

THE ADJECTIVE *EÚELPIS* IN THE LIGHT OF GREEK LITERATURE, THE LXX AND *P. MICH. ZEN.* 107

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Abstract: Inspired by the article of Scarpato on *eúelpis* in Wisd 12,19, the author wishes to further examine this term, in order to shed light on the single occurrence of the term in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, as well on its usage in non-biblical Greek, in the LXX and in the extant Hellenistic documentary papyri. This contribution therefore presents a lexicographical study of the adjective *eúelpis* and can be divided into three parts. First, attention will be given to a selected set of examples of this term in Greek literature. Second, its occurrences in the LXX will be considered in detail. This survey will end with the investigation of *eúelpis* in *P. Mich. Zen.* 107,18-19.

Keywords: *Eúelpis*. “In good hopes”. “Confident” / “cheerful” / “hopeful”. Greek literature. LXX. *Hapax*. Pr 19,18. 3 Macc 2,33. Wisd 12,9. *P. Mich. Zen.* 107,18-19.

El adjetivo *eúelpis* a la luz de la literatura griega, la LXX y *P. Mich. Zen.* 107

Resumen: Inspirada por el artículo de Scarpato sobre *eúelpis* en Sb 12,19, la autora desea profundizar en este término, con el fin de arrojar luz sobre la única aparición del término en la *Sabiduría de Salomón*, así como sobre su uso en textos griegos no bíblicos, en la versión de los LXX y en los papiros documentales helenísticos existentes. Esta contribución, por tanto, presenta un estudio lexicográfico del adjetivo *eúelpis* y se puede dividir en tres partes: primero, se prestará atención a un conjunto seleccionado de ejemplos de este término en la literatura griega; segundo, se considerarán en detalle sus ocurrencias en los LXX, y finalmente se investigará la aparición de *eúelpis* en *P. Mich. Zen.* 107,18-19.

Palabras clave: *Eúelpis*. “En buenas esperanzas”. “confiado” / “alegre” / “esperanzado”. Literatura griega. LXX. *Hapax*. Pr 19,18. 3 Mac 2,33. Sb 12,9. *P. Mich. Zen.* 107,18-19.

Introduction

The adjective *eúelpis* is derived from the stem *elp-* (as in *elpís* / *elpízō* “hope”, “expectation”, “illusion” / “to hope”, “to think”, “to suggest” etc.), and the prefix *eu-*. It is commonly used in Greek literature, with the meaning: “in good hopes”, “confident” / “cheerful” “hopeful”¹.

Even though the terms *elpís* / *elpízō* have been examined in several ways and with several approaches², only a few sporadic observations on their derived adjective (*eúelpis*) have been made³. A more systematic treatment of *eúelpis* may be found in the work of the Italian scholar Scarpát. About twenty-eight years ago he published an accurate article on the *hapax eúelpis* in *Wisd* 12,19, where he analyzed a set of examples of this adjective mainly in Greek literature and the LXX and explained *eúelpis* in *Wisd* 12,19 against the background of Philo of Alexandria⁴.

In the present article, we would like to shed some new light on this *hapax* in the *Wisdom of Solomon*. Without claiming to be exhaustive, we will provide a general overview of the usage of *eúelpis* in Greek literature, with a special focus on its instances in the LXX. We will also examine the usage of this term in *P. Mich. Zen.* 107, a text that, to our knowledge, has been neglected by previous studies.

¹ See LIDDELL – SCOTT – JONES, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 711.

² For a recent bibliography on this topic, see BUFFA, “The Adjective ἀνέλπιστος”, 232-233.

³ Cf. e.g.: FICHTNER, *Weisheit Salomos*, 48; BULTMANN – RENGSTORF, “ἐλπίς”, 518, 520; SCHRIJEN, *Elpis*, 100, 158-159; LACHNIT, *Elpis*, 118-119; HUART, *Le Vocabulaire*, 149-150; WOSCHITZ, *Elpis*, 119; 121; 128; 157-161; 167; 327-328; VAN MENXEL, *Ἐλπίς*, 110-111; LARCHER, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, III, 731-732; SPICQ, *Note*, 557; MOTTE, “L’espérance”, 165; BRITO MARTINS, *O conceito d’elpis*, 176-177; FULKERSON, “Torn between Hope and Despair”, 77; JOHNSTON, “Poet of Hope”, 43; FISHER, “Hope and Hopelessness”, 73; TSOUNPRA, “The Politics of Hopelessness”, 115; LATEINER, “Elpis as Emotion and Reason”, 139, 143; RUNIA, “The Virtue of Hope”, 258, 260-261, 263, 266; VASSALLO, “Paradossi (pre)platonici”, 186-187, 206.

⁴ SCARPAT, “La buona speranza in Sap. 12,9”, 203-208. Scarpát’s observations on *eúelpis* made in this article were afterwards taken up in his commentary on *Wisdom of Solomon*: SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 438-444. For recent remarks on *eúelpis* in the writings of Philo, see RUNIA, “The Virtue of Hope”, 260-268. It is worth remarking that the term is not attested in pseudepigraphic and NT literature.

