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SOLI DEO GLORIA.

Commitment to avoid plagiarism

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Influence of the Catechetical School of Alexandria
on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa

Yours sincerely



R. OPPER

Clarification of key concepts and terms

Allegory

Allegory is a literary device, or even a literary genre, making extensive use of metaphor, thereby hiding the real or intended meaning of an expression or passage behind suggestive words (Deist 1984:5).

Ancient Near East

The Ancient Near East was the home of early civilisations within a region roughly corresponding to the modern Middle East: Mesopotamia (modern Iraq, Southeast Turkey and Northeast Syria), ancient Egypt (although geographically the major part of Egypt is in Northeast Africa), ancient Iran (Elam, Media, Parthia and Persia), Anatolia/Asia Minor (modern Turkey), the Levant (modern Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Jordan), Malta and the Arabian Peninsula (*World Atlas* 2015).

Angelomorphic Pneumatology

Angelomorphic pneumatology is the use of angelic imagery in early Christian discourse about the Holy Spirit. Bucur follows Fletcher-Louis' definition, according to which this term is to be used wherever there are signs that an individual or community possesses specifically angelic characteristics or status, though for whom identity cannot be reduced to that of an angel. It signals the use of angelic *characteristics* in descriptions of God or humans, while not necessarily implying that either are angels *stricto sensu*. Angelomorphic pneumatology does not imply the identification of Christ or the Holy Spirit with angels (Bucur 2009a:xxv-xxvi).

Apologetes

These were the 2nd- and 3rd-century defenders of the Christian faith against heresies, oppression and non-Christian religions. Justin Martyr, Tatian, Tertullian and Origen were apologetes (Deist 1984:11).

Apophatic Theology

This Theology argues in favour of the existence of God by contending that nothing that exists on earth is perfect or can be helped to be the ultimate ground of existence (Deist 1984:11).

Arianism

This is a Christology denying that Christ was of the same substance as God and thereby denying Christ's divinity (Deist 1984:13).

Ascetic

An ascetic is a person who, often for religious reasons, withdraws from everyday life and denies herself/himself ordinary pleasures (Deist 1984:14).

Atticism

"Atticism" is referred to when a person used the idiom or style (character) of the Attic dialect of Ancient Greek in another dialect or language (*The Free Dictionary* sa).

Binitarianism

The term "binitarian" is typically used by scholars and theologians as a contrast to a Trinitarian Theology: A Theology of "two" in God rather than a Theology of "three" (Barnes 2001:1).

Buddhism

These are the doctrines of the Indian philosopher Siddharta Gautama (ca 563-483 BCE) comprising the Eightfold Path of Nirvana and immortality: Right views, resolutions, speech, conduct, occupation, endeavour, meditation and contemplation (Deist 1984:22, 99, 189; Hillerbrand 2012:44).

Catechesis

Catechesis is oral instruction in the basic principles of Christian religion and faith (Deist 1984:25).

Christian School

A Christian school is a διαδοχή (*succession*) of teachers handing down a fixed tradition of learning to their pupil successors (Van den Broek 1995:41).

Church Fathers

These were the leading figures of the Early Church (Deist 1984:29).

Copt(ic)

Rural Upper Egypt displayed a Coptic culture where people spoke Coptic (an Arabic form for Egyptian) – "Coptic" can refer to a people group, a language, or even a church. The term "Copt" is a translation of the modern Latin *Coptus*, which is an adaptation of the Arabic term *quft/qubt*, which is most probably an adaptation of the Coptic term *gyytios* – most probably a translation of the Greek term Αἴγυπτος (*Egypt*), a term which originated from the ancient Egyptian name for Memphis, also called the "house of Ptah" (Isichei 1995:26).

Deification

1. Elevation to the likeness or level of God/the gods (Deist 1984:42).
2. The grace of renewal (*Coptic Orthodox Church Network* sa).

Diophysitism (Dyophysitism)

This is the "doctrine of the two natures." This term originated from Monophysitism and was used to refer to the doctrine of the two natures of God (Deist 1984:49).

Donatism

Donatism is a 4th-century North African schismatic ecclesiastical movement whose members believed that the validity of the sacraments of baptism and ordination was forfeited if the recipient afterwards yielded to pressure of persecution and denied her/his faith. They also strongly opposed the pact between church and state that existed at the time (Deist 1984:48).

Early Church (Period/Era)

The Early Church Era refers to the church of the time between the beginning of the 2nd century BCE and the beginning of the middle ages (the 5th century CE) (Deist 1984:49).

Ebionites

They were a group of ascetic Jewish Christians who, during the first six centuries, accepted Christ as a prophet and as Messiah, but not as the Son of God, therefore rejecting his divinity (Deist 1984:50).

Eclecticism

Eclecticism selected certain elements from various (philosophical) systems and introduced them into a new system where they did not necessarily fit (Deist 1984:50).

(The) Enlightenment

This is an 18th-century intellectual movement that held human reason to be the ultimate norm of truth (Deist 1984:53). The term was used since the 19th century to refer to a period when emphasis was placed on human reason and autonomy, which was characteristic of much of western European and North American thought during the 18th century (McGrath 2013:354).

Epicureans/Epicurism

Epicureans held the philosophical view that the ultimate good for the individual consists in the absence of pain and trouble and in the presence of peace of mind and that mankind is therefore wise to avoid circumstances that can cause discomfort (Deist 1984:54).

Gnosticism

This religious and philosophical movement among Jews and especially Christians of the 1st to the 6th century taught that man is saved only by special knowledge of God, and that the world, though created by a malevolent demiurge (Plato's name for the creator-god) who is a lowly emanation of the Supreme

Deity, has been or can be saved through the secret knowledge of the supreme Deity dispensed by his emissary, Jesus Christ (Deist 1984:68).

Hagiography

Hagiography is the writing of bibliographies of Saints (Deist 1984:71).

Heresy

This is a doctrinal view that is at variance with the recognised, established and official doctrine of a church (Deist 1984:73).

Heretic

A heretic is a person who advocates or believes a heresy (Deist 1984:73).

Hermit

A hermit was a strict religious ascetic (Deist 1984:74).

Jacobites

These were the Monophysite members of the Syrian Orthodox Church (Deist 1984:86).

Manichaeism

This 3rd-century religious group, founded by Mani, had close ties with Gnosticism and preached asceticism and, although they entertained some Christian ideals, they sought to reconcile Christianity with Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. According to McGrath (2013:357), this was a strongly fatalist position associated with the Manichees, to which Augustine of Hippo attached himself during his early period. A distinction is drawn between two different divinities, one of which is regarded as evil, and the other as good. Evil is thus seen as the direct result of the influence of the evil god (Deist 1984:22, 99, 189; Hillerbrand 2012:44).

Marcionism

This is a view of Scripture (originating from Marcion in 165) according to which the Old Testament is a barbarous book and a witness to a blood-thirsty creator-god and is, therefore, the exact opposite of the New Testament, emphasising

moreover that the New Testament may itself contain a residue of Old Testament conceptions and accordingly should not automatically be taken to be canonical. Marcionism accepts as canonical a reduced New Testament, consisting only of amended texts of the Gospel of Luke and ten Pauline Letters (Deist 1984:100).

Melkites/Melchites

These were royalist Arab-speaking Christians who sided with the Pope against the Monophysites and were supported in this by the Byzantine Emperor (Deist 1984:102).

Modalism

This is an interpretation given to the doctrine of the Trinity and holding that God is only one Substance but that he revealed himself in three (successive) modes, namely as the Father (Creator), as the Son (Saviour) and as the Holy Spirit (Comforter) (Deist 1984:107).

Monasticism

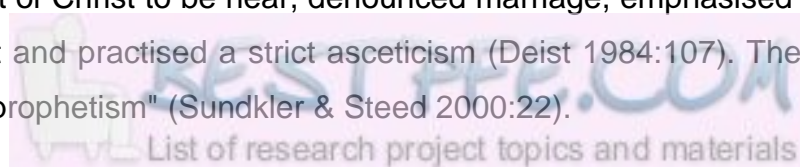
Monasticism is the phenomenon of religious groups voluntarily withdrawing from society to communal places of residence where they devote themselves to a religious life of prayer, mortification, meditation and the study of sacred Scriptures (Deist 1984:107).

Monophysitism

This is a 5th-century interpretation of Christology which held that Christ did not have two (equally powerful) natures (human and divine), but that his divine nature dominated his human nature (Deist 1984:107). This view differed from the orthodox view upheld by the Council of Chalcedon (451) that Christ had two natures – one divine and one human (McGrath 2013:357).

Montanism

This Christian group, which existed between the 2nd and 4th century, believed the second advent of Christ to be near, denounced marriage, emphasised the rule of the Holy Spirit and practised a strict asceticism (Deist 1984:107). They were an "explosion of prophetism" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:22).



Mortification

Mortification is the striving to overcome the carnal desires and will of the unregenerate life by prayer, fasting, asceticism, etcetera (Deist 1984:108).

Neo-Platonism

This upsurge of Platonism occurred between the 3rd and 6th century when Platonism was combined with other philosophical ideas and insights and had a major influence in the formation of Christian doctrine, as can be clearly seen in ideas such as that of the total transcendence of God as an absolute Being, that the universe is the product of a series of emanations from this Being, "culminating" in the material world (the lowest emanation of the absolute) and that man's goal in life is the gradual estrangement between body (matter) and soul (spirit) in order to be mystically reunited with the Absolute (Deist 1984:113).

Nestorianism

As a 5th-century Christology, it held that Christ's two natures (human and divine) were not united into a single person, but co-existed in him as separate entities. There are members of the Eastern Church group who still adhere to this doctrine (Deist 1984:113).

Nilotic

Nilotic is the family of interior African languages that developed along the Nile long before Judaism and Christianity came to Egypt, and were largely unaffected by Mediterranean cultures. They became the major linguistic vehicles for grassroots Christianity in the middle Nile valley (Oden 2007:21).

Orthodoxy

This 17th- to 18th-century movement in Protestant Theology sought to counter the influence of the Enlightenment on Theology by keeping to the creeds and confessions of the times of the Reformation on the one hand and, on the other hand, by working out a systematic body of church doctrine on the basis of philosophical systems (Deist 1984:120).

Palestine

Hundreds of years have passed since this region was officially known as Canaan – therefore most historians refer to the Canaan of the New Testament Era as Palestine. This is somewhat misleading as it was only after the suppression of the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 CE that the Roman Emperor Hadrian changed the name to *Syria Palaestina*. This region only became known as *Palaestina* in the 4th century. This was obviously meant to be an affront against the Jews, since *Palaestina* is the Latin word for Philistia, the ancient enemy of Israel (Burton 2007:115).

Patristic Age

This is roughly the period between Christ's death and the 8th century, that is the period during which the Church Fathers flourished (Deist 1984:125).

Pelagianism

This is a theological position developed by the 5th-century British monk Pelagius in opposition to the doctrine of predestination and original sin, emphasising instead the ideas of (a) man's free will (able even to resist God's grace) and (b) man's inherent ability to do what is good (Deist 1984:126).

Philosophy

Philosophy can be defined as the search for wisdom and truth (Deist 1984:128).

Platonism

This was a philosophical system of the Greek philosopher Plato (ca 427-347 BCE) who held that man has access to two worlds – the material and the ideal. The only real world, however, is the world of ideas, the physical world being merely a copy or shadow of it. Man's greatest virtue therefore is in escaping from the material world (eg her/his body) into the world of the ideas (soul), which alone is eternal (Deist 1984:130).

Pneumatomachian

The Πνευματομάχοι (*Pneumatomachoi* – *opponents of the Holy Spirit*), also known as Macedonians or Semi-Arians in Constantinople, and the Τροπικοί

(*Tropikoi – misinterpreters*) in Alexandria, were an anti-Nicene Creed sect that flourished in the countries adjacent to the Hellespont during the latter half of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century. They denied the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father in the divine Trinity (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2015).

Restitution

This is the way in which God is restoring creation to its original state of sinlessness (Deist 1984:145).

Sabbellianism

A 3rd-century doctrine holding that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were only "masks" of God and not three distinct Persons – a form of Modalism (Deist 1984:148; McGrath 2013:359).

Septuagint (LXX)

The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew texts of the Old Testament Scriptures that the Jews had brought from Jerusalem to Alexandria. It originated from Pharos and was first accepted in Alexandria under the rule of Ptolemy 2 (Philadelphus) in the middle of the 3rd century BCE (cf Josephus' *Ant Jud* 12.2; Mbiti 1986:22).

Soteriology

Soteriology is the section of Christian Theology dealing with the doctrine of salvation (Deist 1984:160; McGrath 2013:360).

Stoicism

This was the philosophy of the Greek Stoics, who held the world to be a manifestation of the divine mind, so that everything is under the perfect control of natural laws. Therefore, since the divine will is present in matter, it is futile to entertain so-called spiritual values and emotions such as love, passion and grief. Man must submit to the laws of nature and take life as it is (Deist 1984:162).

Subordinationism

This was the tendency to regard the Son as subordinate to the Father and therefore as inferior to him and, in doing so, to conceive of the Trinity as a hierarchy (Deist 1984:164).

Theotokos

The term "Theotokos" can be translated as *the bearer of God*. This is a Greek term used to refer to Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, with the intention of reinforcing the central insight of the doctrine of the incarnation – that is, that Jesus Christ is none other than God. The term was extensively used by writers of the early church, especially around the time of the Nestorian controversy, to articulate both the divinity of Christ and the reality of the incarnation (McGrath 2013:360).

Traditor

A *traditor* was a traitor, a Christian who handed in his Bible to Roman officials when possession of these Scriptures were forbidden by Emperor Diocletian (Deist 1984:175).

Tropikoi

See *Pneumatomachian*.

Unionite movement

This movement taught that in the person of the incarnate Christ there was but a single, divine-human nature, thus opposing the Orthodox Diophysite teaching of a double nature – both divine and human – after the Incarnation (Sundkler & Steed 2000:16).

Wisdom

This was an Ancient Near Eastern philosophy of a practical/ethical or speculative nature (Deist 1984:186).

Wisdom Literature

Wisdom literature is the body of Ancient Near Eastern texts that expound wisdom (Deist 1984:186).

Zoroastrianism

This was a Persian religion founded by one Zoroaster between the 7th and the 6th century BCE and, based on the idea of constant strife between the universal principles of good (Ahura Mazda) and of evil (Ahriman), taught purity of thought, word and deed, eternal bliss for the faithful and eternal damnation for the wicked. Its sacred "book" is called the *Avesta* (*Temple of Reason* 2006).

Abbreviations used to refer to documents

Abbreviation	Full name of Document/Place*	Author
<i>Ad Epis</i>	Ad Episcopos Ægypti Et Libyæ Epistola Encyclica	Athanasius
<i>Add</i>	Address	Theodore
<i>Add Orig</i>	Address to Origen	Gregory Thaumaturgus
<i>Adv Haer</i>	Adversus Haereses	Irenaeus
<i>Ann</i>	Annales	Tacitus
<i>Ant Jud</i>	Antiquitates Judaicae	Josephus
<i>Ant Mart Coll</i>	Antiquorum Martyriorum Collectio	Eusebius
<i>Apion</i>	Against Apion/Contra Apionem	Josephus
<i>Apol</i>	Apology	Justin Martyr
<i>Apol contra Arian</i>	Apologia contra Arianos	Athanasius
<i>Apolog</i>	Apology (against Rufinus)	Jerome
<i>Barn</i>	Barnabas	Barnabas
<i>Bibl Cod</i>	Bibliotheca Codices	Photius
<i>Cast</i>	Letter to Castritius	Jerome
<i>Comm 1 Pt</i>	Commentary on 1 Peter	Didymus the Blind
<i>Comm 1 Tim</i>	Commentary on 1 Timothy	Didymus the Blind
<i>Comm Jo</i>	Commentary on John	Origen
<i>Comm Matt</i>	Commentary on Matthew	Origen
<i>Comm Ps</i>	Commentary on the Psalms	Origen
<i>Comm Rom</i>	Commentary on Romans	Origen
<i>Comment in Esaiam</i>	Commentariorum in Esaiam	Jerome
<i>Cont Cels</i>	Contra Celsum	Origen
<i>Cont Flacc</i>	Contra Flaccum	Philo
<i>Cont Julian</i>	Contra Julianum	Cyril of Alexandria
<i>Crown Speech</i>	Crown Speech of Menander	Menander
<i>De Civ</i>	De Civitate Dei	Augustine
<i>De Decret Nic Syn</i>	De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi	Athanasius
<i>De Fuga</i>	De Fuga in Persecutione	Tertullian
<i>De Ira</i>	De Ira	Seneca
<i>De Praed Sanc</i>	De Praedestinatione Sanctorum	Augustine
<i>De Princip</i>	De Principiis	Origen
<i>De Res</i>	De Resurrectione	Athenagoras
<i>De Sent Dion</i>	De Sententia Dionysii	Athanasius
<i>De Spir Sanc</i>	De Spiritu Sancto	Basil
<i>De Script Eccl</i>	De Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum	Jerome

Abbreviation	Full name of Document/Place*	Author
<i>De Syn Nic Dec</i>	De Synodi Nicaenae Decretis	Athanasius
<i>De Vir</i>	De Viris Illustribus	Jerome
<i>De Vit Patr</i>	De Vitis Patrum	Rufinus of Aquileia
<i>Dom</i>	Domitianus	Suetonius
<i>Epist</i>	Epistulae	Jerome
<i>Epist ad Amphilocho</i>	Epistola ad Amphilocho	Basil
<i>Epist ad Max</i>	Epistola ad Maximum	Basil
<i>Epist ad Ser</i>	Epistula ad Serapionem	Athanasius
<i>Epist Fab</i>	Epistle to Fabius of Antioch	Dionysius
<i>Ex Mart</i>	Exhortation to Martyrdom	Origen
<i>Fr</i>	Fragment (Historia Ecclesiastica)	Philip Sidetes
<i>Fr Luc</i>	Luke Fragment	Origen
<i>Geogr</i>	Geography	Strabo
<i>Haeres</i>	Haereses	Epiphanius
<i>Hist</i>	Historia Ecclesiastica	Socrates
<i>Hist Aug</i>	Historia Augusta	Severus
<i>Hist Eccl</i>	Historia Ecclesiastica	Eusebius
<i>Hist Eccles</i>	Historia Ecclesiastica	Theodoret
<i>Hist Ecclest</i>	Historia Ecclesiastica	Sozomen
<i>Hom Jos</i>	Homily on Joshua	Origen
<i>Hom Lev</i>	Homily on Leviticus	Origen
<i>Hom Rom</i>	Homily on Romans	Origen
<i>HS</i>	A short work on the Holy Spirit	Didymus the Blind
<i>Hyp</i>	Hypotyposes	Clement
<i>Laur</i>	Laurentian Library in Florence*	–
<i>Leg</i>	Legatio pro Christianis	Athenagoras
<i>LConst</i>	Life of Constantine	Eusebius
<i>Mag</i>	Magnesians	Ignatius
<i>Marc</i>	Marcion	Tertullian
<i>Paed</i>	Paedagogus	Clement
<i>Phil</i>	Philadelphians	Ignatius
<i>Praef ad Lib</i>	Praefatio ad Librum	Jerome
<i>Praep Evang</i>	Praeparatio Evangelica	Eusebius
<i>Prot</i>	Protrepticus	Clement
<i>Quis Div</i>	Quis Dives Salvetur?	Clement
<i>Rom</i>	Romans	Ignatius
<i>Strom</i>	Stromateis	Clement
<i>Synag kai Apod</i>	???	Photius

Abbreviations of Biblical books

All the references to the Bible refer to the New International Version (NIV) or are personal translations.

Book	Abbreviation	Book	Abbreviation
Genesis	Gn	Nahum	Nah
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zeph
Numbers	Num	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zech
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ruth	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1 Sam	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2 Sam	John	Jn
1 Kings	1 Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2 Ki	Romans	Rm
1 Chronicles	1 Chr	1 Corinthians	1 Cor
2 Chronicles	2 Chr	2 Corinthians	2 Cor
Ezra	Ezra	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Neh	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Esther	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1 Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2 Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1 Tim
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2 Tim
Isaiah	Is	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	Lam	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Ez	James	Jas
Daniel	Dn	1 Peter	1 Pt
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2 Pt
Joel	Joel	1 John	1 Jn
Amos	Amos	2 John	2 Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3 Jn
Jonah	Jonah	Jude	Jude
Micah	Micah	Revelation	Rev

List of maps and addenda

1. Maps

The two maps used in this thesis appear on pages 13 and 20 respectively, and were taken from my personal archive.

2. Addenda

Two addenda have been added to the thesis:

- Addendum A: Chronological list of Patriarchs/Bishops of Alexandria.
- Addendum B: Time-line of Emperors and Popes during the existence of the Roman Empire until the end of the 5th century.

Summary

The aim of the thesis is to determine the influence exerted by the heads of the Catechetical School (*Didaskaleion*) in Alexandria on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa prior to the Arab invasion in 642 CE in Egypt. The methodological tool used is the Historical Method.

Chapter 1 contains a discussion of the founding and development of the city of Alexandria through its Golden Era and until the Arab invasion in 642 CE. This city played an important role in the development of Christianity as it is there that the early Christians (the "followers of Christ's teachings") settled and established their faith.

Chapter 2 deals with the founding of the *Didaskaleion* as an addition to the other big schools/"universities" in the city, for example the *Musaion* (also called the *Museion*), the *Serapium* (also called the *Serapeum*) and the *Sebastion*. All the possible heads of the School are discussed in order to get a full picture of the School and her activities during the time.

In Chapter 3 all the extant and lost documents written by the heads of the School are discussed to provide insight into the formation of the Theology of the School and the contributions of her various heads.

Chapter 4 constitutes the pinnacle of the thesis and depicts the influence of the School on the known parts of Africa – to the west and the south of Alexandria – during the first seven centuries CE (until the Arab invasion in 642). The influence is described at two levels:

- Influence, where mentioned by a specific writer, is called *factual influence* and includes personal influence.
- Influence that is not mentioned but observed, is called *derived influence*.

As there is ample evidence that the (heads of the) School exerted both factual and derived influence on the people in Africa, the conclusion can be drawn that the School and her heads played a significant role in the growth and development of Christianity in Africa.

Keywords/Phrases (indexing terms)

The keywords and key concepts used for this research are the following:

- Alexandria
- Alexandrian School
- Catechetical School in Alexandria
- *Didaskaleion*
- Heads/Principals/Deans of the School
- Clement of Alexandria
- Origen (of Alexandria)
- (Early) Christians/Christianity
- Foundation of Christianity
- Influence of the Catechetical School
- Egypt
- Africa
- Roman Empire

Introduction

1. "Can anything good come out of Africa?"

[W]hen Philip is asked [sic] "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" his response is simple and convinced. [sic] "Come and see". The indication that Africa is on its way out of the continued mire of under-development is not in the rising statistics of Africa's individual wealthy, the presence of admirable aid or trade projects to help the poor, or in the statistics that show Africa's rising presence in world trade; it is not even in references to her emerging democracies, or to individual success stories, remarkable though these may be. The true indication that there is something good in Africa will be when Africans are confident enough when asked [sic] 'Can anything good come out of Africa?', [sic] to respond with a simple convinced, "Come and see" (Ezeani 2011).

The question/saying, "Can anything good come out of Africa?" originated from the Latin saying, "Ex Africa semper aliquid novi?" (*Out of Africa always something new?*). This saying is ascribed to Gaius Plinius Secundus, also called Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE) whose book *Naturalis Historia* 8.42 contains the following statement: "Unde etiam vulgare Graeciae dictum semper aliquid novi Africam adferre" (*Common saying of Greece from whence also we always have something new to bring to Africa*).

The motivation for undertaking this study was, in part, influenced by the following statement made by Groves (1948:1): "It is the paradox of this vast continent that while sharing in the earliest history of the human race, it was yet not opened up until late in the nineteenth century." It had become clear that Africa had for too long been side-lined as a continent with actually no history. Because of its colonial background, scholars proposed that the history of this continent had originated in Europe. These

scholars tended to forget or to side-line brilliant writers like Clement, Origen, Athanasius and Augustine.

Not only scholars from the West, but "tragically many African scholars and church leaders also have ignored their earliest African Christian ancestors" (Oden 2007:11). Meanwhile Africa (ie that part of Africa that formed part of the Roman Empire – mostly the northern part, see the map on page 13) played a decisive role in the formation of Christian culture worldwide. Furthermore, quite a few "decisive intellectual achievements of Christianity were explored and understood first in Africa before they were recognized in Europe, and a millennium before they found their way to North America" (Oden 2007:9). In fact, the history of Christianity in Africa dates back much further than it does in the United States of America and Europe – including Rome. Oden (2007:76) stated: "African intellectual history has no need to be defensive or self-effacing. We are learning that Africa taught Europe before Europe was prepared to teach Africa. Europe has slept for many centuries without being fully aware of its vital intellectual sources in Africa." However, this statement must not be idealised and has to be put in the correct perspective:

It would be a vast exaggeration to claim that African theology became normative for all aspects of ancient ecumenical Christianity. But it is not an exaggeration to say that African exegetical skills and competencies in interpreting the Old Testament provided the pattern by which Africans, especially Origen, Augustine and Cyril, supplied the scriptural basis for the dogmatic work of the oikumene, from the Cappadocians (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa) to Gregory the Great (Oden 2007:76-77).

Africa was receptive to the gospel even from the 1st century. Oden (2007:95) pointed out that this was "uniquely characteristic of African community life and of African Christianity." Before Constantine (early 4th century) the Christian intellect simply blossomed better in Africa than anywhere else. Alexandria was the main centre of Christian intellect, and "[e]ventually it offered its rich wisdom to the cultures of the northern side of the Mediterranean, but not until it had been cradled and nurtured

and schooled in Africa" (Oden 2007:95; cf also Mokhtar 1993:21-33; White 1999-2000).

What may be added here without elaboration is that Africa is also regarded as the cradle of mankind, which contributes to the realisation that this continent has far more to it than currently meets the eye (cf Oppenheimer 2003; Oliver 2014).

1.1 "Harnack's folly"

A question that may well be asked is, "Who was responsible for denying Africa its rightful place in the world of Christianity and Theology?" Oden (2007:57) firmly believed that it was one of the biggest proponents, Adolf von Harnack, the "leading liberal German historian in the 1890s and early 1900s" who started it and he was followed by the "core of the nineteenth-century German liberal tradition – Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl and Ernst Troeltsch" (Oden 2007:57). This misconception, referred to by Oden as "Harnack's folly," caused European historians to regard Rome and Antioch as the founding places of Christianity.

Oden ascribed it to a "specific prejudice of Hegelian idealism" (Oden 2007:58), asserting that "everything of intellectual importance" that occurred and took place in the Roman Empire, originated in Europe. This is why Alexandria was regarded as a "non-African extension of the European intellect" (Oden 2007:58) and why the Alexandrian and Egyptian Christians were actually regarded as "disconnected from African ways" (Oden 2007:59) instead of being founded within the African way of religion.

The perception that the major scholars of Africa were not at all that African, did not exist before Von Harnack's opinion became known. This misconception was triggered by the writings of the proponents of the French Enlightenment, German idealism and British empiricism – Hegel, Troeltsch, Von Harnack and Bauer (Oden 2007:70) – and was accepted not only by Europeans, but also by Africans: "The main distortion prevailing in modern African theology have their roots in the Eurocentric tradition from Hegel to Harnack that penetrated deeply into the assumptions of Bauer, Bultmann and Tillich" (Oden 2007:70).

2. Choice of the topic

After having worked on various topics in the fields of the New Testament, Greek and OD(e)L, I found that my particular interest remained with the Early Church Era. This led to my decision to focus on the Catechetical School in Alexandria (Africa) for this study. Being part of Africa, my intention is to use this research to highlight the significant role played by Africa in establishing Christianity, especially during and after the era of the Early Church.

With the topic "Influence of the Catechetical School of Alexandria on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa" in mind, the writings of the heads of the School will be investigated to determine the influence exerted by them on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa prior to the Arab invasion in 642 CE.

3. Justification for choosing this topic

3.1 Part of Africa

Currently, especially in South Africa, most of the scholars who are interested in the field of Church History, do research on contemporary topics/issues, or on the history of the country, mostly from 1652 to today, or after 1994. This is very important and relevant for the country and its position (or the position of the church in the country), especially since Christianity was always seen as the religion of the state and taken for granted, especially until 1994.

As mentioned earlier, my previous studies and the fact that I am proud to be an African, have led me to realise that my particular interest lies in the history of the Early Church – a period that still offers much scope for further research. As there are currently not many scholars who engage themselves in the Early Church Era, I want to investigate this very important stage in the history of African Christianity, because it is the starting point of Christianity not only in Africa, but to some extent in the world, since African Christianity also had a major influence on the Christianity of the Ancient Near East and Europe. This research, which will pay special attention to the works of scholars/writers like Clement and Origen, will lead to the conclusion that Africa was the cradle of formalised Christianity and Theology (cf Schaff Vol 6, 1885:696).

With regard to the relevance of this study it is important to quote the words with which Thabo Mbeki, former president of South Africa, started his speech at the adoption of *The Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill* on 8 May 1996: "I am an African, and I am proud of it" (Mbeki 1996). This was the main determinant for me to make a contribution to the research on our continent, Africa. During its three centuries of colonisation, South Africa was not really seen as part of Africa, or as being integrated into the continent. Rather, this country was seen as part of, or as an extension of Europe, and it was only in 1994 that South Africa truly became part of the continent. Thabo Mbeki, who succeeded Nelson Mandela as president of the country, made a valuable contribution in this regard by initiating the Pan African Parliament and the African Union. The first paragraphs of his initial speech at the Pan African Parliament, which convened at Gallagher Estate, Midrand, on 16 September 2004, contained the following important words:

Today, we meet at this gathering of the representatives of the peoples of our continent to write a new page in our continuing efforts to give meaning to the rallying call of our struggle for liberation that, The People Shall Govern!

For centuries the masses of our people, throughout our continent, waged heroic struggles to free all our countries from the inhuman systems of colonialism and apartheid. Even after most of our countries were free, those who had liberated themselves made the determination that they could only enjoy the fruits of freedom and independence when the rest of the continent was liberated.

Accordingly, we meet in South Africa today because the peoples of Africa dared to make the necessary sacrifices to end the criminal system of apartheid in our country, and thus bring to a close the long period of colonial and white minority rule in our country (Mbeki 2004).

This followed on the monumental "African Renaissance Statement" made by Mbeki (then deputy president) at Gallagher Estate on 13 August 1998, in which, amongst others, he called upon "Africa's hundreds of thousands of intellectuals" who had

emigrated to other countries, especially to Europe and the United States, to return to Africa:

I dream of the day when these, the African mathematicians and computer specialists in Washington and New York, the African physicists, engineers, doctors, business managers and economists, will return from London and Manchester and Paris and Brussels to add to the African pool of brain power, to enquire into and find solutions to Africa's problems and challenges, to open the African door to the world of knowledge, to elevate Africa's place within the universe of research, the formation of new knowledge, education and information (Mbeki 1996).

He then blamed the colonisers for the fact that Africa viewed itself as being inferior to the rest of the world, especially to Europe, when he stated:

They [the colonisers – my addition] sought to oblige us to accept that as Africans we had contributed nothing to human civilisation except as beasts of burden...In the end, they wanted us to despise ourselves, convinced that, if we were not sub-human, we were, at least, not equal to the colonial master and mistress and were incapable of original thought and the African creativity which has endowed the world with an extraordinary treasure of masterpieces in architecture and the fine arts (Mbeki 1996).

To this he added:

The beginning of our rebirth as a Continent must be our own rediscovery of our soul, captured and made permanently available in the great works of creativity represented by the pyramids and sphinxes of Egypt, the stone buildings of Axum and the ruins of Carthage and Zimbabwe, the rock paintings of the San, the Benin bronzes and the African masks, the carvings of the Makonde and the stone sculptures of the Shona (Mbeki 1996).

It would have been highly appropriate if he had added the names of great Africans such as Origen and Philo, to name but two of them.

3.2 Links between Africa and the Jews

It is interesting to note that Egypt had close (intimate) ties with Palestine and Syria from the 2nd millennium BCE, as testified by clay tablets in cuneiform from Egyptian governors (Groves 1948:31). There are also some Biblical references that confirm early contacts between the Jews and Africa, and also ample other evidence of contact between Palestine and Africa, showing that these two parts of the world were not unknown to each other. This opened the door for the migration of the Jews to Africa at specific times in history. Documents dating from the early period of Christianity revealed that the history of the Jews was deeply rooted in Africa, "from Joseph to Moses to the exodus to the flight of the holy family to Egypt to the Ethiopian eunuch" (Oden 2007:96). Oden pointed out that these historical narratives and events defined the "whole subsequent narrative of salvation history in the Christian view" (Oden 2007:97).

It is highly probable that there were well-educated Christians in Alexandria in the apostolic times. In Acts 18:24-28 reference is made to Apollos who was a learned Jew of Alexandria and mighty in the Scriptures. It could be that he had learned about Jesus in Alexandria, before he met Aquila and Priscilla (cf *Coptic Orthodox Church Network* sa). Then there is Mark the Evangelist, who allegedly was the first head of the Catechetical School in Alexandria and who wrote the oldest Gospel, named after himself, bringing the "first apostolic voice to the African continent, according to African tradition" (Oden 2007:97).

3.2.1 Biblical names for Egypt, Ethiopia and their inhabitants

The Old Testament, more specifically Isaiah 11:11, refers to Egypt by three names, namely Lower Egypt (Mišrajim), Upper Egypt (Pathros) and Kush (Nubia). The Septuagint translated the Hebrew term "Kush," which referred to Kush and Nubia, with three terms: χούς, Αιθιοπία or Αιθίοψ. In Isaiah 18:2 and 7 the inhabitants of the Upper Nile are called the *Morať*, which means the bronze people or the polished-gleaming people (cf Bennett 1971:489). It is very significant that the "nations" (*goyim* in Hebrew and τὰ ἔθνη in Greek), which included Egypt and Kush, were prominent

among them and indeed shared in the fellowship with God (Gn 12:3; Is 19:24; Ps 87; Mt 28:19; Ac 2:5-13). Some of these could be references to Diaspora Jews, but they do in fact refer to all men being drawn to God.

The African influence on the Roman civil authority reached its zenith when Victor 1 – an African – served as Pope from 189-198 (cf Oden 2007:60). This brings us back to the question whether anything good can come out of Africa. A statement made by Oden (2007:67) is very true:

If modern African Christianity had been better grounded in ancient African ecumenical teachings, it would never have felt compelled to be defensive about the Hellenistic voices in its own African tradition. For Hellenism in Africa had become profoundly Africanized over the very long period of time of some twenty generations before Origen. Modern African Christians need to get this straight in order to recover their actual historic identity as African. Otherwise Africa needlessly deprived itself of its own heritage.

Another point of interest is that Africans adopted Greek and Latin names, obviously because they were ruled over by the Greeks and Romans consecutively (cf Oden 2007:67). Added to this, the documents written during that time were not written in an African language, but in Greek and Latin. This caused many scholars to assume that they were imports from Europe (Oden 2007:94). Oden warned that this assumption could lead to two major problems:

- The systematic neglect of the African sources could, over time, become well-nigh racist.
- This kind of assumption would deprive Africa of its "authentic voices that express the best of its true intellectual history" (Oden 2007:94).

3.2.2 Biblical references

References to Egypt and Kush are found in all three parts of the Hebrew Bible, namely the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, and even in Acts, where the story of the expanding church is told:

- **Genesis 2:13:** In this primeval narrative there is a reference to the Gihon River that surrounded the land of Kush.
- **Genesis 10:6-13:** Kush and Egypt are named in the Table of Nations.
- **Genesis 9:25:** Here the "curse of Ham" (in fact the "curse of Canaan") has reference, because Canaan was under African political (cultural) control at the time of the composition of the Table of Nations, during the eighteenth (Thutmose) Dynasty.
- **Genesis 37:28:** Joseph was sold to Midianite merchants who took him to Egypt. This happened in approximately 1800 BCE.
- **Exodus 2:10:** Moses was born and received an Egyptian name given to him by an Egyptian princess. This happened in approximately 1300 BCE.
- **Exodus 6:25** (cf also Num 25:7): Aaron's son was named Phinehas (meaning the *Nubian* or *dark one*).
- **Numbers 12:1:** During the Wilderness period of the Israelites Moses took a Kushite (Nubian) woman to be his wife.
- **2 Samuel 18:21-23, 31 and 32:** References to a Nubian messenger amongst the troops of David (in Hebrew he was called *ha-kushi*, which is the same as the Egyptian *Pa-nehesi*).
- **1 Kings 3:1:** King Solomon married an Egyptian princess.
- **1 Kings 10:** The (Afro-Arabian) queen of Sheba visited Solomon in approximately 1000 BCE. Her real name was Makeda and she came from Axum (the present-day Ethiopia).
- **2 Kings 19:9 (Is 37:9):** Hezekiah formed an alliance with King Tirhaka of Kush, also known as King Taharqa of the twenty-fifth Nubian Dynasty, to stop Sennacherib at the turn of the 8th to the 7th century BCE.
- **Job 28:19:** This verse contains a description of Kush.
- **Psalms 68:31:** This verse states that envoys will come from Egypt to Israel, while the land of Kush (Cush) will submit itself to God.
- **Psalms 87:4:** This verse is a reference to pilgrims to the Jerusalem sanctuary who came from the "nations," among which were Rabah (a poetic name for Egypt) and Kush.

- **Isaiah 18:1-7:** A reference to the Kush-Egypt Oracles of Isaiah 18-20, which here refers to a diplomatic mission up the Nile that was related to an anti-Assyrian plot in approximately 714 BCE.
- **Jeremiah 38:7-13 and 39:15-18:** An account of Ebed-Melek, an official of Zedekiah, who saved Jeremiah's life during the 587 BCE siege of Jerusalem.
- **Daniel 11:43:** Daniel "predicted" in the context of his apocalyptic visions that Antiochus 4 was planning a war against Kush during the Seleucid-Ptolemaic strife (168 BCE).
- **Nahum 3:8-9:** A lamentation of the fall of Thebes (*No-amon* in Hebrew) to the Assyrians in 663 BCE.
- **Zephaniah 1:1:** The prophet's father was named Cushi/Kushi.
- **Acts 8:26-40:** The Kushite ("Ethiopian") official was converted by Philip. "Candace" in Acts 8:27 referred to the title for a Kushite queen. The Luke-Acts account of the spread of the gospel among the "nations" proves that "Ethiopia" was among the first to respond to the gospel.

There are also numerous references to Egypt and Kush when God speaks to his people about what Bennett (1971:498-499) called "the prophetic covenant theology:"

- **Amos 9:7:** God warns Israel that his love will be extending beyond his covenant with Israel to the Kushites ("Ethiopians"), here symbolising distant peoples.
- **Jeremiah 13:23:** The inability of Jerusalem to change her ways is compared with the inability of a Kushite to change the colour of his skin.
- **Ezekiel 30:1-5 and 6-9:** The "oracle against the nations" depicts Kush as an Egyptian ally, though the Egyptian rule was already in the hands of the Saite twenty-sixth Dynasty (663-525 BCE).
- **Isaiah 43:3:** This passage lists the Afro-Arabian area (Egypt, Kush and Arabia) as a worthy ransom for the restoration of Israel.
- **Isaiah 45:14:** This passage refers to the same wealthy nations who will come to acknowledge the God of Israel.

3.2.3 The origin of Abraham

According to the Bible, Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldeans when God called him to be the father of a new nation, later called the Israelites – God's chosen people. The Chaldeans formed part of Mesopotamia, together with the Sumerians, Akkadians, Amorites, Babylonians, Assyrians and Aramaeans. Their language was (and still is) Aramaic (*Chaldeans on Line sa*).

A biological study undertaken in 2010 by Clyde Winters proved that about 5,000 years ago there was a migration from the Kushites (from Africa) to Eurasia (Winters 2010:296, 298). Linguistics and DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) studies proved that Abraham's ancestors formed part of the Kushites who migrated from West Africa to Asia (Linsley 2010a; 2010b). Abraham's ancestors more specifically moved from the Upper Nile Valley and the Horn of Africa to the coastal areas of Arabia. There they established themselves in separate territories. Abraham's father was Terah (Gn 11:24). Terah was a name associated with the Nilotic Ainu, originating from the Upper Nile Valley. The Ainu migrated from Africa eastward, as far as Japan and north to southern Siberia.

These rather astounding facts linked the Jews even closer with Africa and therefore with Christianity. In fact, the Christian people who migrated to Alexandria were actually just moving back to where they came from.

3.3 Alexandria

For the sake of clarity some time-lines referring to Alexandria and matters related to the city are included, as well as a complete list of the Patriarchs/Bishops that served there (cf Addendums A and B). The history of Alexandria, as discussed in the thesis, covers the period from its foundation to the Arab invasion in 642 CE.

3.3.1 The Dynasties of Manetho

Different time-lines with different time indications are available and include those of Adams and Ciałowicz (1997:5) and Bennett (1971:491). The classification chosen for this study is that by Manetho, an Egyptian historian and priest. His writings date from the time of Egypt's first two Ptolemaic rulers (323-245 BCE) (cf Lloyd 2000:395-421). In his major work, *Aegyptiaca (History of Egypt)*, consisting of three volumes, he

divided Egyptian history into thirty-one dynasties, starting with Menes in approximately 3000 BCE and ending with Alexander the Great in 332 BCE (cf *Ancient Egypt Online* 2010). Menes was considered the first Pharaoh to rule Egypt. He united the Kingdoms of the Delta and Nile (Upper and Lower Egypt) and built the city of Memphis. He ruled for approximately 60 years.

Volume 1 contains an account of "Dynastic Egypt" and covers Dynasties 1 to 11, including the *Early Dynastic Period* (Dynasties 1-2, 3050-2686 BCE), the *Old Kingdom* (Dynasties 3-6, 2686-2181 BCE), the *First Intermediate Period* (Dynasties 7-11, 2181-1991 BCE) and part of the *Early Middle Kingdom* (covering the period 2134-1782 BCE). Volume 2 deals with Dynasties 12 to 19 (1991-1185 BCE), depicting the end of the *Middle Kingdom* (Dynasty 12, 1991-1782 BCE), the *Second Intermediate Period* (Dynasties 13-17 – the Hyksos rule, 1782-1570 BCE), ending with Dynasties 18 to 19 (1570-1185 BCE) – the establishment of the *New Kingdom*. The Period of the Hyksos rule (*Second Intermediate Period*) was detailed by Josephus (*Apion* 1.82-92), who held the opinion that the Hyksos ("shepherd-kings") were the ancient Israelites who migrated to Egypt from Palestine in the time of Moses. Pharaoh Ahmose 1, the founder of Dynasty 18, drove the Hyksos out of Egypt. Volume 3 covers the last twelve Dynasties (1185-332 BCE) that formed the last part of the *New Kingdom* (Dynasty 20), the *Third Intermediate Period* (Dynasties 21-25 – also known as the *Libyan Period*) and the Late Period (Dynasties 26-31), which ended before the rule of the Ptolemies.

The Ptolemies ruled from 332-30 BCE, preceding the era of the Roman Empire which lasted from 30 BCE to 324 CE (Bennett 1971:491). Then followed the *Coptic Period*, also called the Christian or Eastern Roman period, between 324 and 642 CE. This period was ended by the Arab invasion.

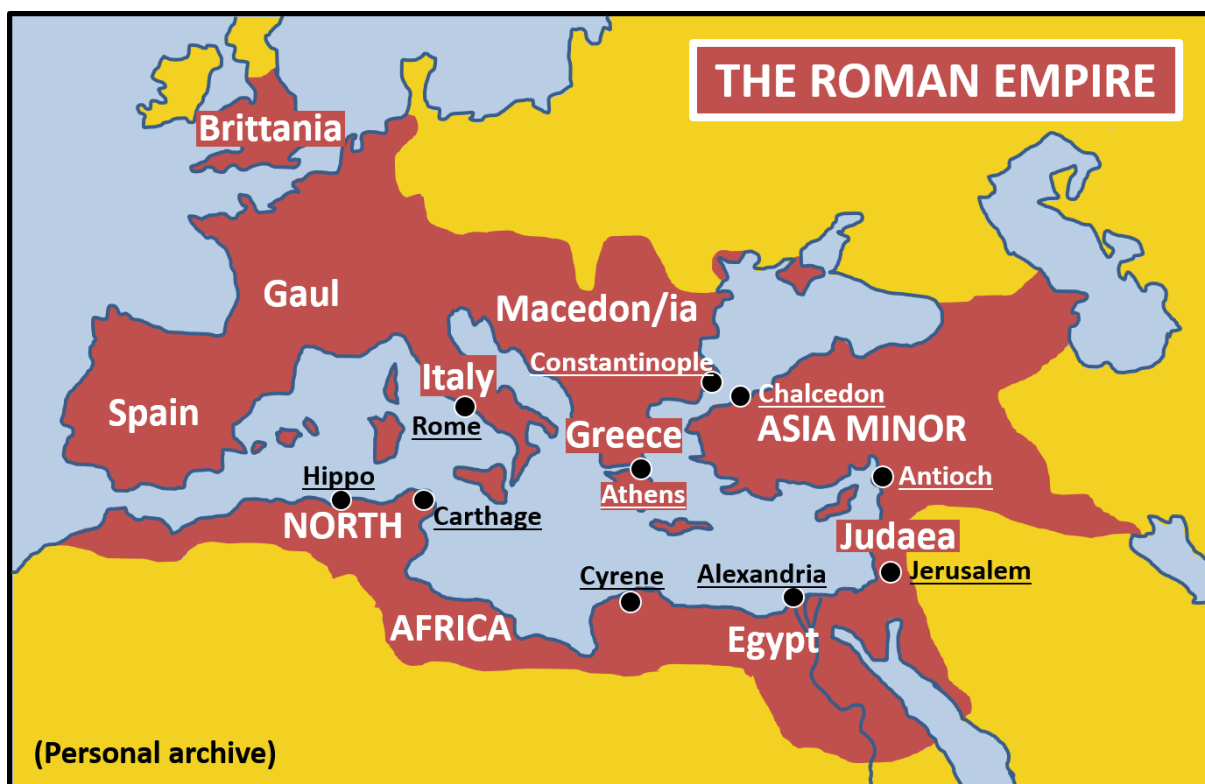
The Israelites entered Egypt in approximately 1880 BCE, during the so-called pre-Hyksos period and stayed there for almost 430 years according to Exodus 12:40. Bennett (1971:493-494) incorrectly alleged that this was their first real contact with Egypt and Africa (cf Winters 2010 above). Evidence exists that, during the Late Period of the Egyptian Dynasty, especially between 587 and 323 BCE, Jewish

communities settled in Egypt in the area from the north (now Alexandria) to Elephantine at the first cataract of the Nile River (Winters 2010).

3.3.2 The Patriarchs/Bishops of Alexandria

El Masri (1982:8) referred to them as Popes. She stated that the most recent name of the Patriarch of Alexandria is "Pope and Patriarch of the great city of Alexandria, all of Egypt, the Middle East, Ethiopia, Nubia and the Pentapolis" (El Masri 1982:8). For an exhaustive list of Patriarchs, refer to Addendum A.

3.4 The Roman Empire



The development of early Christianity can be understood only within the framework of the Roman Empire, stretching as far back as 753 BCE with the founding of Roma by Romulus and reaching its zenith during the reign of Emperor Trajan, who ruled the Empire from 98-117 (McGrath 2013:16; cf also Fraser 1972; Gibbon 1776). The ruler of the Roman Empire was called "Emperor" and not "King," due to abuses of political power related to the latter title during the time when Roma still was a republic. The first Roman Emperor to rule the Empire (from 27 BCE) was (Caesar) Augustus, also known as Octavius. He ruled until 14 CE. It was during his reign that Jesus was born in Palestine. Also during his reign territorial expansions took place,

especially in Egypt – Egypt had to provide the population of Rome with grain. Further territorial expansions occurred during Trajan's rule. During this time a "civil religion" began to emerge in which the Roman Emperor was worshipped "as an expression of allegiance to the Roman state and empire" (McGrath 2013:17). When a worthy Emperor died, he was incorporated in the Roman pantheon as a state divinity. The Latin term "religio" was derived from a root meaning *to bind together*. Other religions, mostly practised in private, were tolerated as long as they did not interfere or conflict with the official *religio*.

In 364 CE a formal split occurred between the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire when Valentinian 1 appointed Valens as Emperor of the East while he himself held his position up to 375 when Gratian became the first Emperor of the western part of the Empire. In 476 Odoacer, who was a mercenary in the service of Rome and the leader of the Germanic soldiers in the Roman army, deposed the Western Roman Emperor, Severus, thereby terminating the existence of the Western Roman Empire. The Eastern Roman Empire only fell in 1453 when the Ottoman Turks under Mehmet 2 captured Constantinople and in 1461 when they conquered the Empire of Trebizond, which was the last Greek state. In Egypt the Romans were conquered by the Arabs in 642 CE.

3.4.1 The "Eastern" and "Western" churches

The Christian church was founded by the disciples of Jesus, who became his Apostles after his death, resurrection and ascension. Although the Romans defeated the Greeks and conquered their territory prior to the establishment of the Roman Empire in 27 BCE (actually the commencement of the period of the Emperors, cf time-line in Addendum B), the Greek culture could not be wiped out. Therefore, although Jesus, a Hebrew by birth, was born during the Roman reign, he was born within a Greek culture – therefore he was a Jew born under Roman reign within a Greek culture.

Initially Christianity had to establish itself and that happened in big centres like Alexandria and Antioch – within a Greek culture. Christianity, however, expanded during the time of the Roman Empire to spread across the entire Empire and even to places beyond its borders. It soon also found itself within an established Roman

(Latin) culture, founded in Rome in the 8th century BCE. Although Christianity formed part of many different cultures (such as the Egyptian and Antiochian cultures), these cultures were filled with and even encapsulated by the Greek culture. The Roman culture, however, stood firm and kept its Latin affiliation.

By the end of the 1st century the church in Alexandria has already started to display characteristics of Roman influence in its structure, but as time went by, the cultural divide also became a political and ecclesiastical divide, which resulted in people referring to the church with terms such as "Eastern" and "Western." The terms "Eastern" and "Western," therefore, originated from divisions in the church as a result of the cultural divide between the Hellenistic East and the Latin West, as well as the political divide between the weak Western and strong Eastern Roman Empires.

The centre of the Latin-speaking West was Rome, while Constantinople became the centre of the Greek-speaking East. Apart from the cultural and political differences and rivalry between the two churches (actually church groups), they also disagreed on doctrine and ecclesiology.

3.4.1.1 The Eastern churches

As the churches in the East became known as the Eastern Orthodox church/es, the term "Orthodox" was often exchanged with "Eastern" (or *vice versa*), although these churches considered themselves to be part of an Orthodox and Catholic Church. Eastern Christianity comprised of the Christian traditions and churches that developed in Asia Minor, the Middle East and Africa, as well as in the Balkans, eastern Europe, India and parts of the Far East over several centuries of religious antiquity. Alexandria thus formed part of what was referred to as the Eastern churches.

a. Eastern Orthodox Church

The official name of the Eastern Orthodox Church was the Orthodox Catholic Church, also referred to as the Orthodox Church or just Orthodoxy. The Orthodox Church traced its development back to the earliest church established by the Apostle Paul and the other Apostles throughout the ancient Roman Empire (Binns 2002:3).

The church saw itself as the historical and organic continuation of the original church founded by Jesus and his Apostles (Ware 1963:8).

b. Oriental Orthodoxy

Oriental Orthodoxy can be described as the faith of the Eastern Christian churches that recognised only the first three Ecumenical Councils held at Nicaea (Nicea), Constantinople and Ephesus. They were opposed to the dogmatic definitions put forward by the Council of Chalcedon (451). Hence, these Oriental Orthodox churches were named "Old Oriental churches," "Miaphysite churches" and also "Non-Chalcedonian churches." The Western Christian church called them "Eastern Orthodox" or "Monophysite churches." However, the Oriental Orthodox churches rejected these names as they did not follow the teachings of either Nestorius or Eutyches (Davis 1990:342).

The schism between the Oriental Orthodox church and the rest of the Christendom occurred in the 5th century, when Pope Dioscorus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, and the other thirteen Egyptian Bishops, rejected the Christological dogmas of the Council of Chalcedon, which held that Jesus had two natures – the divine and the human. They were willing to accept the wording "of/from two natures" but not "in two natures."

3.4.1.2 The Western churches

Just like Eastern Christianity, the origin of the Western Churches or Western Christianity could be traced, directly or indirectly, to the Apostles and other early Christian preachers. Christian writers of the West wrote in Latin. In the West their writings were more influential than those writers who wrote in Greek, Syriac or other Eastern languages. Although evidence exists that the first Christians in the West used Greek (cf eg Clement of Rome), it had been superseded by Latin in the 4th century. According to Cross and Livingstone (2005:397), there is even evidence of a Latin translation of the Bible in the 2nd century in southern Gaul and in the Roman province of Africa. While the see of Constantinople became dominant throughout the Emperor's lands, the Bishops of the West were not dependent on the Emperor in Constantinople, but reported only to the see of Rome.

3.4.2 The rise and decline of the Roman Empire (*Imperium Romanum*)

In less than fifty-three years (between 220 BCE, when the Punic Wars started, and 167 BCE) the Romans succeeded in conquering nearly the whole of the (known) inhabited world – an achievement unparalleled in human history (Radice 1979:41). The Empire succeeded to conquer Egypt only in 30 BCE. The Roman Empire, mostly centralised around the Mediterranean Sea (including Europe, Africa and Asia), represented the post-Republican Era of the ancient Roman civilisation (Kelly 2006:4; Nicolet 1991:1, 15). The form of government was autocratic. Julius Caesar, being appointed in 68 BCE, marked the transition of the Roman Republic in 45, which had existed for 500 years, to the Empire. The first 200 years of the existence of the Roman Empire were characterised by stability and referred to as the *Pax Romana* (*Peace of Rome*). The Empire expanded most significantly during the reign of Trajan in 98-117 CE. The *lingua franca* in the eastern regions of the Empire was primarily Greek, while people living in the western parts of the Empire primarily spoke Latin. Between the 3rd and 5th century the Empire was divided into what is known as the Eastern ("Greek East") and Western ("Latin West") Roman Empires. The provinces in western Europe (Gaul, Britannia and Spain), as well as Italy and northwestern Africa constituted the Western Empire. The rest of the Empire belonged to the Greek East. The centre of power for the Western Empire was Rome, while Constantinople became the centre of power for the Eastern Empire.

During the 4th century, under the reign of Constantine, Christianity became the state religion (cf Starr 1991:670-678). During the 5th century, in 476, the central government of the Latin West collapsed (Asimov 1991:110). The eastern part of the Roman Empire continued and later adopted the name "Byzantine Empire." During the late 4th and early 5th century the Roman Empire began to disintegrate due to invasions. The Eastern Empire finally ended in 1453 with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks (Asimov 1991:198). The question may be asked what contributed to the fall of Rome, or what caused it. In 1984 Alexander Demandt investigated the fall of the Empire and ended up with 210 different theories (Demandt 1984:695), summarising that the decline happened over a period of four centuries during which several invasions took place.

3.4.3 Time-line of Emperors and Popes during the time of the Roman Empire until the end of the 5th century

The time-line provided in this thesis is based on the work done by Piero Scaruffi (1999), Schmidt (2004:40-43) and *The Original Catholic Encyclopedia* (2013). The first five centuries CE were chosen as they clearly showed the final break in the Empire between the East and the West around 364, as well as the demise of the Western Empire in 476. The complete list is attached as Addendum B.

4. Area of investigation

4.1 The scope of the investigation

The scope of this investigation includes

- the history of the city called Alexandria;
- the (Catechetical) School in Alexandria from its founding until its demise;
- the heads of the School;
- the writings of these heads as
 - polemic writings (against certain constructions or "heresies" of the time);
 - informative writings (for the School);
 - apologetic writings (to defend Christianity or their own viewpoints);
- the influence the heads and their writings had on Christianity in Africa;
- the influence of Christianity on Africa during the first six centuries.

4.2 Explanation

After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, the focal point of Christianity gradually shifted from Palestine to world cities like Alexandria, Athens, Antioch and Rome. Scholars like Enslin put the spotlight on Alexandria: "It [Alexandria – my addition] had snatched the torch from the fingers of 'violet crowned, illustrious Athens,' long the undisputed centre of learning but now but a shadow of her former self...Rome with its genius for organization and administration was no rival" (Enslin 1954:214). This caused the world of that time to take note of all the writings that originated in Alexandria.

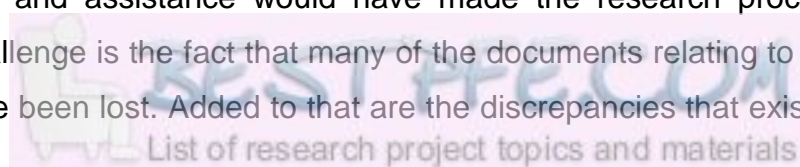
As has already been alluded to under heading 1, specifically in the 21st century there is a new emphasis on Africa. Many things about this continent have not been spoken about. Scholars like Bediako (1995, 2004), Oden (2007), Decret (2011), Ngong (2014), and many others are coming to the fore and want to give Africa the credit it deserves. Oden specifically identified one of the numerous gaps in the research on Africa: "Christianity has a much longer history than its Western and European expressions. The profound ways African teachers have shaped world Christianity have never been adequately studied or acknowledged, either in the Global North or South" (Oden 2007:9).

A series called *Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity* (ECCA) was launched in the 21st century under the editorship of Brakke, Jacobsen and Ulrich. They have already published 16 volumes between 2006 and 2014. With this series the scholars are publishing monographs and edited volumes focusing on early Christianity and its connections with the religion/s and culture/s of antiquity and late antiquity. They payed special attention to the interactions between different religions and cultures and to how these religions and cultures influenced each other.

Many things have been said and books been written about Alexandria and the School. The thesis will focus on Christianity in Africa, specifically on the influence the School (and her heads) had on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa. It will also discuss, to some extent, the influence Alexandria had on the world at that time in history. References will also be made to the writings of early scholars/"heretics"/historians such as Philo, Eusebius and Arius, and they will be discussed at some point.

4.3 Challenges and limitations

A few challenges concerning the thesis should be pointed out. First, there is the challenge of talking about "Africa" at a time when there was no continent known by this name. Second, the Coptic Church in Egypt is very hesitant to communicate with researchers who are not connected to their church. Although this is understandable, their co-operation and assistance would have made the research process much easier. A third challenge is the fact that many of the documents relating to the heads of the School have been lost. Added to that are the discrepancies that exist between



documents that were written by scholars during the time of the Early Church. One of the best examples is the discrepancy between the two lists (neither of which was exhausted) of heads of the School recorded by Eusebius and Philip Sidetes respectively.

4.3.1 "Africa"



Under this sub-heading Africa – specifically the northeastern parts of the continent currently called Africa – will be discussed. First, it is necessary to establish which name was used by the Ancient Near East to refer to this part of the world. During these earliest days the known parts of Africa were without a collective name. Before the third millennium BCE the people of Egypt referred to their land as *Keme* (*Kmt ta: the black land*), alluding to the rich mud from the Nile inundations (*Sata Livewire* 2010). This name was derived from the stem *kmt*, meaning *black*. In the spoken language the letter "t" in *kemet* became silent (cf *Sata Livewire* 2010). The ancient

Egyptians referred to themselves as *Kemetu* (*black people*). It is interesting to note that the Copts (the "modern Egyptians") still refer to Egypt as *Kame*, *Keme*, *Kimi* or *Kheme* (cf *Sata Livewire* 2010).

The desert (of Egypt) was referred to as *Dashre* – the red land. The centre of Lower Egypt (the northern part of the country) was Memphis, while the centre of Upper Egypt was Thebes. The first cataract of the Nile near Elephantine and Aswan formed the border of Pharaonic Egypt. Further to the south was lower Nubia (between the first and second cataracts) while Upper Nubia was situated between the second and fourth cataracts. From approximately 1970 BCE (this was Dynasty 12 in the Middle Kingdom), Upper Nubia was better known as Kush, today known as Ethiopia, but stretching more to the south – the sixth cataract. Between the third and the first millennia (the Akkadian period) Egypt was called *Magan* by the Sumerians in Mesopotamia, while they referred to Africa as *Meluhha* – "the land of the black man" (Bennett 1971:488). During the twenty-fifth Egyptian Dynasty, also called the Nubian Dynasty or Kushite Empire, dated 760-656 BCE (Török 1997:132) the whole of Egypt was called *Meluhha* and *Kashi* by Akkadian sources.

If one may dare to refer to "Africa" during the time-span mentioned above, the following question needs to be asked: "Did the people of that time already refer to themselves as inhabitants of Africa, or not?" According to Burton (2007:19),

the name *Africa* was only introduced to the region when the Romans gained entrance to the continent after defeating Hannibal's army in the Punic Wars. Even at that time, the name *Africa* only applied to the newly formed Roman province and to no other territory. At some time towards the end of the Middle Ages, the name was applied to the entire "continental mass of land on which the original Roman colony was located.

Burton (2007:19) also distinguished a "Biblical Africa" which "swells beyond its contemporary boundaries to include Saudi Arabia and the countries that share its peninsula; the western regions of the Middle East, including Israel, Iraq and Lebanon; and possibly the southernmost parts of modern Turkey."

Oden (2007:80-81) tried to generalise the problem by stating that "[t]he most generic name of the entire continent has from time immemorial been simply *Africa*." He then elaborated on this statement by showing that in ancient times the name "Africa" referred only to a part of the peninsula of the modern Tunisia. As time went by, it became common to use the name to refer to the part of the Mediterranean country west of Egypt. Only much later, when the larger continent was explored more widely, would it become the name for the whole continent (Oden 2007:81).

Oden (2007:31) explained the controversy of Africa: "There is an irony in speaking of 'young Africa:' It is at once a very youthful survivor of wearisome modernity, and a most ancient, early, and, in that sense, young expression of both Christianity and ancient Africa." Despite all these arguments, it would be the easiest to refer to "Africa" as the known part of the continent during the time of the Roman Empire.

4.3.2 The ways of the Coptic Church

The term "Copt" is derived from the Greek term Αἴγυπτος (*Aigyptos*), which is derived from the Egyptian term "Hikaptah" – one of the names for Memphis, the first capital of Ancient Egypt. Today the term "Coptic" refers to Egyptian Christians (cf *The Christian Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt* 2006). The Coptic Orthodox Church is currently regarded as one of the oldest Christian churches on earth (cf El Masri 1982:introduction page). According to El Masri (1982:introduction page), the Copts have the belief that their church "has kept the Orthodox faith and struggled – with no violation – many centuries to save it without any changes from the teachings of early Christianity, and offered thousands upon thousands on the altar of the martyrdom." The Coptic Church in Egypt and elsewhere in the world was based on the teachings of Mark the Evangelist, who allegedly visited Alexandria during the 5th decade CE. They consider themselves to be the subject of Old Testament prophecies like Isaiah 19:1, coupled with Hosea 11:1, which are, according to them, references to Jesus and his parents fleeing from Herod to Egypt. They also believe that Isaiah 19:19 refers to their existence: *In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border.* After the Arab invasion in 642 the Coptic Church was the only part of the Christian church that survived in Egypt (cf Chapter 4).

However, as has been mentioned earlier, the Coptic Church, which is a basic source for this research, is almost inaccessible to non-members or people who have not been approached by someone in the church. Despite numerous attempts to communicate with them, I have had no success. They (rightfully?) have a natural distrust of "others"/"outsiders" and I respect that. Fortunately they have a website called the *Coptic Orthodox Church Network*, which supplied me with much information.

4.3.3 Extant material

The extant documents that refer to this era present a challenge, but also a limitation. A large number of the documents that was written during that time, has been lost and only a relatively small number remained. Furthermore, the extant material does not always supply facts (in the sense that we regard facts today), that is a "true account" of what happened. In the words of Gordon (2014:667):

In the absence of an ancient narrative framework, it is immensely difficult to represent adequately the history of religion in the "long" Roman Empire between, say, 133 b.c.e. (the acquisition of Asia) and, say, 395 c.e., or even 325 c.e. (Council of Nicaea). The only ancient attempt to do this was Eusebius' *History of the Church*, which was the (mythic) history of "Truth Triumphant."

4.3.4 Limitations

The limitations of this research include the fact that it will only cover a specific area/place (Africa, Egypt, Alexandria) during a specific time-span (the first six centuries CE). However, hopefully the thesis will motivate other scholars of Africa to do further research. Oden (2007) has touched on several topics on which further investigation is needed.

Though focused on Alexandria, this research also considers the influence of the School on the surrounds like the Maghreb, Carthage, Numidia and the Nile Valley (all part of Africa) without elaborating much on the history of these places. To strengthen certain arguments, references are also made to Europe (Rome, Athens,

etc) without an in-depth study of the origin, history and circumstances of these places.

5. Problem statement

As already stated, Africa has been marginalised for the past few centuries. That means that everything that happened in Africa and all Africa's contributions were minimised or even nullified. This situation calls for a "new look" at Africa, as proposed by scholars like Oden, Isichei and Ngong. Egypt and especially Alexandria should be investigated with a view to clarifying their role in the formation of Christianity, as, according to Schaff, Alexandria (as part of Egypt in Africa) was the cradle of formalised Christianity and Theology (Schaff Vol 6, 1885:696).

5.1 Research question

The primary research question is: "What immediate and more extended influence did the Catechetical School in Alexandria (the *Didaskaleion*, which existed until the end of the 4th century CE) have, through (the writings and examples of) her heads, on how Christianity was formalised and developed in Africa?" The research question is linked to the aim and objectives of the study.

5.2 Aim and objectives of the study

5.2.1 The aim

The aim of the thesis is to determine the extent of the influence of the heads – exerted personally and through their writings – of the Catechetical School in Alexandria on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa. Although the School's activities were terminated by the end of the 4th century, her extended (derived) influence in Africa continued for centuries, especially until the Arab invasion in 642 CE. This influence needs to be further investigated in great detail.

5.2.2 The objectives

5.2.2.1 Main objective

With the aim of the thesis in mind, the influence that the heads of the School exerted personally on each other and on their students, needs to be investigated. It is also necessary to discuss their writings which contain the early beginnings and foundation of the Christian Theology.

5.2.2.2 Subsidiary objectives

The following objectives can be highlighted:

- To confirm the existence of a Catechetical School at Alexandria.
- To determine who the heads of the School were.
- To determine and briefly discuss the writings of the heads of the School.
- To discuss the writings of scholars like Philo and Eusebius, where appropriate, as they are connected to the writings of the heads of the School.

6. Hypotheses

Hypotheses are declarative statements (testable or demonstrable) of the relationship between things. These hypotheses need to be verified and tested as they must supply a clear answer to the question, "How and to what extent did the Catechetical School of Alexandria influence the growth and development of Christianity in Africa?"

The impetus for this enquiry originated with the new way in which the world has started to view Africa and its existence, especially since the late 20th century. Because Africa has been colonised, mainly by Europe, between the 15th and early 20th century, it became a continent that other continents looked down upon. This links to the question asked at the beginning of this Chapter: "Can anything good come out of Africa?" One of the aims of this thesis is to invite the reader with the words, "Come and see!"

The hypotheses for this study are non-statistical and are as follows:

- There was a Catechetical School in Alexandria.
- It was active during the first four centuries CE.

- In their writings, early historians like Eusebius and Philip Sidetes referred to various heads of the School.
- Alexandria was initially theologically stronger than even Rome, Antioch and Athens.
- Alexandria had a decisive influence on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa (and even outside of Africa).
- Something good really did come out of Africa....

7. Research methodology

Leming (2014) stated clearly how a researcher should choose a methodology:

The process of deciding on the methodology for testing research hypotheses (whether it be survey, experiment, field research, or historical analysis) should not be dictated by one's "favorite" methodology. Rather, the decision for methodological type is influenced by

1. the nature of the research hypotheses;
2. the body of knowledge concerning the relationship between the variables of interest;
3. one's expertise in a given methodology (okay, favoritism may play some role), and
4. the resources at hand for carrying out the research.

Therefore, the research hypotheses and the body of knowledge concerning the topic should be the primary factors in the selection of method. The "kosher" researcher does not first decide what method to use and then try to shape the hypotheses to the methodology.

The research methodology is the cornerstone of a thesis. Fully aware of the fact that the research methods are the tools and theories of workmanship when tackling the problem, choices had to be made between a vast array of methods and methodologies.

Methodology is the theory behind the research methods. It sets the tone for what is to follow. Two possible methods that could be used for this study were the Historical-Critical Method and the Historical Method, disregarding more recent methodologies such as New Criticism (cf Barton 2010:167-177; Barton 2006:9-20) and Anthropology of Religion (cf Lambek 2014:145-165).

7.1 The Historical-Critical Method

This method was first used by JS Semler (1725-1791) who differentiated between the Word of God and the canon of the church. Krentz (1975:18) referred to this: "For him canon does not denote a set of divinely inspired texts but merely collections of books chosen by churches as suitable for public reading. This disjunction allowed for the emergence of a new interpretive method, which has become known as the historical-critical method." This approach remained dominant in Biblical interpretation from the mid-19th century until the mid-1970s, when "noted Biblical scholars" turned to sociology and anthropology (Wortham 1999:ix). Yet it still has the competence to provide invaluable interpretive tools if handled carefully and intelligently.

Through the years there were several "interpretations" or types of this method, like the "Troeltschian," "Duhemian" and "Spinozistic" methods (cf Plantinga 2003:31-38; Möller 2000:150) to name only the most important. Without elaborating on these methods, it is my view that the prospects for and role of historical criticism will depend largely on the definition attached to it. Careful consideration needs to be given to the fact that this approach centres on its methodology, specifically its focus on genetic questions. In the words of Marsh (2009): "Many of the tools most closely allied to historical-criticism, such as text-, form-, redaction-, and source-criticism (amongst many others) are analytical rather than synthetic. In other words, historical-critical analysis of texts often involved fragmenting texts to understand their history and pre-history."

7.1.1 The "historical" side of the method

It makes sense to interpret ancient texts against the background of what is known about their historical settings. Historical interpretation is based on the assumption that the ancient authors (subjectively) reflected their own historical situation and wrote to address people of their own time and place.

7.1.2 The "critical" side of the method

The term "critical" has both negative and positive connotations. During the 19th century in particular there were researchers who believed that the purpose of historical criticism was to disprove the historical truth of the Bible. FC Baur (1792-1860) named this approach "negative criticism" (cf Baur 1862:394-395). He suggested instead a "positive criticism" whose agenda would be the understanding of Biblical texts against their historical background. Most Biblical scholars are in favour of this approach.

The "critical" side of historical criticism is the application of one's historical knowledge to the ancient text, unfettered by religious or ideological strictures that would destroy the light that history can shed upon the Bible.

7.1.3 Other criticisms that also belong to this category

Although the criticisms mentioned here are more/merely applicable to Biblical writings, it is considered appropriate to name and define them.

7.1.3.1 Tradition Criticism

Tradition Criticism is used to determine the development of traditions during the early existence of the church and forms the basis for Form and Redaction Criticism. It is an attempt to trace the evolution of the form and/or meaning of concepts, words or sayings. This is a very sceptical form of criticism and its conclusions are often devoid of supporting evidence (Kulikovsky 1997).

7.1.3.2 Form Criticism

This type of criticism aims to penetrate behind the written text to discover, if possible, its oral form (cf Black & Dockery 1991:176). Each form is associated with a definite human situation or *Sitz im Leben*. These forms can be associated with specific situations in the life of the writer, Catechetical School, etcetera.

One of the disadvantages of Form Criticism is that form categories are often based on content, rather than on actual form. Although it should be admitted that form and content do influence each other, some categories are simply stylistic descriptions.

Also many sayings and stories have no "common" form and many have (a) "mixed" form/s. Some may even fall into multiple categories (Black & Dockery 1991:187).

7.1.3.3 Redaction (Editorial) Criticism

Redaction Criticism builds on the results of Source and Tradition Criticism. In the case of some writings it is possible that some author – a redactor – shaped those materials into what is called, for example, the text of Origen. Redaction Criticism helps a scholar to look at the big picture, at how the author/redactor organised the data to accomplish a literary purpose. Results of Redaction Criticism are highly subjective and should not be accepted uncritically (Black & Dockery 1991:213).

7.1.3.4 Source Criticism

This type of criticism is applied when it is necessary to look for the "source/s" of a specific writing, for instance a writing of Eusebius who made use of the works of Clement and Origen.

7.1.3.5 Historical Criticism

By using this form of criticism the interpreter tries to understand both the historical situation to which the text points and the historical situation of the author. Sometimes these are the same, but most often they are not.

7.1.4 Evaluation

Through the years the Historical-Critical Method has earned for itself a negative reputation with regards to the interpretation of specifically the (writings of the) Bible. Smith (1994:204) stated:

There are, consequently, two reasons that faith in Christ is incompatible with advocacy of the historical-critical Method:

- First, contrary to the critical axiom of the method, a Christian has made a decision to abandon his or her intellectual autonomy and to accord noetic authority to a set of texts.
- Second, against the historical axiom, by recognizing the noetic authority of these texts, credence is given to the possibility of the unhistorical interpretation of the Jewish

Scriptures, since there are several instances of such unhistorical interpretation in Jesus' interpretation and in the interpretation of the early church recorded in these texts.

Although this study utilises the Bible as source, it cannot really be said that the Bible acts as a primary source. Also because of the negativism attached to the Historical-Critical Method, another method should be taken into consideration.

7.2 The Historical Method

Once the decision has been made to conduct an historical research, certain steps need to be followed to achieve/secure a reliable result. Busha and Harter (1980:91) detailed six steps for conducting historical research:

1. The recognition of a historical problem or the identification of a need for certain historical knowledge.
2. The gathering of as much relevant information about the problem or topic as possible.
3. If appropriate, the forming of hypotheses that tentatively explain relationships between historical factors.
4. The rigorous collection and organisation of evidence and the verification of the authenticity and veracity of the information and its sources.
5. The selection, organisation and analysis of the most pertinent collected evidence, followed by the drawing of conclusions.
6. The recording of conclusions in the form of a meaningful narrative.

Both quantitative and qualitative variables can be used in the collection of historical information. Historical research also encompasses research concerning the origin, development and influence of ideas of the past – this is research based on engagement with the past. It includes investigations like the recording, analysis and interpretation of past events in order to better understand the past. In order to be usable, collected data should provide

- external evidence or criteria that will account for the authenticity of the information;
- internal evidence or criteria that will explain the meaning of the data.

This rather simple and straightforward method appears to fit in best with the requirements of this study and was therefore deemed the most appropriate method to be used.

8. Expected outcomes

8.1 Outcomes

This research aims to investigate the influence exerted by the writers who headed the Catechetical School in Alexandria on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa mostly during the period defined by Oden (2007:9): "Christianity would not have its present vitality in the Two-Thirds world without the intellectual understandings that developed in Africa between 50 and 500 CE." As the lifespan of the Catechetical School was between the middle of the 1st century to the end of the 4th century, the Arab invasion only took place in 642 CE.

The following outcomes are expected:

- To come to a clear understanding of the history of the Catechetical School in Alexandria and its various heads, by drawing a time-line and populating it as far as possible.
- To set the record straight about the decisive role played by Africa in the formation of Christian Theology and culture.
- To confirm and emphasise the fact that Christianity would not have achieved its current vitality in the Two-Thirds world had it not been for the intellectual understandings that developed in Africa between 50 and 400 CE. This fact has been ignored by scholars during the past five centuries (Oden 2007:10).
- To investigate the role of the Catechetical School in Alexandria in promoting the formation of the Christian Theology and culture, especially in Africa.

8.2 Contribution

Much of the research on Africa revolves around its political history, especially its colonisation and present-day politics, as well as all the different (African) churches. The research being done on the Early Church and specifically the Catechetical School in Alexandria does not focus intensely on its influence on Africa as such. With

this research the aim is to make a contribution to the fact that the School had a considerable influence on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa.

9. Literature review

9.1 Primary and Secondary Sources

All the extant writings of the heads of the School, together with references to their writings that were lost, form the primary sources for the thesis. Added to these are

- the 4th-century ten-volume work called *Historia Ecclesiastica (Hist Eccl)* by Eusebius of Caesarea, a Roman historian referred to as the "first church historian" and also as the "father of Church History" (Doergen 1937:446-448; cf Verdoner 2014:239);
- the 5th-century "voluminous but chaotic *Christian History*" (Van den Broek 1996:199) called *Historia Ecclesiastica* and consisting of twenty-four volumes, of Philip Sidetes (also called Philip of Side) of which only fragments remained. He was also a historian of the early Christian church.

It is a fact that the primary sources do not always concur with each other on factual history (for instance regarding the heads of the School), but it should be noted that during that time the oral culture was still very much alive. This explains to some extent why the influence of the Catechetical School within the African culture is more difficult to identify from literature than it would be the case in other parts of the Roman Empire.

Research that provided information on the Catechetical School has been recorded since the end of the 19th century with proponents like Schaff (1885) and his team who produced a multi-volume series on the most significant writers of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, as well as the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, which contained much information on the School and her heads, as well as the translated text of the Fathers. The book of Von Hefele, *A history of the Christian councils, from the original documents, to the close of the Council of Nicaea A.D. 325*, written in 1871, containing a discussion on the Council of Nicaea, also added some information on the School.

