

ORIGEN: THE SOURCE OF AUGUSTINE'S THEORY OF TIME

There is a fundamental presupposition in order to comprehend Origen's conception of time: that is to know the exact relation of his ontological definition of time (namely, what time proper *is*) to the tradition before him. As a matter of fact, Origen adopted the fundamental Stoic conception of time as an *extension* (διάστημα), being himself aware of the difficulties that this question was causing to Stoic thought¹. The Stoics in general considered time as incorporeal². They could not easily say that time does not exist; not only because there is the psychological and phenomenological experience of time, but also because the Stoics themselves used both the term and the notion of time. They were obviously reluctant to consider time as a purely intellectual construction in the same manner that they thought the Platonic Ideas to be. Time is real *in a sense*, therefore, as it is obviously not corporeal, it was attributed the quasi-reality of one of the incorporeals³.

Nevertheless it is true that the Stoics do not offer any exhaustive theoretical analysis of their original conception of time as an «extension». Yet this is neither accidental nor is it due to negligence: on the contrary, it can be sustained that not to elaborate too much on their original conception is a constitutive element of the Stoic view of time. This is a direct result of their general view that it is only «bodies» that are «real», as «real» considered only what is «acting» or «suffering». Thus, the Stoics would regard time as «real» only if they had accepted the presupposition that time is a «body»; but since time is obviously not a body, the spontaneous Stoic reaction, in the first place, would be to reject the notion that time «exists» — which is equally absurd as contrary to immediate human psychological experience, at least. Thus the Stoics solved the problem by accepting the existence (in a sense) of

1. On the exact relation of Origen's conception of time, as well as the criticism of Plotinus, Plutarchus and other Greeks against the Stoic definition of time, s. P. TZAMALIKOS, *The Concept of Time in Origen*, Dissertation for the Degree of Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of Glasgow, 1986; chapter 2.

2. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta (SVF)*, II, 117, 19; 166, 1 and 8.

3. *SVF*, II, 117, 18-23.



four «incorporeals», namely time (ὁ χρόνος), space (ὁ χώρος), speech (τὸ λεκτόν) and the void (τὸ κενόν). It is apparent though that in the Stoic philosophy, and its materialism, the term «incorporeal» is a cause of embarrassment. Subsequently, a further analysis of the question of time would be a matter of more perplexity. This is exactly what they sought to avoid. To them, time has always remained a «something» which stands between «being» and «non-being».

The Stoics in general distinguished three degrees of reality: The ὄντα (beings) were regarded of full reality and such were only bodies. Incorporeals were called τινὰ (somethings) but they were not regarded as ὄντα. Below them the οὐτινα (nothings) were mere conceptions (ἐννοήματα.) Time belongs to the second grade of reality⁴. Another distinction of degrees of reality is between what is ὑφ'εστῶς (subsisting) and what is ὄν (being); the former seems to correspond to τινὰ (somethings)⁵.

A theory attributed to Chrysippus was that only something «fully real» should be considered as «existing» (ὑπάρχειν). They used to make a distinction between ὑπάρχειν and ὑφ'εστάναι⁶; the latter is not a full reality but a «potential» reality. What they mean by that is that «fully real» is a predicate when the predicated action is taking place in actuality: For example, «walking» exists fully only as long as one walks, yet it does not exist fully when one is lying or sitting⁷. In the light of this view the Stoics assert that it is only present time that is fully real. On the other hand, they regard it as a property of time to be both infinite in both directions (namely, that of past and future) and to be infinitely divisible. It is their fundamental view of time as a continuum that makes them infer that time is infinitely divisible⁸.

Plutarchus alleges that to Stoics «present» is considered as time so infinitely small that it is actually «crushed» between past and future (which are both held to be not fully real). Finally, the present itself is regarded to be extinguished because of this «crushing», and not to exist itself in reality; for what remains out of this «crush» is past and future, which nevertheless are considered not as «full» but as «potential» realities⁹. It is according to this

4. Cf. SVF 2.329-35 and 521. SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *Adversus Mathematicos* (adv. Math.), 10.218; Cf. J. M. RIST, *Stoic Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1969; ch. 9; PASQUALE PASQUINO «Le statut ontologique des incorporels», in Jaques Brunschwig (ed.), *Les Stoiciens et leur logique*, Paris, 1978.

5. Cf. R. SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, London, 1983; p. 23.

6. SVF, II, 164, 27.

7. SVF, II, 164, 26-30.

8. SVF, II, 164, 23-25. This is a view of Origen's, too.

9. SVF, II, 165, 37-43.

argumentation that Plutarchus attributes to the Stoics the opinion that time is not in itself a «being»¹⁰.

Such were the matters surrounding the question of time. Platonists, for example, were asserting that it is time's «continuity» itself that attributes an unreality to time¹¹. On the other hand though Chrysippus rejects this assertion: he does not believe that to regard time as a continuum entails an unreality of present time or of the events of the present time and he subsequently develops a whole argumentation on this subject. What the Stoics actually did was to make the distinction between what «exists» (as various material objects or an action for as long as it takes place) and what is «real» (and this includes material objects as well as incorporeals, like time). Yet, even if we accept that this distinction eluded Proclus in his criticism of Stoic view of time¹², what remains is the fact that time was a question entailing a number of problems in its treatment.

In spite of the fact that Origen would be regarded as indebted to the Stoics for his fundamental ontological conception of time as an «extension», he has taken decisive steps of his own towards surmounting the impasses of the Stoic as well as the rest of pagan thought. What is of substantial help to him towards this direction is the different conception of «world» which he held.

In Origen's thought the notions of «body» and «incorporeal» have a totally different meaning from that in the Stoics. To them «incorporeal» is a «something» between being and non-being; it is only of necessity that they are compelled to accept the four incorporeals¹³ since they can neither deny that they «exist» nor assert that they are bodies.

By stark contrast, in Origen's view, incorporeal nature not only pertains to fully real existence, but also it is this which par excellence *is*. It is God, and only God, who is incorporeal. On the other hand, Origen's reference to corporeality pertains to fallen rational beings, which were created on the Fall. What he regards as corporeal nature originates in moral causes, it has a moral goal and will be terminated after proper free moral action¹⁴. Furthermore, corporeality is applied not only to the visible world, but also to what is «not seen» and yet regarded as material¹⁵.

10. *SVF*, II, 117, 42-43.

11. J. RIST, *Stoic Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1969; p. 280.

12. *SVF*, II, 166, 4-10.

13. Speech (τὸ λεκτόν), the void (τὸ κενόν), space (χῶρος), time (χρόνος); *SVF*, II, 117, 18-23.

14. P. TZAMALIKOS, *Op. cit.*, chapter 1.

15. *Op. cit.*, chapter 1.

Therefore there are two main differences between Origen's thought and the Stoics on the subject:

First, he avers that the entire world (according to his conception of «world») is a material one, yet he does not allow that only what is a «body» is a «being» (ὄν), as the Stoics did¹⁶. Holding a notion of *transcendence* to the world, he not only affirms that incorporeal is real, but also explicates his conviction that incorporeal nature is the superior reality — superior not with respect to the degree, so to speak, of reality, but to the quality of it.

Secondly, the distinction between corporeality and incorporeality interests Origen for reasons purely theological, not natural. The bodies that interest him are those which have a theological significance and those are the bodies of rational creatures¹⁷. In the final analysis, the conception of corporeality pertains to the world as a «downfall» (καταβολή) and the radical transcendence and superiority of incorporeal divine life compared to the entire world (which is all corporeal) is underlined.

Given these presuppositions, Origen had no reason to wonder as to whether time itself is a body. He, as well as the Stoics, knew the simple and apparent phenomenological datum that time is not a body. The difference is that while to Stoics this datum was a source of embarrassment, to Origen it was not. The reason lies in their different conceptions of the world itself, their different opinions about the significance of corporeality and incorporeality, and the notion of *transcendence* (a notion not held by the Stoics at all) — all of them with respect to the different conceptions of what is *real*.

