

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Dr **Omanson** is a UBS translation consultant based in the United States.

Two generations ago among the Kisi tribe in northwestern Liberia lived a mighty warrior who had at his command many young warriors from the Mandingo tribe. These young warriors were fed their meals by the great Kisi warrior and would all say to him, “Father, thank you”. One day one of his wives became pregnant; when his son was born, he named him Balika because of all the thank you’s he had heard. Balika also had several wives. The first-born son of his youngest wife became a Bible translator in the Kisi language. This son’s name was Saa.

Among the Kisi people lives a man who is a mighty farmer, able to plow much ground in one day with his wide hoe. So he calls himself Kōndōó Á bōó. Some Kisi people drink much or their fathers drank much. That is why they are named Kol-lecho.

The above information was supplied to me by Tennyson Saa, the Kisi Bible translator. Among the Kisi, as among many tribes in West Africa—and as among the Israelites in the Old Testament—people’s names often have meaning, whether the names are given at birth or in adult years. For the reader without a knowledge of the Kisi language and culture, the stories of the mighty warrior, mighty farmer, and the people who drink a lot will lack part of the meaning. The Mandingo warriors would say “Va ibalika” (which means “Father, thank you”). That is why the warrior named his son Balika. Tennyson was named Saa because that means “First-born son” in Kisi. The name Kōndōó Á bōó means “To dig/take wide”. Among the Kisi people, when a man offers a visitor a drink from a bottle of palm wine, the visitor will say “Kol lecho” (literally meaning “drink on top of it”). The man then drinks a small amount of the palm wine first, drinking from the wine in the top half of the bottle (on top of it). This proves to the visitor that the drink is not poison. People who drink a lot are frequently told “kol lecho”, and then they are given the name “kol-lecho”.

Just as these stories about the Kisi people become more meaningful once the meanings of the names Balika, Saa, Kōndōó Á bōó, and Kollecho are known, so many passages in the Old Testament become more meaningful once the meanings of Hebrew names are known. Unfortunately, most translations throughout the centuries have merely transliterated names rather than translating them. The result has been a loss in meaning. Consider these translations of 1 Samuel 23.26-28:

NIV—Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land”. Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth.

NJB—Saul and his men proceeded along one side of the mountain, David and his men along the other. David was hurrying to escape from Saul, while Saul and his men were trying to cross over to David and his men’s side, to capture them, when a messenger came to Saul and said, “Come at once, the Phi-

listines have invaded the country”. So Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to oppose the Philistines. That is why the place is called the Gorge of Separations.

Without a knowledge of Hebrew, the reader (or hearer) of NIV may well ask, “But *why* did they call that place Sela Hammahlekoth?” On the other hand, the reader of the NJB will understand immediately, as did the Israelite reader of the Hebrew text.

Consider further these translations of Ezekiel 39.11:

RSV—On that day I will give to Gog a place for burial in Israel, the Valley of the Travelers east of the sea; it will block the travelers, for there Gog and all his multitude will be buried; it will be called the Valley of Hamon-gog.

TEV—The LORD said, “When all this happens, I will give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, in Travelers’ Valley, east of the Dead Sea. Gog and all his army will be buried there, and the valley will be called ‘The Valley of Gog’s Army’”.

The purpose of this article is (1) to identify verses in the Old Testament where it is necessary to understand the meaning of a Hebrew name in order to understand the meaning of a verse or paragraph; (2) to explain the meaning of each name or to explain what the name sounds like in Hebrew; and (3) to suggest ways in which the translator may make a functionally equivalent translation which will permit “receptors to pass over the chasms of language and culture to comprehend, in so far as possible, the full implications of the original communication”.¹

PEOPLE AND PLACE NAMES WITH MEANING FOR THE NARRATIVE

OT texts	Hebrew name	Meaning
Gen 3.20	Eve	sounds like “living”
4.1	Cain	sounds like “gotten”/“acquired”
4.20	Jabal	sounds like “to lead”
4.21	Jubal	sounds like “trumpet”
4.25	Seth	sounds like “has given”
5.29	Noah	sounds like “comfort”/“relief”
9.27	Japheth	sounds like “extend”, “increase”
10.25	Peleg	sounds like “divide”
11.9	Babel	sounds like “confused”
16.11	Ishmael	God hears
16.13	El Roi	the God who sees me
16.14	Beer-lahai-roi	well of the Living One who sees

¹ See Jan de Waard and Eugene A. Nida, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986, 14.

