

# Job, the “vir simplex” (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3):

Ambiguities in the Hebrew Book of Job and the Vulgate

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**ABSTRACT** • The study compares Jerome’s two translations of the Book of Job – the first from the Greek, the second from the Hebrew text – with a particular focus on their dealing with ambiguities and on the shift in the translation of  $\Delta\Lambda$  / ἄμεμπτος / ἄκακος (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3) from “sine crimine” / “innocens” (*iuxta Graecos*) to “simplex” (*iuxta Hebraeos*). As the analysis seeks to demonstrate, this shift is probably deliberate and reflects the theological debate around Pelagianism, in the course of which Jerome abandons the picture of Job as a model of piety and virtue and instead aims at depicting him as “simple man” that is not exempt from original sin.

**KEYWORDS** • Book of Job; ambiguity; Septuagint; Vulgate; Jerome; translation technique; Pelagian controversy

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG** • Die Studie vergleicht Hieronymus’ zwei Übersetzungen des Buches Hiob – die erste aus dem Griechischen, die zweite aus dem hebräischen Text – mit besonderem Fokus auf ihren Umgang mit Mehrdeutigkeiten und auf die Verschiebung in der Übersetzung von  $\Delta\Lambda$  / ἄμεμπτος / ἄκακος (Hiob 1,1.8; 2;3) von “sine crimine” / “innocens” (*iuxta Graecos*) zu “simplex” (*iuxta Hebraeos*). Wie die Analyse zu zeigen versucht, ist diese Verschiebung wahrscheinlich beabsichtigt und spiegelt die theologische Debatte um den Pelagianismus wider, in deren Verlauf Hieronymus das Bild Hiobs als Vorbild für Frömmigkeit und Tugend aufgibt und ihn stattdessen als “einfachen Menschen” darstellt, der nicht von der Erbsünde frei ist.

**SCHLAGWORTE** • Buch Hiob, Mehrdeutigkeit, Septuaginta, Vulgata, Hieronymus, Übersetzungstechnik, Pelagianischer Streit

In the Vulgate, the Book of Job begins with the statement that Job was a “vir simplex” – a “simple man”:

“Vir erat in terra Hus nomine Iob et erat vir ille simplex et rectus ac timens Deum et recedens a malo.” (Job 1:1 Vulg.)

MT, which is probably to a large extent very similar to the Hebrew text(s) that Jerome had at hand, reads as follows:

אִישׁ הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ-עוּץ אִיּוֹב שְׁמוֹ וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא תָם וְיָשָׁר וְיָרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע:

That Jerome translates the Hebrew term תָם with “simplex” (“simple” / “open” / “plain”) comes rather unexpected, as the figure of Job is anything but simple. In fact, Job is a complex character, crying out in pain and anger in front of his friends (Job 3) but in the end falling silent (Job 40:3–5), wrestling with God and himself, turning from submission (Job 1:21–22; 2:10) to rebellion (Job 7:12–21; 9:11–35 etc.) and back again (Job 42:1–6).

Together with the Psalter and the Solomonic books (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs), Jerome translated the Book of Job twice: Around 387, he completed the first translation (*iuxta Graecos*) that was based on the Greek text(s) of Job; only a few years later (around 394), he undertook the second translation from the Hebrew text, the *iuxta Hebraeos* which became part of the Vulgate and from which we cited above.<sup>1</sup> This allows us to compare the two versions in order to explore differences concerning their theological grounds. Regarding Job 1:1, we discover an interesting difference between Jerome’s translations, as in the *iuxta Graecos*, the verse reads as follows:

καὶ ἦν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ἀληθινός ἄμεμπτος δίκαιος θεοσεβής ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πράγματος (Job 1:1b LXX / OG)

“erat homo ille verax, sine crimine, iustus, dei cultor, abstinens se ab omni re mala” (*iuxta Graecos*)<sup>2</sup>

The adjective ἄμεμπτος (“blameless”) which LXX (OG) uses to translate תָם is rendered here with “sine crimine” (“without reproof” = “blameless”). One may wonder therefore what provoked Jerome’s replacement of “sine crimine” by “simplex” in his second translation. While it is possible that the use of “simplex” was influenced by Aquila’s recension that replaced ἄμεμπτος with

