חֶרֶב

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Introduction

Grammatical Type: n f.

Occurrences: Total 413x OT (Qere); 2x Sir (39.30, 40.9); 24x QumB
(4QpaleoGen-Exod1 22.2 [= Ex 22.23], 4QpaleoExodm 18.6 [= Ex 18.4], 25.4 [= Ex
22.23], 4QExodc 6.35 [= Ex 15.9], 1QIsa as MT Is 1.20, 2.4, 3.25, 13.15, 14.19, 21.15b,
22.2, 27.1, 31.8 [3x], 34.5 [spelled חַרְבּוֹ], 6, 37.7 [margin], 38, 41.2, 49.2, 51.19, 65.12,
66.16), 58?x Qum (1QH 5.10, 13, 15, 6.29, 1QM 6.3, 11.2, 11 [2x], 12.10, 16.1, 19.4,
1QpHab 6.8, 10, 2Q23 1.5, 4Q158 7.8, 4Q161 8.21, 4Q162 2.1, 4Q163 21.4, 4Q165
5.1.5, 5.1.5a, 4Q169 3-4.1.9, 3-4.2.5, 3-4.4.4, 4Q171 1-2.2.1, 1-2.2.15, 1-2.2.16, 4Q176
19.1.2, 4Q177 10.16 [2x], 4Q370 1.6, 4Q381 31.1.7, 78.1.3, 4Q386-89 4.11, 4Q390 1.10,
2.1.4, 4Q418 172.14, 4Q429 2.2.12?, 4Q436 1.7, 4Q471 1.7?, 4Q492 1.1.4, 1.1.10,
4Q504 1-2.3.8, 6Q18 11.12, 11QT 50.5, 55.7, 8, 12, 62.9, CD 1.4, 17 [= 4Q266 2.1.21],
21, 3.11, 7.13, 8.1 [= 4Q266 3.3.23], 19.7, 10, 13, 17); 0x inscr.

Text Doubtful:

A.1 BHK suggests that at Nu 22.31 LXX read חֶרֶב instead of MT חַרְבּוֹ. BHK
Jdg 7.20 conjectures reading חֶרֶב in place of לִתְקוֹעַ חַרְבּוֹ, and that חֶרֶב from later in
the verse should be omitted. BHK Is 34.5 records proposals to emend חֶרֶב (חרב) to חַרְבִּי
ורב. BHS records the former proposal and also the proposal חַרְבּוֹ. BHS Jr 33.4
records the conjecture of אָלָּלְתָּה חֶרֶב for בְּהָרָיוֹת (Ketiv; see Versions A.3).

A.2 Clines (3:307a) gives the number of occurrences for Qumran manuscripts and
related texts as 55, and includes occurrences found in Wadi Murabba’at material and in
the psalms from the Cairo Geniza. The figure above for Qumran and CD occurrences
includes only those with strong support. Possible further occurrences, where context or manuscript condition does not permit definite identification, are 1Q38 10.1, 2Q31 1.1, 4Q491(4QM) 24.2, 5Q21 1.2. All are marked as possible occurrences in Clines (3:310a). In 1QM 15.3 and 19.11 the compound תרנבל ‘sword of God’ occurs. Clines (3:309b) restores תרנבל in 4QJub (i.e. 4Q221) 23.22, though this is absent from Milik (1966). Clines (3:308b-09a) also records that 4QApocJos (i.e. 4Q473) 1.6 contains “(מ תרנבל)”. This is entirely a restoration and the words are not present in Wacholder and Abegg (1995). Only the Heth of תרנבל survives in 4Q429(4QHod) 2.2.12 according to Clines (3:308b).

A.3 The Resh and Beth of תרנבל in 4QExod (i.e. Ex 15.9) are restored. In 1QIsaa Is 21.15a reads נמי תרנבל ת with the He (rather than Heth) of תרנבל added later above the word (cf. LXX τὸ πλῆθος).

B.1 [nil]

Qere/Ketiv: 2Ch 34.6, Ketiv תרנבלאה, Qere תרנבלאה (see Text Doubtful A.1).

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 While חֶרֶב is given under חֶרֶב III in BDB (352) and Ges. (256), in KB (329-30) and HAL (335) it is registered with the root חֶרֶב II. This difference is due to whether separate roots חֶרֶב I ‘dry’ and חֶרֶב II ‘waste, desolate’ exist (BDB), or whether the two are in fact one root (KB, HAL). Ges.-18 (391-92) follows the classification of BDB, though it registers as a possibility KB’s and HAL’s combination of two of the supposed roots. חֶרֶב is cognate with the BH verb חֶרֶב Qal ‘attack’ (Jr 50.21, 27), niph and hoph ‘fight together’ (2Kg 3.23). KB (329), HAL (335), and Kaiser (1982:166) understand the verb חֶרֶב to be a denominative from חֶרֶב. This verb is compared with Syr hrab ‘smite, slay’ (BDB:352). According to Ges.-18 the Grundform of חֶרֶב is harb.
A.2 Ges.-18 (392) records that in post-biblical Hebrew חֶרֶב may also mean “Pflugschar”. In M. Kelim 21.2 Bunte (1972:373) understands חֶרֶב as “‘Pflugsterze’, ein einem Schwert ähnliches Holz, mit dem der Pflüger den Pflug lenkt”. See also Ben Yehuda (1734, n. 2).

A.3 חֶרֶב is quoted by scholars as having the following cognates in Semitic languages:


d. Eth ḥrb, which according to Ges.-18 (392) is a loan-word from Arb. Leslau (1987:241) takes it as cognate with חֶרֶב. He gives the same derivation, glossing ḥrb ‘war’, and citing further cognates in Eth dialects.

f. Ahituv (1968:974) says that a cognate word is attested in Phoenician.


A.5 Eg ḫrp, ḫarpu is derived from חרב according to Ahituv (1968:974), *HAL* (335), Ges.-18 (392). Helck (1971:518) compares Eg harpu “Schwert” with Hebrew חרב without discussing derivation. Ges. (256) gives the same derivation as Ahituv etc. above, but vocalises the Eg word ḫurpu. See also Müller (1893:304). The two words are said to be cognate in KB (330), and in Enns (1997:259) it is said that Eg ḫrp developed from common Semitic ḫrb.

A.6 חרב is said to be the source of Armenian ḥarb “Schwert” (*HAL*:335). Hübschmann (1895:304) says that Armenian ḥarb is equivalent to Syr ḥarbā. Enns (1997:259) cites Armenian ḥarb as possibly comparable.

