Introduction

Grammatical Type: n.

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

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 תִּסַּע as a possible original reading instead of מַסָּע. This proposal is unnecessary and without support.

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 The etymology of מַסָּע is disputed. KB (543) and the Masorah Magna connect it with מָסֵע in 1Kg 6.7, which refers to transported stone, and is derived from נָסֵע I. If this connection is maintained מַסָּע describes the preceding word חֲנִית. 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 מָסֵע of 1Kg 6.7, KB (543) declares מַסָּע of Jb 41.18 “unerklärt”, while HAL (574), maintaining its listing with the lexeme of 1Kg 6.7, merely defines מָסֵע of Jb 41.18 as “Waffe”. Nork (1842:375) attempts to explain מָסֵע as “Geschoss” by understanding it to be from נָסֵע “aufziehen sc. den Bogen”.

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

B.1 Bochart (1692, Vol. 2:785) connected מָסֵע with Arb nṣg ‘shake’, which in the phrase nṣg b’lrmḥ refers to brandishing a spear. The etymology is rejected by
Gesenius (1835:892) since the word “ab usu Hebraei נָסַע nımis 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) נָסַע is perhaps cognate with Arb nsg, “to strike or hit (among other meanings)”. Ahituv (1968:973) mentions Arb nsg meaning זָרַק. Zorell (453) cites Arb nasaga “flagellavit, verbis pupugit”. There are no phonetic objections to this equivalence.

**B.3** According to Delitzsch (1876:537) נָסַע is from the root נָסע ‘pull up’, which corresponds to Arb nz’ meaning “fortschnellen, zielen”. It therefore signifies a “Wurfwaffe” as Arb minz’a ‘arrow’. Dhorme (1926:585) likewise supports this etymology: “Puis l’hapax נָסַע [note the pointing] qu’on dérive de נָסַע, arabe nsg ‘jeter’, mais où nous reconnaissions plutôt l’arabe minza’ ‘flèche lancée au loin’, de la racine nz’ qui correspond précisément à l’hébreu נָסַע ‘arracher, décamper, etc.’” It is not clear how Dhorme thinks that נָסַע and nz’ 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’ by Barth (1893:51), with reference to Nöldeke (1886:723), who said, “Von נָסַע ist [Arb] nz’ ... schwerlich zu trennen.”

**B.4** Tur-Sinai (1957:573) has proposed that מַסָּע is an infinitive of נָסַע, and means “journeying”. This is connected with an emendation of מַחָנוֹת חָנִית, and the view that the original מַחָנוֹת מָסָע שׁוֹרָה 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 מַסָּע means “hij die opbreekt”. This presumably takes מַסָּע to be from נָסַע I ‘pull out or up, set out, journey’ (BDB:652).

**2. Formal Characteristics**

**A.1** maqtaːl of 1-N root.

**B.1** [nil]
3. Syntagmatics

A.1 If מַסָּע 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 מַסָּע is rather a qualifier of חֲנִית, and is connected with מַסָּע 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 חֲנִית in the construct.

B.1 [nil]

4. Versions

A.1 The Tg (Diez Merino 1984) is one of the few translational authorities to have understood there to be three weapons mentioned in verse 18b. It translates מַסָּע 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.

A.2 LXX: ἐὰν συναντήσωσιν αὐτῷ λόγχαι, οὔδὲν µὴ ποιήσωσιν δόρυ ἐπηρέαν 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 ἐπηρέαν after δόρυ. δόρυ corresponds to חֲנִית, and θώρακα to שִרְיָה. Therefore מַסָּע is not viewed as a weapon. In the (probably later) addition of ἐπηρέαν it is understood to qualify חֲנִית. The translation with the addition of ἐπηρέαν has considerable affinity to that of Sym below. SyHex rumhe zqifāṭa is the equivalent of δόρυ ἐπηρέαν.

A.3 Sym: καταλαξούσα αὐτῶν μάχαιρα οὐχ ὑποστήσεται οὐδὲ λόγχης ἄρσις καὶ θώρακος. This supports the view that מַסָּע is a modifier of חֲנִית. ἄρσις, being cognate with ἐπηρέαν, suggests that Sym used the same etymology as the fullest form of the LXX text.

A.4 Pesh: τρα ἄ dhabrā dlā meškāh lamqām marnyāṭā drawrbāne šqal “The gate of the friend who is not able to stand. He carried the spears of nobles.” 10c1,
11c1, 12a1/fam and 8a1⁵ have dharbā “of the sword” in place of dhabrā. Either these witnesses preserve the original Pesh reading, or they have been corrected to MT. In either case dharbā is probably corrupt, and dhabrā (= חרב) was the original reading.

marnyāṭā may be taken as the translation of חנית due to its meaning and position in the verse. חנית 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.

rawrṭāne ‘nobles’ probably represents חֲנִית, being connected by the translator with רש. 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 sqal ‘carry’ (perhaps in the sense of “endure”) as the equivalent of מַסָּע. This derivation coincides with that of Sym (อรσίς) and of the ultimate form of the LXX (ἐπηρμένων).

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

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

B.1 BHK proposes that Pesh read אשים. Although this fits well with the sense of “lift” or “carry” as attested by ṥरσίς, ἐπηρμένων, sqal and elevatio, this sense was more probably read from נסא. This view is supported by the use of the Syr root sql to represent the root נסא in 1Kg 6.7, where נסא is rendered bk’p ‘šmlmt’ ḏsqwlt’. BHK’s proposal does not have a single consonant in common with MT and is therefore implausible as a conjecture. Moreover, the renderings ṥרσίς and ἐπηρμένων do not presuppose the verb אשים since in Nu 2.17, 2Kg 4.4, Jr 31.24 and Ps 78.26 the verb אשים is rendered αἴρω or ἐπαιρω in the LXX, although the sense in these contexts is not primarily “lift up”.

4
HAL (574) says that LXX δόρυ is the equivalent of מַסָּע. While δόρυ may be the equivalent of מַסָּע תָּחִין it is inaccurate to say that δόρυ is the equivalent of מַסָּע alone. In later LXX tradition ἐπηρεμένον was the equivalent of מַסָּע, and δόρυ the sole equivalent of תָּחִין.

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 If מַסָּע is not qualifying חֲנִית 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 חֶרֶב 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 מַסָּע is a qualifier of חֲנִית, then it probably serves a similar function to מַסָּע in the phrase מַסָּע שְלֵמָה אֶבֶן חֲנִית in 1Kg 6.7. It could then either define a specific type of חֲנִית, or be an epithet that could be used of any חֲנִית.

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

B.1 [nil]

7. Conclusion
It is impossible to be certain whether or not מַסָּע is a weapon. Since none of the Arba etymologies has any certainty and the context gives so few indications little further can be known about the meaning of מַסָּע. “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 מַסָּע modifies חֲנִית and has something to do with “lifting” or “carrying”.

**Bibliography**


