

Introduction

Grammatical Type: n m.

Occurrences: (Total: 44) 36x OT, 2x Sir, 5x Qum, 1x Inscr.

Sir (numbering of Beentjes 1997): Sir 51.1, 10.

Qum: CD 20.20(B); 1QIs^a; 4Q510 2.2; 11QPs^a 18.2 [=154.4].

Inscr: Naveh & Magen 1997:43, text D (=D-50.002?).

Text doubtful:

A.1 [nil]

B.1 At Hb 3.13 the תָּשַׁע following the second יָשַׁע has been taken to indicate that a verb is required, and an infinitive can easily be substituted in view of the prefix הֵ before the noun. Ward (1959:27) suggests that this is called for, not only by the sign of the direct object, but also by the LXX's infinitives, both in the Old Greek and in the variant text of Codex Venetus and other mss cited by him (on the latter see Ziegler 1967:37-39, 80-81, 274; Jellicoe 1968:198; Lange and Tov 2017:616). And yet only one of the two nouns in that verse is translated by an infinitive, and even then in the Old Greek it is an articular infinitive, which operates more as a noun than as a verb. It should be noted that an articular infinitive renders the noun [מְיֹשַׁע] at Ps 68[67].21 in the same manner. It could be argued in the other direction that the תָּשַׁע is an addition by a later scribe who read לִישַׁע as a verb rather than a noun with prefix. Freedman (1972:535) prefers to understand the תָּשַׁע either as an emphasizing particle or as the second person masculine pronoun (written defectively) to call attention to the pronominal suffix on the following noun. BHK also proposes reading a verb, emending the nouns to the hiph inf לְהוֹשִׁיעַ (cf. Wellhausen; GKC:§ 115d), whilst Dahood suggests that such emendation is not necessary if one only changes the vocalization to read a hypothetical *yiphil* form, יִשַׁע (1979:258–59). It may simply be the object marker after an abstract noun, perhaps also found at Dt 7.8.

B.2 If the form יִשַׁעְכֶם at Is 35.4 were to be taken as a nominal form, then we either have an alternative spelling of the noun (Wernberg-Møller 1957:73) or a text that requires emendation. It is, however, probably the verb in this verse. See Formal Characteristics B.1.

B.3 Although the NAB would correct the noun יָשַׁע to the verb at Jb 5.11 (cited by Clines 1989:*ad loc.*), the noun can be understood as an adverbial accusative (see Syntagmatics A.3; GKC:§ 118 q) and need not be emended.

B.4 The three letters יָשַׁע (with the *yodh* uncertain) appear on a late third-century/early-second century inscription from Gerizim (Naveh & Magen 1997:43, text D). Since the inscription is broken off immediately before these letters, it is not possible to determine whether this is a whole word or part of it. It may be significant to note that the context suggests some form of dedicatory prayer, and the possible appearance of the word יְקוּם (denoting resurrection?) could indicate that it is a prayer or Psalm to God. This would support the reading יִשַׁע, a noun that only appears in poetry in the OT and most often in prayers and Psalms.

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 [See יָשַׁע]

B.1 [nil]

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 Segholate noun. It is always found in the singular in OT.

A.2 The nominal form יִשְׁע appears in the Babylonian tradition at Jb 5.4, 11 and possibly in the MT itself at Is 35.4 (Wernberg-Møller 1957:73). See B.1 below.

B.1 The form יִשְׁעֶכֶם at Is 35.4 is sometimes seen as an incorrect vocalization of the verb (so BHS), and Watts concludes that the verb and meaning is clear, even if the form is not (1987:7). Wernberg-Møller reads it as the noun, but this is less likely.

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 יִשְׁע is subject of the verb יֵצֵא 'to go out' (Is 51.5), בּוֹא 'to come' (Is 62.11)

A.2 יִשְׁע is the object of the verbs צִמַח hif 'to cause to spring up' (2Sm 23.5), נָתַן 'to give' (Ps 85.8). יִשְׁע is also the indirect object of the verb לָבַשׁ hiph 'to clothe' (Ps 132.16). It is preceded by the verbs שִׁית + בָּ 'to place in' (Ps 12.6), רָאָה hiph + בָּ 'to show' (Ps 50.23), מָן + רָחַק 'to be far from' (Jb 5.4), שָׁגַב 'to be exalted' (Jb 5.11).