A.7 It was proposed by Bochart (1692, Part 2:760) that Gr ἀρπη is derived from Hebrew חרב, and this seems to be approved by Ges.-18 (392; cf. Ges.:256). Liddell & Scott (1940:246) record no Semitic or Egyptian etymology for ἀρπη, though they do record ἀρπη as also being an “unknown bird of prey”; this is reminiscent of Akk ḫarbu “Umbruchpflug” and “Name eines Vogels” (*AHw*:325). ἀρπη, however, has good Indo-European cognates (Lewy 1895:177-78), and on neither semantic nor phonetic grounds is it a compelling cognate. Brown (1995:78, revision of Brown 1968) claims that mythological parallels between Greek and Hebrew literature “come close to proving that
on one side or the other there has been either folk-etymology or contamination with a foreign word”. Chenet (1939:49) notes that the words have been connected, and then precedes to draw parallels between Ug ḥrb and Gr ἁρπή.

B.1 [nil]

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 Segholate qatl form.

B.1 [nil]

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 Subj: אִסְכּ ל ‘be gathered’ (Jr 47.6), בּוֹא ‘come’ (Ezk 21.24, 25, 30.4, 33.4, 6b, Ps 37.15, 2Ch 20.9, 4Q171 1-2.2.16 [= Ps 37.15]), יִהְיֶ ‘be’ (1Sm 14.20, Jr 14.15, 42.16), הָוָ ‘go’ (Jr 48.2), הָדִיר hitp ‘turn’ (Gn 3.24), יָרָ ‘kill’ (Am 9.4), יָסָ ‘writhe, whirl’ (Ho 11.6), אָשַׁ ‘hasten’ (1QH 6.29), אֲבַ ‘go out’, i.e. ‘be drawn’ (Ezk 21.9), תְשׁ ‘save’ (Ps 44.7), נִ ‘destroy’ (Ho 11.6), נִ ‘be doubled’ (Ezk 21.19a), נִ ‘cut off’ (Nah 3.15), יְקָ ‘take’ (Ezk 33.4, 6b), יִ ‘be found’ (1Sm 13.22), יְ ‘reach’ (Jr 4.10), יִ ‘avenge’ (Lv 26.25 = CD 1.17 = CD 19.13), יְ ‘be given’ (Ezk 32.20b), יְ ‘turn aside’ (2Sm 12.10), יֶ ‘be’ (Lv 26.6, Ezk 14.17), יֶ ‘awake’ (Zc 13.7, CD 19.7 [= Zc 13.7]), יִ ‘stand’ (Jb 41.18), יֶ ‘return’ (2Sm 1.22), יֶ ‘bereave (of children)’ (Dt 32.25, 1Sm 15.33, La 1.20), יֶ ‘judge’ (4Q161 8.21), יֶ ‘be quite’ (Jr 47.6). It is also subject of the following verbs, all of which liken the action of the sword to the consumption of food or drink: אֲכָל ‘eat, consume’ (Dt 32.42, 2Sm 2.26, 11.25, 18.8, Is 31.8b, Jr 2.30, 12.12, 46.10, 14, Ho 11.6, Nah 2.14, 3.15, 4Q1M 6.3, 11.11-12 [= Is 31.8b], 12.10, 19.4, 4QpNah 3-4.1.9 [also in Is 1.20 מַ ‘be the logical subject of the action of the verb אֱלֹ ‘be quite’ (Is 4.1), הָ ‘call’ (2Sm 6.9, 24, 12.18).
full’ (Is 34.6), רָוָה ‘be saturated’ (Jr 46.10), הָרָה piel ‘be drunk’ (Is 34.5), ‘be sated’ (Jr 46.10). The only verbs of which it is subject that give indications of its material nature are חַדַד hoph ‘be sharpened’ (Ezk 21.14, 16) and מְרַט piel ‘be polished’ (Ezk 21.16).

A. 2 Obj:ׂ בָּאוּ hiph ‘bring’ (Lv 26.25, 1Kg 3.24, Ezek 5.17, 6.3, 11.8b, 14.17a, 29.8, 33.2), יָרָה ‘fear’ (Ezk 11.8a), לָקַח ‘take’ (Gen 34.25, Jdg 3.21, 1Sm 17.51, 21.9b, 31.4b, 1Kg 3.24, Ezek 5.1, 1Ch 10.4b), כָּעַן ‘hold back’ (Jr 48.10), נַפָל piel ‘cause to fall’ (Ezk 30.22), נַשְׁפָה ‘lift up’ (Is 2.4b, Mc 4.3b), כָּעַן hiph ‘reach’ (Jb 41.18), נָצַן ‘give, put’ (Ex 5.21, 1Sm 22.10, 13, Is 41.2, Ezek 30.24, 25, 32.27), נָשָא piel ‘command’ (Am 9.4), רָאָה piel ‘see’ (Jr 5.12, 14.13, Ezek 33.3, 6a), שִים ‘place, set’ (Ex 32.27, Jdg 7.22), נָשָא piel ‘break’ (Ho 2.20), נָשָא piel ‘shatter’ (Ps 76.4), נָשָא hiph ‘return’ (1Ch 21.27), נָשָא piel ‘send’ (Jer 9.15, 24.10, 29.17, 49.37, Ezek 14.21). The following verbs are used to mean “draw” a sword:ׂ בָּאוּ hiph (Ezk 21.8, 10, though Fredriksson [1945:95, n. 5] implies that the word may have overtones of leading out an army), נָשָא piel (Ps 37.13, 4Q171 1-2.2.15 [= Ps 37.14]), נָשָא piel (Ex 15.9, Lv 26.33, Ezek 5.2b, 12b, 12.14, 28.7, 30.11, 1QpHab 6.8), יָרָה piel (Jdg 3.22, 8.20, 9.54, 1Sm 31.4a, 1Ch 10.4a). In Jdg 8.10, 20.2, 15, 17, 35, 46, 2Sm 24.9, 2Kg 3.26, 1Ch 21.5 (2x) נָשָא is in an ambiguous construction where it may govern a direct object or a genitive (cf. Jdg 20.25). The following verbs denote more particular actions performed with חֶרֶב as object: לחַנַּר piel ‘gird on’ (1Sm 17.39, 25.13 [3x], Ps 45.4), לָשֵׁט piel ‘whet’ (Ps 7.13), נַשָּׁע piel hiph (Ex 20.25), נַשָּׁע piel polel ‘brandish’ (Ezk 32.10). To convert a חֶרֶב into an 아ֶת the verb נָשָא piel is used (Is 2.4a, Mc 4.3a).

