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## Ἀκακία and ἄκακος.

Considerations on a Septuagint term for “innocence”\*

### Introduction

The investigation of the vocabulary of ethics of the Septuagint (= LXX) yields two astonishing results. On the one hand, it appears that various key terms of Greek ethics are extremely rare in the translated books, e.g. terms denoting responsibility, free will or freedom of choice.<sup>1</sup> On the other, the LXX employs terms denoting virtues or faults that obviously did not form part of the specific terminology of Greek ethics. In the case of the first observation, the noun ἀρετή “virtue”, for example, has only some scattered attestations in the translated books of the LXX, especially in Deutero-Isaiah where it is used not with reference to human virtues but to God’s wonderful deeds (see Isa 42:8, 12; 43:21; 63:7). As for two cardinal virtue of Greek philosophy, ἀνδρεία, “courage” is attested only five times in the Psalms, the Proverbs and in the Book of Ecclesiastes, and σωφροσύνη “self-control, temperance” is not attested at all in the LXX books translated from a Hebrew or Aramaic source. Yet there is no doubt that the LXX texts more than once present personalities of the Old Testament history, such as David, as virtuous or as courageous (e.g. 1 Kgdms 17). But the fact remains that none of them are praised for his or her ἀνδρεία. It is difficult to explain why the LXX avoids such a term, while a more recent Jewish

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<sup>1</sup> See the observations by FOLKER SIEGERT, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament. Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta* (Münsteraner Judaistische Studien 9), Münster 2001, 261. Vocabulary dealing with freedom of choice, however, appears in the late collection of the Psalms of Solomon, in particular in PsSol 9:4: τὰ ἔργα ἡμῶν ἐν ἐκλογῇ καὶ ἐξουσίᾳ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν. See EBERHARD BONNS, “Philosophical Vocabulary in the Psalms of Solomon – The Case of PsSol 9:4”, *The Psalms of Solomon: Language, History, Theology*, edited by Eberhard Bons/Patrick Pouchelle (Early Judaism and its Literature 40), Atlanta, Ga. 2015, 49–58.

author, Josephus, does not refrain from describing Moses e.g. as a man of exceptional virtue (*Ant.* 2.205: ἀρετῇ τε πάντας ὑπερβαλεῖ “he will excel all men in virtue”), the young Saul as an example of self-control (*Ant.* 6.63: ἐνεδείξατο ἐγκράτειαν καὶ σωφροσύνην “he showed command over himself and self-control”) and David as a man of courage (*Ant.* 6.167: τῆς ἀνδρείας ἀκούσας τοῦ νεανίσκου “[Saul] having heard from the valour of the young man”).

Be that as it may, these observations are no less surprising than another feature of the LXX vocabulary of ethics in a broader sense. In fact, the LXX uses various terms denoting human virtues and vices that no doubt play a key role in the respective biblical contexts. However, the exact meaning of these terms is not self-evident. In particular, the question remains as to what specific connotation a term exhibits in its given context. A good example is the adjective ἄτοπος which occurs several times in the LXX, probably in the sense of “evil, wicked”. However, the exact nature of misconduct is not made explicit, e.g. in the book of Job: εἶδον τοὺς ἀροτριῶντας τὰ ἄτοπα οἱ δὲ σπείροντες αὐτὰ ὀδύνας θεριοῦσιν ἑαυτοῖς, “I saw those who plow wrongs,<sup>2</sup> and those who sow them [i.e. wrongs] reap torments for themselves” (Job 4:8).<sup>3</sup> Like in many other cases where the LXX vocabulary appears unusual, at least at first sight, the crucial question arises as to whether the terms in question also occur in extra-biblical texts or debates dealing with ethical issues. In other words: to what extent this specific LXX terminology has been coined by the Greek Jewish translators, and to what extent did they borrow it from their Hellenistic milieu? Needless to say, this milieu not only includes Greek literature available in Hellenistic times, but also Greek language written and spoken in Egypt as attested in a huge number of contemporary papyri.

