

C. G. NIARCHOS, Athens

ARISTOTELIAN AND PLOTINIAN INFLUENCES ON St AUGUSTINE'S VIEWS OF TIME

The question of the nature and the essence of time has been widely discussed by several ancient philosophers and in particular by Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. Their ideas reflect to a certain extent the influence exerted upon them by the primitive relevant doctrines of the Presocratics. In this article I intend to analyse mainly the doctrine of Aristotle and Plotinus on time and its influence on the St Augustine's teaching on time in relation to the new ideas on the subject invented by the Christians, since St Augustine is considered to be one of the leading philosophising Fathers of the Christian Church of the early centuries.

I. Plato's views

Χρόνος - αἰών - εἰκὼν - κίνησις

The problem concerning the concept of *time* has always been related to the question of the creation of the world. Plato defines *time* as an «everlasting likeness (εἰκὼν), moving according to number, of eternity (αἰών), which rests in the One»¹. The sensible world is a thing of passage, but in fact it never passes away; its passage fills all time, and naturally its structured laws remain constant. So it can really be called «a moving or a passing image» of the truly enduring «εἰκὼν κινητὸς αἰῶνος μένοντος ἐν ἐνὶ κατ' ἀριθμὸν ἰοῦσα αἰώνιος εἰκὼν», i. e. time, which is measured duration, may be referred to, in virtue of its character, as measurable, «an image of eternity». *Time* is to eternity, as the series of intergers, the numbers, stand in the Pythagorean theory of numbers, to the unit or number one². Both Plato and Aristotle see *time* and

1. Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 37 d: «ἐν ἐνὶ κατ' ἀριθμὸν ἰοῦσαν αἰώνιον εἰκόνα, τοῦτον ὄν δὴ χρόνον ὠνομάκαμεν». The sensible world is a thing of passage, but it never passes away, for its passage fills all time, and, of course, the formal laws of its structure remain the same throughout. In this sense it is really a moving or passing «image» of the truly abiding. In fact time, which in itself is measured duration, may be said to be, in virtue of its character, as measurable, «an image of eternity». Cf. also A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's, Timaeus*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1961, pp. 186-187.

2. In many cases Plato insists that time has a like relation to «eternity», and is considered to be as a «shadow» or «projection» or «perspective» of αἰών. This view of time reminds



motion as closely associated in a kind of reciprocal relationship. Plato identified *time* with motion, while Aristotle, though critical of that identification³, does admit their close interrelationship⁴. Plato's theory of *time*, as an image of eternity, shows its ontological status⁵, but this does not convince Aristotle for whom *time* is mainly the numbering of motion according to the relation between the prior and the posterior⁶. *Time* is not synonymous with movement, but it must be calculated from movement. Certainly a calculation presupposes a calculator and therefore if a mind did not exist, in any case, neither would time⁷. It is the entire recognition of sequence (prior and posterior), that brings people into an awareness of the time factor.

II. Aristotle's doctrines

Χρόνος - κίνησις - ἀλλαγή - πρὶν καὶ μετὰ

We are told that Aristotle «could not grasp reality as time and change» and this in the sense of a peculiar variety of ignorance⁸. It is known that Aristotle himself has devoted much of his speculation to the fact and nature of change, development and activity. Aristotle also opposed the known Parmenidean theory that true being was unchanging, for it is taken for granted that everything that declares its existence within the entire nature is in motion⁹. Similarly Aristotle criticised several views of the determinists who held that past and future were equally fixed and each thing possesses a double poten-

us of the often called «Newtonian» time, the absolute time, which is true and similar to the known as «mathematical» time. In the famous words of the *Principia*, «absolute time and mathematical time of itself and from its own nature, flows equally without regard to anything external».

3. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 10, 218 b 10-20. There is here a straight influence by Pythagoras; cf. Plac. 1 21: 1: «Πυθαγόρας τὸν χρόνον τὴν σφαῖραν τοῦ περιέχοντος εἶναι». In *Physics* A-Δ, Aristotle uses *κίνησις* and *μεταβολή* interchangeably, being himself aware of the distinction which he unfolds in E, 225 a 34-69.

4. Aristotle, *Physics* A 12, 220 b.

5. Plato, *Timaeus* 39 b; cf. A. E. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 205-212.

6. Aristotle, *Physics* A 11, 219 a 14-2, b 1-2: «Τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ χρόνος, ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον».

7. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 14, 223 a 24-28: «ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἢ τὸ ἡριθμημένον ἢ τὸ ἀριθμητὸν εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ἄλλο πέφυκεν ἀριθμεῖ ἢ ψυχὴ καὶ ψυχὴ νοῦς, ἀδύνατον εἶναι χρόνον ψυχῆς μὴ οὔσης, ἀλλ' ἢ τοῦτο ὃ ποτε ὄν ἐστὶν ὁ χρόνος, οἷον εἰ ἐνδέχεται κίνησιν εἶναι ἄνευ ψυχῆς».

8. Cf. J. G. Gunnell, *Political Philosophy and Time*, Middletown, Conn. 1968, p. 235. S. R. L. Clark, *Aristotle's Man. Speculations upon Aristotelian Anthropology*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983², pp. 214 f.

9. Aristotle, *Physics* A 2, 185 a 12.

tiality of beings: a given cloak may be cut up, or it may wear out first¹⁰. In fact, a metaphysic of substances (rather than events or stuffs) goes along with limited indeterminism and with tensed propositions (rather than the untensed, timelessly true of false propositions of ordinary modern logic)¹¹. It is obvious that our temporal model is closely related to our other qualities and personality traits and the Aristotelian model will therefore help the understanding of his cosmological theories¹².

The problem of time is widely discussed by Aristotle in his *Physics* Δ, and his interest is mainly centred on questions such as: how can time exist when what is past is no longer and what is to come is not yet? how can moments come to be or pass away — when do they do so? how can «now» remain always the same without making all event simultaneous? Aristotle is firm in declaring that «time is the number of motion with respect to the before and after»¹³. The concept of «now» is, in one sense, always the same and, in another, different¹⁴. In the same way as in a point, or in a body: these may be carried from one place to another and remain the same, despite its different description, so also the concept of «now» is differently described in a way as we are fully aware of «the before and after» during the process of motion¹⁵. Hence *time* and the *now* are interdependent¹⁶. So far so good. In fact, what does this amount to?

There are certain objections against Aristotle's definition of *time* being *circular*. *Time* and *change* go on together for the one depends on the other. The reference to «before and after» is usually understood in terms of *time*¹⁷. Certainly we know of change before we know of time, even though time is a *sine qua non* of change, so the concept of time is introduced by way of change; their distinction is supported by epistemological and ontological reasons¹⁸. In fact, according to Aristotle, time is not a *sine qua non*, but an attribute of change, depending entirely on the counting of a counter. Aristotle insists that the things that are actually in movement are identical with those that are actually in time and those that are potentially in movement with those that are po-

10. Idem, *De Interpretatione* 19 a 12.

11. A. Prior, *Papers on Time and Tense*, Oxford 1968, p. 64; cf. S. Clark, *Aristotle's Man*, op. cit., p. 114.

12. Cf. R. H. Knapp - J. T. Garbutt, «Time Imagery and the Achievement Motive» in *Journal of Personality* 26 (1958), pp. 426 f.

13. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 11, 219 b 2; cf. S. Clark, *Aristotle's Man*, op. cit., p. 115.

14. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 11, 219 b 12 f.

15. *Ibid.* Δ 11, 219 b 18 f.

16. *Ibid.* Δ 11, 219 b 33 f.

17. *Ibid.* Δ 11, 219 b 15 f.

18. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Δ 11, 1018 b 9-10.

tentially in time. Alexander thought that by the latter class of things are meant «τὰ ἡρεμοῦντα». But Simplicius points out that, time is the measure of rest as well as of movement, things at rest are *actually* in time. He may therefore be right in suggesting that the reference is to things that are **capable** of coming into being but have not yet done so¹⁹. In the same way if *time* and *before and after* are interdependent concepts certain problems are created, for temporal concepts are irreducible to non-temporal concepts and time is an immediately intuitable phenomenon. Time is thus not a movement, but «the number of movement in respect of before and after», that in virtue of which movement is numerable²⁰. The concept of «movement» does not simply mean locomotion. Usually the word «μεταβολή», which covers generation and destruction, growth and diminution, and qualitative change, as well as locomotion, sometimes enables us to recognize a lapse of time²¹. The word «κίνησις» covers all the kinds of change except generation and destruction.

Sir David Ross discusses the problem of circularity (with reference to before and after) and the possibility of the existence of change without time²². For him the «static now», the dated moment, is inconsistent with the dynamic, the «now» which always is the same being. The «now» corresponds to the moving body, being a sort of unit involved in time (which is the number of movement) as the moving body, or rather its successive positions, are involved in the movement. Time is not made up of a finite number of «nows», nor a movement of a finite number of positions, as a number is made up of a finite number of units. In fact the notion of the «now» as a unit of time is incompatible with the notion of it as the generator of time, which is that with which Aristotle has chiefly been working²³. The «now» is applicable to only one moment at a time and to all moments at those moments because of a common relation of presentness to a mind²⁴. Hence, time, or the temporal spread, is made up of «nows»²⁵. Ross is convinced that time should be considered as a dimension in

19. Idem, *Physics* Δ 14, 223 a 20-21. Cf. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Physics. A revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966⁴, pp. 590-591.

20. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 11, 219 b 1-3: «τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν ὁ χρόνος ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον. οὐκ ἄρα κίνησις ὁ χρόνος ἀλλ' ἢ ἀριθμὸν ἔχει ἢ κίνησις»

21. *Ibid.* Δ 10, 218 b 21; 219 a 4-6.

22. Cf. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Physics*, op. cit., p. 68.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 601.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

25. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 11, 220 a 18-21: «καὶ ὅτι φανερόν ὅτι οὐδὲν μόνιον τὸ νῦν τοῦ χρόνου, οὐδ' ἡ διαίρεσις τῆς κινήσεως, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἡ στιγμή τῆς γραμμῆς. αἱ δὲ γραμμαὶ αἱ δύο τῆς μιᾶς μόνια, ἢ μὲν οὖν πέρας τὸ νῦν οὐ χρόνος, ἀλλὰ συμβέβηκεν». Also cf., Plato, *Parmenides* 156 d.

which motion is extended, thus there is no reason why rest should not be extended in the same dimension; given that rest is not the negation of movement but the privation of it, i.e. the alternative state to movement in a thing that is capable of movement²⁶. Indeed this is the crux of the matter. If time is a dimension in the sense which Ross apparently shows, it is made up of moments which are all (timelessly) present, and there could be empty time into which motion is *not* extended, as rightly Clark observes²⁷, and this is against *Physics* (Δ 10, 218 b 21 f). The «now» would not change at all, for all truths are timeless, and the refusal of Ross' account of time as a dimension would demand something to be put in its place²⁸.

In close relation to the problem of time is the question of *aion*, the period of the whole heaven, which refers to the totality of things and includes all time. Its conceptual introduction into philosophy may be seen in Parmenides, where the denial of becoming in true being leads to its corollary, the denial of the temporal distinctions «past» and «future» and the affirmation of total present simultaneity²⁹. Melissus understands this as *infinite*, without limit, going on for ever, a notion later distinguished as *aidios*, perduration in time, and the same type of interpretation may be seen in Aristotle³⁰. The basic distinction between *χρόνος* and *αἰὼν* that is implied in Parmenides is made fully explicit in Plato's *Timaeus* (37 d), where time is created to serve as an image of the state of forms (*eide*), from which Plato has banished all *genesis*, or as Plotinus puts it *αἰὼν* «is the manner of existence of Being»³¹. In fact Plato's admission, through the intermediary of the soul, of both *nous* and *kinesis* into the intelligible world creates a problem, unknown to the static universe of Parmenides. The solution is to be found in Aristotle's doctrine of the First Mover whose span of existence is endless (*aidios*); the reason for this is the peculiar type of activity involved in a *νόησις* thinking itself, what Aristotle calls «the activity of immobility» (*ἐνέργεια ἀκινήσιας*)³². This is the foundation of the treatment of eternity in both Plotinus and Proclus. The latter's account of eternal activity derived from Aristotle's conception of activity, and through him the notion of eternity as a *totum simul* passed into Christian theology and especially in

26. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 12, 221 b 9-14.

27. Cf. S. Clark, *Aristotle's Man*, op. cit. p. 116.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-122.

29. Parmenides, in Diels, fr. 8, line 5.

30. Melissus, in Diels, frs. 2, 3, 4, 7. Cf. Aristotle, *De Coelo* A, 279 a.

31. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 4. Also see Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Λ 7, 1072 b; W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics. A revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, II, 1970⁵, pp. 378-379.

32. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Z 14, 1154 b 26-27.

the writings of St Augustine³³. The concepts of time and eternity are treated by Proclus not as modes of the spirit but as substantive principles having, like other spiritual substances, both an immanent and a transcendent existence. In fact Plotinus' influence is here obvious: eternity is considered as a *διάθεσις* of the Real, and time as the formal aspect of the activity of the Soul, «the form of willed change»³⁴.

In the first book of the *de Caelo* Aristotle describes *αἰὼν* as *θεῖος* and contrasts the supreme *αἰὼν* with the individual *αἰῶνες*, and this seems to be a contrast between the measure of the life of the whole heaven and the measures of the individual lives contained in it. A deified *αἰὼν* has a prominent place not only in the Aristotelian tradition and the Gnostic and Hermetic speculation, but in the sacred book of the later Neoplatonism, the *Oracula Chaldaica*³⁵. *Αἰὼν* always is, *ἀεὶ ὄν*; *αἰθήρ*, the fifth and divine element, always runs³⁶. The eternity of the world is a widely accepted fact³⁷. God, being God, cannot (or would not) destroy or remake the world³⁸ and its eternity does not imply that there is any actual infinity of past time³⁹, but rather that it has always been the case that something was the case before⁴⁰.