A. 3 חֶרֶב is nomen rectum of the following nouns: אֲבַחַת ‘slaughter’ (Ezk 21.20), נָשָא ‘existence’, i.e. ‘there is’ (Nu 22.29), מְלַמֵּד ‘those who have learned’ (4Q471 1.7 [all letters damaged]), נָשָא ‘flight’ (Lv 26.36), נָשָא piel polel ‘punishments’ (Jb 19.29b). Victims of the sword, when expressed by a nomen regens, may be נָשָא ‘slain’ (Nu 19.16, 11QT
slaughter (Is 22.2, Jr 14.18, Ezk 31.17, 18, 32.20a, 21, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35.8, Zp 2.12, La 4.9), \( \text{מְחֻלְלֵי} \) ‘survivors’ (Pr 12.18), \( \text{מַדְקְרוֹת} \) ‘piercings’ (Pr 12.18), \( \text{מְטֹעֲנֵי} \) ‘those pierced’ (Is 14.19), מְכַּה ‘those struck’ (Jr 18.21b), and מְכַּה ‘a blow’ (Est 9.5). Sword-bearers may be אֲחֻזֵי ‘holding’ (Ct 3.8a), נֹשְאֵי ‘carrying’ (1Ch 5.18), שְׁלֵש `drawing’ (Jdg 20.25), or כַּלָּים ‘holding’ (Ezk 38.4). The blade of the \( \text{חֶרֶב} \) may be designated as גְּרֶנֶב ‘flashing blade’ (Dt 32.41), לַהַב ‘blade’ (Nah 3.3), לַהַט ‘flame’ (Gn 3.24), and שֶׁלֶת \( \text{חֶרֶב} \) ‘blade’ (1QM 6.3). All four of these terms have the base meaning “flame”, and are probably applied to the \( \text{חֶרֶב} \) due to the reflective qualities of its metal blade. צוּר ‘rock’ (Ps 89.44) is understood by BDB (866a) as equivalent to צֹר ‘flint’. חֲגוֹר ‘belt’ (2Sm 20.8) may be nomen regens before \( \text{חֶרֶב} \). יְדֵי ‘hands’ occurs as nomen regens before \( \text{חֶרֶב} \), but only in fixed expressions. In Jr 18.21a, Ezk 35.5, Ps 63.11, and 4Q381 31.1.7 it is immediately preceded by על, and in the three biblical occurrences it is also preceded by נְגִּיר הiph ‘deliver over’. In Jb 5.20 יְדֵי is nomen regens before \( \text{חֶרֶב} \), but is preceded by מִן and פָּדָה. For this verb with מִן and פָּדָה see Dt 7.8, Ho 13.14, Ps 49.16, Jb 6.23. Thirty-nine times the expression לְפִי־חֶרֶב “by the mouth of the sword” occurs, sometimes in pause (Gn 34.26, Ex 17.13, Nu 21.24, Dt 13.16 [2x], 20.13, Josh 6.21, 8.24 [2x], 10.28, 30, 32, 35, 37, 39, 11.11, 12, 14, 19.47, Jdg 1.8, 25, 4.15, 16, 18.27, 20.37, 48, 21.10, 1Sm 15.8, 22.19 [2x], 2Sm 15.14, 2Kg 10.25, Jr 21.7, Jb 1.15, 17, 11QT 55.7, 8, 12, 62.9 [= Dt 20.13]).

A.4 יְדֵי \( \text{חֶרֶב} \) is nomen regens of the following proper nouns, or nouns identifying specific persons: בָּא (IQH 6.29), זֶרֶש שְׁלֹש (Jdg 7.14), גֶּלֶת נוֹפ (1Sm 21.10, 22.10), הָנָא (1Kg 19.17a), הָנָא (1Kg 19.17b), משׁוֹה יֵהוּ (1Kg 19.17b), רָבַי יִרֹ ה (1Ch 21.12b), מְלָאך יָהוֹ (1Ch 21.30), פִילְדֵנִי (Ezk 21.24, 32.11), פִּירָה (Ex 18.4, Ezk 32.31, 32); general common nouns: נאָו ‘his brother’ (Hg 2.22), יָוָא (Jar 20.4a), זְיֵי (1Ch 21.12a), נָשׁ (Jdg 7.22, 1Sm 14.20, Ezk 38.21b), גָּאֲוָ (Dt 33.29), כֹּנֶר ‘warrior’ (Zc 9.13), גָּוָיָ (Ezk 32.12), גָּוָי (4Q169 3-4.2.5), הָכִּלָּל.
The following nouns as nomina recta specify the type of sword: נקמות 'judgement' (2Ch 20.9). The following nouns following חרב as nomina recta specify the type of sword: פִּיפִיּוֹת 'mouths', i.e. ‘two-edged’ (Ps 149.6), צֻרִים 'flints', i.e. ‘made of flint’ (Josh 5.2, 3). A form of genitive construction using Lamedh occurs in חֶרֶב לַיהוָה (Jdg 7.20), and חֶרֶב לְה' (Is 34.6, Jr 12.12, 47.6).

A.5 חֶרֶב occurs with the following prepositions: אֶל (2Sm 23.10, Jr 33.4, 34.17, Ezk 21.17), ה (Jb 15.22), ב (Gn 48.22, Ex 5.3, 22.23, Nu 14.3, 43, 20.18, 31.8, Dt 28.22, Josh 10.11, 11.10, 13.22, 24.12, 1Sm 17.45, 47, 2Sm 1.12, 3.29, 12.9 [2x], 2Sm 20.10, 1Kg 1.51, 2.8, 32, 18.28, 19.1, 10, 14, 2Kg 6.22, 8.12, 11.15, 20, 19.7, 37, Is 3.25, 13.15, 27.1, 31.8a, 37.7, 38, 66.16, Jr 5.17, 11.22, 14.12, 15, 16.4, 19.7, 20.4 [2x], 21.9, 26.23, 27.8, 13, 29.18, 32.36, 34.4, 38.2, 39.18, 41.2, 42.17, 22, 44.12 [2x], 13, 18, 27, Ezk 5.2a, 12a, 6.11, 12, 7.15b, 11.10, 16.40, 17.21, 23.10, 25, 47, 24.21, 25.13, 26.6, 8, 9, 11, 28.23, 30.5, 6, 17, 21, 32.12, 22, 23, 24, 33.27, 39.23, Ho 1.7, 7.16, 14.1, Am 1.11, 4.10, 7.9, 11, 17, 9.1, 10, Mc 5.5, Hg 2.22, Ps 44.4, 78.64, La 2.21, Dn 11.33, Ezr 9.7, 2Ch 21.4, 23.14, 21, 29.9, 32.21, 34.6, 36.17, 1QpHab 6.10 [= Hb 1.17], 1QM 11.2, 11a, 2Q23 1.5, 4Q163 21.4, 4QpNah 3-4.4.4, 4Q171 1-2.2.1, 4Q176 19.1.2, 4Q177 10.16a, 4Q418 172.14, 4Q492 1.1.10, 6Q18 11.2), לו (Is 49.2, Zc 9.13, Ps 64.4, Pr 5.4, 1QH 5.10, 13, 15, 4Q436 1.7), וב (Lv 26.7, 8, Is 65.12, Jr 15.2 [2x], 9, 25.31, 43.11 [2x], Jl 4.10, Mc 6.14, Ps 78.62, 4Q386-89 4.11, 4Q390 1.10, 2.1.4, CD 1.4, 17, 21, 3.11, 7.13, 8.1, 19.10, 13, 4Q266 2.1.21 [= CD 1.17], 4Q266 3.3.23 [= CD 8.1]), מ (Jb 27.14), מ (Ex 18.4, 1Kg 19.17 [2x], Jr 21.7a, 51.50, Ezk 12.16, 38.8, Ps 22.21, 144.10, Jb 5.15, 2Ch 36.20), מ (Lv 26.37, Is 21.15 [2x], 31.8c, Jr 14.16, 25.16, 27, 32.24, 46.16, 50.16, Jb 19.29a, 39.22, La 5.9, 1Ch 21.30, 4Q162 2.1), מ (4Q165 5.1.5a [= Is 21.15]), מ (1Sm 18.4), מ (Gn 27.40, 1Sm 31.5, Ezk 33.26, 1Ch 10.5), ס (Neh 4.7).