17.5	Abram	exalted father
17.5	Abraham	father of many
17.19	Isaac	he laughs
19.22	Zoar	small, little
19.37	Moab	sounds like "from my father"
19.38	Ben-ammi	son of my people
21.31	Beer-sheba	well of seven <i>or</i> well of the oath
22.14	Jehovah-jireh	the Lord provides <i>or</i> sees
25.25	Esau	hairy
25.26	Jacob	he grasps the heel
25.30	Edom	red
26.20	Esek	dispute or quarrel
26.21	Sitnah	opposition or enmity
26.22	Rehoboth	room <i>or</i> broad places
26.33	Shibah	oath <i>or</i> seven
26.33	Beer-sheba	well of the oath <i>or</i> well of seven
27.36	Jacob	he grasps the heel
28.19	Bethel	house of God
29.32	Reuben	see, a son
29.33	Simeon	he has heard
29.34	Levi	sounds like "cling" or "attach"
29.35	Judah	sounds like "praise"
30.6	Dan	sounds like "judge in favor"
30.8	Naphtali	my struggle
30.11	Gad	good fortune
30.13	Asher	happy
30.18	Issachar	sounds like "reward"
30.20	Zebulun	sounds like "accept" and "gift"
30.24	Joseph	sounds like "may he add" or "may he give another"
31.47	Jegar-sahadutha	Aramaic word means "witness heap"
31.47,48	Galeed	Hebrew word means "witness heap"
31.49	Mizpah	watchtower
32.2	Mahanaim	two camps
32.28	Israel	he struggles with God
32.30	Peniel	face of God
33.17	Succoth	shelters
33.20	El-Elohe-Israel	God, the God of Israel
35.7	El-bethel	God of Bethel
35.8	Allon-bacuth	oak of weeping
35.15	Bethel	house of God
35.18	Benoni	son of my trouble
35.18	Benjamin	son of my right hand
38.29	Perez	breaking out
41.51	Manasseh	sounds like "forget"
41.52	Ephraim	sounds like "twice fruitful"
50.11	Abel-mizraim	mourning of the Egyptians

Exod.	2.10	Moses	sounds like “draw out”	
	2.22	Gershom	sounds like “an alien there”	
	15.23	Marah	bitter	
	16.31	Manna	What is it?	
	(v.16.15)			
	17.7	Massah	testing	
	17.7	Meribah	quarreling	
	18.3	Gershom	sounds like “an alien there”	
	18.4	Eliezer	my God is helper	
	Num	11.3	Taberah	burning
11.34		Kibroth-hattaavah	graves of craving	
13.23,24		Valley of Eshcol	Valley of cluster	
20.13		Meribah	quarreling	
21.3		Hormah	destruction	
Josh	5.3	Gibeath	hill of foreskins	
		Haaraloth		
	5.9	Gilgal	sounds like “roll”	
	7.26	Valley of Achor	Valley of Trouble	
	14.15	Kiriath-Arba	city of Arba	
	Judges	1.17	Hormah	destruction
		2.5	Bochim	weepers
		6.24	(Jehovah-Shalom)	The Lord is peace
		6.32	Jerrubbaal	let Baal contend
		15.17	Ramath-lehi	Jawbone hill
15.19		En-hak-kore	caller’s spring	
18.12		Mahaneh-dan	camp of Dan	
Ruth		1.20	Naomi	pleasant
	1.20	Mara	bitter	
1 Sam	1.20	Samuel	sounds like “heard by God”	
	4.21	Ichabod	no glory	
	7.12	Ebenezer	stone of help	
	23.28	Sela-hammah- lekoth	rock of parting	
	25.25	Nabal	fool	
2 Sam	2.16	Helkath-hazzurim	field of sword-edges	
	5.20	Baal-perazim	Lord of breaking through	
	12.25	Jedidiah	loved by the Lord	
2 Kings	18.4	Nehushtan	sounds like “bronze” and “snake” and “unclean thing”	
1 Chron	4.9	Jabez	sounds like “pain”	
	7.23	Beriah	sounds like “in trouble”	
	13.11	Perez Uzzah	outbreak against Uzzah	
	(v. 2 Sam. 6.8)			
	14.11	Baal Perezim	the lord who breaks out	
	(v. 2 Sam. 5.20)			
	22.9	Solomon	peace	
25.4	Hananiah	be gracious, O Lord		