<sup>1</sup> According to Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, (“Job latin chez les Pères et dans les bibles”, RBen 122 (2012), 48–99, 366–393, here 75–91), the *iuxta Graecos* dates to 387, *iuxta Hebraeos* to 394, as stated above; Stephen Vicchio (The Image of the Biblical Job. Volume 2: Job in the Medieval World, Wipf & Stock Publishers, Eugene 2006, 12) instead assumes that Jerome began with the first translation in 389 and with the second in 391. In fact, it may be that it was while translating the Book of Job that Jerome got persuaded to abandon the Greek text and to base his translation of the Old Testament on the Hebrew text.

<sup>2</sup> The text of Jerome’s *iuxta Graecos* is extant in three manuscripts from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> cent. and partially as well in citations in Augustine’s *Annotationes in Iob*. Above and in the following, the text is cited from Carl Caspari. “Das Buch Hiob (1,1–38,16) in Hieronymus’s Uebersetzung aus der alexandrinischen Version: nach einer St. Galler Handschrift saec. VIII”, Christiania 4 (1893), 1–108 (cf. PL 28, 1137–1182); Caspari’s edition of the oldest, but incomplete manuscript (St. Gallen, 8<sup>th</sup> cent.) gives the variants of the other two manuscripts as well as of the *Annotationes* in the footnotes; on earlier editions cf. Bogaert, “Job latin”, 76–77.

ἀπλοῦς (“plain, simple”), this influence does by no means exclude a theological reasoning underlying the translation.

In the following, I will argue that the switch in Jerome’s second translation of Job 1:1 was motivated by a theological rationale. In a first step, I will seek to demonstrate the general fidelity of both of Jerome’s translations to the respective Greek or Hebrew source text by the example of some deliberate ambiguities in the Hebrew text that were lost in both LXX and Jerome’s *iuxta Graecos*, but at least partially preserved in the *iuxta Hebraeos*. In a second step, I will compare the translation of the root ׀ַן in LXX and the *iuxta Graecos* on the one hand and in Jerome’s second translation on the other hand. Finally, I will briefly explore the theological background that may underlie the *iuxta Hebraeos* by giving a glance to Jerome’s interpretation of the Book of Job before and after his second translation. As we will see, the use of “simplex” in Job 1:1 is probably intertwined with the theological debates at the turning from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> cent.

## 1. Ambiguities in MT Job and their translations

### 1.1. Semantic ambiguities (Job 1:5, 10, 11, 21; 2:5, 9; 7:6)

MT Job has a lot of semantic ambiguities that in some cases do not simply derive from the inevitable ambiguousness of language but rather have to be considered as a skillful play with the polysemy of words or syntactic constructions.<sup>3</sup> The sixfold use of the stem ׀ַך in the prologue (Job 1:5, 10, 11, 21; 2:5, 9) is probably the best-known example and an apt starting point for our investigation.<sup>4</sup> The fact that the same verb is used both for God’s beneficial acts for Job (1:10) and for the two imagined antithetical reactions of Job to the withdrawal of the divine blessing – either to “curse” (1:11; 2:5, 9) or to “praise” (1:21) – on the one hand hints at the question about the causal connection between human praise of God and divine blessing of man and, consequently, about the utilitarian motive of Job’s piety which he is accused of by the Satan. On the other hand, Job’s reaction to the loss of his children and his property in Job 1:21 gets somewhat ambiguous: Might his praise of YHWH who “has given” and “has taken away” (v.21) mask the “curse” that the Satan predicted (v.10)?

