WHAT WAS A MOŠIAꜥ?

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A New Approach to a Semantic Problem

Mošiaꜥ is a word peculiar to Hebrew [1]). The only other certain occurrences of the root *yšꜥ* are in Amorite [2]) and Moabite [3]); while its relation to South Arabian *yšꜥ* (whose meaning is unknown) [4]), and to Arabic *wasiꜥa* (to be spacious) is not clear [5]). In any case

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[1]) Possibly a participial form of the hiphil occurs on the Moabite Stone in the name *Mšꜥ*, which can be read either as *mošaꜥ* or as *mešaꜥ*. See G. A. Cooke, *A Text-book of North Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1903) p. 6; S. Morag, *Eretz-Israel* V (1959), pp. 138-134. Apart from that one occurrence there is no evidence for *mošiaꜥ* in another language, which is not a borrowing from Hebrew, as in Samaritan. See J. H. Petermann, *Linguae Samaritanae Grammatica* (Berlin, 1873) p. 50.

[2]) The element *išḫi-* is found in personal names at Mari in the first quarter of the second millenium BC: C.-F. Jean, *Studia Mariana* (1950) Vol. IV, p. 83. For the correspondence *ḫ* = ꜥ in Amorite, cf. *ḫa-az-ri* (Heb. ꜥ*ezer*) and *ḫa-ab-du* (Heb. ꜥ*ebed*); and see C.-F. Jean, *op. cit.* p. 64.

[3]) G. A. Cooke, *loc. cit.*

[4]) *yšꜥ* was a Sabaean god (cf. Safaitic *yšꜥ*: Εθαφ). The name appears in Thamudic personal names, *whbyšꜥ*, *ḥmyšꜥ* and ꜥ*myšꜥ*, and in Nabataean *yšꜥw* and *tymyšꜥw* (see K. Conti Rossini, *Chrestomathia*, s.v. *yšꜥ*; A. van der Branden, *Les Textes Thamoudéens de Philby*, Vol. I, pp. 18ff.; Georges Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen*, Vol. II, p. 105b). SA *hwšꜥ*, to help, cannot correspond to Hebrew *hošiaꜥ* (SA *š*: Heb. *s*), and is probably a transposition of *šwꜥ*, cf. Arabic *šiꜥa*, and Aramaic *siꜥā*. See Rossini, *op. cit.* p. 248.

[5]) This last etymology, giving the word the meaning of spaciousness, has long been popular. Cf. Brown, Driver and Briggs, *A Hebrew Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1907) s.v.; L. Koehler, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden, 1953) s.v.; S. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (Oxford, 1959) p. 69. Certainly the idea that our Saviour is the One who sets us free from our straits (cf. Hebrew *ṣarot*), and that salvation means spaciousness, is theologically illuminating and fairly common in the Old Testament: e.g. Ex. xxxiv 24 (where Saꜥadiya translates *hirḥib* with the word *wasiꜥa*), Ps. iv 2, Isa. lii 2f. But the words containing the root *yšꜥ* do not occur in these passages. It can be shown that *hošiaꜥ* is contrasted with *ṣarot* (straits) in some passages (e.g. Jud. ii 16, x 14; 1 Sam. x 19; Jer. xiv 8; Isa. xlvi 7, lxiii 8f.), and that *nošaꜥ* is parallel to *yaṣaʾ* (to come out) in several contexts (e.g. Num. x 9; Jer. xxx 7): but *hiṣṣil* is found with *ṣarot* too (e.g. 1 Sam. xxvi 24; Ps. xxxiv 18), and *ḥalaṣ* parallel to *yaṣaʾ lemerḥab* (e.g. Ps. xviii 20), while *hošiaꜥ* occurs parallel to *ḳabaṣ* (to gather together) in several places (e.g. Jer. xxxi 7; Zeph. iii 19). Finally the etymology itself is not without difficulties: we

whatever the etymology of the root, *mošiaᶜ* is a word in its own right and with its own connotations [1]). It is a word invariably implying a champion of justice in a situation of controversy, battle or oppression. In the legal language of Deuteronomy it can be applied to anyone who happens to be at hand [2]), while in the language of the prophets, especially Deutero-Isaiah, it is one of the titles of the God of Israel [3]). Etymology cannot explain these facts [4]), and it is the aim of this study to discover by another method [5]) the original meaning and *Sitz im Leben* of an important Biblical word.

