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A Pentateuch to Read in? The Secrets of the *Regensburg Pentateuch*

Abstract: This paper deals with special codicological and palaeographical features of Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52, the *Regensburg Pentateuch*, which was written about 1300. Not only does this manuscript contain *tagin* ('crownlets') on single letters that differ from the usual use of *tagin* found in Tora scrolls, but it also displays the *masora parva* and *masora magna* in a peculiar layout. The marginal Masora includes many commentaries that decidedly fall outside the usual scope of a Masora note. The paper shows that the manuscript's codicological peculiarities refer in many respects to the teachings of the *ḥaside ashkenaz* (the German Pious), who regarded *tagin* and Masoretic notes (to name but a few items) as carriers of the expanded divine revelation.

1 Introduction

The idea that readings of Tora excerpts at Jewish prayer services must rely upon the appropriate scrolls seems every bit as natural and obvious as the fact that nowadays one *normally* prefers to read a printed book. In fact, these two different media can be used together: Atop the pulpit (*bima*) at a modern synagogue prayer service will lie a handwritten Tora scroll. Next to it will be a printed Hebrew version, intended to permit comparative reading and help the reader correct any errors made, and the congregation itself may read the text using a number of printed and often bilingual copies.

This state of affairs, however, seems more natural than it actually is. From ancient times up to the early Middle Ages, the only mobile medium available to write on was scrolls, something that held true not only for the Tora, but for the full *twenty-four books* of the Bible (although not every book corresponded directly to a *single* scroll). Exactly when codices were created and to what end (given that

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scrolls continued to be used for liturgical purposes, including Tora readings and readings of the *Megillat Ester*) is still somewhat unclear even today. On the other hand, R. Yiṣḥaq ben Moshe Or Zaruaʿ (*c*. 1200–1260) reported that his teachers, R. Yehuda ben Shemuʾel he-Ḥasid and R. Avraham ben Moshe, relied upon a sample of *Ḥumash* (i.e., a Pentateuch) with annotations of Targumim for Tora readings, and that this had been explicitly permitted, leading us to conclude that this approach had yet to become truly commonplace.[1]

When did the Jews begin to record their traditional (and holy) scripture using codices? Why did scrolls fall out of favor for certain purposes, but not for others? What purposes were there exactly? And in what way did the Jews attempt to express the sacred nature of a *sefer qodesh* through book forms other than scrolls?

These questions are intrinsically related to a further issue. Initially, the fact that, after a certain time, one begins to find codices in the corpus of Hebrew and Aramaic biblical and scriptural tradition[2] does not necessarily mean anything more than that scripture was ceasing to be put in the form of a scroll (that is, by sewing sheets of parchment together side by side), but by gluing a certain number of nested, singly folded "double" sheets together (three double-sheet layers = *ternio*, four = *quaternio*, five = *quinternio*, etc.).[3] In itself, the shape of such a codex reveals little about the function it was intended to serve; criteria such as the number of sheets and layers, the amount of text, the structure of a page (or *mise-en-page*), and the scope and nature of the metatextual elements are more important. Unfortunately, one is quickly forced to conclude that commentary on the subject of scrolls and codices in general (and the more specific subject of the various types of codex dating from the Hebrew High Middle Ages) has thus far amounted to little more than vague suggestion, speculations that have spread through the literature more or less unchallenged following the

1 *Sefer Or Zaruaʿ*, Part 1, *Hilkhot Qeriʾat Shemaʿ* #11; see Ta-Shma 1999, 171–185.

2 In the tradition of Judaeo-Arabic Bible codices produced since the 9th century, we currently know of 36 Hebrew Bible manuscripts dating to before the 13th century, six of which are from the 10th century, eight from the 11th century, and 22 from the 12th century (cf. also Tov 2001, 23). The majority of manuscripts of this kind are undated ones, however. The latest estimates classify 5,000 manuscripts from the Hebrew manuscript tradition of the Jewish Middle Ages as biblical (Tora scrolls and codices as well as approximately 24,000 fragments of the Cairo Geniza; with regard to the latter, see the database known as *The Friedberg Geniza Project* http://www.genizah.org/onlineFGP.htm?type=FGP&lang=eng; accessed in May 2017; regarding European binding fragments, see the database called *Books Within Books*; accessed in March 2017.

3 For an overview, see Turner 1977; for studies on the history of Hebrew codices, see esp. Beit-Arié 1993; Beit-Arié 2000; Beit-Arié 2003; Beit-Arié 2009; Sirat 2002.

publication of Ludwig Blau's landmark work in the field.[4] Thus, the following is intended to provide a brief overview of the 'state of research,' followed by an independent and decidedly expanded approach hitherto developed within the scope of Sonderforschungsbereich 933 'Materiale Textkulturen', though further refinement certainly remains to be done.

2 Scroll and codex: the *status quaestionis*

In his study *The Biblical Masorah*, Israel Yeivin devotes a whole two and a half pages to the subject of scrolls and codices.[5] He differentiates, under the heading of המגילה לעומת המִצְחָף ('A comparison of the scroll and codex'), between 'religious or cultic' (דתי \ פולחני) use for Tora scrolls and 'nonreligious or profane' (חילוני) use for codices, but without bothering to define these types of use in any more detail. Yeivin declares that codices did not exist before 700, and further that, prior to the development of any distinction between codex and scroll, there existed 'profane scrolls' (מגילות חילוניות) that contained Masoretic accents, *ga'ya* (or *meteg* marks), and diacritical signs (*niqqud*), but were intended for 'profane' (קריאה חילונית) and not liturgical use and subsequently fell out of favor for largely this reason.[6] Yeivin's distinction between 'religious' and 'profane' readings is already made problematic by the fact that the fragments of the various scrolls remaining to us often do not permit us to understand what purpose they originally served.[7] The *pinakes* (Hebrew sing. פִּינָקְס, Greek sing. πίναξ) known to us from the Tannaitic and Amoraic period chiefly consisted of Halakhic compendia.[8] The biblical scrolls contained either single books of the Bible or more modest compilations. The rabbinical writings, however, which rather suspiciously discuss the idea of compressing several books into a single entity (scroll),[9] show that the Jews

4 Cf. Blau 1902.

5 Cf. Yeivin 2011, 3–5.

6 Cf. Yeivin 2003, 3–5; however, he points out one aspect that has seldom been taken into account so far, namely, that the Karaites would always have been reading from a Tora scroll including punctuation and accentuation during their prayer service, since according to Karaite hermeneutics the Masoretic metatext, i.e., punctuation and accentuation, were given at Sinai as well; cf. Allony 1979; Shalev-Eyni 2010, 155, n. 10.

7 For further information on the two Haftara scrolls, cf. Yeivin 1963; Fried 1968; 1993; cf. also Oesch 1979, 115–117.

8 Cf. Lieberman 1962, esp. 203–217.

9 Cf. b. *Bava Batra* 13b; *Massekhet Soferim* (ed. Higger; in Database *Responsa Project* 18) III, 1.5.6. (= pp. 122–125); also compare Blank 1999 on the minor tractates.

were more familiar with and put more faith in the traditional scroll form and the individual recording of biblical books it required, believing it to be more Halakhically appropriate (quite aside from the fact that a single scroll containing Tora, Prophets, and Writings would have been exceptionally unwieldy).[10] In this context, the Tora itself must be construed as a long-standing exception, as it was recorded both ways: as *Ḥamisha Ḥumshe Tora* (or 'Five Fifths of Tora'), but also as *Ḥumash* ('One Fifth'), that is, as a single book, although the latter form would not have been used for public readings.[11]

The answer to the question of when the first biblical codices were created can only be approached through reliance on the oldest known manuscripts, such as the so-called *Codex Cairensis* (written in 895 by Moshe ben Asher). According to the Spanish annalist Avraham ben Shemuʾel Zacuto, the so-called *Codex Hilleli* was approximately 600 years old in 1197 and would therefore have been written around 600.[12] Even if that date does seem a little early, all things considered (Sarna himself chose the 10th century to mark the end of the relevant period), it still means that the 7th century plus or minus a little marks not only the introduction of the biblical codex, but also (and more critically) that of vocalization and accentuation systems. This line of reasoning puts the cart before the horse, however; the way in which the connection between the development of the Masoretic codex and the developmental history of the Quran, right down to its vocalization history, is overlooked or disregarded never ceases to amaze me. The geographic and religio-sociological environment of the (Arabic-speaking!) Masoretes (irrespective of whether or not they were Karaites[13]) makes a strong case for an intimate connection: according to Islamic tradition, the Quran (which was originally unvocalized and remained so through the mid- or late 9th century) was initially recorded and passed on in the form of a collection of parchment (*raqq*[14]) sheets (*ṣaḥīfa*, pl. *ṣuḥuf*) that were eventually combined to form a codex (*muṣḥaf*, pl. *maṣāḥif*).[15] It is this very concurrence that marks the creation of the great Masoretic codex, given that its purpose was likewise to unify pieces

10 Cf. also Blau 1902, esp. 57–63; Sarna 1974.

11 Cf. b. *Giṭṭin* 60a: אין קוראין בחומשין בבית הכנסת משום כבוד הציבור ('Ḥumashim may not be read from inside the synagogue out of respect for the congregation.').

12 Cf. Sarna 1974, Introduction.

13 Cf. also Dotan 1977; Zer 2009.

14 On the use of this term in the tradition of Oriental Jews, cf. Haran 1985, 47–56.

15 Cf. the so-called *Muṣḥaf Uthmān* (cf. *Corpus Coranicum* http://www.corpuscoranicum.de/handschriften/index/sure/1/vers/1?handschrift=170; accessed in June 2017). On the Spanish Quran manuscripts from the 11th and 12th century, cf. also Kogman-Appel 2004, 34–38.

of scripture (the twenty-four books of the Bible) into a single codicological unit (*miṣḥaf*[16]).[17]

With respect to the codices, Yeivin develops an important temporal distinction, one he also qualifies (albeit in a single subclause). According to him, the Masoretic manuscripts written between 850 and 1100 are 'pure', cohesively Masoretic metatexts,[18] whereas manuscripts from after 1100 are admixtures of various Masoretic systems and show the influence of grammarians and even biblical interpreters.[19] Unfortunately, this point is left entirely unelaborated. Thus, it remains unclear whether the influence of these grammarians can be seen in the insertion of grammatical explanations or statistical evaluations of grammatical phenomena, or indeed whether such influences might not be interpreted as elements of textual exegesis.

One important aspect that has hitherto largely been disregarded to the best of my knowledge is the fact that many of the older Oriental codices were apparently never bound, as my doctoral student Kay Joe Petzold discovered during a visit to the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg and confirmed on the strength of an indicator already found in the work of Paul Kahle.[20] Although these codices are generally (and often rather hastily) described as 'model' codices (Hebrew sing. מוגה), they could be interpreted quite differently if this codicologically important aspect were to be studied in more detail and confirmed on the strength of additional evidence; in that event, they could be interpreted as representative samples of a text handed over to the scribes in an unbound, loose-leaf form for them to make multiple identical copies simultaneously. If this were so, the final canonization of Hebrew-Aramaic biblical scripture including accentuation, punctuation, and Masoretic metatext would, indeed, be intrinsically and provably linked to the origin of the codex. To what extent Jews hailing from Judaeo-Arabic

16 On the term *miṣḥaf*, cf. also Sarna 1974, Introduction, n. 20.

17 Cf. Oesch 1979, 117. However, he associates the attempt to unify the Tora, Prophets, and Writings in one book, but not with the Quran. It is also worth noting that this aspect is evidence that suggests that the early Masoretes may have been Karaites; producing a single codicological unit may have been an attempt to appreciate the prophetic books and hagiographs in themselves, i.e., not as part of the Tora. On the issue of the Scriptures as sanctuary, see n. 118 below.

