Introduction

Grammatical Type: n. Gender unattested although BDB (899) and Gesenius (1835:1236) register it as masculine. Pl קרדומים (1x) and קרדומות (3x).

Occurrences: Total 5x OT, 1?x Sir (40.16), 0x Qum, 0x inscr.

Text Doubtful:

A.1 In Jdg 9.48 the pl has been considered problematic (see Exegesis). BHK suggests that we read the sing קרדום. This involves the removal of the final Taw, and of the initial He of the article. By the assumption of textual corruption in two parts of the word the emendation is made less plausible. BHK claims Gk support for the proposal, and possible support from Pesh. BHS suggests that MT’s תקרדומות be emended to סאתו תקרדומות. It suggests possible support from LXX and Pesh (see Versions). Zorell (738) and BDB (899) also support the emendation. In addition it may be noted that in Jdg 9.48 there is no daghesh in the Mem in van der Hooght’s edition of the Hebrew Bible (1862), or according to Gesenius (1835:1236).

A.2 In Ps 74.5 BHS has the proposal to read רדומוק instead of רדומוק. This emendation goes back at least to Schmidt (1934:141), and is more recently followed by Kraus (1978:677). It seems to be motivated by the fact that מביא is singular, and it is thought unlikely that an individual would simultaneously use more than one קרדם. Emerton (1963:376) questions the basis of the emendation thus: “Judges ix. 48 has the same plural noun after a verb with a singular subject, and it may be suspected that the text is right in both passages and that the plural is to be explained in some way which no modern scholar has yet discovered.” As an explanation for the occurrence of the pl twice with a sing subject Davies (1997) refers to the possibility that for chopping wood a single individual possessed axes of more than one size, i.e. a felling axe and a hand-axe.
A.3 Sir 40.16 reads קָרְדֹּם according to MS B, but according to MS M the text reads קָרְפֹּת. Since LXX has ἀχί ἐπὶ παντὸς ὕδατος καὶ χείλους ποταμοῦ πρὸ παντὸς χόρτου ἐκτιλῆσεται the reference cannot be considered as probable.

B.1 [nil]
Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 The only convincing parallels to קַרְדֹּם outside Hebrew are in Arb and Eg. Even these parallel words may not be native to those languages.

A.2 In Levy RH קַרְדּוֹם and קוּרְדּוֹם “Grabscheit”, “Grabeisen” are equated with the BH lexeme. HAL (1061) quotes the former and Gesenius the latter (1835:1236). With regard to the word in RH Vogelstein (1894:37) refers to the plowing of fields with a “Doppelhacke mit zwei Blättern (קרדום). Das eine Blatt hatte eine ziemlich breite scharfe Schneidefläche, die zum Holzspalten verwendet werden konnte (בית בִקּוּעַ), das andere Blatt lief in eine auf allen vier Seiten sich verjüngende Spitze aus ($שף$), und diente speziell zum Behacken des Bodens.”

A.3 Discussions of the etymology of קַרְדֹּם generally connect it with Arb qaddûm “Adze”, e.g. Gesenius (1835:1236), BDB (899), KB (853), HAL (1061). Gesenius and KB state that the sequence Resh-Daleth developed from a geminated Daleth. GK (§85 w) similarly regards the Resh as inserted into a triliteral root to make a quadriliteral root. According to Fränkel (1886:84) the word has been loaned into Arb. He says, “Ich möchte auch qdwm...erst als Entlehnung aus einem aram. קרדומא (hebr. קרדום) fassen.” According to him Ibn as-Sikkît as recorded in Jawhari warned against the form qdwm with shadda on the d. Fränkel then comments “so scheint dies doch grade die ältere von den späteren puristischen Lexicographen verdrängte Bildung.” BDB (899) mentions both Arb qaddûm and qadûm, quoting Fränkel’s view that they are loan-words.

A.4 Albright (1934:51) registered Eg “qa-ar-di-na, qa-ra-di-na, axe, adze = Can. *garzin(a), which seems to be somehow related to N. Can. ḫršn, adze, a
dissimilation of Accad. ḫassīnu (cf. Heb. qardōm, adze = Aram. *qaddūmā > Arab. qaddūm, adze).” He says that Eg qa-ar-di-na may come from the form *g (q) arṣīn (a).