The semantic method suggested here is as follows. All the contexts in which the word appears are divided into three classes according to their particular value for the study [6]): *form-contexts* where the forms in which the word appears can be compared with any particular forms in which its synonyms appear [7]); *situation-contexts* where there are some details of the situation in which the word is used; and *definition-contexts* where the activity of the *mošiaᶜ* is described in different words. Then at each stage an attempt is made, negatively, to distinguish it from its synonyms and, positively, to find some clue to its special meaning.

The first group of *form-contexts* is one in which those in danger cry

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find SA *yšᶜ* where we would expect *yšᶜ* or *wšᶜ*. This has already been noticed by BROWN, DRIVER and BRIGGS, *loc. cit.*; cf. BROCKELMANN, *GVGSS*, para. 46.

[1]) We are concerned with the noun and not the verb in the participial form. In the following five passages it is a verb: Jud. vi 36; 1 Sam. x 19, xiv 39; Jer. xxx 10 = xlvi 27; Zech. viii 7. In Jud. xii 3 read *'en mošiaᶜ*.

[2]) E.g. Deut. xxii 27.

[3]) Isa. xlix 26 = lx 16, xliii 3, 11, xlv 15, 21; Jer. xiv 8; Hos. xiii 4; Pss. vii 11, xvii 7, xviii 3, cvi 21.

[4]) Pierre GUIRAUD (*La Sémantique*, 1959) gives the example of the French word *tête*. If you knew only the root of the word, that is, Latin *testa*, a pot or vase, how could you understand the phrase *tête à tête?* On the shortcomings of pure etymologising, see further J. BARR, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford, 1961) *passim*.

[5]) The semantic method is not merely a statistical survey of the occurrences of a particular word in each context; for statistics can prove nothing conclusively so long as our evidence is limited to the Old Testament, which is a relatively small cross-section of the language of the people of Israel in various periods. In the meantime therefore, until other Palestinian tells yield contemporary ostraka, our aim is to find out in what contexts it is possible for the word to be used, in what contexts it never appears, and in what contexts no other word is used in just the same way. If conclusions from such considerations are supported by etymological and historical evidence too, then we may be approaching the truth of the matter.

[6]) There are 35 contexts in which *mošiaᶜ* appears: we are concerned with the 29 in which it appears as a noun. See note 1.

[7]) 'Form' is not used of course in the sense of *Gattung*.

out, "but there is no *mošiaᶜ* [1]). This recurs also without any reference to the cry for help [2]). The form does not assist us in distinguishing the word from its synonyms, as *maṣṣil* appears in the same negative form in no less than 15 out of its 18 occurrences in the Old Testament[3]), and *ᶜozer* in more than half [4]). Notice, however, that it is in this form that the word appears in the legislative passage, Deut. xxii 27, which becomes formative in later Hebrew [5]).

The second group is the positive form of the first. Here in answer to the cries of those in danger, "He sent them a *mošiaᶜ*" [6]). This form distinguishes *mošiaᶜ* quite sharply from all its synonyms [7]). In Old Testament usage these have not lost their participial or verbal characteristics sufficiently to be used as the objects of verbs of sending and appointing, while *mošiaᶜ* has [8]). In two instances it appears as the object of the verb *lᵉhakim* (Judges iii 9, 15). Now this verb is found only with the following individuals: king, judge, prophet, priest, shepherd, watchman, father, son, *saṭan* and *mošiaᶜ*. Thus *mošiaᶜ* is separated from its more general synonyms and brought into a class of people who have a definite office or position in ancient Israel. The comparison in this connexion of Judges iii 9, 15 with ii 16, 18

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[1]) Deut. xxii 27; Jud. xii 3; Ps. xviii 42 = 2 Sam. xxii 42.

[2]) Deut. xxviii 29, 31; Isa. xlvii 15.

[3]) Deut. xxxii 39; Jud. xviii 28; 2 Sam. xiv 6; Isa. v 29, xlii 22, xliii 13; Hos. v 14; Mic. v 7; Ps. vii 3, l 22; lxxi 11; Job v 4, x 7; Dan. viii 4, 7.

[4]) 2 Kings xiv 26; Isa. lxiii 5; Ps. xxii 12, lxxii 12; Job xxix 12, xxx 13; Lam. i 7; Dan. ii 45.

