

The Targum to the book of Ruth.

By

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This Targum like all the other Targums to the so called »Festal rolls»¹ belongs to a special class of Targums, the chief characteristics of which is an exaggerated use of paraphrase. They can scarcely be called Targums (i.e. translations) in the ordinary sense like for instance the Targum Onkelos to the Pentateuch, which is valuable also for the textual criticism of the Bible. The Targums to the five rolls on the contrary are more or less Haggadic, paraphrastic commentaries like the Midrashim.² They are all comparatively late in date. Dalman³ assigns these Targums to a date half-way between the Babylonian Targums (i.e. Onkelos and that to the prophets) and the Jerusalem Targums⁴ to the Pentateuch and those to the greater Hagiographa. Of these six Targums the Targums to the Lament-

¹ The »Festal rolls» (Megilloth) Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, are so denominated because each was written on a roll by itself, and they came to be associated and publicly read at five great seasons. The book of Ruth was read at Pentecost, the harvest feast, because it makes special mention of the harvest field.

² The Targum of Esther is known in two forms: 1) almost a literal translation (that of the Antwerp Polyglot) and practically the same text with several Haggadic additions (that of the London Polyglot), 2) the so called second Targum, a large commentary, containing many late Midrashim. The so called second Targum to Esther is quoted by Rashi (to 1 Kings 10: 19) as the »Haggada» of the Meg. Esther; Zunz, Gottesdienstliche Vorträge, 2nd ed. p. 83.

³ Grammatik des Jüdisch-Palästinischen Aramäisch (1905) p. 35.

⁴ Zunz, op. cit. The second Targum to Esther is quoted by Rashi (to Deut. 3: 4) as a Jerusalem Targum.

ations and Ecclesiastes and the first Targum to Esther are not very paraphrastic. The remaining three (i.e. the second Targum to Esther, the Targum to the Song of Songs and to Ruth are much of the same Haggadic character and almost of the same type.¹

In the following English translation from the original Aramaic Targum² to the book of Ruth, the Revised Version has been used as a foundation. The additions that are to be found in the Targum have been printed in italics.

But since the R.V. is not a literal translation it has been in many cases impossible to show the small identities or differences between the Massoretic Hebrew and the Targum. Many a time the explanatory additions of the English version are just the same as those of the Aramaic version (Targum).³ The explaining additions are often used also without any actual need.⁴ Very characteristic is the transparent exaggerating tendency of the Targum.⁵ Only once a Massoretic sentence is missing in this Targum.⁶

As to the contents of the Targum in comparison with the Biblical text one leading idea may be presented here. It is a known fact that the canonical book of Ruth is practically free from religious pragmatism, which is so much to be found elsewhere in the O. T. On the contrary this lack of pragmatism is abundantly supplied by the Targum.

¹ All these begin in the same way. The Targum to the Song of Songs gives a list of ten different songs, which »were sung in this world», except the tenth one, which is eschatological. The second Targum to the book of Esther gives a list of ten different kingdoms, the tenth kingdom being eschatological. The Targum to the book of Ruth gives a list of ten different famines, the tenth famine being also eschatological. Cf. the Jerusalem Targum on Exodus 12: 42 speaks of four nights, and the last is eschatological. These Targums deal much with the subject of the »King Messiah».

² »Humesh Megiloth», by Moshe Alsheikh, printed in Warsaw 1877.

³ Compare for instance the footnotes to 1: 11; 2: 14; 3: 15.

⁴ As an illustration of the typical explanatory additions may be mentioned the Targum to 2: 9: »Athirst *for water* — drink of that *water* which —».

⁵ See for instance 2: 7: »She sat a *very* little in the houses».

⁶ See footnote 3, p. 91.

CHAPTER I.

