

Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity in relation to his ecclesiastical and socio-political trajectories

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction - Proposal.....	4
1. Title	4
2. Abstract	4
3. Background and problem statement	6
3.1 Background.....	6
3.2 Problem statement	7
4. Aim and Objectives	10
4.1 Aim	10
4.2 Objectives	10
5. Central theoretical argument	11
6. Methodology	11
7. Concept clarification	12
7.1 Trajectories	12
7.2 Motifs	13
7.3 Hermeneutical praxis	13
8. Chapter division.....	13
Chapter 2 - The historical trajectories evident in Tertullian’s theological conception of the Trinity	15
1. Biographical Sketch.....	15
1.1 An enigmatic figure in ecclesiastical history	15
1.2 References to Tertullian beyond his own work	16
1.3 Various interpretations of Tertullian.....	19
1.4 What we can deduce from his work.....	27
1.5 Tertullian’s legacy	29
2. Historical trajectories evident in Tertullian’s work	31
2.1 Philosophy	32
2.2 Heterodoxy	35
2.3 Church paradosis	36
2.4 Scriptural Corpus	38
2.5 Socio-political environment.....	41
3. Conclusion.....	43
Chapter 3 - The chronological development of the first three historical trajectories	44
1. Synopsis.....	44
2. Philosophy	45
2.1 Pre-Socratic	46
2.2 Socratic	65
2.3 Post-Socratic	79
2.4 Concluding remarks.....	94
3. Scriptural Corpus.....	94

3.1 A clear contrast between the philosophical trajectory and the Scriptural Corpus	94
3.2 Old Testament authority	97
3.3 New Testament authority	98
3.4 Defining texts which culminated in the theological formulation of the Trinity	105
3.5 Concluding remarks	108
4. Socio-political Environment	109
4.1 Carthage: history in relation to Rome	109
4.2 Society structure	114
4.3 Religions	117
5. Conclusion	119
Chapter 4A – Hermeneutics, motifs and presuppositions of philosophy and the ecclesiastical tradition	123
1. Philosophy: Motifs, presuppositions and hermeneutic	124
1.1 Motifs & Presuppositions	124
1.2 Socratic	128
1.3 Sophistic	139
1.4 Philo	143
2. Ecclesiastic Community: motifs, presuppositions and hermeneutical method	146
2.1. Motifs & Presuppositions	146
2.2 Hermeneutical method	154
2.3 Concluding Remarks	177
Chapter 4 B - The development of the orthodox and heterodox trajectories	179
1. Ecclesiastical Paradosis	179
1.1 Apostolic Fathers	179
1.2 Apologists	185
1.3 Irenaeus	197
1.4 A summary of the Orthodox trajectory	204
2. Heterodoxy	205
2.1 Gnosticism & Marcion	205
2.2 Hermogenes	211
2.3 Montanism	212
2.4 Modalism	213
3. Conclusion	214
Chapter 5 - Motifs and hermeneutical praxis of Tertullian for theological conceptualization	216
1. Presuppositions & Motifs	216
1.1 Epistemology	216
1.2 Concerns (motifs)	222
2. Hermeneutical praxis	226
2.1 Regula Fidei	226
2.2 Unity of the Two Testaments	227
2.3 The economy or dispensations of God	228
2.4 Historicity	231
2.5 Christo-centric	234

2.6 Simplicity of Scripture.....	235
2.7 Typology and Allegory.....	236
2.8 Role of heresy in hermeneutics.....	237
3. Concluding Remarks	238
Chapter 6 – Tertullian’s theological conception of the Trinity	246
1. Cosmology.....	246
1.1 True “natura”	246
1.2 Fallen “natura”	248
2. Teleology.....	250
2.1 Efficient cause: creation	251
2.2 Efficient cause: soteriological.....	252
2.3 Final Cause: summum bonum	258
3. Ontology	259
3.1 Rules of Divinity: Philosophical (monistic arguments for monotheism) and Regula Fidei (Trinity) ...	259
3.2 The Unity of God.....	260
3.3 The diversity of God	264
3.4 The generation of the Son.....	272
4. Concluding Remarks	277
Chapter 7 – Comparative study of Tertullian’s theology, orthodox distinguishing markers and the Nuwe Hervorming.....	279
1. Cosmology.....	279
2. Teleology.....	282
3. Ontology.....	285
4. Orthodox hermeneutical distinguishing markers	289
4.1 Authority of Scripture as the revelation of God.....	289
4.2 The Unity of the Two Testaments	289
4.3 The Regula Fidei	289
4.4 Historicity	290
4.5 Christo-centric hermeneutic.....	290
4.6 Concluding remarks.....	291
5. Critical evaluation of the <i>Nuwe Hervorming</i> ’s proposition on the Trinity	291
5.1 Aim of Spangenberg’s article	292
5.2 Spangenberg’s new hermeneutic proposed.....	292
5.3 Spangenberg’s theological conception of the Trinity	293
5.4 The teleology of Jesus	295
5.5 Spangenberg’s aim and hermeneutical grid evaluated.....	295
5.6 Spangenberg’s theology of the Trinity evaluated	297
6. Conclusion.....	299
Bibliography	301

Chapter 1 – Introduction - Proposal

1. Title

Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity in relation to his ecclesiastical and socio-political trajectories

2. Abstract

1) English

Tertullian's theology of the Trinity seems to have been influenced by five historical trajectories: 1) philosophy, 2) the scriptural corpus, 3) socio-political background, 4) orthodoxy and 5) heterodoxy (Chapter 2).

The philosophical trajectory conceptualized divinity teleologically as a divine monistic ordering intelligent principle of cosmology. This is facilitated by philosophy's epistemological premise: anthropology is the microcosm of divinity. Heterodoxy generally adopted the epistemology and conceptualizations of philosophy (Chapter 3, 4A and 4B).

The orthodox trajectory's Trinitarian theology is facilitated by its epistemological premise: the scriptural corpus. The Christ-event (*theologia crucis/Christi*) as well as the apostolic tradition (*Regula fidei*) facilitated its hermeneutical praxis. Due to the philosophical and socio-political trajectories, Patristic orthodoxy's Trinitarian theology was limited. Tertullian generally adopted the orthodox trajectory's epistemology, theology and praxis (Chapters 4A, 4B, 5 and 6).

The Trinity is not a predominant Hellenistic concept, since Patristic Trinitarian theology exhibited its own distinct hermeneutical praxis. Therefore, the epistemological and hermeneutical boundaries of Patristic orthodoxy remain relevant for contemporary theologizing (Chapter 7).

Key terms: Trajectory, Hermeneutics, Trinity, Divinity, Philosophy, Socio-political, Historicity, Scriptural Corpus, Heterodoxy, Orthodoxy, *Regula fidei*, Cosmology, Ontology, Teleology, Motif, Presupposition

2) Opsomming: Afrikaans

Tertullianus se teologie van die Drie-eenheid is beïnvloed deur vyf historiese denkpatrone: 1) die filosofie, 2) die Ou en Nuwe Testament geskrifte, 3) sy socio-politiese agtergrond, 4) ortodoksie en 5) heterodoksie (Hoofstuk 2).

Die filosofiese denkpatroon het God teologies beskou as 'n monistiese, intelligente, kosmologiese orderingsbeginsel. Hierdie beskouing was gefasiliteer deur filosofie se epistemologie: antropologie is die mikroveld van die goddelike. Heterodoksie het die epistemologie en teologie van filosofie geheel en al aangeneem (Hoofstukke 3, 4A and 4B).

Die ortodokse denkpatroon se drie-eenheidsteologie was gefasiliteer deur sy unieke epistemologie: die Ou en Nuwe Testamentiese geskrifte. Die koms van Christus (*theologia crucis/Christi*) sowel as die apostoliese tradisie (*Regula fidei*) het ortodoksie se hermenetiek gevorm. Weens die filosofiese en sosio-politiese denkpatrone, was die Patristiese drie-eenheidsteologie beperk. Tertullianus het die ortodokse denkpatroon se epistemologie, teologie en hermenetiek aangeneem (Hoofstukke 4A, 4B, 5 and 6).

Omdat die Patristiese teologie sy eie unieke hermenetiek het, is die Drie-eenheid hoofsaaklik nie 'n Hellenistiese konsep nie. Daar word tot die gevolgetrekking gekom dat die epistemologie en hermenitiese raamwerk van Patristiese ortodoksie steeds relevant is vir huidige teologiese formulerings (Hoofstuk 7).

3. Background and problem statement

3.1 Background

One of the key fascinations or primary reasons for my interest in theological investigation is epistemology. In a post-modern society where “new” is considered better and historical knowledge a haphazard pursuit of relativity, there is a general sense that people have become rootless, to the degree that their thoughts and beliefs have no anchor or historical point of reference. This milieu has created an atmosphere where historical study is not as appreciated as it should be. Not knowing the origin of our contemporary identity or ideology leaves a person vulnerable to any form of speculation or ideological challenge. My conviction is that it is in understanding the origin and development of an idea that we can best appreciate and apply it in our contemporary setting. A person is not an essay, but rather a chapter within a larger book with many preceding chapters.

The interest in epistemology is also connected with the puzzling study of theological conceptualization. In studying Missiology and Historical Theology at Honours level, two authors impacted my understanding regarding the conceptualization of theology. David Bosch stated the following, “Our views are always interpretations of what we consider to be divine revelation, not divine revelation itself (and these interpretations are profoundly shaped by our self-understanding)”; or in another statement, “There is, truly, no knowledge in which the subjective dimension does not enter in some way or other” (Bosch 2005:182). Similarly, Hiebert (2004:193-224) asserts that all theologies are set within a cultural and historical context which influences the theologian’s perception or relation.

What makes Tertullian a fascinating person to study is his unique position in ecclesiastical history. One author exclaims that Tertullian could be seen (if one takes into consideration that Irenaeus’ origin was Asia Minor) as the first indigenous theologian of the western empire (Osborn 2003:6-7). In many respects, his primary contribution to the historical dialogue is his conception of the Trinity, which has become, in subsequent theological formulation, a foundational and critical contribution to orthodoxy. His key contribution, summarized in the maxim “*una substantia, tres personae*” (one substance, three persons), has remained a coined phrase for orthodoxy. His vocabulary for the Trinity remains a standard to this day.

If the postulation of Bosch and Hiebert is true, that would imply that the orthodox formulation of Tertullian's Trinity has a subjective-cultural element within it. This brings to the fore some key issues for the orthodox conception of the Trinity. If Tertullian was influenced by his cultural milieu, then his theology is to some extent a cultural product. In what way was Tertullian influenced by his historical context? What elements within his Trinitarian doctrine made his theology generally adopted as orthodoxy within the western church? How do Tertullian's theology, hermeneutical praxis and motifs impact contemporary theology? If Tertullian is considered to be such a prominent figure in ecclesiastical history, it would be prudent to do a thorough analysis and possible synthesis of his theology and praxis regarding the Trinity, taking into account the various trajectories evident in his theology.

Another reason for my interest in analysing Tertullian's theology of the Trinity also relates to our contemporary setting. Within the South African context the doctrine of the Trinity (as understood from a historically orthodox perspective) has been challenged in certain academic circles. One prevalent entity is the *Nuwe Hervorming* which argues for a type of monistic panentheism, negating the possibility of a triune Godhead (Spangenberg 2012). The position held by the *Nuwe Hervorming* bears some resemblance to the Trinitarian debates within Tertullian's historical context and is a deviation from the orthodox tradition. Consequently, in order to adequately answer contemporary challenges to orthodoxy, it is reasonable to first understand the historical development of orthodoxy and to identify what elements within it constituted it as orthodoxy.

3.2 Problem statement

Tertullian is considered an important figure to study, due to his wealth of literary output. Currently, there are 31 authentic extant treatises, which comprise 1500 pages (Bray 2010:65). The primary theological interest in Tertullian is focused on his formulation of the Trinity; since it is regarded as his most significant contribution to historical theology (Steenberg 2009:61).

Even so, much scholarly speculation is concerned with Tertullian's reputation as an enemy of argument. Comically, he is coined the "apostle of unreason" (Osborn 2003:27). This is due to two statements that are commonly used as a proof for Tertullian's dislike of philosophical discourse; "*Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis?*" (What relation has Athens with Jerusalem?) (Tertullian, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7.9) as well as "*prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est*" (straightforward it is believable, because it is absurd) (Tertullian, *De Carne Christi*, 5.4). Traditionally this seems to be

the dominant perception (Von Campenhausen 1960:17). Harnack (1910:198), for example, argues that Tertullian's anti-philosophical position was a watershed moment in the history of theology. More recently, however, it has been challenged. Bray and Osborn, for example, argue extensively that these passages have been misquoted or proof-texted, creating a caricature of Tertullian that is non-existent (Bray 2010:65; Osborn 2003:27). Picturing Tertullian as pro-philosophical, some have described him as unconsciously being Stoic in philosophical perception and Aristotelian in logic (Ayers 1976:310; Payne s.a:30-31).

Apart from the continual debate regarding his position on philosophy; much writing has been centred on his exact identity. Many have opted to classify Tertullian as a Roman Jurist who applied a legal mind to his theological conceptions (Wand 1979:79; Von Campenhausen 1960:5; Decret 2009:33). Others have dismissed the claims of Tertullian ever being an advocate or trained in Roman law (Bray 2010:64), while others seek to root his identity within the cultural-historical roots of Carthage (Brown 2004:200). His seeming schismatic nature is one argument for him being truly Romano-African (Steenberg 2009:60).

Even though Tertullian is regarded as the originator of much of our foundational Trinitarian understanding (Osborn 2003:255), Warfield (2003:15-17) insists that Tertullian's theology on the Trinity, his modes of argument and formulation, are not original. What we probably have, according to Warfield, is the terminology that was common within the 2nd and 3rd century, preserved in Tertullian's writing. However, Warfield does not elucidate his statement. The perception of Tertullian not being original, but rather a compiler or formulator of previously conceived notions, raises a question. If Tertullian is not original, but rather a sort of consummation of various trajectories of thought or flows of thought, how exactly did they develop and culminate? If there could be perceived, within Tertullian's writing, legal and metaphysical philosophy, ecclesiastical *paradosis* (tradition), Roman and African idiosyncrasies and responses to heterodoxy, where exactly did these trajectories begin and how did they culminate within Tertullian's conception of the Trinity? Moreover, what hermeneutical grid or framework did Tertullian use to compile or synthesize these various trajectories into an orthodox synthesis of Trinitarian belief? What motifs did Tertullian share or not share with the various trajectories which appealed to him or motivated a vehement response against them?

Apart from the lack of a general consensus regarding Tertullian's attitude towards philosophy and his identity there seems to be a lack of seeking to observe the various trajectories within Tertullian's thought and how these trajectories have been synthesized within his theology. In my estimation, a large proportion of historical study regarding Tertullian only deals with his immediate context,

negating the reality of long developing trajectories which stimulated the culmination of Tertullian's theology of the Trinity. Much is being dealt with at a surface level, rather than at an epistemological level. Tertullian is neither merely a product of the 2nd century nor his immediate context, but rather the fruit of hundreds of years of philosophical and theological progression. How did all these various trajectories culminate into the one man and what was his hermeneutical grid through which he synthesized the various theologies/ideologies/cultural milieu to formulate a theology of the Trinity?

There is a sense then, that theological dialogue is "sparked" and shaped by our historical-cultural setting, but simultaneously (I would add), our dialogues then stimulate further theological investigation. Thomas Kuhn, as quoted by Bosch, termed these ideological "sparks" as "revolutions" (Bosch 2005:184). There is a positive and negative synergism between our socio-political environs and theological conceptualization. In a positive sense, the subjective dimension of our cultural milieu facilitates or initiates theological formulation, which would have otherwise (if the current setting were non-existent) been absent. There is a sense of dependence on our historical setting to spark theological discussion. Theology cannot develop in a vacuum. In a negative sense, whereas our cultural milieu generally does spark theological discussion or facilitate "revolutions", it also gives the theological dialogue a subjective dimension. Modifications due to the partial incorporation of our cultural milieu into our theological construction seem to be inevitable. It is due to this inevitability, making the theological dialogue an "unfinished product", that further investigation is stimulated. A puzzling question regarding these phenomena is what elements within the theologizing process have given rise to what generally is called "orthodoxy" juxtaposed to "heterodoxy"?

In the light of the above, the question is: ***How did the various ecclesiastical and socio-political trajectories culminate in Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity?***

Questions arising from the problem:

- 1) What were the various trajectories that can be evidentially demonstrated from Tertullian's theology of the Trinity?
- 2) How did each of these trajectories develop chronologically?
- 3) What motifs and hermeneutical praxes governed the various trajectories?

- 4) What were Tertullian's motifs and his hermeneutical praxis for assimilating the various trajectories into his theology?
- 5) What was the eventual synthesis of the various trajectories culminating in Tertullian's theology of the Trinity?
- 6) How does Tertullian's theological praxis regarding the formulation of the Trinity impact contemporary orthodox theologizing in contrast to heterodoxy?

4. Aim and Objectives

4.1 Aim

The main aim of this study is the historical-analysis of the various trajectories evident in Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity as well as the hermeneutical praxis through which Tertullian assimilated an orthodox formulation of the Trinity. The goal is to deduce various hermeneutical principles which can be incorporated into current orthodox theologizing regarding the Trinity juxtaposed to the prevalent heterodox position presented by the *Nuwe Hervorming*.

4.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- 1) Identify the various trajectories evident within Tertullian's work regarding the Trinity
- 2) Analyze how each of these trajectories developed chronologically
- 3) Discern what motifs and hermeneutical praxis governed the development of these trajectories
- 4) Analyze what Tertullian's motifs and hermeneutical praxis were for assimilating the various trajectories into his theology of the Trinity
- 5) Stipulate what the eventual synthesis of these trajectories are within Tertullian's theology of the Trinity

- 6) From the foregoing analysis, expound various hermeneutical principles for orthodox theologizing of current trajectories within our contemporary setting, by comparing Tertullian's conception of the Trinity with the contemporary heterodox formulation of the *Nuwe Hervorming* as postulated by Sakkie Spangenberg.

5. Central theoretical argument

Tertullian's governing principle for assimilating the five historical trajectories within his theology of the Trinity bears some resemblance to Luther's "*theologia crucis*". His epistemology was refined by his Christo-centric hermeneutic which Tertullian himself described as "*oikonomia sacramentum*". It is this Christo-centric hermeneutic which forms the basis for his orthodox theologizing which was traditionally encapsulated within the "*Regula Fidei*".

6. Methodology

The church historical study will be done from an Evangelical Reformed perspective in the following way:

The study could be divided into four steps:

- 1) A literary analysis is required of all the primary texts which relate to Tertullian's conceptualization of the Trinity. These would encompass Tertullian's own works such as *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, *Apologeticum*, *De Carne Christi*, *De Anima*, *Adversus Marcion*, *Adversus Praxean* with possible references to *De Corona Militis*, *Adversus Hermogenem*, *Adversus Iudaeos*, *Ad Nationes* and *Adversus Valentinianos*. To identify historical trajectories within Tertullian's work, key terms and concepts that seem similar to the various trajectories will be researched.
- 2) It is from analyzing Tertullian's own work that we progress to a literary analysis of relevant texts that pertain to the various historical trajectories. The philosophical works of Plato (*Timaeus*, *Republic*, *Sophist* etc.) and Aristotle (*Metaphysics*, *Physics* and *On the*

Heavens) as well as later Latin works of Cicero (*De Natura Deorum*, *Academica* and *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*) and Seneca (*Moral Essays* and *Epistulae*) would be considered. It should be noted though, since my field of focus is primarily on Tertullian or ecclesiastical history, I will primarily rely on secondary authoritative works on the philosophers. Moreover, my concern with the philosophers is key concepts and motifs and their development in history, which are generally well known and expounded by authorities on the subject. From the philosophical, progression will be made to the ecclesiastical literature existent prior to Tertullian. Even though it could be presumed that Tertullian did not have direct access to all these works, their contribution to the larger trajectory makes them necessary as indirect influences. The assumption here is that even though church fathers did not possess the physical works of their compatriots, the ideas or formulations of those works went beyond geographical lines. In relation to the ecclesiastical paradosis (tradition), relevant scriptural texts will be analyzed regarding their exegesis within the first two centuries of the church.

- 3) A literary analysis will be done on Tertullian's work (using the same primary texts as in the first section) to deduce his hermeneutical praxis. Subsequently, a careful analysis will be done of Tertullian's theology of the Trinity in relation to his historical trajectories and hermeneutical praxis.
- 4) A comparative study will commence regarding Tertullian's orthodox praxis and theology juxtaposed to a contemporary heterodox praxis and theology. The specific focus will be on the Unitarian theology of the *Nuwe Hervorming* prevalent in South Africa as extrapolated in the article of Sakkie Spangenberg regarding the Trinity. It is through this study, which we hope to crystallize some key principles that separate heterodox praxis from orthodox praxis.

7. Concept clarification

7.1 Trajectories

A trajectory could be defined as a "flow of thought" or a discernible ideological path that does not encompass one particular generation, but spans across many historical epochs. This flow of thought is not static, but a dynamic progression of "revolutions" or "sparks" which are formed by each epoch's

particular socio-political context. The things connecting the various revolutions are general concepts, terms and motifs that are continually revisited and extrapolated.

7.2 Motifs

Motifs are the presuppositions forming the foundation of a person's belief system which are intimately tied to a particular desire/s. For example, the theory of recapitulation or the divinization of man is enforced by the presupposition of divine revelation through the New Testament Scriptures due to the Christ event, which is held due to the desire for liberation or salvation from the present order of the world. Incorporated into that is the notion of theological implications, meaning certain beliefs are held due to the positive implications they possess. The loss of the theological belief means the loss of its positive implications, which motivates a person to either a) defend them or b) re-evaluate them.

7.3 Hermeneutical praxis

This is the overarching themes or principles which govern a person's synthesis of ideas. Basically, it is the mechanics used in order to interpret and conceptualize data. It is the lens through which a person interprets the world. This lens, inevitably, is influenced by a person's motifs or presuppositional beliefs.

8. Chapter division

- 1) Introduction (Proposal)
- 2) The historical trajectories evident in Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity
- 3) The chronological development of the first three historical trajectories
- 4) A) Hermeneutics, motifs and presuppositions of philosophy and the ecclesiastical tradition
- 4) B) The development of the orthodox and heterodox trajectories
- 5) Motifs and hermeneutical praxis of Tertullian for theological conceptualization

- 6) Tertullian's theological conceptualization of the Trinity
- 7) Comparative study of Tertullian's theology, orthodox distinguishing markers and the *Nuwe Hervorming*

Chapter 2 - The historical trajectories evident in Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity

The objective of this chapter is to identify the various historical trajectories evident in Tertullian's theology of the Trinity. Prior to investigating various texts of Tertullian's treatises, it would be prudent to first provide a context for Tertullian's work by giving a biographical sketch. To some extent, the validity of each of the trajectories depends on our understanding of Tertullian's persona; thus the necessity to provide a biographical sketch. Moreover, as we investigate the various relevant passages from Tertullian's treatises, attention would be given to previous scholarship on the various trajectories. It should be noted that the objective is not to extrapolate the various trajectories, but primarily to demonstrate that the five trajectories were evident in Tertullian conceptualization. How these trajectories developed chronologically will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters.

1. Biographical Sketch

1.1 An enigmatic figure in ecclesiastical history

In many respects, even though much is written regarding Tertullian's contribution to our understanding of the early church, particularly in Africa, the consensus remains the same regarding the person himself: he is enigmatic (Dunn 2004:3; Barnes 2005:3). In the 19th century Lamson (1875:128) wrote, "What we could assert is that not much is known of Tertullian's life". In the 21st century the conclusion remains the same, as Decret (2009:33) would acknowledge, "Tertullian's life, his dates of birth and death, as well as the chronology of his writings, cannot be known with certainty". With the distinction of being classified as the first recognizable Latin theologian (Von Campenhausen 1960:5), all we can really assert is the period in which he possibly lived; which is the middle of the 2nd century (Wand 1979:79). Moreover, scholars cannot deduce the exact age at which Tertullian converted to Christianity (Bray 1979:38). The general consensus seems to be that Tertullian converted as an adult, but whether he was young (Hill 2003:30) in his mid-30's (Decret 2009:33) or 40's (Brown 2004:200), we cannot say. All we can ascertain is that he did become a Christian in adult life.

Conversely, the paucity of Tertullian's biographical information has not discouraged scholarly speculation in reconstructing his *persona* according to external and internal sources. Prior to investigating the three dominant portrayals of Tertullian, attention should be given to external sources within the first 400 years of the church.

1.2 References to Tertullian beyond his own work

It is generally considered that the most extensive references to Tertullian beyond his own treatises is that of Jerome in his work *De Viris Illustribus*, which was written in the 4th century. Even though it is the most extensive, it remains inadequate in constructing a biographical sketch of Tertullian.

According to Jerome, Tertullian was a “*presbyter*” (priest), whose father was “*centurione proconsulari*” (centurion of the proconsul) (*De Viris Illustribus*, 3:53:1). In addition, Tertullian, “greatly thrived under the reign of Severus and Antoninus Caracalla”¹. Tertullian was a prolific author, “he wrote many volumes”² (*De Viris Illustribus*, 3:53:2). However, due to strife with the Roman clergy, Tertullian left the Catholic Church to join the Montanist sect, “thereafter, [due to] the envy and insults from the clergy of the Roman church, he lapsed to Montanist doctrine”³ (*De Viris Illustribus*, 3:53:4). Although this might be the case, his work was still in circulation and greatly valued. Cyprian of Carthage referred to Tertullian as a “*magister*” (master/teacher) (*De Viris Illustribus*, 3:53:3).

Earlier than Jerome, Eusebius only mentions Tertullian in brief, indicating that Tertullian was trained in Roman law (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2:2:4). Lactantius (A.D. 305), a Latin theologian, described Tertullian as trained in every literary genre, a kind of polymath (*Divinarum Institutionum*, 5:1:23). Regardless, Lactantius was more a critic of Tertullian's style than an admirer (Bray 1979:9). Augustine, after studying the works of Tertullian, exonerated him of all heresy (Decret 2009:41). Beyond this, the information becomes scarce.

¹*sub Severo principe et Antonino Caracalla maxime floruit*

²*multaque scripsit volumina*

³*invidia postea et contumeliis clericorum Romanae Ecclesiae, ad Montani dogma delapsus*

By the 5th century Tertullian was condemned as a heretic by the Catholic Church. By the end of the 6th century, after a reference by Isidore of Seville (*Chronicon*, 81), any reference to Tertullian is lost. Only in the Middle-Ages by the 15th century was an interest in Tertullian revived (Bray 1979:10-11). However, subsequent authors have long since been distanced from the life and times of Tertullian and could probably not, with certainty, give any biographical information worthy of note.

If external sources should be considered authoritative in constructing a reliable picture of Tertullian, the following portrayal would be acceptable. Tertullian lived in Carthage and was part of an elitist group due to his father's high societal position. Furthermore, he had an excellent education in rhetoric and law, pursuing the legal profession after completing his studies. After his conversion he became a priest of the Catholic Church in Carthage and used his literary skills in writing many treatises. However, due to later strife with the Roman clergy and a seeming attraction to Montanist teaching, Tertullian abandoned the Catholic Church to join the sect. Later on, Tertullian left the sect to begin his own sect, which was, in Augustine's day, exonerated from all heresy.

While this is to some extent the accepted biographical sketch for many scholars, it has not gone unchallenged. There seem to be some inconsistencies in the various depictions of Tertullian by the various external sources. Problems with the above picture are:

- 1) Eusebius, who is earlier than Jerome, never mentions that Tertullian became a priest within the church of Carthage. Recent external evidence seems to indicate that the Carthaginian church had a unique church government structure of elders or "*seniores*". This form of church government seemed to be similar to the various existing political institutions of the surrounding African towns and villages where elders were the primary basis of authority (Wilhite 2007:132; Stewart-Sykes 2002:119-120). Tertullian also points to a government of elders, "Certain approved elders preside, who have obtained this honour not by purchase, but by testimony, for it is evident that not anything of God is purchased by money"⁴ (*Apologeticum*, 39:5). Moreover, when Tertullian does mention the idea of priesthood (*De Ieiunio Adversus Psychicos*, 11:4), he argues for the priesthood of all believers (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9) (Dunn 2004:5). This testimony contradicts Jerome's assertion of Tertullian's priesthood. It would seem more likely that Jerome re-interpreted his cultural-milieu into his understanding of Tertullian (Bray 1979:41).

⁴*Praesident probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio, sed testimonio adepti, neque enim pretio ulla res dei constat*

- 2) If Tertullian lapsed into heresy, it would seem unlikely that Cyprian, who immediately succeeded Tertullian, would revere Tertullian as a “*magister*” and use his work with such frequency and authority. Moreover, historically Montanus and his disciples were disowned and their writings burned (Bray 1979:62). This is not the case with Tertullian, whose works were preserved and enjoyed wide circulation, as Jerome testifies: “And many volumes he wrote, which we omit [to mention], [since] many are known”⁵ (*De Viris Illustribus*, 3:53:2). Consequently, Jerome’s statements are contradictory, since a heretical author would not have enjoyed such ecclesiastical authority and readership.
- 3) The often expressed conclusion that Tertullian lapsed to Montanism cannot really be deduced from the phrase “*montani dogma*” (doctrine of Montanus). It could also imply sympathy or an acceptance of Montanist teaching, not necessarily a joining of the cult (Barnes 2005:10-11; Bray 2010:64-65). That would be stretching external evidence beyond its due limits. It would, to some extent, be a logical fallacy to deduce from Jerome that Tertullian became an ardent Montanist or even a schismatic. When considering internal and external evidence, this position does not seem feasible (Wilhite 2007:25). Furthermore, it is not inconsequential that references to Tertullian being a heretic began to circulate during the Donatist schism. It was only in the 5th century that eventual consensus was reached to condemn Tertullian as a heretic (Bray 1979:10). Nevertheless, more will be said on this point a little later.

Apart from the different problems evident in the external witness, this has not prevented some scholars from creating various personas of Tertullian. Generally, three dominant positions have been developed regarding who he was. Firstly, that he was a Montanist; secondly that he was a Roman jurist and thirdly, that he was an anti-philosophical fundamentalist. All three rely on both external and internal evidence, though the last named is primarily based on seemingly internal evidence.

⁵*multaque scripsit voluminia, quae quia nota sunt pluribus, praetermittimus*

1.3 Various interpretations of Tertullian

1.3.1 Montanist

Following Jerome's statement that Tertullian, "lapsed to Montanist doctrine"⁶ (*De Viris Illustribus*, 3:53:4), many scholars have followed his postulation in developing a biographical sketch of Tertullian in Montanist terms. Due to the moral rigor of many of Tertullian's treatises, many scholars deduce a Montanist influence (Hill 2003:32; Barnes 2005:136-142). Moreover, owing to his frequent criticism of the Catholic Church in general, some have inferred that this indicates Tertullian's schismatic nature, being a clear illustration of his departure from the general church to the Montanist sect (Bray 2010:64-65). Therefore, his treatises regarding martyrdom are interpreted as a Montanist fascination which also inevitably moved him to break from the Catholic Church (Barnes 2005:171-172). What generally follows, following Augustine's references regarding the Tertullianist sect within Carthage, is that Tertullian broke away from the Montanist sect (differing on their understanding of the Holy Spirit) to form his own distinct community exhibiting its own "brand" of theology (Decret 2009:38, 40-41).

In support of the above construction, various passages from Tertullian's work are used as internal evidence for the hypothesis that he was a Montanist or at least lapsed into the heretical group. One key work which is regarded as a Montanist treatise is *Adversus Praxean*. This is generally presumed from Tertullian's continual reference to the Holy Spirit as the "*Paraclete*" as well as his reason for opposing Praxeas, "for then the same bishop of Rome, already acknowledging the prophecies of Montanus, Prisca, Maximilla, and knowing them, bestowing peace to the church of Asia and Phrygia, he [Praxeas] [was] confidently asserting false accusation regarding the prophets and their churches and defending his predecessors' authority, he forced [the bishop of Rome] to revoke the letter of peace which he already sent out and [coaxed the bishop of Rome] to cease from his purpose of receiving the charismatic gift. And so Praxeas helped the Devil with two services at Rome, prophecy he expelled and heresy he brought in, the Paraclete he put to flight and the Father he crucified"⁷ (*Adversus Praxean*, 1:5). Barnes (2005:142) comments that the great achievement of *Adversus*

⁶*ad Montani dogma delapsus*

⁷*nam idem tunc episcopum romanum, agnoscentem iam prophetias Montani, Priscæ, Maximillæ, et ex ea agnitione pacem ecclesiis Asiæ et Phrygiæ inferentem, falsa de ipsis prophetis et ecclesiis eorum adseverando et praecessorum eius auctoritates defendendo coegit et litteras pacis revocare iam emissas et a proposito recipiendorum charismatum concessare. ita duo negotia diabolo Praxeas Romae procuravit, prophetiam expulit et haeresim intulit, paracletum fugavit et patrem crucifixit.*

Praxean, “exemplifies a paradox: Tertullian helped to rescue the Catholic Church from heresy precisely because he was a Montanist”.

Correspondingly, in his *De Ieiunio Adversus Psychicos* 1:3, Tertullian seems to sympathise or at least consider Montanism a valid theological grouping. “Montanus, Priscilla and Maximilla do not proclaim another God, nor do they separate Jesus Christ, nor do they overturn another faith or rule of faith, but that they plainly teach more frequently to rather fast than to marry”⁸. According to Tertullian, opposition to Montanism is not regarding the core doctrines of the Christian faith, but primarily due to difference in practice, opting for the more rigid practice of Montanism than the practice of the Psychics (Decret 2009:38).

Apart from the above two citations that clearly mention all three leaders of the Montanist movement, Montanus is mentioned alone in *De Ieiunio Adversus Psychicos* 12:4 and also in *Adversus Omnes Haereses* 7:2. Prisca is mentioned in *De Exhortatione Castitatis* 10:5 and *De Resurrectione Mortuorum* 11:2. However, apart from the above mentioned citations, there are no other references to the Montanist sect. Out of the current 31-32 treatises of Tertullian available to us, only 4-5 treatises mention Montanism, primarily in passing and not as a defence or explanation of Montanism; as Bray concludes, “flimsy evidence indeed” (1979:56-57). Even though there are approximately 15-18 works missing of the Tertullian corpus (*De Ecstasi* probably being the most relevant), it would be an argument from silence to insinuate that within this corpus more Montanist tendencies would be observed. In addition, whereas Montanist teaching was primarily focused on eschatology as well as the charismata, Tertullian quotes them in relation to the resurrection (*De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, 11:2), fasting (*De Ieiunio Adversus Psychicos*, 1:3; 12:4) and chastity (*De Exhortatione Castitatis*, 10:5) (Bray 1979:61-62). From this one can almost certainly conclude that Tertullian was principally interested in Montanist practice, gleaming from them rather than being assimilated into them (Brown 2004:196).

Apart from direct citations, some have argued for Tertullian being a Montanist based on a lexical argument. In their opinion, the words “*psychicus*”(non-Montanist) and “*paracletus*”(Holy Spirit) are considered Montanist in origin. Due to Tertullian’s use of the terms, it is then assumed or concluded

⁸*nam idem tunc episcopum romanum, agnoscentem iam prophetias Montani, Prisciae, Maximillae, et ex ea agnitione pacem ecclesiis Asiae et Phrygiae inferentem, falsa de ipsis prophetis et ecclesiis eorum adseverando et praecessorum eius auctoritates defendendo coegit et litteras pacis revocare iam emissas et a proposito recipiendorum charismatum concessare. ita duo negotia diabolo Praxeas Romae procuravit, prophetiam expulit et haeresim intulit, paracletum fugavit et patrem crucifixit.*

that he became or was at least influenced by Montanism (Bray 1979:57). Even though Montanism did adopt these terms, both terms are found within the New Testament Scriptures (cf. regarding *paracletus* - Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; and regarding *psychicus* – 1 Cor. 2:13; 15:14; James 3:15; Jude 19) (Rankin 2004:XV). Consequently, it would be just as plausible to argue that Tertullian's main influence regarding the usage of terms was not Montanism, but the recollecting of the apostolic tradition or New Testament Scriptures.

Apart from the Montanist interpretation, various scholars have found evidence of Tertullian being a schismatic on the basis of his ostensible distinction between two groups of Christians. For example, in *De Monogamia* 12:6 Tertullian exclaims, "...that Utina of yours does not fear Scantinian law. For how many digamists preside in your house [church], certainly insulting the apostle, certainly not blushing, when this [word] is being read under them!"⁹, drawing a clear distinction between Tertullian's group and theirs. In *De Ieiunio Adversus Psychicos* 17:4 Tertullian remarks, "The maxim/epitaph they extend to your gluttony, that double honour among you, having assigned to the presiding [elders] twofold shares. When the apostle gave double honour as brothers and officers; who is holier among you, except more frequently banqueting, except more in catering sumptuously, except more instructed in cups?"¹⁰ In *De Pudicitia* 10:12 Tertullian make a distinction between his church and his opponents' church who endorse the Shepherd of Hermas, for example "if not by all the church's councils, even yours"¹¹ and "who in the chalice [for communion] you depict [not we depict]"¹².

On surface level these quotations appear to indicate that Tertullian was part of a sect, though this would stretch the actual internal evidence available. To conclude that the "we" equates a separatist grouping and the "you" the Catholic Church, is not explicit from the texts. The conclusion that the above citations imply a Montanist schism in North Africa, is not based on internal evidence, but rather the presupposition of the existence of such a group, party or schism in North Africa (Wilhite 2007:169). There is no current archaeological or literary evidence which describes a Montanist community in North Africa. Even though Carthaginian society would have had many points of commonality with the more existential Montanist teaching (Brown 2004:196); this commonality would still not prove the existence of a Montanist community in North Africa.

⁹*ille vester Utinensis nec Scantiniam timuit. Quot enim ex digamia president apud vos, insultantes utique apostolo, certe non erubescerent, cum haec sub illis leguntur!*

¹⁰*Ad elogium gulae tuae pertinent, quod duplex apud te praesidentibus honor binis partibus deputatur, cum apostolus duplicem honorem dederit ut et fratribus et praepositis. Quis sanctior inter uos, nisi conuiuandi frequentior, nisi obsonandi pollucibilior, nisi calicibus instructor?*

¹¹*si non ab omni concilio ecclesiarum, etiam uestrarum*

¹²*quem in calice depingis*

Conversely, Wilhite (2007:172-179) has suggested a possible reason for the “us/them” language prevalent in some parts of Tertullian’s works. In many instances Tertullian specifies that his ecclesiastical opponents are Roman. Specifically in *De Monogamia* 9:11, 16:6 and 17:2-3 Tertullian refers to his opponents as being Roman. Moreover, Tertullian’s opponent in *Adversus Praxean* is the bishopric of Rome who condemned Montanism as well as accepting Praxeas’ teaching of modalism (*Adversus Praxean*, 1:5). It would thus appear more likely that Tertullian is elucidating the relationship or conflict between the African and Roman sees of his time. This would also make more sense of Jerome’s claim, “*invidia postea et contumeliis clericorum Romanae Ecclesiae, ad Montani dogma delapsus*” (*De Viris Illustribus*, 3:53:4). Consequently, a better hypothesis would be to consider the “us/them” distinction to be ethnically defined and not a schism within Carthage.

Apart from the internal evidence, there are various external factors that are not taken cognisance of. For example, even though Tertullian was not declared a saint, he was never branded a schismatic either and his works were widely read until Augustine. If he did lapse into the Montanist sect, it would be logical that his works would not be as popular as they were prior to Augustine. The Catholic Church in general did not regard works of heretics as valuable reading material, or as Cyprian apparently suggested, work of a “*magister*” (Bray 2010:64-65). Jerome himself admits that the need to quote Tertullian’s work is superfluous due them being widely known (“*quae quia nota sunt pluribus, praetermittimus*”) (*De Viris Illustribus*, 3:53:2).

What should be noted are the reasons or motifs for Catholic and Protestant scholarship to prefer classifying Tertullian as a Montanist schismatic. Among Catholic commentators, Tertullian is treated with suspicion due to his apparent anti-clericalism and his non-dismissive attitude towards Montanism. Juxtaposed, Protestants find Tertullian uncomfortable due to his non-critical attitude to the episcopate as well as his preference for celibacy. Therefore, it would be more preferable to consider Tertullian a Montanist, which would imply Tertullian losing some authority in matters of theology and practice (Rankin 2004:3-5).

Taking the above into consideration, it would be more sensible to conclude that even though Tertullian was influenced by Montanism and shared many of its moral convictions and theological emphases, he did not capitulate to the sect (Bray 2010:64-65). Gleaming from a particular strand of teaching for insight does not imply allegiance, but rather a concern for objectivity. Subsequently, even though Tertullian is not a Montanist, Montanism remains a clear influence on many aspects of his

theology and thus forms part of the various trajectories that have played a role in Tertullian's theological formulations (Dunn 2004:7).

1.3.2 Roman Jurist

Following Eusebius' claim that Tertullian was a trained lawyer (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2:2:4), many scholars have sought to formulate a biographical sketch of Tertullian in legal terms. Classified as being part of the educated elite, Tertullian is depicted as having studied and practiced Roman law ("*juris consultus*") (Decret 2009:33; Chadwick 2003:118; Olsen 1999:91; Bromiley 1978:27; Neander 1898:202). Being trained in Roman law, it is further postulated that Tertullian must have lived and practiced as an advocate in Rome, being a "*corpus iuris civilis*" (Brown 2004:200; Wand 1979:79; Von Campenhausen 1960:5). Apparently, Tertullian was also trained in military art (Warfield 2003:3). It is then proposed that Tertullian used his legal knowledge and introduced legal phraseology within his theological conceptualization (Hill 2003:30; Berkhof 1937:63).

One of the key treatises used to illustrate Tertullian's legal brilliance is *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*. As a Roman legal manoeuvre, a *praescriptio* was an argument questioning the validity of a trial or case. Thus, a *praescriptio* is applied to object the continuation of a trial. Consequently, when Tertullian writes *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, he is not writing to discuss doctrinal issues, but rather the heretics' rights to argue against orthodoxy. Basically, the argument is invalid since orthodoxy and heterodoxy function on two different premises (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7) (Brown 2003:218-219).

Even though the above position is fairly well represented and popularized since Harnack's insistence that Eusebius' witness is the most credible regarding Tertullian's profession and training, others have sought to follow Schlossmann (who rejected Eusebius' and Harnack's hypothesis). Schlossmann argued that Tertullian's literary style and use of various sources from poetry, philosophy, law and culture, seems more similar to a rhetorician than a lawyer. Thus, rather than being a lawyer, Tertullian is viewed as a rhetorical genius (Wilhite 2007:20-22). As Ayers (1976:311) would exclaim, "A good orator was expected... to be necessarily an extremist, highly emotional, or contemptuous of reason". These traits are exhibited in Tertullian's writings. What would strengthen this claim further is Lactantius' claim that Tertullian was an expert in every literary genre (*Divinarum Institutionum*

5.1.23), which might explain the difficulty in pinpointing his actual training and practice (Barnes 2005:24; Brown 2004:200).

What is clear from Tertullian's work is that he did draw from extensive legal knowledge (Bray 2010:66), which cannot be negated. However, the problem occurs in whether the usage of legal knowledge implies legal training, since it is also expected of rhetoricians. Moreover, Tertullian's knowledge stretched beyond legal knowledge to incorporate a fair understanding of philosophy, poetry, Greek and Latin historians (Decret 2009:33). Thus, we can understand why Eusebius, Jerome and Lactantius gave Tertullian various identities of being either a jurist (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 2:2:4), rhetorician and polymath (Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum*, 5:1:23) and Carthaginian presbyter (Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, 3:53). He could have possibly encompassed all three. What we can conclude with some certainty is that Tertullian did not have a humble background and received an excellent education, an education he applied extensively in his writing (Brown 2004:200)

1.3.3 Anti-philosopher

Probably the most negative assessment concerning Tertullian's persona regards his attitude towards philosophy. This is also the point where Tertullian draws the most critical appraisal (Gonzalez 1974:17). In many respects, our interpretation of Tertullian's usage of philosophy would determine whether it was influential in a positive or negative way; whether it was an accidental trajectory or proactively used in Tertullian's conception of the Trinity.

Quite a dominant perception is that philosophy was an accidental or unconscious influence in Tertullian's theology. Harnack (1910:198) purports that Tertullian was hostile towards philosophy, even though he was a Stoic in many of his persuasions. The uncertainty and speculation of philosophy Tertullian sought to replace with the certainty of revealed wisdom (Sider 1980:417). This hermeneutical shift from philosophy as primary to revelation as primary is the pivotal point of debate. In Harnack's (1910:198) estimation, due to Tertullian's insistence on revealed wisdom (Scripture) above speculative wisdom (philosophy) (Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, 46; *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7), his general attitude was negative; thus making philosophy an accidental cause.

The above argument has led many scholars to describe Tertullian as strongly against rationalism and philosophical construction (Bray 1979:35-36; Olsen 1999:93; Dunn 2004:32; Shelley 2008:79). The phrase, “*credo quia absurdum*” (I believe because it is absurd), is often quoted as Tertullian’s position (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:116), even though it is nowhere stated in his treatises (Gonzalez 1974:17). Thus, as Osborn (2003:27) iterates, many scholars have given Tertullian the reputation as being “the enemy of argument and the apostle of unreason”.

This persuasion, apart from scholarly argument, is drawn from various instances in Tertullian’s writing where he seems overly critical and negative towards philosophy and reason. For example, when considering the believability of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ, Tertullian writes, “it is straightforward believable, because it is absurd... it is certain, because impossible”¹³ (*De Carne Christi*, 5:4) (Dunn 2004:31). Moreover, in *Apologeticum* 22:1-2, Tertullian argues that philosophy’s origin is of the demons, since Socrates drew his wisdom from demons. In *Apologeticum* 46:7, Tertullian argues that, “As scoffers and corrupters the philosophers with evil intent affect truth and by affecting it they corrupt [it], since it is glory they desire. Christians both from necessity grasp and in integrity excel, as those who care for their salvation”¹⁴. Whereas philosophers seek fame in their pursuit of mimicking truth, Christians are the true custodians and caretakers of it. Concerning the origin of philosophy, Tertullian did not present a rosy picture, “For it is the material wisdom of the world, rash interpreters of the divine nature and dispensation. Indeed heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy...”¹⁵ (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:2-3).

Probably the most famous of citations from Tertullian’s works to validate the above hypothesis, is *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 7:9, “What [relationship] then [has] Athens and Jerusalem? The Academy and the Church? The heretics and the Christians?”¹⁶ Being a rhetorical question the answer seems obvious: nothing. Tertullian proceeds in the same passage to argue that our enquiry should not exceed our discovery of Christ. In Christ all speculation needs to cease, “Our work of curiously seeking [does not continue] after Christ Jesus nor questioning after the Gospel. When we believe, we

¹³*prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est... certum est, quia impossibile*

¹⁴*Quam illusores et corruptores inimice philosophi affectant veritatem et affectando corrumpunt, ut qui gloriam captant, Christiani et necessario appetunt et integre praestant, ut qui saluti suae curant.*

¹⁵*Ea est enim materia sapientiae saecularis, temeraria interpret diuinæ naturae et dispositionis. Ipsae denique haereses a philosophia subornantur...*

¹⁶*Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? quid academiae et ecclesiae? quid haereticis et christianis?*

desire to believe nothing else. For this we believe first, that we do not need to believe another [additional belief]”¹⁷ (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:11-13).

Conversely, recent scholarship seems to opt against the above hypothesis on various grounds. It is often ignored when quoting Tertullian is the context in which he writes in reference to philosophy. Generally, Tertullian cites philosophy negatively in confrontation to heresy, pointing out the origin of the heretical doctrine juxtaposed to the apostolic tradition (Ayers 1976:309-310). Moreover, Tertullian engages the various heresies and theological stipulation with immense rigor and logic, correcting one philosophical position with the proposition of another; often going beyond the limits of the current philosophical milieu (Bray 2010:65). The real point of contention was not whether philosophy is good or evil, but what the basis of ultimate authority was. Tertullian’s point in *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 7 is that heretics seek their ultimate authority in philosophy, thus rejecting the apostolic tradition and Scripture in favour of philosophy. Thus, “*Ipsae denique haereses a philosophia subornantur...*” (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:2-3) (Gonzalez 1974:18). Furthermore, Tertullian’s words, “*prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est... certum est, quia impossibile*” (*De Carne Christi*, 5:4), is based on Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 1:27, “but the foolish of the world God chose, so that he may shame the wise”¹⁸. Tertullian’s contention here is that the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ are beyond mere philosophical comprehension, but can only be understood in relation to God’s omnipotence, revelation and the historical event (Gonzalez 1974:20-21). Moreover, Tertullian’s statement actually exhibits some rhetorical genius. Aristotle states (*Rhetoric*, 2.23.22) that often the probability of a case is due to the sheer improbability of the story. The defendant’s insistence on the improbable often indicates that it is the most likely scenario. In this sense, the life of Jesus seems so improbable that it is actually credible to believe (Sider 1980:418).

Lastly, Tertullian’s famous citation, “*Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid academiae et ecclesiae? Quid haereticis et christianis?*” (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:9), has been used out of context. Tertullian was not posing the question concerning faith versus reason, but rather two different premises of reasoning. The one is the reason of Athens, which is dialectical, and the other the reason of Jerusalem, which is historical. The former seeks objectivity through inward-subjective reason, while the other seeks objectivity from the historical events or facts, drawing conclusions from those facts. Dialectical reason considers the probability of God’s action, while historical reason

¹⁷*Nobis curiositate opus non est post Christum Iesum nec inquisitione post euangelium. Cum credimus, nihil desideramus ultra credere. Hoc enim prius credimus non esse quod ultra credere debeamus*

¹⁸ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα κατασχύνη τοὺς σοφοὺς

considers whether God has done it. Thus, the question is not reason versus unreason, but which position would you make your ultimate authority; your epistemology (Gonzalez 1974:21-23).

Consequently, Tertullian is not disparaging philosophical investigation, but proposes a different hermeneutical system in engaging philosophical questions. He was basically casting suspicion on the traditional basis upon which Greek and Latin philosophers sought to deduce objectivity. Tertullian's contention with heretics was that they sought the authoritative basis and hermeneutical lens of "Athens" rather than "Jerusalem". Reason was a gift from God (*De Anima*, 16:2), but it needs to be guided by God's revelation (Sider 1980:418-419; Dunn 2004:33).

1.4 What we can deduce from his work

Having considered the various personas of Tertullian, it remains true that he is an enigmatic figure in ecclesiastical history. Even so, there are some aspects to his life that we can delineate with greater certainty when considering his writings as our primary source.

1.4.1 Regarding his birth and parentage

All we really can deduce is that he was native to Carthage and North African by birth (Bray 2010:64). Tertullian did not grow up as a Christian, but was pagan as a youth (Decret 2009:33). His status within Carthaginian society was most likely elitist or aristocratic in nature, in the sense of being beneficiary of the re-colonization and re-establishment of Carthage (Wilhite 2007:44, 60).

Tertullian's distinct African identity can be deduced from a careful analysis of *Ad Nationes*. When one brings into equation the various literary works and mythology that Tertullian employs in his treatises, it is clear that his audience is the educated class. Tertullian assumes this literate status, when he quotes specific examples of "*vestras litteras*" (your literature) (*Ad Nationes*, 2.12.26) (Wilhite 2007:64). Tertullian does not identify himself as Roman. This is indicated by his referring to Romans as his "other". Throughout his treatise he speaks "*de Romanis*" (of the Romans) in the third person (*Ad Nationes*, 2.9.1ff). More interestingly, Tertullian speaks of Aeneas not as his originator, but as

“their” originator, “their fond father Aeneas, in whom they believed”¹⁹ (*Ad Nationes*, 2.9.12) (Wilhite 2007:65). In *Ad Nationes* 1.17-18, Tertullian’s anti-Roman stance becomes clearer as he compares the Christians with Egyptians, Athenians and especially Carthaginians who have endured Roman occupation and persecution (Wilhite 2007:66-67).

Consequently, the frequent statement that Tertullian was culturally Roman (Von Campenhausen 1960:6), neglects to take into account the frequent negativity Tertullian reveals towards Rome itself. In *De Pallio* Tertullian devotes himself to writing against the adoption of Roman dress compared to the traditional Carthaginian dress (*De Pallio*, 1:3) (Wilhite 2007:141). Culturally, it seems evident that Tertullian identified himself as a North African of Carthage.

1.4.2 Regarding education and career

Given the varied interpretations of Tertullian’s education and work, it is evident that we will never really know with certainty his profession. What is fairly certain is that Tertullian exhibited a wealth of knowledge, literary and rhetorical skill in the composition of his treatises (Ayers 1976:310-311). This would indicate that Tertullian enjoyed a good education, which was only the privilege of the wealthier classes (Brown 2004:200; Dunn 2004:5; Wilhite 2007:19-20).

However, given the vast amount of literary knowledge and rhetorical skill, some scholars have opted to consider Tertullian a type of sophist or polymath. It is evident that in many respects, Tertullian’s knowledge and rhetorical skills seem to correspond with the second sophistic movement (Decret 2009:33; Wilhite 2007:22; Barnes 2005:211-232; Brown 2004:200).

Almost all of Tertullian’s works were sparked by controversy, primarily focused on apologetics and refutations (Wand 1979:81; Wright 1974:960). By implication, Tertullian’s theology was situational and argumentative. His interest lay primarily in the defence of the Faith.

¹⁹*Patrem Diligentem Aenean crediderunt*

1.5 Tertullian's legacy

In spite of Tertullian's enigmatic character, he remains a considerable influence in ecclesiastical history. His works provide a significant window into the 2nd and 3rd century church in the western half of North Africa (Decret 2009:34).

1.5.1 As a writer

When one recalls the period in which Tertullian wrote, generally marked by fierce persecution, his literary output is remarkable (Chadwick 2003:118). Despite the loss of a couple of Tertullian's works, today there are 31 existent treatises that are estimated as authentic, which compiled together would approximate 1500 pages (Bray 2010:65). Barnes' (2005:192) estimation of Tertullian's literary prowess seems accurate, "Tertullian was clearly the luminary of his age, and inaugurated the new and living form of Christian Latin literature".

The breadth of subject matter is immense and it is quite difficult to summarise his work accurately. Bray (1979:3-6), for example, categorizes Tertullian's work in five broad categories. Firstly, apologetic writings such as *Apologeticum*. Secondly, works on persecution such as *De Fuga in Persecutione* and *Ad Martyras*. Thirdly, Christian piety and practice, such as *De Oratione*, *De Ieiunio* and *De Patientia*. Fourthly, a Christian's relationship to the world, such as *De Spectaculis*, *De Idolotaria* and *De Corona*. Lastly, doctrinal treatises, such as *De anima*. However, an additional category could be added, which would be works written specifically against heresies, such as *Adversus Marcionem*, *Adversus Praxean* and *Adversus Valentinianos*.

Some scholars have tried to arrange Tertullian's works chronologically. For example, Osborn (2003:9-10) arranges Tertullian's works according to three "discernible" epochs in his life development. Firstly, Osborn places Tertullian's apologetic works and works on Christian living at the beginning of his Christian life, approximately 197 A.D. Secondly, he places Tertullian's works against heresies in the middle period of his life, approximately 207-208 A.D. Finally, Osborn places Tertullian's ethical works at the end of his life and the treatise *Adversus Praxean*, since this is believed to be the period in which Tertullian lapsed into Montanism. Even though some scholars might agree with some of Osborn's chronology (Brown 2004:217), the consensus is far from

conclusive. As appealing as a neat construction might be in arranging Tertullian's work chronologically, the arrangement is more likely to be based on one's presuppositions regarding the biographical sketch of Tertullian. It remains a dubious and fruitless pursuit. To accept Osborn's construction, one has to accept that Tertullian did lapse into Montanism, which is debatable.

It would seem more prudent to appreciate Tertullian's works collectively and to resist the temptation to arrange them chronologically, since it remains an inconclusive matter. Tertullian himself gave very little indication as to when he wrote a particular work. Only works with references of particular contemporary names or events can be generally chronologically placed.

1.5.2 As a theologian

The significance of Tertullian's 31 treatises is due to their immense theological contribution, especially in relation to the Trinity. Tertullian was the first author to devote a whole treatise to the subject of the Trinity in *Adversus Praxean* (Hill 2003:34). Also, he was the first to clearly assert the tri-personality of God in his conception of the Trinity (Berkhof 1937:63). Having written principally in Latin, his works were more accessible in the western half of the Roman Empire. Consequently, the West generally sought to define the Trinity within the theological parameters and terminology set by Tertullian (Letham 2004:100, 192). Furthermore, Tertullian's influence did not remain within the western half of the Roman Empire, but it is reasoned that his conception of the Trinity triumphed at the council of Nicaea, thus ultimately reaching the entire Catholic Church (Olsen 1999:95). As Osborn (2003:116) would state, "ideas rarely enjoy such unambiguous triumph".

However, Tertullian's theological contribution is not just in the realm of Trinitarian theology. Accordingly to one analysis, Tertullian is responsible for coining 509 nouns, 284 adjectives, and 161 new verbs in the Latin language (McGrath 1996:249). His terminology remains current in Western Christianity and continues to affect our thinking. For example, the terms "*persona*" and "*substantia*" are still in use when describing God's tri-personality. He is also responsible for introducing the word "*sacramentum*" as a description for baptism (Dunn 2004:11; Bray 2010:66). It would be a fallacy to disregard Tertullian when considering ecclesiastical history and the development of theology, since he is a catalyst in the progression of many strands of theological discussion.

1.5.3 As perceived within Church History

In brief, Tertullian's works enjoyed wide circulation and influence, until the 5th century when he was condemned a heretic. Even though prominent theologians such as Cyprian and Augustine spoke in favour of Tertullian, due to the Donatist schism and the usage of Tertullian's work to validate the schism, his works drifted into obscurity (Bray 1979:10-11). Tertullian was thus branded a schismatic and a catalyst for the Donatist movement (Steenberg 2009:60).

From the Reformation period to today, there has been an increased interest in Tertullian's works again, though for varying reasons. Additionally, the response to Tertullian's work still seems to be polarised between harsh condemnation and fierce support. Whereas B.B. Warfield would esteem Tertullian in the most positive terms, R.A. Knox would label him as a propagandist and Montanist heretic (Steenberg 2009:60). There is a sense that Tertullian's style, rigour and personality facilitates a polarization in assessments.

2. Historical trajectories evident in Tertullian's work

Having formulated a biographical sketch, I will proceed to identify the various historical trajectories evident in Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity. The evidence for a trajectory being present in Tertullian's work is validated through the following criteria: 1) explicit reference, 2) conception agreement and 3) agreement in motifs.

In this study five trajectories have been identified: 1) philosophy, 2) heterodoxy, 3) church paradosis, 4) Scriptural corpus and 5) socio-political environment. Nevertheless, it should be taken into cognisance that the identification of trajectories is reduced in relation to Tertullian's treatises that bear some relevance to his conception of the Trinity. Consequently, not every possible trajectory evident in Tertullian's work is taken into consideration.

2.1 Philosophy

2.1.1 Previous scholarship

Even though the general assessment of many scholars was that Tertullian was anti-philosophical, as we have already seen, recent scholarship is slowly moving away from this perception. Moreover, past scholarship, as is evident in Harnack's appraisal of Tertullian, admits that though Tertullian seemed opposed to philosophy, he was simultaneously influenced by it. In Harnack's (1910:198) opinion, Stoicism was the primary influence in Tertullian's thought process.

Contemporary scholarship has latched on to this admission, perceiving a strong affinity to Stoicism in Tertullian's theology of the soul, describing the soul as a corporeal entity (Brown 2004:223-224). In particular, Tertullian seems to have a strong like-mindedness to the Stoicism propagated by Seneca (Bray 2010:66). Apart from Stoicism, other scholars have suggested traces of Aristotelian categorical logic (Ayers 1976:310).

Ecclesiastically, whereas it was common to contrast Clement of Alexandria with Tertullian in their theological models, commonality is more demonstrated. For example, Olsen (1999:97-98) points out that the same philosophical notions that were evident in Clement of Alexandria's theology of God are also incorporated by Tertullian. Both agree on the simplicity, immutability and impassibility of God.

What modern scholarship is recognizing is not that Tertullian was anti-philosophical, but rather that he has a different epistemology. Whereas Tertullian recognizes that various aspects of the Gospel seem contradictory to current philosophical systems, they remain true since they have happened. However, unlike Tertullian's contemporaries who have no understanding of the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, Tertullian introduces the concept of God's omnipotence overcoming logical limitation (cf. *De Carne Christi*, 3-5). Thus, Tertullian acknowledges that God moves beyond human perception, as the Scriptures seem to indicate (1 Cor. 1-2; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26; Matt. 10:32) (Osborn 2003:54-56; Dunn 2004:32). In conclusion, what current scholarship is suggesting is that philosophy was a clear trajectory which influenced Tertullian's conceptualization.

2.1.2 Tertullian texts

There are multiple instances in Tertullian's work where he interacts with his contemporary philosophical milieu.

In *Ad Nationes* 1:4:6-7 Tertullian gives a more positive appraisal of Socrates, on the basis that he understood that the pantheon of gods are false entities. Tertullian to some extent agrees with the Pythian god's exclamation that, "of you all Socrates is the wisest"²⁰, since Socrates came nearest to the truth, "destroying your gods"²¹.

Furthermore, in *Ad Nationes* 2:1:13 describes the philosophers' knowledge of God, "Finally, with the philosophers [the knowledge of God] is uncertain"²². This is due to their vast opinions regarding God's nature, "proceeding from ignorance of the truth"²³ (*Ad Nationes*, 2:2:1). Tertullian goes on to explain the origin of true philosophical wisdom by quoting Solomon's words from Proverbs 9:10, "'the beginning', he said, 'of wisdom [is] fear in God'"²⁴ (*Ad Nationes*, 2:2:3).

In many regards, Tertullian's characterization is not dissimilar to that of Cicero, who describes both Plato and Aristotle as confused. Cicero deems Plato's understanding of the nature of the gods as inconsistent, "Now to speak about Plato's inconsistencies they are a long [story]"²⁵ (*De Natura Deorum*, 1:12:30). Even though Tertullian and Cicero agree that, "For all these matters [which relate to worship] are concerning this issue of the question of the immortals/gods"²⁶ (*De Natura Deorum*, 1:6:14), their conclusions differ. Cicero ends his discourse with uncertainty (Tertullian's exact accusation of the philosophers) (*De Natura Deorum*, 3:40:95), while Tertullian asserts that God can be known through His revelation.

²⁰uirorum...omnium Socrates sapientissimus

²¹deos vestros destruendo

²²Denique apud philosophos incerta

²³veniens de ignorantia veritatis

²⁴'Initium', inquit, 'sapientiae metusin Deum'

²⁵Iam de Platonis inconstantia longum est dicere

²⁶haec enim omnia ad hanc de dis immortalibus quaestionem referenda sunt

To some extent, Tertullian's assertion in *Ad Nationes* 2:2:7 is true of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, "For merely finding God, they explained him not as they found him, so that they may debate concerning his quality, nature and habitation"²⁷. His whole contention in *Ad Nationes* 2:2 is that God is knowable through His revelation, but philosophers opt for uncertain speculation based on dialectical reasoning. Tertullian principally argues that what the philosopher sought to know, Christians truly know. The philosopher's quest to comprehend the metaphysical realm of the divine is fulfilled in the Christian expectation. As Tertullian exclaims in *Apologeticum* 46:9, "Any Christian workman both finds and displays from there all (the attributes) which in God he seeks, and also ascribes [it] in all matters"²⁸.

Generally, much of Tertullian's work deals with the issue of epistemology regarding philosophical construction. For example, when dealing with heretics, Tertullian's primary accusation is generally that they opted for the authority of philosophy above the authority of the Scriptures. As he exclaims, Hermogenes' chief fault was that, "For [Hermogenes] turned from Christianity to the philosophers, from the church to the Academy and Porch"²⁹ (*Adversus Hermogenem*, 1:4).

Conversely, apart from the issue of epistemology, Tertullian does exhibit a broad knowledge of the philosophers. For example, in *Adversus Marcionem* 1.13.3, Tertullian makes reference to Thales of Miletus, Heraclitus, Anaximenes, Anaximander, Zeno and Plato as well as their conceptions of the nature of God. In *Adversus Marcionem* 2:5:1 Tertullian describes human nature very similarly to the Platonic and Stoic understanding of the soul as being derived from the divine substance or spark, "man [is] both His certain image and likeness, indeed even his substance"³⁰ (Plato, *Timaeus*, 42B-D; Rackham 1999:XXIII; Clark 1989:167; Tarnas 1993:41). Furthermore, in *Apologeticum* 17:6 Tertullian develops the notion of recollection in Plato's philosophy along Christian lines, arguing that all souls are Christian in the sense that, since they have derived their existence from God, should have some form of recollection of Him, "O the testimony of the soul by nature Christian!... For it knew the throne of the living God, since from Him, and from there it descended"³¹ (Tarnas 1993:41; Barnes 2005:123).

²⁷*Inuento enim solummodo deo, non ut inuenerunt, exposuerunt, ut de quali'tate eius et de natura, etiam de sededisceptant*

²⁸*Deum quilibet opifex Christianus et invenit et ostendit et exinde totum, quod in deum quaeritur, re quoque adsignat*

²⁹*A Christianis enim ad philosophos conuersus, de ecclesia in Academiam et Porticum*

³⁰*...hominem, et quidem imaginem et similitudinem suam, immo et substantiam suam...*

³¹*O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae! ... Novit enim sedem dei vivi; ab illo, et inde descendit.*

In *De Anima* 1:1-6 Tertullian begins his discourse by affirming that the question of the nature of the soul is one of the primary questions which philosophy sought to answer. In *De Anima* 2:1 Tertullian asserts that philosophy and Christian doctrine correspond at many junctures, due to the fact that “by the common perception/sense, which to the soul God deemed worthy to endow”³² (Dunn 2004:31).

What the above discourse elucidates is that Tertullian had vibrant interaction with his philosophical milieu and the various philosophical trajectories available to him.

2.2 Heterodoxy

2.2.1 Previous scholarship

Brown (2003:9-10) summarises the relationship between orthodoxy and heterodoxy well in the following paragraph: “No religion has emphasized faith and the necessity of holding right doctrine more than Christianity, and no religion has been more productive of doctrinal controversies and heretical opinions... Theology, we admit, is to a large extent a reaction against a response to truths imperfectly understood, taken out of context, or perceived as inadequate or unsatisfying. Nevertheless, the existence of heresy in Christianity presupposes the existence of a truth to which the heretics were responding, and which they sought to explain or to understand better than they perceived the more conventionally orthodox, heresy gives evidence for the fact that those assumptions existed, and that they were held to be fundamental”.

This statement is evidently quite true when describing Tertullian, who responded and wrote extensively against most of the major heretical teachings of his day. Gnosticism and its ambassadors in the person of Marcion and the Valentinians, Montanism and modalism as presented by Praxeas are all evident in his work. Tertullian devoted considerable time in refuting and correcting these various heterodox persuasions; as Olsen (1999:92) would explain, “Tertullian’s theology is formed in response to heresies”.

³²*de publico sensu, quo animam deus dotare dignatus est.*

What is recognized is that Tertullian seeks to understand the heresy in question and then begins to redefine it towards orthodoxy. Thus, he engages comprehensively with Marcion's antithesis, Praxeas' modalism and Valentinian's gnostic teaching (Osborn 2003:xvi-xvii; Barnes 2005:121). Subsequently, it is quite clear that heterodoxy was a prominent trajectory within Tertullian's theology, as Osborn (2003:246) concludes, "Most thinkers write under the stimulus of controversy, and Tertullian was fortunate to have many opponents to make him think".

2.2.2 Tertullian texts

A great deal of Tertullian's work is dedicated to opposing heresies prevalent within the ecclesiastical community. Thus, without necessarily citing direct passages in which Tertullian mention heresies, it would suffice to mention the works in which he addresses them: *Adversus Marcionem*, *Adversus Hermongenem*, *Adversus Valentinianos*, *Adversus Praxean* and *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*. Tertullian did, arguably, fulfil what he hoped to accomplish in *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 44:14, "concerning the rest (of the heresies), if God will show favour by His grace, we will also particularly respond to certain of these [heresies]"³³. The specific works mentioned above are a testimony to Tertullian's desire to address specifically each individual heresy. Inadvertently, these "responses" have formed a significant trajectory within Tertullian theological conception of the Trinity (Barnes 2005:121).

2.3 Church paradosis

2.3.1 Previous scholarship

If a comparative study were to be done between the various apologists, many similarities would be observed. It is thus not unique for scholarship today to see similarities between Justin and Tertullian, for example, in relation to the Logos doctrine (Hill 2003:34). Moreover, many studies are done with Tertullian and Irenaeus put together as being similar in theological persuasion, particularly in their contention with Gnosticism (Brown 2003:78). Conversely, apart from seeming similarities, others note that Tertullian seems to be an advance on Irenaeus and Justin's theology. Thus, there is not a static transmission of doctrine, but a progressive exposition and expansion of what previously had

³³*Dereliquo si Dei gratia adnuerit etiam specialiter quibusdam respondebimus.*

been taught or suggested (Kelly 2007:36; Osborn 2003:6-7). Tertullian might have adopted the theology of his predecessors (Warfield 2003:18), but he did not remain utterly bound to it.

Apart from the direct references to various church fathers by Tertullian, which we will observe later, most of the similarities are discernible in similar terminology and general theological investigation. Warfield describes Tertullian's work as a significant advance on his forebears, though still limited to the apologetic framework set out by Justin (Warfield 2003:84-88, 109).

2.3.2 Tertullian texts

One aspect in which ecclesiastical *paradosis* is evident is Tertullian's view of apostolic succession in respect of the Catholic Church. Like Irenaeus (Irenaeus, *Adversum Haereses*, 33:4:1), Tertullian considered heresy invalid or unworthy of consideration due to its seeming later date, "We are accustomed to use a shortened argument against heretics, by outlining their late posterity"³⁴ (*Adversus Hermogenem*, 1:1). Similarly, in *Adversus Marcionem* 1:1:7 Tertullian dismisses Marcion's teaching on the premise of its "*novitatis*" (newness).

Moreover, Tertullian's description of the Son as "*rationalis deus*" (the Reason of God) (*Adversus Praxean*, 5:3) is the same as Justin, who describes the Son, "His Word/Reason who took form becoming a man and being called Jesus Christ"³⁵ (Justin, First Apology, 5:15). As Warfield (2003:18) asserts, Tertullian did adopt the Logos Christology of his predecessors in the formulation of his theology of the Trinity.

Another aspect which indicates that church tradition was a prominent trajectory in Tertullian's thought is the notion of the *Regula fidei* (rule of faith). Irenaeus referred to this fluid tradition as the canon of truth (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:10:1; 1:22:1; 5:20:1), which was flexible in expression but constant in content (Kelly 2007:37). For Tertullian, the *Regula fidei* formed the boundary of theological inquiry, which heretics generally sought to overstep (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 12:5). Thus, what we can observe is that Tertullian kept within the tradition set by the apostolic church, which was extrapolated in the work of Irenaeus (Kelly 2007:41).

³⁴*Solemus haereticis compendii gratia de posteritate praescribere*

³⁵ αὐτοῦ τοῦ λόγου μορφωθέντος καὶ ἀνθρώπου γενομένου καὶ Ἰησοῦ Ἐριστοῦ κληθέντος

In *Adversus Valentinianos* 5:1, Tertullian directly mentions Justin and Irenaeus as former church fathers, “Justin, the philosopher and martyr, Miltiades, the sophist of the church, Irenaeus, a most curious/eager explorer of all doctrine; our Proculus, a virgin of old age and of dignified Christian eloquence, these I will have hoped to follow in all works of faith, just as in this [work]”³⁶. What this text reveals is that Tertullian was a) acquainted with and knowledgeable of the various church fathers and their theology; b) had a deep admiration for them and c) sought to emulate them in his life and theology.

Consequently, it would seem evident that ecclesiastical tradition was a prominent trajectory within Tertullian’s theological praxis.

2.4 Scriptural Corpus

2.4.1 Previous scholarship

Due to the controversies of Tertullian’s day, especially Marcion’s dichotomy between the Old Testament and New Testament, the church in general began to emphasise the various apostolic writings and the Old Testament as Scripture. There is a sense that Tertullian lived in a unique period of ecclesiastical history where the apostolic writings began to enjoy more authority, equal to the Old Testament Scriptures (Harnack 1910:55-56). Following Jude 3, Brown (2003:24-26) argues that the formal acceptance of the New Testament or at least the solidification of the New Testament was not merely due to normal ideological evolutionary processes, but rather it was the clarification of what the ecclesiastical body already possessed and believed.

Subsequently, what becomes clear is that both Testaments played a significant and prominent role in theologizing among those who were more orthodox in persuasion or who aligned themselves to the apostolic church. Thus, Tertullian puts great emphasis on the unity of Scripture, but also the witness of the apostolic church to the authenticity of Scripture. The key distinguisher, as discerned in Irenaeus and Tertullian was the *Regula Fidei*, which was considered a type of summary of the teaching of the Testaments (Kelly 2007:39-40).

³⁶*Iustinus, philosophus et martyr; ut Miltiades, ecclesiarum sophista; ut Irenaeus, omnium doctrinarum curiosissimus explorator; ut Proculus noster, virginis senectae et Christianae eloquentiae dignitas, quos in omne opere fidei quemadmodum in isto optaverim adsequi*

In addition, when careful analysis is done of Tertullian's texts, mention is made of every New Testament book except two (2 and 3 John) (Dunn 2004:19; Bray 2010:66). Brown (2004:227) highlights that Tertullian seems to view Scripture as God's legal "*testamenta*" through which God's nature and will is revealed (*Apologeticum*, 20:1-5) and states the true nature of the cosmos (*De Anima*, 21:5). Consequently, Tertullian sought to construct his theology upon the premise of revealed wisdom or Scripture (Harnack 1910:198).

2.4.2 Tertullian texts

In *Adversus Marcionem* 2:16:2 Tertullian draws a clear distinction between orthodox epistemology and heterodoxy, or the basis for orthodox teaching, "We have been taught of God by the prophets and from Christ, neither from philosophers nor from Epicurus"³⁷. The words of the prophets and of Christ are contained within the Old Testament and Apostolic writings. The authority of the apostolic writings is based on Christ's commission to the apostles to write what they have seen and heard. Their authority is tied to the authority of Christ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 4:2:1-2). Within this corpus Tertullian includes Luke's Gospel as well as the writings of Paul (*Adversus Marcionem*, 4:2:4-5).

Tertullian's discourse from book 3 to book 5 of *Adversus Marcionem* is a detailed Scriptural argument, as he seeks to demonstrate that the Old Testament and New Testament form a unity and that the Creator God of the Old Testament is in fact the God of Christ in the New Testament. For example, in book 3 Tertullian primarily deals with Old Testament Scriptures and how they relate to Christ. In book 5 Tertullian deals with the following New Testament letters:

Chapters 1-4, Galatians,

Chapters 5-10 1 Corinthians;

Chapters 11-12, 2 Corinthians;

Chapters 13-14, Romans;

Chapters 15-16, 1-2 Thessalonians;

Chapters 17-18, Ephesians;

³⁷*Deum nos a prophetis et a Christo, non a philosophis nec ab Epicuro erudimur*

Chapter 19, Colossians;

Chapter 20, Philippians;

Chapter 21, Philemon and 1-2 Timothy.

Therefore, the premise for Tertullian's theological argumentation in *Adversus Marcionem*, as in many other treatises, is the scriptural corpus available to him. Furthermore, in *Apologeticum* 47:9 Tertullian refers to two sets of Scripture which heretics seek to abuse; the "*vetus*" (old) and "this our newly given/prepared [Scripture]"³⁸.

In *Adversus Praxean* 29:1 Tertullian emphatically states that the authority for belief should be based on the premise of Scripture's testimony. This should be adequate for any Christian, "Let the saying be sufficient that Christ the Son of God has died, for this is Scripture"³⁹. It is this "*scripturarum auctoritate*" (authority of Scripture), which should remove any offense to believing.

In *Apologeticum* 18:8 Tertullian makes a profound statement regarding Scripture and its relation to divinity or knowing God, "Whoever will have listened, he will find God; again whoever will have studied/taken pains to understand, will be compelled to believe"⁴⁰. There is a sense that Tertullian views Scripture as the window to see the vision of God and it is also sufficient to compel any true student of it to believe in that vision. Thus, again, Tertullian views Scripture as a sufficient tool or means in the process of theology.

What the above citations clearly illustrate is that Tertullian viewed Scripture as his primary "*auctoritas*" for theologizing and that he used it extensively in his treatises, particularly in the context of addressing heresy. Therefore, it was a strong influential trajectory in Tertullian's theological praxis.

³⁸ *nostram hanc noviciolam paraturam*

³⁹ *sufficiat Christum filium dei mortuum dici, et hoc quia ita scriptum est*

⁴⁰ *Qui audierit, inveniet deum; qui etiam studuerit intellegere, cogetur et credere*

2.5 Socio-political environment

2.5.1 Previous scholarship

Whereas the above four trajectories are fairly easy to discern and generally accepted among most scholars, the most interesting developments have been regarding the role Tertullian's socio-political environment played in his theology. To some extent, the fascination with the historical and socio-political context of Tertullian was sparked by the work of Paul Monceaux, *Historie litteraire de l'Afrique* (1901). Monceaux presented the hypothesis that the North African Church was a unique cultural entity, distinct from the ecclesiastical bodies in Italy and Gaul. Tertullian served as the archetype of this distinction (Bray 1979:21-22).

Consequently, more scholars have sought to understand Tertullian's works in the light of 2nd and 3rd century Carthage. As Brown would state, "The source of Tertullian's theological vision can be found in the soil of his native Africa" (Brown 2004:217-218). More recently, scholars such as Wilhite have promoted the idea of reading Tertullian anthropologically, studying Tertullian from the viewpoint of Roman colonialism. Thus, wherever anti-Roman sentiment is expressed either towards Roman society or the Roman church, it is proposed to read it from the perspective of Roman occupation and not merely theological controversy surrounding Montanism and Roman paganism (Wilhite 2007:25-26).

Subsequently, Wilhite (2007:190) suggests to place Tertullian back into his proper context, which is North Africa, and to avoid the stereotypical reading which interprets Tertullian as a westerner. Thus, Wilhite advocates reading Tertullian with this question in mind, "What does it mean to be an African during Roman colonization of Africa?" (Wilhite 2007:190).

There is a sense then, which Tertullian exhibits a unique Africanity in his theology. To some extent, this latest development seeks to move scholarship to read Tertullian within his subjective milieu and to take into cognisance that his interests did not deviate from that of his native Carthage.

2.5.2 Tertullian texts

That Tertullian did not consider the Christian community entirely different from his own socio-political context is verified in *Ad Nationes* 1:13:5, “we are not far from Saturn and your sabbaths”⁴¹. In Tertullian’s opinion, the Christian practice of worship is not too dissimilar from the Carthaginian practice of worshipping Saturn.

In *Adversus Judaeos* 7:6-9, Tertullian explains the universal reign of Christ in relation to the historical kingdoms known to his socio-political context. What is interesting is that Tertullian takes the time to ridicule the Roman Empire for being limited in power. Tertullian deliberately compares the limit of the Roman Empire with the limitlessness of Christ’s sovereignty and the willingness of His people to follow Him. Christ is, unlike the Roman Empire, “*ubique adoratur*” (everywhere being adored) (*Adversus Judaeos* 7:9).

That Tertullian considered his cultural background as more superior to some other cultures manifests itself in his depiction of Pontus and Marcion in *Adversus Marcionem* 1:1:3-5. Tertullian depicts Pontus as one of the most barbarous places within the confines of the Roman Empire. However, to add ridicule, Tertullian describes Marcion in the following colourful terms, “But nothing is so barbarous and sad from Pontus than that Marcion is born there. More forbidding/gloomy than a Scythian, more unstable than a Samartian waggondweller; more inhumane than a Massagete, more audacious than an Amazon, darker than a cloud, more frozen than winter; more brittle than ice, falser than the Ister; more rough than a Caucasus”⁴².

Apart from Tertullian’s sense of cultural superiority, Tertullian was also keenly aware of various cultural difficulties in assimilating Christian theology. In *Adversus Praxean* 3:1, Tertullian recognizes that one of the fundamental reasons for the objection to the notion of the Trinity is due to the cultural background of most believers, which was a conversion “*a pluribus diis saeculi*” (from the world’s plurality of gods).

⁴¹*non longe a Saturno et sabbatis vestris sumus*

⁴²*Sed nihil tam barbarum ac triste apud Pontum quam quod illic Marcion natus est, Scythia tetrior, Hamaxobio instabilior, Massageta inhumanior, Amazona audacior, nubilo obscurior, hieme frigidior, gelu fragilior, Istro fallacior, Caucaso abruptior.*

What the above citations validate is that Tertullian was keenly aware of his own cultural heritage in a) recognizing similarities between his native Carthaginian society and the Christian community; b) using his cultural pedigree as a superior vantage point to some of his opponents and c) understanding the various cultural hindrances to believing or accepting certain key theological truths. Consequently, Tertullian wrote within his own cultural milieu, forming an important trajectory in his theology.

3. Conclusion

Regarding Tertullian's persona, not much can be confidently asserted, but primarily inferred from his work. However, this does not imply that Tertullian is a complete enigmatic figure. Due to the complexity of his writing as well as the breadth of knowledge, it is clear that Tertullian seems to have enjoyed a more elitist background in his native Carthage and had an extensive education. Various traditional personas of Tertullian, such as being a Montanist, Roman Jurist or anti-philosophical fundamentalist, are no longer considered as being a matter of fact. Even though aspects of these personas are evident in his work and some external sources refer to Tertullian as having lapsed in Montanist dogma or being a jurist, the evidence remains insufficient to ascertain any of these personas.

Tertullian's philosophical position remains a point of contention, but recent scholarship has challenged the traditional position of considering Tertullian as an anti-rationalist. What is clear is that Tertullian argues within the same philosophical categories as his secular and heretical counterparts, though differing on key issues such as epistemology. Tertullian does not reject a philosophical framework or conceptions, but rather the basis upon which it should be constructed. Tertullian had a different hermeneutical lens for asserting and assimilating knowledge, in particular to the understanding of divinity or the Trinity. What exactly Tertullian's hermeneutical lens was will only be considered in Chapter 5.

Apart from Tertullian as a person, what is more important for our study is the identification of the various trajectories evident in his work regarding his conceptualization of the Trinity. What previous scholarship as well as Tertullian's texts seems to indicate is that five trajectories dominated his thought process: 1) Philosophy, 2) Heterodoxy, 3) Church Paradosis, 4) Scriptural Corpus and 5) his socio-political environment. How these trajectories chronologically developed until their culmination in Tertullian's conceptualization of the Trinity will be investigated in Chapters 3, 4A and 4B.

Chapter 3 - The chronological development of the first three historical trajectories

1. Synopsis

It should be noted that the following chapter will not be dealing with the epistemological grounds for the various positions, but primarily with the various philosophical and theological constructions of God/gods. The epistemological basis, and the hermeneutical lens as well as the undergirding presuppositions and motifs that govern their epistemology and hermeneutics will only be discussed in Chapter 4A and 4B. Moreover, Chapter 3 will only be dealing with the chronological development of the three primary trajectories' contribution to the metaphysical comprehension of the nature of god/gods. The trajectories of orthodoxy and heterodoxy will be demonstrated in Chapter 4B, due to them being primarily offshoots of the first three trajectories and the epistemological basis and hermeneutical lens derived from them. Consequently, heterodoxy and orthodoxy would also demonstrate how these epistemologies and hermeneutical praxes developed in ecclesiastical history prior to Tertullian.

Explanations will be provided of selected philosophical positions in order to demonstrate the philosophical trajectory's conceptualization of divinity or the metaphysical reality of God. In relation to this, it would also be the aim to demonstrate the strong correlation between the various philosophical formulations. There are key prepositions and concepts that are repeated throughout, for example, the notion of a logical principle that governs or fashions co-eternal and unformed matter.

Moreover, since philosophers deal with the notion of divinity through their understanding of cosmology and teleology, these categories will be included in our investigation. Thus, three primary categories will be considered:

- 1) Cosmology: the composition of reality, specifically seeking to understand the universe through the concept of unity and diversity.
- 2) Teleology: as the concept of cosmology is extrapolated, a necessary first cause or teleological principle is sought; this principle is often attributed to a divine power or god/gods.

- 3) Ontology: once the necessity of divinity is illustrated, the nature of this divinity is explained in accordance with their cosmological understanding and teleological function of the metaphysical reality of god/gods.

These will be modified slightly when considering the scriptural corpus, since it does not necessarily share similar interests in defining divinity through cosmology and teleology. This does not imply an absence of these categories, but rather a lack of emphasis on these specific categories.

