

PD17 - Commentary on PD17

Post by "Don" of July 17, 2023 at 6:53 AM

[Quote from Nate](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

am of the opinion that translations should, if at all possible, reflect the original texts' wordplay, eg, playing off the original here in [PD17](#)'s:

δίκαιος vs ἄδικος

ἀταρακτότατος vs ταραχῆς

I agree. As far as KD17 goes, it should be "**the greatest troubles.**"

Good call!

Ὁ δίκαιος ἀταρακτότατος, ὁ δ' ἄδικος πλείστης ταραχῆς γέμων.

More literal (formal equivalence):

"The one who acts justly has a fully untroubled mind; but the one who acts unjustly is full of the greatest troubles."

More dynamic/functional equivalence:

"One who acts justly has the greatest peace of mind, free from trouble; but one who acts unjustly is full of troubles, and will be agitated, confused, and uncertain."

There is definitely a place for both formal and dynamic translation. I see Epicurus's wordplay using similar words or constructions often being lost in traditional or scholarly translations. What would be optimal, from my perspective, would be to be able to somehow convey that wordplay as well as to convey the various nuances and connotations the ancient Greek language has in a readable, colloquial English style. Doing both is NOT easy! Anybody who attempts translation, formal or functional, has my respect!

[Dynamic and formal equivalence - Wikipedia](#)

Edit:

In the past, I looked askance at dynamic/functional equivalence. My impression (especially of Bible translation) was that the translator was trying to read their own understanding into the text, to make it say something it wasn't actually saying. While that may be possible, I now think

a strictly literal translation could do the same in that choosing one target word to convey one source word can also hide the deeper meaning of a text. Some balance of dynamic and formal equivalence is probably the best approach. And yes I'm trying to remind myself of this all the time 😊