

**ASPECTS OF THE METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS
AND COSMOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS
OF THE CONCEPT OF "TIME" IN
PROCLUS THE NEOPLATONIS**

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Abstract: *In this article I am discussing the concept of "time" in Proclus' treatise entitled The Elements of Theology. The article is divided into eight sections, in which "time" as a cosmological state is approached in relation to the metaphysical self-constituted, aeon, the Soul and motion.*

Key-words: *Proclus, time, The Elements of Theology, aeon, soul.*

Introduction

In the ontological –and, principally, from a cosmological point of view– system of Proclus the Neoplatonist philosopher (412-485) the concept of "time" is one of the main topics approached in a variety of ways. It is mainly connected with questions which have to do with the production and development of the sensible world as well as those metaphysical factors that, as archetypes, perpetually define the principles in which it is regulated and the forms in which the nature of the sensible beings appears, which is subject to development and change. This perpetuality will be preserved until they complete the teleological plan for which they were created. Proclus elaborates his theories on time in mostly three of his works; in *Institutio theologica*, where, since he considers time as a basic ontological category, he investigates it in the sense of the stable forms-principles in which it appears, as well as in view of the general processes that it establishes for natural evolution. In his *Commentary on the Parmenides*, where he discusses the metaphysical archetypes of time, namely the stable grounds as well as the requirements which define the modes of its creative functions and interventions.¹ In his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, where he approaches time as a necessary and stable requirement for the development of the natural world, that is to say as being related to the active mode of presence and the formation or self-formation terms of

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¹ Cf. *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, trans. Glenn Morrow and John Dillon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 1212.39-1238.17.

matter and its elements according to the conditions which have been given to it.² So, in the first treatise he investigates time from an epistemological point of view, in the second one in the light of the metaphysical plans which aeon defines and in the third work as an expression – actually a major one – of the metaphysics of immanence.

In this article we shall systematically process all that is concluded in Proclus' *Institutio theologica* [hereafter denoted as *Inst*]. We strongly believe that it is epistemologically required to focus on these three works since there is a special principal-view extending in every one of them that imposes its mark and, at the same time, shapes the theoretical context where everything is analytically developed in the articulation of its contents. This distinction does not implied, nonetheless, that the Neoplatonic philosopher neglects the unity of his own relevant views about time, as in any case his general aim is to bring out a holistic system on every theoretical level. However, he treats each of his theoretical targets through a succession of individual research stages. So, in this case, he clearly outlines that his thought is developed in three stages, which are diligently and intentionally defined for the purposes of each of his works, leading to an excellent geometrical "illustration" of individual theoretical quests. So, we shall subsequently examine time, integrated in a quasi-theory of cosmological categories, namely under a general approach.

Metaphysical self-constituted and time

For the first time in his *Inst* Proclus investigates the concept of "time", and more specifically in the chapter where he develops his theory of *self-constituted*, namely of those metaphysical divine entities which activate, in a targeted way, all the ontological gifts provided by the superior Cause, the "One", as well as by their superior entities, and are self-constituted.³ The inclusion of time in this theory serves as an argumentation a contrario. Specifically, it reinforces the Neoplatonic philosopher's attempt to underline and justify the notion—as well the how and why—the divine and self-constituted beings permanently preserve an undiminished and unaltered character and are not being subjected to the definitions and the restrictions of temporal evolution. His intention is in accordance with the non-negotiable principle of his system about ontological and evaluative separations between the divine and the sensible things, that is, between eternity and changeability, among being and becoming.⁴ It is, at the same time, about

² Cf. *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, ed. Ernst Diehl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1906), I, 362.9-14, 427.25-428.20; III, 9.2-28, 21.6-32, 92.13-23 and especially the second book of the *Commentary* mentioned above.

³ Cf. *Inst* [Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, ed. Eric Robertson Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963)], 40-51, 42.8-50.6, 223-27; Jean Trouillard, *L'un et l'âme selon Proclus* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1972), 76-77. It should be noted that Proclus thinks that self-constituted are divine entities which correspond to the categories of the second hypothesis of the Platonic dialogue *Parmenides*, according to the post-interpretive Neoplatonic reading or approach. These entities are hierarchical with each other and each superior gives to its immediately inferior elements that the latter utilizes and thus participates in the formation of itself, that is, to a certain extent it operates under the conditions of self-causation.

⁴ See *Theol. Plat.* [Proclus, *Théologie Platonicienne*, Vol. I–VI, eds. Henri Dominique Saffrey and Leendert Gerrit Westerink (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968–1997)], 50.6-12, 57.12-20. These are passag-

an application and a specialised extension of the prominent Neoplatonic relationship of the one with the multitude, which serves the purpose of perpetually preserving an ontological substratum in the permanence of its originality, at a time when the sensible world is in a long and dramatic process of development and formation. It is about a cosmic expansion that is certainly associated with the corruption of individual body formations. At the same time however, the perpetuity of the sensible world precludes the possibility of leading itself to the vastness of the unordered infinity, to the flow of formations and to the chaos of absolute inhomogeneity.⁵

So, in the beginning of his elaboration, Proclus contends that time has measurement properties of an intervening character, with the result that everything that is subject to its measurement exists and acts invariably, according to the fixed principles that it defines as a quasi-archetypal measure.⁶ In this light it is obvious that time is not perceived as a subsequent property nor as a simple descriptive category, but as an ontological possibility and condition for the emergence of natural beings into being in a certain way, but neither materialistic nor constructive. Thus, since time -under its evolutionary prism- is considered as a difference between the past and the future, anything temporal must be viewed in the light of this difference. "Εἰ γὰρ ὑπὸ χρόνου μετρεῖται, προσήκοι ἂν αὐτῷ τὸ κατὰ χρόνον εἶναι ἢ ἐνεργεῖν, καὶ τὸ ἦν καὶ τὸ ἔσται διαφέροντα ἀλλήλων".⁷ The exact opposite occurs in the case of the aeon (eternity), where the past and the future are numerically identical, or do not differ in their numerical measurement. Therefore, the terms of succession here are used by technical analogy and are unaffected by time, which, on the one hand, is mainly characterised by the course of proceeding and differentiating and, on the other hand, contains -in the light of their succeeding one another - a distinguishable 'prior' and 'posterior'.⁸ By extensions, if the past and the future are expressions of an ongoing differentiation, what is subject to their succession is becoming (γιγνόμενον) and in no way has the characteristics of the true being, that is, of the eternal and the undiminished. "Εἰ οὖν ἄλλο τὸ ἦν καὶ ἄλλο τὸ ἔσται, γινόμενον ἄρα ἐστὶ καὶ οὐδέποτε ὄν".⁹

es that belong to chapters referring to the interpretation of the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*. In fact, in the first, reference is made to the individual souls, who live according to time, and to the natural beings who participate in it.

