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REINTERPRETING *'āḇaḏ* AND *šāmar* IN GENESIS 2:15: IMPLICATIONS FOR ASANTE-TWI BIBLE TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

The Asante-Twi Bible's translation of '*āḇaḏ*, and *šāmar*, can be misleading and a source of motivation for environmental degradation among Asante communities in Ghana. Incidentally, Ghana faces serious environmental crisis where many of her water bodies and forest cover are being destroyed due to illegal mining activities. If a misinterpretation arises out of such a translation of the biblical text, it could be considered as a stimulus for ecological misbehaviour. Was it the case of unavailability of suitable clauses in the receptor language or a choice of translational approach by the local translators? This study employed a historical-critical method and an exegetical approach, where Genesis 2:15 was contextually, textually and morphosyntactically analysed and its translations in the Asante-Twi Bible assessed. Having scrutinized ancient texts such as the Masoretic Text, Septuagint and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and their parallel with Asante-Twi Bible regarding the text, it is argued in this paper that the Hebrew clause, *'āḇəḏāh ūšāmərāh*, could be suitably translated as *ɔnyɔ mu adwuma na ɔnhwɛ so yie*, "he should cultivate and keep it well," in the Asante-Twi. It is believed that this would advance mother-tongue theologizing regarding Christian environmental discourse among Asante-Twi readers. This study has contributed to the field of Mother-tongue Biblical Hermeneutics, Bible Translation Studies, Old Testament Exegesis, Biblical Studies and Linguistics.

Keywords: *Garden of Eden; Genesis 2:15; till and keep, Asante-Twi Bible*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that translation involves interpretation.[1] At the heart of biblical interpretation process is theology. Thus, a theological health could result in the health of an interpretation of a text and vice versa. Likewise, a theological flaw would occasion a flaw in the interpretation of a text and the opposite, is true. Both theology and interpretation of a biblical text can also impact translation or be influenced by translation. This reveals an established interrelationship among translation, interpretation and theology of a given biblical text.[2]

Out of the numerous problems that Bible translators encounter in their work, is the non-availability of a word in the receptor languages to carry the exact meaning of a word in the source language. This and other challenges sometimes lead to obscurity in the translated text and the resulting theology.[3] The application of biblical knowledge may be one of, if not the greatest goal of exegesis. Thus exegesis, translation and interpretation are bedfellows in biblical scholarship.

The problem with the Asante-Twi Bible (AsTB, 2012/2018 Editions) is that the Hebrew verbs *ʻāḇaḏ* and *šāmar,* in Genesis 2:15 have not been adequately expressed in the AsTB as has been done in the Akuapem-Twi Bible (AkTB) and Mfantse-Twi Bible (MfTB). A critical examination of the AsTB's translation of the text (Gen. 2:15), as *ɔnnɔ na ɔnwɛn hɔ,* signals a translation imperfection. Literally, the AsTB reads, "human should weed/clear and watch it." Considering the context of the creation narrative, the paper has indicated that humanity was set in a garden with responsibilities. Therefore the idea of weeding or clearing, cultivating and caregiving should be understood to be the general intention of the narrator. However, the rendering of *ʻāḇaḏ*, as *ɗɔ*, "weed," could be considered literally by some readers.

This paper argues that unlike in some instances where Akan mother-tongues do not easily provide suitable terms, clauses, expressions and phrases for some literary structures and vocabularies of the source texts, the idea of the clause, *ʻāḇaḏ* and *šāmar,* in Genesis 2:15 can be at home with the target language. As a result, the clause under study is analysed contextually, textually and morphosyntactically to establish its meaning in the context of the creation narrative. The meaning, so established, is then compared to its renderings in the Asante-Twi Bible (AsTB). A brief survey of the components and sources of the Genesis corpus is undertaken, a structure is then attempted, followed by a textual criticism, where the pericope (Gen. 2:15) is critically examined in the Masoretic Text (MT), Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (TsPJ) and the Septuagint (LXX).

2.0 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF BIBLE TRANSLATIONS IN AKAN/TWI

The history of human existence has proven that one of the socio-cultural elements which has always been indispensable in human interactions is language. In all human societies, language is the vehicle of communication. Difficulties arise at all levels of human-human interactions in terms of encoding and decoding. The need for translation does occur in interactions among even groups who claim the same descent. The issue becomes more crucial in inter-tribal, inter-racial, inter-continental, and even inter-generational and inter-demographic communications.

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[1] Isaac Boaheng, *A Handbook for African Mother-Tongue Bible Translators* (Wilmington: Vernon Press, 2022), 91.
[2] Konrad Schmid, "What is the Difference between Historical and Theological Exegesis?" *JBT* 25 (2011): 18.
[3] Emmanuel Twumasi-Ankrah et al, "An Analytical Study of the Translations of Genesis 1:26-27 in the Akuapem-Twi Bible," *E-Journal of Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics and Theology (MOTBIT)* Vol. 4, Issue 3 (2022): 45.

It is the mission of Christianity to make all groups encounter the knowledge of Christ in a dynamic way. This mission is impossible without communication.[4] As a result, one of the most critical enterprises the church has been involved in over the years is translation.[5] "Bible translation began in Egypt in the third century BCE, when Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek. Since then, Bible translation projects have been undertaken all over the world to facilitate the proper understanding of and appropriate response to God's word by a receptor community."[6] The LXX as the product of the first biblical translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language, occurred in the days of Ptolemy Philadelphus II in 250 BCE in Alexandria, Egypt.[7] This pioneering translation work was made possible on African soil and with Africans playing a key role.[8]

Although from official records Ghanaians encountered Christianity through the Portuguese explorers in the 1470s, the area of biblical translation and interpretation for the indigenous people remained grey until the advent of the Dutch in the seventeenth century.[9] The beginning of translation can be attributed to Jacobus Elisa Johannes Capitein. According to Ekem, Capitein was an African slave who had an opportunity to study Biblical Languages whilst in Holland during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. He is accredited to be the first who translated into Mfantse (Fante-Twi), some extracts from the Bible such as, the "Lord's Prayer," the "Ten Commandments" and the "Apostles' Creed" in 1744. The full Fante-Twi Bible was published in 1948.[10] Later, the first full Akan/Twi Bible version, "Akuapem-Twi (AkTB)," was published in 1871,[11] courtesy of a Basel missionary, Johann Christaller, in collaboration with indigenous people such as C. A. Denteh, David Asante and Clement Anderson Akrofi.[12]

As it were, that translation had orthographic hitches since it was based on a common Twi dialect, called "Akuapem," and was meant to be used by all Twi-speaking groups, be it Asante, Akuapem, Fante or Bono whose pronunciation of certain words is different. John Ekem opines that the difficulties led to the newly-revised full Bible in Akuapem-Twi and Asante-Twi, published in 1964.[13] The subsequent versions, AkTB and AsTB (2012 and 2018 editions) were similarly occasioned by the identification of some translational challenges.

