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FINNISH TRANSLATIONS OF PROPER NAMES IN A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE

Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences
Bachelor's thesis
March 2023

ABSTRACT

Keskinen, Onni: Finnish Translations of Proper Names in *A Song of Ice and Fire*
Bachelor's thesis
Tampere University
Bachelor's Program in Languages, Specialization in English Language
March 2023

The purpose of this study is to examine the Finnish translation of the book series *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R.R. Martin by looking at the ways in which the proper names present in the books have been translated. It is almost inevitable that some functions of names are lost in translation. There are names that have implicit connotations that readers have speculated on for years, and semantically loaded names that very simply and clearly describe and characterize their referents. This thesis examines what strategies were used in the translation of these names and how these strategies affect the narrative and emotive functions of the names. Is critical information lost in translation?

The research data used for a quantitative study of the translation strategies consists of three chapters from one of the books, *Korppien Kestit (A Feast for Crows)*. All proper names found in the three chapters were categorized by the type of name and by the translation strategy used in the Finnish text. In addition to these names, other interesting names of characters and places and their name functions were examined more closely in a qualitative study.

The quantitative study of translation strategies and the analysis of name functions was based on the work of Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom (2016). Further qualitative analysis made use of translation studies texts by Peter Newmark (1988) and Jeremy Munday (2012), where the concept of foreignizing and domesticating translation strategies is described.

Proper names in the translation are mostly unchanged. This could be largely because of the method George R.R. Martin uses in creating fictive names, that is, using partly real names with a cultural function. This causes domesticating methods to lose the function of mirroring medieval Britain. This is the case mostly among first names of characters. Semantically loaded names, however, many of which are family names, nicknames, and place names, were largely translated using domesticating strategies. The use of these strategies is not entirely consistent, as some semantically loaded names were loaned from the source text. This general method of translation seems to emphasize functions that affect mood and the flow of the text over informative functions. Therefore, some information is lost, but the emotive functions of names are similar, and the mood of the Finnish text is close to the original.

Keywords: name functions, foreignization, domestication, proper names, mood, fantasy literature

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Keskinen, Onni: Finnish Translations of Proper Names in A Song of Ice and Fire
Kandidaatin tutkielma
Tampereen yliopisto
Kielten tutkinto-ohjelma, Englannin opintosuunta
Maaliskuu 2023

Tämä tutkielma tarkastelee George R.R. Martinin *Tulen ja Jään Laulu* -kirjasarjan suomenkielistä käännöstä selvittämällä, miten kirjoissa esiintyvät erisnimet on käännetty. Joitain nimien funktioita välttämättäkin jää pois käännöksessä. Joillain nimillä on epäselviä merkityksiä, joita lukijat ovat saaneet spekuloida jo vuosia. Toisilla nimillä on hyvin selvät ja läpinäkyvät merkitykset, jota kuvailevat nimen omaavaa henkilöä tai paikkaa. Mitä strategioita näiden nimien kääntämisessä käytettiin? Miten nämä strategiat vaikuttivat nimien kerronnallisiin ja tunnelmallisiin funktioihin? Jääkö käännöksessä pois tärkeää tietoa?

Kvantitatiivisen tutkimuksen data koostuu kolmesta Korppien Kestit- kirjan kappaleesta, joista löytyvät erisnimet lajiteltiin nimen tyyppin ja käännösstrategian mukaan. Muita mielenkiintoisia henkilö- ja paikannimiä analysoitiin tarkemmin ja eriteltiin, mitä funktioita käännetty nimet säilyttivät.

Käännösstrategioiden kvantitatiivinen tutkimus ja nimifunktioiden analyysi pohjautui Ainialan, Saarelman ja Sjöblomin tekstiin (2016). Kvalitatiivinen jatkoanalyysi hyödynsi Peter Newmarkin (1988) ja Jeremy Mundayn (2012) tekstejä, joissa kuvaillaan vieraannuttavia ja kotouttavia käännösstrategioita.

Käännöksen erisnimet ovat enimmäkseen muuttumattomia. Tämä saattaa johtua suurilta osin Martinin tavasta, jolla hän antaa hahmoilleen nimiä, jotka pohjautuvat oikean elämän kulttuuriin. Tämä aiheuttaa sen, että kotouttavat käännösstrategiat menettävät keskiaikaisia Brittein saaria peilaavan funktion. Tämä koskee suurimmilta osin hahmojen etunimiä. Nimet, joilla on paljon semanttista arvoa, joista suuri osa on sukunimiä, lempinimiä tai paikannimiä, käännettiin useimmiten kotouttavilla strategioilla. Näiden strategioiden käyttö ei ollut täysin säännöllistä, sillä jotkin semanttista sisältöä omaavat nimet lainattiin myös suoraan lähdetekstistä. Tämä yleinen kääntämistapa näyttää painottavan enemmän sellaisia funktioita, jotka vaikuttavat tunnelmaan ja tekstin sujuvuuteen. Jonkin verran tietoa siis häviää käännöksessä, mutta nimien tunnereaktioihin vaikuttavat funktiot ovat laajalti samanlaisia, ja suomenkielisen tekstin tunnelma on lähellä alkuperäistekstiä.

Avainsanat: nimien funktiot, vieraannuttaminen, kotouttaminen, erisnimet, tunnelma, fantasiakirjallisuus

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck -ohjelmalla.

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1 Introduction

This thesis examines the translation strategies of proper names in the Finnish translations of George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* fantasy book series. The books have been translated into 47 languages and were translated into Finnish as *Tulen ja Jään Laulu* between 2003 and 2014. Some Finnish readers have stated that "the source language text has some nuances that the Finnish translation does not always have" (Väyrynen 2014) [my translation]. One of the most difficult and multifaceted parts of translating imaginative literature is the translation of names. The purpose of this thesis is to shed light on the names present in the translation and the effect they might have on the mood, narrative functions, or other such nuances present in the source text.