A.3 At Jb 5.11 יִשְׁע follows immediately on from שָׁגַב 'to be exalted' without any preposition as an adverbial accusative (Gordis 1978:*ad loc*; GKC:§ 118 q).

A.4 יִשְׁע is nomen regens of אֱלֹהִים 'God' (Ps 50.23).

A.5 יִשְׁע is the nomen rectum of אֱלֹהִים 'God' in liturgical contexts (Is 17.10; Mc 7.7; Hb 3.18; Ps 18.47; 24.5; 25.5; 27.9; 65.6; 79.9; 85.5; 1Ch 16.35). In all these cases יִשְׁע has a pronominal suffix ('my', 'his', 'our').

It is also the nomen rectum of things: קַרְנֵי 'horn' (2Sm 22.3; Ps 18.3), מָגֵן 'shield' (2Sm 22.36; Ps 18.36), צוּר 'rock' (2Sm 22.47; Ps 95.1), בְּגָדִים 'clothes' (Is 61.10), גְּבוּרֹת 'powers' (Ps 20.7), שִׂשׂוֹן 'joy' (Ps 51.14), and אֱמֻנָה 'faithfulness' (Ps 69.14).

A.6 יִשְׁע is the predicate of יהוה (Ps 27.1). יִשְׁע has as its predicate the adj קָרוֹב 'near' (Ps 85.10).

A.7 יִשְׁע is in apposition to אֱלֹהִים 'God' (Sir 51.1).

A.8 יִשְׁע is followed by *waw* + הִפְיָן 'delight' (2Sm 23.5) or follows אֹר + *waw* (Ps 27.1).

B.1 It is probable that at Is 45.8 יִשְׁע should be the subject of the verb emended to יִפְרֵךְ (Westermann 1969:153).

B.2 The precise syntagmatic relationship in Hb 3.13 is uncertain (see Introduction: Text Doubtful B.1).

4. Versions

a. LXX: ἔλεος (Is 45.8);

ῥύομαι (Hb 3.13: Codex Venetus, second occurrence)

σωτήρ (Is 62.11; Mc 7.7; Hb 3.13, 18; Ps 24[23].5; 25[24].5; 27[26].1, 9; 65[64].6; 79[78].9; 95[94].1);

σωτηρία (2Sm 22.3, 36, 47; 23.5; Is 17.10; 51.5; 61.10; Ps 12[11].6; 18[17].3, 36, 47; 20[19].7; 69[68].14; 132[131].16; Jb 5.4; 1Ch 16.35);

σωτήριον (Ps 50[49].23; 51[50].14; 62[61].8; 85[84].5, 8, 10);

σώζω as articular infinitive (Hb 3.13);

Omitted: Jb 5.11.

b. Peshitta: *pōrqānā* (2Sm 22.3, 36, 47; 23.5?; Is 17.10; 45.8; 51.5; 61.10; 62.11; Mc 7.7; Hb 3.18; Ps 12.6; 18.3, 36, 47; 20.7; 24.5; 25.5; 27.1, 9; 50.23; 51.14; 62.8; 65.6; 69.14; 79.9; 85.5, 8, 10; 95.1; 132.16; Jb 5.4, 11);

praq (Hb 3.13 [2x]; 1Ch 16.35);

ṣebyānā (2Sm 23.5?);

c. Targum: [[מיתיא]] (Is 45.8);

פְּרָקוּנָא (2Sm 22.3, 47; Is 17.10; 51.5; 61.10; Mc 7.7; Hb 3.18; Ps 12.6; 18.3, 36; 20.7; 24.5; 25.5; 27.1, 9; 50.23; 51.14; 62.8; 65.6; 69.14; 79.9; 85.5, 8, 10; 95.1; 132.16; Jb 5.4, 11; 1Ch 16.35);

פְּרָק (2Sm 22.36; Is 62.11; Hb 3.13 [2x]);

