”.

2) *Atra gūlai un ilian tauthr ono un atra ono wáise sköliro fra rauthr.*

“May luck and happiness follow you and may you be shielded from misfortune.” (A blessing by Eragon¹⁹)

3) *Atra nosu wáise fricai.*

“Let us be friends.”

(Note: *fricai* is singular)

4) *Sé mor’ranr ono fina.*

“May you find peace”

(Note: literally, “may peace find you”)

5) *Sé onr sverdar sitja hvass!*

“May your swords stay sharp!”

(Kind of “farewell wish” in the warrior culture of the Varden, especially before a great battle. It can also be used as a battle cry.)

¹⁹ Or at least, how it should have been. In the original blessing *sköliro* “shielded” was replaced by *skölir* “(a) shield”, with a curse as result.

4. Examples of the Ancient Language in the Elvish Culture

Although every culture in Alagaësia has its value, we will only discuss the elvish culture a little bit more. In this section we will give a taste of this culture, for example some elvish poetry – all in the Ancient Language. Enjoy!

4.1 “Du Silbena Datia”

“*Du Silbena Datia*” - “The Sighing Mists” - is one of the most beloved elvish poems. It is a song that tells the tragic story of two lovers, Acallamh and Nuada, who were separated by longing for the sea. Although they live in the woods, elves are highly attracted to the sea – perhaps because they have come a long time ago from over the sea. Because of their longing, the elves find great meaning in the song. Here follows a verse from the song and its translation. The “translation” is the original written by Christopher Paolini; the song in the Ancient Language is our product.

O Durnareyna undir himmen bár

Onr vídhra kulsja kalla edtha, kalla edtha

Ae eka wilae sigla

Mae thar er älfa-konu, du

Kallas edtha, kallas edtha

Älfrinn binna hjarta iet medh leya, hvitr ai lois

Nae eom wáise jierdaí, aíran maru aegór

Ae eom wáise rífaí midhli traevam un sjór

O liquid temptress 'neath the azure sky,

Your gilded expanse calls me, calls me.

For I would sail ever on,

Were it not for the elven maid,

Who calls me, calls me.

She binds my heart with a lily-white tie,

Never to be broken, save by the sea,
Ever to be torn twixt the trees and the waves.

4.2 A letter to Eragon and Saphira

Elves do not only have a poetic script (*Liduen Kvaedhi*), but also have a quite poetic form of speech – especially compared to humans and dwarfs. Their speech is also, for our human ears, quite formal and “high”, which is not only due to their general high level of sophistication, but also to their “honour and courtesy”-culture and immortality. After all, it is always better to avoid a millennium-long grudge and therefore to honour one another. One has to choose his words carefully, and besides, because lying is impossible in the Ancient Language, one has sometimes to find other ways to speak the “truth” – or there will be a feud anyway.

However, this does not mean that elves speak always like this, or that less “high” constructions are impossible. Still, we would like to give a written example of the sophisticated elvish speech in the form of a letter to Eragon and Saphira in Ellesméra.

Kvetha, Saphira Bjartskular un Eragon Sundavar-Vergandí,

Eka, Ballaen abr breoal Miolandra, ach lítilla sig un arr'na eom ono, Saphira, wiol thornessa vethr äfthreya. Älfya ach néiat veidhr, un né mlatr er eom wáise havro unin Ellesméra, né unin annr drasar. Ēfa ono threyja, ono náta ach ai du skulblakar abr eld, un kodthr sem hvaët ono atra unin du Weldenvarden. Vae áíran bedhr sem ono eitha vergandar onr unin welden, svá sem aera un adurna stydja rínn un némedh blödh.

Eragon, lereptar thornessar eru wiol ono. Theirr erí veirraí maru Niduen abr breoal Islanzadís un theirr eru förn älfirns eom ono.