Aristotle strongly believes that time will not end as long as there is motion⁴¹, because time is an attribute of motion which is brought into being by the same fact as in motion. Since motion has started an infinity of pastward time is already created and this cannot be considered «empty». Likewise an infinity of futureward time. B. Russell states that without minds no one moment of the temporal spread has any pre-eminence and time as a container is prior to change, while time as the experience of becoming is an error of the human mind. Surely Aristotle's view is quite different, for things certainly

33. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 4. Also see Proclus, *Elements of Theology* ed. E. R. Dodds, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964², pp. 50-51. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI, 11: «non praeterire quicquam in aeterno sed totum esse praesens»; *De Trinitate* XII, 14. Boethius, *De Consolatione* V. Prosa 6. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pars I, qu. X, art. 5.

34. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 6, 4.

35. Cf. Proclus, *In Timaeum* III 14.3. Also see Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7,5: an *αἰὼν* might well be called a god: «ὄθεν σεμνὸν ὁ αἰὼν, καὶ ταῦτόν τῷ Θεῷ ἡ ἔννοια λέγει... καλῶς ἂν λέγοιτο ὁ αἰὼν Θεὸς ἐμφαίνων καὶ προφαίνων ἑαυτὸν οἷός ἐστι».

36. Aristotle, *De Coelo* A₃, 270 b 23; A₄ 279 a 27. Cf. Plato *Cratylus* 410 b.

37. Aristotle, *Physics* H 1, 250 b 11 f.

38. Idem, *De Philosophiae* fr. 19 (Ross).

39. Idem, *Physics* Γ 6, 205 a 1; *De Gener. et Corr.* 318 a 19 f; *Metaphysics* K 10, 1066 a 35 f.

40. Cf. S. Clark, *Aristotle's Man*, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

41. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 13, 222 a 29 f: «εἰ δὲ μηδεὶς χρόνος ὅς οὐ ποτε, πᾶς ἂν εἴη χρόνος πεπερασμένος. ἄρ' οὖν ὑπολείψει; ἢ οὐ, εἴπερ αἰεὶ ἐστὶ κίνησις;»



become, and there is no illusion. Time does not exist without the possibility of being enumerated, for numbers do not. In no case Aristotle would support the idea that time as the possibility of becoming is, in some sense, prior to change, for time as a container is an abstraction of human mind. Another error is the question of the imagery «empty time» and «what happened before» (time). A third error refers to the view that time cannot come into being or have an end, «for there could be no before and after without time». The argument is: 'If you say time comes into being, you imply that before that was no time; but the very word «before» implies time. Yet, if all substances are perishable, everything else is perishable (since everything else is posterior to and depends on substance). But movement and time are not perishable⁴².

At *De Memoria* (450 a 17 f) Aristotle declares that an awareness of *time* is necessary for memory. If we cannot number events in respect of the «before» and «after», then our images of them might be predictions or visions of some currently existing reality, not of the soil from which the present situation is developed. In fact «before» and «after» arise from our single experience of a change in which we recognize one and the same entity under different attributes⁴³.

It is therefore obvious that for Aristotle time is nothing mysterious, but it is destructive, not *time* itself, only the processes which occur in time⁴⁴. Time is change with respect to the «before» and «after» qua numerable. «Change», the realization of something's potential, is, for Aristotle, equivalent to «time».

III. Plotinus' views

Χρόνος - αἰωνιότης - πρόοδος - ἐπιστροφή

Plotinus, who speculates at great length on the problem, relates time closely to the question of eternity. In fact it appears utterly impossible to him to separate the two elements of *time* and eternity⁴⁵. The Aristotelian definition of time, as number or measuring of motion is strongly attacked by Plotinus

42. Idem, *Metaphysics* Λ 6, 1071 b 6-9: «ἀλλ' ἀδύνατον κίνησιν ἢ γενέσθαι ἢ φθαρῆναι (ἀεὶ γὰρ ἦν), οὐδὲ χρόνον. οὐ γὰρ οἶόν τε τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον εἶναι μὴ ὄντος χρόνου». Cf. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics* B, op. cit., pp. 368-369.

43. Cf. A. Prior, «Gale's Language of Time» in *Mind* 78 (1969), pp. 473 f. S. Clark, *Aristotle's Man*, op. cit., pp. 125-127. J. Piaget, «Time Perception in Children», in J. T. Fraser (ed.) *The Voices of Time*, London, 1968, pp. 202 f.

44. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 12, 221 a 30 f; *Metaphysics* N 6, 1093 b 8 f.

45. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 7 - 10. Also see III 7, 5-15: «ἀλλὰ πῶς ἐν χρόνῳ καὶ πῶς ἐν αἰῶνι ἔστιν εἶναι, γνωσθεῖη ἂν εὐρεθέντος πρότερον τοῦ χρόνου».

in his treatise *On Time and Eternity*. For Plotinus time is not the measure of motion (which lies necessarily in time); we rather take the intervals between the regular recurrences observed in the movements of the heavenly bodies and from them we measure the passage of time. For Plotinus it is impossible to hold a philosophical approach to time in terms of number or measure of motion⁴⁶. He even disagrees with Plato's identification of time with motion and the movement of the heavens. Instead, he prefers to interpret the problem of both *αἰὼν* and *χρόνος* in terms of life, the former representing the life of the intelligible⁴⁷.

Plotinus considers time to be a sort of «degeneration» of the total self presence, through the soul's capacity to accept this «total simulteitas». Time must then be the life of the soul progressing from state to state. The manner of the soul's procession (*πρόοδος*) from intellect, to be informed by reversion (*ἐπιστροφή*) upon its contemplation, resembles the procession of the Intellect from the One; the soul, however, remains in a more intimate relationship to Intellect, since the latter does not possess the unique element of transcendence and complete otherness of the One⁴⁸. In the soul's proceeding from Intellect there is found an element of «tolma», of unwarranted self-assertion, stemming from a wish to lead an independent autonomous existence⁴⁹. The particular form which the «tolma» of the soul assumes, constitutes for Plotinus the origin of time. This «tolma» springs from a desire for a life different from that of Intellect. The realm of Intellect ensures a condition of repose in eternity, where eternal, immediate and simultaneous possession of all possible objects is maintained. So the only option available for the soul is to pass from that stage of eternal life; now instead of all things being present at once, one event follows another in a perpetual series of action and thought. This specific «tolma» can easily be described as a kind of restlessness, longing for continuous movement for its own sake. Indeed, for Plotinus, the very basis of time is the restless seeking for a state where each object can be discerned in perpetual flow and succession⁵⁰.

46. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7,8; cf. also R.T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, London, 1972, pp. 53, 56.

47. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 11; R. T. Wallis, op. cit., pp. 65, 82, and cf. 129-130.

48. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 10-11; cf. R. T. Wallis, op. cit, pp. 65-67, 87-88. J. M. Rist, *Plotinus: The Road to Reality*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967, pp.112-129. A. H. Armstrong (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1967, p. 69.

49. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 11, 15-20; V I, 10; R. T. Wallis, op. cit., pp. 47, 66-67.

50. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 11, 43-45. A. H. Armstrong, op. cit., pp. 251-254.

Plotinus does not share Aristotle's opinion of time as number or measurer of notion⁵¹. According to him, time is not motion at all. Is it then something which might belong to motion? or is it the interval of motion? or else regular motion? Again, is it the space covered by a moving object? In all these cases, time would be a number, but not the number one, and its repetition a number, while its interval will be in the space covered by the movement⁵². Similarly Plotinus denies that the *Timaeus*' description of a temporal origin to the sensible world should be taken literally⁵³.

IV. Augustine's speculations

Χρόνος - ἱστορία - διάστασις

The influences exerted by Plotinus, as well as by Aristotle, on the theories of time, developed by St Augustine were substantial. Especially Plotinus' concept of *tolma*, as the main characteristic of the soul, led Augustine to consider the soul as always seeking some better conditions for itself⁵⁴. So the soul put itself into the process of movement and change. It became agitated, wishing to examine all the objects seen in the intelligible world; not, however, in one single action, but rather through gradual states of plurality. Therefore, the sensible world emerges from the same soul, as the image of the intelligible world, the temporal appearing instead of eternity within a framework of time. The soul produces acts in varied succession, one though following another to make a series of events. Thus the distention of the life of the soul occupies the concept of time.

The main feature behind Augustine's idea of time as «distentio» is the Plotinian and generally the Neoplatonic teaching, according to which the unrest of the cosmic soul, which generates time, is regarded as a decline from the tranquil immutability of the first principle. «Distentio» thus corresponds to

51. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 8, 1-8, 23-24. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 12, 220 b 14 f: «...οὐ μόνον δὲ τὴν κίνησιν τῷ χρόνῳ μετροῦμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ κινήσει τοῦ χρόνου διὰ τὸ ὀρίζεσθαι ὑπ' ἀλλήλων· ὁ μὲν γὰρ χρόνος ὀρίζει τὴν κίνησιν ἀριθμὸς ὧν αὐτῆς, ἡ δὲ κίνησις τὸν χρόνον». Not only the motion is related to time but even the existence of beings is «understood in time», except all eternal beings which are not «in time». *Ibid.* Δ 12, 221 a 1, and Δ 12, 221 b 3-5.

52. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, I 11. Cf. VI 6. 2. 16-17. R. T. Wallis, op. cit., 61-62, 68-69.

53. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 2,1. 20-26; IV 3.9.12-20; VI 7, 3.1-9.

54. Idem, *Enneads* III 7, II 42-45: «εἰ οὖν χρόνον τις λέγοι ψυχῆς ἐν κινήσει μεταβατικῇ, ἐξ ἄλλου εἰς ἄλλον βίον ζωὴν εἶναι ἅρ' ἂν δοκοῖ τις λέγειν».

διάστασις in the Plotinian sense⁵⁵. It is possible that we should treat «distention» (from *distineo*) as signifying distraction⁵⁶.

The ongoing part of this life occupies future and when it is gone it becomes past. So time is the life of the soul, consisting of the movement through which the soul passes from one state to another. Time is not outside the soul, any more than eternity is outside being. It does not accompany the soul nor succeed it, but it manifests itself in the soul, united to it as eternity is united to intelligible being.

For Plotinus the existence of time results from the separation of the World-Soul from the Intelligence, and the consequent independence of the soul, which deploys in an objective world, the images of the intelligible things, to be contemplated according to the multiplicity inherent in its nature. Time, like space, is only this deployment in an interior and exterior sense, subjective and objective of the soul's activity: time is the «distention» of this activity. With Augustine, on the other hand, there is no question of any creation of an objective world by the World-Soul, as taught by Plato (in *Timaeus*), or of *emanation*, as held by the Neoplatonists; for it is God who creates time simultaneously with the entire universe by free will out of nothing (*ex nihilo*)⁵⁷; this world also being changeable is not everlasting (*ἀτίδιος*)⁵⁸.

In the actual process of the creation of the world Augustine faced the following questions concerning the factor of time: if God created the world

55. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 11, 41: «διάστασις οὖν ζωῆς χρόνων εἶχε καὶ τὸ πρόσω αἰεὶ τῆς ζωῆς χρόνων ἔχει αἰεὶ καὶ ἡ παρελθοῦσα ζωὴ χρόνον ἔχει παρεληλυθότα». Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones*. XI 23, 30; 26, 33».

56. Cf. J. Gibb - W. Montgomery (ed.), *The Confessions of Augustine*, Cambridge 1927, pp. 362 f.

57. Augustine, *Confessiones* XII 8, 28; *De Vera Rel.* XVIII 35; *Fide et Symb.* 2. Cf. E. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. II: *Medieval Philosophy, Augustine to Scotus*, London 1966, pp. 74-78. «...In the Plotinian emanation - theory the world is depicted as proceeding in some way from God without God becoming in any way diminished or altered thereby, but for Plotinus God does not act freely (such an activity would, be thought, postulate change in God), but rather necessitate nature, the Good necessarily dillusing itself. The doctrine of free creation out of nothing is not to be found in neoplatonism, if we except one or two pagan thinkers who had most probably been influenced by Christian teaching. Augustine may have thought that Plato had taught creation out of nothing in time, but it is improbable, in spite of Aristotle's interpretation of the *Timaeus*, that Plato really meant to imply this. However, whatever Augustine may have thought about Plato's views on the matter, he himself clearly states the doctrine of free creation out of nothing and it is essential to his insistence on the utter supremacy of God and the world's entire dependence, on Him. All things owe their being to God». (Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 74).

58. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI, 4; *De Civitate Dei* XII, I 1 ff.

out of nothing, why did He create it at the time He chose to, and not earlier or later? This question, Augustine comments, assumes that it makes sense to talk about a time «before» creation. Obviously the assumption, however, is entirely erroneous. For to say that God created the world is to say that he created time. In fact, according to Augustine, apart from the world there is no time, and «if there was no time, there was no 'then'». Again, the question why God created the world in this exact place and not in another, led Augustine to conclude that one should adopt different concepts of communication. He censures those who ask the impertinent question: what was God doing before He made heaven and earth? Augustine was not content to answer with the joke that He was getting hell ready for people who ask such questions, though he could not resist including it in his *Confessiones*⁵⁹. Augustine observes that those who speak thus (the Menichaeans) have no comprehension of eternal things, for they ignore the Christian doctrine of creation which presupposes an absolute beginning⁶⁰.

The chief aim of Augustine was to draw attention to a categorical difference between time and the things that go on in time. The assumption to ask about time «before» creation is wholly erroneous. For, if we say that God created the world is to say that He created time. It is thus obvious that «there is no time apart from the world», and «if there was no time, there was no 'then'; nor when time was not was there any time»⁶¹. To make use of a phrase, taken from the Nicene controversy, Augustine could have said: «there was when time was not», but not: «there was a time when time was not». The term «before» denotes a relationship between happenings in time requiring two separate factors: the former and the sense of a «before» and an «after» situation⁶².