This skillful play with polysemy that might subtly cast a shadow of ambiguity on both God’s “blessing” (v.10) and Job’s “praise” (v.21) is only partially preserved in the Greek translation: Two times, Job 1:5 and 2:9, the verb ׀ַך is not translated with εὐλογεω (as in 1:10, 11, 21 and 2:5), but with the locutions κακὰ νοῶ (1:5) and λέγω τι ῥῆμα (2:9). Jerome follows LXX in this regard at least once, in 2:9 (“dic aliqod verbum”), in his translation *iuxta Graecos*. In the other case (1:5),

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hoffman, Yair. “The Use of Equivocal Words in the First Speech of Eliphaz (Job IV-V)”, VT 30 (1980), 114–119; Noegel, Scott. Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job (JSOTS 223), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1996; Seow, Choon. Job 1–21: Interpretation and Commentary (Illuminations), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Linafelt, Tod. “The Undecidability of ׀ַך in the prologue to Job and Beyond”, BibInt 4 (1996), 154–172.

the manuscripts differ, but possibly „maledixerint“ was later emended to „benedixerint“ in the course of the textual transmission.<sup>5</sup> In the *iuxta Hebraeos* instead, the wordplay of the Hebrew text is preserved, as in all six occurrences the verb בָּרַךְ is now rendered with “benedico”, although the euphemistic use of the verb (1:11; 2:5, 9) is not attested outside the translation and reception of biblical texts.<sup>6</sup> One may argue whether Jerome intended to preserve the ambiguity of MT or whether he was just focused on a literal translation; in any case his concordant translation of בָּרַךְ attests to his effort to come as close to the Hebrew wording as possible.

A second example of semantic ambiguity in MT that I want to single out here is the noun תְּקוּהָה in Job 7:6. It is commonly translated with “hope”, as in fact, in the same paragraph we encounter the verb קוּהָה “to hope” (v.2). However, the imagery of weaving in V.6a (אָרַגְהָ “loom”) suggests that the meaning “thread” is evoked simultaneously:<sup>7</sup>

יְמֵי קְלוֹ חַנְיָ-אָרַגְהָ וַיִּכְלוּ בְּאֶפְסֵי תְּקוּהָה (Job 7:6 MT)

“My days are wearing off from the loom, and come to their end without hope / thread.”

The ambiguity fosters the interconnection of the imagery with its factual meaning: As Job foresees that the “thread” of his life is about to end, also his “hope” is fading out. This ambiguity is lost in LXX, and here again Jerome’s *iuxta Graecos* follows the deviations of the Greek text from MT:

ὁ δὲ βίος μου ἐστὶν ἐλαφρότερος λαλιᾶς ἀπόλωλεν δὲ ἐν κενῇ ἐλπίδι (Job 7:6 LXX / OG)

“et vita mea exilior est quam loquella, et periit in vacuum spem” (Job 7:6 *iuxta Graecos*)

As there is no Latin term that combines the meanings of “spes” and “filum” resp. “linum”, it is impossible to preserve the semantic ambiguity in any way. Nonetheless, by integrating the imagery of weaving, Jerome’s second translation allows the reader to grasp to some extent the interpenetration of the imagery and its factual meaning:

“dies mei velocius transierunt quam a texente tela succiditur et consumpti sunt absque ulla spe”

As the two examples from the prologue and Job’s second speech illustrate, both of Jerome’s translations are intended to render faithfully the respective Joban texts; in his second translation, Jerome takes up the challenge to replicate at least rudimentarily the semantic ambiguities that are (probably) deliberately woven into the Hebrew text.

<sup>5</sup> The manuscripts of St.Gallen (8<sup>th</sup> cent.) and Bodley (12<sup>th</sup> cent.) have „benedixerint“ in Job 1:5, Augustin (adnotationes in Iob) and the manuscript of Marmoutier (11<sup>th</sup> cent.) instead have “maledixerint”, cf. Caspari. “Das Buch Hiob”, 49.

<sup>6</sup> Within the Vulgate, the euphemistic use of “benedico” (“to curse”) is attested also in 1Kgs 21:10, 13 in line with MT (בָּרַךְ).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Noegel. Janus Parallelism, 50–52; Eckstein, Juliane. Die Semantik von Ijob 6-7: Erschließung ihrer Struktur und einzelner Lexeme mittels Isotopieanalyse (FAT II 125), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2021, 193–210; my translation is in accord with Eckstein’s semantic analysis.

## 1.2. Ambiguities regarding the depiction of God (Job 1:16; 2:3)

In MT, several sections of the prologue reveal that the calamities that hit Job are caused directly by YHWH. LXX Job instead deviates significantly from MT. Although there is no absolute certainty that these differences are not going back to the Hebrew Vorlage, it is most probable that these shifts are motivated by a theological intention, namely to reduce the ambiguity concerning God as the agent of Job’s suffering.<sup>8</sup> Here again, two examples may serve to illustrate Jerome’s faithfulness to LXX in the first and to MT in the second translation.