*Atra esterní ono thelduin,
Mor'ranr lífa unin hjarta onr,
Un du evarínya ono varda.*

Bellaen du Hljöðhr

Greetings, Saphira Bjartskular and Eragon Shadeslayer.

I, Bellaen of House Miolandra, do humble myself and apologize to you, Saphira, for this unsatisfactory meal. Elves do not hunt, and no meat is to be had in Ellesméra, nor in any of our cities. If you wish, you can do as the dragons of old were wont, and catch what you may in Du Weldenvarden. We only ask that you leave your kills in the forest so that our air and water remain untainted by blood.

Eragon, these clothes are for you. They were woven by Niduen of Islanzadí's house and are her gift to you.

May good fortune rule over you,

Peace live in your heart,

And the stars watch over you.

Bellaen du Hljöðhr

4.3 An elvish greeting

Of course, poetry and letters are fine, but how does one have to greet someone in this speech, in this highly sophisticated society in which honour and courtesy are the main concepts?

There are two ways to do this: the relative simple *kvetha*, and the complicated, but most characteristic way, famously known by every dedicated fan: *Atra esterní ono thelduin, mor'ranr lífa unin hjarta onr un du evarínya ono varda*. The first one does not need much explanation; the second one absolutely does. And this is actually only a small matter of courtesy, according to Arya; elvish society can be very complicated.

As it is explained in the second book *Eldest*:

'First she explained that when one elf meets another, they stop and touch their first two fingers to their lips to indicate that "we shall not distort the truth during our conversation." This is followed by the phrase "Atra esterní ono thelduin" to which one replies "Atra du evarínya ono varda."

"And," said Arya, "if you are being especially formal, a third response is made: 'Un atra mor'ranr lífa unin hjarta onr,' which means, 'And may peace live in your heart.' These lines were adopted from a blessing that was made by a dragon when our pact with them was finalized. It goes:

Atra esterní ono thelduin,
M or'ranr lífa unin hjarta onr,
Un du evarínya ono varda.

"Or: 'May good fortune rule over you, peace live in your heart, and the stars watch over you.'"

"How do you know who is supposed to speak first?"

"If you greet someone with greater status than yourself or if you wish to honour a subordinate, then speak first. If you greet someone with less status than yourself, speak last. But if you are uncertain of your position, give your counterpart a chance to speak, and if they are silent, speak first. Such is the rule." (132-133)

Did everyone get that? Now let's find an elf...

5. A Basic Dictionary

5.1 Christopher Paolini's Ancient Language

The words in this section form the original material, except for some demonstratives, pronouns and honorifics (that are all explained in the chapter 3).

Demonstratives			
Singular		Plural	
thornessa	this	thornessar	these
thaët / sem / thorna	that	thornar	those

Articles	
Ai	A/an
Du	The

Coordinators	
Mar	But
Orono	Or
Un	And

Personal Pronouns	Singular		Plural	
1 st person	eka edtha ie (seldom used)	I/me	nosu vae	we/us
2 nd person	ono	you	ono	you (plural)
3 rd person	älfr	he/him	theirr	they/them
	älfrinn	she/her		
	älf	It		

Possessive Pronouns	Singular		Plural	
1 st person	iet (informal) pömuria (formal)	my	vaet	our
2 nd person	onr	your	onr	your (plural)
3 rd person	älfrs	his	thierra	their
	älfrinns	her		
	älfs	its		

Adjectives	
Äenora	Broad
Bjart	Bright
Boëttq	Broad, widespread
Brunhvittr	White-browed
Chetowä	Mourning
Datia	Sighing
Dauthleiker	Mortal
Edoc'sil	Unconquerable
Eja	Oaken
Eldrvarya	Burning
Ekar	Oaken
Galba	Great, big
Heill	Healed
Helgr	Hallowed, sacred
Hjöldr	Silent
Hvass	Sharp
Hvittr	White
Ignasia	Shining
Ilia	Happy
Íll	Bad
Kvaedhí	Poetic
Maela	Quiet
Lunaea	Smooth
Nuanen	Beautiful
Nángoröth	Blasted
Ramr	Strong
Raudr	Red
Svit	Wise
Vandr-fodhr	Ill-marked
Vangr	Wandering
Vëoth	Slow

