

THE COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF RUTH IN THE HEBREW MANUSCRIPT VATICAN EBR. 18*

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1. Introduction – 2. Manuscript Vatican ebr. 18 (V18) – 3. Sources of V18 – 4. The Subject Matter of V18 – 5. The Purpose of V18 – 6. Conclusion – Appendix: Cited Verses of V18

1. Introduction¹

Commentaries may seem to be a kind of mosaic. They may contain compiled explanations of original authors. But who are the “original” authors if no explicit indication of them is given in a certain commentary? Medieval commentaries in manuscripts that do not signify the names of their authors are often termed “anonymous.” However, the content of such “anonymous” commentaries may be a compilation of interpretations. Their subject matter may be well-established in traditional literature. Here, the term “traditional literature“ alludes to conveyed Jewish interpretations which may serve as a source for the compilation of texts. By comparison to other comments on the same subject a compiled commentary can be indicated as an arrangement of different components. Some manuscripts contain identical explanations; others have attributions to

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¹ Abbreviations: IMHM, i.e., The Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts (National Library of Israel); MS(S), i.e., manuscript(s); V18, i.e., marginal gloss in Vatican MS ebr. 18; H32, i.e., Hamburg MS Cod. hebr. 32; Part 1, i.e., V18 on Ruth 1:1-6; Part 2, i.e., V18 on Ruth 1:7-13. F # cf. no. in the computerized catalogue of IMHM (http://aleph500.huji.ac.il/F/?func=file&file_name=find-b&local_base=nnlmss).

their original source. Therefore, comparison reveals further insight. One result of the enquiry can be an attribution of the (formerly) “anonymous” commentary to a certain source. The Commentary on the Book of Ruth in the Manuscript Vatican ebr. 18 of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana may be considered as a compilation of conveyed interpretations. V18’s exegeses is a compilation because parts of it may be attributed to different traditional Jewish literature, though no authors are quoted explicitly in V18 itself.

2. Manuscript Vatican ebr. 18 (V18)

V18 contains a marginal gloss on Ruth 1:1-13 on the left side of folio 336r. The same page contains the biblical text of Ruth 1:1-20 and the following pages only contain the biblical text. V18 is dated to 1273/74. We find its description already in the catalogue of Umberto Cassuto² in 1956 and in the catalogue published in Jerusalem 2008.³ In the description of the Commentary on Ruth we read on Ruth 1:1-6 “the commentary is the anonymous one beginning שפוט לש' פועל that was edited from a Hamburg manuscript by A. Jellinek in his *Commentarium zu Esther, Ruth und den Klageliedern*.”⁴ According to the Jerusalem Catalogue, the second part of the commentary in V18 on Ruth 1:7-13

² *Codices vaticani hebraici: Codices 1 - 115*, edited by Umberto Cassuto. Rome: Bibl. Vaticana 1956, p. 22.

³ V18 has 369 folios with three columns each, on folios 297-352 two columns. It is written in Ashkenazic square scripts. The order of the five Scrolls is “Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations and Esther.” Cf. *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library*, compiled by the Staff of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, edited by Benjamin Richler. Palaeographical and Codicological Descriptions Malachi Beit-Arié in collaboration with Nurit Pasternak. Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 2008, p. 12f.

⁴ “Commentaries to the first chapter of Ruth were added in the margins; on Ruth i:i–i:6 the commentary is the anonymous one beginning שפוט לש' פועל that was edited from a Hamburg manuscript by A. Jellinek in his *Commentarium zu Esther, Ruth und den Klageliedern* (Leipzig 1855); on Ruth i:7–i:13 it is the expanded redaction of Rashi as edited by M. Zippor, מהדורה מורחבת נוספת של פירוש רש"י לרות וקטעי רות זוטא בשינויי נוסח, *Sidra*, viii (1992), pp. 99–118.” Ibid. (see note 3), p. 12.

is “the expanded redaction of Rashi as edited by M. Zippor.”⁵ Now, the commentary is divided into two parts, written by two different hands, first on Ruth 1:1-6, second on Ruth 1:7-13. This gap can also be seen as there are two handwriting styles in the two parts of the marginal gloss itself. Let us have a more detailed look at these sections of V18.

2.1 V18 on *Ruth* 1:1-6

As mentioned before, there are no attributions to authors in V18 itself. In contrast, we find parts of the explanations of the marginal gloss in V18 on Part 1 (Ruth 1:1-6) in other manuscripts, e.g., in MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32; MS Prague 18 F 6⁶ and MS Berlin Or. fol. 1221⁷. Parts of the comments on the Book of Ruth in these MSS may be attributed to a group of R. Joseph Kara’s commentary as shall be shown elsewhere. In V18 they are compiled together with other comments, e.g., attributed to Rashbam, as will be shown in the following paragraphs. However, only MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32 has the very same compiled arrangement of comments on Ruth 1:1-6 as V18.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ MS Prague 18 F 6, i.e., MS Prague, National Library of Prague 18 F 6 - Narodni Knihovna v Praze XVIII F 6; F 23100.

⁷ MS Berlin Or. fol. 1221, i.e., MS Berlin, National Library of Berlin Or. fol. 1221 - Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Preussischer Kulturbesitz) Or. fol. 1221; F 10035

2.1.1 *Manuscript Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32 (H32)*⁸

H32 labels its sources, at least throughout the commentary on Ruth 1-2:5. This manuscript was edited by Jellinek in 1855. He provided his edition with the following heading: פירושים על רות לר' יוסף קרא לרשבם לדונש לר' מנחם בר חלבו ולאיש פלוני ז"ל.⁹ H32 is, thus, a typical compiled commentary including comments by Rashi, Rashbam and R. Joseph Qara. Their explanations are explicitly attributed to them. We could therefore assume northern France to be the (historical) place where the commentaries were originally expressed. H32 as a whole is compiled and not a single author's citation. One (if not the only) criterion for the compilation in H32 is the order of the verses. However, the commentary in V18 on Ruth 1:1-6 is the same as in H32.

