About the House of Israel:

A Textual Ethnography of Fictive Kinship

in

the Story of Ruth

in

the Masoretic text, Antiquities of the Jews, and Targum Ruth

by

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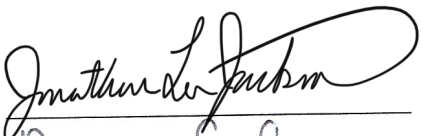
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Rabbi Dr. Richard Sarason

For my teacher and my friend, Bill,

William F. Kelleher, Jr., ז״ל,

who always taught us to ask, to listen, and to see;

to accept the simple as complex and the complex as simple;

to learn that the strange is familiar and the familiar is strange;

and to give voice to justice in this world.

Abstract:

This study of the Jewish story of Ruth focuses on three different versions in which the story has come down to us in the present -- the Masoretic Book of Ruth in biblical Hebrew, the version retold in the *Antiquities of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus in Greek, and the work of Targum Ruth by the Rabbis in Aramaic. My approach to the study of how and why aspects of this story change in these three versions is ethnographic. I read these texts and interpret them as a cultural anthropologist through the lenses of cultural, critical, and literary theories.

In the first and second chapters of the present study, I draw from classical and contemporary anthropology and critical theory to construct an understanding of "kinship" as a heuristic by which we can analyze these versions. The grounding theory and methodology of kinship that I develop is not one based solely on ties of blood or genetics ("consanguinity") nor on ties of socially legitimated marriage ("affinity"), but rather on those creative forms of forging ties of mutual emotional and material support called "fictive kinship." I use this third rubric to attempt to uncover the cultural work that the Ruth story does for those Jewish communities that inherited it and transmitted it. In the third chapter, I apply the heuristic theories of kinship to explore how fictive kin-making strategies do cultural work to form an "argument" (MT Ruth 1) and an "enactment" (MT Ruth 4) -- that is, an interweaving of the traditional order of blood and marriage with the fictive is effected through performative language and manipulation of social space.

In the fourth chapter, I examine the strategies of omission and their possible significance for the cultural work that retelling accomplishes in Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews* 5.317-338. Here, I focus on the changes to the "argument" (MT Ruth 1) and the "enactment" (MT Ruth 4), especially attending to those things that Josephus omits. I use the

critical theoretical rubrics of taste and distaste to touch upon the relationship between the colonized culture of Jews and the powerful but "delicate" sensibilities of the Roman overlords. Finally, in the fifth chapter I explore the rabbinic strategies of changing the framing temporality of the text on the one hand, and weaving in strands of their halachic discourse to transform the cultural work of kinship in the text and its rabbinic/ Aramaic cultural context.

In the concluding chapter, I discuss my findings about creative kinship strategies in the order of the "fictive" in order to explore and deepen anthropological concerns about risk management in cultures, the very force that works against and balances the unbounded creativity of cultural "fiction," or creative production of new social arrangements. Here, I also examine the ways in which the power of an inherited text over a living culture might be managed by drawing on the literary realm of "possible worlds theory."

Contents:

1. Introduction: About the House of Israel	6
2. Ethnography of Biblical Text and Theories of Kinship	19
3. Remapping Ruth: "Arguing" (Ruth 1) and "Enacting" (Ruth 4) Kinship	32
4. Cultural Aesthetics and Retelling: Josephus and Omission by Distaste	67
5. Adding to the Discomfort: Time, *Halacha*, and Identity in Targum Ruth	102
6. Conclusion: Possible or Impossible Wor(l)ds?	125
7. Tables and Figures	134
8. Bibliography	137

1. Introduction: About the House of Israel

All human cultures can be modeled as being shaped, maintained, and modified by four interrelated forces: what we do in our social groups (culture), how we communicate with each other and with previous and subsequent generations (language), which objects and tools we need to live in our social groups and environment (material culture), and finally our bodies themselves -- both strengths and limitations (biology). In the fields of American anthropology -- culture, biology, language, and archaeology -- there is and has long existed a general consensus that we are made human and that we diversify into different and discordant cultures by a complex of causes. These causes are as follows: genetics and the selective pressures of evolution, material technology, linguistic communication, and kinship (cf. Shryock and Smail 2011).

Now among causes that comprise this complex of four, there is of course no discernable order of development or precedence. For example, as regards evolution, the pressures of natural selection determine the fittest humans to survive and pass on both their heritable and epigenetic traits to following generations. Yet, we know of early human ancestors, both hominin and hominid, which had far smaller brain capacities then anatomically modern *Homos sapiens*, our own species. These smaller-brained ancestors were able to advance and thrive in their times and places by material technology -- stone tool-making at an arguably advanced and artful level. These things had to be learned, and they afforded access to richer and more consistent transmissions of human culture. Both the development and the instruction in techniques of tool-making required language to match the complexity of advancing technology. But the human body probably also had some form of linguistic communication at that time, since we know that one of the main genes responsible

for human language skills, called FOXP2, has been present in the human genome long before tools (Enard, Przeworski, Fisher, et al. 2002). Culture, language, material culture, and biology are the circle that circumscribes what it is to be human, that is, anatomically modern *Homo sapiens sapiens.*

All constellations of human behaviors can be classified into coherent groups, which are sufficiently different from one another that we can identify them as bounded socio-cultural groups. We call these units culture, as a designation slightly more nuanced than that which is found in the preceding paragraph. Culture is what makes one population, social group, or societal identity different. At a high level, that of population in a place and time, culture difference is relatively easy to distinguish, even if each group's exact borders are unclear. At a more focused, microscopic level, at the level of an individual, these differences are harder to see. If they are not harder to see, then they are continually contested as one culture-group negotiates with another. Culture is a way to distinguish human groups; however, its borders -- the boundaries by which we identify them -- are porous.

Culture seems like a mist in our hands, insofar as we know that it is indeed there, but its edges and crystalline form continually change and evade us as analysts. This is not just an effect of its difficult-to-discern boundaries, but because culture is part of the four-part cycle of being human that also includes biology, material culture, and language. Taken together, these four forces drive human and cultural evolution. Evolution is constant, even if we cannot see it. The natural sciences have learned during the recent decades, as genetics has reached a new period of productive efflorescence, that the speed of evolution, called its "equilibrium" (namely, the balance between change and stasis of a species) is far faster than Charles Darwin (2003) or Alfred Wallace ever could have imagined at the close of the 19th century.

Consider in our own time, by way of example, the shifting symbols of text messages that have supplanted speech in many venues as human communication, the rapidly evolving form that the material technology of the phone takes from year to year, and the effects that these technologies and forms of communication have on our sleep-wake cycles, on our bodies themselves. This produces moments of rapid culture-change.

And now we come to the specific focus of this study, kinship. More specifically, I will attend carefully to kinship's expression and reflex in human language. I would urge the reader to note the following caveat with extreme care: When I invoke the notion of kinship, I do not do so in any general sense. Kinship, as we shall explore in a moment, is *not* the description or study of the family, even though, probably frustratingly for the reader at this juncture, family is indeed a part of kinship. Kinship is the keystone concept to understand the reasons behind this study and the findings that I report and discuss in subsequent chapters. *Kinship is a methodology, a way to describe human culture at a particular moment (the so-called "ethnographic present" in anthropological parlance).*

Kinship studies is the excavation, the description, and analysis of the reckoning, declaring, and disputing of ties of mutual material and emotional interdependence, social ordering, and meaning-making as are expressed through cultural/ behavioral, linguistic, material, and biological (reproductive and sexual selection pressures) means. Kinship, in an over-arching sense, is an operationalization of culture.[1]

[1] Late in the course of researching this thesis project, I discovered the work of Cynthia Chapman in *The House of the Mother.* Here (2016: 5-7) she presents many of the main points that I have drawn together in this disciplinary genealogy of kinship studies independently of the aforementioned work. The reader should note, however, that my construction is independent of Chapman 2016, and provides a different vantage of understanding on the same sources found in Chapman (principally Lewis Henry Morgan, David Schneider, and Linda Stone). For the present study's theoretical requirements in establishing a methodology, what Chapman presents is too incomplete a genealogy of this academic discourse for it to be a sufficient theoretical lens by which to measure biblical expressions of kinship. To this end, I argue here the opposite of her conclusion vis-à-vis MT Ruth. Chapman argues that MT Ruth's "house of the mother" kinship form, as I shall explore below, is a

The earliest anthropologists such as Lewis Henry Morgen were heavily influenced by classical literature and the notion that the languages we speak and the speech communities we form are equivalent to the blood relations that connect the physical bodies living in these speech communities. Note, though, that the notion of "blood" was more than simple genetics. Blood is a metonym for the relations we call "blood-ties," some of which are and some of which are not genetic relations. Morgan argued in *Ancient Society* (1877) that the Latinized Greek word "*gens"* (γένος), from which we derive our concept of heritability ("genetics") and family was a *system of blood relations and non-blood marital relations between bodies*. Within this system of the *gens*, common language was shared. This notion that language mapped blood was later discarded among anthropologists as the biological and medical sciences progressed. Especially influential in the decoupling of language and blood were, for example, molecular biology (DNA) and genetics.

However, in the 1960s-70s (briefly) and later on in the 1990s, anthropologists returned to the idea of "kinship," which they now called "relatedness." David M. Schneider's ground-breaking study of *American Kinship* (1968) demonstrated patterns of relatedness that involved calculating how a human belongs to a social group through blood (consanguinity), marriage (affinal relationship), and "fictitious" or socially defined ties. Despite Schneider's renewed interest in kinship and his expansion of the concept into "fictitious" terms, that is, socially creative means independent of the biological factor of blood and the social laws of marriage, Schneider's study fell into disfavor even despite the fact that scholars praised its extensive sampling and large ken. The primary critique was that it *ignored cultural*

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form within the patriarchal structure; my findings as interpreted through the forgoing theoretical lens and methodology argue that it is a socially "queer" form that runs against the normative patriarchal forms and has to be re-integrated into the normative system.

difference and, in fact, treated all ethnic groups and races without factoring in these important cultural variations and boundary lines.

In a recent survey of kinship studies that synthesizes both foundational and new works, Marshall Sahlins (2013) writes that "this, then, is what I take a 'kinship' system to be: a manifold of intersubjective participations, which is to say, a network of mutualities of being," (Sahlins 2013: 20). In other words, kinship is simultaneously both an organized (i.e., a fixed, inherited, and coherent system learned through enculturation/ socialization) and organizing (i.e., creative) cultural ideal by which people calculate: (1) *how they should participate and ally* (i.e., sex and marital alliance) with one another, (2) the *appropriate balance of distance and intimacy* (i.e., "proxemics") between different members in the social web, and finally (3) *the boundaries of the in-group and the out-group.* Kinship is thus both a totalizing stand-in for a cultural system and at the same time the fundament on which it is based. Clues to culture become evident by charting these calculations.[2]

Anthropological field studies have shown us cross-culturally that "kinship" *is not* the same idea as genetic, biological, or familial relations, although the two may indeed overlap (either through chance or intentional calculation). Over the course of the history of the field, the anthropological concept of kinship (be it fictional, marital/ affinal, or blood/ consanguine) comes to be defined as an *entirely* "fictitious system" from the outset, fictitious being defined as Clifford Geertz's (2004) notion that cultural phenomena and concepts are consciously constructed by linguistic negotiation within a social group (called in anthropology an *ethnos*, hence the study of the group an *ethnography* or *ethnology*). This fiction is both a narrative

[2] This paragraph is taken from an unpublished paper of mine, *For the Love of a Brother: Incest and Kinship in Song of Songs 8:1 (Jackson 2019).*

that is shared among group members and it is a system that is lived out *because of that sharing*.

As a fiction of culture, kinship studies found new vigor in the 1990s. Anthropologists began exploring kinship under the new theoretical construct called “relatedness.” They were suddenly able to account for and to explore topics formerly invisible to ethnographic methods. Examples are new sexual identities, new and fluid understandings of ethnic identity, and new perspectives of gender. Thus, the theoretical constructions that undergird the idea of new “relatedness” studies in anthropology have proven to be excellent heuristics for scholars exploring cultures experiencing change. In particular, new relatedness studies help us to explore social groups that find themselves experiencing threats to group cohesion.

Why then does kinship methodology receive primacy of place in this study? Kinship is heuristic, it is an anthropologically-created construct (existing only within the academic discourses of anthropology). Kinship detects data or the echoes of data that help us draw a useful and descriptive map of human culture at a particular place and time, called the "ethnographic present," another technical term for the moment of analysis when the anthropologist is present. When statisticians or quantitative sociologists want to examine a cultural or historical phenomenon empirically, by means of data that is as objective as can possibly be acquired in a systematic (that is, scientific) manner, they undertake a procedure called "operationalization." That is, they find some numerical proxy that can be mathematically modeled (math being their system) to analyze the phenomenon. Kinship, similarly to statistical analysis, is a proxy for culture. One could just as easily, depending on the demands of the cultural target of study, use gender-sexuality, historical chronology,

politics and ideology, material culture technology, or even historical linguistics as a heuristic proxy.

But the specific realm of the history of biblical interpretation and the context of Judaism makes kinship among the most appropriate of methodologies to elect as heuristic of the map I am endeavoring here to chart. The first cultural object of this study is the Masoretic Book of Ruth as the *textus receptus* of modern, extant Jews. But it is dangerous to speak of "Jewish" reading or history of interpretation, even with a late biblical book such as is Ruth. Regarding the dating of MT Ruth, Robert Alter's introduction to his translation provides helpful orientation:

> Is Ruth in fact a Late Biblical book? Although this is the consensus of biblical scholars, there are some vocal dissenters. These tend to take at face value the assertion of the opening verse that we are reading a story that goes back to the period of the Judges and Samuel in the Septuagint and consequently in the Christian canonical order of the Bible. Some of the dissenters evoke the pure classical style of Ruth that in many ways sounds like the Hebrew of the early first millennium BCE.
>
> But style is actually the clearest evidence of the lateness of Ruth. The writer took pains to create a narrative prose redolent of the early centuries of Israelite history, but it is very difficult to execute such a project of archaizing without occasional telltale slips... for example the verbs used for taking a wife (1:4)... and for removing a sandal (4:7)... The other strong sign of Ruth's composition in the period after the return from the Babylonian exile in the fifth century BCE is genre... (Alter 2019: 621).

Even though there is vagueness in the dramatic date versus the linguistic evidence, I begin my focus with חז״ל, *hochamim zikronam livracha,* the so-called Sages that stand as the ideological and ritual folk-heroes of Judaism as the world knows it today.

Rabbinic literature of the so-called Tannaitic and Amoraic periods had to contend with an imagined audience, whether or not the rabbis actually governed or interacted with this audience in any real or empirically demonstrable way. This audience is the people, *'am*

yisra'el. The rabbinic imagination present in the literature of this era seeks to imagine a possible world into existence (Bell and Ryan 2019). Despite a chain of losses in the collective memory of the Jews — especially the loss of the political autonomy and homeland of Judah as an ancient nation-state, the loss of the Temple, the transformation of society to the role of colonial subjects under the Persians and later Hellenistic conquerors — peoplehood is still on the collective mind of the Rabbis. Without the physical proximity of the people, and with the above-listed losses, it this rabbinic literature and narration that needs to hold the Jews together as a people.

In simplest terms, the Rabbis must imagine and narrate the idea of,עם ישראל אחד, the "People of Israel," into existence, based in their world-view and in their inherited traditions. The body of stories of the Torah, from the ancestry tales of Genesis to the legislation of marriage, is in its totality a system of endogamy created in the context of Diaspora itself, i.e., after 586 BCE. These imagined literary ideas of a coherent concept of peoplehood where there is actually none, of autonomous nationhood while clients of empires, and of social proximity even as Jews live spread far across the ancient Diaspora, is something of a logical contradiction. And yet, the coherent concept of kinship, of an imagined being-in-common worked out in stories and in legislation, persisted as an important anchor for Jewish identity in the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern world. This kinship elides the experience of Exile (post-586 BCE) and becomes changed and elaborated *within the rabbinic literary imagination* in the Tannaitic and Amoraic generations of Sages.

A central theoretical assertion of this study is that the imagined world of literature in writing and the lived world of human culture influence and affect each other (Bell and Ryan 2019, Auerbach 1953). In other words, our performed culture reflects our imagination, and

literature is the place where we work out our imagination and where we share it with each other (Dor 2015). Through conducting this study, I hope to explore how the rabbinic literary world of reading starts of a snowballing process of re-imagining Jewish kinship. I hope to discover how the Rabbis used the sharing and production of midrashic biblical interpretation and narrative (Chane and Venter 2010) with interspersed halachic "norms" in order to cope with the increasing loss and distance faced by early Jews in the ever-growing Diaspora. I will do this by tracing kinship diachronically from the Masoretic form of the Book of Ruth, to its Hellenistic transformations in the world of Josephus and the Septuagint (the Greek *Targum* of the Hebrew *Vorlagen* texts), and its Amoraic form in the (likely) 5th-century Aramaic Targum of Ruth.

But, as the reader might imagine at this juncture, after having considered both the broad historical scope of this study as well as the comprehensively culture-encompassing domain of kinship, one might ask how kinship can be specified further methodologically. This operation occurs when we apply kinship to the specific literary and imaginatory world of the Rabbis. In anthropological terms, the notion of עם ישראל is for Jews an example of what has come to be called “house kinship” (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995). The experience of loss of the Temple, its reconstruction under the Persians, Hasmonean autonomy, and Roman procuratorship evince a loss of the material "house" or locational center-point of Judaism. I would contend that something of this loss is evident in the very composition of MT Ruth, as it reflects experience of exile and loss of land (Schipper 2016, Alter 2019). It is also a loss of the symbols collocated within this central physical locus, and a loss of patrilocal endogamous social order. Diachronically, the loss of a center produces an increasingly large Diaspora (both in terms of population distribution and geographical range,

as well as in terms of the cultures to which Jews were exposed and with which they syncretized). This Diaspora always came into being in relation to imagined homeland, "imagined community" (after Benedict Anderson 2016), and its hoped-for future redemption or restoration.

One of the language games and ideological efforts of rabbinic biblical interpretation, therefore, becomes the attempt to keep alive and to expand the "house kinship" of the people across increasing space, time, and difference. However, they must keep it alive in the imagination, and they must share this imagination through the production of narrative. It is possible, therefore, to understand the rabbinic approach to reading as an ongoing enactment of house kinship. In Jewish studies, there has been recent interest in the boundaries of the periphery of the Jewish kinship system, for example Beth Berkowitz' *Defining Jewish Difference* (2014) and Mira Wasserman's *Jews, Gentiles, and Other Animals* (2017). However, a study of the rabbinic project of holding together and elaborating the house kinship system of Judaism merits closer investigation itself. This kinship-based approach has been in vogue since the early 2000s within anthropological circles, which consider the effects of modernity and post-modernity. However, such an ethnographic theory and method has not yet been applied to rabbinic literature, and not to my finding to any ancient literature. Previous work on what I have here named Jewish kinship during the rabbinic period is largely limited to two arenas: studies of identity (as discussed above) and studies of marriage and marriage law. Michael Stalow's (2001) *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, is the clearest example, focusing on ritual, economics, law, and concluding with the notion of an ideal system. Kinship studies, however, seeks to paint a richer picture of a group's imagined world, and my study would help to fill out the picture.

For the Rabbis producing midrashic literature, the situation was one of constant change, which is why I argue that new relatedness/ kinship studies will provide an effective and interesting way to read and to analyze early Jewish literature and as a lens into an imagined social world. One interesting sub-form of kinship for this particular problem is the methodology of "house kinship," a more encompassing and inclusive term than it first seems to be. House kinship was first articulated by Claude Lévi-Strauss, and developed in the mid-90s by Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones (2015). In house kinship, the concept "house" is a dually physical and ideological object of culture, which organizes and transmits most specifically: notions of membership in the group; material, symbolic, and metaphorical representations of the group (both in practice and in the ideal); and inheritances (both physical and ideological) across generations and place simultaneously.[3] Recent developments in literary theory offer us the idea that the literary world not only reflects the social world, but that it also effects its future development, as explored in Bell and Ryan's *Possible Worlds Theory and Contemporary Narratology* (2019).

Drawing on the work of E. M. Forster, Simon-Shoshan (2013) refers to the following aspects of narrativity: 1) it involves verbs in a causal chain of events unfolding (or, if stative or intransitive, a system of events towards becoming or unfolding), 2) this chain of events or unfolding requires the passage of time in such a way that the verbs constructing the narrative imply causality, 3) there must be events represented over the course of the narrative, and 4) there must be some degree of specificity: either preterit action geared toward representing the past, or future action representing the imagined or the hypothetical. The representation of the

[3] Cynthia Chapman (2016) also draws on this anthropological field of "house kinship," and in fact this work by Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones (1995) in her exploration of the house-society portrayed in the Hebrew Bible (see Chapman 2016: 31-37 for a survey of similar anthropological work and her application of the heuristic model to biblical society).

past (that is, social memory) and the imagining of the future (that is, creating a “possible world”) are the contexts that will allow me to study how these terms function in the collection of literature in which they are found.

Thus, the following study will begin with a close-level analysis reflecting consanguine, affinal, and fictive kinship modes in MT Ruth. My survey will cover all four chapters of the biblical book as we have it today in Jewish communities; however, the focus of the analysis it to garner a picture of how kinship is working in the text. To this end, I will focus on the re-mapping of biblical kinship norms (Deuteronomy 23) that occur in the text. This will lead to a focus on MT Ruth 1, where an "argument" can be excavated from the Hebrew text for a risky, novel, and private formation of fictive kinship. Then, the focus shifts to MT Ruth 4, where the fictive house-kinship "argued for" in Ruth 1 is "enacted" through affinal ritual (i.e., marriage) by the consanguine kinsman Boaz in order to make a place for the strange and dangerous fictive kinship established as the "House of Naomi" to the normative system that Deuteronomy reflects for ancient Israel.

Following this grounding analysis, I will turn to two historical sites of reception and interpretation. The first is the Hellenized Greek Jewish tradition as represented by Flavius Josephus (b. 37/38 CE in Jerusalem, d. c. 100 CE in Rome). In his *Antiquities of the Jews* (5.317-338) he retells the Ruth story, but he also reworks the story through a number of strategies (Sterling 1998). Prominent in his retelling of MT Ruth 1 (the fictive kinship "argument") and MT Ruth 4 (the fictive kinship "enactment" by means of social orders of blood and marriage) is the strategy of "omission." I will analyze his strategy and what it might reflect of his socio-cultural position vis-à-vis the kinshipping norms of his day through the affective theories in anthropology regarding (dis)taste and distinction (Bourdieu 1984), in

particular attending to the relationship between the human affective response now lost to us and its linguistic-textual traces that we can track thanks to the insightful work of Lynn Huffer (Huffer 2010, Foucault 1972, Derrida 1997[1974]). Fundamentally, I am examining the reception of a textual tradition in a world for which there is little place to understand how the "argument" and "enactment" of Ruth are regarded in this Greek world of Josephus.

Finally, I will examine contrasting strategy to Josephus's reworking through omission. In Targum Ruth, we have the strategy of halachic insertion into aggadic narrative received from the biblical tradition. With a (very likely) stabilized *textus receptus* among the rabbis, there emerges the rubric of unchangeability of the text. Yet, like all human culture groups living in a particular time and a particular place, the Tannaim and Amoraim had to contend with forms distasteful or incoherent to them with respect to their *Weltanschauung*. So, in this chapter we will explore the outcomes and interpretive work of revision through insertion, especially as regards the harmonization of the text to the rabbinic world and the sensibilities of Aramaic targum as a religious activity situated in the social institution of the synagogue.

2. Ethnography of Biblical Text and Theories of Kinship

I will begin this study by focusing on the Masoretic text of the Book of Ruth. This biblical text is four chapters long, and, to be sure, there is an explicit and overt focus on group membership, kinship, marriage, the social position of women, and ethnic affiliations abounding throughout it. One may make the case that these above-listed categories are the very purpose of the book. The reason that I have chosen it to be the focus of a kinship-ethnography is to demonstrate that there are several levels operating at the same time in a culture, especially when it comes to language and linguistic expression. To be sure, biblical Ruth is a cultural artifact, but the specific form is linguistic. There are multiple levels of consciousness that humans have of their employments and deployments of language, as I will explore in greater detail shortly. At present, my point is that even in a book constructed in the language of kinship, there are deeper workings not evident without the deep gaze of ethnologic analysis.

The anthropologist stands, in Clifford Geertz's often-quoted terms, *betwixt and between*, as simultaneous insider and outsider. The discipline's central contention is that because of this role in the culture under study as both an insider and an outsider, one can become conscious, careful listener and observer of meanings in culture (and therefore so too in language) of which the natives of the culture are unaware. The outcome is, the reader should be prepared to note, often stranger than a surface-level descriptive analysis might produce. What follows is the central principle of an ethnographic study, according to the ethos of American anthropology as it emerges from the foundational thinking of Franz Boas, and especially as it is tempered by the cultural theories of Clifford Geertz. According to the roots of the approach in Boas, one immerses in a culture wholly for a period of time, attends

to language, and how culture is constructed according to this palace of words and their deployments.

Indeed, to this end, Geertz wrote:

> Toward the end of his recent study of ideas used by tribal peoples, *Le Penseé Sauvage*, the French anthropologist Lévi-Strauss remarks that scientific explanation does not consist, as we have been led to imagine, in the reduction of the complex to the simple. Rather, it consists, he says, in a substitution of a complexity more intelligible for one which is less. So far as the study of man [*sic*] is concerned, one may go even further, I think, and argue that explanation often consists of substituting complex pictures for simple ones while striving somehow to retain the persuasive clarity that went with the simple ones. (Geertz 2004: 34).

To this end, my goal in the present chapter is to read biblical, Masoretic Ruth as a field site. My immediate aim as an ethnographer is to assume that all the words and their usage are strange. I therefore first classify them (Maus and Durkheim 1975[1963]; Bowker and Starr 2000), and second, I place them in a taxonomy. In the fashion of the earliest American ethnographers such as Morgan and McLennan, I focus on kinship terms as the signs of underlying social structure that emerge in daily language. With this goal of mapping words and their relationship to discover kinship, it really does not matter at all that the topic of the work is explicitly kin negotiations; it is a contention of anthropological analysis that culture as a total system is unconscious, even if its practitioners believe they are aware of a negotiation of part of it.

I read Ruth with three etic, external categories: words belonging to the category of blood relations (consanguine kinship, "shared blood"), words belonging to the category of marital relations (affinal kinship, "social alliance"), and words which functionally appear to negotiate social relations by their deployment in Ruth, but which are neither shared blood (consanguine) nor marital relationships. This last category is called by the term "fictive"

kinship in anthropology, not because it is false in the sense that the English literary genre is made-up, but rather that it is constructed or composed of more than simple blood or marriage arrangements (Geertz 2004).

A word is necessary about these three categories as regards how this study attempts to uncover traces of their presence in Ruth as a linguistic and literary artifact. Deeply buried within the roots of American anthropology is the work of Lewis Henry Morgan, an unintentional ethnographer in a world before such an approach to studying humans existed. As a fraternity member at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, as the legend goes, Morgan made contacts with the local Haudenosaunee league of Amerindians (in his vicinity, the tribe was that of the Cayuga, a client subordinated by Onondaga overlords). The story told in departments of anthropology is that he was seeking out new fraternity initiation rituals -- ways to build a society, and he became fascinated and was thereby afforded a deep view of Five Nations Amerindian culture. Over his incipient career as an erstwhile ethnographer, he eventually produced *Ancient Society* as study of the deep structure of human society. This is relevant to the present discussion insofar as his central contention is that *relations of blood, the deep human relationship shared between human bodies across time and space, is visible in language* (Morgan 1985[1887]).[4]

[4] Elizabeth Tooker comments: "The question that came to dominate anthropology, at least American anthropology, was: How did each of the many peoples of the world get to be where they are now? What is the history of each? It was not a new question. The nineteenth-century evolutionists had incorporated into their discussion the notions of diffusion and independent invention. They had discussed migrations. Morgan, for example, wrote a long paper on 'Indian Migrations,' which he originally intended to include as part of *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity*, but which was published separately. But their principal concern was with what had happened before recent history, in those remote times before the peoples known today had become differentiated in race, language, and culture. Linguistic studies -- particularly those of the genetic relationship of Indo-European languages--called into question the validity of such an assumption, indicating a longer and more complex history than had been supposed [before]. Race, language, and culture could no longer be regarded as associated, but rather each in its own way came to be considered as providing evidence of a people -- physical type of its biological history, linguistic studies of the history of its language and cultural classifications of the history of its culture. In this new climate, the ideas of the evolutionists looked hopelessly subjective. The attempts of the nineteenth-century anthropologists to answer the question, 'How did we get

Morgan's theories and methodology in *Ancient Society* of tracing the roots of his contemporary situation of human geography and varying degrees of social progress are based in a now-dismissed typology. The typology is, according to Morgan's provisional (1877) scheme in *The Ancient Family*, that at the shared root of all societies is the "consanguine family... founded upon the intermarriage of brothers and sisters, own and collateral, in a group..." (Morgan 1985[1877]: 384).

Regarding the stability of consanguinity as a foundational human kinship phenomenon and blood as a social metaphor in general, British anthropologist[5] Janet Carsten observes that "[a]nalyzing the meaning of blood in particular contexts illuminates its special qualities as a bodily substance, material, and metaphor" and asks "...can we have a theory of blood, and what would such a theory look like?" (Carsten 2013:2). She notes in the introduction to her edited volume that blood is a "recurrent" and a "divergent[ly] significant" cross-cultural "phenomenon" which has two theoretical dimensions that matter for our present discussion: "In demonstrating blood's recurring but divergent significance across cultural and historical contexts, the essays collected here articulate another theme familiar from classic studies of symbolism: a tension between the 'arbitrary' nature of the sign (Saussure 1960[1916]) and the particular power of 'natural symbols' (Douglas 2003[1970])" (Carsten 2013).

This is what we might learn from these two theoretical observations by Janet Carsten. First, we can assume that the symbolism of blood in terms of its inherited rules (*langue*) in

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where we are now?' seemed to be merely an effort to measure the achievements of other peoples against the standard of Western civilization." (Elizabeth Tooker in Morgan 1985[1877]: xxvi)

[5] This appellation is significant because it signals that she belongs to the structure-function school stemming from Bronislaw Malinowski, which is a different intellectual genealogy from the culture-interpretation school later typified by Clifford Geertz.

contradistinction to its real-world deployment (*parole*) would thus evince in ethnological contexts new meanings in old vessels--the terms do not change, but we must attend carefully to how they are used. Second, as a "natural symbol," its power comes from its guise of being part-and-parcel of our humanity, when it is in fact a social construct, by which I would contend Morgan to have been convinced and blinded too strongly.

Problematically for Morgan's kinship schema, he envisages a complexity of society escalating as time progresses, reflecting the evolutionist ethos of his day. According to Morgan's understanding, the longer a thing evolves, the more it is perfected according to some unknown *telos*. Therefore, complexity was for Morgan a gauge of proximity to developmental perfection.

Morgan wrote in *The Ancient Family* that the consanguine family became more complicated in one of the several forms he observes in his cross-cultural analysis, the model most relevant to our current biblical concern, namely the "patriarchal family:" "It was founded upon the marriage of one man with several wives; followed, in general, by the seclusion of his wives" (Morgan 1985[1887]: 384). He notes further that the patriarchal form, to his account no longer being found in the modern world (a charge now largely invalidated in comparative ethnology), but importantly found in the *Greek, Roman, and Semitic literary sources upon which he builds his theories*, was, in his words an "intermediate [form]... [a social form] not sufficiently influential upon human affairs to create a new, or modify the then essentially existing systems of consanguinity" (Morgan 1985[1887]: 384).

Two observations are relevant to the present study. First, I retain the contention that there is a reflex of blood in language; that is, traces of consanguinity, or, more accurately, the ideology of consanguinity, can be observed in linguistic kin designations both *de jure* and *de*

facto. Second, because Morgan's empirical data for the reconstruction of "ancient society" were both Homeric myths and biblical texts, I think it is reasonable to try and retain as a hypothesis worth testing the idea that the "patriarchal family," as a complex social development of the "consanguine family" is *intermediate*--existing between ancient forms we can identify in our own social worlds today, and, by extension unstable. Its explicit statement in the biblical Ruth makes any moves against it we can also uncover in deeper levels of the text all the more important to detect.

In other words, how better to argue for a novel system of kinship than in the dressing of one that is both recognized broadly and is also functionally non-durative over the long-term of society. In short, blood is constant, but affinity and alliance (that is, marital elaborations of blood) are less stable. Consanguinity is overtly expressed in kinship terms (mother, father, daughter, son, עם), but the more complex social constellations of relatedness (daughter-in-law, son-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law) are less stable. One of the less stable (but importantly biblically dominant) models is that of the בית or "house," predominantly known as the patriarchal form "house of the father," but also occurring in a variant, which for our present purposes is important, in the form of the "house of the mother" (Chapman 2016, King and Stager 2001).