Verbs	
Aurboda	Banish
Ach	Do, does
Atra	May, let
Binna	Bind
Blaka	Flap
Blöthr	Stop
Brakka	Reduce
Burthr	Birth
Celöbra	Honour, celebrate
Deyja	Die
Dunei	Love
Eitha	Go, leave
Eldhimner	Grow
Elrun	Thank
Ethgri	Invoke
Eyddr	Empty
Flauga	Fly

Finna	Find
Frethya	Hide
Gala	Chant, sing
Gánga	Go
Fortha	Display, put forth
Freytha	Hide
Gath	Unite
Gëuloth	Dull
Haina	Hurt, harm
Havr	Have
Hethr	Has
Hlaupa	Run
Huildr	Hold
Hórna	Listen
Jierda	Hit, break
Kalla	Call
Kausta	Come
Kodthr	Catch
Kópa	Stare
Kverst	Cut
Ládrin	Open
Letta	Stop
Lífa	Live
Losna	Loosen, release
Lunaea	Smooth
Ma'mor	Unlock
Malthinae	Confine, hold in place
Moi	Change
Mor'amr	Open
Malabra	Intend, mean
Naina	Make bright
Otherúm	Swear
Reisa	Raise, lift
Risa	Rise
Sé	May
Sitja	Stay
Sharjalví	Move
Sjon	See, look
Stydja	Rest, remain
Slauta	Sound
Slytha	Sleep
Taka	Give
Tauthr	Follow
Taune	Take
Theafathan	Thicken
Thelduin	Rule over, reign
Theyna	Be silent
Thorta	Speak
Thrautha	Throw
Threyja	Desire, want
Thrysta	Compress
Thurra	Dry

Vaetna	Expel, scatter
Vanta	Lack, need
Vakna	Awaken
Varda	Watch over
Vergarí	Kill
Verma	Heat
Verrunsmal	Fight
Wilae	Will (seldom used)
Weohnata	Will (aux. V.)
Weohnataí	Would

Nouns	
Adurna	Water
Aiedail	Morning Star
Agæti	Celebration
Älfa	Elf
Andlát	Death, in relation to poison
Arget	Silver
Aurboda	Banishing
Baen	Place (used in compounds)
Beor	Bear
Blaka	Flapper, wing
Blödh	Blood
Blödhren	Blood-oath
Böllr	Orb, ball, round object
Breoal	House, family
Brisingr	Fire
Brun	Brow
Burthr	Birth
Celöbra	Honour
Dag	Day
Daert	Spear
Dauth	Death (in general)
Deloi	Earth
Delois	A green-leafed plant with purple flowers
Domia	Dominance
Dras	City
Dautr	Daughter
Draumr	Dream
Dröttning	Queen
Dröttningu	Princess (Little Queen)
Dvergr	Dwarf
Dunei	Love
Ebrithil	Master
Eïnradin	Word (as in "I give you my word) [<i>Erewoord</i>]
Edur	Tor, prominence
Eldunarí	"Heart of hearts"
Erisdar	Flameless lanterns (named after the elf who invented them)
Esterní	Good fortune
Evarína	Star

