

Translation by C. M. M. Brady

This is a translation of Valmadonna No. 1 (NB: Previously known as Sassoon 282!), which dates to 1189, the oldest MS available. Please also see Derek Beattie's critical edition, *Targum and Scripture: Studies in Aramaic Translations and Interpretations in Memory of Ernest G. Clarke*, SAIS 2, ed. Paul V.M. Flesher (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 231-90.<sup>1</sup> An online version of this text is available at the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon (CAL) hosted by Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati and is managed by Prof. S Kaufman.

In most cases where words are found in [] and are not italicized they are missing in the MS but are necessary to represent the Hebrew vorlage (MT). In some cases, particularly in TgRuth 1:1, there are words or phrases which are not in V (and are part of an aggadic expansion) but are necessarily for the expansion to make sense. If you have any corrections or comments please contact the me at [cbrady@targuman.org](mailto:cbrady@targuman.org).

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## Chapter 1

1 In the days of [the leader] of leaders there was a famine in the land of Israel. Ten severe famines were decreed from Heaven to be in the world from the day of the creation of the world until the time when the King Messiah shall come, to reprove through them the inhabitants of the world. The first famine was in the days of Adam. The second famine was in the days of Lamech. The third famine was in the days of Abraham. The fourth famine was in the days of Isaac. The fifth famine was in the days of Jacob. The sixth famine was in the days of Boaz, who was called Ibzan the Righteous, who was from Bethlehem. The seventh famine was in the days of David, the King of Israel. The eighth famine was in the days of Elijah the prophet. The [ninth] famine was in the days of Elisha in Samaria. And the tenth famine will be [in the future], not a famine of eating bread nor a drought of drinking water, rather of hearing the word of prophecy from before the Lord. And when that famine was severe in the land of Israel, a great man from Bethlehem of Judah went out and went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

2 The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife was Naomi. And the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. [They were Ephrathites], lords from Bethlehem of Judah, and they came to the country of Moab. And they were governors there.

3 Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left a widow and her two sons orphans.

4 They transgressed the decree of the Memra of the Lord, and they took for themselves foreign wives from the house of Moab. The name of one was Orpah, and the name of the second was Ruth, the daughter of Eglon, the king of Moab. And they dwelt there for a time of about ten years.

5 And because they had transgressed the decree of the Memra of the Lord and had married into foreign nations, their days were cut short. And both Mahlon and Chilion also died in the unclean land, and the woman was left bereft of her two sons and widowed of her husband.

6 She arose, she and her daughters-in-law, and returned from the country of Moab, for it was announced in the country of Moab from the mouth of the angel that the Lord had remembered his people, the House of Israel, to give them bread because of the merit of Ibzan the judge and his prayers which he prayed before the Lord. He was Boaz the Pious.

7 She went out from the place where she had been, and her two daughters-in-law with her, going on the way to return to the land of Judah.

8 Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return, each to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with your dead husbands, since you refused to take men after their deaths, and with me, since you have fed and supported me.

9 The Lord has given you a perfect reward for the kindness which you have done, and through that reward you will find rest, each one in the house of her husband." And she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

10 And they said to her, "No, we will not return to our people and our god, but rather we will return with you to your people to become proselytes."

11 Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters. Why would you go with me? Do I still have children in my womb that they might become husbands for you?

12 Turn back, my daughters, from behind me. Go to your people, for I am [too] old to be married to a man. For I said, 'If I were a young woman, I would have hope; but if I married tonight to a man and even if I bore sons,

13 would you wait for them to grow up, as a woman who waits for a minor brother-in-law to take as a husband? Is it for their account that you would remain tied, that you would not be married to a man? Please, my daughters, do not embitter my soul, for it is more bitter for me than you, for the blow has gone out against me from before the Lord."

14 They raised their voices and wept again, another time. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and went on her way, but Ruth clung to her.

15 She said, "Behold! Your sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods. Go back after your sister-in-law to your people and your gods."

16 Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you, to go back from after you, for I desire to be a proselyte."

Naomi said, "We are commanded to keep Sabbaths and holy days such that we may not walk more than two thousand cubits."

