

# גִּרְזָן

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## Introduction

Grammatical Type: n m.

Occurrences: Total 4x OT, 0x Sir, 1?x QumB (1QIsa<sup>a</sup> as MT Is 10.15), 3x inscr (Siloam inscr [D-4.116.2, 4 (2x) = RR-Jer(7):3]).

Text Doubtful:

**A.1** [nil]

**B.1** Clines (2:375) incorrectly twice gives Is 10.5 instead of Is 10.15 as an occurrence. Hobbs (1989:115) says that it occurs 14 times in the OT.

**B.2** גִּרְזָן read by Cornill (1886:376) in Ezk 31.11. He justifies this contextually as follows (1886:377), “In v. 10 war die Höhe des Baumes geschildert, in v. 11<sup>a</sup>, dass er in die Hand eines Völkergewaltigen gegeben worden, in v. 12 wird berichtet, dass er gefällt worden sei, man erwartet daher in 11<sup>b</sup> eine Handlung, welche das Fällen vorbereitet. Geht man von גִּרְשׁ aus, so bietet sich als nicht all zu fern liegend גִּרְזָן dar...”

**B.3** On 1Kg 6.7 Noth (1968:99) commented, “Das Nebeneinander von undeterminiertem מקבות und הגרזן mit Artikel ist eine Unebenheit. Man kann diesen Artikel ‘streichen’...vielleicht erweist aber auch diese Unebenheit (ו)הגרזן als späteren Zusatz...”

Qere/Ketiv: none.

## 1. Root and Comparative Material

**A.1** There are many forms both within Semitic and outside Semitic that are regarded by at least some authorities as cognate with גִּרְזָן. KB (193) says that together the wide range of cognates “suggests common foreign origin”. Ges.-18 (229) calls it a “Kulturwort”. That an instrument like a גִּרְזָן might be a transculturally desirable piece of technology would facilitate the movement of the word. The instability of the

consonantal form, as attested by variation in the form of the proposed cognates, may suggest an origin outside Semitic. At least some analogy may be found for such a wide geographical distribution of the term “axe” in the fact that Gk πέλεκυς ‘axe’ is compared with Sanskrit *paraśus* and is said to be a loan-word from Babylonian *pilaqu* and Sum *balag* (Liddell & Scott 1940:1357, Lewy 1895:178). Beekes (1995:37), however, rejects the proposal that the Indo-European words are connected to Akkadian *pilakku*.

**A.2** KB (193) quotes Akk *ḥašinu* “(l *ḥašsinu?*)” as cognate. *HAL* (195) cites Akk *ḥaš(s)innu* and Sum *ḥaši(nna)*. *CAD* (6:133) says that Akk *ḥašinnu* ‘axe’ appears from the Old Akk period on, and exists as an Akk loan-word in Sum and Hitt. *AHw* (332) and Renz (Vol. 1:186) state that Akk *ḥašinnu* and Hebrew גַּרְזֵן are cognate. *AHw* (followed by Ges.-18:229) also records the Old Sum form *ḥa-zi*, and the New Sum form *ḥa-zi-in/na*. These Sum words are also recorded as cognates of גַּרְזֵן by Renz (Vol. 1:186). Hoch (1994:304, n. 56) considers the connection between גַּרְזֵן and Akk *ḥaš(s)innu* and Sum *ḥaši(nna)u* unconvincing.

**A.3** If the above Akk cognate is accepted we must also accept Arm 𐎧𐎺𐎠𐎫 and Syr *ḥašsinā* ‘a small axe’ (Payne-Smith 1903:154) as cognate. Brockelmann (251) registered Syr *ḥašsinā* as “f. (N§84 ex acc. *ḥašinnu* > ar. *ḥašīn*, aeth. *ḥašīn*, arm. ܟܘܫܝܢ” and takes it to mean “dolabra, securis” Renz (Vol. 1:186) registers Syr *ḥašsinā* as cognate.

