

Introduction

Grammatical Type: n f?

Occurrences: Total 1x OT (Ps 68.21), 0x Sir, 0x Qum, 0x inscr.

Text doubtful: none.

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 [See [ישע]]

B.1 [nil]

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 Only the plural form מוֹשָׁעוֹת is attested. It is not certain either from the form or from the syntagmatic context whether it is masculine or feminine. However, *HAL* suggest that it is feminine, the singular form being *מוֹשָׁעָה* (see BL:490e).

B.1 Briggs & Briggs propose that the lexeme is an Arm inf from the verb ישע, citing the LXX rendering (1907:110). The plural form, however, makes this unlikely.

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 The pl is found preceded by לְ and in predicative position to אֱלֹהִים 'God' (Ps 68.21). The *lamed* expresses a relational sense of God to מוֹשָׁעוֹת, perhaps a *lamed* of specification (see WO: § 11.2.10 d). Alternatively, the *lamed* might indicate the possessive, and the expression לְמוֹשָׁעוֹת אֱלֹהִים would be comparable to the construct chain frequent in the Psalms of אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (e.g. Ps 18.47; 24.5).

B.1 Gunkel sees the לְ as a dittography after אֱלֹהִים (290).

4. Versions

a. LXX: σώζω as articular infinitive (Ps 68[67].21);

b. Peshitta: *mp̄syn* (Ps 68.[20]21);

c. Targum: תקוּף ופּוּרְקָן (Ps 68.21);

d. Vulgate: *salus* (Ps 68[67].21 [s for pl]).

A.1 The LXX, Pesh and Vg clearly understand the root meaning as 'to save'. Although in the Tg the verse is greatly expanded, the phrase תקוּף ופּוּרְקָן 'protection and deliverance' renders a similar sense, the double translation perhaps aiming to cover the full range of the semantics of the lexeme.

B.1 [nil]

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 [See [ישע]]

A.2 The noun [מוֹשָׁעָה] is a hapax legomenon, found at Ps 68.21. [מוֹשָׁעָה] seems to be in parallelism with both ישׁוּעָה 'salvation' in the previous verse and לְמִנְתַּי תּוֹצֵאֹת 'escapes from death' later in the same verse.

B.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 [מוֹשָׁעָה] appears in a Psalm that describes in broad terms God's saving acts, including the deliverance from Egypt, defeat of the enemies, conquest of the land and protection from evil. The obvious connection of [מוֹשָׁעָה] with the verb ישַׁע, its parallelism with יִשְׁוֹעָה and the context indicate that it is a noun denoting 'deliverance'.

A.2 HAL (532) glosses [מוֹשָׁעָה] as 'Hilfeleistung', and BDB (448) preserves the plural form in its gloss 'saving acts'.

B.1 [nil]

7. Conclusion

A.1 The evidence from the context, the parallelisms, the Versions and the likely root גַּשׁ all point to [מוֹשָׁעָה] denoting 'deliverance' or 'saving act', with reference to victories over enemies and even over death/Mot.

A.2 מוֹשָׁעוֹת is probably the plural form of a feminine noun *מוֹשָׁעָה .

Bibliography

Briggs, C.A. & Briggs, E.G. 1907. Commentary on *Psalms*, vol. 2. [ICC] (Edinburgh: T&T Clark).

Gunkel, H. 1933. *Einleitung in die Psalmen: die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

James K. Aitken
University of Cambridge