

Hanna Liss (ed.)

Philology and Aesthetics

Figurative Masorah in Western European Manuscripts

In collaboration with Jonas Leipziger



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Philology and Aesthetics

European Bible manuscripts and their Masorah traditions are still a neglected field of studies and have so far been almost completely disregarded within text-critical research. This volume collects research on the Western European Masorah and addresses the question of how Ashkenazic scholars integrated the Oriental Masoretic tradition into the Western European Rabbinic lore and law. The articles address philological and art-historical topics, and present new methodological tools from the field of digital humanities for the analysis of *masora figurata*. This volume is intended to initiate a new approach to Masorah research that will shed new light on the European history of the masoretic Bible and its interpretation.

The Editor

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Philology and Aesthetics

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Contents

Hanna Liss

Introduction: Editorial State of the Art of the Masoretic Corpus
and Research Desiderata 7

Rainer Josef Barzen

Personal Grief Between Private and Public Space: A Micrographic
Inscription as a Historical Source (MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 16) 35

Dalia-Ruth Halperin

Micrography Mounted Falcons: An Exegetic Text and Image 59

Clemens Liedtke

“How Am I Supposed to Read This?” Challenges and
Opportunities of Medieval Western Masorah as a Digital
Scholarly Edition 103

Hanna Liss

Masorah as Counter-Crusade? The Use of Masoretic List
Material in MS London, British Library Or. 2091 131

Sara Offenberg

Illustrated Secret: Esoteric Traditions in the Micrography
Decoration of Erfurt Bible 2 (SBB MS Or. Fol. 1212) 177

Kay Joe Petzold

Rashi in the Masorah: The Figurative Masorah in Ashkenazi
Manuscripts as Parshanut 203

Hanna-Barbara Rost

The Interconnection Between Images and Texts. The Analysis
of Four Masoretic Illustrations in MS Vat. ebr. 14 and Their
Intertwined Relations 225

Sebastian Seemann

The *Okhla* Lists in MS Berlin Or. Fol. 1213 (Erfurt 3) 243

List of Figures 263

Notes on Contributors 267

Indices..... 271

 1 Manuscripts 273

 2 Authors and Names 277

 3 Hebrew Bible 281

Hanna Liss

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Masorah as Counter-Crusade? The Use of Masoretic List Material in MS London, British Library Or. 2091

Abstract: This paper deals with fol. 203r of MS London Or. 2091. It shows that the *masora figurata* found on this page is not an “alphabet soup,” but rather represents a sophisticated theological program. The article elucidates the *masora figurata* on the upper and lower part of the folio that displays the four figures, the lion, the ox, the man (as a knight), and the eagle as the four creatures of the Merkabah. The Masorete integrated, among others, various lists from the so-called *Okhla we-Okhla*-recensions and used it to set up a correspondence between the Biblical lemmata and the iconographic program with the Divine knight in its center. The theological message embedded in this folio is the desire for a Divine warrior during the dark ages of the crusades. The article proves that the iconographic program is revealed as a carefully arranged composition which utilizes the *masora figurata* in an exceedingly meaningful way.

Keywords: Western European Bible, Manuscripts, Art and Meaning of *masora figurata*; the Merkabah vision in the book of Ezekiel, church tympanums in Northern France

The following article deals with a thirteenth-century Ashkenazic Hebrew manuscript that presents the *masora magna* and other Masoretic list material in figurative design (*masora figurata*).¹ The article has two strategic goals: In a first step, I will present a lengthy case study, i.e. an edition of the entire Masorah (*masora parva* and *masora magna*) of one folio from MS London Oriental 2091. The edition takes special care to edit and

1 The following essay was written as part of our project work *Corpus Masoreticum* <https://t1p.de/7amk>. I thank Dave Meyer-Lindenberg for emending and shaping my English, and Dr. Kay Joe Petzold and Dr. Renate Smithuis for their critical and helpful remarks.

present the Masoretic material in the way the scribe organized it on the page and, thus, in the *mise-en-texte* that he wanted his readers to view. In a second step, I will develop an initial theoretical approach as regards the figurative notation of list material, and I will not only address the question of how, why, and in which way list material was transformed into figurative illustrations, but, in the end, will also deal with preliminary considerations with respect to editorial practice.

MS London, British Library, Or. 2091 is an Ashkenazic manuscript that might have belonged to an entire Bible volume, of which today only the (Former and Latter) Prophets (fols. 1r–267v) as well as the Hagiographa (fols. 268r–423v) are left.² The manuscript's peculiarity lies in its large-scale micrographic designs. The thirty micrographic designs are found at the beginning of the respective book chapters,³ and sometimes cover the entire folio with one or more micrographic ensembles. It is noteworthy that the Dodekapropheton (Hosea–Malachi) is not simply regarded as 'the Twelve' (*Tere Asar*) insofar as it presents *masora figurata* at the beginning of every minor prophet's book. Codicologists date the manuscript to the second half of the thirteenth century; the description of the British Library has the manuscript stemming from Germany.⁴

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- 2 424 folia; cf. Margoliouth, George: *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum*. 4 vols. British Museum: London 1899–1935 (vols. 1–3 repr. 1965), here vol. 1, no. 117. A short online description may be found at <https://t1p.de/q9aw> (accessed March 2020); the manuscript can be viewed here: <https://t1p.de/3dt3>; accessed March 2020).
 - 3 1r: Joshua, 20r: Judges, 38v: Samuel, 84r: Kings, 132r: Jeremiah, 172v: Isaiah, 203r: Ezekiel, 239r: Hosea, 243v: Joel, 245r: Amos, 249v: Obadiah, 250r: Jonah, 251r: Micah, 254r: Nahum, 255r: Habakkuk, 256v: Zephaniah, 258r: Haggai, 259v: Zechariah, 265v: Malachi, 268r: Ruth, 270v: Psalms, 309r: Job, 324r: Proverbs (*Mishle*), 335v: Songs, 338r: Ecclesiastes (*Qobeleth*), 343r: Lamentations (*Ekha*), 345v: Esther, 352r: Daniel, 363r: Ezra/Nehemiah, 380v: Chronicles (*Divre ha-Yamim*). Fol. 424r contains a blessing for the scribe; 424v deals with the order of the books (see below, note 60, p. 117).
 - 4 Cf. <https://t1p.de/q9aw> (accessed January 2019); on the question of the geographical region in which the manuscript might have been produced, see below, p. 132.

The micrographic decorations have, so far, been exclusively investigated from an art-historical viewpoint.⁵ The letters and text material are mostly merely referred to as “Masoretic notation” without elaborating further as to their content or Masoretic and exegetical provenance. Thus, no one ever took the trouble to thoroughly decipher and edit the *masora figurata* decorations. In this manuscript, the *masora figurata* encompasses *masora magna* material as well as list material, as is familiar from the various *Okhla*-recensions.⁶

1 Illustrations of the Divine Chariot (*merkava*)

On folio 203r, the scribe arranged three micrographic images. In the upper and lower margins, one can recognize the portrayals of the four *hayyot*, the four “living creatures” from the vision described in Ezek 1 and 10, in profile: the eagle, the man, the lion, and the ox. The four creatures are not simply drawn facing the viewer; rather, they form two ensembles with each creature facing its counterpart, in the upper margin (from right to left): eagle – man and lion – ox, in the lower margin (from right to left): lion – ox and man – eagle. While the upper image shows only the upper bodies of the *hayyot*, the bottom image displays the creatures in full, surrounded by two rectangular frames, with the outer frame including

5 Offenberg, Sara: *Up in Arms. Images of Knights and the Divine Chariot in Esoteric Ashkenazi Manuscripts of the Middle Ages*. (Sources and Studies in the Literature of Jewish Mysticism 56). Cherub Press: Los Angeles 2019, esp. pp. 69–78; Rost, Hanna-Barbara: *Masoretisches Bildmaterial in ausgewählten aschkenasischen und nordfranzösischen Bibel-Handschriften des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts – Ikonographie und Interpretation*. Master’s Thesis: Heidelberg Center for Jewish Studies 2018, pp. 40–44; Offenberg, Sara: “Jacob the Knight in Ezekiel’s Chariot: Imagined Identity in a Micrography Decoration of an Ashkenazic Bible.” *AJS Review* 40, 2016, pp. 1–16; Tahan, Ilana: *Hebrew Manuscripts: The Power of Script and Image*. British Library: London 2007, pp. 133–135; Epstein, Marc M.: *Dreams of Subversion in Medieval Jewish Art and Literature*. Penn State Univ. Press: University Park, PA, 1997, pp. 153; Metzger, Thérèse/Metzger, Mendel: *La Vie Juive Au Moyen Age. Illustrée par les manuscrits hébraïques enluminés du XIIIe au XVIe siècle*. Office du livre: Fribourg/Paris 1982, p. 304; Rost 2018, pp. 64–65, presents a detailed list of all the motifs, animals, and imaging program in this manuscript.

6 To be dealt with in detail in the following.

escutcheons in its four corners. One particularly eye-catching detail is a man wearing a helmet and chainmail armor. Recently, Sara Offenberg dealt with this figure in more detail.⁷ She identified it as an armored knight, and explained it as the depiction of Jacob's image engraved upon the Throne of Glory (דמות יעקב חקוקה בכסא הכבוד) as elaborated on in a variety of treatises written by the *Haside Ashkenaz*. According to Offenberg, this micrography is an illustration of the Biblical motif of *avir ya'aqov* יעקב יעקב, i.e. the title *The Mighty One of Jacob* (cf. Gen 49:24; Isa 49:26; 60:16; Ps 132:2.5). Her argument is based on the fact that the connection between *avir ya'aqov* and the image engraved upon the Throne of Glory was already established by R. El'azar of Worms in his *Perush ha-Merkava*.⁸ Knights in Hebrew manuscripts are often interpreted as portrayals of "Jews as knights of the God of Israel, in contrast to the Christian knights,"⁹ thereby underscoring a positive Jewish attitude towards the "knightly code of honor and valorous behavior."¹⁰ As a corollary, Offenberg suggests a depiction of "spiritual aspects of noble warriors,"¹¹ and interprets the micrographic decoration as Jacob embodying the *Verus Israel* and true scholarly knight.

The third micrographic depiction on this folio, which is placed at the end of the book of Isaiah, is identified by Offenberg as the cherub (*keruv*) mentioned in Ezek 10:4.¹²

It is striking that no previous study gave thought to the (head of the) stork as part of the inner frame in the *figurata* of the upper margin, or dealt with the ensemble as a whole on this folio. Therefore, the relationship

7 Offenberg 2019, esp. pp. 69–78; Offenberg 2016; cf. also Offenberg, Sara: "A Jewish Knight in Shining Armour: Messianic Narrative and Imagination in Ashkenazic Illuminated Manuscripts." *University of Toronto Journal of Jewish Thought* 4, 2015, pp. 1–14.

8 See Offenberg 2016; cf. Wolfson 1995, pp. 1–62, esp. pp. 29–41.

9 Marcus, Ivan G.: "Why Is this Knight Different? A Jewish Self-Representation in Medieval Europe." In: Baumgarten, Elisheva/Raz-Krakotzkin, Amnon/Weinstein, Roni (eds.): *Tov Elem: Memory, Community and Gender in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish Societies: Essays in Honor of Robert Bonfil*. Mosad Bialik: Jerusalem 2011, pp. 139–152, here: p. 148.

10 Offenberg 2016, p. 16; cf. Marcus 2011, p. 152.

11 Offenberg 2016, p. 16.

12 See, already, the manuscript's description: <https://t1p.de/52fl> (accessed March 2020), and Offenberg 2019, p. 69; Offenberg 2016, p. 3.

between the iconographic program of the entire ensemble and the philological material demands further investigation, as does the question of how and in which way the scribe/*masran* organized his work of art.

2 The Masorah on folio 203r.

2.1 *Masora Figurata* 1: The Four-Winged Frontal Face

The first micrographic decoration is a four-winged frontal face that is placed at the end of the book of Isaiah. It follows the verse Isa 66:23 (“*And new moon after new moon, and sabbath after sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship Me – said the Lord*”¹³) that is repeated after the last verse of the book (Isa 66:24). Isa 66:1–24 is the Haftara for Shabbat *Rosh Hodesh*.¹⁴ The repetition of the last-but-one verse corresponds to reading practice in the synagogue, according to which at the end of the book of Isaiah (Isa 66:24) as well as at the end of Malachi (Mal 3:24),¹⁵ Ecclesiastes (Eccl 12:14), and Lamentations (Lam 5:22), the last-but-one verse is repeated¹⁶ since it conveys words of doom. Moreover, one ends a liturgical reading by reciting the last verse with a word of salvation.¹⁷ It is noteworthy that the scribe of our manuscript wrote this verse as an integral part of the Biblical text without denoting it as a repetition for

13 Bible translations according to *Jewish Study Bible* (Jewish Publication Society; ed. Adele Berlin/M. Brettler, Oxford University Press: Oxford 2004), ad loc.

14 See, already, R. El’azar ben Yehudah of Worms, *Sefer ha-Roqeaḥ, Hilkhot Rosh Hodesh*, #228 (ed. Schneurson, p. 130).

15 Haftara for *Shabbat ha-Gadol*, the Shabbat preceding Passover.

16 Isa 66:23.24.23; Mal 3:23.24.23; Eccl 12:13.14.13; Lam 5:21.22.21.

17 However, the assumption that this hints at the conclusion that the Bible was used in a liturgical context is problematic, since the beginning of the Haftara on fol. 202r is not annotated, which one would expect in a Bible used for liturgical purposes. It seems that the conventional differentiation between “Masoretic Bibles,” “liturgical Pentateuchs,” and “study Bibles” (cf. Stern, David: “The Hebrew Bible in Europe in the Middle Ages: A Preliminary Typology.” *JSIJ* 11, 2012, pp. 235–322, esp. pp. 236–240) has to be elaborated upon and refined; see Liss, Hanna: “A Pentateuch to Read in? The Secrets of the Regensburg Pentateuch.” In: Wandrey, Irina (ed.): *Jewish Manuscript Cultures. New Perspectives*. (Studies in Manuscript Cultures 13). De Gruyter: Berlin/Boston 2017, pp. 89–128 [open access: <https://www.degruyter.com>], esp. p. 95.

Haftara reading.¹⁸ The repetition of Isa 66:23 at the end of the book of Isaiah holds a *masora parva* note: כּוּ סוּ פֶּסֶם “(The phrase) יהוה occurs 20 times at the end of a verse.”¹⁹

With regard to the fact that the *masran* did not display a full-fledged creature with face and wings, but simply a frontal face with four wings, we can assume that his illustration might have been meant to point to the Ezekielian vision in Ezek 1, in particular to the depiction of the stormy wind in Ezek 1:4 ff. with the appearance of the four creatures:

I looked, and lo, a stormy wind came sweeping out of the north – a huge cloud and flashing fire (...). In the center of it were also the figures of four creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the figures of human beings. However, each had four faces, and each of them had four wings (...). They had human hands below their wings. The four of them had their faces and their wings on their four sides. Each one’s wings touched those of the other. They did not turn when they moved; each could move in the direction of any of its faces. Each of them had a human face [at the front]; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right; each of the four had the face of an ox on the left; and each of the four had the face of an eagle [at the back].