	25.4	Hanani	Lord, be gracious to me
	25.4	Eliathah	you are my God
	25.4	Giddalti	I have praised
	25.4	Romanti-ezer	and exalted for helping
	25.4	Joshebekashah	though sitting in adversity
	25.4	Mallothi	I have proclaimed
	25.4	Hothir	Highest
	25.4	Mahazioth	Visions
2 Chron	3.17	Jachin	he establishes
	(v. 1 Kgs. 7.21)		
	3.17	Boaz	in him is strength
	(v. 1 Kgs. 7.21)		
	20.26	Berachah	praise, blessing
Job	42.14	Jemimah	Turtledove
	42.14	Keziah	Cassia
	42.14	Keren-Happuch	Mascara
Isa	7.3	Shear-jashub	a remnant shall return
	7.14	Immanuel	God with us
	8.1,3	Maher-shalal-hashbaz	Quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil
	8.3	Maher-shalal-hashbaz	Quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil
	62.4	Hephzibah	my delight is in her
	62.4	Beulah	married
Jer	1.11	<i>shaged</i>	Hebrew means "a rod of Almond"
	1.12	<i>shoged</i>	Hebrew means "watching"
	20.3	Magor-missabib	terror on every side
	43.13	Heliopolis	temple of the sun
	50.21	Mera-thaim	double rebellion
	50.21	Pekod	punishment
Ezek	20.29	Bamah	high place
	39.11	Valley of hamon-gog	valley of multitude of Gog
	39.16	Hamonah	multitude
	48.35	Yahweh Shamma	The lord is here, or Yahweh is here
Hosea	1.6	Lo-ruhamah	not loved
	1.9	Lo-ammi	not my people
	2.16	Ishi	my husband
	2.16	Baali	my master
	2.23	Lo-ruhamah	not loved
Joel	3.2, 12	Valley of Jehoshapat	Valley of (Jahweh has) Judged
Amos	1.5	Valley of Aven	Valley of Wickedness
	1.5	Beth-eden	House of Pleasure

Micah	1.10	Gath	sounds like “tell” or “announce”
	1.10	Beth Leaphrah	house of dust
	1.11	Shaphir	sounds like “pleasant”, or “House of luxury”
	1.11	Zaanah	sounds like “come out”
	1.12	Maroth	sounds like “bitter”
	1.13	Lachish	sounds like “team” (of horses)
	1.14	Achzib	deception
	1.15	Mareshah	sounds like “conquer”

Five Possible Solutions For Translating

There are at least five ways translators can deal with these verses in which people and place names have significance which is part of the meaning. Each solution has its own advantages and disadvantages.

(1) Simply *transliterate* the Hebrew name. Judges 15.17b would read “and that place was called Ramath-lehi”.

(2) Simply *transliterate* the Hebrew name in the text, but use a *footnote* to explain the meaning. Judges 15.17 would then have a footnote for the name “Ramath-lehi”, saying “That is, *The hill of the jawbone*” (RSV) or “*Ramath Lehi means jawbone hill*” (NIV) or “Ramath Lehi: This name in Hebrew means ‘Jawbone Hill’” (TEV).

(3) Simply *transliterate* the Hebrew name in the text and then *add* “*which means . . .*” Judges 15.17b would read, “and that place was called Ramath-lehi, which means Jawbone Hill”. The additional words may or may not be in italics.

(4) Simply *transliterate* the Hebrew name in the text and then give a *translation of the Hebrew name in parentheses or brackets* following the Hebrew. Judges 15.17b would read, “and that place was called Ramath-lehi [Jawbone Hill],” or transliterate the Hebrew name and then separate the translation of the name with a dash. Judges 15.17b would then read, “c’est pourquoi on appela l’endroit Ramat-Lehi—colline de la Mâchoire”, (FC). (See also Isaiah 8.1 in TOB). The German common language translation *Die Gute Nachricht* (DGN) frequently uses this approach: “Davon hat der Ort den Namen Ramat-Lehi (Kinnbackenhöhe)”—Judges 15.17. (See also Gen 19.38; 26.20, 21, 33; 28.19; 31.48, 49 and *passim* in DGN).

(5) *Translate* the Hebrew name rather than transliterating it. Judges 15.17b would then read, “The place has been called ‘Jawbone Hill’ ever since” (Living Bible). Throughout the long history of Bible translation, this solution has seldom been followed. An early example is the translation of Genesis 3.20 in the Septuagint: *kai ekalesen Adam to onoma tēs gunaikos autou Zōē* (Life) *hoti hautē mētēr pantōn tōn zōntōn* (living things).

In a variant of solution number five, one could include the Hebrew names in a footnote while translating the names in the text. The note on Job 42.14 in TOB, for example, says, “En hébreu les trois noms sont *Yemima, Qecia et Qéren-Happouk*”.

