

גְּאֻלָּה

(For fuller discussion of the lexical field as a whole see the ‘Overview of SAHD entries for “Deliverance” words’ on this site)

Introduction

Grammatical type: n f.

Occurrences: Total 14x OT, 0x Sir, 2x Qum, 0x inscriptions

Qum: 4Q504 5 ii 4; 4Q506 124.4

Text doubtful:

A.1 אֲנָשֵׁי גְאֻלָּתְךָ ‘men of your redemption’ in Ezek 11.15 is difficult, reflected by the disagreement in the Versions: οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας σου (LXX) and *nš’ dšbytk* (P) ‘men of your captivity’, reading גְּלוּתְךָ ‘your fellow exiles’ (root גלה), whereas the Vg has *virī propinqui tui* ‘your kindred’, and Tg קרִיבֵךְ ‘your relatives’, agreeing with MT (so BDB, p.145). See Exegesis, A.5.

A.2 4Q504 5 ii 4 נהגה גאל]תנו from a speech addressed to God, has been reconstructed using a parallel text 4Q506 124.4 נהג]ה גאלתנו ‘let us/we will celebrate our redemption’.

Qere/Ketiv: none.

1. Root and comparative material

A.1 [see גאל]

A.2 The theological meaning of גְּאֻלָּה ‘redemption’ (political liberation and independence) can also be found on ‘Freedom’ and ‘Redemption’ coins from the First Revolt against Rome (AD 66-70), bearing the inscription לגאלת ציון ‘for the redemption of Zion’ and coinage from the Bar Kochba revolt (AD 132-5) with the inscription שנת אהת לגאלת ישראל ‘year one of the redemption of Israel’ (for detailed references see Vermes and Millar 1973, pp.605-606). Similar expressions (always with ישראל) occur in the dates of legal documents from the period of the Second Revolt found in the caves of Wadi Muraba‘at (Mur 22 1.1; 24 2.2, 4.2, 5.1; 29 1.1; 30 2.1[8]; very likely also in other places where the papyrus is damaged), again corresponding to הרוות in some similar Aramaic documents (DJD II, pp.118-148). DCH 2, p.296, also refers to another occurrence in a ‘Bar Kochba IOU’ (further examples (p. 139 n. 2) and discussion in Horbury 2011).

2. Formal characteristics

A.1 *q^etullā* form (Joüon / Muraoka, 2000, §88Ck). It always occurs in the singular in the OT. This formation is found with a number of other legal terms (see further Horst 1961b, p.153 n.21).

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 גְּאֻלָּה is several times the subject of verb היה (Lev 25.29[2x], 31, 32, 48).

A.2 גְּאֻלָּה is the object of verb נתן ‘to give, grant’ (Lev 25.24), מצא (Lev 25.26, + כְּדִי שׁוּב, Lev 25.51, 52), גאל (Ru 4.6), הוג (4Q504 5ii.4; 4Q506 124.4).

A.3 הַלְאָנָה is nomen regens of עוֹלָם ‘the right of redemption for ever’ (Lev 25.32); and it occurs with the suffixes ‘his, its’ referring to a piece of land (Lev 25.26), a house (Lev 25.29[x2]) or an enslaved person (Lev 25.51, 52), ‘your’ referring to Ezekiel (Ezek. 11.15), ‘my’ referring to the next of kin (Ruth 4.6) and ‘our’ referring to the speakers of the ‘The Words of the Luminaries’ (members of the Qumran community? 4Q504 5 ii 4; 4Q506 124.4).

A.4 הַלְאָנָה is nomen rectum of כְּדִי ‘according to the sufficiency of redemption’ (Lev 25.26), מִשְׁפָּט (+ לְקִנּוּיָהּ) ‘the right of redemption (to buy)’ (Jer 32.7) and, if the text is correct, אֲנָשֵׁי ‘men of your redemption/kin group’ (Ezek 11.15).

A.5 הַלְאָנָה occurs in the nominal clauses: לְךָ הַמִּשְׁפָּט הַהַלְאָנָה לְקִנּוּיָהּ ‘the right of redemption to buy is yours’ (Jer 32.7) and לְךָ הַהַלְאָנָה ‘the right of redemption is yours’ (Jer 32.8).