In drawing the four wings so prominently, his illustration was probably meant to echo the calculation regarding the faces and the wings as we find it in *Targum Ezek* 1:6, and as it is later repeated in the Hekhalot literature as well as in Rashi’s commentary, i.e. that the Biblical verse “each had four faces, and each of them had four wings.” (Ezek 1:6) was understood

18 See e.g. MS Berlin, SBB-PK, Ms. Or. Fol 1213 (“Erfurt 3”), fol. 303r (end of the book of Isaiah, follows the book of Hosea), where this last verse is only partly quoted (וְהָיָה מִדֵּי הַדָּשׁ), written in small characters and unvocalized, and closed by a *sof pasuq* in order to tag it as an additional reading at the end of the Haftara (however, the beginning of the Haftara section is not highlighted; fol. 302r). Likewise, the Ashkenazic manuscript MS Vienna 16, fol. (1299; cf. Schwarz, Arthur Zacharias: *Die hebräischen Handschriften der Nationalbibliothek in Wien*. Strache: Wien et al. 1925 (online: <https://t1p.de/lryz>; accessed March 2019), no. 5, pp. 6–7) repeats the first three words of v.23 and thus offers an identical quotation to Erfurt 3, but does not stress the repetition by using smaller letters (Haftara marked in the margins, fol. 172r). By contrast, any labelings of this kind are missing in the Oriental manuscripts like Leningrad, Evr. I B 19a, fol. 245v; Aleppo-Codex (“Jerusalem Crown”), fol. 130v.

19 Cf. Weil, Gérard E.: *Masorah Gedolah: Iuxta Codicum, Leningradensem B 19a*. Pontificum Institutum Biblicum: Rome 1971, #2481.

in such a way that each face had four wings, and the prophet, therefore, described a total number of 64 faces ($4 \times 4 \times 4$) and 256 wings ($4 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4$). If our scribe followed the classical Rabbinic sources²⁰ as well as the later exegesis of R. El'azar ben Yehudah of Worms,²¹ this figure could represent the human face, the *keruw*:

וזה מראיהן דמות אדם להנה כלומר עיקר מראיהן הוא אדם כרוב חיות וזה מראיהן דמות אדם הרי חומד
התחלתן כלומר דמות החמוד הוא אדם מראיהן דמות אדם התחלתן אדם להנה וארבעה פנים התחלתן
אלוף אדם אלוף וחשוב שבהן. זהו כי המקום אשר יפנה הראש הוא כרוב.

They had the figures of human beings (Ezek 1:5), that means that the essence of their appearance was a human, [the] *keruw*.²² ‘Creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the figures of human beings.’ Their beginning [i.e. the first letters of those four words yield the word] ‘he covets,’ i.e. the most delightful appearance is that of the human. ‘Their appearance: They had the figures of human beings.’ Their beginning [i.e. with the word] ‘human being’: ‘human beings. However, each had four faces.’ Their beginning[s] [i.e. the first letters of those four words yield the word] ‘chief,’ i.e. the human being the head and [the most] important among them. Therefore, ‘in the direction in which one of the heads faced’ (Ezek 10:11), that is the *keruw*.²³

It is likely that our scribe wanted this face to be identified as the human face, the *keruw*. The emphasis on the human would fit exactly with the first Masoretic list in *masora figurata* 1, which starts with the lemma of Ezek 1:8.

-
- 20 The identification of the human face with the *keruw* stems from the Rabbinic explanation in *b. Hag. 13b* and *b. Sukk. 5b* (מאי כרוב אמר רבי אבהו כרביה שכן בבבל) “What is the likeness of a *keruw*? R. Abbahu said: כרביא like a child, since in Babylonia they call a youth רביה); see also Rashi on *b. Sukk. 5b*: כרביא. פני תינוק.
- 21 See Liss, Hanna: *El'asar ben Yehuda von Worms, Hilkhoh ha-Kavod. Die Lehrsätze von der Herrlichkeit Gottes. Edition. Übersetzung. Kommentar.* (Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism 12). Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen 1997, pp. *16–*18, 40–43, 114–118.
- 22 Wolfson 1995, p. 10, translates “the essence of their appearance was a human, the cherub of the creatures,” but the word *hayyot* already belongs to the next exegetical argument. Although the Hebrew sentence is ambiguous, it is quite obvious that R. El'azar takes up the Rabbinic statement of R. Abbahu (see note 20).
- 23 R. El'azar ben Yehudah of Worms, *Sefer Sode Razzaya*, ed. Shalom Weiss, Jerusalem 1988, p. 141 (followed by the entire Aramaic calculation of the faces and the wings).

The *masora figurata* in figure 1 maps the first part of a list that we find in both previously known *Okhla we-Okhla* recensions and, for example, in the *masora magna* of the Leningrad Codex:

1. MS Halle, Yb 4°10, #120, fols. 51r.v²⁴ (ed. Díaz Esteban #120): אָף מֶן מֵד ; דָּבָרֵי וּ בְּסוּף תִּיבֹתָא וְקָרִין ;
2. MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 148, #131, fol. 76r²⁵ (ed. Frensdorff #136²⁶): מֵד מְלִין ; כְּתָבִי וּ בְּסוּף תִּיבֹתָא וְקָרִין ; וְסִימְנָהוּן
3. MS Leningrad, Evr. I B 19a (L), fol. 440r (ed. Weil #3811): אֵלֶיךָ דְּכַתּוּבָא וּ בְּסוּף ; תִּיבֹתָא וְקָרִין ;

In our manuscript, the list bears the following title (starting in the upper right wing):

וידו חז מן מד מלין בסוף תיב דכתבין ויו וקריין יוד וסימנהון (The form וידו represents one of 44 (words) that are written (with the letter) *Waw* (at the end of the word), but are read (as if written with the letter) *Yod*.)

This list belongs to Ezek 1:8 (וידו אדם מתחת כנפיהם; “They had human hands below their wings”), which is part of this *Okhla*-list, and we also find an appropriate *masora parva* note with two circelli attached to the word וידו that reads דִּי ק “this [form has]: to be read [(*qere*) differently]” and ד “four times,” thereby referring to a list of four appearances in which the word וידו appears as fem. dual cs.²⁷ Our list starts with Ezek 1:8 and moves on in the order of the Biblical verses, starting with the pentateuchal reference

24 MS Halle, Yb 4°10, fol. 51r. This recension of *Okhla we-Okhla* is quoted as *Okhla-H*.

25 Quoted in the following as *Okhla-P*.

26 Frensdorff’s edition deviates from the manuscript, cf. Frensdorff, Salomon: *Das Buch Ochlah W’ochlah (Massora)*. Hahn’sche Hofbuchhandlung: Hannover 1864. A new edition of this recension is currently being prepared by Sebastian Seemann, Graduate School 1728 “Theology as an Academic Discipline,” Heidelberg Center for Jewish Studies.

27 Exod 17:12; Jer. 10:9; Ezek 1:8; Ezek 7:27; cf. Weil 1971, #496. This list is also referred to in Dotan, Aron: *Thesaurus of the Tiberian Massora. A Comprehensive Alphabetical Collection of Masoretic Notes of the Tiberian Bible Text of the Aaron Ben Asher School. Sample Volume: The Massora to the Book of Genesis in the Leningrad Codex*. Tel Aviv University: Tel-Aviv 1977.

in Deut 5:10, all through the four wings and ending up with Isa 47:13, a verse that deals with the scanners of heaven and the star-gazers.²⁸

2.2 *Masora Figurata* 2: the Four Creatures in Profile

The second part of this list (*Okhla*-H #120; *Okhla*-P #131 [Frensdorff #136]) is not lost: We find it in the upper micrographic image, starting with Isa 52:2, following almost exactly the same order as in *Okhla*-H, but deviating in many references from the order in *Okhla*-P. This second part of *Okhla*-H #120 ends at the beak of the stork. Compared to *Okhla*-H #120, the list lacks the references from 2 Sam 18:13, 2 Kgs 17:13, and Ps 119:79. On the other hand, it offers a reference from Dan 2:24 (which is missing in both the *Okhla* recensions as well as in L). This means that our scribe used 40 lemmata from a list at hand for his micrographic illustration. In referring to 44 signs, his list recension comes close to *Okhla*-H #120. However, at this stage of research on the manuscript, it's too early to determine what kind of list the scribe had at hand when he was creating his images.

Right beneath the knight, there starts a second list that, too, is represented by

1. MS, Halle Yb 4°10, #121, fol. 51v (ed. Díaz Esteban #121): וַחֲלוּפֵיהֶן הָאֵל
מִן כֹּד הַצִּנְתִּי י בְּסוֹף תִּיבּוֹתָא וְקִרְיִין וְ
2. MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 148, #132, fol. 76v (ed. Frensdorff #137): והלופיהו הד
מלין כתבי י בסוף תיבו וקרין ו וסימנהון

In our manuscript, the list bears the following title starting right underneath the knight:

והלופיהו הד מן כב מלין כתבין יוד יוד בסוף תיבותא וקרין ויו וסימנהון – The opposite: One of 22 words that are written with the letter *Yod* at the end of the word, but are read (as if written) with the letter *Waw*, and their signs [*simanim*] are (...).²⁹

28 Rashi understands the verse on the basis of the Targum and *Mahberet Menaḥem*: “astrologers” – Yonatan understands it as “the gazers of the heavens,” i.e. those who gaze at the constellations of the heavens, comparing it to “clear [ברה] as the sun” (Cant 6:10). Likewise, Menaḥem referred to these (verses and understood them as) “those who clarify the orbit of the constellations.”

29 This list presents 17 Biblical lemmata with 24 cases in all (12×1 + 4×2 and one time 4 occurrences). The 24 cases match the heading of MS Halle, Yb 4°10

Both these lists encompass a collection of Biblical words that are not written in the way they are read (*qetiv* and *qere*³⁰). In our case, the words are written with either *Yod* or *Waw*, but are read the opposite way, i.e. either *Waw* or *Yod*.

2.3 *Masora Figurata* 3: The Four Creatures with Full Bodies

In the third Masoretic drawing at the bottom of the respective folio, the four *hayyot* (lion, ox, man, eagle) appear a second time. This micrography consists of three longer and at least two shorter lists, focusing on the motif of the face(s). One list (path 6) enlists 18 verses, in which a certain lemma occurs (at least) four times. Of these, the first is not accompanied by the copula *Waw*, whereas the others are.³¹

The *figuratae* on folio 203r thus encompass a total of seven lists, of which at least two match with *Okhla we-Okhla* material and five stem from the *masorah gedolah* (*masora magna*) as it is found in different Bible codices.³²

Figs. 1–2 (path 1: dark blue)

וידו (The form) וידו represents one of 44 (words) that are written (with the letter) *Waw* (at the end of the word), but are read (as if written with the letter) *Yod*, and their signs [*simanim*] are (...).³³

Fig. 2 (path 2: red)

והלופיהו (With regard to the former list: the opposite): One of 22 words that are written with the letter *Yod* at the end of the word, but are read (as if written) with the letter *Waw*, and their signs are (...).

Fig. 2 (path 3: green)

#121, fol. 51v; however, our list's heading mentions 22 cases which does not match the cases at hand, nor the biblical verses.

30 *Qere we-la ketiv* (“read although not written”) and *ketiv we-la qere* (“written but not read”).

31 This list can also be found in L (fol. 451v; cf. Weil 1971, #3911).

32 In our edition, each of these lists was assigned a specific path.

33 See edition in the appendix, p. 135.



Fig. 1: London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203r (upper margin)

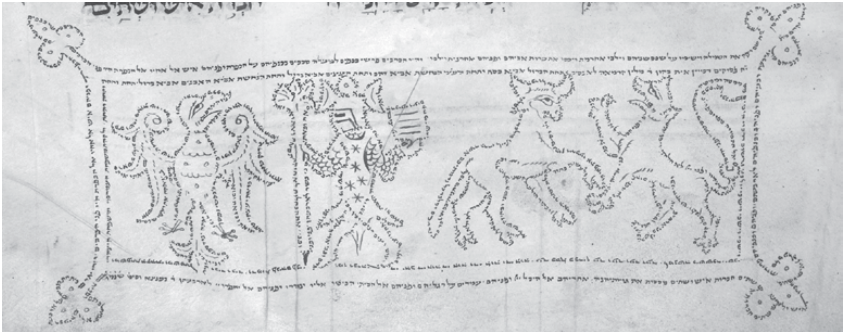


Fig. 2: London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203r (lower margin)

וְלִי יְחֻזְקָאֵל בַּסְפָּרָא וְסִימְנָהוֹן (The name) ‘Ezekiel’ occurs two times in this book, and their signs are (...), follows a *masora parva* note on Isa 66:22.³⁴

Fig. 3 (path 4: orange-colored)

34 The list seems to be somewhat corrupt: The scribe notes Ezek 1:3, but Ezek 24:24 that is to be expected, is missing, and the text quoted instead (יהי יי אֵל יְחֻזְקָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ אֵל יְחֻזְקָאֵל) has so far not been found in any of the Biblical manuscripts; the following *masora parva* note on Isa 66:22 seems to be out of place and the Biblical text (upper right column, line 6) does not have a *parva* note *in situ*.



Fig. 3: Western façade, tympanum of the central bay at the Royal Portal of the Cathedral of Chartres. © heidICON – Object and Multimedia Database of Heidelberg University; <https://t1p.de/0xyu> (accessed March 2020)

וּפְנֵיהֶם חַד מִן טַ בְּקִרְיָה וּסִמְנֵיהוֹן (The word) ‘and their faces’ occurs nine times in Scripture, and their signs are: (...).

Fig. 3 (path 5: purple)

שְׁנֵמֹו ,[they,] who slept.’ ‘the four’ [occurs] four times in this section, and (its) sign

Fig. 3 (path 6: light blue)

יֵחַ פְּסוּקִים דְּמִיִּין אֵית בְּהוֹן דְּ מִלִּין קְדַמָּאָה לֹא נְסִיב וְאוּ וְתַנְיָנָא וְתַלִּיתָא תַלִּית נְסִיב וְיוּ וּסִמְנֵהוֹן 18 verses that resemble one another insofar as there are four words whereby no *Waw* has been prefixed to the first, whereas (at least) the second and third word are accompanied by a *Waw* prefixed to it, and their signs are (...) [follow *simanim*].

