

“true sayings”, *The Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Letters*, by George W. Knight III (Kampen: Kok 1968, pages 52–55). Knight also remarks that our understanding of 1 Tim 3:1 should not be prejudiced by our view of episcopacy.

Translators should by no means ignore the new edition of Nestle-Aland, seeing that it does sometimes suggest a different meaning from the UBS text. However in 1 Tim 3:1 the UBS paragraphing is to be preferred.

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The translation of “Passover” in French-speaking parts of Africa, and elsewhere

Since the early history of the Christian Church there has been a close relationship between the Passover of the OT and the Christian celebration of the resurrection of Christ. In later Christian usage the Greek word for Passover (*pascha*) was applied to the Easter festival. This close relationship between the two festivals has been the cause of some confusion in the translation of the word for Passover, especially in French-speaking areas of Africa.

The well-known French dictionary, *Le Petit Robert*, lists the words *Pâque* (“Passover”) and *Pâques* (“Easter”) as having a common origin in the Latin *pascua*, which in turn comes from the Greek *pascha*. The feminine singular noun, *la Pâque*, is defined as “the annual Jewish festival commemorating the Exodus from Egypt”, while *Pâques*, the plural form of the noun, means “the Christian celebration . . . commemorating the resurrection of Christ”. Obviously the meanings are quite different, but in French the spelling of the two words differs only slightly and the pronunciation is identical except in a few special cases. The word for Passover is normally accompanied by the definite article, but no article appears with the word meaning Easter.

The word “Easter”, of course, does not occur in the Bible (except in the incorrect translation of Acts 12:4 in the Authorized Version). But the word “Passover” is found more than seventy-five times in both the Old and New Testaments. The proper translation of this item is therefore quite important.

Traditionally, the tendency in French-speaking parts of Africa has been to transliterate and adapt the Greek word, *pascha*, yielding such forms as *Peska* (K nyarwanda), *Pasika* (Kirundi), *Pasaka* (Zaire, Swahili and Kinandi), *Pashika* (Kiluba), and *Paseka* (Ngbaka). The same approach has been used in other parts of Africa too, and perhaps elsewhere in the world. Hausa, a language of Nigeria, uses the term *Paska*. In Angola the Umbundo translation has *Pascoa*. And East African Swahili, like the Swahili of Zaire, also has *Pasaka*.

Frequently, however, translations in Central Africa have used French as their basis of transliteration. This has produced such terms as *Pake* (Kituba, 1950), *Paki* (Lingala, 1977), and simply *Pâque* in Bulu of Cameroun, Sango of Central African Republic, and the new translation into Kituba in Zaire.

There are at least two important arguments against such renderings of Passover. First, meaningful translations should seek to avoid transliterations wherever possible, because they often produce words that are either meaningless or misunderstood by the average reader. Why should the transliteration of *pascha* or *Pâque* be any more acceptable than the transliteration of words like *Raca* or *Mammon* or *Didymus*?

In French-speaking parts of Africa there is a second reason for avoiding the transliteration of the French word for Passover. Many African languages in these areas have borrowed the French word for Easter. As we have noted, the pronunciation of the words for Easter and Passover is virtually identical. In most contexts only the presence or absence of the definite article distinguishes them. Since most African languages do not have definite articles, there remains no way to distinguish between the two terms where the general population has borrowed the word for Easter and the Bible translators have borrowed the word for Passover to use in their translation. In the Lingala-speaking area, for example, the word *Paki* is far from meaningless. On the contrary, where this matter has been tested, the response of almost all those persons questioned indicates that this word brings to its hearers ideas of the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. Some even consider the references to *Paki* before the death of Christ as prophetic!

Even in languages where the basis of transliteration is Greek rather than French, the same term has sometimes been adopted for Easter as well as Passover. Thus the same confusion exists as in the languages that have used French as their basis of transliteration.

The solution to this problem is the same as that proposed by Nida for similar items, namely to **translate** the word rather than transliterate it. "It is not necessary or advisable," says Nida, "to transliterate such words as 'centurion' or 'apostle'. One can always employ a phrase such as 'a leader of one hundred soldiers' for 'centurion' and 'a sent one' for 'apostle'." (*Bible Translating*, pages 18–19.) We should translate the idea of "passover" or "passage" rather than transliterating from either the Greek or the French.

The words *pascha* in the NT and *pesah* in the Hebrew OT should not only be translated, but they should be translated by the expression which is the most appropriate in each passage where they are found. In some passages the word Passover refers to the actual Passover meal held on the 15th of Nisan in the Jewish calendar. More frequently, however, Passover refers to the entire seven day festival leading up to the killing and eating of the Passover lamb. And in other cases it refers to the sacrificial animal itself.

A study of the immediate context of the word "Passover" will give a clear indication of which of these three meanings is intended. If it occurs with a verb such as "kill", "sacrifice", "slaughter", "offer", or "roast", then we are required by the context to understand that the writer has in mind the animal that is sacrificed for the celebration. But if the word Passover is accompanied by the verb "keep" or "celebrate", the meaning "festival" is indicated. The verbs "prepare" and "eat" could be understood to refer either to the meal as a whole or to the lamb, but in most cases it is better to translate "Passover meal" in contexts where these verbs occur.

The two principles discussed here are basic to meaningful translating: (1) translate rather than transliterate whenever possible and (2) translate with what is appropriate in each passage. Yet somehow these principles have often been neglected with regard to the translation of the word "Passover". Translators should take care to apply these principles when translating the word for Passover, just as they do when translating other important terms.

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