

Methods and Sources of Yedidya Shelomo Norzi in his Treatise *Minhat Shay**

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Norzi's Sources, Decision-making and Aims in his Treatise

Rabbi Yedidya Shelomo ben Avraham Norzi's treatise *Minhat Shay* (infra: MSh) is a work intended to resolve questions of the precise wording of the entire Bible text. The original name of this work, completed in 1626, was *Goder Peretz*, but when the work was printed, more than 100 years afterwards, the name was altered by the publisher and became MSh. This amazing act will be discussed *infra*.

* The late Dr. Zvi Betzer studied the *Minhat Shay*, and towards the end of his life prepared a scientific edition of MSh on the Pentateuch. Betzer's untimely passing away, in the autumn of 2002, led Professor Aron Dotan to ask me, on behalf of Betzer's family, to continue his work on that edition, which has been published by the World Union of Jewish Studies (Jedidiah Solomon Raphael Norzi, *Minhat Shay on the Torah: Critical Edition, Introduction and Notes*; ed. Zvi Betzer; Jerusalem, 2005, 428 pp. [in Hebrew]; *infra*: MShT).

This article is based on this edition as well as on what I discovered and investigated while completing the edition and thereafter. I have attempted not to reiterate here the points made by Betzer in his comprehensive introduction to this edition. I have merely adduced a number of basic facts noted there, which are needed in order to understand the topics considered in this article.

The MSS of *Minhat Shay* mentioned in the article:

A = MS Oxford, Bodley Mich. 562 (its number in the Institute for Photocopies of Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem: F 16683).

K = MS Kaufman A43 (F 2844).

K1 = MS Kaufman A44 (F 2845).

L = MS London, British Museum, Add. 27198 (F 5868)

P = MS Parma 895 (2872) (F 13766).

Most of the issues dealt with in this paper were presented in the 18th Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies (IOMS), which took place in Leiden in August 3rd, 2004, as a part of the IOSOT 18th Congress.

In creating MSh the author made use of a very large number of books and other works in various fields. The "Index of People's Names, Works and Biblical Editions mentioned in *Minhat Shay*" in the Betzer edition¹ includes some 330 items, to which there must be added general references to "manuscripts", "Spanish books" etc. Many of these works were available to Norzi, and he quotes them directly. Many others are quoted indirectly, i.e., the source was not available to Norzi, but it did appear in some other source the words of which Norzi quotes.

The many sources from which Norzi quotes may be divided into three main categories, in accordance with their status and their weight in resolving textual questions:

1. Early and later manuscripts and printed versions of the Bible and masoretic works. Norzi mentions about twenty masoretic works, to which we must add the scores of Bible manuscripts and printed versions available to him, the precise number of which it is difficult to determine. Of the masoretic works, special significance is to be accorded to the book by R. Meir ben Todros Ha-Levi Abulafia, *Masoret Seyag La-Torah*, and to that by R. Menahem di-Lonzano, *Or Torah* (infra: OrT), both of which will be dealt with broadly *infra*.

2. Grammar books and dictionaries. Norzi mentions some forty works of this type.

3. Translations of the Bible (*targum*), midrashic literature, the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, biblical commentaries, commentaries on the Talmud and the midrashim, books of Jewish law (*halakha*), the *responsa* literature, books of Jewish mysticism and philosophy, books of sermons, history books etc. All these may be included in a single category, for their approach to Bible text determination is indirect, and they mainly deal with other fields of endeavor. Norzi mentions over two hundred and fifty (!) works of this type, and proves able to pick out of them the passages where they actually relate to biblical textual problems.

¹ MShT, 403–417.

From Norzi's phraseology, the hierarchical status of the sources of these three categories is clearly visible: the masoretic literature is more significant than the grammar books or books of *halakha*, midrash and mysticism. The precedence accorded masoretic works over that of grammar books is sharply expressed in cases of a difference of opinion between R. Meir Ha-Levi Abulafia, author of the masoretic work *Masoret Seyag la-Torah*, and R. David Qimhi (RaDaQ), the grammarian.

Norzi writes:

Gen 28:16 (MShT, p. 114, l. 17–22): ייקק יעקב משנתו – in all the accurate books this is spelled with two *yod*. As for what the author of *Mikhlah Yofi* wrote, “it appears with the *yod* of the ״אית״ group only (the *yod* that marks the 3rd person masculine singular verb form)”, is erroneous, his words being taken from *Ha-Mikhlah* (p. 129). This can be derived from the comment of the Grammarian [= R. Elijah Bahur] *op. cit.*, as well as from his comment on Root יקק in *Ha-Shorashim* (=Qimhi's dictionary). So they are not to be relied upon in this. Now let us rely on what I wrote in the Torah portion of Noah on the verse ויקק נח quoting R. Meir Ha-Levi of blessed memory who was an expert and whose comments are precise in every case, and especially in determining the text of the Torah, for this is his purpose and this is his expertise in clarifying the truth in accordance with the accurate books. One should not consider his decisions erroneous, for he has certainly checked and found [what he has determined].

In other words, a group of grammarians are of the opinion that the correct spelling here is *defectiva*, but the determination of biblical spelling is not their main purpose, and so R. Meir Ha-Levi overrules them all, “for this is his purpose, and this is his expertise”.²

Regarding the weight of the books of the third type in determining the correct version, Norzi says:

Lev 4:34 (MShT, 237, l. 106–108): ...Wherever the Gemara or the Midrash disagree with the tradition regarding *defectiva* or *plena* spellings, we follow the tradition, not only in aggada homiletic interpretations... but also where they determine *halakha*.

[...] הרמ"ה ז"ל שהיה רב מובהק ודבריו מדוקדקי' בכל מקו' ובפרט במלאכת הגהת התורה, כי² לכך בא, וזהו אומנותו לברר האמת ע"פ הספרי' המדוייקי', ואין לטעות בהוראותיו, דודאי דק ואשכח.

Gen 14:1 כדרלעמר (MSHT, p. 84, l. 60–61): Wherever the *masora* disagrees with the Gemara, we follow the *masora*, as we found in a number of places.

This appears paradoxical: Norzi reviewed many hundreds of comprehensive works in various fields in order to locate places relevant to the correct Bible reading. However, despite this enormous effort, the weight of the evidence he uncovered in resolving questions of the correct Bible reading is very low, and is actually almost insignificant.

