

טלט piel

(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: vb.

Occurrences: Total 24x OT, 0x Sir, 10x Qum (1QH fr2 1.6, 3.28, 5.18, 6.25, 32, 9.29, 33, 1QSb 1.7, 4Q171[pPs^a] fr3-10 4.20, 4Q381 24.1.7, 11QPs^a 23.13 [= Ps 144.2]), 0x inscr. All but three of the biblical occurrences are in non-prophetic poetry, and all Qumran occurrences are in poetry. All occurrences are in poetry (cf. Hubbard 1997b:621).

Text Doubtful:

A.1 BHS 2Sm 22.44 records that a Hebrew manuscript, citations, LXX manuscripts, Pesh and Vg support ותִּפְלֹטְנִי (as Ps 18.44) rather than MT ותִּפְלֹטְנִי. At Ps 18.44 it notes the reading of 2Sm 22.44. BHS Ps 18.3 suggests the deletion of ותִּפְלֹטְנִי *metri causa*, but also registers that Tg and 2Sm 22.3 add לִי immediately after ותִּפְלֹטְנִי. BHS Ps 18.49 registers that 2Sm 22.49 has וּמוֹצִיאִי in place of ותִּפְלֹטְנִי. BHS Ps 32.7 suggests that for פִּלְטָה, טַלְטַל may be read (Jenni [1968:106] likewise considers this text uncertain). BHS Ps 37.40 records that LXX and Pesh provide a copula before יִפְלֹטְנִי (second occurrence). However, this is simply because the translators followed the syntactic preferences of the receptor languages. BHS Ps 71.2 suggests that Pesh does not have an equivalent of ותִּפְלֹטְנִי. However, it is uncertain whether Syr *psny* is the equivalent of תִּפְלֹטְנִי, of ותִּפְלֹטְנִי, or of both.

A.2 The piel form תִּפְלֹטְנִי in Jb 23.7 is repointed as a Qal תִּפְלֹטְנִי by Driver (1936:160), Dahood (1970b:397), Ruprecht (1979:421) and BHK. In most cases (though see Dahood) the repointing is due to the lack of a direct object for the piel. Hasel (1989:593 = 2001:555) rejects this proposal. Fohrer (1963:363) retains the piel, but alters the pointing of מִשְׁפָּטִי to מִשְׁפָּטִי, thus providing a direct object. Hölscher (1952:58) suggests reading תִּפְלֹטְנִי with נִפְשִׁי understood, or simply תִּפְלֹטְנִי.

A.3 Hubbard (1997b:622) describes פִּלְטָה (Ps 56.8) as “problematic” on the ground that a psalmist would not ask for the wicked to be allowed to escape. He registers the emendation to פִּלְטָה or פִּלְטָה (“repay” NRSV, also recorded in Zorell [650b] and going back at least to Ewald [1880:279]), though he prefers MT, understanding it to be “a bitter, even ironic, question: ‘For their evil is their [sic] deliverance for them?’” (following Tate [1990:65]). Jenni (1968:106) and HAL (879b) consider this text uncertain.

A.4 Consonantly the noun מִפְלֹטָה and the piel participle מִפְלֹטְנִי are identical. As a result it has been proposed that some cases pointed piel in MT be repointed as מִפְלֹטְנִי. This has been proposed for Ps 18.3 (Hupfeld [1867:462], Briggs & Briggs [1906:151], Dahood [1973:33]), Ps 144.2 (Hupfeld [1867:462], Dahood [1970a:329, for some reason referring to the repointed form as “pausal”, 1973:33]), and 2Sm 22.2[3] (Fürst 1857:771b). HAL (584b) mentions all three of these conjectures. Watson (1984:265) translates מִפְלֹטָה (Ps 18.3) “my haven”, which suggests repointing as מִפְלֹטְנִי. Hill (1997:1057) understands Ps 18.3 to be an occurrence of מִפְלֹטְנִי, but Zorell (462), Alonso Schökel (424), and Hubbard (1997b:624) give Ps 55.9 as the only occurrence of the noun מִפְלֹטְנִי. For further instances see below B.1.

