

# BIBLE AND JEWISH BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Newsletter No.1 | Autumn 2024



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# Editor's Letter

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This is the first newsletter of the Chair of ***Bible and Jewish Biblical Interpretation*** at the University of Jewish Studies Heidelberg, in which we would like to inform you about our activities and current events. We hope to be able to inform you regularly about our research in the autumn (around the Jewish New Year). Our team specializes in researching the textual and interpretive traditions of the Hebrew Bible, with a particular focus on the Masora, the Targum, and medieval Jewish exegesis. We are currently engaged in three research projects: The first is on the Masorah in Ashkenazi biblical manuscripts, the second is on medieval Hebrew-French glossaries, and the third is on the transmission of biblical texts in rabbinic literature. We would like to thank all those who have taken an interest in our work and who have given us invaluable support.

Although a little late: To all our Jewish friends and colleagues: We wish you and yours a happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Hanna Liss and teams

# CORPUS MASORETICUM

THE INCULTURATION OF MASORAH INTO JEWISH LAW AND LORE FROM THE 11TH TO THE 14TH CENTURIES:  
DIGITAL RECONSTRUCTION OF A FORGOTTEN INTELLECTUAL CULTURE

This project started in 2018 and has started in its third funding phase in August 2024. Its aim is the first ever philological engagement with the Western European Masoretic tradition between the 11th and 14th centuries. Significant progress has been made since 2018. A substantial number of transcriptions have been made available online, and efforts are currently underway to enable users to access transcriptions in a variety of export formats.

**Website:** [BIMA 2.1](#)

The journal Corpus Masoreticum Working Papers is currently in its third year of publication.

**Website:** [Corpus Masoreticum Working Papers](#)

We welcome submissions of research articles on a range of topics related to the Hebrew Bible, in particular manuscripts, medieval Jewish Bible interpretation, Masorah, edition theory, as well as digital humanities and related fields. We aim to publish regularly, though the frequency may vary.

**Website:** [Corpus Masoreticum](#)

## MEET THE TEAM

### Principal Investigator

Prof. Dr. Hanna Liss

### Research Staff

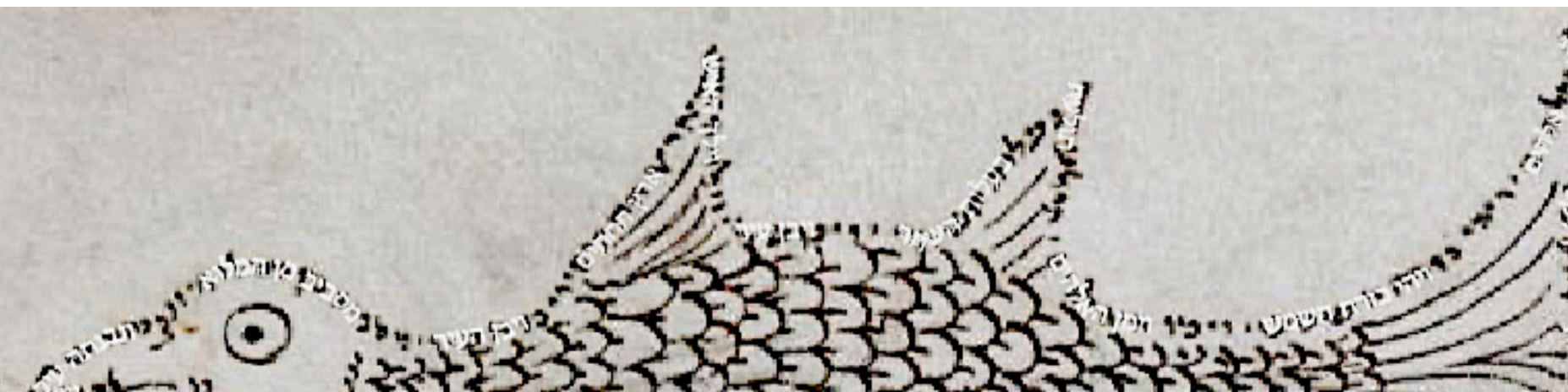
Melissa Anwar Uthman M.A.  
Benjamin Blum Dipl. -Theol.  
Dr. Ingeborg Lederer-Brüchner  
Clemens Liedtke M.A.  
Sebastian Seemann M.A.  
Dr. Ilona Steimann

### Project Coordinator

Ekaterina Gotsiridze M.A.

