Ruth 4,17

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Gen 19,38

The younger also bore a son and named him Ben-ammai; he is the ancestor of the Ammonites to this day.

• Deuteronomium 23,3-4

No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD.

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none of their descendants shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD.

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Thus says the LORD: For three transgressions of the Ammonites, and for four,

I will not revoke the punishment; because they have ripped open pregnant women

cכאמר יהוה על שילה שלשה פשעי בני עמון ועל ארבעה

לא אשיבנו על הרקעמה הרות

The names Noomi & Ruth

• בן-עמי (Ben-Ammi; Gen 19,38)
• נעמי (Noomi)
• הרות (pregnant women; Am 1,13)
• רות (Ruth)
Abstract:

The problematic return of Ruth

The Moabite Ruth is regarded as a prototype of a convert to Judaism. Her conversion is described as a return to Juda (Ruth 1:22; 2:6). In the four chapters of the Ruth scroll the Hebrew root שׁב serves as a key word as it appears 15 times.

According to biblical tradition, the Moabite Ruth is denied the return because of her background. The biblical scriptures explain repeatedly that Moab (Moab, i.e. the Moabites) and בני־עמון (the Ammonites) have no right to return to the congregation, i.e. to (re)integrate into Israel (Dtn 23:4; Neh 13:1 etc.).

Three obstacles prevent the conversion of the Moabite Ruth:

1) After the destruction of Sodom (Gen 19:24–25), where Lot had settled after the separation from his uncle Abram (Gen 13:12), there was a fatal case of incest (Gen 19:30–38): The sons that arose from this incident are considered to be the founding fathers of the Moabites and the Ammonites (Gen 19:37–38).

2) The ancestors of the Moabite Ruth were still affected by the separation of their forefather. Lot had separated himself from his uncle Abram and therefore from the promise that was bound to him (Gen 13:8–11).

3) In addition to the incest of Lot’s daughters in Genesis, according to the prophet Amos (Am 1:13–2:1) the Ammonites ( בני עמון) and the Moabites (Moab) also committed war crimes, which prevented that God “brought them back” (וּנּלֹא אֲשִׁיבֶ; root שׁב in hifil; Am 1:13; 2:1).

The “return” or “conversion” of a Moabite and therefore a reintegration into God’s covenant with Abraham despite of the three obstacles is in need of an explanation. An author who wanted the Moabite to “return” to Juda had to give her some kind of theological pass.

The study asks for philological indications that are suitable to shed a light on how the author handled the difficult background of his protagonist. A new understanding of the proper names in the Ruth scroll offers a key.
The Lost Daughter

Ruth’s problematic return

*Ruth and the Lot–Abraham–Cycle*
Some parallels: Ruth – Abram – Lot – Lots Daughters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruth 1,11f. – Gen 19,31</th>
<th>Ruth and Lot’s daughters have no hope for descendants.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 1,16f. – Gen 13,8-11</td>
<td>Ruth and Lot shall separate, but unlike Lot from Abram, Ruth refused to separate from Noomi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 2,11 – Gen 12,1</td>
<td>Ruth &amp; Abram leave their home and move to a foreign land.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth 2,8-17 – Gen 18,3-6</td>
<td>Boaz hosts Ruth and Abraham hosts the Lord</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth 3,2-4 – Gen 19,32f.</td>
<td>Boaz and Lot drink alcohol; Ruth and Lot’s daughters lay down with them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth 3,7f.13f. – Gen 19,33-36</td>
<td>The situations of Ruth and Lot’s daughters in the camp were the same, their behaviours were opposite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 4,12-17 – Gen 19,36-38</td>
<td>The naming of Ruth’s and Lot’s daughter’s children.</td>
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</table>
Christoph Paudiß: Loth und seine Töchter (Gen 19, 30-38).

um 1649, Leinwand, 155,5 × 198 cm.
Budapest, Magyar Szépmüvészeti Múzeum.
Deutschland; Barock.
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Ammonites & Moabites are excluded from the covenant

• Deuteronomium 23,3-4
No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of their descendants shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD.

• Amos 1,13
Thus says the LORD: For three transgressions of the Ammonites, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because they have ripped open pregnant women.
• Ben-Ammi (Gen 19,38; בֶּן־עַמִּי)
• Noomi (צְעָמִי)
• Pregnant women (Am 1,13)
• Ruth (רְוֹתָה; רְוֹת)