Lastly, the investigation of Tertullian's socio-political environment will be concerning the development of Carthage, its relation to Rome as well as the pluralism which dominated Carthage. This will be a brief study, since, in general estimation, this made minimal impact on Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity (which we hope to demonstrate in Chapter 6 and 7). It would highlight, possibly, the relationship between the bishopric of Rome and Carthage during the time Tertullian wrote *Adversus Praxean* as well as the careful selection of words Tertullian employs to avoid being classified as a pluralist, which was the dominant religious persuasion of his day. In addition, it would elucidate something of Tertullian's social heritage, which enabled him to become a proficient writer who engaged in multiple disciplines, uncommon to many within the church of his day.

The study will proceed as follows. Firstly, we will consider the development and understanding of the two primary branches of knowledge available to the early church: 1) philosophy and 2) scriptural corpus. Secondly, Tertullian's socio-political environment will be studied, in order to extrapolate the context of his writing. Due to the sheer scope and volume of literature available, this study will be reductionist in its analysis, only taking into consideration the key elements that would contribute to our study.

2. Philosophy

The study of the philosophers will primarily be concerned with the notion of theology proper or divinity; how they understood the divine reality called God. There is a sense that philosophers conceived of God teleologically and from his "τέλος" derived his ontology. The God of the philosophers is primarily a God of necessity or "τέλος", rather than a relational God of redemptive

history. It is from their observation of nature or the universe, seeking to make sense of it, that the necessity of God or an intelligence or Reason is necessitated. Consequently, when considering the philosophers, God will be understood from the disciplines of cosmology and teleology. It is from these two disciplines that a type of ontology of God is formulated.

2.1 Pre-Socratic

To some extent, the Pre-Socratic era could be deemed irrelevant to the 2nd and 3rd century A.D., due to the immense timespan between the two eras. Even so, it is legitimate to begin with the beginning of recorded philosophical speculation. It was generally the Pre-Socratic era which shaped subsequent philosophical speculation and sowed the seeds for more elaborate conceptualizations (Copleston 1962:96-97).

For example, in *Timaeus* 27D-28A, Plato makes the following statement, “Now first of all we must, in my judgment, make the following distinction. *What is that which is existent always and has no becoming? And what is that which is becoming always and never is existent? Now the one of these is apprehensible by thought with the aid of reasoning, since it is ever uniformly existent; whereas the other is an object of opinion with the aid of unreasoning sensation, since it becomes and perishes and is never really existent. Again, everything which becomes must of necessity become owing to some Cause; for without a cause it is impossible for anything to attain becoming...*” (My italics for emphasis) (Bury 2005:49)⁴³.

The following categories can be deduced from Plato’s quote. Firstly, the notion of being and becoming as the fundamental principles of cosmology; “being” equivalent to immutability and thus absolute objectivity and “becoming” to continuous fluctuations that are primarily subjective and unreliable. Secondly, the sphere of becoming is dependent on a Cause, a teleological principle that sets the whole in motion.

⁴³Ἔστιν οὖν ὃ κατ’ ἐμὴν δόξαν πρῶτον διαιρετέον τάδε· τί τὸ ὃ αἰεὶ γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον καὶ τί τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν αἰεὶ ὃν δὲ οὐδέποτε τὸ μὲν δὴ νοήσει μετὰ Λόγου περιληπτὸν αἰεὶ κατὰ ταῦτα ὃν τὸ δ’ αὖ δόξη μετ’ αἰσθήσεως ἀλόγου δοξαστὸν γιγνόμενον καὶ ἀπολλυμένον ὅντως δὲ οὐδέποτε ὃν πᾶν δὲ αὖ τὸ γιγνόμενον ὑπ’ αἰτίου τινὸς ἐξ ἀνάγκης γίγνεσθαι·

Plato sets out in *Timaeus* to explain these categories of cosmology, teleology and eventually speculating the ontology of the Cause. To some extent, Plato demonstrates his dependence on the subsequent thinking of the Pre-Socratic era in which these categories were investigated and the trajectories set. Even though their conceptualizations were not as robust and mature as Plato and subsequent philosophers, they remain the catalysts which eventually produced a philosopher like Plato who was, in my estimation, an inheritor of the trajectory of former philosophical investigation.

However, since the Pre-Socratic philosophies are many and varied, I would reduce my investigation to a select few, with reference to some of the others as they correlate (though primarily in passing). Jointly, we will investigate the Milesian philosophers, followed by Pythagorean, Heraclitan and Parmenidean philosophy. Finally, we will investigate Empedocles and Anaxagoras, due to their influence on Plato, Aristotle and the Post-Socratics.

2.1.1 Milesians

2.1.1.1 Cosmology

Prior to the Milesians, Greek cosmology and theology was primarily understood within the framework of the pluralism as presented by Homer and Hesiod. However, subsequent to Homer and Hesiod, this traditional understanding did not remain unchallenged. To some extent, the Milesians presented an alternative understanding of cosmology as a reaction to the traditional *status quo* (Naddaf 1998:1; Granger 2007:140). Customarily, scholars attribute the beginning of this philosophical reaction to Thales of Miletus who lived approximately 624-546 BC (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:5-6), but recent scholarship has pointed out that prior to the Milesians, others have sought to revise Greek cosmology and theology. For example, Pherecydes depicted the supreme-god Zas, who was a type of feminine demiurge or fashioner of uncreated matter. Zas was feminine in distinction to the common masculine Zeus, and was associated with fashioning uncreated matter in a peace-loving manner, unlike the usual depiction of the cosmos coming into existence due to warrior-like conflict (Granger 2007:152-153). Accordingly, the Milesians are part of a larger tradition of reaction against traditional Greek mythology.

However, where the Milesians (Thales being considered the catalyst) were unique was that to some extent, they sought to understand cosmology from the principle of unity and diversity, seeking a unifying principle that governed the larger whole. Moreover, they sought to understand cosmology without the anthropomorphic language evident in the various creation accounts depicted in Greek mythology. Having observed the various diverse components of natural phenomena, Thales sought to find a unifying principle or substance. What Thales sought, and successively Anaximander and Anaximenes (keeping to the original principles of their tutor), was the *Urstoff* from which diversity derives its existence (Copleston 1962:36; Feinberg 1966:8).

What should also be noted is that even though their interest was understanding what the primordial substance was (*Urstoff* or φύσις) from which all things derive their existence (Feinberg 1966:8), they also shared the underlining interest of the mythologies of Homer and Hesiod. They desired to understand the societal structure in relation to the cosmic design, following the three spheres of cosmology, anthropology and politogony as depicted in the earlier mythologies. Consequently, there remains continuity in structure and interest, even though they seek to explain it from a different vantage point (Naddaf 1998:2-3).

2.1.1.2 Teleology

As the universe was considered being the interplay between unity and diversity, one and many, the necessity rose to identify this unifying substance, the *Urstoff*, which was identified in crude material terms. Nevertheless, their interest was not limited to identifying the *Urstoff*. There also had to be a rational element to it. What is often neglected in discussing the Milesians is Cicero's assertion in *De Natura Deorum*, 1:10:25 which seems to indicate that Thales did not merely seek a material cause (using Aristotelian terminology), but also an efficient cause. As Cicero reports, "For Thales of Milesius, who was the first person to have investigated such matters, said water to be the first principle of things, God being the mind who fashioned/moulded all things out of water – as if the gods are without sensation"⁴⁴. Aristotle also made a similar assertion regarding Thales.

Some might question Cicero's assertion on the basis that we have no primary sources of Thales' proposed concept of "*deus mens*", but only doxographical tradition, which implies that Aristotle and

⁴⁴*Thales enim Milesius, qui primus de talibus rebus quaestivit, aquam dixit esse initium rerum, deum eam mentem quae ex aqua cuncta fingeret – si di possunt esse sine sensu...*

Cicero did not have any work to consult for authentication (Dicks 1959:298). However, even if the possibility exists that subsequent doxographies imported the various biographers' philosophical doctrines into Thales' biography (Dicks 1959:301) or interpreted it differently than Thales intended (Clark 1995:297-298), their authenticity was not questioned by either the Greek authors such as Herodotus, Plato and Aristotle, or the Latin authors such as Cicero. Thus, their authenticity was irrelevant to the classical age. Tertullian would have most likely understood Thales according to the doxographies available in his day.

Hence, following Cicero, it would seem that beyond the *Urstoff* there was an intelligent agency or intelligences which as a craftsman or craftsmen, moulded from the *Urstoff* the diversity observable through natural science. The efficient cause, therefore, seems not to be *Urstoff*, but an intelligent agency. Moreover, this intelligence was not understood in monotheistic terms, but most likely pantheistic terms, as permeating the cosmos as a regulating principle, as Plato and Aristotle attributed Thales of saying, "All things are full of gods"⁴⁵ (Plato, *Laws* 10:899b; Aristotle, *De Anima* 411a8 [A22]) (Clark 1995:297; Granger 2007:158). In addition, Thales understood the human soul as a cause of motion (κίνησις), and seems to have interpreted the microcosm of the human soul as being a representative of the macrocosm of an all-pervasive soul (ψυχή) which causes the motion of the cosmos and *Urstoff* or primordial substance. In this regard, as Aristotle deems, Thales is close to and a forerunner to Anaxagoras' "νοῦς" (Aristotle, *De Anima*, 404a25-404b6, 405a13-19) (Clark 1995:297-298).

What further strengthens this notion of a governing intelligence is Anaximander's understanding of his "ἄπειρον". For Anaximander, the "ἄπειρον" (the indeterminate boundless) "encompasses all things and all things pilots"⁴⁶ (Granger 2007:158). This pilot of all things is the origin of the universe, from which all things came into existence through continual motion or flux (Anaximander, *Fragments*, A11)⁴⁷ (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:6-7). From the "ἄπειρον's" motion the cosmos grows like a living being from a seed (γόνιμον) (Naddaf 1998:3). The difference, most likely, between Thales and Anaximander, is that Thales' "*deus mens*" was separate from the *Urstoff*, though permeating it, while Anaximander's "ἄπειρον" is the *Urstoff*; a type of naturalized Zeus that permeates the whole cosmos (Leshner 1995:133). However, what both share is the notion of governing intelligence. For the theory of *Urstoff* to seem plausible, an efficient cause was necessary. That efficient cause, though not

⁴⁵ Πάντα πλήρη θεῶν εἶναι

⁴⁶ καὶ περιέχειν ἅπαντα καὶ πάντα κυβερνᾶν

⁴⁷ πρὸς δὲ τ ο ὑ τ ω κ ί ν η σ ι ν αἰδίων εἶναι, ἐν ᾗ συμβαίνει γίνεσθαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς.

investigated in any detail, was the fashioner only mentioned as being “*mens*” (mind) by Thales (which permeates all things) or the *Urstoff* itself (the material element possessing intelligence itself).

2.1.1.3 Ontology

Ontologically, we do not know more regarding how Thales understood this intelligence to be. We primarily only know, if Aristotle and Cicero could be considered an authority, that god/gods consisted of “*mens*”, that is “*sine sensu*” (without sensation) and permeates all things.

Anaximander and Anaximenes synthesized this intelligence with the notion of *Urstoff*. Thus, Anaximander and Anaximenes elaborated more regarding the ontology of the *Urstoff*. Thales did consider the *Urstoff* to be water (Aristotle, *De Caelo* B 13:294a28)⁴⁸ (Sproul 2000:15), but more as an origin of the cosmos, than the ontological essence of divinity. Anaximander considered the *Urstoff* to be the indeterminate boundless or “*ἄπειρον*” (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:6-7) and Anaximenes considered it to be air (Copleston 1962:36), attributing to this material substance intelligence.

Where Anaximander and Anaximenes parted ways was the empirical reality of their *Urstoff*. Anaximenes considered the *Urstoff* to be observable air, thus being able to empirically verify it. Consequently, it was a very immanent principle (Granger 2007:159). Conversely, Anaximander made a distinction between the “*ἄπειρον*” and the cosmos. The “*ἄπειρον*” was the super-cosmos from which the cosmos derived its existence; however, the “*ἄπειρον*” is not an immanent principle, but unknowable, distant and unobservable. Its existence is purely within the super-cosmos. It is mysterious because what we know empirically regarding it is limited to the opposites and the products of their interactions, of hot, cold, moist, dry, or of fire, air, water, earth (Aristotle, *Physics*, 204b26-28). This would seem to indicate primitive conceptualization of transcendence, but Anaximander’s “transcendent” “*ἄπειρον*” was still material and bound to space and time. It was distant, but not wholly transcendent. The Milesians primarily conceptualized in crude materialistic terms. It was only until Plato that divinity was predominantly conceptualized with the notion of incorporeality⁴⁹ (Granger 2007:158-159, 160-161).

⁴⁸Θαλῆς μὲν ὁ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχηγὸς φιλοσοφίας ὕδωρ φησὶν εἶναι (διὸ καὶ τὴν γῆν ἐφ’ ὕδατος ἀπεφύνατο εἶναι)

⁴⁹It should be noted that Pythagoras does seem to indicate that the world-soul was incorporeal. Plato possibly only extrapolated Pythagoras’ ontological understanding of divinity.

2.1.2 Pythagoreans

2.1.2.1 Cosmology

Pythagoras was originally from Samos but left Samos in 530 BC and settled in Croton (Tredennick 2003:XIV-XVI). Similar to the Milesians, there are few, if any, original sources from which to deduce what Pythagoras actually said. Most of what we know comes from various doxographies that have generally been doubted regarding authenticity (Morrison 1956:135; Baker 1972:1). Yet, this does not nullify the Pythagorean society and what it taught as a whole, even if its progenitor remains an elusive figure. Unique to the Pythagorean philosophical system was the concept of numbers as the basis for reality. Numbers created figures, such as the triangle, square and rectangle. These figures, which are mathematical constructions, give material substances shape and size, forming its structure of reality. Consequently, all things consisted of numbers, whether light or dark, male or female, good or evil, these categories had mathematical constructions of odds, evens and opposites (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:11). This does not necessarily imply that numbers are material, but rather that all things resemble mathematical constructions and can be mathematically deduced (Baker 1972:36).

From the notion of all things consisting of numbers which formulate shapes that structure reality, Pythagoreans also added the notion of Limit. Limit is what gives material substances form, which to them was exemplified in music and medicine (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:11). Thus, the all-embracing unity in Pythagoras' construction of cosmology is the concept of Limit (Tredennick 2003:XIV-XVI). For things to have harmony and not disorder there has to be a limit to their form, a mathematical boundary to the present reality.

2.1.2.2 Teleology

Pythagoras, observing the mathematical genius of the cosmos which exists in *harmonia*, pointed to a divine intelligence as the efficient cause (Morrison 1956:153). Pythagoreans understood the universe to be pervaded by a world-soul or universal soul (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 1:11:27)⁵⁰ which is the logical element to the mathematical construction of the universe, existing in harmonious limits

⁵⁰*Nam Pythagoras, qui censuit animum esse per naturam rerum omnem intentum et commeantem ex quo nostri animi carperentur, non vidit distractionem humanorum animorum discerpi et lacerari deum, et cum miseri animi essent, quod plerisque contingeret, tum dei partem esse miseram, quod fieri non potest*

(Morrison 1956:153). Moreover, man being able to perceive the mathematical constructions, as the world-soul, implies that we are derivative from the world-soul or parts of it. Cicero puts it crudely, that our souls have been torn from the world-soul (*De Natura Deorum*, 1:11:27). Consequently, the human soul is the microcosm of the macrocosm (god), being the chief principle of order (Tredennick 2003:XIV-XVI). Thus, the trajectory of “*deus mens*”, as hinted by Thales, was preserved in Pythagoras.

2.1.2.3 Ontology

Apart from the notion of mathematical constructions as the primary reality to the material universe, the Pythagoreans added a soteriological element to their philosophy, unlike the Milesians. The ontological understanding of God/gods was derived from their understanding of the human soul, seeing them as equivalents, a microcosm and macrocosm of the same reality. Yet, Pythagoras’ understanding was not limited to the human soul, but considered all things being part or parts of the universal whole or soul (Baker 1972:32).

Consequently, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls was developed, where it was the duty of man to establish harmony within (similar to the cosmological harmony evident in mathematics) and so, through a series of reincarnations, return their soul back to the universal soul (Morrison 1956:152; Tredennick 2003:XIV-XVI). This notion of the world-soul being disseminated throughout the cosmos, giving humanity intelligence and the ability to connect with the incorporeal divine would form a trajectory which would be further extrapolated in subsequent philosophers, though more explicit in Plato and Stoicism.

What makes the Pythagoreans important is that they were the first real alternative to the more crude materialistic formulations of the Milesian cosmologists, placing the absolute reality of the universe in the incorporeal reality of mathematics and the world-soul; thus, to some measure, abandoning the notion of *Urstoff*. This would later have a profound impact on Plato’s understanding of the Forms as the absolute reality upon which objectivity could be based (Copleston 1962:52-53).

2.1.3 Heraclitus

2.1.3.1 Cosmology

As in the cases of Pythagoras and the Milesians, we possess very few original sources which can be directly attributed to Heraclitus. We only possess a small number of disconnected fragments of Heraclitus, written in poetical form, which makes it exceedingly hard to construct any systematic understanding of his philosophical thought (Adomenas 1999:89). We are primarily dependent upon secondary sources, such as Plato and Aristotle, in understanding Heraclitus. Hence, our interpretation of Heraclitus depends on the interpretation given by Socratic sources.

What is worthy of note is the context of some of Heraclitus' writings. Similar to the Milesians and Xenophanes, Heraclitus posed an alternative to popular Greek interpretations of divinity (Adomenas 1999:87). This does not imply a total abandonment of the Greek mythology proposed by Homer and Hesiod, but Heraclitus does exhibit a clear dissatisfaction with the status quo. This becomes important, since it is this dissatisfaction with paganism which later Christian Apologists, and Tertullian, compliment the philosophers for and find commonality in (Adomenas 1999:87).

Heraclitus' (ca. 540-480 BCE) understanding of the universe could be summarized with the Greek phrase “πάντα χωρεῖ” (all is in flux) (Copleston 1962:55). Whereas the Milesians sought to understand the composition of the *Urstoff* and the Pythagoreans the mathematical constructions, Heraclitus endeavoured to understand the concept of change within cosmology (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:12).

For Heraclitus, all things are continually in motion, which implies that nothing is ever the same (Sproul 2000:20). As Plato remarks in (*Cratylus* 402a), “Heraclitus says somewhere that all things pass and nothing abides; and comparing things to the current of a river, he says you cannot step twice into the same stream”⁵¹. This illustration can be found in Fragment DK B12, “On those who enter the same rivers, ever different waters flow”⁵². Similarly, Aristotle argues in *De Caelo* 298b:30 (III, i)⁵³

⁵¹Λέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει, καὶ ποταμοῦ ῥοῇ ἀπαικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς δις ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης

⁵²Ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ

that Heraclitus understood cosmologically that all things are in continual motion and never steadfast. Consequently, reality seems to have no certainty, since nothing has absolute permanence.

Apart from the notion of change evident in Heraclitus' understanding, he also considered reality or the cosmos as existing in continual tension between opposites. There is a unity of opposites that are necessary for the order of the cosmos (Adomenas 1999:109). As Heraclitus mentions in Fragment DK B51, "It is a harmony of tensions, like the lyre and bow."⁵⁴ Or in *Fragment* DK B8, "what opposes brings together, and out of what differs (comes) beautiful harmony"⁵⁵ And these tensions exist in unity, as "all is made up of one and all comes out of one"⁵⁶ (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B10), in the sense that all opposites fit in an overarching plan or principle. For example, even though Hesiod acknowledged the opposites of night and day, he failed to recognize that these opposites form a governing composite whole, a unity, which is necessary for harmony (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B40, 57, 106)⁵⁷ (Curd 1991:536). Whereas Hesiod would see two opposing gods governing night or day, Heraclitus would affirm them to be governed by one (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B67)⁵⁸.

2.1.3.2 Teleology

The notion of flux or continual motion is not a new concept, as Anaximander alluded with the eternal motion of the *Urstoff* (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:6-7). Even so, Heraclitus emphasized the problem, extrapolating the trajectory set by Anaximander (Tredennick 2003:XI). If all things are in motion, why does the cosmos not primarily consist of chaos? Likewise, if the universe exists as a unity of opposites (such as night and day, life and death), what keeps these tensions together to work in harmony? Heraclitus noticed that even though human beings continually change (from infant to adult) they remained the same person throughout the change. There was a consistency (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:12), or a glue which keeps the forms, unity and diversity, one and many, the opposites, together.

⁵³Οἱ δὲ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα γίνεσθαι φασὶ καὶ ρεῖν, εἶναι δὲ παγίως οὐδέν, ἓν δὲ τι μόνον ὑπομένειν, ἐξ οὗ ταῦτα πάντα μετασχηματίζεσθαι πέφυκεν: ὅπερ ἐοίκασι βούλεσθαι λέγειν ἄλλοι τε πολλοὶ καὶ Ἡράκλειτος ὁ Ἐφέσιος.

⁵⁴Οὐ ξυνιᾶσιν ὅπως διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῷ ὁμολογέει· παλίντροπος ἁρμονίη ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης

⁵⁵Τὸ ἀντίξουν συμφέρον καὶ ἐκ τῶν διαφερόντων καλλίστην ἁρμονίαν καὶ πάντα κατ' ἔριν γίνεσθαι

⁵⁶ὅλα καὶ οὐχ ὅλα, συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον, συνᾶδον καὶ ἐκ πάντων ἓν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα

⁵⁷Πολυμαθὴν νόον οὐ διδάσκει· Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐνδίδασκε καὶ Πυθαγόρην, αὐτὶς τε Ξενοφάνεά τε καὶ Ἐκκράτιον

⁵⁸ὁ θεὸς ἡμέρη εὐφρόνη, χειμῶν θέρος, πόλεμος εἰρήνη, κόρος λιμός...

This teleological principle, which keeps logical order and harmony between the diversity of things, and the opposite tensions evident in the cosmos, Heraclitus called the “λόγος” or reason or wisdom. This one principle (λόγος) permeates the diversity of the cosmos (Copleston 1962:56; Sproul 2000:20), giving the flux of cosmology a teleological meaning and consistency (Tredennick 2003:XI). Thus reality is contained in the one principle, namely “λόγος”, and not in the diversity of flux or the accumulation of knowledge of various opposites evident in the cosmos (Curd 1991:536; Copleston 1962:56). It is this “λόγος” that acts as the supreme governor of the cosmos and human society (Adomenas 1999:109). As *Fragment* DK B41 would explain, “One is wisdom, to know the mind by which all is steered through all.”⁵⁹ Moreover, true knowledge is only found with the λόγος, who Heraclitus calls “θεός”, and not human opinion (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B78)⁶⁰. And since all things are held in unity and purpose by the “λόγος”, nothing is considered good or evil from the perspective of the One, since opposites serve a unifying order or purpose (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B102)⁶¹.

2.1.3.3 Ontology

To some extent, Heraclitus synthesized the notion of “*deus mens*” and *Urstoff* in his understanding of the unifying principle of the cosmos, by attributing to it the ontological substance of fire (Sproul 2000:21). As fire is continually kindling and going out, consistently consuming and in strife, so the universe is moved by the Fire or “λόγος” (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DKB30; 65; 90) (Copleston 1962:57; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:12). However, it remains ambiguous whether Heraclitus used Fire in a metaphorical sense or in a literal sense (Benardette 2000:613). It is clear that the Stoics later considered the “λόγος” to be a fiery ether of some sort, but it could be that Heraclitus merely used the empirical reality of fire as a metaphorical illustration to explain his overarching principle. His literary style was poetical, which generally incorporates metaphorical language.

Nevertheless, there might be some grounds to consider Heraclitus’ Fire to be literal. The one aspect which seems to point us to a more literal understanding of the “λόγος” ontology is its relation to the human soul. Whereas the material universe is in continual flux, the only true reality is the universal soul which is described as an all permeating fire. For Heraclitus, this Fire was the One or God or Principle, having pantheistic overtones (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:13), in the sense that it permeates all

⁵⁹ ἐν τὸ σοφόν, ἐπιστασθαι γνώμην, ὅτῃ ἐκυβέρνησε πάντα διὰ πάντων

⁶⁰ ἦθος γὰρ ἀνθρώπειον μὲν οὐκ ἔχει γνώμας, θεῖον δὲ ἔχει

⁶¹ Τῷ μὲν θεῷ καλὰ πάντα καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ δίκαια, ἄνθρωποι δὲ ἅ μὲν ἄδικα ὑπειλήφασιν ἅ δὲ δίκαια

things. Similar to Pythagoras, Heraclitus considered the human soul as being a microcosm of the macrocosm, being a part of the all-permeating Fire or “λόγος”. This connection is drawn from the fact that humanity exercises the faculty of reason. Man’s reason is a moment in the universal Reason or the canalisation of it. When a person dies, his fire returns to the all-permeating Fire and the material substances of earth and water which compose his body dissolve into the flux (Copleston 1962:59). For Heraclitus, the material body is inferior to the faculty of reason prevalent in man and worthless without it (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B96)⁶². To some extent, as observed, Heraclitus is perpetuating the Pythagorean trajectory.

Conversely, it should be noted that even though Heraclitus considered the “λόγος” as a universal and immanent ordering principle, he considered it more an impersonal force than a personal being; similar to the impersonal *Urstoff* of water and air conceptualized by the Milesians (Copleston 1962:59-60). Unique as well, is that Heraclitus, though accepting the Greek pantheon, did not equate the “λόγος” with it. Zeus and the “λόγος” are not the same entity (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B32)⁶³. For Heraclitus, the “λόγος” is supreme over both men and gods (Adomenas 1999:111). Finally, what is important to stress is that Heraclitus was not interested in necessarily describing a divine being, but rather an ordering principle which gives epistemological foundation for knowledge (Curd 1991:536-542). Consequently, Heraclitus in all likelihood stopped short of explaining it as divinity. Its religious character only developed in subsequent philosophical schools.

2.1.4 Parmenides

2.1.4.1 Cosmology

Whereas Heraclitus explained that the unifying principle, the One of the universe was the all-permeating fiery ether known as the “λόγος”, in the flux of the many or the realm of becoming, Parmenides (ca. 510 BC) denied the existence of the realm of becoming or the many. It is merely an illusion (Mackenzie 1982:1; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:15).

⁶² Νέκυες γὰρ κοπρίων ἐκβλητότεροι

⁶³ ἐν τῷ σοφὸν μόνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζητὸς ὄνομα

To some extent, Parmenides was following the logical argument set forth by Xenophanes (approximately 50 years Parmenides' senior), that the universe is One and is god, which was an attack on pluralism (Tredennick 2003:XII). Parmenides continued the argument by redefining the concept of "being". For Parmenides, "something is... or is not"⁶⁴ (Parmenides, *Fragment*, 2:3; 8:5-11); something cannot become something, but rather something must already be. There is no point where "being" is generated or perishes, which would imply a state of becoming not appropriate to his conceptualization of "being" (Crystal 2002:214). Accordingly, true being is an immutable perfection of existence that exhibits no elements of change or becoming. For Parmenides, true being can be compared to a sphere, since there is nothing lacking or out of order within a sphere, but it is complete in all its dimensions (Sproul 2000:22; Crystal 2002:216; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:15-16). Thus, Parmenides' cosmology is spherical, depicting the universe as a closed system of rings (Finkelberg 1986:306).

The notion of a spherical cosmology is not unique to Parmenides, but can already be seen in Anaximander. This is further continued in the works of Plato and Aristotle. In Greek cosmology, the sphere is seen as the symbol or shape of perfection. Due to a sphere having perfect equilibrium in the centre, perfect undifferentiation, uniformity and continuity, it would seem, from an empirical perspective, to be perfect (Drozdek 2001:308).

2.1.4.2 Teleology

Since Parmenides considered the realm of becoming, the world of flux in Heraclitus' understanding as a mere illusion, Parmenides placed reality and truth in the sphere of the changeless One (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:16).

Parmenides did not conceive of being in teleological terms, but merely sought to counter the notion of flux or becoming. To some extent, as we will see, Parmenides' cosmology and ontology of God were the same. Thus, it seems out of necessity emphasizing the immutability and oneness of being, Parmenides only conceived reality to be a radical homogenous monism (Mackenzie 1982:1). If distinction was evident between the material universe and the incorporeal one, as some scholars

⁶⁴ ὅπως ἐστίν... ὥς οὐκ ἐστίν...

would propose (Drozdek 2001:307), this can only be inferred by reading subsequent Eleatics, like Melissus, into Parmenides.

2.1.4.3 Ontology

In part, Parmenides was enforcing Xenophanes' understanding that the universe is God or One. Parmenides insisted on a type of numerical monism (Copleston 1962:66; Curd 1991:242-243), in which the universe was eternal, with no origin; static, finite, spherical, complete and one (Copleston 1962:67-68; Clark 1989:27; Curd 1991:242-243; Crystal 2002:216; Tredennick 2003:XI-XII). Being is finite, simply because finiteness implies completeness while infinity implies incompleteness; thus moving away from Anaximander's "ἄπειρον" (indeterminate boundless) (Drozdek 2001:306). The spherical nature of the One is most likely a metaphorical reference to the One's perfection, completeness, immutability, being a simile (Coxon 1934:140; Mourelatos 1999:126; Drozdek 2001:308).

This finite being is the only reality and this reality is one entity. Consequently, there is no distinction between God or the material universe, both being One. The distinction between Parmenides and the Milesians in this regard is that the Milesians argued for a material monism, an original matter from which all diversity came into existence. For Parmenides, there is only a numerical monism, one entity. Thus reality is one being rather than the origin of the multiplicity of things (Curd 1991:242-243; Sisko 2003:87-89).

What should be noted is that Parmenides did not really develop a conception of divinity, but primarily was occupied in clarifying the concept of "being" with the view to understand the epistemological basis for knowledge (Crystal 2002:217). It was Parmenides' objective to demonstrate that "being" could not have a rival ordering principle, such as becoming, which is essentially non-being (Long 1963:101). Despite that, Parmenides does leave a bit of ambiguity that could facilitate the following interpretation. Parmenides argues that the basis for existence is the faculty of thinking, "For it to think it is also being"⁶⁵ (Parmenides, *Fragment*, 3). Simultaneously, Parmenides argues that all reality is a numerical monism. Consequently, it could be deduced that his numerical monism had cognitive

⁶⁵Τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι

qualities (Phillips 1955:557-558; Crystal 2002:217). What strengthens this interpretation is that subsequent philosophers considered reality as having a cognitive life of its own (Crystal 2002:217).

Subsequent philosophers sought to reconcile the philosophy of “being” as presented by Parmenides and Heraclitus’ concept of flux, though with differing degrees of satisfaction. The first of these were the Atomists, Leucippus (ca. 435 BC) and Democritus (ca. 420 BC) who used Parmenides’ concept of being in explaining their theory of Atoms, which were indestructible and eternal units of matter through which the diversity of the cosmos consisted. Whereas various objects could dissolve or be remade (flux), the Atoms of which they consist remain immutable (being) (Vlastos 1946:76; Tredennick 2003:XVIII-XIX; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:23).

The Atomists moved the debate from a numerical monism, to a predictional monism, where each entity must be immutable in its being (Curd 1991:261). However, the Atomists remained within the trajectory of the Milesians in understanding cosmology in crude materialistic terms, without reference to an incorporeal reality. Even though Epicurus adopted Democritus’ Atomism in his philosophy (Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, I:VI:17), it did not enjoy widespread acceptance.

What makes Parmenides important is not the subsequent theory of the Atomists, but his later influence on Plato’s Idealism. The contrast between Parmenides and Plato is that Plato considered true being as being incorporeal, while Parmenides remained within the Milesian tradition of philosophising in materialistic categories, even if his understanding was a numerical monism. Moreover, defining the highest concept of being as an immutable substance had a tremendous impact on philosophical and theological conceptions of God’s being or ontology. It is quite ironic that Parmenides, though not interested in defining divinity, indirectly formed a trajectory that would impact subsequent conceptions of divinity.

2.1.5 Empedocles & Anaxagoras

2.1.5.1 Cosmology

In many regards, Empedocles' and Anaxagoras' understanding of the cosmos was not too far from the understanding of the Atomists, also seeking to synthesize Parmenides' numerical monism and Heraclitus' eternal motion by promoting a predictional monism. Thus, the concept of "being" remains an immutable entity, but redefined in pluralistic terms. For both Empedocles and Anaxagoras, the universe is a composition of the basic eternal immutable particles or elements, which join together and eventually separate due to the eternal motion of the universe. Consequently, whereas the objects change (Heraclitus), the basic particles remain immutable and indivisible (Parmenides) (Sproul 2000:24-25; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:19-20).

Whereas the above seems to be an advance on previous postulations, Empedocles did revert back to the Milesian tradition of seeking the *Urstoff* of the universe. The primary difference is that Empedocles attributed the primary substance of the universe to four elements, rather than one; namely, fire, water, air and earth (Tredennick 2003:XII-XIII ; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:20). Anaxagoras considered the *Urstoff* to be seeds or "*spermata*" from which the universe is formed (Sproul 2000:25; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:21). Anaxagoras' reference to "*spermata*" as the primordial mixture (σύνμμιξις) is a biological metaphorical analogy to the seeds of plants from which their substance derives their origin. The primordial mass contained all the substances or elements from which the various objects derive their being. Consequently, it possesses both unity and diversity (Drozdek 2005:165-167).

Anaxagoras conceptualized the cosmos in two epochs. The first epoch Anaxagoras views the cosmos as a primordial uniform mass, which is almost identical to Parmenides' numerical monism. The next epoch is the formation of the universe through the beginning of the vortex or whirl, similar to Anaximander's motion of the "ἄπειρον". This new stage of the primordial mass remains in many respects, the same as Parmenides' numerical monism (since the matter did not change in its essence), but Anaxagoras adds the notion of dynamism, in which the primordial mass moves and separates to form new objects in the vortex that is ever expanding and possess phenomenological change (Sisko 2003:90, 102).

2.1.5.2 Teleology

Whereas their cosmology shared similar traits with that of the Milesians, Heraclitus, Parmenides and the Atomists, some scholars have argued that their teleological principle was distinctly unique. The primary question which drives the formulation of their teleological principle is: if the universe is the composition and decimation of the primary immutable particles or elements, what causes this motion?

Empedocles' contribution is probably the unique one of the two in terms of a love/hate dualism, since he introduced the two tensions of love and hate as the ordering principles of the universe. Whether Empedocles implied a literal emotion of love (harmony) and hate (discord) is doubtful, but more likely he uses a simile or comparison, thus being metaphorical (Clark 1989:34). Love, as an ordering principle, draws the immutable elements together to compose or form an object, while hate pushes these immutable particles apart. For Empedocles, the eternal motion or cycle of harmony and discord, drawing and pushing away is the teleological principle of the universe (Tredennick 2003:XII-XIII; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:20).

Whereas Empedocles described a dualistic principle of two forces at work, Anaxagoras rejected this and opted for a singular principle; namely, mind or “νοῦς” (Sproul 2000:25). Consequently, Anaxagoras promoted the teleological principle of an intelligible governing force. It is mind that creates the vortex of motion from which the universe came into existence through the immutable “*spermata*” (Clark 1989:34; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:21-22). Moreover, “νοῦς” exhibits total control over the process of life or existence by being the governor of the eternal motion that moves all things, thus being an absolute principle (Anaxagoras, *Fragment*, 12:10-17) (Copleston 1962:86-87).

2.1.5.3 Ontology

For Anaxagoras, reality exists as mind and matter, “νοῦς” and “*spermata*”. Thus, unlike Anaximander, Anaxagoras sees the *Urstoff* as being without cognitive qualities. His view is more akin to Thales of Miletus. “Νοῦς” exists as a separate entity to matter, not mixing with it, though enveloping it (Anaxagoras, *Fragment*, 12:1-3, 25-26; 14). Uniquely, Anaxagoras gave “νοῦς” material

qualities, describing it as the “finest of all things”⁶⁶ and occupying space (Anaxagoras, *Fragment*, 12:9-10) (Copleston 1962:86-87).

Since “νοῦς” is present with all objects and controls all objects, it possesses a type of omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence regarding the ordering and governing of the universe (Clark 1989:34). However, although Anaxagoras might have affirmed “νοῦς” as the governing principle, he did not conceptualize it as a personal being or entity (Copleston 1962:86-87). Consequently, the “νοῦς” was explained in strict teleological categories, without really seeking to expand on its ontological qualities (Clark 1989:34; Tredennick 2003:XIII-XIV). In the light of this, Plato and Aristotle bemoaned the superficial or unrefined proposition of Anaxagoras, since he failed to extrapolate what he said (Tredennick 2003:XIII-XIV).

Some have attributed Anaxagoras as the first philosopher to introduce the concept of “νοῦς” (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:22), yet this does not seem to be the case from our current study. Cicero has viewed Thales as one of the first to attribute the principle of God being “νοῦς” or “*mens*”, governing or forming the universe from the *Urstoff* (*De Natura Deorum*, I:X:25). Furthermore, Anaximander attributed to his “ἄπειρον” (indeterminate boundless) cognitive qualities, describing it as a pilot of all things (Granger 2007:158). Pythagoras considered the world to be governed by a universal soul, which had cognitive qualities (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, I:XI:27). Heraclitus’ “λόγος” also shared rational qualities or cognitive qualities, though unexplained in many aspects (Adomenas 1999:109). Lastly, if Cicero can be considered a reliable secondary source, Xenophanes, of whom Parmenides seems to be a protégé, endowed the universe with Mind and called it God (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 1:11:28)⁶⁷ (Leshner 1995:135). Moreover, the concept of the universe being formed from a vortex or rotation is not Anaxagoras’ idea, but the Milesians, in particular Anaximander (Clark 1989:34).

It would seem that Anaxagoras had little originality in his conceptualization of “νοῦς”, but most likely articulated previous philosophers’ formulations with a new set of vocabulary. Consequently, in addition to Heraclitus’ “λόγος” the term “νοῦς” is used. Clarification of what has gone before seems to be more likely than an entirely new thesis proposed by Anaxagoras, which illustrates the trajectory which began with Thales and to some extent gets further extrapolation in Anaxagoras. Therefore,

⁶⁶ ἔσθι γὰρ λεπτότατον τε πάντων χρημάτων καὶ καθαρώτατον, καὶ γνώμην γε περὶ πάντων πᾶσαν ἴσχει καὶ ἰσχύει μέγιστον.

⁶⁷ Tum Xenophanes, qui mente adiuncta omne propterea quod esset infinitum deum voluit esse

Plato's assertion in *Philebus* 28d:7-8 is an accurate reflection regarding the Pre-Socratics or "the ones who spoke before us"⁶⁸, "reason and a marvellous organizing intelligence pilots the whole universe"⁶⁹ (Leshner 1995:135).

2.1.6 Concluding remarks

What should be noted are the clear trajectories that continue in most of the Pre-Socratic philosophers, who only contribute small variations and expansions.

2.1.6.1 Unity and Diversity

Most cosmological conceptualizations in Pre-Socratic thinking run along the lines of unity and diversity. For the Milesians, as observed, *Urstoff* (unity) and the various objects derived from it (diversity), form the basic understanding of cosmology. For the Pythagoreans, numbers (unity) and objects (diversity) do the same thing. Heraclitus uses "λόγος" (unity) and "ἕωρε" (diversity). For the Atomists, Empedocles and Anaxagoras speak of the immutable substances or atoms (unity) and the mutable objects derived from it (diversity). Essentially, the trajectory of thought remains the same, with variations of explaining it.

2.1.6.2 *Urstoff* and the eternity of matter

In relation to the above, all Pre-Socratics seem to believe in the eternity of matter. Where there is an ordering principle, matter is co-eternal with it. Where there is no ordering principle, matter is still eternal. This being so, most Pre-Socratics have sought to identify the primal substance from which all things were fashioned. Thales' Water, Anaximander's "ἄπειρον", Anaximenes' Air, Heraclitus' Fire, Parmenides' Immutable One, the Atomists' atoms, Anaxagoras' "*spermata*" and Empedocles' four elements all share the commonality of eternity and being the primary substance or substances. Monism remains an overarching term for the various propositions made by the Pre-Socratic philosophers.

⁶⁸ οἱ πρόσθεν ἡμῶν ἔλεγον

⁶⁹ νοῦν καὶ φρόνησιν τινα θαυμαστὴν συνταίττουσαν διακυβεῖν

2.1.6.3 A rational, cognitive ordering being or principle

More important than their cosmology, is their eventual teleology of an ordering principle. Thales attributed the ordering principle to be a divine mind. This thought continued in Anaximander's "ἄπειρον", Pythagoras' universal soul, Heraclitus' "λόγος", Parmenides' One and Anaxagoras' eventual "νοῦς". The ordering principle is rational, thinking and therefore fashioning or ordering all matter.

Ontologically, there are some variations on its being. The "ἄπειρον" is the *Urstoff*. The "λόγος" is fire or a fiery metaphorical ether. The One is all being and generally considered material. The "νοῦς" is a rarefied form of matter; generally formulated in materialistic terms, some predominantly using material categories in a metaphorical sense or simile. The concept of incorporeality could possibly be evident in Pythagoras and Thales, but it is not explicit and can only be inferred by interpretative suggestion.

2.1.6.4 Microcosm, macrocosm

In addition to the ordering teleological principle is the common assumption that the human being is the microcosm of the divine being (macrocosm). The human mind is a blueprint or image of the divine mind in Thales. The human soul is a piece of the universal soul in Pythagoras. Man can connect with the universal "λόγος", since man possesses "λόγος" in his rational capabilities or soul in Heraclitus. Humanity and Divinity share reason, "λόγος", mind, or soul. Basically, the Pre-Socratics believed that like knows like. We possess an image of the universal reality. To some extent, for the Greek philosopher anthropology is the basis of theology. It is from studying humanity that we form a concept of divinity.

When these trajectories are taken up in the Socratic era, they receive their fullest expression, as will be demonstrated in the next section. What we hope to observe is that the foundations or trajectories of subsequent philosophy regarding divinity were formed by the Pre-Socratics.

2.2 Socratic

2.2.1 Plato

2.2.1.1 Cosmology

2.2.1.1.1 A likely synthesis

In many respects, Plato both perpetuates former trajectories set by the Pre-Socratics, but simultaneously diverges from them by creating a unique synthesis of former ideas. Moreover, following his tutor Socrates, Plato's concern stretched beyond the mere question of origin and knowledge to include ethics (Cicero, *Academica*, 1:4:15-16) (Tarnas 1993:7; Sproul 2000:31).

Plato's conception of the cosmos could be understood as a synthesis between Pythagorean mathematics, Heraclitean flux and Parmenidean or Eleatic conception of static being (Copleston 1962:69; Tredennick 2003:XX-XXI). Plato understood that the world of sense perception was in continual flux; however, following his tutor's ethical agenda, this doctrine posed a problem. If the physical cosmos is a realm of flux, what is the basis for ethics or morality, which requires an absolute foundation? Thus, Socrates' main emphasis, the clear definition of things and ethics, became a key consideration in Plato's understanding of the Cosmos (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X-XIV, 13-33). Simultaneously, Plato could not accept the extreme position of Parmenides which denies any notion of being to the realm of becoming or plurality. It is from these two seeming contradictory statements that Plato synthesizes a dualistic conception of the cosmos (Allen & Springsted 2007:14; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:65).

However, it should be noted that Heraclitus also alluded to an overarching unity in the ordering principle of "λόγος". Thus, although there seems to be chaos or ever-present change, there remains a logical unity and consistency in the ordering principle of "λόγος" (Copleston 1962:56; Curd 1991:536; Adomenas 1999:109). This conception of a logical ordering principle is not abandoned by Plato, as we will subsequently see.

2.2.1.1.2 The incorporeal realm – The Forms

Whereas Parmenides conceived of the universe as a numerical monism, Plato followed the Atomists, Empedocles and Anaxagoras in affirming a predictional monism. However, where Plato diverges from the former Pre-Socratics is that this predictional monism is not present within the corporeal realm of material entities. Plato introduces, in my estimation, a new concept, possibly derived from the Socratic desire for accurate definition as well as Pythagorean mathematical construction of the universe (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X-XIV, 13-33) (Tredennick 2003:XX-XXI).

Plato introduces the concept of incorporeality, which might have been present to some degree in the concept of Thales' "*deus mens*", the world-soul of Pythagoras, the "*λόγος*" of Heraclitus or the universal "*νοῦς*", but not really explored or magnified as in Plato's case. For Plato, predictional monism is evident in the realm of Forms or Ideas. In Plato's estimation, Forms or Ideas are changeless, eternal and incorporeal substances, of which the material realm is a poor image or copy. Whereas the material realm might participate in the Forms, it does not possess them nor is it contained within them, but remains separate (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:49-50). Thus the intangible Forms form the substrate of the tangible material realm (Tarnas 1993:12). As Plato asserts in *Timaeus* 29B, "Again, if these premises be granted, it is wholly necessary that this Cosmos should be a Copy of something" (Bury 2005:53)⁷⁰. Evidently, Plato takes a step further than Socrates by proposing that a clear definition of something actually has an incorporeal existence as a Form. It has substance.

However, the doctrine of Forms does not imply that every existing material thing has a corresponding Form, but rather that every existing thing participates partially in a universal Form. For example, whereas a chair might be beautifully crafted and a young woman might be beautiful in appearance, they are not beauty in itself, but participate in the universal Form of Beauty (Kelly 2007:15). Moreover, Forms do not necessarily correspond to what is physically observed in the material realm, in the sense that there is a perfect Form of a chair in the realm of Forms. Rather, Forms are mathematical ratios following Pythagorean cosmology, which introduce limits and thus shape to chaotic matter (Allen & Springsted 2007:5-8).

⁷⁰Τούτων δὲ ὑπαρχόντων αὖ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη τόδε τὸν κόσμον εἰκόνα τινὸς εἶναι.

2.2.1.1.3 The corporeal realm - Matter

Juxtaposed to the incorporeal realm of Forms, is the sense-perceptible realm of the material universe. This material universe is co-eternal with the realm of Forms, however it is chaotic, moving in blind necessity (Clark 1989:94; Allen & Springsted 2007:4). Thus it is disorderly and without any rational coherence.

What gives order to the corporeal realm or any sense of rationality is its participation in the realm of Forms, being a receptacle of it (Sproul 2000:36). Yet, due to its ontological disposition to chaos or blind necessity, it will never perfectly mimic the immutable Forms (Allen & Springsted 2007:3-4).

Thus, Plato does not conceive of *ex nihilo*, but rather of a dualistic co-eternality between the material realm and an ordering principle. Therefore, Plato remains within the Pre-Socratic trajectory of the co-eternality of matter. However, the unique difficulty in Plato's conceptualization is that if there are two existing realms in which the corporeal participates in the incorporeal, how does this actually take place? How do the seeming transcendent Forms become immanent within the material realm? In addition, the Forms, being mathematical ratios and being evident within the sense-perceptible realm of matter, exhibit a rational intelligence. It cannot be without some form of a "λόγος" principle. Consequently, Plato proceeds in the *Republic*, *Timaeus* and other dialogues to extrapolate this teleological principle.

2.2.1.2 Teleology

Whereas Plato's cosmology is generally explained as presented in this thesis, there is common confusion in exactly explicating what Plato's teleological principle was. Whereas Plato would affirm that the incorporeal realm of Forms and corporeal realm of matter exhibits a greater intelligence due to the mathematical genius evident in the cosmos, it is very difficult to pinpoint it to an efficient cause (Plato, *Sophist*, 265c, e) (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:65). Plato affirms this in *Timaeus* 28B, "And that which has come into existence must necessarily, as we say, have come into existence by reason of some Cause"... However, Plato continues, "Now to discover the Maker and Father of this universe were a task indeed; and having discovered Him, to declare Him unto all men were a thing impossible"

(Bury 2005:51)⁷¹. Similarly in *Sophist*, 38. 254A, “Stranger: But the philosopher, always devoting himself through reason to the idea of being, also has difficulty in seeing on account of the brilliant light of the place; for the eyes of the soul of the multitude are not strong enough to endure the sight of the divine”⁷² (Flower 2002:403). There is a sense that even though Plato knew that there must be an efficient cause, how to exactly define this cause is beyond dialectical reason. This does not hinder Plato from trying, but in the process he left the matter with great ambiguity; as Cicero would describe regarding Plato’s concept of divinity, “Now regarding Plato’s inconsistencies it is a long story” (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 1:12:30)⁷³. Consequently, those who subsequently followed Plato had varied interpretations of what exactly Plato meant when explaining the various teleological principles evident in cosmology (Finkelberg 1996:391).

From Plato’s works, it would seem that there is a hierarchical structure of causality or teleology (Robinson 1967:61). One of the most common interpretations is to consider the Form of the Good (the Universal Form) as proposed in the *Republic* VI 508e-9b, as the ultimate efficient cause of the cosmos from which the Forms derive their existence, as all living things find their nourishment from the Sun, granting all things intelligibility (Copleston 1962:202-206; Clark 1989:91; Menn 1992:546; Tarnas 1993:42-43; Allen & Springsted 2007:28; Kelly 2007:15-16). The Form of the Good is followed in succession by the Demiurge or Father of the Universe who uses the pattern of the Forms to subdue chaotic matter to order as a fashioner or craftsman, not as a creator in the biblical sense (Plato, *Timaeus* 29E-30B, 48A; Copleston 1962:273; Menn 1992:546; Allen & Springsted 2007:3-6). From the Demiurge, a third principle is derived, namely the World-Soul, which permeates the universe. Thus the universe, like the Demiurge, possesses soul, being a living entity as a whole. The World-soul’s purpose is to mirror the Demiurge in the cosmos (being its chief ordering principle), who in turn contemplates the Forms or the ultimate Form of the Good (Plato, *Timaeus*, 36D-37A; *Phaedrus*, 252d6-253c6; cf. 250cl-6, 251a5-7) (Robinson 1967:57; Blyth 1997:190; Kelly 2007:16; Crickmore 2009:6).

⁷¹ γέγονεν· ὁρατὸς γὰρ ἄπτὸς τέ ἐστι καὶ σῶμα ἔχων πάντα δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα αἰσθητά δόξη περιληπτὰ μετὰ αἰσθήσεως γιγνώμενα καὶ γεννητὰ ἐφ’ ἧς τῷ δ’ αὖτε γενομένῳ φαμέν ὑπ’ αἰτίου τινὸς ἀνάγκη εἶναι γενέσθαι τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς εὐρεῖν τε ἔργον καὶ εὐρόντα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν

⁷² ΣΕ. Ὁ δὲ γε φιλόσοφος, τῇ τοῦ ὅυτος ἀεὶ Διὰ λογισμῶν προσκείμενος ἰδέα, διὰ τὸ λαμπρὸν αὐτῆς τῆς χώρας οὐδαμῶς εὐπετὴς ὀφθῆναι· τὰ γὰρ τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ψυχῆς ὅμματα καρτερεῖν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀφορώμενα ἀδύνατα.

⁷³ *Iam de Platonis inconstantia longum est dicere*

Whereas most would be in agreement regarding the relation between the Demiurge/Father (generally seen as synonymous)⁷⁴ and the World-Soul or λόγος that permeates the universe, the debate primarily centres on whether there is truly a hierarchical distinction between the Form of the Good and the Demiurge. Modern scholarship tends to collapse the Demiurge into the Form of the Good, in the sense of perceiving the Demiurge as a metaphorical construct of the rational principle of the Good, thus negating the possibility of a supreme divinity. In this depiction, Plato only conceived of a teleological structure of reality, without a metaphysical reference (Clark 1989:184; Benitez 1995:113-114). Conversely, Plato's disciples, as we will demonstrate in Middle-Platonism, as well as older scholarship tended to collapse the Form of the Good into the Demiurge, thus either seeing the Form of the Good as the thoughts of God or as God himself. In this depiction, Plato's teleology is dependent on the metaphysical reality of God or Divinity (Benitez 1995:113-116).

It would seem most probable to fuse the notion of the Form of the Good and the Demiurge/Father of the Universe into one supreme reality which in turn relates to the incorporeal and corporeal realm as either the Form of the Good or the Demiurge. In *Republic* VI 508E-9B, The Form of the Good is described as the originator of intelligibility and reigns over the realm of the intelligible (509D). It is also within the Good that the cosmos finds its τέλος and thus becomes beneficial (505A). Similarly, the Demiurge is described in *Timaeus* 28A as the cause of the cosmos. He is described as the father of all existence (37C), who brings order out of disorder (30A). He sets the limits of universe (30B), which is his 'only-begotten' creation. Moreover, the Demiurge is described as the only being that could dissolve the universe (32C, 38B, 41A) (Benitez 1995:122-123, 127). In addition, the Demiurge's purpose in fashioning matter is aesthetic and teleological, in the sense of conforming matter to the perfection of himself (Plato, *Timaeus*, 30A, 30C, 31A, 34A-B, 37C). Whereas some have adopted the interpretation that the Demiurge contemplates the Forms and seeks to fashion matter into their likeness, this seems not to fit with Plato's further description of the Demiurge. For example, in *Timaeus* 30D Plato explains that the Demiurge is the original of the universe and contains within himself all intelligible beings⁷⁵ (Benitez 1995:129). In *Republic* 597B 5-7, the Demiurge is described as the author of the ideal bed, the realm of Forms (Copleston 1962:216). This seems to clearly refer to the Forms being contained within the Demiurge. Consequently, the Demiurge contemplates the Forms that are contained within him and are not external to him (Copleston 1962:205-206; Benitez 1995:129). This interpretation seems even more plausible when considering the abundance of

⁷⁴In *Politicus* as well as *Timaeus* the correlation is made. The world-soul is described as being formed by the δημιουργός καὶ πατήρ (*Politicus* 273B1-2; *Timaeus*, 34B3 ff) (Robinson 1967:57).

⁷⁵τὰ γὰρ δὴ νοητὰ ζῶα πάντα ἐκείνο ἐν ἑαυτῷ περιλαβὼν ἔχει, καθάπερ ὁδε ὁ κόσμος ἡμᾶς ὅσα τε ἄλλα θρέμματα συνέστηκεν ὁρατὰ τῷ γὰρ τῶν νοουμένων καλλίστῳ καὶ κατὰ πάντα τελέῳ μάλιστα αὐτὸν ὁ Θεὸς ὁμοιωσαὶ βουλευθεὶς ζῶον ἐν ὁρατόν...

references to a personal god in *Philebus* 28C-30B, *Statesman* 269C-274E, *Laws* 884D-899D, *Republic* 596C-D, *Sophist* 265E-266E, *Cratylus* 389A2, *Laws* 903C (Benitez 1995:117-118).

In all likelihood, Plato was reaching out to a concept of a singular or universal absolute principle, this principle being explained as the Form of the Good in relation to the intelligible realm and the Demiurge in relation to the formation of the cosmos and the material realm. Nevertheless, Plato would seem to have never reached the point of a complete depiction of what he pursued (Clark 1989:184; Benitez 1995:126-127). Plato appears to have never been satisfied with his formulation of the Good and Demiurge. Hence, it was generally Middle-Platonism, and ultimately Plotinus, that sought to make explicit which was implicit or confused in Plato's dialogues.

Therefore, the teleological principle within Plato is the Demiurge/Father of the Universe/the Good, in whom the realm of Forms find their intelligibility and the realm of matter is turned from chaos to cosmos. However, in order to fashion the cosmos, the Demiurge creates the World-Soul who permeates the cosmos and seeks to mirror the Demiurge from which it proceeded. In this respect, Plato has built the teleological bridge between the dualistic conceptualization of reality by introducing a master craftsman, namely the Demiurge.

2.2.1.3 Ontology

Surprisingly, Plato's conceptualization of the ontology of the Demiurge is not dissimilar from the Pre-Socratics, but almost identical.

Firstly, in *Philebus* 28D6-8, Plato argues that the cosmos could not have come into existence through irrationality and chance (as the Atomists would propose), but that it points to a master Intelligence. This Intelligence is described as the ruler of the cosmos (Plato, *Philebus*, 28C6-8). Consequently, the chief characteristic of the Demiurge/Father/Good is intelligence or reason (Robinson 1967:58; Benitez 1995:136-137). However, this is an attribute in Plato's estimation and not an ontological principle. For example, in *Philebus*, 30C9-10; *Timaeus*, 30B3; *Sophist*, 249A4-8, Plato argues that "νοῦς" cannot exist apart from soul or "ψυχή". This does not imply that "ψυχή" is synonymous with "νοῦς" or *vice versa*, but rather that soul possess intelligence, "ψυχή" having "νοῦς" (Menn 1992:556; Allen & Springsted 2007:23). Consequently, the Demiurge may possess intelligence, but he is not "νοῦς" as in

Anaxagoras or “*deus mens*” as in Thales. There is some correlation between Plato’s Demiurge and Anaximander’s “ἄπειρον” in the sense that they possess reason, though the “ἄπειρον” was material, while the Demiurge seems incorporeal. Even so, it is clear that the notion of reason or intelligence remains primary in considering any concept of deity in philosophy.

Secondly, in *Philebus* 29A-31A, Plato’s basis for attributing the Demiurge with “νοῦς” or “λογός” is the microcosm-macrocosm model evident in the Pre-Socratics. For Plato, humanity or man is a microcosm of the macrocosm of the universe. As man is an ordering principle in a small scale, so the Demiurge is the ordering principle of the cosmos (Benitez 1995:136).

Thirdly, if the Demiurge possesses intelligibility as humanity and “νοῦς” cannot exist without “ψυχή”, Plato moves to his ontological conceptualization of the Demiurge. The ontological basis of the Demiurge is soul, being the purest soul (Robinson 1967:58). Only soul can possess mind, and so the Demiurge must, out of logical necessity, be ontologically a soul or the arch soul (*Timaeus*, 46D 5-6; *Sophist*, 249A 4-8). It is because the Demiurge endowed the universe with a World-soul, which in turn endows humanity with soul, that we can participate in Reason or νοῦς (*Timaeus*, 30A 2ff.; Menn 1992:557; Allen & Springsted 2007:6, 23; Kelly 2007:16). Thus, Plato’s doctrine of the soul is in many ways Pythagorean in nature, if not identical in most respects. This is even more clear when considering the ontological make-up of the World-soul, which is musical or based on the harmonics promoted by Pythagoras (Crickmore 2009:19).

Evidently, Plato did not create a completely new trajectory regarding a theology of divinity, but to some extent remained within the Pre-Socratic tradition. It would be better to depict Plato as the culmination and clarification of Pre-Socratic thought, rather than depicting him as setting an entirely new trajectory of thought (Tarnas 1993:45). This does not imply that Plato was wholly unoriginal, but he remains bound to his historical context or the historical trajectories he inherited.

However, Plato did add a concept of classifying soul which would later be used in Aristotle’s notion of the Prime Mover. Plato argued that for something to possess soul it required “κίνησις” (movement). It had to be able to move itself without necessarily being moved by something else. In this sense, the Demiurge, being the purest soul, is perceived as the “ἀρχὴ κίνησεως” exercising ultimate movement of the cosmos (Robinson 1967:58-60; Blyth 1997:192; Allen & Springsted

2007:6). Plato would even go so far as to imply that it is only something that possesses the power to produce change that possesses true being (Plato, *Sophist*, 34:247D-E; 35:248C).

2.2.2 Aristotle

2.2.2.1 Cosmology

Unlike Aristotle's predecessors and the historical trajectory thus far, Aristotle never tried to formulate a cosmogony, but simply accepted the eternal existence of the universe as we can empirically observe it. For Aristotle, any notion of seeking the origin of existence is superfluous, since there is no origin nor termination of the material universe (Wicksteed & Cronford 1996:xxx). This does not imply that it is self-sustaining, since it seems to point to an immaterial metaphysical reality upon which the material depends (Wicksteed & Cronford 1996:xlvi-xlviii).

2.2.2.1.2 The collapse of Form into Matter

Being a pupil of Plato, even though he had much in common with his former tutor, Aristotle did not wholly accept Plato's synthesis of Parmenidean, Heraclitian and Pythagorean cosmology (Sproul 2000:46-47).

Whereas Plato sought to accommodate Parmenides' conceptualization of being and Heraclitus' understanding of becoming by understanding cosmology as a dualistic construction of two realms, Aristotle rejected this notion. Whereas Plato's synthesis diminished the realness of the material universe, Aristotle sought to affirm its ontological and epistemological validity (Wicksteed & Cronford 1996:xxi). Thus, Aristotle endeavoured to undermine Plato's concept of Forms as having a separate ontological existence from the material universe (Cicero, *Academica*, 1:9:33). However, this does not imply that Aristotle denied the notion of Forms and Matter. Instead, Aristotle posed the formulation that the substance of something actually contained within itself the Forms (Tarnas 1993:55-61). Consequently, our basis for epistemology is not derivative from some incorporeal reality of Forms, but can be empirically deduced from the material objects available (Wicksteed & Cronford 1996:xlvi-xlviii).

2.2.2.1.3 Corporeality and Incorporeality redefined

Apart from redefining Plato's Forms, Aristotle also redefined the categories of corporeality and incorporeality. In Aristotelian cosmology, following the historical trajectory of a spherical universe, the universe is spherical and finite. Consequently, affirming Parmenides and dismissing Anaxagoras, there is only one universe and not a plurality of worlds. Nevertheless, Aristotle argued that there is an ontological existence beyond the finite cosmos, beyond the sphere that is incorporeal. This realm is devoid of place, space and time. This realm, in Aristotle's estimation, is wholly divine, eternal and perfect (Guthrie 2000:xiii). As he would explain, "Wherefore neither are the things there born in place, nor does time cause them to age, nor does change work in any way upon any of the beings whose allotted place is beyond the outermost motion: changeless and impassive, they have uninterrupted enjoyment of the best and most independent life for the whole aeon of their existence" (Aristotle, *De Caelo*, i. 9. 279a 15-21) (Guthrie 2000:91-95)⁷⁶.

Even if the metaphysical realm of the incorporeal can only be assumed by inference and is speculative in nature, it remains, in Aristotle's estimation, the principal science of all sciences, which transcends the science of physics and mathematics. For Aristotle, the study of the incorporeal realm of divinity is a distinct science or branch of knowledge (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X-XIV, 1064a30-1064b5).

To some extent, Plato's dualistic cosmology was not entirely absent in Aristotle, since in Aristotle's cosmology, though the Forms are immanent or latent within all substances, there remains an incorporeal realm separate from the corporeal realm. Yet the incorporeal realm is in the "beyond" and to some extent beyond personal comprehension. Even here, Plato's "Father of the Universe" in *Timaeus* remains intact, since for Aristotle, as Plato, this being is beyond empirical certainty and can only be explained in speculative terms. Though what should be noted is that the incorporeal and corporeal realms are co-eternal. In spite of the corporeal realm's dependence on the incorporeal, the incorporeal is not the originator or creator of the corporeal. Together they form the composite picture of existence or cosmology. This distinction is significant in order to safeguard against the assumption that Aristotle introduced the notion of transcendence. It is best to refer to the incorporeal realm in the sense of distance and hierarchy, in that it is beyond and supreme in the ladder of reality, but it is not

⁷⁶φανερὸν ἄρα ὅτι οὔτε τόπος οὔτε κενὸν οὔτε χρόνος ἐστὶν ἔξωθεν· διόπερ οὔτ' ἐν τόπῳ τάκεϊ πέφυκεν οὔτε χρόνος αὐτὰ ποιεῖ γηράσκειν οὐδ' ἐστὶν οὐδενὸς οὐδεμία μεταβολὴ τῶν ὑπὲρ τὴν ἐξωτάτω τεταγμένων φορὰν ἀλλ' ἀναλλοίωτα καὶ ἀπαθῆ τὴν ἀρίστην ἔχοντα ζωὴν καὶ τὴν αὐταρκεστάτην διατελεῖ τὸν ἅπαντα αἰῶνα

transcendent in the biblical sense as being completely “other” to the corporeal realm since it forms part of cosmological reality and is not its originator.

2.2.2.1.4 The introduction of categories as precise definition

In order to explain the immanent or latent Forms evident within material substances, Aristotle introduced the concept of categories, in which he endeavoured to distinguish different aspects of being (Tarnas 1993:56). This advancement, to some extent, is imperative for subsequent theologizing.

Aristotle’s categories work from what is primary to existence to what is accidental in quality or attribute. For Aristotle, the introduction of categories is truly the Socratic pursuit of precise definition. Thus, Aristotle’s philosophy still functions within the Socratic tradition of his tutor Plato.

Primary to Aristotle’s conceptualization of cosmology are the categories of nature and substance; nature being the primary, shapeless and unchangeable stuff from which something derives its potency and source of motion, such as bronze for bronze objects or wood for wooden objects (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I-IX, 1014b25-1015a19). Closely related to nature is the category of substance, which is the ultimate subject, in the sense of that which cannot be further predicated from something else but has a separate existence and possesses a separate body. Substance is the foundation of something’s existence, thus being determinative whether something is or is not (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I-IX, 1017b10-25). Consequently, for Aristotle, something’s being is determined by its substance, what it is as an individual (like a man or a horse or a god etc.) and not by its attributes or qualities associated with the substance like beauty, perfection etc. (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I-IX, 1028a10-19). For Aristotle, knowing something’s substance is to know it truly and is the primary endeavour of the epistemologist (*Metaphysics* I-IX, 1028a30-1028b8).

Apart from the categories that seem to define unity such as nature, substance and being, Aristotle also introduced categories of plurality (*Metaphysics* X-XIV, 1054a20-33). Empirical study of the cosmos would affirm a plurality of substances. However, how does the cosmos exhibit a plurality? In this sense, Aristotle sought to define the concept of generation. For Aristotle, due to matter being eternal, for something to exist it requires a pre-existent part, as he explains: “Therefore, as we say, generation would be impossible if nothing were already existent. It is clear, then, that some part must necessarily

pre-exist; because matter is a part, since it is matter which pre-exists in the product and becomes something”⁷⁷ (*Metaphysics* I-IX, 1032b30-1033a2) (Tredennick 2003:341). Consequently, nothing is without something prior being, which ultimately terminates in the eternality of matter. Hence we observe a chain of generation, each substance partaking, to some extent, in the primary nature of the cosmos.

Nevertheless, even though Aristotle has various definitions of categorization, such as “same”, “other”, “like”, “unity and plurality” etc., the above examples would suffice. The selectivity of the categories are due to the purpose of demonstrating that subsequent theologizing was not devoid of these categories, but, as we will hope to demonstrate, endorsed them in defining God from the scriptural corpus.

2.2.2.1.5 Redefining Being and Becoming: Potentiality – Actuality

Whereas Plato exhibited a particular love for mathematics, which is primarily static in perception, Aristotle showed a keen interest in biology, which is dynamic in development. Observing the development of a seed growing into a plant or a baby into an adult facilitated Aristotle’s unique contribution to cosmology: potentiality and actuality which was the primary argument for his teleological argument for the existence of an incorporeal divinity (Tarnas 1993:57-58).

Aristotle asserted that the form latent within a substance possessed entelechy, its developmental dynamic, which determined its particular materiality. A fish, for example, displays all the qualities of being a fish because their substance contains the entelechy of fishness. Thus, the entelechy of a thing determines its becoming what it becomes. Consequently, all things that truly exist possess within themselves a kind of motion of becoming, moving from one existence to another (Tarnas 1993:57-58; Sproul 2000:47). Thus, the Form latent within is the teleological end of an organism or thing or to which a substance or thing strives to become.

In this sense, when a baby is born, latent within the baby is the Form of an adult. The baby, possessing potentiality or movement, is drawn by the Form (its true actuality) to become what the

⁷⁷ὥστε καθάπερ λέγεται, ἀδύνατον γενέσθαι εἰ μὴδὲν προϋπάρχοι. ὅτι μὲν οὖν τι μέρος ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὑπάρξει, φανερόν· ἡ γὰρ ὅλη μέρος· ἐνυπάρχει γὰρ καὶ γίγνεται αὕτη.

Form latently is. Thus the Form draws the organism from potentiality unto actuality. When there is a realization of the being actualizing its Form, the Form gradually loses its hold and decay sets in. Thus, all things possess an indwelling impulse or a teleological finality. In this sense, Aristotle synthesized the Platonic synthesis of Parmenides and Heraclitus through the concept of actuality and potentiality. Therefore, Aristotle does not deny “becoming” a sense of reality, but affirms it a unique place of reality as potentiality moving towards actuality. The realm of becoming is thus not a poor copy of the realm of Forms, but an expression of *telos* in the striving for actualization (Tarnas 1993:57-59; Sproul 2000:49).

2.2.2.2 Teleology

2.2.2.2.1 Causes

As an expansion to the philosophical interest of teleology, Aristotle introduced or clarified the notion of causes. The concept of something being the cause of something is not inherently original to Aristotle, since it has been the foundational presupposition to the philosophical speculation regarding divinity. Nevertheless, Aristotle sought to clarify and redefine the concept of cause. There is then, an amplification or elucidation of former conceptions.

Aristotle generally identified four types of causes evident in cosmology. Firstly, there is the formal cause, which we, to some extent have dealt with. Basically, the formal cause is that which determines what something is, like an idea or plan. The Forms latently evident in each being possess, to some extent, the formal cause. Secondly, there is the material cause, that from which something is made or comes into existence. To some extent, the nature of something is its material cause. Thirdly, there is the efficient cause, that by which something is made, like a sculptor chiselling a marble statue. Fourthly, there is the final cause, that for which something is made; or to put it in Platonic terms, in what way is this thing deemed good. The final cause is thus its ultimate end or in which something's usefulness terminates (Sproul 2000:48). For Aristotle, previous philosophers, though generally dealing with material and efficient causes, rarely touch on the final cause of things, which validates their ontological existence (Meyer 1992:792-793).

Aristotle's classification of causes or teleological categories becomes prominent within ecclesiastical conceptions of divinity, as I hope to demonstrate in subsequent chapters. What is important for this chapter is to note that the concept of Causes is directly related to Aristotle's idea of potentiality and actuality, which in turn form the primary argument for Aristotle's speculation of the existence of his god (Sproul 2000:49).

2.2.2.2 The Primary Cause and Final Actuality in the argument for the Prime Mover

As we have observed, Aristotle's cosmology is a dynamic process of potentiality and actuality. Moreover, due to the concept of potentiality, all things possess a type of motion or movement. Nevertheless, as a necessity, the inference which leads Aristotle's cosmology into the incorporeal realm of divinity is the question of what the primary cause of the universe is. In this sense, there should be an efficient and final cause to the universe as a whole, which in turn is ultimate actuality to which the entire universe's potentiality is drawn (Clark 1989:130; Tarnas 1993:63; Sproul 2000:49-50; Wicksteed & Cronford 2000:265).

It is this pursuit, this search for the ultimate "τέλος", which occupies a great deal of Aristotle's argument in *Metaphysics*. Nevertheless, Aristotle's interest is not in the origin of the universe, since its eternality is assumed. Aristotle is not seeking the originator of existence, but rather the originator of the dynamism of potentiality and actuality (Aristotle, *Physics* VIII, 260a24-27, 261b27). Whereas Plato's argument of movement was one aspect of defining being or soul, for Aristotle it becomes the primary argument to deduce being, and specifically, the incorporeal reality of divinity.

Following Aristotle's logic, Aristotle assumes that due to the microcosm observed of potentiality and actuality in organisms, the universe itself has a similar movement of potentiality and actuality; an ideal Form to which it is drawn. Keeping with the idea that the latent form is perfect in realization, the Form of the Universe must possess perfect actualization. Consequently, there should be no movement or potentiality evident in the Form of the Universe, since it is perfectly actualized. Thus, the Form of the Universe must be immutable. In addition, since the entire material universe possesses potentiality, the Form of the Universe must be immaterial, since its primary existence is perfect actuality (Aristotle, *Physics* VIII, 267b18-25; *Metaphysics* X-XIV, 1073a4-14). It exists in the incorporeal realm "beyond" the material realm. This immutable and immaterial being which is perfect actualization is Aristotle's Prime Mover (Clark 1989:130; Tarnas 1993:63; Wicksteed & Cronford

2000:264; Tredennick 2003:XXIX; Goodman 2007:63-64). Aristotle's Prime Mover is not just the efficient cause of motion (where most philosophers seem content in describing the teleology of divinity), but also the final cause. The Prime Mover is also the supreme good and is thus that to which all things strive to become. Consequently, he is the cause of motion and the end to which things move (Menn 1992:573; Goodman 2007:64).

2.2.2.3 Ontology

Due to Aristotle's belief that knowing the substance of something implies truly knowing its being, Aristotle endeavoured to know the ultimate substance of the Prime Mover, which in his estimation was immutable, eternal and indivisible (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X-XIV, 1071b1-10, 1073a4-14). Coupled with the notion of immutability is the necessity that this substance must be perfect actuality (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X-XIV, 1071b18-22, 1072a20-25).

For Aristotle, this immutable substance is "νοῦς" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X-XIV, 1072b15-30). In *Eudemian Ethics* 1217b31 as well as *Nicomachean Ethics* 1096a24-25 Aristotle describes the Prime Mover as "ὁ θεός καὶ ὁ νοῦς" (God-and-mind). This phrase is exegetical, in the sense that Aristotle is connecting the two names to the same entity and is not describing two distinct entities (Menn 1992:551). Whereas to some measure, former philosophers considered God to possess rationality, for Aristotle God is ontologically "νοῦς", which to Aristotle is an incorporeal "οὐσία" and not merely an attribute or characteristic. Later philosophers, such as Cicero, also recognized that Aristotle considered God to be incorporeal mind without any physical sensation (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 1:13:33) (Menn 1992:561-562; Kelly 2007:17). Yet this does not imply that Aristotle was the first to make "νοῦς" an ontological substance. Anaxagoras already described "νοῦς" as a rarefied substance, though maybe not in incorporeal terms such as Aristotle and for Anaxagoras the "νοῦς" is immanent in activity, while Aristotle's "νοῦς" was indirectly acting upon the material realm in the incorporeal "beyond".

For Aristotle, the human mind can share to some degree in the Divine "νοῦς", coming from the beyond and penetrating the material universe. The human mind is incorporeal, since it cannot be empirically observed, which would seem to imply that its being is derivative from the cosmic "νοῦς".

Thus, Aristotle perpetuates the trajectory regarding the microcosm of anthropology as a mirror of the macrocosm of the universe (Menn 1992:569; Tarnas 1993:61).

However, when describing the divine life of this ontological “νοῦς”, it does not truly exhibit any form of true transcendence. Due to Aristotle’s logical insistence that the Divine Mind is also the perfect actuality of the universe, it implies that the Divine Mind contemplates only himself, since he is the perfect Form of the Universe and is perfect goodness and life (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* X-XIV, 1072b15-30). By implication, as Aristotle’s logic proceeds, the Divine Mind is not omniscient and does not look beyond himself to the material universe. It is merely by indirectly stimulating the potentiality and movement of the material universe, drawn to its perfect actuality as its efficient and final cause, that the Divine Mind exhibits any sense of influence (Clark 1989:185; Goodman 2007:64;).

2.3 Post-Socratic

Generally, it is accepted that Post-Socratic philosophy did not truly contribute any significant trajectory of philosophical formulation, but primarily modified or synthesized Pre-Socratic and Socratic thought. Even so, what is quite unique to Post-Socratic thought is its religious character. Pre-Socratics as well as Socratics did not seem to have made their speculations of divinity a matter of religious devotion, but primarily viewed divinity as a necessity to their cosmogony. Yet, the Pythagorean community should be exempt from this general statement, since their philosophy had soteriological significance. Plato did exhibit something of the Pythagorean religious character regarding reincarnation and salvation through *gnosis*, yet it is not as explicit. Unlike the former schools of thought, Post-Socratics gave the trajectories formulated by their forerunners a much stronger religious tone (Clark 1989:184). This is evident in Stoicism and Middle-Platonism. Simultaneously, it is in the Post-Socratic era that Jewish philosophers sought to incorporate Hellenistic thought in their conceptualization of Yahweh. The prominent figure of Post-Socratic Jewish thought is Philo.

2.3.1 Stoicism

Similar to the Pre-Socratics and Socrates, we do not possess any primary source of Zeno, but only secondary sources or interpretive sources of Zeno's philosophy. Nevertheless, this does not really pose a problem since it is the interpretive sources which were most likely the primary texts known to Tertullian's era. Prominent philosophers such as Cicero and Seneca made Stoicism palatable to the Latin-speaking community. Cleanthes, a Carthaginian, could be seen as a direct import or link of Stoic thought into North Africa. Hence, in a similar manner to the Pre-Socratics, the interpretive sources shaped how the various philosophical trajectories were understood and used by subsequent generations.

2.3.1.1 Cosmology

The most prominent aspect of Stoic cosmology was the denial of the incorporeal.⁷⁸ In this sense, Stoicism disagreed with Plato's incorporeal realm of Forms as well as Aristotle's incorporeal "beyond", though if a comparison were necessary Stoicism's corporeal cosmology is more akin to Aristotle than to Plato, due to Aristotle's insistence that all things in the universe are corporeal (Kidd 1976:276; Clark 1989:158; Sproul 2000:51-52; Kelly 2007:17).

The logic for corporeality is as follows. Accepting Plato and Aristotle's argument that being/soul possesses movement or the ability to move, Stoics took the logic a bit further. For Stoics, only the corporeal possesses the ability to act and be acted upon, to move and be moved. If, as Heraclitus would propose, the universe is in continual flux, it would imply that all things are in movement, which in turn, would imply that all things are corporeal.

This line of argument is clearly picked up in Seneca's Epistles. For example, in *Epistula* 106:3-5, Seneca argues, "Good acts, for it is beneficial; (and) that which acts is corporeal"⁷⁹ (Seneca, *Epistulae* 93-124, CVI:3-5). Furthermore, in the same epistle a little further on Seneca postulates, "Also then,

⁷⁸ In a manner similar to the Pre-Socratic cosmology of *Urstoff*, the universe, as well as all seeming incorporeal substances, is corporeal or material.

⁷⁹ *Bonum facit: prodest enim. Quod facit, corpus est*

anything which has so great a force, so that it moves, and compels, and restrains, and controls is corporeal”⁸⁰ (Seneca, *Epistulae* 93-124, CVI:9).

Apart from the corporeal cosmology, Stoicism affirms a type of cyclical cosmology as well, similar to that of Empedocles. The universe will, according to Stoicism, be drawn together into a universal conflagration, being consumed by the creative Fire. However, this will be a temporal unity, from which the creative force will move the unity into the diversity of the universe as we observe it now. Thus, similar to Empedocles, there is a drawing and a pushing force which moves corporeal matter in a cyclical fashion (Rackham 1999:XXIV). However, whereas Empedocles views the cycle as an amalgamation and separation of matter, for the Stoics the cycle is a process of destruction and reconstruction. Moreover, when the creative Fire reconstructs the cosmos, it essentially moulds an identical cosmos to what was, prior to the conflagration. In retrospect, the concept of conflagration makes little sense, due to the idea that the recreated world is identical to the former (which implies no improvement, but mere repetition). This seems to make the concept of conflagration an illogical principle in an otherwise rigorously logical system of cosmology (Salles 2005:56-57).

2.3.1.2 Teleology

If the universe is material and always in motion (quite similar to Heraclitus’ flux, Empedocles’ cycle and Aristotle’s movement of potentiality), yet is moving intelligibly and not chaotically, there must be a cause to this cyclical flux or a craftsman which gives the universe its rational beauty (Setaioli 2007:335). As Seneca would suggest, “Our Stoics say, as you know, that there are two things in the nature of the universe, from which all things are made: cause and matter. Matter lies sluggish... Cause, however, which is reason, moulds matter...”⁸¹ (Seneca, *Epistulae* 1-65, LXV:2) (Allen & Springsted 2007:42; Kelly 2007:18).

This cause is the Stoics’ god, as Seneca would suggest, “Truly, the universe consists out of matter and God”⁸² (Seneca, *Epistulae* 1-65, LXV:23-24). Or more clearly, “Do we search for what may be the

⁸⁰*Etiam nunc cui tanta vis est, ut inpellat et cogat et retineat et inhibeat, corpus est*

⁸¹*Dicunt, ut scis, Stoici nostril duo esse in rerum natura, ex quibus omnia fiant, causam et materiam. Materia iacet iners, res ad omnia parata, cessatura, si nemo moveat. Causa autem, id est ratio, materiam formet et quocumque vult versat, ex illa varia opera producit. Esse ergo debet, unde fiat aliquid, deinde a quo fiat. Hoc causa est, illud materia*

⁸²*Nempe universa ex material et ex deo constant*

cause? Certainly, it is creating Reason, which is God”⁸³ (Seneca, *Epistulae* 1-65, LXV:12). It is this cause, the Stoic god called the “λόγος”, which permeates all the material universe, giving its logical order and creative force. Depending on the school of Stoic thought, this “λόγος” either follows Heraclitus’ more metaphorical suggestion of an universal law or ordering principle; an impersonal force called fate; or (as in Seneca’s case) deity status as a Divine providence (Kidd 1976:276; Rackham 1999:XXIII; Kelly 2007:18). Consequently, Cicero refers to the “λόγος” more impersonally than Seneca, “... It follows that the universe is governed by Nature”⁸⁴ (*De Natura Deorum*, II:XXXIII:85). Nevertheless, since Seneca is mentioned in person by Tertullian, the Stoic school which attributes divinity to the “λόγος” could possibly be the school Tertullian was more acquainted with and which he found to be a regular ally in various theology propositions

Interestingly, the Stoics describe the creative force of the “λόγος” as a teleological principle in relation to the human soul being the rational principle of the body. For the Stoics, as the human soul orders the body, so the creative “λόγος” orders the sluggish matter of the universe (Kidd 1976:276; Kelly 2007:18). Essentially, the “λόγος” is the soul of the universe as the human soul is to the body. This line of thought is evident in Seneca, as he would explain: “God’s abiding place in the universe relates as the soul in man; because the world-matter corresponds to our bodies. Therefore, let the lower serve the greater”⁸⁵ (*Epistulae* 1-65, LXV:23-24). Thus, the philosophical notion of microcosm-macrocosm remains a strong logical premise in Stoicism in comprehending divinity.

This World-soul, known as the “λόγος”, governs through permeating the cosmos through *seminal logoi* which become the creative force in all matter. It is this *seminal logoi*, in Aristotelian terms, which gives matter its potentiality and actuality, being the agent of movement as well as the creative designer. Thus, the Divine is evident in all things and is immanent in all things (Kelly 2007:18).

⁸³ *Quaerimus, quid sit causa? Ratio scilicet faciens, id est deus*

⁸⁴ *sequitur natura mundum administrari*

⁸⁵ *Quem in hoc mundo locum deus obtinet, hunc in homine animus. Quod est illic material, id in nobis corpus est serviant ergo deteriora melioribus*

2.3.1.3 Ontology

2.3.1.3.1 All permeating fire

To the Stoics, the “λόγος” is a pantheistic principle, in the sense that it permeates all substances. Possibly, as an analogy, the concept of diffusion would serve best. For example, as a drop of blue colourant diffuses in a glass of water and eventually permeates the whole glass, so the “λόγος” diffuses through the universe like a liquid or gas. For Stoics, since the “λόγος” is corporeal, it possesses substance. This substance was fire or fiery ether which can be empirically observed with the distribution of heat. Where heat is evident, there is more movement, which implies more of the “λόγος” diffusion (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 2:9:25). Consequently, Stoicism is a *theologia naturalis* (theology of nature) and not a *theologia fabulosa* (myth and poetry) (Setaioli 2007:333).

What Heraclitus possibly might have suggested metaphorically, the Stoics insisted on in its literal material reality (Clark 1989:159-161; Kidd 1976:276-278). As Cicero says, “Zeno said that it is Fire”⁸⁶ (*De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, IV:V:12). Or in another instance, Cicero says this of Zeno’s conception of God: “And so this same (idea) in another place he said that ether is God... However, in other books sometimes, (Zeno) believes that a Reason extends through all the natural world working upon it with divine power”⁸⁷ (*De Natura Deorum*, 1:14:36). And again, Seneca describes this Fire as being a “πνεῦμα” or “*spiritus*” or breath which gives life, order and nourishes all things (*Questiones Naturales*, 6:16:1)⁸⁸ (Setaioli 2007:336).

