

seems to be pre-masoretic and then styled by the masoretic community for particular purposes. The scribes divided the text into paragraphs for the convenience of the reader and for the ordering of the worship service. The nature of the paragraph is somewhat mechanical and probably has no exegetical value. The open paragraph ( ) starts at the beginning of a line after a blank line or an unfinished line while the closed paragraph ( ) begins after a space within a line.

The passages are further divided into Sedarim of which there are 452 in BHS. The Sedar appointed reading sections and these were further divided into parashim...weekly readings intended to facilitate systematic reading. The sedarim are marked by at the beginning of the section and the parashim are marked by . Both signs are marginal.

b. Masoretic devices

The Masoretic text is embellished with some text protective devices that are rather impressive and rather hard to learn to use. The following discussions are more for student understanding than memory or total comprehension.

(1) The Masora Marginalis

This material is comprised of traditional notes on the text and written in the margins of the printed text. The marginal masora is divided into two blocks of material:

The Masora Parva, material found on the side margins and consisting mostly of notes on the form and meaning of the external text...warning against oversights, misunderstandings of key letters, missing words, etc. Some of these notes tell us the frequency of a form and nearly every hapax legomena is so marked (Wurthwein: pp 20-21). To use them well (the Masora Parva) one needs patience, industry, and extreme good fortune. Ginsburg: THE MASORA COMPILED FROM THE MANUSCRIPTS is rather an encyclopaedic treatment of the whole. It is sufficiently complicated to baffle all but the best trained minds...so ask no questions about it in this class!