Introduction

Grammatical Type: n. m.(?)

Occurrences: Total 2x OT, 0x Sir, 0x Qum, 0x inscr.

Text doubtful:

A.1 The whole of the verse Jb 30.24 is obscure and many emendations have been proposed in the past. However, if שׁוּע is understood to denote the ‘cry’ of the poor (e.g. Dhorme 1967; Habel 1985:416), it echoes 29.12, where the verb ישׁע occurs.

A.2 Jb 36.19 is also a difficult verse, the sense of לֹא בְצָר (or at least its grammatical connection) being particularly elusive. But the reading שׁוּע is generally retained and its presence can be detected behind all the (very varied) versional renderings of the verse (see below).

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 [See also ישׁע 1. Root and Comparative Material, especially on the PNs, for which the occurrences of ישׁע provide a more plausible basis for the use as an element of a PN.]

A.2 Although this noun might be derived from a biliteral by-form of the verb ישׁע ‘to save’, it could equally be cognate with ישׁע piel ‘to cry out for help’. BDB (447; 1002) lists it under both roots to indicate uncertainty on the matter, but expresses preference for the second option (447), and this fits the context where it is used better.

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 Probably of the qitl pattern (BL §461l’), if it is derived from the triliteral root ישׁע (see Root and Comparative Material A.2). (HAL [1340] apparently envisages qūl as the pattern, citing BL: § 452t [similarly Ges18:1335]: this would be appropriate if the root were biliteral.). Such a derivation is favoured by Wildberger for ישׁע in Is 22.5, in preference to the alternative view that it means the Sutu (as in Ezek 23.23), which would require the emendation of ר to in the previous stich to ישׁע (807 note f, 818). If ישׁע is related to the verb ישׁע, the loss of the consonantal waw may be due to the preceding u vowel (JM: § 26b). This does not occur with the noun יָשׁע ‘a cry for help’, perhaps to distinguish it from ישׁע (cf. JM: § 26c, n. 2), but more likely because there is no original u vowel in that word, which is of the qitlat pattern.

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 ישׁע is the subject (or perhaps object) of the verbך עָר ‘to arrange’ (Jb 36.19).

A.2 ישׁע is (in MT: see further below Exegesis A.1) subject of a nominal clause with ל + 3p(!)l suffix and ב + וְדוֹ (Jb 30.24). It is less likely that it is preceded by לְ ‘therefore’: this occurs mainly in Aramaic (though 2x in the book of Ruth, where it is spelt לְכָל) and does not fit the context here.
4. Versions
   a. LXX: δέομαι? (Jb 30.24); δέησις (Jb 36.19);
   Minor Greek Versions [MRN]:
   b. Peshitta: prq (Jb 30.24; 36.19);
   c. Targum: צלות (Jb 30.24); בשות (36.19);
   d. Vulgate: salvo (Jb 30.24); magnitudo (Jb 36.19).

   A.1 Apart from LXX the Versions in both places attempt a word-by-word rendering of a Vorlage that was similar or identical to MT, even if the translators were (understandably) unable to produce a coherent translation of the verses as a whole which fitted well into their respective contexts. It is therefore possible to deduce with some certainty what they took שׁוּע to mean, though three different interpretations of it are attested.

   A.2 Pesh associated שׁוּע with ישׁע, for which its rendering prq is often used. Targ’s two equivalents, meaning ‘prayer’ (Job 30.24) and ‘request’ (Job 36.19), evidently had a word related to the verb עַשׁ, ‘cry out’, in mind. Vulg gives two different interpretations, agreeing with Pesh in Job 30.24 but offering an abstract noun meaning ‘greatness’ in Job 36.19. The latter will be related to Vulg’s rendering of שׁוּע in Is 32.5 (maior) and implies that the Heb. consonants were read by it as שׁוּע here too.