[[צוֹרְקָא]] (?2Sm 23.5);

תְּקוּף וּפּוֹרְקוּן (Ps 18.47);

d. Vulgate: *Iesus* (Hb 3.18; Ps 51[50].14; 79[78].9; 85[84].5; 95[94].1);

salus (2Sm 22.3, 36, 47; 23.5; Is 61.10; Hb 3.13 [2x]; Ps 18[17].3, 36, 47; 20[19].7; Jb 5.4);

salutaris (Ps 12[11].6; 24[23].5; 27[26].1; 50[49].23; 62[61].8; 69[68].14; 85[84].8, 10; 132[131].16);

salvator (Is 17.10; 45.8; 51.5; 62.11; Mc 7.7; Ps 25[24].5; 27[26].9; 65[64].6; 1Ch 16.35);

sospitas (Jb 5.11);

A.1 It is striking how often the LXX (σωτήρ) and the Vg (*Iesus*) read the word as denoting a person rather than an abstract noun, although they do not agree on the same passages to render this way. The Targumim to 2Sm 22.36 and Is 62.11 also read those passages as speaking of a ‘saviour’.

A.2 The Targum to Is 45.8 interprets the concept of salvation as the resurrection of the dead, a reflection of the Targum’s theological views rather than semantics. Likewise the Targum’s reading צוֹרְקָא ‘necessity’ at 2Sm 23.5 forms part of a midrashic text and is not evidence for the semantics.

A.3 It is noticeable how the Pesh and Tg favour the root *prq*, and do not once choose *šzb* or *psy*, roots often chosen for translating cognates of פִּלַּט, מַלְטָא and נִצַּל.

A.4 The choice in the Vg of cognates of *salvare* distinguishes the word from נִצַּל where cognates of *liberare* were more popular (cf. Sawyer :449).

A.5 The late Latin lexeme *sospitas* ‘safety’ at Jb 5.11, although not from the same root as most of the Vg’s choices, nonetheless conveys the same sense. In fact it is an apposite term since it has associations with divine safety in pagan writers. A cult title of Juno at Lanuvium was *Sospita* (Cicero, *de natura deorum* 1.82; see Glare 1982:1796), and *sospitatrix* was used of Isis (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.9, 25; Glare 1982:1796). Perhaps as a result of this association *sospitator* ‘saviour, preserver, deliverer, redeemer’ (Lewis & Short 1958:1734), another post-classical Latin noun, became a title used of Christ (*sospitator nostri generis*, Arnobius Afer 2.96).

A.6 The Pesh’s *ṣbyn* ‘desire’, ‘gratia’ (Brockelmann:619) at 2Sm 23.5 is perhaps influenced by the noun חֶפְזָא in the following phrase (cf. Pesh on Qoh 12.10). In fact, since the positional equivalent of חֶפְזָא is *pōrqānā*, one might conclude that for some reason Pesh has interchanged its renderings of יִשַׁע and חֶפְזָא.

A.7 It appears that the whole Targumic expression תְּקוּף וּפּוֹרְקוּן of Ps 18.47, which is also used to translate מוֹשְׁעוֹת at Ps 68.21, is the usual Tg Ps translation for construct expressions containing יִשַׁע. It is found at 2Sm 22.3 and Ps 18.3 to translate

עֲשֵׂה and at Ps 18.36 to translate עֲשֵׂה לִי. The Tg at Ps 18.47, therefore, translates עֲשֵׂה by the phrase under the influence of these renderings.

B.1 The LXX translation ἔλεος ‘mercy’ at Is 45.8 renders the cause of God’s salvation, rather than the effect.

B.2 The LXX of Jb 5.11 does not appear to translate עֲשֵׂה, perhaps finding difficulty with the syntax of the verse (see Syntagmatics A.3; Text Doubtful B.3).

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 [See עֲשֵׂה vb]

A.2 עֲשֵׂה is found in parallelism with צִיּוֹן מְעוֹז ‘rock of refuge’ (Is 17.10), צְדָקָה ‘righteousness’ (Is 61.10), נְקֻמָּה ‘steadfastness’ (Ps 85.8). עֲשֵׂה also forms part of a series of words denoting protection (Ps 18.3).

