

# שָׁרְיָה

## Introduction

Grammatical Type: n f.

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

Text Doubtful:

**A.1** [nil]

**B.1** Hoffmann (1891:91), supported by BHK, suggested reading שְׁדִיָּה, which would be cognate with Syr šdyt' 'javelin'. However, it is not sensible to emend MT to a word not attested in BH.

Qere/Ketiv: none.

## 1. Root and Comparative Material

**A.1** Bochart (1692, Vol. 2:785) was the first to suggest a connection between שָׁרְיָה and Arb siryat 'small arrow'. BDB (1056) derives שָׁרְיָה from the root שָׂרָה, with which it compares Arb siryat 'short dart'. This word is cited as cognate by Zorell (881) and by Gordis (1978:488), who gives it the meaning "an arrowhead".

**A.2** Freytag (1830-37:312) attests both sirwat and surwat as by-forms. Their meaning is probably "short arrow". The former is treated as cognate by Zorell (881), *HAL* (1526) and Gordis (1978:488). Both are treated as cognate by Delitzsch (1876:538) and Dhorme (1926:585). Rowley (1970:339) may support this etymology, or the etymology of A.1 above.

**B.1** Most of the ancient versions connected שָׁרְיָה with שָׁרְיָן and שָׁרְיָן. This connection is rejected by most modern authorities (e.g. Gordis 1978:488) on the ground that an offensive weapon better suits the context.

**B.2** Van Selms (1983:205) interprets the word as a verbal form from the root šārāh 'loose', arguing that v. 18b has the same syntactic structure as v. 18a. He translates "Hij die opbreekt met een speer - deze laat los", taking šryh as from šārāh "loslaten" (cf. Jb 37.3), i.e. an aramaizing passive participle or an intransitively used perfect.

**B.3** Tur-Sinai (1957:573) connects שְׁרִיָּה with Arm שְׂרָא and שְׂרִי ‘to rest, to dwell’. “...It is thus more natural to understand מסע ושריה as ‘journeying and resting’ of a military camp.” Tur-Sinai does not explain how this meaning suits the context.

**B.4** KB (1011), perhaps through a misprint, relate שְׁרִיָּה to Arb *sirrat* “feinste Pfeilspitze *finest arrow-head*”.

**B.5** Delitzsch (1876:538) further compares Arb *serîja* “kurze runde, wie es scheint, birnförmige Pfeilspitze”. The same word may be noted by Gesenius (1835:1481) for an interpretation which he does not adopt. Although this could be cognate phonetically, it is not cited by more recent authorities.

## 2. Formal Characteristics

**A.1** If a noun it is a *qitla:h* form from a 3-Y root.

**A.2** To judge from its form and likely cognates (see Root and Comparative Material) the noun is feminine. Two Kennicott manuscripts (17 and 196) read ושיריה, and one (384) reads ושירייה. These variants support the *hireq* in the first syllable.

**B.1** [nil]

## 3. Syntagmatics

**A.1** If שְׁרִיָּה is a noun then it may have a loose connection with the verb תְּקוּם. It is categorised as something that will not “stand” or “endure” against Leviathan.

**B.1** [nil]

## 4. Versions

**A.1** The majority of the ancient versions understood שְׁרִיָּה to be a piece of armour, in particular a “breast-plate”. Most Gk MSS render שְׁרִיָּה as θώρακα, which SyHex retranslates into Semitic as šeryānā. Jb 41.18b was probably not in the Old Greek of LXX, and may be an addition from Thd. Sym θώραξ, Vg and Jerome *thorax*, and Tg שירינא all similarly connect שְׁרִיָּה with שְׂרִיָּן or שְׂרִיָּן.

**A.2** Pesh Jb 41.18b *marynātā drawrbāne šqal*. The translator has abandoned a formal representation of MT's syntax since its meaning was obscure. He simply attempted to combine the supposed meanings of the words into a translation that made sense. *rawrbāne* is probably a conjecture at the meaning of *שָׁרִיָּה* by connecting it with the word *שָׂר*.

**A.3** 11QtgJob and Aq are not extant for this passage.

**B.1** [nil]

## 5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

**A.1** *שָׁרִיָּה* is either in the semantic field of defensive military equipment, or of offensive weapons.

**B.1** *שָׁרִיָּה* has been viewed as a verb of loosing by Van Selms (1983:205), and as a verb of “resting” by Tur-Sinai (1957:573). See Root and Comparative Material.

## 6. Exegesis

**A.1** A major factor in the rejection by commentators of the hypothesis that *שָׁרִיָּה* is related to *שָׂרִיָּן* and *שָׂרִיָּן* has been the argument that the context requires an offensive weapon against Leviathan, not a defensive piece of equipment. Given the uncertainties surrounding the words in the context of Jb 41, no firm conclusions can be reached as to the validity of this argument. However, “breastplate” does not provide a likely progression from the offensive weapons earlier in the verse, while “dart” or “arrow” on the basis of Arb cognates does.

**B.1** [nil]

## 7. Conclusion

**A.1** Debate over its meaning has largely been between the two possibilities that it is a variant form of *שָׂרִיָּן* and *שָׂרִיָּן* ‘breastplate’ (cf. Ewald 1855:§163 *f*), or that it is an offensive weapon as most modern authorities maintain, e.g. Zorell “aliquid iaculum vel telum” (881), *HAL* “Pfeil, Pfeilspitze” (1526), Alonso Schökel “Venablo,

punta de lanza” (764). Although there is no ancient authority for the translation of שְׁרִיָּה by a term denoting an offensive weapon, this seems to be the probable meaning of the word. The Arb cognates siryat and sirwat correspond phonetically to the Hebrew, even agreeing with the Masoretic pointing. Furthermore, the meaning “arrow” or “dart” suits both the general context and the particular context of the verse.

**B.1** Clines (3:271), commenting on תְּגִית, inexplicably glosses שְׁרִיָּה as “lance”. In the same volume (307), commenting on חֶרֶב, it is glossed as “javelin”.

### **Bibliography**

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