

OVERVIEW OF SAHD ENTRIES FOR ‘DELIVERANCE’ WORDS

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Much of the work that is summarised here was done between 1998 and 2001, when Dr James Aitken and (for one year) Dr Peter Williams were full-time researchers at the Cambridge Centre of the SAHD project. In the summer of 2005 Mrs (now Dr) Alison Gray added two further sets of entries on the basis of her MPhil thesis (Cambridge, 2004). At a later stage (from 2012) Dr Gray made valuable contributions to the completion of the three large entries for the עזר group, and Dr Kim Phillips and Mr William Ross used their linguistic and technical expertise to convert Hebrew, Greek and transliterated text in the old entries into Unicode. The Centre is most grateful to the Leverhulme Trust, the Jerusalem Trust, the British Academy, the Hort Fund of the Cambridge Faculty of Divinity and the Cambridge Humanities Research Grants Scheme for the grants which made this work possible. We are also very grateful to colleagues on the SAHD Executive Committee, especially Professor H.G.M. Williamson, for their careful reviews of the drafts of these entries which were submitted to them and for many helpful suggestions that they made for improvement. Whatever gaps, errors and inconsistencies may remain are our responsibility and not theirs.

Other work of the centre has been published in T. Muraoka (ed.), *Semantics of Ancient Hebrew* (Abr-Nahrain Supp. 6: Leuven, 1998), and J. K. Aitken, *The Semantics of Blessing and Cursing in Ancient Hebrew* (ANE Studies Supp. 23: Leuven, 2007), and on the project's websites.¹

Entries have been completed for the verbs גאל, הושיע, הציל, מלט, עזר, פדה, פלט and פרק, in all conjugations, together with nouns from the same roots. Originally (following Sawyer) we called the group of lexemes that we are studying ‘words for salvation’. But ‘salvation’ has too many connotations of the inner, spiritual life to be suitable as a term for the linguistic description of classical Hebrew words which most often relate to the external circumstances of the individual or the people (German ‘Heil’ is not so problematic, perhaps). The word ‘deliverance’ is therefore now used instead, and it may be defined as ‘an action (normally performed by a different person) for the benefit of persons who are in danger or trouble’.

It is important to say that we are dealing with words that have such a *meaning*. There are other words which can *refer to* actions of such a kind, although their meaning is somewhat different: for example, הוציא, ‘bring out’, or העלה, ‘bring up’, with reference to the Exodus, שפט, ‘judge’ and רפא, ‘heal’. We do not include them. There are also various metaphors that may be used to represent deliverance, especially when the trouble is itself described metaphorically, as in Ps. 18.17:

He (Yahweh) reached down from on high, he took me;

¹ <http://www.sahd.div.ed.ac.uk> ; <http://www.sahd.divinity.cam.ac.uk>.

he drew me out of mighty waters (ימשני ממים רבים , root משה). Cf. v. 5.

Again we do not include these. All of them belong to what J. F. A. Sawyer called the wider ‘associative field’ of words for deliverance or salvation (see below). It is fully recognised that such related words and (especially in poetry) metaphors play an important part in ancient Hebrew accounts of deliverance. We hope that our work on the ‘plainer’ and more general expressions studied here will contribute to further study of the related words and metaphors, and also that such study will provide useful confirmation or correctives for the conclusions which we have reached.²

Previous work

An obvious starting-point is the monograph of J. F. A. Sawyer (1972), *Semantics in Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation*, together with some related articles of his.³ The monograph’s title reflects its double aim: in Sawyer’s words ‘what started out as an analysis of several biblical terms became, as it were, a practical guide to describing the meaning of OT Hebrew’ (p. 2). Here we are mainly concerned with the former, narrower task, though Sawyer’s views about more general issues naturally inform his specific discussions and conclusions and will need to be referred to as well. Under the wider heading of ‘context’ Sawyer notes the need to attend to different ‘registers’ and ‘styles’ of a language and he chooses to examine in detail only occurrences of ‘salvation-words’ in texts which directly address God (the prayer ‘register’). These he subdivides between six ‘styles’, which are defined initially by their introductory verbs and in cases where there is none by similarity of form and content (pp. 17-27, with a table on p. 27). Here Sawyer is only concerned with what he will later call the ‘lexical group’ of salvation-words which are ‘very closely related to one another (p. 30): הושיע, הציל, הלץ, מלט, עזר, פלט, פצה, פרק, and the Biblical Hebrew nouns etymologically related to them. Before examining these words in detail, however, Sawyer devotes a chapter to a much wider group of lexemes which he calls ‘the associative field of HOŠIA’ (pp. 29-58), an expression derived from the ideas of F. de Saussure and J. Trier: ‘a word’s associative field includes terms related to it at all levels (for instance synonyms, opposites, terms that rhyme with it or look like it)’ (p. 30). Sawyer’s wider group contains some 200 items, which he classifies under 13 headings derived from the meaning or social context of each item (see the table on p. 37): many are words used in a metaphorical sense. Although this collection of lexemes is acknowledged to be based largely on intuition (pp. 33-35), its value for ‘a general study of OT language about salvation’ and its advantages over (as often elsewhere) a focus on a single word or root are properly noted. Among the words

² On the metaphors see P.D. King, *Surrounded by Bitterness: Image Schemas and Metaphors for Conceptualising Distress in Classical Hebrew* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2012); and A.R. Gray, *Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures: A Reading through Metaphor* (BINS 127, Leiden: Brill, 2014).

³ (SBT 2nd series 24, London: SCM Press, 1972). See also his ‘What was a *Mošia*?’ , *VT* 15 (1965), 475-86; ‘Root-meanings in Hebrew’, *JSS* 12 (1967), 37-50; ‘Spaciousness. An Important Feature of Language about Salvation in the Old Testament’, *ASTI* 6 (1968), 20-34; and ‘A Historical Description of the Hebrew Root *yš*’, *Hamito-Semitic* (The Hague, 1975), 75-84. An important earlier work of synthesis is J.J. Stamm, *Erlösen und Vergeben im Alten Testament* (Bern: Francke-Verlag, 1940).

studied by us גאל and פדה have their place within this wider 'field', but they are not given any particular prominence.