The issue is difficult to resolve, though for contextual reasons it seems highly probable that the piel participle is found in Ps 18.49, 40.18, and 70.6. The other proposals for repointing must stand or fall together since the verbal similarities between 2Sm 22.2, Ps 18.3 (and following it 4Q381 24.1.7), and Ps 144.2 (and thus 11QPs^a 23.13) are too great for different pointings of the word to be acceptable in these cases. All these texts are referring to God and contain a list of descriptive nominals with 1sg suffix. This is in contrast with Ps 55.9 (the only example of מְפַלֵּטִי in MT), which has no such list. Thus the Masoretic pointing reflects some formal difference of context, and is probably to be retained. All the above examples will be treated as piels in the entry, with the *caveat* that the other pointing is perfectly plausible.

A.5 For the possibility that Ps 55.9 contains מְפַלֵּט see section Text Doubtful in entry on מְפַלֵּט.

A.6 In 1QH 6.32 פלט piel may be restored (the ms. is damaged): see also A.7. Bardtke (1956:600) has ולוא יהיה פלט, with פלט as piel (infinitive), indicated by doubling of middle radical. “[E]scape” (Vermes 1997:274) could be based on פִּלֵּט or מְפַלֵּט.

A.7 The phrase רָצִי פִּלֵּט (Ps 32.7 MT) has been considered difficult. For proposed emendations see Hasel (1989:599-600 = 2001:561). However, 1QH fr2 1.6, 3.28, 6.25 (probably, cf. Bardtke [1956:600]) and Ps 56.8 (possibly) provide parallels for such a nominal use of the piel infinitive. Zorell (650b) even lists the infinitive פִּלֵּט as a separate lexeme, stating that it is used as a substantive “salus” in Ps 32.7, 56.8 (cf. Hubbard 1997b:621). Craigie (1983:264) also retains MT.

A.8 1QSb 1.7 is partially restored. According to DJD (I:120) and Charlesworth (1994:122) it reads יפֿלטכה, which is translated by Charlesworth (1994:123) as “de]liver”, suggesting that he takes it as a piel.

A.9 4QpPs^a 3-10.4.20 quoting Ps 37.40 substitutes מלט for MT פלט the first time, but not the second (DJD V:45, Hubbard 1997b:625).

B.1 Hupfeld (1867:462) proposed reading the noun מְפַלֵּטִי in Ps 40.18 and 70.6 which have מְפַלֵּטִי in MT. This emendation provides less good sense than MT.

B.2 Hubbard (1997b:623) wrongly states that BHS suggests the emendation of פלט piel in Mc 6.14 to hiph. In fact BHS suggests the emendation of פלט hiph to piel.

B.3 For a discussion of the incorrect proposal to read פלט piel in 1QH 3.10 see entry on פלט niph Exegesis A.1.

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 See פלט Qal.

B.1 See פלט Qal.

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 Strong trilateral root.

B.1 [nil]

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 Subj פָּרַה (Jb 21.10), אֱלֹהֵי (Ps 71.4), 1sg pron = Job (Jb 23.7), 2sg pron = God (2Sm 22.44, Ps 17.13, 18.44, 43.1), 3sg pron = God (Ps 37.40, 1QSb 1.7), 2pl pron = gods (Ps 82.4), part = God (Ps 18.49).

A.2 Obj נִפְשׁ (Ps 17.13, 1QH 5.18, 9.33), לְ וְאֶקְיֹן (Ps 82.4); direct object suffix (2Sm 22.44, Ps 18.44, 22.5, 9, 31.2, 37.40 [2x], 43.1, 71.2, 4, 91.14); 1sg suffix on participle (2Sm 22.2, Ps 18.3, 49, 40.18, 70.6). The object may be mediated by Lamedh in Ps 56.8 (assuming that this is not nominal, or to be emended), and perhaps also in 2Sm 22.2 and Ps 144.2.

