double cooking-stove

1. Statistics
Torah: 1. Neviim: 0. Ketubim: 0. Total: 0.
Only attested in Lev. 11:35.

2a. Literal Use
In spite of the masculine form of the dual כְּפֵרִים, the singular might well be the feminine כְּפֵרִית which is the normal form in postbiblical Hebrew (cf. GBHrev, §90e on the plural).

Lev. 11:31b-38 discusses the outcome of all sorts of contact (כְּפֵרִים, vv. 31, 36) with the carcass (כְּפַרָן) of dead reptiles: anything upon which such a creature falls (כְּפַרָן) will be unclean, any vessel of wood (כְּפַרְץ), garment, skin or sack must be put into water (v. 32). Every earthen vessel (כְּפַרְץ), cf. Kelso, CVOT, 6-7, No. 5; 18, No. 40) into which it falls shall be broken (כְּפַרְץ Qal), its contents will be unclean (v. 33). After provisions about unclean water and drink in v. 34, v. 35 resumes the theme of vv. 32-33. The general rule of v. 32a is repeated in v. 35a: everything upon which any part of their carcass (כְּפַרְץ) falls shall be unclean. Now it continues with earthenware which is not used as containers of food, but earthenware used to prepare food: oven (כְּפַרְץ) and כְּפֵרִים. These objects too must be shattered (כְּפַרְץ Qal) because they have become unclean and should be treated as such (כְּפַרְץ). Apparently the כְּפֵרִים was made of clay, like the oven. It could rather easily be destroyed and, again, remade – just like the כְּפַרְץ of v. 33, but in contrast with the כְּפַרְץ of v. 32, which had to be cleaned in water.

In collocation with the well-known term כְּפַרְץ ‘oven’, כְּפֵרִים may represent some kind of apparatus for baking or cooking. In view of its dual ending it probably had two openings. Nothing is said about its seize.

2b. Figurative Use
Not attested.

3. Epigraphic Hebrew
Not attested.
4. Cognates

SEMITIC?: Gesenius & Roediger, TPC, 672a; BDB, 468b and HAWAT, 176b derive like כֶּרֶס כֶּרֶס, from a supposed Semitic root *kwr ‘to dig’ (cf. Ps. 22:17), and/or ‘to be/make round’ (cf. Orel & Stolbova, HSED, 323, No. 1481). In view of the weak middle radical w/y a direct derivation from כֶּרֶס ‘to dig’ and/or *kwr Pilp. ‘to go round, dance’ is less likely.

However, GB, KBL, HALAT and HAHAT regard כֶּרֶס as a loan from Akkadian kīru (see below). This seems a better line of derivation.

AKKADIAN: It is difficult to believe that Sumerian ġr4/kir, Akkadian kīru ‘kiln (for lime and bitumen)’ and Akkadian kūru ‘smelting furnace’ are totally unrelated. Mankowski, ALBH 67-8 deems it possible that the Sumerian word was borrowed from Semitic kūru and that later on Akkadian borrowed it back in the form of kīru. Ellenbogen, FWOT, 83, and Tawil, ALCBH, 160, take the words together. In my opinion it is likely that both words are originally Semitic and derive from a √kwr, cf. Syriac kwr Etpa. ‘to be hot, burn’ and kūrā, ‘fire, furnace’ (Costaz, DSF, 153; Sokoloff, SLB, 612). However, it would seem wise to keep the two nouns apart as denoting different types of heating devices.

UGARITIC: kr ‘to be hot, furious, enraged’ (cf. Del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín, DULAT, 454).

POSTBIBLICAL HEBREW: Jastrow, DTT, 636b: כֶּרֶס, ‘a portable stove on feet, with caves for two pots’; see further Section 6.

JEWISH ARAMAIC: Sokoloff, DJBA, 578: כֶּרֶס (plural) ‘oven’

SYRIAC: See above.

OLD ARABIC: kwr ‘fire altar’ (Biella, DOSA, 244).

CLASSICAL ARABIC: kūr and kīr ‘a blacksmith’s fire-place’ (Lane, AEL, 2637)

MODERN PALESTINIAN ARABIC: kūr ‘réchaud en terre cuite’ (stove of baked clay); kūra ‘soufflet de forge’ (blacksmith’s bellows) (DPASyr, 463).

