For fuller discussion of the lexical field as a whole see the ‘Overview of SAHD entries for “Deliverance” words’ on this site

**Introduction**

**Grammatical Type:** n m.

**Occurrences:** Total 21x OT (23x including the place name עֵזֶר in 1Sm 4.1; 7.12), 0x Sir, 19x Qum

Sir: 36.29 (MS B), but should be emended (see Text Doubtful A.1).

Qum: 1QH* a 6.29 (frg); 1QM (1Q33) 1.2; 1QM 4.13; 12.7; 13.8; 13.10; 17.6; 1QS 3.24; 4Q303.10 (frg); 4Q382 17.2; 4Q416 2.iii.21; 4Q417 2.i.7; 4Q418 10a-b.4; 4Q418a 16b+17.3 (frg); 4Q491 11ii14 (frg); 4Q495 2.2 (= 1QM 13.10); 4Q511 125 i.3 (frg); 5Q25 2 i.1 (frg); 11Q13 2.14.

Text doubtful:

A.1 The reading of MS B at Sir 36.29b of עֵזֶר should certainly be emended to עִיר, as preserved in all the other extant manuscripts (MSS C, D) and in Bmg. The letters yodh and zayin in the scribal hand of B can only be distinguished by the length of the tails.

A.2 In several of the Qumran texts listed above it is uncertain whether the form is a verb or noun (see also entry on עָזַר):

B.1 4Q382 17.2 contains the reading עֵזֶר. The context is indeterminate and therefore the reading cannot be assigned to a lexeme.

B.2 In the Qumran ms 1QIs* at Is 30.5 the noun עֵזֶר is found where the MT has עָזַר, indicating the interchangeability of these two nouns (Lipiński 2001:14). It is not possible to determine which is the ‘original’ reading, although one may note that in the Qumran texts there is a greater tendency to form feminine nouns from masculine nouns (Qimron §330.4).

Qere/Ketiv: Ezk 12.14 Kt עָזַר Qr עֵזֶר or emend to עֹזְרָיו ‘his helpers’ (cf. BHS), following LXX, Syr. And Tg.

1. **Root and Comparative Material**

A.1 [See עָזַר]

B.1 [nil].

2. **Formal Characteristics**

A.1 – qitl form, in which seghol appears after a guttural (JM: §88Ch; 97Aa)

B.1 [nil]

3. **Syntagmatics**

A.1 עֵזֶר is the subject of the verb היה ‘to be’ (Dt 33.7); 있어 ‘to come’ (Ps 121.1).

A.2 עֵזֶר is the object of verb עָשָה ‘to make’ (Gn 2.18; 4Q303.10), מצא ‘to find’ (Gn 2.20), פָּלְט ‘to scatter’ (Ezk 12.14), שלח ‘to send’ (Ps 20.3; 1QM 17.6), הלך ‘to walk’ + prep עִם ‘with’ (4Q416 2.iii.21; 4Q418 10a-b.4 reconstr.), פָּלְט ‘to set’ (Ps 89.20), and Niphal עָזַר (Dn 11.34); כתב ‘to write’ (1QM 4.13); חשב ‘to reckon as’ (4Q417 2.i.7).
A.3 is the predicate of ‘God’ (Ex 18.4), of ‘Lord’ (Dt 33.7), of ‘the God of Jacob’ (Ps 146.5), and of all the gods [of justice]. It is also in apposition to ‘Lord’ (Ps 33.20; 70.6; 115.9, 10, 11); to ‘all who surround him’ (Ezk 12.14); and to ‘the violations of the covenant’ (IQM 1.2).

A.4 is nomen regens with ‘God’ i.e. ‘God’s help’ (IQM 4.13), with the help[ of your flesh] (4Q416 2.iii.21; 4Q418 10a-b.4), and possibly with šarā’ī the remnant (IQM 13.8), preceded by the preposition (or this could be an infinitive construct).

A.5 is nomen remict of ‘shield’ (Dt 33.29); ‘stone’ (1Sm 7.12).

A.6 is also followed by ‘in’ + noun ‘name of the Lord’ (Ps 124.8), and followed by instrumental beth + (means of) the power of the majestic angel (IQM 17.6).

A.7 is followed by the preposition ‘against’ (Gn 2.18, 20; 4Q303.10).

A.8 is followed by the preposition ‘for’ + noun ‘the lot of his covenant’ (IQM 17.6).