A.3 Action complemented by מִן followed by רִיבֵי עַמִּי ‘strife with my/a people’ (2Sm 22.44), רָשָׁע ‘the wicked’ (Ps 17.13), רִיבֵי עַם ‘strife with a people’ (18.44), רָשָׁעִים ‘the wicked’ (37.40 [cf. 4QpPs^a fr3-10 4.20]), אִישׁ מִרְמָה וְעוֹלָה ‘those who are deceitful and unjust’ (43.1), יַד רָשָׁע ‘the hand of the wicked’ and כַּף מְעוֹל וְחוּמָן ‘the grasp of the unjust and cruel’ (71.4), יַד רָשָׁעִים ‘the hand of the wicked’ (82.4 in par.), שְׁפָטִי ‘my judge’ (Jb 23.7), כֻּלֵּי ‘all...’ (1QSb 1.7).

A.4 Inf is nomen rectum of רָנַי (Ps 32.7).

B.1 [nil]

4. Versions

a. LXX:

ῥύομαι (2Sm 22.44, Ps 17[16].13, 18[17].44, 22[21].5, 9, 37[36].40a, Ps 43[42].1, 71[70].4, 91[90].14);

ῥύσταις (Ps 18[17].3, 49, 70[69].6, 144[143].2);

σώζω (Ps 56[55].8);

διασώζομαι (Mc 6.14b, Jb 21.10);

ἐξαιρούμενος (2Sm 22.2);

ῥύομαι + ἐξαιρέω (Ps 31[30].2);

ἐξαιρέω (Ps 37[36].40b, 71[70].2, 82[81].4);

λυτρόω (Ps 32[31].7);

ὑπερασπιστής (Ps 40[39].18);

ἐξάγω (Jb 23.7).

b. The Three:

Thd ῥύομαι (Ps 18.44);

Sym ῥύομαι (Ps 18.44, 56.8);

Aq διασώζω (Ps 31.2, 32.7, 43.1, 56.8);

Sym διασώζω (Ps 31.2);

Thd σώζω (Ps 56.8);

Quinta διασεσωμένος (Ps 56.8).

c. Pesh:

mpsyn’ (2Sm 22.2, Ps 18.3, 40.18, 56.8, 70.6, 144.2 [probably]);

plṯ peal (Jb 21.10);

plṯ pael (2Sm 22.44, Mc 6.14, Ps 31.2);

plṯ ethpaal (Jb 23.7);

psy pael (Ps 17.13, 18.44, 49, 22.5, 9, 37.40 [2x], 43.1, 71.2 [= תצילני ותפלטי], 4, 82.4, 91.14);
pwrqn (Ps 32.7).

d. Tg:
ב[י]ז[י]ש (2Sm 22.2, 44, Mc 6.14, Ps 18.3, 44, 49, 22.5, 9, 31.2, 37.40 [2x], 40.18, 43.1, 71.2, 4, 82.4, 91.14, 144.2, Jb 21.10);
אישתזיב (Jb 23.7);
פצא (Ps 17.13);
שזבותא (Ps 32.7, 70.6);
רוקן (Ps 56.8).

e. Vg:
salvator (2Sm 22.2, Ps iuxta Hebraeos 18[17].3, 70[69].6, 144[143].2);
salvo (2Sm 22.44, Mc 6.14, Ps iuxta Hebraeos 17[16].13, 18[17].44, 22[21].5, 9, 31[30].2, 32[31].7, 37.40 [1x], 43[42].1, 71[70].4, 82[81].4);
salutare (Ps iuxta Hebraeos 40[39].18);
salvus (Ps iuxta Hebraeos 56[55].8);
pario (Jb 21.10);
pervenio (Jb 23.7);
libero (Ps iuxta Hebraeos 71[70].2, 91[90].14);
qui servas me (Ps iuxta Hebraeos 18.49[17.48 *ad finem*]);
zero (Ps iuxta Hebraeos 37[36].40 [1x]).

A.1 Hasel (1989:595 = 2001:557) holds that the frequent use of σόζω and its derivatives in the LXX represents a shift from the Hebrew word-field of “Entkommen” and “Entrinnen”, to one of “Retten”, “so daß die Entronnenen des MT in der LXX zu Geretteten werden.” With similar phraseology (but no reference to Hasel) Hubbard (1997b:624-25) maintains that the translation by the LXX results in “the displacement of the word field of vbs. to escape and to run away by that of vbs. to save. Those who in MT escaped, in LXX become those who are saved.” See, however, Conclusion.