A.6 The following adjectives, or participles with adjectival function occur with חֶרֶב: בָּא 'coming' (Ezk 33.6a), גָּדוֹל 'big' (Is 27.1), חַד 'sharp' (Is 49.2, Ps 57.5, 4Q436...

B.1 Clines (3:307a) may be read as emending שֶה נָטוּ (Is 21.15 = 4QpIsae 5.5a) to שֶה לְטוּ. While it is reasonable to emend Is 21.15 thus, 4QpIsae, being based on the same text as MT but being an independent composition, should not be so emended.

4. Versions

a. LXX:

ῥομφαία 190x (Gn 3.24, Ex 5.21, 32.27, Nu 22.23, 31.8, Josh 5.13, 6.21, 8.24b, 24.12, Jdg 1.8, 25, 4.15, 16, 7.14, 20, 8.10, 18.27, 20.2, 15, 17, 25, 35, 37, 46, 48, 21.10, 1Sm 13.19, 22, 14.20, 15.8, 33, 17.39, 45, 47, 51, 21.9 [2x], 10, 22.10, 13, 19a, 25.13a, 31.4 [2x], 5, 2Sm 1.12, 22, 2.26, 3.29, 12.9 [2x], 10, 24.9, 1Kg 1.51, 2.8, 32, 19.1, 10, 14, 17 [2x], 2Kg 3.26, 6.22, 8.12, 10.25, 11.15, 20, 19.7, Is 66.16, Jr 5.17, 6.25, 38[45].2, 39[46].18, 42[49].16, 17, 22, 43[50].11 [2x], 44[51].12a, 13, 18, 27, 28, Ezk 5.1, 2a, 12a, 17, 6.3, 8, 11, 12, 7.15 [2x], 11.8 [2x], 10, 12.14, 16, 14.17 [2x], 21, 17.21, 21.14 [2x], 16, 17, 19 [3x], 20, 24, 25, 33 [2x], 23.10, 25, 24.21, 25.13, 29.8, 30.24, 25, 32.10, 11, 33.2, 3, 4, 6 [2x], Ho 1.7, 2.20, 7.16, 11.6, 14.1, Jl 4.10, Am 1.11, 4.10, 7.9, 11, 17, 9.1, 4, 10, Mc 4.3 [2x], 5.5, 6.14, Nah 2.14, 3.3, 15, Zp 2.12, Hg 2.22, Zc 9.13, 13.7, Ps 7.13, 17[16].13, 22[21].21, 37[36].14, 15, 44[43].4, 7, 45[44].4, 59[58].8, 63[62].11, 64[63].4, 76[75].4, 78[77].62, 64, 89[88].44, 144[143].10, 149.6, Ct 3.8 [2x], La 2.21, 4.9, 5.9, Dn 11.33, Ezr 9.7, Neh 4.7, 12, 1Ch 10.4 [2x], 5, 21.12b, 16, 27, 30, 2Ch 20.9, 21.4, 32.21, 36.17);
μάχαιρα 160x (Gn 27.40, 31.26, 34.25, 26, 48.22, Ex 15.9, 17.13, 22.23, Lv 26.8, 25, 33, Nu 14.43, 21.24, 22.29, 31, Dt 13.16, 20.13, 32.25, 41, 42, 33.29, Josh 5.2, 3, 10.11, 19.47, Jdg 3.16, 21, 22, 7.22 [A not B], 8.20 [A not B], 9.54 [A not B], 2Sm 2.16, 11.25, 15.14, 18.8, 20.8 [2x to MT's 1x], 10, 23.10, 1Kg 3.24 [2x], 18.28, 2Kg 19.37, Is 1.20, 2.4 [2x], 3.25, 13.15, 14.19, 21.15b, 22.2, 27.1, 31.8 [3x], 34.5, 6, 37.7, 38, 41.2, 49.2, 51.19, 65.12, Jr 2.30, 4.10, 5.12, 9.15, 11.12, 12.12, 14.12, 13, 15a, 16, 18, 15.2 [2x], 3, 9, 16.4, 18.21 [2x], 19.7, 20.4 [2x], 21.7 [2x], 9, 24.10, 25[32].16, 27, 29, 31, 26[33].23, 31[38].2, 32[39].24, 36, 34[41].17, 46[26].10, 14, 16, 47[29].6, 48[31].2, 10, 49[25].17, 50[27].16, 35, 36-37 [4x], Ezk 5.2b, 12b, 26.6, 8, 9, 11, 28.7, 23, 30.4, 5, 6, 11, 17, 21, 22, 31.17, 18, 32.12, 20a, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33.27, 35.5, 8, 38.4, 8, 21b, 39.23, Zc 11.17, Ps 57[56].5, Jb 1.15, 17, Pr 5.4, 12.18, 25.18, 30.14, La 1.20, 1Ch 5.18, 21.5 [2x], 12a, 2Ch 23.14, 21, 29.9);

ξίφος 11x (Josh 10.28, 30, 32, 35, 37, 39, 11.11, 12, 14, Ezek 16.40, 23.47);

gῆ (Jr 51[28].50);

ἐγχειρίδιον (Ex 20.25, Ezk 21.8, 9, 10);

ἐπελεύσεται? (Jb 19.29b);

ἐπικάλυμα (Jb 19.29a);

λόγχη (Jb 41.18);

οἱ τόποι? (2Ch 34.6 [probably supporting Ketiv]);

πόλεμος (Lv 26.6?, 36, 37, Nu 14.3, 20.18, Jb 5.15);

προμαχώνας (Jr 33[40].4 reading Ἑρμῆς for Ἐρμῆς [BHK, BHS]);

