

## THE AUTONOMY OF THE STOIC VIEW OF TIME

In treating the question of time it is a favorite generalization of scholars to speak of «Greek» conception of time, as if there were only one view of it. The fact is, however, that there was serious dissent and none the less intense controversy among the various Greek philosophical schools. Of the entire «Greek tradition», we shall mainly outline the Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic views of time, in order to purport that the Stoic conception was an autonomous one, quite independent from that of either Plato or Aristotle. For the reasoning of the Stoic view of time springs from entirely different premises. This is bound up with the entire Stoic philosophy and the study of this view of time *ipso facto* brings to the heart of this particular philosophy. For how thinkers conceive of time stands in harmony with their overall view of reality. This is of necessity consonant with their fundamental philosophical premises, with their conception of being, as well as with the methods and dialectics of enquiring into philosophical problems.

A certain view of time, therefore, is highly indicative of an entire philosophical outlook. In fact there is a mutual interconnectedness: not only a certain philosophical system determines its own concept of time. But also, a view of time plays, in the first place, a determining rôle in the formation of a general philosophical attitude.

The conception of time brings us to the core of a philosophy: how to live; what, if any, is the purpose of individual existence; how to face death; what might constitute the content of a possible hope; how, if at all, God is conceived of; the perception of the world and its purpose, if any; whether or not the world was created, and all the temporal implications that the notion of creation entails —those are all notions essentially bound up with the concept of time.

We shall examine in due course the interconnections between the Stoic view of time and the rest of the principal concepts of this philosophy. First though we should outline the other Greek conceptions of it, from which we purport that the Stoic one was different.

Plato's views of time have enjoyed a special interest, perhaps because of the mythological (and thus, ambiguous) form in which he deliberately



expressed his views, as well as because of the special attention that Christian theologians paid to them.

To Plato, time proper is something continuous and thus beyond the possibility of conceptual definition. To speak about «moment» is but a product of abstract reasoning; moment in itself is not actually time and it does not really exist<sup>1</sup>; for, if it existed, time would become static and the content of time would include the possibility of rest without motion and change. Time is not an aggregate of static «nows»; it is inherently related with change and motion. There can be no motion without time<sup>2</sup>.

Thus *time - motion - change* are so closely connected together that they cannot be understood independently from each other. This means that there is no time without motion and change. Subsequently, whatever is temporal is subject to motion and change.

Plato rejects the possibility of human comprehension of notions such as «beginning» or «end» of time<sup>3</sup>. Even the fact that God created time cannot be fully grasped: one can only have a vague idea of such a notion<sup>4</sup>. It is true though that he definitely repudiates the notion of time being without beginning.

Aristotle singles out Plato stating that, with the exception of Plato, all the philosophers are in agreement that time is uncreated<sup>5</sup>. But the purport of this «creation» according to Plato is but the idea that time appeared with the order which was set on the pre-existing «original matter». For indeed Plato, in tune with the general tradition of his day, rejects the idea of creation out of nothing. This, nevertheless, should be regarded as a question needing some further discussion, since it is Plato who, elsewhere, speaks of the «countless ages of the past<sup>6</sup>». Besides, he holds that Being is synonymous with Action, namely, the true existence is synonymous with its creative act, Substance is synonymous with Function<sup>7</sup>. God's perfection always compels him to act<sup>8</sup>, and he cannot be conceived of as being in the timeless eternity without exercising this creative ability. It is then beyond the human comprehensive ability to conceive what God did *before* he created the universe —if such a

1. PLATO, *Parmenides*, 156 d.

2. PLATO, *Parmenides*, 151 e ff; *Timaeus*, 38 a ff.

3. PLATO, *Timaeus*, 37 d ff.

4. PLATO, *Timaeus*, 38 d.

5. ARISTOTLE, *Physics*, 251 b 15 ff.

6. PLATO, *State*, 499 c.

7. PLATO, *Sophist*, 247 d; 248 c.

8. PLATO, *Timaeus*, 29 e ff.





notion could make any sense at all. For it is not really clear whether Plato held a temporal beginning of the world<sup>9</sup>.

In any event, it is true that he denied the existence of time in the original chaos, since time is denied to the irregular and, therefore, to the irrational motion of the chaos<sup>10</sup>. Time did come into being and this notion is stated in the celebrated passage of *Timaeus*:

«...When God the Father and Creator saw the creature... the created image... He rejoiced... and determined to make a copy... like the original... But to bestow the attribute (of the eternal) in its fullness upon a creature was impossible. Wherefore he resolved to have a moving image of eternity (εἰκὼ δ' ἐπινοεῖ κινητόν τινα αἰῶνος ποιῆσαι). And when he set in order the heavens, he made this image eternal but moving according to number (κατ' ἀριθμὸν ἰοῦσαν αἰώνιον εἰκόνα), while eternity itself rests in unity. And this image we call time<sup>11</sup>».

«Time, then, and the heavens came into being at the same instant in order that, having been created together, if there was ever to be a dissolution of them, they might be dissolved together. This (sc. time) was framed after the pattern of the eternal nature, in order that it might resemble this as much as possible (κατὰ τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς διαιωνίας φύσεως, ἵν' ὥς ὁμοιότατος αὐτῷ κατὰ δύναμιν ᾗ). For the pattern exists from eternity (τὸ μὲν γὰρ δὴ παράδειγμα πάντα αἰῶνά ἐστιν), whereas the created heaven has been, is, and will be, in all time. Such was the mind and thought of God when he created time<sup>12</sup>».

Aristotle treated the problem of time facing a vast extent of questions which are related to it<sup>13</sup>. At the outset he states that time could not be without change or motion<sup>14</sup>, because it is only through the different stages of

9. Since PLATO'S views in *Timaeus* are couched in an allegorical form, it is not surprising that even his closest disciples disagree and vastly differ in their opinions about the real meaning of *Timaeus*. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *De Caelo*, 280 a 20; 300 b 16; *Physics*, 251 b 17; *Metaphysics*, 1071 b 31; 1071 b 37; *De Anima*, 406 b 25 ff. ARISTOTLE clearly contrasts his views in *De Generatione et Corruptione*, 329 a 13. On this question there is further reference in SIMPLICIUS, *Commentary in Aristotle's Physics*, 488, 15; 489, 6; 489, 9; Alexander of APHRODISIAS, *Commentary in Aristotle's Physics*, 1091 a 27; PLUTARCH, *De Animae Procreatione in Timaeo*, III, 1; IV, 1; PHILOPONUS, *De Aeternitate Mundi*, VI, 8; VI, 21; VI, 27; VI, 31.