An ongoing Akan Bible translation project is the Bono-Twi Bible (BnTB) project which commenced in 2017 and is estimated to be completed after ten years of its commencement.[14] Aside from Akan dialects, Bible translation activities are ongoing for many groups and languages in Ghana

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[4] Solomon Sule-Saa, "Owning the Christian Faith through Mother-Tongue Scriptures: A Case Study of the Dagomba and Konkomba of Northern Ghana," *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (2010): 47.
[5] Andrew F. Walls, "A Watershed Period of Translation: The Bible in Sixteenth Century Europe and the Spread of the Christian Faith," *Journal of African Christian Thought,* Vol. 13, No. 2, (2010): 3.
[6] Boaheng, *A Handbook for African Mother-Tongue Bible Translators* 3.
[7] Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2009), 15.
[8] John D.K. Ekem, "Early Translators and Interpreters of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures on the Gold Coast (Ghana): Two Case Studies," *Journal of African Christian Thought,* Vol. 13, No. 2, (2010): 34.
[9] Ekem, "Early Translators and Interpreters of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures on the Gold Coast," 34.
[10] Ekem, "Early Translators and Interpreters of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures on the Gold Coast," 34.
[11] Jan P. Sterk, "Bible Translation in Africa: Keeping up with the Times," in *Bible Translation in African Languages* Gosnell L.O.R York and Peter M. Renju (eds.), (Nairobi: Kenya: Acton Publishers, 2004), 177.
[12] John D. K. Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast: The Historical, Linguistic, and Theological Settings of the Ga, Twi, Mfantse, and Ewe Bibles* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura; Manchester, UK: St. Jerome Publishing, 2011), 49-78.
[13] Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast,* 75.
[14] Boaheng, *A Handbook for African Mother-Tongue Bible Translators,* 83.

and mention can be made of translation projects in Damgbe-Tongu, Dagare, Gurene, Effutu, Wassa and Okere mother-tongues. In addition, efforts are being made to produce mother-tongue Audio Bible to serve the interest of people who cannot read as well as Sign Language Bible for a section of people who have some hearing and speech impairments.

Clearly, Bible translation activities began in Ghana as a collaborative venture between the Western missionary societies and the indigenous people, producing translations in Ga in 1866, Akuapem in 1871, Ewe in 1913, Fante in 1948 and Asante in 1964.[15] This translation enterprise was later spearheaded by the indigenous Ghanaians and supervised by their Western partners through the Bible society groups. Currently, Bible translation is solely undertaken by indigenous translators and supervised by indigenous translation consultants. This underscores a progressive development in the area of Bible translation activities in Ghana, highlighting the idea of learning by doing, and doing it well by collaboration and peer reviews.

Some scholars assert that translation involves only transcoding words or sentences from the Source Language (SL) into a Target Language (TL) while preserving semantic and stylistic equivalence.[16] In contrast, Vermeer posits that "translation is not the transcoding of words or sentences from one language to another, but a complex form of action, whereby someone provides information on a text (SL) in a new situation and under changed functional, cultural and linguistic conditions, preserving formal aspects as closely as possible."[17] Isaac Boaheng adds to this view that "Bible translation may be considered as the rewriting of a biblical text from the source language (which includes Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic) to another language, re-packaging the original message for the receptor community."[18] To Basil Hatim and Jeremy Munday, translation may be defined as the process of transferring information from a source language to a translating language, taking into consideration the specific socio-cultural context of the receptor community.[19]

Here, both Boaheng and Hatim and Munday make the new audience the focus and most important in the work of the translator. Boaheng enjoins the translator to focus on every useful way of presenting the source text so that it will be meaningful to and be readily accepted by the target audience. On their part, Hatim and Munday's position seem to suggest that even though it is the desire of a translator to transfer information from a source text to a receptor community, the translator is not expected to transfer the information blindly. Rather, the specific cultural knobs of the target audience may determine which of the information (especially, cultural ones) need to be transmitted and those that are to be ignored; as well as the way those pieces of information are to be translated. This is corroborated by Kuwornu-Adjaottor et al, who consider it a translational injustice to see God and his messages as having no association with cultures, and thus resulting into disorientation of local cultures, tabula rasa and imposition of words (diction), symbols, elements and structures alien to and

[15] Boaheng, *A Handbook for African Mother-Tongue Bible,* 83.
[16] Emmanuel Foster Asamoah and Jonathan Edward Tetteh Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "A Critical Study of the Designation of Chapter as *Ti* by Asante-Twi Bible Readers," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS)*, Vol. 1, Issue 6 (2020): 221.
[17] Hans J. Vermeer, *A Skopos Theory of Translation: Some Arguments for and* Against (Heidelberg: Textcon Text Verlag, 1996), 50.
[18] Boaheng, *A Handbook for African Mother-Tongue Bible Translators* 7.
[19] Basil Hatim and Jeremy Munday, *Translation: An Advanced Resource Book* (London: Routledge, 2004), 6.

unidentifiable with the people.[20] This advances the view that is widely held that Bible translation should consider the context of people for whom a translation is intended.

In addition, Bible translation refers to the knack and technique of representing the Christian sacred writing (Bible) in a linguistic tongue which is completely foreign to the original text so well that the new readers would hear God speak to them in their own language and in a remarkable way. Translation of the Bible could refer to the vivid portrayal of all that is in source documents to such a degree that the actual intent and purposes of the content contained in the source text are not in any way denied the target reader. Striving to render a biblical text, using another linguistic tongue in a fashion where the substance of the sacred text found within the working text (source text), is considerably preserved in a target mother-tongue, remains the fundamental goal of Bible translation. "A translation of a Biblical text that offers neither coherence nor prominence does not present the structure of thought."[21] In executing a translation activity, there is the need to make use of a linguistic register that is clearly intelligible and is able to concurrently preserve the conventional rules, quality, structure, style, lexis, tense form, syntax and the "theologico-ethical" idea of the text.