ῥοπή (Josh 13.22);

σίδηρον (Jb 5.20, 15.22, 39.22);

σφαγή (Jb 27.14);

τὸ πλῆθος (Is 21.15a);

ὑπὸ τῶν ἄγγελῶν? (Jb 40.19);
φόνος (Ex 5.3, Lv 26.7, Dt 28.22);

χείρ (Ex 18.4);

paraphrase or different Vorlage (Jr 14.15b);

zero (Nu 19.16, Dt 13.16b, Josh 8.24a, 11.10, 1Sm 17.50, 18.4, 22.19b, 25.13b, c, Jr 27[34].8, 13, 17, 18, 34[41].4, 41[48].2, 44[51].12b, Ezk 32.20b, 23, 25, 31, 33.26, 38.21a, Est 9.5, 2Ch 36.20).

b. The Three:

µάχαιρα: Aq 18x (Ex 5.3, 20.25, Josh 5.2, 10.11, Is 21.15a, Jr 2.30, 6.25, 24.10, 33.4, 46.16, 48.10, 50.35, 36a, Ezk 32.25, Zc 13.7, Ps 76.4, 149.6, Ct 3.8b); Sym 30x (Ex 5.3, 20.25, Josh 5.2, 10.11, Is 21.15a, 51.19, Jr 2.30, 31.2, 33.4, 46.16, 48.10, 50.35, 36a, 51.50, Ezk 21.9, 19 [3x], 20, 31.17, 32.27, Zc 13.7, Ps 59.8, 76.4, 78.62, Jb 15.22, 19.29a, 39.22, 40.19, 41.18); Thd 11x (Josh 5.2, 10.11, Is 21.15a, Jr 29.17, 33.4, 50.36a, Ezk 21.9, 32.23, 31, Jb 39.22, Pr 25.18); Ἄλλος (Ps 44.4);

ῥομφαία: Aq 6x (Jr 14.15b, 34.4, 44.12b, Ezk 5.12a, 21.9, 32.20); Thd 8x (Ex 5.3, 20.25, 2Sm 12.10, Jr 14.15b, 29.18, 44.12b, Ps 76.4, Dn 11.33); Ἄλλος (Lv 26.6, 7, Nu 22.31); Quinta (Ps 76.4);

ξίφος: Thd (Josh 10.28).

c. Pesh:

ḥrb’ 248x (Gn 3.24, 27.40, 31.26, 34.25, 26, Ex 5.3, 21, 17.13, 18.4, 22.23, Lv 26.6, 7, 8, 25, 37, Nu 14.3, 43, 19.16, 20.18, 21.24, 31.8, Dt 13.16b, 20.13, 28.22, 32.25, Josh 8.24 [2x], 10.11, 28, 30, 39 [with variant], 11.10, 11, 12, 13.22, Jdg 1.8, 25, 4.15, 16, 7.14, 20, 22, 18.27, 20.37, 48, 21.10, 1Sm 14.20, 15.8, 33, 22.19 [2x], 2Sm 1.12, 22, 2.26, 3.29, 12.9 [2x], 10, 15.14, 18.8, 1Kg 1.51, 2.8, 32, 18.28, 19.1, 10, 14, 17 [2x], 2Kg 6.22, 8.12, 11.15, 20, 19.7, 37, Is 1.20, 3.25, 13.15, 21.15b, 27.1, 31.8 [4x to MT’s 3x], 34.5, 6, 37.7, 38, 41.2, 51.19, 65.12, Jr 2.30, 4.10, 5.12, 17, 6.25, 9.15, 11.22, 12.12, 14.12, 13, 15 [2x], 16, 18, 15.2 [2x], 3, 9, 16.4, 18.21 [2x], 19.7, 20.4 [2x], 21.7 [2x], 9, 24.10, 25.16, 27, 29, 31, 26.23, 27.8, 13, 29.17, 18, 31.2, 32.24, 36, 33.4, 34.4, 17, 38.2, 39.18, 41.2, 42.16, 17, 22, 43.11 [2x], 44.12a, 13, 18, 27, 28, 46.10 [2x to MT’s 1x], 14, 16, 48.2, 10, 49.37, 50.16, 35, 36 [2x], 37 [2x], 51.50, Ezk 5.12a, 17, 6.3, 8, 11, 12, 7.15
e. TgSam:
חרבה (always, except נבנדה [Dt 28.22]).

f. TgNeo:
חרבה (always, except Dt 33.29 where it paraphrases). In Ex 20.25 TgNeo
also uses the word פרזלא ‘iron’.

g. TgPsJ:
חרבה 23x (Gn 31.26, 34.26, Ex 15.9, 18.4, 22.23, Lv 26.6, 7, 8, 25, 33, 36, 37, Nu
14.3, 43, 20.18, 21.24, 22.23, Dt 13.16 [2x], 20.13, 28.22, 32.25, 33.29);
سريפת 13x (Gn 27.40, 34.25, 48.22, Ex 5.21, 17.13, 20.25, Nu 19.16 [2x], 22.29,
31, 31.8, Dt 32.41, 42);
חרבה and סריפת (Ex 32.27);
חרבה (Gn 3.25);
םיימא in addition to סריפת (Ex 20.25);
קטלא (Ex 5.3).

h. TgO:
חרבה (Gn 3.24, 27.40, 31.26, 34.25, 26, 48.22, Ex 5.21, 15.9, 17.13, 18.4, 20.25,
22.23, 32.27, Lv 26.6, 7, 8, 25, 33, 36, 37, Nu 14.3, 43, 19.16, 20.18, 21.24, 22.23, 29,
31, 31.8, Dt 13.16, 20.13, 28.22, 32.25, 32.41, 42);
קטל (Ex 5.3);
paraphrase (Dt 33.29).