A.9 is followed by the preposition from noun ‘enemy’ (Dt 33.7), indicating the danger from which help is sought.

A.10 is followed by the preposition ‘upon’ + noun ‘mighty one’ (Ps 89.20).

A.11 is preceded by (beth essential) (Ex 18.4; Dt 33.26; Ps 146.5; IQM 1.2; 11Q13 2.14) and instrumental beth, following the verb the (IQM 6.29), although this text is fragmentary and the object of the verb is missing. It is preceded elsewhere by the preposition (5Q52 2 i 1), although this text is also fragmentary and there is insufficient context to establish the meaning. At Ho 13.9 MT is barely intelligible without rearrangement or the addition of a word, for which there is no justification: with the text as it stands Andersen and Freedman (1980, 625), followed by ESV, rendered ‘against me, against your helper’, which is possible in isolation but (like Macintosh’s suggestion [1997, 536]) makes a poor fit with the context. LXX and Sy support the emendation of the as (BHS), which assumes a widely attested type of scribal error and clarifies the sense in a way that fits the interrogative style of v. 10. The beth of beth essential can then be understood as beth essential, which is found several times before both and (see Syntagmatics), here referring to potential (divine?) helpers who have failed to save Israel from destruction by Yahweh (see ἀστράς may be understood either as an indefinite 3rd sing. perf. verb equivalent to a passive, with the vocalisation of MT, or with Pesh. as a 1st sing. perf. verb (written defectively) with Yahweh as subject as in vv. 8 and 11).

A.12 is preceded by the preposition ‘as a … helper’, qualifying the congregation of your holy ones will be amongst us’ (IQM 12.7).

A.13 is preceded by the preposition with (4Q418a 16b+17.3), although the context is unclear as the text is fragmentary.

A.14 is joined by with to Hiphil (Ex 18.4), to ‘shield’ (Ps 33.20; 115.9, 10, 11), and to ‘all his troops’ (Ezk 12.14).

A.15 is qualified by the adjective ‘little’ (Dn 11.34), and by ‘eternal’ (IQM 12.7; 17.6).

B.1 [nil]

4. Versions
a. LXX:

 bổθήσ (Gn 2.18, 20; Ex 18.4; Dt 33.7, 26, 29; 1Sm 7.12; Ezk 12.14 [pl for s]; Ps 33[32].20; 70[69].6; 115[113].9[17], 10[18], 11[19]; 146[145].5; )

 ὑπηρέται (Is 30.5; Ps 20[19].3; 89[88].20; 121[120].1, 2; 124[123].8; Dn 11.34 [Theodotion]);

 ὑπήρθο (Ho 13.9);

 ἵππος (Dn 11.34 [LXX]);

 Αἱβενέζερ (1Sm 7.12)
Minor Greek Versions [MRN]:
ἀντίληψις (Symm: Ps 89[88].20)
βοήθεια (AL: Ps 121[120].1)

b. Peshitta:

m'drn’ (Gn 2.18, 20; Ezk 12.14; Ps 33.20; 70.6; 121.1);
‘wrdrn’ (Is 30.5; Ps 20.3; 89.20; 121.2; 124.8; Dn 11.34);
’dr (Ex 18.4; Dt 33.26, 29; Ho 13.9; Ps 146.5);
’dwr’ (Dt 33.7; Ps 115.9, 10, 11).

c. Targum:

TgO
סער (Gn 2.18, 20);
Pael旮уд (Dt 33.7);
_ansעדה (Ex 18.4; Dt 33.26, 29).

TgJon
Pael旮уд (Is 30.5);
_ansעדה (1Sm 7.12; Ezk 12.14; Ho 13.9).

TgNeo
זג (Gn 2.18, 20);
סער וספד (Dt 33.7);
_ansעדה (Ex 18.4; Dt 33.29).
zero (Dt 33.26).

TgFr
בר זג (Gn 2.18, 20);
סער וספד (Dt 33.7);
_ansעדה (Dt 33.29);
zero (Dt 33.26).

TgCG
זג (Gn 2.18, 20 Ms B);
סער וספד (Dt 33.7 Ms DD).

TgPsJon
סער (Gn 2.18, 20);
סער וספד (Dt 33.7);
_ansעדה (Ex 18.4; Dt 33.26, 29).