[5]) The only meaning given for the word in JASTROW (p. 751) is this forensic one. But although the Deuteronomic context is thus seen to be formative in the legal language of the Talmud, the word continued to have its more prophetic meaning in the language of prayer. Cf. HERTZ, *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, Revised Edition, with commentary (London, 1959) p. 133.

[6]) Isa. xix 20; cf. 2 Kings xiii 5; Neh. ix 27 ('gave them') and Jud. iii 9, 15 ('appointed for them').

[7]) These fall into two groups: those with the sense of rescuing *from* some danger (*hiṣṣil, halaṣ, hipliṭ, himliṭ, hoṣiᵓ, gaᵓal, padah, paraḳ* and Aramaic *šezib*. Cf. LANGENBERG, *Biblische Begriffskonkordanz*, pp. 237ff.), and those with the sense of helping *in* some danger (*ᶜazar, ganan*).

[8]) *Lᵉhakim* means basically to raise up, of stones (e.g. Jos. iv 9), of altars (e.g. 2 Sam. xxiv 18), etc. Then it can mean to establish, of covenants (e.g. Gen. vi 18). But with personal objects the meaning is to raise up, to bring on to the scene (BROWN, DRIVER and BRIGGS, *op. cit.*, s.v. *ḳum*) or to commission, appoint (L. KOEHLER, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Ḳum*). It is interesting also to note that *ḳum* appears to be the technical term for coming forward to speak in court. Cf. Roland DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel, Its Life and Institutions* (London, 1961) p. 156, and its usage with *Saṭan* (1 Kings xi 14, 23).

further emphasises this: here *šopeṭ* and *mošiaᶜ* refer to the same individual [1]).

It is of course possible that by that time *mošiaᶜ* was a general term applicable to any hero whose position affected the fortunes of Israel. But at the same time it is probable, in view of its treatment in these contexts and its association with men in authority, that it belonged originally to some special sphere of life—the palace, the battlefield, the temple, the lawcourt, the market-place, the family—and was later applied to other wider contexts [2]). But let us leave the discussion of the sphere to which *mošiaᶜ* originally belonged until we have completed our survey of the contexts at our disposal.

The *situation-contexts* in the historical writings all have one thing in common: it is in a situation of injustice, and in particular unjust oppression of the chosen people, that a *mošiaᶜ* is needed. This applies to situations of battle [3]), and to situations of general lawlessness [4]).

The subject, when one is mentioned, is always God or His appointed hero. But of the many occurrences without a subject, such as those quoted under *form-contexts*, all cannot refer to divine intervention. Deut. xxii 27 is a clear piece of legislation and the language must be legal language [5]). It is hardly likely that the victorious God-appointed hero of the other contexts was intended here also: for there is no hint of that either in the verse itself, where the *mošiaᶜ* is merely the representative of justice in a case of unjust oppression of the weak (a maiden in distress), or in the Talmudic occurrences where the word

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[1]) *Šapaṭ* and *hošiaᶜ* are used interchangeably in the Book of Judges by ER² (C. F. BURNEY, *The Book of Judges* (1920) pp. xxxiii, 59). The noun *šopeṭ*, like the Punic *suffeten* (See G. A. COOKE, *op. cit.*, pp. 115 ff), has a meaning there which is not found in the legal portions of the Bible, notably the Book of Deuteronomy (Y. KAUFMANN, *Sefer Šofṭim* (1962) p. 31). KAUFMANN does not suggest, however, that the case of *mošiaᶜ* is very similar. Cf. Deut. xxii 27 and 1 Sam. xxv 26, 31, 33, where a forensic origin for the root *yšᶜ* is suggested (See M. Z. SEGAL, *Sifre Shmuel*, *ad loc.*).

[2]) This is true as we have seen in the case of *šopeṭ* (see page 478 note 1), and may also be true of *mošiaᶜ*.

[3]) Jud. iii 9, 15; xii 3: 1 Sam. xi 3; 2 Kings xiii 5; Neh. ix 27.

[4]) Deut. xxii 27, xxviii 29, 31.