i. TgPro:
חרבה (Josh 5.13, 6.21, 8.24 [2x], 10.11, 28, 30, 32, 35, 37, 39, 11.10, 11, 12, 14,
13.22, 19.47, 24.12, Jdg 1.8, 25, 3.16, 21, 22, 4.15, 16, 7.14, 20, 22, 8.20, 9.54, 18.27,
20.37, 48, 21.10, 1Sm 13.22, 14.20, 15.8, 33, 17.39, 45, 47, 50, 51, 18.4, 21.9 [2x], 10,
22.10, 13, 19, 25.13 [3x], 31.4 [2x], 5, 2Sm 1.12, 22, 2.16, 26, 3.29, 11.25, 12.9 [2x], 10,
15.14, 18.8, 20.8, 10, 23.10, 1Kg 1.51, 2.8, 32, 3.24 [2x], 19.1, 10, 14, 17 [2x], 2Kg 6.22,
8.12, 10.25, 11.15, 20, 19.7, 37, Is 1.20, 3.25, 13.15, 14.19, 21.15b, 22.2, 27.1, 31.8 [3x],
34.5, 6, 37.7, 38, 41.2, 49.2, 51.19, 65.12, 66.16, Jr 2.30, 4.10, 5.12, 17, 6.25, 9.15, 11.22,
12.12, 14.12, 13, 15 [2x], 16, 18, 15.2 [2x], 3, 9, 16.4, 18.21 [2x], 19.7, 20.4 [2x], 21.7 [2x], 9, 24.10, 25.16, 27, 29, 26.23, 27.8, 13, 29.17, 18, 31.2, 32.24, 36, 33.4, 34.4, 34.17, 38.2, 39.18, 41.2, 42.16, 17, 22, 43.11 [2x], 44.12 [2x], 13, 18, 27, 28, 46.10, 14, 16, 47.6, 48.2, 10, 49.37, 50.16, 35, 36 [2x], 37 [2x], 51.50, Ezk 5.1, 2 [2x], 12 [2x], 17, 6.3, 8, 11, 12, 7.15 [2x], 11.8 [2x], 10, 12.14, 16, 14.17 [2x], 21, 17.21, 21.8, 9, 10, 14 [2x], 16, 17, 19 [4x for MT’s 3x], 20 [2x for MT’s 1x], 24, 25, 33 [2x], 23.10, 25, 24.21, 25.13, 26.6, 8, 11, 28.23, 29.8, 30.4, 5, 6, 17, 31.17, 18, 32.10, 11, 20 [2x], 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.2, 3, 4, 6 [2x], 27, 35.5, 8, 38.8, 21 [2x], 39.23, Ho 1.7, 2.20, 7.16, 11.6, 14.1, Am 1.11, 4.10, 7.9, 11, 17, 9.1, 4, 10, Mc 5.5, 6.14, Nah 2.14, 3.15, Zp 2.12, Hg 2.22, Zc 9.13, 13.7);

after שֶלֶף (Jdg 8.10, 20.2, 15, 17, 25, 35, 46, 2Sm 24.9, 2Kg 3.26);

pl 11x (1Sm 13.19, 1Kg 18.28, Is 2.4a, Ezek 16.40, 28.7, 30.11, 32.27, 38.4, Jl 4.10, Mc 4.3a, Nah 3.3);

but Kimchi pl סְפָא (Ezk 23.47);

סְנָבִי (Ezk 26.9);

ם רַבָּה = אָמּוֹלִים הָרִים (Josh 5.2, 3);

אֶרֶבֶן sing (Ezk 32.12);

שִׁים (Is 2.4b, Mc 4.3b);

מַלְכָּה (Ezk 30.21);

קַטָּן? (Zc 11.17);

קָטָל (Is 21.15a);

קָטָל (Jr 25.31);

הָרֹקֵפָה (Ezk 30.22, 24, 25, 33.26).

j. Targums to other parts of the Bible; Tg Ps from Díez Merino (1982):

חרב (Jb 1.15, 17, 15.22, 19.29 [2x], 27.14, 41.18, Ps 22.21, 37.14, 76.4, 78.62, 64, 144.10, Ct 3.8 [2x], La 1.20, 2.21, 5.9, Est 9.5, 1Ch 21.12b, 2Ch 20.9, 21.4, 23.14, 21, 29.9, 32.21, 36.17, 20);
(Jb 5.20, 39.22, 40.19, Ps 7.13, 17.13, 37.15, 44.4, 7, 45.4, 57.5, 59.8, 63.11, 64.4, 89.44, 149.6, Pr 5.4, 25.18, La 4.9 [2x], 1Ch 5.18, 10.4 [2x], 5, 21.5, 12a, 16, 27, 30);

(2Ch 34.6, see A.4);

(Pr 12.18, 30.14);

(Jb 5.15).

k. Vg:

gladius 380x (Gn 3.24, 27.40, 31.26, 34.25, 48.22, Ex 5.3, 21, 15.9, 17.13, 18.4, 22.24, 32.27, Lv 26.6, 8, 25, 33, 36, Nu 14.3, 43, 21.24, 22.23, 29, 31, 31.8, Dt 13.16a, 20.13, 32.25, 41, 42, 33.29, Josh 5.13, 6.21, 8.24a, 10.11, 28, 30, 32, 35, 37 [2x to MT’s 1x], 11.10, 13.22, 19.47, 24.12, Jdg 1.8, 25, 3.16, 22, 4.15, 7.14, 20, 22, 8.10, 20, 9.54, 18.27, 20.15, 17, 25, 35, 37, 48, 21.10, 1Sm 13.19, 14.20, 15.8, 33, 17.39, 45, 47, 50, 51, 18.4, 21.8 [2x], 9, 22.10, 13, 19 [2x], 25.13a, b, 31.4 [2x], 5, 2Sm 1.12, 22, 2.16, 3.29, 11.25, 12.9 [2x], 10, 15.14, 18.8, 20.8, 10, 23.10, 24.9, 1Kg 1.51, 2.8, 32, 3.24 [2x], 19.1, 10, 14, 17 [2x], 2Kg 3.26, 6.22, 8.12, 10.25, 11.15, 20, 19.7, 37, Is 1.20, 2.4 [2x], 3.25, 13.15, 14.19, 21.15 [2x], 22.2, 27.1, 31.8 [3x], 34.5, 6, 7, 37.38, 41.2, 49.2, 51.19, 65.12, 66.16, Jr 2.30, 4.10, 5.12, 17, 6.25, 9.16, 11.22, 12.12, 14.12, 13, 15 [2x], 16, 18, 15.2 [2x], 3, 9, 16.4, 18.21 [2x], 19.7, 20.4 [2x], 21.7 [2x], 9, 24.10, 25.16, 27, 29, 31, 26.23, 27.8, 13, 29.17, 18, 31.2, 32.24, 36, 33.4, 34.4, 17, 38.2, 39.18, 41.2, 42.16, 17, 22, 43.11 [2x], 44.12 [2x], 13, 18, 27, 28, 46.10, 14, 16, 48.2, 10, 49.37, 50.16, 35, 36 [2x], 37 [2x], 51.50, Ezk 5.1, 2 [2x], 12 [2x], 17, 6.3, 8, 11, 12, 7.15 [2x], 11.8 [2x], 10, 12.14, 16, 14.17 [2x], 21, 16.40, 17.21, 21.3, 4, 5, 9 [2x], 11, 12, 14 [2x], 15, 19, 20, 23.10, 25, 47, 24.21, 25.13, 26.6, 8, 11, 28.7, 23, 29.8, 10, 30.4, 5, 6, 11, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25, 31.17, 18, 32.10, 11, 12, 20 [2x], 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.2, 3, 4, 6 [2x], 26, 27, 35.5, 8, 38.4, 8, 21 [2x], 39.23, Ho 1.7, 2.18, 7.16, 11.6, 14.1, Jl 3.10, Am 1.11, 4.10, 7.9, 11, 17, 9.1, 4, 10, Mc 4.3 [2x], 5.6, 6.14, Nah 2.13, 3.3, 15, Zp 2.12, Hg 2.23, Ze 9.13, 11.17, Ps 7.13, 17.13, 22.21, 37.14, 15, 44.4, 7, 45.4, 57.5, 59.8, 63.11, 64.4, 76.4, 78.62, 64, 89.44, 144.10, 149.6, Jb 1.15, 17, 5.15, 20, 15.22, 19.29 [2x], 27.14, 39.22, 40.14, 41.17, Pr 5.4, 12.18, 25.18, 30.14, Ct 3.8a, La 1.20, 2.21, 4.9, 5.9, Dn 11.33, Ezr
armatura (Ezk 26.9);
bellum (Lv 26.37 [pl]);
culter (Ex 20.25, Josh 5.2, 1Kg 18.28);
ensis (1Sm 13.22, 25.13c, Ct 3.8b, 1Ch 10.4b);
framea (Zc 13.7);
micro (2Sm 2.26, Jr 47.6, Ezk 21.28 [2x]);
sica (Jdg 3.21);
paraphrase (Nu 19.16, 20.18, Jdg 20.2, 46, Est 9.5, 1Ch 21.5b);
zero (Gn 34.26, Lv 26.7, Dt 13.16b, Josh 5.3, 8.24b, 10.39, 11.11, 12, 14, Jdg 4.16).