In difference to the “fire of God” (אש אלהים) in Job 1:16 MT, according to LXX, the fire (πυρ) that falls from heaven is not explicitly associated with the divine:

עַד־כִּי־יִפֹּטֵר אֱלֹהִים אֶשׁ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶשׁ וַיִּפֹּטֵר אֱלֹהִים אֶשׁ וַיִּפֹּטֵר אֱלֹהִים אֶשׁ

ἔτι τούτου λαλοῦντος ἦλθεν ἕτερος ἄγγελος καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς Ἰωβ πύρ ἔπεσεν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ

“adhuc eo loquente, uenit alius nuntius, et dixit ad Iob: ignis Dei cecidit de caelo (...)” (*iuxta Graecos*)

“cumque adhuc ille loqueretur uenit alter et dixit ignis Dei cecidit e caelo (...)” (*iuxta Hebraeos*)

in his first translation, Jerome – in difference to LXX – maintains the reference to God (“ignis Dei”), as is the case in the recensions of Aquila and Theodotion. Nonetheless there is a slight, but theologically significant difference in his second translation: Whereas in the first translation the “fire of God” falls “down from heaven” (“cecidit de caelo”), what tends to recall a natural process (like rainfall), in the second it rather falls “out of heaven” (“cecidit e caelo”) what underpins the divine agency.

The second example is in 2:3, where MT states that YHWH has let himself incite to destroy Job for no reason; in LXX instead, YHWH’s speech to the Satan points out that it is the latter who “said to destroy his possessions for no reason”:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׂטָן וְיָצֵא מִן־עֵדֶן כִּי־אָמַרְתָּ לֵּאמֹר אֶשׁ וַיִּפֹּטֵר אֱלֹהִים אֶשׁ

σὺ δὲ εἶπας τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ διὰ κενῆς ἀπολέσαι

“Tu uero dixisti substantiam eius frustra perdere” (*iuxta Graecos*)

“Tu autem commouisti me aduersus eum ut adfligerem illum frustra” (*iuxta Hebraeos*)

<sup>8</sup> On the differences between MT and LXX (OG) Job and the latter’s theology cf. Kepper, Martina; Witte, Markus. “Job: Das Buch Ijob/Hiob”, in Karrer, Martin (Hg.). *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 2011, 2041–2126; Cook, Johann. “The Profile and Some Theological Aspects of the Old Greek of Job – Resurrection and Life after Death as Points in Case”, *OTEs* 24 (2011), 324–345; Cook, Johann. “Towards a ‘Theology’ of the Old Greek Text of Job”, in Ausloos, Hans; Lemmelijn, Bénédicte (eds.). *A Pillar of Cloud to Guide: Text-Critical, Redactional, and Linguistic Perspectives on the Old Testament in Honour of Marc Vervenne* (BETL 269), Peeters, Leuven 2014, 353–362; Cox, Claude. “Job”, in Aitken, James (ed.). *The T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*, T & T Clark, London 2015, 385–400; Cox, Claude. “Old Greek Job 42 – A Surprise at the End of the Road: Intertextual Connections between the Epilogue and the Prologue Introduced by the Translator”, in Gauthier, Randall; Kotzé, Gideon; Steyn, Gert (eds.). *Septuagint, Sages, and Scripture: Studies in Honour of Johann Cook* (VT.S 172), Brill, Leiden 2016, 180–189.

The difference between Jerome’s translations is evident, as in his first translation, Jerome follows LXX literally (“but you said to destroy his possessions for nothing”), in the second one instead he provides an almost verbatim rendering of MT (“but you incited me against him that I smite him for nothing”).

In these two examples we can again grasp Jerome’s faithfulness to the text in both translations. The fact becomes more striking as in *iuxta Hebraeos*, Jerome does not mitigate the provocative wording of the Hebrew text and by this allows that – compared to LXX – the depiction of God in the book becomes somewhat ambiguous.