In addition, its permeation is most evident in relation to the human soul. The human soul is perceived in Stoic thought as to be a “piece” or seed of the “λόγος”. The logic seems quite straightforward. If the universe is governed by the “*ratio*”(reason) being corporeally fire, and man possesses “*ratio*” and also exhibits heat from his material body, it implies that the two are similar, if not identical (Setaioli 2007:333). Thus, reverting back to Pythagorean, Platonic and Aristotelian anthropology, man’s reason

⁸⁶Zeno id dixit esse ignem

⁸⁷Atque hic idem alio loco aethera deum dicit...Aliis autem libris rationem quondam per omnem naturam rerum pertinentem vi divina esse adfectam putat

⁸⁸non esse terram sine spiritu palam est, non tantum illo dico quo se tenet ac partes sui iungit, qui inest etiam saxis mortuisque corporibus, sed illo dico vitali et vegeto et alente omnia. Hunc nisi haberet, quomodo tot arbustis spiritum infunderet non aliunde viventibus et tot satis? Quemadmodum tam diversas radices aliter atque aliter in se mersas foveret, quasdam summa receptas parte, quasdam altius tractas, nisi multum haberet animae tam multa tam varia generantis et haustu atque alimento sui educantis?

is an element of the divine within our existence or a piece of the divine reason or soul; or to put it another way, man's intelligence infers the existence of a divine being presence, since like knows like (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 2:6:18). Possibly, the only difference between Stoicism and the others is that the Stoics insisted that this "*ratio*" is corporeal, being a fiery element (Kidd 1976:276-278).

This thought is fairly emphasized in Seneca. For example, Seneca explains the human soul's relation to God: "Friendship I say? No indeed, moreover there is an intimacy and likeness, since indeed a good man differs only in time from God, being his disciple and imitator, and true offspring, whom his glorious parent [God], being no gentle overseer of virtue, just as a strict father, severely rears"⁸⁹ (*Epistulae Morales*, I:1:5-6). Or in *Epistula* 41, "God is near you, he is with you, he is within you"⁹⁰ (*Epistulae* 1-65, XLI:1-2). Furthermore, in another instance in *Epistula* 41 Seneca uses the analogy of a ray of sunlight relating to the sun to describe the human soul's relation to God: "Just as the rays of the sun indeed touch the earth, but being (connected) there, from whence they were sent; in this way the great and holy soul was sent down in this, so that we may have a nearer knowledge of God, indeed it converses with us, but clings to its origin"⁹¹ (*Epistulae* 1-65, XLI:5). This inner soul or "λογοι" in man's body is akin if not the same as the Divine "λόγος". Man possesses the corporeal Good (another term for the "λόγος") (*Epistulae* 93-124, CVI:10), which Seneca describes as perfect Reason, "Therefore, what Good is in you? Perfect Reason"⁹² (*Epistulae* 93-124, CXXIV:23).

2.3.1.3.2 A material Νοῦς

For Stoics, like previous philosophers, the chief quality of the divine is its rational capacity or intelligence. However, Stoics seemed to have followed Aristotle's suggestion that "νοῦς" is in fact a type of substance. Where they differ regards what this substance is. For Aristotle the substance is incorporeal actuality. For the Stoics it is the fiery ether. Hence, it could be confidently suggested that the Stoic material "νοῦς" is similar to Anaxagoras' "νοῦς" which consists of a rarefied corporeal substance.

⁸⁹ *Amicitiam dico? Immo etiam necessitudo et similitudo, quoniam quidem bonus tempore tantum a deo differ, discipulus eius aemulatorque et vera progenies, quam parens ille magnificus, virtutum non lenis exactor, sicut severi patres, durius educat*

⁹⁰ *prope est a te deus, tecum est, intus est*

⁹¹ *Quemadmodum radii solis contingent quidem terram, sed ibi sunt, unde mittuntur; sic animus magnus ac sacer et in hoc demissus, ut propius divina nossemus, conversatur quidem nobiscum, sed haeret origini suae*

⁹² *Quod ergo in te bonum est? Perfecta ratio.*

Moreover, whereas Aristotle's "νοῦς" exists in the incorporeal "beyond", the Stoic "λόγος" has an immanent corporeal pantheistic existence, permeating all things. This permeation is so immanent and complete that Stoic philosophers, such as Seneca, do not hesitate to call nature itself divine or God (*Questiones Naturales*, 2:45:3)⁹³ (Setaioli 2007:337). For later philosophers⁹⁴, such as Cicero, this pantheistic concept caused a bit of confusion, since the Stoic "νοῦς" exists everywhere in degrees (*De Natura Deorum*, 2:15:39). In some places it is more concentrated (like the stars) and in others less concentrated (like inanimate objects such as rocks). As Cicero explains his confusion when dealing with the Carthaginian Stoic Cleanthes, "Then (Cleanthes) said that the world itself is God, then the whole mind and soul of the world he gives this name, then the all-surrounding and embracive flame, which is the furthest and highest, which encompassed all sides and the most outer ends (of the universe), he judges to be the truest deity"⁹⁵ (*De Natura Deorum*, 1:14:37). In a similar vein Cicero judges Chrysippus to believe the same, though Chrysippus also described the "λόγος" in this fashion, "He said the world is God and the outpouring-universal soul."⁹⁶ (*De Natura Deorum*, 1:15:39). In the light of this, it should be no surprise that Stoics could affirm that a human being possesses godhood, since God permeates all things.

In conclusion, similar to the Pre-Socratics and Socratics, Stoicism affirms the eternity of matter as well as the ordering principle. For the Stoics the all permeating fire is only a craftsman and sustainer of the cosmological order, not a creator from *ex nihilo*, as Cicero would report Zeno to have said "it is a craftsmanlike fire"⁹⁷ (*De Natura Deorum*, 2:22:57-58) (Setaioli 2007:335). Nevertheless, due to the notion of the conflagration of the universe, Cicero could also report that Zeno viewed the Fiery ether as the parent of the universe⁹⁸ (*Academica*, I:XI:39).

There is a sense then that Cicero's judgement of Stoicism is quite fitting when discussing Zeno and other Post-Socratics. Whereas they might proclaim to be original in their conceptions, they simultaneously "do not give enough tribute to the great debt they owe to the inventors (of these philosophical positions)"⁹⁹ (*De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, IV:V:13). Generally, various Pre-Socratic and Socratic trajectories are evident in Stoic philosophy. For example, the concept of the all-

⁹³ *ipse enim est hoc quod vides totum, partibus suis inditus*

⁹⁴ Keeping in mind that Cicero was prior to Seneca, but not Stoicism.

⁹⁵ *tum ipsum mundum deum dicit esse, tum totius naturae menti atque animo tribuit hoc nomen, tum ultimum et altissimum atque undique circumfusum et extremum omnia cingentem atque complexum ardorem, qui aether nominetur, certissimum deum iudicat*

⁹⁶ *mundum deum dicit esse et eius animi fusionem universam*

⁹⁷ *ignem esse artificiosum*

⁹⁸ *statuebat enim ignem esse ipsam naturam quae quidque gigneret, etiam mentem atque sensus*

⁹⁹ *non satis magnam tribuunt inventoribus gratiam*

pervading fire which controls the flux of the universe is a Heraclitean idea. The concept of the human soul being parts of the world-soul is a Pythagorean concept (Setaioli 2007:350). The all-pervading world-soul which causes the motion of the world is a Platonic concept. That “νοῦς” is a substance is Thales’, Anaxagoras’ and Aristotle’s proposition. Even the Stoic insistence on corporeality is connected to the Pre-Socratic trajectory of a material reality. It is best to deem Stoicism as a rearrangement of former ideas, charged with a more religious flavour which undergirds its ethics. Due to the Stoic insistence of a universal natural law, the philosophy gained popularity within the Roman Empire, especially among jurists, since Stoicism (to some degree) provided an undergirding for the application of a universal-Roman law upon different parts of the Empire (Allen & Springsted 2007:42). This notion of the “λόγος” being a universal law could be traced back to Heraclitus who poetically said that it is law to obey the wisdom of the one and that man’s laws are fed by God, Heraclitus’ “λόγος” or “ἐνὸς” (Heraclitus, *Fragments*, DK B33; 114)¹⁰⁰.

2.3.2 Middle-Platonism

As previously noted, Plato seemed to have reached towards an ultimate principle or cause of the universe, though stopped short of synthesizing the Form of Good and the Demiurge into one principle. Nevertheless, from reading Plato it seems evident that both the Form of the Good and the Demiurge seemed identical due to shared qualities and functions. They could be interpreted as one and the same. Yet this is an interpretive inference and not necessarily an explicit statement of Plato himself. Whereas there was this confusion in Plato, Middle-Platonism sought to make what is implicit in Plato explicit by merging the two concepts (Copleston 1962:215-216; Clark 1989:184; Allen & Springsted 2007:9). However, Middle-Platonism was not just a reflection on Plato’s dialogues, but also other subsequent philosophers such as Aristotle and the Stoics (Rich 1954:125). Consequently, the concepts of Mind, Demiurge and the Form of the Good were synthesized into one deity. Lastly, Middle-Platonism, like Stoicism, had a more religious overtone than its predecessors, emphasizing the soteriological conceptions latent in Plato’s dialogues (Kelly 2007:19-20). This revival of Platonic thought gained momentum around 100 BC, but lost its public appeal around 200 AD (Allen & Springsted 2007:46). Consequently, it was contemporary to Tertullian.

Since Middle-Platonism is a branch of the Platonic trajectory, I will only focus on what distinguishing contributions it made to the larger philosophical trajectory. Moreover, the study of Middle-Platonism

¹⁰⁰Νόμος καὶ βουλῇ πείθεσθαι ἐνός and τρέφονται γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἀνθρώπειοι νόμοι ὑπὸ ἐνός τοῦ θεοῦ

has some relevance for Philo. Nevertheless, it is primarily considered here due to its Christianisation, in my opinion, in Gnosticism, which would become a heterodoxical opponent for Tertullian. This will be investigated in Chapter 4B. The primary contribution that would be considered is its philosophical cosmology regarding the hierarchy of reality, since its teleological principle is similar to general Platonic thinking.

2.3.2.1 Cosmology: hierarchy of reality

When considering the Middle-Platonic conception of reality, it should be noted that Middle-Platonists were not necessarily original in this proposition, but probably made explicit a trajectory evident in Plato, who in turn was influenced by the dualism evident in Pythagorean cosmology.

Plato, in seeking to form a conceptualization of cosmology, suggested a type of hierarchy of reality. At the top of the pyramid are the Form of the Good/Father of the Universe and the Forms, though the relationship between the Form of Good/Demiurge and the Forms were not satisfactorily clarified, apart from the interpretative inference that the Forms derive their ontological existence from the Form of the Good. Between the Form of the Good/Demiurge and the material universe is the World-Soul who contemplates the Demiurge and the Forms in giving shape, order and movement to the universe. At the lowest level is the inert material world. Other scholars have sought to add the notion of mathematical numbers evident in Plato, though there is the alternative interpretation of seeing the Forms as mathematical ratios, which I have adopted in this thesis (De Vogel 1953:53).

Following Plato, Middle-Platonists also sought to construct a hierarchy of reality, though with a few alterations from their interpretation of Plato's work. At the top of the pyramid of reality is the Divine Mind which is described as Plato's Father of the Universe. The distinction between Plato and Middle-Platonism is the more explicit reference that the Forms are God's thoughts (Allen & Springsted 2007:47; Rich 1954:124). Albinus described the Father of the Universe in Aristotelian terms as being "νοῦς", while Antiochus (who seems to be a Stoic-Platonist) equated the Forms with God's mind (De Vogel 1953:61). Seneca, though Stoic, understood Plato's Forms in relation to God along Middle-Platonic lines as being God's thoughts (*Epistulae* 1-65, LXV:7). Still, Middle-Platonists generally viewed the Divine "νοῦς" as utterly distant from the material universe, similar to Aristotle's "beyond", and it was preoccupied with itself. Its effect on the rest of reality is done via intermediaries (Allen & Springsted 2007:47). For Albinus, the next stage of the hierarchical reality is God's thoughts, which

are the Forms. This is followed by the soul and eventually ends with the lowest stage of reality: matter (De Vogel 1953:52).

Generally, this is the only distinctive contribution made by Middle-Platonism to the philosophical trajectory; that is, by equating the Forms with God's thoughts and by emphasizing Plato's hierarchy of reality or being. Neo-Platonists would later give a more elaborate hierarchy of being which is described as a set of emanations from the One, but Plotinus' philosophical system is more prominent after Tertullian's era and would not be considered.

2.3.3 Philo

Whereas all the previous philosophers were rooted in the Greco-Roman world of pluralism and were generally only influenced by Hellenistic ideology (with influences from Egyptian and Mesopotamian source as well as possible influences from the Orient), Philo is unique due to his Jewish background. Philo is the first known philosopher to incorporate the scriptural corpus or the notion of revelation into the philosophical trajectory, which in turn shaped his cosmology, teleology and ontology in a unique and distinct way from previous Hellenistic philosophers (Clark 1989:195). This does not imply that Philo was not Hellenistic, but he was not solely dependent on Hellenistic philosophy. It could be argued that Philo formed the metaphorical bridge between philosophy, the scriptural corpus and the ecclesiastical community. How Philo relates to the orthodox and heterodox community will be investigated in Chapter 4A and 4B.

2.3.3.1 A new school of Philosophy

What is sometimes neglected by scholars when dealing with Philo are the reasons for his writing. While his work seems to be a synthesis of the Torah, Platonism and Stoicism (Harnack 1958:109-110), Philo's work is also apologetic in nature. Apparently, during Philo's era Judaism was viewed negatively and unpalatable by the Hellenistic communities (Runia 1999:135-136).

It would seem that Philo wrote apologetically, seeking to make Judaism more acceptable and to defend it against its critics. Accordingly, Philo depicts Judaism in Hellenistic categories. Interestingly,

Philo characterises Judaism as a unified front (generally ignoring the three prominent schools of thought (Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes) with one progenitor, namely Moses (Runia 1999:140-141).

Following the Greek's philosophical model of "ἁρσεις" (a school of thought), Philo depicts Moses as the teacher of Judaism and his followers as his pupils (*De Specialibus Legibus*, 1:59)¹⁰¹. Though Moses is not the originator of the physical Israelite nation, he is depicted as its lawgiver and dogma teacher. Nevertheless, Philo resists calling Moses a "φιλόσοφος" (philosopher), but rather refers to Moses as containing all the qualities of a philosopher, king, lawgiver, priest and prophet (*Vita Mosis*, 2:2)¹⁰² (Runia 1999:128-129). Yet, Philo does not hesitate to term Moses' "νόμος" as "δόγμα... καὶ φιλόσοφον" (decree/dogma... and philosopher) (*De Specialibus Legibus*, 1:345)¹⁰³ (Runia 1999:130). Moreover, as Plato enjoyed a plethora of commentators and interpreters, Philo describes Moses in a similar way. Philo describes himself as not writing anything original (*De Opificio Mundi*, 5)¹⁰⁴. What is more interesting is that Philo portrays the other authors of the Old Testament as followers and interpreters of Moses (*De Opificio Mundi* 49¹⁰⁵; *De Agricultura* 55; *De Plantatione* 39; *De Confusione Linguarum* 39, 44; *De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia* 177¹⁰⁶). Possibly, in distinction to Plato's interpreters, these were inspired commentaries or secondary revelation derivative from the Pentateuch (Runia 1999:130-132). Finally, as Plato's followers later considered the originator of the philosophy to be divine in some way, Philo continually refers to Moses as "ἱερώτατος" (most holy) (*Legum Allegoriarum* 3:185¹⁰⁷; *De Cherubim*, 39; *Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Soleat*, 135¹⁰⁸, 140; *De Specialibus Legibus*, 1:59; *De Virtutibus*, 175) (Runia 1999:133).

Inasmuch as Philo esteemed the Greek philosophers, in his estimation Moses has the fullest embodiment of truth. Greek philosophy either borrowed from Moses or derived some similar conclusions due to their partaking in divine reason (Runia 1999:135-136). Hence, it would be safe to

¹⁰¹ τὴν δ' ὁμοίαν προαίρεσιν ὁ ἱερώτατος Μωυσῆς καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἅπαξ ἀπάντωνπᾶς σώζειν ἔοικεν ἀληθείας ἐραστής ὢν διδάσκαλος, ἦν καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς γνωρίμοις ἐγχαράττειν καὶ ἐνσφραγίζεσθαι ποθεῖ τὰς ψευδεῖς δόξας μακρὰν τῆς διανοίας αὐτῶν ἀποικίζων.

¹⁰² ...τὴν τε βασιλικὴν καὶ φιλόσοφον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τρεῖς ἐτέρας, ὧν ἡ μὲν πραγματεύεται περὶ νομοθεσίαν, ἡ δὲ περὶ ἀρχιερωσύνην, ἡ δὲ τελευταία περὶ προφητεῖαν.

¹⁰³ ἄλλ' ἡμεῖς γε οἱ φοιτηταὶ καὶ γνώριμοι τοῦ προφήτου Μωυσέως τὴν τοῦ ὄντος ζήτησιν οὐ μεθυσόμεθα, τὴν ἐπιστήμην αὐτοῦ τέλος εὐδαιμονίας εἶναι νομίζοντες καὶ ζωὴν μακραίωνα, καθὰ καὶ ὁ νόμος φησὶ λέγω τοὺς προσκεμένους τῷ θεῷ ζῆν ἅπαντας, δόγμα τιθεὶς ἀναγκαῖον καὶ φιλόσοφον

¹⁰⁴ οἴκοθεν μὲν οὐδέν

¹⁰⁵ Ἰερεμίαν τὸν προφήτην ἰδὼν ὁράω καὶ γινούς, ὅτι οὐ μόνον μύστης ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἱεροφάντης ἱκανός, οὐκ ὤκησα φοιτῆσαι πρὸς αὐτόν·

¹⁰⁶ ἐνθὺνδ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ τις τῶν φοιτητῶν Μωυσέως, ὄνομα εἰρηνικός, ὃς πατρίῳ γλώττῃ Σαλομών

¹⁰⁷ ἱερώτατον Μωυσῆν

¹⁰⁸ Μωυσῆς ὁ ἱερώτατός

assume that Philo's apologetic model formed the blueprint for subsequent Christian apologists when engaging their Greco-Roman milieu. How they relate will be considered in Chapter 4A and 4B.

2.3.3.2 Cosmology

Unlike the Greek philosophers who generally affirmed the eternality of matter as a dual principle to deity or the intelligent designer, Philo (it could be argued) was the first philosopher to introduce the concept of *ex nihilo* regarding matter. For Philo, God is not part of a gradation of reality, even if it is its highest reality of being, but rather utterly different from the created order (*Legum Allegoriarum*, 2:1)¹⁰⁹. His relationship to creation is not a craftsman to matter, but as its Creator and originator. Prior to God there was nothing that is part of the incorporeal or corporeal realm (Clark 1989:204).

Yet, Philo still insisted on Plato's Forms, though redefining it according to the Middle-Platonic concept of the Forms beings God's thoughts (*De Opificio Mundi*, 16)¹¹⁰. However, the Forms are not anterior to God, but ulterior and utterly subjected to his mind or reason (*De Opificio Mundi*, 24)¹¹¹ (Clark 1989:201). Strangely enough, Philo insists that, "This teaching is Moses' and not mine"¹¹², as if Moses taught Platonic Forms (*De Opificio Mundi*, 25).

2.3.3.3 Teleology

Without needing elaboration, since it is Philo's ontology that is of interest to us, it would suffice to mention that Philo's teleological principle differs from Greek philosophy significantly. Dissimilar to the Greek philosophy's continual insistence of the teleological principle as a craftsman or a mere moulder of the material substance, Philo's God is not a mere necessity to an intelligible system, but the creator of the universe. Consequently, for existence or being to actually be, there had to be a creator of being, and that creator or originator is God (Clark 1989:200).

¹⁰⁹ μόνος δὲ καὶ καθ' αὐτὸν εἷς ὢν ὁ θεός, οὐδὲν δὲ ὅμοιον θεῶ

¹¹⁰ προλαβὼν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἅτε θεὸς ὅτι μίμημα καλὸν οὐκ ἂν ποτε ποτὲ γένοιτο γίνεσθαι δίχῃ καλοῦ παραδείγματος... βουλευθεὶς τὸν ὁρατὸν κόσμον τουτοῦ δημιουργῆσαι προεξετύπου τὸν νοητὸν, ἵνα χρώμενος χράω ἄσωμάτῳ καὶ θεοειδεστάτῳ παραδείγματι τὸν σωματικὸν ἀπεργάσῃται

¹¹¹ τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον εἶναι ἢ θεοῦ λόγον

¹¹² τὸ δὲ δόγμα τοῦτο Μωυσέως ἐστίν, οὐκ ἐμὸν

Clearly alluding to Aristotle's inactive Unmoved Mover, Philo contrasts the Jewish understanding of creator with the philosophers' understanding of fashioner, "For some, having admired the world itself rather than the Creator, declare it as uncreated (as having no origin) and eternal; but they irreligiously falsely represent God as completely inactive. Contrariwise, it would be pleasing to marvel at the power of God as the creator and father of all..." (*De Opificio Mundi*, 7)¹¹³. Philo continues by explaining that God is superior even to the Form of the Good and Beauty (*De Opificio Mundi*, 8)¹¹⁴. This is true, according to Philo, since Moses has reached the highest pinnacle of philosophy.

2.3.3.4 Ontology

2.3.3.4.1 God transcendent

According to Philo, God is not merely distant in gradations or merely beyond the corporeal realm, but is utterly transcendent: "The efficient Intelligent cause of the universe (God) is utterly pure and utterly unmixed, better than virtue, better than knowledge, better than good itself and better than beauty itself" (*De Opificio Mundi*, 8)¹¹⁵. For Philo, God is pure being, absolutely simple (following Parmenides' and Aristotle's conception of perfect or actualized being) and self-sufficing, thus not dependent upon the created order for His existence (*Legum Allegoriarum* 2:2). As Philo explains, "He is full of himself, sufficient to himself, and he existed before the beginning of the cosmos and equally so after the beginning of all things" (*De Mutatione Nominum* 27)¹¹⁶. Due to this insistence on utter transcendence, God is described as "without quality" (αποιοῦς) and could not be described in logical categories or in reference to finite objects (Kelly 2007:9).

¹¹³ τινὲς γὰρ τὸν κόσμον μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν κοσμοποιὸν θαυμάσαντες τὸν μὲν ἀγέννητόν τε καὶ αἰδίου ἀπεφάνησαντο, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ πολλὴν ἀπραξίαν ἀνάγκως κατεψεύσαντο, δεόν ἔμπαλιν τοῦ μὲν τὰς δυνάμεις ὡς ποιητοῦ καὶ πατρὸς καταπλαγῆναι, τὸν δὲ μὴ πλέον ἀποσεμνύναι τοῦ μετρίου.

¹¹⁴ Μωυσῆς δὲ καὶ φιλοσοφίας ἐπ' αὐτὴν φθάσας ἀκρότητα καὶ χρησμοῖς τὰ πολλὰ καὶ συνεκτικώτατα τῶν τῆς φύσεως ἀναδιδαχθεὶς ἐγνωγινώσκω δὴ, ὅτι ἀναγκαιοτάτον ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς οὖσι τὸ μὲν εἶναι δραστήριον αἴτιον, τὸ δὲ παθητόν, καὶ ὅτι τὸ μὲν δραστήριον ὁ τῶν ὅλων νοῦσιν ἐστὶν εἰλικρινέστατος εἰλικρινῆς καὶ ἀκραιφνέστατος, κρείττων ἢ ἀρετὴ καὶ κρείττων ἢ ἐπιστήμη καὶ κρείττων ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν.

¹¹⁵ ὅτι τὸ μὲν δραστήριον ὁ τῶν ὅλων νοῦσιν ἐστὶν εἰλικρινέστατος εἰλικρινῆς καὶ ἀκραιφνέστατος, κρείττων ἢ ἀρετὴ καὶ κρείττων ἢ ἐπιστήμη καὶ κρείττων ἢ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν,

¹¹⁶ αὐτὸ γὰρ ἑαυτοῦ πλήρες καὶ αὐτὸ ἑαυτῷ ἱκανόν, καὶ πρὸ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως καὶ μετὰ τὴν γένεσιν τοῦ παντὸς ἐν ὁμοίῳ

2.3.3.4.2 Logos

Besides his insistence on the transcendence of God as well as his relation to the universe as creator-creature, Philo also made an incredible chasm between the creator and creature. To some extent, Philo was following Plato and Aristotle as well as Middle-Platonism's insistence that the Supreme Being has no direct relation to the material realm, but primarily influences the material order through intermediaries (Harnack 1958:110). The distinction, though, between Philo and previous philosophers is that Philo stressed a truer sense of transcendence (God is not part of the universal order), while the philosophers stressed the concept of hierarchy and distance (God is distant from the material realm, though still part of the universal order).

It is Philo's conceptualization of the "λόγος" (synthesizing Judaic doctrine of *ex nihilo* with the "λόγος" of philosophy) which is most relevant to our study, due to its almost Christian character (Tarnas 1993:101). As Harnack observes, Philo's influence cannot really be seen in the first century of the church, but becomes more prominent in the second century with the Apologists (Harnack 1958:113-114). How Philo impacted the Apologists will be considered in Chapters 4A and 4B.

Due to the insistence on intermediaries, Philo suggested that God conceived the "λόγος" who was the chief intermediary and most akin to God, being prior to all creation (*Legum Allegoriarum* 3:175)¹¹⁷. Most scholars seem to agree that Philo's "λόγος" is a synthesis of Plato's Forms (*De Opificio Mundi*, 20; 24) (Kelly 2007:9-10), yet there remains some ambiguity on whether the "λόγος" is God's highest thought, in the sense of merely being the Forms and is thus a mere personification of an abstract concept (Clark 1989:201-202), or whether the Forms are contained within the "λόγος", thus being its own distinct entity separate from the Forms. Philo describes the "λόγος" as highest thought of God, yet simultaneously being a product of God's thought (*De Opificio Mundi*, 25)¹¹⁸ (Harnack 1958:110). Moreover, Philo described the "λόγος" as the soul of the world, and the world itself and only receives its self-realization through the cosmos (De Vogel 1953:47). Conversely, he is also described as a power and person, a function of God, yet having its own distinct divinity (Harnack 1958:110-111).

¹¹⁷ καὶ ὁ λόγος δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπεράνω παντός ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου καὶ πρεσβύτατος καὶ γενικώτατος τῶν ὅσα γέγονε

¹¹⁸ ὁμολοῦν ὅτι καὶ ἡ ἀρχέτυπος σφραγίς, ὃν φημεν λέγει νοητὸν εἶναι κόσμον, αὐτὸς ἂν εἴη τὸ παράδειγμα, ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν ὁ θεοῦ λόγος.

In *Legum Allegoriarum* 2:86, Philo describes God's relation to the "λόγος", "God is and second is God's Logos"¹¹⁹. The λόγος is also described as "θεῖος" (divine or divine being) (*De Cherubim*, 36). In addition, Philo calls the "λόγος", "νοητὸς" (mind) (*Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, 30-32) and the "σκιὰ" (shadow) of God (*Legum Allegoriarum* 3:96)¹²⁰ which God used as an "ὀργάνω" (instrument) in creation. Yet, it would seem that the "λόγος" is created, since he is described as "πρεσβύτατον" (elder), in comparison to the visible world described as "νεώτερος υἱὸς θεοῦ" (young son of God) which proceeds from the "λόγος" (*Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, 31) (De Vogel 1953:46-47); though the idea of sonship in this particular instance cannot be taken literally. It is rather a metaphorical reference to generation or being created. God is their Father, in the sense that He is their creator.

Taking all the above into consideration, I would suggest that Philo conceives of the "λόγος" as God's mind personified. However, since the "λόγος" serves as an intermediary, performing God's (who Philo calls the Father-Creator in relation to the "λόγος") creative work, it would seem that God's Mind or Thoughts were personified but also given a distinct ontological existence. Though generated from God, He is neither within God as God's Mind, nor is he God, since he is, to some measure, created as an instrument of God's mind. Consequently, this would most likely explain Philo's rich terminology in describing the "λόγος". Yet Philo's conception of the "λόγος" is not a new trajectory, but more a redefining of Plato's Demiurge and World-Soul, a type of intermediary hierarchy. In relation, Philo's latent "λόγος" which becomes an external "λόγος" has great similarity to the Stoic concept "ἐνδιαθετος" (rational thought within oneself) and a "λόγος προφορικός" (a thought externally uttered from oneself in a word). In Latin terms, God's "ratio" becomes "sermo". Consequently, the "λόγος" was latent within God, but externally expressed (receiving its own ontological being) to serve as an intermediary instrument in creation (Kelly 2007:11).

Lastly, Philo's "λόγος" does not escape the philosophical trajectory of microcosm-macrocosm. As the "λόγος" is God's medium in creating and governing the universe, being immanent within the universe, yet transcendent with God's mind (*De Cherubim*, 36)¹²¹, so the "λόγος" is described as being the mediator of the knowledge of God (being God's "εἰκόνα"[image]) and it is by contemplating the "λόγος" that we know God (*De Confusione Linguarum*, 97)¹²² (Kelly 2007:11). The question is, how can the "λόγος" serve this function? According to Philo, the human soul, our rational capacity, shares in the divine mind or "λόγος", thus giving man the ability, when contemplating the "λόγος", to

¹¹⁹ ὁ πάντων ἐστὶ γένος, τὸ δὲ γενικώτατόν ἐστιν ὁ θεός, καὶ δεύτερος ὁ θεοῦ λόγος

¹²⁰ σκιά θεοῦ δὲ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ ἐστίν

¹²¹ ἀλλ' ὁ δίοπος καὶ κυβερνήτης τοῦ παντὸς λόγος θεῖος

¹²² ἰδεῖν, εἰ δὲ μὴ δύναιντο, τὴν γοῦν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, τὸν ἱερώτατον λόγον

apprehend deity (Harnack 1958:110-111). Consequently, Philo follows the philosophical trajectory of microcosm-macrocosm. Most likely, Philo is explicitly incorporating the Stoic notion “λόγοι” which permeate the universe, but is contained within the supreme “λόγος” (Rich 1954:125, 132). Subsequently, as has been repeatedly the case, anthropology remains foundational in understanding divinity. This does not imply that Philo was as crude in applying this as the former philosophical trajectories, but he only slightly modifies it by insisting on the transcendence of God as Creator, which is a biblical idea.

2.4 Concluding remarks

It should be noted that the philosophical trajectory also demonstrates the struggle the philosophers had in conceptualizing anything beyond the physical universe. Even though there were some underlying similarities, their conception remained vague with only a handful of consistent principles regarding Divinity. Admiration should be given for their attempt in perceiving the metaphysical reality of God; however, their philosophy of God remains a testimony to the limits of dialectical reasoning in understanding something that is transcendent in being. Thus, the gods of the philosophers remained, to some extent, material or co-eternal with matter, the one's existence inferred from the other. Moreover, it should be noted that most philosophers, though proposing the notion of a supreme being, kept the traditional gods of the Greeks and Romans as being real entities. Thus, there is a hierarchy of sorts, the Supreme Being reigning over the plethora of divinities known as the gods. What might have been controversial in their time was that the philosophers considered the gods to be within the material realm of the universe whilst the Supreme Being was generally not.

3. Scriptural Corpus

3.1 A clear contrast between the philosophical trajectory and the Scriptural Corpus

Prior to formulating a conception regarding how the ecclesiastical community regarded the Old Testament and New Testament as well as the distinguishing texts that propelled the church to formulate a Trinitarian understanding of God, it would be prudent to first make a distinction between philosophy and the scriptural corpus. A failure to do this could lead to depreciating the uniqueness of

the scriptural text as an independent trajectory from philosophy and create artificial points of connection (Clark 1989:190). Three distinguishing factors need to be taken cognisance of:

3.1.1 Philosophical proposition juxtaposed to Scriptural historicity and metanarrative

As we have already discussed in fair detail, philosophy was primarily concerned with the formulation of dogma or a philosophical corpus of teaching regarding various subjects. Consequently, philosophy's chief interest was neither historicity nor the delineation of an historical-metanarrative of the cosmos. History was not linear, but rather cyclical in nature, as can be observed in most cosmologies in philosophy. Universals were more of a concern than particular historical events (Brown 2003:12).

By contrast, the scriptural corpus is primarily a historical metanarrative of God's personal dealings within history with a particular people. Consequently, the scriptural corpus' conceptualization of God is not dependent upon theorization based on natural observation and dialectical reasoning, but primarily by God's self-disclosure through His acts in history, beginning with Adam, Noah and more progressively from Abraham onwards (Alan & Springsted 2007:xvii). Of particular note to the ecclesiastical community was the historical event of Jesus Christ. Unlike Plato's unknown father or Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, which is assumed through logical inference, Jesus was a historical person whose existence was witnessed to (Brown 2003:12). The above contrast will be explored in more detail in the hermeneutical praxes of philosophy, the ecclesiastical community and Tertullian in Chapters 4A and 5.

3.1.2 A definitive origin of the material and immaterial universe juxtaposed to the eternality of matter in philosophy

The Bible affirms a radical ontological distinction between God and the material and immaterial universe. God is ontologically unique on the basis of Him being the creator of the cosmos. He is not a mere fashioner of the material and immaterial universe, but its originator. The universe and God do not share co-eternality (Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11). Moreover, God is not merely the universe's creator, but biblically He claims sovereignty over it (Ps. 90:2; Jn 17:5). Hence God, though

uniquely distinct or transcendent, being creator, is also uniquely immanent being sovereign over creation (Clark 1989:186-187).

Consequently, when compared to the philosophical conceptions of God, there is a stark contrast. The philosophers primarily understood transcendence as hierarchical with God being the pinnacle of the hierarchy of reality. Nevertheless, God is not independent of that order, but co-eternal and generally conceptualized as either material or immaterial; distant or immanent. Stoicism's divine "λόγος" as well as Plato's World-soul have possible similarities with God's sovereignty as depicted in the scriptural corpus. However, neither Stoicism's "λόγος" nor Plato's World-soul is personal, but more *deus ex machine* (God from machine). Finally, whereas the philosophical trajectory generally formulated a logical ontology of God, the biblical distinction between creator and creation produces a theological problem, in the sense that the biblical God is beyond intellectual ability to fully comprehend. The God of the scriptural corpus does not use philosophical categories in defining God, since He is truly transcendent (Allen & Springsted 2007:xxiv). How the above distinction impacted orthodoxy and Tertullian's cosmology, teleology and ontology will be considered in Chapters 4B and 6.

3.1.3 Revelation juxtaposed to dialectical reasoning

If, as we have observed, God is primarily defined through His immanent acts and words in actual history, but He is also transcendent being its creator and can thus not be defined within cosmological categories; how is God within the scriptural corpus conceived? For the ecclesiastical community, as we hope to observe in Chapters 4A and 5, the concept of revelation was a new trajectory within Greco-Roman ideology. The God of the scriptural corpus is primarily known through His self-disclosure, known as revelation (Clark 1989:187-188).

If God did not reveal Himself He would have been primarily unknowable, which is exactly Plato's point in *Timaeus* 28B. However, the scriptural corpus seems to affirm that God transmitted His self-disclosure through intermediaries and committed this revelation to the Old Testament prophets and ultimately in Christ (Kelly 2007:30). As we will hopefully observe in chapters 4A and 5, the concept of revelation altered ecclesiastical epistemology and, to a great extent, began a new trajectory within the ecclesiastical community. It supplanted to some degree, the philosophical epistemology of dialectical reasoning. Nevertheless, this will be further extrapolated in chapters 4A and 5.

Having briefly mentioned three important distinctions between the philosophical trajectory and the scriptural corpus, it is important to understand what epistemological authority the scriptural corpus enjoyed within the ecclesiastical community. Whereas, as we will observe, the Old Testament generally enjoyed unanimous authority within the church, the New Testament is slightly different and is more controversial within the ante-Nicene period.

3.2 Old Testament authority

Generally, most scholars would agree that the ecclesiastical community of the patristic period considered the Old Testament, or the Jewish Scriptures, as being the true knowledge of God (Harnack 1958:108). It would also seem that for the first hundred years the Old Testament was primarily and exclusively the church's scriptural corpus (Kelly 2007:52). Nevertheless, the ecclesiastical community did not interpret the Old Testament as Judaism did, but considered it to be a Christian book, in the sense that (if correctly understood) pointed to Jesus Christ (Justin, *First Apology*, 31¹²³; 61¹²⁴) (Bethune-Baker 1951:51-52; Pagels 2002:362-367; Kelly 2007:32; Briggman 2011:330-332).

Consequently, when the earliest documents of the church referred to “τῆς γραφῆς” or “γέγραπται γάρ” or “λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή”, it primarily referred to the Old Testament (1 Clement 23:5; 34:6; 35:7; 46:2ff; Barnabas 4:7, 11; 5:4; 6:12) (Kelly 2007:52). Yet what makes the issue of Old Testament authority more complex is that the Christian community also made use of the inter-testamental and apocryphal books such as Tobit, Didache, Ecclesiasticus, 2 Esdras, Wisdom of Solomon, History of Susannah, Bel and the Dragon and Baruch. Quotations from these occur as early as 1 Clement and Barnabas, but also continue into Tertullian's day, since Tertullian also made frequent use of these works (Kelly 2007:54).

To some extent, the church's perception of the Old Testament authority is well summarized by Athenagoras in his *Apology* or *Plea for Christians*. In Chapter 7, for example, Athenagoras refers to the prophets as having spoken by God's Spirit and their mouths being used as instruments to utter

¹²³“Ἄνθρωποι οὖν τινες ἐν Ἰουδαίοις γεγέννηται θεοῦ προφήται, δι’ ὧν τὸ προφητικὸν Πνεῦμα προεκήρυξε τὰ γενήσεσθαι μέλλοντα, πρὶν ἢ γεγέσθαι.”

¹²⁴καὶ ἐπ’ ὀνόματος Πνεύματος ἁγίου, ὃ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν προεκήρυξε τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν πάντα, ὃ φωτισζόμενος λούεται.

God's words, not human opinion¹²⁵. Similarly, in Chapter 9, Athenagoras speaks of Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah having being led by the impulse of God's Spirit, being used by the Spirit as a flute player uses a flute, raising them above their own thoughts to utter God's words¹²⁶. Consequently, for the early church, the Old Testament enjoyed an authority superior to philosophical formulations, being revelatory in nature and not a collection of human opinions. This will be explored in more detail in Chapters 4A and 5.

3.3 New Testament authority

3.3.1 The seeming lateness of New Testament authority

Whereas scholarship seems in agreement regarding the church's estimation of the Old Testament's authority, the issue of canonicity regarding the New Testament remains a contentious problem. The seeming little empirical evidence for the usage of the New Testament books within the early church documents, has given premise for the hypothesis that these books most likely did not exist prior to Marcion's formation of his own canon. Harnack (1958:283), for example, suggests that there was no reliable tradition of the teaching of the Apostles, except for possibly the Pauline corpus (Leitzmann 1953:100-104¹²⁷).

Moreover, it would seem that heresy preceded orthodoxy and that orthodoxy, as some would propose, is a mere reaction to heterodoxy (Brown 2003:70). Consequently, as Harnack would further venture to suggest (1910:40), prior to the year 150 AD there were no collections of the Gospels or Epistles that possessed equal authority to the Old Testament (Richardson 2006:21). For Harnack (1910:40, 45-46), Marcion was the first to conceive of the notion of a new canon of Scripture to which the Orthodox Church reacted. Even so, Harnack (1910:41) does concede that Justin mentions

¹²⁵ἡμεῖς δὲ ὧν νοοῦμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν ἔχομεν προφήτας μάρτυρας, οἱ πνεύματι ἐνθέῳ ἐκπεφωνήκασιν καὶ περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ περὶ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ... πιστεύειν τῷ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύματι ὡς ὄργανα κεκνηκότι τὰ τῶν προφητῶν στόματα, προσέχειν δόξαις ἀνθρωπίναις.

¹²⁶Τῶν Μωσέως οὔτε τῶν Ἡσαίου καὶ Ἰερεμίου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν προφητῶν, οἱ κατ' ἕκστασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς λογισμῶν, κινήσαντος αὐτοὺς τοῦ θείου πνεύματος, ἃ ἐνηργούτο ἐξεφώνησαν, συγχρησάμενου τοῦ πνεύματος ὡς εἰ καὶ ἀύλητῆς αὐλὸν ἐμπνεύσαι.

¹²⁷Unlike Harnack, Leitzmann would concede early authorship, but argue that the apostolic writings were only accepted or canonized at a much later date. For Leitzmann, it was a gradual process that accelerated in the mid 2nd century and was only finalized in the 4th century.

the memoirs of the Apostles being read during daily worship (*First Apology*, 67)¹²⁸, though dismisses whether it shared equal authority with the Old Testament. Furthermore, Harnack presupposes (1910:42) that Tatian's effort to compose a fourfold Gospel implies that the Gospels were not fixed documents and were probably not recognized prior to 160 A.D.

The above hypothesis has given rise to the notion that the New Testament's authority and canonicity only really occurred during the period of Irenaeus and Tertullian. Consequently, Tertullian is not seen as an inheritor of the New Testament canon, but an innovator of it. Accordingly, Irenaeus and Tertullian created a *Regula fidei*¹²⁹ by which various texts could be determined to be apostolic and through this rule compile a type of New Testament canon (Harnack 1910:47, 55-56). Even so, Harnack (1910:55-56) would suggest that prior to 200 A.D. there was no general consensus regarding what the New Testament texts were. It was, generally, a haphazard affair and differed from one geographical location to another depending on the socio-political and ecclesiastical context of the particular area (Harnack 1910:57).

3.3.2 Some problems with the above hypothesis

A couple of points of consideration need to be taken into cognizance when considering the authority of the New Testament canon.

Firstly, it should be humbly admitted that, due to the little historical documentation we possess regarding the exact compilation of the New Testament books, we primarily have to rely on speculative hypotheses regarding its formation. Unfortunately, we currently do not have enough primary sources which indicate what New Testament books were exactly accepted during the patristic period, since it might have been principally conveyed via verbal tradition. Moreover, the Apostolic Fathers seemed to have little interest in defining what Scripture is and what it is not and could have most likely assumed the local apostolic churches would have been aware of the distinction. It would seem that it was only until the advent of the Apologists (who explained Christianity to the Greco-Roman world) and the rise of more robust heresies that prompted the church to articulate, in writing, its position on the Old Testament and New Testament books. Consequently, the traditional liberal

¹²⁸ Ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων, ἥ τὰ συγγράματα τῶν προφητῶν. The Latin translates this phrase most interestingly as, “et commentaria apostolorum, aut scripta prophetarum leguntur”.

¹²⁹ Regarding the development of the *Regula fidei* and its function, this will be investigated in detail in Chapter 4A and 5.

position presented by Harnack is primarily, given the poor evidence, an argument from silence, since we have no clear reference to a denial or affirmation of the New Testament books prior to the apologetic and polemical era of Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian.

Secondly, to some extent, Harnack's hypothesis is similar to Friedrich Hegel's philosophy of history in which ideology is primarily determined by the evolutionary process of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis (Brown 2003:25). For Harnack, the New Testament is a product of that evolutionary process. Conversely, if we take into consideration Jude 3's insistence that there is a faith once delivered¹³⁰ (cf. Lk. 1:2; 1 Cor. 11:2, 23; 15:3), it would seem to suggest that Hegel's theory might not be applicable to the New Testament corpus. It would seem that the ecclesiastical community did receive some form of a fixed body of teaching or doctrine that is handed down as apostolic tradition (Kelly 2007:30-31; Brown 2003:24). Accordingly, the patristic period could be read as a mere unfolding of the solidification of that set body of teaching, as a type of historical development of clarification, rather than a mere philosophical evolutionary process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis (Brown 2003:24). What further strengthens this hypothesis is the fact that from the beginning of Christianity heresies have arisen, yet they were continually rejected. This would seem to imply that the apostolic church did possess a nucleus of teaching by which it could scrutinize new ideas (Brown 2003:74).

Thirdly, whereas it seems true that the church did not possess an equal number of copies of various New Testament books in each geographical district, to argue that this implies that if certain books were omitted in one region it means that they were rejected is, in my opinion, not a sound argument. The argument does not take into consideration the historical milieu in which the early church existed. It should be noted, that in many ways the churches were not able to "network" as our contemporary movements do. Information in the Roman Empire did not possess the same degree of "fluidity" as our contemporary setting. In fact, the fast circulation of texts only occurred with the invention of the Gutenberg Press [as the spread of Luther's 95 Theses would attest] (Gonzalez 2001:22). It was probably only at the council of Nicea in 325 A.D. that the larger church congregated together as a more global entity (Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 3:7; Gonzalez 2001:162-163). In this regard, the notion that the canonical text of Scripture was unanimous in all regions would be a fallacy. Even so, that does not imply that the New Testament canonical books were non-existent; only that they were not evenly distributed. The absence of a particular letter or epistle in one church father's

¹³⁰ τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἀγίοις πίστει. It should be noted that the Greek verb is in the aorist tense, which implies a complete body of teaching handed over to the ecclesiastical community.

manuscripts should rather imply unequal geographical distribution of New Testament texts. As time passed, circulation of the New Testament texts became wider and more evenly distributed, to the point that in Athanasius' day all 66 books are accounted for in a single church or episcopate (Shelley 2008:66).

3.3.3 An alternative thesis

Inasmuch as there seems to be little evidence, apart from their own inward testimony, of the existence and usage of the New Testament books, there seems to be enough hints within some of the ecclesiastical writings to suggest that the New Testament, or at least some of it, enjoyed early recognition and was revered as God's word.

3.3.3.1 Apostolic fathers

In Ignatius' letter to *Smyrneans* 5:1, Ignatius refers to the Gospels with equivalent authority to the Old Testament when he says, "They have been convinced neither by the words of the prophets nor the Law of Moses, nor, until now, by the Gospel..."¹³¹ (Ehrman 2005:301). Similarly in 7:2, Ignatius writes, "... but instead to pay attention to the prophets, and especially to the Gospel, in which the passion is clearly shown to us and the resurrection perfected"¹³² (Ehrman 2005:303).

In 1 Clement 42:1-2, Clement highlights that the Apostles' teaching was not their own opinion, but was given to them by Jesus Christ who was sent by God the Father, forming a chain of authority, "The Apostles were given the Gospel for us by the Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. Thus Christ came from God and the Apostles from Christ"¹³³ (Ehrman 2005:109; Kelly 2007:32-33). In 2 Clement 2:4, Clement quotes the Gospel of Matthew, referring to it as Scripture (the term used in reference to the Old Testament), "And also another Scripture says..."¹³⁴ and regarding it as the words of "Χριστὸς" (Christ) (2 Clement 2:7) (Ehrman 2005:167-168). Furthermore, in 2 Clement 14:2, Clement puts the Old Testament and the Apostolic witness together as equal authorities

¹³¹ Οὐς οὐκ ἔπεισαν αἱ προφητεῖαι οὐδὲ ὁ νόμος Μωυσέως, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μέχρι νῦν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον...

¹³² Προσέχειν δὲ τοῖς προφήταις, ἑξαίρετως δὲ τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, ἐν ᾧ τὸ πάθος ἡμῖν δεδῆλωται καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τετελείωται.

¹³³ Οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἡμῖν εὐηγγελισθησαν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξεπέμφθη. ὁ Χριστὸς οὖν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

¹³⁴ Καὶ ἕτερα δὲ γραφὴ λέγει, ὅτι οὐκ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους, ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοὺς.

when he writes, “And, as you know, the Bible and the Apostles indicate that the church has not come into being just now, but has existed from the beginning”¹³⁵ (Ehrman 2005:187).

Similarly, in the *Epistle of Barnabas* 4:14 quotes Matthew’s Gospel, using the Old Testament formula of “it is written”¹³⁶ (Kelly 2007:56). In addition, Polycarp, in his letter to the *Philippians* 3:2-3 speaks in elevated terms of the Apostle Paul, “When he was with you he accurately and reliably taught the word of truth to those who were there at the time. And when he was absent he wrote you letters. If you carefully peer into them, you will be able to be built up in the faith that was given you. This faith is the mother of us all”¹³⁷ (Ehrman 2005:337; Kelly 2007:33).

What can we deduce from the above citations? What would seem clear is that from the earliest ecclesiastical period, the Apostles and in particular the Gospels were revered with an authority that is equal to the Old Testament. The Apostles received their words from Christ and Christ from God and the Apostle Paul’s words embodied the faith that builds up the body of Christ. Polycarp’s reference to Paul does indicate that the apostolic teaching was formerly delivered orally, but later on through the written form of epistles. Nevertheless, what constituted the writings as authoritative was most likely due to them enshrining the oral tradition which was already existent (Kelly 2007:33). Consequently, this would seem to indicate that there were, at an early stage, apostolic writings. Hence, whereas Harnack (1910:40, 45-46) would suggest that Marcion was the first to formulate a type of canon, it would altogether be more probable that Marcion was revising an already existent list of books prevalent within the ecclesiastical community (Kelly 2007:58). Thus, it should not surprise us that after Marcion’s more explicit revising, the Apologists and subsequent teachers of the church would more explicitly mention and single out various books as apostolic writings. What was formerly assumed had to be explicitly mentioned for clarification (Kelly 2007:58; Richardson 2006:21-22).

3.3.3.2 Apologists

Prior to Irenaeus and Tertullian, there is little mention made by the Apologists, such as Justin and Tatian, of the New Testament writings. As we have already noted, Justin has made mention of the

¹³⁵Καὶ ὅτι τὰ Βιβλία καὶ οἱ ἀποστολοὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν οὐ νῦν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ ἄνωθεν.

¹³⁶ὥς γεγραπται, πολλοὶ κλητοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοὶς εὐρεθώμεν

¹³⁷οὔτε γὰρ ἐγὼ οὔτε ἄλλος ὅμοιος ἐμοὶ δύνανται κατακολουθῆσαι τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ μακαρίου καὶ ἐνδόξου Παύλου, ὅς γενόμενος ἐν ὑμῖν κατὰ πρόσωπον τῶν τότε ἀνθρώπων ἐδίδασκεν ἀκριβῶς καὶ βεβαίως τὸν περὶ ἀληθείας λόγον, ὅς καὶ ἀπὸν ὑμῖν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς, εἰς ἃς ἔσαν ἐγκύπτειτε, δυνηθήσεσθε οἰκοδομεῖσθαι εἰς τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν πίστιν. ἥτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ πάντων ἡμῶν...

memoirs of the apostles (*First Apology* 66:3; 67; *Dialogue with Trypho* 103:8), but not much else is mentioned by him. Even so, Justin's pupil, Tatian, produced his "*Diatessaron*" which sought to bring the four Gospels into harmony. This would suggest that the four Gospels were grouped together quite early (Kelly 2007:33, 58).

However, Irenaeus, third generation after the Apostles, was the first writer to speak of a New Testament in relation to the Old Testament (*Adversus Haereses*, 4:9:1) (Kelly 2007:56-58). Irenaeus did not view the Scriptures, both old and new as a human invention, but as unadulterated truth or true knowledge (*Adversus Haereses*, 2:27:2; 3:2:2) (Shelton 2010:32). In addition, Irenaeus saw the New Testament books as forming a unity with the Old Testament, revealing to us Christ in the Old Covenant. For Irenaeus, Philip's discussion with the Ethiopian eunuch regarding Christ from Isaiah in Acts 8 is a perfect example of the unity of the two testaments (*Adversus Haereses*, 3:6:1-5; 4:22-4:26; 4:23:2) (Shelton 2010:33).

Regarding the New Testament books, Irenaeus viewed the four Gospels as being the pillars of the church (*Adversus Haereses* 3:11:8-9). Quite interestingly, Irenaeus admitted that there was a difference between the four Gospels' accounts of the life of Christ, yet considered this as a confirmation of its authenticity as well as reliability. Nevertheless, from our earliest records it is only Tatian and Irenaeus who make mention of the Gospel of John as completing a fourfold Gospel account. Yet, Irenaeus did say that his acceptance of the Gospel of John is based on the tradition he received from Asia Minor (*Adversus Haereses* 3:3:4; 3:11:9) (Pagels 2002:347, 361). Irenaeus referred to almost all the New Testament books which illustrates that he was one of the first to almost use the entire scriptural corpus as subsequent generations would (Hardy 2006:352).

Having outlined the above development of the scriptural corpus' authority within the ecclesiastical community, Tertullian's comprehensive usage of the Old and New Testament scriptures illustrates that he was not the innovator of the canon, but an inheritor of it. Tertullian mentions in *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 36:5 that, "(The church) combine the law and the prophets with the Gospels and the letters of the apostles"¹³⁸. In *Adversus Praxean* 20 Tertullian refers to both testaments as, "the whole store of both testaments"¹³⁹. Furthermore, in reference to the Scriptures, Tertullian calls them "divine" in *De Testimonio Animae* 5:6¹⁴⁰ (Kelly 2007:56-57). What is even more striking is

¹³⁸ *legem et prophetas cum euangelicis et apostolicis litteris miscet*

¹³⁹ *totum instrumentum utriusque testamenti*

¹⁴⁰ *divinae scripturae*

Tertullian's comprehensive list of New Testament books he mentions in *Adversus Marcionem*. In *Adversus Marcionem* 4:5:3 Tertullian writes of the four Gospels in relation to their apostolic origin. In *Adversus Marcionem* 5:1-21, he refers to Galatians, 1&2 Corinthians, Romans, 1&2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, 1&2 Timothy and Titus. In *De Pudicitia* 19:1-9 he refers to the Apocalypse of John¹⁴¹; 19:10 to 1 John¹⁴²; and 20:2 he mentions the Epistle to the Hebrews, attributing its authorship to Barnabas¹⁴³ (Kelly 2007:59).

Finally, one of the first lists we have of a possible New Testament canon, or at least a compilation of texts, is the Muratorian Canon, which dates back to about 190 A.D. The following books are found in it: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 1&2 John, Jude, the Apocalypse of John, the Apocalypse of Peter and the Wisdom of Solomon. The last two, however, were subsequently rejected (Shelley 2008:66).

In conclusion, it would seem that at a very early stage the apostles' teaching, whether oral or not, enjoyed equal authority with the Old Testament. Still, their writings were not evenly distributed, which implied that most churches did not have a complete collection of all the apostolic writings. Even so, whatever works the church possessed of the apostles were considered as being from Christ and therefore of equal authority to the Old Testament. It was only by the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian that churches in general had a more complete collection of the apostolic writings. Due to Marcion's reaction, however, the church was forced to clarify its position by clearly stating what is apostolic and what is not. Accordingly, contrary to Harnack's position, it would seem more plausible to conclude that by 200 A.D. the New Testament was effectively complete, though its formal finalization only occurred two centuries later (Brown 2003:74).

The recognition of both testaments being divine or inspired by God was fundamental to subsequent theologizing. It cannot be overstated when said that for the orthodox ecclesiastical community, the scriptural corpus was the ultimate authority, since it was divine, and consequently was deemed superior to the philosophical trajectory. Tertullian was the inheritor of this trajectory. This will be explored in more detail in Chapters 4A and 5.

¹⁴¹ *Apocalypsis*

¹⁴² *De epistola quoque Iohannis*

¹⁴³ *Extat enim et Barnabae titulus ad Hebraeos, a Deo satis auctorati uiri, ut quem Paulus iuxta se constituerit in abstinentiae tenore : Aut ego solus et Barnabas non habemus operandi potestatem? Et utique receptor apud ecclesias epistola Barnabae illo apocrypho Pastore moechorum*

3.4 Defining texts which culminated in the theological formulation of the Trinity

3.4.1 Old Testament texts

3.4.1.1 A seeming plurality

For the early church, there seemed to be an ambiguous reference in the Old Testament to a type of plurality within God. This is particularly evident in Gen. 1:26, since God speaks in the plural¹⁴⁴. The *Epistle of Barnabas* noticed the grammar and syntax of the verse and made the interpretation that God is speaking, “to his Son”¹⁴⁵ (*Epistle of Barnabas*, 6:12). In addition to the plural reference in Gen. 1:26, there is also the plural form “*elohim*” used for “God”, which seems to also imply a plurality within God (Brown 2003:147-148).

In relation to the above, there are also the numerous references to the “Word”, “Spirit” and “Wisdom” of God as well as the “Angel of the Lord”, that shared some of the divine attributes that would be associated with God alone (Brown 2003:148). Moreover, the Old Testament also contains numerous passages or texts which refer to the Spirit of God. In Ps. 32:6¹⁴⁶ (LXX) and Ps. 103:30¹⁴⁷ (LXX) God’s Spirit is spoken of as being co-creator of the universe or the living. Similarly, in Isa. 42:5 (LXX), God’s Spirit is referred to as giving all living things their life force¹⁴⁸. Consequently, by referring to the Spirit of God being active in creation, the assumed plurality in Gen. 1:26 and the term “*elohim*”, is made more explicit. Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses* 5:6:1ff), for example, applies this Spirit-creator theme to Gen. 1:26. Irenaeus speaks of the “*Spiritus Patris*” (Spirit of the Father), which is involved in giving life to humanity and conforming it to God’s image. In addition, Second-Temple and Post-Second-Temple Jewish authors made exegetical links between wisdom and the spirit, forming a type of Wisdom Pneumatology. The general sources of this are Proverbs, First Enoch, Wisdom of Ben Sirach and Wisdom of Solomon. It, thus, explains why church fathers, such as Irenaeus, would refer to the Spirit as God’s Wisdom (*Adversus Haereses* 4:20:1ff) (Barnes 2008:171-178)¹⁴⁹. Apart from the above citations, there are numerous citations, too many to number, which

¹⁴⁴ ποιήσωμεν...ἡμετέραν

¹⁴⁵ ὡς λέγει τῷ υἱῷ

¹⁴⁶ τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ πάντα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν

¹⁴⁷ ἐξαποστελεῖς τὸ πνεῦμά σου καὶ κτισθήσονται καὶ ἀνακατασκευάζεις τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς

¹⁴⁸ οὕτως λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ πῆξας αὐτόν ὁ στερεώσας τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ διδοὺς πνοὴν τῷ λαῷ τῷ ἐπ’ αὐτῆς καὶ πνεῦμα τοῖς πατοῦσιν αὐτήν

¹⁴⁹ This link between Spirit and Wisdom will be considered in more detail in Chapters 4B and 6.

makes reference to the Spirit of God, empowering God's servants or moving people to prophesy. As an example, Num. 11:25-29 would suffice. God's Spirit rested on certain individuals, who then were empowered to prophesy.

Hence, what the above citations illustrate is that the early church did recognize the Old Testament's apparent plurality, which (to them) pointed to a plurality within God himself, thus laying the foundation for a Trinitarian understanding of divinity. Conversely, in tension with the seeming plurality there is also a strong monotheistic emphasis.

3.4.1.2 Strong monotheism

Whereas the plurality within God is alluded to in the Old Testament, monotheism is more explicit and strongly emphasized. A clear reference to this is Deut. 6:4¹⁵⁰, which explicitly states that God is a singularity, unity, or one. That the ecclesiastical community embraced the Old Testament's monotheistic claims is evident. For example, Athenagoras, in his *Plea for the Christians*, Chapter 9, makes reference to Ex. 20:2-3, Is. 43:10-11, 44:6 and 66:1 to underline monotheism. For Athenagoras, these are the grounds for rejecting any form of pluralism, which was prevalent in the Greco-Roman world. Yet, Christians were not atheists, since they adhered to the monotheistic beliefs of the Old Testament.

What the above citations illustrate is that the Old Testament reveals a tension of a plurality within God, yet exclusivity as well, in the sense that God is one and there is no other god beside Him. What seems obscure in the Old Testament texts appears to be made explicit in the New Testament texts.

¹⁵⁰ ἄκουε Ἰσραὴλ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστίν

3.4.2 New Testament texts

3.4.2.1 The threefold formula

The most explicit references to a plurality or trinity are the baptismal and benediction formulas of the New Testament. The apostle Paul, for example, gives a threefold benediction, referring to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). Similarly, Paul also admonishes with a similar formula in 1 Cor. 12:4-6 and Eph. 4:4-6. The Ephesian citation also exhibits the Old Testament tension, referring to the Spirit, Lord and God (plurality), yet they are one (unity)¹⁵¹. Apart from the Pauline corpus, there is also the baptismal formula of Matt. 28:19-20, where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are grouped together (Pelikan 1956:99). *Didache* 7:1-3 indicates that the church practiced this baptismal formula at a very early stage in ecclesiastical history.

3.4.2.2 References to Christ

What becomes abundantly clear, when studying the numerous references to the person of Christ, is that the early church was not the inventor of a high Christology¹⁵². In Phil. 2:5-11, for example, Christ is described as being in “μορφῇ θεοῦ” (form of God) (Pagels 2002:367). The historical person of Jesus is also described as “κύριος” or “θεός”, even “ὁ θεός” (Heb. 1:5ff). Col. 1:15 describes him as “εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου” (image of the invisible God). Further on in Col. 1:16-17, he is described as the creator all things, being eternal or prior to all existence. Col. 1:19 is the most striking, since it states “ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι” (because it pleased God for all his fullness to dwell in him (Christ)) (cf. 2 Cor. 5:19; Col. 2:9). Revelation 1:8 describes him as Alpha and Omega, beginning and end¹⁵³. Additionally, Jn. 1:1-3 explicitly ties Jesus Christ’s identity with the eternally existent Word, who is also God (Welch 1948:21-22).

¹⁵¹Εν σῶμα καὶ ἐν πνεύμα, καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν· εἰς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἐν βάπτισμα, εἰς θεός καὶ πατὴρ πάντων, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν.

¹⁵²This is Spangenberg’s central argument regarding patristic trinitarianism, which we will consider in Chapter 7.

¹⁵³Εγὼ εἰμι τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ

Apart from the more explicit references, there is also the twofold nature in which Christ Jesus is described. In Rom. 1:3f; 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:11; 3:18, Jesus is attributed a twofold order of being, one that is “σάρξ” (flesh) and the other “πνεῦμα” (spirit). This twofold division became the starting point for most Christological investigation in the early church (Kelly 2007:138-139). What made the above citations difficult for the early church, especially with a possible Hellenistic philosophical background, was that all these were tied to the historical person of Jesus; as Paul would claim in 1 Tim. 2:5, “The man Christ Jesus”¹⁵⁴ (Brown 2003:12).

It should not, therefore, surprise us that from the earliest known witness of the apostolic church, Jesus was referred to as God or the Son of God (Harnack 1958:186-189). Yet, this confession posed serious difficulties in comprehension when considering the philosophical trajectory which the early church inherited. It is generally agreed that the above citations sparked the Trinitarian debate. When we begin to investigate the ecclesiastical trajectory in Chapter 4B, this problem is only wrestled with in detail during the 2nd century with the advent of the Apologists.

3.4.2.3 References to the Spirit

The New Testament text continues, to some extent, the Old Testament assertions of the Spirit of God. In Jn. 14:17 the Spirit is described as the Spirit of Truth¹⁵⁵ who indwells God’s people; in Jn. 14:26 He is described as Comforter or Helper¹⁵⁶ (cf. Jn. 15:26). Jn. 16:13 attributes a revelatory function to the Spirit of God, being the instructor of truth¹⁵⁷. Hence, from the Gospel of John the Spirit of God has a prominent revelatory function (Welch 1948:22). However, Eph. 1:13 speaks of a sealing of God’s Spirit¹⁵⁸, which seems more soteriological in nature.

3.5 Concluding remarks

It should be noted that in this section we primarily dealt with the raw material used by the early church to construct a theology of the Trinity. What is important is to determine whether the church

¹⁵⁴ ἄνθρωπος χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς

¹⁵⁵ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας

¹⁵⁶ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον

¹⁵⁷ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση

¹⁵⁸ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ,

regarded the scriptural corpus as an authoritative source for theological formulation and what the texts were that seemed to have moved the church towards a Trinitarian understanding of divinity.

What we have generally determined was that the ecclesiastical community, from its basic inception, regarded the Old Testament as God's revelation of Himself. In addition, the church also regarded the apostles as having special authority from Christ and their teaching was considered inspired. Consequently, when the apostles eventually did put their teaching into writing, whether through personal epistles or the Gospels, these were, it would seem, accepted on a similar authoritative basis as the Old Testament. The fact that the Apostolic Fathers used the same phraseology when quoting the Gospels as they would for the Old Testament indicates this. Moreover, it was common to mention the apostolic teaching and the Old Testament together, as being similar in authority. Nevertheless, it was primarily during the age of the Apologists and the advent of Marcion's canonical challenge that the church sought to make the distinction explicit and to establish which books were apostolic.

In conclusion of this section, it should be understood that the church's formulation of a Trinitarian understanding of God was more a culmination process of interpretation and rationalization of the scriptural data available. The scriptural corpus was not a set of propositions on divinity, but more the progressive historical self-disclosure of God as He acted throughout redemptive history (Welch 1948:21-22). Consequently, the ecclesiastical tradition is more the clarification or interpretation of the faith once delivered (Jude 3). What the hermeneutical lens was for interpreting the scriptural corpus and how that was applied throughout the early church prior to Tertullian, will be discussed in Chapter 4A.

4. Socio-political Environment

4.1 Carthage: history in relation to Rome

4.1.1 A brief sketch of Carthage prior to Roman conflict

What makes a historiography of Carthage difficult to construct is primarily due to a lack of evidence available to construct one. Firstly, from a literary perspective, Carthage did not leave any written

documents (apart from some inscriptions on temples and tombs) presenting its history prior to Roman occupation. Due to this lack of literary evidence, we primarily rely on a) inscriptions on some buildings and tombs and b) Greek and Latin writers. Whereas Aristotle and Cicero did portray the Carthaginian political structure in a positive light, other writers portrayed Carthaginian culture as unattractive (Scullard 1955:101). Apart from the little literary evidence available, there is also little architectural evidence left of the Punic era. Rome's levelling of the Byrsa Hill has only left some of the more modest buildings intact (Mattingly & Hitchner 1995:180). Consequently, Carthage, to some extent, is as enigmatic as Tertullian's persona.

According to legend, the city of Carthage was founded by the Phoenician Dido approximately 9th Century BC, though Phoenician trade was known to have occurred here prior to the establishment of Carthage (Wilhite 2007:28). Another tradition attributes the formation of Carthage to Elissa, the sister of Pygmalion, king of Tyre, who fled from her brother and landed on the African coast (Harden 1939:3). Interestingly, Josephus (*Contra Apionem* 1:18) asserts the historical validity of Pygmalion who reigned during the 9th century BC. What might have possibly motivated this westward movement, apart from the reference to familial strife, is not really known. What is surmised is that possible westward expansion was due to the rise of the Hebrew monarchy and Assyria during the 9th century. Moreover, Phoenicia already possessed colonies in Sicily and Malta (Harden 1939:3-5).

Carthage, from its inception, seems to have exhibited a multi-ethnic character, which is generally divided among Libyans (Berbers), Ethiopians, Phoenicians and Greeks (Mitchell 1903:183). Furthermore, these cultures seemed to have inter-mingled and can particularly be seen in the matrix of gods worshiped within Carthage which have Punic and Libyan origin. Therefore, Carthage exhibited the complex matrix of ethnic identities prevalent in North Africa at the time (Wilhite 2007:28).

4.1.2 Reasons for conflict with Rome and Carthage's eventual destruction

Historically, what is known is that Carthage primarily sought to expand its economic power towards Sicily and Sardinia, considering it to be part of its territory. Both Carthage and Rome would be in conflict regarding these regions (Van Dommelen 1997:311). However, what is not exactly known is what exactly moved both parties towards continuous conflict, with Rome eventually only seeking Carthage's destruction. Generally, there seem to be three proposed reasons for Carthage's eventual confrontation with Rome in the western Mediterranean.

4.1.2.1 Roman defence

Traditionally, most scholars from the 19th century attributed Roman expansion to the hypothesis of self-defence. In this view, Rome stumbled into an empire or reluctantly occupied foreign territories due to reactionary or pre-emptive military expansion to defend its borders (Sidebottom 2005:315-316). According to this theory, Rome's conquest of Sicily was a pre-emptive military action to prevent Carthage from expanding and threatening Italy. What makes this position untenable is the historical fact that Rome and Carthage enjoyed a cordial relationship until Rome invaded Sicily, which Carthage saw as a violation of their treaty agreements (Gruen 1973:275). Due to current anti-colonial sentiment within anthropological studies, the above position has been generally discredited (Sidebottom 2005:315-316).

4.1.2.2 Roman aristocratic interest

One of the more recent hypotheses is that Roman aristocratic interests motivated Roman imperialism. According to this theory, during the Republic period of Rome, elites required large amounts of capital to promote their position within society, since through various expenditures a person could maintain and advance their status among the elite. Senators had various ways of obtaining capital. One was through landholdings, which had little return. Another was through rent of urban properties or trade. However, in order to obtain large amounts of capital, this was often acquired through "windfall" capital obtained by warfare and expansion (Sidebottom 2005:319-321).

Quite interestingly, when Octavian finally became monarch Augustus (30 BC – AD 14), the option of personal military initiatives were monopolized by the emperor, which negated the opportunity for elites to obtain "windfall" capital through military conquest. Simultaneously, the Roman Empire generally stopped expanding, except for the various Imperial military endeavours initiated by the emperor (Sidebottom 2005:321). Within the new system, the aristocratic elite received "windfall" capital through donations from the emperor, as Tacitus mentions in *Annales* 15:1-2. Emperor Vespasian, for example, gave allowances of 500 000 sesterces a year. Emperor Tiberius, as Tacitus mentions *Annales* 2:37-38, gave Marcus Hortensius Hortalus 200 000 sesterces for each of his four children, though the recipient made no speech of gratitude for the donation. This internal financial system curtailed the expansion prominent within the Republic period of Rome (Sidebottom 2005:321-322). When one considers that it was Marcus Porcius Cato, a senator and aristocrat, who demanded

the destruction and plundering of Carthage, which implies tremendous “windfall” capital, this theory seems quite plausible (Brown 2004:166).

4.1.2.3 Trade expansion

Closely tied to the above hypothesis, is the more generally accepted idea that Carthage and Rome conflicted due to trade interests. Carthage, as well as most North African cities, was highly dependent on expansive trade-networks for its survival and prosperity (Wilson 2002:263). Consequently, Carthage sought to expand its trade routes towards the native North African populace as well as dominate other Phoenician settlements. This brought Carthage in conflict with the Greeks, Sicilians and eventually Rome (Scullard 1955:102-103). In all likelihood, it would seem that Republican Rome’s aristocratic interests as well as Carthage’s economic conquests were the two reasons that pushed the two parties into eventual conflict.

Without needing to repeat what is commonly attested in scholarship, Carthage’s conflict with Rome eventually led to its eventual destruction. By 200 BC Carthage had lost most of its colonial domain to Rome due to their crushing defeat at Zama (202 BC). Nevertheless, it lingered on for about 50 years until it was ultimately destroyed by Scipio, under the authorization of Cato, in 146 BC (Enslin 1947:199-200; Bray 1979:32; Brown 2004:167). Yet, 23 years after the destruction of Carthage, Caius Grachus, founded a colony within Carthage’s territory (Decret 2009:1). From Carthage, Rome began to expand its administrative and military presence in North Africa (Keita 1994:156).

4.1.3 Romanization of Carthage

The formation of a Roman colony at Carthage 23 years after its destruction was later followed by Julius Caesar re-establishing Carthage by resettling some Roman citizens in the area (Enslin 1947:200; Bray 1979:32-33). Due to Rome’s need for grain, Rome generally developed the area agriculturally and even more expansively than during the Punic period (Wilhite 2007:29). During Octavian’s conflict with Pompeius, the necessity for a supply of grain beyond Egypt motivated an even more aggressive expansion of Roman interest in Africa Proconsularis (Fishwick & Shaw 1977:372-373). This was done by utilizing the area between the Lesser Atlas and the coast, where rainfall was more consistent and the soil generally fertile. The success of this endeavour was so great

that in Horace's day an African farm was synonymous with prosperity and wealth (Canter 1940:202). Consequently, during Augustus' reign Carthage recovered its economic strength and adopted Latin as its trade language (Wilhite 2007:29). By the 2nd century AD, when Tertullian lived in Carthage, the city was considered the second most important city in the western half of the Empire (Bray 1979:33).

During the period of Romanization, Carthage continued to exhibit a multi-ethnic character of Romans, Jews, Greeks, Numidians, Phoenicians and Libyans (Brown 2004:169, 174). Yet, despite Rome's occupation of Carthaginian territory, Punic remained the dominant language in the region. Augustine mentions on a number of occasions that Punic was the current language in his area (Augustine, *Epistulae* 66:2; 108:14; 209:3). Apart from the Punic language, the Libyan language was also still in use (Scullard 1955:105; Adams 1994:88-89). Consequently, the indigenous or former inhabitants of Carthage did not abandon their former ethnic identities, but maintained them during Rome's occupation. This, in turn, seems to counter the general notion of considering Carthage as a mere Latin city (Wand 1979:79). Apart from linguistics, North Africa was generally architecturally dominated by Punic or Libyan-Phoenician and Numidian communities. Due to the strong and already existent Punic and even Hellenistic institutions and influences, Roman assimilation was very slow and generally only accelerated around the 3rd century AD, slightly after Tertullian's era (Mattingly & Hitchner 1995:184-185).

In this sense, former Carthaginians did not assimilate quickly or without resistance to Roman colonization. Yet, whatever cultural resistance was evident during Tertullian's day, this did not entirely stop Romanization of the area. One strategy Rome continually implemented to pacify its newly conquered regions was the granting of Roman citizenship. According to Cicero's argument in *De Officiis*, possessing "*civitas*" was the closest bond humans could enjoy, since it implied enjoying a similar social standing and life. This strategy was first implemented in Italy, where Roman "*civitas*" was granted to Italians, which generally eroded a sense of national distinction (Walbank 1972:160). In this sense, Rome forged a supranational state in which Roman citizenship was granted to any who would conform to Roman culture. Generally, the emerging elites within the newly conquered area conformed first to promote their status, since Roman citizenship provided political recognition and equality (Walbank 1972: 155, 166-168).

What Roman "*civitas*" indirectly facilitated was a type of cross-pollination of culture. Whereas Rome sought to Romanize its conquered regions, Rome was also similarly influenced by the various ethnicities and cultures it assimilated into the Empire (Woolf 1997:348).

4.1.4 Africanization of Rome

Due to Roman “*civitas*” it was theoretically possible to participate in any position of government of Roman civilization. Rome was not a homogenous ethnical entity, but a multi-national, multi-ethnic imperial structure, which implied that it’s governmental and intellectual power became increasingly heterogeneous. This was generally the case with North Africans, who have historically been noted to have served with the Roman military as far as Britain (Keita 1994:158-159). By the 2nd century A.D. many indigenous Africans were added to the Carthaginian “*ordo*” (order) and incorporated within the elite class of society (Brown 2004:180).

During the 2nd century, Tertullian’s period, North Africa in general dominated the political and intellectual life of Rome. By 180 A.D. senators of African origin made up a third of the Roman senate (Wilhite 2007:30). Politically, Africa’s importance became prominent due to its contribution of 5 emperors to the Roman Empire, in particular Septimus Severus. In addition, culturally it began to produce orators, romancers and philosophers such as Apuleius (Canter 1940:204-205).

This process of Romanization and Africanization facilitated a new societal structure into which Tertullian was born and interacted.

4.2 Society structure

4.2.1 Colonizers

In addition to the native African and Phoenician ethnicities prevalent in Carthage, due to Roman occupation and interest there were also Roman colonizers. Whereas some interpret the Roman colonizers to be primarily Italian (Wilhite 2007:43), it should be noted that Roman “*civitas*” was extremely heterogeneous, which implied multiple ethnicities and cultures conglomerated in Carthage. Some of the known ethnicities are Latins, Etruscans, Celts, Jews, Danubians and Balkans which are identified through the varied funerary inscriptions found in Africa Proconsularis (Mattingly & Hitchner 1995:173).

4.2.2 Indigenous

Similar to the Roman colonizers, the indigenous population was not homogenous (Wilhite 2007:43). Even so, there seems to be some indication that most of the ethnicities were influenced and became increasingly Punicized and Hellenized in culture and architecture. For example, some of the royal tombs and monuments found at Dougga, Medracen and Chemtou of the Numidian and Mauretanian kingdoms seem more Punic and Hellenistic in style, which implies an adoption of Carthaginian culture (Mattingly & Hitchner 1995:171).

Moreover, indigenous Africans could be distinguished physically from the Roman colonizers. Virgil, for example, in *Moretum* 31-32 points out that an “*Afra*” woman (African) could be distinguished by her “*figura*” (appearance)¹⁵⁹. Ethiopians and Berbers and other ethnicities prevalent in North Africa could be distinguished by their darker complexion when compared to Roman colonizers. Apart from their complexion, North Africans generally adopted the more Greek style of dress, namely the *pallium* and not the Roman toga. Regarding language, as we have already noted, Punic and Libyan remained in usage well past the 2nd century A.D., with Latin primarily being the language of trade. As a final unifying element among indigenous Africans was their identity of being non-Roman (Wilhite 2007:44, 126-128).

Regarding whether the indigenous population were the majority of the North African church, we can only speculate, though there is some indication that they were the majority. For example, when Cyprian of Carthage (a generation after Tertullian) was escorted to his martyrdom, it is reported that the inhabitants of Carthage almost rioted in support of their bishop. Nevertheless, this remains a vague point since Carthage was multi-ethnic with many colonizers. What seems more persuasive is that during the latter half of the 3rd century, the once numerous Punic inscriptions to pagan gods completely cease (Wilhite 2007:52).

4.2.3 New Elites

The most complex group within the new social strata was the new elites. New elites generally refer to indigenous Africans who have benefited from Roman occupation. In this sense, they have adopted

¹⁵⁹*Era tunica custos, Afra genus, tota patriam testante figura*

“*romanitas*” to benefit from the wealth of the Empire (Woolf 1997:340; Wilhite 2007:44). Due to their adoption of some elements of Roman culture, it has made it difficult to pinpoint their exact identity as a group, since it is fluid, including both African and Roman identities (Wilhite 2007:46-47).

That this group was large is indicated by the numerous inscriptions testifying to the munificence of the new aristocracy in spending wealth on monuments, projects of construction and recorded philanthropy (Garnsey 1971:116). What makes the North African situation unique was that literacy does not seem to be a monopoly of the elitist class, since archaeology has discovered several Libyan alphabets that were used prior to and after Roman occupation. That indigenous Africans were proficient in reading and writing could be indicated by the various Libyan graffiti found. This has led some to suggest that the distinguishing marker of the new elite class was to employ Latin as their written language, the language in which Tertullian wrote the majority of his treatises (Mattingly & Hitchner 1995:172).

However, adopting some elements of “*romanitas*” did not imply complete subjugation. This is indicated by various historical examples of new elites who rebelled against Roman authority. One example is Julius Civilis from Batavia. Though he was part of the elite class, Tacitus records that he stressed his nativism in order to rally support in rebellion against Roman occupation (*Historiae*, 4:14-15; 4:61) (Dyson 1971:265). Generally, it would seem, Rome’s greatest opposition within the Empire was often the Romanized native class. This was prominently due to Roman government accelerating administration and financial control of a region (Dyson 1971:267-268). Hence, it would seem loyalty to Rome was primarily due to personal benefit, yet if this benefit seems diminished the indigenous elite would revert to its original ethnic identity.

What the above societal strata indicate in relation to Tertullian was that he most likely belonged to the elite class in Carthage. This is primarily indicated (as has been discussed in Chapter 2) by his preference for Latin, but also his wealth of knowledge, which indicates an elite education. Additionally, Tertullian’s insistence on wearing the *pallium* (*De Pallio*) as well as his refusal to accept the Bishop of Rome’s judgment regarding Praxeas in *Adversus Praxean*, and various other references already mentioned in Chapter 2, seems to indicate that Tertullian was indigenous to Africa and remained African in his identity. Nevertheless, it would be a fallacy to overstress his ethnicity as a primary influence in his theology. It primarily elucidates possible reasons for Tertullian’s seeming

aversion to aspects of Roman culture (such as the toga), but more prominently it highlights Tertullian's academic pedigree which is exhibited in his writing.

4.3 Religions

4.3.1 Carthaginian religion

The most prominent deity within Carthage was the god Saturn or Ba'al, which has Phoenician or Canaanite origins and was exclusively worshipped in North Africa. That the worship of Saturn was common is indicated by at least 18 temples and shrines that have been excavated in the region of Carthage. What is important was the various terms used in describing Saturn. Saturn was often described as "High God of Africa", "Supreme Father", "Holy One", "Eternal One" and sometimes "The Old Man" (Brown 2004:190-191).

In joint reverence, there was the god Ba'al Tanit (*Juno Caelestius* in Latin), who was the goddess of fertility (Decret 2009:6-7). Tanit's origin seems to have been from the Berbers, but the worship of her was adopted by the Punic contingent. That the worship of Tanit was widespread can be deduced from literally thousands of inscriptions in Punic referring to Tanit (Mitchell 1903:174). The worship of Tanit seems to have been a grisly affair is evident by various excavations in the Tophet. What has been discovered is that animal sacrifice as well as infant sacrifice was common practice throughout the Punic period (Mattingly & Hitchner 1995:180). It would seem that the male god Ba'al Hammon (Saturn) and the female god Ba'al Tanit (Juno) were the most popular deities, yet due to the brutality evident in its various rituals, Punic religion was denounced by Rome (Scullard 1955:105). However this did not imply the cessation of worship, but rather the adoption of Latin names and different rituals (Wilhite 2007:155-156).

4.3.2 Roman religion

When Rome occupied Carthage and rebuilt it, one aspect which demonstrated its occupancy was the building of the Capitoline Triad, dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. Interestingly, the reason for them being joined together was due to the belief that the three reflected multiple aspects of a single

deity. This concept was also applied to the Carthaginian gods of Ba'al Hammon and Tanit. Tanit, for example, was considered to be the "Face of Ba'al" (Mattingly & Hitchner 1995:207; Brown 2004:177; Decret 2009:7).

When Rome introduced its gods to Carthage, it also introduced Roman orthopraxy (Wilhite 2007:152). For the Roman, the gods' primary function was to impose a sense of order, which is Cicero's point in *De Natura Deorum* 1:3. Consequently, Roman religion was more pragmatic in nature and closely tied to notions of legal and political theory rather than speculative theology or philosophical formulation. That procedure and efficacy was emphasized is demonstrated by the compilation of the *brevarii*, which was a type of law of prayer in which the proper procedure could be studied and applied when praying, thus being similar to legal and political science. Pliny the Elder, for example, argued in *Naturalis Historia* 28:2(3):10-11, that if the proper rules of prayer are not followed, the prayer would lack efficacy (Brown 2004:53-56).

In relation to the introduction of Roman deities within Carthage, Rome also introduced the imperial cult, which had some theological significance regarding "*paterfamilias*" and "*auctoritas*".

4.3.3 *Paterfamilias* and *Auctoritas* in paganism and the imperial cult

The concept of "πάτερ" (father) or the "*paterfamilias*" had rich meaning within Roman society and was understood at numerous levels as a metaphor for order. At a microcosmic level, the smallest societal unit within Roman society was the "*familia*" (family) and was considered central in preserving law and order. The chief provider and sustainer of order within the "*familia*" was the "*pater*" (father). However, the term "*pater*" was extended beyond the biological father to any person one was bound to in subordination by law and who was obligated to sustain the "*familia*". This developed into the patronage system of the patron and client. This system, unfortunately, did develop a bad reputation (Seneca, *Epistulae*, 19:4), since it failed primarily in its role to sustain and protect the lower classes. Yet, it remained the microcosm of order (Brown 2004:4-6).

A common understanding within Hellenism was that the societal unit of "*familia*", with its head being the "*pater*", was the microcosm of the macrocosmic universal order. In this sense, it was not unusual

for Hellenistic society to refer to deities as “*pater*” or “πάτερ”. In Homer’s *Odyssey* 9:529, Polyphemos calls Poseidon father. Homer and Aristophanes addressed Zeus as father. In Latin literature, Jupiter and Mars are called father. In philosophy, Cleanthes calls Zeus “πατέρ” in line 34 of his *Hymn to Zeus*. Diogenes Laertius in *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7:147, calls the Stoic the “λόγος” father (Brown 2004:8-9).

The concept of “*familia*”, being the microcosm, was enlarged and applied to the emperor who was considered the father of the fatherless (*pater patriae*), and the state, which was considered to be an extension of the family (*res publica*). Consequently, the microcosm of the household became the metaphor for the relationship between the rulers and the ruled (Brown 2004:6-7). In addition to the concept of “*pater*” being applied to the emperor, in order to consolidate his power, Augustus, for example, also used the word “*auctoritas*”. The term “*auctoritas*” is an ontological term which indicates that a person in his being possesses authority, even if it is not exercised. In this sense, coupled with the imperial cult, Augustus sought to cement his rule over occupied territories (Brown 2004:61-62).

What made the adoption of the term “*auctoritas*” difficult was that Augustus was not necessarily ontologically authoritative, but primarily demanded worship due to his former actions as restorer of the Roman Empire. What facilitated the possible assimilation of the term was the understanding that Augustus was a microcosm or earthly exemplar of the divine monarchy or macrocosm (Brown 2004:62).