Studies on these topics are still in their infancy; in order to develop them, in this paper I will deal with one specific example of the LXX ethical vocabulary, the noun ἀκακία and the cognate adjective ἄκακος. Admittedly, some basic information on ἄκακος can be found in the article on κακός by Walter Grundmann in Kittel’s *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Ceslas Spicq has dedicated a short article to the adjective in his *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*.<sup>5</sup> However, both articles focus on the New Testament use of the word without placing particular emphasis on the LXX evidence. The recent dictionaries of

<sup>2</sup> *La Biblia Griega Septuaginta. III: Libros poéticos y sapienciales*, Salamanca 2013, translates as follows: “he visto a los que cultivan lo incorrecto, y los que lo siembran, cosechan dolores para sí mismos” (431).

<sup>3</sup> See the future HTLS article ἄτοπος, ἀτοπία by Daniela SCIALABBA.

<sup>4</sup> *ThWNT* III, 483–484.

<sup>5</sup> CESLAS SPICQ, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. Vol. I. ἀγα–ἐλπ, Peabody Mass. 1994, 53–55.

the LXX are of no real help insofar as they do not provide information as to the normal Greek use of the word. Moreover, the translations diverge. As for ἀκαλία, Takamitsu Muraoka renders it by “moral *innocence*”<sup>6</sup> whereas Lust, Eynikel and Hauspie give two more meanings: “guilelessness, innocence, integrity”.<sup>7</sup> The recent Spanish dictionary by Amador Ángel García Santos goes into the same direction offering not less than five different equivalents: “*carencia de maldad, inocencia, falta de malicia, simplicidad, candidez*.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore a more systematic study of the two words ἄκακος and ἀκαλία in the LXX would be beneficial. However, before going into the details of the LXX instances, it is important to highlight two issues:

1. The two words are chiefly attested in the Psalms, the Proverbs and the book of Job. They are absent from the Pentateuch and the historical books. Except for one instance of ἄκακος in Jer 11:19, the words never occur in the Prophets. In other words, in legal, historical and prophetic texts nobody is depicted as ἄκακος, or praised for his or her ἀκαλία. The question therefore arises in which contexts the two words are appropriate.

2. It would be tempting to think that ἄκακος is the opposite of κακός and that ἀκαλία denotes the absence of καλία. A quotation like Job 2:3 could point in this direction: God presents Job as somebody who is turning away from each κακόν and who still maintains his ἀκαλία (ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς κακοῦ ἔτι δὲ ἔχεται ἀκαλίᾳ “staying away from all wrong? And he still maintains his innocence” [NETS]). In Prov 8:5, however, the adjective ἄκακος is used in parallel with ἀπαίδευτος, literally “uneducated”: Both the ἄκακος and the ἀπαίδευτος are invited to hear the voice of Wisdom and to acquire knowledge. It is obvious that in this instance ἄκακος hardly denotes someone who keeps a distance from evil. Thus, the following conclusion suggests itself: we must reckon with more than one meaning of ἄκακος and ἀκαλία in the LXX texts.

In order to gain more insight into the specific LXX use of the two terms, it is useful to make a clear distinction between the noun and the adjective. In each case, three questions are of particular interest:

1. In which contexts do the words occur? Do the contexts provide any information concerning the connotations of the words?

2. What are the Hebrew equivalents of the respective Greek terms? How did the LXX translators understand their Hebrew source text?

<sup>6</sup> TAKAMITSU MURAOKA, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Leuven 2009, 19.

<sup>7</sup> JOHAN LUST/ERIK EYNIKEL/KATRIN HAUSPIE, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint. Revised Edition*, Stuttgart 2008, 19.

<sup>8</sup> AMADOR ÁNGEL GARCÍA SANTOS, *Diccionario del Griego bíblico. Setenta y Nuevo Testamento*, Estella (Navarra) 2011, 43.