In Origen's view the fact that time is not a body does not create any problem whatever. Time is not a body in the same sense that «space» itself is not a body, the function of «speaking» (namely, expressions, phrases, affirmations, etc.) is not a body, «void» is not a body¹⁸, in like a manner that a «predicate» or an «axiom» or the abstract notion of «to be attached» or «to be interwoven with»¹⁹ are not in themselves bodies. He was far away from the Stoic doctrine that only what is a body is real. Therefore he never faced the dilemmas of the Stoics, who remained imprisoned in perplexities created by themselves just because they never held a notion of *transcendence* to the world; they preferred to remain into the visible material world and its impasses. This is what Origene calls «the absurdities of the followers of Zeno

16. *SVF*, II, 117, 5-6.

17. *S. op. cit.*, ch. 2, about the kinds of motion according to Origen's thought.

18. *SVF*, II, 117, 20-22.

19. *SVF*, II, 117, 40-43.

and Chrysippus» and declares that he does not hold views which could cause him to «fall into these absurdities»²⁰.

To the Stoics this world is «the whole» (τὸ ὅλον). Origen also names the world by the same expression. He however regards this «whole» not as an absolute and all-embracing reality, but as a reality created, dependent, related to the transcendent God and, in itself, being *out* of God. This is a striking difference between Origen and the Stoics — a difference which had serious implications.

When Origen refers to time as «that which is extended alongside with» (τὸ συμπαρακτεινόμενον)²¹, he by this term indicates a lot of his conception of time and its relation to the «structure of the world». The use of the verb *συμπαρακτείνεσθαι* is pivotal for a proper apprehension of Origen's concept of time. He does not, however, employ any particular noun for time proper, a noun to be predicated by the adjective *συμπαρακτεινόμενος*, which he introduced in the terminology of time. To him time is a kind of extension. Although it is obvious that this «extension» is not a spatial one, he prefers to insist on the term *διάστημα* (extension) and the notion of the close connexion of this *διάστημα* to the «structure of the world» (τοῦ κόσμου κατασκευῇ), which in the final analysis implies the close relation of time to space. The relation of this *διάστημα* to the «structure of the world» is suggested through the verb *συμπαρακτείνεσθαι*; and this is one of the elements that makes the term *διάστημα* denoting a view of time radically different from that of Platonists or Aristotelists who sometimes used the term *διάστημα* for *periods* of time, yet never for denoting *time proper*.

Furthermore, a painstaking study of Origen's thought reveals an additional substantial characteristic of the essence of time proper. In fact, there are points of his work where he appears to consider time as a «dimension» of the world.

It should be noted that in Greek the terms «diastema» (*διάστημα* = extension) and «diastasis» (*διάστασις* = dimension) have the same root and their meaning has an inner connexion. «Diastasis» (dimension) is definitely a ideational «diastema» (extension) along which life is going on. Today we regard time as the fourth dimension of space-time, which stands in close connexion to the three spatial dimensions. Accordingly, the term «adiastatos» indicates what is without «diastases» (dimensions), that is, «dimension-

20. *Contra Celsum*, (Cels) VIII, 49.

21. *Exposita in Proverbia*; 10; *Commentary on John*, 1, XXIX; *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, § IX.

less». It is precisely this term which is used in Origen's works in two cases at least.

His conviction is that it is divine life which is the very life and it is this state, namely the divine one, which Origen calls as «perpetual life» (ἀειζωίας)²². It is obvious that he here refers to the life of God. The same term «perpetual life» is used at another point of the same work again in order to indicate the divine life as the final goal of all creation; it is there that this life is described as «calm and dimensionless» (ἄταράχου καὶ ἀδιαστάτου ζωῆς)²³. Thus the contrast between the atemporal divine life and the temporal world is pointed up through the term «ἀδιάστατος».

This is a point in Origen's thought which deserves to be particularly noticed and studied. In a previous work²⁴ we have shown that the radical transcendence of God to the world is portrayed in terms of space and time. The life of creation is contrasted with divine life by virtue of the fact that the latter is spaceless and timeless. When, therefore, Origen depicts divine life as a «life without dimensions», it is obvious that he implies space and time, alluding to the absence of space and time in the divine life.

Considering time as a *dimension* is the point where Origen's fundamental ontological definition of time as «diastema» (extension) and «diastasis» (dimension) converge. This happens not only because these two terms are closely related to each other on the grounds of philology and etymology, but also because it is Origen himself who correlates them, in order to express a substantial facet of his conception of time.

It is therefore worthwhile to reflect upon this view of time as dimension, in order to enquire into what is the inner meaning attributed by him to this notion.

It should be noted that the term *διάστασις* (dimension), applied to time, is not used by Origen exclusively, in like a manner that the term *διάστημα* (extension) is not an invention of his. While the latter has a special position in the Stoic conception of time, the former is a term employed also by the Neoplatonists when they refer to time. The very term *ἀδιάστατος* can be found in the *Enneads* (III, 7-13) of Plotinus many times, particularly in the section where he deals with the question of time and eternity²⁵. It is therefore quite obvious that, in treating the question of time, the Neoplatonists were

22. *Exposita in Proverbia* (*expProv*), 16.

23. *ExpProv*, 2.

24. *Op. cit.*, chapter 1.

25. With regard to the discussion about time and eternity, the term *ἀδιάστατος* can be found at the following points of the *Enneads*: III, 7-13; III,7.3; III,7.6; III,7.11; III,7.13.

using the term «ἀδιάστατος». The term *διάστασις* (dimension) was used, too²⁶, as Plotinus regards time as a «dimension of life» (*διάστασις ζωῆς*)²⁷ and «eternity» (αἰών) as «dimensionless» (ἀδιάστατος) and «non temporal» (οὐ χρονικόν)²⁸.

This, however, by no means suggests that Origen's view of time has been influenced by that of Neoplatonism.

First of all, Origen was twenty years older than Plotinus and he wrote his commentaries on the Proverbs (where the notion of dimension is found) probably around 238 A.D.²⁹. Taking into account that the *Enneads* were composed when Plotinus was pretty aged, it follows that at the time when Origen made these affirmations the *Enneads* had not been written yet.

Beyond that, however, in Neoplatonism time is the motion of the Soul whereas the fundamental Platonic notion of time as an «image» of eternity is preserved there, too.

At any rate, Origen's view of time is in essence radically different from the Platonic one as regards this crucial point: To Plato, time is a «moving image of eternity» and this very term of *image* denotes that time was established in the world by the demiurge so that a certain *affinity* exists between this world and the world of Ideas. Time, as an «image», is exactly the element by which an affiliation and resemblance is established between Here and Beyond.

By stark contrast, Origen's view is exactly the contrary: It is exactly in terms of space and time that the radical schism, the «gap», between the transcendent God and the world is portrayed. Time not only *does not* establish any affinity between divine life and the world, but it is exactly *in terms of time* that the radical hiatus between God and the world is portrayed.

Origen therefore is quite far away from Platonism and Neoplatonism on this point. Besides, in Plotinus' view, time was not created as a being out of non-being, but it followed down a «restlessly active nature» which was in «that quiet life»³⁰ and so this «nature» «moved and time moved with it»³¹. Hence, according to Plotinus, time was existing «before» time, as it were, and «was at rest with the eternity in real being»³² and «although it was not yet

26. *Enneads*, III, 7. 8.

27. *Enneads*, III, 7. 11.

28. *Enneads*, I, 5. 7.

29. Cf. MARGUERITE HARL, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice du Verbe Incarnée*, Paris, 1958; p. 71.

30. *Enneads*, III, 7. 10.

31. *Enneads*, III, 7. 11.

32. *Enneads*, III, 7. 11.



time» «it kept quiet too»³³. Also, in his view, time was made «according to the pattern of eternity, and as its moving image»³⁴.

In short, whereas to Plotinus time is *life* (of the Soul)³⁵, to Origen is but a *natural element*, namely an element of the make-up of the world. The difference between Plotinus' and Origen's views of time is far too striking to need any further comment³⁶.

This is why Origen has no hesitation in employing the term *ἀδιάστατος* (dimensionless) as well as the notion implied by it, namely of time as a «dimension of life». It was his deeper knowledge that his conception of time was far too different from the Neoplatonic one that made him feel free to use common terms with confidence and with no fear of miscomprehension.

