

Artikel

An Open Question Relating to the Hebrew Root *glh*

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The title of this article has been inspired by a statement which is to be found in a study of the above root by B.K. Waltke who remarked thus: "In the light of this evidence it must remain at this point an open question whether we are dealing with one or two roots."¹

It is also true to state that, this article also derives from the present writer's contribution to Volume 2 of *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, in which the root *glh* was examined syntagmatically.² During this intensive investigation the complex root was treated as a whole, a decision which was rendered necessary by the history of lexical tradition; although, the question (whether because of the semantic range of *glh* we are dealing with one root or two) which is now under consideration, remained uppermost in the mind of the lexicographer. It is, therefore, proposed in the scope of this study to investigate this question thoroughly, so that one may either corroborate or reject A. Even-Shoshan's attestation of *glh* II³. In order to arrive at a satisfactory answer to this question – as to whether we are dealing with one root or two roots – it appears that there are two levels of approach: (a) the evidence from comparative Semitic Philology; (b) the evidence from the use of the root(s) in the Hebrew Bible.

(a) *The Evidence from Comparative Semitic Philology*

By an examination of the evidence in Comparative Semitic Philology is meant an examination of the use semantically of the cognate root *glh* in the varying Semitic languages. The use of the root *glh* in Semitic has been thoroughly investigated by D. Cohen in his comprehensive Dictionary⁴. BDB in its evaluation of this root made reference to: Arabic, Ethiopic, Aramaic and Syriac, and it seems appropriate to follow their classification, with the proviso that one must now add Ugaritic to this list of cognate languages⁵. A similar evaluation of the cognate languages has been made more recently in the new Gesenius⁶. As far as Arabic is concerned the root *glā*

¹ R.L. Harris, G.L. Archer, B.K. Waltke, "Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament" Vol 1 pp 160-161. Chicago 1980.

² D.J.A. Clines (Ed), "The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew" Vol 2 pp 348-352. Sheffield 1995.

³ A. Even-Shoshan, "A New Concordance of the Bible" pp 235-236. Jerusalem 1996.

⁴ D. Cohen, "Dictionnaire des racines sémitiques" Vol 3 pp 120-122. Leuven 1993.

⁵ F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, "A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament" pp 162-163. Oxford 1907.

⁶ W. Gesenius, "Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über Das Alte Testament" 18th Edition, pp 215-217. Berlin 1987.

carries both sets of meanings. E.W. Lane has noted that, the root *ġlā* in its first conjugation carries the meaning of “*was or became clear, unobscured, exposed to view, displayed, laid open, disclosed, uncovered; was or became apparent, overt, conspicuous, manifest, notorious, plain, obvious or evident.*”⁷ In addition to this meaning which the root *ġlā* carries, he has noted that it also conveys “*go forth, emigrate, disperse oneself or be dispersed, leave, flee.*”⁸ For the sake of completeness it should also be noted that the root *ġlā* carries the additional meaning of “*have degree of baldness*”, which may be seen as an extension of its basic meaning of “*be exposed to view*”.⁹ Thus, when one examines the lexical use of the Arabic root *ġlā* it appears to have a similar semantic range to that of its Hebrew counterpart. However, for the purposes of this study it should be noted that, R. Blachère has divided his evaluation of this root into two homonyms, namely, *ġlā* I, “*unveil*” and *ġlā* II, “*leave, evacuate*”, so that it may be that we should accept that Arabic once possessed two roots which in the evolution of the language became one¹⁰. It now appears appropriate that we should examine the use of the cognate root in Ethiopic.