Ruth said, "Wherever you go, I will go."

Naomi said, “We are commanded not to lodge with Gentiles.”

Ruth said, “Where you lodge, I will lodge.”

Naomi said, “We are commanded to keep 613 commandments.”

Ruth said, “What [your people] keep I will keep as if they were my people from before this.”

Naomi said, “We are commanded not to worship foreign gods.”

Ruth said, “Your god is my god.”

17 Naomi said, “We have four death penalties for the guilty: stoning with stones, burning with fire, execution by the sword, and hanging on a tree.”

Ruth said, “How you die, I shall die.”

Naomi said, “We have a cemetery three cubits.”

Ruth said, “And there I will be buried. And do not say any more. May the Lord do thus to me and more against me if even death shall separate me from you.”

18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she ended the conversation with her.

19 And the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, all the inhabitants of the city were excited about them, and [the women] said, “Is this Naomi?”

20 She said to them, “Don’t call me Naomi, call me Bitter of Soul for Shaddai has made me very bitter.

21 I went out full with my husband and my sons, and the Lord has brought me back empty of them. Why do you call me Naomi, since from before the Lord my sin has testified against me and Shaddai has brought harm to me?”

22 So Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, with her who returned from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem on the eve of Passover, and on that day the children of Israel began to harvest the Omer of the heave-offering, which was of barley.

## Chapter 2

1 Now Naomi had a kinsman through her husband, a great, strong man from the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz.

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “I will go now to the field, and I will glean among the ears of grain after one in whose eyes I will find favor.”

She said to her, "Go, my daughter."

3 So she went, and she arrived and gleaned in the field behind the reapers. And, as chance would have it, the field belonged to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

4 Just then, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, "May the Memra of the Lord be your sustenance."

And they said [to him], "The Lord bless you."

5 Boaz said to his servant who was appointed chief over the reapers, "From which nation is this girl?"

6 The servant who was appointed chief over the reapers replied and said, "The girl is from the people of Moab; she has returned, and became a proselyte, with Naomi from the country of Moab.

7 She said, 'I will pile up, now, and glean ears of grain among the sheaves that remain [upon the surface of the ground] behind the reapers.' She came and stood and has remained here from morning until now. It is only for a short time that she has sat in the house but a little while."

8 And Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen to me, my daughter. Do not go to glean ears of grain in another field, and do not pass from here to go to another nation. But remain here with my girls.

9 Look at the field that is being reaped. Go behind them. Have I not commanded the young men not to molest you? And at the time you are thirsty for water, go to the vessels and drink from the water which the young men fill."

10 She fell on her face and bowed to the ground and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes that you should befriend me since I am from a foreign people, from the daughters of Moab, who are not purified to enter into the congregation of the Lord?"

11 Boaz replied and said to her, "It has surely been told to me concerning the word of the sages that, when the Lord decreed concerning them, he did not decree against any but the men. And it was told to me by prophecy that there will come forth from you kings and prophets because of [all] the kindness which you have done for your mother-in-law, because you have supported her after your husband died and you forsook your god and your people [and your father and mother] and the land of your birth and went to become a proselyte and to dwell among a people who were not known to you before.

12 May the Lord repay you a good payment in this world for your good deeds, and may your reward be perfect in the next world from before the Lord, the God of Israel, to whom you have come to become a proselyte and to shelter under the shadow of his glorious Shekinah. And by that merit you will be saved from the judgment of Gehenna so that your portion may be with Sarah and Rebekah and Rachel and Leah."

13 She said, “May I find favor before you, my lord, for you have comforted me by deeming me worthy to be admitted to the congregation of the Lord and you have spoken consolation to the heart of your maidservant in that you have assured me of inheriting the next world in righteousness, when I have not merit to have a portion in the next world, even with one of your maidservants.”

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and eat bread and dip your food in the broth which is cooked in vinegar.” She sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her flour of parched grain. She ate and was satisfied and had some left over.

15 When she got up to glean ears of grain, Boaz commanded his young men saying, “Even among the sheaves, let her glean, and do not embarrass her.