A.1 LXX ῥομφαία is slightly more common than μάχαιρα, though the latter is the more common word in Greek generally (Harl 1992:161). μάχαιρα “désigne une sorte de sabre légèrement recourbé” (Dorival 1994:428), although according to Dorival (1994:429) the translators of Numbers considered ῥομφαία and μάχαιρα synonymous. μάχαιρα is clearly able to signify a knife (e.g. Gn 22.6 translating מַאֲכֶל, see also Harl et al. 1986:193), and thus something shorter than a ῥομφαία. Thus μάχαιρα is used where a sword is not denoted, e.g. Josh 5.2-3. However, the two terms do have considerable semantic overlap. Michaelis (1959:994) notes that ῥομφαία corresponds almost exclusively to חֶרֶב, while μάχαιρα represents other nouns. ῥομφαία is usually selected to represent a large sword. One of the two terms is often preferred by translators of individual sections of the LXX (Muraoka 1970:499-500). In addition LXX uses ῥομφαία in Ezk 29.10, Hg 1.11 where MT has חֶרֶב, suggesting that it read the text as חֶרֶב. LXX Jr 14.15b reads ἐν θανάτῳ νοσερῷ ἀποθανοῦνται for MT’s νοσσὼν ἀποθανοῦνται. BHK suggests that it read with Jr 16.4a.
A.2 The minor Gk versions mainly use ῥομφαία and μάχαιρα, the latter more frequently. Sym shows greater consistency than the other translators, but this is probably because μάχαιρα is the more common word in native Greek authors, and Sym seeks to write elegant Greek.

A.3 In Pesh הֶרֶב is most frequently rendered by its cognate הָרֶב (248x). In Is 66.16 and Jb 41.18 Pesh contains a text that is probably now corrupt, and that can best be explained by supposing that it originally contained the word הָרֶב. Thus Jb 41.18 has הָרֶב, though 8a1c, 10c1, 11c1, and 12a1 fam read הָרֶב; Is 66.16 wbhr bh “and he chooses it” is probably corrupt from wbhrbh translating MT’s בְּחַרְבּוֹ. However, Clines (3:309a) suggests the possible emendation of בְּחַרְבּוֹ to בָּהּ בְּחַר (or emending to) בַּרְחְבּוֹתֵיהֶם (less probably written plene by BHS, which proposes this as original, comparing Pesh and Arb).

A.4 In the Targums it is often impossible to identify a single term corresponding to הֶרֶב. The equivalents given are not always the only words in the context that correspond to Hebrew הֶרֶב. Frequently Tg has an equivalent such as דַּכְּשֵׁל מְחָרָב (e.g. Ezk 29.8), which is represented above as merely מְחָרָב. The Targums vary predominantly between using the cognate מְחָרָב (or מְחָר), and using סְיפָא (or סְיפָא) in addition to מְחָרָב. This is the same fluctuation as was shown in Pesh. TgFrg and TgNeo Ex 20.25 both use מְרֻלָּא, מַרְלָא in addition to מְחָרָב, while TgPsJ uses מַרְלָא in a way comparable to TgPsJ’s use of נְנֶב (TgSam Dt 28.22) probably from the root נְנֶב ‘dry’ and connecting the word with Hebrew מְחָר I ‘dry’. נְנֶב in 2Ch 34.6 reads בְּחָרְבֹתֵיהֶם.

A.5 In addition to the occurrences of gladius given above, gladius is used in Ezk 29.10 to render MT’s הָרֶב (compare LXX). In 1Sm 25.13 ensis is used interchangeably with gladius, and therefore no semantic distinction need be attributed to the variation in equivalent. Likewise, in the account of Ehud’s הֶרֶב, gladius (Jdg 3.16, 22) is used interchangeably with sica ‘dagger’ (Jdg 3.21). In three cultic contexts the term culter
‘knife’ is used. Renderings such as *culter* and *sica* indicate that Vg did not understand the חֶרֶב to be necessarily longer than a knife.

In two cases Vg, in contrast to MT, does not support the word חֶרֶב textually. In Dt 28.22 it uses *aestus* ‘heat’ (= חֹרֶב), and in 2Ch 34.6 it paraphrases, perhaps due to the difficulty of the passage, supporting neither Ketiv nor Qere.

**B.1** Miller (1973:195) claims that in LXX Jdg 3.22 “the handle of Ehud’s sword is described as ‘flaming’ although nothing of this is said in the Hebrew”. However, the LXX is quite literal in its translation of the Hebrew representing לַהַב by φλόξ, as usually elsewhere. Michaelis (1959:994) says that ξίφος is the equivalent of חֶרֶב only eight times.