18 Cf. Yeivin 2011, 9.

19 Thus, it is not surprising that Yeivin (2011) shows an explicit interest in the earliest manuscripts.

20 Codex Firkovich B 19a and *Codex Cairensis* are both stored in a box, unbound and as a loose-leaf collection. On Paul Kahle's new review of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets on the occasion of a visit he paid David Zeki Lishaʿ, leader of the local Karaite community in Abbasiye, Cairo on February 20th, 1956, see Kahle 1959, 91.

lands distinguished between *sefer* (book/scroll) and *qunṭres* (unbound quires),[21] and what significance was ascribed to these respective artefacts, would be subject to investigation in a separate phase, paying particularly close attention to Judaeo-Arabic (and Karaite) metatexts.

3 Hebrew biblical codices in Western Europe

The emphasis the Israeli biblical scholarship community has chiefly placed on early comprehensive Masoretic Oriental biblical manuscripts[22] and the Geniza fragments[23] has caused later European manuscripts (with few exceptions) to exist in something of a scholarly vacuum up to the present day, for they were and are considered philologically without merit. Such a philologically motivated consideration of manuscripts does not fit in very well with palaeographical findings, however, given that the latest estimates classify 5,000 manuscripts from the Hebrew manuscript tradition of the Jewish Middle Ages to be biblical (Tora scrolls and codices, as well as around 24,000 fragments from the Cairo Geniza[24]). On the other hand, research undertaken in the field of Jewish mediaeval studies that primarily focuses on the art-historical aspects of biblical manuscripts and prayer books[25] has yet to yield meaningful philological results. Similarly, codicological and palaeographical treatments, which have recently also begun to discuss European biblical manuscripts, often fail to pay much (if any) attention to Masoretic metatexts[26] or the philological side of things.[27]

21 See Liss 2014, 222f. on this very important distinction, particularly for European mediaeval Jews.

22 The earliest examples are Codex Petropolitanus (Ms. St. Petersburg, Codex FirkovichEBP I B 19a [1008]); Ms. *Jerusalem Crown* (*Codex Aleppo* [925]), and *Codex Cairensis* (896); on potential later dating of the *Codex Cairensis*, cf. Beit-Arié, Sirat and Glatzer 1997, 53–55; 67–68; cf. also Shalev-Eyni 2010, 155, n. 13 and the studies by Breuer 1976; Dotan 1971; Glatzer 2002; and Yeivin 1968.

23 Cf. also Goshen-Gottstein 1962, esp. 35–44.

24 Cf. the online database *The Friedberg Geniza Project* [see note 3]. Regarding the European Hebrew binding fragments, see the online database *Books Within Books*.

25 Cf. for instance Metzger 1972; Narkiss 1983; Metzger 1994; Kogman-Appel 2004, esp. 34–97; Kogman-Appel 2009.

26 For the definition of the term ‚metatext' as it is used here see Hilgert 2010, 98; Focken/Ott 2016.

27 Olszowy-Schlanger is an exception to this. In describing Ms. London Sassoon 282 = Valmadonna 1, she not only provides purely palaeographic data on script, seams, sewing, ruling, ink, and *mise-en-page*, but also a detailed comparison on vocalization (see Olszowy-Schlanger

In 1963, Moshe Goshen-Gottstein presented his first typology of codex types based on his examinations of the Geniza fragments, which was not merely palaeographically defined, but also provided for various categories of use and function. In this context, he distinguished between 'Masorah codices', 'study codices' and 'listener's codices'.[28] By 'Masorah codices', he meant those magnificent, comprehensively accented, and vocalized codices complete with *masora parva* and *magna*, which he believed to have been placed in scriptoria so that they might serve professional scribes as exemplars of the craft. 'Study codices', on the other hand, were those codices that, despite being vocalized, lacked Masoretic metatexts and were therefore likely intended for a more general audience of readers and students. 'Listener's codices' formed a class of mass-produced, quickly-made, and often sloppy copies of the Pentateuch, used by individual congregants to trace readings at synagogue. David Stern, building on Goshen-Gottstein's work, suggested a similar differentiation between 'Masoretic Bibles', 'liturgical Pentateuchs' and 'study Bibles'.[29] However, all these attempts at classification ended up demonstrating that none of the distinguishing criteria used were suitable for geographic and socio-cultural differentiation.

Additionally, both Goshen-Gottstein's and Stern's proposed typologies are made questionable by the fact that we know of copies of the Pentateuch that could very well have been intended for liturgical use, but also contain Masoretic metatexts. What is more, there appears to be no reason why comprehensive Masoretic Bibles could not have been used in synagogues. Stern's contribution therefore also fails to rise above the level of general observation (depending for the most part on the art-historical work of Katrin Kogman-Appel[30] and Sarit Shalev-Eyni[31]): he neither makes an attempt at geographic specificity, nor does he even begin to try cataloguing such criteria as one could use to more precisely classify individual (and partial) copies of the Bible.

Yet another point merits our attention: practically every author mentioned has reflexively assumed there to have been some sort of use at synagogue. However, the question of whether one was allowed to read from a (Pentateuch) codex at synagogue was still very much open to debate in the 12th century. Thus, there

2003, 109–140, esp. 129–137), on the interchange of *qamaṣ* and *pataḥ*, *segol* and *ṣere*, on the notation of *qamaṣ qaṭan*, on the consonant *waw* at the end of words, on *dagesh* and *rafe*, *dagesh qal* in the letters BGDKPT, and on the diacritical mark in the letter *shin*, among other things.

28 Cf. Goshen-Gottstein 1963, 35–44 (Goshen-Gottstein always kept writing 'Massora' with a double 's').

29 Cf. Stern 2012, esp. 236–240.

30 See esp. Kogman-Appel 2004.

31 See Shalev-Eyni 2010, esp. 2–18.

exists a point of dissent between Ashkenazic and Sephardic *posqim*, or 'deciders', on the subject of whether reading from *Ḥumashin*, or editions of the Pentateuch, at prayer service in the absence of a Tora scroll ought to be permissible.[32] Spanish, Provencal, and, initially, Northern French scholars[33] allowed such a reading (קריאה הברכה) in the event of a *minyan* being present, but not a scroll;[34] Ashkenazic scholars forbade this, arguing that the benediction (*berakha*) said over the ritual reading would then have been for naught (ברכה לבטלה).[35]

Maimonides,[36] in a response, gave permission for *berakha* to be said over *Ḥumash*, and in the process did not differentiate between public reading in the context of a *minyan* and private reading, for both were to be considered *limmud ha-tora* ('study of the Tora'). In doing so, Maimonides was able to rely on the opinion of the Gaonic *posqim*, who, while considering the question of whether one might read from a non-kosher Tora scroll or one written on *qelaf*, had decided that this ought to be permissible, reasoning that *berakha* was intended to be spoken not over the physical object, but the reading itself (i.e., the act of reading) (והשיב שמותר לברך שאין הברכה אלא על הקריאה).

Therefore, before one embarks on an attempt, whether general or specific, to reconstruct various 'Sitze im Leben' and to transplant modern methods of reading and study to the Jewish Middle Ages without bothering to consider the artefacts involved, it seems prudent to begin by establishing a list of criteria that can be used to examine the individual (partial) biblical codices. Any such catalogue, however, needs to concern itself with significantly more than the mere volume of biblical text or Masoretic metatext. With regard to the European biblical manuscripts, for example, one might ask:

1. Which books of the Bible are included in the codex?
2. Does the codex include the Hebrew (or, in exceptional cases, the Aramaic) biblical text only, or the Targum as well?
3. If it includes the (or a) Targum, is it part of the main body of text (alternating with the biblical text), or is it arranged in its own marginal column?[37]

32 See Ta-Shma 1999, 171–181.

33 It was not until the era of Rabbenu Tam, who was Rashi's grandson and R. Shemuel ben Me'ir's brother and agreed with the Ashkenazic view, that the prohibition was enforced in France; cf. Ta-Shma 1999, 172.

34 Cf. Ta-Shma 1999, 171.

35 See n. 1 above; also see the report by Simḥa ben Shemu'el from Vitry in the *Maḥzor Viṭry* (ed. Hurvitz) I, #117, 88, highlighting that the private reading should be completed at the same time as the public reading (לעולם ישלים אדם פרשיותיו עם הציבור שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום).

36 Cited in Ta-Shma 1999, 172.

37 Cf. Attia 2014 for a more extensive and recent treatment of the issue.

4. Is the text arranged in columns? If so, how many are there to a page?[38]
5. Which metatexts does the codex include? Can notations on sections of *parashiyyot* be found, and if so, what form do they take? Does the main body of text include *petuḥot* (open line divisions) and *setumot* (closed spaces), and if so, can one determine whether they refer to the space or line they occur in or the section before or after?
6. Can Masoretic notes (*masora parva*, *masora magna*) or Masoretic secondary sources and compilations (e.g., *Okhla we-Okhla*, *Sefer ha-Ḥilufin* 'Book of Variants'[39]) be found?
7. Are there references or even chapter headings, aside from *parashiyyot* notation and other section markers?
8. Does the codex include illuminations, sketches, or Hebrew micrography? How elaborate is the book (color materials, colored illumination, colored passages of text, etc.)?
9. Can Halakhic instructions concerning synagogue use or writing instructions be found in it?
10. Are there any obscure or extravagant notations?
11. Can references to text outside the biblical codex that would help to explain this or that external form be found?
12. Can one see whether certain texts are intended to be *read*? If so, which ones? Are there texts or metatextual elements (such as *tagin*[40]) that are not intended to be read aloud, but rather silently witnessed, whether to aid in more quickly locating part of the text or a liturgical section, to refer to some externality, or to reference additional texts not explicitly written into the codex, but 'implicitly cited'? Which symbols are simply noted for the sake of completeness?

In the following, I will start a discussion about these criteria by applying them to the *Regensburg Pentateuch* (Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52 #34698) and comparing them with other European biblical manuscripts,[41] with the aim of deconstructing and expanding the typology proposed by Goshen-Gottstein or Stern. Upon closer

38 According to Shalev-Eyni 2010, 4, Oriental codices and a number of European biblical manuscripts have a three-column layout on every page.

39 Cf. Dotan 1976; Ognibeni 1995.

40 See section 4.4 below.

41 Reference manuscripts have been (in order of age): Ms. St. Petersburg Firkovich B 19a (Codex Leningradensis; 1008); London, Valmadonna Trust Libr. 1 (Sassoon 282; 15. *tammuz* 4949 = 1189); Vat. ebr. 468 (La Rochelle, 6. Tishri 4976 = 1215); Vat. ebr. 482 (La Rochelle, 1216), Berlin or. quart. 9 (Northern France, 1233); Vat. ebr. 14 (Rouen, 21. *av* 4999 = 1239).

investigation, it becomes clear that the European biblical manuscripts in codex form, though superficially similar in that they include only the Pentateuch (with or without *Megillot*, and with or without *Haftarot*), actually differ from each other in nearly every other point. The question of why this should be so and what this implies with respect to approaching the individual manuscripts, who was permitted to use these manuscripts, to what end, and in which context he was supposed to use them has thus far barely been posed. In this context, one will only be able to differentiate and classify aspects more precisely if palaeographic, philological/historical, and sociocultural lines of inquiry are given equal weight. Comprehensive praxeological analyses of the handwritten artefacts of the Jewish Middle Ages — in our case, an inquiry into the materiality and presence of the script, including a consideration of its philological, ritual, and Halakhic nature — still need to be done for practically all the Hebrew biblical codices. Similarly, an effort to relate historical source material concerning rituals and Halakha to those artefacts available to us today still needs to be made, and the following is also intended to help satisfy that need. Given this rather preliminary state of affairs, my analysis is, above all, intended to help pave the way for a larger research project.