10. PLATO, *Timaeus*, 38 b.

11. PLATO, *Timaeus*, 37 c ff.

12. PLATO, *Timaeus*, 38 b; Aristotle rebuked Plato for having thought that time was created; Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Physics*, 251 b 16 ff.

13. ARISTOTLE, *Physics*, book IV, ch. 10-14 (217 b 29 - 224 a 16).

14. *Physics*, 218 b 22. Aristotle was criticised for his attempt to relate time to motion by





motion or change within our mind that we are able to conceive of time<sup>15</sup>. Although «fast» and «slow» are defined by time, time proper is something constant, because time is not defined by time<sup>16</sup>. Hence, although time is something related to motion or change<sup>17</sup>, it is itself something fundamentally different from motion and change proper:

«Clearly then it (sc. time) is not motion... But neither time exists without change... It is evident, then, that time is neither motion nor is it independent from motion<sup>18</sup>».

Thus time is a number or measure of motion (κινήσεως ἀριθμός)<sup>19</sup>, as well as the number (ἀριθμός) of motion with respect to our distinction between the «before» and the «after»<sup>20</sup>. As «everything that moves is in time<sup>21</sup>» and it is time which marks motion<sup>22</sup>, «time is what is counted and not that with which we count<sup>23</sup>».

To Aristotle then time is a number. To be «in time», therefore, means to be counted or measured by time<sup>24</sup>. Time in itself is continuous since this is an

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Strato of LAMPSACUS (also called the «Physicist»). He discusses this question in his work entitled *Περὶ Χρόνου* and perhaps in his *Περὶ Κινήσεως*, which are both lost. Cf. Diogenes LAERTIUS V, 59 ff; SIMPLICIUS (*op. cit.*, 965, 10); PROCLUS, *In Platonis Timaeum Commentarii*, 242 e ff. He was also criticised by Sextus EMPIRICUS (*Pyrrhonia*, III, 136 ff; *Adversus Mathematicos*, X, 176 ff.) and PLOTINUS (*Enneads*, III, 7 ff.).

15. *Physics*, 218 b 22 ff; 222 b 30 ff; 235 a 11.

16. *Physics*, 218 b 14 ff.

17. *Physics*, 219 a 1 ff; 218 b 22 ff; 236 b 20; 241 a 17; 251 b 11; 218 b 34.

18. *Physics*, 219 a 1 ff: «Ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὔτε κίνησις οὔτε ἄνευ κινήσεως ὁ χρόνος ἐστί, φανερόν». (It is evident, then, that time is neither motion nor is it independent from motion). *Physics*, 218 b 22: «Ὅτι μὲν τοίνυν οὐκ ἔστι κίνησις, φανερόν». (Clearly then it (sc. time) is not motion). *Physics*, 218 b 24: «Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' ἄνευ μεταβολῆς» (But neither time exists without change).

19. *Physics*, 221 b 8; 221 a 1; 251 b 10.

20. *Physics*, 219 a 13-34; 221 b 12-14; *De Caelo*, 279 a 14.

21. *Physics*, 223 b 31; 232 b 21; 236 b 20; 239 a 20 ff; 241 a 15.

22. *Physics*, 220 b 16.

23. *Physics*, 219 b 5 ff; 220 b 15; 221 a 1; 221 b 7; 221 b 11; 221b21; 221 b 25.

24. *Physics*, 221 a 3 ff: «καὶ ἐστὶ τῇ κινήσει τὸ ἐν χρόνῳ εἶναι τῷ μετρεῖσθαι τῷ χρόνῳ καὶ αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ εἶναι αὐτῆς». (To be in time means, for motion, that both it and its essence are measured by time). 221 a 8 ff: to be in time means one of two things: 1. to exist when time exists; 2. as we say of some things that they are «in number» ...or that things have a number. Things which are always (immutable and unchangeable), namely God, are not, as such, «in time». For they are not contained by time, nor is their being or existence measured by time (221 b 2). They are not «affected by time, which indicates that they are not in time» (221 b 5).

S. also 221 b 16; 221 b 21; Hence Aristotle distinguishes the infinite everlasting duration from eternity proper which is a «being above time».



attribute of what is continuous, namely, the number of motion<sup>25</sup>: this is a single, infinite and uniform «continuum»<sup>26</sup>.

Time is uncreated and it is infinite both in respect of its divisibility and its extremities<sup>27</sup>. Thus time has a uniformity of nature and «continues through its entire duration inalienably and without modification<sup>28</sup>»; it is always what it is, it is not *in* time and it is not contained by time, or measured by time, or affected by time<sup>29</sup>. Time is the everlasting duration itself.

Of the immediate disciples of Plato, it was Haestiaeus of Perinthus (of the so-called old Academy) who fully abided by his master's allegorical definition of time. He avers that «time is the course of the heavenly bodies in their relation to one another<sup>30</sup>». Speusippus, however, seems to follow Aristotle, as he defines time «the quantity within motion» (τὸ ἐν κινήσει ποσόν)<sup>31</sup>. Accordingly, Xenocrates defines time as «the measure of what has been created, as well as everlasting motion» (μέτρον τῶν γεννητῶν καὶ κίνησιν αἰδίου)<sup>32</sup>, which maintains the Platonic definition of time as *motion*, but is also in line with the Aristotelian view of time as *number*.

On the other hand, the followers of Aristotle, the Peripatetics, did abide by their master's definition of time<sup>33</sup> —perhaps because it was not allegorical and it was more concrete. Besides, it had a scientific character not susceptible of much controversy and different interpretations, as happened with Plato's views. Thus Theophrastus defends the notion of a universe without beginning or end, and similar views were expressed by Eudemus of Rhodes and Dicaearchus of Messina.

It was Strato of Lampsacus, however, who expounded his own views of time in an *ad hoc* treatise, challenging the Aristotelian definition of time in terms of number or motion as unsatisfactory, if not erroneous. He defines time

25. *Physics*, 220 a 24 ff. Cf. 219 a 10 ff; 219 b 9 ff; 233 a 14 ff.

26. Cf. Aristotle's views on the infinite divisibility of all quantities, including time: *Physics*, 227 a 10 ff; 231 a 21 ff; 232 a 23 ff; 233 b 15; 233 b 32 ff; 234 a 10 ff; 235 a 25; 237 a 10; 237 b 8; *De Generatione et Corruptione*, 317 a 2 ff; *De Caelo*, 306 b 22.

27. *Physics*, 233 a 18 ff. Cf. 233 a 25.

28. *De Caelo*, 279 a 22 ff.

29. *Physics*, 221 b 3 ff.

30. STOBÆUS, *Eclogue*, I, 250. About Haestiaeus of Perinthus cf. Diogenes LAERTIUS, III, 46.

31. PLUTARCH, *Questiones Platonicae*, VIII, 4, 3; this definition, however, is not clear as to whether time is the «number» of motion or the «measure» which is *in* motion.