It thus seems that Norzi's main goal in his work was to determine the precise version of the Bible text, but this was not his only goal. On the title page of his book he notes that the work contains *inter alia* the "*midrashim* that disagree with the tradition, [...] and many *aggadot* regarding *defectiva* and *plena* spellings".³ The exceptional number and varied character of Norzi's sources is far beyond what is needed for a resolution of the Bible text. This results from Norzi's intention to adduce in his work *midrashim* and commentaries relating in some way to the biblical text, even when they have no practical influence upon the resolution of textual problems, whether they match Norzi's decision and the version indicated by most of the books or not.⁴ This view of the treatise as an anthology of *midrashim* and *halakhot* pertaining to the spelling (and the vocalization) of the words of the biblical text is clearly reflected in the comprehensive "Index of the Items Mentioned in the Treatise", which Norzi added to his own work.⁵

In one of the later additions to this work, Norzi defines his position on the question of texts differing from that of the *masora*, of which he found many in the Talmud, the *midrashim* and the Zohar. Norzi relates that the large number of disagreements between the Talmudic and aggadic literature and the *masora* caused him much difficulty and sorrow, until he came across a fundamental solution in the *kabbala* literature, as follows: a practical

³ Z. Betzer (ed.), *The Addenda to Minhath Shay* (Jerusalem, 1997 [Heb.]), *Miqdash Yah frontispiece*, 57, lines 18–20. This book includes all the items Norzi appended to *Minhat Shay*: the Introduction to the book, its Conclusion, various indices, as well as three articles on grammatical subjects.

⁴ Norzi explains this intention in his introduction as well (see Betzer, *Addenda*, 82, lines 382–392).

⁵ Betzer, *Addenda*, 133–173.

resolution of textual problems is performed in accordance with the ruling of the *masora*, yet nevertheless the textual version contradicting the *masora* has a place from the standpoint of the *kabbala*, and it may be referred to and even learned from.⁶

B. Identification of Norzi's Sources

Most of the works Norzi made use of have been identified by now, and this is especially true of those works available to him in printed form. We can on occasion trace which printed edition Norzi used and locate it, while on other occasions we can at least locate some printed edition of such a work.⁷ Of the works he had before him in manuscript rather than in printed form, it is more difficult to locate the specific manuscript from which he worked. Norzi was not accustomed to provide detailed descriptions of the manuscripts he had, and so we lack any clearly identifiable characteristics they might have.

This is especially true of biblical manuscripts. Norzi mentions "the Spanish books" upon which he relied some eight hundred times, but provides but scanty details of them, and it is difficult to determine the number, the scope and the nature of the manuscripts available to him.⁸

Two biblical manuscripts have been identified until now as manuscripts of which Norzi made use. The first is MS Parma 2668 (782). This is a manuscript embracing the entire Bible, written in Toledo, Spain, in the year 1277. De Rossi notes in his catalog that Norzi made use of this manuscript, and subsequent scholars have adopted this approach.⁹ Norzi generally

⁶ See Num 23:9 ומגבעות אשורנו (MShT, p. 311, l. 43–56).

⁷ In Betzer's edition of *Minhat Shay* I introduced an apparatus of references, relating to all the books available to me. The reader can find there a detailed bibliography of each of them (pp. 418–428).

⁸ According to a late tradition, Norzi studied sixty "Bible" manuscripts, but the reliability of this tradition is doubtful. See *infra*, note 36.

⁹ For the nature of this manuscript and its identification see: G.B. De Rossi, *Manuscripti Codices Hebraici Bibliothecae I.B. De Rossi* (Parma, 1803), II:170–171; P.E. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (Oxford, 1959), 140; P.E. Kahle, *Der hebräische Bibeltext seit*

denotes the origin of the manuscript, doing so in various ways, such as: MS from Tultitulla, a Spanish biblical MS from Tultitulla, (a) precise book from Tultitulla etc.

Betzer checked and found that whenever Norzi mentions this manuscript, the testimony he adduces from it is indeed deliberate.¹⁰ An additional examination I undertook shows that in a number of places there are clear signs of Norzi having made use of this manuscript. For instance: Ps 102:11 ותשליכני “while in a precise book of Tultitulla, the *yod* has been pulled over and a space has opened up near the *lamed*”—the attraction of the *yod* and the broadening of the *lamed* are clearly visible in the photograph of the manuscript. Prov 6:13: קורץ בעיניו—in a number of books the *ketiv* is בעינו and the *qeri* is בעינו, just like in the phrase מולל ברגלו in the same verse. However, in a precisely written book from Tultitulla which was spelled this way at first, the *qeri* was erased outside and the word reinstated inside: בעינו—the erasure of the masoretic comment and the emendation of the *ketiv* are noticeable in the manuscript. Job 40:23: ולא יהפזו “in an early text from Tultitulla there appears ולא with a *waw*, but I have seen that the *waw* is written barely, and there was originally לא with (should be: without) a *waw*”—the fact that the *waw* was inserted by another writer shows up clearly in the photograph.

A number of scholars—headed by Kahle—have claimed that this manuscript, which matches the accepted text of the Bible, greatly influenced Norzi’s decisions. With the assistance it provided, he was able—they say—to determine a text similar to that of Ben-Asher.¹¹ These claims seem to have been exaggerated, for the manuscript from Tultitulla is mentioned only 35 times in MSh, and of these—only twice in the Pentateuch.¹²

Franz Delitzsch (Stuttgart, 1961), 117; Betzer, *Addenda*, 35–36; op. cit., 43, notes 200–201.

¹⁰ See MShT, 25–26 and n. 135.

¹¹ See the places listed *supra*, n. 9.

¹² In the Prophets and Writings Norzi speaks of a certain “one book” from Tultitulla, whereas in its two appearances in the Pentateuch he uses the plural in

Another manuscript used by Norzi is MS British Museum Harley 5710-5711, which is a complete Bible text with masoretic annotations written approximately in 1230.¹³ This MS contains eight masoretic notes signed by the name *Hizqiya Ha-Naqdan*, and Norzi quotes three of these word-for-word.¹⁴ Norzi also cites a number of notes on the page from this MS, which adduce another version under the name ס"א (=other books), and also an annotation that indicates וי"שם (Gen 50:26).

I shall mention here two works that served Norzi well, but never appeared in print and so remained almost unknown. The grammar book *Rav Pe'alim* is mentioned some sixty times in MSh, and the *Ba'al Ha-Lashon* dictionary appears some fifty times. They were both compiled by Yosef ben Yehuda Zarqa,¹⁵ and of each there have survived a few manuscripts. I have found in the catalogue of the Institute for the Photographs of Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem, that there have also survived autographs of both

mentioning "ancient manuscripts from Tultitulla" (Gen 36:7) and "precise books from Tultitulla" (Gen 38:3).

There is no connection between this MS from Tultitulla and "the Hilleli book in Tultitulla" mentioned five times in MSh by this name and some 260 more times under the name "the Hilleli Copy". In all these cases Norzi is referring to a list of phrases in the Pentateuch he had before him. A similar list, almost identical to the one before Norzi, was published by C.D. Ginzburg, *The Massorah*² (New York, 1968), III: 106-129.

