

**bowl, hemispherical basin**

גִּלְיָה

**1. Statistics**

Torah: 0. Nebiim: 11. Ketubim: 4. Total: 15.

**2a. Literal Use**

In Josh. 15:19 (= Jud. 1:15) the גִּלְיָה refers to a reservoir of water (גִּלְיָה מַיִם), or perhaps a spring, located in the Judaeian hill country.

The same noun refers to the piece on top of the pillars Boaz and Jachin (גִּלְיָה הַפְּתִירָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשׁ הָעַמֻּדִים) in 1 Kgs 7:41 (עַל־פְּנֵי) in 1 Kgs 7:42; || 2 Chron. 4:12-13). Both these spheres were covered with a network (הַשְּׂבָכוֹת שְׁתֵּימָּה), each of which was embellished by two rows of pomegranates (הָרְמָנִים), 400 in all. The symbolical meaning of the spheres is disputed (Busink, 315-7; Fritz 1992), but if the two pillars Boaz and Jachin represented the guarding ancestors of the Davidic dynasty, as argued by De Moor 1995, esp. 16-7; 1997, 356-8; 1998, 200-1, the spheres may simply represent their heads in an aniconic way. See for an artist's impression of the two pillars, Busink, Pl. 52, opposite p. 174. Possibly this is a later development and were the capitals originally provided with faces.

Zech. 4:2-3 גִּלְיָה describes a hemispherical bowl on top of a golden lampstand (מִנְיֹרֶה זָהָב). Presumably this bowl too was made of gold and served as a reservoir for the oil of the seven lamps that were mounted round about upon it (cf. North 1970; Petersen 1984; → מִנְיֹרֶה). What these occurrences seem to have in common, is neither their function (water; building material; oil for lighting) nor their material (gold, stone, rock), but only their (hemi)spherical shape.

In view of the fact that the cognate words in Akkadian and Ugaritic denote golden and silver hemispherical drinking bowls (see section 4 below), it is unlikely that the word גִּלְיָה in Qoh. 12:6 denotes anything else (contrast e.g. Kelso, *CVOT*, § 38; Gordis 1968). It is also overstretching the meaning of Hebrew → קָבֵל to make it 'a silver tendril' of a golden lampstand (Seow 1997). Precious metals could be worked into torques resembling ropes or cords in antiquity (*CAD* D, 66; *CAD* Š/2, 321; Maxwell-Hyslop 1971; Exod. 28:14, 22; 39:3; Judg. 8:26). Qoh. 12:6a therefore

depicts the end of a wealthy man: the silver chain he was wearing proudly will be removed and the golden cup from which he used to drink will be broken into pieces to be melted down again. Qoh. 12:6b compares this man's end with that of a humble woman: her earthen jar ( $\rightarrow$  כִּי) and the wheel ( $\rightarrow$  כִּלְיָהַּ) with which she had to haul up water will be broken. It was a task of girls to fetch water in their earthen jars (Gen. 24; *KTU* 1.16:I.50-51), just as grinding was a daily chore of women (Qoh. 12:3; cf. Exod. 11:5; Isa. 47:2; Mt. 24:41 par.; Curtis, *AFT*, 115). Both Qoh. 12:3 and Qoh. 12:6 depict the unexpected cruel end of men and women in the prime of life who become victims of warfare or plague. In this way the wisdom teacher brings home his message that death might come just as unexpectedly to the youth he is addressing (Qoh. 12:1) as to aged people.

## 2b. Figurative Use

It is possible that the designation of a pond or spring by the word כִּלְיָהַּ is a metaphorical use of the term (see section 9).

Some scholars have suggested that the golden כִּלְיָהַּ in Qoh. 12:6 should be taken as a metaphor for the beauty of life (e.g. Gesenius & Roediger, *TPC*, 288). As shown above, this is an unnecessary assumption.

## 3. Epigraphic Hebrew

Not attested.

## 4. Cognates

The word כִּלְיָהַּ derives from the  $\sqrt{gll}$  'to be round' and basically designates a spherical vessel (Klein, *CEDHL*, 99; Guichard, *VLRM*, 178). Other derivatives of the same root designate circular objects, like wheels, disks and balls. In several Semitic languages, among them Arabic, derivatives of the  $\sqrt{gwl}$  have similar meanings.

AKKADIAN: In Mari the *gullum*, a Syrian vessel, was a large hemispherical drinking cup of gold, silver, or, more rarely, bronze, provided with one or more handles, sometimes decorated with indented hammering imitating a basket (Guichard, *VLRM*, 189-93, 234-5). See also Salonen, *Hausgeräte*, vol. 2, 96-7; Sallaberger,

*BTG*, 111.

UGARITIC: *gl* ‘cup’ (of silver and gold), Del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín, *DULAT*, vol. 1, 297.