Fig. 3 (path 7: yellow)

וּפְנֵי חַד מִן יוּ בְּקִרְיָה וּסִמְנֵהוֹן “And the face”: one out of 16 verses in Scripture, and their signs are (...).

With respect to their philological content, some observations can be made. First of all, regarding the rebuttal by modern Bible scholars that the

Medieval scribes were merely artists and not philologists, and therefore had no idea of the Masorah and its aims,³⁵ one must say that those lists that do not present recensions of *Okhla we-Okhla*, i.e. the lists in Fig. 3, present *masora magna* material that always has its respective *masora parva* note displayed *in situ*. They all belong to Ezek 1:10 and 1:11. The *masora parva* notes therefore already present Ezek 1:10, in particular, as a crucial verse for the entire vision and its interpretation.

Verse	Biblical lemma	<i>masora parva</i> note		Path
Ezek 1:10	וּפְנֵי		י	7
Ezek 1:10	וּפְנֵי		י	7
Ezek 1:10	לְאַרְבַּעַתָּו		ד	5
Ezek 1:10	לְאַרְבַּעַתָּו		ד	5
Ezek 1:10		יֵה פֶסֶד אֵית בְּהוֹן דְּמִלִּין קְדַם לֹא נִסְ וְשֹׁאֲרֵי		6
Ezek 1:11	וּפְנֵיהֶם		ט	4

Although the lists from Figs. 1 and 2 do not come in list form, one can see the order of the biblical lemmata. In particular, the order of the prophetic books Isaiah – Jeremiah – Ezekiel can be traced, indicating that the scribe had a list at hand that presented these prophets in the order that can also be found in the *Okhla-H* recension, whereas *Okhla-P* shows the order Jeremiah – Ezekiel – Isaiah.

As an initial result, we can state that the scribe noted *masora parva* and *masora magna* (although in figurative form) that belongs to the respective page and its Biblical context. Elia Levita might have been right that the Masorah on this page is somewhat unpleasant to read,³⁶ and some *masora parva* notes or lemmata in the *masora magna* that one can find in other

35 See e.g. Dotan, Aron: “Masorah.” In: Skolnik, Fred/Berenbaum, Michael (eds.): *Encyclopaedia Judaica. Second Edition*. Vol. 13. Thomson Gale: Detroit/New York 2007, pp. 603–656, here: p. 620: “As time passed copying the text became a less intelligent work, and there were copyists who lacked all understanding of the Masorah, to the extent that some of them used the material of the Masorah for mere ornamentation of the text [...]. Manuscripts like these, some of which are most ornate, are worthless for the study of the Masorah.” This would be true only if the scribe wrote the Masoretic list in order to have it used for the study of linguistics and grammar.

36 See his harsh criticism cited in the introduction of this volume, p. 9.

Bible codices might be missing, but with regard to its philological quality, the Masoretic material on the page is as accurate as its linear counterpart in the Oriental codices.

Before we interpret the use of the Masoretic list material within the micrographic ensembles on this folio, we should first discuss some topics concerning the layout of the earliest testimonies of Masoretic list material and its function in order to come to a clearer result for our initial question on the dissolution of the Masorah lists and their iconic reconfiguration.

3 A List Is a List Is a List?

3.1 Masoretic Material in List Form

The question of when, for which purpose, and according to which *mise en texte* and *mise en page* the *masora magna* as well as the *Okhla we-Okhla* lists were written is highly disputed and has occupied the representatives of the so-called *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as well as Protestant Bible scholars from the eighteenth century up to the present day.³⁷ The previously mentioned *Sefer Okhla we-Okhla*³⁸ is a medieval compilation in list form that deals with a variety of topics and phenomena related to the text of the Hebrew Bible. Two manuscripts have been found in which this compilation appears independently from and thus outside a Hebrew Bible codex. These manuscript recensions are MS Halle, Yb 4°10 (*Okhla-H*), and MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 148 (*Okhla-P*). Both manuscripts are undated and were written between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. However,

37 On Masorah in general see recently Ofer, Yosef: *The Masorah on Scriptures and its Methods*. De Gruyter: Berlin/Boston 2019; Dotan 2007; for an elaborated research history on *Okhla we-Okhla* see Seemann, Sebastian: *Das Buch Ochla we-Ochla und die Masora Magna in der Bibelhandschrift MS Berlin SBB-PK Ms. or. Fol 1213: Eine exemplarische Studie zum Buch Exodus*. Master's Thesis: Heidelberg Center for Jewish Studies 2016, pp. 6–78.

38 The book got its title from the first pair of the lists (אכלה in 1 Sam 1:9 and אכלה in Gen 27:19) listing those words alphabetically that appear only twice in the Bible, once written with and once without the letter Waw: אלפא ביתא מן חד וחד – On the vocalization of אכלה as אַכְלָה without *mappiq* (in the *He*) and with *Hatef Qamets* as in Rashi and in a couple of Ashkenazic manuscripts see in detail already Seemann 2016, esp. pp. 11–13); see above all Ognibeni 1995; Díaz Esteban 1975; Frensdorff 1864.

the fact that fragments with *Okhla we-Okhla* material were already found in the Cairo Genizah, together with the fact that *Okhla we-Okhla* lists were collected in list form within Hebrew Bible codices³⁹ before the tenth century (often referred to as *masorah gedolah*), means that in effect, the question whether the Paris and Halle recensions have to be regarded as late compilations is still an open one.⁴⁰

The *Okhla we-Okhla* recensions represent list material at its best. The lists are arranged either alphabetically or according to the order of the Biblical catchwords. They contain unique words with special features (spelling; specific layout of words/letters), or pairs of words that differ from one another in tiny details (with the letter *Waw*, without the letter *Waw*), extraordinary accents or vowels, vocalizations, etc. MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 148 contains 374 lists, whereas MS Halle, Yb 4°10, which is clearly divided into two sections, offers 170 lists in the first part (סימני מסורת) and 343 lists in the second section (סדרא אחריונא).⁴¹ Contemporary Masorah research⁴² distinguishes between accumulative Masorah (מסורה מצרפת) and enumerative Masorah (מסורה מפרטת). This is not the place to go into the hermeneutics of the single parts of the lists in more detail, but what we can

39 To be found either in the four margins of a page or as cumulative Masorah on the last pages of a codex; on this topic see in particular Ofer, Yosef: *The Babylonian Masora of the Pentateuch, Its Principles and Methods* (Hebr.). Academy of the Hebrew Language: Jerusalem 2001, esp. pp. 112–116; Lyons, David: *The Cumulative Masora. Text, Form and Transmission. With a Facsimile Critical Edition of the Cumulative Masora in the Cairo Prophets Codex* (Hebr.). Ben-Gurion Univ. of the Negev Press: Beer Sheva 1999; Lyons, David: *The Vocalization, Accentuation and Masora of Codex Or. 4445 (Brit. Mus.) and Their Place in the Development of the Tiberian Masora*. Ph.D. Thesis: University of London 1983; Lyons, David: “The Collative Tiberian Masorah. A Preliminary Study.” *Masoretic Studies* 1, 1974, pp. 55–66.

40 See also Dotan, Aron: *The Awakening of Word Lore. From the Masora to the Beginnings of Hebrew Lexicography*. Academy of the Hebrew Language: Jerusalem 2005, esp. pp. 31–44; Ofer 2001, esp. pp. 113–116.

41 *Okhla-H* even offers two tables of contents for both parts of the compendium: 1. ##1–170: fols. 1v–3v; 2. ## 171–343: fols. 5r–6v. The *Okhla Halle* recension contains a lot of lists that form clusters due to a common subject, and if counted separately, *Okhla-H* would encompass a total number of 319 lists; see also <https://t1p.de/9fgi> (online access [accessed March 2020]; table of content).

42 See e.g. Ofer 2019, pp. 49–60; Lyon 1999.

say is that the collections were edited systematically, their lists to be identified by a certain theme. In other words: The lists follow a “‘technical’ and somewhat analytical”⁴³ arrangement, thereby referring to topics outside the semantics of the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁴

These observations lead us to the question of the *mise en texte* of a list and the hierarchies within the lists.⁴⁵ The alphabetically arranged lists start with *Alef* א and go through the alphabet until the last letter, *Taw* ת, whereas others are arranged according to the order of the Biblical books, or even collect three verses, one from each part of the Biblical canon (i.e. Pentateuch [always in the beginning], Prophets, and Hagiographa [always at the end of such a list]).⁴⁶ The *mise en texte* of the *Okhla we-Okhla* recensions resemble one another in that they organize their material in a column from the top to the bottom of each page. *Okhla-H* presents text arrangements in single and double columns, while *Okhla-P* organizes the lists in two columns throughout. It should be emphasized that a table of

43 Lyons 1999, p. x.

44 For the Rabbinic *Listenwissenschaft* compare already Neusner, Jacob: “The Mishnah’s Generative Mode of Thought: Listenwissenschaft and Analogical-Contrastive Reasoning.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110, 1990, pp. 317–321, here: p. 317: “That mode of thought defines ways of proving propositions through classification, so establishing a set of shared traits that form a rule that compels us to reach a given conclusion.”

45 As regards the question of how layout and representation of a list determine its epistemological function, see in particular Cancik-Kirschbaum, Eva: “Stabilität, Change Management und Iteration. Listenwissenschaft in Mesopotamien.” In: Cancik-Kirschbaum, Eva/Traninger, Anita (eds.): *Wissen in Bewegung. Institution – Iteration – Transfer*. (Episteme in Bewegung. Beiträge zu einer transdisziplinären Wissensgeschichte 1). Wiesbaden 2015, pp. 289–305; Cancik-Kirschbaum, Eva: “Phänomene von Schriftbildlichkeit in der keilschriftlichen Schreibkultur Mesopotamiens.” In: Krämer, Sybille/Cancik-Kirschbaum, Eva/Totzke, Rainer (eds.): *Schriftbildlichkeit. Wahrnehmbarkeit, Materialität und Operativität [i.e. Operativität] von Notationen*. Vol. 1. Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2012, pp. 101–121; Hilgert, Markus: “Von ‘Listenwissenschaft’ und ‘epistemischen Dingen’. Konzeptuelle Annäherungen an altorientalische Wissenspraktiken.” *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie* 40(2), 2009, pp. 277–309; Jullien, François: “Die praktische Wirkkraft der Liste: von der Hand, vom Körper, vom Gedicht.” In: Jullien, François (ed.): *Die Kunst, Listen zu erstellen*. Merve: Berlin 2004, pp. 15–50.

46 See <https://t1p.de/nz86> (accessed March 2020).

contents (as in the case of *Okhla*-H) and the *mise en texte* in columns not only guarantees the quick finding of certain topics and examples, but also ensures easy and accurate copying. The more the material to copy is laid out confusingly or in a complex way, the more the scribal process becomes error-prone.

Although the lists contain Biblical words and verses, the lemmata and the signs as they appear in these lists do not refer to their Biblical semantic content, but to their orthographic, linguistic, phonological, syntactic, statistical, or grammatical peculiarities. It is the topic of each list that provides its semantics. Semiotically speaking: the signs of the list material (Hebrew letters and words) achieve their meaning not from the object/thing (*res*) they denote, but only in their relations to the given theme as a semiotic framework.⁴⁷ The lists, therefore, do not represent theological knowledge or religious topics of the Bible, but the grammatical and linguistic state of the art of the respective Masorete(s).

This “epistemology of representation”⁴⁸ leads us to the definition of a list as a “representative of how knowledge was processed”⁴⁹ that forms the basis for our cultural-science-oriented reconstruction and analysis of the varieties of usage and practice of Hebrew linguistic and grammatical knowledge in the Middle Ages. For example, with regard to the two *Okhla we-Okhla* recensions that form the basis of our *figuratae*,⁵⁰ we might consider the following: The lists give words from the Hebrew Biblical text that are written with either *Yod* and *Waw*, but are read the opposite, i.e. either *Waw* oder *Yod*. They stem from a collection of cases dealing with Biblical words that are not read in the way they are written (*ketiv* and *qere*⁵¹). These sublists are collected in different sections of the respective lists (e.g. *Okhla*-H ##71–150), and the lists are arranged according to the Biblical verses, starting with the Torah (Pentateuch), followed by (Former and Later) Prophets, and ending with *Ketuvim*

47 Compare also Hilgert 2009, esp. pp. 286–288.

48 Hilgert 2009, p. 288 (“Epistemologie der Repräsentation”).

49 Hilgert 2009, p. 288 (“wissenspraktische Repräsentation”).

50 1. Halle, Yb 4°10, #120, fols. 51r.v // Paris, BnF, hébr. #131, fol. 76r; 2. Halle, Yb 4°10, #121, fol. 51v // Paris, BnF, hébr. #132, fol. 76v.

51 *Qere we-la ketiv* (“read although not written”) and *ketiv we-la qere* (“written but not read”).

(Hagiographa). These cases are related to the transmission of Scripture, to scribal and reading practices.⁵² From the structure of the list, it is clear that they address only readers familiar with (or willing to become familiar with!) all three canonical parts of a Hebrew Bible, as bound together in one codex. A scribe could go through the manuscript according to the order of the Biblical books. Other “*Okhla*-type” lists, which are found in Oriental manuscripts like Firkovich, Evr. I B 19a (L), too, like the list in Weil #3911⁵³ (in our edition: path 6), lead the reader to grammatical and syntactical topics, and were probably used to introduce linguistics and grammar into the study of the Bible. In addition, the use of these lists could have brought rabbinic scholars to integrate those parts of the Bible into the scholarly curriculum that had usually been neglected. In medieval Ashkenaz, where mainly the Babylonian Talmud was studied through the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and the reading of the Bible was limited to the Pentateuch, Megillot, and Haftarot, the study of those texts of the Hebrew Bible that were not part of the liturgy arose only slowly.⁵⁴

In any case, the *masora magna* as well as the *Okhla we-Okhla* recensions are, above all, (absolutely or relatively) exhaustive collections of knowledge related to the text of the Hebrew Bible and its transmission as well as to Hebrew grammar and linguistics. These lists were used by scribal and linguistic experts in order to categorize and classify this material according to the needs of a scientific community. Scholars who used these lists were interested in these enumerations of Biblical words and verses, not with regard to their semantic content and their meaning in the Biblical context, but rather because of the respective scientific theme at issue.

52 Compare Ofer 2019, pp. 106–107: “Readers tend to prefer euphemisms and language of respect towards heaven, but scribes, on the other hand, can write things as they are; readers tend towards linguistic uniformity and reject deviant and archaic forms, while the scribe is more conservative; readers tend towards ‘smoother’ versions, while the scribe may preserve deviant and unusual forms (...). The root of the matter of *ketiv* and *qere* is the double transmission of Scripture from generation to generation through both a written tradition and an oral tradition.”

