

Research Article

A Critical Study of the Translation of ἑγκράτεια (egkrateia) in Galatians 5:23 in the Asante-Twi Bible(2017)

ABSTRACT

Bible translation is a complex exercise that attempts to communicate what was first expressed in one language by expressing it in another so that readers may, as much as possible, discern what was said and infer what was meant in the original. Using the mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics approach, this study sought to critically examine the translation of ἑγκράτεια (egkrateia) in Galatians 5:23 in the Asante-Twi Bible. Its objective was to find out whether ἑγκράτεια has been translated in the Asante-Twi bible in way that brings out what was meant by the author in the original text. The study found that ἑγκράτεια which is preferably rendered as “self-control” in English is translated as “*anidahɔ*” (vigilance, temperance) in the Asante-Twi Bible instead of “*ahohyesoɔ*” (self-control). *Ahohyesoɔ* (self-control) seems to express more vividly that “fruit of the Spirit” Paul talks about which has to do with one’s ability to control the natural appetites and desires. This research adds to the knowledge of the field of mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics. It is recommended that subsequent revision of the Asante-Twi Bible will consider translating ἑγκράτεια as “*ahohyesoɔ*” (self-control).

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INTRODUCTION

According to the late Nelson Mandela of South Africa, “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.”² This assertion by Mandela reflects the need to present the gospel to the African in his own language since the Bible was written in the everyday languages of its original readers. Hence, for a better understanding of the Scriptures there is the need to translate it from the original languages to the mother–tongues of the indigenous people.

According to Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole, Bible translation belongs to the category of literary and “artistic translation, which converts a source text into a target text.” It also involves a process known as “trans-mediatization” or the transfer from one medium to another (e.g., from an oral text to a written one, from a written text to a painted one, from a printed text to an audio-visual one, from one script to another, i.e. transcription, transliteration and digitalization).³ Translating the Bible is a complex and tedious task. The translation of religious texts far surpasses all other types of translation in terms of length of historical tradition, numbers of languages involved, diversity of cultures, and variety of procedures, motivations and special problems.⁴ The focus of translating the Bible should move from the “form of the

² Kaycheng Soh, ed, *Teaching Chinese Language in Singapore: Retrospect and Challenges* (Singapore: Springer Science+Business Media, 2016), V

³ Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole, “History and theory of Scripture translations,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* Vol. 64 (1), 2008, 254.

⁴ Eugene Albert Nida, “The Translation of Religious Texts: A unique and ancient tradition,” *Babel* 9:1-2 (1963), 3, accessed on 17th February, 2020, DOI 10.1075/babel.9.1-2.01nid

message” to the “response of the receptors”.⁵ Translation of the Bible into Ghanaian mother-tongues has faced one or more exegetical and translation problem(s).⁶ This article critically examines the translation of ἐγκράτεια in the Asante-Twi Bible (AsTB) and also considers the challenges and the prospects for other Ghanaian mother-tongue translators. The Asante people are mainly located in the Ashanti region of Ghana. As of 2019 the population is estimated at 5,792,187; and Kumasi, the traditional capital of the Asante, at 2,096,053.⁷ The Asantes are part of a socio-cultural group known as the Akan. This group consists of the Akwamu, Guan, Fante, Denkyira, Brong, Akyem, Kwahu, Sefwi, Wassa, Akwapim, Assin and Asante.⁸ Geographically, the Akan occupy the western, central and Ashanti regions and parts of the Brong-Ahafo⁹, eastern regions of Ghana and the eastern part of the Ivory Coast.¹⁰ The Asantes speak Asante-Twi (part of the Akan languages). It is the most widely spoken language in Ghana.¹¹ According to Ekem, the term “Twi” is often used to refer to the non-Mfantse dialects of Akan such as Akuapem and Asante.¹²

Methodology

The mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics approach was used in the study. This is a step-by-step approach that analyses, adopts and adapts words and phrases in biblical texts in order to appropriate the word of God for indigenous Bible reading communities.¹³ The approach requires exegesis of the text under study and an examination of how “accurately” the text has been translated in the mother-tongue for readers of the Bible to understand the text(s) in their own languages as intended by the author(s) of the biblical text. It involves a critique of the mother-tongue translations to get them as closely related to the original texts in meaning.