TgPsa
Pael旮עד (Ps 89.20; 115.9, 10, 11);
_ansעדה (Ps 20.3; 33.20; 70.6; 121.1, 2; 124.8; 146.5).

d. Vulgate:

adiutorium (Gn 2.18; 1Sm 7.12; Ps 89[88].20);
adiutor (Gn 2.20; Ex 18.4; Dt 33.7; 1Sm 7.12);
auxiliator (Dt 33.26; Ps 115[113].9[17], 10[18], 11[19]; 146[145].5);
auxilium (Dt 33.29; Is 30.5; Ho 13.9; Ps 20[19].3; 33[32].20; 70[69].6; 121[120].1, 2; 124[123].8; Dn 11.34); ([praesidium (Ezk 12.14)]).

A.1 As noted in the entry for עז, the LXX has a strong preference for βοηθέω and cognate nouns.

A.2 At 1Sm 7.12 the mss present a double translation, first the transliteration of the name and then its meaning.

A.3 The primary verb used to translate עז in the Peshitta is 'dr, and it follows suit with the related nouns.

A.4 In the Targumim, the translation of עז is usually יס or יש, which both carry a general sense of help in terms of aid, assistance and support. In the translation of the nominal form here, the only addition is ישג 'support', in the sense of something / someone to lean on or rely on.

A.5 As noted in the entry for עז, the Vg has a strong preference for adiuvor and auxilior and their cognate nouns. In Ezk 12.14 praesidium 'defence, guard' is exceptionally used for 'his help(ers)' because they are those who surround the prince in Jerusalem (v. 10), i.e. the king, to defend him (כ אשר סביבתיו): compare the places where praesidium is used with a verb to represent עז. Like ḥylʾ in Ps 108.13 (see עזר, Versions A.4), praesidium specifies the particular form that the help provided takes and does not represent the core meaning of עז.

A.6 The use of verbs to render עז is occasionally found (cf. LXX, Tgg), but it is not as common as with עזר.

B.1 [nil]

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 [see עזר]

A.2 עז occurs in parallelism with יהלמ 'majesty' (Dt 33.26, 29); ישע Hiph ‘to profit’ (Is 30.5); ישע ‘to support’ (Ps 20.3) [cf. Targum]; ישג ‘shield’ (Ps 33.20; 115.9, 10, 11); Piel ptc ישג (Ps 70.6); ישג ‘hope’ (Ps 146.5).

A.3 It is set in contrast to יבש ‘shame’ and יכדר ‘reproach’ (Is 30.5).

A.4 It appears in collocation with ירג ‘troop’ (Ezk 12.14); ישע Hiph (Ex 18.4); ישע hiph (Hos 13.9); ירג ‘trust’ (Ps 115.9, 10, 11); ישע אל God’s acts of salvation, ישע אל God’s victories, and ישע אל God’s support (1QM 4.13).

B.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 Within the OT עז, unlike עזר, occurs (6x: 3x in prose and 3x in the old tribal poem in Dt 33) in the Pentateuch. It also has about half its biblical occurrences in the Ps, but it is less frequent in prophecy and does not appear in Job or Lam. Its only occurrences in the historical books are in the toponym Ebenezer. At Qumran it is nearly three times as frequent as עזר, but both occur several times (sometimes close together) in 1QM. The same fourfold sub-division of contexts is used here as for עזר, but ‘divine’ has also to include help from (and occasionally to) heavenly beings other than God.

A.2 עז as an earthly ‘helper’ and companion
is used in Genesis to describe the companion that Adam needs in the garden of Eden because he was alone (Gen 2.18). This is not (as Ben-Hayyim mistakenly translates: see DCH 6, pp. 342, 869) ‘woman’ or ‘wife’, since in these contexts, God creates all kinds of animals to act as a potential עזר but none is a suitable ‘helper’ to be ‘opposite him’ / ‘to face him’ (Gen 2.20). The prepositional expression corresponds to the dimension of help as presence which is emphasised in some of the occurrences of the verb עזר.

The designation ‘help’ is explicitly applied to woman at Qumran, most clearly in the advice about family life in 4QInstruction (4Q416 f2 iii 21: cf. Gen. 2.23; cf. 4Q418 f10a-b 4: 4Q418a f16b+17 3 has the same phrase, but in a different setting) but also in 4Q303 f1 10, where לאשה follows. By contrast 4Q417 f2 i 7 represents an איש עול as an undesirable source of help.