It is in chapters 4, 5 and 6 (pp. 60-101) that Sawyer turns his attention to the narrower lexical group. Here the ideas of John Lyons's *Structural Semantics* (1963) and Noam Chomsky's transformational grammar (in the treatment of nouns: see pp. 62-67) are more influential. The approaches of the three chapters are clearly distinguished by their titles: 'Synchronic Description', 'Historical Description' and 'Definition'. It is noted that הושיע and its related nouns (the latter actually outnumbering forms of the verb) are by far the most frequent members of the group in the 'prayer register', and the only ones to appear in prophetic examples of it. They have a wider associative field (including metaphors: pp. 54, 68-69) than, for example, הציל, which in this register also has no nominalisations. On the other hand Sawyer claims that הושיע is less frequently transitive compared with other verbs in the group (this might be disputed) and the rarity of a following מן (only 4 times out of 38 in the register) makes the element of separation less prominent in its uses than elsewhere (cf. the table on p. 73). As for paradigmatic relations, Sawyer concentrates on reference (i.e. the extra-lingual feature referred to, as indicated by the wider context: p. 77) and opposition. Most of the evidence for the former is in fact drawn from the words' syntagmatic relations (subject, object etc.). In the prayer register the subject of הושיע is always Yahweh except in Hos. 14.4, and this is generally the case with הציל (the exception is Isa. 44.17 where an idol/foreign god is so addressed). Of course such a limitation could well be due to the choice of register. עזר is used with a human 'subject' in Jud. 5.23, which is taken to indicate its 'more general application' – a conclusion which is indeed borne out by its usage elsewhere (p. 81), but scarcely by the limited evidence in the register taken alone. The object is always the speaker or his community (again this is not surprising in the register), and where specified is sometimes its leadership (though only with הושיע, as it happens). The danger 'from' which someone is removed is generally the speaker's enemies (once חמס as a [superficially] generic term) with all the words examined. Among other meaning-relations opposition (the favourite of structural linguists) is generally the most illuminating, and Sawyer's examples produce the following oppositions: for הושיע there are השפיל, מות, נפל (sc. into the hands of enemies), קצר (probably), נדהם and שקר; for the other words there is only (for עזר כחש). As Sawyer points out, these words connect with specific aspects ('components'?) of the meaning of the words in the group, some relating to the subject and some to the treatment of the object: between them they narrow down (but do not completely determine) the meaning. Further help is provided by consequences (blessing, praise, security), implication (by way of a כי-clause) and poetic parallelism, the last indicating a relation to ענה, שמע and רפא which suggests 'readiness to intervene' and 'general health, physical and spiritual' as central aspects of הושיע in contrast to the ideas of separation or removal which characterise the other members of the group. These are at any rate helpful leads, even if only to part of the definition desired.

The 'historical description' in chapter 5 includes some reference to wider etymological relations outside Biblical Hebrew, and so represents a partial departure from the position of

James Barr on this issue.⁴ But this does not extend to an acceptance of the long-popular but now generally discarded association of הושיע with Arabic *wasi'a*, 'be wide, spacious': Sawyer accepts the evidence from Ugaritic and Epigraphic South Arabian that the second consonant of the root was originally *ṭ* and not *s*.⁵ Unfortunately the extra-biblical occurrences of the root are so far all in proper names, so they add nothing significant to our understanding of its meaning(s). From an examination of its usage within and beyond the prayer register Sawyer concludes that הושיע (i) 'is applied almost exclusively to divine intervention or the activity of divinely appointed agents such as kings and judges' (p. 94) and (ii) often has a 'forensic' meaning, though not necessarily a forensic origin (p. 95). These features are also evident in post-biblical Hebrew. הציל and עזר (for which עדר occasionally occurs as a loan from Aramaic), on the other hand, have no special religious connotations, and this continues to be the case in later phases of Hebrew. The notion of separation appears with both verbs, much more frequently with the former. Sawyer treats מלט (which occurs only in Hebrew) as a by-form of the more widely attested פלט and notes its occurrence in the passive (Niphal) and the rarity of a divine subject with it, which fits in with its rarity in the Psalms. In later Hebrew it becomes the preferred form for 'rescue, escape'. Finally, three rarer words are discussed, חלץ, פרק and פצה, the latter two being seen, in the meaning 'save', as loans from Aramaic.

The final chapter on the lexical group (ch. 6, 'Definition') helpfully identifies the oppositions between different terms as regards frequency, nominalisation, transitivity, separation and religious context, and presents this information in three different ways, including a series of block diagrams (p. 111). The conclusions vary slightly, but according to Sawyer not significantly, depending on whether occurrences in the register alone (pp. 103-05) or throughout the OT (pp. 105-11) are being considered.

Detailed comments on some of Sawyer's conclusions will follow in the summary of our own results later on. A few general points may be made here. Sawyer's attention to 'register' is important, and similar to the concept of 'functional languages' used by the Florence centre of SAHD. But the examination of only one register in detail, however understandable for the doctoral dissertation on which Sawyer's book was based, becomes a serious handicap when the meanings of words that occur frequently elsewhere have to be determined. (It is perhaps less of a problem for the development of an appropriate *method* for the semantic study of Biblical Hebrew, which is Sawyer's other aim.) Sawyer is aware of this and, as noted, some of his discussion takes account of occurrences outside the prayer register. But without more detailed study it is not clear whether one can have confidence that (some of) his conclusions do in fact apply to the Biblical Hebrew corpus as a whole, or indeed even to the prayer register itself, since the data there are sometimes very limited in extent. Further, the inclusion of information about meanings in rabbinic, medieval and modern Hebrew is interesting and may sometimes confirm or suggest trends in the development of meanings, but it is curious

⁴ See his *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 107-160; and e.g. his essays on 'Etymology and the Old Testament' (1974) and 'Limitations of Etymology as a Lexicographical Instrument in Biblical Hebrew' (1983), reprinted in J. Barton (ed.), *Bible and Interpretation: The Collected Essays of James Barr. 3. Linguistics and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.402-24, 425-44.

⁵ *Semantics*, pp. 93-94; cf. 'A Historical Description' (above, n.3).

that virtually no attention is paid to ancient Hebrew inscriptions, the Hebrew text of Ben Sira and the Dead Sea Scrolls, which arguably are much more relevant for the study of Biblical Hebrew.⁶

A wider range of occurrences of the words in question is reviewed in the major theological dictionaries of the OT that have appeared since 1970.⁷ Their articles on the words studied here will be briefly surveyed, with special reference to controversial issues, before an overview of the SAHD entries themselves is given.

1. הושיע . There is widespread support for the idea that ‘help’ is the primary or basic meaning, though NIDOTTE continues to use the traditional equivalent ‘salvation’ to excess and is too focussed on theological uses (even for a theological dictionary!). THAT is the best on the references to human ‘help’, and also highlights the cultic and eschatological uses well, in addition to a possible *Heimat* (for the religious use?) in Holy War traditions. Sawyer in TWAT reaffirms his emphasis on forensic usage (as in his book), but now seems to see it as dependent upon the general theological uses of the word.

2. הצייל . The core meaning is seen as ‘take away’, though THAT qualifies this to mean ‘from a place’ rather than ‘out of’. This may be behind NIDOTTE’s point that the action may be preventative as well as a rescue from an actual situation of trouble. NIDOTTE derives a nuance of ‘snatching away’ from the conjugations other than the Hiphil. Contrasts with הושיע are noted in TWAT and THAT, and also with פלט in the latter. Emphasis is laid on the use with a divine subject, but the statistics in THAT show that this applies to little more than half the occurrences.

