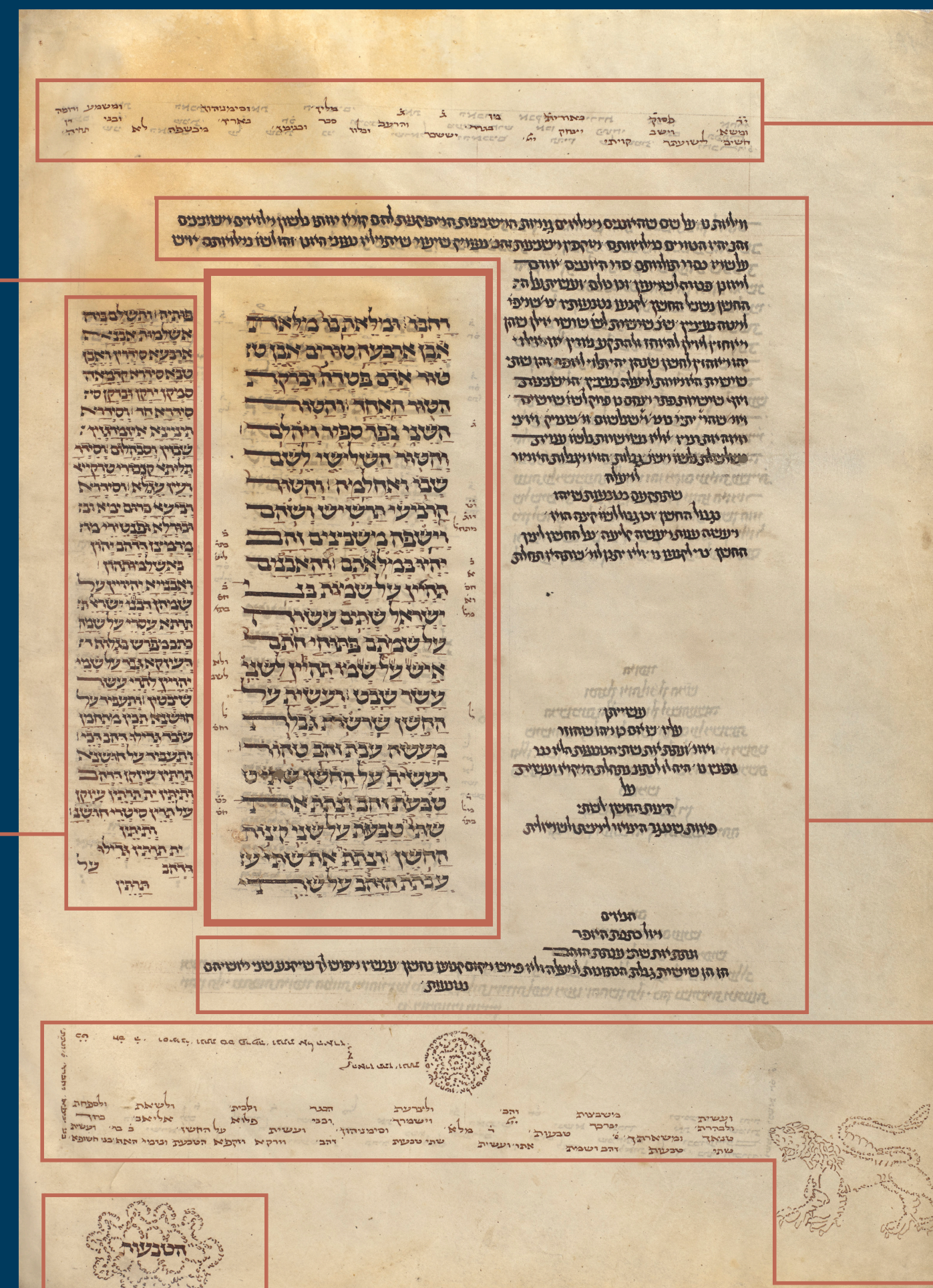


The Rothschild Pentateuch

Each page of the manuscript is divided into portions reserved for different aspects of its reading and comprehension. All of the texts are read from right to left.

At the center is the text of the Torah itself, written in a formal, square Hebrew script. It is accompanied by two sets of markings, one indicating the vowels (*nikkud*) and the other specifying the way the text is to be chanted in ritual contexts (*te'amin*, cantillation symbols).



The upper and lower margins contain the *masorah magna*, a commentary devoted to textual details such as the number of occurrences of individual words, which was intended to preserve the accuracy of the text of the Torah over time. This commentary was written in micrography, minute Hebrew letters that often formed elaborate shapes.

In the outer margin is commentary by Rashi, an acronym for Rabbi Shlomo Itzhaki (1040–1105). His commentary on the Torah as recorded in the Rothschild Pentateuch is one of the earliest dated copies of this text to survive.

At the bottom left is a catchword, a guide to assembling the parts of a manuscript (or book) in the correct order. Catchwords, which appear at the end of a group of pages, give the first word of the next group.

The inner margin is occupied by Targum Onkelos, the Aramaic translation of the Torah, with additional interpretation. In a tradition dating to the second century, when Aramaic was commonly spoken, the Torah was read aloud in both Hebrew and Aramaic.