Cynthia Chapman (2016) follows King and Stager [2001]:

> I support the consensus view among scholars that the *bêt 'āb* was a kinship designation that encompassed both shared residence and dependent (*sic*), possibly biological relationships to a founding male ancestor... De Vaux, for example, defined the *bêt 'āb* as comprising "those who are united by common blood and common dwelling place." Two decades later Norman K. Gottwald affirmed this dual usage, suggesting that the *bêt 'āb* was "a compromise formation involving kinship and residence." More recently, Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager have described the *bêt 'āb* as "a group of families with descent from the same *paterfamilias* and dwelling in the same region or village." They also point to the inclusive nature of the *bêt 'āb*, defining its

> social composition as a father, "his wife or wives, sons and their wives, grandsons and their wives, the unmarries sons and daughters, slaves, servants *gērîm*, aunts, widows, orphans, and Levites." (Cynthia Chapman 2016: 21).

Returning to the current site of the study, the biblical book of Ruth, it is worth taking note of in the composition history of the work. Schipper (2016: 13) observes in terms of genre and its relationship with the rest of the Jewish biblical canon that "[o]ne could interpret the book of Ruth as an example of ancient Israelite literature apart from any specific collection of literature, such as a Jewish or a Christian Bible... The book of Ruth is ancient Israelite literature in that it assumes many figures, idioms, and customs from ancient Israel's written and/ or possibly oral traditions. How accurately these traditions reflect the historical realia of ancient Israel remains uncertain." This uncertainty makes the present inquiry into the function of fictive kinship undergirding the social orders of blood and of marriage all the more apt -- how can a literary artifact manipulate the inherited patriarchal family model, as Morgan called it? My inquiry is all the more fitting given the "general scholarly consensus that Ruth is mostly the product of a single author" (Schipper 2016: 18).

But the author and compositional hints (Alter 2019: 621) are worth observing for the reader to consider in what way our present-time readings are objective. It is instructive, I think, to compare our stance to another civilizational era that we no longer occupy culturally or in terms of styles of thinking about biblical texts, so that we might see the situatedness of our own vantage as readers. In the history of Jewish reception of this ancient work, the Talmud reports rabbinic traditions that the author is none other than Solomon.

This mention is found in a *baraita* in b.Bava Batra 14b (cf. Schipper 2016: 19):

> סידרן של כתובים רות וספר תהלים ואיוב ומשלי קהלת שיר השירים וקינות דניאל ומגילת אסתר עזרא ודברי הימים ולמאן דאמר איוב בימי משה היה ליקדמיה לאיוב ברישא אתחולי בפורענותא

לא מתחלינן רות נמי פורענות היא פורענות דאית ליה אחרית דאמר רבי יוחנן למה נקרא שמה רות שיצא ממנה דוד שריוהו להקב"ה בשירות ותושבחות

The *baraita* continues: **The order of the Writings** is: **Ruth and the book of Psalms, and Job and Proverbs; Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Lamentations; Daniel and the Scroll of Esther;** and **Ezra and Chronicles.** The Gemara asks: **And according to the one who says** that **Job** lived **in the time of Moses, let** the book of **Job precede** the others. The Gemara answers: **We do not begin with suffering,** i.e., it is inappropriate to start the Writings with a book that deals so extensively with suffering. The Gemara asks: But the book of **Ruth,** with which the Writings opens, **is also** about **suffering,** since it describes the tragedies that befell the family of Elimelech. The Gemara answers: This is **suffering which has a future** of hope and redemption. **As Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Why was she named Ruth,** spelled *reish*, *vav*, *tav*? Because there **descended from her David who sated,** a word with the root *reish*, *vav*, *heh*, **the Holy One, Blessed be He, with songs and praises.**

ומי כתבן משה כתב ספרו ופרשת בלעם ואיוב יהושע כתב ספרו ושמונה פסוקים שבתורה שמואל כתב ספרו ושופטים ורות דוד כתב ספר תהלים על ידי עשרה זקנים ע"י אדם הראשון על ידי מלכי צדק ועל ידי אברהם וע"י משה ועל ידי הימן וע"י ידותון ועל ידי אסף

The *baraita* now considers the authors of the biblical books: **And who wrote** the books of the Bible? **Moses wrote his own book,** i.e., the Torah, **and the portion of Balaam** in the Torah, **and** the book of **Job. Joshua wrote his own book and eight verses in the Torah,** which describe the death of Moses. **Samuel wrote his own book,** the book of **Judges, and** the book of **Ruth. David wrote the book of Psalms by means of ten elders** of previous generations, assembling a collection that included compositions of others along with his own. He included psalms authored **by Adam the first** man, **by Melchizedek** king of Salem, **and by Abraham, and by Moses, and by Heman, and by Jeduthun, and by Asaph...** (Hebrew text, Sefaria.org, Trans. William Davidson Talmud)

Again, the reader should note the *quality* of the compositional context as a form of collective memory as an *emotional resonance* that permits the reconstruction of inherited forms: "רות נמי פורענות היא פורענות דאית ליה אחרית" or "Ruth, also is suffering, suffering which has a future" (b. Bava Batra 14b). The inherited form, the explicit, normative kinship, is evident in the usage of the genealogy that ends the book of Ruth as a merism for its social meaning. This genealogy leads to the Davidic monarchy (itself a symbol of social order and ancient nationhood): "רבי יוחנן למה נקרא שמה רות שיצא ממנה דוד שריוהו להקב"ה בשירות ותושבחות"

or "Rabbi Yohanan [asked], Why is her name called Ruth? Because, David goes forth from her -- he praised the Holy One, Blessed Be He [in a word composed of the same letters as the name Ruth] by songs and praises [using the terminology of the rabbinic liturgy]" (b. Bava Batra 14b).

Taken together, the traumatized emotional state of the times (be they Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, or Persian) and the normative social ideal of Davidic monarchy as the framework of biblical kinship suggest that the ancient rabbis also discerned something potentially transformative in Ruth as a cultural artifact. For them, it was the אחרית, the future redemption we might interpolate, but for us, it is that the surface terms of the patriarchal family (affinal kinship) and the more ancient blood terms (consanguine kinship) are going to be subverted by the less explicitly visible manifestations of fictive kinship.

Regarding academic studies of composition from our own time and place, the date of composition is understood as a range, but it is the *historical quality* of the range that is significant for my present purposes. Schipper notes that "no single piece of evidence definitively determines the date of Ruth's composition" (Schipper 2016:22), but the range is significant: "Scholars have assigned a wide range of possible dates for the written composition of the book of Ruth, from the time of the united monarchy in the tenth to ninth centuries BCE to the late Persian period or the early Greek period" (Schipper 2016: 20-21). Indeed, Adele Reinhartz notes that:

> The author of the book is unknown and the date is difficult to establish. Many earlier scholars proposed a date between 950 and 700 BCE, that is, between the time of David and the Assyrian conquest of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. More recently, scholars opt for a date during the period of the Babylonian exile or the early period of the return (586-500 BCE). *In that case, the book may be read as a story of return, promising that those who return from exile will be blessed with family continuity in their land just as Naomi*

> *was blessed when she returned from Moab to Bethlehem.* (Reinhartz in Berlin and Brettler 2014: 1574)

Both dating options, the Assyrian conquest and dispersion of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BCE and the Babylonian exile and Persian return bear the same social hallmarks: traumatic upheaval of social norms and the possibility to imagine something new. One might hypothesize at present that nostalgia might intensify the use of old, inherited kinship forms as social norms. But just because older forms are invoked it does not mean that these social categories or ideological ideals are occupied by real human relations; the truth might be more transitional, as I explore here.

That "transitional truth," that complex and not-easily-simplified lived reality which undergirds the usage of the apparently natural symbolism of consanguine kinship and also the apparent cultural dominance or idealness of the affinal kinship inherent in patriarchal family models, is what we call in anthropological terms "fictive kinship." The notion of "social fiction" may appear to be problematic if the reader regards it by its non-technical meaning of "false" or "unreal." Yet as a technical term in cultural anthropology, we understand it in accordance with Clifford Geertz's understanding that an ethnographic analysis is a *constructed venture*: "They are thus fictions in the sense that they are 'something made,' something fashioned'--the original meaning of [the Latin gloss] *fictiō*--not that they are false, un-factual, or merely 'as if' thought experiments" (2004: 15).

Even as an anthropologist constructs her or his analysis of a culture, so too do members of a culture-group construct culture by living both *within* and *against* culture. I contend as an anthropologist of the contemporary period that people bear the full agency possible within the strictures and structures of their social system, that they are not passive subjects. Even within the starkest articulation of blood and marital systems is inherent

manipulation and transformation through social fictions, new constructions -- how much more so in the context of a book like Ruth, born of imperial upheaval and emotional tumult (which, even more powerfully, resonates across many periods of history).

I introduce the meta-categories of "explicit" and "tacit" kinship in order to operationalize in a culturally observable way my conclusion just stated. I will begin with the latter term, tacit. My category is rooted in the queer theory work of Decana (2008), and is relevant to the current application because he examines the social phenomenon of a group in society harnessing dominant social forms to resist an inherited structure and express a different lived reality than the dominant structure's terms and rules imagine.

This is "tacit subjectivity," namely Decana's *el sujeto lo tacito* (2008): According to this model borrowed from contemporary Spanish (Cubano) linguistics, the sexually queer aspects of a subject's personhood are differently visible in different arenas of life. This theory of personhood contradicts earlier models of queerness where the "narrative of the closet" is the "dominant narrative" in the life of all queer persons regardless of cultural difference (Sedgewick 2008[1990]). Taken out of queer (sexuality) studies and generalized to an individual moving within a cultural system in general, tacit subjectivity encompasses those points of divergence from dominant narratives. This subtle social performance is what I attend to in this study. Queer studies has historically viewed queer subjectivity as emergent and conforming to the then-contemporary model of "out queerness" during the process in which the individual moves from invisible and private or "closeted" to publicly visible and "out" (Brown 2006).

Complicating this linear picture of the "model gay subject" (Puar 2007), Decana (2008) argues that "outness" and subjectivity are fluid and highly dependent on the nature of

the social relationships that foreground the particular instantiation of subjectivity. Thus, it is the intensity and quality of the emotional bond, and ultimately the position and relationship within a kinship network that has a continually unfolding, transformative effect on a subject's expressed sexuality, or in our case, subjectivity within the consanguine and affinal kinship systems.[6]

In contrast to fictive kinship, which is often entirely tacit insofar as it is neither blood nor is it marriage alliance, both consanguine and affinal kinship bear the authority of being a natural symbol and a patriarchal family, respectively. Regarding the affinal system, Michael Satlow observes that

> For any society that supports marriage as a social institution--which is to say virtually every society--the question, Why marry?, and the answers to it, are crucial. On the one hand, they serve the concrete function of convincing people to marry, thus physically reproducing the institution. Thus societies, like those of Jews and non-Jews in antiquity, that offer quite distinct roles to men and woman frequently deploy different persuasive means to convince men and women to marry. On the other hand, within a given society's justification of marriage can also be found an articulation of how that society understands marriage, which in turn is a key to understanding more complex issues of group values and identity... (Satlow 2001: 3)

So I think it is clear that the institution represented by affinal kinship terms offers a public ideal, and an *explicit imposition of a norm onto a body and its life-ways.* Blood is inescapable, just as marriage in the "patriarchal family" is difficult to escape. These modes of expressing kinship are inescapable, or practically so, without becoming socially "queer" or taken out of society altogether. Fictive kinship patterns that mark what was formerly unmarked, however, are not so; they are tacit. This distinction, then, is the function of my distinguishing tacit from explicit kinship in the subsequent analysis. I will build on this

[6] The preceding two paragraphs are adapted from my defended dissertation proposal, (2011), *Unholy Alliance: Queer Kinship and Reform Judaism 1978-2003,* The Maxwell School, Syracuse University.

understanding of "tacit subjectivity," the subsequent study uses the notions of intimacy, movement, and proximity as a way to understand how relationships are created in tacit networks that may defy the boundaries of biblical consanguinity and marital affinity. I will seek to make visible textually reflected subjectivity in Ruth as an argument about how inherited norms are re-worked to make a new argument for kinship.

3. Remapping Ruth: "Arguing" (Ruth 1) and "Enacting" (Ruth 4) Kinship

Kinship as a heuristic map of culture is an anthropological construct reflecting human behavior, or, in the context of the present study, as reflected by literary expression. As such, the degree of isomorphism between the findings of my ethnological coding on the one hand, and whatever the lived reality was for the initial communities in possession of MT Ruth will not be a complete correlation. The results will, however, be instructive as a map of normally invisible cultural patterns[7] and as a starting place for a coherent diachronic analysis of early Jewish kinship as imagined in literature across the MT, Hellenistic omission, and Targumic interpolative translation.

The coding scheme of consanguine, affinal, and fictive kinship will require further explication, which I treat below. At the present time, it is of note that of 131 coded units in the text (usually a marked verse, but certain coding exceptions were counted as a single unit), 13 had elements in all three categories (Table 2). This phenomenon, is, I believe worth exploring. The first examples of blood, marriage, and social fiction occurring as separate references in the same coded units happen in MT Ruth 1:1-2:

[7] To this point, Baudrillard warns us of the trap that occurs when the enticement of the heuristic model's elegance is more attractive than that of reality: "If once we were able to view the Borges fable in which the cartographers of the Empire drew up a map so detailed that it ends up covering the territory exactly (the decline of the Empire witnesses the fraying of this map, little by little, and its fall into ruins, though some shreds are still discernible in the deserts -- the metaphysical beauty of this ruined abstraction testifying to a pride equal to the Empire and rotting like a carcass returning to the substance of the soil, a bit as the double ends by being confused with the real through aging) -- as the most beautiful allegory of simulation, this fable has now come full circle for us, and possesses nothing but the discrete charm of second-order simulacra... Today, abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of the real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory -- *precession of simulacra* -- that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. *The desert of the real itself*" (Baudrillard 2004[1981]: 1).

וַיְהִי בִּימֵי שְׁפֹט הַשֹּׁפְטִים וַיְהִי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ וַיֵּלֶךְ **אִישׁ** מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה לָגוּר בִּשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב ~~הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ~~
~~וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו~~: וְשֵׁם **הָאִישׁ** אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ נָעֳמִי ~~וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי־בָנָיו | מַחְלוֹן~~ וְכִלְיוֹן אֶפְרָתִים מִבֵּית לֶחֶם
יְהוּדָה וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׂדֵי־מוֹאָב וַיִּהְיוּ־שָׁם׃

In this first example, the reader can see that the temporal clause that starts verse 1 is not coded. The terms in *green* are fictive kinship, the terms in ~~orange~~ are blood kinship (referring to members sharing what we would call a genetic relationship through bio-reproduction), the terms in blue refer to kinship by marital alliance. Terms in **red** are known as the "ego" in anthropological parlance. When an ethnographer comes to map kinship, they must be careful to map from an internal perspective in the network. Such a perspective is ensured by reading the social networks of relations from the perspective of one informant, one individual who is a "native" member of that network system. Thus, since there is a linear narrative and temporal progression from the start of MT Ruth to the end, we begin by adopting the perspective of אִישׁ. This is also parallel to the perspective of the text. The main character is the man, he is identified by his homeland, then his land of habitation, then his "collateral kin," those connected to him in the kinship network: הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו, that is, "he, his wife, and his two sons."

Because this is the family of the ego-informant, and because this is the opening statement of the text following immediately the statement of the narrative's temporality, this family-unit is what we might call the "thesis statement" of the text. MT Ruth will make an ethnographic argument over the course of its narrative, which either affirms, rejects, or modifies this thesis statement of a family unit: הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו. A more nuanced look at the introduction of the thesis-unit shows a more complicated argument.

Verse 1:1 is structured as: temporal indicator, the ego, and then the thesis unit of הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו. But the ego-term אִישׁ is nested in what I have coded as a statement about

fictive kinship as follows: בָּאָרֶץ וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה לָגוּר בִּשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב translated as "in the land, and the man went from Bethlehem of Judah and he resided in the Fields of Moab." Of course, this is not just a nuanced thesis about kinship, it is also the opening narrative movement of migration by a man with a household of collateral kin (and, one assumes, attendant property) to a neo-local place of residence. Yet in kinship terms, we have a specific argument about fictive kinship--the category which is neither genetics/ blood nor marriage. This fictive kinship I am calling "land kinship." Thus, the thesis-unit of :הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו is predicated on the movement from natal land and sub-territory of that land (Bethlehem of Judah) to a new territory (Fields of Moab). The verb is -מ ילך, he left, or "migrated" in our current analytical context, and he resided as a non-natal resident of some kind, לגור, in Moab. The typical thesis-unit of the family is thus *atypical* insofar as the migration is from the Land, Judah, to outside the Land, Moab (viz. King and Stager 2001; Chapman 2016).

The association between references to genetics-blood and marital alliance on the one hand in the same verses as the particular argument for fictive kinship in Ruth, that of land, is not, I argue, coincidental. I contend rather that this association is a way of "proving" the argument or justifying the transformations to the normative social unit in Ruth of "man, his wife, and his two sons" in the novel setting of "residing (לגור) in the Fields of Moab." Above, I observed this associative phenomenon of consanguinity, affinity, and "fictivity" co-occurring in 9.92% of the kinship references I was able to code in Ruth, and that the first instance is, in fact, a thesis statement of the text.

When the research codes references to blood-kinship and references to affinal kinship (marital terms or statuses), the following cases occur in MT Ruth chapter 1 (Table 1). The mentions of. blood kinship terms are as follows (MT Ruth 1:1-21): [ושם שני הוא... ושבי בניו

בנותי, לעמך, לכנה שבנה אשה לבית אמה, ותשאר האשה משני ילדיה ומאישה, ושני בניה, בניו מחלון וכליון, ורות המואבי, עמך עמי, אל-עמה, בנתי, וגם ילדתי בנים, בנותי]. The mentions of marital or affinal terms are as follows (MT Ruth 1:1-21): [לשאת ל- נשים מ-, איש נעמי, ושם אשתו אלימלך, הוא ואשתו, זקנתי מהיות, תן ה׳ לכם ומצא מנוחה אישה בית אישה, ותאמר נעמי לשתי כלתיה, ושתי כלותיה עמה, כלתיה, יבמתך, לחמותה, הלהן תעגבה לבלתי היום לאיש, גם הייתי הלילה לאיש, לאיש]. I refer to these blood and marriage terms in chapter 1as "explicit" kinship, as I shall explain momentarily.

When the reader attends to the fictive, that is, socially-constructed concepts of social bonding and mutual ties of dependency that are both non-blood and non-marital terms, there is a subtler "argument" that emerges in the text, which we see hinted at in the discussion of verse one above.[8] The following story remains when we "control for" or remove references to "explicit kinship" and instead attend to what I call provisionally "tacit kinship." I refer to them as tacit because in identifying these fictive elements preserved in this literary cultural artifact, we have a divergence from the emic view, which has self-declared categories of blood and marriage reflected elsewhere in the Jewish scriptures.

Yet, from an etic perspective, we have a number of terms with a clearly kinship-making function. These functions, as marked in the Table 1) below are: land kinship (both permanent residence and temporary sojourn, transformations to land kinship by means of migration (both solo and in new social groupings), labeling people by their patronymic geographic ancestry, "gift exchange" (Mauss 1990[1950]), contact and proximity, and finally name change.

Thus, chapter 1, remapped according to kinship, reads as follows with the fictive terms being marked in text sound in the list of figures at the end of this study (See Table 3,

[8] Please see Table 1

page 137). As an exercise in exposing what the tacit, fictive kinship looks like, I have removed as much as possible (while still remaining intelligible) of the consanguine and the affinal aspects of the story in the first chapter of Ruth to expose the contours of that which is tacit, namely fictive kinship. Re-narrated *solely* according to the map of tacit, fictive kinship, the story is as follows:

> [**I**] There was a famine in the Land [of biblical Israel], a man from Bethlehem, that is Judah, went to reside in the Fields of Moab. [They were] Ephrathites of Bethlehem, that is Judah. They came to the Fields of Moab, and they stayed there.
>
> [**II**] And they lived there for approximately 10 years.
>
> [**III**] [Three women] went out to return from the Fields of Moab. She [the Ephrathite woman] left where she was living, they [the three women] went on the road back to Judah. [Two women, natally from Moab said to her,] No, we will return with you to your people. [The Ephrathite said,] No, turn back... for the hand of YHVH has struck out against me.
>
> [**IV**] [One natal Moabite] kissed her; [the second natal Moabite] clung to her. [The Ephrathite said], she has returned, go follow. [The Moabite said,] Don't ask me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge, where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus and more may the LORD do to me if anything but death parts me from you. [The Ephrathite saw] that she was determined to go with her.
>
> [**V**] They went to Bethlehem. [The Ephrathite woman] changed her name when her natal people called her by her name.
>
> [**VI**] The Ephrathite and Moabite women returned together, they arrived in Bethlehem.

Further, I have divided up the "fictive kinship-only" story according to phases, as indicated by Roman numerals above. In [I], there is a situation of leaving the Land (of Israel) to the Fields of Moab. The consanguine and affinal terms indicate that they are a patriarchal family consisting of father (Elimelech), mother (Naomi), two biological sons

(Machlon and Chilion); they migrate from natal land to the Fields of Moab. Elimelech dies, and this dissolves the first normative marital principle of the patriarchal family.

Section [II] marks the sojourn as a bounded time, during which Machlon and Chilion marry into the Moabite people via two women, Orpah and Ruth. Machlon and Chilion die, leaving behind an all-female, three-member household of a widow (though she is not at present named as such!) and two daughters-in-law, also unnamed widows.

Section [III] represents the return-migration from Moab to Bethlehem. A new, unnamable and tacit family unit no longer fits in the Moabite kinship system, we presume, and must return to the natal people and land of the head-of-household. We hear in this an echo of the patriarchal family, insofar as Naomi remains the head-of-household, which is why, I would argue, she is *not* named as a widow in the text.

Section [IV] represents the performance and testing of this new family unit. The head-of-household (female) Naomi attempts to dismiss the two subordinate member women and thereby dissolve the unit. *But the subordinates, called daughters-in-law, refuse* and the unit will not be dissolved. Instead, it is reinforced by physical proximity and affection, namely a kiss and a hug, thus reinforcing the unnamable and tacit-kinship reality of the new family unit. This is sealed with a vow invoking God, and marked as continuing into death, with a declaration of co-burial.

Section [V] is the return of the head-of-household and the one subordinate member, called daughter-in-law or simply "daughter" at several critical junctures. Another symbolic performance occurs to clarify the newness of the family unit that has arrived back "home," or, at least, back to the home of the head-of-household. The people *do not recognize her* and ask "Can this be Naomi?" Critically, she changes her name. Consider in our time and place

the adoption of the husband's family name by wife, and the struggles that occur with such a name after divorce. This change, in the present context, represents that there is something amiss in her social position in this fictive kinship analysis.

Finally, section [VI] makes the argument that there is a new kinship accepted symbolized by residing for a time-unmarked sojourn in the Land of Israel and not the Fields of Moab (which was time-marked as being limited). Thus, we are left with two questions: First, what kind of kinship is this? Provisionally, as I shall explore later, this is "land kinship" or "migration kinship," both of which articulate a tacit fictive kinship critical to the time-place of composition of the book of Ruth (be it Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Persian, or Hellenistic, they are all upheavals of place and order both emotionally and in terms of social structure and norms). Second, we should attend to why there are not relations of blood, since, as I argued above, these foundational concepts are not so easily dismissed.

Two things remain constant as workings of tacit kinship (fictive) undermines explicit kinship (consanguine and affinal), which the above-explained heuristic exercise clarifies: On the one hand, blood terms remain inescapable--at several points in the story the word "עם" is retained, even as words such as "בת" are re-applied to non-biogenetic relations. On the other hand, the affinal kinship model (or, better: social structure) of the "house" or "domus" is retained throughout the narrative, even as it is transformed from what Morgan called the "patriarchal family" characterized by the transfer of women from the בית אב, or father's house to the house of the husband, which, effectively, becomes a novel בית אב by means of the bio-reproduction of genetic children by those women in the husband's possession as collateral in his household.

Considering the second retention first, the house-model, the female as head-of-household is not an unknown model in the context of what became Jewish canonical scriptures. For example, we can observe in the Song of Songs 8:1-2:

מִי יִתֶּנְךָ כְּאָח לִי יוֹנֵק שְׁדֵי אִמִּי **אֶמְצָאֲךָ בַחוּץ** אֶשָּׁקְךָ גַּם לֹא־יָבוּזוּ לִי׃
אֲנַהֲגְךָ אֲבִיאֲךָ אֶל־**בֵּית אִמִּי** תְּלַמְּדֵנִי אַשְׁקְךָ מִיַּיִן הָרֶקַח מֵעֲסִיס רִמֹּנִי׃

Note the **bold** terms I emphasize in my translation: "Who will be given to me like a brother, one who suckles at my mother's breast? I shall find you *outside*, I shall kiss you; even they will not despise me. I shall conduct you, I shall bring you to *the house of my mother*, she will instruct me; I will give drink to you of rich wine from the juice of pomegranates." In this context of male-female sexual romance, there is a kinship transformation, also effected fictively. First, the narrator elides the difference of blood, declaring effectively that even if the male and female characters might not be blood relatives, they are as close as one can become, by sharing the mother's breast. Second, sexual conduct and marriage are elided; the female speaker (we presume) brings the male character who is found בחוץ, outside, *into the mother's house.* So, in one sense, yes, these are strange kinship happenings in this example.

However, they are also other examples within the canon that show that even in the context of such strange kinship, there is also precedent. Indeed, the בית אב occurs at least 149 times in the corpus of the Hebrew Bible (MT), and the בית אם occurs only four times.[9] Thus, it is a rare kinship designation, to be sure, but it does exist. For example, in Gen. 24:28 one finds:

[9] בית אב occurs at least 149 times in the Bible as the construct phrase worded as such, but the numbers increase greatly as one looks at slight variation, for example, situations in which the אב is named as a PN-male: for example, see Gen. 12:15 (Egyptian model, PN-male), 17:23 (Abraham's house, PN-male), 20:13, 20:18 (PN-male), 28:2 (PN-male). The construct phrase בית אם occurs only in Gen. 24:28, here in Ruth 1:8, Song 3:4 and Song 8:2, also as observed in Chapman 2016.

וַתָּרָץ הַנַּעֲרָ וַתַּגֶּד לְ**בֵית אִמָּהּ** כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה׃

"And the youth ran to his mother's house" according to these words, which demonstrates a house of the mother justified by blood (it is her birth son). Here in this example, the house of the mother is an affinal term overlapping a consanguine one. This is interesting to compare to the Song 8:2 reference, wherein the mother's house is the place of sexual contact, made possible to name as such because the non-consanguine relationship between the male and female characters has been corrected to make them nursing kin, again, as close as one can get after birth.

Cynthia Chapman (2016) notes that this term, the בית אם, also occurs in Gen 24:28, Ruth 1:8, and Song of Songs 3:4 and 8:2 (2016:51). These, she notes, are the only four occurrences in the MT. She comments that:

> While the term *bêt 'ab* is used extensively throughout the biblical canon and therefore received detailed scholarly analysis, the term *bêt 'ēm*, translated literally as the "house of the mother," appears only four times... Meyers understands the *bêt 'ēm* as an "alternate expression for the same societal unit" as the bet ab. The difference in her view between the two terms is one of vantage point; the *bêt 'ēm*, she argues, is the way women view the *bêt 'ab* in which they live. This book [Chapman 2016] demonstrates that when we take into account the associate maternal kinship designations that emerge in the house-of-the-mother texts, we can builds a case for understanding the term *bêt 'ēm* or "house of the mother" as an indigenous Hebrew kinship designation for the "uterine family." Comprising a mother and her biological and adopted children, the house of the mother is distinct within yet supportive of the house of the father upon which it depends. In its most basic form, a *bêt 'ēm* represents a social and spatial subunit with the larger house of the father (Chapman 2016: 51).

Both here and in subsequent chapters, I will take issue with Chapman's contention that the house of the mother is found nested within the patriarchal house of the father system in the particular context of Ruth. I do not find her argument compelling, from an anthropological, perspective that all four instances of the בית אם scattered across Genesis, Ruth, and the Song of Songs would necessarily have the same function as an expression of a

cultural form. To this end, I will focus on the appearance in Ruth. In our present context of analysis, Ruth 1, we find the following context of use:

וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי לִשְׁתֵּי כַלֹּתֶיהָ לֵכְנָה שֹּׁבְנָה אִשָּׁה לְ**בֵית אִמָּהּ** יַעֲשֶׂה [יַעַשׂ] יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם עִם־הַמֵּתִים וְעִמָּדִי׃

This verse translates to "And Naomi (PN-female) said to her two daughters-in-law (an affinal marriage alliance), let each woman travel back to the **house of her mother**, may YHVH deal with you mercifully, just as you all have dealt with the dead, and with me." Here blood ties are asserted, to be sure. Each of the daughter-in-law's [כַלֹּתֶיהָ] husbands are dead; the בית אב would therefore be logically dissolved. As result, as a normative correction, the women are asked to *travel back*, [לֵכְנָה שֹּׁבְנָה] to their consanguine natal house, [לְ**בֵית אִמָּהּ**]. Above, we noted that the tacit kinship workings in Ruth 1 were largely effected through verbs of motion, sojourn, and return, as well as direct references to land (especially natal). Here, too, the test of Naomi's new form of house kinship is tested through the request that they return, as it were, to "normal" or normative kinship systems.

Note carefully, however, that in the direct address to the two daughters-in-law by Naomi, they are addressed not by their affinal designation of [כַלֹּתֶיהָ] but rather by their *neutral sex-based gender designation of* [אִשָּׁה]! This is the first undermining of the normative reversal of the exchange of women between houses in Judahite/ Bethlehemite and Moabite (we presume generously [Gayle Rubin 1978, *The Traffic in Women*]) society. The two women in the direct address refuse to do so, instead saying in Ruth 1:10: [וַתֹּאמַרְנָה־לּוֹ כִּי־אִתְּךָ נָשׁוּב לְעַמֶּךָ׃], or "(The women) said to her (Naomi), "We shall return with you to your people." The new model of the בית אם is preserved as different in this test of novel kinship, and is strengthened through the ultimate blood relation--joining a people or עם.

What of blood, then, the most foundational and basic category? To examine blood, let us look at a term that is very difficult to classify, the "people" or עם. For the anthropologist Morgan, this was the ultimate expression of blood, elaborated through the unstable and intermediary social structure of the biblical and Homeric patriarchal family by out-group sexual and marital unions that connected in-group mating. It was the organization of the house of Israel built on bio-reproductive models. Indeed, this explicit kinship has been the predominant model in biblical studies, but it is one that is modified if not outright contradicted in biblical Ruth.

King and Stager, in their *Life in Biblical Israel* (2001), amalgamate textual and archaeological evidence from the Land to demonstrate clearly this normative model of explicit house kinship. Their theoretical grounding is Weberian, and draws on his notion of "patrimonial authority," and their schema is tripartite:

> ...[A]t the ground level is the ancestral, or patriarchal household known as the *bet ab*, literally 'house of the father.' At the level of state or, better, tribal kingdom, in ancient Israel and in neighboring polities, the king functions as the *paterfamilias*, his subjects dependent on personal relationships and loyalty to him, in return for which allegiance they expect protection and succor. As sovereign and proprietor of the land, the king presides over his house (*bayit*), which includes the families and households of the whole kingdom... The king, however, does not represent the apex of this societal model; rather, it is Yahweh (in the case of Israel), who is the supreme patrimonial lord. He is the ultimate patrimonial authority over the children of Israel, who are bound to him through covenant as kindred ('am), or kindred-in law (citing Cross 1998). (King and Stager 2001: 4).

This is a commonly accepted model both in sociology and in general, owing to Weber's conceptual dominance in that field on the one hand, and owing to the emergent structure of Western civilizations on the other. The notion of עם remains difficult to classify in terms of blood, marriage alliance, or fictive kinship. Part of the reason is the level of abstraction in which it emerges as an organizing principle of biblical society in King and

Stager (2001), as quoted above. Indeed, King and Stager, following Cross (1998), observe as well that this is the highest order of social abstraction, on the most ideological and least empirically social level, in Marxian terms, of the national deity:

> Genealogies figure prominently in biblical history because kinship is the foundation of Israelite society. Classified in descending order, the social units are the שבט/ מטה, commonly translated "tribe" but literally "staff/ scepter"; משפחה, rendered as clan, literally "family," comprising several families; בית אב, the "father's house" or "family household," the joint family or lineage. *Another term is עם, (as in עם Yahweh), which Frank M. Cross translates "the kindred of Yahweh" This encompassing unit designates the covenanted community, or, to use Cross' phrase 'kinship-in-law.'* (King and Stager 2001: 37)

In the context of the present analysis, the problem of עם's high and distant classificatory level is evident in the synthetic use of the Hebrew Bible in the analysis by King and Stager; they presume a conceptual unity in the biblical books. Here, in this study, I am reading Ruth *against* the notion of normative law in order to see the tacit workings of fictive kinship both *within* and *against* the explicit categories of bloof and marriage. So, by attending to the occurrences of עם in Ruth 1, *we can see that עם is transformed by the fictive kinship strategies of motion, sojourn, and return, as well as direct references to land*.