**A.4** Gesenius (1835:302) considered the following Arb words as cognate: *karzin*, *kirzin*, *kirzīn*, *kirzam* and *kirzīm*, all of which denote the sort of axe used for felling trees. Of these Gesenius observes “quibusque prope accedit hebr. קַרְדִּים”. KB (193) and *HAL* (195) likewise compare Arb *karzan*, *karzam* and *kirzīm*. *AHw* (332), Ges.-18 (229) and Renz (Vol. 1:186) say that Arb *karzan* is the same word. See also on Mandaic below. Fränkel (1886:85) said, “So ist wohl auch das mir allerdings blos aus den Lexx. bekannte *krzn* ‘Axt’, entlehnt (vgl. גַּרְזֵן), trotzdem ich dafür kein aramäisches Aequivalent kenne.” According to Fränkel, Jawhari attests *krzym*, and *krzyn* alongside *krzm* and *krzn*. Hoch (1994:304) considers the connection with Arb *krzn* unconvincing.

**A.5** KB (193), *HAL* (195), *AHw* (332) and Renz (Vol. 1:186) cite Eg grDn as being the same word. Ges.-18 (229) says that Eg *grdn* and *qrđn* (= qa-ar-Di-na <

\*garzin) are Canaanite loan-words. The hypothetical Canaanite \*garzin(a) is reconstructed as equivalent to Eg qa-ar-di-na by Albright (1934:58). Albright accepts the equation between the Eg word and גַּרְזִין. Helck (1962:571, number 237) compares Hebrew גַּרְזִין with Eg *qa-r-si-na*. Westendorf (1965:466) mentions a possible etymology of a Copt word meaning “Messer, Schwert, Dolch, Degen”, which would involve comparison with Hebrew גַּרְזִין. Osing (1976:374-75) cites an Eg loan from Akk *ħaršinnu* [sic] with comparison to Hebrew גַּרְזִין [sic]. Eg qa-r-di-na is definitely linked with Heb גַּרְזִין (Hoch 1994:304). Hoch (1994:304-05) gives other hieroglyphic spellings to the Eg word attested in the 18th-20th dynasties.

**A.6** Ges.-18 (229) says that a possible *Grundform* is *g/karsin*, and references for this form Salonen (1952:8-9). There Salonen is arguing that Arb #a\$In (like its Eth counterpart) arose from Arm #a\$\$InA, which in turn arose from Akk #a\$\$innu. He continues, “Die Urform des Wortes in der Substratsprache, aus der es entlehnt worden ist, muss etwa \*k/garsin geheissen haben, da wir dasselbe Wort im Hebräischen, als ein auf anderem Wege als aus dem Akkadischen entlehntes Wort, in der Form garzen haben.” Thus Salonen’s view that the earliest form is \*k/garsin rests almost entirely on Hebrew. From this hypothesis he surmises that “Im Akkadischen ist das ursprüngliche -r\$- zu -\$- geworden. Das anlautende #- zeigt, dass ursprünglich k- stark spirant war, also: k'-.” He further compares the Armenian form **ԿԱՏՈՒՆ**.”

**A.7** Salonen (1952:8) quotes Armenian **ԿԱՏՈՒՆ** as comparable to Hebrew גַּרְזִין. Hübschmann (1895:307) cites Armenian **ԿԱՏՈՒՆ** as equivalent to Syr X\$yn' “dolabra, securis” and Arb #Syn “Axt”.

**A.8** Salonen (1952:8-9), with reference to the “axe” words says, “Die indogermanischen Wörter für ‘Axt’, speziell das griechische ἄξινη, gehören wohl auch zu derselben Sippe, nicht aber als Lehnworte aus den semitischen Sprachen. Dabei ist im Griechischen das anlautende *k-* > *h-* > *0* geworden.” Ges.-18 (229) compares Lat *ascia*. HAL (195) mentions Gr ἄξινη and Lat *ascia* as possibly connected with Hebrew גַּרְזִין. If a link with Indo-European can be maintained then גַּרְזִין is ultimately linked to English “axe” and German “Axt” etc. Regarding the theory

that ἀξίνη is a loan from Semitic Lewy (1895:178) comments “Die Vertretung von  $\alpha$  durch  $\xi$  statt  $\sigma$  oder höchstens  $\zeta$  wäre beispiellos.”