32. STOBÆUS, *Eclogue*, I, 250.

33. SIMPLICIUS, *Commentary in Aristotle's Physics*, 411, 5 ff.



as «the quantity in all action» (τὸ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσι ποσόν)<sup>34</sup> and «the quantity of everything that is in motion and at rest» (τὸ ἐν κινήσει καὶ ἡρεμίας ποσόν)<sup>35</sup> and (μέτρον κινήσεως καὶ μονῆς)<sup>36</sup>.

This notion of *rest* is particularly interesting, since it was on this that Plotinus grounded his arguments against the connexion of time with motion, in his *Enneads* (III, 7, 8).

As regards the Epicurean attitude to the problem of time, we shall only briefly state that they generally were influenced by the Aristotelian view. They regarded time as a «sympton accompanying things in motion» (σύμπτωμα τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ παρακολούθημα κινήσεων)<sup>37</sup>, namely, a concomitant of motion.

We now come to the Stoic conception of time. According to the Stoics, time is in essence held to be an extension (διάστημα). This definition has enjoyed little attention. Also it has been inadequately comprehended. Some scholars<sup>38</sup> seem to be uncertain as to whether the Stoic definition of time should be regarded as nearer to that of either Plato or Aristotle, leaving this ambiguity unresolved. On the other hand, it is only after a short consideration that A. Chroust concludes that the Stoic definition of time was but an echo of the Aristotelian one<sup>39</sup>.

What we think is the flaw in the proper understanding of the Stoic definition of time is the crucial, indeed ontological, significance of the notion of *extension*, as we shall discuss presently.

In reference to the earliest Stoic view of time, Zeno's definition is extant in a passage which reads as follows:

«And Zeno has said that time is an extension of motion (κινήσεως διάστημα) and the criterion of fastness and slowness. And it is in time (κατὰ τοῦτον) that events occur and everything that becomes and all beings are<sup>40</sup>».

In another passage it is also stated that «...of the Stoics, Zeno [says] that time is in general the extension of any motion» (πάσης ἀπλῶς κινήσεως διάστημα)<sup>41</sup>.

34. SIMPLICIUS, *op. cit.*, 789, 34.

35. STOBÆUS, *Eclogue*, I, 250.

36. Sextus EMPIRICUS, *Pyrrhonia*, III, 137; *Adversus Mathematicos*, X, 228; X, 177.

37. STOBÆUS, *Eclogue*, I, 252.

38. J. RIST, *Stoic Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1969, pp. 273-4.

39. A. CHROUST, «The meaning of time in the ancient world», *The New Scholasticism*, XXI, 1947, p. 42.

40. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta (SVF)*, I, 26, 11-15; ap. STOBÆUS, *Ecl.*, I. 8.

41. *SVF*, I, 26, 14-15; ap. SIMPLICIUS, *ad Cat.* 80 a 4.





Chrysippus defines time as the «extension of the motion of the world<sup>42</sup>». Although this seems to be a more specific definition of time, compared to that of Zeno, this by no means lends itself to the assertion that it introduces an essential modification of Zeno's view<sup>43</sup>. For Zeno's original conception of time as extension remains here unchanged and is the kernel of Chrysippus' conception of time, too. Besides, there is at least one passage where Chrysippus' view is cited in disjunction from, or as an explanatory one, to Zeno's:

«And Chrysippus [says] that time is the extension of motion (κινήσεως διάστημα) and this is why it is sometimes said to be the measure of fastness or slowness; or [time] is the extension which closely attends the motion of the world and it is in time that everything is moving as well as being<sup>44</sup>».

It has been asserted that this definition in terms of its letter may be nearer Aristotle (who defined time as the measure or number of motion), but it is not impossible that the spirit of this definition be more related to that of Plato (who considered time as the moving image of eternity)<sup>45</sup>.

We do not see, however, why the Stoic conception and definition of time should by all means be associated with either that of Aristotle or of Plato. What we assert is that Zeno's conception is clearly a third view, at least in this respect: the Platonic definition of time is undoubtedly a metaphysical as well as a theological one, while that of Aristotle is a scientific and mathematical one.

To Zeno though time is neither something related to metaphysics in any way (for he was a materialist Stoic), nor is it considered as an intellectual mathematical perception, namely, a number or measure. Although he suggests that time may be «and a criterion of fastness and slowness», he clearly postulates the essence of time proper as an *extension*.

Thus time is associated with a natural reality (that is, motion) and is regarded in itself a natural reality, too: a sort of extension which is indispensable for motion to take place and to make sense. In his view, therefore, time is neither an *image* of a metaphysical reality, nor is it a mathematical conception, namely *number* or *measure*. Time is a sort of natural *extension*.

42. Διάστημα κοσμικῆς κινήσεως, SVF, II, 164, 14 ff.

43. As asserted by J. RIST, *op. cit.*, pp. 278 ff.

44. «Τὸ παρακολουθοῦν διάστημα τῇ τοῦ κόσμου κινήσει». SVF, II, 164, 15-18. This is how APPOLODORUS defines time, too: «Time is the extension of the motion of the world» (χρόνος δ' ἐστὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου κινήσεως διάστημα). SVF, III, 260, 18-19.

45. *Op. cit.*, pp. 273-4; RIST, anyway, states that he is not sure which definition ZENO'S should be considered as more closely related to.





The Platonic definition of time is grounded on a fundamental premise, which is the notion of *transcendence*. Whatever the interpretation of *Timaeus* at this point may be, there is one fact which cannot be disputed: the main point which Plato wished to make in his definition is the *similarity* of time to eternity (s. *supra*: «ἐν' ὡς ὁμοιότατος αὐτῷ κατὰ δύναμιν ἦ»). This, in the final analysis, implies the *dependence* of the temporal to the eternal, the dependence of the image to the archetype. It is true that Plato's views on the question of the beginning of the universe are somewhat vague and surrounded by controversy. This is so though only because he focused his main attention not to the problem of beginning, but to the point that the cosmos is originated and dependent on an absolute and supreme *transcendent cause*. This is the main notion expressed through the allegorical statements in *Timaeus*. If one would point out some contradictions in the statements concerning the notion of «beginning»<sup>46</sup>, this is due to Plato's main concern with the notion of dependence of the world on a supreme absolute transcendent cause, which left the notion of beginning in *Timaeus* as a second-class problem.

This background and dialectics are totally alien to the Stoic thought. For in Stoicism the notion of transcendence makes no sense at all. The Stoics firmly stick to the materiality of the world which is regarded as the «whole» (τὸ ὅλον)<sup>47</sup> —with nothing existing beyond the world. So the spirit of the Stoic definition of time can have nothing in common with the views of Plato.