George Raymond Richard Martin is a writer best known for his long-running book series, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, set on the fictional continent of Westeros. The first book, *A Game of Thrones*, was published in 1996 and is followed by *A Clash of Kings*, *A Storm of Swords*, *A Feast for Crows*, and *A Dance with Dragons*. There are 2 more books planned as of 2023 with no confirmed release date. In addition to being a famous novelist, Martin is also a screenwriter, television producer and short story writer. He began selling science fiction short stories in 1970 while working as a journalism instructor and a chess tournament director (Martin 2014e). He released his first novel, *Dying of the Light*, in 1977 and two more novels before moving on to writing for television shows. He began work on *A Song of Ice and Fire* in the early nineties (Martin 2014d). He has written several accompanying worldbuilding books and short stories set in the world of *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

In a fantasy world as vast and detailed as George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, there are countless details to be found on subsequent readings. Many connections are found in the specific language use, and previous text can gain new meaning later in the story. This makes translating the books very difficult, as one would need to reread carefully and find all potential references to other parts of the text. Martin often uses very specific language to build connections within his texts. This is very challenging to translate accurately, sometimes impossible, let alone while maintaining the intended meaning and tone. Much of these contextual interpretations and references are contained in proper names of people and places. This is why I am interested in studying how the names in the book series have been translated. The Finnish translator for *A Song of Ice and Fire*, Satu Hlinosvky, stated in an interview that

the most interesting and challenging aspect of translating *A Song of Ice and Fire* would be the names (Hlinovsky 2007). Kersti Juva said the same of her Finnish translation of *The Lord of the Rings* (Juva 2021, 150). There are so many potential strategies for translating the various creative names in fantasy literature that it is difficult to decide and then hold on to that same strategy and keep it consistent. The objective of this thesis is to examine the name translation decisions made in the Finnish version of the book series. Do the target language names convey the same mood and do they serve all the same functions as in the source text? Some proper names in the books carry a significance in the storytelling; are all these narrative functions preserved or are they all possible to preserve? Which name translation strategies were used most frequently, and why are these strategies more common and perhaps best suited for this book series?

This thesis is concerned with translation studies as well as onomastics, the study of names. Onomastics is a relatively young field of study, and especially translating names in imaginative literature specifically has little in the way of standardized theories or methods from scholarly publications. Translations of famous fantasy works, such as *The Lord of The Rings*, *Harry Potter*, or *A Song of Ice and Fire*, however, have plenty of discourse and opinions coming from eager readers and fans of the series. This study makes use of publications concerning translation studies in general as well as texts on onomastic theories and the functions of names.

This research was carried out in both a quantitative and a qualitative study. To demonstrate the prominence of different translation strategies, there are figures illustrating the translation strategies used for all proper names that appear in three example chapters of the books. I analyze the prominence of the given strategies among proper names in the selected chapters and speculate on reasons for the strategies. I then examine specific examples of repeatedly occurring proper names appearing in the five books more closely.

2 Proper Names

Names are a necessary part of linguistics, as people have been naming things for practically as long as language has existed (Ainiola et al. 2016, 13). The word ‘name’ can refer to two different things. A name is usually a word that refers to a single person, subject, or object, such as Tom. In this instance the more specific term would be ‘proper noun’ or ‘proper name’. On the other hand, ‘name’ can also refer to a person, subject or object as a representative of

its class, such as ‘chair’ or ‘boy’. These are also names given by people to their environment. These are referred to as common nouns or appellatives. The study of names is known as onomastics. Generally, in this field of study, the word ‘name’ always refers to proper nouns (Ainiala et al. 2016, 13). This will also be the case in this text.

Names often also have other functions, other meanings, than just identifying the name carrier and making it easier to refer to them. Names given to places, people, pets and even objects can often have a highly emotive function (Ainiala et al. 2016, 18). Names, therefore, can have several functions, both for convenience and practical purposes and for more abstract and descriptive purposes, to create identity and personality. These other functions are examined in this text, concerning the translation of the book series. Are the emotive functions maintained in the name translations? Is all of the information surrounding the semantically loaded names preserved? What translation strategies were used to achieve some or all of the potential functions of a proper name? It is unavoidable that some functions of a name are lost in translation, and it is up to the translator to choose which functions are more important.

2.1 Names in Fantasy

By naming, a person takes hold of the environment, in a way slaps a label on it and thus changes it as a part of his own culture. Human culture therefore creates names. On the other hand, names, being their own, unique elements of language, produce culture. (Ainiala et al. 2016, 17).

Worldbuilding is a very important part of writing fantasy, as it encourages immersing oneself into the world of the writer. Creating names that sound natural and like they belong in the world and the text goes a very long way in maintaining that immersion.

Semantically loaded names, often nicknames of characters and place names, are significant from a linguistic and from a storytelling perspective. Personal names with no clear semantic value, however, may have implications that are less clear. However, despite many personal names not being as transparent, they act as signifiers of the culture that the individual carrying the name belongs to. They make them a part of a community and the name often reflects aspects of that community. Names have a role in building a person’s identity. They can also express religious and personal values (Ainiala et al. 2016, 125-126). A person’s name, therefore, is not simply an identifying tag to tell one apart from other people. A name can be associated with a religion, culture, or ethnicity. The author must then consider the potential implications their names can have on the reader, intended or not. A name such as Gabriel, for

example, might be associated with biblical themes (“Gabriel”). The author cannot predict the reader’s understanding of names unless they add more information in the surrounding text.

In imaginative storytelling such as fantasy books, names are often significant as the author has thought about the character and what kind of name would fit them. In the real world, of course, names do not define their bearer, but in fiction, a name can define a character. All literary names are chosen by the author with a purpose and all names are somehow motivated (Dvořáková 2018, 41). The reasons for choosing a name could be drawing a comparison with a real-world person with a similar name, or for simply aesthetic reasons.

2.2 Translating Proper Names

In non-fictional texts, names are most often not translated. This is because the only function that these names need to fulfill is the identifying function, a label for their referent. There are some exceptions, such as traditional and well-established names of rulers or places whose names are not easy for Finnish speakers to pronounce fluently. These names have Finnish adaptations, such as *Tukholma* for Stockholm or *Kaarle XVI Kustaa* for Carl XVI Gustaf (Ainiala et al. 2016, 261). These kinds of names have been naturally established as part of Finnish speakers’ lexicon and are thus made into official proper names.