BDB in its consideration of the Hebrew root *glh* has deemed that it has two cognate roots in Ethiopic, namely, *glw* and *gly*. To the first of these Ethiopic roots it has apportioned the meanings: *obducere, velare*¹¹. However, since we are attempting to consider the evidence from Ethiopic properly it seems correct not to take their word for such evidence, but to examine the exact use of the roots *glw* and *gly*. A. Dillmann has noted that the root *glw* has two sets of meanings, the first of which he has defined by the Latin root *obduco*, and the second which he has defined by means of the Latin roots: *velo, obvelo, velo operio*¹². From the first of these definitions it can be detected that the Ethiopic root *glw* roughly equates to the Hebrew root *glh* with the meaning of “*depart, go into exile*”, since Latin’s *obduco* can be rendered by “*lead, draw before, draw to*”. However, when his second set of meanings is examined they exhibit no correspondence with the Hebrew root *glh*, since Dillmann has rendered these by a succession of Latin roots whose basic meaning is that of “*cover, cover over*”. We now proceed to consider the second Ethiopic root *gly* which Dillmann has noted as being cognate to the Arabic root *ġlā*, and which he has defined by means of the Latin roots: *retexo, manifesto, explico, declaro*¹³. When these meanings are examined it can be clearly seen that *gly* equates more or less to the Hebrew root *glh* with the meaning “*of uncover, reveal*”, since the Latin roots he has used to define *gly* bear the meaning of “*unveil, unravel, exhibit, make public, unfold, set forth, show, declare*”. Thus, when one examines the lexical use of the roots *glw* and *gly* they would appear to exhibit the same range of meanings as that

⁷ E.W. Lane, “Arabic-English Lexicon” Vol 1 pp 446-447. London 1863-68.

⁸ E.W. Lane, “Arabic-English Lexicon” Vol 1 pp 446-447. London 1863-68.

⁹ E.W. Lane, “Arabic-English Lexicon” Vol 1 pp 446-447. London 1863-68.

¹⁰ R. Blachère, “Dictionnaire arabe-français-anglais” pp 1660-1666. Paris 1957.

¹¹ F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, “A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament” pp 162. Oxford 1907.

¹² A. Dillmann, “Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae” pp 1140-1141. Lipsiae 1865.

¹³ A. Dillmann, “Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae” pp 1140-1141. Lipsiae 1865.

attributed to Hebrew's *glh*. The only caveat which can be recorded against the above analysis and comparison of the Ethiopic roots *glw* and *gly* with Hebrew's *glh* is that W. Leslau in his *Comparative Dictionary* considers that the Ethiopic root *glw* should not be equated with Semitic *gli/u*, but with *gll/gwl*¹⁴. What this means in practical terms for the purposes of comparison is that it is only the Ethiopic root *gly* which may be truly evaluated with Hebrew's *glh*. This evaluation of the evidence from Ethiopic means that its root *gly* only equates to the Hebrew *glh* when it is used to denote the nuances of "uncover, reveal", and that, consequently, there is no root in Ethiopic which can be compared to the Hebrew's *glh* as a verb of motion. For this reason it seems better to hold with Dillmann¹⁵, C. Brockelmann¹⁶ and Blachère¹⁷ that the Ethiopic root *glw* should be equated with Semitic *gli/u*, and not with *gll/gwl*. We shall now proceed to examine the cognate use in Aramaic.

BDB in its consideration of the Hebrew root *glh* has deemed that it is cognate to the Aramaic *gl*¹⁸. In his treatment of this latter root, M. Jastrow has treated the forms *g^elê*, *g^elâ*¹⁹, and *gālâ*²⁰ together under one root and has, therefore, proposed that we are dealing with one Aramaic root and not two. To this root in its *Peal* conjugation he has attributed two sets of meanings thus: "reveal, uncover; go into exile, go away, disappear"²¹. However, it is important to recognise the dating of the literature that he is dealing with, which according to his introduction may be considered to be either first or second century BC.¹⁹ Thus, for our purposes what we require is a treatment that deals with the Aramaic root *gly/gl*²² in antiquity. Such a treatment has been provided by J. Hoftijzer who has noted that the root *gly*, which is the earlier form of *gl*²³, occurs in various Aramaic texts with the meaning of "discover, reveal"²⁴. He has now, however, revised his earlier work and has noted that the root *gly* occurs with the meaning "reveal, uncover" in both Official and Jewish Aramaic, and with the meaning "go into exile" in Jewish Aramaic only²⁵. The picture presented by Biblical Aramaic is, of course, a fragmentary one, but is, nevertheless, worthy of note for the sake of completion. In Biblical Aramaic the root *gl*²⁶ occurs in the *Peal* with the meaning of "reveal disclose", and only in the *Hafel* with the meaning of "deport". Thus, when one examines the lexical use of the Aramaic root *gly/gl*²⁷ it appears to have a similar semantic range to that of its Hebrew counterpart.