¹³ For its description see C.D. Ginzburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, with Prolegomenon by Harry M. Orlinsky (2nd ed.; New York, 1966), 478-485.

¹⁴ MSh to Jer 6:28 16:5; 32:12. Norzi's relationship to this MS was revealed by Jordan Penkower. See J. Penkower, "Minhat Shay: Motivation of the Author and Analysis of Commentary of Genesis" (M.A. Thesis, Yeshiva University, New York, 1969), 40-41; Abraham A. Lieberman, "Jedidiah Solomon Norzi and the Stabilization of the Textus Receptus," in *Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies – Masoretic Studies 8* (ed. E.J. Revell; 1995), 40, n. 9.

¹⁵ Yosef ben Yehuda Zareq (or Zarqa) was born in Spain at the close of the 14th century. He moved to Italy at the beginning of the 15th century where he went from one city to another, including Mantua, Norzi's town. See: S. Simonson, *The History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua* (Jerusalem, 1963-1965), 516 [Heb.].

works: MS Cambridge Add. 661 (F 16991) is an autograph of *Rav Pe'alim*,¹⁶ and MS Moscow Ginzburg 229 (F 47621) is an autograph of *Ba'al Ha-Lashon*.¹⁷ Moreover, in the first manuscript an inscription of ownership has been identified, reading "Shlomo son of Avraham Norzi", while the second contains an inscription of ownership reading "Shlomo, son of Avraham". The conclusion to be drawn from this is that these two autographs were owned by Norzi, and from them he drew the excerpts he quotes from these works. Indeed, an examination of the two MSS has shown that all the quotations from these two works in MSh on the Pentateuch are found precisely in the manuscripts.

C. *The Autographs of Minhat Shay and its Chronology*

A work such as MSh, being an anthology by nature, cannot be written all at once or in a given order. Its compiler has need of scores of books and works in various fields, and draws from each of them the data relevant to the text of the Bible. It is thus reasonable that he consults with additional works as time goes on, locating in them references to various Bible verses and listing each in its proper place.

This, then, is the way in which MSh was compiled. The manuscript versions of MSh provide an extraordinary opportunity to observe the history of its development. As Betzer has shown, we have available two autographic MSS of the work. Norzi first wrote MS London (L). He wrote it down on one side of the page only, on the reverse side, thus leaving the obverse side unused. The material written down first in the "Pentateuch" section of MS L can be termed Stage I.

Later, Norzi made additional annotations in the margins and on the unused, obverse sides of the page. These annotations "filled out" the work, thus more than doubling its scope, especially in the "Pentateuch" section.

¹⁶ See also S. Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge, 1997), 302. This MS was written in the year 1429.

¹⁷ Fragments from the Introduction and the Conclusion of each of these works were published by M. Silver as an appendix to his article, "A Poem of Debate from the Fifteenth Century," *Italia* 7 (1988): 7-28 [Heb.].

Because of the large number of additions it became difficult to read, and so Norzi copied over MSh to the Pentateuch on to MS Oxford (A). The work on the Pentateuch as copied over for the first time on MS A will be termed Stage II.¹⁸

MS A, too, was written on the reverse side of the page only, and here, too, annotations were added in the margins and especially on the unused obverse side of the page. The final stage of this work, as written in the final position of MS A, will be termed Stage III. This stage was later copied over onto other MSS and became permanent in the printed versions of the work.

Betzer based his edition, of course, on MS A, this edition thus reflecting the final stage of the composition, Stage III. Betzer, however, worked precisely and marked by means of angled brackets all those passages which are additions, i.e., they were written down in the margins of MS A or on the obverse pages of that MS, and so the Betzer edition makes it possible for the reader to observe the transition from Stage II to Stage III.¹⁹

The distinction between Stage I and Stage II is not expressed in the Betzer edition, because this distinction is reflected only in MS L and not in MS A. Our discussions hereunder of these two stages (and of the use Norzi made of the book by R. Meir Ha-Levi and of the book OrT) are, accordingly, based upon a direct examination of MS L.

¹⁸ After copying over MSh on the Pentateuch from MS L into MS A, Norzi ceased to update MS L, and so the first writing on MS A is almost identical to the final condition of MS L. For exceptional cases, see Betzer, *Addenda*, 26, n. 113.

¹⁹ The following are three works which were made available to Norzi at a late stage (i.e., Stage III), so that all mentions of them appear in angled brackets in the Betzer edition to the Pentateuch: *Sefer Masoret Ha-Berit Ha-Gadol* by R. Meir Angel (mentioned 7 times in MSh to the Pentateuch); *Midrash Leqah Tov* also known as *Pesiqta de-R. Tuvia* (mentioned some thirty times); *Sefer Sha'arei Orah* by Yosef Ibn Jiqatila (mentioned some ten times to the Torah).

Regarding a number of the additions made in MS A, Betzer notes that they may have been inserted by someone else, rather than by Norzi himself. However, he raised such a suspicion only with regard to a small portion of those additions, and only in an insignificantly small number of cases can it be determined with certainty that Norzi was not their author.

From the data concerning the time MSh was compiled we may deduce that the work was formulated over a relatively short period—of about eight years. The “lower limit” is the year 1618 when OrT was printed, and the “upper limit”—the month of Nissan of the year 1626—mentioned in the conclusion to the work (Betzer, *Addenda*, 94, l. 50).

The basis for the determination of the “lower limit” is the fact that a very large number of annotations originating in OrT are included in the first stage of writing of MS L (i.e., already in Stage I as defined above). We may thus determine that Norzi began to write his work only after OrT became available to him. This starting time may indeed be moved up slightly, for Norzi testifies that he had seen OrT even before it went to print, when its author, Lonzano, visited him. The latter, a resident of Jerusalem, came to Italy in order to have his book printed there, and thus it is unlikely that he arrived in Italy long before the book went to press. At the very most, the beginning of the formulation of MSh can be moved up to a year or two before 1618.

As to “the upper limit”: one may ask whether Norzi went on to make improvements to his work even after he wrote the conclusion and included the closing date in that conclusion. Indeed, this seems likely with regard to the indices Norzi prepared, as may be seen from an examination of MS L. The first thirty-six pages of this manuscript comprise a booklet, which was only attached to the manuscript at a later stage (this will be discussed at greater length *infra*). This booklet contains the two versions of the introduction to the work, the conclusion and various indices as well (for details see the Introduction to the Betzer edition pp. 10-11, and also Betzer, *Addenda*, 16-17). The indices appear on pp. 21-36 of this booklet, i.e., after the conclusion and the date which appear on p. 20b. It would thus seem that Norzi set about preparing various indices only after he completed the work.²⁰

²⁰ I do not know what the basis is for Lieberman’s statement (*supra*, n. 14, p. 38), that Norzi died in 1626, the year in which he completed his work. See *infra*, n. 36.