5. Conclusion

While scholarship generally seeks to understand the variations within each philosophical school, the purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate the strong continuity of thought in the philosophical trajectory. Even though there are slight variations in emphases on particular aspects of philosophy in each school of thought, all the schools generally remained within certain parameters of thought. For example, even though Plato and Stoicism differed regarding incorporeality and corporeality, both generally accepted a type of dualism in cosmology where divinity and matter are co-eternal, with divinity or intelligence being superior to inert matter. Neither proposed a new trajectory of thought by moving beyond the cosmological categories of unity-diversity, corporeality-incorporeality, divisibility-indivisibility, order-chaos, and the eternality of divinity and matter. In this sense, though

they vary, they still remain within the larger philosophical trajectory set in Hellenistic thought. Most of these trajectories can be deduced from the Pre-Socratic systems, though most of the Pre-Socratic propositions were only expanded, clarified or redefined in Socratic philosophy.

A general comparative analysis is provided below to illustrate the uniqueness of each trajectory juxtaposed to the other. These three trajectories were the primary trajectories that influenced orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and ultimately Tertullian.

	Philosophy	Scriptural Corpus	Carthaginian Religion
Cosmology	Dualism: Eternality of matter and divinity being part of the same reality. Apart from the two primary entities of matter and divinity, there is the subdivision of corporeality and incorporeality. In philosophy God is not a creator, but a craftsman or fashioner of the eternal matter. Cosmology is generally understood through the basic principles of unity and diversity, divisibility and indivisibility, order and chaos.	The universe is created from <i>ex nihilo</i> by the Creator God. Creation is a composition of an incorporeal realm and a corporeal realm, though God is neither part of the incorporeal or corporeal realm, but is subsistent and independent from both. Consequently, God is truly transcendent in being “other” from creation.	Not known, apart from the notion that Ba’al Hammon and Ba’al Tenit control the sky and fertility.
Teleology	God is the intelligence and efficient cause in ordering the material realm. Moreover, He is described as the Supreme Good or Actuality of the Universe, its final cause.	God is the Creator and Saviour of the universe.	
Singularlity or Plurality?	Except for Xenophanes and Socrates,	Monotheism, though within the God’s	Roman and Carthaginian understood that the

	philosophers generally accepted the Greek pantheon or sought to redefine it. Most proposed a hierarchy of divinity, in the sense that there is the supreme being (the god of the philosophers) and subservient to the supreme being are the gods, followed by other lesser beings.	monotheistic being there is a plurality of being. God is both a unity (singular) and diversity (plural).	various deities could be multiple aspects of a single deity. Yet, they were worshiped separately as not as one deity.
Intermediaries	Socratics and Post-Socratics (with the exception of Stoicism) generally argued for intermediaries between the supreme being and the material universe, the most common mediator being the “λόγος”.	The Word and Spirit	
Substance	The supreme being possesses substance, as anything in philosophical reality. God is either corporeal, and empirically observed (Heraclitus, Stoicism); or incorporeal intelligence observed through logical inference (Pythagorean cosmic “ψυχή”, or Anaxagoras’ “νοῦς”).	Not described, though plenty of metaphorical references and anthropomorphisms in describing God’s being. God is described in Jn. 4:24 as “πνεῦμα”.	
Attributes	Intelligence, Immutability, perfect actuality, supreme good, craftsman, eternal motion.	Beyond the scope of this chapter.	Generally, some pagan gods were considered <i>pater</i> of the universal <i>familia</i> or region.

Microcosm-Macrocosm	Humanity is a composition of both realms: divine and material. Our divine component is our intelligence and part of the incorporeal realm. Our bodies are part of the material realm. Consequently, man is the microcosm of the universal macrocosm.	Man is made in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27), which implies that something in man mirrors his Creator.	The family unit is the microcosm of the gods, being the macrocosm. Hence, society replicates the divine order.
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How the three primary trajectories impacted the orthodox and heterodox trajectories will be considered in Chapter 4B. However, prior to engaging the orthodox and heterodox trajectories, it is important to first consider the various hermeneutical praxes utilized in assimilating the three primary trajectories. This will be the focus of Chapter 4A.

Chapter 4A – Hermeneutics, motifs and presuppositions of philosophy and the ecclesiastical tradition

To some extent, the development of the orthodox and heterodox trajectories is the interplay of two distinct hermeneutical paradigms at work within the ecclesiastical community. It would seem that the distinct theologies developed by orthodoxy and heterodoxy were dependent upon which hermeneutical praxis one adopted. Consequently, Trinitarian theology was primarily a matter of hermeneutics in interpreting the primary trajectories, which are described in Chapter 3.

In order to demonstrate the interplay between hermeneutics and Trinitarian theology, it is imperative to first distinguish between philosophical and ecclesiastical hermeneutics as two distinct praxes. It is generally acknowledged that philosophy developed various hermeneutical strategies to understand cosmology and divinity. It is following a particular hermeneutic, which Plato first followed to conclude that God is essentially good and not the cause of evil (*Republic*, II:379a-308c) and that he operates within rational laws of justice and goodness, being also the ultimate cause and end of the universe (*Republic*, II:380a-381d; *Laws*, X:893c-897b). Cleanthes, a Stoic, repeats the notion in his *Hymn to Zeus* that the divine “λόγος”, is the “νόμος” (law) of the universe (Brown 2004:36-50). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the philosophical hermeneutic which facilitated their conceptualization of divinity. Moreover, in order to understand their hermeneutical praxis, it is essential to have some comprehension of the primary presuppositions and motifs that governed these hermeneutical praxes.

The aim of the study is to ultimately demonstrate in which hermeneutical “camp” Tertullian placed himself, which in turn facilitated his conceptualization of the Trinity in relation to the various historical trajectories with which he interacted. This is critical in order to determine what constitutes orthodox Trinitarian theology juxtaposed to subsequent heterodox alternatives. Tertullian’s own hermeneutical praxis and how it relates to philosophical and ecclesiastical hermeneutics will be considered in Chapter 5.

1. Philosophy: Motifs, presuppositions and hermeneutic

1.1 Motifs & Presuppositions

1.1.1 Like knows like: human intellect's relation to the Divine

Probably the most important presupposition that governed philosophical hermeneutics is the concept that like knows like, in the sense that humanity has a kinship to divinity. A person's reason as well as his soul (that which is immaterial¹⁶⁰) is essentially like the immaterial reason we perceive in the visible universe. In this sense, humanity is able to comprehend or grasp divinity through the exercise of reason alone, without the necessary aid of revelation (Allen & Springsted 2007:36-50; Tarnas 1993:61; Copleston 1962:133).

Pre-Socratics and Socratics held to the notion of microcosm-macrocosm (as explained in Chapter 3), in the sense that human anthropology is the microcosm of universal divinity. Pythagoras, as Cicero explains, believed our "ψυχή" (soul) to be parts of the universal "ψυχή" (*De Natura Deorum*, 1:11:27). Plato, for example, argued that our inner reason is akin to the universal reason (*Timaeus*, 47B-C)¹⁶¹, and that the individual "ψυχή" is derivative from the world "ψυχή". Since "ψυχή" possesses "νοῦς", we possess "νοῦς" as well (*Timaeus* 30A 2ff; 46D 5-6; *Sophist* 249A 4-8). A similar notion is prevalent in Aristotle, who considers our human "νοῦς" to come from the immaterial sphere of the divine "νοῦς" (Menn 1992:569; Tarnas 1993:61). Cicero summarizes the basic Hellenistic belief well: "Yet from men's ingenuity itself (we can deduce there) is some mind and we must reckon it indeed (as) divine and sharp. For from where did man pick it (mind) up?" (*De Natura Deorum*, 2:6:18)¹⁶².

This presupposition is strongly expressed in the Stoic philosophy of Seneca. Seneca viewed the soul as being imprisoned in our bodies, having its former existence in the universal soul (*Epistulae* 93-124, CII:21-22). For Seneca, the universal soul that abides within us is still connected to its divine origin

¹⁶⁰Or a rarefied corporeal substance as in Stoicism.

¹⁶¹ἄλλὰ τούτου λεγέσθω παρ' ἡμῶν αὕτη ἐπὶ ταῦτα αἰτία θεὸν ἡμῖν ἀνευρεῖν δωρήσασθαι τε ὄψιν ἵνα τὰς ἐν οὐρανῷ κατιδόντες τοῦ νοῦ περιόδους χρησαίμεθα ἐπὶ τὰς περιφοράς τὰς τῆς παρ' διανοήσεως συγγενεῖς ἐκείναις οὓσας ἀταράκτους τεταραγμένας ἐκμαθόντες δὲ καὶ λογισμῶν κατὰ φύσιν ὀρθότητος μετασχόντες μιμούμενοι τὰς τοῦ θεοῦ πάντως ἀπλανεῖς οὓσας τὰς ἐν ἡμῖν πεπλανημένας καταστησαίμεθα

¹⁶²*Et tamen ex ipsa hominum sollertia esse aliquam mentem et eam quidem acriorem et divinam existimare debemus. Unde enim hanc homo 'arripuit'*

(*Epistulae* 1-65, XLI:5)¹⁶³. This microcosm-macrocosm conception is well illustrated in Seneca's estimation that the soul of man's relation to the body is the same as God's relation to the universe (*Epistulae* 1-65, LXV:23-24)¹⁶⁴. Man is only distinct from God in relation to mortality and immortality (*Epistulae* 93-124, CXXIV:14)¹⁶⁵. Man possesses within himself the Good, which is perfect reason (*Epistulae* 93-124, CXXIV:23)¹⁶⁶.

To some extent, it is this premise alone which motivates the Socratic philosopher to venture into theological speculation regarding the nature of divinity without the necessity of some form of divine revelation or self-disclosure.

1.1.2 Ethical concern

As we have already noted in Chapter 3, philosophy seemed to have always possessed an ethical or socio-political concern. Pre-Socratic philosophers, as some scholars have observed, were interested in cosmology as a basis for polity (Naddaf 1998:2-3). This concern was also expressed within Plato's dialogues, particularly in the *Republic* and *Timaeus*. Plato's premise for the necessity of an ethical and rational Republic (microcosm) is that the universe is a rationally organized entity with a teleological purpose (Allen & Springsted 2007:2, 11). Since our human "ψυχή", "λόγος" and "νοῦς" is tied to the universal "ψυχή", "λόγος" and "νοῦς", it is the chief aim of humanity to order its existence in accordance with it (*Timaeus*, 47B-C) (Allen & Springsted 2007:2, 11, 16-17). Generally, the notions of piety in Latin and Hellenistic societies had strong political overtones (Emlyn-Jones 1990:21).

This concern was sharpened by Socrates who desired to formulate ethics on a personal level, knowledge being the means to ethical action (Allen & Springsted 2007:39; Brown 2004:36; Copleston 1962:128-129); as Aristotle attributed to Socrates, "But concerning ethics Socrates indeed busied himself"¹⁶⁷ (*Metaphysics*, I:987b). Plato followed his mentor, arguing that it is the aim of every person to pursue divine likeness in virtue, emphasizing a sense of personal ethics (*Republic*, X:613a-b). In *Laws* IV:716ff, Plato argues that all men should be determined to follow God as imitators as our

¹⁶³ *sed haeret origini suae*

¹⁶⁴ *Quem in hoc mundo locum deus obtinet, hunc in homine animus*

¹⁶⁵ *haec duo, quae rationalia sunt, eandem naturam habent, illo diversa sunt, quod alterum immortale, alterum mortale est*

¹⁶⁶ *Quod ergo in te bonum est? Perfecta ratio.*

¹⁶⁷ Σωκράτους δὲ περὶ μὲν τὰ ἠθικὰ πραγματευομένου

primary motive for ethics¹⁶⁸, since God is the measure of all things¹⁶⁹ (countering the relativistic ethics of Protagoras). Similarly, in *Philebus*, Plato starts with the basic question of defining what is good, being ethical to some extent. However, the dialogue quickly moves into the metaphysical sphere of the supreme Good (*Philebus*, 15a-b; 16c; 23c) (Benitez 1995:131). Consequently, the primary basis for ethics is divinity, which in turn motivates him to pursue a concept of divinity. Socratic philosophy was a way of life rooted in the metaphysical reality of divinity (Lohr 2010:169).

Central to Stoicism was ethics or a moral philosophy of imperturbability, in which one seeks to respond properly with a sense of apathy, serenity and courage to the universal determinism of the “λόγος” (Sproul 2000:52). It was the aim of the Stoic philosopher to align his life to the supreme “λόγος”, who was the supreme good. In *Epistula* LXXI:2, Seneca argues that in order to know whether something is to be sought after or avoided, it needs to be considered in relation to the supreme good¹⁷⁰. In this sense, the Stoicism portrayed by Seneca was ethical in that it was man’s aim to imitate God (Setaioli 2007:333).

1.1.3 Teleological concern

That the philosophers had a teleological concern regarding their conceptualization of divinity has been elaborated on in Chapter 3. Teleology principally shaped their conception of divinity. For most philosophers of the Socratic tradition, the world was governed by cause and purpose, “τελος” (Allen & Springsted 2007:11). Plato and Aristotle, for example, were convinced that the deepest cause for something is found in its end, purpose or final actuality (Tarnas 1993:61). Hence, the pursuit of divinity was driven by the pursuit for ultimates (Goodman 2007:61).

The pursuit of teleology was also jointly due to the Socratic ethical concern. Seneca, of the Stoic tradition, summarizes this ethical link well in *Epistulae* LXXI:2, “No man can set in order the details unless he has already set before himself the chief purpose of his life”¹⁷¹ (Gummere 2002:73). This chief purpose was found in the “*summum bonum*” (chief good), which is the divine “λόγος”. Teleology, ethics and divinity were closely integrated.

¹⁶⁸ Δῆλον δὴ τοῦτό γε ὥς τῶν συνακολουθησόντων ἐσόμενον τῷ θεῷ δεῖδιανοηθῆναι πάντα ἄνδρα.

¹⁶⁹ ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἡμῖν πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον

¹⁷⁰ Quotiens, quid fugiendum sit aut quid petendum, voles scire, ad summum bonum, propositum totius vitae tuae, respice

¹⁷¹ non disponet singular, nisi cui iam vitae suae summa proposita est

1.1.4 Multiplicity-Unity: concern for order

Tied to the teleological and ethical concern is the concern for cosmological order within the multiplicity-unity paradox prevalent in Hellenistic thought. The problem, as we have stated in Chapter 3, was first postulated by the Milesian philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. Cosmological order was essential, since it formed the macrocosm for the microcosm of political order (Naddaf 1998:2-3).

This concern was not limited to the Pre-Socratics, but was also investigated at length by Plato in his *Timaeus*. Plato, in *Timaeus* 27D-28A, highlights the problem of being and becoming, multiplicity and unity, as essential to cosmology. Keeping in cognisance that *Timaeus* formed the cosmological basis for Plato's *Republic*, the problem of unity-multiplicity is paramount. Without objective truth and cosmological order, the philosophical basis for a political society crumbles (Allen & Springsted 2007:2-3, 11-12). Generally, divinity formed the unity of the universe's multiplicity, as we have demonstrated in Chapter 3.

1.1.5 Soteriological concern

Apart from the ethical and teleological concern, some of the philosophers also expressed a soteriological concern. Pythagoras seems to be the first philosopher to propose the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, in which it is the endeavour of the philosopher to re-unite with the universal soul his soul which was torn from it. (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 1:11:27; Morrison 1956:152; Baker 1972:32; Tredennick 2003:XIV-XVI).

This doctrine was later adopted by Plato, who also proposed a process of reincarnation in which the individual “ψυχή” strives to re-connect with the universal “ψυχή” through the praxis of recollection (*Philebus* 29A-31A; *Timaeus* 30A 2ff; Menn 1992:557; Allen & Springsted 2007:6, 23; Kelly 2007:16). Moreover, it is in the recollection of the knowledge of the Forms that we can administer a type of harmony within our own souls, being united to the cosmological order through gnosis (Plato, *Timaeus*, 47B-C; Tarnas 1993:41; Sproul 2000:36-37). A failure in one life to complete the process of recollection can end in a reincarnation of a lower state of being (*Timaeus*, 42B-D). The pursuit of divinity within philosophy was not merely a pursuit of knowing, but also of salvation. Middle-

Platonists shared a similar soteriological concern in which the soul's origin is the divine and it is the pursuit of the philosopher to reunite it with its origin (Allen & Springsted 2007:23-24, 32, 47-49).

The Stoics, as described by Seneca, also had a soteriological concern. There was a sense that the Stoics, though materialists, considered the faculty of reason to be a superior material substance to the inactive material substance of the body. As Seneca would put it, "While we cleave, we will not have an equal share of the alliance"¹⁷² (*Epistulae* 1-65, LXV:21-22). The body was something that should be treated with contempt (*Epistulae* 1-65, LXV:21-22)¹⁷³. For Seneca, the material body was a prison from which the philosopher sought to escape. The soul was to leave the body and be re-united with his divine origin (*Epistulae* 93-124, CII:21-22)¹⁷⁴. The day the soul leaves the body, as Seneca would put it, "is the birth of (your) eternity"¹⁷⁵ (*Epistulae* 93-124, CII:26). Thus, what Pythagoras, Plato and the Stoics (and possibly others) share is a type of escapism from the present material reality to an immaterial, stable and perfect divinity. The primary means of reaching this divinity is through gnosis, recollection or harmonizing the soul through knowledge.

What I will hopefully demonstrate is that the above presuppositions and motifs informed and shaped the hermeneutical praxis of the philosophers, in particular those who have their epistemological foundations in the Pre-Socratic and Socratic tradition. We will consider the Sophists as a separate entry, since they are a type of reaction against the affirmations of objectivity prevalent in the Pre-Socratic and Socratic tradition.

1.2 Socratic

Whereas in the study of the philosophical trajectory in Chapter 3 I started with the Pre-Socratics, in this section I have opted to begin with the Socratics. The implication is not that the Pre-Socratics did not develop a hermeneutic for philosophical enquiry, but rather that the Socratics extrapolated the Pre-Socratic epistemologies.

¹⁷² *dum haeremus, non erimus aequis partibus socii*

¹⁷³ *Contemptus corporis sui certa libertas est*

¹⁷⁴ *Cum venerit dies ille, qui mixtum hoc divini humanique secernat, corpus hic, ubi inveni, relinquam, ipse me dis reddam. Nec nunc sine illis sum, sed gravi terrenoque detineor*

¹⁷⁵ *Dies iste, quem tamquam extremum reformidas, aeterni natalis est*

In particular, due to tremendous overlap between the various hermeneutical praxes in Socratic thought, we will primarily concentrate on Plato's hermeneutical praxis. Prior to commencing a detailed study of Plato, some possible distinctions within Aristotelian and Stoic hermeneutical praxis should be highlighted.

1.2.1 A brief description of Aristotelian and Stoic hermeneutical praxis

Regarding metaphysics, Aristotle was keenly aware of the fact that, "all men naturally desire knowledge" (*Metaphysics* I-IX, 980a22)¹⁷⁶ (Tredennick 2003:3). Still, regarding the knowledge of divinity, Aristotle readily admits that the acquisition of it is beyond human capability due to the limitations of our current human nature. Yet, this does not imply that the philosopher cannot enquire into the subject of divinity, since it is the chief science dealing with the ultimate principle and teleological cause: God (*Metaphysics* I-IX, 982b30-983a10)¹⁷⁷. This philosophical enquiry was facilitated through the rigorous use of personal logic, which for Aristotle was the primary basis for acquiring knowledge (Sproul 2000:41-42).

Due to Aristotle's emphasis on logic as the primary agent for epistemology, Aristotle considered the mythologies of Hesiod and Homer as being archaeological texts of former logical enquiry, though most of the logic behind the poems is lost (Palmer 2000:202). Narrative, for Aristotle, was immature attempts at philosophical enquiry and failed in its aim to grasp divinity (*Metaphysics*, 1.2.982b17-20). In this sense, historiography was not a science and could not offer genuine explanations of reality (Goodman 2007:63). To some extent, as we will observe in Plato, Aristotle was merely recapitulating the hermeneutical praxis of his tutor.

Stoicism made slight modifications to the basic tenets evident in Platonic and Aristotelian hermeneutics. For example, regarding the faculty of reason, Stoic philosophers generally considered the mind to be divine in origin, as being the most rarefied element within humanity. We are partakers

¹⁷⁶ Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει

¹⁷⁷ Διὸ καὶ δικαίως ἂν οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνη νομίζοιτο αὐτῆς ἡ κτῆσις· πολλαχῇ γὰρ ἡ φύσις δούλη τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστίν, ὥστε κατὰ Σιμωνίδην θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας, ἄδρα δ' οὐκ ἄξιον μὴ οὐ ζητεῖν τὴν καθ' αὐτὸν ἐπιστήμην... ἀλλ' οὔτε τὸ θεῖον φθονερὸν ἐνδεχεται εἶναι... ἡ γὰρ θειοτάτη καὶ τιμιωτάτη... ἦν τε γὰρ μάλιστ' ἂν ὁ θεὸς ἔχοι, θεία τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐστί, κἄν εἴ τις τῶν θείων εἴη. μόνη δ' αὕτη τούτων ἀμφοτέρων τετυχηκεν· ὅ τε γὰρ θεὸς δοκεῖ τῶν αἰτίων πᾶσιν εἶναι καὶ ἀρχή τις, καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην ἢ μόνος ἢ μάλιστ' ἂν ἔχοι ὁ θεός. ἀναγκαιότεραι μὲν οὖν πᾶσαι ταύτης, ἀμείνων δ' οὐδεμία.

of the divine reason or “λογός” (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, I:XV:39; II:VI:18; II:VIII:21). In a manner similar to Plato, Seneca hints at an external influence that aids our own faculty of reason. In Seneca’s estimation, no person is able to do good without the divine “λογός” aid (*Epistulae* 1-65, XLI:1-2). Apart from morality, for a person’s “ψυχή” to rise above normal circumstance, it requires the “*adminiculo numinis*” (the propping of the divine will). Using a similar analogy to Plato’s, Seneca describes this divine propping up as a ray of the sun touching the earth, yet clinging to its origin (as if a prolation of the sun’s substance). This ray comes down to enable us that “*propius divina nossemus*” (we may know more closely the divine) (*Epistulae* 1-65; XLI:5). This is a type of external influence which then works within us to draw us closer to divinity (Setaioli 2007:335).

Possibly, the concept of “καταληπτόν” is a Stoic invention. Essentially, according to some Stoics, for something to be credible or to have any epistemological certainty, it had to be “graspable”. For something to be grasped, it had to be apprehended by sensation. If the sensation was so firm as to be irremovable by reason, it was termed knowledge. Consequently, the senses for some Stoics played a role in epistemology, thus not dismissing the empirical sphere of phenomena and particulars as Plato did (Cicero, *Academica*, I:XI:41-42).

What we will subsequently observe is that Aristotle and Stoicism’s epistemologies were, to a great extent, only expressions of Platonic hermeneutical praxis. There is a sense that Aristotle and Stoicism did not doubt the fundamental tenants within Plato’s epistemology and generally adopted it as their undergirding hermeneutical praxis.

1.2.2 Socrates

Prior to Socrates, it is assumed, the Pre-Socratics were only interested in cosmology (Brown 2004:36). However, this is a superficial distinction, since we have already demonstrated in Chapter 3 that one of the primary concerns of the Pre-Socratics was politogony or seeking a cosmological absolute for the political sphere of daily human experience. This interest dates back to the mythological writings of Homer and Hesiod (Naddaf 1998:2-3).

The distinction would rather seem to be regarding epistemology. Unlike the Pre-Socratics who had a more empirical form of philosophy (with the exception of Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Parmenides); Socrates sought knowledge through dialectical reasoning. Consequently, knowledge is obtained through an internal struggle of reasoning or questioning which can be facilitated through conversation. Socrates, according to Plato, described it as a type of midwifery, aiding the person through questioning to give birth to true knowledge and to dispense with false opinion (*Theaetetus*, 149A-151e).

The aim of this dialectical conversation is to move beyond the particulars and reach a universal precise definition. True knowledge is not externally observed, but internally obtained within one's reason. In order for this process to be effectual, the philosopher needs to take a certain disposition: ignorance. As Cicero would put it, is "to know nothing except (ignorance) itself"¹⁷⁸ (Cicero, *Academica*, I:IV:15-16; Plato, *Symposium*, 216d-e). In addition, Socrates was not merely interested in politogony, but personal ethics as well, thus bringing philosophy to bear on personal daily living juxtaposed to societal structure and order (Stumpf & Fieser 2008:33-35). Cicero puts it this way, Socrates "has brought (philosophy) to ordinary life"¹⁷⁹ (*Academica*, I:IV:15-16).

The quest for internal universal knowledge through reason or rigorous dialectical conversation became the epistemological foundation and hermeneutical lens through which subsequent philosophers sought to understand the theology, cosmology, anthropology and ethics. Nevertheless, Socrates' idea is not entirely original, since Heraclitus exhibits a similar concept in his "λόγος". Similar to Socrates, Heraclitus dismisses the mere compilation of facts as being true knowledge. True knowledge is obtained through participation in the "λόγος" (which occurs through using our own "λόγος"), which in turn reveals the underlining unity or universal principles which link the facts and give coherence (Copleston 1962:56; Curd 1991:536-542; Adomenas 1999:111).

¹⁷⁸ *nihil se scire dicat nisi id ipsum*

¹⁷⁹ *avocavisse philosophiam et ad vitam commune adduxisse*

1.2.3 Plato

1.2.3.1 The soul's relation to knowledge: recollection

Most scholars would agree that to discriminate Socrates' philosophy from Plato is almost impossible due to Socrates being Plato's chief voice in his dialogues. Inasmuch as we have Aristotle's assertion that Socrates introduced inductive argument (*Metaphysics*, XIII:1078b), and some other references outside of Plato's works (cf. Cicero, *Academica*, I:IV:15-16), there remains a sense of ambiguity. Yet, what we do know is that Socrates' philosophy had a tremendous impact on Plato, who (we could argue) extrapolated his mentor's teaching in his dialogues.

Similar to Socrates, Plato considered divinity knowable due to our ontological affinity. For Plato, as it was for Pythagoras and most philosophical schools, the "ψυχή" of a person is divine in origin, being part of the universal "ψυχή" (*Philebus* 29A-31A; *Timaeus* 30A 2ff; Menn 1992:557; Allen & Springsted 2007:6, 23; Kelly 2007:16). Even so, in the process of being "torn from" the original divinity and imprisoned within material bodies, our souls have forgotten their original knowledge or the Forms. Yet, this knowledge is not entirely forgotten, but remains latent within each person's "ψυχή". Accordingly, it is through the process of recollection that the knowledge of the Ideas or Forms can be known. It is the quest of the philosopher, as we have already noted in the soteriological concern, to re-attain our lost union with our eternal origin (Tarnas 1993:41; Sproul 2000:36-37).

To some extent, Plato's assertion is not too far from Protagoras' position: man is the sum of all things (even though he challenges Protagoras in *Laws* IV:716a). Plato's chief epistemological foundation is the presupposition that universal knowledge is latent within a person and merely needs to be drawn out. How this is done, we will now investigate.

1.2.3.2 Universals versus particulars

It is generally agreed that one of Plato's primary assumptions was that objective knowledge was attainable and must be infallible and authentic (Copleston 1962:173). Still, knowledge was not attained through the mere collection of particulars (which pertain to what is sensible), as Heraclitus

challenged Hesiod, but by seeking a universal definition to which the particulars pertain (the universal idea, which is also quite similar to Heraclitus' universal "λόγος") (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XIII:1078b). Consequently, it is the pursuit of the universal abstract which is the highest and most objective knowledge (Copleston 1962:175; Sproul 2000:38; Allen & Springsted 2007:27). Plato puts it this way, true knowledge or existence is "colourless, formless and intangible, visible only to the intelligence"¹⁸⁰ (*Phaedrus*, 247c6-8). It is the universal which possesses "real and essential being"¹⁸¹ (Copleston 1962:205-206).

Plato's analogy for the movement from particulars to universals is the Divided Line (*Republic*, VI:509d–511e). Whereas the Divided Line analogy has four stages (some argue five), it can be divided into two spheres of seeming reality. The one sphere is the sphere of the visible world of particulars which can merely formulate opinions. The other sphere is the intelligible world of the Forms which transcends the particulars. True knowledge is a) when we lay hold of the universals that govern the particulars (the Forms) and b) when we grasp the teleological principle which binds the various Forms together, which is described as the Form of the Good. This process of deriving the universal and "τέλος" from the particulars is facilitated through dialectical reasoning, adopting the Socratic method or "*elenchus*" (Plato, *Republic*, VI:511b)¹⁸² (Allen & Springsted 2007:30-32; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:48-49).

Visible World (opinion)		Intelligible World (knowledge)	
A: Shadows and reflections	B: Sensible objects	C: Reasoning from unexamined assumptions (the only examples Plato gives are from mathematics)	D: Reasoning from assumptions up to what they depend on (using only Forms)

¹⁸⁰ ἡ ἀχρώματός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφῆς οὐσία ὄντως οὐσα, ψυχῆς, κυβερνήτῃ μόνῳ θεατῇ νῶ

¹⁸¹ τὴν ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστιν ὄν ὄντως ἐπιστήμην οὐσαν

¹⁸² τὸ τοίνυν ἕτερον μάθαινε τμήμα τοῦ νοητοῦ λέγοντά με τοῦτο οὐ αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος ἄπτεται τῇ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δυνάμει

In this sense, Plato sought to move the sphere of philosophy towards a more abstract conceptualization. The premise for this shift is primarily due to the belief, as proposed by Heraclitus, that all particulars are in continual flux and remain unreliable for epistemology (Allen & Springsted 2007:35). This shift had a tremendous impact on disciplines such as historiography¹⁸³. If we follow Plato's logic, particulars such as historical events bare little relevance to ultimate objective truth, since it remains within the realm of particular phenomena. It is the universal principle or "τέλος" (purpose/cause) which facilitated the historical event that is the universal, immovable, objective truth and it is that universal principle which should be the philosopher's endeavour. Hence, abstraction is preferred above historiography (Sproul 2000:37-38; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:36).

When considering Plato's pursuit of universals, three key elements emerge. Firstly, abstract definition is ultimately the primary pursuit of philosophy, which are (in his estimation) the Forms. Secondly, these Forms or universals form a teleological basis for day to day phenomena. Thirdly, undergirding this pursuit of objective knowledge with a teleological end is ethics (functioning as a governing motif), since it is the goal of the philosopher to know the objective reality and to align himself with it. This aligning is part of applying the universal good to our own "ψυχή".

Plato describes this ethical motif prevalent in the pursuit of the universal order in *Timaeus* 47B-C, "The cause and purpose of the best good (philosophy), as we must maintain, is this – that God devised and bestowed upon us vision to the end that we might behold the revolutions of Reason in the Heaven and use them for the revolving of the reasoning that is within us... by imitation of the absolutely unvarying revolutions of the God we might stabilize the revolutions within ourselves"¹⁸⁴ (Bury 2005:107-109)

¹⁸³My reason for focusing on historiography is due to the nature of the scriptural corpus (as we have noted in Chapter 3). Most of the Old Testament and the New Testament Gospels are historiographical. In this sense, the particulars of historical events are considered important. Nevertheless, as we will subsequently demonstrate, through the application of Platonic hermeneutics, Jewish theologians such as Philo and the Apologists in ecclesiastical tradition desired to derive the universals latent with the historiographical account of the scriptural corpus.

¹⁸⁴ἀλλὰ τούτου λεγέσθω παρ' ἡμῶν αὕτη ἐπὶ ταῦτα αἰτία θεὸν ἡμῖν ἀνευρεῖν δωρήσασθαι τε ὄψιν ἵνα τὰς ἐν οὐρανῷ κατιδόντες τοῦ νοῦ περιόδους χρησαίμεθα ἐπὶ τὰς περιφορὰς τὰς τῆς παρ' διανοήσεως συγγενεῖς ἐκεῖναις οὕσας ἀταράκτοις τεταραγμέναις ἐκμαθόντες δὲ καὶ λογισμῶν κατὰ φύσιν ὁρθότητος μετασχόντες μιμούμενοι τὰς τοῦ θεοῦ πάντως ἀπλανεῖς οὕσας τὰς ἐν ἡμῖν πεπλανημένας καταστησαίμεθα

1.2.3.3 Reason as a means of recollection

The primary agent or means for attaining the universal Forms is the faculty of reason (*Republic* VI:511d)¹⁸⁵. In this sense, Plato remains within the philosophical hermeneutical tradition, not deviating from the concept that the human faculty is divine and therefore able to apprehend the metaphysical sphere. As Cicero exclaims, “They proposed that the mind is the judge of things... because it alone might discern that which is always simple, and uniform, such as it is”¹⁸⁶ (*Academia*, I:VIII:30).

It is only the “νοῦς” or personal “λόγος” that can discern from the various particulars what is common and stable, which points to the universal Form that governs it teleologically (Kelly 2007:15). As reason lays hold of the transcendent Forms, it causes within the philosopher a type of mystical emotional response as our “λόγος” is joined, to some degree, with the universal “λόγος” in comprehending the Forms. Consequently, keeping the soteriological concern at the forefront, it is the philosopher’s pursuit to re-attain the union with the eternal through the faculty of reason (Tarnas 1993:41-43).

The most well-known analogy is Plato’s Cave in *Republic* VII:514a-520a. The primary point of the analogy is the necessity of the education of the “ψυχή”, yet the analogy has a soteriological motif. According to Plato, humanity’s loss of the universal knowledge is like a prisoner within a cave, forced to look at the wall of the cave (*Republic*, VII:514a). Being in the darkness and only having a torch light casting shadows on the wall of the cave, we presume that the shadows are actual knowledge (this being Plato’s reference to the empirical reality and his simultaneous dismissal of the sophists who considered the collection of particulars or empirical knowledge as being wisdom) (*Republic*, VII:514b-515c). However, it is only once the person is freed, turns from the wall of the cave and is led to the outside of the cave that we see true reality as we behold true light. This process is complete once the person beholds the true nature of the Sun, which is Plato’s analogy for the Form of the Good, being the teleological end and cause of all things (*Republic*, VII:516a-516c). Hence, the person who was once bound experiences true illumination for the first time. Once this is experienced, the liberated

¹⁸⁵ καί μοι ἐπὶ τοῖς τέτταρσι τμήμασι τέτταραταῦτα παθήματα ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γιγνόμενα λαβέ, νόησιν μὲν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀνωτάτῳ, διάνοιαν

¹⁸⁶ *mentem volebant rerum esse iudicem; solam censebant idoneam cui crederetur, quia sola cerneret id quod simplex esset simplex et unius modi et tale quale esset. Hanc illi ἰδέαν appellant, iam a Platone ita nominatam, nos recte speciem possumus dicere.*

prisoner should return to his fellow prisoners in the cave and lead them out (*Republic*, VII:515c) (Alan & Springsted 2007:32-33; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:45).

For Plato, the matter of education, in which the “ψυχή” receives true knowledge, is a matter of conversion, turning away from the things that bind us to this empirical sphere (such as the desire for pleasure, wealth and prestige) and pursuing true knowledge by utilizing our “λόγος”. This journey from darkness to light is Plato’s concept of salvation, a salvation through gnosis. This process is facilitated by dialectical reason (*Republic*, VII:515b; *Sophist*, 230B-D; *Meno*, 80A; *Theaetetus*, 149A-151e). Nevertheless, Plato acknowledges that this salvation is only ultimately realized once we break out of the cycle of reincarnation and are rejoined to the universal “ψυχή” from which we were torn (Allen & Springsted 2007:32; Stumpf & Fieser 2008:45).

Plato seems to elevate reason as being perfectly objective in its ability to grasp the universal Form of the Good, yet Plato also admits that only a few really have the capacity to gain a vision of the Form of the Good (Allen & Springsted 2007:27). Plato describes it this way, “the philosopher, always devoting himself through reason to the idea of being, also has difficulty in seeing on account of the brilliant light of the place; for the eyes of the soul of the multitude are not strong enough to endure the sight of the divine”¹⁸⁸ (*Sophist*, 38:254A) (Fowler 2002:403). It is from this admission that Plato attributes an external influence to the “ψυχή” in obtaining objective reality. This external influence is described by Plato through the Sun analogy in *Republic* VI:507b-509c.

In his Sun analogy, Plato compares the Form of the Good with the sun in day to day experience. In order for someone to perceive physical objects they need light which comes from the sun. Inasmuch as our eyes have the ability to see, they require external light in order to obtain vision. Similarly, the Form of the Good gives vision to our intelligence, in the sense of enabling a person to grasp the Forms (*Republic*, VI:507d-508e). Nevertheless, as the light of the sun cannot be equated with vision, so the Form of the Good cannot be equated with the knowledge of the truth, but it is essential in order to perceive truth (*Republic*, VI:508a-509a). Plato describes a threefold process. Firstly, the Good gives us the power of vision. Secondly, utilizing this vision we perceive universal truth. Thirdly, as we grasp universal truth it fills us with the existential experience of beauty (Plato, *Symposium*, 210a-212c) (Alan & Springsted 2007:27-28). Consequently, Plato proposed a type of existential illumination which does not derive its epistemological basis from within human reason, but is external

¹⁸⁸ Ὁ δέ γε φιλόσοφος, τῇ τοῦ ὄντος ἀεὶ διὰ λογισμῶν προσκείμενος ἰδέᾳ, διὰ τὸ λαμπρὸν αὐτῆς χώρας οὐδαμῶς εὐπετὴς ὀφθῆναι· τὰ γὰρ τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ψυχῆς ὅμματα καρτερεῖν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀφορώντα ἀδύνατα.

to it. This is, in all probability, as close as Plato got to the concept of revelation, as would subsequently be proposed by Philo and the ecclesiastical tradition.

In summary, the following diagram would suffice in demonstrating Plato's epistemology and hermeneutic regarding knowledge:

<i>(A) Sphere of Particulars</i>	<i>(B) The faculty of Reason</i>	<i>(C) The Form of the Good</i>	<i>(D) Sphere of universals</i>
The physical realm of every day phenomena. Due to its continual flux it is unreliable regarding objective knowledge. Nevertheless, due to its participation in the universal Forms, it bears some resemblance to the objective reality of the Forms.	A person's "ψυχή" is derivative of the universal "ψυχή" and thus possesses within oneself the knowledge of the universal Forms. Yet, due to our "ψυχή" being "torn from" the universal "ψυχή", this knowledge is only latent within, being "lost". Consequently, the philosopher practices the art of recollection.	As the sun produces light which gives vision to our physical eyes, so the Form of the Good gives vision to our intelligence or "λόγος". It makes the realm of Forms "visible" to the person who seeks to grasp it through "elenchus".	The intelligible realm of Forms which is devoid of all physical qualities of the sphere of particulars. This realm is immutable and forms the epistemological basis of objective knowledge, which in turn forms the basis of ethics.
	Recollection takes place through using the faculty of "νοῦς" or "λόγος", since these faculties are divine and connected to the universal "λόγος". However, in order to stimulate the proper use of our "λόγος" the philosopher needs to practice "elenchus" or dialectical reason.	In order to experience this illumination, a philosopher needs to turn from the sense perceptible world of particulars and turn towards the intelligible realm of the universal Forms. A conversion is necessitated.	It is the pursuit of the philosopher to know the realm of Forms as well as the teleological principles that govern it and so align oneself to it. Consequently, the microcosm of human ethics needs to align with the macrocosm of universal order.

	In as much as our λόγος is divine in origin, it still requires an external influence in order to obtain a proper comprehension or vision of true knowledge.	A person who has obtained a perfect grasp of the Form of the Good, seeing its light the clearest, breaks free from the cycle of reincarnation and returns to the universal “ψυχή” from which it was torn, thus reuniting with its origin.	
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1.2.4 Concluding remarks

Socratic hermeneutics’ key distinction is its presupposition that the human intellect is divine and able to obtain objective knowledge. Even so, it needs to be guided by dialectical reasoning in order to obtain proper knowledge. The interest in obtaining knowledge of the divine is due to an ethical and teleological concern for present reality as well as a soteriological concern for future salvation from our present reality.

Whereas the Pre-Socratic and Socratic period in Hellenism claimed a type of objectivity in its epistemology and hermeneutical praxis, this did not imply Hellenism was homogenous in ideology. There was another prevalent school of thought that existed prior to Plato as well as afterwards into the 2nd century A.D.; namely Sophism.

The importance of the Sophistic movement is often neglected in Patristic scholarship, primarily due to its clear association with relativism in Hellenistic studies. Nevertheless, the sophistic element of rhetoric as a means of persuasion as well as its ability to point out the contradictions within philosophical positions on cosmology and divinity became an important tool in Christian apologetics and was extensively employed by Tertullian. It could be argued that the sophistic movement’s relativism made the necessity of divine revelation more apparent.

1.3 Sophistic

A couple of aspects of the sophistic movement need to be noted prior to investigating it. Firstly, the sophistic movement was an alternative movement to the Pre-Socratic and Socratic philosophies. We will primarily be focusing on two aspects which distinguish it: their rejection of objectivity as well as their emphasis on rhetoric. Secondly, the sophistic movement was not a unified movement, but similar to the Pre-Socratics and Socratics, there were various schools of thought prevalent in the larger movement. For example, Sextus Empiricus, a sceptic, takes great pains to distinguish the Sceptics from other philosophical schools, in particular other sophists such as Protagoras (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, 1:29-33).

1.3.1 The rejection of objectivity

Historically, the Sophistic movement was primarily impacted by the unique socio-political environment of the Hellenistic world. Whereas philosophers such as the Pre-Socratic Heraclitus, Socratic Plato and Post-Socratic Stoicism considered there to be a universal natural law applicable to all societies, the democratic milieu of the Hellenistic states undermined this due to its continual shift in city constitutions. Moreover, as the Greeks came into contact with other political entities, such as Persia, Babylon, Egypt, Thrace and Scythia, different societal laws were observed (Plato, *Republic*, I:338c) (Copleston 1962:102; Clark 1989:48).

Plato records the opinions of Thrasymachus (*Republic*, I:338c-347e) and Callicles (*Gorgias*, 492b) that held that laws were merely the devices of the few, strong rulers to exploit the masses or implemented by the masses to keep the strong in check (Clark 1989:48). Thus, a law has no objective foundation apart from the pragmatic usefulness inherent in it. This places laws in the realm of particular microcosms and not the universal macrocosm. Subsequently, Sophists rejected the macrocosm-microcosm paradigm of the Pre-Socratics and Socratics, and depreciated universals for particulars (Copleston 1962:102).

Diversity within socio-political societies fostered scepticism regarding the universal claims of the Pre-Socratics and Socratics. In addition, due to the various contradictory hypotheses proposed by various Pre-Socratics and Socratics, the concept of objectivity seemed illusive. For example, even though the

Milesians agreed on the concept of *Urstoff*; each concluded differently on its actual substance. Heraclitus' flux and Parmenides' immutable being were contradictory when compared (Copleston 1962:101). Hence, the argument of Sextus Empiricus (2nd century A.D. – a contemporary of Tertullian) that for every proposition, a counter proposition of equal weight and force could be argued (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, 1:6, 27) (Sproul 2000:54).

What the above philosophical and socio-political problems illustrate is that Hellenism was more a diversity in ideologies than a unity. Even though, as we have demonstrated in Chapter 3, there were consistent trajectories regarding aspects of divinity within the more dogmatic philosophies, there were contradictory elements as well. Noticing this, the Sophists believed that objective knowledge was unattainable (Tarnas 1993:33-34). In this sense, Sophists preferred the notion of likelihood above the concept of absolute truth (Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, 1:6-7). An example of this is Cicero, who is known as being sceptical regarding epistemology (Rackham 1999:XV). This becomes evident in his *De Natura Deorum*. Cicero, at great length, highlights the contradictions within the dogmatic schools of philosophy regarding divinity, starting with Thales (*De Natura Deorum*, I:X:25) and continuing until Aristotle (*De Natura Deorum*, I:XIII:33). After various discussions on the Roman gods, Epicurean and Stoic philosophy, Cicero concludes the book with great ambiguity and uncertainty, “I felt that that of Balbus approximated more nearly to a semblance of the truth”¹⁸⁹ (*De Natura Deorum* III:XL:95; Rackham 2000:83). In spite of his grasp of the subject matter, Cicero does not claim any assent to the various positions. His preference for the Roman gods was primarily due to their pragmatic necessity for public order (*De Natura Deorum*, I:VI:14).

Strangely enough, in spite of the Sophistic tendency to relativize epistemology, the Sophists were generally known to be encyclopaedists and polymaths. For example, Hippias of Elis (a contemporary of Protagoras) was known for his grasp of a variety of subjects, such as mathematics, astronomy, grammar, rhetoric, rhythmic, harmony, history, literature and mythology. The reason for this polymath tendency is twofold. Firstly, through the accumulation of various contradictory propositions, some conclusion could be drawn that has more resemblance to true reality, getting a sense of quietude on the subject (Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, 1:6-7, 25-29). Secondly, these conclusions were generally more practical in nature than theoretical, applying them to particular circumstances (Copleston 1962:102-103, 113).

¹⁸⁹ *mihi Balbi ad veritatis similitudinem videretur esse propensior*

1.3.2 Rhetoric as adopted praxis

Since knowledge was a matter of personal impression and the sophists had a tremendous grasp of various subject matter; this wealth of knowledge was used as a means of personal gain through the art of rhetoric. In Hellenistic society, rhetoric was generally considered to be the art of persuasion through oratory. The rhetoric's aim was not necessarily to define truth, but to win an argument. Quintilian put it this way, "There are also three (things), which an orator must always have before (him): so that he may instruct, move and charm"¹⁹⁰ (*Institutio Oratoria*, III:5:2). This implied that the rhetorician could use contradictory statements if it achieved his end: persuasion through instruction, moving and charming. In this sense, the sophistic tendency of being polymaths made them ideal rhetoricians (Dunn 2004:26; Barnes 2005:211; Dunn 2005:4).

The sophists also viewed rhetoric as a means to delight, bedazzle and impress audiences (Barnes 2005:212; Dunn 2005:4). Some sophists, enamoured by the art of rhetoric, would compile arbitrary eulogies and speeches on mundane things; style was more important than substance. For example, Lucian of Samosata created a speech on *The Fly*, while Marcus Cornelius Fronto composed a *Eulogy of Smoke and Dust* (Dunn 2004:25-26). This problem became more apparent within the autocratic Roman Empire, where persuasion was downplayed compared to flattering the emperor. Appearing erudite, polished and sophisticated gained favour with Caesar and could imply exaltation in status. It was this shift in rhetoric (from persuasion to flattery) that irked Tacitus and the Younger Pliny (Dunn 2004:27; Barnes 2005:212).

In spite of the deterioration of rhetoric by the 2nd century, the ecclesiastical community continued the classical tradition of persuasion (Dunn 2004:29), as I will demonstrate when considering Tertullian's hermeneutical praxis in Chapter 5.

1.3.3 Examples of the use of rhetoric

The rhetorical art was generally divided into three broad categories (with many subcategories) (*tria genera causarum*): forensic (used in law courts to persuade regarding past events); deliberative (used in assemblies and senate to persuade regarding future action); and exhortatory or epideictic (primarily

¹⁹⁰ *tria sunt item, quae praestare debeat orator; ut doceat, moveat, delectet*

praising an individual while entertaining guests) (Cicero, *De Inventione*, I:7)¹⁹¹ (Dunn 2004:26; Barnes 2005:224; Dunn 2005:10). Some orators such as Quintilian, opted to consider rhetoric to be only one genre with many causes (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, III:3:14ff) (Barnes 2005:224-225).

There were various mechanisms utilized by the rhetorician in order to achieve the goal of instructing, moving and charming. One form of rhetoric was the lavish display of erudition as well as the grasp of various philosophical themes. This was a particular trait of the Second Sophistic in Tertullian's era. Apuleius, a Carthaginian, is a prime example. In his apology, Apuleius cites well-known Latin and Greek writers and philosophers, such as Virgil, Sallust, Cicero, Homer, Euripides, Demosthenes and the Stoics (Apuleius, *Apology*, 4; 10). In addition, Apuleius displays his vast knowledge by citing Theophrastus and Aristotle's zoological and anatomical treatises (Apuleius, *Apology*, 36ff; 9). Apuleius' brilliance at the art of rhetoric was legendary and is, to some extent, encapsulated in his work *Florida*. The theatre of Carthage would be filled with throngs of people, not to see entertainers, but to hear Apuleius the philosopher (*Florida*, 5). In his estimation, it was the wealth of knowledge accumulated in philosophical enquiry which gave Apuleius his rhetorical genius (*Florida*, 13) and inevitably gave him high esteem among his peers, being granted a statue in the forum of Carthage (*Florida*, 16) (Barnes 2005:212, 228).

Narrative was also employed as a tool for opening speeches. Dio of Prusa begins his oration with the well-known story of Alexander the Great and Timotheus the flute-player (Dio Chrysostom, *Orationes*, 1:1ff) (Barnes 2005:214, 218). Throughout an oration, it was also necessary to use *exemplum*, which were the recalling of imaginary or historical narratives to emphasise a point (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, V:11:6). Pliny, for example, compares the emperor Trajan with historical characters such as Pompey to make his point (*Panegyricus*, 29:1ff; 57:5; 88:6) (Barnes 2005:218).

Whereas narratives could charm the audience, defamation was a powerful tool to win an argument against a formidable opponent. To persuade in one's favour, it was often the practice to present various allegations of your opponent's origin and moral character (Cicero, *De Oratore*, II:240). Satire, ridicule and the ability to concentrate on the weaker elements of an opponent's argument were all required to be a good rhetorician (Barnes 2005:215-220).

¹⁹¹ *tribus in generibus rerum versari rhetoris officium putavit, demonstrativo, deliberativo, iudiciali. demonstrativum est, quod tribuitur in alicuius certae personae laudem aut vituperationem; deliberativum, quod positum in disceptatione civili habet in se sententiae dictionem; iudiciale, quod positum in iudicio habet in se accusationem et defensionem aut petitionem et recusationem.*

1.4 Philo

In Chapter 3 we have already demonstrated Philo's amalgamation and critical evaluation of Hellenistic thought in the categories of cosmology, teleology and ontology of divinity; what is important in Chapter 4A is his contribution regarding hermeneutical praxis.

Philo, of all the philosophers, remains the most important due to him being the first to integrate philosophy and the scriptural corpus. To some extent, his praxis became the blueprint for the apologists, though altered significantly, since the Apologists also incorporated the apostolic writings as scriptural corpus (Harnack 1958:55). The most significant element which Philo contributes to hermeneutics is the introduction of allegory.

1.4.1 Allegory: universals in the particulars

As the Jews, particularly from Alexandria, came into increasing contact and under the influence of the Hellenistic world, there was an apologetic concern to validate the uniqueness and superiority of the Torah juxtaposed to other philosophical literature. However, there were various difficulties with the Old Testament text. Firstly, whereas many philosophical schools (excluding the corporeal divinity of Stoicism) argued for an incorporeal divinity, the Torah describes God in anthropomorphic terms (for example, God has arms, a back and eyes). Consequently, the literal interpretation seemed unviable (Clark 1989:198).

In addition, there were numerous laws and historical events within the Old Testament that seemed barbarous or too bloody, such as circumcision, the sacrificial system, the Canaanite genocides etc. This made the Old Testament unpalatable to most Hellenistic societies, as well as Hellenistic Jews (Brown 2003:45).

Philo, in order to bridge this conundrum, introduced allegory. Whereas the literal event (like Abraham's pilgrimage) did occur, there was a spiritual meaning behind them (Clark 1989:198). By applying this method of seeking a spiritual meaning behind the historical event or literal meaning, Philo nullified the Torah's most significant element: historiography (Brown 2003:45). Eventually,

only the allegorical meaning was considered the only true meaning and was preferred above the literal interpretation (Harnack 1958:114, 116).

Apart from seeking to soften various unpalatable elements within the Old Testament, Philo's allegorical method was predominantly the application of Plato's universals versus particulars paradigm. As we have already noted, Plato considered particulars or every day phenomena as being transient, mutable and in continual flux; adopting the Heraclitus' conceptualization of cosmology. Historiography was considered menial or insignificant. What is more important is the universal form and teleological principles from which particulars derive their being.

What I would suggest is that Philo adopted this hermeneutical paradigm and applied it to the scriptural corpus. Therefore, when approaching a particular event or passage within the scriptural corpus, it is the aim of the interpreter to look beyond the particular historical phenomena and to seek the universal (spiritual) principle behind it. Hence, the literal meaning is nullified, since it is the aim of the reader to discover the universal governing the literal meaning. Basically, Philo is applying Plato to the Torah. The allegorical method seems to be merely the uncritical assimilation of Plato's universals vs. particular hermeneutical praxis.

1.4.2 Examples of the allegorical method

Philo's works are numerous. It would suffice to mention a couple of examples from *De Opificio*, where Philo applies the allegorical method to the Genesis account of creation. In *De Opificio* 1:16-18 Philo insists that the “ὄρατον κόσμον” (visible world) is based on a “καλοῦ παραδείγματος” (good copy), which is “ἄσωμάτω” (incorporeal). Philo explains that the incorporeal model or idea is similar to that of an architect's plan conceived in his mind prior to building. In this way, God conceived the universe as an idea and then set out to physically create that idea¹⁹². Furthermore, explaining the concept of “εἰκόνα θεοῦ” (image of God) in Gen. 1:26-27, Philo interprets this allegorically to mean that man imitates the incorporeal image of God the most¹⁹³, being modeled on the “ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν” (archetypal idea of ideas), namely the “ὁ θεοῦ λόγος” (Logos or Reason of God) (*De Opificio*, 1:25) (Clark 1989:197, 200-201).

¹⁹² ἐκάστη τῶν ἄσωμάτων ἰδεῶν τὰς σωματικὰς ἑξομοιωὺν οὐσίας.

¹⁹³ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἐστίν, μίμημα θείας εἰκόνης

When Genesis 1:1 declares that God created the heavens and the earth, Philo understands this phrase to mean that God first created an incorporeal heavens and invisible earth, a copy or Form from which the physical universe is patterned (*De Opificio*, 1:26-29)¹⁹⁴. Whereas the world was created in six days, the incorporeal universe was already created (*De Opificio*, 1:36)¹⁹⁵. Furthermore, in *De Opificio* 1:47-53, Philo enters an elaborate interpretation of the number four being the day on which the heavenly bodies were made, it being the perfect number. Nevertheless, earlier in *De Opificio* 1:13, Philo also sees significance in the number six, described as “πρῶτος τέλειόστέλεος” (first perfect or complete [number]).

Lastly, Philo further extrapolates what the “εἰκόνα θεου” is in *De Opificio* 1:69, as being “τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμόνα νοῦν” (the governing mind of the soul), which is patterned on the great Governor in the universe that possesses reason¹⁹⁶. In reference to the plural in Gen. 1:26-27, “Let us make”, Philo interprets this to imply intermediaries who aided God the Father in creation, and He is therefore blameless of any form of evil or blemish in the physical universe (*De Opificio*, 1:75).

Looking at these various excerpts from Philo’s interpretation of the Genesis account of creation, it is evident that he takes great liberty in allegorizing the narrative, incorporating Platonic conception of Forms. Moreover, Philo readily adopts the Hellenistic concept of human reason having its ontological origin from divine reason. There is a sense that Philo is almost re-interpreting Genesis in the light of *Timaeus* (Clark 1989:200-201).

¹⁹⁴ ἐποίησεν οὐρανὸν ἀσώματον καὶ γῆν ἀόρατον

¹⁹⁵ ὁ μὲν οὖν ἀσώματος κόσμος ἤδη πέρας εἶχεν ἰδρυθεὶς ἐν τῷ θείῳ λόγῳ

¹⁹⁶ ἔχει λόγον ὁ μέγας ἡγεμὼν ἐν ἁπαντιπᾶς τῷ κόσμῳ

2. Ecclesiastic Community: motifs, presuppositions and hermeneutical method

2.1. Motifs & Presuppositions

2.1.1 The necessity of revelation and illumination

In Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* 4:1, the old man asks the prominent presuppositional question regarding a person's conceptualization of divinity. Will the "ἄνθρωπου νοῦς" (mind of man) see "τὸν θεόν" (God) only when the "ἅγιω Πνεύματι" (Holy Spirit) adorns it? Whereas philosophical epistemologies and hermeneutics would argue that one's personal "λόγος" is sufficient in comprehending divinity, the ecclesiastical community generally rejected this presupposition.

For Justin, who is more sympathetic to philosophy, true divinity is only known when one is enthused or led by God's Holy Spirit (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 7:1)¹⁹⁷. Without the adorning of the Holy Spirit (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 4:1), no person can accurately speak of divinity (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 3:7). In order to comprehend divinity, there is the necessity of the adorning of the Holy Spirit, an external influence not derivative from one's personal "ψυχή". This adorning of the Spirit, which brings light or illumination in order to comprehend divinity, is granted to a person by God and His Christ (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 7:3)¹⁹⁸ (Briggman 2009:117-119).

Justin argues in his *First Apology* 38-51, that the scriptural corpus was not a human invention, but has its origin from the Divine "λόγος", which moved men to speak His words. They are God's own self-disclosure and not mere human speculation¹⁹⁹. Even though Justin seems to confuse the role of the Holy Spirit and the Son regarding the work of illumination and revelation, what he clearly illustrates

¹⁹⁷ Εγένοντο τινες πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου πάντων τούτων τῶν νομιζομένων φιλοσόφων παλαότεροι, μακάριοι καὶ θεοφιλεῖς, θείῳ πνεύματι λαλήσαντες καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα θεσπίσαντες προφήτας δὲ αὐτοὺς καλοῦσιν... ἀλλὰ μόνα ταῦτα εἰπόντες α' ἤκουσαν καὶ ἃ εἶδον ἅγιω πληρωθέντες πνεύματι.

¹⁹⁸ Εὔχου δέ σοι πρὸ πάντων φωτὸς ἀνοιχθῆναι πύλας· οὐ γὰρ συνοπτὰ οὐδὲ συννοητὰ πᾶσιν ἐστὶν εἰ μὴ τῷ θεῷ δῶ συνίεναι καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς αὐτοῦ

¹⁹⁹ "Ὅταν δὲ τὰς λέξεις τῶν προφητῶν λεγομένας ὡς ἀπὸ προσώπου ἀκούητέ μὴ ἀπ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἐμπνευσμένων λέγεσθαι νομίσητέ ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ κινούτος αὐτοὺς θεοῦ λόγου ποτὲ μὲν γὰρ ὡς προαγγελτικῶς τὰ μέλλοντα γενήσεσθαι λεγεί ποτὲ δὲ ὡς ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ δεσπότου πάντων καὶ πατρὸς θεοῦ φθέγγεται ποτὲ δὲ ὡς ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποτὲ δὲ ὡς ἀπὸ προσώπου λαῶν ἀποκρινομένων τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ

is that divinity cannot be conceptualized accurately without the external influences of illumination and inspiration (*First Apology*, 36:1-2; 38:1; 39:1; 42:1; 44-45; 47:1; 48:4; 49:1) (Briggman 2009:121).

This does not imply that the ecclesiastical community did not recognize philosophy or consider it to contain no grasp of divinity. Justin would even suggest that the philosophers used Moses and have some seed of the truth given to them (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 2:1²⁰⁰; *First Apology* 1:44; 2:8). Nevertheless, they did not share equal status in authority (*First Apology*, 2:13), due to the concept of illumination and revelation (Chadwick 2003:93). Some did take a stronger position against the epistemological validity of philosophy. In the *Epistle to Diognetus* 8:1-3, the author makes it quite clear that without divine assistance, no person is able to see or know God. In fact, the author takes a similar approach to that of the sophists and Cicero in highlighting the contradiction in philosophers' conceptualization of divinity²⁰¹. Consequently, illumination and revelation are essential in knowing true divinity (Bromiley 1978:10-11; Fairweather 2006:219).

To some extent, the ecclesiastical community shared the convictions of Philo, which asserted that the true God can only be comprehended through His own oracles and not through the exercise of the faculty of reason alone. Harnack considers this a redefining of mythology as revelation, giving it an epistemological supremacy over philosophical enquiry (Harnack 1958:111-112), yet this seems to be a superficial understanding or comparison between Greek mythology and the scriptural corpus. The Hellenistic milieu did have some concept of revelation as oracles, as Delphi would illustrate (Balme & Morwood 1997:9-11), yet when compared to the Old Testament scriptural corpus, there is more dissimilarity than any form of similarity. The Old Testament is primarily a historiography or meta-narrative set within a real, space-time continuum of God's historical dealings with a people group. Moreover, Jesus Christ was a historical figure and not a speculation or mythological construct. Consequently, revelation and illumination, within the ecclesiastical community, was tied to eye-witness accounts of the actual events and could be seen as divine interpretations of historical events and persons (Kelly 2007:30).

When considering revelation and illumination's necessity, Irenaeus attributes it to our anthropological status post-fall, as recorded in Gen. 3. According to Irenaeus, even though humanity possesses the

²⁰⁰ Εγώ σοι, ἔφην, ἐρῶ, ὃ γέ μοι καταφαίνεται. ἔστι γάρ. τῷ ὄντι φιλοσοφία μέγιστον κτῆμα, καὶ τιμιώτατον Θεῷ, ᾧ τε.

²⁰¹ Τίς γὰρ ὅλως ἀνθρώπων ἠπίστατο, τί ποτ' ἐστὶ θεός, πρὶν αὐτὸν ἐλθεῖν; ἢ τοὺς κενοὺς καὶ ληρώδεις ἐκείνων λόγους ἀποδέχῃ τῶν ἀξιοπίστων φιλοσόφων...

faculty of reason, which is akin to God's reason (thus agreeing with the philosophical premise to some extent), that reason is tarnished or broken by the Fall. Since our great apostasy, man is unable to know God objectively. Consequently, it is only through God self-disclosing himself within history, through the incarnation of the Son (Jn. 1:14), that man is able to know God again (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:1:1; 5:2:1-2; 5:20:1)²⁰² (Pagels 2002:370-371).

This is possibly the point where the two epistemological foundations diverge into separate paths. Whereas philosophy affirms our personal “λόγος” and “ψυχή” to be divine in origin and neutral in application, the ecclesiastical community held that it was tarnished by the Fall. This does not imply anti-rationalism, but rather the necessity of redemption of our rational faculties. This redemption is revelation and illumination which is facilitated by the Son (λόγος) and the Spirit (πνεύματι).

2.1.2 Soteriological Concern

The origin of the soteriological motif is primarily due to the ecclesiastical community's understanding of anthropology, which is informed by the scriptural corpus. For Plato and the Pythagorean society, soteriology was primarily due to a type of cosmic amnesia which occurred when the our “ψυχή” was torn from the cosmic “ψυχή”. Consequently, one of the teleological elements within philosophy is the goal of regaining our lost heritage through gnosis. The fact that people act illogically or “out of sync” with the cosmos is due to them subjugating their “ψυχή” to the corporeal elements of their current being. This, for Plato, explains the imperfection or wrongdoing prevalent within humanity. This can be remedied through subjugating ourselves to our preserved “νοῦς” or “λόγος” which remains devoid of the passions of the corporeal. There is a sense then, within philosophy, that redemption is an internal accomplishment within our “ψυχή”. Plato does have the concept of the external influence of the Form of the Good, but this is a passive influence without immanent involvement in the corporeal realm.

In contrast, the ecclesiastical community had a much more grim understanding of our human condition. Our entire ontological frame has been impacted by the Fall as recorded in Gen. 3, which marred our likeness to God (Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 3:18:1; 5:2:1) and made us captive to the devil (Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 5:21:1-3). In Adam we lost our former state (*Adversus Haereses*,

²⁰² *Non enim aliter nos dicere poteramus quae sunt Dei, nisi magister noster, Verbum existens, homo factus fuisset. Neque enim alius poterat enarrare nobis quae sunt Patris, nisi proprium ipsius Verbum. Quis enim alius cognovit sensum Domini?*

3:18:7). Consequently, it is not merely our corporeal ontology that is affected, but our “ψυχή”, “λόγος” and “νοῦς”. The consequence of this depravity is multifaceted. Apart from our disconnection with true divinity, we also experience degeneration into non-being, namely death. In this way we share Adam’s guilt (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:34:2)²⁰³. Moreover, our total deprivation implies that we are unable to redeem ourselves internally; hence, the need for an external redemption. This external redemption is only accomplishable by the Creator of creation, namely God (Kelly 2007:171).

While the above position is generally held within the ecclesiastical paradosis, there were some who held a slightly more positive estimation of our human nature. Justin, for example, considered the Fall or human disobedience to be primarily stemming from ignorance of what is good (*Second Apology*, 14:1). This ignorance is primarily inflicted by the influence of demons (*First Apology*, 5:2; *Second Apology*, 5:3ff; 17:2ff). Therefore, Justin’s soteriology is not too alien from Plato’s, being primarily a redemption through gnosis and the conquering of the demonic. Yet, this gnosis remains an external intervention by the divine “λόγος”, thus deviating significantly from Plato’s theory of recollection (*First Apology*, 12-19; 23; 45:4). Moreover, in *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin also incorporates the concept of substitution; Christ’s death accomplished the remission of our sins and the re-possession of mankind (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 41:1²⁰⁴; 111:3; 134:5ff). Christ also creates a new humanity (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 138:2)²⁰⁵. According to Irenaeus, Justin was the first to clearly mention the concept of recapitulation (*Adversus Haereses*, 4:6:2) (Kelly 2007:166-170).

In the light of the above, it should not surprise us that the soteriological motif is dominant in the Patristic period’s conceptualization of divinity. The purpose of the incarnation was soteriological; what the primary means of redemption was had diverse explanations. Didache, for example, speaks of Christ giving a new gnosis, faith and immortality (*Didache*, 9:3; 10:2)²⁰⁶. Or in *1 Clement* 36:2, Christ came to give us a taste of “ἀθανάτου γνώσεως” (knowledge of immortality). Further on, in *1 Clement* 59:2, Clement refers to the Son coming to bring us “σκοτούς εἰς φῶς” (from darkness into light) and “ἀπὸ ἀγνοσίας εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν δόξης ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ” (from ignorance into the knowledge of his

²⁰³ *Dolor autem plagae est, per quam percussus est homo initio in Adam inobediens, hoc est mors*

²⁰⁴ Καὶ ἡ τῆς σεμιδάλεως δὲ προσφορά, ὧ ἄνδρες, ἔλεγον, ἡ ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαρικομένων ἀπὸ τῆς λέπρας προσφέρεσθαι παραδοθεῖσα, τύπος ἦν τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς Εὐχαριστίας, ὃν εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ πάθους οὗ ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαιρομένων τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπὸ πάσης πονηρίας ἀνθρώπων, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν παρέδωκε ποιεῖν, ἵνα ἅμα τε εὐχαριστῶμεν τῷ Θεῷ ὑπὲρ τε τοῦ τὸν κόσμον ἐκτικέναι σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας ἐν ᾗ γεγενᾶμεν ἡλευθερωκέναι ἡμᾶς, καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας καταλελυκέναι τελείαν κατὰ τὴν Βουλὴν αὐτοῦ.

²⁰⁵ Ὁ γὰρ Χριστὸς, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως ὢν, καὶ ἀρχὴ πάλιν ἄλλου γένους γέγονεν τοῦ ἀναγεννηθέντος ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ δι’ ὕδατος καὶ πίστεως, καὶ ξύλου τοῦ τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ σταυροῦ ἔχοντος.

²⁰⁶ Πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ γνώσεως, ἧς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου... καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ πίστεως καὶ ἀθανασίας, ἧς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου.

glorious name) (Kelly 2007:164). What the citations illustrate is that the Platonic concept of gnosis did not vanish from Patristic thinking, but it was significantly altered in that gnosis was not through internal investigation, but divine external impetus.

Ignatius focused more on the ontological elements in soteriology. For Ignatius, union with Christ implied new life and immortality and the escape from death (Ignatius, *Ephesians*, 3:2²⁰⁷; *Smyrneans*, 4:1²⁰⁸; *Trallians*, 2:1²⁰⁹). It would seem that the Patristic period the focus was more on the consequences of our depravity than redemption from our depravity through the remission of sins. Even so, Barnabas speaks on occasion of Christ accomplishing the remission of sins through His death as a sacrifice (*Barnabas* 5:1²¹⁰; 6:11; 7:3; 8:3). *1 Clement* 12:7 and 49:6 also speaks of Christ's blood being a substitutionary sacrifice for us²¹¹ (Kelly 2007:164-166).

In summary, the soteriological motif was primarily due to the concern to reverse the apostasy of humanity as recorded in Genesis 3. This apostasy was holistic in scope, affecting our corporeal and incorporeal being. Moreover, this reversal cannot be accomplished via internal contemplation or philosophical enquiry, since our “ψυχή”, “νοῦς” and “λόγος” are also affected. What is needed is an external intervention by the Creator of creation. Consequently, one of the chief undergirding motifs that govern the church's conceptualization of the Trinity is the need to be redeemed by God himself. The necessity of Jesus being divine and human, which sparked the Trinitarian debate, is due to the soteriological motif.

2.1.3 Missiological concern

By the second century, almost all Christian literature had Gentile authorship, having overshadowed its Jewish origins (Shelley 2008:48; Richardson 2006:15, 18-19). This transition from an exclusively Jewish ethnicity to a more Gentile ethnicity was not an accidental phenomena, but a purposeful

²⁰⁷ Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, τὸ ἀδιάκριτον ἡμῶν ζῆν

²⁰⁸ Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἡμῶν ζῆν

²⁰⁹ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς ἀποθανόντα, ἵνα πιστεύσαντες εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ἐκφύγητε

²¹⁰ Εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ὑπέμεινεν ὁ κύριος παραδοῦναι τὴν σάρκα εἰς καταφθοράν, ἵνα τῇ ἀφέσει τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἀγνισθῶμεν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ῥαντίσματι αὐτοῦ τοῦ αἵματος

²¹¹ Τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν ἐν θελήματι θεοῦ, καὶ τὴν σάρκα ὑπὲρ τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν

intention of the ecclesiastical community in applying Jesus' commission (Matt. 28:18-19²¹²; Jn. 17:16, 18²¹³) (Shelley 2008:79).

As the church spread throughout the Roman Empire, it was eventually noticed. Eighty years after the church's inception, Christianity was mentioned by Pliny the Younger (Pliny, *Epistulae*, 10:96-97), Tacitus (Tacitus, *Annales*, 15:44) as well as Suetonius (Suetonius, *Nero*, 16:2). Nevertheless, their references to Christianity were not positive, but primarily negative, considering it to be a "*superstitionem pravam et immodicam*" (distorted and excessive superstition) (Pliny, Letters, 10:96:8) or "*exitibilis superstitio*" (deadly superstition) and "*mali*" (evil) (Tacitus, *Annales*, 15:44) or "*superstitionis novae et maleficae*" (new and mischievous superstition) (Suetonius, *Nero*, 16:2). Generally, the term "*superstitio*" was used by the Romans and Greeks to designate religions foreign to Rome or Hellenism. Yet, the term also implied a religion that did not promote Roman values of virtue, justice and public morality (Wilken 1970:439; Neill 1986:28).

Conversely, closer to the end of the second century, Galen would refer to Christians as being a philosophical school, which is a more socially acceptable category (Galen, *De pulsuum differentiis*, 3:3)²¹⁴. Within a century a shift occurs regarding people's perception of Christianity. This does not imply that the views held by Pliny, Tacitus and Suetonius ceased, since Celsus and Marcus Aurelius left similar comments regarding Christianity. What it does reveal is that Christians were engaging their cultural milieu and seemed to have begun expressing the Christian message within philosophical categories that were more intelligible to the Hellenistic world (Wilken 1970:445, 448-449; Neill 1986:32; Shelley 2008:78).

Christianity faced the challenge of communicating a distinctly Jewish message into Hellenistic terms. This endeavour was undertaken by the Apologists. Whereas the Old Testament and Gospels were primarily historiographical in genre, the Apologists sought to communicate their truths in the rational terminology of Hellenism. The issue was intelligibility. Yet, this was not an entirely new paradigm, since the Alexandrian Jews, in particular Philo (as we have observed in Chapter 3), sought to communicate Judaism within Hellenistic categories, even depicting Judaism as a type of philosophical

²¹² πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη

²¹³ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον

²¹⁴ *Potius enim alii Moysis et Christi sectatores decedant de sua disciplina quam qui sectis sunt addicti et consecrati medici et philosophi*

“ἄρσεις”. Judaism, like Christianity, was unpalatable and considered a “*superstitio*” (Harnack 1910:170, 175; Runia 1999:128-129, 135-136).

Tertullian, for example, described the Christian “*collegium*” (society) as a “*disciplina*” and “*secta*” (Greek: ἄρσεις) in *Apologeticum*, using the same terminology that would be designated to a philosophical school (Wilken 1970:454). Justin, in *Dialogue with Trypho* 2:1-2, argued that Christianity was the fulfilment of philosophy’s primary aim: the search for the ultimate truth or the universal one (Lohr 2010:175-176). While the search for the universal principle was Heraclitus’ and Plato’s pursuit, Justin argued that Christ is the fulfilment of that pursuit. Whereas Plato was never satisfied with his conception of the Father of the Universe/Demiurge/Form of the Good, Justin claimed that Jesus, who is God’s “*λόγος*”, is the ultimate principle.

The Apologists also sought to correct the misconceptions regarding Christianity prevalent within the Roman Empire. Athenagoras, for example, sought to defend Christianity against the charges of atheism, incest and cannibalism, seeking to defend monotheism. These charges were primarily due to the rejection of the traditional pagan deities as well as the secretiveness of Christian gatherings (Richardson 2006:293, 296).

The real question is: what motivated the adoption of the praxis prevalent among the Apologists? 19th century scholarship generally tended to argue for the Hegelian theory of the evolution of ideology as the primary influence; primarily concentrating on the seeming adoption of Middle-Platonic negative theology. The problem with this hypothesis is that it assumes that the Apologists were systematicians, and consequently interpret the Apologists in systematic categories (Palmer 1983:236). Conversely, to adopt this hypothesis does not take into consideration the genre of literature, which is apologetic and not a systematic theology (Richardson 2006:296).

Richardson (2006:296), when commenting on Athenagoras’ Apology, accurately describes the motif or concern which underlined the Apologists’ writing, “The first aim was the same as the modern missionary – to defend monotheism”. The primary reason for adopting Hellenistic categories when explaining the Christian Faith was not the ideological evolution of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis, but rather the contextualization of the Christian message in order to make it intelligible and palatable to their Gentile audience, thus applying Jesus’ commission (Matt. 28:18-20) as well as the Pauline

praxis of 1 Cor. 9:22, “I have become all things to all, so that by all means I might save some”²¹⁵ (Neill 1986:40). Whether they always applied theological discretion in their missiological zeal is debatable (Bromiley 1978:17), but it seems to have been their primary motif for writing.

In conclusion, when we consider the adoption of Hellenistic categories, the Sophistic arguments against objectivity as well as the art of rhetoric, these were primarily motivated by a missiological concern.

2.1.4 Concern for Unity: hermeneutics and doctrine

According to Richardson (2006:26), the dominant interest of the second century was the ordering of church life and dogma. Similarly, Bray (1979:52) states that the church during the second century was preoccupied by formulating a comprehensive hermeneutical praxis applicable to the universal church. To some extent, the concern for unity stems from the missiological concern, which in turn is energized by the soteriological concern. As the church became more culturally diverse due to its missiological concern, the fostering of unity became increasingly difficult.

During the second century, the majority of the ecclesiastical body in Rome was of eastern descent, thus sharing the Hellenistic tradition of the churches of Asia Minor, Palestine and Alexandria. This does not imply that Rome was not influenced by Hellenism, but that the eastern region had its own distinct diversity of cultures within Hellenism that eventually penetrated the Roman church. Whereas this influx of diverse cultures bolstered the Roman church, it also introduced a particular challenge; the introduction of variants of dogma and praxis. This influx forced the Roman church to consider whether the church was a loose conglomeration of sects or a compact body of believers united in doctrine and uniform in practice. Various bishops, such as Bishop Anicetus and Victor sought to impose a type of uniformity within the Roman church (La Piana 1925:208, 210, 215-222).

In addition, with the influx of diversity, there was also the influx of heretical alternatives that considered Rome a vantage point for spreading their specific interpretation of the scriptural corpus

²¹⁵ τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω.

(La Piana 1925:212). For example, Marcion challenged the notion of the unity of the Old and New Testaments, proposing a hermeneutical lens of interpreting the two testaments as portraying two distinct deities (Bray 1979:52). Montanism also, posed a serious threat to the conception of ecclesiastical unity, since it rejected the hierarchical system imposed by Rome as well as traditionalism prevalent within the orthodoxy (La Piana 1925:222).

In conclusion, whereas we do observe a missiological concern, especially among the Apologetic tradition, it should also be noted that the local church also had a concern for uniformity in doctrine, hermeneutics and praxis. Hence, polemical authors such as Irenaeus and Tertullian spent considerable attention on clarifying the orthodox dogma and hermeneutical lens juxtaposed to heterodoxy.

2.2 Hermeneutical method

As we have noted in the church's concern for unity, during the second century much energy was spent on clarifying the hermeneutical and doctrinal position of orthodoxy. As we attempt to extrapolate the hermeneutical praxis of orthodoxy, we will first consider its origin (which stems from the apostolic writings). This will be followed by investigating the relationship between the two testaments, the place of historiography in epistemology, the emphasis on a Christo-centric approach to Scripture, the *Regula Fidei* and the adoption of the allegorical method.

2.2.1 An Apostolic dichotomy

If our analysis in Chapter 3 regarding the scriptural corpus is correct, then it would not be fallacious to consider the apostolic writings as the vantage point of ecclesiastical hermeneutics. These were some of the first ecclesiastical writings and within the apostolic corpus there is a new hermeneutical praxis proposed that diverges from philosophical epistemology. We will primarily focus on the Pauline corpus, in particular 1 Corinthians and Colossians.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul distinguishes between two types of “σοφία”(wisdom). In 1 Cor. 1:24, Paul speaks of the “θεοῦ σοφίαν” (wisdom of God), contrasting this to “τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου” (the wisdom of the world) (1 Cor. 1:20). Paul gives a breakdown of the two types of wisdom:

θεοῦ σοφίαν	τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου
1. The Wisdom of God is embodied in Christ (1 Cor. 1:24, 30) ²¹⁶	1. Worldly wisdom is known for its eloquence (1 Cor. 1:17)
2. It is hidden and unknowable through the use of worldly wisdom and must be imparted through revelation, being divine in origin (1 Cor. 1:21; 2:7-8)	2. It is particularly the practice of the Hellenistic world (1 Cor. 1:22-23)
3. It is superior to human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:25)	3. It is human in origin (1 Cor. 2:5)

The primary distinction between God’s wisdom and the world’s wisdom, in Paul’s estimation, is the Cross of Christ. According to Paul, the crucifixion is seen as folly according to worldly standards (1 Cor. 1:23) and its significance nullified when one seeks to understand it through the lens of worldly wisdom (1 Cor. 1:17). Consequently, to know God’s wisdom is to know the crucifixion (1 Cor. 1:24) (Piper 2010:145-147).

In Colossians Paul makes a similar distinction between philosophy and Christology or a type of “*theologia crucis*” (theology of the cross). In Col. 2:8, Paul makes a direct reference to the danger of “ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας” (being taken captive by philosophy), which he describes as “οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν” (not according to Christ). As an epistemological foundation and hermeneutical lens, Paul highlights that in Jesus Christ all the fullness of divinity or the divine nature dwell bodily (Col. 2:9)²¹⁷. Correspondingly, in Col. 1:15 and 19 Paul describes Christ as the “εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου” (image of the invisible God) and “πάν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι” (all the fullness [of God] to dwell).

It should not surprise us then that Paul emphasizes that God or divinity is known in Christ and particularly the crucifixion (Col. 1:24-2:4). Christ, in this section, is described in Col. 2:3 as containing “πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως” (all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge).

²¹⁶Χριστὸν θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ θεοῦ σοφίαν; Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὃς ἐγενήθη σοφία ἡμῖν ἀπὸ θεοῦ
²¹⁷ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς

In conclusion, within the New Testament scriptural corpus two epistemologies are mentioned, yet only one of them will produce a true theology of divinity. According to the Pauline corpus, the wisdom of the world, embodied in philosophy and derivative from the Hellenistic milieu, cannot attain a true understanding of divinity. Its epistemological foundation as well as its hermeneutical lens is flawed. True divinity is known through the person of Jesus Christ and in particular the historical event and interpretation of his crucifixion. He is the revelation of divinity and embodies true wisdom.

If the above is true, the apostolic body of literature already sets forth a dichotomy, rejecting the hermeneutical lens of philosophy and adopting a type of “*theologia crucis*”. The question is: did the ecclesiastical community of subsequent generations maintain this dichotomy and emphasis on a Christo-centric hermeneutic in understanding divinity?

2.2.2 Unity of the Two Testaments

Generally, most within orthodoxy tended to consider the two testaments as forming a single book or covenant (Brown 2003:147-148). This position was not an invention of the ecclesiastical community during the second century, when the issues of hermeneutics became more prominent, but could be traced back to its inception. The Gospel of Luke, for example, clearly states that Jesus considered the Old Testament as referring to Himself, illustrating a distinct unity between His Person and Work and the Old Testament (Luke 24:27)²¹⁸ (Kelly 2007:65). Hence, like the apostolic dichotomy regarding epistemology, so also the concept of the testaments’ unity is of apostolic origin, or of Jesus Himself.

That orthodoxy continued to promote this unity is clearly illustrated within the apologetic as well as ecclesiastical writings. Justin, for example in *Dialogue with Trypho* 29, argues that the Old Testament belongs to the Christian (being more ours), than to the Jews (Trypho), since Christians grasp the spirit of the Old Testament, which points to Christ²¹⁹ (Kelly 2007:66). Irenaeus elaborated more extensively regarding the unity of the two testaments. In *Adversus Haereses* 3:12:12-14 and 4:32:2, Irenaeus explains that the Law of Moses as well as the grace of the New Testament were given by the same God for the benefit of humanity, even though the heretics seek to divide them (Kelly 2007:68). In relation to this, the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets and narrative writers in a way which allowed

²¹⁸ καὶ ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν προφητῶν διερμήνευσεν αὐτοῖς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς τὰ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ.

²¹⁹ Τρύφων; Ἐν τοῖς ὑμετέροις ἀπόκεινται γράμμασι, μᾶλλον δὲ οὐχ ὑμέτεροις, ἀλλ’ ἡμετέροις. Ἡμεῖς γὰρ αὐτοῖς πειθόμεθα· ὑμεῖς δὲ, ἀναγινώσκοντες, οὐ νοεῖτε τὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς νοῦν.

the church to recognize Christ in the Old Covenant, particularly looking at the Psalms, Abraham and Isaiah (*Adversus Haereses*, 3:6:1-5; 4:22-4:26; 4:32:2) (Shelton 2010:32-33).

2.2.3 Historicity over speculation

Unlike the philosophical milieu in which epistemology is primarily derived from speculative deductions from empirical phenomena, the Christian Faith is centred on an historical person: Jesus Christ (Harnack 1958:41). In this sense, the key issue which dominated much of the early church is the idea that the historical person Jesus was also, in the language of Paul, the “εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου” (image of the invisible God) (Col. 1:15) (Letham 2004:89). Unlike the Platonic and Aristotelian tendency to discard historiography, for the early church the historical words and acts of Jesus were of primary importance (which explains to some measure the historiographical nature of the four Gospels). In addition, Paul stressed the historicity of the various events pertaining to Jesus’ life, death and resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:3-8²²⁰.

In the light of the above, God’s self-disclosure was not seen as a speculative science of applying our “λόγος” to contemplate the universal “λόγος”, but a historical event of God acting and speaking in history. Within the ecclesiastical community, historiography gained prominent importance, since God’s revelation was tied to historical events (Welch 1948:22). An example of this is Irenaeus focusing on the historical event of Jesus’ bodily resurrection, highlighting the eye witness accounts of the disciples that verify this, in order to make a theological point (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:7:1)²²¹ (Pagels 2002:365). Consequently, what we observe is that prior to a theological proposition, a historical reference was sometimes cited, being the factual basis for the theological construct.

²²⁰Note the phrase “κατὰ τὰς γραφάς” (according to the Scriptures), which highlights the apostolic hermeneutic of viewing the person and work of Jesus Christ as tied to the Old Testament scriptural corpus. The New Testament, which is considered to be encapsulation of the acts and words of Jesus as well as the inspired interpretation of His acts and words, is viewed as a fulfillment of the Old Testament expectation.