Bible translation can be described as the art and practice of depicting the ancient Christian sacred text into mother-tongues which are different from the ancient ones in which the text was in earlier times written, bearing in mind the ethos of the new readers' natural milieu.[22] This suggests a way of rejuvenating the age-old Christian sacred texts as found in the working text or SL into a particular mother-tongue or TL in such a way that they appear culturally and significantly germane and acceptable to the local readers. Translation seems to be not only an act of translating a source material but also interpreting people's culture, ethos, cosmology and philosophy. A good translation is expected to integrate, to a large extent, the worldview of both the source text and the target text, taking into consideration, the principal cultural values, beliefs, philosophies and linguistic registers.

This brings to the fore the need for a competent translator. A translator is expected to be proficient in both the biblical language or SL and the selected target language or TL. A reliable translator ought to be one who is familiar and knowledgeable in the indigenous philosophical thoughts of both the original readers and the contemporary or target readers. In a translation work, one would anticipate that the translators to be assembled, would be experienced exegetes of the ancient biblical text and luminous indigenous speakers of the mother-tongue of the target readers.

To Aloo Osotsi Mojola, the dialects, the grammatical and figurative richness, as well as the cultural worldview inherent in the ancient biblical texts, should not be misunderstood to be the preserve of the ancient believers but should be thought as emanating from all the native community members among whom the texts were produced.[23] The implication is that the immediate context of the working text cannot be decoupled from the remote context. At the composition stage of a biblical text, it absorbs and affects essential elements of the community. "The competent translator would need to go behind

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[20] Jonathan Edward Tetteh Kuwornu-Adjaottor et al., "Structuralism, Deconstruction and Bible Translation and Interpretation: Philosophical Dimensions for Mother-tongue Bible Translation," *Archives of Humanities and Social Sciences Research* Vol. 2, Issue 1(2025): 2.

[21] Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1989), 195.

[22] Asamoah and Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "A Critical Study of the Designation of Chapter as *Ti,"* 221.

[23] "These texts are only subsets of the larger culture which is by definition larger than the sum of all its parts. There is, in fact, no exclusive Christian or holy language or culture exclusive to them as such. The language of any translation is part of the language of the larger culture – of which the language of any text is only a limited manifestation." See Aloo Osotsi Mojola, "Bible Translation in the Context of the Text, Church and World Matrix –a Post Nida Perspective," 154. [DOI: https://doi.org/10.28977/jbtr.2003.2.12.141].

the text to harness the historical, cultural, geographical, political, economic and religious background of that source text."[24] The task of a competent Bible translator, in the broadest sense, is to attempt to communicate the actual meaning of the source text in the receptor language.[25] Although Bible translators concur about this being their primary objective, they differ about the modus operandi in achieving it.

It is instructive to state that employing an appropriate translation approach brings ancient sacred scriptures back to life in a contemporary Bible-believing society. The relationship between ancient Bible believers and contemporary Bible believers is nothing more than theological. Majority of African Bible readers' interest in the Bible is driven by this theological quest. Translating the Bible into African indigenous languages such as Akan/Twi in order to help Akan Christians realise this theological expectation in the Bible has been undoubtedly helpful.

There are essentially two main translation philosophies or theories: formal (or literal) equivalence and dynamic (or functional) equivalence. In addition to these, "relevance theory" has recently gained traction in the translation field, though for the purpose of this study, the focus will remain on formal and functional equivalence. Formal equivalence, or literal equivalence, encourages translators to prioritize accuracy by ensuring that words, terms, figures, and phrases in the target language directly and sufficiently reflect those from the source language. This approach emphasizes preserving the integrity of the "Sacred Text," leading scholars to describe it as a "word-for-word translation."[26] It is rooted in the belief that translation should not involve interpretation.[27]

The core issue with the word-for-word approach is that it ends up being interpretive, despite its intention to avoid interpretation.[28] Kuwornu-Adjaottor argues that word-for-word or literal translation is a challenging task, as words only carry meaning when people attribute significance to them.[29] It is reasonable to argue that the meaning of a word, phrase, or expression cannot be fully understood without considering its context, which includes the entire system of beliefs, practices, and experiences that shape the world in which the word is used.[30]

Another translation philosophy, a relatively modern one, is dynamic equivalence or functional equivalence, which was propounded by Eugene Nida. Using the principle of "equivalent effect" from linguistics, Nida's theory emphasizes translating ideas rather than words, advocating for simple language and style to ensure the content is easily understood by the target audience.[31] Bible translations that follow this approach are more accessible to readers. Such translations align closely with the intention of the Bible writers, who aim to communicate in the everyday language of the people. This method makes translations clearer and more comprehensible for those unfamiliar with church teachings and for new Christians. The dynamic equivalence theory of translation focuses on conveying the closest natural equivalent of the source language's message in the receptor language, both in meaning and style. Its goal is to communicate a message that remains true to the original while being clear and natural in the target language. This is achieved through analysis, reconstruction and

[24] Twumasi-Ankrah et al., "An Analytical Study of the Translations of Genesis 1:26-27 in the Akuapem-Twi Bible," 47.
[25] Smith Kevin Gary, "Bible Translation and Relevance Theory: The Translation of Titus," (Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor *Litterarum*, Stellenbosch, South Africa: University of Stellenbosch, 2000), 24.
[26] J. G. van der Watt, "What happens when one picks up The Greek text?" *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 2 (2002): 247.
[27] Watt, "What happens when one picks up The Greek text?" 247.
[28] Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "Assessment of Three Problematic Texts," 80.
[29] Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "Assessment of Three Problematic Texts," 80.
[30] T. Wilt & E. Wendland, *Scripture Frames and Framing* (Stellenbosch: African SunMedia, 2008), 249.
[31] Eugene. A. Nida & C. R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1969/1982), 210.

transference of the source text to the target one.[32] Translations that are intended for new converts to the Christian Faith which must display faithfulness and precision regarding the original texts may be required to make use of contemporary words, articulated in new ways such that where necessary, new vocabularies or expressions are neologized. Also, such translations require that terms in the original text be transliterated or adapted to the pronunciation of the mother-tongue, or that idiomatic expressions that are used should express the central idea of the text.[33]

Conversely, the dynamic equivalence approach to Bible translation has faced significant criticism from some scholars, who argue that it is problematic. They contend that this theory of translation does not prioritise preserving the structure and form of the original text. Instead, it focuses on conveying the core idea of the source text in a way that fits the target language, suggesting that this approach is more focused on the reader than on the source text itself.