Names in literature, however, carry many functions. Names that are invented for a text always have meaning and reason behind their creation and therefore interact with their surrounding text. Different authors and individual texts can have very different usages of names. One writer may aim to give names more levels of meaning than others. Some pick their names almost randomly, with little intention other than identifying the referent. Functions of fictional names have been classified by many scholars in many ways, and it is difficult to give a definitive list of potential functions. Žaneta Dvořáková sums up the typical understanding of functions of literary proper names in the Czech field of onomastics into eight categories: identification, characterization, mythization, associating, symbol, classification, aesthetics, and illusion (2018, 35). Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom on the other hand, in their introduction to Finnish onomastics, define 11 functions of names in fiction: identifying, fictionalizing, localizing, social, descriptive, associative, affective, ideological, classifying, narrative, and humorous (2016, 260). Many of these functions are similar in their definitions and some of them overlap. Onomastics is a relatively new and developing field of research, and scholars’ views on names and their functions differ, especially on an international level. Both sources

cited also note that these classifications are not perfect and not a generally accepted definition in the fields of literary or general onomastics (Ainiala et al. 2016, 260; Dvořáková 2018, 35). These definitions are given to illustrate how many functions names in literature can potentially have, not to strictly define or classify all functions of names.

As an example from the book series in question, a name like Jon Snow has many functions in addition to simply identifying the name bearer. In George R.R Martin's Westeros, children born outside of marriage are given surnames different from their parents' name and are considered bastards, of a lower social class. Bastards born in the northern part of the kingdom are given the surname Snow (Martin 1996, 30). Those in the south are called Sand, and other parts of the kingdom have their own bastard names like Stone, Rivers, Flowers, or Waters. Therefore, this name has a localizing and a social function. The name bearer is recognized by those around them as a member of a certain social class and that they are born in the north. Jon Snow's morals and decision making are affected by his name and his bastard status, therefore giving this name a narrative and an affective function. Other functions could be attributed to the name, such as the ideological function, as it reflects the ideologies of the culture the name bearer is born into. Bastards are associated with low morals, lust, and treachery by the people of Westeros (Martin 2000, 506). This name thus has at least six of the functions defined by Ainiala et al (2016, 260). More functions can probably be defined, but this thesis is not concerned with uncovering all name functions with exact precision. The Finnish translation of the name, Jon *Nietos* (Martin 2005, 196), (Snowdrift [my translation]), has for the most part the same aesthetic and connotative functions as the source text counterpart. The meaning of bastard names is defined within the books, so the functions pertaining to that aspect of the name remain the same.

A translation should naturally strive to produce an equivalent effect to the source text, which is nearly impossible. Translators aim to preserve as many functions of a text as they can. This applies to preserving functions of fictional names. There are many ways to classify and define translation strategies, but for the purposes of this thesis I utilize the four broad classifications determined by Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom in their introduction to Finnish onomastics:

1. *Loan* or loaning the original foreign language name as it is to the target language
2. *Translation* or translating the original foreign language name into the target language
3. *Adaptation* or phonetically adapting the original foreign language name in the target language

4. *Replacement* or replacing the original foreign language name by some other name or appellative expression (2016, 261)

In my analysis of three separate chapters, I refer to the four translation strategies described by Ainiala et al., as having broader categories to put each name into makes the work and the results clearer. Translation strategies can be divided into more categories if one wishes to classify them more accurately, but for the purposes of this study these four strategies are sufficient.

2.2.1 Foreignization and Domestication

When discussing translation strategies, one important concept is that of foreignization and domestication. Does the translator prefer to keep the translation close to the source language, thus preserving as much of the original meaning of the text as possible? Would they rather domesticate the text, thus making it more understandable and familiar to target language readers but risk losing some of the original text's function? A foreignizing method allows the translator to "move the reader towards the source text", allowing the reader to better appreciate the original text. There are drawbacks to foreignization, however. "In order to communicate the same impression which he or she received from the source text, this impression will also depend on the level of education and understanding among the target text readership, and this is likely to differ from the translator's own understanding" (Munday 2012, 46). Therefore, the translator in a sense gives up control of what kind of impression the text will leave on the reader, as full understanding of the source text requires a certain level of knowledge not guaranteed among readers. This is assuming that the piece of text that has been processed using a foreignizing method carries other connotations or serves several functions. In the context of our given translation strategies, loaning would be considered foreignizing and the others—translation, adaptation, and replacement—would usually be domesticating.

When examining foreignization and domestication in light of the data used in this thesis, we may assume that the best option for most character names is probably foreignization. There is no reason to alter most character names as their main function, identifying their referent, is achieved without altering the source text, and names maintain their aesthetic and part of their affective function with no changes. However, semantically loaded names have more functions than those of identification and aesthetics. They often contain contextual information about their referent and the world around them. These functions speak for a domesticating approach.

2.2.2 Translating Fantasy Names

Names in a fantasy world should be memorable and easy to pronounce for the reader, as one can often become confused when confronted with too many names at once. This is often the case in fantasy books when new characters and places are introduced. Therefore, in a Finnish translation, it is beneficial to use names that sound Finnish and fit into the Finnish vocabulary. This is not to say that all names should be changed into native Finnish names, as often name loans fit in to the Finnish context as well as the English. As Ainiala et al. mention, name loans have become common between cultures and languages and are still becoming more common (2016, 21). This could be a result of modernization and globalization in the world of literature. Readers of all nationalities and languages are becoming more familiar with English as a lingua franca and are used to encountering other foreign languages, thus becoming accustomed to reading foreign-sounding names as well.

When translating proper names, Peter Newmark states that usually they are loaned over from the source text to preserve nationality when they have no connection to the text, that is, when they are not semantically loaded (1988, 214). When it comes to imaginative literature names with connotations, translation should be considered. Furthermore, if both nationality and connotation are important, Newmark suggests that the name should first be translated to the target language and then naturalized into a new name (1988, 215). Many names in *A Song of Ice and Fire* contain cultural context from real-life England or the fictional Westeros. At the same time, these names can have explicit or suggestive connotations. As an example, the Stark family has a heritage dating back to the First Men, thousands of years in the past, and thus their name is a short word with a simple meaning. The Karstarks are a minor family descending from the Starks, therefore their name is partly the same. Both names contain the word *stark*, meaning strong and harsh. Thus, these are characteristics that are easily associated with members of these families in reader's minds. The character Tormund Giantsbane has a Scandinavian-sounding name, bearing resemblance to *Dórmundr* and being a modern Norwegian version of the name ("Tormund"; "Names"). This indicates the difference between cultures within the book, as Tormund comes from far north, where the cultural differences to Westeros (which is more based on England) are emphasized often.