[5]) The suggestion that the word began in an ordinary, everyday context, is a much easier explanation of its appearances in such contexts than any other, such as that of Emil G. HIRSCH, in his article in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* on 'Salvation'. Discussing the word *Hosanna* in 2 Kings vi 26, he sees in the address of the woman to the king 'all the greater irony if it repeated the usual greeting of respect to the king'. On the other hand MONTGOMERY and GEHMAN (*ICC* p. 386) speak of the word as 'the usual legal formula, as in the appeal of another woman (2 Sam. xiv 4)'.

has become almost a technical term [1]). It appears then that in the Old Testament there is both a 'prophetic' usage [2]), culminating in Deutero-Isaiah, and a 'forensic' usage, evident at least in the Book of Deuteronomy. This being so, it is difficult to see how the prophetic contexts could have been earlier than the forensic [3]), and we would therefore expect in the third group of contexts to find some of the earlier forensic connotations still clinging to the word in its prophetic usage.

But before we go on to the definition-contexts, it would be well to show how at this stage *mošiaʿ* is distinguished from its synonyms [4]). *Maṣṣil* does not invariably represent justice: indeed in three cases [5]) it is a *maṣṣil* from God that is cried for, a usage quite alien to *mošiaʿ*. Secondly the idea of violent action is almost invariably stressed, so that descriptions of the situation include the most violent vocabulary [6]), and in particular the notion of spoil and plunder recurs frequently. This second observation agrees well with the meaning of the other forms of the root [7]).

A similar semantic development distinguishes *ḥalaṣ* from *mošiaʿ*. Its original meaning of 'take off, tear out' occurs in several passages [8]); and again there is no suggestion of justice in the action.

ʿozer and the hiphil forms of the words for 'escape' (*plṭ, mlṭ, yṣʾ*) appear in contexts very like *mošiaʿ*, but without any association with God or justice: the *ʿozrim* of Rahab [9]) and of Egypt [10]) are the very opposite.

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[1]) See page 477 note 5.

[2]) 'Prophetic' here means that usage which culminates in the adoration of God the *Mošiaʿ* in Deutero-Isaiah (cf. page 476 note 3), but refers also to the earlier passages such as Jud. iii 15, which have been called 'prophetic history' or *Heilsgeschichte*.

[3]) The opposite development is common: e.g. *goʾel, šopeṭ*, Redeemer, Satan, angel.

[4]) The aim is to find contexts where there is a significant relationship between the word and its context. This will be found where the synonyms seldom or never appear, but *mošiaʿ* regularly.

[5]) Deut. xxxii 39; Isa. xliii 13; Job x 7.

[6]) *Ṭarap*, to tear away (Isa v 29; Hos. v 14; Mic. v 7; Ps. l 22); *paraḳ*, to tear away (Ps. vii 3); *maḥaṣ*, to break in pieces (Deut. xxxii 39); *tapas*, to seize (Ps. lxxi 11); *nagaḥ*, to gore (Dan. viii 4); *ramas*, to trample (id. viii 7); *dakaʾ*, to bruise (Job v 4).

[7]) The piel form means to strip off, tear away (e.g. Ex. iii 22), and the hophal to be plucked out (from burning, e.g. Amos iv 11).

[8]) Qal in Deut. xxv 9; Isa. xx 2. Piel in Ps. vii 5 (despoil) and Lev. xiv 40 (tear out).

[9]) Job ix 11.   [10]) Ezek. xxx 8.

Gʾl and *pdh* are similar to *mošiaʿ* in that they too have both a 'forensic' application [1] and a 'prophetic' [2]). Moreover like *mošiaʿ*, *gʾl* is a word peculiar to Hebrew and a word associated with the God of Israel [3]).

Finally *gnn* is found only in the context of the defence of a city (in one case of a people in a city) [4]). The Aramaic words from the root *prk* with the meaning 'save' never occur in the Hebrew of the Old Testament.

Thus we have seen that the *mošiaʿ* appears most often, not in contexts of violence or physical danger, but in situations of injustice; that he is always on the side of justice, and in this differs from all the synonyms; that when the subject is mentioned it is always God or His appointed hero; and finally that one occurrence in the language of the lawcourt suggests an original forensic meaning. It will be noticed, however, that this group of contexts does not help to pinpoint the meaning: that is the purpose of the third group of contexts to which we will now turn.

The first of the *definition-contexts* defines in two clauses the effect the coming of a *mošiaʿ* had on the existing situation:

"And the Lord gave (them) a *mošiaʿ*:

And they escaped from the hand of the Syrians.