1. And it came to pass in the days when the judges¹ judged, that there was a *severe* famine in the land of Israel. *Ten severe famines were prescribed from the heavens to be in the world, from the day of the creation of the world until king Messiah should come, to rebuke by them the inhabitants of the earth. The first famine was in the days of Adam, the second famine in the days of Lamech, the third famine in the days of Abraham, the fourth famine in the days of Isaac, the fifth famine in the days of Jacob, the sixth famine in the days of Boaz who was called Absan the just, who was of Bethlehem-Judah, the seventh famine in the days of David the king of Israel, the eighth famine in the days of Elijah the prophet, the ninth famine in the days of Elisha in Samaria, the tenth famine is to be in the future, not a hunger of eating bread, nor thirst of drinking water, but of hearing the word of prophecy from before the Lord.*² And when this famine was severe in the land of Israel, there went away a great man from Bethlehem-Judah, and he went to sojourn in the country of Moab,³ he, and his wife, and his two sons.

2. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion Ephrathites, *great men* of Bethlehem-Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and were there *military tribunes*.⁴

3. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left a *widow*, and her two sons *fatherless*.

4. *And they transgressed against the ordinance of the word of the Lord.* And they took them *strange* wives, of the daughters of Moab. The name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other was Ruth, *the daughter of Eglon, king of Moab*, and they dwelled there about *the time of* ten years.

¹ Aram. n ā g ī d, literally »the leader».

² See Amos 8: 11—13.

³ M (the Massoretic text) and T (the Targum) »the field of Moab», A. V. and R. V. »the country of Moab», cf. M and T »the land of Israel».

⁴ »Military tribunes», Aram. r ō f ī l ī n, lat. rufilus, (D a l m a n, Aramäisch—Neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum etc. (1922).

5. *And because they had trespassed against the ordinance of the word of the Lord, and had married with strange nations, their days were shortened. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them, in the defiled land; and the woman was left deprived of her two sons and as a widow of her husband.*

6. Then she arose, with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab, for it was made known¹ *in the country of Moab, by the mouth of the angel*, that the Lord had remembered² his people *the house of Israel* in giving them bread, *for the sake of the righteousness of Absan the prince, and on account of his prayer which he prayed before the Lord; he is Boaz the pious.*

7. And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her.³

8. And Naomi said to her two daughters in law: Go, return each to her mother's house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with *your husbands who sleep*,⁴ *for ye refused to take husbands after their deaths, and with me, for ye nourished and sustained me.*

9. The Lord grant you *a perfect compensation for the good that you have done to me, and in that compensation* may you find rest each one in the house of her husband, and she kissed them and they lifted up their voice and wept.

10. And they said unto her, *We will not return to our people and to our god*,⁵ *but we will return with thee unto thy people in order to be proselytised.*

11. And Naomi said: Return again, my daughters, why will ye go with me? Have I yet *any more*⁶ sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

¹ M «for she had heard».

² M «the Lord had visited» (pāqad).

³ The 7 b of M is missing altogether in T, «and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah».

⁴ T «with your husbands who sleep» — M «with the dead».

⁵ 1: 10 Literally «to our fear». The same expression «fear» occurs twice in v. 15.

⁶ A. V. has added an explanatory addition «any more», which is just the same addition as that of T.

12. Turn again, my daughters, *from (following) after me*, go to your people, for I am too old to be *married* to a husband. For¹ I said, if I were a girl, there would be hope for me, *certainly* I could be married to a husband to night, and *certainly* I could bear sons.

13. Perhaps for them ye would tarry until they were grown, *as a woman who keepeth herself (chaste) for a little brother in law to take her to a husband*. Would ye sit *worrying yourself* for their sakes, since ye are not taken to a husband? *I pray*, my daughters, *embitter not my soul, it is more sad with me than with you*, for a *chastisement* from before the Lord hath gone forth against me.

14. And they lifted up their voice and wept again a second time, and Orpah kissed her mother in law, but Ruth clave unto her.

15. And she said, Behold thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and to her god, return thou after thy sister in law *to thy people and to thy god*.

16. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, to return from (following) after thee, for *I desire to be proselytised*. *Naomi said: We are commanded to keep the sabbaths and the feast days,² we may not go more than two thousand cubits*. *Ruth said*, Whither thou goest, I will go. *Naomi said: We are commanded to keep the Six Hundred and Thirteen Precepts*. *Ruth said*, *What thy people keep I will keep, also I, as if they had been my people also previous to this*. *Naomi said*, *We are commanded not to worship strange gods.*³ *Ruth said*, Thy God is my God.

17. *Naomi said: We have four penalties of death for the guilty, stoning with stones, and burning with fire, and beheading (with) the sword, and hanging upon wood*. *Ruth said: In whichever way thou diest I will die*. *Naomi said, We have a burial-ground*. *Ruth said*, And there I will

¹ The contents of 12 b and 13 have undergone so deep syntactic changes that the difference between M and T can not easily be shown here with different types. Cf. T »it is more sad with me than with you« — M »it grieveth me much for your sakes«.

² Literally »good days«.

³ Literally »worship«. (Also the name of the Mount Moriah) Aram. pūlhānā, D a l m a n, pūlhānā.

be buried,¹ and *do not add to speak any more*, the Lord do so to me, and so may he add upon me, if aught but death part thee and me.

18. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she left speaking unto her.

19. So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass when they were come to Bethlehem that all *the inhabitants of* the city were moved about them and they said, Is this Naomi?

20. And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me *Merirath Naphsha*,² for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21. I went out full of *my husband and of my sons*, and the Lord hath brought me back again empty *of them*. Why call ye me Naomi? From before the Lord *my guilt* is testified to me,³ and the Almighty hath afflicted me.

¹ Tractate Yebamoth, 47:

She (Naomi) said to her (Ruth): We are not allowed to go more than two thousand cubits on the sabbath day ('āsīr lān t⁹hūm).

(R): Whither thou goest, I will go.

(N): We are commanded not to commit fornication ('āsīr lān yihūd).

— (R): Where thou spendest the night, I also.

(N): We are commanded to keep the Six hundred and thirteen precepts.

— (R): Thy people is my people.

(N): We are not allowed to worship the stars.

(R): Thy God is my God.

(N): The house of judgment has four penalties of death.

(R): In whichever way thou diest, I will die.

(N): Two kinds of tombs (sc. one for the good people and another for the wicked) are allowed before the house of judgment.

(R): Where thou shall be buried, there I will be buried.

² Literally «bitter in the soul». M «Mara» (bitter).

³ A. V. and R. V. «seeing the Lord hath testified against me». The addition «my guilt» (hōb⁹tī) indicates that according to the Targum the mere act of leaving Bethlehem was a sinful doing, cf. 1: 4, 5. The Targum has understood the meaning of the Hebrew verb 'ānāh in the sense of «to testify» ('ist⁹hid) and not in the sense of «to afflict» (cf. m⁹unnēh Is. 53: 4 and «travail», Eccl. 1: 13; 3: 10). Further with regard to this question of textual criticism see Nowack, Handkommentar zum A. T., Ruth (1900) p. 190.

22. And Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter in law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab; and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of *the days of the passover, and on that day the children of Israel began to reap the handful of presentation* of the barley.

CHAPTER II.

1. And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man, *well acquainted with the law*, of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz.

2. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, I will go now to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. She said unto her, Go, my daughter.

3. And she went and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

4. And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, *The Word of the Lord* be your help! And they answered him, The Lord bless thee!

5. Then said Boaz unto his servant, that was set over the reapers, *Of what nation* is this damsel?

6. And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab *and was proselytised*.

7. And she said, Let me glean¹ *now* and gather *the ears* among the sheaves *which are left* after the reapers. So she came and hath continued, *and hath remained now* from before the morning,² even until now, save that she tarried a *very* little in the house.

8. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hast thou not hearkened unto me, my daughter? Go not to glean *corn* in another's field,³ neither pass from hence, *to go to another people* but abide here fast by my maidens.

¹ »I pray you» is an additional explanation in A. V. and R. V.

² T »from before the morning» — M »from the morning».

³ T »in another's field» — M »in another field».