When comparing to J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of The Rings*, *A Song of Ice and Fire* may be more challenging for a translator, as there is no clear-cut system for translating the names. This is because there is a significant difference in the source texts, that is, one is entirely imaginary,

and one is more explicitly inspired by real cultures. Tolkien was very interested in linguistics and paid very close attention to the naming systems of his world. He also gave guidelines for how his character and place names should be translated. All the names that appear in English are, in his world, Westron names, and thus should be translated into the target language (Juva 2021, 148).

Martin is not quite as well-versed in linguistics and has not given instructions for the translators of his works. He does, however, have a similar method of creating culture through character and place names. In addition to using historical English names, he invents English-sounding names that denote a certain culture in his world. Names of persons coming from First Men heritage are short and dynamic, such as Stark, Strong or Hart. A later migration of Andals introduced more elaborate names into Westeros (Martin 2014c, 01:20:40). Valyrian names are made to sound more exotic, so they have many *y*'s and *ae*- constructions. These names, and the culture of Westeros, however, are made to reflect the real-world British Isles, as opposed to Tolkien's completely invented Middle Earth. Thus, strictly translating all names that resemble English words is perhaps not always the best option, as it is in the translation of the *Lord of The Rings*.

3 A Song of Ice and fire

George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* currently consists of five books, with two more books yet to come. Martin is an American novelist, and his books fall into the fantasy genre. The world is reminiscent of medieval Europe, with knights and tourneys, and especially the history of England, more specifically the War of the Roses, has inspired much of the story (Martin 2017). Most of the events take place in Westeros, which is meant to be a fantasy representation of medieval England and shares familiar cultural aspects. The story is told by a third-person limited narrator from the point of view of several different characters (Point-of-View or POV characters). The style of narration leaves many things implicit in the text because the POV character does not have all the information that the reader does, and thus the reader has to make connections themselves between different POVs.

The first book in the series, *A Game of Thrones*, was published in 1996, and the latest one, *A Dance with Dragons*, in 2011. The series was adapted into the highly successful television series *Game of Thrones* on HBO in 2011, which ran for eight seasons, finishing the story on screen before the author finished writing the books. The books have been translated into

several languages. The Finnish versions were all translated by Satu Hlinovsky. Hlinovsky personally wanted to translate the books into Finnish and founded the publishing company Kirjava, with their first publication being *Valtaistuinpeli*, a translation of *A Game of Thrones*, in 2003 (Hlinovsky 2007).

3.1 Names in A Song of Ice and Fire

The continent of Westeros is often said to closely resemble England (Martin n.d.). Many of the Westerosi names in the books are derived from English names and they are slightly changed to fit better into the fantasy setting or they are taken straight from English naming conventions (Martin 2014c, 01:20:00); for example, Edward, Peter, and Benjamin are changed to Eddard, Petyr, and Benjen. Character names from Valyria or other regions outside of Westeros are usually completely invented and sound foreign to English readers, such as Daenerys Targaryen or Kraznys mo Nakloz. These other regions are not strictly based on England or any other country but may draw inspiration from various places and cultures. The books are also full of semantically loaded names and names with more or less transparent connotations that can hint at a character's background, personality or role in the story. For example, one of the main characters, Brandon Stark, often nicknamed Bran, is associated with ravens and deals with magical raven-related imagery throughout the books. The word "Bran" is usually translated in Welsh as raven or crow (Koch & Minard 2012). It is also the name of a king of Britain in Welsh mythology, Brân the Blessed (MacCulloch 2005, 106). This name thus carries several connotations from Welsh culture and language and has been a target of speculation for fans of the series (Burette31 2015) along with many other names of characters or locations in the series.

Nicknames and epithets in the book series probably have the most semantic value, and most if not all of them have a story to how the characters gained their names. Family names are sometimes just names, but they can also have a semantic value and clearly defined meaning. Sometimes the name is taken from Irish or English history, sometimes somewhere else, and the historical meanings of these words can be emblematic with the characters that carry them. When translating to other languages, these kinds of names have good reasons for preserving the translation the exact same as the source text, as English readers probably would not catch the specific historical significance any more than the target language readers would. The names appear to have fewer functions than other names that have been changed in the

translation. Some family names, however, have clear meaning in modern English that gives a hint to the character's background and feeds the reader's imagination, for example, the families Stark and Strong.

As mentioned earlier, names build culture, and George R.R. Martin uses names as a tool in his worldbuilding a great deal. There are several characters with the same name in his world because some names are more popular than others and the characters name their children after great leaders, for example (Martin 2014c, 01:22:00). Martin has shown in many ways that his world contains a very rich culture that does not all fit on page, and the readers gets glimpses of it through details such as names.

Martin uses personal and family names in this same way to identify a social group an individual character belongs to. For example, the great houses regularly name their children after heroes or important figures associated with their culture or family. There are several Brandon Starks who are named after Brandon the Builder and many Aegon Targaryens are named after Aegon the Conqueror. Distinctions are made between common names like Tansy or Pate and highborn, royal names like Aemon or Aegon, with class being a prominent theme within the book series. Many of the great houses have their own naming conventions. First names in the Lannister family often start with a *ty*- syllable (Tyrion, Tywin, Tyrek, Tytos, Tyshara), where Targaryens often have an *ae*- diphthong in their name (Rhaegar, Aemon, Daemon, Daeron, Daenerys, Rhaenys...), and Targaryen names are also associated with royalty because of their long reign as the ruling family of Westeros. When these naming conventions are broken, it is noted by other members of society. Rhaegar Frey, named after Rhaegar Targaryen, is from a family lower in the feudal hierarchy. He is mocked and belittled for carrying a name that is considered unfitting of his station:

- (1) "I had the Freys to supper. One sat just where you're sitting now. Rhaegar, he named himself. I almost laughed right in his face". (Martin 2011, 136)
- (2) "You saw them, the arrogant Ser Jared and his nephew Rhaegar, that smirking worm who wears a dragon's name." (Martin 2011, 384)

The Freys notably have named several of their children after prominent members of the royal family or people in places of power. They are also mentioned as being looked down upon by other lords of older houses as upstarts (Martin 2000, 138). which further paints them as less prestigious members of society. These patterns of names among characters in certain families or environments are one of the ways in which Martin creates immersion and detail in Westeros without explicitly stating these things.

