

# PARAHeB

PARATEXTS HEBREW BIBLE

## Understanding the Paratexts of the Hebrew Bible



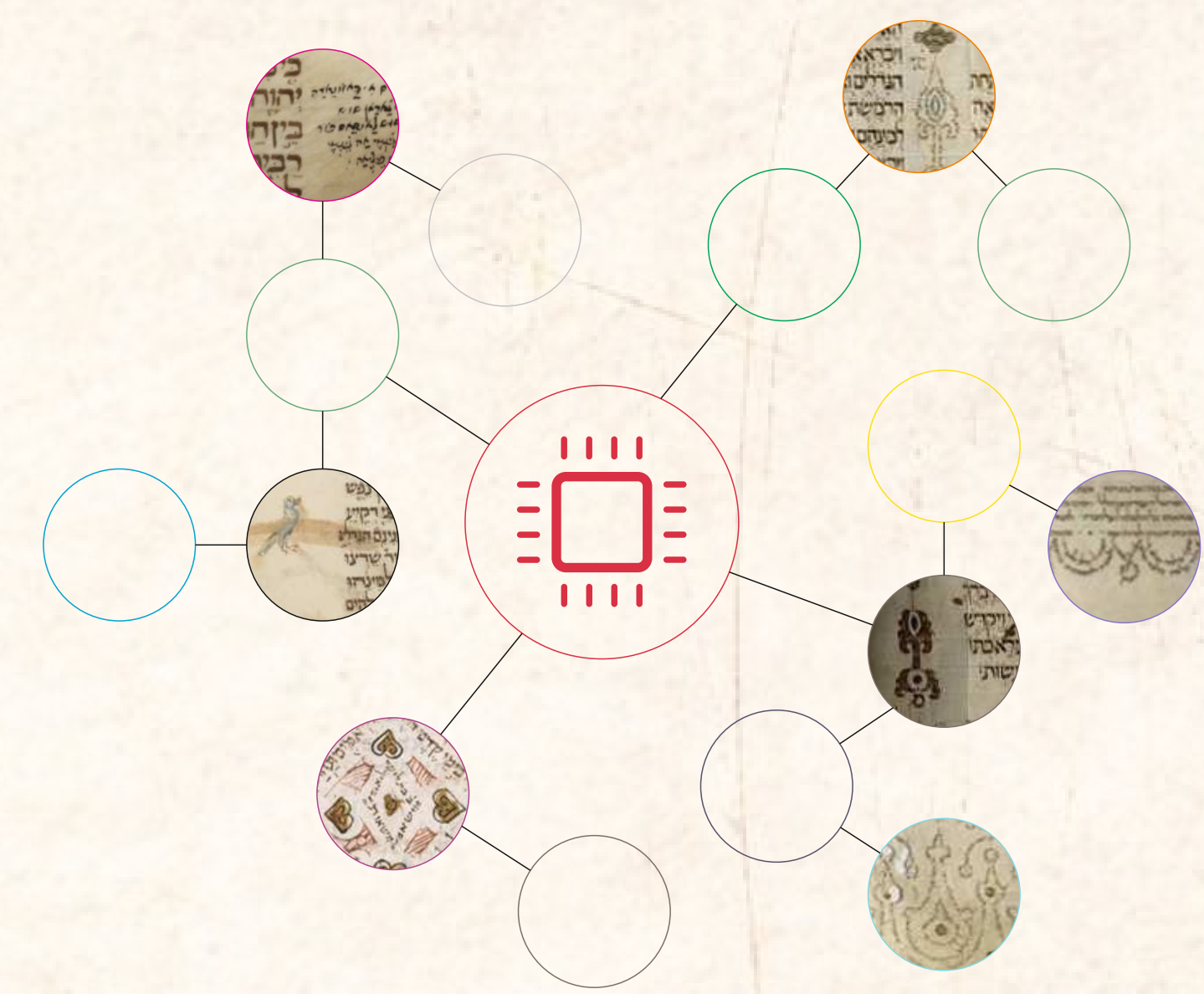
### Introduction

Medieval Hebrew Bible manuscripts often feature marginal annotations known as Masora, primarily studied for textual content, overlooking their format, location, and variations across manuscripts. They are typically perceived as "guardians" of the biblical text, but this view limits our understanding of their relationship with the text. Furthermore, the diverse arrangements and numbers of annotations across manuscripts are often neglected. Some manuscripts also include other paratextual elements like glosses and decorations in the margins, yet their functions and interactions remain unexplored.