As to the numerous additions written in the margins of the pages, were they written prior to the conclusion of the work, or perhaps after it? It seems more reasonable to assume that most of these additions preceded the date of the conclusion. Betzer has shown that the indices on pp. 21–35 relate also to the additions appearing in MS A, i.e., that they were prepared after the completion of Stage III of the work.²¹ It seems likely that the indices were prepared soon after the writing of the conclusion, while the additions to MS A were probably written earlier. Further support for this assumption can be gleaned from Norzi's declaration to be found in the conclusion, where he states that he had decided to stop and not to expand his work any further—though he was able to expand it more and more—because of his intention to deal with the Mishnah and the Gemara and their commentaries.

An indirect indication of the date of the creation of MS A, i.e., of the completion of Stage II, can be found by an examination of R. Meir Angel's *Sefer Masoret Ha-Berit Ha-Gadol*. This book is mentioned seven times in MSh to the Pentateuch, all of these being in the additions of MS A;²² the book was printed in Mantua, Norzi's home town, in the year 1622, i.e., in the middle of the period in which MSh was prepared. It may be assumed that such a book, one that deals with the *masora*, became available to Norzi immediately after its publication. We may thus conclude that the first writing of MS A took place prior to the year 1622, i.e., that before this year all the marginal notes in MS L were already compiled, and R. Meir Ha-Levi's book had already reached Norzi (see *infra*, D).

Did Norzi put eight consecutive years of intensive work into his monumental work? Its introduction indicates a completely different picture. Norzi apologizes there for the errors which may have found their way into his book and as for the compiling of the book he states: "Since I did it bit by bit, <during the days of Nissan and Tishri which are called in Germanic lands *Ben Ha-Zemannim* (i.e., interval),> and whenever I was distracted from

²¹ See: Z.H. Betzer, "Further Clarifications on the Work of Norzi," *Hebrew Studies* 42 (2001): 257–269, and especially 259–260.

²² Besides these it is mentioned some twenty times in MSh to the Prophets and Hagiographa in MS L, all of these being in the additions of that MS.

my studying, and furthermore by the current trials and tribulations in the world".²³ It is difficult to believe that a work of such vast scope relating to the entire Bible was carried out while working two months a year for eight years. We may be able to resolve this paradox to some extent by noting that this statement appears in the first draft of the Introduction and was somewhat amended when Norzi copied it over. His second version reads as follows: "Since I did a lot of it bit by bit" etc. (Betzer, *Addenda*, 86, line 498). Norzi apparently intended to say that important sections of the work had been written continuously and consecutively, and only the supplements and the additions were done later, not consecutively, in the "intervals" in his studies.

D. Excerpts from Masoret Seyag la-Torah were Inserted into Minhath Shay at a Late Stage of its Development

Norzi states a number of times that the book written by R. Meir Ha-Levi, *Masoret Seyag la-Torah*, appeared before him at a late stage. Here are two examples:²⁴

Gen 2:25 (ערומים): ...Afterwards I found in the introduction to the book by R. Meir Ha-Levi, as follows...

Gen 34:22 (בהמול): ... Afterwards I rejoiced to see that my analysis was like that of R. Meir Ha-Levi, who wrote as follows...

The reader of the printed versions of MSh may be surprised, for R. Meir Ha-Levi is mentioned in this work more than six hundred times, and this seems to be one of the elements on which Norzi builds his own work. Norzi accepts the authority of R. Meir Ha-Levi and does not disagree with him

²³ יען עשיתיהו סירוגין סירוגין, >ביומי ניסן וביומי תשרי, שקורין בארצות אשכנז בין הזמנים, < נקד הוינא חליש מגירסאי, ומטרדות הזמן והסער הנוספות בעולם.

²⁴ In 18 places Norzi states that R. Meir Ha-Levi's book became available to him at a late stage, while in most of these he states that he is happy to see that he had reached independently the same conclusions as did R. Meir Ha-Levi. These are those places: Gen 2:25 (ערומים); 27:11 (שער); 31:2 (כתמול); 34:22 (בהמול); 41:23 (שדפות); 41:27 (והרעות); 43:18 (וייראו) and also (באמתחתינו); 44:10 (נקיים); 44:31 (כראותו); 49:21 (הנתן); 50:16 (מותו); Ex 18:8 (אודת); 26:5 (מקבילת); Num 1:10 (פדהצור); 20:16 (ויצאנו); 24:23 (משמו אל); Deut 23:2 (פצוע דכה).

explicitly even once. The impression received is that when MSh was being written, R. Meir Ha-Levi's book was constantly before its author. How, then, can he say that the book reached him only in a late stage of writing his own work?

The solution to this paradox can be derived from MS L. An examination of this MS shows that almost all the passages in which R. Meir Ha-Levi is mentioned are late additions to the manuscript. These passages were written between lines, in the margins or on the obverse side of the page which was originally left empty for this very purpose. Only in isolated cases does R. Meir Ha-Levi appear in the original writing of the work, and in these cases the content of Ha-Levi's words is adduced in a secondary quotation, from the book OrT. I have checked this in sections of Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy, and my findings are unambiguous: when MS L was originally composed, R. Meir Ha-Levi's book was not available to Norzi.

The stages in the composition of the work are clearly visible at the following spot:

MSh to Exod 5:22: הרעתה – "In the Hilleli copy: הרעתה; in the Jerusalem book: הרעתה with a missing ה, thus are his words. In all our books there is a ה"א at the end of the word. And Ha-Meiri says: הרעתה without a *waw* and with a *he* at the end. **And thus wrote, too, R. Meir Ha-Levi** and the book *Shemen Sason*. I have also found a masoretic manuscript that reads as follows: הרעתה three times: once it is written הרעתה, once it is written הרעת, and once הרעות; with נישב [Exod 5:22] the spelling is הרעתה, with לעבדך (in the *be-ha'alotkha* portion [Num 11:11]) it is spelled הרעת and with לקמית אה (I Kgs 17[:20]) it is spelled הרעות. Now in Kings and *beha'alotkha* the *masora* says: "Three, each one different from the others in spelling.

Now these are the words of R. Meir Ha-Levi: למה הרעתה is the only one spelled *defectiva* twice, without a *yod* and without a *waw*, as in the parallel phrase הרעתם אשר עשיתם [Gen 44:5] and one written defectively with another meaning – והרעתם בחצצרת [Num 9:9]. למה הרעתה לעם הזה [Exod 5:22] without either a *yod* or a *waw*, but with a *he* at the end of the word. And one is *defectiva* thrice – למה הרעת לעבדך without a *yod*, without a *waw*, and without a *he*. ולא הרעתי את אחד מהם [Num 16:15] spelled *defectiva* with neither a *yod* nor a *waw*."