3. עזר . The idea of ‘help’ is explicated by TWAT as involving cooperation of both parties, in a distinction from other words in the group, and as possibly involving an enduring state, as in alliances (deduced from the nouns?). The idea of ‘protection’ is sometimes prominent according to THAT and NIDOTTE. Both TWAT and NIDOTTE pick up the frequent occurrences in Chronicles, to the virtual exclusion of הושיע and הצייל - one wonders why this might be. עזר continues to be common in Deutero-Isaiah and the Psalms as a way of multiplying synonyms.

4. חלץ . NIDOTTE sees ‘removal’ as the central idea, but makes little attempt to correlate the individual senses with this. TWAT gives a very fragmented account of the word, but does note that it rarely has any direct reference to affliction or trouble (so that the emphasis is on the benefit to the person?).

⁶ I pass by here the important assessment of Sawyer’s work by I. Zatelli, *Henoch* 1 (1979), 261-68, which tends to be appreciative of (some of) Sawyer’s results (e.g. p. 267) but more critical of his pragmatic and eclectic methodology.

⁷ G.J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren and H.-J. Fabry (eds), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970ff.) (TWAT/TDOT); E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds), *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, and Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1971, 1976) (THAT/TLOT); W.A. VanGemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996) (NIDOTTE). The occurrences in the Qumran texts are now much more fully treated in H.J. Fabry et al. (ed.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011-16).

5. מלט / פלט. The general view is that מלט is a special Hebrew derivation from פלט. This conclusion sits a little awkwardly with the intra-Hebrew distribution of the words, which makes occurrences of מלט mainly 'late', as seen by NIDOTTE. TWAT (6, 598) identifies a distinction from הושיע (from Jenni), with the latter being viewed as a subsequent action (or is it a summary word?). The distinction between מלט and פלט (see below on P.J. Williams) is already there in essence in all three articles, though THAT claims that there is no distinction of meaning when they are used in parallel, and NIDOTTE finds evidence of both 'from' and 'to' with פלט. For מלט it suggests 'slip away safely' as basic. The idea of 'escape' is central, but this is obscured by LXX's use of σῶζω.

6. פצה. Only NIDOTTE deals with it: the normal sense is 'open', and only Ps. 144 extends this to 'deliver'.

7. פרק. The nuance of 'force' is well recognised in TWAT and NIDOTTE and helps to distinguish it. There is no entry for it in THAT. NIDOTTE also sees 'separation' as involved in some cases (nouns in 1 Sam. 4 and Obad. 14; also the Dan. 4 Baram occurrence).

8. גאל. There is a notable difference between TWAT, which sees the general use as basic, and THAT (Stamm) and NIDOTTE, which make the legal use original. NIDOTTE has a good distinction between the technical legal uses in Leviticus and a general reference to family responsibility, as in Ruth and elsewhere. The main distinctions from פדה are the ideas of 'reclaiming' and the involvement of a family member (which could be connected).

9. פדה. The same issue about development surfaces here, with both TWAT and THAT (Stamm) making the legal use primary, in the latter case specifically in the case of trade; whereas NIDOTTE follows Jepsen in tracing this back to a more general usage. Despite this, curiously, NIDOTTE uses the word 'ransom' much too often. TWAT makes a lot of the connection with כפר (via the nouns), but the evidence against this is well assembled in NIDOTTE.

The SAHD Entries⁸

The lexemes in this group which have so far been investigated by the SAHD centre in Cambridge correspond to the most widely attested members of Sawyer's inner 'lexical group', plus גאל, פדה and פרק. Among the less frequent members of the inner group we have not (yet) dealt with הלץ and פצה, but we recently decided to include פרק, mainly because of the widespread use of its Aramaic cognate to render various members of the lexical group in the Targums and the Peshitta. גאל and פדה were placed by Sawyer in the wider 'associative' field of words for salvation, but we have included them because at least some of their uses come very close to those of the words in the inner group, as Sawyer himself acknowledges (p. 36; cf. p. 57). It is not entirely clear why he excluded them from the inner group, but he was clearly convinced by the view that their general theological use is a metaphorical development from originally legal expressions (pp. 54-55) and perhaps this was the reason. If

⁸ For a valuable general introduction to the aims and method of the SAHD project and the different parts of the 'framework' of entries see Aitken, *Semantics of Blessing and Cursing*, pp. 23-41.

so, the argument is weakened, for him at least, by the idea that הושיע itself ‘was originally a forensic term’.⁹ Our own decision to include them finds some support in NIDOTTE’s definition of the semantic field of ‘salvation’ (5, pp. 165-66): it also includes שָׁרִיד, ‘remnant’, presumably because of its relationship to nouns from the root פלט (though oddly not שְׁאָרִית), and also שְׁלוֹם, whose semantic relationship to יְשׁוּעָה and related words certainly deserves consideration. Such a study might also make reference to J.K. Aitken’s entry on ברכה.

This overview of the entries will proceed in three stages. It will begin with the general conclusions reached in the various entries. The second section will provide a comparison between the findings about the ancient versions. Finally we shall seek to relate these findings to the general view taken of each lexeme and add some concluding observations.

1. *Specific conclusions.*

a. הושיע: We concur with the general view that the etymological derivation of its meaning from the idea of ‘spaciousness’ has been disproved. This idea does feature in one associated metaphor (Sawyer), but it makes no special contribution to the verb’s meaning. There are no obvious ‘concrete’ uses from which it might be deduced (unless שוּעַ were a by-form and had a specific reference to ‘wealth’). In its many occurrences (202x in BH) the verb expresses ‘the bringing of *assistance* to someone in need, in military, civil and judicial contexts’. No one of these areas has a clear priority, and Sawyer’s earlier suggestion that the ‘forensic’ use is basic should be rejected. הושיע can, in wisdom literature, refer to an increase in prosperity or wealth, and occasionally in the Psalms and elsewhere also to defence, i.e. protection in advance from enemy attack. Use with מן is comparatively low (c. 23x, 12%) and Sawyer’s conclusion about its low ‘transitivity’ should be noted (and perhaps re-examined): these features suggest that the focus of the verb is on the agent or the action rather than the beneficiary or the danger/need.

Related nouns account for another 180 or so occurrences in BH, the great majority being instances of three nouns: יְשׁוּעָה, יִשׁוּעָה and יְשׁוּעָה. Their distribution is especially heavy in poetry (whereas the verb has over 35% of its occurrences in prose), mainly in the Psalms and Isaiah, though 11 of the 37 occurrences of יְשׁוּעָה are in prose. All of them more often refer to a *state* of security than to an action that brings it about, and among them only יִשׁוּעָה exhibits a plural form (12x in BH; also the hapax מוֹשִׁיעָה). יִשׁוּעָה is particularly common in descriptions of God, and it hardly ever refers to an action. יְשׁוּעָה is not used at Qumran, unlike the other two nouns, but it does occur 3x in Ben Sira (and also in MH). It is commonly derived from שוּעַ, but without good reason: its meaning seems to be indistinguishable from יְשׁוּעָה. The other two nouns (possibly) derived from שוּעַ (otherwise it occurs only in PNs) seem to mean ‘great man’ (שוּעַ: at least in the two clear cases) and ‘cry for help’ (שוּעַ: this is probably derived from שָׁוַע, like שוּעַ in Is. 22.5) and provide no basis for a connection between the two roots.