Eyrea	Ear
Faelnirv	A special elvish liquor
Fairth	Picture taken by magical means
Freohr	Death, with a heroic nuance (as in <i>du Sundavar Freor</i> "Death of the Shadows")
Fricai	Friend
Fell	Mountain
Fethr	Feather
Fethrblaka	Bird
Fyrn	War
Fëon	Spring
Förn	Gift
Garjzla	Light
Garm	Wolf
Gata	Passage, path, road
Gedwëy	Palm (e.g. of hand)
Grind	Gate(s)
Grathr	Hunger
Gramarye	Magic (in general)
Guliä	Luck
Haldthin	Thornapple
Hel	Death, with a nuance of terror (as in <i>Helgrind</i>)
Hjarta	Heart
Hugin	Thought
Íllgrathr	"Bad Hunger" ²⁰
Ilian	Happiness
Illumëo	Truth
Indlvarn	Pairing between rider & dragon
Istalrí	Flame/Fire
Islingr	Bringer of Light; illuminator
Kalfa	Calve
Knifr	Knife
Kvetha	Greeting(s)
Kveykva	Lightning
Kvistr	Branch
Kona	Woman
Könungr	King
Kuldr	Gold
Kyn	Kind (as in race, e.g. humankind)
Lam	Hand
Laufsbläd	Leaf
Lethr	Leather
Lethrblaka	bat; the Ra'zac's mounts <i>and</i> parents
Liduen	Script
Lifa	Life
Llámarae	An elvish fabric made by cross-weaving wool and nettle threads
Loivissa	A blue, deep-throated lily that grows in the Empire

²⁰ A name for a new species on Vroengard (see note 4 [in section 5.2]).

Manin	Memory
Malmr	Metal
Mor'ranr	Peace
Nagz	Blanket
Nalgask	An elvish mixture of beeswax and hazelnut oil used to moisten the skin
Nam	Name
Nidhwal	Dragon-like creatures that live in the sea
Niernen	Orchid
Oro	Arrow
Orùm	Serpent
Osthato	Sage
Rakr	Mist
Rauthr	Misfortune
Ren	Oath
Reona	Reaper
Ristvak	Sorrow
Seithr	Witch
Silbena	Mists (pluralis tantum)
Shur'tugal	Dragon Rider
Skölir	Shield
Skul	Scale
Skulblaka	Dragon
Snalgí	A race of giant snails
Solus	Sun
Sönr	Son
Sundavr	Shadow
Sverd	Sword
Stenr	Stone
Talos	A cactus found near <i>Helgrind</i>
Thringa	Rain
Traevam	Tree
Vaer Ethilnadrás	A brown, free-floating seaweed with gas-filled bladders along the joints of its branching stem
Vanyali	Magic (casted spell)
Vara	Flower
Valdr	Ruler
Vard	Guard (as in <i>Áthalfard</i> ²¹)
Varden	Guardians, Protectors
Ven	Sight
Vindr	Air, wind, twist
Vöndr	A thick, straight stick
Voll	Grounds, fields
Vergandí	Slayer
Verrunsmal	Fight
Welden	Forest
Wyrda	Fate
Wyrdfell	Elven name for the "Forsworn"
Yawë	Bond of trust
Zar'roc	Misery

²¹ An organization of elves dedicated to the preservation of their songs and poems.

Prepositions	
Abr	Of
Audr	Up
Eom	To
Frá	From
Wiol	For
Medh	With
Nem	As
Undir	Under, beneath
Unin	In
Vel	Upon

Adverbs	
Frëma	More

Directions	
Fram	Foreward
Aptr	Backward

General Elvish Honorifics		
Honorific	Meaning & Use	Example
<i>elda</i>	gender-neutral suffix of great praise	<i>Oromis-elda</i>
<i>vodhr</i>	male suffix of middling praise	<i>Däthedr-vodhr</i>
<i>vadhr</i>	female suffix of middling praise	<i>Rhunön-vadhr</i>
<i>nann</i>	common, very neutral suffix between equals	<i>Lifaen-nann</i>
<i>fohrn</i>	suffix for an unfamiliar, praise-worthy person (formal speech)	<i>Earnë-fohrn</i> ²²
<i>mar</i>	diminutive, gender-neutral suffix for a young, usually cute person	<i>Dusan-mar</i>
<i>nur</i>	gender-neutral suffix for a younger person	<i>Alanna-nur</i>
<i>finiarel</i>	suffix for a young man of great promise	<i>Eragon-finiarel</i>
<i>finiaril</i>	suffix for a young woman of great promise	<i>Arya-finiaril</i>
<i>vor</i>	male suffix for a close friend	<i>Eragon-vor</i>
<i>var</i>	female suffix for a close friend	<i>Arya-var</i>
<i>svit-kona</i>	formal honorific for an elf woman of great wisdom	<i>Islanzadí svit-kona</i>
<i>svit-madr</i>	formal honorific for an elf man of great wisdom	<i>Däthedr svit-madr</i>
<i>ebrithil</i>	Honorific meaning “master”; can be used separately	<i>(Oromis) ebrithil</i>