In Ruth, the author is moving עם to a much lower order here through fictive kinship; we see עם not so much as within the framework of law, but rather, quite literally in personal choice, insofar as Orpah and Ruth *refuse* to return according to the order of law (cf. Schneider 1968). This is powerful evidence that even a high-order organizing concept such as עם can be undone by individual agency and refusal to adhere to a behavioral and migratory kinship norm such as "go, return." Indeed, six invocations of the national deity, YHVH, in Ruth 1 include four in contexts that bring this distant, higher-order social authority into a

position in which the novel kinship structure featuring Naomi as head-of-house is affirmed (1:8, 9, 17). The first three are oaths to affirm the novel kinship structure:

1:8 וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי לִשְׁתֵּי כַלֹּתֶיהָ לֵכְנָה שֹּׁבְנָה אִשָּׁה לְבֵית אִמָּהּ יַעַשׂ [יַעַשׂ] **יְהוָה** עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם עִם־הַמֵּתִים וְעִמָּדִי׃

1:9 יִתֵּן **יְהוָה** לָכֶם וּמְצֶאןָ מְנוּחָה אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִישָׁהּ וַתִּשַּׁק לָהֶן וַתִּשֶּׂאנָה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכֶּינָה׃

1:17 בַּאֲשֶׁר תָּמוּתִי אָמוּת וְשָׁם אֶקָּבֵר כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה **יְהוָה** לִי וְכֹה יֹסִיף כִּי הַמָּוֶת יַפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵךְ׃

The moment when YHVH is next described in the women's speech is Naomi's name-change in her return to her natal עם:

1:13 הֲלָהֵן ו תְּשַׂבֵּרְנָה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדָּלוּ הֲלָהֵן תֵּעָגֵנָה לְבִלְתִּי הֱיוֹת לְאִישׁ אַל בְּנֹתַי כִּי־מַר־לִי מְאֹד מִכֶּם כִּי־יָצְאָה בִי יַד־**יְהוָה**׃

Naomi justifies the name change by saying that "YHVH has gone out against me [כִּי־יָצְאָה בִי יַד־**יְהוָה**׃]." There is thus a dual-invocation of the national deity. First, YHVH is invoked twice to affirm the novel house kinship arrangement. Second, YHVH is invoked as the one who is the cause of misfortune and disruption, namely, the death of the three husbands required to structure normal kinship. What this demonstrates, vis-à-vis King and Stager's synthetic argument, is that the house kinship is both reflective of a stable shared norm, rooted in blood and elaborated through marital alliance, but that it can be worked within and against by individual agents in the kinship network by means of fictive kinship such as migration, habitation, and proximity. Fictive kinship is therefore a powerful and transformative social metaphor. Within the freedom afforded to agents inherent in manipulating a social metaphor, the tacit within the explicit, therefore, we attend to the tacit in interpretive reflexes of Ruth over time.

We therefore turn our analysis at this juncture to the distribution of the three categories of kinship in biblical Ruth. As a first step to mapping the strange social territory of Ruth, I coded the text according to consanguine terms and expressions, affinal expressions, and fictive expressions. As to coding strategies, I marked some units as individual words and some units as expressions or whole rituals. Because this is a cultural analysis based in (textual) linguistic deployments, sometimes a referent to kinship will be a term, and sometimes it will be a phrase. Biblically, there are also literary units and formulae to which I had to attend as the analyst. Three incidents in the process of analysis stand out in particular. The results can be seen in Table 2. Of those expressions related to kinship, N = 131, 22.14% are consanguine, 30.92% are affinal, and 50.76% are fictive in this initial data collection schema.[10] That is to say all mentions of kinship that I coded across the four chapters of Ruth, nearly half are fictive.

A closer examination of fictive terms within MT Ruth 1 and their specific classifications is illustrative (for which see Table 1). The types of fictive kinship are: mentions of land that are not time-marked in terms of habitation by the main characters of the narrative, mentions of land in the context of patriarchal grouping, migration, mentions of land in the context of time-limited sojourn, land as the object of a migratory return, "symbolic migration" and novel unit co-migration, or the migration that directly produces a new house-kinship type, gift exchange, symbolic name changes, and self-declarations or namings of new kinship statuses.

[10] Please see Table 2.

Certain difficulties occurred in this method of data-marking. First the ritual of חליצה in Ruth 4:06-8 is at once matters of blood, marriage, and fictive kinship constructions. The ritual is found in Deuteronomy 25: 5-10:

כִּי־יֵשְׁבוּ אַחִים יַחְדָּו וּמֵת אַחַד מֵהֶם וּבֵן אֵין־לוֹ לֹא־תִהְיֶה אֵשֶׁת־הַמֵּת הַחוּצָה לְאִישׁ זָר יְבָמָהּ יָבֹא עָלֶיהָ וּלְקָחָהּ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וְיִבְּמָהּ: וְהָיָה הַבְּכוֹר אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד יָקוּם עַל־שֵׁם אָחִיו הַמֵּת וְלֹא־יִמָּחֶה שְׁמוֹ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: וְאִם־לֹא יַחְפֹּץ הָאִישׁ לָקַחַת אֶת יְבִמְתּוֹ וְעָלְתָה יְבִמְתּוֹ הַשַּׁעְרָה אֶל־הַזְּקֵנִים וְאָמְרָה מֵאֵן יְבָמִי לְהָקִים לְאָחִיו שֵׁם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אָבָה יַבָּמִי: חָלְצוּ־לוֹ זִקְנֵי־עִירוֹ וְדִבְּרוּ אֵלָיו וְעָמַד וְאָמַר לֹא חָפַצְתִּי לְקַחְתָּהּ: טוֹנְפָה יְבִמְתּוֹ אֵלָיו לְעֵינֵי הַזְּקֵנִים וְחָלְצָה נַעֲלוֹ מֵעַל רַגְלוֹ וְיָרְקָה בְּפָנָיו וְעָנְתָה וְאָמְרָה כָּכָה יֵעָשֶׂה לָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִבְנֶה אֶת־בֵּית אָחִיו וְנִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּית חֲלוּץ הַנָּעַל: ס

> When brothers dwell together and one of them dies and leaves no son, the wide of the deceased shall not be married to a stranger, outside the family. Her husband's brother shall unite with her: he shall take her as his wife and perform the levir's duty. The first son that she bears shall be accounted to the dead brother, that is name may not be blotted out in Israel. But if the man does not want to marry his brother's widow, his brother's widow shall appear before the elders in the gate and declare, 'My husband's brother refuses to establish a name in Israel for his brother; he will not perform the duty of a levir.' The elders of his town shall then summon him and talk to him. If he insists saying, 'I do not want to marry her,' his brother's widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, pull the sandal of his foot, spit in his face and make this declaration: Thus shall be done to him who will not build up his brother's house! And he shall go in Israel be the name of "the family of the unsandaled one. (Trans. JPS)

In kinship terms, the consanguine aspects are the "building of the house" (אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִבְנֶה אֶת־בֵּית), which amounts to the production of socially legitimated, bio-reproductive offspring for future generations. This reproduction is called "establishing a name in Israel" (the inverse of וְלֹא־יִמָּחֶה שְׁמוֹ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל). The reader should note the easy slippage between kinship rooted in blood relation to social status evident in this ritual: Because the levir refuses to take his dead brother's widow as his wife for the sake of biological reproduction, that is the establishment of a "name" or a "house," he is transferred from the social in-group, Israel, to an out-group or marginal status. This out-group, made neither by blood ties not by socially legitimated marital relations, is considered a fictive kinship to be one of the בית חלוץ הנעל. Hence, I have coded the entire mention of this incident as simultaneously consanguine, affinal, and fictive.

The second issue in coding pertains to Ruth 4:18-20, the issue of genealogies. The reader should note that although the biblical genealogies or "תולדות" are important in the larger biblical narrative, specific focus on it is beyond the scope of the present study. As a biblical genre, such lists abound, and they make social arguments tying history to kinship, thus extending the biblical author's present-time social world into the past and future. In kinship terminology, the bio-reproduction of children (consanguinity) from socially legitimated marriages (affinity/ alliance), produces an imagined people projected into the future (fictive, constructed kinship). Hence, I have coded the genealogies that close the book as at once consanguine, affinal, and fictive.

The third issue is one that is born from the problem of trying to apply a quasi-quantitative method to the study of culture, which is inherently based in the interpretive imagination of the ethnographer. Our job as "field" ethnologists is to try and learn to see from within, but sometimes we cannot. In one instance, I have coded an incident (Ruth 1:19) as both affinal and consanguine because, simply put, culture is messy and defies our coding schemata. Thus, this quasi-quantitative map I have done is to serve as an organizing overview, a high-altitude survey, but it should not be considered wholly scientific in the sense that it is not predictive, but it should be considered socially scientific in the sense that it is systematic.

If we can hold the argument that Naomi's house is by the close of MT Ruth 1 a new social unit, and that this is affirmed through oaths to the national deity of Judah/ Bethlehem, then in reading MT Ruth 2 through the lens of kinship, wherein explicit kinship is worked against by the tacit, we should yield informative results. In the opening lines of the chapter, we read: "Naomi had a kinsman [מודע], to her husband, a mighty warrior man, from the

family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz" [וּלְנָעֳמִי מְיֻדָּע [מוֹדָע] לְאִישָׁהּ אִישׁ גִּבּוֹר חַיִל מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וּשְׁמוֹ בֹּעַז:].

Once again, we are thrust back into the patriarchal family world of normative, explicit kinship in blood and marital terms. But there is a hint that something is amiss, I would contend, in the appellations that appositionally describe Boaz: his social role is named before his patronymic ancestry. This opens up narratively the possibility that kinship can be transformed. Once again, too, the normative explicit world of the [יהודה/ בית-לחם] עם is invoked when Ruth, now by MT Ruth1's reckoning a member of the novel house-kinship over which Naomi is the head, is designated as a Moabite (2:2). Quickly, however, the situation of Ruth's otherness is resolved by 2:2-3. Ruth seeks permission of the head of household Naomi to go to the fields and meet a man, and, we presume marry [אֲשֶׁר אֶמְצָא־חֵן בְּעֵינָיו] into the people to legitimate her position in the עם.

But, within the novel form of the household Naomi reassures her that her status is not dependent on affinal kinship through marriage to a Judahite/ Bethlehemite man, but rather through blood; she says, "Go, my *daughter*" [וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ לְכִי בִתִּי:]. Indeed, Boaz, the man who sees Ruth favorably, inquires about her in 2:5 and receives his answer in 2:6: "To whom does this girl belong" [לְמִי הַנַּעֲרָה הַזֹּאת:] he asks to which he receives the response "She is a Moabite girl who came back with Naomi from the Fields of Moab" [וַיֹּאמֶר נַעֲרָה מְוֹאֲבִיָּה הִיא הַשָּׁבָה עִם־נָעֳמִי מִשְּׂדֵה מוֹאָב:]. In a sense, the marking as "other," [מְוֹאֲבִיָּה], is undone by the use of fictive kinship, in this case co-migration back to the head-of-household's natal land as a member of the new house kinship form [הִיא הַשָּׁבָה עִם־נָעֳמִי מִשְּׂדֵה מוֹאָב:].

Evidence for this restoration to membership in explicit kinship is given in the consanguine address by which Boaz addresses Ruth, " Boaz said, 'Did you not hear, my

daughter..." [וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז אֶל־רוּת הֲלוֹא שָׁמַעַתְּ בִּתִּי] (Ruth 2:7). Second and further in evidence of this restoration, Boaz finishes by invoking fictive kinship in terms of motion and proximity; he asks her to stay in his presence, which the reader would have learned in the tacit kinship argument set forth in MT Ruth 1 means that one begins to enter another's household. Boaz concludes in the linguistic mood of direct imperative to Ruth, "Do not go away to glean in another field, don't even pass on from here; here should you cling to my girls" [אַל־תֵּלְכִי לִלְקֹט בְּשָׂדֶה אַחֵר וְגַם לֹא תַעֲבוֹרִי מִזֶּה וְכֹה תִדְבָּקִין עִם־נַעֲרֹתָי:].

But once again the status of blood presents a problem for a young, unmarried woman to take agency to her benefit in her novel kinship situation. Ruth refers to herself as a "foreigner" [וְאָנֹכִי נָכְרִיָּה:] (Ruth 2:10). Once again, in rejection of the former boundaries established by the explicit kinship ties of blood and marriage, Boaz answers her, invoking the national deity to secure the kinship status as we saw in MT Ruth 1, "May YHVH fulfill your work, and may your recompense be full, from YHVH the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge" [יְשַׁלֵּם יְהוָה פָּעֳלֶךְ וּתְהִי מַשְׂכֻּרְתֵּךְ שְׁלֵמָה מֵעִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־בָּאת לַחֲסוֹת תַּחַת־כְּנָפָיו:] (2:12). This is clearly becoming a negotiation from an Israelite (now named as such newly in verse 2:12 by the invocation of the deity, and Ruth accedes to his deity-invoking oath by naming the status of collateral kin, that is, un-related members of a household unit, calling herself a "maidservant" [דִּבַּרְתָּ עַל־לֵב שִׁפְחָתֶךָ וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה כְּאַחַת שִׁפְחֹתֶיךָ:].

Once again, we find a series of actions that perform fictive kinship, which are now negotiated by conversation and affirmed by the speech-act (Austin 1975) of the oath. For example, we find eating of the food of another's house (2:14) [דִּבַּרְתָּ עַל־לֵב שִׁפְחָתֶךָ וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה כְּאַחַת שִׁפְחֹתֶיךָ:], but note well that her concession is maintained, because of her proximity; she

eats by the collateral kin, or household staff. Ruth settles in to working under these conditions of work, social proximity, and domicile membership as collateral kin (2:14-19).

The question remains in our kinship analysis, however, as to the fate of the novel *bêt 'îšāh* [בית אישה] under Naomi's headship (who is called in 2:19 "her mother-in-law" to express the tacit household in explicit terms [חֲמוֹתָהּ]. Naomi's speech in learning of Ruth's situation in 2:20 is striking in this regard: "Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'Blessed is he to YHVH, who has not abandoned ([עָזַב], an anagram of Boaz, though, to be sure, a subtle one that may not be intentional) his mercy to the living and to the dead.' And Naomi said to her "he is a relative [קָרוֹב] to us, the man is from our near-kin [מִגֹּאֲלֵנוּ]" [וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֳמִי לְכַלָּתָהּ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָזַב חַסְדּוֹ אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַמֵּתִים וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נָעֳמִי קָרוֹב לָנוּ הָאִישׁ מִגֹּאֲלֵנוּ הוּא:]. This declaration in the tacit and explicit kinship framework of analysis that I have employed here is nothing other than working the Naomi-household (the novel form established through tacit kinship) into the normative patriarchal system.

How then does this occur? In contrast to the position Ruth negotiated as a maidservant [שִׁפְחָתֶךָ], Naomi declares that he is a "relative" with the lemma "one who is near" [קָרוֹב], thus declaring new (conceptual) proximal distance in which Ruth may now physically move; we presume she may eat his food, for example, now at his table. But, for the moment, and for the sake of the conscious manipulation of explicit blood and marriage kinship, Naomi does not advise Ruth against telling him, but rather she exhorts her *to maintain proximity with the collateral kin and the workers, and not Boaz* (2:20-21); hence, there is a tacit awareness in the text of the fictive kinship effects of physical proximity as a reflex of and performance producing the social reality.

Next, we must focus on the new term introduced by Naomi. It is the term for kin shared between household units in the patriarchal society [מֶגֹּאֲלֵנוּ]. Regarding this term, King and Stager comment (2001: 38-9):

> Kisman-Redeemer: Integral to the family structure and indicative of its solidarity in biblical times is the concept of the גואל, often translated "redeemer." Cross suggests that the verb גאל, "to redeem" is best translated "to act as a kinsman." The גואל is the next of kin whose duty is to vindicate a family member with the משפחה. The responsibility of the גואל extends to brother, uncles, cousins and any other *blood* relative [emphasis mine].

This term, גואל, contextually, takes the form not just of the category that King and Stager (2001) describe, but also the idea of redeeming social status of a "queer" household of women (relative to, we presume, the much larger numbers of normative household structures).[11] This theme of redeeming kinsman occupies MT Ruth 3 and the redemption itself results in the genealogy that concludes MT Ruth 4, wherein the "argument" of MT Ruth 1 for a new form of fictive kinship is "enacted."

Proximity in terms of calculating the distance between blood relatives becomes bound up in social proximity in MT Ruth 3. Naomi instructs Ruth to *lay with Boaz*, in the most biblically intimate of spaces (3:1-6), Boaz discovers Ruth in his sleeping place when he wakes up, but is *comforted* to learn that she is a kinswoman, which she declares by saying that he is a "redeeming kinsman" (3:9) [וַתֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי רוּת אֲמָתֶךָ וּפָרַשְׂתָּ כְנָפֶךָ עַל־אֲמָתְךָ כִּי גֹאֵל אָתָּה׃]. Boaz declares his joy that she came to him and to his duty to redeem her through marriage (3: 10). But at this point we remember that *Ruth and Naomi share no consanguinity, and that their affinal bond has been ended by the death of the husband.* Therefore, this is a double-

[11] Indeed Koehler and Baumgarter in *HALOT* observe that a specific function is tied to the performance of the root ג.א.ל, namely "[the] duty of a male relative of a deceased, who leaves a childless widow behind, to redeem her from childlessness through marriage" (169b) and cite Gen 30:1, which dies not use the lemma explicitly (and I Tim 2:15 in the NT).

acceptance of Ruth's legitimacy, both that she has found the man who is to redeem her explicit affine marital status on the one hand, and who accepts her in the capacity of a consanguine daughter to Naomi.

Finally, we observe in MT Ruth 3 that proximity matters strongly, as Boaz declares "But while it is true that I am a redeeming kinsman, there is another redeemer closer than I" [וְעַתָּה֙ כִּ֣י אָמְנָ֔ם כִּ֥י אִם גֹּאֵ֖ל אָנֹ֑כִי וְגַם֙ יֵ֣שׁ גֹּאֵ֔ל קָר֖וֹב מִמֶּֽנִּי׃] (3:12). This declaration and search for a closer blood relation--for one who is not blood-related in the first place but has come to occupy that social status by the tacitly workings of the fictive realm of kinship against the explicit one of blood and marriage--takes us into MT Ruth 4.

For the present analysis, MT Ruth 4 has two relevant themes: First is the theme of the merger of land (fictive, tacit kinship) and the resultant genealogy that links the individual agency of Naomi and her novel kinship unit back up to the highest earthly orders of the system, that of the Davidic Monarchy. The near kinsman refuses to fulfill his role (4:5-6) and undergoes the ritual of חליצה to pass on that automatic affinal kinship-duty.

MT Ruth 4 also provides us with the physical mapping of normative and explicit kinship concerns. First, we note that justice and the authority to mend or punish violations of consanguine and affinal structures and rules (cf. Schneider 1968, Sahlins 2013) occurs in the city gate: "And Boaz ascended to the city-gate,[12] and he sat there, and presently the redeeming-kinsman who spoke to Boaz passed by. Boaz said, 'Come sit, so-and-so,' and he sat down." (Ruth 4:1) [וּבֹ֣עַז עָלָ֗ה הַשַּׁ֙עַר֙ וַיֵּ֣שֶׁב שָׁ֔ם וְהִנֵּ֥ה הַגֹּאֵ֖ל עֹבֵ֣ר אֲשֶׁר֩ דִּבֶּר־בֹּ֨עַז וַיֹּ֜אמֶר סוּרָ֤ה שְׁבָה־פֹּ֙ה֙ פְּלֹנִ֔י

[12] William Dever (2012) writes regarding the city gate that "[t]he city gates that we have seen in the 8th century are not only mentioned several times in the Hebrew Bible, but several functions of these gates are specified. The gate (ša'ar) was for entering and leaving the city (2 Kings 23:8), a receiving place for officials (I Sam 20:25), a general gathering area (Ruth 4:1, Psalm 69:12), a forum for public discussion (2 Chron 32:6), a place for juridical actions (Deut 17:5, Amos 5:10-15), a marketplace (Job 31:21-22; Proverbs 22:22, 24:7, 31:32); Gen 23:17-18; Ruth 4:1-12), a place for cultic activities (2 Kings 23:8)" (2012:137).

אַלְמֹנִי וַיָּסַר וַיֵּשֶׁב:]. Even in this proper place of justice (the explicit social order), there are tacit workings. Boaz does not say why he has summoned the redeeming kinsman; the redeeming kinsman enters the physical location of justice and explicit kinship rulings by means of subterfuge, or, at the very least, by means of incomplete information as to why he was summoned.

Indeed, Boaz quickly transforms the place from a happenstance summons to speak casually to a formal court in which the order of law can be invoked by convening the elders of the town, "Then [Boaz] took 10 elders of the city and he said, 'Be seated here,' and they sat."(4:2) [וַיִּקַּח עֲשָׂרָה אֲנָשִׁים מִזִּקְנֵי הָעִיר וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁבוּ־פֹה וַיֵּשָׁבוּ:]. In this act, we see again evidence for the power of proximity of persons in society to transform a social arrangement. So too is kinship elided to place and authority over that place. The issue needing justice is suddenly that Naomi has to sell the land that once belonged to her husband, Elimelech (4:2). What has gone wrong that the female household (produced and transformed through female co-migration and proximity) over which Naomi is head, the "House of Naomi,"must sell the land that she avoided letting pass from her possession at the death of her husband?

The issue is the space her novel kinship form occupies; there is elision between people and place, one thing becomes the other. The order of law demands this be resolved through a redeeming not just of marital norms, but through the enactment of a legal formula that draws together the fictive kinship of movement verbs (sitting), the patriarchal family elaborated in the elders that govern as *paterfamilias* of the Land (King and Stager 2001), and the elision of affinal and blood kin (the unmarried woman Ruth and her *apparent* blood mother Naomi). The formula to be enacted is stated as: "Acquire in front of those who are

sitting, in front of the elders of my people, if indeed you will act as a redeeming-kinsman" [קְנֵה נֶגֶד הַיֹּשְׁבִים וְנֶגֶד זִקְנֵי עַמִּי אִם־תִּגְאַל גְּאָל] (Ruth 4:4).

To the present point in this study,[13] stated in brief, the story is that normative and socially typical marriages occur for Naomi and Elimelech, as is their bio-reproduction of sons Machlon and Chilion. However, famine disrupts their place of residence, and requires their migration for an unclear amount of time to the Fields of Moab. There, their sons take wives from the "daughters of the Moabites," Ruth and Orpah. This is explicitly forbidden in the Torah.[14] Things get stranger: Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah lose their husbands, but Naomi retains her husband's property holdings in the Land of Israel. Naomi, Ruth, and, for some time, Orpah migrate together forming a functional בית אם or matriarchal house, and Naomi and Ruth form a non-normative "house" or kinship unit in Israel on a novel, queer pattern (in terms of members as women, not blood, not in-laws, and still holding property) against the pattern of a בית אב as the fundamental socially organizing unit in Israel.

What has occurred, therefore in MT Ruth 1 is that the "*argument*" for a new unit based in co-migration and affective ties of love and material support is "imagined" into existence in narrative as a possibility for a new social order. But, it is not enacted as legitimate until a blood kinsman, Boaz, aligns the private, imagined household of Naomi-Ruth to the normative laws of the בית אב and Levirate marriage in MT Ruth 4. MT Ruth 4,

[13] The next section was prepared for the Advanced Biblical Hebrew Seminar at the PSGS of HUC-JIR for fall semester 2020 in consultation with the instructor that it would be used for this thesis (through page 64 of the present work).

[14] Deuteronomy 23: 4 : An Ammonite nor a Moabite may enter into the community of the Eternal, even by the 10th generation, they shall not ever come into the congregation of the Eternal.
לֹא־יָבֹא עַמּוֹנִי וּמוֹאָבִי בִּקְהַל יְהוָה גַּם דּוֹר עֲשִׂירִי לֹא־יָבֹא לָהֶם בִּקְהַל יְהוָה עַד־עוֹלָם׃

therefore, is the *"enactment*" that brings the risky and socially queer House of Naomi into alignment with the system that it resists.

In the book of MT Ruth up until this point I proceeded in my analysis by identifying kinship terms by these three orders: blood, affine, and fictive. I discovered that nearly half of the kinship terms in the story told in MT Ruth 1 are fictive, and of these the greatest majority refer to migration and land-based kinship. Of course, given the overall trope in the Hebrew Bible of the land and the people of the land, and the biblical Deity's continual and conditional bequeathal of that land, this is of no surprise. What is, however, surprising, is how in Ruth the use of land becomes a narrative strategy to rework the fundamental, basic biblical norm of the בית אב. The patriarchal house is re-worked to become a complicated form of the בית אם, a house of the property-holding widow Naomi, constituted of the daughters-in-law (turned widows) Orpah and Ruth (who are also Moabites, forbidden to Israelites in the affinal order [Deuteronomy 23:4]).

Yet this novel, queer, and fictive "house"(-type) is effected as a "mere" narration, an introduction to the book. At the close of the book, in chapter 4 of the MT version, we find the imagined story re-integrated into the biblical system through Toraitic law--it is normalized, given contextual validity, and, therefore, becomes "real" [cf., very generally, Dor 2015; and Bell and esp. Ryan 2019].

Schipper (2016) identifies three sections to chapter 4: the portion dealing with "Boaz at city gate" (4:1-12) (2016: 162), the "birth of Obed" (4:13-17), and the Davidic genealogies at the end, which Schipper calls "the generations of Perez" (4:18-22). In aligning these divisions to our adopted schema of anthropological kinship, we see that the first section aligns to the order of fictive kinship, the second to the order of blood, as does the third. What

links these three sections anthropologically -- aside from the progression plot itself -- is the order of affinal kinship that Boaz, the main actor in Ruth 4, is manipulating, as I will explore in the next section of this essay.

Of principle concern here in this analysis is the fictive order of Ruth 4:1-12. Structurally there are three manipulations of normative biblical word-order from VSO to SVO (4:1, 4:4, and 4:10). The predominant mode of narration in this first section is the use of the perfect *qatal* (קטל) form in the main clause of each sentence, followed by the use of the *wa-yiqtol* (ויקטול). For example, in 4:1 Boaz's principal action is "עָלָה הַשַּׁעַר", that Boaz mounted to the city gate. Arnold and Choi have called this usage of the קטל the "complete" or "whole" use of the perfect. In effect, it narrates an event seen from the perspective of the narrator as done and discrete (Arnold and Choi 2019: 66-67). The subsequent action in dependent clauses is in the ויקטול form, which again is a typical use, classified by Arnold and Choi (2018) to be an approximation of the perfect aspect that establishes the main action/ main verb in this example.

The use of the perfect is, however, relatively less frequent to other forms (most of which are ויטול or imperatives) in this section of narrative, occurring in 4:1 (עלה), 4:3 (מכרה), 4:4 (אמרתי), 4:7 (שלף, נתן), 4:10 (קניתי), 4:12 (ילדה). For the purposes of narrative coherence, I am not going to discuss 4:12, because this perfect comes in a blessing, which invokes the matriarchic merit of Tamar, and is not part of the main narrative. However, a skeleton or inner structure of action is clarified by attending to these perfect forms.

Boaz ascends to the gate (4:1). He does this in order to address the problem that the unmarried but non-אלמנה woman (i.e., she refuses to claim this status) Naomi had sold (מכרה, 4:4) her land, which has kinship issues insofar as it is a violation of the normal order of the

inheritance property as it moves with legitimate or here illegitimate kin-ties. The next perfect narrative action (4:7) is in an explanatory aside as to the normative functioning of the kinship system in the case of the husband's death, and the ritual of חליצה used to evade that prescribed outcome--a man would draw off his shoe (שלף) and then give it away (נתן), thus changing his status in Israel. The final in 4:10, קניתי, is a speech act, realizing in reality the establishment of Naomi's private house-kinship within the public domain.

Ruth 4 uses topicalization by pre-position (Arnold and Choi 2018: 182-187, cf. Huehnergard 2000: 3.6 for how this works generally in Semitic language-family syntax) as a strategy to demonstrate when a character steps out of the normative house-kinship system of the Torah's ideal. If VSO word-order is more typical (at least numerically) for biblical Hebrew, it commands the reader's attention when VSO is violated in SVO-order. One does not want to carry social metaphors too far or too literally into the language that carries them; however, it strikes me as not an overstatement to align the בית אם kinship of Ruth and its violations of the בית אב orders of blood and of affinity with the way Ruth 4 violates VSO word order.

We find this SVO phenomenon (and one instance of OVS, which fronts the object of the action rather than the action or the agent) in the following verses, excluding 4:18-22, the genealogical appendage (Schipper 2016):

Ruth 4:1 וּבֹעַז עָלָה הַשַּׁעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם וְהִנֵּה הַגֹּאֵל עֹבֵר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־בֹּעַז וַיֹּאמֶר סוּרָה שְׁבָה־
פֹּה פְּלֹנִי אַלְמֹנִי וַיָּסַר וַיֵּשֵׁב׃

Ruth 4:4 וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי אֶגְלָה אָזְנְךָ לֵאמֹר קְנֵה נֶגֶד הַיֹּשְׁבִים וְנֶגֶד זִקְנֵי עַמִּי אִם־תִּגְאַל גְּאָל
וְאִם־לֹא יִגְאַל הַגִּידָה לִּי וְאֵדַע [וְ][אֵדְעָה] כִּי אֵין זוּלָתְךָ לִגְאֹל וְאָנֹכִי אַחֲרֶיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי
אֶגְאָל׃

Ruth 4:10 וְגַם אֶת־רוּת הַמֹּאֲבִיָּה אֵשֶׁת מַחְלוֹן קָנִיתִי לִי לְאִשָּׁה לְהָקִים שֵׁם־הַמֵּת עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ
וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת שֵׁם־הַמֵּת מֵעִם אֶחָיו וּמִשַּׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם׃

Three instances occur at critical moments of the realization of the imagined kinship system narratively speaking, and involve 3 critical characters: Boaz (4:1), the unnamed "redeeming kinsman/ גואל" (4:4) called פלוני-אלמוני, and Ruth, the Moabite, (former) wife of Machlon (4:10). Up to this point in the story, in chapters 2 and 3, Naomi, having returned to the Land of Israel from the Fields of Moab seeks to integrate her widowed (Moabite) daughter-in-law into her natal kinship system. While chapter 1 establishes Ruth as a member of Naomi's novel kinship house, bound-up in kinship are two other social aspects -- the transmission of property across generations on the one hand, and the production of those generations on the other. Even in the creation of something new, it must be integrated into the practices and the understandings of the old.

In 4:1**,** Boaz is fronted; this narratively marks a shift that foreshadows the social shift that Boaz will enact, or the fronting is to make present for the reader, by means of performative language and by means of "tricking" or "substituting" for the birth-right and -responsibility of the redeeming kinsman. The actions he takes are simple past action: he went up to the gate (עָלָה הַשַּׁעַר), he sat (וַיֵּשֶׁב), and he said (וַיֹּאמֶר). Grammatically, we are presented with an interruption of this sequence of a perfect קטל followed by two subsequent- or successive-action *wa-yiqtol* forms. This neat sequence of actions is interrupted by the appearance of Boaz's target in "ascending to the [city] gate," the place of power. The reader finds the sequence of the particle הנה plus subject plus verb (a second inverted, SVO order); it announces the arrival of Ruth's nearest male גואל, "redeeming kinsman," whose place and social role Boaz wishes to substitute. Note that both are introduced in inverted word-order.