Many translations are not consistent in the approach taken. Eight examples from several translations will illustrate:

Solutions followed in translations in English, French, Spanish and German versions

verse	name	Solution				
		TEV	RSV	NJB	NIV	FC
Gen 4.20, 21	Jabal, . . . Jubal	1	1	2	1	1
Judges 6.24	Jehovah-shalom	5	5	5	5	5
Judges 15.17	Ramath-Lehi	2	2	2	2	4
Judges 18.12	Mahaneh-dan	5	2	5	2	4
1 Chron 13.11	Perez-Uzzah	2	2	1	2	2
Hosea 1.6	Lo-ruhamah	5	5	2	2	5
Hosea 1.9	Lo-ammi	5	5	2	2	5
Job 42.14	Jemimah, . . . Keziah, Keren Happuch	2	1	5	1	2

verse	name	VP	TOB	Seg	RVR	DGN
Judges 6.24	Jehovah-shalom	5	5	5	2	5
Judges 15.17	Ramath-Lehi	2	2	2	2	4
Judges 18.12	Mahaneh-dan	5	2	2	5	4
1 Chron 13.11	Perez-Uzzah	2	5	1	2	4
Hosea 1.6	Lo-ruhamah	2	4	2	2	5
Hosea 1.9	Lo-ammi	2	4	2	2	5
Job 42.14	Jemimah, . . . Keziah, Keren Happuch	2	5	1	1	5

Versions:

TEV = Today's English Version

TOB = Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible

RSV = Revised Standard Version

VP = Versión Popular

NJB = New Jerusalem Bible

Seg = Segond révisée

NIV = New International Version

RVR = Reina Valera Rev.

FC = Français Courant

DGN = Die Gute Nachricht

Advantages and Disadvantages of Each Solution (for the reader)

Solution 1: The primary advantage of this solution is for the translator. The inconsistency seen in the above translations in English, French, Spanish and German suggests that the translators have difficulty deciding when to transliterate, when to use notes, and when to translate. What logical reason is there for translating Mahaneh-dan (Judg 18.12) but not Ramath-Lehi (Judg 15.17), as TEV does? Or why translate the names of Job's daughters (Job 42.14) but transliterate *Lo-ruhamah* and *Lo-Ammi* in Hosea, as NJB does? The translators who consistently transliterate the Hebrew do not have to decide with each name how to handle the problem of meaning; that is an advantage for the translator. But this solution has little value for the reader who will fail to see the connection

between a name and the explanation of the name, unless the reader already knows Hebrew!

Solution 2: This approach has some obvious advantages. Names that are already being used in the churches—such as “Eve”, “Cain”, “Noah”, “Edom”—can be transliterated according to the requirements of the receptor language, and the reader will recognize the person or place referred to. At the same time, the meaning can be preserved in a footnote.

Sometimes a Hebrew name is used because it *sounds like* another word, but does not really *mean* the same as another word. For example, the name *Gad* means “luck” (Gen 30.11), so one could translate, “Leah said, ‘I have been lucky’; so she named him Luck”. But the name *Dan* only *sounds like* the Hebrew for “judge in favor”. Strictly speaking, then, one could not translate Genesis 30.6 as “Rachel said, ‘God has judged in my favor. He has heard my prayer and has given me a son’”; so she named him Judge-in-Favor”. Solution 2 would transliterate the names Gad and Dan and place the explanation in footnotes.

Several disadvantages should also be mentioned. Many people will not read the text for themselves. They will hear the text read in a worship service, but footnotes are not read in such situations.

Also, as a joke or a pun that needs to be explained loses much of its punch, so explanations in footnotes lack a direct impact. Take, for example, the story of Job. All of his children and property were destroyed, but at the end of the story, Job is blessed more than he was at the beginning of the story. In celebration of this blessing, according to Job 42.14, “his first daughter he called “Turtledove”, the second “Cassia” and the third “Mascara” (NJB, and also TOB and *Die Gute Nachricht*). This translation achieves a functional equivalence with how the story would have been read or heard by a reader of Hebrew. There is an immediate awareness of Job’s joy, indicated by the beauty of the meanings of these names. TEV follows solution 2, (use of footnotes) and thereby preserves the meanings of the names. The direct impact, though, that the original readers must have experienced is gone. And, finally, many readers – whether new readers or sophisticated readers – do not read footnotes, especially if the bottom of the page is overloaded with footnotes, making it difficult to find the correct footnote for the text being read. For example, Genesis 29.35-30.28 are on one page in my office edition of TEV, and that one page has nine footnotes in seven lines. Many readers will not bother to read these notes.

