

פָּרֵק

(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 where פָּרֵק occurs, enabling more of the total context to be seen. Only the first occurrence of פָּרֵק is extant in 4Q385, but the second can be confidently restored by comparison with 4Q386.

Qere/Ketiv: In Is 65.4 וּפְרֵק is the Ketiv, but the Qere is וּמְרֵק and this is also the reading of 1QIs^a (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 פָּרֵק and פָּרֵק.]

2. Formal Characteristics

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

3. Syntagmatics

A.1 פָּרֵק is the subject of קָרַב 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 פָּרֵק is in the construct state before פְּגִלִים, ‘uncleanness’ (a genitive of the attribute, as in בֶּשֶׂר פְּגוּל in Ezk 4.14).

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

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

4. Versions

a. LXX:

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

Jewish revisers:

nil

b. Peshitta

wmṭwšyn (bšld' [m`nyhwn...]) (Is 65.4)

c. Targum:

רטף (פיגול) 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 ומרק (see Qere/Ketiv). LXX adds the interpretive gloss θυσίων, ‘(made from) sacrifices’ and apparently (mis)understood פגלים as a pass. part. qal of a verb פגל which occurs only in later Heb. and Aram. (Jastrow 1971: 1133), hence rendering it by μεμολυμμένα, ‘defiled’. Since the verb פגל 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 θυσίων (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 כליהם, its choice of equivalents (‘polluted’, if *mṭwšyn* is from *ṭwš*, and ‘by corpses’ [presumably reading פגרים for פגלים]) 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 פרק (or מרק) 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 פגלים rather than מ/פרק, in which case the rendering is of no relevance to the semantics of פרק.

5. Lexical/Semantic Fields

A.1 In Is 65.4 the parallel stich refers to the eating of ‘pig’s flesh’ (בשר החזיר), 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 (הטאה [Lev. 6.21]), a מנהה (Nu 4.16; Is 66.20), ingredients for making bread (Ezk 4.9), קיץ (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 קדשים]); 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 כלי preceded by ב where it has a different sense are not included.]

A.3 In 4Q385 f2 the expression פרק אל פרקו is preceded by עצם אל עצמו, ‘one bone to another’, which (with the wider context and its basis in Ezk 37, where עצם אל עצמו 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 פֶּרֶק 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 פֶּרֶק in later Heb. (see פֶּרֶק, 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 פֶּרֶק rather than פֶּרֶק, 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 ומרק.

B.1 Volz states his preference for the reading ומרק, 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 פֶּרֶק, 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 פֶּרַק) 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 פֶּרֶק.

Bibliography

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