9. Let thine eyes be on the field ¹ that they do reap, and go thou after them, have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and *in the time* when thou art athirst *for water*, go unto the vessels, and drink of that *water* which the young men have filled.

10. Then she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine sight, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am *from a strange nation, of the daughters of Moab, and of a people who are not clean to enter into the congregation of the Lord?*

11. And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me *by the word of the wise men, that when the Lord decreed* ² *he did not issue a decree concerning women but concerning men, and it was said unto me by prophecy that there are hereafter to proceed from thee kings and prophets on account of the kindness* that thou hast done unto thy mother in law, *whom thou didst nourish* since the death of thine husband, and how thou hast left *thy god, and thy people*, thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come *to be proselytised, and to dwell* among a people which thou knowest not heretofore.

12. The Lord recompense *thee with a good recompense in this world, because of thy good work*, and a full reward *in the world to come* be given thee *from before* the Lord, the God of Israel, under the shadow of the *Shechinah of whose glory* ³ *thou hast come to be proselytised and to be protected. And in this righteousness thou shalt be delivered from the judgment of Gehenna, that thy portion may be with Sarah and Rebekah and Rachel and Leah.*

¹ M literally «thine eyes on the field» — T explaining «be observing (observe) the field!»

² «An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation shall none belonging to them enter into the assembly of the Lord for ever» (Deut. 23: 3).

³ Y^oqārā. Shechinah, the abiding Presence, Yeqara, the excellent glory, cf. «the voice from the excellent glory» (2 Pet. 1: 17). Shechinah seems to indicate the inward, Yeqara the outward aspect of «deus manifestus».

13. Then she said, Let me find grace in thy sight, my lord, for that thou hast comforted me, *and hast given me a right to be clean in the congregation of the Lord*, and for that thou hast spoken kindly *consolations to the heart of thine handmaid, for thou hast given me the hope of inheriting the world to come, according to righteousness, and I, I have no righteousness so as to possess a portion*¹ in the world to come, even with one of thy handmaidens.

14. And Boaz said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel *in the meat which is prepared in the vinegar*. And she sat beside the reapers, they reached her parched *meal*² and she did eat, and was sufficed and left.

15. And when she was risen up to glean *ears*, Boaz commanded his young men saying, Let her glean among the sheaves and reproach her not.

16. And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them that she may glean and rebuke her not.

17. So she gleaned *ears* in the field until even, and she beat out *the ears* that she had gleaned, and *the quantity of them* was about *three* measures of barley.

18. And she took it up, and went to the city, and her mother in law saw what she had *gathered*, and she brought forth *from the wallet*, and she gave to her the food that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

19. And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wert thou *diligent* in work? Blessed be the man that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had been working *hard* and said, The man's name with whom I was working *hard* to day is *called* Boaz.

20. And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he *from the holy mouth* of the Lord, for he hath not left off his kindness.

¹ Literally »I have no righteousness to be to me a portion».

² 2: 14 »Meal» (qemah) is an explanatory addition to the Biblical word »parched» just as the »corn» of the A. V. and R. V.; »thereof» is an explanatory addition in R. V.

to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is nigh of kin to us: he is the man of the redemption.¹

21. And Ruth the Moabitess said, *Surely*, he said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until *the time when they shall* have ended all my harvests.

22. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, and that they meet thee not in any other field.

23. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean until the barley harvest was ended, and the wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother in law.

CHAPTER III.

1. And Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, *by an oath I will not rest, until the time that* I seek rest for thee, in order that it may be well with thee.

2. And now, is not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maidens thou wast *in the field*. Behold, he winnoweth the barley floor *in the wind* of the night.

3. Wash thyself therefore *in water*, and anoint thyself *with perfume*, and put a *fine* raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the threshing-floor, (but) make not thyself known unto the man until he shall have done eating and drinking.

4. And it shall be, *at the time* that he lieth down on his bed, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in and uncover his feet, and lay thee down, *and thou shalt ask of him counsel*, and he will tell *by his wisdom* what thou shalt do.

5. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest *unto me* I will do.

