Time, Atemporality and the Trinitarian Nature of God in Plato's Philosophical Heritage

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Abstract: The paper addresses an apparently unsolvable philosophical question: can the Christian Dogma of the Trinitarian nature of God be rationally explained? The authors argue that the conflict between *fides* and *ratio* can be resolved by a novel interpretation of the concept of time within a new philosophical paradigm: the Purposeful Evolution Theory (PET)[1], where time, as in Plato, is a movable image of Eternity. In this paper, the PET is used to explain the Christian Dogma of Trinity through a deductive reasoning centred on the concept of atemporality. The Purposeful Evolution Theory has strict links with Plato's philosophy and represents a key for a systematic interpretation of Plato's unwritten doctrines. The authors argue that Plato's unwritten doctrines already addressed and partially solved the problem of Eternity and Time, indirectly giving a reason-based explanation of the Trinitarian Nature of God and His Goodness, before it was even revealed.

Keywords: Plato's unwritten doctrines, Dogma of Trinity, time, atemporality, Anthropic Cosmological Principle

INTRODUCTION

Many philosophers have attempted a rational explanation of the Trinitarian Dogma. From Origen (*De Principiis*) and Augustine (*De Trinitate; Confessiones*), to Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Teologiae*) and Hegel (*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaftten im Grundrisse*), just to quote a few, they all have made important

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[1] See Daniele Piccioni. 1996. *Un angelo d'oro*, Rome: Città Nuova. See also *Osservatore Romano*, 25th November 2012.

contributions towards an interpretation of the Trinity and/or the (related) concept of Time. In particular, a recent paper, *Time, Eternity and Trinity*, (Achtner 2009) links Augustine's reasoning on consciousness (*Confessions* XI. 26-28) with the concept of time as past, present and future. Despite the numerous insights provided by philosophers, *fides et ratio* is still contradictory and distant. In our opinion, the root to the problems encountered by those who have analysed this religious dogma from a rational point of view is in the lack of a unified theory capable of creating a true philosophical paradigm shift.

The authors argue that, if an atemporal God would exist, as Plato's unwritten doctrines seem to suggest, He could only be the One and the Three at the same time. The Fathers of the Church such as St Justin (I Apology, XLVI) reinterpreted and applied the Stoic definition of *lógos spermatikòs* to the Greek philosophers, in particular Plato. They were considered bearers of the *lógoi spermatikòi*, therefore capable to create a bridge between philosophical reasoning (Ratio) and Revelation (Fides).

Following the above argument within the Purposeful Evolution Theory paradigm, the authors of this paper successfully argue the nature of God as *Unum et Trinum*.

The paper is structured as follows: first the concepts of time and atemporality are discussed; then the concept and nature of God as discussed in both written and unwritten Plato's doctrines is presented together with the Fathers of the Church's debate about the Trinitarian Nature of God; finally the novel paradigm of the Purposeful Evolution Theory is used to provide a rational interpretation of the Trinity.

TIME

The ideal place of time is our psyche, since it is the psyche that can have "science, opinion and awareness" of time (Plato, *Parmenides*, 155 D). The psyche is able to subdivide time in three parts: past, present and future. However, in a temporal reality, the present is the only one to exist: «a sheer boundary between two non-existing entities: the past that no longer exists and the future that does not exist, yet»[2].

[2] Michael Dummett. 1996. *La base logica della metafisica*. (*The Logical Basis of Metaphysics* [1993]). Bologna: Il Mulino, p. 20. See also Augustine, *Confessions*, XI, 20: «Neither are there future nor past things». Translated by J. G. Pilkington. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 1. Edited by Philip Schaff.

In a temporal dimension, the present instant is the only one where something can exist and manifest itself. In the present, everything subsists: matter, place, all sensations, thoughts, any past record/memory, and any expectation about the future. Both the past and the future belong to temporality like the present, but unlike this one, they can only appear to us in an indirect way: as the Platonic Augustine affirms, without the present our psyche would not know the three times[3].

The past is a set of elapsed events that, opposite to future events, might manifest themselves to us in the present time, in a physical but indirect manner, in the shape of memories[4], or in the shape of echoes, sediments, traces, records, images, etc. This manifestation of the past in the present happens in various ways according to the mode and the means through which the material recording has occurred, whether in the synapses of our brain, in the molecules of the air, of rocks, through radiations or in any other way. In other words, we get to know «the most recent past, but also the most remote past, only through the present»[5].

Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887. Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1101.htm

[3] Augustine, *Confessions*, XI. 20: «Nor is it fitly said, "There are three times, past, present and future;" but perchance it might be fitly said, "There are three times; a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future." For these three do somehow exist in the soul, and otherwise I see them not: present of things past, memory; present of things present, sight; present of things future, expectation».

[4] Ibid., XI. 18: «Although past things are related as true, they are drawn out from the memory,—not the things themselves, which have passed, but the words conceived from the images of the things which they have formed in the mind as footprints in their passage through the senses».