To begin with, the *Regensburg Pentateuch* will be subjected to palaeographic description, which will then be expanded upon using contemporary source material, or at least source material appropriate to the period in question. It is possible to show that many of this manuscript's idiosyncrasies are difficult or even impossible to explain without the help of external sources concerning *minhag*, Halakha and theological questions. This is intended to account for the fact that, when working with mediaeval manuscripts, one cannot simply content oneself with palaeographic and codicological examinations of the artefacts themselves, but must endeavor to understand the thinking and writing of the human beings who created those artefacts for a specific purpose and interacted with them in a special way.

4 The *Regensburg Pentateuch*

The *Regensburg Pentateuch*[42] is a manuscript that was probably compiled by two scribes and a total of four Masoretes in Regensburg *c*. 1300.[43] It was possibly commissioned by a rabbi named Gad ben Peter ha-Levi, who is mentioned as the owner of the manuscript.[44]

The *Regensburg Pentateuch* includes the Tora, the *Five Megillot*, the *Haftarot*, the Book of Job, and an excerpt from the Book of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 2:29–8:12, 9:24–10:16). The manuscript has drawn the attention of Israeli art historians, chiefly because of its elaborate illumination; for example, Katrin Kogman-Appel has examined the connection between Sephardic book illustration and the manuscript's illuminations of the sanctuary and the Temple's vessels in Jerusalem (fols 155v–156r).[45] More recently, Michal Sternthal has provided a thorough codicological and palaeographic analysis in a hitherto unpublished Master's thesis in Hebrew.[46] Special recognition is due to the fact that Sternthal does not merely concentrate on the iconographic aspects of the five full-page illustrations, but also discusses codicological and philological aspects at various points, thus taking into account not just the authors of the main body of text, but the three or four Masoretic individuals involved as well.[47]

42 Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52 [#34698]); cf. the Catalogues of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts (IMHM), The Hebrew University, http://aleph.nli.org.il:80/F/?func=direct&doc_number=000180179&local_base=NNLMSS (accessed in June 2017); cf. also the description of the illuminations in the Center of Jewish Art, *The Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art*: http://cja.huji.ac.il/browser.php?mode=treefriend&id=326&f=ntl_localname (accessed in June 2017).

43 The first scribe (David bar Shabbetai he calls himself at the end of book *Devarim* (Deuteronomy), fol. 152r) wrote the Tora and the Book of Esther, potentially a part of Masora as well (cf. Sternthal 2008, 16 n. 44). The second scribe, called Barukh, wrote the remaining parts. On the different Masoretic individuals involved, cf. extensively Sternthal 2008, 15–17, esp. 16, n. 43f.

44 Wischnitzer 1935, 305; Sternthal 2008, 17. R. Gad ben Peter from Regensburg was the son of the Jewish money-lender Peter bar Moshe ha-Levi (cf. also Schubert 2012, 59).

45 Kogman-Appel 2009; Offenberg 2013, 25 and 56.

46 I thank Dr Sara Offenberg, Bar Ilan University, for having placed a copy of Sternthal's book at my disposal.

47 Sternthal 2008, esp. 7–19 and 79–101.

4.1 Arrangement and contents of the manuscript

- Tora (including *masora parva* and *magna*): Genesis: 1v–39v; Exodus: 39v–71v; Leviticus: 71v–93r; Numbers: 93v–124r; Deuteronomy: 124r–152r.
- *Five Megillot* (including *masora parva* and *magna*): Esther: 158v–167v; Ruth: 168r–170r; Song of Songs: 170r–172r; Lamentations: 172r–174v; Ecclesiastes: 174v–179r.
- The sequence of the *Five Megillot* is unique among the complete and partial European Bibles we have examined up to this point. Other manuscripts also identified as Ashkenazic have a very similar arrangement (where Esther is recounted first): the London Harley 5706 manuscript (13th century) as well as British Library Add. 9404 and Or. 2786, in which the *Megillot* sequence runs like this: Esther / Song of Songs / Ruth / Lamentations / Ecclesiastes. This is an analogous progression (except that Ruth and Song of Songs switch positions).[48] The *Megillot* sequence, as well as that of the hagiographies, has yet to be investigated; an in-depth analysis of their content remains to be done.[49]
- *Blessings concerning Tora readings and Haftara:* 179r–180r, followed by the *Haftarot* (*incl. masora parva* and *magna*) for individual and special Shabbatot; 179v–224v; blessings to follow the Haftara reading: 224v–225r.

48 Ms. British Library Harley 5706, Add. 9404, Or. 2786 (Margoliouth 1905, vol. 1, #72, 46f.). My thanks to Dr Kay Joe Petzold, for this information, who worked on his Ph.D. within the scope of the collaborative research center SFB 933 'Materiale Textkulturen' (project B04, Gelehrtenwissen oder ornamentaler Zierrat? Die Masora der Hebräischen Bibel in ihren unterschiedlichen materialen Gestaltungen). He examined and compared the most important European biblical manuscripts and commentary manuscripts in this light and made this survey available to me. The information on Mss. Vatican ebr. 14, London, Valmadonna Trust Library 1 (Sassoon 282) and Berlin or. quart. 9 stated here come from Petzold's survey.

49 The sequence of the *Megillot* (and other Hagiographa) may differ significantly in the various (Bible) manuscripts: Mss. München heb. 5 (Rashi's commentary), Wrocław M1106 (complete Bible), and Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana B 30 inf. (complete Bible), which were all written between 1233 and 1239 by the same scribe and *naqdan* Yosef bar Qalonymus for the patron, Yosef ben Moshe, each contain the identical sequence of the *Megillot* (Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Lamentations), Psalms, and Job; cf. Petzold 2013). On the different sequence of the *Megillot*, cf. Ginsburg 1966, 3–4. Anyhow, the custom of reading the *Megillot* on the feasts of pilgrimage was unknown until Geonic times (cf. *Massekhet Soferim* XIV, 18, in: *Massekhtot Qeṭanot, Massekhet Sefer Tora and Massekhet Soferim* [ed. Higger 1930, in: *Responsa Project* 18]).

- *Additional biblical texts:* Job (incl. *masora parva, magna*): 225v–240r; curses from Jeremiah 2:29–8:12; 9:24–10:17; 240r–245r.[50]
- The inclusion of Job and the Jeremiah excerpts strikes one as odd at first. However, they comprise part of the reading for the fast and mourning day of the 9th of *Av* (*tishʿa be-av*).[51] Ms. Berlin or. quart. 9 also places Job directly behind the *Five Megillot*. R. Elʿazar ben Yehuda of Worms' *Sefer ha-Roqeaḥ* proves that Ashkenazic communities did, in fact, read Job and selected excerpts of the curses of Jeremiah in this way, for it explicitly mandates that 'it is forbidden (on *tishʿa be-av*) to read of Tora, the Prophets and the Writings, likewise to learn of the Mishna, the Midrash, Halakhot (anthologies) and Aggadot (anthologies). One must rather read *qinot* (Lamentations), Job and of the curses of Jeremiah.'[52]
- *Illustrations*: The manuscript includes a total of five full-page illustrations: the *Binding and Circumcision of Isaac*, 18v;[53] *Mattan Tora* ('Gift of the Tora'), 154v;[54] *Aharon*, the *Mishqan* (dwelling-place) and its equipment, 155v–156;[55] illustrations of the *Megillat Ester*, 157v;[56] and *Job and His Friends*, 225v.[57]
- The *Regensburg Pentateuch* is written entirely in Hebrew and does not include a Targum.

50 Such a survey is also provided by the following manuscripts: Princeton University, Sheide Library, Ms. 136 from 1313; and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 14 from 1340, both of which are of Ashkenazic provenance (cf. Sternthal 2008, 7, n. 14).

51 The Babylonian Talmud (bTaʿan 30a) states for *tishʿa be-av*, a day of fasting, that in private reading only such passages from the Bible and oral teaching are to be read that normally are not read (קורא במקום שאינו רגיל לקרות ושונה במקום שאינו רגיל לשנות). For public reading, in addition to reading Lamentations, the Book of Job and oracles of doom (הדברים הרעים) from the Book of Jeremiah are also mentioned. Nowadays, the Book of Lamentations is read on *ʿerev tishʿa be-av*, and on *tishʿa be-av*, Jeremiah 8:13–9:23 is read as well as Deuteronomy 4:25–40. During the three weeks of mourning between the 17th of *tammuz* and the 9th of *av*, Jeremiah 1:1–2:3; Jeremiah 2:4–28; 3,4, and Isaiah 1:1–27 are read as special Haftarot.

52 Cf. Elʿazar ben Yehuda, *Sefer Roqeaḥ, Hilkhot Tishʿa be-Av*, #310 (*Responsa Project* 18): ואסור לקרות בתורה ובנביאים ובכתובים ולשנות במשנה ובמדרש ובהלכות ובאגדות. וקורא בקנות ובאיוב ובדברים הרעים שבירמיה.

53 Cf. Sternthal 2008, 20–27.

54 Cf. Sternthal 2008, 27–33.

55 Cf. Sternthal 2008, 34–48.

56 Cf. Sternthal 2008, 48–51.

57 Cf. Sternthal 2008, 52–55.

4.2 *Mise-en-page*

The biblical text is arranged in columns.[58] At the start of a *parasha* ('section'), the first word of the sentence is frequently written in chrysography,[59] occasionally underlaid in blue and outlined in red.[60] The *masora parva* – and this is the first of several exceptional textual elements – is noted on the outer margins of the text, consistently from top to bottom and therefore aligned *vertically*, often in conjunction with writing instructions. The scribe drew fine, red vertical lines, which are frequently very difficult to see, to make the individual Masoretic notes more readable and easier to assign to the main text. Nevertheless, the initial impression is of a colorful mess of Masoretic notes, distributed across several columns (generally six to eight). In the upper and lower margins, the *masora magna* is consistently noted across multiple lines: two per page in the upper margin, and three in the lower margin.[61] The respective *parasha* was consistently noted by a later hand in the gap between the *masora magna* and the main body of text. Commentaries on the *masora parva* as well as the *masora magna* are noted along the inner margin. Latin pagination may be found at the lower right-hand corner of the verso page.

Throughout the Tora section (fols 1v–152r), the codex consistently includes 60 lines of biblical text per sheet, that is, 30 lines per *page* (this figure drops to 20 lines for the Book of Esther). The sheet (Hebrew דף) and page (Hebrew עמוד) structure are unusual in that each *verso* page begins with the letter *waw*, with the exception of six pages where a different letter is used. Those letters, in the chronological sequence of the text, form the words בי״ה שמ׳ו (i.e., 'Through Y׳H, His Name'; Psalm 68:5).[62] Masoretic scribal entries that make the reference to בי״ה

58 On the size of the manuscript (243 × 185 mm) and the text fields (Tora: 169–179 × 86–115; Esther: size varies), cf. Sternthal 2008, 79–80. The inaccuracy of the conventional distinction between Ashkenazic and French is already evident here. According to Shalev-Eyni 2010, esp. 2–12, French and Ashkenazic manuscripts differ primarily in that French editions of the Pentateuch do not include the Targum for the most part, but rather contain Rashi's commentary in the margin, and the biblical text is arranged in one column, while German editions of the Pentateuch 'traditionally' have a three-column layout and include the Targum (interlinear). Unfortunately, this neither holds true in the case of the manuscripts copied in France, Mss. Vat. ebr. 14 (1239) and Berlin or. quart. 9 (1233), nor in the case of the *Regensburg Pentateuch*.