⁹ *Semantics*, p. 54. In his TWAT article he appears to move away from this view, as noted above (p. 5).

b. עזר: This is the general Hebrew word for ‘help’, but it is only about half as common as הושיע and its related nouns. Its generality and wide range of contexts of use mean that it could be regarded as the ‘superordinate’ expression to which other words in the group relate as hyponyms. On the other hand, it has some distinctive characteristics – the perhaps surprising frequency of verbs of motion with the noun עזרה and the infrequency of constructions with מן (though it may be more surprising that there are any at all).

c. הציל: This root is represented almost entirely by verbal forms, in no less than five conjugations. The noun הצלה occurs only once in BH, in Esther (LBH), but it became common in MH. By far the most common conjugation is the Hiphil (219x), in which the meaning is most often the deliverance of people from danger to safety. Rarer uses refer to the removal and occasionally the recovery (compare here גאל and also שוב Hiph.) of objects from one place to another. Association with מן is very frequent. The Niphal provides the passive of the main sense, whereas the Hophal (3x) is the passive of ‘removal’. The Piel (4x) and Hithpael (1x) also generally represent this sense. From these data one could reasonably deduce a basic sense of ‘remove’, whose prime specialisation (which became the dominant use) was for ‘deliverance from danger’, with a much rarer specialisation to ‘recovery’.

d. מלט and פלט: Our entry on פלט (by P.J. Williams) points out that it is the Piel forms of the verb (34x) and the related nouns (c. 60x) which account for the great majority of the occurrences. The Qal, Niphal (only at Qumran) and Hiphil are all rare. Williams argues that, as partly observed in earlier studies, the meaning is overwhelmingly ‘bring to safety’ (so that LXX σῶζω is a very appropriate equivalent).¹⁰ He observes that the process of rescue from danger or trouble is reflected in what may be imagined as a semantic ‘line’, with the idea of escape from hostile forces at one end and arrival at a place of safety at the other. פלט corresponds predominantly to the latter, while מלט occupies the opposite end of the line, i.e. the sense ‘escape’ (in the Niphal) or ‘rescue’. The argument is supported by observations about the frequency of nominal forms and PNs (indicating a settled state) from the root פלט in contrast to their rarity with מלט, by the striking difference in the proportions of occurrences associated with מן (69% with מלט, but only 12% with פלט: noted already by Sawyer, *Semantics*, p. 108) and syntagmatic relations with words such as נוס and ברה. These observations undermine the common view that the verbs מלט and פלט are ‘complementary’ but essentially synonymous, with מלט supplying the passive forms and פלט the nominalisation. The fact that both verbs occur, in almost equal numbers, in the Piel should have already suggested that this was not the whole story.

The entry on מלט (by J.K. Aitken) notes that its Niphal is over twice as frequent as its Piel (72x vs. 35x), while the Hiphil and Hithpael are both rare. The use of the Hiphil for childbirth and the Hithpael for emission or escape could seem to support Williams’s argument. But with the Niphal (which is unattested for פלט in BH) directional morphemes as well as constructions with מן are found, suggesting that in this passive conjugation there is more of an overlap between the meanings of the two verbs. Williams’s full account makes some

¹⁰ Cf. P.J. Williams, ‘Difference between the roots *mlt* and *plt*’, ZAW 114 (2002), 438-42.

allowance for this in a different way by recognising some ‘moments’ on the semantic ‘line’ to which both verbs could refer, even though the predominant focus in each case is on the opposite ends of it. Aitken has identified a structural reason for one such overlap.

e. גאל: There has been much debate about the semantics of this word (see above). Our entry (by Alison Gray) concludes that the basic meaning is ‘to act as a kinsman’ [we should add ‘for the benefit of another’ here] (hence the nominalised use of the participle גאל), from which there developed the specialised legal senses of ‘buy or claim back, redeem’ (which generated the cultic use for ‘buy back [not as a kinsman] from God’) and then ‘avenge’ (bloodshed: hence the expression גאל-הדם). The theological uses (which include that of the nominalised participle גאל) derive not from these legal and cultic senses but from the original more general meaning and attracted in some cases the construction with מן from verbs with a related meaning. This development can be clarified by distinguishing [kin], [buy] and [claim back] as the semantic components of the verb. The noun גאלה relates only to the cultic and legal meanings in BH, but its use is widened at Qumran and in other post-biblical occurrences to include a theological reference. The one occurrence of גאלים probably has (legal) redemption in view, though ‘vengeance’ is also a possibility.

f. פדה: Again there has been much debate about this group of words. Our entry (also by Alison Gray) concludes that the general meaning ‘liberate’ is basic (with Jepsen and against Stamm, who sees the theological usage as dependent upon and affected by the legal uses). In legal texts it means release as the result of a ransom payment or the death of an animal (or, at Qumran, an oath). In theological uses it can express deliverance from enemies (like גאל and including, in Deuteronomy, at the Exodus) and occasionally from sin and the construction with מן is sometimes found. But there is no allusion there to an associated payment or death. Among the nouns פדות is confined to theological contexts (it is very common at Qumran) and represents the act of deliverance. The other two nouns, פדוים and פדיון, both stand for the ransom price that is paid and indicate how central this is to the legal uses of the verb. פדוים is used in cultic contexts, but פדיון is not. As a cultic term פדה is indistinguishable from and interchangeable with the weakened sense of גאל and is also used of ‘buying back’ an animal or person from God, but elsewhere the kin-relatedness of גאל makes the meanings of the two verbs clearly distinct.

g. פרק: Only three occurrences of this verb and its related nouns (plus one in Biblical Aramaic) belong to the semantic field of salvation/deliverance. In the majority of its uses it refers to the violent removal of an object, or part of an object, not a person: so ‘tear off’. The noun פּרַק = ‘plunder’ is clearly related to this meaning. Other nouns refer to bones or joints, probably as ‘broken’ parts of the body of a human or an animal. Where the verb is used with a personal object, the idea of violent removal could still be present, although this is generally not recognised in modern translations. In Aramaic the verb is much more widely used with a personal object in senses such as ‘save, redeem’ (hence its popularity as a rendering of other words in the lexical group), and another possibility is that the Hebrew occurrences referred to above, three of which are certainly exilic or later, reflect the influence of the Aramaic verb.

2. The renderings in the Ancient Versions

An important element of our work is the extensive analysis of the renderings given to these words in the ancient Versions. This could provide something akin to the ‘testimony of the native speaker’ which is regarded by linguists as invaluable in the study of semantics and especially for distinguishing the nuances of closely related terms. Of course the native speakers concerned would be those who lived some time after the texts in question were composed (in most cases at least), but the fact that in their translations they were usually trying to represent what the words meant in the older biblical texts might in theory preserve a true memory of how they had been understood in earlier times.