And the people of Israel dwelt in their homes as formerly". (2 Kings xiii 5). The result of the coming of a *mošiaʿ* on to the scene was escape from injustice, and a return to a state of justice where each man possesses his rightful property [5]). While the first of these results is common to the synonyms, the second is a peculiar characteristic of passages about the intervention of a *mošiaʿ*.

There are three passages in Deutero-Isaiah where a forensic meaning is suggested.

"For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your *mošiaʿ*:

I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you". (xliii 3)

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[1]) *Gaʾal*: e.g. Num. v 8; Ruth iv 6 (see further L. KOEHLER, *op. cit.*, s.v. paras. 1-3). *Padah*: e.g. Ex. xiii 13 (*id.* s.v. para. 1).
[2]) *Gaʾal*: e.g. Isa. xli 14, xliii 14 (*id.* s.v. para. 5). *Padah*: e.g. 2 Sam. iv 9 (with *ṣarot!*) (*id.* s.v. para. 2).
[3]) Cf. Isa. xlix 26 = lx 16 where the two occur together.
[4]) 2 Kings xix 34 = Isa. xxxvii 35; Zech. ix 15.
[5]) Cf. Obadiah 17-21.

By a legal process God arranges an exchange whereby Israel is saved [1]. If we are to say that *mošiaʿ* has any meaning at all which distinguishes if from the other titles of God, then it is probable that the prophet chose this particular one for this context, precisely because of its forensic connotations.

"I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no *mošiaʿ*:

I declared and *hošaʿti* and proclaimed......

......and you are my witnesses". (xliii 11)

Again the *mošiaʿ* is the One who appears on behalf of Israel in court [2]. The forensic metaphor is clear. Notice also the unambiguous association of the verb *hošiaʿ* with verbs of speaking and proclaiming [3].

"Assemble yourselves and come....

Declare and present you case: and let them take counsel together.

And there is no other God besides me,

A righteous God and a *mošiaʿ*:

There is none besides me". (xlv 20ff)

Another lawcourt metaphor: the *mošiaʿ* is closely connected with *ʾel ṣaddiḳ*, one of the titles of God which is particularly appropriate in a forensic context. Such a title does not of course take the action automatically into the lawcourt; but in a forensic context, the root *ṣdḳ* probably has forensic connotations [4].

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[1] Num. xxxv 31.

[2] Cf. vv. 9, 10.

[3] The connection between defending and proclaiming may come from the lawcourt. Cf. Ethiopic *awsĕʾa*, to anwer, to defend (in a court of law). See page 485 notes 1, 2. The frequent occurrence of the verb *hošiaʿ* in an absolute form perhaps suggests an original intransitive root (meaning to answer or speak), which would also explain the use of the preposition *lᵉ* after it in many cases (L. KOEHLER, *op. cit.* s.v. *yšʿ* paragraph 3), its appearance alongside *ʿanah* (to answer) especially in the Psalms (xx 10, lv 17, lx 7, cxviii 21, cxix 146), and the contexts where it occurs after a verb for crying out or calling for help (see pages 477 notes 1, 6). For parallels cf. Aramaic *bᵉʿel debābē*, opponent in court (Akkadian *dabābu* to speak), and the Arabic phrase 'answer on my behalf (the Prophet) concerning what he said' = 'defend me against the accusations to which the Prophet referred' (C. C. TORRAY, *Selections from the Ṣaḥiḥ of al-Buḥari*, (Leiden, 1906) p. 39, line 9). For this last reference and for many other suggestions and valuable criticisms, I am extremely grateful to Professor Chaim RABIN.

[4] *Ṣedeḳ* appears in Deut. xvi 18-20 as an essential characteristic of anyone concerned with legal procedure. (Cf. L. KOEHLER, *op. cit.*, s.v. paras. 2, 3).

Another word associated with *mošia‘* and belonging to the language of the lawcourt is *rib* [1]).

"When they cry to the Lord because of oppressors,
He will send them a *mošia‘*,
and he will contend (*rav*) and deliver them". (xix 20)

In the action hoped for when the *mošia‘* comes, the idea of delivering is secondary. The main idea is intervening and contending on behalf of the right [2]).