There is a power dynamic established not only in Boaz's taking up a position in the city gate, the place of legal transactions in the ancient Israelite city, but in the grammatical

mode by which he addresses the redeeming kinsman: סוּרָה שְׁבָה־פֹּה פְּלֹנִי אַלְמֹנִי. This address is two commands each with a paragogic ה״י, in normal VSO word-order, and the address is פְּלֹנִי אַלְמֹנִי, "so-and-so." I contend that the combination of the power-imbalances of Boaz's place of sitting, the use of commands, and his addressing the kinsman as so-and-so are content that, when combined with the structure of non-subject-emphasizing word-order do three things: They nullify the interruption of his presence, keep the focus on Boaz as the one who will take the social role he desires, and offer foreshadowing.[15]

Verse 4:4 brings the reader Boaz's effecting the switch, by exploitation of the ambiguous language of the redeeming kinsman and his forcing a "double-object" or cognate accusative from the latter. Boaz has up to this verse managed to maintain effecting power in his move to step into the role of the redeeming kinsman. Now, because human status is negotiated in spoken discourse, he must convince or" un-convince" the kinsman of his social responsibilities. At the beginning of the verse, in SVO order, Boaz in fronted by saying: "וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי אֶגְלָה אָזְנְךָ לֵאמֹר". Boaz states the problem of integrating the private and novel form of the House of Naomi into which he has become embroiled to the normative Israelite system by saying: כִּי **אֵין זוֹלָתְךָ לִגְאֹל** . The use of the ל״מ-prefixed infinitive construct here with the negative particle of predication אין shows "obligation, permission... or prohibition (Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 114 l). But, Gesenius regards this as an exceptional usage here, to be translated as "there is not... [aside from you to redeem]" (Ibid., note 5, following his

[15] Ibn Ezra, although not operating within our contemporary, scientific grammar system makes an important observation about the name פלוני אלמוני in his comment to 4:1: " פלוני אלמוני. יש אומרים שהוא מן 'מופלא', ו'אלמוני' מן 'אלם' שאין לו שם ידוע אצל המדבר." That is, " So-and-so. There are those who say that the first "so-" term comes from "wonderful, magnificent, marvelous," and the second "-so" comes from "dumbness, muteness, silences, speechlessness." His observation underscores, I think, that one deeply engaged in the grammar of biblical Hebrew, who has a deep sense for the normal and the odd turn of phrase, will be sensitive to the same things toward which our contemporary, scientific tools may also point.

logic in 152o(4)). I would argue that both translational values are inherent in this expression, because this mirrors the trick that Boaz effects against the kinship system, and I will explore in my essay below.

By the end of the verse, the situation has *apparently* reversed, with the words of the Kinsman replacing Boaz's by imitating the verb and a modified choice of first common singular personal pronouns in אנכי: "וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי אֶגְאָל" . " Joüon and Muraoka compare the use of the prefixing form אֶגְאָל here to the use of the perfective in 4.9. They translate the latter, קניתי, as what they call the present of instantaneous action, "I acquire here and now" (112f); this is comparable to what linguists Austin and Searle called the "speech act" - in saying, so too is the action accomplished, usually as a change of state. The observation of the present verse is that the imperfect signals the opposite of a speech act, with something of questionable intentions. Joüon and Muraoka call this the opposite of the "firm and definite" sense of the perfect/ suffixing tense. (See also this comparison between 4:4 and 4:9 as performative speech acts in Waltke and O'Connor 30.5.1d, n.15.). And indeed, the redeeming kinsman who is duty-bound, by virtue of his birth position in the consanguine system, directly refuses his duty in 4:6.[16] Shipper (2016) observes the use of the cognate accusative in the kinsman's passing of his birth-duty to Boaz: גְּאַל־לְךָ אַתָּה אֶת־גְּאֻלָּתִי. Literarily, this might the equalness of what the גואל is refusing and Boaz will be taking upon himself by having it repeated twice.

In 4:10, in order for this integration to be accomplished, there is a necessary boundary-crossing or violation between the novel and the inherited, the normative and the queer. What is this normative? Chapter 4 re-imagines the laws of Levirate inheritance

[16] וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לֹא אוּכַל ׀ לִגְאוֹל־[לִ][גְאָל]־לִי פֶּן־אַשְׁחִית אֶת־נַחֲלָתִי גְּאַל־לְךָ אַתָּה אֶת־גְּאֻלָּתִי כִּי לֹא־אוּכַל לִגְאָל׃

and exchange of women within an affinal family as found in Deuteronomy 25.

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 prescribes:

> כִּי־יֵשְׁבוּ אַחִים יַחְדָּו וּמֵת אַחַד מֵהֶם וּבֵן אֵין־לוֹ לֹא־תִהְיֶה **אֵשֶׁת־הַמֵּת** הַחוּצָה לְאִישׁ זָר יְבָמָהּ יָבֹא עָלֶיהָ וּלְקָחָהּ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וְיִבְּמָהּ: וְהָיָה הַבְּכוֹר אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד יָקוּם עַל־שֵׁם אָחִיו הַמֵּת וְלֹא־יִמָּחֶה שְׁמוֹ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: וְאִם־לֹא יַחְפֹּץ הָאִישׁ לָקַחַת אֶת־יְבִמְתּוֹ וְעָלְתָה יְבִמְתּוֹ הַשַּׁעְרָה אֶל־הַזְּקֵנִים וְאָמְרָה מֵאֵין יְבָמִי לְהָקִים לְאָחִיו שֵׁם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אָבָה יַבְּמִי: וְקָרְאוּ־לוֹ זִקְנֵי־עִירוֹ וְדִבְּרוּ אֵלָיו וְעָמַד וְאָמַר לֹא חָפַצְתִּי לְקַחְתָּהּ: וְנִגְּשָׁה יְבִמְתּוֹ אֵלָיו לְעֵינֵי הַזְּקֵנִים וְחָלְצָה נַעֲלוֹ מֵעַל רַגְלוֹ וְיָרְקָה בְּפָנָיו וְעָנְתָה וְאָמְרָה כָּכָה יֵעָשֶׂה לָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִבְנֶה אֶת־בֵּית אָחִיו וְנִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּית חֲלוּץ הַנָּעַל: ס

As Schipper observes, Ruth's status receives a special and rare kinship term marking in אשת המת, the "wife of the dead man," signaling first that she is *not* a widow (אלמנה) (and is not transferred back to her natal domicile. Note the word-play that may be operating here: Ibn Ezra noted the connection between the root א.ל.ם "to disappear" and the second name of address for the redeeming kinsman. So too is there a sound play with the root א.ל.ם "to disappear" and the status of אלמנה that Naomi refuses in maintaining the בית אם she created by migration and material-affective bonds with Ruth and Orpha.

My previous statistical and kinship-term mapping in Chapters 1, 2, and 3 suggests this is because of her migrations and unions with her daughters-in-law after their husbands' deaths. We can all as individuals in our culture-worlds make a declaration of our status, of our organization patterns, of our identity; this is like inventing a word. But for that word (or individual declaration) to bear meaning beyond the private sphere and within the public, there has to be some sort of translation of the private to the public, or at least an integration. In Ruth 4, Boaz effects a manipulation of the Deuteronomic system. Schipper describes this meeting of the private בית אם of Naomi, Ruth, [and Orpah] with the system of Israel as follows:

> The term "the wife of the dead man"... occurs only here and Deut 25:5... in Deut 25:5, the term... functions as a technical description of a woman who remains under the protection of her husband's household or clan after her

> husband's death rather than returning to her birth household as an *'almānâ*.... [it] describes a scenario in which a wife and her husband had been living with his kin as an extended family whose inherited land *nahālâ* had not yet been divided between the husband's brothers as an inheritance... As part of an extended family, the wife would still be under the authority of its more senior members after her husband's death (cf. Gen 38; 'Household Organization'...). If Naomi and Ruth were dwelling together (2:23), and their household's portion had not been divided between his sons, Ruth's legal status would be "the wife of the dead man" since she refused to return to her birth household as an *'almānâ* (1:16-17). *Boaz acknowledges Ruth's legal status, which may assume her entitlement to security within the clan even if the specifics of her case differ from what Det 25:5-10 or Gen 38 describe.* (Schipper 2016: 166, *emphasis mine*)

Verses 4:7 appears to be a side-comment, but I take it to be the crux of the kinship argument made here. Waltke and O'Connor refer to the grammatical phenomenon that marks 4:7 out as parenthetical the "disjunctive *waw*" (39.2.3), which occurrs "inter-clausally," and "breaks into" the main narrative. Again, we see grammar providing a strong argument for content. Clearly "what they used to do in Israel" (וְזֹאת לְפָנִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַגְּאוּלָה וְעַל־הַתְּמוּרָה) is contrasted with that which occurs now in the narrative, that is, Boaz stepping in for the redeeming kinsman, taking his place, and finding, ultimately, a place to validate and to include Naomi's novel kinship system.

The ultimate act of transformation -- entry of Naomi's fictive creation by means of Boaz's disruption of the normative path of kinship in the case of a husband's death to his brother or next redeeming kinsman in acquiring both Ruth and Naomi's attendant property (thus reifying the בית אם of Ruth and Naomi) -- is accomplished through direct speech. What Austin (1965[1952]) calls "performative language," is grammatically an utterance, but not one that describes, but rather announces a change of state or condition (Austin 1965: 5-7). A famous later example of this kind of enacting speech often cited in linguistic anthropology is "with this ring, I thee wed" or "I now pronounce you husband and wife" (ibid.), and with

these words, public society instantly re-interprets the two addressed individuals as a social unit, a family, legitimate kin in the affinal order. Thus, we find Boaz' words announcing the switch he accomplished in 4:4. The ritual does not effect the social transformation, the recognition of the fictive and private by the traditional and public, but the following words do as performative language:

Ruth 4:9 וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז לַזְּקֵנִים וְכָל־הָעָם עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם כִּי קָנִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לֶאֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְאֵת כָּל־
אֲשֶׁר לְכִלְיוֹן וּמַחְלוֹן מִיַּד נָעֳמִי׃

Ruth 4:10 וְגַם אֶת־רוּת הַמֹּאֲבִיָּה אֵשֶׁת מַחְלוֹן קָנִיתִי לִי לְאִשָּׁה לְהָקִים שֵׁם־הַמֵּת עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלֹא־
יִכָּרֵת שֵׁם־הַמֵּת מֵעִם אֶחָיו וּמִשַּׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם׃

Boaz announces "I have acquired" (קָנִיתִי לִי). This is the final use of the perfect, and the last structural piece in the narrative. Even though this performative utterance is in the perfect, the final words of 4:10 are *uttered in the present*: (עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם׃), "You all are witnesses today." This time-scape is marked by three phenomena: First, this is a non-verbal clause with the predicate preceding the subject (which we may gloss as a return to the VSO and thus the normative (Arnold and Choi 2019: 177, etc.) syntactic order. Second, there is direct address of the audience, which as an artistic or narrative feature that has an effect--to my subjective judgement--of something like "breaking the fourth wall" in a movie or theater play. Finally, the last word of the verse is "הַיּוֹם "effecting a powerful transformation of the perfective action (completed aspect) to the present time not only of the "witnesses" in the text, but to the reading/ listening audience of the literary work. The kinship change has been validated and legitimated, and made a part of our cultural fabric as readers who hold this text to be sacred, and, therefore, to some degree culturally authoritative.

We see in the opening and middle sections of Ruth 4 that Boaz manipulates the order of law, both through manipulation of acquisition as well as by means of proxemics (that is,

people manipulating each other's movements and position in physical space) and the manipulation of movement (which are forms of tacit, fictive kinship moving with the apparently permanent norms of the explicit orders of blood and marriage). There is great social effect to the changes wrought both by Naomi and Ruth's kinship transformations and Boaz's: The argument is made in the closing genealogy.

A genealogy is a reflection of explicit kinship framed in the orders of blood and marriage alliance, and it works through the bio-reproduction of children. It appears to be genetically empirical and draws ancient times and happenings related in inherited texts to the present time of the reader. Yet, it is a literary production that is entirely dependent for its logic and coherence on the texts that proceed and follow it. In Ruth, the genealogy leads to the Davidic monarchy. We have seen that through transformations effected with the tacit order of fictive kinship within the orders of blood and marriage, a system is transformed. The resultant genealogy is, therefore, also a fiction, a contextually dependent construction that can be manipulated. The orders of blood and marriage alliance that seem structural and foundational to the genealogic argument, therefore, *are entirely dependent on the tacit order of fictive kinship.* In biblical Ruth, these tacit orders are performed through migration and movement, proximity and contact between bodies, and the fitting of novel forms of kinship into the guise of the inherited forms. This will be an important site of discussion in subsequent sections of this study.

Why, the reader might ask, would the author(s) and editors or biblical Ruth engage in producing a work that seems to bolster the order of culture while showing how an entire cultural system can be transformed, at least in the literary imagination, by the action of a group of women who find themselves in socially "queer" household arrangements? Why is

the behavior of one woman in a literary work describing the inherited rituals of marriage, kinship, and those rituals which guard it jealously such as חליצה worth an assembly of elders at the city gates in Ruth 4, the literal seat of justice and order for those within the walls of an ancient city such as Bethlehem?

Two principles are at play, I believe. First, there is the notion of "risk" in culture (Douglas 2003, Appadurai 2013). Second, to think in polarities for a moment, there is its opposite, the comfort in the daily recognition of order and behavioral homeostasis in one's community. Kinship is such a structure that gives the sense of order against chaos; however, even in performing this order, which is explicit and apparently little changed over deep time, tacitly the subjects of a cultural system work against it. There is thus in the conduct of day-to-day life the *explicit,* fragile, and illusory permanence of the imagined kinship system against our actions, which threaten to expose it as a fiction of culture through our small, *tacit* enactments and performances within that system.

Second, "risk" in the behavior of members of a culture-group enters through behavior, and this can be modeled on Mary Douglas' classic theory of contagion. In *Purity and Danger* (2007[1966]), she models the significance of contagion, in our study taken as the ability of individual actions to contaminate and therefore transform the purity of the order-bestowing kinship system. Douglas writes in her new introduction to the 2007 printing:

> It may seem that in a culture which is richly organised (*sic*) by ideas of contagion and purification, the individual is in the grip of iron-hard categories of thought which are heavily safe- guarded by rules of avoidance and by punishments. It may seem impossible for such a person to shake his own thought free of the protected habit-grooves of his culture. How can he turn round upon his own thought-process and contemplate its limitations? . . . Reflection on dirt involves reflection on the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death. Wherever ideas of dirt are highly structured, their analysis discloses a play on such profound

> themes. This is why an understanding of the rules of purity is a sound entry to comparative religion. (Douglas 2007[1966]: 6-7, excerpted)

We learn that kinship is always at risk, modeled through the lens of contagion (tacit kinship) and purity (explicit, inherited, normative kinship). We have explored in this chapter the inner-workings of biblical Ruth as a cultural artifact, as a set and written ethnographic description by means of the heuristic lens of kinship systems and their transformation. We have uncovered the power of the transformative tacit to move in the seemingly-fixed forms of the explicit. We have observed contamination by the contagion of a "queer" individual and her household. The question that arises next for the present study is what happens when ancient communities read the book when the original circumstances of reception are lost?

4. Cultural Aesthetics and Retelling: Josephus and Omission by Distaste

In this chapter, I will focus on the reading of Greek transformations to the Ruth story by pre-rabbinic Jews in a Hellenized world. In particular, my focus will be on the "argument" for the House of Naomi in MT Ruth 1 and its "enactment" in MT Ruth 4 through the agency of the consanguine relative Boaz, which he enacts through a modified ritual of affinal association found in MT Deuteronomy 25. In terms of the change of the reading community that inherits and deals with the fixed text of MT Ruth, two things take place in the world of Greek-speaking Jews: First, the culture-group borders of the Jews remembered in the Hebrew linguistic tradition will be transformed by the newly cosmopolitan world. It is a world of broken borders in which Greek thrives as a *lingua franca;* "Greek" is a hegemonic world culture system. For Hellenized Jews, their cultural ideal or norm has shifted from the lost world pre-Assyrian/ Babylonian/ Persian conquest to the new world where Greek language, culture, and thought is the norm. They must recalibrate their life-ways in response to this shift from being their own center to being a colonized peripheral group. Second, the boundaries of the community have changed -- groups are re-made in the Hellenistic social cosmology, and new notions of elite status and inroads to power and status effect the choices people make when they recalibrate and reinterpret previous generations' stories (generally after Safrai and Stern 1976).

For the purposes of the present study, we must consider whether our analytical heuristic of kinship is at all evident to Josephus himself, as expressed in his writing. That is, is concern with kinship present in his work as emic, or is it an etic insertion that we make as researchers with a strong theoretical case to prove? Feldman (1998) argues that when we consider Josephus's writings as an *oeuvre*, a number of patterns emerge regarding how he

handles material (Feldman 1998: 198, 544, *et passim*). In fact, by the frequency with which he re-works biblical kinship, it seems as though Josephus's emic concern does overlap the ethnographic construct of kinship.

Feldman identifies first that Josephus writes for both a non-Jewish and Jewish audience in the medium of Greek, but that his main audience of concern is the non-Jewish Greek readers (Feldman 1998: 543-4, citing Ant. 20.262); this is evidence that reframing will have to take place, both because of the limits of his non-natal linguistic medium and because of his translation of culture-set to culture-set (after Dor 2015). Among these concerns for inter-linguistic and intercultural translation that Feldman identifies specifically within Josephus's practices of rewriting biblical stories is a "concern with assimilation and intermarriage." Although marriage practices do not constitute the whole of anthropology's kinship discourse, marriage and intermarriage concerns are key signs of the presence of kinship at work. Regarding these concerns, Feldman observes several very consistent examples of Josephus's care in translating them from biblical to Hellenistic culture.[17]

> In addressing Jews in his audience, notably in his account of the Israelites' sin with the Midianite women (Ant. 4.131-55), increased in length from nine verses [Numbers 25:1-9] to twenty-five paragraphs [Ant. 4.131-55]), Samson's affairs with non-Jewish women (Ant. 5.286-313), and Solomons excesses of passion (Ant. 8.191-98), *Josephus stresses the dangers of assimilation and intermarriage*. And yet, aware that excessive objection to intermarriage would play into the hands of those who had charged the Jews with misanthropy, Josephus modulates Samson's parents' objection to his proposed intermarriage (Ant. 5.286), and he omits marriage with Moabites from his list of prohibited marriages (Ant. 3.274-75), 4.244-45), in view of Boaz's marriage with Ruth the Moabite. Even Ezra, whose break-up of intermarriages is so central to his mission is not portrayed as taking the lead in doing so (Ant. 11.141 vs. 1 Esdras 8.68-70). *Furthermore, his concern is not with intermarriage generally but rather with the danger of compromising the purity of the Jewish priestly line*

[17] Note preliminarily that these translations largely use the practice of expansion or addition, which is different than what we will study as his technique in Ruth, where he engages in manipulation of the story by means of *omission.*

> *(Ant. 1.140). Moreover, Josephus'[s] opposition to intermarriage is based on opposition to yielding to passion, a point of view that would have especially appealed to Stoics, and on the principle that such marriages broke the law of the country, a view that would have especially appealed to the Romans*. (Feldman 1998: 544, *emphasis mine*)

From this pattern, I argue that we can glean something of a concern for matters attendant to those aspects of culture that we call kinship in the discourses of anthropology and in the present study. But, if this assessment based in Feldman's survey of Josephus's *oeuvre* is accurate, it is possible that it is not often remarked upon in contemporary scholarship for two reasons: First, as indicated in Chapter One of this study, marriage and kinship overlap but are not co-extensive, and scholars often substitute the former for the latter. Second, as Feldman observes, this specific concern is part of the larger trend in Josephus's work to write in negotiation with a fear that Jews are perceived as "illiberal" or "misanthropic," and are a people whose mores and life-ways move against the foundational, cohesive principles of the Roman empire, which Feldman and others have called "assimilation" (Feldman 1998).

Life in a Hellenized Roman world always offered to Jews and minorities the promise of a way into paths of power, even if the means of accessing it were not always accessible, or rather that the existed *de jure* and not *de facto*. For example, Cohen (1999:294-5) has noted that there is a possibility of full inclusion in the Roman Empire codified in imperial law, one which is effected by means of marriage with a citizen. This is true even if there is only a demonstrable *perception* that the party intended to be joined in affinal kinship is a citizen, even when that person is not. Cohen explains: "...[t]he Romans allow their rules to be affected by the intention of the actors. If a Roman citizen, either male or female, marries a

noncitizen in the erroneous belief that the noncitizen is a citizen, and can demonstrate that the mistake was an honest one, the noncitizen spouse and the children automatically become citizens" (Cohen 1999: 295, citing Gaius, *Institutes* 1:67-68). We might extend this marital and legal principle to the domain of kinship by saying that the Empire advertises that there are but a few paths to be part of the hegemony; therefore, this would explain Josephus's fear of presenting a colonized people's legal propensity to exclude, as symbolized in the prohibition against marrying the Moabite and the Ammonite (Deuteronomy 23:4).

In illustration of the nexus between kinship and the fear of the "illiberal" charge against the Jews in general, Feldman writes:

> As we see in his handling of the intermarriages of Esau, Joseph, Moses, Samson, and Solomon, among others, Josephus was in a quandary. On the one hand, the Bible explicitly prohibits intermarriage (Deuteronomy 7:3); but, on the other hand, too strenuous an objection to the practice on his part would play into the hands of those who accused the Jews of misanthropy and illiberalism. Significantly, whereas in the Bible it is only after the death of their father Elimelech that his sons Mahlon and Chilion take wives of the women of Moab (Ruth 1:4), Josephus, on the contrary, indicates that it was Elimelech himself who took Moabite women as wives for his sons (Ant. 5.319), presumably to indicate that Jews are not prejudiced against non-Jews, even Moabites, this despite the fact that the Torah declares that no Moabite may enter the "assembly of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 23:3) because they had shown hostility to the Israelites during their forty years of wandering in the desert after the Exodus. *Moreover, again to show that Jews are not hostile to non-Jews, Josephus'[s] picture of the two Moabite daughters-in-law of Naomi arouses even more sympathy than does the biblical version. In the latter, when they are urged to return to their homeland of Moab, they reply very simply 'Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people' (Ruth 1:10). In Josephus, by contrast, we are told that the daughters-in-law had not the heart (ἐκαρτέρουν, 'endured') to be parted from Naomi (Ant. 5.321). And Josephus would have given even greater credit to the daughters-in-law in light of his extra-biblical detail that Naomi actually begged (παραιτουμένη) and implored (παρεκάλει) them to return.* (Feldman 1998: 196-7, emphasis mine)

So, to this end, we can see in Josephus's work a breakdown in boundary-patrolling (Bowker and Starr 2000) laws between Jews and non-Jews, in particular in his re-narration

and reworking of the Ruth story from its details as it appears in the MT, as Feldman argues: "As to the almost total omission of the identification of Ruth as a Moabitess, we may note that Josephus, in his summaries of Jewish laws pertaining to marriage (Ant. 3.274-75, 4.244-45, Ag. Ap. 2.199-203), omits the prohibition of marrying Amorites and Moabites, presumably because he wished to avoid the charge that Jews are illiberal toward other people" (Feldman 1998: 198).

Further, Feldman notes that at the time of Josephus's writing, the 90s CE in the case of the *Antiquities of the Jews*, this concern about kinship is a Janus-faced danger. The "illiberal" charge against the Jews actually masks the cultural risk of the presence of the Jew from the perspective of the Roman cultural and political elites, insofar as Jews do not only resist full imperial membership and participation by their life-ways, but they also function as a rot within the framework of the house of Rome. The risk is that Jews might proselytize:

> The subject of proselytism was an extremely delicate one. As the Romans saw a decline in religiosity (see, for example, the preface to Livy's history), they became more and more bitter about those who were trying to draw them away from their ancestral religion and values. The expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 139 BCE (Valerius Maximus 1.3.3) and, apparently, in 19 CE (Josephus, Ant. 18.81-84; Tacitus, Annals 2.85; Suetonius, Tiberius 36; Dio Cassius 57.18.5a) had been connected with the alleged attempt of the Jews to convert non-Jews to Judaism (see Feldman [1993a, 300-4]); and we must note that such drastic action had taken place despite the generally favorable attitude of the Roman government toward the Jews. Josephus, therefore, had to be extremely careful not to offend his Roman hosts by referring to the inroads that the Jews were making through proselytism into the Roman populace; hence his remarkable silence about the conversion of Ruth to Judaism. (Feldman 1998:198)

Indeed, Josephus explains three important points to his reader in his *Preface* to the *Antiquities of the Jews*. First, his writing is from an in-group member translating outward, from Jewish information and memory to Greek taste and consumption such that it be "worthy of their study" (ἅπασι φανεῖσθαι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἀξίαν σπουδῆς), also noting that the Jews

were originally (we presume before Hellenization) different (τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι). Second, Josephus reimagines his religion as a Greek-like nation in terms of its particular Jewish "antiquities" (τὴν παὰ ἡμῖν ἀρχαιολογίαν) and "virtues" (τὴν ἄλλην ἄσκησιν ἀρετῆς). Third, the very linguistic medium (διαλέκτου) of expression that he employs in the *Antiquities* and his other writings is "foreign" (ξένην) and "unaccustomed" (ἀλλοδαπήν) to the Jews. He writes as follows:

> **Ant. 1:5** ταύτην δὲ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἐγκεχείρισμαι πραγματείαν νομίζων ἅπασι φανεῖσθαι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἀξίαν σπουδῆς· μέλλει γὰρ περιέξειν ἅπασαν τὴν παὰ ἡμῖν ἀρχαιολογίαν καὶ διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθηρμηνευμένην γραμμάτων.
>
> **Ant. 1:6** ἤδη μὲν οὖν καὶ πρότερον διενοήθην ὅτε τὸν πόλεμον συνέγραφον, δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ τίσι χρησάμενοι τύχαις ὑφ᾽ οἵῳ τε παιδευθέντες νομοθέτῃ τὰ πρὸς εὐσέβειαν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἄσκησιν ἀρετῆς πόσους τε πολέμους ἐν μακροῖς πολεμήσαντες χρόνοις εἰς τὸν τελευταῖον ἄκοντες πρὸς Ῥωμαίους κατέστησαν.
>
> **Ant. 1:7** ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ μείζων ἦν ἡ τοῦδε τοῦ λόγου περιβολή, κατ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον χωρίσας ταῖς ἰδίαις ἀρχαῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ τέλει τὴν γραφὴν συνεμέτρησα· χρόνου δὲ προϊόντος, ὅπερ φιλεῖ τοῖς μεγάλων ἅπτεσθαι διανοουμένοις, ὄκνος μοι καὶ μέλλησις ἐγίνετο τηλικαύτην μετενεγκεῖν ὑπόθεσιν εἰς ἀλλοδαπὴν ἡμῖν καὶ ξένην διαλέκτου συνήθειαν.
>
> Now I have undertaken the present work, as thinking it will appear to all the Greeks worthy of their study; for it will contain all our antiquities, and the constitution of our government [i.e., the Torah], as interpreted out of our Hebrew Scriptures; and indeed I did formerly intend, when I wrote of the war, to explain who the Jews originally were, -- what fortunes they had been subjected to --and by what legislator they had been instructed in piety, and the exercise of their virtues, --what wars also they had made in remote ages, till they were unwillingly engaged in this last with the Romans; but because this work would take up a great compass, I separated it into a set treatise by itself, with a beginning of its won, and its own conclusion; but in process of times, as usually happens to such as undertake great things, I grew weary, and wen on slowly, it being a large subject, and *a difficult thing to translate our history into a foreign, and to us unaccustomed language.* (*Antiquities* 1.*5-7*, Trans. Whiston 1987*, emphasis mine*)

Taken together, Josephus's work in retelling the Ruth story happens in the context of a shift of the biblical Ruth as an imagined ideal from the center of the world of the Jews to the periphery of the Greek world. In this newly re-organized social field, the newly marginalized or non-central cultural position of this literary ideal would demand transformations to how kinship *should* be imagined and how it shifts. As moderns in a world that has largely questioned if not wholly eschewed colonial ideology and practice, we are accustomed to considering that the colonized (the Jews in the case of the Greeks and Romans) might desire to bend to the will of the colonizer for the benefit of individual or collective/ national agency. This phenomenon is, of course, true in the direction of influence we are accustomed to imagine. But recent anthropological theory questioning the complexities of nationalism and colonial dynamics have observed (e.g., Van der Veer 2001 in the context of 19th-20th century Britain and India) that sometimes these vectors of influence can, in fact, change directions, such that we could imagine the Jews influencing the Greeks.

Therefore, we might preliminarily hypothesize that the movement-based kinship that we observed in our investigation into the Masoretic text of the biblical Ruth story would be disrupted, both by the dominant vector of the Hellenization of the Jews, but *also* by Josephus's "translat[ing his] history into a foreign and unaccustomed language." This caveat should be a caution to our methodology that it is not just the Hellenic world speaking Jewish antiquities through the pen of Josephus, but rather what we have in the *Antiquities of the Jews* is Josephus "translating" difficult concepts *precisely to influence the Greeks* (νομίζων ἅπασι φανεῖσθαι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἀξίαν σπουδῆς).

Methodologically, our question becomes, how do these transformations reflect changes to the imagined kinship system of Jews telling the story? What has changed and why? In order to answer these inquiries, it would be helpful to focus on one aspect of cultural behavior: cultural aesthetics (taste and distaste). Aesthetic responses reveal to the ethnographer in the same moment of observation both the enculturated norms that condition the subject's reaction to a phenomenon, and also the subject's agency in their reacting to aesthetic responses behaviorally. In the present context of Josephus, this behavior is writing and re-narration of biblical stories.

Preliminary to this discussion, we will turn to the social rubrics of taste and distaste.
Preliminary to this discussion, we will turn to the social rubrics of taste and distaste.
Feldman (1998) construed the omission of the performative enactment of the argument in MT Ruth 1:16 as a sensitivity to Roman perceptions about Jews as dangerously "illiberal toward other peoples," that is, other life-ways are distasteful to Jewish kinship aesthetics. Instead, Feldman tells us, Josephus reworks the Ruth story to say that "[s]he makes no intention to join her mother-in-law's religion. We are merely told that Naomi 'took her with her, to be her partner in all that should befall' (Ant. 5.322)" (Feldman 1998: 199).

In the present study, the reader might observe that I am rather boldly declaring that that which is omitted, the "un-namable" fictive kinship "argument" and "enactment" of the House of Naomi is a mark of Josephus's aversion, of his distaste. I make this identification between the un-nameable and the distasteful because of founding assumptions from Queer Theory. In a similar trend in social theory, Michael Taussig writes in *Defacement* (1999), at this point in his argument about female genitalia in the Western cultural gaze, that:

> At its most literal, *defacment* insists on a certain silliness, shot through with morsels and wisdom in the magic of words and names, as with the face of

> de/facement pressing close on the heels of sacrilege, bringing faciality and negation into strange hybrid wholeness... to render *sacrilege* as a *rend(er)ing of faciality*... the uncovered and the covered, and... Freud's main message that the uncanny... corresponds to *everything that ought to have remained secret but has come to light--the secretly familiar* which has undergone repression and then returned to it. (Taussig 1999: 49)

Following such a theoretical, Freudian approach to understanding an aesthetic reaction to that which we find "*ought to have remained secret but has come to light*." This notion is what I take to be un-nameable and therefore distasteful, that is, as an offense against the sense, something that can be perceived, but whose perception is not well accepted. Thus, in reading Josephus's omissions of aspects of the Ruth narrative as aesthetic responses, we are tracing Josephus's *abjection*, as Kristeva calls such distastes and reflex to deface a social object as un-namable: "Abjection accompanies all religious structurings and reappears, to be worked out in a new guise, at the time of their collapse... abjection persists as *exclusion* or taboo (dietary or other) in monotheistic religions, Judaism in particular, but drifts over to *transgression* (of the Law) within the same monotheistic economy" (Kristeva 1982:17).

That which Josephus finds distasteful will not be determined by the pure "Judaism" that Kristeva implies above (here, I am contextualizing Kristeva's notion of the "monotheistic economy" as implying a dominant Jewish cultural system, unmixed with Hellenistic culture and its morality and taste), but rather by his own "hybrid" sensibilities as a Jew writing outward to the Hellenistic world that has honored him as an elite.

Regarding taste and acceptability/ rank in a socio-cultural system, Bourdieu has noted that "[t]aste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in objective classifications is expressed or betrayed..." (Bourdieu 1984:6). In this chapter I will explore

Josephus's strategy of omissions from MT Ruth in his re-relation of the story. I will theorize these as lacunae that express (through omission) his Hellenized sensibilities as a self-avowed historian of his people. This aesthetic-response strategy (of which the inward part is Josephus's emotional response and the outward, evidentiary trace is his writing) reacts to the private and fictive kinship "argument" of MT Ruth 1and the problematic import of queer modes of fictive kinship to the normative orders of blood and marriage in the biblical text.

In his re-narration of the biblical Ruth story in *Antiquities of the Jews* 5.317-337, Josephus makes evident his intentions for including it in the history of Israel. He tells his reader directly that: "τὰ μὲν οὖν κατὰ Ῥούθην ἀναγκαίως διηγησάμην ἐπιδεῖξαι βουλόμενος τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δύναμιν, ὅτι τούτῳ παράγειν ἐφικτόν ἐστιν εἰς ἀξίωμα λαμπρὸν καὶ τοὺς ἐπιτυχόντας, εἰς οἷον ἀνήγαγε καὶ Δαβίδην ἐκ τοιούτων γενόμενον" (Antiquities 5.337), or "I was therefore obliged to relate this history of Ruth, because I had a mind to demonstrate the power of God, who, without difficulty, can raise those that are of ordinary parentage to dignity and splendor (cf. MT Psalm 113:7-9, especially in the context of the Ruth story), to which he advanced David, though he were born of such mean parents" (Trans. Whiston, 2016[1987]: 148-149). We might read this and take him at his word, namely that he seeks to make the story of Ruth into a *bios* novella of personal triumph. To be sure, we must take him at his word, but only to a certain degree. Yet, we all act both in obedience to our conscious will and to the internalized map of reality provided by our natal culture with which we are the most familiar. As such, we as ethnographic readers must attend with care to his handling of kinship, indeed to his re-working what the text says, by virtue of *how* he prunes or expands the biblical story.