2.1.2 *"Authors" in H32: Rashi, Rashbam, R. Joseph Qara*

Although single parts of the commentary in H32 are attributed to northern French exegetes by name,¹⁰ we have to consider the possibility that certain additions may have been inserted since the phrasing of the "original statements" by its authors. Remnants of the primary statement are certainly transmitted, but in some cases they are attributed to authors with supplements. The term "author" is used for the attribution as indicated by the commentary itself, i.e., if the text

⁸ The repository library is Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek. H32 has 165 folios with two columns per page, written in Ashkenazic script. Jellinek dates H32 to the 12th Century; see Adolph Jellinek, *Commentarien zu Esther, Ruth und den Klageliedern, von R. Menachem b. Chelbo, R. Tobia b. Elieser, R. Josef Kara, R. Samuel b. Meir und einem Ungenannten*. Leipzig: Leopold Schnauss 1855, p. Vff. The computerized catalogue of IMHM dates H32 to the 13th century, cf. F 885 (March 5th, 2012). The Commentary on Ruth is located on folios 83r-84v; 69r-69v. Today, these folios are sequently arranged, as regards content. The arrangement of the five Scrolls is as following: Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Lamentations.

⁹ Jellinek (see note 8), p. 23.

¹⁰ Concerning the following discussion on V18, just a short note on the "original statements of Rashi," which are hard to be unhinged: Rashi is probably cited, and the explanations may be to some extent his; to what extent has to be shown elsewhere. So at this stage of investigation it may be assumed that Rashi is probably cited in a later stage, and the explanations are not his original statements.

designates a comment to a certain originator, he is called “author”, though remains of the first expression and additions together may be interconnected.¹¹ Despite the description of the commentary on the Book of Ruth in H32 by Jellinek, the authors are specified, i.e., the commentary in H32 is not anonymous. Both in H32 and V18 we find an interpretation on Ruth 1:1, alluding to the *peshat*.

2.1.3 Example: V18 on Ruth 1:1 - compared with H32

V18 on Ruth 1:1, fol. 336r, marginal gloss, lines 19-31;

וילך איש' עשיר גדול היה ופרנ' הדור ויצא מפני צרת העין שהיתה עינו צרה בעניים
הבאים לדחוקו לכך נענש רב' שלמה ואינו פשט כי לא מפני צרת העין יצא אלא מפני הרע
ותשב משדה מואב כי שמעה בשהל' מוא כי פקד וג' אלמ' חזינן שמפני הרעב יצא'

And a man went – he was rich and a chief [parnas] of this generation. And he went for reasons of miserliness, because he was miserly with the poor (people) that came to implore him. And therefore he was punished. [An explanation by] R. Solomon [i.e., Rashi]. But this is not the *peshat* [the plain meaning]. Since he left not for reasons of miserliness but rather on account of the famine. [As it is written in Ruth 1:6] *And she returned from the fields of Moav as she had heard in the fields of Moav [HaShem had] remembered [his people to give them bread]* and so on. Therefore [we learn] that he left on account of the famine... [Explanation of R. Samuel ben Meir, i.e., Rashbam].

H32 on Ruth 1:1, fol. 83r, Col. 1, lines 31-38

וילך איש' עשיר גדול היה ופרנס הדור ויצא מפני צרת העין שהיתה עינו צרה בעניים
הבאים לדחוקו לכך נענש רבי' שלמ' ואינו פשט כי לא מפני צרת (ה)עין יצא אלא מפני
הרעב' כמ' דתמ' ותשב משד' מוא' כי שמע בשד' מוא' כי פקד יין את עמ' לתת להם לחם'
אלמ' חזינן שמפני הרעב יצא ... ר' שמ'

In H32 this statement is attributed to Rashbam, therefore this attribution is assumed also in the following remarks. Rashbam quotes

¹¹ For reasons of convenience the term “author” is used, though the term “pseudo-author” could be used, too. Cf. Hanna Liss, “The Commentary on the Song of Songs Attributed to R. Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam),” in: *MJS-online* 1 (2007), pp. 1-27 (<http://www.medieval-jewish-studies.com/Journal/Vol1/article01.html>, March 5th, 2012).

Rashi and refers to the *pesbat* by explaining Ruth 1:1 by its closer context (Ruth 1:6). With it, Rashbam states another explanation, not following his grandfather Rashi. Though Rashi had introduced the *pesbat* for interpreting the biblical text literally, he does not apply the *pesbat* to Ruth 1:1 in the statement cited, but Rashbam does. This reminds us of Rashbam's remark on Gen 37:2: הפשטות המתחדשים בכל יום *The peshatot that are renewed every day.*¹²

Referring to the *pesbat*, the above cited comment from V18 on Ruth 1:1 with its parallel in H32 shows characteristics of the “exegetical style” we are familiar with from the northern French school, who followed in the footsteps of Rashi.¹³ As regards to content, the first part of the example, attributed in H32 to Rashi, recalls midrashic