The intellectual distinction between time and the «construction of this world», or the «structure of life», made in the *Commentary on Ephesians*, fr. IX, and in *Exposita in Proverbia*, 10, implies the conceptual distinction between space and time. It is Origen's view that rational nature is «changeable and convertible» by the very condition of its being created — for what was not and began to be is by this very fact shown to be of a «changeable nature»³⁷, and he repeats that «rational nature is changeable and convertible»³⁸ and it was «necessary for God to make a bodily nature, capable of changing at the Creator's will, by an alteration of qualities, into everything that circumstances might require»³⁹. It is through the establishment of time as a creature and part of the make-up of the world that «change» and «alteration» make sense. What Origen calls «structure» of the world provides the «scenery» for the drama of the world to take *place*; the «structure», therefore, provides the «place». It is through *time* that «action» and «movement» (and thus, change and alteration) can make sense and be realized. Time, therefore, is a «dimension of life» for creaturely freedom to make sense and to be realized; for it is obvious that freedom of rational creatures could hardly make sense in the absence of time. Time, as a *διάστημα* (extension) is the *διάστασις* (dimension) alongside which world moves towards the end⁴⁰.

33. *Enneads*, III, 7. 11.

34. *Enneads*, III, 7. 13; also, III, 7. 11.

35. *Enneads*, III, 7. 11.

36. These are not the only differences; Origen's conception of «aeon» is fundamentally a «natural» one (s. *Selecta in Psalmos*, 5), whereas, in Plotinus' view, «aeon» is the timeless eternity.

37. *De Principiis (Princ)*, IV, 4. 8.

38. *Princ*, IV, 4. 8.

39. *Princ*, IV, 4. 8.

40. We discuss the nature and the actual content of «end» in op. cit., chapter 5.

Origen's view of ἀδιάστατος (dimensionless)⁴¹ applied to the divine life indicates his conception of it as totally beyond time, as God himself is beyond any notion of change or alteration; and certainly it is not accidental that he uses the term «dimensionless» together with the term «calm» when he refers to the state of divine reality⁴².

What is in divine life is unchanged since it is perfect; this is why Origen, at another point, uses the term «ἀδιάστατος» in order to indicate what is certain, positive and not subject to change⁴³. Expounding the views of Gregory of Nyssa on this question, R. Sorabji⁴⁴ regards them as a «fuller»⁴⁵ account of the divine reality. This «fuller» is stated as a comparison with Origen's account on the question. It is ironical though that what R. Sorabji quotes as an account (of Gregory's) «fuller» than the one of Origen's⁴⁶ are but Origen's own views employed by Gregory⁴⁷. The very definition of time as διάστημα, its relation to the world portrayed by the term συμπαρεκτεινόμενον, the portrayal of divine life by the term ἀδιάστατος, and, in general, the conception of both time and divine timelessness, are all just mere repetitions of Origen's own ideas and expressions⁴⁸.

Therefore this is not the case of a «fuller» account; it is one more case in which a Cappadocian merely *repeats* views of Origen without mentioning him at all.

R. Sorabji⁴⁹ also asserts that Philoponus «picks up the very words» which Proclus and earlier Plotinus, Basil and Gregory used in their discussions on time and divine reality. Proclus certainly follows Plotinus. How radically different Origen's views were will be discussed further on. As

41. *ExpProv*, 2.

42. Gregory of Nyssa faithfully follows Origen in the distinction between spatio-temporal reality as one «contained within dimensions» as opposed to the «dimensionless» divine reality «τῆς σωματικῆς καὶ διαστηματικῆς φύσεως»... as opposed to ... «ἢ νοερά τε καὶ ἀδιάστατος φύσις»; *De anima et resurrectione*, M, 46. 48 B; similarly in *De hominis opificio*, 23. 3; M, 44. 212 A. This Gregory's adherence to Origen's terminology is particularly striking in *Contra Eunomium*, 12; M, 45. 933 B; *ibid.* 1064 C.

43. *HomLuc*, 1.

44. R. SORABJI, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

45. *Ibid.*

46. GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Contra Eunomium*, M, 45. 36; M, 45. 368; M, 45. 461-4; M, 45. 1064 C-D; M, 45. 796 A; M, 45. 809 B-C; also *hom. in Eccl.* 7, (M, 44. 729 C-D); in *Hex.* (M, 44. 84 C). On Gregory's view, s. H. VON BALTHASAR, *Presence et pensée*, Paris 1942, pp. 1-10.

47. R. Sorabji also includes the definition of time by Basil of Caesarea among these «fuller» accounts. On this he obviously follows an erroneous view of J. Callahan, on which we discuss below.

48. S. P. TZAMALIKOS, *op. cit.*, chapter 2.

49. R. SORABJI, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

far as the Cappadocians are concerned, the «very words» picked up by Philoponus are not theirs, as R. Sorabji asserts, but they are Origen's.

Origen considers time as a «dimension» of the world and introduces the term «co-extended alongside with» (συμπαρεκτεινόμενος)⁵⁰ in order to portray the very relation of this «dimension» to what, by abstraction, he calls «structure of this world» (alluding to space proper, as a constitutive element of the world). In doing so, he actually seems to have an inner conception of what only in the twentieth century was conceived as «space-time». We cannot know to what extent he was conscious and had a clear conception of this reality; yet even if he had such a conception he would have never expounded that in a separate treatise; for he stresses that his purpose is to enunciate theological views, not views on matters of nature (φυσιολογεῖν)⁵¹. Had he nevertheless or had he not a clear conscious conception of the reality of «space-time», we can say that he had an intuition of that⁵².

Consequently, in Origen's view it would be «absurd»⁵³ to wonder whether or not time is a body, in the same sense that he would find it absurd to wonder whether or not «length» or «height» or «width» are in themselves bodies. It is the fundamental presuppositions of his thought that prevent him from such «absurd» questions; and it is these presuppositions which allow him to affirm explicitly that time is a creature of full reality, keeping away from the perplexities that the Stoic thought entails.

Moreover he holds the psychological and phenomenological division of time into past, present and future. Thus, he refers to Ezek., 16, 30 («and you have three times committed fornication») and comments as follows: «for the three times (οἱ τρεῖς χρόνοι) comprise the whole aeon»⁵⁴. Yet it is in the *Commentary on John* (at the point where he refers to the actual meaning of the tenses) that he enunciates his views about «existence» in relation to the parts of time, namely to past, present and future. It is there that he explicates that the future refers to what «will exist» (τὸ μέλλον ὑπάρξει)⁵⁵. It is also quite characteristic of his views on the subject that he refers to the «Kingdom of God» as a «contemplation» of the past aeons as «aeons made» (γενομένων αἰώνων) while the future aeons are stated as «aeons which will be made» (γενησομένων αἰώνων)⁵⁶. The meaning of this «contemplation» has a

50. We give an extensive analysis and documentation of this point in op. cit., chapter 2.

51. *Cels*, IV, 60.

52. Origen expressed this inner feeling of «space-time» by the term «aeon». Cf. *selPs*, 5.

53. *Cels*, VIII, 49.

54. *Selecta in Ezechiel (selEz)*, 16.

55. *FrJohn*, I.

56. *SelPs*, 144; the same terminology is also used in *selPs*, 9 and *selPs*, 15.

different character in relation either to the past or to the future: referred to the past (which is already «made») this contemplation means a «memory» (μνήμην) of the past aeons⁵⁷; in the case of future aeons this should be understood as a kind of foreknowledge. Thus time is conceived not only in terms of an objective reality related to the world but also is viewed psychologically.

In the light of our discussion we can now come to a point which seems to have been puzzling so far. We can now establish the view that it was Origen who was actually the source of Augustine's theory of time.

J. Callahan has written a work⁵⁸ in which he argues that it was Basil of Caesarea who is the source of Augustine's theory of time. Callahan is wrong simply because Basil's affirmations which appear to constitute his conception of the nature of time are Origen's perceptions, whereas Basil's expressions are Origen's own expressions repeated verbatim. Perhaps things would have been clearer if the Cappadocians had explicated that their affirmations could not claim originality but they were mere repetitions of Origen's perceptions⁵⁹. They never did anything of the kind.

John Callahan wrote his work in 1958. As late as 1983, R. Sorabji⁶⁰ refers to Callahan's assertions and, although he has some doubts referring to the alleged influence of Gregory of Nyssa upon Augustine, he cannot himself solve what he regards as a «mystery». He suggests Aristotelians as a possible source of influence upon Augustine⁶¹ but he himself says⁶² that he is deterred from drawing conclusions due to Augustine's slowness in acquiring Greek, the language in which Gregory wrote.

