פִּדְיוֹן

(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.m.
Occurrences: Total 2x OT, 0x Sir, 0x Qum, 0x inscr

Text doubtful:
B.1 פִּדְיוֹם in the MT of Nu 3.49 is presumably intended as a by-form of פִּדְיוֹן (for nouns with afformative ם- see GK §85t). But it is more likely a corruption of פְּדוּיִם (cf. Sam) by metathesis in the consonantal text.

Qere/Ketiv: none

1. Root and Comparative material
A.1 [See פדה]

2. Formal characteristics
qitlān form (or *qatalān*) (Joüon / Muraoka 2000, §88Mb-c).

3. Syntagmatics
A.1 פִּדְיוֹן is the subject of the verbs יקר 'to be precious' and חדל 'to be lacking' (Ps 49.9).
A.2 פִּדְיוֹן is the object of the verb נתן 'to give' (Ex 21.30).
A.3 פִּדְיוֹן is nomen regens of נַפְשׁוֹ 'his life' referring to the victim of a goring-ox (Ex 21.30) and of נַפְשָׁם 'their life', subject not specified, but 'human beings' is implied by 49.8 (Ps 49.9).

4. Versions
a. LXX:
λύτρα (Ex 21.30)
λύτρωσις (Ps 49.9)

A.1 The two renderings divide equally between 'price of redemption' and 'act of redemption'.
B.1 According to Field ἄλλος represented פִּדְיוֹן in Ps 49.9 by ἀντίλυτρον, but as he observes this is more likely to be a displaced rendering of כֹּפֶר in v.8.

b. Peshitta:
pwrqnʾ (Ex 21.30; Ps 49.9)

c. Targum.
TgO

פורקן (Ex 21.30)
TgNeo
פורקן (Ex 21.30)
TgPsJon
פורקן (Ex 21.30)
TgPsa
פורקן (Ps 49.9)

     d. Vulgate
pretium (Ex 21.30)
pretium redemptionis (Ps 49.9)

5. Lexical / Semantic Field(s)

    A.1 [see פדה entry]

    A.2 פִּדְיוֹן is closely associated with כפר 'ransom price' (Ex 21.30, Ps 49.8-9), which has its usual non-cultic sense.

6. Exegesis

    A.1 פִּדְיוֹן (Ex 21.30 and Ps 49.9) seems to be synonymous with פדוים, although both times it occurs specifically with נפשׁ. Exodus 21.30 concerns the owner of a dangerous ox which has not been kept secure and has killed a human. The owner is subject to the death penalty, but he may be allowed to pay a ransom. This practice is found elsewhere in the ANE, in the Laws of Eshnunna (§54) and in the Code of Hammurapi (§251). The פדיון (ransom) therefore, is the price (כפר) a man must pay for the victim's life. In Ps 49.9, פדיון also seems to mean 'price', although it is in a different context. Ps 49 is a Wisdom Psalm on life and death, particularly focussing on wealth and power. It clearly states that a brother cannot redeem (פדה) a man (Ps 49.8). He cannot give God his price (כפרו), which is presumably his ransom price. פדיון then qualifies כפרו in the preceding verse. In the face of death, wealth will not help you, for the value (פדיון) of (eternal) life (v.9) is too great - it is something which only God can give (v.15). This use of פדיון is very similar to the socio-legal usage and leads to an almost literal understanding of God paying a ransom price to the power of Sheol, which is not found explicitly elsewhere in the OT (but cf. Hos 13.14).

    A.2 The contexts suggest that while the emphasis of פְּדוּת is on the power of redemption/to redeem and it is always used in relation to God, פִּדְיוֹן on the other hand is used with human subjects. It denotes an actual ransom 'price' given in exchange for life (Ex 21.30), as is פדוים in Nu 3.46-51.

7. Conclusion

פִּדְיוֹן means the price that is paid for the redemption of a life. Neither of its two occurrences is in a cultic context. This contrasts with the wholly cultic use of פדוים.

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