53 Firkovich, Evr. I B 19a, fol. 451v.

54 See Eldar, Ilan: “The Grammatical Literature of Medieval Ashkenazi Jewry.” In: Glinert, Lewis (ed.): *Hebrew in Ashkenaz. A Language in Exile*. Oxford Univ. Press: New York/Oxford 1993, pp. 26–45, p. 26.

4 Figurative Masoretic Lists

In accordance with these observations, the question arises whether the lists used to fill out the lines of the *masora figurata* illustrations convey orthographic, linguistic, phonological, syntactic, statistical, or grammatical peculiarities, and whether they were written in order to convey this kind of scientific knowledge. If yes, one might ask why they were written in such a form, one that makes them quite difficult to copy. And if they were not written for this purpose, what, then, was the reason for integrating a variety of list material into the *figuratae*?

As mentioned above, folio 203r contains seven lists in all, of which at least two match to *Okhla we-Okhla* material and five stem from or resemble the *masorah gedolah* (*masora magna*) as we find it in various Bible codices. It is obvious that a list arranged in the form of a four-winged face with jagged-edged wings is more difficult to copy than a table arranged in columns, particularly as even the beginning of a list in a classical Masoretic list is easier to find, since a column or a table easily leads a reader or a scribe to its starting point at the top of a page or at the beginning of a title/subtitle or initial lemma. This is not the case in our *masora figurata* illustrations.⁵⁵ Whereas the starting point of the first list (a type of *Okhla*-H #120; path 1) is rather easy to find, since it seems appropriate for a Hebrew-writing or -reading person to start at the upper right wing, this does not apply to the second list that starts right beneath the knight (path 2). Furthermore, the edition of path 1 in the four-winged face clearly shows that even the order of the words within one Biblical verse is sometimes confusing. As an initial hypothesis, we might therefore state that the Masoretic list material in figurative forms was probably not meant to be copied within a Hebrew linguistic or grammatical scientific context. It should not be used to generate scientific knowledge related to Hebrew linguistics and Hebrew grammar. However, this does not mean that the scribe used the Masoretic list in a less intelligent way.⁵⁶

55 It is indeed the case in other illustrations. My colleague Dr. Renate Smithuis found out that the *masran* sometimes inserted small graphic signs into the *figurata* in order to provide some reading aids.

56 See above note 35, p. 109.

4.1 *Masorae figuratae* 1 and 2

It is noteworthy that our scribe used both the lists/list recensions *Okhla-H* #120 and 121 // *Okhla-P* #131 (Frensdorff #136) in an unusual way. He could have used the shorter list for the smaller *masora figurata* 1 and reserved the longer list for the upper, larger illustration (*masora figurata* 2). Instead, he chose to split up a longer masoretic list and divide it into two micrographic images. Why?

When comparing the Masoretic lemmata with the illustration, one can see that the scribe took great pains to relate the micrographic decoration and the Biblical excerpts in such a way that the iconographic program and its semantic content match exactly as often as possible; compare the following examples that stem from the second part of the *Okhla-H* #120-recension (matching references marked in bold):⁵⁷

Verse	Hebrew Quotation	Translation (lemma and Biblical quotation)	Position
Isa 46:11	עצע קורא ממזרה עיט	'My purpose': I summoned that swooping bird from the East	Eagle
Isa 60:21	מטעו ועמך כלם צדיקים לעולם יירשו ארץ נצר מטעו מעשה ידי להתפאר	'His Planting': And your people, all of them righteous, shall possess the land for all time (...) my handiwork in which I glory.	Eagle: right wing
Jer 3:19	תקראו ואני אמרתי איך אשיתך בבנים תשובו ב בפסוקא	'you would surely call': I had resolved to adopt you as My child, 'and never cease to be loyal to Me [i.e. never turn away from following Me]'. 2 times (<i>ketiv-qere</i>) in this verse.	Eagle: head
Jer 51:34	אכלנו הממנו נבוכדנצר מלך בבל ה בפסוקא	'Devoured me and discomfited me': Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon: altogether 5 times (<i>ketiv-qere</i>) in this verse.	Eagle: beak
Ezek 1:8	וידו אדם מתחת כנפיהם	They had human ' hands ' below their wings .	Eagle: left wing
1 Chr 22:7	בנו ויאמר דוד לשלמה בנו לאמר	'my son': David said to Solomon: "My son, ..."	Knight: helmet visor

⁵⁷ The entire edition is found in the appendix, p. 135; translation taken from *JPS*.

Verse	Hebrew Quotation	Translation (lemma and Biblical quotation)	Position
2 Chr 32:21	ומצאיו וישלח יי מלאך ויכה	his own offspring (of his own bowels): The Lord sent an angel who annihilated	Knight: crest (helmet)
Ps 11:1	גודו למנצח לדוד ביי חסיתי הרכם צפור	‘take [to the hills]’: For the leader. Of David. In the Lord I take refuge ; how can you say to me, take to the hills like a bird!	Knight: crest (helmet)
Ps 102:24	כהו ענה בדרך כהו	‘My strength’: He drained my strength in mid-course	Lion

The scribe’s endeavor to establish a relationship between the image and the Biblical text elements quoted is quite obvious. The “bird of prey” is written in the image of the eagle (not the lion, for example), the “(work of my) hands” is found in the right wing, the phrase “devoured me” forms part of the beak of the eagle, the “refuge” is related to the helmet’s crest, and so forth. Therefore, the first reason that our scribe chose to split up *Okhla*-H #120 and divide it into two micrographic images can be seen in his effort to align the illustration and the semantic content of the list’s Biblical lemma with one another.

There might be a second reason for the fact that he did not use the shorter list *Okhla*-H #121 for the four-winged face,⁵⁸ but opted for the first part of the longer one.⁵⁹ By using *one* list for *two* images, the scribe creates connections. In this case, at least two connections can be made out that are established by this list:

The first connection refers to the order of the Biblical books. By means of the technique of splitting up one list and dividing it onto two images, the scribe sets up a link between the Biblical books of Isaiah and Ezekiel. One distinctive feature of the Western European Bible manuscripts is the great variety with regard to the order of the books. Western European Bibles from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries do not show a “regular order,” as one is led to expect today from the printed editions (be they in Hebrew or in translation). In this case, the scribe fixed the order of

58 See above p. 105.

59 I.e. 14 signs and Biblical references from a list of 40 references.

the books (Jeremiah –) Isaiah – Ezekiel by means of one list within two images.⁶⁰

The second connection to be established relates to a possible associative link between the first Masorah image (four-winged face) and the second, i.e. the image of the four creatures, i.e. a connection between God's chariot (*merkava*) with the four creatures (*hayyot*; image upper margin) and the (one!) four-winged face, the *keruv*, from Ezek 1:5.⁶¹

This last hypothesis is based on the theory of a possible relationship between the *masora figurata* illustration in Ashkenazic manuscripts and the esoteric theology (*torat ha-sod*) by the so-called *Haside Ashkenaz*, represented by such prominent sages like R. El'azar ben Yehudah of Worms, R. Yehudah he-Hasid of Regensburg, R. Neḥemiah ben Shlomo Troestlin of Erfurt,⁶² and others. A possible key to the understanding of the relationship between *masora figurata* 1 and 2 can be found in R. El'azar ben Yehudah's treatise *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*⁶³ as well as in his *Perush ha-Merkava*.⁶⁴

In *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, R. El'azar explains that in his vision, the prophet Ezekiel saw four *hayyot* ("living creatures," pl.; Ezek 1:5.13–15.19–22; 3:18), although he should have seen only one *hayya* (sg., as it is

60 The same order of the books is also documented in MS Vienna 16, whereas the Oriental manuscripts Leningrad, Evr. I B 19a and Aleppo show the order Isaiah – Jeremiah – Ezekiel. Things again look different in MS Berlin SBB-PK Ms. Or. Fol 1213 (Erfurt 3) that presents the order Jeremiah – (fols. 230v–258r) – Ezechiel (fols. 259v–285r) – Isaiah (fols. 286v–303v). As regards this topic, it is worth noting that the *Okhla we-Okhla* recensions usually differ from one another: MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 148 gives the order Jeremiah – Ezekiel – Isaiah, whereas MS Halle, Yb 4°10 shows the order Isaiah – Jeremiah – Ezekiel. Our scribe must have had an *Okhla we-Okhla* recension at hand that presented the order of the books in the way of MS Halle, Yb 4°10, since his Masoretic list sequences follow the order of *Okhla-H*.

61 See above p. 106.

62 See the article by Sara Offenberg in this volume, pp. 149–169.

63 The oldest manuscript is MS London, British Library, Add. 27199 (Margoliouth III, 737), written in 1515 by Eliyahu bar Asher ha-Levi Ashkenazi (Elia Levita) on behalf of Cardinal Aegidio de Viterbo (for a codicological description see Liss 1997, pp. 11–13). *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* is found on fols. 485v–522v.

64 R. El'azar ben Yehudah, *Perush ha-Merkava*, MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 850, fols. 58r, 72v–73r, 79v.

described in Ezek 10:15.17.20). As an exegetical-theological solution for these inconsistencies, he explained that the heavenly realm and visionary appearance are subject to the tension between Divine unity and the multiplicity of any creative entity:

כי לא יראו בענין עולם הזה עיניך תראינה את מוריך מלך ביופיו תחונה עיניך. הצדיק בכל צדדיו יראה כעליונים לפניו ולאחריו כל צדדין שיון כמו ולא יסבו בלכתם לכך יש לחיות הרבה פניו וגם כל החיות אדוקים יחד כאגוז שהוא פרקי' ולמטה ד' והאמצעי כל החיות נקראי' חיה. היא החיה אשר ראיתו. הרי כולם גוף אחד לכך ט' פנים לכל בריותם ורנ' כנפיהם. וירכב על כרוב הרי נחלק ולא היה גוף אחד.

In this world they will not see it. Your eyes will see your teacher.⁶⁵ *Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty* (Isa 33:17). [Only in the messianic future], the righteous will behold him at all sides – just as the upper [angels] in front of him and after him (...) as in: *They turned not as they went* (Ezek 1:9.12.17; 10:11 [2]). Therefore, the *hayyot* have many faces, and all the *hayyot* are joined together like a big nut that is divided into sections, below there are four and a middle one. All the *hayyot* are called *hayya*, this is the *hayya* that I saw (Ezek 10:15.20), all of them were *one* body. Therefore [they had] 64 faces for each of the *hayyot*, and 256 wings. *And He rode upon a keruv* (Ps 18:11 כרוב). Behold, [the word conveys the meaning of] fragmented [כִּרְיֹב ‘like many’; H.L.]: It was not one body [but many].⁶⁶

The idea of the image of the four creatures, to which a fifth creature is then related, was described by R. El'azar ben Yehudah more than once, in particular in his *Sod ha-Egoz* (“secret of the nut”). In his comments on the *merkava* chapters in Ezek 1 and 10, R. El'azar explains the exegetical tension between Ezekiel's vision as described in Ezek 1, where four *hayyot* are depicted (Ezek 1:5.13–15.19–22; 3:18), and the one in Ezek 10 that mentions only one *hayya* (Ezek 10:15.17.20). R. El'azar elucidates this contradiction between the two vision reports as a contradiction on its surface by introducing the category “upper” = heavenly (מעלה) realm, and “lower” = earthly (מטה) realm, into the vision of the *merkava*, and, thus,

65 Cf. Isa 30:20, probably quoted by heart, since even the Ashkenazic manuscripts read like the Orientals (compare Firkovich, *Evr. I B 19a*: ראה את מוריך; likewise, e.g., in London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 186; MS Vienna 16, fol. 157r. – On the topic of the righteous sitting in front of God see *b. Soṭah 49a, b. Sukk. 45b*, and Rashi *Tosafot ad loc.*

66 R. El'azar ben Yehudah, *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, MS London, British Library Add. 27199, fol. 533r; compare also Avraham ben Azriel's *Sefer Arugat ha-Bosem* (ed. E. E. Urbach, Jerusalem 1947, vol. 2, 169): כן ד' חיות הן וחיה אחת למעלה.

explaining the visionary appearance of the four-*hayyot*-creature in its variform as one single heavenly entity.⁶⁷

Against this theological background, we might be able to explain the stork of the upper *figurata*: It belongs to the inner frame more than to the four creatures. First of all, it might refer very generally to the Ashkenazic Hasidic ideal of piety (cf. SHP #975).⁶⁸ *Sefer Hasidim* reports a well-known pun that says that the *hasid* is called *hasid* because of the *hasida*, i.e. the Biblical stork, which Targum Onqelos translates into the Aramaic *hawwarita* “the white (bird),”⁶⁹ for it is written: “(...) *no longer [shall] his face grow pale,*⁷⁰ because [non-pietists] disgrace his face and make it pale; but he [i.e. the *hasid*] remains deaf and dumb; he does not open his mouth, nor does he disgrace the face of his fellow creatures, but in the messianic futures their faces will shine.” Furthermore, the stork is a bird without a tongue. It chatters with its beak, but it doesn’t “talk.” It, therefore, represents the characteristic attribute of secrecy and discretion as it is described in the *Physiologus*,⁷¹ which could have been known to the *Haside Ashkenaz*. The stork that bears the entire *merkava* construction might, therefore, be an impish hint about the epistemological use of a list that is bound to an esoteric interpretation. In this case, the stork would allude to the *torat ha-sod* that is embedded in the *masora figurata*.

It might even be more sophisticated: London or. folio 2091 is an Ashkenazi manuscript, and in the German lands as well as in Northern France, i.e. an environment deeply rooted in and influenced by Christian visual culture, we find many churches and books in which this four-figure

67 See already Altmann, Alexander: “Eleazar of Worms’ Hokhmah ha-’Egoz.” *JJS* 11, 1960, pp. 101–113, here: p. 112, who understands R. El’azar ben Yehudah in such a way that to the four *hayyot* a fifth is added, but this is not the idea behind R. El’azar’s explanations; see Liss 1997, esp. 114–118; Wolfson 1995, p. 121 incl. note 65; Farber, Asi: *The Concept of the Merkabah in Thirteenth-Century Jewish Esotericism. Sod ha-’Egoz’ and Its Development* (Hebr.). Ph.D. Thesis: Hebrew University Jerusalem 1986, esp. pp. 421–424.

68 Ed. Princeton University *Sefer Hasidim* Database (PUSHD): https://etc.princeton.edu/sefer_hasidim/ (access March 2020).