It now seems appropriate to consider the use of the Syriac's *gl*²⁸, since it is the final cognate root listed by BDB. Payne Smith has attributed to this root three sets of meanings thus: a) manifesto, revelo; b) pronuntio; c) migro; although it should be stressed he has restricted the latter of these to the form *gly*²⁹. The semantic range

¹⁴ W. Leslau, "Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez" p 192. Wiesbaden 1991.

¹⁵ A. Dillmann, "Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae" pp 1140-1141. Lipsiae 1865.

¹⁶ C. Brockelmann, "Lexicon Syriacum" p 115. Halle 1928.

¹⁷ R. Blachère, "Dictionnaire arabe-français-anglais" p 1660. Paris 1957.

¹⁸ M. Jastrow, "Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature" Vol 1 p 248. Leipzig 1903.

¹⁹ M. Jastrow, *ibid*, Vol 1 p v.

²⁰ J. Hoftijzer, "Dictionnaire des Inscriptions Sémitiques de L'ouest" p 50. Leiden 1965.

²¹ J. Hoftijzer & K. Jongeling, "Dictionary of North-West Semitic Inscriptions" Vol 1 pp 221-224. Leiden 1995.

²² R. Payne Smith, "Thesaurus Syriacus" Vol 1 pp 716-717. Oxford 1879.

attested for *gl*² is, therefore, to be rendered in English thus: “*make public, exhibit, unveil, uncover, proclaim, announce, remove, depart*”. The use of *gly/gl*² in Syriac is very similar to that of *glh* in Hebrew. The final piece of evidence to be considered is the use of the cognate root in Ugaritic.

As far as Ugaritic is concerned the six examples of *gly* all occur in the perfect tense of the root, to which Gordon has attributed the meaning of “*leave*”.²³ In his examination of the texts in which *gly* occurs he considers that *gly* is cognate to the Arabic *ġlā* “*emigrate*”, but that it is not synonymous with *b*³, “*come, arrive*”; although this latter interpretation may be open to question, since other scholars have attributed to it the meaning “*approach, arrive at, enter*”.²⁴ Whichever interpretation we adhere to the one thing that is certain is that in Ugaritic *gly* is a verb of motion.

It is now time to consider what conclusions may be deduced from the evidence which the Cognate Semitic Languages have supplied. At the outset, a cursory glance of this evidence would seem to suggest that no firm conclusions can be drawn from it. This is particularly the case if we consider the evidence which Arabic, Aramaic and Syriac have supplied us with, since they, at least, would tend to suggest that we are dealing with one Semitic root whose semantic range encompasses the nuances of both motion (“*emigrate, remove, depart*”), and revelation (“*uncover, reveal*”). However, the situation depicted by these languages, is, to say the least, a complex one. Part of such complexity is the chronological spreading and dating of these languages, since, as Moscati has noted, their actual dating ranges from the second millennium BC to the 5th cent. AD²⁵. As far as the languages we are dealing with are concerned their chronological order may be defined thus: Ugaritic 1300-1200 BC; Hebrew 1200-200 BC; Aramaic 900-200 BC; Syriac 200-1200 AD; Arabic (classical) 400 BC-400 AD; Ethiopic 300 AD-modern times. Therefore, for our purposes what is required is a diachronic treatment of the root *gly* in these languages.

