

Sylvie Raquel, "What Kind of Text Critic Was Origen?"

Origen exhibited a dynamic intellectual life. His over-achieving personality as well as his insatiable thirst for learning served his incredible passion for the Scriptures. He has indeed been called the first Christian text-critic. What does that really mean? What was textual criticism like in the second and third centuries? For sure, Origen recognized that some errors in copying manuscripts were calculated while others were unintentional. He also claimed that God helped him "repair" the differences between the copies of the Old Testament. What methodology did he use to make such assessments? What was also motivating his search? Was it for the sheer love of studying the text, for theological aspirations, or for apologetic purposes? Can the goals of modern textual criticism compare with what Origen intended to achieve? As a response to the preceding questions, this paper will explore Origen's methodology and purpose in investigating the texts of the Old and New Testaments, compare it to the current state of research in textual criticism, and examine how his textual activities are a window into third-century Christian scholarship.