6. And she went down unto the threshing-floor and did according to all, that her mother in law bade her.

7. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, *and when he had blessed the name of the Lord who received his prayer, and caused the famine to pass away from the land of Israel*, he went to lie

¹ 2: 20 Aram. g a b r ā m i p p u r q ā n ā.

down by the side of the heap, and *Ruth* came softly and uncovered his feet and laid her down.

8. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and he *trembled, and his flesh was made tender as the rape*¹ *from fear*, and he saw a woman sleeping over against his feet, *and he restrained his rash imagination and approached not unto her, even as Joseph the righteous did, who abstained from approaching the Egyptian woman, the wife of his lord, even as the pious Paltiel the son of Layish did, who fixed a sword between himself and Michal, the daughter of Saul, the wife of David, for he abstained from approaching unto her.*²

9. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am *Ruth thy handmaid, let thy name be called upon thine handmaid, to take me for a wife,*³ for thou art a redeemer.

10. And he said, Blessed be thou from *before* the Lord, my daughter: thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, *first because thou wast proselytised and last, because thou madest thyself as a woman who keepeth herself (chaste)*⁴ *for a little brother in law, until the time that he grow up, in order that (thou shouldst) not follow the young men, to commit fornication with them, whether poor or rich.*

11. And now, my daughter, fear not, I will do thee all that thou sayest unto me, for all *who sit at the gate of the great Sanhedrin* of

¹ Aram. *liftā'*, i.e. *navew*, coleseed (*Brassica rapa*). This is a rather strange figure.

² Cf. 1 Sam. 25: 44; 2 Sam. 3: 15; Tractate Sanhedrin, 18: It is written *Palti* and it is written *Paltiel*. Rabbi Jochanan said: His name is *Palti*, but why is he called *Paltiel*? — Because God saved him from the guilt. What did he? — He fixed a sword between himself and her and said: «Every one that is occupied (*hā'ōsēq*) with this thing, shall be pierced through with this sword.

³ The Biblical expression «spread thy skirt over thine handmaid» — has been rendered by the Targum in an explanatory form, the spreading of the skirt has been used by the Biblical authors figuratively and means thus: «Let thy name be called upon thine handmaid to take me for a wife».

⁴ I.e. abstains from marriage or any sexual intercourse in order to follow the law of the levirate, see footnote to 4: 4.

my people, know, that thou art a virtuous woman, *and there is strength in thee to bear the yoke of the commandments of the Lord.*

12. And now, it is true that I am a redeemer, howbeit there is *another redeemer, who is worthy to perform the duty of a redeemer more than I.*

13. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if the man *who is worthy to redeem thee from the law* will redeem thee, *behold it is well*, and he will redeem thee to life, and if he will not redeem thee, then I will redeem thee, *I have said with an oath before the Lord, (that) according to that which I have spoken unto thee, so I will do: lie down until the time of morning.*

14. And she lay at his feet until the morning, and she rose up *in the dawn*, while a man could not (yet) know his neighbour *by reason of the darkness*, and he said *unto his young men*, Let it not be known *to any man* that the woman came to the threshing-floor.

15. And he said, Bring the *veil* that is upon thee, and hold it; and she held it, and he measured six measures¹ of barley, and laid it on her, *and strength came to her from before the Lord to bear them, and directly it was said by prophecy, that in the future there should proceed from her the six righteous ones of the world, who should each of them be blessed with six blessings in the future, David and Daniel, and his companions, and king Messiah: and Boaz went into the city.*

16. And when she came to her mother in law *in the dawn*, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her; *according to the word of the mouth from before the prophecy that was revealed to him, (so) did he unto her.*

17. And she said, These six *measures* of barley *the man* gave me, for he said *to me*, Go not empty to thy mother in law.

¹ 3: 15 M »six of barley» — T »six seahs of barley». The name of the measure is seah, the nearest English equivalent of which is one peck. An ephah contains three seahs. Six seahs of barley is a very heavy burden to carry, therefore the Targum adds: »and strength came to her from before the Lord to bear them». According to Oettli and Nowack the measure was 'Omer, and thus six Omers = $\frac{3}{5}$ Ephah; while 6 seahs = 2 Ephahs.

