

# צלה

## Introduction:

Grammatical Type: verb

Occurrences: (Total 3):

HB – 3 occurrences: 1 Sam 2:15, Isa 44:16, 19.

Epigraphy – None

Qumran – None

Ben Sira – None

## Text Doubtful:

A1. None

Qere/Ketiv: None

## 1. Root and Comparative Material

A1. In the Hebrew Bible there is a related adjectival form צָלִי, and this also occurs three times in the biblical corpus, with a similar meaning – in this case ‘roasted’ or as a substantive ‘roasted (meat)’. It is found in Isa 44:16, Ex 12:8, 9.

A2. The lexeme also occurs in Palestinian and Babylonian Jewish Aramaic as one of multiple words that use the root צלי, likewise meaning ‘roast’.<sup>1</sup>

A3. Ethiopic retains a ‘broil’ or ‘roast’ meaning with the form *ṣalawa*.<sup>2</sup>

A4. Arabic uses the root *ṣly* for ‘broil’, ‘roast’, or ‘fry’.<sup>3</sup>

A5. The root is used in Akkadian and appears as *ṣelû*. However, the word has less to do with roasting for cooking purposes, and more to do with burning incense or sweet-smelling items.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Formal Characteristics

A1. The lexeme is a ל"ה (ל"י) verb.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, Dictionaries of Talmud, Midrash, and Targum 2 (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990), 465: #2 צלי; Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods*, Dictionaries of Talmud, Midrash, and Targum 3 (Ramat-Gan: Baltimore: Bar Ilan University Press; Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 965: #3 צלי.

<sup>2</sup> Wolf Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez (classical Ethiopic): Ge'ez-English, English-Ge'ez, with an Index of the Semitic Roots* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987), 556–557: *ṣalawa* II.

<sup>3</sup> Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1956), 4.1721b: *ṣly*.

<sup>4</sup> Martha T. Roth, ed., *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 16.124: *ṣelû* A.

**A2.** Each occurrence is in the *Qal binyan*, two of which are prefixed forms, with the third being an infinitive construct.

**A3.** There is, as mentioned above, a corresponding adjectival form צָלִי that occurs three times in the biblical text.

### 3. Syntagmatics

**A1.** The subjects of this lexeme are human beings. In 1 Samuel 2:15, the subject of the infinitive is the priest, כֹּהֵן. In Isaiah 44:16 and 19, the subject is undoubtedly a human, but greater specificity is elusive. In verse 16, the subject may simply be a generic human, the grammatical subject being indicated only by the 3ms verbs present. However, it is probable that the subject may be found as early as verse 13 where the text introduces a wood craftsman, חָרֵשׁ עֵצִים.

**A2.** The objects of this lexeme include בָּשָׂר (1 Sam 2:15, Isa 44:19) and צָלִי (Isa 44:16). Presumably the latter is, like the former, expected to be meat. Each of the other occurrences of both the verbal lexeme צָלָה and the adjectival form צָלִי are clearly concerned with meat and one can therefore assume the same for Isaiah 44:16.

### 4. Versions

a. LXX:

όπτάω 'Roast', 'broil':

b. Peshitta:

ܐܠܝܢܐ (twy) 'Roast', 'bake':

c. Targum

טוי 'Roast', 'cook'

d. Vulgate

coquo 'Cook', 'bake', 'boil', 'roast'

**A1.** Each of the above words consistently replaces the Hebrew צָלָה. However, they each appear in other places, where the Hebrew uses a different cooking verb. For example, όπτάω in the LXX also stands in where the Hebrew has בָּשַׁל, both in Deuteronomy 16:7 and in 2 Chronicles 35:13 – two of the Passover texts.<sup>5</sup> טוי in the Targumim does the same in 2 Chronicles 35:13, but retains בָּשַׁל in Deuteronomy 16:7. In the Peshitta, unlike the Targumim or the LXX, the root ܒܫܠ (bšl) is used both in 2 Chronicles and Deuteronomy.

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the Passover texts, see the Lexical/Semantic Field section. όπτάω also translates שָׂרַף for baking bricks in Genesis 11:3.

**A2.** The case of the Vulgate is slightly different than that of the other versions. Unlike these other versions, the Vulgate uses a generic cooking verb, *coquo*, where the Hebrew has צלה. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that this Latin verb is used in many other places translating a range of other cooking verbs. However, what is intriguing is that *coquo* is used in Deuteronomy 16:7, but a more specific roasting verb, *asso*, is used in 2 Chronicles 35:13.<sup>6</sup> This change to *asso* in Chronicles agrees with the Targumim and the LXX, though differs from the Peshitta. It is also odd that the Vulgate avoids using *asso* to translate the clear roasting verb צלה, but chooses the generic *coquo* instead – a move that none of the other versions make.

## 5. Lexical/Semantic Field

**A1.** The lexeme is part of a group of cooking verbs, which consists of the following other lexemes: בשל, אפה, בעה, זיד, לבב, עוג, קלה, and רתח. Each of these lexemes denotes something different about cooking. Some are more specific or generic than others. Some are for dry cooking and others for cooking with liquid.

**A2.** צלה ranks as one of the more specific terms as it denotes roasting with an open fire, as discussed in the exegesis section below. It is, therefore, more specific than the broader terms אפה and בשל, for example.

**A3.** In terms of their general meaning, צלה and קלה appear to be closely related, though they are never used in parallel or in the same kinds of contexts. צלה tends to refer to the roasting of meat, while the clearest cases of קלה have to do with roasting grain. However, one cannot be too confident as to the nature of their relationship, given that neither verb occurs very frequently.