R. Meir Ha-Levi is mentioned twice in this passage. The first time his opinion is brought in brief, while the second time it is quoted at length. An examination of MS L suffices to show that the first mention of his opinion is in Norzi's original text, while the longer quotation is an addition on the opposite page. At the time of the initial writing, R. Meir Ha-Levi's book was not available to Norzi, and he drew his knowledge of R. Meir's opinion from Lonzano's work, without mentioning it—as he did with the information of the opinion of the author of *Shemen Sason* and the quotation from the words of Ha-Me'iri. At a later stage the book reached Norzi and thus he added to his discussion of this verse a lengthy quotation from R. Meir's writings.²⁵

E. The Decisive Influence of Or Torah on Norzi

In contrast to R. Meir Ha-Levi, whose book was not available to Norzi at the initial stage of his writing, Lonzano's book, OrT, was the basis for MSh, and played an important role in formulating its structure and methodology. In MS L it can easily be seen that use was made of OrT from the earliest stage of the manuscript, and one can actually conclude that Norzi only began to write his work after OrT had been made available to him.

Clear evidence of this is Norzi's own explicit admission, in the first draft of the Introduction to his work:

I have also imbibed thirstily the words of the illustrious sage R. Menahem di Lonzano, who came to my home to stay with me and showed me his commentary on the Pentateuch, prior to bringing it to press. He named his book *Or Torah* [...], **from which I learned and did similarly.**²⁶

²⁵ In Deut 23:2 (פצוּע דכה) MShT, p. 363) R. Meir Ha-Levi is mentioned twice as well. His opinion is first cited within an extract from OrT, and later a longer quotation is adduced, where Norzi introduces it saying: "Some time after I had written all this, I found the book *Masoret Seyag La-Torah* by the late R. Meir Ha-Levi, and since everything he wrote seemed to me to be correct and just, I copied them over here."

²⁶ גם שתייתי בצמא את דברי הזקן ונשוא פנים החכם ר' מנחם די לונזאנו, אשר בא צדיק זה לבית מלוני לחסות בצל קורתיו, והראה לי הגהתו אשר עשה על החומש, קודם שהביאה אל הדפוס, וקרא שם הספר אור תורה [...] וממנו ראיתי וכן עשיתי גם אני.

In these last words, Norzi actually admits that it was Lonzano's book that brought him to compile his own work, with it served as an example for emulation. In his final wording of the Introduction, Norzi omitted this sentence, and seems to have done so deliberately, so as not to reveal to too great a degree the dependence of his work on that of Lonzano.²⁷

By means of a precise comparison of the two works one can appreciate the strong ties between them. I bring here a number of the clearest and most substantial of the points of contact of the two works:

1. The Principles of Decision Making and the Precedence Accorded to R. Meir Ha-Levi:

OrT on כסיה (Exod 17:16): R. David Qimhi wrote under the root כסא that it is a single word... and R. Meir Ha-Levi wrote that in precise texts it is written as two words... Furthermore, **R. Meir Ha-Levi is an expert. Moreover, it is his entire purpose and it is his expertise** to search out and examine manuscripts and *masora* annotations and thus to distinguish between that which is correct and that which is incorrect, whereas **R. David Qimhi does not have the same purpose, but merely writes about whatever he finds.**

OrT about כדלעמר (Gen 14:1): If one asks why I rejoiced to find that what R. Meir Ha-Levi and Ha-Meiri wrote was indeed so, for didn't this rule out

²⁷ The same orientation of Norzi can also be seen in another place. In MS L Norzi wrote **at the head of his work** (i.e. before Gen 1:1) an opening remark: "In this work of mine, I shall often mention the writings of the illustrious sage, R. Menahem di Lonzano, regarding his remarks to the text of the Pentateuch, which he has apparently done in his work called *Or Torah*. [...] And in order to attribute the material to its writer, I shall inscribe ת"א, the initials of the name of his book". After a time, he wrote in the margins that this remark must be moved to the Introduction, and indeed he did so: He integrated the remark in his Introduction (see Betzer, *Addenda*, 80-81), and omitted it from the beginning of the work in MS A. But a remark that stands at the beginning of the work is much more significant than a sentence hidden somewhere in the long Introduction. It seems that the more his book developed, the more Norzi felt that Lonzano's relative contribution decreased, and he moderated his declaration about his dependence on Lonzano.

the opinions of R. Abraham from the mountain and of R. Nissim? What have I seen that shows that the one is preferable to the other, for perhaps the other is to be preferred? My answer is twofold: for one, the opinions of R. Meir Ha-Levi and Ha-Meiri matched the truth as it is found in the manuscripts, and so it is proper to rejoice at the confirmation of their opinion and to make an effort to do so, which is not the case with the opinions of R. Abraham and R. Nissim, which were the opposite of the truth. Moreover, R. Meir Ha-Levi and Ha-Meiri are to be preferred to the others, **for this is their entire purpose and this is their expertise**: to read the Pentateuch carefully and to make inquiry and examine ancient manuscripts in order to arrive at the truth. This is why it is extremely rare to find a mistake in their conclusions, **for they can be assumed to have checked it and found it**. This is especially so of R. Meir Ha-Levi who was so great an expert that Nahmanides used to ask him to clarify his own doubtful cases, and would call him the great prince of Levi. This is not so with regard to R. Abraham and R. Nissim of blessed memory, for this is not their purpose and this is not their expertise. While engaged in interpreting Tractate Hullin, they came across some expression and wrote of it that which seemed correct at the moment, and so if their opinions are disproved, this should not be surprising.

MSh on Gen 28:16: ויִקַּץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָחוֹ (quoted entirely *supra*)—[...] R. Meir Ha-Levi of blessed memory who was an expert and whose comments are precise in every case, and especially in determining the text of the Pentateuch, **for this is his purpose and this is his expertise** in clarifying the truth in accordance with the accurate books. One should not consider his decisions erroneous, for he has certainly checked and found [what he has determined].

MSh on Deut 23:2 (פְּצוּעַ דָּכָה): If I am appropriate to decide, I would recommend relying on R. Meir Ha-Levi of blessed memory, for this book relies on his work in everything he says, for he has the authority and has certainly verified whatever he has ruled.

