

Using Google AI to generate translation of ancient Greek words

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 28, 2026 at 2:51 PM

I know there are mixed feelings for some regarding the use of AI, but I have just discovered that it is quite easy to use Google AI to translate ancient Greek words (but of course we know that errors may surface).

I was working on a particular section of the Letter to Menoecus, and found this on one of the words...

query: translate into english from ancient greek the following word: παράττεσθαι

Quote

AI response:

The Ancient Greek verb **παράττεσθαι** (tarattesthai) translates to **"to be troubled," "to be disturbed," "to be agitated," or "to be thrown into confusion."** [1, 2]

It is the present passive/middle infinitive of *tarassō* (τράσσω), which literally means to stir up or agitate liquids (like muddying water) and metaphorically refers to unsettling the mind or emotions. [1]

And then I queried (just for fun and comparison):

is this word used in the bible ?

Quote

AI response:

Yes, the underlying verb **τράσσω** (*tarassō*) is used in the New Testament.

While the exact grammatical form **παράττεσθαι** (the present passive infinitive) does not explicitly appear in the finalized textual tradition of the New Testament, other inflected variations of the exact same passive verb are used in some of the Bible's most famous passages to describe deep emotional or spiritual distress. [1]

Notable New Testament Uses

In the New Testament, the verb describes profound emotional turmoil, fear, or a troubled mind: [1]

- **Jesus' Deep Emotion:** When Jesus is deeply moved by the death of Lazarus in [John 11:33](#), the text says he "*troubled himself*" (ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν). Later, facing his impending crucifixion in John 12:27, he cries, "*Now my soul is troubled*" (ἡ ψυχὴ μου τετάρακται).
- **Comforting the Disciples:** In John 14:1, Jesus delivers his famous reassurance: "*Do not let your hearts be troubled*" (μὴ **ταρασσεσθω** ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία)—which is the imperative passive form of the exact same word.
- **The Disciples' Terror:** When the disciples see Jesus walking on water in Matthew 14:26, the text notes they "*were terrified*" (ἐταράχθησαν). [[1](#), [2](#)]

Post by “Don” of May 28, 2026 at 11:20 PM

FWIW: From my translation/commentary

131j. ἀλλὰ τὸ μήτε ἀλγεῖν κατὰ σῶμα μήτε ταραττεσθαι κατὰ ψυχὴν·

- σῶμα "one's body; one's material life in the physical world"
- ταραττεσθαι < τᾱρᾱττω, Attic form of ταρασσω (tarassō) "trouble, disturb, upset"
 - ταραττεσθαι (Attic form) < ταραττεσθαι (middle/passive infinitive)
 - This word is connected to αταραξία (ataraxia) < ἀ- (a- "not") + ταρασσω (tarassō "trouble, disturb") + -ῖα
- "but that which neither pains the body (σῶμα sōma) nor troubles the mind (ψυχὴν psykhēn)."

Post by “Don” of May 29, 2026 at 6:22 AM

In thinking about this a little more, my fervent plea is to not rely on AI to answer a question like this. I would be suspect whether it was actually parsing an ancient Greek word or defaulting to modern Greek definitions. In this specific test case, it at least stuck with ancient Greek although in examining the sources references we find:

1. http://www.ldysinger.com/Evagrius/03_Pr..._prayer_all.htm - "Webpage was created for a workshop held at Saint Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo, California in 1997" Item 92 has the word in question: not become agitated but these are all Christian prayers. The main page <http://www.ldysinger.com/> shows this is from a Christian seminary workshop.

2. <https://sites.temple.edu/dwolf/files/20...-Telos-6.10.pdf> - This is more promising as it is actually a paper on Epicurus by a professor of philosophy at Temple University in Philadelphia. The word in question is actually quoted from the letter to Menoikeus. This could be worth reading in full as the author says "I claim that Epicurus does not hold the view that telic pleasure is simply an absence of pain or disturbance." However, if we pass this over in a reliance on AI to simply scrape it for our question, we might miss out on something valuable.