On the other hand, the seeming similarity of the Stoic definition to the Aristotelian one does not actually constitute any affinity between them at all.

Once time is postulated as a number or measure of motion, it follows that time could not exist if there were no soul at all. On this point Aristotle is quite explicit: if there is no one to count, then there can be nothing to be counted —thus there could be no «number»<sup>48</sup>, even though motion proper

46. For example, he affirms the pre-existence of human being; cf. *Meno* 86 a; *State* 611 a; *Phaedrus* 245 d ff; *Phaedo* 75 c ff; 106 d; *Laws* 781 e. But since soul (which in itself is an *orderly* reality) has always existed, this means that orderly reality has *always* existed —which contradicts the statements that time was created when order was brought into the pre-existing chaos and the «original stuff».

47. *SVF*, II, 167, 8.

48. Cf. *Physics*, 223 a 16-35: «Πότερον δὲ μὴ οὐσης ψυχῆς εἴη ἂν ὁ χρόνος ἢ οὐ, ἀπορήσειεν ἂν τις· ἀδυνάτου γὰρ ὄντος εἶναι τοῦ ἀριθμήσοντος ἀδύνατον καὶ ἀριθμητόν τι εἶναι, ὥστε δῆλον ὅτι οὐδ' ἀριθμός· ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἢ τὸ ἡριθμημένον ἢ τὸ ἀριθμητόν. Εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ἄλλον πέφυκεν ἀριθμεῖν ἢ ψυχὴ καὶ ψυχῆς νοῦς, ἀδύνατον εἶναι χρόνον ψυχῆς μὴ οὐσης, ἀλλ' εἰ τοῦτο ὃ ποτε ὄν ἐστὶν ὁ χρόνος, οἶον εἰ ἐνδέχεται κίνησιν εἶναι ἄνευ ψυχῆς. Τὸ δὲ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον ἐν κινήσει ἐστὶν· χρόνος δὲ ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ἢ ἀριθμητὰ ἐστὶν».

This assertion of Aristotle has been hard to accept by many commentators, who have





could still make sense. For it is only the soul which is qualified to count. Without soul there is only motion. If there is only motion, but no possibility of counting, then this definition actually falls.

In Aristotle's definition there are two fundamental premises: First, motion. Second, the soul, who is the counting agent and renders a meaning upon number. Thus this definition of time is sound only if there are those two presuppositions, namely, the moving (or changing) object and the counting intelligent subject. As a matter of fact, this point raised no problems to Aristotle's theory of time<sup>49</sup>, since he held the notion of everlastingness of the world.

In Aristotle, therefore, what is of absolute ontological priority with respect to time is *motion*.

By contrast, to the Stoics the main ontological definition of time is *extension*. Time would be regarded *also as* a «measure», but this is just an additional property of it. This means that if time is not regarded as a measure, and if there is no one to count it, the Stoic definition of time does not fall—in contrast to what happens to the Aristotelian one.

The real point which stands behind this substantial difference is, we think, the Stoic doctrine of cosmic periods.

The Stoics, as well as Aristotle, held that time is *one* and it is a *continuum*. If, hypothetically, the Stoics held time proper to be in essence defined as number, then the end of each cosmic period could entail the end of time and the beginning of *another* time. Yet this is clearly rejected by them. For they all, especially Chrysippus, are quite explicit in that each new world begins and ends with a cosmic catastrophe, but time does not<sup>50</sup>. This means that time proper is an element of the world quite independent from whether

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sought to reinterpret the text. A list of interpretations is supplied by P.F. CONEN, *Die Zeittheorie des Aristoteles*, Munich 1964, pp. 156-69. In a perspicuous discussion he cites Simplicius, H. Carteron, W. Bröker, A.-J. Fegustiére and J. Moreau. R. Sorabji, on the other hand, simply takes it that Aristotle has made a mistake at this point, namely, in his assertion that where there exists no one to do the counting, there is no countability. (R. SORABJI, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, London, 1983, pp. 83-94).

We shall take Aristotle's words as they are clearly stated in *Physics* and shall not deal with the aforesaid discussion which is out of our scope.

49. Further, according to a testimony of Censorinus, Aristotle himself taught that mankind has been always. At any rate, Aristotle was quite clear in his view of the eternity of the world: man is the end of nature, and hence of the world, which itself is without beginning. Cf. F. HULTSCH, *Censorini, De Die Natali*, Leipsig, IV, 3, 1867.

50. Cf. PHILO, *De Aeternitate Mundi*, I, 33 ff: «...ὁ κόσμος... ὡς δοκεῖ τοῖς Στωϊκοῖς διῆκον ἄχρι ἐκπυρώσεως, οὐσία τις ἢ διακεκοσμημένη ἢ ἀδιακόσμητος, οὐ τῆς κινήσεως φασὶν εἶναι τὸν χρόνον διάστημα...».





the «substance» (οὐσία) which constitutes the world is «decorated» (διακοσμημένη, during the cosmic period) or «undecorated» (ἀδιακόσμητος, during the dissolution of the world). Time is *one* extension along which the alternations of his substance take place periodically.

Time is *one*, it is without beginning, indeed this is a continuum infinite in both directions. If time proper was defined as the number of the wordly (and thus: orderly, since there can be no number of motion in disorder) motion, this could entail that *this* present world is without beginning or end—an idea held by Aristotle, but totally unacceptable to the Stoics. Besides, in a general conflagration there are not souls to count motion, and yet time does exist and its continuity is maintained, too.

The conclusion out of this analysis is that if the Stoics accepted the Aristotelian definition of time, then fundamental premises of their philosophy (such as the notion of cosmic periods) could have no adequate ground. In short, the Aristotelian definition of time is essentially incompatible with fundamental Stoic doctrines. This is why time is in principle defined as an *extension*: a definition which can defy Aristotle's denial of successive worlds and does not necessarily presuppose an intelligent subject to count time (which is indispensable for the Aristotelian conception of time to make sense). To the Stoics, time may be regarded as *also* a «measure», not because time itself is a number, but because motion takes place *in* time, namely, in the *extension* which time proper is held to be. For it is not number, but it is *extension* what constitutes the fundamental ontological definition of time proper. Thus the occurrence of a cosmic catastrophe (which marks the end of a world and the beginning of the next) and the subsequent absence of an orderly motion, as well as of an intelligent subject capable of counting motion, does not put the Stoic definition of time in any question whatever. And this happens on account of the fact that the Stoic definition of time is radically different from that of Aristotle.