In this research the Asante-Twi Bible translator was interviewed as well as two other Asante-Twi scholars (a lecturer and a retired educationist). Eighty (80) questionnaires were also administered to Asante-Twi bible readers in the Kumasi metropolis who could speak and write both English and Asante-Twi to get their views on the meaning and interpretation of ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*) in the Asante-Twi Bible. All these hundred respondents do not read Greek so ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*) was rendered in English to present the “exact” meaning to them in order to know how they would have translated ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*) to Asante-Twi considering the context of the text.

Background to Galatians 5:23

Galatians 5:23 (πραΰτης ἐγκράτεια· κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος.)
(gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.)

In Galatians 5:19-22, Paul enumerates what is known as “the works of the flesh” and “that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Paul notes that the “works of the flesh” (τα ἔργα τῆς σαρκος, *ta erga tēs sarkos*) are “manifest” or “obvious” (φανερὰ, *phanera*): they are well known to the Galatians from their pagan background.¹⁴ Paul reminds his readers about them so that they will have a clear-eyed understanding of just what the “passion of the flesh” that the Spirit will help them avoid looks like.¹⁵ Douglas J. Moo argues that one focus that emerges from the list in Galatians 5:19-22 is a concentration on sins that involve community relationships.¹⁶

In contrast to the “works of the flesh” is “the fruit of the Spirit” enumerated in Galatians 5:22-23. Love is the first “fruit” stated by Paul which summarizes the demand of God’s law (Gal. 5:14); it endures forever (1 Cor. 13:13), and unites all the virtues of life (Col. 3:14).¹⁷ In keeping with Paul’s focus on those manifestations of the Spirit that are particularly foundational for a harmonious community life, “gentleness” (πραΰτης [*praytēs*]) is now mentioned.¹⁸ The model for this attitude is Jesus, who claimed to be “gentle [*πραΰς*, *prays*] and humble in heart” (Matt. 11:29; cf. 21:5; 2 Cor. 10:1). The last “fruit of the Spirit” Paul talks about is “self-control” (ἐγκράτεια, *egkrateia*), which is thought by

⁵ Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 3.

⁶ Jonathan Edward Tetteh Kuwornu-Adjaottor identified such hermeneutic problem in the translation of Mark 1:12 in the Dangme Bible, Ghana. He has worked on several of such translation problems in the Ghanaian mother-tongue Bibles. See Jonathan E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, “A Critical Study of the Translation of Mark 1:12 in the Dangme Translation of the Bible,” *Oguva Journal of Religion and Human Values (OJORHV)* 5 no. 2, 2019, 99.

⁷ “Populations by Regions: Ashanti,” Ghana Statistical Service, Accessed on 17th February 2020.
<https://www.statsghana.gov.gh/regionalpopulation.php?population=MTI5MzE3OTU5OC40NDg1&&Ashanti®id=1>

⁸ Victor Selorme Gedzi, “The Asante of Ghana,” *International Journal of African Society Cultures and Traditions* Vol. 2, no.3, 2014, 21

⁹ The Bono-Ahafo region has since 2019 been divided into three main regions: Bono, Ahafo and Bono East regions.

¹⁰ Gedzi, “The Asante of Ghana,” 21.

¹¹ J.D.K. Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast (Ghana): The Historical, Linguistic and Theological Settings of the Ga, Twi, Mfantse and Ewe Bibles* (Manchester: ST. Jerome Publishing, 2011), 50.

¹² Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast (Ghana)*, 50.

¹³ Kuwornu-Adjaottor, “A Critical Study of the Translation of Mark 1:12,” 99.

¹⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 358.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Moo, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Galatians*, 358.

¹⁷ Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: Galatians*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 271.

¹⁸ Moo, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Galatians*, 366.

some scholars to be a deliberate contrast with the final two “works of the flesh,” “drunkenness and carousing.”¹⁹ “Self-control” was prized by some of the Greek philosophers – Socrates considered it one of the cardinal virtues, and Aristotle gives much attention to it in his Ethics – but it barely appears in the LXX (only 4 Macc. 5:34).²⁰ It does figure more prominently in some of the Hellenistic Jewish writings.²¹

Exegeses of ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*)