The New Testament question is interesting, but I would suggest caution. I've done this myself, but we also have to remember that word meanings change over time and there are a couple centuries between Epicurus and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament. In thinking about this a little more, it might be more applicable to ask where words in Epicurus show up in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, since it was composed closer to Epicurus' time. That just occurred to me as I was writing. In any case, the sources "referenced" by the AI are all simply different websites that reference Strong's Concordance entry #5015. That's a fine source, but the AI is pointing to multiple sites with the same information, making it look like it found several different citations when it really only found Strong's.

If you have a question about an ancient Greek word in a text, my suggestion would be to:

- Copy and paste the word into Wiktionary: In this case, the word itself doesn't come up, BUT if you start chopping from the end, you get <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%CF%84%CE...%83%CF%83%CF%89>

- Just type the word into Google and assess the actual search results: <https://www.google.com/search?client=...bih=559&dpr=1.5>

In this case, Logeion comes up first and also a site with Strong's Concordance.

Adding in site:edu brings up several academic papers with the word, including ones using the Letter to Menoikeus. You can even use a Google search like (try it, copy and paste this into a Google search bar):

ταράττεσθαι site:edu intext:menoecus -ai

and that puts the word into context within some academic papers.

I simply don't trust a generative AI using an LLM to provide trustworthy answers in and of itself. Okay, tracking down the actual sites it has scavenged from across the Internet may be helpful, but its extruded text based on word probabilities... I'm not going to trust it to "compose" a text-based answer. I'm going to evaluate WHERE it's getting its words that it smooshed together, worked on probabilities for what tokens come after each other, and strung together what it

came up with. And, if that's the case, I'm going to search for the sources themselves from the start rather than put my trust in an automaton mediating access to actual sources.

Post by “Kalosyni” of May 29, 2026 at 9:35 AM

[Don](#) thank you for your tips and advice regarding this, and you gave some helpful links for further research.

[Quote from Don](#)

This word is connected to ἀταραξία (ataraxia)

When investigating the word **ταράττεσθαι** (tarattesthai), I wanted to get as far away as possible from the word ataraxia. Ataraxia says nothing about what is to be removed or avoided.

Apologies, but found this to be of interest... (and after this I will refrain from further posting using AI translation).

Quote

Query: how many times is the word ἀταραξία found in the text of the Letter to Menoecus ?

Google AI response:

The word **ἀταραξία** (specifically in its accusative form, ἀταραξίαν) appears **exactly one time** in the original Greek text of Epicurus's *Letter to Menoecus*. [[1](#)]

Where It Appears

The single occurrence is found in **Section 128** of the text: [[1](#), [2](#)]

Quote

"...ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ὑγίειαν καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς **ἀταραξίαν**, ἐπεὶ τοῦτο τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν ἔστι τέλος." [[1](#)]

(...to the health of the body and the **ataraxia** [imperturbability] of the soul, since this is the goal of a blessed life.) [[1](#), [2](#)]

Why Is It Only Used Once?

It is a common misconception that the word repeats constantly implying that *ataraxia* is the central pillar of Epicurean philosophy. However, Epicurus preferred to describe the *concept* of tranquility using descriptions of what is absent rather than repeating the abstract noun itself: [1, 2, 3, 4]

- **Verbal Descriptions:** He frequently writes about "not suffering pain" or "not being alarmed". For instance, immediately following his single use of *ataraxia*, he uses the phrase "ὅπως μήτε ἀλγῶμεν μήτε ταρβῶμεν" ("**so that we may neither suffer pain nor feel fear**"). [1]
- **Alternative Terms:** He often relies on words like **ἀπορία** (lack of physical pain) or shifts to general discussions of **ἡδονή** (pleasure), defining it purely as the baseline state when all bodily and mental distress is cleared away. [1, 2, 3]

Display More

Post by "Don" of May 30, 2026 at 8:10 AM

I hope I didn't come across too harshly! I'll admit discussions of AI can raise my hackles. The AI summaries *sometimes* uncover interesting references (like that paper). But those don't necessarily need AI to find, just good searching skills.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

When investigating the word *ταράττεσθαι* (*tarattesthai*), I wanted to get as far away as possible from the word *ataraxia*. *Ataraxia* says nothing about what is to be removed or avoided.

Fair enough, but seeing Epicurus' choice of words in context is important, too. The fact that he wanted to use *ταράττεσθαι* rather than another word I feel is important.

As for *ataraxia*, a few of the AI references are pointing back to discussions on this forum and the FB group. That becomes circular.