Despite two World Wars, some research on the planting of Christianity in Africa was undertaken by Groves (1948) during the middle of the 20th century and a little later by Enslin (1954 – specifically on Clement). Towards the end of the 20th century more related research was conducted by scholars like El Masri (1982), Wilken (1984), Van den Broek (1995, 1996), Scholten (1995, 2002), Van den Hoek (1997) and many others. They mostly reviewed the School for its anthropology (eg Scholten and Van den Hoek) or tried to answer the questions regarding the existence of the School (eg Van den Broek and Scholten) or the format in which the School existed (eg Van den Hoek).

The most useful secondary literature source was that by Iris Habib el Masri, called *The Story of the Copts: The true story of Christianity in Egypt. From the foundation of the church by Saint Mark to the Arab Conquest*, written in 1982. This book covers the exact time span of the thesis. As the daughter of the secretary of the General Congregation Council of the Coptic Church, she had access to much information that would not be available to any ordinary person. Although her book provides much positive evidence, she unfortunately did not focus on the heads of the School, who were mostly mentioned in passing. There is also no mention of any influence the School and her heads may have had on the rest of Africa.

El Masri's book was complemented by information obtained from *The Coptic Theological Seminary* that re-established the Catechetical School in Alexandria in 1893 and has a website called the *Coptic Orthodox Church Network* (referred to above). Unfortunately this website does not provide much information about the School in Alexandria. Special mention should also be made of an unpublished MPhil Dissertation completed by Margaret Elizabeth Fogarty in 2004, titled *Egyptian Christianity: An historical examination of the belief systems prevalent in Alexandria C.100 B.C.E – 400 C.E.* This excellent work contains much information that could be utilised in this study.

Proponents of Africa's role in the growth of early Christianity who are worth mentioning are Isichei (1995), Oden (2007) and Ngong (2014). While Isichei's book focused more specifically on the oppressed and slavery in Africa, Oden and Ngong reflected more on the recent influence of Christianity in Africa. What makes these

books so valuable is that the writers took into account the earliest history of Christianity in Africa.

9.2 Gap in the current research

The "gap" in the current research was identified by Oden when he stated that "[t]he profound ways African teachers have shaped world Christianity have never been adequately studied or acknowledged, either in the Global North or South" (Oden 2007:9).

10. Chapter outline

The thesis is presented as follows:

- **Introduction:** The Introduction provides the reader with the necessary background to be able to understand the subsequent Chapters within the context of the Early Church Era.
- **Chapter 1:** In this Chapter the story of Alexandria is told, from the rise of this illustrious city to its fall.
- **Chapter 2:** The Catechetical School and her heads in Alexandria are discussed against the background provided in Chapter 1.
- **Chapter 3:** Having determined in Chapter 2 who the heads of the School might have been, all the documents written by the possible heads of the School are mentioned and cursorily discussed.
- **Chapter 4:** This Chapter builds on all the previous Chapters as it discusses the title of the thesis and elaborates on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa.
- **Conclusion:** In this Chapter all the information given in the thesis is reviewed, as well as the conclusions reached on different levels.

Chapter 1

Alexandria from rise to fall¹

Alexandria...maintaining always the intellectual and even the ecclesiastical primacy of Christendom. "Ye are the light of the world," said the great Enlightener to the Galileans of an obscure and despised Roman province. But who could have prophesied that Egypt should again be the pharos of the world, as it was in Moses? Who could have foreseen the "men of Galilee" taking possession of the Alexandrian Library, and demonstrating the ways of Providence in creating the Bible of the Seventy, and in the formation of the Hellenistic Greek, for their ultimate use? Who could have imagined the Evangelist Mark and the eloquent Apollos to be the destined instruments for founding the schools of Christendom, and shaping scientific theology? Who would not have looked for all this in some other way, and preferably in Athens or in Rome?...Now, as to Alexandria we owe the intrepid defenders of truth...we must not forget that they are to be judged by the *product* of their united testimony...while they were creating the theological dialect of Christendom and the formulas of orthodoxy (Schaff Vol 6, 1885:603-604).

1.1 Introduction

In this Chapter the focus will be on Alexandria from its earliest beginnings as a small village called Rhakotis, until its "fall" during the Arab siege in 642 CE. The last seven hundred years of this period is called the Golden Era of the Delta City. The discussion will cover mainly the period from the middle of the 1st century CE, when the "earliest Christians" migrated to Alexandria from Palestine (and other parts of Asia) until the Arab siege. The earliest forms of "Christianity" as well as its development in the city will be discussed. Although the terms "Christian" and "Christianity" are used here, it should be borne in mind that these terms were not known during the 1st century and the early days of the Catechetical School in Alexandria. According to Acts 11:26, the term "Christianity" was first used in Antioch (in Syria) in the writings of Ignatius (ca 35-107), the second (or third) bishop of Antioch in the 2nd century CE (cf McGrath 2013:1). Tacitus, a Roman historian, referred to "Chrestians" (*the virtuous*) in his *Annales* 15.44.2-5, written in 64 CE. This

¹ An article, based on a part of this Chapter and co-authored with my supervisor, Prof MJS Madise, was published in 2014 under the title "The formation of Christian theology in Alexandria" in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 35/1, Art. #1314, 13 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v35i1.1314>.

was misunderstood to be a reference to Christianity due to the similarity between the two Greek terms *χρηστοί* and *χριστοί* (cf Ulrich 2014a:4).

When this term was first used in Alexandria, is open for speculation. Because of this, the earliest Christians in Alexandria will be called "followers of Christ's teachings" – a term adopted from Fogarty (2004:8). In Alexandria, being a cosmopolitan city, the followers of Christ's teachings were faced with an array of other religions, cults and philosophies. The five most important of these will be discussed.

1.2 Alexandria prior to the Roman rule

In 359 BCE Philip 2 of Macedon/Macedonia claimed the throne and soon afterwards started to conquer the known world. After his assassination, his son, Alexander the Great, followed in his footsteps. When Alexander was still a boy, he was tutored by the philosopher, Aristotle. He acceded to the throne in 332 BCE at the age of 20. In 331 BCE he liberated Egypt and its capital, Memphis, from the Persians, whom the Egyptians hated (Fogarty 2004:14). He then proceeded north along the Nile to Rhakotis to complete his preliminary campaign against the Achaemenidae. He did this by sweeping their fleet from the sea by using the simple method of denying them access to any of the harbours, therefore making contact with the army to the east impossible.

The small village, Rhakotis, which had been established as far back as the 13th century BCE, was considered by Alexander to be a favourable place for trade that would also serve as a first line of defence for the country. A lighthouse would be erected on the island Pharos, approximately 1,300 metres off the coast, to warn ships of shallow waters and also to invite nations to trade with Egypt. The lighthouse was designed by Sostratus of Cnidus in the time of Ptolemy 1. A causeway was built from Pharos to Rhakotis on the mainland, situated on the western edge of the Nile delta, in this way establishing a double port (cf Fraser 1972:5-6). The bigger city that was developed to the east of Rhakotis was renamed to Alexandria, after Alexander, and became the new capital of Egypt. Enslin (1954:213) suggested that the establishment of this city could be considered Alexander's greatest single achievement. Dinocrates, Alexander's personal architect, designed Alexandria on a

grid pattern, making provision for a wide, sweeping colonnaded central avenue (Fogarty 2004:25).

The above-mentioned major development of the Rhakotis settlement provided Egypt with the one crucial feature it had been lacking, namely a good harbour. This opened the door to smooth and accessible trade routes to the Mediterranean world. A second advantage offered by this development was that the tidal features of the Nile, previously a continuous restraint on seasonal trading, could now be bypassed.

Although Alexandria replaced Memphis as capital of Egypt, the Egyptians initially still regarded Memphis to be their capital, referring to it in spiritual terms such as "the holy city of Ptah" – he was their god of creation. After Alexander, the Ptolemies accepted Memphis as Egypt's second capital. Interestingly enough, Alexander had himself crowned Emperor ("Pharaoh") in Memphis at the temple of Ptah, with which he indicated his continuation of the pharaonic tradition of being crowned son of the god Ammon (Fogarty 2004:24).

Alexander left before seeing his city built. He died in Babylon in 323 BCE. He bore several titles, including "King of Macedonia" (336-323 BCE), "Pharaoh of Egypt" (332-323 BCE) and even "King of Persia" (330-323 BCE) (cf *History of Macedonia* 2001-2003). His death was followed by a struggle for his throne between 321 and 306 BCE, which ended with the formation of three kingdoms, called the Macedonian Empire, the Seleucid Empire (based in Syria and Mesopotamia) and the Empire of the Ptolemies (based in Egypt and Cyrenaica) (Fogarty 2004:14). The Ptolemies consolidated the policy of Alexander. Ptolemy 1 Soter, the son of Lagos and the first Pharaoh of the Ptolemy dynasty, declared Alexandria the capital of Egypt (Fogarty 2004:6).

Alexander wanted Alexandria to become a Macedonian city or colony (El-Abbadi 1993:38-42) and the Ptolemies took care of that: Throughout their dynastic rule Alexandria remained firmly Greek. The Ptolemies were not just Pharaohs, but also Macedonian kings who ruled over both the Graeco-Macedonian elite living in Egypt, and the Egyptians. The Greeks, who were educated at all-Greek gymnasiums established in the main cities, held all the key offices in the land.

Alexandria grew into a cosmopolitan city and was chosen by many as a home, especially for learning. The Greek Alexandria was divided into three regions (cf *The Roman World* 2010):

- The Jews lived mostly in the northeastern part of the city (near the Gate of the Sun) in an area also called the Delta (Modrzejewski 1995:91).
- The Egyptians lived in the Rhakotis district to the west (near the Gate of the Moon), as well as in nearby Canopus and local villages. Rhakotis was the poorest part of Alexandria.
- In the northern part of the city, close to the royal palaces, was the *Brucheum*, the royal quarters of the Greeks, forming the most magnificent part of the city and being reserved for the elite.

The Macedonian members of Alexander's armies constituted the majority of the original population. The Greeks who were based in Naukratis and Memphis also moved to the city. People also made their way to Alexandria from Syria, Asia Minor, Italy, Syracuse, Libya, Carthagina and Massillia in the Mediterranean (Fogarty 2004:26). Here they mingled with eastern mystic thoughts to develop a new civilisation.

According to El-Abbadi (1993:43), even people (mostly Buddhists) from as far as India arrived in Alexandria, as King Asoka of India (who lived in the late 3rd century BCE) had an embassy in Egypt. El-Abbadi based his assumptions on the fact that it is known that Clement of Alexandria was angered by the women's predilection for self-adornment and mentioned, amongst other things, "their gold-wrought fabrics, their Indian silk and over-wrought silken stuffs" (*Paed* 2.11 *On Clothes*; cf El-Abbadi 1993:58).

As Jerusalem was not very far away from Alexandria (approximately 500 km), many Jews (including some of the earliest Christians) also made their way to Alexandria where, just like all the others who arrived there, they were Hellenised. Proof of this can be found in the Septuagint they used in their synagogues. Under the Ptolemies the Jews were even granted administration of their own affairs, which was a privilege not even extended to the Egyptians. According to Enslin (1954:214), there were

more Jews in greater Alexandria than in all of Palestine. Sundkler and Steed (2000:8) maintained that there were almost one million Jews in all of Egypt during that time. Alexandria became the metropolis of Egypt and eventually one of the great centres of Christianity, as opposed to Antioch and Rome. In this city the religious life of Palestine came into contact with the intellectual culture of Greece.

Alexandria was soon flourishing and became the largest city in the known world. Trade and industry also developed rapidly, producing much sought-after products like linen, papyrus (paper), gold, ebony, woven textiles, perfumes and glass. (In his *Geogr* 17.6 Strabo called Alexandria the greatest trading market in the inhabited world.) The ruler who understood Alexander's vision and was determined to realise it, was Ptolemy 2 Philadelphus. In 287 BCE he ceased his military campaigns and instead concentrated on building up the city. It was under his rule that Alexandria's world-renowned library and *Musaion* ("shrine of the Muses") were established. He also took care of the extensive stocking of the library from sources across the known world (Fogarty 2004:23). He married his sister, which was acceptable to the Egyptians, but despicable to the Greeks.

Although this diverse population formed the perfect basis for conflict, general harmony appears to have been achieved, thanks to the enlightened policy and understanding of Ptolemy 1 and continued under his successors, especially due to the use of Greek as the prevailing *lingua franca*, which served as a unifying factor. Greek therefore was the linguistic vehicle for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and information about religions, cults and beliefs. If Egypt had not been Hellenised and if the Egyptians had continued to speak their own language, the intensity and spread of religious matters, especially of Christianity, might have remained a local consideration. Alexandria and the Greek language thus formed a combined force that enabled the dissemination of the new religious doctrines, including Christianity. Although that spread actually occurred during the centuries of the Roman rule in Egypt, it was the Greeks who provided the platform for the internationalism that was to follow (Fogarty 2004:27).

The Egyptians adopted the Greek way of life as they gradually learned Greek and even adopted Greek names and attire (El-Abbadi 1993:46). This spread further to

the surrounding areas, including Ptolemaic Athribis on the eastern side of the Delta, north of the Heliopolis.

The single most dominant feature of Egyptian life in antiquity was religion and its appealing connection with the Nile, the life-giver, and the sun and stars, symbols of the great gods Amun-Re and Osiris (Fogarty 2004:22). When he decided to create Alexandria as the new capital, Alexander the Great showed great wisdom in honouring this fact and to maintain religious tolerance, permitting the indigenous religion of Egypt to remain intact while also introducing the Greek gods to the society and even permitting freedom of worship to the Jews. This policy was kept intact by his successors, the Ptolemies (Fogarty 2004:6).

Religion played a major role during the time of the Ptolemies. The Pharaohs underwent special temple initiations and the priests instructed and conducted the traditional rituals – from coronations to funeral rites. However, the Ptolemies were even more concerned with the Olympian deities venerated in Greece. They built two temples in Alexandria – one for the new cult of Serapis and the other one for Alexander, which necessitated the removal of his remains from his burial site in Memphis to a new mausoleum in Alexandria. According to Lloyd (2000:414-415),

[t]he priests enjoyed considerable political power, not least because their good will was evidently seen by the Ptolemies as the key to the acquiescence of the Egyptians population, and some of them, like Manetho of Sebennyus, played a major role in Ptelomaic politics. The High Priests of Memphis were particularly important from this point of view, both because they were the most significant figures in the second city in the kingdom and because they were the supreme pontiffs of Egypt at the time...The priests and scribes were the pre-eminent repositories and exponents of traditional Egyptian culture, a role in which they were clearly spectacularly successful in Ptolemaic times.

Central to his policy of achieving co-operation between the Greek and Egyptian sections of the Alexandrian population, Ptolemy 1 sought a tutelary deity that would

be acceptable to both. After consultation with the Egyptian priest Manethon and the Athenian priest Timotheus, the tutelary deity of Serapis was devised – a combination of the Osiris-Apis Memphis cult.

Ptolemy 3 Euergetes succeeded Philadelphus and reigned from 246-221 BCE. He built the *Serapium* (the *temple of Serapis*; Oden 2011:153) in the Egyptian quarter. The new temple was to incorporate a branch of the Great Library. In the centuries to come, the specially built *Serapium* in Alexandria eventually became a religious centre of great significance, not only in Egypt, but also in the Roman world. The newly erected *Serapium* did not mean the end of the "old" cults, as the Egyptians continued to worship in particular the goddess Isis.

According to Malaty (1995:8), Alexandria was already famous for its many schools long before the establishment of Christianity in the city, signifying that this city was an "arsenal of knowledge." The most significant school was the *Musaion*, founded by Ptolemy and well known in the East. The two other schools worth mentioning were the *Serapium* (which was later destroyed by Emperor Theodosius in 389; Schaff Series 2, Vol 6, 1885:7) and the *Sebastion*. Each of these schools had its own huge library. The *Musaion's* library, for instance, housed 700,000 volumes, which was astounding for its time. These institutions not only made Alexandria famous as a centre of knowledge, it made this city the intellectual centre of the world for the several hundred years during which Egypt was occupied by the Greeks and the Romans (Fogarty 2004:14).

Alexandria was unique in ancient history, because there "the civilizations of Pharaonic Egypt and of Greece blended for three centuries (332 B.C.E to 30 B.C.E.)" (Mokhtar 1993:21). After 30 BCE Roman civilisation took over for another three or four centuries, adding to the blend.

The major factor undermining the Ptolemaic dynasty and responsibly for its fatal decline, was dynasty schism (Lloyd 2000:418). Ptolemy 4 Philopator (221-205 BCE), Ptolemy 5 Epiphanes (205-180 BCE), Ptolemy 10 Alexander 1 (107-88 BCE) and Ptolemy 12 Neos Dionysus (80-51 BCE) were also great figures in the Ptolemaic dynasty. Ironically the last ruler of the Ptolemaic dynasty, Cleopatra 7, was also the

most famous Ptolemy of all. In 51 BCE Cleopatra lost the battle of Actium in the Adriatic Sea, which culminated in the Roman conquest and occupation of Egypt in 30 BCE, the year of her death (Fogarty 2004:19). Egypt then became a Roman province and was ruled by Octavian.

1.3 The Golden Era of Alexandria

The seven hundred years of greatness of Alexandria (cf White 1999-2000), also known as the Golden Era of Alexandria, ranged between 52 BCE and 642 CE, "unfortunately" not under Greek rule, but as part of the Roman Empire. This is rather sad, since although the Ptolemies had established Alexandria to become one of the leading cities in the Mediterranean, it only blossomed during the Roman rule. This posed a *contradictio in terminis* concerning this period: Even though the Romans did not attach the same importance to Alexandria as did the Greeks (cf White 1999-2000), it was during their rule that the city experienced a Golden Era.

The death of Cleopatra 7 marked not only the end of the Ptolemaic rule, but also of pharaonic rule. Roman occupation, however, did not mean the end of the Hellenistic influence on Egypt, nor did Roman rule signal the end of Egyptian customs and religious practices among the bulk of the people. Greek may have been the *lingua franca*, especially among the intelligentsia, but Egyptian gods were still being worshiped and the labourers still spoke Egyptian, for they never had access to Greek education. The Latin of the Emperors did not obtain a foothold in Egypt and remained the language of the officials only. During the Roman rule the Egyptians lived mainly around Rhakotis, the Greeks lived downtown and the Jewish community occupied two of the five sectors in the eastern districts (Sundkler & Steed 2000:8).

As can be seen on the map provided in the Introduction to the thesis, the three continents that formed the biggest part of the Roman Empire were Africa, Europe and Asia. Africa (actually only the northern part of the continent) was the part of the Empire south of the Mediterranean, denoting the Nilotic, Berber, Libyan, Numidian, Nubian and Ghanaian cultures. Europe constituted the part of the Empire north and west of the Straits of Byzantium, "from Thrace to Ireland, from Sicily to Scandinavia" (Oden 2007:17). In Asia, the third continent, the Empire had spread to Palestine, Syria, Anatolia and the countries to the east.

Each of these continents was represented by a very prominent city: Rome represented Europe, Antioch represented Asia, and Alexandria represented Africa. But which city was the greatest? Oden (2007:17-18) had no doubt:

At its zenith the Afro-Hellenic city of Alexandria was larger than either Rome or Antioch, and of far more importance in the world of ideas, literature and learning. Alexandria stood for centuries [sic] as one of the three leading cities of the ancient world. It should not be surprising that the Christian leaders of Alexandria came to symbolize and represent all Christians on the continent in terms of ecclesiastical organization...Many Christian ideas and practices travelled north to Europe from the Nilotic and Numidian cultures. Nilotic and Numidian cultures are the epicenter for the pre-European history of Christianity.

Enslin (1954:213-214) also stated:

[A]t the time of the early spread of the ferment subsequently to be known as Christianity this city, with its museum, its unmatched libraries, its host of scholars in all the fields of human thought, not simply tolerated by the civil authorities but sought after and given every encouragement and support, was the unrivalled intellectual centre of the Roman world. It had snatched the torch from the fingers of "violet crowned, illustrious Athens," long the undisputed centre of learning but now but a shadow of her former self...Rome with its genius for organization and administration was no rival.

El Masri (1982:2) also referred to Alexandria, specifically during the second part of the 1st century CE when Mark (again) arrived there:

At the time of his arrival in Alexandria, it was considered the most outstanding center of culture and learning in the world. Its famous school and great scholars were sought by all who thirsted for knowledge. There, Greek philosophers, Hebrew rabbis, Persian and Indian seers, together with Egyptian hierophants pondered life's mysteries. The Museum and Library

were not only imposing buildings, they contained the rarest and best of human achievements in the mental, spiritual and artistic fields.

At the same time, Alexandria was noted for its notorious living: its revellers and bravados, its wrestlers and charioteers were always parading the main streets – streets that were colonnaded and very wide, some up to two hundred feet.

Alexandria was not only geographically well positioned, but also produced intellectual work that was highly acclaimed by both the ancient Greeks and the Jews. Malaty (1995:9) stated that there were numerous Jewish schools scattered everywhere in the city. Apart from the Jews (with their Scriptures), there were also Babylonians (with their astrology), Persians (with their dualism) and a mass of other religions.

Unlike the Ptolemies who gave a lot to Egypt and took a lot, the Romans took more than they gave. The wealth and prosperity of Alexandria was seen by the Romans as an insult to the Empire, at least in Roman eyes (White 1999-2000). The Romans saw Egypt as the outpost of their Empire and only as an asset in terms of the grain and stone (especially porphyry) produced there. They were not interested in investing a great deal in Egypt as the Ptolemies did, and they only built one city in Egypt, namely Antinoopolis on the Nile (Fogarty 2004:20). For them Egypt was useful as a military post and a lucrative trading centre. Even though the Romans prevailed against Egypt, Alexandria remained a centre of intellectual activity.

Augustus Caesar, the first Emperor of the Roman Empire, regarded Alexandria as merely a Greek city. The reason could be that he was not familiar with Egypt and the Egyptian culture, which differed from the rest of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds in almost every way (Fogarty 2004:20). He therefore degraded the city to the level of a mere provincial capital when he put a prefect in charge of the city. This annoyed the citizens of this world-class city. He then added to their dismay by appointing a Roman official as the High Priest of Alexandria and Egypt. In the entire history of this city no foreigner had ever before held that position. The official was in fact no real High Priest, but rather an overseer over the priests and an administrative

head, positioned in the city to collect the taxes derived from the temples (Fogarty 2004:21).

During its Golden Era, the Delta City experienced sporadic persecutions of Christians, at least until the time of Constantine. At the beginning of the 3rd century Emperor Severus became alarmed by the increasing numbers of Christians. In 202 he authorised the persecution of the Christians in Egypt and martyred them in Alexandria. According to Fogarty (2004:30), the "persecution was brief...and school and students resumed their activities for another fifty years before the next wave of persecutions began, this time under the Emperor Decius, and this time far more brutal and intensive, with a view to stamping out the new religion completely." Despite all these persecutions, Christianity continued to grow and expand in the city and surrounds.

In 249, the last year of the reign of Emperor Philip 1, allegedly a practising Christian, a riot broke out in Alexandria with all the effects of a severe persecution (*Catholic Online* sa). Dionysius, one of the heads of the School, described this riot in a letter to Fabius of Antioch (*Epist 3 Fab 2ff*). The mob of pagans first grabbed an old man by the name of Metras and eventually stoned him outside the city when he would not deny his faith. Following this, a woman called Quinta was also stoned to death because she refused to sacrifice. The mob plundered the houses of the Christians. Apollonia, an aged virgin, jumped without any prompting into the fire that was prepared for her without uttering one word of blasphemy. There was also a man named Serapion who was thrown from the upper story of his house. The Christians did not dare to go into the streets, for the mob was waiting to burn them if they did not refute their faith.

The riot was stopped momentarily by a civil war, but at the beginning of 250 the new Emperor Decius legalised the persecution of Christians. Dionysius wrote how many Christians in Alexandria denied their faith because they remembered what had happened earlier, while others held out until the torturing became too much for them. Some Christians were imprisoned for some time.

Dionysius related that when two men, Julian and Kronion, were whipped and then burnt to death, a soldier called Besas tried to protect them and was consequently beheaded. Macar, a citizen who came from Libya, was burnt alive, and so were Epimachus and Alexander, together with four women, who had been imprisoned for a lengthy period and had often been tortured. Three other women, Ammomarion and the aged Mercuria and Dionysia were also apprehended. Ammomarion was only imprisoned, but the other two died by the sword. A steward, Ischyron, was pierced through the stomach by his master with a large pile because he refused to sacrifice. The Egyptians Heron, Ater and Isidore were also extensively tortured before being burnt alive. Nemesion was tortured and scourged and then burnt between two robbers.

Despite these persecutions, this period also produced stories of miracles and true bravery. A fifteen-year-old boy, named Dioscorus, stood so firm under torture that the judge, overcome with shame, dismissed his case. A number of soldiers, together with an old man named Ingenuus, could not tolerate it when a certain man was about to apostatise. They made indignant signs to him and when they were called to order, they cried out that they were Christians with such boldness that the governor and his assessors could not believe their eyes. After this incident the men suffered a glorious martyrdom.

Christians were not martyred only in Alexandria and other big cities, but also in smaller cities and villages. Many fled to the deserts and the mountains where they died of hunger, thirst, cold or disease, or were killed by robbers or wild beasts. Others were carried off as slaves and some of them were even ransomed for large sums of money.

Despite these "incidents," Christianity was generally tolerated in the Roman Empire until 284 CE, when the Emperor Diocletian came to the throne. Diocletian further degraded Alexandria's status to that of an administrative city. The effect of this decision was devastating, especially for the city's merchants who consequently lost the considerable prestige they had previously enjoyed. Diocletian, who honoured the Roman gods, had a natural suspicion of all the other religions in Alexandria, especially the Christian movement. His severe persecutions, which started in 303,

were the last intensive persecutions of Christians by the Roman Empire. He persecuted the Egyptian Christians for approximately eight years, killing a great number of them. White (1999-2000) postulated that a total of 144,000 Christians were killed, but this could not be verified. Stark (1997:164) reported on the martyrdom as follows: "The total number of Christians martyred by the Romans was probably fewer than a thousand. But their steadfastness greatly strengthened the faith of other Christians and impressed many pagans."

In later years the Coptic Christians referred to this period as the "Era of the Martyrs" with the Bishop of Alexandria and other Egyptian Bishops being beheaded in 312 (El-Abbadi 1993:72). These persecutions *per se* became a watershed in the history of Egyptian Christianity and marked the beginning of a distinct Egyptian or Coptic Church in Alexandria. In that same year Constantine 1 became the ruler of the western part of the Empire. After Constantine claimed that Christ appeared to him one night (cf Eusebius' *LConst* 1.28), his troops were ordered to mark their shields with the Christian cross and they were victorious (cf El-Abbadi 1993:72). From that day onward Constantine allegedly committed himself to the Christian faith. Although this was in a sense positive news for the Christians in the Empire, it also had its consequences as this event marked the shift of the church's centre from Alexandria to Constantinople (Fogarty 2004:31). After so many centuries, Alexandria has lost its status as the centre of Christianity for ever.

This was followed by a sad event in the history of Christianity and particularly of Alexandria: Theophilus became Bishop of Alexandria in 385. He was an extremist and stirred up the Christians in the city to demolish the *Serapium*, the popular sanctuary of Alexandrian paganism, and other pagan temples. In the process they also murdered quite a number of their fellow citizens who were pagans. Fogarty (2004:31) described some of the consequences:

It is reasonable to suggest that these pogroms ended *early* Christianity, its essences to linger on in the Coptic Church alone, while the next phase, the Roman phase of Christianity, got under way. This phase of Roman Christianity (as opposed to Egyptian Christianity), grew stronger, institutionally, in Alexandria than hitherto, an organized church by now owning

considerable wealth from trading both in the city and abroad, using its own fleet of ships on the high seas. Paradoxically, the Alexandrian church grew stronger, while the Roman Empire slipped further from its dominance.

In 642 CE the Persians ("Arabs") were successful in their final attacks on the Byzantine Empire and captured both Jerusalem and Alexandria. The capital of the "new era" became Cairo. The seven hundred years of greatness for Alexandria – the Golden Era – had come to a close.

1.3.1 The Hellenisation and/or Judaisation of Alexandria

1.3.1.1 Hellenisation of Alexandria

At first sight it may look as if Alexandria was Hellenised to such an extent that, after the Romans took Egypt from the Greeks, the language did not change to Latin and the custom and culture did not change to Roman, but it remained thoroughly Greek. This was the goal of the Ptolemies, as they strived to inculcate a Greek culture in Egypt, especially in Alexandria (cf El Masri 1982:12). Their concerned efforts, together with the presence of many seers, sages and philosophers that gathered in this city, made it the "foremost center of learning" during that time (El Masri 1982:12). Even though Alexandria was willing to participate in and perfect other cultures, El Masri correctly pointed out that the Ptolemies actually "completely" failed in their attempt, mainly because the Egyptians would not change easily and because they were "too deeply rooted in the traditions of their own glorious past of culture and learning" and the "pride of their Egyptian heritage" (El Masri 1982:12). According to Fogarty, this resulted in Christianity taking on an Egyptian colour and therefore she referred to "Egyptian Christianity:" By understanding Egyptian Christianity as an expression of Egyptian culture, one is better able to understand what made Egyptian Christianity Egyptian (Fogarty 2004:6). Despite this, many Egyptians started to speak and write in Greek to such an extent that many famous Egyptian scholars, like Pantaenus, were mistaken to be Greek (cf El Masri 1982:20).

Therefore, although Alexandria was Hellenised to some extent, the Egyptian culture kept influencing the Christians throughout the Golden Era of the city.

1.3.1.2 Judaisation of Alexandria

Among the other religions Judaism stood very strong in Alexandria. Hebraic teachings had a considerable influence on the people of the city. El Masri (1982:13) stated that the "Jewish community in Alexandria was the most illustrious, and second only to that of Jerusalem, besides being the best organized in the world." Great Hebrew Rabbis and even philosophers, such as Philo – called Philo of Alexandria – resided in the city. Mark the Evangelist, also resided in the city during the middle of the 1st century CE. As will become obvious in this Chapter, Judaism played a considerable role in the city.

1.4 Christianity in Alexandria

1.4.1 Early Christianity in Alexandria

Fogarty pointed out that "Alexandria is the key to understanding the origins and nature of early Christianity, both as a religious and a cultural phenomenon" (Fogarty 2004:23). However, the words of Pearson (2004:12) put her statement in the correct perspective: "On the origins of Christianity in Egypt our sources are completely silent until the early second century, when Alexandrian Christian literature begins to come into the light of day...."

After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, a considerable number of exiled Jews, including scholars, merchants and skilled artisans, migrated to and settled in Alexandria, thus further enriching the city's life. Many of them were followers of Christ's teachings, although at first it seemed as if they were an integral part of the existing Jewish community in the city (Pearson 2004:14; cf Roberts 1979:26-48). They came to the city as "missionaries, refugees and traders" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:9). This city was one of the most fertile areas for the development of the early Christian movement, because of its unique location as the intellectual centre of the ancient world. In the words of Pearson (1986a:207): "It need hardly be stated that the first preaching of the gospel of Messiah Jesus in Alexandria was centered in the Jewish community there, the largest and most powerful Jewish settlement in the entire Greek-speaking world" (cf also McGrath 2013:3).



El-Abbadi (1993:70) remarked that the birth and rise of early Christianity in Alexandria and Egypt after the middle of the 1st century passed almost unnoticed. These earliest Christians coming from Jerusalem were in fact practising Jews, who remained Temple- and tradition-centred and observed the Law, but who, unlike the Jews (Judaism), believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

Pearson correctly claimed that it is historically more accurate to speak of the emergence of Christianity than to speak of a single origin or founding of the new religion. He argued that Jesus was not the founder of Christianity, because he was a Jew (both in terms of ethnicity and religion): "He did not found the new religion, nor did he make any (recorded) attempt to do so" (Pearson 1997:15). He added that even the Apostles cannot be regarded as the founders, for they were also Jews, living in a new community of believers in Jesus, but still regarded as a community of Jews. Against this, it may be argued that the Apostles, inspired by Jesus, were the founders of this new religion, even though they never gave this new faith movement a specific name, nor had the deliberate intension of starting something new. They were simply obedient followers of Christ, acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The beginning of Christianity was linked to Judaism as Jesus and his first disciples were Jews and because of the Scriptures they shared (McGrath 2013:3). In the words of Meissner (2000:89): "Jesus' teaching was a distillation of many elements of contemporary Jewish religious, ethical and eschatological teaching, retaining many of the most basic religious convictions of the Jewish tradition, changing or modifying others, and proclaiming a new path to salvation." Although "Christianity" in Alexandria was shaped by its Jewish roots (Broadhead 2010:117; McGrath 2013:3), the development of Christianity in Alexandria was more influenced by the Hellenic world first and then by the Roman world, than by Judaism. Although the city was already part of the Roman Empire, the Greek culture was still to be maintained for long in this Egyptian city. The reference "Graeco-Roman Egypt" implied three cultures in one, with the Egyptian culture in the background and the Greek culture being dominant over the Roman culture. The 1st-century followers of Christ's teachings were, however, predominantly Jewish, which added a fourth culture to the cosmopolitan mix in Alexandria.

As indicated in the introduction, one cannot refer to this religious group or movement as "Christianity" at this stage, "since there was no religion as such yet, nor systematized theology, and no distinctive community" (Fogarty 2004:28-29). The group also did not call themselves Christians. Although Acts 11:26 recorded that it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians," it is suggested that other people attributed this name to the followers of Christ's teachings. The term "Christianity" (*Christianismos*) was coined for the first time in the early 2nd century by Ignatius of Antioch, in *Magnesians* 10.1 and 3, *Philadelphians* 6.1 and *Romans* 3.3 (cf Pearson 1997:11). There Ignatius also claimed, prematurely, that Judaism and Christianity were completely distinct from each other.

Macleod (2002:148) maintained that Platonic thoughts coincided with the development of Christian Theology and that there were areas of contact and commonality between the two ideologies. Greek philosophy also played a role and "contended strongly for the spiritual nature of the reality behind and beneath all visible things" (Olson 1999:56). Barrett (2011:6) added: "Christianity entered as an innovative character on the already established academic scene. The presence of Judaism in Alexandria as Christianity began to assimilate into the culture provoked Christian attention to philosophical development."

In the absence of a systematic doctrine for "Christianity" during the 1st century CE, different leaders, be they charismatic like Paul, or scholarly like Ignatius of Antioch, developed different interpretations of Christ's teachings as they went along. Essentially this movement could be described as a messianic-chilastic or millenarian movement. Theissen (1982:194) put it this way: "Thus, messianic-chilastic movements are frequently reactions of an oppressed people to a politically imposed foreign culture in which the injured sense of self-esteem within the dominated culture seeks to assert itself."

During the 2nd century the movement started to evolve into a religion as commentaries were written by Ignatius, Irenaeus of Lyons and Clement of Alexandria. These were based on the already written Synoptic Gospels together with John's Gospel. This started a dialogue between Christianity and the world around it,

in particular with Judaism, but also with cults like Gnosticism and Hermeticism (Fogarty 2004:103). Fogarty (2004:8) stated:

Christianity in its infancy began to take root in Alexandria where several other faiths already existed, and the new religion cannot have escaped a certain amount of influence from the older, surrounding religions. Furthermore, very early Christianity would have adopted existing symbols and practices from those religions, to serve its new form of belief. What is of interest is that, despite the older, entrenched religions, Christianity began not only to arouse interest among Greek-speaking peoples in Alexandria, but was later to become the religion of choice among native Egyptian people to such an extent that it became, eventually, the national religion of Egypt...a position upheld until the Arab conquest in the 7th century C.E. dismantled the status quo. The remnants of those earliest Christians are to be found in their descendants, the Copts, who form some ten percent of the population of Egypt today.

Bauer (1971:44-60) expressed the opinion that the original and most dominant form of Christianity in Alexandria until the time of Bishop Demetrius (189-231) was "heretical" and specifically Gnostic, as Gnostic teachers such as Basilides, Valentinus and Carpocrates were active there. However, Pearson (1986a:221) believed that while Gnostics could be found in 1st-century Alexandria, it was more likely, *prima facie*, that other, more dominant varieties of Christianity existed there that were more reflective of the Jerusalem origins of the Christian mission and of the dominant varieties of Judaism in Alexandria at that time.

As Christianity arose out of the Jewish milieu in Palestine, in Alexandria it became a decisive factor for European culture and spiritual life for centuries to come (Otzen 1998:3). To this Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:369-370) added:

Alexandria becomes the brain of Christendom: its heart was yet beating at Antioch, but the West was still receptive only, its hands and arms stretched forth towards the sunrise for further enlightenment. From the East it had obtained the Scriptures

and their authentication, and from the same source was deriving the canons, the liturgies, and the creed of Christendom.

As Alexandria formed part of the East and made use of Greek to disseminate its writings and Christianity, the West had to follow suit. Milman (1840:28-29) stated:

All the churches of the West were Greek religious colonies. Their language was Greek, their organization Greek, their writers Greek, their Scriptures and their ritual were Greek. Through Greek, the communications of the churches of the West were constantly kept up with the East...Thus the Church at Rome was but one of a confederation of Greek religious republics founded by Christianity.

In Barrett's words (2011:5-6): "Christianity is regarded as the most successful sect movement in history because it began as a small fringe group that surged across cultural and political boundaries and built an enormous following. Early Christianity stood on morality, reality, and the nature of God as its defining principles" (cf also McGrath 2013:14). Stark (2007:322) added that because polytheism had become an embarrassment in many pagan circles, the monotheism of Christianity appealed to the intellect of the people.

1.4.2 A distinct Christianity in Alexandria

Although the Roman society already recognised the earliest Christians as belonging to an independent religion during the second half of the 1st century (Ulrich 2014a:4), it is more accurate to refer to the earliest Christians in Alexandria as a Judaeo-Christian sect and as followers of Christ's teachings. These followers were not only in Alexandria, but were to be found over a vast area spanning from Jerusalem to Antioch, Carthage, Rome and Alexandria, with the latter being one of the most significant centres in which "Christianity as a systematized religion was slowly forged" (Fogarty 2004:3). Pearson (1997:145) stated that "[i]t was probably not until the early second century that Christians emerged as a group, or groups, distinct from the Jewish community." Runia (2004:256) confirmed this by saying that the "second century was the first and most decisive watershed in the formation of Christian

theology. By the end of that century the main outlines had been drawn, notably in the achievements of Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria." Christianity as an autonomous religion, distinguished from Judaism, can therefore only be identified from the middle of the 2nd century CE (McGrath 2013:11). McGrath (2013:14) explained it as follows:

Although Christianity emerged from within Judaism, it rapidly developed its own distinctive character. One of the most striking differences between the two faith, evident by the early second century, is that Judaism tended to define itself by correct practice, where Christianity tended to appeal to correct doctrine. Historians of this age thus often speak of Jewish *orthopraxy*, and Christian *orthodoxy* [both emphases by McGrath].

Van den Hoek (1997:80) supplied more reasons for establishing a date during the second half of the 2nd century:

Some scholars have argued that Alexandrian Christianity came out of Judaism and that this Jewish background remained a major influence. This may have been true before the Jewish revolt (115-117) and its suppression by Trajan. By the late second century, however, events had radically attenuated that continuity. In all likelihood, Clement and Origen's link with Philo and other Jewish Hellenistic or Jewish Christian sources was primarily a literary one. Clement does not reflect living contacts with Jewish scholars, although Origen does to some extent, particularly in his later years in Caesarea. Even Christian authors of the time of Hadrian and the *Antonines* [Antoninus Pius 138-161, and his son Marcus Aurelius 161-180 – my addition] reveal no clear signs of a relationship with a Jewish or Jewish Christian ambience. Whatever happened around the time of Hadrian, the traditional watershed in Jewish and Christian Alexandria, the living contacts with Judaism seem to have vanished thereafter.

Pearson (1986a:214) also referred to the revolt, but with the view that the separation took place after that: "The political situation in Alexandria reached a critical point when the messianist Jews there sparked the revolt against Rome under Trajan (115-117) that led to the virtual annihilation of the Jewish community." His view was that after this revolt Judaism ceased to represent an important religious force in Egypt, while other religions and philosophies filled the gap. Unfortunately no information is available on the role Christians played in that conflict or even directly afterwards (cf Van den Hoek 1997:80-81). Modrzejewski (1995:227) agreed with Pearson that the revolt marked the end of Judaeo-Christianity and the beginning of "pagano-Christian groups."

Although Christianity separated itself from Judaism, Pearson (2004:15) advocated that this did not mark a complete rupture between the two groups. Paget (2010:137-138) also took the revolt as the separation point between the followers of Christ's teachings and the Jews. With reference to the *Epistle of Barnabas* (*Barn* 2, 3, 9, 10, 15) discussed below, he stated: "The most obvious manifestation of separateness was the non-observance by a majority of Alexandrian Christians of the distinctive Jewish laws which were central to the expression of Jewish identity" (Paget 2010:141).

According to Enslin (1954:215-216), there is no real basis for choosing a date earlier in the 2nd century, as it is beyond dispute that Christianity was well established in Alexandria during the last decade of the 2nd century, which was in fact true. Christianity therefore grew out of a "process that unfolded in different ways at different times with different groups of people" (Pearson 1997:15). This was very true specifically in Alexandria.

1.4.3 The first steps of the new religion

(Early) Christianity was the single greatest group that broke away from Judaism. As has already been said, most of the followers of Christ's teachings were Jews in every sense of the word – ethnically as well as religiously and at first they still observed all the Jewish customs and traditions. They added only one thing to the Jewish belief system: They believed that Jesus was the expected Messiah and therefore they accepted his teachings and followed him. Until the end of the 1st century there was

no written Theology and the Gospels were not widely disseminated – therefore Jesus' teachings were spread largely by oral exchange.

Jesus' teaching, as narrated by different groups of followers, differed from group to group. In Jerusalem the Ebionites followed the Petrine/Johannine line, while in Antioch especially Paul and later Ignatius developed a far more dogmatic line, which (especially referring to Paul) became the theological basis for Western Christianity. Alexandria was more likely to have adhered to the Jerusalem tradition, because of the alleged visits by Mark (*Coptic Orthodox Church Network* sa).

Most of what Jesus said and did was not radical enough to disturb the Jews of the time. However, they were undoubtedly disturbed by his claim of a life after death. When the followers of Christ's teachings claimed that Jesus (the Messiah) was the Son of God, it was completely unacceptable to the Jews (Fogarty 2004:108). The followers of Christ's teachings held his appearance to his disciples and other Jews after his death as a confirmation that he was indeed the Messiah (although not a political Messiah) whose coming had been foretold by the prophets. Despite the fact that certain pronouncements were unacceptable to the Jews, the differences between the two groups were small enough to make it possible for the earliest Christians to submit to Jewish laws while also adhering to the teachings of Jesus. In Alexandria this tendency continued throughout the 1st century as well as the first part of the 2nd century. For this reason Paget (2010:137) advocated that "[i]t is now generally accepted that Christianity in Egypt had its origins in the Jewish synagogue."

The belief system of the early Christians included the following elements:

- The customs of Judaism such as circumcision, and upholding of Yahweh's Covenant with Israel, observing the Torah and Jewish festivals.
- Jesus of Nazareth was Messiah whose coming had been prophesied.
- He taught them (in accordance with the Jewish laws) to
 - share everything they possessed with one another;
 - lead a prayerful life;
 - seek the Kingdom of God within;

- love their neighbour.
- He also taught them (his new claims)
 - that he was the designer and fulfilment of the Law;
 - that, instead of practising Pharisaical separation, they had to embrace each other, even the Samaritans;
 - about the baptism and the Eucharistic meal. Baptism was not new: The Essenes already had purification rites, while John the Baptist baptised many people. The Eucharist was also known to them: The breaking of bread was a Jewish custom, observed each year as *Pesach* and weekly at the commencement of the Sabbath (cf Fogarty 2004:108).

Since Christianity developed and grew under different leaders in different parts of the world, this did not take place in a uniform way, but with different dogmas, as stated above by Pearson (1997:15). What was acceptable to one group, could be rejected by another. According to Green (1998:13), this eventually led to "bitter controversies" that threatened the unity and future of the new religion. Christianity split up into groups across the Ancient Near East before it could solidify into a stable, unified religion in the manner of rabbinical Judaism, which led to a high degree of susceptibility to different world views and religions. As pagan religions were still the dominant systems of the world, rudimentary Christianity "had to compete for survival by justifying itself to itself, but also to others. This fact and the zeal of its early leaders, it can be argued, actually contributed to its survival" (Fogarty 2004:109).

As a result of this, as well as ample criticism from other religions, Christian writers started producing apologetic writings from the 2nd century onward. The three strongest writers were Clement, Origen and later Augustine (of Hippo), who wrote their works at a time when the majority of the people were still illiterate.

In Alexandria there were also educated Greek-speaking Christians who had access to the Jewish Septuagint. There was, however, no general access to the Scriptures, although a limited number of copies of the Gospels and the Epistles, as well as the apocryphal gospels and religious tracts were in circulation. In 382 CE Pope Damascus authorised a complete text of the canonical books of the Old and New

Testaments, which were (unofficially) accepted as the authentic Scriptures from as early as the 2nd century.

The one issue that was not contested, was the core belief that Christ died so that all who believed in him might attain to everlasting life after death. Christianity was a religion without an underworld of macabre spirits, but one preaching hope for all, not just the elite, and unlike the temples of antiquity which were closed to all but the priests and the elite, the churches of the new religion were accessible to all, and once baptised into the faith, participation in the rituals and sacraments was, again, a universal privilege (Fogarty 2004: 110).

The important factor here is that the Christianity that developed in Alexandria was an Egyptian Christianity and not a Palestinian Christianity anymore. Christianity spread into the world from the Catechetical School in Alexandria, but "it was indubitable the unique qualities of the Hellenistic world that made the spread and reception of the religion possible and such an attractive proposition" (Fogarty 2004:131). Pearson (1997:186-213) attributed the spread of Christianity also to its philanthropy – its organised networks of people caring for all those in need, regardless of their social status (more about this later).

1.4.3.1 The *Epistle of Barnabas*

The *Epistle of Barnabas* is worth mentioning here, because this exhortational work is probably the oldest complete writing originating from Alexandria, dating from between 80 and 120 CE, most probably from the beginning of the reign of Emperor Hadrian in 117 CE (Pearson 1986a:211).

One thing that can be said with certainty is that this Barnabas surely was not the Barnabas who accompanied Paul (cf Schaff Vol 1, 1885:366). The ancient writers who referred to this Epistle unanimously attributed it to Barnabas the Levite of Cyprus, who held a place of honour in the early church (cf Schaff Vol 1, 1885:366). Clement referred to him quite often (cf eg *Strom* 2.6, 7). Origen also referred to this Epistle, which he described as "a Catholic Epistle" (cf *Cont Cels* 1.63) and which he

seemingly ranked among the "Sacred Scriptures" (cf *Comm Rom* 1.24). Barnard (1964:47) proposed that the author was a Jewish Rabbi who had converted to Christianity and who brought the Jewish exegetical and homiletical traditions of the Alexandrian synagogue with him. Kraft (1961:11) suggested that it would be best to refer to him as Pseudo-Barnabas. Taking into account what is said above, the author of this Epistle will be referred to as *Barnabas* in this thesis.

This Epistle, drenched with the *Two Ways* form of ethical exhortation (cf Smith 2014:465-497) described both the Jewish and Christian exegetical traditions in Alexandria (Pearson 1986a:212). It displayed a negative view of the Jews, with references to

- the interpretation of the Golden Calf episode in Israel's history (*Barn* 4:7-8; cf *Ac* 7:38-42);
- the "Righteous One" as a messianic title applied to Jesus (*Barn* 6:7; cf *Ac* 7:52);
- the attitude expressed with regard to the Jerusalem Temple and its *cultus* (*Barn* 16:1-2; 2:4-8; cf *Ac* 7:42-43, 48-50) (cf Pearson 1986a:212-213).

Pearson (2004:93) added:

By the time of the final redaction of *Barnabas*, relations between Christians and Jews had come to the breaking point. This was largely the result of the aftermath of the destruction of the temple in 70, the most important feature of which was the consolidation of Pharisaic ("proto-rabbinic") Judaism towards the end of the century and the dissemination, among Jews of the Diaspora as well as in Palestine itself, of the so-called *Birkat ha-minim* (benediction [really "malediction"] of the heretics), which effectively excommunicated Christians (*nosrim*) from the synagogues.

Barnabas referred to Christians as "the new people of the Covenant" and to the Jews as "the former people" (*Barn* 5:7; 7:5; 13:1-6; cf Pearson 1986a:213-214).



1.4.3.2 The *Kerygma*

The *Kerygma* was most probably a writing of the early 2nd-century Egyptian Christianity (Rutherford 2013:88). Heracleon (cited by Origen in his *Comm Jo* 13.17.104) has already referred to it in his *Commentary on John* written in the middle of the 2nd century. The *Kerygma* was most probably a source for the *Apology* of Aristides, the 2nd-century Athenian philosopher. This writing indexed people according to their knowledge of God, describing them in a way very similar to that in *Apology* 1. It is said in the *Kerygma* that Christians worshiped God *καινῶς* (*in a new manner*), also called a *τρίτον γένος* (*third way*) alongside the Greeks and Jews. The writing criticised Greek and Jewish forms of worship, as referred to by both Clement (*Strom* 6.5.41.223) and Origen (*Comm Jo* 13.17.104):

And do not worship in the manner of the Jews. For those people, while supposing that they alone know God, do not have knowledge (of this God), since they render cultic service to angels and archangels, to month and moon. And so if the moon does not appear they do not observe the sabbath called "First," and neither do they observe the new moon, nor the Festival of Unleavened Bread, nor the Festival (of Booths), nor the Great Day (of Atonement).

The *Kerygma* equated service to angels with Jewish festivals that depended on lunar cycles (cf Rutherford 2013:89). The triumvirate of service to angels, Jewish festivals and lunar cycles was regarded as a unified cultic system opposing the *τρίτον γένος*. Both the *Kerygma* and *Apology* expressed the view that the Jews were "in a ritual system administered by and/or directed by angels" (Rutherford 2013:89). Although this may be true for *some* (or *most of the*) Jews in Alexandria, the *Apology* incorrectly referred to *all* Jews.

Because Origen cited the *Kerygma*, it can be assumed that he was aware of this invective against the Jewish angel cult and knew that this was posited to distinguish between the Jewish and Christian ways of worship. However, according to Rutherford, he distanced himself from that assumption: "For Origen, the fact that angels mediated Torah does not imply that Jews worship angels" (Rutherford 2013:89).

1.5 Other religions/cults/philosophies in Alexandria

The most powerful, popular and significant of religious beliefs and cults in Egypt and particularly in Alexandria, apart from Christianity, were Judaism, the Isis cult, the Serapis/Sarapis cult, Gnosticism and Hermeticism.

1.5.1 Judaism

After King Solomon's death in approximately 930 BCE Israel was no longer a unity, largely because of political instability in the northern kingdom. The northern kingdom was influenced by the Canaanite-Phoenician culture and worship of Yahweh was only weakly presented in important circles. However, the southern kingdom, governed by descendants of King David in Jerusalem, the capital city, enjoyed a stable political, cultural and religious regime for approximately 400 years. According to Otzen (1998:8), "It was here that the version of Yahwism was developed which became determinative for the later Jewish understanding of what belief in Israel's god [sic], Yahweh, entailed."

Shalmaneser 5 of Assyria assumed control of the northern kingdom in 722 BCE, while Babylon captured the south and destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in 587 BCE. After the Babylonians were conquered by the Persians, the exiled Judaeans (Jews) were free to either remain in Babylon or return to Palestine in approximately 540 BCE. Otzen (1998:11) assumed that the majority probably remained and in due course formed the Eastern Jewish Diaspora. However, a core group did return to Judah and rebuilt the Temple, completing it in 516 BCE. These Judaeans enjoyed the protection of the Persians for the ensuing centuries of Persian rule, which allowed them to consolidate their community and religious beliefs.

In the 4th century BCE Alexander the Great defeated the Persians, leading to the establishment of his empire and followed in Egypt and Palestine by the Ptolemies. Once again the Judaeans enjoyed religious freedom (Fogarty 2004:46-47). However, after the Romans took over from the Greeks, the Jewish revolt and the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 CE caused the demise of the Jewish state, that is the southern kingdom. Many Jews fled Jerusalem and settled in different places, one of which was Alexandria, where the next phase of Judaism was started.

Malati (1995:153) maintained that "[i]n Alexandria, Greek thought exercised its strongest influence on the Hebrew mind." Proof of this is found in the translation of the Septuagint, by the order of Ptolemy Philadelphus in the middle of the 3rd century BCE (cf El Masri 1982:11). This constituted the beginning of Jewish-Hellenistic literature. Apart from the influences of Hellenism (with which they already had contact in Judaea), Judaism also had to contend with the followers of Christ's teachings, Greek philosophers, Gnosticism and Hermeticism. During the period between 70 and 130 CE these influences and in particular Hellenism, led to the formation of Rabbinic Judaism. As previously mentioned, in this city the Jews enjoyed more civil rights than the Egyptians (Fogarty 2004:48): They had their own legal structures and were encouraged to practise their ancestral traditions (Broadhead 2010:115; Paget 2010:127). There were many synagogues in Alexandria. In Philo's *Contra Flaccum* 55-56 he reported about one of them, being an enormous basilica referred to in rabbinic sermons as the "glory of Israel." The foundation of Jewish belief comprised the following:

- The *Torah*;
- The Old Testament:
 - Creation;
 - History of the Covenant;
 - The laws (Lev, Dt);
 - Psalms;
 - Prophetic writings;
- The *Talmud*:
 - The *Mishnah* (rabbinical collection of oral traditions written down in 200 CE);
 - *Gemara* (commentaries on the elements of the *Mishnah*, also written in ca 200 CE).

Otzen (1998:67) referred to Judaism (in Alexandria) as follows:

To a Jew law is more than mere injunction and prohibition. It is revelation. To an orthodox Jew the Pentateuch contains everything that it has pleased the Lord to reveal to his chosen people Israel and about his nature and will, neither more nor

less. In principle, the *entire* revelation is contained in the Law, that is, the Pentateuch. The rest of the Old Testament contains nothing which goes beyond the Law – and certainly nothing which contradicts it.

Judaism stayed alive and well in Alexandria, despite the new "Christian" movement that was developing together with and alongside it. Even when a Jewish form of Gnosticism started to arise in Alexandria, Judaism itself continued as before and remained implacably separate. This situation might have been facilitated by the protection they enjoyed from first the Ptolemies and later the Romans, whose treatment of the Jews in Alexandria was in strong contrast to what they had experienced in Jerusalem.

However, the Jewish community in Alexandria was characterised by divisions of different natures. One of the main divisions was that between the educated, cultured Jews who were in favour of a synthesis between Judaism and Hellenism, including Philo (more on Philo in Chapter 2), and a "lower" group that championed messianism and had a fighting spirit (Tcherikover 1963:22-27). The Jews were culturally and religiously divided with specific reference to the Law:

- Some upheld a strictly literalist interpretation of the Law.
- Some favoured an allegorical interpretation.
- Some favoured a total rejection of the Scriptures and their myths.
- Others were in favour of a spiritual reading of the Scriptures leading to a rational abandonment of the observances of ritual law (cf Pearson 1991:148).
- There were also Jews who belonged to apocalyptic and Gnostic groups.
- Other Jews were effectively atheistic or non-observant.
- Lastly, there were Gentile affiliates – among them were the earliest Christians.

The young generation of Jews in Alexandria could not speak Hebrew. They were therefore unable to read the Torah and the Talmud. This made the Septuagint an important source for both the Jews and the early Christians. Of great value to later Christians was the fact that the Jews were strong on codification, commentary (interpretations of the Law) and observance (Fogarty 2004:49).

Three specific groups that broke away from Judaism were the Qumran sect, the Essenes and the followers of Christ's teachings. The Qumran sect sought purification in total seclusion from others and away from urban centres and rigid observance of the Law. It is possible that this exclusivity led to their demise. The Essenes broke away not only from the Temple and Temple worship, but also from society. They can be described as the pioneers of later Christian monasticism with the emphasis on asceticism, communal sharing, celibacy, a strictly regulated life of prayer, the study of the Scriptures and seclusion from the world (Fogarty 2004:51). The members of the third group were the followers of Christ's teachings. Like the Qumran group they lived "in the universe of apocalyptic" (Otzen 1998:221). Otzen (1998:221) elaborated by saying that "Christianity would not have become a world religion, had it not been borne along by Jewish apocalyptic." He gave the following examples of how the early Christians applied the "universe of apocalyptic" in their writings:

- Joseph was informed "in a dream" that he must become the husband of Mary (Mt 1:20) and to flee to Egypt (Mt 2:13).
- On his way to Damascus Paul was struck down by a vision of God (Ac 9:3ff).
- Peter was led out of a locked prison by an angel (Ac 12:1-19a).

During their first years in Alexandria the (orthodox) Jews and the followers of Christ's teachings lived so close to each other that the Jews had much influence on the emergence of the new religion. It was this juxtaposition of the early Christians with Judaism and the other religions and cults in Alexandria that created a powerful new religion called Christianity.

Pearson (1991:145) stated that "hundreds of thousands" of Jews lived in Alexandria. This concurred with Philo (*Cont Flacc* 43) who estimated that a million Jews were resident in Egypt during the first half of the 1st century CE. However, Paget (2010:126) estimated the number of Jews to have been approximately 180,000 out of a total population of 500,000 or 600,000 people.

1.5.2 Gnosticism

In 1945 a large collection of Gnostic literature, containing thirteen codices with forty-four different books of Gnostic writings, was discovered at Nag-Hammadi and

Chenoboskion in Upper Egypt (McCaughey 2007:63). These documents revealed striking parallels between Gnostic doctrines and Christian interpretations (Meissner 2000:163). These Gnostic texts have been concealed as Gnosticism had become a heresy in the late 4th century (Isichei 1995:18).

Gnosticism, which developed in the 1st century, was derived from a very old belief system called Orpheanism. The myths of Gnosticism denoted

[t]he fate of the divine spark present in humanity and its fall into a hostile world of shadows, where it forgets its true home, while unconsciously longing to return there; its wanderings and hopes, and the eventual arrival of a Saviour who will reveal its true origin and thus enable it to regain consciousness of its essential alienation from this world of shadows (Filoramo 1990:38).

The content of Gnostic mythology was generally based on the belief that a crisis in the Godhead led to a separation of lesser beings from absolute divinity: The Angel of Creation, in revenge, created matter and humankind and is often referred to as the demiurge. In this separation from their divine origins, human beings became mired in darkness and in evil ways. It is only through divine revelation, which was available only to those with the necessary knowledge, that the self could be redeemed and restored to union with its origins (Fogarty 2004:56-57). These few sentences showed a thorough dualism embedded in and characteristic of Gnosticism, "setting an infinite chasm between the spiritual world and the world of matter" (Malaty 1995:126). It envisaged "a cosmic struggle between matched forces of god and evil, darkness and light" (MacCulloch 2009:122). Gnosticism

- rejected the Jewish account of the creation (MacCulloch 2009:122);
- despised the tendencies of the flesh;
- rendered time and history as limited and emphasised the eternal over the historical;
- held that Jesus came to instruct only a chosen few (McLelland 1976:71); Clement thought that this was in conflict with the actual teaching of Christ (cf Barrett 2011:26).

This philosophy was first called "Gnostic" by the end of the 2nd century, on account of its search for wisdom (*gnosis*). Isichei (1995:18) defined *gnosis* as "intuitive knowledge, the knowledge of the heart." According to Malaty (1995:137-138), "The most important center of *Gnosticism* was Alexandria which had become [sic] the heir of Jewish traditions, classical thought, and the old mysticism of oriental religions. It was in Alexandria that the greatest doctors of *Gnosticism* – Basilides, Carpocrates and Valentinus – flourished" (cf also Kovacs 2009:263). The main proponent of Gnosticism was Basilides (Pearson 2004:22-23). Therefore, Alexandria as a cosmopolitan city and home to a conglomerate of cultures, but also to a wide variety of scholars, was the perfect place to disseminate Gnosticism and Gnostic teachings. Gnosticism was centred in Egypt and found a fertile place in Judaism, Christianity and other religions. It expanded to such an extent that it became a threat to Christianity (Fogarty 2004:58). Malaty (1995:147-148) supplied five reasons why Gnosticism spread in Alexandria:

- Gnosticism first appeared in the city as an attitude accepted by certain pagans and some Jews and followers of Christ's teachings. As this was an intellectual meeting point between Jew and Greek, the interchange of intellectual ideas took place in the ideal environment.
- The pseudo-Christian Gnostic sects offered a much more acceptable religious system with a guaranteed way of salvation to the pagans.
- Contrary to the followers of Christ's teachings, the Gnostics tried to answer difficult questions such as, "If God is good, who created the evil?," which effectively attracted people to them.
- The Gnostics regarded themselves as superior, well-educated people and the only ones that could be trusted with the divine mysteries.
- Many of the founders of the Christian Gnosticism were pre-Christian Gnostics who, instead of surrendering their former beliefs, just added some Christian doctrines to their Gnostic views. Writing in the name of the Apostles to give authority to their word, they wrote some apocryphal gospels, epistles and apocalypses which had a tremendous effect on their readers.

Here is a list of prominent Gnostic leaders:

- Basilides was active during the reigns of Emperors Hadrian (117-138) and Antoninus Pius (138-161). He wrote his *Exegetica* which consisted of twenty-four books. He wanted to be a Christian Theologian, although he considered himself to be a Christian Gnostic. He was heavily influenced by Greek philosophy and Stoicism. His syncretism attracted many people, but its popularity ended in the 4th century.
- Marcion, a contemporary of Basilides, could not choose between the worlds of Gnosticism and Christianity (especially Pauline). He founded a church in Rome in 144 and died in 160.
- Saturnilos was a Syrian and a contemporary of Basilides, who introduced asceticism.
- Cerinthus, Carpocrates and his son Epiphanes, who had a strong following between 130 and 160, also spread Gnosticism.
- Marcellina, a female follower of Carpocrates, spread his teachings to Rome.
- Simon Magus was a fraud according to Acts (Ac 8:9ff). Justin Martyr, however, alleged that Simon was worshiped by his followers as "the first god."
- Menander was a disciple of Simon Magus.
- In the 2nd century Gnosticism became a threat to Christianity because of its spread to Italy, Egypt, the Orient, East Syria (Mesopotamia) and Armenia. In the West it was halted in the 4th century by Christian Emperors who acted against heresies. Valentinus established his school in Alexandria. He was born and educated in Alexandria and was also a Christian teacher. The Church Fathers and others, including Hippolytus, Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Epiphanius, all gave evidence of his teaching, although from an anti-Valentinian point of view. Rome regarded him as a heretic.

Starr (1991:605) referred specifically to Basilides and Valentinus:

Some Gnostics found themselves attracted to Jesus as savior, but were forced to deny His humanity as an affront to the pureness of divinity; nor could they accept bodily resurrection. Leading Christian Gnostics were Basilides and Valentinus of the first half of the second century. The views of such men, if

accepted, would have crippled basic Christian beliefs both about the nature of Christ and about the equality of all believers; for Gnostics constructed levels of knowledge through which men could rise to the ultimate completion of reality.

It is a fact that early Christianity, as a developing religion, was influenced to some extent by the other well-established religions, cults and philosophies among which it developed. This led Pearson (1990:195) to ask: "Was Egyptian Christianity originally a Gnostic and thus, from a later perspective, heretical form of the religion?" Even if this is not the case, Gnosticism still played an important role in the development of Christianity in Egypt. Two texts, written soon after the advent of Christianity in Egypt in the second half of the 1st century CE (Parrot 1996:221), are cited to prove the point: The *Eugnostos* which was a mere Gnostic text, though not undisputed (cf Parrot 1996:221), without Christian content, and the *Sophia*, which was a Christian document that contained much, if not *verbatim*, of the *Eugnostos* text. According to Fogarty (2004:64-65), "The author of *Sophia* superimposed a Christian tale into *Eugnostos*, by telling the audience that Christ was the latest incarnation of the Gnostic saviour. This literary technique was a prototype of the manner in which so much of Christian doctrine has subsumed ancient myth, re-figuring it onto Christian format." In the *Sophia* the reference to the events following the resurrection of Jesus was clearly Gnostic, referring to phrases like "underlying reality," "the plan" and "the secret of the holy plan." Added to this, the saviour of Gnosticism, transmuted into the Christ of the New Testament, was still, quintessentially "invisible spirit." Yet he communicated in human terms, which were not Gnostic. Another non-Gnostic part of the *Sophia* was the reference to Christ as Mediator.

The Church Fathers and philosophers like Plotinus refuted the doctrines of the Gnostics. In the 3rd century a new form of Gnosticism entered Egypt, namely Manichaeism. This religion, founded by the prophet Mani, spread worldwide (Pearson 2004:24).

Having said this, it is important to mention that, just like all the other cults, religions and philosophies, the term "Gnosticism" did not refer to a "relatively well-defined coherent movement," but it did gather "together a number of quite different unrelated

groups, and presents them as if they represented a single religious belief system" (McGrath 2013:28). It might be best to refer to Gnosticism as a close group of religious doctrines and myths with three shared beliefs:

- The "demiurge" (craftsman or artisan) was an evil and ignorant creator who created the cosmos as a physical realm without having any knowledge of the "true God," therefore believing that he was the only God.
- Mankind was trapped within this realm.
- Salvation could be described as a process in which believers received *gnosis* (knowledge) of their divine origin. This allowed them to break free from being imprisoned in this realm. The body acted as the prison (cf McGrath 2013:28).

The notion of a demiurge played a significant role in the dialogue of Plato, called *Timaeus*.

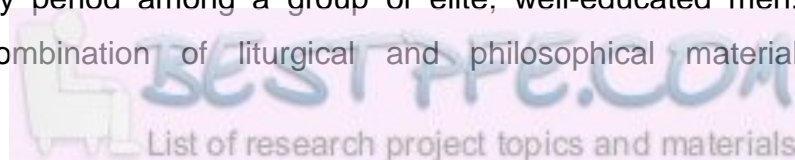
1.5.3 Hermeticism

The *Corpus Hermeticum/Hermetica* was found among the codices in the Nag Hammadi Library. It is impossible to determine whether Hermeticism was a by-product of Gnosticism, a tributary of Gnosticism or a belief wholly separate from Gnosticism. Questions like the following arise: "What was the nature of the *Hermetica*?", "Were they pagan or Christian/Judaeo-Christian, or were they pagan and then adapted for Christian Theology?" According to Sellev (1997:166), "The term Hermeticism refers to a popular, if not obscure religious movement in Egypt during the periods of the Greek and Roman domination. Though ultimately derived from ancient Egyptian thought and practice in significant ways, Hermetic doctrines are expressed in the language and concepts of Hellenistic syncretism."

The prime purpose of the *Hermetica* was to instruct their readers in the tenets of Hermetic beliefs and to spread the belief system throughout the Greek-speaking world and the Roman Empire (including Egypt and Alexandria) (Fogarty 2004:96). In the words of Valentasis (1997:201):

Hermetic religion thrived in the Greco-Roman and Late Antiquity period among a group of elite, well-educated men.

The combination of liturgical and philosophical material



indicates that the society of such men not only satisfied their intellectual yearnings, but also addressed their need for male religious association. Hermetic literature survived as the province of male philosophical speculation and religious practice into the Renaissance and following...The impact of this Hermetic literature on the western European intellectual tradition has just begun to be appreciated.

Interestingly enough Augustine, in his book, *De Civitate Dei* (*City of God*; specifically in 8.27), went to great lengths to despatch Hermetic beliefs one by one, discarding them as heretical from a Christian perspective. The way in which he did it proved that Hermeticism must have posed a serious threat to Christianity at the time.

1.5.4 Platonism

Alexandria was one of the most important centres where Christianity engaged with Platonism. This engagement included the willingness of the scholars to adapt the vocabulary and concepts of the Christian faith to the ideas and issues of classical Greek philosophy, especially Platonism. Philo already started with this as he developed approaches to Judaism showing its compatibility with Platonism. Clement and Origen also tried to make Christianity attractive to Platonism (cf McGrath 2013:29-30), with the result that Christianity was more readily accepted within the Hellenistic culture.

Clement used the Platonic style as he realised that the Hebraic ways of thinking, incorporated in apostolic Christianity, were foreign to the Greek speaking populace of Alexandria. He therefore "borrowed" concepts and ideas from Platonism and other classic Greek philosophical schools like Stoicism, and used it in the Christian context. This was not without risk, as it could result in a misrepresentation of Christianity. McGrath (2013:30) summarised this as follows: "Clement's critics were never entirely sure whether he was Christianizing Platonism or Platonizing Christianity." Both Clement and Origen held the view that Hellenistic philosophical systems had come into being through divine revelation and that they were justified in reclaiming them in the service of Theology.

Platonism gave rise to an increase in the use of allegorical Biblical interpretation, already being employed by Philo. *Contra* the Hebrew view that truth was expressed in history, the allegorical Biblical interpretation stripped away the historical shell of the Bible to reveal its philosophical core (McGrath 2013:30). The way in which Clement and Origen employed Platonism (also referred to as "Middle Platonism," cf McGrath 2013:30) is clearly revealed in their logical doctrines: Both of them regarded the notion of the *logos* as very important for understanding the identity of Jesus, as it has been put forward by the Gospel according to John in the first chapter. This led them to concur with John that Jesus was the *Logos* incarnate, as well as the Mediator between God and his creation. Origen used Platonic ideas to arrive at his view of the shape of the resurrected body. Utilising Plato's dialogue *Timaeus*, referring to the resurrected body as "spherical," he concluded that the resurrected body would be a sphere (*De Princip* 3.6).

The fact that Clement and Origen in particular utilised the Platonic forms, secured for them a "hearing for Christianity in the more intellectually sophisticated quarters of Hellenistic culture" (McGrath 2013:31), which gave Christianity a secure intellectual foundation and the assurance that this religion would be taken seriously by the Hellenistic world of the day.

1.5.5 The Isis cult

Isis "was first worshipped in Egypt as 'Aset,' the personification of the throne that was believed to 'give birth' to the pharaoh, the incarnation of Osiris (later known as Sarapis), god of vegetation and the afterlife" (Corrington Street 2000:378-379). The members of this cult believed that Isis' son, Horus, was born anew in every Egyptian pharaoh.

The origins of the Isis cult dated back to long before the Ptolemaic rule, when Egyptians traded with other Mediterranean countries like Greece and in this way introduced the cult to them. In the 5th century BCE Herodotus already referred to Isis worship in Egypt at Cyrene, Bubastis, Sais and Memphis. Corrington Street (2000:369) stated:

In his *Histories* Herodotus claims that "Isis is Demeter in the Greek language (2.59.156)", and that the "mysteries" known as

the Thesmophoria in Greece, which celebrated the goddess Demeter, had their origin in the worship of Isis at Sais (2.171). In mainland Greece, Isis was also being worshipped in Piraeus, the port of Athens, by Egyptian merchants as early as the fifth century B.C.E...By the beginning of the second century B.C.E. the worship of Isis, with or without her associated deities – Sarapis, Horus, and her assistant, the jackal-headed god Anubis – was known throughout the Hellenistic world, from Sicily to the shores of the Black Sea.

From Egypt this cult spread throughout the Graeco-Roman world. From Greece it spread to the Greek-speaking colonies of southern Italy (Corrington Street 2000: 370) and from there to Rome (88 CE) during the consulship of the Roman general Sulla. Isis was considered the goddess who had supreme control over the powers of the cosmos, including life and death and most specifically fate (Corrington Street 2000:378-379).

At first Isis was worshiped only by the slaves, people of the lower classes and women of all classes, but as time went by, even the upper classes were drawn to the cult, which became popular during the rule of Caligula, the Flavian Emperors, the Antonine Commodus and the Severan Caracalla (Corrington Street 2000:370). This was the first time in the history of an ancient religion that neither class nor ethnicity determined membership of a cult (Fogarty 2004:36).

The influence of the Isis cult lasted for about 2,500 years, despite attempts to suppress it by Roman senators, Emperor Tiberius in 19 CE and Christian leaders in the West as late as the 5th century. The Roman prohibition of paganism at the end of the 4th century CE put an end to the worship of Isis in the West. In Egypt this cult was finally suppressed in the 6th century.

The most complete evidence of the Isis worship was found in the last chapter of a 2nd-century novel, the *Metamorphoses*, by Apuleius of Madauros. This chapter described an initiation into the cult of Isis and Sarapis at Cenchreae in Greece. In the 3rd century knowledge of and participation in the activities of the Isis cult had reached

a high in the Graeco-Roman world. The *Corpus Hermeticum* incorporated the *Kore Kosmou*, a revelation dialogue between Isis and her son Horus. In this Greek text it became clear how the influence of Isis had also filtered into Hermeticism (Fogarty 2004:39).

The Isis cult appeared to have had a significant influence on the followers of Christ's teachings in Alexandria, especially with regard to the use of images. According to the myth, Isis was impregnated by her brother Osiris and gave birth to a son, whom she named Horus. The image of Isis – the mother and child – showed a marked resemblance to images of Mary and Jesus used by the early Christians, and even to later portrayals. The Roman Catholic Church still refers to the Madonna (mother of Jesus) as "Queen of Heaven" and "Our Lady" – which are both titles that originated from the Isis cult. In an ancient Catholic hymn the words "Hail, Queen of heaven" and "Star of the sea," originated from the Isis cult and its depiction as "Lady of the Lighthouse" and "Lady of the Seas" (Fogarty 2004:34; cf Martin 1987:72).

The Isis cult was a striking example of Egyptian culture that influenced the formation of early Christianity.

1.5.6 The Serapis/Sarapis cult

This cult, based on the worshiping of two Egyptian gods, Osiris and Apis (the bull), was not indigenous to Egypt, as it was established by the Hellenist ruler, Ptolemy 1 Soter in 286 BCE. While Memphis was the centre of the Apis cult, Alexandria became the centre of the Serapis cult. With the establishment of this cult, Ptolemy 1 saw the opportunity to unite the versatile population of Alexandria. Lewis (1986:70) confirmed that

the god Serapis was an instant and enduring success, one that lasted all through antiquity until the triumph of Christianity, even though the Egyptians never came even close to the status of equality with the Greeks that Serapis was supposed to symbolize...In fact, there were really two separate cults of Serapis: the Greeks worshipped him with the rituals of a Greek god, often portraying him in one of the guises of Zeus, while the Egyptians treated him entirely as one of their own.

The slaying of the bull was a key mythological image in the 2nd-century cult of Mithras, since the blood of the bull was regarded as the source of all life. In ancient Egypt, however, the bull was not slain as it was seen as an incarnation of the god Osiris and was therefore sacred. It was also a symbol of fertility, and the Pharaoh was traditionally called "Mighty Bull." Even though this form of worship has disappeared long ago, there is still a popular devotion to the bull today.

Owing to the cosmopolitan nature of the Alexandrian society and the large numbers of travellers that passed through the city, this cult became known in many foreign parts and even gained popularity in Rome (Fogarty 2004:42). The Romans were particularly drawn to this Egyptian cult, which was introduced in all the Roman provinces by the legionaries. Sanctuaries for Serapis were built all over the Roman Empire. One such sanctuary was the Red Basilica in Pergamum, which could accommodate more than a thousand people for a service that bore a close resemblance to the services conducted in Jewish synagogues or Christian churches (Fogarty 2004:43-44).

Both Serapis and Isis were worshiped across the Empire. It is therefore interesting to note that while Egypt was ruled politically by the Romans, the Roman Empire was pervaded by Egyptian religion (Fogarty 2004:22). Foakes Jackson (1947:183) cited the Emperor Hadrian's remarks in a letter:

Those who worship Serapis are likewise Christians; even those who style themselves the bishops of Christ are devoted to Serapis. The very Patriarch (the Jewish *nasi* of Tiberias) is forced by some to adore Serapis, by others to worship Christ. There is but one God for them all. Him do the Christians, Him do the Jews, Him do the Gentiles all alike worship.

The Serapis cult remained active into Late Antiquity.

1.6 Influences on Christianity in Alexandria

This sub-heading will take a brief look at the influences exerted by other religions and cults (already alluded to) on the followers of Christ's teachings in the Delta City.

1.6.1 Why was Christianity influenced?

During their first years in Alexandria it was impossible for the earliest Christians to have a unique, new, totally distinct religion, even if that was the aim. Given the dynamics of enculturation it is rather obvious that the followers of Christ's teachings adopted many elements of its principles and doctrines from the religions and cults around them. They did not copy these elements blatantly, but customised and implemented them in ways suitable to them (cf Fogarty 2004:117).

Copenhaver (1995:lviii) used the term "conversations" to describe the processes the early Christians used to re-formulate Gnostic and Hermetic thought and to develop Christian thinking and writing. These "conversations" took place against the backdrop of other schools in Alexandria, such as the Greek Gymnasium where philosophical and scientific disciplines were presented, the Jewish Synagogues where Jews studied the Torah and the "newly translated" Greek Septuagint, as well as Gnostic and Hermetic schools. Some students were first trained in pagan discourses in these schools, but later converted to Christianity, bringing with them everything they had learned. Added to all the influences that were imposed on Christianity in Egypt were the changes from Egyptian to Greek to Roman rule. However, Egypt did, to some extent, maintain its indigenous culture and religion amidst the legacy of Greek culture left by the Ptolemies and the establishment of the *Serapium*, in itself a symbol of syncretism.