⁵ See *Inst*, 1-6, 2.1-6.30. compare also Dodds, *Proclus' The Elements of Theology*, 187-93. *Theol. Plat.* II, 3.6-30.26. In his above-mentioned texts Proclus undertakes to prove the objective presence of the *One-Good* and that this supreme Principle is the absolute condition for the formation and development of the metaphysical and the natural world.

⁶ See *Inst*, 50, 48.16-17: "Πᾶν τὸ χρόνω μετρούμενον ἢ κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν γένεσις ἐστὶ ταύτη, ἢ μετρεῖται κατὰ χρόνον".

⁷ See *Inst*, 50, 48.18-20: "Εἰ γὰρ ὑπὸ χρόνου μετρεῖται, προσήκοι ἂν αὐτῷ τὸ κατὰ χρόνον εἶναι ἢ ἐνεργεῖν, καὶ τὸ ἦν καὶ τὸ ἔσται διαφέροντα ἀλλήλων".

⁸ See *Inst*, 50, 48.20-22: "Εἰ γὰρ ταυτὸν κατὰ ἀριθμὸν τὸ ἦν καὶ τὸ ἔσται, οὐδὲν ὑπὸ χρόνου πέπονθε πορευομένου καὶ αἰεὶ ἄλλο τὸ πρότερον ἔχοντος καὶ τὸ ὕστερον".

⁹ See *Inst*, 50, 48.22-23.

The above clarification means that, whatever is becoming coexists with time -by which it is measured-, that it exists and is subject to the process of becoming, that it is not ontologically steadfast and lacks existential permanence. Furthermore, that, in its existential-genetic or developmental-cycle, it always accepts new definitions of its composition, presence and function, in the sense that the temporal "now" is always different from its predecessors and its successors due to temporal progression. This procession contributes to its diverse changeability in the space of a quasi-mechanistic -in terms of its repetitive laws-universe. Therefore, it is not possible for the being to strictly exist as a simultaneous whole in its various moments, but has inevitably a, so to speak, dispersed existence of temporal duration, extended with it as long as its life lasts. Hence, as non-self-sufficient it possesses existence in non-being, since that which is coming-to-be during its gradual development is not that which is to become and does not possess it, at least in a prior active status. All this growth potential therefore, is called generation.¹⁰ Indirectly, it becomes obvious that interactions between the produced beings or between the fields of matter will be determined by the changes or variables of time, which, however, follow standard regularities.

The views expressed lead to the conclusion that all that is self-constituted, by being non-generated and a cause of itself, transcends the property of time to measure. On the other hand, generation, as a process of emergence into being, holds an application only for those natural states which can be measured by time.¹¹ By extension, to underline the ontological distinctions between the two worlds, none of the self-constituted develops its subsistence within the temporal developments. "Οὐδὲν ἄρα τῶν ἀθυποστάτων ἐν χρόνῳ ὑφέστηκεν".¹² Therefore, at least with the data so far, any form of evolution is excluded from the metaphysical order; and there is still a pending question of whether its composition is justified in terms of a static ontological model,¹³ a status that certainly would not be without consequences for the perspective of the meeting of the hyperempirical with the empirical. How would the static therefore proceed to creative manifestations?

¹⁰ See *Inst*, 50, 48.23-30: "...οὐχ ἅμα ἅρα ὅλον ἐστίν, ἐν τῷ σκιδναμένῳ τῆς χρονικῆς παρατάσεως ὄν, καὶ συνεκτεινόμενον...".

¹¹ See, *Inst*, 51, 50.4-5: "γένεσις γὰρ περὶ τὴν ὑπὸ χρόνου μετρούμενην φύσιν ἐστίν".

¹² See, *Inst*, 51, 50.5-6; compare to: Jean Trouillard, "Procession néoplatonicienne et création Judéo-Chrétienne". *Néoplatonisme, mélanges offerts à Jean Trouillard, Les Cahiers de Fontenay* 16, 22 (1981): 16-22.

¹³ Dodds, *Proclus' The Elements of Theology*, 236-237, commenting on Proclus's views, notes: "The self-constituted is without beginning or end in time; but this must not exclude the possibility of it having a temporal history – otherwise the human soul, which enters into the time-series, will not be self-constituted, and the proof of immortality will be *manqué*. Accordingly, Proclus introduces here the distinction between temporal existence and temporal activity: the concept of the self-constituted excludes the former, but not necessarily the latter". This is a subject addressed in *Commentary of Proclus in the Platonic dialogue Alcibiades I* [cf. note 42, *infra*] where the human soul is defined as the human self for each individual and has metaphysical characteristics, as long as its temporal action is not influenced by any conditions of animosity.

Αἰὼν and Time: general framework of relations-differences

Proclus, immediately afterwards, examines the relationship between time and the aeon (*αἰών*). Processing his previous thoughts, he observes that all that is eternal, is a simultaneous whole in its essence and that its existence is simultaneously present in its entirety, not being submitted to any substantive development of its *hypostasis*, in the sense that it does not acquire any attributes it did not possess before. Thus, it is not subject to quantitative fluctuations, maintaining -as a result- its metaphysical stability without alterations.¹⁴ It is, therefore, capable of appearing with a specific ontological representation that it already possesses since its foundation. "Ὅποσον εἶναι δύναται, τοσοῦτον ὄλον ἤδη κεκτημένον ἀνελαττώτως καὶ ἀνεπιτάτως".¹⁵ The philosopher also notes that an eternal being has the whole of its essence and energy present to itself, that is simultaneously entire too and steadfast in an unvarying measure of completeness. Moreover, this ontological unity is not only a given, but its energy has constantly one unchanging outline, under the conditions of its essence, without movement or transition.¹⁶

At this point, however, an ontogenetic issue rearises in our opinion, resulting from the presence of an energy that is immovable and intransitive. If such form of energy exists, it becomes rather problematic to explain and to justify not only the process but also the outcome of production. Accepting, at least for now, that at this point Proclus treats the ontological situations in terms of their rigidly bounded and absolute state -on the basis of the distinction between the two worlds- and that his concern is exhausted to the delimitation and concretization of the fields, we are once again led -along with him- to the conclusion that there is no evolution in the nature of eternal beings. Hence at this point "is" (*ἐστὶ*) dominates whereas there is no "was" (*ἦν*) nor will "be" (*ἔσται*), neither an earlier nor a later, both in terms of substance and in terms of energy.¹⁷ This is about the 'aeon' (*αἰών*) or the 'eternal being' (*ἀεὶ ὄν*) which is the cause of the existence of every eternal being which in essence or in energy, has the whole of its essence or energy present to itself. "Τοῦ ὄλοις εἶναι ὁ αἰὼν αἴτιος, εἴπερ πᾶν τὸ αἰώνιον ἢ κατ' οὐσίαν ἢ κατ' ἐνέργειαν ὄλην ἅμα τὴν οὐσίαν ἢ τὴν ἐνέργειαν