Here's an old post showing occurrences of *ataraxia* in the texts:

Post

[RE: Every Instance of "Ataraxia," "Eudaemonia," and "Tranquilatas" in a Core Epicurean Text](#)

ΑΤΑΡΑΞΙΑ (Ataraxia and related terms: Note that ἀταραξία is literally "ataraksia" even though the usual English spelling is "ataraxia." Therefore, words that have atarak- are directly related.

From ἀ- (a-, "not") + ταραάσσω (tarássō, "trouble, disturb") + -ῖα (-iā); Antonyms: ταραάχη (tarakhé)

[http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?do...ntry=a\)taraci/a](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?do...ntry=a)taraci/a)

PD17 One who acts aright is utterly steady and serene, whereas one who goes astray is full of trouble and confusion. (Peter Saint-Andre)

ó...



Don

February 19, 2023 at 10:28 PM

Post by "Pacatus" of May 30, 2026 at 12:11 PM

I asked Google the difference, if any, between Google AI and Gemini. Here, for anyone interested (who didn;t already know, as I didn't), is the reply from Google AI (I didn't inquire further):

"Gemini is the 'brain' (the AI model), while Google AI Mode is a feature (an enhanced search experience) inside Google Search that uses Gemini to answer your questions. Here is how they differ:

"Gemini (accessed via Google Gemini) is a standalone AI chatbot and large language model. It is designed for deep, multi-step tasks, long conversations, and writing assistance.

"Google AI Mode is an interface built directly into the Google Search bar. Instead of just giving you a list of links, it uses Gemini in the background to browse the live web, synthesize answers, and let you ask follow-up questions. It also acts dynamically, building custom interactive layouts or calculators right in your search results.

In short: You are chatting with Gemini when you use Google AI Mode, but AI Mode is specifically tuned for fast web research and live information."

I usually do not restrict myself to the AI mode when using Google (though I don't always disable it with the -ai command). Then, at least, I can compare the AI response to other sources. I sometimes use Gemini on my phone for quick questions: e.g., "Who did Miguel Amaya play for before the Cubs?" 😊

Post by "Pacatus" of June 7, 2026 at 6:43 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

I'll admit discussions of AI can raise my hackles.

I've been thinking about this (actually it's been festering in my brain - along with Eikadistes' plea to not use AI generated "art"). Really, it sometimes more than "raises my hackles."

To call AI-generated "art" art is, to my mind, a lie. It's not the notations on paper (or a screen) that makes Beethoven's Ninth Symphony art: it's the human genius that produced it. The poetry of, say, William Butler Yeats, is only art because of the complex human mind that produced it. The most perfect AI-generated painting in the style of a Picasso is still just - a forgery.

Although I think that online friendships between real people *can be* real friendships, the notion of being "friends" with a Siri or an Alexa or such is a delusion. A philosophical Garden "populated" by AI bots is a "brave new world" I wouldn't want to be part of. A basketball game whose moves and outcome are AI generated, with CGI "players" - instead of the to and fro of real players - is not a game I would want to watch.

I'm not a total Luddite with regard to AI, as I noted. But I think we need to recognize that there are certain dehumanizing potential uses.

(I also would consult a real, live research librarian before relying on AI. 😊)

Maybe that's all crudely put, but I wanted to get it off my chest ...

Post by "TauPhi" of June 7, 2026 at 8:47 PM

Shortly after I joined the forum, during the first online meeting I attended, I was asked if given the opportunity, would I choose to become an Epicurean god. I said no because I wanted to retain my humanity since I was born human. I was in an overwhelming minority. Most people would choose to sacrifice their humanity for blessedness and incorruptibility. I never forgot this moment. Maybe because it was the first meeting, maybe because I was surprised by other people's decision. I think the usage of AI in the areas of human creativity boils down to a very similar choice.

Some people are perfectly fine with sacrificing the struggle of their own creativity because AI can write/paint/sing/play faster and better. Those people don't seem to see the point in slow betterment of their limited human potential since they have been presented with the opportunity of godlike simulacrum. Why to struggle with inferior human quality when you can effortlessly obtain godlike results?