69 Deut 14:18: TO *hawarita*; TPsJ *hiwwarita*; Targum Yerushalmi II (Fragment Targum) *hiwwarta*.

70 Isa 29:22.

71 Cf. Seel, Otto (ed.): *Der Physiologus*. Artemis: Zürich/Stuttgart 1960, pp. 76–77.

ensemble is represented as the four evangelists.⁷² Moreover, the stork is known as a representation of Christ. The *Physiologus* explains that the stork resembles Christ in that he appears to the heavenly beings (in the heavenly realm) as God, but to the lower world as a man. This would not only match R. El'azar's discussion of the relationship between the upper celestial *hayya* and the four *hayyot* the prophet saw, but would also fit into the illustrative concept of our folio, which so prominently presents God's revelation, the *kavod*, and the *merkava* with the four *hayyot*. If we assumed that our scribe had such an allusion in mind, we would have to interpret the stork as a kind of counter-motif to a well-known contemporary Christian theological topic.

4.2 Masora figurata 3

Similarly to the relationship between text and image in *masora figurata 2*, in this micrography depicting the four *hayyot*, we observe that with regard to certain parts of the image, the scribe was interested in linking the iconographic program to the semantic content of the Biblical verses quoted in the Masoretic list. However, this time, the semantic relationship between one and the other is not as immediate as in *masora figurata 2*.

On the right side of the upper inner frame, there begins a list with “18 verses that resemble one another insofar as there are 4 words of which to the first no *Waw* is prefixed ...” (listpath 6; cf. Weil #3911), starting with Exod 39:3 (וירקעו את פחי הזהב) and reaching the central figure in this ensemble – the knight – exactly at Ezek 1:10, the central passage of the Ezekielian *merkava* vision in Ezek 1:10. The knight's right foot and arm, as well as the tapered end of his mace is designed by means of the verse Ezek 1:10, that describes the four *hayyot* (“Each of them had a human face ...”).

72 See below, p. 129.

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Hebrew Quotation</i>	<i>Translation (lemma and Biblical quotation)</i>	<i>Position</i>
	<p>י"ח פסוקים דמיין אית בהון ד' מילין קדמאה לא נסיב ואו ותנינא ותליתאה למלים נס' ויו וסימנהון</p>	<p>18 verses that resemble one another insofar as there are 4 words of which to the first no <i>Waw</i> is prefixed, whereas (at least) the second and third word are accompanied by a <i>Waw</i> prefixed to it, and their signs are...</p>	<p>6.1.1.</p>
Exod 39:3	<p>וירקעו את פחי הזהב וקצין פתילים לעשות בתוך התכלת ובתוך הארגמן ובתוך הארגמן ובתוך תולעת השני ובתוך תולעת השני ובתוך השש</p>	<p>They hammered out sheets of gold and cut threads to be worked into designs among the blue, the purple, and the crimson yarns, and the fine linen.</p>	
[[...]]			
Ezek 1:10	<p>ודמות פניהם פני אדם ופני אריה אל הימין לארבעתן ופני שור מהשמ' מהשמאל לארבעתן ופני נשר לארבעתן פני ופני ופני ופני</p>	<p>Each of them had a human face [at the front]; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right; each of the four had the face of an ox on the left; and each of the four had the face of an eagle [at the back]. Face, and face, and face, and face.</p>	<p>knight: foot; arm; staff</p>
Ezek 34:4	<p>את הנחלות לא חיזקתם את ואת ואת ואת</p>	<p>You have not sustained the weak [...], and the [sick], and the [strayed], and the [lost] [...]</p>	<p>knight: staff</p>
Ezek 47:18–20	<p>ופאת קדים פאת ופאת ופאת ופאת ופאת ופאת הים מבין ומבין ומבין ומבין ומבין ומבין</p> <p>ופאת קדים מבין חורן ומבין דמשק ומבין הגלעד ומבין ארץ ישראל הירדן מגבול עליהם הקדמוני תמדו ואת פאת קדימה: ופאת נגב תימנה מתמר עדימי מריבות קדש נחלה אליהם הגדול ואת פאת־תימנה נגבה: ופאת־ים הים הגדול מגבול עדינכה לבוא חמת זאת פאת־ים</p>	<p>And the east side between Hauran and Damascus and Gilead, and the land of Israel, by the Jordan, from the border unto the east sea shall ye measure. This is the east side.</p> <p>And the south side southward shall be from Tamar as far as the waters of Meriboth-kadesh, to the Brook, unto the Great Sea. This is the south side southward.</p> <p>And the west side shall be the Great Sea, from the border as far as over against the entrance of Hamath. This is the west side.</p>	<p>knight: staff; crest; visor; helmet</p>
[[...]]			

Verse	Hebrew Quotation	Translation (lemma and Biblical quotation)	Position
Dan 5:19	ומן רבו די יהב די הוה (ו)די הוה ודי הוה ודי הוה	And because of the grandeur that He bestowed [upon him, all the peoples and left foot nations of every language trembled in fear of him. He put to death] whom [he wished,] and whom [he wished he let live; he raised high] whom [he wished] and whom [he wished he brought low].	knight:

The peculiarity of this *figurata* lies in the fact that the Masorete attached the lemmata and (partial) quotations of the list in such a way that the verses Ezek 47:18–20 (the new boundaries of the land of Israel) are related to the knight, the knight’s helmet and visor, the crest, and the upper part of the mace (“Streitkolben”). Like in *masorae figuratae* 1 and 2, the scribe not only made the list’s original hierarchy (from the Pentateuch over the Prophets to the Hagiographa) unrecognizable, but also changed the epistemological function of the list. Whereas the *masora magna* refers to grammatical peculiarities regarding the use of the copula *Waw*, our scribe focused on the semantic content of the Biblical section taken from Ezek 47:18–20 and incorporated it into the most prominent illustration of *masora figurata* 3 in order to attach the Ezekielian vision to the figure of the knight. Even without knowing that there is a further list attached to Ezek 1:10, we would realize that a knight (though we do not yet know who it is!) would be and should be responsible for the demarcation of the new boundaries of the land. From Ezek 47:13, it is clear that the division of the land results from Divine order (division of the land) and is a promise (inheritance of the land) at the same time.⁷³ In this case, to take up an expression by Markus Hilgert, the list becomes an “artefactual representation”⁷⁴ that points beyond its immediate semantic content – the tribes divide the inherited land – to an eschatological hope – the knight will return the land to Israel. The scribe changed the “epistemic

73 Ezek 47:13–14: “Thus said the Lord GOD: These shall be the boundaries of the land that you shall allot to the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall receive two portions, and you shall share the rest equally. As I swore to give it to your fathers, so shall this land fall to you as your heritage.”

74 See Hilgert 2009, p. 300.

practice”⁷⁵ insofar as the list material was adopted and radically changed in its application in order to create a new meaning.

The last list used in *masora figurata* 3 (listpath 7; *masora parva* ad loc.) was used by the scribe in order to explain the nature of the knight. This list is attached to the lion (starting in the lion’s tail), listing 16 verses in which the term פְּנֵה (“front; face”) in plural constructus with particle conjunction ו is written. This is a list in which, again, the verses Ezek 1:10 (three occurrences), Ezek 10:14, and Ezek 41:19.21 (three occurrences) play an important role. The two lists, therefore, have Ezek 1:10 in common, and the scribe used this verse in order to attach to it two topics, the topic of the “face” and the enumeration of verses that contain a certain term with or without a prefixed *Waw*. In addition, one has to keep in mind that the topic of the faces is introduced by the elaboration of the *masora parva* note on Ezek 1:8.11: בקריה וסימנהון “*And their faces*: one out of nine verses in Scripture, and their signs are (...)” that forms the initial rosette in Fig. 3 (path 4).

Verse	Hebrew Quotation	Translation (lemma and Biblical quotation)	Position
	ופניהם חד מן ט בקריה וסימנהון	“And their faces”: one out of 9 verses in Scripture, and their signs are ...	path 4
	ופני חד מן יו בקריה וסימנהון	“And the face”: one out of 16 verses in Scripture, and their signs are ...	path 7
Ezek 1:10	ודמות פניהם פני אדם ופני אריה אל הימין לארבעתן ופני שור מהשמי מהשמאל לארבעתן ופני נשר לארבעתן פני ופני ופני ופני	Each of them had a human face [at the front]; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right; each of the four had the face of an ox on the left; and each of the four had the face of an eagle [at the back]. Face, and face, and face, and face.	knight : foot; arm; staff

⁷⁵ See in particular Detel, Wolfgang: “Wissenskulturen und epistemische Praktiken.” In: Fried, Johannes/Kailer, Thomas (eds.): *Wissenskulturen: Beiträge zu einem forschungsstrategischen Konzept*. Akademie Verlag: Berlin 2003, pp. 119–132, here: pp. 119–120; Hilgert 2009, p. 284.

Ezek 1:10 and 10:14 are the crucial starting points in the exegesis of Ezekiel's description of the chariot, as we find it in R. El'azar ben Yehudah's *Hilkhot ha-Kavod* (##18–20⁷⁶). Here, R. El'azar explains the prophet's vision of the *kavod* (the Divine Glory) sitting on the heavenly throne, in particular by means of an extensive exegesis on the Biblical description of the *merkava* and the four *ḥayyot*, thereby elaborating on the term פנה/פני ("front/face"):

לך הוצרך הנביא לראות כסא הכבוד ועליו כמלך. והוצרך ד' חיות שהיא ברייא אחת ויו' פנים לכל אחת ד' ביחד כי ד' חוברות מקיפין לכל צד של כסא הכבוד והם יו' והוצרכו סד' פנים יו' לכל חיה. וד' פנים לאחד פני האחד פני הכרוב ופני השני פני האדם והג' פני אריה והד' פני נשר. פני האחד פני הכרוב ופני השני פני אדם. פני פני כ' לכרוב וב' פעמ' פני אדם אבל לאריה ולנשר פעם אחת פני

Therefore, a prophet must have seen the Throne of (the Divine) Glory and upon it (the appearance of a figure) like a king. And likewise, necessarily, the four *ḥayyot* are (not four) but one created entity (ברייה אחת). And each of them has sixteen faces, four (times four) altogether. Four groups surround each side (of the throne), which sums up to sixteen. Therefore, sixty-four faces were needed, sixteen for every *ḥayya*.⁷⁷ And each one had four faces: the first face was the face of the *keruv*, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.⁷⁸ 'The first face was the face of the *keruv*, and the second face was the face of a man': face – face: As regards the *keruv* and the man the term פני [is mentioned] twice, whereas in the description of the lion and the eagle, this term [is written only] once.⁷⁹

The entire passage in R. El'azar's *Hilkhot ha-Kavod* is meant as an exegetical proof for the doubling of the Divine realm within the prophetic vision (למעלה; למטה): The duplication-relevant terms (פני) are the proof for the idea that the prophet saw the lower figure/image (*demut*) of the heavenly (the upper) image.⁸⁰ By means of this line of argument, R. El'azar attempts to

76 Edited, translated and explained in detail in Liss 1997, pp. *16–*18; 40–43; 114–118.

77 A similar passage is found in the *Perush ha-Merkava* on Ezek 1:8 (cf. Abrams, Daniel/Farber-Ginat, Asi (eds.): *The Commentaries to Ezekiel's Chariot of R. Eleazar of Worms and R. Jacob ben Jacob ha-Kohen*. Cherub Press: Los Angeles 2004, p. 47).

78 Ezek 10:14.

79 Edited in Liss 1997, pp. *16–*18.

80 In the entire section, R. El'azar not only lists the verses with the doubled פני, but also gives those with the doubling of צלם and דמות (see Liss 1997, pp. 41–43, 115–118).

envision the polymorphism of the Divine revelation within the prophetic vision as only a visionary multiplicity.

This exegetical emphasis on the term פנה/פני in *Hilkhot ha-Kavod* is a classic example of R. El'azar ben Yehudah's exegetical method according to the *remez* (allusion) and *sod* (secret), inasmuch as he explains a Biblical text's formal design in a way that unearths deeper theological knowledge, knowledge that is not found on a verse's or word's semantic surface. Likewise, in his *perush ha-merkava*, he explains the *masora parva* note on Ezek 1:8⁸¹ with the following words:

שבים ידו כתיב שידו של הקב"ה תחת כנפי החיות לקבל שבים *ketiv* ([*we-la qere*] 'written (but not read)', since it is the hand of the Holy One, blessed be He, under the wings of the *hayyot* in order to receive penitents [i.e. to protect penitents from the attribute of justice; H.L.⁸²].

R. El'azar's comments are based on a statement by R. Shim'on ben Laqish, expounding the *ketiv* form in the Biblical text as a hint to the theological idea that even though the Biblical text speaks about the hands (pl. → created multiplicity) of the *hayyot* (pl.), one may draw the conclusion that God's hand (sg. → Divine unity), too, was under the *merkava*. From here, it is only a small theological step to the idea that the Biblical texts (in their deeper meaning) reflect the tension between Divine unity and the multiplicity of created beings (in this case, angels) to be envisioned by the prophet.

R. Yehudah he-Ḥasid's *Sefer ha-Kavod* as well as R. El'azar's *Hilkhot ha-Kavod* (and other parts of his *Sefer Sode Razzaya*)⁸³ are dedicated entirely to this subject, i.e. they deal in particular with the question of the unity of the Creator, the metaphysical quality of His revelation, and the means by which a prophet and, in their time, a mystic could experience and envision the Divine presence described in the Bible as the *kavod*, and in rabbinic literature as the so-called *shekhina*.⁸⁴ R. Yehudah he-Ḥasid ("the Pious")

81 See the edition ק יד "this form is to be read (differently)."

82 Cf. *b. Pesah. 199a*: מאי דכתיב וידו אדם מתחת כנפיהם ידו כתיב זה ידו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שפרוסה תחת כנפי החיות כדי לקבל בעלי תשובה מיד מדת הדין.

83 MS London, British Library Add. 27199 (Margoliouth III, 737).

84 See also Liss, Hanna: "The Torah Scroll and Its Function as a Ritual Object in Jewish Culture." In: Schulze, Hendrik (ed.): *Musical Text as Ritual Object*. Brepols: Turnhout 2015, pp. 165–174, esp. pp. 167–169; Liss, Hanna: "Die

developed the idea that the *kavod* has two faces or two sides, one face directed toward the Divine unity (and not to be envisioned by any created being), the other side toward the created world. According to R. Yehudah, the double-faced *kavod*, emanating from the Divine unity (הכל), therefore guarantees an ontological relationship between God (unity) and the created entities (multiplicity) visible to the prophet.

This allusion to the theological meaning of the doubling of the term face (פני) might have been the reason for the scribe not only to double the two *masora parva* notations on Ezek 1:10, but also to double the *figurata* illuminations with the four *hayyot* on this page, since folio 203r is the only page in the entire manuscript on which the *masora figurata* in the upper and lower margin presents the same motif.