### 1.3. Ambiguities concerning Job (Job 9:22; 32:1)

Similarly to the disambiguation of the depiction of God in the prologue, LXX tends to reduce the ambiguity concerning Job’s moral integrity in the dialogue in order to draw “a more positive portrayal of Job as a patient sufferer and even a prayerful man.”<sup>9</sup> In MT, Job launches sharp accusations against God (Job 7:12–21; 9,11–35 etc.). In 9:22, he blames God of destroying “the blameless and the wicked”. LXX avoids Job uttering such an attack by replacing both object and subject of the phrase:

הַגָּדוֹל וְהַיָּדוּיִם יִפְּסֵם (9:22 MT)

μέγαν και δυνάστην ἀπολλύει ὀργή (9:22 LXX / OG)

In the Greek text, it is not God, but the anger that “destroys”, and it is not “the blameless and the wicked”, but “the great and powerful” that become its victims. Jerome’s first translation agrees with the Greek text, in his second translation instead he fully conforms with the Hebrew wording:

“magnum et potentem disperdit ira.” (...)” (*iuxta Graecos*)

“et innocentem et impium ipse consumit”. (...)” (*iuxta Hebraeos*)

In MT, Job’s bold statement on God’s unjust judgment stands in tension to his fear of God that is both verbally expressed (1:1, 8, 9; 2:3) and acted out (1:5, 21; 2:10) in the prologue. LXX almost completely eliminates the ambiguity concerning Job’s piety provoked by this tension; Jerome in his second translation instead brings it back into the text.

A second example, where LXX deviates from MT in order to make an unambiguous statement on Job’s righteousness is Job 32:1:

וְיָדַעְתָּ כִּי צַדִּיקִים אֵינִי (32:1 MT)

ἦν γὰρ ἰωβ δίκαιος ἐναντίον αὐτῶν (32:1 LXX / OG)

<sup>9</sup> Seow, Job 1–21, 113; cf. Gard, Donald. “The Concept of Job’s Character According to the Greek Translator of the Hebrew Text”, JBL 72 (1953), 182–186; Cook. “Profile”, 330; Häner, Tobias. “The Exegetical Function of the Additions to Old Greek Job (42,17a–e)”, Bib. 100 (2019), 34–49, here 41–42.

Whereas MT makes clear that Job “was righteous in his (own) eyes”, according to LXX, the latter’s righteousness is acknowledged by his friends (“Job was righteous before them”).

Jerome’s first translation follows here Theodotion who is close to MT; nonetheless, his second translation clearly differs here and – in conformity with MT – reinforces the ambiguity concerning Job’s status as a righteous man by stating that Job “considered himself to be righteous”:

“erat enim Iob in conspectu suo iustus” (*iuxta Graecos*)

“quod iustus sibi videretur” (*iuxta Hebraeos*)

As these two examples show, Jerome’s *iuxta Hebraeos* abandons the image of Job as an unambiguously righteous and pious man that is present in LXX (and by consequence in his first translation), and instead reproduces the ambiguity in MT concerning Job’s moral integrity.

#### 1.4. Summary

In conclusion, we may state that Jerome in both the *iuxta Graecos* and the *iuxta Hebraeos* translation remains faithful to his translation principles in the sense that he aims at providing a mostly literal rendering of the respective Joban text, with the result that in the first translation compared to MT ambiguities are reduced (in conformity with LXX), whereas the second translation to some extent preserves the ambiguities of the Hebrew text. However, Jerome’s turn to the Hebrew text and its ambiguities brings along – as we have seen – a theological shift concerning the depiction of God as agent of the calamities that hit Job and, more importantly, with regard to Job’s exemplarity as a model of piety and endurance. As we will see now turning back to Job 1:1, this shift is not a feature of the second translation that the reader detects only little by little going through the text, but rather is hinted at right from the beginning.