¹⁴ See, *Inst*, 52, 50.7-10: "Πᾶν τὸ αἰώνιον ὄλον ἅμα ἐστίν' εἴτε τὴν οὐσίαν ἔχει μόνον αἰώνιον, ὄλην ἅμα παροῦσαν αὐτὴν ἔχον, καὶ οὐ τὸ μὲν αὐτῆς ὑποστάν ἤδη, τὸ δὲ εἰσαῦθις ὑποστησόμενον, ὃ μήπω ἐστίν". Cf. Jean Trouillard, "La procession du temps selon Proclus", *Diotima* 4 (1976): 104.

¹⁵ *Inst*, 52, 50.10-11.

¹⁶ See *Inst*, 52, 50.11-14.

¹⁷ See *Inst*, 52, 50.15-20: "...τὸ εἶναι μόνον ὃ ἐστίν, ὄλον ἅμα ἐστίν ἕκαστον ὃ ἐστίν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐνεργεῖν". William O' Neill, "Time and Eternity in Proclus", *Phronesis* 7, 2 (1962): 161-62, notes: "In the *Elements of Theology*, Proclus goes somewhat deeper and posits an eternity before all things eternal, a time prior to all things temporal. Eternity is cause of things existing and acting as simultaneous wholes. Time is either the perpetual duration of things that ever come-to-be or the limited duration of things that come-to-be only for a while". The above scholar bases his reference on propositions 2-5 of the *Elements of Theology*, but they obviously have a wider application as expressions of the way the two worlds exist.

ἔχει παροῦσαν αὐτῶ¹⁸. We should note that with αὐτῶ not only immanence is implied but, also, initial acquisition.

Αἰὼν and Time in the light of the relation of terms: unparticipated (ἀμέθεκτον) and participated (μεθεκτόν)

Then the Neoplatonic thinker uses his triadic dialectical scheme of production: unparticipated (ἀμέθεκτον) - participated (μεθεκτόν) - participating (μετέχον).¹⁹ By applying, therefore, the hierarchies and successions defined by this scheme, he notes that eternity per se is unparticipated, but eternity –as a general determinative category- that exists in every eternal thing is participated, and every eternal thing itself -as a specific and delimited metaphysical substance- is participating. Similarly, he identifies the same relations in the field of all beings subject to time. Thus, "καὶ τὸ ἔγχρονον ἄλλο (μετέχον γάρ), καὶ ὁ ἐν τούτῳ χρόνος ἄλλος (μετεχόμενος γάρ), καὶ ὁ πρὸ τούτου χρόνος, ἀμέθεκτος ὢν".²⁰ So, both unparticipated eternity and unparticipated time are present everywhere and in all members of their order -and obviously in their related inferiors- without altering their being. While participated, as secondary archetypes, are the ones that are participated in by something, a presence that leads to the thought that specific aspects of the "one-multitude" relation are being developed, in the form of the emanation and immanence of a property –or of a specific combination of properties– in a sequence of similar things or states. And this version is reinforced by the following view of Proclus, that eternal things are many, and likewise the temporal; eternity exists prior (προὔπαρχει) to all eternal things by participation (κατὰ μέθεξιν) and time has subsisted (προὔφεστηκεν) before all things in time. The undivided eternity, as the eternity of eternities and the one time, as the time of times, constitute the productive –and eternally generating– causes of the participated terms.²¹

¹⁸ See *Inst*, 52, 50.21-23. In his comments Dodds, *Proclus' The Elements of Theology*, 227-28, mentions the Platonic (*Timaeus*, 37e and *Parmenides* 154a-155c) the Aristotelian (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1154b27) and the Plotinian (*Enneads* III, VII, 4) sources of Proclus's theories of the eternal substance and the eternal energy respectively. On the concept of "time" in the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition, cf. Rémi Brague, *Du temps chez Platon et Aristote* (Paris: P.U.F., 1982).

¹⁹ See *Inst*, 23-24, 26.22-28.20.

²⁰ See *Inst*, 53, 50.26-52.1.

²¹ See *Inst*, 53, 52.1-7. See also Trouillard, "La procession du temps selon Proclus", 104-105. Dodds, *Proclus' The Elements of Theology*, 228, notes: "Time and eternity are here treated not as modes of the spirit but as substantive principles having, like other spiritual substances, both an immanent and a transcendent existence. In this Proclus deserts the sober and penetrating analysis of Plotinus, who regards eternity as a *διάθεσις* of the Real, and time as the formal aspect of the activity of Soul, 'the form of willed change'. This unfortunate development may be merely the result of a 'critique simpliste' applying the same formula to all concepts indifferently; but I suspect that Proclus had a special reason for hypostatizing αἰὼν and χρόνος, namely their importance in late Hellenistic cultus and contemporary magic". Trouillard, "La procession du temps selon Proclus", 110, is much more moderate on this matter and treats Proclus's differentiation from another perspective. He observes, then, the following: "Proclus retient le meilleur aspect du temps plotinien, conformément à sa tendance propre qui le porte à révéler les niveaux inférieurs de la procession, y compris la matière, et à y voir moins des occasions de chute que de rebondissement. Le temps n'est pas seulement une détente, mais un rythme. Il n'est pas essentiel-

Of course, based on a wider context, it is apparent that the metaphysical multitude differs from the physical one, both in terms of quantitative and qualitative structure.

Obviously, a problem arises in regard to the view that there is a kind of time which is unparticipated, and questions emerge such as: exactly where does time stand? What is the relation between time and the various forms of eternal beings or even with eternity itself? In our opinion, Proclus most probably suggests that there is a metaphysical archetype of the sensible and evolving time, which maintains the properties of eternity. It is rather about self-growth, in the context of a quasi-internal dialectical approach of eternity, whose mission is to activate processes that are not being submitted to temporal transitions and evolutions. From this point of view, the cosmic order will acquire both metaphysical justification and foundation and will develop its first stages of being within the divine immanence. We could also preserve the possibility that what is meant, at this point, is temporal perpetuity as well, as an element that obviously conveys the above reflection to other levels of permanence. In this case, a) the evolution of the sensible world, perpetually nourished by inexhaustible metaphysical natures, will be the only permanently constant given, and b) within this evolution new physical entities will constantly appear. This means that everything will operate and will be formed as a dynamic continuum dependent on weighted -and perhaps uncertain as perceived by the human mind- factors. In his *Commentary*, however, in *Ti.* -and mostly in the second book-, Proclus elaborates on the above issues in a more specialised way and he refers to the way in which time is presented -before it manifests itself in the cosmic universe- in the area of eternity (*αἰών*).