¹² On the term *pesbat* compare, e.g., Benjamin J. Gelles, *Pesbat and Derash in the exegesis of Rashi*. Leiden: Brill 1981, esp. pp. 9-27; David Halivni, *Pesbat & Derash. Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991; Sara Japhet, “The Nature and Distribution of Medieval Compilatory Commentaries in the Light of Rabbi Joseph Kara’s Commentary on the Book of Job,” in: *The Midrashic Imagination; Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*, edited by Michael Fishbane. Albany: State University of New York Press 1993, pp. 98-130; idem, “The Tension between Rabbinic Legal Midrash and the ‘Plain Meaning’ (Peshat) of the Biblical Text—An Unresolved Problem?: In the Wake of Rashbam’s Commentary on the Pentateuch,” in: *Sefer Moshe. The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume. Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism*, edited by Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, Shalom M. Paul. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns 2004, pp. 403-425; Sarah Kamin, “Affinities Between Jewish and Christian Exegesis in 12th Century Northern France,” in: *Jews and Christians Interpret the Bible*, edited by Sarah Kamin. Jerusalem: Magnes Press 1991, pp. 12*-26*; Hanna Liss, *Creating Fictional Worlds; Pesbat-Exegesis and Narrativity in Rashbam’s Commentary on the Torah*. Studies in Jewish History and Culture 31. Leiden; Boston: Brill 2011, esp. pp. 35-56; idem, “‘Peshat’ - Auslegung und Erzähltheorie am Beispiel Raschbams,” in: *Raschi und sein Erbe; Internationale Tagung der Hochschule für Jüdische Studien mit der Stadt Worms*, edited by Daniel Krochmalnik, Hanna Liss, Ronen Reichman. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter 2007, pp. 101-124; Elazar Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion; Studies in the Pentateuchal Commentary of Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir*, 2nd ed. Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press 2005 (Hebr.).

¹³ On the topic of the northern French school in the footsteps of Rashi compare, e.g., Moshe Ahrend, “L’adaptation des commentaires du *Midrash* par Rashi et ses disciples à leur exégèse biblique,” in: *Revue des Etudes Juives* 156,3-4 (1997), pp. 275-288, esp. p. 276; Avraham Grossman, *The Early Sages of France; Their Lives, Leadership and Works*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press 2001 (Hebr.).

explanations.¹⁴ This is a characteristic of Rashi's explanations, too, as he in some cases alludes to the midrash in his exegesis.¹⁵ The general style of the interpretations on Part 1 (V18 on Ruth 1:1-6 and H32 as a whole) may be considered as explanations for introducing a pupil in Bible interpretation. A scholar of Jewish biblical interpretation should know *peshat* as well as midrashic exegesis. Therefore the *Sitz im Leben* may have been education in the method of the northern French school.

2.2 V18 on Ruth 1:7-13

The second part of the commentary found in V18 differs from the one in H32 and the other MSS mentioned before. But there are other MSS and editions that may be attributed to Rashi, e.g., MS Vienna 23,¹⁶ MS New York Lutzki 778¹⁷ and MS St. Petersburg Evr. I 21.¹⁸

2.2.1 An edition comparable to V18

In 1992 Moshe Zipor edited "An Additional expanded edition of Rashi's Commentary to *Ruth* and Segments of *Ruth Zuta* in a different Version."¹⁹ That edition contains the same comments (for the most parts) on Part 2 (V18 on Ruth 1:7-13) as V18.²⁰ The explanations are

¹⁴ In the case of the statement cited on Ruth 1:1, the interpretation is referring to Ruth Rabbah 1:4 by alluding the departure of "a man" (i.e. Elimelech) to his miserliness.

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., Ahrend (see note 13).

¹⁶ I.e., MS Wien NB 23 (Cat. Schwarz); Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod hebr. 220; Vienna NB 12B.; F 10151. The commentary attributed to Rashi in MS Wien 23 on Ruth 1:12 is the same as in V18.

¹⁷ I.e., MS Jewish Theological Seminary Lutzki 778; F 24010. Only the commentary on Ruth 1:12 attributed to Rashi is the same as in V18.

¹⁸ I.e., MS St. Petersburg - Russian National Library Evr. I 21; F 51073 (Reel 4). May be dated into the 14th century according to the computerized catalogue of the IMHM. MS St. Petersburg Evr. I 21 contains the same explanation on Ruth 1:8 as V18. This interpretation is also found in *Ruth Zuta* as will be shown below.

¹⁹ Cf. note 4. The bibliographic data is: Moshe Zipor, "An Additional expanded edition of Rashi's Commentary to *Ruth* and Segments of *Ruth Zuta* in a different Version" in: *Sidra* 8 (1994), pp. 99-118 (Hebr).

²⁰ Zipor's Sources are: a) *On the version of Rashi's commentary*: MS Leningrad B 396 (F 46933), written in South Italy, annualized to 1276/77-1284/85, with the annotation in

almost the same, though textual variants in V18 compared to the edition of Zipor occur. The differences may be recorded as following: Some few words are missing in V18 that appear in Zipor's edition;²¹ some words are inverted;²² in a few cases other words are missing in V18 that occur in Zipor's edition, therefore that variation may be labeled as an "extended"²³ version. In addition to that an interpolation can be found in Zipor's edition in contrast to V18.²⁴ However, both comments on Ruth 1:7-13 are comparable.