**A.9** KB (193) quotes Berber (ta) *gelzim* as cognate. Stumme (1912:127) says, “Aus *bárzel* besteht der wichtigste Teil des *amadir*, wie der der Axt, die berberisch *agelzim* heißt; in der Endung *im* dieses Wortes wird niemand eine hebräisch-phönizische maskuline Pluralendung suchen, sondern dasselbe wohl als eine Veränderung von *gárzen* oder einer diesem גָּרְזֵן ähnlich klingenden Form hinnehmen.” Stumme is quoted with approval in Ges.-18 (229).

**A.10** HAL (195) cites Ug #r\$*n* as cognate. This view is in contrast with that of Gordon (*UT*:398, 405), who understands this word as a proper noun. The Ug word has been vocalised as #ura\$ana (Schaeffer 1955:245). Salonen (1952:8) reads Ug #r\$*n* as #ar\$In, and believes it to be a distant cognate of גָּרְזֵן. Friedrich (1933:739) says that גָּרְזֵן, Ug #r\$*n*, Arm #a\$\$InA and Akk #a\$innu are “verschiedene Versuche...eine dem Semitischen fremdartige Lautfolge ungefähr wiederzugeben”. Although there is no certainty that the Ug form #r\$*n* is an axe, its morphology with r as second radical and # as first radical is the strongest indicator of an etymological link between words morphologically closer to grzn, and those morphologically closer to #*n* (Davies 1997). Hoch (1994:304) considers Ug #r\$*n* a personal name unconnected with Hebrew גָּרְזֵן.

**A.11** Dietrich (1967:303) derives Mand qurnasa thus: “qurnasa < akk. #a\$\$innu (alt-neusum. #a-zi[in/na]) ‘Axt’ über \*qurzana (von dieser Stufe aus sind mand.-pers. gurza, s.d., hebr. grzn und arab. karzan abgeleitet, vgl. neuäg. krDn) und \*qursana mit Methathese von n und s.” This analysis is quoted with approval by Ges.-18 (229).

**A.12** Clines by arrows relates גָּרְזֵן to גָּרַז I ‘be cut off’ in Ps 31.23 (2:375). It is probable that some relationship was felt at the synchronic level by speakers of the language. It may be that a similar (but diachronic) connection is drawn by Gesenius (1835:302) when he says of גָּרְזֵן that “Syllaba ג- in fine adiecta quadrilittero formando inservit”. Leslau (1958:15) states that the noun גָּרְזֵן “could be derived from” the once attested Hebrew verbal root גָּרַז. Bons (1994:132-33) derives גָּרְזֵן from the triliteral root גָּרַז. GK (§30 q) takes the Nun to be an expansion from a triliteral root, the

Seghol being a modification from an original short *a* (§85 *u*). Hoch (1994:304) gives גִּרְזֵן as connected with גרז.

**A.13** Gesenius (1835:302) also considered words as cognate that have the second and third radicals in a different order, e.g. מְגַזְרָה. Hoch (1994:304) similarly links גִּרְזֵן with other Semitic g<sub>z</sub>r words related to “cutting”.

**A.14** KB (193) suggest the following etymology, “גִּרְזֵן *if Hebrew*, גִּזָּם (גוז, ‘cutter’) > \*גִּרְזָם > \*גִּרְזֵן > (*influenced by* בִּרְזֵל)”. However, the article in KB on balance seems to point against a Hebrew origin for the word.

**B.1** Ges.-18 (229) compares with גִּרְזֵן Gr ἄξιον ‘axe’, but this is almost certainly a misprint for ἄξιον.

## 2. Formal Characteristics

**A.1** גִּרְזֵן is a quadrilateral.

**B.1** [nil]

## 3. Syntagmatics

**A.1** In Dt 20.19 גִּרְזֵן is the object of the verb נָדַח ‘impel (i.e. wield)’ (BDB:623). In Dt 19.5 we have the phrase יָדוֹ בְּגִרְזֵן וְנִדְחָהּ meaning possibly “and his hand is thrust (i.e. ‘swung’) with the axe”. נִדְחָהּ is best analysed as a niph of the root נדח (BDB:623) since a piel of this root is not attested.

**A.2** In the Siloam tunnel inscr the people who did the cutting are represented by the qal participle of the verb חָצַב (line 4, line 2 restored, cf. Davies 1991:68). In Is 10.15 the user of a גִּרְזֵן is likewise called a חָצֵב. Actions contextually associated with a גִּרְזֵן are also represented by the verbs כָּרַת qal ‘cut’ (Dt 19.5, 20.19), חָטַב qal ‘cut wood’ (Dt 19.5) and נָכַח hiph ‘strike’ (D-4.116.4).