Αἰὼν and Time as two modes of eternity

The ontological difference, however, between aeon and time still remains. According to Proclus, aeon reflects wholeness, while time reflects separation, the latter being a particularity applied to the way anyone relates to beings -or to conditions- submitted to the processes of time.²² This relation is applied in every specialisation of the mode in which these two categories of beings exist, both in their emergence in coming-to-be and their formation, as well as in the forms of their expression and function. "Πᾶς αἰὼν μέτρον ἐστὶ τῶν αἰωνίων, καὶ πᾶς χρόνος τῶν ἐν χρόνῳ: καὶ δύο

lement un glissement indéfini, mais une récupération de cette fluxion par la puissance nombrante qui procède de l'éternité. Il n'est pas avant tout un mouvement, mais le mesure immobile qui impose un ordre au mouvement". Our view is that Trouillard's approach stands closer to Proclus's thought. Trends have considerably changed during the period from the time of Plotinus to the time of Proclus and matter had been remarkably reassessed in the ontological scale of the ontological values. It is obvious, however, that such a question will be systematically addressed mainly in the context of the required ontological and, more specifically, cosmological relations in Proclus's commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*. Either way Proclus moves more than all of his Neoplatonic predecessors into what could be described as realism.

²² See *Inst.*, 54, 52.11-14. For a more general discussion on the subject, see Jan Opsomer, "Deriving the three intelligible Triads from the *Timaeus*", in *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne, Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13-16 mai 1998). En l'honneur de H. - D. Saffrey et L. G. Westerink*, eds. Alain-Philippe Segonds et Carlos Steel (Leuven: University Press – Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2000) 351-372, and especially 358-360.

ταῦτα μέτρα μόνα ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς οὐσι τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς κινήσεως“.²³ It is noteworthy here that reference is made to movement, a dynamic state which, if it does not indicate the existence of transitive activity (certainly not in temporal terms) in the metaphysical level, at least it excludes it from being static and stereotypical as well as rigid from an ontological perspective. In general, however, the most accurate term for describing the mobility of the metaphysical world is ”procession“, which refers to an eternal emanation.²⁴ Thus, the reflection of metaphysical immobility, developed above, is significantly reduced and what comes to the fore is the concept of the dynamic model together with the seemingly necessary formations. Besides, in his other texts, the Neoplatonic philosopher presents -and in fact with astonishing geometrical classification- an evolving picture of the metaphysical world, even if this evolution stands within certain limits and obeys a strictly prescribed planning.²⁵ In further view of the subject and having as a reason Proclus’ *Commentaries* in the Platonic dialogues *Timaeus* and *Alcibiades I*, we would note that with its reference to *aeon*, human consciousness appears to be eagerly seeking its meaning, in locating and decrypting the divine sources of the sensible world surrounding it.

Proclus, in specifying even more his reference to the difference between aeon and time, observes that based on the principles of procession (*πρόοδος*) and likeness (*ὁμοιότης*)²⁶ it is impossible for what is eternal to coexist in the same ontological category with what comes to be in time. And this exclusion occurs because the former have -and always preserve- the character of an integral being (*ὄντος*), whilst the latter have a dated existence in temporal evolution and do not exist perpetually, completing their limited cycle of development. Hence, the ontological gap between the two worlds is a fact, but only from a preliminary theoretical perspective.²⁷ In order for the philosopher to fill this gap, which would exclude the creation of the physical world, he raises the question -following his favourite method- of intermediaries or mediations. It is about the transitional states containing elements from both initially non-attached ontological terms.²⁸

By choosing a moderate solution, Proclus contends that there must be a mean (*τὸ μέσον*) between eternity and time; the mean between things which come-to-be for a

²³ See *Inst.*, 54, 52.8-10. Dodds, *Proclus’ The Elements of Theology*, 229, notes: ”The traditional Academic definition of Time was ‘the measure of movement’ (*τὸ μέτρον τῆς κινήσεως*). This description was riddled with criticism by Plotinus, whose fundamental objection to it is that it tells us what time is used for without bringing us any nearer to understanding what time is. But it serves Proclus as a way of stressing the reality of time as something independent of and higher than its content, against the Aristotelian view which made it a *πάθος κινήσεως* and an *ἀριθμητόν*, something itself counted or measured“.

²⁴ See *Inst.*, 25-39, 28.21-42.7.

²⁵ See also, *Theol. Plat.* II, 61.11-73.23.

²⁶ See *Inst.*, 28. 32.10-34.2: ”Πᾶν τὸ παράγον τὰ ὅμοια πρὸς ἑαυτὸ πρὸ τῶν ἀνομοίων ὑφίστησιν....

²⁷ See *Inst.*, 55, 52.17-21: ”...τοῖς δὲ αἰωνίοις συνάπτει τὰ ἐν μέρει χρόνου γινόμενα ἀδύνατον (καὶ γὰρ ὡς γινόμενα ἐκείνων ὄντων καὶ ὡς ποτὲ τῶν αἰεὶ ὑφεστηκότων διέστηκε)“.

²⁸ Cf. *Theol. Plat.* IV, 6.6-13.8, where a discussion is made about the way in which the supreme divine beings exist and how they communicate.

time and things that are perpetually, is either that which perpetually comes to be or that which is for a time. He immediately notes, however, that such a differentiation is unlikely to be happening for two reasons: Firstly, because ontologically and logically it is impossible for a true being to be temporary and, secondly, because a temporary being which is not fully real is one with coming-to-be. In consequence, no such being can be identified as an intermediate mean since it excludes the features of one term, namely that of aeon and that would lead to the necessity to seek for another intermediate reality. It remains, therefore, that the mean is that which always comes-to-be, which in virtue of its coming-to-be is attached to the inferior order of the physical cosmos, while in its perpetuity it imitates the eternal nature. "Λείπεται ἄρα τὸ ἀεὶ γινόμενον εἶναι τὸ μέσον ἀμφοῖν, τῷ μὲν γίγνεσθαι συνάπτον τοῖς χεῖροσι, τῷ δὲ ἀεὶ μιμούμενον τὴν αἰώνιον φύσιν".²⁹