A.3 עזר ‘human military support’

עזר denotes human military support, in the sense of protection or defence in a time of need (Isa 30.5; Ezk 12.14; Dan 11.34).

The occurrence of עזר in Ezk 12.14, complicated by a Qere / Ketiv in the MT, is usually understood to be a scribal error for עזורי, on the basis of evidence from the Versions (see e.g. Zimmerli ad loc). However, Greenberg (1983, 216) and Block (1997, 364) note that the old 3rd person masculine singular ending –h also occurs in Ezk 11.15 and ten times elsewhere. Ehrlich’s solution that עזר and עזר are variants here (preferring to remove the awkward עזר altogether) seems unwarranted. If understood as a singular noun, it would be a unique – though not impossible – use of the noun in a collective sense of ‘his aids’ or ‘allies’ (cf. the participles with plural suffixes: עזריה in Ezk 30.8 and עזריו in 32.21). It seems most natural to translate the phrase ‘his allies and all his troops’ (כל אגפיו), reading it as an epexegetical clause to qualify כל谁 סביבתו ‘all who surround him’ (cf. NRSV).

In the Qumran War Scroll עזר (with beth essentiae) stands for the support given to foreign forces by disloyal Jews (সমর: 1Q1 1.2) in the eschatological battle.

A.4 עזר ‘divine help/helper, defender’

עזר also denotes divine help with a sense of support, protection or rescue by someone who is on one’s side, such as when the psalmist asks or affirms where his help comes from (Ps 121.1,2; for the latter see also 124.8 in A.5 below). This help is described in a general sense of being watched over and preserved from evil (Ps 121), as also in 33.20 (with מגן: cf. 115.9-11 in A.5 below).

In contexts that describe God as ‘my help’ with beth essentiae, it seems more natural to render the noun as ‘helper’ or ‘defender’ – someone who is on one’s side, e.g. Ps 146.5, “Happy is he who has the God of Jacob as his helper”. In Ex 18.4, this description of God as defender occurs in the context of being rescued or protected from harm: “for the God of my father was my helper, and rescued me from the sword of Pharaoh”.

Protection (sc. against ‘destruction’ by Yahweh) is also the point in Hos. 13.9 if, as is most likely (see Syntagmatics A.11), י is read for יב (with LXX and Sy: cf. BHS) and שחתך is understood as the equivalent of a passive: ‘You are destroyed, O Israel, for who was your helper?’ (cf. Davies 1992, 292).
In the Qumran Community Rule God and ‘the angel of his truth’ (Michael according to Leaney, pp. 43-44) assist ‘the sons of light’ in their struggle against moral evil (1QS 3.24). God and his angel also work together in creation (1QH 6.29).

A.5 ‘divine military assistance’

is used in the tribal blessings in Dt 33 to denote divine help in particular contexts of military support, protection or strength (Dt 33.7 – with *beth essentiae*, 33.26 [which may be what the fragmentary 5Q25 f2 1 is referring to], 29). The plural pronouns in Ps 124 suggest that v. 8 also refers to help in a national military crisis; likewise in Ps 115.9, 10, 11, occurs in the context of affirming trust in YHWH over and against human strength and/or other gods. In these cases, overlaps with the semantic domain of refuge and protection in the Psalter, as there is an emphasis on the choice of YHWH as the source of the psalmist’s strength and protection (cf. also Ps 146.5, and e.g. Ps 28.7-8).

This may after all be the sense in the difficult second half of Ps 89.20, where God says: The combination is unusual and many (e.g. Kraus) prefer to emend to ‘a crown’ (cf. its contrasting use of the king’s downfall in v. 40). Others (e.g. Miller 1970, 160; Rainey 1975, 74-75; Lipiński 2001, 17) have seen here an instance of a noun derived from II which is cognate with Ug. *gzer*, meaning ‘a young hero’ or ‘a young man’, parallel to *ḥazar* placed ‘over the warrior(s)’ in a position of authority. Ginsberg (1938, 210 n.5) and Ahlström (1959, 101) suggest the meaning ‘power’, as already envisaged by BDB, p. 1001, comparing the very similar Ps 21.6 in another royal psalm. But the parallelism between other words in the deliverance group and being ‘raised up’ elsewhere suggests that the normal understanding of as ‘help’, which is supported by the Vss, may be correct here, with being the parallel word to (cf. the use of the latter to describe Saul in 1 Sam. 9.2). For the military context see vv. 23-24; help as ‘strengthening’ is implied in v. 22. in Ps 20.3 (yet another royal psalm) also belongs here.