²²¹*Quomodo igitur Christus in carnis substantia surrexit, et ostendit discipulis figuras clavorum, et apertionem lateris (haec autem sunt indicia carnis ejus, quae surrexit a mortuis)*

2.2.4 Christo-centric hermeneutic

That the ecclesiastical community had a Christo-centric hermeneutic is primarily derivative from the church's understanding of the historical person, Jesus Christ. It is this "*theologia Christi*" (theology of Christ) that informs the church's hermeneutical praxis. Within the New Testament scriptural corpus, various divine terms were tied to the person of Jesus Christ: "ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς" (the Lord Jesus), "υἱός" (son in relation to God), "θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ" (God was in Christ), "εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου" (image of the invisible God), "ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς" (in him all the fullness of deity dwells bodily), "ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων" (being in the form of God), "θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος" (the Word was God) (Acts 1:21; Heb. 1:5; 2 Cor. 5:19; Col. 1:15; 2:9; Phil. 2:6; Jn. 1:1). Moreover, the baptismal confession ties the Father, Son and Holy Spirit together as a unity (Matt. 28:18-20) (Welch 1948:21-22; Harnack 1958:187-189; Letham 2004:89).

The primary focal point of unity between the Old and New Testament is the person and work of Jesus Christ (Lk. 24:27) (Kelly 2007:65). The Apostolic Fathers, as we have already noted, considered Jesus Christ to be their new gnosis (*Didache*, 9:3; 10:2)²²² or the "ἀθανάτου γνώσεως" (knowledge of immortality) (*1 Clement* 36:2) who brought His church "σκοτούς εἰς φῶς" (from darkness into light) and "ἀπὸ ἀγνοσίας εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν δόξης ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ" (from ignorance into the knowledge of his glorious name) (*1 Clement* 59:2) (Kelly 2007:164). What we can derive from these statements is that for the Apostolic Fathers, true knowledge was tied to the Person and Work of Christ. Yet, they did not necessarily clarify their concept in hermeneutical terms. It would seem that the first person to have really extrapolated what the Apostolic Fathers possibly meant was Irenaeus. This was primarily due to the Gnostics and Marcion who proposed alternative hermeneutical praxes regarding the scriptural corpus.

Irenaeus, in *Adversus Haereses* 3:6:1-5, applies this Christo-centric hermeneutic, arguing that the Old Testament as well as the apostolic witness confirms the divinity of Jesus Christ. By adopting this praxis, Irenaeus was approaching the Old Testament Christologically. In *Adversus Haereses* 1:9:2-3; 1:22:1; 4:20:1-12, Irenaeus argues that to understand the scriptural corpus correctly, one has to interpret it with the recognition that Jesus is divine and the agent of God the Father's creation and plan of redemption. For Irenaeus, Jn. 1:1-3 becomes the prominent hermeneutical lens through which the scriptural corpus needs to be interpreted. Book 4 of *Adversus Haereses* is almost entirely devoted

²²²Πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ γνώσεως, ἧς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου... καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ πίστεως καὶ ἀθανασίας, ἧς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου.

to interpreting the Old Testament with a Christo-centric hermeneutic (*Adversus Haereses* 4.2.3, 6; 4.5.3; 4.7.1-3; 4:10:1; 4.13.3) (Pagels 2002:362-367; Briggman 2011:330-332).

Adversus Haereses 4:26:1 summarizes Irenaeus' proposed hermeneutic, "If any one, therefore, reads the Scriptures with attention, he will find in them an account of Christ, and a foreshadowing of the new calling. For Christ is the treasure which was hid in the field, that is, in this world; but the treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ, since He was pointed out by means of types and parables" (Schaff na:830). To miss Christ in our reading of Scripture, for Irenaeus, is to miss the intent and truth of Scripture.

2.2.5 *Regula Fidei*

Since the *Regula Fidei* features prominently within Irenaeus' and Tertullian's writings and forms a key hermeneutical lens regarding the theological conception of the Trinity, we will consider this in detail. The *Regula Fidei* remains, especially in Protestant scholarship, a contentious issue.

2.2.5.1 Possible Origin

There is some debate or inconclusiveness regarding the origin of the *Regula fidei*. Two prominent propositions seem to be opted within scholarship, namely that it was either a baptismal formula which became a type of doctrinal "*lex*" (law) (Harnack 1910:27-28; La Piana 1925:213; Richardson 2006:22) or that it is the oral apostolic teaching that was handed down from generation to generation, which existed apart from the apostolic writings (Leitzmann 1953:108; Kelly 2007:37).

The greatest difficulty to consider the *Regula fidei* being a baptismal creed is that the historical texts do not indicate so. Both Irenaeus and Tertullian argued that the *Regula fidei* is apostolic in origin and a unifying element within the apostolic church; neither seemed to have applied it as a baptismal formula. Consequently, to argue that it is a baptismal creed contradicts the primary texts' claims and should probably be considered as speculative.

Nevertheless, some elements of the *Regula fidei* do occur in the baptismal formula mentioned by *Didache* 7:1-3 and Justin in *First Apology* 61, but they only refer to the threefold name. The *Didache* only mentions the, “τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος” (name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit). Justin mentions the, “ὀνόματος... τοῦ Πατρὸς... καὶ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ Πνεύματος ἁγίου” (name of the Father, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit). The only possible link to the *Regula Fidei* as a baptismal formula is Justin mentioning that the illumined are baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate²²³. Irenaeus also mentions in *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching* 6-7, that the baptismal formulation is based on the *Regula veritatis* (rule of truth). It could be that elements of the *Regula fidei* were incorporated into the baptismal confession or formula of the early church, but there is less evidence that would suggest that it was first a baptismal formula that was transformed into a type of doctrinal “lex” (Kelly 2007:89).

If we take the primary texts’ claims seriously (that it is apostolic in origin), than the evidence seems to suggest the second alternative. Irenaeus makes a strong case for its apostolic origin. In *Adversus Haereses* 1:10:1, Irenaeus argues that the *Regula fidei* was received from the apostles and their disciples. In *Adversus Haereses* 3:1:1, Irenaeus explains that the Gospel was first transmitted orally and was only later conveyed in written form (Kelly 2007:37-38). This “doctrine of the apostles” was handed down through a line of succession from one presbyter to another and is contained within the churches that are linked to the original apostles (*Adversus Haereses*, 3:4:1; 4:26:1-4; 4:33:8) (Leitzmann 1953:114-115; Shelton 2010:27-28).

To summarize Irenaeus’ argument, the *Regula fidei* was handed down by the Apostles to the Presbyters or Bishops of the church (*Adversus Haereses* 1:10:1-2; 2:9:1; 3:2:2-4; 3:4:1; 4:26:2; 4:33:8; 5:20:1). It is found in the written Scriptures (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:22:1; 2:13:3; 3:1:1; 3:12:6; 4:33:8; 4:35:4). It is the benchmark for all true churches across the empire (*Adversus Haereses*, 1.9.5; 1.10.2; 2.27.1; 3.3.2-4; 4.1-3; 4.33.6) (Shelton 2010:30).

²²³Καὶ ἐπὶ ὀνόματος δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σταυρωθέντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ ἐπ’ ὀνόματος Πνεύματος ἁγίου, ὃ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν προεκήρυξε τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν πάντα, ὁ φωτιζόμενος λούεται.

Tertullian makes a similar case for the origin of the *Regula fidei*. In Tertullian's estimation, the *Regula* originally came from Christ (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 13:6)²²⁴. Moreover, the *Regula* was with the church from the inception of the Gospel (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:2)²²⁵. Taking the above into consideration, there was no doubt that Irenaeus and Tertullian believed in the apostolic origin of the *Regula fidei* and considered its ancientness as a principal argument against the novelty of heretical dogma (Bastiaensen 1977:36, 43).

2.2.5.2 Function

If the church possessed the written scriptural corpus of both the Old and New Testaments, why would they insist on keeping the oral tradition of the Apostles as well? The term *Regula* (rule) seems to indicate its function. This summarized body of doctrine was primarily used as a type of hermeneutical grid to distinguish between true and false interpretations of Scripture (Harnack 1910:30-31; Leitzmann 1953:114-116). This is clearly the sense in which Irenaeus employed it in *Adversus Haereses* (1:10:1; 1:22:1; 5:20:1) (Kelly 2007:37). Moreover, apart from being a hermeneutical grid to distinguish orthodoxy from heterodoxy, it was also a means of maintaining unity within the apostolic church (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:10:1-2) (La Piana 1925:213). In Irenaeus' estimation, the Gnostics deviated from the essential doctrines which were orally transmitted from the apostles to the apostolic churches' bishops or presbyters (Pagels 2002:351-352). The *Regula fidei* should be the *regula* for every believer regarding their understanding and interpretation of Scripture (*Adversus Haereses*, 2:27:1). To some extent, Irenaeus was laying the groundwork for the later concept of Catholicity. Irenaeus was overlapping three key ideas: tradition, Scripture and catholicity (Bethune-Baker 1951:56-57; Shelton 2010:28-30).

2.2.5.3 The *Regula fidei* as recorded by Irenaeus and Tertullian

As we break down the content of the *Regula fidei*, it would be prudent to do a comparative study of Irenaeus and Tertullian's description of it. The *Regula fidei* was not a formalized creed, but a loose set of propositions. The content essentially remained the same, but it was packaged differently. It would seem that the *Regula fidei* was later crystalized or formalized as the Apostle's Creed. Nevertheless, the crystalization of it into a formalized creed is beyond the parameters of this study. Generally, the

²²⁴*Haec regula a Christo*

²²⁵*hanc regulam ab initio evangelii decucurrisse*

Regula fidei seems to be an exposition of the threefold unity of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It does not explain the relationship between the three names, but its structure is trinitarian.

1) The *Regula fidei* or *veritatis* as recorded by Irenaeus:

The first point of the *Regula veritatis* is that the Father is the One God who is the almighty Creator of all things, whether visible or invisible. Nothing is beyond Him and all things are governed by Him (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:10:1-2; 1:22:1; 2:1:1; 2:27:1; 4:33:7; *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching*, 6).

The second point regards the Son. He is the historical Jesus Christ, who was God the Father's Word and agent of creation. He became flesh, being born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered death under Pontius Pilate, rose from the dead in bodily form and ascended into heaven in bodily form. He united God to man and abolished death, bringing eternal life. He will return to gather all things to Himself, consummating all things, to resurrect the dead and to execute judgment (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:10:1-2; 1:22:1; 2:32:4; 4:9:2; 4:33:7; 5:12:5; 5:20:1; *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 6).

The third point regards the Holy Spirit. He proclaimed the redemptive plan of God the Father regarding the Son to the prophets. He eternally indwells the universal church, furnishing it with the knowledge of the truth, and renewing man unto God (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:10:1-2; 4:33:7; *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 6-7).

Irenaeus makes it clear in *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 6-7 that the three persons work together to accomplish the salvation of the human race: soul and body (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:10:1-2; 5:20:1). It is their collective purpose to rescue man from corruption to incorruption, and to ultimately glorify man in union with God (Shelton 2010:40).

2) The *Regula fidei* as recorded by Tertullian:

Tertullian's *Regula fidei* is generally analogous to Irenaeus in division as well as content. Tertullian's *Regula* is also structured according to the threefold unity of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; affirming the unity as well as diversity within God.

The first point regards the Father. He is the only one God, who is the Creator of the world and created all things through His Word (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 13:1)²²⁶. However, due to the divine economy or God's redemptive purpose, He also has a Son (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:1)²²⁷.

The second point, which is more elaborate, regards the Son. The Son was the Father's agent of creation, being His Word (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:1)²²⁸. As God's Word, He also revealed Himself under the name of God in the Old Testament (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 13:3)²²⁹. When the time had come, He was born of the Virgin Mary and was known as Jesus Christ (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 13:3)²³⁰. At this juncture, Tertullian elaborates more on the nature of Jesus' incarnation, describing Him as "*hominem et deum, filium hominis et filium dei*" (man and God, son of man and son of God) (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:1). The incarnate Word, being man and God, preached a new law and the promise of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was crucified, died and was buried. On the third day He rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 13:4)²³¹. This was all according to the Old Testament scriptures (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:1)²³². Finally, He will return to raise the dead to life and judge the living and the dead. The saints to eternal life in glory and the wicked to the eternal fire (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 13:5²³³; *Adversus Praxean*, 2:1²³⁴)

The third point regards the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent by the Son to lead those who believe (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 13:5)²³⁵. He is not only the one who leads the church, but He is also the sanctifier of those who believe in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:1)²³⁶.

²²⁶Unum omnino Deum esse nec alium praeter mundi conditorem qui uniursa de nihilo produxit per verbum suum primo omnium emissum.

²²⁷unicum quidem deum credimus, sub hac tamen dispensatione, quam oikonomian dicimus, ut unici dei sit et filius

²²⁸sermo ipsius qui ex ipso processerit, per quem omnia facta sunt et sine quo factum est nihil

²²⁹Id verbum filium eius appellatum in nomine Dei varie visum a patriarchis, in prophetis semper auditum

²³⁰postremo delatum ex spiritu patris Dei et virtute in virginem Mariam, carnem factum in utero eius et ex ea natum egisse Iesum Christum

²³¹Exinde praedicasse novam legem et novam promissionem regni caelorum, virtutes fecisse, cruci fixum, tertia die resurrexisse, in caelos ereptum sedisse ad dexteram patris

²³²hunc passum, hunc mortuum et sepultum secundum scripturas, et resuscitatum a patre et in caelo resumptum sedere ad dexteram patris

²³³venturum cum claritate ad sumendos sanctos in vitae aeternae et promissorum caelestium fructum et ad profanos adiudicandos igni perpetuo, facta utriusque partis resuscitatione cum carnis restitutione.

²³⁴venturum iudicare vivos et mortuos

²³⁵misisse vicariam vim spiritus sancti qui credentes agat

What should be considered is that Irenaeus and Tertullian apply the *Regula fidei* to different theological controversies. Irenaeus focuses primarily on the first point of God being the Creator of the universe as well as the bodily aspects of Jesus' incarnation and salvation, since these were prominent points of diversion between orthodoxy and Gnosticism. Tertullian focuses distinctly on the Trinitarian elements within the *Regula*, due to Praxeas' modalism. Hence, the *Regula fidei* should be seen as a set of theological propositions that could be applied to various theological issues. It is a type of summary of the Gospel (Leitzmann 1953:114-116; Shelley 2008:54).

2.2.5.4 The *Regular fidei* latent within the Apologists

Inasmuch as Irenaeus and Tertullian were the first to explicitly mention the term *Regula fidei*, this does not imply that its propositions were non-existent prior to them. Justin, for example, regularly employ phrases such as “we had learned” or “we have received” or “it has been handed down” (Hardy 2006:231). For example in *First Apology* 6, Justin remarks that the truth is transmitted from one person to another, according to what has previously been taught. Hence, it is a body of teaching that is passed on, rather than innovative ideas²³⁷. In *First Apology* 10, Justin makes reference to the tradition they have learned²³⁸. If Irenaeus' and Tertullian's construct of the *Regula fidei* is applied to the Justin's *First Apology*, striking similarities become apparent.

In *First Apology* 61, Justin reiterates the threefold formula, though applying it to the baptismal confession. In order to be incorporated within the orthodox community, one had to confess God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit²³⁹. Throughout Justin's *First Apology*, various key doctrines regarding each person had to be acknowledged.

Similar to Irenaeus and Tertullian, though with less clarity, it was important that one confessed that the Father was the Master of all things (*First Apology*, 61). It was important to Justin that the Son was

²³⁶ *qui exinde miserit, secundum promissionem suam, a patre spiritum sanctum paracletum, sanctificatorem fidei eorum qui credunt in patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum*

²³⁷ Καὶ προσκυνούμεν, λογῶ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ τιμῶντες, καὶ παντὶ βουλομένῳ μαθεῖν, ὡς ἐδιδάχθημεν, ἀφθόνως παραδιδόντες

²³⁸ Ἀλλ' οὐ δέεσθαι

²³⁹ Ἐπ' ὀνόματος γὰρ τοῦ Πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων καὶ Δεσπότης Θεοῦ, καὶ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ Πνεύματος ἁγίου, τὸ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τότε λουτρὸν ποιοῦνται.

identified as God's Word, who was born through a Virgin, was our teacher, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven (*First Apology*, 13²⁴⁰; 21²⁴¹; 61²⁴²).

Where Justin seems to elaborate more, unlike Irenaeus and Tertullian, is the role of the Holy Spirit. Whereas God the Son was second in rank to God the Father, the prophetic Spirit was third in rank (*First Apology*, 13)²⁴³. Moreover, it was through the Holy Spirit that God inspired the Old Testament prophets to speak of the events of Jesus' life and death (*First Apology*, 31²⁴⁴; 61²⁴⁵). Where Justin deviates from Irenaeus and Tertullian is his attempt to demonstrate this point in *First Apology* 30-53, looking at various Old Testament passages that seem to allude or point to Jesus Christ. Irenaeus does deal with the Old Testament extensively, applying his Christo-centric hermeneutic, but Justin is more explicit on this, generally beginning a discussion on an Old Testament passage with the term “προφητικὸν Πνεῦμα” (the prophetic Spirit) (*First Apology*, 31, 32, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 47, 48, 51). Probably, the greatest deviation is Justin's comment in *First Apology* 46, where Justin broadens the allusions to Christ to the Hellenistic philosophers who partake in reason. Yet, it would seem Justin clarifies this in *First Apology* 59, by arguing that the Hellenistic philosophers borrowed from the Old Testament scriptures, which demonstrates points of commonality.

Athenagoras makes similar statements that coincide with the *Regula fidei* as mentioned by Irenaeus and Tertullian and somewhat alluded to in Justin's *First Apology*.

Similar to Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian, Athenagoras states that the Christian is guided by the threefold formula of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Athenagoras does elaborate slightly more on the relationship between the Three: forming a unity, yet having distinction in rank. This elaboration could be due to Athenagoras' audience being the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (*Plea*, preface and Chapter 1), since the emperors would not have had a proper

²⁴⁰ τὸν διδασκαλὸν τε τούτων γινόμενον ἡμῖν, καὶ εἰς τοῦτο γεννηθέντα Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν σταυρωθέντα ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου

²⁴¹ τὸν Λόγον, ὃ ἐστὶ πρῶτον γέννημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἅνεν ἐπιμιξίας φάσκειν ἡμᾶς γεγενῆσθαι Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν διδάσκαλον ἡμῶν, καὶ τοῦτον σταυρωθέντα καὶ ἀποθανόντα καὶ ἀναστάντα ἀνελθύναι εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν

²⁴² καὶ ἐπ' ὀνόματος δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σταυρωθέντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου

²⁴³ υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ὄντως Θεοῦ μαθόντες, καὶ ἐν δευτέρᾳ χώρᾳ ἔχοντες, Πνεῦμά τε προφητικὸν ἐν τρίτῃ τάξει

²⁴⁴ Ἄνθρωποι οὖν τινες ἐν Ἰουδαίῳ γεγέννηται θεοῦ προφηταὶ, δι' ὧν τὸ προφητικὸν Πνεῦμα προεκήρυξε τὰ γενήσεσθαι μέλλοντα, πρὶν ἢ γεγέσθαι·

²⁴⁵ καὶ ἐπ' ὀνόματος Πνεύματος ἁγίου, ὃ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν προεκήρυξε τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν πάντα, ὃ φωτιζόμενος λούεται.

understanding of what the threefold formula implied. Nevertheless, the threefold formula remains the cornerstone of Christian dogma for Athenagoras (*Plea*, 10²⁴⁶; 12²⁴⁷; 24²⁴⁸).

Athenagoras primarily deals with the threefold formula within the context of the charge of atheism (*Plea*, 4-30), hence the possible neglect of mentioning the Son's soteriological work. Athenagoras' primarily focuses on creation and the interplay of the Three in creation. Consequently, he is selective in what he reiterates regarding the *Regula fidei*.

Regarding the first point of the Father, Athenagoras affirms the postulation of Irenaeus and Tertullian. The Father is the uncreated creator of the universe and that all things are made through His Word (*Plea*, 4²⁴⁹). Moreover, He also is the governor of the universe, being in control of His creation (*Plea*, 7²⁵⁰). In the light of this, Athenagoras terms the Father as “τοῦ παντὸς δημιουργὸς καὶ πατὴρ” (the creator and father of all) (*Plea*, 13). On this point alone, Athenagoras is sure that the charge of atheism cannot stand (*Plea*, 30²⁵¹). In this sense, the content of the *Regula* is used as a defense for the Christian Faith.

Regarding the second point of the Son, Athenagoras merely affirms that God the Father has a Son (*Plea*, 10²⁵²). This Son is God's Word, the agent of creation, and the Father and Son form a unity (*Plea*, 10²⁵³). Athenagoras limits his investigation of the Son to His role in creation, which is most likely due to the genre of literature and audience (as has been already mentioned).

Regarding the third point of the Holy Spirit, Athenagoras elaborates like Justin. Whereas Irenaeus, Tertullian and Justin neglect to mention the Spirit's operation at creation, Athenagoras mentions that

²⁴⁶ τίς οὖν οὐκ ἂν ἀπορήσαι ἄγοντας θεὸν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν θεὸν καὶ πνεῦμα ἅγιον, δεικνύοντας αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ ἐνώσει δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ τάξει διαίρεσιν...

²⁴⁷ ὑπο μόνου δὲ παραπεμπόμενοι τοῦ τὸν ὄντως θεὸν καὶ τὸν παρ' αὐτοῦ λόγον εἰδέναι, τίς ἢ τοῦ παιδὸς πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἐνότις, τίς ἢ τοῦ πατρὸς πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν κοινωνία, τί τὸ πνεῦμα, τίς ἢ τῶν τοσούτων ἔνωσις καὶ διαίρεσις ἐνουμένων, τοῦ πνεύματος, τοῦ παιδός, τοῦ πατρὸς...

²⁴⁸ ὥς γὰρ θεὸν φάμεν καὶ υἱὸν τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ καὶ πνεῦμα ἅγιον...

²⁴⁹ ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ἕνα θεὸν ἄγει τὸν τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς ποιητὴν, αὐτὸν μὲν οὐ γενόμενον... πάντα δὲ διὰ τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῦ λόγου πεποιηκότα...

²⁵⁰ ἡμεῖς δὲ κρατύνωμεν τὸν διακοσμήσαντα τὸ πᾶν τοῦτο, τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν θεόν...

²⁵¹ θεὸν ἄγοντες τὸν ποιητὴν τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς καὶ τὸν παρ' αὐτοῦ λόγον

²⁵² νοοῦμεν γὰρ καὶ υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ

²⁵³ ἀλλ' ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν ἰδέᾳ καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ πρὸς αὐτοῦ γὰρ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ πάντα ἐγένετο, ἕνδος ὄντος τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ

the Spirit holds the universe together, being its sustainer (*Plea*, 6²⁵⁴); the mention of this unique point is probably similar to Athenagoras' reason for only mentioning the Son's role in creation: his audience. Where Athenagoras corresponds remarkably with Irenaeus, Tertullian and Justin, is his continual mention of the Holy Spirit being the one who inspires the prophets, proclaiming God's person and works. He is the chief author of the scriptural corpus. Athenagoras, unlike Irenaeus, Tertullian and Justin, expounds slightly on the *modus operandi* of the Holy Spirit's inspiration. Athenagoras describes it as a musician playing an instrument. The instrument is totally in the control of the musician, in order to play the exact desired tune (*Plea*, 7²⁵⁵; 9²⁵⁶; 10²⁵⁷). Athenagoras' expansion on this point is most likely due to his pagan audience not necessarily understanding what the ecclesiastical community might mean by the Spirit's designation being the “προφητικὸν πνεῦμα” (the prophetic Spirit) (*Plea*, 10). In this regard, it seems Athenagoras moved beyond merely reiterating the *Regula*, seeking to interpret it as well.

Finally, in *Plea* 36, Athenagoras extensively discusses the bodily resurrection at the end of the age. It would seem, when comparing the two apologetic works of Justin and Athenagoras with the polemical works of Irenaeus and Tertullian, that the content of the *Regula fidei* is almost identical. The only distinction seems to be in how it is applied to different genres of literature and audiences.

2.2.5.5 Regula Fidei latent within the Apostolic Fathers

According to *Martyrdom of Polycarp* [mosquensis] 22:2, Irenaeus received the “τὸν ἐκκλησιαστικὸν κανόνα καὶ καθολικόν” (the ecclesiastical and catholic [universal] rule) from the τοῦ ἁγίου (the holy one – in context: Polycarp). Even though this alternative epilogue is most likely written by Pionius (ca. 250 AD) (Ehrman 2005:363; Shepherd 2006:143-144), it does make the historical claim that the “κανόνα” or *regula*'s origin dates back to the Apostolic Fathers. If Pionius is correct, it would imply that Tertullian and Irenaeus are not the innovators of the *Regula fidei*, but rather the inheritors of it through a line of succession. In order to establish this proposal, it is necessary to illustrate continuity between the Apostolic Fathers' writings and the *Regula fidei* as presented by Irenaeus and Tertullian;

²⁵⁴ ὅφ' οὗ λόγῳ δεδημιούργηται καὶ τῷ παρ' αὐτοῦ πνεύματι συνέχεται τὰ πάντα τοῦτον εἰδότες καὶ κρατύνοντες θεόν

²⁵⁵ ἡμεῖς δὲ ὧν νοοῦμεν καὶ πεπιστευκαμεν ἔχομεν προφήτας μάρτυρας, οἱ πνεύματι ἐνθέῳ ἐκπεφωνήκασιν καὶ περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ περὶ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ... τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύματι ὡς ὄργανα κεκινήκοι τὰ τῶν προφητῶν στόματα...

²⁵⁶ οἱ κατ' ἑκστασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς λογισμῶν, κινήσαντος αὐτοῦ τοῦ θείου πνεύματος, ὡς εἰ καὶ αὐλητῆς αὐλὸν ἐμπνεύσαι...

²⁵⁷ καίτοι καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἐνεργοῦν τοῖς ἐκφωνοῦσι προφητικῶς ἅγιον πνεῦμα ἀπόρροιαν εἶναι...

and whether the primary propositions are evident, such as the threefold formula, the person and role of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, resurrection of the dead and apostolic origin.

Similar to Tertullian, Irenaeus and the Apologists, the Apostolic Fathers held to the threefold formula of divinity, utilizing it in various contexts. In *1 Clement* 46:6, Clement uses the threefold formula to emphasize unity within the ecclesiastical body, “We have one God, one Christ and one Spirit”²⁵⁸. Correspondingly, in order to foster submission and unity within the ecclesiastical body, Ignatius emphasizes that the apostles were submissive “to Christ, to the Father and to the Holy Spirit”²⁵⁹ (*Magnesians*, 3:1-2). In *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 14:1-3, Polycarp’s prayer is structured according to the threefold name, “Lord God Almighty... Father... Jesus Christ your beloved child... the Holy Spirit”²⁶⁰. *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 22:1, 3 closes with a threefold doxology, “glory to him (Jesus Christ) and to the Father and the Holy Spirit into the ages of the ages. Amen”²⁶¹. In *Didache* 7:1, the threefold name is utilized at baptism, “Baptise into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”²⁶². Consequently, the threefold name is not merely utilized as a baptismal creed, but applied to elements of ecclesiastical life, confessional prayer, doxology and baptism. It seems to be more a summary of divinity, rather than a strict incantation for baptismal candidates.

Regarding the first point of the *Regula fidei*, the Apostolic Fathers seem to primarily reiterate what Tertullian, Irenaeus and the Apologists claim. In *1 Clement*, Clement generally refers to the Father as the “Master of all”²⁶³ (the same designation Justin utilized for the Father) (*1 Clement*, 8:2; 9:4; 11:1; 20:8; 24:5; 36:2; 49:6; 52:1; 56:6 etc.). Clement also describes the Father as the Creator of the entire universe (*1 Clement*, 19:2)²⁶⁴. In one instance Clement refers to the Father as “the creator and master of all”²⁶⁵ (*1 Clement*, 33:2) and in another “creator and Father of all”²⁶⁶ (*1 Clement*, 35:3) or “Father and God and creator”²⁶⁷ (*1 Clement*, 62:2). Likewise, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 14:1 describes the Father as “the God of angels and of powers and of all creation”²⁶⁸. *Didache* 10:3, describes the Father

²⁵⁸ ἡ οὐχὶ ἓνα θεὸν ἔχομεν καὶ ἓνα Χριστὸν καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος τὸ ἐκχυθὲν ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς...

²⁵⁹ Σπουδάζετε οὖν βεβαιωθῆναι ἐν τοῖς δόγμασιν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων... ἐν υἱῷ καὶ πατρὶ καὶ ἐν πνεύματι... ὑποτάγητε τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ καὶ ἀλλήλοις, ὡς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ σάρκα καὶ οἱ ἀποστολοὶ τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ἵνα ἑνώσις ἡ σαρκικὴ τε καὶ πνευματικὴ

²⁶⁰ κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ... πατήρ... Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ σου παιδός... πνεύματι ἁγίῳ

²⁶¹ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς... ᾧ ἡ δόξα σὺν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. ἀμήν.

²⁶² βαπτίσατε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος

²⁶³ ὁ δεσπότης τῶν ἀπάντων

²⁶⁴ πατέρα καὶ κτίστην τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου

²⁶⁵ αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ δημιουργὸς καὶ δεσπότης τῶν ἀπάντων ἐπὶ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ ἀγαλιᾶται

²⁶⁶ ὁ δημιουργὸς καὶ πατήρ τῶν αἰώνων

²⁶⁷ πατέρα καὶ θεὸν καὶ κτίστην...

²⁶⁸ ὁ θεὸς ἀγγέλων καὶ δυνάμεων καὶ πάσης τῆς κτίσεως παντός τε τοῦ γένους τῶν δικαίων, οἱ ζῶσιν ἐνώπιόν σου.

as “Almighty Master” who “created all things for the sake of your name”²⁶⁹. Consequently, one of the key points of the *Regula fidei*, as stated by Irenaeus and Tertullian, is clearly reiterated by the Apostolic Fathers: the Father is the creator and ruler of the universe.

Regarding the second point of the *Regula fidei*, the Apostolic Fathers remain within the same parameters as Tertullian, Irenaeus and the Apologists. A primary point for Clement was that Jesus Christ was first spirit, but became flesh for our sake (2 *Clement*, 9:5)²⁷⁰. Ignatius seems to have expounded the Son much more than the other Apostolic Fathers. In *Ephesians* 7:2, Ignatius extensively explains the twofold nature of the Son who is “flesh and spirit” and who is “from Mary and from God”²⁷¹. Using similar language to Tertullian, Ignatius highlights in *Ephesians* 18:2, that Jesus was born from Mary from the line of David through the Holy Spirit, according to the “οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ” (economy or plan of God)²⁷². Moreover, in *Ephesians* 19:1, Ignatius mentions the virginity of Mary when Jesus was conceived. The great events of Jesus’ birth, death and resurrection were unnoticed by the rulers of His day²⁷³. Using similar language to Tertullian, Ignatius clarifies in *Ephesians* 20:2 the twofold nature of Christ as “Son of man and Son of God”²⁷⁴. Moreover, using the same language as the *Regula fidei* of Tertullian and Irenaeus, Ignatius describes the Son as the Word of God (*Magnesians* 8:2)²⁷⁵.

The most striking element of Ignatius’ account of the Son is the almost identical duplication of the *Regula fidei*’s formula, which emphasizes the historicity of the Son’s incarnation, life, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension during the reign of Pontius Pilate and His return to resurrect the dead. In three instances to three different churches, Ignatius emphasizes that the church must be fully convinced of these cardinal points of the faith (*Magnesians*, 11²⁷⁶; *Trallians*, 10:1-2²⁷⁷; *Smyrneans*,

²⁶⁹ σύ, δέσποτα παντοκράτορ, ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός σου

²⁷⁰ εἰ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ κύριος ὁ σώσας ἡμᾶς, ὧν μὲν τὸ πρῶτον πνεῦμα, ἐγένετο σὰρξ καὶ οὕτως ἡμᾶς ἐκάλεσεν, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ σαρκὶ ἀποληψόμεθα τὸν μισθόν

²⁷¹ εἷς ἰατρός ἐστιν, σαρκικός τε καὶ πνευματικός, γεννητὸς καὶ ἀγέννητος, ἐν σαρκὶ γενόμενος θεός, ἐν θανάτῳ ζωὴ ἀληθινή, καὶ ἐκ Μαρίας καὶ ἐκ θεοῦ, πρῶτον παθητὸς καὶ τότε ἀπαθής, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν

²⁷² ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκυοφορήθη ὑπὸ Μαρίας κατ’οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ ἐκ σπέρματος μὲν Δαυίδ, πνεύματος δὲ ἁγίου

²⁷³ καὶ ἔλαθεν τὸν ἄρχοντα τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἡ παρθενία Μαρίας καὶ ὁ τοκετὸς αὐτῆς, ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ θάνατος τοῦ κυρίου...

²⁷⁴ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τῷ κατὰ σάρκα ἐκ γένους Δαυίδ, τῷ υἱῷ ἀνθρώπου καὶ υἱῷ θεοῦ

²⁷⁵ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν αὐτοῦ λόγος ἀπὸ σιγῆς προελθὼν

²⁷⁶ ἀλλὰ πεπληροφορησθαι ἐν τῇ γεννήσει καὶ τῷ πάθει καὶ τῇ ἀναστάσει τῇ γενομένῃ ἐν καιρῷ τῆς ἡγεμονίας Ποντίου Πιλάτου· πραχθέντα ἀληθῶς καὶ βεβαίως ὑπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἡμῶν, ἥς ἐκτραπήναι μηδενὶ ἡμῶν γένοιτο

²⁷⁷ κωφώθητε οὖν, ὅταν ὑμῖν χωρὶς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ λαλῇ τις, τοῦ ἐκ γένους Δαυίδ, τοῦ ἐκ Μαρίας, ὅς ἀληθῶς ἐγεννήθη, ἔφαγέν τε καὶ ἔπιεν, ἀληθῶς ἐσταυρώθη καὶ ἀπέθανεν... ὅς καὶ ἀληθῶς ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ νεκρῶν,

1:1-2²⁷⁸). Polycarp, in *Philippians* 7:1 emphatically states that whoever does not believe in the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God is the antichrist, of the devil and the firstborn of Satan²⁷⁹. Both Ignatius and Polycarp are traditionally believed to have conversed with the Apostles. Their emphasis of these particular points should not be considered as mere coincidental, but most likely point to their apostolic origin.

Apart from the Son's origin and historical pattern, the Apostolic Fathers also refer to His role within the “οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ”. Jesus is described as the knowledge of God or through whom God is known (Ignatius, *Ephesians*, 17:2²⁸⁰; *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 14:1²⁸¹; *Didache*, 9:2²⁸²). His incarnation was necessary in order to bring eternal life (Ignatius, *Ephesians*, 19:3²⁸³). According to 2 *Clement* 1:1²⁸⁴, Jesus must be conceptualized as God, being the judge of the living and the dead. Finally, according to Ignatius, Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the Old Testament text or “ἀρχεῖα”. Jesus' crucifixion, death and resurrection embody it (*Philadelphians*, 8:2²⁸⁵).

Regarding the third point of the *Regula fidei*, the Apostolic Fathers primarily describe the person and role of Holy Spirit in a similar fashion to the *Regula* as presented by Tertullian and Irenaeus. The Old Testament was inspired or spoken by the Holy Spirit and primarily speaks concerning the Son (1 *Clement*, 16:2ff²⁸⁶, 45:2²⁸⁷, 63:2²⁸⁸). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes God's people incorruptible or immortal, since we partake in His immortality; in this sense the Spirit is present at the

ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ὅς καὶ κατὰ τὸ ὁμοίωμα ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας αὐτῷ οὕτως ἐγερεῖ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

²⁷⁸ πεπληροποιημένους εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν, ἀληθῶς ὄντα ἐκ γένους Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, υἱὸν θεοῦ κατὰ θέλημα καὶ δυνάμιν θεοῦ, γεγεννημένον ἀληθῶς ἐκ παρθένου, βεβαπτισμένον ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου... ἀληθῶς ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου καὶ Ἡρώδου τετράρχου καθηλωμένον ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐν σαρκί... ἵνα ἄρῃ σύσσημον εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας διὰ τῆς ἀναστάσεως εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ πιστοὺς αὐτοῦ, εἴτε ἐν Ἰουδαίοις εἴτε ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῆς ἐκκλησίας αὐτοῦ

²⁷⁹ Πᾶς γὰρ ὅς ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῇ, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθέναι, ἀντιχριστός ἐστιν· καὶ ὅς ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῇ τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστιν... καὶ λέγῃ μήτε ἀνάστασιν μήτε κρίσιν, οὗτος πρωτότοκός ἐστι τοῦ σατανᾶ

²⁸⁰ διὰ τί δὲ οὐ πάντες φρόνιμοι γινόμεθα λαβόντες θεοῦ γνώσιν, ὃ ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός

²⁸¹ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πατὴρ, δι' οὗ τὴν περὶ σοῦ ἐπιγνώσιν εἰλήφαμεν...

²⁸² εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ γνώσεως, ἥς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου·

²⁸³ θεοῦ ἀνθρωπίνως φανερουμένου εἰς καινότητῃ αἰδίου ζωῆς

²⁸⁴ οὕτως δεῖ ἡμᾶς φρονεῖν περὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὡς περὶ θεοῦ, ὡς περὶ κριτοῦ ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν

²⁸⁵ ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀρχεῖα ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, τὰ ἄθικτα ἀρχεῖα, ὁ σταυρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις αὐτοῦ...

²⁸⁶ καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐλάλησεν

²⁸⁷ ἐνκεκύφατε εἰς τὰς ἱερὰς γραφάς, τὰς ἀληθεῖς, τὰς διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου

²⁸⁸ ἡμῶν γεγραμμένοις διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος

resurrection of the dead (2 *Clement*, 14:5²⁸⁹; *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 14:2²⁹⁰). Finally, the Holy Spirit's origin is from God (Ignatius, *Philadelphians*, 7:1)²⁹¹.

Regarding the resurrection of the dead, the Apostolic Fathers seemed to have believed that the Father (1 *Clement* 26:1²⁹²) and Holy Spirit (*Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 14:2²⁹³) would be active at the resurrection of the dead. Nevertheless, in order to participate in the resurrection of the dead or eternal life and God's kingdom, one has to receive it in Christ (2 *Clement*, 5:5²⁹⁴) who is also the historical evidence of a future resurrection (1 *Clement*, 24:1²⁹⁵).

Lastly, 1 *Clement* 42:1-5²⁹⁶ (cf. 1 *Clement*, 44:1-6), seems to be the only passage that speaks of apostolic succession regarding teaching. God the Father sent the Son, who sent the Apostles through the Holy Spirit, and the Apostles appointed bishops or presbyters over the churches. However, what this passage illustrates is that the Apostolic Fathers were persuaded that their dogma was of apostolic origin. They were the inheritors of it, not the innovators.

2.2.5.6 Proposed Hypothesis

Prior to proposing a possible hypothesis regarding the *Regula fidei*, a comparative diagram will illustrate the tremendous continuity regarding the content of the *Regula* from the Apostolic Fathers to Tertullian. The variations are minimal and, to some extent, inconsequential in implication.

²⁸⁹ τοσαύτην δύναται ἡ σὰρξ αὕτη μεταλαβεῖν ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν κολληθέντος αὐτῇ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου...

²⁹⁰ εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς αἰωνίου ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ πνεύματος ἁγίου

²⁹¹ τὸ πνεῦμα... ἀπὸ θεοῦ

²⁹² μέγα καὶ θαυμαστὸν οὖν νομίζομεν εἶναι, εἰ ὁ δημιουργὸς τῶν ἀπάντων ἀναστασιν ποιήσεται τῶν ὁσίων αὐτῷ δουλευσάντων ἐν πεποιθήσει πίστεως ἀγαθῆς...

²⁹³ εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς αἰωνίου ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ πνεύματος ἁγίου

²⁹⁴ καὶ ἀνάπαυσις τῆς μελλούσης βασιλείας καὶ ζωῆς αἰωνίου

²⁹⁵ κατανοήσωμεν, ἀγαπητοί, πῶς ὁ δεσπότης ἐπιδείκνυται διηνεκῶς ἡμῖν τὴν μέλλουσαν ἀνάστασιν ἔσεσθαι, ἥς τὴν ἀπαρχὴν ἐποιήσατο τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστήσας

²⁹⁶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἡμῖν εὐηγγελίσθησαν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξεπέμφθη... μετὰ πληροφορίας πνεύματος ἁγίου ἐξῆλθον εὐαγγελιζόμενοι, τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ μέλειν ἔρχεσθαι.

Regula Fidei				
Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache, Martyrdom of Polycarp (latent)	Apologists: Justin & Athenagoras (latent)	Irenaeus (explicit)	Tertullian (explicit)	
Threefold Formula: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Applied to ecclesiastical unity, baptism, doxology and prayer.	Threefold formula: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Applied to baptism, but also as a hermeneutic.	Threefold formula: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Applied hermeneutically.	Threefold formula: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Applied hermeneutically.	
Father: Creator and Master of the universe	Father: Creator and Master of the universe	Father: Creator and Governor of the universe	Father: Creator	
Son: Born of the Virgin Mary from the line of David. Both God and man and lived among us. He was crucified, died, rose again and ascended to heaven during the time of Pontius Pilate. And He will return to judge the living and the dead. He came to reveal the Father and bring eternal life. This was due to the divine economy or plan.	Son: the Word of the Father and agent of creation. He was born of a Virgin, was the teacher of God's people, was crucified by Pontius Pilate and died. Rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. Will return to judge the living and the dead.	Son: Word of the Father, agent of creation, was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried. Rose from the dead. Ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. Through Jesus Christ we receive eternal life. He will return to judge the living and the dead.	Son: Word of the Father, agent of creation. Revealed Himself in the Old Testament. He was born of the Virgin Mary. He is both God and man. He taught God's people. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried. Rose from the dead. Ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will return to judge the living and the dead. This was due to the divine economy or plan.	
Holy Spirit: He is from God. Inspired the Old Testament Scriptures and pointed to the person and work of the Son. He indwells God's people and through His indwelling He makes them incorruptible and	Holy Spirit: Sustainer of creation, the prophetic Spirit who inspires the prophets to speak God's words, revealing God's person and works in advance. In particular, the Spirit pointed to the person and work of the	Holy Spirit: He inspired the Old Testament prophets to speak of the person and work of Christ. He illuminates and renews God's people.	Holy Spirit: He is sent by the Son to lead His people. He is the sanctifier of God's people.	

will be active at the resurrection.	Son in the Old Testament.		
Resurrection: All three persons are present in the work of the bodily resurrection at the end of the age. Jesus is the historical evidence that it will happen.	Resurrection: The bodily resurrection of the dead. Judgment of the wicked. Eternal life for those who trusted in Christ.	Resurrection: All three persons work for the salvation of the human race. The bodily resurrection of the dead. Judgment of the wicked. Eternal life and glory for those who trusted in Christ.	Resurrection: Jesus will return to accomplish the bodily resurrection of the dead.
Origin: not stated, though both Ignatius and Polycarp conversed with the Apostles and considered these points to be cardinal. Moreover, <i>1 Clement</i> argued for apostolic succession as legitimizing one's ministerial position in order to safeguard against disunity.	Origin: it was handed down to them. They are not the innovators of it, but the inheritors.	Origin: the Apostles received it from Christ.	Origin: the Apostles received it from Christ.

During the Patristic period, there is a sense that there was an overlap between apostolic oral tradition as well as the written apostolic writings. The apostolic church possessed both bodies of dogma (Leitzmann 1953:114-116). This overlap can also be illustrated within the New Testament corpus (Bethune-Baker 1951:41). In Acts 20:25-31, Paul admonishes the elders of Ephesus to keep what they have received from him while he was proclaiming the Gospel of God among them. Similarly, in Gal. 1:6-12, Paul admonishes the Galatian church for abandoning the Gospel which he orally “τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν” (proclaimed) (v.11) and received “δι’ ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ” (through the revelation of Jesus Christ) (v. 12). Similar, in Col. 1:23, the Colossian church “ἤκούσατε” (heard) the Gospel which was first “τοῦ κηρυχθέντος” (proclaimed). Paul’s writing was motivated by their apparent temptation to abandon what they have initially heard. In 1 Peter 1:25, Peter mentions that the Gospel was initially “τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν” (proclaimed). However, in 1 Pet. 5:12, Peter “ἔγραψα” (has written) the oral message. Moreover, in 2 Pet. 3:14-18, Peter makes mention of the Pauline corpus. There is a sense, that during the apostolic period this overlap already occurred. . Jude 3 makes

mention of “τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει” (faith once delivered to the saints); ideas of transmission and succession are implied. It is apostolic tradition (whether oral or written) which defines orthodox catholicity (Bethune-Baker 1951:41-42; Shelton 2010:31, 40).

What the various texts of the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists illustrate is that the *Regula fidei* was not an invention of Irenaeus and Tertullian, but its content can be traced back to the Apostolic Fathers, who in turn have inherited their teaching from the Apostles. It would seem to be a summary of the oral apostolic teaching, which was known from the church’s inception and existed alongside the written apostolic works. To some extent, the written apostolic corpus confirmed the validity of the oral apostolic teaching and *vice versa*. Irenaeus and Tertullian most likely introduced the term *Regula fidei* to the body of teaching, but did not introduce its content, but inherited it. The necessity to term the apostolic teaching as *Regula fidei* was mostly likely to form a concise distinguishing marker between Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy and so preserve a unified ecclesiastical community. It formed the parameters of theological investigation and hermeneutical inquiry into the Old and New Testament writings.

2.2.5.7 Impact of ecclesiastical hermeneutics

Firstly, the *Regula* was trinitarian in formulation. Inasmuch as it does not explain the exact relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, its primary structure is trinitarian (Leitzmann 1953:109-110). Consequently, any form of theological inquiry or conceptualization had to take into cognisance the threefold formula. Whereas most debates regarding divinity were Christological (regarding the divinity and humanity of the Son and His relationship to the Father), the threefold formula forced the Patristic writers to incorporate the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it also constrained orthodoxy from moving beyond the threefold formula to incorporate other divinities.

Secondly, within the *Regula* there is a strong emphasis on the historicity of the Christ-event. The necessity of defining the period to be during the reign of Pontius Pilate illustrates the importance of historicity. The events and historical words of Jesus inform theology and also form the parameters of their theology. If theological investigation contradicts the historical events (incarnation, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension), it has moved beyond orthodoxy.

Thirdly, the *Regula*'s insistence that the Son reveals the Father (cf. Jn. 14:6-7) and the Holy Spirit pointed to the Son in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 1:19-21), facilitated the logical development of a Christo-centric hermeneutic within the orthodox community (Leitzmann 1953:122). Consequently, the Old Testament was approached Christologically. Whether they applied this hermeneutic correctly is debatable, but they sought to demonstrate how the Holy Spirit revealed the person and work of the Son in the Old Testament.

2.2.6 Allegory redefined as typology

As we have already stated, Philo seems to have been the first Jewish philosopher to have applied a type of allegorical method to the Old Testament text. This, as I have proposed, was primarily due to the adoption of Plato's hermeneutic paradigm of universals vs. particulars, seeking the universal governing principles and Forms that govern the particulars and in which the particulars participate. In this paradigm, particulars have little significance apart from their participation in the universal Forms. This pursuit of universals was motivated by Plato's pursuit in knowing the one unifying principle, or the ultimate principle, which he unsatisfactorily (in his own estimation) described as the Form of the Good/Father of the Universe/Demiurge.

Strikingly, this concern was picked up by the ecclesiastical community. In *Epistle to Diognetus* 8:1-9, the author expresses clearly that the philosophers sought to know the ultimate in vain, since He was only revealed in Christ Jesus, His Son. Furthermore, in *Epistle to Diognetus* 11:3-5, he describes the Son as the "ὁ αἰών" (the eternal one) who was sent down to reveal the Father. Moreover, Justin explains this idea of the Son being the universal one more emphatically in *Dialogue with Trypho*. *Dialogue with Trypho* 2:1-2, Justin explains that the philosophers, though noble in their quest for the universal one, could not find Him. *Dialogue with Trypho* 2-7 is about Justin's personal quest to discover God, the universal one. In Chapter 8, Justin describes how his quest terminated in his discovery of Jesus Christ, since the Son is the revealed universal one.

Moreover, due to the *Regula*'s insistence of a Christo-centric hermeneutic when approaching the Old Testament, it facilitated the adoption of a type of allegorical method similar to Philo. Where the ecclesiastical hermeneutic diverged from Philo was that allegorical interpretation had a governing principle, namely the person and work of Christ. It was typological in the sense that the Patristic writers sought to demonstrate the continuity between the Old and New Testaments or the Old

Testament expectation fulfilled in Christ (Bethune-Baker 1951:51-52; Kelly 2007:70-71). The *Epistle of Barnabas* illustrates this quite well. For example, when considering the Old Testament, *Barnabas* 1:7 argues that through the prophets God was making known the person and work of Christ and His impact on their contemporary society²⁹⁷. For Barnabas, all the events of Christ as well as the advent of the church were foreseen within the Old Testament corpus (*Barnabas*, 7:1²⁹⁸). Barnabas was continually looking for typological links with various New Testament events, such as baptism and the crucifixion (*Barnabas*, 11:1²⁹⁹). To describe this hermeneutic, Barnabas adopts the term “τύπον” (type) in his interpretation of the Old Testament corpus (*Barnabas*, 8:1; 12:6; 14:5), a term used by Paul and the author of Hebrews (cf. Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Heb. 8:5).

Consequently, the *Epistle of Barnabas* is dominated by typological interpretations of the Old Testament. Regarding Exodus 33:1, 3, *Barnabas* 6:1³⁰⁰ argues that it speaks of the Lord Jesus. When Moses reiterates the promise of a land flowing with “τὸ γάλα καὶ τὸ μέλι” (milk and honey), this pointed to our spiritual nourishment which happens “τῇ πίστει” (by faith) and “τῷ λόγῳ” (by the word) (*Barnabas*, 6:17). Regarding the Scapegoat in Lev. 16:7-9, *Barnabas* 7:9³⁰¹ argues that this pointed to the historical event of Jesus’ rejection, humiliation and crucifixion. The burnt offering, according to Barnabas, “ὁ μόσχος ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐστίν” (the calf is Christ) (*Barnabas*, 8:2).

Nevertheless, Barnabas does apply the typological Christo-centric hermeneutic much more adventurously in other instances. In the case of Abraham’s circumcision in Gen. 14:14 and 17:23, Barnabas argues that Abraham “ἐν πνεύματι προβλέψας εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν” (in the Spirit looked towards Jesus) by “λαβὼν τριῶν γραμμάτων δόγματα” (having received the teaching of three letters) (*Barnabas*, 9:7). In *Barnabas* 9:8, he explains that the number of people circumcised signified the person of Jesus and the cross. Probably arguing from the Septaugint (since it relies on Greek numbering, not Hebrew), Barnabas argues that the number eighteen contain the two letters “ἰῶτα” and “ῥῆτα” which are the first letters of the name Jesus, and so “ἔχεις Ἰησοῦν” (you have Jesus). The first letter of the number three hundred is “ταῦ”, which is contained in the word “σταυρὸς” (cross). Using

²⁹⁷ ἐγνώρισεν γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ δεσπότης διὰ τῶν προφητῶν τὰ παρεληλυθότα καὶ τὰ ἐνεστώτα...

²⁹⁸ πάντα ὁ καλὸς κύριος προεφαιέρωσεν ἡμῖν

²⁹⁹ Ζητήσωμεν δέ, εἰ ἐμέλησεν τῷ κυρίῳ προφανερῶσαι περὶ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ περὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ.

³⁰⁰ λέγει γὰρ ὁ προφήτης παραβολὴν κυρίου

³⁰¹ οὐχ οὗτος ἐστίν, ὃν ποτε ἡμεῖς ἐσταυρώσαμεν ἐξουθενήσαντες καὶ κατακεντήσαντες καὶ ἐμπτύσαντες; ἀληθῶς οὗτος ἦν, ὁ τότε λέγων ἑαυτὸν υἱὸν θεοῦ εἶναι.

Ps. 90:4 and 2 Pet. 3:8, Barnabas interprets Gen. 2:2-3 as being a type of the end, in the sense that the Lord will complete all things in six thousand years (*Barnabas*, 15:4³⁰²).

Justin adopts a similar typological Christo-centric hermeneutic when approaching the Old Testament. In *Dialogue with Trypho* 134:1ff, Justin interprets Leah and Rachel as referring to the Jewish synagogue and the church. Moreover, in *Dialogue with Trypho* 138:2³⁰³, the wood in Noah's ark pointed to the Cross. Irenaeus reiterates this hermeneutic as well. In *Adversus Haereses* 4:26:1, Irenaeus argues that Christ is pointed out by types and parables within the Old Testament. Nevertheless, in order to curtail too ingenious interpretations, Irenaeus argued that only Scripture could interpret Scripture (*Adversus Haereses*, 2:28:3; 3:12:9). Whether he ardently followed his own rule is debatable, but unlike Philo, it was not an entirely uncontrolled type of allegorization, but governed by a typological Christo-centric hermeneutic. Therefore, it would be an oversimplification to argue that Philo's allegorical method was uncritically assimilated within ecclesiastical hermeneutics.

2.3 Concluding Remarks

Inasmuch as the philosophical hermeneutical milieu and the ecclesiastical hermeneutical milieu shared some commonality at certain particular junctions (for example, soteriological concern, the search of unity in diversity and the adoption of Platonic universals vs. particulars), there are significant differences as well.

The only epistemological foundation upon which philosophical hermeneutics could function is the presupposition of the autonomy, objectivity and divine origin of the human “λόγος”, “ψυχή” or “νοῦς”. It is from this premise that Pre-Socratic and Socratic hermeneutics function. Yet, what the Sophistic movement demonstrated was the contradictory nature of Pre-Socratic and Socratic propositions. Due to their relativity, knowledge was a tool for personal use in rhetoric rather than a true quest for objectivity.

³⁰² τοῦτο λέγει, ὅτι ἐν ἑξακισχιλίοις ἔτεσιν συντελέσει κύριος τὰ σύμπαντα· ἡ γὰρ ἡμέρα παρ' αὐτῷ σημαίνει χίλια ἔτη

³⁰³ Ὁ γὰρ Χριστὸς, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως ὢν, καὶ ἀρχὴ πάλιν ἄλλου γένους γέγονεν τοῦ ἀναγεννηθέντος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ δι' ὕδατος καὶ πίστεως, καὶ ξύλου τοῦ τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ σταυροῦ ἔχοντος· ὃν τρόπον καὶ ὁ Νῶε ἐν ξύλῳ διεσώθη ἐποχούμενος τοῖς ὕδασι μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων.

Conversely, accepting the limitations of the human “λόγος” as created and fallen, ecclesiastical hermeneutics argued for the necessity of divine revelation and illumination. Apart from God’s intervention through the revelation of the Spirit and the incarnation of the Son, true knowledge of divinity is impossible. Since the Son is the full embodiment of all truth and true knowledge of divinity, Scripture needs to be read in the light of Him. Nevertheless, this does not imply that people approach God’s revelation correctly; hence the need for an orthodox hermeneutical rule. This has given rise to the explicit reference of the *Regula fidei*. Due to its Trinitarian, historical and Christocentric emphasis, it informed and moulded ecclesiastical hermeneutics to exhibit similar traits. In this way, orthodox Christianity guarded against a diversity of conclusions and preserved a sense of unity.

Finally, it would seem that the Orthodox Church’s engagement with the philosophical milieu was not primarily motivated by a Hegelian type of quest for objectivity through thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Rather, it would appear that the chief motive was missiological. This does not imply that the ecclesiastical community remained unaffected by it and did not err in theological discretion, but they significantly altered the meaning of philosophical terminology. One example is the term “λόγος”. Formerly, it was primarily used as a term referring to the rational capacity of a person or the impersonal divine being governing the material universe in Heraclitan, Platonic and Stoic thought. Within the ecclesiastical tradition, this term signified a historical person: Jesus Christ.

Having distinguished between philosophical and ecclesiastical hermeneutics, Chapter 4B will examine the interplay of these different hermeneutical praxes within the orthodox and heterodox trajectories.

Chapter 4 B - The development of the orthodox and heterodox trajectories

1. Ecclesiastical Paradosis

Traditionally, liberal scholarship, under the auspices of Harnack and Hegel, generally argued for an evolution of theological dogma through the process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. If this paradigm were true, the early church fathers were chiefly influenced by the Hellenistic spirit of enquiry (Harnack 1958:46-47; Allen & Springsted 2007:xviii).

If our analysis of the ecclesiastical hermeneutic is correct in Chapter 4B, it would seem that the orthodox ecclesiastical community did not promote novelty or philosophical enquiry, but primarily sought to perpetuate what it initially inherited (Kelly 2007:90). The orthodox trajectory exhibits a strong adherence to keeping within the parameters of the *Regula fidei*. Where the orthodox community elaborated, it was principally due to the need for clarification owing to its interaction with pagan society (apologetics) as well as the advent of heresies (polemics). There seems to be some form of interpretative inference where circumstance necessitated it, but generally they exhibited a reluctance to contradict or venture beyond what has been formerly inherited (Bishop 1910:359, 362).

1.1 Apostolic Fathers

To some extent, the *Regula fidei* encapsulates the Apostolic Fathers' understanding regarding the Trinity. In general, they rarely moved beyond the *Regula fidei* (Kelly 2007:90). Consequently, what has been mentioned in chapter 4A regarding the *Regula fidei* would suffice. Moreover, the Apostolic Fathers did not endeavour to conceptualize divinity along the philosophical categories of cosmology, teleology and ontology. They generally engaged in ecclesiastical issues and praxes. Theological conceptualization was not the principal goal of the Apostolic Fathers, being more situational in orientation (Bromiley 1978:3-4; Kelly 2007:90). Clement and Ignatius, for example, generally wrote on issues regarding unity, martyrdom and heresies that motivated disunity (Richardson 2006:34-35, 75-77).

Even so, the categories of cosmology, teleology and ontology are not entirely absent within the Apostolic Fathers. Regarding cosmology, as has been stated in the *Regula fidei*, the Apostolic Fathers believed that the universe was created *ex nihilo*. However, creation is marred due to the fall, being subject to corruptibility. Teleologically, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the agents of creation and salvation or the efficient causes at the original creation and its restoration.

We will now focus on the various points where the Apostolic Fathers moved beyond the *Regula fidei*, seeking to interpret what the *Regula* implied. Specifically, how did they ontologically clarify the threefold formula of the scriptural corpus and the *Regula*?

1.1.1 Ontology

As we have already observed regarding the *Regula fidei* in Chapter 4A, the threefold formula was the general theological grid through which the Apostolic Fathers conceptualized divinity (cf. 1 *Clement* 2:1-3; 46:6; *Didache* 7:1-3; Ignatius, *Magnesians*, 13:1-2). The real question is, did they venture beyond it or seek to interpret it?

1.1.1.1 Unity of the Godhead

Overall, the Apostolic Fathers did not elaborate upon the relation between the Three (Kelly 2007:91), yet they applied the threefold formula to particular ecclesiastical contexts.

Due to the prevalent issue of church unity, Ignatius in particular takes great pains to emphasize the unity of God as the foundation for unity within the early church. For example, in *Magnesians* 1:2, Ignatius desires the church to experience the unity, “Ἰησοῦ καὶ πατρός” (Jesus and the Father). In *Magnesians* 7:2³⁰⁴, Ignatius mentions that the Son came from the one Father, and remained one with Him and returned to Him. In this sense, Ignatius seems to suggest an ontological unity, which he applied relationally regarding church unity (cf. *Magnesians*, 13:2). That Ignatius probably considered

³⁰⁴ Ἐπὶ ἑνᾷ Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν ἀφ’ ἐνὸς πατρὸς προελθόντα καὶ εἰς ἕνα ὄντα καὶ χωρήσαντα

it to be an ontological unity is implied in *Smyrnaeans* 3:3, since the Son is “πνευματικῶς ἡνωμένος τῷ πατρὶ” (spiritually united with the Father).

Some have argued that Ignatius proposed an economic trinitarianism in which the Son and Holy Spirit are mere expressions of the Father. Yet, this suggestion does not take into consideration the Johannine scriptural corpus which also emphasizes the ontological and relational unity of the Son with the Father (cf. Jn. 1:1; 10:30; 14:9; 17:5) (Kelly 2007:93). That Ignatius saw distinction can be deduced from his application of the threefold formula to ecclesiastical life. The deacons represent the Son, the bishop the Father and the council the apostolic band (who were endowed with the Holy Spirit) (*Trallians*, 3:1). They had teleological and relational distinction, as do deacons, bishops and councils. Even so, Ignatius’s emphasis is on God’s ontological and relational unity, “τοῦ θεοῦ ἕνωσιν ἐπαγγελλομένου, ὁ ἐστὶν αὐτός” (God promises unity, which he himself is) (*Trallians*, 11:2).

1.1.1.2 Father

Beyond the *Regula fidei*, the Apostolic Fathers mention very little regarding the Father. Apart from being the creator and ruler of the universe, the Father is ontologically described as the “τῷ μόνῳ θεῷ ἁοράτῳ” (the only invisible God) or “ἄορατος θεός” (invisible God) (2 Clement, 20:5; *Diogenetus*, 7:2). Whereas Plato does mention that the Father of the Universe cannot be known (Plato, *Timaeus*, 28B), the Apostolic Fathers most likely take their inference from the apostolic writings that use a similar expression in reference to the Father (cf. Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:15; 1 Tit. 1:17; Heb. 11:27). Moreover, the Apostolic Fathers claim something which Plato did not, the Father manifested Himself or made Himself known through the Son, “For no one either saw him or made him known, but he revealed himself” (*Diogenetus*, 8:5)³⁰⁵.

What we do know of the Father seems to stem from His revelation of Himself through the divine economy or plan in the person and work of the Son and Holy Spirit. He is not known beyond what we know of Him in them.

³⁰⁵ Ἀνθρώπων δὲ οὐδεὶς οὐτε ἐγνώρισεν, αὐτὸς δὲ ἑαυτὸν ἐπέδειξεν

1.1.1.3 Son

2 *Clement* 1:1 sets the tone for the Apostolic Father's conceptualization regarding the Son: "it is necessary to think concerning Jesus Christ, as concerning God"³⁰⁶ (Bromiley 1978:8). Ignatius freely calls Jesus Christ "θεῶ ἡμῶν" (our God) or "τοῦ θεοῦ μου" (my God) (cf. *Polycarp*, 8:3; *Ephesians*, 1:1; *Romans*, 6:3; *Trallians*, 7:1). If taken literally (in the light of Ignatius' statement), Clement is affirming that the Son shares the ontological qualities of the Father (Bromiley 1978:4). This is further highlighted by Ignatius' description of the Son as being "ἀόρατον" (invisible), but became "ὀρατόν" (visible) (*Polycarp*, 3:2). Hence, like the Father, the Son was invisible. The only ontological distinction seems to be that the Son became visible, unlike the Father. In addition, the Son is described as being "οὗτος ὁ αἰών" (the eternal one) (*Diognetus*, 11:5), which implies that He is uncreated and co-eternal with the Father. Furthermore, the Son is described as being, "ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ" (from God) (1 *Clement*, 42:1-2). Relationally, the Son is often described as God the Father's "παιδὸς" (child) (1 *Clement*, 59:2, 4; *Didache*, 10:1-2; *Diognetus* 8:9), though what exactly is implied by this designation is not really explained³⁰⁷.

The only bizarre statement seems to be made by Ignatius, claiming that the Son is "τοῦ πατρὸς ἡ γνώμη" (the mind of the Father) (*Ephesians*, 3:2). For Kelly (2007:93), this might be the only ontological distinction made between the Son and the Father who share the divine "πνεῦμα". However, there are some serious problems with this assertion. The deduction assumes that Ignatius is adopting the Aristotelian concept of God being "νοῦς" or that "νοῦς" has substance (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1096a24-25) (Menn 1992:561-562; Tarnas 1993:63; Kelly 2007:17). Philo, also termed the "λόγος", "νοητὸς" (mind) (*Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, 30-32). Yet, the context of Ignatius' *Ephesians* seems to differ from this conclusion. Firstly, after stating the indicative that Jesus Christ is the Father's mind, Ignatius forms the imperative that the bishops should share "ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ γνώμῃ" (in the mind of Jesus Christ). This seems to imply that the Son is the Father's mind relationally, as we share relationally in the Son's mind. This implies a harmony of thought rather than the same ontological mind. Additionally, in *Ephesians* 5:2 Ignatius highlights the intimacy of the Son with the Father: relational terminology. In *Ephesians* 7:2; 18:2; 19:3, Ignatius ontologically states that Jesus is God in the flesh, revealing the Father. Furthermore, in *Ephesians* 17:2, Ignatius describes the Son as being "θεοῦ γινώσκων" (knowledge of God). Ignatius is clearly not implying that Jesus is

³⁰⁶θεῶ ἡμῶν περὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὡς περὶ θεοῦ

³⁰⁷The Apostolic Fathers' adoption of the term could possibly be linked with the Apostolic writings' use of the term in reference to Jesus (Matt. 12:18; Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30). Παιδὸς is generally translated as "servant", though it predominantly means "child". It would seem the Apostolic Fathers adopted the latter.

ontologically God's knowledge, but rather the revelation of God, being God himself. Consequently, it would seem more prudent to state that Ignatius affirms that Jesus is ontologically God as the Father is God and is so intimately tied to the Father relationally that He can be described as the mind and knowledge of God, being the perfect revelation of the Father.

This fits well with other propositions made by the Apostolic Fathers regarding the Son. *Diognetus* 8:9³⁰⁸ affirms that the Father only communicated His plans to the Son. It would seem that when the Apostolic Fathers employed the term “λόγος” for the Son (*Diognetus* 11:2-5), they had the revelatory role of the Son in mind, since the Son is the only one who could reveal the invisible Father. This fits more with the Johannine corpus which affirms that the Father is only known through the Son, who is His Word (cf. Jn. 14:6). Consequently, it would seem that the primary influence in their Christology was not Hellenistic philosophy, but the scriptural corpus.

Due to their affirmation that the Son is ontologically the same as the Father, they also affirmed the dual nature in the Son when He was incarnated, being both God and man (Bromiley 1978:4-5). *Diognetus* describes the incarnation as the Father sending the Son as God and as a man to men (*Diognetus*, 7:4)³⁰⁹. Inasmuch as the Son became man, he remained united with the Father in spirit (Ignatius, *Smyrneans*, 3:2)³¹⁰. He is “ἐν σαρκὶ γενόμενος θεός” (God coming in flesh) (Ignatius, *Ephesians*, 7:2). This incarnation was possible due to the “θέλημα καὶ δύναμιν θεοῦ” (will and power of God) (Ignatius, *Smyrneans*, 1:1-2).

1.1.1.4 Holy Spirit

Similar to the *Regula fidei*, the Apostolic Fathers did not elaborate on the Holy Spirit, but chiefly focused on the Son. It would seem that the only reference to the divinity of the Holy Spirit is Ignatius claiming that the Holy Spirit is “ἀπὸ θεοῦ” (from God) (*Philadelphians*, 7:1).

³⁰⁸ Ἐννοήσας δὲ μεγάλην καὶ ἄφραστον ἔννοιαν ἀνεκοινώσατο μόνῳ τῷ παιδί

³⁰⁹ ὡς θεὸν ἔπεμψεν, ὡς ἄνθρωπον πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἔπεμψεν

³¹⁰ Καίπερ πνευματικῶς ἠγνωμένος τῷ πατρί.

1.1.1.5 Concluding remarks

Evidentially, the Apostolic Fathers did not seek to interpret the content of the *Regula* or scriptural corpus in detail regarding the Trinity. Ontologically, they affirmed that the Three formed an ontological and relational unity. Due to their reluctance to form interpretative deductions, very little philosophical influence can be deduced. The one reference to the Son being the mind of the Father does not imply a synthesis of Aristotelian ontology of divinity, but denotes more a sense of relational intimacy and the Son's revelatory function as being God made visible, displaying the invisible Father (Kelly 2007:95).

Ontologically, the Apostolic Fathers did allude to the substance of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; they are ontologically “πνεύματι” (spirit). Interestingly, the term “πνεύματι” is not employed by Pythagoras (ψυχή- incorporeal), Heraclitus (*ignem* - corporeal), Anaxagoras (νοῦς - corporeal), Plato (ψυχή), Aristotle (νοῦς) or Stoics (*ignem* - corporeal). Seneca does refer to the Fire being “πνεῦμα” or “*spiritus*” (*Naturales Quaestiones*, 6:16:1)³¹¹ (Setaioli 2007:336). Yet, it is “*spiritus*” that is ontologically “*ignem*” (fire) and not vice versa. The term is more likely to stem from the scriptural corpus. Jn. 4:23 states this most explicitly, “πνεῦμα ὁ θεός” (God is Spirit).

The Apostolic Fathers also affirmed the scriptural corpus' distinction between God and the created order, God being its creator (Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11) and ruler (Ps. 90:2; Jn 17:5) (Clark 1989:186-187). Affirming the *Regula*'s pneumatology, the Apostolic Fathers remained within the scriptural corpus' description of the Spirit being the inspirer of the Scriptures (cf. Jn. 16:13; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 1:19-21) (Welch 1948:22; Barnes 2008:171-178).

Regarding the Son, the Apostolic Fathers kept the terminology of the New Testament writers, referring to the Son as being “σάρξ” (flesh) and “πνεῦμα” (spirit). (cf. Rom. 1:3f; 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:17; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:11; 3:18) (Brown 2003:12; Kelly 2007:138-139). Consequently, they sought to remain within the parameters of the scriptural corpus and the *Regula* rather than following the philosophical trajectory. Unfortunately, the Apostolic Fathers lacked the robust interaction with their cultural-milieu

³¹¹ *non esse terram sine spiritu palam est, non tantum illo dico quo se tenet ac partes sui iungit, qui inest etiam saxis mortuisque corporibus, sed illo dico vitali et vegeto et alente omnia. Hunc nisi haberet, quomodo tot arbustis spiritum infunderet non aliunde viventibus et tot satis? Quemadmodum tam diversas radices aliter atque aliter in se mersas foveret, quasdam summa receptas parte, quasdam altius tractas, nisi multum haberet animae tam multa tam varia generantis et haustu atque alimento sui educantis?*

as the Apologists or the clarification of theological propositions as the polemical writings of Irenaeus or Tertullian. What seemed to have dominated the writings of the Apostolic Fathers was the concern for unity: hermeneutically, doctrinally and in ecclesiastical life.

1.2 Apologists

As we have already noted in our motifs section of chapter 4A, the Apologists' writings were primarily directed towards a pagan audience who had little or no reference to Christianity or understood Christianity according to some misguided public perceptions. Additionally, their writings were defences, seeking to establish the credibility of Christianity as a faith within the Roman Empire (Brown 2003:76-77). In this regard, the most dominant motif was the missiological concern. Due to this, the Apologists more readily structured their presentation of divinity along philosophical categories, readily interacting with the philosophical trajectory prevalent in Hellenism. Since the scriptural corpus was contained within the ecclesiastical community and the *Regula fidei* was an ecclesiastical concept unknown to their pagan audience, it necessitated interpretation and explanation (Brown 2003:77-78; Kelly 2007:95-96). The question is: how did the missiological concern influence their application of the ecclesiastical hermeneutical praxis in relation to the Trinity?

1.2.1 Cosmology

Similar to Philo (*Legum Allegoriarum*, 2:1)³¹², who derived his conceptualization from the scriptural corpus (cf. Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11), the Apologists affirmed that the world was created *ex nihilo*. Moreover, the Apologists affirmed the contrast between a transient creation and an eternal creator, reiterating the *Regula fidei* and scriptural corpus (Harnack 1910:204-205; De Vogel 1985:12; Clark 1989:186-187). Nevertheless, like Philo, they sought to explain this concept to their pagan context, adopting philosophical terms to make it intelligible (*De Opificio Mundi*, 7)³¹³.

Some have argued that the Apologists were merely christianizing Middle-Platonic concepts of the hierarchical structure of reality (Hill 2003:17). At closer inspection, however, this does not seem to be

³¹² μόνος δὲ καὶ καθ' αὐτὸν εἷς ὢν ὁ θεός, οὐδὲν δὲ ὅμοιον θεῷ

³¹³ τινὲς γὰρ τὸν κόσμον μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν κοσμοποιὸν θαυμάσαντες τὸν μὲν ἀγέννητόν τε καὶ αἰδίον ἀπεφήναντο, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ πολλὴν ἀπραξίαν ἀνάγκως κατεψεύσαντο, δέον ἔμπαλιν τοῦ μὲν τὰς δυνάμεις ὡς ποιητοῦ καὶ πατρὸς καταπλαγῆναι, τὸν δὲ μὴ πλέον ἀποσεμνῖναι τοῦ μετρίου.

the case. What the Apologists are arguing for is similar to Philo: God's utter transcendence in comparison to the created order. Similar to Philo (*De Opificio Mundi*, 7)³¹⁴, the Apologists criticised the philosophers for not conceiving that matter was created and that God alone was uncreated. Theophilus' major denunciation of Platonic philosophy is based on the fact that they attribute to matter equal ontological status as God (*Ad Autolycum*, 2:4)³¹⁵ (Palmer 1983:249).

Athenagoras, for example, elaborates on the relationship between the created order and God. In *Plea* 16³¹⁶, Athenagoras emphasizes that God is complete in himself and has no need of creation. Yet a little further on, Athenagoras affirms the Pythagorean and Platonic assertion that the world functions like an "ὄργανον" (instrument) in "ῥυθμῶ" (rhythm). Athenagoras also affirms Plato's belief that the world is "τέχνη τοῦ θεοῦ" (God's artistry). The key difference is: Plato's god is a mere fashioner of eternal material (material cause) by which the instrument was made; Athenagoras conceived God as the creator of the material cause as well (Kelly 2007:85). Accordingly, the Apologists did not exhibit the same reluctance as the Apostolic Fathers to explain the *Regula* and scriptural corpus in philosophical terms (Richardson 2006:295). Nevertheless, they significantly altered the meaning of the philosophical terms to fit biblical categories (De Vogel 1985:2).

In addition the Apologists went beyond the *Regula* to explain the ultimate cause of creation (addressing the philosophical concern for "τέλος"). The purpose of creation was to create a suitable place for the creation of man who was endowed with the ability to partake in God (Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 2:10)³¹⁷. This partaking was possible because man shared the ontological quality of "λόγος" with God, being made in God's image (Kelly 2007:96). Man had, therefore, the ability to either partake in immortality or mortality (Tatian, *Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 13; Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 2:27; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 5) (Harnack 1910:213). Yet the Apologists also deviate significantly from the Philosophers. Whereas the Pythagoreans and Plato argued that the human "ψυχή" derives its existence from the universal "ψυχή", being a part of it, the Apologists

³¹⁴ τινές γὰρ τὸν κόσμον μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν κοσμοποιὸν θαυμάσαντες τὸν μὲν ἀγέννητόν τε καὶ αἰδίον ἀπεφάνησαντο, τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ πολλὴν ἀπραξίαν ἀνάγκως κατεψεύσαντο, δέον ἔμπαλιν τοῦ μὲν τὰς δυνάμεις ὡς ποιητοῦ καὶ πατρὸς καταπλαγῆναι, τὸν δὲ μὴ πλέον ἀποσεμνῦναι τοῦ μετρίου.

³¹⁵ Πλάτων δὲ καὶ οἱ τῆς αἰρέσεως αὐτοῦ θεὸν μὲν ὁμολογοῦσιν, ἀγέννητον, καὶ πατέρα, καὶ ποιητὴν τῶν ὅλων εἶναι· εἴτα ὑποτίθενται θεὸν καὶ ὕλην ἀγέννητον, καὶ ταύτην φασὶ συνηκμακέναι τῷ θεῷ. Εἰ δὲ θεὸς ἀγέννητος, καὶ ὕλη ἀγέννητος, οὐχ ἔστι ὁ θεὸς ποιητὴς τῶν ὅλων ἐστὶ κατὰ τοὺς Πλατωνικοὺς, οὐδὲ μὴν μοναρχία θεοῦ δείκνυται, ὅσον τὸ κατ' αὐτούς.

³¹⁶ ὁ δὲ κόσμος οὐχ ὡς δεομένου τοῦ θεοῦ γέγονεν· πάντα γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἐστὶν αὐτὸς αὐτῷ, φῶς ἀπρόκτιτον, κόσμος τέλειος, πνεῦμα, δυνάμεις, λόγος

³¹⁷ Καὶ τρῶτον μὲν συμφώνως ἐδίδαξαν ἡμᾶς, ὅτο ἐξ οὐχ ὄντων τὰ πάντα ἐποίησεν. Οὐ γάρ τι τῷ θεῷ συνηκμασεν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ τόπος ὢν, καὶ ἀνενδεὴς ὢν, καὶ ὑπερέχων πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων, ἠθέλησεν ἄνθρωπον ποιῆσαι ᾧ γνωσθῇ· τούτῳ οὖν προητοίμασε τὸν κόσμον.

argued that the human “ψυχή” is created and is not immortal. Tatian states this emphatically, “the soul is not immortal”³¹⁸ (*Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 13).

Unlike Platonism and Stoicism who consider evil to be the origin of inert matter lacking the logic of soul or reason, the Apologists argued that creation, though originally made good, became fallen. The Fall, as Theophilus explains, was due to man acquiring knowledge prior to maturity, disobeying God’s command to wait. This was prompted by the deception of the Devil. Man fell into sin and mortality (*Ad Autolycum*, 2:17, 21, 25, 27-28). Justin, likewise, explained that the demons continue their deception in the form of idols or gods, keeping people captive from the knowledge of the true God (*First Apology*, 5) (Meijering 1974:249).

The Apologists affirmed the goodness of the physical creation, describing the Fall as a moral failure which subjugated man to ignorance and death. Consequently, the Apologists went beyond the *Regula*, though explicating the scriptural corpus, in particular Gen. 1-3 (cf. Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 2:17-28³¹⁹). Conversely, this did not hinder the Apologists from incorporating philosophical terminology and categories into their conceptualization. At content level, though, the Apologists are proposing a radically different cosmological trajectory when compared with the philosophical trajectory.

For the Apologists’ cosmological description of reality to be perceived as true, three efficient causes are necessitated: a creative cause (agent of creation), a revelatory cause (agent to release man from his ignorance) as well as a soteriological cause (agent to renew creation). In this regard, the Apologists are continuing to address the teleological concern of the philosophical motifs.

1.2.2 Teleology

1.2.2.1 Philosophical epistemology rejected: revelatory and soteriological cause

To some degree, the Apologists were not in entire agreement as to the extent of the effects of the Fall on humanity, in particular humanity’s cognitive faculties. Two strands of thought seemed to have

³¹⁸Οὐχ ἔστιν ἀθάνατος, ἄνδρες Ἕλληνες, ἡ ψυχὴ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν, θνητὴ δέ.

³¹⁹These chapters are basically an exposition of Genesis 1-3

pervaded: one is the affirmation of the neutrality or divine connection of the human “λόγος” with the divine “λόγος” (a position more akin to Plato and Stoicism). The other is the position that the human “λόγος” is marred due to selfish passions. Justin, in *First Apology* 46, seems to have argued that some of the philosophers like “Σωκράτης καὶ Ἡράκλειτος” (Socrates and Heraclitus) shared the accusation of being called “ἄθεοι” (godless or atheists), since they also partook in the “λόγον” which “πᾶν γένος ἀνθρώπων” (all the race of men) partook in, who is called “τὸν Χριστὸν πρωτότοκον τοῦ θεοῦ” (the Christ the first-begotten of God). In Justin’s estimation then, human reason is capable of neutrality due to its divine participation (De Vogel 1978:361). Theophilus seems to agree with Justin. In *Ad Autolycum* 2:8 Theophilus makes the statement that some philosophers’ “ψυχῇ” (soul) were awakened and spoke things in accordance with “τοῖς προφήταις” (the prophets). Theophilus also argued that humanity was endowed with the freedom to forge his own end, being neutral (*Ad Autolycum*, 2:27) (Harnack 1910:1983-183-184, 195).

This proposition creates a problem. It seems to nullify any need for an external soteriological work. At this juncture, Apologists such as Justin and Theophilus seem to be in complete agreement with the basic presupposition of philosophy: the epistemological foundation for reality or objectivity is centered on the utilization of the faculty of reason. Foreseeing this problem, the Apologists of this persuasion argued that all people, though seeming neutral in reason are deceived by “δαίμονες” (demons) (Justin, *First Apology*, 54; Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 2:8; Athenagoras, *Plea*, 24-27). There is an external negative influence, the influence of the demonic, which hinders humanity from perceiving divinity. Consequently, the hindrance is not our unification with matter or body (Pythagorean, Platonic and Stoic belief), but a spiritual intervention of the demonic (Harnack 1910:184-185; Palmer 1983:249).

Not all the Apologists narrowed the problem to demonology alone. Athenagoras, for example, speaks of the “τῆς ψυχῆς ἄλογoi” (irrationalities of the soul) (*Plea*, 27). Moreover, when the philosophers inquired regarding divinity, they did it “οὐ παρὰ θεοῦ περὶ θεοῦ” (not from God about God), but “παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἕκαστος” (each from himself). Due to this, they, “ἄλλος ἄλλως ἐδογμάτισεν... περὶ θεοῦ” (they taught other conflicting [doctrines]... about God) (*Plea*, 7). From this perspective, the problem is inward or due to irrational elements prevalent in a person’s soul, which is motivated by pride or selfish ambition (Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 3:3) (Harnack 1910:189; De Vogel 1978:379-380).

Consequently, whether the Apologists consider the problem to be external (demons) or internal (marring of the soul) or both all agreed that philosophy could not grasp true divinity or was incapable of attaining what it sought: the knowledge of the universal One. At this point, the Apologists resort to the Sophistic argument that the dogmatic philosophers continually contradicted one another (Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 2:4, 5, 8; 3:3, 6-7; Athenagoras, *Plea*, 7). Tatian was more scathing, arguing that philosophers were only capable of corrupting truth (*Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 40). Whatever the philosophers said should be considered worthless, due to their own corrupt character and arrogance (*Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 2, 3, 19, 25) (Harnack 1910:189, 194; Palmer 1983:250).

In this regard, the Apologists were in agreement with the Sophists; the human mind is incapable of perceiving true or objective reality, and in particular true divinity. However, the Apologists diverge from the Sophists regarding the purpose of knowledge. The Sophists used it for personal gain through the art of rhetoric. According to the cosmology set out by the Apologists, the ultimate cause of cosmology was for man to know divinity. The philosophers might have failed, but their original pursuit was noble. In order for the ultimate cause to be materialised, the Apologists argued that God sent an efficient cause in order to fulfill His primary goal for creation: the revelation of the Son and Spirit.

To reveal God to man, God sent His Son to reveal the truth to men; or as Justin would put it, “Reason himself, taking form and became man, being called Jesus Christ”³²⁰ (Justin, *First Apology*, 5, 46, 63; *Second Apology*, 10) (Kelly 2007:97). The “λόγος” became flesh (Jesus Christ) in order to persuade men from idolatry to the worship of the true God (*First Apology*, 14) (Bromiley 1978:14; Palmer 1983:241-242). Consequently, the incarnation is seen as primarily revelatory in function. Tatian, argues, in *Oratio Adversus Graecos* 13 that death is due to ignorance of the divine, but if the soul could attain the knowledge of the divine it would receive eternal life as well. Since the human “ψυχή” is “σκότος” (darkness) due to ignorance, the “Λόγος” is “τοῦ θεοῦ φῶς” (the light of God). Yet, there is confusion among the Apologists regarding the revelatory function of the Son and Spirit. For example, all of the Apologists affirm the truth of the *Regula* that the Holy Spirit is the “προφητικὸν πνεῦμα” (prophetic Spirit) who inspired the Old Testament prophets and New Testament Apostles to write the words of God (Justin, *First Apology*, 31, 32, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 47, 48, 51; Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 1:14; 2:8-10, 22, 30, 33-35; 3:10, 11, 17; Tatian, *Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 12, 20, 25, 26, 29, 30) (Harnack 1910:192-194).

³²⁰ Αὐτοῦ τοῦ Λόγου μορφωθέντος καὶ ἀνθρώπου γενομένου, καὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ κληθέντος.

Due to the muddling of the teleological function of the Son and Holy Spirit, the Apologists also muddled them ontologically, sometimes promoting a type of binitarianism rather than a trinitarianism. Nevertheless, the Apologists primarily focused on the revelatory function of the Son, which can be deduced from the scriptural corpus (cf. Jn. 14:6; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-3) and would seem more familiar to their pagan audience. The concept of salvation through gnosis is well attested in Platonic philosophy. Therefore, they chiefly conceived the Son's salvific function as being revelatory.