It is true that Aristotle refers to periods of time using the word *διάστημα*. There are, however, certain substantial differences:

Aristotle never allowed that *διάστημα* represents the ontological identity of time proper. To be the *number* of motion is one thing, but to be the *extension* of it is quite another. He used the term *διάστημα* in the everyday sense of «something which joins two points». In this sense, *διάστημα* may have an either temporal or spatial meaning. But on no account does this constitute a definition of time proper. Aristotle never took *διάστημα* to indicate time proper, as Zeno and Chrysippus did. For he held an entirely different view of the essence of time.

Aristotle, as well as Plato, could, like everybody else, use the





commonplace term of *διάστημα* to suggest *parts*, or periods, of time. But they never suggested that time *itself* is an extension. It was only the Stoics who explicitly defined *διάστημα* as indicating time proper ontologically. As a matter of fact, the portrayal of time as *διάστημα* is exactly what *moving image* is for Plato and *number* or measure is for Aristotle.

In Aristotle then *motion* stands in ontological priority to time. In contrast, to the Stoics the ontological definition of time is *extension*. Time may be *also* a measure, but this is an additional property, not the indispensable ontological quality of it.

It is clear, therefore, that the Stoic view of time, with respect to these of Plato and Aristotle, is grounded on an *autonomous* definition of time which is quite independent from either the Platonic or the Aristotelian one. Later it was Proclus who pointed out that the Stoic view is actually different from the views of time of either Plato or the Peripatetics<sup>51</sup>. In the extant passage though there is only his claim, but no argumentation for it. We cannot know whether or not Proclus distanced Plato's view of time on the grounds stated above. What we do know though is that scholars have not realized so far that the Stoic view of time is essentially independent from either the Platonic or Aristotelian one. This is why some of them opt for relating it to the Platonic views, others (H. Chroust) take it to be similar to those of Aristotle, whereas others (such as J. Rist) do not plump for either the former or the latter and leave the question moot.

To the Stoics (in contrast to Plato's views), *time - motion - change* are not intrinsically associated to the extent that they could not be understood independently from each other. It is true that the notion of *motion* is deeply involved with the early Stoic definition of time. Time proper, however, is by no means a reality dependent upon the notion of motion. The Stoic definition by no means entails that time cannot exist without motion. Such a conclusion could ensue from both the Platonic and Aristotelian definitions—but not from the Stoic one. A Stoic could never argue that there is no time in the absence of any notion of motion, which Plato and Aristotle did. Certainly the Stoics did concede that whatever is temporal is subject to motion and change; but on no account does this concession stem, as a necessary corollary, from their definition of time proper.

Among all the Greek definitions of time proper, it is solely the Stoic one in which the notion of motion is not ontologically indispensable for the very existence of time proper. This happens on account of the ontological priority of time to motion. This is actually the point of the critical relation of motion

51. *SVF*, II, 166, 6-10.



to time and this is how the involvement of motion with the definition of time should be viewed.

It is only in the Stoic thought that a *per impossibile* absence of motion does not necessarily entail the impossibility of existence of time proper. Certainly in that case the question which could be invited is what is the point for time to exist at all. This, however, is an *epistemological* question, perhaps a question pertaining to the meaning of time or to the *raison d'être* of it. But on no account is it an *ontological* question: which means that the hypothetical absence of motion does not of necessity extinguish the ontological ground for the existence of time proper. The discussion could perhaps invite the question of why in such a case time *should* exist—but there is no ground to support the claim that in that case time *could not* exist.

The nature of time is to be an extension *for* the motion of the world, yet the existence of time does not *depend* on this motion at all. Certainly to the Stoics the perpetual motion of the world is an unquestionable fact. Nevertheless they did not ground the existence of time proper on motion itself as, more or less, the rest of the Greek schools of thought did. It is rather the notion of motion which is dependent on that of time. Particularly in Zeno's definition, the concept of time is ontologically prior to the notion of motion—not vice versa. Time is the indispensable substratum for motion to take place, indeed to make sense at all.

The Stoic time as *διάστημα* (extension) is related to *διάστασις* (dimension) rather than to motion—albeit it could hardly be claimed that the Stoics in any respect anticipated the conception of time held by Modern Physics. Nevertheless, the radical difference between time as extension and these of time as either moving image or number, is quite obvious on the ground of this contradistinction: the Stoic is the case of a *static* time, as contrasted with the Platonic (as well as the Plotinian) *dynamic* notion and the Aristotelian abstract scientific mathematical perception of it.

There are assertions that neither the Pythagoreans nor the Stoics made an explicit part of their theory that time will be the *same* throughout successive aeons. Taking into account, for example, the Greek idea of the Great Year, it could be argued that, once this period comes round and the heavenly bodies return to their original alignements, then time comes to an end and starts again.

However, there is a point which has to be made against these assertions<sup>52</sup>. This argument is sound *only* if time is regarded as a *measure* or

52. Cf. R. SORABJI, *op.cit.* The author suggests that it was only with Eudemus that the idea that *time* will be the same was put forward (p. 184).



*number*, namely, in an Aristotelian sense. Once time is regarded as essentially being an *extension*, this argument is no more sound:

If time is but the number counting the years of a cosmic period, then certainly it will reach the number of years which comprise a cosmic period and then counting will have to *begin* again, which means that *another* time should start again.

In contrast, if time in its essence is regarded as an *extension*, there is nothing to suggest that this will *begin* again. This extension is simply infinite in both directions —as the Stoics explicated. We think that this is a main reason why they seem not to have dealt with the question of the *sameness*, or not, of time in the course of the world. They simply did not need to do so.

Much discussion has been made about *cyclicity* in speaking of either time or events<sup>53</sup>. It has been quite popular among scholars to speak about «cyclic» time and «rectilinear» time —the former regarded as the Greek conception of it. This notion of cyclicity enjoys much currency and use, perhaps because it provides a simplistic spatial figure of time. We regard, however, this distinction as most misleading for a proper comprehension of the problematique of time proper.

This notion of cyclicity could hardly make sense in any Greek school of thought. Even in Heracletus and the Stoics, one could not speak of *cyclic* events. At most one would speak about *periodic* events, which *re-cur* in normal periods of the infinite, linear, continuum of time. With regard to Plato, for instance, suggestions of «cyclicity»<sup>54</sup> have their counter-points in his works. In the *State*<sup>55</sup>, for example, he seems to suggest that some day in the future, the ideal State, which he portrayed, will materialize. It would be then very reasonable to assert that the portrayal of an occurrence lying in the indefinite future is a *τέλος* which implies a *linear* conception of time.