1. The adjective *eúelpis* in Greek literature

The lemma *eúelpis*⁵ is attested 582 times in the *TLG* corpus⁶. This adjective mainly describes a mental state of animate, human beings.

If used as a predicate, it describes a temporary state of mind or a temporary condition. For instance, in Thucydides' *Hist.* 6.24.3 we read: "upon those in the flower of their age, through a longing for far-off sights and scenes, in good hopes of a safe return"⁷. In this passage, the expression *eu-élpides óntes sōthésesthai*⁸ literally means "being in good hopes of being saved" and is employed with reference to some Athenian soldiers headed by Nicias in an expedition with not less than one hundred triremes. By means of these words, Thucydides⁹ underlines the fact that they nourish the hope of coming back from the expedition safe and sound, as life is for them the dearest good, especially as in the circumstances of war.

Particularly noteworthy is the use of *eúelpis* in Ps.-Aristotle, *Probl.* 955a2–4: "This is why all are eager to drink up to the point of drunkenness, because much wine make men confident just as youth does boys". After having analyzed the different effects of drunkenness, which cause changes in character and affect thought, intelligence and wisdom, the author compares the state of alcoholic euphoria (*ho oínos ho polýs*) to youth (*hē neótēs*)¹⁰. According to him, both wine and hope have the same effect on man, as they make him confident (*euélpidas poieî*). In fact, hope inspires courage in man, while drunkenness produces in him the absence of fear and, therefore, to some extent, confidence. In other words, here *eúelpis* is an effect of drunkenness¹¹.

⁵ In Aristophanes, *Av.*, *Euelpidēs* "Good Hope" is a chief character. On this subject, see BULTMANN – RENGSTORF, "ἐλπίζ", 518.

⁶ See <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/> [consulted: 3/03/2022].

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all the texts and translations of this section are quoted according to the Loeb Classical Library.

⁸ Johnston renders this expression "and hope that they would be safe": JOHNSTON, "Poet of Hope", 43. Tsoumpira prefers to translate it by "confident of surviving": TSOUMPIRA, "The Politics of Hopelessness", 115.

⁹ In this occurrence, Thucydides portrays the Athenians and their forces as quick to hope. In this regard, see LATEINER, "Elpis as Emotion and Reason", 143.

¹⁰ For a similar comparison, see Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1154b10.

¹¹ The same idea is expressed e.g. in both Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1117a14–15, where those getting drunk become confident ([...] *hoi methyskómēnoi euélpides gār gínontai*) and Aristotle, *Eth. Eud.* 1229a20, where it is said that wine makes men confident (*euélpidas gār poieî ho oínos*), but also in Ps.-Aristotle, *Probl.* 910a30–31, where drunken men described as not inquisitive but "courageous and confident" (*andreíoi kai euélpides*).

Another good example of *eúelpis* used as a predicate, denoting a temporary physical condition is Aretaeus, *Sign. diut.* 1.13: “But if all these symptoms abate, if pus that is white, smooth, consistent, and inodorous, is discharged, and the stomach digests the food, there may be good hopes of the patient”¹². Taking into account the inflammation of the liver, the physician Aretaeus of Cappadocia pays particular attention to the symptoms, which are present when this organ is acutely affected by disease. In this occurrence, the adjective *eúelpis*¹³ appears in a medical context, and holds a passive meaning. In fact, it points to a patient who is “well hoped of”¹⁴ survival from a disease, a patient who is himself the subject of good hopes of recovery.

A special usage of *eúelpis* occurs where the utterances of humans, metonymically, can be described as “cheerful”, while in reality it is people who speak in the mental state of cheerfulness. In this sense it is worth mentioning Polybius’ *Hist.* 1.32.6: “As they spread, the words of Xanthippus gave rise to rumors and some cheerful talk among the populace”¹⁵. Thus, the historian narrates that a certain Xanthippus, a man trained in the Spartan discipline, expresses his opinion about the war between Romans and Carthaginians, saying that the Carthaginians owed their defeat, not to the superiority of the Romans, but to the inexperience of their generals. Passing from mouth to mouth, Xanthippus’s observations give rise to rumors (*ho throûs*) and cheerful talk (*laliá ... eúelpis*) among the multitude.

Eúelpis may also denote a permanent state of mind that can be described as a long-standing personal character trait. Not surprisingly, it occurs in biographical sections or in ethical contexts. For instance, in *Ages.* 8.2.2, a biography of Agesilaus II¹⁶, Xenophon affirms: “Thanks to his optimism, good humour, and cheerfulness he was a centre of attraction to many, who came not merely for purposes of business, but to pass the day more pleasantly”. After having described the king’s glorious actions, Xenophon gives an account of his virtues (chapters 3-9). Recording several qualities, he mentions, among the others, his capability of being optimistic, good-humored, and

¹² For the translation, see ARETAEUS, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus*, 321.

¹³ For the Greek text, see ARETAEUS, *Corpus medicorum Graecorum*, 55.