Only the broad tendencies of the translators will be summarised here, even though detailed examination of individual instances (and rarer renderings) might well shed valuable light on the distinctions of meaning that need to be made. Two approaches to the data will be followed in turn: first an overview of the renderings in each of the Versions taken separately, with some study of the distinctions in meaning between their most favoured equivalents; and then a consideration of how each word(-group) is rendered by all the versions and what this might indicate for the understanding of it in the early post-biblical period. As far as we know, the project’s synthetic studies may be the first time that such a ‘lexical field’ study of versional renderings has been done.¹¹ It should be a valuable approach for the study of the Versions themselves, as well as for the semantics of the underlying Hebrew. There are of course considerable pitfalls and difficulties in the use of the Versions for any kind of study of the Hebrew Bible itself, and the warnings of Aitken, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31, need to be noted. What follows is only a preliminary and provisional account of what they may have to offer in this particular case.

(i) The Versions Separately

LXX: In the LXX the following equivalents are the main ones used.

σφζω is the clear preference for הושיע etc. and מלט (the latter especially with the Niphal). It also appears occasionally for עזר, הציל (esp. with the Niphal), פלט (where it is preferred by the Three) and פדה.

It has a wide range of meaning, including ‘save from death’, ‘keep safe’ and in the passive ‘be healed’ and ‘escape’. The associated nouns are often used in a religious sense.

βοηθέω is regularly used for עזר etc., but also for הושיע.

It means ‘help’, but also sometimes ‘come to the rescue’.

ἐξαιρέω is one of the common equivalents for הציל, and it is also used for מלט and פלט.

It means ‘take out, take from’, and also ‘remove’, often in a negative sense but also (in the middle acc. LSJ) for ‘set free’.

¹¹ Cf. Aitken, *Semantics of Blessing and Cursing*, pp. 30-37. He refers to T. Muraoka’s essay, ‘The Semantics of the LXX and its Role in Clarifying Ancient Hebrew Semantics’, in T. Muraoka (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Hebrew Semantics* (Abr-Nahrain Supp. 4; Leuven, 1995), pp.19-32, as a rare predecessor, and also to L.L. Grabbe, *Comparative Philology and the Text of Job: A Study in Methodology* (SBLDS 34; Missoula, MA, 1977).

ῥύομαι is the other main equivalent for הציל and it is preferred for פלט. It sometimes appears as a rendering for הושיע and מלט, and occasionally for גאל (mainly in Isaiah where the subject is God) and פדה.

Its meaning in classical and later Greek is mainly ‘rescue, set free’ and even ‘redeem’ (the sense ‘protect, defend’ is virtually confined to Homer). Unlike ἐξαιρέω, therefore, it is entirely used of a positive outcome.

λυτρόω/ομαι is the most common equivalent for גאל and פדה, with the difference that ἀγγιστεύω, ‘to be next of kin’, is also frequently used for גאל but not for פדה. λυτρόω/ομαι is also used for the cases of פרק which have a personal object, no doubt because of the sense ‘redeem’ which that verb had in Aramaic.

The meaning is ‘release on receipt of a ransom’ in the active and ‘release by the payment of a ransom, redeem’ in the middle.

The favoured Septuagintal renderings point to an affinity between the meanings attributed to הושיע and מלט and to a lesser extent between הושיע and עזר. The rendering of the former pair by σώζω (and less often by ῥύομαι) reflects their strong expression of benefit to the object of the action and also attributes to them an element of rescue or escape. It is possible that the occasional use of βοηθέω for הושיע (but not מלט) gives some recognition to its stronger focus on benefit than danger.

The choice of ῥύομαι for הציל and פלט lends to them both its positive sense of ‘set free’. ἐξαιρέω is also used frequently for הציל and less often for פלט, and its own possession of a positive sense fits in with this. Possibly its neutral and negative senses are responsible for its frequency with הציל, since the latter also has such senses in a minority of cases. In other words the LXX may indicate an awareness of ‘remove’ as well as ‘rescue’ in the meanings of הציל.

Finally the use of λυτρόω/ομαι for גאל and פדה reflects the place of a payment in many instances of these verbs, though the use of other verbs recognises that this is not universal and the examples of ἀγγιστεύω for גאל help to identify a linguistic component that distinguishes these two verbs.

[Our data on the *Jewish revisers* are unfortunately still patchy (with none at all on הושיע and הציל; but for the latter they tend towards ῥύομαι rather than ἐξαιρέω).¹² The distinction between גאל and פדה by the use of ἀγγιστεύω for the former is more frequent in them. For פלט Aquila has διασώζω regularly, while Symmachus prefers ῥύομαι or compounds of φεύγω, none of which appears for מלט in the meagre data that we have for it.]

Vulgate: The pattern of renderings is very similar to the LXX, quite likely through the mediation of the Old Latin. But there are one or two notable differences.

¹² For some data on הציל see G.I. Davies, ‘A Fragment of an Early Recension of the Greek Exodus’, in E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *Papers Presented to the Fifth International Congress on Biblical Studies held at Oxford, 1973* (TU 126, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), pp. 151-56 (154).

salvo is regularly used for הושיע and for the Piel forms not only of מלט but of פלט (see below on the renderings of other instances of these roots).

It is a late Latin word, derived from the classical adjective *salvus*, ‘safe, sound’ and it is used in preference to the older *servo* (which seems to mean ‘keep’ in the Vulgate).¹³ Perhaps it conveys a stronger sense of the normal state of well-being to which a person or group is being restored.

auxilium/adiutorium are used for the nouns from the root עזר, and the related verbs were often used for the verb, alongside a number of nominal renderings. They are sometimes found for הושיע too.

LS (p. 38) say that *adiuvo* is the general word, while *auxilior* is aid for the weak.

eruo is one of two common equivalents for הציל, but it seems not to be widely used otherwise (occasionally for פדה).

This verb, unlike ῥύματα in Greek (and more like ἐξαιρέω), frequently has a neutral or even negative sense (like other compounds of *ruo*), but the positive use is also well attested: ‘rescue, release’. Still its breadth of meaning may have discouraged its wider use as a rendering of words in the lexical group.

libero is also commonly used for הציל (especially the Niphal) and it appears occasionally for פדה and quite often for הושיע, though not as often as *salvo*. The neutral or negative senses of הציל are represented by various other words which mean ‘remove’ or plunder’.

libero, from its association with *liber*, ‘free’, etc. has the primary sense of ‘free, release from slavery’, but it was also used much more widely of release from e.g. an obligation or a difficulty. It emphasises the cessation of trouble in the verbs it is used to translate.