Solution 3: The basic advantage here, as in solutions 4 and 5, is that the meaning is immediately clear to the reader. But there are disadvantages. This solution can lead to cumbersome translations. Consider, for example, this way of translating Job 42.14: “The first daughter he named Jemimah, which means Turtledove, the second Keziah, which means Cinnamon-blossom, and the third Keren-Happuch, which means black eye-shadow”. Another difficulty, mentioned in Solution 2, is that the name sometimes sounds like another word but does not mean the same. One could translate Genesis 30.66 as “So she named him Dan, which sounds like the Hebrew word for ‘judge in favor’”. But this translation is heavy and gives the impression that the original writer was *explaining* the Hebrew name to the original readers.

Solution 4: This has the same advantage as solution 3. It has an advantage over solution 3 of being less cumbersome and perhaps less intrusive as an addition to the text in an attempt to make implicit meaning explicit. But this solution has basically the same disadvantage as 3: it suggests that the original readers did not understand the meaning of the name apart from an explanation. Further, while one could place some names in parentheses when the translated name has the meaning of the Hebrew name; it is misleading to do so when the name only sounds like another word. While one could say “. . . so she named him Gad (Luck)” in Genesis 30.11; one should not say “so she named him Dan (judge in favor)” in Genesis 30.6, because *Dan* only sounds like the word “judge in favor”. Additionally, if brackets are used elsewhere in the translation to mark textually dubious verses, then parenthesis may need to be used.

Solution 5: The obvious advantage here is that one comes closest to functional equivalence with the Hebrew. But many of the difficulties stated for solutions 3 and 4 apply here also.

Suggestions for Translating

If one intends to translate meaning and not just sounds, then solution 1 is not really a solution at all. Concerning the names of Jacob's children in Genesis 29.31-30.24, Gerhard von Rad wrote,

The fourteen explanations of the names and their puns can only be understood altogether in the original and cannot be transferred into English. Above all, it is immediately obvious that this is not a formal narrative, but a number of small units without a context, which all conclude in the explanation of a name. *In each case the accent lies on this explanation* [italic mine] . . . We must, however, imagine that not the least of the charms of this passage for the ancient reader consisted in the renewed suspense about how the next name (long familiar, of course) would be interpreted by the narrator.²

Granted that the accent lies on the explanation of the names, then translations should endeavor to elicit that “suspense” of the readers of the Hebrew text. But if the translation does *not* somehow communicate the meanings of these names, then the “charm” and “suspense” are gone and a functional equivalence has not been achieved.

I grew up reading the King James Version in an edition which had no footnotes. Names such as Ben-ammi, Zoar, and Kibroth-hattaavah had zero meaning for me, and as a result much of the richness of the text was missing, without my even knowing it. My work with Bible translators has shown that most of them have not been aware of the significance of these names; and their translations, quite naturally, do not preserve the meaning.

If 1 is not the solution, then what is? The translation itself should carry the meaning when possible, but absolute adherence to any of the last four solutions (2-5) is probably not possible. The following guidelines are suggested:

(1) Translate rather than transliterate when possible. In the eight examples above, Jehovah-Shalom should be translated as “Yahweh-Peace” or “the

² G.von Rad, *Genesis*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972, 293-294.

LORD is Peace” (Judges 6.24). Ramath-Lehi should be rendered as “Jawbone Hill” (Judges 15.17); Mahaneh-dan, as “Camp of Dan” (Judges 18.12); Perez-Uzzah, as “Outbreak against Uzzah” or “Punishment of Uzzah” (1 Chron 13.11); Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi as “Not Loved” and “Not-My-People” respectively (Hosea 1.6, 9); and Jemimah, Keziah, and Keren Happuch as “Turtledove, Cassia (or Cinnamon-flower), and Black Eye Shadow” (Job 42.14). This guideline applies especially to names which occur once only and/or are not already familiar to most Bible readers.

(2) Names that are already well-known should be transliterated; but when the text indicates the significance of the name, use a footnote (solution 2) or add an explanation in the text (solutions 3 and 4). For example one could translate Genesis 17.5 as “No longer will you be called Exalted Father; your name will be Father of Many, for I have made you a father of many nations”; but since Abraham is a name already well-known to Christians (and non-Christians), this name should be transliterated. A translation with notes can explain that Abram means “exalted Father” and Abraham means “father of many”. A translation without notes should place these meanings within brackets, parentheses, or between dashes: “No longer will you be called Abram [exalted father]; your name will be Abraham [father of many], for I have made you a father of many nations”.