²² Earnë was an elvish poet who lived a very long time ago.

5.2 Additional vocabulary

In this section, one can find an expansion of the original material. Most of the new vocabulary has been pulled from an Old Norse dictionary, since this was also Paolini's strategy in making the first set of words. However, there are also quite a few words which are made up by the editors.

Interrogatives	Ancient Language	English
<i>Pronouns</i>	hverr	who/whom
	hvaët	what
<i>Determiners</i>	hvorna	which/what (singular)
	hvornar	which/what (plural)
	hverrs	whose
	hvert	quantifier: how much/how many, etc.
<i>Adverbs</i>	hvar	where (location)
	hvan	whence (source)
	hvaðin	where/wither (direction/goal)
	hvenaer	when (time)
	hvé	how (manner)
	hvérstu	how (by what means)
	hví	why/wherefore (reason)
	hvárt	whether (choice)

Indefinite Pronouns							
Negative		Universal		Assertive existential		Elective existential	
no one	<i>Neinn</i>	everyone	<i>alleinn</i>	someone	<i>sumeinn</i>	anyone	<i>anneinn</i>
nobody	<i>Néhverr</i>	everybody	<i>hverrall</i>	somebody	<i>hverrsum</i>	anybody	<i>hverrann</i>
nothing	<i>Néhvaët</i>	everything	<i>hvaëttall</i>	something	<i>hvaëtsum</i>	anything	<i>hvaëttann</i>
none	<i>Nér</i>	all	<i>allr</i>	some	<i>sumr</i>	any	<i>annr</i>

Coordinators	
Éfa	If
Thí	Because, since
Svá	So

Adjectives	
Äfsjät ²³	Invisible
Äfthreya	Unsatisfactory
Arg	Silver
Giptasjot	Nice, cosy, cheerful; "gezellig"

²³ As in *Andlát Äfsjät*, the "invisible posion" (as Glaedr calls it) that infects the island of Vroengard and corrupts its wildlife. It is actually a form of radiation, caused by a spell casted by Thuviel in his last battle against Galbatorix during the Rider War. He sacrificed his own body for it by converting it in pure energy and he exploded, but failed anyway. Because the phenomenon of radiation is in this world entirely new and very dangerous to investigate, there is no other concept than "invisible poison" for it.

Bár	Blue
Durna	Liquid, fluent
Gin	Purple
Gipta	Good
Grár	Grey
Grénn	Green
Gul	Golden
Héff	Yellow
Hvink	Pink
Iluma	True
Lang	Long
Maerr	Noble, honourable
Raunn	Orange
Ramínn	Royal
Rínn	Pure, untainted
Skýnn	Quick, fast
Svartr	Black