2.2.2 Sources of explanations on Ruth 1:7-13: Rashi and parts of Ruth Zuta

The explanations on Part 2 (V18 on Ruth 1:7-13) contain compiled parts. For example, on the one hand, the explanation on Ruth 1:8 is found in Ruth Zuta.²⁵ It mentions ten different markets in Jerusalem. These ten markets may be labeled as a rabbinical illustration, as only in rabbinic times (or: in a rabbinical constructed everyday life) ten different markets for different parts of Jewish society could have existed. Such kinds of traditional interpretations, mainly found in Talmud and midrash, were the source Rashi referred to.²⁶ On the other hand, we find the exegesis on Ruth 1:12 as explanations

the MS "בידי יצחק בן שלמה"; MS Parma De Rossi 541, i.e., Parma Biblioteca Palatina Cod. Parma 2342 (F 13218), which is the basis of Buber's edition of Ruth Zuta (מדרש זוטא על שיר השירים, רות, איכה וקהלה, ed. Shlomo Buber. Berlin: M'kize Nirdamim 1894), dated into the 13th-14th century (F 13218) and MS Oxford Bodley Heb e. 47 of which no specific date is found (in the catalogue of the IMHM (F 21300), but compare Zipor (see note 19), p. 100; b) *On the version of Ruth Zuta*: MS Parma 541, i.e., Parma Biblioteca Palatina Cod. Parma 2342 (F 13218), see above; MS Firkowitch II 161.10, contains Interpretations on Ruth 2:6-4:16; MS Oxford Bodley Heb e. 47 (F 21300). Cf. Zipor (see note 19), p. 99f.

²¹ Letters are missing esp. on Ruth 1:7; cf. Zipor (see note 19), p. 111. Words are "missing" on Ruth 1:12; cf. Zipor (see note 19), p. 112.

²² E.g., on Ruth 1:7.9; cf. Zipor (see note 19), p. 111.

²³ E.g., על אהת כמה וכמה, at the end of the explanation of Ruth 1:9, as a commentary on Ruth 1:6; cf. Zipor (see note 19), p. 111.

²⁴ E.g., the explanation on Ruth 1:6 occurs in Zipor's edition between the one on Ruth 1:7 and 9.

²⁵ This explanation may also be found in MS St. Petersburg Evr. I 21, cf. note 18.

²⁶ Cf., e.g., Ahrend (see note 13).

attributed to Rashi, e.g., in *Miqra'ot Gedolot*.²⁷ In the case of this interpretation on Ruth 1:12 it is interesting that just the part of Rashi's interpretation, on Ruth 1:12, is not found in H32 (with its parallel interpretation on Ruth 1:1-6 in V18 as mentioned before). But the parts before and after the interpretation on Ruth 1:12 do occur in H32. There are specific future-oriented explanations of Rashi on Ruth 1:12 concerning Naomi's demand to her daughters-in-law not to follow her. It may be assumed, that the explanations on Ruth in V18 convey transmitted interpretations that were either quoted by Rashi or were arranged together with Rashi's explanations.

2.2.3 Example: V18 on Ruth 1:8 - compared with other editions

V18 on Ruth 1:8, fol. 336r, marginal gloss, lines 63-71

ותאמ' נעמי למה מחזרת אותם שלא תתבייש בהן' שכן מצינו בעשרה שווקי' היו
בירושל {ל} ם ולא היו מתערבין אילו עם אילו שוק של מלאכים של נביאי' שוק של כהנים
של לוי'ם שוק של ישר' וכו'

And Naomi said – Why does she send them back? So that she would not be ashamed because of them. As we also find in [the case of] ten markets (that) were in Jerusalem, which would not mingle with each other: A market of delegates, of prophets, a market of priests, of Levites, a market of Israel and so on.

According to the Book of Ruth the reference to the ten markets cannot point to historical realities, as Jerusalem was not yet a constituted capital in the *time of the judges* (Ruth 1:1). Neither kingship nor the temple of Jerusalem were established. Therefore the reference to the ten markets is text-external, i.e., not inner-biblical in any case, and the rabbinic world view is represented in the explanations of the Book of Ruth.

²⁷ E.g., *Miqra'ot Gedolot HaKeter* (electronic Version). Tel Aviv: 2007.

Here, in V18 as well as in Ruth Zuta,²⁸ and *Yalkut Shimoni*,²⁹ only five markets are listed.³⁰ Also MS St. Petersburg Evr. I 21 contains the same explanation on Ruth 1:8 as V18 with the allusion to ten markets but mentions only five of them.³¹ The depictions of the markets are almost the same as in V18, but one (textual) variant occurs: Instead of מלכים V18 writes מלאכים.³² In V18 only five markets are specified, but in other parallel editions *ten* markets are explicated.³³ The general style of the interpretations on Part 2 (V18 on Ruth 1:7-13) may be described as “aggadic”. Therefore, the closeness to midrash may be stated.³⁴

²⁸ Cf. Ed. Buber (see note 20), p. 21.

²⁹ *Yalkut Shimoni* does not mention ten markets by number, rather “some markets” “שכן...מצינו כמה שווקים היו בירושלים” See ילקוט שמעוני השלם, repr. Jerusalem: Vagshal 2003, p. 741.

³⁰ In all cases the list is as following: שוק של נביאים (Market of (the) Kings) (market of (the) Prophets); שוק של כהנים (market of (the) Priests); שוק של לויים (market of (the) Levites); שוק של ישראל (market of Israel). This is a kind of ascending order according to the status of these groups in relation to the sanctuary/temple (and therefore in some ways to Holiness). *Ruth Zuta*, Ed. Buber (see note 20), p. 21 continues: שוק של לויים; *Yalkut Shimoni* (see note 29), p. 741 continues: שוק של לויים.

³¹ See MS St. Petersburg Evr. I 21, Fol. 24r, line 7: 'ושוק של מלכי' ושוק של נביאים' ושוק של כהנים' ושוק של לויים' ושוק של ישראל'.