Words for ‘escape’ or ‘flee’ like (*ef*)*fugio* and *evado* are common as renderings of the Niphal of מלט and nouns derived from פלט.

redimo is the most common equivalent for both גאל and פדה, but they are distinguished by the number of cases in which *propinquus* (in the sense ‘close relative’) is used for גאל and (phrases using) *pretium* for פדה, and not vice versa. פרק is also rendered by *redimo* in two of the three places where a person is the object.

redimo means ‘buy back’ and particularly to ‘ransom’ a slave. The element of ‘recovery’ is, however, not always present and it could be used more generally for either ‘purchase’ or ‘acquire’.

The Latin equivalents bring הושיע, מלט and פלט close together, with the two latter not as clearly distinguished as they are in the LXX. On the other hand the use of words for ‘escape, flee’ for them in certain forms makes for more of a distinction from הושיע in Latin.

הציל has a distinctive rendering in *eruo* (though it is also found for פדה), but the use of *libero* for both it and הושיע serves to maintain some commonality between these two words, despite the non-use (except in Gen. 32.31[30]) of *salvo* for הציל.

The renderings of גאל and פדה (and פרק) again reflect both their similarity and difference.

¹³ *salvo* and cognates are used over twice as often overall as *servo* etc.

Targums: סָעַד and סִיעַ (but not עִזַּר) are naturally used for עִזַּר, but interestingly they are not used for הוֹשִׁיעַ.

The meaning of סָעַד according to Jastrow is normally ‘assist, help’, but it is also used of sustenance by food or drink.

פָּרַק is one of two words that between them provide most of the other renderings for the lexical group in the Targums. It is almost universally used for הוֹשִׁיעַ, גָּאֵל, פָּדָה and Heb. פָּרַק, and twice even for עִזַּר. But there are two instances of נִצְחָנָא, ‘victory’, for הוֹשִׁיעַ, and for גָּאֵל there are two instances of קָרַב, indicating family relationship, while in the ‘vengeance’ passages גָּאֵל is retained as a loan-word in Onkelos and Jonathan and תָּבַע, ‘seek, claim’, is used in the Palestinian Targums.

The extensive use of פָּרַק is made possible by its wide range of meaning in Aramaic (on this see further 1. Root and Comparative Material A.2 in our entry for פָּרַק). In Jewish Aramaic the meanings ‘redeem’ and ‘rescue’ predominate, but ‘remove’, ‘fall apart’, ‘untie’ and ‘divide’ are also attested. CAL gives ‘dismantle’ as a major meaning. The predominant meanings given above, however, are probably the most relevant to the Targumic renderings.

שִׁיזַּיְ(י)ב is the other expression that is frequently used. It is the regular equivalent for הִצִּיל (though רוּק is used for the Piel and עָדַי for the Hithpael, and פָּצָא frequently appears in Pss, Job and Proverbs), מָלַט and פָּלַט, and it sometimes appears for גָּאֵל.

The meaning of שִׁיזַּיְ(י)ב is ‘release, save’ (Jastrow), ‘save’ (CAL).

פָּלַט is occasionally used for מָלַט and פָּלַט.

In Aramaic פָּלַט has the meanings ‘discharge (from the body)’ and ‘escape’ (Jastrow): CAL attributes the meanings ‘eject’ and ‘escape’ to two separate verbs. In either case the latter meaning will have made פָּלַט suitable for some forms of the word-groups in question (cf. the use of Latin *effugio*), but not for others, since it lacks an active transitive use for ‘deliver’.

פָּצָא is occasionally used. It is not found in Onkelos, Jonathan, Pseudo-Jonathan or apparently in the Palestinian Targums. But it is frequent in the Pss, Job and Proverbs, especially for הִצִּיל. This may be connected with the frequency of *pšā* in the Peshitta (see below).

The concentration on two equivalents in the Targums may have tended to blur distinctions within the lexical group. But it would be interesting to consider why פָּרַק was preferred for some words (especially הוֹשִׁיעַ) and שִׁיזַּיְ(י)ב for others. What was seen as the significant difference between them? In any case the groupings are probably significant: הוֹשִׁיעַ linked with גָּאֵל, פָּדָה and Heb. פָּרַק; הִצִּיל with מָלַט and פָּלַט.

Peshitta: The distribution of equivalents is very similar to the Targums, but there are some notable differences in the words employed.

‘*dar* is generally used for עִזַּר, instead of סָעַד and סִיעַ. The absence of the latter is the more surprising, as it exists in Syriac in the same sense. ‘*dar* is also very rarely used for הוֹשִׁיעַ. The meaning of ‘*dr* is ‘help, assist’.

praq is again the main equivalent for הושיע, גאל, פדה and Heb. פרק. In the case of הושיע this extends to renderings of שוע and שוע (cf. Vulg. x1, Targ. x1). There are again two instances of הושיע being rendered by *nšhn*, ‘victory’. For גאל *tba* again occurs in the ‘vengeance’ passages, but more surprisingly also in Ruth; and there are three instances of *qrab* being used to mark the ‘family’ dimension. *praq* is also occasionally used for הציל.

pšā is also widely used: it is the main equivalent for הציל and the Piel and Niphal forms of מלט and פלט (but not so prominently for the nouns). It is also found occasionally for הושיע and פדה. The meaning of *pšā* is given as ‘deliver, set free’ by the shorter Payne Smith; CAL (under *pšy*) gives ‘save’. The latter’s citations imply that it is found in Jewish Aramaic [JBA presumably = ‘Jewish Babylonian Aramaic’], but it is also well attested in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Samaritan Aramaic and Syriac. In the latter (to judge at least from our Peshitta data) it has largely displaced *šyzb*.

šyzb is used for noun-forms from פלט and some instances of מלט and פדה, but not at all apparently for הציל.

(The shorter) Payne Smith cites some derivatives on pp. 304-05, referring them to the root *yzb*, but its entry for the verb is as *šwzb* on p. 564. From the derivatives it looks as though it acquired a strongly (Christian) theological meaning in Syriac. It is given the meaning ‘save’ in CAL.

plṭ is found occasionally for פלט and more frequently for מלט.

In Syriac *plṭ* means ‘escape, slip away’ and in the Pael both ‘save’ and ‘eject, vomit’.

Of the major variations from Targumic renderings in the Peshitta the use of *dar* instead of *s’d* is readily explicable by dialectal differences. The extensive substitution of *pšā* for *šyzb* is less easy to understand, since the latter verb certainly existed in Syriac and was sometimes used for members of the lexical group in the Peshitta. Is there again a dialectal difference behind this, or is there some other reason (perhaps a theological one) for the favouring of *pšā*? In any case the broad division of the words other than עזר into two groups is again reflected in the Syriac renderings, whatever exactly the perceived difference between them was. It may be noted, among less common equivalents, how the special uses of גאל and nominal/passive forms of מלט and פלט are again identified in the Peshitta.