**A.3** In the first line of the Siloam inscr מְנַפֵּם is usually restored (see Davies 1991:68) as a verb governing גִּרְזֵן via the restored object marker אֵת. This would be

the hiph of הַנּוּ ‘swing, wield, wave’ (BDB:631). Clines (2:375) records this restoration.

## B.1 [nil]

### 4. Versions

#### a. LXX:

ἀξίνη (Dt 19.5, Is 10.15);

πέλεκυς (1Kg 6.7);

σίδηρον (Dt 20.19).

#### b. Aq:

πέλεκυς (Dt 20.19, probably);

πέλυξ (Dt 19.5, Is 10.15).

#### c. Pesh:

nrg' (Dt 19.5, 20.19 [5b1, 6h6, 9a1<sup>fam</sup>], Is 10.15);

przl' (Dt 20.19 [most manuscripts]);

mgzr' (1Kg 6.7).

#### d. Tg:

TgO ברזלא (Dt 19.5, 20.19);

TgPro חולילא ‘chisel’? (1Kg 6.7, Is 10.15);

TgNeo, TgFrg (Klein 1980) סיקורא (< Lat *securis*) (Dt 19.5);

TgPsJ סיקוריא (Dt 19.5);

TgNeo כל מין דפרזל (Dt 20.19);

TgPsJ מן דפרזלא (Dt 20.19);

Samaritan Tg גרזל (Dt 19.5);

Samaritan Tg קצוץ (Dt 20.19).

#### e. Vg:

*securis* (always; pl in Dt 20.19).

A.1 By using πέλεκυς and πέλυξ, Aq has strongly differentiated הַנּוּ from קַרְדָּם, which he translated by ἀξίνη. Since both ἀξίνη and πέλεκυς are used in the

LXX for גְּרִיזָן, it is unlikely that any firm semantic distinction between the two Hebrew words can be inferred on the basis of Aq.

**A.2** In Dt 20.19 it is likely that TgNeo's reading of “any kind (מִין) of iron” developed from an earlier reading of “instrument (מִזְן) of iron” like TgPsJ.

**A.3** In the Samaritan Tg the word גְּרִיזָן may support some association between גְּרִיזָן and בְּרִיזָן. The word קְצוּץ is explained thus by Macuch (1982:248): “קְצוּץ Dt 20:19 qA\$O\$ ‘Axt’”.

**A.4** The fact that in Dt 20.19 LXX, Pesh and all Jewish targumic witnesses translate גְּרִיזָן by “iron” may represent an exegetical tradition, and indicate that גְּרִיזָן was associated with “iron”.

**B.1** McNamara (1997:102 note 11) comments that in Dt 19.5 TgNeo פְּרוּזָא renders Hebrew גְּרִיזָן. In fact in Dt 19.5 פְּרוּזָא translates Hebrew הַבְּרִיזָן.

## 5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

**A.1** In Dt 19.5, 20.19 גְּרִיזָן occurs in close association with the word עָץ, which it is being used to cut. In 1Kg 6.7 it occurs in the same context as אֶבֶן. Similarly in the Siloam inscr (line 3) צֶר ‘rock’ is the material being cut. In contrast, the word קְרָדָם is only attested with wood as its object. There may therefore be some semantic opposition between the two instruments, גְּרִיזָן being able to be used on a greater variety of materials.

**A.2** In Dt 19.5 and 1Kg 6.7 בְּרִיזָן is mentioned with גְּרִיזָן. In MT to 1Kg 6.7 בְּרִיזָן פְּלִי-כְּלִי בְּרִיזָן is in apposition to גְּרִיזָן, suggesting that a גְּרִיזָן was made, at least partly, of iron.

**A.3** In 1Kg 6.7 גְּרִיזָן occurs next to מְקַבֵּוֹת, pl of מְקַבֵּת ‘hammer’ (BDB:666), as an instrument of a similar kind. The co-occurrence of a word for “hammer” and גְּרִיזָן in a context of finishing stone may suggest that in some contexts גְּרִיזָן could mean “chisel” or something similar (compare TgPro on 1Kg 6.7 and Is 10.15). In Is 10.15 הַגְּרִיזָן is the A parallel to הַמְּשׂוֹר meaning the “saw” (BDB:673).