B.1 Some authorities view קרדּוֹמ as a development from a form with the consonants qdm. This proposal can take different forms. In Levy (372) RH קרדּוֹמ is said to be from קרדמ, meaning “abmeisseln”. Given that קרדמ is not attested in the corpus of Ancient Hebrew, it may make more sense to see it as a denominative from קרדּוֹמ. However, Levy sees קרדּוֹמ as a pirel form from קרדג. KB (853) reads “*קדרג, ja., sy. קרד, [Arb] qadda schneiden cut, [Arb] qaddūm Axt adze”. This view is rejected by HAL (1061), which says “etym. inc., wohl Primärnomen”. Gesenius (1835:1236) says, “Hebraeum autem קרדג ortum censeo ex verbali Pi. קדרג, [Arb] qaddūm inserta littera r (v. ר), a primaria acuendi significacione…”

B.2 Dahood (1968:202) commenting on Ps 74.5 wrote, “qardummot probably equals Ugar. qrdm in the divine title aliqrdm.” With respect to this view HAL (1061) says, “…doch ist sehr fraglich, ob das ug. qrdm mit dem he. sbst. gleichzusetzen [ist]; die Axt wäre dann ein Symbol des Baal…” HAL (loc. cit.) mentions that Ug qrdm may be parallel to Akk qarrādu/qurādu “‘Krieger, Held’ u. danach ‘lij qrdm = der Stärkste unter den Helden, bzw. Mächtigster der Helden…” Here the Ug m may be understood as a plural ending.

B.3 In addition to Arb qaddūm, Gesenius (1835:1236) cites Arb kirtīm “securis” as cognate.

B.4 With the assumption that a word in Sir 40.16 meaning “calamus, iuncus” is the same lexeme, Zorell (738) claims that Arb quddūm is cognate.

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 קרדּוֹמ is a quadriliteral noun.

B.1 Levy (372) considered קרדּוֹמ as a pirel form from the root קדר (see Root and Comparative Material).

3. Syntagmatics
A.1 A קַרְדֹּם is used to cut עץ in Jdg 9.48, and occurs in close association with עץ in Jr 46.22 and Ps 74.5. Given that there are no occurrences of קַרְדֹּם with other materials, e.g. rock, as its object, it may be that a קַרְדֹּם was specifically a woodcutting axe.

A.2 By its concurrence with בְּיָדוֹ in Jdg 9.48 קַרְדֹּם was clearly a hand-held instrument.

A.3 Obj לָקַח (Jdg 9.48), ש $לָטַה (1Sm 13.20, “hammer, sharpen, whet” [BDB:538], “hämmern, schärfen hammer, sharpen” [KB:480]). Another phrase connected with קַרְדֹּם is לְמָעְלָה מֵבִיא “bringing upwards” in Ps 74.5 (see Exegesis). This phrase is understood in LXX to be a reference to an “upper entrance”, cf. Hebrew תַּחַךְ.

A.4 In 1Sm 13.21 קַרְדֹּם occurs in association with the word פְּצִירָה. The meaning of this word is disputed: it is corrupt according to BDB (823), but according to others means “sharpening (of ploughshare)” (KB:772), “Preis” (HAL:898).

B.1 [nil]

4. Versions

A.1 LXX always ἁξίνη. LXX has the same number as MT, except in 1Sm 13.21 where LXX uses sing.

A.2 Sym 1Sm 13.20 had τὸ ἁξίναριον according to the Cambridge LXX. In Ps 74.6 Sym has ἁξίνη pl.

A.3 Field (1875) on 1Sm 13.20 says “Procop. subjungit: Ἄκῳλας τ ἅλλα μὲν ὀψαύτως, ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ δρεπάνου, τριόδοντα φησιν”. Thus Aq probably used ἁξίνη as LXX. This conclusion is supported by Aq’s use of ἁξίνη in the pl in the next verse.

A.4 Pesh in Jdg 9.48 uses nrg’ (probably sing), and the same in the pl in Ps 74.5. According to Payne-Smith (1879-1901:2468) nrg’ means “securis, ascia”. In 1Sm 13.20 it has kwlb’ in the sing, and in 1Sm 13.21 the same probably in the sing. According to a seventh century Ms (7a1) it also uses kwlb’ in Jr 46.22 in the pl. Payne-Smith (loc. cit.) says that kwlb’ means “securis” or “bipennis”.