In the philosophical ethic of the Greek classical period and of later Hellenism ἐγκράτεια (from the stem κρατ-, which refers to power and dominance) plays a significant role in their writings.²² The idea of *egkrateia* is first introduced into ethics by Socrates as one of the chief virtues.²³ Plato and Aristotle adopted it in turn. According to Aristotle, the one who is *egkratēs* has strong desires but is able to suppress them.²⁴ Among the Stoics, *egkrateia* was taken as a sign of human freedom.²⁵ It was part of being truly human to moderate one’s desires, particularly one’s sexual drive and enjoyment of food and drink.²⁶

The word and its variant forms have significant roles in the writings of Philo and the Essenes.²⁷ According to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*,²⁸ the word group ἐγκράτ- takes its sense from κρατ-, which denotes power or lordship. This expresses the power or lordship which one has over someone or something. It adds that, “the basic sense is most clearly expressed in the adjective ἐγκράτης, which may be derived from ἐν (in) and κράτος (power, dominion, strength, government) with its implication of having power in oneself, or from ἐν κράτει (ᾧν) implying a status of power.”²⁹

Ἐγκράτης means one who has a status of power or rule, or one who has power over something, whether this power is factual or spiritual. It also means to have power or dominion over all things and over oneself.³⁰ The person who has power over himself has dominion over his personal emotions and natural desires.

The *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* adds that, ἐγκράτης signifies the free, autonomous and independent person who does not allow himself to be tempted or diverted by any allurements.³¹ Hence, ἐγκράτεια means dominion which one has over something or oneself. The opposite of ἐγκράτεια is ακρασια which means lack of self-control, restraint,³² or incontinence.³³

Usage of ἐγκράτεια in the Bible

In the LXX (Septuagint) *egkrateia* occurs only 3 times, exclusively in the Wisdom literature (Sirach 18: 15, 30; 4 Maccabees 5: 34), meaning abstinence from excess; *egkratēs* (11 times, only in apocryphal writings) and *egkrateuomai* (3 times) are not so much special ascetic terms. They chiefly denote that one has gained or is in control of something (cf. Gen. 43:31; 1 Sam. 13:12; Sir. 6:27).³⁴

Ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*) is normally used with regards to all human desires, including desires for food and drink, sex and all other human appetites.³⁵ It is astonishing to know that with the need for a person to have self-control over his natural desires, ἐγκράτεια does not appear at all in the New Testament Gospels.³⁶

In Acts 24:25 *egkrateia* is found alongside righteousness and judgement as the theme of Paul’s proclamation. “Self-control” may here be an allusion to the marriage of the procurator Felix, which was the result of adultery.³⁷ In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul advocates for celibacy for those who want to dedicate their lives to the service of God. But if people cannot exercise self-control ἐγκρατεύονται (*egkrateuontai*) they should be married. In 1 Corinthians 9:25, ἐγκρατεύεται

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² According to Balz and Schneider, self-control was recognized as a cardinal value by many Greek philosophers such as Socrates. Plato set himself in opposition to overindulgence in both food and sex. See Balz, H. and Schneider G., eds, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Volume 2 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 377.

²³ Collin Brown ed, *The NIV Dictionary of New Testament Theology* Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 494.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Balz and Schneider, eds, *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume 1, 377.

²⁸ Gerhard Kittel, ed, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume IV (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 339.

²⁹ Kittel, ed, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 340. Cf. Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1994), 500.

³⁰ Kittel, ed, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume II, 340.

³¹ Balz and G. Schneider, eds, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume 1, p. 377.

³² Kittel, ed, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume II, 340.

³³ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, 500.

³⁴ Collin, *The NIV Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 495.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 494.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 495.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

(*egkrateuetai*) is used of the athlete exercising self-control in all things.³⁸

Ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*) occurs twice in 2 Peter 1:6, in all of which it is rendered “temperance.” However, some versions of the English Bible render it as “self-control”, for this is the preferable rendering as temperance is only limited to one form of self-control;³⁹ for the various powers bestowed by God on man are capable of abuse; but the right use demands the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit of God.⁴⁰

The adjectives of Ἐγκράτεια are Ἐγκράτης (which denotes self-control, is rendered as “temperate” in Titus 1:8); νηφάλιος (which is differently translated as “temperate”, “sober”, or “vigilant” in 1 Timothy 3:2, 3:11; whereas in Titus 2:2, σώφρων, sober has been rendered “temperate” or “self-control” in some English versions).⁴¹ The verb form of Ἐγκράτεια, ἔγκρατεύομαι is rendered “is temperate” in 1 Corinthians 9:25, used figuratively to describe the rigid, self-controlled athlete who wants to win the prize.⁴²