One more passage from the prophets:

"*Mošiʻim* shall go up to Mount Zion to judge Mount Esau:
And the kingdom shall be the Lord's". (Obad. 21)

Final victory means the coming of *mošiʻim* to rule like Judges over Israel [3]). The people will once again possess their own property (v. 17) and justice will be the foundation of the Kingdom of the Lord (v. 15).

Finally there are two relevant passages in the Psalms.

"My shield is with God, *mošia‘* of the upright in heart:
God is a righteous judge, and a god who has indignation every day". (Ps. vii 11)

The picture is again of God as the defender ('shield') in a court of law [4]), described in v. 7:

"Let the assembly of the people be gathered about Thee:
And over it take Thy seat on high".

Once again the *mošia‘* is associated with *ṣaddik* and the judge, while as in other instances it is the 'upright in heart' that He is defending.

"Wondrously show Thy steadfast love,

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[1]) *Rib* is parallel to *hošia‘* in Jud. vi 31 (where the Revised Standard Version has for *hošia‘* 'will you defend his cause?'); 1 Sam. xxv 33//39; Isa. xlix 25. Cf. also Pss. vii 11 and xvii 7 which are discussed below.

[2]) Another example of this is Exodus ii. Here the actual intervention of Moses on behalf of the maidens in distress is described by the verb *hošia‘* (v. 17); but when the event is complete it is described by the word *hiṣṣil* (v. 19). Notice incidentally that in the same chapter Moses is exactly the *mošia‘* referred to in Deut. xxii 27, and the representative of justice in two other instances (vv. 11f. and 13ff.), whether or not *Mošeh* and *Mošia‘* are etymologically connected (cf. Coptic *moše*, counsel for the defence).

[3]) Vv. 15, 17 suggest that the idea of judge in the Deuteronomic forensic sense is still present here. See page 478, note 1.

[4]) Where judge and just appear together, a forensic meaning is certain.

Mošiaᶜ of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at Thy right hand". (Ps. xvii 7).

This is another *riv*-context, where the *mošiaᶜ* defends a man with a just cause (v. 1) against adversaries at God's right hand. This last detail may be a touch of local colour: both the adversary and the defender stood at the right hand of the accused [1]).

Our study of the *form-contexts*, then, showed us that *mošiaᶜ* was more than the present participle of a verb, and was even treated in some instances as an office or trade. In the *situation-contexts* we saw that where a specific situation is mentioned, it is a forensic one, either literally or metaphorically; and when any subject was mentioned, it was God or His appointed hero, the champion of justice. This last characteristic distinguished *mošiaᶜ* from all its synonyms. The few *definition-contexts* which we studied described the *mošiaᶜ* as the defender of the unjustly accused in a lawcourt, literally or figuratively, and brought the word rather into association with ideas of justice and legal procedure, than with battle or violence.

Now very little is known of legal procedure in ancient Israel [2]). In the legislative codes there is almost nothing about court procedure, and what little there is in other parts of the Bible is concerned with the protagonists in the scene only. We would not then expect to find within the Old Testament any conclusive evidence for the existence of an official in the law-court called *mošiaᶜ*. But it is known that in the ancient world there were many such officials [3]), and in his short survey of the procedure in the court of ancient Israel, Père DE VAUX drawing mainly on incidental evidence in the Prophets and the Psalms, remarks that "the defender.....was rather a witness for the defence than an advocate, for which there is no word in Hebrew." [4])

While it would be too much to say that the *mošiaᶜ* was equivalent to Père DE VAUX's 'advocate', it certainly has much in common with it

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[1]) It has been pointed out that in Ancient Israel the defender and the adversary stood on the right hand of the accused (Roland DE VAUX, *op. cit.*, p. 156). To be on the right hand of the accused is in direct parallelism with *bošiaᶜ* in Ps. cix 31.

[2]) See DE VAUX, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-157 and his bibliography, p. 531.

[3]) See A. WALTHER, *Das altbabylonische Gerichtswesen* (Leipzig, 1917), pp. 105-180; DRIVER and MILES, *The Babylonian Laws* (Oxford, 1952) Vol. I, pp. 490-494. On one office, the *mazkir*, see Brevard S. CHILDS, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (SCM Press, 1962) p. 15, where a summary of recent research and a short bibliography can be found. On procedure at Nuzi see LIEBESNY, *The Administration of Justice at Nuzi* (*JAOS* LXIII 1943, pp. 128-144). There, for example, there was an official representative of the plaintiff called *puḫu*.