One last observation might be added here: When editing these *masora figurata* illustrations, modern researchers often struggle with the frames of the images that only hesitatingly reveal their secrets with respect to the beginning of the reading. The drawing shows strong efforts to depict the frame as circular, as an infinite loop without a precise beginning and ending. In particular, the lower image presents an angular shape. This angular image might also have been rooted in the description of the throne of glory and the *hayyot* as we find it in R. El'azar's short commentary on the chariot (*perush ha-merkava*) and in the commentary of R. Ya'aqov ben Ya'aqov ha-Kohen:

... והכסא הוא עגול מלמעלה מלמעלה כמו כ' אבל למטה הוא מרובעה

The throne is round [when seen] from above like [the letter] Kaf, but from below, it is quadrangular (...).⁸⁵

וכ"ל ח"י"ה וחי"ה מרובעת מד' פנים לכל צד וצד

And each of the *hayyot* is quadrangular due to the four faces on each side.⁸⁶

Offenbarung Gottes in der mittelalterlichen Bibel- und Gebetsauslegung." *Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte* 13, 1998 = 2001, pp. 271–292; Dan, Joseph: *Studies in Ashkenazi-Hasidic Literature* (Hebr.). Masada Press: Ramat Gan 1975, p. 169; Dan, Joseph: "An Ashkenasic Story on the Conversion to Judaism of an Arab King (Hebr.)." *Zion* 26, 1960/61, pp. 132–137.

85 R. El'azar ben Yehudah of Worms, *Perush ha-Merkava*, MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale héb. 850, fol. 67r (ed. Abrams/Farber 2004, p. 74 [edition deviates from the manuscript]).

86 Abrams/Farber (eds.) 2004, p. 115.

The masoretic notes on this page, in connection with the images, thus draw the reader's attention to the topic of the Divine revelation on the throne of Glory and the power of the *kavod*. By using the Masoretic notes to focus on Ezek 1:10 ("faces") and, at the same time, attaching them to the knight, our scribe takes up a well-known theological topic on the Divine revelation and connects it with the figure of a knight, to be more precise: with the Divine knight. The fact that the knight is made from verses of Ezek 1 shows that this figure represents God's glory as described in Ezek 1, rather than a human being or Jacob embodying the *Verus Israel*. Thérèse and Mendel Metzger point to the stars on the armor of the knight, suggesting they mark him as a celestial being.⁸⁷ As a corollary, the reference to the lemmata from Ezek 47 (i.e. the new boundaries of the land of Israel) can now be interpreted as made by the scribe in order to use the *masora figurata* to establish the image of a "counter-crusade" in times of trouble: God's presence, the *kavod* himself, is to be expected to help Israel regain the land and resettle in it. The knightly *kavod* is desired so that it (i.e. He) may act as the Divine knight for the Jews.⁸⁸ The *masora figurata* does not only address an internal Jewish issue or a mere theological motif, but, clearly, a Jewish-Christian conflict. The scribe used the lists in order to have more Biblical verses at his disposal. The *masora magna* that belongs to a *masora parva* note on the respective page did not provide him with a suitable Biblical reference, and he therefore took the *Okhla we-Okhla* material in order to make use of the Biblical verse he needed for this theological message.

5 "Crossing the Threshold..."

The argument that the *masora figurata* served as a sophisticated means to depict the Jewish-Christian theological battle is further strengthened by a

87 "Seules les étoiles de la cotte d'armes passée sur son haubert évoquent le caractère céleste de la vision" (Metzger 1982, p. 275).

88 This motif is already found in the Midrash, where it says that the Jewish people shall not fight themselves when entering the land: "*Come and possess the land* (Deut 1:8) (...). When you enter the land, you will have no need for weapons but only compasses and rulers [to divide the land among you]." (שאתם נכנסים) (לארץ אין אתם צריכים כלי זיין אלא קובע דיפטיין ומחלק).

closer look at the iconographic program of this folio. The four creatures are not simply drawn facing the viewer. Rather, they form two couples in profile: the eagle facing the man/knight, and the lion facing the ox (Figs. 1; 2).

This figurative arrangement probably did not originate with the scribe. He might have seen it, perhaps more often than he wished to. As already noted above, the four creatures from the Ezekielian vision are often presented as a four-figure ensemble representing the four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), as depicted in the Book of Revelation.⁸⁹ The way in which the creatures in this manuscript are arranged – face to face – resembles the evangelical ensembles, as can be found on church tympanums and in portals, in particular in France. Kendall and Rohde showed that in particular in the tympanums of the early gothic cathedrals and churches that present the figure of Christ with the four evangelists (tetramorph), symbolized by the four creatures from the Ezekielian vision and the Book of Revelation (Rev. 4:1–11), the animals are designed with their heads/faces in half relief, one opposite the other.⁹⁰ Moreover, in these tympanums, too, we find exactly the same grouping of the animals in half relief: the eagle (i.e. John) facing the man/knight (i.e. Matthew), and the lion (i.e. Mark) facing the ox (i.e. Luke). In the geographical triangle between Chartres, Angers, and Bourges, we find a number of early Gothic portals with exactly these features, of which the cathedral of Chartres is the most prominent and formative example (Fig. 3):⁹¹

89 Kendall, Calvin: *The Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and Their Verse Inscriptions*. Univ. of Toronto Press: Toronto 1998, p. 55; the motif of Christ in Majesty accompanied or surrounded by the four creatures can be found in Byzantine apse mosaics as early as the fifth century, cf. Mathews, Thomas F.: *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*. Revised Edition. Princeton Univ. Press: Princeton 1999, pp. 115–141.

90 Rohde, Martin: “Innovative Portalskulptur im Umkreis des Chartreser Portal Royal.” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 71(3), 2008, pp. 297–320; Kendall 1998, p. 55.

91 This motif was also very prominent for small sculptures, as a thirteenth-century Cluniac ivory carving of Christ in Majesty surrounded by the four creatures (evangelists) shows: <https://t1p.de/g63z> (Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge).

- Western façade, tympanum of the central bay at the Royal Portal of the Cathedral of Chartres
- Western façade, tympanum of the Cathedral of Angers
- Western façade, tympanum of the Cathedral of the Priory church of Saint-Loup-de-Naud
- Southern façade, tympanum of the Cathedral of Le Mans
- Southern façade, tympanum of the Cathedral of Bourges
- Western façade of the church of Lassouts

All these churches' tympanums present the two pairs "Man [i.e. Matthew] – Eagle [i.e. John]" and "Lion [i.e. Mark] – Ox [i.e. Luke]."⁹² Jews saw these portals when they were traveling or visiting a city during trade fairs,⁹³ and they were aware of the ceremonial processions that conferred even more dignity and relevance on these portals.⁹⁴ They probably recognized the four creatures that were presented on such significant parts of the building as the tympanum. Even though Jewish scholars might not have been aware of the New Testament description in the Book of Revelation (Rev 4), and did not comprehend the sophisticated iconographic program of the eschatological appearance of Christ in its entirety,⁹⁵ they must have realized that Christian ideology took over the symbols and hereditary titles of the Jews, having defeated them by means of military power and overwhelmed them with architectural centennial projects like

92 From left to right, upper and lower row. Only the church of Lassout (although grouping the same pairs of evangelists) presents the Eagle [i.e. John] on the left opposite to the Man [i.e. Matthew] on the right in the upper row.

93 Cf. Fassler, Margot Elsbeth: *The Virgin of Chartres: Making History through Liturgy and the Arts*. Yale Univ. Press: New Haven et al. 2010, p. 283: "This is cathedral art; its projected audience ranged from pilgrims, who had infrequent opportunities to experience the special presence of the Virgin of Chartres, to local people, priests, and parishioners, who explored the cult and its meaning throughout their lives, during what was an era of deep association with the crusaders' mission."

94 See in particular Fassler 2010, esp. pp. 282–322; Fassler, Margot Elsbeth: "Liturgy and Sacred History in the Twelfth-Century Tympana at Chartres." *Art Bulletin* 75(3), 1993, pp. 499–520.

95 See also Fassler 1993, p. 517: "The iconography of the portal is about entering: specifically about the coming of the Messiah into time, into his church, and at the end of time (...)."

cathedrals, of which the portal, in particular, constituted the “dwelling place of God.”⁹⁶ The Christians “crossing the threshold” of the cathedral, which “transported the worshipper directly into the heavenly city,”⁹⁷ separated the Christian from the Jewish world, but this does not mean that the Jews had no idea of the theological relevance of a tympanum’s sculptural design. In particular, the prominent appearance of the four *hayyot* that were equally prominent in Jewish mysticism must have evoked a theological and artistic spirit of contradiction.

These observations would match our interpretation, according to which the scribe’s pen brought forth an urgent request for a “counter-crusade.” Rachel Dressler proved that the Royal Portal of the cathedral in Chartres (north door) depicts not only Jewish suffering, but likewise the rejection and depravity of the Muslims.⁹⁸ Crusader topics like the Massacre of the Innocents (Herod’s infanticide), carved in stone, play a prominent role in the iconography of the Royal Portal at Chartres.⁹⁹ For the Jews, the iconographic program based on contemporary theological discourse and ideologies that took shape in the sacral architecture of that time must have been a serious challenge. The striking parallels between the arrangements of the four *hayyot* in our manuscript and on the French churches’ tympanums as well as the fact that MS London, British Library, Or. 2091 presents the heraldic lily,¹⁰⁰ the “fleur-de-lys” as the royal symbol, in many of its *figuratae* points once again to a French geo-cultural background of the scribe, rather than to Germany, as in the manuscript’s description.¹⁰¹

It is quite difficult to prove that the Hebrew Bible masters, or even the scribes, had those portals in mind when they were creating their

96 Cf. Kendall 1998, esp. pp. 6–18.

97 Kendall 1998, p. 6; compare also Fassler 1993, p. 501, who states that the act of entrance into the church was regarded as a ceremony that symbolized Christ’s coming; Carlsson 1976, esp. pp. 61–63, emphasizes that the jamb statues on the Western façade of the Cathedral of Chartres depict the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem as represented by the church building.

98 Dressler, Rachel: “‘Deus hoc vult’: Ideology, Identity and Sculptural Rhetoric at the Time of the Crusades.” *Medieval Encounters* 1(2), 1995, pp. 188–218.

99 Dressler 1995, esp. pp. 98–206.

100 See Rost 2018, esp. pp. 40–42.

101 See above, note 2, p. 101.

illuminations. However, one is tempted to interpret the *figuratae* as portals (with verse inscriptions¹⁰²) through which the reader (a certain type of reader? a mystic?) is prepared to enter the book, the text, the Divine world. The question of whether there is an art-historical relationship between the church portals and our figurative images needs further research; however, the *figuratae* in particular in this manuscript, which presents *masora figurata* only at the very beginning of each Biblical book, might be compared to the church portals, leading their readers into the Biblical text as the symbol for the Divine world.¹⁰³

6 Conclusion

How did our scribe treat the Masoretic material? On folio 203r as our initial test case, we can assume that the scribe had list material in front of him that he disassembled in a very specific way. In contrast to the scholarly tradition related to the philological education in the Bet Midrash, in which the Masorah was used in a highly selective list-like form as a grammatical and linguistic tool, this manuscript's scribe abolished the Masoretic list form by dissolving its outer frame; the lists' hierarchy (verse-chronological order) can no longer be clearly determined. The moment of diachrony which is necessary for the reading of a list (out loud or to oneself) is simultaneously relinquished by viewing a decorative element. The act of reading as a primarily cognitive-rational activity is enhanced with an aesthetic and emotional component. However, the Biblical verses' semantic content, which was lost when subordinated to the list's respective topic, was regained and used to serve a specific exegetical and theological purpose, in our case: the emphasis on the (desire for the) power of Divine revelation. As our folio shows, our scribe's ideological worldview was conceivably influenced by the Christian environment (theology, iconography [drolleries], book illumination, heraldry, architecture). If we are to take Andreas Reckwitz's claim seriously, according to which the meaning of a text is completely dependent on the interpretations of the participants and

102 On the verse inscriptions in stone see in particular Kendall 1998, esp. pp. 33–48.

103 “Portals, with their images and verses, guided and directed Christians in their passage into the interior of the church” (Kendall 1998, p. 6).

the respective practices of reception,¹⁰⁴ we must conclude that the question of why the Masorete decided to create these distinctive textual forms, or of how the Masoretic references relate to isolated Masorah traditions (in the form of lists), can exclusively be addressed on the basis of the evidence of each individual artifact, allowing us to see the individual transfer of meaning in the act of the forming of the *masora figurata*.

It is precisely this deliberate dissolution and visual re-arrangement of the Masoretic list format that forces the modern editor to edit the material in such a way that the cultural background under which *masora figurata* was created, as well as the theological allusions that express a distinctive reaction to it, are made visible to the modern viewer.¹⁰⁵ The theological message becomes visible only when the edition displays the iconographic function of the Biblical lemmata and their semantics within the *figurata*. Whereas in a list, the single elements are read diachronically from the beginning to the end, the *figurata* of the four *hayyot* and the knight in its center, comprised of Biblical verses from the Ezekielian visions, is perceived synchronically: one image in its unity made up of a number of single verses (Figs. 4; 5). In this regard, the perception of the (edited) *figuratae* (by the medieval as well as the modern viewer) resembles precisely what R. El'azar ben Yehudah elaborated upon in his *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* on the prophetic vision:

Behold, [the word conveys the meaning of] fragmented [כררוב 'like many'; H.L.]: It was not one body [but many].¹⁰⁶

104 Reckwitz, Andreas: *Die Transformation der Kulturtheorien. Zur Entwicklung eines Theorieprogramms*. Velbrück Wiss.: Weilerswist 2006, p. 611, including n. 85; see also Hilgert, Markus: “‘Text-Anthropologie’. Die Erforschung von Materialität und Präsenz des Geschriebenen als hermeneutische Strenge.” In: Hilgert, Markus (ed.): *Altorientalistik im 21. Jahrhundert. Selbstverständnis, Herausforderungen, Ziele*. (Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 142). Berlin 2010, pp. 87–126.

105 On the theory of Digital Editing of the *masora figurata* see the article by Clemens Liedtke in this volume, pp. 87–109. For a general overview of the history of Digital Editing see Sahle, Patrick 2013: *Digitale Editionsformen, Zum Umgang mit der Überlieferung unter den Bedingungen des Medienwandels*. 3 vols. (Schriften des Instituts für Dokumentologie und Editorik 7–9). Books on Demand: Norderstedt 2013 (open access: vol. 1: <https://t1p.de/z4i2>; vol. 2: <https://t1p.de/nf67>; vol. 3: <https://t1p.de/1kbu>).

106 See above, note 63, p. 152.

The *masora figurata* thus becomes a means for the medieval reader – we might call him a mystic – to envision a theological truth that lies beyond shapes and letters. At the same time, the Biblical book – to be more precise, the Bible codex that was used in the scholarly environment of the Bet Midrash – developed into a bearer of theological secrets beyond the mere Biblical text.¹⁰⁷

Our example demonstrates that the artistic production of such a text is not rooted in a fixed meaning of the Masoretic comments. Philological analysis identifies the Masoretic material in this meticulous arrangement as an essential tool for theological testimony, and reveals the iconographic program of Masoretic material combined with the draftsman's illustrations as a theological all-embracing art form ("Gesamtkunstwerk") that was meant to be identified as such by (a distinctive group of) contemporary readers.

