

mirror

מִרְאָה

1. Statistics

Torah: 0. Nebiim: 0. Ketubim: 1. Total: 1.

2a. Literal Use

מִרְאָה in Job 37:18 is again a *hapax legomenon* skipped by both Cohen, *BHL* and Greenspahn, *HLBH*. God invites Job to hammer out ($\sqrt{\text{רקע}}$) the high sky which is **מִרְאָה מוֹצֵק** ‘hard like a cast מִרְאָה’. Apparently he challenges Job to imitate his work as the Creator to form the **רַקִּיעַ**, ‘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 מִרְאָה means ‘mirror’ (see below), it is apt to recall that mirrors were cast from extremely hard (cf. **מִרְאָה**) and pure metal, usually bronze, because pitting would make them useless. See further **גְּלִיזָה** and **מִרְאָה**.

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 → **מִרְאָה** where also derivatives meaning ‘mirror’ have been listed.

5. Ancient Versions

Ⲫ and other Greek versions: Ⲫ (with obelos, from θ and α) $\theta\rho\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$, ‘appearance’.

Ⲅ: 11Q10 (11QtgJob XXIX.9) has **עֲקָה**, ‘[like a] pressed [mir]ror’. The rabbinical **Ⲅ**: **וְחֻזְתָּהוֹן הַיָּד אֲסַפְלִירָא סְנִינָא**, ‘and their (i.e. the clouds’) appearance like a glistening mirror’ (as usual, different readings are attested, cf. Stec 1994, 262*). **אֲסַפְלִירָא** is a loanword from Latin *specularia*, ‘window panes’, cf. *specularius*, ‘mirror-maker’ (*LD*, 1739).

ס: Skips מִרְיָ: *lmsmkw ʿkjd*, ‘to hold (it) together’.

ט: Also ט omits מִרְיָ: *quasi aeri fusi sunt* ‘which are cast like bronze’.

6. Judaic Sources

On the authority of Smend 1906 *HALAT*, 1084, seems to accept the reading מִרְיָ in Sir. 12:11. Lévi 1951, 18 and Beentjes 1997, 39, read כַּמְגִלָּה רֵו, ‘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 כַּמְגִלָּה רֵאִי, ‘like someone who polishes a mirror’. ט Sir. 12:10-11 describes how the wickedness of an evil opponent is like rust that has to be removed ($\sqrt{\text{גלה}}$ Pi.) time and again. The word used for ‘mirror’ is ἔσποτρον, as in Wisdom 7:26; Test. Job 33:8; 1 Cor. 13:12; Jac. 1:23.

7. Illustrations

→ גִּלְיֹן.

8. Archaeological Remarks

→ גִּלְיֹן.

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

All dictionaries of Biblical Hebrew recognise the meaning ‘mirror’ in Job 37:18 – Other literature cited: Clines 2006: D.J.A. Clines, *Job 21–37* (WBC, 18A), Nashville 2006 – Lévi 1951: I. Lévi, *The Hebrew Text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus* (SSS, 3), Leiden 1951 – Smend 1906: R. Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach erklärt*, Berlin 1906 – Stec 1994: D.M. Stec, *The Text of the Targum of Job* (AGJU, 20), Leiden 1994.

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