In his attempt to measure time, Augustine tends to pass from metaphysics to phaenomenology; but this exact analysis of the activity of the human spirit compensates for the weaker aspects of the «distention» theory. If the moment of the body can be measured by time, then perhaps also time itself can be measured; and a harmony may be also established between different durations, suggesting that time itself may be a distention. But a distention of what? That is the important and vital question.

59. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI 11, 13; *De Gen. c. Man.* 1, 2, 3.

60. His abt-quoted reply: «He was getting hell ready for people who ask such questions» was really meant in jest, though it finds mention in the *Confessiones* XI 12, 13.

61. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI 13, 15.

62. Cf. *Ibid.* XI 30, 40; also see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I 46, 3: «In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram», it does not mean that things were created in «principio temporis», but «quia simul eo tempore caelum et terra creata sunt».

It is clear that time would appear to be a distention of the soul itself. An example might be given of a voice which makes itself heard and which we measure when it is gone; or of a poem which we are about to recite; we then observe the totality of the poem just before saying it; afterwards we realise that the distention of the spirit results from a permanence of intention in which the impression is preserved that keeps the past in itself and anticipates the future, so at each movement of the present, the past and the future are included in the intentionality of the spirit: «In you, my soul, I measure time...; by these impressions you make the past remain while I measure it as present and record it; what remains will be recorded and present intention will be projected into the future»⁶³.

The negativity of time is dialectically the reverse, since the intention predominates but the distention corrects. Augustine speaks sometimes of attention and sometimes of intention in order to mark the presence of the spirit in the passage of time; attention has a mainly objective sense, expressing the permanence of awareness in turning its attention to the object. The intention is more subjective, expressing the action of the spirit which observes and unifies the totality of all these separate events⁶⁴. Intention is an action of the free will of the soul in relation to its knowledge of things and above all its sensations. As Martin Heidegger points out: «through intention the human spirit becomes temporal», which means that participates within the existence and evolution of the temporal reality⁶⁵. It creates time and predominates over it. But this positivity is only partial, for the human spirit becomes temporal at the same moment through distention. So time is, in fact, a double rhythm of positive and negative, the positive is the intention and the negative is the distention. Hence time is, according to Augustine, a distended intention and an intentionalised distention. In this way the phenomenology of time assumes a metaphysical value: the being of time (or man) is simultaneously non being and being, perpetual happening and duration. In Augustine's speculation spiritual activity comprises fully his whole life, but in an intentional manner and not actual; in this process the element of subjectivity, far from damaging the fullness of being, realises it in the measure where it is accessible to the human being⁶⁶.

63. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XXVII 36.

64. Cf. J. Robner, «L'intentionnalité des sensations chez St Augustin», in *Augustinus Magister* I, pp. 491-498.

65. Cf. F. C. Coppleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy*, London, Methuen 1975², pp. 39-45.

66. Cf. F. C. Merleau - Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Paris 1945, pp. 481 f.

It is evident from the above analysis that neither past nor future nor present have any stability of being, if considered as within the things which flow by. What does last is the attention, by which the spirit comprehends a synthesis of the three elements of memory, present happening and expectation. Here the influence exerted by Aristotle on Augustine is obvious⁶⁷. Through the permanence of attention, what will happen is allowed to change into the past⁶⁸. It is the same activity of the spirit which explains its continuity and its identity through the passage of time; the spirit is always concentrated towards past, present and future. This unique «tention» towards multiple aspects explains clearly the possibility of measuring time. In the process of recitation, the action is distended into memory because of what has been said and in anticipation of what is yet to be said⁶⁹. Attention is present and through the presence of the attention the future flows into the state of being past⁷⁰.

On the basic question of past-present-future Wittgenstein suggests that even Augustine found great difficulty in defining exactly these three temporal modes⁷¹. There is the possibility to be at a loss for a concrete reply to the question of what exactly is meant by the terms of temporal reality. But what precisely Augustine is trying to state is that the past ceased to be and the future does not yet exist; if therefore we say that time «is» or that time «exists», we must surely be referring to the present. But what is the present? Is it the present century, the present day, the present hour, the present moment? Any of these can themselves be divided into past, present and future. Thus the present appears to shrink into a conceptual limit, but never to be described as something that is. The concept of «duration» cannot be applied to the present. In spite of Wittgenstein's views that to look for the essence of time is a misguided enterprise, we think that Augustine has already faced the whole problem quite well, for he is not prepared to claim that the solution of the problem lies in its dissolution. He continues his exploration in a very positive manner and ventures the proposition that time is not something out there in an objective sense. The past exists in memory and the future in expectation. In fact there are three modes of time: a present of past things, a present of present things and a present of future things. The present of past

67. Aristotle, *De Memoria* 450 a 17 f.

68. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XXVII 37.

69. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 11, 41: «διάστασις οὖν ζωῆς χρόνον εἶχε...».

70. Cf. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XXVII 38.

71. Cf. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* I 89. F. C. Coppleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

things is the memory, the present of present things is the direct perception and the present of future things is the expectation⁷². Despite the assistance of memory, perception and expectation, grasping the concept of time seems a rather difficult enterprise to Augustine. He asks: who can measure the past and the future time, since they are not here to measure?⁷³ Yet, he asks: have things that are past and things that are future a real existence? Can future things be foreseen, by means of images, in the same way as the past is recalled, or only by a process of continuous influence from things present?⁷⁴ The past and the future mark the «existing borders» of the present. But if the present were always present and never went to the past, there was no time, but eternity. In other words, neither the past nor the future have real existence, except as present to memory and expectation⁷⁵. Thus time is basically a relation between temporal things according to which they could be said to be «before» or «after» one another. Everything in the temporal world is necessarily the subject to becoming and passing away: future beings and past beings are inherent in their «existence» via creation⁷⁶. But the past is no longer, it was; and the future is not yet, but will be. The present, which alone appears to have a claim to being, vanishes to a point without dimension at which the future becomes past: for any determinate duration can be divided into smaller units, some of which are past and some future. So what we must consider as time is a point without dimension, the point at which the «not-yet-real» becomes the «longer-real», and whatever reality it possesses, it is deprived of any duration within the entire universe⁷⁷.

72. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI 20, 20. Also see C. G. Niarchos, *Θεμελιώδεις Έννοιες τῆς Φιλοσοφίας*, vol. I, Athens, 1984, pp. 292-295.

73. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI 16, 21.

74. Idem, *Confessiones* XI 16, 22-23. We note here that Augustine employs a «mystical» way of predicting the future things, but later he uses also a «rational» method of inferring the future from the present. So he protects himself from asserting the known way of the prophets of Judaism.

75. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI 20; cf. J. F. Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1948 (passim).

76. Cf. W. J. Verdenius - J. H. Waszink (eds.), *Aristotle on Coming-to-be and Passing-away, Some Comments*, Leiden, Brill 1968, passim.

77. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI 15, 18-20. J. M. Baldwin, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, New York 1901: «Time», p. 700 b: «Augustine's contribution consists in suggesting the subjective view of time as existing only in the present regard of a comparing consciousness. How this view is consistent with the recognition of an objective temporal order of events he does not show... (as compared with Plotinus) the novelty of this view consists in transferring the reference of time from the World-Soul to the human soul». Also see R. Eisler, *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe*, «Zeit».

Nevertheless, we do not only speak of long or short times, but in addition we are fully aware of duration of time; we can also compare them and even measure them. In fact, we measure time precisely in its passing, for we cannot measure what has already been or what is not yet⁷⁸. The past and the future are non-existent, and the actual present has no extension⁷⁹. In man's consciousness the past and the future have a certain mode of being in so far as the past is remembered and the future anticipated. Thus we depend on this consciousness for our basic cognisance of the length of any duration. This does not, however, imply that past and future are in fact real. They are «real» only in so far as they are present to the mind in memory and expectation. For example, when we recite a short syllable followed by a long one, then we keep the memory of what we have already achieved through memory and further more through recollection. Augustine states that it is the mind which measures time and in this point he completely agrees with the relevant Aristotelian views⁸⁰.

Augustine seems to accept the Aristotelian theory of time as circular movement, for time itself is thought to be a circle, because it measures and is measured by acircular motion; so that to say that events form a circle is to say that there is a circle of time, i.e. that time is measured by a circular motion; for what is measured is nothing more than the measure taken several times over⁸¹. Augustine dissociates himself from theories such as identification of time with the motion of heavenly bodies and their motion⁸². Indeed the belief in heavenly bodies was so ancient that both Plato and Aristotle trace back the beginning of man's belief in God to a contemplation of the heavens⁸³. The motives are various: the identification of air-soul-life, coupled with the apparent eternity of their motion, and the discovery of the order in their movements⁸⁴. When he wrote his early dialogue *On Philosophy*

78. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI 15, 1 ff.

79. Idem, *Confessiones* XI 16, 21, 27; Cf. C. G. Niarchos, *Θεμελιώδεις Έννοιες τῆς Φιλοσοφίας*, op. cit., pp. 294-295.

80. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI 16, 26. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 14, 223 a 25-27: «εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ἄλλο πέφυκεν ἀριθμεῖν ἢ ψυχὴ καὶ ψυχῆς νοῦς, ἀδύνατον εἶναι χρόνον ψυχῆς μὴ οὔσης, ἀλλ' ἢ τοῦτο ὃ ποτε ὄν ἐστιν ὁ χρόνος, οἷον εἰ ἐνδέχεται κίνησιν εἶναι ἄνευ ψυχῆς. Τὸ δὲ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον ἐν κινήσει ἐστίν». Also see *Metaphysics* I 1005 a 12, 1036 b 31, 1038 a 44 and Plotinus, *Enneads* II 7, 9, 15.

81. Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 14, 223 b 28-29: «καὶ γὰρ ὁ χρόνος αὐτὸς εἶναι δοκεῖ κύκλος τις». S. Clark, *Aristotle's Man*, op. cit., p. 116.

82. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI 24, 1, ff.

83. Cf. Plato, *Cratylus* 397 c-d; *Laws* I, 885 e; IB, 966 d. Aristotle, *De Philosophiae*, fr. 10 (Ross).

84. Aristotle, *De Anima* A₂ 405 a. Cf. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* I 27 f.

Aristotle still believed in the Platonic star souls and gave them a role of his doctrine of the actual causality of motion. But when he wrote the *De Caelo* he appeared to be less convinced on the subject, for they seem to have no role in the motion of the stars⁸⁵. In the *Metaphysics* they are nowhere to be seen, but they only appear to be as the souls of the various planets⁸⁶. The problem of heavenly bodies and motion drew the attention of Neoplatonic philosophers who associated it with the current occultism⁸⁷. Due to its incompatibility with Christian theories Augustine declined any acceptance of the above-mentioned doctrines. He insists that all events succeed each other the same order in an endless series of recurrent circles⁸⁸. Despite any connection of time with motion, Augustine argues, no co-existence between them can thereby be assumed. Plotinus states that time exists even if motion ceases and in this Augustine appears to be his close follower⁸⁹.

Several problems and complexities of the temporal reality created certain incompatibility between them and the unique significance given by Christian doctrines to the events of human history; any downgrading or trivialising human existence was naturally repugnant to Augustine. For Plato and Plotinus time is a simple image (ἀπείκασμα) of eternity⁹⁰. But for Christian philosophers, such as Augustine, it should show a substantial expression, for God Himself has chosen the exact historical moment of His appearance in flesh. Christ's incarnation is varied by Augustine as acknowledgement of the time of man's conscience, since there can be no doubt about the existence of our internal time, which is still succeeded and reflected by our actions, each of which expresses its own temporal reality. Thus if the time of all personal actions is taken together, it will constitute firstly the time of humanity and secondly the real time of history, to the extent that the sequence of historical moments represents a simple development of the eternal continuity. Here again Augustine opposes to the Platonic and the Plotinian concept and theory which stripe time of all positive reality. Professor E. Moutsopoulos reaches the heart of the matter by emphasizing Augustine's insistence that it was only the time of the incarnation that *cut* the eternity⁹¹. The continuous present,

85. Aristotle, *De Philosophiae* fr. 24 (Ross); *De Caelo* II 292 a.

86. Idem, *Metaphysics* A 8, 1073 a-b; 1074 a.

87. Cf. E. R. Dodds, *Proclus, The Elements of Theology* op. cit., Appendix II, pp. 313-321.

88. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XXI 13, 17-20.

89. Idem, *Confessiones* XI 23, 13; Plotinus *Enneads*, III 7, 8, 7.

90. Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 37 d-e; Aristotle, *Physics* Δ 10, 218 a-b. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 4.

91. Cf. E. Moutsopoulos, *Σχολαστική Διανόησις*, Athens 1978, pp. 16-17. Idem, *Πο-*

without past or future, becomes possible only with the very moment of the incarnation of the Divine Logos. The reality of time —and the beginning of history— is therefore the result of the fact of the incarnation, which also indicates God's continuous presence within the temporal world through his divine Grace and Providence.