(ii) The Word-Groups One by One

הושיע. As a minor, though important, observation we may first note that the rendering of הושיע by words for ‘help’ is occasionally found in LXX, Vulg and Sy (but not apparently in the Tgg). A more striking fact is the different associations for it which appear in the versional renderings. The use of σῶζω in LXX links it with מלט, and the use of *salvo* in Vulg links them both with פלט. On the other hand the rendering by פרק/*praq* in the Tgg and Sy makes it part of a ‘family’ which includes other members of the lexical group: גאל, פדה and פרק. The divergence is not easy to understand and it deserves further exploration. It might indicate that the assignment of a meaning to הושיע was a problem, and so two different traditions of translation developed, one in the classical languages (and we have noted how the Old Latin

might have been an important lexical link between the translators of the LXX and the Vulgate) and one in the Aramaic dialects. What seems to unite the two ‘traditions’, if we may call them that, is that a distinction needed to be made between standard renderings of הושיע and הצייל. On this the ‘classical tradition’ did allow for some overlap by its use of ῥύομαι and *libero* for הושיע on some occasions. But the distinction was generally maintained.

עזר. This word has its standard equivalent(s) in each language or dialect, and there is little overlap between its renderings and those of other members of the group (but see above on הושיע).

הצייל. First, it may be noted that the minority sense ‘remove’ is recognised in some renderings of LXX (σκαλεύω), Vulg. and Tgg. The use of ἐξαιρέω and *eruo* alongside ῥύομαι and *libero* might also be a reflection of this aspect of the word’s meaning: they are less common (though ἐξαιρέω at least does appear) as renderings of מלט and פלט, which lack the neutral or even negative sense of ‘removal’.

There is some recognition of an overlap with פלט in LXX’s use of ῥύομαι for the latter (whereas מלט goes with הושיע). This overlap is more strongly present in the regular renderings of הצייל, פלט and also מלט into Aramaic (Tgg. generally שיזב, but some cases of פצי in the Writings; Sy generally p̄sy, but also šyzb).

מלט and פלט. LXX marks a distinction between these words (and establishes different affinities respectively with הצייל and הושיע) by its predominant use of ῥύομαι for מלט and σῶζω for פלט. In the other Versions no such distinction occurs, in the Vulgate through the use of *salvo* and words for ‘escape’ for both of them (here the difference from LXX deserves note) and in Tgg. and Sy by the shared use of שיזב, פצי and פלט.

גאל. In all the Versions the same word, one which means or can mean ‘redeem’, is used in many cases to render both גאל and פדה (and in some degree also for פרק). But the distinctive features of גאל are also reflected. In LXX and Vulg. it is the ‘family’ dimension which is most clear, from the use of ἀγγιστεύω and words like *propinquus* (this dimension appears only infrequently, it seems, in Tgg. and Sy). In Tgg. and Sy the reference to vengeance is marked either by the retention of גאל as a loanword (in Onkelos and Jonathan) or by the use of תבע/*tb* (Palestinian Targums and Sy). In Sy *tb* is, more surprisingly, also used in Ruth, perhaps in the more general sense of ‘making a claim’ for someone. The wider sense of ‘deliverance’ is also recognised in some uses of ῥύομαι, *libero* and שיזב.

פדה. See above on גאל and also on הושיע. The idea of payment is sometimes reinforced by *pretium* in Vulg. References to family connections do not appear in the Versions’ renderings. A more general meaning ‘deliver’ appears in the use of ῥύομαι or σῶζω, *libero* or *eruo* and p̄sy or šyzb.

פרק. In LXX and Vulg. words for ‘redeem’ are used where there is a personal object, no doubt as a reflection of this sense in Aramaic; elsewhere a variety of words for ‘removal’ are used. In Tgg. and Sy the use of פרק/*prq* itself occurs more widely as a result of its various meanings, which include ‘remove’.

(iv) Summary

In a number of ways the versional renderings coincide with the semantics of the lexical group or individual members of it as these were expounded above on the basis of other criteria. For example, the special characteristics of גאל and פדה and the difference between them are visible, though in differing degrees. The use of different equivalents in different contexts for e.g. הציל and again גאל and פדה draws attention to their different senses. The opposition (in the technical linguistic sense) between הושיע and הציל is quite strongly represented, and this could well be attributed to the divergence over the feature of 'separation' (i.e. use with מן) between these verbs: the preferred equivalents in each case would support this. The special position of עזר and its links with הושיע are also reflected in the Versions.

On the other hand our survey has exposed a tendency to blur the differences between the lexemes by the use of a restricted number of equivalents for them. This is particularly noticeable in the Tgg. and Sy where two Aramaic words predominate in each case (the Tgg. to the Writings side with Sy for some reason in the specific vocabulary used) and divide the group (with the exception of עזר) into two broad divisions. The Versions' renderings also leave the position of הושיע unclear, because they point to its close association either with מלט (and in Vulg. with פלט) or with גאל, פדה and פרק, implying perhaps 'rescue' in the one case and 'redemption' in the other.

3. Concluding summary

Our examination of the individual lexemes has shown that some, in fact most, of them have a range of meaning that embraces more than deliverance from a general situation of trouble or danger. They may additionally refer to a quite specific kind of trouble or danger, like גאל and פדה. Or they may also be used of actions that do not involve trouble or danger at all, such as פרק and some forms of the root נצל. In both these situations the wider use may contribute distinctive elements of meaning to the standard uses. Such features may help to identify the distinctive meanings or 'oppositions' (in the structuralist sense) of the words in the 'lexical field', though they need to be combined with other kinds of data (especially syntagmatic relations).

One method which can contribute to the clarity of such distinctions is *componential analysis*. (I am using the method here in a less far-reaching way than when it is applied to the analysis of the meanings of particular lexemes individually, though the two enterprises are and should be related.) If we go back to the broad definition of deliverance given earlier, we can break it down into three essential components: [an action],[a person who benefits from it] and [a situation of danger or trouble]. Some of the verbs are strongly associated in their pattern of use with *removal* from a situation of danger or trouble, and this is indicated especially by the frequency with which they are followed by the separative preposition מן. הציל is the most frequent member of this sub-group, but מלט is another. In fact both מלט and פלט belong here,

but in slightly different ways: מלט tends to express (I put it like that because there are inevitably some exceptions) removal from danger, while פלט tends to mean arrival at a place of safety.¹⁴

Other verbs that we have treated occur less often, if at all, with מן, and it might be argued that when they are used with מן the explanation is syntactical rather than lexical: i.e. we are dealing with a ‘pregnant’ use of the combination in which another verb expressing the idea of removal is implied.¹⁵ A clear case of this is עזר. This verb normally lays greater emphasis on the benefit to the person concerned (‘help’) than on removal from danger or trouble as such. And the same is probably true of הושיע: this is reflected in the popularity of modern words for ‘help’ in recent dictionaries of Hebrew.¹⁶ It may also explain why this verb’s associated nouns are so frequent: nouns cannot so easily be associated with a prepositional phrase as with a pronominal suffix which refers to the doer or the beneficiary of the action.