### Student Assistants

Ida Braun  
Dr. Johannes Knöppler  
Helena Lindner  
Paul Simon Peters M.A.  
Amöna Treichel





# Guest Lectures

## FURTHER PERSPECTIVES ON THE TYPOLOGY OF MEDIEVAL HEBREW BIBLES

**Assoc. Prof. Javier del Barco**  
(Complutense University of Madrid)

On Wednesday 17 January 2024, our colleague Professor **Javier Del Barco** from the Complutense University of Madrid gave a lecture as part of his Mercator Fellow research stay in Heidelberg. In his lecture 'Further Perspectives on the Typology of Medieval Hebrew Bibles', he gave a fascinating insight into the study of books as historical and cultural objects, exploring the relationship between text and object, as well as the practice of reading, using and collecting manuscripts and incunabula. His time as a Mercator Fellow proved invaluable to the Corpus Masoreticum team.



## A NON-JEW MADE THAT TORAH SCROLL!

**Dr. Nehemia Gordon**  
(Institute for Hebrew Bible Manuscript Research)

On 15 February 2024, our second Mercator Fellow, Dr **Nehemia Gordon** of the Institute for Hebrew Bible Manuscript Research, gave a lecture entitled "A Non-Jew Made that Torah Scroll". His analysis of enigmatic inscriptions on medieval Ashkenazi and Italian Torah scrolls shed light on the halakhic question of the extent to which Jews were involved in the parchment making process, and provided a compelling insight into the complex relationship between Jewish minorities in Europe and their non-Jewish neighbours. The Corpus Masoreticum team benefited greatly from working with Nehemia and learning from his expertise, particularly in the field of oriental biblical manuscripts.



# BIBLE GLOSSARIES AS HIDDEN CULTURAL CARRIERS

JUDEO-FRENCH CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES

(Funding by and establishment at the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities / Academies' Program)

The project on the Bible Glossaries began in January 2023 and is funded by the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences. The Hebrew-French glossaries, most of which date from the 13th century, are to be edited (mostly for the first time) and placed in their historical and philological context. The philological work has been integrated from scratch into the BIMA 2.1 digital working environment.

The team is currently preparing for its first international peer review process. It is our intention to present the first transcriptions of the glossaries on BIMA 2.1 in the near future.

**Website:** [Bible Glossaries](#)

## MEET THE TEAM

### Principal Investigators

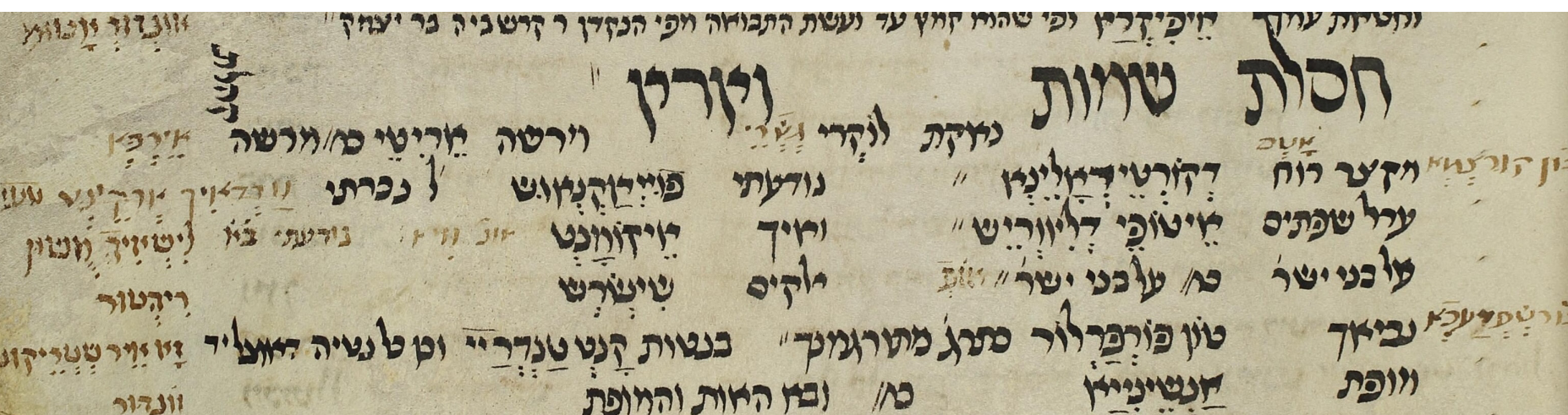
Prof. Dr. Hanna Liss  
Dr. Stephen Dörr

### Research Staff

Alessandra Arcidiacono M.A.  
Dr. Sabine Arndt  
Dr. Katelyn Mesler  
Fabian Strobel M.A.