Conclusion

Having examined briefly the Aristotelian, the Plotinian and to some extent the Platonic views on time we come to a conclusion of Augustine's doctrine on the same issue. Augustine seems to be more strictly confined than Plotinus, who puts time in the universal soul, thus giving a meaning to times of things⁹². In fact, even with the Latin Christian philosopher one can find a link with things: «my present defines itself in a presence in the world, especially in an action which puts one in the world within a knowledge that is both individual and social, extending progressively the time and history of the world». We observe here a kind of cooperation (συνεργεία) between spirit and event in the perception of time⁹³. In Augustine time is given a double value: existential, in Heidegger's sense as the fundamental aspect of human existence, ambivalent as this existence itself, and eschatological, where the meditation of the Logos permits the hopes of a definitive passing of time⁹⁴. He states that «distention is my life, with the Son of God acting as mediator between the one Almighty God and many men». Surely present life, when involved in a continual tension towards the hope of future union with the truth⁹⁵, already rises above time and anticipates the eternal⁹⁶. The meaning of temporal existence is the struggle towards eternity through the mediating Grace of Christ. Bertrand Russell considers Augustine's theory as «a great advance on anything found on the subject in Greek Philosophy»⁹⁷. It is also much superior in our view, to the temporal concepts given by Kant. St Augustine might perhaps be regarded as the forerunner of the interpretations developed in more recent times by

ρεία τοῦ Πνεύματος: τὰ ὄντα, Athens 1974, pp. 49-54; Idem, *Φιλοσοφία τῆς Καιρικότητος*, Athens 1985, passim.

92. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, 12, 24-25; Plato, *Timaeus* 38 c, 39 b.

93. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XXVII 38; XXXI 41.

94. Idem, *De Civitate Dei* XXIX 29.

95. Idem, *De Civitate Dei* XXX 40.

96. Idem, *De Civitate Dei* XXIX 39: not in those things which are future and transient, but in those things which are before not distended but extended not by distention, but by intention, I follow the path towards my heavenly reward.

97. Cf. B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, London 1948, p. 374.

thinkers such as Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre. Yet in the early medieval history Augustine's philosophy of time is used as the basis for the proof that the experience by which we separate past, present and future remains below divine level⁹⁸.

ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΙΚΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΛΩΤΙΝΙΚΕΣ ΕΠΙΔΡΑΣΕΙΣ ΣΤΗ ΘΕΩΡΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΙΝΟΥ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΝ ΧΡΟΝΟ

Περίληψη

Τò πρόβλημα τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ χρόνου ἀπασχόλησε διὰ μακρῶν τὴν ἀρχαία ἐλληνικὴ φιλοσοφία. Ὁ Πλάτων ὥρισε τὸν χρόνο ὡς: «εἰκὼν κινητὸς αἰῶνος μένοντος ἐν ἐνὶ κατ' ἀριθμὸν ἰοῦσα αἰώνιος εἰκὼν», καθ' ὅσον ὁ ἴδιος ἀντιλαμβάνεται τὴν χρονικότητα ὡς εἰκόνα τῆς αἰωνιότητος. Ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης, ὅπως καὶ ὁ Πλάτων, διακρίνει στὴν ἔννοια τοῦ χρόνου καὶ τῆς κινήσεως μιὰν ἀμοιβαία σχέση, δεδομένου ὅτι μέσῳ τῆς κινήσεως συντελεῖται ἡ διάκριση τοῦ προτέρου ἀπὸ τὸ ὕστερον. Ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ «νῦν» ἀποτελεῖ τὸ διακριτικὸ σημεῖο μεταξὺ τοῦ προτέρου καὶ τοῦ ὕστερου, καθ' ὅσον στὸ σημεῖον αὐτὸ γίνεται ἡ πλήρης συνειδητοποίηση τῆς χρονικῆς φορᾶς. Ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης διατυπώνει τὸν ὅρισμό τοῦ χρόνου: «τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν ὁ χρόνος, ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον» (*Φυσ. ἀκροάσ.* Δ₁₁, 219 b 1-2) καὶ τὸν ἐρμηνεύει ὡς τὸ ἀριθμητὸ σημεῖο τῆς κινήσεως. Ἐὰν ἓνα γεγονὸς «ἔρχεται» γιὰ νὰ περάσῃ μέσα στὸν χρόνο, αὐτὸ σημαίνει ὅτι εἶναι ἀριθμητὸ ἀπὸ τὸν χρόνο (πρβλ. αὐτόθι, vb 5-9). Ὅχι μόνον ἡ κίνηση σχετίζεται μὲ τὸν χρόνο, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ ὑπαρξὴ νοεῖται «ἐν χρόνῳ» (πρβλ. αὐτόθι, Δ₁₂, 221 a 1 ἐξ.). Καλύτερη μονὰς μετρήσεως εἶναι ἡ τακτὴ, κυκλικὴ κίνηση, καὶ σ' αὐτὸ συμφωνοῦν Πλάτων καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης (πρβλ. αὐτόθι, Δ₁₄, 223 b 12-34).

Ὁ χρόνος δὲν εἶναι συνώνυμος μὲ τὴν κίνηση, ἀλλὰ πρέπει ν' ἀριθμηθῇ ἀπὸ τὴν κίνηση. Καὶ ἡ ἀπαρίθμηση ἀπαιτεῖ ἓναν ἀριθμητὴ, ποὺ εἶναι ὁ νοῦς, δίχως τὴν ὑπαρξὴ τοῦ ὁποίου δὲν νοεῖται ὁ χρόνος, ὡς πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον. Ὅμως, κατὰ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη, ἂν δὲν ὑπῆρχε ὁ νοῦς, θὰ ὑπῆρχε ἡ «κίνησις», καθ' ὅσον αὐτὴ ἀποτελεῖ τὸ ὑποκείμενο τοῦ χρόνου καὶ ὄχι τὸ μετρητὸ σημεῖο ποὺ εἶναι ὁ χρόνος (πρβλ. αὐτόθι, Δ₁₄, 223 a 21-29). Ὁ χρόνος, ὡς τὸ μετρητὸ σημεῖο, διακρίνεται ἀπὸ τὸν «αἰῶνα», καθ' ὅσον ὁ αἰὼν πάντοτε

98. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XXI, ch. 4. Cf. H. J. Marrou, *St Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, Paris 1938 (1949) pp. 148-157. Idem, *Saint Augustine and his influence through the Ages*, London 1957 (passim).

εἶναι (ἀεὶ ὄν) καὶ ἐπομένως δὲν νοεῖται ἐδῶ «πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον». Ὅπως-δήποτε ἡ σχέση «προτέρου» καὶ «ὕστερου» γεφυρώνει τὴν χρονικὴ μὲ τὴν ὄντολογικὴ προτεραιότητα, καθ' ὅσον τὸ «πρὶν» καὶ τὸ «μετὰ» προέρχεται ἀπὸ τὴν ἐμπειρία τῆς «ἀλλαγῆς» ποὺ συντελεῖται στὴν κίνηση καὶ διακρίνεται τὸ ἴδιο πρᾶγμα μὲ διαφορετικὲς ιδιότητες.

