

stewpot

קלחת

1. Statistics

Torah: 0. Nebiim: 2. Ketubim: 0. Total: 2.

2a. Literal Use

According to 1 Sam. 2:13-14 the קלחת was a vessel which people used in the sanctuary at Shiloh for preparing a sacrificial meal (זבח). Presumably the priests, sons of Eli, had a right to take a share from the meat (בשר). A servant of the priest would come along ‘when the meat was cooking’ (כבשׁל הבשר, v. 13) and would spear a chunk on behalf of the priest with his three-pronged fork (המזלג שלש-השניים, → מזלג). He would thrust (נכה Hiph.) the fork into the pan (→ פיור), or kettle (→ דוד), or קלחת, or pot (→ פרוור) to bring up (עלה Hiph.) the piece.

Both the circumstance that the vessels mentioned were intended for preparing a communal festive meal and the use of a three-pronged fork suggest that all these vessels were fairly large and had a wide opening. The use of the verb עלה Hiph. might suggest that they were all fairly deep. The material of which the vessel was made is not mentioned.

2b. Figurative Use

Mic. 3:2-3 accuses the leaders of Israel of tearing the skin from off the people (פשט Hiph.), and their flesh (שאר) from off their bones, and even of eating the flesh of the people, and flaying their skin from off them. Finally they ‘break their bones in pieces, and spread them out in a kettle (בסיר), like flesh (כבשר) in a קלחת’. Obviously the prophet – probably Micah the Morashtite – does not accuse the leaders of cannibalism here. He compares their policy of dispossessing small farmers (cf. 2:1-2, 9), tearing the clothes off peaceful passers-by (cf. 2:8, the same verb פשט Hiph.) and misleading innocent people (3:4-11) with a butcher’s trade. Nothing suggests that the קלחת is a special cultic vessel here. Again the material of which it was made remains unclear.

The verb פרש ‘to spread out’ suggests a fairly wide vessel suitable for cooking chunks of meat approximately as long as pieces of bone. Apparently → סיר was a similar vessel since both

are ruled by the same verb in Mic. 3:3. Since the כִּיר is for cooking the bones whereas the קִלְחָה is for the meat, the latter might be a cooking pot of higher quality. The spreading out of the chunks suggests a fairly flat bottom.

3. Epigraphic Hebrew

Not attested.

4. Cognates

EGYPTIAN: Whereas Ellenbogen, *FWOT*, 149; T.O. Lambdin, *JAOS* 73 (1953), 154; *HALAT*, 1030, regard קִלְחָה as a loan from Egyptian *qrht* ‘earthen pot’ (*WÁS*, Bd. 5, 62-3; Hannig, 864), Hoch, *SWET*, 331-2, is of the opinion that Egyptian *krht*, a type of basket for grapes or flowers, as well as Coptic *calaht*, a pot (Crum, 813-4), are loans from the Canaanite word *qlht*. Hoch’s suggestion is unlikely, however, and the Coptic word is better derived from Egyptian *qrht*. The latter it is a rather general term for earthenware (Vachala 1992), but the vessel could also be made of metals like silver, gold and bronze. The Coptic word denotes a blackened cooking pot and serves as a rendering of κύθρα/χύτρας in 1 Sam. 2:14 and Mic. 3:3. An Egyptian goddess bearing the name *qrht* is attested, but it is unclear whether she had anything to do with the vessel.

COPTIC: See above.

AKKADIAN: If *qlh(t)* was the original form, a further cognate might be the Assyrian vessel *qulliu*, plural *qulliātu*, a type of bowl or pot in which food was prepared and/or served. Sometimes it appears to be made of clay, but more often of bronze (*CAD* (Q), 297-8; Salonen, *Hausgeräte*, Bd. 2, 110-1). It is hardly a jar (cf. *AHw*, 926: ‘ein Ton- od Bronzekrug’), in contrast to Hebr. קִלְיָה, Syr. *qūlā*, *qūl^etā* and Arab. *qillah* which all denote a type of jar or pitcher, not a cooking pot.

UGARITIC: Another cognate appears to be Ugaritic *qlht*, attested in *KTU* 5.22:16. This is a list of seemingly unconnected words and names. Apparently the tablet is a scribal exercise. The circumstance that the preceding two entries have to do with the hand-mill and the following entry is *qmh* ‘flour’ suggests that the

pot was regularly used for recipes containing flour. However, the scribe was very inexperienced and often confused the *h* that was dictated to him with *ḥ* (for example in *qmḥ* = *qmḥ*, cf. M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, J. Sanmartín, *UF* 7 (1975), 166). So it is possible that the original Ugaritic form was *qlḥt*.