There are, then, two kinds of eternities: the one is eternal and steadfastness – which is related to the unchangeable essence-, the other is temporal and comes-to-be –which is an expression of processes which follow a precise coordination. It is obvious, however, that the second is ontologically related to the realm of empirical becoming and not to the first eternity, from which it derives only the inexhaustible duration, exactly what is needed for the teleological plan to be fulfilled. Proclus adds that the former is having its ontological properties concentrated in a simultaneous whole, while the latter is diffused and unfolded in temporal extension; the one entire in itself, the other composed of parts, each of whom exists separately –despite its functional or organic relation with the others- in an order of succession from that which is prior to that which is posterior.³⁰ It follows from the above that time, regardless of its archetypal and metaphysical preconditions, confirms, with its seemingly irreversible movements, that the sensible world is in a process of perpetual development, thus excluding any version of inertia. This view is reinforced by Proclus in another thematic context, where he emphasises that time is infinite. "Πεπερασμένη γὰρ οὐσα (sc. ἡ τῆς γενέσεως δύναμις), ἐν τῷ ἀπείρῳ χρόνῳ παύσεται".³¹ It should also be noted that temporal perpetuity and perpetuity of the sensible world is a logical and solid argument in regard to the ontological and scientific effort to accurately support the perpetuity of metaphysical reality. That is, since the effect is perpetually under formation, it is necessary to keep its supplying cause in readiness of permanent presence and energy production.

Then the Neoplatonist thinker returns back to the issue of the intermediates, starting once more from the fact that aeon is ontologically superior to time. He observes, first of all, that for what has its existence embraced by time is in all respects temporal, since a fortiori it has a temporal activity.³² This condition is not only considered

²⁹ *Inst*, 55, 52.26-28. According to Dodds, *Proclus' The Elements of Theology*, 229: "The purpose of the present proposition is to affirm the necessary existence of a class of things having such perpetuity, and to distinguish this from eternity proper (*αἰών*), which belongs only to immaterial principles".

³⁰ See *Inst*, 55. 52.30-54.3.

³¹ *Inst*, 85, 78.14-15.

³² See *Inst*, 106, 94.24-25: "Τὸ γὰρ τὴν οὐσίαν ἔχον ὑπὸ χρόνου περιεχομένην κατὰ πάντα ἐστὶν ἐγγχρονον".

as something subsequent but also exists in terms of its specifications, a parameter based on the fact that it has already been provided with energy corresponding to it, under the temporal term. "Πολλῶ γὰρ πρότερον τοῦτο καὶ τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἔγχρονον ἔλαχεν".³³ It is appropriate to clarify, at this point, that it is not implied priority of energy over the substance on the same ontological level, but, rather, priority of energy production over the subsequently formed new substance. These dependencies can, in fact, be manifested in a way of successive repetition of the domain and temporal priority of the former term to the latter, following the cosmic process.

However, regardless of what takes place in the cosmos of sensible experience, the necessity of the intermediate principle is reinforced by the fact that what is fully temporal, in regard to all its features, is altogether unlike the fully eternal to all its features as well. Consequently, if there is no intermediate, then a gap of ontological incompatibility develops, which renders inactive any prospect of productive activity. With this commitment and by retaining the characteristics of each term, Proclus observes that the mean term will be eternal in its essence and temporal in its energy but not conversely, for energy will then be ontologically superior to essence.³⁴ Hierarchically classified this way, these states perform the meeting of the eternal with the temporal and of the metaphysical with the sensible -until the material body expression is achieved- without any functional problems. Additionally, without risking and redefining the traditional ontological status and their consequent scale of values as expressing the integrity of "is" (*εἶναι*) in contrast to the alteration of "becoming" (*γίγνεσθαι*). In other words, as the recording of priority in terms of responsibilities and gifts.

Subsequently, the Neoplatonist philosopher raises the question of what would be the possibilities and the conditions for the same thing to participate at once time and aeon. He therefore notes -now applying the necessity of an intermediate principle as a given- that, if the same thing participates in both time and aeon, this dual presence-function is not done intrinsically but through its relations. The same thing will, therefore, be at once a being and a generation but in different respects, namely not in the sense of conflation but, rather, ensuring an inner hierarchy among its elements. According to the above, it is obvious that generation, which is temporal even in its essence, is ontologically connected with that reality which partly communicates with true being and partly with generation per se, participating at once aeon and time.³⁵ Apparently, the formulated correspondences and relations make it obvious that participation as a way of development is exclusively related to time. Thus, "πᾶν γὰρ τὸ ὅπως οὖν μεριστὸν ἢ κατὰ πλῆθος ἢ κατὰ μέγεθος ἢ κατὰ τὰς ἐνεργείας ἐστὶν μεριστὸν ἐν χρόνῳ φερομένας".³⁶ The parameter of separations cannot apply to the metaphysical level, where coherence and unity prevail, despite the differences among ontological categories or, in other words, among gods.

³³ *Inst* 106, 94.25-26.

³⁴ See *Inst*, 106, 94.26-31: "...ἢ οὖν τῆ οὐσία αἰώνιον, τῆ ἐνεργεία δὲ ἔγχρονον τὸ μέσον, ἢ ἀνάπαλιν. Ἄλλὰ τοῦτο ἀδύνατον" ἔσται γὰρ τῆς οὐσίας ἡ ἐνέργεια κρείττων. Λείπεται δὲ θάτερον εἶναι τὸ μέσον".

³⁵ See *Inst*, 107, 94.32-96.8.

³⁶ See *Inst*, 171, 150.3-4.

Eternal energy – temporal energy

In the next point, Proclus – while referring to the content and properties of the Intellect (*Noûς*), of the third term of the well-known Neoplatonic metaphysical triad: Being-Life-Intellect,³⁷ and of the individual intellects– he stresses that for a being that falls under the terms of becoming and has its energy in some certain part of time, is not connected with the eternity of energy. And it is necessary, here too, to apply the intermediate principles which, in order to be valid, require the energies –in terms of duration and integrity– to behave like substances. Under this condition, the ontological gap is bridged in the field of the energy as well; thus, between the enteral energy and the energy which is complete in a certain time there is an energy which has its completion in the whole of time.³⁸ It should be noted that the reference to eternal activity indirectly strengthens the view that, within the metaphysical level, mobility is a given, even under the version of the multi-core perpetual source of the forms or the renewals that the world of sensible experience employs after its original creation.

