(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: noun

Occurrences: (Total: 3) 1x OT, 2x Qum, 0x Sir, 0x inscr.
Qumran: 4Q385 f2, 5-6; 4Q386 f1, i 5

Text doubtful: The two Qumran documents are both texts of 4Q Pseudo-Ezekiel and overlap whereפרק occurs, enabling more of the total context to be seen. Only the first occurrence of פרק is extant in 4Q385, but the second can be confidently restored by comparison with 4Q386.

Qere/Ketiv: In Is 65.4 ופרק is the Ketiv, but the Qere is ומרק and this is also the reading of 1QIs (see further below on Versions and Exegesis). BHS retains the Ketiv, but the better attested Qere (‘broth’) is followed in many modern translations (Luther, AV, RV, RSV, NEB, REB, NRSV, NIV; but not JB, ‘food’), as well as by BDB, p. 830. As a hapax legomenon in BH, however, the Ketiv is the more difficult reading and should perhaps be preferred. See further below, Exegesis B.2.

1. Root and Comparative Material

[See the entries for פרק and מרק.]

2. Formal Characteristics

Noun, presumed qatal-type (only construct form survives in a vocalised text of Ancient Hebrew).

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 פרק is the subject of קרב qal, ‘come near’, in 4Q385 f2 5 (though the reading of the verb is somewhat uncertain and probably based on Ezk 37.7).

A.2 In Is 65.4K פרק is in the construct state before פגלים, ‘uncleanness’ (a genitive of the attribute, as in בשר פגלה in Ezk 4.14).

A.3 פגלים (Is 65.4K) is the subject of a noun-clause, in which the complement is כליהם, presumably ‘in their vessels’ (adverbial indication of place). The sing. here might well be collective.

A.4 פרק occurs in a composite expression פרק אל פרק, ‘one joint (shall come near) to another’ (4Q386 f1 i 5), which indicates that a פרק here forms part of a larger whole (though prior separation is also presupposed).
4. Versions

a. LXX:

ζωμός (θυσιῶν, μεμολυμμένα...) (Is 65.4)

Jewish revisers:
nil

b. Peshitta

wmṯwšyn (bšld’ [m’nḥywn…]) (Is 65.4)

c. Targum:

רין ( FlatButton)

TgJ (Is 65.4)

d. Vulgate:

ius (profanum) (Is 65.4)

A.1 LXX, Vulg and TgJ render by words meaning ‘broth, soup’ and are clearly based on the Qere ורין (see Qere/Ketiv). LXX adds the interpretive gloss θυσιῶν, ‘(made from) sacrifices’ and apparently (mis)understood פגלים as a pass. part. qal of a verb פעל which occurs only in later Heb. and Aram. (Jastrow 1971: 1133), hence rendering it by μεμολυμμένα, ‘defiled’. Since the verb פעל and the associated nouns are used in MH and Aram. specifically of invalid sacrifices, this (mis)understanding could also have given rise to the addition of θυσιῶν (cf. TgJ). In any case Vulg. avoids any such specific connection

A.2 The Peshitta has no reference to soup or broth and may therefore have been endeavouring to render the Ketiv. But, apart from its use of m’nyhwn for מְטָלֵים, its choice of equivalents (‘polluted’, if mṯwšyn is from twš, and ‘by corpses’ [presumably reading מְטָלֵים מְטָלֵים מְטָלֵים for וְקֵרָב]) is imprecise and probably based on guesswork inspired by a quest for a suitable parallel to ‘eating pig’s flesh’ in the previous stich (for the idea cf. Nu 19.14-15). There is no obvious etymological explanation for Sy’s understanding of פרך (or מַרְגָּר) as meaning ‘polluted’. It is of course possible that it got it from LXX’s μεμολυμμένα, not realizing that this was intended as the equivalent of מְטָלֵים מְטָלֵים מְטָלֵים rather than מַרְגָּר, in which case the rendering is of no relevance to the semantics of פרך.

5. Lexical/Semantic Fields

A.1 In Is 65.4 the parallel stich refers to the eating of ‘pig’s flesh’ (בשר חזיר), a forbidden dietary practice according to Lv 11.7-8 and Dt 14.8.
A.2 Other materials which are said to be ‘in vessels’ (with ב) are meat (חטאת [Lev. 6.21]), a mixture (Nu 4.16; Is 66.20), ingredients for making bread (Ezk 4.9), oil (Jr 40.10), incense (Nu 4.16), a mixture of solids and liquids (Gn 43.11, but the sense of כלים may be ‘baggage’), water (Nu 5.17 [מים קדשׁ]; 1Kg 17.10), wine (Est 1.7; Jr 40.10), oil (Nu 4.10; Jr 40.10). The list thus covers both solids and liquids, mainly but not entirely for human consumption, and items for use in both domestic and cultic situations. [Examples of כלים preceded by ב where it has a different sense are not included.]

A.3 In 4Q385 f2 the expression פרקו פרק אל is preceded by אָֽנָּשׁ, ‘one bone to another’, which (with the wider context and its basis in Ezk 37, where אָֽנָּשׁ occurs in v. 7) suggests that a פרק is something like an עצם but not identical to it. The order of the expressions might be taken to mean that a פרק is something smaller than an עצם, which would also fit with both etymology and usage outside Ancient Hebrew.

6. Exegesis

A.1 Marti (pp. 401-2) and Beuken (IIIB, p. 67) leave open the possibility that פָּרָּק is the original reading in Is 65.4, rendering it ‘Brocken’ (‘crumbs’, pres. ‘small pieces’ [sc. of meat]) or ‘brokken’ (pres. the same). Both of them, like other commentators, interpret the consumption of this food as part of secret rituals, perhaps connected with the cult of the dead.

A.2 In 4Q385 and 4Q386 the context seems to require a reference to bones without flesh on them, and the placement after עצם (cf. Syntagmatics) points to ‘smaller bones, joints’ being meant. This fits a use of פֶּרֶּק in later Heb. (see פֶּרֶּק, Root and Etymology, A.4), to which there are possible parallels in Syriac (cf. ibid., A.6). The BH word מפרקת (q.v.), ‘neck(-bone)’ may also be connected with this, in view of the neck-bone’s composition from several small bones (vertebrae). The vocalisation of the Qumran texts being uncertain, it may be better to associate these occurrences with פֶּרֶּק rather than פָּרָּק, in view of the MH vocalisation of a word with a similar meaning. One might even consider whether the vocalisation of the BH word should also be reviewed, since the vowels in MT relate to the Qere זְרֵכָה.

B.1 Volz states his preference for the reading זְרֵכָה, saying that it even appears as the Ketiv in some mss. (1932: 277, 279. Westermann (1969: 399, 401) and Goldingay (2014: 427 n. 7) follow this reading without mentioning the problem.

7. Conclusion

A.1 פָּרָּק, as the more difficult reading, is probably original in Is 65.4 and in view of the parallel most likely refers to pieces of meat ‘torn off’ (cf. the meaning of the verb פָּרַק) a larger joint.

A.2 In 4Q385 and 4Q386 the meaning must be the ‘(bone) joint’ to which some cognates in Hebrew and possibly Syriac point (cf. Exegesis A.2). The word should perhaps be vocalised פֶּרֶּק.

Bibliography

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