¹⁴ *Eúelpis* in the passive sense means that the person described by this adjective is the subject of hope / inspires hope. A very literal translation could be “well hoped of” as suggested by LIDDELL – SCOTT – JONES, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 711.

¹⁵ We provide the English translation.

¹⁶ He was one of the joint kings of Sparta in 398 B.C.E.: XENOPHON, *Scripta Minora*, XVII.

cheerful (*eúelpis*, *eúthumos*, *hilarós*)¹⁷. Underlining these three virtues, he depicts Agesilaus as an agreeable person, able to keep good company on every occasion, whether in work time or in leisure. As an admirer of an ideal Spartan character, Xenophon clearly sees in Agesilaus the embodiment of his conception of good king.

Another relevant example is Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1117a22–23: “Those who act in ignorance also appear courageous, and they are not far from those who are confident, though inferior to them inasmuch as they do not have self-assurance, while the others do”¹⁸. Dealing with different kinds of courage, Aristotle here focuses on the courage caused by ignorance. He affirms that those who act in ignorance (*kai hoi agnooúntes*) seem to be courageous (*andreíoi dè fáíntai*), but no more than at first sight. Noting some affinities between this set of people and those who are confident (*ou pórrō tōn euelpídōn*), he further explains that, despite the resemblances, those who act in ignorance are inferior to those who are confident, since they lack self-assurance (*axiōma oudèn éjousin*)¹⁹.

The kinds of adversity that occur in the contexts of *eúelpis* may be the absence of divine help (e.g. Aeschylus’ *Prom.* 509, Euripides *Herc.* 460) or death (e.g. Plato, *Apol.* 41c, *Phaed.* 63c and *Phaed.* 64a). In Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Vincitus*²⁰, l. 509 the text states as follows: “[...] I am of good hope that you will yet be loosed from these bonds and will be no less powerful than Zeus”²¹. With these words, the Chorus of ocean Nymphs tries to reassure the distressed Prometheus, punished by Zeus for having given fire to humankind, and enchained for this reason to a mountain in Skythia. In some ways, the Nymphs desire to sooth his troubles, telling him that they are confident (*eúelpís eimi*) that he will gain his previous freedom (*tōndé*

¹⁷ Here *eúelpis* is part of a praiseworthy triad in honour of Agesilaus: SCARPAT, “La buona speranza in Sap. 12,9”, 204; SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 439. It is notable that in this occurrence the adjective is used attributively.

¹⁸ We provide the English translation.

¹⁹ Aristotle has previously stated (*Eth. Nic.* 1117a13-14) that those who are “confident” think that they are the strongest and that no harm will come to them. “Confident” here refers to the Greek term *euelpídes*.

²⁰ This is the first occurrence of the adjective in Greek literature. See LACHNIT, *Elpis*, 118. Huart, for his part, affirms that this adjective is almost ignored in Greek tragedy (HUART, *Le Vocabulaire*, 149).

²¹ We provide the English translation.

s'ek desmôn éti lythénta) and power (*mēdèn meíon isjýsein Diós*), if he does not benefit mortals beyond due measure²².

Another interesting occurrence of *eúelpis* in this sense, is in Euripides' *Hercules*, ll. 460-461: "Oh, how far I've fallen from the hopeful conviction, which I once hoped for from your father's words"²³. Filled with deep disillusionment, Megara utters words of desperation. In this context, the adjective *eúelpis*²⁴ "hopeful" agrees with the noun *dóxē* "conviction", and refers to the fact that Megara hoped to see her three children grown up, ruling and married with fine brides. These were the hopes once raised in her by Heracles' words (*ek lógōn pot' élpisa*), which unluckily turned out to be vain. In fact, Lycus wanted to kill her and her children to prevent them from avenging their grandfather Amphytrion.

Moreover, in *Apol.* 41c-41d²⁵, Socrates utters these words: "But you too, members of the jury, must be hopeful in the face of death and keep in mind this one truth: that nothing can be bad for a good man, either alive or dead, and his affairs are not disregarded by the gods"²⁶. Being accused of impiety and of corrupting the youth by Meletus, Anytus and Lyco, Socrates is tried before the court, found guilty and sentenced to death²⁷. In his closing speech he addresses the members of the jury (*ô ándres dikastaí*) and exhorts them to be hopeful in the face of death (*euélpidas éinai pròs tòn thánaton*)²⁸, as no evil can come to a good man (*andri agathô[i]*) either in life or after death. Plato thus presents Socrates as confident when facing death.

A similar attitude toward death can be found in *Phaed.* 63c²⁹, where Socrates declares: "[...] but I am hopeful that there is something there for the dead, and, as has long been said, something better for the good than

²² In this occurrence, the adjective *eúelpis* is constructed with an infinitive clause, as has been pointed out by SCARPAT, "La buona speranza in Sap. 12,9", 206; SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 442.

²³ We provide the English translation.

²⁴ Fisher renders the expression *dóxē eúelpis* "expectation of good hope": FISHER, "Hope and Hopelessness", 73.

²⁵ Schrijen briefly takes into account this passage: SCHRIJEN, *Elpis*, 157-158.