16 You might even let some fall from the pitchforks for her and leave it for her to glean. Do not rebuke her.”

17 She gleaned ears of grain in the field until evening. Then she beat out the ears of grain which she had gleaned, and they amounted to about three seahs of barley.

18 She carried it and went into the town. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned, and she took out of her bag and gave to her that food which she had left over when she was satisfied.

19 Her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you glean today, and where have you diligently worked? May the man who befriended you be blessed!”

She told her mother-in-law with whom she had diligently worked, and she said, “The name of the great man with whom I diligently [worked] today is called Boaz.”

20 Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed be he by the holy mouth of the Lord, who has not failed in his kindness to the living and the dead.” Naomi said to her, “The man is related to us. He is one of our redeemers.”

21 Ruth the Moabite said, “He also said to me, ‘You shall remain with my young men, until the time when they have finished all my harvest.’”

22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his girls, so that no one will bother you in another field.”

23 So she joined Boaz’s girls in gleaning until the barley harvest and the wheat harvest were finished, and she stayed with her mother-in-law.

### Chapter 3

1 Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, I swear that I shall not rest until the time that I shall seek for you [a rest], that it may be well with you.

2 Now, is there not Boaz our kinsman with whose girls you were in the field? He is winnowing at the barley threshing floor in the night wind.

3 Wash yourself with water, anoint yourself with perfumes, put on your finery, and go down to the threshing floor. Do not make yourself known to the man until the time that he has finished eating and drinking.

4 At the time when he lies down, note the place where he is lying and go and uncover his feet and lie down. You shall ask advice from him, and he will tell you in his wisdom what you should do.”

5 She said to her, “All that you have said to me I will do.”

6 And she went down to the threshing floor and did all that her mother-in-law had commanded.

7 Boaz ate and drank, and his heart was merry. He blessed the name of the Lord who had accepted his prayers and had removed the famine from the land of Israel, and he went to lie down beside the heap of grain. And Ruth came in secret, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

8 In the middle of the night the man was startled. And he trembled, and his flesh became soft like a turnip from fear. He looked and lo, a woman lying at his feet. His desire grew strong, but he did not approach her, just as did Joseph the Righteous who refused to approach the Egyptian woman, the wife of his master; just as Paltiel bar Laish the Pious did, who placed a sword between himself and Michal daughter of Saul, wife of David, whom he refused to approach.

9 “Who are you?” he asked.

She said, “I am Ruth your maidservant. Let your name be called over your maidservant by taking me in marriage, for you are a redeemer.”

10 He said, “May you be blessed from before the Lord, my daughter. You have made your latter good deed better than your former one, the former being that you became a proselyte and the latter that you have made yourself as a woman who waits for a minor brother-in-law until the time that he is grown up, in that you have not gone after young men to commit fornication with them, whether poor or rich.

11 Now, my daughter, do not fear; all that you say to me I will do for you, for it is known before all who sit at the gate of the great Sanhedrin of my people that you are a righteous woman and there is in you strength to bear the yoke of the commandments of the Lord.

12 Now, while it is true that I am a redeemer, there is also a redeemer for whom it is more fitting to act as a redeemer than me.

13 Stay the night, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good, he is fitting to redeem you according to the law. Behold, it is good! Let him redeem for life. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then I will redeem you. I say with an oath before the Lord, as I have spoken to you, so will I do. Lie down until the morning.”

14 She lay at his feet until the morning, and she arose at dawn before a man could recognize his companion because of the darkness. And he said to his servant, "Let it not be known to any man that the woman came to the threshing floor."

15 Then he said, "Bring the scarf that you are wearing and hold it." She held it, and he measured out six seahs of barley and put them on it. Strength and power were given to her from before the Lord to carry them, and immediately it was said to her prophetically that there would descend from her six of the most righteous men of all time, each of whom would be blessed with six blessings: David, Daniel and his companions, and the King Messiah. Then Boaz went to the town.

16 She came to her mother-in-law at dawn, and she asked, "Who are you, my daughter?" She told her all that the man had done for her; according to the prophecy which was revealed to him, he acted toward her.