Verbs	
Aera	Air, breath
Avir'ganí	Curse
Bedhr	Ask, pray
Binna	Bind
Brenna	Burn, set on fire
Bríssir	Spit fire (like dragons do)
Efthaina	Take revenge, avenge
Föra	Journey
Forínga	Forgive
Fraygna	Learn
Fragra	Teach
Gadr	Farm, make grow
Gatharí	Navigate, find a path
Hestra	Ride (on a horse)
Hlakka	Cry
Hragra	Humiliate
Hwola	Scream
Kenna	Know
Kvaedhr	Make /compose poetry
Kyssa	Kiss
Línna	Laugh
Náta	Can
Rífa	Tear
Sigla	Sail
Sjanan	Whisper
Skemta	Amuse
Skríf	Write
Smidra	Smith, forge
Straumr	Stream
Veidhr	Hunt
Veirra	Wave (a cloth)
Velspara	Prophesise

Vinyala	Cast a spell
Yfir	Lead

Nouns	
Aegór	Sea
Aegáral	Boat, ship
Älfa-hestra	Elven horse ²⁴
Almr	Bow
Almrandi	Archer
Amdautr	Granddaughter
Amvidira	Grandfather
Ammódir	Grandmother
Amsönr	Grandson
Andlit	Face
Ár	Year
Árangr	Season
Argetsmídr	Silversmith
Avir'ganí	Curse
Bjártmaldr	"Brightsteel" ²⁵
Benn	Leg
Bóndr	Husband
Bónða	Wife
Borg'ran	Castle, stronghold
Bran	Child
Bródir	Brother
Dagí	Sunlight
Daga	Dawn
Daeamr	Demon, evil/demonic spirit
Durnareyna	Poetic name for the sea, which may be translated as "liquid temptress"
Durnarín	Change (more fluent one)
Efthaina	Revenge, vengeance
(Abr) Eld	(of) Old; Ancient times; (of) yore
Eptri	Butt
Faedhír	Feud, conflict, fight, grudge, 'bad blood'
Fenrín	Were-cat
Fingr	Finger
Föra	Journey
Fóringa	Forgiveness
Fuht	Foot
Gardr	Farm
Gala	Song
Grón	Lip
Haereth	Hero, heroine
Háls	Neck
Hamr	Skin
Hammír	Hammer

²⁴ A horse trained by the elves. It is able to understand fully commands in the Ancient Language.

²⁵ A special rare kind of metal that is used for Rider's swords with very special properties. It comes from a meteorite that crashed down in *Du Weldenvarden*.

Haust	Autumn
Hausa	Skull
Hlakka	Tear
Heili	Brain
Heim	Home, house
Herd	Shoulder
Hestra	Horse
Hestragal	Rider, horse-man
Himmen	Heaven, sky
Hofud	Head
Hragra	Humiliation
Hridd	Time
Issa	Ice, frost
Fjara	Shore
Flauga	Flight
Fljót	River
Fragr	Belly
Kenna	Knowledge
Kista	Chest
Kné	Knee
Knuí	Knuckle
Konu	Girl, maiden, young woman
Könungru	"Prince" (same principle as <i>Dröttingu</i>)
Kvaedhen	Poet (general word)
Kvaedhr	Poetry
Kvangadr	Marriage ²⁶
Kurtírda	Courtesy
Kykvendi	Animal
Kyldhen	Partner, mate ²⁷
Kyldha	(romantic)Relationship
Landr	Country, land
Lérept	Clothing
Leya	Tie, cord
Líkami	Body
Litr	Colour
Loi	Lily (plural: lois)
Madr	Man
Madru	Boy
Maerren	Nobility, nobles
Maerr-kona	Noblewoman, lady
Maerr-madr	Nobleman, lord
Maldrsmídr	Blacksmith
Mánadr	Month
Mennslig	Human
Merlí	Lake
Mlatr	Meat

²⁶ Elf marriage may be a rare phenomenon, but it exists! Marriage is the ultimate vow of eternal love for the elves. "Until the death doth us part" means exactly what it means in this culture... and eternity is a heck of a long time when you are immortal!

²⁷ Referring to the usual form of elvish romantic relationships. Couples can stay together for as long as they wish to. Marriage is not very common, and getting children not at all.