59 Cf. fol. 8v: the beginning of *parashat Lekh Lekha* (Genesis 12).

60 On the individual variants produced by each scribe, cf. Sternthal 2008, esp. 93–97.

61 Cf. Sternthal 2008, 79–80; it is interesting that the *masora magna* in the Book of Esther is noted across four lines in the upper margin and across six lines in the lower margin.

62 Genesis 1:1 (בראשית), fol. 1v; 49,8 (יודוך), fol. 38v; Exodus 14:28 (הבאים), fol. 50v; 34:11 (שמר), fol. 65v; Numbers 24:5 (מה טובו), fol. 114v; Deuteronomy 31:28 (ואעידה), fol. 149v. This distinctive

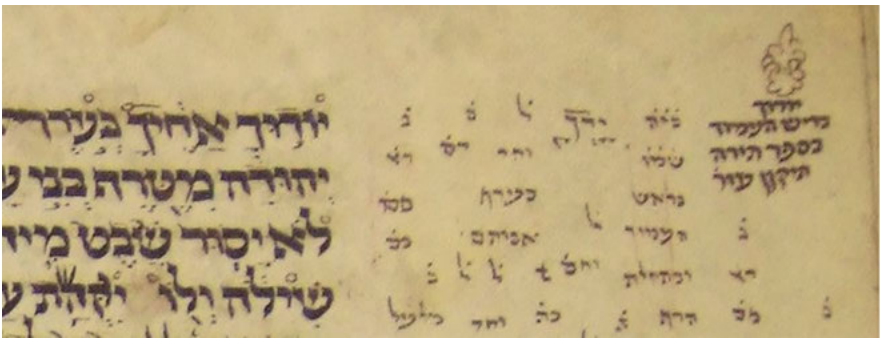

Fig. 1: Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52, fol. 38v. © Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

שמ״ו explicitly clear can be found everywhere in the book except Genesis 1:1.[63] In two further places (fols 38v and 50v[64]), the second Masoretic hand[65] noted the word missing from the sequence (יודוך und הבאים) and appended the following comment: בראש / העמוד / בספר / תורה / תיקון / עזרא (see Fig. 1).

The mediaeval debate concerning Halakha (religious laws) and *minhag* (custom) refers to this layout, wherein every page of a Tora scroll must begin with the letter *waw*, as in ווי העמודים (*wawe ha-ʿammudim*, 'the *wawim* of [the beginning of] a page'). This expression is derived from the description of the structure of the Ark of the Covenant, Israel's portable (!) sanctuary in the desert, and more precisely from that of the vestibule (*ḥaṣer*), in which the 'hooks of the pillars' are referred to.[66] That the scribe, David bar Shabbetai, endeavored to implement this idea is made abundantly clear by a comment found on the inner margin, starting at the level of the 13th line on fol. 152r:

ס)סך הכל העמודים / (מ)אה וחמשים / להעתיק ספרי / (ת)ורה הוא מתוקן / (בו)וי עמודים וס׳ / ששים שורות / כל עמוד ועמוד / סוף פסוק בסוף / כל עמוד ועמוד / וב״ה שמו כתיקנן

feature has already been noted by Sternthal 2008, 8, n. 19; she is right in pointing out that the first word on fol. 66v, Exodus 35:19 (את בגדי), does not belong to the group of בי״ה שמ״ו.

63 Fol. 38v: בי״ה / שמ״ו / בראש / העמוד / בתחלת / הדף; fol. 50v: בי״ה / שמ״ו / בראש / העמוד; fol. 65v: בי״ה / שמ״ו / בראש / העמוד; fol. 114v: בי״ה / שמ״ו / בראש / העמוד / בראש / הדף; fol. 149v: בי״ה / שמ״ו / בראש / הדף. The forwards slash marks each a new row.

64 In fol. 65, a note by the Masorete is recorded: זה היה / בראש / העמוד / בספר / תורה / תיקון / עזרא.

65 Sternthal 2008, 15, locates two Masoretic individuals in the section written by a scribe called David (Tora and Esther, fols 1v–167v), who would have been working in parallel and 'intertwined', as it were.

66 Exodus 27:10.11; 38:10.11.12.17.

> In sum, (the number of) pages (amounts to) one hundred and fifty; to copy Tora scrolls, they shall be arranged (in the style of) *wawe ha-ʿammudim*; (namely,) sixty lines to each column[67] and a verse end to every (recto) page. And, likewise, (exceptions as per) בי״ה שמ״ו in accordance with this principle.

A Tora scroll written on *gewil* (compare e.g. Babylonian Talmud *Baba Batra* 15a; Maimonides, *Mishne Tora*, *Hilkhot Tefillin* I, 8–9)[68] notes the biblical text on one side only, generally on the inner layer adjacent to the flesh. If a Tora folio has been written by following the layout of *wawe ha-ʿammudim*, the *waw* can be seen at the beginning of the page on the upper right, and all sixty lines will be simultaneously visible to the reader (at least in theory). A codex whose individual sheets are inscribed on both sides must therefore note the beginning of a page, using the w*aw* on the verso side, to ensure that the sixty lines remain visible to the reader as intended. This also explains the fact that this manuscript — as is true of many Ashkenazic manuscripts, incidentally — has very similar outer and inner layers.[69] Entries made in the hand of the manuscript's user/owner in 1601 confirm that this style of page layout had become commonplace by then.[70]

4.3 Section markers

Manuscripts produced as early as those found at Qumran already display signs of textual and sectional structuring.[71] Even now, we only understand this partially, because what documentation and evidence there is seems remarkably inconsistent and heterogeneous. This is all the more surprising given that the rabbinical texts were at first glance in favor of drawing a clear distinction between *petuḥa* and *setuma*, as is shown by a dictum from *Massekhet Sefer Tora*, and that the suitability of a Tora scroll for liturgical use seems to depend on such structuring.

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67 'Column' (*ʿammud*) in a Tora scroll contains 60 lines per sheet (i.e., a one-sided written '*blat*'); in this case, the double-sided written leaf ('*zayt*') on each page (recto and verso) consists of 30 lines of text in the main text body on each page, i.e., the biblical text.

68 Cf. esp. Haran 1985, 33–47. *Gewil* is the thickest skin, from which only the epidermis, i.e., hair and the outermost layer, are removed (*gewil* is effectively synonymous with עור 'skin', in rabbinic literature). In contrast, *qelaf* und *dukhsustos* (the hair side) are finer than *gewil* (cf. bShabb. 79b; bMenaḥ. 32a). However, see also the discussion of the diverse terms by Ira Rabin in her contribution to this volume.

69 This is also confirmed by Sternthal 2008, 79, who examined the original manuscript. On the work on Ashkenazic manuscripts, cf. for instance Sirat 2002, esp. 102–122.

70 Cf. also Sternthal 2008, 11, n. 30.

71 Cf. Ginsburg 1897, 9–24; Oesch 1979, esp. 165–314; Tov 2001, 50–53.

> If an open section was written as a closed one, or vice versa, the scroll had to be stored away. What is an 'open' section? The one which starts at the beginning of a line. How much space must be left at the end of a line so that the section beginning at the next line can be called an open one? (A space on which) a name may be written consisting of three letters.[72]

The *Regensburg Pentateuch* also indicates so-called 'open' (*petuḥot*) and 'closed' (*setumot*) sections by writing the letters *pe* (פ) and *samekh* (ס) in brown and red ink (with an intensity comparable to that of the main text); in certain places, a later hand, using light brown ink, notes departures from a Tora scroll in this regard.[73] The scribe, David, clearly understood that a number of varying regional traditions existed with respect to *petuḥot* and *setumot*. Prior to the onset of the Book of Esther, he noted his (Ashkenazic) source material (from Regensburg) as well as such (Northern French) deviations as were known to him, though he also remarked that each of the manuscripts he listed was personally handwritten by eminent Halakhic scholars:

> (With respect to the) *petuḥot* and *setumot* of the Esther scroll, I obtained (them) from a personally (handwritten) manuscript (*ketivat yado*) from R. Yehuda the Pious (*he-Ḥasid*),[74] son of Rabbenu Shemu'el the Pious, may his soul be bound up in the bond of life: *Also Vashti the Queen* (Esther 1:9) closed; *Then the king said to the wise men* (Esther 1:13) — open (...).[75] And he who is precise in this regard (והמדקדק), upon him be blessings.[76]

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72 *Massekhet Sefer Tora* I,10, in *Massekhtot Qeṭanot*, *Massekhet Sefer Tora* und *Massekhet Soferim*; ed. Higger 1930, in *Responsa Project* 18; see also Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 103b.

73 See, for instance, fol. 72r; 75r even three times: ובס״ת סתומה or rather ובס״ת ס; fol. 88v: ובקצת ס״ת הוא סתומה; fol. 89r: ובס״ת אינו כלום; fol. 90r: וברוב ס״ת לא מצאתי שום.

74 R. Yehuda ben Shemu'el he-Ḥasid ('the Pious'), born *c.* 1150 in Speyer — died 1217 in Regensburg.

75 Subsequent topics are a list of the open and closed sections starting with Esther 1:16; 2:1; 2:5; 2:21; 3:8; 3:1 (the sequence of Esther 3:8 and 3:1 has, indeed, been interchanged); 4:1; 6:1; 7:5; 8:1; 8:3; 8:7, 8:15; 9:7; 9:10; 9,29; 10:1; the scribe also lists the deviations in the scroll of Esther according to Rabbenu Tam (Yaʿaqov ben Meʾir 'Rabbenu Tam' [born in Troyes *c.* 1100 – died 1171]) and R. Yosef Ṭov Elem (Yosef ben Shemu'el Bonfil Ṭov Elem [*c.* 980–1050]); and the debate referring to this by Eliyahu ha-Zaqen.

76 In Hebrew: פתוחות וסתומות של מגילת אסתר והעתקתים מכתיבת ידו של הרב ר׳ יהודה חסיד בן רבינו שמואל חסיד ת׳נ׳ב׳ה. / גם ושתי המלכה סתומה. ויאמר המלך לחכמים פתוחה. ויאמר מומכן פתוחה. אחר הדברים האלה כשך פתוחה. איש יהודי סתומה. בימים ההם ומרדכי ? סתום. ויאמר המן מלך פתוח. אחר הדברים פתו׳. ומרדחי ידע סתום׳. / ובמגילת של רבינו תם מכתיבת ידו נמצאת פתוחה שורה. ובמגילת הר׳ יוסף טוב עלם מכתיבת ידו נמצאת סתומה. ורבינו אליהו הזקן זכור לטוב זקן זקינו של מרתי אמר מסכס׳? לדברי רבינו תם לעשותה פתוחה שורה. / בלילה ההוא סתומה. ויאמר המלך אחשורוש פתוחה. ביום ההוא נתן סתומה. ותוסף אסתר סתומה. ויאמר והנה בית המן סתומה. ומרדכי יצא סתומה. ואת פרשנדתא סתומה. עשרת בני המן סתום׳. ותכתב אסתר המלכה פתוחה.ובמגילת רבינו תם כתיבת ידו נמצאת פתוחה שורה. ובמגילת רבינו יוסף טוב עלם סתומה. וישם המלך אחשרש סתו? / והמדקדק׳ יבא עליו ברכה

The manner in which *petuḥa* and *setuma* are characterized here leads one to conclude that the word *parasha* ought to be appended, a conclusion that is reinforced by the manuscript itself. *Petuḥa* and *setuma* are thus used to describe those sections that follow their respective spaces in the text.[77] Comparing the list made here with the transcription of the Book of Esther that immediately followed, however, has the effect of highlighting a total of seven discrepancies between David's list and the finished manuscript.[78]

Even in the High Middle Ages, there still existed a great many colorful disagreements on the subject of *petuḥot* and *setumot*. This is made clear by the fact that Maimonides (1135–1204), in his *Mishne Tora*, *Hilkhot Tefillin*, *u-Mezuza we-Sefer Tora* VIII, 1, 2, and 4, chose to make a thorough study of this very subject, as part of which he listed (in VIII, 4) the entire corpus of *petuḥot* and *setumot* in the Pentateuch, simply to put an end to the general confusion.[79] For the purpose of this analysis, representative samples of *petuḥot* and *setumot* were taken from the Book of *Wayyiqra* (Leviticus) and contrasted with selected European manuscripts from France and Ashkenazic lands as well as the Codex Leningradensis.[80] In several places, the *petuḥot* and *setumot* marked in the *Regensburg Pentateuch* are at odds with those of Maimonides and the other manuscripts.[81]

77 The fact that no agreement on this was reached in mediaeval Jewish texts has already been pointed out by Oesch 1979, esp. 49–59.