Ὁ Πλωτῖνος συνδέει τὴν ἔννοια τοῦ χρόνου πρὸς τὴν ἔννοια τῆς αἰωνιότητος καὶ ἀσκεῖ κριτικὴ στὴν ἀριστοτελικὴ θεωρία γιὰ τὸν χρόνο ὡς «μέτρον κινήσεως». Χρόνος εἶναι ἡ ζωὴ τῆς ψυχῆς, συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν διαδικασίαν τῆς «προόδου» ἀπὸ τὸν νοῦν καὶ τῆς «ἐπιστροφῆς» τῆς σ' αὐτόν. Κατὰ τὴν «πρόοδον» αὐτὴν τῆς ψυχῆς διακρίνεται ἡ «τόλμα» μέσφ τῆς ὁποίας ἡ ψυχὴ ὁδηγεῖται πρὸς αὐτο-ὑπαρξιν, καὶ αὐτό, κατὰ τὸν Πλωτῖνο, ἀποτελεῖ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ χρόνου. Ἡ «τόλμα» αὐτὴ ὀρίζεται ὡς ἓνα εἶδος ἀδημονίας γιὰ συνεχῆ κίνηση, ἀλλὰ σὲ καμμιά περίπτωσιν ὁ χρόνος δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ εἶναι κίνηση καθ' ἑαυτή.

Ἡ θεώρησις τοῦ χρόνου ἀπὸ τὸν Πλωτῖνο ὡς «τόλμα» ὠδήγησε τὸν Αὐγουστῖνο στὴν ἀποδοχὴ τῆς θεωρίας ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ πάντοτε ἐπιδιώκει ἀνώτερα ἐπίπεδα στὴν οὐσία καὶ τὴν ὑπαρξὴ τῆς, καὶ ὡς ἐκ τούτου ἡ ψυχὴ τίθεται σὲ κίνηση καὶ ἀλλαγὴ. Ταυτοχρόνως ἡ ψυχὴ γίνεται πρόξενος τῆς δημιουργίας τῶν πραγμάτων, ἡ δὲ μεταξὺ αὐτῶν παρουσία τῆς διακρίνει πράγματα παρελθόντα καὶ πράγματα μέλλοντα. Ἔτσι, κατὰ τὸν Αὐγουστῖνο, ὁ χρόνος, δὲν εἶναι ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴν ψυχὴν, ὅπως εἶναι ἡ αἰωνιότης ἔξω ἀπὸ τὰ ὄντα· δηλαδὴ ὁ χρόνος δὲν συνοδεύει τὴν ψυχὴ οὔτε τὴν διαδέχεται, ἀλλὰ φανερόνεται στὴν ψυχὴ ὅπως ἀκριβῶς ἡ αἰωνιότης φανερόνεται στὰ νοητὰ ὄντα.

Κατὰ τὸν Αὐγουστῖνο, ποὺ ἔχει δεχθῇ ἐπίδραση ἀπὸ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη καὶ τὸν Πλωτῖνο, ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ χρόνου θὰ μπορούσε νὰ παρασταθῇ ὡς ἑξῆς: Ἄν ρωτήσῃ κανεὶς τί συνέβη πρὶν ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ χρόνου, ὁδηγεῖται σὲ ἄτοπη συλλογιστικὴ, καθ' ὅσον ὁ ὅρος «πρὶν» δηλώνει μία σχέση μεταξὺ συμβαινόντων «ἐν χρόνῳ» καὶ ἐπομένως ἀπαιτοῦνται δύο ὅροι γιὰ νὰ ὑπάρξῃ μιὰ σχέση. Ὁ χρόνος «ἤλθε στὴν ὑπαρξιν» μαζὶ μὲ τὰ γεγονότα, καὶ ἐπομένως δὲν ἔχει νόημα νὰ μιᾶμε γιὰ χρόνο πρὶν ἀπὸ τὰ χρονικὰ γεγονότα, τὰ ὁποῖα προϋποθέτουν ἓνα δημιουργό, ποὺ ὁ ἴδιος εἶναι ἓνα αἰώνιο παρόν. Τὸ παρόν ὑπάρχει σ' ἓνα σημεῖο, δίχως διαστάσεις, στὸ σημεῖο ὅπου τὸ μέλλον γίνεται παρελθόν, καὶ ὅπου ἐκεῖνο τὸ ὁποῖο δὲν εἶναι ἀκόμη πραγματικὸ γίνεται τὸ ὄχι περαιτέρω πραγματικόν. Ἐν προκειμένῳ, ὅτιδήποτε ἔχει πραγματικότητα δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ἔχει διάρκειαν (πρβλ. Ἐξομολογήσεις XI 14, 17, PL 32, 815-816 καὶ XI 15, 18-20, PL 32, 816-817). Ἐπομένως δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ γίνῃ λόγος γιὰ μακρὸν ἢ σύντομον χρόνο, ἀλλὰ γιὰ ἀντίληψιν τῆς διαρκείας τοῦ χρόνου (intervalla temporum), τὴν ὁποία μπορούμε νὰ μετρήσουμε. Μετᾶμε τὸν χρόνο μὲ τὸ πέρασμά του, γιὰτὶ δὲν μπορούμε νὰ μετρήσουμε ἐκεῖνο ποὺ πέρασε ἢ ἐκεῖνο ποὺ δὲν ἤλθε ἀκόμη (πρβλ. αὐτόθι,

XI 16, 21, 27, PL 32, 817-820). Στην συνείδησή μας τὸ παρελθὸν καὶ τὸ μέλλον ἔχουν ὑπάρξει, ὑπὸ τὴν ἔννοια ὅτι τὸ παρελθὸν «ἀναμιμνήσκεται» καὶ τὸ μέλλον μπορεῖ νὰ προβλεφθῇ. Τὸ μέλλον καὶ τὸ παρελθὸν εἶναι πραγματικὰ μόνον ἐφ' ὅσον εἶναι «παρόντα» στὴν μνήμη, τὸ παρὸν παρόντων πραγμάτων εἶναι ἡ ὄραση καὶ τὸ παρὸν μελλόντων πραγμάτων εἶναι ἡ προσδοκία.

Ἡ θεωρία τοῦ χρόνου ὡς κυκλικῆς κινήσεως ἔχει ἀσκήσει ἐπίδραση στὸ ἔργο τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου, καθ' ὅσον, κατ' αὐτόν, τὰ γεγονότα διαδέχονται τὸ ἓνα τὸ ἄλλο κατὰ τὴν ἴδια τάξη σὲ μία ἀτέλειωτη σειρά ἐπαναλαμβανομένων κύκλων. Ἡ ἐξεικόνιση αὐτὴ τοῦ χρόνου δὲν ἐρμήνευε τὰ ἱστορικὰ γεγονότα, πρᾶγμα τὸ ὁποῖο ἀνάγκασε τὸν Αὐγουστῖνο νὰ προσφύγῃ στὴν χριστιανικὴ θεώρηση τῆς ἱστορίας, καθ' ὅσον, ἔτσι, ἀπέφυγε τὴν καταδίκη τῆς ἀνθρώπινης ζωῆς σὲ ἀσημαντότητα. Εἶναι γεγονός, τονίζει ὁ Αὐγουστῖνος, ὅτι σὲ κάθε χρονικὴ στιγμή ὑπάρχει ἡ παρουσία τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς ἀγαπητικὴ πρὸς τὸν κόσμον πρόνοια, ποὺ στὴν συγκεκριμένη ἱστορικὴ στιγμή ἐκφράσθηκε ὡς θεία ἀποκάλυψη.

Ἀθῆναι

Κ. Γ. Νιάρχος