The Soul as an infinite and temporal reality and Time

Next, Proclus elaborates on the Soul – the ontological reality that hierarchically follows the triad: Being, Life, Intellect- and the individual souls; he starts his observations again from the fact that the self-constituted is not subject to the conditions of time. But since in his system souls occupy an intermediate position between the metaphysical and the sensible level,³⁹ he argues that every soul is eternal in substance but temporal in energy. "Πᾶσα ἄρα ψυχή μεθεκτὴ τὴν μὲν οὐσίαν αἰώνιον ἔλαχε, τὴν δὲ ἐνέργειαν κατὰ χρόνον".⁴⁰ He goes on to note that if the participated Soul (*μεθεκτὴ Ψυχή*) is eternal in its existence, its existence is true Being and perpetual Being. But if it manifests through its energy in time, it is generated, complying to the –repeatable– successions from the prior to the posterior in time. Viewed under this dual perspective of the levels of its presence and function, the *Soul* will be the first of the generated natures. From this point on, a series of beings of generated nature begins, and that which is in every respect generated, is ontologically distanced from eternal natures.⁴¹ And in the case of the *Soul*, the appreciation of the metaphysical in the ontological and evaluative scale is clear, affecting accordingly the existence of the physical. Regarding the cultural atmosphere, it should be noted that this appreciation expressed through the

³⁷ See *Inst*, 101-103, 90. 17-92.29; *Theol. Plat.* IV, 6.16-17.13; also; Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus I*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968), 213-46, 260-72; Werner Beierwaltes, *Proklos: Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979), 93-118.

³⁸ See *Inst*, 175. 152.25-30.

³⁹ See *Inst*, 184-211, 160.21-184.20. Trouillard, *L'un et l'âme selon Proclus*, 21-67.

⁴⁰ *Inst*, 191, 166. 26-27. On the relation of time with every individual soul Trouillard, "La procession du temps selon Proclus", 111, notes the following which highlight the appreciation of time according to Proclus: "En tout qu' il est déterminé par un nombre noétique, il est antérieur à l' âme, Proclus conteste la thèse plotinienne qui fait maître le temps dans l' âme".

⁴¹ See *Inst*, 192, 168.11-19: "...εἰ δὲ πῆ γενητὴ ἐστὶ πᾶσα ψυχή, κατ' ἐνέργειαν, πρώτη ἂν εἴη τῶν γενητῶν τὸ γὰρ πάντα γενητῶν πορρωτέρω τῶν αἰωνίων".

individual souls is not unknown to the prevailing tendency of Neoplatonism for a turn to the inner existential roots of man, which are perceived as being connected with any divine origins of his soul.⁴² That is, of a soul that specifies the universal in its own way.

Time and movement

Correlating time with movement -in the same thematic context- the philosopher also presents some of its intervening properties and functions. So, he notes that time determines its movement, hence has the character of measure and finitude and its path is determined by a numerical principle, indicating the procession and succession of certain formations. "Διότι μὲν γὰρ χρόνου μετέχει, μέτρου καὶ ὄρου μετείληφεν ἢ κίνησις, καὶ κατ' ἀριθμὸν πορεύεται' διότι δὲ αἰεὶ κινεῖται, καὶ τὸ αἰεὶ τοῦτο οὐκ αἰώνιον ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ χρονικόν, ἀνάγκη χρῆσθαι περιόδουσι".⁴³ At the same time, he presents movement in an Aristotelian way, as having a transitive activity from one set of conditions to another; and the sum of things that move to be finite both in number and in magnitude. "Ἡ μὲν γὰρ κίνησις μεταβολὴ τίς ἐστίν ἀφ' ἐτέρων εἰς ἕτερα' τὰ δὲ ὄντα ὄρισται καὶ τοῖς πλήθεσι καὶ τοῖς μεγέθεσι".⁴⁴ Under these limitations it is evident that every intra-mundane soul that participates time, having movement and exercising a temporal activity, will have a periodic motion that Proclus thinks it is essential to establish its cyclic reinstatement. "Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐγκόσμιος, κίνησιν ἔχουσα καὶ ἐνεργοῦσα κατὰ χρόνον, περιόδουσι τε τῶν κινήσεων ἔξει καὶ ἀποκαταστάσεισι; πᾶσα γὰρ περίοδος τῶν ἀϊδίων ἀποκαταστατικὴ ἐστίν".⁴⁵ This passage shifts the issue

⁴² See Pierre Boyancé, "Théurgie et téléstique néoplatonicienne", *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 147 (1955): 189-209. The issue in question and the related ones are elaborated in the *Commentary* of Proclus in the Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades I*. In both treatises a highly coherent Anthropology is compiled, with that of Proclus including the intermediate tradition. Regarding the presence of this Platonic dialogue in the Neoplatonic tradition, see Segonds' highly specialised introductory texts in his edition of Proclus' *Commentary* [Alain Philippe Segonds (ed.), *Proclus. Sur le premier Alcibiade de Platon*, Tome I (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981), VII-CIV].

⁴³ *Inst*, 198, 172.25-28. These are finite movements in a finite space that can continue through an infinite time only by returning periodically to their starting point. Essentially the reference is made to periodic movements, each of which renews from their starting point the perpetuity of a universal movement, which of course has the character of applied universality. See Dodds, *Proclus' The Elements of Theology*, 301; Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 67-72.

⁴⁴ *Inst*, 198, 172.28-30. The periodic appearance of new beings or ontic formations each time confirms the perpetuity of movement and, indirectly, of the metaphysical gifts. Cf. Levan Gigineishvili and Gerd Van Riel, "Ioane Petritsi: A Witness of Proclus' Works in the School of Psellus", in *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne, Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13-16 mai 1998). En l'honneur de H. - D. Saffrey et L. G. Westerink*, eds. Alain-Philippe Segonds et Carlos Steel (Leuven: University Press - Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2000), 571-78 and especially 573-74.

⁴⁵ *Inst*, 199, 174.6-9. For the purposes of this article, we shall maintain Dodds', *Proclus' The Elements of Theology*, 302, point of view here, that it does not mean one human life, but one cycle of experience. It is possibly insinuated that with this cycle there is a series of successive embodiments for each soul. This possibility is explicitly ruled out by the Christians, who strictly insist on their view that each human as a person has his own soul, thus emphasizing on the principle of uniqueness.

of a simple cosmic evolution to a field of a more general behavior and to a purpose of eschatological type. Thus, questions may arise such as: is this an extreme devaluation of the sensible world that functions merely as a mean and not as an end towards an independent completion of itself, or, conversely, is it an revaluation of it as a required and contributing terms of an ontological completion? Are we facing an eschatological panpsychism? Do we have a preconceived notion of a metaphysical foundation of Hegelian nature? Are Plato's or even Origen's versions of the souls' restoration projected? Regardless of the answers to these questions, we have to note that in Proclus' system teleology is in no way excluded. It just needs specification in its content, which is not univocal.