This motivational appendix is not uncommon in Josephus's works. Such an expression can be seen as characterizing, according to Barclay (2007), a very deep knowledge of Greek cultural norms and ideals in combination with his desire to defend the distinctness of the Jews. Commenting on the motivations in constructing the *Against Apion*, Barclay observes:

> ... [Josephus] displays an impressive cultural range in knowledge of Greek history, historiography and philosophy, and his interlocking arguments in defense of Judeans are spiced with acute literary analysis and clever polemics. From *Apion*, we also learn precious information about the reputation of Judeans in antiquity through the critics and commentators cited by Josephus, many otherwise obscure. *Above all*, we discover the apologetic substance of a Judean author culturally aware and politically experienced in late first-century Rome. Josephus's proof that the Judeans were an independent and ancient people, his refutation of cultural slurs and political accusations, his demonstration of the superior 'constitution' enjoyed by the Judeans--each of these reveals much about ancient competitions for cultural honor and how Judeans could position and advance their own tradition under the hegemony of the 'Greek' canons of knowledge and Roman political power. (Barclay 2007: *Introduction XVII*)

These claims about Josephus's knowledge and the purported reasoning for Josephus's arguments are easy to make, to be sure, given Josephus's introductory material in the *Against Apion* and also given how amply and how often he demonstrates Barclay's above-cited analysis. Yet, far harder to explain is his cultural position vis-à-vis the two overlapping spheres of the Greek system on the one hand and the Judean on the other. Gregory Sterling (in Mason, ed. 1998: 104-171), introduces two distinct agendas for these overlapping cultural domains. Of the Greek, he says, "The practice of rewriting texts and offering the retelling as an authorial composition was common in antiquity. Historians of events situated in the distant past often made a virtue out of a necessity by rewriting an existing literary source" (Mason, ed. 1998: 104). He then provides numerous ancient Greek and Latin authors (e.g., Diodorus Siculus, Livy, Pliny the Younger) who demonstrate such a covert strategy, naming

the legitimate form that it takes in this ancient context as *mimesis* (μίμεσις), while calling the stream that goes too far "*klopé*" (κλοπή) or plagiarism (Mason, ed. 1998: 104).

By contrast, of the "Eastern" or, we presume, ethnically Semitic, peoples he says, "Eastern peoples also rewrote texts although not always for the same reasons as their counterparts in the West. Following the conquests of Alexander the Great, some Easterners began rewriting their sacred texts as a means of *countering Hellenistic misperceptions through alternative self-definitions. These apologists wrote their histories under the fiction of 'translations.'*" (Mason, ed. 1998: 105). Between the ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman worlds, continues Sterling, stands the Jewish tradition with the cultural technology of the genre called "rewritten scripture" here or "rewritten Bible" in other authors (ibid.).

Sterling writes that "[i]n Second Temple Judaism a different literary tradition of rewriting Israel's sacred story developed, which we know today as rewritten scripture. *In this tradition there is no fiction of translation nor is there any effort to Hellenize Semitic texts. Rather, the aim of these works was to restate the biblical text in terms that were acceptable to the particular audience addressed"* (ibid.). Sterling's central claim is that Josephus's *Antiquities* embodies something between Greek historiographic re-inscription and the Second Temple Jewish re-written Bible genre (1998: 105).

Sterling focuses on *Antiquities* 5.317-337 (Ruth) to demonstrate the sum-total effect of Josephus's work of retelling on the form of the narrative by focusing on "omissions" from the text, how he handles "textual difficulties," the "names of God," the "genealogical appendix," "alterations," "stylistic improvements," "sequential alterations," "actor alterations," "narrative lacunae," "dramatic expansions," "moralizing additions," and the "interpretive colophon." As to findings, Sterling observes that the story is first abbreviated

and then framed by the above-mentioned "interpretive colophon" at the end, and the "introductory frame" at the beginning in order to make it to align with his "earlier presentation of the law" (1998: 128), which "... illustrates how *halakha* determines *haggada* in the Antiquities" (ibid.). Although the reader should note that his use of these terms *halcha* and *aggadah* is quite anachronistic, since they are proper to later Rabbinic culture and not Hellenistic, it is still the case that his point is well taken in terms of the "interpretive strategies" they represent that resemble the later Rabbinic genres. In the end, we can glean that the understanding of Jewish law re-framed for a Hellenized audience dictates that the story be retold in a way that carries inherited Jewish practice into a framework that is not distasteful to the sensibilities of the hegemonic culture. We can understand that the story shifts to match the demand of the cultural norm.

For the purposes of the focused scope of analysis in this study, we will confine our focus to how Josephus engages, that is *re*-relates, if you will, Ruth 1 and Ruth 4. In Chapter 3 of the present study, I analyzed the fictive kinship story extracted from the first chapter of MT Ruth, and will refer to this in this section as "the argument," namely for land-kinship manipulated through co-migration (which, in turn, effects mutual ties of emotive and emotional support and interdependence) to establish and produce a new form of בית אם in place of the socially normative בית אב in normative (textually imagined) Israelite culture. My last parenthetical remark is important. A text is imagined and narrates a possible world (after Bell and Ryan 2019). MT Ruth 4 takes the argument of 1 and "enacts it," as we saw earlier, via performative language, using the blood-relation Boaz in order to articulate, that is, to coordinate in affinal kinship terms, Naomi's novel בית אם kinship into a "legitimated" presence, if a queer one, in larger (imagined and idealized) Israelite society of the Masoretic

text. Thus MT Ruth 4 is the "enactment." Here, I would like to focus on how Josephus rewrites the "argument" by means of the "enactment."

We know that Josephus is not reciting verbatim the MT version of Ruth, or even a now-lost Hebrew versions similar to it in detail. Such a practice is common in Josephus, because his work is a historical analysis *and not* a translation proper as is the Septuagint (be the version in question the work of Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, the Seventy[-Two], or even Origen's Fifth and Sixth). Sterling in *The Invisible Presence* (1998: 112-113) identifies a taxonomy of changes between MT Ruth and its re-relation in Josephus's *Antiquities* 5.321-336. I will reproduce his findings here. His taxonomy classifies the following changes: 1) direct discourse, 2) placement of direct discourse into indirect discourse, 3) use of narrative description to replace direct discourse, and 4) omission entirely from the re-narration of direct discourse I will focus here on the implications for the present kinship study of Sterling's (3) and (4), that is, Josephus's narration and omission strategies.

In "the argument" of MT Ruth 1, Sterling observes Josephus's *omission* of MT 1:15, 16-17 (trans. JPS):

> וַתֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׁבָה יְבִמְתֵּךְ אֶל־עַמָּהּ וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֶיהָ שׁוּבִי אַחֲרֵי יְבִמְתֵּךְ: וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת אַל־תִּפְגְּעִי־בִי לְעָזְבֵךְ
> לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרָיִךְ כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֵלֵךְ וּבַאֲשֶׁר תָּלִינִי אָלִין עַמֵּךְ עַמִּי וֵאלֹהַיִךְ אֱלֹהָי: בַּאֲשֶׁר תָּמוּתִי
> אָמוּת וְשָׁם אֶקָּבֵר כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִי וְכֹה יֹסִיף כִּי הַמָּוֶת יַפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵךְ:
>
> "So" she said, "See, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods. Go follow your sister-in-law." But Ruth replied, "Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus and more may the LORD do to me if anything but death parts me from you."

Thus, his retelling is as follows, citing before and after the omission:

> καὶ γὰρ ἤδη καλῶς τὰ κατ᾽ αὐτὴν ἐπυνθάνετο χωρεῖν. οὐκ ἐκαρτέρουν δὲ διαζευγνύμεναι αὐτῆς αἱ νύμφαι, οὐδὲ παραιτουμένη βουλομένας συνεξορμᾶν πείθειν ἐδύνατο, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγκειμένων εὐξαμένη γάμον εὐτυχέστερον

αὐταῖς οὗ διημαρτήκεσαν παισὶ τοῖς αὐτῆς γαμηθεῖσαι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθῶν κτῆσιν, ὅτε τὰ πρὸς αὐτὴν οὕτως ἐστί,

However, her daughters-in-law were not able to think of parting with her; and when they had a mind to go out of the country with her, she could not dissuade them from it; but when they insisted upon it, she wished them a more happy [*sic*] wedlock than they had with her sons, and that they might have prosperity in other respects also;

μένειν αὐτόθι παρεκάλει καὶ μὴ συμμεταλαμβάνειν αὐτῇ βούλεσθαι πραγμάτων ἀδήλων τὴν πάτριον γῆν καταλιπούσας. ἡ μὲν οὖν Ὀρφᾶ μένει, τὴν δὲ Ῥούθην μὴ πεισθεῖσαν ἀπήγαγε κοινωνὸν παντὸς τοῦ προστυχόντος γενησομένην.

...and seeing her own affairs were so low, she exhorted them to stay where they were, and not to think of leaving their own country, and partaking with her of that uncertainty under which she must return. Accordingly Orpah stayed behind; but she took Ruth along with her, as not to be persuaded to stay behind her, but would take her fortune with her, whatsoever it should prove.

(Greek text, Accordance Software; trans., Whiston 1987).

With Josephus's omission here, what is missing is the declaration of resistance to the imagined Israelite norm; Ruth does not declare her intention to co-migrate with Naomi, she is merely described as " τὴν δὲ Ῥούθην μὴ πεισθεῖσαν ἀπήγαγε κοινωνὸν παντὸς τοῦ προστυχόντος γενησομένην, " " but she took Ruth along with her, as not to be persuaded to stay behind her, but would take her fortune with her, whatsoever it should prove." *Chance and fortune that happen to occur* (παντὸς τοῦ προστυχόντος γενησομένην) take the place of a speech-act, a declaration and refusal to follow the norm. It seems, this is an unconscious or conscious move against the "argument" of MT Ruth 1, transforming it into an "accident of whatever happens."

As regards the effect of Josephus's omissions against MT Ruth and how they effect the weakened (if not mortally wounded) "argument" of MT Ruth 1, let us look at Josephus's

only omission that Sterling (1998: 114) observes in *Antiquities* 5.336 from MT 4:(7-8,) 9-12.

The MT text reads (trans. JPS):

> וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז לַזְּקֵנִים וְכָל־הָעָם עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם כִּי קָנִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לֶאֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְכִלְיוֹן
> וּמַחְלוֹן מִיַּד נָעֳמִי: וְגַם אֶת־רוּת הַמֹּאֲבִיָּה אֵשֶׁת מַחְלוֹן קָנִיתִי לִי לְאִשָּׁה לְהָקִים שֵׁם־הַמֵּת עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ
> וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת שֵׁם־הַמֵּת מֵעִם אֶחָיו וּמִשַּׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם: וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־בַּשַּׁעַר וְזֹאת
> לְפָנִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַגְּאוּלָּה וְעַל־הַתְּמוּרָה לְקַיֵּם כָּל־דָּבָר שָׁלַף אִישׁ נַעֲלוֹ וְנָתַן לְרֵעֵהוּ וְזֹאת הַתְּעוּדָה
> בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לְבֹעַז קְנֵה־לָךְ וַיִּשְׁלֹף נַעֲלוֹ: וְהַזְּקֵנִים עֵדִים יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה הַבָּאָה אֶל־
> בֵּיתֶךָ כְּרָחֵל ו וּכְלֵאָה אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׁתֵּיהֶם אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וַעֲשֵׂה־חַיִל בְּאֶפְרָתָה וּקְרָא־שֵׁם בְּבֵית
> לָחֶם:וִיהִי בֵיתְךָ כְּבֵית פֶּרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה תָמָר לִיהוּדָה מִן־הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִתֶּן יְהוָה לְךָ מִן־הַנַּעֲרָה הַזֹּאת:
>
> Now this was formerly done in Israel in cases of redemption or exchange: to validate any transaction, one man would take off his sandal and hand it to the other. Such was the practice in Israel. So when the redeemer said to Boaz, "Acquire for yourself," he drew off his sandal. And Boaz said to the elders and to the rest of the people, "You are witnesses today that I am acquiring from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. I am also acquiring Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, as my wife, so as to perpetuate the name of the deceased upon his estate, that the name of the deceased may not disappear from among his kinsmen and from the gate of his home town. You are witnesses today." All the people at the gate and the elders answered, "We are. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the House of Israel! Prosper in Ephrathah and perpetuate your name in Bethlehem! And may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah—through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman."

In place of the MT version, Josephus provides us with (*Antiquities 5.335*, text Accordance Software, trans. Whiston 1987):

> **Ant. 5:335** μαρτυράμενος οὖν ὁ Βόαζος τὴν γερουσίαν ἐκέλευε τῇ γυναικὶ ὑπολῦσαι αὐτὸν προσελθοῦσαν κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ πτύειν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον. γενομένου δὲ τούτου Βόαζος γαμεῖ τὴν Ῥούθην καὶ γίνεται παιδίον αὐτοῖς μετ᾽ ἐνιαυτὸν ἄρρεν.
>
> ...[S]o Boaz called the senate to witness, and bid the woman to [make] loose his shoe and spit in his face, according to the law; and when this was done Boaz married Ruth, and they had a son within a year's time.[18]

[18] This description by Josephus does not accord to the MT Ruth narration, but is rather a gloss on his explanation to Deuteronomy 25 in Ant. 4.254-256: **Ant. 4:254** τὴν ἄτεκνον τἀνδρὸς αὐτῇ τετελευτηκότος ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἐκείνου γαμείτω καὶ τὸν παῖδα τὸν γενόμενον τῷ τοῦ τεθνεῶτος καλέσας ὀνόματι τρεφέτω τοῦ κλήρου διάδοχον· τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ τοῖς δημοσίοις λυσιτελήσει γιγνόμενον τῶν οἴκων οὐκ ἐκλειπόντων καὶ τῶν χρημάτων τοῖς συγγενέσι μενόντων, καὶ ταῖς γυναιξὶ κουφισμὸν οἴσει τῆς συμφορᾶς τοῖς ἔγγιστα τῶν προτέρων ἀνδρῶν

Once again, we see the omission of the speech act from the "enactment." Thus, to summarize, the MT "argument" (MT Ruth 1) is not asserted through strong objection and refusal of the social norm in the mouth of Ruth. The MT "enactment" is neither asserted nor enacted through performative language quite literally through the voice of Boaz, as the one bringing the non-normative House of Naomi into alignment with and acceptance by the textual Israelite norm. This functionally undoes the kinshipping work of Ruth 1 in the Hellenized Jewish tradition, as evident in Josephus. We must inquire of this conclusion, to what end?

Before we can decide whether or not Josephus might be trying to erase -- be it either by intention or by the workings of his unconscious and Hellenized aesthetic sensibilities as a writer -- we do have to look at the Greek traditions for these problematic verses (1:15-17, 4:9-12) in the LXX. Sterling (1998: 108) cites St. John Thackeray (1967[1929]) regarding the *Vorlage* or textual tradition that may lay before (or "underneath") the re-related work of Josephus. Sterling acknowledges:

συνοικούσαις. **4:255** ἐὰν δὲ μὴ βούληται γαμεῖν ὁ ἀδελφός, ἐπὶ τὴν γερουσίαν ἐλθοῦσα ἡ γυνὴ μαρτυράσθω τοῦθ', ὅτι βουλομένην αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ οἴκου μένειν καὶ τεκνοῦν ἐξ αὐτοῦ μὴ προσδέχοιτο ὑβρίζων τὴν τοῦ τεθνηκότος ἀδελφοῦ μνήμην. ἐρομένης δὲ τῆς γερουσίας, διὰ ποίαν αἰτίαν ἀλλοτρίως ἔχοι πρὸς τὸν γάμον, ἄν τε μικρὰν ἄν τε μείζω λέγῃ, πρὸς ταῦτα ῥεπέτω· **4:256** ὑπολύσασα δ' αὐτὸν ἡ γυνὴ τἀδελφοῦ τὰ σάνδαλα, καὶ πτύουσα αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον τούτων αὐτὸν ἄξιον εἶναι παῤ αὐτῆς λεγέτω τυγχάνειν ὑβρίσαντα τὴν τοῦ κατοιχομένου μνήμην. καὶ ὁ μὲν ἐκ τῆς γερουσίας ἀπίτω τοῦτ' ἔχων ὄνειδος πρὸς ἅπαντα τὸν βίον, ἡ δ' ᾧπερ ἂν βουληθῇ τινι τῶν δεομένων γαμείσθω. " **Ant. 4:254** (4.8.23) If a woman's husband die, and leave her without children, let his brother marry her; and let him call the son that is born to him by his brother's name, and educate him as the heir of his inheritance; for this procedure will be for the benefit of the public, because thereby families will not fail, and the estate will continue among the kindred; and this will be for the solace of wives under their affliction, that they are to be married to the next relation of their former husbands; **4:255** (4.8.23) but if the brother will not marry her, let the woman come before the senate, and protest openly that this brother will not admit her for his wife, but will injure the memory of his deceased brother, while she is willing to continue in the family, and to bear him children; and when the senate have inquired of him for what reason it is that he is averse to this marriage, whether he gives a bad or a good reason, the matter must come to this issue, (4.8.23) That the woman shall loose the sandals of the brother, and shall spit in his face and say, He deserves this reproachful treatment from her, as having injured the memory of the deceased;—and then let him go away out of the senate, and bear this reproach upon him all his life long; and let her marry to whom she pleases, of such as seek her in marriage. " (Text, Accordance Software; trans. Whiston 1987).

> ... A redaction critical approach requires us to ask about Josephus's *Vorlage(n)* or the 'primary version' as I will call it. Unfortunately, it has proven problematic to come to a firm resolution whether his primary version was in Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic or a combination of these. Several factors complicate the process: the creative nature of Josephus's 'secondary version' often makes it impossible to know if he read a different text or simply recast it; the text represented by the MT, DSS, and LXX^B is relatively uniform; the relationships among the Hebrew text-types and Greek manuscript tradition are extremely complex, and Josephus agrees with all three traditions at different points... My working assumption is that Josephus knew both a Hebrew and a Greek edition of Ruth, as well as earlier interpretations of the text... *The fact that these witnesses including the evidence from Qumran are in such agreement suggest that the majority of the changes in Josephus are editorial and not the result of a variant base...* (Sterling 1998: 108-109, emphasis mine).

So, given the "agreement of sources" with regard to Hebrew, Qumranic, and Sepuagint traditions, I will take the liberty to cite from the Rahlfs edition (Alfred Rahlfs, *Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft* 2006) for the sake of simplifying and making clear the comparison. The LXX reads:

> **Ruth 1:15** καὶ εἶπεν Νωεμὶν πρὸς Ῥούθ Ἰδοὺ ἀνέστρεψεν ἡ σύννυμφός σου πρὸς λαὸν αὐτῆς καὶ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτῆς· ἐπιστράφητι δὴ καὶ σὺ ὀπίσω τῆς συννύμφου σου.
> **Ruth 1:16** εἶπεν δὲ Ῥούθ Μὴ ἀπαντήσαι ἐμοὶ τοῦ καταλιπεῖν σε ἢ ἀποστρέψαι ὄπισθέν σου, ὅτι σὺ ὅπου ἐὰν πορευθῇς πορεύσομαι, καὶ οὗ ἐὰν αὐλισθῇς αὐλισθήσομαι· ὁ λαός σου λαός μου, καὶ ὁ θεός σου θεός μου·
> **Ruth 1:17** καὶ οὗ ἐὰν ἀποθάνῃς ἀποθανοῦμαι, κἀκεῖ ταφήσομαι. τάδε ποιήσαι μοι Κύριος καὶ τάδε προσθείη, ὅτι θάνατος διαστελεῖ ἀνὰ μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ.
>
> And Naomi said to Ruth, "Look your sister-in-law has returned to her people and to her gods; turn now also after your sister-in-law." And Ruth said, "Do not entreat me not to leave you, or to return from following you; for, wherever you go and wherever you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God my God. And wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried: the Lord did so and more to me if I should leave you, for death only will divide between myself and you." (Trans. Brenton 1997[1851], modifications my own).

So it is clear that for the Jewish audience requiring the aid of the Greek text to understand the MT, the oath binding Ruth to Naomi and creation of the socially queer בית אם of the House of

Naomi is not distasteful such that it requires omission or modification of the Greek.[19] This retention highlights the effect (if not also the *apparent* intentionality of Josephus's intervention/ omission). Note also that the use of marital terms is maintained in the Greek, "ἡ σύννυμφός σου" or "the one-together-as-bride" translates MT "כַּלָּתֵךְ " the normative term for a woman acquired by a marriage to the son's family in neo-local exogamy. The retention of the Greek marital/ affinal term "sister-in-law" for "daughter-in-law" Hebrew makes the strong claim in the retained "argument" of MT Ruth 1 in the Greek Jewish tradition.

In LXX 4:9-12, we find:

> **Ruth 4:9** Καὶ εἶπεν Βόος τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Μάρτυρες ὑμεῖς σήμερον ὅτι κέκτημαι πάντα τὰ τοῦ Ἀβειμέλεχ καὶ πάντα ὅσα ὑπάρχει τῷ Χελαιὼν καὶ τῷ Μααλὼν ἐκ χειρὸς Νωεμείν·
> **Ruth 4:10** καί γε Ῥοὺθ τὴν Μωαβεῖτιν τὴν γυναῖκα Μααλὼν κέκτημαι ἐμαυτῷ εἰς γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀναστῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ τεθνηκότος ἐπὶ τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐξολεθρευθήσεται τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ τεθνηκότος ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς λαοῦ αὐτοῦ· μάρτυρες ὑμεῖς σήμερον.
> **Ruth 4:11** καὶ εἴποσαν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς οἱ ἐν τῇ πύλῃ Μάρτυρες. καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι εἴποσαν Δῴη Κύριος τὴν γυναῖκά σου τὴν εἰσπορευομένην εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου ὡς Ῥαχὴλ καὶ ὡς Λείαν, αἳ ᾠκοδόμησαν ἀμφότεραι τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐποίησαν δύναμιν ἐν Ἐφράθα· καὶ ἔσται ὄνομα ἐν Βαιθλέεμ.
> **Ruth 4:12** καὶ γένοιτο ὁ οἶκός σου ὡς ὁ οἶκος Φάρες, ὃν ἔτεκεν Θαμὰρ τῷ Ἰούδᾳ, ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος οὗ δώσει Κύριός σοι ἐκ τῆς παιδίσκης ταύτης.
>
> And Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, "You are this day witnesses, that I have brought all that was Elimelech's and all that belong (pres. tense!) to Chilion and Machlon, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover, I have bought for myself a wife, Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Machlon, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance; so the name of the dead shall not be destroyed from among his kin, and from the tribe of his people: You are this day witnesses.
>
> (Trans. Brenton 1997[1851], modifications my own).

[19] David McClister in his dissertation (2008) *Ethnicity and Jewish Identity in Josephus* works from the perspective of Louis Feldman's study (1998) *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible*. McClister's important observation building on Feldman's work is that Josephus is deeply aware of the "sensitivity" of Roman readers (2008: 220-228, *et passim*). In the present work, I am building on Van der Veer's (2001) reversed vectors of influence in colonial situations to explore the distaste that Josephus might have taken on himself.

So, following Sterling's analysis (1998), we may presume the above-cited pericopes from Ruth were known to Josephus. The LXX retains Boaz's performative-language speech act, which otherwise and normalizes the queer he House of Naomi as a part of the textually expressed Israelite norm. At work are Josephus's upper-class, Greek-speaking (as his non-natal language) sensibilities, which also had to be further tempered by sensitivity to his Roman imperial patronage that got him out of prison and into the wealth of Rome. These sensibilities apparently required the deletion of the establishment of the House of Naomi in the "argument" of MT Ruth 1 and its "enactment" in MT Ruth 4. To explore this, we must first consider what is "Greek" and what is "Jewish" for the times of, before, and shortly after Josephus.

Philip Alexander (1999) helps us understand the cultural nexus of languages in Palestine during the Hellenistic and Roman eras as follows:

> The linguistic map of Palestine in the opening centuries of the current era was made up of three main languages - Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew, but who spoke which language and in what registers they functioned is not as clear-cut as one might think. Let me sketch out my own position. In my view the evidence indicates that by 200 CE Hebrew had effectively disappeared as a vernacular. It had been under pressure, and arguably steadily declining for a very long time, perhaps ever since the return from the Babylonian exile. (Alexander 1999: 73)

Thus we can summarize Alexander's assessment as follows: Since the time of the Persian Return (c. 538 BCE) that ended the Babylonian Exile (586-7 BCE), there began the situation of loss and misunderstanding of biblical Hebrew. This loss is echoed in our surviving MT of Nehemiah 13: 23-25 (Alexander 1999: 73). Nehemiah 13: 23-25 reads (following JPS):

> **Neh. 13:23** גַּם ו בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם רָאִיתִי אֶת־הַיְהוּדִים הֹשִׁיבוּ נָשִׁים אַשְׁדּוֹדִיּוֹת [אַשְׁדָּדִיּוֹת] עַמּוֹנִיּוֹת [עַמָּנִיּוֹת] מוֹאֲבִיּוֹת׃
> **Neh. 13:24** וּבְנֵיהֶם חֲצִי מְדַבֵּר אַשְׁדּוֹדִית וְאֵינָם מַכִּירִים לְדַבֵּר יְהוּדִית וְכִלְשׁוֹן עַם וָעָם׃
> **Neh. 13:25** וָאָרִיב עִמָּם וָאֲקַלְלֵם וָאַכֶּה מֵהֶם אֲנָשִׁים וָאֶמְרְטֵם וָאַשְׁבִּיעֵם בֵּאלֹהִים אִם־תִּתְּנוּ בְנֹתֵיכֶם לִבְנֵיהֶם וְאִם־תִּשְּׂאוּ מִבְּנֹתֵיהֶם לִבְנֵיכֶם וְלָכֶם׃

> Even in those days, I saw that the Judeans brough back wives [that were of] Ashdod, Ammonite, and Moabite ethnicities. And regarding their children, they used to half-speak Ashdod's language, but their did not recognize how to speak Judean-language, according to one people or the other. But I contended with them, I cursed them, and I struck some of the men, and made tore out their hair, and I made them swear by the God, that you would not five your daughters to their sons, nor marry from their daughters to your sons or for yourselves. (Trans. JPS)

Therefore, we see an overlap beginning historically in the Persian period, and subsequently becoming a cultural ideology inherited by later generations who held the accounts of Nehemiah as sacred or communally authoritative, that there is a marital or kinshipping prohibition against affinal/ marital alliance between ethnic groups as both perceived and as performed linguistically. The linguistic performance transgressing the ideology of Nehemiah is constructed as 1) code-switching (the use of language situationally, עם ועם), 2) non-recognition of what is Judahite and what is not-Judahite that we in today's parlance call functional bilingualism, and 3) the mixing of households (we presume in the form of the "בית אב" itself).

Blows against the imagined situation of pure, unmixed Hebrew (and Nehemiah's expressed belief that concomitant with it is the idea of pure Judahite identity) continue in a downward direction. First, it was the elites that were exiled, leaving behind the עם הארץ or people of the land (sociologically non-elite), whom the later rabbis largely regard as unlettered or fools. Second, there was the top-down influence of Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of Neo-Babylonian, and later Persian, administration (generally see Barr 2003, Alexander 1999, Berquist 1995). To this end, again speaking of the tri-lingual cultural melting pot of Palestine, Philip Alexander writes: "The influence of Aramaic on the lexicon, syntax, and word-formation of Rabbinic Hebrew is well known. Indeed, in some cases, the Rabbis seem

to have been unable to distinguish the two languages. When apparently trying to produce Hebrew they actually came out with a curious Hebraized Aramaic" (Alexander 1999, citing J. Feldman 1977).

As time progressed from the historical perspective of Judah, unmixed Hebrew as the natal language and "pure" Judahite marital pedigree is eroded over time, bringing us to the renewed crisis of the Hellenistic era in which Josephus finds himself as a writer. There are two socio-cultural penetrations or admixtures which are relevant to the present analysis. First, there is the penetration of the elites of the cultural system. Second, there is the penetration of the religious system. Now, of course this division is somewhat artificial, but the following accounts demonstrate that we can take the upper-class, aristocratic, and priestly *Weltanschauung* of Josephus as relevant for the practices and life-ways of the lower classes too, and not just the literary ideal of the elites, or pandering of a patronage-recipient to his Roman sponsors that got him out of war prison (after Thackeray 1997[1927]).

James Barr presents a historical survey (2003[1989]) of the linguistic situation in Hellenized and later Roman Palestine, in terms of who spoke Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek and at which levels in society. We often make presumptions of clear distinctions between the three linguistic groups, presuming mostly non-porous barriers between the three linguistic communities, with those lines being drawn on class-power boundaries (to use the language of Foucault [1972]). For example, Daniel Sperber (2006: 628) writes that Greek as the vehicle and sign of high-culture and colonial dominance (my appellations) most penetrated the upper classes (priestly, political, wealthy, and aristocratic): "So too, inhabitants of the large, partially Hellenized cities, with centers of Roman administration, like Tiberias and Caesarea,

who had greater contact with the Roman army and bureaucracy, would of necessity have requires a working knowledge of Greek" (Sperber 2006: 628).

Daniel Sperber also cites an example from the later literature of the Rabbis that shows the social depth of penetration and normalization of Greek into the non-elite and presumably non-wealthy social castes, not only in Hellenized cosmopolitan cities, but in the countryside as well (which we as historians and anthropologists all to often imagine as pure and insulated from non-endemic cultural pressures or hegemonies):

> Thus, on the one hand R. Abbahu, who lived in Caesarea (died 309) and had extensive connections with the local administration, must have had a fine command of the Greek language. This is evident from a passage of Genesis Rabba: 'They (gentiles) asked R. Abbahu: From where do you know that a child formed [to be born] after seven months [of pregnancy] can live? He replied to them: From your own [language] I will prove it to you: [זיטא איפטא איטא אכטו]... This enigmatic passage has been successfully decoded as follows ζῇ τὰ ἑπτὰ (μάλλον) ἢ τὰ ὀκτώ, meaning: 'Infants of seven months are more likely to survive than those of eight.' This is a very clever wordplay, since, ζ = 7 and η = 8. Only one with a considerable degree of linguistic competence could formulate such a response. (Sperber 2006: 628).

Further evidence is found in the Talmud of the Land of Israel, the so-called Yerushalmi (Schiffman 1991), at y. Sotah 7:1 (21b) (as cited in Sperber 2006: 29):

> רבי לוי בר חיתה אזל לקיסרין שמע קלון קריין שמע אלוניסתין בעא מעכבתון. שמע רבי ייסי ואיקפד אמר כך אומר אני מי שאינו יודע לקרות אשורית לא יקרינה כל עיקר. אלא יוצא בכל לשון שהוא יודע.

I translate this as follows: "Rabbi Levi bar Haita went to Caesarea [Maritima]. He heard their voices while reciting the Shema-prayer *in Hellenistic* [Greek]. He desired to prevent them [from doing this]. Rabbi Isai heard and became angry. He said thusly, 'Should I rule that somebody who does not know how to read *Ashurit*, should not recite it at all? Rather, he fulfilled his obligation (to recite the Shema) in any language that he does know.'" I cite this example to show that even among those Jews whose practice is most basic in the liturgy,

Hellenism and its impact on linguistic expression of subcultural (non-Hellenic) identity crept even into classes governed by the elites, as demonstrated by Levi bar Haita's attempt to " בעא מעכבתון" or "prevent/ hinder them" from praying in Greek. Further evidence for low-caste linguistic penetration is evident in lexical evidence. Agricultural vocabulary demonstrates a high number of Greek *lemmata* (Sperber 2006: 28). Thus, not just the practices of prayer but of daily sustenance reflects deep engagement with Greek language--and therefore we might impute with culture practice--both in the spheres of medical science and religious conduct, but also in the sphere of daily life.

Not only does the penetration of Greek into Jewish culture indicate linguistic change, it also implies the presence of the hegemonic culture-world, of which Greek is the vehicle. So, we turn to family as an explicit sign of (consanguine and affinal) kinship to see what other changes Hellenization wrought to explicit aspects of kinship. Shmuel Safrai observes generally about first-century Palestine that "[t]he ideal of marriage was the perpetuation of the family line, and so the number and survival of children was seen as the family's chief blessing" (Safrai 1976: 750). Regarding the Second Temple-era Greek notions of marriage as expressed among Jewish writers, Michael Satlow (2001: 20-21) summarizes:

> In sum, Jewish writers during the Second Temple period had entirely conventional assumptions about the purpose of marriage, assumptions that they shared with much of the Greek and later Roman intelligentsia. The purpose of marriage was to create an *oikos* [οἶκος, the Greek word for בית], through which a (1) its members gained identity; (2) a man achieved respectability and 'manhood;' and (3) new members of the state and household were reproduced and raised. Marriage was by no means an end in itself, but carried many social expectations, obligations, and privileges.