According to Matthew Poole’s Commentary on the Whole Bible, “temperance” denotes a sober use of meats, drinks, apparel, or any wherein our senses are delighted.⁴³ It states that temperance is a moral virtue and as such some have attained to by moral discipline, the cultivating of their natures by education, and moral philosophy; yet it is a fruit of the Spirit of God.⁴⁴ The moral man only comports himself from principles of reason, showing him the beauty and comeliness of such a conversation, and aims no higher in it, than a happiness of converse in this life, his own honour and reputation; on the contrary the spiritual man doing the same things aims at a higher end – the glorifying of God and saving of his own soul – and does these things from the fear of God, out of love and faith to Him.⁴⁵

Translation of Ἐγκράτεια in Gal. 5:23 in some English Bibles

Ἐγκράτεια has been variously translated as “self-control” or “temperance” in Gal. 5:23 in the various English Bible versions. The American Standard Version, Common English Bible, The Complete Jewish Bible, English Standard Version, Good News Translation, New American Standard Bible and the New International Reader’s Version have translated Ἐγκράτεια as “self-control”. New King James Version and the New Revised Standard also use “self-control”.⁴⁶ However, the Webster Bible, King James Version and the Jubilee Bible (2000) rather translate Ἐγκράτεια as “temperance”.⁴⁷ This supposes that most of these English translations prefer to translate Ἐγκράτεια as “self-control”.

Problem with the translation of Ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*)

In Galatians 5:22-23, the author of this epistle makes mention of the “fruit of the Spirit” that should be evident in the life of the Christian. Ἐγκράτεια, which translates as “self-control” or “temperance” has been listed as one of the “fruit of the Spirit”. The AsTB translates Ἐγκράτεια as *anidahɔ*. The *English-Tshi (Asante) Dictionary* defines “temperance” as “*anidahɔ*”.⁴⁸ *Anidahɔ* can also mean “vigilance” or “being vigilant”. It is of a truth that the one who desires to exercise self-control should be vigilant in his daily walk. However, not all who are vigilant will necessarily exercise self-control. If one is to translate Ἐγκράτεια as “temperance” in Galatians 5:23, then *anidahɔ* is the right rendition. However, from the Vine Expository Dictionary “self-control” is the preferred rendering for Ἐγκράτεια because temperance is only limited to one form of self-control.⁴⁹

The usage of *anidahɔ* (vigilance, temperance) for Ἐγκράτεια (self-control) is problematic because it fails to bring to light one key fruit that should be produced by the Christian. Lack of self-control has led many Christians into trouble – some have been accused of defilement, adultery, fornication, murder, theft and the likes.⁵⁰

The Christian who exercises self-control over his natural appetites and desires is able to conduct himself in a matured manner in all aspects of Christian living. Vigilance or temperance (*anidahɔ*) does not necessarily lead to self-control if the subject does not go a step further to put his or her desires and affections under his or her own control. The

³⁸ Brown, *The NIV Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 496.

³⁹ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* Vol. 4 (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981), 114.

⁴⁰ Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of the New Testament*, 114.

⁴¹ The English Standard Version, Good News Translation with Apocrypha translate sw, frwn as “self-control”, whereas the Revised Standard Version, New King James Version, Revised Standard Version render it as “temperate”.

⁴² Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of the New Testament*, 114.

⁴³ Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Volume III (Matthew-Revelation) (London: Billing and Sons Ltd., 1979), 659.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 659.

⁴⁵ Poole, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Volume III (Matthew-Revelation), 659.

⁴⁶ Salem Web Network, accessed on 25th February 2020 on <https://www.biblestudytools.com/galatians/5-23-compare.html>

⁴⁷ “Compare Translations for Galatians 5:23,” Bible Study Tools, accessed on March 2, 2020. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/galatians/5-23-compare.html>

⁴⁸ Basel Missionary Society, ed. *English-Tshi (Asante): A Dictionary*, 2nd edition (Basel: Basel Evang. Missionary Society, 1909), 194, accessed on February 10, 2020. <https://archive.org/details/englishtshiasant00evaniala/page/134/mode/2up>

⁴⁹ Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 114.