Elaborating on the subject in even more detail, Proclus notes that, since all movements can be expressed through the participating in time pair of an earlier and a later, then time will be this cosmological state that measures the periods of the souls. He observes, however, that if all souls had the same period, time would be by extension the same category for all of them with no separations.⁴⁶ By immediately reconstructing this version, he formulates a new hypothesis which, in his estimation, belongs to the limits of reality. Specifically, if their restorations are different, something analogous would hold true in the case of time as well, since it would differ in every period and restoration. "Ἐἰ δὲ ἄλλαι ἄλλων ἀποκαταστάσεις, καὶ χρόνος περιοδικὸς ἄλλος ἄλλων καὶ ἀποκαταστατικός".⁴⁷ It is obvious that we are faced with the successive presence of particular souls and the successive appearance of particular periods of time, where a special process is taking place.

The above connections-procedures emerge from the immediately following position of the philosopher that the soul, which is first measured by time, has the whole of time for measure, which also means that in the beginning of the cosmic development the first Soul and time together with all of its properties and its seminal future presences coexist.⁴⁸ We can safely argue that it is about a course viewed from a perspective of a whole that consists, at this level of potentiality or works in a seminal mode with respect to the products which will arise, and begins its -perhaps prescribed- development. Explaining his position, Proclus points out that, if time is the measure of all movement, the first which moves will entirely participate of time, and will be measured by the whole of time, for if the whole of time did not measure its primal participant, it would not measure any other, according to the whole of its functions.⁴⁹ We can therefore conclude that the philosopher presupposes that in order for time to be a condition and measure of the sensible world, it must preside as a category and as a necessary factor

⁴⁶ See *Inst*, 200, 174.10-15.

⁴⁷ *Inst*, 200, 174.15-18.

⁴⁸ See *Inst*, 200, 174.19-22: "Ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ πρώτως ὑπὸ χρόνου μετρομένη ψυχή τῷ σύμπαντι χρόνῳ μετρεῖται, δῆλον. Εἰ γὰρ μέτρον ὁ χρόνος κινήσεως ἀπάσης, τὸ πρώτως κινούμενον ἔσται παντὸς τοῦ χρόνου μετέχον καὶ ὑπὸ παντὸς μεμετρημένον". It is about a position that we find in the Commentary on Plato's dialogue *Timaeus*, especially at the second book.

⁴⁹ See *Inst*, 200, 174.22-24; Evangelos Moutsopoulos, *Les structures de l'imaginaire dans la philosophie de Proclus* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1985), 64-66.

for the cosmological function of the first -and inclusive of its interventions- Soul. Indirectly then, the world Soul will be a condition and measure of temporal evolution for sensible beings and conditions, each one participating time accordingly.

Individual measures of time and individual souls

From this point on, the development-appearances of the individual souls are specified and are connected with the natural phenomenon of successive periods, where the individual measures of time measure the individual souls. The effects of this measurement are relevant – both in terms of quantity and characteristics – with the perspective of the souls' reinstatements. Many reinstatements will take place, that shall be parts of the single period or reinstatement wherein the world Soul, which is the primal participant of time, is reinstated. "Αἱ πολλὰ αὐτῶν (sc. τῶν ἄλλων ψυχῶν) ἀποκαταστάσεις μέρη ἔσσονται μιᾶς περιόδου καὶ ἀποκαταστάσεως, ἦν ἡ τοῦ χρόνου μετέχουσα πρῶτως ἀποκαθίσταται".⁵⁰ Essentially, therefore, we should not only refer to the periodic successive appearance of the souls but to the periodic successive appearances –which are activated by a regulative causation- of parts of the same general or universal *Soul*, which is obviously associated with a special type of reinstatement. Thus, granted preconditions lead us to accept that, according to Proclus, the world of experience –which is subject in time– is diffused by a panpsychism, a parameter that preliminarily suggests the secularised Hegelian Word. So, in our view, within this context, the text should be approached through the prism of successive restoration with which the philosopher concludes his reasoning: "Ὅλον οὖν τὸ χρονικὸν μέτρον κατὰ μίαν ζωὴν αἱ ἄλλαι ψυχαὶ δέχεσθαι οὐ πεφύκασι, τῆς πρῶτως ὑπὸ χρόνου μετρομένης ὑφειμένην λαχοῦσαι τάξιν".⁵¹

The Neoplatonic thinker gives below an even more analytical approach for the ambiguity and interference of every particular soul, when referring to the character of its mobility. He presents therefore, every particular soul being at certain times in the level of gods and at others in the world of generation; and this is repeated eternally by any other particular soul that is to be appeared. This dual presence of each soul does not mean that it is found at the same time in both worlds. And this is due to the fact that it is not possible for it to be for an infinite duration among the gods, nor for the same period of duration within the material bodies. "Λείπεται ἄρα περιόδους ἐκάστην ποιεῖσθαι ἀνόδων τε ἐκ τῆς γενέσεως καὶ τῶν εἰς γένεσιν καθόδων, καὶ τοῦτο ἄπαστον εἶναι διὰ τὸν ἄπειρον χρόνον. Ἐκάστη ἄρα ψυχὴ μμερικὴ κατιέναι

⁵⁰ *Inst*, 200, 174.29-31. According to Trouillard, "La procession du temps selon Proclus", 112-13, "Le temps-total enveloppe et mesure toutes les durées et d'abord la période totale qui contient tous les cycles partiels, comme l'âme totale contient les âmes particulières. À l'intérieur de cette unique période qui est celle de l'âme universelle, chaque âme définit sa propre durée selon sa puissance". These obviously point out that there are strict limits, which, in a teleological system, clearly do not subject to an ontological plan.

⁵¹ *Inst*, 200, 174.32-35. Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246b and *Timaeus*, 36c; also, *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, III.29.18. In his comments, Dodds, *Proclus' The Elements of Theology*, 301-03, refers to similar approaches about restoration found in Middle Platonism and the Stoics. It is a view with a clear religious and theological direction, which arises from processes of self-knowledge.

τε ἐπ' ἄπειρον δύναται καὶ ἀνιέναι, καὶ τοῦτο οὐ μὴ παύσεται περὶ ἀπάσας τὸ πάθημα γινόμενον“.⁵² And here we could argue that every soul goes through many embodiments, of those that are required to achieve its complete purification and its teleological realisation.