This project seeks to comprehensively study the role and impact of Masora and other paratextual elements in understanding the Hebrew Bible.

### Objectives

1. Examine the dynamic relationship between the biblical text and the Masora, considering factors such as format and number of annotations. Investigate how figurative Masora annotations influence perception and highlight critical information. Explore the impact of the presence or absence of Masora on the reader's experience and understanding of the biblical text.
2. Investigate the intricate interaction between the Masora and other paratextual elements in manuscript margins. Analyze how these paratexts are visually separated, their relationships with the biblical text, and the implications of multiple paratexts on a single page. Examine how other paratexts influence the relationship between Masora and the biblical text and the establishment of prioritization.



This project aims to unveil the multifaceted relationship between the biblical text and paratextual elements in Hebrew Bible manuscripts, enriching our understanding of their significance.

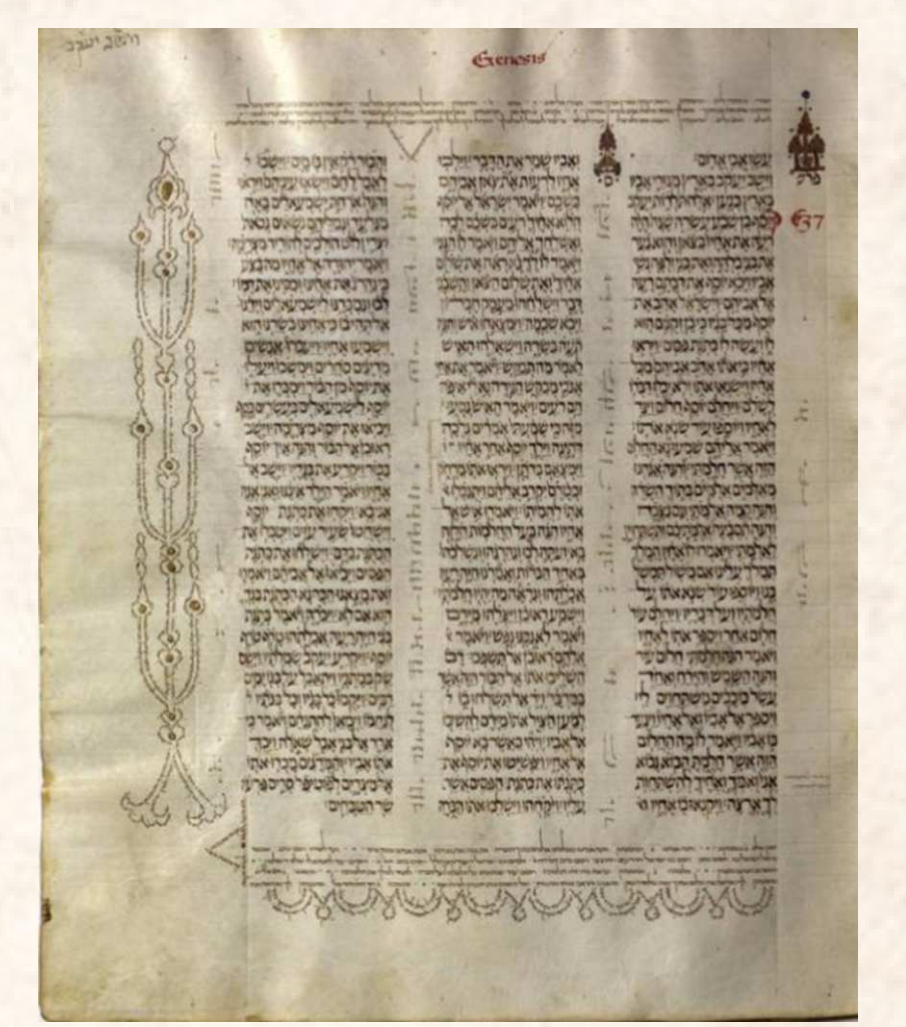
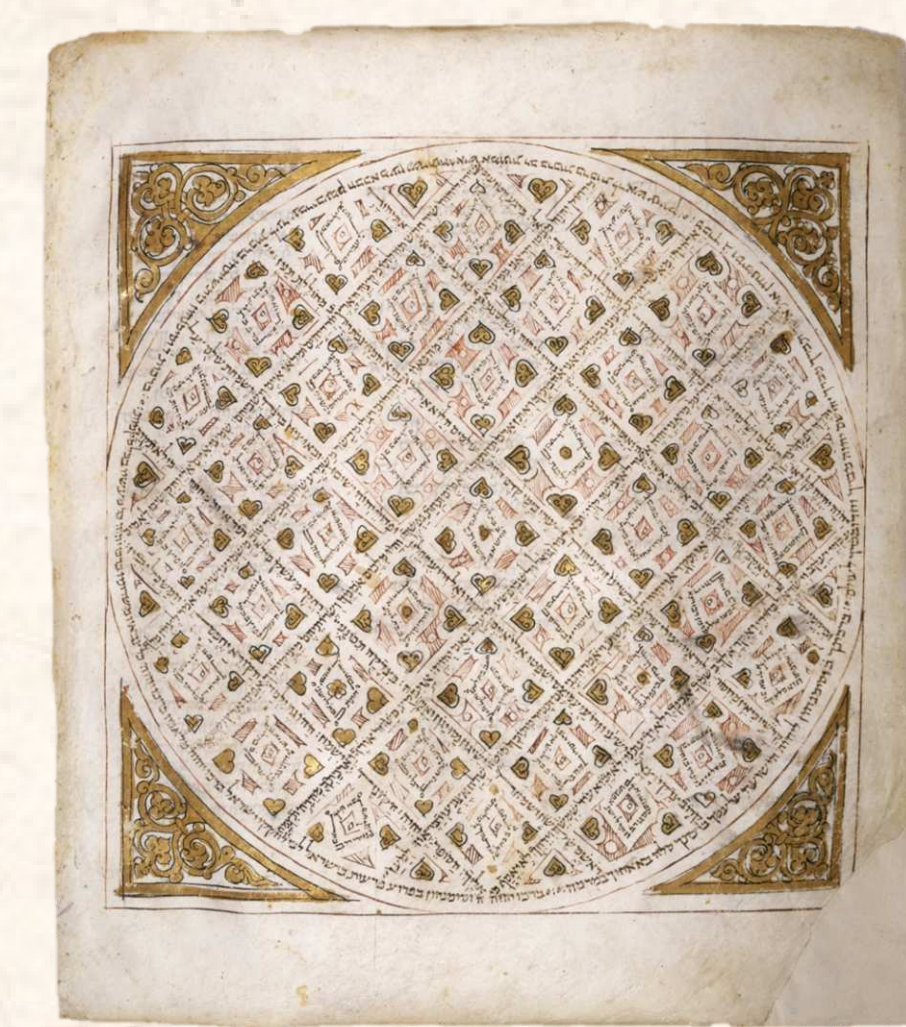