So, applying this summary to the foregoing analysis of Josephus's omissions in the "argument" and "enactment" of Ruth, we might hypothesize that there are, in fact, three threats present against Josephus's *Weltanschauung*: First, against Satlow's first claim is the

notion that the members of the House of Naomi are *producing and modifying* their identities, making it problematic for the Hellenized re-relater. Second, there is no "man" in the system in the "argument;" the presence of the House of Naomi is a category-error in that it might be nonsensical to Josephus and not worth explaining and passing on. Furthermore, regarding this second point, Boaz, the man who "enacts" the unrecognizable "argument" for the queer kinship formation of the House of Naomi actually *displaces* by his speech-act (the one omitted above) the "achieve[ment] of the responsibility of manhood" that was natally the social destiny of the גואל, the redeeming kinsman. Boaz cannot be seen to be disrupting another man's בית/ οἶκος for Josephus's aesthetic sensibilities.

Third, there is an aspect of the unknown, of the unpredictable, in terms of the "social expectations, obligations, and privileges " borne by the unification of the House of Naomi back to her blood-house by means of Boaz' marriage to Ruth. The unpredictable is dangerous, especially for a "colonized" Jew working under the patronage of the Roman emperor, and might not be worth the risk of relating.

Anthropologically speaking, society has both a normal range for identity, and a variable range of tolerance for outlier identities. Derrida (*Of Grammatology* 1979, also Huffer 2010: 26, ff.) called these potentially dangerous new imaginings "*différance*" in an altered French spelling, which means something like a "deferral" of effect and meaning in English. Read anthropologically, the changes being too different causes to society are *deferred*, are anticipated in a future time that is not in our control.

But there is a further specification to be drawn between Derrida's notion of *différance* and the linguistic representation we are studying here. In the briefest possible articulation of the matter, Derrida's concept refers to a deep set-emotional reaction we impute to have been

felt by an ancient author or reader. In terms of Josephus's inner world of emotion and affect, of course we cannot know this with any full certainty. But we *do have* as empirical evidence Josephus's writings. Therefore, by extension, we *also have* his silences at places where we know that the Ruth story had other details for previous generations of Jews. This textual trace evidence of such a reaction that we either find or find omitted in writing is what Foucault called the "shape of [an] emergence" (Foucault 1972). He defined this concept as the linguistic "object" that comes into being *because of* social, societal, institutional, (and, in our case, kinshipping) cultural forces. The emotion remains invisible but a textual trace, the physical inscription of an aesthetic reflex of taste or distaste, comes into being. We must ask if we can legitimately connect them. In this case, we must ask: Is Josephus's silence about problematic biblical fictive kinship in Ruth truly the linguistic object that marks his emotional and aesthetic response?

Reaction and evidence for that reaction relate directly to how risk is perceived, measured, and the way in which people react to it; I hypothesis that *the greater the risk, the more likely we must appreciate silence as evidence of the "shape of emergence" form*. We therefore need to attend closely to whether we are identifying the linguistic shape of emergence of our discursive object, of the Hellenized Jewish perception of the aesthetic risks of their ancient kinship systems in a world ruled by Rome, or whether we are theorizing the abjection that pushes a writer either to omit it or to work to change or re-interpret it.[20]

[20] Lynn Huffer (2010) has observed that in American scholarly discourse, there is an artificial amalgamation of these two concepts -- Derrida's internal/ emotional *différance* and Foucault's textual/ linguistic shape of emergence -- within the category of "postmodern," but she argues that this identification between the two ideas is not correct for important reasons relevant to the present analysis. Huffer (2010: 26) notes: "The most famous philosophical critique of Foucault has come from an equally famous critic of Enlightenment thinking, Jacques Derrida, who, especially in the American mainstream highbrow press, is often lumped together with Foucault. In postmodern philosophical circles, Derrida's dispute with Foucault over his exclusion of madness from the *cogito* in the *Meditations* has become legendary. As Edward Said and others have pointed out in their analyses of the Derrida-Foucault dispute over Descartes, the disagreement hinges on their differing conceptions of

Regarding the risks presented to society by an unpredictable deferral of meaning (*différance*), Michael Satlow explains in the context of Greco-Roman Palestine:

> This justification for marriage [the Greek οἶκος] also makes sense when seen within the larger economic context of ancient Palestine.... our sources are predominantly written by and for the relatively wealthy, and these individuals were most likely to have made their living as landowners. Prior to the Bar Kokhba revolt, Judean landowners frequently lived on their estates in villas or manor houses. In the Galilee, both before and after the revolts, land-owners more commonly lived in cities or big towns and left the daily administration of their lands to others.... For both... the *oikos* worked. An *oikos* ideology reinforced the self-conception of the resident Judean household as a family business that was tightly bound to and dependent upon the land. But even the Judean and Galilean landowners who did not live on their own land found in *oikos* a suitable ideology that linked them both to the past and to their land. An implication of this economic logic is that as a society's dependence on agriculture decreases, the strength of this *oikos* ideology should also weaken... (Satlow 2001:21-22)

Satlow's formulation is that the οἶκος penetrated and re-organized the בית אב structure of Judean and Galilean Jewish centers; it created a link to the land in the Hellenized Jewish kinship system. Ruth is a foundational national myth -- one that bears such weight that the Davidic Monarchy's genealogy can be appended to it. It represents the kinshipping framework of a people returned from some exile who now experience a decoupling from the

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textuality, language, and dialectical thinking. For Derrida, Descartes lends himself to an internal reading of a metaphysical structure that establishes the conditions of possibility of all thought. Rather than excluding madness, Derrida argues, Descartes radically universalizes it by comparing it with the sensory illusions of dreams. For Derrida, the structure of madness is allied with the structure of language in its *différance* (with an a), its feeble capacity to perform gesture of protection and enclosure against the terrifying specter of meaninglessness. Shannon Winnubust points out that *différance* -- "the undecidability of endless differing and deferring" -- "operated within the same system of lack initiated by the Hegelian dialectics of desire and recognition." Foucault himself, in his scathing response to Derrida, "This Body, This Paper, This Fire,"--written in 1964 and included as an appendix to the 1972 French reedition of *History of Madness*--slams Derrida for reducing "discursive practices" to "textual traces" for his "little pedagogy, a pedagogy which teaches the pupil that there is notion outside the text"... For Foucault, Derrida's self-enclosed textual *différance* is problematic because it leaves out those effects that cannot be traced to linguistic forces. Descartes text, for example, had the force of an 'event' within a network of sociopolitical relations that Foucault dramatizes through the institutional practice of confinement of the mad in seventeenth-century Europe. Thus the rationale and the practices of exclusion and confinement he describes in *Madness* are not simple textual or linguistic structures, but the result of institutional, political, and historical forces as well." (Huffer 2010: 26-26, emphasis mine).

biblical notion of the endowment of the Land to the ancestors. The *risk* of new forms of fictive kinship are of the same degree of danger as is the dissolution of land-based life-ways. If so, we may assume that this risk is of grave concern to Hellenistic Jews. If the Ruth story *demonstrates through new kinship enactments engendered by migration and speech acts declaring new household types and bonds,* then this is a sign of the *différance*, the deffered and unpredictable risk inherent within the very decoupling of land and kinship. As such, if Naomi, and a textual imagined world ideal, can establish kinship ties through comigrations and ties of emotional and material interdependence as enacted through speech acts, then we find strong grounds for Josephus's aesthetic (but internal) judgement to dismiss the more powerful aspects of the episode and omit it in his re-relation.

Such invisible emotions have long been the bane and fascination of anthropologists, the striving to see the overlap of the imagined world of the mind, the spoken reality of narrative, and the physical ways people live. Critical theory of the Foucauldian, post-Structural branches offers us an enticing way to argue for visibility of the overlap of these three unknowable, arguable, and empirical (respectively) objects of ethnographer's desire. When the object of study is an abjection -- like fictive kinship in the context of Ruth or like madness in Foucault's own context -- the efforts to distance the abject from the normative by elites make this three-part overlap a possible thing we might be able to trace.

Speaking about the history of the concept of madness or mental illness in nineteenth century Europe -- a correlate phenomenon to problematic arguments and enactments of kinship relations or declarations in our present context of analysis, since both are ways of being that resist the expected aesthetic norm -- Michel Foucault argues in *The Formation of Objects* that there are three vectors necessary to identify a problematic (or, better,

problematized) social phenomenon or "object." Foucault argues the historian must attend to the "*surfaces* of their *emergence*: show where these individual differences, which, according to the degrees of rationalization, conceptual codes, and types of theory, will be accorded the status of disease, alienation, anomaly, dementia, neurosis or psychosis..." (1972: 41). This is to say that we are to look for difference as a sign of an mental world of imagination at variance with the cultural norm. The second vector to be identified is the "authorities of delimitation," namely those hegemonic or elite authorities who make the rules, as it were, or have speaking authority in a society and in its institutions (Foucault 1972: 41-2). Third, Foucault asks that we attend to the "grids of specification" "according to which... [objects] ... are divided, contrasted, regrouped, classified, derived from one another as objects of... [a] discourse" (1979: 42).

In our present context of the Hellenized Jewish reception of the MT "argument" and "enactment" for fictive kinship as the "House of Naomi," we have defined the third facet of the social object first (that is, our argument for non-normative kinship and its entry into the normative system as visible in silence as a response to aesthetic distaste). In other words, in first specifying how the MT argument is presented and enacted in the narrative, given all its problems as against the norms of Deuteronomy 23 and 25 and against Genesis 38, we have seen how the concept is " divided, contrasted, regrouped, classified, derived from one another as objects of... [a] discourse" in the omissions made by Josephus in the Greek stream of inheritance. (We will see another strategy to this Foucauldian "grid of specification" in the Aramaic/ rabbinic stream in the next chapter, one which operates not by omission, but rather by means of halachic insertion.)

At present, if we attend to the causes of this omission-strategy that Josephus adopts here, we must look both to the "authorities of delimitation" and to the "surfaces of emergence." The "authorities of delimitation" are also been made clear in this chapter--namely the forces of Hellenism and the expectations of his Roman (Greek-reading) audience, and the demands this makes on the older "authority of delimitation" in the imagined, inherited norm of biblical Israel. This conflict between the ancestral and the modal or fashionable authority of delimitation both makes difficult the maintenance of older "kinship-objects," to use Foucault's terms. The acts of omission by Josephus can be seen as one outcome of the new order supplanting the old, either in terms of authority as we tend to think in our current socio-cultural position in the US, *or* supplanting in terms of intelligibility -- we can not think that which is unthinkable given our socio-cultural parameters of reality, as we saw earlier in this study in the theories of Decana (2008), who explored those living under the social mark of *el sujeto lo tacito,* or "tacit subjectivity" and their struggles to exist. In the MT, Ruth can pledge to Naomi her mutual ties of emotional and material interdependence, can "do kinshipping." In Josephus's re-relation, she cannot because it is unthinkable and unnamable.

Therefore, we come to the third and most difficult of Foucault's demands on historical research, namely the "surface of emergence," because even reading the text anthropologically, we are *still moderns* and we have what is in truth a paucity of evidence offering only a narrow window into a vast and now-lost human culture experienced by Josephus and his social world. But, if we make a small modification to the "surfaces of emergence" given our restricted and highly focused data set of MT Ruth and Josephus

Antiquities 5, we can regard *taste* as a cultural rubric (albeit a high-level and highly unspecified one) that represents something of the surface of emergence.

For this theoretical maneuver we can derive a definition from Bourdieu's work on taste as an operational force in the creation of social layers of distinction and rank. Bourdieu observes that:

> Popular taste applies the schemes of the ethos, which pertain in the ordinary circumstances of life, to legitimate works of art, and so performs a systematic reduction of the things of art to the things of life. The very seriousness (or naivety) which this taste invests in fictions and representations demonstrates *a contrario* that pure taste performs of suspension of 'naive' involvement which is one dimension of a 'quasi-ludic' relationship with the necessities of the world. *Intellectuals could be said to believe in the representation -- literature, theater, painting -- more than in the things represented, whereas the people chiefly expect representations and the conventions which govern them to allow them to believe 'natively' in the things represented*. (Bourdieu 1989[1974]: 5)

Josephus is "intellectual" or "elite." There are two ways that we can parse this statement: the measured philological perspective typified by Mason (1989) in his analysis entitled *Should Any Wish to Enquire Further* as against the self-reports of Josephus and also reports of other Late Antique authors such as Jerome (4th c. CE). Mason writes that Josephus's glory in Rome as a client of Vespasian was less splendorous than Josephus himself reports it to be (to little modern surprise):

> Josephus... did not rise high enough to become an object of such envy. Suetonius and Dio mention him in passing as a curiosity, only as a prisoner in Judea and only because of his remarkable prediction about Vespasian's rise to power. He did not even reach the lowest rung of the *cursus honorum* in Rome; much less was he an *amicus* or trusted advisor of any Flavian emperor. To be sure, Eusebius (*Eccles. Hist* 3.9.2) claims that a statue was erected in Josephus's honor in Rome, but we have only his word for it, and we do not know when the statue might have been built -- between Josephus's and Eusebius's times. *All of the other evidence unanimously points to a career on the fringes of any real power. This is perhaps only to be expected of a captured*

> *enemy soldier, but it needs emphasis becaus of the long scholarly tradition of viewing Josephus as a favourite of the Flavian court.*
>
> *Given Josephus's lack of prominence in the court of Vespasian and Titus, we ought to be wary of assuming that the imperial family were his primary literary patrons. Of course, one could have numerous patrons at any given time.* Martial mentions at least 60 people who might be patrons, and Statius, 18. Peter White has shown that Flavian Rome was marked by a multiplicity of possible sponsors. Unlike the period of Augustus (31 B.C.E. to 14 C.E.), in which a tightly drawn literary circle was led by the famous patron Maecenas, the end of the first Christian century saw potential literary 'friends' everywhere. (Mason 1998: 77, emphasis mine)

But the second source is what matters more prominently in our analysis of Josephus's distaste and tendency or strategy to omit in biblical re-relation. If we understand this tendency to boast not solely as a lie or a brag, but as based in a *possible* (or, at least, *not* unlikely) self-perception in Josephus own, auto-ethnographic self-report, then we can understand the following: he carried an elite mindset and therefore hybridity between Greek and Judean cultural worlds.

In the self-reports, his social status is a social distinction visible by virtue of his self-claimed birth as a priest, his self-reported teaching in the Temple, and his managing to convince Roman authorities to give him a writing voice, and if Eusebius's account in the *Ecclesiastical History* (3.9.2) can be trusted (which it might be possible to do, following Mason's reading, but if it is trustworthy, it is at least anachronistic to Josephus's own life-world and experience), not to mention his demonstrated facility in Greek as well as his claims to literary Aramaic (Thackeray 1997[1927]). We do have some evidence that he believed in the representation over its content as the dominant form of the socio-cultural "object," we might say its "true form," as we see in his opening remarks to *Contra Apionem* (Barclay 2013):

Apion 1:6 (1.2) Πρῶτον οὖν ἐπέρχεταί μοι πάνυ θαυμάζειν τοὺς οἰομένους δεῖν περὶ τῶν παλαιοτάτων ἔργων μόνοις προσέχειν τοῖς Ἕλλησι καὶ παρὰ τούτων πυνθάνεσθαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις ἀπιστεῖν· πᾶν γὰρ ἐγὼ τοὐναντίον ὁρῶ συμβεβηκός, εἴ γε δεῖ μὴ ταῖς ματαίαις δόξαις ἐπακολουθεῖν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ αὐτῶν τὸ δίκαιον τῶν πραγμάτων λαμβάνειν. **1.7** τὰ μὲν γὰρ παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἅπαντα νέα καὶ χθὲς καὶ πρῴην, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις. εὕροι γεγονότα, λέγω δὲ τὰς κτίσεις τῶν πόλεων καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς ἐπινοίας τῶν τεχνῶν καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς τῶν νόμων ἀναγραφάς· πάντων δὲ νεωτάτη σχεδόν ἐστι παῤ αὐτοῖς ἡ περὶ τὸ συγγράφειν τὰς ἱστορίας ἐπιμέλεια.

The first thing that occurs to me is utter astonishment at those who think one should pay attention only to Greeks on matters of great antiquity, expecting to learn the truth from them, while disbelieving the rest of humanity. For my part, I find the very opposite of things to be the case, if indeed one should not follow worthless opinions but derive a right conclusion from the facts themselves. For everything to do with the Greeks I have found to be recent, so to speak from yesterday or the day before -- I mean the founding of cities, and matters concerning the invention of arts and the recording of laws; and just about the most recent of all for them is the writing of histories.

(Trans. Barclay 2013: 13-14).

Josephus the colonial subject mobilizes his self-avowed elite status to make an argument that his people have legitimate agency to be different against Greek cultural hegemony (indeed, even to hold a pride of privileged place that belongs to vaunted antiquity). Further, we see evidence of his "'quasi-ludic'" playing with the non-normative reality of the people he represents as a model-minority speaking for the Jews to Rome and the Hellenized Greek-reading world. We see this through the freeness with which he omits material from the Hebrew text we know in the MT. This strategy is a very different one from that which is taken up by the Aramaic rabbinic streams of reception. This outcome, the very freedom to omit, is, in Bourdieu's terms, a function of his class- and privilege-based distance from the queer contours of the surface of everyday life for colonized Jews in the Roman empire. Bourdieu writes that:

> The pure aesthetic is rooted in an ethic, or rather, an ethos of elective distance from the necessities of the natural and social world, which may take the form of moral agnosticism (visible when ethical transgression becomes an artistic *parti pris*) or of an aestheticism which presents the aesthetic disposition as a universally valid principle and takes the bourgeois denial of the social world to its limit... *The detachment of the pure gaze cannot be dissociated from a general disposition towards the world which is the paradoxical product of condition by negative economic necessities -- a life of ease -- that tends to induce and active distance from necessity.*
>
> (Bourdieu 1989[1974]: 5)

Thus, ultimately, it is a matter of taste and distaste that drives the omission strategies in *Antiquities* 5. Gregory Sterling (1998: 127-8) addresses the question of "...what is Josephus's methodology and agenda?" He refers to the strategy of "omission" as being "important for the primary version but not the secondary version" that Josephus is producing. Indeed, I have attempted to argue that the omission is far more than a matter of importance, it is a judgment by a Hellenized elite against an inherited, ancient, and outmoded (that is, distasteful) socio-cultural object in the form of queer fictive kinship that runs afoul of both biblical and Hellenic norms.

To this end, Steve Mason (1998: 96) observes that "[i]f the internal evidence from both the [*Jewish*] *War* and the *Antiquities* appears to require a first audience of willing, Greek-speaking Gentiles in Rome, the external evidence makes such an audience entirely plausible." Taste and distaste, cultivated in obedience to the Hellenic norms of the elite status to which Josephus lays claim, demand not only explanation but silence on certain matters, indeed "from time[-]to[-]time groups of Judeans were expelled from Rome in part, evidently, because too many Romans were adopting their customs" (Mason 1998: 96, n.7: "disciplinary expulsions mentioned for 139 B.C.E., 19 C.E., and perhaps the 40s C.E.").

Indeed, to this end, Sterling further argues that "Josephus... did far more than curtail the story. He shaped it according to his understandings of acceptable narrative..." (1998:128)

shaped by his "commendation of virtue" in that, as Sterling observes, "Boaz is elevated and Naomi and Ruth are lowered." This is done through a taste-guided strategy of omission. We thus will next explore what is done through the midrashic strategy of additions in Targum Ruth.

5. Adding to the Discomfort: Time, *Halacha*, and Identity in Targum Ruth

Up to this point in this study we have understood the MT Ruth as an orphan in time. This temporal home of MT Ruth was time set adrift into historical experiences of exile and changed relationships to the land vis-a-vis the structure of kinship of the בית, *oikos,* or *domus*; and it allowed for the narrative, one might argue, to penetrate time-barriers and cultural barriers into more reading communities, and into more places where the kinship "argument" of MT Ruth 1 and its "enactment" in MT Ruth 4 might make the reader uneasy. In this way, the MT can present it either as the coda to Judges and preview to Samuel as in the case of the LXX (Schipper 2016: 11), or Josephus can present it as an "antiquity," (from among the ancient antiquities: ἅπασαν τὴν παῤ ἡμῖν **ἀρχαιολογίαν**), a historical happening or events (τὰ πράγματα), of the Jews before the Greeks.

It was time-marked by its qualitative definition as the experience of exile, return, external forces of cultural hegemony, and remapping relations between the Land of Israel and the People Israel (after Alter 2019, Schipper 2016). In the MT version of this story, there was a re-mapping in MT Ruth 1 that produced an "argument" for a novel form of fictive kinship, a women's collective bonded by ties of mutual material and affective support, the House of Naomi, as a בית אם. In the conclusion of the story of MT Ruth with chapter 4, there is an "enactment" of the "argument" from MT Ruth 1.

In the Josephan re-telling, the House of Naomi is still present as a form of fictive kinship; however, as we saw, Josephus omits key pieces of the "enactment" and the "argument," making it less offensive to his Hellenized Jewish tastes. I speculated perhaps this was due to the hegemonic intrusion of the Hellenic notion of the "*oikos*," οἶκος, or *domus*. This "house" society was imagined bound to the land, but due to crises in the Judahite and

Galilean societies of the Jews of Palestine, such as the mode of occupying that land and changes in class and caste, there was a feeling of dislocation. This made the "enactment" of the "argument" from MT Ruth a *risk* (after Douglas 2003, Appadurai 2013) in the anthropological formulation of the concept, as we saw in the conclusion to the previous chapter in the present study.

Here in this chapter, I will explore the inheritance of the "risk" present in the MT's "argument" and "enactment," and in particular how Aramaic writers of the rabbinic tradition handle this risk when the Ruth story needs to be retold in public contexts, likely in the synagogue, as we will see below. Regarding the language problem, we first need to turn to the linguistic milieu of Palestine in which the rabbinic ideas coalesce into a social movement. Barr (2003) notes the trilingual socio-cultural context of Palestine. Although these traditions are mixed socially, they managed to produce different streams of literature -- the Greek and Josephan texts eventually entering the Christian literary streams, and the Aramaic becoming the literature of Rabbinic Judaism.

We might postulate (carefully) from this divergence of the Greek and the Aramaic streams that Josephus's strategy of omission could possibly become identified with the "other's" linguistic milieu, the non-rabbinic one. But it could also be the case that Josephus's strategy of omission at distaste simply does not suit a *Weltanschaung* whereby the written text of the תורה שבכתיב is unalterable and divine (after Schechter 1993[1909] and many others). But disjuncture or divergence does not imply complete separation. So, we have a problem of balancing the particularity of what becomes two fairly distinct literary traditions on the one hand, and then we also have the problem that these come out of a "melting pot" or

"admixture" of sorts in the socio-cultural world of human experience and practice out of which these diverging Greek and Aramaic literary traditions emerge.

In contrast to Josephus's strategy of omission through likely distaste and the phenomenon of "un-namability" of distasteful cultural objects, in the Targumic literature such as Ruth, we see the strategy of *midrashic insertion*. Writing about this phenomenon in Targum Ruth, Chan and Venter (2010) draw on the foundational studies of the re-written Bible genre by Geza Vermes (2010: 2). They argue that even if aware, the early rabbinic interpreters saw little practical difference between the *exegesis* of a text and its *eisegesis*, "it involves both drawing out the meaning which is implicit [in the rabbinic speech community] in Scripture, and reading meaning into scripture" (Chan and Venter 2010: 2, citing Alexander 1984:7). In the following analysis, we will see adopted an *eisegetic* interpolation of Oral Torah or *halacha* to make a distasteful or risky text appear to support their rabbinic kinshipping norms.

Preliminarily, I contend that one of the factors favoring the fact that the Targumist is able to append (halachic) *additions* to the distasteful -- as opposed to omissions like Josephus -- is that the book is taken out of a linear historical timeline. Josephus made it an archaeology of antiquities; the Targumist takes it out of linear time and places it in repeated time epochs. Immediately when we read the transformed opening lines of the Targum, we the readers know that we are in a different theory of temporality. Indeed, Chan and Venter (2010: 3) point to the issue of temporality as a trigger requiring midrashic insertion, insofar as the biblical book's "...*indication of time* is neither specific nor defined in Ruth" aside from the time-marker,"when the judges judged." Compare the opening time-markers in the MT,

Josephus, and Targum Ruth below. First, in MT Ruth 1:1, we have a vague reference to time-markers in the Hebrew Bible.

> וַיְהִ֗י בִּימֵי֙ שְׁפֹ֣ט הַשֹּׁפְטִ֔ים וַיְהִ֥י רָעָ֖ב בָּאָ֑רֶץ וַיֵּ֣לֶךְ אִ֗ישׁ מִבֵּית֙ לֶ֣חֶם יְהוּדָ֔ה לָג֥וּר בִּשְׂדֵ֖י מוֹאָ֑ב הֽוּא וְאִשְׁתּ֖וֹ וּשְׁנֵ֥י בָנָֽיו׃

> And so it was in the days back when the judges used to judge that there was a famine in the land.

These opening words are an *intra-textual* (that is, within the Hebrew scriptures) assignment of temporality and location (Schipper 2016, Alter 2019). It is of note that in the earliest testimonia of the biblical canon Ruth is construed as a coda or conclusion to the books of Judges and an introduction to First and Second Samuel (Schipper 2016: 10-13). Therefore, the time is "narrative," lost in mythic time (after Eliade 1987). This aspect of temporal location, I argue, both allows for the production the "argument" in chapter one, but also requires the "enactment" back into that biblical system in MT Ruth 4.

By contrast, observe how Josephus temporally locates his re-relation:

> Μετὰ δὲ τὴν Σαμψῶνος τελευτὴν προέστη τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν Ἠλὶς ὁ ἀρχιερεύς. ἐπὶ τούτου λιμῷ τῆς χώρας κακοπαθούσης αὐτῶν Ἀβιμέλεχος ἐκ Βηθλέμων, ἔστι δὲ ἡ πόλις αὕτη τῆς Ἰούδα φυλῆς, ἀντέχειν τῷ δεινῷ μὴ δυνάμενος τήν τε γυναῖκα Νααμεὶν καὶ τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῆς αὐτῷ γεγενημένους Χελλιῶνα καὶ Μαλαῶνα ἐπαγόμενος εἰς τὴν Μωαβῖτιν μετοικίζεται.
>
> Now after the death of Samson, Eli the high priest was governor of the Israelites. Under him, when the country was afflicted with a famine, Elimelech of Bethlehem, which is a city of the tribe of Judah, being not able to support his family under so sore a distress, took with him Naomi his wife, and the children that were born to him by her, Chilion and Mahlon, and removed his habitation into the land of Moab; (Antiquities 5.318, trans. Whiston 1957[1851]).

Here we see a different intra-biblical temporal location for the event, implied governance by the priests. Yet here in the Targum of Ruth, there is a very different mode of temporality, namely, the iterative and the eschatological. Thus Targum Ruth 1:1 states:

והוה ביומי נגיד נגודיא והוה כפנא תקיף בארעא דישׂראל עישׂרתי כפנין תקיפין איתגזרו מן שׂמיא למיהוי בעלמא מן יומא דאתברי עלמא עד זמן דייתי מלכא משׂיחא לאוכחא בהון דיירי ארעא כפן קדמאי ביומי אדם כפן תניין ביומי למך כפן תליתאי ביומי אברהם כפן רביעאי ביומי יצחק כפן חמישׂאי ביומי יעקב כפן שׂתיתאי ביומי בועז דמתקרי אבצן צדיקא דמן בית־לחם כפן שׂביעאי ביומי דוד מלכא דישׂראל כפן תמינאי ביומי אליהו נביא כפן תמינאי ביומי אלישׁע בשׂמרון וכפן עשׂיראי למהוי לא כפן למיכל לחמא ולא צחותא למשׁתי מוי אילהין למשׁמע פתגם נבואה מן קדם ייי וכד הוה כפנא הדא תקיף בארעא דישׂראל נפק גברא רבא מן בית־לחם יהודה ואזל לדור בחקלא דמואב הוא ואיתתיה ותרין בנוי

It came to pass in the days of the Judge of Judges that there was a great famine in the Land of Israel. Ten great famines were decreed by Heaven to be upon the earth, from the day on which the world was created until the coming of the King-Messiah, to admonish therewith the inhabitants of the earth. The first famine was in the days of Adam. The second famine was in the days of Lemech. The third 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 is known as1 Ivzan the Pious of Beth Lehem of Judah. 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 at Samaria. The tenth famine is due to come, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but to hear the word of prophecy from the Lord. And when there was this great famine in the Land of Israel, a nobleman went forth out to Beth Lehem of Judah and went to dwell in the field of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. (Trans. Samson H. Levey, Hebrew Union College, 1934)

The Targumist makes several interpretive moves in his translation of the Hebrew to the Aramaic. First, נגיד נגודיא, the "leaders guided/ led," which Samson Levey interpreted the Aramaic construct as a superlative, that is as "Judge of Judges" (probably interpreting the base-form "leader") from the Pe'al (G) of the Aramaic root נ.ג.ד, replaces the infinitive construct and plural active G-participle שְׁפָט הַשֹּׁפְטִים [בימי...] in the MT, "when the Judges used to judge." Next, there is a ten-fold periodization of biblical history revealing times marked by great famines ("כפנין תקיפין") beginning from the creation of the world (" איתגזרו מן שׂמיא למיהוי בעלמא") to the coming of an Anointed King or Messiah (" מן יומא דאתברי עלמא עד זמן דייתי מלכא משׂיחא"), and, importantly for understanding the Aramaic-literature strand of how Jews dealt with the risks of Ruth's kinship "argument" and "enactment," *it sets the narrative*

within eschatological time. This is the first and most crucial criterion by which the MT kinship is re-framed.

The time is somewhat related to that which takes place in the Second Temple literary genre of the Jewish apocalypse, which is worth exploring for a moment. John J. Collins provides a helpful form-critical rubric for the ancient Jewish genre of apocalypse as follows (1998[1984]: 5): "a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world." To be sure not all of these markers are present in Targum Ruth, nor are they present int this opening time-locating line; however, we must note that the מלכא משיחא and his "coming" marks the end of the ten-member time sequence (and also makes the opening words of the book accord to the presence of the Davidic genealogy that is appended onto it), so the very smallest claim we can solidly make thus far is that Ruth is *reframed temporally* as an eschatology to fit with the technology of the Jewish apocalypse genre that can take books out of historical time and into the experiential time-scape of the interpretive community. More precisely, this move fits into an eschatologically-driven typology of famine.

In fact, it is this eschatological sequencing that has helped scholars to achieve a relative dating of the text in terms of our understanding of the history of rabbinic texts in a scholarly sense. Flesher and Chilton note that this periodization also occurs at the beginning of *Esther Sheni*, the Targum to Esther, and that because the ten famines list also occurs in

Genesis Rabba 25:3,[21,22] that the dating of the text can not be before the Amoraic period of 250-500 CE (2011:246). Yet Flesher and Chilton also argue for a later date to Targum Ruth, noting the occurrence of parallel traditions (Targum Ruth 3:8 to b. Sanhedrin 93b; Targum Ruth 4:22 to b. Shabbat 55b) and a similar pattern of "interpretive tendencies" matching those found in the eight-century Targums of the Writings (Flesher and Chilton 2011: 246). They further observe, both culturally and germane to our present study, that "[t]he emphasis upon a more domesticated sexuality, as compared to [Esther] Sheni, suggests a more settles period, in which the threat of forced intermarriage had receded somewhat" (Flesher and Chilton 2011: 246 at n.34, citing Cohen 1996, *Islam and the Jews*: 78-108).