2. The Declaration of Reliance upon the Printed Versions of 1544 and 1547:

OrT, the end of the work:

You must be aware, my erudite reader, that this text can be used by everyone, yet it will only be useful in its entirety to one who has available the *Miqra Gedola*, in its second Bomberg printing, or the *Miqra Qetanna*, printed by Bomberg in the year 304 [1544], for I have checked these two and examined every letter, every vocalization sign and every cantillation sign, and I have emended everything, *defectiva* and *plena* spellings, as well as open and closed *parashiyot*, but I have not seen the other printed versions and it is quite possible that other errors appear in them.

Norzi on OrT:

[Lonzano] named his book *Or Torah*. This book is extremely useful to anyone, especially to one who has access to the second Bomberg printing of *Miqra Gedola*, of the year 308 [1547] or the 304 [1544] printing of the Bomberg *Miqra Qetanna* (Betzer, *Addenda*, "Major Introduction by the Author," 81, lines 334-336).

Norzi on his own book (MSh, MS L, p. 37a²⁸):

This edition regarding vocalization, cantillation, *defectiva* and *plena* spellings, open and closed *parashiyot* <and undersized and oversized letters> will be helpful to everyone, especially to those who have access to the second Bomberg printing of *Miqra Gedola* of the year 308 [1547] or the 304 [1544] printing of *Miqra Qetanna*.

3. The Dependence of MSh on OrT for the Correction of Printing Errors and of the *Parashiyot*:

The dependence of MSh on OrT is especially evident in the brief notes dealing with vocalization and cantillation signs, such as Exod 1:1: ואלה ויקרא מלך מצרים למילדת—בזקף קטן; *ibid.*, 18: שמות—מלת ואלה ברביע. I have examined a sampling consisting of a hundred brief annotations like these in MSh regarding the first twenty chapters of Exodus, and for this purpose I

²⁸ This page is extremely important, for it serves as a kind of frontispiece for the work, with general information regarding its printing. The pages preceding it in the MS (including the Introduction to the work, and various indices) made up a separate unit and were added to the manuscript at a late stage, as will be discussed *infra*.

selected only those notes that do not include any discussion or even mention of a source. In 87 cases, I found these notes in OrT, which is apparently their source. All these notes are included in Stage I of MSh, i.e., they are located in the initial writing of MS L, rather than in the marginal additions.

Another field in which Norzi's dependence upon OrT is evident is that of the open and closed *parashiyot* in the Pentateuch. Betzer (MShT, p. 22) examined this and found that Norzi refers to the question of open and closed *parashiyot* in 134 places in the Pentateuch, and all but seven are mentioned in OrT.

4. Indirect Quotations in MSh made by means of OrT:

Norzi admits in his Introduction (in a passage already adduced *supra*), that he included in his work excerpts from books to which he had no access, and did so by means of indirect quotation from the book OrT. Furthermore, at the beginning of his work, in MS L, before his annotations to the book of Genesis, Norzi wrote as follows:

In this work of mine, I shall often mention the writings of the illustrious sage, R. Menahem di Lonzano, regarding the text of the Pentateuch, which he has apparently done in his work called *Or Torah*. It has enlightened me considerably from scribes and books to which he had access in Jerusalem. <And in order to attribute the material to its writer, I shall inscribe ם״א, the initials of the name of his book.>

Norzi says that Lonzano had access to important books in Jerusalem, which are not available to him, and so he draws information of them from OrT, i.e., he adduces them by means of indirect quotation. Norzi seems to have been referring especially to two important masoretic works: *Kiryat Sefer* by R. Menahem Ha-Meiri and *Shemen Sason* by R. Yosef Sason. Norzi mentions *Shemen Sason* some twenty-five times and Ha-Meiri about 60 times. In numerous cases he does not indicate that the information he adduces has its source in OrT, but an examination shows that this was indeed his source, for Norzi never brings information of these two books unless it appears in OrT.

Here are two typical examples:

(1) MSh Gen 44:23 תספון (MShT, p. 145, ll. 8-9): in all the books as well as in the Hilleli copy, the word is written without the first *waw* or the *yod*, and so it is in R. Meir Ha-Levi's work and **in the book *Shemen Sason* as well.**

OrT *ibid.*: Moreover, Ha-Meiri wrote: תוספון without the *yod*. This means that he was of the opinion that the word was spelled *plena* with the two *waws*. Yet in all the books it is spelled without the first *waw* and without the *yod*. This, too, is the opinion of R. Meir Ha-Levi of blessed memory, and this is the opinion to be preferred. **The author of *Shemen Sason* also wrote the same.**

(2) MSh Deut 5:28 תסרו (MShT p. 342, ll. 135-136): the masoretic note to this indicates it is the only one spelled *defectiva*. This is one of the eight *defectiva* spellings in that *lishna*, elaborated in 2 Kings 4. **R. Meir Ha-Levi also wrote so, unlike Ha-Meiri who spelled it *plena*.**

OrT *ibid.*: R. Ha-Meiri spelled תסרו כי *plena* but it is spelled without the first *waw* in all books, with a comment of the *masora* that it is the only one spelled *defectiva*. Another comment of *masora* says that there are eight *defectiva* spellings in that *lishna*, elaborated in 2 Kings 4, this being one of them. For everyone agrees that this is spelled *defectiva*. **R. Meir Ha-Levi also wrote so, and this is indeed the main opinion.**

In neither of these cases does Norzi mention Lonzano, but his opinion is evidently based on that of the latter, for the information concerning *Shemen Sason* and Ha-Meiri is drawn from Lonzano's work.²⁹

The significance of these two works—*Qiryat Sefer* by Meiri and *Shemen Sason*—must be emphasized. For this purpose, one may study Lonzano's conclusion to his work, OrT. There Lonzano mentions the works upon which he relied: ten early biblical MSS, handwritten masoretic works and four compositions: *Masoret Seyag La-Torah* by R. Meir Ha-Levi, *Qiryat Sefer* by Meiri, *'Et Sofer* by R. David Qimhi, and *Shemen Sason*. Two of these last four—*Qiryat Sefer* and *Shemen Sason*—were not available to Norzi, and all the

²⁹ The information concerning the opinion of R. Meir Ha-Levi, too, is drawn in both these cases from OrT, for it appears in the initial writing of MS L, i.e., before R. Meir Ha-Levi's book reached Norzi.

excerpts he brings from them are actually taken from OrT. *Masoret Seyag La-Torah* became accessible to Norzi only at a late stage in his work.³⁰

Norzi apologizes for the widespread use he makes of OrT:

And even though he made his work available to the public, I have not omitted to ascribe his statements to him, just as I have done with many books that are with us, written by the renowned grammarians ... (Betzer, *Addenda*, *ibid.*, 81, lines 338-340).