⁵⁰ A Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) pastor (Joseph Wiredu Mensah) was alleged to have defiled a 14-year-old pupil in the Ekumfi District in the Central region of Ghana. This alleged act of illicit sex is a clear demonstration of lack of self-control on the part of the pastor. This news was reported by a credible newspaper in Ghana, the Daily Graphic. “SDA pastor allegedly defiles 14-year-old pupil,” Graphic Online, accessed January 30, 2020. <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/sda-pastor-allegedly-defiles-14-year-old-pupil.html>

translation of ἐγκράτεια as *anidahɔ* in Galatians 5:23 does not bring out the meaning as intended by the author in the Asante-Twi Bible.

Understanding of ἐγκράτεια by the AsTB translator and other three educationists

The Asante-Twi Bible emerged as a result of the revision works on the Akuapem-Twi Bible, when efforts to get a single Twi Bible that would serve the Akan speaking people of Ghana failed. It was in 1964 during the revision of the Akuapem-Twi Bible that the Asante-Twi was produced with a different orthography from the Akuapem-Twi Bible.⁵¹ Since then, the Asante-Twi Bible has undergone revision in the years 2012, 2017 and 2018.⁵² One Bible translator who is involved in the revision of the Bible is Ernest K. Boateng.⁵³ He argues that ἐγκράτεια has been translated as *anidahɔ* because vigilance or temperance is also required for a Christian to bear fruit in the Spirit. To him, there seems to be no issue in translating ἐγκράτεια as *anidahɔ*.

The educationists interviewed were of the view that the best rendition for “self-control” is *ahohyesoɔ* instead of *anidahɔ*.⁵⁴

The views of the Asante-Twi bible readers on the translation of ἐγκράτεια

Some AsTB users were also interrogated about their views on the translation of ἐγκράτεια in Galatians 5:23. Eighty questionnaires were administered to Christians belonging to the Mainline, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches within the Kumasi Metropolis. From the exegesis of ἐγκράτεια in Galatians 5:23, the researcher translated ἐγκράτεια as “self-control” in English and sought the views of the respondents about how they think “self-control” should be translated in Asante-Twi. The options provided to the respondents were:

- a. *ahohyesoɔ* (self-control)
- b. *ahopakɔyire*(self-denial)
- c. *anidahɔ* (vigilance, temperance)
- d. any other translation

The results are as follows:

Table 1.0 Graphical presentation of respondents’ view on the translation of ἐγκράτεια

Suitable Translation	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
A	60	75.00
B	2	2.50
C	18	22.50
D	00	00.00
Total	80	100

Source: Field data, Jan. 2016.

From the responses, Option A – *ahohyesoɔ* (self-control) – was chosen by 60 (75%) of the respondents. Option C – *anidahɔ* (vigilance, temperance) – which is the AsTB’s translation of ἐγκράτεια was endorsed by 18 (22.5%) of the respondents. Option B – *ahopakɔyire* (self-denial) – had the least endorsement by 2 (2.5%) of the respondents. Option D, which gives room to respondents to provide any other suitable translation for ἐγκράτεια apart from the first three options was chosen by none of the respondents. From the above presentation, the majority of the respondents (75%) are of the view that *ahohyesoɔ* (self-control) is the most suitable translation for ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*) in Galatians 5:23.

Discussions of the above findings

Comparison of the Asante-Twi Bible Translation of Galatians 5:23 with the Akuapem-Twi, Fante and the New Testament English-Twi Bibles

Asante-Twi (1964): Galatians 5:22-23 – *Na honhom aba ne ɔɔɔ, anigyee, asomdwoee ... ɔɔwoɔ, anidahɔ. Mmara biara nni hɔ a etia yeinom.* (For the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace ... meekness, vigilance. There is no law against these things).

⁵¹ Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast (Ghana)*, 76-77.
⁵² New Versions of the AsTB were released by the Bible Society of Ghana in 2012 and 2017.
⁵³ Pastor Ernest K. Boateng is a Bible translator and the resource mobilization officer for Northern Sector, Bible Society of Ghana. He was interviewed on 10th June, 2016.
⁵⁴ These persons are Rev. Wilberforce Wireko (an educationist and former headmaster of Aggrey Memorial A.M.E. Zion School; interviewed on 30th January, 2016); Mr. E. A. Fordjour (Lecturer – Department of Modern Languages, KNUST; interviewed on 2nd February, 2016).