3.2 Research method

I have categorized names from the fourth book in the series, *Korppien Kestit*. I gathered the data by taking every name that is present in three chapters and placing them into five categories. The categories are first names, family names, nicknames, place names and other names such as objects or creatures. Then, within those categories, I classified the names further according to the translation strategies used. The purpose of gathering this data is to examine which translation strategies have been most prominent in the translation of the books. I deemed three chapters to be an appropriate sample size, as the books together contain more than 2000 named characters, according to a list of characters on the fan site A Wiki of Ice and Fire (“List of characters”). In addition to character names, this study is interested in place names, nicknames and epithets, and other proper nouns. The data gathered consists of 310 proper names, most of which were first names of characters.

The reason I have chosen this specific book out of the five in the saga is that this one is more focused on common folk outside of the noble houses and the lords, so there are more semantically loaded names present, as the names of the noble houses are either completely invented or have only vague resemblance to historical names, for example Robert Baratheon, Aegon Targaryen, or Jaime Lannister. *Korppien Kestit* also introduces many new characters, so there is more material for analysis. The chosen chapters that were examined are focused on different Point-of-View characters, in different parts of the book and in different regions of Westeros, so the samples do not overlap too much. However, other interesting examples from the other four books were chosen for the analysis section in order to examine specific name translations and whether they carry the same value and functions as in the original text.

4 Analysis on Use of Translation Strategies and Name Functions

For this thesis, I collected and analyzed names from three chapters from the book series. The chapters are selected from the Finnish translated book, *Korppien Kestit (A Feast for Crows)*. Figure 1 illustrates the translation strategies used for all the capitalized proper names. I categorized the names according to the translation strategies used, of which there are four: Loan, Translation, Adaptation and Replacement. Another category is given to names that use a combination of two or more strategies, often names with two parts using partial translation and loan. These categories of translation strategies are based on the strategies described by Ainiala et al. (2016 261).

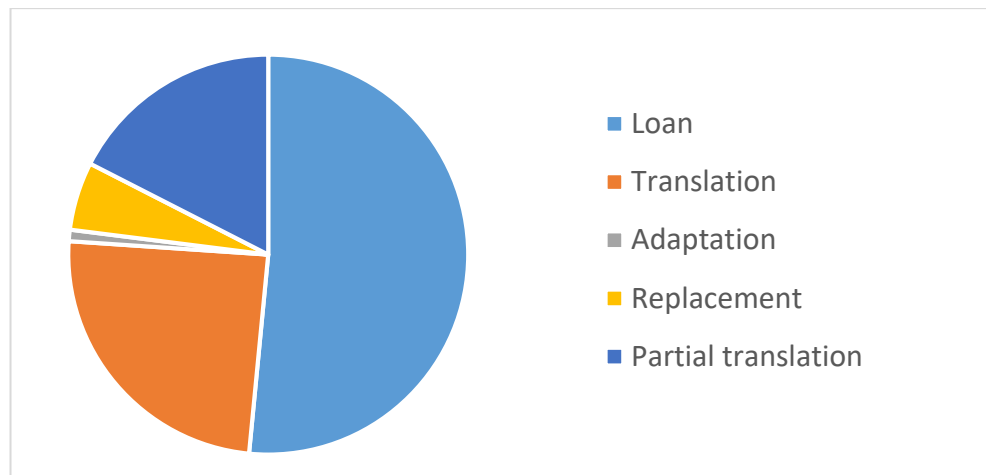


Figure 1: Name translation strategies among all proper names

As shown in figure 1, more than half the names in the given chapters were loaned. This coincides with the hypothesis that there is a large number of names in the books that have been loaned when compared to translations of other fantasy authors' works. However, looking closer, the names present in the chapters can be divided into smaller categories. The names have been categorized as follows: First names, Family names, Nicknames, Place names, and other proper names. The "other names" are usually names of non-human creatures, objects, or concepts. Different types of names have different origins and conventions, and thus can contain different amounts of semantic content and functions. These factors always affect the translation as the more functions or semantic content a name has, the more reason there is to translate it.

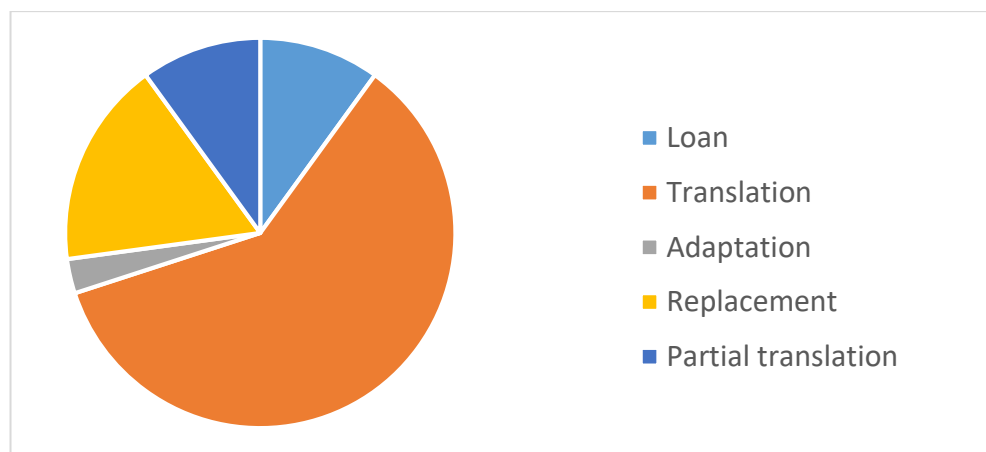


Figure 2: Name translation strategies among place names

Looking at place names in figure 2, we see that translation was by far the most common translation strategy, meaning using a word with equivalent or close meaning from the target language. This is of course difficult to do with names that do not have a clear meaning, that is,

names that have less semantic content. As Ainiala et al. mention, traditional place names often describe the features of their referents (2016, 65). These names therefore have or have had semantic content at the time of name giving. Place names sometimes transform over long periods of use. Therefore, place names often are semantically loaded and therefore warrant a translation strategy other than loaning.