³² מלאך (pl. מלאכים) may be translated as “angel; delegate, messenger, herald; (also) prophet” see Reuben Alcalay, *The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary*, Ramat-Gan, Jerusalem: Massada Publishing Co. 1987, col. 1336.

³³ Cf., e.g., A. Marmorstein, “Der Midrasch (שני כתובים) von den Widersprüchen in der Bibel,” in: *MGWJ* 73 (1929), pp. 281-292. According to Marmorstein’s Edition of MS Oxford (Bodl), Nr. 2686, fol. 43a, the *ten markets* are the following: שוק של מלכים - market of (the) kings; שוק של נביאים - market of (the) prophets; שוק של מלכי יהודה - market of (the) kings of Jehuda; שוק של סנהדרין - market of (the) *Sanhedrin* (i.e. members of the supreme court); שוק של כהנים גדולים - market of (the) high priests; שוק של [אוכלי?] טהרות - market of (those [who eat?]) pure/cleansed food; שוק של נזירין - market of (the) *Nazirites* (i.e. religious ascetics); שוק של חסידים - market of (the) *Hassidim* (i.e. pious/orthodox); שוק של שבט לוי - market of (the) tribe of Levi; שוק של משמרות - market of (the supporters of) conservatism. This list shows that the first markets mentioned are in most cases the same as in V18 and the other editions cited above. Though also here a variant occurs: 'שוק של ישראל' The “Market of Israel”, mentioned in V18, is missing in the citation of MS Oxford by Marmorstein. See Marmorstein, *ibid.*, p. 291.

³⁴ Zipor (see note 19), p. 105 discusses the topic of the ten markets, too, and stresses the closeness to Ruth Zuta in his article.

3. Sources of V18

Taking V18 as a whole compiled commentary, divided into at least two parts, raises the question of the sources or traditional literature in V18. This question is linked to the query of the origins of content in the two parts of V18. The MSS compared are H32 on Part 1 (Ruth 1:1-6) and possible sources for the explanations on Part 2 (Ruth 1:7-13).

First on the sources in H32 with its parallel interpretation on Part 1 (Ruth 1:1-6) in V18. In H32, hardly any cited traditional literature is found on Part 1 (Ruth 1:1-6). H32 has identical content as V18 and attributes the explanations to specific authors. Therefore, the explanations on Part 1 (Ruth 1:1-6) in V18 may be labeled as compiled commentaries of authors. The comparison to H32 hints at the cited authors Rashi, Rashbam and Qara. However, no specific traditional literature is taken up in these interpretations.³⁵ Second on the sources of the explanations on Part 2 (Ruth 1:7-13) in V18. Rashi's "own" commentary as, e.g., in MGK on Ruth 1:12, is the same as in V18, as already mentioned. The explanation on Ruth 1:8, with its reference to the description of ten markets in Jerusalem, may be found only in Ruth Zuta but not, e.g., in Ruth Rabba or the Babylonian Talmud as a possible source.³⁶ Now, in the search for other sources of V18, the question arises, which tradition may occur in Ruth Zuta itself? According to Avigdor Shinan scarcely anything can be said about the

³⁵ Interestingly, only the explanations on Ruth 1:1-6 that are the same as in H32 are found in V18, as traditional literature in H32 is cited on Ruth 1:7. That is right after the end of the explanation on Ruth 1:6, where V18 takes up another hand. The following demonstration on a righteous that leaves the country recalls Ruth Rabbah 2:12 and Gen 28:10 with its explanation of the departure of Yaaqow.

³⁶ "RUTH ZUTA" ("Minor Ruth"), or *Midrash Megillat Ruth be-Fanim Aherim* ("Other Aspects of the Midrash on the Scroll of Ruth), a late Midrash compiled from **Ruth Rabbah*, the Babylonian Talmud, and other sources." See Moshe David Herr, "Midrashim, Smaller," in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. 2nd ed. Vol. 14. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007, p. 187.

background or composition of Ruth Zuta.³⁷ It may be called a “late Midrash”.³⁸

Or is it possible that the “original interpreter” of Part 2 (Ruth 1:7-13) in V18 was Rashi - or operated at least at the same time as Rashi but was not Rashi himself? Trying to answer this question leads to speculation. The following approach may provide some guidance: Why does V18 not attribute its commentary to the apparent authors Rashi, Rashbam and R. Joseph Qara (on Part 1 as H32) or to a certain midrash (regarding the exegesis in Part 2)? One possibility might be that the underlying elements of V18 were compiled together at a later stage than, e.g., H32 - but without further attributions. Therefore it was difficult for the transmitter at a later stage (before the combination in V18 itself) to attribute the different interpretations to their authors. Another possible explanation could be, which is more probable in the case of V18, that the content of the explanations was most important for its transmission. The purpose of the transmitter was to transfer the content of the explanations, not the specific attributions to the authors.³⁹

For conveying a choice of interpretations the compiler of V18 put together the first part (on Ruth 1:1-6) from a *Vorlage* unknown to us

³⁷ Avigdor Shinan, "המעשים במדרש הקרוי רות זוטא", in: *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem, June 22-29, 1993. Division C: *Thought and Literature*, Vol. I. *Rabbinic and Talmudic Literature*. Jerusalem: The World Union of Jewish Studies 1994, p. 129-136, esp. p. 130 (Hebr.).

³⁸ Midrash Ruth Zuta may be dated into the 10th century. This date is found in EJ but not in Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, transl. and ed. by Markus Bockmuehl. 2nd Ed. Edinburgh: Clark 1996, p. 321. Ruth Zuta itself is according to Herr “compiled from **Ruth Rabbah*, the Babylonian Talmud, and other sources. [...] As the author of **Midrash Lekah Tov* at the end of the 11th century used this Midrash it was apparently compiled in the tenth century.” See Herr (see note 36). However, it has to be concluded that Ruth Zuta should be investigated as an composition of its own. I thank Dr. Amos Geula for remarks in this case.