[4]) *Op. cit.* p. 156.

in Old Testament usage and a forensic origin would be the best explanation of that.

The root appears in many personal names in Hebrew [1]), and also in Moabite [2]), Amorite [3]), and possibly South Arabian [4]). That forensic terms were closely associated with deities at an early period is clear from the large number of personal names in which the name of a god is compounded with a forensic term: e.g. Jeho-shaphat, Dani-el, Jerub-baal in Hebrew and many examples in Assyrian, Amorite, Ugaritic, Moabite, Phoenician [5]). A forensic meaning for the root *yšʿ*, therefore, would accord well with the evidence of personal names too.

It was stated above that *mošiaʿ* is a word in its own right and must be treated as such; but we have had occasion to cite several passages in which the verb *hošiaʿ* appears in a similar context [6]), and even in conjunction with *mošiaʿ* [7]). In the historical writings the verb appears alongside forensic vocabulary [8]), and in situations either literally [9]), or metaphorically [10]) forensic. Occasionally a forensic meaning gives some extra point to the passage and perhaps suggests why the writer chose this word and not another. Moreover the nouns appear to mean (particularly in the historical books) more than victory, mighty act, salvation, because, time and time again they are brought forward as pieces of evidence in the course of an argument or controversy [11]).

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[1]) Isaiah, Hosea, Elisha (?), Hoshaiah, Ishi.

[2]) Mesha. G. A. COOKE, *loc. cit.* page 475, note 1.

[3]) *Išḫia, Išḫi-ᵈaddu.* C.-F. JEAN, *op. cit.*

[4]) See page 475 note 2. The fact that it appears in similar names suggests that it is related to the root *yšʿ* page 485 note 1).

[5]) Cf. also Hebrew Yigael, Padaiah; Assyrian Ashurdan, Beldan, Nergal-shaphat etc.; Amorite Na-aq-am-ᵈid-du; Ugaritic nqmd (if it is equivalent to Na-aq-am-id-du); and Phoenician Baʿalpadah.

[6]) Jud. ii 16, 18.

[7]) Jud. iii 9; Isa. xliii 11; Neh. ix 27.

[8]) *Špṭ*: Jud. ii 16, 18; iii 31; 1 Sam. x 27; 2 Sam. viii 14. *Rib*: see page 482, note 1.

[9]) Ex. ii 17; 2 Sam. xiv 4; 2 Kings vi 26, 27 (see page 478 note 1); and on the forensic origin of *hošiaʿ* in 1 Sam. xxv 26, 31, 33 see M. Z. SEGAL, *Sifre Shmuel, ad loc.*

[10]) The following are battle contexts in which there is a formal similarity to the forensic contexts listed on page 477, note 2 and page 478, note 5 Jos. x 6; Jud. ii 18; iii 9, 15; x 12, 14; 1 Sam. vii 8; 2 Kings xvi 7.

[11]) Ex. xiv 30; Deut. xx 4; Jud. vi 36 f.; vii 2; xv 18; 1 Sam. xxi 13; xvii 47; xix 5; 2 Sam. iii 18; x 11; xix 31; 2 Kings v 1; xiii 17; xix 19. For example, there is some argument culminating in a mighty act described by the word *hošiaʿ* or its sisters, and 'Israel saw . . . . and feared the Lord . . . and they believed in the Lord and His servant Moses' (Exod. xiv 30), or a *tešuʿah* is a piece of evidence to save the life of the accused (e.g. Jonathan in 1 Sam. xix 5, 6).

By themselves these facts prove nothing, but they add to a growing body of evidence for a possible forensic origin of the word *mošiaʿ*.

The possibility is further increased if we relate it, not to Arabic *wasiʿa* (see page 475, note 5), but to Ethiopic *ʾawseʾa*, to answer, and *tawasʾa*, to defend one's cause [1]. The development from verbal defence to physical defence is not unparalleled [2], so that the Arabic *wasiʿa* may still be related, spacious not being necessarily the earliest or fundamental meaning (but see page 485, note 1).

