Ruth 4,17 | Gen 19,38
--- | ---

The women of the neighbourhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.”

The younger also bore a son and named him Ben-ammi; 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.

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.

ל א ש ו ת ה א ל ה ר ק מ א פ ש ט פ מ ב ר ל פ נ ע ל ל א ר ב ש ע ה

### The names Noomi & Ruth

- **בע름** (Ben-Ammi; Gen 19,38)
- **נעמי** (Noomi)
- **רהות** (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 שׁוֹב 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 מואב (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 (מואב) also committed war crimes, which prevented that God “brought them back” (וּנּלֹא אֲשִׁיבֶה; root שׁוֹב 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.