1.6.2 Conversions to Christianity

In the midst of all of this, many people converted to the new religion. Fogarty (2004:118) gave the following reasons for this: The people felt approved of the way in which the early church organised itself (cf Frankfurter 1998:267) and were attracted by the charisma of certain Christian holy men and women (like the later desert monks and mothers), to whom they turned for advice and assistance in almost the same way they have turned to the oracles in the Egyptian religion. These people's powerful appeal to the populace "provided a major *entree* for the Christian institutions during the fourth century" (Frankfurter 1998:268).

Something that attracted the Egyptians was the centrality given to the Scriptures by the Christians and the fact that they were in possession of Scriptures in written form

on papyrus. The Egyptians regarded the written word, invented by the great god Thoth, as sacred. Although most of them could not read, they recognised the holiness of words inscribed on temple walls.

Though Christianity in itself was new, it was "laid upon an indigenous, archaic, and surprisingly deterministic framework" (Frankfurter 1998:272). As it was obvious that this young religion would be influenced, it formed the reason for the smooth transition for the populace from pagan to Christian religion.

1.6.3 Pagan practices

In the early church in Alexandria the followers of Christ's teachings continued with practices with which people were familiar, such as preparing amulets and uttering spells, adding "the invocation of the official language of Christian liturgy as the new authority over the supernatural" (Frankfurter 1998:271). Frankfurter mentioned that later on, in the 5th century, the Menouthis shrine of Isis was converted to a shrine for Saint John and Cyrus, and that many pilgrimages were undertaken to tombs and shrines where pilgrims would sleep in the precincts to receive dreams and question the dead about the living.

1.6.4 Consequences

It appears that the influence exerted on one another by different religions was greater than one would expect. Under sub-heading 1.6 the focus has been on how Christianity was influenced by other religions/cults. However, it should be noted that these religions/cults also influenced each other and were obviously influenced by this new religion. This led to differences occurring within a specific credal system, so that one could have "pagan," Jewish, or even Christian Gnostics. There were Torah-centred Jews, but also Jewish Christians (Fogarty 2004:121).

These "conversations" (Copenhaver 1995) soon developed into arguments, which became more serious disputes and soon afterwards became heated and sometimes even vitriolic (Fogarty 2004:121). This resulted in the appearance of apologetic writings in the 2nd century up to the 4th and 5th century. Reasons for these disputes could have been the fear of being overwhelmed by other religions, or zealotry, or the conviction that Christianity was right. The apologists thought so, as they were writing

strong polemic literature against the "heretics." Their writings signified their sense of outrage at what they perceived was the distortion of Christianity and also their determination to act against the heretics. Interestingly enough the polemics also fell into traps of their own. Irenaeus, in his *Adversus Haereses (Against Heresies)* 3.31 for example, emphasised that the Old Testament was a Christian text and had been "miraculously translated into Greek."

1.7 Christianity in the Roman Empire

Christianity was born in the Roman province of Judaea, which was politically an insignificant part of the Empire. The main determinant of Christianity was Jesus Christ, who was born in Judaea during the reign of Caesar Augustus. After his death, resurrection and ascension, his disciples established a religion shaped according to the style of Judaism. Christianity was born into a culture with little sympathy for its ideas and values (McGrath 2013:37). Despite this, the new religion was already significantly present in the eastern parts of the Empire by the second half of the 1st century. From the founding of this new religion onwards all the adherents knew that their religion was not legalised by the Roman Empire as a religious movement – neither by the state nor the Emperor (McGrath 2013:7, 38).

Two or three decades before the birth of Christ some kind of "civil religion" began to emerge, forcing the people of the Empire to worship the Emperor (cf McGrath 2013:17-18). This was particularly evident in the major cities of the eastern parts of the Empire and led to Pliny the Younger, the governor of the province of Bithinia, writing a letter to Trajan in approximately 112 asking him how to deal with the growing number of Christians who refused to worship the image of the Emperor (cf McGrath 2013:19). The Romans started to refer to the Christians who rejected the official state religion as "atheists."

During the first half of the 2nd century the Roman Empire reached its zenith under Emperor Trajan (98-117). Those belonging to the new religion, already referred to as "Christians" in Antioch, found it difficult to adhere to the demands of the state. However, they were able to survive, as the Roman authorities distinguished between civil religion (the state cult) and the private views of groups or individuals. Still they were not altogether safe, as the state was suspicious of them. This suspicion was

not only on a political level, but was also aroused on a cultural level by their refusal to participate in games and other public ceremonies that had a quasi-religious nature. Some of the criticism against the Christians was based on ignorance: Because most of their meetings were held in seclusion, outsiders could only guess about what happened at certain ceremonies like the Eucharist, and tended to imagine that the Christians were involved in acts of cannibalism, incest, child murder and orgies (McGrath 2013:38).

These suspicions subjected the Christian groups to sporadic persecutions, for instance during the reign of Decius. As Rome (founded in 752 BCE) celebrated its first millennium during his short reign (249-251), he demanded that all citizens of the Empire make a sacrifice to the gods, for which a certificate of compliance would be issued by their local magistrate. Many Christians lapsed or abandoned their faith to avoid persecution. This persecution ended with the murder of Decius in 251.

In 303 Emperor Diocletian ordered the demolition of all Christian places of worship together with the destruction of all their holy books and the cessation of all acts of Christian worship. Christian civil servants were to lose all their privileges and become slaves (McGrath 2013:40). Diocletian's wife and daughter, who were both Christians, were also forced to comply. In 311 Galerius, the Eastern Emperor, ordered the cessation of this persecution and the reinstatement of the *status quo*. With this edict Galerius recognised Christianity as a religion with the full protection of the law. This was the first step towards ending the persecution of Christians.

Without going into too much detail, it is worth mentioning that in the same year Constantine became Emperor of one part of the Empire and held that position until 324 when he became the sole Emperor. By the end of 312 Constantine declared himself a Christian (without really becoming one – cf Kee 1982) and in 313 he and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan, which proclaimed freedom of religion in both the eastern and western parts of the Empire. In the years to come the whole Empire would be Christianised. Constantine started building large basilicas in many European cities and discontinued financial support for pagan temples. Most of the time the pagan temples were converted to Christian churches. It is interesting to note that Theodosius the Great who reigned during the last part of the 4th century,

completed the process of making Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, "bringing to a conclusion the slow process of Christianization initiated by Constantine" (McGrath 2013:44).

What should have been a wonderful event for Christianity, turned out not to be so, as the church was not ready for this transition. The Bishops who were only the leaders of their congregations, suddenly had to be the pillars of Roman society, enhanced with power and influence. While, in the past, they had met with their congregations in private homes, they now had to gather in "massive dedicated buildings" called basilicas (McGrath 2013:43), while their usual forms of worship had to make way for ceremonies and processions.

The social roles and norms attributed to traditional Roman religion were also transferred to Christianity. In the words of McGrath (2013:44): "An official Roman religion, therefore, was about creating civic unity, social coherence, and political solidarity. These obligations were now increasingly imposed upon Christianity." Constantine used the church as an instrument of imperial policy and imposed his own imperial ideology upon it (McGrath 2013:45; cf Ramirez 1998:19). The church could not be independent anymore, but had to play the role of an imperial unifying religion. The church soon began to change, especially because Constantine discovered that there was no real unity. There was, for example, the Donatist controversy in Africa concerning those Christians who had lapsed during the Diocletian persecution. Constantine responded by appointing a synod of Bishops to solve the problem, but it was not resolved until the late 5th century. The internal problems experienced by the church now became the problems of the state – "imperial political concerns" (McGrath 2013:45) – and that had to change.

The Arian dispute regarding the divinity of Christ was another thorn in the flesh for Constantine. As the church could not solve the problem, he took action in a "post-biblical" way (McGrath 2013:45) by summoning all the Bishops of the church to a Council in Nicaea (Bithinia) – the first ever gathering of this kind. During this First Ecumenical Council, the Emperor subtly started to model the structures of the church to those of the Roman senate.



At the cultural level it was obvious that a number of Roman customs would become part of the Christian practice. McGrath (2013:46) maintained that the most prominent development in Christianity was the "cult of the saints." This was a traditional Roman religious practice to honour the dead with a ceremonial meal at the tomb. This practice soon became part of Christianity as Christians started to gather at the tombs of specific saints or martyrs to celebrate the Eucharist there in their honour. This un-Biblical practice was part of the price that Christianity had to pay for becoming the state religion.

Meanwhile Rome, the "eternal city," became vulnerable, in fact so vulnerable that the seat of government of the western Empire was moved to Ravenna in 402. Rome was conquered and briefly occupied by a Gallic tribal army in 387 and was finally conquered in 408 by a Visigoth army led by Alaric, who withdrew from the city a few days later. Constantinople became the new imperial city and the administrative centre of the Empire. In approximately 476 the western part of the Roman Empire came to an end, while the eastern part would continue to exist for another millennium.

In the aftermath of Constantine's decision to make Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, refugees who fled from Rome to North Africa arrived there with the burning question, "Why had Rome been sacked?" In their opinion Constantine's decision was the "confirmation of the fears of pagan philosophers, who had declared the rise of Christianity as breaking the *pax deorum*" (McGrath 2013:47) – the *pax deorum* being the *peace of the gods*. They alleged that Christianity had violated the sacred root of the Roman religion and culture and that the gods had reacted by abandoning Rome to its enemies.

Christianity did not deteriorate under Rome, but rather developed, showing characteristics of the church of the Middle Ages. McGrath (2013:49) identified three developments within the church that were of particular interest:

- Amidst the loss of political and military power by the state, the church gradually began to emerge as a place of constancy and continuity. Gregory the Great is worth mentioning here, as he initiated missionary expeditions to northern Europe and in this way expanded the Christian influence there.

- Monasteries became the centres of learning, local administration and leadership and offered continuity during these times of uncertainty.
- The church continued using Latin as its language of liturgy and administration, and mostly also for writing in the Empire. This helped to hold the western church together, paving the way for Latin to become the academic language of the Middle Ages.

1.8 An overview on the Roman persecutions of Christians

Many persecutions of Christians under the Roman rule were discussed under specific headings in this Chapter. In the words of Schmidt (2004:27): The early Christians were "persecuted for nearly three hundred years with intermittent periods of toleration." During that time the following Roman Emperors persecuted (and martyred) the Christians:

- Nero (54-68).
- Domitian (81-96).
- Trajan (98-117).
- Hadrian (117-138) – he did not execute many Christians.
- Antoninus Pius (138-161) – Polycarp was martyred in 155 during his reign. During his time a person could be persecuted "simply for bearing the name *Christian*" (Schmidt 2004:28).
- Marcus Aurelius (161-180) – more severe than his predecessor. Justin Martyr was persecuted in 166 under his reign.
- Septimius Severus (193-211) – Perpetua (cf Chapter 4), a 22-year-old mother was thrown to the beasts in the amphitheatre in Carthage.
- Decius (249-251) – many Christians were martyred because they did not want to sacrifice to the pagan gods. He was the first Emperor to initiate an Empire-wide persecution of Christians (Schmidt 2004:31).
- Valerian (253-259) – in 257 he issued an edict forbidding Christian worship. In 258 he issued a second edict to execute Bishops, priests and deacons who refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods.
- Diocletian (284-305) – he had to share his power with Maximian two years after he took office. In 303 an edict was issued to destroy all churches and Scriptures. This was followed by an edict commanding that all church leaders

be imprisoned. Workman (1980:117) stated that the dungeons in Carthage were filled with Bishops, presbyters and deacons to such an extent that there was no place for the real criminals. This persecution is known as the "Great Persecution" (Schmidt 2004:31).

- Galerius (305-311) – together with Maximian he tried to destroy the Christians. Workman (1980:108) described it as follows: "[I]n some towns the streets were strewn with fragments of corpses."

1.9 Conclusion

Especially during its Golden Era, Alexandria was the pride of Africa. For some time it was larger than the two other world cities of the Roman Empire – Rome and Antioch, and also the unrivalled intellectual centre of the Roman world. Added to this, a relatively new religion, later known as Christianity, started to find its feet in this cosmopolitan city – a religion that would change the whole world, because Jesus as the main reason for or determinant of its existence, had changed the world irrevocably.

Following several periods of persecution of Christians – some of them severe – Constantine proclaimed Christianity as the state religion at the beginning of the 4th century. Although this held some advantages for Christianity, there were also disadvantages. While it is difficult to decide whether the advantages outweighed the disadvantages, or *vice versa*, it can be said with certainty that Christianity would never be the same again.

Chapter 2

The Catechetical School and her heads²

2.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter the history of Alexandria was discussed, from its origin as a small village, called Rhakotis, to its development and renaming by Alexander the Great, until its fall, when Egypt was conquered by the Arabs in 642 CE. This also signified the end of the Golden Era of Alexandria, which had lasted for almost seven hundred years.

During its Golden Era, Alexandria, the Delta City, was home to many religions, cults and philosophies that were expressed by people belonging to the different cultures that were present within the city. The most important of these were the Greek and the Roman cultures, which mingled with the local Egyptian culture (cf Fogarty 2004:14-15). One of the religions that was practised, was relatively new and was an offspring of Judaism and still very much part of Judaism. This new religion had not yet been named when its adherents arrived in Alexandria. They were merely people who followed Christ's teachings – although it is also nowhere noted in writing that they were called by that name. Hatch (1957:135) explained the religious beliefs of this group as follows:

The earliest Christians had been content to believe in God and to worship Him, without endeavouring to define precisely the conception of Him which lay beneath their faith and their worship. They looked up to Him as their Father in heaven. They thought of Him as One, as beneficent, and as supreme. But they drew no fence of words round their idea of Him, and still

² The first part of this Chapter was presented as a paper at the *International Journal of Arts and Commerce* in Boston USA in 2014, with the title, "The Catechetical School in Alexandria." An article was subsequently published in 2015 (2015a) under the same title in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36 (1), Art. #1385. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v36i1.1385>. The second part of this Chapter was presented as a paper at the *Conference of the School of Humanities* at UNISA in 2014, with the title, "The heads of the Catechetical School in Alexandria." It was published in 2015 (2015b) with the same title in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36 (1), Art. #1386. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v36i1.1386>.

less did they attempt to demonstrate by processes of reason that their idea of Him was true.

As indicated in the previous Chapter, the schism between Judaism and the followers of Christ's teachings became imminent in the aftermath of the Jewish revolt against the Romans in 115-117 CE. However, this young religion was soon confronted and infiltrated by philosophy and, maybe for the first time, its adherents became aware of the need for a unity of belief concerning the fundamental facets of their faith. Since Greek philosophy tended to turn knowledge into speculation (cf Hatch 1957:137), the young religion had to make sure about its "facts" – in a philosophical way. The founding of a Catechetical School, called the *Didaskaleion*, would be a first step in that direction. In Barrett's words: "The Alexandrian school characterized a theological paradigm, best represented in the work of Clement and Origen. Alexandrian theology maintained an apologetic tradition that Christianity was a revealed philosophy, and from this mentality the catechetical school was derived" (Barrett 2011:4).

Alexandria was a world-famous city, especially renowned for its academic excellence, which resulted in the establishment of schools ("universities") like the *Musaion* (*Shrine of the Muses*) with its library housing 700,000 volumes, as well as the *Serapium* and the *Sebastion*, each with its own huge library (Fogarty 2004:14). This could have been the trigger for the followers of Christ's teachings to start the above-mentioned School. There is great significance in researching the School, as summarised by Malaty (1995:6):

We are in need of studying the thoughts of the School of Alexandria, especially during the period of the first five centuries. It helps us to attain the divine grace of the Holy Trinity and practice the unity with the Father and the Son through the work of the Holy Spirit. It reveals how the early church understands the Holy Scriptures, christianizes the Hellenic culture, and faces heresies.

A second reason for such research is provided by Schaff (Vol 4, 1885:545):

The reader will remember the rise and rapid development of the great Alexandrian school, and the predominance which was

imparted to it by the genius of the illustrious Clement. But in Origen, his pupil, who succeeded him at the surprising age of eighteen, a new sun was to rise upon its noontide. Truly was Alexandria "the mother and mistress of churches" in the benign sense of a nurse and instructress of Christendom, not its arrogant and usurping imperatrix.

These quotations indicate the following:

- This research will reveal how the early church understood the Holy Scriptures.
- Alexandria is seen as the origin or at least one of the origins of Christianity, with the School taking the lead in establishing Christianity in its early phases.

2.2 The *Didaskaleion*

2.2.1 Introductory remarks

In this study the term διδασκαλεῖον (*Didaskaleion*) refers to a school or place of learning (perhaps initially a house). In many passages of Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* the term had this meaning. However, this term also referred to (divine) teaching or doctrine as such, as it can be seen in Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.21.4: "She [Julia Mamaea, the mother of the Emperor Alexander Severus – my addition] was then staying in Antioch and had him [Origen – my addition] sent for with a military escort. After spending some time with her and pointing out to her a great many things that were to the glory of the Lord and that had to do with the excellence of the divine teaching (διδασκαλεῖον), he hastened back to his customary studies."

Eusebius did not only use the term διδασκαλεῖον to refer to the Catechetical School. Van den Hoek (1997:74-75) concluded that there was no fixed term to describe the School and pointed out the following variations used by Eusebius when referring to the School:

- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10.1: διδασκαλεῖον τῶν ἱερῶν λόγων (*school of the sacred words*);

- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.32.30: τὸ διδασκαλεῖον τῆς ἱερᾶς πίστεως (*the school of the sacred faith*);
- *Antiquorum Martyriorum Collectio* 1524, 1.18: τὸ ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ κατηχητικὸν διδασκαλεῖον (*the Catechetical School in Alexandria*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10.4: τὸ κατ' Ἀλεξάνδρειαν διδασκαλεῖον (*the School in Alexandria*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.3.3: τὸ τῆς κατηγήσεως διδασκαλεῖον (*the school of instruction*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10.1: ἡ τῶν πιστῶν διατριβή (*the school of the faithful*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.29.4: ἡ διατριβὴ τῆς κατηγήσεως (*the school of instruction*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.3.8: ἡ τοῦ κατηχεῖν διατριβή (*the school of instruction*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.3.1, 6.4.3: ἡ διατριβή (*the school*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.4.3: ἡ σχολή (*the school*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.3.1: τὸ κατηχεῖν (*the instruction*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.6.1: ἡ κατ' Ἀλεξάνδρειαν κατηγήσις (*the instruction in Alexandria*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.8.1, 3: τὸ ἔργον τῆς κατηγήσεως ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας (*the work of instruction in Alexandria*);
- *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.14.11: τὰ συνήθη τῆς κατηγήσεως (*the customary activities of instruction*).

Clement and Origen refrained from using the term διδασκαλεῖον in their writings, as, during their time, it could also have referred to a heretical religious group with which they did not want to be associated (cf Van den Hoek 1997:74).

Although catechetical schools were introduced in many main centres of Christianity, they had very limited influence as they offered only "an elementary catechism to pagans and new converts alike" (El Masri 1982:13). However, El Masri (1982:13-14) stated that Alexandria took the School to the next level and explained why the School quickly became the centre of "intense intellectual life:"

- The teachers of the School were well versed in Hellenistic literature and philosophy.
- The teachers were also well versed in the books regarded as holy by the young Christian movement – books they obtained from the synagogue.
- Not only students studied at the School, but also men well versed in dialectics, rhetoric and law.

Not only the "simple folk" (El Masri 1982:14) studied at the School – therefore the teachers had to present Christianity in the form of "knowledge, research and wisdom" (El Masri 1982:14).

2.2.2 Was there "in fact" a Catechetical School in Alexandria?

Two main lines of thinking can be distinguished: There are scholars who believed that there was no Catechetical School in Alexandria, or at least not before Clement/Origen, and others who have offered positive arguments to support the existence of the School even before the time of Clement and Origen. The first view point is held by "more recent" scholars:

- In an article written by Annewies Van den Hoek (1997:59-87) she questioned the very notion of a Christian School in Alexandria. Although she did not support the notion that an institutionalised School had existed, she admitted that "teaching and scholarship within the penumbra of the church was a long-established activity in Alexandria well before Origen" (Van den Hoek 1997:76). She further argued that Eusebius created chains of succession of heads of the School "in order to give the organizations of his time an enhanced legitimacy" (Van den Hoek 1997:61) and then continued: "In general, Eusebius's measured comments on the Alexandrian succession and school are verifiable, right down to the ambiguity of its terminology" (Van den Hoek 1997:76).
- Jutta Tloka (2006:112-124) also questioned the existence of a School as she pointed out that Eusebius himself used different expressions when referring to the School during the times of Pantaenus and Clement.
- Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams (2006:78) admitted that a School may have existed, but pointed out that the term διδασκαλεῖον initially referred to an

independent institution that functioned without much structure and that it did not initially depend on the Bishop of Alexandria. Even Origen had to rely on financial support from Ambrosius, as the Bishop did not remunerate him.

- According to Roelof Van den Broek, Eusebius did not work with facts when he pinned down his thoughts on the *Didaskaleion*. He actually worked on hearsay, as he confirmed it himself in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10: "This school has lasted on to our time, and *we have heard* [my emphasis] that it is managed by men powerful in their learning and zeal for divine things." Van den Broek (1995:43) assumed that in the 2nd-century Alexandrian Christianity the teachers were merely laymen, even though they were responsible for "all forms of religious education, from pre-baptismal instruction to high theology." He referred to them as "charismatic διδάσκαλοι, not the holders of academic chairs, incorporated in a school with a fixed curriculum" (Van den Broek 1995:43). This, amongst others, led him to conclude that there had been "no school, in the sense of a Christian academy, with a regular teaching programme" (Van den Broek 1995:43). His argument applied only to the existence of the School before the 3rd century, because he admitted that a Christian School did indeed exist in Alexandria by the second decade of the 3rd century. However, even then the *Didaskaleion* would not have been a "catechetical institute, housed in a separate building possessed by the church" and the teacher would have been a lay teacher "who received his students at home" (Van den Broek 1995:44).
- Clemens Scholten referred to the writings of Eusebius and Clement, postulating that they differed from each other with regard to references to the School in Alexandria. This meant that, during that time, there was "keine Einigkeit in der Interpretation dieser Quellen und damit über den eigentlichen Charakter der alexandrinischen Katechetenschule und ihre Aufgabe und Stellung in der dortige Kirche" [*no consensus on the interpretation of these sources and therefore also not on the very character of the Alexandrian Catechetical School and her role and position in the local church – my translation*] during that time (Scholten 1995:17). He concluded his article by stating that the term (designation) "Catechetical School" should not be applied to the School in Alexandria, because that would create a misunderstanding

(Scholten 1995:37). The School was no place for the instruction of catechumens, but a "theologische Hochschule der dortigen Kirche" [*a theological college of the local church* – my translation] (Scholten 1995:37) that presented the *Quadrivium* and philosophy, especially during the time of Origen.

- Ilaria Ramelli, in her article published in 2009 (Ramelli 2009:136), also mentioned Emanuela Prinzivalli who postulated that there were private schools during the times of Pantaenus and Clement. From Origen onward one could talk of a public School because by then the church in Alexandria was already involved in didactic activities (Prinzivalli 2003:911-937).

Cognisance is taken of the fact that there is no exact evidence of the existence of the *Didaskaleion* in Alexandria, especially before Clement or Origen. It is also true that Eusebius did not work with cold facts, but with interpreted information. Despite this, Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* remains the primary source on this subject, even though his information is (to a certain extent) an unreliable reconstruction based on sketchy evidence that was distorted for his own purposes. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore Eusebius and therefore his writings will be utilised here, though with the necessary caution.

If we accept the existence of the *Didaskaleion* in Alexandria, cognisance must be taken of the fact that there were also other Christian teachers in the Delta City, like Basilides and his son Isidore – during the first quarter of the 2nd century – and Carpocrates and his disciples during the middle of the same century (cf Löhr 2010:171).

Finally the view of El Masri needs also be taken into account. According to her, there were two schools in Alexandria, the one superseding the other: The first one was a "predominantly scientific and literary school," followed by a philosophical and theological school "started even before Christianity" (El Masri 1982:11). Unfortunately she did not elaborate on this finding.



2.2.3 Alexandria and Antioch

The Schools at Alexandria and at Antioch in Syria, founded during the latter half of the 3rd century, were the two major centres for the study of Theology and Biblical exegesis during the time of the Early Church. However, El Masri (1982:13) suggested that all the catechetical schools outside Alexandria "exercised a very limited influence: they offered only an elementary catechism to pagans and new converts alike." Whereas the *Didaskaleion* utilised the allegorical method of interpretation of the Scriptures complemented by a Christology that emphasised a union between man and God, the school of Antioch championed a more literal (occasionally typological) or historical exegesis and a Christology depicting the distinction between man and God in the person of Jesus (McGrath 2013:32).

As the debate on Christology seemed to be somewhat technical, it was an important marker of the increasing importance of these two cities as they were both centres of theological reflection and were places of ecclesiastical leadership (cf McGrath 2013:32). By the end of the 4th century both cities had gained imperial recognition and privilege, while their Bishops were able to voice their views on the location of spiritual authority within the church. However, it was the School in Alexandria that became the centre of "an intense intellectual life" (El Masri 1982:13).

2.2.4 The contribution of Apollos

According to Acts 18:24, Apollos was born in Alexandria, most probably during the first half of the 1st century, and travelled to Ephesus to proclaim the Word of God there. In Ephesus he met Paul, who afterwards constantly mentioned Apollos as a missionary (cf Tit 3:13), in the same vein as Paul referred to himself and Cephas (Peter's original name). In 1 Corinthians 4:6 Paul referred to himself and Apollos as examples of servants of Christ and in 1 Corinthians 16:12 he referred to Apollos as a "brother."

This Apollos allegedly made a strong contribution to establishing the followers of Christ's teachings in Alexandria, which acted as a precursor to the formation of the School. Schaff (Vol 6, 1885:567) provided reasons for treating the rise of the School as an outcrop from the learning and piety of Apollos and explained why he was regarded as a major influence on the School:

- The character and words of "this brilliant Alexandrian" had a significant influence on converts in Alexandria.
- The frequent references made by Alexandrians to Apollos, as Luke did in Acts 18:24, confirmed Schaff's suspicion that they had his good example always before them.
- Since Schaff was convinced that the School was established in Alexandria in apostolic times, he thought that Apollos could have been involved. A "good reason" for Schaff to postulate that Apollos was part and parcel of the establishing of the School, went back to Mark: If Mark was credited with a connection with Alexandria, even though there was no Scriptural evidence, then Apollos should likewise be credited with the same, with one text in his favour, namely Acts 18:26. On the basis of this text, Schaff concluded that Aquila and Priscilla had instructed Apollos to establish catechetical schools for followers of Christ in other places.
- The fact that Clement was silent about Apollos was, according to Schaff, "an objection quite as fatal to the claims of St. Mark."
- The unanimity among the Alexandrians, from Pantaenus onward, in assigning to Paul the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was much debated elsewhere, suggested that they had early evidence (it could be a tradition) on this point. Apollos could have been the source. Clement's testimony about Luke convinced Schaff that Apollos had testified to the Alexandrians that Paul was the author.
- No mention was made of Apollos after 64 CE. Schaff was convinced that he had moved back to Alexandria, bearing the Epistle to Titus and a copy of the Epistle to the Hebrews that had been written during the previous year.

Schaff stated that the genius of Apollos led to the revival of the Delta City and the creation of a succession of scholars who, like him, were "eloquent men, and mighty in the Scriptures" (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:370). This is as worthy of mentioning as all the other speculations regarding the heads of the School and also confirms the presence of people in Alexandria who were serious about teaching and converting others to become followers of Christ's teachings.

2.2.5 Founding and development of the School

According to El Masri (1982:14), the *Didaskaleion* became the "Lighthouse of Christianity" during its time.

2.2.5.1 Background

a. Educational

Since during its Golden Era Alexandria was the metropolis of Egypt, it was also a flourishing seat of commerce and had the biggest and most comprehensive library in the ancient world, which proved that it was one of the greatest learning centres of the Roman Empire.

Apart from the *Musaion*, the *Serapium* and the *Sebastion*, there was also a Christian *Scriptorium* in the city, which had been established in the middle of the 2nd century. This *Scriptorium* was related to the Christian library and it preserved, enlarged and disseminated the collection of the library. The *Scriptorium* already managed the textual transmission of scholars like Philo, as well as the Epistles of Paul and other early Christian writings, which can be traced back to 2nd-century Alexandria. The *Scriptorium*, as the source of collating, editing and copying texts must have had links with the *Didaskaleion* (Van den Hoek 1997:82), producing "biblical texts, established by the methods of textual criticism which had been developed by much earlier Alexandrian scholars for the edition of Greek literary texts" (Van den Broek 1996:201). There also existed a "circle of biblical scholars, Christian γραμματικοί, and well-educated διδάσκαλοι, who knew each other and together were engaged in integrating their Christian belief into the Greek culture they also believed in" (Van den Broek 1996:201-202). Not much is known about these two institutions, leading one to the conclusion that they were established for the local followers of Christ's teachings and therefore did not have the ecumenical character that contributed to making the *Didaskaleion* famous. This environment created the impetus and formed the breeding ground for the founding of a Christian School. The School was advertised abroad and attracted large numbers of students from the Mediterranean world. One of the determinants for these students coming to Alexandria was the *Musaion*, which was the most famous school in the East.

The Catechetical School in Alexandria was the first of its kind teaching theological studies in Christian antiquity. Wilken (1984:15, 18) elaborated on this point:

The teachers of Alexandria were not interested solely in conveying knowledge or transmitting intellectual skills. They were interested in moral and spiritual formation. The course of studies was intellectual in the sense that students read and analyzed books and learned the techniques of debate and argumentation, but this activity was closely tied to moral training, selfanalysis, and spiritual direction...The school of Alexandria was a school for training in virtue.

Today Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* is still the prime source on this subject. However, this work is (to a certain extent) an unreliable reconstruction based on sketchy evidence and distorted for his own purposes. Nevertheless, as has been mentioned earlier, it is impossible to ignore Eusebius and therefore his writings will be (cautiously) used here.

b. Religious and philosophical

Despite the evidence about education in specifically Alexandria given above, the first centuries of the Common Era were

a time of great transition and unrest. It was a period in which the values by which the ancient world had lived were steadily being uprooted. By the middle of the second century...the Roman Empire was witnessing a succession of barbarian invasions, bloody civil wars, various recurring plagues, famines and economic crises. Moreover, the cosmopolitanism of the Empire, the fusion of races, customs, cultures and religions was gradually destroying the State religion, which had served as the basis of the political, social and intellectual life. This period, which began in the early part of the second century, was one of general material and moral insecurity (Tripolitis 1985:9).

This period also marked an increase in the popularity of the old mysteries of Samothrace and Eleusis. Together with all the mysteries, cults and religions,

philosophy was also trying to offer a solution to the spiritual needs of the masses. As the scepticism of the Epicureans and the ascetic ideals of the Stoics had influenced the lives of the intellectuals for over four centuries, they started to once again embrace Platonism as they felt that the writings of Plato could satisfy their spiritual needs. This marked the beginning of a new Platonism "which had absorbed many of the ideas of Aristotle, the Stoics and the neo-Pythagoreans" (Tripolitis 1985:10) and had influenced the thoughts of various philosophical and religious movements of the time. This culminated in a philosophical movement called "Middle Platonism" during the latter half of the 2nd century.

Middle Platonism's most significant contribution was that it brought together and equated Aristotle's *Supreme Divine Mind* and the Platonic *World of Forms and Ideas*. It also suggested a hierarchy of three divine primary beings:

- At the head was the Divine Mind, also called the Supreme God, acknowledged as the First Principle of reality. The Platonic ideas belonged to this category.
- The Supreme God, who was not a creator, derived from himself a second Mind or God – a second principle – who was subordinate to and dependent on him. This second Mind created and governed the earth.
- The third principle was called the World Soul. Middle Platonism postulated that human souls were part of the Divine Mind. They have ascended to earth (the material world) and received bodies.

According to Middle Platonism, mankind had one object and that was to free itself from the material world and return to the Divine. The influence of philosophy on the School will be discussed later in this Chapter.

2.2.5.2 The founding of the School

The exact date on which the Catechetical School in Alexandria was founded is not known. As will be discussed below (cf the sub-heading "Mark the Evangelist"), Malaty (1995:208) postulated that the School was established by Mark in the early part of the 5th decade CE. Malaty based this conclusion on Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.16 according to which Mark had *visited* Alexandria and *preached*

there. This could at least be a starting point for assuming that the School's "early beginnings" could be placed around the middle of the 1st century CE. This would then also be an allusion to Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10 where he referred to the School as "of old a school of sacred learning," but did not mention a specific date.

In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.6.1 Eusebius was more explicit regarding the founding of the School: "Clement, who succeeded Pantaenus, was head of the catechetical instruction (*Didaskaleion*) at Alexandria up to such a time that Origen also was one of his students." From this passage (cf also *The Christian Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt* 2006) it can be deduced that the School was probably founded by Pantainos (mostly referred to as Pantaenus), who was referred to by Eusebius as, amongst others, a *Didaskaleion* (as mentioned above) – the Greek term for a place where people/students/catechumens were taught. This would have been from the middle to the last part of the 2nd century CE (cf the sub-heading "Pantaenus"). Fogarty (2004:29) supported this view by stating that the School was established roundabout the middle of the 2nd century CE. At that stage a considerable number of followers of Christ's teachings, most of them Jewish, already resided in Alexandria.

According to Van den Broek (1996:200-201), the School only started functioning as a Christian academy during the time of Origen in the second decade of the 3rd century. He therefore did not regard either Pantaenus or Clement as heads of the School. His view, already being mentioned, will be elaborated on later in this Chapter.

The discussion of the heads will start with Mark and proceed with all those mentioned in any of the sources as possible heads of the School.

2.2.5.3 The development of the School

The first two centuries of Christianity in Alexandria were marked by relative peace, which gave the new religion in the Delta City time to establish itself and to consolidate (Neale 1850:12). During that time it developed and its number of adherents, which included members of the other nations living there, increased considerably. This led to the establishment of the Catechetical School with a view to promoting the ideas of the new religion and countering the pagan philosophical

schools (Fogarty 2004:29). The School began in a humble way as a Catechetical School. Initially it must have been like a Sunday School held at the home of the teacher, to prepare the students ("catechumens") for baptism. It could be described as a place where a "voluntary, unofficial group of scholars interested in the study and exposition of the Scriptures" gathered (Tripolitis 1985:5).

Candidates were admitted to the School to study the Christian faith and the Bible in order to qualify for baptism. Rees (1969:15) described the activities at the School as follows:

The most renowned intellectual institution in the early Christian world was undoubtedly the Catechetical School (*Didascaleion*) of Alexandria, and its primary concern was the study of the Bible, giving its name to an influential tradition of scriptural interpretation. The preoccupation of this school of exegesis was to discover everywhere the spiritual sense underlying the written word of the Scripture.

Hägg (2006:56) concurred with Rees that the School in its early stages was nothing more than an "institution of the church to prepare the catechumens for baptism."

When Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.6.1) first introduced the School of Pantaenus, he implied that catechetical instruction was part of a long-standing tradition of Biblical scholarship. From that it can be concluded that the School was exactly what its name implied: A Christian school most probably attended at a teacher's private house. The School and the number of followers of Christ's teachings continued growing and spread among the people who adhered to Judaism and the pagans residing in Alexandria. It was open to all people, regardless of their culture, age or background. Since the culture of Hellenism still prevailed (McGrath 2013:27), even though the Romans had conquered most of the known world including Egypt, the language of teaching would have been Greek (cf Fogarty 2004:29).

The Catechetical School soon evolved into a fully-fledged School "to meet the needs of a growing Church within a cosmopolitan educated community" (Tripolitis 1985:6). The aim of the School was to instruct learned men in the doctrines and usages of the

church, to prepare believers to meet the arguments of the philosophers and to train teachers (cf Seeley 1914:106). "The early Christian teachers developed a pedagogy which incorporated demanding intellectual thought alongside evangelism" (Barrett 2011:71).

One may well wonder what the educational standards or qualities of these first teachers were. According to Fogarty (2004:29), "The teachers at the school were Greek-trained and the educational principles of the school were thus firmly in Hellenism...The Greek philosophical training of proselytes was thus a feature from the start, in itself opening the window on gradual departure from the Jewish customs the early believers would have engaged in" (cf also McGrath 2013:27). Van den Broek argued in the same vein, though more critically, stating that the teachers in Alexandria who preceded Clement were "no ecclesiastical officials but laymen" (Van den Broek 1996:200-201).

Although the first impression would be that the School's teaching was limited to theological subjects and Christian philosophy, this was not the case, as Science, Mathematics, Greek and Roman literature, Logic and Arts were included in the syllabus (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.18.3). The teaching was encyclopaedic: To start with, the students were presented with the whole series of profane sciences, after which the teaching would become more focused on moral and religious philosophy and finally on Christian Theology (Malaty 1995:13). This encyclopaedic method of teaching was an Alexandrian tradition and was also followed in the Alexandrian pagan and Jewish schools. The question-and-answer method of commentary began here and, fifteen centuries before Braille was developed, wood-carving techniques were already used here to enable blind scholars to read and write (*St. Marks Coptic Church, Melbourne* sa). The *Didaskaleion* became the oldest centre for sacred sciences in the history of Christianity. This School was the first to develop a system of Christian Theology, as well as the allegorical method of Biblical exegesis which better promoted a holistic interpretation of history (Barrett 2011:1).

Malaty (1995:11-13) listed a number of reasons why the School became influential during the 2nd century:

- The Alexandrian Christians were enriched with religious knowledge at an academic level.
- Numerous spiritual and well-known church leaders received their instruction at the School.
- Through her missionary zeal, many foreigners/pagans in Egypt were converted.
- Because of her ecumenical character, many foreign students studied at the School and became leaders in their own churches.
- The School was a symbol of the importance of education as a basic element in religion.
- This School was the first in her class to offer the world a systematic theological study.
- The School utilised philosophy to deal with the strong philosophical (pagan) Greek element in Alexandria.
- Despite being a church School, the *Didaskaleion* did not interfere in church matters and the organisation of the church of its day.

Duncan (2011:16) stated that the School was only loosely attached to the church and at first did not have any attachments to a local Bishop (cf also Osborn 2005:19). Furthermore, Vrettos (2001:176) placed the School at the same level as the Greek philosophical schools. However, since the School provided instruction to catechumens, it seems likely that there would have been an established relationship between the School and the church, as Malaty recorded that during the time of Justus/Yostius (cf below), one of the earlier heads of the School, the Bishop (sometimes also referred to as "Pope") "took care" of the institution (Malaty 1995:184). Therefore, according to Malaty, as cited in the paragraph above, the School was not a philosophical school, but used philosophy to deal with the strong philosophical element in Alexandria.

The School flourished in Clement's time, probably because he accessed the existing libraries more than his predecessors and was well educated in Greek philosophy. Osborn (2005:20) said that the School was "later to be seen as a triumph of divine providence in which Christianity and classical culture were brought together."

The School seemingly became an institutionalised Christian school and the first Christian "university," (according to Oden 2011:254, it "nurtured the idea of a university") instructing the students in a wide range of disciplines (cf Behr, Louth, & Conomos 2003:48). Duncan (2011:16) suggested that "[i]t was regarded with suspicion by uneducated Christians and with jealousy by ecclesiastics."

2.2.6 The demise of the *Didaskaleion*

Van den Broek (1996:205) recorded the demise of the School as follows:

After Didymus' death [395/398 CE – my addition], the School ceased to exist. Bishop Theophilus (385-412), the declared enemy of paganism and Greek culture, no longer accepted independent theological speculation. From then on, only the bishop was held to be competent in matters of doctrine, he decided what kind of theology had to be taught in his church.

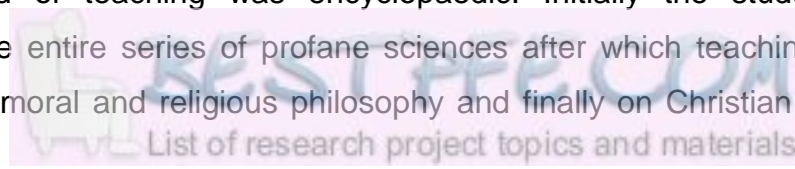
Although Van den Broek might have been justified in recording the cessation of the School's activities following Didymus' death, there was allegedly one head to come after him, namely Rhodon, as stated below.

2.2.7 The School today

The Theological College of the Catechetical School of Alexandria was re-established in 1893. The new school currently has campuses in Alexandria, Cairo, New Jersey and Los Angeles, where Coptic priests-to-be and other qualified men and women are taught subjects such as Christian Theology, History, Coptic Language and Art – including chanting, Music, Iconography and tapestry (*St. Marks Coptic Church, Melbourne* sa).

2.3 Teachings of the School

The teachings of the School have already been alluded to under the previous sub-headings. As has been said, the students (including the catechumens) did not only study Theology or theological subjects, but also other subjects (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.18.3), while the method of teaching was encyclopaedic: Initially the students were presented with the entire series of profane sciences after which teaching became more focused on moral and religious philosophy and finally on Christian Theology.



According to Malaty (1994:13), and based on the main works of Clement, the School presented three main courses, namely

1. a special course for non-Christians, which introduced them to principles of Christianity;
2. a course on Christian morals;
3. an advanced course on divine wisdom and sufficient knowledge for the spiritual Christian.

The School not only taught students how to become Christians, but also exposed them to Christianity in practice. The students were taught how to pray, how to fast and how to practise different ways of asceticism. Besides purity and integrity, they were also encouraged to remain celibate (Malaty 1994:13).

2.3.1 Philo Judaeus

Before discussing the forms of teaching applied in the School, it is necessary to refer to Philo Judaeus (also known as Philo [of Alexandria]), who had a major influence on the heads of the School. Philo (20 BCE to 50 CE), a contemporary of Christ and a renowned scholar and Jewish philosophical historian and writer – therefore a historian *cum* philosopher – lived in Alexandria during the early days of Christianity. He devoted himself to Greek and Jewish thought and was often torn between the two traditions. He held the view that the Greek philosophers were to some extent influenced by the Torah (cf Barrett 2011:6). Philo's "influence upon developing Christian thought is as certain as the origin and first beginnings of the Christian gospel in Alexandria, where later these influences were to be so profound, are unknown" (Enslin 1954:216).

Clement and Origen were acquainted with Philo's works. They used his Biblical interpretations and followed his Platonic ways of thinking. This combination, in which the Platonic underpinnings corroborated their Biblical explorations, could represent their greatest debt to Philo (cf Van den Hoek 1997:79). The works of Philo seemed to have been a fixture in the libraries of both Clement and Origen. Philo's works had a marked influence on Clement, whose writings written in Alexandria showed that he had access to the majority of the Philonic treatises. However, in his last three *Stromateis* (*Miscellanies*) and other works written after he had left the city, the

number of citations from Philo decreased considerably to only a few literal quotations from the *Quaestiones in Genesim* (Van den Hoek 1997:84). Philo thought that the Jewish religious views could also be expressed in the language of Greek philosophy (Hägg 2006:60). Following Philo, Clement held that there was only one truth and "therefore, any truth to be found in Plato can be no other than the truth that has been revealed in Jesus Christ and in Scripture" (González 2010:72).

Origen saw to it that this bibliographic tradition continued to spread, for when he moved to Caesarea, taking his books and scrolls with him, his collection included writings of Philo. His library became the basis for the libraries of the presbyter Pamphilus (also called Pamphilius) and Eusebius, and some of the extant medieval manuscripts of Philo were copies of texts transmitted through the Caesarean library (Van den Hoek 1997:83).

2.3.2 Forms of teaching in the School

The three most prominent forms of teaching in the School were allegorism, philosophy and *gnosis* (the teaching of knowledge).

2.3.2.1 Allegorism

The roots of allegorism lay in the Jewish rabbinical treatment of Old Testament texts, as well in the Greek philosophy, especially Stoicism and Platonism as it was found in Alexandria (cf Ramelli 2011b:570). Philo supported mystical and allegorical interpretations rather than literal meaning. He excelled at allegory and was "tagged" by some scholars as the master, even inventor (cf Schaff Vol 9, 1885:530) of allegorism in Alexandria (cf McGrath 2013:27): "Philo's endorsement of allegorical interpretation and intellectual study initiated a trend of historiography which would influence the teachings of Paul as well as pervade the catechetical school of Clement and Origen" (Barrett 2011:7).

In Philo, Greek and rabbinical learning met. While Scripture was regarded as the divine authority to furnish evidence of Greek philosophical doctrines, the allegorical method of interpretation was employed to perform this large service (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:530). He therefore utilised allegorism systematically to bridge the gap between the Old Testament revelation and the Platonic philosophy. According to Philo, all the

wisdom required for Judaism was contained in the Pentateuch. He discovered many ideas in the Pentateuch that had been concealed even from "Moses" whom he regarded as the author of the Pentateuch.

Although this method was in use before the time of Clement and Origen, it was through them, especially through Origen (cf Boyarin 2010:38-54), that it became firmly established in the School and also in the church. The Alexandrian School believed that the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures simultaneously hides and reveals the truth. While on the one hand it hides the truth from the uninstructed who will not be able to understand it, on the other hand it reveals the truth to the believer. Clement is considered to be the first Christian writer to use this method, alluding to the Bible as a book full of hidden meanings and encouraging the (faithful) reader to search and discover the truth. This made Alexandria the place where allegorism originated (cf Schaff Vol 9, 1885:530). Ramelli (2011a:336) called the method they used *allegoresis*, which can be defined as "the allegorical exegesis of myths, rituals, etc."

According to Duncan (2011:17), allegorism was used within a set of exegetical principles:

- When using allegorical interpretation, the interpreter had to preserve the primary meaning of the text, unless the text itself contradicted the dignity and character of God.
- Each text had to be interpreted in the light of the rest of Scripture, thus within its context.

It is said that an allegorical interpretation better promoted a holistic interpretation of history (Barrett 2011:1).

2.3.2.2 Philosophy

Justin Martyr spoke of Christianity as a philosophy. He was correct, because in his time this term referred only to a "set of ideas" and not to philosophy as it is understood today (McGrath 2013:22). At the time philosophy was both a way of thinking and a way of living. Barrett (2011:6) referred to the acceptance of

philosophy by the followers of Christ's teachings as follows: "Christianity entered as an innovative character on the already established academic scene. The presence of Judaism in Alexandria as Christianity began to assimilate into the culture provoked Christian attention to philosophical development." In the Empire the most important influence of philosophy came from the Greeks and not the Romans. In the words of Malaty (1995:153-154): "Roman power and Roman law controlled the military, political, social, and economic life of the empire; Greek thinking controlled the minds of men."

Athenagoras, the teacher of Pantaenus, can be considered to have been the first Christian known to have had a tendency towards philosophy. As the School made use of encyclopaedic teaching, there was a clear interest in science and philosophy. It was believed that the study of philosophy and rhetoric were the two main ways to accomplish a complete education. Duncan (2011:16) referred to their way of dealing with philosophy as follows: "It challenged existing philosophical systems yet recognised aspects of truth in them: it was sympathetic to pagan systems."

Barrett (2011:82) pointed out that "Philo initiated the manner of defending Christianity within paradigms of Greek philosophy by attempting to wed Judaism with Greek philosophy." The School followed Philo by explaining Christian beliefs in the light of Greek philosophy (Hatch 1957:129). In doing so, they wanted to demonstrate a similarity between the best of Hellenistic thought and their own sophisticated versions of the Christian message (Olson 1999:55). In their evangelical efforts the early Christians blended their Christian life and worldview with Platonism and Stoicism that qualified mainstream Greek philosophy. Stoicism was, however, soon to die in Alexandria and was replaced by neo-Platonism, which was a mixture of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, with the mysticism of Pythagoras added to it (Duncan 2011:16).

The early Christians shared with the philosophers the belief in monotheism – in contrast to the pagan religions. As polytheism had become an embarrassment in many pagan circles, the monotheism of Christianity appealed to the intellect of the people (Stark 2007:322). Olson (1999:56) stated: "Most educated and thoughtful people of the empire considered 'true doctrine' to include belief in a single deity

whose exact identity is beyond human knowledge but who shaped the universe and rules over it as a kind of benevolent and just despot." Barrett (2011:82) said the following: "From this point of agreement among educated people, Greek and Christian, philosophical and theological conversations blended as the concept of God became the subject of cosmological discussion." Philosophy slowly but surely started to soak Alexandrian Christianity, up to the point where faith and philosophy became intertwined.

Referring to Paul's use of philosophy, Barrett (2011:97) stated: "Extending from Philo's initiation of combining philosophies, Paul utilized similar tactics when explaining the details of Christianity with Greek philosophers in Athens. In his approach, Paul initiated a complementary relationship between Christians and intellectuals which would be reflected in the work of Clement and Origen in Alexandria." Paul preferred to look for openings and places where he could lay some common ground. He looked for entry points that would lead to the proclamation of the gospel. In the same way the School promoted a cohesion of Christian and philosophical ideas, despite the differences.

Though Christianity was still young, philosophy offered an expansive heritage which Clement and Origen used as foundation for their theological viewpoint and spiritual discipleship (cf Barrett 2011:98). Macleod (2002:148) stated that Platonic thoughts coincided with the development of Christian Theology and that there were areas of contact and commonality between the two ideologies. The Greek philosophy that was implemented "contended strongly for the spiritual nature of the reality behind and beneath all visible things" (Olson 1999:56). As the Platonists were dismissive of the books of the Bible because of the poor Greek in which they were written, the School undertook with their writings the task of reconciling the books of the Bible to Hellenism, in particular with the philosophy of Plato. Added to this, they used philosophy as a weapon against Gnosticism.

Plato and Aristotle discussed theories regarding the Greek *polis* (*city*). In this regard Barrett postulated: "The goal of the Greek *polis* was the common good, which was achieved through shared responsibilities. The Alexandrian school reflects the ideal of

the Greek *polis* as educational responsibilities were shared between Christian and philosophical ideas" (Barrett 2011:7).

Plato (429-347 BCE), one of the greatest philosophers in Western history, in particular played a role in ensuring Clement's high regard for philosophy. Plato followed his teacher Socrates (470-399 BCE) who devoted his life to philosophical study (Cantor 2003:18-19). Socrates described self-knowledge as a more pertinent issue than empirical inquiry. This means that a person should be able to explain *why* s/he plans to do something, before s/he thinks about *how* it should be done. This made Socrates hesitant about putting any of his teachings in writing, or to express it in words in any way. Plato differed from Socrates in that he wrote extensively.

The most influential Platonic belief on early Christian thought was the teaching on the nature of God (Lynch 2010:35). When the Platonists referred to "the One," they had the origin of everything in mind. Plato regarded "the One" as "beyond description and beyond human understanding" (Lynch 2010:35). This was acceptable to Christianity: Just as God had a Mediator, philosophy also had one, called the *logos* (*word*), to interact with humanity. Plato also believed in a triad at the centre of the universe. Clement made ample use of this (cf Barrett 2011:24).

When early Christians came into contact with eastern religions and heretical movements, specifically Gnosticism, they were confronted with the perspective of "time and history as limited, if not illusory" (Barrett 2011:84; cf Olson 1999:81). With this perspective the eternal was overemphasised, while the significance of physical existence was minimised. The Alexandrian Christians, however, recognised the danger of diminishing the value of earthly purpose. In this way they combined the best of Greek thought with Christian beliefs – principles that established the foundations for Christian education. Christian education focused on the pursuit of truth in conjunction with philosophical methodologies.

According to Clement, much of the Christian doctrine was based on Plato's philosophy (cf Barrett 2011:25). In his teachings Clement acknowledged Plato's four "cardinal virtues," which he included in his Christian philosophy: Wisdom, courage, self-control and justice (also cohesive with Philonic thought; cf Barrett 2011:26). It

was Hägg's conviction that Clement did not only want to offer Christianity as the fulfilment of philosophy, but also encouraged Christians to find the truth in philosophy (Hägg 2006:218), since true philosophy was seen as the love of truth and a striving to know the true God (cf Behr *et al* 2003:49). Knowledge of the true God offered a way to contemplate the original harmony of the cosmos (cf MacCulloch 2009:124).

Clement held that the Greeks received philosophy in the same way the Jews had received the Law from God (*Strom* 6.17). Both of them were precursors of the ultimate truth being revealed in Christ. However, Christianity was the true philosophy that fulfilled Greek philosophy. He held that "the complete Christian is marked by knowledge, perfection, progress, and prayer" (cf Osborn 2005:269). His work brought about a shift in history and caused Greek philosophy to become more compatible with Christianity. The term "Logos" was used (represented) in both Greek philosophy and Christianity. In Greek philosophy it referred to the "rational order of the universe, and immanent natural law, a life-giving force hidden in things" (Stark 2007:322). Clement's exposition of the divine *Logos* "formed the basis for Christological thought to follow" (Barrett 2011:31).

2.3.2.3 *Gnosis*

Gnosticism has already been discussed in the previous Chapter. There was a difference between the Gnostic sect/s in Alexandria and the *gnosis* that the School applied. Here it is best to refer to Clement's use of the term (cf his *Strom* 2.19, 20; 4.21; 6.9, 10, 12, 16, 18; 7.1, 3, 7, 8, 11-14). According to him, a Christian *Gnostic* is an orthodox Christian who received the divine *gnosis* (*knowledge*) from the Holy Spirit by illumination through Christ (the *Logos*) within the church's traditional beliefs (*Strom* 2.10). Clement held that every Christian is a true Gnostic, perfected in knowledge, thus stating that faith is the criterion of knowledge. Clement's idea of faith implied that it is rational. The Gnostics penetrated beyond the literal surface to the symbolic. Faith was essential, but only as a first step to understanding the divine mysteries (cf Sellers 1940:13). Clement was in favour of the study of secular sciences and philosophy. If a Christian was learned, he would be able to distinguish between truth and a lie and he would guard Christian faith against its enemies. He stated that if a person lacked true reason, his perspective could be corrupted (cf Barrett 2011:87).

Clement regarded Christ as the source of *gnosis* by the grace of the Father (*Strom* 7.10), granting one her/his knowledge through baptism and by reading the Scriptures. He regarded *gnosis* as the principle and author of every action one had to take in order to conform to the *Logos*. According to him, the true Gnostic had a desire for knowledge, struggled to practise goodness and made effort with prayer, witnessing to God daily (as a martyr) and never feared death. This person had to know, see and possess God – this almost made one equal to the angels.

Contrary to the view of the Gnostics, Clement held that "gnosis is often used as an equivalent of God's message in Scripture, also called a mystery" (Hägg 2006:151). He therefore interpreted *gnosis* to be a mystery of God and even as the divine *Logos*. Faith was the necessary foundation for *gnosis*. Thus, in order to have *gnosis*, one first has to believe. To get *gnosis* of God, one has to love God. For Clement *gnosis* was the "door to a higher form of Christian spiritual life" (MacCulloch 2009:148).

Clement's use of *gnosis* evoked suspicion among the Christians (Hägg 2006:32). According to Clement (*Strom* 7), a true Gnostic was a "person of wisdom who lives off the mind and shuns the lower life of the pursuit of bodily desires and pleasures...becoming Godlike in virtue and wisdom" (Olson 1999:88). A true Gnostic would develop as many attributes of God as possible. This could be the reason why Clement devoted much of his writing (especially his *Strom*) to *gnosis* to contradict the way in which the term was used by the proponents of Gnosticism. Clement devoted his *Stromateis* to his epistemology – a philosophical understanding of knowledge (cf Barrett 2011:28). Clement referred to two kinds of knowledge in his writings:

- Spiritual knowledge, referring to the truth found in Christianity.
- Logical knowledge, addressing reason.

Both of these kinds of knowledge were said to be dependent on faith as a foundation to find knowledge in God. In both of these kinds of knowledge, faith and reason would function cohesively: Faith would be the starting point, with reason building on it. Clement remarked: "Christians who are content with faith, and do not use reason

to build upon it, are again like a child who is forever content with milk" (*Strom* 5.11; cf González 2010:73).

Despite all of this, Clement maintained that God can only be known through the mediation of the Son (cf Hägg 2006:212): "In knowing God, Clement emphasized developing a conception of God rather than attempting to describe God. Attempting a description of God, Clement employed negative language to describe who God is not. This method is termed *via negativa*."

2.4 Characteristics of the School

Although Malaty (1995:15-29) had distinguished six characteristics of the School, a seventh characteristic that formed an implicit part of most of the teachings is added in this study – that characteristic is apology.

2.4.1 Deification

Deification was the core of Alexandrian Theology. With the term "deification" the Alexandrians had in mind the renewal of human nature as a whole. This renewal would include the discarding of the corrupt human nature in order to share in the characteristics of Jesus Christ. They based their view on two verses from the Scriptures, namely 2 Peter 1:4 (partaking in Jesus' divine nature) and Colossians 3:10 (the renewal in knowledge in the image of the Creator). Clement made two references in that context:

- In *Quis Dives Salvetur* 37 he referred to Jesus: "For this he came down, for this he assumed human nature, for this he willingly endured the suffering of man, that by being reduced to the measure of our weakness *he might raise us to the measure of his power*."
- In *Protrepticus* 1.8.4 he stated: "The Word of God became man just that you may learn from a Man how it may be *that man should become godly*."

The Holy Spirit was seen as the one who was to renew human nature so that it could achieve close unity with the Father and the Son.

2.4.2 Oneness of life

The aim of the School was to integrate the students' study of religion, philosophy and science with both their church life and their daily life. The Christian life should be a response to divine revelation. This culminated in the heads and students being true worshippers, ascetics and preachers.

2.4.3 Soteriological Theology

The School did not present God as a mere idea to believe in, but as a Reality – the Saviour who was recognised through his redeeming deeds to mankind. This was the basic principle of the Alexandrian Theology. The School advocated a close relationship between (the acquisition of) theological knowledge and salvation.

2.4.4 Penance and repentance

Alexandrian Theology was soteriological and therefore penance and repentance were preconditions. Origen, in his *Second Homily to Leviticus 1-4*, summarised the seven ways in which sins could be forgiven: These were baptism, martyrdom, almsgiving, forgiving your neighbour's sins, restoring a sinner, abundance of charity, and penance (having true remorse for one's sins, confessing them to a priest of the Lord and asking him for a remedy).

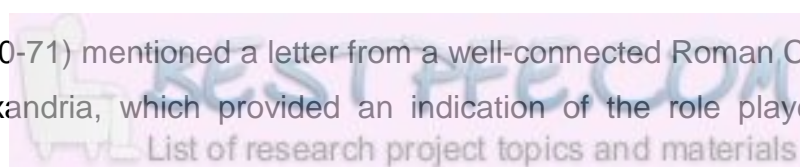
2.4.5 Theological terms and definitions

Being ensconced in Hellenism, the School mostly utilised Greek philosophical terms to explain Christian doctrines and to deal with the philosophers and heretics around them. However, these terms did not define their theological terminology at all.

2.4.6 Ecumenical spirit

The School practised ecumenism by attracting quite a few foreign students to come and study Theology. The heads of the School set an example by being actively involved in the universal church, like Origen who visited Rome, Caesarea, Arabia and Tyre. The Alexandrian Theologians also played a pivotal role at the Ecumenical Councils.

El-Abbadi (1993:70-71) mentioned a letter from a well-connected Roman Christian to Christians in Alexandria, which provided an indication of the role played by the



Alexandrian School as a link between the Egyptian Christians and those elsewhere in the world. That letter referred to "Papa Maximus," the Bishop of Alexandria and therefore signified, according to El-Abbadi, the recognition by Christians elsewhere of the Bishop's status as head of Egypt's Christians.

2.4.7 Apology

As Christianity developed in Alexandria, so did all the other religions, cults and philosophies. The champions of the newly founded religion had to defend this religion against all the others and this developed into an early Christian apology. The early apologists in Alexandria may be referred to as the Egyptian Christian apologists (cf Fogarty 2004:124). Apology prevailed from the late 1st century onwards, until at least the 5th century.

Christian apology had its origin in the ἀπολογία (legal defence speech) first used by a rhetoric teacher, Antiphon of Rhamnus, in the 5th century BCE (cf Ulrich 2014a:7). The first ancient writer to use the term "apology" was Eusebius, in a reference to a collection of early texts that defended the Christians, contained in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.8.3 and 17.1.

Because the *Sitz im Leben* of the earliest Christians differed from the classical defence speeches, the writers did not refer to their texts as apologies, but rather as letters, objections, applications or petitions (Ulrich 2014a:7). An apologetic work was mostly "addressed to someone who was hostile to Christianity" (Hyldahl 2014:139). As these apologies mostly circulated within the Christian group, the addressee was in many cases only a "literary device" (Hyldahl 2014:140). As the Christians read the document, it would strengthen them and help them to remain true to their Christian faith, especially during the times of persecution.

Three factors gave rise to the founding of the "early Christian apologetics" (Ulrich 2014a:1), obviously before Constantine:

- Apology was founded for the sake of defence and evangelism.

- The earliest Christians needed to relate to outsiders who thought that their faith was just another religion in the Roman Empire. Misunderstandings had to be replaced by the truth.
- The apologists wanted to give elucidatory answers to questions asked by the followers of Christ's teachings, like:
 - "How should one react to the persecution of Christians and the threat of martyrdom?"
 - "How could one lobby for the abolition of these persecutions?"
 - "What does the Roman Empire gain from allowing Christian worship in its territory?"

As Christianity was still in its infancy, these writers tried to explain the basic principles of the new religion so as to show the real character and conduct of the followers of Christ's teachings. They tried to wipe out the prejudice that led the Emperors to sanction the violent persecutions of the adherents (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:496). Their writings showed that their religion offered a philosophy as well as a divine revelation. They argued against polytheism and pointed out its disastrous effects on morality. The apologists played an important role because:

- they held a mirror to the conflicting aspects of various belief systems;
- they made the first real attempt to systematise the Christian religion, which contributed much to the development of a Theology;
- their writings supplemented the reading of Scriptures;
- in this way they contributed to the spread of the Christian religion, for both believers and non-believers (cf Fogarty 2004:124).

Aristides and Quadratus were the first apologists. While the latter's work was lost in total, the former's *Apology* was discovered in 1889. This *Apology* dates back to 125 CE when Aristides presented it to Emperor Hadrian (Pedersen 2014:35; cf Schaff Vol 9, 1885:499). Athenagoras wrote in the latter part of the 1st century and produced two apologetic works called *Legatio (Pleading [for Christians])* and *De Resurrectione (About the resurrection from the dead)*. Justin Martyr, who reached his zenith during the middle of the 2nd century (cf Ulrich 2014b:51-66) headed the group of apologists whose works are extant and who all wrote in Greek: They include Tatian (cf

Falkenberg 2014:67-79), Melito, Theophilus and the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*. There were also Latin apologists during the 2nd century, like Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Arnobius and Lactantius (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:496).

Clement and Origen were 2nd-/3rd-century apologists whose "contributions in the formulation of early Christianity were of a scope and depth seldom, if ever, matched by any of their successors" (Fogarty 2004:124). Origen's *Contra Celsum* was an outstanding apologetic work, though it did not have much influence on the church of its time (cf *Coptic Orthodox Church Network* sa). Clement wrote apologetic works against Gnostics like Valentinus (Rome), Basilides (he and his son Isidore were teachers in Alexandria) and Theodotus (also in Rome). Although Hyldahl (2014:139) maintained that Clement did not write a "proper apology or apologetic work," his *Protrepticus* is a fine example of good apology (cf Chapter 3).

A century after Clement and Origen wrote their apologies, Augustine of Hippo (in North Africa) also made valuable contributions. His writings showed a distinct change from the work of the first two apologists as they were more directed at Roman audiences and concerns, which were far removed from the distinctly Hellenistic philosophical world in which the Alexandrians had worked. Augustine's writings therefore reflected the transition that was occurring in Christianity away from Egypt and Africa towards the Roman and Western world.

The apologists wrote against sharp criticism that ranged "from sporadic persecution to quite spurious claims by pagans that the Christians engaged in immoral acts such as promiscuity, and even cannibalism, at their secret meetings" (Fogarty 2004:124). Some of the apologists' writings (especially Tertullian's) sometimes contained heated and sarcastic remarks.

2.5 Heads of the School

There is much "vagueness" regarding the heads of the *Didaskaleion* in Alexandria. First, there is the question about whether such a school did in fact exist, as mentioned earlier in the Chapter. Second, concerning the heads of the School, not a single historian (with the exception of Philip Sidetes) who discussed the events surrounding the early church with reference to Alexandria, provided a list of heads

that would be acceptable today. Not one article or book could be found that explicitly discussed all the possible heads. The following three scholars provided some information in this regard that could be utilised:

- During the first half of the 4th century Eusebius, without intending to provide his readers with a list, referred to eight heads in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*.
- At the beginning of the 5th century Philip Sidetes, referred to as a Pamphylian (Berry 2007:58) because he was born in Side, better known as Iconium in Pamphylia, wrote a "voluminous but chaotic *Christian History*" (Van den Broek 1996:199) of which only fragments remained. In Book 24, also called the *Twenty-fourth Logos* and now only known as *Fragment 2*, of his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, written between 434 and 439, he listed thirteen heads of the School, or "teachers" as he called them. This was the only attempt to provide a list of the heads that could be found. Unfortunately, in the extant fragments of this document no reasons were given for the sequence in which he arranged the heads, nor could any explanation be found why he omitted those mentioned here. It could be an editorial error on his side, also because he did not elaborate on this.
- Iris Habib el Masri was born in 1910 in a Coptic family. It is interesting to note that in Arabic the surname El Masri means *The Egyptian*. Her father was secretary to the General Congregation Council of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt. In 1982 she wrote a book called *The Story of the Copts: The true story of Christianity in Egypt*, in which she named fourteen heads of the School, without pertinently listing them.

The following is a comparison between the three "lists," complemented by an integrated list:

Eusebius of Caesarea		Philip Sidetes		El Masri		Integrated list	
1.	Mark	1.	Athenagoras	1.	Athenagoras	1.	Mark the Evangelist
2.	Pantaenus	2.	Pantaenus	2.	Justus	2.	Justus
3.	Clement	3.	Origen	3.	Eumanius	3.	Eumanius
4.	Origen	4.	Heraclas	4.	Marianus	4.	Marianus
5.	Heraclas	5.	Dionysius Magnus	5.	Pantaenus	5.	Athenagoras
6.	Dionysius Magnus	6.	Clement	6.	Clement	6.	Pantaenus
7.	Pierius	7.	Pierius	7.	Origen	7.	Clement
8.	Peter the Martyr	8.	Theognostus	8.	Heraclas	8.	Origen
		9.	Serapion	9.	Dionysius	9.	Heraclas
		10.	Peter the Martyr	10.	Theognostus	10.	Dionysius Magnus
		11.	Macarius Politicus	11.	Pierius	11.	Theognostus
		12.	Didymus the blind	12.	Peter the Martyr	12.	Pierius
		13.	Rhodon	13.	Achillas	13.	Achillas
				14.	Didymus the blind	14.	Peter the Martyr
						15.	Serapion
						16.	Macarius Politicus
						17.	Didymus the blind
						18.	Rhodon

- While Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 5.10) was convinced that Mark was the founder of the School, Philip Sidetes assigned that honour to Athenagoras, who lived almost a century after Mark. El Masri (1982:14) concurred with Eusebius that Mark had founded the School, but thought that Athenagoras was the first head, with the implication that Mark appointed both him and his successor, Justus (El Masri 1982:14). The problem with El Masri's postulation is that Athenagoras lived at a time when Mark was already long dead. This means that El Masri had incorrectly placed Athenagoras before instead of after his three predecessors, Justus, Eumanius and Marianus. She acknowledged the fact that Pantaenus and Clement were his students, therefore putting him in the correct time frame with relation to them. One can only wonder why three heads were placed before Pantaenus if he had been a student of Athenagoras. If for some reason El Masri did not want Mark to have been the first head of the School, then Justus would have had to be the first head if her chronology was correct.

- Eusebius left a huge gap between Mark (middle 1st century) and Pantaenus (last part of the 2nd century), which El Masri filled with three heads who allegedly succeeded Athenagoras (in her version) – Justus, Eumanius and Marianus.
- Eusebius and El Masri were chronologically correct in their references to the successors of Pantaenus. However, Eusebius did not mention Theognostus as a "head" between Dionysius Magnus and Pierius, while El Masri did. He also mentioned only one head after Pierius, namely Peter the Martyr who already died in 311. The implication could be that he was of the opinion that after Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 the School was no longer needed, as there was then freedom of religion.
- El Masri (1982:15) related that when Pantaenus was sent to India by Demetrius, he entrusted the School to one of his students named Clement. She did not state that Clement took over from Pantaenus, but only that when Pantaenus returned, he again "assumed" his office as head of the School. It therefore appears as if Clement acted in a temporary capacity and was not at that stage regarded as the (permanent) head of the School.
- In the list of Philip Sidetes the chronological order is not always correct:
 - The obvious "mistake" he made, was to place Clement after Dionysius instead of before Origen. He was seemingly under the impression that Origen was the student of Pantaenus and not of Clement.
 - He swapped Pierius and Theognostus for some reason.
 - He left out Achillas as a possible head after Pierius.
 - He placed Peter the Martyr after Serapion, who in fact died almost half a century after Peter.
- El Masri (1982:75) referred to Achillas as a head of the School, but stated that he was a close disciple of Peter the Martyr and that he succeeded Peter. However, according to Schaff's interpretation of Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 7.32.25, 26), Achillas and Pierius were heads of the School simultaneously, at least for a part of their headship (Schaff Series 2, Vol 1, 1885:828, 830). Schaff's case, supported by Eusebius, seems to be stronger. Although Achillas was the head of the School before Peter, he was the Bishop of Alexandria after Peter, which

could be the reason why El Masri assumed that he also succeeded Peter as head.

- El Masri did not mention either Serapion or Macarius Politicus as heads of the School and, although she did not indicate that Didymus the Blind was the last head of the School, he was the last head to be named in her story.

It was an arduous (but satisfactory) task to decide who the actual heads of the School in Alexandria were. In the end it was decided to "give everyone his due" and to name every possible head of the School that was referred to by any of the writers, even if that might mean that some would be included who did not actually belong there. Clement and Origen are named with most certainty (cf Fogarty 2004:29; Van den Broek 1996:200-201). As there are witnesses for the rest of the mentioned heads, they are inserted in this thesis as they fit well in the chronological table of the School.

In this study the title "head" refers to the person who was in control of the School, or during her early stages, the house. Titles like "dean" and "principal" were also used by scholars, but since those are associated with official institutions, they were considered inappropriate when referring in this study to the School in her early days. The term "head" was therefore chosen as it would fit all the stages of the School, regardless of whether it was still a Sunday School at the head's house, or an institution or even "university."

It seems likely that when the catechumens or students were instructed at specific houses, people might have referred to those houses as churches. In such a case the person in charge of the house would have had a liturgical function combined with the educational function. This role would best be fulfilled by a priest (Van den Hoek 1997:77). This seemed to have been the situation with both Pantaenus and Clement and even before them. In Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.11.6 Alexander, who was the Bishop of Jerusalem, called Clement a πρεσβύτερος, which can be translated as "presbyter" or more likely "priest." Clement (*Prot* 113.1) also called Pantaenus a πρεσβύτερος. Especially during Clement's time, at the beginning of the

3rd century, the πρεσβύτερος had a "position of particular strength" (Van den Hoek 1997:78, referring to Jerome's *Epist* 146.1.6).

Despite this and after exhaustive discussions by scholars such as Munck (1933:174, 185) and Bardy (1937:82, as referred to by Neymeyr 1989:86), it was argued that the School was "essentially independent of the church" (Van den Hoek 1997:71), as has already been indicated.

When reference is made to the "School" and her "heads," these terms merely refer to the *Didaskaleion* and her "teachers," regardless of the *Didaskaleion's* stage of development.

2.5.1 Mark the Evangelist

Born: 5/15 CE

Died: 68 CE

Head of the School: middle 40s to 68 CE (probably not continuously)

Mark was the first of the eyewitnesses to the history of Jesus to preach the good news in a continent that now has almost a half a billion believers (Oden 2011:176). According to the "first historians" (Malaty 1995:208), Eusebius and Jerome (who was one of the later attendees of the School), Mark, one of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem (referred to by Clement as "the follower of Peter" in his *Hyp* 1.1), "founded" the School in the middle of the fifth decade CE (cf *De Vir* 8, 11 where Jerome referred to the School as a "church;" cf Malaty 1995:208). Malaty (1995:10; cf also Oden 2011:243) therefore concluded that Mark was the first head (although Eusebius did not pertinently state that) on the basis of his interpretation of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.16 in which Eusebius mentioned that Mark had been sent to Alexandria to preach there. He regarded that as at least an indication of the "early beginnings" of a school by the middle of the 1st century CE. El Masri (1982:1), citing the *Coptic Annals*, stated that Mark arrived in Egypt in 61 CE. This could be a follow-up on Mark's first visit. El Masri (1982:13, referring to *Hist Eccl* 5.10) also stated that Mark established the *Didaskaleion* but added that he was not the first "dean."

According to the *African memory*, Mark was born in Cyrene (Africa) to God-fearing "Diaspora Jewish" parents (Oden 2011:17; cf Oliver 2016:4). His parents had to flee from their home in Cyrene because of an invasion by nomad tribes (El Masri 1982:1). They fled to Jerusalem where this family became well known. Mark's first name was in fact John, but he was better known by the name Mark (Ac 12:12, 25). He is first mentioned in the Bible in Acts 12:12 where it is stated that the house of his mother Mary was a place in Jerusalem *where many people had gathered and were praying*. This family was a family of trustworthy Christians, as Peter, the leader of the Apostles, chose to go to their house after the angel had released him from jail. El Masri (1982:1-2) assigned a few more events to Mark and the house of his family:

- He was one of the seventy chosen by Jesus (cf Lk 10:1).
- His family's home was chosen by Jesus as the place for his first Passover (cf Mt 26:18).
- That house became the meeting place of the Apostles after Jesus had been crucified (cf Mk 16:14).
- The Holy Spirit descended on those gathered in the upper room of that house (cf Ac 1:13; 11:1).
- That house was recognised as the first Christian church (Ac 12:12).

When Saul (later called Paul) and Barnabas departed on their first missionary journey, they took Mark with them (Ac 12:25). Mark was probably the cousin of Barnabas (cf Col 4:10). Something must have happened on the journey, as Mark departed from them when they reached Pamphylia (cf Ac 15:37). It was also because of him that Paul and Barnabas parted ways as the latter wanted to take Mark with them on their second missionary journey, while Paul opposed the idea (Ac 15:36-41). Mark then went with Barnabas to Cyprus. Later on Paul mentioned Mark twice as someone working with him (cf Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11), which leads one to the assumption that he had made peace with Mark.

When Mark entered Alexandria for the first time, the strap of his sandal broke. He took it to a cobbler, Anianus/Anianos/Anianius, to have it repaired and as the cobbler accidentally pierced his own hand with his awl, he cried out, εἶς ὁ θεός, translated as *God is One!* (Oden 2011:144) or *O, one God!* (cf El Masri 1982:3). Mark then took

clay, spat on it and applied it to the wound. It healed immediately. He then converted the cobbler, who took him to his home where he and his family were baptised.

In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.16 Eusebius referred to Mark as follows: "They say that this Mark was the first to be sent to preach in Egypt the Gospel which he had also put into writing, and was the first to establish Churches in Alexandria itself. The number of men and women who were there converted at the first attempt was so great, and their asceticism was so extraordinarily philosophic, that Philo thought it right to describe their conduct and assemblies and meals and all the rest of their manner of life" (cf also *De Vir* 8). These early believers led a communal life, sharing everything (El Masri 1982:4). El Masri (1982:13-14) referred to *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10 as the source indicating that Mark established the School. In fact, the reference there was to Pantaenus.

The fact that neither Clement nor Origen made any reference to Mark made the above postulations rather dubious, also in the light of the fact that Eusebius wrote in the 4th century, therefore after Clement and Origen. However, evidence does exist that Mark was indeed in Alexandria (*De Vir* 8; Oden 2011:141; Pearson 2004:12) and that he was martyred there in 68 CE (Oden 2011:157), although Jerome (*De Vir* 8) recalled the day of his death in the eighth year of Nero (62-63). Clement of Rome gave more detail in his *Letter to the Corinthians* (ca 96 CE): "Mark, the evangelist and first bishop of Alexandria, preached the gospel in Egypt, and there, drawn with ropes unto the fire, was burnt and afterwards buried in a place called there 'Bucolus' under the reign of Trajan the emperor." According to the *Martyrium Marci* 7, he was dragged by horses in the streets of Alexandria until he died (cf Chapter 4).

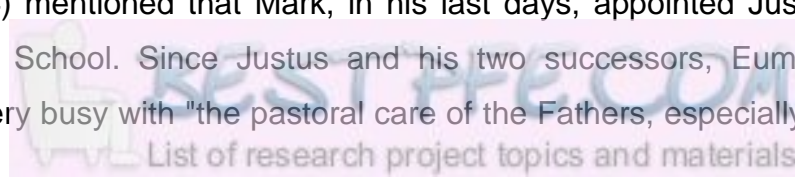
2.5.2 Justus (also called Yostius)

Born: Uncertain

Died: Uncertain

Head of the School: 68-121 CE

El Masri (1982:14) mentioned that Mark, in his last days, appointed Justus as the new head of the School. Since Justus and his two successors, Eumanius and Marianus, were very busy with "the pastoral care of the Fathers, especially with non-



Christians" (Malaty 1995:183), they were not well known. Justus was ordained Patriarch of Alexandria in 121 CE. Malaty (1995:183-184) stated that Pope Anianus "took care" of the School during that time:

Pope Anianus, who was ordained by St. Mark himself, took care of the School, and all who joined it renounced the world to devote their lives to the worship and service of God, living in true love and spiritual peace; there was no rich nor poor among them, for the rich gave their money to the poor, to be rich in God. They ate once a day at sunset, both men and women alike in this respect. We can say that the two most important characteristics of the School were the combination of study with spiritual life, such as prayer, fasting and almsgiving. It was open and men and women were co-admitted to the School.