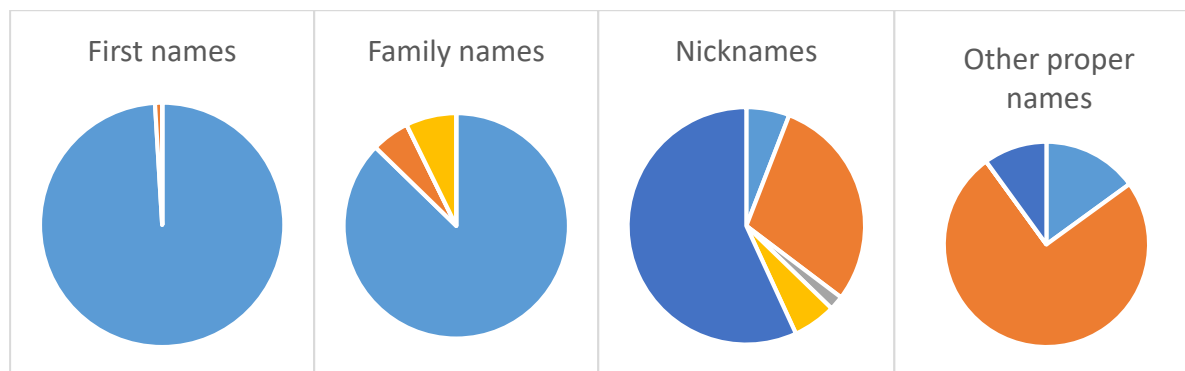


Figure 3: Name translation strategies among the other four categories of names

As seen in figure 3, first names and family names were mostly not changed in the translation process. All other categories of names, however, contain a much higher number of domesticating strategies. Among nicknames, place names and other proper names, translation and partial translation as the strategies of choice cover a large portion of names. There were only three cases of adaptation among all three chapters. As expected, nicknames and place names were generally semantically loaded and therefore warranted translating into the target language. Nicknames often contain the first name of the character in addition to another descriptive or humorous name given by their community, so they contain many partial translations.

The reasons for the consistent loaning of first names could be many. First and last names in the series are not very semantically transparent, although connotative meanings can be found behind many of them. Transforming all of the names through, for example, phonetic adaptation could render most of the names very different and unrecognizable from their source text counterparts. Using Newmark's suggested strategy of first translating the name and then fitting it into the target language naming conventions would probably severely affect the mood of the text and the cultural connotations of the names, as the story is set in a fantasy version of medieval England. Once again, many names have both a culturally rooted aspect and a semantic meaning. For example, the family name *Stark* in modern English means strong and harsh ("Stark") and it also is phonetically similar to *York*, the northern family in the

historical event of the War of the Roses, on which a large part of *A Song of Ice and Fire* is based. Stark (York) and Lannister (Lancaster) mirror the sides of the historical conflict (Martin 2017).

In the following section, I analyze interesting names of characters and places from the series. This closer analysis allows me to better examine the informative and emotive functions of individual names and potential alternative translation strategies. I attempt to find interesting name functions and speculate whether those functions are preserved in the translation. Some names may also have new functions in the translation that the original text names did not have.

4.1 Character names

4.1.1 Dolorous Edd (*Surusilmä Edd*)

Edd Tollett's nickname Dolorous Edd was translated as *Surusilmä Edd* (Martin 2014, 293). The word *dolorous* is most commonly translated to *surullinen* but the translator opted to use addition to introduce the thought that the character specifically looks dour and sad most of the time. *Surusilmä* (*suru* 'sorrow' and *silmä* 'eye') conveys that there is a sad look in his eyes. Addition is a very uncommon strategy in the Finnish translation of *A Song of Ice and Fire*. In the terms described by Ainiala et al. (2016, 261), this strategy could be defined as a mix of translation and replacement, as the sorrowful part is translated, but more information is added. This strategy is not necessarily completely accurate, because mentions of Dolorous Edd Tollett in the book do not depict him as sad looking, but his nickname mostly refers to his macabre jokes and anecdotes (Martin 1998, 187). Another reason for the addition is alliteration, that is, having words or syllables start with the same letter or sound. *Surusilmä* is an example of alliteration that was not present in the original English text, and it is a good strategy to make nicknames sound more natural and like they were originally written in the target language. There are many of examples of alliteration as a naming strategy in the translation. They have a slightly different meaning from the original, but they still fit into the world and do not cause too much disparity between the different languages.

4.1.2 Tully (*Tully*)

Among family names and the names of great houses very few strategies other than loan is found. These houses and families have a very rich history within the universe, and their names

almost always refer to their founding, origin, location or qualities of the members of the house.

House Tully of Riverrun is one of the great houses of Westeros. Tully is a British surname of Irish and Scottish origin, meaning *flood* (Woulfe 1923, 63). The Tullys of Westeros follow the Faith of the Seven, which is a fictional religion loosely based on Catholicism. Their house words are Family, Duty, Honor. The Tullys are referred to as river lords, as they reside in the aptly named Riverlands, and their castle, Riverrun, is of course located on top of a river. Here the loan strategy was used (Martin 2004, 74), and it is a good choice as ‘Tully’ probably does not carry any different meanings for an English and a Finnish reader.

4.1.3 Redwyne (*Redwyne*)

The name Paxter Redwyne was loaned (Martin 2004, 21). The family name Redwyne is semantically loaded and refers to the origins and livelihood of house Redwyne. Their coat of arms is a burgundy grape cluster on a blue background, and they are known for making the most famous wine in Westeros. The name Redwyne is only spelled slightly differently from *red wine*. The name was, however, not altered in any way in the Finnish translation and the translator instead opted to loan it in its original form, and thus the informational content of the name is lost. This name hints at the personality and station of Lord Redwyne, whose house is very powerful and rich, due to having made their fortune in producing wine for the entire kingdom. There seem to be plenty of reasons to translate the name into *Punaviini* (red wine). This would even allow for alliteration. It could be difficult to change in spelling from the original word while keeping it phonetically the same, as in the original, but there seems to be no reason it would have to be spelled differently. It appears that nearly all the family names in the books are left untranslated, while character’s nicknames are translated into Finnish. The family names, however, sometimes have a similarly self-explanatory in-world origin that would justify them being translated into Finnish. Loaning names with clear semantic content has a risk of losing narrative functions as well as descriptive ones.