78 Esther 1:9: open (instead of closed); Esther 2:21: open; Esther 6:1: open; Esther 7:5: closed (instead of open); Esther 8:1: open; Esther 8:3: open; Esther 9:29: closed. Sternthal 2008, 12, n. 31, notes four deviations.

79 Maimonides, *Mishne Tora*, *Hilkhot Tefillin*, *u-Mezuza we-Sefer Tora* VIII, 4: ולפי שראיתי שיבוש גדול בכל הספרים שראיתי בדברים אלו, וכן בעלי המסורת שכותבין ומחברין להודיע הפתוחות והסתומות נחלקים בדברים אלו במחלוקת הספרים שסומכין עליהם, ראיתי לכתוב הנה כל פרשיות התורה הסתומות והפתוחות וצורת השירות כדי לתקן עליהם כל הספרים ולהגיה מהם, וספר שסמכנו עליו בדברים אלו הוא הספר הידוע במצרים שהוא כולל ארבעה ועשרים ספרים שהיה בירושלים מכמה שנים להגיה ממנו הספרים ועליו היו הכל סומכין לפי שהגיהו בן אשר ודקדק בו שנים הרבה והגיהו פעמים רבות כמו שהעתיקו ועליו סמכתי בספר התורה שכתבתי כהלכתו. See Penkower 1981 on the question of whether the codex from Egypt mentioned here is identical to the codex recognized today as the Aleppo Codex (*Keter Aram Ṣova*).

80 The examinations of Ms. St. Petersburg, Codex Firkovich EBP I B 19a here are based on the digital facsimile (PDF format) of the manuscript; the edition of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) has turned out to be markedly erroneous once again, also in terms of the issues raised here.

81 Maimonides notes a total of 52 *petuḥot* and 46 *setumot* in the Book of Leviticus. The *Regensburg Pentateuch* differs from the list in *Hilkhot Sefer Tora*, 26 times entirely and six times in part; a *petuḥa* is listed 8 times instead of *setuma*; three sections are denoted as *setuma* instead of *petuḥa*; there are seven cases of additional *petuḥot*, and seven of additional *setumot*.

For the purposes of this comparison of open (*petuḥot*) and closed (*setumot*) sections, the definition given by Maimonides[82] and the *Maḥzor Viṭry* was adopted, as our manuscript was evidently written with a similar understanding in mind. Accordingly, an open section (*petuḥa* פ) is defined as always beginning at the start of a line. Should the previous line have been so thoroughly filled as to allow no room for three (*Maḥzor Viṭry*)/nine (Maimonides) letters,[83] a line had to be left blank, and one had to begin at the start of the the next (third) line. A closed section (*setuma* ס) may begin at the end of a line, after a space in the middle, where one or two words may be placed at the start of the line. Occasionally, there is only room for a small space at the end of a line; in that case, a space of at least three letters must be placed at the beginning of the second line if the subsequent section is to be described as closed.

Although Maimonides distinguished only between *petuḥot* and *setumot*, the version of the Pentateuch included in *the Regensburg Pentateuch* makes use of two more types of space or section marker: סדורה (*sedura*, 'in a special order') and שורה (*shura,* 'line'). The *sedura* is found in five different places in the Book of Leviticus alone.[84] Both the well-known Masoretic commentator Yedidya Shlomo ben Avraham Norzi (1560–1626)[85], in his *Minḥat Shay*, and the more latter-day Israel Yeivin claim that this method of structuring sections is real, though poorly understood.[86] The *Minḥat Shay* connects it with the so-called *Sefer Tagi*,[87] which (in certain handwritten recensions) is incorporated in the so-called *Maḥzor Viṭry*, R. Simḥa of Vitry's compendium of Halakhic injunctions on the subject of customs (*minhagim*) and prayer; according to recent research, it is traceable to Northern France, and more precisely to the School of Rashi (*mi-deve Rashi*).[88] The *Maḥzor Viṭry* provides a complete explanation of the *parasha sedura*:[89]

82 Maimonides, *Mishne Tora, Hilkhot Tefillin, u-Mezuza we-Sefer Tora* VIII,1–2.

83 The word למשפחותיכם (Exodus 12:21; Numbers 33:54) is quoted here as an example.

84 Fols 78v, 80r, 83r, 90r, and 93r.

85 *Commentary on Numbers* 26:5 (ed. Betser 2005, 316).

86 Yeivin 2011, 40.

87 On the *Sefer Tagi*, also see the following descriptions below.

88 Regarding the relationship between the *Maḥzor Viṭry* and the *Siddur Rashi*, see the detailed account in Lehnardt 2007.

89 *Maḥzor Viṭry* (ed. Hurwitz 1963), vol. II, par. 519, p. 658: סדורה. כל שכותב והולך השיטה עד חצייה או עד שלישיתה ומניחה. ומתחיל לכתוב בשיטה אחרת של מטה לה כנגד ההנחה של אותה שיטה עליונה. זו היא סדורה: זו מצאתי בסידור קדמוני.; cf. also Tosafot, bMenaḥ. 32a (ed. *Responsa Project*); here, the last sentence (זו מצאתי בסידור קדמוני) is formulated in the third person singular, indicating a reference to Rabbenu Tam. Just how complex the mediaeval reception of *petuḥot* and *setumot* was regarding the differences between Ashkenazic and Sephardic sources is shown in the explanation of *petuḥot* und *setumot* provided by R. Yaʿaqov ben Asher (Baʿal ha-Ṭurim; *c.* 1269 [Cologne]–1340 [Toledo]); in his

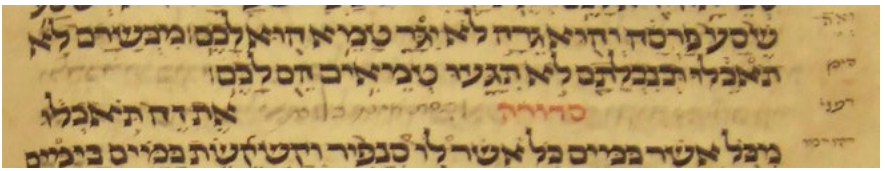

Fig. 2: Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52, fol. 78v. © Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

> Sedura: (If) a man writes, and the line goes through the middle or to the (last) third and stops, and (if he then) begins to write on the line placed underneath, and (if) he does so at the precise place (where the text stopped) in the above line, then that is a *sedura*. I found it explained this way in an older *siddur*.[90]

This explanation does indeed correspond to the form of *sedura* found in the *Regensburg Pentateuch* (see Fig. 2).

These section markers can also be found in Codex Firkovich EBP I B 19a, Ms. London, Valmadonna Trust Library 1 (Sassoon 282; 1189) and Ms. Vat. ebr. 14 as well as in later European biblical manuscripts. However, they are not always identified as such. Codex Firkovich EBP I B19 a and Vat. ebr. 14 have a three-column layout on every page, whereas Vat. ebr. 468 and 482 have two columns – and herein might lie the explanation of the existence of *sedura*. It would appear that the *sedura* form replaced *petuḥa* in cases where a line simply contained too little text (i.e., too few letters) to permit the insertion of a suitably large space at the end that could have been used to introduce a *petuḥa*. In that event, however, these distinctions are not motivated by content so much as by concerns about form, concerns that are intimately related to page layout.

The *Regensburg Pentateuch*, aside from the *sedura*, also provides a definition of שורה (*petuḥa shura*),[91] i.e., a *petuḥa* following on the heels of a blank line (typically represented by a simple ש in that same line).

Arbaʿa Ṭurim, Yore Deʿa paragraph 275 (ed. *Responsa Project*), he points out a different model, opposing the one mentioned in *Maḥzor Viṭry*, and mentions that this model was introduced by his father, R. Asher ben Yeḥiʾel (known by the acronym ROSH, ר״אש; *c.* 1250–1327). Also see Oesch 1979, esp. 47f.

90 On the term *siddur* in the Hebrew sources of the Jews in 12th- and 13th century Northern France (*ṣarfat*), see Lehnhardt 2007, 66, n. 5.

91 Fols 8v; 17v; 20r (mentioned as alternatives); 27r; 27v; 28v; 30r; 115r, et al. The term is also explicitly mentioned as פתוחה שורה in the list of *petuḥot* and *setumot* within the Book of Esther, fol. 158v.

4.4 *Tagin*

One of the peculiarities of the *Regensburg Pentateuch* is the manner in which it decorates certain letters with so-called *tagin* (sing.: *taga* תָּגָא / תָּאגָא)[92], or decorative 'crowns'/ 'crownlets'.

There is no common consensus on *tagin* in rabbinical and medieval literature: the Babylonian Talmud (b. *Menaḥot* 29b) says that seven letters in a given Tora scroll (*shin*, *ʿayin*, *ṭet*, *nun*, *zayin*, *gimel*, and *ṣade*; the mnemonic is שעטנז גץ) ought to be specially ornamented.

The Talmud (b. *Soṭa* 20a) makes reference to a *taga* on the letter *dalet*; the letter *quf*, too, was apparently so adorned (b. *Shabbat* 104a; b. *ʿEruvin* 13a). According to b. *Shabbat* 89a and b. *Menaḥot* 29b, Moshe encountered God himself, tying crowns (*ketarim*) to the tops of letters; God, upon being asked why he would do such a thing, responded that R. Aqiva (in the future) would be able to derive untold numbers of Halakhic rules from each 'tittle' (sing. *qoṣ*) (b. *Menaḥot* 29b; cf. b. *ʿEruvin* 21b). Compared to this tale, the account provided by *Massekhet Sofrim* seems very thin: *Massekhet Soferim* IX,1 can only offer a reference to four *tagin* on the *bet* of the first word of the Tora (*be-reshit*). R. Moshe ben Naḥman (Ramban; 1194–1270), in the introduction to his Tora commentary, relies on the rabbinical account in b. *Menaḥot* 29b, but enhances this with an (unfortunately lost) Midrash story from the *Midrash Shir ha-Shirim*, according to which King Hezekiah showed the *Sefer Tagi* to the Babylonian delegation of Merodach-Baladan. Maimonides counted the *tagin* on the individual letters of '*tefillin*' and '*mezuzot*' (sixteen, all told), but ruled that a departure from that number, whether positive or negative, would not have the effect of making the ritual object unusable (*pasul*).[93]

The rabbinical sources considered it self-evident that *tagin* would be noted on (as of yet unvocalized) consonant text, and most certainly on a scroll, because codices were not yet in use for sacred texts. We therefore have no information on what was intended to happen to *tagin* in the event of a scroll's being transcribed to codex form. To the best of my knowledge, the Oriental Masoretic codices (Ben Asher / Ben Naftali School) did not make a practice of adding *tagin* to letters.[94]

92 Cf. Targ Cant 3,11.

93 Maimonides, *Mishne Tora, Hilkhot Tefillin, u-Mezuza we-Sefer Tora* II:9.

94 So far, Codex Firkovich EBP I B 19a, the remaining parts of the Book Deuteronomy from the Aleppo Codex (www.aleppocodex.org; accessed in June 2017), and the *Regensburg Pentateuch* have been checked.