In arguing that Basil is the source of Augustine's theory of time, Callahan, too, speaks of a «puzzle»⁶³ because there is no evidence that Basil's refutation of Eunomius (the work in which Basil's views of time are found, and adduced by Callahan as an evidence) was ever translated into Latin, in whole or in part. He, too, refers to the current opinions about Augustine's limited knowledge of Greek (especially at the relatively early age when he wrote the *Confessions*). According to these opinions, Augustine would not

57. *SelPs*, 76.

58. J. CALLAHAN, «Basil of Caesarea: A new source of St. Augustine's theory of time», *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 63 (1958), pp. 437-54.

59. In op. cit., chapter 2, we adduce extensive evidence stating the passages where the Cappadocians use Origen's own words without any reference to him at all.

60. R. SORABJI, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

61. Op. cit., p. 248.

62. Op. cit., p. 290, n. 14.

63. Op. cit., p. 438.

have been able to read Basil's Greek with the facility that the adaption of Basil's ideas in this chapter of the *Confessions* would seem to require⁶⁴. Finally, he says that he cannot attempt any solution to this question⁶⁵ and all he concludes at the end of his work is that Basil influenced Augustine «through some contact that cannot at present be determined»⁶⁶.

We think we can now offer a definitive and substantiated answer to what has been regarded as a difficult question and «mystery» for a very long period of time. This answer can be provided out of our discussion hitherto.

There is no need to search for «connexions» between Basil and Augustine (as J. Callahan does), because, in fact, Augustine never read Basil's work. It was not Basil (neither himself nor through any «connexion»), but Origen who influenced Augustine's theory of time⁶⁷. How Augustine came in contact with Origen's writings could not be a mystery. At the time of Augustine, Origen's works had been translated into Latin. For it was during Augustine's lifetime (354-430) that Jerome translated a large part of Origen's *Homilies on the Song of Songs* (380) and Rufinus translated the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (400), the *De Principiis* and other works of Origen. Besides, in relation to other matters, Augustine himself refers to Origen by name⁶⁸.

The passage of Basil which Callahan alleges to have influenced Augustine is from *Adversus Eunomium*, I, 21. In that section Basil states that time is not the movement itself of heavenly bodies (as Eunomius alleged) but it is «the extension which is extended alongside with the constitution of the world, in which all movement is measured ... and thus we say that it is quicker or slower»⁶⁹.

In this statement of Basil's there is no term or expression pertaining to the definition of time which has not been enunciated by Origen⁷⁰. Basil here

64. For what he regards as a «difficult question» he cites the work by H. I. MARROÛ, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture*, Paris, 1949, pp. 27-46, 631-637.

65. Op. cit., p. 440.

66. Op. cit., p. 450.

67. The points which we make here and which show the extent to which Augustine's thought was indebted to that of Origen's have eluded B. ALTANER in «Augustinus und Origenes», *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 1950, pp. 15-41.

68. *De haeresibus*, XLIII (MIGNE, PL, XLII).

69. *Adversus Eunomium*, I, 21. «Χρόνος δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ συμπαρατεινόμενον τῇ συστάσει τοῦ κόσμου διάστημα».

70. For the term *διάστημα* s. ORIGEN'S *Fragmenta in Matthaeum*, 487 (twice); *Commentary on Matthew*; 15, 34; 15, 28; *De Oratone*, XXVII, 13; Time as «extended alongside the constitution of the world» is stated in the Fragment IX of the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*. Basil repeats Origen's affirmations not only in spirit, but also in letter, in fact he uses

does nothing more than merely repeating the terminology of Origen; a terminology employed by the Alexandrian who made an inspired breakthrough and for the first time established a Christian conception of time. That Basil did not explicate the fact that his assertions are but mere repetitions of views and expressions of his master is a historic and serious omission. Indeed Basil is accountable for this erasure and owes an apology to the judgement of History⁷¹.

At the same point of this work, Basil affirms that the movement of stars does not indicate «what» time is by «how much» time is («οὐ γὰρ ποιάν, ἀλλ' εἶπερ ἄρα, ποσὴν μᾶλλον ἢν εἰπεῖν οἰκειότερον, ἀλλὰ τίς οὕτω παῖς παντελῶς τὴν διάνοιαν ὥστε ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι ἡμέραι μὲν καὶ ὥραι καὶ μῆνες καὶ ἐνιαυτοὶ μέτρα τοῦ χρόνου εἰσίν, οὐχὶ μέρη;»)⁷².

In a column beside this section of *Adversus Eunomium*, Callahan cites a passage from Augustine's *Confessions* (X, 23ff). Then he comes to compare the two passages and to ground the view that it is due to the definition of time as an «extension» (διάστημα) and «extended alongside with» (συμπαρεκτείνων) that Augustine has been able to articulate the view that time is something distinct from the movement of heavenly bodies⁷³. It is true that the very term *συμπαρεκτείνων* (and Origen was the first who introduced this term in the terminology about time) suggests the notion of «dimension», both essentially and etymologically. In addition, nevertheless, Origen used the term *διάστασις*, as discussed above. Hence Augustine did not have to think much on this or to make any inferences or discoveries. Origen had already portrayed the fundamental perceptions very clearly and had introduced the appropriate terminology.

Origen's expressions themselves. In op. cit., chapter 2, we have discussed the significance of the term *διάστημα* employed by Origen for time in relation with the introduction of the term *συμπαρεκτείνων* for time, as an innovation which had a tremendous impact on Origen's successors and a decisive role towards the establishment of a conception of time which is strikingly near the latest scientific conception of it.

71. Basil is not the only one who perpetrated this plagiarism remaining unduly silent about Origen's views. The other Cappadocians, as well as Athanasius and others, did the same. Here we make only this point: The Orthodox Church regards Athanasius as a saint. On his name-day the text of Paul read in the liturgy begins thus: «Do mention your masters who preached the word of God unto you» (Heb. 13, 7). The issue of plagiarism by the Cappadocians and Athanasius needs a discussion of its own. For their silence over Origen's authentic views played a crucial role in the historical process which led to the anathematism against Origen in 553 AD. The fact that plagiarism was a usual practice until the Renaissance is certainly not an answer to the question.

72. Ibid.

73. J. CALLAHAN, op. cit., p. 444.



In vain Callahan tries to relate the term «day» (as found both in Basil's and Augustine's compared passages), asserting that the latter refers to «day» because the former does so⁷⁴. The connexion of «day» to the definition of time as «extension» (διάστημα) and «extended alongside with» (συμπαρεκτείνων) was made by Origen⁷⁵. It is also Origen who states that the term «day» does not mean «the course of the sun» (τὸν δρόμον τὸν ἡλιακόν)⁷⁶.

Furthermore, Callahan asserts that it is also due to the same temporal categories that Augustine was able to depict time as a «dimension»⁷⁷. No doubt that, at this point, Callahan is right. What he does not know though is that, here too, Augustine did not have to make much speculation or original conceptual perception. For it was Origen who had perceived time as a «dimension» due to the very fundamental perception of time as διάστημα and συμπαρεκτείνων which he himself had established and elaborated long before Augustine.

So, when Augustine speaks of time as a *distentio* he has not actually made any discovery of his own. He just employs the views perceived, elaborated and presented by Origen⁷⁸. For it was he who first saw that to regard time as a «dimension» is an immediate consequence of ontologically regarding time as an «extension»; that is regarding time as something quite different from space and yet «extended alongside with» space. The perception, the logical inference and the use of the term «dimension», were all already there.

We endorse Callahan's argument that when Augustine introduces the term *distentio* speaking of time, what he has in mind is the expression συμπαρεκτεινόμενον τῇ συστάσει τοῦ κόσμου⁷⁹. But we do not endorse his claim that this particular point, too, constitutes an influence of Basil's upon Augustine. For this is a notion of Origen's, found (both in letter and in spirit) in the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (fr. IX) and none the less in the *Exposita in Proverbia* (10). This is what has eluded Callahan and all the other scholars who have for so long time spoken about the «puzzle» and «mystery» of the influence on Augustine's theory of time. Callahan is certainly right in asserting that Augustine became able to take this view of time due to this formulation. Yet, as we said, this view itself, too, had been already taken by Origen himself. In any case, Augustine's expression *spatium*

74. CALLAHAN, op. cit., p. 447.

75. In *commJohn*, 1, XXIX.

76. *SelPs*, 117.

