

תֹּתַח

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Introduction

Grammatical Type: n m?

Occurrences: Total 1x OT (Jb 41.21), 0x Sir, 0x Qum, 0x inscr.

Text Doubtful: none.

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and Comparative Material

A.1 To judge from Bochart's claim (1663:785) "תֹּתַח *fustem*, ex *Arabica* lingua novè explicamus" he was the first to connect תֹּתַח with Arb wataḥa "fuste percutere". This is cited as cognate by Schleusner (1822:215), Heiligstedt (1847:280), König (1910:539), and Ahituv (1968:974). Arb also possesses the cognate word mītaḥat 'club'. BDB (450) supports the connection of תֹּתַח with both Arb words, as do Zorell (894), Driver (1950:340), and *HAL* (1580 ["wahrscheinlich"]). Hirzel (1852:258) says, "nach der Etymologie: *Keule* (nicht: *Hammer*, LXX, *Vulg.*, *Luth.*, *Zür. Uebers.*)".

B.1 Barth (1894:294, n. 1) regarded תֹּתַח as a "Fremdwort aus assyr. tartāḥu 'keule'". However, as noted by BDB (450), this rests on a misreading of the cuneiform signs. Meissner (1931:195-96) argues that the word should be read kuttāḥu. Nevertheless, Ebeling (1933:33) has argued that even the pronunciation kuttāḥu is uncertain because of the well attested word šiltāḥḥu 'arrow' or 'spear'. CAD records both kutāḥu 'a lance' (8:603) and šiltāḥu (šiltāḥḥu) 'arrow' (17-b:448-51). Driver (1950:339-40) discusses and rejects the supposed word *tartāḥḥu. He believes that this word was never supposed to be equivalent to תֹּתַח, but that תֹּתַח was believed to be a scribal error for the hypothetical Hebrew word *תֹּתַח, the supposed equivalent of *tartāḥḥu. *HAL* (1580) rightly defends KB's failure to mention *tartāḥu as a form possibly cognate with תֹּתַח.

Dhorme (1926:585) and Gordis (1978:489) cite Barth's proposal favourably. Hartley (1988:529) says, "The meaning 'javelin' or 'mace' is assigned to MT tōtāḥ on the basis of

Akk. *tartaḥu*, ‘shaft, club’ (Dhorme), or Arab. *mitaḥat*, ‘club’ (Rowley). Cf. G.R. Driver, *ETL* 26 (1950) 339-40.” Hartley seems to have misunderstood Driver. Gray (Driver & Gray 1921 Pt. 2:344) cites the Akk cognate as possible, but refers to Delitzsch (1896:630), which though containing the word *tartaḥu* makes no connection between it and Hebrew תִּוְתָח. Besides the non-existence of the supposed Akk cognate of תִּוְתָח, questions had already been raised by 1910 about the equation of תִּוְתָח with **tartaḥhu*. König (1910:539) viewed the derivation of תִּוְתָח from Assyrian *tartaḥu* as groundless and improbable. Even granted the existence of such an Akk word there would be enough problems phonetically to make any equation highly dubious.

B.2 KB (1025) explain תִּוְתָח as cognate with Arb *wataḥa*, with ḥ rather than ḥ, to which they assign the meaning “mit Knüppeln schlagen *beat with cudgels*”. This seems to be merely a typographic error, though it is not corrected in Koehler & Baumgartner (1958) and is cited by Van Selms (1983:205). The correct form with ḥ is used in *HAL* (1580).

2. Formal Characteristics

A.1 The form תִּוְתָח is in pause. Therefore Schleusner (1822:215) understood the word to be תִּוְתָח in its basic, non-pausal form. If Arb *wataḥa* is cognate with תִּוְתָח then we may, with Bochart (1663:785) and Olshausen (1861:§213), compare its formation with תִּוְשָׁב. It would then be a Root-a *taqta:l*. However, since its only occurrence is in pause consideration should also be given to the view that it is *taqtal* rather than *taqta:l*.

B.1 Barth (1894:294) refused to connect תִּוְתָח with other Hebrew words of the same external form, deriving it erroneously from Akk. See Root and Comparative Material B.1.

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 In MT תִּוְתָח is construed with the pl verb נִחְשְׁבוּ “they are considered”. It may therefore be that תִּוְתָח is a distributive sing. Heiligstedt (1847:280-81) says of תִּוְתָח “sensum collectivi habet, quare cum plurali verbi conjuncta est.” Hirzel (1852:258) says that תִּוְתָח is “hier als Gattungsbegriff mit dem Plur. Construiert.”

B.1 [nil]

4. Versions

A.1 The extant versions generally support the meaning “hammer” or “mallet”. LXX originally did not contain v. 21a. Thd, now standing in Hexaplaric LXX manuscripts (Dhorme 1926:585), reads: ὡς καλάμη ἐλογίσθησαν σφῦραι. Aq is attested as the same by Field (1875:79). Some manuscripts, e.g. Vaticanus have σφυρα for σφῦραι. σφυρα is accented in the editions of Walton, Swete and Tischendorf (see also *HAL*:1580) as σφυρά pl of σφυρόν ‘ankle’, as opposed to σφῦραι pl of σφῦρα ‘hammer’, ‘mallet’. These latter meanings can more easily be derived from MT. Schleusner (1822:215) and Gesenius (1835:644) read LXX as σφύρα. Sym (reconstructed from SyHex ’yk qny’ ḥšyb’ lh ’rzpt’) reads: ὡς καλάμη ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ σφῦρα.

A.2 Vg *malleus* supports the rendering of the Gk versions.

A.3 Tg’s reading אַקסֵי ‘axes’ (Díez Merino 1984:163) supports identification with a hand-held weapon.

A.4 Jb 41.21a is absent from Pesh (Dhorme 1926:585), and not extant in 11QtgJob.

B.1 [nil]

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 Offensive weapon.

B.1 [nil]

6. Exegesis

A.1 תִּתִּן is in parallel with בִּידוֹן, or with בִּידוֹן שֶׁעָרַךְ. This may suggest a hand-held weapon, though the parallel need not be precise. Since the text says that תִּתִּן “is/are considered as stubble”, one may presume that something known for its solidity is being compared to something known for its weakness. This is a possible contextual indicator that a club is being referred to.

A.2 Clines (3:328a), on חֶשֶׁב, glosses תִּתִּן as “cudgel”.

B.1 *HAL* (1580) expresses disagreement with Fohrer (1963:526-27), alleging that he translates תֹּזֶחַת by “Sichelschwert”. *HAL* maintains that both etymology and versional evidence argue against this “Sonderbedeutung”. However, Fohrer in fact agrees with *HAL* in translating תֹּזֶחַת by “Keule”, and *HAL* has misread Fohrer (1963:526) where “Sichelschwert” is the translation not of תֹּזֶחַת in Jb 41.21a, but of כִּידוֹן in 21b.

7. Conclusion

The connection with Arb wataḥa seems plausible, and along with the testimony of the ancient versions points towards the meaning “club”, although another sort of hand-held weapon may be meant.

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