### Methodology

Utilizing a comparative approach, we will analyze a selection of Hebrew Bible manuscripts representing various paratextual situations, encompassing different levels of complexity and variety.

### Study Overview

We will begin with the illuminated Hebrew Bible at the Chester Beatty Library (Heb 772), a 14th or 15th-century Italian manuscript. This manuscript contains the Hebrew Bible with illuminations, decorations, and marginal annotations. A comparison will be made with the Hebrew Bible codex Leningrad B19a, the oldest complete Hebrew Bible codex, and the Hebrew Bible codex Madrid M1, which features deeply annotated, figurative Masora and numerous post-production annotations. Additionally, several manuscripts with shared Masora and glosses in the margins will be analyzed.



### Database Creation

We will develop a comprehensive database for the study of paratextuality, offering advanced search capabilities beyond simple listings. This tool will accommodate Hebrew and non-Hebrew manuscripts with paratexts, benefiting researchers in the field.



### Interdisciplinary Approach

Our project combines philology and experimental analysis to explore the impact of paratextual elements on artwork appreciation and knowledge encoding. Experiments will address questions about the impact of figurative Masora and the coexistence of multiple paratexts on reading and comprehension.

### Acknowledgments

The research team includes Elvira Martín-Contreras (Principal Investigator), Esperanza Alfonso, Javier del Barco, and Debora Matos. Irene Rincón (DH Technician)

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### References

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/critical/research/researchclusters/biblicalinterpretation/paratextsseekingunderstanding/>

