

**THE TEN NEQUDOTH OF THE TORAH, OR, THE
MEANING AND PURPOSE OF THE
EXTRAORDINARY POINTS OF THE PENTATEUCH
(MASSORETIC TEXT); A CONTRIBUTION TO THE
HISTORY OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM AMONG THE
ANCIENT JEWS: A DISSERTATION**

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The Ten Nequdoth of the Torah, or, the Meaning and Purpose of the Extraordinary Points of the Pentateuch (Massoretic Text): A Contribution to the History of Textual Criticism among the Ancient Jews: A Dissertation by Romain Butin

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ROMAIN BUTIN

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A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM
AMONG THE ANCIENT JEWS

BY

ROMAIN BUTIN, S. M., S. T. L.

A Dissertation

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BIOGRAPHY.

The author of this Dissertation, Romain Butin, was born December 3, 1871, at Saint-Romain d'Urfé, department of Loire, France. After a preparatory training in the schools of his native town, he pursued the study of the classics at the 'Ecole Cléricale' of Les Salles, and at the 'Petit Séminaire' of Saint-Jodard, in the same department. In 1890, he came to America and spent two years in the study of Philosophy at the scholasticate of the Marist Fathers, in Maryland. He then entered the Society of Mary, and after two years of active work at Jefferson College, Louisiana, came to the Marist College near the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., for his theological training. In 1898, he matriculated at the Catholic University, where he followed the courses of Moral Theology under the late Prof. Th. Bouquillon, of Sacred Scripture under Prof. C. P. Grannan, and of Hebrew under Prof. H. Hyvernât. In 1900, he received the Degree of Licentiate of Theology, and was appointed professor of Hebrew and Sacred Scripture at the Marist College. In the fall of the same year, he registered in the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures. Since then, while continuing the study of Sacred Scripture under Prof. C. P. Grannan, he has devoted most of his time to the Hebrew and Aramaic Languages and to post-Biblical Jewish Literature under Prof. H. Hyvernât.

PREFACE.

Assuming that from an early date, unavoidable errors have crept into the text of the Hebrew Scriptures, the question arises, have the Jews tried to restore that text to its primitive purity? if so, as is generally granted, at what date did they realize the necessity of such a critical revision? and what means did they take to effect their purpose? We believe there is no rashness in asserting that the last two questions have never been fully solved, and are consequently, still open for discussion. It is true that the ancient *Qeres*, as well as many extraordinary features of the *textus receptus*, such as the *Pisqa* or blank space in the middle of verses, the Suspended Letters, the Inverted *Nuns*, the Extraordinary Points, etc., all of which are partly at least anterior to the Talmud, have been repeatedly examined and interpreted in various ways; yet, as to the true purpose and meaning of these pre-Talmudic textual peculiarities, there exists, among scholars, the most discouraging absence of agreement, and a solution that would command universal assent, is still a *desideratum*.

The hope of contributing, even in a small measure, to the attainment of this end, has prompted us to investigate the meaning of the so-called Extraordinary Points, and find out whether or not they are an evidence of a critical effort on the part of the ancient Jews.

It is our pleasing duty to express our gratitude to Prof. H. Hyvernat, not only for the constant and manifold encouragement that he has given us in the preparation of this Dissertation, but also for the unsparing care and kindness with which he has directed our Semitic studies.

We must also acknowledge our indebtedness to Dr. S. Schechter, President of the Faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary,

New York, and to Dr. G. F. Moore, Professor of the History of Religions, in Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., who have consented to read the first redaction of this work, and to whom we are under obligation for many valuable remarks and suggestions.

Our thanks are no less due to Dr. I. Casanowicz, of the National Museum, Washington, D. C., for his kind assistance towards the correct understanding of many Rabbinical texts.

Let us add, however, that none of these scholars are in any way responsible for the views and conclusions which we advocate, and that to us alone are to be attributed any shortcomings the reader may detect in the present Dissertation.

ROMAIN BUTIN.

The Marist College, January, 1906.

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