We are suggesting, then, a development from a definite office within a definite sphere of life to a title of God related anthropomorphically to that same sphere of life, and from there to a title of God in any general context. This development is found in several words and in particular in several forensic terms: both *goʾel* and *ṣedek* are examples which show, particularly in how they have been translated (Redeemer, victory), an exactly parallel development. In English neither Saviour nor Redeemer carries forensic connotations in its usage in prayers and hymns today: but in Old Testament Hebrew *goʾel* had certainly not lost its forensic meaning, and I would suggest neither had *mošiaʿ*. We have seen many hints of a forensic meaning already, and in the remaining passages not discussed above, the meaning of 'advocate' or 'witness for the defence' fits well and adds something to the passage [3]. One third of its occurrences in the Old Testament are in Deutero-Isaiah; three of these we have seen have clear references to the lawcourt [4], in two of them *goʾel* and *mošiaʿ* are coupled as titles of God, who avenges His chosen people, con-

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[1] In Rom. ii 1 this word is used to translate the Greek *anapologetos*, without defence (forensic language: cf *apologia*). See DILLMANN, *Lexicon Linguae Ethiopicae*, p. 895 f. Now the existence of personal names containing the root *yšʿ* in Amorite, Moabite and Hebrew, alongside exactly similar formations in South Arabian with the root *ytʿ* strongly suggests that these two roots are related etymologically. But this can only be the case if both go back to Proto-Semitic* *ytʿ* (since P-S* *t* becomes *š* in Hebrew, Moabite and Amorite, and *t* in South Arabian; see BROCKELMANN, GVGSS, para. 46), which cannot correspond to Arabic *wasiʿa* (since Arabic *s* goes back to P-S *s* or *š*, but not *t*). It can correspond to Ethiopic *awseʾa* (P-S* *t* becomes *s* in Ethiopic; for *ʾ*:ʿ see DILLMANN, *Ethiopic Grammar* (London, 1907) pp. 47, 127 and BROCKELMANN, *op. cit.*, para. 45k; for P-S *y*: Ethiopic *w* see DILLMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 127 f).

[2] See page 481, note 3.

[3] Isa. xlvii 15 is perhaps reminiscent of the picture of lawlessness in Judges xxi 25, where every man did what was right in his own eyes. In Isa. lxiii 8 the presence of a *mošiaʿ* is parallel to 'they will not deal falsely'.

[4] Isa. xliii 3, 11; xlv 2.

tending with those who contend with them [1]), and in another the *—king Noah?* absence of a *mošia'* is parallel to a state of lawlessness [2]).

We must beware of reading too much into one word. But, negatively, (1) there are no cases in the Old Testament where a forensic meaning is impossible, and (2) there is no other word used so consistently in similar contexts; and positively, (1) three quarters of its occurrences suggest to a greater or lesser degree the language of the lawcourt, (2) the most probably etymology (see page 485, note 1) suggests a forensic origin for the root *yš'*, (3) there are other examples of forensic words appearing in wider and more general contexts, but still retaining forensic overtones, (4) the *mošia'* was always on the side of justice, (5) his activity seems to have been verbal rather than physical in many contexts, unlike its synonyms, and (6) there was a place in ancient Israel for an 'advocate' or a 'witness for the defence', as also for a 'witness for the prosecution'. If the *satan* was the one, was the *mošia'*, at some time and in some part of the ancient Middle East [3]), the other?

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[1]) xlix 26 = lx 16.

[2]) xlix 25b, where *hošia'* and *rib* occur together again.

[3]) The fact that the root *yš'* occurs first in Amorite, then in Moabite and Hebrew personal names could suggest that it came south in one of the Amorite waves. See Y. AHARONI, *Ereș-Israel biṭekufat hammikra* (Jerusalem, 1963) p. 113f. and Map 11; cf. Gen. xii. The fact that in the only languages in which the root appears apart from personal names (Hebrew, Moabite, Ethiopic) it means approximately or exactly to defend, together with semantic considerations, seems to me conclusive evidence for a forensic origin of the word. Traces of this are still found in some passages where the word still has forensic meaning (Deut. xxii 27; Jud. vi 31; Sam. xxv 26, 31, 33; 2 Sam. xiv 4; 2 Kings vi 76), while forensic overtones are still present in prayers addressed to God the *Mošia'*, the Advocate, the Defender of the oppressed who cry for help, He who stands at their right hand in time of need.