17 She said, "The man gave me these six seahs of barley, for he said to me, 'Do not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"

18 She said, "Stay, my daughter, with me in the house until you know from the Beth-Din how it will be decreed from heaven and how the matter will be resolved, for the man will not rest but will resolve the matter for good this day."

#### Chapter 4

1 Boaz went up to the gate of the Beth-Din of the Sanhedrin and sat there with the elders. Just then the redeemer of whom Boaz had spoken to Ruth passed by, and he said, "Turn aside and sit down here, man whose paths are modest." He turned aside and sat down.

2 Then he took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here." They sat down.

3 He said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from the field of Moab, is selling the piece of land which belonged to our kinsman Elimelech.

4 I thought I would warn you and inform you and say, 'Buy!' in the presence of the Beth-Din of the Sanhedrin and in the presence of the elders of my people. If it is your desire to redeem, redeem. And if it is not your desire to redeem, tell me, so that I may know, for there is no one apart from you to redeem and I will be redeemer after you."

He said, "I will redeem."

5 Boaz said, "On the day that you buy the field from the hand of Naomi and from the hand of Ruth the Moabite, wife of the deceased, you will acquire her by levirate marriage, in order to raise up the name of the deceased upon his inheritance."

6 The redeemer said, "In that case, I am not able to redeem for myself because I have a wife. I do not have permission to marry another in addition to her lest there be contention in my house and I

destroy my inheritance. You, redeem my inheritance for yourself, for you have no wife. For I am not able to redeem.”

7 This custom was observed in former times in Israel: when they were transacting business or redeeming or exchanging one with another before witnesses, a man would take off his right-hand glove and reach out with it, the possession, to his companion. Thus was the tradition in the house of Israel for a man to make purchases from his companion before witnesses.

8 So the redeemer said to Boaz, “Stretch out your hand for the symbol of ownership and take possession for yourself.” Boaz drew off his right-hand glove and took possession for himself.

9 Then Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, “Be witnesses this day that I have acquired all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon from the hand of Naomi.

10 And also Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, I have acquired for myself in marriage in order to raise up [the name] of the deceased upon his inheritance and so that the name of the deceased may not disappear from among his kinsmen and from the gate of the Sanhedrin which is in his place. You are witnesses this day.”

11 All the people who were in the gate of the Sanhedrin and the elders said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord give this woman who is coming into your house good fortune like Rachel and Leah, the two of whom built the house of Israel, our father, with twelve tribes. May you prosper in Ephrath and be renowned in Bethlehem.

12 May your house be as prosperous as the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, from the offspring which the Lord will give you by this young woman.”

13 Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. He went in to her. And the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son.

14 The women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the name of the Lord, who has not withheld from you a redeemer this day. May his name be called among the righteous of Israel.

15 May he be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age with delicacies, for your daughter-in-law who loves you has borne him. She has been better to you in the time of your widowhood than many sons.”

16 Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and she became his nanny.

17 The neighbors gave him a name saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They called him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18 These are the descendants of Perez. Perez fathered Hezron.

19 Hezron fathered Ram, and Ram fathered Aminadab.



20 Aminadab fathered Nahshon, and Nahshon was the head of a family of the house of Judah. Nahshon fathered Salma the Righteous, that is Salma from Bethlehem, and Netophah, they did away with the guard-posts which Jeroboam the Wicked placed on the roads, and the deeds of the father and sons were as beautiful as balm.

21 Salmon fathered Boaz, Ibzan the judge, that is Boaz the Righteous, through whose merit the people, the house of Israel, were freed from the hand of their enemies; and because of his merit the famine passed from the land of Israel. Boaz fathered Obed, who served the Lord of the World with a perfect heart.

22 Obed fathered Jesse, who was called Nahash because no sin or fault was found in him that he should be delivered into the hand of the Angel of Death to take his life from him. He lived many days until there was remembered before the Lord the counsel which the serpent gave to Eve, the wife of Adam, to eat of the fruit of the tree, for those who eat of its fruit are made wise to know good and evil. Because of that counsel all who dwell on earth were condemned to death, and for that sin the righteous Jesse died, that is Jesse who fathered David, the king of Israel.