פְּדוּיִם

(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 פִּדְיוֹם in the MT of Nu 3.49 is read as פְּדוּיִם in the Sam. text, which both BDB (p.804) and BHS follow. פִּדְיוֹם might be a by-form of פִּדְיוֹן, as there are few nouns with afformative ם (GK §85t, JM §88Ml), but the use of פְּדוּיִם 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 consonantal text of MT could readily have arisen by scribal error.

A.2 It is uncertain whether פְּדוּיֵי 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 פדויים 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 פִּדְיוֹם Qr פְּדוּיִם 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 פדה]

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 פְּדוּיִם appears as object of the verbs: לקח 'to take' (Nu 3.46, 49), נתן 'to give' (Nu 3.48 [in apposition to כסף, ind. obj. Aaron and his sons], 51 [ind. obj. Aaron and his sons]).

A.2 פְּדוּיִם is nomen regens of 'the 273 (surplus)' (Nu 3.46), הָעֹדְפִים בָּהֶם 'those left over/in excess' (Nu 3:48), הלוים 'the Levites' (Nu 3.49), בכור הבה]מה הטמא] 'the [firstborn of] the unclean [ani]mal' and נפשׁם 'their souls/lives' (4Q270 2 ii 8-9).

A.3 פְּדוּיִם is nomen rectum of כסף 'silver' (Nu 3.49, 51).

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

A.5 פְּדוּיִם is used with the prep על preceded by העדפים (Nu 3.49).

A.6 פְּדוּיִם 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 פְּדוּיִם 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:
pwrqnʾ (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 פְּדוּיִם by a noun, in Nu 3.49 the second instance is represented by the part. of the verb פרק 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 פְּדוּיִם 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) פִּדְיוֹן and כֹּפֶר are used with the same sense.

6. Exegesis

The only occurrences of פְּדוּיִם 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). פְּדוּיִם 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 פְּדוּיִם 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 בְּ 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 פדה, 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 כפר in this sense of payment for life, although the verb כפר is more closely connected to the idea of expiation (cf. Nu 35.33; Dt 21.8).

7. Conclusion

פְּדוּיִם, like פִּדְיוֹן, 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 פִּדְיוֹן is used only in 'profane' contexts.

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