mirror

1. Statistics

2a. Literal Use
'אֶֽרֶץ in Job 37:18 is again a *hapax legomenon* skipped by both Cohen, *BHL* and Greenspahn, *HLBH*. God invites Job to hammer out (נְבֹשׁ the high sky which is מַקְדָּשׁ כְּרָא מַקְדָּשׁ 'hard like a cast'ɐכ). Apparently he challenges Job to imitate his work as the Creator to form the מַקְדָּשׁ, 'firmament' (Gen. 1:6-8, etc.). The *tertium comparationis* is the hardness of the firmament (Clines 2006, 882-3). Since it seems likely that the word 'אֶֽרֶץ means 'mirror' (see below), it is apt to recall that mirrors were cast from extremely hard (cf. מַקְדָּשׁ) and pure metal, usually bronze, because pitting would make them useless. See further וּמַקְדָּשׁ and מַקְדָּשׁ.

2b. Figurative Use
Not attested.

3. Epigraphic Hebrew
Not attested.

4. Cognates
SEMITIC: The root occurs in several Semitic languages (Leslau, *CDG*, 458-9; Klein, *CEDHL*, 600; Beeston, *SD*, 113; Biella, *DOSA*, 474). See → מַקְדָשׁ where also derivatives meaning 'mirror' have been listed.

5. Ancient Versions
Θ and other Greek versions: Θ (with obelos, from θ' and α') δόξα τούτων, 'appearance'.

צ: 11Q10 (11QtgJob XXIX.9) has כָּלַחְוָה עַטִּי מַקְדָּשׁ, 'like a pressed mirror'. The rabbinical צ: מַקְדָּשׁ עַטִּי, 'and their (i.e. the clouds') appearance like a glistening mirror' (as usual, different readings are attested, cf. Stec 1994, 262*). מַקְדָּשׁ is a loanword from Latin *specularia*, 'window panes', cf. *specularius*, 'mirror-maker' (*LD*, 1739).
6. Judaic Sources

On the authority of Smend 1906 HALAT, 1084, seems to accept the reading יָרָא in Sir. 12:11. Lévi 1951, 18 and Beentjes 1997, 39, read יָרָא הרִכָּל, ‘like someone who betrays a riddle’ in MS A. However, the Greek text differs considerably from the Hebrew one in MS A and probably presupposes יָרָא האָרָא, ‘like someone who polishes a mirror’. So Sir. 12:10-11 describes how the wickedness of an evil opponent is like rust that has to be removed (ךָּלֵל פָּי) time and again. The word used for ‘mirror’ is Εσοπτρον, as in Wisdom 7:26; Test. Job 33:8; 1 Cor. 13:12; Jac. 1:23.

7. Illustrations

8. Archaeological Remarks

9. Conclusion

On the basis of the context as well as the use in Ben Sira and the versions, the meaning ‘mirror’ can be accepted with confidence.

10. Bibliography


This article should be cited as:
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