

The Masora Magna often gives whole citations merely mentioned in the Parva and it is found at the broader top and bottom margins because, as Wurthwein wryly remarks, it needs more space. A Bible fully prepared with both varieties of masora has considerably little room left on the page for the text.

(2) The Masora Finalis

This material comes at the end of the book and is arranged alphabetically. It includes such small comments as may be found in the final notes of BHS and many comments on word frequencies, numbered accounts, etc.

In our circles the Masora is not well understood. But due to it the Hebrew text which we have is, for the most part, far freer of complications and doubts than is the comparable Greek text. In addition, the Masoretic work should fill us with some strange sort of respect for the attitudes of persons so willing to put their whole lives into a preservation of truth. If their understanding was limited, their diligence to a particular program and course of activity was prodigious.

c. Masoretic Safeguards

A number of artificial means of text purity maintenance were adopted. Counting of letters, key words, sops, etc., all constituted methods of seeking to keep the text error-free. Extraordinary size for key letters, etc., all became part of an ingenious method of maintaining an extensive document in relative purity. Invention of paseq, vowel signs, (discussed later) and punctuation marks all formed part of the process. We have noticed that it is impossible to keep a work so large free from any error, but the work of the Masoretes came about as close as one could come to achieving a transmission with minimal faults. Masoretic notes of the marginal parva are marked with a clear circle in BHS and it is striking that even when a text seemed not to be correct, the Masoretes kept it as it was and made their adaptations marginal.

These materials are important for textual criticism and it is important the student have an exposure and understanding of them for further progress.