²⁶ We provide the English translation.

²⁷ For further details, see PLATO, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo*, 86-105.

²⁸ Woschitz translates this expression thus: "gute Hoffnung haben in Hinsicht auf den Tod": WOSCHITZ, *Elpis*, 119.

²⁹ On *eúelpis* in *Phaed.* 63c see also VAN MENXEL, *Ἐλπίς*, 110-111; SCARPAT, "La buona speranza in Sap. 12,9", 204; SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 439. See also BRITO MARTINS, *O conceito d'elpis*, 176; VASSALLO, "Paradossi (pre)platonici", 186-187.

for the bad”³⁰. In this dialogue set in prison, Socrates establishes the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and provides some proofs of its truth³¹. Trying to explain his opinion to his disciple Simmias, he reveals to him that he is hopeful about death (*eúelpís eimi ênaí ti toís teteleutēkósi*) and, somehow, glad to die. In fact, he is convinced that his soul will continue to exist after the death of the body.

Further on, (*Phaed.* 64a³²) Socrates takes up and expands this line of reasoning: “[...] it seems to me likely that a man who has really spent his life in philosophy is of good courage when he is about to die and hopeful that he will gain the greatest blessings in the other world when he dies”³³. Socrates explains to his disciples Simmias and Cebes that a philosopher should be hopeful (*eúelpís ênaí*) when he is about to die (*méllōn apothanéisthai*), as a man who has truly devoted his life to philosophy will attain the greatest blessings in that other world (*ekēi mégista ... agathá*). According to Plato, the philosopher should be *eúelpís* in the face of death. This capability of keeping a positive attitude toward death comes from the belief in immortality and in the metempsychosis of the soul, both doctrines that enable the philosopher to foresee a life of bliss after death for those who act justly. Imagining a reward after death, Plato seems to extend hope beyond the present life.

2. The adjective *eúelpís* in the LXX

In the LXX the adjective *eúelpís* is attested 3 times, once in a translated text (Pr 19,18) and twice in non-translated texts (3 Macc 2,33 and Wisd 12,19)³⁴. It is notable that in these three instances it is used as a predicate to describe a temporary state of mind or a temporary condition.

In Pr 19,18, *eúelpís* occurs in the following sentence: “Discipline your son, for thus he will be ‘well hoped of’, but do not be exalted in your soul to *hýbris*”³⁵. The author of *Proverbs* here advises parents to be continual-

³⁰ We provide the English translation.

³¹ For a brief discussion of the contents and purposes of the *Phaedo*, see PLATO, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo*, 266-291.

³² On *eúelpís* in *Phaed.* 64a, see also SCHRIJEN, *Elpis*, 159-160; BRITO MARTINS, *O conceito d’elpis*, 177; FULKERSON, “Torn between Hope and Despair”, 77; VASSALLO, “Paradossi (pre)platonici”, 187.

³³ We provide the English translation.

³⁴ In this contribution the LXX is quoted according to RAHLFS – HANHART, *Septuaginta*, while the MT is quoted according to the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia 1997.

³⁵ We provide the English translation.

ly engaged in their children's education³⁶. Likewise, he exhorts them to be diligent in punishing their sons for their faults, even if they are recalcitrant³⁷. The statement *hoútōs gār estai eúelpis* literally means "so that he is in good hope"³⁸ and renders the MT *kî-yēš tiqwāh* "for there is hope"³⁹.

It is noteworthy that, though *tiqwāh* is most commonly translated by *elpís*⁴⁰, the Greek translator employs the compound adjective *eúelpis* instead of *elpís*. *Eúelpis* is therefore a less literal rendering of its Hebrew equivalent⁴¹. In this way, the meaning of the sentence slightly changes. In fact, using an adjective (*eúelpis*) instead of its cognate noun (*elpís*), the LXX translator clearly expresses that the adjective refers to the son. By doing so, his translation is in fact clearer than the MT, where the expression *kî-yēš tiqwāh* "for there is hope" could be related either to sons or parents. Be this as it may, the LXX text conveys the idea that parents' education makes the son *eúelpis*, "well hoped of", which somehow means "promising", able to fulfil his father's expectations. Even though this passage does not seem to have an exact parallel in Greek, the use of the adjective *εὐελπίς* in the passive sense, meaning "well hoped of," may be compared with its use in Aretaeus, *Sign. diut.* 1.13.

In 3 Macc 2:33, it is said: "They remained hopeful of obtaining support, and despised those who were withdrawing from them, and they judged (them) enemies of the nation and began to exclude them from community life and service"⁴². After mentioning the edict of Ptolemy IV Philopator (3 Macc 2,28-29), ordering that, under the penalty of death, all the Jews should be obliged to be registered⁴³ and subjected to slavery, the author of *3 Maccabees* lingers on the reactions of the Jews to it. Some accepted to be initiated into the Mysteries of Dionysus, as this would give them equal rights to the Alexandrians (3 Macc 2,30-31). Others, the majority, tried to avoid registration, being hopeful of obtaining support (*eúelpidēs te katheistēkei-*

³⁶ See CIMOSA, *Proverbi*, 200.

