(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. pl abstr.
Occurrences: Total 6x OT, 0x Sir, 3x Qum, 0x inscr
Qum: 4Q270 2 ii 8(2x), 2 ii 9

Text doubtful:

A.1 The unique occurrence of פדוּיֵי in the MT of Nu 3.49 is read as פדוֹיֵי in the Sam. text, which both BDB (p.804) and BHS follow. פדוֹיֵי might be a by-form of פדוֹי, as there are few nouns with affirmative פדוֹי (GK §85t, JM §88Ml), but the use of פדוּיֵי in the exactly corresponding phrase in v.51 and the firm preference for this form in the Priestly texts make the Sam. reading more likely to be original. The consonantant text of MT could readily have arisen by scribal error.

A.2 It is uncertain whether פדוֹיֵי in Nu 3.49 should be seen as a noun, as elsewhere in 3.46-51, or as the pass part of the verb פדה. The latter is favoured by Gray (1903, p. 32), NRSV and other modern translations, it appears to be the view taken in Tg and Vg, and it produces a smoother sense.

B.1 In 4Q511 36.3 פדוּיֵי is most likely the pass part of the verb פדה: the genre of the text makes a legal term out of place.

Qere/Ketiv:

A.1 Nu 3.51 Kt פדוּיֵי Qr פדוֹיֵי according to BDB, p. 804a, but the Leningrad Codex has no Qere here, and BHS implies that it only appears in some MSS.

1. Root and Comparative material

A.1 [See פדוֹי]  

2. Formal characteristics

A.1 qatūl : Joüon and Muraoka 2000, §88Ec (abstract or action nouns), §136f-i (on the use of the plural to represent intensity, abstraction or action) (cf. BL 517y and Köhler 1921, p. 316). Cf. also גאולים.

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 פדוּיֵי appears as object of the verbs: ‘to take’ (Nu 3.46, 49), ‘to give’ (Nu 3.48 [in apposition toכסף, ind. obj. Aaron and his sons], 51 [ind. obj. Aaron and his sons]).
A.2 פ דוּי ם is nomen regens of ‘the 273 (surplus)’ (Nu 3.46), ‘those left over/in excess’ (Nu 3:48), ‘the Levites’ (Nu 3.49), ‘the [firstborn of] the unclean [animal]’ and ‘their souls/lives’ (4Q270 2 ii 8-9).

A.3 פ דוּי ם is nomen rectum of כסף ‘silver’ (Nu 3.49, 51).

A.4 פ דוּי ם is used with 3rd s m suffix of the firstborn of (human beings and) unclean animals (Nu 18.16).

A.5 פ דוּי ם is used with the prep על preceded by נדメディ (Nu 3.49).

A.6 פ דוּי ם is used as a casus pendens (or in a nominal clause) with a specified price (Nu 18.16).

4. Versions
   a. LXX:
      λύτρα (Nu 3.46, 48, 49, 51)
      λύτρωσις (Nu 18.16)
      ἐκλύτρωσις (Nu 3.49)

      A.1 In four cases LXX treats פ דוּי ם as a word for the payment made, in the other two as a word for the action of paying. The distinction is hardly necessary.

   b. Peshitta:
      pwrqn ‘(Nu 3.46, 48, 49[2x], 51, 18.16)

   c. Targum:
      TgO
      פורקן (Nu 3.46, 48, 49, 18.16)
      פריק (Nu 3.49)

      TgNeo
      פרקון (Nu 3.46, 48, 49[2x], 51, 18.16)

      TgPsJon
      פרקון (Nu 3.46, 48, 49[2x], 51, 18.16)

      A.1 Although the Targums generally render פ דוּי ם by a noun, in Nu 3.49 the second instance is represented by the part. of the verb פדה in TgO, as also in Vulg.

   d. Vulgate:
      pretium (Nu 3.46, 48)
      redimo (Nu 3.49)
      redemptio (Nu 18.16)
      [no equivalent] (Nu 3.49, 51)

      A.1 The use of a verbal form for the second instance in Nu 3.49 implies that it was taken to be the pass part of the verb פדה, not a noun, as also in TgO.
5. Lexical / Semantic Field(s)
   A.1 [see פדה entry]
   A.2 פדוּי is closely associated with כסף silver (Nu 3.48, 49, 51), and in Nu 18.16 it appears to be defined as ‘5 shekels of the sanctuary’. In comparable (non-cultic) contexts (Ex 21.30; Ps 49.8-9) and are used with the same sense.

6. Exegesis
   The only occurrences of פדוּי which refer to enforceable law are Nu 18.16 and 4Q270 2 ii 8-9, both involving a redemption payment for firstborn which is to be made to Aaron and/or his sons. The pseudo-historical account in Nu 3.46-51 applies this to the role of the Levites as temple-servants in the Priestly Work and provides further information about the means of redeeming first-born humans, as it refers to their cost. The first-born animals and humans of the Levites are to be given to God in place of (i.e. as a redemption for) the first-born of the whole of Israel (Nu 3.41). פדוּי occurs in a construct with the number of first-born Israelites (273) above the number of Levites (3.46, 48). The redemption price for them is five shekels (3.47). Twice פדוּי occurs as nomen rectum with כסף, which seems to mean here ‘money of redemption’ (3.49, 51). Stamm distinguishes פדה from גאל by the idea of substitution or giving something in exchange for the object to be redeemed (1976, p. 395), which is supported by the use of ב in Ex 13.13, 34.20, and the explanation of payment in Nu 3.46f. The focus on payment of equivalent value does seem to be prominent in כסף, but it is not completely absent from the meaning of גאל (cf. Isa 52.3), in the idea of re-purchase. Both פדה and גאל seem to be related semantically to the noun כספ in this sense of payment for life, although the verb כספ is more closely connected to the idea of expiation (cf. Nu 35.33; Dt 21.8).

7. Conclusion
   פדוּי, like פּוּנָי, means the price that is paid for redemption. Its use is limited to the cultic practice of the redemption of the firstborn in Priestly texts and Qumran law, whereas פּוּנָי is used only in ‘profane’ contexts.

Bibliography


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