77. Op. cit., p. 445.

78. S. P. TZAMALIKOS, op. cit., Ch. 2.

79. CALLAHAN, op. cit., pp. 447 and 450.

*temporis*⁸⁰ is but a literal translation of Origen's expression *χρονικὸν διάστημα*, used, for instance, (indeed twice) in the fragment 487 of the *Commentary on Matthew*.

Due to Origen's definitions of time Augustine did not stick to an altogether psychological conception of time but expounded his theory in a manner in which the psychological aspect of time increasingly fades giving room to a more objective definition of it. This is why Augustine's view of time is less psychological at the end of his philosophizing about it in the *Confessions* than in the beginning of this work.

So when Augustine comes to regard the three functions of the mind⁸¹, no longer regarded as distinguished activities but rather as three aspects of a single *distentio*, he just comes in line with Origen's view of time.

It is because Origen had considered time as something different from Plotinus's time as *διάστασις ζωῆς* (dimension of life) that Augustine's *distentio* is rightly regarded as something different from the Plotinian perception of time. Callahan is right in regarding this view of time as a «radical transformation»⁸². For indeed, by introducing the term *συμπαρεκτείνων*⁸³, Origen made clear that this *διάστασις* (dimension) has nothing to do with the mental phenomena of memory, attention and anticipation.

Origen, as we saw, also held a psychological perception of time, namely time perceived as comprising past, present and future⁸⁴. It was this aspect that influenced Gregory of Nyssa more⁸⁵. In his whole conception of time

80. CALLAHAN, op. cit., p. 447.

81. Augustine held that time, as a *distentio animi*, has three aspects, namely, memory, attention and anticipation, without which past, present and future can have no meaning; s. chapters 27, 28 of the *Confessions*.

82. CALLAHAN, op. cit., p. 450.

83. The term *συμπαρεκτείνων* was employed not only by the Cappadocians but also by John of Damascus as late as in the 8th century. In op. cit., chapter 2, we adduce passages of Christian writers verbatim using Origen's innovations in the terminology of time; these passages are spanned in a period of five centuries. What is interesting there is that the less they follow Origen in spirit (and not only in letter) the more they fall to an affinity with Platonism, to which Origen established an inspired diametrically-opposed thesis. This happened with Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Damascus. They echoed Origen's expressions without having actually assimilated his conception of time. This also happened with Augustine, as we shall see shortly below; s. op. cit. ch. 2.

84. *SelEz*, 16; *expProv*, 18; *expProv*, 28.

85. This point provides an answer, too, to what Callahan regards as a «serious historical problem in relating Augustine to Gregory», a problem to which R. Sorabji's hesitant suggestion (s. supra) does not certainly solve, as he himself concedes. There was no immediate relation of Gregory with Augustine but it was Origen's thought that exerted its influence upon both Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine.

though it was not a prevailing facet. He certainly speaks of «memory» (μνήμην) of past time⁸⁶ and of «contemplation» (θεωρίαν) of future or past time⁸⁷ as well as of «knowledge» (γνώσιν) of things «past, present and future»⁸⁸ yet they are always references to psychological states *accompanying* motion *in* time rather than defining and indicating time proper.

As a matter of fact this is what constitutes a fundamental difference between Origen's conception of time and that of Plotinus'. To Plotinus, time is *in* the soul; but he thinks of a «soul» which is a universal principle that creates the world and everything in it⁸⁹. In such a view, time is simply the productive *life* of this soul, in which the universe and its motion have their existence. Time is regarded as the power which produces motion (and does not measure it), everything is said to be *in* time. Thus time is stated as a *διάστασις ζωῆς* (dimension of life) only in so far as it produces motion.

To Origen, however, the distinction of time itself from space, established by the term *συμπαρεκτείνων* (extended alongside with), renders time a *dimension* existing in itself beside space. Therefore the term *διάστασις* in this conception of time has a meaning radically different from that in Plotinus.

With respect to this, and without any basis at all, P. Plass makes the wrong assertion that, in Origen, time is «the unsure, fragile motion of minds»⁹⁰. This particular assertion is ironical; for the conception of time in Origen was *exactly the opposite* to what Plass alleges. In fact, Basil used Origen's conception of time (as well as his terminology) in order to attack Eunomius, who asserted that «time» is in itself «motion». What Plass does here is to attribute to Origen a conception of time which is diametrically opposite to that which he really held⁹¹.

Regardless of the fact that Callahan is wrong in thinking that it was in Basil that Augustine found the sources for his theory of time, he is right in asserting that, without the definition of time as an *extension* extended alongside with the constitution of the world, Augustine's affirmation of time as the *distentio animi* would be regarded as simply a transformation of

86. *SelPs*, 76.

87. *SelPs*, 9; *selPs*, 15; *selPs*, 144.

88. *ExpProv*, 18; *expProv*, 28; *Princ*, III, 1. 13. At that point Origen states that it is only God who has such a knowledge, alluding to his conception of God as omniscient.

89. S. P. TZAMALIKOS, *op. cit.*, Introduction and Ch. 2.

90. P. PLASS, «The Concept of Eternity in Patristic Theology», *Studia Theologica*, 36 (1982), p. 13.

91. Cf. *supra*, particularly the point where Origen's statement that the term «day» does not mean «the course of the sun» (τὸν δρόμον τὸν ἡλιακόν) is discussed.

Plotinus' *διάστασις ζωῆς*. But the «radical transformation» of the Neoplatonic conception of *διάστασις* into an entirely different conceptual category was undoubtedly an achievement of Origen.

There is a point though which Callahan would not suspect at all. It is true that Origen's (according to Callahan: Basil's) perception of time enabled Augustine to relate time to *any* motion. But is it coincidental that such a perception of time leads to this radical result? The answer is no. For when Origen established and elaborated his own conception of time he held a conception of the world consisted of many ranks of life. Time was perceived as existing in *all* ranks of life and *motion* in them exists, too⁹². Thus he devised a conception of time which can be related not just to the motion of the heavenly bodies of the visible firmament, or even only to the motion of what is visible; he established a conception of time which is related even to the motion of worlds which are «not seen» (namely spaces other than this three-dimensional visible one) and yet they are «material». This is why Origen established a view of time which is related to *any motion* and not just to the movement of the visible heavenly bodies or of the movement of anything visible. For all the particular «words» which comprise the entire (one and single) world are temporal, they are moving and they are «material», if made of a matter «not seen». This is why time has to be related to *any* motion. This is a notion closely related to the special significance that the term «world» has in Origen's thought.

Although Origen offered inspired affirmations on the perception of time as a dimension, he never composed an *ad hoc* treatise on the subject; the reason is that works of this kind had always been out of his interest. With regard to the very word *διάστασις* (dimension) Origen speaks rather by contrast, namely of timelessness as «dimensionless». But his introduction on the term *συμπαρεκτείνων* was more than enough to indicate that time is regarded as a dimension. The point is though that one should study the whole of Origen's works in order to draw his crystal conception of time. This is what Augustine seems not to have been able to do, probably because he did not manage to have all the Greek texts of Origen in Latin translations. Having obviously not comprehended Origen's conception entirely he remarks:

«Thus it seems to me that time is nothing other than an extension (*distentio*), but what it is an extension of I do not know. It would be surprising if it were not an extension of the soul (*animus*) itself»⁹³.

92. We discuss this in op. cit., chapter 2, §3.

93. *Confessions*, XI, 26.

If Origen had explicated his view of time as a dimension⁹⁴ then Augustine would «know» what kind of «dimension» time is. He has been unable to comprehend and follow Origen all the way. Hence he seems to seek refuge in Plotinus' conception of the nature of this «dimension». Subsequently it has been argued that his conception of time was influenced by that of Plotinus⁹⁵. Our view is that such a claim is not unjustified to a certain extent.

This is a tragic irony. For although it was Origen who made the radical transformations in the conception of time and it was he who decidedly established a view of time entirely different from any Platonic or Neoplatonic one — he is now regarded as being outside «orthodoxy».

On the other hand, Augustine just succumbed to certain perceptions of Plotinus. He certainly had a false knowledge of crucial facets of Origen's thought, as his attack against Origen by name shows⁹⁶. Thus, for one reason or another, he did not comprehend Origen's crystal clear notion that time is *one* and it is an extension of the *entirety* of the world, namely that all rational creatures live in *this* and *one* time. Hence, he introduces a notion of «angelic time»⁹⁷ which he depends on the mental movements of the angels⁹⁸.