This in turn might suggest a connection with the Ugaritic divine name *Qlh* (for deification of cultic vessels, see J.C. de Moor, *UF* 2 (1970), 225, 317; V. Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion*, Leiden 1994, 520-38).

5. Ancient Versions

⊖ and other Greek versions: 1 Sam. 2:14 *κῦθραξ* – *GELS-L*, 270: ‘earthen pot’; Mic. 3:3 *κῦθραξ* – *GELS-M*, 251: ‘earthen pot: receptacle for meat’; *GELS-L*, 521: ‘earthen pot’; *LS*, 2013: ‘earthen pot, pipkin’.

Ⓣ: 1 Sam. 2:14; Mic. 3:3 *קרהר* – *CWT*, Bd. 2, 346: ‘Kochgeschirr, Kessel, Topf’; *DJPA*, 476: ‘pot’ (of earthenware or bronze, put on a stove).

Ⓢ: 1 Sam. 2:14 *qerd^elā* – *CSD*, 518: ‘a large hanging pot’; *LS*, 693: ‘olla’; Mic. 3:3 *qedrā* – *CSD*, 491: ‘a pot’; *LS*, 649: ‘olla’.

Ⓟ: 1 Sam. 2:14; Mic. 3:3 *olla*.

6. Judaic Sources

The occurrences of the word קלחה in b. Ber., 56b; b. Sanh., 110b; Num. R., XVIII.2 are all derived from Mic. 3:3 and do not help to elucidate the meaning of the word in Classical Hebrew. b. B.Bat., 74a, however, compares the heat to which the קלחה is exposed to the fire of hell and seems to indicate that the meat was turned over and over in it (הרהר) while searing.

7. Illustrations

Cf. V.Philips Long, *ZIBBC*, vol. 2, 280.

8. Archaeological Remarks

[Will be added later on.]

9. Conclusion

The evidence collected seems to point in the direction of a fairly deep earthen or metal cooking pot with a rather wide opening. In this vessel chunks of meat were spread out on the flat or concave bottom, apparently for maximum exposure to the heat, thus probably for a first searing. This process also explains why people replaced the vessel by metal versions (Egypt, Assyria) if they could afford it. The association with flour in the Ugaritic text suggests that after the searing water was added for prolonged simmering (בשל) and that finally the broth was thickened with flour to obtain what we would call a stew. Bottéro 1995, 15, 105, suggests that unlike the modern procedure for making a roux the flour was added only after the searing. Therefore the best rendering might be ‘stewpot’.

10. Bibliography

Bottéro 1995: J. Bottéro, *Textes culinaires mésopotamiens*, Winona Lake 1995, 15, 105 – Dalman, *AuS*, Bd. 7, 211 – *BDB*, 886: ‘caldron’ – *BRL*², 183 – Cathcart 1972: K.J. Cathcart, *RSO* 47 (1972), 57-8 – *CVOT*, No. 76: ‘the vessel is used for cooking a meat stew’ – Alonso Schökel, *DBHE*, 636: ‘Puchero, olla’ – *GB*, 714: ‘Topf, Kessel’ – *HAHAT*, 1169: ‘Topf, Kessel’ – *HALAT*, 1030: ‘Topf, Kessel’ – *HAWAT*, 409: ‘Pfanne uä’ – *HCHAT*, , Bd. 2, 316: ‘Kessel, Schüssel’ – Honeyman 1939: A.M. Honeyman, *PEQ* 1939, 90: existing evidence is insufficient ‘to fix this cooking-vessel more nearly’ – *KBL*, 839: ‘Topf, Kessel caldron’ – *LHA*, 724: ‘olla’ – Rios 2001: A. Rios, ‘The Olla’, *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture* 1 (2001), 22-4 – Salonen, *Hausgeräte*, Bd. 2, 110-1 – Gesenius & Roediger, *TPC*, 1216: ‘olla, lebes carni coquenda’ – Vachala 1992: B. Vachala, ‘Fragment einer Töpferszene aus der Ptahschepses-Mastaba’, *GM* 130 (1992), 109-111.

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