³⁹ Here we also see that “copyright” was not of that great importance in the Middle Ages as it got up to now. Quite possibly, the authors were *especially* not cited in order to avoid bewildering the recipient or to get more authority for the content of the text. Anonymous interpretations at times and in some cases received more prestige than identified commentaries.

today. The model may have been the same as that of H32 which probably contained attributions to its authors in its first stage, presumably as we find them in H32. The second part of the explanations in V18 (on Ruth 1:7-13) contains commentaries designed in the style of Rashi's usage of traditional literature. This part may have had Ruth Zuta as its “master copy”.⁴⁰ However, both parts of the explanations are reworking the same material Rashi utilized in his commentaries.⁴¹

4. The Subject Matter of V18

What is the subject matter of V18? Is there a change of content by compilation in comparison to interpretations in other manuscripts? There is a totally different interpretation in V18 as it appears now in the manuscript. In comparison to the compiled commentary in H32, there is a shift of subject matter, i.e., in V18, a more general way of interpretation may be assumed than in H32. The “missing” part in V18 following in H32 points out the relationship between Naomi and Ruth as its main subject. This relation is explained as the relation between proselytes and the Jewish community. This subject is not that important for the “real life community” of the time as there were few proselytes in the 13th century. This may be the key to the question, why the same explanations are not brought up in V18 according to Ruth 1:7ff. While in H32 the exegesis of specific authors may have been transmitted for scholarly reasons so that everyone reading the commentary could know *who* said *what*, the emphasis in V18 is placed on more general matters. The second part in V18, which is different from H32 as a compilation of Ruth Zuta and Rashi's explanations,

⁴⁰ The same may be true for the MSS Zipor uses for his edition and MS St. Petersburg Evr. I 21. The question “What exactly happened to the text before its citation in the Manuscript?” has to be left open here.

⁴¹ The subject of the chronological layer of V18 in comparison to other sources shall be discussed elsewhere.

emphasizes on the one hand more common topics. Moreover, the following issues concern mostly the future.

Besides the description of the ten markets (see above), the topics on Ruth 1:8 are for example:

- 1) The relationship between Jews and Gentiles, which is illustrated according to the relationship between Ruth and her relation by marriage to Naomi's family;⁴²
- 2) *Kindness*, with reference to the present as well as the future to come.⁴³
- 3) Citations of (David's) Psalms.⁴⁴

All in all, most of these explanations are inner-biblical interpretations.

In addition to that, Part 2 (V18 on Ruth 1:7-13) in some parts recalls Rashi's explanations. This style of interpretation may be found in a similar way according to other books of the Bible.⁴⁵ By establishing

⁴² V18, line 74-76: 'אשה לבית אמה' לא לבית אביה ללמדך שאין אב לגוי – [Return- each] woman into her mother's house – not in her father's house. [It is written in this wording] to teach you that a non-Jew has no father." This explanation may be understood as a polemic against Gentiles with an applied textual connection by using the word *לבית אמה* to the house of her mother instead of *the house of her father* (that would be *אבה*).

The issue of the conversion of Ruth is deduced from the text, here particularly the question of the point of time when Naomi's daughters in law converted as they had been married to Machlon and Kilyon. V18 mentions Ruth 1:10 in the exegesis on Ruth 1:12 and deduces they *will be* of the same one people like Naomi. V18, line 97-99: "...ולא נתגיירו ועכשיו הן באות נתגייר' כמו שנ' כי אתך נשוב לעמך מעתה נהיה לעם אחד...and they had not converted. But now [on the way] they came [to be] converted. As it is said *But [now] we will return with you to your people* (Ruth 1:10) – from now on we will be one people."

⁴³ V18, line 76-79: 'יעש יי' עמכם חסד' כת' כלומר/ יעש' עמכם לעתיד לבוא ויתן שבר' בעולם הזה: "And the Lord shall deal (יעשה) kindly with you – He shall deal (יעשה) is written. This means: He shall deal (יעש) kindly with you for the future to come. And He shall give you expectation in this very (existing) world." Here, as well in other verses of the Bible, benedictions incorporate a form of *עשה חסד*, e.g. in Gen 24:12.14; Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10; 1 Sam 20:8; 2 Sam 22:51; Jer 32:18; Ps 18:51; 109:16.

⁴⁴ Cf. V18, line 81ff.

⁴⁵ E.g., on Gen 28:10 *ויצא* and *Yaakov left* is linked to *והצא* and *Naomi left* in Ruth 1:7, cf. V18 on Ruth 1:7, line 50-63. By explaining [מן המקום] *והצא* and *she departed from the place* in Ruth 1:7 pragmatical redundancy (with [משדי מואב] *והשב* and *she returned from the fields of Moav*, cf. Ruth 1:6) is excluded. Rather a reference to Genesis Rabbah 64 is given: If a

this connection through interpretation, a wider inner-biblical reference-system is achieved. This is also a characteristic style of exegeses in the footsteps of Rashi.