3. To what extent the LXX use of ἄκακος and ἀκακία can be explained against the backdrop of non-biblical Greek texts?

## 1. The words ἀκακία and ἄκακος in the LXX

### a) The LXX use of the noun ἀκακία

The noun is attested fourteen times in the LXX, most commonly in the Psalms (eight times) and in the Book of Job (four times). In five instances it occurs in the phrase ἐν (τῇ) ἀκακία, used as an adverbial phrase of manner. Thus, ἐν (τῇ) ἀκακία modifies the verbs πορεύομαι and διαπορεύομαι: a Psalmist claims to have walked ἐν ἀκακία (Ps 25:1, 11<sup>LXX</sup>). Slightly different is the form ἐν ἀκακία καρδίας μου (Ps 100:2), the human heart being considered the place where ἀκακία is felt. This kind of adverbial phrase is also used to refer to when David is said to have guided his people ἐν τῇ ἀκακία τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ (Ps 77:72). Moreover, the phrase occurs in the context of the idea of reward. Thus, God is praised for not withholding good things from those who walk ἐν ἀκακία (Ps 83:12).

The idea of reward underlies three other Psalm quotations. In Ps 36:37, the Psalmist invites his anonymous interlocutor: φύλασσε ἀκακίαν καὶ ἰδὲ εὐθύτητα, “maintain innocence, and behold uprightness”, because he or she might hope that “there is a remnant to the peaceful person” (ὅτι ἔστιν ἐγκατάλειμμα ἀνθρώπῳ εἰρηνικῷ). Finally, the word ἀκακία occurs twice in prayers where the Psalmists associate their ἀκακία with an intervention of God that has already taken place or is still expected: “judge me, o Lord, according to my δικαιοσύνη and according to the ἀκακία that is in me” (Ps 7:9),<sup>9</sup> “but you have upheld me because of my ἀκακία” (Ps 40:13).

Do the respective contexts provide any information as to the meaning of ἀκακία? To be sure, the translation of the word as “innocence” can look back on a long history in Christian interpretation of the Bible. It occurs as early as in Jerome’s *Psalterium gallicanum*, i.e. in his Latin translation of the LXX Psalter.<sup>10</sup> In the light of a text like Ps 25, this translation is not at all far-fetched, with the Psalmist maintaining his innocence from the very beginning of the prayer. This interpretation of ἀκακία can be corroborated by at least one parallel word that occurs in another Psalm: δικαιοσύνη, “jus-

<sup>9</sup> For the idea of judgment according to Ps 7<sup>LXX</sup>, see EBERHARD BONNS, “Psalm 7 in the Septuagint”, in: id., *Textkritik und Textgeschichte. Studien zur Septuaginta und zum hebräischen Alten Testament* (FAT I/93), Tübingen 2014, 65–79, on p. 74–75.

<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, Jerome is aware of the different meaning of ἀκακία/innocentia, on the one hand, and the Hebrew word *tāmim*, on the other. Translating Ps 83:12 as follows *non priuabit bonis eos qui ambulant in innocentia*, he notes: *melius habet in hebraico: ‘in perfectione’* (CCL 78, 102).

tice” (Ps 7:9). Thus, the Psalmist can calmly expect God’s judgment because God will surely take into account his justice and his innocence. Likewise, God grants his protection to the Psalmist because of his ἀκακία. Hence, it can be concluded that the term ἀκακία above all denotes an attitude of man toward God. By striving for ἀκακία and avoiding wickedness (Ps 25:4–6<sup>LXX</sup>), humans can expect divine blessing and protection. In a text probably written in the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. BCE, PsSol 4:23, the idea that God saves his devout is clothed in the form of a macarism: Μακάριοι οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον ἐν ἀκακίᾳ αὐτῶν· ὁ κύριος ῥύσεται αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων δολίων καὶ ἀμαρτωλῶν καὶ ῥύσεται ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς σκανδάλου παρανόμου – “Happy are those who fear the Lord ἐν ἀκακίᾳ, the Lord will save them from deceitful men and sinners, and he will save us from every stumbling block of the transgressor of the law” (NETS).<sup>11</sup> Unlike the canonical Psalms, the Psalms of Solomon use the phrase ἐν ἀκακίᾳ in a comparison (PsSol 8:23): God’s faithful are like innocent lambs (ὡς ἀρνία ἐν ἀκακίᾳ, see the similar expression in Jer 11:19: ὡς ἀρνίον ἄκακον) in the midst of the nations of the earth.