Similarly, a name such as *Naphtali* which occurs frequently should be transliterated; but a verse which explains why he was given this name should have a translation in parentheses or a footnote. So Genesis 30.8 may be rendered, “Then Rachel said, ‘I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won!’ So he named him Naphtali [my struggle]”. It is not necessary in other verses to give the meaning of Naphtali, since the meaning is not important in those verses.

(3) In a footnote, the translator can indicate whether a name sounds like a word which gives the name meaning (assonance) or whether the name actually has the meaning, (etymology).³ TEV does this: The note on Genesis 32.2 says “MAHANAIM: This name in Hebrew means “two camps”. The note on Genesis 32.30 says, “PENIEL: This name sounds like the Hebrew for ‘the face of God’”. But if the translators are not using footnotes, then it is best to put the information in brackets. In this case, however, it is probably less cumbersome to put something like the following: Mahanaim [two camps] and Peniel [the face of God] and not explain that Mahanaim means “Two camps” but Peniel only sounds like “the face of God”.

Conclusion

Readers of the Old Testament in a language other than Hebrew are surprised to learn how often a person or place name is actually the name of a plant or animal or a description of climate, soil, size, occupation, or physical characteristic. Some examples will illustrate:

³ It is beyond the scope of this article to determine whether all of the etymologies are capable of being supported linguistically. See James Barr, “The Symbolism of Names in the Old Testament”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 52 (1969), 11-29; Burke O. Long, *The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament*, BZAW 108; Berlin: Topelmann, 1968.

Abel (2 Sam 20.14) = meadow	Jabesh (1 Sam 11.1) = dry
Beer (Num 21.16) = well	Carmel (1 Kgs 18.19) = garden land
Rabbah (Deut 3.11) = large	Zoar (Gen 13.10) = small
Gath (1 Sam 5.8) = wine press	Bethlehem (Gen 35.19) = house of bread
Aijalon (1 Sam 14.31) = stag	Arad (Josh 12.14) = wild ass
Eglon (Josh 10.3) = calf	Parah (Josh 18.23) = cow
Humtah (Josh 15.54) = lizard	Caleb (Num 13.6) = dog
Gibeon (Josh 9.3) = hill	Sela (Judg 1.36) = cliff
Hakkaton (Ezra 8.12) = small one	Kareah (2 Kings 25.23) = bald

While it is interesting to discover the meanings of these names in Hebrew, the reader does not need to know the meaning in order to understand the verses. Perhaps Kareah (2 Kgs. 25.23) was so named because he was bald at birth; or possibly Hakkaton (Ezra 8.12) was a small baby. In neither case is the translation improved by translating *Hakkaton* or *Kareah* rather than transliterating them. But in the list of names given at the beginning of this article, the meaning of the verse *does* depend upon the reader knowing the meaning of the name, or realizing that the name sounds like another word in the context. Translators fail to communicate when they only transliterate the names in these verses.

Translators need to use Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, commentaries, and Bibles with study notes. Of the ten translations of Genesis 4.20, 21 (TEV, RSV, NJB, FC, NIV, TOB, RVR, VP, Seg, DGN), referred to above only NJB has a note indicating that Jabal comes from the root *ybl* (to lead) and Jubal comes from the same root as *yobel* (trumpet). Surely the text takes on a deeper meaning when one realizes that Jabal's (to lead) descendants became shepherds, and Jubal's (trumpet) descendants became musicians.

Several translations (RSV, TEV, Seg, RVR) have no notes for Micah 1.10-15 on the word play of city names. Some translations indicate in a note that the prophet uses word play in these verses, without indicating specifically what the word plays are (FC and TOB for example). Others give the details (NJB and NIV). Verses such as Genesis 4.20, 21 and Micah 1.10-15 lose some of their "punch" if the translation does not help the reader; and perhaps for these verses footnotes are the best way of doing so. But verses in which the writer says, "... and that is why the ... was called ..." lose not only their punch; they lose an essential part of their meaning unless the translator somehow includes the translation of the name in the text or in the notes.

Consider how you might preserve the meanings of these names in your translations, and readers will some day call you "Weldon" because your translation will have been well done.

A cumulative index to *The Bible Translator* for 1980-88 inclusive is available, free of charge to subscribers, from BFBS, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon SN5 7DG, United Kingdom.