5. The Purpose of V18

Why was the commentary compiled as it is presented in V18? The commentary in V18 may have been compiled for the purpose of congregational teaching. This is another purpose compared with its parallels. On the one hand, the purpose of H32 taken as a whole may have been for lessons in biblical interpretations, relying on relevant statements of relevant exegetes (as a kind of “reference material”). On the other hand, the explanations on Part 2 (Ruth 1:7-13) put parts of Ruth Zuta and a statement of Rashi together. Thus, the interpretations of Part 2 as a compilation are gathering a specific collection of traditional literature. In comparison, V18 may have been a “Study Bible”. Its audience may have been primarily *reading*, but also *listening* to the explanations.⁴⁶ The interpretations of V18 as a whole may be understood as examples of what issues should be emphasized when studying the Book of Ruth. V18 combines the mentioned aspects: education and tradition. By uniting both components it may have been shared in the communities of Ashkenaz. As probably not every community had whole annotated Bibles in book form, explanations of

righteous person leaves a town, this makes impression and has consequences: The brightness of the city turns away with the pious person's departure. A similar case is told by Yaakov's departure of Beer Sheva (Gen 28:10). By connecting both biblical passages, a coherent textual reference-system with other similar cases is achieved.

⁴⁶ *Reading* as there are grammatical explanations like on Ruth 1:1 that are better to be read, and *listening* as some introductions of the interpretations are directly addressing a listener, e.g., ללמדך in the explanation on Ruth 1:1.3.9. I do not wish to comment on the likelihood of whether or not the audience had a high degree of experience in interpreting the Bible. Suffice it to say that the actual recipients were to a lesser extent beginners that could hardly read than advanced scholars that probably knew the cited traditional literature by heart and may have had compared what they already knew with the new compiled interpretations.

the northern French school and midrash material may have been circulating in Europe via the glossed Bible Codex V18.

6. Conclusion

The commentary V18 as a whole is comprised of different parts, such as interpretations of the northern French school (Rashi, Rashbam and Qara) and traditional literature (Ruth Zuta). As we have seen, V18 is an assortment of compiled commentaries. V18 combines different aspects of 12th-century northern French Jewish exegesis in the footsteps of Rashi: In the first part, as in H32, Rashi is cited but added by an annotation of Rashbam giving an interpretation according to the *peshat*. In the second part, midrashic explanations (see Ruth Zuta on Ruth 1:8; the reference to ten different markets in Jerusalem) are gathered, which is still typical of Rashi's school of interpretation. Then, on Ruth 1:12 Rashi's own explanation appears without any objection.

In summary, the compiled commentaries on Ruth in V18 are designed according to Rashi's interpretive style. Already at the time of the composition of V18 Rashi's commentary was what people consulted when studying the Bible. The statements add to the authority Rashi possessed as the explanations may be attributed to him. In the case of V18, Rashi's huge impact is evident. His interpretations are significant already in his own era - and outstanding till the present.

7. Appendix: Cited Verses of the Marginal Gloss in V18, Folio 336r compared to H32, Folio 83r

° Letter uncertain

() Addition in MS

{ } Deletion in MS

<> Space in MS

In this edition, line fillers are not given.

H32

H32 on
Ruth 1:1,
Col.1,
lines 19-
39

שפוט לש' פועל ויהי בימי שפוט
השופטים לפני מלוך מלך לבני
ישר' נהיה הדבר הזה' שהיו
נשפטי' על ידי רועים שופטים'

ויהי בימי ויהי רעב' כך נוהגין
בכמה מקומות {לשתי} (לכתוב)
שתי הוויות תכופות' והיו המים
אשר תקח מן היאר והיו לדם
ביבשת <ר' שמ'

ויהי בימי שפוט השופטים' בא
הכת' ללמדך היאך נתגלגל הדבר
שאלמלך שהיה מאלופי יהוד'
והיה יכול לישא לבניו מן הגדולים
שבשבת יהוד' מה להם שנשאו
נשים מואביות' ועל ידי שנתגיירה
רות לשם שמים מה פועל נשתלמה
שיצא ממנה מלכות <ר' יוסי

וילך איש עשיר גדול היה ופרנס
הדור ויצא מפני צרת העין שהיתה
עינו צרה בעניים הבאים לדחקו
לכך נענש רב' שלמ' ואיננו פשט'
כי לא מפני צרת (ה)עין יצא אלא
מפני הרעב' כמ' דתמ' ותשב משד'
מוא' כי שמע בשד' מוא' כי פקד יין
את עמ' לתת להם לחם' אלמ' חזינן
שמפני הרעב יצא' בשדה מואב'
קנפינש בלע'

H32 on
Ruth 1:2,
Col. 1,
lines 39-
41

אפרתים' כך נקראים על שם
מקומם' בית לחם ואפרת אחת היא
שנ' ותקבר בדרך אפרת היא בית
לחם'

H32 on
Ruth 1:3,
Col. 1,

איש נעומי <בעלה של נעמי ר'

V18

V18 on
Ruth 1:1,
lines 1-31

שפוט לש' פועל ויהי בימי שפוט
השופטים יהשופטים לפני מלוך
מלך לבני ישר' נהיה הדבר הז'
שהיו נשפטים על ידו רועים
שופטים'

ויהי בימי ויהי רעב כך ניהגין
בכמה מקומו' לפתור שתי הוויות'
והיו המים אשר תק מן היאר והיו
לדם ביבשת'

ויהי בימי שפוט השופטים בא
הכת' ללמדך היאך נהגל' הדבר
שאלמלך שה' מאלופי יהודה היה
יכול לישא לבניו מן גדולי הדור
שבשבת יהוד' מה גרם להם
שנשאו נשים נשים מואביות ועל
ידי שנתגייר רות לשם שמים מה
פועל נש' נשתלמה שיצא ממנ'
מלכות'

