

מָסַע II

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Introduction

Grammatical Type: n.

Occurrences: Total 1x OT (Jb 41.18), 0x Sir, 0x Qum, 0x inscr.

Text Doubtful:

A.1 The word is marked by BHS as uncertain, and by Alonso Schökel (415) as “dudoso”. Ehrlich (1908-14, Vol. 6:342) declares the text corrupt.

B.1 BHK suggests מָסַת as a possible original reading instead of מָסַע. This proposal is unnecessary and without support.

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 The etymology of מָסַע is disputed. KB (543) and the *Masorah Magna* connect it with מָסַע in 1Kg 6.7, which refers to transported stone, and is derived from נָסַע I. If this connection is maintained מָסַע describes the preceding word הָנִית. Zorell (453) and Alonso Schökel (415), regard it as a lexeme distinct from that in 1Kg 6.7. Despite listing it under the same entry as מָסַע of 1Kg 6.7, KB (543) declares מָסַע in Jb 41.18 “unerklärt”, while *HAL* (574), maintaining its listing with the lexeme of 1Kg 6.7, merely defines מָסַע of Jb 41.18 as “Waffe”. Nork (1842:375) attempts to explain מָסַע as “Geschoss” by understanding it to be from נָסַע “aufziehen *sc.* den Bogen”.

A.2 At least three Arb cognates have been proposed. Clines (3:271, 307), commenting on הָנִית and הָרַב, glosses מָסַע as “dart”. This meaning is probably derived from one of the Arb etymologies below.

B.1 Bochart (1692, Vol. 2:785) connected מָסַע with Arb nšg ‘shake’, which in the phrase nšg b’lrmh refers to brandishing a spear. The etymology is rejected by

Gesenius (1835:892) since the word “ab usu Hebraei נָסַע nimis alienum est”. Further, the sibilants do not correspond exactly between Hebrew and Arabic.

B.2 According to Driver and Gray (1921, Pt. 2:344; cf. Gordis 1978:488) מָסַע is perhaps cognate with Arb nsg, “to *strike* or *hit* (among other meanings)”. Ahituv (1968:973) mentions Arb nsg meaning זרק. Zorell (453) cites Arb nasaga “flagellavit, verbis pupugit”. There are no phonetic objections to this equivalence.

B.3 According to Delitzsch (1876:537) מָסַע is from the root נָסַע ‘pull up’, which corresponds to Arb nz^ʿ meaning “fortschnellen, zielen”. It therefore signifies a “Wurfwaffe” as Arb minz^ʿa ‘arrow’. Dhorme (1926:585) likewise supports this etymology: “Puis l’hapax מָסַע [note the pointing] qu’on dérive de נָסַע, arabe nsg ‘jeter’, mais où nous reconnaissons plutôt l’arabe minza^ʿ ‘flèche lancée au loin’, de la racine nz^ʿ qui correspond précisément à l’hébreu נָסַע ‘arracher, décamper, etc.’” It is not clear how Dhorme thinks that נָסַע and nz^ʿ correspond “précisément”, unless he means semantically. This proposal has the problem that Arb z does not regularly correspond to Hebrew ס. However, the correspondence is maintained for the verbs נָסַע and Arb nz^ʿ by Barth (1893:51), with reference to Nöldeke (1886:723), who said, “Von נָסַע ist [Arb] nz^ʿ... schwerlich zu trennen.”

B.4 Tur-Sinai (1957:573) has proposed that מָסַע is an infinitive of נָסַע, and means “journeying”. This is connected with an emendation of חָנִית to מַחֲנֹת, and the view that the original מַחֲנֹת מָסַע וְשָׂרִיָּה meant “camps, journeying or resting”. This interpretation does not suit the context and involves unnecessary emendation.

B.5 Van Selms (1983:205) believes that Jb 41.18b has the same structure as the first half of the verse, and can be translated, “Hij die opbreekt met een speer - deze laat los”. According to this translation מָסַע means “hij die opbreekt”. This presumably takes מָסַע to be from נָסַע I ‘pull out or up, set out, journey’ (BDB:652).

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 *maqta:l* of 1-N root.

B.1 [nil]

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 If **עֶמֶת** is a weapon there are no distinctive syntagmatic relationships. The word occurs asyndetically with the previous item in the list, and syndetically with the following item. If **עֶמֶת** is rather a qualifier of **תַּיִתֵּן**, and is connected with **עֶמֶת** in 1Kg 6.7, then it may have the regular characteristic of appearing in apposition after a noun that it modifies, or in the case of Jb 41.18 it may be a genitive following **תַּיִתֵּן** in the construct.

B.1 [nil]

4. Versions

A.1 The Tg (Díez Merino 1984) is one of the few translational authorities to have understood there to be three weapons mentioned in verse 18b. It translates **עֶמֶת** by the phrase **אבנא דמטלא וקלעא** “and the sling that hurls stone”. Delitzsch (1876:537-38) claims that Tg supports the etymological connection with Arb *minza*⁶.

A.2 LXX: ἐὰν συναντήσωσιν αὐτῷ λόγχοι, οὐδὲν μὴ ποιήσωσιν δόρυ ἐπηρμένον καὶ θώρακα. Verse 18b was originally absent from LXX and was supplied by Thd (Dhorme 1926:584). In addition, some authorities (including Codices A and B) do not have the participle ἐπηρμένον after δόρυ. δόρυ corresponds to **תַּיִתֵּן**, and θώρακα to **הַרְזֵי**. Therefore **עֶמֶת** is not viewed as a weapon. In the (probably later) addition of ἐπηρμένον it is understood to qualify **תַּיִתֵּן**. The translation with the addition of ἐπηρμένον has considerable affinity to that of Sym below. SyHex *rumḥe zqifātā* is the equivalent of δόρυ ἐπηρμένον.