At this stage the academic level of the School was apparently not very high and the only subject taught was religious studies. According to Malaty, the School functioned under the auspices of the Bishop who took care of the institution (Malaty 1995:184).

2.5.3 Eumanus (also called Eumenius)

Born: Uncertain

Died: Uncertain

Head of the School: 121 to uncertain

Eumanus was appointed head of the School by his predecessor (El Masri 1982:14). He too was not well known, but was a righteous man, "known as pure and chaste, famous for ordaining a large number of priests for preaching" (Malaty 1995:184). He served for more than a decade as Archbishop during the reigns of Emperors Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

2.5.4 Marianus (also called Marcianus)

Born: Uncertain

Died: 154 CE

Head of the School: During the first half of the 2nd century

He was born in Alexandria and succeeded Eumanius as head of the School. In 144 he was ordained as a Patriarch (El Masri [1982:14] referred to the office as "head of the church"). He served for more than a decade during the reign of Antoninus Pius (Malaty 1995:185).

2.5.5 Athenagoras

Born: 133

Died: 190

Head of the School: During the latter half of the 2nd century

According to Malaty (1995:183), Athenagoras (also called Athenagoras of Athens), a learned (Athenian) philosopher and Ante-Nicene apologist (Jacobsen 2014:82) and a contemporary of Justin Martyr and his disciple Tatian (who lived in Syria and wrote the *Diatessaron* – a Biblical paraphrase of the four Gospels), exerted a great influence on the School. He was so influential that the "real beginning" of the School was ascribed to him by Philip Sidetes in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Fr 2; cf Malaty 1995:209; Quasten 1984:229; El Masri 1982:14). Despite his alleged popularity, Eusebius and Jerome ignored him in their writings. Only the patristic writer Methodius (the Bishop of Olympus), quoted Athenagoras in his *Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.7.

Athenagoras had previously held an academic position at the *Musaion* and had been regarded as a leader in paganism who, like the other Platonic philosophers, searched for mistakes in Christianity. While he was studying the Scriptures in search for mistakes, "he was so powerfully seized by the Holy Spirit that he became a defender of the faith he was attacking" (Malaty 1995:209; cf also El Masri 1982:14). He was converted to Christianity in approximately 176 and, according to Malaty (1995:209-210), became one of the most famous heads of the School, while still

embracing philosophy (cf Barnard 1972:13). The *Coptic Orthodox Church Network* (sa) ascribed these characteristics to him:

- He was distinguished among the apologists on account of his gentlemanly tone.
- He was a bookish man.
- His organisation of materials was orderly. His style was atticistic.
- His acquaintance with literature and mythology was profound: He quoted Homer eighteen times, Euripides seven times, Hesiod twice and Pindar, Aeschylus and Callimachus each once.

Although both Malaty and El Masri referred to the above-mentioned five individuals as heads of the School, this is not widely accepted as correct.

2.5.6 Pantaenus

Born: Uncertain

Died: 210/212 CE

Head of the School: 180-189/192

Pantaenus, also referred to as Pantenus (cf Van den Hoek 1997:66; Van den Broek 1996:199) or Pantanaeus (cf *St. Marks Coptic Church, Melbourne* sa) was probably a Sicilian by birth (cf Schaff Vol 8, 1885:2000) and was trained as a Stoic whereupon he became a convert Stoic (*Hist Eccl* 5.10.1ff; cf Fogarty 2004:29). After being trained in Alexandria, he went to Judaea and proclaimed the gospel there (cf Schaff Vol 8, 1885:2000). On his return to Alexandria (ca 180) he became the head of the School, while Commodus was the Emperor (cf Pearson 2004:27). According to the website *Hellbusters* (sa), the School was, up to the time of Pantaenus, a school of proselytes – a Sunday School focused on catechumens, or a house school. During the time of Pantaenus it certainly grew to a more substantial institution and became a theological seminary.

Eusebius remarked the following about him: "At that time a man most famous for his learning, whose name was Pantaenus, headed the course of studies (διατριβή) of the faithful there [in Alexandria – my addition], since, from an old tradition, a school

(διδασκαλεῖον) of sacred words existed among them" (*Hist Eccl* 5.10.1, 4; 6.6.1). Although the School was ἐξ ἀρχαίου ἔθους (*from an old tradition*) as referred to above – and Jerome concurred with that – Eusebius did not mention the predecessor(s) of Pantaenus. Eusebius also quoted a letter from Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem (cf also under the heading "Clement"), to Origen in which he referred to Pantaenus (and Clement): "For we acknowledge as fathers those blessed ones who went before us: Pantaenus, truly blessed and my master, and the holy Clement, who was my master and profited me, and all others like them" (*Hist Eccl* 6.14.9).

According to Eusebius, Pantaenus went on a missionary journey to India and "after many virtuous actions, he, Pantaenus, was head of the school in Alexandria until his death, explaining through teaching and writing the treasures of the divine beliefs" (*Hist Eccl* 5.10.1ff). Although Eusebius here referred to a "second period" of Pantaenus as the head of the School (cf also El Masri 1982:15 referred to above), this time "till his death," that would be in 210 or 212, Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:371) stated that Pantaenus was only the head of the School until 189 (or perhaps 192; cf Pearson 2004:27), after which he was succeeded by Clement and then went on a missionary journey to the East. This is most likely, as Clement already retired from Alexandria in 202 under the persecution of Severus.

Concerning Pantaenus' missionary journey to India, it is of great importance to take note that the "whole East" (which referred to the known Christendom during that time; cf Schaff Vol 2, 1885:734) was centred in Alexandria. In fact, the West was still almost entirely a missionary field. Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:734) mentioned another interesting fact:

Demetrius, then bishop, at the times with which we are now concerned, sent Pantænus to convert the Hindoos, and, whatever his success or failure there, he brought back reports that Christians were there before him, the offspring of St. Bartholomew's preaching; and, in proof thereof, he brought with him a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel in the Hebrew tongue which became one of the treasures of the church on the Nile.

Schaff (Vol 8, 1885:2066; cf also Vol 2, 1885:369) referred to the life of Pantaenus as follows:

The world owes more to Pantænus than to all the other Stoics put together. His mind discovered that true philosophy is found, not in the Porch, but in Nazareth, in Gethsemane, in Gabbatha, in Golgotha; and he set himself to make it known to the world. We are already acquainted with the great master of Clement, "the Sicilian bee," that forsook the flowers of Enna, to enrich Alexandria with what is "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb;" and we remember that he became a zealous missionary to the Oriental Ethiopia, and found there the traces of St. Matthias' labours, and those also of St. Bartholomew.

Actually Pantaenus, however great his influence upon those of his own day might have been, is for today's reader scarcely more than a name (Enslin 1954:218-219). In the words of Enslin (1954:219): "The utter failure by Clement to quote from one whom he obviously prized highly is not easily explained were written works available. Actually the rareness with which Clement calls him by name is surprising...In Clement's extant writing, a fragment from the *Eclogae Propheticae* (56.2), Pantaenus is mentioned once." Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 5.11), however, referred to Clement stating: "In his *Hypotyposes* he speaks of Pantænus by name as his teacher. It seems to me that he alludes to the same person also in his *Stromata*." The reference to Pantaenus in the *Hypotyposes* that Eusebius referred to could be true (though it cannot be verified as it does not appear in the extant parts of that document), but in the *Stromata* (1.1) Clement referred to one of his teachers (without naming the person) as "a Hebrew in Palestine." To identify the person in this reference as Pantaenus, as Eusebius did, is dubious, as Pantaenus was a Stoic philosopher, not likely to be a Hebrew of Palestine (cf *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Pantaenus* sa).

Pantaenus most definitely preceded Clement and Origen in the study of Greek philosophy as an aid to Theology. Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.19) also referred to Origen who defended his use of Greek philosophers by appealing to the example of Pantaenus "who benefited many before our time by his thorough preparation in such

things." Pantaenus must have been in high regard by both of them, as "they said Pantænus had been a hearer of men who had seen the Apostles" (Photius' *Bibl Cod* 118). Despite what has been said above, we still cannot be certain that Pantaenus was indeed a head of the School, whereas his student, Clement undoubtedly was a head, if not the "real" first head of the School. Pantaenus was martyred in 210 or 212 CE (*Hellbusters sa*).

2.5.6.1 Collaboration between Pantaenus and Clement

It has been mentioned that Pantaenus undertook a missionary journey to India. During that time Clement temporarily acted as his substitute. On Pantaenus' return he again assumed his office, but according to El Masri (1982:15-16), Clement stayed on and they worked together. Their first big task was to translate the Gospel (this could be Mark's Gospel as El Masri did not explicate it, or it could be Matthew's Gospel that Pantaenus brought with as referred to above by Schaff [Vol 2, 1885:734]) into the native tongue of Egypt. As the standard form of written communication during that time was *hieroglyphic pictograph* or *demotic script*, it was very difficult for the natives to comprehend. Pantaenus and Clement then decided to develop an easy script which would replace the ancient hieroglyphs. Eventually this became the Coptic language, which was the "pharaonic speech written in the Greek alphabets with the addition of seven letters for sounds which did not exist in Greek, but existed in the [sic] Egyptian" (El Masri 1982:15). With reference to this, Butler (1884:247) remarked: "The romance of language could go no further than to join the speech of Pharaoh and the writing of Homer in the service book of a Christian Egyptian."

Their second task was even more daunting: Upon the positive reaction of the people to their translation of the Gospel, they decided to translate the whole Bible into Coptic (cf El Masri 1982:16).

2.5.7 Clement – the "real gentleman"

Born: 159

Died: 215

Head of the School: 193-202

2.5.7.1 Biographical sketch

Clement's full name was Titos Flavios Klemens. He was born in Athens to a pagan family (Alexandria is given as an unconvincing alternative by Enslin 1954:220-221), during the reign of Emperor Antoninus Pius (Roberts & Donaldson 2004:166), with Polycarp still living and with Justin and Irenaeus in their prime. Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:369) referred as follows to the dawn of one of the greatest Church Fathers in history:

The second century of illumination is drawing to a close, as the great name of this Father comes into view, and introduces us to a new stage of the Church's progress. From Britain to the Ganges it had already made its mark. In all its Oriental identity, we have found it vigorous in Gaul and penetrating to other regions of the West. From its primitive base on the Orontes, it has extended itself to the deltas of the Nile; and the Alexandria of Apollos and of St. Mark has become the earliest seat of Christian learning. There, already, have the catechetical schools gathered the finest intellectual trophies of the Cross; and under the alimnt of its library springs up something like a Christian university. Pantænus, "the Sicilian bee" from the flowery fields of Enna, comes to frame it by his industry, and store it with the sweets of his eloquence and wisdom. Clement, who had followed Tatian to the East, tracks Pantænus to Egypt, and comes with his Attic scholarship to be his pupil in the school of Christ.

Kovacs (2009:261) called Clement a "biblical exegete, platonic philosopher, polymath, and apologist for Christianity," while Barrett (2011:13) portrayed him as a person who wove together "a complex story which grew out of a philosophical past and into a pluralistic future."

Before he went to Alexandria, he had studied under Christian teachers in Greece, Magna Graecia, Syria and Palestine (Van den Broek 1995:42). Because of the missionary work done by especially Paul and Peter, gentile Christians have travelled to Alexandria to study there. Pagans also attended the School to study philosophy (cf Hyldahl 2014:140). After extensive travelling Clement eventually reached Alexandria and became a student of Pantaenus (*Hist Eccl* 6.6). Apparently Pantaenus' lectures inspired him so much that he was converted to Christianity (cf Hyldahl 2014:140). According to El Masri (1982:14), he was also a student of Athenagoras.

It is not certain when he became the head of the School. Fogarty (2004:125) believed that it might have been as early as in 180. This was the time indicated above when Pantaenus became the head. Osborn (2005:21) stated that Clement became head in 193, which is in agreement with Pearson's statement that Pantaenus was the head of the School until 192. During the time that Clement headed the Catechetical School, he "became the leading intellectual voice of the Christian community in Alexandria" (Fogarty 2004:125). One of his most famous students was Origen, who joined the School in 200 CE (Fogarty 2004:29).

While Clement was head of the School, he was also affiliated with the Alexandrian church according to Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.11.6), who referred to him as a πρεσβύτερος (*an ordained presbyter*) and also Jerome in his *Letter XX to Magnus an Orator of Rome* 4 (cf also Roberts & Donaldson 2004:166-167; Williamson 1989:185). He had no reputation as a minister (Olsen 1999:85).

By the beginning of the 3rd century Emperor Severus became alarmed by the increasing number of the believers in and around Alexandria. Between 201 and 202 he authorised persecution of the Christians in Egypt and martyred them in Alexandria. At this time Clement left Alexandria for Palestine, possibly for Caesarea (Enslin 1954:223; Malaty 1995:263; cf Fogarty 2004:127) or maybe even for Cappadocia (Hyldahl 2014:140). Clement left Alexandria

surely not as a coward fleeing danger, else Alexander, himself a confessor, would scarcely have viewed his advent in Caesarea as in accordance with the will of God, and that he

spent some time in Caesarea in effective service; that possibly – this is far from sure – he had visited Antioch on his way from Alexandria (Enslin 1954:223).

Clement was in Jerusalem at the beginning of the reign of Caracalla, still teaching Christians and other pilgrims. The only other detail known about Clement is from a letter of Alexander, then Bishop of Jerusalem, to Origen, from which it was clear that Clement had died: "For this also has proved to be the will of God, as you know, that the friendship that comes to us from our forefathers should remain unshaken, or rather grow warmer and more steadfast. For we acknowledge as fathers those blessed ones who went before us, with whom we shall be before long: Pantaenus, truly blessed and my master, and the holy Clement, who was my master and profited me, and all others like them. Through these I came to know you, who are the best in all things, and my master and brother" (*Hist Eccl* 6.14.8ff). This letter can be dated at about 216 or 217, which means that Clement died during that time or just before it, maybe in 215 (Enslin 1954:223). It can be deduced from this letter that Alexander was also a student of Clement. Without referring to the above letter, Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:371) gave 220 as the year of his death.

2.5.7.2 The character of Clement

Enslin (1954:221) described the person of Clement as follows:

His cultivated diction, encyclopaedic knowledge, especially of the Greek classics, his familiarity with intimate details of pagan ceremonies, to which he frequently refers with apparent exactness, above all the constant undercurrent of urbanity, unobtrusive, but insistent, and his evident at-homeness in the world of culture and refinement – all these suggest that he came from a family not only amply able to provide exceptional opportunities for study but a heritage tending to an awareness of values never subsequently to be lost.

This led Enslin (1954:227) to give Clement the fitting title of "gentleman." El Masri (1982:17) put it this way: "Clement possessed all the characteristics of the talented master: a flashing intellect, a fiery enthusiasm, and an ever youthful soul."

Approximately a century before Enslin, Maurice (1854:239) had already contributed to the glorification of Clement: "I do not know where we shall look for a purer or a truer man than this Clement of Alexandria. He seems to me that one of the old fathers whom we should all have revered most as a teacher and loved most as a friend."

Not much is known about his life, except what we learn from his writings and from what others witnessed about him. Origen remarked in one of his major works, *Contra Celsum* 1.48, that Clement "at all times avoided unnecessary talk about himself." El Masri (1985:18) rightly stated that Clement never compromised. According to her, Clement was the first person to use the Greek term ἰχθύς as a symbol for Christianity and an acronym for *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*.

On account of the philosophical background of Clement, Schaff (1910:782) called him the father of the Christian philosophy in Alexandria. He elaborated as follows: "With a generous patronage Clement conceded all he could to the philosophy of the Greeks, and yet sublimely rose above it to a sphere it never discovered, and looked down upon all merely human intellect and its achievements like Uriel in the sun" (Schaff Vol 6, 1885:696). This contributed to Schaff's decision to declare Clement the founder of formalised Christianity. As Clement was influenced by Philo, his aim was to make Christianity acceptable to students of Greek philosophy (Isichei 1995:20).

Among the early fathers Clement took his own proper place. Fairweather (1901:14) celebrated him as follows: "He was neither an eloquent orator nor a bustling ecclesiastic, neither a public disputant nor a social reformer, but a genial man of letters, of a meditative cast of mind, and with a certain distaste for the strife and turmoil of everyday life."

Enslin (1954:240) compared him to his student, Origen, as well as to two great early church Theologians – Tertullian, a contemporary and Augustine, who lived two centuries later:

Probably Origen was a profounder student of Scripture; certainly Augustine a far more systematic theologian. But both

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of them, not to mention the relentless and vitriol-tongued Tertullian, must have been hard to live with. Surely again and again the latter two had the facility to make the saving love of God appear in a most unattractive light. Not so Clement. It might even be said that, unlike many of his early colleagues, he made it pleasant to become a Christian.

El Masri (1982:17) was more practical than Enslin when she showed how Clement encapsulated his audience to become Christians:

To exemplify this belief, Clement captivated his listeners by reciting to them quotations from poets, philosophers, and orators; they were entranced as one familiar passage after the other fell on their ears. Then, before their elated souls, he expounded the Holy Scriptures. He delighted in guiding them, step by step, from the teachings they knew to the teachings they did not know, leading them in a triumphant procession to the conclusion that Christian wisdom was more complete, more lofty and more magnificent than all the wisdom of antiquity.

Another comparison between Clement and Augustine was done by Fogarty (2004:125), this time with another contemporary, Irenaeus of Lyons, added:

Clement appears to have been a man of singular ability, combining intellectual skill with a certain missionary and pastoral concern for the welfare of the Christians. The tone struck in his writings is reasoned, instructive, and conciliatory, and therefore, unlike the later Augustine, or Clement's contemporary Irenaeus of Lyons, moderate rather than denunciatory.

All this evidence contributes to the fact that Clement was a man of stature, a worthy head of the School.

2.5.7.3 The belief system of Clement

Hannah (1999:177) made the following statement: "Clement believed in the reality of the incarnation (*Paed.* i.8 [74.4]), the tangibility of Jesus' flesh (*Paed.* i.6 [42.1-44.1]; *Strom.* vii.2 [8.1, 5-6]; v.3 [16.5]), the corporeality of his birth (*Paed.* i.6 [42.1-44.1]; *Strom.* 3.17 [102.1]), and the reality of his suffering and resurrection (*Strom.* 6.15 [127.1-2])." The fact that he made ample use of the Philonic heritage enabled him to develop a positive and dynamic Theology (Runia 2004:256).

The early church could not offer a better example of an intellectual Christian than Clement. He insisted that the goal of Christian education is "practical, not theoretical and its aim is to improve the soul, not to teach, and to train it up to a virtuous, not an intellectual, life" (*Paed.* 1.1.1.4-2.1). For Clement a virtuous life was obtained when the soul was in harmony with reason. Wisdom could be both practical and theoretical. Clement referred to a positive value of life on earth "presenting earthly existence as a journey towards knowledge of God, the result of hard work and moral progress" (MacCulloch 2009:148). For human life, according to Clement, the divine was a model for human conduct. Christ's passion became the archetype for Christian life: "To him, Christianity was the means of raising the people to the highest levels of spiritual living" (El Masri 1982:16).

Clement viewed himself as an interpreter of Scriptures. His allegorical exegesis allowed him "to find in the sacred text ideas and doctrines that are really Platonic in inspiration" (González 2010:73). He reserved Biblical interpretation for the Christian intellectual, purely out of concern for misunderstanding (the Protestant Reformation also was of this conviction) and not, as González (2010:73) claimed, to constitute an "elitist theology." He always looked for meaning beyond the literal, in order to find the truth of the gospel.

Osborn described Clement with these words: "No one enjoyed theology more than Clement, yet his skilful synthesis of Athens and Jerusalem has furrowed many brows" (Osborn 2005:77-78). According to MacCulloch (2009:148), Clement was one of the earliest Christian writers on moral Theology, as is evidenced by his detailed discussion of a Christian's daily life, focused on moral progress as found in Books 2 and 3 of his *Paedagogus*. On the same page he mentioned that Clement said

"knowledge increases one's moral worth." Clement emphasised the need for a Christian to eliminate desire, which is only possible in the grace of God. Clement's understanding of Christian morality was determined by virtue. He stated that virtue is the *logos* that has been handed down or taught through the *Paedagogus* (cf Osborn 2005:236).

Clement's contributions to Christianity were evidence of the value he placed on history. Plato, Heraclitus, Philo and Paul shaped his teaching methods (cf Kovacs 2009:262). Barrett agreed: "Because Clement engaged with the past, he was able to contribute to shaping the future" (Barrett 2011:34). Clement saw the church as representing the presence of God on earth. In this he was echoing the thoughts of Justin and Irenaeus (Duncan 2011:17). The quest for truth implied two things:

- It requires rational thought.
- It exposes heresy.

Clement maintained that "the true and ancient church possesses the most exact knowledge and the highest school of thought" (cf Osborn 2005:216).

Clement's work derived from a broad secular (Hellenistic) education, combined with his focused study as head of the Catechetical School. He drew on Platonic and Stoic principles in expounding his Christian principles and teachings. He was so impressed by the interpretative work done on the Scriptures by Philo that, in his own Biblical commentaries, he "adopted Philo's method of interpretation in the construction of specifically Christian understandings of the Scriptures" (Fogarty 2004:126). It is evident that Clement made use of the available knowledge of the time in rebutting both the pagan beliefs and the heretical views of some Christian groups. This was in contradiction, to some extent, to the methods used by Tertullian (with his baser swiping method) and Irenaeus (whose writings contained sometimes rather more florid and fanciful opinions).

Clement maintained a threefold process for acquiring knowledge: *Study (leads to) knowledge (leads to) action*. Knowledge and ethics were two sides of the same coin for Clement: True knowledge is always followed by responsible action. He held that

the "most accurate and logical interpretation leads to the church" (cf Osborn 2005:217). Clement was responsible for the initiation of a Christian Theology through his scholarly works. His legacy spread even further (cf Fogarty 2004:127):

- His insistence on a spiritual life based on self-discipline and gospel values laid the foundation for the monastic living which was to develop in the future decades.
- He appealed to Christians to become well-educated in order to be better witnesses to both believers and non-believers.
- More education was also the path to salvation and therefore real *gnosis*.

He set the stage for Augustine (living in the next century) in two areas (cf Fogarty 2004:127-128):

- He argued that the kingdom of heaven was not to be equated with the institutional church (cf Fredericksen 1986:375).
- He also argued that citizens were entitled to rebel against rulers who wanted to oppress or enslave them, thus opening the way for Augustine's "just war" argument.

For Clement the study of Science was important, since it endorsed the "intellectual abilities which ultimately support the discovery of truth" (Roberts & Donaldson 2004: 518). The study of Dialectic was just as important to him, since "irrational grounds cannot support any judgement" (Osborn 2005:216). This would help one to study the Scriptures with logic and reason in order to determine what is appropriate when attempting to relate to God (Behr *et al* 2003:49).

Clement stated that the Christian teacher replaced Christ on earth, pointing to perfection and knowledge. In saying this, he put a heavy burden on the teacher, who constantly had to ensure that his motive was to be concerned with the salvation of his hearers and the good of those close to him, or that his motive was just to get rewards of honour (Osborn 2005:15). With his teaching programme (oriented around the relationship between Greek philosophy and Christianity) he had two things in mind:

- To reconcile Greek philosophy and Christianity.
- To form his students spiritually and intellectually (cf Barrett 2011:21).

Osborn (2005:21) stated that Clement had in mind to "convert Greeks, to prepare candidates for baptism, and above all to produce spiritual teachers or competent catechists." While at the School, Clement wrote to the well-educated people in Alexandria and told them in an apologetic way that Christianity was the fulfilment of philosophy. This was evidence that the School was not only there for catechists, but also appealed to intellectuals of various disciplines. Possible proof of this may be the reference in his *Stromateis* 1.5 to

- harmonies of music;
- the increasing and decreasing of numbers;
- the "abstract essence" of geometry, astronomy and "Hellenic philosophy."

All of these were classical Greek subjects. For Clement all these subjects had to be used in the service of Christianity (Behr *et al* 2003:49).

Clement's brilliance and the comprehensive nature of his works laid a vital, sophisticated foundation for the development of Christian Theology and was a key reason for the ongoing development of theological work by his successors at the Catechetical School (until at least the 5th century). Christians who opposed Clement adhered to Demetrius' view ("faith alone"), while Clement's social critique, as in the whole of his *Quiz Dives Salvetur?*, pointed out that Christians needed to witness to Christ through the way they lived their lives. This would introduce the notion of ethical obligation in the spheres of economic activity, slavery and almsgiving to the deserving poor (Fogarty 2004:127).

Clement defended Christianity against people who thought that this "new religion" was only for the ignorant and the poor. He was instrumental in helping the church to shape its character through his interactions with both faith and philosophy. As has already been said, he believed that Christianity and philosophy were mutually compatible: "Clement drew heavily on the historical influences of Plato and classical

Greek ideas to promote cohesion between Christianity and philosophy" (Barrett 2011:15).

Clement's presentations were more amenable to his pagan contemporaries, even if they disagreed with his conclusions. It could seem that Clement was too close to pagan thought and therefore was actually Hellenising Christianity. Tertullian, who opposed this approach and had a deep distrust of Hellenism, asked rhetorically: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" With this he demonstrated an almost fundamentalist notion of Christianity as evidenced specifically in his *Apology*. Clement rather sought rapprochement to the surrounding pagans and ethos of his time and therefore displayed a wealth of thoughts serviceable to both the pagan and the Christian, "hoping that this could be exploited for the illumination, especially, of the Christian believer. Thus, instead of haranguing the pagans and heretics, he used their methods to show how Christian belief provided far more plausible substance than their beliefs did" (Fogarty 2004:126-127). Clement did not regard heresy as false, but rather as forms of dogma that held incomplete claims (cf Barrett 2011:9).

Clement never claimed to be unbiased as he represented the one, undivided church (Lampe 1987:313-314). Contemporary scholars who opposed him might have made the same claims. This competition between the scholars of the time reflected an era in the life of the church where communities were struggling for existence, identity and dominance (Van den Hoek 1997:74). These communities were further divided into groups that competed for influence. Although some of these groups could not think in institutional terms, they nevertheless claimed to possess the exclusive path to knowledge or salvation (cf Koschorke 1987:67-71). Clement certainly thought that they were making such claims (Van den Hoek 1997:74). This competition could have been the reason why Clement avoided the use of the term διδασκαλεῖον to refer to the School. Besides, according to the writings of Irenaeus, the term commonly referred to a heretical religious group. Clement did not want his school to be identified with schools of that kind, whose claims he considered to be false. This could also be the reason why he avoided referring to the School by using terms like σχολή, διατριβή and αἵρεσις (cf Wilken 1979:165-193). Clement was not the only member of the School who avoided using these terms for his School. Origen also decided against the use of the term "Didaskaleion" when referring to his own

teaching, at least in the works for which the Greek text has survived. He use the term only once when referring to the "venerable school of the Pythagoreans" (*Cont Cels* 3.51).

In Clement's time, many of his fellow Christians in Alexandria viewed his writings with suspicion, as they were suspicious of the Gnostics with their intellectual flair. When Clement argued about what was good in Gnosticism, they were up in arms, because they were still more legalistically inclined, not far removed from their Jewish roots, or they were newly converted Gentiles who only wanted to hear about salvation and not about intellectual matters (cf Fogarty 2004:125). According to Fredericksen (1986:375), one of them was Demetrius, the Bishop of Alexandria (from 189 CE) who "taught a legalistic doctrine of salvation and preached that the Christian was saved by faith (*pistis*)." Clement argued against Demetrius and the Gnostics in his *Stromateis* 4.21ff when he said that *gnosis* was only an aspect of witnessing about God by living an exemplary life. He added that faith was the font of true knowledge. When a believer is baptised and s/he grounds her/his life on the Scriptures, s/he is the true Gnostic. With this he argued that pagan Gnostics could never attain the ultimate *gnosis* unless they became Christians (cf Fogarty 2004:126). This illustrated Clement's rationale and also his relatively conciliatory attitude towards non-believers. This might be the reason why Kelly (1986:330) called Clement a "Christian humanist."

Because Clement viewed language as incapable of communicating truth (cf Hägg 2006:147), he motivated his students to achieve knowledge (*gnosis*) (cf Heine 2010:57). He stated that the Divine *Logos*, the great Teacher discloses truth carefully (Hägg 2006:143). Clement regarded himself as someone who also revealed truth carefully. In his *Stromateis* 1.1 he described an effective Christian teacher as one who understands that "all true teaching flows from Christ, the one great teacher" (cf Roberts & Donaldson 2004:538-540). When we speak of the *Logos* as the great Teacher, we speak of Christ who educates man by training his soul to discover truth (McLelland 1976:4). Kelly (1986:330) stated:

All his reasoning is dominated by the idea of the *Logos* who created the universe and who manifests the ineffable Father alike in the Old Testament Law, the philosophy of the Greeks,

and finally the incarnation of Christ. Clement is also a mystic for whom the higher life of the soul is a continuous moral and spiritual ascent.

Clement also said that true knowledge is demonstrated in obedience, referring to the *Logos* in the service of God. Moral progress was such a substantial element of a Christian's life that Clement held that the process continued after death (cf MacCulloch 2009:148). This led to the idea of purgatory of the medieval Western Church.

Clement held that a Christian who has reached true knowledge, becomes a Christian Gnostic, by combining elements of classical Greek with Christianity. This person has then reached the highest form of intellectualism. This can be referred to as a Christian Hellenism (Behr *et al* 2003:49). Regarding the discovering of truth as the highest possible academic achievement, Clement utilised science, philosophy and dialectic (argument) as aids to achieve it. He said: "The true and perfect knowledge ascends beyond the world to the intelligible, spiritual realities, which are what eye has not yet seen nor ear heard and which have not entered into the heart of man until the teacher fully explains them" (cf Osborn 2005:202).

While the Greek Church discredited Clement's teachings together with his successor Origen as sometimes heretical, the Latin Church fully endorsed Clement's works, even though much later Pope Sixtus 5 questioned its orthodoxy in part. Clement's works thus became assimilated in the Western Church (cf Fogarty 2004:127).

Whereas Clement asserted the triple sense of Scripture, consisting of the mystic, the moral and the prophetic, Origen "nursed" it into mysticism (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:730).

2.5.8 Origen – the true African

Born: 185

Died: 253/254

Head of the School: 203-231

2.5.8.1 Biographical sketch

Among the ante-Nicene writers of the Eastern Church, the greatest by far was Origen, both as a theological and as a prolific Biblical scholar (cf *The Development of the Canon of the New Testament* sa). Ngong (2014:175) referred to him as "one of the foremost biblical scholars of all times."

Origenes (also referred to as Origen or Origen Adamanti[n]us; cf *De Vir* 54) was born and grew up in Africa. It is not clear what the term "Adamantius" really meant. Schaff (Vol 4, 1885:547) referred to this as his surname and characteristics: "His surname denotes the strength, clearness, and point of his mind and methods." Tripolitis (1985:2) postulated that it meant "Man of Steel." Regarding Origen's African origins, Oden (2011:68) commented: "It is a strange and demeaning criterion to apply to Origen the odd assumption that because he was adept to many languages he was not very African. By his metaphors, the greatest interpreter of early Christianity shows many indications of being indigenously African, whatever his specific ethnicity."

Origen was born in Alexandria to (most probably) Christian parents (cf Barrett 2011:37). His father was a Roman convert (Heisey 2004:34). The fact that his name means "born of Horus" could indicate that his parents were only converted after his birth (Isichei 1995:21). He was a product of the "eclectic intellectual environment of the Egyptian metropolis of Alexandria" (Tripolitis 1985:1) and grew up as a boy of "great intellectual brilliance" (Duncan 2011:18). From "his earliest youth" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:529) he devoted himself to study the Scriptures. Under his father Leonides, who was a teacher in rhetoric or grammar, Origen was educated in various branches of Grecian learning, as well as in the reading of Scriptures (*Hist Eccl* 6.2.6, 8; cf Schaff Vol 4, 1885:547). Even at a youthful age he already looked past the plain and obvious meaning of the text to penetrate into its deeper significance (*Hist Eccl* 6.2.9).

He somehow survived the persecution by Septimius Severus, probably between 202/203 and 206, but his father was beheaded (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.1). According to Severus (*Hist Aug* 17.1-2), these persecutions prohibited conversion to Judaism and Christianity, while Crouzel (1989:5) expressed the opinion that they were aimed in particular at the catechists (heads) of the School. Many people/Christians, mostly Greek and Roman citizens, fled the city (Holliday 2011:676). However, during these times quite a number of people converted to Christianity because of their contact with Origen. Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.3.1) referred to Clement and Origen as witnesses to the exodus of Christians from the city.

Origen was eager for martyrdom (*Hist Eccl* 6.2.3), but his mother dissuaded him from exposing himself to that kind of danger (*Hist Eccl* 6.2.3; cf El Masri 1982:26). After the death of his father, Origen and his family were reduced to extreme poverty as their belongings were confiscated to the imperial treasury, "a customary practice with the Romans" (El Masri 1982:26). Fortunately a rich Christian lady of Alexandria took Origen, who was the eldest of seven children, into her house and gave him everything he needed (*Hist Eccl* 6.2.13; cf Löhr 2010:164; Robertson 1875:139; Scholten 1995:19). (El Masri [1982:27] seemed to be under the impression that the lady took in all the children.) Another person who also lived in that house and had been adopted by the benefactress to be her heir, was a gnostic teacher by the name of Paul of Antioch (*Hist Eccl* 6.2.14). Origen avoided him as far as he could.

After some time Origen left the house and became a teacher of grammar. As he was very diligent and professional in his work, he attracted many students like Plutarch (who died a martyr) and Heraclas, who would succeed him as head of the School (*Hist Eccl* 6.3.2; cf Schaff Vol 4, 1885:548). At the Catechetical School he was under the instruction of Clement. Olson (1999:100-101) speculated that Origen could also have attended a philosophical school in Alexandria, which might have led to his participation in founding Neo-Platonism.

Clement left the Catechetical School that had been broken up by the persecution. Robertson (1875:140) remarked: "In these circumstances, Origen, whose extraordinary abilities and precocious learning were already noted, received applications from some educated heathens who wished to be instructed in Christian

doctrine." According to Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.3.3; 6.15.1; Van den Hoek 1997:62 concluded that the life of Origen was Eusebius' favourite subject in his writings), he was appointed head of the School in 203 by Bishop Demetrius: "He [Origen – my addition] was in his eighteenth year when he became head of the school of catechetical instruction (διδασκαλεῖον), and there he progressed during the persecutions at the time of Aquila, the governor of Alexandria" (cf also El Masri 1982:22). El Masri (1982:27; cf Payne 1980:44) concluded that he made it a "veritable School of Martyrs:"

Those of his disciples who sealed their faith with their blood were countless. The young teacher visited them in their prison, accompanied them to the tribunal of their persecutors, and followed them to the very spot of their martyrdom, then under the very eyes of their executioners, gave them the Kiss of Peace, remaining by their sides until they commended their spirits into the Hands of the Father.

Eusebius supplied two reasons why Origen started to teach: First there was nobody left in Alexandria who could teach, and second, Bishop Demetrius asked Origen to become an official teacher of the church and therefore head of the School, which he had brought under his control (Holliday 2011:678). During these years Origen enjoyed a high level of independence as head of the School (cf Lampe 2003:376-377).

After Origen's appointment at the School he refused all remuneration (cf Schaff Vol 4, 1885:548) and lived in poverty. He even sold his own small library to make ends meet (*Hist Eccl* 6.3.9; cf Duncan 2011:19). After a day at School he spent most of the night examining Scriptures. He slept on the ground and fasted frequently (*Hist Eccl* 6.3.9). Later on he found a patron in Ambrose, who supported him financially (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:550; Scholten 1995:20).

Eusebius reported that when Origen discovered that he had more work than he could handle, he chose Heraclas to help him: "But when he [Origen – my addition] saw that he could not spend enough time on studying the divine things at a deeper level, through close examination and interpretation of the sacred books, and,

moreover, when he saw that he could not handle the instruction of those who came to him, since they did not give him space to breathe – for from dawn to dusk one batch of students after the other was running in and out of his school – he divided up the masses, selected Heraclas from his students – a man who was serious in divine matters and also very learned and not bereft of philosophy – and made him partner in the instruction, leaving to him the first introduction of those who were just instructed in the basics, and keeping for himself the lecture course for those who were trained" (*Hist Eccl* 6.15.1; cf also 14.11; 26.1).

In 215 Origen's work at the School was interrupted for a while as he was driven from the city by Emperor Caracalla's furious attacks on the Alexandrians. He later returned home and in 228 was sent by Demetrius on a mission to preach in Achaia (El Masri 1982:23). On his return he passed through Caesarea in Palestine, where he preached in churches after having been requested and ordained to do so by Alexander and Theoctistus, the Bishops of Jerusalem and Caesarea respectively (*Hist Eccl* 6.8.4; cf 6.19.17).

Origen was forty years old before he started writing extensively (Hillerbrand 2012:41). Being a native Egyptian, he wrote much of his work in Africa and later transmitted his extensive African library and teaching to *Caesarea Palestina*. Apart from Greek and unusual for his time, Origen also studied Hebrew, which would prove to be of considerable benefit to his Scriptural interpretations. Because he was such a prolific writer and preacher, he was much in demand in foreign countries. Demetrius, the Bishop of Alexandria, objected to Origen's constant journeys abroad. He even tried to denounce Origen, but could not obtain endorsements from the churches in Greece and Palestine. This could have started when Demetrius refused to ordain Origen as a priest, referring amongst others, to his "objectionable doctrines" (cf Vrettos 2001:190), which could only have been a reference to his philosophical background. The Bishop then ordered him to return to the School (cf Schaff Vol 4, 1885:549).

In 228/229 Origen travelled to Greece on some church business (called "ecclesiastical affairs" in *Hist Eccl* 6.23.4). On his way he stopped at Caesarea and was then ordained as a presbyter by the same friendly bishops who had invited him

to preach on his previous visit. When Origen returned to Alexandria some two years later, he learned that Demetrius was angry with him as he felt that his authority had been flouted. Since Origen was only a layman, his Bishop, Demetrius, regarded this action as a breach of ecclesiastical discipline. In 231 Demetrius summoned a synod (consisting of Egyptian Bishops and Alexandrian presbyters) and declared Origen unworthy to be head of the School and excommunicated him from the fellowship of the church of Alexandria (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:551; Holliday 2011:675). According to El Masri (1982:23-24), the Bishop excommunicated him for two reasons:

- The ordination of an Egyptian priest was the prerogative of their church.
- Origen was an eunuch (cf later) and "thus had lost the right to priestly ordination, for only men without blemish could be ordained" (El Masri 1982:24).

According to El Masri (1982:32), Origen, upon his excommunication, did not return to the School, but in 234 went to Palestine where he extended the Biblical and theological school founded by Pamphilus (cf Fletcher 2014) that would soon outshine the School in Alexandria (cf Holliday 2011:674-696). Schaff had the opinion that Origen actually started the school in Caesarea (cf Schaff Vol 9, 1885:529). In his new homeland Origen continued with his literary work, his continuous preaching and his lecturing. Among his students was Gregory Thaumaturgus (*the Wonderworker*), who later became Bishop of New Caesarea (cf Schaff Vol 6, 1885:3).

After Origen's departure from Alexandria the church and the School practically became one institution as his two successors, Heraclas and Dionysius, both became Bishops of the Alexandrian church within the following year (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.26; 29.4). The heads were now also officials of the church, "but the bishops seem to have granted them a relatively independent position" (Van den Broek 1995:47).

Although Origen returned to Alexandria once, he was banned by Heraclas and then made Caesarea his permanent base (Chang 2010:16). During that time there was a lack of cohesion among the early Christians. In 250 Emperor Decius started a new wave of persecutions against the Christians. Origen was arrested and tortured before being imprisoned in Tyre, but he managed to survive. He died in Tyre a few

years later, in either 253 (Barrett 2011:28) or 254 (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:554), probably as a result of the torture (cf also *De Vir* 54).

2.5.8.2 The character of Origen

Ramelli (2011b:571) referred to Origen as "the indefatigable exegete and philosopher-theologian Origen of Alexandria," while Hillerbrand (2012:41) depicted him as "a theological Leonardo da Vinci, a third-century 'Renaissance man'." Schaff (Vol 4, 1885:554) characterised him as follows:

The character of Origen is singularly pure and noble; for his moral qualities are as remarkable as his intellectual gifts. The history of the Church records the names of few whose patience and meekness under unmerited suffering were more conspicuous than his. How very differently would Jerome have acted under circumstances like those which led to Origen's banishment from Alexandria! And what a favourable contrast is presented by the selfdenying asceticism of his whole life, to the sins which stained the early years of Augustine, prior to his conversion! The impression which his whole personality made upon those who came within the sphere of his influence is evidenced in a remarkable degree by the admiring affection displayed towards him by his friend Ambrose and his pupil Gregory. Nor was it friends alone that he so impressed. To him belongs the rare honour of convincing heretics of their errors, and of leading them back to the Church; a result which must have been due as much to the gentleness and earnestness of his Christian character, as to the prodigious learning, marvellous acuteness, and logical power, which entitle him to be regarded as the greatest of the Fathers.

There was, however, also a negative (in fact enigmatic) side to this great African. El Masri (1982:25) noted it as follows:

Origen is the enigma of ecclesiastical history. He was a genius of the word: a prolific writer, a great teacher, an ardent doer. His admirers and devoted followers were innumerable, and yet he

did not escape having strong adversaries who tried to malign him. His name stirred the most enthusiastic devotion and the most passionate antagonism. Such a singular destiny could only heighten the attraction of the singularly interesting figure of Ancient Christianity.

Origen was the most famous of Clement's known students and it appears as if the School reached its zenith under him. As indicated, he was only eighteen years old when he became the head of the School (Enslin 1954:222). He started writing at this time (though not extensively) and eventually became probably the most prolific writer of the ancient world (Olson 1999:101). He wrote for the educated because he realised that if Christianity was to succeed in conquering the world and moulding its civilisation, it had to justify itself to both the intellect and the heart of mankind (Barrett 2011:39). He grew to such an extent as a Theologian that he became the father of Theology (cf *Coptic Orthodox Church Network* sa).

Origen is also called the father of theological science. Vrettos (2001:181) stated: "He created a solid system of dogma and laid foundations for scientific criticism of the Old and New Testaments." This contributed to the idea that the School should become an intellectual expression and a philosophical basis for Christianity. In his *De Viris Illustribus* 54 the Church Father Jerome identified Origen as the greatest teacher of the Early Church after the Apostles. Not all agreed with Jerome, because

- much of Origen's work had a philosophical complexity;
- some of his detractors either mistranslated his work, or misquoted him (cf Fogarty 2004:130).

These were some of the reasons why Origen never enjoyed the recognition he deserved in the ranks of approved Theologians (Fogarty 2004:130). In the 3rd century there was an ongoing debate on whether Origen was a philosopher or a churchman. In later years his most trustworthy defenders were a diverse group ranging from Eusebius of Caesarea to a number of Alexandrians including Didymus the Blind, head of the School in the 4th century and the later Cappadocian Fathers, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa.

He maintained a closer affiliation with the church than Clement. Although he was denied ordination in Alexandria, he still worked closely with Bishop Demetrius. Whereas in the past the School had been independent from the bishopric, it now became increasingly linked with episcopal authority (cf Barrett 2011:41).

2.5.8.3 The belief system of Origen

El Masri (1982:36) provided a great introduction to Origen's belief system:

In all the domains of thought, Origen marks a decisive point: he is the founder of Biblical Science, by his researches and commentaries on both the Old and New Testaments; he is the first to constitute a great Theological Synthesis, and the first to attempt an explanation of Christian Mystery, and finally, he is the first who described the Path by which the Soul can ascend to God.

Origen did not want to add knowledge to his students, but to "teach them to answer by themselves the questions that arose in the process of learning one or another discipline" (Behr *et al* 2003:53). He was highly student-oriented, and he aimed to preserve unity, based on mutual respect and friendship in his classes. He therefore knew his students well. He regarded teaching the love of God as his most important task (Barrett 2011:42). He also started a new method of teaching by presenting theories of all the philosophical schools to his students and encouraging them to discern between right and wrong, which culminated in Christian virtue (cf Heine 2010:34).

Origen wanted to be a life-long mentor rather than a teacher (cf Green 1998:112). The good example he set by the way in which he conducted his personal spiritual life attracted students to him. In combining both Stoic and Platonic elements, Origen's curriculum followed a psychagogic (persuasive) rationale (cf Scholten 2002:261-280). For him the soul was the focus on all levels of instruction. Only by attending to the soul could the follower of Jesus realise her/his human potential "to become in his purified mind like God and to approach God and to abide in him" (Theodore's *Add* 12.149).

Origen was a Theologian rather than a philosopher (cf Grant 1991:400). From his youth he was a master of allegory, in which Scripture is seen as having several layers of meaning (cf "Allegorism" above). While the literal interpretation has little regard for history (cf MacCulloch 2009:112), the allegorical interpretation resembles the spiritual reality (Lynch 2010:101). According to Origen, literal truth is more superficial, while allegorical (mythological) truth is the reality and it requires much discrimination for discovery. He "inherited" this way of interpretation from both Philo and the Alexandrian Judaism before/after Philo (Sundkler & Steed 2000:11). With this approach to Scriptures he opposed the Jews and Gnostics of his time who interpreted the Scriptures literally (El Masri 1982:31).

Whereas the Greeks saw *historia* as the reporting of worldly events, Plato relegated it to *mythos* as compared to the genuine *logos*. While his aim was to distinguish between history and the study of the actions of God (McLelland 1976:113-114), Origen's goal was to search for a deeper meaning, a higher truth in Scripture. This led him to discouraging dependency on the literal meaning of a text. Truth in Scripture should not be read as linear historical events, but as myth, offering a deeper explanation of truth (cf MacCulloch 2009:112). According to Origen, truth can exist outside of Scripture, but no truth can be in conflict with Scripture. Faith and reason go hand in hand. For him "the ontological structure of Scripture is analogous (homologous) to that of the universe" (Boyarin 2010:40).

Origen regarded history as only an image of eternity. According to Martens (2012:635), he had "little interest in history" (cf also Fairweather 1901:79). Trigg took this point further and stated that Origen assumed that any purely historical information was irrelevant (Trigg 1983:179). De Margerie (1993:197) warned that there is the "temptation, inherent in Origen's love for allegory, to empty history of its meaning." Butterworth (1936:lvii) argued (rather to the extreme) that Origen's method of Scriptural interpretation "despises the history, ignores the poetry, and turns all that is warm and human into frigid intellectual reasonings." Assumptions like these led to the Pontifical Biblical Commission publishing a document in 1941 about "the grave exaggeration of the Alexandrian School, that they wished to find a symbolic meaning everywhere, even to the detriment of the literal and historical meaning of the text" (Pontifical Biblical Commission 1941:214). Martens discussed

the arguments of these critics thoroughly and rightfully concluded that "these criticisms have rarely hit their intended target" (Martens 2012:650).

Barrett (2011:50) explained what Martens could have meant when she argued that Origen tended to regard the literal sense of Biblical historicity as the first step to interpret the Scriptures, followed by the allegorical, that goes beyond the given surface: "Origen combined the allegorical method of interpretation with logical consequences of Scriptural inspiration, and in doing so developed a 'threefold sense of Scripture,' grammar-cohistorical, moral, and pneumatic" (Barrett 2011:53) – the last-mentioned being the most significant level of meaning. Because literal interpretation became a stumbling block for the educated pagans, Origen was determined to remove it (Barrett 2011:53). In the words of McLelland: "By introducing historicity into the conversation on allegory and biblical interpretation, Origen is credited as the initiator of historical philosophy" (McLelland 1976:117).

Origen also made a contribution on the level of typology, which was a method by which he compared the Old and New Testaments. At that stage the canon of the New Testament had not yet been set, although he already accepted the four Gospels as being authoritative (Barrett 2011:54). The struggle Christians faced at that time was to reconcile the Old Testament with the new covenant presented in the New Testament. Origen utilised typology to interpret both, understanding the elements of the Old Testament as a foreshadow of what was to come in the New Testament: "Typology was the same method which explained allegorical interpretation; the literal meaning of scripture was confronted by the deeper, and more elusive, figurative meaning" (Barrett 2011:55).

He saw Biblical interpretation as something that was open to misunderstanding and therefore he preferred to reserve it for the spiritual elite only, evoking a sort of Christian elitism (*contra* Clement; cf Largier 2013:207). This was fostered by the School, only as an attempt to preserve the integrity of the meaning of Scriptures. This action would flow over in teaching the true meaning to those who were limited to a literal understanding (Barrett 2011:53).

Origen was the first critic of the Bible who attempted to systematically organise the Old Testament (cf Lynch 2010:98). After mastering Hebrew, he started working on his *Hexapla* and provided a method for textual comparison of the Old Testament (more about this in Chapter 3).

The Christian desire to attain unity with God started, according to Origen, with a commitment to the spiritual life. He stated that the spiritual life began with the Platonic/Delphic maxim "know yourself" (cf McLelland 1976:127; Löhr 2010:165), although he re-interpreted it as self-knowledge becoming aware of being made in the image of God (cf McLelland 1976:127). Like Clement, Origen believed that "Greek philosophy and Plato were merely anticipations of the higher and fuller truth to be found in divine revelation" (Olson 1999:81-82).

Origen is also considered to have been the inventor, or at least one of the chief supporters of ἀποκατάστασις (*apokatastasis* – *restitution*; cf Ramelli 2009:135). Like his master Clement, he emphasised each human being's free will and responsibility and God's salvific will and providence for each and every creature (cf *Strom* 2.15.69-71; 7.16.102.1-3; 7.6.34.1-3). This became the essence of his theoretical system (Ramelli 2009:167). His system of Christian philosophy was revealed in his great work *De Principiis* (*On first principles*), in which he discussed the nature of God and his *Logos* and creation, as well as many other subjects. Christian Theology was, according to Origen, the highest form of philosophy (Barrett 2011:41). Origen's Theology was very similar to Clement's, because he also tried to relate Christian faith to the Neo-Platonic philosophy of the day. The truth was only that which showed cohesion with Scripture.

Origen advocated the following:

- The free will of humanity.
- The Greek idea of pre-existent souls.
- Human beings were endowed with reason.
- Souls existed prior to the creation of the physical world.
- In that pre-existent state they already chose for or against God.

- Only Jesus remained sinless, even during his time of pre-existence – that constituted his sinless life on earth.

He followed in the footsteps of the Greeks in his concern for knowledge of God and its relationship to self-knowledge. Philosophy, according to him, provided the basis for the study of Christianity. Origen's career developed alongside the Neo-Platonism founded by Ammonius Saccas (El Masri 1982:26; Barrett 2011:48). Both Origen and Plotinus were students of Saccas. According to Neo-Platonism, the world is an imperfect copy of an ideal universe (Vrettos 2001:170). That is why the Platonists distinguished between the physical world and the eternal world.

Added to the fact that Origen followed his teacher, Clement, adhering to the Platonic cardinal virtues of wisdom, self-control, justice and courage, he advocated an ascetic lifestyle, but a little different from many others: Instead of withdrawing from society, he rather limited himself from physical comforts (cf Williamson 1989:182-183). For him deeds spoke louder than words (cf Harris 1966:34). His asceticism became extreme, to such an extent that, according to *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.8 (*Origen's daring deed*), he castrated himself for the sake of the Kingdom (Justin Martyr's *Apol* 1.29; cf Duncan 2011:19; Isichei 1995:22; Hillerbrand 2012:41), due to a "perverted interpretation of our Lord's words in Matthew xix. 12 and the desire to place himself beyond the reach of temptation in the intercourse which he necessarily had to hold with youthful female catechumens" (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:549). For clarity's sake the verse is quoted here: *For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others – and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.*

Just like Clement, he adopted a theory of *gnosis*, but it was independent of the Gnostics. After receiving simple faith, the Christian goes on a journey of (Christian) *gnosis*, during which he gains knowledge of God (cf Harris 1966:50). For him knowledge and morality were intertwined: To obtain salvation, a person had to go through a process of learning and growth.



He opposed Gnosticism by denying that the created world was evil (cf Lynch 2010:103). He ascribed the evil and suffering of this world to the fact that mankind had to realise their dependence on God and acknowledge his pre-eminence. He felt that the existence of the physical world and history was the result of sin (cf González 2010:1, 81). Man's free will, however, gives him the chance to repent. Many regarded him as a Universalist, because he supported reconciliation, which would also include satan.

Origen did not want to divide Christianity into simple and complex systems, but believed that in faith everyone would be able to understand it (cf Green 1998:42). This is why he classified the teachings of the church to be challenging, but attainable (cf Behr *et al* 2003:51).

Contrary to Clement's view of the *Logos* as the good teacher, Origen adopted the Greek version of the *Logos* as the Word, which was the combination of intelligible Christian belief in God and belief in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. He saw the *Logos* and the Son of God as one and equal to God (Barrett 2011:47-48).

His doctrine of God was one of the best developed doctrines in the history of Theology. He also expressed the divinity of Christ, but some people accused him of subordination. He saw the *Logos* as an extension of God, as One that has always been with God, as the One that entered the world as God's Word. It would have been inappropriate for God himself to enter the world incarnate, therefore he sent the *Logos* (Barrett 2011:52).

Origen believed that knowledge may be attained through a right relationship with God (cf Behr *et al* 2003:49). This led speculation being brought into a vital union with practice (cf Harris 1966:34). Like Clement, Origen was convinced that knowledge and virtue were one. He regarded education, as mere scholarly learning, as the grasping of the methods and contents of a plurality of regions of scholarship. Its ecclesial counterpart would be "sapiential knowledge engendered by grace and divine self-disclosure" (Farley 2001:153). Faith, therefore, would become solid proof when truth was found through what has been transmitted by God (Osborn 2005:202).

Origen believed that faith established the existence of supernatural realities (cf Harris 1966:152) and that Theologians were granted the wisdom to explore these realities. Faith, mixed with ignorance and error, was not condoned (Harris 1966:153). He was convinced that knowledge involved the conception of an end (cf Harris 1966:58), which implied an eschatological principle in his theory of knowledge. The end would be the culmination of rationality and the *Logos*. Faith and reason could therefore never be opposed to each other (Harris 1966:59). He also said that hope must return to remembrance if it is not to lose its real foundation. Therefore, the church had to be oriented toward the history enacted by Christ to reveal its eschatology (cf Moltmann 1993:28-29).

Origen had a motto "Despoiling the Egyptians" (drawn from the exodus account of the Old Testament) which referred to the borrowing of truth from pagan sources "where it may be useful in explicating the meaning of Scripture and communicating the gospel to pagan inquirers" (Olson 1999:103). With this he wanted to accumulate all the knowledge he could find for Christian use.

He taught that God bestowed divinity on the entire cosmos. The more a person learned about God, the more he evolved into the likeness of God, resulting in divinisation, which was seen as the ultimate salvific achievement where a person gained a part in the nature of God (Olson 1999:112). The more the soul acquired divine attributes, pre-eminently sanctification, wisdom and knowledge, the more it would become divine (cf McGuckin 2004:92). Salvation, however, was a lifelong process of transformation to the image of God and depended on the free will of the human and the grace of God. These ideas made people believe that Origen was a heretic (Barrett 2011:47). Furthermore, Origen was against subordinationalism, while he was sometimes depicted as the forerunner of Arianism (Ramelli 2011c:21). This true African was, however, much concerned with the relationship between the Father and the Son.

It may be concluded that while Origen was a rational Christian philosopher, he was also a dogmatic Theologian (cf Harris 1966:12). He lacked a substantial Christian point of historical reference, but he allowed spiritual and intellectual convictions to guide his theological efforts (cf Barrett 2011:56): "Origen's work was the first attempt

at a system of Christian doctrine, or philosophy of the Christian faith; a pivotal moment in the development of Christian thought" (Barrett 2011:40; cf also Harris 1966:42). Isichei (1995:21) described him as the "first major thinker of the early church seriously to tackle the intractable problems of Christianity." Like other writers of his time, he did not give much thought to the Holy Spirit.

2.5.8.4 The "heresy" of Origen

After his death Origen was accused of heresy, because he had departed from the orthodox faith and had become unorthodox (cf Schaff Vol 4, 1885:562; Chadwick 2014; *The Development of the Canon of the New Testament* sa):

- Origen said that the human soul of Christ previously existed and was united to the Divine nature before the incarnation of the Son of God which is related in the Gospels. He was thereby accused of making the Son inferior to the Father, therefore being a precursor of Arianism (of the 4th century).
- He argued that at the resurrection, people's material bodies will be transformed into absolutely ethereal bodies. He was therefore accused of spiritualising away the resurrection of the body.
- Origen postulated that everybody, including the demons, will finally be restored through the mediation of Christ. Because of this statement, he was accused of denying the existence of hell.
- He proclaimed a morally enervating universalism.
- He speculated about pre-existent souls and world cycles when he said that the souls of men had existed in a previous state and that the imprisonment of the souls in material bodies was a punishment for sins which they had then committed.
- With his allegorical interpretation he dissolved redemptive history into timeless myth by using the allegorical interpretation and turned Christianity into a kind of Gnosticism.

Isichei explicated these allegations with information that could not be verified anywhere else. Her words are quoted here for the sake of clarity:

Origen had a bold cosmic vision. He believed that a revealed religion tells us nothing about the universe before the world

existed, or what will happen when it ceases to exist, these are legitimate spheres for speculation. Before all ages, God created spiritual beings, souls, angels, spheres and what later became the powers of darkness. The Fall was not that of Eve and Adam, but of these spiritual beings who wearied of the adoration of God. They fell from God in varying degrees, the angels least, the powers of darkness most. Human bodies were given to souls, both as a punishment and as a remedy for their fall. Souls exist before the moment of conception and go, not through one, but many lives. This is how he interprets, 'Jacob I have loved and Esau I have hated', not as a harsh predestinarianism, but in terms of the quality of their previous lives. Just as souls go through many incarnations, so there have been and will be many worlds. Origen was a universalist. He believed that even the beings furthest from God still have a capacity for repentance and a return to God. One of the elements in his thought that caused most scandal was his insistence that even Satan could, and one day would, be saved. However, his insistence on the freedom of will meant that even the blessed in heaven still had the capacity to reject God (Isichei 1995:21-22).

Schaff (Vol 4, 1885:554) gave good reasons, in an apologetic way, for the "mistakes" of Origen:

But no doubt the chief cause of his being regarded as a heretic is to be found in the haste with which he allowed many of his writings to be published. Had he considered more carefully what he intended to bring before the public eye, less occasion would have been furnished to objectors, and the memory of one of the greatest scholars and most devoted Christians that the world has ever seen would have been freed, to a great extent at least, from the reproach of heresy.

Chadwick (2014) said that, although Origen was often attacked in his lifetime, as he was suspected of "adulterating the Gospel," it was after his death that the suspicion actually really started mounting. The Greek Christian, Methodius of Olympus, criticised him because of his spiritual doctrine on the resurrection. Origen's mistakes were serious because his thoughts were not yet moulded into precision as he was "in early life" (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:565). The Church could not leave these errors uncorrected, but, as mentioned above, the biggest reason for regarding him as a heretic, was because he finished his writings quickly and then published them before pondering over what he has written. Schaff righteously defended Origen and with him, all the Ante-Nicene Church Fathers who faulted in some way or another:

But, as to the sharpness of modern censures upon Origen's conspicuous faults, I must suggest three important considerations, which should be applied to all the Ante-Nicene doctors: (1) How could they who were working out the formulas of orthodoxy, be expected to use phrases with the skill and precision which became necessary only after the great Synodical period (325-451 CE) had embodied them in clear, dogmatic statements? (2) How could the active intellect of an Origen have failed to make great mistakes in such an immensity of labours and such a variety of works? (3) If, in our own day, we indulge speculative minds in large liberties so long as they never make shipwreck of the faith, how much more should we deem them excusable who were unable to consult libraries of well-digested thought, and to employ, as we do, the accumulated wealth of fifty generations of believers, whenever we are called to the solemn responsibility of impressing our convictions upon others? (Schaff Vol 6, 1885:93)

Despite the fierce criticism he had to contend with and which was supported by Anastasius 1, Epiphanius of Constantia, Jerome, Pontian and Theodore of Mopsuestia, Origen also had his defenders, especially in the East. They were Eusebius of Caesarea, Didymus the Blind, Athanasius the Bishop of Alexandria (to some extent), as well as the Cappadocian Fathers – Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa (Chadwick 2014). As Origen wrote the Κατὰ

Κέλσον and *Homilies* much later in his life, it would be much fairer to judge him on these writings.

2.5.8.5 Disciples of Origen

During the 3rd and 4th century, after Origen's death, he had many noteworthy disciples (cf El Masri 1982:35):

- Eusebius of Caesarea – regarded as the "father of ecclesiastical history."
- Didymus the Blind – he continued with Origen's way of exegesis and mysticism.
- Gregory Thaumaturgus – he transmitted the intellectual legacy of Origen to the Cappadocians.
- Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus: They took selections of Origen's writings, made a compilation that also included the writings of other prominent Fathers and called it *Philocalia*.
- Gregory of Nyssa – he took over Origen's Theology and mysticism.
- Evagrius of Pontus – he was "one of the greatest of speculative spirituals" who spread Origen's doctrines. These doctrines reached Cassian, who passed them on to Rufinus of Aquelia.
- Jerome (in his introduction to the translation of one of the books of Didymus, called *Περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος λόγος* (*A short work on the Holy Spirit*) stated: "All the philosophy of Ambrosius of Milan, and of the great St. Augustine was founded on the philosophy of Origen, Alexandria's great teacher."

2.5.8.6 Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea

As already mentioned, Origen left Alexandria in 234 for Caesarea, which had risen to prominence after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. There he became the head of a theological school that was similar to the School in Alexandria. One of his students was the presbyter Pamphilus (Fletcher 2014), a native Palestinian. He wanted the school to excel and become greater than the one in Alexandria. The Christian library of the school contained 30,000 manuscripts. Great scholars were assisted in their theological development including Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great and Jerome. Eusebius of Caesarea was one of the outstanding students who studied

under Pamphilus, the successor of Origen (Fletcher 2014). So close was their relationship that Eusebius referred to himself as Eusebius Pamphili (Eusebius, the son of Pamphilus). During the Great Persecution Eusebius started compiling a comprehensive ten-volume history of the early Christian church, which was completed in 313 when Constantine declared religious freedom. During that same year he was elected Bishop of Caesarea. Another great work of his was his twenty-one-volume work on Old Testament Prophecies about Christ, called *Demonstratio Evangelica* (*Demonstration/Proof of the Gospel*). Eusebius was a devoted churchman until his death (Burton 2007:118-119).

It can be mentioned that Eusebius also participated in the writing of a six-volume series called *Apologia pro Origene* (*Defence of Origen*). Pamphilus, who became a martyr (cf *De Vir* 81), wrote the first five books while in prison (with the help of Eusebius) and Eusebius completed the sixth book on his own after Pamphilus has died. Only Book 1, compiled by Rufinus in Latin, has survived. Eusebius (and Pamphilus) wrote the books in defence of Origen, because he was branded a heretic after his death.

2.5.9 Heraclas

Born: 177

Died: 247/248

Head of the School: 231-247/248

Heraclas was one of Origen's first students. Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.19) recorded what Origen said about Heraclas: "In this we imitated Pantænus, who before our day assisted many and had no little knowledge of these matters, and Heraclas, who is now one of the priests of Alexandria, whom I found a hearer of my own teacher of philosophical studies, for he had already been with him for five years before I began to attend these lectures."

He and his brother Plutarch were both converted to Christianity by Origen. Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.33) reported that, after his brother's martyrdom, Heraclas "gave a great example of philosophical life and *askesis*." Being a distinguished philosopher who studied for five years under Ammonius Saccas (Van den Broek 1995:46), he became

the assistant of Origen in 218 when he was appointed to teach the beginners at the School (*Hist Eccl* 6.15) and was made a priest by Bishop Demetrius. In 231, when Bishop Demetrius condemned Origen, Heraclas became the head of the School and succeeded Demetrius as Bishop (Patriarch) soon afterwards. Origen left Alexandria for Caesarea in 234 CE. After some time, when he returned to Alexandria, Heraclas deposed him as a priest and banished him from Egypt. Photius (*Synag kai Apod* 9; cf *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Origen* sa) recorded these events as follows:

In the days of the most holy Heraclas, Origen, called Adamantius, was plainly expounding his own heresy on Wednesdays and Fridays; the said holy Heraclas therefore separated him from the Church and drove him from Alexandria, as a distorter of the wholesome doctrine and a perverter of the orthodox faith. Origen, thus excommunicated, on his way to Syria reached a city called Thmuis, which had an orthodox bishop named Ammonius, who committed to Origen the delivery of an instruction in his Church. The said Pope Heraclas, having heard this, went to Thmuis, deposed Ammonius for this cause, and set up in his stead as bishop a younger man named Philip, who was of great note among the Christians. Later on, Heraclas, being besought by the people of the city, received Ammonius again as bishop, and gave the episcopate of Thmuis to both Ammonius and Philip. But after the holy Heraclas had gone thence, Philip never sat upon the bishop's throne, but when Ammonius expounded or celebrated the liturgy, always stood behind him all the days of the life of Ammonius. But when the latter was dead, then Philip sat on the throne, and became one of the bishops remarkable for virtue.

Heraclas was martyred in 247/248 (*New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Heraclas* sa). Eusebius only reported that he died (*Hist Eccl* 6.35).

2.5.10 Dionysius Magnus (*the Great*)

Born: 190/200

Died: 265

Head of the School: approximately 232-247

Besides being referred to as *Dionysius of Alexandria* by Jerome (*De Vir* 69), he was also called *The great Bishop of Alexandria* (ὁ μέγας Ἀλεξανδρέων ἐπίσκοπος) by Eusebius (in the preface to *Hist Eccl* 7.30) and *The illustrious and blessed Bishop* by Basil (in his *Letter 70: Without address*). Dionysius Magnus was born to distinguished pagan parents in Alexandria. He was a star worshipper (a *Sabeian*) and a physician (El Masri 1982:43) and he attended various schools of philosophy before he became a Christian under the influence of Origen (Roberts & Donaldson 1871:157). Thereafter he was made a presbyter in Alexandria. He was a fellow-student of Gregory Thaumaturgus.

When Heraclas became Bishop, in the third year of Emperor Philip, Dionysius succeeded him as head of the School. He stayed on as head for some fifteen years, even after he had succeeded Heraclas as Bishop in 246. He was Bishop of Alexandria, "at that time, beyond all comparison, the greatest and the most powerful See of Christendom" (Schaff Vol 6, 1885:181) until 248 and then again from 264-265. According to Eusebius, Dionysius was, after Cyprian, the most outstanding Bishop of the 3rd century. According to a *Scholium* in the *Codex Amerbachianus*, he held the position of Bishop for a total of seventeen years.

In 249 there was a massive persecution by Emperor Decius. Dionysius was arrested and taken to a small town named Taposiris (*Hist Eccl* 6.40.4). He miraculously escaped. Large numbers of Christians were martyred in the cities and villages. After the persecution came the pestilence. Dionysius (in his *Epistle 12: To the Alexandrians*) described how the heathens pushed away their sick, fled from their own relatives and threw bodies half dead into the streets. The Christians' heroic acts of mercy were recounted by their Bishop. He also described how many priests, deacons and persons of merit died from succouring others. According to him, these deaths were in no way inferior to martyrdom.

When Origen died in 253/254, Dionysius, who was in Libya at that time, wrote a letter in his praise to Theotecnus of Caesarea. In 257, under Emperor Valerian, he was banished from Alexandria after a trial before Aemilianus, the prefect of Egypt (*Catholic Online* sa). When toleration was decreed by Emperor Gallienus in 260, Dionysius returned to Alexandria, where he remained until his death as an old man.

According to the *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Dionysius of Alexandria* (sa), there were several similarities between Dionysius and Cyprian:

- They were better administrators than Theologians.
- Their writings usually took the form of letters.
- Both were converts from paganism.
- Both were engaged in the controversies regarding the restoration of those who had lapsed during the Decian persecution, concerning Novatian and with regard to the iteration of heretical baptism.
- Both corresponded with the Popes of their day.

Dionysius had widespread influence on the churches of both the East and the West. Schaff (Vol 6, 1885:181) noted that his life ran in a parallel line with that of Gregory and that they both died on the same day. On the same page we find this jewel of a testimony to Dionysius:

But I must find room to express my admiration for his character, which was never found wanting amid many terrible trials of character and of faith itself. His pen was never idle; his learning and knowledge of the Scriptures are apparent, even in the fragments that have come down to us; his fidelity to the traditions received from Origen and Heraclas are not less conspicuous; and in all his dealings with his brethren of the East and West there reigns over his conduct that pure spirit of the Gospel which proves that the virgin-age of the Church was not yet of the past. A beautiful moderation and breadth of sympathy distinguish his episcopal utterances; and, great as was his diocese, he seems equally devoid of prelatric pride... (Schaff Vol 6, 1885:181).



It was mainly Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6, 7; *Praep Evang* 14) who reported about Dionysius and to some extent Jerome (*De Vir* 69; *Praef ad Lib* 18 – *Comment in Esaiam*), Athanasius (*De Sent Dion*; *De Syn Nic Dec*) and Basil (*De Spir Sanc* 29; *Epist ad Amphiloich*; *Epist ad Max*).

When Dionysius died, the Delta City was held in such high regard as the "centre and bulwark of Christian scholarship" that it was referred to as a "second Jerusalem" (El Masri 1982:55).

2.5.11 Theognostus

Born: 210

Died: 270

Head of the School: 260/265-270

Theognostus was appointed as the head of the School by Dionysius, who at that time was the Bishop of Alexandria (El Masri 1982:45). Neither Eusebius nor Jerome mentioned him, but Athanasius (the twentieth Bishop of Alexandria) referred to him as an eloquent and learned man – ἀνὴρ λόγιος (*De Decret Nic Syn* 25) and the admirable and zealous Theognostus – Θεόγνωστος ὁ θαυμάσιος καὶ σπουδαῖος (*Epist ad Ser* 4.9). According to Photius (*Bibl Cod* 106), he too was a student of Origen and later became head of the School, probably in 260 or 265 CE (Schaff Vol 6, 1885:374). He died in Heliopolis (Egypt) in 270.

2.5.12 Pierius

Born: Uncertain

Died: After 309

Head of the School: 270 to uncertain

Dionysius also appointed Pierius as head of the School after the death of Theognostus (El Masri 1982:45). He was a priest/presbyter and head of the School at the same time as Achillas (*Hist Eccl* 7.32.25, 26), the Greek writer. At that time Theonas was the Bishop (Pope) of the city (cf *De Vir* 76). Eusebius referred to him because he was well known for his voluntary poverty, his asceticism, his skills in philosophy as well as his exegesis and exposition of the Scriptures and his sermons

in the church (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.2.15; 3.8-9). He was also an exegetical writer. According to Jerome (*De Vir* 76), he was well qualified in dialectic and rhetoric and was called *Origenes junior* (*Origen the younger*), or *the new Origen* (cf Van den Broek 1996:205; El Masri 1982:45) as he promoted the doctrines introduced by Origen. The specific doctrines of Origen that he followed were those concerning the Holy Spirit and the pre-existence of souls (Schaff Vol 6, 1885:378). As a result of the persecutions by Diocletian in 284, he left Alexandria for Rome, where he died. Philip Sidetes (*Fr* 4.7, referring to Theodorus *Book* 13) postulated that he was martyred.

2.5.13 Achillas

Born: Uncertain

Died: 313

Head of the School: 303

Achillas, mentioned under the previous heading, was allegedly one of the heads of the School after Pierius (Scholten 1995:17; El Masri 1982:93), but only for a brief period of time. He was the eighteenth Bishop of Alexandria from 311-313. He was the head of the School before Peter the Martyr, but became Bishop of Alexandria after Peter.

He was ordained a presbyter by Pope Theonas together with Pierius, whom he succeeded as head of the School. El Masri (1982:93) gave the date as 303. It is possible that he was head of the School at the same time as Pierius and that they divided the work between them, as did Origen and Heraclas (cf Scholten 1995:33). When he became Bishop, he reinstated Arius as priest in Alexandria – that was after Peter the Martyr had excommunicated Arius (cf Schaff Vol 6, 1885:620). Achillas was famous for his work in Greek philosophy and theological science and was called *Achillas the Great* by Athanasius (*Ad Epis Part 2: To the Bishops of Egypt* 2.23).

2.5.14 Peter (also called Petros) the Martyr

Born: Uncertain

Died: 311

Head of the School: Beginning of the 4th century

El Masri (1982:72) called Peter a "sagacious person." Butler (1846:511) described him in more words referring to Eusebius: "Eusebius calls this great prelate the excellent doctor of the Christian religion, and the chief and divine ornament of bishops; and tells us that he was admirable both for his extraordinary virtue and for his skill in the sciences and profound knowledge of the Holy Scriptures." These words originated from the *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.32, 8.13 and 9.6. Anastasius Bibliothecarius wrote a lengthy testimony on the life of Peter (*Apud Maium, Spicilegii* 52; cf Schaff Vol 6, 1885:607-621).

Peter, a native Egyptian, succeeded Theonas as Bishop of Alexandria in 300. He was the sixteenth Bishop after Mark, therefore the seventeenth Bishop. According to Philip Sidetes (*Fr* 5.4 [12]), he also became head of the Catechetical School and was strongly opposed to Origenism. During the last nine of his twelve years as Bishop, he endured violent persecutions carried out by Diocletian and his successors. Butler (1846:511-512) reported: "That violent storm, which affrighted and disheartened several bishops and inferior ministers of the church, did but awake his attention, inflame his charity, and inspire him with fresh vigour." Many endured with him, but some betrayed their faith to escape torments and death, even Meletius, the Bishop of Lycopolis in Thebais. Peter called a council and convicted Meletius (Theodore's *Hist Eccles* 1.8). Butler (1846:513) added:

Thus he formed a pernicious schism, which took its name from him, and subsisted a hundred and fifty years. The author laid several snares for St. Peter's life, and though by an overruling providence these were rendered ineffectual, he succeeded in disturbing the whole church of Egypt with his factions and violent proceedings; for he infringed the saint's patriarchal authority, ordained bishops within his jurisdiction, and even placed one in his metropolitanical see.

Arius, who was in Alexandria at that time, initially showed support for Meletius' cause, but then quitted and was ordained a deacon by Peter. Not too long afterwards, he relapsed back to Meletius' views and was excommunicated by Peter. Peter himself was imprisoned during the reign of Galerius Maximus, but was set free soon afterwards. When the persecutions were resumed in 306 Peter fled Alexandria, but returned in 311. During the same year persecution flared up again and Emperor Maximin himself went to Alexandria, where he ordered the immediate arrest and execution of Peter and three of his priests (*Hist Eccl* 7.32.31). Peter was allegedly the last Christian slain by Deocletian. That is why he is called Ἱερομάρτυς (*The holy martyr*, or as El Masri [1982:74] put it, "The Seal of the Martyrs").

His death drove many of his followers to the deserts, where they lived as hermits. Schaff (Vol 6, 1885:649) elaborated on this: "It now introduced *monasticism*, in its earliest and least objectionable forms, into Egypt, whence it soon spread into the Church at large."

2.5.15 Serapion

Born: Uncertain

Died: 360/370

Head of the School: 339-360/370

Serapion, also known as "Serapion of Arsinoc" or "Serapion the Scholastic," was a brilliant scholar and Theologian (*Catholic Online* sa). He started off as a desert monk (living in the Egyptian desert) and after the death of Antony (a hermit of the Benedictine order), he and Athanasius worked closely together, especially in their struggle against Arianism. After 343 he became the bishop of Thmuis (near Diospolis in Lower Egypt on the Nile Delta; cf *De Vir* 99; Vaschalde sa;). Because he unambiguously backed Athanasius and his (referring to Athanasius) opposition to Arianism, he was exiled for some time by the zealous Arian Emperor Constantius 2. *Catholic Online* (sa) referred to him as "Bishop and head of the famed Catechetical School of Alexandria, Egypt," which should be for the period from 339 until his death in 360 or 370.

2.5.16 Macarius Politicus

Born: 300

Died: Uncertain

Head of the School: Uncertain

Macarius was given the additional name *Politicus (of the city)* by his fellow countrymen to distinguish him from "Macarius of Egypt" who spent most of his life in the desert (Sozomen's *Hist Ecclest* 3.14; cf also Schaff Series 2, Vol 2, 1885:648). He was born in Upper Egypt in approximately 300 CE and was a monk and hermit. More than this is not known of him. No reason could be found for his inclusion in the list of thirteen "teachers" by Philip Sidetes, referred to earlier.

2.5.17 Didymus the Blind

Born: 313

Died: 395/398

Head of the School: The second half of the 4th century

Didymus, who was known as the "Blind Seer of Alexandria" (El Masri 1882:163) was regarded as the foremost Christian scholar of the 4th century, as well as an influential leader (Aiken 2014). Saieg (2006:9) described him as a "pious man; his theology, his exegesis, and his study of philosophy all move from a desire to understand his piety and to have that piety understood." Although he became totally blind at the age of four (cf *De Vir* 109), he hungered to learn and developed an amazing ability to retaining information. In his youth he prayed to God for the illumination of his heart and not his sight, although he allegedly admitted to Antony, one of his students, that the loss of his sight was a source of grief to him (cf *Cast* 68.2; Aiken 2014).