Philip Noss, for instance, argues that the dynamic equivalence approach does not draw on the theory of language, which is key to translation and thus falls short.[34] Nababan bluntly states that the objective of this theory is unrealistic in attempting to achieve the same effect on target readers as it was in the source text readers.[35] Donald Carson affirms that the theory has been the main basis for the identification of translation imperfections by some scholars.[36] Whereas Mojola and Wendland postulate that Nida's definition of translation is a statement or philosophy which views communication in terms of a conduit metaphor,[37] S. E. Porter contends that Nida does not take the theory far enough.[38]Others, however, believe that Nida has gone too far, and would love to retrace his steps to a more formal translational approach.[39] Those who hold this view argue that the source language should take precedence, as they believe that certain aspects of functional equivalence, such as an emphasis on communal clarity and excessive focus on the reader, can lead to unnecessary deviations from the original meaning of the sacred text.[40]

Despite the criticisms of the dynamic equivalence theory, it has highlighted an important concept: that Bible translation should not be rigid but rather dynamic and purpose-driven, aimed at conveying the Bible's message in a straightforward yet impactful way for readers. Christians view the Bible as God's message to humanity throughout history, calling all people to respond to His word. The dynamic principles of translation play a crucial role in fulfilling this ultimate purpose of the Bible.

It can be argued that the dynamic equivalence theory remains widely used today, as most translations aim to achieve a certain degree of equivalency with the source text.[41] Akan/Twi Bibles are familiar with the dynamic equivalence approach. Akan translators have extensively applied its principles across various texts in the Twi Bibles to effectively convey the message of the source text

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[32] Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "Assessment of Three Problematic Texts," 85.
[33] Twumasi-Ankrah et al., "Analytical Study of the Translations of Genesis 1:26-27," 48.
[34] Philip A. Noss (ed.), *A History of Bible Translation* (Scotland: Francis Dalrymple-Hamilton, 2007),
[35] M.R. Nababan, *Translation Theory* (2008), cited in Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "Assessment of Problematic Texts," 86.
[36] Donald Arthur Carson, "The Limits of Functional Equivalence in Bible Translation and other Limits too," *The Bible Translator* Vol. 56, Issues 1-4, (2005): 91.
[37] Osotsi Aloo Mojola & R. E. Wendland, "Scripture Translation in Translation Studies," in T. Wilt, ed., *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2003), 7.
[38] S. E. Porter, "Translations of the Bible (since the KJV)," in S. E. Porter, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 365.
[39] L. Ryken, *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation: Communicating God's Word to the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002),
[40] Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "Assessment of Problematic Texts," 87.
[41] J.C. Loba-Mkole, "History and Theory of Scripture Translations,"*Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 19 (2008):176.

to Akan readers. This characteristic of the Akan/Twi Bibles strongly supports the need for ongoing translation, interpretation, retranslation, and reinterpretation.

It is in this vein that translation flaws usually arise in biblical translations. "The capacity of an exegete to suitably represent a source material in the language, cultural and situational context of the target readers, without misrepresenting the context and content of the source text has always been the most daunting mission of biblical translation undertakings. There are several factors that contribute to translation imperfections in receptor languages. One such factor is the involvement of non-native translators, whose lack of expertise and proficiency in the target language can negatively impact the translation. Mojola supports this observation, noting that "a quick look at many Bible translation journals reveals this issue."[42] The reliance on other translations as source texts for third-language target texts also contribute to translation imperfections. Emmanuel Asamoah confirms this, noting that there appear to be translation and interpretation challenges for native speakers of Akan, particularly with the AsTB.[43]

Another issue is the lack of equivalent words, expressions, and figures in the target language that can fully convey the meaning of the source language. Rhodes supports this by stating that there is no direct one-to-one correlation between words in different languages, and since no two languages express ideas in exactly the same way, no translation can ever be completely flawless.[44] Like other translations, the Akan Bibles face certain translation challenges due to the factors mentioned earlier. The present study seeks to offer an improved version of the text (Gen. 2:15) in the AsTB.

3.0 COMPONENTS AND SOURCES OF GENESIS 2:15

A thorough understanding and meaning of a literary work such as the Old Testament (OT) hinges almost always on the context. The true meaning is lost when one attempts to take statements out of context.[45] This study is essentially set in the context of primeval history (Gen. 1-11). This body of texts is among the most important texts as well as among the best known in the OT canon.[46] Primeval history seeks to give a universal setting for what is to be the early sacred history of one particular people (Ancient Israel).[47] Genesis 1 and 2 are understood to be two corresponding accounts of the creation narrative. Levy avows that the first two chapters of Genesis are a single account of creation with two distinct and complementary points of view, where each emphasises a unique aspect of the creation process and presents different facets of the same issue.[48] As postulated by William Dyrness, taking the text (Gen. 1:1-2:4a) as a pericope, it is ascribed to the late Priestly (P) source, while its parallel (Gen. 2:4b-25), is considered to have emerged from the Yahwist/Jahwist (J) tradition.[49] This indicates that

[42] Mojola, "Bible Translation in the Context of the Text," 156.
[43] Emmanuel Foster Asamoah, "A Study of the Translation of *proseuche* (Acts 6:4) in the Greek New Testament and Asante-Twi Bible," *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* Vol. 9, Issue 2 (2022):1.
[44] R. Rhodes, *The Complete Guide to Bible Translation: How They Were Developed* (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2009), 26.
[45] Ronald L. Giese Jnr, "Literary Forms of the Old Testament," in *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Literary Forms* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), 5.
[46] Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 11.
[47] Ephraim A Speiser, "Genesis," in *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1964)
[48] Yamin Levy, "Fiat and Forming: Genesis I & II Revisited," *A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought* Vol. 27, No. 1 (1992): 20.
[49] William Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois, USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), 66.

although the corpus arises from the Mosaic period, the creation narrative comes to us from two angles –possibly from two ancient traditions that complement each other.[50]

A critical perusal of the context, structure and syntax of Genesis 2, brings to fore the striking movement of what appears to be a second account of the creation narrative.[51] Unlike the earlier account (Gen. 1), human is portrayed as having an intimate relationship with the environment. He is a product of the earth (v. 7), he is made to consider it as his dwelling place and he is told to take responsibility for its development and sustainability (v. 15). This interconnectedness between humanity and earth is emphasized by the *'ādām-'ādāmāh,* assonance.[52] It is interesting to note that the J source joins together several old stories and myths, and rewrites them to convey its religious message about Yahweh.[53]

