

Choice & Avoidance: towards a better translation for avoidance

Post by “Julia” of August 17, 2024 at 8:44 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

Choosing from the list in post #26 above, I find that "rejection" resides in a nice place. More oomph than "avoid," less action packed than "flee."

This is not very consistent with the understanding I got from the Cambridge Greek Lexicon (CGL), in so far as rejection does not imply a commitment to action. Rejection is merely the opposite of selection. Both selection/rejection are a type of decision: the former decides for something specific, the latter decides for everything-but-that-which-is-rejected. These two decision types are mirrored in ἀρῆσις (hairesis) and φεύγω (pheugo): The conquest of hairesis is of a specific thing, and the location pheugo flees to is anywhere-but-here. *However:* It is very clear to me from the CGL that both hairesis *and* pheugo have a definite imperative of action, and as I have said in #27 that fits into a semantic frame one can see about those terms. This is to say: They're a type of semantic opposites like attack-defend are in English, and as a matter of fact, attack-defend would be an okay valid translation in some cases.

In English, someone is *taking* charge – and someone is *taking* flight. "Taking" is how this control-grabbing is captured, and it is opposite to "being given". Taking flight is more than being rescued or finding rescue (by chance). Whether someone takes charge or is given charge, the result is the same, but there is an opposite in the process leading to that result. Neglecting this control-grabbing is a trap one shouldn't fall prey to when translating hairesis and pheugo. With that in mind:

Hairesis and pheugo *both* come with an oomph, and not only do I see no way around that, I doubt it was by chance (for example, various better words for various types of "reject" exist in Ancient Greek), and further yet, I see value in recognising and being very clear about that both words describe someone committed to their future and actively taking control of it (as said in #27); i don't think that's something negative.

To me, a rejection has not enough commitment and agency; I recognise that a rejection can be quite active, it can be a pushing-away, a protest, a disowning, a refutation. However, on one hand these would be different Greek words, and on the other, even with these meanings of rejection in English, it remains not very consistent with what I understand upon reading the CGL...

(I'm not suddenly an expert in Ancient Greek, but searching the digital CGL for "reject", et cetera, then reading the various entries it finds does give me what I feel to be a good overall

sense of things.)