The logic of their argument is as follows: If the Teacher (the Son) has expelled the bad teachers (demons), humanity is able to utilize its faculty of reason to know God through the Son and so begin to live the true life. To some extent, the Apologists' view of soteriology is more akin to the ethical and soteriological concern of the philosophers, which promoted salvation and moral living through gnosis (Plato, *Philebus* 29A-31A; *Republic*, X:613a-b; *Timaeus* 30A 2ff; Menn 1992:557; Allen & Springsted 2007:6, 23; Kelly 2007:16; Setaioli 2007:333). The only difference seems to be that within philosophy, gnosis is achieved internally, while for the Apologists it is received externally from the Son (De Vogel 1978:363).

The Apologists did not limit their soteriology to gnosis, but also incorporated the notion of substitution. Due to our ignorance we sinned and became captive to the devil. In *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin explains the concept of substitution, in that Christ's death accomplished the remission of our sins and the possession of mankind, releasing us from the devil's captivity (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 41:1³²¹; 111:3; 134:5ff). Through this work, Christ also creates a new humanity (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 138:2)³²².

1.2.2.2 Creative cause

According to the Apologists, the chief agent or creative cause in creation was the "Λόγος", who was sent forth to execute the creation and organization of the cosmos (Justin, *First Apology*, 59, 64; *Second Apology*, 6; Athenagoras, *Plea*, 10) (Kelly 2007:97). To some extent, the Apologists' conceptualization of the "Λόγος" being the efficient cause of creation seems similar to Philo's "Λόγος"

³²¹Καὶ ἡ τῆς σεμιδάλεως δὲ προσφορά, ὧ ἄνδρες, ἔλεγον, ἡ ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαριζομένων ἀπὸ τῆς λέπρας προσφέρεσθαι παραδοθεῖσα, τύπος ἦν τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς Εὐχαριστίας, ὃν εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ πάθους οὗ ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαιρομένων τὰς φυχὰς ἀπὸ πάσης πονηρίας ἀνθρώπων, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν παρέδωκε ποιεῖν, ἵνα ἅμα τε εὐχαριστῶμεν τῷ Θεῷ ὑπὲρ τε τοῦ τὸν κόσμον ἐκτικέναι σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας ἐν ἡ γεινῶμεν ἡλευθερωκέναι ἡμᾶς, καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας καταλελυκέναι τελείαν κατὰ τὸν παθητοῦ γεγομένου κατὰ τὴν Βουλὴν αὐτοῦ.

³²²Ὁ γὰρ Χριστὸς, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως ὢν, καὶ ἀρχὴ πάλιν ἄλλου γένους γέγονεν τοῦ ἀναγεννηθέντος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ δι' ὕδατος καὶ πίστεως, καὶ ξύλου τοῦ τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ σταυροῦ ἔχοντος·

doctrine, and some scholars, such as Harnack (1910:206-207), have argued for the duplication of Philo's thought. The similarities are quite obvious, since the "λόγος" for both Philo and the Apologists was the instrument of God's creation. Nevertheless, the Apologists' concept is similar to the Gospel of John. Regarding the "λόγος", John states that, "πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο" (all things through him were made) (Jn. 1:3). The Apologists also affirmed the ontological statement in the Gospel of John that, "θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος" (the Word was God) (Jn. 1:1). Philo affirmed the "λόγος" to be a created being from God's thoughts, being internal "*ratio*" becoming "*sermo*", which seems more akin to Plato's world-soul or the Stoic concept of "ἐνδιαθετος" (rational thought within) becoming "λόγος προφορικός" (externally expressed word) (cf. *Legum Allegoriarum* 2:86; 3:96; *De Cherubim*, 36; *Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, 30-32; Kelly 2007:11; De Vogel 1953:46-47; Bethune-Baker 1951:119-120). Conversely, the Apologists' claim that the "λόγος" is not merely a divine creation, but God as well; taking their cue from the scriptural corpus and *Regula*'s affirmation of the Son being God.

Furthermore, in addition to the Son being the efficient cause of creation, the Apologists also affirm that God the Father sustains the universe, "παρ' αὐτοῦ πνεύματι" (by His Spirit), being its life-force or breath (Athenagoras, *Plea*, 6; Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 1:4; 1:7; 2:13). Consequently, whereas the Son is the agent of creation, the Spirit is its sustainer.

1.2.3 Ontology

If the Father of the universe used the efficient causes of the Son and Spirit in creation and redemption, what is their relationship with the Father?

1.2.3.1 Threefold Name

The Apologists affirmed the threefold formula of the scriptural corpus and *Regula* (Justin, *First Apology*, 6, 31, 61, 63, 65, 67; Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 1:7; 2:15; 2:18) (Briggman 2009:111). Due to their audience (pagan society) as well as their missiological motif, the Apologists did not merely reiterate the formula, but sought to explain the relationship between the three names.

Theophilus was the first to define the threefold name as a “τριάδος” (triad) of “τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ τοῦ Λόγου αὐτοῦ, καὶ τῆς Σοφίας αὐτοῦ” (of God, and of His Word and of His Wisdom) (*Ad Autolyicum*, 2:15). Unfortunately, Theophilus did not elaborate on what he meant by “τριάδος”. The context of the citation was regarding the “τρεις ἡμέραι” (three days) of creating the luminaries being a “τύποι” (type) of the “τριάδος”. Being satisfied with his typological interpretation of the luminaries in Genesis 1:3-31, Theophilus did not pursue to clarify his terminology (Kelly 2007:102). Justin sought to make a typological interpretation of Plato’s *Timaeus* 36 B-C and 2 *Epistle* 312E, as containing the threefold formula (*First Apology*, 60). Yet, this is a very ambitious and unlikely endeavour (Hardy 2006:281; Briggman 2009:112). Justin did not seek to explain the exact relationship between the three names at this instance.

Athenagoras seems to be the most explicit in explaining the threefold name in monotheistic terms, continually emphasizing the unity of the Godhead. In order to affirm the unity of God Athenagoras resorts to highlighting how the philosophers and poets affirmed the unity of God (*Plea*, 5-6) (Palmer 1983:244). The Apologists were aware of the philosophical concern and paradigm of unity-diversity. Athenagoras’ claim that the philosophers willingly or unwillingly reached an agreement on the unity of God (ontology) when enquiring the first principle (teleology) is not a farfetched conclusion (*Plea*, 7)³²³. As noted in Chapter 3, most Pre-Socratics moved towards a monistic understanding of divinity. Similarly, Socratic philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle both conceived of a supreme being that was the ultimate unity in a cosmos of diversity. Athenagoras was engaging this philosophical quest for the unifying principle of the cosmos, claiming that it is the triadic God of the Christians.

At several instances Athenagoras describes the three as being a “ένώσει” (unity) (*Plea*, 10; 12), affirming the scriptural corpus’ strong affirmation of monotheism, though applying this to the triadic formula. However, like most of the Apologists, this monotheistic unity also has a “τάξει διαίρεσιν” (distinction in rank) (*Plea*, 10). It is the quest of the Christian, according to Athenagoras, to know the “κοινωνία” (fellowship) of the Son with the Father (relational term) as well as their “ένωσις καὶ διαίρεσις” (unity and distinction) (ontological term) (*Plea*, 12). It is explaining this distinction within the monotheism that pre-occupies the Apologists’ thought regarding divinity (Bethune-Baker 1951:128-129).

³²³ ὅταν οὖν τὸ μὲν εἶναι ἔν τὸ θεῖον ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον, καὶ μὴ θέλωσι, τοῖς πᾶσι συμφωνῇται ἐπὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς τῶν ὅλων παραγινόμενοις

1.2.3.2 Distinction and rank defined

According to Justin, God is everlasting, ineffable, changeless, impassible and uncreated (cf. *First Apology*, 6; 9; 13; 14; 25; 61; 63) (Palmer 1983:242; Kelly 2007:84-85). Tatian in a similar way describes the Father as invisible, intangible, eternal, uncreated and spirit (*Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 4; cf. Athenagoras, *Plea*, 4; 6) (Palmer 1983:243). Theophilus breaks slightly from the negative theological descriptions of Justin and Tatian, by affirming God the Father both positively and negatively. God's glory (positive) is uncontainable (negative); His greatness (positive) incomprehensible (negative); His strength (positive) incomparable (negative); His wisdom (positive) unequalled (negative); His goodness (positive) inimitable (negative); his kindness (positive) indescribable (negative) (*Ad Autolycum*, 1:3). Theophilus is grasping that God's attributes are communicable, yet in essence still incommunicable. Some have inferred that the utilization of negative theology is primary due to Middle-Platonic influences which generally describe the Supreme Being in negative terms. Yet, it should be noted that the context of these descriptions are principally in relation to pagan deities. The pagan gods were known for their passion-filled exploits and were almost entirely communicable in attributes and nature. The Apologists sought to contrast the Christian God from the pagan deities (Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 1:1; 1:10; 2:2; 2:34; 2:36) (Palmer 1983:247, 251).

Where distinction and rank seem to occur within God is at the moment of creation. Theophilus describes this distinction or diversification the following way, "God, then, having His own Word internal within His own bowels, begat Him, emitting Him along with His own wisdom before all things. He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by Him He made all things. He is called "governing principle" [ἀρχή], because He rules, and is Lord of all things fashioned by Him. He, then, being Spirit of God, and governing principle, and wisdom, and power of the highest, came down upon the prophets, and through them spoke of the creation of the world and of all other things."³²⁴ (Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 2:10; Schaff na:98).

A couple of things need to be observed regarding Theophilus' statement. Firstly, both the "Λόγον" (Son) and "Σοφίαν" (Spirit) were latent within the Father or "ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις σπλάγχνοις" (in his own

³²⁴ Ἐχων οὖν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ Λόγον ἐνδιάθετον ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις σπλάγχνοις, ἐγέννησεν αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ Σοφίας ἐξερευζάμενος πρὸ τῶν ὅλων. Τοῦτον τὸν Λόγον ἔσχευ ὑπουργὸν τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένων, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα πεποίηκεν. Οὗτος λέγεται ἀρχή, ὅτι ἄρχει καὶ κυριεύει πάντων τῶν δι' αὐτοῦ δεδημιουργημένων. Οὗτος οὖν, ὢν Πνεῦμα Θεοῦ, καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ σοφία, καὶ δύναμις υφίστου κατήρχετο εἰς τοὺς προφήτας, καὶ δι' αὐτῶν ἐλάλει τὰ περὶ τῆς ποιήσεως τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων.

bowels). The term used “ἐνδιάθετον” is the same word used within Stoicism regarding the latent word or “ratio” within. It would seem the Apologists uncritically adopted Philo’s Stoic-Platonic construct of the “λόγος” as the created agent of God. Athenagoras describes that the Word was the Son in “ἰδέα καὶ ἐνεργεία” (in idea and actuality) (*Plea*, 10), a sort of Platonic and Aristotelian construct of God’s thought’s realized. Secondly, the Son and Spirit were only latent until the act of creation was necessitated. In this regard, their ontological status is dependent on their teleological function, being part of God’s “οἰκονομία” (economy) (Tatian, *Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 5). The Son was the “ἄρκή” (governing principle) through which God created the cosmos (essentially identifying him with Plato’s quest for the universal One). This position seems to be held by most Apologists (Athenagoras, *Plea*, 6; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 61; Tatian, *Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 5). Consequently, it would seem that the Son and Spirit’s ontological distinction and rank is based on their origin. The Father is the original monotheistic being (Harnack 1910:210; Bethune-Baker 1951:124; Hill 2003:17; Letham 2004:90).

The Apologists seem to completely resort to philosophical categories defined by Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Philonic philosophies to explain the threefold formula contained within the New Testament corpus as well as the *Regula*. Nevertheless, there is a distinction between the Apologists and the philosophical trajectory. Painstakingly, the Apologists sought to clarify that the Son and Spirit are not created beings, but are also co-eternal with the Father, sharing in the essence of the Father (Harnack 1910:210). Their epistemological premise and hermeneutical grid demands it.

Athenagoras, for example, argues that the Word was not created, “γὰρ ὁ θεὸς, νοὺς αἰδίου ὧν, εἶχεν αὐτὸς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν λόγον”³²⁵ (for God, being eternal mind, has within himself the Word) (*Plea*, 10). There was no point where God did not possess His Word within Him, which implies that the Word is eternal with God (Tatian, *Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 4). Furthermore, when the Word became “sermo” (external) this did not imply that He received a separate essence from the Father. Tatian describes that the Word came into existence by “μερισμὸν” (participation) and not “κατὰ ἀποκοπήν” (according to abscission). Using the analogy of a torch, Tatian argues that the essence of the Son is like, “μιας δαδὸς ἀνάπτεται μὲν πυρὰ πολλὰ” (one torch lighting indeed many fires) (*Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 5). In this sense, the Son and the Father share the same essence. The Son’s begetting was not in a human sense of birth, but initiated by the Father’s will and power (Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 61, 128-129) (Hill 2003:17-18; Kelly 2007:97-100).

³²⁵Yet, describing God as eternal “νοῦς” is reminiscent of Anaxagoras and Aristotle’s understanding of the divine being ontologically “νοῦς”.

Another analogy adopted is the analogy of the rays of the sun. Seneca, for example, used this analogy to explain our “λόγος” relation to the universal “λόγος” (*Epistulae* 1-65, XLI:5). It also seems that the Apologists understood the analogy in a similar way, as if the rays of the sun or its effluence are ontologically identical or extensions of the original (operating within their philosophical milieu). As a ray of the sun, so the Son is still united in essence with the Father (Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 128) (Chadwick 2003:95). The sun analogy is also applied to the Holy Spirit. Athenagoras describes the Holy Spirit, “εἶναι φάμεν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀπορρέον καὶ ἐπαναφερομενον ὡς ἀκτινα ἡλίου” (to be the effluence of God, flowing from and returning as the rays of the sun) (*Plea*, 10). Consequently, the Holy Spirit is described in similar fashion as the Son being a ray of light from the sun.

Whereas the Apologists did mention the existence of the Holy Spirit and attributed to Him the role of inspiration and sustaining creation, there remained some confusion. To some extent, their strong emphasis on the “λόγος” (to some degree motivated by their Christo-centric hermeneutic) overshadowed and made the Holy Spirit almost obsolete in their constructions. For example, Justin attributes to the Holy Spirit the function of inspiration, but also to the Son (*First Apology*, 36; 38-51; 63). Similarly, the Holy Spirit and the Son share the same functions regarding prayer (*First Apology*, 65; 67). It was the Spirit of the Word that formed the man Jesus Christ in the Virgin Mary (*First Apology*, 33). Both the Son and the Spirit bestow gifts on the church (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 87). Both share the role of illumination (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 4; 7). It seems that the inclusion of the Holy Spirit is due to the scriptural data as well as the *Regula* which insists on His ontological existence (Briggman 2009:115-132). Even so, most Apologists attribute to the Spirit the teleological function of granting immortality (Tatian, *Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 13) and inspiration (Athenagoras, *Plea*, 7; 9) (Kelly 2007:102).

1.2.4 Concluding Remarks

It could be argued that the Apologists were the first attempt of the ecclesiastical community to thoughtfully engage their pagan neighbours. Driven with a missiological motif, motivated by a soteriological concern, the Apologists sought to explain the Christian faith in categories palatable to their Hellenistic audience.

When understood from this premise, the Apologists' engagement was not driven by the same motifs of a modern systematician: objectivity through the process of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Rather, the Apologists utilized Hellenistic terminology and altered its meaning to fit with the scriptural data as well as the ecclesiastical hermeneutical grid (De Vogel 1985:2). Whether this alteration was successful is debatable.

What seems to be clear is that the Apologists did not possess the terminology or concepts to adequately define the relational and ontological status of the threefold name of the Godhead. Inasmuch as they affirmed monotheism, their extrapolation of the triadic Godhead was problematic. The Son and Spirit are more defined as attributes that received ontological status than ontological beings in and of themselves. Moreover, driven by the philosophical construct of ontology-derived-from-teleology, the Son and Spirit's existence seem superfluous or obsolete prior to and after the accomplishment of God's "οἰκονομία" (economy or plan). Their existence as external beings from the essence of the Father is only validated by their teleological function. Once that function ceases, their ontological status also ceases. Consequently, it would seem that the Apologists did not adequately describe the "κοινωνία" (fellowship) of the triadic God. Relational terminology is predominantly lacking.

Is it a fair judgment to argue that due to their failure to adequately describe the ontological relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit, they were unorthodox? To argue that the Apologists were not part of the orthodox trajectory and mere Hellenizers of Christian thought, neglects the premise with which they operated. Inasmuch as their postulation of God's ontology appears questionable at many junctures, they continually affirmed the essential components within the scriptural corpus and *Regula fidei*. For the Apologists, the Father, Son and Spirit were God. They shared divinity. They were co-eternal (even if this meant being latent within the Father). They remained a unity in their triadic being. Consequently, monotheism did not become tritheism. It would seem the Apologists remained within the bounds of the scriptural corpus and *Regula fidei*. In this regard, they are orthodox (De Vogel 1978:369).

What made the Apologists' quest incredibly difficult was that the philosophical trajectory did not possess trinitarian concepts in a biblical sense. There was no preconceived framework to operate in. Plato's world-soul was a created being and Plato conceived reality in a hierarchical structure (Plato, *Timaeus*, 36D-37A; *Phaedrus*, 252d6-253c6; cf. 250cl-6, 251a5-7; Robinson 1967:57; Blyth 1997:190; Kelly 2007:16; Crickmore 2009:6). Aristotle's concept of generation explained generation

as sequential, which implied that generation can not be eternal. Something has to be prior to something (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I-IX, 1032b30-1033a2). Stoicism's concept of diffusion was possibly the closest to a notion of shared substance within philosophy, but remained inadequate, since diffusion was explained as varying degrees of distribution and concentration of the divine essence (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 2:9:25). In this regard, divinity was defined hierarchical, sequential or diffused. To engage the Hellenistic milieu in order to make the Christian faith intelligible implied irreconcilable difficulties, since the content of the scriptural corpus as well as the *Regula* remained alien to the philosophical trajectory.

1.3 Irenaeus

1.3.1 Distinction between Irenaeus and the Apologists

What sets Irenaeus apart from the Apologists is the genre of literature. The Apologists wrote to a pagan audience seeking to clarify the Christian faith. Irenaeus' work is polemical, written to a Christian audience seeking to clarify orthodoxy in relation to heterodoxy, in particular Gnosticism (Shelton 2010:27). Irenaeus was not missiologically driven, but shared the Apostolic Fathers' concern for ecclesiastical unity in the midst of a diversity of opinions (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:10:1-2). However, Irenaeus also has a strong soteriological concern and this can be deduced from his elaboration on the soteriological function of the Son and Spirit.

Consequently, Irenaeus avoided the philosophical jargon of the Apologists, opting to use more biblical language in his description of divinity (Kelly 2007:105). This does not imply that Irenaeus was utterly devoid of philosophical concepts and terminology. For example, in *Adversus Haereses* 3:24:2-3:25:5 Irenaeus accuses the Gnostics of being Epicurean in their cosmology and ontology of divinity. Irenaeus' strongest argument is that the Gnostics lack a teleological conception of cosmology. Citing Plato's *Laws* 4:715E and *Timaeus* 29E in *Adversus Haereses* 3:25:5 and utilizing Plato's argument in *Timaeus* 30A, Irenaeus argues that it is due to God's goodness that God deigned to fashion a good cosmos with a teleological purpose. Therefore, the cosmos is not a purposeless or accidental creation. Irenaeus is not shy from wielding philosophical arguments to bolster his polemic (Briggman 2011:118-124).

1.3.2 Cosmology

Like the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists, Irenaeus affirmed that the cosmos was created *ex nihilo* by God the Father (*Adversus Haereses*, 2:10:4; 2:11:1; 2:30:9; *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching*, 5) (Letham 2004:92-93; Kelly 2007:86). Originally created for good, God's creation was also subjected to futility due to the apostasy of angels and the disobedience of men (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:10:3). It is from these two fundamental points of ecclesiastical cosmology (creation and fall), that Irenaeus introduces the efficient causes of creation and salvation.

1.3.3 Teleology

1.3.3.1 Creative cause

According to Irenaeus, God the Father created the universe by the Word and Spirit, describing them as God's hands (*Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 11). Irenaeus' justification that the Son and Spirit were involved at creation is deduced from Gen. 1:26, which uses the plural "ποιήσωμεν" (let us make) and "ἡμετέραν" (our). Irenaeus' selection of words in referring to the Son and Spirit as the hands of God seem to be an appropriation of the biblical language employed in Job 10:8 and Ps. 119:73, referring to "αἱ χεῖρές σου" (your hands) through which God "ἐποίησάν" (made) and "ἐπλάσαν" (formed) (Bromiley 1978:20; Letham 2004:93; Kelly 2007:106; Briggman 2011:121).

At this point, Irenaeus and Justin's understanding of the teleological function of the Son and Spirit are similar. Both seem involved in the act of creation. Even so, Irenaeus does differentiate between the Son and Spirit. According to Irenaeus, the Son establishes the cosmos, while the Spirit gives order and forms it (*Adversus Haereses*, 4:20:2) (Kelly 2007:106).

What we should deduce from Irenaeus' selection of words is that Irenaeus was more dependent on the scriptural corpus for his conceptualization of a creative cause than the Apologists. Irenaeus' work is written to the ecclesiastical community and is in opposition to heterodoxy and its interpretation of

Scripture. Therefore, it should not be a surprise that Irenaeus is more inclined to argue from the scriptural corpus, since that is the main point of contention.

1.3.3.2 Soteriological cause: recapitulation and revelation

Where Irenaeus seems to elaborate in more detail is the soteriological cause of cosmology. Due to the Gnostic position undermining any notion of a material redemption, Irenaeus' elaboration is most likely motivated by a soteriological concern. Irenaeus, seeking to validate a material redemption, painstakingly demonstrates how the Son and Spirit affirm the goodness of the material universe as well as wanting to redeem what God has created through them.

Due to the corruption of the cosmos, being subject to mortality, it is unable to redeem itself. Only the Creator of the cosmos, who is incorruptible and immortal, can redeem creation and it is only if the Creator joins Himself with His creation that the created cosmos can become incorruptible and immortal (*Adversus Haereses*, 3:19:1; 4:38:1-4). Consequently, the incarnation of the Son was necessitated, "The Word... had been made a man"³²⁶ (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:1:1). The incorruptible took on corruptible flesh becoming the Second Adam, in order to reverse the affects of the Fall of Adam (Bromiley 1978:21, 82; Hill 2003:27-28). Irenaeus' recapitulation theory can be deduced from Rom. 5:11-21 (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22; 15:45). The Son accomplished this by, "giving his soul for our souls and his flesh for our flesh"³²⁷ (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:1:1; cf. 5:1:3; 5:36:3).

Apart from the Son establishing redemption for creation, it is the Spirit of God who (joining himself with humanity), grants the immortality accomplished by the Son, being the breath of life that revivifies men (*Adversus Haereses*, 3:11:8). As Irenaeus explains in *Adversus Haereses* 5:36:2, "this is the ordering and arrangement of them who are being saved", they "ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father"³²⁸. The Spirit of the Father was poured out to bring about the, "*adunionem et communionem Dei et hominis*" (union and communion of God and men) (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:1:1; cf. 4:38:1-4).

³²⁶ *Verbum... homo factus fuisset*

³²⁷ *Suo igitur sanguine redimente nos Domino, et dante animam suam pro nostra anima, et carmen suam pro nostris carnibus...*

³²⁸ *Hanc esse ad ordinationem et dispositionem eorum qui salvantur, dicunt presbyteri apostolorum discipuli, et per huiusmodi gradus proficere, et per Spiritum quidem [ad] Filium, per Filium autem ascendere ad Patrem*

In this sense, the Spirit and the Son complement one another. Irenaeus does not muddle the Son and Spirit's function, but describes them as co-partners in being the Father's soteriological cause. The Spirit was poured out "bringing God down to men" and the Son was incarnated, "raising man to God". In this way we receive "*in corruptelam*" (incorruption) through "*communione*" (communion) with God (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:1:1; cf. 5:20:1-2)³²⁹. Adam, "did not at any moment flee God's hands"³³⁰ (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:1:3).

Apart from the Son and Spirit's soteriological function of redeeming the material creation, the Son and Spirit also have a revelatory function. For Irenaeus, only the Son reveals the Father and it is only through the Son that the Father can be known (*Adversus Haereses*, 4:9:1; 4:10:1). Irenaeus states this emphatically, "For there is no other way we are able to know the things of God, unless our Teacher, the existing Word, had been made man"³³¹ (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:1:1). The Son made the "*invisibili Patri*" (invisible Father) known through the "*visibile Verbum*" (visible Word) (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:16:2) (Kelly 2007:106-107). At this point alone, Irenaeus is rejecting the philosophical epistemology, firmly adhering to the ecclesiastical presupposition of the necessity of revelation; keeping to the parameters of the scriptural corpus (cf. Jn. 14:6; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-3).

In addition, where Justin muddled the revelatory and illuminatory function of the Son and Spirit, Irenaeus clarifies the role of the Spirit. According to Irenaeus, the Son can only be known through the Spirit (*Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 6-7). In this sense, the Son reveals the Father, but the Spirit illuminates man in order to behold the Son. This can be deduced from the scriptural corpus (cf. Jn. 14:15-18, 26; 16:12-15; Eph. 1:15-23) (Kelly 2007:107). Apart from the role of illumination, the Spirit of God is also the prophetic Spirit, who inspired the prophets (*Adversus Haereses*, 3:1:1; 3:11:9).

³²⁹ *Ad homines quidem deponente Deum per Spiritum, ad Deum autem rursus imponente hominem per suam incarnationem, et firme et vere in adventu suo donante nobis in corruptelam, per communionem quae est ad eum*

³³⁰ *Non enim effugit aliquando Adam manus Dei*

³³¹ *Non enim aliter nos dicere poteramus quae sunt Dei, nisi magister noster, verbum existens, homo factus fuisset*

1.3.4 Ontology

1.3.4.1 Threefold name: unity

As we have noted at the *Regula fidei* in Chapter 4A, Irenaeus affirms the threefold name of God. Throughout Irenaeus' works, he affirms the monotheism prevalent in the scriptural corpus (Brown 2003:79). God, in his essence, is indissolubly one (*Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 47). Irenaeus also stresses God's transcendence and immanence in that nothing is beyond God, yet God contains all things (*Adversus Haereses*, 4:19:2) (Hill 2003:24-25; Kelly 2007:104-105). In *Adversus Haereses* 2:18:3, Irenaeus moves away from the negative theology evident in the Apologists' writing in describing the Father. Irenaeus does stress that God is fundamentally different from humanity regarding their thoughts, passions and desires. The reason is that God is perfect in His being. Positively, Irenaeus refers to God the Father as being complete in understanding, spirit, thought, intelligence, reason, hearing, seeing, light and goodness. By inference, man is incomplete in all these qualities. God's two hands (Son and Spirit) are ontologically one with Him, like our own hands to our human physiology (*Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 11) (Kelly 2007:106).

For Irenaeus, the Son and Spirit share the Father's essence, being co-eternal with Him and not external to Him. Moreover, Irenaeus refrains from explaining how the Son was generated³³², rejecting the Apologists' adoption of the Stoic concept of "*ratio*" becoming "*sermo*" (*Adversus Haereses*, 2:13:8; 2:28:4-6). For Irenaeus, the Son was in the bosom of the Father (*Adversus Haereses*, 3:11:5-6) (Letham 2004:92-93). Irenaeus does not propose a type of teleological ontology of the Son and Spirit, since they have always conversed with the Father. Moreover, what is begotten of God is God (*Adversus Haereses*, 2:30:9; 4:20:3; *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 47, 51, 53) (Kelly 2007:105; Shelton 2010:42).

Yet, if the Father, Son and Spirit are an intrinsic unity, how can they be distinctly identified, forming a Trinity?

³³²Irenaeus cites Is. 53:8 as reason not to inquire regarding the Son's generation.

1.3.4.2 Diversity: revealed in the economy of God

A small distinction occurs between Irenaeus and the Apologists regarding the diversity within the unity of God. For the Apologists, the Son and Spirit derive their ontological status from their teleological function. This implies that they “came into being” when God was seeking to accomplish His purposes. Inasmuch as the Apologists affirmed the Son and Spirit’s divinity, their co-eternality was only latent within the Father.

Conversely, Irenaeus affirms the co-eternality of the Son and Spirit with the Father and refuses to explain the generation of the Son (implying the eternal-generation of the Son). Unlike the Apologists, Irenaeus affirms that the Son and Spirit are only made known through the “οἰκονομία” (economy) of God. Therefore, their ontological existence is not dependant on God’s “οἰκονομία”, only the revelation of them. In conclusion, God is known as Father, Son and Spirit, since He revealed Himself as Father, Son and Spirit in redemptive history. Historicity or the historical events of redemptive history validate God’s Trinitarian being. Irenaeus’ understanding of the Trinity is rooted in his conception of soteriology or the redemptive narrative (Letham 2004:94-95; Kelly 2007:105).

Irenaeus cites numerous creative and redemptive historical events as explications of the trinitarian nature of God. In *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, Irenaeus states that the Trinity is known: in the Christian baptismal formula (3; 7); at creation (5); in redemptive history (6-7; 30; 41; 89; 97); at the incarnation (32-33); the resurrection (42; 56); in the Davidic covenant (49-50); in the divine approval of Christ’ ministry (53) and at the renewal of the cosmos (89). This forms the core belief of orthodox doctrine (100). Accordingly, the One God is known as a Trinity through His economy or dispensations (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:10:1; 4:14:2; 4:28:2) (Brown 2003:84; Kelly 2007:104-105; Shelton 2010:42-43, 45).

Regarding the Son’s incarnation, Irenaeus describes Him as “*vere homo, vere deus*” (truly man and truly God) (*Adversus Haereses*, 4:6:7) (Brown 2003:84; Kelly 2007:148). He is the eternal Word who became incarnate (*Adversus Haereses*, 1:9:2; 3:16:2, 8; 3:17:4). The only seeming ontological distinction between the Son and Father is that the Son is visible (through the incarnation) and the Father invisible (Kelly 2007:147).

Regarding the Spirit, Irenaeus adopts Theophilus' designation of the Spirit as being God's Wisdom, validating his statement from various scriptural texts and inter-testamental texts (cf. Ps. 33:6); being always present with God the Father (cf. Gen. 1:26; *Adversus Haereses*, 4:20:1). Moreover, the Spirit is under the subjugation of the Son and Father, revealing the Son and Father unto whom the Father wills and the Son dispenses (*Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 47) (Kelly 2007:106-107).

1.3.5 Concluding Remarks

Similar to the Apostolic Fathers, Irenaeus seems more concerned to remain within the parameters of the scriptural corpus and *Regula fidei*. Both did not seek to exactly explain the ontological relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit, except to affirm that the Son is God as well. The tendency to remain bound to the scriptural corpus and *Regula fidei* is primarily to preserve ecclesiastical unity. Nonetheless, Irenaeus was also motivated by a soteriological concern. This is due to the Gnostic emphasis of discrediting the materiality of the cosmos as being the creation of a lesser being and the prison of a person's "ψυχή". Matter was intrinsically evil. According to this cosmological understanding, the incarnation is impossible, since God (good) would never take on matter (evil). Consequently, Irenaeus stressed the points of God being the creator of the physical universe, but also that God seeks to redeem and glorify the physical universe.

If orthodoxy is defined by the ecclesiastical hermeneutic, Irenaeus is convincingly orthodox. He affirms the epistemological premise of revelation and illumination. His emphasis on the Son illustrates a Christo-centric understanding of the scriptural corpus. Moreover, Irenaeus emphasizes the necessity of historicity, in particular redemptive history, to validate theological conceptualization³³³. Irenaeus' Trinity is not a theological construct based on the philosophical speculation, but primarily due to the scriptural corpus revealing God as Father, Son and Spirit. Yet, it could be argued that Irenaeus reads Scripture teleologically, since he emphasizes God's economy as the means of knowing God (Letham 2004:96-97; Kelly 2007:108).

³³³The importance is historicity is primarily due to the biblical presentation of time being linear with an end. There is an economy or plan set forth by God and will be terminated by God. This is contrary to Hellenistic concept of time being cyclical. Consequently, historiography had little significance apart from its participation in the universal principle that governs its cyclical nature (Ursic & Louth 1998:97, 99-100)

1.4 A summary of the Orthodox trajectory

	Apostolic Fathers	Apologists	Irenaeus
Cosmology	God created all visible and invisible reality <i>ex nihilo</i>	God created the invisible and visible universe <i>ex nihilo</i> in order to create man.	God created the invisible and visible universe <i>ex nihilo</i> . His motive was His sheer goodness.
Teleology	God created the universe through His Son, the Word.	God created the universe through His Son and sustains it by His Spirit. Both the Son and Spirit are involved in redeeming humanity and revealing the Father.	God created the universe through His Son and orders it by His Spirit. Both are involved in redeeming and revealing the Father. The Son reveals and the Spirit enables.
Ontology: Unity	God the Father, Son and Spirit form a unity. They are relationally and ontologically a unity.	God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are a relational and ontological unity, like the rays of the sun. However, the Son and Holy Spirit are latent within the Father prior to creation and redemption.	God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are a relational and ontological unity. They are co-eternal and share the Father's essence, being His "hands".
Ontology: Diversity	The Son is God made visible. He is both God and man.	The Son is God's " <i>ratio</i> " becoming " <i>sermo</i> ". He is in essence one with the Father. He is both God and man.	The Son is God made visible. He is in essence one with the Father. He is both God and man.
	The Spirit is from God	The Spirit shares the essence of the Father, being His Wisdom.	The Spirit is the Wisdom of God, being co-eternal with the Father. He is subjugated to the Son and Father.

2. Heterodoxy

Citing Col. 2:8, according to Tertullian the root of heresy is philosophy (*Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:7). In *Praescriptione Haereticorum* 7:1-6 & 33:3-12, Tertullian claims that all the heretics have their roots in some philosophical school and that some of the heresies were in their infancy during the apostolic period. This would imply that at an epistemological and hermeneutical level, heterodoxy is more akin to the philosophical milieu than the ecclesiastical. It is the aim of this section to determine whether the heterodoxical trajectory was merely an extension of the philosophical trajectory (Chapter 3) into the ecclesiastical community.

2.1 Gnosticism & Marcion

The origin of Gnosticism is difficult to pinpoint due to the lack of historical data. Traditionally, Gnosticism was considered to be a Christian phenomenon, facilitated by a desire to understand the ontology of divinity (Brown 2003:39). Among liberal scholarship, Gnosticism was considered to be the first attempt of Christianity to systematize its dogma. Harnack (1958:227-228), considered them to be the first theologians who sought to contextualize the Gospel message into Hellenism. Gnosticism was the synthesis of oriental religions and Greek philosophy and the simple Gospel (Harnack 1958:229; Hill 2003:22). The first to propose a new synthesis was Simon Magus (Tertullian, *Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 33:11). Accordingly, whatever anti-thesis was developed after the thesis of Gnostic teaching was considered to be a new synthesis devoid of the original Gospel message (Brown 2003:41).

Conversely, contemporary scholarship seems to discard the original assesment of the origin of Gnosticism. Prior to Christianity, there seems to have been Jewish Gnosticism and widespread fushions between oriental religions and Greek philosophy (Kelly 2007:23; Richardson 2006:24). To some extent, Harnack was already hinting towards this by affirming that similar syntheses of religion had occurred in Syria, Judeaand Samaria prior to Christianity, though he never made the conclusion of an earlier origin (Harnack 1958:243-244). Accordingly, Simon Magus is not viewed as the progenitor of Gnosticism, but rather a perpetuator of former Samaritan inclinations to amalgamate various

ideologies and religions. The movement is much older than Christianity (Kelly 2007:22-23). Christian Gnosticism was merely a branch of a much larger tendency.

Moreover, that Gnosticism is older than Christianity seems to fit the philosophical climate of 300BC-60AD. As we have noted in Chapter 3, Stoicism and Middle-Platonism exhibited a much more religious tone than the Pre-Socratic and Socratics (Clark 1989:184). Prior to Stoicism and Middle-Platonism, Pythagoreans developed a religious philosophical system, driven by a soteriological motif of redemption through gnosis. In a similar way, Plato believed that our “ψυχή” is torn from the universal “ψυχή” (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 1:11:27; Morrison 1956:152; Baker 1972:32; Tredennick 2003:XIV-XVI). Within Pythagorean and Platonic thought, the quest of each person who possesses “ψυχή” was to recollect our lost knowledge and through gnosis break free from our corporeal existence and rejoin the incorporeal “ψυχή” (*Philebus* 29A-31A; *Timaeus* 30A 2ff; Menn 1992:557; Allen & Springsted 2007:6, 23; Kelly 2007:16). Stoicism and Middle-Platonism assimilated the Pythagorean and Platonic motif of redemption through gnosis and enthused it with religious overtones (Seneca, *Epistulae* 1-65, LXV:21-22; *Epistulae* 93-124, CII:21-22; CII:26; Allen & Springsted 2007:47-49).

Lastly, Stoicism, Epicureanism and Middle-Platonism were merely re-interpretations and syntheses of already existent trajectories. Consequently, a culture of synthesis was commonplace within Hellenistic societies. That Hellenistic philosophy could have been assimilated with already established oriental religions or Judaism is highly likely. The most prominent Gnostics during the Patristic period were Valentinus, who resided in Rome, and Marcion. Notably, Valentinus and Marcion did not share the ecclesiastical concern for unity. Marcion, for example, inevitably broke away from the orthodoxy to establish his own ecclesiastical body (Thomassen 2004:242, 253).

2.1.1 Cosmology

Gnostic cosmology was principally dualistic. The universe consists of two spheres of reality: incorporeal and corporeal. The incorporeal realm is ontologically good and receives its being from the incorporeal One. The corporeal realm is ontologically evil and was created by an evil lesser god or gods, known as the Demiurge. Marcion identified the Demiurge with the Old Testament Jehovah, attributing to Him the characterization of justice and vindictive wrath, being the evil creator of the

universe (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 1:2; Isaiah 45:7). Others adopted a Middle-Platonic conceptualization that the material universe is the lowest emanation of a string of emanations from the incorporeal Father (Turner 2006:9; Brown 2003:58). Similar to Philo, between the two spheres of reality is a plethora of intermediary beings or Aeons that connect the two spheres like a ladder. Generally, Gnostics allegorized the Old Testament in a similar fashion to Philo, adopting the Platonic hermeneutic of universals vs. particulars. Nevertheless, some viewed the Old Testament as incompatible with their cosmology and rejected it in its entirety, like Marcion (Harnack 1958:232, 246-247; Bromiley 1978:18-19; Hill 2003:22; Chadwick 2003:102-103; Brown 2003:40; Richardson 2006:24-25; Kelly 2007:26).

Similar to Pythagorean, Platonic and Stoic philosophy, the human being is an amalgamation of both spheres: the corporeal body that is evil and the incorporeal soul that is good (Bos 2002:282; Bromiley 1978:18). How this amalgamation occurred is quite varied and many Gnostic schools considered this union to be a cosmological fall (Brown 2003:60). Saturnilus, for example, argued that the unseen Father breathed the spark of life into creeping creatures that became human (Brown 2003:57). Others adopted Plato's anthropology in *Timaeus*, suggesting that humanity is stratified: those who possess the divine spark, those who partially possess it and those who have no spiritual affinity and no chance of redemption (Pearson 1984:67; Chadwick 2003:102). Similar to Pythagoras and Plato³³⁴, those who possess the divine spark or spirit, it was their quest to break free from the evil prison of the body and rejoin their spirit to the cosmic or incorporeal One, climbing the "ladder" of the Aeons or intermediaries. This "ladder-climbing" takes place through gnosis or secret knowledge communicated by the Aeons (Pearson 1984:67-68; Hill 2003:23; Turner 2006:9; Kelly 2007:26).

Gnostic cosmology, in general, considered the material universe to be accidental or created with vindictive intent by a demiurge; thus abandoning "all interest in the Genesis protology in favor of a theology of transcendental ascent" (Turner 2006:9). Accordingly, the material universe lacks teleological purpose, apart from the need to escape it. In this sense, Gnosticism rejects the microcosm-macrocosm philosophical understanding of reality, which in turn undermines the necessity of ethics. Gnosticism's only ethical concern is derivative from their soteriological motif to escape the material universe. It lacks the political and personal ethics prevalent in Hellenism.

³³⁴It should be noted that Aristotle had a similar conception of the human soul, in the sense that the soul's bond to the body is unnatural and it was necessary for the soul to be released from the material body (Bos 2002:281-282)

2.1.2 Teleology

The soul's escape from the material universe preoccupied Gnostic teleology. Being a synthesis of Christian dogma and philosophy, the Gnostics primarily believed that Jesus was the bearer of the ineffable Father's gnosis, who came down to earth in order to impart this gnosis unto men. He is the Father's "νοῦς" (Bromiley 1978:18; Kelly 2007:25). It is through the Gnostic Christ that one could learn of the complex relationships between the Father and the Aeons and through this knowledge escape from one's material prison (Pearson 1984:68; Brown 2003:57-59).

Some scholars have argued that the Apologists were Gnostic in their teleological understanding of soteriology (Chadwick 2003:101). To some extent, a comparative study would reveal some similarities. For example, Justin, Theophilus and Athenagoras argued that demons, through deception, robbed humanity of the knowledge of God (Justin, *First Apology*, 54; *Dialogue with Trypho*, 105:3; Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 2:8; Athenagoras, *Plea*, 24-27). In order to reveal the Father, God's "λόγος" came down to man in order to reveal the Father to them (Justin, *First Apology*, 5; 10; 46; 63; *Second Apology*, 10; Tatian, *Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 13).

If the Apologists limited their understanding of soteriology to gnosis, then the similarity is striking and disconcerting. Yet, the Apologists, unlike the Gnostics, did not limit their soteriology to gnosis. The Apologists also affirmed the necessity of substitution for sin (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 41:1³³⁵; 111:3; 134:5ff). Likewise, the Apologists did not deem the material universe as evil, but affirmed materiality by upholding Jesus' incarnation in the flesh. Redemption for the Apologists was not an escape from the material universe, but redemption from false gods to the true God. They might be superficially similar, but ultimately differ.

³³⁵Καὶ ἡ τῆς σεμιδάλεως δὲ προσφορά, ὧ ἄνδρες, ἔλεγον, ἡ ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαιριζομένων ἀπὸ τῆς λέπρας προσφέρεσθαι παραδοθεῖσα, τύπος ἦν τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς Εὐχαριστίας, ὃν εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ πάθους οὗ ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαιρομένων τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπὸ πάσης πονηρίας ἀνθρώπων, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν παρέδωκε ποιεῖν, ἵνα ἅμα τε εὐχαριστῶμεν τῷ Θεῷ ὑπὲρ τε τοῦ τὸν κόσμον ἐκτικέναι σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας ἐν ἡ γειγῶταμεν ἡλευθερωκέναι ἡμᾶς, καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας καταλελυκέναι τελείαν κατάλυσιν διὰ τοῦ παθητοῦ γεγονότος κατὰ τὴν Βουλὴν αὐτοῦ.

2.1.3 Ontology

2.1.3.1 Father

Apart from Marcion's affirmation of a lesser evil Demiurge who created the material world, Gnostics were generally monists in their understanding of divinity. The One invisible or ineffable Father was above all thought (Harnack 1958:232; Brown 2003:61). Like the Middle-Platonists, the Gnostics viewed reality as a hierarchy of being, from the incorporeal One, flowing down to the corporeal universe. Ultimately, the entire material universe, all the intermediary Aeons and all reality derive their existence from the One. This ontological construct is more akin to the Pre-Socratics monism than the scriptural corpus (Pearson 1984:60).

Marcion differed slightly in that he rejected the emanation of reality and the Aeons. Marcion kept the tenet of dualism, but conceptualized two gods: the good incorporeal Father and the evil corporeal Demiurge (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 1:6; Brown 2003:64). Marcion was not a monist, but a dualist in the strictest sense. Moreover, like Aristotle's divine "νοῦς", Marcion's good Father existed in the incorporeal beyond and existed in perfect harmony. Tertullian mockingly says, "However, the god of Marcion, He is not able to be offended, because, being unknown, he is not known to be irritated"³³⁶ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:5:4).

To some extent, the Gnostic understanding of the supreme Father is almost identical to the Platonic construct of the Father of the Universe. Plato did not reject the Greek pantheon, but subordinated it to the Supreme Being (De Vogel 1978:376). They were created gods or derived their ontological existence from the Supreme Being. The Gnostic construct of the ineffable Father and the Aeons appears to be a duplication of Plato with the adoption of some Christian and oriental jargon. Gnosticism is most likely an uncritical assimilation of Hellenistic and oriental thought.

³³⁶ *Deus autem Marcionis, et quia ignotus, non potuit offendi, et quia nescit irasci.*

2.1.3.2 Son

Two perspectives appear to exist within Gnosticism regarding the Son. Some argue that the Son is one of the intermediary Aeons, which implies that He is not co-equal or eternal with the ineffable Father (Harnack 1958:258-259). Others argue, like Marcion, that the Son was the Father (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 1:11; 1:14; 2:27; 3:8; 3:9; 3:11; 4:7; Brown 2003:64). Consequently, Gnostics were either monistic-pluralists or modalistic-dualists. Within Gnostic logic, there is no concept of Trinity.

Affirming that matter is evil, all Gnostics appeared to have agreed that the Son never incarnated or took upon himself the material substance of flesh (Tertullian, *Adversus Valentinianos*, 39). He merely appeared as a phantom to reveal the hidden gnosis of the Father (Docetism) (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 1:19; Richardson 2006:25; Brown 2003:52, 59-60; Chadwick 2003:102; Hill 2003:23). The Son was never a historical person, but rather a visible universal principle. In this system, there is a total rejection of the validity of historicity to validate epistemology (Harnack 1958:231-232). Marcion also adopted the Gnostic tendency of Docetism, arguing that the Good Father never incarnated (Brown 2003:64; Barnes 2005:125). Jesus only appeared during the reign of Caesar Tiberius, denying His birth and childhood (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 4:7).

2.1.4 Concluding remarks

Tertullian's appraisal of Gnosticism is scathing to say the least. Using the rhetorical mechanism of defamation (Cicero, *De Oratore*, II:240), Tertullian considers Marcion's personal character as disqualifying and his content destructive (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:1). Similarly, Tertullian considers Valentinus' Gnosticism to be laughable at best and only deals with it for the sake of his readers (*Adversus Valentinianos*, 6). Why would orthodoxy deal so disdainfully with the Gnostic alternative?

When compared, there seems to be little if any resemblance between the two, apart from the adoption of some Christian terminology. The closest point of contact seems to be Gnostic and Apologetic teleology, but this is merely a superficial similarity. Cosmologically and ontologically, Gnosticism has little resemblance to the orthodox hermeneutic as well as the orthodox trajectory. It generally denies all the fundamental tenets of the apostolic church encapsulated in the *Regula fidei*. Regarding

the scriptural corpus, it generally rejects the Old Testament. Moreover, its allegorical method in regards to the Old Testament is not constrained by the Christocentric hermeneutic adopted by the orthodox community. Lastly, rather than a Trinity, it affirms a monism or plurality of divine beings, which is more akin to Hellenistic conceptualization of divinity. In modern scholarship, Gnosticism is often deemed to be a type of Platonism rather than a Christian entity (Pearson 1984:56).

It exhibits a similar disdain for the visible material universe as Plato and the Stoics do. Moreover, its construct of divinity seems more in line with Aristotle's incorporeal "νοῦς" that exists in the incorporeal beyond, possessing true actuality. Consequently, unlike the Apologists and Irenaeus who critically engaged the Hellenistic milieu, it would seem that the Gnostics uncritically assimilated various elements of the philosophical trajectory, rejecting the scriptural corpus where it did not agree with their hypotheses. Epistemologically, it seems more in line with philosophical hermeneutical praxis.

Tertullian's disdain is most likely due to the realization that Gnosticism was not a strand of orthodox Christianity, but rather an entirely new religion. It was ultimately alien to orthodoxy. Rather than seeing Gnosticism as the first theologians, it is better to view them as one of the first heterodoxical groups to emerge within ecclesiastical history, forming its own distinct religious identity, being an extension of the philosophical trajectory (Pearson 1984:55).

2.2 *Hermogenes*

2.2.1 Cosmology

The primary point of deviation from the scriptural corpus and *Regula* in Hermogenes is his conception of cosmology. Hermogenes adopted the philosophical trajectory's hypothesis that matter is co-eternal with the Supreme Being (Tertullian, *Adversus Hermogenem*, 1). Hermogenes' logic is similar to the philosophical trajectory. According to Hermogenes, there are only two possible explanations for the universe, either God created it out of himself (Pre-Socratic monism, in particular Anaximander's "ἄπειρον") or He merely fashioned pre-existent matter into an intelligible design (Anaxagoras' "νοῦς"; Plato's Demiurge; Aristotle's "νοῦς" and Stoicism's "λόγος") (Tertullian, *Adversus Hermogenem*, 2) (Barnes 2005:122). Moreover, since Plato and Stoicism affirmed that matter was

inert, illogical and prone to chaos, Hermogenes made the logical deduction that matter was evil (Tertullian, *Adversus Hermogenem*, 11).

Similar to Gnosticism, Hermogenes uncritically assimilated the philosophical trajectory into his conception of cosmology, inevitably rejecting the scriptural corpus and *Regula*.

2.3 Montanism

There is a sense that to classify Montanism as a heresy is quite harsh, since its main point of difference is due to a stronger emphasis regarding the teleological purpose of the Holy Spirit. Montanism originated in a time of persecution during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, when the Empire experienced various natural catastrophes, military disasters and persecution of Christians (Barnes 2005:130-131). Apart from the socio-political milieu, the orthodox community became more culturally assimilated with its surroundings, losing its distinction in lifestyle (Shelly 2008:65).

It was within this setting that Montanus, Prisca and Maximilla received the new prophecy. In most regards, the Montanist movement was orthodox in theology, though it adopted an incredibly rigorous ascetic lifestyle (Chadwick 2003:114-115). What distinguished Montanism was its proclamation of the revival of prophecy as well as a unique emphasis on the Spirit (Richardson 2006:25).

2.3.1 Teleology: The Spirit

Agreeing with the *Regula fidei* that the Spirit inspired the Old Testament prophets and Apostles, it differed on whether this function ceased. In their opinion the prophetic inspirational gifts of the Spirit have not ceased, but continued with them being the new wave. Whoever rejected their teaching inevitably blasphemed and rejected the Holy Spirit (Harnack 1910:101; Chadwick 2003:114-115; Shelly 2008:65; Decret 2009:37-38).

Similar to Athenagoras' explanation of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, Montanists believed that inspiration was an ecstatic experience in which a person lost his own consciousness, being used as an

instrument by the Holy Spirit to speak God's words. Even so, they differed from the normal prophetic pronouncement of "Thus says the Lord", claiming that the Father speaks directly through them (Harnack 1910:95-97; Bethune-Baker 1951:47; Chadwick 2003:115).

The distinction seems minimal and it is this minimal distinction that would explain why the church was generally undecided on whether Montanism was orthodox or heterodox. That Tertullian was sympathetic towards Montanism seems clear from his various writings on Christian praxis which take a rigorous line, similar to Montanism (cf. *De Corona Militis*; *De Idolotaria*; *De Cultu Feminarum*; *Ad Uxorem*; *De Monogamia*; *De Exhortatione Castitatis*; *De Pudicitia*) (Barnes 2005:132-142). Yet, as has been argued in Chapter 2, this does not imply joining Montanism.

However, there were major points of concern. Irenaeus in *Adversus Haereses* 3:11:9 points that Montanists seemed to have prophesied outside of the church's jurisdiction and not within the church, which implies that they were a divisive movement. Furthermore, if the *Regula* is correct, Jesus Christ is the fullest expression of God's revelation and the Spirit is the illuminator of the revelation of Christ. To some extent, Montanism's insistence on the continuation of revelation implies that Christ's revelatory function is incomplete (Richardson 2005:26). In addition, since it is revelation not dependent on the centrality of the Son, it lacks a hermeneutical grid through which it can be assessed and controlled. It undermined the ecclesiastical concern for unity and at some points inadvertently rejected the ecclesiastical hermeneutic.

2.4 Modalism

The first known person to be distinguished as a Modalist was Praxeas (Brown 2003:100; Barnes 2005:278); yet, Marcion exhibited a similar trait in identifying the Son with the Father. The main point of deviation from orthodoxy seems to be Modalism's ontological conception of divinity.

2.4.1 Ontology: strict monotheism

Modalism is basically a strict monotheism, in the sense that it does not differentiate between the Father, Son and Spirit, but considers each to be modes of the same deity at different stages of redemptive history (Brown 2003:99). Modalism seeks to uphold monotheism as well as the divinity of Christ, yet rejecting any form of distinction (Kelly 2007:119-121). Therefore, Modalists only affirm unity, while rejecting diversity. In this sense, as Tertullian argues, Modalists opt for a simple unity (*Adversus Praxean*, 12), as proposed by Pre-Socratic monism, Platonic Supreme Being and Aristotle's "νοῦς".

Tertullian highlights that to some extent, Modalism is an overreaction to the dualism and pluralism of Gnosticism prevalent in Valentinian and Marcionite doctrine as well as their pagan context (*Adversus Praxean*, 3). In this regard, Modalists overemphasized Jesus' own affirmation that "ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἐσμεν" (I and the Father are one) (Jn. 10:30) as well as Jesus' revelatory function revealed in Jn. 14:9 (Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*, 1; 2; 5; 7; 10) (Brown 2003:100; Kelly 2007:121).

3. Conclusion

	Orthodoxy	Heterodoxy
Cosmology	God created the invisible and visible universe from His goodness for the creation of man. However, man fell into sin. Due to the Fall, man is unable to know God and suffers death.	Matter was either co-eternal with God (Hermogenes), or accidental, being the product of the Aeons or an evil demiurge (Gnosticism and Marcion). The human soul is a divine spark imprisoned in matter. Only through gnosis can it be released.
Teleology	God the Father created the Universe through His Son and Spirit. The Son is God made visible, being the Father's revelation or Word. Through the Son we can know the Father. Through the incarnation the Son redeems God's creation, joining corruptible flesh with incorruptible divinity. The Spirit enables humanity to behold the Son and	The Son is the gnosis of God and gives people who possess the divine spark the ability to know the Aeons and begin climbing the ladder towards the supreme One (Gnosticism). The Spirit continues to inspire God's people, in particular the prophetic witness of Montanus, Prisca and

	joins humanity to the Son, granting them immortality. The Spirit inspired the prophets and Apostles.	Maximilla. Their words are the words of the Father (Montanism).
Ontology: Unity	Father, Son and Holy Spirit form an ontological and relational unity. The Son and Spirit share in the Father's essence, being co-eternal.	God is either one, simple being with one person (Modalism), or the supreme being with a plethora of demi-gods emanated from Him (Gnosticism). He is either a strict unity or a monistic principle in a pluralistic divinity.
Ontology: Diversity	The Son is God made visible at the incarnation. He is both God and man and eternally united to the Father. Either the Son was latent within the Father as His " <i>ratio</i> " prior to creation or co-eternal by eternal generation.	The Son is the Father (Modalism and Marcion) or He is an Aeon of the invisible Father (Gnosticism). Since matter is evil, He never incarnated, but only appeared in phantom form (Gnosticism).
	The Spirit shares in the essence of the Father, like the Son. He is God's Wisdom	The Spirit is not mentioned, except in Montanism, that affirms orthodoxy regarding God's ontology.

The above comparison should highlight the distinction of the orthodoxy and heterodox trajectories. Unlike heterodoxy that seems to be a synthesis or uncritical assimilation of the philosophical trajectory (Chapter 3) and its hermeneutical grid (Chapter 4A), orthodoxy remained within the parameters of the *Regula fidei* (Chapter 4A). Orthodoxy is more a perpetuation of former tradition than a synthesis (cf. Jude 3). Orthodoxy should be distinguished from heterodoxy on the premise that orthodoxy sought to clarify and interpret its existing body of doctrine, while heterodoxy sought to reinvent and form a synthesis. The most Hellenistic orientated group within orthodoxy, the Apologists, never ventured to contradict the scriptural corpus or *Regula* or alter its content.

In Chapters 5 and 6 I will consider whether Tertullian remained within the orthodox trajectory, adopting its epistemology, hermeneutic and theology or whether he assimilated the heterodox trajectory, predominantly adopting a philosophical trajectory's understanding of divinity.

Chapter 5 - Motifs and hermeneutical praxis of Tertullian for theological conceptualization

In Chapters 3, 4A and 4B we have extensively demonstrated the five trajectories prevalent in Tertullian's conception of the Trinity as well as the hermeneutical praxis of philosophy and the ecclesiastical community; Chapters 3, 4A and 4B are Tertullian's heritage. In Chapter 5 we will investigate whether Tertullian adopted a philosophical hermeneutic or the orthodox ecclesiastical hermeneutic.

1. Presuppositions & Motifs

1.1 Epistemology

1.1.1 Philosophy

In Chapter 2 we clearly demonstrated that Tertullian's principal concern regarding philosophy is whether it is the primary epistemological foundation for theological conceptualization. Tertullian rejected its epistemological primacy in theologizing. This point already demonstrates which hermeneutical praxis Tertullian endorsed. Even so, when we consider Tertullian's estimation of philosophy in relation to theology, we will notice a much more mature understanding than his predecessors (the Apostolic Fathers, Apologists and Irenaeus).

1.1.1.1 Philosophy's limits

Tertullian's estimation of reason's capacity to know God is both positive and negative. Positively, Tertullian has no qualms that reason is a gift from God. In *De Anima* 2:2, Tertullian states, "the common intelligence... God deemed worthy to endow (upon) the soul"³³⁷. Moreover, since the creation of man, man possessed the true knowledge of God. Tertullian puts it this way in *Adversus Marcionem* 1:10:3, "The soul (was) before prophecy. For from the beginning the knowledge of God

³³⁷ *sed et natura pleraque suggeruntur quasi de publico sensu, quo animam deus dotare dignatus est.*

was the endowment of the soul”³³⁸. Consequently, human souls, “have known the God of Moses”³³⁹. The knowledge of God is, therefore, “certain, complete, (and) common, because (it is) evidently (the property) of all”³⁴⁰ (*Ad Nationes* 2:1:14). If Tertullian’s understanding of human reason concluded here, it would have seemed as if he understood reason in a similar way as Plato’s notion of recollection, with only the distinction that the soul is created and not ontologically the same as God (Osborn 2003:80). Nevertheless, Tertullian also assesses human reason negatively.

Unlike philosophy, Tertullian argues that the human soul and its capacity to reason is marred or corrupted. Since the Fall in Gen. 3, “all is changed by the Devil”³⁴¹ (*De Corona Militis*, 6:3) (Bray 1977:111). Consequently, due to the Fall, man’s desires revolve around self-glorification rather than God. Whatever knowledge we possessed of God we have opted to change or corrupt due to our inclination for self-glory (*Ad Nationes*, 2:2:5)³⁴². In this sense, Tertullian argues that philosophy’s primary motif in their conceptualization of divinity is “*libido gloriae*” (a desire of glory). To some extent, Tertullian’s argument is the same as Paul in Romans 1:18-23. The Apostle Paul explains that man “τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων” (suppresses the truth in unrighteousness). For “the knowledge of God is plain”³⁴³ (Rom. 1:19) and “clearly discerned”³⁴⁴ from “the creation of the world”³⁴⁵ (Rom. 1:20). Sadly, “they did not honour him as God”³⁴⁶ (Rom. 1:21). What knowledge men possessed of God “they changed”³⁴⁷ (Rom. 1:23).

Apart from the corruption of our reason to discern God, Tertullian also rejects the microcosm-macrocosm paradigm regarding the epistemology of divinity. We might have possessed the knowledge of God, but this knowledge is not derived from self-investigation, as if anthropology is the basis for theology. Tertullian puts it this way in *Adversus Marcionem* 1:4:2, after quoting God’s question through Isaiah, “To whom will you liken me? Human attributes may be compared to divine attributes, (but) not so to God”³⁴⁸. Anthropology cannot be a basis for epistemology of divinity, since man and God are not ontologically equivalent.

³³⁸ *Ante anima quam prophetia. Animae enim a primordio conscientia dei dos est*

³³⁹ *deum Moysi tamen norunt*

³⁴⁰ *haberi enim debet, sicut est, certa, integra, communis, quia scilicet omnium.*

³⁴¹ *omnia esse a diabolo mutata.*

³⁴² *et ita accedente libidine gloriae ad proprii ingenii*

³⁴³ τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν

³⁴⁴ καθαράται

³⁴⁵ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου

³⁴⁶ οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν

³⁴⁷ ἥλλαξαν

³⁴⁸ *Esaia deus, contionabitur, Cui me similabitis? Divinis forsitan comparabuntur humana, deo non ita.*

With the above postulations, Tertullian's employment of the sophistic argument of relativity seems logical. For Tertullian, accepting the former Apologists' claim that Moses is older than any Hellenistic philosophy, philosophy merely corrupted the truth evident in the Scriptures (*Apologeticum*, 47; *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:8) (Weltin 1956:157). Philosophy is merely the "*sapientia saecularis*" (wisdom of the world) and if utilized as our epistemology for divinity, we need to know that "*haereses a philosophia subornantur*" (heresies are being instigated by philosophy) (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:2). Moreover, philosophy does not cultivate certainty in theology, since philosophy is primarily "*artifex struendi et destruendi*" (the art to build and destroy) (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:6). Consequently, it can only produce conflicting opinions (*De Anima*, 2:5-6) and is always "*incerta*" (uncertain), since it suffers from "*ignorantia veritatis*" (ignorance of the truth) (*Ad Nationes*, 2:1:13; 2:2:1; *Apologeticum*, 47) (Osborn 2003:15, 42). Apart from attacking dialectical reasoning, Tertullian also rejected the empirical model of the Pre-Socratics, claiming it is impossible to deduce the nature of God from observation (*Ad Nationes*, 2:4:1ff). Strikingly, Tertullian argues that the arch-philosopher Thales of Miletus' fall into a well was symbolic of all dogmatic philosophers, who could not deduce God's being from the universe (*Ad Nationes*, 2:4:18).

Nevertheless, Tertullian is not merely employing the sophistic argument. In *Ad Nationes* 2:6:5, Tertullian argues that rhetoric should not be a basis for validating truth, "Should it be perceived that he who had spoken best, that he had spoken most truly? (Or) he who (had spoken) most truly, he is the best?"³⁴⁹ Moreover, throughout his discussions regarding the epistemological validity of human speculation (philosophy), Tertullian cites 1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:17; Tit. 3:9; Col. 2:8. By calling philosophy, "*sapientia saecularis*", Tertullian is employing the apostolic dichotomy (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:9:7; 5:19:7) (Osborn 2003:15, 42). For Tertullian, philosophy is insufficient and dangerous as an epistemological basis for theology, since our human reason is tainted by the Fall and unable to comprehend divinity through mere observation.

1.1.1.2 Boundary of philosophy: faith in Christ

Having explained the limits of philosophy or reason, Tertullian sets out to define the boundaries in which reason must operate. Firstly, since the universe is tainted or marred by the Fall, the universe

³⁴⁹ *qui melius dixerit, hic verius dixisse videatur? non, qui verius, is melius?*

should not be considered as neutral or as true “*natura*” (nature). For Tertullian, only God’s being is untainted by the Fall, which implies that only God’s revelation is true “*natura*”. In *De Corona Militis* 6:1, Tertullian states that it is only “*Dei lex*” (the law of God) that is truly “*natura*” (Bray 1977:111). Consequently, the revelation of God forms the first boundary marker for reason (*De Anima*, 26:1).

Nevertheless, heretics also employ the Scriptures. Countering this problem, Tertullian argues that it is not merely the Scriptures that form the boundary marker, but also a specific hermeneutic of the Scriptures, the *Regula fidei* (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 1-2) (Dunn 2004:33). Central to the *Regula fidei* is the centrality of Christology in our hermeneutic of Scripture. Consequently, for Tertullian, once we have found Christ, we have found what the philosophers have sought, and should cease to proceed further (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 7:12; 8:1-5; 9:3-5; 10:1-9) (Enslin 1947:209).

For Tertullian, the Scriptures, *Regula* and Christocentric hermeneutic are considered to be true wisdom and the bounds of reason (*Ad Nationes*, 2:2:1ff). Christianity is the true philosophy and should be donned with the philosopher’s cloak (*De Pallio*, 6:2)³⁵⁰, since it has Jesus Christ (Osborn 2003:15-16; 42:43).

1.1.1.3 Philosophy’s uses

As we have already noted in Chapter 2, Tertullian’s disdain for philosophy epistemologically did not imply a total disregard for it. In most of his works, he employs rhetoric to argue his case. Rhetoric, as explained in Chapter 4A, though used by sophism in self-interest, is not seen as evil if it is used to advance the truth (Ayers 1976:311). Furthermore, Tertullian would generally keep philosophical terminology and concepts if he considered them to be in line with the scriptural corpus. Tertullian did not hesitate, for example, to consider the human being as a composition of soul and body, since both terms were employed in Scripture (Bray 1979:80).

Sharing the missiologal motif of the Apologists Tertullian acknowledged that non-Christians would generally be persuaded by non-Christian sources and evidence than by any Christian evidence.

³⁵⁰ *melior iam te philosophia dignata est, ex quo Christianum vestire coepisti.*

Therefore, it was necessary to demonstrate that Christianity is not contrary to the best concepts in philosophy (*De Testimonio Animae*, 1:1-2) (Dunn 2004:33). In this sense, it should not surprise us that Tertullian would employ philosophical constructs in order to demonstrate a Christian concept. For example, in *Apologeticum* 17:5f, Tertullian employs a Stoic argument for the existence of God as well as the natural inclination of man to spontaneously declare, “*Deus bonus et magnus*” (good and great God!) (Osborn 2003:78).

What the above demonstrates is that Tertullian was not an anti-rationalist, but contended for Scripture as the primary epistemological foundation for theology, as well as the guide for our reason and rhetoric. Reason and rhetoric should be governed by the revelation of Christ and employed for persuasion.

1.1.2 The necessity of revelation

As we have noted regarding the limits of philosophy, even though we naturally possessed the knowledge of God, this knowledge was marred or changed due to the Fall. What was formerly “*natura*” is now unnatural. Consequently, what is necessary is for what is truly natural to break into the unnatural universe marred by the Fall. For Tertullian, revelation is the in-breaking of God’s self-disclosure, which is the only aspect of reality that is “*natura*”. Without revelation, God’s true nature would be unknown. As Tertullian says in *De Anima* 1:4, “For by whom has the truth been obtained without God? By whom has God been known without Christ? By whom has Christ been explored without the Holy Spirit? By whom has the Holy Spirit been attained without the mystery of faith?”³⁵¹

Tertullian employs a threefold formula in describing his epistemology. In *De Virginibus Velandis* 16:1, Tertullian argues that their “opinions are according to Scripture, according to nature, according to discipline/tradition/education”³⁵². Moreover, all three are in God’s possession or authorship (*De Virginius Velandis*, 16:2)³⁵³ (Bray 1977:110-111; Bray 1979:120; Bray 2010:76). Yet, as we have noted, Tertullian’s concept of “*natura*” is not as the natural order exists now, but as it did prior to the Fall. Tertullian describes our current nature as an “adulteration”³⁵⁴ (*De Anima*, 16:7). Consequently,

³⁵¹ *Cui enim veritas comperta sine deo? Cui deus cognitus sine Christo? Cui Christus exploratus sine spiritu sancto? Cui spiritus sanctus accommodatus sine fidei sacramento?*

³⁵² *nostrae opinionis secundum scripturam, secundum naturam, secundum disciplinam.*

³⁵³ *Dei est scriptura, dei est natura, dei est disciplina*

³⁵⁴ *naturae alterius adscribere, posterioris et adulterae*

true “*natura*” and “*disciplina*” (instruction or tradition) would never violate God’s “*scriptura*”. Therefore, when a person comes into contact with the scriptural corpus, a type of recognition or recollection takes place, in which the person recognizes the former knowledge that has been marred by the Fall (*Apologeticum*, 17.3; *Adversus Valentinianos*, 3:2³⁵⁵; *Adversus Marcionem*, 1:18:2; 4:1:10; 4:21:6). Hence, as Tertullian confidently asserts, “He who will listen, will find God; and again he who will learn to understand, will be compelled and believe”³⁵⁶ (*Apologeticum*, 18:9) (Osborn 2003:80-81).

Evidently, Tertullian’s epistemological foundation is the scriptural corpus. Although Tertullian never wrote commentaries, he continually references Scripture as his primary authority in almost every treatise. In addition, Tertullian cites almost every book of within the scriptural corpus, with a few exceptions (as we have noted in Chapter 2) (Dunn 2004:19). For Tertullian, the scriptural corpus is “*divina*” (divine), “the testimony of the divine truth of prophecy”³⁵⁷ (*Apologeticum*, 21:1-5) and would never violate the true natural order (*De Anima*, 21:5). In addition, the Christian Scriptures are not a novelty, but actually the testimony of the ancient divine knowledge prior to the Fall³⁵⁸. Therefore, whatever subsequent propositions of divinity might occur (philosophy) they derived it from the scriptural corpus (*Apologeticum*, 47:1). Consequently, its antiquity is also a basis for its “*auctoritas*” (authority). The scriptural corpus is decisive in all matters of theology and whatever does not fit the scriptural corpus should be discarded (*Adversus Praxean*, 29:1; *De Anima*, 26:1f) (Bray 1979:78-80; Brown 2004:226-227). Even if some elements within the scriptural corpus seem obscure or uncertain, the problem is not the revelation of God, but our inability to comprehend and interpret correctly (*De Resurrectione Carnis*, 21:1f) (Bray 1979:112).

Ultimately, the revelation of God (“*scriptura*” which is true “*natura*”) was revealed by the Son, who disclosed it unto His Apostles (*Adversus Marcionem*, 2:16:2; 3:1:1; 4:2:1f; *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 21:1-2). Moreover, to ensure that the Son’s words were preserved as He told them, He sent His Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to inspire the Apostles (*Adversus Praxean*, 4:4; *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 22:8-12). Whatever the Apostles recorded is complete, lacking in nothing (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 25:1-2). It forms the only solid basis for any conceptualization of divinity and anthropology (*De Anima*, 1:12; 2:18; 21:6). In this sense, unlike the philosophers (in

³⁵⁵ *eum deum recognoscere quem iam illi natura commisit*

³⁵⁶ *Qui audierit, inveniet deum; qui etiam studuerit intellegere, cogetur et credere.*

³⁵⁷ *testimonium divinitatis veritas divinationis.*

³⁵⁸ For Tertullian, it would seem, Adam originally possessed the true knowledge of God. In this sense, the soul knew God without the necessity of Scripture (*Adversus Marcionem* 1:10:3). Yet, due to the Fall, this original knowledge is marred. Nevertheless, God continued to reveal Himself. The original knowledge Adam possessed is now preserved in the revelation of the Scriptures.

particular Plato) who could only speculate, Christians can truly declare who God is (*Apologeticum*, 46:9). As Tertullian exclaims in *Apologeticum* 18:1, “(God) put forth a written record; if someone desires to inquire concerning God; being a seeker to find (Him) and finding (Him) to believe and in believing to serve (Him).”³⁵⁹

1.1.3 The necessity of illumination

Whereas the former Apologists seemed to have been content on only explaining the necessity of revelation, Tertullian also elaborated on the Spirit’s present role regarding the illumination³⁶⁰. For Tertullian, the Scriptures alone would not suffice, since the “*sermonem dei*” (Word of God) can also be subjugated to “*interpretatione corrumpens*” (corrupting by interpretation). Consequently, God sent “*suo spiritu in omnem carnem*” (His Spirit on all flesh), in order to have “*purgavit*” (cleared) the “*verborum et sensuum*” (words and meanings) of the “*pristina instrumenta*” (ancient record) “*ab omni ambiguitatis obscuritate*” (from all ambiguous obscurity) by His “*luminibus*” (lights). Consequently, in order to avoid heresy, we need to drink from the Spirit’s “*fontem*” (fountain) (*De Resurrectione Carnis*, 63:6-10).

In the light of the above, in order for God’s “*natura*” in “*scriptura*” to be interpreted correctly, we also need the “*lumina*” of the Spirit. Illumination becomes pivotal (Osborn 2003:78-79; Brown 2004:229). Consequently, when Tertullian says that the orthodox community should, “especially be followers of the Paraclete and not of men”³⁶¹ (*Adversus Praxean*, 13:5), Tertullian is most likely pointing to the Spirit’s ministry of illumination rather than revelation, since the Spirit is the “*oeconomiae interpretator*” (interpreter of the economy) (*Adversus Praxean*, 30:5).

1.2 Concerns (motifs)

When we begin to consider Tertullian’s theology of the Trinity, it should be noted that various key motifs motivated his initial writing. These concerns, which seem more akin to the ecclesiastical hermeneutic explained in Chapter 4A, will be considered now.

³⁵⁹ *adiecitur instrumentum litteraturae, si qui velit de deo inquirere et inquisito invenire et invento credere et credito deservire.*

³⁶⁰ Yet, as we have noted in Chapter 4A, Justin spoke of the adorning of the Holy Spirit. This adorning of the Spirit was necessary in order to comprehend God.

³⁶¹ *maxime paracleti non hominum discipuli*

1.2.1 Soteriological concern

Repeatedly, similar to Irenaeus, Tertullian points to the fact that the Trinity should be understood in the light of God's "*oeconomia*" (*Adversus Praxean*, 3:1). The "*oeconomia*" is the redemptive narrative of God's recapitulatory work through the Son and Spirit. Therefore, Tertullian's theology of the Trinity is closely connected to his understanding of soteriology or "*theologia crucis*" (Osborn 2003:59). That soteriology is a dominant theme, seems also clear from Tertullian's contrast between philosophy's primary motif "*libido gloriae*" (desire of glory) and Christianity's primary motif. For Tertullian, the primary motive for a Christian's preoccupation with divinity is "*saluti suae curant*" (they care for their salvation) (*Apologeticum*, 46:6) (Steenberg 2009:89-90).

For Tertullian, the incarnation of the Son (a point Marcion could not accept) was primarily motivated by the "*humanae salutis*" (the salvation of man) (*Adversus Marcionem*, 2:27:7). Moreover, the life, death and resurrection of the Son are necessary for "*salus nostrae*" (our salvation) (*Adversus Marcionem*, 3:8:1-7). Consequently, for Tertullian, a correct Christology is fundamental for our soteriology. As he says in *Adversus Marcionem*, 3:9:5, "Because Christ alone could become incarnate (born in the flesh from flesh), so that he might reform our nativity by his nativity, and so again he might dissolve our death by his death, rising in the flesh."³⁶²

Therefore, similar to Irenaeus, a key motive for Tertullian in writing his polemical works as well as Apologetic works stems from a concern for salvation. Generally, it is when orthodox soteriology is threatened, that Tertullian lifts his pen to write.

1.2.2 Concern for unity: *Regula* (doctrinal)

Without elaborating on this point too much, since it will become increasingly evident when we consider Tertullian's unique application of the *Regula fidei*, Tertullian had a strong concern for unity. However, this unity was not a mere societal unity, but a doctrinal unity. One of the key reasons for Tertullian's writing *Adversus Praxean* was due to Praxean's doctrine spreading "*ubique tunc semen*

³⁶² *quia solus Christus in carnem ex carne nasci habebat, ut nativitatem nostram nativitate sua reformaret, atque ita etiam mortem nostram morte sua dissolveret resurgendo in carne in qua natus est ut et mori posset.*

excusserant” (everywhere then the seeds had been sent forth) (*Adversus Praxean*, 1:7). These “semen” were causing doctrinal disunity, especially in Rome (Warfield 2003:8).

Yet, possibly unique to Tertullian, his concern for unity was also coupled with a missiological concern. For example, in *Apologeticum* 47:9 he makes explicit mention that there are some among the church who “*adulteraverunt*” (have adulterated) the Christian revelation. His purpose for mentioning this is to assure his non-Christian hearers that these deviations do not imply that the church is synonymous with philosophy’s plurality of opinions. Doctrinal unity was critical to the church’s mission. Consequently, when writing against Marcion, he affirms that the apostolic church is united in its doctrinal convictions (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:21:4-5). Thus Tertullian shares the ecclesiastical community’s concern for unity.

1.2.3 Missiological concern

That Tertullian had a missiological concern is evident from his more apologetic works, such as *Apologeticum* and *Ad Nationes*. Tertullian was keenly aware that various aspects of the Christian Faith were untranslatable in Roman or Carthaginian terms. To some extent, this untranslatability caused particular animosity from the more elitist classes of the Roman Empire and facilitated the justification of persecution (Wilhite 2007:157-161).

Apologeticum and *Ad Nationes* should be considered as missiological documents rather than systematic treatises. This becomes clear when one considers how carefully Tertullian contextualized his message to suit his particular audience. For example, when one reads *Ad Nationes*, he identifies the social identity of his audience by the selection of his content. Firstly, the audience is most likely of the elitist class in Carthage, due to references such as “*litteras vestras*” (your literature) (*Ad Nationes*, 2:12:26), which assumes an educated audience. As we have noted in Chapter 2, Tertullian’s audience is Carthaginian, since Romans are generally referred to as their “other” (*Ad Nationes*, 1:10:43; 2:9:1f). Lastly, Tertullian harps on the national identity of Carthage by alluding to the oppression it has suffered under Roman rule (*Ad Nationes*, 1:17:2; 1:18:3; 2:17:2). Similarly, though the content of *Apologeticum* overlaps with *Ad Nationes*, the content is tailored for a different audience. Tertullian makes explicit in *Apologeticum* 35:6 that his audience is the “*Quirites*” (Romans) (Wilhite 2007:65, 70).

Due to the complexity of North Africa (as we have demonstrated in Chapter 3), Tertullian was able to amalgamate various literary material from various cultures and employ them within his rhetoric. Tertullian accommodates Romans, Greek, Jewish and other sources within his writing. Probably an area neglected in Patristic scholarship, but similar to the Apologists before him, he was a master at contextualization and could comfortably shift his own persona in order to address a different social identity, whether Roman or non-Roman (Wilhite 2007:179-180). The only motif that could motivate contextualization is the concern for persuasion, which in turn derives its impetus from a missiological concern.

1.2.4 Teleological concern

As we have noted in the Trinitarian theology of the Apologists (Chapter 4B), God's divinity was often conceptualized teleologically. The Son's and Spirit's external ontological being is dependent on their teleology, purpose or function. Generally, the Son and Spirit are conceived of as the efficient causes of creation and redemption, adopting Aristotelian logic.

Similar to the Apologists, Tertullian exhibited a strong teleological concern in his conceptualization of divinity. This is illustrated by his continual insistence on understanding the Trinity within God's economy. The Son and Spirit fulfilled the economy or plan of God the Father (Steenberg 2008:89-90). Furthermore, when he challenges Marcion's conception of his god, Tertullian questions the ontological validity of the god, due to it having no teleological purpose. As he emphatically states, "I will with more propriety believe that God is not, than that (He) is without cause"³⁶³ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:12:1). Correspondingly, in *Ad Nationes* 2:5:1f, Tertullian argues that it is only proper to consider something to be deity if it is the efficient cause and not the material cause of something. Paganism errs on the basis that it ascribes deity to the material cause rather than the efficient cause, who is the God of the Christians.

What we will observe in Chapter 6 is that Tertullian's teleological concern motivates his conceptualization of the Son and Spirit as the efficient causes of creation and redemption. Ontology and teleology are closely linked. To some extent, teleology validates ontology. In this sense,

³⁶³ *in tantum deum dignius credam non esse quam esse sine causa*

Tertullian, like the Apologists, share the teleological concern of the dogmatic philosophers (Chapters 3 & 4A).

2. Hermeneutical praxis

2.1 *Regula Fidei*

Generally, as we have noted in Chapter 4A, the *Regula fidei* was used as a hermeneutical grid for interpreting Scripture, forming the boundaries of interpretation or inquiry (Kaufman 1991:178). In this section, we will investigate how Tertullian employed the *Regula fidei* beyond its normal function as a hermeneutical lens. His persona primarily gravitated towards a type of Roman legalism. For example, when considering the rite of baptism, Tertullian describes it as a “*lex tingendi*” (law of baptizing) (*De Baptismo*, 13:3) (Bray 1979:97, 102). When he employs the *Regula fidei*, he does not merely apply it as a hermeneutical grid³⁶⁴, but also as a legal boundary marker that validates one’s right to use the Scriptures (Brown 2004:221, 229; Ayers 2005:33-34).

2.1.2 *Regula Fidei*: exclusivity of Scripture (orthodox community)

Whereas the orthodox community was satisfied to regard the *Regula* only hermeneutically, Tertullian stretched its application to make the scriptural corpus their exclusive property. For him, heretics had no right to the Scriptures, due to their continual alteration of the meaning of the text, thus violating the boundaries of the *Regula fidei* (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 15:4; 19:2-3). Since the heretics propose a new interpretation, it would be difficult for a third party to be an arbiter in judging whose interpretation is correct (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 15:3; 17:2-18:3). Tertullian understood that for the ecclesiastical community to preserve its unity as well as the authority of the Scriptures, it needed to be within conformity with the *Regula fidei*, since the oral tradition existed prior to its written record (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 19-21; 37) (Dunn 2004:21-22). Consequently, in order to preserve authority, heretics should be exempt or barred from appealing to Scripture, “because

³⁶⁴It should be noted that Tertullian does employ the term *regula* in a hermeneutical sense. For example, Tertullian could refer to the *regula* of Marcion and Valentinus (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:1:7; *Adversus Valentinianos*, 4:3-4) and the philosophers (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:19:7). The *Regula fidei* was primarily a hermeneutical boundary for Tertullian (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 12:4-5) (Kaufman 1991:178; Brown 2004:221).

without the scriptures (heresies) are not able to exist”³⁶⁵ (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 39:7) (Kaufman 1991:167).

In the light of the above, orthodoxy is constituted by the *Regula fidei*. As Tertullian would claim, it is by the “*tradita disciplina*” (handed down tradition) that “*fiunt christiani*” (they become Christians) (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 19:2). In addition, “To know nothing against the Rule is to know everything”³⁶⁶ (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 14:5); hence, anything beyond it is to exclude oneself from the true faith. If heretics deny the *Regula fidei*, “(they) do not pertain to the Scriptures”³⁶⁷, since they are “*non christiani*” (not Christians) and should not be given right to “*christianarum litterarum*” (Christian literature/scriptures) (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 37:1, 3).

On a more positive note, inquiry should be within orthodoxy and in this sense Tertullian’s inquiry remained within the orthodox community, generally working with the sources that derive their origin within the apostolic church’s community (*Adversus Valentinianos*, 5:1f). Nevertheless, he did not actually apply his own rule of exclusivity when dealing with heterodoxy. He engaged Marcion, Valentinus, Praxeas and Hermogenes from the premise of Scripture, arguing for the correct hermeneutical praxis (Dunn 2004:22).

2.2 Unity of the Two Testaments

In *Apologeticum* 21:1f, Tertullian argues for a type of super-cessionism in that Christians have completely inherited the Jews’ right to the Old Testament, since the Jews apostatized (Dunn 2004:49-50). Yet, does this imply a possible dualism or cessation in continuity between the Old and New Testament; or are the Old Testament Scriptures, as Justin would put it, a Christian document?

To demonstrate that there is a strong unity and continuity between the Testaments and that Christians were the beneficiaries of both, Tertullian wrote *Adversus Iudaeos*³⁶⁸. *Adversus Iudaeos* 1:1-3a is Tertullian’s *exordium* (beginning), in which he states the question of whether the promises of the Old

³⁶⁵ *quae sine scripturis esse non possunt*

³⁶⁶ *Adversus regulam nihil scire omnia scire est*

³⁶⁷ *ad scripturas non pertinere*

³⁶⁸ Note that Tertullian writes *Adversus Iudaeos* with a clear rhetorical structure (as will be demonstrated), thus utilizing rhetoric for the purpose of persuasion.

Testament apply to the New Testament community of the Gentiles. In Tertullian's estimation, it is an emphatic yes. From the *exordium*, Tertullian moves to his *refutatio* (2:1b-6:1), denying the Jewish claim that God only made a covenant with the Jews. According to Tertullian, God always promised a new law (2:1b-10a), a new circumcision (2:10b-3:13), a new Sabbath (4:1-11) and a new sacrifice (5:1-7), which applied universally and not to one ethnic identity. From his *refutatio*, he moves to his *confirmatio* (6:2-14:10) in which he supports his refutation. For Tertullian, Christ was the fulfilment of the promises in the Old Testament, going at great lengths to demonstrate his case from Chapters 8:3-14:10; adopting a similar argument as the Apologists and Irenaeus (Dunn 2004:65-66). To summarize Tertullian's argument, "*Christum id est natum*" (the Christ has been born) and He is the historical person "*Iesus*" (*Adversus Iudaeos*, 8:15; 9:25). Consequently, the unifying element or glue of the Testaments is the historical person Jesus Christ. Christology is the foundation for the Testaments' unity.