There is only one case, in which one might speak of cyclical time: that is, a *hypothetical* eclectic attitude, according to which the Stoic notion of successive worlds is upheld, while time is also regarded as a *number*, in an Aristotelian sense. At the end of a cosmic period, time will have to start again, because this will have reached the amount of years comprising the cosmic period and it will be no more possible for this number-time to increase further. Since the Aristotelian time is infinite (without any absolute

53. Cf. R. SORABJI, *op. cit.*, pp. 184 ff.

54. Cf. PLATO, *Timaeus*, 22 c ff., 23 a ff.

55. Cf. PLATO, *State*, 499 d: «περὶ τούτου ἔτοιμοι τῷ λόγῳ διαμάχεσθαι, ὡς γέγονεν ἡ εἰρημένη πολιτεία καὶ ἐστὶν καὶ γενήσεται γε, ὅταν αὕτη ἡ Μοῦσα πόλεως ἐγκρατὴς γενήσεται. οὐ γὰρ ἀδύνατος γενέσθαι, οὐδ' ἡμεῖς ἀδύνατα λέγομεν· χαλεπὰ δὲ καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ὁμολογεῖται». (Our italics).





beginning or end), the *counting* (of the *number*, which is time) will have to start again. Thus, there is no absolute beginning and time proper seems to be repeated in a cyclic scheme.

It is only in such a hypothetical case that one could speak of *cyclical* time: that is, an infinite series of counting up to a certain number, and then starting from the beginning counting all over again. Such an eclectic view of time, however, if ever any, never made a substantial mark in the Greek thought.

The very notion of *repetition* of events exactly implies a *distinction* of events, even if they are *structurally* identical from one cosmic period to another. Hence, the notion of cyclicity alleged as a universal Greek conception of time is absurd. As for Aristotle, he speaks of time as «something like a cycle<sup>56</sup>». It had been a gross mistake to take this phrase out of its context and allege that Aristotle suggested that time is «cyclical»; a mistake which clearly indicated that this text of the *Physics* had not been properly studied —anyway a mistake which we do not think is made nowadays<sup>57</sup>.

If one wishes to stick to this notion of cyclicity (albeit there is no reason to do so at all)<sup>58</sup>, he at best would speak of a *spiral* of space-time.

Thus it is due to the very conception of time as extension that the Stoics did not need to explicate their view that time is in essence *one* and the same throughout the successive aeons. Nevertheless, they did emphasize that time is a continuum which is not broken off during the destruction of a world. This point comes in support to our argument that the Stoic view of time is in its essence radically different from that of Aristotle.

We conclude, therefore, that there is an autonomous Stoic tradition on

56. ARISTOTLE, *Physics*, 223 b 28-29; cf. also 223 b 24-25; 223 b 31-33.

57. O. CULLMANN buttressed his assertions about what he calls «Greek» view of time on that point of Aristotle and refers to a number of scholars who treated the passage in the same way; cf. *Christ and Time*, (Greek tr. by P. COUMANTOS, Athens, 1980); p. 240, n. 3. Similarly, cf. H. C. PUECH, «Gnosis and Time», in *Man and Time*, Papers of the *Eranos Yearbooks*, (Vol. 3, 2nd print, Bollington Series, XXX, 3, Princeton, NJ, 1973); p. 42 and n. 6.

What Aristotle suggests is that time is not rectilinear but *curved*. Although not referring to Aristotle's view, T. Boman criticized Cullmann for asserting that time is «rectilinear» whereas astronomical time is always cyclic. Cf. T. BOMAN, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*, tr. by J. MOREAU, London, 1960, p. 162.

58. In fact the only reason is the insistence of certain theologians who find it convenient to posit a simplistic and misleading catch-all description of time as a «Greek» one, in order to make the point of a Hebraic and Christian «rectilinear» time. The issue of time, however, is not so simple and needs a more sophisticated treatment.





the conception of time (namely, on the particular question of *what* time proper *is*) which stands beside the Platonic and Aristotelian streams, being independent from either of them. Any attempt to associate the Stoic view with either the Aristotelian or the Platonic one could be pointless. The claim about any essential similarity between the Platonic or Aristotelian view of time on the one hand, and the Stoic one on the other, in fact implies that there is an essential dependence of the Stoic thought upon either the Platonic or the Aristotelian one. Such a claim virtually disputes the fact that Stoicism constitutes an independent and self-directing stream of thought. (It would be not only out of our scope, but also superfluous, to argue that this is not quite the case.) For it would be absurd to dispute the historical fact that Stoicism is quite independent from any other Greek school of thought; that it had its own momentum and its highly vigorous and influential presence in the spiritual environment and evolution of ideas —namely, into that which is usually described through the all-embracing expression «Greek thought».

Dr. Panayiotis TZAMALIKOS

## Η ΑΥΤΟΝΟΜΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΩΙΚΗΣ ΑΝΤΙΛΗΨΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ

### Περίληψη

Κατὰ τὴν διαπραγμάτευση τοῦ προβλήματος τοῦ Χρόνου ἀπὸ τοὺς διαφόρους μελετητές, συχνὰ ἡ γενικευμένη καὶ ἀπλουστευτικὴ ἔκφραση «Ἑλληνικὴ Σκέψη» χρησιμοποιεῖται γιὰ νὰ ἀποδώσει κατὰ τρόπο ἐνιαῖο ἀντιλήψεις Ἑλληνικῶν Σχολῶν οἱ ὁποῖες διαφέρουν ριζικὰ μεταξὺ των. Σὲ ὅ,τι ἀφορᾷ τὸ θέμα τοῦ Χρόνου, στὴν καλύτερη περίπτωσις ἐπισημαίνεται ἡ (προφανὴς ἄλλωστε) διαφορὰ μεταξὺ τῆς Πλατωνικῆς καὶ Ἀριστοτέλειας ἀντιλήψεως περὶ Χρόνου. Μέχρι σήμερα αὕτῃ ἡ διάκρισις εἶναι ἡ μόνη ποὺ γίνεται μέσα στὸ σύνολο τῶν Σχολῶν, οἱ ὁποῖες συλλήβδην ὀνομάζονται «Ἑλληνικὴ Σκέψη». Κάθε ἄλλη ἀντίληψη περὶ Χρόνου θεωρεῖται ὅτι σχετίζεται (ἢ, ὅτι πρέπει νὰ σχετίζεται) εἴτε μὲ τὴν Πλατωνικὴν εἴτε μὲ τὴν Ἀριστοτέλεια περὶ Χρόνου ἀντίληψη. Στὸ ἄρθρο αὐτὸ ἀποδεικνύεται ὅτι ἡ ἐλλιπὴς κατανόησις τῆς Στωικῆς ἀντιλήψεως περὶ Χρόνου εἶχε ὡς συνέπεια νὰ μὴν ἔχει γίνει (οὔτε σήμερα νὰ γίνεται) ἀντιληπτὸ ὅτι πρόκειται γιὰ μιὰν ἀποψη τελείως ἀνεξάρτητη ἀπὸ τὴν ἀντίστοιχη Πλατωνικὴν ἢ τὴν Ἀριστοτέλεια. Τοῦτο ὀφείλεται ἐπίσης στὸ





γεγονός ότι δεν έγινε αντιληπτός ο τρόπος με τον όποιον ή Στωική αντίληψη περί Χρόνου σχετίζεται με άλλες θεμελιώδεις πλευρές της όλης Στωικής φιλοσοφίας.