A.2 The use of both ρύσμαι and ἐξαπέσω in LXX Ps 31(30).2 is due to assimilation to Ps 71.2 within the Greek or Hebrew textual traditions.

B.1 [nil]

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 It is widely recognised that the roots פלט and מלט are intimately connected (Jenni 1968:106-07, 122, Klein 1987:509, Hubbard 1997b:621, see also Root and Comparative Material A.10 of פלט Qal). Their relationship has been explained as one of “complementarity” (Sawyer 1972:98), with the root פלט providing the nominal forms for the root מלט (Hubbard 1997b:621). Ruprecht (1979:423) argues that the two verbs are not distinguished in meaning. Differences of distribution have been noticed between the roots (see references below), but these are generally by-products of the fundamental difference between the roots; the meanings of the roots, though deeply related, are generally to be distinguished (Williams 2002). This is illustrated if the process of escape from danger

and arrival at safety is divided into the following five sections, or points: *a.* initiation of departure from danger, *b.* motion away from danger, *c.* motion towards safety, *d.* point of arrival at safety, *e.* state of safety. מלט root lexemes focus on *a.* and *b.*, though they may include *c.* and *d.*, whereas פלט root lexemes must include *c.*, *d.* or *e.*, though they may also include other points. Alternatively, it may be that מלט words view the whole event from the horizon of departure, and פלט words from the horizon of arrival.

That מלט niph is a verb focusing on departure from danger is shown as נִמְלֵט precedes וַיִּבְרָח in 1Sm 22.20, i.e. the occurrence it denotes precedes the motion towards safety. On the other hand, לְנֶצַח (Jb 23.7), or עַד עוֹלָם (1QH 9.29) meaning “for ever” is used as a complement of the event described by the root פלט because the lasting nature of the condition reached is stressed. This distinction between the roots produces a number of side-effects. Since מלט focuses on the horizon of departure there is a greater tendency for the preposition מן to occur with מלט than there is with פלט. Thus Sawyer (1972:108) calculated that מלט has 69% separation (use with מן), while פלט only has 12%. There is also a greater number of occurrences of נָפֵשׁ with מלט, because it focuses on departure from Sheol/danger. On the other hand, there is a greater tendency to use פלט piel with God as subject than to use מלט piel with God as subject, because frequently the resulting safety of God’s salvation is stressed. God is מְפַלֵּט because he rescues to safety. However, of the root מלט Hubbard says, “The root refers primarily to human actions rather than to divine intervention” (1997a:950). Exceptions to this tendency can be explained as when Ps 41.2 uses מלט with God as subject, because its focus is on the evil day from which deliverance has been given, not on what the person has been delivered to.

For a similar reason nominal forms occur exclusively with the root פלט since nominal forms focus on people in a state, and thus better describe people in the later stages of the process of rescue to safety. Furthermore, the root פלט forms many proper names in Hebrew and in cognate languages because it stresses that rescue to safety is given by God or the gods. On the other hand, the only BH proper name from the root מלט is מְלֵטָה (Neh 3.7).

Although the process of giving birth normally focuses on the point of departure and therefore מלט is used, e.g. Is 34.15, 66.7, פלט is used in Jb 21.10 to describe how the cattle of the godless give birth to offspring that then live safely. 1QH 3.9-10 shows a progression from מלט to פלט. It uses מלט (3.9) when the woman is in pain as she is delivering, or about to deliver and then פלט once the child, identified as a גבר (3.10), has emerged to safety. The use of פלט piel for giving birth draws quite close to the meaning in Modern Hebrew פלט ‘emit’.

Although it might be thought that Ps 22.5-6 shows מלט and פלט to be synonymous, this is not the case. In fact, Ps 22.6b provides a litotic parallel לא־בוֹשִׁי (which merely denies a negative) for the equally understated נִמְלְטוּ “and they escaped” (6b), which has no focus on arrival at safety.