³⁷ See *ib.*, 200; FOX, *Proverbs 10-31*, 656.

³⁸ We provide the English translation.

³⁹ According to Fox, translating "while there is hope" as Toys in the *New Revised Standard Version* does, is contrary to the syntax. In this regard see Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 656.

⁴⁰ E.g. in Pr, Job, Ez 37,11, cf. BULTMANN – RENGSTORF, "ἐλπίζ", 521.

⁴¹ In Hebrew, compound words do not exist, so in this case the LXX translator has deliberately chosen to provide a less literal translation.

⁴² We provide this English translation.

⁴³ The purpose of this registration was probably taxes. For further details, see CROY, *3 Maccabees*, 58-59.

*san antiléψεōs*⁴⁴ *teúxasthai*⁴⁵) and loathing those who, somehow, betrayed their religion (*toùs apojóroúntas ex autôn ebdelyssonto*⁴⁶).

In this context, the adjective *eúelpis*⁴⁷ refers to the Jews of Alexandria who remain hopeful not to be overthrown by the consequences of the edict and struggle to keep their own identity. This use is similar to Thucydides' *Hist.* 6.24.3, where the Athenian soldiers are in good hopes of a safe return from war.

The adjective *eúelpis* is a *hapax* in the *Wisdom of Salomon*, where it occurs in the following passage (12,19):

You taught people by such acts as these
that the righteous should be loving
toward human beings,
and you have made your sons "well hoped of"
as you give conversion for sins⁴⁸.

This verse is part of the second section (12,3-21) of a larger digression on the divine philanthropy (*Wisd* 11,15-12,27)⁴⁹. Giving attention to God's moderation toward the Canaanites, our sage both describes their depravities (v. 4-6), as well as the purpose of the divine action toward them (v. 7) and presents the divine punishment as gradual with regard to them (v. 8-11). Having stressed the idea of God's freedom (v. 12) and justice (v. 13-15), the author adds that the divine exercise of justice implies might and clemency (v. 16-18). Directly addressing Israel as his people (*sou tôn laón*), he says that God has taught (*edídaxas*) him by such acts (*dià tôn toiútōn érgōn*)⁵⁰ that

⁴⁴ For an analysis of this term, see PASSONI DELL'ACQUA, "Terzo Libro dei Maccabei", 642.

⁴⁵ According to the Hellenistic use, this verb can be rendered with a future, see PASSONI DELL'ACQUA, "Terzo Libro dei Maccabei", 642; BORBONE (ed.), *La Bibbia dei Settanta*, vol. 2: *Libri storici*, t. 2, 1560, f.n. 71.

⁴⁶ For further details on *bdelyssomai* see *La Bible d'Alexandrie. Troisième livre des Maccabées*, 141; PASSONI DELL'ACQUA, "Terzo Libro dei Maccabei", 642; BORBONE (ed.), *La Bibbia dei Settanta*, vol. 2: *Libri storici*, t. 2, 1560, f.n. 72.

⁴⁷ This adjective is translated "Sie waren aber voll guter Hoffnung", in KNÖPPLER, "Makkabaion III", 1432.

⁴⁸ We provide this English translation.

⁴⁹ *Wisd* 11,15-12,27 is a digression on the divine philanthropy in which the author reflects on why God did not inflict as severe punishments on the Egyptians as he did with the Canaanites. Such a digression falls into three sections: 11,15-12,2 (on the divine moderation toward Egypt), 12,3-21 (on the divine moderation toward the Canaanites) and 12,22-27 (on God's mercy and on idolatry): MAZZINGHI, *Wisdom*, 294-296.

⁵⁰ According to VÍLchez LÍNdez, God has taught his people by means of the prophets and of the men of God: VÍLchez LÍNdez, *Sabiduría*, 343.

the righteous person (*tòn díkaion*)⁵¹ should be loving toward human beings (*filánthrōpon*)⁵². Furthermore, he asserts that God has made his sons “well hoped of” (*kaì euélpidas epoiēsas*⁵³ *toùs huiouís sou*)⁵⁴ because he “gives” repentance for the sins (*hóti didoís epì hamartēmasin metánoian*). The author of the *Wisdom of Salomon* conveys the idea that God supports the righteous and makes his children “well hoped of” (*euélpidas*), since conversion (*metánoia*) will be granted and, along with it, salvation⁵⁵. In this context, the adjective *euélpis*, is characterized by an eschatological dimension. Constructed with the particle *hóti*⁵⁶, which introduces a causal clause (*didoís epì*

⁵¹ In this regard, Larcher remarks that, to deserve the title of righteous, the Israelites should imitate God both in actions and feelings: LARCHER, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, III, 731.

⁵² Besides Wisd 12,19, the adjective *filánthrōpos* appears twice in the *Wisdom of Salomon* with reference to Wisdom (Wisd 1,6 and Wisd 7,23). For an accurate overview of the concept of philanthropy, a typically Greek ideal, see MAZZINGHI, *Wisdom*, 59, with further bibliography. With Larcher, we are inclined to render the term *filánthrōpos* of Wisd 12,19 by “loving toward mankind”: LARCHER, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, III, 731.