And some people decide to pick up their pens, brushes, microphones and guitars and create something, every time something a bit better than their previous something. Never as fast, never as perfectly sterile. Always imperfect, human something. That's where I find myself. I love my imperfections and limitations. I will never ask AI to do creative work for me and I still don't want to be an Epicurean god.

Post by “DaveT” of June 8, 2026 at 9:15 AM

This type of discussion is so interesting to me, but I always need to unpack the definitions of words being used. Here's what I got from Google:

AI is generally classified into three main capability levels:

Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI): AI trained to accomplish specific, highly specialized tasks, such as speech recognition, image classification, or playing chess. This is the only type of AI in widespread use today.

Artificial General Intelligence (AGI): A theoretical form of AI that would possess cognitive abilities entirely equivalent to a human, allowing it to perform any intellectual task a human can.

I see that there is no AI existing today that can create anything in the sense of human creativity. AI can repeat what humans have created, and loaded into AI data bases. That is all.

If people can enjoy Elvis Presley in full costume printed onto velour by a human and hung in their bedrooms, who am I to judge their taste? Same goes for anyone enjoying AI random art

based on data bases, or short stories generated by random scene selections from data bases.

Will I ever want to use AI as it exists today to expand the germ of an idea I have as a novelist, and then claim the final product was my work alone? No, I can't do it. Pride perhaps but, no.

Can I judge anyone who takes pleasure from reading a novel written mostly by current AI, or any future AI? I think not. Who am I to deny anyone such pleasure? Would I read such a novel written in that fashion? I'd give it a shot, and who knows, perhaps I'd enjoy it.

[TauPhi](#) On being a Greek god. Hell, no! If they were considered corporeal and immortal, sooner or later existence would become a boring repetition of all their yesterdays. If incorporeal, same answer but only half the pleasures until boredom hits!

Post by "Cassius" of June 8, 2026 at 10:06 AM

Not commenting at the moment on the AI aspect but on this specifically:

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

Most people would choose to sacrifice their humanity for blessedness and incorruptibility

I don't see this as a productive way to state the problem. I would CERTAINLY like to be blessed and incorruptible presuming those mean having the power to pursue pleasures without end and never being burdened with sickness or death. Where we can improve either our minds or bodies we should. The devil is always in the details and I don't see retaining humanity to mean that we can't further expand our health and our life spans and even our ability to think.

And I don't think that Epicurus saw "living as gods among men" being incompatible with that.

In another conversation Don has recently mentioned "Rorschach tests" and I think the [Epicurean gods](#) are one. We are all projecting what it means to be an Epicurean god and we're doing so in very different ways, and the divide on these issues can't be bridged without being very specific about what we are talking about. I don't think Epicurus saw anything incompatible between himself as a human and what he saw as [Epicurean gods](#) - we just don't have the medical/technical/etc ability to get there, but there's no theoretical barrier to getting a lot closer to their status. And that's why I think DeWitt made a key observation to point out that there is textual support for the view that Epicurus held that the gods must ACT to maintain their blessedness and incorruptibility.

Post by “Kalosyni” of June 8, 2026 at 11:30 AM

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

Some people are perfectly fine with sacrificing the struggle of their own creativity because AI can write/paint/sing/play faster and better. Those people don't seem to see the point in slow betterment of their limited human potential since they have been presented with the opportunity of godlike simulacrum. Why to struggle with inferior human quality when you can effortlessly obtain godlike results?

Two interesting ideas: calling what AI produces as "godlike" and "godlike simulacrum". I hadn't thought of it that way, nor do I now. I simply see it as an interesting phenomenon, some of which I occasionally find is good/pleasing to me.

Deeper questions that each person may answer differently for themselves: How does AI creativity make you feel? Does using AI cause bad (or painful) consequences or does it sometimes bring pleasure? Is there such a thing as AI that is "done well"? What about wider consequences for the environment and society? And now we are seeing everyone say "not in my backyard" about data centers.

Also, consider this: that there is a large amount of purely human-made art that is "bad" art -- but who decides what is "bad" art? For myself I have two categories: 1) "interesting" art, of a type that is "a curiosity" (and that which I personally consider "bad" and also which makes me feel unpleasant emotions (I'm using the word "interesting" as sarcasm here). 2) "good" art, of a type that I find is skillfully rendered according to my own personal standards and it also gives me pleasure to experience it (and of course this is very subjective).