At a young age he was already one of the most learned men of his day, with a sound knowledge of grammar, rhetoric, logic, music, arithmetic and geometry (Theodoret's *Hist Eccles* 4.26), as well as the Scriptures, much of which he knew by heart. He also "spent time and labour in order to study Aristotle" (Tzamalikos 2012:244). Jerome, another student of Didymus, was so impressed by his skills and knowledge that he called him "the Seer" (*Apol* 1.43; cf *De Vir* 109). The orator Libanius wrote to an official in Egypt: "You cannot surely be ignorant of Didymus, unless you are

ignorant of the great city wherein he has been night and day pouring out his learning for the good of others" (*De Vit Patr* 2.24). Jerome spent a month with Didymus to discuss difficult passages of Scripture so that his own doubts could be resolved (cf *Apol* 2.12; *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Didymus the Blind* sa).

He was appointed as head of the School at a very young age and retained that position for almost fifty years (El Masri 1982:164). He remained a layman and never became part of the clergy. During his time the School was accessible to blind students as they could study through a system that made use of letters engraved into the surface of wood (El Masri 1982:164). He was strongly influenced by Origen and adopted most of his ideas.

Didymus lived the life of an ascetic, even though he remained in the city and did not live in the desert like other ascetics. The *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Didymus the Blind* (sa) contained this story Didymus had told Palladius: One day, while he was fasting and thinking about the persecutor of his time, called Julian, he fell asleep in his chair. In a dream he saw white horses running in different directions, while the riders cried out, "Tell Didymus that today at the seventh hour Julian died! Arise and eat, and inform Athanasius the bishop, that he may also know it." Didymus noted the exact time and could later confirm that the events had occurred exactly as foretold in his dream.

He was one of the major opponents of Arianism and was very orthodox in his view of the Trinity and Christology. As noted above, Van den Broek (1995:47) correctly is of the opinion that Didymus' death (in 395/398) marked the end of the School's existence.

2.5.18 Rhodon

Born: Uncertain

Died: Uncertain

Head of the School: End of the 4th century

According to Philip Sidetes (*Fr* 2), Rhodon succeeded Didymus the Blind towards the end of the 4th century. Philip claimed that he had studied under Rhodon, "after he

had transferred the school from Alexandria to Side in the time of Theodosius the Great (379-395)" (Van den Broek 1995:41). According to him, the School was moved to Side when Rhodon was the head, therefore Didymus the Blind was in fact the last head of the School in Alexandria. No more information about Rhodon is available.

2.6 An evaluation of the contributions of Van den Broek and Scholten

This heading is closely linked to sub-heading 2.2.2, under which the question regarding the existence of the School was discussed. The reason for discussing the heads of the School in Alexandria before discussing the contributions of these two distinguished scholars, is to provide the reader with the "bigger picture."

2.6.1 A word in advance

Frequent reference has already been made to the book, *Studies in Gnosticism and Alexandrian Christianity*, written by Roelof Van den Broek and published in 1996. The publication of this book was preceded by an article (*The Christian "School" of Alexandria in the Second and Third Centuries*) written by him as part of research undertaken in 1995 on centres of education (*Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*). In the same year Clemens Scholten also published an article (*Die alexandrinische Katechetenschule*) on the Catechetical School in Alexandria. In 1997 Van den Hoek referred to the studies of Van den Broek and Scholten as follows: "More recently Roelof van den Broek and Clemens Scholten have advanced new reconstructions of the school of Alexandria that contrast with the image of the school as Eusebius, the prime source on the subject, had presented it" (Van den Hoek 1997:60). Their views will be discussed separately, as they are almost totally against the notion of a Catechetical School as such. The viewpoints of these two scholars will be discussed and evaluated on the basis of what has already been stated in this Chapter.

Most scholars have presented the traditional view on the founding of the *Didaskaleion* as provided by Eusebius, sometimes or somehow altering it here and there. Van den Broek and Scholten decided on a different approach. The articles written by these two scholars differ in character: Van den Broek emphasised two things: The diversity of the Alexandrian Christian communities and the link between Alexandrian Christianity and earlier Jewish traditions. Scholten focused on a later

period in the School's existence and discussed Origen and his *ambiance*. In his opinion the "academic" aspects (more specifically philosophy) of the School were of greater importance (cf Van den Hoek 1997:60).

2.6.2 Discussion of the viewpoint of Van den Broek

Van den Broek correctly stated that Eusebius did not work with facts when he pinned down his thoughts on the *Didaskaleion*. As has already been mentioned, he actually depended on hearsay (cf *Hist Eccl* 5.10). Van den Broek (1995:39) therefore questioned the information given by Eusebius: "What did he really know and what did he simply infer from the resources at his disposal?" This question actually goes back to the oral culture that dominated the time of the Early Church Era. Cognisance is therefore taken of the fact that the evidence on the School may be bleak and it is noted that Eusebius did not work with cold (written) facts, but with interpreted (subjective oral) information. This creates the gap for scholars to try and (re)construct the information to their disposal. However, one cannot simply ignore the writings of Eusebius, written at a time much closer to the events, or demolish his arguments with 21st-century postulations. Furthermore, oral history, especially in Africa, has grown over the centuries to become a valid source of information, as thoroughly discussed by Oden (2011) in his book, *The African Memory of Mark: Reassessing early church tradition*, based to a great extent on oral sources of Africa – the *African memory* (cf also the review done on this book by Oliver 2016).

The following two questions summarised Van den Broek's point of view: "Was there a school at all, in the sense of an established institution of learning and education? Or were there in Alexandria independent teachers only?" The truth is that final answers to these two questions are impossible, which means that any answer will be based on speculation, be it by Eusebius or by the said scholar. Take, for example, the alleged existence of the Johannine School (in Ephesus?) which is still being debated today. Culpepper (2007:290) concluded on the grounds of the essential characteristics of ancient schools that "the Johannine community was a school." Many scholars are vigorously arguing to the contrary. This is one of the reasons why in this study a stand is taken against this kind of reasoning.

Among philosophical schools in Antiquity there was a tradition to have a succession of teachers, where the teacher was succeeded by his student. Van den Broek stated that Eusebius implemented that philosophical tradition of *successio* at the School, citing that Origen was a student of Clement who had been a student of Pantaenus, and they all became heads of the School. In 1997 he elaborated on this: As Eusebius was writing at a much later stage, from a perspective of established Christian organisations, he deliberately created chains of succession concerning Bishops or heads of the *Didaskaleion*, dating their starting points back to apostolic times "in order to give the organizations of his time an enhanced legitimacy" (Van den Hoek 1997:60-61). With this postulation he wanted to put the School within a philosophical framework and questioned whether the original purpose of the School had indeed been to provide for the catechumens. This would contrast strongly with what was argued above, as well as with the whole notion of the development of the School from a "house school" to a kind of "university." As clearly stated above, philosophy did play a vital role at the School, especially from Clement's time onward, but that did not negate the original purpose of the School.

He also stated that Origen never mentioned his "alleged" predecessor Clement and never attended one of his courses (Van den Broek 1995:41). However, in *Contra Celsum* 1.48 Origen clearly referred to Clement, who "at all times avoided unnecessary talk about himself," as is mentioned in the above discussion of Clement as a head of the School. In his *Stromateis* 1.11.3 Clement referred to a *successio apostolica*, which was also a *successio veritatis*, especially for the teachers/heads (cf Van den Broek 1995:42). Van den Broek called it "astonishing," but it seems as if his theory on the *successio* would then have to be dated back to *before* Clement and Origen. Van den Broek merely referred to this as a succession of the Apostles and not of the predecessor-teachers or heads.

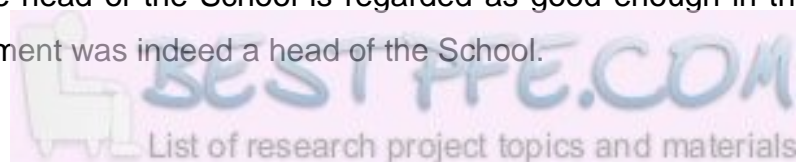
Commenting on this and concurring with this study, without referring to Van den Broek, Van den Hoek (1997:76) stated:

The nomenclature of the school aside, it seems clear that teaching and scholarship within the penumbra of the church was a long-established activity in Alexandria *well before Origen* [my emphasis]. Eusebius's characterization of the early school's

curriculum as consisting of interpreting scripture and teaching catechism, corresponds closely to Clement's activities as they emerge from his writings. Eusebius's claim that Clement engaged in catechetical instruction seems, therefore, *amply justified* [my emphasis]. In general, Eusebius's measured comments on the Alexandrian succession and school are verifiable, right down to the ambiguity of its terminology.

Van den Broek (1995:43) assumed that in the 2nd-century Alexandrian Christianity the teachers were merely laymen, even though they were responsible for "all forms of religious education, from pre-baptismal instruction to high theology." He referred to them as "charismatic διδάσκαλοι, not the holders of academic chairs, incorporated in a school with a fixed curriculum" (Van den Broek 1995:43). Should this assumption be true, then the whole notion of Alexandria being renowned for its academic excellence (Fogarty 2004:14) becomes suspect, at least when referring to the Christian community. He admitted, though, that "some of these teachers" were schooled in Greek philosophy and Greek culture in general. He also confirmed the existence of a *Scriptorium* and a "circle of biblical scholars" by the middle and latter half of the 2nd century, but stood firm on his conviction that there was "no school, in the sense of a Christian academy, with a regular teaching programme" (Van den Broek 1995:43). This actually annihilated the existence of the School as it is presented in this study.

According to Van den Broek, it was during the second decade of the 3rd century that a Christian school was established in Alexandria. Even then the *Didaskaleion* would have been a "catechetical institute, housed in a separate building possessed by the church" and the teacher would have remained a lay teacher "who received his students at home" (Van den Broek 1995:44). With this Van den Broek postulated that Origen who became the head in the second decade of the 3rd century, was actually the first head of the School, while neglecting Clement in particular as a head. As previously mentioned, Origen did refer to Clement and the evidence about Clement being the head of the School is regarded as good enough in this study to conclude that Clement was indeed a head of the School.



Van den Broek (1995:44) also stated that Eusebius confused the persecution of 206-210/211 by Aquila with the persecution of 202, thereby mistakenly stating that Origen had taken up the position of head of the School in 203 instead of 211. If Van den Broek is correct, the question would be, "Why did the Bishop take eight years to appoint a new head after Clement has left the School in 202?" It therefore seemed more logical that the appointment was made in 202/203 rather than 211 (cf also Scholten 1995:19).

As has been put forward above, the syllabus of the School was not limited to theological subjects and Christian philosophy, but also presented other subjects. Van den Broek (1995:45) quoted the Frenchman, Pierre Nautin, who "has convincingly argued that this report [referring to Eusebius' *Hist Eccl* 6.18.3 noted above – my addition] has no historical basis but was simply inferred by Eusebius from what he knew of Origen's teachings at Caesarea." Eusebius allegedly used the *Address to Origen* written by Gregory Thaumaturgus in 245 and delivered during the Caesarean period of Origen, which contained a teaching programme consisting of five steps:

Step 1: A period of moral purification.

Step 2: Dialectics, as the most useful part of logic.

Step 3: Physics, including geometry (science of the earth) and astronomy (science of the heavens).

Step 4: Ethics.

Step 5: Theology.

Van den Broek (1995:45) referred to this curriculum as "an elaboration of the Stoic division into logic, ethics, and physics (including theology); it has distinct parallels in the works of Philo." He could not imagine that Origen in his Alexandrian period taught such curriculum. Once again the undertone of a purely philosophical school is noticeable in his argument.

In one of his first paragraphs Van den Broek stated that he did not think that Heraclas was the only teacher responsible for the first religious instruction, but that there were "a considerable number of teachers who could take care of the pagans who wanted to join the church" (Van den Broek 1995:46). He furthermore did not

think that Heraclas taught his students Theology at all, but "it seems more probable that Heraclas introduced the students to logic, physics and perhaps general ethics, and that Origen limited himself to biblical studies and theology" (Van den Broek 1995:46). In the previous paragraph it was mentioned that Van den Broek could not imagine that Origen in his Alexandrian period taught such curriculum, but thought that he had given the task to Heraclas. This seems contradictory.

2.6.3 Discussion of the viewpoint of Scholten

Scholten referred to the writings of Eusebius and Clement and postulated that they differed from each other with regard to their references to the School in Alexandria. He stated that there is "keine Einigkeit in der Interpretation dieser Quellen und damit über den eigentlichen Charakter der alexandrinischen Katechetenschule und ihre Aufgabe und Stellung in der dortige Kirche" (*no consensus on the interpretation of these sources, and thus on the very character of the Alexandrian Catechetical School and its role and position in the local church* – my translation) during that time (Scholten 1995:17). The view that the School was there for the clergy, with the exclusive purpose to educate the catechumens, is not at all supported by Scholten, even though, on the last page of his article he referred to the School as a "theological college of the church." Origen was the first head of the School to add an "open education" to the education of the "catechumens." However, everything seemed to point away from a catechetical institution in Alexandria (cf Scholten 1995:18).

Scholten (1995:18) regarded Eusebius' writings on Origen as mere hagiographies with very little historical worth. He postulated that, while Origen was in the home of his benefactress (the "rich lady" referred to under the discussion of Origen's history), he came under the influence of a philosophical teacher. The only other person mentioned who also lived in the house was a gnostic teacher by the name of Paul of Antioch, and according to Robertson (1875:139), Origen avoided him as far as he could. Scholten also referred to Plotinus, a great philosopher during that time, who might have had an influence on Origen. According to Scholten, this influence on Origen was so strong that his life can be described as a φιλοσοφώτατος βίος – an *outstanding philosophical life* (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.3.9). Based on what has already been said in this study, this remark would not surprise anyone. However, it was only the

first step taken by Scholten to prepare his reader for his actual hypothesis, that this School was no catechetical school, but a philosophical – mainly a Christian philosophical – school in Alexandria.

On page 21 of his article Scholten declared that Origen found his life as a Christian and his philosophical life to be incompatible. No evidence could, however, be found in ancient writings to support this postulation. It seems as if Scholten made this point to build up to his own maxim as stated at the end of the previous paragraph. On the next page Scholten said that when Origen gave part of his educational duties to Heraclas, it was clear that he did not distinguish between the baptised and unbaptised, the pagans and the official catechumens, and that this became one of the roots of the character of the School. Origen would only distinguish between the novices and advanced students in the Christian sciences. With this the novices would be given a complete philosophical basis before they moved on to the advanced courses. They were introduced to the so-called *Quadrivium* (Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy and Music) – subjects the Platonists deemed necessary for studying Plato (Scholten 1995:22). Introductory books for mathematical knowledge were already being obtained from Theon of Smyrna and Nicomachus of Gerasa during the first half of the 2nd century. The introductory phase of the education at the School would provide the students with biographies of philosophers or other philosophical writings before the actual studies would begin. To support his postulation, Scholten incorrectly referred to Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.18.3: "For when he perceived that any persons had superior intelligence he instructed them also in philosophic branches – in geometry, arithmetic, and other preparatory studies – and then advanced to the systems of the philosophers and explained their writings. And he made observations and comments on each of them, so that he became celebrated as a great philosopher even among the Greeks themselves." Scholten believed that this was a reference to Origen, but in fact it was a reference to Ambrose as is clear from the previous paragraph of *Historia Ecclesiastica* (that is 6.18.2) where there is a reference to Origen, but the paragraph was referring to Ambrose: "Many others also, *drawn by the fame of Origen's learning* [my emphasis], which resounded everywhere, came to him [Ambrose – my addition] to make trial of his skill in sacred literature. And a great many heretics, and not a few of the most

distinguished philosophers, studied under him diligently, receiving instruction from him not only in divine things, but also in secular philosophy."

On page 29 Scholten stated that everything indicated that after his appointment as head of the Catechetical School, Origen started building a Christian education in the style of the Platonic school of philosophy of his time in which the centre was Biblical exegesis. This led Scholten to interpret what happened to Origen in 215 (mentioned under the discussion of Origen's history) as follows: Origen left Alexandria in 215 for two years because of the threat posed by Emperor Caracalla, not because he was a Christian, but because he actually was the head of a school of philosophy. Caracalla's actions were therefore directed against the philosophers and their schools in Alexandria and not against the Christians. Schaff (Vol 4, 1885:249-250) said that this happened in 216 (not 215) and that the Emperor visited Alexandria,

and directed a bloody persecution against its inhabitants, especially the literary members of the community, in revenge for the sarcastic verses which had been composed against him for the murder of his brother Geta, a crime which he had perpetrated under circumstances of the basest treachery and cruelty. Origen occupied too prominent a position in the literary Society of the city to be able to remain with safety, and therefore withdrew to Palestine to his friend Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem, and afterwards to Cæsarea, where he received an honourable welcome from Bishop Theoctistus.

According to Scholten, there was a direct threat against Origen, while Schaff reported that his withdrawal was a cautious move because of Caracalla's revenge plans.

Scholten (1995:29-30) made his next assumption: He stated that although there were catechumens at the School, they were not there as catechumens wanting to be baptised, but as students interested in Christian philosophy. Earlier in this Chapter Malaty (1995:183-184) was quoted as saying: "We can say that the two most important characteristics of the School were the combination of study with spiritual life, such as prayer, fasting and almsgiving. It was open and men and women were

co-admitted to the School." Scholten's view left no room for any practical religious activities at the School, as he saw it as a kind of theoretical Christian philosophical School: "Wenn durch den philosophischen Unterricht bei Origenes Heiden für das Christentum gewonnen werden, sich bekehren und zum Taufe anmelden möchten, dann ist dieser Effekt gewiß gern gesehen und von Demetrios sogar sicher gewünscht, aber mit der Taufvorbereitung im eigentlichen Sinne hat es nichts zu tun" (*When pagans are persuaded to Christianity by the philosophical teaching of Origen, and are converted and would like to register for baptism, then this is certainly welcomed and even desired by Demetrius, but with the preparation for baptism in the true sense it has nothing to do – my translation*) (Scholten 1995:30). In this Chapter the assumption is made (without stating it explicitly) that all the catechumens, at least in Alexandria, had to register as students at the School in order to be baptised and admitted to the church. No evidence to the contrary could be found.

As Scholten did not agree, he stated that the School may therefore not be called a *Catechetical* School. His postulation was based on the fact that there was little common ground between a philosophical school and a church. He also based his assumption on a reference made to the School by Eusebius. He said that scholars are misled by the phrase τὸ τῆς κατηγήσεως διδασκαλεῖον (*the school of instruction*), which did in fact not refer to a catechetical school as such. Phrases that would refer to such an institution but were never used with reference to the School, would be διδασκαλεῖον τῶν κατηχομένων (*school for catechumens*), διδασκαλεῖον τῶν ἱερῶν λόγων (*school of the holy words*), or διατριβὴ τῶν πιστῶν (*school of the believers*). Scholten (1995:30) further stated that the terms κατήγησις/κατηχεῖν (*instruction or catechesis*) in no way ("keineswegs") referred to the education of baptismal candidates, but was implemented in various areas of education. On the same page he concluded that Eusebius' use of the term κατηχεῖν (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.3.1) was not a reference to the instruction of the catechumens of the church in the sense of preparation for baptism at that time. In the light of this conclusion τὸ τῆς κατηγήσεως διδασκαλεῖον should be translated as *School of Christian education* or *Christian school*. The phrase διατριβὴ τῶν πιστῶν would then be used only to distinguish this school from the pagan schools.

Scholten (1995:31) maintained that Demetrius did not give Origen the order to instruct the catechumens or to prepare them for baptism, but to recruit the most capable teachers and run the best-organised Christian philosophical school in Alexandria at that time. On the next page he indicated quite clearly that the School's teachings were there for the training of the clergy ("*Klerusausbildung*"). No evidence could be found that Bishop Demetrius had a philosophical orientation, therefore this assumption by Scholten was most likely just an assumption. It is quite obvious that Heraclas, who succeeded Demetrius, had a philosophical orientation. No evidence could be found that the Bishop or the church in Alexandria was responsible for the instruction of the catechumens.

Looking at the School during the time before Origen's involvement, Scholten postulated that she was inherently philosophically oriented, but that the Christian-philosophical character of the School reached its zenith under the leadership of Origen and Heraclas. Heraclas also became Bishop of Alexandria and was succeeded by Demetrius, who also was a representative of Christian philosophy. Scholten (1995:35) elaborated as follows on this postulation: Pantaenus was a Stoic. He taught Clement who was the teacher of Origen. It can therefore be concluded that Pantaenus and Clement were also philosophically oriented. According to Scholten, Demetrius would have given them the same instruction as he had given to Origen. The only problem with this postulation is that Clement succeeded Pantaenus in the year in which Demetrius became Bishop (cf the discussion under the sub-heading "Pantaenus" about the time he was succeeded by Clement). Pantaenus was a Stoic, which meant that he had a philosophical background. However, that did not imply that he would distance him from catechumens. (Scholten may also have utilised a reference system not known to me, because his reference was to Clement's *Stromateis* 1.43.1, which should be 1.9.1 according to Schaff Vol 2, 1885:664.)

Scholten (1995:36) argued that Christian Science has blossomed in Alexandria before Origen's time, especially in the teaching of Biblical exegesis. Origen simply built on that. All of them represented philosophy to some extent. Nothing is wrong with that statement, although the undertone to it is that this ruled out the catechumens, which is something this study strongly opposes.

As has been mentioned above, Scholten (1995:37) concluded his article by stating that the designation "Catechetical School" would create a misunderstanding, should it be applied to the School in Alexandria.

2.6.4 Brief evaluation

Having reviewed the above-mentioned documents of the two scholars, it became clear that this study would rather go with the "conservative" viewpoints of the scholars already mentioned. Should more literature and more concrete proof become available for the two above-mentioned scholars, the views expressed in this study would have to change.

The decision to discuss the views of Van den Broek and Scholten was based on the fact that they had rather different views on this subject and these views were worth mentioning as they constitute part of the discussion on the matter.

2.7 Conclusion

As the followers of Christ's teachings settled in Alexandria, they were confronted by a vast array of other religions, cults and philosophies. Mark was already there doing missionary work during the fifth decade CE. They, therefore, did not present any *Fremdkörper*, also because of the presence of Judaism in the city and because of Apollos who was also there preaching the gospel. This city with schools or "universities" like the *Musaion*, the *Serapium* and the *Sebastion* was renowned throughout the Roman Empire for its academic excellence. The adherents to this new religion then also started with what can be called a house school where catechumens were prepared for baptism. Because of the missionary character of this religion, pagans were soon permitted to enter the School and the curriculum was also extended by adding subjects like Science, Mathematics, Greek and Roman literature, Logic and Arts. In this way the *Didaskaleion* grew to form part of a network of schools/"universities" in Alexandria.

The teaching was influenced by philosophers like Philo Judaeus and Plato, and the School excelled in particular in three forms of teaching, namely allegorism, philosophy and *gnosis*. Coupled with the apologetic character being displayed in the

writings of especially Clement and Origen, this put the *Didaskaleion* (almost) on the same level as the mentioned schools.

There is no reason to doubt that Clement and Origen were among the heads of the School during the late 2nd and early 3rd century CE. There were, however, sixteen other individuals who were also alleged to belong to the *successio* of heads in the School. Initially the School operated rather independently from the church as there was no Bishop in charge of the School and the first heads were merely laymen. After Didymus' death, the School ceased to exist in Alexandria. This was the time when the responsibility for matters relating to doctrine for the Christians in the Delta City was taken over by the Bishops.

Chapter 3

Documents written by the heads of the School

The great feature of the ante-Nicene theology, even in the mistakes of the writers, is its reliance on the Holy Scripture. What wealth of Scripture they lavish in their pages! (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:546).

3.1 Introduction

This Chapter is crucial in the sense that it contains information on all the extant and known (those who did not survive) writings of the identified heads of the Catechetical School in Alexandria. The writings of the heads of the School (the heads being discussed quite elaborately in the previous Chapter) will now be named and discussed.

If there are no known writings by a particular head (like Justus), his name will simply be omitted from the list. Although in most cases only secondary references to the works of the heads are available, they will provide the reader with a broader view of the thoughts of these writers.

3.2 Mark the Evangelist

The Gospel according to Mark was allegedly written by Mark himself. It is the earliest Gospel in the Bible and

probably the earliest extant narrative book about Jesus...Most [scholars – my addition] further agree that Mark was very quickly and widely circulated and influential, becoming the pattern and major source for the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke...This makes the Gospel of Mark particularly important as a source for study of early Christianity, the history of early Christian literature, and, of course, Jesus of Nazareth (Hurtado 2004:132).



If Mark was indeed the author of the Gospel, then it must have been written before 68 CE, which was the year in which he was allegedly martyred. Since scholars are still indifferent about the most likely place of origin of the Gospel – Syria (Theissen & Merz 1996:24-27), Palestine (Schröter 2010:278), or Rome (Pseudo-Clement's *Letter to Theodore* 2.6.12) – Alexandria can also be added as a possibility as Mark spent a large part of his last twenty years in this city. If the Gospel was not written there, then at least it could have been expanded there. According to Paananen (2012:89), who quoted Pseudo-Clement, "Clement affirms that in Alexandria Mark the evangelist expanded the Gospel that he had written in Rome during Peter's lifetime, and that this 'μυστικὸν εὐαγγέλιον' (Theod. II.6,12; 'secret Gospel' in Smith's translation) was still in use in Alexandria."

Contrary to this view, scholars like Koester (1983:35-57; 1989:19-37; 1990:275-303), Schenke (1984:65-82) and Crossan (1985:91-121; 1988:283-284; 1990:155-168; 1991:328-329) argued that the longer version of the Gospel represented an earlier form of the Markan document. After an elaborate discussion of these viewpoints, Brown (2003:109-110) concluded that (Pseudo-)Clement was probably right when he said that the Gospel had been expanded in Alexandria. Carlson (2005:132) called this a "more spiritual Gospel" which was created in Alexandria for those believers who were already advanced in knowledge (cf Brown 2008:535).

Pearson (1986b:153) stated that "the tradition of the preaching of Mark in Alexandria may predate the acceptance of the canonical Gospel in the Alexandrian Church." Clement and Origen had quoted Mark in their writings (cf *Paed* 1.9.85.1-2; *Quis Div* 37.1-4 by Clement; *Fr Luc* 210 by Origen; Edwards 2010:194).

3.3 Athenagoras

The two works of Athenagoras that are referenced are both apologetic. They are the *Legatio* (*Legatio pro Christianis*, also called *Apology* or *Presbeia*, translated as *Embassy* or *A plea for the Christians*), written between 176 and 180 (cf Blount 2001:72) and *De Resurrectione* (*Treatise on the resurrection*) (cf Berry 2007:59; Jacobsen 2014:83).

In the foreword to the *Legatio*, which consists of thirty-seven chapters, Athenagoras clearly stipulated, in the form of a petition, to whom his writing was addressed: "To the Emperors Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus, conquerors of Armenia and Sarmatia, and more than all, philosophers." In this treatise he showed a sound knowledge of the works of Menander, especially in the introduction and conclusion (Schoedel 1989:56). Clear parallels to Menander's work can be seen in the praise to the Emperors in the introduction (cf the *Crown Speech of Menander* 422.5-423.5) and the prayer for a long reign at the conclusion (*Leg* 37.2, compared to the *Crown Speech* 377.19-20).

As he was famous for his clarity of thought and strength of negotiation, this writing was philosophical but non-rhetorical and was intended to show the Emperors the falsity and absurdity of the defamation against Christians. He analysed and discussed the three accusations of that time against Christians, namely cannibalism, atheism and Oedipean ideals (also called "Oedipean intercourse" or plainly "incest"). This was why he divided his work into three sections (cf Berry 2007:59):

- The introduction – Books 1 to 3: In a very polite way he emphasised that the mistreatment of Christians was unjust, in fact non-sensical.
- Section 1 – Books 4 to 12: A response to the charge that Christians were atheists.
- Section 2 – Books 13 to 30: A response to the charge that Christians were cannibals. He also responded to the complaint that Christians refused to make sacrifices to and worship the civic and imperial gods (cf Jacobsen 2014:93).
- Section 3 – Books 31 to 35: A response to the charge that Christians were sexually immoral and committed incest.

According to Buck (1996:209-226), it is very likely that Athenagoras never presented this petition to the Emperors.

His work *De Resurrectione*, "the first complete exposition of the doctrine in Christian literature" (*New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Athenagoras* sa) which he wrote somewhat later than *Legatio*, consisted of twenty-five chapters divided into two parts:

- Part 1 (chapters 1-10) is called *God and the resurrection*: This formed the negative side of the treatise in which the apologist responded to the objections of philosophers to the resurrection of the body.
- Part 2 (chapters 11-25) is called *Man and the resurrection*: This was the positive side in which Athenagoras intended to prove the truth of the resurrection, maintaining that human existence only makes sense if there is a resurrection.

This work was probably the best early Christian treatise on the subject of resurrection and was intended as a public lecture. "It shows skilful understanding, and is regarded as the first attempt ever made by a Christian writer to prove this dogma by means of philosophical arguments and not by revelation and the biblical texts alone" (*Coptic Orthodox Church Network* sa). Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:279) added: "Both his Apology and his treatise on the Resurrection display a practiced pen and a richly cultured mind. He is by far the most elegant, and certainly at the same time one of the ablest, of the early Christian Apologists," together with the following appreciative remark: "It is very remarkable that Eusebius should have been altogether silent regarding him; and that writings, so elegant and powerful as are those which still exist under his name, should have been allowed in early times to sink into almost entire oblivion" (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:278).

The name of Athenagoras was hardly ever mentioned by other writers in history. The only allusions to him in early Christian literature are quotations from his *Legatio* in a fragment of Methodius of Olympus (312 CE), as well as in Epiphanius, Photius of Constantinople and Boethos of Chalcedon, and in the (untrustworthy) biographical details in the fragments of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Philip Sidetes in Pamphylia (ca 425 CE). One reason for this could be that his treatises were circulated anonymously and were therefore considered to be the work of another apologist. His writings witnessed to his scholarship and culture, combined with his "power as a philosopher and rhetorician, his keen appreciation of the intellectual temper of his age, and his tact and delicacy in dealing with the powerful opponents of his religion" (*New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Athenagoras* sa).

According to Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:276), Athenagoras' work opened "the way for Clement's elaboration of Justin's claim, that the whole of philosophy is embraced in Christianity."

3.4 Pantaenus

Jerome (*De Vir* 36) referred to the writings of Pantaenus with these words: "Many of his commentaries on Holy Scripture are indeed extant." This reference to Pantaenus' writings is usually regarded as based on a misunderstanding by Eusebius of Clement's words, which seemed to indicate that such writings were not available to him: One of his purposes in writing the *Stromateis* was to preserve in his memory what he had learned from Pantaenus and he apologised there for the fact that a part of what he had learned from the blessed man had already escaped his memory.

Schaff (Vol 8, 1885:2066-2067) documented two fragments written by Pantaenus. The first fragment occurs in "*Extracts from the Prophets* written probably by Theodotus (also called *Excerpts of Theodotus* in number 56)", and "was collected by Clement of Alexandria or some other writer," being a short commentary on Psalm 19:4b. The second fragment is to be found "in the Scholia of Maximus on St. Gregory the Divine" (Schaff Vol 8, 1885:2066-2067).

According to the *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Pantaenus* (sa), he (Pantaenus) might have been the writer of the concluding chapters of the *Epistle to Diognetus*. The main reason for this suggestion is that, in two passages, Anastasius Sinaita singled out Pantaenus and two or three other early Church Fathers as interpreting the six days of Creation and the Garden of Eden as figuring (representing) Christ and the Church.

According to Schaff, the broad and liberal tone of Alexandrian Theology may be due in part to the influence of Pantaenus, but "[m]uch of his exegetical work was still extant in the days of Jerome, who, however, reports that he did more for the Church as a teacher than as a writer" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:530).

3.5 Clement

3.5.1 Introduction

Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:276) referred to Clement in a charming way as "that man of genius who introduced Christianity to itself, as reflected in the burnished mirror of his intellect." He also regarded Clement as the founder of Christian literature, after Justin and Irenaeus (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:276). As both of the last-mentioned writers were 2nd-century writers, Griggs (1990:56) rightfully claimed that Clement was the first Christian teacher of the 3rd century from whom a number of works remained. There were, however, two other Christian writers of the 2nd century who were both connected to the School and who can be added to Justin and Irenaeus, from whom we have fragments of writings left, namely Athenagoras and Pantaenus.

Clement preferred the oral tradition to the written one. His writings were aimed at upholding the apostolic tradition. He was not a systematic Theologian and attempts to treat him as such were futile. In the words of Ensor (2013:20),

Clement's writings are notoriously unsystematic. Despite his promise at the beginning of the second work of his trilogy [*Paedagogus* – my addition] that he will give teaching which will "guide the soul to all requisite knowledge," the third work, the *Stromata*, as its very name implies, turns out to be a disorganised patchwork of ideas rather than a systematic theology, and hardly fulfils this promise. In fact it is very difficult to establish exactly what Clement believed in many areas of doctrine, including his doctrine of the atonement.

Von Campenhausen (1963:31) also referred to the *Stromateis* as a "wide-ranging work really leading nowhere in particular." Van den Hoek depicted Clement as a "difficult author" (Van den Hoek 1996:223; cf Mansfeld 1994:155-161), because he expressed himself in "obscure" ways, but she immediately added: "This unclear style may be intentional. Clement warns the reader (*Strom* 1.2.2; 20.4; 56.2) that knowledge of the ultimate truth is not to be obtained easily" (Van den Hoek 1996:223). During his time there was one form of exegesis, a "style of interpretation long associated with the delta of the Nile: allegorical exegesis. It is to be found on

every page of his writing and is fantastic in the extreme" (Enslin 1954:238). Though he was not a systematic Theologian, one finds "in him a theory of Scripture, its inspiration and its nature, which is followed also by Origen, and which determines the whole character of Alexandrian exegesis" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:530). This implied that he assigned two meanings to every text in Scripture: A mystical (deeper) meaning in addition to the obvious literal meaning. By implementing this method of interpretation of the Scriptures, called the allegorical method, he followed in the footsteps of Philo (cf Chapter 2).

He was a humble man and his writings reflected his humility. However, he was less positive about the Jews and the Greeks and insisted that the Greeks had borrowed their insights from the barbarians, that was, from the Jewish Scriptures. He went so far as to say (in *Strom* 5.14 with the heading *Greek plagiarism from the Hebrews*): "It having been then, as I think, clearly shown in what way it is to be understood that the Greeks were called thieves by the Lord" (cf Enslin 1954:232). Through his writings he became the ethical philosopher for the early Christians (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:369).

When Clement quoted from Scripture, he used the Septuagint, sometimes with verbal adaptations. He also quoted from memory (which was not always accurate) and sometimes he blended texts together. If Clement's works cannot be described as commentaries, they should be regarded as extended discussions of specific texts. Clement also displayed what Schaff (Vol 9, 1885:530) called, a "theory of Scripture, its inspiration and its nature," determining with it the whole character of exegesis being done in the School, being "an inspired and infallible storehouse of truth" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:530) unknown to his readers. The reason was that he believed that everything in Scripture had not only a literal (obvious) meaning, but also a mystical – that was the allegorical method.

According to Dinan (2008:31), in his writings Clement made ample use of the works of Heraclitus who had lived during the last part of the 6th and the first part of the 5th century BCE. About twenty-one (possibly 22) passages written by Clement contained almost literal quotations of Heraclitean fragments, while twenty other passages were found to contain paraphrases or reminiscences of Heraclitus.

3.5.2 The writings of Clement

The writings of Clement can be categorised as follows:

3.5.2.1 According to Eusebius

In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.13.1-3 Eusebius listed ten writings of Clement, all apparently extant at the time he wrote (cf Kovacs 2009:264). The first three are referred to as Clement's Trilogy:

- *Protrepticus* (*Exhortation to the Greeks*, also referred to as the *Cohortatio*).
- *Paedagogus* (*Instructor* or *Tutor*).
- *Stromateis* (*Miscellanies*).
- *Hypotyposeis* (*Sketches*).
- *Quis Dives Salvetur?* (*Quis Dives Salvandus?* according to Verster 2014:111) (*Who is the rich man that is being saved?*).
- *On the Pascha* (*Treatise on Easter*).
- *Discussion on fasting*.
- *On slander* (*On speaking evil*).
- *Exhortation to endurance/patience* or *To the newly baptised*.
- *Ecclesiastical canon* or *Against the Judaizers*.

3.5.2.2 The Trilogy

The three major works of Clement, referred to as his Trilogy, have survived in full (cf Hyldahl 2014:140). The Trilogy consisted of the *Protreptikos* (λόγος ὁ προτρεπτικός πρὸς Ἕλληνας – *Exhortation to the Greeks/heathen*), referred to as *Protrepticus*, written in approximately 190/195, the *Paidagogos* (παιδαγωγός – *The Instructor*), referred to as *Paedagogus*, written in approximately 198, and the *Stromateis* (Στρωματεῖς – *Miscellanies*, which is also called "Patchwork Quilts" by Kovacs 2009:264; cf Kovacs 2001:3), also referred to as *Stromata* and written before 211. These three writings are "among the most valuable remains of Christian antiquity, and the largest that belong to that early period" (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:372). The writings contain

- an apology for pagan consideration of Christianity;
- responses to Gnosticism and *gnosis*;

- an exposition of philosophy for the Christians;
- moral instructions.

The Trilogy was interconnected with one idea, that of the *Logos*, the Word, the Son of God, in the following way:

- The *Protrepticus*: In this writing Clement exhibited the Son of God by attempting to draw his readers from the superstitions and corruptions of heathenism to faith.
- The *Paedagogus*: Here he exhibited the Son of God by training his readers with precepts and discipline.
- The *Stromateis*: In this last part of the Trilogy he introduced his readers to the higher knowledge of God.

What he constantly had in mind was the passage of John 1 about the *Logos*: *The Word, who was with God, and who was God, became man and dwelt among us.*

a. **The *Protrepticus***

This document, consisting of twelve chapters, was an apologetic writing and included polemics, like most apologies do, with the intention to win pagans over to the Christian faith (Hyldahl 2014:141). It was an appeal to the "educated polytheists of the time to abandon their traditional gods and listen to the one true God who has made himself known in Jesus Christ" (Ensor 2013:23). It was aimed specifically at the Greeks and not at gentiles in general. It

contains a complete and withering exposure of the abominable licentiousness, the gross imposture and sordidness of paganism. With clearness and cogency of argument, great earnestness and eloquence, Clement sets forth in contrast the truth as taught in the inspired Scriptures, the true God, and especially the personal Christ, the living Word of God, the Saviour of men. It is an elaborate and masterly work, rich in felicitous classical allusion and quotation, breathing throughout the spirit of philosophy and of the Gospel, and abounding in passages of power and beauty (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:372).

In this document Clement tried with all his heart to prove that Christianity was superior to the religions and philosophies of especially the Greeks. He presented Christianity as a solution to the negative aspects of Greek mythology. Against the Gnostics he stated that Christianity was the true heir to Greek philosophy (cf Hägg 2006:63). This attitude of his was characteristic of the School (Enslin 1954:228). Clement was well acquainted with Philo's work intended for the Jews, and emulated it with regards to content, aim and method (cf Dinan 2010:435). Clement's writing style was very complicated and intellectual:

[S]entence structure, a very wide vocabulary, figures of speech, a plethora of quotations, a regular habit of veering from one subject to the next when to his quick-witted mind he had finished his argument or at least had sketched its chief aspects. In the *Protrepticus* all of this is particularly conspicuous (Enslin 1954:229, cf also 230).

According to Enslin (1954:229), Clement was an Atticist, meaning that he used the language and style typical of Athens and Attica as can be seen in the polished, elegant and concise rhetorical style on every page of his writings. In the *Protrepticus* he clearly showed his non-Christian readers that there was nothing inferior to Christianity, not even in their use of words. However, the way in which Clement accommodated his opponents, especially the philosophers and Plato in particular, may present a somewhat unfair picture of him. Although he was a convinced Christian, he was very fair to his opponents. This led to the debate about Clement really being a Platonic Christian or simply an "intellectually Christianised" Platonist: "But he sees profound values in other systems and is not ashamed to recognize them...In the *Protrepticus* this is less evident. Here he is definitely the apologist" (Enslin 1954:229). The *Protrepticus* is filled with philosophical art, but above all with the gospel.

b. The *Paedagogus*

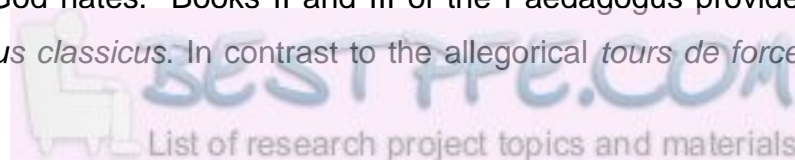
In this writing, which was a follow-up to the *Protrepticus*, Clement addressed the people who were converted to Christianity and who already exhibited Christian morals and manners (Barrett 2011:25; Ensor 2013:24). It served as a guide for the newly converted to form and develop their character and therefore to live a Christian

life. The focal point of this writing was παιδεία (*training and teaching*) which was central to "Clement's explication of Christianity" (Kovacs 2001:3). Therefore the aim of this three-part book was to present Jesus as the only Παιδαγωγός and Διδάσκαλος, "and to expound and enforce His precepts" (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:372). Clement put it this way (*Prot* 11.112.1): "Therefore since the Logos himself has come to us from heaven, it seems to me that we need no longer have resort to human teaching, seeking knowledge in Athens or the rest of Greece or Ionia. For if we have as teacher the one who has filled everything with his holy activities – creation, salvation, beneficence, law-giving, prophecy, teaching – this teacher now gives us all instruction, and, through the Logos, the whole universe has now become Athens and Greece."

In his *Paedagogus* 1.1.1.4-2.1 Clement equated the Logos with the Paedagogus and detailed his actions: "Let the Logos be called by the single name παιδαγωγός, which suits him well, since the pedagogue is practical, not systematic, and his aim is to improve the soul, not to teach it (διδάξαι), and to introduce it to the life of moderation, not the life of knowledge. And yet the same Logos also acts as teacher (διδάσκαλος), but not at present. The one who reveals and explicates in matters of doctrine is the Logos acting as teacher. The pedagogue, who is concerned with practical life, first exhorted us to attain a firm character and now urges us on to carry out our duties, by delivering faultless precepts and displaying as examples to those who come after the errors of those who have gone before."

Here one gets a very revealing picture of Clement, the cultivated and educated gentleman, who was entirely at home in the world that he knew so well. Enslin stated that in this writing Clement worked quietly and effectively to help the "intellectually undisciplined Christian movement" to take a respectable standing among the educated (Enslin 1954:231). He continued:

No better introduction to Clement as a man of poise, *savoir faire*, and native refinement and delicacy is to be found than in his unconscious amplification of this thesis: "There is nothing which God hates." Books II and III of the *Paedagogus* provide the *locus classicus*. In contrast to the allegorical *tours de force*



and absurdities of derivation which are so frequent in his pages, here we find a man who is thoroughly at home in the world of culture and refinement, who is neither afraid nor enamoured of God's good things but who has a constant, if unself-conscious, set of mind – seemingly the product of years of a genuinely liberal background – against both vulgar ostentation and ignorant or illiberal abstinence (Enslin 1954:236).

As he saw it, "[i]n a word, the Christian is characterized by composure, tranquillity, calmness, and peace (*Paed.* 2.7.60.204)" (Enslin 1954:237). This writing also gave special prominence to Mary, the mother of Christ: "There is only one Virgin Mary, and I delight in calling her the Church" (*Paed* 1.6.8.300; cf Rule 2008:35-52).

This writing contains three books (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:372-373):

- *Book 1*: This book consists of thirteen chapters in which Clement detailed "the person, the function, the means, methods, and ends of the Instructor," that is Jesus himself, the Word and the Son of God.
- *Books 2 and 3*: These two books, which consist of thirteen and twelve chapters respectively, contain rules as well as a code of Christian morals and conduct for the "regulation of the Christian, in all the relations, circumstances, and actions of life, entering most minutely into the details of dress, eating, drinking, bathing, sleeping, etc."

c. The *Stromateis*

According to Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.13) and Photius (*Bibl Cod* 111), the 19th-century lexicographer and epitomist, the full title of this work was Τίτου Φλαβίου Κλήμεντος τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀληθῆ φιλοσοφίαν γνωστικῶν ὑπομνημάτων στρωματεῖς (*Titus Flavius Clement's miscellaneous collections of speculative [gnostic] notes bearing upon the true philosophy*). Other writers and readers became so familiar with it that they started to call Clement the Στρωματεύς (*Stromatist*; cf Schaff Vol 2, 1885:373). Clement finished the first part in 192/194 after the death of Commodus (cf Havrda 2011:373) and the rest during the reign of Severus from 193-211 (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.6).

With reference to the place where Clement wrote it, Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:374) remarked:

So multifarious is the erudition, so multitudinous are the quotations and the references to authors in all departments, and of all countries, the most of whose works have perished, that the works in question could only have been composed near an extensive library – hardly anywhere but in the vicinity of the famous library of Alexandria.

The writing consists of seven books. Many scholars believed that it originally consisted of eight books, with the eighth book being lost. The content assigned to the eighth book, however, had no connection with the rest of the writing (cf Schaff Vol 2, 1885:373). The books (including the so-called eighth book) were divided into chapters as follows:

- Book 1: twenty-nine chapters.
- Book 2: twenty-three chapters.
- Book 3: eighteen chapters.
- Book 4: twenty-three chapters.
- Book 5: fourteen chapters.
- Book 6: eighteen chapters.
- Book 7: twenty-eight chapters.
- Book 8: nine chapters. This book was probably added after Clement left Alexandria (Hyldahl 2014:140).

We still have the complete *Stromateis* (considering that Book 8 did not really form a part thereof). Most scholars regarded the *Stromateis* as their chief source for reflection on Clement. Their reason was that in the *Stromateis* Clement was concerned with the more weighty matters of doctrine.

As the title indicates, this work was written (in opposition to Gnosticism?) to equip the readers with a true *gnosis*, that would be a Christian philosophy. Faith was the basis from which those who were trained by the *Paedagogus* could be led to this higher knowledge. Kaye (1835:229) described the aim of the *Stromateis* as follows:

"The object of Clement, in composing the *Stromata*, was to describe the true 'Gnostic,' or perfect Christian, in order to furnish the believer with a model for his imitation, and to prevent him from being led astray by the representations of the Valentinians and other gnostic sects." He defined Clement's description of a true Gnostic as follows:

By γνῶσις, Clement understood the perfect knowledge of all that relates to God, His nature, and dispensations. He speaks of a twofold knowledge, – one, common to all men, and born of sense; the other, the genuine γνῶσις, bred from the intellect, the mind, and its reason. This latter is not born with men, but must be gained and by practice formed into a habit. *The initiated* find its perfection in a loving mysticism, which this never-failing love makes lasting (Kaye 1835:238-239).

Clement himself stated (*Strom* 2.10.46.1; cf 7.1.4.2): "Our philosopher clings to these three things: first contemplation, secondly the performance of the commandments, and third the training (κατασκευῆς) of good men. When these things come together, they complete the Gnostic. But whichever of these is lacking makes knowledge (τὰ τῆς γνώσεως) incomplete."

This is the third of the three principal writings by Clement. It is also the longest and in many ways the most important one (Ensor 2013:27). The previous two writings largely repeated traditional views and also reflected less independent development than is seen in the *Stromateis* (Mosser 2005:55). According to Klibengajtis (2004:317), if one considers the *Opus Clementinum* in its entirety, it is only from the *Stromateis* that one can derive "abstrakte und epistemologische Gedankengänge" (*abstract and epistemological thought patterns* – my translation). To some extent this concurred with what was said about Clement's work as a whole in the introductory remarks, except that the *Stromateis* was excluded from that. However, this contrasted with the view of Von Campenhausen (1963:31), discussed above. Both points of view can be regarded as correct since, as stated earlier, Clement's writing style was not easy to understand (cf Van den Hoek 1996:223; Mansfeld 1994:155-161).

Clement wrote for people who were already well-established Christians. The *Stromateis* was also more doctrinal than his two earlier works, even though it lacked a clear structure. The chief significance of this writing lay in the fact that

Clement seeks to steer a middle path between those who had a simple, traditional faith and shunned all association with Greek philosophy, on the one hand, and those "Gnostic" Christians who, in their eagerness to syncretise Christianity with other streams of thought outside the Christian tradition, had fallen into heresy, on the other (Ensor 2013:27).

A good example of this was when people tried to distinguish between Christian faith and knowledge, asserting that the "former is related to the Son and the latter to the Father" (Havrda 2010:2). Clement (*Strom* 5.1-2) clearly stated that one must also have knowledge about the Son.

This writing, being a "miscellaneous collection," contained the speculations of Greek philosophers and heretics, which were compared to those who "cultivated the true Christian gnosis, and of quotations from sacred Scripture" (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:373). True Christian *gnosis* and quotations from sacred Scripture were regarded to be the source of higher Christian knowledge. Being devoted to philosophy, Clement described this discipline as a divinely ordered preparation for the Greeks to come to faith in Christ. He placed it on the same level as the Law for the Jews. If one wanted to obtain true Christian knowledge, then one had to become familiar with the literature and culture of philosophy, which he regarded highly. In this he opposed certain other Christians of his time who believed that study (learning) was useless and dangerous. He saw himself as an eclectic, believing that there was truth in every faith or system. However, he added that all the truth that can be found will only become real truth in Christ, who is the true origin of it all.

The following words of Schaff (Vol 2, 1885:373) can be applied as a conclusion to this writing: "The *Stromata* are written carelessly, and even confusedly; but the work is one of prodigious learning, and supplies materials of the greatest value for understanding the various conflicting systems which Christianity had to combat."

3.5.2.3 *Quis Dives Salvetur?*

Its original title was τίς ὁ σωζόμενος πλούσιος; (*Who is the rich man that is being saved?*). This very practical treatise, based on the Markan version of the rich young man (cf *Quis Div* 4-5), showed the reader that it is the love and not the possession of riches that is evil (Ensor 2013:31; cf Clarke 2009:447-468) and that the attitude of the soul is of the greatest essence. Ensor (2013:31) maintained that, with this, Clement rejected "the ascetic ideal and instead commends the principles of moderation and good stewardship of what God has entrusted to us." To my mind he only distinguished between the "haves" and the "have-nots" and encouraged the "haves" to use their riches in the service of the Lord. According to Isichei (1995:20), this sermon "has been read and cited more than any of his other works."

3.5.2.4 **Writings preserved in part**

Two writings were preserved in part, namely

- *Eclogae Propheticae* (*The prophetic selections* or *Selections from the prophetic Scriptures*).
- *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (*Excerpts from Theodotus* or *Epitomes of the writings of Theodotus and of the Eastern doctrine*).

3.5.2.5 **Fragments of writings**

Of the following books only fragments have been preserved:

- The eight books of the *Hypotyposeis*. These books consisted of expositions of all the books of the Bible.
- *Adumbrationes: The Adumbrations* or *Commentaries on some of the Catholic Epistles* (most probably also part of the *Hypotyposeis*; cf Bucur 2009a:6; Bucur 2009b:313).
- *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (*Excerpts from Theodotus*). These could be extracts made by Clement for his own use, providing the reader with considerable insight into Gnosticism (cf Bucur 2009b:313).
- *Eclogae Propheticae* (*The selections from the prophetic Scriptures*) were compositions of the same character as the *Hypotyposeis* and could be part of that work (cf Schaff Vol 2, 1885:374; Bucur 2009b:313).

According to Enslin (1954:224-225), it seems likely that both of the last two writings by Clement mentioned above, as well as the so-called "eighth book" of the *Stromateis*, were unfinished works, or were abridged extracts that Clement made for his personal use (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:375). Both these writings provided considerable insight into Gnosticism.

Bucur (2009a:189) was of the opinion that the last three mentioned documents "represent the pinnacle of Clement's mystagogical curriculum, whose purpose is to communicate the highest mysteries of Christian doctrine by means of advanced biblical exegesis." In his *Excerpta ex Theodoto* Clement referred mostly to quotations from Valentinian works and added his own, sometimes very sharp, criticism to it. This was complemented by consequent theological speculation. It really created the impression that these were pages from Clement's workbook. The *Eclogae Propheticae*, which followed the *Excerpta* in the 11th-century Florence manuscript (*Laur* 5.3) and its 16th-century copy, also contained only notes and was not a finished literary product. In contrast with the *Excerpta* the *Eclogae Propheticae* were exegetical in nature and could form part of the exegetical work, the *Hypotyposeis* (seemingly still extant in the days of Eusebius). Although these writings, in which Clement quoted frequently from the *Hypotyposeis*, are lost, we do have a Latin translation by the 6th-century Cassiodorus of the sections dealing with four of the Catholic Epistles: 1 Peter, Jude, and 1 and 2 John (Stählin 1906:203-215). According to Stählin (1906:202), it could be this work of Clement that led Photius (*Bibl Cod* 109) in the 19th century to accuse Clement of heresy. The accusations referred to

- the eternity of matter, a doctrine of ideas that degraded the Son to a created being;
- metempsychosis, a belief that there were many worlds before Adam;
- a non-scriptural view of the birth of Eve;
- the actual marriage of the fallen angels and daughters of men;
- a docetic view of the incarnation;
- the view that there were two *logoi*, the lesser of which appeared to men.

Photius (*Bibl Cod* 109) concluded his charge: "And he utters a myriad other nonsensical and blasphemous notions – either he himself or some other purporting to be he." It is probable that this criticism by Photius, perhaps together with the fact that Origen was his pupil, contributed to the official scepticism regarding the propriety of considering Clement a saint.

3.5.2.6 Lost works referred to by Clement

In his writings Clement made reference to the following completed and planned works (Schaff Vol 2, 1885:375), but no trace of them could be found (cf Roberts & Donaldson 1868:16):

- περὶ ἀρχῶν καὶ θεολογίας (*On first principles and Theology*) (cf Giulea 2009:187-213; Osborn 1994:1-24 for elaborative discussions on "faith" in this writing).
- In *Paedagogus* 2.10 Clement mentioned a writing titled *On continence or Concerning marriage* (cf also *Paed* 3.8).
- *On the allegorical interpretation of members and affections when ascribed to God.*
- *On angels.*
- *On the devil.*
- *On the origin of the universe.*
- *On the unity and excellence of the church.*
- *On the offices of Bishops, presbyters, deacons and widows.*
- περὶ προφητείας (*On prophecy*).
- περὶ ψυχῆς (*On the soul*; together with the previous document, most probably part of the *Hypotyposeis*, cf Bucur 2009a:5).
- περὶ ἀναστάσεως (*On the resurrection*).
- *On continence.*
- *Against heresies.*

3.5.2.7 References by other writers

Under this sub-heading references made by other writers to lost works by Clement will be briefly discussed:

- Maximus the Confessor, the most prominent Greek Theologian of the 7th century, referred several times (in at least two books) to a work by Clement titled *On providence* (cf Stählin 1906:LIV-LX, 219-221).
- Palladius, in his *Historia Lausiaca* (ca 420 CE), mentioned a work *On the Prophet Amos* (the full title is *The treatise of Clement, the stromatist, on the Prophet Amos*), which does not seem to have been part of the lost *Hypotyposes* and may have been an independent writing. No fragment of it is known.
- Stählin (1906:LX-LXII) cited and evaluated the meagre evidence regarding dubious references to *specific letters* written by Clement, but failed to name them.

3.5.2.8 Other lost writings

- *On the Pascha.*
- *Discussion on fasting.*
- *On slander.*
- *Exhortation to endurance.*
- *Ecclesiastical canon.*

3.5.2.9 Pseudo-Clementine writing

The *Letter from Clement of Alexandria to Theodore*: This letter, originating from the later 2nd or the early 3rd century (Jay 2008:596) was attributed to Clement by Smith (1973:1-25), but Watson (*inter alia*) argued that the letter's internal anomalies were incompatible with Clementine authorship (Watson 2010:128, 170; cf also Paananen 2012:87-125; Viklund & Paananen 2013:235-247; Brown 2008:535). The reason given by many scholars for their rejection of this document as being written by Clement is that "the style and vocabulary is too much like Clement to be by Clement" (Jay 2008:574; cf Criddle 1995:215-220; Carlson 2005:50-54).

3.6 Origen

Among the ante-Nicene writers of the Eastern Church, the greatest by far was Origen, both as a theological and as a prolific scholar of the Bible. Schaff (Vol 4, 1885:565) referred to him as the "great biblical scholar and critic of the first half of the third century." This was but half of a testimony which would be completed a century later by Tripolitis (1985:vii; cf also Sundkler & Steed 2000:11) when he wrote:

Origen is an enigmatic figure, his works are difficult to analyse and understand. This difficulty is due to the fact that his writings are of a very diverse and complex nature. Some are sophisticated philosophical treatises and others are totally biblical...Even much of his extant works in Greek are very obscure and difficult to interpret. In particular, the complex nature of his work and his pioneering speculations in his explication of the Christian views has perplexed many interpreters of his work both in his time and through the centuries to the present time.

In his time there were two distinct hierarchies in the church:

- The official clerical offices of the Bishop, priest and deacon, who emphasised the sacred rites of salvation.
- The office of the teacher/instructor/lecturer, whose focus was more on the interpretation of faith and the Scriptures taught by the church (Tripolitis 1985:6).

Origen, a member of the second group, was rather critical of the first group (cf *Comm Matt* 16.8.22), mainly because he regarded them as men without learning, who were therefore not capable of teaching their members the Christian faith (cf *Hom Lev* 6.6). He spent most of his life in Alexandria as head of the School, although he visited Antioch, Athens, Arabia, Ephesus and Rome and lived for some time in Caesarea in Palestine. Just like Clement, Origen did not engage in hostile denunciation of the pagans, but rather engaged them in highly intellectual debate in which they found it difficult to respond. Origen's writings were an attempt to present

the Gospels to the pagans in such a way and style that they could make it their own (cf Fogarty 2004:129). According to El Masri (1982:31), Origen's aim in all his writings was to clarify his two main themes, "a loving, beneficent Creator, and free creatures."

Clement imparted prominence to the Catechetical School in Alexandria. Origen, his student, was to take the School one step further. Schaff (Vol 4, 1885:546) referred to him as "this other Timothy" who was taught the Scriptures as well as the literature of the Greeks by his father Leonides. According to Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.2.9), Origen did not find satisfaction in the plain and obvious meaning of texts, but was always looking for a deeper significance. He was a great teacher whose aim was to explain Scripture to his students. It seems that he knew all the Scriptures by heart: "He had no concordance to help him; but he was himself a concordance" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:532). Added to this was the fine way in which he did textual criticism, as in his day there already existed many variations in different copies of Scripture. Schaff called him the first textual critic of the church (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:532). Scrivener (1883:418, 509) depicted Origen as an author in the following way:

Origen is the most celebrated biblical critic of antiquity. His is the highest name among the critics and expositors of the early Church. He is perpetually engaged in the discussion of various readings of the New Testament, and employs language, in describing the then existing state of the text, which would be deemed strong if applied even to its present condition, after the changes which sixteen more centuries must needs have produced...Seldom have such warmth of fancy and so bold a grasp of mind been united with the lifelong, patient industry which procured for this famous man the honourable appellation of *Adamantius*.

Schaff referred to him as the first great interpreter of Scripture in the church, even though other commentaries had been written before his (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:529). During the latter parts of the 2nd century the Gnostic churches also wrote commentaries on Scripture. Examples are those written by Heracleon the Gnostic, allegedly of the Valentinian school (cf Kaler & Bussières 2006:275-289) who

commented on John (often cited by Origen) and even Pantaenus, the predecessor of Clement and Origen.

Origen's writings were "heavily influential on the early Church, and for good reason, as they are inspirational and encouraging" (Schaff Vol 3, 1885:1633). It is interesting to note that some of Origen's greatest rivals were fellow Christians who also thought that his views were too close to heresy (Fogarty 2004:129).

Origen viewed the sacraments as merely allegories or symbols of something spiritual to communicate the divine truth (Tripolitis 1985:7). He regarded baptism as a cleansing from all sins and as a rebirth (*Comm Jo* 6.17) and the rite of unction/confirmation formed as part of the same process (*Comm Rom* 5.8ff). The Eucharist was, according to him, one of the most important mysteries of the church: A thanksgiving/prayer to God and a source of sanctification (*Cont Cels* 8.33, 57) accompanied by the "kiss of peace" (*Hom Rom* 10.33). Prayer was very important to him and he advocated that one should pray at least three times a day "facing the east, either standing or kneeling with outstretched hands and uplifted eyes" (*On prayer* 12.31).

According to Epiphanius (*Haeres* 64.63), Origen produced a total of 6,000 writings. It is assumed that he arrived at this number by including every individual treatise and each of his homilies as a separate volume or piece of writing. Unfortunately the major part (about two-thirds) of his writings has been lost (Tripolitis 1985:11). Though many of his most important treatises survived, in particular the controversial *On first principles*, it survived in the form of "questionable fourth-century Latin translations" (Tripolitis 1985:vii).

The classification of his works was done by Schaff (Vol 4, 1885:556-564) and Tripolitis (1985:11-13).

3.6.1 Exegetical works

Under this heading the following works are named:

- Ὁμιλῖαι: These were his oral expositions.
- Σχόλια: These were brief notes on Scripture, of which only fragments remained.
- Σημειώσεις: These were short notes which were generally reckoned to be a third class of his exegetical works.
- Τόμοι: The Τόμοι were written commentaries and lengthy expositions on Scripture, for example on John, Matthew and Romans (written in 243; cf also Scheck 2003:1277-1288). In these commentaries he discussed Scripture "without being hampered by the requirements of edification, according to the method which alone he recognizes as adequate" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:531). Due to the method Origen used (cf the explanation in his *De Princip*) his *Commentaries* were deficient in order and sequence. Because his method required him to look at every verse for spiritual meaning/s, "combined with his own extraordinary fertility of imagination and wealth of matter" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:533), the books he discussed became very disconnected. He used to ask a number of questions and then suggested possible meanings, after which he would add as many texts as he could gather from throughout Scripture and also considered them. He introduced the questions and themes very modestly, but in the end he left many questions unanswered, "[s]o that the work as a whole is rather a great collection of materials for future consideration than a finished treatise" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:533). What is very important regarding his writings is that his interests were intellectual rather than literary or practical, and scientific rather than popular.

His *Commentaries on John* are today the earliest available work on Christian exegesis, "the first great work of Christian interpretation" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:529; cf also 533). Origen wrote the first five books in Alexandria during the period 226-231 (cf Radde-Gallwitz 2011:232) and the rest in Caesarea between 231 and 238. The last of these volumes that still exists today is volume 32 which ends with John 13:33. Although it has been alleged that there were thirty-nine volumes in total, the only volumes extant today are Volumes 1, 2, 6, 10, 13, 19, 20, 28 and 32 of which some are not complete

and some are mere fragments. These commentaries contain several references to Heracleon who wrote the first known commentary on the Gospel of John in approximately 170 CE. As a prominent Gnostic Christian and disciple of Valentinus, Heracleon was one of the most important Biblical exegetes of his day and therefore Theologians like Clement and Origen had to take note of his work.

The *Commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew* were written at about the same time as *Contra Celsum*, between 246 and 248. At that stage Origen was over sixty years of age (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:529, 791). These commentaries consisted of twenty-five books, of which the first nine were lost. Books 10 to 17 (on Mt 13:36-22:33) are extant in Greek, while the rest of the books survived only in their Latin versions (Mt 22:34-27:66). In these Commentaries Origen also made use of writings that were excluded from the Christian canon, such as the *Gospel of Thomas* (Grosso 2011:250).

- *Homilies*: Origen wrote approximately two-hundred *Homilies* on the principal books of the Old and New Testament. These *Homilies* were characterised by a "peculiar system of interpretation" (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:556), together with which he implemented his method of allegorising as much as he could. Although this method in its "historical and literal signification offended his exegetical sense" (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:556), Origen held the opinion that "the passages which hold good in their historical acceptance are much more numerous than those which contain a purely spiritual meaning" (*De Princip* 4.1.19). These *Homilies* formed only a part – and not the most important part – of his exegetical works (cf Schaff Vol 9, 1885:531).

3.6.2 Critical works

The most important contribution Origen made to Biblical literature was his attempt to rectify the Septuagint text by collating it with the Hebrew original and with other Greek versions (cf Schaff Vol 4, 1885:841). He began this tiring work in 214/215 (Tripolitis 1985:ix). The first form in which he published it was a *Tetrapla* with four columns containing the texts of the Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion. After this he reworked the *Tetrapla* to become a *Hexapla*, adding the Hebrew texts accompanied by a Greek transcription of it. Ambrose (Origen's wealthy patron)

employed a team consisting of writers and scribes to assist Origen by taking down the texts he dictated and by making copies of the results (Isichei 1995:21).

This six-columned Bible became Origen's great critical work. The six columns were divided as follows:

- Column 1: The current Hebrew text.
- Column 2: The text in Greek letters.
- Column 3: The version of Aquila.
- Column 4: The version of Symmachus.
- Column 5: The current text of the Septuagint.
- Column 6: The version of Theodotion.

Where appropriate, he also added alternative Greek translations, increasing the six columns to seven, eight or even nine as required. El Masri (1982:30) called this his *Octapla* and identified the two other columns as two texts, called by Origen *The fifth* and *The sixth* – their authors are unknown. In these columns he inserted critical marks in the Septuagint text, for instance an asterisk to indicate that something should be added to the text, while an obelus/cross indicated text that should be omitted. He did this textual criticism mostly at the hand of Theodotion. With this writing he actually provided a revised text of the Septuagint. He completed the study of the *Hexapla* in 245 (Tripolitis 1985:xi) which means that it took him almost three decades to finish this work, during which time he travelled widely in the East to collect materials (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:557). With this vast scholarly work devoted to various expositions of the different parts of the Bible he displayed his advanced knowledge of Hebrew, engaging in serious debate with Jewish Rabbis.

This work, consisting of some fifty volumes, was placed in a repository in Tyre. After Origen's death it was moved to the library in Caesarea, which had been founded by Pamphilus/Pamphilius, the friend of Eusebius. When the Arabs invaded Caesarea in 653 CE, the library was burnt down. Fortunately Pamphilus and Eusebius had copied the Septuagint text and critical marks of Origen. Subsequent transcribers, however, corrupted the text again.

The remains of these writings were published in two volumes in 1713. The church of today is still indebted to Origen for the "patient and encyclopedic labour and learning which he bestowed on the Scriptures" in this writing of his (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:546).

3.6.3 Apologetic works

Origen's apologetic works were aimed at pagans and Gnostics. His great apologetic work is titled Κατὰ Κέλσον or *Contra Celsum* (*Against Celsus*) and has survived in its entirety in Greek (cf Arnold 2010:54; Engberg 2007:283-313). Sometimes the arguments of the pagans or Gnostics were rejected because the writer regarded them as insignificant, or based on error or wickedness. Spanoudakis (2010:32) thought that *Contra Celsum* was such an "antirrhetic" (controversial) document. This seems not to be the case, as Origen wrote this work in defence of Christianity against heated attacks by Celsus, who was a relatively unknown anti-Christian (Greek) philosopher who wrote a work titled Λόγος ἀληθῆς (*True word/discourse*), of which very little is known except for the quotations from it used by Origen in his treatise. In this work Celsus reproached Christians as *Sibyllists* (cf *Cont Cels* 5.61), meaning that they were followers of the Sibylline Oracles.

Celsus also had another accusation, saying that "Juden und Christen sich gewisser Teile des alttestamentlichen Narrativs schämen und deswegen bemüht seien, sie mit Hilfe der Allegorese umzudeuten" (*Jews and Christians were ashamed of certain parts of the Old Testament narrative and therefore endeavoured to reinterpret it with the help of allegory – my translation*) (Schiebe 2012:472). In *Contra Celsum* 4.48 Origen refuted this with a philosophical answer in which he referred to the absurdities in the Greek religion.

Origen viewed Celsus as an Epicurean who had adopted another doctrine than Epicurus in order to assail Christianity. This treatise of his, composed with great care, was "the great apologetic work of antiquity" (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:558). It consists of eight books and was written during the later years of Origen's life, but

the rule which Origen prescribed to himself, of not allowing a single objection of his opponent to remain unanswered, leads him into a minuteness of detail, and into numerous repetitions, which fatigue the reader, and detract from the interest and unity

of the work. He himself confesses (*Contra Celsum* Preface 1.6) that he began it on one plan, and carried it out on another (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:558).

In this treatise Origen took a firm stand against the adversaries of the gospel who seemingly took a Jewish position against it. This compelled him to establish in the first two books a perfect harmony between the two Testaments of the Bible, "proving Christ to be the substance and sum of both" (Schaff Vol 5, 1885:1384). This manuscript survived and is held in the Vatican (Fogarty 2004:129).

3.6.4 Dogmatic works

The dogmatic works, which are listed below, provide an indication of Origen's views on various issues of Christian dogma:

- One of Origen's best dogmatic works is called Στρωματεῖς (*Miscellanies*) and was written in 231/232. He composed this work to imitate his master Clement. While the original writing consisted of ten books, only three fragments remained, being translated into Latin by Jerome.
- A *Treatise on the resurrection*, written in 229/230, of which only four fragments remained.
- A four-book treatise called Περὶ Ἀρχῶν (*On first principles*, "amended" and translated into Latin by Rufinus as *De Principiis*, as the original Greek text has perished). This systematic presentation of the principles of Christian doctrine, written between 220 and 223 (Tripolitis 1985:ix) revealed the details of Origen's exegetical method.

It is interesting to note that the Περὶ Ἀρχῶν of Origen had almost the same title as a document written by his predecessor, Clement. Clement's work was called *On first principles and Theology*. Gregory Nazianzus, nearly two centuries later, wrote a book full of poems called *Poemata Arcana*. As he was profoundly influenced by Origen, the first poem in his book was also called *On first principles* (Norris 2012:63-64).

The preface to this work presented the "fundamental aim of Origen's expository writings" (Tripolitis 1985:12): According to this, the Apostles delivered only the basic doctrine of Christian faith in their writings and

teachings. They did, however, not investigate or explain questions about the reasons for or bases of their doctrines. It was for that reason that Origen felt that he had to discuss these reasons and bases. In this work Origen taught his readers about the noetic significance and intelligibility of creation. He added to this the calling of humans to behold and understand the truth of what had been created (McIntosh 2012:368).

When Jerome saw what Rufinus had done to the original text, he undertook a new translation, but only a few fragments of his translation remained. It was in this treatise, which contained Origen's views on various questions of Systematic Theology, that he developed his system and brought his peculiar principles to the fore.

In the fourth book of his *De Principiis* Origen explained how he interpreted Scripture. He argued that in Scripture much meaning lies beyond the capacity of the ordinary mind and that this meaning could not be retrieved by practical application. The only way to get to the real meaning was to search after its hidden sense. In *De Principiis* 4.1.11 he elaborated on this: "For as man is said to consist of body, and soul, and spirit, so also does sacred Scripture, which has been granted by the divine bounty [God – my addition] for the salvation of man." This implied that Scripture has three senses ("meanings") – the bodily sense (the somatic sense, also called the obvious matter-of-fact sense), the psychical/moral sense (serving for edification of the pious) and the highest of them all, the spiritual sense. Origen named this last sense in no less than forty ways (cf Schaff Vol 9, 1885:531) which included *the heavenly sense, the intellectual sense, the anagogical sense, the mystic sense and the hidden sense*. His view was that the highest objective of the interpreter was to discover these heavenly mysteries. With this he took a stance against "the notion that historical facts should be regarded as the chief outcome of a Scripture narrative" (Schaff Vol 9, 1885:533). Fact had to give way for something more important: The things of the Spirit or the spiritual meaning. It was actually this treatise that made the church turn against Origen.

3.6.5 Practical works

The practical works that Origen wrote were:

- Περὶ Εὐχῆς (*On prayer*) was one of the oldest treatises on Christian spiritual life (Gavin 2013:126) and was written at the request of his friend Ambrose in 233/236. This book contains an exposition of the Lord's Prayer.
- Λόγος προτρεπτικός εἰς μαρτύριον (*Exhortation to martyrdom*) (cf Greer 1979:171-216). This work was written in 235, after Maximin (the Thracian, also known as Maximinus Thrax, the twenty-seventh Emperor of the Roman Empire) started with his persecution and imprisoned Origen's friends Ambrose and Protocetus. This persecution obliged Origen to take refuge in Caesarea (in Cappadocia), where he hid for about two years in the house of a Christian lady called Juliana. She was the heiress of Symmachus (the Ebionite translator of the LXX) and she gave Origen several manuscripts that belonged to Symmachus. Here he composed his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, which was intentionally written for the sake of his friends Ambrose and Protocetus who had been freed after the death of Maximin. The death of Maximin made it possible for Origen to return to Caesarea in Palestine.

A major section of the *Exhortation to martyrdom* was devoted to retelling the story of 2 *Maccabees* pertaining the martyrdom of Eleazar and the seven brothers, confirming the belief that their deaths were "paying the penalty for (their) sins, and (they) are enduring these sufferings willingly, in order that by them (the Jewish people) may be purified" (*Ex Mart* 25; cf Heisey 2004:38). In this writing he called upon his readers to accept tribulation "like a noble athlete." He recalled the martyrdom of the seven Hebrew brothers in 2 *Maccabees* where the older brother was depicted as an "athlete of piety" (*Ex Mart* 1.23).

- He also wrote numerous letters, of which only two survived. The first letter was addressed to Julius Africanus, a student of Heraclas, and is called *Epistola ad Africanum*. It is a response to Africanus who questioned the genuineness of the history of Susanna, which formed part of the apocryphal additions to the *Book of Daniel*. Origen wanted to uphold the story as both useful in itself and a genuine portion of the ancient prophetic writings (Schaff Vol 4, 1885:562). (Julius Africanus was an author in his own right and

produced at least four treatises during the first half of the 3rd century; cf Schaff Vol 6, 1885:291ff). The second letter that survived, called *Epistola ad Gregorium*, was addressed to Gregory Thaumaturgus and written in approximately 237/243 (Tripolitis 1985:x), to explain how Greek philosophy could be employed when explaining Scripture. In it he also mentioned that the study of Scripture was the highest of all studies. Scientific learning would only be considered as preparatory for the learning of Scripture. The extant letter is so brief that it is possibly only a fragment of the original.

- The Φιλοκαλία (*Philocalia – Love of beauty*). Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus made this compilation of Origen's work to explain some difficult passages of Scripture (Schaff Series 2, Vol 7, 1885:409). Large parts of this writing have been preserved, especially those from his treatise *Contra Celsum*. The *Letter to Gregory* also formed part of it as it served as a preface to the commentaries.

3.6.6 Writings ascribed to Origen

A case is recorded of the discovery of a manuscript of Hippolytus in 1842 at Mount Athos. It was published under the name of Origen because his name was inscribed on the manuscript. The content of this manuscript showed a marked similarity coincided to the teachings of Origen. However, it was later established that this fragment was the long-lost *Philosophumena* of Hippolytus (Schaff Vol 5, 1885:8). At the same time and place another manuscript called *The refutation of all heresies* was also discovered. As it was obviously a continuation of the *Philosophumena* and therefore another writing by Hippolytus, it was initially also ascribed to Origen (Schaff Vol 5, 1885:10). Another reason for initially ascribing it to Origen, was that the manuscript was seemingly done in the name of Origen, as all four the manuscripts of the first book (out of nine or ten) ascribed the writing to Origen, with words like *Refutation by Origen of all heresies*, *Of Origen's Philosophumena...these are the contents*, and *Being estimable by Origen, a man of the greatest wisdom*. Even in the manuscript discovered last, the following was written in the margin: "Origen, and Origen's opinion." Schaff (Vol 5, 1885:10-396) discussed the various reasons why Origen could not have been the writer of the above-mentioned writings.

3.6.7 Final remarks

As mentioned at the beginning of the discussion on Origen, his writings are of a diverse and complex nature (cf Tripolitis 1985:vii). When one reads his *Homilies*, one discovers a "humble and devout Christian" (Tripolitis 1985:12). He also had another side, which is revealed in his *Commentaries* (especially the two on Matthew and John) and his dogmatic and apologetic works such as *De Principiis* and *Contra Celsum*, in which he came across as a very sophisticated scholar of philosophy, especially of Plato. However, Origen can only be understood completely if one treats his works as a whole, written by a man who was both a Biblical Theologian and a philosopher.

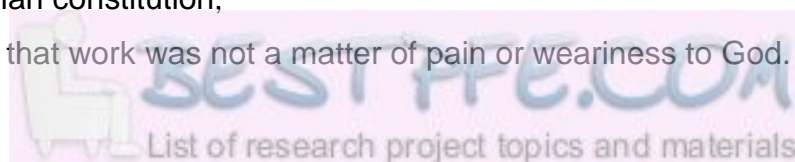
3.7 Dionysius Magnus

Since very little of Dionysius' writings are extant, one is dependent on the citations of his work by Eusebius. Dionysius wrote the following:

- *A Treatise on the promises* (two books), written in response to the book of Nepos called *Refutation of the allegorists* (cf *Hist Eccl* 3, 7), referring to the *Revelation of John*, in which he pointed out that
 - the promises that the holy men in the Scriptures received "were to be understood according to the Jewish sense of the same" (Roberts & Donaldson 1871:161);
 - there would be a millennium period on earth, which would be replenished with corporeal delights.

In Book 1 Dionysius stated his own opinion concerning the above-mentioned cases. Book 2 is a discussion on the *Revelation of John*.

