

to the Jews as it contained so many items not in their own texts. His aim was to seek to restore the LXX to correct form.

To do this, Origen gathered the Greek text materials and prepared them in a scroll with parallel columns...something like a polyglot. It read like this:

Hebrew /Translit/Aquila/Symmachus/ LXX as known/Theodotian
1 2 3 4 5 6

Origen, we are told, took the other Greek translations as a means of hypothesizing the actual LXX text. These other Greek versions could serve this purpose as they had not suffered the tampering that was apparent in the LXX (although they are about 500 years younger ..well, 300 years younger, at least). He offered corrections by comparison and using critical marks devised in Alexandria by the literary critic Aristarchus, about 150 BC, he placed an obelisk before lines or words that were not found in his Hebrew text. Similarly he placed an asterisk at portions found in Hebrew but not found in the LXX. The absence or presence of these passages in the other Greek versions were thought to show the changes made by the LXX implementers and perhaps even to show why these changes were made. In theory one could read the LXX column and know exactly what came from a corresponding Hebrew, what did not and where the Hebrew had terms, etc., for which no translation was made. The intention was to cut from the LXX the accretions of the passage of time and particularly the Christian interpolations. But you can easily see how, as time went on, the work of Origen itself would be subject to criticism and redaction of almost every sort.

To understand better this work we need to know two things: 1) How well Origen really understood the idiom of the Hebrew text and 2) How his contemporaries regarded the work and what judgment and criticisms were passed upon it. Some of these latter might help us know some mistakes in his methodology or, if there were none recognized, we would be given greater confidence in both procedure and outcome.

The Hexapla was kept at Alexandria until the destruction of the library by the Islamic forces in the latter part of the 7th century. It has not been seen since. Jerome studied from it and