**A.4** גִּרְזֵן is in the semantic field of tools. However, in wartime such a tool may be used as an offensive weapon. However, in contrast to קִרְדָּם, there is no textual evidence for the use of a גִּרְזֵן in military contexts (Ahituv 1968:974, Hobbs 1989:115).

**B.1** [nil]

## 6. Exegesis

**A.1** It seems most probable that the iron referred to in Dt 19.5 is the blade of the גִּרְזֵן. Craigie (1976:266) understood Dt 19 to refer to an event when “two men go into the forest to cut wood and one is killed as a result of an accident due to a fault in his friend’s axe”. Compare also 2Kg 6.1-7 where the בִּרְזֵל falls into the water. The question is whether this refers to the loose blade or to the instrument as a whole.

**A.2** 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. barzelA, Sa'adja ar. XadId, also ‘Eisen’) dem Späthebräischen fremd ist, während die zum Baumfällen Jerem. 46,22 gebrauchten qardummOt als ein Gerät mit zwei Schneiden wohl bekannt sind. Das wohl einschneidige ma`a\$Ad (Jerem. 10,3) könnte sachlich garzen entsprechen; kaSSII (Ps. 74,5) war wohl ein größeres Werkzeug und qardOm (Ps. 74,5) das gewaltigste.”

**B.1** [nil]

## 7. Conclusion

**A.1** Overwhelming etymological and versional evidence supports the conclusion that גִּרְזֵן denotes an axe. Contextual and syntagmatic information also supports this conclusion. We know that a גִּרְזֵן was used for chopping wood (Dt 19.5, 20.19), for hewing stone (1Kg 6.7) and for tunnelling through rock (Siloam tunnel inscr). This is in contrast to the attestations of קִרְדָּם, which in its five OT occurrences is only associated with the cutting of wood. Given the paucity of occurrences of both words, it is impossible to be certain that there was a semantic opposition between גִּרְזֵן



and קרדום as regards the material they were used to cut. גרזן is translated by Gesenius (1835:302) as “securis”, by BDB (173) as “axe” and with reference to the Siloam tunnel inscr “pick” or “pick-axe”, by KB (193) “Beil *axe*”, “Steinhaue *pick*”, by HAL (195) “Beil”, “Steinhaue”, and by Ges.-18 (229) “Axt”, “Meißel”, “Hacke” and “Picke”. Clines (2:375) glosses the word as “axe - cutting instrument with blade or point of iron”. This is further specified as “axe” in Dt 19.5, 20.19 and Is 10.5, “pickaxe” in the Siloam inscr, and “adze” in 1Kg 6.7.

**A.2** There is a recurring association of גרזן with iron. The fact that the forms גרזן and ברזל are very similar may have facilitated their association, or even their association may have facilitated the assimilation of their forms as noted in Root and Comparative Material A.14, though the two words undoubtedly possess separate etymologies. גרזן and ברזל are linked in Dt 19.5 and 1Kg 6.7. At Dt 20.19 LXX, most manuscripts of Pesh, and all Jewish targums translate גרזן by “iron”. At Dt 19.5 the Samaritan Tg form גרזל may be a mixture of גרזן with ברזל. The association with ברזל is again in contrast to קרדום, which is never contextually associated with iron, nor associated with iron in the versions.

**A.3** A further contrast with קרדום is that גרזן is not attested in military contexts, whereas קרדום is. This, however, may be due to the small number of attestations of both words.

**A.4** Some of the oppositions between גרזן and קרדום noted above may be related. If, for instance, a גרזן always had an iron head, and the קרדום had a semantic opposition to גרזן as regards its material composition (perhaps because it never used iron, or generally used bronze etc.), then this might explain the difference in their application. Both denote axes. However, only the harder material iron was used on stone or rock.

**A.5** Another opposition between גרזן and קרדום is that גרזן is not attested in pl, whereas four of the five attestations of קרדום are in pl. It is possible that קרדום supplied the pl of גרזן. But this would be virtually incompatible with any semantic distinction between the two words, since they would have to be semantically very close for such a complementary distribution to arise.

## B.1 [nil]

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