Fig. 3: Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52, fols. 71v/72r. © Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Modern Tora scrolls assign three *tagin* to each of seven letters (ז,ג,ז,נ,ט,ע,ש), one to each of five (ה,י,ח,ק,ד,ב), and none to the remaining nine (ר,פ,ו,ס,ת,כ,א,ל,מ).[95] I have yet to find any evidence of this custom in more ancient sources.

The *Regensburg Pentateuch*, however, completely fails to note these 'regular' *tagin* assigned to the letters שעטנז גץ, instead making use of *tagin* which the *Sefer Tagi* either lists as exceptions or fails to mention at all (see Fig. 3). The *Sefer Tagi* is a rather mysterious source in its own right. It can be found as part of the *Maḥzor Viṭry*. The version included in Hurvitz' edition[96] was also recorded in Ginsburg's *Massorah*[97] (with minor discrepancies). Ginsburg's lists and those of the *Maḥzor Viṭry* do not quite tally with each other, and given this background, it is hardly surprising that the *Regensburg Pentateuch* makes use of yet another tradition. Some special *tagin* cannot be found, but a number of others can, and these are left unmentioned by what has hitherto been considered the relevant source material.

A representative analysis was made of the text of Leviticus 1:1–5:26. We were able to show that the *Sefer Tagi's* (list of) letters featuring special *tagin*, as reproduced in the Hurvitz edition of the *Maḥzor Viṭry*,[98] is largely a match for our

95 Cf. *The Torah Reader's Compendium* (Gold 2004 ad loc.).

96 *Maḥzor Viṭry* (ed. Hurwitz 1963), vol. II, 674–683.

97 Ginsburg 1883, vol. II, 680–701.

98 *Maḥzor Viṭry* (ed. Hurwitz 1963), vol. II, 674–683. However, it can be said restrictively that a critical edition of the *Maḥzor Viṭry* is yet to be made. The lore of *Sefer Tagi* in Hurwitz' edition goes back to Ms. London Add. 27200–27201 (Margolioth No. 655; mid-13th century; cf. Margoliouth 1905, vol. II, 273–74) and is only contained in this handwritten tradition.

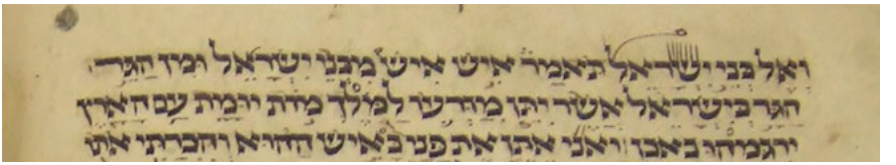

Fig. 4: Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52, fol. 80v. © Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

manuscript.[99] The manuscript itself fails to mention or explain this, and even the *Sefer Tagi* merely lists the consonants in question in chronological order.[100] What is more, there apparently existed a number of variant approaches: the *Sefer Tagi* of the *Maḥzor Viṭry* refers to additional *tagin* on the word ישראל in Leviticus 20:2, which can be found on fol. 86v of the *Regensburg Pentateuch* and do, indeed, adorn the first ישראל (see Fig. 4), whereas Ms. Valmadonna 1 applies these *tagin* to each of its three iterations of ישראל.

Ultimately, though, this is nitpicking and fails to address the question of why *tagin* are noted in the first place, and moreover why *tagin* were chosen that differ from those of a Tora scroll. This, at the very latest, is where Sternthal's suggestion that the *Regensburg Pentateuch* was a 'model' codex designed to assist in writing Tora scrolls falls short or breaks down. Before we use the next section to address this question, we ought to make a brief study of the Masoretic notes and other metatexts that form part of the *Regensburg Pentateuch*.

4.5 *Masora parva* and *masora magna*

Sternthal discerned a total of four Masoretic scribes;[101] to some extent, they apparently worked together. The *masora parva* encloses up to nine columns per page and is written vertically. The individual columns are separated from one another by brown or red lines (some of which are quite difficult to see today). The *masora magna* is noted in the upper and lower margins and encloses 2–3 lines per upper and 3–5 lines per lower margin.

99 There are five deviations with respect to the letter *he* (22 listed verses); *mem sufit* (1×): no deviation; *samekh* (3×): no deviation; *pe* (10×): one deviation; *ṣade* (1×): no deviation; *resh* (3×): no deviation.

100 *Maḥzor Viṭry* (ed. Hurwitz 1963), vol. II, p. 674: ואני הלבלר אסדר כל אותיות גדולות וקטנות ומשונות ותגיהן בכל סידרא וסידרא לבד לבד.

101 See note 42 above.

Fig. 5: Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52, fol. 58r. © Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

A clean distinction between *masora parva* and *masora magna* cannot always be made, however. The marginal *masora* includes much more commentary than would be par for the course in an Oriental codex; it contains a number of textual elements that fall decidedly outside the usual scope of an *masora parva* note. Occasionally, this even rises to the level of including excerpts of Midrash, as may readily be seen in fol. 58r: the expression הרונמה השעית השקמ, from Exodus 25:31, makes use of the *plene* rendition of the *nifʿal* form הִשָּׁעִיתֵ.[102] The Oriental codices mostly display incorrect spelling and present some short *masora parva* notes on the occurence of the *nifʿal*-form.[103]

Ms. Jerusalem 180–52 provides the complete design context (must be read vertically; see Fig. 5): ז׳ ו׳ חס׳ ודין מל׳ ורמז שעתיד שלמה י׳ מנורו׳ (‘the *nifʿal* form ת(י)עשה

102 Most of Western European Hebrew biblical codices use this plene spelling, such as Ms. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana B 30 inf. (copied in 1236); Ms. Oxford Bodleian Library, Kennicott 3 (Neubauer 2325; 1299); Ms. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica ebr. 468 (La Rochelle, 1215); Ms. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica ebr. 482 (La Rochelle, 1216); and Ms. New York, Public Library, Spencer Collection 1 (Xanten, 1294). On the debate about the orthography of this verbal form and the Masoretic discussions on this issue in Jewish Bible commentaries from Northern France and England, see Liss 2013, esp. 1127–1130.

103 Cod. Vatican ebr. 448 (ed. A. Diez Macho, *The Pentateuch with the Masorah Parva and the Masorah Magna and with Targum Onkelos Ms. Vat. ebr. 448*. 5 vols, Jerusalem: Makor 1977, fol. 119v) notes the letter *yud* as י (not as 10x!) as *masora parva*, presumably to point out the plene spelling or the numerical equivalent ten; St. Petersburg Codex Firkovich EBP I B 19a notes ז, i.e. this word occurs seven times in its *nifʿal* form in the Bible (Exodus 25:31; 35:2; Leviticus 2:7.11; 6:14; 23:3; Nehemiah 6:9; the reference to three plene spelling refers already to the word מנורה).

occurs seven times, is written incorrectly six times, and rendered *plene* here as a reference to the ten *menorot* that Shlomo would erect in the Temple').[104]

Thus, our scribe, in just a few strokes of the quill, turns a statistical blip into a major point of exegesis. Such examples are found throughout the work and demonstrate that the scribe responsible for this Pentateuch (or perhaps the man who commissioned it) was interested in crafting a written Tora into which an oral Tora could be integrated through statistical annotations. How much was integrated into the Masoretic notes alone is a question that can only be answered with the help of a detailed editorial study.

4.6 Metatext and peculiarities of script

The letters of the *Regensburg Pentateuch* are unusual in a number of respects. The letter *pe* is occasionally rendered as *pe lefufa*, for instance, where the beginning of the letter is rolled up to form a spiral. Such idiosyncratic letters can also be found in Ms. Valmadonna 1, for example. Other idiosyncrasies concerning particular letters occur in accordance with a number of references listed in the *Maḥzor Viṭry*.[105] These peculiarities of script are very clearly intended to be merely seen and not read aloud, because neither the unusually formed letters nor those ornamented with *tagin* are pronounced in a different way; only the design of the *scripture* changes.

Certain idiosyncrasies of script have led one to see a 'model' codex in the *Regensburg Pentateuch*, designed as a template for scribes with the task of writing Tora scrolls. Accordingly, David the scribe periodically makes a note of prescriptions created for the writing of scrolls, such as the injunction (in two separate places) that a gap of at least four blank lines be left between two books of the Bible.[106]

The observations made thus far should suffice to make my point. It has been shown that the *Regensburg Pentateuch* is a special manuscript, and one that merits more than just consideration from a palaeographic point of view; it requires the reader to be familiar with certain Halakhic rules, discourses, or theological and exegetic interpretations – content that must be discovered *underneath the*

104 Cf. 1Kgs 7:49; see also *Tan Behaʿalotkha* 3.

105 On the idiosyncratic letters and specific features of the page layout, cf. *Hilkhot Sefer Tora* in the *Maḥzor Viṭry* (ed. Hurwitz 1963), vol. II, 658–674.

106 Cf. fols 39v and 71v (in red ink): ארבעה שורות מלאות פתוחות בין ספר לספר; cf. already *Massekhet Sefer Tora* II:5 and *Massekhet Soferim* II:4, in *Massekhtot Qeṭanot*, *Massekhet Sefer Tora* and *Massekhet Soferim* (ed. Higger 1930, in *Responsa Project* 18).

façade of the manuscript's external form – and the manuscript was intended to show how important such content was to the people who interacted with it. A representative effort along these lines will be made in the final part of this paper, based on the information provided by the *wawe ha-ʿammudin* and the *tagin*, in an attempt to better approximate a possible function of our manuscript in the context of religious life and thought in 12th and 13th century Ashkenazic Germany.

5 Masterminds behind the manuscript

5.1 The debate surrounding the making of a *sefer Tora*

The rule that a *sefer Tora* be rendered in sixty lines to a sheet is found in the work of Rabbenu Tam[107] and is thus (only) proven to have existed as of the 11th century. Likewise, the prescription according to which each page of the Tora[108] must begin with a *waw* is not found in the classical rabbinical 'smaller tractates', *Massekhet Soferim* and *Massekhet Sefer Tora*. In light of this fact, it hardly seems surprising that the scribe would want to backdate this prescription to Ezra (who was occasionally called *ʿEzra ha-Sofer*), though such a connection is far from (Halakhically) obvious.[109] On the contrary, as Israel Ta-Shma has shown, this matter was the subject of serious dissent, which Ta-Shma characterized as having taken place between scribes (*soferim*), or 'artists', and Halakhic authorities, or 'intellectuals'.[110] Ta-Shma identified this debate as having occurred during the active period of R. Meʾir ben Barukh of Rothenburg's life (also known as MaHaRaM) in the 13th century.[111] Meʾir's position is recounted by one of his students, who does not exactly mince words while discussing that of his *soferim* contemporaries who recorded Tora using the *wawe ha-ʿammudim* layout:

> That which the ignorant ones (among the) scribes do, namely that they begin each page with a *waw*, is called *wawe ha-ʿammudim*, (and on the contrary) it seems to me (to be) absolutely

107 Cf. *Maḥzor Viṭry* (ed. Hurwitz 1963), vol. II, 655: ושיעור שורות דף ששים.

108 The Tora scroll is inscribed on one side only.

109 *Tiqqun Ezra* is located in the Hebrew (High) Middle Ages, when a reference to the (proto)-rabbinic period became necessary. This is why the term is not found in rabbinic literature; cf. also Bernheimer 1924, 207, n. 1.