⁵³ The educational value of this phrase is highlighted by the verb *poiēîn*. For further reflections on this verb, see SCARPAT, “La buona speranza in Sap. 12,9”, 203; SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 438.

⁵⁴ The *toùs huiouís sou* “his sons”, are the Israelites: e.g. LARCHER, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, III, 731.

⁵⁵ See SCARPAT, “La buona speranza in Sap. 12,9”, 206; SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 442. For the connection between *elpís* / *euélpis* and *metánoia*, see SCARPAT, “La buona speranza in Sap. 12,9”, 205-208; SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 440-444.

⁵⁶ There is an open debate on the interpretation of this particle. Some scholars interpret the particle *hóti* as introducing a causal clause e.g.: “e infundiste a tus hijos la esperanza, pues dejas arrepentirse a los que pecan”, ALONSO SCHÖKEL – ZURRO, *Ecclesiastés y Sabiduría*, 160; “et tu as rempli tes fils d’espérance puisque tu offres le repentir après les péchés”, LARCHER, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, III, 730; “et tu as rendu espoir à tes fils, parce que tu leur donnes de se repentir de leurs fautes”, *La Bible d’Alexandrie. Les Proverbes*, 270-271; “and you have made your sons hopeful because you give repentance for sins”, PIETERSMA – WRIGHT, *New English Translation of the Bible*, 708. Others see it as introducing an object clause e.g.: “und erfülltest deine Kinder mit der frohen Hoffnung, dass du nach Verfehlungen [Zeit zur Busse] gewährest”, HEINISCH, *Das Buch der Weisheit*, 233-234; “und machtest deine Söhne voll froher Zuverlicht, dass du beim Sündigen Busse gewährest”, FICHTNER, *Weisheit Salomos*, 48; “and madest thy sons to be of good hope that thou grantest repentance for sins”, REIDER, *The Book of Wisdom*, 155; “e rendesti i tuoi figli uomini che hanno la buona speranza che ai peccati tu concedi (sempre) la conversione”, SCARPAT, “La buona speranza in Sap. 12,9”, 207; SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 443. “und hast deinen Söhnen gute Hoffnung gemacht, dass Du bei Verfehlungen Umkehr gibst”, KRAUS – KARRER (eds.), *Septuaginta Deutsch*, 1076; “tu

hamartémasin metánoian), it refers to the theological conviction that both conversion and hope are gifts of God⁵⁷.

This particular example may be clarified in the light of Pr 19,18⁵⁸. In fact, in Wisd 12,19 the adjective *eúelpis* is used in the passive sense, with the meaning “well hoped of”, just as in Pr 19,18, and it is meant as the result of teaching. In Wisd 12,19, God is regarded as a father enabling his children to be “well hoped of”, that is “promising” in fulfilling the parental expectations.

3. The adjective *eúelpis* in *P. Mich. Zen. 107*

After having considered the three attestations of *eúelpis* in the LXX and after having tried to explain them, as far as possible, in the light of Greek literature, we will now take into consideration its occurrences in papyri, in order to add some details to its usage.

The term *eúelpis* is occasionally used in Egyptian documentary papyri from the period between the 3rd cent. C.E. and 4th cent. C.E.⁵⁹ The only occurrence of *eúelpis* in the extant Hellenistic documentary papyri is *P. Mich. Zen. 107.18-19* (Inv. 3147)⁶⁰. It is one of the Zenon papyri⁶¹, a collection of letters and other documents preserved by a certain Zenon who lived in Egypt

as donné un bel espoir à tes fils qu’après les péchés tu donnes le repentir”, *La Bible de Jérusalem*, 1154; “e hiciste que tus hijos tuvieran buena esperanza, de que concedes perdón por los pecados”, FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS – SPOTTORNO DÍAZ-CARO (eds.), *La Biblia griega. Septuaginta*, vol. 3, 529; “and you have given your sons the good hope that that you grant them (the possibility) of repenting for their sins”, MAZZINGHI, *Wisdom*, 308.

⁵⁷ See SCARPAT, “La buona speranza in Sap. 12,9”, 207; SCARPAT, *Libro della Sapienza*, II, 442.

⁵⁸ The whole expression *kai euélpidas epoíēsas toùs huiouús sou* appears to be an echo of Pr 19,18: *La Bible d’Alexandrie. Les Proverbes*, 270.

⁵⁹ E.g. *P.Oxy* 1 71; *P.Diog* 18trip1; *P.Col* 7 173; *P.Cair. Isid* 67. These late examples will not concern us here.

⁶⁰ The only other occurrence extant from the Hellenistic period is in a literary papyrus, *P. Herc.* 1424, col. 25, l. 13, where Philodemus of Gadara, commenting on a verse of Epicharmus, affirms that the thought of future profit makes hopeful [*eu-élpidas poieî*]. For the image of the *P. Mich. Zen. 107* see <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis/x-1836> [consulted: 3/4/2022].