In other words, Norzi made use of Lonzano's work when it was in manuscript form, and drew upon it considerably. After some time OrT appeared in print and was widely circulated. Norzi justified his actions in a number of ways: firstly, he made use of OrT before it appeared in print. Secondly, the quotations from OrT are attributed to their author. Thirdly, Norzi claims that there is no substantive difference between the excerpts he adduces from the books of the grammarians and those that he brings from OrT.

All these justifications are somewhat flimsy: (1) while it is true that OrT was accessible to Norzi even before it appeared in print, but the author Lonzano, who gave Norzi the draft, had come specially to Italy in order to have his work printed. (2) Not all the excerpts from OrT are actually attributed to their author; many hundreds of short textual annotations are copied from OrT without any attribution whatever. (3) The chance exploitation by Norzi of the books of the grammarians to clarify a textual problem in various places in no way resembles the intensive use he makes of OrT to resolve textual problems, i.e., precisely for the purpose the book was intended!

F. The Opening Leaflet of MS L and the Name of the Work

MS L, the first comprehensive autograph of MSh, is made up of an anthology of leaflets (in Norzi's terminology: פנקסים) that were bound together in a hard binding (Betzer, *Addenda*, 16). The identification of the

³⁰ The work *'Et Sofer* is mentioned six times in MSh. Four of its excerpts appear in OrT, but in two places (Gen 1:6; Nu 21:4) Norzi seems to have quoted directly from the work itself.

first leaflet of this manuscript is especially important. It should be noted that the body of the work, i.e., the notes dealing with the Pentateuch, begin on page 38, side b. Page 37 is a kind of frontispiece, with Norzi's name and pedigree, explanations relating to the usefulness of the work, and various memoranda Norzi wrote down either for his own benefit or for that of the intended printer of his book and of the Bible edition prepared according to it. Page 37 appears to be the original opening page of the work.

The leaflet encompassing the first 36 pages of the manuscript includes: a draft of the writer's introduction (pp. 1-7) and of the conclusion (p. 8a); a clean rewrite of this introduction (pp. 9-10, 13-19); the frontispiece of the work and "a small opening taken from the *Efodi*" (pp. 11-12, i.e., inside the introduction); the conclusion of the work (p. 20) and various indices pertaining to the work (pp. 21-36).

It is self-evident that the indices could have been prepared only after the completion of the entire work. Betzer has shown that the indices reflect the last stage of the work (Stage III), i.e., they contain a representation of even the additions appearing only in the margins of MS A of the Pentateuch.³¹ The conclusion of the work, too, was written, as seems most probable, after its completion, and we have already adduced evidence that it was written after the completion of Stage III. As for the Introduction, many writers write the introduction to their works only after the body of the work is already written down. And so, a study of the Introduction to MSh demonstrates that it was written at a relatively late stage: in its first draft Norzi already writes that "I have been privileged to see a book compiled by the illustrious sage, R. Meir Ha-Levi". Hence the Introduction can not have been written any earlier than during Stage II of the work, after the completion of the entire part relating to the Pentateuch (at least) in MS L, when R. Meir Ha-Levi's book *Masoret Seyag La-Torah* had already become accessible to Norzi.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the first leaflet was written after the completion of the work, and attached to the beginning of the manuscript only at some late stage. The name of the entire work, *Goder*

³¹ See *supra*, note 21.

Peretz, is often mentioned in this leaflet: it is one of the central topics dealt with in the long introduction, and is mentioned in both the frontispiece and the conclusion of the work. However, it is not mentioned even once in all other 606 pages of the manuscript, i.e., in the notes to the entire Bible text and in the three articles appearing at the end of the manuscript. Norzi seems to have decided on the name of the work at a relatively late stage, when he was writing the introduction, the frontispiece and the conclusion.

As for the development of Norzi's book, as Betzer has shown, MS K1 of MSh derived from both autographic manuscripts of the work, L and A. This MS was written in the eighteenth century, many years after the author's death, but it is of great significance in the history of the book. Its scribe was an expert in masoretic matters. He had access to both MSS that Norzi had left, neither of which contained the entire work: MS A contained the annotations to the Pentateuch and the Five Scrolls, with many additions which are not to be found in MS L; and MS L included the annotations to Prophets and Hagiographa as well as the three articles at the end of the work, which were not included in MS A. Thus the scribe of MS K1 succeeded in integrating the two correctly, and, furthermore, he found help on occasion in MS L in the part relating to the Pentateuch as well.³²

The first printed version of MSh, the Mantua printing (1742-1744), resembles MS K1 very closely. It is even possible that MS K1 itself was written as part of the preparations for the printing of the work.³³

³² Betzer, *Addenda*, 27. In his edition Betzer comments on several occasions on annotations found in MS L but not in MS A (e.g., in Gen 34:22,29). My examination revealed that these annotations are to be found in MS K1 as well (and also in the printed editions). Hence the scribe of MS K1 compared the two MSS, and determined the text of MSh to the Pentateuch in accordance with MS A, while taking into consideration MS L as well.

³³ Della Volta tells (in note 1 at the end of MS K) of an attempt to print the work *Minhat Shay* prior to the Mantua printing 1742-1744. This attempt was unsuccessful, though the frontispiece of the edition was printed (perhaps in a trial printing?). MS K1 may possibly have been copied while preparing for this edition. At any rate, I have not found in MS K1 any clear reference to such preparations, such as instructions to the printer or introductions which are not to be found in either MS L or MS A.

Two anomalies appear as a result of this description. The first: how is it possible that the scribe of MS K1, who was extremely expert in matters of the *masora* and made great efforts in copying the whole text of MSh onto the 853 pages of his manuscript, did not copy over its frontispiece, its Introduction or its Conclusion, which do not come to even 15 pages altogether? Can he have thought that the Introduction and Conclusion were of no importance? Unlikely, because anyone who has ever dealt with books is aware of the great significance of these sections!

The second anomaly concerns Rafael Haim of Italy, the publisher of the first printed edition of MSh. Why did this man alter the name of the work, omit the name decided upon by the author, and give it a new name on his own authority? If he valued the work so highly, so that he devoted to it almost half of every page and refrained from including in his edition any other commentary, why did he act so arbitrarily with regard to its title as to erase it completely from the book?

All these anomalies can be solved simultaneously if we only recall what we said about the first leaflet in MS L. It would seem that this leaflet had not yet been attached to the beginning of MS L at that time, and was not accessible to the copyist of MS K1. He thus was unable to copy over everything contained in that leaflet: the frontispiece, the Introduction, the Conclusion and the indices, and so was in no way able to know what name the author had given his work.