Leaving all these family names untranslated makes it difficult for the Finnish reader to get lost in the story, as they must constantly pause on every minor character as they struggle to think how to pronounce their names, not to mention they would lose any meaning or connotation the names may have. For some simple and short names, such as Tully or Stark, this is fair and understandable, but with names like Paxter Redwyne or Utherydes Wayn, both very minor

characters, a reader might pause for a moment. Names such as these do not fit as well into Finnish speech conventions and may even break immersion as they are completely different from the surrounding language, which has been translated.

Some family names that are similar to Redwyne, such as Yronwood (*Rautapuu*) (Martin 2004, 44) or Blackmont (*Mustavuori*) (Martin 2005b, 467), have been translated instead of loaned like most other similar names. These names are mentioned much less frequently than Redwyne but are very similar in the amount of semantic content. The Yronwoods and Blackmonts are both minor lords in a mountainous part of the south. They have their castles in the middle of a mountain range, but there are no other clear connotations or clues as to the etymology or history of their family names. Both names sound cold, hard and steadfast and seem to have mostly an aesthetic and affective function. Upon reading these names, a reader might assume that the name bearers carry a tough and unfriendly demeanor or family history. These functions are lost with the loan strategy. In order to keep consistency, family names with some amount of semantic content that does not heavily affect the narrative such as Redwyne, Yronwood or Blackmont could all be translated. Alternatively, they could all be loaned as well.

4.1.4 Tansy (*Lemmikki*)

Most first names in the translation are loaned throughout the book series. There are few characters whose first names have a semantic meaning that is also significant enough to the story for the translator to translate or replace it. In the following quote, where the name Tansy is first introduced, it makes sense because the characters ponder the meaning of the name, and mention that people often name their children after flowers. Therefore, it must come across to Finnish readers that the name discussed could belong to a plant or a woman. Tansy (the flower) is mentioned several times in the books, and there are in fact several different characters with the same name. Every time the word is capitalized and refers to a name, it is translated as *Lemmikki*, and every time it refers to the plant, it is translated as *pietaryrtti* (common tansy). The first mention of a ‘Tansy’ is in *A Storm of Swords*, when the feverish and delirious Hoster Tully, an old man on his deathbed, speaks these words:

- (3) Lord Hoster’s eyes opened. “Tansy,” he husked in a voice thick with pain. “Forgive me . . . the blood . . . oh, please . . . Tansy . . .” (Martin 2000, 27)

Tansy is common woman’s name in Westeros, and it is also the name of a common flower. This is a plot point in *A Storm of Swords*. Catelyn is confused by her father Hoster’s last

words and thinks that *tansy* refers to a woman her father knew. The reason that the specific name is significant is because the readers later find out at the end of *A Storm of Swords* what the words are actually referring to. Hoster had forced Catelyn's sister, Lysa, to drink a mixture made from tansy and other herbs to cause a miscarriage:

- (4) "... I would have given you a son too, but they murdered him with moon tea, with tansy and mint and wormwood, a spoon of honey and a drop of pennyroyal. It wasn't me, I never knew, I only drank what Father gave me . . ." (Martin 2000, 757)

The herb has been historically used as a folk medicine in medieval times (Mitich 1992) and is still used in some parts of the world to induce abortion (Shah et al. 2009, 3). The plant is also mentioned many times over the course of the books, and especially between these two scenes, specifically as a form of birth control. This connection can easily be overlooked even on multiple readings, but today it is commonly accepted among fans of the books that this 'tansy tea' is what Hoster Tully is referring to on his deathbed (Maester Hodor 2012). He is ridden with guilt and his last thoughts are of what he did to his daughter many years ago.

The name has been translated to *Lemmikki* (myosotis) instead of *pietaryrtti* (tansy), which is understandable, considering *Lemmikki* is a much more believable woman's name in Finnish. However, the name *Lemmikki* is the name of a different flower altogether, and thus the narrative function of the name Tansy is lost. This is one of the many challenges translators in all languages face in localizing narrative literature.

In the Finnish translation, *Miekkamyrsky* (*A Storm of Swords*) the connection is impossible to make, because the *lemmikki* flower is not similarly poisonous and has not been historically used for the same purposes. When Catelyn's sister reveals that she had been forced to drink a mixture made from the flower *pietaryrtti* (common tansy), there is no connection to the scene earlier in the book because the *lemmikki* flower is not mentioned, and thus the mystery of Hoster's final words is left unsolved. This is a minor detail in the story and was still being debated on fan forums in 2012, after the HBO series' popularity had brought more fans to the books (Jadecat 2012). There are also several other characters named Tansy in the books, which could serve as red herrings for the readers, as the POV character, Catelyn, also thought that Tansy referred to a woman, not the plant. It might be unreasonable to expect the translator to spot minor connections like these in 2006, when the translation was written for *A Storm of Swords*, and even then, there is still the problem of there not being a proper Finnish name that would fit both the flower and the woman. *A Storm of Swords* was also translated in two parts, *Miekkamyrsky* 1 and 2, because of the size of the book. Because of this, the first scene with

Hoster's mysterious words is in the first part and the reveal is at the very end of the second part, and so the connection is very difficult to make. There were other plants mentioned in the reveal however, namely wormwood (*koiruoho*), **mint** and pennyroyal (*puolanminttu*). My suggestion for the closest equivalent would be to change the name Tansy to *Minttu* (mint). It is a relatively rare but conventional woman's name in Finland, and mint is included in the list of ingredients that Lysa explains in the later book chapter. This would still only create a rather thin connection, but it would help in maintaining the narrative function of the name.

4.2 Place names

4.2.1 The Dreadfort (*Kauhiala*)

The Dreadfort in the books is the home of the Boltons, one of the great families of the northern part of Westeros. The Boltons have a reputation of cruelty and ruthlessness, and their family rules through fear and intimidation. Their house sigil is an image of a flayed man on a cross. The name of their castle invokes the same kind of almost cartoonishly evil image. The name was translated into *Kauhiala* (Martin 2005b, 54). In this translation, adaptation was used, as the translator takes the root word, translates it, and changes it to fit Finnish naming conventions. This translation seems to be quite successful in conveying an almost equivalent effect, making the reader instantly suspect that this is not a good place and the people who live here are probably not that nice. The *fort* part of the name is omitted, instead using the root word *kauhu* (fear, dread) and adding the *-la* suffix, which is typically used in Finnish place names (Ainiala et al. 2016, 69). Using a more literal translation, such as *Kauhulinna* from *kauhu* (fear, dread) and *linna* (castle, fort) would sound even more cartoonish, and perhaps would be more fitting for a haunted house attraction in an amusement park. In translating this name, it is probably best to use an almost literal translation that clearly conveys evil and discomfort. The Dreadfort is a difficult name to translate while maintaining a serious and realistic mood, and *Kauhiala* is a good translation with a similar effect.