As far as the oldest of these languages is concerned, namely, Ugaritic, the root *gly* occurs purely as a verb of motion, and as noted above, has been rendered by “*leave, approach, arrive at, enter*” without any nuance of revelation or uncovering being detected. The position with Aramaic is that it seems to indicate the existence of one root only, the *Peal* of which language expresses the concepts of “*reveal, disclose, go into exile*”. However, it should be noted that, the latter concept is to be found only in a single text from Jewish Aramaic, whose provenance may be dated to the 2nd. cent. BC²⁶. The earliest attested occurrence of the Aramaic root *gly/gl*² is in Imperial Aramaic (which may be dated as 600-300 BC), to which St. Segert has attributed the meaning “*enthüllen*” in the *Peal*, while the meaning “*in Verbannung führen*” is attributed to the *Hafel* only²⁷. It is interesting to note that this is exactly the picture

²³ C.H. Gordon, “Ugaritic Textbook” Glossary No 579. Rome 1964.

²⁴ M.H. Pope, “El in the Ugaritic Texts” pp 64-65. 1955.

²⁵ S. Moscati, “An Introduction to The Comparative Grammar of The Semitic Languages” pp 8-15. Wiesbaden 1980.

²⁶ J. Hoftijzer & K. Jongeling, “Dictionary of North-West Semitic Inscriptions” Vol 1 pp 221-224. Leiden 1995.

²⁷ St. Segert, “Altaramäische Grammatik” p 530. Leipzig 1975.

that is presented by the evidence of Biblical Aramaic, the *Hafel* of which yields the concept of “*deport*”. Does this slender evidence suggest that the nuance of “*deport, lead into exile*” was originally solely the property of the causative conjugation? When one examines the Syriac language the evidence seems to suggest the existence of one root only; although, a certain dichotomy is to be found in the fact that, as R. Payne Smith has noted, the meaning “*migro*” is restricted to the form *gly*, and not to *gl*.²⁸ The examination of the evidence of the Arabic language would tend to lead us to the conclusion that we are dealing with one root, since in Arabic the root *glā* expresses the nuances of “*was or became clear, unobscured, exposed to view, displayed, laid open, disclosed, uncovered; was or became apparent, overt, conspicuous, manifest, notorious, plain, obvious or evident*” as well as that of “*go forth, emigrate, disperse oneself or be dispersed, leave, flee.*”²⁹ However, it may be that Classical Arabic may be judged to be too recent an arrival on the Semitic scene to defend absolutely the premise that we are dealing with only one root. The last language to be examined is that of Ethiopic which, surprisingly, uses two roots to express all the nuances covered by Hebrew’s *glh*. The roots in question are, as noted above, *glw* and *gly*, the former of which carries the meaning “*lead, draw before, draw to*”, while the latter carries the meaning “*unveil, unravel, exhibit, make public, unfold, set forth, show, declare*”. The evidence thus examined does show that in Ethiopic at least the nuances conveyed by Hebrew’s *glh* are expressed by two roots. The only caveat that can be expressed on this detection is that while the root *glw* does express the concept of motion by such nuances as “*lead, draw before, draw to*”; it also expresses concepts that are exactly the opposite of those expressed by *glh*, namely “*cover, cover over*”. The evidence provided by Ethiopic may be judged to be of a unique character, since, as A. Dillmann and C. Bezold have noted, it has preserved a more antique stage of the Semitic morphology and syntax than that which may be found in the other Semitic languages³⁰. While the same judgement is often to be applied to the ancient morphological forms which Arabic has preserved, Dillmann and Bezold are of the opinion that Ethiopic has preserved many of the antique and rare usages, of which Arabic has left no trace whatsoever. It may be, therefore, that Ethiopic has preserved two roots where the other Semitic languages such as Aramaic and Arabic have retained only one. If one accepts that such is the case, and if the evidence provided by Ugaritic can be added to this scenario together with the slender evidence in Aramaic and Syriac then it may be that the case for the existence of *glh* I and *glh* II can be justified.

(b) *The Evidence from the Hebrew Bible*

I now proceed to examine the evidence provided by the use of the root(s) in the Hebrew Bible. The examination of the evidence from the Hebrew Bible seeks to evaluate whether there were two roots: *glh* I being a verb of revelation which expresses the nuances of that concept such as “*uncover, reveal*”, whereas *glh* II

²⁸ R. Payne Smith, “Thesaurus Syriacus” Vol 1 pp 716-717. Oxford 1879.