Στόν Πλάτωνα ή θεμελιώδης σύλληψη θεωρεί τον Χρόνο ως *εικόνα* (κινητή της αιωνιότητος), στόν δέ 'Αριστοτέλη ό Χρόνος κατά την ούσία του είναι *άριθμός* (της κινήσεως) και μέτρον (ταχύτητος και βραδύτητος). Σε αντιδιαστολή με αυτές τις δύο αντιλήψεις, οί Στωικοί θεωρούν τον Χρόνο ως *διάστημα*. Οί ούσιώδεις διαφορές στην όντολογική σύλληψη του *τί είναι* ό Χρόνος μπορούν να προκύψουν μόνον με μιá γενικότερη θεώρηση της θέσεως που έχει ή κάθε αντίληψη στην οικεία φιλοσοφία (Πλατωνική, Αριστοτέλεια, Στωική).

Η Πλατωνική θεώρηση στηρίζεται στην άποψη ότι ό Χρόνος καθ' έαυτόν συνιστά ένα στοιχείο *όμοιότητος* με μιάν υπερβατική πραγματικότητα. Τελικώς (και στο θέμα του χρόνου) υπαινίσσεται την θεμελιώδη άποψη περί έξαρτήσεως της έγχρονης από την άχρονική υπερβατική πραγματικότητα, έξαρτήσεως της εικόνας από το άρχέτυπο. Στόν Πλάτωνα, ή έννοια του χρόνου σχετίζεται με την θεμελιώδη αντίληψη ότι ό κόσμος (ως τάξη —δηλ. ως έγχρονη πραγματικότητα) προέρχεται από μιάν *υπερβατικήν αίτία* και έξαρτάται από αυτήν.

Μία τέτοια αντίληψη όμως είναι τελείως ξένη προς την Στωική σκέψη. Διότι εκεί ή έννοια της *υπερβατικής* πραγματικότητας δεν έχει καμία θέση. Το «όλον» είναι ό φυσικός κόσμος και δεν υπάρχει τίποτε πέρα από αυτόν. 'Ακόμη και ό θεός των Στωικών είναι ένδοκοσμικός.

Σε ό,τι αφορά τον 'Αριστοτέλη, ό χρόνος (ως άριθμός) υπάρχει σε στενό συσχετισμό με την ψυχή, ή όποία αποτελεί το λογικόν μετρούν υποκείμενο. Δεν νοείται ή ύπαρξη χρόνου (= άριθμού) χωρίς την ύπαρξη του μετρούντος υποκειμένου. Στόν 'Αριστοτέλη υπάρχει μία απόλυτη όντολογική προτεραιότητα της κινήσεως. Κίνηση και μετρούν υποκείμενο αποτελούν τις απαραίτητες προϋποθέσεις για να έχει νόημα ό όρισμός του χρόνου. Κατ' αντιδιαστολή, στους Στωικούς ή απόλυτη όντολογική προτεραιότητα αποδίδεται στόν χρόνο ως *διάστημα*.

Η διαφορά είναι ριζική, ούσιαστική και κρίσιμη, γίνεται δέ φανερή αν ληφθούν υπόψη οί αντίστοιχες αντιλήψεις για την *διάρκεια* του κόσμου. Για τους Στωικούς ό χρόνος είναι *ένας* και αποτελεί *συνεχές*. 'Εάν ό χρόνος ήταν κατά την ούσία του άριθμός, τότε κάθε διαδοχικός κόσμος θα είχε έναν *άλλο* χρόνο —αυτόν που θα προέκυπτε από την έξ αρχής *αρίθμηση* του χρόνου (αρίθμηση, ή όποία θα αποτελούσε και αυτήν την ούσία του). 'Αν αυτό το πρόβλημα δεν παρουσιάζεται στόν 'Αριστοτέλη είναι διότι, απλώς, εκείνος δεν πίστευε στις κοσμικές περιόδους: 'Ο κόσμος είναι *ένας* και έχει *άναρχη* και *άτελεύτητη* διάρκεια.





Ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ χρόνου ὡς διαστήματος προσδίδει στήν Στωικὴν ἀντίληψη μιὰν ἰδιαιτερότητα σὲ σχέση μεῖ ὅλες τὶς ἄλλες σχολές (ὄχι μόνο Πλατωνισμό, Νεοπλατωνισμό καὶ Ἀριστοτελισμό, ἀλλὰ ἀκόμη καὶ Ἐπικούρειους, ἀκόμη καὶ τὸν Σκεπτικὸ Σέξτο τὸν Ἐμπειρικό): Ὁ χρόνος δὲν ἐξαρτᾶται ἀπὸ τὴν κίνηση (καὶ ἀλλαγὴ) ἐξ ὁρισμοῦ (ποὺ σημαίνει ἀπὸ ὄντολογικὴν ἀναγκαιότητα). Ὑπάρχει (ἰδίως στὸν Ζήνωνα) μία ὄντολογικὴ προτεραιότητα τοῦ χρόνου σὲ σχέση μετὰ τὴν ἔννοια τῆς κινήσεως. Ὁ χρόνος ὑπάρχει γιὰ τὴν κίνηση, ὁ χρόνος ὑπάρχει γιὰ νὰ μπορεῖ νὰ ὑπάρχει ἡ κίνηση, ὡς ἔννοια καὶ ὡς πραγματικότητα.

Ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ διαστήματος συσχετίζει τὸν χρόνο μᾶλλον μετὰ τὴν ἔννοια τῆς διαστάσεως, παρὰ μετὰ τὴν ἔννοια τῆς (Πλατωνικῆς) «κινήτης εἰκόνας» ἢ τοῦ (Ἀριστοτελικοῦ) «ἀριθμοῦ» καὶ «μέτρου». Βεβαίως οἱ Στωικοὶ δὲν ἀρνοῦνται τὴν σχέση τῆς κινήσεως μετὰ τὸν χρόνο. Ἡ διαφορὰ τους ὅμως ἀπὸ ὅλους τοὺς ἄλλους εἶναι ὅτι ἡ ἐπὶ κλήση αὐτῆς τῆς σχέσεως οὐδόλως τοὺς εἶναι ἀναγκαῖα κατὰ τὴν συζήτηση περὶ τῆς ὄντολογίας τοῦ χρόνου. Καὶ τοῦτο ὀφείλεται στὸ ὅτι ἡ περὶ Χρόνου ἀντίληψή των ἦταν ριζικὰ διαφορετικὴ ἀπὸ ἐκεῖνες ὅλων τῶν ἄλλων σχολῶν.