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A.5 In number TgPro follows MT. Tg Jr 46.22, 1Sm 13.20, 21 כָּרָדָה, which is cognate with the Syr word kwlb’ mentioned above. Tg Ps 74.5 (Díez Merino 1982) has כָּרָדָה, most likely a mistake for כָּרְדָא.

A.6 Vg always securis ‘axe’, following MT in number, except in Jdg 9.48, where Vg has sing.

B.1 [nil]

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 It seems that קַרְדֹּם was primarily a forestry tool. There is no explicit mention of a קַרְדֹּם being used against a human in military contexts.

A.2 Although it is not its subject, in Jdg 9.48 קוּרָדָה is used for the action represented by the verb כָּרַת. In Jr 46.22 a קַרְדֹּם can be used for the action represented by the verb כָּרַב.

A.3 In 1Sm 13.20-21 קַרְדֹּם is part of a list of instruments which are probably for agricultural rather than military use.

B.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 The context of 1Sm 13.20-21 suggests that a קַרְדֹּם was one of a number of tools that the Philistines did not mind the Israelites possessing, although the Philistines did not want the Israelites to possess חֶרֶב or חֲנִית (1Sm 13.19). These tools were used primarily for agricultural purposes.

A.2 Emerton (1963:377) says, “It is probably a mistake to treat קַרְדֻּמּוֹת לְמָעְכֵּלָה... קַרְדֹּמַן as if it meant, or should be emended to mean, wielding or swinging axes upwards. The words make good sense if the text is translated unchanged ‘like one who brings up axes into a thicket of trees’. Judges ix. 48 tells how Abimelech went to cut wood: he went up (וַיַּעַל) Mount Salmon, and he took axes
in his hand. Hills were natural places to which to go to cut trees (Neh. viii. 15; cp. Isa. xl. 16), because they were parts of the country where the old woods had not been completely cleared for agriculture. Thus Ps. lxxiv. 5 compares those who damage the temple to those who take axes up into the wooded hill country in order to cut down trees.”

A.3 קַרְדֻּמוֹת occurs predominantly in the pl. The fact that two of these pl uses (Jdg 9.48 and Ps 74.5), rather than merely one, have the difficulty that the subject appears to be singular, cautions against emendation in either case (see Emerton 1963:376). According to Byington (1920:79) in Jdg 9.48 the plural “has singular meaning”.

A.4 Moore (1895:267) suggests that the plural in Jdg 9.48 is exegetically difficult. “The plur. is difficult. There is no evidence or probability that the plur. was used of a single axe (Be.; originally bipennis, Stud.), and the explanation of Schm., al., that Abimelech took a number of axes to distribute to his followers, is an ingenious but improbable exegetical makeshift. We expect קַרְדֻּמוֹת...”

A.5 Dalman (1935:5) said, “Als Werkzeug dient eine eiserne Axt (garzen) (5. M. 19,5; 20,19, Jes. 10,15), deren hebräische Bezeichnung (bei Onkelos aram. barzelä, Sa’adjα ar. ḥadid, also ‘Eisen’) dem Späthebräischen fremd ist, während die zum Baumfällen Jerem. 46,22 gebrauchten qardummōt als ein Gerät mit zwei Schneiden wohl bekannt sind. Das wohl einschneidige ma’āsād (Jerem. 10,3) könnte sachlich garzen entsprechen; kaṣṣīl (Ps. 74,5) war wohl ein größeres Werkzeug und qardom (Ps. 74,5) das gewaltigste.” Likewise Dalman (1942:43) calls qardom “ein Doppelbeil”.

B.1 [nil]

7. Conclusion

A.1 קַרְדֹּם, according to all authorities, may be translated “axe”. Further specification of the type of axe is less certain. A key question is the extent to which קַרְדֹּמ and קַרְדֹּם overlap in their meaning. Whereas קַרְדֹּּם is used for cutting both wood and stone, קַרְדֹּּם is only used for wood. This distribution may be due only to the paucity of references we have.
A.2 Some RH testimony may suggest that קַרְדֹּם was a two-sided axe.

B.1 [nil]

Bibliography


