

## **PAMPHILUS, SAINT (c. 240-310)**

A philosopher, teacher, and supporter of ORIGEN, who was martyred in Palestine (feast day: 16 February in the East, 1 June in the West). He was a friend of EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, who wrote a [biography](#) of him, now lost.

Pamphilus is known through references in surviving works of EUSEBIUS, JEROME, and Photius. Born in Beirut, he studied in Alexandria and then went to Caesarea, Palestine, where he was ordained presbyter. He established a great library there and reopened the school that [Origen](#) had founded. He gathered texts and commentaries of Scripture: Origen's *Hexapla*, *Tetrapla*, and commentaries on the minor prophets are mentioned by Jerome. After two years' imprisonment, he died as a martyr in February 310. With the help of Eusebius, he had written a defense of [Origen](#) in five books. Eusebius added a sixth book after Pamphilus' death, adopted his name as a surname, and spoke of him as a holy martyr (*Historia ecclesiastica* 6.32), a most eloquent man, a true philosopher (*Historia ecclesiastica* 7.32), and "the most wonderful man of our time" (*Historia ecclesiastica* 8.13). A brief account of his life and death is given by Eusebius in *On the Martyrs of Palestine*.

An outline of the chapters of the *Acts of the Apostles* was confidently attributed to Pamphilus and published by Montfaucon. Pamphilus' *Apology for Origen* was directed to an influential group of Origenist confessors, condemned to the [copper](#) mines at Phaeno in southern Palestine, who were critical of any philosophical tendencies and of those who avoided martyrdom.

The first book of the *Apology* survives in the [Latin translation](#) of RUFINUS. However, it has been argued that the work is described anonymously by Photius in sufficient detail for reconstruction. Fifteen objections include Origen's claim that one should not pray to the Son, that the Son does not know the Father [as the Father](#) knows Himself, that

souls transmigrate into other bodies, that there is no eternal punishment or [resurrection](#) of the flesh. Pamphilus attacks the critics of Origen: some have not read him, some have read selectively, some have received strength from him and then turned against him; all have done great harm. Origen's own words must be the basis of understanding and judgment. He is shown to profess all essential doctrines. Further, many Egyptian [bishops](#) did not agree with Demetrius' condemnation of Origen. Pamphilus lists the achievements of [Origen](#) for [the word](#) of God, drawing on the traditions he had learned in Alexandria. Origen is defended by showing either that the doubtful doctrine was hypothetical or that other respected teachers had held the same beliefs. The final book reports the martyrdom of Pamphilus and of the principal confessors to whom the apology had been addressed.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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