1. lamp; 2. brand, mark (?)

1. Statistics

2a. Literal Use
Not attested.

2b. Figurative Use
Usually ְַדִּסְג is regarded as a by-form of → ְַדִּסְג. It is used four times (1 Kgs. 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs. 8:19 = 2 Chron. 21:7) in similar phrases to emphasise the stability, continuity and vitality of the Davidic dynasty. Apparently it is a metaphor for the Davidic descendant. The metaphor indicates that the dynastic light is kept burning, i.e. that there will be, without interruption, a Davidic king on the throne in Jerusalem. This interpretation is not entirely undisputed. With reference to the Akkadian nīru, ‘yoke’, in a figurative sense ‘dominion’ (Hanson 1968; Tawil, ZIBBC, 238-9), as well as the Egyptian nr, ‘power’ (Görg 1985), the meaning ‘dominion, sovereignty’ has been defended. So, using a different argument, a return is made to the targumic interpretation (see section 5) which was based on exegesis with help of the Aramaic ְַדִּסְג ‘yoke’. However, the use of Akkadian nīru ‘light, lamp’ as a royal epithet (CAD (N) 2, 349) argues in favour of the metaphorical use.

The text and sense of ְַדִּסְג in Prov. 21:4b are doubtful. ְַדִּסְג is equated by some with ְַדִּסְג (‘the lamp [= happiness, delight] of the wicked is sin’), by others with ְַדִּסְג (Torah: 0. Nebiim: 2. Ketubim: 1. Total: 3; Prov. 21:4b: ‘the tillage [or, ploughing] of the wicked is sin’; cf. the use of ְַדִּסְג [‘the tillable, untilled or fallow ground’] in Jer. 4:3; Hos. 10:12; Prov. 13:23). Another possibility that might be explored is to connect the word with Akkadian nīru III, a mark for the identification of animals; Arab. nāra ‘to make a mark upon a camel with a hot iron’, nār ‘brand, mark made with a hot iron’. For a similar proposal see Driver 1951, 185. This would result in the translation ‘Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the hallmark of the wicked, are sin.’ However, all three interpretations remain uncertain.
3. Epigraphic Hebrew
Not attested.

4. Cognates
→ רֵי or section 2b.
Ugaritic: HAHAT, 815, cites Ugaritic nyr ‘luminary’, as a cognate. This it is, but not morphologically. Because in Ugaritic the y is normally a consonant, this proposal is acceptable only if one emends מ (スター). But nothing is gained by this operation.

5. Ancient Versions
ς: 1 Kgs 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs. 8:19; Prov. 21:4 שֵי ‘lamp’; 2 Chron. 21:7 שֵי nheyr ‘shining lamp’, a double translation.
ν: 1 Kgs. 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs. 8:19; Prov. 21:4; 2 Chron. 21:7 lucerna ‘lamp’.

6. Judaic Sources
Not attested in this meaning.

7. Illustrations
No suggestions.

8. Archaeological Remarks
→ רֵי.
9. Conclusion

ñana, which is used only in figurative language, evidently denotes the burning lamp, especially its light. As such it is used a few times for the Davidic king or descendant. In Prov. 21:4 a rendering ‘brand’ in the sense of ‘hallmark’ might be considered.

10. Bibliography


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