The OT concept of the creation of the world was a theological position and an expression of faith by Ancient Israel.[54] The story reflects Israel's thought in the 10th century BC when it had become a nation that could contend with other nations and their beliefs.[55] Theologically, Israel sought to identify herself within the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) wider context of the prevailing ideas about the origin of the universe, which included the then nations of the world (Gen. 1:1, 26-28; 2:7). In contrast to Israel's view was the idea of the origin of nature and or the world, thought to have been an emanation of the deity.[56] The OT creation narratives may have been an effort by Ancient Israel to assert her identity as a sovereign nation among neighbouring states. These narratives aimed to reinforce Israel's legitimacy and claim to the land, countering any perceptions that they were a vassal or foreign entity within the Fertile Crescent. Hence, in the J source, creation begins with humanity; other creatures, including the earth and all that it contains are made for human benefit. In contrast to J, the P source deals with only a few crucial events, chiefly among them is the creation of the world. It works out a wider theology around the goodness of God's creation and focuses more on moments of blessing[57] of which Israel was a key beneficiary.

All of this is to say that the authors[58] of the Book of Genesis took various ancient stories which were in oral tradition and used them to relate how God gave "dominion" and responsibility for the world to humanity, the freedom to act on one's own and the gifts to achieve happiness. Here, only what is essential is recorded; nothing is accidental or included merely because it stood in the received tradition.[59] It is more or less a theologically captivating speech, meant to inspire contingents to come to terms with who they are, so that they would take up their roles and do the needful.

3.1 The Linear Structure of Genesis 2:4-7, 15

A. An Introduction (v. 4)

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[50] S. Robert Candlish, *Studies in Genesis* (Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1979), 34.
[51] Levy, "Fiat and Forming," 24.
[52] Lawrence A. Turner, "Announcements of Plot in Genesis," (Ph.D., Thesis, The University of Sheffield, 1988), 18.
[53] Claus Westermann, *Genesis*, tr. David E. Green, (London: T&T Cark International, 2004), 2.
[54] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* English tr. D. M. G, (Edinburg: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), 339.
[55] Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* 66.
[56] Rad, *Old Testament Theology* 339.
[57] Dryness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* 66.
[58] Authorship of Genesis has been in dispute among scholars. For example, Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), 21-22, argues that a good case can be made that Moses authored the essential shape of Genesis and of the Pentateuch, he clearly did not author the extant text in our hands. However, traditionally, Jews and Christians alike have held that Moses was the author/compiler of the first five books of the Old Testament.
[59] Solomon T. Babawale and Nathaniel O. Shogunle, "Man and Environment: Exegesis of Genesis 1:26-28 in Nigerian Context," *SMCC Higher Education Research Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 1(2020): 197.

B. Background/Setting (vv. 5-6)
C. Main Event (Formation of human from the ground) (v. 7)
D. The planting of a beautiful garden by the LORD God for the human (vv. 8 -14)
E. The LORD God made human responsible for the upkeep of the garden (v. 15)

The main event starts from verse 7 with וַיִּיצֶר *vayyiṣer*, "and he formed," which is a *wayyiqtol* verb. The presence of verbs describing what had "not yet" happened in verse 5, and then verbs with process aspect in verse 6, describing what was happening when the action of verse 7 took place has been identified.[60] The plot describes the state of things on earth when it was first created, where the economy of the inanimate kingdom or of the botanical world was fitted instantly to maintain the sovereignty of the LORD God and to provide for the welfare of human.[61] The narrator begins with the appearance of the earth itself, endowed with potential to produce varieties of seeds (Gen. 2:5) to support human life. The next to appear is the effect of precipitation (Gen. 2:6). Finally, as an essential factor to effectively achieve the divine intent, is the formation and tending hands of human to work, cultivate and develop that terrestrial environment (Gen. 2:7).

Here, one observes a contrast between the P and the J accounts. In the former account (Gen. 1:26-28), human is portrayed as a high spiritual being, with heavenly nature, capable of having a strong nexus with God; whereas human, in the second account (Gen. 2:4-7), is depicted as earthly, originating from the earth and having earthly interconnectedness.[62] It is instructive to state that when the two accounts (P and J) are scrutinized fairly, as affirmed further by Candlish, one would notice that they are consistent with and supplementary to each other.[63] What one observes in the second pericope (2:4-7) presents an outline that can best be described as a linear structure, describing the storyline.

4.0 GENESIS 2:15 IN ANCIENT TEXTS

Text	Masoretic Text (MT)	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (TPsJ)[64]	Septuagint (LXX)[65]
Ancient Text	וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיַּנִּחֵהוּ בְּגַן־עֵדֶן לְעָבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ׃	וּרְבַר יְיָ אֱלֹהִים יַת אָדָם מִן טַוָר פּוּלְחָנָא אָתַר דְּאִתְבְּרִיָא מִתַּמָן וַאֲשְׁרֵה בְּגִינוֹנִיתָא דְּעֵדֶן לְמֶהֱוֵי פְּלַח בְּאוֹרַיְתָא וּלְמִנְטַר	καὶ ἔλαβεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὃν ἔπλασεν, καὶ ἔθετο αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ

[60] Jack Collins, "Discourse Analysis and the Interpretation of Genesis 2:4-7," *Westminster Theological Journal* Vol. 61, (1999): 273.
[61] Candlish, *Studies in Genesis* 36.
[62] Candlish, *Studies in Genesis* 34.
[63] Candlish, *Studies in Genesis* 34.
[64] Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is a western Targum (translation) of the Torah (Pentateuch) traditionally believed to have come from the land of Israel (as opposed to the eastern Babylonian Targum Onkelos). It is an Aramaic translation and interpretation of the Law, done for liturgical purposes. This Aramaic translation occurred at a time when Hebrew had ceased. Its correct title was originally Targum Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Targum), which is how it was known in medieval times.
[65] University of Pennsylvania Center for Computer Analysis of Texts (CCAT), https://www.blueletterbible.org/lxx/gen/2/1/s_2001. See also, Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7.