The Book of Job corroborates the idea that ἀκακία denotes the integrity of humans that God is expected to take into consideration. The noun ἀκακία occurs four times in Job. In Job 2:3, God himself characterizes Job by a series of adjectives beginning with ἄκακος: ἄκακος ἀληθινός ἄμειπτος θεοσεβής ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς κακοῦ, “an innocent, genuine, blameless, religious man, staying away from all wrong” (NETS). The series is concluded by the phrase (see above): ἔτι δὲ ἔχεται ἀκακίας “and he still maintains his innocence” (NETS). Therefore, it is apparently the concept of ἀκακία by which Job’s virtues are summarized. Ironically, his friend Eliphaz asks him if his ἀκακία is not based on folly (Job 4:6). In one of his replies, Job, however, is determined not to relinquish his ἀκακία, but to hold fast to his δικαιοσύνη (Job 27:5–6). Finally, Job is convinced that God knows his ἀκακία (Job 31:6). Once again, one cannot but conclude that the noun ἀκακία denotes the human quality of integrity, particularly in relationship with God. On the other hand there is no evidence in the respective contexts that ἀκακία carries the connotation of “guilelessness” or “simplicity”.

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<sup>11</sup> See also KENNETH ATKINSON, “I cried to the Lord”. *A Study of the Psalms of Solomon’s Historical Background and Social Setting* (JSJ.S 84), Leiden 2004, 92, who seeks to reconstruct the circumstances of the redaction of this Psalm. See also IDEM, “Perceptions of the Temple Priests in the Psalms of Solomon”, in: *The Psalms of Solomon. Language – History – Theology* (Early Judaism and its Literature 40), edited by Eberhard Bons/Patrick Pouchelle, Atlanta Ga., 2015, 79–96, on p. 83.

b) *The Hebrew equivalents of ἀκακία*

The noun ἀκακία corresponds to the following Hebrew words that all derive from the same root: *tom* “completeness, integrity” (Ps 7:9; 25[26]:1, 11; 36[37]:37; 40[41]:13; 77[78]:72; 100[101]:1; Job 4:6); *tāmîm* “blameless” (Ps 83[84]:12), *tummāh* “integrity” (Job 2:3; 27:5; 31:6). On the assumption that the Hebrew *Vorlage* did not diverge considerably from the later masoretic consonantal text, the following question arises: how did the translators understand the Hebrew words underlying the rendering ἀκακία? Obviously, they aimed at highlighting one idea which they attributed to such words: the absence of wickedness, such as is expressed by Psalm 25 and by the Book of Job. Admittedly, the translators could have opted for other Greek words, e.g. εὐθύτης “righteousness” (Jos 24:14), ἀπλότης “simplicity” (2 Kgdms 15:11), ὁσιότης “holiness” (3 Kgdms 9:4). However, none of them expresses the *absence* of wickedness in such an absolute way as is required by texts like the Book of Job and Psalm 25.

c) *The LXX use of the adjective ἄκακος*

The adjective occurs 17 times in the LXX, most commonly in the Book of Proverbs (eight times), in the Book of Job (three times), in the Psalms of Solomon (three times), and in the Psalms (once). Some of these occurrences share one connotation with the noun ἀκακία, i.e. the idea that they refer to a human quality appreciated by God. This is the case in Job 8:20; 36:5: the Lord will not reject the ἄκακος (ὁ κύριος οὐ μὴ ἀποποιήσῃται τὸν ἄκακον). Likewise, God highlights Job’s integrity presenting him as a blameless and god-fearing person who stays away from evil (Job 2:3; see above). In the only attestation of ἄκακος in the Psalms, the emphasis is not on the relationship of the ἄκακοι with God but with the Psalmist whom they have joined: ἄκακοι καὶ εὐθεῖς ἐκολλῶντό μοι ὅτι ὑπέμεινά σε κύριε (Ps 24:21). The fact that ἄκακος is used in parallel with εὐθύς suggests the conclusion that ἄκακος once more denotes a moral quality, i.e. integrity. A similar parallel appears in Prov 2:21 where the ἄκακος and the χρηστός are promised to dwell the earth. Obviously, the idea of reward is underlying this promise.