18. Then said she, Sit still *with me*, my daughter, *in the house*, until thou know *how it is decreed from the heavens*, and how the matter will *be explained*, for the man will not rest until he have finished *for good* the thing this day.

CHAPTER IV.

1. And Boaz went up to the gate of the house *of judgment of the Sanhedrin*, and sat him down there *with the elders*, and behold, the redeemer of whom Boaz spake *to Ruth* came by, and he said, Turn aside, sit down here, o man *whose ways are humble!* And he turned aside and sat down.

2. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

3. And he said unto the redeemer, Naomi that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth the parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's.

4. And I thought to disclose it unto thee saying, Buy *the whole* before them that sit *at the gate of the house of judgment of the Sanhedrin*, and *the whole* before the elders of my people, if thou wilt redeem it, redeem it, and if thou *desire it not*, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none beside thee *that hath permission* to redeem it *before thee, and who is (so) near to dwell as thou, and I know of thee*, and I am *a redeemer* after thee. ¹ And he said, I will redeem it.

5. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of the hand of Ruth the Moabitess the wife of the dead, *thou art bound to redeem and seek to marry her, and to take her to wife, in order* to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

¹ The custom, which permits the nearest heir of the dead to inherit the widow, is not identical with the ordinary levirate, where it is the brother who is bound «to perform the duty of an husband's brother», that is, to marry his widowed sister-in-law if childless, and where the firstborn shall succeed in the name and inheritance of the dead. (Deut. 25: 5—10; Mt. 22: 24—26). For the levirate and other customs mentioned here, see I. Ben zinger, Encycl. Bibl. col. 2949, and also Edw. Westermarck, History of Human Marriage (1894) pp. 510—514.

6. And the redeemer said, I cannot redeem it *in this manner, for I have a wife, (and) I am not able to take another in addition to her, lest there be contention in my house,* and I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou for thyself¹ *for thou hast no wife,* for I cannot redeem (it).²

7. And *in this manner* in former time it was *customary* in Israel, *at the time of accepting or giving or redeeming or exchanging, one with his fellow,* and of confirming all things: a man drew off (his) shoe *with his right hand,* and gave it *as a possession* to his neighbour, and thus *the house of Israel were accustomed to buy of another* before witnesses.

8. And the near kinsman said unto Boaz, *Extend thy hand to the possession, and buy it for thyself,* and Boaz drew off the shoe *with his right hand, and bought it for himself.*³

9. And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, *Be ye witnesses concerning me* this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

10. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from *among* the gate of *the Sanhedrin which is in his place;* ye are witnesses *concerning me* this day.

¹ Here the rendering of T is shorter than that of M, which runs: 'Take thou my right of redemption on thee.'

² The Rabbinical teaching is not strictly opposed to polygamy: 'A man may marry many wives, even a hundred, either at once, or one after the other, and his wife can not prevent it, provided that he is able to give to each suitable food, clothing and marriage-duty.' (Yad hachazakah, Hilchoth Ishuth, 14: 3).

³ The Seder Nashim contains seven tractates, the first of which is called Yebamoth. (Y**ə**bāmōt = sisters-in-law, or more probably to be pointed y**ə**bāmūt = the duty of the levirate.) The most important subjects dealt with in this tractate are 1) The levirate marriage (cf. above the footnote to 4: 4); 2) the ceremony of the drawing off of the shoe (cf. Ruth 4: 7) and all that this involves. It symbolised renunciation of rights and possession on the part of the widow; 3) the forbidden degrees in marriage (cf. Lev. 18, ff.).

11. And all the people that were in the gate of *Sanhedrin*, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel *our father into twelve tribes*: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous ¹ in Bethlehem.

12. And let thy house *prosper* as the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.

13. So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in unto her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son.

14. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be *the Name of the Lord*, which hath not left thee this day without a near kinsman, ² and let his name be famous *among the righteous* in Israel.

15. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age *in delicacies*: for thy daughter in law which loved thee, which was better to thee *in the time of thy widowhood* than *a multitude of sons*, hath borne him.

16. And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

17. And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi, and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18. Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron.

19. And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab.

20. And Amminadab begat Nahshon, *and Nahshon was prince of the chief house of the tribe of Judah*, and Nahshon begat Salmah *the righteous, he was Salmah of Bethlehem and Netophah*, ³ *whose sons did away with*

¹ Literally »let thy name be called».

² Literally »Blessed be the Name of the Lord in that a redeemer hath not been wanting to thee this day.»

³ N^otōfāh, a locality probably near Bethlehem-Judah (Esra 2: 22; Neh. 7: 26; with N. gent. 2 Sam. 23: 28 f; 2 Kings 25: 23; Jer. 40: 8; 1 Chr. 2: 54; 9: 16; 11: 30; 27: 13, 15; Neh. 12: 28). G u é r i n, Jud. 2, 375 proposes Beit Nettif, 20 km west from Bethlehem.

*the watchmen whom Jeroboam the impious appointed on the highways, and the works of the father and of the children were as fair as Netophah.*¹

21. And Salmah begat *Absan the prince; he is Boaz the righteous, on account of whose righteousness the people of the house of Israel were delivered from the hand of those who hated them, and on account of whose prayer the famine passed away from the land of Israel; and Boaz begat Obed, who served the Lord of the world with a complete heart.*

22. And Obed begat Jesse, *who was called Nahash, since there was not found in him injustice or corruption that he might be delivered into the hands of the angel of death*² *to take away his soul from him. He lived many days, until there was remembered before the Lord the advice which the serpent gave to Eve, the wife of Adam, to eat of the tree. Those who eat the fruit of it know how to distinguish between good and evil. Because*³

¹ N^otōfā' (Ex. 30: 34 naṭāf), a perfume, probably Opobalsamum.

² According to Abodah Zarah, 20 b, the dying person sees his enemy the Angel of Death (called Sammael, identical with Satan in Rabbinical literature) with a sword, on the point of which a drop of gall trembles. In his anxiety the dying man opens his mouth and swallows the drop, which accounts for the deathly pallor of the face and the corruption of the whole body (cf. Holmberg, *Studia Orientalia* I p. 76). The Angel of Death can also use his sword, although the wound is not allowed to be visible, on account of the respectability of the human race. The Angel of Death has, however, no absolute power. According to Baba Bathra, 17 a, there are six persons — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, over which the Angel of Death has exercised no authority. Jesse, Amram, Benjamin and Chileb have died (only) through the «sin of the serpent». In fact, there was a time, when all the Israelites were free from death and like the angels. For originally God had entrusted the law to all the nations (acc. to Deut. 33: 2—3; Hab. 3: 3), but they had not been willing to submit to it (Abodah Zarah, 2 b). And when the Israelites took on themselves the law at Mount Sinai, the description in Psalm 82: 6 applied literally to them (Abodah Zarah, 5 a, they were «the sons of God»). They became free from the influence of the Angel of Death and would have remained so, but for the sin of the golden calf.

³ On the other hand death is the consequence of our personal sin, not of Adam's guilt (Bemidbar R. 19). Thus there are to be found two opinions in Rabbinical literature, the one ascribing death to personal, the other

of that advice were all the inhabitants of the earth made subject to death, and in this iniquity slept Jesse the righteous, and Jesse begat David the king of Israel.

tracing it to Adam's guilt. In Shabb. 55 a, b each view is supported, the one by a reference to Ezek. 18: 20, the other to Eccles. 9: 2 (cf. also Siphre on Deut. 32: 49). The final conclusion of the above-mentioned discussion seems rather to incline towards the connection between death and Adam's fall (cf. Debarim R. 9, ed. Warsh. p. 20 a). The view of this Targum is also supported by the Apocrypha, see for instance the book of Wisdom, 2: 23—24.