4.2.2 The Last Hearth (*Viimeinen Kotiliesi*)

The word *hearth* comes from old English *heorð* which refers to a fireplace, also from Old High German *herd*, in transferred use also means house, home, fireside (“Hearth”). Usually, *hearth* is used to refer to the heart of a home, a resting place, a fireplace. *Hearth* still has an antiquated sense to it and is not used to refer to anything in a modern home. The name has been translated to *Viimeinen Kotiliesi* (Martin 2005, 98), directly meaning last home hearth

(my translation), though in a modern context, *liesi* would always be translated as stove (“Liesi”). The word *liesi* has adopted a new meaning and is now known as a regular appliance in a modern home. Few Finnish people even know that *liesi* has been used to refer to a fireplace instead of a ceramic stove. *Kotiliesi* is also the name of a Finnish lifestyle magazine. Therefore, the name sounds strangely contemporary when placed into this medieval English environment. This affects mood in the text, as the source text name sounds rather dramatic, like a place on the edge of civilization, the last proper warm resting place before venturing into the cold northern wilderness. *Viimeinen Kotiliesi* is also clunkier because of the higher number of syllables.

An alternative translation could be, for example, *Viimeinen Tulisija*. It is similarly a literal translation of Last Hearth, but with a different translation of hearth. *Tulisija* directly translates as fireplace, and is associated with warmth, a place to rest. This maintains a similar meaning as the current translation in a medieval context and eliminates the more modern meaning of *liesi*. The *koti* part of the translation, conveying the comfort of home, would be omitted. This alternative translation unfortunately still has the large number of syllables compared to the source text name, so it would of course not be perfect either.

4.2.3 King’s Landing (*Kuninkaansatama*)

The city of King’s Landing, the capital city of Westeros, has a very simple origin for its name. The city was founded on the place where the conquering king’s ships landed when he first arrived in Westeros, thus, King’s Landing. It is a very literal name with transparent meaning. The Finnish adaptation of the name *Kuninkaansatama* (king’s harbor) (Martin 2004, 20) is close in meaning, and perhaps the best alternative. *Harbor* emphasizes the proximity to the sea and the king’s ships, which are a large part of the city’s identity. Some other translations in other languages, such as German (*Königsmund* [king’s mouth]) and Danish (*Kongens Hjem* [king’s home]), have received some critique for straying too far from the original meaning (Haemonculus 2013, TalionTheShadow 2021). The Finnish translation has preserved the narrative function of the name while still maintaining appropriate mood, and has seemingly avoided similar criticism.

5 Conclusions

I have attempted to analyze the translation strategies and choices made in the book series. I have picked out interesting translations and I have given some suggestions for other potential translations. I have not found great inconsistencies in the translation, but some information is lost in the strategy that has been used, such as with the name Tansy (*Lemmikki*). The quantitative study of translation strategies used in three chapters of text showed that first names of characters were very rarely translated and were mostly loaned from the English source text. Family names were similarly mostly loaned, but there were some more exceptions. Nicknames, place names and the names of objects were almost all translated or altered. These types of names carry the most semantic value and leaving them untouched would deprive the reader of information that is important to both mood and story details.

Some family names and first names could be retranslated in order to carry the same or similar information and narrative content as the source text. Examples of these types of names are Redwyne (loan) and *Lemmikki* (Tansy). Names like these lose part of their narrative function. Other names, like *Viimeinen Kotiliesi* (The Last Hearth), slightly affect mood and break immersion in the text.

There is less phonological replacement present in *A Song of Ice and Fire* than for example the *Lord of The Rings* books, perhaps because the names are less semantically transparent and more rooted in real world culture, as many of the names are part invented and part real-world English names. George R.R. Martin's world makes the job of translating some names of characters very difficult, forcing the translator to choose between domesticating names to flow better in Finnish, and foreignizing to preserve the cultural, aesthetic, and connotative functions of the source text. This makes the believability of the names in the Finnish translation slightly inconsistent, as some sound more foreign than others.

A Song of Ice and Fire fans of different nationalities have pointed out their dissatisfaction in some translations of the books, citing names like *Königsmund* (king's mouth) and *Lennister* in German, for King's Landing and Lannister respectively (Haemonculus 2013). Such names can affect the narrative functions and the mood experienced by the reader. In the Finnish translation of *A Song of Ice and Fire*, the translator goes to some lengths to maintain the appropriate mood in the books. This means translating some names that sound unfitting and loaning others. This, however, creates some inconsistencies, with some similar names being

loaned and some not. Especially semantically loaded English names in the middle of Finnish text can be jarring. Informative functions of semantically loaded names are also lost in favor of not breaking immersion. Fans of the book series seem to have mixed reactions towards this strategy, as commenters mention they are often taken aback by names that have been localized instead of leaving them as they are in the source text, calling some localized names “ridiculous” in the target language text (Shebara 2013). However, this could be because many readers are already accustomed to English words and are sufficiently familiar with the English language to observe functions of semantically loaded names.

Part of a translator’s mission when writing imaginative literature should be to make the text look and feel natural, as if it was originally written in the target language, making the reader forget it is a translation (Newmark 1988, 24). When translating medieval fantasy such as Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, this can be extremely difficult, as many fantasy tropes and medieval European items and concepts are rooted in English and other Germanic languages. This cultural vernacular carries over to proper names and epithets as well, such as names of castles. The Finnish translation creates names that fit in the world and do a very good job in describing culture and maintaining immersion, with some exceptions. Most translated names succeed in creating mental imagery just as colorful and vivid as the source text. Not every name is translated using the same strategy, but there is consistency in mood and the way the names fit into the story.

Onomastics is a relatively young field of study, and as it develops, studies of names in literature and their translations will be more standardized. There is plenty of room for further research in just the naming systems and the potential translations of *A Song of Ice and Fire*, not to mention fantasy and imaginative literature in general.

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