However, except for Prov 2:21, in the Book of Proverbs the situation is quite different.<sup>12</sup> Generally speaking, the adjective ἄκακος does not allude to moral integrity but to a lack of knowledge and experience. This can be illustrated by some quotations: the aim of reading and learning Proverbs is that shrewdness is given to the ἄκακοι, and that both perception and insight is given to the young person (ἵνα δῶ ἀκάκοις πανουργίαν παιδί δὲ νέω

<sup>12</sup> See also DAVID-MARC D’HAMONVILLE, *Les Proverbes. Traduction du texte grec de la Septante. Introduction et notes* (BA XVII), Paris 2000, 159.

αἴσθησίν τε καὶ ἔννοιαν, Prov 1:4). This implies that the adjective ἄκακος refers to a person who lacks skill, experience and knowledge, particularly because of his or her youth. The idea that the ἄκακος needs πανουργία, perhaps in the sense of “subtlety”, is underlined by the personified Wisdom inviting her audience to listen to words of wisdom: νοήσατε ἄκακοι πανουργίαν (Prov 8:5). Moreover, the ἄκακος might suffer from measures of “education”, “discipline” (παιδεία) that cannot be hidden from other people (Prov 15:10).<sup>13</sup> Conversely, the lack of experience and knowledge could have serious consequences: the ἄκακος is inclined to believe every word: ἄκακος πιστεύει παντὶ λόγῳ (Prov 14:15). On the other hand, the ἄκακος does not lack moral guidance if he or she holds on δικαιοσύνη (Prov 1:22). Similarly, δικαιοσύνη is said to guard the ἄκακοι whereas ἀμαρτία makes the impious worthless (Prov 13:6). Finally, observing that the intemperate is punished the ἄκακος is able to become wiser (Prov 21:11).

A difficult example is the comparison in Jer 11:19: ὡς ἀρνίον ἄκακον. Does the adjective allude to the innocence of the lamb because it is “not suspecting that it was being led to its death”?<sup>14</sup> This interpretation cannot be ruled out entirely. However, if the focus of the comparison is on the unjust suffering of the prophet Jeremiah, who endures persecution, then the adjective ἄκακον might allude to innocence: both the prophet and the lamb are doomed to die even though they are innocent.<sup>15</sup>

This brief overview illustrates that in the Book of Proverbs the adjective ἄκακος has a quite ambiguous meaning. With the exception of Prov 2:21, it refers to a person who lacks experience and knowledge. In the worst case, he or she has to bear the consequences of being ἄκακος. However, this does not mean that the destiny of an ἄκακος is sealed for ever. On the contrary, as a matter of principle the ἄκακοι are considered capable of learning.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, allowing themselves to be guided by virtues such as δικαιοσύνη, the ἄκακοι are able of leading a life that does not plunge them into ruin (Prov 2:21<sup>LXX</sup>).

<sup>13</sup> In the LXX, the verse diverges considerably from the MT text; see PATRICK POUCHELLE, *Dieu éducateur, Une nouvelle approche d'un concept de la théologie biblique entre Bible Hébraïque, Septante et littérature grecque classique* (FAT II/77), Tübingen 2015, 263.

<sup>14</sup> CESLAS SPICQ, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. Vol. I. ἀγα-ἐλπ, Peabody Mass. 1994, 54.

<sup>15</sup> See also GEORG A. WALSER, *Jeremiah: A Commentary Based on Ieremias in Codex Vaticanus* (Septuagint commentary series), Leiden, Boston, 2012, 267: “He compares himself to an innocent lamb, which the people of Anathoth try to kill because of his prophecies.”

<sup>16</sup> For this idea, see also HERMANN VON LIPS, “Exkurs: Weisheitliche Terminologie, besonders im Sprüchebuch”, *Septuaginta Deutsch. Erläuterungen und Kommentare. Band II: Psalmen bis Daniel*, edited by Martin Karrer/Wolfgang Kraus, Stuttgart 2011, 1946–49, on p. 1948.

d) *The Hebrew equivalents of ἄκακος*

Unlike the noun ἀκακία, the adjective ἄκακος corresponds to different Hebrew roots. Two tendencies are recognizable: where ἄκακος means “innocent” the Hebrew equivalent is *tom* (Job 2:3; 8:20; Ps 25:21) or *tāmīm* (Prov 2:21); however, where the adjective rather means “inexperienced”, perhaps “simple-minded”, the Hebrew equivalent is *paʿtī*, “naïve”, “simple” (Prov 1:4, 22; 8:5; 14:15; 21:11).