## 2. The root **דָּן** in MT Job and in Jerome’s translations

In order to further investigate Jerome’s translation of **דָּן** with “simplex” in the initial characterization of Job in Job 1:1, an overview on the use of the root **דָּן** in the whole book and its translations in LXX and in the *iuxta Graecos* on the hand and in the *iuxta Hebraeos* on the other hand may be helpful. In total, the root recurs 16 times in the book: The adjective **דָּן** recurs in 1:1, 8; 2,3; 8:20; 9:20, 21, 22 (7 uses), the adjective **דָּנִים** in 12:4; 36:4; 37:16 (3 uses), the noun **דָּנָה** in 2:3, 9; 27:5; 31:6 (4 uses), and the noun **דָּן** in 4:6 and 21:23. Out of these, 10 times “blameless” / “blamelessness” is attributed to Job: After the narrator (1:1), God (1:8; 2:3 [twice]) and Job’s wife (2:9) in the prologue, in the dialogue it is predominantly Job himself who asserts to be without

blame (9:20, 21; 27,5; 31,6); once this statement is taken up by a friend of Job (4:6), yet in a questioning way.<sup>10</sup>

LXX variegates the translation of the root **דָּן** between ἄμεμπτος ("blameless") and ἄκακος / ἀκακία („innocent / innocence"): Both terms are used 5 times, only once the noun ἀπλοσύνη turns up.<sup>11</sup> The figure of Job is designated 4 times each as "blameless" (ἄμεμπτος) and as "innocent" (ἄκακος). By consequence, in the Greek text the somewhat ambiguous root **דָּן** that is mainly associated with cult (cf. **דָּן** in Ex 12:5; 29:1; Lev 1:3.10; 3:1 etc.) is transferred into a clear statement about Job's moral integrity.

Jerome's first translation is in line with LXX in this regard, as he generally translates ἄμεμπτος with "sine crimine" ("without reproof", 4 times) and ἄκακος / ἀκακία with "innocens / innocentia" („innocent / innocence", 5 times); only in 4:6 ἀκακία is rendered by "simplicitas" and in 9:20 ἄμεμπτος by "iustus". In the second translation instead, at a first glance the picture gets blurred: Nine times the root **דָּן** is translated with "simplex" / "simplicitas", four times with "innocens" / "innocentia" and three times with "perfectus" / "perfectio".<sup>12</sup> However, a close look reveals that regarding the characterization of Job, the *iuxta Hebraeos* follows a clear pattern: Whereas Job himself may consider himself "innocens" (2:3b; 9:20; 27:5), the narrator (1:1) and other characters (1:8; 2:3a, 9; 4:6) never declare him "sine crimine" or "innocens",<sup>13</sup> but regard him as "simplex" – and that is, we may infer, how the reader ought to see him as well. In fact the use of the locution "sine crimine" is omitted completely in the second translation. Therefore, when in Job 2:3b God states that Job "adhuc retinens innocentiam" this is probably not to be understood in the way that the latter "maintains" his innocence, but rather suggests that God observes Job "keeping" the conviction of his innocence "in mind", i.e. continuing to consider himself as innocent. Accordingly, his wife in 2:9 declares that what he actually preserves is his "simplicity" ("permanes in simplicitate tua"). In sum, we may state that in contrast to LXX that aims at highlighting Job's moral integrity by downgrading ambiguous statements regarding his blamelessness, the *iuxta Hebraeos* carefully avoids any straightforward declaration of Job's status as "innocent" or "blameless".

Outside the book of Job, the adjective **דָּן** is used six more times in relation to a person; only once (Gen 25:27) it is translated with "simplex", twice with "immaculatus" (Ps 64:4; Sol 5:2) and once each with "innocens" (Ps 37:37) and "perfectus" (Sol 6:9). This fosters the impression that regarding Job, the use of "simplex" in Job 1:1, 8; 2:3 is deliberate as it is a rather uncommon way of rendering **דָּן** in context of human qualities. What regards the use of "simplex" and its

<sup>10</sup> As the context of Eliphaz' speech makes clear, in 4:6 Job's friend does not affirm, but rather question Job's "perfection": "Eliphaz appears to be praising Job, but he may also be heard as mocking Job's piety and pretense at perfection" (Seow. Job 1–21, 396).

<sup>11</sup> Several times LXX gives no equivalent to the root **דָּן**, cf. appendix.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the list in the appendix.