A.6 הַלְאָנָה is followed by the prepositions: לְ ‘to’ of possession + 3ms sf ‘it’ referring to the house(s) earlier in the verse (Lev 25.31), לְ + לְוִיִּים ‘the Levites’ (Lev 25.32), לְ + 3ms sf ‘him’ referring to one’s brother (אָח) from v.47 (Lev 25.48), לְ + 2ms sf ‘you’ referring to Jeremiah (v.6) (Jer 32.8), לְ + 2ms sf ‘you’ (referring to Boaz, v.5) (Ru 4.6), לְ + לְאָרְצָהּ ‘for the land’ (Lev 25.24), מִן ‘part of’ + כֶּסֶף מְקֻנָּתוֹ ‘price of the sale’ (Lev 25.51).

4. Versions:

a. LXX

λύτρον (Lev 25.24, 26, 51, 52)

λυτρωτός (Lev 25.31, 32)

λύτρωσις (Lev 25.29[x2], 48)

ἀγγιστεία (Ru 4.6, 7)

[αἰχμαλωσία (Ezek 11.15)]

παραλαμβάνω (Jer 32.7)

πρεσβύτερος (Jer 32.8)

A.1 λύτρον is used in the LXX to translate the nominalizations of כּפַר, גָּאֵל and פְּדוּתָהּ. In Classical Greek λύτρον denotes ‘price of release, ransom’ (LS p.1067b), the ‘means of release’ implied by the suffix –τρον, and was used for the sum paid to ransom prisoners of war and slaves (Procksch and Büchsel 1967, p. 340).

A.2 The choice of words in the LXX seems to vary according to context, λύτρον being used when the emphasis is on a particular sum of money and λύτρωσις and λυτρωτός when the rights of redemption are being discussed.

A.3 It is no surprise that ἀγγιστεία appears in Ruth, as the main verb used to translate לָאָל in Ruth is ἀγγιστεύω ‘to be next of kin’. Together with πρεσβύτερος, which is used elsewhere of the eldest child (e.g. Gen 19.31; 27.1; 44.12) and is here a free rendering assuming the equivalence of הַלְאָנָה to the rights of the firstborn, ἀγγιστεία reflects the kinship aspect underlying הַלְאָנָה (see entry on גָּאֵל).

A.4 παραλαμβάνω in Jer 32.7 is a generalising rendering which ignores the technical meaning of הַלְאָנָה (cf. P, Tg).

b. Peshitta:

ṗwrqn’ (Lev 25.24, 26, 29 [2x], 31, 32, 48, 51, 52; Isa 63.4)

*yrtwt*ʾ (Jer 32.7; Ru 4.6, 7)
[*šbyt*ʾ (Ezek 11.15)]
*wl*ʾ (Jer 32.8)

c. Targum:

TgO

פורקן (Lev 25.24, 26, 29[x2], 31, 32, 48, 51, 52)

TgJon

קריב (Ezek 11.15)
אחסנתא (Jer 32.7,8)

TgNeo

פרקון (Lev 25.24, 26, 29[x2], 31, 32, 48, 51, 52)

TgPsJon

פורקן (Lev 25.24, 26, 26, 29[x2], 31, 32, 48, 51, 52)

Targum Ruth

אחסנתא (Ru 4.6)
פרקן (Ru 4.7)

A.1 Both the Peshitta and the Targums prefer the root *prq*, rather than *šzb* or *psy* (see entry on root יִשַׁע), with the exception of passages in Ruth and Jeremiah, where the choices of *yrtwt*ʾ, *wl*ʾ and אחסנתא respectively emphasise the claim to inheritance or possession.

d. Vulgate:

privilegium (Ru 4.6)
redemptio (Lev 25.24)
pretium ad redimendum (Lev 25.26)
licentia redimendi (Lev 25.29)
possum redimi (Lev 25.32, 48)
pretium (Lev 25.51)
propinquus (Ru 4.7; Jer 32.8; Ezek 11.15)
propinquitas (Jer 32.7)
redimo (Lev 25.31)
[no direct translation (Lev 25.52)]

A.1 It appears that the Vulgate does not have one particular word with which to translate גִּאֲלָה, but has sought to translate each occurrence with more specific phrases.

5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

A.1 (see גאל vb)

A.2 In Jer 32.8 **גְּאֻלָּה** is conjoined with **מִשְׁפַּט הַיְרֵשָׁה** ‘right of inheritance/possession’ as either an equivalent or a related idea, confirming that **גְּאֻלָּה** can denote a ‘right of redemption’ (cf. the phrase **מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה** in v.7).