²⁹ E.W. Lane, “Arabic-English Lexicon” Vol 1 pp 446-447. London 1863-68.

³⁰ A. Dillmann & C. Bezold, “Ethiopic Grammar” § 3-4, pp 6-9. London 1907.

would be considered to be a verb of motion and would express the nuances of “depart, disappear”.

When one examines the actual occurrences of *glh* II “depart, disappear” (on the supposition that it actually existed as a root in its own right), one finds that according to Even-Shoshan’s attestation of *glh* II it occurs in the *Qal* some 28 times; in the *Niphal* only once; in the *Hiphil* some 38 times; and in the *Hophal* some 7 times. This investigation further reveals that, the use of the *Hiphil* and *Hophal* conjugations, which express the concepts of “take into exile, be taken into exile”, are unique to this root and are not used at all in *glh* I. The sole occurrence of the *Niphal* in Is 38₁₂ is textually doubtful, since BHS has noted that the Vulgate on this occasion has rendered the *Niphal* of *glh* “be rolled up”, and therefore, proposes the emendation *w^enāgal*. This emendation is particularly attractive, since it gives credence to the following *ʾōhāl rōʿim* “shepherd’s tent”, which the shepherd would surely remove by rolling it up. We are now left solely with the *Qal* which occurs some 28 times with the nuance of motion; whereas *glh* I occurs some 22 times in the *Qal* with the nuance of revelation. As far as the *Qal* of *glh* II is concerned it is necessary to distinguish between its “primary” meaning and its “extended” meaning, both of which are intransitive. By “primary” meaning what is meant is its simple use as a verb of motion where it conveys such nuances as “go forth, depart, disappear”, and is to be found in such texts as: 1 S 4_{21,22} Is 24₁₁ Ezk 12₃ Ho 10₅ Jb 20₂₈ Pr 27₂₅. By contrast, the “developed” sense “be in captivity, go into captivity” and is to be found in such texts as: Jg 18₃₀ 2 S 15₁₉ 2 K 17₂₃ 25₂₁ || Jr 52₂₇ Is 5₁₃ 49₂₁ Jr 1₃ Ezk 39₂₃ Am 1₅ 5₅ 6₇ 7_{11,17} Mc 1₁₆ Lm 1₃. Of these, the last from Lm 1₃ is deserving of further comment, since that particular text has been the subject of scholarly investigation³¹. In this latter study, R.B. Salters has subjected the root *glh* to intensive investigation and in the course of doing so has noted that, many exegetes have attributed to *glh* a passive meaning, “is gone into captivity, is taken captive”, which is also derived from their interpretation that the verse alludes to the Babylonian captivity. Whether or not the verse actually refers to the Babylonian captivity the fact remains that exegetes seem to have missed the point that the root *glh* is here used with a “stative” nuance: “be in captivity”. Its use in this verse to denote a state is surely in common with the use of the other perfects in vv 1-5, which the author of Lamentations has surely used to denote the situation of distress of Judah, so that Yahweh may be moved to involvement in it. This use of the perfect to denote conditions of distress in the poetic laments of the Hebrew Bible is one, to which attention has already been drawn by the present writer³².

In the above analysis attention was drawn to the primary meaning of *glh* II, namely “go forth, depart, disappear”. It was further noted that, this meaning is to be found in such texts as: 1 S 4_{21,22} Is 24₁₁ Ezk 12₃ Ho 10₅ Jb 20₂₈ Pr 27₂₅. To this list may be added Is 49₂₁ and Am 6₇, since in these two latter texts the root *glh* is paralleled by

³¹ R.B. Salters, “Lamentations 1.3: Light from the History of Exegesis”, in *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (ed. J.D. Martin and P.R. Davies), Sheffield 1986.