107 See also Liss, Hanna: "Aschkenasische Bibelcodices als Träger exegetischer und theologischer Geheimnisse." In: Schattner-Rieser, Ursula/Oesch, Josef M. (eds.): *700 Jahre jüdische Präsenz in Tirol. Geschichte der Fragmente, Fragmente der Geschichte*. Innsbruck Univ. Press: Innsbruck 2018, pp. 203–223.

7 Appendix: Edition



Fig. 4: Paths marking the *masora figurata* in MS London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203r. © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database



Fig. 5: Edition of the masora figurata in MS London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203r; also available online: <http://bima2.corpusmasoreticum.de/manuscript/British.Library.Or.2091/203r>, © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database

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List of Figures

Rainer Josef Barzen

Personal Grief Between Private and Public Space: A Micrographic Inscription as a Historical Source (MS Vienna Cod. 16)

Fig. 1: The Rintfleisch Persecution 1298 according to the Memorbook of Nuremburg (M)	42
Fig. 2: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 16, fols. 248v and 252r	51
Fig. 3: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 16, fols. 259r and 264v	52

Dalia-Ruth Halperin

Micrography Mounted Falcons: An Exegetic Text and Image

Fig. 1: Catalan Micrography Maḥzor, fols. 10r/9v (Barcelona 1336–46)	60
Fig. 2: Chart 1, fol. 1or	62
Fig. 3: Anglo-Catalan Psalter, fol. 161r, added series of miniatures from the Ferrer and Arnau Bassa atelier (Barcelona 1340–48)	64
Fig. 4: Catalan Micrography Maḥzor, fol. 9v (Barcelona 1336–46; unexecuted drawing) of a standing couple facing one another, seen with infrared photography	66
Fig. 5: “With Me from Lebanon My Bride”: Leipzig Maḥzor, Leipzig, Univ. Lib. V. 1102/I, fol. 64v	67
Fig. 6: Yonah Pentateuch, London, British Library, Add. 21160, fol. 181v.	70
Fig. 7: Chart 2, fol. 181v	73
Fig. 8: Yonah Pentateuch, London, British Library Add. 21160, fol. 192v and fol. 201v	74
Fig. 9: Cologne, the “Severinstor” city gate (twelfth century)	75
Fig. 10: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. Ebr. 1, fol. 817r (German Lands 1294)	78
Fig. 11: Chart 3, fol. fol. 817r: Color Separation: Orange – Frames; Light blue – Image; Green – indicates a repeated use of a previous reference; Purple – a verse not found within the <i>Okhla we’Okhla</i> lists	81
Fig. 12: Chart 3A (Detail)	84

- Fig. 13: Chart 4 – The Clusters of *Okhla we’Okhla* Lists that Form the Image: Orange – *Okhla we’Okhla* #10; Light blue – *Okhla we’Okhla* #11; Green – *Okhla we’Okhla* #13; Red – *Okhla we’Okhla* #70; Purple – a verse not found within the *Okhla we’Okhla* lists 85
- Fig. 14: Hamburg Miscellany, Hamburg, Staats- und Landesbibliothek Hamburg, Cod. Hebr. 37, fol. 35v 89

Clemens Liedtke

“How am I supposed to read this?” Challenges and Opportunities of Medieval Western Masorah as a Digital Scholarly Edition

- Fig. 1: Libraries as digital service providers for *Corpus Masoreticum* (interfaces/APIs, quality, and license terms) 108
- Fig. 2: Structural overview of mise-en-page of biblical text, *masora parva*, *masora magna* and *masora figurata* as linked contexts. Source: <http://bima.corpusmasoreticum.de/figurata/tor>. © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database 112
- Fig. 3: Sample of a text variant graph: Genesis 1:1 in 24 English translations. © Stefan Jänicke/Annette Geßner. Source: <https://t1p.de/7bn0> 116
- Fig. 4: Example graph representation of Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ebr. 468, with folio 1v nodes expanded in Neo4J. © Clemens Liedtke 118
- Fig. 5: Sample of a SVG textpath element, result (left) and source code (right). © Clemens Liedtke 120
- Fig. 6: Sample taken from London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203r. Source: <http://bima.corpusmasoreticum.de/figurata/ritter> (edited by Hanna Liss; SVG code: Clemens Liedtke) ... 120
- Fig. 7: Schematic outline of the *Corpus Masoreticum* application architecture *Corpus Masoreticum* as a “Big Data” analytical application. © Clemens Liedtke 123
- Fig. 8: *Corpus Masoreticum* as a DH Project. © Clemens Liedtke .. 126

Hanna Liss

Masorah as Counter-Crusade? The Use of Masoretic List Material in MS London, British Library Or. 2091

- Fig. 1: London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203r (upper margin) 141
- Fig. 2: London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203r (lower margin) 141

Fig. 3:	Western façade Tympanum of the central bay at the Royal Portal of the Cathedral of Chartres. © heidICON – Object and Multimedia Database of Heidelberg University; https://t1p.de/0xyu (accessed March 2020)	142
Fig. 4:	Paths marking the <i>masora figurata</i> in MS London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203r. © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database	169
Fig. 5:	Edition of the <i>masora figurata</i> in MS London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203r; also available online: http://bima2.corpusmasoreticum.de/manuscript/British.Library.Or.2091/203r , © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database	170

Sara Offenberg

Illustrated Secret: Esoteric Traditions in the Micrography Decoration of Erfurt Bible 2 (SBB MS Or. Fol. 1212)

Fig. 1:	“Erfurt 2” (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Or. Fol. 1212), fol. 381r	179
Fig. 2:	“Erfurt 2” (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Or. Fol. 1212), fol. 381r (detail)	181
Fig. 3:	Yonah Pentateuch, London, British Library, Add. 21160 (Ashkenaz, thirteenth century)	183
Fig. 4:	London, British Library, Or. 2091, fol. 203a (Ashkenaz, thirteenth century)	184
Fig. 5:	“Erfurt 2” (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Or. Fol. 1212), fol. 521a (13th century)	189
Fig. 6:	13th century sword, Shield of Conrad of Thuringia (1240), and Great helm (13th century)	190
Fig. 7:	R. Nehemiah, <i>Alpha Beta de-Metatron</i> : MS London, British Library, Or. 1055, fol. 105a	195

Kay Joe Petzold

Rashi in the Masorah: The Figurative Masorah in Ashkenazi Manuscripts as Parshanut

Fig. 1:	Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ebr. 14, fol. 85v	206
Fig. 2:	The right doorpost: <i>masora parva</i> to the lemma מִשְׁפָּט. © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database	207
Fig. 3:	The archway, the left doorpost, the ramp and parts of the stairs: <i>Okhla</i> -list of <i>Ketiv/Qere</i> variants. © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database	208

Fig. 4: Upper part of the stairs and the balcony: masoretic anocations to the lemmata <i>שְׁאֲרָה קְסוּתָה וְעִנְתָה</i> . © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database	211
Fig. 5: Upper part of the left doorpost: אל המזוזה. © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database	214
Fig. 6: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ebr. 14, fol. 25r	216
Fig. 7: Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3289, fol. 243r	218

Hanna-Barbara Rost

The Interconnection Between Images and Texts.

The Analysis of Four Masoretic Illustrations in MS Vat. ebr. 14 and Their Intertwined Relations

Fig. 1: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ebr. 14, fol. 7r (detail). Noah's © BIMA: Biblical Masora Database	227
Fig. 2: London, British Library, Egerton MS 1894, fol. 4r, and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, hébr. 20, fol. 13r (detail)	230
Fig. 3: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Lat. 5729, fols. 6r and 94v (details)	232
Fig. 4: Schematic representation of the “Columns of the Enclosure” Masora figurata, Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ebr. 14, fol. 93r.	238

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Indices

1 Manuscripts

Private Ownership

Codex Cairensis (Cairo, Abbasiyya, Moshe al-Dari Synagogue, MS. 34) 7
Codex S1 (former: Sassoon 1053) 16
Gottheil 14 (Breuer Ms. מל) 15
Valmadonna 1 (Washington, Museum of the Bible, CG. MS. 000858; former: Sassoon 282) 17

Public Libraries

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preußischer Kulturbesitz
Or. Quart. 9 108, 226
Or. Quart. 942 186f
Or. Fol. 1210 ('Erfurt 1') 178, 204
Or. Fol. 1211 ('Erfurt 1') 177f, 204
Or. Fol. 1212 ('Erfurt 2') 25, 177ff, 181, 189, 204
Or. Fol. 1213 ('Erfurt 3') 25, 108, 136, 152, 209, 243ff, 247ff

Bernkastel-Kues, St. Nikolaus Hospital
MS 314 44

Cambridge, University Library
Add. 858 187

Copenhagen, The Royal Library

Cod. Hebr. 37 ('Copenhagen Maimonides') 182

Halle, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt
Yb 4°10 15, 25, 87, 138f, 144f, 147, 150ff, 209ff, 215, 222, 243ff, 247, 249ff

Hamburg, Staats- und Landesbibliothek Hamburg
Cod. Hebr. 37 89

Jerusalem, Israel Museum
IM 180_52 ('Regensburg Pentateuch') 21, 211, 220

Jerusalem, The National Library of Israel
Heb 8°6527 59
Heb 24°5702 ('Damascus Pentateuch'; Sassoon 507) 209

Jerusalem, Ben Zvi Institute
MS 1 ('Aleppo-Codex'/'Keter Aram Tzova') 8, 16, 136, 152, 211

Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek
V. 1102/II ('Leipzig Maḥzor') 67, 182

London, British Library

Add. 11639 ('London
Miscellany') 182, 186
Add. 15282 ('Duke of Sussex
German Pentateuch') 108,
203, 212
Add. 15451 21
Add. 21160 ('Yonah
Pentateuch') 24, 69f, 74, 108,
183, 203, 211, 220
Add. 27199 ('Margoliouth III,
737') 152f, 160
Add. 27210 ('Golden
Haggadah') 229
Or. 1055 195
Or. 2091 25, 119f, 131f, 141,
153f, 165, 169f, 183f, 203
Or. 4445 145, 209, 211
Egerton 1894 ('Egerton Genesis
Picture Book') 229f
Harley 5710 21, 108

London, Mocatta Library

MS 1 ('Mocatta Haggadah') 59

Madrid, Biblioteca Complutense

M1 15f, 209

Manchester, John Rylands

University Library
MS heb 6 ('Rylands
Haggadah') 59

Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana

B. 30 inf. 108
B. 31 inf. 108
B. 32 inf. ('Ambrosiana
Bible') 108, 182

Munich, Bayerische

Staatsbibliothek
Cod. Hebr. 2 108
Cod. Hebr. 5, 1–2 204, 218
Cod. Hebr. 392 21
Cod. Hebr. 393 35, 48f

New York, Jewish Theological

Seminary,
Ms. 1786 187

Oxford, Bodleian

Libraries
Opp. 54 (Neubauer 706) 43

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de
France

Latin 8846 61
Hébreu 5-6 108
Hébreu 20 230
Hébreu 148 13f, 25, 79, 87,
138f, 144f, 152, 243
Hébreu 850 152, 161

Parma, Biblioteca Palatina

Cod. Parm. 2199 43
Cod. Parm. 2808 108
Cod. Parm. 3289 25, 108, 203,
205, 217ff, 222
Cod. Parm. 2668 12

Rome, Biblioteca Angelica

Or. 46 186

St. Petersburg, Russian National
Library

Firkovich Evr. I B 19a ('Codex
Leningradensis') 8, 15f,
136, 138, 148, 152f, 211,
238, 248

Firkovich Evr. I. B 3
(‘Codex Babylonicus
Petropolitanus’) 7

*Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica
Vaticana*

Ebr. 14 9, 20, 21, 25, 108, 110,
119, 203ff, 210, 212, 215ff,
221, 225ff, 229, 236,
238, 241

Ebr. 274 185

Ebr. 448 209

Ebr. 468 108, 118

Lat. 5729 ('Latin Ripoll
Bible') 231f
Urb. Ebr. 1 24, 59, 77ff, 88, 91

*Vienna, Österreichische
Nationalbibliothek*

Cod. Hebr. 16 24, 35, 37, 39,
45f, 51f, 108, 136, 152f

Cod. Hebr. 28 ('Vienna
Pentateuch') 203

*Wroclaw, Biblioteka
Uniwersytecka*

Cod. Or. I, 1 ('Double
Maḥzor') 182

M1106 21, 108

2 Authors and Names

A

Abraham Ibn Ezra 20, 228, 241
Andrews, Tara L. 115
Attia, Élodie 19ff, 39

B

Barzen, Rainer 24
Ben Asher 12, 16, 21
Ben Naftali 247
Ben Shahar, Na'ama 178f, 187
Binaszkiewicz, Jana 246, 247
Bomberg 10

C

Cailleux, Philippe 236, 237
Clemens VI (pope) 10

D

David Ben Abraham al-Fāsi 245
David Kimḥi (Radak) 20, 245
de Lagarde, Paul 244ff
Díaz Esteban, Fernando 15,
243f, 247f, 253
Dotan, Aron 16, 244

E

Efraim of Bonn 88
Ehrentreu, Ernst 251
El'azar Ben Yehudah of
Worms 20, 134, 137,
152ff, 159ff, 167, 178,
186, 188
Eliyyahu Ben Asher ha-Levi
Ashkenazi (Elia Levita) 11,
143, 252
Eliyya Ben Berekhya
ha-Naqdan 20f, 25, 203, 205,
225f, 228f, 231ff, 236ff

F

Fischer-Lichte, Erika 22
Frensdorff, Solomon 13f, 138,
243f
Frona, Rahel 178

G

Geiger, Abraham 13
Ginsburg, Christian David 15, 86
Golb, Norman 236

H

Halperin, Dalia-Ruth 17, 24
Harl, Marguerite 231
Hilgert, Markus 157
Hillel Ben Shahar 88
Hupfeld, Hermann 12, 243f,
249, 253

I

Idel, Moshe 178, 196
Isaac Ben Moses of
Vienna 191
Isaac Ibn Jashush 244

J

Jacob Ben Meir (Rabbeinu
Tam) 18, 245
Jehuda ha-Naqdan 251
Jonah Ibn Janah (Rabbi
Jonah) 244
Joseph Ben Yitzhak Bekhor Shor
of Orleans 91
Joshua Ibn Gaon 229