A.3 Like the verb **גָּאַל** (see entry on **גָּאַל**, Lexical/Semantic Field(s), A.1), **גְּאֻלָּה** is closely associated with the verb **קָנָה** ‘buy’ (Jer 32.7-8).

A.4 In 4Q504 5 ii 4, 4Q506 124.4 **גְּאֻלָּה** is associated with (forgiveness of?) sins; the verbs **פָּדָה**, **סָלַח** and **נָצַל** Hiph. appear elsewhere in the text to refer to God’s action.

6. Exegesis

A.1 Several times **גְּאֻלָּה** means simply ‘redemption’, in the context of family and property law (Lev 25.24, 26; Jer 32.7; Ruth 4.7). A generalised development of this meaning, occurs in 4Q504 5ii.4; 4Q506 124.4 (compare also the slightly later use for the ‘liberation’ of Israel cited in Root and Comparative Material, A.2). But it also has some derived meanings which are reflected in the varied renderings of LXX and Vulg.

A.2 The meaning ‘right to redemption’ is clear in Jer 32.8 in view of the preceding phrase and also the fuller expression **מִשְׁפַּט הַגְּאֻלָּה** in v. 7. This meaning is also indicated by the context in Lev 25.31-32 and 25.48, and perhaps also in 25.29 (but see A.3). In Ruth 4.6 it may be present (cf. Vulg *privilegium*, NRSV), but ‘do my redeeming’ is also possible.

A.3 In Lev 25.29 the meaning of **גְּאֻלָּה** could be ‘the period of redemption’ (cf. JPS for the second occurrence).

A.4 The meaning ‘price of redemption’ is required by the context in Lev. 25.51-52 (cf. **יְשִׁיב**, and also LXX and Vulg here; likewise BDB and Horst 1961a, p.219).

A.5 In Ezek 11.15, if MT is correct (Cooke 1936, p.127, supports the reading **גְּלוּתָהֶם**, based on LXX and P), the sense of **גְּאֻלָּה** must be something like ‘family, kin-group’ (cf. Tg, Vulg), as representing those who would have had the responsibility of ‘redemption’ as **גְּאֻלָּיִם**. Zimmerli (1979, p.261; following Horst 1953, 337-338) defends this interpretation and argues for its appropriateness in Ezekiel’s exilic situation: it conforms well to the mention, just before, of Ezekiel’s ‘brothers’ and the implied interest in the family’s ancestral land is a natural one in the circumstances of exile, especially in the face of counter-claims like that made at the end of Ezek 11.15. It is certainly possible that such a collective meaning developed from the more common meaning ‘(right of) redemption’, but this remains the only place where it may be attested.

B.1 Horst (1961b, p.153) defines the meaning of **גְּאֻלָּה** as ‘Recht bzw. Pflicht zur Lösung (zur Rückkauf)’, ‘right or obligation of redemption (of repurchase)’, and he is followed by Ringgren (1977, p.352) and Stamm (1971, p.383). This is undoubtedly correct for some passages (above, A.2), but in others it either does not fit the context or is only one of two possibilities (see A.1, A.3-4).

B.2 The meaning ‘price of redemption’ (cf. A.4) is given by BDB (p.145) for **גְּאֻלָּה** also in Lev. 25.26, but it is the presence of **כֶּדֶי** there which indicates the amount required and **גְּאֻלָּה** most likely has the sense ‘redemption’.

Conclusion

גְּאֻלָּה is an expression that is much less widely attested in the OT than the verb **גָּאַל**: it appears only in laws and accounts of legal practice in the realm of family and property

law (even the questionable case in Ezek 11.15 would have to be related to this). It is never used to refer to blood-vengeance, cultic restitution or divine action. At Qumran it was used once (two parallel texts) with the theological sense of ‘salvation, liberation’ by God, as is also attested in Hebrew of the 1st and 2nd cent. A.D.: see Root and Comparative Material. *הָאָלָהּ* has, as both the Versions and exegetical considerations confirm, various related shades of meaning. It is the word for the practice of ‘redemption’ in the technical legal sense that involves a close family member (cf. the list in Lev. 25.48-49). But it also means ‘right of redemption’ and ‘price of redemption’ several times, and it may mean ‘period of redemption’ and ‘kin-group’ too.

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Alison Gray

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