		פִּקּוּדָהָא	ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ φυλάσσειν
Transliteration	*vayyiqqaḥ ’āḏōnāi ’ēlōhim ‘et-hā’āḏām vayyanniḥêhū ḇəḡan-‘êḏen, lə’āḇəḏāh ūšāmərāh.*	*ūḏḇar yəyā ’ēlōhim yat ’āḏām min thāvār pūlḥānā ’ātar dəitbarəyā mitamān və’ašəreh bəgiynūniytā’ də’eḏēn ləmēhēvey pəlaḥ bə’orayətā’ ūləminəthar piqūrāhā’*	*kai elaben kyrios ho theos ton anthropon, hon eplasen, kai etheto auton en to paradeisō ergazesthai auton kai phylassein.*
Translation	And the LORD God took the human and put him in the *beautiful garden* to cultivate and keep it.	And the LORD God took the man from the mountain of worship, where he had been created, and made him dwell in the Garden of Eden, to do service in the law, and to keep its commandments.”[66]	And the Lord God took the man whom he had formed, and placed him in the *garden of delight,* to cultivate and keep it

4.1 Textual Variants of Genesis 2:15

It can be observed that though both the MT and TPsJ of Genesis 2:15 were written in Hebrew and Aramaic respectively and produced in Israel, there are significant differences at the literary level. This could not be as a result of a mistake but possibly, as it were, the translators of the TPsJ attempted to include an explanation or expansion of the text. This is not strange since the Targum is not just a translation but also a commentary.[67] A close look at the text (Gen. 2:15) in the TPsJ, brings out strange phrases such as “the mountain of worship,” “service in the law” and “to keep its commandment.” All these phrases are unknown to the MT and the LXX. They could have been added by a later editor to draw Israel’s attention to her primary duty towards Yahweh –the keeping of the Mosaic Law and the commandments. This (TPsJ) translator refers to the ground from which human was formed as a “mountain of worship” – a sanctuary, denoting, sacredness. Also, the exhortation to “do service in the law” and “keep the commandments,” is an expression of what the Israelite community of faith thought to be their main preoccupation, and would grab every slightest opportunity to highlight it. However, in the MT, human is exhorted rather, to “till” or “cultivate” the ground and keep it; no reference is made to the Law.

Rose’s English version of the TPsJ translates *ḇəḡan-‘êḏen* as (Garden of Eden), highlighting the basis for similar renderings in some of the English versions. However, the LXX, which was meant to be read by non-Jews, presents it as παραδείσῳ *paradeisō,* (paradise), which denotes the idea of a delightful, beautiful, pleasurable, pleasant place. The LXX would assume this posture of translating *‘êḏen,* for its audience who hitherto would not easily understand the term. This is in keeping with the idea that translation goes with interpretation. This raises the question of what YHWH really meant when he instructed the human to *‘āḇaḏ*, and *šāmar,* in such a beautiful and pleasurable environment. It is against this backdrop that this paper would advocate for a suitable translation and interpretation of *‘āḇaḏ*, and *šāmar*, in the AsTB.

5.0 THE FORMATION/MAKING OF HUMAN FROM THE GROUND (GEN. 2:4-7)

5.1 Introduction of the Event (v. 4)

The Yahwist account of creation distinctly seeks to provide a universal perspective on the origin of the world. The narrative emphasises that all generations and creations in the universe, both human and

[66] Tov Rose, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862-1865), 9.
[67] Rose, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, 4.

non-human, emanate from the LORD God (YHWH). This portrayal underscores YHWH as both the creator and sustainer of the cosmos and its inhabitants. The narrative effectively conveys the divine power and creative attributes of YHWH through the depiction of various events, highlighting the teleological characteristics inherent in the natural world as described by the authors.

5.1.1 *The Background/Setting and the Event (vv. 5-6, 7)*

Genesis 2:5-6 introduces the formation of humans by first detailing the temporal, environmental, and procedural context leading up to this event. The passage reveals that the earth and its plants were created by YHWH prior to the making of humans. Additionally, God caused water to emerge from the ground to irrigate the plants He had created. This narrative suggests that God prepared a favourable environment for the forthcoming formation of humans, an environment that would also be conducive to the flourishing of both flora and fauna, thereby fostering a harmonious and potentially picturesque landscape. The emergence of water from the ground to irrigate the plants also suggests that the soil was sufficiently moistened to be shaped. This moisture is significant in the formation of the human, who was formed from the dust of the ground (v. 7), thereby establishing a material connection between the earth and humanity. The immaterial aspect of the human being, however, was imparted by YHWH through the vital breath of life, which was breathed into the human, thereby animating him and making him a living being.

5.1.2 *The LORD creates a "Beautiful Garden" for Humankind (vv. 8-14)*

וַיִּקַּח *vayyiqqaḥ,* is from the Hebrew primary root, לָקַח *lāqaḥ,* a *qal waw* consecutive imperfect third masculine singular verb, denoting, "to take" or "receive."[68] In the text, *vayyiqqaḥ,* should be translated as "and he took,"[69] referring to the LORD God as the subject and the human becomes the object of the sentence. This could reveal an idea of YHWH, leading the human to the beautiful environment created for them.

וַיַּנִּחֵהוּ *vayyanniḥêhū,* can be analysed morphologically as consisting of a *waw* conjunction, *hiphil*[70] consecutive imperfect third masculine singular verb.[71] Its primary root comes from יָנַח *yānaḥ,* meaning, "deposit"; by implication, to allow to stay, lay down, let alone, place, and set down.[72] The *hiphil* forms of the root, usually come with the *dagesh,* as is the case of the text (Gen. 2:15). The verb in context, can therefore be understood as the LORD God, causing the human to stay in the garden. In the simplest term, "he put," "deposited or placed" the human in the garden or made the human stay in the garden. This means that the human's occupancy of the garden was not a choice he made but rather he was made to stay there to play a role for the creator. Bruce Waltke affirms that God's placement of the human in the beautiful garden suggests that humanity is meant for fellowship in the garden, with God, its creator and chief gardener. This implies that God's action in making that beautiful garden and placing the human there was pragmatically to create an atmosphere for relationship and

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[68] James C. Bangsund, *You can Read Biblical Hebrew: Simple Lessons and a Basic Dictionary* (Tanzania: Research Institute of Makumira University College, 2015), 294; James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), No. 3947.

[69] John A. F. Sawyer, *A Modern Biblical Hebrew* (London, Stocksfield: Oriel Press Ltd Routledge & Kegan Paul plc, 1976), 98.