Other words in the group are distinguished by what they say about the action itself. פרק appears to mean ‘violent removal’, mainly of things rather than persons. As such it perhaps has little concern with the person who benefits. גאל is another example of a verb focused on a particular kind of action, although it is much debated which of the components of its specific legal meaning also apply to its theological use. ‘Action by a family member’ is perhaps the most generally applicable description, though ‘restoration to a former state of well-being’ applies to most cases too (the PNs are the most difficult for this). The idea of ‘payment’ of a price seems not to be implied in the theological use. פדה probably belongs here too, with an idea of ‘liberation’ being implied in the theological use, but not a payment (again the PNs raise some difficulty for this).

Another issue that arises about this lexical field is whether some or all of its members have an essential or predominant theological component to their meaning. This was maintained by Sawyer for הושיע, which he suggested was ‘one of a small group of “disinfected” words (cf. BARA’ ‘to create’), properly used only where YHWH or his appointed leader is subject’.¹⁷ Similarly it has been maintained that הציל is used ‘overwhelmingly with a divine subject’.¹⁸ Even within the Old Testament corpus this plays down the significance of those places where these verbs have a human subject. But it also fails to recognise that the Old Testament is a very theological book, or collection of books, so that it is not surprising that a divine subject frequently occurs with these and many other verbs. One would like to be able to test such claims by reference to non-theological texts. There are some such texts in the Old Testament, namely Song of Songs and Esther. The Song appears to contain none of the ‘deliverance’ words (which may well be due to its subject matter), but Esther does have the only case in BH of הצלה (4.14) and an occurrence of מלט (4.13), neither with a divine subject. Hebrew inscriptions provide another possible test, but the few occurrences (1x גאל; 4x הושיע; cf. גאלה

¹⁴ Williams, ZAW 114 (2002), 438-42.

¹⁵ Cf. GK §119ee-gg; BDB, p. 578a: as, e.g., in Ps. 22.22 with ענה.

¹⁶ Cf. TWAT and THAT.

¹⁷ Semantics, p. 103. He seems to have overlooked the occurrences of the Piel of ברא for ‘cut out’ in Josh. 17.15, Ezek. 21.24, 23.46-47.

¹⁸ R.L. Hubbard, NIDOTTE, 3, 141-47.

on coins) are probably all in religious contexts. There are, it should be noted, a large number of proper names in inscriptions which include elements from the lexical field, but they are probably all theophoric or abbreviations of theophoric names, so they do not change the picture. So it is on the Old Testament evidence that the issue has to be judged, and as noted there are sufficient instances of the verbs being used with a human subject to show that it is not their meaning but their usage that has a strong theological dimension there.

It has not been part of the Cambridge centre's working method to explore the use of lexemes in different 'functional languages' of ancient Hebrew,¹⁹ although we do from time to time refer, for example, to the usage in legal texts. An issue of particular interest is whether some of the lexemes considered are restricted to, or predominantly used in, prose or poetry.²⁰ In a broad perspective it can be said that all the word-groups (roots) are well represented in both prose and poetry, with a slightly larger number of occurrences in poetry which may well be due to the frequency with which the topic of deliverance is treated in the Psalms and in prophecy. But there are some noteworthy differences both within and between word-groups.²¹ הושיע and related nouns are significantly more frequent in poetry than in prose. For the verb the ratio of poetic to prose occurrences is about 2:1 (higher in the Niphal), and apart from תשועה (14x prose, 21x poetry) the related nouns occur almost exclusively in poetry: even ישועה occurs only five times (out of 78) in prose. For הצייל the distribution is more even (93/216 in prose; also the one occurrence of a related noun), but this is partly due to the concentration of the Piel and Hithpael, which have non-deliverance meanings, in prose. There is an even more striking contrast between the verbs מלט and פלט, with the latter being entirely poetic and the former slightly more common (50/94) in prose. It is, however, mainly the Niphal of מלט that accounts for the prose occurrences, while nouns related to פלט are also more common in prose (approximately twice as frequent as in poetry). גאל and (to a lesser extent) פדה and related nouns are more frequent in prose, but the imbalance is largely accounted for by occurrences in legal texts (and for גאל the special case of the book of Ruth): neither is at all common in narrative prose. The few occurrences of פרק and related nouns are evenly distributed between prose and poetry, but all the 'deliverance' cases are in poetry, suggesting (as far as the limited evidence goes) that this semantic development is a feature of poetic style.

Finally, it has been our hope to draw some conclusions about *diachronic aspects* of the semantics of this lexical field, but so far we have had more success in calling in question some well known assertions than in identifying positive indications of change through time. Epigraphic evidence of proper names confirms that non-legal uses of גאל and פדה were already established in pre-exilic times, and also that the verb פלט, which is sometimes claimed to be 'late' in BH, was well known in the monarchy period. One aspect of the data

¹⁹ As has been very productively done in SAHD entries and other publications prepared in Florence: see on this I. Zatelli, 'Functional Languages and their Importance in the Semantics of Ancient Hebrew', in Muraoka (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Hebrew Semantics*, pp. 55-64; also F. Zanella, *The Lexical Field of the Substantives of "Gift" in Ancient Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 20-34, 389-413.

²⁰ The debates about how prose and poetry are to be distinguished and whether there is a sharp dividing-line between them will be left on one side here.

²¹ The figures given are approximate and take only partial account of the fact that some biblical books contain both prose and poetry.

which we are collecting and analysing which may take us further is the evidence from Qumran. This is of course of interest in its own right, and the progress of dictionary projects focused on this material will be of help to many others as well as to ourselves. But, as Avi Hurvitz pointed out, Qumran usage is a valuable clue for the detection of linguistic change within the Old Testament itself, particularly in the recognition of features of ‘Late Biblical Hebrew’. Further work on our data may also identify changes in the meanings and uses of words for deliverance. To refer to ‘further work’ is a reminder of the purpose of all our work in the SAHD project: it is first and foremost to assemble the data and make them conveniently available, not to find answers to all the questions that we or others might have. It is a tool for further research, which can be modified in the light of it, not the last word on the semantics of ancient Hebrew.

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TABLE OF ENTRIES AND AUTHOR(S)

LEXEME	DATE COMPLETED	AUTHOR(S)	APPROX. PAGES	NOTES
גָּאַל	2012	Gray	16 pp.	
גָּאַלָה	2012	Gray	6 pp.	
גָּאַלִים	2012	Gray	3 pp.	
יָשַׁע	2016	Aitken, Davies	15 pp.	
יָשַׁע	2000	Aitken	6 pp.	
יָשׁוּעָה	2016	Aitken, Davies	6 pp.	
מוֹשָׁעָה	2000	Aitken	2 pp.	
שׁוֹעַ	2016	Davies	3 pp.	
שׁוֹעַ	2016	Aitken, Davies	4 pp.	
תְּשׁוּעָה	2000	Aitken	6 pp.	
hiph מלט	1999	Aitken	3 pp.	
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piel מלט	1999	Aitken	5 pp.	
hiph נצל	2016	Aitken, Davies	13 pp.	
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עָזַר	2014	Aitken, Gray	13 pp.	

עֶזֶר	2016	Aitken, Gray, Davies	8 pp.	
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