<sup>13</sup> In Job 4:6, we encounter the locution "perfectio viarum tuarum", uttered by Eliphaz in view of Job, but probably not in an affirmative way, cf. above (note 11).



derivatives (“simpliciter” / “simplicitas”) in the Vulgate outside the Book of Job, in 18 out of 26 cases it translates a derivative of the root **דַּן**.<sup>14</sup> However, this is the case predominantly in Proverbs (13 times), where in most cases **דַּן** / “simplex” implies an attitude of trustfulness. In this sense, we may conclude that what Jerome intends by translating **דַּן** with “simplex” in Job 1:1 and further on is to shift the image of Job from “Job the blameless” – i.e. Job as an example of virtue and moral integrity – to “Job the simple” – i.e. Job as a rather ordinary person that is steadfast in his trust in God’s grace.

### 3. The interpretation of the Book of Job around Jerome’s translation *iuxta Hebraeos*

In general terms, for the Greek and Latin interpreters in Antiquity, Job stands out as a paradigm of endurance and patience from 1 Clem (1 Clem 17:3–4) in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century to John Chrysostom (Commentary on Job 4:1–5) in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> However, at the time when Jerome gets to grips with his translation of Job *iuxta Hebraeos*, the situation starts to change, and it might be that his rendering of Job 1:1 that depicts Job as a “vir simplex” is influenced by the theological debates that begin to arise at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and that make Job a contested and ambiguous figure in the Christian interpretation. In fact, as Kenneth Steinhauser points out, the figure of Job is often mentioned and referred to in the Pelagian controversy.<sup>16</sup> Although this controversy comes to its climax only a decade or two after Jerome’s second translation of the Book of Job, it is fairly possible that Jerome knew about Pelagius’ teachings already at that time and felt the necessity to adapt his translation accordingly.

In fact, there is a remarkable shift in Jerome’s interpretation of Job before his translation *iuxta Hebraeos* and after it.<sup>17</sup> Before the translation, Jerome in his homilies presents Job as an example of endurance and patience in line with the Christian mainstream up to this point.<sup>18</sup> Afterwards instead, in the Pelagian controversy, the Book of Job serves Jerome as a prooftext of original sin: In his Dialogue against the Pelagians (Dialogus adversos pelagianos) he cites namely Job 1:5 (Job

<sup>14</sup> A derivative of „simplex” is used to translate a derivative of **דַּן** in Gen 20:5, 6; 25:27; 2Sam 15:11; 1Kgs 9:4; Prov 2:7, 21; 10:9, 29; 11:3, 5, 20; 19:1; 20:7; 28:6, 10, 18; 29:10). Beside the root **דַּן**, derivatives of „simplex” are used several times to translate the root **רָשָׁע** (1Chr 29:17; Prov 3:32).

<sup>15</sup> On the central themes and aspects of the Christian reception of the Book of Job in Antiquity cf. Dassmann, Ernst. “Akzente frühchristlicher Hiobdeutung”, JbAC 31 (1988 40–56); Dassmann, Ernst. “Hiob”, RAC 15, Hiersemann Anton Verlag, Stuttgart 1991, 366–442; Vicchio, Stephen. The Image of the Biblical Job. Volume 1: Job in the Ancient World, Wipf & Stock Publishers, Eugene 2006, 139–157.

<sup>16</sup> Steinhauser, Kenneth. “Job Exegesis: The Pelagian Controversy”, in Schnaubelt, Joseph; van Fleteren, Frederick (eds.). Augustine: Biblical Exegete, Collectanea Augustiniana 5, Peter Lang, New York-Bern 2001, 299–311; cf. Steinhauser, Kenneth “Job in Patristic Commentaries and Theological Works”, in Harkins, Franklin; Canty, Aaron (eds.). A Companion to Job in the Middle Ages. Brill’s companions to the Christian tradition 73, Brill, Leiden 2016, 34–70.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Vicchio, Job in the Medieval World, 10–17.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Jerome, homilies 6; 73; 88; 91.

offering burnt offerings for his children's sins) and 14:4–5 ("For who is clean of blemishes? Not even if his life were but one day on earth"<sup>19</sup>) as scriptural evidence against the Pelagius and the denial of original sin.<sup>20</sup> In this context, Job from an outstanding paradigm turns into an everyman, a "vir simplex" – a "simple man" who trusts in God's grace rather than in his own virtues.<sup>21</sup> The translation *iuxta Hebraeos* stands in the middle of this shift with the result that Job maybe more than ever becomes an ambiguous, Janus-faced figure.