On this notion Augustine is rather vague, as he can say neither that these movements are time nor that they are not. Finally he seems to plump for the view that they are *time*, yet of a kind of its own: it is a sort of quasi-time, a notion employed in order to put the angels between time and the divine reality. In any case, one can hardly help thinking that the relation of this «time» to movements of souls of angels is, in essence, quite reminiscent of Plotinus' views on the question.

None of these vaguenesses appear in the views of Origen. For to him

94. Origen's references are not inadequate — but Augustine depended on the Latin versions of his works; besides we do not know if he read the entirety of Origen's relevant references on the question. In view of Augustine's attacks against Origen by name (in which Origen is attacked not only for assertions never made by him, but also for doctrines diametrically contrary to his authentic views; s. our discussion in op. cit. ch. 5) it seems most unlikely that Augustine had a full knowledge of Origen's works. It should be emphasized though that the study of the *entirety* of Origen's works is necessary, exactly because his view of time imbues his entire work and cannot be found as a whole in any particular work devoted to this topic.

95. Cf. R. SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 165ff.

96. AUGUSTINE, *De Haeresibus*, XLIII (Migne, PL, XLII).

97. *De Civitate Dei*, XII, 16.

98. This theory had already been offered in two works straddling the *Confessions*: *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus* III, 7-8 and *de Genesi ad litteram*, V, 5. 12; the mental movements of the angels are described in *de Genesi ad litteram*, IV, 22. 39 and *De Civitate Dei*, XI, 7.

there are only two states with respect to time: Temporality, which is the state of the entire world (in all ranks of life which comprise it); and Timelessness, applied to the divine Beyond. There is no mixing or confusion or intermediary state between these two realities.

We think that Augustine's falling into employing Neoplatonic perceptions is due to the fact that he was profoundly influenced by Origen's conception, but he was actually unable to appreciate how deeply and essentially the Neoplatonic view of time as *dimension* (together with the Stoic ontological definition of time as *extension*) was transformed through Origen's thought. We assume that this is a reason why (in contrast to what happens in Origen) the «psychological» aspect of time prevails over the «objectivist» one in Augustine's thought. Plotinus' general idea was that time is somehow dependent on changes in the soul. Augustine has never been able to overcome radically the Neoplatonic principle of close connexion of the *essence* of time to soul — even though he regards the notion of «soul» in an apparently different context.

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ΩΡΙΓΕΝΗΣ: Η ΠΗΓΗ ΤΗΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΘΕΩΡΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΙΝΟΥ

Περίληψη

Υπάρχει μία θεμελιώδης προϋπόθεση προκειμένου να κατανοήσει κάποιος την περί Χρόνου αντίληψη του Ώριγένη. Η προϋπόθεση αυτή συνίσταται στην γνώση της ακριβοῦς σχέσεως τῆς ὄντολογικῆς περὶ Χρόνου ἀντιλήψεώς του, σὲ σχέση μὲ τὴν πρὸ αὐτοῦ παράδοση. Μία ἐκτενὴς ἀνάλυση τοῦ θέματος ἔχει γίνει στὴν ἐργασία μου *The Concept of Time in Origen*, (University of Glasgow, 834 σελ.). Ἐδῶ θὰ δώσουμε μερικὰ στοιχεῖα ἀπαραίτητα γιὰ τὴν παροῦσα ἐργασία.

Ὁ Ώριγένης υἱοθέτησε τὴν θεμελιώδη Στωικὴ ἀντίληψη περὶ τοῦ Χρόνου ὡς *διαστήματος*, ἡ ὁποία (ὅπως ἔχει ἀποδειχθεῖ στὴν προαναφερθεῖσα ἐργασία) εἶναι ριζικῶς ἀνεξάρτητη τόσο ἀπὸ τὴν Πλατωνικὴ καὶ Νεοπλατωνικὴ ἀντίληψη, ὅσο καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀριστοτέλεια καὶ Περιπατητικὴ. Κατὰ τὴν Πλατωνικὴ ἀντίληψη, ὁ χρόνος καθ' ἑαυτὸν εἶναι *εἰκόνα* (κινητὴ τῆς αἰωνιότητος), ἐνῶ κατὰ τὸν Ἀριστοτέλη ὁ χρόνος εἶναι *ἀριθμός* (κινήσεως). Κατὰ τὸν Πλωτῖνο, τέλος, ὁ χρόνος εἶναι *ζωή* (τῆς Ψυχῆς). Πρέπει νὰ σημειωθεῖ ὅτι τὰ ἀνωτέρω ἀποτελοῦν τὶς ἀντίστοιχες



αντιλήψεις για την ὄντολογία τοῦ χρόνου καθ' ἑαυτὸν — καί, ὑπὸ αὐτὴν ἀκριβῶς τὴν ἔννοιαν εἶναι ριζικῶς διαφορετικὲς ἀπὸ τὴν ἀντίληψη τοῦ Χρόνου ὡς διαστήματος.

Αὐτὴν τὴν θεμελιώδη ἀντίληψη τῶν Στωικῶν περὶ τοῦ τί εἶναι ὁ χρόνος καθ' ἑαυτὸν υἰοθέτησε ὁ Ὡριγένης. Ἐκεῖνο τὸ ὁποῖο ἐν συντομία ἀναλύεται στὴν παρούσα ἐργασία εἶναι τὸ γιατί ὁ χρόνος (προφανῶς ὄχι ὑλικός, οὔτε οἰασδὴποτε μορφῆς σῶμα) προκαλοῦσε τόση ἀμηχανία μέσα στὸ γενικώτερο πνευματικὸ κλίμα τῆς Στωικῆς Σκέψεως. Καὶ ἀναλύεται τὸ γιατί ὁ Ὡριγένης δὲν εἶχε νὰ ἀντιμετωπίσει κανένα ἀπὸ τὰ προβλήματα καὶ τὶς ἐσωτερικὲς ἀντιφάσεις τῶν Στωικῶν — ἀντιφάσεις οἱ ὁποῖες ἔγιναν ἀντικείμενο σφοδρῆς κριτικῆς ἀπὸ τὸν Πλωτῖνο, τὸν Πλούταρχο καί, μερικῶς, τὸν Πρόκλο.

Τοῦτο συνέβη διότι ὁ Ὡριγένης διαμόρφωσε μίαν ἀντίληψη περὶ χρόνου ἢ ὁποῖα, ἀφ' ἑνὸς μὲν ἦταν σύμφωνη μὲ τὴν Χριστιανικὴ του πίστη, ἀφ' ἑτέρου δὲ καθορίσθηκε ἀπὸ σπουδαιότατες καινοτομίες ποὺ πρῶτος εἰσήγαγε ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Ὡριγένης. Ὑπῆρχαν ἐγγενεῖς λόγοι στὴν Στωικὴ φιλοσοφία, οἱ ὁποῖοι ὑποχρέωναν τοὺς Στωικοὺς νὰ μὴ προχωρήσουν σὲ πολλὲς ἀναλύσεις τῆς περὶ χρόνου ἀντιλήψεώς των. Αὐτὸ ἀκριβῶς ἐπέσυρε τὴν ἔντονη κριτικὴ τοῦ Πλωτίνου. Τοῦτο ὅμως τὸ ἐπραξαν συνειδητὰ καὶ λόγω θεμελιωδῶν φιλοσοφικῶν τους πεποιθήσεων, ὅπως ὁ ὕλισμός καὶ ἡ ἔλλειψη ἐννοίας ὑπερβατικότητος στὴν ὅλη φιλοσοφία τους. Ἡ εἰσαγωγὴ τῶν «τεσσάρων ἀσωμάτων» (χῶρος, χρόνος, κενόν, λεκτόν) μέσα σὲ μιὰ σκέψη ὅπου «πραγματικὸ εἶναι μόνον ὅ,τι εἶναι σῶμα» δὲν ἔλυσε τὰ προβλήματα σαφοῦς ἐκθέσεως κάποιας ὄντολογίας τοῦ Χρόνου.