- *A Book on nature*, addressed to Timotheus, in opposition to the Epicureans. In this book Dionysius installed his Christian philosophy against the Epicureans, refuting their dogma that denied the existence of a providence and referred the constitution of the universe to atomic bodies (cf Eusebius' *Praep Evang* 14.23-27), on the grounds of
 - familiar human analogies;
 - the constitution of the universe;
 - the human constitution;
 - the fact that work was not a matter of pain or weariness to God.



- In his *Chronicon* Eusebius referred to a writing by Dionysius that concurred with a treatise written by Cyprian, named *On the mortality*, depicting a pestilent disease that occurred in "many provinces of the whole world, and especially Alexandria and Egypt."
- *Exercitations against Sabellius*, addressed to Dionysius, the then Bishop of Rome (4 books/letters) (cf *Praep Evang* 7.19). In this writing he dealt with his own unguarded statements in the controversy with Sabellius (cf Athanasius and Basil). Regarding the two Dionysii, Schaff said that, "with a holy jealousy they entered into fraternal explanations of the same truth, held by each, but by neither very *technically* elucidated" (Schaff Vol 7, 1885:834).
- A *Letter to Fabius* detailing the persecution of Decius.
- A *Letter against Germanus* referring to his own experiences of the persecution.
- An *Epistle to Bishop Basilides* "containing explanations which were given as answers to questions proposed by that bishop on various topics, and which have been received as canons" (Roberts & Donaldson 1871:196). The *Epistle* contained four canons:
 - Canon 1: On the close of the fast on the day of Pentecost.
 - Canon 2: If women in the time of their separation may enter the house of God.
 - Canon 3: A reference to the relations of marriage, based specifically on 1 Cor 7:5.
 - Canon 4: Examples of Christian behaviour.
- Roberts and Donaldson (1871:189-196) mentioned a (second) Epistle of Dionysius to *Dionysius of Rome* (the first one being his *Exercitations against Sabellius*), also called *Elenchus et Apologia*, which contained a number of books.
- Fragments of Epistles (forming part of the *Works of Dionysius*):
 - Epistle 1: *To Domitius and Didymus* (cf *Hist Eccl* 7.11).
 - Epistle 2: *To Novatus* (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.45).
 - Epistle 3: *To Fabius, the Bishop of Antioch* (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.41, 42, 44).
 - Epistle 4: *To Cornelius, the Roman Bishop* (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.46).

- Epistle 5: His first *Letter on baptism*, directed to Stephen, the Bishop of Rome (cf *Hist Eccl* 7.2, 3, 4).
- Epistle 6: *A Letter to Sixtus, the Bishop*. In this letter he alluded to letters he had written to the presbyters Dionysius and Philemon, as well as to Bishop Stephen on the baptism and the heresy of the Sabellians.
- Epistle 7: *To Philemon, a presbyter of Sixtus, the Bishop of Rome* against the heresies of the time.
- Epistle 8: *To Dionysius, the presbyter of Xystus*. In this Epistle he stated that Novatian should be opposed because of his schism, his impious doctrine and because of the "repetition of baptism of those who came to him" (Roberts & Donaldson 1871:221).
- Epistle 9: *A Letter to Bishop Sixtus 2* on the baptism (cf *Hist Eccl* 7.4).
- Epistle 10: *Against Bishop Germanus* (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.40; 7.11).

Schaff (Vol 6, 1885:253) stated:

Germanus had accused Dionysius of neglecting to hold the assemblies of the brethren before the persecutions [under Decius – my addition] broke out, and of rather providing for his own safety by flight. For when persecution burst on them, the bishops were wont first to convene the people, in order to exhort them to hold fast the faith of Christ; there infants and catechumens were baptized, to provide against their departing this life without baptism, and the Eucharist was given to the faithful.

- Epistle 11: *To Hermammon* (cf *Hist Eccl* 7.1, 10, 23). In this Epistle Dionysius spoke out against Emperor Gallus.
- Epistle 12: *An Epistle to the Alexandrians*. Eusebius referred to this Epistle in *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.22. In the preface to *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.21 he said: "When peace had scarcely yet been established, he (Dionysius) returned to Alexandria. But when sedition and war again broke out, and made it impossible for him to have access to all the brethren in that city, divided as they then were into different parties, he addressed them again by an Epistle at the Passover, as if he were still an exile from Alexandria." In *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.22 he referred to the pestilence which succeeded the Decian persecution.

- Epistle 13: An *Epistle to Hierax* that described the rebellion and uproar as a consequence of the persecution (cf *Hist Eccl* 7.21).
- Epistle 14: His *Festival Epistles*. In *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.20 Eusebius related the following: "In addition to these epistles, the same Dionysius also composed others about this time, designated his *Festival Epistles*, and in these he says much in commendation of the paschal feast. One of these he addressed to Flavius, and another to Domitius and Didymus, in which he gives the canon for eight years, and shows that the paschal feast ought not to be kept until the passing of the vernal equinox. And besides these, he wrote another epistle to his co-presbyters at Alexandria."
- Exegetical fragments:
 - Fragment 1: *A commentary on the beginning of Ecclesiastes*.
 - Fragment 2: *The Gospel according to Luke – an interpretation*. This was done more specifically on Luke 22:42-48 in which Jesus begged his Father not to let him die on the cross.
 - Fragment 3: *On Luke 22:42*. This fragment elaborated on the previous one, especially on the phrase "let the cup pass."
 - Fragment 4: *An exposition of Luke 22:46*, connected with the preceding on Christ's prayer in Gethsemane.
 - Fragment 5: *On John 8:12*, elaborating on the phrase "I am" and on the statement that Jesus is the reflection of the eternal light.
 - Fragment 6: *On the One Substance*.
 - Fragment 7: *On the reception of the lapsed to penitence* – probably an excerpt from his works *On Penitence* (cf Jerome's *De Script Eccl* 69).

References to Dionysius are also found in the works of the following writers:

- Jerome (*De Vir* 69; *Praef ad Lib* 18; *Comment in Esaiam*);
- Athanasius (*De Sent Dion*; *De Decret Nic Syn*);
- Basil (*De Spir Sanc* 29; *Epist ad Amphiloich*; *Epist ad Max*).

3.8 Theognostus

Theognostus, of whom we know very little, wrote seven books under the title τοῦ μακαρίου Θεογνώστου Ἀλεξανδρέως καὶ ἐξηγητοῦ ὑποτυπώσεις – *Outlines of the blessed Theognostus, the exegete of Alexandria*:

- Book 1: *God the Father as the Creator of the universe.*
- Book 2: *The necessary existence of the Son.*
- Book 3: *The Holy Spirit.*
- Book 4: *Angels and demons.*
- Books 5 and 6: *The incarnation of God.*
- Book 7: *On God's creation.*

Only three fragments of those seven books are extant today. Although Theognostus was a champion of the *Homoousian* doctrine (according to Athanasius' *De Decret Nic Syn* 6.25ff), Gregory of Nyssa (Book 3 *Against Eunomius*) accused him that, just like Eunomius, he held the wrong view on the Son's relationship to the work of creation. As there is no real extant evidence on this matter, it is almost impossible to value that accusation by Gregory.

3.9 Pierius

It seems that Pierius devoted himself to "sacred criticism and the study of the text of Scripture" (Schaff Vol. 6, 1885:378). According to Photius (*Bibl Cod* 118-119), he wrote a work (βιβλίον) consisting of twelve treatises, also called *sermons* (λόγοι). In some of these treatises he repeated the dogmatic errors that some authors attributed to Origen, such as the subordination of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son, and the pre-existence of human souls (cf Von Harnack 1897:89). Two works of his that were mentioned by Photius, which were therefore extant during his time, were the *Treatise on the Prophet Hosea* and *Commentary on the first Epistle of Corinthians* – with emphasis on Paul's view of marriage (1 Cor 7:7; cf also Jerome's *Second Epistle to Pammachius*). The following are his known sermons:

- εἰς τὸ κατὰ Λουκᾶν (*On the Gospel of Luke*);
- εἰς τὸ Πάσχα καὶ τὸν Ὡσηέ (*An Easter sermon on Osee*). According to Radford (1908:46), this sermon was called *On Easter and Hosea*.
- περὶ τῆς θεοτόκου (*A sermon on the Mother of God*);

- εἰς τὸν βίον τοῦ ἁγίου Παμφίλου (*An eulogy on St Pamphilus*, who had been one of his disciples);
- A few Easter sermons.

Except for the *Sermon on the mother of God* and his *Eulogy on Saint Pamphilus* mentioned above, Philip Sidetes (*Fr 7*) also added the following:

- *A statement about Saint Paul's wife* from the *First of the Easter sermons*.
- An etymological explanation of Biblical names, *According to Pierius*.

3.10 Peter the Martyr

In 306 Peter wrote his *Penitential canons*, of which fifteen were excerpted from an *Easter festal Epistle* (cf *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on St. Peter of Alexandria* sa) in which he addressed the people who had lapsed. Scholars and Oriental Christians of his time referred to these *Canons* in a collection called *Responsa*, as well as to other fragments of his work. In a writing called *Fides partum*, the Jacobites praised Peter for his writings. Another writing called *Unio Pretiosus* contained a homily of Peter on the baptism of Jesus. Other extant writings by Peter are

- *De Deitate*: An extract of this book was included in the *Acta Conciliorum Ephesini et Chalcedonensis*. Three passages of this writing, apparently written in opposition to Origen's subordinationist views, were quoted by Cyril at the Council of Ephesus.
- *De Adventu Salvatoris*: A fragment of this homily is cited by Leontius Byzantinus in his first book opposing Nestorius and Eutyches, affirming the two Natures of Christ. This is also confirmed in a fragment called *On the Sojourning of Christ with us*.
- *Epistle to the Alexandrine church*: Peter allegedly wrote this *Epistle* after writing another addressed to Meletius, the Bishop of Lycopolis. In this writing he probably alluded to the synod held at Alexandria during which Meletius had been deposed from his office. Athanasius (*Apol contra Arian* sec 39, tom 1) also referred to this synod when he said, "Peter, who was amongst us as bishop before the persecution, and who died a martyr in the persecution,

deposed in common council of the bishops, Meletius, an Egyptian bishop, who had been convicted of many crimes."

- *Sermo in Sanctum Pascha*: A passage of this sermon on the Passover was given in the *Diatriba de Paschate*, prefixed to the *Chronicon Alexandrinum S Paschale*.
- Seven fragments were preserved in Syriac from a work on the *Resurrection*, in which he maintained the identity of the risen body with the earthly body against Origen.
- *That up to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews rightly appointed the fourteenth day of the first lunar month.*
- *Of the soul and body.*
- *On Saint Matthew.*
- *From a sermon.*

3.11 Serapion

Serapion became known through his theological writings, which included the following:

- A book against the ideas of Manichaeism of his time in which he contradicted their view that the soul is the work of God, while the body belongs to the devil.
- Several letters that have been lost.
- A treatise on the *Titles of the Psalms* (quoted by Jerome in *De Vir* 99) that has also been lost.
- He revised writings of Athanasius directed against the Arians (*New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Serapion* sa).
- Socrates (*Hist* 1.4.23) referred to
 - an abstract that Serapion wrote of his own life;
 - an abridged rule of Christian perfection, from which he would often repeat the following words: "The mind is purified by spiritual knowledge (by holy meditation and prayer), the spiritual passions of the soul by charity, and the irregular appetites by abstinence and penance."

He was also the author of a series of writings on *The doctrine of the divinity of the Holy Spirit* (addressed to the Emperor) and the *Euchologium* – a sacramentary (*Catholic Online* sa).

3.12 Macarius Politicus

The only source containing any reference to writings by Macarius that could be found was *Biblical Training* (sa), according to which "[a]n extant monastic rule containing thirty regulations for his 5,000 monks of the Nitrian desert and a sermon on the eschatology of souls are among the writings ascribed to him."

3.13 Didymus the Blind

The fact that Didymus was blind did not prevent him from writing a large number of documents, most of which were fragments or "short works" and commentaries, but unfortunately very few survived. He combined the theological way of thinking and vocabulary of Athanasius with the style of two much younger writers of his time in the persons of Basil and Gregory Nazianzus.

Didymus seemingly supported the idea of the pre-existence of the soul. Jerome (*De Vir* 109) attributed the doctrine of the "restitution of all things" to him as he had taught that the fallen angels and even satan himself would be saved by Christ, yet he often spoke of eternal punishment (cf his *Comm 1 Tim*; *Comm 1 Pt*). For him God's punishments would be remedial. From his Trinitarian and Christological teachings it is clear that he was not influenced or convinced by Origen's views.

The tone of his writings was always well balanced and calculated with the intention to rather win over his opponents than to defeat them. He dealt harshly with heresies, but never with the person/s behind the heresies. A point of critique against him is that his writing style was poor and careless.

Leipoldt (1905:9ff) supplied the most comprehensive list of writings by Didymus. Although he made reference to the *De Trinitate*, this treatise was not among the listed written works of Didymus. However, since other scholars attributed this treatise to Didymus, it is included in this list:

- *De Trinitate*: These three books, composed after 379 (cf *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Didymus the Blind* sa) are almost entirely preserved.
- Λόγος κατὰ Ἀρείου καὶ Σαβελλίου (*A short work/word against Arius and Sabellius*). This document was published under the name of Gregory of Nyssa, but was later proved to have been written by Didymus. Together with Arius and Sabellius another person called Achillius, who was initially involved in the Arian struggle, was also named in this work.
- *De Dogmatibus* (*Dogmatic works*, called *On the doctrines*; cf *De Vir* 109). In this writing Didymus discussed the creative activity of the Holy Spirit.
- *Contra Arianos libri duo*. This could be an extension of his *De Dogmatibus* and was completed in 392. Jerome (*De Vir* 109) referred to this work as "Two books against the Arians."
- *Sectarian Works* (*Works against sectarians*). Didymus wrote in these works that the Holy Spirit did not *receive* wisdom, but that he *was* wisdom. According to Leipoldt (1905:10), this was a *Lieblingsgedanke* (*favourite idea*) of Didymus.
- Περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος λόγος (*A short work on the Holy Spirit*) addressed to Paulinianus (cf *Apol* 2.24). In this writing Didymus made numerous (different) references to the Holy Trinity. He was credited with the "invention" of τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις μία οὐσία (*three "Beings/Creatures," one Being*; cf Leipoldt 1905:2). This was actually a clumsy use of words, as Didymus admitted that philosophically οὐσία and ὑποστάσεις were synonyms, both referring to the Latin *persona* (cf *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Didymus the Blind* sa). Because until the 4th century the Greek-speaking Church had no means of expressing the doctrine of the Trinity, Leipoldt (1905:10) suggested that Didymus did not know the term ὁμοούσιος, which would explain why he referred to the Trinity as *una substantia* (HS 16.1049A), *una essentia* (HS 36.1065A) and *una natura* (HS 18.1050B). He also referred to the Trinity as a special *substantia* (HS 1.1033C), *essentia* (HS 4.1035B) and *natura* (HS 23.1053A). These references are made in Latin, because the original writings of Didymus on the Holy Spirit were preserved only in the Latin translation made by Jerome (*De Vir* 109).

- *After Jerome* (cf *Rufinus* 3.28). In 386, at the request of Rufinus, Didymus wrote a book on the issue of why young children die.
- *After Jerome* (*De Vir* 120). This could be the same as the previous document, or a second document with the same name and it is directed against Eunomius. According to Leipoldt (1905:11), it is not clear whether in these writings Didymus referred to the Trinity as one or as three entities.
- *After Jerome* (cf *Epist* 48.19 *ad Pammachium*) written in 393. Whether this was a third document with the same name, a later addition to the previous documents, or a document totally distinguished from the previous two, is not clear. However, what is clear is that it was written about seven years later than the first document.
- *πρῶτος λόγος* (*First book/Short work*). In this writing Didymus discussed the Holy Trinity and more specifically the Holy Spirit. He referred to fourteen texts in the Bible and dealt with each in a separate chapter, so that the document consisted of fourteen chapters.
- *Περὶ τριάδος βιβλία τρία* (*Three books on the Trinity*). The first book dealt with the Son, while the second book related to the Holy Spirit. In the third book he discussed the most important Biblical proofs of his opponents. These books were finished by 392.
- *Ἐπομνήματα εἰς τὰ περὶ ἀρχῶν Ὀριγένους* (cf *Socrates' Hist* 4.25). This was a *Memorandum on the Περὶ Ἀρχῶν of Origen*, in which Didymus defended Origen who, according to him, had been misunderstood by his accusers.
- *Κατὰ Μανιχαίων* (*Against the Manichaeans*). In this treatise, which is almost completely extant, he refuted the Manichaeans with philosophical proofs and a debate on controversial passages from the Bible. The *Κατὰ Μανιχαίων λόγος* of Gregory of Nyssa is almost a direct (sometimes abridged) citation of this treatise of Didymus.
- Three fragments: *Ad Philosophum*, *Περὶ ἀσωμάτου* (*About the "bodiless"*) and *Περὶ ψυχῆς* (*About the soul*).
- He wrote quite a number of commentaries, of which very few are extant. Of great importance is his *Commentary on the Catholic Epistles*, known through a Latin translation undertaken by Epiphanius for Cassiodorus. There is also a *Commentary on 2 Peter* from which Epiphanius frequently quoted. From

Didymus' commentaries it is obvious that he was influenced by Origen, even with regard to the use of the text and grammar, as well as his wide allegorising, but from his extant work it is clear that he was not much influenced by Origen's heresies.

- Jerome (*De Vir* 109) named a collection of commentaries written by Didymus, which Leipoldt (1905:11) referred to as "exegetical fragments:"
 - *Commentaries on all the Psalms*.
 - *Commentaries on the Gospels of Matthew and John*.
 - Eighteen volumes *On Isaiah*.
 - Three books of commentaries *On Hosea* (addressed to Jerome).
 - Five books *On Zechariah* (written at Jerome's request).
 - Commentaries *On Job* "and many other things."
- Two treatises were originally ascribed to Didymus, but it was later concluded that he was not the writer. They are:
 - *Pseudoathanasius contra Apollonarium*. This was a treatise written by Ambrose, a student of Didymus.
 - *Pseudobasilus adversus Eucomium*. After a long discussion Leipoldt (1905:26-31) could not really conclusively identify the author of this writing.

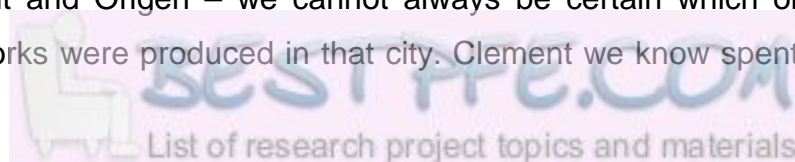
3.14 Rhodon

Rhodon was referred to by Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 5.12-13) and was initially credited with writings against heretics like the Cataphrygians, but these were later ascribed to Asterius Urbanus (Schaff Vol 8, 1885:2043).

3.15 Conclusion

While doing research on the documents of the above-mentioned heads that are at our disposal today, the words of Paget (2010:124) were always borne in mind:

Christian material from Alexandria is very scarce. Similarly, even if we can be certain that an individual writer was from Alexandria or spent time there – as is the case with both Clement and Origen – we cannot always be certain which of their works were produced in that city. Clement we know spent



both the early and latter parts of his life away from the city, while Origen spent the latter parts of his life in Caesarea.

When researching documents like these, one has to be content with the fact that

- most of the documents are not originals, but copies, some of which were "amended" with the best of intentions, some to fit the theological view of the transcriber, while others were just copied incorrectly.
- many documents were translated from Greek (the language in which most of them were originally written) to Latin – the *lingua franca* of Rome. Obviously a translation is not on the same standard as the original, but here too, emendations and other editorial changes as shown above were implemented.
- the documents referred to no longer exist anymore and one has to try to make sense of the references to determine the intended meaning of the original author, or even try to (re-)construct the document from all the different references.

All in all, however, there are enough extant documents, complemented by references to documents that do not exist anymore, to (somehow) arrive at conclusions regarding the Theology of the heads of the Catechetical School in Alexandria.

Chapter 4

The growth and development of Christianity in Africa

The early Christian church in the first three centuries after Jesus's resurrection brought about the most amazing transformation of diverse social and religious cultures ever achieved by peaceful means in the history of the world (*Christianity.com* 2015).

The great feature of the ante-Nicene theology, even in the mistakes of the writers, is its reliance on the Holy Scripture. What wealth of Scripture they lavish in their pages!
(Schaff Vol 4, 1885:546).

4.1 Introduction

With Psalm 68:31 in mind (*Envoys will come from Egypt; Kush will submit herself to God*) it would be fitting to start this Chapter with a citation from Mathetes in his *Epistle to Diognetes* 5.1 to 6.1 (late 2nd century) to depict the lifestyle of the Christians in the Early Church:

For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men, nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all others, they beget children, but they do not destroy their offspring. They

have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned. They are put to death and restored to life. They are poor yet make many rich. They are in lack of all things and yet abound in all. They are dishonoured and yet in their very dishonour are glorified. They are evil spoken of and yet are justified. They are reviled and they bless. They are insulted and repay the insult with honour. They do good yet are punished as evildoers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life. They are assailed by the Jews as foreigners and are persecuted by the Greeks. Yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred. To sum it all up in one word: what the soul is to the body, that are Christians in the world.

This quotation can be supplemented and given a wider spectrum by the two propositions of Burton (2007:111) that

- the majority of the Bible was penned on African soil, "Africa" being a part of the Roman Empire comprising Egypt and the countries to its south and west (cf Introduction).
- Christianity was born in "Biblical Africa."

The previous Chapters contained discussions and depictions of Alexandria and the *Didaskaleion* and all her heads serving there for a period that covered roughly the first four centuries CE. In Chapter 3 the focus was on the academic documents contributed by all the scholars that were mentioned. In this Chapter attention will be given to the *growth and development* of Christianity in Africa and how it was influenced by the teachings of and also examples set by the heads (and students) of the Catechetical School. This Chapter will therefore look at the practical "everyday" Christianity in Africa (and not merely at the academic side). The influence that will be

discussed will cover the first seven and a half centuries – that is the period before the Arab invasion.

The *Didaskaleion* in Alexandria had a tremendous influence on Christianity as she was the first intellectual institution in Africa where scholars could theologise about God. The other intellectual centre of Christianity in Africa was Carthage, which was home to proponents like Tertullian and Cyprian. The theological school in Carthage was, however, not at the same level as the *Didaskaleion* and was also established much later.

As discussed in the previous Chapter, the heads of the School published an extensive amount of material. These writings were of a polemic, an informative and an apologetic character, mostly using the allegorical method for the interpretation of Scriptures. With these writings the authors laid the foundation for both the Theology and the practice of Christianity in the then Roman Empire. The successive heads of the School influenced each other, while their writings influenced the growth and development of Christianity, first in Alexandria and also in Africa and abroad. The influence of these writings on the growth and development of the early Christian church in Africa will have to be determined by the actions of the church in correspondence with, or contrary to the content of the writings. This could lend itself to a very subjective assessment of the actions of the Christians in Africa.

It is a fact that there were only two, maybe three, Christian schools in Africa before 642, the oldest and the greatest being the *Didaskaleion* in Alexandria, followed by the theological school in Carthage (founded in the second half of the 2nd century) and probably another one in Hippo, established almost a century after the founding of the school in Carthage. It is also true that the heads of the *Didaskaleion*, especially Clement and Origen, wrote extensively and developed a basic Theology on which the church could flourish after their time.

It is paramount to mention here, at the start of the most important chapter of the thesis, that the different influences being ascribed to the School and her heads, are surely not the only influences exerted by them. This chapter, therefore, does not, by any means, claim to be exhaustive or the last word about the different influences of

the *Didaskaleion* and her heads on the people, scholars, fathers and other people of Africa.

4.2 Existential questions/assumptions

4.2.1 How did Jesus' stay in Egypt affect Africa?

We do not know where Jesus and his parents resided after they fled to Egypt to escape from Herod. Although it is important to take note of this, it makes no difference to the fact that Alexandria was the first place in Africa where Christianity developed and flourished some five decades later. In fact, Jesus was still too young to witness when his parents left Egypt for Nazareth.

The Egyptian church, however, regarded Egypt as a holy land (cf discussion below). For them it was of great importance that Jesus and his parents had taken refuge in Egypt for almost three and a half years. This had a significant influence on Egyptian Christianity, especially for the Copts.

4.2.2 A *Didaskaleion*? In Alexandria?

As mentioned earlier, Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, was the leading city – the centre – in Africa and for some time even the centre of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Alexandria was also the centre of intelligence in the Roman Empire for a considerable period. The Delta City was home to the *Didaskaleion*, a Christian Catechetical School which initially was probably bigger than those in Antioch and Rome (the other two centres of Christianity). This school could, however, never be compared to the likes of the *Musaion*, the *Serapium* and the *Sebastion*, which were also in Alexandria. Little is actually known about the *Didaskaleion*, except for what could be learnt from references made by Eusebius in particular.

The *Didaskaleion* must obviously have had people who were responsible for keeping her up and running – they were called "heads" in the previous Chapters. During the first seven centuries (and even up to this very day) Philip Sidetes was the only writer/historian who made an attempt to list the "heads" of the *Didaskaleion*. However, his list is not reliable owing to serious inconsistencies with regard to the heads that were listed and the eras during which they actually lived. Since no better

information than that provided by Eusebius is available on the existence of the *Didaskaleion*, one has to (critically) rely on his evidence.

4.2.3 Facts and/as opposed to message

Spiegel introduced a concept called the "text-context conundrum" (Spiegel 1990:75) when he asked questions such as, "How can we write responsible history from biased literary documents? How can we ethically and fairly derive the social from the rhetorical? How can we recover history?" Anyone who is searching only for facts will end up by merely criticising the ancient documents without reaching a responsible answer (cf Jacobs 2003:105). A route out of this "conundrum" is called "postcolonial criticism" by Jacobs (2003:106). He described it as follows: "A central premise of many postcolonial analyses is that discourse – by which I mean not just *words* but also authoritative structures of meaning and action – does not reflect the 'real world' of its participants, but rather constructs that world" (Jacobs 2003:107).

It is very important to take note that in the Biblical times and even during the time of the Roman Empire, facts were not considered to be as decisive as they are regarded today. Even in the Bible it is evident that the *message* enjoyed priority over the facts. This is quite evident in the creation story and in books like Jonah in the Old Testament. Taking the Gospel according to Matthew (from the New Testament) as an example will suffice. The author of this Gospel regarded a mountain as very important and therefore he constructed the most important events to take place on a mountain. When Jesus pronounced his beatitudes, it had to be a "Sermon on the Mount" (Mt 5-7) even though, according to Luke's report, Jesus delivered it on a "level place" (Lk 6). According to Matthew 4, Jesus' last and greatest temptation by the devil occurred on a mountain, while Luke 4 showed that the last temptation took place at the Temple (as the Temple was very important for this author). According to Matthew 28, the ascension of Jesus took place on a mountain, but in Luke 24 one reads that it took place in the "vicinity of Bethany." The *message* was therefore more important than the facts.

The same applies to the primary authors with whom this thesis engaged. Philip Sidetes had a specific plan ("message") when he drew up his list of heads of the *Didaskaleion*. Eusebius likewise had his own agenda ("message") in his references

to the *Didaskaleion* and her heads. Today many scholars, in their quest for facts, are very critical of Philip Sidetes and Eusebius, two scholars for whom the message was of more importance within the eras they lived. This had to be taken into account in this study.

4.2.4 Important people and an important place

It would be fairly safe to assume that "all" the writers of the Early Church were to some extent aware of the existence of a *Didaskaleion* in Alexandria and would therefore obviously connect important people living in Alexandria with the *Didaskaleion*. Take for instance the presence of Mark in Alexandria during the middle of the 1st century CE. There could be no better explanation for the establishment of the *Didaskaleion* than to assume that it was done by a follower of Christ's teachings who was born and later residing in Africa!

But which of the distinguished individuals/writers on the list in Chapter 2 really were heads of or even attached to the *Didaskaleion*? It has been said that one could only be certain about two of the heads, namely Clement and Origen – and then to what extent? It is interesting to note that Clement fled Alexandria (with good reason) after having been attached to the *Didaskaleion* for only a few years, while Origen's thoughts on a variety of theological issues were regarded as heretical, specifically after his death, although he already had problems with the church during his lifetime. If only these two facts were to be taken into account, a critical reader would immediately enquire about the credibility of information about the School and her heads.

4.2.5 What influence?

The influence that the documents written by the heads of the *Didaskaleion* had on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa cannot be easily measured, while the influence of the Catechetical School as such is almost immeasurable. This is why, for the purposes of this study, two possible types of influence were distinguished:

1. Influence, where mentioned by a specific writer, was identified as *factual influence*. That included personal influence.

2. Influence that was not mentioned but observed was identified as *derived influence*.

Chapter 3 has to some extent discussed the first type of influence. Mention was made of writers like Eusebius who referred to the heads of the School, because he was familiar with their writings, but also of other writers who were influenced by what they had read about the heads. The fact was also mentioned that a specific head had certainly been influenced by his predecessor, or at least acknowledged that his predecessor had meant a lot to him, like Clement's reference to Pantaenus mentioned earlier. In one case reference was made of Origen who had castrated himself in order to live a purer life – others did the same.

In this Chapter certain theological methods that were applied by the heads of the *Didaskaleion* will also be discussed. These were handed down from one generation to the next, such as apology and the allegorical method. This is regarded as factual influence.

However, the most significant influence detected was *derived influence*. In imitation of the church in Alexandria and because of the derived influence of the church of Alexandria, Christianity was cemented in Africa until the Arab invasion took place and to a minor extent even afterwards. The area under consideration is specifically (the rest of) Egypt and the area to the south of the country. One could easily argue that the countries to the west of Egypt were influenced more by Rome than by Alexandria, with proponents like Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine of Hippo who all spoke Latin. This could be true, but these writers were on African soil and therefore acted in an African context, rather than in an Italian (Roman) context.

Within this context it seemed appropriate to supply the reader with the history of the formation of Christianity in the entire African part of the Roman Empire in order to describe the fact that Christianity was part and parcel of everything in Africa, as Augustine mentioned it in his *De Civitate Dei* (to be discussed later). It will become obvious how most of the countries to the south of Egypt followed Alexandria in the Monophysite religion, but how the countries to the west of Egypt tended to rather look at Rome for guidance.

4.3 Factual influence

The direct influence of the heads of the *Didaskaleion* will be discussed under this heading.

4.3.1 Influence of the heads of the *Didaskaleion*

The establishment of Christianity in Africa was brought about by specifically two brilliant thinkers and writers – Clement and Origen of Alexandria. The future of Christianity in general was maximally indebted to these two religious giants,

for without their singular achievements in systematizing Christian thought and belief, it is easy to speculate that Christianity might have meandered on as just another religion among many. At best, formalized Christian religion would have been delayed by several hundred years until the arrival – again fortuitously – of Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome in the dying days of Rome (Fogarty 2004:144).

The "patterns of exegesis" followed by the School, were soon to be implemented by

- Tertullian in Carthage;
- Origen in Caesarea;
- Gregory of Nazianzus in Cappadocia;
- Gregory the Great in Rome (Oden 2011:241).

The exegesis was done by seeking the spiritual sense of the sacred texts and then combine it with its plain or historical sense. These patterns (spiritual forms of exegesis) were well established by the end of the 2nd century, and "would stand at the core of consensually held classic Christian teachings" (Oden 2011:242).

Five heads are identified as having had a great influence on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa, namely Mark the Evangelist, Athenagoras, Clement, Origen and Didymus the Blind. Didymus is also compared to Gregory of Nazianzus, specifically with regard to their views on the Holy Spirit.

4.3.1.1 Mark the Evangelist

John Mark was probably the first head of the School in Alexandria (cf Chapter 2) and placed a very high value on education (Oden 2011:245). With his method of transmitting the gospel teaching in Alexandria (which he had learned from Peter and Paul) he influenced his successors, since it was "multicultural, multilingual, straightforward and evangelical" (Oden 2011:242). The apostolic faith was transmitted in an unchanged manner and not through originality or individual creativity that could lead to assumptions (Oden 2001:244).

Another form of influence by Mark was through the Eucharist. According to Oden (2011:246), the "Markan Eucharist has been at the chore of the central rite of African Christian worship from the outset, from which other liturgies (of Basil, Gregory and Cyril) presumably derived." If one looks at the Divine Liturgy of Cyril, it is obvious that it was directly derived from that of Mark, which became the "primitive and archetypal worship service of the Orthodox Church in Alexandria" and the "prototypical pattern for classic African liturgies" (Oden 2011:247). Interestingly the present Coptic Orthodox Church utilises three Liturgies, which are based on the Markan prototype:

- The Divine Liturgy according to Saint Basil, the bishop of Caesarea.
- The Divine Liturgy according to Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, the bishop of Constantinople.
- The Divine Liturgy according to Saint Cyril 1, the twenty-fourth Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church (Oden 2011:247).

Mark was also the first Christian martyr on African soil when he died in 68 CE in Alexandria (cf *Hist Eccl* 2.16), setting the example for many martyrs, especially in Africa, to follow him. According to the *African memory* depicted by Oden in his book, *The African Memory of Mark* (2011), John Mark was martyred in the following way: During the Paschal season, the Jews in Rhakotis met at a house church near the Serapium. The "mob" (people who worshiped idols) forced their way into the congregation and seized Mark, while he was preaching to the congregants. They immediately put a rope around his neck and dragged him with horses to Bucalis, while he praised God. There they threw him into a prison. According to the *Martyrium Marci* 8, an angel as well as Jesus himself visited him and comforted him during that

night. The next morning, while he was dragged back to the Serapium by horses, he died giving his spirit to God (Oden 2011:154-157).

In the next forty years, from 68-109, at least four of his "earliest disciples" – people who presided over the church that he had founded in Alexandria (Oden 2011:169), would follow in his footsteps: Anianus (Anianus), Malchus (Milaios), Sabinus (Sabinos) and Cerdo (Kerdon). Leonides (Origen's father), Peter the Martyr and Catherine of Alexandria were also examples of Christians in Alexandria who were influenced by him to be martyred (Oden 2011:170). More than a century later Cyprian of Carthage was beheaded. In the words of Oden (2011:172): "These African martyrs received the apostolic vision from the beginning through Mark. They learned that the truth of the gospel is worth dying for."

These are but a few of all the martyrs that are discussed in this thesis, who were willing to die for their faith just like Mark. One may well ask whether the death of one person can really be seen as an influence on others to also die? The answer to this question lies in the words of Tertullian of Carthage in his *Apology* 50 (which again appears later in this Chapter): "The blood of Christians (martyrs) is the seed of the church."

4.3.1.2 Athenagoras

In Chapter 3 we learnt that Methodius of Olympus in Lycia, Epiphanius, Photius of Constantinople and Boethos of Chalcedon all referred to Athenagoras. Jerome referred to Methodius as Bishop in Tyre (cf *De Vir* 83). He was the first systematic opponent of Origen and was thoroughly familiar with the works of the heads of the *Didaskaleion*.

In his works Athenagoras sought justice for the Christian community and society of his time while focusing on clarifying orthodox beliefs referring to the praxis in the church. He was committed "to the concept of the supernatural regardless of the incredulity it received from the surrounding culture" (Berry 2007:63). He described a God that could give life to anything dead, which was a miracle in itself. His task as an apologist was not only to re-orientate the view of his readers concerning faith, but also to "educate Christian laity in the doctrines of the faith and of encouraging them

to live lives of extraordinary nobility for the sake of the gospel" (Blount 2001:80). While doing this, he apparently felt no qualms about seeking conflict with or alienating his readers by making statements that could annoy them. Blount (2001:80) stated: "Still, contrary to what one might expect from a philosopher and professional academic, his apology primarily consists not of arguments but rather of a clear, careful, and attractive account of Christian doctrine and practice." Instead of trying to convince his readers of the rationality of the Christian belief system, he rather showed them the attractiveness of Christianity.

It is significant that Athenagoras employed Stoic psychological terms while investigating the way the fallen angels had intercourse with the humans ("virgins"), thus creating the giants (cf specifically *Leg* 25:1-3). The roots of this story originated in the *Book of the Watchers*, a document that forms part of *1 Enoch* 6 (cf Gn 6:1-4), also known as *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*. According to Giulea, this showed that he "internalized the myth and conferred on it a psychological analysis" (Giulea 2007:258). Most probably he was the first to implement this kind of interpretation, and that he influenced both Clement and Origen to do likewise (Giulea 2007:261). Origen treated this "old Jewish tradition" in a Greek philosophical way. Before Athenagoras, Philo also implemented the theme of souls descending from heaven in his *De Gigantibus*.

Seneca (*De Ira* [*On Anger*] 2.4.1) elaborated on the emotions of the movement of the soul by distinguishing three movements: The first movement of the mind is, according to him, involuntary and can therefore not be avoided by reason. This first movement of the soul is ethically neither good nor bad, but neutral. The second movement stages a moral mistake of reason, because the mind sanctions the appearance of injustice. In the third movement the mind overthrows reason in an uncontrolled way. Origen, however, connected the first movement with evil thoughts and abandoned the ethical neutrality (cf *De Princip* 3.2.2-4; *Hom Jos* 15.3; *Comm Matt* 21; *Comm Ps* 54.5). This was in line with what Athenagoras did. Both Origen (*De Princip* 3.2.4) and Athenagoras (*Leg* 24.4; 25.4) were champions of the free will of man as "a cardinal player in the human intentionality" (Giulea 2007:273).

Athenagoras developed a theory of psychological processes that did not provide for ethical neutrality. According to him, the evil in the human souls has two sources: External evil comes from the wicked spirits and internal evil coming from the human affinity and deliberation. These irrational and demonic processes of the mind are in opposition to the contemplation of the Truth and the intuition of the Father. The human mind can therefore operate in two possible ways: In an evil internal movement or in contemplation of the divine – therefore there is no ethical neutrality. Since the mind has an affinity for matter and matter is the dwelling place of evil (*Leg* 24.2; 25.1; 27.2), "the consequence of having an affinity (συμπάθεια) for matter consists in the emergence of irrational movements within the mind" (Giulea 2007:275). Even in his *De Resurrectione* Athenagoras displayed the body with its material affinities drawing the soul to material things (*De Res* 21.4). He contrasted it with the affinity for divine things (*Leg* 25.3). Demonic attacks on a human being are therefore dependent of either her/his material reasoning or the affinity for divine things. The human has the power to decide or control her/his reason or free will (*Leg* 24.4).

Athenagoras, together with Justin Martyr, laid a foundation for a kind of Christian intolerance towards the state as well as other religions. In all his writings, filled with apology, Athenagoras, unlike Tertullian (cf Bowlin 2006:13-14), never asked the Romans to show tolerance towards Christianity. Athenagoras pointed out the "folly" of the Egyptians, which might have been an attempt to justify Christianity: "Among every nation and people, men offer whatever sacrifices and celebrate whatever mysteries they please. The Egyptians reckon among their gods even cats, and crocodiles, and serpents, and asps, and dogs. And to all these both you and the laws give permission so to act, deeming, on the one hand, that to believe in no god at all is both impious and wicked, and on the other, that it is necessary for each man to worship the gods he prefers, in order that through fear of the deity, men may be kept from wrong-doing" (*Leg* 1; cf Schaff Vol 2, 1885:281).

4.3.1.3 Clement

Clement was responsible for the initiation of a Christian Theology through his scholarly works. His legacy spread even further (cf Fogarty 2004:127): His insistence on a spiritual life based on self-discipline and gospel values laid the foundation for

monastic living which was to develop in the future decades. He was in fact the inventor of the triad *being-life-thinking* (cf *Strom* 5.6.3), which was assigned to Plotinus. That means that Plotinus "inherited" it from Clement (cf Havrda 2010:29).

Clement was the predecessor and teacher of Origen who is regarded as one of the greatest African Theologians. Wagner (1971:212) stated that between the 4th and 9th century Clement "remained a minor, almost forgotten figure" and that his works were "quoted or mentioned in a sermon or catena, but his distinctive ideas were subjects neither of praise nor debate." The reason for his assumption is that writers after Clement did not mention him by name, like Methodius and Arnobius (at the turn of the 3rd to the 4th century). Although writers like Hippolytus, John Damascene, Maximus, Hilary, Firmicus Maternus and Meister Eckhart did allude to him (cf Havey 1908:45), Wagner's point of view is that the "attempts to trace his influences on various writers are inconclusive because the images and polemics present in his works became commonplaces for others" (Wagner 1971:212). It seems as if Wagner studied Clement through the works of Origen (discussed below), instead of evaluating his writings as original material.

Unlike Wagner, Jefford pointed out that no region in the Empire was more tolerant of the Christian developments than Egypt. And within this "open environment" Clement started utilising his talents "in an effort to shape a religious tradition which came to dominate the history of Alexandrian theology" (Jefford 1993:381). This is an indication that his successors took note of his work. Kovacs (2009:262) rightfully remarked that Clement's writings were the earliest surviving works denoting a connection with Alexandrian Christianity and that after his death he was "held in high esteem by those who took up the task of Christian theological exploration" (Kovacs 2009:269). The letters of Alexander, the Bishop of Jerusalem, as quoted by Eusebius, are a good example of his influence on the Greek Fathers. In a letter to the church in Antioch, written in 211, Alexander referred to Clement as follows: "I am sending you these lines, my dear brothers, by Clement the blessed presbyter, a man virtuous and approved, of whom you have already heard and will now come to know" (*Hist Eccl* 6.11.6). In 215 he wrote a letter to Origen, referring to the deceased Clement (and Pantaenus) as "Pantænus, the truly blessed man and master, and the holy Clement, my master and benefactor, and if there is any other like them, through

whom I became acquainted with thee, the best in everything, my master and brother" (*Hist Eccl* 6.14.9).

Eusebius referred to Clement as a "celebrated guardian of the orthodoxy of the church" (*Hist Eccl* 3.32.2). Cyril of Alexandria had the same view that Clement was "an eloquent and learned man, who has studied deeply the writings of the Greeks as perhaps few before him did" (*Cont Julian* 6-7). Because Clement wrote in Greek, he was not well known in the Latin-speaking Western church. Despite that Jerome called him "the most learned of all. What is there in his books that lacks learning? No, rather, what is there that does not reflect the very heart of philosophy?" (*Epist* 70.4).

During the 3rd century Origen continued developing Clement's "approach to exegesis and several of his characteristic emphases" (Kovacs 2009:269), while Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, Evagrius and Didymus the Blind did the same during the 4th century. These Theologians developed many of Clement's theological ideas further, including the idea of "the divine economy," which is the belief that God had a well-designed plan for salvation, as well as his understanding of the Christian life as the pursuit of perfection (consisting of various stages of training and discipline) and his theory of the "gradual ascent of the soul to the beatific vision" (Kovacs 2009:269).

Although Origen referred to Clement only once in his writings (*Cont Cels* 1.48), he most probably was the Theologian who knew Clement's writings best and expanded them. One of his lost works even had the same title as one of Clement's works, namely *Stromateis* (*Miscellanies*). In his exegesis of Biblical texts he frequently followed the pattern used by Clement (Kovacs 2004:325-329). He also used quite a few of Clement's ideas and developed them in greater depth. The result was that many scholars and Theologians did not read Clement's works as Origen displayed more brilliance than his predecessor.

The fact that Origen used Clement's works but was condemned at the Second Council of Constantinople, also brought Clement's work under suspicion (cf Kovacs 2009:270). This suspicion reached its pinnacle during the 9th century when Photius referred to the *Hypotyposes* of Clement as containing many godless and fantastic

ideas like the eternity of matter, his doctrine of transmigration and his allegedly heretic idea about the existence of two *Logoi* (cf *Myriobiblion* 109-111; Bucur 2009b:332). The characteristics of Origen's work that flowed back to Clement's work were of such a kind that Georgius Monachus (*Hamartolos*), writing his *Chronicon Breve* in about 850, declared in *Chronicon Breve* 26 (PG 110:84) that Clement was an "Origenist:" Κλήμησ δὲ ὁ Στρωματεὺς, Ὡριγενιαστῆς ὄν, ὡς τινι τῶν Πατέρων ἀπεκαλύφθη (*Clement was the Stromatist, but it was revealed [by God – my addition] to one of the Fathers that he was [actually – my addition] an Origenist*). Wagner (1971:209) referred to Clement and his legacy as follows: "His personality, integrity and theology have undergone greater debate than most. So far much of the discussion about Clement has had negative results."

Clement was the first Theologian who started to focus on central problems of Christian Theology, for example how to reconcile faith with knowledge and how to utilise secular learning to elucidate the revelations given in Biblical texts. He went along with his texts in an exuberant and optimistic way which encouraged many Theologians through the ages. One of his favourite texts was, "Seek and you shall find" (Mt 7:7; cf Kovacs 2009:270).

In his *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, *Eclogae propheticae* and *Adumbrationes*, which are fragments or "surviving parts" of his *Hypotyposesis* (cf Bucur 2009a:xxii, 5) Clement referred to the Holy Spirit and angels by making use of the Biblical passages in Zechariah 4:10, Isaiah 11:2-3 and Matthew 10:18. This notion constituted "a relatively widespread phenomenon in early Christianity" (Bucur 2009a:xxiii). In *Stromateis* 5.13.88, 1.24.158 and 4.13.93 Clement discussed the Holy Spirit with reference to his *On Prophecy* and *On the Soul*, together with the above-mentioned documents. According to Bucur (2009a:xxiii), Clement's theological articulation of angelomorphic pneumatology, spirit Christology and binitarianism constituted a "relatively widespread phenomenon in early Christianity." This statement was based on studies of *Revelation*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Justin Martyr and Aphrahat (270-345 CE), a Syriac-Christian author who lived in northern Mesopotamia. Aphrahat's works showed how the early "Jewish" Christianity flowed into the Christianity of the Syriac-speaking Eastern church. While asceticism originated in Alexandria, Aphrahat incorporated his angelomorphic pneumatology in his ascetic theory (Bucur

2009a:187). Angelomorphic pneumatology constituted a significant phase in Christian thinking and reflection on the Holy Spirit during early Christianity. Based on Jewish apocalyptic literature, Christianity developed a doctrine of Christ and the Holy Spirit and shaped it during the 3rd and 4th century (Bucur 2009a:190).

With the Arian controversy the angelomorphic pneumatology of Clement (and the underlying use of Mt 18:10 with a confluence of angelology and pneumatology) was severely debated with reference to the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Afterwards more emphasis was placed on the person of the Holy Spirit as part of the Trinity, and the whole notion of angelomorphic pneumatology was discarded.

In his *Stromateis* 3.7.60 Clement contrasted the Valentinians who propagated a πνευματικόν γάμον (*spiritual marriage*; cf Irenaeus' *Adv Haer* 1.8.4) to several encratic groups (proponents of self-denial, continence and fasting, and followers of Marcion and Cassianus; DeConick 2003:312) whom he opposed and who hated the flesh and rejected the marriage union. Even though it might seem as if Clement also had a spiritual marriage in mind "such as we find commonly in early Christianity, a marriage in which both partners choose to remain celibate" (DeConick 2003:312), this was not the case. The marriage propagated by the Valentinians included a sexual relationship, but emphasised the need for ἐγκράτεια (*self-control*) which was applied not only to the marriage, but to "the other things for which the soul has an evil desire because it is not satisfied with the necessities of life" (DeConick 2003:313). The marriage was therefore a wilful action for the purpose of procreation and not for recreation. In the words of DeConick (2003:342):

At the moment of conception the husband and wife were supposed to raise their thoughts on high so that their spirits could mingle with the angels and draw down a soul that contained a spiritual seed. This was the great mystery of their marriages – to conceive a child who would resemble the Lord, a child with a spirit-infused soul.

This corresponded very closely to the thought pattern of Clement.

Finally the legacy left behind by Clement, in collaboration with his predecessor and master Pantaenus (already discussed in Chapter 2), must be mentioned as one of this great Church Father's most successful contributions to Africa and to Egypt in particular: As already mentioned (cf sub-heading 2.5.6.1), while in the process of translating Mark's Gospel (Matthew's Gospel?) into the native tongue, they encountered many problems as the standard form of written communication was *hieroglyphic pictograph* or *demotic script*. This led Pantaenus and Clement to develop an easy script that would replace the ancient hieroglyphs. Eventually this became the Coptic language. In response to the people's very positive reaction to their translation of the Gospel, these two scholars took the bold step to translate the whole Bible into Coptic (cf El Masri 1982:16).

4.3.1.4 Origen

He was one of a few prominent Theologians in the Early Church who was (most probably) born into a Christian family. His father Leonides was a confessor and a martyr (cf Schaff Vol 4, 1885:546; Hillerbrand 2012:41). Origen was the first Theologian to "offer a systematic understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures as the Christian 'Old Testament'" (Hillerbrand 2012:43). As a systematic Theologian he was reflective and thoughtful in his writings and would first explain the basics and the details of the Christian faith coherently and systematically to ensure that his readers would be able to understand the notions he wanted to advance. His use of allegory to interpret the Scriptures, influenced or rather dominated Christian Biblical exegesis until the 16th century with the Protestant Reformation (cf Hillerbrand 2012:43). Fogarty argued that, together with Clement,

a view is fashioned of the extraordinary, penetrative, and highly sophisticated academic nature of their writings, making 2nd and 3rd-century contributions to the formation of early Christian theology not only of inestimable importance in the development of the religion, but also of a profoundly influential quality which in many ways, it could be argued, established the basis for the future of the religion throughout the world, albeit chiefly in the West (Fogarty 2004:129).

Chadwick (2014) emphasised the orthodoxy of Origen, amongst others:

If orthodoxy were a matter of intention, no theologian could be more orthodox than Origen, none more devoted to the cause of Christian faith. His natural temper is world denying and even illiberal. The saintliness of his life is reflected in the insight of his commentaries and the sometimes quite passionate devotion of his homilies. The influence of his biblical exegesis and ascetic ideals is hard to overestimate; his commentaries were freely plagiarized by later exegetes, both Eastern and Western, and he is a seminal mind for the beginnings of monasticism.

Schaff (Vol 4, 1885:554) was abundant in his praise for Origen as a person and for his influence on others. He depicted Origen's character as pure, noble, patient and meek and praised the "self-denying asceticism" of this great Father: "The impression which his whole personality made upon those who came within the sphere of his influence is evidenced in a remarkable degree by the admiring affection displayed towards him by his friend Ambrose and his pupil Gregory. Nor was it friends alone that he so impressed." To this Schaff added that the writings of Origen were "heavily influential on the early Church, and for good reason, as they are inspirational and encouraging" (Schaff Vol 3, 1885:1633). Evagrius Ponticus, born in Africa, became a monk in Constantinople and made ample use of Origen's works, although his *Kephalaia Gnostica* (comprising of 540 chapters) seemed to be the specific writing that led to the condemnation of Origen in 553 (Kalvesmaki 2014). It was through Evagrius that Origen's work passed into the Greek ascetic tradition and to the West (Kalvesmaki 2014).

Gregory Thaumaturgus (one of Origen's students and later Bishop of Neo-Caesarea, the metropolis of the Roman province of Pontus) wrote and presumably delivered his *Εἰς Ὀριγένην Προσφωνητικός* (*Address on Origen*) in Caesarea between 238 and 245 (Trigg 2001:27; cf Löhr 2010:162). Referring to Origen, he witnessed in his *Address on Origen* (*Argument* 6): "And from the very first day of his receiving us [referring to him and his brother Athenodorus – my addition] which day was, in truth, the first day to me, and the most precious of all days, if I may so speak, since then for the first time the true Sun began to rise upon me." This is considered to be the

only surviving example of a classical rhetorical genre, the λόγος συντακτικός – a speech given at a departure (Brinkmann 1901:59-60). It is also the oldest surviving oration by a Christian that is not a homily and one of only two surviving testimonies by students to their teachers in Late Antiquity (cf Trigg 2001:28). The other oration was Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* written a few years later. Porphyry testified that he had met Origen while he (Porphyry) was still young (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.19.5). At the heart of this address is a testimony to Origen's teaching (*Add Orig* 93-181). According to Gregory Thaumaturgus, Origen first shaped his student's morals and thereafter their intellect. The curriculum consisted of the four disciplines of philosophy – dialectics (*Add Orig* 99-108), physics (which contained geometry and astronomy – *Add Orig* 109-114), ethics (*Add Orig* 115-149) and Theology (*Add Orig* 150-181). Origen named these disciplines in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (*Prologue* 3).

This *Address to Origen* stipulated what Clement described in his *Stromateis* 6.16 as a participation in the divine οἰκονομία (*arrangement/plan*). Gregory thanked the Divine for arranging his meeting with Origen (*Add Orig* 5.55). This can be taken back to Origen's *Peri Archon* 2.1.2 where he stated that nothing happened accidentally (cf Benjamins 1994:28). The language used by Gregory in his *Address to Origen* is an exact reflection of Origen's own descriptions of the spiritual person (πνευματικός) who corresponds to the gnostic (γνωστικός) in the writings of Clement and Evagrius, a Christian monk and ascetic living in the late 4th century.

In his *Commentary on John* Gregory identified Origen as a "divinely inspired exegete" with the reason that his personal guiding angel was the *Logos* himself, also referred to as the *Angel of Great Council* in Isaiah 9:6 (LXX) (cf Trigg 1991:35-51).

Gregory of Nyssa relied heavily on Origen in his *Anti-Subordinationistic Argument in In Illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius* (cf Ramelli 2011c:21). Augustine was also profoundly influenced by the writings of Origen. One of the best examples is his *Commentary on Genesis* in which he clearly utilised the writings of Origen (cf Heidl 2003:78-79; Pâran 2012:57-58). In his *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 2.21.32 he literally replicated Origen's *Homilies on Leviticus* 6.2 (cf Origen's *Cont Cels* 24.40; 7.7, 18).



Origen led by example. The previous paragraphs illustrated how he enriched peoples' lives, as affirmed by Gregory Thaumaturgus. Melito (also called "the philosopher" or "Bishop of Sardis") of whom very little is known, was a contemporary of Origen. Schaff (Vol 8, 1885:2004) referred to him as follows: "[W]e shall find him [Melito – my addition] styled 'the Eunuch' by Polycrates. It is supposed that he had made himself a coelebs 'for the kingdom of heaven's sake,' without mistaking our Lord's intent, as did Origen" (cf Polycrates' *Letter to Bishop Victor of Rome*). It is not clear whether he did it without knowing about Origen, or whether he did it in imitation of Origen. It is interesting to note that Augustine also referred to men and women "making themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven," as if this was a standard practice in his time (*Moral Treatises of St Augustin, Of holy Virginitiy, Section 47*).

Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great were strongly influenced by Origen, for whom they had the greatest respect, but avoided repeating the mistakes he had made (Schaff Series 2, Vol 7, 1885:409). As indicated in Chapter 3, they compiled a *Book of Extracts* from his exegetical writings and then published it in twenty-seven books named *Philocalia*, which can be called a *Christology*. According to Socrates (cf Schaff Series 2, Vol 7, 1885:409), these books depicting a careful study of Origen and helped these two writers in their controversies with the Arians. Although the Arians quoted Origen, these two "Fathers were enabled to confute them readily, by shewing that they [the Arians – my addition] were completely ignorant of the meaning of Origen's argument" (Schaff Series 2, Vol 7, 1885:409).

a. Origen as the "founder" of the Holy Spirit as Agent

During the second half of the 4th century the Holy Spirit was, to a great extent, regarded as merely an activity (ἐνέργεια) of God and not as the Third Person in the Trinity (cf Radde-Gallwitz 2011:227). This was found in the pneumatologies of the 4th century, like those issued by Nicaea, as well as the *Tropikoi* (against whom Athanasius argued in his *Letters to Serapion*) and the *Pneumatomachians* of Asia Minor, under the leadership of Eustatius of Sebasteia.

At that time there were two prominent scholars, apart from Origen (living in the previous century), who advocated this case to the contrary, as they insisted on the

substantial existence of the Holy Spirit. They were Didymus the Blind and Gregory of Nazianzus. Both of them were "using Origen's arguments against modalism for their own purposes" (Radde-Gallwitz 2011:228). Although these scholars differed considerably from each other in their understanding and interpretation of the activities of the Spirit, one thing was fundamental: They assumed a disjunction between activity and substance (Radde-Gallwitz 2011:244), while the latter and not the former was characteristic of the Holy Spirit.

During the 4th century Gregory of Nyssa constructed the Trinitarian formulation "that God is one and the same nature or essence (μία οὐσία) in three individual substances (τρῆς ὑποστάσεις), and that the Son is ὁμοούσιος [*consubstantial* – my addition] to the Father. Indeed the three members of the Trinity share in the same οὐσία" (Ramelli 2012:302). Didymus and Gregory of Nazianzus followed this formulation, which had its foundation with Origen who already maintained that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have the same οὐσία but are three different ὑποστάσεις (cf *Cont Cels* 8.12; *Comm Matt* 17.14, referring to the Father and the Son, and *Comm Jo* 2.10.75, referring to the fact that "not only the Father and the Son, but also the Spirit are three different *individual substances*;" cf also Ramelli 2012:302).

Origen adopted the term ὑπόστασις used by Clement and probably Pantaenus, although there are no extant documents written by Pantaenus to prove the claim (cf Ramelli 2012:345). The way in which Clement used the term, however, depicted more the generic meaning of "substance," not referring to the (substance of the) Trinity, like in Clement's *Stromateis* 2.35.2, 4.136.4-5 and 5.3.2. Although at first sight it looks as if the use of ὑπόστασις in *Stromateis* 2.96.2 differed from how it was used in the rest of the Clementine corpus, and that it could refer to (one person of) the Trinity, Van den Hoek (1988:101), following Prestige (1929:270-272), convincingly stated that the best translation would be "station" or "stop."

Fragment 37 of Origen's *Commentary on John* discussed John 3:8 in which Jesus told Nicodemus that "[t]he wind blows wherever it pleases." Origen understood the Greek sentence τὸ πνεῦμα πνεῖ ὅπου θέλει as referring to the Holy Spirit (and not

the wind) blowing wherever he wishes to. With this he indicated that the Spirit was a substance. To further explain John 3:8, he added 1 Corinthians 12:11, Acts 15:28, Acts 13:2 and Acts 21:10-11. 1 Corinthians 12:11, πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται (*One and the same Spirit does all these things, distributing to each as he wishes*) clearly showed that the Spirit is an active substance. The next verse, Acts 15:28, ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν... (*It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...*), demonstrated that the Apostles took a decision under the guidance of the Spirit. In the next verse cited (Ac 13:2), the Spirit told the congregation what to do: λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ νηστευόντων εἶπεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, Ἀφορίσατε δὴ μοι τὸν Βαρναβᾶν καὶ Σαῦλον εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ προσκέκλημαι αὐτούς (*While they were fasting and worshipping the Lord, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them"*). Complementing this verse, Origen cited Acts 21:10-11: ἐπιμενόντων δὲ ἡμέρας πλείους κατήλθεν τις ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας προφήτης ὀνόματι Ἀγαβος, καὶ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ἡμᾶς καὶ ἄρας τὴν ζώνην τοῦ Παύλου δήσας ἑαυτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας εἶπεν, Τάδε λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, Τὸν ἄνδρα οὗ ἔστιν ἡ ζώνη αὕτη οὕτως δήσουσιν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ οἱ Ἰουδαϊοὶ καὶ παραδώσουσιν εἰς χεῖρας ἐθνῶν (*After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judaea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles'"*).

Fragment 37 must have formed part of Origen's *Commentary on John* Book 11 or 12 (both are lost). As he wrote it in Alexandria after visiting Rome, he was clearly aware of groups in both Alexandria and Rome disputing the case of the Holy Spirit as a person, such as the Modalists who denied the "separate hypostatic existence of the Son and the Spirit" (Radde-Gallwitz 2011:232). As Sabellianism was a form of Modalism, his argument was also aimed against their view that the three persons were only masks of God. In this fragment Origen insisted on the distinct, substantial reality of the Son and the Holy Spirit (cf Heine 1998:59). Origen held the view that the Spirit is a distinct reality who was created by the Son.

4.3.2 Comparative works

The next three sub-headings serve to indicate how the scholars influenced each other without being mentioned. It would have been "natural" for Athenagoras to have influenced his student Clement, although the latter never made mention of such influence.

4.3.2.1 A comparison between the writings of Athenagoras, Clement and Origen on Soteriological Theology

Soteriological Theology, a system of Theology based principally on the salvation of man, was one of the focal points at the School of Alexandria. They did not engage in theological disputes about this issue, but were concerned with man's salvation. Their Christological Theology was based on soteriological thought (*Coptic Orthodox Church Network* sa), which was a focal point in the *Didaskaleion's* preparation of the newly converted as catechumens to become witnesses. Three scholars are discussed as examples, namely Athenagoras, Clement and Origen:

- Athenagoras wrote his *Plea on Behalf of Christians*, addressed to Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius and his son Commodus (cf Chapter 3) to refute the three charges against Christians – atheism, Thystean feasts and Oedipodean intercourse by preaching the gospel in defence. He regarded it a great opportunity to share the truth with the Emperors and in fact with all his readers. He had two things in mind: Defending the Christian faith and attracting his readers to the salvation offered by Christ.
- Clement, the intellectual Christian, followed in the footsteps of his predecessor. In his *Paedagogus* 1.1 he referred to Jesus as follows: "The Instructor being practical, not theoretical, his aim is thus to improve the soul, not to teach, and to train it up to a virtuous, not to an intellectual life." Although he was himself an intellectual, he admitted that the process of conversion is based more on a virtuous than on an intellectual life.
- Origen, the student of Clement, was focused on the salvation of souls. His whole life was an example to others of how to live according to the will of God and thereby to encourage others to give their lives to God: "Origen's views of martyrdom, prayer and Scriptures merge into one vision of Christian life as a

movement towards a perfect knowledge of God and perfect fellowship with Him through Christ" (*Coptic Orthodox Church Network* sa).

Young (1979:172-174) referred to Origen as the one who collected all the themes expressing the nature and work of Christ in Scripture, such as *Light of the World, Resurrection, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Door and the Shepherd, Christ as King, Teacher and Master, Son, True Vine and Bread, First and Last, Living and Dead, Sword, Servant, Lamb of God, Paraclete, Propitiation, Power, Wisdom, Sanctification, Redemption, Righteousness, Demiurge, Agent of the good God, High-Priest, Rod, Flower, Stone and Logos*. These were the themes he focused on when he discussed and dealt with the saving work of Jesus. In Origen's works we find a pattern of conflict between good and evil, depicting Christ as the victor every time (cf *De Princip* 1.3, 4, 7, 8).

Another important theme in Origen's soteriology is found in his *Exhortation to Martyrdom* where he depicted Jesus as the perfect example of obedience whom Christians should follow – as the *Way*. When one follows Christ to heaven, especially through martyrdom, all the secrets and mysteries will be revealed and one will discover the nature of intelligibles and the beauty of *Truth*. In his *De Principiis* he described Jesus' saving work as part of the picture of the struggle against the devil and his angels, for we do not wrestle *with* princes or *with* powers, but *against* principalities and powers (*De Princip* 3.2). Obedience, complemented by self-denial, humiliation, death to sin and the spiritualised martyrdom, therefore reflected an imitation of Christ.

The conquering of the devil was the most prominent theme in Origen's soteriology. *De Principiis* 3.2 contains an elaborate discussion of the "opposing powers." Then again, in *Contra Celsum*, he allotted a large role to the demons in his arguments with Celsum (cf Schiebe 2012:472). In his *Homilies on Joshua* he recorded warfare against the devil, as he utilised allegory to demonstrate that Joshua's wars were foreshadowing the wars of Christ and his followers against the devil and his followers. The theme of Jesus who always defeated the devil and his angels appeared throughout Origen's work. According to the *Coptic Orthodox Church Network* (sa), this cannot be treated as "belonging to a lower theological level," or as

a "mere appendage to the philosophically inclined system in which we find the real Origen." In fact, "[i]t is basic to his whole understanding of salvation, and is the theory to which he turns to explain all soteriological problems."

4.3.2.2 A comparison between the writings of Clement, Origen and Tertullian on martyrdom and the redistribution of wealth (2nd and 3rd century)

a. On martyrdom

Just as Monasticism/asceticism was a way in which the believers distinguished themselves from other believers/non-believers, so martyrdom was also a way, although a very extreme way, for believers to show their adherence towards their belief system. As Monasticism was discussed quite extensively, it would be fitting to also look at martyrdom, especially from the viewpoints of the Alexandrians, Clement and Origen, and to compare their views with that of Tertullian of Carthage.

Being good theological scholars, these three writers articulated the phenomenology of martyrdom to a lesser extent, but rather reflected an exhortational approach with more theological reflection on the foundations and motivations for martyrdom (cf Heisey 2004:33). It is interesting to note that not one of them died a martyr. Clement and Tertullian died natural deaths, while Origen died in prison where he was tortured during the later Decian persecution (cf Schofer 2012:9). For them the willingness to be a martyr was based in their disciplined lives as Christians. They were up against the Gnostics whose teachers wanted to put less pressure on visible Christian witness during persecution. They were of the opinion that ascetic disciplines formed the foundation for Christians to commit themselves to martyrdom and that the ascetic response was "fundamental in earliest Christianity" (Heisey 2000:76; cf Tilley 1991:467-468).

Evidence about the early Christians mostly indicated that the ascetic choices expressed in emerging Monasticism were responses to persecution against them and demonstrated their desire to express their deepest Christian faithfulness in an alternative way (Malone 1950:1-8; Frend 1967:356, 360; Irvin & Sunquist 2001:250).

Boyarin (1999:95) pointed to the accounts about the Maccabean martyrs in the 3rd century, reflected in 2 and 4 *Maccabees* as a portrayal of the "oldest, most clearly pre-Christian element of martyrology." Now for the first time a martyr's death was regarded as the fulfilment of a religious mandate and not just the willingness of a person to die a violent death. Christians started to regard this imitation of Christ as a central aspect of their religious experience. Boyarin had the opinion that "if martyrdom is not voluntary it is not martyrdom" (Boyarin 1999:121). With this pronouncement he tried to protect a specific point made about martyrdom where someone chose death in order to be regarded as a martyr (cf Moss 2012:532). There was therefore a distinction between voluntary (also called "provoked") martyrdom and "true" or "normative" martyrdom (Moss 2012:532).

Clement was one of the first Theologians who discussed martyrdom in depth. Since the time of Clement the Montanists (also called the "New Prophecy Movement" in the West; cf Moss 2012:537) were very positive about voluntary martyrdom. When someone therefore chose to be martyred, s/he was in many cases regarded as a Montanist (cf Barns 1903:44; Kraft 1955:269). Moss (2012:541) stated that the different kinds of martyrdom were first distinguished by Clement in approximately 215. Clement also initiated the rhetorical formation of the true martyr. He specifically depicted the martyr in his *Stromateis* as part of a comprehensive discussion on virtue, by referring to the training, composure, discipline and piety of a martyr. In *Stromateis* 2.125.2-3 he said that "fear that derives from the law...trained (the martyrs) to show piety even with their blood."

A close look at Clement's standpoint on martyrdom shows that he was less interested in the sources of persecution than in the foundations of perseverance. Bowersock suggested that Clement used the term "martyr" in its original sense: "Clement's analysis of martyrdom returned prudently to the original sense of the word...He is trying to turn the very word back into its original sense of 'bearing witness'" (Bowersock 1995:67). However, Clement was not referring to some Platonic form of martyrdom, but was rather creating meaning for the term. He was narrowing the practice of "true" martyrdom by creating an image of the true martyr that is distinct from the "voluntary martyr" who rushed to death (cf Moss 2012:542). In this process Clement positioned himself between two extremes: "Now some of the

heretics who have misunderstood the Lord, have at once an impious and cowardly love of life; saying that the true martyrdom is the knowledge of the only true God (which we also admit), and that the man is a self-murderer and a suicide who makes confession by death; and adducing other similar sophisms of cowardice...they differ with us in regard to first principles. Now we, too, say that those who have rushed on death (for there are some, not belonging to us, but sharing the name merely, who are in haste to give themselves up, the poor wretches dying through hatred to the Creator) – these, we say, banish themselves without being martyrs, even though they are punished publicly. For they do not preserve the characteristic mark of believing martyrdom, inasmuch as they have not known the only true God, but give themselves up to a vain death, as the Gymnosophists of the Indians to useless fire" (*Strom* 4.16-17).

This argument illustrated Clement's ambivalent feelings about martyrdom (cf Boyarin 1999:62). On the *one hand* he condemned those who simply charged forward to be martyred. Moss (2012:543) said: "Clement rhetorically expels them from his community and debases and negates the significance of their offering. They are not, he says, true martyrs; they are without witness (*amartyros*)." In his commentary on Matthew (specifically Mt 19:29), Clement distinguished clearly between simple martyrdom (death) and true, gnostic martyrdom. He referred to the latter as a life lived purely, filled with knowledge of God, in obedience of God and without passion. Mere bodily martyrdom is therefore subtly denigrated. On the *other hand* Clement harshly deplored the impiety and cowardice of those heretics who were afraid of martyrdom. Here Clement clearly assumed the rhetorical high ground that the Aristotelian means afforded him, by taking the middle position (cf Moss 2012:544).

For Clement martyrdom was coupled with a disciplined life (cf Löhr 2003:438). A practical ascetic discipline was the demonstration of philosophical or spiritual behaviour, not only by Christians, but also by the educated and uneducated, Greeks, barbarians, slaves, men, women and children: "For self-control is common to all human beings who have made choice of it. And we admit that the same nature exists in every race, and the same virtue" (*Strom* 4.8).

Clement's view was that the martyr's suffering was firmly rooted in the love motivation, "albeit shaped with a Platonic understanding of love as beyond the passions" (Heisey 2004:39). In his *Stromateis* Book 4 he articulated his view regarding the notion of a reward for martyrdom: "Nor does (the martyr) sell his faith in the hope of the gifts prepared, but in love to the Lord he will most gladly depart from this life" and "[w]e call martyrdom perfection, not because the (person) comes to the end of his life as others, but because he has exhibited the perfect work of love" (*Strom* 4.4). The foundation of his argument is found in the *Beatitudes* (Mt 5:10) stating, *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness*. Reflecting further on this he wrote: "It is the sum of all virtue, in my opinion, when the Lord teaches us that for love to God we must as gnostics despise death" (*Strom* 4.6).

Still on the theme of love, Clement referred to Paul's claim in Romans 8:28: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*. In his *Stromateis* 4.14 he discarded the views of the Gnostics Valentinus, Heracleon and Basilides and referred them to the *Sermon on the Mount* (Mt 5-7) in which we are commanded to love our enemy. He also referred to other Scriptures that pictured the reality of a martyr, citing the words of 1 John 3:18-19 with its command to love in word and deed. The foundation thereof is that no fear is present in love (1 Jn 4:16-18) and that one should keep the command to love God by keeping his commandments (1 Jn 5:3). Clement was convinced that martyrdom was a human act that stemmed from love for God, rather than from "the search to appease God's anger or to obtain a reward after death" (Heisey 2004:40).

Origen, the student of Clement, was well known for his ascetic practices. As has already been noted in a previous Chapter, he lived with only the bare necessities, owning only one coat and went barefoot, while he fasted regularly and allowed himself only a few hours' sleep per night. He also performed the act of self-castration to contribute to his service of the Lord. Unlike his predecessor, Clement, as well as Tertullian, who seemed to draw strongly on pagan examples to make their case (cf *Hist Eccl* 6.24-26; 6.3.1-7, 10-12; 6.8.1-3), Origen's ascetic practices were founded on his reading of the New Testament Scriptures (Heisey 2004:40).

He set out a programme of self-formation to empower Christians to respond appropriately when they were tortured (Schofer 2012:8-9; cf Kolbet 2009:545-572). The Romans threatened to torture him, but these threats did not scare him. On the contrary, it set "the standard for his submission to his God, demanding all the more intensive practices, hermeneutical stances toward scripture and the world, and cultivation of compassion" (Schofer 2012:9).

Origen wrote his *Exhortation to Martyrdom* after his patron Ambrose had been imprisoned by Maximin the Thracian. As Ambrose really was afraid in the face of the threat of martyrdom, Origen emphasised the value and also the difficulty of self-denial, especially for someone like Ambrose, who was a wealthy and prominent citizen of Alexandria: "We have to strive not merely against denial (of Christ) but also lest we feel any shame when the enemies of God suppose that we are suffering shameful indignities. This is particularly applicable to you, holy Ambrose. Honoured and respected by a vast number of cities, you are now, so to speak, walking in the procession bearing the cross of Jesus and following him who leads you before governors and kings" (*Ex Mart* 1, 36). Later he stated that martyrdom was the way to obtain forgiveness for the sins an individual had committed after baptism (*Ex Mart* 30).

His *Exhortation to Martyrdom* contained additional references to a witnessing death as a basis for rewards in the afterlife. Origen drew these claims from Biblical references like Matthew 5:10-12 and Romans 8:18 where suffering and persecution are mentioned as ways to "buy our salvation" (*Ex Mart* 2.4). By referring to the suffering of Paul described in 2 Corinthians, Origen urged Ambrose to "commend ourselves by scourgings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labours, by watchings, and by fastings. For behold the Lord is here with his reward in his hand to render to each one according to his works" (*Ex Mart* 42, with reference to Is 40:10; 62:11; Ps 60:12; Rev 2:23; 22:12).

Origen's *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, just like Clement's *Stromateis*, also built on the theme of love. He referred to the text in Deuteronomy 6 that demands us to love God with everything we have (*Ex Mart* 3.6, 15). He also mentioned the Maccabean martyrs by describing the third brother as "trampling upon" his sufferings "for his love

to God" (cf 2 *Maccabees* 7:12). He then added something to the Maccabean account by stating that "he regarded his sufferings as nothing" (*Ex Mart* 25, 27). Here Origen was thinking of the imitation of Christ in martyrdom and linked it with a quotation from Romans 5 to demonstrate the "hope which grows out of martyr love for God" (*Ex Mart* 41). It looks as if Origen could not choose between the "older views of martyrdom as offering a reward for the faithful and the emerging perspective of martyrdom out of love for God" (Heisey 2004:38).

In imitation of Clement, Origen did not encourage people to go out and seek martyrdom, but stated that if martyrdom came to someone, s/he had to die willingly. He advocated daily training for Christians to learn to love their enemy/ies, to pray for their prosecutors and to nurture a stubborn attitude of non-violence as a response to martyrdom. During torture a Christian should avoid reproach or slander towards the torturers and should also avoid speaking against the Christian confession (Schofer 2012:9). In his training for martyrs he echoed Stoic as well as other philosophical ways of training to prepare for death through different spiritual exercises.

Origen's view was that the interpretation of Scriptures was a central element in personal formation and development. In his opinion the ideal Christians would know that they had conquered their desires while the torturers had not. Kolbet (2009:556-565) added to this by stating: "Through this interpretation, scripture supports moral cultivation and generates the possibility of freedom within captivity."

Tertullian's perspective was more earthly than that of his contemporary Clement (cf Löhner 2003:443). When writing about martyrdom and especially the discipline required of the martyr, he loved to use military imagery and training for battle to illustrate his point. In his *Apology* 50 he noted that Christians were like soldiers who complained about being called into battle, but when the battle started, they fought with everything in them. Specifically in *To the Martyrs* 2.8 and 3.3 he compared the preparation for martyrdom to that of a soldier who was being trained by the Holy Spirit.

He regarded the ascetic disciplines as being very important for a person's preparation for any challenge of persecution. In his *On Patience* 13 he referred to the

widow, the virgin and eunuch who were sustained by the patience that was necessary for one to resist the temptation to flee persecution. He also linked a readiness for martyrdom with preparation based on ascetic practices. He therefore criticised the Christians who were in prison and then requested fellow-Christians to bring them food, adding: "A well-fattened Christian will perhaps be more necessary for bears and lions than for God" (*On fasting* 12.2-3; 17.9).

Unlike Origen who positioned himself between the old and the more recent perspectives on persecution, Tertullian retained the ancient perspectives (Heisey 2004:37). In his *De Fuga in Persecutione* (*On flight in persecution*) 12 he argued that people should not submit to martyrdom in the hope of a posthumous reward, but should see it as the repayment of a debt to God. Based on the teaching of Jesus that one should render to God and Caesar what is the due of each, a Christian actually owed God "the blood which his own Son shed for me" (*De Fuga* 12). In approximately 211 Tertullian wrote about a young soldier who was executed for refusing to wear a wreath at a ceremony (*De Corona Militis*). Tertullian did not use the kind of polemical and rhetorical language used by Clement and it seems as if he was unaware of the distinctions made by Clement between different kinds of martyrdom (cf Moss 2012:546).

One of the strongest statements he made about the motivation for martyrdom came from his debate with Valentinus in *Scorpiace*. He accused Valentinus of arguing that Christians were not necessitated to witness if it would mean their death. Valentinus seemed to suggest that this would mean that God was "thirsting for blood" (Heisey 2004:37). Tertullian stated that this could actually be the case, as such an understanding of God could shape the behaviour of a Christian. In *Scorpiace* 15.7 he remarked: "The world has held it lawful for Diana of the Scythians, or Mercury of the Gauls, or Saturn of the Africans, to be appeased by human sacrifices; and in Latium to this day human blood is drunk by Jupiter, and no one expresses reluctance if our God, too, had required martyrdoms for himself, to have a sacrifice of his own, who would have reproached him of (creating) a deadly religion." Moss (2012:547) commented on this issue: "The discursive production of voluntary martyrdom as a practice distinct from true martyrdom begins in the early third century with Clement; whether his Christian predecessors or contemporaries shared his distinction is not at

all clear. We can, however, note different lines of tension in the work of his contemporaries."