In the War Scroll help from heaven is brought to the forces of light by God (4.13; 13.8 [par. in 4Q491 f7]; 4Q491 f11 ii 14), by angels (12.7) and by God working through an angel (17.6: Michael; cf. 13.10 [par. 4Q495]: but here could well involve the verb). In 11Q13 2.14 the redeeming angel Melchizedek (probably another name for Michael: cf. Kobelski 1981, 71-74; Steudel 2000, 535-36), in his conquest of the powers of Belial, receives the help of ‘all the gods/angels [עֵזֶר]’, ‘all the gods/angels [of righteousness]’.

A.6 In the OT the ‘help’ denoted by often takes the form of rescue or refuge (note especially the association with *tsedeq* in Exod. 18.4; Ps. 33.20; 70.6 [cf. *טְשִׁיר* in v. 2], with in Dt 33.29 and Ps 20 [v. 10] and with in Dt 33.29; Ps 33.20; 115.9-11). But at Qumran these kinds of help are barely present at all, only perhaps in 11Q13 2.14 (with *טְשִׁיר* in ll. 6 and 13). Support in a more general sense (as in Gen. 2) is more widely attested there (cf. A.2 above), and in the military contexts of the War Scroll the aid of allies is directed towards winning the inevitable victory, not escaping danger (as also in Dt 33, with in v. 29 and in the royal psalms, with in Ps 20 [v. 10]).

A.7 Like , the help expressed by is sometimes closely related to the presence of its provider, whether human or divine. Thus the woman who proves to be, at least most of the
time, man’s true helpmeet in Gen. 2 is given to be ‘with him’ (3.12), he ‘clings’ to her and they become ‘one flesh’ (2.24; cf. 4.1). Companionship is also central to the echoes of this passage in 4QInstruction (see A.2 above). God’s help comes to the king from his ‘sanctuary’ on Zion (Ps 20.3), where he dwells; and he gives help and protection to the man on a journey (Ps 121.1-2) by being ‘at his right hand’ (v. 5). Perhaps this is also signified to the eschatological warriors by having יָרֵץ inscribed on one of their banners (1QM 4.13).

A.8 The personal sense, in which עֵזֶר virtually means ‘helper’, is also attested in a wide range of passages (Gen 2.18, 20; Dt 33.7; Ezk 12.14; Ps 33.20; 70.6; 115.9-11; 1QS 3.24; 1QM 13.10; 4Q303 1.10; also in the instances with beth essentiae: Ex 18.4; Dt 33.26; Hos 13.9; Ps 146.5).

A.9 Occasionally a failure to give help that was expected is noted (Gen 2.20; Is 30.5; Hos 13.9).

A.10 There is one case of עֵזֶר being followed by מַן and a word for enemies (Dt 33.7), a construction which brings it very close to some of the main members of the ‘deliverance’ group like נצל Hiph. The explanation is probably the same as for the rare parallels with עָזַר (see Exegesis A.3(b)) and עֶזְרָה (see Conclusion A.4), that is a pregnant use in which a noun with the sense ‘deliverance’ is assumed to intervene before the מַן.

A.11 There are three cases where עֵזֶר preceded by ל functions like a verb (infinitive). Two are in unvocalised texts (1QM 13.8, 10) and could be parsed as verbal forms. The third, Is 30.5, has עֶזְרָן in parallel to the infinitive להועיל, which illustrates the equivalence very clearly (cf. עֶזְרָה, Exegesis A.7).

7. Conclusion
There appear to be four distinctive uses of this noun in the HB: human helper, military support, divine protection and divine assistance in battle. These are all connected by the broader notion of help in the sense of support or assistance. As far as its situation is concerned, עֵזֶר has a wider application than words for ‘deliverance’, as it need not presuppose a situation of trouble or distress – this would be a special case – and it can be given (as ‘protection’) to avert such things. It can also refer to ‘support’ in a very general sense, as in Gn 2, where ‘two are better than one’. (See also the Conclusions for עָזַר and עֶזְרָה.)

Bibliography
Miller, P.D. 1970. Ugaritic ĠZR and Hebrew ʿZR II. UF 2:159-75.