⁶¹ These papyri “were discovered by a gang of peasants digging for *sebakh* or for antiquities in the site of the ancient Philadelphia”: EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 1.

in the 3rd cent. B.C.E.⁶² Probably originating in Philadelpheia⁶³, in the *nome* of Arsinoite, this papyrus consists of four pieces, and it is 16 cm high and 14 cm wide⁶⁴.

As for as the papyrus condition is concerned, it is broken off at the top and at the bottom, and there are some letters missing in the middle. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish on the recto 21 lines⁶⁵:

TRANSLATION (ll. 12-21)⁶⁶

For there is no one else in Philadelphia to whom those who are wronged can flee for protection at any time. Know therefore that through no other person can I too be cleared of the charge unjustly brought against me. For there is no ground for it, but the charge is trifling, so that with the gods' help I am of good hope that I shall be saved. But Kraton is not in the same case; for from his deeds, by the genius of the king ...

This is a letter written by an accused person who is hopeful of being cleared of the charge brought against him, and appeals probably to Zenon⁶⁷ on behalf of Kraton, which seems to be involved in some trouble⁶⁸. It is possible that *P.S.I.* 622, the writer of which also appeals to Zenon on behalf of Kraton, refers to the same case⁶⁹. In Philadelphia, Zenon⁷⁰ was both the private agent of Apollonios⁷¹ (*ho par'Apollōníou* or *tôn perì Apollōnion*

⁶² For further bibliography on the Zenon archive, see e.g. PRÉAUX, *Les Grecs en Égypte*; SWIDEREK, "La société indigène", 231-284; SWIDEREK, "La société grecque", 363-400; ZAKY, "New Data", 147-162; PESTMAN, *A Guide to the Zenon Archive*; ORRIEUX, *Les Papyrus de Zenon*; ORRIEUX, *Zenon de Caunos*; CLARYSSE – VANDORPE, *Zénon*.

⁶³ This site lies on the eastern edge of the Fayoum at the end of the road that crosses the desert from the Nile valley and bears the name of Darb el Gerza: EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 1. For details on the foundation of Philadelpheia, see CLARYSSE – VANDORPE, *Zénon*, 47-52.

⁶⁴ All information is taken from EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 180-181.

⁶⁵ The text is reproduced according to EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 180-181.

⁶⁶ The first lines are too fragmentary to provide a translation. For the English translation of ll. 12-21, see EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 181. For a French translation of ll. 11-13: ORRIEUX, *Les Papyrus de Zenon*, 129.

⁶⁷ See EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 180; ORRIEUX, *Les Papyrus de Zenon*, 129.

⁶⁸ Cf. EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 180.

⁶⁹ See *ib.*, 180.

⁷⁰ Zenon is a central figure in this papyrus and in this correspondence. Born in Kaunos, a town in the coast of Caria, he belonged to a respectable family. For further details on Zenon's life see *ib.*, 16-60; ORRIEUX, *Les Papyrus de Zenon*, 16-20; CLARYSSE – VANDORPE, *Zénon*, 23.

⁷¹ In his place of growing importance, Zenon exercised a general supervision over Apollonios' estates, but he also undertook the construction of certain public

*diokētēn*⁷²) and was responsible for the public security and the administration of justice (*epistátēs*)⁷³. It is probable that our papyrus can be assigned to this phase of Zenon's career⁷⁴.

Despite its fragmentary condition, *P. Mich. Zen.* 107 is not without value, as it contributes some new and interesting details to the usage of the adjective *eúelpis*. In fact, at ll. 18-19 there is the following expression: [...] *σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς*⁷⁵ *eúelpís eimi [diasōthē]sesthai*⁷⁶. "with the gods' help I am of good hope that I shall be saved". Here the accused person fearing for his life appeals to Zenon's authority to obtain justice, but at the same time believes that his earthly salvation is possible only with the help of the gods.

As often in Greek literature and as in the three instances in the LXX, in this passage the adjective *eúelpis* is used as a predicate and describes a temporary state of mind. This occurrence is characterized by a close connection between the gods' intervention (*σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς*), hope (*eúelpis*) and salvation ([*diasōthē*]sesthai). Thus, hope takes on a religious connotation, as the person in trouble appeals to Zenon to obtain justice but, at the same time, considers the possibility of being saved thanks to the gods' help. This is what makes him confident (*eúelpis*) in being rescued from the present distress and injustice.

buildings and temples: EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 26-38. For further details on Zenon as private agent of Apollonios, see also CLARYSSE – VANDORPE, *Zénon*, 24.

⁷² This is the title given to Zenon in the formal documents: EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 38.

⁷³ For instance, he arrested malefactors by order of Apollonios or of the *oecónome* or of some other officials (*P.S.I.* 359; *P. Cairo Zen.* 59202). He also examined the charge against certain cattle-thieves from the neighboring village before handing them over to the police. More information about Zenon's activities can be found in *ib.*, 38-43.

