Introduction

Grammatical Type: n f.
Occurrences: Total 1x OT (Jb 41.18), 0x Sir, 0x Qum, 0x inscr.
Text Doubtful:
A.1 [nil]

B.1 Hoffmann (1891:91), supported by BHK, suggested reading שידיה, which would be cognate with Syr šdyt’ ‘javelin’. However, it is not sensible to emend MT to a word not attested in BH.
Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 Bochart (1692, Vol. 2:785) was the first to suggest a connection between שרייה and Arb siryat ‘small arrow’. BDB (1056) derives שרייה from the root שרה, with which it compares Arb siryat ‘short dart’. This word is cited as cognate by Zorell (881) and by Gordis (1978:488), who gives it the meaning “an arrowhead”.

A.2 Freytag (1830-37:312) attests both sirwat and surwat as by-forms. Their meaning is probably “short arrow”. The former is treated as cognate by Zorell (881), HAL (1526) and Gordis (1978:488). Both are treated as cognate by Delitzsch (1876:538) and Dhorme (1926:585). Rowley (1970:339) may support this etymology, or the etymology of A.1 above.

B.1 Most of the ancient versions connected שרייה with שריין and שרי. This connection is rejected by most modern authorities (e.g. Gordis 1978:488) on the ground that an offensive weapon better suits the context.

B.2 Van Selms (1983:205) interprets the word as a verbal form from the root šəraḥ ‘loose’, arguing that v. 18b has the same syntactic structure as v. 18a. He translates “Hij die opbreekt met een speer - deze laat los”, taking šryh as from šəraḥ “loslaten” (cf. Jb 37.3), i.e. an aramaising passive participle or an intransitively used perfect.
B.3 Tur-Sinai (1957:573) connects שִׁירִּ야 with Arm שֵׁרַה and ‘to rest, to dwell’. “...It is thus more natural to understand מסע נשריא as ‘journeying and resting’ of a military camp.” Tur-Sinai does not explain how this meaning suits the context.

B.4 KB (1011), perhaps through a misprint, relate שִׁירִּיה to Arb sirrat “feinste Pfeilspitze finest arrow-head”.

B.5 Delitzsch (1876:538) further compares Arb serîja “kurze runde, wie es scheint, birnförmige Pfeilspitze”. The same word may be noted by Gesenius (1835:1481) for an interpretation which he does not adopt. Although this could be cognate phonetically, it is not cited by more recent authorities.

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 If a noun it is a qitla:h form from a 3-Y root.

A.2 To judge from its form and likely cognates (see Root and Comparative Material) the noun is feminine. Two Kennicott manuscripts (17 and 196) read שִׁירִּיה וְ, and one (384) reads שִׁירִּיוֹת וְ. These variants support the hireq in the first syllable.

B.1 [nil]

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 If שִׁירִּיה is a noun then it may have a loose connection with the verb תָּקוּם. It is categorised as something that will not “stand” or “endure” against Leviathan.

B.1 [nil]

4. Versions

A.1 The majority of the ancient versions understood שִׁירִּיה to be a piece of armour, in particular a “breast-plate”. Most Gk MSS render שִׁירִּיה as θώρακα, which SyHex retranslates into Semitic as šeryānā. Jb 41.18b was probably not in the Old Greek of LXX, and may be an addition from Thd. Sym θώραξ, Vg and Jerome thorax, and Tg ישרייה all similarly connect שִׁירִּיה with שָׁרִים or שָׁרִי.
A.2 Pesh Jb 41.18b marynāṭā drawrbāne šqal. The translator has abandoned a formal representation of MT’s syntax since its meaning was obscure. He simply attempted to combine the supposed meanings of the words into a translation that made sense. rawrbāne is probably a conjecture at the meaning of הַשִּׁרְיָה by connecting it with the word פָרָשׁ.

A.3 11QtgJob and Aq are not extant for this passage.

B.1 [nil]

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 הַשִּׁרְיָה is either in the semantic field of defensive military equipment, or of offensive weapons.

B.1 הַשִּׁרְיָה has been viewed as a verb of loosing by Van Selms (1983:205), and as a verb of “resting” by Tur-Sinai (1957:573). See Root and Comparative Material.

6. Exegesis

A.1 A major factor in the rejection by commentators of the hypothesis that הַשִּׁרְיָה is related to הַשִּׁרְיָן and הַשִּׁרְיָנָ ’breastplate’ (cf. Ewald 1855:§163 f), has been the argument that the context requires an offensive weapon against Leviathan, not a defensive piece of equipment. Given the uncertainties surrounding the words in the context of Jb 41, no firm conclusions can be reached as to the validity of this argument. However, “breastplate” does not provide a likely progression from the offensive weapons earlier in the verse, while “dart” or “arrow” on the basis of Arb cognates does.

B.1 [nil]

7. Conclusion

A.1 Debate over its meaning has largely been between the two possibilities that it is a variant form of הַשִּׁרְיָן ‘breastplate’ (cf. Ewald 1855:§163 f), or that it is an offensive weapon as most modern authorities maintain, e.g. Zorell “aliquod iaculum vel telum” (881), HAL “Pfeil, Pfeilspitze” (1526), Alonso Schökel “Venablo,
punta de lanza” (764). Although there is no ancient authority for the translation of שִׁרְיָה by a term denoting an offensive weapon, this seems to be the probable meaning of the word. The Arb cognates siryat and sirwat correspond phonetically to the Hebrew, even agreeing with the Masoretic pointing. Furthermore, the meaning “arrow” or “dart” suits both the general context and the particular context of the verse.

B.1 Clines (3:271), commenting on חֲנִית, inexplicably glosses שִׁרְיָה as “lance”. In the same volume (307), commenting on חֶרֶב, it is glossed as “javelin”.

Bibliography