#### 4. Conclusion

In both translations of the Book of Job, Jerome rigorously seeks to deliver a Latin text that remains close to the respective Greek and Hebrew sources. In his second translation (*iuxta Hebraeos*) he manages to transfer some of the ambiguities of MT at least rudimentarily to the target language (Job 2:3; 7:6 etc.). Nonetheless, his translation from MT that by the beginning of the Middle Ages gains predominance in the Latin church betrays a theological rationale. As our analysis has shown, already in Job 1:1, compared to the first translation, an important shift takes place that is possibly provoked by the rise of the Pelagian controversy: In order to contradict the Pelagian denial of original sin, in Jerome's second translation, Job loses his innocence, as the translator – in contrast to his *iuxta Graecos* – carefully avoids any statement on Job's blamelessness. Therefore, in Job 1:1, 8 and 2:3 the expressions "sine crimine" and "innocens" are replaced by "simplex", allowing that Job gets relegated from his status as a model of piety and endurance to a "simple" everyman.

<sup>19</sup> Curiously, Jerome cites after LXX that considerably deviates here from MT – and his own translation *iuxta Hebraeos*. There is a considerable gap between Jerome's effort to remain close to the Hebrew text in his translation and his rather free use of biblical texts in his theological argumentation; cf. Vicchio, *Job in the Medieval World*, 16–17.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Jerome, *adv. Pelag.*, 33.

<sup>21</sup> „Jerome as the early homilist saw Job as a blameless and upright man, a patient and steadfast saint, while the latter homilist found in Job, not a patient and moral man, but rather a flawed and sinful Everyman, a sufferer from original sin.“ (Vicchio, *Job in the Medieval World*, 17).

## Appendix: The root **דן** in MT Job and its translations

	MT	Speaker	Subject	LXX	<i>luxta Graecos</i>	<i>luxta Hebraeos</i>
1:1	דן	narrator	Job	ἄμεμπτος <sup>22</sup>	sine crimine	simplex
1:8	דן	God	Job	ἄμεμπτος	sine crimine	simplex
2:3a	דן	God	Job	ἄμεμπτος (ἄκακος) <sup>23</sup>	innocens <sup>2</sup>	simplex
2:3b	הקל	God	Job	ἀκακία	innocentia	innocentia
2:9	הקל	Job's wife	Job	(no equivalent)	(no equivalent)	simplicitas
4:6	דן	Eliphaz	Job	ἀκακία <sup>24</sup>	simplicitas	perfectio
8:20	דן	Bildad	(other)	ἄκακος	innocens	simplex
9:20	דן	Job	Job	ἄμεμπτος	iustus	innocens
9:21	דן	Job	Job	(no equivalent)	sine crimine	simplex
9:22	דן	Job	(other)	(no equivalent)	(no equivalent)	innocens
12:4	דן	Job	(other)	ἄμεμπτος	sine crimine	simplicitas
21:23	דן	Job	(other)	ἀπλοσύνη <sup>25</sup>	simplicitas	simplicitas
27:5	הקל	Job	Job	ἀκακία	innocentia	innocentia
31:6	הקל	Job	Job	ἀκακία	innocentia	simplicitas
36:4	דן	Elihu	(other)	(no equivalent)	(no equivalent)	perfectus
37:16	דן	Elihu	(other)	(no equivalent)	(no equivalent)	perfectus

<sup>22</sup> Aquila: ἀπλούς.

<sup>23</sup> In difference to the threefold literal repetition of the characterization of Job in 1:1, 8; 2:3 MT, LXX varies, adding in 1:1 in third place δίκαιος and in 2:3 ἄμεμπτος. Jerome's *luxta Graecos* adopts the variation in 1:1, but not in 2:3, as it has only “innocens”, but not “sine crimine”.

<sup>24</sup> Aquila: ἀπλότης.

<sup>25</sup> Not in OG, added in LXX from Theodotion.