⁷⁴ Between the 256 B.C.E. and the 247 B.C.E. Zenon resided at Philadelphia, where he exercised general supervision over Apollonios' estates in the Mephite as well as in the Arsinoïte *nome*. See *ib.*, 27; CLARYSSE – VANDORPE, *Zénon*, 28-29. Moreover, in the *P. Mich. Zen.* 107, at line 21 the fragmentary expression *τὸν ἀγαίμονα τοῦ βασιλέως* "by the genius of the king" probably refers to the king Ptolemy II, as Zenon was attached to the personal suite of Apollonios, who appears to have been appointed about 262 B.C.E. and to have remained in office until the death of Ptolemy II: EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 6.

⁷⁵ Some other Zenon papyri enable us to form the idea that in Philadelphia many deities were celebrated: Isis, Serapis, Asklepios, Apollo, Artemis, Leto, Heracles. See EDGAR, *Zenon papyri*, 15.

⁷⁶ We build up this reasoning assuming that the text restoration [*diasōthē*]sesthai is right. A similar combination of the syntagm *σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς* and the verb *σό(ι)ζῶ* can be found e.g., in *UPZ* 1 122, 17-18, 157 B.C.E., Memphis.

Final observations

In Greek literature, the term *eúelpis* is attested several times, mainly signifying a positive, optimistic state of mind in situations of adversity, which typically lie in the future.

When employed as a predicate, it may describe a temporary state of mind or condition such as e.g. “being in good hopes” for a safe return from war (Thucydides, *Hist.* 6.24.3), “being confident” as one of the effects of drunkenness (Aristotle *Eth. Nic.*, 1117a15; *Eth. Eud.* 1229a20; Ps.-Aristotle, *Probl.* 910a31; 955a3), “being ‘well-hoped of’” in the context of survival from a disease (Aretaeus, *Sign. diut.* 1.13, *eúelpis* having here a passive meaning).

Eúelpis may also point to a permanent state of mind, described as a long-standing personal character trait as attested in biographical passages e.g. “being optimistic” in Xenophon, *Ages.* 8.2.2, or in ethical contexts e.g. “being confident” in Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 1117a23.

In Polybius, *Hist.* 1.32.6 we find a noteworthy usage of *euelpis*: here, by metonymy, the words used are described as “cheerful”, while it is in fact the people speaking who display cheerfulness.

The causes of the mental state of *eúelpis* may (e.g. “being hopeful” regarding death in Plato, *Apol.* 41c, *Phaed.* 63c and *Phaed.* 64a) or may not extend to the supernatural realm (e.g. “being of good hope” or “being hopeful” in situations implying the absence of the gods’ aid in Aeschylus, *Prom.* 509; Euripides, *Herc.* 460).

In the LXX, *eúelpis* is attested 3 times, once in a translated text (Pr 19,18) and twice in non-translated texts (3 Macc 2,33 and Wisd 12,19). All three occurrences comply with its general use in Greek literature: used as a predicate, *eúelpis* describes a temporary state of mind or a temporary condition. Pr 19,18 conveys the idea that the father makes his son *eúelpis* “well hoped of”, “promising” in fulfilling the parental expectations. Even though this passage does not seem to have an exact parallel in Greek literature, the use of the adjective *eúelpis* in the passive sense, with the meaning of “well hoped of”, is similar to its use in Aretaeus, *Sign. diut.* 1.13. Moreover, in 3 Macc 2,33, this adjective is employed with reference to Jews who, facing a political difficulty, are hopeful of obtaining support. This use is similar to Thucydides *Hist.* 6.24.3, where Athenian soldiers are in good hopes of a safe return from war. In Wisd 12,19, *eúelpis* signifies “well hoped of”. This passage is comprehensible in the light of Pr 19,18. In fact, in both Pr 19,18 and Wisd 12,19, the adjective is used in the passive, with the nuance of “well hoped of” and it is the result of teaching. The idea lying behind these two

texts is that a father (God in Wisd 12,19) teaches his son to be “well hoped of”, “promising” in living up what is expected of him.

The only occurrence of *eúelpis* in the extant Hellenistic documentary papyri is *P. Mich. Zen.* 107. Particularly interesting is the expression *σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς εúelpís eimi* [*diasōthē*] *sesthai* “with the gods’ help I am of good hope that I shall be saved” at ll. 18-19. This official letter addressed to Zenon, originating in Philadelpheia and belonging to the second half of the 3rd B.C.E., shows that the adjective *eúelpis* was used in Egypt in non-literary texts at the time of the LXX translation. The juxtaposition of the words “gods’ intervention” (*σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς*), “hope” (*eúelpis*) and “salvation” ([*diasōthē*] *sesthai*) in ll. 18-19 of *P. Mich. Zen.* 107 indicate that *eúelpis* here has a religious connotation. As already in Greek literature and as in the occurrences of this term in the LXX, also in this text this adjective is used as a predicate and denotes a temporary state of mind. Moreover, as in Plato, *Apol.* 41c, *Phaed.* 63c and *Phaed.* 64a, it refers to a supernatural realm. In fact, the person, involved in some trouble appeals both to Zenon and to gods, in order to be saved.

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