Tertullian did not distinguish between voluntary martyrdom and normative martyrdom, but between people who fled from persecution and those who were martyred. He was willing to accept flight from persecution to apostasy (*To his wife* 1.3.4), but he sometimes equated flight to apostasy (*De Fuga* 5.1). Then again he stated that the Spirit "encourages martyrdom rather than flight" (*De Fuga* 9.4), which somehow created a dichotomy between the two possibilities. For Tertullian there was actually no difference between "voluntary martyrdom" and "martyrdom."

Clement had reportedly fled the Severan persecution in Alexandria in 202 (*Hist Eccl* 6.11.6; 6.14.9) from which one can assume that he agreed with the author of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* who justified initial flight from persecution. Unlike Polycarp (who was captured) and Cyprian of Carthage, Clement never returned to face death (Ritter 1989:421-439). It can further be deduced that "for Clement the point at which martyrdom becomes necessary is the point at which one is forced to confess or deny Christ" (Moss 2012:547).

With this, Clement gave flight from persecution a new dimension. Since he described voluntary martyrdom as passionate foolishness and excluded from true martyrdom, one can assume that Clement's view was that initial flight followed by execution is presented as true martyrdom or martyrdom in accordance with gospel (*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 1-4). This shows that martyrdom and flight actually defined one another. The strategy of Clement was remarkably effective as he moved the focal point of martyrdom away from the defence of flight to an attack on enthusiasm and the accusation of volunteerism to martyrdom (cf Moss 2012:547).

b. On redistribution of wealth

According to Burghardt (1997:8), five themes were very important in the everyday lives of the Christians in the Early Church:

- Christianity had to transform the values of the Graeco-Roman world it inhabited, specifically the attitude towards property and possessions. Their new value would be "sharing rather than possessing."

- To attain that attitude, a conversion of the heart was indispensable. To become genuine Christians, the rich had to become detached from their riches.
- Basic to the fresh Christian attitude was the belief that God created the material universe for all humankind and that the wealthy were essentially earth's stewards.
- A particularly powerful motive for this belief and practice was that Christ identified with the poor and the disadvantaged people.
- The church was seen as a community of support and sharing, where the poor and the widows, the orphans and the aged were not only the beneficiaries of the rich but their "spiritual bodyguard," a return of love through care and counsel, through prayer and even protest.

Clement started his homily *Quis Dives Salvetur?* with a reference to Matthew 19:21 where Jesus answered the rich young man, *If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.* Clement did not regard the wealthy person as being excluded from God's Kingdom (cf Clarke 2009:451). In *Quis Dives Salvetur?* 11-17 he explained this notion: A rich person does not have to destroy his wealth, but he must banish from his soul his attachment to it, his desire for it, his excitement over it and his anxious cares about it. Wealth must serve as an instrument to be used justly, therefore to "possess them more for the sake of the brethren than himself" (*Quis Div* 16).

John Chrysostom, writing in the 4th century, expressed a view that differed somewhat from that of Clement when he wrote that "when one attempts to possess himself of anything, to make it his own, then contention is introduced" (*Homily 12 on 1 Tim 4*). Origen did not condemn a wealthy person, but he did put him to a test: He had to decide what he loved most in his life, for that would be his god/God. He feared that most wealthy people would rather choose their gold (*Homily on Judges 2:3*) and added from the Scriptures (1 Tim 6:10) that "the love of money is the root of all evils" (*Comm Matt 11* Explanation of "Corban"). Tertullian (*Marc 4.36*) referred to the rich man as a "vain-glorious observer of the commandments, (who) was convicted of holding money in much higher estimation" (cf also Crossley 2005:397-401).

While Clement tried to accommodate the rich man, both Origen and Tertullian did not have good words for him. Clement offered us the "most extended of the extant early expositions" (Clarke 2009:450) of the story and to some small extent influenced both Origen and Tertullian.

4.3.2.3 A comparison between Didymus the Blind and Gregory of Nazianzus

Didymus the Blind wrote his treatise *On the Holy Spirit* (which survived only in Jerome's Latin translation) between 359 and 361 (almost at the same time as or just before Athanasius wrote his *Letters to Serapion*; cf Sieben 2004:39-41), while Gregory wrote the *Fifth Theological Oration* (*Oration 31*) about twenty years later (ca 380).

Didymus' knowledge of and admiration for Origen in general is widely accepted. Being an "Origenist" is what led to his posthumous condemnation by the Council of Constantinople in 553 (cf Casiday 2012:241-252). Socrates (*Hist* 4.25) referred to Didymus' apologetically-oriented commentary on Origen's *On First Principles* as proof of his thorough knowledge of Origen. In his treatise Didymus started with 1 Corinthians 12:11 and then cited Acts 15:28 in his argument that the Spirit was the substance of God. He also referred to Acts 13:2 to support his argument. In this treatise he first addressed the Alexandrian Pneumatomachians and then moved on to the Sabellians (cf Hauschild 1967:37).

By stating in his *On the Holy Spirit* that the Spirit was not merely an activity, one could assume that Didymus showed dependence on Origen (cf Radde-Gallwitz 2011:239). He further showed dependence by using the same verse from Scripture, as Origen did in *Fragment 37*. He also stated clearly that the Holy Spirit has a will, which is strongly reminiscent of Origen's views. Radde-Gallwitz (2011:239) correctly asserted that "[t]he Spirit's works were the live issue for Didymus," who stated that the Spirit worked authoritatively (cf Heron 1972:162) and not merely at the Father's command (Radde-Gallwitz 2011:241). The only differences between the above-mentioned documents written by Origen and Didymus is that Origen set out to interpret John 3:8, while Didymus interpreted 1 Corinthians 12:11 and also referred twice to John 3:8.

In accordance with Origen, Gregory (the 4th-century Archbishop of Constantinople) was rather philosophical in his *Fifth Theological Oration* (31.10, 29) as he used logic to arrive at his destiny. His premise was that the Spirit is either an activity or a substantial entity. Since the former suggestion was absurd and unscriptural, even impious, the latter had then to be correct. In his *Oration* 31.6 he used some of the Scriptures that Origen used, such as 1 Corinthians 12:11 and Acts 13:2, to prove that the Spirit is an agent (substance) and not merely an activity. With this

Gregory has placed fragment 37 into a concise, but sophisticated discussion of the ways in which traditional categorical language may and may not be used for the Trinitarian persons. Furthermore, as with Didymus, we see in Gregory a dialectic that affirms that the Spirit must himself be thought of as a substance while also pushing the reader to grasp the Spirit's consubstantiality with the Father and the Son (Radde-Gallwitz 2011:245).

4.3.3 The origin of apology and allegory

This was discussed at length in Chapter 2. In Alexandria Christianity initially met with a hostile audience during the 1st and 2nd century. In particular they experienced opposition from the Jewish community/ies who resided there. Their confession that Jesus was the Messiah went against the beliefs of the Jews who were still awaiting the Messiah. The earliest Christians' beliefs were monotheistic, which placed them in opposition to the Greek pantheon and the Roman gods and when they were proclaiming that Jesus was King of the universe, it was only natural that they would experience opposition from the followers of the Caesar who revered their Emperor as the universal ruler (Berry 2007:53-54). This gave rise to early Christian apologists who articulated their firm convictions to and in front of the crowds. Berry (2007:54; cf Boer 1999:48-49) named four themes that the apologists focused on:

- They appealed to the Roman authorities to treat Christians fairly and justly.
- They pointed out the inconsistencies and errors of the other beliefs/practices.
- They highlighted and defended their beliefs and ways of living.
- They articulated certain theological concepts in order to justify the legitimacy of Christianity as a viable religion.

Apart from the cults and other religions that were practised in and around Alexandria, this also formed part of their defence against *inter alia* Gnosticism, Marcionism and Montanism. The main apologists of the first centuries CE were Clement, Origen and later Augustine of Hippo. Their work constituted valuable contributions during the "most critically formative years in the evolution of Christianity, in the systematization of what Christian faith consisted of, what its doctrinal tenets were, what its canonical texts were, and what, in fact, constituted heresy" (Fogarty 2004:144).

Dialogue and the discovery of certain facts were the primary means for the apologists to communicate with their readers. Clark called this *Dialogical Apologetics* and devoted an entire book to it (Clark 1999).

Methodius was one of the chief antagonists of Origen, but was nevertheless greatly influenced by the way in which Origen used allegory, "as may be seen by his tendency to allegorical interpretations of Holy Scripture" (Schaff Vol 6, 1885:699). Schaff (Vol 6, 1885:3) also commented: "[A]nd yet the influence of Origen upon his [Methodius' – my addition] own mind is betrayed even in his antagonisms. He objects to the excessive allegorizing of that great doctor, yet he himself allegorizes too much in the same spirit."

4.3.4 The Council of Nicaea

This Council was held outside of Africa, but under the full influence of Africa. Two examples of influence can be stated here. Since the Council members needed a creed to defend themselves against heresies like Arianism (El Masri 1982:104), they appointed three members to ensure the effective wording of the creed: The members were Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria, his deacon Athanasius and Leontius, the Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. However, as Athanasius had actually already worded a confession on his own (Isichei 1995:24), the creed that was later accepted therefore had its origin in Africa.

Another decision taken by the church in Alexandria was that re-baptism was wrong. This was a principle highlighted by Peter the Martyr during the time of Bishop Dionysius (El Masri 1982:106) in his fourteen canons of *Church Discipline* "during the fourth year of the persecutions" (El Masri 1982:74). The churches of both the

East and the West respected these canons (El Masri 1982:75). This principle was also accepted by the Nicaean Council Fathers (El Masri 1982:106).

4.3.5 Documents still used in the Coptic Church

Certain documents that were written in Egypt during the time of the existence of the *Didaskaleion*, supported the views of the School. Two documents that originated before the 4th century and are still being used by the Coptic Church today will be briefly discussed below.

4.3.5.1 The Apostolic Church Order

This document, also called *The Ecclesiastical Canons of the Holy Apostles*, was written in Egypt during the 3rd century. The treatise was addressed to the "sons and daughters," which most probably referred to the congregation or catechumens. It was written in the name of the twelve Apostles – John, Matthew, Peter, Andrew, Philip, Simon, James, Nathanael, Thomas, Cephas, Bartholomew and Judas (the brother of James, who was the brother of Jesus; cf Schaff 1885:238). This list, in which the names of Peter and Cephas were mentioned as if they were two individuals, differed from the list in Matthew 10. Bartholomew is also wrongly distinguished from Nathanael (Schaff 1885:238). Furthermore, only one James is mentioned, but no indication is given of whether he was the son of Zebedee or Alpheus. One James is therefore omitted, as well as Thaddeus and Judas Iscariot (who betrayed Jesus). The document contains thirteen canons:

- Canons 1 to 2: Introductory remarks on the founding of a church and missionary work.
- Canons 3 to 13: Comments by the Apostles John, Matthew, Peter, Andrew, Philip, Simon, James, Nathanael, Thomas and Cephas – mostly moral precepts.

Although this document does not contain any reference to the *Didaskaleion* or any of her heads, it is strongly reminiscent of the works of the heads of the School, who actually spoke and taught the words of the Apostles. It is interesting to note that the 127 canons of the Coptic Church in Egypt (one of the church's official documents) today is based on this document (Parry 2010:103; cf also Schaff 1885:237).

4.3.5.2 The Coptic Church Order

The Coptic name for this document is *The Canons of our Holy Fathers the Apostles* (Schaff 1885:249). It consists of seven books and, according to Steimer, dates back to the beginning of the 4th century in Egypt (Steimer 2000:43-44). Bradshaw (2008:273-274), however, dated it back to the early 3rd century in the area between West Syria and Asia. The first book was called *The Apostolic Constitutions* and corresponded with *The Apostolic Church Order*. It was also written in the name of the twelve Apostles – the same twelve as in the case of *The Apostolic Church Order* and consists of thirty canons:

- Canons 1 to 2: Introductory remarks on the organisation of the church.
- Canons 3 to 14: Moral precepts by the Apostles John, Matthew, Peter, Andrew, Philip, Simon, James, Nathanael, Thomas, Cephas and Bartholomew.
- Canons 15 to 29: Canonical legislation, again from the mouths of the Apostles.
- Canon 30: A conclusion by Peter (cf Quasten 1953:119).

4.4 Derived influence: The practice of Christianity in Africa up to 642 CE

4.4.1 An introductory word

A very important Christian observation that must be made as introduction to this part of the Chapter is that when the Holy Spirit takes control of one's life, that person is transformed and empowered to do great things for the Lord. Jesus' first disciples acted as very good examples. They were so scared when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane that they fled from the very spot (cf Mk 14:52). Only Peter followed the soldiers with Jesus at a distance (cf Lk 22:54), but soon afterwards denied three times that he knew Jesus (Lk 22:56-62). Only one disciple (allegedly John) and four women were present at the crucifixion (Jn 19:25-26).

When these same people received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were immediately transformed and lost their fear and feelings of inferiority (cf Ac 2). Peter, who once denied that he knew Jesus, had the courage to stand up and address the crowds. The followers of Christ's teachings then adopted a unique lifestyle in which

they shared everything they owned with each other (Ac 2:42-47; 4:32-36). The Jewish Council, called the Sanhedrin, in Jerusalem was hostile towards this "new religion" and imprisoned the leader, Peter, several times (cf Ac 12). About 35 CE they even gave orders for Stephen to be stoned to death and he became the first Christian martyr (Ac 7:54-59; cf Schmidt 2004:19-20). The persecution of the "church" (Ac 8) – the new faith ("earliest Christians") in Jerusalem – resulted in its members being scattered throughout Judaea and Samaria (Ac 8:1) and as far as Antioch (Ac 11:19-27). Peter (Ac 12:17) and Paul (together with Barnabas and John Mark, cf Ac 12:25) left Jerusalem to do missionary work. After their first missionary journey John Mark and Barnabas separated from Paul. According to Eusebius (cf Chapter 2), John Mark proceeded to Alexandria some time afterwards. In Acts 17:6 (NKJV) it is stated that these followers (of Christ's teachings) *turned the world upside down*. It must, however, also be pointed out that it was the intent of the Christians to change the world! Schmidt (2004:29) put it well: "The changes largely occurred as a by-product of their transformed lives."

4.4.2 Christianity on the move

One may well ask what Christianity was all about, and was its main reason just to get as many converts as possible? Stark (1997:161) answered these questions very well:

Christianity served as a revitalization movement that arose in response to the misery, chaos, fear, and brutality of life in the urban Greco-Roman world...Christianity revitalized life in Greco-Roman cities by providing new norms and new kinds of social relationships able to cope with many urgent problems. To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachment. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fire, and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective nursing services...For what they brought was not simply an urban

movement, but a new culture capable of making life in Greco-Roman cities more tolerable.

As mentioned earlier, the followers of Christ's teachings initially formed part of the Jewish synagogues wherever they went, but because of the internal differences between the two religions (particularly regarding the prominence of Jesus) the Christians started to separate themselves from the synagogues. This caused a major crisis for the new religion as the followers tried to understand their new-found faith and their purpose on earth. It was difficult to separate themselves from their Jewish roots, because during the first half of the 1st century most of the followers of Christ's teachings were Jews.

A ray of hope for the new movement in Alexandria at about the middle of the 1st century CE was the (alleged) arrival of John Mark in the Delta City. According to Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 2.16), he preached and established churches in Alexandria, in this way introducing Christianity to Africa even before it was called by that name. Numbers of people were converted and many of them adopted an ascetic lifestyle.

These followers of Christ's teachings believed in the Scriptures and accepted the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures as confirmed at Jamnia in 90 CE. Josephus, the Jewish historian, in his *Antiquities* 18.3.3, admitted that he was surprised that this new religion still existed by the end of the 1st century. However, during the 1st century many followers of Christ's teachings who were scattered all over the Empire started to document their thoughts on this new religion, which resulted in the distribution of catechetical books and letters.

All these followers expected Jesus to return to earth very soon and when this did not materialise, the role of the church, especially that of the Bishop, became stronger. This helped very much, as the church realised that it was being attacked from outside and from inside: From outside the (sporadic) persecutions did not stop until the beginning of the 4th century, while the mysteries and cults, other religions and philosophies still prevailed. On the inside the church had to deal with certain heresies that had developed, such as Gnosticism, Marcionism and Montanism, to name but a few. These persecutions from outside the church and problems inside

the new religion gave rise to the writings of the apologists, who bore strong witness for Christianity with their writings. Following the example of the earliest martyr, Stephen, there were others who witnessed more practically by becoming martyrs themselves. One of the best-known examples was Polycarp, a Bishop from Smyrna, who was martyred in 155 CE at the age of eighty-four. By the end of the 2nd century the strongest Christian centres were the churches in Asia Minor and Africa, while Rome was more a centre of prestige.

What made Christianity so acceptable to the masses was the fact that it drew people from all social classes. If a slave became a Christian, s/he became a sister/brother, even if s/he still remained a slave (cf Paul's *Letter to Philemon* as a good example). Under the following sub-headings the contributions of Christianity to the faith society will be discussed.

4.4.2.1 The first martyrs

James the brother of Jesus, and many others after him were soon to follow Stephen as martyrs (cf Schmidt 2004:21-22). According to Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 2.23.6), James, also called James the Just (*Hist Eccl* 2.23.4), spent so much time praying that he developed calluses on his knees: "[H]is knees became hard like those of a camel." He was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and then, as he was still not dead, beaten with a club to death (*Hyp* 6; according to *Ant Jud* 20.9.1, he was stoned to death). These first martyrs were followed by hundreds of people willing to die for their faith during the first three-hundred years of Christianity. In Egypt too there were many martyrs and according to Frend (1967:394), the numbers could have "easily run into four figures." Especially in Alexandria the faithful Christians stood strong under the influence and testimonies of the School, as Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 6.1) stated: "This was especially the case in Alexandria, to which city, as to a most prominent theatre, athletes of God were brought from Egypt and all Thebais according to their merit, and won crowns from God through their great patience under many tortures and every mode of death." Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 8.9.1-4) further reported as follows about the martyrs in Thebais (Upper Ancient Egypt): "1. It would be impossible to describe the outrages and tortures which the martyrs in Thebais endured. They were scraped over the entire body with shells instead of hooks until they died. Women were bound by one foot and raised aloft in the air by machines,

and with their bodies altogether bare and uncovered, presented to all beholders this most shameful, cruel, and inhuman spectacle. 2. Others being bound to the branches and trunks of trees perished. For they drew the stoutest branches together with machines, and bound the limbs of the martyrs to them; and then, allowing the branches to assume their natural position, they tore asunder instantly the limbs of those for whom they contrived this. 3. All these things were done, not for a few days or a short time, but for a long series of years. Sometimes more than ten, at other times above twenty were put to death. Again not less than thirty, then about sixty, and yet again a hundred men with young children and women, were slain in one day, being condemned to various and diverse torments. 4. We, also being on the spot ourselves, have observed large crowds in one day; some suffering decapitation, others torture by fire; so that the murderous sword was blunted, and becoming weak, was broken, and the very executioners grew weary and relieved each other."

Groves (1948:38) articulated this situation as follows: "No section of the hard-pressed Christian fellowship held a prouder record than did the Egyptian Christians under their fiery trial." In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.1.13 Eusebius also articulated the missiological intention of the Christians, even of those who were exiled. He referred to Dionysius of Alexandria who was exiled with others to Libya during the 3rd century. Their witness in that part of Africa had the effect that quite a number of the heathens forsook their idols and turned to God.

In North Africa a group of seven men and five women were martyred near Carthage in 180 CE (Sundkler & Steed 2000:21; Isichei 1995:34). Two decades later, in 203, the (well-known) death of Perpetua and Felicitas was reported. They had been thrown to lions in the arena in Carthage (cf McGrath 2013:36).

Tertullian of Carthage in his *Apology* 50 once said: "The blood of Christians (martyrs) is the seed of the church." These words were particularly true during the persecutions, as the number of Christians kept growing despite the persecutions. The persecution of Christians came to an abrupt end in most of the Empire when Constantine issued the Edict of Milan to legalise Christianity in 313. At that stage there were approximately five to seven million Christians – about ten percent of the

Empire (Schmidt 2004:33). In the eastern part of the Empire, persecutions continued under Licinius until he was defeated by Constantine in 324 (Schmidt 2004:35-36).

It is important to note here that most of the Christians in Egypt were Monophysites, while the church in North Africa (to the west of Egypt) was Chalcedonian.

4.4.2.2 Infanticide

Clement reprimanded the Romans for "saving and protecting young birds and other creatures" (Schmidt 2004:53) while they easily abandoned their own infants (*Paed* 2.279). Tertullian also referred to this in his *Apology* 3:24-25. Lactantius, born in Africa in 240, became an adviser to Constantine and a tutor to his son (cf DePalma Digeser 2000) and also opposed child abandonment (*Divine Institutes* 1.6). These voices of the church led Emperor Valentinian to outlaw infanticide in 374 and to criminalise child abandonment in the *Code of Justinian* 8.52.2. Honorius and Theodosius 2 expanded Valentinian's laws by saying that when an infant was found and was not claimed by anyone after it had been announced in the church, the finder could keep the child.

4.4.2.3 Abortion

Josephus (*Apion* 25.202) condemned the Roman custom of abortion as it was against the Law of the Bible for a woman to cause an abortion or do away with a foetus, which "destroys a soul and diminishes the race." This view was also held by 1st-century Christians. Clement criticised women who tried to conceal their sexual sins by performing abortions (*Paed* 1.296). Athenagoras wrote to Emperor Marcus Aurelius in defence of Christianity where he stated that Christians were not cannibals and were opposed to abortion (*Leg* 2.147). Tertullian also articulated the opposition of Christians to abortion (*Apology* 9). This led to the Synod (West) of Elvira, Spain (ca 305/306) and to the Council of Ancyra in 314 (in modern Turkey – East) voicing their disapproval of this practice. It also gave rise to the institutionalising of the sanctity of human life in the Western World (Schmidt 2004:60), which broadly distinguished Christians from pagan societies (Lecky 1927:24).

4.4.2.4 Suicide

Under the influence of Stoicism human life was not very highly valued before and during the time of Jesus on earth (Schmidt 2004:67). Abortions, infanticide, child abandonment, gladiator shows and suicide formed part of the accepted lifestyle of the pagans in the Roman Empire. Adhering to the Old Testament Scriptures, the earliest Christians believed that life was God's exclusive prerogative, referring to Job 1:21: *The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the Name of the Lord be praised*. Clement was an early critic of suicide (*Quis Div* 22), while Eusebius called it the "most shameful death" (*Hist Eccl* 8.13.15). Augustine wrote against the Donatists (*Book 4*) in North Africa who thought it better to commit suicide after baptism as they believed that there was no further forgiveness for sins once they had been baptised (Schmidt 2004:69). Augustine referred to the commandment *You shall not murder* and pointed out that no Patriarch, prophet or Apostle committed suicide.

4.4.2.5 Cremation

Tertullian (*Ad Nationes*, Book 1) rejected this pagan practice. Christians concurred as they believed in the resurrection of the body. They also referred to Genesis 3:19 where it is stated that after death man would *return to the ground*.

4.4.2.6 Disposal of the dead

The expansion of Christianity in any region was measured at two levels: "[T]he area of population that becomes attached to the new faith, and the depth to which the new religion penetrates in reshaping faith and life" (Groves 1948:40). Especially with regard to the second level, growth was more gradual in Egypt. Maybe the best example found in Egypt and more specifically in Antinoe (Upper Egypt), is seen in the disposal of the dead. Excavations revealed the first signs of a slow transition from the earlier Egyptian custom, with the early Christians being embalmed. The custom of mummification continued until the beginning of the 5th century when the church opposed it on the witness of Antony. The old Egyptian custom of the offering of food to the dead was maintained for centuries to come (cf Groves 1948:40ff).

4.4.2.7 Promiscuity

After the end of the Punic Wars in 146 BCE there was a breakdown in sexual morality in the Roman Empire. This resulted in extreme sexual behaviour in and

outside marriage during the 1st and 2nd century CE (Schmidt 2004:80). Marriage was regarded "as a disagreeable necessity" (Farrar 1882:71). Tertullian (in his *De Spectaculis*) condemned this type of behaviour. Christians held the opinion that only sexual intercourse between a married man and his wife was God-pleasing, as was supported by the Scripture in Hebrews 13:4: *Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral*. This Christian behaviour as described in the 2nd-century document, *Epistle to Diognetus* by Mathetes, demonstrated a new sexual morality. Westermarck (1922:576) stated that this behaviour brought back dignity and beauty to the formal wedding ceremony. Christians also rejected homosexuality and bestiality.

4.4.2.8 Women

Christians did not regard women as equal to men. Clement (*Paed* 3.11) said that a woman should blush because she is a woman, while Tertullian (*On the Apparel of Women* 1.1) made this comment about Eve: "You are the devil's gateway...You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert, that is death, even the Son of God had to die." Augustine was also of the opinion that women did not reflect the image of God to the same extent that men did. In his *On the Trinity* 12.10 he said that, apart from her husband, a woman did not possess the image of God.

It was only in 374 CE that Emperor Valentinian 1 repealed the *Patria Potestas* law which was approximately 1,000 years old (cf Morey 1894:150), thereby stating that

- the pagan husband no longer had the power of life and death over his family;
- a woman could marry the man of her choice;
- a married woman was no longer under the absolute rule of her husband;
- a father could no longer sell his daughter to her prospective husband;
- a marriage could be recognised without the consent of the father.

4.4.2.9 Charity

Tertullian referred to a common fund held by early Christians in the church in Carthage to which they contributed freely (*Apology* 39), generally one-tenth of their income (Lecky 1927:81). That fund had been established for the benefit of the

widows, the physically disabled, orphans, sick people, prisoners who were jailed for their faith, needy teachers, burials for poor people and sometimes to fund the release of slaves. Lecky (1927:79) stated: "The active, habitual, and detailed charity of private persons, which is such a conspicuous feature in all Christian societies, was scarcely known in antiquity."

4.4.2.10 Caring for the sick and dying

Human compassion – to the sick and the dying – was rarely seen among the Graeco-Romans, as there was a "virtual lack of compassion for the sick and stricken" among them (Schmidt 2004:130). Dionysius Magnus (*Works of Dionysius, Epistle 12.5*) already referred to in Chapter 3, described the situation in Alexandria after the plague in approximately 250 as follows: "[The pagans – my addition] thrust aside anyone who began to be sick, and kept aloof even from their dearest friends, and cast the sufferers out upon the public roads half dead, and left them unburied, and treated them with utter contempt when they died." In contrast to the Romans who regarded helping the sick and dying as a sign of weakness, the Christians saw it as a sign of strength (Haggard 1934:108). This is evident in the *Works of Dionysius, Epistle 12.4*: "[V]ery many of our brethren, while in their exceeding love and brotherly kindness, did not spare themselves, but kept by each other, and visited the sick without thought of their own peril, and ministered to them assiduously and treated them for their healing in Christ, died from time to time most joyfully...drawing upon themselves their neighbours' diseases, and willingly taking over to their own persons the burden of the sufferings of those around them."

From this it is obvious that there were no hospitals in the Roman Empire before Christianity entered it (cf Schmidt 2004:153-154). The Greeks did have *ιατρεία* (*surgeons' shops*), but in fact these were "places where sick people went to have their ailments diagnosed by physicians who prescribed medicine for them, but they provided no nursing provisions" (Schmidt 2004:154). A Roman *valetudinarian* would only treat slaves and gladiators who were ill, and sometimes ill stricken soldiers (Johnson 1988:133-137), but not other people (Davis 1984:65).

The first "hospitals" managed by Christians were in their own homes. However, after Constantine legalised Christianity in 313 and especially after he defeated Lucinius in

324, the Christians were able to do more than that (Schmidt 2004:155). At the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (325) Bishops were ordered to establish hospices close to a cathedral in every city (Faxon 1949:7). These hospices, called ξενοδοχεῖα, were more than present-day hospitals as they not only nursed and cared for the sick, but also offered shelter to the poor and lodging to pilgrims (Schmidt 2004:155). Augustine played a major role in establishing hospitals in Hippo and other cities. By the middle of the 6th century hospitals were "securely established" (Schmidt 2004:157).

4.4.2.11 Education

The Christians saw teaching as part of the *Great Commission* (Mt 28:19-20) (Schmidt 2004:171). The learners were called "catechumens" as they were instructed in the ways of the Lord. This led to the founding of the Catechetical School in Alexandria, as well as schools in Ephesus and Rome by Justin Martyr in approximately 150 CE. These schools provided the literary and theological foundation for Christianity to flourish in the Early Church Era. As has already been mentioned, the School in Alexandria not only taught Christian principles and doctrine, but also subjects like Mathematics, Medicine and even Grammar. Through these catechetical schools "Christianity became for the first time a definite factor in the culture of the world" (Boyd 1965:84). Christian education was available for both sexes.

4.4.2.12 Science

The origin of science required the motto of Christianity that God was rational (Whitehead 1926:18). This led to the conclusion that the "universe is governed rationally by discoverable laws" (Schmidt 2004:222). Contrary to Aristotle's ideas, early Christianity stated that God as the creator of heaven and earth was separate and distinct from it (Schmidt 2004:220). The early Christians were, however, concerned about the cutting up of cadavers, like Tertullian (*De Anima* 10) who criticised the Greek surgeon Herophilus for doing this. Augustine (*De Civ* 12.24) also expressed opposition to this custom.

4.4.2.13 Liberty and justice

Moses was the first person who required two witnesses for a successful conviction (Dt 19:15). Matthew 18:15-17 elaborated on that premise: *If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.* The Bible also focused on equality, but specifically on spiritual equality before God (Ac 10:34-35; Gal 3:28).

4.4.2.14 Slavery

Slavery was indigenous to Africa. However, the Christians introduced the custom of freeing their slaves. Augustine depicted slavery as a product of sin and something that was against God's will (*De Civ* 19.15). Athenagoras owned his own slaves, while Clement and Origen were neutral on the topic of slavery (cf Schmidt 2004:276).

4.4.2.15 Early Christian art

Schmidt (2004:293) reflected on art in the time of the early Christians: "During their first three centuries the early Christians contributed very little to the world of art. Given that art flourishes best in the context of freedom, which the early Christians did not have, this is not surprising." Although the Christians in Africa were not enslaved, they were severely persecuted and were therefore not "free." They did, however, develop their own symbols, for example the fish (ἰχθύς – discussed in Chapter 2). After the legalisation of Christianity in 313, their artworks increased significantly as they started to develop their own forms of expression. Dalton (1921:31-32) stated that they distributed bronze vessels in the Coptic style even to distant Anglo-Saxon cemeteries.

4.4.2.16 Music

In his *Stromateis* 7.7 Clement stated that Christians sang at mealtimes and also before going to bed at night. He also attached a hymn, called *A Hymn to Christ, the Saviour* to his *Paedagogus*, which was apparently sung by early Christians as a "hymn of praise and thanksgiving" for those that had been newly received into the

church (Schmidt 2004:315). Psalms were first chanted in Latin in Carthage (Benson 1927:67).

4.4.2.17 Christian names

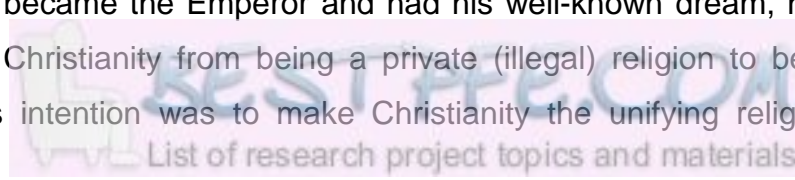
According to Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria, by the middle of the 3rd century CE Christians started giving their children the names of Apostles and other prominent Christian, rather than Roman names (*Hist Eccl* 7.25.14-15; cf Schmidt 2004:401). During the second half of the 4th century this became a custom among the Christians.

4.4.3 Debates in the development of Christianity in Africa

Each group of the early Christians living in Alexandria developed their own Theology, articulating their understanding of their faith and religion in their own unique way, which resulted in "different" Theologies (cf Chapter 1). A good example can be found in their understanding of creation. Some writers interpreted the creation like many Jewish writers did and regarded it merely as the "imposition of order on pre-existing matter, or the defeat of chaotic forces" (McGrath 2013:52). This was in imitation of many members of Judaism, who articulated this view up until the 16th century. However, another view developed among certain Christian Theologians who believed that creation was a "creation *ex nihilo*" – *out of nothing* (cf McGrath 2013:52), a view that was derived from the New Testament (cf Heb 11:3). This view was eventually adopted by the church. There were also other issues of faith that were at first regarded as good, but were later rejected as heresies, such as Ebionism and Docetism. All these occurred during the 1st century.

As Christianity was confronted with intellectual alternatives such as Platonism and Gnosticism, the believers had to rethink and develop their own points of view. This process proceeded slowly and cautiously. Later on this developed into the formation of creeds, which were authorised statements of faith based on consensus rather than the private beliefs of individuals (McGrath 2013:52).

After Constantine became the Emperor and had his well-known dream, he had the intention to raise Christianity from being a private (illegal) religion to become the state religion. His intention was to make Christianity the unifying religion of the



Empire. The implication was that Christianity as such should not be divided by any means. This led to the Council of Nicaea in 325 where a bulk of Christological issues were disputed and solved. The main difference between Christianity and the classical Roman religions was that the latter focused on matters of practice while Christianity centred around ways of thinking about the world, "[a]nd the only way of working out which were the best ideas was through debates" (McGrath 2013:53). The following debates among the early Christians were of importance:

- The Canon of the new Testament;
- Arianism;
- Trinitarianism;
- Donatism;
- Pelagianism;
- Innovation of tradition;
- The origins and development of creeds.

4.4.3.1 The Canon of the New Testament

Although the early Christians adopted the Old Testament Scriptures, they did not observe Jewish food laws or sacrificial regulations. Concerning the New Testament writings, there was pressure to reach an agreement on the *canon* (*rule* or *norm*) of the New Testament. Texts that were widely regarded by Christians as authoritative were the four Gospels and the letters ascribed to Paul, while texts like the *Didache*, 1 *Clement*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* and the *Apocalypse of Peter* had only local authority. At the beginning of the 3rd century, however, "without any form of international consultation" (McGrath 2013:54-55), most churches had already accepted the New Testament in almost the same form as it is today, with writings like 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude and Revelation achieving general acceptance a little later. In 267 Athanasius of Alexandria sent out an *Easter Festal Letter* containing all the current books of the New Testament. The important factor was that the "formation of the New Testament canon was shaped by the habits of Christian communities, not the decisions of Christian bishops" (McGrath 2013:55).

4.4.3.2 Arianism

One of the greatest challenges faced by the early Christians was that they had to decide on the identity of Jesus Christ according to the New Testament writings. They came to the realisation that no model or analogy existed according to which they could shape their thoughts about Jesus. The incarnation of Jesus was very important and the church held that it was God who entered into history by taking the human nature of Jesus of Nazareth. This caused immense problems for the thought pattern of Hellenistic philosophy, which found it inconceivable that an immutable God entered history in a human form. This triggered Arius (270-336 CE), a priest in Alexandria, to postulate that Jesus was not divine, but was created to be ranked "first among the creatures" (McGrath 2013:56). Arius argued that although Jesus formed part of the Trinity, the Father, who was totally transcendent and immutable, was the ultimate source of authority and chose to act through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Arius found opposition from within Alexandria in the person of Athanasius (293-373 CE) on two important points: First, only God the creator can redeem the creation. Jesus was not redeemed and was therefore God, as he redeemed many other people. Jesus Christ is therefore the Saviour and, while it is only God who can save, Jesus must have been God incarnate, as is clear from John 1:14. Second, Christians worshipped and prayed to Jesus. If Jesus were a mere creature, then the Christians who worshipped and prayed to him would be sinning. In Constantinople (381) it was decided that Jesus was *ὁμοούσιος* (*of the same substance*) as God.

4.4.3.3 Trinitarianism

Initially only God was regarded as the Creator and the Judge. However, the Council of Nicaea declared Jesus to be fully divine, thereby depicting early Christianity as Trinitarian, or actually Binitarian, since at the time the Holy Spirit was not really taken into consideration as indicated above. Although the rejection of Arian's views by the church brought about clarity about the status of Jesus, there was still some uncertainty regarding the nature and role of the Holy Spirit. During the 4th century a group of writers, led by Eustathius of Sebaste (leader of the Pneumatomachians), argued that the Holy Spirit was not divine, neither in person, nor in works (*New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on Dionysius of Alexandria* sa). Athanasius and Basil of Caesarea pointed out that Christians were baptised in the Name of the *Father*,

Son and Holy Spirit, according to Matthew 28:18-20. In his *Letter to Serapion* (*Letter 54*) Athanasius declared that the baptismal formula clearly pointed out that the Holy Spirit had the same divinity as the Father and the Son. Although this argument prevailed, even to as late as 380, Gregory of Nazianzus (*Orations 2:36-38*; cf Schaff Series 2, Vol 7, 1885:440-441) pointed out that many Christian Theologians were uncertain about the person of the Holy Spirit. At the meeting in Constantinople in 381 it was stated (again) that the Holy Spirit had the same divinity as the Father and the Son. This led Didymus the Blind to attest to the fact that the Holy Spirit was responsible for creating, renewing and sanctifying God's creatures (*De Trinitate* 1.18.57; cf also McGrath 2013:59).

In the meantime, during the early 3rd century, there was a group known as Sabellianism (the most influential part of Modalism), who argued that God was One, revealing himself as the Father, the Son and the Spirit. A century later the Cappadocian Fathers in the Eastern church and Augustine of Hippo consolidated the doctrine of the Trinity, therefore rejecting the view of the Sabellianism (McGrath 2013:59).

4.4.3.4 Donatism

Under the persecutions of Diocletian (284-313) Christian leaders were ordered to hand over their (holy) books to be burned. Those who obliged were called *traditores* (*those who handed over*). After the accession of Constantine, a decision had to be taken on how those *traditores* should be treated by the church. In North Africa many local Christians were outraged when the new Bishop, Caecilianus, was consecrated by three Bishops of which one, the Bishop of Aptunga, was a *traditor* (McGrath 2013:60-61).

The Donatists believed that the Catholic Church had been corrupted because of the lapse of its leaders. This belief was still alive about a century later when Augustine was consecrated as Bishop of Hippo Regius in 396. In his *De Correctione Donatistarum* 6.23 he responded to the Donatists by emphasising that the church was not a "pure body," but rather a "mixed body" of saints and sinners, which would be separated at the end of time by God himself. Humans were not to make that judgement in God's place. The church was regarded as holy, not because of its

members, but because of Christ. He compared the church with a hospital where people who know that they stand in need of forgiveness are healed (McGrath 2013:61).

4.4.3.5 Pelagianism

This controversy started in the early 5th century in the Western church. Questions about the human nature, sin and grace came into focus. These questions went back to Christianity being implemented as state religion. Many people then saw it as a career opportunity and as a matter of convenience to be part of this religion. Pelagius, a British monk, arrived in Rome by the end of the 4th century and was shocked at the religious nominalism of some Christians. Though his intentions were good, he went too far to rectify the problem by trying to change Christianity into a religion of moral achievement (McGrath 2013:62). He argued that since perfection was possible for humanity, it was obligatory. Augustine, however, held the view that human nature was damaged and corrupted by sin, which weakened and incapacitated the human free will (*A Treatise Against Two Letters Of The Pelagians* 6.23; cf also Schaff Series 1, Vol 1, 1885:32). Through realising its inability to carry out God's will, mankind discovered the grace of God. In fact, the views of Pelagius basically advocated a stern moral authoritarianism, making allowances for neither human weakness nor the grace of God. This is the reason why Augustine rallied against Pelagianism in so many of his works – *On the guilt and the remission of sins, Infant baptism, On the Spirit and the letter, On nature and grace, On the Acts of Pelagius, On the grace of Christ and original sin, On marriage and concupiscence, On grace and free will, On discipline and grace, Against Julian of Eclanum, On the predestination of the Saints and On the gift of perseverance* (cf Schaff Series 1, Vol 1, 1885:36).

4.4.3.6 The origins and development of creeds

The theological debates in the Early Church urged them to develop creeds – "authorised, consensual, public statements of the essentials of Christian belief" (McGrath 2013:64). Two creeds that emerged within Christianity enjoyed widespread support: First, the Nicene Creed was formulated by the Bishops at the Council of Nicaea, which was convened by Constantine in 325. Second, the Apostle's Creed did not rest on imperial authority and could be regarded as contrasting to the Nicene

Creed. It appeared to have emerged by consensus over a long period of time (McGrath 2013:66). The first creed showed signs of a polemical agenda, while the second creed did not contain any polemical content. In fact these two creeds complemented each other in that the first offered a framework against heresies, while the second affirmed the fundamental themes of faith.

4.4.3.7 The Council of Chalcedon 451

The Council of Nicaea in 325 settled the matter regarding the identity of Jesus, arguing for his full divinity and humanity. However, the Council did not completely deal with the matter. This led to more controversy as Arius and Athanasius debated the divinity of Christ. The Bishops of Constantinople, at that stage the most important metropolitan centre of the Empire, supported Arius. Emperor Theodosius 1 (379-395) deposed the Bishops of Constantinople in order to keep the unity of the church. In the early 5th century there was huge tension between the Bishops of Constantinople and Alexandria as both regarded their sees as the most important within the Christian world. This controversy, often referred to as the Nestorian Controversy, was between Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, and Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Nestorius held the view that Mary, who was referred to as *Theotokos* (*bearer of God*), should also be referred to as *Christotokos* (*bearer of Christ*). Cyril of Alexandria realised that Nestorius did not really believe that Jesus was both divine and human. In 431 Emperor Theodosius 2 (408-450) convened a Council at Ephesus where Nestorius presented and lost his case, paving the way for the full acceptance of *Theotokos*.

Once again the debate was not really resolved. The successor of Theodosius then convened another Council at Chalcedon in 451. There the "Chalcedonian Definition" was accepted and set out as an agreed formula referring to both the natures of Jesus Christ. This was well accepted by both the Eastern and Western churches. However, in Alexandria the feeling was that Chalcedon had not done enough to safeguard Jesus' divinity. As they were champions of Monophysitism, they considered themselves to be indifferent to the churches of Europe and Asia (McGrath 2013:68).

4.4.4 The founding of Christianity in Africa up to 642 CE

Among the reasons for the rise of Christianity in Africa, one of the most significant is, ironically, the pagan criticism of this new religion (Fogarty 2004:144) referred to earlier. Something that also enhanced the rise of Christianity is the fact that it started in Africa with superb historical timing during the Roman reign.

Under this sub-heading the situation in different parts of Africa, as well as the various Christian writers who lived in the known parts of Africa during the first seven centuries CE will be discussed. It is important to note that during that period in history there were no universities in the world. The schools that came closest to being universities, were in Alexandria – the *Musaion*, the *Serapium*, the *Sebastion* and the *Didaskaleion* – though no degrees were awarded there. The first university in the world was established in 859 CE by a woman called Fatima al-Fihri in Al-Karaouine in Fes (Morocco). According to the *Guinness World Records 2015* (edited by Craig Glenday), this university is considered the oldest continuously-operating degree-granting university in the world. The second oldest university was founded in Cairo in Egypt in 970 and was called the Al-Azhar University. Both these universities served as centres for Islamic learning. More important for this study is that both were established in Africa, which confirms the fact that Africa was the centre of academia during the time of the Roman Empire.

4.4.4.1 Egypt

Fogarty (2004:145) stated that "[t]he revisiting of Egypt's singular contribution to the evolution of Christianity is not only of great importance, but potentially the most significant source – paradoxically – of a new contemporary understanding of the ancient faith so many millions profess." Added to this, it can be stated that Christianity amply utilised pagan festivals and temples for their own purposes and that

[w]ithout the Egyptian formulations of early Christianity, the form of present-day Christianity would have been very different. Egyptian elements of belief are still intrinsic in several spheres of Christian doctrine, and this goes to the heart of the faith itself in far more telling ways than the superficial appurtenances of festival days and buildings, or even iconic representations.

Then the fact that Jesus spent his first years in Egypt (Matt 2:14-15), about which the Gospel are silent. So, out of Egypt, in subsequent centuries, comes some of the most important developments in early Christianity (Fogarty 2004:145-146).

Christian development was influenced by two different types of environments in Egypt (Groves 1948:36):

- On the one hand we find the Jews who, living among the Greek-speaking population mainly in Alexandria, were influenced by Hellenism to such an extent that they even translated their Scriptures into Greek. Greek philosophy and Platonic ideas formed part of everyday life in this city.
- On the other hand there were the native Egyptians who later became the Copts. They influenced the early Christians through their magical mysteries derived from the famous cult of Osiris.

a. Writers living in Egypt

Philo Judaeus (discussed in Chapter 2) was one of the prominent scholars among the 1st-century Jews in Alexandria. Sundkler and Steed (2000:8) characterised him as follows: "A leading spokesman for the Jewish Diaspora in Alexandria was Philo, philosopher and Bible expositor, international and cosmopolitan Jewish scholar, deeply influenced by Hellenistic culture and concerned with establishing areas of contact and understanding between Hellenism and Judaism." Through his writings he tried to blend the "tradition of the Hebrew Bible with Greek philosophy, a synthesis that profoundly influenced the Christian intellectuals of Alexandria" (Isichei 1995:16).

Egypt, and Alexandria in particular, needed an apparatus that would enable them to make an intellectual analysis of the Bible and formulate doctrine. This culminated in the founding of the *Didaskaleion* which became the hallmark of the Theologians and their theological systems in this Delta City. The two greatest Theologians of Alexandria were Clement and Origen. Their allegorical ways of interpretation were grounded in the writings of Philo and Alexandrian Judaism (cf Sundkler & Steed 2000:11). These Theologians were challenged by other religious movements,

specifically Gnosticism with its roots in the Old Testament and its claim that it possessed the ultimate $\gamma\omega\tilde{\omega}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ (Burton 2007:131).

Clement was Christianity's first systematic Theologian (Burton 2007:130). His insistence on a spiritual life based on self-discipline and gospel values laid the foundation for the monastic living that was to develop in later decades (cf Fogarty 2004:127). Clement was succeeded by Origen who was the most influential Theologian of his time. He even had a number of women studying under him, one of whom was Herais who was martyred. He was skilled in Platonic philosophy and wrote more than 2,000 treatises on Christian learning, "mostly in the form of sermons and commentaries" (Burton 2007:131). It seems as if Origen had a profound influence on the early growth and development of Christianity in Africa. Gregory Thaumaturgus was one of Origen's students. He wanted to study law, but was converted by Origen and became a missionary in Cappadocia. "Legend tells us that there were seventeen Christians in Cappadocia when he was young and seventeen pagans there when he died" (Isichei 1995:22).

Another writer of note was Didymus the Blind (313-395/398). Despite having been blind from infancy, he gathered a wealth of knowledge and wrote several commentaries and "influential scholarly treatises which contributed to the relevant theological debates of his time" (Burton 2007:131). The two people who were strongly influenced by him were Tyrannius Rufinus, an Italian-born monk, and Jerome, who produced the Latin Vulgate. Another significant person in the history of the Bible in Africa was Athanasius (298-373 CE) whose "most lasting influence on Christianity was the identification in 367 of the twenty-seven books that comprise the New Testament canon" (Burton 2007:131). It should be noted that he did not include the book of Esther in the Old Testament canon.

Arius (256-336 CE), an ascetic North-African Christian presbyter and priest in Alexandria, living just after Origen, interpreted the writings of Origen to his own advantage (cf above). Influenced by Neo-Platonism, he suggested that Jesus, being the Word, the *Logos*, the Son, was secondary and subordinate to God (the Father). Some two decades before he died, his theological views became subject to scrutiny. In 318 the church charged him with heresy and a local synod condemned and

excommunicated him (Isichei 1995:23). In 336 he died in Constantinople, "a broken, and largely forgotten man" (Isichei 1995:24).

As mentioned earlier, Arius' main opponent, so to speak, was Athanasius, the "greatest patriarch" of Egypt and Bishop of Alexandria in approximately 328-373 (Sundkler & Steed 2000:12). Although he was only a deacon at the Council of Nicaea, he played a decisive role (Isichei 1995:24) as he wrote one of the three creeds of the present church, namely the Athanasian Creed. As an ascetic, he identified himself with the rising monastic movement in Egypt – the desert people. He was a close friend of Antony the hermit.

Cyril the Great (380-444) succeeded his uncle Athanasius from 412-444 as Patriarch of Alexandria and was called the super-Athanasian by Prestige (1969:285). He had a significant influence on the Ethiopian Orthodox Church – consequently they named their most important doctrinal manual, the *Qerillos (Cyril)* after him (cf Sundkler & Steed 2000:12). Isichei (1995:25) depicted him as someone who "was destined to play a dominant role in theological controversy." He was anti-Semitic and persecuted both the Jews and the Neo-Platonists in Alexandria. He was outspoken against Nestorius, a monk from Antioch and later the Patriarch of Constantinople. Nestorius did not regard Mary as the mother of God and made a clear distinction between the two natures of Jesus. He also maintained that it was blasphemy to refer to Jesus as having once been a little boy. In 441 he was condemned by the Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus.

b. Christianity in Egypt

To understand the fundamental tensions within the Egyptian Christian church, it is necessary to distinguish between Alexandria and the rest of Egypt. While Alexandria was actually a Greek-speaking city with a cosmopolitan culture that also contained a contingent of Coptic inhabitants and Jews, the rural Upper Egypt had a Coptic culture and its inhabitants spoke Coptic (cf Isichei 1995:26). After the Greeks had entered Egypt and especially Alexandria, it became customary, over time, to write the Egyptian language using Greek letters (cf sub-heading 2.5.6.1). The Copts were not cosmopolitan and were in fact oriented towards monasticism. The Coptic language started to emerge during the 2nd century CE (cf Clement above) with the

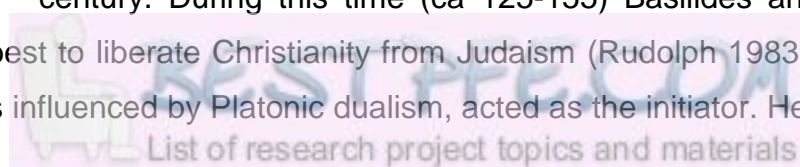
first Bible translations being done by the end of that century and in the next century (Sundkler & Steed 2000:10; cf Burton 2007:123).

The Egyptian church held the tradition that Egypt was a holy land, because Jesus and his family took refuge there for approximately three and a half years after his birth. Shorter (1988:193-194) evaluated this event as follows: "When Jesus was persecuted by the European Herod, God sent him into Africa; by this we know that Africans have naturally a true spirit of Christianity." As thousands of Jews migrated to Egypt and more specifically to Alexandria, they became a significant minority in the Delta City. It was in this Jewish settlement that the first groups of Christian missionaries and traders from Judaea arrived. After attending the synagogues for a while, they started to gather in their own places for worship. Based on the account of Eusebius that John Mark the Evangelist founded the first see in Alexandria, this tradition led to the acceptance of the Gospel according to Mark in the Alexandrian church (Pearson 1986b:144-145).

The earliest Christians in Alexandria found themselves in an environment in which the content of the New Testament was still debated. This gave rise to "Christianity" assuming several identities in this city. Some people would call it heresy, but Burton (2007:124) preferred to speak of "heterodoxy" and distinguished between two prominent groups in Alexandria, namely the "Selective Bible Group" and the "Unorthodox Bible Group."

i. The Selective Bible Group: Gnosticism and Monasticism

"Gnosticism" was a general term used to refer to several Christian groups with almost the same theological conviction. The Gnostics treated the Bible in a radical way. While some books in the Bible contain certain gnostic trends, such as the Gospel according to John, the systematisation of the gnostic belief seems to have taken place in Alexandria and Egypt as a whole. The Nag Hammadi papyri which were discovered in Egypt in 1945 provided evidence to that effect. These forty-nine documents written in Coptic revealed the teachings that had taken place during the first part of the 2nd century. During this time (ca 125-155) Basilides and his son Isodore did their best to liberate Christianity from Judaism (Rudolph 1983:309-313). Basilides who was influenced by Platonic dualism, acted as the initiator. He despised



Judaism to such an extent that he proposed a radical change in the Christian theological system to bring about a total separation between Christians and Judaism (Burton 2007:125). He argued in philosophical language that the spirit world was superior to the material world and that Yahweh was only a spiritual entity under the supreme God.

In the middle of the 2nd century, between 140 and 160, Valentinus became a prominent figure whose arguments resembled those of Basilides. He also did not regard Yahweh as the supreme God and encouraged his followers to openly violate the Ten Commandments (Burton 2007:126).

As a result of the persecution of Coptic Christians in Egypt, a number of Copts took refuge in the desert and became the so-called Desert People. As indicated in Chapter 2, many adherents of the Egyptian religion converted to Christianity, especially around the middle of the 3rd century, because this religion was open to all people. Many individuals became martyrs for their faith. The apologists used these facts to prove that Christianity was based on the truth (Isichei 1995:26). According to Isichei (1995:27), the "most distinctive contribution" made by the Coptic Church to Christianity was the invention of the eremitical and monastic lifestyles.

Young (2001:54-55; cf also Rubenson 1990:59-88) ascribed the origins of the monastic life to Clement and Origen:

It has recently been demonstrated that among many of the fourth century monastic establishments of Lower Egypt, a sophisticated curriculum, itself dependent upon a long-established Hellenistic *paideia* still in place in Egyptian schools of the Nile valley, formed the accepted basis for the monastic life. Furthermore, an earlier generation of monks, particularly the followers of Anthony [sic], had been trained in a curriculum adapted from the third-century works of Clement of Alexandria and of Origen, and their successors among Egyptian Christian teachers. It presupposed a kind of Platonic philosophy and a spiritual interpretation of Scripture.

A continuous transmission of Origen's training and theological ideas took place through Antony and his disciples. This transmission occurred widely in Africa and reached Kellia (Upper Egypt) by the late 4th century, where Evagrius (of Pontus) resided. Evagrius was a deacon and former student of Gregory of Nazianzus and also of Melania and Rufinus in Jerusalem. When he came to Egypt, he met with Macarius the Great and Macarius the Egyptian who were more recent followers of Antony. He also became a monastic teacher and adapted the *paideia* (education) of Clement and Origen to the ascetic circles of Nitria and Scetis (cf Rubenson 1990:91, 168). He was therefore deeply indebted to Clement and Origen "directly through reading their works, and indirectly through his teachers Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus" (Young 2001:56).

Unlike Gnosticism, the flourishing monastic movement in Egypt took the Bible very seriously and rapidly gained popularity especially in the late 3rd century. The rise of Monasticism is seen as one of the most important developments that took place (with)in early Christianity (McGrath 2013:33). The terms "monk" and "Monasticism" were derived from the Greek term μοναχός referring to being solitary or alone. Although most of the Desert People (also called "Desert Fathers" – *Abbas*, or "Desert Mothers" – *Ammas*) came from poor backgrounds, they did not only pray and read from the Scriptures to their exposure, but also took care for their own needs by weaving palm fronds into mats and baskets, while they were also harvesters (Isichei 1995:28). They were not only self-sufficient, but also offered assistance to the local poor and people in prisons, as well as the poor in Alexandria. Because they knew poverty themselves, the privations of the desert were easier for them to endure (Evans-Pritchard 1937:xviii, 195).

One of the core focuses of Monasticism was selflessness or passionlessness (*ἀπάθεια*). This was widely propagated by Clement in his writings. In his *Stromateis* 2.126.1 (cf also *Strom* 2.181.15-16) he stated: "We must exercise ourselves taking care of those things which fall under the power of passions." Man is called upon to be "ruler of the self and the things which are proper to oneself" (*Strom* 7.17.1; cf 3.12.27). Clement adopted this vocabulary from the pagan philosophical tradition and the philosophical schools around him, a vocabulary which, by the time of Marcus Aurelius (2nd century) had already become "slogans in the cultivation of the self"

(Maier 1994:722): αὐτάρκεια (*independence*), ἄσκησις (*asceticism*), ἐγκράτεια (*mastery*), σωφροσύνη (*self-control*), μετριοπάθεια (*restraint over passions*) and ἀπάθεια (*dispassionateness*).

Soon after the monastic lifestyle had been established, it became clear that there were two quite different ways of withdrawal from the sinful worldly distractions. Eremitic Monasticism referred to a solitary, ascetic lifestyle and the solitary monk was also called a hermit. Cenobitic Monasticism, referring to a communal lifestyle, really gained momentum in the 5th century (McGrath 2013:33). Two reasons were evident: A solitary monk had problems finding food on his own, and common prayer was expected from all Christians.

The Desert People were considered to be a "continuation of the Jewish-Palestinian world of travelling preachers and prophets" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:13). These were people who opted for radical change in the sense that they created their own societies away from the ordinary society, as they lived in absolute poverty and were devoted to prayer and meditation. They usually chose to withdraw to the desert where they lived as hermits. The Desert People were characterised by their "visions, miracles, prediction of events and insight into occurrences in far-away places" (Von Lilienfeld 1983:98). The state, however, regarded them as tax-evaders and people who objected to military service (Sundkler & Steed 2000:13). More about them will follow later.

One of the first Desert People was Paul of Thebes (in Upper Egypt) who fled to the desert during persecution and remained there for the rest of his life. That is also where he met Antony (the hermit), also called Antony the Great or Antony of Egypt, who was of Coptic descent and was one of the best examples of the Desert People of the 3rd and 4th century CE. Antony apparently was the founder of the monastic movement in Egypt, the "father of the eremitic life" (Groves 1948:42). It is told that in 273, when he was 20 years old, this wealthy young man was so moved by Jesus' advice to the rich man in Matthew 19:21 (*Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*) that he did just that. After making good provision for his sister, he moved into the wilderness and encouraged many followers to join his

monastic communities in the deserts and mountains where they could study the Scriptures and live a contemplative life. His disciples included only Christians, also called "men of Jerusalem" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:13). Colonies of hermits sprang up, especially in the deserts of Nitria and Scete in Lower Egypt (Groves 1948:42). Antony was strongly influenced by the Theology of Origen, from which he developed his teachings. Ammonius (3rd and 4th century) who established monasticism in the Nitrian desert and gathered hundreds of hermits around him, and Arsenius (4th and 5th century) were two more examples of Desert People.

A later development involving the *Abbas* was the founding of the Pachomian monastic movement by Pachomius (290-346 CE), an Egyptian native, in the 4th century. He was converted in 313 and settled in Tabnessi along the Nile in 323 (Burton 2007:126). He then established a community at Tabennesis, on an island in the Nile in the Upper Thebaid and attracted a contingent of followers. Before his death in 346 he established nine monasteries and two nunneries (Shaw 1996:34; Groves 1948:42). Each monastery was surrounded by a wall to signify withdrawal from the world. Within the walls the monks held *κοινωνία*, here referring to a common corporate lifestyle, which means that they wore the same clothes, ate the same food and occupied rooms, called cells, which were all furnished identically (McGrath 2013:34). He did not allow his monks to be ordained, so as to protect them against involvement in ecclesiastical struggles and the desire to be promoted.

The followers living in house groups had to practise a handicraft skill, mostly weaving (Sundkler & Steed 2000:15). While praying, a monk would work on his spinning wheel so as not to fall asleep. By the end of the 4th century more than 50,000 monks gathered for Easter – this was obviously a large movement. These monks acted as missionaries of the church, giving catechetical classes to young and old. They succeeded the martyrs after the persecution of the church came to an end during the 4th century.

Athanasius (the Great), an ascetic who identified himself with the rising monastic movement, was Bishop of Alexandria from 328-373. He was the person who consecrated Frumentius as Bishop of Aksum and, by doing this he established a link with the church of Ethiopia, one that would last 1,600 years (Sundkler & Steed

2000:12). *The life of Antony*, a book written by Bishop Athanasius, became a manual for many in later years (cf Rubenson 2006:191-208).

All in all it can be stated that Egyptian Christianity really made a huge contribution to the whole of Christendom through the development of the monastic life. This movement had a philosophic undertone, with the spirit being opposed to the senses so that they achieved liberation from the bondage of the senses and subsequently a deeper spiritual experience. The Egyptian converts in Alexandria were especially keen to do just that (Groves 1948:42).

The Desert People also engaged in writing. Syncletia of Alexandria is a good example of a female spiritual writer whose sayings were included in a document called *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (!)

There was, however, also a negative side to monasticism. Firstly, a discomfort on the side of the state is identified. The state was not very pleased with all the people leaving the cities for the desert. According to Groves (1948:42-43),

the State took action to secure the discharge of civic duty. Whether the monastic life appealed as offering an escape from onerous social and civic obligations, rationalized as the choice of the better way, or was a genuine choice of self-denial, the result was the same. A seriously depleted community was left behind to serve as citizens.

This caused the state to decree a law in 365 in Valens which stipulated that all who wanted to leave the city to take up a monastic life should first come back and discharge their civic duties, or to hand over their property to relatives who would assume responsibility for those duties (Moeller 1912:360). Secondly there was also discomfort on the side of the patriotic citizens: "Much resentment was caused among patriotic citizens at later periods that the land should be so largely denuded of able-bodied defenders in times of peril" (Groves 1948:43). Lastly, some monasteries succeeded in obtaining so much power that they started to rival the Egyptian episcopate in their influence. This sometimes led to violence and invasions of Alexandria which resulted in fanatical riots and bloodshed, causing much damage to

the name of Christianity. Groves (1948:43) concluded on this matter: "There is little doubt that the extravagant extension of monasticism in Egypt beyond what was required to fulfil a genuine sense of vocation greatly weakened the life of the Church in that country."

ii. **The Unorthodox Bible Group: Arianism and Monophysitism**

Burton (2007:128) called Arianism the "arch-heresy for orthodox Christianity." Arius, who has been mentioned several times earlier, was the founder and believed that the Son of God was younger in time than the Father. Arius had attended the school in Antioch and afterwards returned to his homeland Egypt, more specifically Alexandria. The difference between the schools in Alexandria and Antioch was that the former focused more on the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures, while the latter promoted a literal interpretation. Having been educated in Antioch, Arius maintained that since according to Scripture, Jesus was *begotten*, there must have been a time when he did not exist. He published his views in a book called *Thalia*.

In 321 the Bishops in Alexandria held a synod during which they denounced Arius' unorthodox teachings. This did not deter Arius and by 325 his influence had already spread through the whole of the eastern Mediterranean. Emperor Constantine then summoned the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea 325 to deal with, amongst others, this issue. Bishop Alexander and his deacon Athanasius represented Alexandria at the Council. Athanasius had by then already written his theological treatise in which he stated that the Father and the Son were of the same origin and therefore inseparable. Arius was excommunicated and the Council agreed that the Father and the Son were of the same substance (*ὁμοούσιος*), as stated in the Nicene Creed that has been recited in the churches throughout the centuries.

Despite Arius' excommunication Arianism still spread, even beyond the Empire's borders. Von Harnack (1898:39-40) provided a good reason for that: After Constantine legalised Christianity, the Arians made it easier for the "cultured and half-cultured" to become Christians. The monotheism depicted by the Arians was easy to accept by the polytheists, as there was only reference to one God.

Although Constantine denounced Arius, he became sympathetic towards his teachings and at a synod in Jerusalem he anathematised Athanasius who was at that stage the Bishop of Alexandria. Despite the fact that the second Ecumenical Council in 381 in Constantinople also denounced Arianism, it became the dominant Christology in Germanic Christianity up to the 8th century.

As the Council of Nicaea accepted the fact that the Father and the Son were of the same substance (*ὁμοούσιος*), others, later called semi-Arians, held the view that the Father and Jesus were of like nature (*ὁμοιούσιος*). This view was opposed by the Arianism who postulated that the Son was unlike the Father (*ἕομοι*). The Arian question regarding the nature of the union between the two natures of Jesus was to dominate dogmatic discussions during the 5th and 6th century. The Bishops in Alexandria took the leading part in these conversations.

The Council of Chalcedon, held in 451, marked the parting of the Orthodox Alexandrian Church from the West and the Greek Church (Sundkler & Steed 2000:16). The Council decided that Christ was "perfect alike in His divinity and perfect in His humanity, alike truly God and truly man...the same Christ in two natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably" (Von Harnack 1898:220). In this they differed from the Monophysites, especially those in Alexandria, who taught that the two natures of Christ were both resolved into one by his incarnation. Most of the Egyptian monks therefore were very reluctant to sign this orthodox formula (Groves 1948:45).

In the previous century Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, had denounced his priest Arius, and his successor Cyril followed in his footsteps. While suppressing the influence of Arius and "the related Nestorius" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:16), Cyril became a champion of the emerging Unionite movement, which attracted thousands of monks. The Council of Chalcedon decided against the Unionites and in favour of the above-mentioned view of the two natures of Christ (cf Sundkler & Steed 2000:16). Dioscorus, the then Patriarch of Alexandria was deposed and replaced with the Greek Orthodox Proterius. The Egyptians immediately reacted by appointing their own Patriarch in the person of Timothy Aelurus. Therefore, from 452 onwards the Patriarch of Alexandria was a Unionite, who was opposed by the Greek-

Orthodox Patriarch (cf Sundkler & Steed 2000:16). In 457 the monks and other followers killed Proterius, after which they were able to build on the "Coptic language and tradition, the Unionite doctrine and enthusiastic monastic leadership" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:16).

At that time a doctrine was developed that Mary was the God-bearer (θεοτόκος), which evoked the question whether Jesus was restricted to one nature (μόνη φύσις) at his birth, or did he also adopt a human nature? This led Egypt to start embracing Monophysitism under the monk Shenoute, who supported the view of Athanasius. Shenoute openly attacked Nestorius, the Bishop of Constantinople, and the ruling of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The Monophysite churches grew as a result of the Chalcedon ruling. After Chalcedon Egypt was divided into a small group of Melkites/Melchites (derived from the Hebrew term *melek/melech*, meaning *king*, also referred to as "Caesar-Christians;" cf Schaff Vol 3, 1885:776) who believed in the dual nature of Jesus, and a larger group called Jacobites who maintained the Monophysite view. This was a long-lasting split that led to extreme violence (Groves 1948:45). Troops from Constantinople were called in to restore order and the newly elected Bishop could only move around with a military escort (Kidd Vol 3, 1922:407). Rioting and tumult shook the city as the monastic settlements participated with the battle-cry, "One Nature!" (Groves 1948:46). Apart from the small group of Melkites, the church in Egypt had separated itself from the Orthodox Communion that was recognised by the Emperor. This struggle led to the appearance of Monophysite churches in Egypt, Syria and Armenia.

iii. Consequences

Initially the Roman Empire pressurised Egypt with economic sanctions and demanded them to pay tax by giving almost all their grain to Rome, and later they also had to hand over their Holy Scriptures. Those who refused to do so were persecuted. The worst of all persecutions took place under Diocletian, who became Emperor in 284. His persecutions took place from 299-304 and were extended in Egypt until 311 under Maximus. In Alexandria Peter Martyr was the first Egyptian saint to be executed. The persecution was the most severe in the Thebaid in Upper Egypt, where Coptic Christians were martyred in their numbers.

Concerning relations with other churches in the East, Isichei (1995:18) reported as follows:

The churches of Egypt, Nubia, and Ethiopia had close links with the rest of eastern Christendom. There is a great unity of spirit between Egyptian and Syriac Christianity. The Syrian churches rejoice in the fact that their language is the closest to the Aramaic spoken by Jesus. Syrian Christians converted Aksum, and later strengthened its faith by their missionary presence... After Chalcedon, the spiritual unity of Ethiopian, Nubian, Egyptian and Jacobite Syrian Christians was cemented by their adoption of a Monophysite Christology.

4.4.4.2 Cyrenaica

The missionary expansion from Egypt took place westwards to Cyrenaica (called "Cyrene" in the Bible: Ac 2:10; 6:9) and southwards along the Nile valley (Groves 1948:46). In Cyrenaica, the birthplace of Mark the Evangelist, there was a Jewish community (Oden 2011:19) that was in contact with Jerusalem very early in the 1st century and on conversion became missionaries to the Gentiles (cf Ac 11:20; 13:1). Catacombs dating back to the late 3rd century have been discovered. By the middle of the 3rd century the church in Cyrenaica was "under a metropolitan resident in Ptolemais" (Groves 1948:46). Later on this church came under the ecclesiastical direction of the Bishop of Alexandria.

4.4.4.3 Nubia

Nubia, to the south of Egypt (below the First Cataract south of the island Philae), was divided into three kingdoms: Nobatia (to the north), Makouria and Alodia (also known as Alwa). Despite the fact that Christianity came rather late to this part of Africa (Isichei 1995:30), this country had a rich church history of almost a millennium spanning the period from 453-1450 CE. The first reference to this part of the country was made by Origen in his *Commentary on Matthew* 14 where he stated that the gospel was not being preached to all the people in this country.

Christianity was officially introduced in Nubia in 453 when an old Coptic priest called Julian arrived in Nobatia for a two-year stay and soon converted a guesthouse to a

church. He was in attendance on Theodosius, the Monophysite Patriarch of Alexandria. There is, however, evidence of a church building as well as pottery and oil lamps marked with the Christian cross and other Christian symbols in Nubia from well before this date (Sundkler & Steed 2000:30). It is assumed that Coptic monks had earlier reached this country via the Nile. Each of the three kingdoms accepted Christianity in its own way: Nobatia was part of the Unionites, while Makouria accepted the more Orthodox Melkite faith to which it was introduced by Chalcedonian emissaries in 569/570, while Alodia accepted Monophysitism in 580 prompted by Longinus, the Bishop of Philae (Isichei 1995:31). As the Melkites opposed the Monophysites, there was a divided image of Christianity in Nubia. Nobatia was eventually absorbed by Makouria and adhered to the Monophysite faith (Isichei 1995:31).

Unlike Aksum (cf below), where the royal court treasured Christianity, the believers of Nubia (succeeding Meroe) were commoners who received the gospel from missionaries from Egypt. It was only in the 6th century that the royalty of Nubia started paying attention to Christianity when the Roman imperial family requested missionaries from Nubia to visit them. This was done on behalf of the Nubian monarch Silko, king of Nobatia. A Monophysite group arrived and established the same roots of Christianity that were in Egypt.

In Nubia the king was also a high-ranking priest. The history of the church in Nubia was therefore the history of its (Christian) kings, "taking on the aspects of a court religion, while the masses were, perhaps, only superficially incorporated into the church" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:32). The most prominent cathedral in Nubia was erected in Faras, the capital of Nobatia, in the 7th century. What made this cathedral so important was the "large mural paintings of Biblical and ecclesiastical personalities" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:33) that were found there, as well as a list of twenty-seven consecutive Bishops.

A number of the Christians in Alodia originated from Aksum, a neighbouring country and it was only in 580 that the ruler of Alodia invited missionaries from Nobatia to visit them.



Nubian Christians developed in isolation and, despite the Arab conquest of Egypt, they survived and flourished for centuries (Isichei 1995:31). The Arabs could not conquer Nubia. Nubia became the only state whose independence was recognised by the Arabs.

Nubia (also Ethiopia) was one of only a few countries not under Roman rule that converted to Christianity (Isichei 1995:31). They were strongly influenced by Byzantium and used the liturgy of Mark the Evangelist. Up to six churches were found in nearly every village. Burton reflected: "Although divided by a theological war that sprung from different readings of the Sacred Text, the scattered kings of Ethiopia entered the seventh century with the united consensus that Jesus the Christ was the *Negus Negati* ('king of all kings')" (Burton 2007:138).

4.4.4.4 Aksum

Whereas Nubia had the advantage of the Nile, Aksum (northern Ethiopia), situated to the east of Nubia, bordered on the Red Sea, which facilitated communication between the Semitic population on the southwestern Arabian coast and the Kushite communities in Aksum (Sundkler & Steed 2000:35).

During the 4th century a Syrian Christian philosopher, Meropius, accompanied by two young men, Adesius and Frumentius (also Christians) and a crew, travelled on the Red Sea from Tyre to India and anchored at a port on the Aksumite coast. Due to a political dispute with Rome, some of the angry natives attacked and killed almost everybody in the group except for Frumentius and Aedesius (Burton 2007:137). Even Meropius lost his life. The two young men were taken to King Ella-Amida of Aksum, who took them into his service: Aedesius became his cupbearer and Frumentius the royal secretary. Soon afterwards, when the king died, the Queen Mother appointed these two men as regents for the boy King Ezana who was still too young to rule the country (Sundkler & Steed 2000:35). On resuming his office, the new king offered both men their freedom.

Frumentius did not return to Syria, but went to the newly installed Patriarch Athanasius in Alexandria and informed him of the need for a Bishop in Aksum. Athanasius consecrated Frumentius as Bishop to Aksum in 341/346, thereby

establishing an ecclesiastical link between the Patriarch in Egypt and the church in Aksum (Ethiopia). In 350 he returned to Aksum. As mentioned above (cf Sundkler & Steed 2000:35) this link lasted 1,600 years. Frumentius was most probably not the founder of Christianity in Aksum as suggested by Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 3.1.13), but he did play a decisive role in that part of Africa. The new King Ezana, influenced by and converted to Christianity (cf Isichei 1995:33), changed the symbols on his coins to that of the sign of the cross, and phrases like "Lord of All," "Lord of Heaven" and "Lord of Earth."

Ezana's successors maintained his faith, although Christianity became a religion of the elite, while the citizens still held on to their traditional belief systems. Close to the end of the 5th century, nine holy men (monks) from Syria (all devoted Unionites), known as the *Nine Saints*, arrived at Aksum and established the Ethiopian monastic movement there (Sundkler & Steed 2000:36, 37). They built several monasteries and churches "among them Debre Damo in Tigray, the oldest existing church in Ethiopia" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:36). They attracted thousands of men and women who became totally devoted to the church. They also translated a version of the Septuagint into Ge'ez. These men "became the carriers of a literary and liturgical movement which gave the young Church its style and its strength, but were also decisive in taking the Christian message to the illiterate masses" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:37). They started with a theological compilation of Patristic texts, especially those of Cyril, in Ge'ez. These texts would later become the theological foundation of faith in Ethiopia. These men were most probably Monophysites, as the evidence showed that the Ethiopian Church embraced the Monophysite cause (Isichei 1995:33). Their teachings were, however, not of a high standard and many of their catechumens still held on to their former superstitions.

The rulers of Aksum were Christians, with the most prominent one being Kaleb who ruled from 510-558. He assisted the Christians in southern Arabia and with the help of monks he converted the pagans in that country.

4.4.4.5 Kush

Acts 8 refers to an Ethiopian official (an *eunuch*) in service of the Candace or Qinaquis (Sundkler & Steed 2000:35) who ruled over the country to the north of

Aksum, with Meroe as capital (Groves 1948:35). He came to Jerusalem to worship and was in possession of a Hebrew scroll of the prophet Isaiah, which proved the existence of a Meroitic community (community in Meroe) that was familiar with the faith of Israel. Irenaeus (*Adv Haer* 3.12) and Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 2.1.13) referred to him as a missionary to his people. According to Ethiopian tradition, Israel's faith was introduced to them by Menelik 1, the son that the Queen of Sheba (allegedly) had with King Solomon of Israel. When Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was at war with Jeroboam, quite a few members of the Dan tribe allegedly fled to Ethiopia and formed the foundation for the Hebrew believers in Kush (Burton 2007:136-137).

As the Jewish roots were so entrenched in Kush, even the Christians much later gave prominence to the Tanak over the rest of the Bible. Practices like seventh-day observance, circumcision and even abstention from certain meats were upheld until recently (Dowling 1909:20-24). By the beginning of the 6th century the entire Bible, including the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha had already been translated into Ethiopic.

It can be taken as a fact that the Ethiopian official referred to above returned to Meroe and shared the Good News with his colleagues. Other kingdoms in Ethiopia also took note of his new discovery and joined in. The history of Kush is much intertwined with that of Aksum and should be read together with that of Aksum.

4.4.4.6 The Maghreb/Maghrib

a. African writers

The Maghreb was that part of North Africa that formed part of the Roman Empire west of Egypt. Two writers need to be mentioned here: Arnobius Afer who flourished between 290 and 303 had been a pagan polemicist in Numidia (to the west of Carthage and Hippo) before he was converted to Christianity. He wrote *Against pagans* during the persecution of Diocletian. Lactantius who flourished between 290 and 320 was a student of Arnobius. He wrote a pamphlet on *The death of persecutors* in which he stated that the persecutors would be punished for their cruel treatment of the Christians (cf Isichei 1964:58-71).

b. Christianity in the Maghreb

According to Isichei (1995:33-34),

[t]he growth of North African Christianity can only be understood against the background of Roman rule, which began with the sack of Carthage in 146 BC, and completed with the conquest of Mauretania (northern Morocco) in AD 40. The Maghrib underwent a process of Romanization that had no parallel in Egypt. Roman cities were founded, most notably Carthage, on the site of its predecessor, razed to the ground. New provinces were founded, Mauretania, Numidia (northern Algeria) and Africa, in Tunisia, which, taking its name from the local Afri, gave its name to a continent.

Josephus (*The Jewish War* 2.383, 386) stated that Africa provided Rome with corn for eight months per year, while Egypt provided the rest. The official Christian history of this part of the Roman Empire started in 180 CE when seven men and five women were martyred near Carthage (Isichei 1995:34).

4.4.4.7 Carthage

Carthage was also a centre of early Christianity. While the Berber tribes were the earliest inhabitants of this part of Africa, there were also Jewish settlements. After the Roman colonisation of foreigners, mainly soldiers and veterans entered the countries of North Africa. Soon North Africa became the granary of Rome as wheat, oil, wine, fruit and vegetables were exported to Italy and further abroad.

Three languages contributed to the religion in this part of Africa:

- The Berber dialects never disappeared, but were referred to as Libyan.
- Punic was the language of the rulers until the Romans took over.
- Latin was the language brought to the land by the Roman invaders.

