

## גְּאוּלִּים

(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.

Occurrences: Total 1x OT, 0x Sir, 0x Qum, 0x inscriptions

Text doubtful:

**B.1** It is possible to parse the form as m pl. pass. part. of the verb (cf. Duhm and Whybray ad loc.), and DCH records it as such, while allowing the nominal parsing as an alternative (2, pp. 293-94). But most modern commentators (so Marti, Volz and recently Blenkinsopp) and versions (e.g. RSV, NRSV) treat it as a noun, as do BDB (p. 145) and HALOT (p. 168, with ref. to BL 517y and Köhler 1921). The parallel גַּמְלָה and the versional renderings (see below) support this.

**B.2** Budde (1909, pp. 661-62; cited by Köhler without reference) proposed the emendation גְּמוּלִי, but it has not found favour with others.

Qere/Ketiv: none.

### 1. Root and comparative material

**A.1** [see גַּאֵל]

### 2. Formal characteristics

**A.1** *qatūl* : Joüion 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, 316). Cf. also פְּדוּיִם.

### 3. Syntagmatics

**A.1** גְּאוּלִּים is *nomen rectum* of שְׁנַת, ‘the year of redemption’ and the whole phrase is the subject of the verb בּוֹא (Isa. 63.4).

**A.2** The form attested is גְּאוּלִּי, ‘my redemption’: the 1 s pronoun here, as throughout Isa 63.1-6, refers to God.

### 4. Versions:

**a. LXX**

λύτρωσις (Isa 63.4)

**A.1** λύτρον is used in the LXX to translate the nominalizations of כֶּפֶר, גַּאֵל and פְּדָה. 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 when the action or right of redemption is being discussed.

**b. Peshitta:**  
*pwrqn* (Isa 63.4)

**c. Targum:**

**TgJon**  
פורקן עמי (Isa 63.4)

**A.1** Both the Peshitta and the Targums prefer the root *prq*, rather than *šzb* or *pšy*, to render גאל (see entry on root גאל), with the exception of passages in Ruth and Jeremiah, where the choices of *yrtwt* and אהסנתא respectively emphasise the claim to inheritance.

**A.2** Here the Targum has added עמי to make clear whose ‘redemption’ is involved.

**d. Vulgate:**  
*redemptio* (Isa 63.4)

## 5. Lexical/Semantic Field(s)

**A.1** (see גאל vb)

**A.2** גאולים occurs in poetic parallelism with נקם, ‘vengeance’ (Isa 63.4). The parallelism is not synonymous: the two terms represent the different effects of the same action respectively for Israel’s enemies and Israel itself (cf. Tg).

## 6. Exegesis

**A.1** Marti (1900, 392) compared ‘the year of my גאולים’ to the laws on the jubilee year in Lev. 25.28-34, 47-55, where the verb גאל is used several times.

**B.1** Merz (1916, 68) introduced a sense based on the idea of the גאל as an avenger of blood: ‘(the year of) those to whose avenging I am obligated’. Köhler (1921, 316) took this in a more plausible direction (‘year of’ is not very likely to be followed by a genitive of the person, and the sense which Merz proposed for the part. is forced) by comparing נערים and בתולים (cf. also זקנים) as ‘time-words’ formed on this pattern and proposing ‘time when one acts as an avenger of blood’ (likewise KB and Westermann 1969, 383). But, although the parallel with נקם, ‘vengeance’, can be seen as favouring this interpretation, it is not decisive (see above, 5) and the combination with ‘year’ seems to make this temporal dimension of meaning otiose. Volz retains the traditional understanding as an abstract noun (1932, 261).

## Conclusion

The single occurrence of גָּאֵלִים in BH leaves some doubt as to which of the uses of the verb it is related to. A case has been made for '(time of) avenging' instead of the traditional understanding 'redemption', which sees it as a synonym of גָּאֵלָה in one of its senses, but it is not compelling.

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