### Student Assistants

Chaimaa Brissa  
Anna Gazarian  
Pia Lorenz  
Isa Roesse





## BETWEEN EXCHANGE AND EXPULSION: JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN FRANCE, 1096–1394

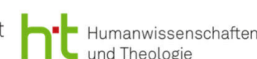
**Katelyn Mesler** was recently invited to the German Historical Institute in Paris to take part in a conference, *Between Exchange and Expulsion: Jews and Christians in France, 1096–1394*, where she presented on “Vernacular Verses: New Approaches to Medieval Hebrew-French Glossaries.” The talk was intended to introduce the Bibel glossaries project to scholars who focus on Jewish-Christian relations in medieval France. To that end, Mesler introduced the content of the glossaries and then discussed some of the core questions about the origins of the glossaries, the preservation of French words, the relationship between the manuscripts, and some of the methodological pitfalls to avoid. She emphasized in particular the importance of studying the glossaries in parallel, rather than individually.

Between Exchange and Expulsion.  
Jews and Christians in France, 1096–1394

17–19 September 2024



Organisation:  
Görge Hasselhoff (TU Dortmund), Judith Kogel (IRHT/CNRS) and Amélie Sagasser (DHIP)



## OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF BERGAMO ON DECEMBER 19TH

On 23 May, at the Seminario internazionale del corso di dottorato Studi filologici e linguistici sul patrimonio scritto e orale (SFILi), **Hanna Liss** and **Stephen Dörr** presented the first results of the Academy project *Biblical Glossaries as Hidden Cultural Carriers*. Their lecture entitled “Biblical Glossaries: Hidden Cultural Deposits - Ongoing Research and Perspectives” was the first step in a collaboration with the University of Bergamo. As part of this collaboration, Italian doctoral students will come to Heidelberg for a month to work with the Biblical Glossaries Project team, with the costs being covered by Bergamo. The official launch of this collaboration will take place on 19 December.



# KOOPERATIONSFEIER

## 19.12.2024, 18h

### Universität Bergamo

#### Akademieprojekt *Bibelglossare*

**Begrüßung:**  
Hanna Liss / Stephen Dörr

**Vorstellung der Kooperation:**  
Maria Grazia Cammarota (Universität Bergamo)  
Kritische Studien zum schriftlichen und mündlichen Kulturgut.  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit in der Doktorandenausbildung zwischen Philologie und Linguistik

**Festvortrag:**  
Richard Trachsler (Universität Zürich)  
Textphilologie, die entthronte Königsdisziplin. Bemerkungen aus der Sicht eines Mediävisten

Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg  
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# BIBLIA RABBINICA

THE BIBLICAL TEXT IN RABBINICAL LITERATURE - ACCORDING TO  
THE TEXT VARIANTS BASED ON THE BABYLONIAN-YEMENITE TEXT TRADITION



The aim of the project that started in 2022 is the exhaustive computer-assisted recording and evaluation of the reading variants in selected rabbinic texts on the basis of the Babylonian-Yemenite text traditions, which have been incorporated into the rabbinic biblical text tradition on a large scale. The analysis of these variants will open up the reconstruction of the variability of biblical textual history up to the High Middle Ages, and thus close an important gap in biblical textual criticism.

**Website:** [Biblia Rabbinica](#)

## MEET THE TEAM

Principal Investigator

Prof. Dr. Hanna Liss

Research Associate

PD Dr. Gianfranco Miletto

Student Assistant

Paul Simon Peters M.A.

# Project Highlights

## PHD DISPUTATION: MARIA SEIDEL

On 10 May 2024, **Maria Seidel** successfully defended her doctoral thesis on Yaakov ben Asher's commentary on the Masoretic Torah. The examination committee was chaired by Hanna Liss and included Katrin Kogman-Appel, Nikolas Jaspert and Johannes Heil. Maria Seidel's dissertation is the first in-depth study of Ben Asher's Masoretic commentary, analysing the sources he used to write his exegetical remarks on Masoretic notes and textual peculiarities of the Hebrew Bible. The dissertation was written as part of the Corpus Masoreticum project. Maria's dissertation, together with that of Hanna Zoe Trauer (ex aequo), was awarded this year's dissertation prize of the German Association for Jewish Studies and Jewish Theology (Arnold-Goldberg-Preis), which will be presented as part of the association's 50th anniversary celebrations. We congratulate Maria Seidel on her successful defence and wish her all the best for the future.