   B.1 LXX’s renderings of both verses are (typically for the translation of Job) free and imprecise (cf. Driver and Gray 2:280 on 36.19). They seem to be improvisations based mainly on the (preceding) context and matches with words in MT are by no means certain. But it is probably significant that δεηθεις in Job 30.24 and δεησιως in 36.19 (just before ἐν ὀνήματι) occur in approximately the places where renderings of שׁוּע would be expected. If so LXX understood שׁוּע in the same way as Targ was later to do.

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)
   A.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis
   A.1 Job 30.24 belongs to Job’s apologia (ch. 29-31) in which he presents himself as an impeccably kind and righteous man. He particularly emphasises his generosity to the poor (29.12-17; 31.13-22). The MT of 30.24 as it stands is ‘unintelligible’ (Driver and Gray 1:259) and does not include any word for a poor man, but there is one in the following verse. The varied emendations and interpretations proposed show that there can be no certainty here (cf. ibid. 2:219). But the suffix of בְּפִיד needs an antecedent and there is none in the present wording of the earlier part of the verse. The best solution (better than the popular טובע) is to read בְּעַנִי, ‘against an afflicted man’, for the unlikely עַנִי (so Habel:416, following Pope; cf. BHK). The fem. pl. suffix of לָהֶן can hardly be right, but in the palaeo-Hebrew script mem and nun could easily be confused. A form with a pl. suffix (לָהֶם) is unlikely: by itself רֵע could be taken collectively, but דָּהֵם shows that it means a (typical) single individual). Habel (417) follows Dhorme and more dubiously the free
translation of LXX in reading ל, which gives the literal translation ‘when in his
distress there is a cry to me’, on the basis that של here is related to ר׳, as most
commentators have thought. Perhaps better, and closer to MT, we propose to read
למשוע for the last two words and translate ‘or in his distress to the one who cries out’,
understanding the verb from the first half of the verse, with a variation in the
preposition used after it. MT could have arisen on this view from a mistake in the
word-division, leading to the change of ל to the more regular ל, followed by the
confusion of mem and nun posited above. The correctness of one of these solutions
receives some support from 29.12, where ר and של occur adjacent to one another.

A.2 In his third and fourth speeches (36.1 - 37.26) Elihu turns from argument
to a direct address to Job, in which rebuke and instruction are combined. In 36.17-23
he warns Job that his arrogance may be the ruin of him. In this context a reference
to his ‘cry’ (ר) in 36.19 fits well, because Elihu has already specifically said that
God does not answer the prayers of the arrogant (35.12-13). In parallel he speaks
here of כל מאמזת צי, ‘all the powers of strength’, which might be Job’s pretended
ability to argue with God as an equal, as being equally futile. The words לן מ י, ‘not
in distress’, remain puzzling: they apparently represent the expected effect of הין;
but since the meaning (or even the reading) of that word is far from certain it is
impossible to explain exactly how לן מ י might express ‘removal from distress’. In
fact Driver and Gray (2:279) reasonably argue that ‘לא בצר’ is not the same as
בלא צר (8.11; 30.28), but can only mean without affliction (cf. 4.21; 34.20’; on this basis
Dillmann’s rendering of the verse, which they cite (280), ‘Can he (God) bring thy cry
into order (i.e. make it a cry of submission) without (the use of) affliction, and all the
efforts of his strength’, has much to be said for it. But the association of של with ר
remains plausible however this problem is (or is not) solved. The alternative ‘riches’
(Driver and Gray 1:313; 2:279) or ‘opulence’ (Pope :267) has no real foundation.

7. Conclusion
A.1 In view of the problems in both verses where של occurs, certainty about
its meaning is impossible. But it is most likely that it is related, as is more generally
(but not universally) accepted for של in Is 22.5, to ר, ‘cry out’. The Versions
(LXX, Targ) provide some support for this view. It has, in other words, nothing to do
with של; and the ‘deliverance’ word- group more generally (pace Pesh and [in Job

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