Ὁ Ὡριγένης δὲν εἶχε αὐτὰ τὰ προβλήματα. Γι' αὐτὸν ὑπῆρχε ὁ ὑπερβατικὸς Θεὸς ὁ ὁποῖος δημιούργησε τὸν χρόνο. Σὲ ἀντίθεση μὲ τοὺς μέχρι τότε ἰσχυρισμοὺς διαφόρων, ὅπως τοῦ Φλορόφσκι, ἔχω ἤδη ἀποδείξει (op. cit., κεφ. 2) ὅτι ἦταν ὁ Ὡριγένης, καὶ ὄχι ὁ Αὐγουστίνος, ἐκεῖνος ποὺ εἰσήγαγε τὴν ἀντίληψη ὅτι ὁ χρόνος εἶναι δημιούργημα. Ἐπιπλέον ὁ Ὡριγένης ἦταν ἐκεῖνος ποὺ θεώρησε τὸν Χρόνο ὡς συνεχές, μὴ ἄπειρο, καὶ ἐπίσης, θεώρησε τὸν χρόνο ὡς διάσταση.

Τοῦτο τὸ τελευταῖο ἀποτελεῖ ἐξαιρετικὰ σημαντικὸ στοιχεῖο τὸ ὁποῖο ἀγνοεῖ μέχρι σήμερα ἡ παγκόσμια βιβλιογραφία. Ἡ κύρια συμβολὴ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἄρθρου εἶναι ὅτι παρέχει ἀπάντηση σὲ ἓνα ἐρώτημα, τὸ ὁποῖο ἔχει βασανίσει μελετητὲς ἐπὶ μακρόν — καὶ ἔχει ἐρευνηθεῖ μὲ τρόπο ἰδιαίτερα ἔντονο κατὰ τὰ τελευταῖα σαράντα χρόνια, πλὴν χωρὶς νὰ ἔχει εὑρεθεῖ ἀπάντηση.

Τὴν ἀπάντηση τὴν παρέχουμε μὲ τὸ παρὸν ἄρθρο.

Τὸ πρόβλημα ἀφορᾷ τὴν πηγὴ τῆς περὶ Χρόνου θεωρίας τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου.

Τὸ 1945 ὁ H. I. Μαγροῦ, μετὰ ἀπὸ ἀρκετὴ ἔρευνα, δὲν κατόρθωσε νὰ φθάσει σὲ μία λύση τοῦ προβλήματος, τὸ ὁποῖο τελικῶς ἄφησε ἀναπάντητο, θεωρώντας το ὡς «δύσκολο ζήτημα».

Τὸ 1958, ὁ John Callahan δημοσίευσε ἓνα ἄρθρο στὸ περιοδικὸ *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, καὶ ὑποστήριξε ὅτι πηγὴ τῆς περὶ χρόνου θεωρίας τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου εἶναι ὁ Βασίλειος Καισαρείας. Παραθέτει δύο κείμενα — ἓνα τοῦ Βασιλείου (ἀπὸ τὸ *Κατὰ Εὐνομίου*) καὶ ἓνα τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου (ἀπὸ τὶς *Ἑξομολογήσεις*). Ἡ παραβολὴ τῶν δύο κειμένων δείχνει, πράγματι, ὅτι ὁ ὅρος *συμπαρεκτεινόμενος*, ἀναφερόμενος στὸν χρόνο, σημαίνει μὲ σαφήνεια ὅτι ὁ χρόνος θεωρεῖται ὡς διάσταση, καὶ ἡ σχετικὴ ἀντίληψη τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου γιὰ τὸν Χρόνο ὡς *distentio* καθὼς καὶ ἐκφράσεις του ὅπως *spatium temporis* δείχνουν σημαντικὴ ὁμοιότητα (καὶ συνεπῶς δάνειο) μὲ τὸ κείμενο τοῦ Βασιλείου. Ἐν τούτοις ὁ Callahan γνωρίζει ὅτι τὸ ἔργο αὐτὸ τοῦ Βασιλείου εἶχε μεταφρασθεῖ στὰ Λατινικά. Τὸ γεγονὸς αὐτὸ (σὲ συνδυασμὸ μὲ τὴν πολὺ περιορισμένη γνώση ἑλληνικῶν ἐκ μέρους τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου — εἰδικὰ κατὰ τὴν σχετικῶς νεαρὴ ἡλικία του, ὅποτε ἔγραψε τὶς *Ἑξομολογήσεις*) καθιστᾷ ἀδύνατη τὴν λύση τοῦ προβλήματος. Ἔτσι, ὁ ἴδιος θεωρεῖ ὅτι τὸ ζήτημα παραμένει ἓνα «μυστήριον». Τελικῶς, ἀναφέρει ὅτι δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ἐπιχειρήσει νὰ δώσει καμμία λύση. Τὸ μόνο ποὺ ἀρκεῖται νὰ πεῖ εἶναι ὅτι ὁ Βασίλειος θὰ πρέπει νὰ ἐπηρέασε τὸν Αὐγουστῖνο «μέσω κάποιας ἐπαφῆς, ἢ ὁποία πρὸς τὸ παρὸν δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ καθορισθεῖ».

Τὸ 1983, ὁ καθηγητὴς τῆς Ἀρχαίας Ἑλληνικῆς Φιλοσοφίας στὸ King's College τοῦ Λονδίνου, Richard Sorabji, στὸ ἀξιόλογο ἔργο του *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, ἀντιμετωπίζει τὸ πρόβλημα καὶ πάλι. Ἄν καὶ λέει ὅτι ἔχει ἀμφιβολίες γιὰ τὴν ὑποστηριζομένη κάποια ἐπιρροὴ τοῦ Γρηγορίου Νύσσης ἐπὶ τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου, καταλήγει μὲ τὴν δήλωσιν ὅτι θεωρεῖ τὸ ὅλο πρόβλημα ὡς «μυστήριον». Διερωτᾶται μήπως ἦταν κάποιοι Ἀριστοτελιστὲς αὐτοὶ ποὺ ἐπηρέασαν τὸν Αὐγουστῖνο, ἀλλὰ δηλώνει ὅτι δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ὑποστηρίξει αὐτὴ τὴν λύση δεδομένου ὅτι ὁ Αὐγουστῖνος δὲν ἔξερε καλὰ ἑλληνικά, τὴν γλῶσσα στὴν ὁποίαν ἔγραψε ὁ Γρηγόριος.

Μὲ τὸ παρὸν ἄρθρο δίνουμε στὴν ἐπιστημονικὴ κοινότητα τὴν λύση τοῦ προβλήματος, ἢ ὁποία προκύπτει ἀπὸ τὰ κείμενα καὶ τὴν σύγκρισή των.

Ὡς γνωστόν, οἱ Καππαδόκες ἦσαν ἀπὸ τοὺς πιὸ θερμοὺς θαυμαστὲς τοῦ Ὁριγένη. Τὸ πρόβλημα μὲ αὐτοὺς εἶναι ὅτι υἱοθετοῦσαν καὶ χρησιμοποιοῦσαν τὶς ἀπόψεις του, ἀλλὰ ποτὲ δὲν ἀνέφεραν τὴν πηγὴ τους. Βεβαίως, μέχρι τὴν Ἀναγέννηση, ἡ λογοκλοπὴ ἐθεωρεῖτο ὡς μία τρέχουσα καὶ συμβατικὴ πρακτικὴ. Δὲν θεωροῦμε ὅμως αὐτὴ τὴν ἀπάντησιν ὡς ἱκανοποιητικὴ.



Μία σύγκριση τοῦ κειμένου τοῦ Βασιλείου ἀπὸ τὸ *Κατὰ Εὐνομίου*, δείχνει ὅτι ὁ Βασίλειος ἔχει ἀντιγράψει τὸν Ὁριγένη κατὰ λέξη. Σὲ ἄλλη ἐργασία ἔχουμε ἀποδείξει ὅτι ἡ εἰσαγωγή τοῦ ὅρου *συμπαρεκτείνεσθαι* στὴν ὁρολογία τῆς φιλοσοφίας τοῦ χρόνου ἀποτελεῖ μία ἀπὸ τὶς μέγιστες συμβολές τοῦ Ὁριγένη πρὸς τὴν κατεύθυνση διαμορφώσεως μιᾶς Χριστιανικῆς περὶ Χρόνου ἀντιλήψεως. Τὸν ὅρον αὐτὸν δανείζεται μία πλειάδα Χριστιανῶν συγγραφέων μετὰ τὸν Ὁριγένη (μέχρι τὸν 8ον αἰῶνα, ὁ Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός) — ἀλλὰ κανένας δὲν ἀναφέρει τὴν πηγή του.