110 Cf. Ta-Shma 1996, 99–104.

111 R. Meʾir ben Barukh of Rothenburg, *c.* 1215 (in Worms) – 1293 (in Wasserburg a. Inn); cf. Hans-Georg von Mutius 1990.

Fig. 6: Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52, fol. 151v. © Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

> forbidden; (to accomplish this,) they must arrange the pages alternatingly wide and narrow, and (as a consequence) there are sometimes large letters, which is impermissible… sometimes also strange letters with overhangs, (so) that each page may begin anew with a *waw* […] And behold, I wrote to my master […] on this matter, and he agreed fully with me, and these are the words he used to answer me: 'And regarding what you wrote me concerning the Tora scrolls (that use the layout of) *wawe ʿammudim*, I (too) believe it to be wrongheaded, as you wrote, for it is not traceable to the words of Tora, nor to those of the *soferim*, (but merely) to a scribe, R. Leontin of Mühlhausen,[112] who (thereby) wanted to prove his artistic mettle. If (today) I were to write a *sefer Tora*, I would make a great effort to ensure no page would begin with a *waw*, excepting whatever begins with (the word) ואעידה [Deuteronomy 31:28bβ].'[113]

R. Meʾir, who further defended this position in his commentaries on Maimonides' injunctions to the scribes of Tora scrolls,[114] was clearly not the only one who objected to this custom.[115] He interpreted it as pure vanity on the part of scribes – a practice that, to make things worse, also caused an unacceptably large number of letters to appear as *litterae dilatabiles* (or deformed letters). This is an effect that pervades the *Regensburg Pentateuch* (Fig. 6).

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112 Mentioned by Zunz 1865, 174 as 'Leontin from Mühlhausen, a scribe'.

113 Hebrew text as edited by Ta-Shma 1996, 99: מה שנהגו סופרים בורים להתחיל כל עמוד בוי״ו, וקורין לו ווי העמודים, נראה שאיסור גמור יש בדבר, שהרי עושים העמודים יש מהן רחב ויש מהן קצר, ופעמים שיש אותיות גדולות אשר לא כדת … ופעמים אותיות משונות ארוכות הרבה כדי שיגיעו וי״ו לראש כל עמוד … והנה כתבתי דברי אלה למורי רבינו […] והסכים על ידי, וז״ל אשר השיבני ׳ושאלת על ספר תורה בווי עמודים, לא נכון בעיני כמו שכתבת, ואינו לא מדברי תורה ולא מדברי סופרים, אך סופר אחד היה, ר׳ ליאונטין ממיהלהויזין, שהראה אומנות שלו. ואילו היה לי לכתוב ס״ת הייתי נזהר שלא היה שום עמוד מתחיל בוי״ו חוץ מ׳ואעידה בם׳.

114 Cf. his *Hagahot* on the *Mishne Tora*, *Hilkhot Sefer Tora* 7,9 (הגהות מיימוניות הלכות ספר תורה 7,9).

115 Ta-Shma 1996, 99f., refers to Rabbenu Pereṣ's glosses on *Sefer Tashbeṣ*; cf. also *Sefer Tashbeṣ Qaṭan*, par. 181 (ed. *Responsa Project* 18).

Ta-Shma assumed that this debate had already been festering for a while by the time it was first recorded.[116] Because David bar Shabbetai was very clearly copying from a manuscript traceable to the circles of the *ḥaside ashkenaz* (or 'the Pious of Germany'),[117] it seems probable that the original impetus for this opinion came from there as well. The accompanying debate, dated by Ta-Shma to the 12th or 13th century, is basically still continuing today, something that is made obvious by the fact that Ta-Shma did not make use of a single artefact as evidence in his discussion of the phenomenon.

The *Regensburg Pentateuch* is not a *sefer Tora* (a Tora scroll), however, but a codex. If, therefore, a codex is created in the style of a Tora scroll, employing the *wawe ha-ʿammudim* layout, then some sort of connection between sacred entities, between a holy place (the Ark of the Covenant) and holy text, is clearly being aimed at. Naphtali Wieder, drawing on a passage from Aharon ben Asher's *Diqdduqe ha-Ṭeʿamim* in 1957, argued for a certain equation of sanctuary and scripture, for an analogy between the Holy of Holies and the Tora, and for the idea that such a comparison had apparently been made even in ancient times.[118] Here, then, at the very latest is when the sacred-entity attribute of an artefact would have been made manifest in codices, and, indeed, in the 11th century, the Spanish expatriate and resident of Northern France and England, Ibn Ezra, described the Masoretes, who were the ones to introduce the biblical codex, as 'guardians of the walls of the holy place' (*shomre ḥomot ha-miqdash*).[119] If codices had a sacred aspect comparable to that of *sefer Tora*, then, owing to their external form, they would have helped meet one important theological need, arising from the custom that scrolls (up to the present day) may not be vocalized, accented, or enhanced with Masoretic metatexts or in any other way aside from invariable *tagin*. However, such additions had always been part of oral teachings, the *tora she-beʿal pe*, which can only represent the Tora as the complete revelation of God in conjunction with the written teachings (*tora she-bikhtav*). Therefore, the integration of this oral Tora could very well be interpreted as increasing the sacredness of the artefact. For the Oriental codices of the 9th to 11th centuries, this aspect would need to be separately elaborated upon using the artefact itself and/or metatexts.

116 Cf. Ta-Shma 1996, 99.

117 Cf. the scribal note in fol. 158r, which explicitly mentions R. Yehuda he-Ḥasid and his father: פתוחות וסתומות של מגילת אסתר והעתקתים מכתיבת ידו של הרב ר' יבודה חסיד בן רבינו שמואל חסיד ת"נ"ב"ה.

118 Cf. Wieder 1957, esp. 166–168.

119 Cf. also Ibn Ezra, *Sefer Moznayyim* (ed. Sàenz-Badillos): וזה המקדש הם ספרי הקדש 'And the sanctuary, these are the holy scriptures'.

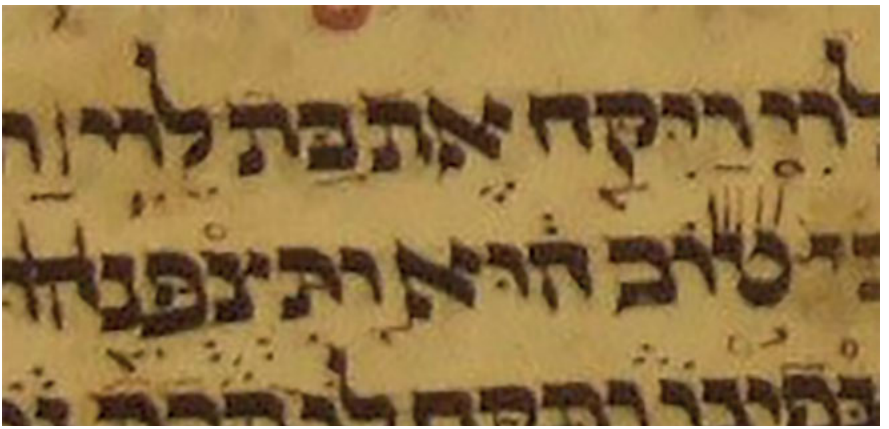

Fig. 7: Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52, fol. 40r. © Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

In the case of the *Regensburg Pentateuch*, the *wawe ha-ʿammudin* layout serves to demonstrate the phenomenon for first purposes. In the following section, a preliminary explanation of the integration of special *tagin* will help make things clearer.

5.2 The significance of *tagin* in the 'esoteric' *Bible commentaries*

A number of very illuminating explanations of *tagin* can be found, particularly in the context of the exegetic commentary on the Books of Exodus and Leviticus, that are reflected by the *Regensburg Pentateuch* in one way or another.

Exodus 2:2, the story of the birth of Moshe, includes the passage: ... 'and when she saw him that he was a goodly child' (כי טוב הוא). The *Regensburg Pentateuch* boasts a *ṭet* with five *tagin* (see Fig. 7), an idiosyncrasy also found in Ms. Valmadonna 1 (fol. 4v):

The manner in which these *tagin* are arrived at was explained by Yaʿaqov ben Asher (1238–1340) in his commentary on Exodus 2:2:

> He was a goodly (טוב) child: Five *tagin*, two on the *ṭet*, one on the *waw*, and two on the *bet*, to say (already here) that he (Moshe) will eventually receive the *Five Fifths of Tora*, for of these it is said: For I give you good doctrine (לקח טוב) (Prov 4:2).[120]

120 *Baʿal ha-Ṭurim Ḥumash* (ed. Gold) ad loc.; a critical edition of this commentary is still to be made; parallels can be found in Yehuda he-Ḥasid's *Ṭaʿame Mesoret ha-Miqra*; R. David Qimḥi's *ʿEṭ Sofer*, R. Meʾir ben Todros ha-Levi Abulafia's *Masoret Seyag la-Tora*; R. Menaḥem ha-Meʾiri's

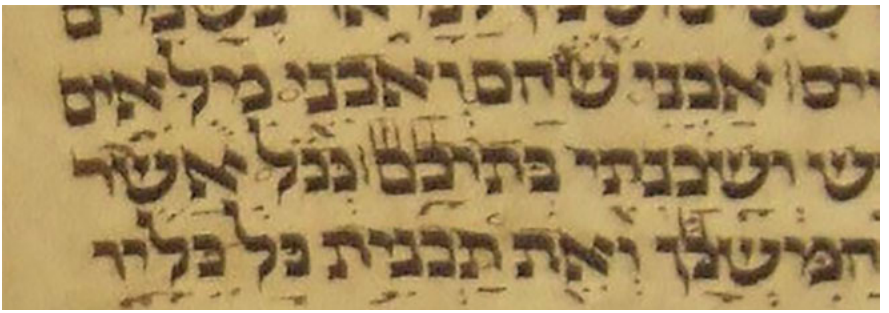

Fig. 8: Ms. Jerusalem IM 180/52, fol. 57v. © Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

The word 'goodly' (טוב) is used to unite Moshe and Tora. With the help of the *tagin*, this initially rather tenuous connection is made formal and manifest through the use of the five-count (five *tagin*/five books of Tora). An additional effect is to enhance the story of Moshe's birth with an allusion to his future purpose. The *Regensburg Pentateuch* (likewise Ms. Valmadonna 1) was certainly familiar with the significance of the five-count, but placed all five *tagin* atop the *ṭet* instead of distributing them over the whole word טוב. The *Maḥzor Viṭry* is unfamiliar with these special *tagin*,[121] as are the Oriental codices. Quite obviously, there existed a number of different traditions concerning *tagin* in the High Middle Ages.

Another example: the context of the construction of the Ark of the Covenant, which has already supplied an example for the elaborate *masora parva* commentary on תֵּיעָשֶׂה (Exodus 25:31), is also noteworthy on account of several features of its *tagin*. Thus, in fol. 57v (at the beginning of Par. Teruma Exodus 25:1), special *tagin* may be found on the final *mem* and the *kaf* of the expression ושכנתי בתוכם 'that I may dwell among them' in Exodus 25:8 (Fig. 8).