Regarding the genre of Targum as a feature of the Late Antique synagogue in general, Lee Levine notes about attempts to date the material that "...[o]n the basis of the above considerations, it is clear that the targumic compilations are multilayered with material from different periods; the editing process continues over centuries throughout Late Antiquity and beyond, into the Early Middle Ages." (Levine 2011: 161). A new time-scape for the

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[21] מִן הָאַדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אֵרְרָהּ ה' (בראשית ה, כט), עֲשָׂרָה שְׁנֵי רְעָבוֹן בָּאוּ לָעוֹלָם, אֶחָד בִּימֵי אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (בראשית ג, יז): אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ. וְאֶחָד בִּימֵי לֶמֶךְ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: מִן הָאַדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אֵרְרָהּ ה'. וְאֶחָד בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם (בראשית יב, י): וַיְהִי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ. וְאֶחָד בִּימֵי יִצְחָק, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (בראשית כו, א): וַיְהִי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ מִלְבַד הָרָעָב הָרִאשׁוֹן. וְאֶחָד בִּימֵי יַעֲקֹב, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (בראשית מה, ו): כִּי זֶה שְׁנָתַיִם הָרָעָב. וְאֶחָד בִּימֵי שֹׁפֵט הַשׁוֹפְטִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (רות א, א): וַיְהִי בִּימֵי שְׁפֹט הַשֹּׁפְטִים וַיְהִי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ. וְאֶחָד בִּימֵי דָּוִד, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (שמואל ב כא, א): וַיְהִי רָעָב בִּימֵי דָוִד שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים. וְאֶחָד בִּימֵי אֵלִיָּהוּ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (מלכים א יז, א): חַי ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתִּי לְפָנָיו אִם יִהְיֶה הַשָּׁנִים הָאֵלֶּה טַל וּמָטָר כִּי אִם לְפִי דְּבָרִי, וְאֶחָד בִּימֵי אֱלִישָׁע, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (מלכים ב ו, כה): וַיְהִי רָעָב גָּדוֹל בְּשֹׁמְרוֹן, שֶׁהוּא מִתְגַּלְגֵּל וּבָא לָעוֹלָם. וְאֶחָד לֶעָתִיד לָבוֹא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (עמוס ח, יא): לֹא רָעָב לַלֶּחֶם וְלֹא צָמָא לַמַּיִם כִּי אִם לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶת דִּבְרֵי ה'. רַבִּי הוּנָא וְרַבִּי יִרְמְיָה בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר רַב יִצְחָק עִקֵּר אַוְתֶּנְטָיָא שֶׁלּוֹ לֹא הָיָה רָאוּי לִהְיוֹת בִּימֵי דָּוִד אֶלָּא בִּימֵי שָׁאוּל, אֶלָּא עַל יְדֵי שֶׁהָיָה שָׁאוּל גִּרוֹפִית שֶׁל שִׁקְמָה, גִּלְגְּלוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא וַהֲבִיאוֹ בִּימֵי דָּוִד, מַתְלָא אָמְרִין שִׁילוֹ חָטָא וְיוֹחָנָא מִשְׁתַּלְמָא, אָתְמָהָא. אָמַר רַבִּי חִיָּא רַבָּה מָשָׁל לְזָגָג שֶׁהָיָה בְּיָדוֹ קֻפָּה מְלֵאָה כּוֹסוֹת וּדְיָטְרוּטִין, בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁהָיָה מְבַקֵּשׁ לִתְלוֹת אֶת קֻפָּתוֹ הָיָה מַבִּיא יָתֵד וּתְקָעָהּ וְנִתְלָה בָּהּ, וְאַחַר כָּךְ הָיָה תּוֹלֶה אֶת קֻפָּתוֹ. לְפִיכָךְ לֹא בָּאוּ בִּימֵי בְּנֵי אָדָם שְׁפוּפִים, אֶלָּא בִּימֵי בְּנֵי אָדָם גִּבּוֹרִים, שֶׁהֵן יְכוֹלִין לַעֲמֹד בָּהֶן. רַבִּי בֶּרֶכְיָה הֲוֵי קָרֵי עֲלֵיהוֹן (ישעיה מ, כט): נֹתֵן לַיָּעֵף כֹּחַ. רַבִּי בֶּרֶכְיָה בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי חֶלְבּוֹ אָמַר שְׁנַיִם בָּאוּ בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם, רַב הוּנָא בְּשֵׁם רַב אַחָא אָמַר אֶחָד בִּימֵי לֶמֶךְ וְאֶחָד בִּימֵי אַבְרָהָם, רָעָב שֶׁבָּא בִּימֵי אֵלִיָּהוּ, רָעָב שֶׁל בַּצֹּרֶת הָיָה, שָׁנָה עֲבָדָה שָׁנָה לֹא עֲבָדָה, רָעָב שֶׁבָּא בִּימֵי אֱלִישָׁע, רָעָב שֶׁל מְהוּמָה הָיָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (מלכים ב ו, כה): עַד הֱיוֹת רֹאשׁ חֲמוֹר בִּשְׁמֹנִים כֶּסֶף, רָעָב שֶׁהָיָה בִּימֵי שֹׁפֵט הַשּׁוֹפְטִים, רַבִּי הוּנָא בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי דוֹסָא אָמַר אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁתַּיִם סְאִין הָיוּ וְנַעֲשׂוּ אַרְבָּעִים וְאַחַת, וְהָא תָנֵי לֹא יֵצֵא אָדָם לְחוּצָה לָאָרֶץ אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן הָיוּ סָאתַיִם שֶׁל חִטִּים הוֹלְכוֹת בְּסֶלַע, אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמְעוֹן אִימָתַי בִּזְמַן שֶׁאֵינוֹ מוֹצֵא לִקַּח, אֲבָל אִם הָיָה מוֹצֵא לִקַּח אֲפִלּוּ סְאָה בְּסֶלַע לֹא יֵצֵא לְחוּצָה לָאָרֶץ, וְאִלּוּ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ יָצָא, לְפִיכָךְ נֶעֱנָשׁ . [Text: Sefaria.org]

[22] Beattie (2003: 18, n.2) observes: "A similar list of ten famines is found in *Gen[esis] R[abba] 25:3; 40:3; 64:2, Ruth R[abba]* 1:4, and in later midrashim Tg. Cant. 1:1 has a list of tens songs, and Tg. Esth. II [= Sheni] 1:1 a list of ten kings."

Targumic (and other rabbinic literature) permits different interpretive readings, because of the removal of a text from linear time into time determined by its content.

The significance of this temporal manipulation within the narrative becomes evident when we apply the thinking of Eviatar Zerubavel (2003) in *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*. In remarking on the concept of "historical continuity," Zerubavel notes:

> Not every historical narrative presupposes change. Essentially projecting a general sense that there is 'noting new under the sun,' many, in fact, regard the present as a *continuation* of the past. Thus, instead of one actually replacing the other, the two are viewed as parts of an integrated whole. Despite the convectional grammatical distinctions between past and present tenses, *the past and the present are not entirely separate entities.* (Zerubavel 2003: 37).

The periodization of time that is *inserted*, a diametrically opposed strategy to the one we explored in Josephus, demonstrates a repeated, ten-fold iteration of events linked by the recurring presence of a "famine." Further, any historical marker of the Ruth story actually occurring in the historical period of the judges becomes nullified insofar as the time is moved to the that identified as the acme of the "judge of judges," which many identify as the story-internal figure of Boaz (for example, Beattie 2004: 18, esp. n. 1,2),[23] the one who, for our present purposes, *"enacts" the "argument" for kinship into the normative society of mythic Israel.*

As scholars agree to be typical of the Aramaic Targums (Flesher and Chilton 2011), Étan Levine notes (1973: *Preface*) that "[u]nlike midrash texts, the targum incorporated its material directly into the Biblical translation: thus, the listener (and the casual reader!) was

[23] Beattie comments regarding the opening phrase which she translates to "It happened in the days of the judge of judges," that "[the] MT [reads]... "judging of the judges." The earliest occurrence elsewhere of [the Targum's] interpretation of the Hebrew consonantal text is in Samuel Uceda [sic] (b. 1540), who attributed it to Shemariah ha-Ikriti (1275-1355). The "judge of judges," or judge par excellence is intended as a reference to Boaz, who is identified as Ibzan" (2003: 18, n. 1).

unable to discern the distinction between translation of, and commentary upon a scriptural reading. The various didactic, polemical, and inspirational *midrashim* fused into a continuous narrative." As an interpolating genre, the Aramaic Targum would have gained its authority by its ritual positioning.

Lee Levine observes in his survey of the second-century synagogue as a religious institution that there are three bodies of ritual practice for which we have a plethora of documentation in the ancient synagogue: Torah reading, "related Torah-reading activities such as the sermon and the *targum*," and communal prayer (Lee Levine 2005: 146):

> That the *targum* was an integral part of the synagogue liturgy was well known in Late Antiquity. Detailed laws relating to this practice, along with the translations and interpretations on such occasions, abound in rabbinic sources. Even second-century authorities were already well aware of this practice, and many regulations associated with it are discussed in this contemporary literature. It seems that tannaitic sages were not initially a new practice in this regard, but rather commenting upon, critiquing, and defining (for themselves? for others?) the existing institutions. Thus, it is quite likely that the use of *targum* goes back at least to the late Second Temple period... (Levine 2011: 161).

Thus, having established the historical placement, ritual life, and communal authority of the "telling" of Targum Ruth, we must consider where it fits theoretically into our analytic schema. I will attempt to do this linguistically, since I think that the firmest evidence on which analysis can proceed is the philological discussion of the *textus receptus* of Targum Ruth.

Earlier we noted the triple language situation of Greco-Roman Palestine according to Stephen Barr's analysis (2003). Roger Le Déaut (2003) further specifies regarding Aramaic, the rise and adoption of which he refers to as coming from the "shock of exile:"

> How, in the face of the established fact of the survival of Hebrew as a spoken language down to the second century CE, are we to explain the emergence of the Targum? The traditional solution remains tenable: because of the steadily reduced

> comprehension of the Hebrew of the Bible. *In all provinces, even in Judea, Aramaic was dominant; 'Mishnaic' Hebrew was very different from the scriptures,* if we are to judge from good manuscripts of Jewish literature... Classical Hebrew texts called for a version in modern language, of which the most usual was Aramaic... *On the other hand, the Targum was a necessity even for those who could still, more or less, comprehend the biblical texts. These were often difficult; to translate them in the presence of the people was not enough. They still had to be interpreted.* The Targum gave the traditional interpretation, placing the text within the people's grasp, explaining it and drawing all the practical conclusions relevant to life. Translation and homiletic commentary must, in ancient times, often have been placed on equal footing; but on this point we are able only to make conjectures. (Le Déaut 2003: 565-566).

So, we might preliminarily differentiate the style and technique apparent in the interpretive work of Targum Ruth as follows: If Josephus explains *outward*, from colonized traditions of the Jews under Hellenism to the physical context of the Roman emperor's court in the vehicle of Greek and Greek historiography (Mason 1998), then the Targum of Ruth explains *inward*, from the past traditions of the colonized people to their present linguistic needs and situation of cultural understandings. This binary encapsulation of the translational situation is especially true given Le Déaut's contention that the use of Aramaic was wide-spread in among areas of Jewish habitation, whereas, as Barr's analysis demonstrates, it is more difficult and painstaking to reconstruct the penetration of Greek, and even more so its place in ritual (see Chapter 4 of the present study).

To this end, first I will explore the interpolations relevant to our study of the "argument" of MT Ruth 1, and then following this I will explore the interpretive changes to the "enactment" of MT Ruth 4. Finally, in the concluding chapter of the present study, I will place these in conversation with theories of linguist Daniel Dor and the newest articulation of literary narratology's "imagined worlds theory" as construed in Bell and Ryan (2019), *Imagined Worlds.* In examining how the Targumist reacts to, explains, or modifies the "risk'

(Douglas 2003, Appadurai 2013) of the kinship "argument" in MT Ruth 1, we note that there are two expansions in Targum Ruth 1, as follows:

וּמִית אֱלִימֶלֶךְ בַּעְלָהּ דְּנָעֳמִי וְאִשְׁתְּאַרַת הִיא אַרְמְלָא וּתְרֵין בְּנַהָא יַתְמִין׃

> Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left a widow, and her two sons were left orphans. (Targum Ruth 1:3 Trans Levey 1934)

Against the MT to 1:3: וַיָּמָת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ אִישׁ נָעֳמִי וַתִּשָּׁאֵר הִיא וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ, "Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons." Note that the Aramaic introduces a *legal appellation* to Naomi, that she was a widow (הִיא אַרְמְלָא). This is significant insofar as in Chapter 3 in the present study, we observed that part of the way the "argument" of MT Ruth 1 was predicated was on the fact that the text *did not call her a widow and allowed Naomi to hold onto property and position of head of household.* Here, as we shall discuss further below, the Targumist introduces *halacha* into the narrative "*aggada*," if you will, as a way to make less possible and therefore less risky the House of Naomi.

Next, in the Aramaic Targum to Ruth 1:4, we find the next interpretive expansion to the text found in the MT:[24]

וַעֲבַרוּ עַל גְּזֵירַת מֵימְרָא דַּיְיָ וּנְסִיבוּ לְהוֹן נָשִׁין נוּכְרָאִין מִן בְּנָת מוֹאָב שׁוֹם חֲדָא עָרְפָּה וְשׁוֹם תִּנְיֵתָא רוּת בַּת עֶגְלוֹן מַלְכָּא דְּמוֹאָב וִיתִיבוּ תַּמָּן כִּזְמַן עֲשַׂר שְׁנִין׃

> They transgressed the decree of the Word of the Lord and took unto themselves foreign wives, of the daughters of Moab, the name of the 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 period of about ten years. (Trans. Levey 1934)

Compared to the MT version of 1:4 (which reads: וַיִּשְׂאוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מֹאֲבִיּוֹת שֵׁם הָאַחַת עָרְפָּה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית רוּת וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם כְּעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים׃), the Targumist adds to the text וַעֲבַרוּ עַל גְּזֵירַת מֵימְרָא דַּיְיָ וּנְסִיבוּ

[24] Translations of Targum Ruth provided in this chapter are taken from those of Samson H. Levey, Hebrew Union College, 1934, available at Sefaria.org, unless otherwise noted.

לַיהוֹן נָשִׁין נוּכְרָאִין מִן בְּנָת מוֹאָב, " They transgressed the decree of the Word of the Lord and took unto themselves foreign wives, of the daughters of Moab." This is a reference to Torah law, namely Deuteronomy 23:4: לֹא־יָבֹא עַמּוֹנִי וּמוֹאָבִי בִּקְהַל יְהוָה גַּם דּוֹר עֲשִׂירִי לֹא־יָבֹא לָהֶם בִּקְהַל יְהוָה עַד־ עוֹלָם:,"No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted into the congregation of the LORD; none of their descendants, even in the tenth generation, shall ever be admitted into the congregation of the LORD" (Trans. JPS).

Moreover, this is specified further a few verses later not only against the "order of affinal marriage," but *even* against the emotional and material ties of interdependence by which fictive kinship is defined. We read in Deuteronoomy 23: 7 that לֹא־תִדְרֹשׁ שְׁלֹמָם וְטֹבָתָם כָּל־יָמֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם:,"You shall never concern yourself with their [i.e., certain groups such as the Moabite people to which Ruth belongs] welfare or benefit as long as you live." Therefore, not only do we have in 1:3 a complicated but no less subversive halachic legal argument in declaring Naomi's status by saying that she was "left" as the Aramaic term for "widow" (וְאִשְׁתְּאַרַת הִיא אַרְמְלָא,), *but we also have* an explicit statement that this party is in violation of Deuteronomy's laws regarding the constitution of the community, tacitly bolstered by the continued prohibition that those excluded from legitimate kinship in Israel are not even to be cared for (לֹא־תִדְרֹשׁ שְׁלֹמָם וְטֹבָתָם).

In anthropological terms of kinship, this inclusion of Torah prohibitions against fictive or affinal kinship ties that would lead to such concern for welfare or benefit (שְׁלֹמָם וְטֹבָתָם כָּל־יָמֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם), is a very strong move against the fictive kinship argument in MT Ruth 1. We will see shortly that this Torah-law insertion in Targum Ruth 1 is complemented by a later, rabbinic argument by means of a halachic insertion taking the form of performance of proselytizing dialogue or instruction in Targum Ruths's version of MT Ruth 4. At present, I

would like to specify the nature of the "move" made by the Targumist, and that this is a move against rabbinic notions of the בית אב/ אם, *domus*, οἶκος, or "house kinship."

In transitioning to Targum Ruth 4 and its halachic refutation, we note that Shmuel Safrai (1976: 748, ff.) explains the normative ideal of the Jewish family in Palestine according to our early rabbinic sources, which replaces biblical Israelite ideals explored in Chapter One of the present study:

> There were scattered cases of men and women who remained unmarried or who married only at an advanced age. Various reasons lay behind these very rare cases, such as economic difficulties or the wholehearted dedication to some goal or project, e.g., Torah study. *The accepted ideal, however, was that of marrying and building up a family at a young age.* Tannaitic literature is full of comments and statements on the value of family life. The sages saw in the family not only the fulfilment of a divine commandment but also the basis for social life, and they try to invest family life with an aura of holiness. Family life is held in high value in most of the literature of the Second Commonwealth. None of the ascetic trends within Pharisaic Judaism advocated celibacy. (Safrai 1976: 748, *emphasis mine*)

Safrai goes on to define the human constituents of this social ideal: (generally) "monogamous marriage." Aside from the husband-wife affinal kinship, and, we impute, their bio-reproductive and consanguine offspring, there is a decrease in the ideal of the presence of collateral fictive kin in the Tannaitic household. Collateral fictive kin, defined in the narrow sense of non-consanguine, non-affinal kin with a position in the household such as servants also represent a change for rabbinic society against the remembered biblical, and recently experienced Hellenistic, ideals. Safrai contends that "[b]y the time there were no longer Jewish maidservants, and a Gentile maidservant was forbidden to both her master and his sons until she had been freed and then converted, thus gaining the status of any other legal Jewish woman" (Safrai 1976: 748).

Further, the notion of (intimate) collateral kin, such as the maidservant (as observed by Safrai), is concatenated in early Tannaitic sources, such as those traditions associated with Hillel with non-ideal behavior (Safrai 1976: 748, n.1). Safrai observes the following two traditions:

m. Avot 2:7

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, מַרְבֶּה בָשָׂר, מַרְבֶּה רִמָּה. מַרְבֶּה נְכָסִים, מַרְבֶּה דְאָגָה. מַרְבֶּה נָשִׁים, מַרְבֶּה כְשָׁפִים. מַרְבֶּה שְׁפָחוֹת, מַרְבֶּה זִמָּה. מַרְבֶּה עֲבָדִים, מַרְבֶּה גָזֵל.

He used to say: The more flesh, the more worms; The more property, the more anxiety; The more wives, the more witchcraft; The more female slaves, the more lewdness; The more slaves, the more robbery. (Trans. Wiliam Davidson Talmud)

m. Yevamot 2:8

מִצְוָה בַגָּדוֹל לְיַבֵּם. וְאִם קִדַּם הַקָּטָן, זָכָה. הִנִּיחָן עַל הַשִּׁפְחָה וְנִשְׁתַּחְרְרָה, אוֹ עַל הַנָּכְרִית וְנִתְגַּיְּרָה, הֲרֵי זֶה לֹא יִכְנוֹס. וְאִם כָּנַס אֵין מוֹצִיאִין מִיָּדוֹ. הִנִּיחָן עַל אֵשֶׁת אִישׁ, וְהוֹצִיאוּהָ מִתַּחַת יָדוֹ, אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁכָּנַס, יוֹצִיא:

The commandment to perform *yibbum* is upon the oldest brother. If a younger brother preempted him [by performing *yibbum*], he has acquired [a wife]. If a man is suspected of [having relations] with a slave and then she was freed, or with a non-Jewish woman who then converted, he must not marry her. If, however, he did marry her they do not take her away from him. If a man is suspected of [having relations] with a married woman, and then [in consequence] she was taken away from her husband, even though he married her, he must divorce her. (Trans. William Davidson Talmud)

Mishna Avot records the categories of נָשִׁים, שְׁפָחוֹת, עֲבָדִים (women not the primary wife, maidservants, and male servants) as typological for problematic collateral, fictive kin types in the Tannaitic Jewish household. In a ruling in Mishna Yevamot on *yibbum*, the very Levirate marriage we see manipulated in Targum Ruth 4, we see the problem of these fictive kinship ties being specified by potential enactments of the male head-of-household's sexual desire. Because these relations are not blood and they are not marriage, such desires are not

incestuous (Stiebert 2018, generally). But here we see the orders of kinship at work: To fix the problem of the real necessity for collateral fictive kin in a Tannaitic household, we need to fix the identities of the bodies in question, through conversion to the national kinship of Jewish peoplehood.

Such a solution by means of conversion is effected in the next insertion to MT Ruth 1 in Targum Ruth 1:15, 16, and 17:

וַאֲמָרַת הָא תְּבַת יְבִמְתֵּךְ לְוָת עַמָּהּ וּלְוָת דַּחֲלָתָהּ תּוּבִי בָּתַר יְבִמְתֵּךְ לְעַמֵּךְ וּלְדַחֲלָתֵיךְ׃

Then said she: "Behold, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and to her gods. Return after your sister-in-law to your people and your gods!"

וַאֲמָרַת רוּת לָא תַקְנִיטִי בִי לְמִשְׁבְּקָךְ לְמָתָב מִבָּתְרָיִךְ אֲרוּם תְּאֵיבָא אֲנָא לְאִתְגַּיָּרָא אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי | אִתְפַּקְּדָנָא לְמִטַּר שַׁבַּיָּא וְיוֹמֵי טָבָא בְּדִיל דְּלָא לְהַלָּכָא בָּר מִתְּרִין אַלְפִּין אַמִּין | אֲמַרַת רוּת לְכָל מָן דִּי אַתְּ אָזְלָא אֵיזֵיל אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִתְפַּקְּדָנָא דְּלָא לְמִבָּת כַּחֲדָא עִם (גּוּבְרַיָּא) עֳמָמַיָּא | אֲמַרַת רוּת בְּכָל אֲתַר דִּי תָּבִיתִי אֲבִית אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִתְפַּקְּדָנָא לְמִנְטַר שִׁית מְאָה וּתְלָת עֲסַר פִּקּוּדַיָּא אֲמַרַת רוּת מַה דְּנָטְרִין עַמִּיךְ אֲהָא נָטְרָא אֲנָא כְּאִלּוּ הֲווֹ עַמִּי מִקַּדְמַת דְּנָא אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִתְפַּקְּדָנָא דְּלָא לְמִפְלַח פּוּלְחָנָא נוּכְרָאָה אֲמַרַת רוּת אֱלָהִיךְ הוּא אֱלָהִי׃

But Ruth said: "Do not coax me to leave you, to turn from following you, for I desire to become a proselyte." Said Naomi: "We are commanded to keep the Sabbaths and holidays, not to walk more than two thousand cubits." Said Ruth: "Wheresoever you go I shall go." Said Naomi: "We are commanded not to spend the night together with non-Jews." Said Ruth: "Wherever you lodge I shall lodge." Said Naomi: "We are commanded to keep six hundred thirteen commandments." Said Ruth: "That which your people keep, that I shall keep, as though they had been my people before this." Said Naomi: "We are commanded not to worship idolatry." Said Ruth: "Your God is my God."

אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִית לַנָא אַרְבַּע דִּינֵי מוֹתָא לְחַיָּבָיָא רְגִימַת אַבְנָא וִיקֵידַת נוּרָא וּקְטִילַת סַיְפָא וּצְלִיבַת קִיסָא אֲמַרַת רוּת בְּכָל מַה דְּתְמוּתִי אֲמוּת אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִית לַנָא בֵּית קְבוּרְתָא אֲמַרַת רוּת וְתַמָּן אֶהֵא קְבִירָא וְלָא תּוֹסִיפִי עוֹד לְמַלָּלָא כְּדֵנָן יַעֲבֵיד יְיָ לִי וְכְדֵנָן יוֹסִיף עֲלַי אֲרוּם מוֹתָא יְהֵי מַפְרִישׁ בֵּינִי וּבֵינָךְ׃

Said Naomi: "We have four methods of capital punishment for the guilty -- stoning, burning with fire, death by the sword, and hanging upon the gallows." Said Ruth: "To whatever death you are subject I shall be subject." Said Naomi: "We have two cemeteries." Said Ruth: "There shall I be buried. And do not continue to speak any further. May the Lord do thus unto me and more if [even] death will separate me from you." (Trans. Levy 1934).

Note well the added Aramaic words אֲרוּם תְּאִיבָא אֲנָא לְאִתְגַּיָּרָא , "because I desire to become a convert/ proselyte. The new, rabbinic sense of גר has changed from temporary [migrant] sojourner in biblical Hebrew to one who enters the House of Israel now in the rabbinic era and form of the language in post-biblical Hebrew (Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1996: 236a-b, *lemma* "גר"). In Targum Ruth 1:16-17, the Targumist interweaves responses from Naomi to Ruth's pledge. By means of this addition and the series of additions that follow in this pericope, the rabbis add halachic procedure to Ruth's speech act. No longer does she privately and tacitly enact the House of Naomi, but she requests that Naomi instruct her *rabbinically* into the house of Israel, as I will explain further below.

In MT Ruth 1, these words of Ruth are a performative speech act, a pledge that verbally cements the House of Naomi as a tangible social entity in the form of fictive kinship defined by co-migration and by mutual acts of emotional and material support and interdependence. They are famous, and, I think, deeply moving in terms of their declaration of mutual bonds of affective and material support: אַל־תִּפְגְּעִי־בִי לְעָזְבֵךְ לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרָיִךְ כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֵלֵךְ וּבַאֲשֶׁר תָּלִינִי אָלִין עַמֵּךְ עַמִּי וֵאלֹהַיִךְ אֱלֹהָי: "Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, your God my God" (Trans. JPS). This is a private enactment, but from the narration's perspective, a valid "argument" that becomes "enacted" by Boaz in MT Ruth 4.

This situation is unacceptable to normative Tannaitic ideals of the Jewish family, and, as we have seen above, conversion is the social technology to resolve this problem. Unlike Josephus's Hellenistic strategy of omission on the grounds of cultural distaste, rabbinic culture corrects by interlacing *halacha* into *aggada* in Targum Ruth 1:16-17:

	MT Ruth, Ruth		Tar. Ruth, Ruth		Tar. Ruth, Naomi
But Ruth said: "Do not coax me to leave you, to turn from following you,	וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת לָא תַקְנִיטִי בִי לְמִשְׁבְּקָךְ לְמִתַּב מִבָּתְרַיִךְ				
		for I desire to become a proselyte."	*אֲרוּם תְּאִיבָא אֲנָא לְאִתְגַּיָּרָא*	*Said Naomi: "We are commanded to keep the Sabbaths and holidays, not to walk more than two thousand cubits."*	*לְאִתְגַּיָּרָא אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי | אִתְפַּקְּדָנָא לְמִטַּר שַׁבַּיָּא וְיוֹמֵי טָבָא בְּדִיל דְּלָא לְהַלְּכָא בַּר מִתְּרִין אַלְפִּין אַמִּין*
Where you go, I shall go	כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֵלֵךְ	*Said Ruth: "Wheresoever you go I shall go*	*אֲמַרַת רוּת לְכָל מָן דִּי אַתְּ אֵזְלָא אֵיזֵיל*	*Said Naomi: "We are commanded not to spend the night together with non-Jews."*	*אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִתְפַּקְּדָנָא דְּלָא לְמִבָּת כַּחֲדָא עִם (גּוּבְרַיָּא) עַמְמַיָּא*
And wherever you lodge, I shall lodge	וּבַאֲשֶׁר תָּלִינִי אָלִין	*Said Ruth: "Wherever you lodge I shall lodge."*	*אֲמַרַת רוּת בְּכָל אֲתַר דִּי תְּבִיתִי אֲבִית*	*Said Naomi: "We are commanded to keep six hundred thirteen commandments."*	*אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִתְפַּקְּדָנָא דְּלָא לְמִפְלַח פּוּלְחָנָא נוּכְרָאָה*
Your people will be my people	עַמֵּךְ עַמִּי	*Said Ruth: "That which your people keep, that I shall keep, as though they had been my people before this."*	*אֲמַרַת רוּת מָה דְּנָטְרִין עַמִּיךְ אֲהֵא נָטְרָא אֲנָא כְּאִלּוּ הֲווֹ עַמִּי מִקַּדְמַת דְּנָא*	*Said Naomi: "We are commanded not to worship idolatry."*	*אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִתְפַּקְּדָנָא דְּלָא לְמִפְלַח פּוּלְחָנָא נוּכְרָאָה*
And your God will be my God.	וֵאלֹהַיִךְ אֱלֹהָי:	*Said Ruth: "Your God is my God."*	*אֲמַרַת רוּת אֱלָהִיךְ הוּא אֱלָהִי*	*Said Naomi: "We have four methods of capital punishment for the guilty -- stoning, burning with fire, death by the sword, and hanging upon the gallows."*	*אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִית לָנָא אַרְבַּע דִּינֵי מִיתָא לְחַיָּבַיָּא דְּגִמַּת אַבְנָא וְיִקְּדַת נוּרָא וְקַטִּילַת סַיְפָא וְצְלִיבַת תֵּיסָא*
Wherever you die, I shall die	בַּאֲשֶׁר תָּמוּתִי אָמוּת	*Said Ruth: "To whatever death you are subject I shall be subject."*	*אֲמַרַת רוּת בְּכָל מָה דְּתְמוּתִי אֲמוּת*	*Said Naomi: "We have two cemeteries."*	*אֲמַרַת נָעֳמִי אִית לָנָא בֵּית קְבוּרְתָא*
And there shall I be buried	וְשָׁם אֶקָּבֵר	*Said Ruth: "There shall I be buried. And do not continue to speak any further.*	*אֲמַרַת רוּת וְתַמָּן אֲהֵא קָבִירָא וְלָא תּוֹסִיפִי עוֹד לְמַלָּלָא*		
Thus and more may YHVH do to me if death should divide between me and you.	כֹּה ׀ יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִי וְכֹה יֹסִיף כִּי הַמָּוֶת יַפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינָךְ:	May the Lord do thus unto me and more if [even] death will separate me from you."	כִּדְנָן יַעֲבֵיד יְיָ לִי וְכִדְנָן יוֹסִיף עֲלַי אֲרוּם מִלְּתָא יְהֵי מַפְרִישׁ בֵּינִי וּבֵינָךְ:		

The ***italicized*** text above marks the expansion; it is halachic conversion effected through dialogue. It is a narrative intrusion by rabbinic *halacha* into the aggadic narrative of the text. Commenting on Targum Ruth 1:16 (and, we may add, subsequently into verse 17), and Naomi's rebuke that precedes it when she asks Ruth to return to "her own people and gods,"

Étan Levine notes that "[t]he targum consistently presents the dialogue as a formal, juridical transaction, meeting the requirements for religious conversion. The additionally repeated 'back to your people and back to your god(s)' represents a traditional formula for rebuffing of would-be proselytes" (É. Levine 1973: 56). Further, he connects the ritual described above to that described in the later Amoraic-era Talmud report of a Tannaitic baraita in b. Yevamot 47a-b, as reproduced below (Trans. Davidson Talmud, observed in Levine 1973: 56-7):

> תנו רבנן גר שבא להתגייר בזמן הזה אומרים לו מה ראית שבאת להתגייר אי אתה יודע שישראל בזמן הזה דוויים דחופים סחופים ומטורפין ויסורין באין עליהם אם אומר יודע אני ואיני כדאי מקבלין אותו מיד
>
> The Sages taught in a baraita: With regard to a potential convert who comes to a court in order to convert, at the present time, when the Jews are in exile, the judges of the court say to him: What did you see that motivated you to come to convert? Don't you know that the Jewish people at the present time are anguished, suppressed, despised, and harassed, and hardships are frequently visited upon them? If he says: I know, and although I am unworthy of joining the Jewish people and sharing in their sorrow, I nevertheless desire to do so, then the court accepts him immediately to begin the conversion process.
>
> ומודיעין אותו מקצת מצות קלות ומקצת מצות חמורות ומודיעין אותו עון לקט שכחה ופאה ומעשר עני ומודיעין אותו ענשן של מצות אומרים לו הוי יודע שעד שלא באת למדה זו אכלת חלב אי אתה ענוש כרת חללת שבת אי אתה ענוש סקילה ועכשיו אכלת חלב ענוש כרת חללת שבת ענוש סקילה
>
> And the judges of the court inform him of some of the lenient mitzvot and some of the stringent mitzvot, and they inform him of the sin of neglecting the mitzva to allow the poor to take gleanings, forgotten sheaves, and produce in the corner of one's field, and about the poor man's tithe. And they inform him of the punishment for transgressing the mitzvot, as follows: They say to him: Be aware that before you came to this status and converted, had you eaten forbidden fat, you would not be punished by *karet*, and had you profaned Shabbat, you would not be punished by stoning, since these prohibitions do not apply to gentiles. But now, once converted, if you have eaten forbidden fat you are punished by *karet*, and if you have profaned Shabbat, you are punished by stoning.
>
> וכשם שמודיעין אותו ענשן של מצות כך מודיעין אותו מתן שכרן אומרים לו הוי יודע שהעולם הבא אינו עשוי אלא לצדיקים וישראל בזמן הזה אינם יכולים לקבל
>
> And just as they inform him about the punishment for transgressing the mitzvot, so too, they inform him about the reward granted for fulfilling them. They say

> to him: Be aware that the World-to-Come is made only for the righteous, and if you observe the mitzvot you will merit it, and be aware that the Jewish people, at the present time, are unable to receive their full reward in this world;
>
> לא רוב טובה ולא רוב פורענות ואין מרבין עליו ואין מדקדקין עלי
>
> they are not able to receive either an abundance of good nor an abundance of calamities, since the primary place for reward and punishment is in the World-to-Come. And they do not overwhelm him with threats, and they are not exacting with him about the details of the mitzvot (observed in Levine 1973: 56-7).