PHOENICIAN, PUNIC: See under Greek and Latin.

SAMARITAN ARAMAIC: אַגְל ‘pond’, and הַלָּה, a ‘jewel’ (as rendering of כְּרִיָּה, a roundish gold jewel, in Exod. 35:22), Tal, *DSA*, 147.

CLASSICAL ARABIC: Lane, *AEL*, 437: *ǧullat* ‘a large receptacle . . . for dates’; 489, *ǧūll* ‘wall surrounding a well’.

ETHIOPIIC: *g<sup>w</sup> ellelāt* ‘metal ornament surmounted by a cross placed atop a church’ (Leslau, *CDG*, 191); *gull<sup>f</sup>lat*, ‘clay pot put on the top of an Ethiopian house, cupola, dome’ (Leslau, *CAMhD*, 204).

SANSKRIT, GREEK AND LATIN: Probably Sanskrit *gōlas*, ‘a waterpot’, Greek γαυλός ‘milk-pail, water-bucket, machine for raising water, any round vessel’, γαῦλος ‘round-built Phoenician ship’ (*LSJ*, 339, Suppl. 33) and Latin *gaulus*, ‘pail, round vessel’ (*LD*, 803) are all loans from Semitic languages (cf. Lewy *SFG*, 150-1; Brown 1995).

### 5. Ancient Versions

⊖ and other Greek versions: ⊖ uses different equivalents for each passage: Γολαθμαῖν (Josh. 15:19, 3x, with many orthographic variants, apparently taking it as a placename, \*גִּלְתָּה מִיָּם, like λύτρωσις ὕδατος ‘ransom of water’ (Jud. 1:15, 3x, representing \*גִּלְתָּה מִיָּם, *GELS-L*, 286), στρεπτόν (braided) ‘moulding, capital (of a pillar)’ (1 Kgs 7:27-28 [= π 7:41-42], *GELS-L*, 442), λαμπάδιον, ‘bowl (of a lamp), small lamp’ (Zech. 4:2-3, *GELS-L*, 276; *GELS-M*, 144, both with lit.), ἀνθέμιον ‘flower’ (Qoh. 12:6, *GELS-L*, 36) and γωλαθ ‘ball, small globe’ (2 Chron. 4:12-13, *GELS-L*, 94).

In Qoh. 12:6 α’ has λύτρωσις, probably representing הַלָּה; σ’ περιφερής, ‘round shape’; θ’ χελώνη ‘tortoise-shell’. See also Muraoka, *GHTIS*, 175.

⊔ offers the equivalents אַהַר בֵּית שְׁקִיא ‘irrigation place’ (Josh. 15:19; Judg. 1:15); אַגְנָא ‘basin, kettle, vessel’ (1 Kgs 7:41-42); גִּלְתָּה ‘bowl’ (Zech. 4:2-3) The paraphrasis of Qoh. 12:6 in ⊔ apparently equates

גִּלְגָּל with גִּלְגָּלֶת ‘skull’.

ס: Josh. 15:19 *hefrā hānā*, ‘this pit, pond’; Jud. 1:15 *bēt šeqyā* ‘irrigated field’; 1 Kgs 7:41-42 *ʾagnā* ‘large bowl, wine vessel, waterpot; crater of volcano; capital of pillar; base of a vessel’; Zech. 4:2-3 *keftā* ‘hollowed place, arch or vault’ (Payne Smith (Margoliouth), *CSD*, 222; Sokoloff, *SLB*, 647 gives ‘dish, pan’ as the first meaning).

ט: Josh. 15:19 and Jud. 1:15 *inriguum* ‘watered, sprinkled’; 1 Kgs 7:41-42 *funiculos* ‘cord’; 2 Chron. 4:12-13 *epistylia* ‘architrave’; Zech. 4:2-3 *lampas* ‘lampstand’; Qoh. 12:6 *vitta* ‘cord’.

## 6. Judaic Sources

In LevR 32.8 the occurrence of גִּלְגָּל in the meaning of ‘cup, bowl’ is a quotation from Zech. 4:2.

## 7. Illustrations

For possible examples of lampstands with multiple spouts around a circular basin in the middle see North 1970. The meaning ‘pool, natural water-basin’ is suggested by the fact that swirling water from a natural water outlet tends to hollow out a roundish basin in the rock. See e.g. *PLBL*, vol. 2, Benjamin, Gibeon pool (72-30tb.jpg); vol. 4, En Gedi, Nahal Arugat pool (df 022702.jpg).

## 8. Archaeological Remarks

[Will be added later on.] See North 1970; *BRL*<sup>2</sup>, 200.