## 2. The use of ἀκακία and ἄκακος in non-biblical Greek literature

Does the use of ἀκακία and ἄκακος in the LXX match the use of the two words in non-biblical texts? A differentiated answer is necessary. To begin with, it should be noted that the noun ἀκακία is not very frequent. Here and there, it is used in a very generic way (e.g. Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* IV.19.10). Nevertheless, the contexts as well as the meaning of the word diverge considerably from the LXX evidence.

As for the adjective, which is somewhat more common in Greek literature, there are a few cases where the context gives no clear indication as to the exact meaning of ἄκακος (e.g. Aeschylus, *Pers.*, 671). However, some of the passages show certain similarities with the LXX use of the adjective. Nevertheless, both the noun and the adjective share some semantic features, alluding especially to the lack of experience and to a certain guilelessness, particularly of young people. This can be illustrated by examples taken from different authors, epochs and literary genres.

α) An important feature of the use of ἀκακία and ἄκακος lies in the connection made between the ἀκακία and the ἀπλότης “simplicity, sincerity” of an individual. Needless to say the words do not have any negative connotation in these contexts. Thus, Diodor of Sicily gives a short description of the Spartan admiral Callicratidas (13.76.2): “Callicratidas was a very young man, without guile and straightforward in character, since he had had as yet no experience of the ways of foreign peoples, and was the most just man among the Spartans” (οὗτος δὲ νέος μὲν ἦν παντελῶς, ἄκακος δὲ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπλοῦς, οὐπω τῶν ξενικῶν ἠθῶν πεπειραμένος, δικαιοτάτος δὲ Σπαρτιατῶν). It is interesting to note that this very positive sense appears in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, who lived some decades later. In his work *De opificio mundi*, § 156, he does not use the adjectives ἄκακος and ἀπλοῦς, but the corresponding nouns. Thus, he characterizes the Fall of Man as a transition from original ἀκακία and ἀπλότης to the condition of πανουργία, here probably in the sense of craftiness (ἐξ ἀκακίας καὶ ἀπλότητος ἠθῶν εἰς πανουργίαν μετέβαλεν, see also § 170).



β) The idea that young peoples' ἀκακία leads to error results from Aristotle's "Rhetoric". In this work the philosopher dedicates a long section to the characters (τὰ ἥθη) of humans, and in this context, he also deals with the characters of young people (*Rhet.* 1389 a 2 – 1389 b 13), including their strengths and weaknesses. According to him, one of their false assumptions is based on their own ἀκακία: young people are wont to think that sufferings of other people are unmerited.<sup>17</sup>

γ) Several texts stress the link between ἀκακία and lack of experience which can lead one to commit serious errors, or to put oneself in danger. Thus, the alleged or real inexperience of a person is supposed to explain his or her faults. This is the case e.g. in Apollodoros, *Against Neaira* (= Pseudo-Demosthenes, speech 59) where a certain Theogenes defends himself in a lawsuit.<sup>18</sup> The central point at issue is the question of whether Theogenes had known about the real identity of his future wife, with whom he had performed the sacred rituals of the city of Athens. In his defence, Theogenes seeks to convince the Areopagus that he has been tricked by his father-in-law, Stephanus. Obviously, Stephanus had passed off the girl as his legitimate daughter. In reality, however, she was the daughter of a hetaera, Neaira. Nevertheless, Theogenes argues that it was because of his own inexperience and naïveté (διὰ τὴν ἀπειρίαν τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τὴν ἀκακίαν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ [§ 81]) that he has acted as he did when he had married his wife. The Areopagus finally relents, convinced by the argument presented by Theogenes, i.e. his supposed guilelessness (διὰ τὴν ἀκακίαν τοῦ τρόπου [§ 83]). It is obvious that in such a context the boundaries between the meanings "innocent" and "inexperienced, guileless" are fluid. *Mutatis mutandis*, this holds true for a passage of the comedy *Dyskolos* by Menander. In lines 222–223 Knemon is blamed by his slave for having left alone his daughter, a young innocent girl (ἄκακον κόρην μόνην ἀφεις ἐν ἐρημίαι ἐᾶς), i.e. without thinking of the dangers which could threaten her, in particular by a young man, Sostratos, her future husband. The adjective also appears in Menander, *Her.* 19, in reference to a young girl who is supposed to be a slave.