Τέλος, ὁ εὐρέως διαδεδομένος χαρακτηρισμὸς τοῦ (λεγόμενου) «Ἑλληνικοῦ» χρόνου ὡς «κυκλικοῦ» ἀποτελεῖ ἓνα λάθος, τὸ ὁποῖο προέκυψε ἀπὸ παλαιότερη ἐσφαλμένη ἀνάγνωση τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλη καὶ παρεξήγηση τῆς Στωικῆς ἀντιλήψεως περὶ τῶν διαδοχικῶν κοσμικῶν περιόδων. Ἡ Στωικὴ ἔννοια τῆς ἐπαναλήψεως τῶν γεγονότων, αὐτὴ καθ' ἑαυτήν, ἀκριβῶς σημαίνει διάκριση τῶν γεγονότων, ἔστω καὶ ἂν αὐτὰ εἶναι κατὰ τὴν δομὴ των ἀπαράλλακτα. Ὑπάρχει ἐπ-ανά-ληψη γεγονότων στὸ ἄπειρο γραμμικὸ συνεχὲς τοῦ χρόνου —ἀλλὰ ὄχι ἐπανάληψη τοῦ χρόνου καθ' ἑαυτόν. Ἡ ἔννοια «ἐπανάληψη τοῦ χρόνου καθ' ἑαυτόν» δὲν ἔχει κανένα νόημα, οὔτε τὴν ἐπικαλεῖται κανεὶς Ἕλληνας· γι' αὐτὸ καὶ ἡ ἀναφορὰ σὲ κάποιον Ἑλληνικὸ «κυκλικὸ» χρόνο δείχνει ἀπλῶς ἄγνοια τῆς προβληματικῆς τοῦ χρόνου καθ' ἑαυτόν καὶ εἶναι μία ἀκόμη ἐκδήλωση τῆς ἀπλοϊκῆς «χωρικῆς» ἀντιλήψεως τοῦ χρόνου.

Ἀλλὰ ὁ χρόνος εἶναι χρόνος καὶ ὄχι χῶρος, παρὰ τὴν στενὴ καὶ ἀδιαίρετη σύζευξή του μετὰ τὸ χῶρο. Ἡ λανθασμένη ἀναφορὰ σὲ κάποιον Ἑλληνικὸ «κυκλικὸ» χρόνο εὐρῆκε πρόσφορο ἔδαφος σὲ Χριστιανοὺς θεολόγους (ὅπως οἱ O. Cullmann, H. C. Puech, κ.ἄ.). Ὁ σκοπὸς τους εἶναι ἡ ἀντιδιαστολὴ αὐτοῦ ποὺ ἐσφαλμένως θεωροῦν ὡς «Ἑλληνικὴ» ἀντίληψη ἀπὸ τὴν Χριστιανικὴ σκέψη, γιὰ λόγους καθαρὰ δογματικούς (καὶ οὐδόλως σχετιζομένους μετὰ τὴν οὐσία τοῦ χρόνου, ὡς χρόνου). Τὸ πρόβλημα μετὰ αὐτοὺς εἶναι ὅτι γενικῶς δὲν γνωρίζουν τὴν προβληματικὴ τοῦ Χρόνου καθ' ἑαυτόν (ὁ Cullmann τονίζει μετὰ ἔμφαση ὅτι θέλουν νὰ τὴν





ἀγνοοῦν· ἡ πραγματικότητα εἶναι ὅτι οὕτως ἢ ἄλλως οὐδόλως τὴν γνωρίζουν).

Ἡ Στωικὴ ἀντίληψη (παρὰ τὸ δόγμα περὶ τῶν κοσμικῶν περιόδων) διατηρεῖ τὴν ἔννοια τῆς γραμμικότητας τοῦ χρόνου. Ἐὰν ἔπρεπε ὁπωσδήποτε ἡ ἐπανάληψη τῶν γεγονότων νὰ θεωρηθεῖ ὡς εἰσάγουσα ἓνα στοιχεῖο κυκλικότητας (ἀπὸ μιὰν ἐπίμονη, ἀλλὰ ἄνευ οὐσιαστικοῦ νοήματος, ἀπαίτηση γιὰ ὄρισμὸ ἐνὸς «σχήματος» χρόνου, κατὰ μία «χωρικὴν» ἀντίληψή του), τότε ὁ Στωικὸς χρόνος θὰ ἀπεικονίζετο μὲ μιὰν ἑλικά (spiral). Ἀλλά, ἀκόμη καὶ σὲ μιὰ τέτοια περίπτωση, αὐτὸς παραμένει οὐσιαστικὰ χρόνος γραμμικὸς καὶ ἀπειρομήκης κατὰ τὶς δύο κατευθύνσεις του, δηλαδὴ τὸ παρελθὸν καὶ τὸ μέλλον.

Τὸ συμπέρασμα εἶναι ὅτι ἡ Στωικὴ περὶ χρόνου ἀντίληψη εἶναι τελείως ἀνεξάρτητη τόσο ἀπὸ τὴν Πλατωνικὴ ὅσο καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀριστοτέλεια. Δεδομένου ὅτι, γενικῶς, ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ χρόνου ἐκφράζει καὶ συνοψίζει σχεδὸν τὸ σύνολο τῶν ἐπὶ μέρους πλευρῶν μιᾶς φιλοσοφίας, ἡ συγκεκριμένη Στωικὴ ἄποψη θὰ ἀνεμένετο νὰ προκύπτει ἀπὸ τὶς γενικότερες διαφορὲς τοῦ Στωικισμοῦ γενικότερα ἀπὸ τὸν Πλατωνισμὸ καὶ Ἀριστοτελισμό. Καί, πράγματι, ἡ ἀνεξαρτησία καὶ πρωτοτυπία τῆς Στωικῆς ἀντιλήψεως περὶ Χρόνου ἀκριβῶς ἐκφράζει καὶ ὀφείλεται στὴν ἀνεξαρτησία καὶ πρωτοτυπία τῆς Στωικῆς Σκέψεως, ὡς συνόλου.

Δρ Παναγιώτης ΤΖΑΜΑΛΙΚΟΣ