These *tagin*, which are recorded in the *Maḥzor Viṭry* as well,[122] are also used in the (presumably pseudepigraphic) Tora commentary of R. Elʿazar ben Yehuda of Worms (1165–1230), who in his time was the greatest student of R. Yehuda he-Ḥasid, whom we have repeatedly mentioned, and resided in Worms. Among other things, he says the following about the verse in question:

> *And let them make me a sanctuary; that I might dwell among them* (בתוכם) (Exodus 25:8): They shall make me a holy place. Instead of בתוכם ('among them')[123], read ביה בתוך ם ('BYH

Qiryat Sefer, and in a Masoretic treatise by R. Meʾir ben Barukh of Rothenburg.

121 *Maḥzor Viṭry* (ed. Hurwitz 1963), vol. II, 678.

122 *Maḥzor Viṭry* (ed. Hurwitz 1963), vol. II, p. 679.

123 Numerical value: 2+400+6+20+600.

> among 600')[124] [...] the *shekhina*[125] does not dwell (among a group) of fewer than 600, like the value of the closed *mem* (= final *mem*), and the reference (made) through the two *tagin* (to just this *mem*, which in turn refers to) the first and the second sanctuaries.[126]

This is about as complicated as it gets. The final *mem* has a numerical value of 600 (and this is the number that draws the attention of the first half of the exegesis). We, however, are primarily interested in the second half, which engages in interpretation using *tagin* that appear not only in our manuscript, but likewise in the commentary of Elʿazar of Worms, and that are at last used for exegetic purposes: two *tagin*, one of which refers to the First Temple, the other to the Second, the two dwelling-places of God among the Israelites. The Ark, with the help of which God will dwell 'among them', does not refer to the First and Second Temples merely because it is likewise a sanctuary; on the contrary, that exegetic and theological connection is implemented visually using *tagin*.

The *tagin* – and this ultimately holds true for every last crown – are graphical entities that are intended to (and must) be seen, but cannot be read. They are more than mere decorative elements, for they divided readers into categories, just as they do today: the reader who sees the word בתוכם, equipped with these special *tagin*, and is familiar with this form of exegesis will not think of the simple meaning, 'among them', alone; he will realize that a reference to the First and Second Temples is being made. He must not (and cannot) say it out loud; he will simply see it for what it is. And likewise, no matter how adept a reader be at Hebrew, or how well he know the Pentateuch, if this form of exegesis is unfamiliar to him, he must read this *Pentateuch* as he would any other. The secrets of oral Tora (sing. *remez*; *sod*) hidden in the *tagin* would simply be inaccessible to him.

And this is as it should be: not everyone ought to understand this, as a so-called *Sefer Tagi*, surviving as part of a manuscript containing certain writings by R. Yehuda he-Ḥasid and his student R. Elʿazar ben Yehuda of Worms, whom we have now repeatedly encountered, tells us. This '*Sefer Tagi*', however, is more likely actually a sort of commentary on the *Sefer Tagi* referenced earlier in the paper and on *tagin* in general.[127] Right off the bat, it includes an injunction to copy the book, but to keep this a secret (*sod*).[128] In order to understand the connection,

124 Numerical value: 2+10+5 + 2+400+6+20 +600.

125 The rabbinic term *shekhina* refers to the biblical *kavod* ([God's] glory).

126 Tora Commentary of R. Elʿazar ben Yehuda of Worms, ad loc.

127 Ms. Oxford Opp. 540 (Neubauer 1567), fol. 236r–264v (cf. Neubauer 1886, 548; there is still no critical edition of this text).

128 Ms. Oxford Opp. 540 (Neubauer 1567), fol. 236r: ספר תגי את זה תעתיק וכאן סוד. R. Elʿazar of Worms always tried to render the secret (*sod*) of the holy language (סוד לשון הקדש) as well; cf. the

one must make use of the significance of *tagin* as 'vectors' for oral teachings. That significance is likewise explained at the beginning of the book:

> What is on the front and the back page,[129] what is above and what is below before you, all that is written, and the *tagin*: be very careful that you record the oral insights, and if you say: is it (oral insights meaning the Oral Law) not already before him, then that (already) means: *these are the teachings that Moshe presented to the children of Israel*.[130] If you pay attention to the letters, pay close attention to the *tagin*; if you pay attention to the scripture, pay close attention to the Masora. And what if someone were (then) to say: 'Why is all this recorded in allusions, and not explicitly written down?' (This is so because) their heart was (still) pure in the days of Moshe, they knew everything, and nothing was hidden from them, for Moshe (himself) had taught them for forty years – for is it not said: *it is not too hard for thee*,[131] likewise is it said: *This is no trifling matter for you*,[132] [...] but because the holy one, praise be to him, saw the heart of Israel in that hour in which they were (all) wise, (therefore) did he expand (the material) and arrange for them the Tora [...], but (arranged for) an abridgement with respect to the *qal wa-ḥomer*, the *gezerot shawot*, the thirteen *middot* (of R. Jishmaʿel), and the thirty-two rules (of R. Eliʿezer), for had he written everything out with respect to every secret (*remez*), how (then) could he have tasked every man of Israel with the writing of his Tora Scroll?[133]

And so the reasoning comes full circle. Back in the time of the revelation of Tora, each person was a member of the elite ('that hour in which they were [all] wise'), which is why both written and oral teachings were so comprehensively and thoroughly received.[134] But the Eternal God came to a realization – namely, that he had himself commanded that the people of Israel write *sifre Tora*[135] – and he likewise knew that if one had already tasked them with writing down such

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introduction in Urbach 1963, 110f.

129 Cf. Ezekiel 2:10.

130 Deuteronomy 4:44.

131 Deuteronomy 30:11.

132 Deuteronomy 32:47.

133 Ms. Oxford Opp. 540 (Neubauer 1567), fol. 236r: מה לפנים מה לאחור מה למעלה מה למטה לפניך כל מה שכתוב ותגין בין תבין בינה ליכתוב בינה לבעל פה ואם תאמר והלא אינה לפניו כבר כתי׳ וזאת התורה אשר שם משה לפני בני ישראל בין האותיו׳ תבין תגין בין המקרא תבין המסורת ואם יאמר אדם למה כתוב ברמיזה ולא כתב בפירוש לפי כי בימי משה היה לבם פתוח והיו יודעים הכל ואין דבר נעלם מהם כי משה לימדם מ* שנה וכת׳ לא נפלאת היא ממך וכתיב כי לא דבר רק הוא וכן לחכימ׳ ברמיזא כי אילו היו כל אדם חכמים כמלאכים לא היו צריכים שתהא התורה אפילו כך רחבה אלא לפי מה שראה הקבה את לב ישראל באותה (באותו 111) שעה שהיו חכמים לפי זה האריך וסידר להם התורה וחם על ממונם של ישראל וקיצור להם בקל וחומר בגזירות שוויות ביג* מידות בלב* שערים שאילו היה מפרש כפי רמז היאך יחייב כל אחד מישראל לכתוב לו ספר תורה.

134 On fol. 236, *Sefer Tagi* describes Israel's stay in the wilderness as conducive to their learning of the Tora, since no one had to worry about daily food or be afraid of any enemies (ועוד לפי שהיו ישראל אז חכמים ועוד מ׳ שנה היו פנו יי׳ ללמוד בלא צער ובלא דאגת מזונות ובלא פחד מן האויבין).

135 Cf. Deuteronomy 31:24–26.

extensive teachings, said teachings might equally well be recorded not in full, but *be-qiṣṣur* (in shortened form), i.e., with the help of palaeographical idiosyncrasies. The *tagin*, just like the page layout of *wawe ha-ʿammudim* or the *masora parva/masora magna*, are therefore carriers of the expanded divine revelation.

The various (later) owners of the manuscript showed they were well aware of this. One latter-day user read the Tora text with an eye to certain word combinations, looking for chains of four words in which either the first or the last letter of each word in the chain could be combined to form a four-letter name. On fol. 68r, he marked the last letters of the sequence ואמה רחבו ואמה וחצי from Exodus 37:10b and noted the following in the margin: 'the four-letter name out of the last letters (read) backwards'.[136] Similar name speculations are found in the *Book of the Divine Name* (*Sefer ha-Shem*) by R. Elʿazar ben Yehuda of Worms.[137]

Such messages were only easy to decipher for the new *ḥaside ashkenaz* elite or their descendants; and, in a copy of the Tora like the *Regensburg Pentateuch*, they are so cryptic (and encrypted) that understanding them poses a significant challenge even today. What is more, it is still unclear how much of a hand the 'page guardians' (the so-called *shomer qunṭres*) had in 'protecting' these secrets.

6 Results

Thus far, the *Regensburg Pentateuch* has only revealed a portion of its secrets to us, but more than enough information has been gleaned to show that this manuscript is a practically paradigmatic example of why a codicological and palaeographic approach, though certainly important, is nevertheless insufficient by itself should one wish to examine not only the manuscript itself, but the people who interacted with it — who used it and read in it.

We have seen that this particular Pentateuch includes far more than 'just' biblical text. The written content, including the *tagin*, combines with it to form a level of meaning above (or *behind*) the text, and as such serves to support a semantic layer that transcends the text, can be approached in a number of ways, and, most importantly, is not readily apparent. We were able to show just how approachable it can be by examining representative samples of metatexts. The manuscript's secrets would be impossible to unlock were it not for these

136 השם של ארבע בסופו תיבות למפרע; on similar glosses (fols 1v; 132r et al.), cf. also Sternthal 2008, 11, 30.

137 Cf. also Liss 1998; Liss 1999.

metatexts, because the scribe declined to let us know why he put *tagin* on the Hebrew letters the way he did. It is possible that he deliberately refrained from doing so; if so, then it is indeed a *torat ha-sod*, a secret teaching, as was typical of the *ḥaside ashkenaz*.[138]

The manuscript also includes metatexts that provide instructions on the subject of writing. In this case, they are not intended merely to add up to some sort of 'model' codex serving as a template for writing Tora scrolls (although the manuscript certainly could have been used for that purpose),[139] but more likely to permit and enable the production of a Pentateuch with sacred properties, comparable to a Tora scroll. If we consider R. Yehuda he-Ḥasid's opinions on Hebrew books in general,[140] we must again conclude that this manuscript represents a person's attempt to create a definitive artefact, one designed to represent divine revelation, a *sefer qodesh*. However, unlike Tora scrolls, the sacred character of the artefact depends less on its being performed[141] and more on what is actually written on it. In the course of time, the idea became entrenched that what is written (biblical text; *tagin*: *masora parva* and *masora magna*; metatexts in red, etc.) in its capacity as a representation of divine revelation cannot and should not be given a clear or fixed meaning. It is this aspect of semantic ambiguity, which can also be portrayed positively – as infinite semantic variety – that makes the manuscript truly valuable, something that held just as true for the manuscript's contemporary readers as it does today.[142] The five *tagin* on the letter *ṭet* may hide many more links, beyond the one to Tora. Who is to say it is a coincidence that our manuscript includes five full-page illustrations, or that the Book of *Wayyiqra* (Leviticus; *Torat Kohanim*) contains five *sedurot*, or that the letter *he*, with respect to its *tagin*, departs from the *Maḥzor Viṭry* in five distinct ways? Because we now know, thanks to R. Elʿazar ben Yehuda of Worms, that there is an infinite variety of exegetic possibilities out there to choose from, our work has really only just begun.

138 Cf. Liss, 1997, esp. 193–202; Liss 1998.
139 Cf. Sternthal 2008, 11, n. 29; 19.
140 Cf. more recently Liss 2014.
141 Cf. Liss 2014, esp. 181–83.
142 One has to admit that any attempt to edit such treatises reaches its editorial limits in that the graphic representation of the *tagin* does not convey how varied their semantic content is.

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