Μὲ τὴν παροῦσα ἐργασία ἀποδεικνύουμε ὅτι δὲν ἦταν ὁ Βασίλειος, ἀλλὰ ὁ Ὁριγένης ἐκεῖνος ὁ ὁποῖος ἀποτελεῖ τὴν πηγή τῆς περὶ Χρόνου θεωρίας τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου. Τὰ προβλήματα, τὰ ὁποῖα τελικῶς δὲν μπόρεσε νὰ λύσει ὁ Callahan, ἤδη εὐρίσκουν τὴν λύση των. Τὸ πῶς ὁ Αὐγουστίνος ἦλθε σὲ ἐπαφὴ μὲ τὰ γραπτὰ τοῦ Ὁριγένη δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ εἶναι «μυστήριο». Κατὰ τὴν διάρκεια τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου (354-430) ὁ Ἱερώνυμος εἶχε μεταφράσει στὰ Λατινικὰ τὶς *Ὁμιλίες* στὸ *Ἄσμα τῶν Ἀσμάτων* (380) καὶ ὁ Ρουφῖνος εἶχε μεταφράσει τὸ *Σχόλιο* στὸ *Ἄσμα τῶν Ἀσμάτων* (400), τὸ *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* καὶ ἄλλα ἔργα τοῦ Ὁριγένη.

Ἡ παραβολὴ τῶν κειμένων ποὺ παραθέτουμε δείχνει ὅτι ὁ Βασίλειος (στὸ συγκεκριμένο ἀπόσπασμα) ἐπαναλαμβάνει κατὰ λέξη τὰ ὅσα εἶχε γράψει ὁ Ὁριγένης σὲ ἔργα τὰ ὁποῖα παραθέτουμε. Ἐπίσης, τὰ ὅσα ἀναφέρει ὁ Γρηγόριος Νύσσης ἀνευρίσκονται καὶ σὲ ἔργα τοῦ Ὁριγένη.

Βεβαίως, ὁ Ὁριγένης δὲν συνέθεσε ποτὲ μίαν *ad hoc* πραγματεία περὶ Χρόνου. Ἄλλοι ἦταν οἱ σκοποὶ γιὰ τοὺς ὁποίους ἔγραψε τὰ ἔργα του. Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ μία μελέτη τῆς περὶ Χρόνου ἀντιλήψεώς του εἶναι δυνατόν νὰ προκύψει μόνον μετὰ ἀπὸ μελέτη τοῦ συνόλου τοῦ ἔργου του.

Ὁ Αὐγουστίνος δὲν μποροῦσε νὰ διαβάσει τὸ σύνολο τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ Ὁριγένη, διότι δὲν ἔξερε ἑλληνικά. Αὐτὸ ἐξηγεῖ τὸ γεγονὸς ὅτι ἔχει κάνει ἐπιθέσεις κατὰ τοῦ Ὁριγένη ὀνομαστικῶς, κατηγορώντας τὸν ὅτι πίστευε ἀκριβῶς τὰ ἀντίθετα ἀπὸ ὅσα ὁ Ὁριγένης ὄντως ἐπίστευε. Ἀπλῶς, ὁ Αὐγουστίνος δὲν εἶχε διαβάσει τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ὁριγένη ὅπου ὁ τελευταῖος (φυσικὰ στὰ ἑλληνικά) ἐξέθετε τὶς αὐθεντικὲς τοῦ ἀπόψεις. Μερικὴ μελέτη τῶν ἔργων τοῦ Ὁριγένη δὲν μπορεῖ ποτὲ νὰ παράσχει τὶς αὐθεντικὲς ἀπόψεις του. Καὶ ἡ σχετικὴ μελέτη τοῦ Αὐγουστίνου ἦταν κάτι λιγώτερο ἀπὸ μερική. Ἔτσι δὲν κατανόησε πλήρως τί ἀκριβῶς ἐννοοῦσε ὁ Ὁριγένης ὅταν ὀνόμαζε τὸν χρόνο *διάσταση*. Καὶ δὲν τὸ ἔξερε διότι δὲν εἶχε διαβάσει τὰ ἔργα ὅπου ὁ Ὁριγένης ἐξηγεῖ τὴν *καθαρῶς φυσικὴ καὶ ριζικῶς ἀντι-Πλατωνικὴ* ἀντίληψή του περὶ τοῦ Χρόνου ὡς διαστάσεως.

Ὁ χρόνος, κατὰ τὸν Ὁριγένη, εἶναι ἓνα διάστημα, ἓνα συνεχές, συμπαρεκτεινόμενο μὲ τὴν δομὴ τοῦ κόσμου. Μία ἀντίληψη ἀκραιφνῶς φυσική.

Ὁ Αὐγουστῖνος ἤξερε μόνο τὴν «διάσταση» ἀλλὰ δὲν ἔμαθε ποτέ του τί εἶδους διάσταση εἶναι αὐτή. Διότι δὲν εἶχε διαβάσει οὔτε τὸ *Σχόλιο* στὴν *Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους Ἐπιστολή*, οὔτε τὰ *Σχόλια* στὶς *Παροιμίες*, οὔτε τὸ *Σχόλιο* εἰς τὸ *Κατὰ Ματθαῖον Εὐαγγέλιον*. Ἔτσι νομίζει ὅτι ἡ «διάσταση» αὐτὴ σχετίζεται μὲ τὴν «διάσταση ζωῆς» τοῦ Πλωτίνου (θεμελιώδη ἔννοια τῆς περὶ Χρόνου ἀντιλήψεώς του, ὅπως ἐκτίθεται στὶς *Ἐννεάδες*) — καὶ ἔτσι καταλήγει νὰ διαμορφώσει μία ἀντίληψη περὶ Χρόνου ἢ ὁποία ἦταν εὐρέως ἐπηρεασμένη ἀπὸ τὸν Νεοπλατωνισμό. Δὲν κατάλαβε ποτέ κατὰ ποῖον ἀκριβῶς τρόπο ὁ Χρόνος σχετίζεται μὲ τὴν *κίνηση*, κατὰ τὴν Χριστιανικὴ ἀντίληψη ποὺ εἰσήγαγε ὁ Ὁριγένης. Δὲν κατάλαβε ποτέ τὴν *φυσικὴ* περὶ Χρόνου ἀντίληψη τοῦ Ὁριγένη, καὶ ἔτσι φθάνει νὰ ὁμιλεῖ ἀκόμη καὶ γιὰ κάποιο εἶδος «ἀγγελικοῦ χρόνου» (κάτι ποὺ καὶ ὁ ἴδιος τελικῶς τὸ ἀφήνει ἀσαφές).

Τελικῶς, ἐκεῖνο ποὺ δὲν κατάλαβε εἶναι ὅτι, καὶ στὸ θέμα τοῦ Χρόνου, ὁ Ὁριγένης εἰσήγαγε ἀντιλήψεις βαθύτατα ριζοσπαστικὲς καὶ πρωτότυπες, οἱ ὁποῖες δημιούργησαν ἓνα βαθύτατο ρήγμα μὲ τὸν Πλατωνισμό καὶ ἀντιδιέστειλαν κατὰ τρόπο ριζικὸ τὴν (ἐντελῶς καινούργια) Χριστιανικὴ περὶ Χρόνου ἀντίληψη, τὴν ὁποία εἰσήγαγε ὁ Ὁριγένης, ἀπὸ κάθε ἄλλη περὶ Χρόνου ἀντίληψη.

Ἐκεῖνο τὸ ὁποῖο ἀποτελεῖ ἱστορικὴ εἰρωνεία εἶναι ὅτι ὁ Αὐγουστῖνος, παρ' ὅλο τὸν σαφὴ Νεοπλατωνισμό καιρίων ἀπόψεών του, θεωρεῖται ὡς ἐκπρόσωπος κάποιας «ὀρθοδοξίας» — ἐνῶ ὁ Ὁριγένης κατεδικάσθη ὡς «Πλατωνιστὴς» ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπους, οἱ ὁποῖοι οὐδέποτε ἔμαθαν, οὔτε ποτὲ ὑποψιάστηκαν, τὶς αὐθεντικὲς ἀπόψεις τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρινοῦ Χριστιανοῦ συγγραφέα.

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