K

Kahle, Paul 14f, 246f, 252
Kittel, Rudolph 15

Kogman-Appel, Katrin 231, 235
Kuczera, Andreas 116

L

Levinson, Eyal 191f
Liedtke, Clemens 21, 24
Lifshitz, Isaac Joseph 191
Lipschütz, Lazar 14
Liss, Hanna 19ff, 25, 47, 79

M

Macé, Caroline 115
Marcus, David 16
Marcus, Ivan G. 191
Martini, Annett 246f
Meïr Ben Barukh of Rothenburg
(MaHaRaM) 20
Menaḥem of Joigny 18
Metzger, Thérèse and
Mendel 162
Moshe Ben Naḥman
(Ramban) 69
Moshe Kimḥi 20

N

Naḥman Ben Rabbi
Efraim 247
Neḥemiah Ben Shlomo Troestlin
of Erfurt 25, 152, 178, 180f,
187, 194ff
Neubauer, Adolf D. 13

O

Ofer, Yosef 16, 148
Offenberg, Sara 25, 71, 134
Ognibeni, Bruno 15, 243f,
249, 251

P

Petzold, Kay Joe 19ff, 25, 110,
229, 241
Philip IV (king) 10

Pitte, Dominique 236f
Prijs, Joseph 247

R

Radak → David Kimḥi
Ramban (Naḥmanides) → Moshe
Ben Naḥman
Rashbam → Samuel ben Meïr
Rashi → Shlomo Yitzḥaki
Reckwitz, Andreas 166
Reich, Nurit 16
Rost, Hanna-Barbara 25

S

Saadia Gaon 245
Samuel Ben Meïr (Rashbam) 76
Schubert, Kurt 69
Seemann, Sebastian 13, 25
Shim'on Ben Laqish 160
Shlomo Bar Shimshon of
Garmiza 185
Shlomo Yitzḥaki (Rashi) 18, 20f,
91, 136, 139, 204f, 208f, 213f,
216ff, 220ff, 229, 241, 245
Stal, Jacob Israel 88
Steinschneider,
Moriz 246f, 247

W

Weber, Annette 178
Weil, Gérard E. 15, 86, 148,
210, 238, 240

Y

Ya'aqov Ben Asher (Ba'al
ha-Turim) 20
Ya'aqov Ben Ḥayyim Ibn
Adoniyah 10
Ya'aqov Ben Ya'aqov
ha-Kohen 161
Yedidyah Salomon Raphael Ben
Abraham Nortzi 12

Yehudah he-Ḥasid of
Regensburg 20, 152, 160f
Yitzḥak (the vocalizer) 72,
76f, 88
Yitzḥak beRabbi Shimeon
HaLevi 79f, 82f, 87

Yitzḥak of Evreux 18
Yosef Kimḥi 20

Z

Zaagsma, Gerben 104,109
Zundert, Joris J. van 115

3 Hebrew Bible

Genesis

Gen 5:26 232
Gen 6 230
Gen 6:9–11:32 226
Gen 6:16 228
Gen 6:18 231
Gen 7–8 235
Gen 8:7 235
Gen 8:11 234
Gen 8:20 227
Gen 13:10 258
Gen 14:16 258
Gen 18:25 95
Gen 22:20 217
Gen 23:1 217
Gen 24 215, 221, 222
Gen 24:30–43 215
Gen 24:33 215
Gen 24:42 215
Gen 24:43 217
Gen 25:20 217
Gen 27:19 144, 244
Gen 30:15 93
Gen 33:2 259
Gen 33:14 216
Gen 34:28 259
Gen 49:10 80, 92
Gen 49:24 134

Exodus

Exod 3 252
Exod 3:8 253, 255
Exod 3:11–4:8 249
Exod 3:17 253, 255
Exod 6:4 73
Exod 9:3 256
Exod 10:9 256
Exod 13:5 254, 257
Exod 13:10 92

Exod 15 248
Exod 20 222
Exod 20:22–23:19 205
Exod 21 205, 206, 221
Exod 21:6 213f
Exod 21:7 207f
Exod 21:8 209
Exod 21:10 210, 212f
Exod 22:4 82, 92
Exod 23:23 254, 257
Exod 23:28 254, 258
Exod 24:7 231
Exod 24:8 205
Exod 26:2 93
Exod 27 236f
Exod 27:9–19 237
Exod 27:10 237ff
Exod 27:15 239
Exod 28:5 259
Exod 29:5 260
Exod 29:38 233
Exod 31:3 95
Exod 33:2 254, 257
Exod 33:8 207
Exod 34:11 255
Exod 35:15 239
Exod 38 237f
Exod 38:10.11.12.14 240
Exod 38:12 239
Exod 38:12.17 240
Exod 38:15 239
Exod 39:3 155f
Exod 39:39 256
Exod 39:40 257

Leviticus

Lev 2:11.16 94
Lev 3:3 94
Lev 4:26 94

Lev 4:31 94
 Lev 7:37 256
 Lev 11:42 92
 Lev 14:6 259
 Lev 16:2 95
 Lev 16:24 258
 Lev 26:1–13 71
 Lev 26:31 71
 Lev 26:33 72
 Lev 26:34 72
 Lev 26:40–46 71
 Lev 26:42–45 72
 Lev 26:44 73

Numbers

Num 4:9 259
 Num 5:23 221
 Num 12:12 94
 Num 13:29 251, 254, 258
 Num 20:8 258
 Num 21:13 220
 Num 23:17 97
 Num 31:22 256
 Num 31:30 256
 Num 34 217, 219, 222
 Num 34:8 220, 221
 Num 34:8.9.11 221
 Num 34:9 221
 Num 34:11 221
 Num 34:11 218ff
 Num 34:11.12 219
 Num 34:12 219

Deuteronomy

Deut 3:16.17 220
 Deut 3:25 257
 Deut 5:10 139
 Deut 7:1 254f
 Deut 10:17 257
 Deut 14:4–5 228
 Deut 20:17 253, 256
 Deut 27:13 257

Deut 29:19 221
 Deut 31:28 258
 Deut 32:14 86f
 Deut 32:43 97
 Deut 33:3 86, 97

Joshua

Josh 2:18 259
 Josh 3 252
 Josh 3:10 251f, 254, 258f
 Josh 9:1 253, 256
 Josh 11:3 255
 Josh 12:8 253, 256
 Josh 13:27 220
 Josh 24:11 255, 260

Judges

Judg 3:5 253, 255
 Judg 3:7 258
 Judg 5:31 207
 Judg 8:4 219
 Judg 9:16 193
 Judg 16:12 93

Samuel

1 Sam 1:9 144, 244
 1 Sam 2:35 92
 1 Sam 14:9 95
 1 Sam 17:18 193
 1 Sam 25:32 93
 1 Sam 25:40 93
 1 Sam 26:20 96
 2 Sam 16:18 209f
 2 Sam 18:13 139
 2 Sam 21:5 220

Kings

1 Kgs 4:21 238
 1 Kgs 6:1 232f
 1 Kgs 7:39 220
 1 Kgs 9:20 254, 256
 1 Kgs 10:19 186

1 Kgs 13:5 94
 1 Kgs 18:15 83, 95
 1 Kgs 18:38 259
 2 Kgs 2:6 219
 2 Kgs 6:4 219
 2 Kgs 9:26 193
 2 Kgs 17:13 139
 2 Kgs 22:12 259
 2 Kgs 24:15 259

Isiah

Isa 1:8 86, 94
 Isa 1:11 86ff, 94
 Isa 1:18 86
 Isa 5:1 92
 Isa 5:14 212
 Isa 5:25 95
 Isa 5:28 95
 Isa 9:6 92
 Isa 13:17 95
 Isa 14:12 88, 97
 Isa 17:3 94
 Isa 23:2 96
 Isa 25:8 221
 Isa 29:22 154
 Isa 30:6 220
 Isa 33:17 153
 Isa 34:6 86f
 Isa 38:3 95
 Isa 38:8 96
 Isa 38:10 193
 Isa 46:7 220
 Isa 46:11 150
 Isa 47:5 96
 Isa 47:13 139
 Isa 49:5 210
 Isa 49:26 134
 Isa 52:2 139
 Isa 60:16 134
 Isa 60:21 150
 Isa 61:10 94
 Isa 66:1–24 135

Isa 66:22 141
 Isa 66:23 135f
 Isa 66:24 135

Jeremiah

Jer 1:10 257
 Jer 3:19 150
 Jer 6:2 96
 Jer 8:1 259
 Jer 13:13 259
 Jer 31:28 260
 Jer 33:28 193
 Jer 44:9 260
 Jer 51:34 150
 Jer 51:35 96

Ezekiel

Ezek 1 133, 136, 153, 162
 Ezek 1:3 141
 Ezek 1:4 182
 Ezek 1:4ff 136
 Ezek 1:5 137, 152
 Ezek 1:5.13–15.19–22 152f
 Ezek 1:6 136
 Ezek 1:8 137f, 150, 160
 Ezek 1:8.11 158
 Ezek 1:9.12.17 153
 Ezek 1:10 143, 155ff, 161f
 Ezek 1:11 143
 Ezek 3:18 152f
 Ezek 3:23 94
 Ezek 10 133, 153
 Ezek 10:4 134
 Ezek 10:11 137, 153
 Ezek 10:14 158f
 Ezek 10:15.17.20 153
 Ezek 10:15.20 153
 Ezek 12:12 219
 Ezek 24:10 260
 Ezek 24:24 141
 Ezek 27:21 87
 Ezek 28:19 92

Ezek 34:4 156
 Ezek 34:16 260
 Ezek 39:18 86
 Ezek 40:49 96
 Ezek 41:19.21 158
 Ezek 44:25 257
 Ezek 46:19 220
 Ezek 47 162
 Ezek 47:13 157
 Ezek 47:15 221
 Ezek 47:18-20 156f

Hosea

Hos 2:7 256
 Hos 2:13 92, 210, 212
 Hos 4:2 260
 Hos 4:5 96
 Hos 5:14 93
 Hos 11:1 182

Joel

Joel 4:21 48

Nahum

Nah 2:14 93
 Nah 2:19 96

Malachi

Mal 1:2-3 186
 Mal 1:3 182, 186
 Mal 2:16 182
 Mal 3:10 72
 Mal 3:24 81, 135

Psalms

Ps 2:9 40
 Ps 4:5 96
 Ps 11:1 151
 Ps 17:4 93
 Ps 17:12 93, 95
 Ps 18 (19) 44f
 Ps 18 (19)-105 (108) 46

Ps 18:11 153
 Ps 18:17 86
 Ps 18/19/20 (19/20/21) 52
 Ps 19:6-7 94
 Ps 21/22 (22/23) 52
 Ps 22:22 86, 97
 Ps 23/24/25 (24/25/26) 52
 Ps 23:5 93
 Ps 26/27/28 (27/28/29) 52
 Ps 26:12 193
 Ps 28:5 93
 Ps 29/30 (30/31) 52
 Ps 31:8 182
 Ps 31/32/33 (32/33/34) 52
 Ps 31:13 94
 Ps 32:11 97
 Ps 34/35 (35/36) 52
 Ps 36 (37) 45, 52
 Ps 36:11 92
 Ps 37/38 (38/39) 52
 Ps 37-40 (38-42) 45
 Ps 37:3 (38:3) 45
 Ps 37:25 193
 Ps 39/40 (40/41) 52
 Ps 41/42/43 (42/43/44) 52
 Ps 42:3 84, 95
 Ps 44/45/46 (45/46/47) 52
 Ps 47/48 (48/49) 52
 Ps 49/50 (50/51) 52
 Ps 51/52/53/54 (52/53/54/55) 53
 Ps 55/56/57 (56/57/58) 53
 Ps 58/59 (59/60) 53
 Ps 60/61/62/63 (61/62/63/64) 53
 Ps 64/65 (65/66) 53
 Ps 66/67 (67/68) 53
 Ps 66:12 93
 Ps 68 (69) 45, 53
 Ps 69 [71:9/18]) 45
 Ps 69/70 (70/71/72) 45, 53
 Ps 69:19 93
 Ps 71/72 (73/74) 53
 Ps 71:7 94

Ps 73/74 (75/76) 53
 Ps 75/76 (77/78) 53
 Ps 76 (78) 53
 Ps 76/77 (79/80) 53
 Ps 78/79/80 (81/82/83) 53
 Ps 78:5 61
 Ps 80:17 95
 Ps 81/82/83 (84/85/86) 53
 Ps 81:2 97
 Ps 84/85 (87/88) 53
 Ps 84:19 193
 Ps 86 (89) 53
 Ps 87/88 (90/91) 53
 Ps 88:16 182
 Ps 89/90/91 (92/93/94) 53
 Ps 91 (94) 45
 Ps 92/93/94/95 (95/96/97/98) 53
 Ps 96/97/98/99 (99/101/102) 53
 Ps 100 (103) 53
 Ps 101/102 (104/105) 53
 Ps 101:5 95
 Ps 102:7 96
 Ps 102:24 151
 Ps 103 (106) 53
 Ps 104 (107) 53
 Ps 105 (108) 53
 Ps 108 (109) 44
 Ps 118:21 86, 97
 Ps 119:70 94
 Ps 119:79 139
 Ps 131:2 193
 Ps 132:2.5 134
 Ps 132:17 82, 93
 Ps 146 68
 Ps 148–149:7 68

Proverbs

Prov 1:27 95
 Prov 15:18 193
 Prov 16:5 95
 Prov 26:2 209f

Prov 29:17 92
 Prov 30:17 92

Job

Job 1:1 193
 Job 1:8 97
 Job 2:6 96
 Job 16:18 96
 Job 19:17 193
 Job 22:29 95
 Job 28:27 210
 Job 30:25 193
 Job 32:18–19 193
 Job 33:17 95

Song of Songs

Cant 4:3 93
 Cant 4:7 48
 Cant 7:9 193
 Cant 7:13 86, 97

Lamentations

Lam 3:26 96
 Lam 4:5 92
 Lam 4:12 74
 Lam 5:22 135

Ecclesiastes

Eccl 12:12–14 80
 Eccl 12:13 87
 Eccl 12:14 135

Daniel

Dan 2:24 139
 Dan 5:19 157
 Dan 12:11–12 77, 91

Ezra

Ezra 4:2 209f
 Ezra 7:7 258
 Ezra 9:1 255, 260

Nehemiah

Neh 9:8 255, 260

Neh 9:32 256

Neh 10:29 260

Chronicles

1 Chr 2:2 256

1 Chr 8:33 260

1 Chr 9:29 257

1 Chr 11:20 210

1 Chr 11:25 96

1 Chr 22:7 150

1 Chr 22:12 92

1 Chr 28:1 255

1 Chr 28:9 84

1 Chr 29:11 257

1 Chr 29:9 95

1 Chr 38:9 85

2 Chr 8:7 254, 257

2 Chr 31:15 257

2 Chr 32:21 151

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