[70] *Hiphil* stem of a verb is understood to be a causative active form of the verb.

[71] *BibleWorks, 9.*

[72] Strong, *Strong's Concordance* No. 3240.

interrelationship. Thus, Adam and Eve's expulsion will make them feel like castaways in a strange land.[73]

Some scholars are of the view that Garden of Eden refers to a specific but inaccessible place.[74] The garden is often interpreted as a symbolic space within the created order, where God invites human beings to experience a state of pleasure and harmony. In this environment, humans are meant to live in peaceful relationship with God, one another, the animals, and the land upon which they reside. It is not the focus of this paper to wade into the debate on the location of the Garden of Eden but to come to terms with the role of human in such a beautiful place and to ascertain whether or not that idea, inherent in the source text (Gen. 2:15) has been rendered suitably in the AsTB with all its theological nuances. Be it as it may, the theological view is that God manifests himself in a place like this.[75] "This garden is described as a place of unparalleled beauty, with rich fertile soil, supporting a variety of lush vegetation and fruit-bearing trees. Where the air is filled with the sweet fragrance of flowers, while a crystal clear river flows peacefully through its midst, providing nourishment to the land."[76] Robin Ten Hoopen affirms that Eden is a luxurious and fertile place, rich in water and mythically located in the East.[77]

The topography, vegetation, and Celestial River within the garden narrative collectively evoke an image of paradise [78] in the Garden of Eden.[79] It is important to recognize that in the Genesis narrative, the focus lies more on the symbolic significance of the garden rather than its geographical details. There, Eden represents a state of uninterrupted fellowship between God and humanity, and that of human and the natural environment. The expulsion from the garden thus signifies more than just a physical departure; it reflects humanity's sin – disobedience to God's command and the temporary distortion of the ideal interrelationships. Furthermore, Eden was not merely a place of luxury and enjoyment, but also a space where humans were assigned tasks and responsibilities.[80]

5.1.3 *The Responsibilities of Human in the Garden of Eden*

The narrator reveals that YHWH spelt out specific duties for the human whom he had put in the garden. They were to '*āḇaḏ*, and *šāmar*. עָבְדָה '*āḇəḏāh,* is from the primary root, עָבַד *'āḇaḏ*, denoting, "to work," "till," "serve," "keep,"[81] "cultivate."[82] The word appears 290 times in the Old Testament.[83] The

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[73] Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), 86.
[74] John J. Collins, "Models of Utopia in the Biblical Tradition," in *A Wise and Discerning Mind: Essays in Honour of Burke O. Long.* ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley, *Providence: Brown Judaic Studies*. (2020): 69. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvzgb93t.1; Arthur H. Lewis, "The Localization of the Garden of Eden," *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Vol.11, 4(1968): 170; F. Brown, "A Recent Theory of the Garden of Eden," *The Old Testament Student* Vol. IV, I(1884): 3. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3156297?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.
[75] Waltke, *Genesis* 85.
[76] Konstantin Borisov, "The Garden of Eden: A New Perspective on its Location," *Archaeological Discovery* Vol. 12 (2024): 198. DOI: 10.4236/ad.2024.124012.
[77] Robin B. Ten Hoopen, "The Garden in Eden: A Holy Place?" in P. B. Hartog, S. Laderman, V. Tohar, & A. L. H. M. Van Wieringen eds., *Jerusalem and Other Holy Places as Foci of Multireligious and Ideological Confrontation* Vol. 37 (Brill Academic Publishers, 2021): 171. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004437210_011.
[78] The term paradise is derived from the LXX's rendering of Eden by *paradeisos* from Old Persian *pairi-daeza*, which meant, "an enclosed park and pleasure ground."
[79] Waltke, *Genesis* 85-86.
[80] Harris et al, *Theological Wordbook* (2003), 639.
[81] Strong, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* No. 5647. Is this reference different from footnote 69? If no, then be consistent with or without the use of "Abingdon."
[82] Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament,* 6001.
[83] Harris et al, *Theological Wordbook,* 639.

etymology of this word seems to share the ideas of several Semitic roots. Examples include the old Aramaic root which means "to do" or "make," and an Arabic root meaning, "to worship," or "obey" God.[84] When used in reference to things, it is usually followed by an accusative of the thing upon which the labour is expended, example, "to till a field" (Gen 2:5 and often elsewhere); "to dress" vineyards; workers or artisans in flax (Isa 19:9) or in city construction (Ezk. 48:18). Occasionally it is without the accusative as in Deuteronomy 15:19, "to till the ground."[85] Commenting on this, Waltke posits, "Work is a gift of God, not punishment for sin."[86] This implies that humankind was given the responsibility of working and taking care of the garden as a farmer does.

שָׁמְרָה *šāmərāh,* comes from the primary root, שָׁמַר *šāmar,* meaning, "to hedge about" (as with thorns) that is, "guard,"[87] "keep," generally, "to protect," "attend to."[88] This word, *šāmar,* is used 420 times in *qal* form, 37 times in the *niph'al* and 4 times in the *pi'el* and *hithpa'el* forms.[89] The fundamental idea of the root is "to exercise great care over," "do carefully or diligently and to take care of things" such as a garden (Gen. 2:15), a flock (Gen. 30:31), a house (2 Sam. 15:16).[90] In the text (Gen. 2:15), it has been rendered in *qal* infinitive construct suffix third person feminine singular.[91] It is one of the verbs that reveals clearly humans' responsibilities as given by God in the text to diligently take care of the beautiful garden.

6.0 THE TRANSLATION OF *'āḇaḏ,* AND *šāmar,* IN THE ASANTE-TWI BIBLE

An examination of the AsTB's translation of the text (Gen. 2:15), as *Na Awurade Nyankopɔn de onipa no kɔtenaa Eden turom sɛ ɔnnɔ na ɔnwɛn hɔ,* indicates a translation imperfection. The imperfection is located in the clause, *ɔnnɔ na ɔnwɛn hɔ,* literally, "he should weed/clear and watch it." The primary root of the word, *ɔnnɔ,* is *dɔ*. This word can have nuances such as "weed a bush," "love someone/something;" it can also stand for adjectives such as "deep," "hot" and many others. The context of the creation narrative, where human was set in a garden, would tilt toward no other connotations than the idea of weeding or clearing. However, the rendering of *'āḇaḏ*, as *dɔ*, "weed," could be considered literally by some readers. The Hebrew verb, *'āḇaḏ*, denotes more than a mere clearing of a bush but it connotes, to work, prepare, till, plough, dig or cultivate.[92] This idea of '*āḇaḏ,* is logically uncontested, since one would not expect God, who, having made that beautiful garden, would place humans there to just clear it. This is affirmed by Turner that this "tilling" and "keeping" could well be part of the task involved in subduing the earth."[93] The implications could be that human beings were to make use of all the agricultural practices in order to make that beautiful garden in their care a fruitful and sustainable one.