This applies to the Mantua printing as well. Whoever prepared the work for this edition made use of MS K1 alone, and so had no knowledge of the first leaflet of MS L or of the name of the work.³⁴ He thus had no choice but

³⁴ The "Introduction to the Work" was mentioned twice in MS L outside of the initial leaflet, and so too, in MS K1. It is first mentioned in the title of the *Ma'amar* on בג"ד כפ"ת: "The Rules of בג"ד כפ"ת adjacent to יהו"א, about which I wrote in my Introduction to the work that I intend to write", and Basila omitted the last phrase (see Betzer, *Addenda*, 121). The second time it is mentioned in the introduction to the *Ma'amar Ha-Ma'arikh*: "By writing this, I fulfill **what I said in my Introduction**, that I intend to deal with the Ma'arikh and the Ge'aya" (ובזה אצא ידי חובתי ממה) (שיעודתי בהקדמתי כי על הגעיא והמאריך אניף ידי). Basila corrected this to "By writing this, I fulfill **my duty to those who expect me** to deal with the Ma'arikh and the

to find a name for this nameless work.³⁵ Therefore, Rafael Haim of Italy decided to do the author a favor, and named his book after him: *Minhat Shay*, making a point of explaining his choice at the opening of each of the four parts of the Bible edition.³⁶

I have no idea where that initial leaflet went or how it was rediscovered and attached to the manuscript. We know of two MSS which contain

Ge'aya" (ובזה אצא ידי חובתי למבקשי אמרתי כי על הגעיה והמאריך אניף ידי). See Betzer, *Addenda*, 97, ll. 14-15. It seems to me that Basila understood the author's intention and thus knew of the existence of the Introduction, but since it was not accessible to him, he chose to erase the references to it as well.

³⁵ The copying of a manuscript, which enables the writer to leave the work untitled, is unlike the printing of a book to be distributed publicly, for a book cannot be distributed without it having some name.

³⁶ Such a hypothesis was raised by Haim ben R. Yosef Michal who was the owner of MS A and compared it with the printed version of MSh. See H. Michal, *Or Ha-Haim: Hakhme Yisrael ve-sifrehem* (Frankfurt, 1891; photocopy, Jerusalem, 1965), 432, par. 951. Michal was familiar with neither MS L nor its initial leaflet, but conjectured that the printers of *Minhat Shay* had not known of the Introduction to the work, just as they had not known its original name (see also Penkower [*infra*, n. 38], n. 2).

I must add that the Mantua printers had no idea that the writing of MSh was completed in the year 1626, because this date appears in the Conclusion to the work which was not available to them. Basila, who proofread the Mantua printing, wrote in his introduction of MSh (in the year 1742) "that it has been unknown for nearly a hundred and ten years". The date from which he began to count (about 1634) may have been the date of Norzi's demise (which is unknown).

The publisher of the Mantua edition, Rafael Haim of Italy, writes in his introduction: "Behold, the bedstead of Shelomo! There are sixty mighty men around it—the number of Bible texts his eye perceived and examined". The number "sixty" and the verse from Cant 3:7 linking it with the author whose name was Shelomo are mentioned in Norzi's Introduction (Betzer, *Addenda*, 86, lines 478-479 and 90, lines 598-606). Norzi, however, links this number to the "books of the grammarians and the writers", whereas Rafael Haim of Italy links it to the *miqra'ot*, i.e., the manuscripts and printed editions of the Bible that Norzi studied. It thus seems that he had heard of the sixty books from some indirect tradition, either an oral tradition or some written source, but did not see the Introduction directly.

portions of that leaflet:³⁷ one was apparently copied in the seventeenth century, i.e., before the work was printed. The other was copied in the year 1800, and its copier, Shemuel della Volta, was familiar with the Mantua printed text of *Minhat Shay*. He knew of the connection between the leaflet he was copying and the original work, and he integrated into the title of his copy the original names of the work, together with the new name it had been given: מקדש יה וגודר פרץ, הקדמת המקרא להרב בעל מנחת שי ומפתחות (Betzer, *ibid.*).³⁸

³⁷ MS P and MS K (Betzer, *Addenda*, 18–19).

³⁸ The copyist expressed his astonishment at the printer as follows: “Note 6: the printer did not print this most useful Introduction, and I do not know why, unless it was to lessen the expense which is very great in printing, or perhaps it was not available to him in proper form. For I have seen one of these [perhaps from the MS of the author himself]: it is untidy with erasures and inscriptions between the lines and in the margins, and it is very difficult to read it aloud. All that he printed was the flowing introduction by the proofreader, R. Rafael Haim Basila, and another introduction by the printer, Rafael Haim Italy of blessed memory”.

Della Volta suggests two explanations for the omission of the Introduction from the printed version: (1) the cost of the printing; (2) the possibility that all the printer had was an untidy Introduction. From this one may conclude that he had seen the two Introductions to be found in MS L: the rough draft (on pp. 1–7) and the final text (on pp. 9–10, 13–19). From what he saw he concluded that there existed many copies of the Introduction, some untidy, and imagined that such an unreliable copy was in the possession of the printer. For some reason, he refrained from raising the third possibility, the simplest one, that the printer had no copy of the Introduction whatever.

A short time before the last proofreading of this article, I saw the new article of Jordan S. Penkower, “The First Printed Edition of Norzi’s Introduction to *Minhat Shai*, Pisa 1819,” *Quntres* 1/1 (Winter 2009): 9–22. Penkower proved that the copyist of MS K, Shemuel della Volta, was the first to print the Introduction of Norzi, his Conclusion, and three out of his four indexes. Penkower located some copies of this printed edition (Pisa, 1819).

A. Jellinek, who printed Norzi’s Introduction in 1876, didn’t hide his anger at the Mantua printers, who omitted Norzi’s Introduction and changed the name of the work “without pangs of conscience” (A. Jellinek, *Jedidjah Salomo Norzi’s Einleitung, Titelblatt und Schlusswort zu seinem masoretischen Bibelcommentar* [Wien, 1876], vi–vii)

Della Volta seems to have received only the lost leaflet on loan, rather than all of MS L.³⁹ At any rate he identified the link between this leaflet and the manuscript, and was perhaps the first to realize this. This discovery may be what resulted in the attaching of the leaflet to MS L.

G. Conclusion

In his work *Minhat Shay*, Norzi succeeded in creating a proper balance between the vast bibliographic abundance of sources pertaining to questions of the biblical text and an intelligent system of preference and decision, thus succeeding in determining a version quite similar to that which was produced by the Tiberian masoretic school. The ability to integrate into his work that of his predecessors—and especially R. Meir Ha-Levi and Lonzano—together with a profound study of masoretic annotations and with much testimony from the literature outside the *masora*—is what led in the final instance to the respectable status his work enjoys.

³⁹ Some evidence of this can be found in the fact that he did not copy over p. 37, especially the note on the importance of marking the *rafe* appearance of the letters (Betzer, *Addenda*, 17), which was not printed in the Mantua edition.