**On the Tripartite Division of the Bible in Jewish Tradition**

Until now, scholars mostly studied the tripartite division of the Bible into the Pentateuch (*Torah*), the Prophets (*Nevi’im*), and Hagiographa (*Ketuvim*) – as well as the division into four sections employed in the Greek Old Testament – to explore the process of literary canonization accompanying the crystallization of the Biblical codex during the Second Temple period. By contrast, rabbinical scholarship dealt mostly with the reasons for the text’s division, or for the inclusion of a certain book in a given section. At the basis of this line on inquiry lies the assumption that the division was carried out according to some distinct principle or principles.

As is made clear in the two opening sections of the article, interest in the division of the Hebrew Bible into sections only began in Middle Ages, with Maimonides’s *Guide of the Perplexed*. Following Maimonides—and even during his lifetime—the idea took shape that this division reflected three distinct levels of prophetic revelation: those of Moses, the prophets, and the divine spirit. Although this view was recognized as the Maimonides’ legacy, rabbis considered it to reflect the traditional religious position, and anchored it in well-known sayings of the Sages. Sections three and four of the article outline the development of the Sages’ interpretation of the division of the Bible, and the manner in which this scholarship expanded during the second half of the Middle Ages. In an extended, foundational period spanning some 300 years – beginning with the Rabbi David Kimhe, at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, and lasting until Abarbanel and Joseph ibn Yahya, in the 15th and 16th centuries – dozens of dictums were written on the subject, and a number of detailed and systematic works devoted exclusively to the matter were penned by leading rabbinical scholars. The reasoning employed by these scholars, their assumptions and conclusions, inform us of their influence on each other, and attest to the gradual creation of what might be called, in general, the traditional view of the tripartite division of the Bible into *Torah*, *Nevi’im*, and *Ketuvim*.