A.3 עֲשֵׂה is very frequent in the Psalms (20x), but never appears in the Pentateuch. Elsewhere it appears 4x 2Sm, 5x Is, 1x Mc, 3x Hb, 2x Jb and 1x 1Ch. This indicates that it is always found in poetry or prayer, since the instances in 2Sm and 1Ch are in addresses to God sung by the king.

B.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 עֲשֵׂה in the lexica is glossed as ‘Rettung, Hilfe, Heil’ (Ges.-18:511) and in similar fashion, i) safety, welfare, prosperity; ii) salvation; iii) victory (BDB:447). It may perhaps be possible to bring out further shades of meaning, especially on the basis of the syntagmatics.

A.2 The construct expressions containing עֲשֵׂה are frequent and present colourful associations from which we may gain an insight into its meaning.

A.3 עֲשֵׂה is frequently used of God, often in conjunction with terms such as ‘rock’, ‘horn’ or ‘shield’, and in these cases עֲשֵׂה appears to denote a permanent state (i.e. of God’s nature), even when it is used of God in response to his action on a particular occasion (e.g. 2Sm 22.3, 47). It appears to be a definition of God’s nature in some cases (Mc 7.7; Hb 3.18). As a frequent feature of עֲשֵׂה, it is to be distinguished from עֲשֵׂה לִי and עֲשֵׂה לְךָ in this respect.

A.4 Sawyer concludes that עֲשֵׂה comes to those in need but does not ‘rescue’ or remove them from danger (TWAT:1040-41). It is in this respect more of a state than an action, visible in its association with צְדָקָה ‘righteousness’ (Is 45.8; 51.5; 61.10) and its role as a reward (Is 62.11). עֲשֵׂה comes to those that need it at Is 51.5.

A.5 The connotation at Is 51.5 may be ‘victory’, which is certainly the implication of 2Sm 22.36 where it is in a battle context. It may be significant for the battle context in 2Sm 22.26 that the nomen regens is מָגֵן ‘shield’.

A.6 The sense of ‘saving’ for עֲשֵׂה only appears foremost at Hb 3.13, Ps 18.3, 36(?) and Is 17.10. Elsewhere it seems to denote ‘assistance’ (2Sm 23.5) or ‘prosperity’ (Ps 12.6).

B.1 [nil]

7. Conclusion

A.1 עֲשֵׂה appears only in poetical or liturgical contexts (Lexical/Semantic Field(s) A.3), and therefore it is understandable that it is used in addresses to God. It frequently expresses a reciprocal relationship between God and the speaker in the

expressions ‘God of my/your/our עֲשֵׂה ’ (Syntagmatics A.5). In such cases God is praised for the עֲשֵׂה that he brings to the recipient-speaker. Such a construction is used almost exclusively with this noun amongst the cognates. The LXX and Vg likewise render this use by nouns denoting ‘saviour’ or (in the case of the Vg) ‘Jesus’ (Versions A.1, A.5), renderings that are rare elsewhere in the semantic field.

A.2 The Versional renderings appear to distinguish this lexeme from מָלַט , פָּלַט and נָצַל (Versions A.3, A.4) and this also can be detected in the meaning. Whereas these latter lexemes denote movement to safety in some direction, עֲשֵׂה by contrast has a stative force. As it is frequently the nomen rectum of nouns denoting defence or power, עֲשֵׂה (Syntagmatics A.5; cf. Lexical/Semantic Field(s) A.2) seems to be a lexeme denoting a safe state rather than a movement to safety. It is, therefore, on rare occasions only that it can be glossed by ‘salvation’. This stative connotation also accounts for its use to denote general ‘prosperity’ (Ps 12.6; see Exegesis A.6). It may also account for its use only in the singular; a ‘state’ rather than ‘acts’.

A.3 In some instances עֲשֵׂה may also mean ‘help’ or ‘victory’ (Exegesis A.5, A.6), but these meanings are not so frequent with this lexeme as they are with תְּשׁוּעָה .

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