In addition, Tertullian did not merely affirm the unity of the Testaments when writing against the Jewish community, but also against Marcion. In *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* 30:7, one of his major concerns with Marcion is that, "Marcion has separated the New Testament from the Old"³⁶⁹. Therefore, when he wrote *Adversus Marcionem*, a large portion of his work was dedicated to demonstrate the unity of the Testaments. In book IV Tertullian argues for the unity of the Testaments from the Gospel of Luke. In Book V, he moves to the Pauline corpus, arguing for the unity of the Testaments from the texts Marcion sought to use to illustrate their disunity. For example, in *Adversus Marcionem* 5:11:1-16, he expounds 2 Cor. 1-4, arguing that Moses' veil in the Old Testament pointed to the unveiled glory of the New Testament; as Tertullian concludes, "The whole ordinance of Moses has been a figure of Christ, unknown unto the Jews, (but) well known unto us"³⁷⁰ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:11:9). Therefore, analogous with Tertullian's argument in *Adversus Iudaeos*, Christology unifies the Testaments in *Adversus Marcionem*.

2.3 The economy or dispensations of God

We have already observed in Chapter 4B that in Irenaeus' conceptualization of the Trinity, the notion of economy became prominent (Letham 2004:94-95; Kelly 2007:105). To understand the monarchy of divinity revealed as Trinity, one has to understand it within the context of redemptive history or the economy of God. Apart from Irenaeus' conceptualization, the *Regula fidei* is structured according to

³⁶⁹ *Marcion novum testamentum a vetere separavit*

³⁷⁰ *totum ordinem Moysi figuram ignorati apud Iudaeos, agniti vero apud nos Christi fuisse testatur*

redemptive history, displaying a type of economy within its propositions: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*Adversus Praxean*, 3:1) (Osborn 2003:121).

To some extent, picking up where Irenaeus had left off, Tertullian's fundamental hermeneutical principle in his theological conceptualization of the Trinity is the notion of "*oeconomia*" (economy) or "*dispositiones*" (dispensations) (*Adversus Praxean*, 3:1). In addition, the notion of "*oeconomia*" is closely tied with his conceptualization of the unity of the Testaments, since it extends across all the redemptive epochs and forms the unifying theme of the scriptural corpus. In this sense, the "*oeconomia*" is not a universal cyclical principle of divinity (philosophy), but rather a linear extrapolation of the Godhead (Bray 1979:105).

For Tertullian, the scriptural corpus could be divided into three distinct epochs, each relating to a different person of the Trinity: the Old Testament, the Incarnation and Pentecost. In the first epoch, which is largely dominated by the Father, God revealed the content of the Divine Law which was interpreted by the prophets (*De Virginius Velandis*, 1:7). According to Bray (1979:104-105), when Tertullian interprets the Old Testament epoch of the Divine Law, he neglects to explain the role of the Abrahamic covenant within redemptive history, primarily focusing on the Mosaic covenant (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:4:8-10). Inasmuch as this might be true of his polemic against Marcion, Tertullian gives considerable attention to the Abrahamic covenant in *Adversus Judaeos* 2:1f, pointing to the universality of God's Law, which was not only expounded by Moses but existed "*ante Moysen*" (before Moses) (*Adversus Judaeos*, 2:9), demonstrating the transient nature of the Mosaic covenant. God's Law existed "*primum in paradiso*" (first in paradise), then afterwards with the "*patriarchis*" (Patriarchs) and lastly with the "*Judaeis*" (Jews), only being "*certis temporibus reformatam*" (reformed for certain periods) (*Adversus Judaeos*, 2:9). The Abrahamic covenant as well as the Mosaic covenant looked forward to the ushering in of a "*novae legis et spiritalis circumcisionis*" (new law and spiritual circumcision) (*Adversus Judaeos*, 3:11). Consequently, the first epoch of redemptive history is anticipatory of the second and third epoch, being incomplete.

In the second epoch, the Son takes the prominent role as the final revelation of God's divine Law, being the "*novus legislator*" (new legislator or a new lawgiver) (*Adversus Judaeos*, 6:3). Christ was the "*supplementum legis et prophetarum*" (completion of the law and prophets) (*Adversus Marcionem*, 4:2:2) or "*nostra lex ampliata atque suppleta*" (our law [being] amplified and so complete) (*De Oratione*, 22:8) in which all the parables and allegories of the Old Testament are

manifest in their fullness (*De Resurrectione Carnis*, 19-21; *Adversus Marcionem*, 5:11:5-7) (Bray 1979:106). In *Adversus Judaeos* 9:21-22, Tertullian makes similar typological interpretations as *The Epistle of Barnabas* (cf. Chapter 4A), arguing that the “*melle et lacte*” (honey and milk) promised to Moses and Joshua pointed to the eternal life inaugurated by Christ. What Moses and Joshua received in figures, Jesus fulfilled and explicated. As Tertullian concludes, “*in eo*” (in Him [Jesus]) the Old Testament is “*adimpleta*” (fulfilled) (*Adversus Judaeos*, 14:14).

In addition, the penalty of death on sinful Adam was annulled in Christ, accomplishing eternal life for humanity (*De Pudicitia*, 9:6) (Bray 1979:106). Therefore, following his conceptualization of the unity of the Testaments, Tertullian did not consider the revelation of Christ as something fundamentally new to the Old Testament. Christ is its fulfilment and amplification, not its cessation (cf. Matt. 5:18-20). Even so, since Christ is its fulfilment, “the old law has ceased (in function), as the promised new law now operates”³⁷¹ (*Adversus Judaeos*, 6:2). To some extent, Tertullian’s argument is similar to the author of Hebrews 8:5-6 and 13, which argues that the Mosaic covenant was a “ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ” (copy and shadow) of heavenly things. Yet, Christ has obtained a “διαφορωτέρας... λειτουργίας” (a more excellent ministry), being the “κρείττονός... διαθήκης μεσίτης” (mediator of a better covenant) (v. 6). Consequently, Christ’s first advent, “πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν πρώτην” (has made the first [covenant] obsolete) (v. 13).

Regarding the third epoch, Tertullian’s exposition of the role of the Spirit is more robust than that of Irenaeus. Whereas Irenaeus generally limited the role of the Spirit to granting “*incorruptelam*” (incorruption), “*adunionem et communionem Dei et hominis*” (union and communion of God and men) and illumination (*Adversus Haereses*, 5:1:1; cf. 4:38:1-4; 5:20:1-2), Tertullian included and elaborated on the Spirit’s role in sanctification. For Tertullian, at Pentecost God poured out His Spirit upon all people (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:8:6). The necessity of the Spirit’s outpouring was due to the necessity of actualizing the revelation of Christ within the soul of believers. Through the Spirit, the life lived by Jesus Christ becomes feasible for all men to attain, being the “*restitutor*” (restorer) (*De Monogamia*, 4:1). Accordingly, the Spirit conforms or applies the fullness of God’s law upon His people, changing them to the image of the Son, giving a sense of consummation regarding the “*oeconomia*” of God (Bray 1979:106-108).

³⁷¹ *legem veterem cessasse quam legem novam promissam nunc operari*

To some extent, Irenaeus and Tertullian formulated or clarified Patristic Biblical Theology, forming an overarching principle or grid for reading the entire scriptural corpus. What distinguishes their biblical theology is its Trinitarian structure, which is informed by the *Regula fidei*. For Tertullian, the New Testament is God revealing His unity as diversity in the form of a Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit (*Adversus Praxean*, 31:2³⁷²; *Adversus Marcionem*, 4:1:3).

2.4 Historicity

It should not be a surprise that historicity would be important for Tertullian, given his linear understanding of redemptive history or the economy of God. Nevertheless, it would seem that Tertullian employs historicity on two levels: as a defence, but also as a validation of the Christian faith and dogma.

2.4.1 Historicity as a defence: discrediting Paganism

Having already delineated regarding Tertullian's use of classical rhetoric, one key element in presenting a strong legal case is the utilization of "*historiae*" (histories), in particular "*vetustate*" (from antiquity) (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 10:1:34). To some extent, Tertullian's *Apologeticum* employs this rhetorical mechanism as he defends Christianity on a legal premise, charging his Roman audience to, "*Consulite commentarios vestros*" (consult your memoirs/histories) (*Apologeticum*, 5:3) (Burrows 1988:215). Consequently, when he argues for the reformation of Roman legislation regarding Christians, he reverts to historical "*exempla*" to validate his point and defend his case (*Apologeticum*, 4:6-9) (Burrows 1988:215-216).

Yet, it should be noted that Tertullian's interest in historicity was not limited to legal rhetoric, but he applied it to the validation or defence of his religious convictions. A large percentage of *Apologeticum* is dedicated to demonstrate the antiquity and consequent validity of the Christian faith juxtaposed to Roman paganism (Burrows 1988:219). In *Apologeticum* 10:6 he begins with the origin of paganism, "*Saturnus*" (Saturn), since "from him the whole registry (of gods have their origin), even the more able and known of the godhead"³⁷³. From this premise Tertullian argues that historically, these "gods"

³⁷² *sic deus voluit novare sacramentum ut nove unus crederetur per filium et spiritum*

³⁷³ *ab illo census totius vel potioris et notioris divinitatis*

were “*veteri mortui*” (dead men), who were basically given “*fabulae*” (fictitious narrative) and deified (*Apologeticum*, 10:7; 12:1) (Burrows 1988:219-220).

Cicero, in *De Natura Deorum* 1:16:42-43, makes a similar case. When considering the historicity of the poets’ accounts of the gods, Cicero concludes, “I have set forth a rough account that (the poets’ accounts are) not the opinions of philosophers, but the dreams of madmen”³⁷⁴, since they are riddled with historical “*errores*” (errors), being the “*maxima inconstantia veritatis ignoracione*” (greatest fickleness of truth from ignorance). In addition, Tertullian also cites the historical events surrounding Socrates’ death, recalling that the judgment on Socrates was recalled after his death, which implies that his case for the invalidity of the gods was valid (*Apologeticum*, 14:7-8). Furthermore, Tertullian challenges Cicero’s claim that the Romans’ success was dependent on their devotion to the gods (*De Natura Deorum*, 2:3:8). At great length, he argues from historiography that the Romans only became religious after their success, and that through their conquests they also destroyed the gods of the nations they conquered. Cicero’s logic does not match up with the historical record (*Apologeticum*, 25:1f). Furthermore, other nations with different gods had imperial success prior to the Romans (*Apologeticum*, 26:2) (Burrows 1988:221-224).

Tertullian’s argument, though legal, does highlight his emphasis on historiography to validate our epistemology of divinity. Our conceptualization of divinity should not violate the historical data available. This was a key argument in his defence of Christianity. Paganism did not explain or coincide with the historical data, which undermines its credibility as a religious system. However, Tertullian did not only use historiography as a defence, but also as a validation for the orthodox conceptualization of divinity.

2.4.2 Historicity as validation

Citing Josephus in *Apologeticum* 19:6, Tertullian adopts Josephus’ argument that Judaism or monotheism is older than the Hellenistic and Roman deities, proving its validity by its antiquity³⁷⁵. As Tertullian would claim, the God revealed by Moses is older than “*ipsus Saturnus*” (Saturn himself) (*Apologeticum*, 19:2), chronologically arguing for the antiquity of Moses prior to any Hellenistic

³⁷⁴*Exposui fere non philosophorum iudicia sed delirantium somnia*

³⁷⁵This argument was also used by the Apologists prior to Tertullian (cf. Justin, *First Apology*, 44; 54; 59; Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 3:20-29; Tatian, *Oratio Adversus Graecos*, 36-41).

conceptualization of divinity. Consequently, Tertullian is also challenging Tacitus' claim that the religion introduced by Moses is "*novus*" (new) (Tacitus, *Historiae*, 5:4). In Tertullian's estimation, Tacitus is a "chatterbox of lies"³⁷⁶ (*Apologeticum*, 16:3). For Tertullian, the antiquity of the Scriptures alone should convince his Roman audience of their authority (*Apologeticum*, 19:1)³⁷⁷. In the light of this, any other conceptualization of divinity must derive its origin from the original store of knowledge, which is encapsulated in the Jewish Scriptures, being the "*thesaurum*" (treasure-source) of all later "*sapientia*" (wisdom). And due to its antiquity, it should be regarded as the original truth (*Apologeticum*, 47:1-2)³⁷⁸ (Burrows 1988:224-226).

Tertullian's argument for antiquity and historicity fits with his understanding of epistemology. The knowledge of the divine was the property of all until our fall and subsequent rebellion. Since then, men have taken the original truth and construed it, creating novel ideas from the original source. In this sense, all subsequent ideas of divinity are distortions of the original knowledge. Antiquity is important, since it points to the originality of the Scriptures as the primary source for true doctrine. Its plausibility rests on its antiquity and originality in historiography. Thus, unlike the philosophical milieu that discredits historicity, Tertullian cherished it. It also formed a basis for Tertullian's rejection of heresies, since heresies are always a "*novellitas*" (novelty), being "*posterius*" (later) than the original source (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:2-3; cf. *Adversus Marcionem*, 4:4:5; 4:5:1-7; *Adversus Hermogenem*, 1:1).

Finally, apart from the antiquity of Scripture, Tertullian was also concerned that the events of Scripture were historical. The historicity of the person Jesus Christ was critical to the Christian Faith (*De Carne Christi*, 22:1-6) (Kaufman 1991:172). Fables and philosophical speculations for universals could not form the premise for Christian dogma, which motivated Tertullian to emphasise the historicity of the Scriptures, in particular the person and work of the Son (*Adversus Judaeos*, 8:2; 14:2-3; *De Carne Christi*, 9:6-8; *Adversus Marcionem*, 5:5:9). If a theological conception were to contradict the historical event, it needed to be discarded. History validates theology, and for Tertullian, the scriptural corpus is historically accurate (Kaufman 1991:172-173).

³⁷⁶ *sane ille mendaciorum loquacissimus*

³⁷⁷ *Primam instrumentis istis auctoritatem summa antiquitas vindicat*

³⁷⁸ *Antiquior omnibus veritas, nisi fallor*

2.5 Christo-centric

As we have noted, the focal point of Tertullian's epistemology, the unity of the Testaments as well as his biblical theology of "*oeconomia*" is the person and work of Christ. In this sense, Christology is the key determining factor in all theological construction. For example, in *De Anima* 16:3-5, Tertullian rejects the philosophical disapproval of passion (which is deemed irrational and evil), on the basis of the incarnation, since Jesus had passions, being the perfect man. In this sense, the incarnation becomes the principal lens in understanding anthropology (Bray 1979:79-80). Similarly, as we have noted in Tertullian's understanding of the unity of the Testaments and "*oeconomia*", he interpreted the Old Testament Christologically, since Christ is the fulfilment and perfection of revelation (Dunn 2004:68).

Moreover, one of Tertullian's major problems with philosophical Christians was their continual insistence on Matt. 7:7, that Christ motivated philosophical enquiry: ask, seek, and knock. In contrast, Tertullian argues that Jesus was pointing to himself (Jn. 5:39) and that all philosophical enquiry should terminate with the discovery of Him, since He is the consummation of all things (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 8:1f; 13f; 14:1f) (Kaufman 1991:174). For Tertullian, Christ is "*veritatem*" (truth) (*De Virginibus Velandis*, 1:2). He is the perfection the philosophers have sought after, and if found there should be neither "*curiositate... post Christum Iesum nec inquisitione post evangelium*" (curiosity after Jesus Christ nor inquiry after the Gospel) (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:12; 9:5) (Osborn 2003:2, 39-40, 42-43, 45). Therefore, Tertullian's hermeneutic is a type of "*theologia crucis*", in which Christology determines theological reflection.

The reason for Christ being central is also tied to Tertullian's soteriological concern, since in Christ all salvation hinges, being the climax of redemptive history (*Apologeticum*, 21:17; *De Carne Christi*, 12:6; 14:3; *De Resurrectione Carnis*, 8:2; *Adversus Praxean*, 16:7). The centrality of Christ, soteriologically, seems to stem from the scriptural corpus' emphasis that the Christ is the only means of salvation as well as the true revelation of the Father (cf. Jn. 1:12; 5:39; 8:12; 11:25; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Col. 1:15-20; 2:8-10; Heb. 1:1-3) (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:19:3-11; *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 8:6-7). Additionally, Tertullian also picks up on the apostolic dichotomy in 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5, contrasting the world's wisdom from God's wisdom. Central to God's wisdom is the Cross, which might be an "*absurdum*" (absurdity) from a philosophical perspective, but truly "*credibilis*" (credible) (*De Carne Christi*, 3-5; *Adversus Marcionem*, 5:5:5-10) (Osborn 2003:46-47, 54-55, 129). Accordingly, even if the "*evangelium*" might not make philosophical sense, it needs to be accepted

and form the basis of our understanding of divinity, since it is true reality. In conclusion, “From the beginning, the entire order of the divine dispensation has flown through the Son”³⁷⁹ (*Adversus Praxean*, 16:7).

In summary, one could argue that for Tertullian, the original knowledge of divinity is regained and crystalized through the historical advent of Christ. Consequently, to know Christ is to know the original knowledge of God. Christ is our epistemology, the unifying theme of the Testaments and “*oeconomia*” as well as the primary hermeneutical lens through which all the Scriptures need to be interpreted. Christ is Tertullian’s universal. Due to the knowledge of God becoming incarnated, being an historical person, historicity is important.

2.6 Simplicity of Scripture

Unlike his predecessors, Tertullian deliberated a bit more on the various technical methodologies of hermeneutics. This was partly due to his polemical works against heresies that primarily focused on differences of interpretation. For most heresies, the plain reading of Scripture did not suffice (Gnosticism and Marcion in particular), hence their adoption of Plato’s universals vs. particulars as well as Philo’s allegorical method. In this way, the original or literal meaning (particulars) could be avoided, opting for a deeper spiritual meaning (universals). Nevertheless, these allegorical interpretations were only privy to a few “experts” who have this particular insight. Conversely, Tertullian generally argued for the simplicity and self-sufficiency of Scripture. Scripture “*habet rationem*” (has [its own] method); where confusion seems to prevail, it was not Scripture being ambivalent, but human opinions seeking to alter its original meaning (*Adversus Praxean*, 18:2; *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 14:3-5) (Bray 1979:98; Brown 2004:229; Dunn 2004:22).

Accordingly, Tertullian seemed to have adopted a more literal approach to exegesis. When approaching Scripture, it was important to determine the “*sensus*” (sense) of the words in their context, since “*nulla vox divina*” (no divine word) is “*dissoluta*” (disunited) and “*diffusa*” (diffused) (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 9:1-2; 25:6). In a positive sense, all the words of Scripture are interconnected and find their meaning in their context (Brown 2004:228). Consequently, Tertullian insists, regarding obscure passages, that, “*plura intellegi pauciora*” (the few are to be understood [by] the many). The biggest problem of modalists was that, “they desire to submit/yield the whole

³⁷⁹ *a primordio omnem ordinem divinae dispositionis per filium decucurrisse*

revelation of both testaments to three passages³⁸⁰ (Is. 45:5; Jn. 10:30; Jn. 14:9-10) (*Adversus Praxean*, 20:2; *De Monogamia*, 11:5; *De Resurrectione Carnis*, 19:1; *De Pudicitia*, 8:10; 9:1, 11) (Kaufman 1991:170-172; Brown 2004:228; Dunn 2004:22). What Tertullian endeavours to do is to demonstrate that the three passages used by Modalism do not take into account the larger context of John's Gospel (*Adversus Praxean*, 26:1f).

Nevertheless, Tertullian also resorted to allegory when he deemed it necessary. For Tertullian, whereas the literal meaning takes precedent, allegory is required when other passages seem not to shed light on the text. Moreover, if the text seems to violate the *Regula fidei* or contradict other passages of Scripture, allegory is necessitated (Brown 2004:228). Often, in these instances, rhetoric seems to dominate Tertullian's praxis, rather than careful exegesis (Dunn 2004:22).

2.7 Typology and Allegory

When Tertullian resorted to allegory, it would seem that, like his predecessors, Tertullian adopted a Christo-centric typological approach to Scripture. This is generally due, as we have mentioned, to Tertullian's understanding of the unity of the Testaments as well as his biblical theology, which is Christo-centric. For example, in *Adversus Marcionem*, 3:5:3, Tertullian mentions that the events of the New Testament "*figurata portenduntur per aenigmata et allegorias et parabolas*" (are predicted figuratively through enigmas, allegories and parables) in the Old Testament. Consequently, for Tertullian, the Cross of Christ was prophesied in the Old Testament by "*figurati*" (figures or types). Throughout *Adversus Marcionem* 3:18:1f, Tertullian seeks to demonstrate how the Cross of Christ was pre-figured in Isaac, Joseph, Jacob, Simeon, Levi, Moses' prayer and the bronze serpent (*Adversus Marcionem*, 3:18:1f) (Brown 2004:227-228).

Tertullian's typological hermeneutic is evident in most of his works (*Adversus Marcionem*, 3:5:3; 3:14:5-7; 3:24:2; 4:17:12; 5:4:8; 5:7:11; *Adversus Judaeos*, 9:20; *De Anima*, 35:2; *De Resurrectione Carnis*, 37:4; *De Pudicitia*, 8:11). This method is more strikingly employed in his work *Adversus Judaeos*, in which he interprets the whole Old Testament Christologically, from Rebekah in Gen. 25:23 (*Adversus Judaeos*, 1:3-4) to Yom Kippur in Lev. 16:5-29 (*Adversus Judaeos*, 14:9) (Dunn 2004:22).

³⁸⁰ *tribus capitulis totum instrumentum utriusque testamenti volant cedere*

This methodology also becomes evident in *Adversus Praxean* 16:1f, in which Tertullian argues that it was the Son who spoke and acted from the Patriarchs in Genesis to the prophets (cf. *Adversus Marcionem*, 2:27:3). Nevertheless, Tertullian also resorted to more adventurous typological interpretations, similar to the *Epistle of Barnabas* (cf. *Adversus Judaeos*, 9:22). For example, according to Tertullian, God's transferring of Adam to paradise is a picture of our transferring "mundo in ecclesiam" (from the world into the church). Moreover, Eve was a picture of "Mariae" (Mary) and later the "ecclesia" (church) (*Adversus Marcionem*, 2:4:4-5).

As bizarre as some of Tertullian's interpretations might be, it should be noted that the Christocentric hermeneutic was not primarily motivated by the ecclesiastical tradition, even though it did play a prominent role. It would rather seem that Tertullian, like the orthodox community, was motivated by the scriptural corpus, in particular the New Testament, which claims that the Old Testament should be read Christologically (Jn. 5:39-46; Lk. 24:27; cf. Jn. 3:14-15; Acts 2:25-31, 34-36; 2 Cor. 3:12-18; Gal. 4:21-31; Eph. 5:32-33; Heb. 7:1-8:13).

2.8 Role of heresy in hermeneutics

Tertullian acknowledged, as we have mentioned, that heresy will always persist where there is Scripture to dispute. Nevertheless, God could have eliminated heresy if necessary, but continues to allow it to exist (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 39:7; *Adversus Praxean*, 10:8). In this sense, heresy serves a hermeneutical purpose in the formulation of theology. It has a final cause (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 1:2-3). It would seem that heresy forms a crisis in which orthodoxy is forced to examine the text of Scripture and come to a more complete understanding. Heresy, therefore, serves as a prodding stick to motivate better interpretation and theology (*Adversus Marcionem*, 4.5.2-4) (Kaufman 1991:168, 178).

The above hypothesis seems to be the case when considering Tertullian's own works. A large percentage of Tertullian's work is polemical, interacting with various heretical groups (*Adversus Hermogenem*, *Adversus Marcionem*, *Adversus Praxean*, *Adversus Psychicos*, *Adversus Valentinianos*, *De Carne Christi*, *De Resurrectione Carnis*, etc.). To some extent, the only reason why Tertullian

wrote explicitly on the Trinity was partly or primarily motivated by Modalism or Monarchianism as promoted by Praxeas (Von Campenhausen 1960:27, 31).

Apart from heresies' positive cause, Tertullian also realizes that heresy has a more negative influence. For Tertullian, as a fever "*erogat hominem*" (destroys man), so heresy's teleological purpose is the "*languor et interitus fidei*" (deterioration and destruction of faith) (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 2:1-2). Heresy, therefore, is a type of sieve, which separates those who have a true orthodox faith from those who do not.

3. Concluding Remarks

The two comparative studies below, based on Chapter 4A and 5, would demonstrate Tertullian's continuity with orthodoxy.

Presuppositions and Motifs			
	Philosophical	Ecclesiastical	Tertullian
<i>Epistemology</i>	Like knows like: the human "ψυχή" is divine in origin and can therefore know the divine. According to Plato, due to our "ψυχή" being torn from the universal "ψυχή", we suffered cosmic amnesia. However, all knowledge of our former existence is latent within.	Due to the Fall, man's reason is corrupted and unable to know God. Moreover, through demonic deception, man has become ignorant of the true knowledge of God. Consequently, God revealed Himself through the prophets by the inspiration of the Spirit. God ultimately reveals Himself through His Son. It is only through the adorning of the Spirit (illumination), that we can know God in Christ Jesus.	From our inception, all men possessed the knowledge of God, though we are ontologically not the same. However, due to the Fall man lost or corrupted the original knowledge of God, since our reason was also corrupted. Consequently, through " <i>Scriptura</i> " God revealed His true " <i>natura</i> ". Any person who looks into Scripture would experience some form of recollection of our former knowledge of God. Nevertheless, this recollection takes place

			through the illumination of the Spirit.
<i>Ethical concern</i>	The study of divinity forms the basis for personal and political ethics, since divinity is the macrocosm of the microcosm.	The ethical concern within orthodoxy was primarily motivated by divinity, but also by the notion of eternity or eternal judgment. Ethics has an eternal consequence as its final cause (Athenagoras, <i>Plea</i> , 11; 12; 31; 32; 36).	That ethics concerned Tertullian is evident when considering his numerous writings on ethical issues. Whether this impacted his conception of divinity seems unlikely.
<i>Teleological concern</i>	As illustrated by Aristotle's preoccupation with causes, "τέλος" dictates ontology. In this sense, teleology validates ontology. Without purpose, there is no reason for existence. All things exist either as a cause or due to a cause for a final cause.	The Apologists generally conceptualized divinity teleologically, as being the efficient cause of cosmology and soteriology (Athenagoras, <i>Plea</i> , 19).	Similar to the philosophers, Tertullian argued that teleology validates ontology. Moreover, God is conceived of as the efficient and final cause of cosmology. Tertullian's preoccupation with teleology is often in relation to various heterodoxical groups, in particular Marcion, whose god seems to have no teleological purpose.
<i>Concern for order</i>	One of the motifs for philosophy's preoccupation with the unity-multiplicity paradigm was the concern for order. The order of the cosmos through a unifying principle is the macrocosm for the order of ethics and politics. If the universe has an order, it is our duty to align ourselves with it.	Missiologically, the orthodox community addressed this philosophical concern by proposing that the unifying principle of the cosmos is the Son: Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, since discovering Christ, as Justin would put it, the motif for discovering order has been satisfied.	Similar to the Apologists, Tertullian held Christ to be the unity of the multiplicity of the cosmos. Moreover, our curiosity in seeking the unifying principle should terminate in our discovery of Christ. In this sense, this pursuit reaches full satisfaction in the Son.

<i>Soteriological concern</i>	The philosophers that embraced Pythagorean concepts of cosmology generally exhibited a soteriological concern. Gnosis was perceived as a means to salvation. Recollection was, to some extent, a religious endeavour.	Due to the Fall, redemption becomes central. Soteriology is multifaceted. 1) The Son came to be the gnosis of the Father. 2) He came to be a substitutionary sacrifice for sin. 3) His incarnation was for the recreation and glorification of the universe. Soteriology dominated the study of divinity.	The primary concern of the Christian, according to Tertullian, is hispersonal salvation. To some extent, theology is motivated by soteriology or the concern for redemption. Tertullian's primary motive for combating various heterodoxical movements is soteriology.
<i>Missiological concern</i>		The orthodox community exhibited a desire to articulate the Faith in intelligible terms to the Hellenistic world. The rapid growth of the church as well as the inauguration of Apologetics demonstrates this concern.	As <i>Ad Nationes</i> and <i>Apologeticum</i> would demonstrate, Tertullian shared the missiological motif of the Apologists in conveying Christianity in an intelligible way. Tertullian's apologetic works were not merely defences, but also appeals for conversion. Tertullian's usage of Greek, Carthaginian, Roman and other literature and history demonstrates his ability in contextualization.
<i>Concern for unity</i>		Due to cultural diversity as well as the influx of heresy, the church preoccupied itself, internally, with formulating a unifying hermeneutic and dogma.	Tertullian's insistence on the <i>Regula fidei</i> , uniform dogma and praxis within orthodoxy demonstrates his concern for unity. Nevertheless, Tertullian did not promote unity at the expense of orthodoxy, as his writings against various churches would attest.

As the above comparative study would demonstrate, philosophy, orthodoxy and Tertullian overlapped on various concerns or motifs. Nevertheless, the content of the various motifs differ. For example, within philosophy, an ontological and relational soteriological concern does not occur. For some philosophical schools, redemption is necessitated due to our ontological abscission from our origin which facilitated a type of gnostic amnesia. Conversely, for the orthodox community, redemption is necessitated due to transgression or rebellion which facilitated ontological, cognitive and emotive corruption. Orthodoxy's conception of soteriology is more holistic than philosophy. Moreover, orthodoxy's soteriological concern is not escapism (like Pythagoras, Plato and Stoicism), but recreation or restoration.

It would seem that the concern for teleology is where philosophy did make an impact on orthodox motifs. Whereas teleology is evident within the scriptural corpus, it seemed to have dominated the orthodox community's conceptualization of divinity, especially in regards to the Son and Spirit. Consequently, it hindered the orthodox community in conceptualizing divinity beyond teleological categories, being primarily satisfied with describing the Son and Spirit as efficient causes in cosmology and soteriology. Inasmuch as the orthodox community used some relational terminology to describe the relationship between the persons of the Trinity³⁸¹, they did not unpack these terms satisfactorily.

What we notice in the comparative study is that Tertullian had an even stronger affinity to the teleological concern of the philosophers, utilizing it as an argument against Marcion. How this impacted his conceptualization of divinity will be observed in Chapter 6.

Hermeneutical Praxis			
	Philosophical	Ecclesiastical	Tertullian
<i>Dialectical reason</i>	Since soteriology was the acquisition of true gnosis and our "ψυχή" was ontologically divine, it was through the application of reason through "elenchus" that objective	Since our personal "ψυχή" and "λόγος" is marred by the Fall and not ontologically divine, it cannot form the basis for knowing divinity. Like the Sophists, the church agreed	Though Tertullian held to an idea of recollection slightly akin to Plato, he considered reason as incapable of knowing God apart from God's revelation. Scripture

³⁸¹ Athenagoras would speak of the fellowship of the Father and Son and that the Father conversed with the Son (as we have noted in Chapter 4B), but these concepts were not developed any further. Like most Apologists, Athenagoras was content to describe the teleology of the Son and Spirit.

	understanding of divinity was reached.	that objectivity regarding divinity is impossible through mere reason. The scriptural corpus should be its guide.	should be the guide of reason. In particular, Christ should be the boundary marker of philosophical investigation.
<i>Universals vs. Particulars</i>	Due to the material or sensible universe being in continual flux, particulars do not contain objective truth. What the philosopher should occupy himself with are the universal principles in which the particulars participate. Abstraction is preferred above disciplines such as historiography.	For the church, the unifying principle is the Son or “λόγος” of God. Consequently, all particulars pertain to Him and point towards Him. In particular, all of Scripture points to the Son.	Christ is the unifying principle of the multiplicity of the cosmos. He is also the unifying principle of the Scriptures. Consequently, all investigation should be governed by Him and terminate in Him.
<i>Apostolic Dichotomy</i>		Whereas the world seeks divinity through human ingenuity, orthodoxy seeks divinity at the Cross of Christ. Inasmuch as some within orthodoxy admired the ingenuity of the philosophers, the philosophers fell short since they did not possess the full knowledge of divinity as expressed in the Son at His incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension.	Due to philosophy’s epistemological flaw of depending on fallen human reason (which can only formulate relative and contradictory opinions), Tertullian sees little use in philosophy as a primary tool for theological conception. Scripture takes pre-eminence, in particular the revelation of the Son.
<i>Unity of the Testaments</i>		For orthodoxy, the two Testaments form a composite unity. It is one redemptive narrative which finds its culmination in the incarnation of the Son.	The two Testaments form a unity. This unity culminates in the Son. They are not two distinct bodies of doctrine (Marcion), but the testimony of one God revealed as Father, Son and Spirit.
<i>Historicity</i>		Since God is known through His words and works in various events in history, historiography is critical. The	History is a powerful tool to demonstrate paganism’s unreliability (rhetoric and law). History is a validation

		universal principle of the cosmos is a historical person. What He said and did reveal God. Consequently, historiography is critical to theology. Unlike philosophy that considers history as cyclical, orthodoxy views it as linear with a definitive end.	of the Christian Faith, since the Christian Faith is not based on speculative gestures (philosophy), but the linear historical self-disclosure of God, culminating in the incarnation of the Son. Historicity is more important for Tertullian, due to his legal and rhetorical background.
<i>Christo-centric</i>		Since the unifying principle of the cosmos is the Son and God's revelation culminates in the Son's incarnation, the scriptural corpus should be read Christologically.	Since the Son is the unifying principle of Scripture, in particular the Testaments and God's "oeconomia", the Scriptures should be read Christologically.
<i>Regula Fidei</i>		Due to heresy, the church preserved the oral tradition of the Apostles in the propositions of the <i>Regula fidei</i> . It formed the boundary markers for orthodox interpretation and theological investigation. To some extent, the <i>Regula fidei</i> 's Trinitarian structure and emphasis on the Son, as well as historicity translated into the church's general hermeneutic.	The <i>Regula fidei</i> is the boundary marker for hermeneutics and theological conceptualization. Moreover, only those who adhere to the <i>Regula fidei</i> should be allowed to interpret Scripture. Adherence to the <i>Regula</i> validates one's use of Scripture. A true Christian should only limit his theological investigation to those who adhere to the <i>Regula fidei</i> .
<i>Typology</i>	Applying Plato's universals vs. particulars paradigm, Philo interpreted the Old Testament text allegorically, seeking the universals principles to which the particular events pertain. Philo had no overarching governing principle that governed his allegory, except his understanding of Plato's	Since all things point to the Son, the Son becomes the governing principle of all allegorical interpretation. Even though the church, to a lesser or greater degree, adopted Philo's allegorical method, it was controlled by Christology. Orthodox allegory was more	The Old Testament, directly or figuratively, reveals the Son. Consequently, it needs to be read Christologically. Typology dominates Tertullian's interpretation of the Old Testament.

	cosmology, teleology and ontology of divinity.	typological.	
<i>Oeconomia</i>		Irenaeus clearly expresses this concept in his conception of divinity. God is known as Trinity by his words and works through the metanarrative of redemptive history. He is known through his <i>oeconomia</i> or plan.	More elaborate than Irenaeus, but essentially the same, Tertullian argues that God is known as Trinity through His “ <i>oeconomia</i> ”. The linear metanarrative of redemption reveals God as Father, Son and Spirit, with the emphasis on the Son. To ignore the overarching “ <i>oeconomia</i> ” of Scripture would facilitate an incorrect conceptualization of divinity (one of the errors of Marcion, Valentinus and Praxeas in Tertullian’s estimation).
<i>Simplicity of Scripture</i>		This is slightly alluded to in Irenaeus’ work. Scripture should interpret Scripture.	Scripture has its own method, which implies that Scripture should be interpreted in the light of other Scriptures. Allegory should only be employed where the passages remains unclear or in violation with other passages of Scripture or the <i>Regula Fidei</i> .
<i>Role of heresies</i>		Surprisingly, it would seem that prior to Tertullian, the Apostolic Fathers, Apologists and Irenaeus did not see any particular positive role for heresy. Heresy was merely a corruption or deviation from orthodoxy.	Heresy motivates robust orthodoxy and separates false faith from true faith.

As the above comparison would demonstrate, Tertullian was hermeneutically in line with the orthodox community. To some extent, he was more rigorous than his orthodox predecessors in

expanding the uses of the *Regula fidei* to foster a greater sense of unity within the orthodox community. What seems clear is that Tertullian was not an innovator in hermeneutics, but more an inheritor and perpetuator of the orthodox hermeneutic.

A possible unique element in Tertullian's hermeneutic is the idea of recollection in his epistemology. Like Plato, Tertullian argued that all men possess the original knowledge of divinity. It is in observing the "*natura*" of God in His "*scriptura*" that the soul begins "*recognoscere*" (to recognize or recollect); in that sense, the human soul is "*naturaliter christiana*" (naturally Christian) (*Apologeticum*, 17:6). Yet, this is only a superficial similarity to Plato. Firstly, for Plato, the soul's amnesia took place at its unification with the corporeal body. For Tertullian, knowledge was corrupted and consequently "lost" at the Fall in Gen. 3 (long after the soul's unification with the body). The material substance is not the efficient cause of our amnesia, the Fall is. Secondly, for Plato, this lost knowledge can be recollected through the stimulation of our "*λόγος*" through dialectical reasoning, since the "*λόγος*" of man remains objective after its unification with the corporeal. For Tertullian, man's *ratio* is unable to recollect its former knowledge. It can only corrupt it, since it is also marred by the Fall and enthused with "*libido gloriae*" (the desire of [self] glory). Consequently, we need God's revelation in the "*scriptura*" and the illumination of the Spirit for us to experience any form of recollection.

Tertullian might be slightly overlapping Plato's conceptualization of anthropology, but due to the scriptural corpus and orthodox trajectory, Tertullian fundamentally differs from Plato at various junctures.

What the above study should highlight is that the orthodox community, and Tertullian, exhibited a fundamentally unique hermeneutical praxis in comparison with the philosophical milieu. Although some elements seem to agree between philosophical and ecclesiastical hermeneutics, they are essentially different. Where the church did adopt the allegorical method of Philo, they also put in place key governing principles (the *Regula fidei*, historicity and a Christo-centric hermeneutic) that limited allegorical interpretation. Dogmatic philosophy (as was the case with Philo) was not the governing principle in ecclesiastical hermeneutics; Christology was.

Having deduced Tertullian's hermeneutical affinity with orthodoxy, being an inheritor rather than a progenitor of hermeneutical praxis, Chapter 6 will investigate whether Tertullian's conception of the Trinity was innovative or inherited from the orthodoxy community. Regarding hermeneutics, it would seem the two fundamental pillars of orthodox hermeneutics within the Patristic period were the epistemological premise of Scripture and the hermeneutical governance of Christology.

Chapter 6 – Tertullian’s theological conception of the Trinity

1. Cosmology

Tertullian did not elaborate on cosmology in general, but primarily explained cosmology in relation to the human “ψυχή”. It is from Tertullian’s anthropology that we can grasp something of his cosmology. Accordingly, this section will primarily focus on Tertullian’s understanding of human nature, being a created entity by the Creator God. In Chapter 5 we already began to explain Tertullian’s epistemology of recollection or recognition (Chadwick 2003:118). The seeming paradox of the soul being “*testimonium animae naturaliter christianae*” (the testimony of the soul naturally Christian) (*Apologeticum*, 17:6), yet “*fiunt non nascuntur christiani*” (Christians are made, not born) (*Apologeticum*, 18:4) stems from his cosmological understanding of anthropology. For Tertullian, as we will observe, the cosmos can be divided into two stages: 1) the original creation exhibiting true “*natura*” and the fallen creation exhibiting an “*altera natura*” (another nature) (*De Anima*, 16:7).

1.1 True “*natura*”

Whereas Tertullian affirms the *Regula fidei*’s primary point that God created the cosmos “*de nihilo*” (from nothing) (*Apologeticum*, 17:1), his contribution to cosmology is his elaboration of human anthropology. If God is the creator of humanity, what is man’s relation to God? As we have noted in the philosophical trajectory, anthropology is generally conceived as the microcosm of the macrocosm of divinity. This cosmological understanding facilitated philosophy’s conceptualization of divinity as well as man’s relation to divinity (*Adversus Marcionem*, 2:16:4)³⁸².

To some extent, Tertullian agreed with Pythagoras, Plato and Seneca, in affirming that the human “*anima*” (soul) is divine in origin (*De Anima*, 11:1-2; *Apologeticum*, 17:6; *Adversus Marcionem*, 2:5:6-7). Yet, Tertullian did not imply that the *anima* is ontologically equivalent to “*dei spiritus*” (the Spirit of God). Moreover, “*anima*” is not a derivative of eternal matter (rejecting Aristotelian cosmology and Hermogenes’ heterodoxy) (*De Anima*, 3:4). He distinguishes between the “*spiritus*” and “*anima*”, arguing that “*anima*” is the “*flatus*” (breath) which comes “*ex dei spiritu*” (from the

³⁸²Tertullian emphatically states that the philosophical epistemology is folly, “*Stultissimi, qui de humanis divina praeiudicant*” (they are most foolish, who from human things preconceive things divine).

Spirit of God) (*De Anima*, 11:1-6). In this sense, similar to the Apologists (Chapter 4B), the human “ψυχή” is a product of the “πνεῦμα” and not an ontological piece of the “πνεῦμα”. As Tertullian would put it, “*nihil deo adpendimus*” (we appendage nothing to God), the soul is a “*dilutioris divinitatis*” (diluted divinity), being the “*flatus, non ut spiritus*” (being the breath [of God], not as [His] Spirit) (*De Anima* 24:2; *Adversus Marcionem*, 2:9:1-7). It is God’s “*flatus*” which distinguishes humanity from the rest of the created order, but also makes the soul “more inferior than the creator/artist”³⁸³ (*De Anima*, 19:1-2; *Adversus Marcionem*, 2:9:7). On this point alone, Tertullian has deviated significantly from the philosophical trajectory, opting for the notion that the soul is a creation rather than eternal³⁸⁴ (Bray 1979:74, 77; Dunn 2004:37). Moreover, since the soul is a creation, it does not belong to the incorporeal sphere to which Plato attributes it. In Tertullian’s estimation, Plato’s concept of the Forms or an impassable incorporeal reality are “*haeretica semina Gnosticorum et Valentinianorum*” (the heretical seeds of Gnostics and Valentinians) (*De Anima*, 18:4; 23:5).

Whereas it would seem that Tertullian clearly distanced himself from the philosophical trajectory regarding ontology, he also embraced the more Stoical idea of the “*anima corporalis*” (corporeal soul), since the soul “*sentire et pati potest*” (is able to feel and suffer) (*De Resurrectione Carnis*, 17:2). To some extent, Tertullian seems to have considered the entire universe as being corporeal and divided corporeality between visible and invisible corporeality. Though all things are differentiated by “*species... genus*” (species and genus), they are all “*corporalia*” (corporeal) (*De Anima*, 8:1-2). This seems to be an acceptance of Aristotelian categories as well as Stoic corporeality. Tertullian’s acceptance of visible and invisible corporeality is based on his understanding of *Revelation* 1:10 and 6:9. The “*Dei spiritu*” enabled John to see the once invisible “*animas martyrum*” (souls of the martyrs) (*De Anima*, 8:5). Similarly, Tertullian argued that the “*flatus*” of God must be corporeal, since it was breathed into man; breath is tangible (Gen. 2:7). Moreover, Paul, Lazarus and Abraham had tangible experiences of heaven (2 Cor. 12:2-3; Lk. 16:23-24). Tangibility is only possible if something is corporeal (*De Anima*, 9:5-8) (Bray 1979:74, 77; Chadwick 2003:121; Dunn 2004:37). In this sense, Tertullian might have rejected Plato’s dualism, in particular due to its affiliation with various heresies (*De Anima*, 23:5), but he gladly accepted Aristotelian and Stoic categories and conceptions. Their seeming compatibility with Scripture made the assimilation possible (Harnack 1910:198-199).

³⁸³*id est inferius artifice*

³⁸⁴Tertullian generally rejects any philosophical notion of the pre-eternal existence of the soul. Consequently, Tertullian rejects Pythagorean and Platonic conceptualizations of cosmology and anthropology (*De Anima*, 28:1-5).

Apart from the ontology of the soul, Tertullian also attributes various qualities to the soul which would not have been acceptable to Pythagorean, Platonic and Stoic conceptualizations. For Tertullian, writing against Plato, the human soul is “*passibilis*” (passible) (*De Anima*, 24:2; *De Resurrectione Carnis*, 17:2). Inasmuch as Tertullian agrees that “*anima*” (soul) possesses “*animus*” (mind) (to which Plato would agree and Aristotle disagree), the soul also possesses “*sensus*” (sense or emotion) (*De Anima*, 12:1; 18:1f) (Bray 1979:74; Dunn 2004:37). Due to its created status, the soul is capable of deviation (*De Anima*, 24:2)³⁸⁵. Since the soul possesses “*animus*”, it is by its true “*natura*” “*rationale*” (rational). Yet, due to the fall (as we will observe) the soul is now, “*rationalis et irrationalis*” (rational and irrational) (*De Anima*, 16:1).

What the above demonstrates is that Tertullian considered Stoicism to be closer to the scriptural corpus (*De Anima*, 20:1), than Platonic philosophy. This does not imply that Tertullian uncritically assimilated Stoicism, since he emphatically states that our “*anima*” is not ontologically the same as God. It is at this point where the scriptural corpus as epistemology takes premise. Moreover, rejecting the co-eternality of the soul with God, Tertullian maintains God’s transcendence as Creator, since all things derive their origin from Him (*De Anima*, 4:1f). “*omnia a deo instituta*” (all things have been created by God) and “*bona omnia, ut boni auctoris*” (all things [are] good, as [being] of a good originator) (*De Spectaculis*, 2:1; *Adversus Hermogenem*, 11:99-102; *Adversus Marcionem*, 2:4:1-6; 2:5:1-7) (Bray 1979:110-111; Dunn 2004:37). This is Tertullian’s conception of true “*natura*” before the Fall. Yet, it should be noted, since the original “*anima*” was created “*passibilis*”, true “*natura*” had the potential to fall (*De Anima*, 21:7; 22:2). It was in this state that man possessed a true knowledge of God (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:10:3) and was naturally Christian (*Apologeticum*, 17:6).

1.2 Fallen “*natura*”

Inasmuch as Tertullian describes the original “*natura*” as good, he does not attribute the same quality to our current state. For Tertullian, humanity now is unnatural, possessing a corrupt or “*alterius natura*” which is “*ex diabolo*” (from the devil) and is “*adultera*” (polluted/adulterated) (*De Anima*, 16:7; *De Corona Militis*, 6:3) (Bray 1977:110-111). The cause of this adulteration of our nature was due to our disobedience of will, which is ontologically part of our “*anima*” (*Adversus Marcionem*, 2:5:5-7). Accordingly, the Platonic concept of the material body being the cause of evil is rejected. It is the soul, the seat of the will, which sinned (Bray 1979:75, 111). The reason for our wilful

³⁸⁵ *deoque et a primordio exorbitationis capacem et inde etiam oblivionis affinem*

disobedience, according to Tertullian, was Adam and Eve's "*impatientia*" (impatience) in following God's will, being enthused by the devil's own impatience; similar to Theophilus (*Ad Autolyicum*, 2:17, 21, 25, 27-28). The origin of man's impatience is the devil, "Therefore, the nativity of impatience (is) in the devil himself"³⁸⁶ (Tertullian, *De Patientia*, 5:5). Due to this, man lost "*Deo de proximo amicus et paradisi colonus*" (friendship regarding nearness to God and citizenship of paradise), being unable to endure things "*caelestia*" (heavenly) (*De Patientia*, 5:8-13).

Now, if Adam originally, by the freedom and exercise of the will chose to be disobedient, how does this original sin effect humanity? Two alternatives seem to be proposed. According to Steenberg (2008:114-115, 132, 212), Tertullian conception of original sin is not ontological, but economical, in the sense that the societal structure or the new economy of the cosmos, distorts the ontology of the soul. In this hypothesis, the human soul remains neutral, though subjugated to the fallen economy, suffering a subsequent disfigurement. The *imago Dei* (image of God) remains intact within the core of human nature, but is disfigured and hindered from its realization, being not "mutated in its nature". There is some validity to this position. For example, in *De Anima* 41:1-4, Tertullian argues that in spite of the corruption of the soul by the devil, there remains "*bonum animae*" (the good of the soul), since that good is "*a deo*" (from God). Consequently, it cannot be "*extinguitur*" (extinguished), but only "*obumbratur*" (obscured).

The second alternative argues that Tertullian conceived original sin as ontological. Brown (2004:223-224), for example, argues that Tertullian proposed that a person's soul is transmitted from one's parents. As the body is derived from one's parents, so the soul is derived from one's parents. This position, known as traducianism, states that sin is hereditary, being the ontological inheritance from parent to child. There are ample texts to suggest this hypothesis. In *De Anima*, 25-27 Tertullian argues that the body and soul are formed together and that the soul is not added later. In *De Anima* 27:7-33:11, he argues at length that the soul, like the body, is transmitted from one's parent or father. At this point, Tertullian is rejecting the Pythagorean and Platonic understanding of the transmigration of souls, opting to endorse Aristotle's concept of transmission in which man is only capable of begetting man (*Metaphysics*, 7:1032a; 8:1033b)³⁸⁷ (Bos 2002:279). Moreover, Tertullian adopts Aristotle's paradigm of potentiality and actuality, arguing that the soul is the form of the body which becomes human, when "*forma completa est*" (when the form is completed) (*De Anima*, 37:2) (Dunn 2004:37).

³⁸⁶ *Igitur natales impatientiae in ipso diabolo*

³⁸⁷ ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ἄνθρωπον γεννᾷ

To some extent, Steenberg's position does not fully take into account the ontological elements prevalent in Tertullian's work. Nevertheless, it does highlight the fact that there is an external economy to the soul which distorts it, whose ruler is the devil. Consequently, it would seem that both hypotheses are compatible and Tertullian does not seem to argue for the one against the other. There seems to be, in Tertullian's work, an ontological and an economic corruption, the one fuelling the other and *vice versa*. The original sin of Adam affects our ontology through transmission, but also creates a different economy which enforces the ontological marring, being subjugated to the devil. Yet, our original "*natura*" is not utterly extinguished, due to its origin being from God. Maybe, in using modern terminology, Tertullian believed in total depravity, but not utter depravity. In Tertullian's estimation, the author of sinful evil is the devil; the only evil God could be accused of is the evil of penalty and judgment of sin (*Adversus Marcionem*, 2:14:2)³⁸⁸. God's response to the "*altera natura*" is penalty and judgment.

As we have noted in Chapter 5, due to our corruption, our personal "*anima*" and "*animus*" is unable to perceive the original knowledge of God. We have, by our rebellious disposition (internal) and the corruption of the devil (external), suppressed or construed the original knowledge received. Furthermore, we are ontologically and economically distorted. Consequently, Tertullian identifies three efficient causes: a creative cause, a revelatory cause (which we, to some degree, have dealt with in Chapter 5) and a soteriological cause. All remain in Adam, in this "*altera natura*", until one is born again in Christ (*De Anima*, 40:1)³⁸⁹ (Dunn 2004:37). The only hope of the "darkness of antiquity"³⁹⁰ is the Gospel (*Apologeticum*, 4:7) (Burrows 1988:210-211).

2. Teleology

In *De Oratione* 4:1-5, Tertullian comments on Matt. 6:10, explaining that it is the endeavour of every Christian to pray for God's will to permeate both our "*carnis et spiritus*" (flesh and spirit). In this sense, the prayer is for God's working of his economy into our economy. The efficient cause of God's economy, in Tertullian's estimation, is the Son (Steenberg 2008:89-90). There is a sense that teleology preoccupied Tertullian's conception of divinity. Teleology was of such primary importance to Tertullian, that in refutation against Marcion, he argued that God's ontology is validated by His

³⁸⁸ *malorum quidem peccati et culpae diabolum, malorum vero supplicii et poenae deum creatorem*

³⁸⁹ *Ita omnis anima eo usque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recenseatur*

³⁹⁰ *tenebras antiquitatis*

teleology; God must have a “*causa*” (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:12:2). Consequently, similar to the philosophers, Tertullian’s ontology of divinity is predominated by teleology.

2.1 Efficient cause: creation

For Tertullian, the efficient cause of creation, who accomplished God the Father’s will to create, was the Son (Neander 1898:512). Like the Apologists, Tertullian described the Son as the λόγος of God, who is “*artifex... universitatis*” (creator of the universe) (*Apologeticum*, 21:10). Nevertheless, Tertullian describes the creative force of the λόγος in Stoic terms, to some extent adopting Zeno and Cleanthes’ understanding of “*spiritus*”. The Son is “*permeator universitatis*” (the permeator of the universe), and from being all-pervasive, He executes God’s creative will. Yet, one should not push Tertullian’s Stoical analogy too far. It should be noted that his audience in *Apologeticum* is pagan Rome (as we have noted in Chapter 5). In order to make the concept of the creative cause of the Son intelligible to his audience, Tertullian used Stoicism as a metaphorical bridge in contextualization.

Similar to *Apologeticum*, in *Adversus Praxean* 6:3, Tertullian argues that it is through God’s “*sermo*” (Word), possessing “*rationem et sophiam*” (reason and wisdom), that God accomplished creation, actualizing through the “*sermo*” what was within “*dei sensu*” (the mind of God). According to Tertullian, the scriptural basis for this position is found in Prov. 8:22-36, which personifies wisdom as the agent of creation (*Adversus Praxean*, 6:1-2). Yet, this is not the only scriptural premise he cites for the Son being the creative cause. Tertullian also cites John 1:1-3 and Col. 1:15-16 as a basis for the belief that the Son is the creator or executor of the Father’s creative purpose (*Adversus Praxean*, 12:6-7; *Adversus Marcionem*, 5:19:4). Tertullian’s chief accusation against Hermogenes is that Hermogenes refuses to acknowledge that the Son, “*ex nihilo universa fecisse*” (has made the universe out of nothing) (*Adversus Hermogenem*, 1:2). It is on the basis of being the efficient cause of creation that the Son is teleologically “*dominus*” (Lord) (*Adversus Hermogenem*, 3:1-7). Lordship, for Tertullian, is not ontological, but teleological, being tied to God being the Creator of creation. Without being the efficient cause of creation, God cannot have the title Lord.

Apart from his possible missiological contextualization of Stoical ideas and unique understanding of lordship, Tertullian is not really deviating from the scriptural corpus or the orthodox trajectory. To some extent, Tertullian is merely replicating this trajectory.

2.2 Efficient cause: soteriological

For Tertullian, it would seem that the dominant concern or motif which facilitated his understanding of teleology is the soteriological motif. Whereas Tertullian does explain the creative cause of the Son, it is meagre in comparison to his elaboration on the Son and Spirit as the efficient causes of our soteriology.

2.2.1 The Son

For Tertullian, it would seem God's economy of redemption hinges on the Son. The purpose of the Son's incarnation is, "to reform and illuminate"³⁹¹ humanity (*Apologeticum*, 21:7). The Son "alone might liberate humanity"³⁹² (*De Carne Christi*, 14:3); the incarnation of the Son, "is the hinge of salvation"³⁹³ (*De Resurrectione Carnis*, 8:2) (Osborn 2003:46). The resurrection was for "our salvation"³⁹⁴. It is only when we believe in the Son that we obtain salvation (*Apologeticum*, 21:16)³⁹⁵. Tertullian generally describes the Son's soteriological work as being 1) revelatory, 2) redemptive and 3) recapitulatory.

2.2.1.1 Revelation

As we have noted in Chapter 5, due to the fallen state of humanity, having a distorted "*natura*" and consequent "*ratio*", divinity can only be comprehended through revelation or God's own self-disclosure. The revelatory cause, in Tertullian's estimation, is the Son. All revelation is "*a Christo*" (from Christ) (*Apologeticum*, 47:10) and gives the total revelation necessary to know God, being the "*lux*" (light) and "*persona*" (face) of God, in the sense that God can be known and seen in Christ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:11:12)³⁹⁶. Consequently, Christianity, as we have noted, surpasses

³⁹¹ *ad reformandam et illuminandam*

³⁹² *solus hominem liberaret*

³⁹³ *salutis est cardo*

³⁹⁴ *salutis nostrae*

³⁹⁵ *si intellexissent, et consecuturi salutem, si credidissent, meritum fuit delictorum*

³⁹⁶ It might seem that Tertullian is arguing for modalism in this chapter, since Tertullian calls the Son the "*persona*" of God. However, Tertullian is seeking a Latin equivalent of the term "πρόσωπον" (face) in 2 Cor. 4:6. Consequently, Tertullian's use of the term "*persona*" in this particular instance means "face", while in *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian seems to use the term to imply distinct personhood. *Persona* is a flexible term with multiple meanings. Consequently, to rigorously interpret it as only meaning "person" or only meaning "face" is to a) neglect the context in which the term is utilized and b) be reductionistic, limiting the rich scope of meaning of the term to one particular meaning (Osborn 2003:132-133).

philosophy (*De Pallio*, 6:2) and philosophy's quest terminates in Christ (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:11-13; 44:8) (Osborn 2003:17-18, 44-45, 78-79). In this sense, it is only, "through Him and in Him God desires to be known and delighted in"³⁹⁷ (*Apologeticum*, 21:28). Similar to Irenaeus, whereas the Father is "*invisibilis patrem*" (invisible Father), the Son is God "*visibilis...filius*" (visible Son) due to His incarnation (*Adversus Praxean*, 14:3). It would seem, Tertullian is reiterating the scriptural corpus' affirmation of the revelatory function of the Son, being the "image of the invisible God"³⁹⁸ (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4) through whom alone the Father can be known (Jn. 14:6-7). Tertullian affirms that his conclusion of the "*visibilis et invisibilis deus*" (visible and invisible God) is found "*in evangeliiis et in apostolis*" (in the Gospels and the Apostles) (*Adversus Praxean*, 15:1; cf. *Adversus Marcionem*, 2:27:5-6).

Yet, following the orthodox trajectory and applying his typological hermeneutic (Chapter 4A and 4B), Tertullian also affirms that it is through the Son that God worked in the Old Testament. It was the Son who judged at Babel, caused the Flood, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, conversed with Adam, the patriarchs and the prophets (*Adversus Praxean*, 16:1-3) (Neander 1898:524; Brown 2003:148).

How does the Son reveal the Father? Tertullian explains in *Adversus Praxean* 24:1-9 (citing Jn. 5:21; 6:44; 10:30; 14:1-9; 16:28; Matt. 11:27 etc.) that due to the Son being ontologically one with the Father as well as one in will and action, the Father is made known by the Son's "work of virtue and words of doctrine"³⁹⁹ (*Adversus Praxean*, 24:9). It is the historical acts of the Son as well as the Son's words that reveal the Father. The credibility of the Son's revelation is based on His ontological and relational unity with the Father. Yet, it is due to this revelatory function that humanity can experience 'enlightenment' (*Apologeticum*, 21:7) (Steenberg 2008:125-126). This enlightenment has a teleological end, "God conversed with man, so that man might learn to act divinely"⁴⁰⁰. This is the "sacrament of human salvation"⁴⁰¹ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 2:27:7). In summary, God became visible in the Son in order to reveal Himself. The purpose of this revealing is for man to know God, delight in Him and imitate Him.

To some extent, the Son's teleological function as revelation is dependent on his ontological affinity with the Father. Consequently, Trinity is essential for an epistemology of divinity. Without the

³⁹⁷ *per eum et in eo se cognosci et coli deus vult*

³⁹⁸ εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου

³⁹⁹ *per opera ergo virtutum et verba doctrinae*

⁴⁰⁰ *Conversabatur deus humane, ut homo divine agere doceretur*

⁴⁰¹ *sacramentum est humanae salutis*

Trinity, which is Tertullian's point in *Adversus Praxean* 24:1-9, there is no true revelation. By implication, God would remain unknowable.

2.2.1.2 Ransom

Similar to the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Tertullian did not limit the work of the Son to being the efficient cause of revelation (Apologists) or ontological recapitulation (Irenaeus). He also elaborated on the concepts of ransom and propitiation, though still unsatisfactorily in comparison to our current understanding.

In *De Fuga in Persecutione* 12:3, Tertullian states that "Christ has purchased [Christians] by his blood"⁴⁰². How did the Son purchase a people for Himself? He explains further (citing Rom. 8:32; Gal. 3:13), God the Father did not spare His Son, so that "He might make [the Son] a curse for us – because cursed is he who might hang on a tree"⁴⁰³ (cf. *Adversus Praxean*, 29:1-3; *Adversus Marcionem*, 5:3:8-12⁴⁰⁴). In *Adversus Marcionem*, 3:8:4-6, Tertullian, in combating Docetism, argues that the bodily incarnation was necessitated in order that the Son could embrace our penalty, which is death; "Christ died... for our sins"⁴⁰⁵ (cf. *Adversus Praxean*, 30:3, citing Rom. 8:32 and Is. 53:6) (Bray 1979:88, 90-91; Osborn 2003:46; Steenberg 2008:126). Since humanity "had rebelled through transgression"⁴⁰⁶ and received the curse "from the Law"⁴⁰⁷ (*Adversus Praxean*, 29:3), Christ "reconciles all things... making peace through the cross by his blood"⁴⁰⁸ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:19:5; Col. 1:20). In *Adversus Iudaeos* 14:8, Tertullian speaks of the Son being the High Priest, through whom God presents a sacrifice for sin.

What makes Tertullian's understanding ransom unique is that he argued that the ransom is the penalty of death, not a type of payment to the devil. Reconciliation and redemption are accomplished by propitiation, in particular the embracement of the penalty of death. Unfortunately, the context in

⁴⁰² *ex sanguine suo redemit Christus*

⁴⁰³ *fieret pro nobis maledictum - quia maledictus, qui pependerit in ligno*

⁴⁰⁴ In this passage, Tertullian is exegeting Paul's Galatians. Tertullian, like Paul, links the curse with the Law (Deut. 11:26; 21:23), but blessing with faith, in particular faith in Christ's becoming that curse on the Cross (Gal. 3:13). Unfortunately, due to Tertullian's desire to demonstrate the unity of the two Testaments, Tertullian did not elaborate on the propitiation of the Son, but focused on how this passage demonstrates the unity of the Old and New. Sadly, Tertullian's argument with Marcion eclipsed the main point of the passage.

⁴⁰⁵ *Christus mortuus... pro peccatis nostris*

⁴⁰⁶ *rebellaverant per transgressionem*

⁴⁰⁷ *ex lege*

⁴⁰⁸ *reconciliat omnia... pacem faciens per crucis suae sanguinem*

which he explains the concept of ransom is generally in his polemical works against heresy. In most cases, the concept of propitiation is secondary to his primary argument. It is possibly only in *De Fuga Persecutione* 12:3 that Tertullian explains the relationship between ransom and propitiation clearly. Yet, even here, the context is the issue of fleeing from persecution. Consequently, we will probably never know the full extent of Tertullian's comprehension of ransom.

Even so, Tertullian links ransom with the Son's ontology. The only possible way the Son can be the "Mediator of God and man"⁴⁰⁹, who accomplishes reconciliation, is if he is ontologically both the divine "*sermo*" (Word) and "*caro et sanguis*" (flesh and blood) (*De Resurrectione Carnis*, 51:1-2; cf. 1 Tim. 2:5). Teleology and ontology, soteriology and ontology, remain closely linked (Osborn 2003:17-18; Steenberg 2008:127).

2.2.1.3 Recapitulation

Inheriting the ontological atonement of Justin and Irenaeus, Tertullian reiterated the Son's teleological purpose of recapitulation. Apart from revelation and ransom, the Son incarnated for the purpose of becoming a new Adam. In *De Monogamia* 17:6-7, his argument for one marriage and celibacy is based on the idea of there being two Adams; we are either "*in Adam*" or "*in Christum*", which imply two different realms of being and two different ethical paradigms. It is the goal of the Christian to "pass over"⁴¹⁰ from the old Adam into the New (Bray 1979:63, 71).

Tertullian describes the Son's work as the New Adam as the re-creation of the created order (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:12:6). The Son became incarnated for the purpose "*recapitulare*" (to recapitulate) creation, but also to glorify creation; "God was found very small, so that man might become great"⁴¹¹ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 2:27:7; 5:17:1) (Osborn 2003:16-18; Steenberg 2008:121-122). He is "life"⁴¹² and through participation in Him we receive His life (*De Oratione*, 6:2) (Steenberg 2008:123).

Apart from the Son's purpose of restoration, Tertullian also explains how the Son accomplishes this recapitulation. It is through taking upon Himself all of the created order, and walking in obedience to

⁴⁰⁹*sequester dei atque hominum*

⁴¹⁰*transisti*

⁴¹¹*Deus pusillus inventus est, ut homo maximus fieret*

⁴¹²*vita Christus*

the Father, that the Son reverses all elements or consequences of the Fall. His identification with creation guarantees its ultimate restoration. Tertullian puts it this way in *De Carne Christi* 4:4, “Nativity he reforms from death by a heavenly regeneration”⁴¹³. Or more clearly in *Adversus Marcionem* 3:9:5, “Christ incarnated by being born from flesh, so that he might reform our nativity by his nativity, and again so that by his death he might dissolve our death by resurrecting in the flesh”⁴¹⁴.

Tertullian’s understanding of recapitulation is closely tied to his ontological understanding of Christ. In *De Carne Christi* 5:7, he emphatically argues for that the Son has “two substances”⁴¹⁵, being both “*homo et deus*” (Dunn 2005:37). Similar to the Son’s teleological function as revelation and ransom, the Son’s teleological function of recapitulation necessitates the ontology of two substances. Once again, teleology and ontology are closely linked.

Nevertheless, a lingering question remains: how do the Son’s revelation, ransom and recapitulation become actualized in the Christian? It is at this juncture that Tertullian’s teleological understanding of the Spirit becomes prominent. For Tertullian, the Spirit’s work is the continuation of the Son’s post-ascension (Neander 1898:513; Bray 1979:63).

2.2.2 The Spirit

2.2.2.1 Inspiration and illumination

As we have already noted in Chapter 5, the Spirit is the interpreter of the economy of God (*Adversus Praxean*, 30:5)⁴¹⁶ (Neander 1898:511; Pelikan 1956:106). He is the “*deductor*” (guide/teacher) in “*omnis veritatis*” (all truth) (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:1). It is through the Spirit that the revelation of the Son becomes tangible or actualized in the believer. Apart from the Spirit’s illuminating work, the Son’s revelation remains obscure. As an addition to our explanation in Chapter 5, it should be noted that Tertullian seems to propose that the Spirit’s primary aim is to point to the Son or the revelation of the Son, keeping in step with Jn. 16:14; as Tertullian seems to allude poetically, “(The dove) as a

⁴¹³ *nativitatem reformat a morte regeneratione caelesti*

⁴¹⁴ *Christus in carnem ex carne nasci habebat, ut nativitatem nostrum nativitate sua reformaret, atque ita etiam mortem nostrum morte sua dissolveret resurgendo in carne*

⁴¹⁵ *utriusque substantiae*

⁴¹⁶ *oeconomiae interpretatorem*

symbol of the Holy Spirit, loves the East (the sunrise), the figure of Christ”⁴¹⁷ (*Adversus Valentinianos* 3:1).

Complementing the Son, as the Son is the revealer, the Spirit is the interpreter of the revelation of the Son. Each Person has their function regarding the Father’s purpose of self-disclosure.

2.2.2.2 Consummation of recapitulation

Regarding the actualization of the Son’s recapitulation of creation, it would seem Tertullian suggested that the Spirit internalizes or makes effective the accomplished work of the Son through a type of mystical participation in the being of God. It was at the act of baptism that this mystical union took place between the Spirit and man. Yet, he was clear that the water administered at baptism is not identical with the Spirit’s union. The water “prepares”⁴¹⁸ us for the reception of the Spirit. The water is an outward sign of “faith”⁴¹⁹, which is marked by the “witness of baptism”⁴²⁰. The witness of our faith in baptism is an angel, the church and the Trinity. It is when our faith is witnessed, it would seem, that the way is prepared for the Spirit to unite with the person (*De Baptismo*, 6:1f) (Bray 1979:90-92).

The union with the Spirit, as Tertullian seems to suggest, enlarges our capacity for divinity, granting us a communion with God deeper than Adam and Eve enjoyed (*Apologeticum*, 21:6)⁴²¹; as he explains: “But the body will become spiritual when through the Spirit it rises into eternal life”⁴²² (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:10:5). It is through the “habitation”⁴²³ of the Spirit in the body of the believer, that the virtues of Christ are communicated. In particular, the virtue of “*patientia*” (patience), since it was through “*impatientia*” that we originally fell into sin (*De Patientia*, 13:1-3) (Pelikan 1956:105; Steenberg 2008:129, 131; 2009:96-98). In this sense, the Spirit is the “*sanctificator fidei eorum*” (sanctifier of our faith) (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:1).

⁴¹⁷ *amat figura spiritus sancti orientem Christifiguram*

⁴¹⁸ *praeparatur*

⁴¹⁹ *fides*

⁴²⁰ *baptismi arbiter*

⁴²¹ *ob disciplinae auctioris capacitatem*

⁴²² *sed corpus ...futurum spiritale dum per spiritum surgit in aeternitatem*

⁴²³ *habitaculo*

Inasmuch as the Spirit's communication of the virtue of patience is insightful, due to the polemical nature of Tertullian's writings, Tertullian did not systematically explicate what he fully understood. The reference to the glorification of the body was in refutation against Marcion's Docetism. Similarly, the emphasis on patience regarding the sanctification of the Spirit was in relation to martyrdom. Paul makes a similar application in Col. 1:11-12, in which patience and endurance are highlighted as key qualities of the Christian life. Nevertheless, the essential message seems to be clear, it is through the union of the Spirit that the recapitulatory work of the Son is applied to the believer and ultimately consummated in the believer.

2.3 Final Cause: *summum bonum*

In Athenagoras' *Plea* 12, Athenagoras touched on the idea of a final cause in Christianity. The final cause of redemption seems to be "to have known"⁴²⁴ the Father, Son and Spirit. In particular the "κοινωνία" (fellowship) of the Three. Nevertheless, it would seem that Tertullian expressed the final cause of the efficient causes of creation and redemption more clearly than his predecessors. The final cause of creation and redemption is to know God; as Tertullian puts it in *Adversus Marcionem* 2:3:2-3, "The first goodness of the Creator, then, whereby God was unwilling to hide in eternity, is that there is not something by which God might be known. For what [is] so good than the knowledge and enjoyment of God?"⁴²⁵ In this sense, Tertullian touched on the final cause of all things: the knowledge and enjoyment of God. All the efficient causes described are subservient to the final cause of knowing God. This is Tertullian's *summum bonum* (highest good).

In order for the highest good to be attainable, the Son and the Spirit must be the efficient causes of creation and redemption, but also, they must be ontologically God. In addition, for the highest good to be translatable to creation, the Son must be both "God and man", as we will subsequently observe. Tertullian's ontology of God logically flows from his teleology of the Son and Spirit.

⁴²⁴ ἐἰδέναι

⁴²⁵ *Prima denique bonitas creatoris, qua se deus noluit in aeternum latere, id est non esse aliquid cui deus cognosceretur. Quid enim tam bonum quam notitia et fructus dei?*

3. Ontology

3.1 Rules of Divinity: Philosophical (monistic arguments for monotheism) and Regula Fidei (Trinity)

In *Adversus Marcionem*, Tertullian refutes Marcion's hypothesis of the co-eternality of two deities. It is within this *refutatio* that Tertullian resorts to a type of philosophical construct of evaluating divinity. For Tertullian, there are "*regulae*" (rules) for evaluating the "*dei bonitatem*" (goodness of God) (*Adversus Marcionem* 1:22:2). Taking into consideration Tertullian's teleological comprehension of God, the first ontological marker of divinity is "In God, goodness is required to be both eternal and perpetual"⁴²⁶ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:22:4). In relation to goodness, Tertullian continues, God must be "*naturalia... rationalia*" (natural and rational) and "*aeternus*" (eternal) (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:23:1; 1:24:1). To clarify the concepts of natural and rational, Tertullian adds another marker, God is "*perfectus in omnibus*" (perfect in all things) (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:24:1). Tertullian does cite Matt. 5:48 at this juncture, but the overall argument is philosophical in nature.

Yet, what makes Tertullian's rules of divinity important is that they exclude any possibility of a) a plurality of deities (rejecting paganism, Marcion and Gnosticism) (*Ad Nationes*, 1.10:1f; 2:1:10; 2:3:1f; 2:8:1-2; 2:17:1f), and b) the co-eternality of matter (Pre-Socratic, Socratic and Post-Socratic philosophy as well as Hermogenes). To some extent, his philosophical construct is a rational argument for monotheism, which is akin to Athenagoras' philosophical argument for monotheism in his *Plea for the Christians*. For Tertullian, all these rules can only apply to one deity, the "*creatore*" (creator) (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:7:3). "If God is not one, He does not exist"⁴²⁷ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:3:1). "Nothing may be equal to [God]"⁴²⁸ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 1:5:2). "Nothing [is] without origin except God alone"⁴²⁹ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 5:1:1). Consequently, even though Christians worship on the same day when Saturn is worshipped (Sundays), who they worship is an utterly different being (*Ad Nationes* 1:13:1f) (Osborn 2003:11-12, 117-119; Dunn 2004:35-36; Bray 2010:80-81).

Regarding the ontology of God as Trinity, the text in which Tertullian expounds the ontology of the Trinity most explicitly is *Adversus Praxean*. Strikingly, as Tertullian begins his treatise, he reiterates

⁴²⁶ *bonitas perennis et iugis exigitur in deo*

⁴²⁷ *Deus si non unus est, non est*

⁴²⁸ *cui nihil adaequetur*

⁴²⁹ *Nihil sine origine nisi deus solus*

the *Regula Fidei* (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:1). For Tertullian, this is the depository of the faith and the framework within which he will commence his exposition of the ontology of God. It should be noted that the antiquity of the *Regula Fidei* is the compelling reason for Tertullian adopting it as his framework for theological praxis. It is “*ab initio evangelii*” (from the beginning of the Gospel), which gives it an epistemological edge over the “*novellitas Praxeae*” (novel [ideas] of Praxean), who is “*hesterni*” (of yesterday) (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:2). In this sense, Tertullian exhibits the conservatism inherent in orthodoxy.

After stipulating the parameters of inquiry, following his hermeneutical praxis, Tertullian states his position, “All [are] from One, assuredly through the unity substance... the mystery of the economy distributes the unity into Trinity, distributing the Three as Father, Son and Spirit”⁴³⁰ (*Adversus Praxean* 2:4). Whereas Tertullian can philosophically rely on monistic arguments to explain monotheism, the *Regula fidei* compels him to expound monotheism as Trinity. God is not merely a simple unity (Pre-Socratic and Socratic conceptualization leaned towards this conclusion), but diversity expressed as Trinity. To some extent, the rest of *Adversus Praxean* is an exposition of Tertullian’s proposed statement in *Adversus Praxean* 2:4.

3.2 The Unity of God

3.2.1 Paganism critically assessed

As we have noted in Chapter 3, within Roman and Carthaginian religion, Jupiter, Juno and Minerva were generally worshiped as a triad. They were often seen as aspects or masks of one deity. Nevertheless, they were generally worshiped as distinct divinities as well. In this sense, they were either perceived as modalistic or tritheistic, but not Trinitarian (Mattingly & Hitchner 1995:207; Brown 2004:177; Decret 2009:7). The question is: did Tertullian’s conception of the Trinity derive from this pagan trajectory? Some have argued that there is a possible link, since Henotheism was prevalent in Carthage or Africa Proconsularis (Decret 2009:15).

It would seem that Tertullian did not uncritically endorse the above religious trajectory. He emphatically rejects any form of paganism throughout his works. As a reference, *Ad Scapulam* 2:1-10

⁴³⁰ *ex uno Omnia, per substantiae scilicet unitatem... οὐκ οὐνομίας sacramentum quae unitatem in trinitatem disponit, tres dirigens patrem et filium et spiritum*

would suffice. In this section Tertullian emphatically argues for monotheism. Unlike the prevalent Carthaginian society, “We worship one God”⁴³¹; regarding the gods, similar to Justin and Athenagoras, “We know are demons”⁴³² (*Ad Scapulam*, 2:1; cf. *Apologeticum*, 17.1). Alluding to 1 Cor. 10:20-22, Tertullian regards all pagan sacrifice as, “the food of demons”⁴³³. Unlike the created demons and their sacrifices, God has no need of these, since He is, “Creator/Author of the universe”⁴³⁴ (*Ad Scapulam*, 2:8). Consequently, he argues for monotheism juxtaposed to polytheism (Neander 1898:523; Osborn 2003:86; Bray 2010:79-80).

Yet, Tertullian does not merely reject polytheism, but also Judaism. For Tertullian, Judaism “has forsaken God, having deserted to idols”⁴³⁵ and has been always spurious in its monotheism (*Adversus Judaeos*, 1:6-8) (Osborn 2003:117). Moreover, Judaism is not true monotheism in the biblical sense, since they have rejected the “*filius dei*” (Son of God) (*Adversus Judaeos*, 14:11-14). Implicit in this accusation is the theology of the Trinity. For Tertullian, God is not the simple monotheistic deity of the Jews, but a Trinity, since God has revealed Himself through His Son and Spirit. True monotheism, for Tertullian, means Trinity. Consequently, it would seem more probable to argue that Judaism and paganism facilitated a clearer exposition or clarification of monotheism according to the orthodox trajectory. Neither Judaism nor paganism was uncritically assimilated within orthodox Trinitarian theology or at least in Tertullian’s conceptualization.

Nevertheless, what constitutes the monotheistic belief of Tertullian? What is the unity of the Father, Son and Spirit that forms the theological basis for monotheism? It is at this juncture, it would seem that Tertullian resorts slightly towards Stoic conceptions of divinity. The primary unifying category between Father, Son and Spirit, which constitutes a monotheistic unity, is the adoption of the apparent Stoic term “*substantia*”⁴³⁶ (substance) (Bray 1993:38, 111; McGrath 1996:250; Osborn 2003:131).

Stoicism enjoyed popularity in Carthage through the philosophical writings of Cleanthes and others. As we have noted in Chapter 3, Stoicism generally argued for the corporeality of all things, including divinity. Stoicism’s conceptualization of the ontology of God is akin to that of Anaxagoras and

⁴³¹ *Nos unum Deum colimus*

⁴³² *nos daemones scimus*

⁴³³ *Haec enim daemoniorum pabula sunt*

⁴³⁴ *conditor universitatis*

⁴³⁵ *derelicto deo idolis deservivit et divinitate abrelicta simulacris fuit deditus dicente populo ad Aaron*

⁴³⁶ Some scholars have sought to argue that the term “*substantia*” is a legal term regarding property. Yet, like “*persona*”, the term has various meanings depending on the context. It would seem that Tertullian, in relation to divinity, predominantly uses it in the Stoic sense to imply something’s essence.

Aristotle, who both argued for the divine “νοῦς” to be a rarefied material substance or incorporeal substance. For Stoicism, this substance is a fiery ether which permeates all things, being pantheistic (Bray 1993:37).

If we take into account the scriptural corpus, there appeared to be some form of agreement between the Scripture’s description of God and the Stoic idea of ether. God is described as an “πῦρ καταναλίσκον” (consuming fire) (Heb. 12:29). God’s Word is a “πῦρ καιόμενον φλέγον” (a fire burning) (Jer. 20:9). The Spirit of God appear as, “γλῶσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός” (tongues as of fire) (Acts 2:3). God appeared to Moses in a burning bush (Ex. 3:1-14) and answered Elijah with fire to consume the sacrifice on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:30-40). Similar to the sun, God is described as “φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον” (dwelling in unapproachable light) (1 Tim. 6:16). If these texts are not read as imagery, which they seem most likely to be, it would appear that God has substance, if not a fiery substance (Bray 1993:37).

The question is: did Tertullian uncritically adopt Stoicism’s understanding of “*substantia*” as being corporeal fiery ether? Is Tertullian’s conception of God corporeal, as some have previously suggested (Letham 2004:119)?

3.2.2 *Substantia*

For Tertullian, as we have noted, God’s diversity as “*Trinitas*” is preserved as a monotheistic “*unitatem*”, “through the unity of substance”⁴³⁷ (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:4; 18.5; 19.5; 22.11) (Dunn 2004:36). Nevertheless, Tertullian qualifies what he means. The qualification seems to be generally prompted by the various heterodoxical propositions prevalent in Tertullian’s ecclesiastical environment. In this sense, the heterodoxical trajectory facilitated clarification regarding Tertullian’s terminology. Arguing against Marcion’s and Hermogenes’ dualistic cosmology, Tertullian states that God’s substance is not part of the created order. It is consequently neither incorporeal nor corporeal, since all incorporeal and corporeal entities are created. God alone is “*aeternus*” (eternal) in the sense of being, “not born... not made... without beginning and end”⁴³⁸ (*Adversus Hermogenem*, 4:1-3; *Adversus Marcionem*, 1:3:2). It is a condition which belong “*soli deo*” (to God alone) (*De Anima*, 21:7). In addition, unlike the created order which is continually in flux or subject to “*convertibilium*”

⁴³⁷ *Per substantiae scilicet unitatem*

⁴³⁸ *non natam... non factam... sine initio sine fine*

(change), God is unchanging or true being, “His nature is separate from all things”⁴³⁹, which implies that “nothing is equal to God”⁴⁴⁰ (*De Carne Christi*, 3:5) (Neander 1898:528; Osborn 2003:11-12, 57, 117; Warfield 2003:63; Dunn 2004:35-36).

Accordingly, taking the above into consideration, it is highly probable that Tertullian is suggesting that God’s substance cannot be the fiery corporeal ether of Stoicism. God’s substance is transcendent to all created things. In this sense, Tertullian has already significantly altered Stoicism’s concept of “*substantia*”. It is an oversimplification to argue that he considered God to be corporeal fiery ether due to his incorporation of the term “*substantia*” (Payne sa:30-31). Yet, he did maintain that God possessed “*corpus*” (body) and his “*substantia*” was some form of transcendent material; as Tertullian, in rhetorical fashion remarks, “For who will deny that God is body, albeit God is Spirit?”⁴⁴¹ (*Adversus Praxean*, 7:8). In this regard, Tertullian is closer to Aristotle’s understanding of nature and substance as the primary stuff that gives something its potency and ontological basis for existence (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I-IX, 1014b25-1015a19; 1017b10-25). Like the Apostolic Fathers (Chapter 4B), this transcendent substance which is the basis of the Father, Son and Spirit’s “Godhood” is known as “*spiritus*” or “*substantiam spiritum*” (spirit substance), which is God in His essence; “for God is Spirit”⁴⁴² (*Apologeticum*, 21:11; *De Pudicitia*, 21:16; *Adversus Praxean*, 26:3-4) (Neander 1898:522-523; Osborn 2003:131-132); as Tertullian remarks, “For spirit [as substance] has body of its own kind and in its own likeness”⁴⁴³ (*Adversus Praxean*, 7:8). To some extent, it would seem that Tertullian’s scriptural basis for this assertion is derived from Jn. 4:24 that affirms, “πνεῦμα ὁ θεός” (God is Spirit).

The Son and Spirit are united with the Father in substance, being part of the “*corpus*” and partaking in “*spiritus*”. Therefore they can be called God (*Adversus Praxean*, 19:8). They are “*non divise*” (not separate) (*Adversus Praxean*, 11:2). In quite technical fashion, Tertullian exegetes Jn. 10:30, “I and the Father are one”⁴⁴⁴ to mean unity of substance, not unity in number. The term “ἐν” is “*neutrale verbum*” (a neuter word), which would imply “*unitas*” of substance (*Adversus Praxean*, 22:10-13). As Tertullian repeats his interpretation in *Adversus Praxean* 25:1, Jn. 10:30 refers “to unity of substance and not to singularity in number”⁴⁴⁵. Consequently, whereas Tertullian might have rejected the

⁴³⁹ *natura eius ab omnium rerum conditione distat*

⁴⁴⁰ *nihil deo par est*

⁴⁴¹ *quis enim negabit deum corpus esse, etsi deus spiritus est?*

⁴⁴² *nam et deus spiritus*

⁴⁴³ *spiritus enim corpus sui generis in sua effigie*

⁴⁴⁴ *ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἑσμεν.*

⁴⁴⁵ *ad substantiae unitatem non ad numeri singularitatem*

corporeal elements of Stoicism's understanding of "*substantia*", he kept the concept of "*corpus*" and identified God's substance to be "*spiritus*". It is "*substantiam spiritum*" (spirit substance) which constitutes monotheism in the Christian faith (Brown 2003:100).

However, how does the "*unum*" (one) constitute a "*trinitas*" (three)? What separates Tertullian's conception of Trinity from the heterodoxical proposition of Modalism? It is from the unity of God that Tertullian defines God's diversity.