Members of the middle and upper classes spoke mainly Latin in public, whereas the illiterate poor people expressed themselves in Berber and Punic (Groves 1948:57).

Several Councils/Synods were held in Carthage during the 3rd, 4th and 5th century:

- In May 251 Cyprian held a Synod to decide how people who had lapsed during the past prosecutions would be treated. The Bishops who lapsed were banned. This Synod was followed by two others that dealt with the same issue in 252 and 254 (Von Hefele 1871:93ff).
- Two more Synods were held under Cyprian in 255 and 256 concerning the heretical baptism ("heretics" – people who were not members of the Catholic Church – were not to be received until after they had been purified by baptism; cf *Hist Eccl* 7.3). They were repudiated by Stephen 1, the Bishop of Rome, but remained steadfast on their case.
- During 348 orthodox Bishops held a Synod to confirm that they approved of the repression of the Donatists. They also adopted twelve canons of clerical discipline.
- On 28 August 397 the Council of Carthage confirmed the Biblical canon for the Western church. It contained apocryphal books like *Tobias*, *Judith* and the *Maccabees*, but not Revelation, which was only admitted at the Synod of 419.
- In 411 a Council was held at the command of Emperor Honorius and presided over by Marcellinus of Carthage to terminate the Donatist schism. Although this was not a Council in the strict sense of the word, it was one of the most important Councils ever held in the whole of Africa and by the Catholic Church (Von Hefele 1871:462ff). This Council led to the violent suppression of the Donatists.
- The Synod of 1 May 418, referred to by Augustine as "a Council of Africa" (*A treatise on the grace of Christ, and on original sin* 2.24) and by Schaff (*Series 1, Vol 5, 1885:54*) as the "great African Council," was held under the presidency of Aurelius, the Bishop of Carthage. This Synod denounced the doctrines of Pelagius and his followers and supported Augustine's views. In reaction to the reinstatement of a deposed African priest by the Bishop of Rome, this Synod also stated in canon 17 that any member of the clergy in Africa who appealed to a court in Rome would not be received into communion in Africa (Von Hefele 1871:458).
- In 419 and 424 two synods were held to oppose the apostolic authority of Rome (Von Hefele 1871:462).

a. Carthaginian writers

Tertullian, a contemporary of Clement, was called the "father" or "founder" of Latin Christianity because he was the first Christian writer who produced an extensive corpus of Latin Christian literature (cf Gonzáles 2010:91-93; Schaff Vol 3, 1885:2-3; Hillerbrand 2012:38). In 207 he became a Montanist. In his later teachings he articulated his ideas in a way that was contradictory to the actions and teachings of the Apostles. Cyprian was a contemporary of Origen and the first Bishop of Carthage to choose martyrdom (*New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia on St. Cyprian of Carthage* sa).

i. Tertullian (160-220/240)

Tertullian, a trained lawyer as well as an ordained priest (cf *Hist Eccl* 2.2.4; *De Vir* 53) lived in Carthage, today a suburb of Tunis in Tunisia and a seaport city (some 200 km to the west of Alexandria). He was the first great Theologian of North Africa. Using the knowledge gained as a lawyer, he became the inventor of "Ecclesiastical Latin" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:22). He was strictly ascetic (although he was married to a Christian woman) and critically minded. Tertullian disapproved of the theological rigidity of the Catholic Church of his time, and (in ca 202) decided to rather join the Montanist group, a Christian sect that spoke in tongues and encouraged the gift of prophesy (cf Willert 2014:159), but was also labelled as schismatic.

Tertullian founded the Carthaginian theological school of his time (Quasten 1975:20-79). He was most probably the one person that shaped orthodox Christianity more than any other thinker at the time (Burton 2007:132). He was the first Theologian to introduce the term "trinitas" (*Trinity*) to the vocabulary of the Christendom and he also introduced the teaching that one God revealed himself in "tres personae" (*three persons*) (Burton 2007:132). It is also believed that he was the first person to refer to the Hebrew Scriptures as the "Old Testament" and to the Gospels and the letters of Paul as the "New Testament" (Hillerbrand 2012:39).

It is very important to take note that although the Montanists rejected the Trinitarian formula, Tertullian remained convinced that he was right. He called upon all Christians to remain pure, as they were the "bride of Christ." In his *Apology* he defended Christians who opposed the pagan laws of Rome. In one of his writings,

Ad Uxorem, he addressed a woman (a fellow-servant in the Lord) on how to live as a widow (cf Isichei 1995:35). He ended this writing (*Ad Uxorem* 2.8) with the "warmest description of Christian married life in the ancient world" (Isichei 1995:34).

Isichei (1995:35) also depicted Tertullian as a Puritan, although not in the same vein as the English Puritans, but rather with the emphasis on "pure." Isichei explained her characterisation by elaborating on the term with reference to Tertullian: "He believed that Christians should be a gathered remnant, avoiding all the corruption of a tainted world" (Isichei 1995:35; cf Isichei 1964:27-40). Hillerbrand (2012:40) also referred to Tertullian as a "Puritan" and stated that he was the first moral purist "who identified the Christian life with the most rigorous ethical positions." He elaborated on the emphasis that this Theologian put on a pure life: "As far as he was concerned, the moral failure of the church-at-large was fundamental, and he pronounced judgment on female fashion, fasting (or rather, many Christians' lack of it), marriage, modesty, and popular entertainment..." (Hillerbrand 2012:40).

From his thirty-one surviving works (cf Willert 2014:159) his (sometimes exaggerated) view of the growth of Christianity becomes clear, as he referred to it in his *Apologeticum* 37, written in 197: "We are but of yesterday, and we have filled every place among you – cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum; we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods." There is also a possibility that he was the author (maybe just the editor) of *The passion of the holy martyrs Perpetua and Felicity*, also called *Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity* (Isichei 1995:35). Two of his extant writings were dedicated to his wife. Although he strongly supported the idea of martyrdom, he died of natural causes at an advanced age, just like Clement.

ii. Cyprian (200-258)

Cyprian, also initially a lawyer, referred to Tertullian as his master (cf Schaff Vol 3, 1885:8). After his conversion in his mid-forties (Isichei 1995:35) he gave away his wealth (like Origen and also Perpetua) and became strictly ascetic and as critical as his master. According to Quasten (1953:340-348), his ideas about holiness were not as rigid as Tertullian's. He became the Bishop of Carthage in 248. Emperor Decius then began his persecution of Christians which led to Cyprian's flight in 249. On his

return in 251 he found a divided church. One part of the church was willing to sacrifice to the Emperor, while the other part remained faithful, but held the view that the apostatisers (*traditores*) should be banned from the church. Unlike Tertullian, Cyprian believed that they should be given an opportunity for restoration.

Cyprian quarrelled with Rome about the re-baptism of heretics and opposed Rome by championing the idea of re-baptism. In his great work called *On the unity of the church* he also championed episcopatism as he was "determined to uphold the rights of the local bishop" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:22). This eventually led to his martyrdom by Proconsul Galerius Maximus in 258. A few decades later the Diocletian persecution took place against the church in Carthage. This led to the Donatist split in Carthage.

iii. Commodianus

Commodianus was a Christian Latin poet in Carthage who flourished around the middle of the 3rd century. He was not widely known and was only mentioned by Gennadius in his *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis* at the end of the 5th century as well as Pope Gelasius in *De Libris Recipiendis et Non Recipiendis*. He acted positively on the barbarians' conquest of Rome, which he saw as the "agents of God's wrath against the pride of Rome" (cf Isichei 1995:41).

b. Christianity in Carthage

It is difficult to determine from where Christianity in Carthage originated. Groves (1948:58) believed that it was Rome. The first martyr in Carthage was Namphamo, who spoke Punic and came from Numidia (Kidd Vol 1, 1922:59). As mentioned earlier, the first group of twelve Christians (7 men and 5 women) were martyred in Carthage in 180. They originated from Scillium and Numidia and their Latin names showed that they belonged to the Romanised layer of the population. Tertullian could name only four places outside of Carthage where churches could be found in North Africa during his time. In Cyprian's time the number of churches in that part of Africa had increased to approximately one-hundred (Groves 1948:60).

Donatism, a militant Bible group, came into being in the vicinity of Carthage after the Diocletian persecutions in 303-305 (Burton 2007:127). Many ecclesiastical leaders

sided with the state during these persecutions and handed over their Christian literature to be destroyed. Burton (2007:127) postulated that this looked like the fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24. After the persecutions these leaders retained their positions in the church. A growing group of clergy held the view that these leaders should be held responsible for their actions. After Caecilian's election as Bishop of Carthage in 311, they held their own Council with some seventy Bishops (Groves 1948:61) and elected an opposing Bishop in the person of Majorinus. After his death in 215, Donatus acceded to the bishopric. Caecilian, under the auspices of the state, successfully launched an official complaint against this. The Donatists appealed on the grounds of Matthew 13:24-30 as they saw themselves as the "faithful remnant represented by the wheat in Jesus' parable" (Burton 2007:127). Their reform became so visible that Donatism became the majority faith in Roman North-Africa, especially in Numidia. In some parts of the Empire the adherents adopted a faith of liberation, using arms to overthrow the state-sympathetic Catholics whom they called the Biblical antichrist. They went so far as to rape, kill, pillage and confiscate "in the Name of the Lord" (Burton 2007:127). They also had no fear of becoming martyrs for the Lord and sometimes even committed violent suicide, believing that this would earn them a special place in paradise. Unlike the Gnostics who did not believe in Yahweh as the highest God, these Donatists identified fully with Israel. According to Burton (2007:127), this movement collapsed with the Arab invasion. Groves (1948:63) was of the view that Donatism had already collapsed in 411 with the Conference of Carthage.

4.4.4.8 Hippo (Hippo Regius)

a. Augustine (354-430)

Augustine was born in Tagaste (now called Souk) and reared in Carthage. Being of mixed Berber background (cf Frend 1971:230), "he grew up 200 miles from the sea...but spoke no language other than Latin" (Isichei 1995:34). Hippo, the present-day Annaba in Algeria, was located a little to the west of Carthage and was also a seaport city.

Augustine is "generally considered the universal genius, the truly Catholic churchman and theologian whose books have been of immense importance for

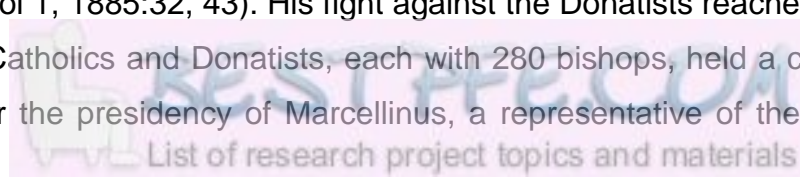
Christians throughout the ages" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:24). Hillerbrand (2012:43) compared him to his predecessors and gave him "primacy of place:" "Arguably one of the most seminal minds of Western Christianity, his influence extended far beyond his time and place, and the history of Christian theology in the Western Church since Augustine may well be seen as but a series of footnotes to his thought" (Hillerbrand 2012:43).

In his youth he embraced Manichaeism. In Milan he was a professor of rhetoric when he met Bishop Ambrose and shortly afterwards rejected Manichaeism. He then turned to Neo-Platonism (Hillerbrand 2012:45). Eventually, in 386, he converted to Christianity and in 388 returned to Tagaste where he founded a monastery. He was ordained to the priesthood in 391 and in 396 he was ordained as Bishop of Hippo, where he served until his death.

Whereas Origen was the systematic Theologian, Augustine can be characterised as a polemic Theologian (Hillerbrand 2012:46). The polemic Theologian would write and rail against his opponent in a specific controversy, while his thought patterns would be "explosive" (Hillerbrand 2012:46). However, this does not apply to his book titled *On the Holy Trinity*.

During his time, he was "existentially engaged" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:25) with three adversary systems of his day, namely Manichaeism, Donatism and Pelagianism. For some time he was attracted to Neo-Platonism. He disliked the study of Greek, as he was part of "Latin Africa" (Isichei 1995:25). He wrote his *Confessions* when he was forty-three.

Using his philosophical background, he refined the Catholic understanding of original sin and he also justified "just wars," especially those fought to stamp out heretics (*De Civ* 4.15). In his *Epistola ad Deogratias* 102.13 (cf also *De Praed Sanc* 19) he maintained that *gratia* (*divine grace*) was the "fundamental power for the religious and moral life of the individual and of the Church" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:25; cf also Schaff Series 1, Vol 1, 1885:32, 43). His fight against the Donatists reached a climax in 411 when the Catholics and Donatists, each with 280 bishops, held a conference in Carthage under the presidency of Marcellinus, a representative of the Emperor.



The Donatists who were of the opinion that the true church consisted of holy members, relied on the authority of Tertullian and Cyprian and were very strong during the 4th century. Marcellinus decided in favour of the Catholics, which resulted in the Donatist clergy being exiled. In fact this was no victory for the Catholic Church as they could have integrated the Donatists in the Church without sacrificing their faith.

Augustine's greatest work was *De Civitate Dei (Concerning the City of God)*, an apologetic writing in which he discussed the "clash in ideologies between the church and the world" (Burton 2007:134) and which he wrote in 412, shortly after Rome had been conquered by the barbarians under Alaric 1, the king of the Visigoths. It took him fifteen years to complete this work (McGrath 2013:47). The general belief among the pagans was that Rome came to a fall because the city accepted Christianity. Augustine, however, pointed out that Rome already showed weaknesses and disintegration even before it had accepted Christianity. According to him (*De Civ* 2.24), Rome fell because its inhabitants became "too complacent, too self-confident, and too arrogant" (Hillerbrand 2012:46) or, as Schaff (Series 1, Vol 2, 1885:10) put it: "...he does not scruple to ascribe her recent disgrace to the profligate manners, the effeminacy, and the pride of her citizens" (cf *De Civ* 2.19, 22; 14.28; 19.26). His focus in this work was that a Christian should live like Abraham in order to be rewarded with the establishment of the eternal city. He also reassured the Christians that it was in fact the ancient gods who had failed the Romans and specifically Rome. In this writing he also criticised the gods of the Romans and Greeks as false and useless. This writing can be called the *Charter of Christendom* (Schmidt 2004:351).

b. Christianity in Hippo

While the North African church with Augustine and his compatriots were not positive towards evangelisation outside the Roman boundaries, the Nestorians, Byzantines (Byzantinian Africa consisted of western Algeria and northern Morocco) and Syrian Monophysites helped to spread Christianity further eastwards.

The (Arian) Vandals under Gaiseric/Genseric were a Germanic tribe that moved to the south of Europe and as far as Spain, from where they travelled to the shores of

Africa by 429. There they came into contact with the Arians who considered themselves Christians and were anti-Catholic (Sundkler & Steed 2000:28). Shortly after the death of Augustine in the following year, these vandals first conquered Hippo and then Carthage in 439, followed by the entire western part of Africa within the next decade. As they considered themselves the masters of Africa, they caused tremendous damage and destroyed the Catholic churches and monasteries.

Since the Vandals have adopted Arianism, some of their kings were ardent Arians. They were anti-Roman and anti-Catholic (Groves 1948:67). In the time of Gaiseric an Arian church was established. Gaiseric was succeeded by Huneric under whose rule the oppression of Catholics became severe. He issued an edict to compel all Catholic churches in his dominion to turn to Arianism. Fortunately for the Catholics the king died and was succeeded by milder kings and they eventually regained their freedom again under Hilderic. In 533 Emperor Julianos/Justinian of Constantinople (in Byzantium) reconquered Africa from the Vandals and in 534 he decreed that all church buildings had to be restored. This led to more than a century of quite growth in the Catholic Church in Africa while state and church once again worked together, until the Arab invasion.

4.4.5 A flourishing Christianity amidst the decline of the Roman Empire

From the above-mentioned it is evident that Christianity was not only a local sect trying to impress a few people. Christianity spread from Egypt to all the regions on the African continent that formed part of the Roman Empire and influenced the people accordingly. Even though the Roman Empire did not regard the Christians with open animosity or antagonism, it did not display a very positive attitude towards Christianity. Initially it was regarded as no more than a Jewish sect, whereas Judaism was a licenced religion in the Empire (cf Hillerbrand 2012:15). However, the Christians soon started to claim that they had an authentic religion, by far better than any other religion (Hillerbrand 2012:15). They were soon the object of criticism: Tacitus (*Ann* 15.44) remarked that the acts of the Christians were abominable, while Suetonius (*Life of Claudius* 25.4) thought that the Christians were given to new and wicked superstitions. Added to this they were charged with offences like sexual perversion and the practising of magic and cannibalism, as had already been indicated.

Despite efforts to get rid of this strange phenomenon (called religion), Christianity just went from strength to strength. As this religion did not fit well into the "otherwise tolerant culture" of the Roman Empire (Hillerbrand 2012:2), the inevitable occurred and governmental oppression and persecution followed. One of the main reasons for their persecutions was that the Christians refused to pay homage to the Roman Emperors, especially after Domitian ordered that the Emperor should be called "Lord and God" at the end of the 1st century (cf *Dom* 13.2; Gloer 2001:42). Christians also refused to serve in the military and even in governmental office. Based on the above-mentioned allegations levelled against the Christians, they became the scapegoats whenever "catastrophes such as epidemics or floods, defeats in battle, or a fire in Rome shook the tranquillity of the empire" (Hillerbrand 2012:16-17). Tertullian (*Apology* 40) summarised this well when he said: "If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls, if the Nile does not send its waters up over the fields, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, if there is famine or pestilence, straightway the cry is, 'Away with the Christians to the lion!'"

Hillerbrand (2012:17ff) identified three stages in the development of the Roman policy towards Christianity:

- Stage 1, intermittently from the late 1st century until the 3rd century: Anti-Christian governmental action to enforce political and societal loyalty. As discussed earlier, the resulting persecutions generally lasted mostly for only brief periods of time.
- Stage 2, during the middle of the 3rd century: A systematic suppression of the church and its leaders. Christendom was flourishing and church buildings were erected at some places. This led to persecutions by Decius (around the middle of the 3rd century) which almost caused the collapse of the church. Fortunately these persecutions were short-lived, but were followed by the most severe persecutions in Christian history undertaken by Diocletian and assisted by Galerius at the beginning of the 4th century.
- Stage 3, during the early 4th century: At this stage the church had already become an impressive organisation, "a state within the state, a body in the body of the empire, and yet not part of it" (Hillerbrand 2012:17). This stage

also marked a decline in the power of the Empire following successful invasions by the Gothic tribes.

After these bloody persecutions something (actually someone) happened that turned everything upside down: Constantine became Emperor. Soon afterwards the Roman Empire started to decline and to disintegrate. Notwithstanding the fact that Constantine proclaimed religious freedom, the Christian religion flourished during this time. At first Christianity spread to Asia Minor and then to Europe. For some centuries the Christian faith and church would unite the people of Europe (Hillerbrand 2012:3).

For a short period of time from 361 Julian came into reign and in 362 he declared all religions equal. He could not see his plan through and was succeeded by Theodosius who once again made Christianity the sole official religion.

4.5 Christianity to blame

The systematic infrastructure of Christianity in Africa did not create the united body that was desired. The Christians, developing their own forms of Christianity, were more often at war with each other than with other groups, and this led to compromise and apostasy (Burton 2007:143). In Palestine there were two forms of Christianity:

- The Church of Jesus the Messiah, which resembled the religion of Israel.
- The Church of the Son of God, which embraced the philosophical creeds of the Ecumenical Councils.

At the *Didaskaleion* the philosophical methodology dominated, leading to movements like Gnosticism, Donatism and Monasticism. Furthermore, the African Christians positioned themselves against their counterparts in the West "by adopting Nestorian and Monophysite Christologies that struck at the heart of orthodoxy" (Burton 2007:143).

Unfortunately, because of the many translations of the Bible, the "cloistered elite who claimed to represent the masses were using God's book for their own political and

philosophical purposes. They seemed to gain pleasure from complicating Creeds and casting accusations against alleged heretics" (Burton 2007:144).

Two scholars, Groves and Northcott, blamed Christianity itself for the alleged failure of the expansion of Christianity in Africa. Groves (1948:viii, 59, 83, 88-89) blamed it on the fact that Christianity did not evangelise (enough): "The greatest failure to be laid at the door of the African Church is its failure to evangelize" (cf also Northcott 1963:58). Both of them were referring to Africa outside of Egypt, as communication in Egypt was very good due to the "parallel waterways – the River Nile and the Red Sea" (Sundkler & Steed 2000:29) which were used by missionaries to evangelise to the people of the Upper Nile, Nubia and Ethiopia in the south.

The populated regions in North Africa bordered on vast forests and deserts to the south. Von Harnack (1908:30), who was one of the great historians on the Early Church referred to North Africa this way:

As a Church province, Africa has a timeless endurance in the history of the Church through its three great sons Tertullian, St Cyprian, and St Augustine. It is one of the most paradoxical facts of history that, after St Paul, Christianity received its strongest impulse for further development from the seashore of Tunisia.

It is curious that he did not mention any Alexandrian scholars, but this could be because he was only referring to the Western Catholic Church.

4.6 The Arab invasion

Seven years after the death of Muhammed in 632 the Arabs/Islam (also called Ishmaelites) invaded Egypt. Their invasion was aided by the collaboration of several high-powered men in Egypt such as Cyrus, the "Melkite" Patriarch of Alexandria, the Byzantine Governor who surrounded the fortress in Alexandria and the Coptic "Duke" Sanutius, who gave the fleet to the Arabs. This was evidence of the bitter division between the Christians in Alexandria. Also, at the time, almost everybody thought that Islam was just another Christian sect (Isichei 1995:43). After their victory the Arabs recognised the Monophysite Church of the Copts, but the Byzantines and

the Chalcedonians withdrew. The Copts constituted only ten percent of the population of Egypt (Fogarty 2004:142).

The Copts were valued taxpayers and civil servants, which could be the reason for the survival of their church (Isichei 1995:43). Until the 10th century the majority of people living in Egypt were Christians. It was during that time that the term "Copt" became synonymous with "Christian" and no longer meant "Egyptian" (Isichei 1995:43).

The Arabs also invaded the rest of the Empire. Their assault on Carthage, initiated from Egypt, succeeded in 647. However, they did not remain in power for long and a next assault followed from 670-683. In 698 Carthage eventually surrendered and a force of 40,000 men was stationed in Tunis, just west of Carthage. Tunis eventually became the major regional centre, while Carthage fell to ruin (Collins 2000:124). This marked the end of the Roman influence in Africa.

The Arabs renamed the known parts of Africa: Northwest Africa became the Maghreb/Maghrif (meaning *the West*), Carthage became Tunis and Africa became Afriqiya.

While the Christians were sometimes reluctant to do missionary work, the Muslims were not: They spread their faith to the south, across the Sahara trade routes to western Sudan and further.

4.7 Conclusion

According to scholars like Schaff and others mentioned above, it was obvious that the *Didaskaleion* had an immense influence on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa and in fact in the entire Roman Empire. Its influence was at two levels:

- Factual influence, including personal influence.
- Derived influence.

Factual influence is first observed between a head of the School and his successor: Pantaenus influenced Clement, who conveyed his knowledge to Origen. It is interesting to note that each one inspired his successor to be more successful. The five heads of the School who can be proved to have influenced the growth and development of Christianity in Africa, were Mark the Evangelist, Athenagoras, Clement, Origen and Didymus the Blind. The head who had the most influence, but who was also criticised the most and even later branded as a heretic, was Origen. His true follower, Didymus, was also (posthumously!) condemned by a Council.

Another proof of factual influence was found in at least two methodologies that were developed at the *Didaskaleion*, namely apology and allegory. Apology was one of the most effective ways in which the earliest Christians could verbalise their beliefs and belief systems to their religious enemies and even prospective converts. Allegory was employed to reveal the deeper meaning of the Scriptures, especially for the benefit of the believers.

Derived influence is a very subjective way to engage with the influence of the School. Knowing, however, that Christianity entered Africa through Egypt and specifically Alexandria and that most of the "Christianities" in Africa, in particular those to the south, but also to the west of Egypt (to some extent), had their origin in Egypt itself, the flooding of Africa by Christianity was discussed, that is until the Arab invasion. First, the immediate influence of Christianity in/on Alexandria and the rest of the Roman Empire was looked at. This was followed by a discussion of debates on Christianity in Africa as the different groups of believers started to develop their own Theology/ies. These debates gave rise to the writing of apologies to defend the Christian belief system against major heresies such as Arianism and Trinitarianism, which resulted in the fixation of the canon of the New Testament and later the whole Bible.

The establishment of Christianity in Africa followed different routes, but it spread through the known parts of the continent during the centuries that preceded the Arab invasion. The first country that was discussed was Egypt, with the focus on the rise and development of the Copts. The Egyptians regarded their country as a holy land on account of the fact that Jesus' parents fled there to ensure the safety of the baby

Jesus and remained there for approximately the first three years of his life. However, this did not prevent Egypt and specifically Alexandria to develop diverse interpretations of Christianity. Two main groups were identified, namely the Selective Bible Group consisting of Gnosticism and Monasticism, and the Unorthodox Bible Group that was rooted mainly in Arianism and Monophysitism.

From Egypt Christianity spread mostly to the south. Nubia, Aksum and Kush were each in their own way touched by Christianity. Missionary work was, however, also undertaken to the west of Egypt, especially to Cyrenaica. Although Christianity in the Maghreb, Carthage and Hippo originated mostly from Rome, the works of writers like Tertullian and Cyprian resembled those of Clement and Origen in many ways. However, it was Augustine who possessed one of the most seminal minds in the Christianity of the West, who was the "truly Catholic churchman."

After Christianity was freed from persecution in 313 CE and later on became the religion of the Empire, it continued to flourish even when the Empire was on the decline a century later. While the Christianisation of Africa and the Empire was largely positive, there was unfortunately also a negative side as this new religion became divided within itself. Christianity was divided into an Eastern and a Western block, with further internal divisions within these blocks. This led to the parting of certain groups from the rest, especially at the Councils, for example the Councils of Nicaea in 325 and Chalcedon in 451, "who either subsequently faded from history, or, as in the case of the Copts, remained intact but out of communion with 'orthodox' Christianity" (Fogarty 2004:144). According to some scholars like Groves and Northcott, not enough missionary work/evangelisation was done by them.

Then came the Arab invasion in 642. The divisions within the broader Christian community at the time and the misunderstanding that they were simply another Christian sect, paved the way for the Arabs to take the land with almost no resistance. The Monophysite church of the Copts, to which only ten percent of the population belonged, was the only church recognised by the new rulers. With this invasion Christianity was "laid to rest" for almost a millennium before it stood up to take its rightful place on the continent.

Conclusion

1. Can anything good come out of Africa?

This question was asked in the Introduction to the thesis to draw attention to the fact that Africa had been neglected as a source of academia until the late 19th century (Groves 1948:1). However, specifically from the second half of the 20th century pertinent scholars such as Isichei, Oden and Ngong, to name but a few, initiated a positive evaluation and appreciation of Africa and have proved that this continent has played a vital role in history on more than one level. The first objective of the thesis was to make a contribution by showing how Africa had been the breeding ground for Christianity and the place where Christian culture and Theology existed *before* it reached Europe and America (cf Oden 2007:9). The second objective was to determine and clarify the extent of the influence exerted by the Catechetical School and her heads in Alexandria on the growth and development of Christianity in Africa prior to the Arab invasion in 642 CE.

2. Methodology

The research was conducted by making use of the Historical Method. Information was gathered, compiled in a meaningful way and critically discussed. Data was then interpreted and analysed to arrive at conclusions. The use of the Historical Method played a vital role in enabling the researcher to reach the pinnacle of the thesis in Chapter 4, after the history and background of the School and Alexandria have been discussed in Chapters 1 to 3. Information on the *Didaskaleion* and her heads, as well as their writings, was essential to ensure an adequate understanding of the discussion of the development and influence of Christianity in Africa, which followed in Chapter 4. Historical facts and evidence obtained from the writings of early scholars concerning the growth and development of Christianity to the south and west of Alexandria were linked with what happened in Alexandria. All this information, viewed through the lens/conditions of the Historical Method, contributed to the evidence that led to the conclusion that Christianity in Alexandria was developed and disseminated by the School to serve the Roman Empire and especially the known parts of Africa.



3. The contribution made by each Chapter

The research question was formulated as follows: "What immediate and more extended influence did the Catechetical School in Alexandria (the *Didaskaleion*, which existed until the end of the 4th century CE) have, through (the writings and examples of) her heads, on how Christianity was formalised and developed in Africa?"

In Chapter 1 a broad background to the study was provided with Alexandria as the central point. The history of Alexandria was traced up to the Arab invasion in 642. This city, which was originally a village called Rhakotis, was chosen by Alexander the Great to be developed as the capital city of Egypt and was renamed in his honour. A positive factor for the early Christians was that when they began to settle in Alexandria, it was a Roman city with a Greek-Egyptian-Jewish culture and a very highly acclaimed academic stature – it was the Golden Era of Alexandria and this city provided a fertile environment for the development of the new religion as the population and culture of the Delta City were very receptive to new views and religions. Initially the first "Christians" ("followers of Christ's teachings") found a safe haven in the Jewish community and the Greek culture before they began to withdraw from the Jews to establish a distinct religion of their own. The new religion was influenced by all the other cults, philosophies, religions and beliefs in the city and in turn influenced many members of other groups to also become followers of Christ's teachings.

Chapter 2 focused on the *Didaskaleion* and her heads. Alexandria was renowned throughout the Roman Empire for its academic excellence, with schools/"universities" like the *Musaion*, the *Serapium* and the *Sebastion* – and the *Didaskaleion* became part of the academic network in the Delta City. Since the School had a missionary character pagans were soon accepted as students. Subjects like Science, Mathematics, Greek and Roman literature, Logic and Arts were taught, while three methods of teaching were followed – allegoric, philosophic and *gnostic*. With all these tools in hand, the heads of the School were in the perfect position to influence all the students (as well as their successors). Added to this they also wrote extensively, especially Clement and Origen.

In Chapter 3 the documents written by the heads – lost as well as extant – were named (and discussed) in order to gain an understanding of the theological views of the School and her heads at the time. Some of the heads allegedly did not produce any material, but the documents of Mark, Athenagoras, Pantaenus, Clement, Origen, Dionysius Magnus, Theognostus, Pierius, Peter the Martyr, Serapion, Macarius Politicus and Didymus the Blind were discussed. Their contents and the views expressed in them provided a basis for the discussions in Chapter 4.

The aim of Chapter 4 was to arrive at a significant (satisfactory) answer to the research question. The way in which the School and her activities contributed to the growth and development of Christianity in Africa was discussed. Brief references were made to the School's influence on people and institutions in Rome and Antioch, and later in the Councils that were held to establish a firm and fixed Theology for Christianity. The first part of this Chapter focused on the influence of the heads on each other through their views, writings and exemplary lives, and their influence on other theological scholars in North Africa (west of Egypt). The Christian movement picked up momentum to the west and south of Egypt after the establishment of Christianity in Alexandria. The derived influence of the School and her heads was pointed out here as the Christians in Africa, outside of Alexandria, acted according to the views held by the School. In this way it could be established that the influence of the School in Africa was both factual and derived.

4. Findings of the research

In Chapter 1 it was established that the Jews actually had an African background as Abraham's forebears most probably originated from Kush (south of Egypt). It became clear that Christianity, more specific Christian Theology, had in fact developed in Africa, specifically in Alexandria. Antioch in Syria – north of Palestine – was another city where Christianity was established, but what happened there could not really compare with what happened in Alexandria. In the early stages of the development of Christianity in Alexandria, the Delta City outshone even Rome.

Chapter 2 argued for the existence of the Catechetical School, the *Didaskaleion*, in Alexandria within the academic setting already referred to – it was referred to by Eusebius as a "school of sacred words" (*Hist Eccl* 5.10.1, 4; 6.6.1). The School was

headed by Christian scholars. Evidence could be found of eighteen such scholars' connection to the School, but only Clement and Origen could be named as heads with absolute certainty. Owing to a lack of more detailed evidence, the mentioned scholars were all discussed as individuals who had headed the School for varying periods. Apart from the philosophy and *gnosis* that were taught at the School, the form of teaching that stood out was allegory, which had been inherited from Philo Judaeus. As the School had to defend the Christian belief system, the heads soon developed what can be called an early Christian apology (cf Fogarty 2004:124).

The following heads of the *Didaskaleion* had outstanding characteristics that enabled them to contribute to the development of early Christianity and its spread over Africa:

- Mark wrote the first (oldest) Gospel that was included in the Christian Bible.
- Athenagoras had previously been a leading pagan and therefore knew how to counter paganism.
- Pantaenus placed philosophy within a Christian milieu (Schaff Vol 8, 1885:2066, cf also Vol 2, 1885:369) – something his successors utilised to the advantage of Christianity. In collaboration with Clement he translated the Bible into the native tongue of the Egyptians.
- Although Pantaenus placed philosophy in a Christian milieu, it was Clement who, according to Schaff (1910:782), was the father of the Christian philosophy in Alexandria, as well as the founder of formalised Christianity. Fogarty (2004:127) maintained that Clement initiated a Christian Theology through his scholarly works, while MacCulloch (2009:148) depicted him as one of the earliest Christian writers on moral Theology. It is interesting to note that Clement was the first person to use the Greek term ἰχθύς as a symbol for Christianity and an acronym for *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*.
- Although Clement was called the father of the Christian philosophy, Origen was credited with introducing historical philosophy (McLelland 1976:117). Vrettos (2001:181) called Origen the father of theological science. Origen was a master of allegory, which views Scripture as having several layers of meaning. He developed a "threefold sense of Scripture": Grammar-cohistorical, moral, and pneumatic" (Barrett 2011:53). Lastly it can be stated that Origen was the inventor of restitution (Ramelli 2009:135).

- Heraclas gave a great example of philosophical life and *askesis* (*Hist Eccl* 6.33).

Chapter 3 contains and elaborates on discussion of the writings produced by the heads to show how the Theology, ethics and morals of Christianity were developed by these scholars.

In Chapter 4 the influence of the (heads of the) *Didaskaleion* is discussed as either factual influence or derived influence. In the first part the direct influence of the heads is discussed and the reader can see how their influence on each other ran like a golden thread through the history of the School. Once again the two key figures, Clement and Origen, played decisive roles. The heads exerted influence not only through their words or the documents they wrote, but also through their conduct. Origen, for instance, castrated himself in order to live closer to God. Almost two centuries later Augustine referred to men and women who practised castration for the same reason, this time in North Africa, west of Alexandria.

Stephen was the first Christian martyr (Ac 7), but soon many more would follow in Alexandria and the rest of Egypt. Heads of the School that were martyred were Mark, Heraclas, Pierius (possibly) and Peter the Martyr. By submitting to martyrdom they showed the Romans and those belonging to all the other religions and cults in and around Alexandria that they would rather be martyred for their faith than become *traditores*. During the persecutions ordered by Diocletian between 284 and 313 many Christian leaders in North Africa decided that the Christian faith was not worth dying for – they were called *traditores*.

It is evident that in North Africa, specifically in Carthage, the Church Fathers Tertullian and Cyprian were also influenced by the teachings of the School in Alexandria. A comparison between the writings of Clement, Origen and Tertullian indicated that the church in the West was definitely influenced by the School, specifically on issues like martyrdom and the redistribution of wealth.

Outside of Africa and outside the time period covered by the thesis, two important cases were mentioned in which the School's influence was visible:

- Outside of Africa: The Council of Nicaea and in fact all the Councils that followed, built on the Theology that was already founded in Alexandria. Even one of the creeds that was adopted by the Councils was the fruitful work of a delegate from Alexandria, named Athanasius. This was not the last contribution of Athanasius, as will be seen later.
- Today: The Coptic Church in Alexandria and also in other parts of the world, for example the United States, is still using the Apostolic and Coptic Church Orders that were constructed in the time of the Early Church.

Concerning derived influence, Egypt and the countries to its south showed many more signs of having been influenced by the *Didaskaleion* and her heads than the countries in North Africa. One reason for this is that after the church had split into an Eastern and Western church, Egypt and the countries to its south formed part of the East, while the countries to its west sided with Rome. It is obvious that the countries to the south of Egypt benefited much more from the missionary work undertaken at the time, as they started living according to Christian principles with regard to ethical and moral issues, such as infanticide, abortion and suicide.

During the time when Theognostus was the head of the School, Athanasius was the Bishop of the church in Alexandria. In 267, almost a century before the canon of the Bible was concluded by the Council of Laodicea in 363, Athanasius sent out an *Easter Festal Letter* containing all the current books of the New Testament. It can be argued that this letter of Athanasius influenced the people over a period of almost a century to accept the books he had judged to be canonical.

As there were many groups of Christians, even in Alexandria, different "Theologies" were developed. This led to lively debates concerning issues that were accepted by one group but not by all of them. Burning issues that were debated were the existence of heretical groups like Arianism, Trinitarianism, Donatism and Pelagianism. The conclusions arrived at through these debates were disseminated and led many believers to reject the false or negative influences of these groups.

The Christian influence that flowed from Alexandria especially to the south was clearly visible as Christianity spread through Egypt and further to Nubia, Aksum and Kush. Even though delegates (missionaries) from Egypt were working there, no Christian schools (intellectual centres of Christianity) were established in the south to promote the doctrines of the School in Alexandria. However, much later two schools were established in Carthage and Hippo in North Africa: The one in Carthage, founded more than a century after the establishment of the *Didaskaleion*, had proponents like Tertullian and Cyprian. Then, after almost another century has passed, the second school was founded in Hippo under the leadership of Augustine.

As Christianity flourished in Africa until the Arab invasion, it is clear that this continent owes Alexandria (with the School and her heads) an accolade for introducing Christianity to Africa, for nurturing proponents like Clement and Origen, for developing a Christian Theology and disseminating it and for influencing the continent in such a positive way that this religion could flourish here, especially during the first seven centuries.

5. A final word

This thesis supplied an answer to the research question in such a way that it should encourage younger scholars who are really interested in the topic and in Africa to do further research. More extensive research on the topic and other related topics is extremely important and recommended to further prove the vital role Africa played in laying the foundation for the formulation of the Theology of Christianity in its earliest forms.

"Can anything good come out of Africa?"

Addendum A
Chronological list of Patriarchs/Bishops of Alexandria

No.	Date	Patriarch/Bishop	Coptic Name
1	40/43-62	Mark the Evangelist	Markos
2	62-83	Anianus (the cobbler)	Inianos
3	83-95	Avilius/Abelios	Mielou
4	95-106	Kedron	Kerdonou
5	106-118	Primus	Epriemou
6	118-129	Justus	Iostos
7	129-141	Eumenius/Eumanius	Oumenios
8	141-152	Mark 2/Markianos	Markianos
9	152-166	Celadion/Keladion	Kalavtianos
10	166-178	Aggripinus/Aggripinos	Aghreppinos
11	178-188	Julian	Yulianos
12	189-232	Demetrius 1/Dimitrios	Demetrios
13	232-248	Heraclas/Heraklas	Yaraklas
14	248-264	Dionysius/Dionysios	Dionesios
15	265-282	Maximus	Maximos
16	282-300	Theonas	Theona
17	300-310	Peter 1, seal of martyrs	Petros 1
18	310-313	Achillas	Archelaos
19	313-328	Alexander 1	Alexanderos 1
20	328-373	Athanasius 1, the Great	Athanasios 1
21	373-378	Peter 2	Petros 2
22	378-384	Timothy 1, the Destitute	Timotheos 1
23	384-412	Theophilus/Theophilos	Theophelos
24	412-444	Cyril 1, Pillar of Faith	Kyrillos 1
25	444-454	Dioscorus/Dioscurus	Dioscoros 1
26	457-477	Timothy 2, Ailuros	Timotheos 2
27	482-489	Peter 3, Mongos	Petros 3
28	489-496	Athanasius 2, Kelitis	Athanasios 2
29	496-505	John 1, the Monk	Yoannis 1
30	505-516	John 2 of Nicaea	Yoannis 2
31	516-518	Dioscorus 2, the Younger	Dioscoros 2
32	518-536	Timothy 3	Timotheos 3
33	536-567	Theodosius 1	Theodosios 1
34	567-576	Peter 4	Petros 4

No.	Date	Patriarch/Bishop	Coptic Name
35	576-605	Damian	Damianos
36	605-616	Anastasius	Anastasios
37	616-623	Andronicus	Andronikos
38	623-662	Benjamin 1	Benjamin 1
39	662-680	Agathon	Agatho
40	680-689	John 3	Yoannis 3
41	689-692	Isaac	Isaac
42	692-699	Simeon 1	Simeon 1
43	704-729	Alexander 2	Alexanderos 2
44	729-730	Cosmas 1	Kosma 1
45	730-742	Theodore 1	Theodoros
46	743-767	Michael 1	Khail 1
47	767-776	Mina 1	Mina 1
48	777-799	John 4	Yoannis 4
49	799-819	Mark 2	Markos 2
50	819-821	James	Jacob/Yakobos
51	830	Simeon 2	Simeon 2
52	831-849	Joseph	Yousab 1
53	849-851	Michael 2	Khail 2
54	851-858	Cosmas 2	Kosma 2
55	859-880	Shenouda 1	Shenouda 1
56	880-907	Michael 3	Mikhail 1
57	910-920	Gabriel 1	Gabriel 1
58	920-932	Cosmas 3	Kosma 3
59	932-952	Macarius 1	Macarios 1
60	952-956	Theophilus	Theophelios
61	956-974	Mina 2	Mina 2
62	975-978	Abraham	Abraham/Avraam
63	979-1003	Philotheos	Philotheos
64	1004-1032	Zacharias	Zacharias
65	1032-1046	Shenouda 2	Shenouda 2
66	1047-1077	Christodoulos	Khristodoulos
67	1078-1092	Cyril 2	Kirellos 2
68	1092-1102	Michael 4	Mikhail 2
69	1102-1128	Macarius 2	Macarios 2
70	1131-1145	Gabriel 2	Gabriel 2
71	1145-1146	Mikhail 5	Mikhail 3
72	1147-1166	John 5	Yoannis 5

No.	Date	Patriarch/Bishop	Coptic Name
73	1166-1189	Mark 3	Markos 3
74	1189-1216	John 6	Yoannis 6
75	1235-1243	Cyril 3	Kirellos 3
76	1250-1261	Athanasius 3	Athanasios 3
77	1262-1268	John 7	Yoannis 7
78	1268-1271	Gabriel 3	Gabriel 3
	1271-1293	John 7	Yoannis 7
79	1293-1300	Theodosius 2	Theodosios 2
80	1300-1320	John 8	Yoannis 8
81	1320-1327	John 9	Yoannis 9
82	1327-1339	Benjamin 2	Benjamin 2
83	1340-1348	Peter 5	Petros 5
84	1348-1363	Mark 4	Marcos 4
85	1363-1369	John 10	Yoannis 10
86	1370-1378	Gabriel 4	Gabriel 4
87	1378-1408	Matthew	Matheos 1
88	1409-1427	Gabriel 5	Gabriel 5
89	1427-1452	John 11	Yoannis 11
90	1452-1465	Matthew 2	Matheos 2
91	1466-1474	Gabriel 6	Gabriel 6
92	1477-1478	Michael 6	Mikhail 4
93	1480-1483	John 12	Yoannis 12
94	1484-1524	John 13	Yoannis 13
95	1525-1570	Gabriel 7	Gabriel 7
96	1571-1586	John 14	Yoannis 14
97	1587-1603	Gabriel 8	Gabriel 8
98	1603-1619	Mark 5	Marcos 5
99	1619-1629	John 14	Yoannis 15
100	1631-1646	Matthew 3	Matheos 3
101	1646-1656	Mark 6	Marcos 6
102	1660-1675	Matthew 4	Matheos 4
103	1676-1718	John 16	Yoannis 16
104	1718-1726	Peter 6	Petros 6
105	1727-1745	John 17	Joannis 17
106	1745-1769	Mark 7	Marcos 7
107	1769-1796	John 18	Yoannis 18
108	1796-1809	Mark 8	Marcos 8
109	1809-1852	Peter 7	Petros 7

No.	Date	Patriarch/Bishop	Coptic Name
110	1854-1861	Cyril 4	Kyrillos 4
111	1861-1870	Demetrius 2	Demetrius 2
112	1874-1927	Cyril 5	Kyrillos 5
113	1928-1942	John 19	Yoannis 19
114	1944-1945	Macarius 3	Macarios 3
115	1946-1956	Joseph 2	Yousab 2
116	1959-1971	Cyril 6	Kyrillos 6
117	1971-2012	Shenouda 3	Shenouda 3
118	2012-	Theodore 2	Theodoros 2
(Sources: http://www.copticchurch.net/topics/synexarion/popes-of-alexandria-chron.html and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Coptic_Orthodox_Popes_of_Alexandria)			

Addendum B

Time-line of Emperors and Popes during the existence of the Roman Empire until the end of the 5th century

All these are only estimated dates as it is impossible to determine the exact date/s from the documents to our disposal.

Time BCE	Event
753	Roma (Rome) is founded by Romulus.
750	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Greeks established a colony at Cuma. • First Etruscan inscriptions.
616	Tarquinius 1 became an Etruscan king of Roma.
600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Etruscans built the colossal tombs of Cerveteri. • The Forum was built. • Oldest Latin inscriptions.
578	Tarquinius Priscus built the Cloaca Maxima, the first sewer.
550	Servius Tullius built the city walls.
509	The last king is expelled and Roma became a republic.
494	Plebeians rebelled against the patricians – the beginning of the class wars.
486	The consul Spurius Cassius proposed land redistribution to the poor, but the patricians murdered him.
474	The Greeks defeated the Etruscans at Cuma.
450	The Twelve Tables of the Roman law were re-enacted.
396	Roma conquered the Etruscan city of Veii.
387	The Gauls/Celts sacked Roma.
376	Licinius and Sextius proposed laws to appease the Plebeians, but the senate postponed them indefinitely.
367	Licinius' laws were finally enacted.
366	Lucius Sextius became the first plebeian consul.
343	Rome fought the Samnites.
341	Rome conquered Campania from the Samnites with its capital Capua.
340	Rome fought the Latin League, including the Samnites.
338	Rome dissolved and annexed the Latin League.
323-282:	Ptolemy 1 Soter: Founded the <i>Musaion</i> with its library in Alexandria.
326	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Circus Maximus was built. • A new war began against the Samnites.
321	At the Battle of Caudine Forks Rome won the Second Samnite War against the Samnites.
312	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Via Appia is begun. • The first aqueduct, the Aqua Appia, is built.
308	Rome conquered the Etruscan city Tarquinia.
300	From now on a plebeian could rise to the priesthood.
298	Rome again went to war against the Samnites.
295	Rome defeated the Samnites at Sentinum and the Gauls/Celts in northern Italy.

Time BCE	Event
287	The Lex Hortensia made plebiscites (laws passed by the Assembly in which plebeians outnumbered patricians) binding on the senate of the patricians.
283	Roma established Gallia Cisalpina (Cisalpine Gaul) in northern Italy.
282-246: Ptolemy 2 Philadelphos: Built the <i>Pharos</i> in Alexandria	
280	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rome issued coins. Rome was defeated by Pyrrhus of Epirus at Heraclea.
275	Rome defeated Pyrrhus and conquered most of southern Italy.
272	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A second aqueduct, the Anio Vetus, was built. The Greek colony of Tarentum surrendered to Roma and soon all the remaining Greek colonies of southern Italy followed suit.
264	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rome and Carthage fought the first Punic war. The Romans destroyed the last vestiges of the Etruscan civilisation (Volsinies).
260	The Roman senate authorised the construction of a navy of triremes.
246-221: Ptolemy 3 Euergetes: Began to build the temple at Edfu.	
232	Gaius Flaminius enacted an agrarian law ceding land of northern Italy to poorer classes of citizens.
225	The Gauls invaded Rome.
222	The invading Gauls were defeated.
221	The Circus Flaminius.
221-205: Ptolemy 4 Philopator: Began to build temples at Esna and Kom Ombo.	
220	A law was passed to forbid senators from entering into business.
218	Hannibal invaded Italy. The Gauls of northern Italy allied with him.
214	War machines designed by Greek mathematician Archimedes saved the city of Syracuse, an ally of Carthage, from a Roman naval attack.
207	Rome defeated Carthage's Hannibal at the Metaurus River.
205-180: Ptolemy 5 Epiphanes	
203	Rome organised the northern colonies of Placentia and Cremona in the territory of the Gauls.
202	Scipio defeated Hannibal, and Rome annexed Spain.
196	The slaves of Etruria rebelled.
195	The Celts of Spain rebelled.
194-176: Cleopatra 1	
189	Antiochus 3, king of the Seleucids, was defeated at the battle of Magnesia and surrendered his possessions in Europe and Asia Minor.
185	The slaves of Apulia rebelled.
184	The oldest known basilica, the Basilica Porcia was built in Rome.
181	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aquileia was founded on the head of the Adriatic. The Gauls of northern Italy were definitely subjugated.
180-145: Ptolemy 6 Philometor	
175	The Celts of Spain were subjugated.
175-115: Cleopatra 2	
171	The Third Macedonian War began when Perseus attacked Rome.
170-116: Ptolemy 7 Euergetes	

Time BCE	Event
167	At the end of the Third Macedonian War the Romans divided Macedonia into four republics.
154	The tribes of Lusitania rebelled against Rome.
151	Roman troops massacred Celts in Spain.
149	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rome attacked Carthage. • Rome conquered Greece after destroying of Corinth.
146	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macedonia became a province of Rome. • Rome destroyed Carthage.
145-144: Ptolemy 8 Neos Philopator	
144	The first high-level aqueduct was built.
142-101: Cleopatra 3	
139	Slave revolt in Sicily with the crucifixion of 4,500 slaves.
135	Second slave revolt in Sicily ("First Servile War").
133	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiberius Gracchus enacted a law to redistribute land to the poor farmers, but was assassinated together with 300 of his supporters. • Attalus 3 of Pergamum willed his kingdom to Rome, and the whole Mediterranean Sea came under Roman control ("mare nostrum").
128	Southern France (Aquitania) became a province of Rome.
126	Italians forbidden by law to emigrate to Rome.
123	Tiberius' brother Gaius Gracchus enacted populist laws.
121	A cornered Gaius Gracchus committed suicide and thousands of his followers were killed by the senate.
116-80: Ptolemy 9 Soter	
113	Germanic tribes Cimbri and Teutones defeated the Romans and invaded Gaul and Spain.
111	Rome declared war on Numidia.
107-88: Ptolemy 10 Alexander 1	
106	The Romans, led by newly elected consul Marius, defeated King Jugurtha of Numidia.
105	The Teutones and the Cimbri defeated the Romans at Arausio/Orange.
104	Slave revolt in Sicily ("Second Servile War").
103	Athenion led a slave revolt in Sicily.
102	Consul Gaius Marius defeated the Teutonic army at Aquae Sextiae/Aix-en-Provence, killing about 100,000 of them.
101	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consul Gaius Marius defeated the Cimbri at Vercelli, killing almost all of them. • Roman troops massacred Athenion's rebels.
100	Lucius Saturninus proposed Gracchian reforms, but was killed by Marius' troops.
98	Roman troops massacred Spaniards.
95	The city of Rome expelled all non-Roman citizens (except slaves).
90	Central and southern Italians started the "social wars" over the issue of citizenship.
88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central and southern Italians were granted full citizenship. • Sulla marched on Rome to seize power from Marius. This was the first time that a Roman army invaded Rome.

Time BCE	Event
87	Octavius and Cinna were elected consuls, but Octavius, a defender of the optimates and an ally of Sulla, was killed by Marius when he opposed Cinna, the defender of the populares. Many Sulla supporters were also killed.
82	By winning the battle at Porta Collina, Sulla reconquered Rome, executed thousands of political enemies including forty senators, and became the dictator, establishing a reign of terror and enacting aristocratic laws.
80: Ptolemy 11 Alexander 2	
80	Sulla retired to private life.
80-51: Ptolemy 12 Neos Dionysus: Erected buildings at Dendera, Edfu and Philae.	
79: Cleopatra 4	
74	Cicero entered the senate.
73	Spartacus led the revolt of the gladiators ("Third Servile War").
71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mithridates 6 of Pontus was conquered by Roman General Lucius Lucullus. Crassus put down Spartacus' revolt and 6,000 slaves were crucified on the Via Appia.
70	Crassus and Pompey were elected consuls.
69	Rome invaded Tigranes' Armenian kingdom and destroyed its capital Tigranocerta.
68	Julius Caesar was appointed to Spain.
67	Pompey launched a campaign against pirates of Cilicia and was given dictatorial powers by the senate.
64	Syria became a Roman province under General Pompey (Gnaeus Pompeius).
63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cicero thwarted Catilina's attempted coup. Pompey captured Jerusalem and annexed Palestine to Rome.
60	Crassus, Pompey and Caesar formed a "triumvirate."
59	Caesar was elected consul.
57	Caesar conquered all of Gaul, killing tens of thousands of people.
55	Caesar fought German tribes and crossed the Rhine.
53	in the first war against Persia, Crassus was defeated and killed by the Parthians at Carrhae (Syria).
52	Clodius, the main defender of the plebeians/the Pompeian party, was assassinated by his rival Milo.
51-47: Ptolemy 13	
51	Caesar crushed the revolt of Vercingetorix in Gaul.
51-30: Cleopatra 7: Tried to preserve Egyptian power by joining forces with Rome. She almost succeeded with the help of Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony.	
50	Rome introduced the gold coin "aureus."
49	When the senate asked for his resignation, Caesar crossed the Rubicon and invaded Rome.
48	Caesar defeated Pompey at Pharsalus and became sole dictator of Rome, calling himself "Imperator."
47-44: Ptolemy 14	
47	Caesar invaded Egypt and proclaimed Cleopatra queen (ethnically a Macedonian Greek).

Time BCE	Event
46	Caesar defeated an army of Pompeians and Numidians at the battle of Thapsus.
45	Julius Caesar employed the Egyptian astronomer Sosigenes to work out a new 12-month calendar (the Julian calendar).
44-30: Ptolemy 15	
44	Julius Caesar was killed.
43	A triumvirate was appointed with Marcus Antonius, the partner in Caesar's fifth consulship, and Octavius, Caesar's adopted son.
42	The religious cult of Julius Caesar was officially instituted by the senate.
36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rome tried to invade Persia. • Octavius defeated Sextus Pompey and the senate appointed him Tribune for life.
32	Marcus Antonius divorced his wife Octavia and married Cleopatra.
31	Octavius, whose navy was led by Marcus Agrippa, defeated Marcus Antonius at the battle of Actium, thus ending the civil wars.
30	Octavius (later Augustus Caesar) captured Alexandria. Both Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra committed suicide. Egypt became a Roman province.
29	Octavius returned to Rome.
Time of the "real" Emperors 27 BCE-14 CE: Augustus/Octavius	
27	Octavius appointed himself "Augustus" (the first Emperor) and founded the Praetorian Guard.
20	A treaty between Rome and Persia (Parthians) fixed the boundary between the two empires along the Euphrates River (Iraq).
18	Augustus enacted the "Julian law of chastity and repressing adultery."
13	Augustus expanded the borders to the region of the Danube.
12	Augustus became Pontifex Maximus.
6	Jesus was born in Palestine.
Time CE	Event
1	Rome had about one million citizens.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forum of Augustus was inaugurated. • Augustus, whose sons have died, chose Tiberius as his adopted son.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rome acknowledges Cymbeline, King of the Catuvellauni, as King of Britain. • Augustus' General Tiberius submitted the German tribes between the Rhine and the Elbe.
6	Pannonia and Dalmatia revolted.
7	Augustus expanded the borders to the Balkans.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gothic warlord, Arminius, destroyed the Roman army at the Teutoburg Forest, while Rome withdrew the border to the Rhine. • Augustus' General Tiberius defeated the Pannonians and Dalmatians.
12	The last Etruscan inscription was carved.
14-37: Tiberius	

Time CE	Event
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augustus died and Tiberius became Emperor, appointing Sejanus chief of the Praetorian Guard. • The Roman Empire had a population of five million people.
19	Tiberius' adopted son Germanicus died and his wife Agrippina moved to Rome with her children, including Caligula.
23	Sejanus plotted to murder Drusus, Tiberius' son and heir.
24/25	Jesus began his ministry.
25	Agrippa built the Pantheon.
26	Tiberius left Rome, leaving Sejanus <i>de facto</i> to run the Empire.
27/28	Jesus was crucified and resurrected.
31	Tiberius survived a plot by Sejanus, who was killed.
33-67: Pope Peter (the Apostle) (?)	
33	Marcus Agrippa was placed in charge of municipal works in Rome and proceeded to build hundreds of cisterns, fountains and public baths.
35	Stephen became the first martyr (under the Jews). Many Christians left Jerusalem for Samaria and other parts of the Empire.
37-41: Caligula	
37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiberius was murdered and succeeded by the mad Caligula, the only surviving son of Agrippina. • Paul became a Christian.
39	Caligula's sisters, Agrippina and Livilla, plotted to murder him, but failed and were exiled.
41-54: Claudius	
41	Caligula was assassinated and the Praetorian Guard appointed Claudius, Germanicus' brother and Agrippina's brother-in-law, as Emperor, so Agrippina could return to Rome.
42	James (one of the Apostles) was executed by Herod Agrippa 1 (grandson of Herod the Great).
43	Claudius invaded Britain.
46	Thracia became a Roman province,
48	Claudius' wife, Messalina, was executed for conspiring to overthrow her husband, and Claudius married his niece, Agrippina the Younger, daughter of Agrippina, who actually was the lover of his advisor Pallas.
49	Agrippina and Pallas established a reign of terror behind the back of the nominal Emperor Claudius.
50	The Romans founded Londinium in Britain.
54-68: Nero	
54	Claudius was assassinated by Agrippina and is succeeded by Agrippina's son Nero.
58	The Romans conquered Armenia.
59	Nero ordered the assassination of his mother Agrippina.
62	The childless Nero divorced his loyal wife Octavia, who was beheaded, and married the pregnant Poppaea while establishing a reign of terror.
62/66	James, the brother of Jesus and Bishop of Jerusalem was martyred.
64	Nero set fire to Rome and blamed the Christians for it. Many Christians, including Peter and Paul, were executed afterwards in Rome.
67-76: Pope Linus	

Time CE	Event
68-69: Galba	
68	Gaul and Spain rebelled against Nero. Nero committed suicide to avoid capture, while the Spanish governor, Galba, was pronounced the new Emperor.
69: Otho/Vitellius	
69	Galba was murdered by the Praetorian Guard who has been bribed by Otho, but the General of the German legions, Vitellius, invaded Italy and claimed the Empire.
69-79: Vespasian	
70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitellius and his followers were defeated by Vespasian, the General of the Egyptian legions who became the new Emperor. • Titus destroyed Jerusalem, and the Jews fled to Armenia, Iraq, Iran, Arabia, Egypt, Italy, Spain and Greece.
72	Jude, the brother of James, was crucified in Edessa.
76-88: Pope Anacletus	
77	The Romans conquered Wales.
79-81: Titus	
79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vespasian died and was succeeded by his son, Titus Flavius Vespasianus. • Mount Vesuvius erupted and Pompeii was buried under ash. • The Colosseum was completed.
80	The Romans invaded Caledonia (Scotland).
81-96: Domitian	
81	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Arch of Titus was erected. • Titus died and was succeeded by his brother Domitian.
84	British rebels were defeated by the Romans at the battle of Mons Graupius.
88-97: Pope Clement 1	
92-96	Christians were severely persecuted.
96-98: Nerva	
96	Domitian was assassinated and the senate replaced him with the old Nerva, thus terminating the principle of heredity (for a century).
97	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rome forbade human sacrifice throughout the Roman Empire. • Chinese General Pan Chao sent an embassy to the Roman Empire. • Timothy was martyred in Ephesus.
98-117: Trajan	
98-106: Pope Evaristus (according to the Liberian Catalogue his name was Aristus)	
98	Nerva died and his designated heir, Trajan, became Emperor.
100	The city of Rome had one million inhabitants at this stage in history.
106-115: Pope Alexander 1	
106	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trajan defeated Dacia, which became a Roman province. • Trajan captured the Nabataean capital, Petra (Jordan) and turned Nabataea into the province of Arabia.
107	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Roman Empire sent an embassy to India. • Ignatius was thrown to wild beasts in Rome.
110	The Basilica of Trajano was completed.

Time CE	Event
111	Pliny the Younger (Trajan's legate) executed followers of Christ's teachings.
112	The Forum of Trajanus was inaugurated.
113	The Colonna Traiana was erected.
115-125: Pope Sixtus 1 (Xystus according to the oldest documents)	
116	Trajan conquered Mesopotamia and the Parthian capital Ctesiphon.
117-138: Hadrian	
117	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trajan died on his way to the Persian Gulf, and Hadrian, his wife's lover, became Emperor. Golgotha was levelled in Jerusalem. Many Christians suffered persecution. Eustachius (a Roman army commander) and his family were martyred.
122	Hadrian's Wall was built along the northern frontier to protect the Empire from the barbarians.
125-136: Pope Telesphorus	
132	Jews, led by Bar-Cochba, whom some have identified as the Messiah, revolted against Rome.
134	The Villa Hadriana was opened.
136-140: Pope Hyginus	
136	Hadrian crushed the Jewish resistance, forbade Jews from entering Jerusalem and changed the name of the city to Aelia Capitolina.
138-161: Antoninus Pius	
138	Hadrian was succeeded by Antoninus Pius, who repealed Hadrian's anti-Jewish laws.
139	Hadrian's mausoleum (Castel Sant'Angelo) was built.
140-154: Pope Pius 1	
155	Polycarp was martyred in Smyrna. Other Christians were persecuted.
157-168: Pope Anicetus	
161-180: Marcus Aurelius; 161-169: Lucius Aurelius Verus	
161	Antoninus died and his heir designate Marcus Aurelius, a philosopher, became Roman Emperor with Lucius Verus as co-Emperor – the first time that Rome is ruled by two Emperors.
162	The British Celts revolted and Parthia declared war on Rome.
164	The plague ("Antonine plague") spread throughout the Roman Empire.
166-174: Pope Soter	
166	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lucius defeated the Parthians and destroyed their capital, Ctesiphon. Justin Martyr (a Christian philosopher) and eleven fellow-Christians were executed in Rome.
167	The Roman Empire was attacked for the first time by barbarians (the German Quadi and Marcomanni).
169	The Roman Empire was invaded by northern Germans.
175-189: Pope Eleutherius	
175	Aurelius defeated the German barbarians.

Time CE	Event
177	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aurelius ordered the persecution of sects like the Christians, and the slave girl Blandina was tortured to death. Many Christians were martyred in Lyons.
178	Aurelius and his son Commodus fought the Third Marcomannic War against the German barbarians.
180-192: Commodus	
180	Aurelius died and his teenage son Commodus succeeded him, thus restoring the hereditary rule.
182	Upon discovering a conspiracy against him, Commodus established a new reign of terror.
185	The freed slave Cleander became the <i>de facto</i> ruler of Commodus' Empire.
187	The Libyan-born General of the Pannonian legions, Septimius Severus, who was raised in a Phoenician family and studied philosophy in Athens, married Julia Domna, a descendant of the high kings of the temple of Baal in Syria.
189-198: Pope Victor 1	
190	In another round of executions Commodus had Cleander himself killed.
192	The Praetorian Guard killed Emperor Commodus.
193: Pertinax; 193: Didius Julianus (Niger); 193-211: Septimius Severus	
193	Septimius Severus seized power, executed scores of senators, confiscated huge lands from the Italian aristocracy and turned Rome into a military dictatorship.
194	Rome annexed Palmyra to the province of Syria.
197	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Septimius Severus persecuted Christians in Africa. He won the civil war at the Battle of Lugdunum and reformed the Praetorian Guard with non-Italians.
198-217: Pope Zephyrinus	
198	Septimius Severus entered the Parthian capital Ctesiphon and annexed the northern half of Mesopotamia.
202	Septimius Severus expanded the southern frontier of African Rome.
203	Christians were massacred in Carthage. Perpetua and Felicitas (her slave) were tossed to wild beasts in the arena.
208	Septimius Severus began a campaign in Britain.
209-211: Geta; 211-217: Caracalla	
211	Septimius Severus died in Britain and was succeeded by his sons Lucius Septimius Bassianus (Caracalla) and Geta. Septimius Severus was the last Emperor to die of natural causes until 284. Most of the others were murdered by the Praetorian Guard or the soldiers and all of them reigned for an average of three years.
212	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caracalla murdered his brother Geta and sentenced to death 20,000 of Geta's followers. Caracalla granted Roman citizenship to all free people who lived in the Roman Empire, but only to subject them to the same taxes.
214	Caracalla murdered King Abgar 9 of Edessa and declared Edessa a Roman colony.
215	Caracalla massacred inhabitants of Alexandria.
217-218: Macrinus	

Time CE	Event
217	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Baths of Caracalla were inaugurated. Caracalla, accompanied by his mother Julia began a campaign against the Parthians, but was murdered in Edessa by his soldiers, while the head of the Praetorian Guard appointed himself Emperor.
218-222: Elagabalus (Heliogabalus)	
218-222: Callistus 1	
219	Julia Maesa, Julia Domna's sister, led a Syrian army that defeated the imperial army and installed her teenage grandson Varius Avitus (Elagabalus), a Syrian priest of Baal, as Emperor. Maesa, however, was the <i>de facto</i> ruler while Elagabalus worshiped a conical black stone representing Baal as the supreme god.
222-235: Alexander Severus	
222-230: Pope Urban 1	
222	<p>The Praetorian Guard murdered Elagabalus and installed Elagabalus' cousin Alexianus (Alexander Severus) as Emperor. He was a grandson of Maesa's and also a teenager, so the real power was in the hands of his mother Julia Mamaea who restored</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jupiter as supreme Roman god; the power of the senate; morality by banning homosexuals and prostitutes.
230-235: Pope Pontian	
230	The Sassanids invaded Mesopotamia.
233	Alexander defeated the Sassanids.
235-238: Maximin (Maximinus Thrax)	
235-236: Pope Anterus (Anteros)	
235	Alexander was assassinated by soldiers loyal to Julius Maximinus, General of the Pannonian legions. This marked the beginning of a fifty-year civil war.
236-250: Pope Fabian	
238: Gordian 1; Gordian 2; Pupienus; Balbinus; 238-244: Gordian 3 (the Younger)	
237	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pontianus and Anteros (two Bishops of Rome) were martyred. Other Christians, like Hippolytus, were also martyred.
238	Maximinus was assassinated by his own soldiers and died without ever having visited Rome, while the senate declared Maximus the new Emperor. He was, in turn, promptly assassinated by the Praetorian Guard that appointed the ten-year-old Gordian 3 as Emperor.
244-249: Philip 1 (Philip the Arab or Philip "Arabs")	
244	Shapur 1 became the king of the Sassanids and attacked Rome. Gordian was assassinated by his soldiers while fighting that war.
249-251: Decius	
249	The Emperor, Philip the Arab, was killed in battle by a rebel king Decius.
250	The Edict of Emperor Decius ordered the first Empire-wide persecution of Christians. The Bishop of Rome was among those killed.
251-253: Pope Cornelius	
251: Hostilian; 251-253: Gallus (Volusianus)	
251	Decius was killed by the Goths in battle.
253: Aemilianus; 253-259: Valerian	

Time CE	Event
253-254: Pope Lucius 1	
253	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Emperor Gallus and his successor Aemilianus were killed by their soldiers and were succeeded by the old Valerian who appointed his son Gallienus as co-Emperor in the West. • Gallienus became Emperor, but thirty "tyrants" carved out their own kingdoms around the Empire. • Valerian issued edicts to persecute Christians. The first one barred them from worshipping.
254-257: Pope Stephen 1	
255	The Goths invaded Macedonia, Dalmatia and Asia Minor.
256	The Persians/Sassanids defeated the Romans and conquered Dura Europus in Mesopotamia.
257-258: Pope Sixtus 2 (Xystus in the oldest documents)	
257	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valerian reconquered Syria from the Sassanids. • Cyprian (in Carthage), Aemilian (in Spolegium, Italy), Bishop Saturninus (in Toulouse) and Lawrence (in Rome) were all executed.
258	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sassanids conquered Armenia. • Valerian persecuted Christians. Even Pope Sixtus 2 was executed. • Postumus declared the independence of Gaul.
259-268: Gallienus	
260-268: Pope Dionysius	
260	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valerian was captured by the Sassanid king Shapur 1 after the Battle of Edessa – the first Roman Emperor to become a prisoner of war. • The plague spread throughout the Roman Empire, decimating its population.
261	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gallienus forbade aristocrats from serving in the army and relaxed the laws against Christianity. • King Odenathus of Palmyra defeated the Sassanids on behalf of Rome, annexing Arabia, Anatolia and Armenia.
263	The Goths raided Ephesus and destroyed the temple of Artemis, that was one of the seven wonders of the world.
266	Odenathus was assassinated, and his wife Zenobia became the new ruler of Syria.
267	The Goths raided the Greek cities.
268-270: Claudius 2	
268	Gallienus was assassinated by his own officers.
269-274: Pope Felix 1	
269	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Goths raided the Greek cities for a second time, but were defeated by the Roman Emperor Claudius 2. • Zenobia conquered Egypt and expelled the Roman governor.
270: Quintillus; 270-275: Aurelian	
270	Claudius 2 died of the plague and the army chose Aurelian as the new Emperor.
271	Emperor Aurelian defeated the invading Germans.
273	Aurelian destroyed the rebellious city of Palmyra in Zenobia's kingdom.

Time CE	Event
274	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurelian defeated Zenobia and brought her as a hostage to Rome, reuniting the eastern Empire. • Aurelian defeated the rebellious Gauls. • Aurelian decreed the birth of the unconquerable sun to counter the Christians in Egypt who worshiped Jesus.
275-283: Pope Eutychianus	
275-276: Tacitus	
275	Aurelian was killed by his officers and was succeeded by the old Tacitus who died within months.
276: Florian; 276-282: Probus	
276	Probus restored peace by repelling the last barbarians on Roman soil.
282-283: Carus	
282	Probus was assassinated by his soldiers.
283-284: Numerian; 283-285: Carinus; 284-305: Diocletian	
283-296: Pope Caius	
284	Diocletian, the son of a Dalmatian slave, became Emperor, but ruled from Nicomedia in the East.
285	Diocletian, proclaiming himself the human manifestation of Jupiter, reunited the Empire and ended the fifty-year civil war.
286-305: Maximian	
286	Diocletian appointed Maximian to rule the West, with the capital in Milano.
293	Diocletian instituted the "tetrarchy" under which each Emperor chose his successor ahead of time, and Diocletian chose Galerius while Maximian chose Constantius Chlorus.
295	The Sassanids invaded the eastern Empire again.
296-304: Pope Marcellinus	
298	All soldiers had to sacrifice to pagan gods.
299	The Sassanids surrendered to Roman Emperor Galerius, who annexed Armenia, Georgia and Upper Mesopotamia.
300	The population of the Roman Empire reached 60 million (about 15 million Christians).
303	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diocletian and Maximian ordered a general persecution of the Christians, including the destruction of all churches (1,500 Christians were killed in eight years). • The thermae of Diocletian were built.
303-304	Maximian issued four edicts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 303: Destruction of all churches and Scriptures. 2. Imprisonment of all Christian leaders. 3. Torture of all clergy and laity who refused to sacrifice to pagan gods. 4. 304: Torture of all Christians who refused to sacrifice to pagan gods.
305-306: Constantius 1; 305-311: Galerius	
305	Diocletian and Maximian abdicated in favour of Galerius and Constantius, but civil war erupted again.
306-307: Severus; 306-308: Maximian; 306-312: Maxentius	

Time CE	Event
306	Constantius died and his son Flavius Valerius Constantinus (Constantine) is acclaimed by the troops as new vice-Emperor of Galerius, while the Praetorian Guard appointed Maximian's son Maxentius Emperor instead of Galerius' choice, Severus.
308-313: Maximinus Daia	
308-309: Pope Marcellus	
308	Galerius appointed another Emperor, Licinius.
309/310: Pope Eusebius	
311-324: Licinius; 311-337: Constantine 1	
311-314: Pope Miltiades	
311	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galerius relaxes the ban on Christianity and decreed the erection of Christian churches. Galerius died, leaving Maxentius and Constantine to fight for the throne of the West. Constantine issued the Edict of Milan and thereby granted freedom to Christians.
312	Constantine defeated Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge and became Emperor of the West while disbanding the Praetorian Guard.
313	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constantine's ally Licinius defeated Maxentius' ally Maximinus, and became co-Emperor in the East. Constantine ended the persecution of the Christians with the Edict of Milan. The Basilica of Maxentius was completed.
314-335: Pope Sylvester 1	
314	Constantine defeated Licinius and claimed all of Roman Europe except Thracia, while Licinius kept Africa and Asia.
323	Constantine defeated Licinius again and became the sole Emperor.
324	Constantine founded a new city, Constantinople (Byzantium).
325	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constantine presided at the Council of Nicaea. He introduced moral reforms and outlawed the crucifixion and branding of slaves. He and his mother (Helena) built numerous Christian churches in the Empire.
326	Constantine ordered the execution of his son Crispus and his wife Fausta Flavia Maxima.
330	Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire to Constantinople (Byzantium).
336: Pope Mark (Marcus)	
337-352: Pope Julius	
337-340: Constantine 2; 337-361: Constantius 2; 337-350: Constans	
337	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constantine 1 died a day after his baptism on Pentecost Day in 337. His sons split the Empire: Constantine 2 took Spain, Britain and Gaul, Constans 1 claimed Italy, Africa, Illyricum, Macedon and Achaea, and Constantius 2 took charge of the East. Constantius 2 implemented more moral reforms and segregated men from women in prisons.
352-366: Pope Liberius	

Time CE	Event
356	Rome had twenty-eight libraries, ten basilicas, eleven public baths, two amphitheatres, three theatres, two circuses, nineteen aqueducts, eleven squares, 1,352 fountains and 46,602 insulae (city blocks).
359	Constantinople became the capital of the Roman Empire.
360	The pagan (Mithraist) General Julian (the "apostate") defeated an invasion of barbarians and was declared Emperor by his German troops.
361-363: Julian the Apostate; 363-364: Jovian	
363	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Julian, a pagan Emperor, tried to stamp out Christianity, but died during an attempt to invade the Sassanid kingdom of Persia, which recaptured Nisibis and Armenia. General Valentinian became Emperor. An earthquake destroyed Petra.
364-375: Valentinian 2; 364-378: (East) Valens	
366-383: Pope Damasus 1	
364	Valentinian delegated Valens as Emperor of the East.
375-383: (West) Gratian; 375-392: (West) Valentinian 2	
376	Valens allowed Visigoths to settle within the Empire.
378	The Visigoths defeated the Roman army at Hadrianopolis/Adrianople.
379-395: (West) Theodosius 1	
380	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theodosius 1 proclaimed Christianity as the sole (official) religion of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was already partitioned. Egypt was ruled from Constantinople, the capital of the East Roman (Byzantine) Empire.
383-388: Maximus; 392-394: Eugenius	
384-399: Pope Siricius	
393	Theodosius forbade pagans to participate in the Olympic Games and shut down the temple of Zeus at Olympia.
395-408: (East) Arcadius; 395-423: (West) Honorius	
395	Theodosius divided the Roman Empire into the Western and Eastern Empires, with Milan and Constantinople as their capitals.
399-401: Pope Anastasius 1	
401-417: Pope Innocent 1	
402	The Western Roman Empire moved their capital from Milan to Ravenna.
406	The barbarians invaded France from the north.
410	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Visigoths sacked Rome. Rome withdrew from Britannia.
417-418: Pope Zosimus	
418-422: Pope Boniface 1	
418	The Emperor granted Wallia's Visigoths permission to settle in Aquitaine (Atlantic coast of France).
421: Constantius 3	
422-432: Pope Celestine 1	
423-425: Johannes; 408-450: (East) Theodosius 2; 425-455: (West) Valentinian 3	
425	The Eastern Emperor Theodosius 2 installed Valentinian 3 as Emperor of the West.
427	Genseric's Vandals crossed the strait of Gibraltar and landed in Africa.
432-440: Pope Sixtus 3 (Xystus in the oldest documents)	
440-461: Pope Leo 1	

Time CE	Event
443	The Emperor granted Burgundi permission to settle in Savoy.
450-457: (East) Marcian	
450	Theodosius 2 died and Marcian succeeded him. He was the first Roman Emperor to be crowned by a religious leader (Patriarch of Constantinople).
452	The Huns invaded Italy.
455: (West) Petronius; 455-456: (West) Avitus	
455	The Vandals sacked Rome.
457-461: (West) Majorian; 457-474: (East) Leo 1	
461-468: Pope Hilarus	
461-465: (West) Severus; 467-472: (West) Anthemius	
468-483: Pope Simplicius	
472: (West) Olybrius; 473: (West) Glycerius; 473-475: (West) Julius Nepos; 473-474: (East) Leo 2; 474-491: (East) Zeno; 475-476: (West) Romulus Augustulus; 475-476: (East) Basiliscus	
476	Odoacer, a mercenary in the service of Rome, leader of the Germanic soldiers in the Roman army, deposed the Western Roman Emperor and thereby terminated the Western Roman Empire.
483-492: Pope Felix 3 (or 2)	
488	Emperor Zeno sent Theodoric's Ostrogoths (still settled in Pannonia) to conquer Italy.
491-518: (East) Anastasius 1	
492-496: Pope Gelasius 1	
493	The Ostrogoths led by Theodoric conquered Italy.
496-498: Pope Anastasius 2	
498-514: Pope Symmachus	
500	Rome's population declined to less than 100,000 people.

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