ETHIOPIAN: kawr ‘furnace’ = Amh. agodo ‘pit in which the blacksmith melts iron’ (Leslau, CDG, 300).
5. Ancient Versions

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6. Judaic Sources

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In the Qumran Temple Scroll, 11Q19, XXXVII.13 occurs in the following context: 'In the four corners of the courtyard <of the priests> you shall make for them a place for the where they shall cook their sacrifices and the sin-offerings'. As this regulation was intended for the four corners, it seems most plausible to interpret the here as a plural; but the dual, in agreement with Lev. 11:35, is also possible: 'make a place for a.'
In rabbinic sources the קירן are mentioned often, e.g., m. Shab., II.1; V.2; m. Kel. 6:2. Usually the word is translated as ‘double stove’ because of its two openings. It was often placed against a wall or in a corner. It was fuelled with stubble or straw. Cf. Krauss, *TA*, Bd. 1, 90-1; Dalman, *AuS*, Bd. 4, 15, n. 2; 45, nn. 2-3; 264, n. 2; Bd. 7, 206, n. 3; Brand, *KHBH*, 230-243.

7. Illustrations
Cf. Dalman, *AuS*, Bd. 4, Abb. 5, 11, and Bd. 7, Abb. 34, 98-100; Honeyman 1939, Plate XX, Fig. 13; Brand, *KHBH*, 134, 138.

Dalman, *AuS*, Bd. 4, 45 writes,

Später ist ein beweglicher Kochherd als kirā bezeugt, <...> welcher der maukade der Araber (S. 40) entsprechend aus einer nach vorne offenen Einfassung auf länglichem Boden bestanden haben wird und unter Umständen als kirājm <...> diese Einfassung zweimal nebeneinander hatte, so daß zwei Töpfe aufgesetzt werden konnten.

8. Archaeological Remarks
Small stoves having two openings to receive two cooking pots have been found at various sites (Levine 1989, 205b, n. 20; Milgrom 1991, 679). Avitzur, 116, Fig. 307 provides a photograph of a small cooking-stove with two openings from Masada (Jacques van Ruiten called my attention to this reference, M.D.K.). Another photograph of what is possibly such a double stove is provided by Boling 1975, Fig. 8a.

Stove for two pots found at Masada (after Avitzur, 116, fig. 307).
The circumstance that the two openings are part of one and the same structure explains the proximity of the apparatus to walls for extra stability.

Kelso takes קֹרֶן, קִרְיָה and קֵרֶב together as ‘the stove family’: ‘All three may be used in holding up a cooking-pot so as to concentrate its heat’ (Kelso, CVOT, 20 [No. 45]).

9. Conclusion

Already Gesenius (TPC) gives both possible translations for כִּרוֹן: focus, ‘hearth’, and fornax coquinaria, ‘cooking furnace, stove’ (cf. BDB and DCH). Since in Lev. 11:35 כִּרוֹן is placed next to וּבְנֵי function ‘oven’ (for baking), the interpretation ‘stove’ (for cooking) commends itself (cf. Baentsch, Jastrow, Kellermann, Cornelius and others; the German ‘Kochherd’ combines both meanings). Although כִּרוֹן is a hapax legomenon in the TeNaKh, whereas וּבְנֵי is much more frequent, its presence in several Judaic sources including Qumran might indicate that it was a fairly common heating device for the upper classes, among them the priests. After all, a stove with two burners allows for more sophisticated cooking. As it could be smashed into pieces, it must have been made of clay (Dalman).

The rabbinic tradition, including the Targum, and followed by the Peshitta, argues in favour of the rendering ‘double cooking-stove’. Archaeological finds seem to confirm the existence of such a cooking device which was placed against a wall or in a corner for greater stability. As a cooking-stove or furnace it is clearly distinguished from its cognate וּבְנֵי, which has its home in the forge (smelting oven, furnace for metal). There is no evidence for a tripod, as suggested by צ and פ.

10. Bibliography

See in addition to the literature cited above: Dalman, AuS, Bd. 4, 15, 45, 96, 264; Bd. 7, 206, distinguishes between כִּרוֹן and וּבְנֵי as ‘Backofen’ and ‘Kochherd’ respectively: ‘Unreinem Gewürm ist der tanmüür ausgesetzt, ebenso wie der Doppelkochherd (kīrajim) (3.M.11.35)’ (AuS, Bd. 4, 96) – Avitzur, 116, fig. 307 – Baentsch 1903: B. Baentsch, Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri (HKAT, 2), Göttingen 1903, 361: ‘Kochherd (Du, weil aus 2 Platten bestehend, nach dem Talm.: weil für 2 Töpfe bestimmt’), 360-1) – BDB, 468b:

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