A.3 Sym: καταλαβοῦσα αὐτὸν μάχαιρα οὐχ ὑποστήσεται οὐδὲ λόγχης ἄρσις καὶ θώρακος. This supports the view that **עֶמֶת** is a modifier of **תַּיִתֵּן**. ἄρσις, being cognate with ἐπηρμένον, suggests that Sym used the same etymology as the fullest form of the LXX text.

A.4 Pesh: *trā‘ā dḥabrā dlā meškah lamqām marnyātā drawrbāne šqal* “The gate of the friend who is not able to stand. He carried the spears of nobles.” 10c1,

11c1, 12a1^{fam} and 8a1^c have *dḥarbā* “of the sword” in place of *dḥabrā*. Either these witnesses preserve the original Pesh reading, or they have been corrected to MT. In either case *dḥabrā* is probably corrupt, and *dḥarbā* (= **דְּחַרְבָּ**) was the original reading. *marnyātā* may be taken as the translation of **מַרְנִיָּתָא** due to its meaning and position in the verse. **מַרְנִיָּתָא** is a well-known word and it is therefore to be expected that a translator would have had less difficulty in translating it correctly than he would have had for the other words in 18b.

rawrbāne ‘nobles’ probably represents **רַוְרְבָנֵי**, being connected by the translator with **רַוְרְבָנֵי**. The translator has abandoned a representation of MT’s syntax since its meaning was obscure, and simply attempted to combine the supposed meanings of the words into a translation that made sense.

This leaves *šqal* ‘carry’ (perhaps in the sense of “endure”) as the equivalent of **שָׂקַל**. This derivation coincides with that of Sym (ἄρσις) and of the ultimate form of the LXX (ἐπηρμένον).

A.5 Jerome’s translation *hastae elevatio et thoracis*, uses *elevatio* ‘lifting up’ to represent **שָׂקַל**, and this is understood to modify **מַרְנִיָּתָא** in a way similar to Sym. Vg has only two weapons in 18b: *neque hasta neque torax*. **שָׂקַל** may be unrepresented in translation due to its obscurity.

A.6 11QtgJob and Aq are not extant for this passage.

B.1 BHK proposes that Pesh read **שָׂקַל**. Although this fits well with the sense of “lift” or “carry” as attested by ἄρσις, ἐπηρμένον, *šqal* and *elevatio*, this sense was more probably read from **שָׂקַל**. This view is supported by the use of the Syr root *šql* to represent the root **שָׂקַל** in 1Kg 6.7, where **שָׂקַל מַרְנִיָּתָא** is rendered *bk’p’ šlmlmt’ dšqwt’*. BHK’s proposal does not have a single consonant in common with MT and is therefore implausible as a conjecture. Moreover, the renderings ἄρσις and ἐπηρμένον do not presuppose the verb **שָׂקַל** since in Nu 2.17, 2Kg 4.4, Jr 31.24 and Ps 78.26 the verb **שָׂקַל** is rendered by ἄρρω or ἐπαίρω in the LXX, although the sense in these contexts is not primarily “lift up”.

B.2 *HAL* (574) says that LXX δόρυ is the equivalent of מִסֵּעַ. While δόρυ may be the equivalent of מִסֵּעַ הַנִּיחַ it is inaccurate to say that δόρυ is the equivalent of מִסֵּעַ alone. In later LXX tradition ἐπηρμένον was the equivalent of מִסֵּעַ, and δόρυ the sole equivalent of הַנִּיחַ.

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 If מִסֵּעַ is not qualifying הַנִּיחַ then it is in the semantic field of offensive weapons.

B.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 The context is about weapons used against the aquatic creature Leviathan. Such a variety of weapons is used against Leviathan that no clue is given concerning the specific type of weapon mentioned here. NEB translates by “dagger”, which fits with the mention of הַרְבַּב earlier in the verse. RV translates by “dart”, which is probably etymologically, rather than contextually, motivated. Most modern versions and commentators, following the AV and Luther’s translation, believe that three weapons are referred to.

A.2 If מִסֵּעַ is a qualifier of הַנִּיחַ, then it probably serves a similar function to מִסֵּעַ in the phrase אֶבְיֹזֵי־לְמָהּ מִסֵּעַ in 1Kg 6.7. It could then either define a specific type of הַנִּיחַ, or be an epithet that could be used of any הַנִּיחַ.

A.3 Gesenius (1835:892), after suggesting that מִסֵּעַ means “sagitta”, observes that to this identification there might be an objection. “Unum obstat, quod paullo post Comm. 20a sagitta memoretur (בְּזִקְשָׁתָא), sed plures in hoc capite sunt eiusdem rei repetitiones.”

B.1 [nil]

7. Conclusion

It is impossible to be certain whether or not מִסֵּעַ is a weapon. Since none of the Arb etymologies has any certainty and the context gives so few indications little further can be known about the meaning of מִסֵּעַ. “Sling” on the authority of Tg is as good a conjecture as any.

It has been insufficiently recognised by scholars that almost all ancient authorities except for Tg attest no more than two weapons in 18b. Considerable support is given by them to the idea that מִסֵּעַ modifies הִנִּיתָ and has something to do with “lifting” or “carrying”.

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