δ) In the aforementioned lawsuit the accused Theogenes is acquitted because he manages to convince the Areopagus of his ἀκακία. However, this

<sup>17</sup> *Rhet.* 1389 b 9–10: τῆ γὰρ αὐτῶν ἀκακία τοὺς πέλας μετροῦσιν, ὥστε ἀνάξια πάσχειν ὑπολαμβάνουσιν αὐτούς. For another interpretation see also WILLIAM M.A. GRIMALDI, *Aristotle, Rhetoric II. A Commentary*, New York 1988, 200.

<sup>18</sup> The text is available in the following edition: *Antiphon, Gegen die Stiefmutter / Apollodoros, Gegen Neaira (Demosthenes 59). Frauen vor Gericht. Herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von Kai Brodersen* (Texte zur Forschung), Darmstadt 2004. For further information on the circumstances of the lawsuit, see DEBRA HAMEL, *Trying Neaira: The True Story of a Courtesan's Scandalous Life in Ancient Greece*, New Haven, London 2004, chapter IX.

does not mean that *ἀκακία* can always be used as an excuse. In his biography of the Macedonian military leader Demetrius, who later became king of Macedon, Plutarch argues that in general the cardinal virtues enable humans to distinguish between good and bad. Therefore, there is no excuse for a kind of guilelessness that prides itself upon its experience of bad things (*Demetr.* 1.4: τὴν ἀπειρίαν τῶν κακῶν καλλωπιζομένην ἀκακίαν). In other words, the noun *ἀκακία* can be ambiguous. Under certain circumstances the lack of experience might be considered excusable. However, it cannot be taken for granted that *ἀκακία* can function as a kind of mitigating circumstance, especially in cases where the *ἀκακία* is coupled with an ignorance of evil. Once more, it is useful to quote Philo. In his work *De ebrietate*, the Jewish philosopher argues that certain vices are due to a lack of knowledge (*ἄγνοια*). As for nakedness (Gen 9:21), Philo maintains that it is caused by *ἀκακία καὶ ἀφέλεια ἡθῶν*, “innocence and simplicity of manners” (*Ebr* 6).

## Conclusion

The examples of non-biblical Greek literature show both points of contact and divergence between the LXX language and non-biblical Greek texts.

α) The points of contact in the use of the adjective *ἄκακος* are evident. In fact, the similarities lie in the ambiguity that is characteristic of the condition of an *ἄκακος*. Supposed to be capable of learning, on the one hand, the *ἄκακος* can become a victim of his or her lack of experience. However, the LXX speaks of these issues in a generalized way, i.e. without mentioning concrete examples or concrete persons.

β) As for the noun *ἀκακία*, it can mean in Greek literature, at least in certain cases, the exact opposite of what the word means in the LXX, where it denotes innocence in an absolute manner (e.g. in the case of Job). In the extant Greek literature, the noun is not only rare, but its use in a generic way is exceptional. Moreover, outside the LXX and Jewish and Christian literature influenced by it, the word is not attested in extant prayers or in religious contexts. Perhaps the specific meaning we can find in the LXX of innocence before a divinity is limited to biblical texts and later Jewish and Christian literature.

Some centuries after the Bible had been translated into Greek, the Christian theologian Basilus felt the need to explain the word in his *Homiliae in principium Proverbiorum*. He observes that the word has two senses: an aversion to sin, and the lack of experience which is accompanied by an ignorance of *κακία* (PG 31, 408). The fact that a Christian author high-

lights these two meanings of *ἀκακία* can lead one to the conclusion that there was a need to explain it to his readers.