Módir	Mother
Moi	Change (suddenly)
Munnr	Mouth
Myrkr	Darkness
Myrkí	Night
Nef	Nose
Ráda	Counsel, advice
Ráden	Counsel (group)
Ramíng	Kingdom
Ranaín	Claw
Sithr	Sorcerer
Sjór	Wave (of the sea)
Sjára	Snow
Skáldh	Poet, bard
Skrífen	Writer
Skríf	Writing, work of prose, like a letter
Skyldarr	Logic
Smídr	Smith
Spolr	Bar
Stír	Toe
Súmir	Summer
Systa	Sister
Systrungr	Cousin from the mother's side
Talhamr	Tongue
Töyrra	Village, small town
Vandagúndar	"Caretakers" ²⁸
Veidhrandi	Hunter
Vedr	Weather
Vedrínr	Storm
Velsparen	Prophet(ess), soothsayer, seer
Vethr	Meal
Vetrsum	Winter
Vídhra	Expanse, wide space
Vidira	Father
Vidrung	Cousin from the father's side
Vinyalen	Spell-caster (general word)
Vika	Week
Yfirra	Leader

Prepositions	
Maru	By ("instrumental"/"agent")
Midhli	Between
Ofan	Down
Udhen	After
Ypir	Above

²⁸ The "Caretakers" maintain the sacred bond between the dragons and their riders. They embody the exalted values of the Riders and once a century they perform the ritual of the *Agætí Blöðhren* to renew the ancient pact. The current Caretakers are two beautiful female elves, Iduna and Nēya, who are twins and can only be distinguished by their hair - one has black hair, and one has silver hair. They are covered with rainbow coloured tattoos that when they stand together, form a dragon with rainbow scales that comes to life through magic during the Blood-Oath Celebration.

Adverbs	
Ae	Ever, forever, always
Aíran	Only
Nae	Never
Némedh	Without

Directions	
Neraehta	Left
Maegri	Right
Austr	East
Nord	North
Sut	South
Hvest	West

Special words	
Já	Yes
Nan	No

6. An Evaluation of the Ancient Language

After taking a look at the original material, we had to conclude very soon that Paolini is not a linguist. All the original material is a grammatical a mess. Often, the sentences seemed to be constructed randomly and any solid regularities proved to be hard to find. However, we have tried to pick out as many original regularities as possible and worked them into the grammar. An example is the rule that the adjective follows the noun it refers to. Other features, for example the interrogatives, we had to build from scratch since there weren't any samples of questions from the books on which we could base this system. Furthermore, most of the new words have also been pulled from the Old Norse dictionary, Icelandic or have been randomly made up by the editors/expanders – which is completely legal practise since Paolini has been using exactly the same method.

Because it was quite clear from the start that the Ancient Language is basically a language with a grammar similar to English and with Old Norse as lexifier – for which it is, unfortunately, also criticised – we decided that our mission would not only be to follow these two guidelines, but also to create its own identity. By creating new constructions and principles -sometimes based on the original material, sometimes not – we have attempted to create not “just” a language, but a language in its own right, with its own original identity.

We started by making word categories complete. For example, we completed the sets of pronouns, possessive pronouns, interrogatives, honorifics, etc. We also analysed all the sentences from the Ancient Language samples from the books to find rules on word order, subordination, morphology, etc. After that, we examined the Old Norse, Icelandic and sometimes even Old English for more guidance on the subject matters. With those building blocks we constructed the grammar and expanded the lexicon. We kept into account that the rules should not only be understandable for linguistics students, but also for the fans of the Inheritance Cycle.

All in all, researching, expanding and editing this language was quite a challenge, but we feel now that this could be very good start for the fans to get deeper into the fantastic world of Eragon and Saphira.

Dear reader and friend, thank you for reading our proposal, and may we see each other again!

*Atra esterní ono thelduin,
Mor'ranr lífa unin hjarta onr,
Un du evarínya ono varda.*

Sé onr sverdar sitja hvass!