³² F.A. Gosling, “The Syntax of Hebrew Poetry: An Examination of the use of Tense in poetry with particular reference to the Book of Job 3.1-42.6”. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of St Andrews 1994.

the root *swr* which there means “*depart, remove*”. This means that, the “developed” sense “*be in captivity, go into captivity*” is to be found in such texts as: Jg 18₃₀ 2 S 15₁₉ 2 K 17²³ 25₂₁ || Jr 52₂₇ Is 5₁₃ Jr 1₃ Ezk 39₂₃ Am 1₅ 5₅ 7_{11,17} Mc 1₁₆ Lm 1₃. When the aforesaid list of texts is examined it can be seen that, with the exception of 2 S 15₁₉, their almost inclusive object of reference is either the Assyrian exile or the Babylonian exile. Thus the texts which refer to the Assyrian exile are: Jg 18₃₀ 2 K 17₂₃ (both Deuteronomic compositions) Is 5₁₃ Am 1₅ 5₅ 7_{11,17}, while the Babylonian exile is referred to in 2 K 25₂₁ || Jr 52₂₇ Jr 1₃ Ezk 39₂₃ Mc 1₁₆ Lm 1₃. In this latter list the text from Micah is taken to refer to the Babylonian exile as being a post-exilic addition to the work of Micah³³. From this examination of these texts it would seem that the act of resettlement which involved taking nations into captivity has given to *glh* II its developed sense of “*be in captivity, go into captivity*”, and in this connection it should be noted that the *Hiphil* and *Hophal* conjugations refer without exception to the Babylonian captivity. An exception to this sense was noted above to be that of 2 S 15₁₉ and it now seems appropriate to examine this occurrence of *glh* II. When one examines the various English translations it seems that their various renderings have been too influenced by the developed sense of *glh* II, namely “*be in captivity, go into captivity*”, since they are virtually in agreement in rendering this text as: “*you are an exile from your country*”. However, if attention can be given to what has been defined as the primary meaning of this root, then a more apt translation of this text would be “*you are an emigrant from your country*”. Therefore, the result of this investigation of 2 S 15₁₉ is that it also can now be classed as an example of the primary sense of *glh* II, which is of course as a verb of motion. In practical terms what this means is that 10 of the 23 occurrences of *glh* II can now be shown to exhibit the nuance of motion by such renderings as “*go forth, depart, disappear*”. Whether, however, this evidence is sufficient to propose the separate existence of a verb of motion *glh* II is a matter for the conclusion of this article, to which we now turn.

The evidence thus reviewed from the Hebrew Bible does show that the root *glh* II not only exhibits the established nuances such as “*be in captivity, go into captivity*”, but also a primary sense “*go forth, depart, disappear*” which indicates that it must be considered to be a verb of motion, and in this connection it is worth underlining the fact that it is used in parallelism with the root *swr* “*depart, remove*”. This use of *glh* II as a verb of motion ties in well with what is known of the root *gly* in Ugaritic, as has been noted above. In addition, one may cite the fact that of all the Semitic languages Ethiopic uses two roots, namely, *glw* and *gly* to cover the nuances expressed by Hebrew’s *glh*. However, these discoveries by themselves are not sufficient to justify the postulation of *glh* II as a root which would be separate and distinct from *glh* I, since our knowledge of the ancient Semitic languages may be judged to be fragmentary, although, it could be argued that the existence of two roots in Ethiopic may preserve a more antique stage of Semitic morphology and syntax. Since our knowledge of the cognate Semitic languages is too fragmentary to finalise a definite conclusion in the direction of a recognition of *glh* II by itself, it seems that the best that one can do is to suggest that the evidence reviewed above

³³ R.L. Smith, “Micah-Malachi”, Word Biblical Commentary Vol 32 p 23. Waco 1984.

may be suggestive of the existence of *glh* II as a separate root, and to underline that its use as a verb of motion in the Hebrew Bible may help to substantiate this proposal.

Abstract:

The article thus presented is the fruit of the present writer's lexical contribution to the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. In this study the author seeks to examine the question relating to the Hebrew root *glh* as to whether we are dealing with one root or two. The question is then examined by two levels of data: 1) the evidence from Comparative Semitic Linguistics; 2) the evidence from the Hebrew Bible itself. The conclusion is therefore, that the evidence examined may be understood as supporting the proposal that *glh* II did exist in its own right and separate from *glh* I.

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