3.3 The diversity of God

Tertullian acknowledges that Modalism or Monarchianism, as defined by Praxeas, was a sincere attempt to protect the orthodox community from the dualism prevalent in Marcion and Gnostic teaching. Moreover, most Gentile Christians converted from paganism (pluralism) to Christianity (monotheism). Yet, Praxeas' proposition was, in Tertullian's estimation, an overcorrection (Osborn 2003:120).

As we have noted in Chapter 4B, due to Modalism's insistence on a strict monotheism, the distinctions within God as Father, Son and Spirit were denied and collapsed into one (*Adversus Praxean*, 1:1, 5) (Dunn 2004:36). God is a "*unitas simplex*" (simple unity), being a "*unicus et singularis*" (one and singular) (*Adversus Praxean*, 12:1). The key term used in order to preserve this strict monotheism is monarchy, which seems to phonetically imply a singular rule; as Tertullian sarcastically remarks, "I prefer that you busy yourself with the meaning of a thing rather than the sound of a word"⁴⁴⁶ (*Adversus Praxean*, 3:6).

Apart from the interpretation of monarchy in Praxeas' theology, the concept of "*trinitas*" seemed to imply the Gnostic teaching, in particular Valentinus, of "*προβολή*" (prolation) (*Adversus Valentinianos*, 7-8). As we have noted in Chapter 4B, the Gnostic concept of prolation or emanation is closely tied to the Middle-Platonic concept of hierarchy of being, which was also adopted in Philonic philosophy. Hence, the concept of "*trinitas*" seemed to have been understood by Praxeas to be another Gnostic theological construct; as Tertullian remarks, "From this someone might have considered that I

⁴⁴⁶ *malo te ad sensum rei quam ad sonum vocabuli exerceas*

am introducing some other ‘προβολήν’, that is, a prolation of one thing out of another, which Valentinus does concerning the Aeons, producing one after another”⁴⁴⁷ (*Adversus Praxean*, 8:1).

Therefore, Tertullian consciously sought to avoid the singularity of Praxeas, but also the plurality of Valentinus. Heterodoxy seems to have facilitated a careful exposition of the diversity of God. Praxeas, apart from the clear scriptural references to monotheism, took monistic philosophical logic to its farthest extent: simple unity⁴⁴⁸. Valentinus took the hierarchical philosophical logic to its farthest extent: hierarchy of plurality of being⁴⁴⁹. Tertullian carefully sought to navigate through the heterodoxical and philosophical trajectories without jeopardizing the scriptural corpus. In order to preserve the diversity of God within God’s unity (walking the metaphorical tightrope), Tertullian explained “*trinitas*” in relation to the divine “*economia*”, and the terms prolation and “*persona*”.

3.3.1 The Divine Economy

According to Tertullian, in order to understand the monarchy of God correctly, one has to interpret monarchy in the light of God’s economy (Lamson 1875:134; Pelikan 1956:107); similar to Ignatius and Irenaeus (*Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 47). In order to counter the singularity of Praxeas, Tertullian argues from the hermeneutical premise of the *Regula Fidei* and his biblical theological understanding of the entire scriptural corpus. According to the *Regula Fidei*, God is revealed as Father, Son and Spirit. Moreover, the biblical metanarrative seems to imply that God’s self-disclosure was progressive, ultimately revealing Himself as Trinity through the Son and Spirit (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:1-4; 13:1f; 16:1f). Monarchy must be understood in relation to biblical metanarrative of God’s economy (McGrath 1996:252; Olsen 1999:97; Osborn 2003:121, 128-129; Brown 2004:223; Dunn 2004:36). God the Father, like the emperor in *paterfamilias* (Chapter 3), distributes his authority and governance through His Son and Spirit, who are ontologically one with Him (Kelly 2007:113). Modalism’s error is that it, “extols the monarchy against the economy”⁴⁵⁰ (*Adversus Praxean*, 9:1).

⁴⁴⁷ *Hoc si qui putaverit me προβολήν aliquam introducere, id est prolationem rei alterius ex altera, quod facit Valentinus alium atque alium aeonem de aeone producents*

⁴⁴⁸ To some extent, Praxeas’ understanding of divinity is more akin to Parmenides’ extreme logic of the singularity of being, which was explained in Chapter 3.

⁴⁴⁹ To some extent, Valentinus and other Gnostics’ understanding of divinity is more akin to Plato and Philo, who argued for a hierarchy of reality with a stratification of divinities. This has been explained in Chapter 3 and 4B.

⁴⁵⁰ *adversus oeconomiam monarchiae adulantes*

In the light of the above, whereas God's "*substantia*" is one, this "*substantia*" is distributed into a "*trinitas*" of Father, Son and Spirit in the economy. The Father, Son and Spirit are distinguishable according to "*gradus, forma, species*" (degree, form and aspect) (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:4) (Osborn 2003:121; Warfield 2003:63; Dunn 2004:36), though they share "*status... substantia...potestas*" (condition, substance and power). They remain "*non divise*" (not separate) (*Adversus Praxean*, 11:2), being joined together "through the unity of substance"⁴⁵¹ (*Adversus Praxean*, 2:4).

3.3.2 The Prolation of the Economy

After stating the necessity of the economy, Tertullian proceeds to explain how this "*dirigens*" (distributing) takes place within the economy. It would seem, at this juncture, Tertullian aligned himself more with the philosophical conceptualizations of the Apologists, than with Irenaeus, who preferred not to enter into speculation about the generation of the Son and Spirit (Warfield 2003:62).

In *Adversus Praxean* 8:1-7 Tertullian, recognizing the dangers of Valentinus, asks the question, "Has the Word of God been put forth or not?"⁴⁵² He answers, "Here take your stand with me, if He has been set forth, know then the prolation of truth"⁴⁵³ (8:2). At this point, it would seem that Tertullian is agreeing with Valentinus regarding the concept of emanation or prolation, but he clarifies his statement. Unlike the concept of Trinity, Valentinus' prolations "He separates from the author"⁴⁵⁴ and places a "long distance"⁴⁵⁵ between the Father and the Aeons; due to this chasm of distance, "the Aeon does not know the Father"⁴⁵⁶ (8:2). Conversely, according to Tertullian, "The Son alone knows the Father"⁴⁵⁷ (8:3). The Son not merely knows the Father (unlike the Aeons), but He is formed from the substance of the Father, "The Word, however, is formed by the Spirit"⁴⁵⁸ and "the body of the Word is Spirit"⁴⁵⁹ (8:4). The Son is ontologically emanated from the Father and identical in substance

⁴⁵¹ *Per substantiae scilicet unitatem*

⁴⁵² *prolatus est sermo dei an non?*

⁴⁵³ *hic mecum gradum fige. si prolatus est, cognosce* προβολήν *veritatis*

⁴⁵⁴ *separat ab auctore*

⁴⁵⁵ *et ita longe ab eo ponit*

⁴⁵⁶ *aeon patrem nesciat*

⁴⁵⁷ *solus filius patrem novit*

⁴⁵⁸ *sermo autem spiritu structus est*

⁴⁵⁹ *sermonis corpus est spiritus*

to the Father. This emanation or prolation is not limited to the Son, but “I propose that the Spirit [proceeds or prolates] from no other than the Father through the Son”⁴⁶⁰ (*Adversus Praxean*, 4:1).

To some extent, Tertullian is applying Aristotelian categories of generation to his understanding of prolation, in the sense that the Son is generated from the “*spiritus*” of the Father (Aristotle, *Metaphysics I-IX*, 1032b30-1033a2). As “man begets man”, due to our affiliation of substance, so God begets God (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 7:1032a; 8:1033b). However, Tertullian does not separate the Father from the Son as two ontologically separate entities. The Son is never “*separatus a patre*” (separate from the Father) (*Adversus Praxean*, 8:4). The generation of the Son is prolation or extension, not abscission. As Tertullian confesses: “We declare that the Son is a prolation from the Father, but not separate”⁴⁶¹ (*Adversus Praxean*, 8:5). In this regard, Stoicism’s indivisible λόγος which permeates the universe is more akin to Tertullian’s understanding of prolation.

What strengthens the notion that Tertullian understands prolation in Stoic terms is the various analogies he incorporates to describe prolation. Similar to the Apologists, Tertullian adopts the analogy of the Sun⁴⁶². In *Apologeticum* 21:10, Tertullian argues that similar to Christianity, “Cleanthes brings together [all Stoic descriptions of God] in spirit”⁴⁶³. After affirming that Christianity considers the Son to be from the divine substance of spirit, Tertullian employs the sun analogy in *Apologeticum* 21:12-13. “And when a ray is being put forth from the sun, [it is] a portion out of the greater; but the sun will be in the ray, because it is the ray of the sun, and it is not separated from the substance, but extended [from the sun]. So spirit is from spirit and God from God, as light from light is kindled. The material of the matrix (of the spirit substance) remains whole and undiminished, though many derive from it and obtain of its qualities. So also, that which proceeds from God is both God, the Son of God, and One. So also, from Spirit comes spirit and from God comes God... He (the Son) has not receded from the source/matrix, but He went forth.”⁴⁶⁴ In this regard, Tertullian understood the prolation of the Son and Spirit in a similar fashion to the Apologists as well as Seneca’s sun analogy regarding the permeation of the λόγος. For Tertullian, “We must

⁴⁶⁰ *spiritum non aliunde puto quam a patre per filium*

⁴⁶¹ *prolatum dicimus filium a patre sed non separatum*

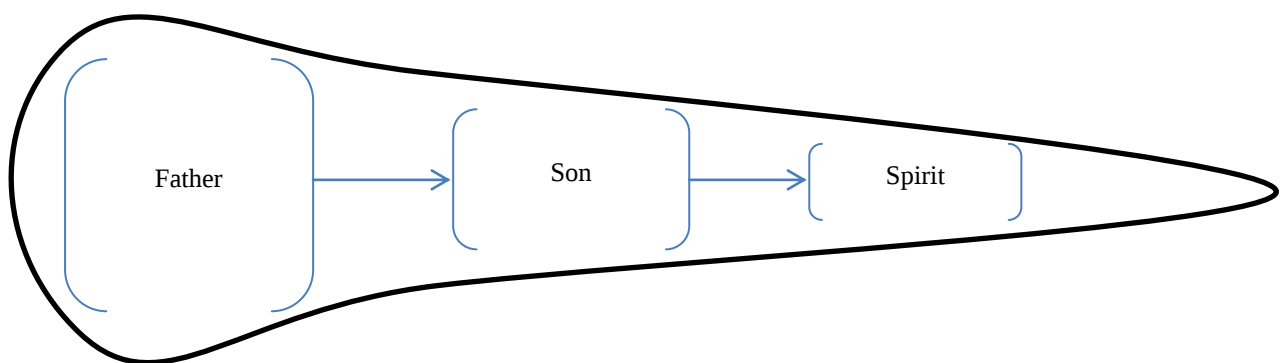
⁴⁶² Tertullian also uses the analogy of a tree being divided between root, branch and fruit and a river being divided between the fountain, river and river mouth. Overall, the analogies explain the same principle of prolation.

⁴⁶³ *Cleanthes in spiritum congerit*

⁴⁶⁴ *Et cum radius ex sole porrigitur, portio ex summa; sed sol erit in radio, quia solis est radius nec separatur substantia sed extenditur, [ita de spiritu spiritus et de deo deus] ut lumen de lumine accensum. Manet integra et indefecta materia[e] matrix, etsi plures inde traduces qualitatis mutueris. Ita et quod de deo profectum est, deus et dei filius et unus ambo; ita et de spiritu spiritus et de deo deus modulo alter[um], numerum gradu, non statu fecit, et a matrice non recessit, sed excessit*

understand the invisible Father in the fullness of His majesty”⁴⁶⁵, in a similar way as the sun is “the fullness of substance which is in the heavens”⁴⁶⁶. The Son is “*visibilis*” (visible) as a “*radium*” (ray), being derivative from the sun. Whereas we cannot tolerate the fullness of the sun, we can “*toleramus*” (tolerate) the rays of the sun. Similarly, we cannot contemplate the fullness of the Father, but we can contemplate the Son (*Adversus Praxean*, 14:3-4) (Harnack 1910:207-208; Osborn 2003:79, 122-123; Warfield 2003:64).

Nevertheless, Tertullian is not merely resorting to philosophical categories as his authoritative base. Tertullian views the Father and Son as being ontologically one on the premise of Scripture. Tertullian cites Jn. 1:18, which describes the Son as being “τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς” (in the bosom of the Father), it is due to the Son’s ontological affinity to the Father that He can “ἐξηγήσατο” (explain or interpret or describe) the Father (*Adversus Praxean*, 8:3). In addition, Tertullian cites Jn. 1:1 & 14:11, “ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν” (the Word was with God) and “ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί” (I am in the Father and the Father in me), which implies some form of unity or close relationship (*Adversus Praxean*, 8:4). Even more emphatic is Tertullian’s citation of Jn. 10:30, which states that the Father and Son are one (as we have already elaborated) (*Adversus Praxean*, 8:4). Consequently, Tertullian’s employment of Stoic and Aristotelian categories should be seen in the light of the scriptural corpus. In order to make sense of the indicatives of Scripture, Tertullian resorts to the philosophical categories that seem to best describe the testimony of Scripture. Tertullian does not whole heartedly adopt Stoicism or Aristotelian categories, but alters them where they seem to violate the Scriptural testimony. Yet, to some extent, Tertullian’s concept of prolation is crudely material in orientation, even if this material is transcendent and not affiliated to anything in the created order (Letham 2004:119). If Tertullian’s conception could be pictured it would most likely have the following image:



⁴⁶⁵ *invisibilem patrem intellegamus pro plenitudine maiestatis*
⁴⁶⁶ *substantiae summam quae est in caelis*

Since a) the Father is the primary substance (*Adversus Praxean*, 9:2)⁴⁶⁷ and the Son the first prolation and the Spirit is prolated from the Father through the Son and b) the substance of spirit has body, it would seem that Tertullian conceived of the ontology of God in a spearhead shape, gradually narrowing from the first to the second and third degree. Nevertheless, this prolation remains part of the primary substance, though each prolation is lesser than the one preceding it. Due to their unity of substance they share all the qualities bound in the substance, namely, eternity, power and other qualities appropriate to divinity as revealed in Scripture. In this sense, Tertullian's Trinitarian understanding seems organic, as the Son and Spirit extend out of the Father, yet it is also ontological subordination, due to the concept of prolation (Olsen 1999:96). For Tertullian, that the Son and Spirit are lesser portions of the "*corpus*" of "*spiritus*" does not diminish their claim to divinity. Tertullian had no qualms in affirming, "The Son is truly a derivation and portion of the whole"⁴⁶⁸, citing Jn. 14:28, "ὁ πατὴρ μείζων μου ἐστίν"⁴⁶⁹ (the Father is greater than me) (*Adversus Praxean*, 9:2). It is on this premise, being prolations, that the Son and Spirit differ from the Father in "*gradus, forma, species*" (degree, form and aspect), since they are extensions of "*substantia*" and not the entire "*substantia*" as the Father (Lamson 1875:129; Bray 1983:112; Osborn 2003:131; Dunn 2004:36; Kelly 2007:114-115; Decret 2009:39). The Father is the material cause of the Son and Spirit.

Apart from the numerous scriptural references, Tertullian introduces the notion of God's omnipotent will as the basis for our acceptance of the Trinity⁴⁷⁰. Inasmuch as the concept of Trinity seems impossible, God's power has no limitations. The reason there is a Trinity is because God has willed it to be. "For with God, to be willing is to be able, and to be unwilling is to be unable"⁴⁷¹. "Therefore, if [God] desired for Himself to make a Son to Himself, He was able [to do it]"⁴⁷². The fact that God reveals Himself as Father, Son and Spirit, implies that God has done what He desired in order to accomplish His purpose (*Adversus Praxean*, 10:9). In this sense, the ultimate point for acceptance of the Trinity is the sovereign will of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures.

In conclusion, since the Son and Spirit are one in substance with the Father, the monarchy is preserved in the economy of God. Appropriately, Tertullian argues that Marcion and Valentinus are

⁴⁶⁷ *pater enim tota substantia*

⁴⁶⁸ *filius vero, derivatio totius et portio*

⁴⁶⁹ *pater maior me est*

⁴⁷⁰ This is also the Apostolic Fathers' and the Apologists' argument regarding the generation and incarnation of the Son (Chapter 4B).

⁴⁷¹ *dei enim posse velle est, et non posse nolle*

⁴⁷² *ergo quia si voluit semetipsum sibi filium facere potuit*

guilty of the true “*monarchiae eversionem*” (subversion of the monarchy) since their plurality of disconnected divinities imply dualism or multiple rulerships. The Trinity is the perfect plurality which preserves God’s monarchy (*Adversus Praxean*, 3:6) (Lamson 1875:135; Olsen 1999:96; Osborn 2003:124, 128-129).

3.3.3 *Persona*

Inasmuch as prolation explains the distribution of God’s substance, it does not qualify distinction. In order to explain distinction between the prolations, Tertullian adopts the term “*persona*”. It is at this juncture that Tertullian appears to clearly move away from the strict monotheism of Praxeas.

The adoption of the term “*persona*” had its challenges. To mention one, the term had a variety of meanings and was often used in the modalistic sense of it being a mask worn by an actor. Yet, it also had a legal meaning, as implying an individual person, distinct from another person, regarding legal transactions (Bray 1983:112; Bray 1993:38-39; McGrath 1996:250). It would seem that Tertullian most likely employed the term “*persona*” in the legal sense as implying distinction of persons; this can be deduced from his insistence on the names of Father, Son and Spirit which designate distinction (Olsen 1999:96; Hill 2003:34-35; Osborn 2003:132-133); as Tertullian implies in *Adversus Praxean* 7:9, “Therefore, whatever has been the substance of the Word, that I call a person and for it I claim the name Son, and while I recognize the Son, I maintain Him as second from the Father”⁴⁷³ (Dunn 2004:36). It is on this basis of personhood, that Tertullian concludes, “For I say that the Father, Son and Spirit are distinct from one another”⁴⁷⁴ (*Adversus Praxean*, 9:1). Consequently, it would seem, what Tertullian is suggesting is that within the unity of substance, God exhibits an inner life of three distinct persons who share the substance of “*spiritus*” (Osborn 2003:133; Warfield 2003:63).

In order to highlight the distinction between the persons of the Trinity, Tertullian resorts to the Aristotelian and Stoic concept of relative disposition (Simplicius, *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, 66.32-67.2). In conversation with Aristotle’s categories, Stoics formulated four categories or genres of classification: substance, quality, disposition and relative disposition. Relative disposition implies that something is dependent on something else in order for distinction to be maintained. For example, light and darkness have a certain disposition to one another. Darkness is known as darkness,

⁴⁷³ *quaecunque ergo substantia sermonis fuit, illam dico personam et illi nomen filii vindico, et dam filium agnosco secundum a patre defendo*

⁴⁷⁴ *enim dico alium esse patrem et alium filium et alium spiritum*

due to its relative disposition to light. Likewise, for a father to be classified as a father there needs to be a son. Similarly, a son cannot be without parent or father. The father and son distinction is dependent on their disposition (Osborn 2003:125-136). As Tertullian argues in *Adversus Praxean* 10:1-3, “However, a father makes a son and a son makes a father... out of necessity a father has a son in order that he may be a father, and a son has a father in order that he may be a son”⁴⁷⁵.

Tertullian applies the category of relative disposition quite extensively throughout *Adversus Praxean*. For example, in *Adversus Praxean* 9:3 Tertullian cites Jn. 14:16 “For I will pray... the Father will send another advocate to you, the Spirit of Truth”⁴⁷⁶. He notes that three distinct persons are mentioned: 1) there is the Son who is asking, 2) there is the “*patrem*” who sends and 3) the “*spiritum veritatis*” who will be a new advocate. Due to the notion of relative disposition, the text implies three persons speaking or conversing with one another. The three cannot be one person, but due to their relative disposition they are three distinct persons. He reiterates in *Adversus Praxean* 11:4-5, citing Isaiah 42:1, “He who speaks and of whom He speaks and to whom He speaks, cannot possibly seem to be one and the same”⁴⁷⁷. Throughout *Adversus Praxean* 11:4-10, he cites various passages that imply distinction in persons due to conversation (Is. 41:1; 42:1; 45:1; 49:6; 53:1-2; Lk. 4:18; Pss. 3:1; 71:18; 110:1). He concludes, “For the Spirit himself proclaims, and the Father to whom He proclaims, and the Son concerning whom He proclaims.”⁴⁷⁸ (*Adversus Praxean*, 11:10). Moreover, the plural expression in Gen. 1:26-27 and Jn. 1:1, cannot imply a singular being (*Adversus Praxean*, 12:1f; cf. 13:1f; 21:1f; 23:1f; 25:1f; 26:1f). Throughout the economy of redemption history, God is revealed as a three persons in conversation, location and action (*Adversus Praxean*, 30:1f).

Having deduced his understanding of the unity and diversity of God as Trinity, Tertullian did not limit his investigation to affirming the existence of the Trinity, but also proceeded to explain the generation of the Trinity, adopting the Apologists’ concern. How he conceived of generation can be perceived from his understanding of the generation of the Son. The generation of the Spirit is generally extrapolated in a similar fashion⁴⁷⁹ (Warfield 2003:18, 74-75; Hill 2003:34; Kelly 2007: 112).

⁴⁷⁵ *atquin pater filium facit et patrem filius... habeat necesse est pater filium ut pater sit, et filius patrem ut filius sit*

⁴⁷⁶ *Rogabo enim, inquit, patrem et alium advocatum mittet vobis, spiritum veritatis*

⁴⁷⁷ *non posse unum atque eundem videri qui loquitur et de quo loquitur et ad quem loquitur*

⁴⁷⁸ *enim ipse qui pronuntiat spiritus, et pater ad quem pronuntiat, et filius de quo pronuntiat*

⁴⁷⁹ Barnes (2008:183-184) argues that Tertullian, like Justin, muddles the function of the Son and Spirit regarding creation and revelation. In Barnes’ estimation, Tertullian removes the Spirit from the act of creation. This is generally assumed from Tertullian’s adoption of Prov. 8:22, in which the Son is called “*sophia*”, a title

3.4 The generation of the Son

It would seem, when considering Tertullian's Christology that the Son's ontology moves through three chronological stages of being. The Son is first latent, then expressed and then incarnated.

3.4.1 The Son latent

Being in general agreement with Athenagoras and Justin (cf. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 61:24), Tertullian views the Son as being latent within the Father. The Father, prior to creation, is the original Supreme being (Neander 1898:521; Kelly 2007:111). As Tertullian explains in *Adversus Praxean* 5:2, "Before all things God was alone, being in Himself and for Himself the universe, space and all things"⁴⁸⁰. Interpreting Jn. 1:1, Tertullian seems to suggest that the Father was never alone, since He had within Himself "*rationem*" (reason). This "*ratio*" is also known as "*λόγον*" by the Greeks (5:3). Prior to creation, the Son was the "*ratio*" of God and "Accordingly, He had with himself and within himself His reason, silently considering and arranging with Him"⁴⁸¹ (5:4). The Son only became "*sermo*" (Word) at the moment of creation. In order to make the concept of the Son being latent within the Father intelligible, Tertullian relates it to anthropology. The basis for this step, according to Tertullian, is Gen. 1:26-27, since man is made "*imagine et similitudine dei*" (in the image and likeness of God) (5:5). At this point Tertullian seems to be adopting the Hellenistic microcosm-macrocosm paradigm of anthropology-divinity (Harnack 1910:210; Waszink 1955:139; Osborn 2003:124; Warfield 2003:58-59). Yet, Tertullian's cosmology underscores the distinction between Creator and creation. They are not ontologically, as in the philosophical trajectory, equivalent. There is merely a likeness as the words "*imagine et similitudine dei*" would suggest.

Our likeness to God is based on our possessing the quality of "*ratio*" (reason), being "*animal rationale*" (rational creatures) (*Adversus Praxean*, 5:5). Looking at anthropology, Tertullian explains, "Observe, when silent with yourself, you are conversing with [your] reason; this process is put in

which was reserved for the Spirit by Theophilus and Irenaeus. Although Tertullian does not call the Spirit "*sophia*", Tertullian affirms the distinction of the Son and Spirit more clearly than Justin. Moreover, as we have noted, Tertullian does distinguish between teleological roles of the Son and Spirit in redemption. Tertullian's neglect of mentioning the Spirit's role at creation could be due to the polemical nature of his writings. Most debates centred on the relationship between the Father and Son. Since his works are situational, it should be expected that the emphasis would be on the relationship between the Father and Son.

⁴⁸⁰ *ante omnia enim deus erat solus, ipse sibi et mundus et locus et omnia*

⁴⁸¹ *proinde eum cum ipsa et in ipsa ratione intra semetipsum habebat, tacite cogitando et disponendo secum*

motion within you by reason, meeting you with a word at every moment of your thought, at every impulse of your mind”⁴⁸² (5:5); “So, in a certain way, the word is a second [person] in you”⁴⁸³ (5:6). On the basis of the microcosmic paradigm of human anthropology, we can deduce that the Son, like our reason, was latent within the Father and conversed with the Father. To some extent, this is identical to the Stoic understanding of the *ratio* (latent) becoming “*sermo*” expressed⁴⁸⁴ (Waszink 1955:141).

Since the Son was not yet expressed for the teleological purpose of creation, Tertullian exclaims, “There was a time when the Son was not with Him”⁴⁸⁵ (*Adversus Hermogenem*, 3:4). The Son was expressed with the teleological purpose to serve the Father⁴⁸⁶. For Tertullian, the title “*filius*” (son) only applies to the second person of the Trinity at the moment of prolation. Prior to prolation, the Son is only the “*ratio*” of God. Inasmuch as the Son is co-eternal with the Father as His “*ratio*”, the teleology of the Son validates His ontological prolation. Consequently, similar to the Apologists, Tertullian seems to almost entirely adopt Stoic, Middle-Platonic and Philonic conceptions of divinity, in particular the generation of the λόγος (Harnack 1910:211; Waszink 1955:140). The primary distinguishing marker between Tertullian and Philo is the notion of “*substantia*”. Philo’s λόγος is a creation, if not the personification of the Forms; Tertullian’s “*Sermo*” is a prolation of divinity, being ontologically equivalent with the Father in “*substantia*”, yet distinct as a “*persona*”. Whereas Philo might call the λόγος divine as being a superior creation, Tertullian calls “*Sermo*” God.

3.4.2 The Son expressed

Due to the teleology of the divine economy and the final cause of God making Himself known, the Son was expressed or prolated at the moment of creation. Tertullian’s primary scriptural premise for this conceptualization is Prov. 8:22-31, which seems to indicate that prior to creation “σοφία” (wisdom) (8:1) was “ἐκτισέν” (created/fathered) (8:22) to be part of God’s creative purpose. As Tertullian explains, “For, as before all things, God desired to put forth that which He had arranged within himself with [His] Wisdom, Reason and Word in their substances and forms, He first prolated/put forth the Word Himself, having within Himself His inseparable Reason and Wisdom, so that the universe might be made through Him through whom they had been planned and

⁴⁸² *vide, cum tacitus tecum ipse congregeris ratione, hoc ipsum agi intra te, occurrente ea tibi cum sermone ad omnem cogitatus tui motum, ad omnem sensus tui pulsum.*

⁴⁸³ *ita secundus quodammodo in te est sermo*

⁴⁸⁴ λόγος ἐνδιαθετός

⁴⁸⁵ *Fuit autem tempus cum ei filius non fuit*

⁴⁸⁶ *sibi seruitura fecisset.*

arranged...⁴⁸⁷ (*Adversus Praxean*, 6:3). Commenting on Prov. 8:22, Tertullian notes, “Then, therefore, the Word himself assumes his form, sound, voice and glorious apparel, when God says, “Let there be light”. This is the perfect nativity of the Word, while He proceeds from God.”⁴⁸⁸ (*Adversus Praxean*, 7:1). Consequently, the organic analogies of a ray from the sun, a shoot from the root of a tree or the stream flowing from the spring appear appropriate (*Adversus Praxean*, 8:5-6⁴⁸⁹). The Son’s prolation makes Him second to the Father in generation; as Tertullian alludes to Aristotle’s concept of generation, “Everything that proceeds from something must be, out of necessity, second from that which it proceeds”⁴⁹⁰ (*Adversus Praxean*, 8:7) (Barnes 2008:184).

Like the Apologists, it would seem that the Son is only prolated due to teleological necessity of an efficient cause for creation and revelation (*Adversus Praxean*, 15:1f; 16:1f) (Harnack 1910:212-213). The sonship of “*ratio et sophia et sermo*” is not an eternal ontological component of divinity. Like the title “*dominum*” (Lord), the title “*filius*” (son) is teleological (*Adversus Hermogenem*, 3:1f) (Warfield 2003:29-32). Nevertheless, it would seem that Tertullian does not deny the “*persona*” of the Son prior to prolation. God the Father did converse with His “*ratio*” prior to creation. Within God the Father “*ratio*” was a “*secundum*” (second person). In this sense, prior to creation, God possessed within Himself an inner life of communion with His “*ratio et sophia*”. Therefore, it would not be too adventurous to suggest that whereas the title “*filius*” might be teleological, the Son’s “*persona*” is ontologically eternal (since God is eternally in “*κοινωνία*” with Himself), whether as “*ratio*” or “*filius*”. Yet, this remains an unfortunate complication in Tertullian’s thought, due to his affiliation with the Apologists’ λόγος theology.

3.4.3 The Son incarnated

Apart from the creative and revelatory function of the Son, in order for the efficient cause of redemption to be realized, the prolated “*sermo*” as “*filius*” becomes incarnated. To some extent, the

⁴⁸⁷ *nam ut primum deus voluit ea quae cum sophia et ratione et sermone disposuerat intra se in substantias et species suas edere, ipsum primum protulit sermonem habentem in se individuas suas rationem et sophiam, ut per ipsum fierent universa per quem erant cogitata atque disposita, immo et facta iam quantum in dei sensu*

⁴⁸⁸ *Tunc igitur etiam ipse sermo speciem et ornatum suum sumit, sonum et vocem, cum dicit deus, Fiat lux. haec est nativitas perfecta sermonis, dum ex deo procedit*

⁴⁸⁹ *nec dubitaverim filium licere et radicis fruticem et fontis fluvium et solis radium, quia omnis origo parens est et omne quod ex origine profertur progenies est, multo magis sermo dei qui etiam proprie nomen filii accepit: nec frutex tamen a radice nec fluvius a fonte nec radius a sole discernitur, sicut nec a deo sermo. igitur secundum horum exemplorum formam profiteor me duos licere deum et sermonem eius, patrem et filium ipsius : nam et radix et frutex duae res sunt sed coniunctae, et fons et flumen duae species sunt sed indivisae, et sol et radius duae formae sunt sed cohaerentes.*

⁴⁹⁰ *omne quod prodit ex aliquo secundum sit eius necesse est de quo prodit*

whole Trinitarian debate hinges on the reality of the incarnation of the Son. It is in our understanding of who the Son is as the man Jesus that would ultimately define our understanding of Trinity. This seems clearly why Tertullian spends considerable energy in numerous treatises to explain the twofold nature of the Son as the man Jesus. For Monarchians, like Praxeas, since God is a simple unity, the incarnation of the Son posed a complication in their conceptualization. For them, the term Son refers to the human substance of the man Jesus, “*filium carnem esse*” (the Son is the flesh), while the term Father refers to the divine substance “The Father, however, is spirit, it is God and Christ”⁴⁹¹ (*Adversus Praxean*, 27:1). Yet, the challenge was not merely posed by Monarchianism. Marcion and the Gnostics completely denied the material substance of the Son; as Tertullian remarks, “Marcion, in order that he might deny the flesh of Christ, denied His nativity also”⁴⁹² (*De Carne Christi*, 1:2) (Dunn 2004:36-37; Kelly 2007:120-122; Barnes 2008:180).

For Tertullian, as we have already noted, in order for the teleological purpose of redemption to be fulfilled, the Son must be both God and man at the same time (*Adversus Marcionem*, 2:16:3). It is only in this ontological state that the Son can be a true mediator. Consequently, whereas the previous orthodoxy propositions were content with affirming “*vere deus et vere homo*” (truly God and truly man), Tertullian explores this notion in much more detail. Even so, Tertullian does not go beyond the scriptural corpus’ twofold formula of σάρξ (flesh) and πνεῦμα (spirit) or the orthodox trajectory’s affirmation of the twofold nature.

In great detail, Tertullian argues that the incarnate Jesus could not be a mixture of “σάρξ” (flesh) and “πνεῦμα” (spirit), since this would imply a third entity, “For if the Word became flesh from a transfiguration and mutation of substance, Jesus must now be one substance from the two [substances], from flesh and spirit, a certain mixture, as an electrum from gold and silver. It begins to be neither gold, that is spirit, nor silver, that is flesh, while the one is being changed by the other and third [substance] is being produced”⁴⁹³. The problem with the notion of a third entity, as Tertullian astutely remarks, “Therefore, Jesus cannot be God; for the Word has ceased to be, who became flesh. He cannot be a true man in the flesh, for He is not properly flesh, which the Word was”⁴⁹⁴ (*Adversus Praxean*, 27:8-9). If the Son is a third entity, it would imply that there cannot be true mediatorship

⁴⁹¹ *patrem autem spiritum, id est deum id est Christum*

⁴⁹² *Marcion ut carnem Christi negaret negavit etiam nativitatem*

⁴⁹³ *si enim sermo ex transfiguratione et demutatione substantiae caro factus est, una iam erit substantia Iesus ex duabus, ex carne et spiritu, mixtura quaedam, ut electrum ex auro et argento, et incipit nec aurum esse, id est spiritus, neque argentum, id est caro, dum alterum altero mutatur et tertium quid efficitur*

⁴⁹⁴ *neque ergo deus erit Iesus; sermo enim desiit esse, qui caro factus est: neque homo caro; caro enim non proprie est, quia sermo fuit*

between the God and man, since the Son is neither God nor man. The Son would cease to be the efficient cause of salvation (Osborn 2003:139).

Consequently, the Son is God and man, having two substances joined together, yet remaining distinct in one person (*Adversus Praxean*, 27:11); as Tertullian remarks, “So, the account of two substances displayed (by Him) are man and God, here born, yet there unborn, here fleshly, yet there spiritual, here weak, yet there most powerful, here dying, yet there living”⁴⁹⁵ (*De Carne Christi*, 5:7) (Osborn 2003:58-59, 139-141; Dunn 2004:36-37). For Tertullian, it would seem, the Son is not a mixture to produce a “*tertium quid*” (third thing), but, as the Stoics would put it, a total blending, where two substances can be joined together, but simultaneously be disseminated from one another (Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On mixture*, 216.14-218.6). Therefore, the two substances “are able to be [joined] in one person/level/plane. From these Jesus consists, from flesh man and from spirit God”⁴⁹⁶, taking his cue from passage such as Rom. 1:3-4 and Jn. 1:14 (*Adversus Praxean*, 27:14) (Osborn 2003:139-140; Kelly 2007:150-151).

Similar to Tertullian’s argument for the acceptance of the Trinity as a valid conceptualization of divinity, Tertullian reiterates that the incarnation of the Word to become the God-man is due to God willing it to be so⁴⁹⁷. God’s will is omnipotent and if He desires to for the Son to be incarnated, than it will be so. Nothing is impossible for God and it is clear from Scripture that God willed it, even if it might seem philosophically unpalatable (Phil. 2:8; 1 Cor. 1:27f; 6:20) (*De Carne Christi*, 3:1f; 4:1f; 5:1f).

Nonetheless, it would seem that Tertullian did succumb to some elements of Platonic, Aristotelian and Philonic concepts of divinity that affirm God’s immutability and being free from suffering. For Tertullian, at the Cross it is only the Son who suffers and not the Father (Chadwick 2003:121). It is only the prolation of the “*spiritus*” which endures suffering and not the Father, “But it is sufficient that the Spirit of God suffered nothing in His essential being... because the Spirit of God has suffered in the Son, which is indeed possible”⁴⁹⁸ (*Adversus Praxean*, 29:7). Yet, there remains confusion in Tertullian’s treatment of the subject, since it would seem that the cry of dereliction in Mk. 15:34 is the

⁴⁹⁵ *ita utriusque substantiae census hominem et deum exhibuit, hinc natum inde non natum, hinc carneum inde spiritalem, hinc infirmum inde praefortem, hinc morientem inde viventem.*

⁴⁹⁶ *in uno plane esse possunt. ex his Iesus constitit, ex carne homo ex spiritu deus*

⁴⁹⁷ This is the argument used by the Apostolic Fathers regarding the incarnation (Chapter 4B)

⁴⁹⁸ *sed sufficit nihil spiritum dei passum suo nomine: quia si quid passus est in filio possibile quidem erat*

“voice of flesh and soul, it is of man, neither of the Word or Spirit.”⁴⁹⁹ (*Adversus Praxean*, 30:2). It is not the divinity and humanity of the Son which embraced death and absolved it, “For we do not say that he died from his divine substance, but from his human substance”⁵⁰⁰ (*Adversus Praxean*, 29:3). However, what should be noted at this juncture of Tertullian treatise, Tertullian is emphatically arguing against the idea of *patripassianism* which affirms the crucifixion of the Father. In this sense, Tertullian is quite orthodox in affirming that it is the Son who suffered on behalf of humanity. Only the Son is the God-man and is therefore the mediator of reconciliation and the new creation (1 Tim. 2:5). This is His role in the redemptive economy of the Father. What we can affirm, and it seems Tertullian is affirming, is that the Son mediated the redemption of humanity on the Cross, not the Father.

4. Concluding Remarks

Cosmologically, teleologically and ontologically, Tertullian seems to be, in general, within the orthodox trajectory. Inasmuch as Tertullian explicates or elaborates on more implicit points in the orthodoxy trajectory, he is not necessarily being entirely innovative. Tertullian, to some extent, has not moved beyond his predecessors (Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, Athenagoras and Irenaeus), but exhibits a similar conservatism in theological conceptualization. Nevertheless, Tertullian is the first person within ecclesiastical history to dedicate a whole treatise to the theological conception of the Trinity (Hill 2003:34).

Cosmologically, like orthodoxy, Tertullian affirms the Creator-creation distinction, also affirming the “*imago dei*” within humanity exhibiting “*ratio*” due to being ontologically the “*flatus*” of God. Yet, like the Apologists and Irenaeus, Tertullian affirms that current “*natura*” is fallen, which includes our “*ratio*”. There is no neutrality or objectivity within human “*ratio*” due to our economical and ontological corruption.

Teleologically, Tertullian affirms the creative, soteriological and revelatory causes of the orthodox trajectory. Possibly, due to the Hellenistic environment, orthodoxy generally conceptualized the ontology of divinity in relation to teleology. Nevertheless, the three efficient causes can be exhibited in the scriptural corpus. Whereas Hellenism might have limited theological investigation to teleological categories, it does not imply that the theological investigation is unorthodox. Rather, it

⁴⁹⁹ *sed haec vox carnis et animae, id est hominis, non sermonis nec spiritus*
⁵⁰⁰ *non enim ex divina sed ex humana substantia mortuum dicimus*

should be seen as a partial appreciation of the content of the scriptural corpus. Generally, it would seem Tertullian and the orthodox trajectory neglected the relational elements prevalent within subsequent Trinitarian conceptualizations.

Ontologically, Tertullian's Trinity does not move beyond the orthodox categories he inherited in the Apologists and Irenaeus. Where Tertullian possibly was innovative is the adoption of new terminology and elaboration on previously assumed concepts in Trinitarian conceptualizations. Even so, Tertullian's Trinity is ontologically hierarchical in structure, with the Father being original source of divinity (Hill 2003:35-36). Like his predecessors (Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, Athenagoras and Irenaeus), Tertullian resorted to philosophical categories and concepts to explain the propositions of the scriptural corpus and *Regula fidei*. Nevertheless, Tertullian did not holistically adopt concepts within the philosophical trajectory, but generally modified or altered various concepts to conform to the scriptural corpus. Ecclesiastical hermeneutics and the Scriptures remained the epistemological premise.

Having deduced Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity, in Chapter 7 I will do a brief comparative study of the philosophical, heterodoxical and orthodox trajectories as well as Tertullian's conceptualization with regards to cosmology, teleology and ontology. From this comparative study I hope to deduce key distinguishing markers of orthodoxy in theological conception within the Patristic period. Afterwards, I will compare orthodoxy's conceptualization of the Trinity with Sakkie Spangenberg's recent critique and revision of Trinitarian theology.

Chapter 7 – Comparative study of Tertullian’s theology, orthodox distinguishing markers and the Nuwe Hervorming

The following comparative study regarding cosmology, teleology and ontology is based on the data of Chapters 3, 4B and 6. The objective of this study is to deduce distinct elements in Tertullian’s and orthodoxy’s theology juxtaposed to philosophy. It is from this doctrinal comparative study that we hope to deduce various hermeneutical distinguishing markers of orthodoxy which facilitated Tertullian’s theological conception of the Trinity. Moreover, these distinguishing markers will be applied to Sakkie Spangenberg’s proposition of a revised doctrine of the Trinity. Spangenberg’s revision is relevant due to it being a current South African debate regarding issues of orthodox divinity. It is Spangenberg’s claim, as will be demonstrated, that the orthodox understanding of the Trinity is a Hellenistic concept that is no longer suitable to our current ideological milieu. Contrary to Spangenberg, from a historical perspective, these distinguishing markers should form the boundary markers of contemporary theological praxis if we are to remain within the orthodoxy trajectory as defined by the Patristic period and be a distinct trajectory from other ideological or socio-political trajectories.

1. Cosmology

	Philosophy	Orthodoxy	Tertullian
Creator/ Creation	The universe is generally conceived of as a unity-diversity. Usually, the unity of the universe is either the compounding of all material substance into a unity (<i>Urstoff</i>) which subsequently expanded into a diversity (Milesians, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Empedocles) or the unity is an intelligible principle, a deity, who is the ordering principle of the Cosmos (Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism) or all reality derives its ontological being as emanations of the Supreme Being or strata of reality with the Supreme	God created the universe <i>ex nihilo</i> . God originally created it good. However, through the deception of the devil, the creation has been corrupted.	God created the universe <i>ex nihilo</i> . Nevertheless, whereas “ <i>natura</i> ” was created good, it became corrupt through the Fall, thus becoming an “ <i>altera natura</i> ” from “ <i>diabolo</i> ”. Consequently, God is ontologically distinct from His creation, being the only eternal entity. Moreover, since God is good, His creation is good. Matter is good.

	Being as the pinnacle of reality (Middle-Platonism and Neo-Platonism). In this trajectory, the divine intelligence is only a designer, not a creator in the proper sense. He is a fashioner. Matter is generally conceived of as either being part of divinity or co-eternal with divinity. It is not created <i>ex nihilo</i> . Only Philo, due to his Jewish background, promoted creation <i>ex nihilo</i> and God's transcendence and eternality. Generally, the empirical sphere (corporeal or material) is either seen as epistemologically valid (Milesians, Aristotle and Stoicism) or invalid since it is in continual flux (Heraclitus and Plato). For Platonism, only the universal principles in which the empirical sphere participates are epistemologically valid.		However, due to the Fall, only God exhibits true " <i>natura</i> ".
Anthropology: ontological affinity	The human "πνεῦμα", "νοῦς" or "λόγος" is ontologically identical to the divine "πνεῦμα", "νοῦς" or "λόγος". They are parts of the divine whole. Humanity and society is the microcosm of the macrocosm of the universe and divinity (Thales, Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism).	God created the universe to create man who has been given the ability to partake and know God. The Soul is not immortal and not ontologically equivalent to God. Nevertheless, humanity was presented the possibility of embracing immortality.	The soul of man is divine in that it is ontologically from the " <i>flatus</i> " (breath) " <i>ex dei spiritu</i> " (from the Spirit of God). Nevertheless, it is a " <i>dilutoris divinitatis</i> " (diluted divinity), and not a part of God's ontological being.
Anthropology: relationship between soul, reason and emotion.	Either our "πνεῦμα" possesses "λόγος" or "νοῦς" as a quality (Anaximander, Pythagoras, Parmenides, Plato) or νοῦς has its own substance (Anaxagoras, Aristotle, Stoicism). Passions are illogical and bound to our material substance, which is passible (Plato,	Our "πνεῦμα" possesses "λόγος".	The soul possesses " <i>animus</i> " (mind) and " <i>sensus</i> " (emotion) and is consequently " <i>passibilis</i> " (passible).

	Stoicism). The human soul is impassible, though hindered by passible material substance.		
Anthropology: relationship between reason and divinity	Due to our ontological affinity to divinity, we are able to participate or know divinity through the faculty of “λόγος”. This is not due to a likeness with divinity, but being identical to divinity. We are the microcosm of the macrocosm of divinity.	In Justin’s anthropology, it would seem that our human “λόγος” can participate in the universal “λόγος” (Jesus Christ). Nevertheless, this participation is hindered by the Fall and they are not ontologically identical.	The soul is made in the “ <i>imago dei</i> ” (image of God) in that the soul has “ <i>ratio</i> ” (reason). There is a likeness between God and man. Yet, God is in essence transcendent and cannot be equated with the soul of man.
Anthropology: theodicy (problem of evil)	Our “πνεῦμα” or “λόγος” is imprisoned in our corporeal bodies. Due to this imprisonment, its ability to participate in divinity is impaired. Matter (Plato) or unintelligible corporeality (Stoicism) is sluggish and prone to chaos. It brings forth passions, that hinder our “λόγος”.	Due to the Fall, man suffers corruption and ultimately death.	Since the Fall our “ <i>natura</i> ” is economically and ontologically corrupt. Yet it is not utterly corrupt. Humanity received the penalty of death and judgment.
Anthropology: impact of Fall on human ability to know God	Prior to our cosmological “Fall”, our “πνεῦμα” had a perfect knowledge of the incorporeal sphere of divinity. Nevertheless, due to our imprisonment, this knowledge is forgotten, but not lost. Through the exercise of our “λόγος” we are able to recollect our forgotten knowledge. Once perfect recollection has taken place, we are able to return to the divine unity from which we were originally torn from (Pythagoras, Plato, Stoicism).	Due to the Fall, man is unable to know God, since our reason has been corrupted.	In Paradise, Adam and Eve enjoyed the knowledge of God. However, this knowledge is suppressed and corrupted since the Fall. Nevertheless, it can be recollected through God’s revelation.

Cosmologically, unique to orthodoxy is its affirmation of the universe being a creation “*ex nihilo*”. This proposition is not evident within the philosophical trajectory. Co-eternality of matter or matter being ontologically an emanation from divinity is generally proposed within Hellenistic ideology. Furthermore, unlike philosophy’s continual affirmation of the divinity of the human ψυχή, νοῦς or

λόγος, the orthodox trajectory distinguishes humanity from divinity. Inasmuch as the human “*anima*” is divine, it is only divine due to being from God’s “*flatus*”, having a similitude and likeness to God, bearing the “*imago dei*”. Nevertheless, it remains a creation and is ontologically not identical with God’s substance. Conversely, it would seem that philosophy’s emphasis of human reason being ontologically divine and our supreme quality impacted orthodoxy’s conceptualization of the “*imago dei*”. The orthodox community and Tertullian also emphasized that our “*ratio*” or “λόγος” is the quality which exhibits the “*imago dei*”, following the philosophical trajectories emphasis, though denying that it is ontologically equivalent.

Orthodoxy generally affirms the goodness of the material universe. Tertullian affirms human emotion and passion as being good, which is not commonly accepted in the philosophical trajectory. This affirmation of material goodness as well as human emotion and passion is based on Christology as well as the cosmology of Genesis 1-2. Inasmuch as the Fall in Gen. 3 marred creation, Christ’s incarnation affirms its essential goodness, since it is created by a good God. Within this paradigm, the theodicy is not due to our impassible ψυχή being united to chaotic and inert matter, but due to our passible “ψυχή” being wilfully disobedient to God. Whereas all things were created good, all things are marred by the Fall, including our “*ratio*”.

2. Teleology

	Philosophy	Orthodoxy	Tertullian
Creation	The order of the cosmos as well as the distribution of matter from a unity to diversity is facilitated by a divine intelligence. This divine intelligence is generally not known, but it is the fashioner of the universe. It either works indirectly on the cosmos (Anaxagoras, Aristotle), through intermediaries (Plato, Middle Platonism, Philo) or directly as an immanent principle (Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Stoicism). Nevertheless, it generally is the	The Son and Spirit are the efficient cause of creation. The Son establishes creation, while the Spirit sustains it.	The Son is the efficient cause of creation. It is through the Son that the Father determined to create the universe.

	efficient cause of order, form and purpose, not creation.		
Salvation/ Revelation	The “λόγος” or universal “ψυχή” facilitates the process of gnosis in which the human “ψυχή” can participate in the universal and recollect its lost knowledge or know god (Pythagoras, Plato, Stoicism).	The Son is the efficient cause of salvation. Through the mediatory role of the Son, the Father reconciles and recreates creation unto Himself and reveals Himself to creation. The Son is God made visible.	The Son is the efficient cause of salvation. It is through the mediatory role of the Son as God and man that God the Father reconciles and recreates fallen “ <i>natura</i> ” and reveals Himself. The Son is God made visible.
	The Form of the Good serves as light to the mind as the sun gives light to the physical creation. It does not impart knowledge inasmuch as it provides our intellect the ability to perceive knowledge or see the metaphysical sphere (Plato).	The Spirit is the efficient cause of salvation in the sense of joining humanity to the Son, granting communion and immortality with God. The Spirit enables God’s people to behold the Son who reveals the Father. The Spirit inspired the Old Testament prophets and points to Christ.	The Spirit is the efficient cause of salvation in the sense of being the applier and consummator of the work of Christ in the individual believer. He is the sanctifier of God’s people. He is also the illuminator of God’s church, enabling God’s people to understand the truth. The Spirit points to the Son in illumination.
Final Cause	The chief end of man is to attain inner harmony with the harmony of the cosmos and to reunite our souls with the universal soul (Pythagoras, Plato, Stoicism) or to actualize within ourselves the perfection of the Prime Mover (Aristotle).	The ultimate purpose of creation and salvation is to know God.	The ultimate purpose of creation and salvation is to know and enjoy God.

To some extent, the orthodox trajectory and philosophy have greater similarities teleologically. The Apologists and Tertullian would agree with the philosophical trajectory that divinity is the efficient cause of gnosis or recollecting the knowledge of true “*natura*”. However, whereas divinity within the philosophical trajectory has more an indirect influence in this process (leaving the recollection to the human faculty of “λόγος”), within the orthodox trajectory, the Son and Spirit are actively involved in revelation and illumination. They are not merely luminaries of knowledge, but bestow and enable humanity to receive and actualize this knowledge. This is due to the orthodox community’s

understanding of anthropology, which claims that human reason is marred by the Fall and unable to perceive divinity.

Apart from the similarity of gnosis, the orthodox trajectory deviates teleologically from the philosophical trajectory regarding creation and redemption. Whereas divinity is merely an organizing principle within philosophy, for orthodoxy divinity is the Creator of creation. Furthermore, whereas for philosophy humanity's union with the material sphere is accidental with little teleological significance apart from escaping its material prison, orthodoxy affirms the entire universe to be part of God's redemptive purpose. Christ redeems humanity holistically. Furthermore, since the notion of a moral Fall and ontological corruption does not occur within the philosophical trajectory, the orthodox concept of soteriology is unique to its trajectory.

Lastly, there is some correlation between philosophy's final cause (reunion and actualization) and orthodoxy's final cause (glorification and communion). In order for the final cause of orthodoxy to be consummated (knowing, enjoying and communing with God), humanity needs to be glorified (recapitulated) ontologically. This seems to correspond with the notion of reunion and actualization within philosophy. Nevertheless, there are significant differences. For philosophy it is merely a matter of reunion, since we are ontologically divine in our "ψυχή". For orthodoxy, we are not ontologically divine, but ontologically corrupt. We require recreation in order to achieve our final cause: knowing God. Furthermore, apart from the Patristic period's lack in explaining the Trinity relationally (due to their teleological affinity to philosophy), the final cause of anthropology is relational: communion with God. Consequently, although there is overlap at this juncture between Tertullian, orthodoxy and philosophy, they remain separate trajectories.

3. Ontology

	Philosophy	Orthodoxy	Tertullian
Unity	God is a) a monistic being, the unity from which diversity emanates (Anaximander), or b) the Supreme being of a hierarchy of divinities (Plato, Middle-Platonism) or c) an immanent principle that permeates the universe (Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Stoicism) or d) One and the only true reality (Parmenides). His substance is either corporeal (Milesians, Heraclitus, Stoicism) or incorporeal (Plato, Aristotle). Either <i>νοῦς</i> is a quality (Anaximander, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Plato) or an ontological substance (Thales, Anaxagoras, Aristotle). Generally, divinity is viewed as supreme intelligence. This being possesses perfect actualization and is not subject to the realm of becoming (Aristotle).	Only God is eternal and is transcendent from creation as its Creator. Father, Son and Holy Spirit form an ontological and relational unity. The Son and Spirit share in the Father's essence, being co-eternal.	Only God is eternal and God is one. Nevertheless, this unity is distributed within God's economy as a Trinity: Father, Son and Spirit. The unifying element between the Father, Son and Spirit (which makes the Trinity a monotheistic concept) is " <i>substantia</i> " (substance). The Son and Spirit partake in the Father's substance, sharing in the divine essence of " <i>spiritus</i> ". This transcendent substance possesses body, but it cannot be equated to anything within the created realm.
Diversity	The universe as well as the gods pertains to the realm diversity or particulars. God is not conceived of as a unity and diversity	The Son is God made visible at the incarnation. He is both God and man and eternally united to the Father. Either the Son was latent within the	The Son is God made visible to creation through His incarnation. He is both God and man, having two natures joined in one person, though not forming a third nature.

	simultaneously. He is either a strict monistic unity (philosophy) or a pluralistic diversity (paganism). Nevertheless, Philo conceived of a divinely created mediator (λόγος) whom God used in creation and through whom He communicates to His creation. The “λόγος” is God’s thoughts given an ontological existence. Nevertheless, it is not God, but the first and supreme creation of God.	Father as His “ratio” prior to creation (Apologists) or co-eternal by eternal generation (Irenaeus).	The Son was latent within the Father prior to creation as His “ratio”. At creation the Son was expressed as “sermo”. Nevertheless, the Son is always with the Father, whether latent or prolated. He is co-eternal with the Father and shares the Father’s essence or substance, thus being God as well.
		The Spirit shares in the essence of the Father, like the Son. He is God’s Wisdom.	The Spirit is prolated from the Father through the Son. He shares in the substance of God and is also God. Like the Son, the Spirit was latent within the Father until creation.
	Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Stoicism generally taught the idea of permeation, in which the “λόγος” or universal soul permeates the universe through “λόγοι”. God is in all things, yet all things are not God, but participate in God. In this sense, all things possess divinity.	Using the Stoic analogy of the sun, the Son and Spirit are like prolated rays of the sun. They are distinct, but ontologically still united to the original source. Like “two hands”, they are distinct, yet ontologically one with God the Father.	The unity of God is distributed as diversity through prolation. The Son and Spirit are prolations of the Father’s primary substance. Like the rays of the sun, the Son and Spirit are extensions from the Father. Nevertheless, as prolations they remain one with the Father. Moreover, each prolation has its own “persona” (person), being a distinct entity from the other persons, sharing in the divine substance. Inasmuch as God is one substance, His inner life exhibits three persons who share the one substance. God is a unity-diversity.

Although the orthodox trajectory would agree with some of the monistic arguments of the dogmatic philosophers, the orthodox community affirmed true transcendence (similar to Philo). God is not part of the created order, but the Author of the created order, being distinct from His creation. Nevertheless, like Philo, the orthodox community and Tertullian adopted to some extent the hierarchical structure evident in Platonism, affirming that the Father does not directly relate to creation. God the Father relates to creation through His prolations (the Son and Spirit). Even so, these prolations remain God, since they share in God the Father's substance. At this juncture, the orthodox community and Tertullian deviate from Platonic and Philonic philosophy.

Although the socio-political trajectory is not mentioned in the above comparative study, mention needs to be made of the concept of *paterfamilias* described in Chapter 3. To some extent, the socio-political environment within which Patristic orthodoxy and Tertullian originated enforced a hierarchical understanding of the indicatives of the scriptural corpus. That the first person of the Trinity is described as Father seems to imply that He is the fountainhead of divinity and the supreme "*auctoritas*" of the monarchy. To some extent, as we have noted in Chapter 6, monarchy was a key element within the Trinitarian debate. Tertullian affirmed that the Father was the supreme "*auctoritas*" who distributed His "*auctoritas*" through the Son and Spirit in creation and redemption. In this sense, it would seem that Tertullian did conceive of the Father along the lines of Roman *paterfamilias*. Accordingly, this might explain partially why Patristic orthodoxy and Tertullian generally affirmed the teleological and ontological superiority of the Father.

Apart from God's relation to creation, the orthodox community affirmed that God is a unity-diversity, a Trinitarian monotheistic being. This concept does not occur within the philosophical trajectory, but the scriptural corpus. However, in order to explain the Trinitarian nature of God, the orthodox community did rely on some philosophical concepts to explain the indicatives of the scriptural corpus. The concepts of the prolation of substance and "*ratio*" becoming "*sermo*" are Stoic concepts. Nevertheless, it would not seem that Stoicism applied these concepts in a similar way. Each prolation for orthodoxy has its own "*persona*". This term is utilized in *Adversus Praxean* in a Roman legal sense to distinguish individuals. That God is tri-personal yet one entity is a unique orthodox concept. The closest philosophical concept is Philo's λόγος, yet Philo did not equate the λόγος ontologically with God.

It would seem, given the emphasis on the substance of God within orthodoxy, this interest could have been partially sparked by Aristotle's own interest in substance as being the final cause of epistemology. For Aristotle, something is truly known if its substance is known (Aristotle, *Metaphysics I-IX*, 1028a30-1028b8). Nevertheless, due to the orthodox community's hermeneutical praxis, it would seem that orthodoxy did not attempt to equate God's substance with any created substance. God's substance is transcendent, even if it is qualified as "*spiritus*". Moreover, orthodoxy distinguished its concept of "*spiritus*" from that of Stoicism, which qualified "*spiritus*" as being fiery corporeal ether. For orthodoxy, in particular Tertullian, "*spiritus*" is a transcendent substance or essence of divinity and cannot be equated with the created sphere.

Lastly, possibly due to the philosophical trajectory's fixation with "τέλος" in a functional sense (generally conceiving divinity as impersonal and mechanical), the appreciation of the ontology of the Son and Spirit by Tertullian and the orthodox community was diminished by only affirming their ontology due to their teleology. It would seem, if creation and redemption were not necessitated, God the Father would not have prolated the Son and Spirit. Unfortunately, the philosophical trajectory seems to have depreciated the relational cause of the Son and Spirit, which would have facilitated a clearer understanding of the co-eternality of the Son and Spirit. This is alluded to in Athenagoras, Irenaeus and Tertullian, but generally not explained or extrapolated. However, this does not imply that the orthodox community was dominated by Hellenism, but rather that their theological investigation of the scriptural corpus was limited by their own historical trajectories.

What the above demonstrates is that orthodoxy (of which Tertullian is clearly a part) was a unique trajectory juxtaposed to the philosophical and socio-political trajectories evident during the Patristic period. It would seem that the unique trajectory of the orthodox community juxtaposed to philosophy is facilitated by its unique hermeneutic. The drastic deviation from the philosophical and socio-political trajectories seems to indicate that orthodoxy functions on a different epistemological basis as well. Although the philosophical and socio-political trajectories did exercise some influence upon the orthodox trajectory (primarily as a limitation to theological investigation), due to orthodoxy's hermeneutical and epistemological distinction, it preserved its theology as a distinct trajectory.

4. Orthodox hermeneutical distinguishing markers

The following distinguishing markers are deduced from the data of Chapters 3, 4A and 5. It is the argument of this thesis that it was the unique hermeneutical lens of the orthodox trajectory which facilitated its unique theological conceptualization of divinity, in particular the Trinity. Consequently, orthodoxy is primarily defined by its hermeneutic of the scriptural corpus. Accordingly, if the following distinguishing markers were to be denied, discarded or ignored, Trinitarian theology (as defined by orthodoxy) would in all likelihood not be possible.

4.1 Authority of Scripture as the revelation of God

For Tertullian and the orthodox trajectory, the key distinguishing marker was their presuppositional belief in the revelatory authority of the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures. These were considered to be God's self-disclosure unto man. They are, as Tertullian would describe them, true "*natura*". Consequently, epistemologically it would seem that the doctrine of the Trinity's main authoritative basis is the scriptural corpus.

4.2 The Unity of the Two Testaments

The two testaments were interpreted as a unity. Unlike the heterodoxical groups, such as Marcionism and Gnosticism, which desired to revise the scriptural corpus, the orthodox trajectory generally stressed their coherent unity. For the orthodox trajectory as well as Tertullian, the two testaments form a singular metanarrative which culminates in the person and work of the Jesus Christ. Consequently, the orthodox community and Tertullian did not hesitate to use both testaments to formulate their theological understanding of the Trinity.

4.3 The Regula Fidei

The *Regula Fidei* was the prominent hermeneutical lens through which the scriptural corpus was interpreted. In order to protect the orthodox community from the various ideological and socio-

political trajectories, the oral tradition of the Apostles was preserved in various loosely connected propositions. Generally, the structure of the *Regula Fidei* was Trinitarian, with the emphasis on the Son, in particular the historicity of His incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension. To some extent, the *Regula Fidei* enforced the Christo-centric and historical emphasis of the church, as well as facilitating a Trinitarian approach to the scriptural corpus. Moreover, its emphasis on God being the Creator of the universe guided the church to affirm its own distinct cosmology from the philosophical and socio-political trajectories.

4.4 Historicity

Due to the historiographical nature of the Old Testament and Gospels as well as the historicity of the Christ-event, historicity was an important feature in Patristic hermeneutics. That the Son was incarnated, lived, died, rose again and ascended during an historical period was paramount in order to validate His divinity as well as the soteriological and hermeneutical implications of His divinity. Consequently, unlike the philosophical trajectory, theology within orthodoxy is not primarily speculative. It is primarily based on the historical self-disclosure of God within the linear history of the scriptural metanarrative. God is believed as Trinity, since He has revealed Himself thus historically.

4.5 Christo-centric hermeneutic

Due to the emphasis on the Son within the *Regula Fidei*, as well as the affirmation that the Old Testament points to the Son as the centrepiece of the unity of the testaments, the orthodox community and Tertullian generally interpreted the Old Testament Christologically. The Christ-event seems to dominate Patristic theology and hermeneutics. To some extent, the Christ-event is the paramount reason for orthodoxy's preoccupation with the Trinity. Christology facilitated orthodoxy's unique typology, which distinguished itself from Philo's allegorical method.

4.6 Concluding remarks

For Patristic theology, in particular its theology of the Trinity, these five distinguishing markers seem to be paramount. It is Tertullian's adherence to these five hermeneutical markers which classifies his theology as orthodox and not heterodox. Generally, heterodoxy tended to deviate from these distinguishing markers, opting for a different epistemological basis or a different hermeneutical lens. To some extent, similar to Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* is primarily a hermeneutical debate regarding the theological propositions of the Trinity. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 6, there is a continual interplay between these five hermeneutical markers when Tertullian seeks to clarify the Trinity and combat the heterodoxical propositions of Praxeas.

Nevertheless, as we have already noted in Chapters 4B and 6, although orthodoxy and Tertullian remained within these parameters of theological investigation, there remained various cultural influences. Due to the socio-political and philosophical milieu in which Tertullian lived, Tertullian's theological conception of the Trinity was limited in its understanding or appreciation. This does not imply that their propositions were heterodox, but rather that their historical context mitigated their ability to fully appreciate the Trinity. A key element missing in most Patristic conceptualizations of the Trinity is the relational aspect as well as the co-eternality of the Son and Spirit with the Father prior to creation. Due to the emphasis on teleology, in particular efficient causes, most Trinitarian concepts were primarily functional at best.

5. Critical evaluation of the *Nuwe Hervorming's* proposition on the Trinity

It should be noted that the following evaluation of the *Nuwe Hervorming's* teaching on the Trinity is based on an article by Sakkie Spangenberg titled "*Die Drie-eenheid in 'n ander baadjie*" (The Trinity in a different jacket), which can be found on their website. We will be investigating the aim of the article, the hermeneutical grid proposed as well as Spangenberg's understanding of the ontology and teleology of Jesus. Like the Early Church, the primary point of contention remains the person and work of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the evaluation is limited to the Patristic period's understanding of orthodoxy, as stipulated above.

5.1 Aim of Spangenberg's article

In Sakkie Spangenberg's (2012) article on the Trinity, he commences to argue that, "the *Nuwe Hervorming* is just as much a part of the Christian tradition as any other group"⁵⁰¹. This is motivated by the accusation of various orthodox Protestant churches that "the *Nuwe Hervormers* have defined themselves outside of the Christian tradition"⁵⁰², due to their denial of the divinity of Christ. "[The *Nuwe Hervorming*] can no longer say anything about the divinity of Jesus"⁵⁰³. Apart from the *Nuwe Hervorming*'s Christology, due to their denial of the divinity of Christ, they also, by implication, deny the "*Drie-eenheid*" (Trinity). In this sense, Spangenberg's article is a defence of a seeming new alternative position, seeking to claim its stake in orthodoxy as well.

5.2 Spangenberg's new hermeneutic proposed

According to Spangenberg (2012), there are two approaches to Christology; there is a Christology "*van benede*" (from below) and a Christology "*van bo*" (from above). These hermeneutical approaches, according to Spangenberg, can be observed in the New Testament. Whereas the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) demonstrate a Christology "*van benede*" (emphasizing the humanity of Christ), the Gospel of John and the Pauline Epistles demonstrate a Christology "*van bo*" (emphasizing the divinity of Christ). For Spangenberg, the Christology of John and Paul triumphed in the "*Griekse en Latynse kerkvaders*" (Greek and Latin church fathers). Accordingly, the *Nuwe Hervorming* is an attempt to revive the Christology "*van benede*".

For Spangenberg (2012), this revival of a Christology "*van benede*" is primarily due to our cultural context. Unlike the church fathers, we do not possess an "*ewigheidsperspektief*" (eternal perspective) and the theology of the John, Paul and the Early Church, "do not do justice to *our* current knowledge and *our* context"⁵⁰⁴. In our modern paradigm of secularism, "there is no hell or heaven and bodies that will resurrect"⁵⁰⁵. The Christology "*van bo*" is "*mites*" (myths). Put simply, a Christology "*van bo*"

⁵⁰¹ ...die 'nuwe hervormers' net so deel van die Christelike tradisie is as enige ander groepering

⁵⁰² die 'nuwe hervormers' hulleself uit die Christelike tradisie gedefinieer het.

⁵⁰³ Hulle kan nie meer iets oor Jesus se goddelikheid sê nie

⁵⁰⁴ laat nie reg geskied aan óns kennis en óns konteks nie

⁵⁰⁵ daar egter nie 'n hel en 'n hemel meer nie en lyke word nie weer lewendig nie

has no cultural relevance except for the possible message latent within the myths⁵⁰⁶. Moreover, due to current archaeology and historiography, our understanding of Jesus' historical context is more robust than that of "Augustine"⁵⁰⁷. Consequently, our hermeneutical praxis for theology should be a) relevant to our contemporary setting and b) take into consideration the "Tweede Tempeltydperk" (Second Temple period).

Furthermore, the key historical event which inaugurated Christianity, according to Spangenberg, is not the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus (which are myths), but the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. Consequently, Christianity is merely a Jewish sect which gravitated towards and eventually identified itself with its central figure: Jesus. As Spangenberg states, "The Christian religion only began after 70 A.D."⁵⁰⁸ For Spangenberg (2012), it is only the Christology "van benede" "that takes seriously the historical Jesus, his historical context and the development of the Early Church"⁵⁰⁹ and is appealing to the "een-en-twintigste eeu" (21st Century).

5.3 Spangenberg's theological conception of the Trinity

For Spangenberg (2012), the defining element in his Christology is the understanding of divinity of Second Temple Judaism. For him, the historical Jesus' "godsbegrip was... monoteïsties" (understanding of divinity was monotheistic). Consequently, "Jesus did not proclaim a Trinity or presented himself as the eternal Son of God before all ages"⁵¹⁰. The assumption is that Jesus would

⁵⁰⁶In ons wêreldbeeld is daar egter nie 'n hel en 'n hemel meer nie en lyke word nie weer lewendig nie. Om hierdie verhale met 'n moderne wêreldbeeld te interpreteer en dit as 'wolhaarstories' af te maak, doen die verhale onreg aan. Ons moet dit kultuursensitief bestudeer en interpreteer. Doen ons dit só behoort ons in ag te neem dat ons hier met mitiese inkledings te doen het en mites is nooit waar of onwaar nie, maar 'lewendig' of 'dood'.

⁵⁰⁷To some extent, this is a modern presupposition. What Augustine knew regarding Judaism or Second Temple Judaism would be unknown to us, due to the limitations of archaeology. However, one can just as easily argue that one's proximity to a specific historical period would imply that one is culturally more astute to that period than someone who is further away chronologically. Some of the Apostolic Fathers lived during the transition of a Second Temple Judaism to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. Although they were generally all Gentile, Ignatius and Polycarp were in close proximity geographically and chronologically to Judea and Second Temple Judaism. Moreover, the Apostles, who were their tutors, lived during that period. It would be an overestimation to argue that orthodoxy was utterly unaware of Second Temple Judaism. It might actually be more feasible to argue that they have personally been in contact with Second Temple Judaism. Nevertheless, this remains a presuppositional argument.

⁵⁰⁸die Christelike godsdiens eers na 70 nC begin het

⁵⁰⁹die Christologie wat erns maak met die historiese Jesus, die wêreld waarin Hy geleef het en die ontwikkeling van die vroeë Christendom

⁵¹⁰Jesus het nie 'n Drie-eenheid verkondig en Homself ook nie as 'die ewige Seun van God wat voor alle eeue bestaan het,' voorgehou nie.

have only understood divinity according to his historical setting, because we are products of our cultural-milieu. Since the *Nuwe Hervorming* limits their understanding of Jesus to be merely human, this proposition seems plausible.

For Spangenberg, “The idea of a Trinity (one being with three persons) is an interpretation and construct of the Greek and Latin church fathers.”⁵¹¹ Consequently, “the description of the church fathers was good and proper for their age, but it is my opinion that it is no longer relevant for our day”⁵¹². This concept of Trinity was an “*ervaringstriniteit*” (experiential Trinity) in the sense that it was the church’s experience of Jesus after his death which prompted this theology. Alternatively, Spangenberg proposes a “*panenteïsme*” (panentheistic) conceptualization of divinity, in which one can argue that “God was present in Jesus”⁵¹³, following John Shelby Spong’s (2002:146) definition, “God is beyond Jesus, but Jesus participated in the Being of God, and Jesus is my way into God”. With Spong’s definition in mind, Spangenberg gives his proposition regarding the person Jesus, “The historical Jesus was an exceptional Jewish prophet, a brilliant Jewish wisdom-teacher and a Jewish believer who lived close to God. The Spirit of God permeated him and he revealed the heart of God to his contemporary setting and lived as an example the reign of God.”⁵¹⁴

When posed with the challenge of the Christology of John’s Gospel, Spangenberg argues that John’s Gospel “was only written at the end of the first century”⁵¹⁵. In Spangenberg’s estimation, due to the lapse in time, John’s Gospel is increasingly more “*Hellenisties*” (Hellenistic) and not part of “Jewish world in which Jesus lived”⁵¹⁶. A key presupposition emerges in Spangenberg’s argument: the Synoptic Gospels and John’s Gospel are merely human accounts and their theologies are contradictory; as Spangenberg states, “The Jesus of the Gospel of John is a Jesus with a totally different character when compared to the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels”⁵¹⁷. Accordingly, we cannot blend their theologies into a whole⁵¹⁸. They seem to be irreconcilable, due to their seeming cultural or

⁵¹¹ Die idee van 'n Drie-eenheid (één Wese en drie Persone) is 'n interpretasie en konstruksie van die Griekse en Latynse kerkvaders

⁵¹² die beskrywing van die kerkvaders was goed en reg vir hulle tyd, maar dis na my mening nie meer geskik vir ons dag nie

⁵¹³ God in Jesus teenwoordig was

⁵¹⁴ Die historiese Jesus was 'n besonderse Joodse profeet, 'n uitnemende Joodse wysheidsleermeester, en 'n Joodse gelowige wat naby God geleef het. Hy was deurdrenk van God se Gees en het God se hart aan sy tydgenote kom wys en sy regering kom voorleef.

⁵¹⁵ eers teen die einde van die eerste eeu nC geskryf is

⁵¹⁶ in die Joodse wêreld waarin Jesus self geleef het

⁵¹⁷ Die Jesus van die Johannes-evangelie is 'n Jesus met totaal ander karakertrekke as die Jesus van die sinoptiese evangelies

⁵¹⁸ Daar is duidelike verskille tussen die eerste drie evangelies en die evangelie van Johannes en ons kan die Jesuskarakter wat hulle teken, nie sommer net met mekaar vermeng nie

socio-political influences. For Spangenberg, the divine statement of Jn. 14:6 is not Jesus' own words, "The writer of the Gospel of John placed [those words] in Jesus' mouth"⁵¹⁹.

5.4 The teleology of Jesus

Befitting the *Nuwe Hervorming's* ontology of Jesus is his teleological function (though these are not categories Spangenberg employs). For Spangenberg, Jesus did not come to inaugurate a "*'n hemelse koninkryk*" (heavenly kingdom), but "*God se regering hier op aarde*" (God's reign on earth). Jesus' primary τέλος was socio-political reform, challenging the Jewish hierarchical structure of his day; as Spangenberg (2012) states, "Jesus pitted himself against the social structure of the Jewish society and emphasized the love and mercy of God"⁵²⁰.

Having deduced Spangenberg's teaching, what will now commence is a step by step evaluation of each section. It should be noted that Spangenberg's aim was for the orthodox community to accept the *Nuwe Hervorming* as being part of the Christian tradition. It could be that Spangenberg would include heterodoxy within that definition, but it would seem the contention is with orthodoxy's rejection of the *Nuwe Hervorming*. Moreover, this evaluation is done by applying Patristic orthodox hermeneutical markers to Spangenberg's conception. This is an historical evaluation.

5.5 Spangenberg's aim and hermeneutical grid evaluated

Commendable is Spangenberg's seeming missiological interest in contextualization, in which our message should be intelligible for the 21st Century. This motif would be shared by the orthodox community, as the Apologists and Tertullian would attest. However, Spangenberg's application of this motif seems more like an uncritical contextualization of secularism and pantheism than a robust attempt to transliterate orthodoxy, yet still being counter-cultural in theological formulation.

⁵¹⁹ *Die skrywer van die Johannesevangelie het dit in Jesus se mond gelê*

⁵²⁰ *Jesus het Hom teen hierdie strukturering van die Joodse samelewing verset en God se barmhartigheid en liefde kom beklemtoon*

Spangenberg's claim that the *Nuwe Hervorming* takes the historical development of the church seriously seems dubious at best. As we have noted in Chapters 3, 4A and 5, from orthodoxy's inception or the earliest records we have of orthodox writings (approximately 50 A.D.), orthodoxy accepted the authority of the Old and New Testament, placing the writings of the Apostles on equal authoritative basis as that of the Old Testament. This is especially true of the Gospels, which are mentioned more explicitly. The New Testament is explicitly stated to be "*a Christo*" (from Christ) and inspired by the prophetic Spirit who inspired the Old Testament prophets. Moreover, apart from their authority, as we have noted in Chapters 4A and 5, the church considered them to be a unity. The Apostolic Fathers placed the writings of the Apostles alongside the Old Testament. Ignatius, Irenaeus and Tertullian affirm that both Testaments exhibit an "*oeconomia*" (economy) or redemptive metanarrative, which is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. For Irenaeus, the diversity of the witness of the four Gospels authenticates their message rather than being contradictory.

External to the Scriptures, as we have noted in Chapters 4A and 5, the church adhered to the *Regula fidei*, which the Orthodox Church claimed was the oral tradition of the Apostles. This claim seems theoretically feasible, as we have demonstrated. The *Regula fidei* affirms the distinctions of the Father, Son and Spirit. Moreover, it affirms the historical events of the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of the Son during the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate. Contrary to Spangenberg's claim, the Orthodox Church was extremely concerned about the historical accuracy of their message. They did not consider these events as myths, but historical events which formed the epistemological basis for their theology.

Apart from Spangenberg's assertion that Jesus revealed God, which orthodoxy would agree with, Spangenberg seems to deny most of the orthodox tenets of the Patristic period. Spangenberg seems to deny the inspiration and authority of the New Testament, seeing them as contradictory statements rather than a unity. They are cultural products of seeming thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis, becoming increasingly Hellenistic. Consequently, for Spangenberg, the concept of apostolic authority, whether oral or written, is an invention of the Patristic era.

Furthermore, it seems clear that Spangenberg would not accept the propositions of the *Regula fidei*. His acceptance would only stretch so far as these propositions were inventions of the Patristic period. They are myths, which imply that they have no historical foundation. For Spangenberg, the only

historical reality is the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. The accounts of the birth, death, resurrection and ascension (critical points of the *Regula fidei*) are not historically accurate.

It would seem Spangenberg's aim has accomplished the opposite of what he claims. Rather than affirming orthodoxy or being part of the larger orthodox contingent, Spangenberg has clearly affirmed his distinction from it. Furthermore, Spangenberg's insistence of contemporary relevancy and the superiority of contemporary knowledge seem to suggest that epistemologically, secularism or our current philosophical milieu has more authoritative weight than the Scriptures. It would seem that Spangenberg's epistemology is not the revelation of God in the Scriptures, but our current philosophical milieu, which exhibits a disdain for supernaturalism. It would seem, if Tertullian's *Praescriptione Haereticorum* were to be applied to Spangenberg, he would be denied a hearing from Scripture, since he would be arguing from a different epistemological basis. Spangenberg and Patristic orthodoxy as espoused by Tertullian have very little in common. To some extent, Spangenberg's position is more akin to Marcion, who denied the Old Testament Scriptures and only accepted the Gospel of Luke and the Pauline epistles. The distinction between Spangenberg and Marcion would be that Marcion denied Jesus' humanity and affirmed his divinity (following his philosophical milieu), while Spangenberg would deny Jesus' divinity and affirm his humanity (following the contemporary Western philosophical milieu). Marcion accepted the Gospel of Luke and the Pauline Epistles, while Spangenberg would opt for the Synoptic Gospels and reject the Gospel of John as an authoritative base for Christology. Nevertheless, the principle is similar, the denial of certain parts of Scripture to accommodate the philosophical milieu of their day.

To some extent, when we consider Spangenberg's theology of Jesus, he is more akin to philosophy and heterodoxy than orthodoxy.

5.6 Spangenberg's theology of the Trinity evaluated

Although Spangenberg claims that his views are contemporary, their origin seems to be ancient. Firstly, the concept of panentheism is not a new concept (I am sure Spangenberg would agree). Concepts of panentheism could be traced back to the pantheism of Pre-Socratic Heraclitus and Post-Socratic Stoicism who affirm the idea of the permeation of divinity. That humanity can possess divinity within is in agreement with most philosophical schools, in particular Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle and especially Seneca's Stoicism. Applying Spangenberg's own critique of Patristic

Trinitarian theology, it would seem that his theology of Jesus is more a synthesis of Stoicism and Christology than a historically accurate account. In some ways, Spangenberg's Christology is akin to Praxeas, since Praxeas separated the two natures in the person of Jesus, claiming that God indwelt Jesus as Father, while Jesus was merely flesh. Similar to Praxeas, Spangenberg would affirm monotheism at the expense of Trinity, but also affirm the panentheistic permeation of the Spirit of God within the historical person Jesus in order to preserve monotheism, as Praxeas would suggest as well. It would seem that Spangenberg's position is similar to Praxeas' Monarchianism. While the terminology is slightly different, the concept is the same.

Furthermore, Spangenberg's description of Christology within the Early Church is a caricature at best. To argue that the Early Church only accepted a Christology "*van bo*" is an unfair judgment. To some extent, it was the heterodoxical propositions about Jesus that were a strict Christology "*van bo*". Gnosticism and Marcion would affirm the divinity of Christ, but deny his humanity, since their philosophical epistemology affirmed the evil of matter. Conversely, orthodoxy affirmed both a Christology "*van bo*" and "*van benede*". The statement "*vere homo et vere deus*" encapsulates it. As we have demonstrated, this would not have been a philosophically acceptable position. In this sense, the Orthodox Church was counter-cultural in its theological conceptualizations. If orthodoxy was merely a Hellenistic synthesis, as Spangenberg would suggest, then they would have denied the humanity of Christ, as their cultural context would have demanded and the heterodoxical groups proposed. It was not fashionable to affirm that the person Jesus had two natures: God and Man. As we have observed, the whole concept of Trinity is unique to orthodoxy. Whereas most philosophical schools would opt for a simple unity or diversity, the idea of God being a unity-diversity, a Trinity, did not fit the philosophical trajectory of Tertullian's day.

It would seem that Spangenberg's proposition of Jesus being merely a historical Jewish man is an overcorrection to his caricature of orthodox Trinitarian theology. Whereas Gnosticism and Marcion denied the humanity of Jesus, Spangenberg denies the divinity of Jesus. Permeation does not equate being ontologically God, but rather affirms the philosophical presupposition of "like-knows-like". It would not be a too adventurous proposition to say that Spangenberg is possibly more Stoic than Tertullian, since Spangenberg's conceptualization of Jesus is almost identical to Seneca's affirmation of anthropology. Accordingly, unlike Gnosticism and Marcion (ancient heterodoxy) and Spangenberg, orthodoxy always keeps the two natures in tension (*vere homo et vere deus*). The concept of Trinity is based on the premise of Jesus being "*vere homo et vere deus*".

In closing, if Jesus' teleological purpose was merely social reform, as Spangenberg would suggest, than the ontological construct of Jesus being merely a man permeated by God's Spirit would be acceptable and compatible with his teleology. However, if Jesus' teleological purpose was to be the Creator and Saviour of the cosmos (which is orthodoxy's main claim); then Jesus must be ontologically both God and man. This is the cornerstone of orthodoxy, a cornerstone Spangenberg would rather tear out than build on. Consequently, Tertullian's affirmation of the Apostolic dichotomy (as noted in Chapter 4A), "*Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? quid academiae et ecclesiae? quid haereticis et christianis?*" (*De Prescriptione Haereticorum*, 7:9) remains relevant today; the question of which epistemological base forms the premise of our theology remains paramount. For Spangenberg, contemporary secularism which denies eternity and Jesus' divinity seems epistemologically more palatable and intelligible than the affirmation of Jn. 1:1, which Irenaeus considered orthodoxy's chief hermeneutical lens, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"⁵²¹ and Jn. 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"⁵²².

6. Conclusion

The distinction markers of Patristic orthodoxy seem to remain the benchmark of orthodoxy. Their value for theological praxis is critical in order to prevent the church from entirely assimilating its cultural and socio-political environment. It is due to these distinction markers that orthodoxy remains theologically counter-cultural, even when the message is contextualized. Nevertheless, it does not imply that orthodoxy has a complete or perfectly accurate understanding of divinity, which the Patristic period in general, and Tertullian in particular, could attest to. What it does imply is that orthodoxy, in its search of a better understanding of divinity, remains within the bounds of its own epistemology: the authority of the Scriptures and the hermeneutical praxis which accompanies it.

Moreover, as the motifs and concerns of the church would attest, the primary motif within orthodox theology, the Trinity in particular, was soteriology. For most orthodox writers within the Patristic period, especially Tertullian, theology was not a matter of academic acceptability or prowess, but a matter of salvation. The apologetic works were not mere defences for academic acceptability in a Hellenistic society which considered Christianity as foolish, but also missiological works that sought to spread the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. The polemical works of Irenaeus and Tertullian

⁵²¹Εν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

⁵²²Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν,

were not written for academic objectivity or peer review, but due to the seeming threat to the church's salvation by heterodoxical propositions. The Trinity is an ontological necessity for the teleology of salvation. It was held not because it made perfect philosophical sense, but because it made perfect soteriological sense.

This seems to be the same concern exhibited in Paul's words regarding the resurrection of Christ; as Paul emphatically argues in 1 Cor. 15:12-19, "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and our faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God [Spangenberg's accusation towards John and Paul], because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not to be raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins... If this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied" (ESV).

It would seem that the Apostolic Fathers, Apologists, Irenaeus and Tertullian, kept this concern primary in their theology. The person and work of Christ, as espoused in the apostolic written and oral tradition, remains the cornerstone of orthodox theological investigation of the Trinity. It is a *theologia crucis* (theology of the cross), not a theology of "*libido gloriae*" (desire for glory).

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