In our opinion, both the aforementioned text and all the previous ones by Proclus that we have examined, do not suggest, even indirectly, a philosophy of timeliness.⁵³ The philosopher in his *Inst* maintains a stereotypical and static system of non-kairotic experience of what is described by the human consciousness. Thus, it does not raise the issue of conscious reduction, which would have the preconditions to introduce a dynamic system of kairotic categories, capable of restructuring in strictly qualitative terms temporal presence, succession and evolution. He generally remains in a description of the ontological processes followed by the souls, but without describing their personal dimension or their added and abstract individual functions, so as a result, he is not concerned with issues of referentiality or intentionality of the consciousness. The movements of souls are primarily subject to solid regularities, and thus it is not examined whether they contribute to the renewal of existential states. Any added feature they require is not specified on a personal level. In this light, we believe that we should examine all that was mentioned about reinstatement. Besides, in this work Proclus presents each soul to be absolutely determined by the fact that it exists and must operate accordingly. Time is neither determined nor transcended by the unique way each soul exists. As infinite, time defines the functions of the soul, of which is an internalised fact and thereby cannot be altered. The question of aesthetic and existential experience, therefore, entirely arises both externally and formally or by assumption. From this non-reference neither purification of the souls is excluded, which shall lead to their restoration. Thus, in the *Inst* the ontological foundations are dominant. Regarding the categories of "Kairos" (καῖρός) we must wait for the extensive Commentaries on the Platonic *Timaeus* and *Alcibiades I* by the Neoplatonic philosopher, and, especially the latter.⁵⁴

Conclusion

According to what we have discussed, we come to the following three conclusions regarding how time is treated in the *Inst*: First of all, time is an objective reality with autonomous –as to the function of the physical cosmos– conditions of development,

⁵² *Inst*, 206, 180.15-29. Jean Trouillard, *La mystagogie de Proclus* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982), 173, observes: "Puisque le temps procède de l'éternité comme son image et qui lui demeure infiniment inadéquate, la seule façon pour le temps d'imiter l'éternité sur tous ses plans sera de sa multiplier indéfiniment. L'âme devra redescendre indéfiniment dans le devenir afin d'exprimer sans cesse dans de nouvelles conditions les virtualités inépuisables de sa substance".

⁵³ Evangelos Moutsopoulos, *Kairos. La mise et l'enjeu* (Paris: Vrin, 1991).

⁵⁴ See *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*, II, 270.13, and III, 45.25-46.4; in *Alc*, 120.14-121.13. compare to: Evangelos Moutsopoulos, *Structure, présence et fonctions du Kairos chez Proclus* (Athènes: Académie d'Athènes, 2003), 67-70, 166-167. Regarding the individual souls in *Commentary* of Proclus in the Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades I*, see MacIsaac Gregory. "The Nous of the Partial Soul in Proclus' Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato". *Dionysius* 29 (2011): 29-60.

it is presuppositional and delimiting of processes and expresses a state that is independent from subjective forms of supervision. It is, essentially, a coherent system of relevance, formulating some of the decisive ways in which the sensible beings appear, that are detectable and measurable by human experience. Secondly, time functions as a dynamic impetus for change, excludes static cosmic systems and transports to the world of sensible experience what it retains from its metaphysical archetype, the *aeon*. At the same time, in terms of its relativity, it is combined with movement, does not introduce any ontological difference between the former and the latter and initially occurs as an absolute inclusive quantity that is consequently articulated in irreversible successive periods. Thirdly, time ensures the conditions for a perpetual cosmic harmony, is the condition for excluding chaos and disorder, and introduces mathematical proportions into the realm of sensible beings, such that they articulate a coherent system of principles. It must therefore be treated as a causal order that radiates in the form of a production chain with a strictly structural content. With the treatises that Proclus will compose later on, he will specify in a highly analytical and systematic way all these, expanding at the same time his fields of interest.

In attempting to co-examine the positions of Proclus with those of Plotinus (*Ennead*, III, VII), we would note that there are some common points between them. And these could be summarized as follows: a) Proclus utilises Plotinus's positions for the ontological differences between time and aeon, but also introduces their approach in the light of the unparticipated and participated and insists particularly on the infinity of time as an ontological condition; b) Regarding the relationship of time with the Soul, we would note that Proclus attributes to it a very positive and optimistic content, while Plotinus presents time deriving from the Soul in a way that appears as its differentiation from the metaphysical integrity of the Intellect. They both refer to their relationship, but each of them in their own perspective; c) Both Proclus and Plotinus connect time with motion, but Proclus fully defines motion by time, while according to Plotinus time is what results from the application of measure to motion in order to be measured. On this issue, Plotinus's positions can be compared more broadly with what Proclus mentions in his Commentary on the Platonic dialogue *Timaeus*. It should also be noted that Plotinus's positions on time and aeon, to a greater extent, are found in the Commentary of Proclus on the Platonic *Timaeus*. There Proclus makes a more extensive critique of Plotinus as he approaches these two concepts exclusively with his own theoretical forms.

Finally, in evaluating the methodology followed by Proclus, we have to make the following two remarks: a) regarding the linear-systematic development of the *Inst*, the sequential citation of the relevant passages about time is formally correct, as Proclus submits it to the legislative articulations of his system and their exact application; and b) regarding his worldview, time is projected in such a way as to highlight an important detail about the connection of the metaphysical with the natural cosmos, according to which the former defines the latter, and in fact in such a way, that the particularities and the distinctions between them are not lifted.

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АСПЕКТИ МЕТАФИЗИЧКИХ ОСНОВА И КОСМОЛОШКЕ ФУНКЦИЈЕ КОНЦЕПТА „ВРЕМЕНА” КОД ПРОКЛА НЕОПЛАТОНИЧАРА

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Резиме: У овом раду, истражено је и протумачено питање разумевања времена у расправи „Στοιχείωσις Θεολογική - Stoichiosis Theologiki“. Закључили смо да је време објективна стварност са аутономним условима развоја у смислу функционисања природног света. Оно је предуслов ограничавајућих процеса, и на првом месту изражава независно стање у односу на начине којима му приступа људски ум. То је, у суштини, кохерентан систем односа, који истиче неке од круцијалних начина појављивања живих бића, који се могу открити и вредновати хуманистичким истраживањима. Други закључак нас упућује на време које делује као динамички подстицај за промене, а које искључује статичне космичке системе и преноси у свет чулног искуства оно што задржава од свог метафизичког архетипа, односно доба. Истовремено, у свом односу према покрету, оно не уводи онтолошку разлику између првог и другог, и у почетку се појављује као апсолутна инклузивна величина онога што следи. Трећи закључак који смо извели у овом истраживању је да време ствара услове за вечну космичку хармонију. Оно је услов за искључивање хаоса који се везује за почетак времена. Такође, време нас уводи у област математичке аналогије која артикулише кохерентан систем закона. Стога се време може разумети као узрок формирања поретка физичког универзума. Испитивањем позиција Прокла и Платинове (Εννεάς, III, VII), закључили смо да постоји подударане мишљења.

Кључне речи: Прокло, време, елементи теологије, еон, душа.

Примљено: 24.7.2023.

Прихваћено: 29.8.2023.