Asante-Twi (2012): Galatians 5:22-23 – *Na honhom aba ne ɔɔ, anigyee, asomdwoee ... ɔdwoɔ, anidahɔ. Mmara biara nni hɔ a etia yeinom.* (For the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace ... meekness, vigilance. There is no law against these things).

Asante-Twi (2017): Galatians 5:22-23 – *Na honhom aba ne ɔɔ, anigyee, asomdwoee ... ɔdwoɔ, anidahɔ. Mmara biara nni hɔ a etia yeinom.* (For the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace ... meekness, vigilance. There is no law against these things).

Akuapem-Twi (2012): Galatians 5:22-23 – *Na honhom aba ne ɔɔ, anigye, asomdwoe ... odwo, anidahɔ. Mmara bi ngu eyinom.* (For the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace ... meekness, vigilance. No law nullifies these things).

Fante Bible (2008): Galatians 5:22-23 – *Na Sunsum no aba nye ɔɔ, dɛw, asomdwee ... ɔdwe, ahohyedo; mbra bi nnyi hɔ tsia yinom.* (For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace ... meekness, self-control; there is no law against these things).

New Testament English-Twi Bible (2013): Galatians 5:22-23 – *Na mmom honhom no aba a esoo ne ɔɔ, anigyee, asomdwoee ... ɔdwoɔ ne honam mu ahohyesoɔ; mmara biara ntumi ntia nnooma a etete sei.* (For the great fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace ... meekness, control over one's fleshly desires. No law can stand against such things).

From the exegesis ἐγκράτεια is an attitude that means that someone has a status of power or rule, or one has power over something, whether this power is factual or spiritual. It also means to have power or dominion over all things and over oneself. It means self-control over the natural appetites of the human flesh.

The Fante Bible translates ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*) as *ahohyedo*, which literally translates as ‘self-control’. This translation communicates the thoughts of the author of Galatians 5:23, as part of the “fruit of the Spirit”. The New Testament English-Twi Bible goes an extra mile in expounding what ἐγκράτεια means as an attitude of disciplining one’s self with regards to the natural appetites and fleshly desires. It translates ἐγκράτεια as *honam mu ahohyesoɔ* (control over the fleshly desires).

From the above exegeses, *The Vine Expository Dictionary* posits that “self-control” is the preferred rendering for ἐγκράτεια and not temperance because temperance is only limited to one form of self-control.⁵⁵ Hence, in the light of the above discussions, ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*) which is preferably rendered as “self-control” is most suitably translated as *Ahohyesoɔ, ahohyedo* or *honam mu ahohyesoɔ* and not *anidahɔ* as translated in the AsTB. This is evident by the enormous endorsement of *ahohyesoɔ* (Option A) as the most suitable translation for ἐγκράτεια (*egkrateia*) by the respondents.

The research finding corroborates a number of similar research findings in the field of Ghanaian mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics where researchers identify translation problems in the Ghanaian mother-tongue bibles.⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research show that ἐγκράτεια is preferably rendered as “self-control” which should also translate as “*ahohyesoɔ*” (self-control) in the Asante-Twi Bible, which is the widely used Twi Bible in Ghana. There is no translation that is perfect and so the Ghanaian mother-tongue Bibles suffer the same fate. However, translations should be as close as possible to the original text in its thought and meaning. It is recommended that future revisions of the AsTB can consider the rendition of ἐγκράτεια as “*ahohyesoɔ*” to express the thoughts originally intended by the author in Galatians 5:23. Academic institutions and Bible translators have a role to play in these revisions in making the Ghanaian mother-tongue Bibles express the meanings of the authors of the Bible in their original languages. This is necessary as mother-tongue Bible users have become more enlightened and want to hear God speak to them in their own languages.

⁵⁵ Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, 114.

⁵⁶ Notably among such scholars is J.E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor who has worked extensively on the Dangme and Akan bibles of Ghana. It is on record that his works have been useful in the revisions of the Akan bibles (Fante, Twi and Akuapem bibles). His contributions to the field of mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics can be found at: “Jonathan E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor,” Research Gate, accessed on 2nd March, 2020. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jonathan_Kuwornu-Adjaottor.

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