Photo: private

LEEDS 2024

**Hanna Liss** participated in this year's *Leeds International Medieval Congress 2024*, presenting in the session Religious Responses to Crisis: "Facing Catastrophes. The Introduction of 'Old-New' Rituals among Jewish Pietists (Hasidim Ashkenaz) in the 13th Century". Here she spoke about the Book of Divine Names (Sefer ha-Shem) of R. El'azar ben Yehuda of Worms (1165-1230), which describes new rituals in the face of political catastrophes and theological crises.

**Ilona Steimann** also participated in the IMC, where she delivered her talk “From Ashkenaz to Italy: The Giant Masoretic Bible in the Berio Civic Library of Genoa.” Her research focused on the Ashkenazi Bible housed in the Berio Civic Library in Genoa. Initially, the manuscript was mistakenly dated to 1438 – the year Rashi’s commentary was added. However, in her talk, Steimann demonstrated that the Bible was actually produced around the year 1300. Through an archaeological analysis of the various layers that reveal both the original production and later modifications of the manuscript, she illustrated how the Bible was used by different owners and adapted in various cultural contexts. Her talk highlighted the shifting historical and cultural significance of this unique manuscript.

JERUSALEM 2024

**Ilona Steimann** also took part in the International Conference in Jerusalem titled “Books Taken into Migration: French Masoretic Manuscripts in Piedmont”, held within the framework of the project ‘Contending with Crises: The Jews of 14th Century Europe’, which addresses Jewish expulsions in the Middle Ages. She gave a talk “Books Taken into Migration: French Masoretic Manuscripts in Piedmont”, in which she discussed the effects of the expulsion of Jews from France in 1394, on the Jewish book culture of Piedmont. Her talk focused on older French manuscripts that were brought to Piedmont after the expulsion and their uses by the descendants of the French Jews. She demonstrated how these manuscripts helped the following generations of the exiles to preserve their past and culturally orient themselves in their new environment.



The research group **Contending with Crises**  
invites you to its first international conference

# Considering Jewish Expulsions in the Middle Ages

## March 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mount Scopus Campus, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem



האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

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**Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Manadel Building, Room 530

**13:00 Reception & Welcome**  
**Nurset Demner & Hannah Tzadok Schachter** (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

**13:30 Session 1: From North to South**  
**Chair:** **Tatjana Bartschay** (Bar-Ilan University)  
**Morgane Furtin** (Université Paris Nanterre & JHU) "Conversing the 1306 Expulsion of the Jews in Southern France: Legal and Anthropological Consequences of a Disputed Ordinance in Montpellier, Narbonne, and Toulouse"  
**Nurset Demner** "Between Expulsions: Retabulating the Jewish Community in Paris, 1360 - 1394"

**14:40 Session 2: Beyond the King's Chair:** **Nete Bodner** (Open University of Israel)  
**Emily Ross** (Indiana University)  
"Stripped! 1290-A Re-examination of the First National Exclusion?"  
**Hannah Tzadok Schachter** "The Role of French Queens in Medieval Jewish Expulsions"

Rabin Building, Room 3001

**16:00 Session 3: Moving East and West**  
**Chair:** **Ephraim Shoham Steinzer** (Ben-Gurion University)  
**Savvy Curry** (Northwestern University & JHU) "Expulsions as Punishment for Sexual Crimes in Christian Court Documents"  
**Judith Gallingay** (Bar-Ilan University) "Jewish Emigrés from Germany and Exiles from France in Castile: Thinking about Upstreamers post 1306"

**Recapition**

**18:00 Session 4: Keynote**  
**Chair:** **Pinchus Ben-Bar** (Bar-Ilan University)  
**Maya Soffer** (Rishon LeTzion) "The Expulsion That Never Happened: Jews and County Palatins in Early Fourteenth-Century Castile"



"Conference also sponsored by The Henry Louis Chair for the Study of the Oral Law and also sponsored by

**Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Manadel Building, Room 530

**13:00 Session 5: Across the Mediterranean I**  
**Chair:** **Katherine Aron-Bell** (Tel Aviv University & JHU)  
**Pierre Sary** (Université Gustave Eiffel) "Cathago delenda est: Plans and Trends of Expulsion in Late Medieval Northern Italy"  
**Georg Christ** (University of Manchester) "Times of Venice or Venetian Jews? Venetian Jewish Presences in Venice and the Venetian Republic After the 1394 Edict of Expulsion"

**14:15 Session 6: Into Exile**  
**Chair:** **Eyal Levinson** (JHU)  
**Katrin Kogman-Appel** (University of Münster) & **Ruth Nussimbaum** (Hochschule für jüdische Studien Heidelberg) "Bucks Taken into Migration?"  
**Minirel Gasztown** (Tel Aviv University) "Living Under the Threat of Exile: The Portuguese Merchants' in Early Modern France, 1550-1723"

**15:30 Session 7: Across the Mediterranean II**  
**Chair:** **Oded Zinger** (JHU)  
**Moshe Yagur** (JHU) "Urban Partitions in the Jewish Communities of Medieval Islam: The Case of Acre/Jaffa"  
**Ron Lust** (JHU) "Ethics of Survival: An Ego Document from a Refugee of the 1391 Riots"  
**Elisheva Baumgarten** (JHU), **Pinchus Ben-Bar** (BIU) & **Eva Haverkamp-Rott** (University of Munich)

**Closing Remarks**

# Recent Publications

## BETTINA BURGHARDT

Gentile Wisdom Side-by-Side with Rashi: An Example of a Masora Figurata that Conveys Much More than Masoretic Knowledge, *Corpus Masoreticum Working Papers* 7, 2024, 122-181 (<https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/cmwp/article/view/105984>).

## STEPHEN DÖRR

“L’ancien français, langue maternelle de Rachi”, in: *Histoire juive de la France*, sous la direction de Sylvie Anne Goldberg, Paris (Albin Michel), 2023, 97-99.

Mit Sabine Tittel, “Fokus romanistische Mediävistik Heidelberg (FRM)”, in: *Athene. Magazin der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1/2024, 36-37.

## HANNA LISS

“Early Hebrew Printing and the Quality of Reading: A Praxeological Study”, in: *Premodern Jewish Books, their Makers and Readers in an Era of Media Change*, ed. by Katrin Kogman-Appel and Ilona Steimann, Brepols, Turnhout, 2024, 251-274.

Jüdische Bibelwissenschaft als Teil einer jüdischen Theologie, in: *Grenzgänge wissenschaftlicher Reflexivität in Judentum, Christentum und Islam*, hg. v. Tugrul Kurt; Felix Machka; Johannes Müller; Christoph Rogers, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2023, 145-168 (open access: <https://content-select.com/de/portal/media/view/64db4d9d-fd8c-4146-87e3-4632ac1b0007>).

Für Kinder, Kantoren und Gelehrte: Die Vielfalt hebräischer Bibelausgaben im Hochmittelalter, in: *Heilige Texte. Verständigungen zwischen Theologie und Kulturwissenschaft*, hg. v. Mirja Kutzer; Ilse Müllner; Annegret Reese-Schnitker (Hg.), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2023, 153-168.

“Masorah Re-Arranged: Eight Masoretic Lists in MS London Oriental 2091, fol. 335v”, *Corpus Masoreticum Working Papers* 6, 2023, 36-120 (<https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/cmwp/article/view/96815>).

“Between Imagination and Exegesis: The Masora Figurata Illustrations of the Two Menorot in Vatican ebr. 14”, *In Images – A Journal of Jewish Art and Visual Culture* 16 (2023), 1-19.

## ILONA STEIMANN

*Premodern Jewish Books, their Makers and Readers in an Era of Media Change*, ed. by Katrin Kogman-Appel and Ilona Steimann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024).

‘A Forced Journey between Two Faiths: The Hebrew Manuscripts of the University of Vienna’, in *Premodern Jewish Books, their Makers and Readers in an Era of Media Change*, ed. by Katrin Kogman-Appel and Ilona Steimann, accepted for publication (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), 369-92. Jörg B. Quenzer, with Hanna Boeddeker, Janine Droese, Theresa Müller, Bruno Reudenbach, Ilona Steimann, ‘On the Concept of “Originators”’, *Manuscript Cultures*, 21 (2024), 3-10.

Multi-Handed Bible Manuscripts: Masoretic Workshops in Medieval Ashkenaz?\* *Corpus Masoreticum Working Papers* 8, 2024, 182-226 (<https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/cmwp/article/view/105988>).

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