וילך איש עשיר גדול היה ופרנ'
הדור ויצא מפני צרת העין שהיתה
עינו צרה בעניים הבאים לדחקו
לכך נענש רב' שלמה ואינו פשט'
כי לא מפני צרת העין יצא אלא
מפני הרע ותשב משדה מואב כי
שמעה בשהד' מוא כי פקד וג' אלמ'
חזינן שמפני הרעב יצא'

V18 on
Ruth 1:2,
lines 32-
36⁴⁷

אפרתים על' שם מקו' **בית לחם**
ואפרת אחת היא שנ' ותקבר דרך
אפרת היא בית לחם'

V18 on
Ruth 1:3,
lines 36-

איש נעומי' בעלה של נעומי'

⁴⁷ In line 33-48 V18 is written in bold letters.

lines 41-44

שמ'

41

וימת אלימלך ללמדך אילו היה
קיים לא היה מניח לבניו שישאו
נשים נכריות <ר' יוסי

H32 on
Ruth 1:5,
Col. 1,
line 44 -
Col.2,
line 4

גם שניהם' כבר מת אלימלך
&אחֶרְכֶן מתו גם שני בניו
אחריו' <ר' שמ'

גם שניהם' מהו גם' בתחילה' לקו
בממונם' ומתו גמליהם ומקניהם'
ואחרכך מתו הם' <ר' שלמ'

H32 on
Ruth
1:6.7,
Col. 2,
lines 4-6

כי שמעה כבר שהרי נפקדו בני
עירה והיה שובע בארץ' לשוב כדי
לשוב' <ר' שמ'

וימת אלימלך ללמדך שאם תיה
קיים לא תיה מניח לבניו שישאו
נשים נכריות'

גם שניהם' כבר מת אלימלך'
ואחֶרְכֶן {ב'י} יכן מתו גם שני בניו
אחריו

גם שניה מהו גם בתחלה לקו
בממונם' ומתו גמלי ומקניהם'
ואחרכך מתו הם'

כי שמעה כבר שהרי

V18 on
Ruth 1:5,
lines 41-48

V18 on
Ruth 1:6,
line 48

End of parallel to H32

On
Ruth 1:7

ותצא מן המקום' והלא כבר נאמ'
ותשב משדה מואב אלא מגיד שיצא'
צדיק מן המקו' ניכרת ועושה רושם'
שכל זמ' לשהצדיק בעיר הוא הדר' הוא
שבחה הוא זיוה' יצא משם פינה זיוה
פינה שבתה' דא' ותצא מ'ה רא' הכתו
לימנות' יציאתה לביאתה אלא כך אמ'
הק'ב'ה' תבוא רות שלא כחשה
בהמותה ותוֹכִיחַ בישר' שמרדו בי'

V18 on
Ruth 1:7,
lines 50-63⁴⁸

On
Ruth 1:8

ותאמ' נעמי למה מחזרת אותם שלא
תתבייש בהן' שכן מצינו בעשרה
שווקי' היו בירושל {ל'ם} ולא היו
מתערבין אילו עם אילו שוק של
מלאכים של נביאי' שוק של כהנים
של לוי'ם שוק של ישר' וכו'

V18 on
Ruth 1:8,
lines 63-71

On
Ruth 1:9

ומצאן מנוחה ומצאן כת' אחת מהן
מצאה מנוחה

V18 on
Ruth 1:9,
lines 72-73

Cf.
Ruth 1:8

אשה לבית אמה' לא לבית אביה
ללמדך שאין אב לגוי' <'> יעש יי|

V18 cf.
Ruth 1:8,
lines 74-

⁴⁸ V18 takes up another hand here.

עמכם חסו יעשה כת' כלומ' / יעשה⁹³

עמכם לעתיד לבוא ויתן שבר' בעולם
 הזה' וכן הוא אומ' כעת יאמר ליעק'
 ולישר' וכו דוד אמר שבעינו בבקר
 חסדיך גו' <'>מידה זה לצדיקי' אבל
 לרשעי' משלם בעולם הזה וכן הוא
 אומ' ומשלם לשנאיו וגו' לפיכך אמ'
 דוד נתתה שמחה בליבי מעת דגנם
 ותירושם רבו' אמר דוד לפני ה'ק'ב'ה'
 בשעה שאתה נותן שובע ושלוח'
 לאומ' העולם שמח אני אם כך אתה
 עושה למכעיסין קץ לעושי רצונך'

On Ruth
1:11.12

שבנה בנותיי <'>למה ב' פעמי' מכאן
 שזמאנין בגר ב' פעמי'
 V18 on
Ruth
1:11.12,
lines 93-
95

On
Ruth 1:12

כי זקנתי להיות לאיש שאנשא לו
 ואלד לו בנימ' ותשא להם שאינכם
 אסורות להם' לפי שהיו (לא) להם
 למחלון לכיליון קידושין <>
 V18 on
Ruth
1:12,
lines 95-
101

שעבריות⁴⁹ היו ולא נתגיירו ועכשיו
 הן באות נתגייר' כמו שנ' כי אתך
 נשוב לעמך מעתה נהיה לעם אחד
 כי אמרתי יש לי תקוה' <'>כי אפ'
 אמר לי לבי יש לי תקוה לינשא עוד
 לאיש וללדת בנים וגם הייתי הלילה
 לאיש ויותר מכאן (אפ') הריתי הלילה
 זכרים וגם ילדתי בנים"

On
Ruth 1:13

הלהן תשברנה בתמי' שמא להם
 תשברנה עד יגדלו'
 V18 on
Ruth
1:13, line
102

שם ישאר לי מכו' רע

⁴⁹ Sic! Probably scribal error in V18, may be emended to נוכריות and translated as “foreign”. Zipor (see note 19), p. 112 reads נוכריות.