## 9. Conclusion

It is likely that a hemispherical cup or bowl stands at the basis of all meanings, including larger convex vessels, the spheres crowning the pillars Boaz and Jachin, the bowl-shaped form on top of lampstands (though not in stone) and (metaphorically) a bowl-shaped natural basin filled by a natural water outlet. The English word ‘bowl’ has the same broad semantic spectrum. While both contents and construction material may vary, in most instances the bowl or basin contains a liquid. Originally it seems to have been a fairly large hemispherical drinking vessel, provided with handles, often made of precious metals like gold and silver. This

meaning is still likely in Qoh. 12:6.

## 10. Bibliography

*BDB*, 165: ‘basin, bowl’ – *BL*, 598: ‘Ölgefäß’ – *BRL*<sup>2</sup>, 200 – Brown 1995: J.P. Brown, *Israel and Hellas*, vol. 1 (BZAW, 231), Berlin 1995, 146-8 – Busink, 315-7 – Klein, *CEDHL*, 99 – Alonso Schökel, *DBHE*, 140: ‘Copa, cuenco ... Esfera ... aljibe’ – *DCH*, 352: ‘bowl; bowl shaped lower part of capital; spring’ – De Moor 1995: J.C. de Moor, ‘Standing Stones and Ancestor Worship’, *UF* 27 (1995), 1-20 – De Moor 1997: J.C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (BETHL, 91B), Leuven 1997 – De Moor 1998: J.C. de Moor, ‘Seventy!’, in: M. Dietrich & I. Kottsieper (eds.), “Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf”: *Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient* (Fs O. Loretz) (AOAT, 250), Münster 1998, 199-203 – Fritz 1992: V. Fritz, ‘Die Kapitelle der Säulen des salomonischen Tempels’, *ErIs*23 (1992), 36\*-42\*, esp. 39\* – *GB*, 140: II ‘Ölgefäß’, III ‘Teil des Säulenkapitäl’s; sv. גִּלְיָה, p. 143: ‘Wasserquellen’ – Gordis 1968: R. Gordis, *Koheleth: The Man and his World: A Study of Ecclesiastes*, New York <sup>3</sup>1968, 347-8 – *HAHAT*, 217: ‘1. (Öl-) Schale Sach 4,2... die Goldschale (sc. des Hängeleuchters) Qoh 12, 6... 2. architekt. (an Säulen)Teil des Kapitells... 3. Becken topogr.’ – *HALAT*, 184-85: ‘Becken, Schale; Wasserbecken’ – *HCHAT*, Bd. 1, 261: ‘1) ... Oelkrug, -gefäß ... 2) krugförmige Gestalt der Kapitäle ... 3)... Wasserquellen’ – *HWAT*, 123: ‘1) Schale a) für Öl ... b) als architekton. Bezeichnung: Kugel des Kapitäl’s ... 2) Quelle’ – *KBL*, 183: ‘Becken; wagrechte Scheiben (Becken) an Säulen’ and sv. גִּלְיָה, 186: place name – *LHA*, 152: ‘res pilae seu sphaerae figuram habens ... 1) receptaculum olei in lampade pretiosa, ampulla Zch 4 2 (lgd. גִּלְיָה) s. Ec 12 6 2) ornamentum quoddam capitellorum columnarum, prob. sphaerale’ – Maxwell-Hyslop 1971: K.R. Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western Asiatic Jewellery c. 3000-612 B.C.*, London 1971 – *MHH*, 157: 1. אֵן עַל רֵאשׁ מְנוֹרָה, חֶלֶק הַכְּתוּרַת שֶׁל עֲמוּדֵי יָכִין וּבֹעֵז ... כְּנֵרָאָה כְּלֵי עֲנוּל הַמְכִיל שֶׁמֶן – North 1970: R. North, ‘Zechariah’s Seven-Spout Lampstand’, *Bib* 51 (1970), 183-206 – Petersen 1984: D.L. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary* (OTL), London 1984, 220-1 – Salonen, *Hausgeräte*, , vol. 2, 96-7 – Seow 1997: C.-L. Seow, *Ec-*

*clesiastes: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AncB, 18C), New York 1997, 381 – Loewenstamm & Blau, *TLB*, vol. 2, 228: ‘1. Basin on top of chandelier, apparently round vessel containing oil (Zech. 4,2); so also perhaps . . . in Eccl. 12,6; but according to another view, the word there means the chandelier itself. 2. Part of capitals of the pillars Yachin and Boaz (1 K. 7,451), possibly a kind of circular basin round the top of a pillar’ – Gesenius & Roediger, *TPC*, 288: ‘lampas aurea’ – Guichard, *VLRM*, 189-93, 234-5.

Last update: 18-05-2011

W.F. SMELIK

This article should be cited as:

W.F. Smelik, ‘כִּלְיָי – bowl, hemispherical basin’, PDF downloaded from:

<http://www.otw-site.eu/KLY/kly.php>