## 6. Exegesis

**A1.** צלה refers to the cooking of meat by means of an open fire. That meat is expected is supported by the fact that the objects of the verb, and the referents of the related adjective, are all meat items.<sup>7</sup> This is also what distinguishes צלה from קלה.

**A2.** That direct heat from an open fire is required is what separates this dry-cooking verb apart from the more common אפה, which typically designates indirect heat baking. Furthermore, אפה entails the making of bread-type items, as opposed to meat.

**A3.** In support of the above statements, *HALOT*, *BDB*, and *DCH* all translate צלה as 'roast', the latter two of which also mention clearly that this process involves flesh or meat.

**B1.** The Passover texts introduce a problem with the meaning of the present lexeme and its relationship to בשל. While Exodus 12:8-9 requires that the Passover lamb be roasted (צלה) and specifically says that it ought not to be boiled (בשל) in water, Deuteronomy 16:7 expressly commands that the Passover lamb be boiled (בשל). There

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<sup>6</sup> For a table displaying the various translations of בשל in the Passover texts, see the בשל entry in SAHD.

<sup>7</sup> See discussion under syntagmatics to explain the occurrence in Isaiah 44:16.

is of course a long history of exegetical wrestling as it relates to this passage. If it were true, as some argue, that *בשל* is a generic cooking verb and can likewise mean 'boil' and simply 'cook', then there would be no contradiction between the two texts.<sup>8</sup> Exodus would still assert that the lamb is to be roasted and not 'cooked in water' (i.e. boiled), whereas Deuteronomy would simply assert that the lamb is to be cooked. If all this were true, the one might argue that *בשל* could stand in for *צלה* as a more generic cooking verb.

However, this assertion, that *בשל* could be a generic cooking verb, is unlikely to be true. Both in medieval Jewish sources and in modern scholarship, the ideological starting point is that these two Passover texts (Ex 12:8-9; Deut 16:7) must not contradict one another. The other occurrences of *בשל* are, however, clearly related to some kind of liquid cooking. Furthermore, liquid cooking was a primary mode of cooking in ancient Palestine and it would be extremely odd for there to be no extant verb related specifically to boiling (in contrast to there being two different lexemes related to different kinds of roasting). While the argument receives more detailed treatment in the SAHD entry for *בשל*, one can at least here assert that *בשל* is unlikely to be a generic cooking verb, that Exodus and Deuteronomy therefore prescribe different cooking methods for the Passover lamb, and that *בשל* is not a more generic substitute for the more specific *צלה*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For a representative set of examples, see Rashi *ad* Deuteronomy 16.7 and 2 Chronicles 35.13. Jay F. Shachter, *The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch*, vol. 5: Deuteronomy (Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House, 2003), 75; S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), 193–194; J. G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 33 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 117–118; Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary 15 (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 285; Judson Rayford Shaver, *Torah and the Chronicler's History Work: An Inquiry into the Chronicler's References to Laws, Festivals, and Cultic Institutions in Relationship to Pentateuchal Legislation*, Brown Judaic Studies 196 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 116; C.J. Labuschagne, *Deuteronomium deel II*, De prediking van het Oude Testament (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1990), 98–99; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 155.

<sup>9</sup> For those who represent this view, see for example Immanuel Benzinger, *Die Bücher der Chronik*, Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament. 20 (Tübingen; Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1901), 132; Kurt Galling, *Die Bücher der Chronik, Esra, Nehemia*, vol. 12, Das Alte Testament deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954), 179–180; Adrianus van den Born, *Kronieken*, De boeken van het Oude Testament (Roermond: Romen & Zonen, 1960), 232–233; Jacob Martin Myers, *II Chronicles*, The Anchor Bible 13 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), 211; H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids; London: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Marshall, Morgan & Scott Pub. Ltd, 1982), 407; Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 135–136; Joachim Becker, *2 Chronik*, Die neue Echter-Bible: Kommentar zum Alten Testament mit der Einheitsübersetzung 20 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988), 121; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 245; Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1993), 1052–1053; Steven Shawn Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 240; Steven L. McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 364; Ehud Ben Zvi, 'Revisiting "Boiling in Fire" in 2 Chronicles 35:13 and Related Passover Questions: Text, Exegetical Needs and Concerns, and General Implication', in *Biblical Interpretation in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Isaac Kalimi and Peter J. Haas, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 439 (New York: T & T Clark,

## 7. Conclusions

The Hebrew lexeme צלה, though it occurs only rarely, is a verb that poses little difficulty for clarity. It is a root attested in other Semitic languages, though it is equally rare in most of these – most likely reflecting how authors of these ancient texts did not prioritize cooking vocabulary, especially not the more specific cooking terms. In Hebrew it entails the roasting of meat over a flame, thereby distinguishing this word both from baking (אפה) and from roasting non-meat items (קלה).

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2006), esp. 240–241; Ronald. E. Clements, ed., *Exodus*, Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 72; Anthony Phillips, ed., *Deuteronomy*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 113. Both Clements and Phillips suggest a contradiction between Exodus and Deuteronomy. K. Roubos, *II Kronieken*, De prediking van het Oude Testament (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1972), 297. Roubos notes that there is a contradiction between Exodus and Deuteronomy, though he also argues that the בָּשַׁל is flexible enough to cover both ‘bake’ and ‘boil’.

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