As a result, it would be important for one to postulate an alternative rendering of the word in the AsTB, to avoid the possibility of being interpreted literally by some readers. In fact, one is not

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[84] Harris et al, *Theological Wordbook,* 639.
[85] Harris et al, *Theological Wordbook,* 639
[86] Waltke, *Genesis,* 87.
[87] Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament,* 8758.
[88] Strong, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* No. 8104. Check ref.
[89] Harris et al, *Theological Wordbook,* 939. Its cognate in Akkadian is *šāmāru* denoting, "wait upon", "attend to". Its equivalent in Phoenician means "watch", "guard". The Arabic renders it as *samara*, "watch".
[90] Harris et al, *Theological Wordbook,* 939.
[91] *BibleWorks,* 9.
[92] Harris et al, *Theological Wordbook,* 639; Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament,* 6001.
[93] Turner, "Announcements of Plot in Genesis," 19.

oblivious of the existence of a deeper meaning of *dɔ,* in the Asante-Twi grammatical structure. Aside from its literal meaning of "weeding," the word could have a deeper nuance. For instance, the Asante-Twi language has expressions such as *medɔ kookoo,* "I cultivate cocoa," *medɔ afuo*, "I am a farmer." All of this shows the deeper denotation of the word – it is more than mere weeding or clearing of a field. This implies that the translator's use of *ɔnnɔ,* in the AsTB is not completely out of place if all readers could interpret it using its deeper meaning. Yet, since interpretation is the core of translation, and the fact that the possibility of literal interpretation is anticipated, thus, it must be dealt with, if possible.

Consequently, it is proposed for the AsTB translators to consider, *ɔnyɔ mu adwuma,* "cultivate it" or "work it," as an alternative expression to discourage the likelihood of literal interpretation from some readers. The clause, if rendered this way, would include in its connotations, all the farming practices such as weeding, uprooting of stamps, ploughing, digging, cultivating, watering, pricking out, thinning out, pruning, disease and pest controlling, staking, and among such others. This alternative proposition is consistent with the translators of the sister Akan/Twi versions. The AkTB version, for instance, translates the clause of the text (2:15), as *ɔnyɔ mu adwuma,* "he should work it." The MfTB version, on the other hand, renders it as, *onsiesie hɔ,* "he should clean/improve it." The AsTB translators could take a cue from these other Twi translations and revise that clause in Genesis 2:15.

Likewise, the succeeding clause, *ɔnwɛn hɔ,* "he should watch it," needs to be revised. This is because the current rendering in the AsTB (2012/2018), could be taken literally by some readers, to mean a mere watching of the garden. Even though the Hebrew verb, *šāmar,* could denote, to "watch" or "guard" in some contexts, the textual analysis done, has proven from the root, a primary notion of exerting great care or meticulously taking care of things.[94] Humans had a responsibility of taking care of the beautiful garden of God, on behalf of God. This implies that they were not to become mere watchmen and gatekeepers, but were expected to protect and assume the responsibility of managers of God's venture. Consequently, one may suggest that the last clause, *šāmar,* (Gen. 2:15) in the AsTB, could be rendered as *ɔnhwɛ so yie,* "he should take care of it" or "keep it." As it were, this alternative rendering is not preposterous, in that, it proves to be consistent with the AkTB and MfTB versions.

6.1 Proposed Translation of Genesis 2:15 in the Asante-Twi Bible

Based on the preceding contextual, textual and morphosyntactical analysis of *ʿāḇaḏ*, and *šāmar* (Gen. 2:15), the proposed translations for Asante-Twi readers are presented in the table below:

Table 2: Proposed Translation of Genesis 2:15 in the Asante-Twi

English	Verse	Asante-Twi (AsTB)
And the LORD God took the human and placed him in the *Beautiful Garden* to *cultivate and to take great care of it.*	**15**	*Na Awurade Nyankopɔn de onipa no kɔduaa turo fɛɛfɛ no mu sɛ, ɔnyɔ mu adwuma na ɔnhwɛ so yie.*

[94] Harris et al, *Theological Wordbook,* 939.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

Following the discussions so far, this paper recommends that institutions running theological, biblical and religious programmes need to incorporate courses on mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics and translation studies as well as biblical languages in order to train exegetes and translators in Ghana. Bible translation agencies in Ghana such as Bible Society of Ghana, GILBIT, Theovision etcetera are encouraged to engage competent exegetes, biblical scholars and translators in their translation activities and must be bold in employing functional equivalence where applicable in order to bring home the message of the Bible in the receptor languages in Akan. They are encouraged to study the findings of this research and adopt the alternative translation to revise the AsTB to have the same idea as captured in the AkTB and MfTBs.

8.0 CONCLUSION

Having scrutinized ancient texts such as the Masoretic Text, Septuagint and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and their parallel with Asante-Twi Bible regarding the text (Gen. 2:15), this paper has drawn attention to potential inaccuracies in the rendition of the Hebrew clause, *ʻāḇəḏāh ūšāmərāh*, from the verbs, *ʻāḇaḏ*, and *šāmar,* "till and keep, "into the AsTB. The text was examined in its historical and biblical context. After examining the textual situation in the selected ancient texts, a morphosyntactical analysis was done. The paper critically studied the Asante-Twi rendition of Genesis 2:15 and contends that since the biblical and theological idea of the creation of a garden where the human race was to dwell and cultivate and take great care of resonates well with the Akan greenery environment, which is full of flora and fauna; presenting the clause with a clearer Twi expression that captures its full nuances; could be timely. Consequently, an alternative rendition, *ɔnyɔ mu adwuma na ɔnhwɛ so yie*, "he should cultivate and keep it well," has been proposed for AsTB translators and readers. It is believed that the proposed translation could engender a stimulating viewpoint in the environmental discourse of Akan Christians. The alternative translations provided in the study are meant to provide the Akan Christian community with an accurate, faithful, and better translation that will enhance Mother-tongue theologizing.

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