There are more "intrusions" into the targumic insertions that commentator D. R. G. Beattie (1994: 20-21) has observed. These are particularly important demonstrating the level of halachic development and specification that had occurred by the time of our text of Targum Ruth. Beattie notes that the reference to "four methods of capital punishment for the guilty" in Targum Ruth 1:17 is a reference to m. Sanhedrin 6:5: אֶלָּא שְׁתֵּי בָתֵּי קְבָרוֹת הָיוּ מְתֻקָּנִין לְבֵית דִּין, אַחַת לַנֶּהֱרָגִין וְלַנֶּחֱנָקִין וְאַחַת לַנִּסְקָלִין וְלַנִּשְׂרָפִין: "Rather, two graveyards were established for the burial of those executed by the court: One for those who were killed by decapitation or strangled, and one for those who were stoned or burned" (Trans. Davidson Talmud), and the mention of "two cemeteries" in the same verse refers to b. Yevamot 47b, as cited above.

So important for the Targumist is the shift of Ruth's personhood status to the People Israel (as an ideal reflection of rabbinic culture), that it must extend beyond this incident and even beyond this life to the very place of burial -- a sign of the manipulative power of these conversion/ proselyting halachic insertions. Gone, however, is the agency of the individuals against the biblical Israelite kin idea to enact through declaration a fictive kin bond and a novel house/ בית-type.

If we now have a situation wherein the "argument" has been made *halachically impossible*, then what changes are to need to be made by the Targumist in the "enactment"

made in MT Ruth 4. Attending to expansions, we note the following addition to Targum Ruth 4:7 and Targum Ruth 4:8:

> וּכְהַדָא מִנְהַגָא בְּעִדָנָא דְמִלְקַדְמִין מִתְנַהֲגָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל בִּזְמָן דְּשָׁקְלָן וְטָרַן וּפָרְקָן וּמַחְלְפָן חַד מִן חַבְרֵיהּ וּמְקַיְמִין כָּל מִדָּעֵם וּטְלַע גְּבַר נַעֲלֵיהּ יַד יְמִינֵיהּ וְאוֹשֵׁיט בֵּיהּ קְנָנָן לְחַבְרֵיהּ וְהַכִין נָהֲגִין בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִקְנֵי חַד מִן חַבְרֵיהּ קֳדָם סָהֲדָיָא׃

> Now the following custom was practiced in Israel in ancient times: When they would carry on business transactions, redeem, and exchange with one another, one would take off his right glove and give it to the other, thereby handing over the right of possession. In this manner the House of Israel was accustomed to make transactions with one another binding, in the presence of witnesses.

> וַאֲמַר פָּרִיקָא לְבוֹעַז אוֹשֵׁיט יְדָךְ לְקִנְיָנָא וּקְנֵי לָךְ וּטְלַע בּוֹעַז יָת נַעֲלֵיהּ יַד יְמִינֵיהּ וּקְנָא לֵיהּ׃

> When the redeemer said to Boaz, "Put forth your hand for the act of acquisition, and buy it yourself," Boaz took off his glove and made the purchase.

It strikes me as important that in the MT Ruth 4 account we noted the unusual construction of parenthetical information about the past introduced by syntax in BH. In that discussion, I noted that Waltke and O'Connor (1990) refer to the grammatical phenomenon that marks 4:7 out as parenthetical the "disjunctive *waw*" (39.2.3) that was placed "inter-clausally," and "breaks into" the main narrative and to express "what they used to do in Israel" (וְזֹאת לְפָנִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַגְּאוּלָּה וְעַל־הַתְּמוּרָה). Here again in Targum Ruth, we have a similar phraseology, now in the Aramaic וּכְהַדָא מִנְהַגָא בְּעִדָנָא דְמִלְקַדְמִין מִתְנַהֲגָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל , "And thus was the custom in ancient times, which was practiced among Israel..." (my trans.). Yet, the details differ. We find in Deuteronomy 25:8-9 (Trans. JPS):

> וְקָרְאוּ־לוֹ זִקְנֵי־עִירוֹ וְדִבְּרוּ אֵלָיו וְעָמַד וְאָמַר לֹא חָפַצְתִּי לְקַחְתָּהּ׃

> The elders of his town shall then summon him and talk to him. If he insists, saying, “I do not want to marry her,”

וְנִגְּשָׁה יְבִמְתּוֹ אֵלָיו לְעֵינֵי הַזְּקֵנִים וְחָלְצָה נַעֲלוֹ מֵעַל רַגְלּוֹ וְיָרְקָה בְּפָנָיו וְעָנְתָה וְאָמְרָה כָּכָה יֵעָשֶׂה לָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִבְנֶה אֶת־בֵּית אָחִיו

> his brother's widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, pull the sandal off his foot, spit in his face, and make this declaration: Thus shall be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house!

First, the context in Targum Ruth is changed from Deuteronomy's narrated situation. In Deuteronomy, one cohabiting brother refuses to fulfil his natal duty not to break the בית אב of his deceased brother's wife and property by taking/ acquiring her as a wife with the description וְחָלְצָה נַעֲלוֹ מֵעַל רַגְלּוֹ וְיָרְקָה בְּפָנָיו וְעָנְתָה וְאָמְרָה , "she removes the sandal from his foot and she spits in their [the elders'] faces, and she speaks up and she says..." (my trans.). Targum Onkelos to the Torah for this verse reads: וְתַשְׁרֵי סֵינֵיהּ מֵעַל רַגְלֵיהּ וְתֵרוֹק בְּאַנְפּוֹהִי וְתָתֵב וְתֵימַר, "and she removes his shoes from upon his feet, and she spits in their faces, and she replies and she says...").

But Targum Ruth moves the context from the refusal of a brother's natal duty to levirate marriage to the arena of business (that is, קנין, as the ritual of acquisition is proper both to the worlds of marital exchange and business transactions), that is "when they would carry on business with one another and they would redeem and exchange" or בִּזְמָן דְּשָׁקְלָן וְטָרְן וּפָרְקָן וּמַחְלָפָן. Note that surely the interventionist Targumist must have been well aware of the Torah proscription in Deuteronomy 25, and thus this represents a conscious recontextualization of the rabbinic notion of where the law is enacted to the biblical ancient and murky past. Note well that a rewrite of the deep past is taking place, even within a "correction" of another problematic text. So, too the biblical sandal upon his feet (MT: נַעֲלוֹ מֵעַל רַגְלּוֹ, Targum Onkelos: מֵעַל רַגְלֵיהּ דִּימִינֵיהּ) becomes "the glove from his right hand (נַרְתִּיק יַד יְמִינֵיהּ)," another (apparent) intervention of the rabbinic world into the deep biblical past of memory. What these two shifts of context and medium of acquisition demonstrate is the

strong need for the current socio-cultural norm *not to be violated by the inherited text.* The practice of *targum* in the rabbinic social context of the synagogue makes this practice possible; if even the details of the ancient ritual can be corrected, subtly, to conform to the rabbinic cultural norm, so too as grave a violation of their world as the House of Naomi.

What these two shifts of context and medium of acquisition demonstrate is the strong need for the current socio-cultural norm *not to be violated by the inherited text.* The practice of *targum* in the rabbinic social context of the synagogue makes this practice possible; if even the details of the ancient ritual can be corrected, subtly, to conform to the norms of their world. In the forgoing analysis, my key assumption has been that *narrative*, while it may not be historically accurate by our terms, does in fact represent an interface between the imagination of the composer and the worlds that they both experience on the one hand and imagine on the other hand.

The Targumist's interventions in the "argument " of MT Ruth 1 and the "enactment" of MT Ruth 4 have shown the strategy if inter-leaving or inter-weaving threads of halachic norms *within* aggadic or narrative material(!). I have not differentiated the rabbinic techniques of *midrash halacha* from *midrash aggadah* purposefully. Studies such as Simon-Shoshan's *Stories of the Law* (2013) observe that at several points in the history of reading rabbinic texts, it has been necessary to blur the line between the halachic and the aggadic polarities.

What the non-distinction (see Shemesh 2008) helps us to clarify as modern readers is that in contrast to Josephus's erasure of text from (we presume) his cultural distaste for its content, the rabbinic strategy that diverged linguistically (Aramaic and Hebrew) from other Hellenized (Greek-dependent) variant Jewish culture groups was one that inserted itself,

often through halachic intervention, into an ancient narrative text. To understand this phenomenon, in the conclusion we will turn in the final chapter to an analysis of their manipulation of the kinship "argument" and "enactment" as evident in changes they made to Targum Ruth in terms of "possible worlds theory" from the discipline of narratology and to "instruction of imagination" from the discipline of theoretical linguistics.

6. Conclusion: Possible or Impossible Wor(l)ds?

In concluding this study of the production of novel fictive kinship as an "argument" in MT Ruth 1 as adopted in the normative biblical rules through the "enactment" of MT Ruth 4, we have something akin to a binary situation of social objects: new, private enactments of kinship in the "argument" of MT Ruth 1 as against the norm of inherited texts (that, further, triggered the "enactment" and alignment with those inherited forms in MT Ruth 4).

We can borrow from the natural sciences to clarify the nuances of this situation. In earlier kinship research presented in the paper *Useful and Inhuman: Inversions of Queer and Corrections of the Jewish Body* (Jackson 2015), I proposed the argument that in the context of contemporary Reform Judaism, the prospect of ordaining of gay, lesbian, and bisexual rabbis presented a category error against the normative model imagined by the ruling institutions of the religion from the emergence of the debate in 1978 until it "disappeared" from view in 2003. In examining the historical and ethnographic data set I amassed to study this problem, it became clear that the conceptual rubric from biology would be helpful to understand how a new form of fictive kinship is imagined as existing against a dominant, established model with normative consanguine and affinal system. To this end, I proposed that the biological rubric of "speciation" the production of a coherent and distinct discursive "object" (after Foucault 1972: 40-49, *The Formation of Objects*) was helpful, as were the notions of "allopatric" versus "sympatric" speciation, as defined below:

> An *allopatry* is a speciation event producing a kin-apart, just as non-heterosexual Jews are seen as an out-group to heteronormative, "traditional" Jewish groups. By contrast, I propose the inverse of this usual queer theory model: *sympatric speciation*. Sympatric speciation is the production of *usually* non- interbreeding species in the same physical space where behavior, "culture," or life-ways patterns cause and maintain inter-species difference, but interaction and ecological interdependence never

> ceases (Darwin 2003) -- two species then occupy one place. (Jackson 2015: 1)

The situation of *allopatric speciation* events characterizes MT Ruth, whereas *sympatric speciation* events characterize Josephus's *Antiquities* 5. 317-332 and Targum Ruth. In sympatry, the merging of the two systems is something of an "inter-breeding" or "hybridizing" event. In the natural world of evolution, the forces of natural selection, survival and reproduction of the fittest, and the increased genetic diversity sometimes brought about by hybridization events are good, if not critical to the world of living things. Yet, in the domain of culture, these *hybridities* -- in our present case, the "enactment" in MT Ruth 4 of the "argument" for the (consanguineally and affinally) queer House of Naomi -- carry with them socio-cultural *risk*, as we saw evinced in Josephus's strategy of omission and the Targumist's strategy of halachic insertion into narrative/ aggadic material. Classically and foundationally for cultural anthropology, Mary Douglas and Victor Turner are important observes of *risk*:

> In her later work on risk, Douglas ([2003]1992) defines the social-dissolution mode of risk by studying "taboo-thinking," which "uses natural dangers to uphold community values," which classifies these dangers, including persons, as marked by the rubric of "pollution" (Douglas 2003[1992]: 4). Thus: "in short, the stronger the solidarity of a community, the more readily will natural disasters be coded as signs of reprehensible behaviour... danger is defined to protect the public good.... pollution seen from this point of view is a *powerful forensic resource*." (Douglas 2003[1992]: 6, *emphasis mine*). Status as a resource, if held by dangerous persons marked as impure, implies and requires that a utility be imagined for them to prevent social dissolution. Over time, this implies that a place of centrality and of need must be developed for the polluted, for those marked by the speciation event as "other." (Jackson 2015: 2)

I think that it is evident to the reader by this point in the present study that the "risk" of MT Ruth1's argument is imagined as a social "utility" in the disrupted Levirate acquisition ritual

in MT Ruth 4. But there are two aspects of becoming a "powerful forensic resource" with utility that remain a problem in the context of our study of fictive kinshipping in Ruth.

First, if it is solved as an allopatric speciation event, as in the example of MT Ruth 1, wherein the system is a simple narrative "argument" for a private speech act in a place *outside* the Land in the Fields of Moab, the dangerous practitioners of risky fictive kinship retain the private declaration of its existence (Ruth 1:16: וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת אַל־תִּפְגְּעִי־בִי לְעָזְבֵךְ לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרָיִךְ כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֵלֵךְ וּבַאֲשֶׁר תָּלִינִי אָלִין עַמֵּךְ עַמִּי וֵאלֹהַיִךְ אֱלֹהָי); they do not impinge on the territorial domain of the normative biblical system. But, second, there is a return of the House of Naomi to the Land, and without consanguine kinship elements of bio-reproduction of children possible among its members, and without the recognition in the larger web of בית אב kinship that exists in the Land of Israel as imagined in the biblical narrative articulation. That is to say, without affinal kinship ties, the House of Naomi cannot "exist" socially.

It has no mutuality, no material support, and no emotional recognition. The solution, then, is "sympatric" that it must be brought in to exist alongside the normative as queer by the agency of Boaz. This makes the House of Naomi a threat, by its presence *among* Israel and not as *kin-apart* and abroad. Yet the text preserves the production of allopatric forms of queer kinship, hence there is always a risk in reading about the emergence of the House of Naomi as it stands in the MT as we have it today.

I think that this risk is reflected, to some degree, in the "orphan" or mobile position of MT Ruth in the canon in its migration from the (Greek or LXX) function as a coda to Judges and preview to Samuel (which may have been a simultaneously existing variant to the order we find in the MT), to its current position in the Writings of the תנ״ך *as a tale taken out of the historical arcs of the bible by its canonical position.* If even the book has to be moved -- even

beyond the histories of reinterpretation it underwent in the Hellenistic Greek and Late Antique Aramaic traditions of the text that we studied here -- this represents something of its disruptive nature to the flow narrative across a canon:

> The Jewish Diaspora is characterized by two mimetic phenomena, the *written-stable core* and the *oral-unstable*: First, there exists the concept of a gravitational center to which diffused extant forms of the religion turn for legitimating authority and claims of identity-in-common. Halbwachs will refer to this phenomenon as "religious memory" (1992[1941]: 92-3, *et passim*), and I identify this gravitational center point as written, canonical memory (Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud, etc.). Second, the diffuse traditions of the Diaspora that all lay claim to the authenticating gravity of religious memory must deal with "sedimented" interpretations in the oral history, an effect of the ancientness of the written "religious memory" that these traditions inherit (cf. Bloch 1998: Ch. 8; Zerubavel 2003; Goldschmidt 2006). (Jackson 2015: 1-2)

So, finally we come to the meeting place of kinship speciation -- the House of Ruth versus Israel -- and how it is read as a disruptive and risky part of the text, such that:

> Persons marked under the sign of risk serve a role and their cautious and laborious negotiation by and within the group at large produces profound transformations to its system of organization, its kinship, where "kinshipping" is a novel and nascent notion of understanding the generation, maintenance, negotiation, and reckoning of a social network through techniques of the body such as touch, language (terms), sexuality, and food, as well as through the exchange of or ritual manipulation of non-human material objects (citing Shryock and Smail 2011: 182-3, ff.). (Jackson 2015 :2)

What is this risk then that I have taken pains to define theoretically? If we understand the "argument" of MT Ruth 1 and its "enactment" in MT Ruth 4 as the preservation of a risk, as an allopatric speciation event ever-preserved despite its *apparent normalization* in the "enactment" of MT Ruth 4, then we must have theoretical grounds to propose the impetus, in socio-cultural terms of kinship, that drove Josephus, as a representative of the Greek traditions, to omit and the Targumist, as a representative of the Aramaic and rabbinic

traditions, to interpolate with *halacha*. Both strategies "normalize" and do their best to assimilate a problematic narrative that neither can erase entirely, given the canonical status of MT Ruth, even if it shifted about positionally and functionally in the order of the biblical books. The Greek makes the speciation of the House of Naomi disappear by omitting Ruth's famous speech act in 1:16-17; the Aramaic makes it legally acceptable by explaining that it was an act of גירות or conversion.

What we have explored are the traces of the work of real human beings on fiction -- constructed narratives -- as ways to manipulate reality and to impute that ideal of reality reflected in a manipulated story into the future, to write the future itself. Words (ideas) make worlds (life in a cultural system). How was their work related to the real and risky possibilities of fictive kinship that moved from the private sphere of personal declarations to the public realm of normative acceptance (or at least co-relation)? To understand this as a matter of concluding the present study, we will apply two theories -- one from narratology because the site of our analysis of the discursive object of kinship has been *texts* (possible worlds theory) and one from theoretical linguistics, because the trace of human culture and experience embedded in these texts (and later extrapolated from them by later speech communities) is *language itself* (instruction of imagination theory).

Bell and Ryan (2019) explain that possible worlds theory emerges from an assertion in the 1970s by philosopher Jaakko Hintikka, who referred to "'language as the universal medium'" (2019: 1) -- and by "universal," Hintikka meant to say that it is totalizing, that we cannot speak outside of it. Consider this observation in terms of Josephus's strategy of omission and the Targumist's insertion -- neither endeavors to name the novel kinship form of the House of Naomi as "bad," "incorrect," or "unnamable." What the particular examples

that we looked at in Josephus's Greek tradition do is to omit, and the Aramaic to interlace their norms (literally, their *halacha*) into the text.

Hintikka even goes on to state directly that "All that language is good for in this view is to enable us to talk about this world. *We cannot use language to talk about other possible worlds"* (Bell and Ryan 2019: 1 citing Hintikka 1988:53, 54). But as narrative studies advanced, the notion of language as a universal medium was rejected, eschewing ideas such as Frederic Jameson's (Bell and Ryan 2019 citing Jameson 1975 and following Martin 2004) concept of the "prison-house of language" (Bell and Ryan 2019), that it cannot speak outside itself. It has certainly seemed thus far as though our interpreters, Josephus and the Targumist, operated within this paradigm, even if naming it as we have here was not appropriate to their time or *Weltanschauungen*.

Bell and Ryan contend that in contrast to being a totalizing prison, language play can become predicative in fiction in the scientific sense of "predictive" -- it can extend beyond itself, able to hypothesize other modes of being human, other worlds to live in:

> For literary and narrative theory, the rejection of the conception of language as universal medium in favor of language as a calculus [proposing possibilities] is nothing less than a paradigm change, though the doctrine of language as universal medium retained its hegemony for quite some time... The new paradigm means that the question of fiction, one taken for granted, suddenly becomes worthy of attention. It also means the rehabilitation of the question of truth and reference with respect to fiction, a question that was either undecidable, heretical, or too easily resolved in a one-world model... In a many-worlds ontology, fictional texts can be associated with worlds, these worlds can be imagined on the basis of all the propositions presented as true by the text, and it is possible to distinguish true statements about members of particular fiction worlds... from false ones... (Bell and Ryan 2019: 2-3, excerpted).

Whether a biblical text is fictional or not is not germane to this discussion. As we saw, for Josephus, by virtue of the antiquity of Jewish culture relative to other cultures, there was no fiction to the Israelite narratives but rather πράγματα and ἱστορία, namely the events of

history and its logics/ narrative identity as it unfolds. Perhaps this is the reason why when it comes specifically to the issues of kinship, his strategy is to omit rather than report, in the tradition of Greek historiography and early Jewish apologetic (Barclay 2013).

For the Targumist, each word of scripture, מקרא or תורה שבכתיב, is from divine revelation, as is the oral law, תורה שבעל פה. Yet interlacing of the oral law and the written is a productive strategy whereby inflexible textual tradition can be recontextualized or bent to the will of the law and culture of the time, to *halacha*. For both the Greek Jewish reception and the Aramaic/ rabbinic, the risk inherent in the private "argument" that articulates and declares the House of Naomi into narrative existence and then "enacts" it into the public sphere's recognized and normative system is too much risk to bear in their transmission of the story across linguistic boundaries. Why is this the case? The solution is, I think, due to the nature of the story's expression in natural language and the possibilities and problems therewith.

Dor (2015) proposes a general theory of human language that stands in contrast to Chomskian linguistics, which presume the inborn nature of language in an entirely theoretical series of "language centers" in the brain, the physical organ of the human mind. Language is by this theory inborn, and, to state the matter very briefly, incapable of thinking beyond itself in linguistic theories under the influence of Chomsky (after Dor 2015). Dor explains:

> "[w]e have moved quite a long way from Chomsky's original picture, and we know much more than we ever did. But the accomplishments did not come today without a price: language, the entire thing, has disappeared on the way. Today, we do not have a general theory of language. We have many pieces of the puzzle, but the puzzle itself does not assemble... [t]he science of language has developed into an extremely fragmented field... [a]s a consequence, when we look at our fragmented pieves of language, situated as they are away from Chomsky's original picture... I will suggest that we need to look at language as a socially constructed communication technology, not as a cognitive capacity" (Dor 2015 10-11, excerpted).

To this challenge, Dor suggests a theory of *instructing* the imagination: "Every speaker of language, every one of us, walks around with two mismatched worldviews -- private-experiential and social linguistic -- and the mismatches between them are variable. Not only is there an external experiential gap between us as individuals; there is also an *internal* gap within ourselves, between ourselves as experiential creatures and ourselves as language users" (Dor 2015: 44). It is by this logic that I have brashly been able to suggest that Josephus represents an individual's distaste for an inherited discursive object. In linguistic terms, Naomi and Ruth's argument and Boaz's enactment of queer kinship was so distasteful to Josephus that he would need to relegate it out of language (that is "internal") when he retold this story.

To a great extent, Dor's language theory helps us understand why it is that sometimes Josephus omits, as we say in Chapter Four of the present study, and at other times, as Sterling (1998: 122-29) has noted in his taxonomy of responses to cultural problem areas in MT Ruth, from a Hellenized Jewish perspective, Josephus adds or moralizes. For example, as Sterling explains that in his re-relation of Ruth 4 that:

> [H]e maintains this emphasis on keeping of the law in the gate scene by adding a detail that aligns the story with his earlier retelling of Deut. 25.5-10 in *Antiquities* 4: Ruth spits in the face of the near kinsman, who refuses to marry her (sec. 335). He explicitly states that Boaz's order for Ruth to spit in his face was 'according to the law' (sec. 335). This probably also explains why he adds a reference to the sons when he asks the redeemer if he possesses the inheritance of 'Abimelech and his sons'... he has inheritance laws in mind. Josephus makes certain that there is no ambiguity in the thrust of the represented scene by mentioning the laws three times (sec. 333). (Sterling 1998: 127).

So we might note that when Josephus adds to the MT, it is because he detects the cultural sensibilities of the Hellenized/ Roman imperial audience might balk at or be in aporia at these events. But something is different if he must omit. By applying Dor's theory, what is in cognitive dissonance with Josephus's inner, private world he cannot instruct to the outer, public world. In the case of the Targum, that which needs to be instructed reframes the text didactically, forcing the narrative as a whole to be interlaced with the halachic norms of the day. In both cases, language is both a vehicle to imagine new worlds as a narrative possible world, and it is a way to instruct the proper interpretation of inherited literature.

Lastly, in the MT itself, the idea of a possible world, where an individual who has privately enacted something against the inherited norm of biblical Israel, is powerful and conservative. The world has changed for the "original" or "first" audience of the narrative. They have experienced territorial disruption, even as they have experienced cultural disruption in exile. The version in MT Ruth therefore permits the reader to reconcile the fluidity of culture. But once this story and the fictive kinship "argument" and "enactment" system in it becomes canonical, it is at that point where it no longer instructs the imagination and imagines a comfortable or acceptable possible world, but rather becomes a discursive object against which the reading community (after Jonathan Boyarin, *Ethnography of Reading,* 1993) must interpret and transform to make it acceptable against both internal-private and communal-public cultural dissonance.

7. Tables and Figures:

Table [1]: Kinship Terms

Consanguine	Affinal	Fictive	Classification
		בארץ	Land - Not Time-Marked
		ללכת...לגור...GN	Land - Migration
		איש מGN	Patronymic Subethnos
הוא... ושבי בניו			Explicit Kinship
	הוא ואשתו		Explicit Kinship
		ושם ... PN (אלימלך)	Patronymic Subethnos
	ושם אשתו אלימלך		Explicit Kinship
ושם שני בניו מחלון ובליון			Explicit Kinship
		אפרתי + מן GN, GN (מבית לחם ויהודה)	Patronymic Subethnos
		ובאו ... GN (שדי מואב)	Land - Migration
		ויהיו שם	Land - Not Time-Marked
	איש נעמי (PN + PN)		Explicit Kinship
ושני בניה			Explicit Kinship
	לשאת לX נשים מGN		Explicit Kinship
	נשים PN-Female apposition to		Gift Exchange - Neolocal בית אב
		לשבת שם כ-TIME	Land - Limited Sojourn
	וימותו ... PN- male , PN-male		Explicit Kinship
ותשאר האשה משני ילדיה ומשישה			Explicit Kinship
		ותקום ... ותשב משדי מואב	Land - Limited Sojourn
	כלתיה		Modified-Explicit Kinship
		שמעה בשדי מואב	Land - Not Time-Marked
		ותצא מן-המקום היתה-שמה	Land - Migration
	ושתי כלותיה עמה		Explicit Kinship
		ותלכנה בדרך לשוב אל-ארץ יהודה	Land - Migration (as Return)
	ותאמר נעמי לשתי כלתיה		Explicit Kinship
לכנה שבנה אשה לבית אמה			Gift Echange - Neolocal בית אמה
	תן ה' לכם ומצן מנוחה אישה בית אישה		Gift Echange - Neolocal בית אמה
		כי-אתך נשוב	Land - Migration (as Return)
לעמך			Explicit Kinship
		שובנה ... למה תלבנה עמי	Gift Exchange - Test of Neolocal בית אמה
.... בנותי			Explicit Kinship
		שבנה	Land - Migration (as Return)
בנותי			Blood Terms to Frame New Argument
	זקנתי מהיות לאיש		Gift Exchange - Application of Neolocal בית אמה
	גם הייתי הלילה לאיש...		Gift Exchange - Application of Neolocal בית אמה
וגם ילדתי בנים			Blood Terms to Frame New Argument
		הלהן תשברנה עד אשר יגדלו	Gift Exchange - Application of Neolocal בית אמה
	הלהן תעגבה לבלתי היום לאיש		Explicit Kinship
בנתי		אל... כי-מר-לי מאד מכם כי-יצאה בי יד-ה'	Self-Declaration of Kinship Status
	לחמותה	ותקש ערפה...	Gift Exchange - Application of Neolocal בית אמה
		ורות דבוקה בה	Gift Exchange - Application of Neolocal בית אמה
		הנה שבה	"Symbolic Migration"
	יבמתך		Explicit Kinship
אל-עמה			Explicit Kinship
		ואל-אלוהיה	Explicit Kinship
		שובי אחרי PN	"Symbolic Migration"
	יבמתך		Explicit Kinship
		לשוב מאוריך כי אל-אשר תלכי אלך ובאשר תליני אלין	"Symbolic Migration"
עמך עמי			Explicit Kinship
		ואלהיך אלהי	Explicit Kinship
		באשר תמותי אמות ושם אקבר כה יעשה ה' לי וכה יסיף כי המות יפריד ביני וביניך	Novel Kinship Declaration in Terms of PLACE
		כי-מתאמצת ללכת אתה	Novel Kinship Made Explicit = Symbolic Co-Migration
		תֵּלַכְנָה שִׁתֵּיהֶם	Symbolic Co-Migration
		אל-תקראנה לי נעמי קראן לי מרא	Name Change
		אני מלאה הלכתי וריקם השיבני ה' [למה תקראנה לי נעמי]	"Symbolic Migration"
		ותשב נעמי	"Symbolic Migration"
ורות המואבי			Explicit Kinship
	כלתה עמה		Explicit Kinship
		השבה משדי מואב	"Symbolic Migration"
		והמה באו בית לחם	"Symbolic Migration"

*Table [**2**]: Distribution of Kinship Terms MT Ruth 1-4 by Count*

Verse:	Consanguine	Affinal	Fictive	Verse:	Consanguine	Affinal	Fictive
1:01	1	1	3	3:01	1	1	1
1:02	1	1	4	3:02	0	0	2
1:03	1	1	0	3:03	0	1	0
1:04	0	2	0	3:04	0	1	1
1:05	1	1	0	3:05	0	0	0
1:06	0	1	2	3:06	0	0	0
1:07	0	1	2	3:07	0	1	0
1:08	1	1	0	3:08	0	0	1
1:09	0	1	0	3:09	1	1	0
1:10	0	0	1	3:10	1	1	1
1:11	2	1	1	3:11	1	1	0
1:12	2	2	1	3:12	0	1	1
1:13	1	1	2	3:13	0	0	1
1:14	0	1	1	3:14	0	0	1
1:15	0	2	4	3:15	1	1	0
1:16	0	0	1	3:16	0	0	0
1:17	0	0	1	3:17	0	1	1
1:18	0	0	1	3:18	1	0	1
1:19	0	0.5	0.5	4:1-2	0	0	0
1:20 - 1::22	0	0	0	4:03	1	0	2
2:01	1	1	1	4:04	0	0	0
2:02	1	1	1	4:05	0	1	1
2:03	0	0	1	4:06-8*	1	1	1
2:04	0	0	0	4:09	0	0	0
2:05	0	0	1	4:10	0	1	1
2:06	1	0	1	4:11	1	1	2
2:07	0	0	0	4:12	1	0	1
2:08	0	0	2	4:13	1	1	0
2:09	0	0	1	4:14-15	0	0	1
2:10	0	0	1	4:16	0	1	0
2:11	1	2	2	4:17	1	0	1
2:12	0	0	3	4:18-20**	1	1	1
2:13	0	0	1				
2:14	0	0	1				
2:15	0	0	0	**Total**	29	40.5	66.5
2:16	0	0	1	% of N=131	22.14%	30.92%	50.76%
2:18-19	0	0	0				
2:20	1	0	0				
2:21	0	0	0				
2:22	1	0	1				
2:23	0	2	2				

*Separate problem of the Halitzah ritual. Here = consanguine + affinal + fictive

** Genealogies = expression of all three categories of kinship.

*Table [3]: MT Ruth 1: Fictive Kinship in **Bold***

1 וַיְהִי בִּימֵי שְׁפֹט הַשֹּׁפְטִים וַיְהִי רָעָב **בָּאָרֶץ** וַיֵּלֶךְ **אִישׁ מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה לָגוּר בִּשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב** הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו׃

In the days when the chieftains ruled, there was a famine **in the land**; and **a man of Bethlehem in Judah**, with his wife and two sons, **went to reside in the country of Moab**.

2 וְשֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ נָעֳמִי וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי־בָנָיו ׀ מַחְלוֹן וְכִלְיוֹן **אֶפְרָתִים מִבֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׂדֵי־מוֹאָב וַיִּהְיוּ־שָׁם**׃

The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons were named Mahlon and Chilion—**Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah**. **They came to the country of Moab and remained there**.

4 וַיִּשְׂאוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מֹאֲבִיּוֹת שֵׁם הָאַחַת עָרְפָּה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית רוּת **וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם כְּעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים**׃

They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth**, and they lived there about ten years**.

6 **וַתָּקָם** הִיא וְכַלֹּתֶיהָ **וַתָּשָׁב מִשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב** כִּי שָׁמְעָה בִּשְׂדֵה מוֹאָב כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ לָתֵת לָהֶם לָחֶם׃

She started out with her daughters-in-law **to return from the country of Moab**; for in the country of Moab she had heard that the LORD had taken note of His people and given them food.

7 **וַתֵּצֵא** מִן־הַמָּקוֹם **אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה־שָּׁמָּה** וּשְׁתֵּי כַלֹּתֶיהָ עִמָּהּ **וַתֵּלַכְנָה בַּדֶּרֶךְ לָשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה**׃

Accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, **she left the place where she had been living**; **and they set out on the road back to the land of Judah**.

10 וַתֹּאמַרְנָה־לָּהּ **כִּי־אִתָּךְ נָשׁוּב לְעַמֵּךְ**׃

and said to her, "**No, we will return with you to your people**."...

12 **שֹׁבְנָה** בְנֹתַי **לָמָּה** תֵלַכְנָה **כִּי** זְקַנְתִּי מִהְיוֹת לְאִישׁ כִּי אָמַרְתִּי יֶשׁ־לִי תִקְוָה גַּם הָיִיתִי הַלַּיְלָה לְאִישׁ וְגַם יָלַדְתִּי בָנִים׃

Turn back, my daughters, for I am too old to be married. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I were married tonight and I also bore sons,

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