The distinction between the roots may also be used to explain variant readings. Thus 4QpPs^a fr3-10 4.20 quoting Ps 37.40 substitutes מלט for MT פלט the first time, but not the second. This produces a progression, which could be overtranslated as, “he rescues them, even rescues them to safety”. 1QIsa^a (Is 31.5) has פלט hiph where MT has מלט hiph, of which Hasel comments “was den Sinn nicht ändert” (1989:596 = 2001:558). However, it is possible that the reading of 1QIsa^a is a scribal correction, where a scribe preferred the more comprehensive פלט to the understated verb מלט.

A.2 For a comparison of פלט and מלט piel with ישע and נצל hiph see Jenni (1968:122-23, 258).

A.3 2Sm 22.49 has ומוציא where Ps 18.49 has מִפְּלֵטִי. This suggests semantic overlap between the terms.

B.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 In Jb 23.7 פלט piel, as pointed in MT, seems to be used intransitively to mean “be delivered from” (Hubbard 1997b:622). KB (762a) avoids this problem by emending מִשְׁפָּטִי to מִשְׁפָּטוֹ, which is then understood as the object of the verb, i.e. “sein Recht durchsetzen”.

A.2 In Jb 21.10 פֶּלֶט has the meaning “give birth to” (of a heifer). Alonso Schökel (584b) describes this meaning as “metafórico”. Jenni (1968:107) says that this habitual action focuses “auf das bloße Resultat”, i.e. the factitive making safe of an offspring. This is to be contrasted according to him with the use of מלט hiph for giving birth in Is 66.7, which also focuses on the continued existence of the child.

A.3 Jenni (1968:80-87) argues that the piel participle of verbs with an intransitive *Grundstamm* generally represents actions that are “habituell” rather than “okkasionell”. Thus מִפְּלֵטִי (6x) means “mein Retter”, i.e. someone who habitually saves me, rather than someone who has merely saved me on one or more occasions (Jenni 1968:84). Jenni (1968:106) notes that in all the passages in Psalms where he considers the text certain Yahweh is subject, and Jenni argues that this underscores “seine freie Gnade beim Retten”.

A.4 Zorell (650b) glosses the piel as “salvum evadere fecit, incolumem servavit”, or in the case of Jb 21.10 as “salvum, incolumem peperit”.

B.1 [nil]

7. Conclusion

A.1 The general meaning of פלט piel meaning “rescue” or “save” seems secure from etymology, syntagmatics, the versions and from exegesis. Contrast with מלט suggests that it concentrates on the more positive aspects of the process of rescue. Although the English terms “rescue” and “save”, and their derivatives, overlap in meaning, at least in the nominal forms “rescuer” and “saviour” the latter is more habitual, and the former occasional. Since it has been established by Jenni that the piel participle is habitual this falls more in the area of “saviour”. Given the potential of פלט piel to denote habitual events with lasting consequences, the distinction between פלט piel and Gk σῶζω should not be exaggerated, nor the semantic distinction between פלט piel and modern theological terms for “salvation”.

A.2 Of course it becomes clear from an examination of the nouns which follow מן in a construction with פלט Piel that the ‘salvation’ which the latter represents is generally of an external, this-worldly character (see Syntagmatics A.3; also מפלט Exegesis A.2 on Ps 55.9 and פליט Syntagmatics A.3 on Jr 44.28 and Ezk 6.8): only Jb 23.7 (‘from my judge’, i.e. God, if that is the meaning) uses פלט in what might be called a ‘redemptive’ context. In the other occurrences with מן it is where God (or gods) is the subject of פלט or

is denoted by the nominalised participle (see Syntagmatics A.1) that a theological dimension is present in the context: saving a person from human enemies or other dangers is something that (only) God can or will do. More generally (the examples involve the noun פליטה): ‘Es fällt auf, dass die Wurzel durchgängig in primär religiös-kultisch gefärbten Kontexten begegnet. Das gilt auch, wenn die Rettung vorwiegend aus kriegerischen Katastrophen heraus gedacht wird...’ (Hausmann 1987:200).

B.1 [nil]

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First printed 27 October 1998