**5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)**

**A.1** חֶרֶב frequently occurs in connection with other weapons. These include items used for archery: תָּשֶׁש (Gn 48.22, Josh 24.12, 1Sm 18.4, 2Sm 1.22, 2Kg 6.22, Is 21.15, 41.2, Ho 1.10, 2.20, 7.16, Zc 9.13, Ps 7.13, 37.14, 15, 44.7, 76.4, Neh 4.7, 1Ch 5.18), חֵץ (Dt 32.42, Is 49.2, Ps 57.5, 64.4, Pr 25.18), רֹמַח (Is 49.2); hand-held weapons: כִּידוֹן (1Kg 18.28, Jl 4.10, Neh 4.7, 4Q381 78.1.3), חֲנִית (1Sm 13.19, 22, 17.45, 47, 21.9, Is 2.4, Nah 3.3, Ps 57.5, Jb 41.18, 1IQ 5.10, 1QM 11.2, 2Q23 1.5), זָרַק (1Sm 17.45, 1QMQ 6.3); shields: צִנָּה (Ezk 38.4), מָגֵן (Ezk 38.4, Ps 76.4, 1Ch 5.18). Twice it is in parallel with אֶבֶן (Ezk 16.40, 23.47). Cherva occurs in the same verse as מַלְחָמָה in Jdg 20.17, 1Sm 14.20, 17.47, 2Sm 11.25, 18.8, 2Kg 3.26, Is 2.4, 3.25, 21.15, 22.2, Jr 18.21, Ezk 32.27, Ho 1.7, 2.20, Mc 4.3, Ps 76.4, 89.44, Jb 5.20, Ct 3.8, 1Ch 5.18.

**A.2** To “draw” a sword from its sheath is expressed by אַמְס hiph, פָּתַח hiph, and פָּלַח, and is expressed in the passive by פָּלַח; compare Ezek 21.9 and 10 (for references see Syntagmatics A.2). The opposite of “to be drawn” is expressed in Jr 47.6 by אַמְס.
niph, meaning “to be gathered”. To sharpen a weapon the verb is נִשָּׁן (Ps 7.13), or נֶשָּׁנָן (Dt 32.41, wrongly understood as piel in Kaiser 1982:166). The action of a weapon may be represented by the verb חֶרֶב ‘pierce through’ (Jdg 9.54, 1Sm 31.4 [2x], La 4.9, 1Ch 10.4). This suggests that in these instances חֶרֶב is a thrusting weapon, rather than a slashing weapon. Similarly, חֶרֶב in Jdg 3.21 seems to refer to the thrusting of a weapon (cf. Jdg 4.21, 2Sm 18.14).

A.3 The חֶרֶב is composed of a נִצָּב ‘handle’ (Jdg 3.22) and לַהַב ‘blade’ (Jdg 3.22 [2x]) or לֶהָב (Dn 11.33). A חֶרֶב also has a פֶּה ‘mouth’ (i.e. “Schneide”, Kaiser 1982:167, but see Exegesis B.1). This occurs most frequently in the phrase לְפִי־חֶרֶב (1Sm 17.51, 2Sm 20.8, Jr 47.6, 1QH 5.15), or נָדָן (1Ch 21.27). As בֵּית in 1QM 5.13 is a part of the הבן, so חֶרֶב in Jdg 3.22, though referring primarily to Eglon’s belly, may, as a pun, recall part of the sword. The חֶרֶב may be worn on the thigh (ךְיָרָו Ex 32.27, Jdg 3.21, Ps 45.4), usually over the outer garment (1Sm 17.39), and on a belt (חֲגֹר 1Sm 18.4, cf. 2Sm 20.8).

A.4 חֶרֶב is a term frequently used to refer to military defeat, or challenge. It occurs along with רָעָב, and בַּעַב in particular in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. For further consideration of this see Kaiser (1982:174-75).
B.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 A minority of occurrences of חֶרֶב clearly require a meaning other than “sword”. Thus, Zorell (266) for these few cases understands חֶרֶב as “aliud instrumentum ad secandum vel findendum factum”. Exegetes agree that in Ex 20.25 חֶרֶב is not a sword, but rather a “dolabra” (Zorell:266), “Meißel” (Kaiser 1982:165), or “stone-dresser’s chisel” (Enns 1997:259). In Josh 5.2, 3 the instruments used for circumcision are said to be צֻרִים חַרְבֹּת, where צֻרִים ‘flints’ defines material composition, i.e. “knives made of flint”. Zorell (266) understand this to mean “culter lapideus”, while Enns (1997:259) understands the item to be a form of dagger. Even the חֶרֶב used for fighting in 2Sm 2.16 may be connected in tradition with צֻרִים, though see Driver (1913:242-43) for alternative views. In Ezk 5.1 the חֶרֶב is equated with a הַגַּלָּבִיםעַר, and is used for shaving head and beard (Clines 3:307a). Clearly a military sword is not meant, but rather some kind of blade (cf. “novacula” Zorell:266). The חֶרֶב used for breaking down towers in Ezk 26.9 is understood as “securis” by Zorell (266).

A.2 Both straight and curved (sickle) swords were known in ancient times (Fohrer 1966:1750-51). Kaiser (1982:166) says that the blade had one sharp edge in the case of the curved sword, and two in the case of the straight sword. From the way that only a few texts explicitly talk of more than one edge we may infer that most swords were curved. The frequent occurrence of the phrase לְפִי-חֶרֶב (see Lexical/Semantic Field[s] A.3) may indicate a single-edged sword, and thus a curved sword. Falling on a sword (1Sm 31.5, 1Ch 10.4) might be easier if it was straight, but under duress any available instrument might be used. The two-edged sword of Ehud in Jdg 3.16 is recorded as having the specific length of a גֹּמֶד ‘shortcubit’ (BDB:167b), though LXX reads σπιθαµή ‘span’. De Vaux (1960:49-50) estimates that most of the military swords were “50 centimètres tout
au plus”, and says that the long sword of the Sea Peoples was not used in the Old Testament.

A.3 The occurrence of חֶרֶב with verbs such as אָכַל ‘eat, consume’, דְּשָׁן hothpaal ‘be fat’, מָלֵא ‘be full’, רָוָה ‘be saturated’, שָבַע ‘be drunk’, מָלֵא ‘be sated’, along with the reference to the פֶּה of a חֶרֶב connect חֶרֶב with devouring.

B.1 Zorell (266) understands לְפִי־חֶרֶב as “‘secundum (os =) iudicium seu ius gladii’ aliquos interimere dicitur is qui iure belli multos, totam urbem, omnes mares ets. occidi iubet”. The understanding of פֶּה as “iudicium” in this case does not explain the occurrence of פֶּה as part of the sword, nor the frequent use of the verb אָכַל with חֶרֶב.

7. Conclusion

A.1 חֶרֶב is broad in meaning, being generally translatable by “sword”, denoting both the curved and straight varieties. It may also denote a dagger, flint knife, stone-dresser’s tool, or razor. Cognates in RH, Akk, Syr and Ug are connected with ploughing. This may suggest that at base the word meant cutting instrument, or blade, of which the sword was a supreme example. Cognate verbs denoting hostile activity would then be denominative.

B.1 [nil]

Bibliography


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