[5] Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. 1959. *Storia naturale* [1749], trad. It. Marcella Renzoni. Turin: Boringhieri, p.18. See also Augustine, *Confessions*, XI, 18: «My childhood, indeed, which no longer is, is in time past, which now is not; but when I call to mind its image, and speak of it, I behold it in the present, because it is as yet in my memory». The fact that the past leaves infinite, durable traces in the present, which may or may not be evident, is argued also in: Henri Bergson. 2000. *Introduzione alla metafisica* [1903], trad. It. Francesca Sforza in *Pensiero e movimento* [1934]. Milan: Bompiani, p.168; Bergson. 1996. *Materia e memoria* [1896], trad. It. Adriano Pessina. Rome - Bari: Laterza, pp.125, 56, 127; Bergson. 1990. *Coscienza e Vita* [1911], in *Il cervello e il pensiero*, trad. It. Marinella Acerra. Rome: Editori Riuniti, p.8. See also Alfred North Whitehead. 1998. *Simbolismo* [1928], trad. It. di Rocco De Biasi, Milan: Cortina, p.31; Whitehead. 1965. *Il processo e la realtà*, trad. It. di Nynfa Bosco, Milan: Bompiani, p.465; Wilhelm

If we investigated the consequences of a present event, we would turn to the future. However, in the temporal dimension all future events, beyond not being recordable, are not tangible, neither directly or indirectly. As stated by Augustine in *Confessions* XI. 18 «the future does not exist yet, therefore cannot be seen, however, it can be predicted on the basis of the present, which already exists and can be seen». Similarly, Wittgenstein (2002, 503) states, «we cannot prophesy events […], we can only make hypothetical forecasts». In other words, within a temporality framework, our psyche can only deduct the future on a probabilistic basis though the intellect and, of course, memory. In order to increase the probability to make correct forecasts, we need the support of memory, since we need to examine and elaborate on previously stored values, dynamics and characteristics related to what we would like to forecast.

If we investigated the causes of a present event, we would turn to the past. In the temporal dimension, everything existing in the present instant inherits its dynamics and characteristics from the previous instant. It is from the past that the present inherits what it is.[6] For example:

- Past generations (not future ones) bestow their genetic heritage to the current generation;
- «Without memory there would be no awareness»[7] because «our whole past life shapes our present state» (Bergson 1996, 125) and «every consciousness is therefore memory, preservation and accumulation of the past within the present» (Id. 1990, 8).

In the cosmos, everything that produces heat (or shares with the heat some crucial aspects [8] and therefore falls under the laws of thermodynamics) defines the arrow of time, which is the present

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Dilthey. 2004. *Progetto di continuazione per la costruzione del mondo storico nelle scienze dello spirito,* in *Scritti filosofici (1905-1911)*, trad. It. a cura di Pietro Rossi, Turin: UTET, p.292.

[6] Among the philosophers who have argued that the past is the fundament, the origin and cause of all present happenings we have: Schopenhauer. 1995. *Sulla quadruplice radice del principio di ragione sufficiente* [1813]. Milan: Rizzoli, pp.192-193; Wittgenstein. 1976. *Osservazioni filosofiche* [1929-1930, 1964]. Turin: Einaudi, p.35; Gadamer. 1994. *Verità e metodo* [1960]. Milan: Bompiani, p.347.

[7] Paolo Taroni. 2012. *Filosofie del tempo. Il concetto del tempo nella storia del pensiero occidentale*. Milan - Udine: Mimesis Edizioni, p.378, where the author echoes the statement "there is no awareness without memory" by Bergson, *Introduzione alla metafisica* [1903], *op. cit.*, p.168.

[8] For instance, in the use of *retarded potential* in electrodynamics.

proceeding from the past to the future. Beside such laws, no other equation/law interpreting the cosmos (e.g. Einstein's gravitational law, Maxwell magnetism or quantum mechanics) distinguishes whether or not a sequence of events proceeds from the past to the future or vice versa[9].

The present is highly fleeting and can be conceived as a chronological set of instants, each of them can be simultaneously defined as *alpha* and *omega*, since in the present instant the *beginning* and *end* coincide.

Despite being constantly in between the past and the future, the instant proceeds from the first towards the second, and its extraordinary nature poses it metaphysically in between movement and immovability[10]. Photography can give us a vague idea of this phenomenon: it gives the impression of freezing the continuous mutability of the photographed subject in an eternally immovable "being".

Time does not flow everywhere in the same way, as Galileo's and Newton stated. Einstein's theory of relativity has suddenly erased their intuitive ideas about time but despite being very effective, and perfectly interpreting several phenomena, it has a limit, which cannot be overcome: it breaks down at the subatomic level; it does not explain

[9] For example, the gravity force between the sun and the earth is the same if we imagine them going backwards in time; similarly, the acceleration force of a rock is the same whether it is thrown up in the air or falls down. According to Carlo Rovelli (2017), «If I watch a movie showing a ball rolling, I would not be able to say if the movie is projecting in the right direction or backwards. However, if in the movie the ball slows down and then stops, I know that the movie is shown in the right way, since when projected backwards it would show implausible events: a ball starting its movement on its own. The stopping and the slowing down of the ball is due to the friction, which generates heath. Only where there is heath there is a distinction between the past and the future. The thoughts move from the past to the future and not vice versa, in fact thinking generates heath in the minds». The only general law of the physics distinguishing the past from the future is the one stated by Clausius: heat cannot move from a cold body to a warm one if nothings else around changes.

[10] Plato, *Parmenides*, 156 D–E: «What sort of thing is that?" "The instant. For the instant seems to indicate a something from which there is a change in one direction or the other. For it does not change from rest while it is still at rest, nor from motion while it is still moving; but there is this strange instantaneous nature, something interposed between motion and rest, not existing in any time, and into this and out from this that which is in motion changes into rest and that which is at rest changes into motion». In Plato. 1925. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol.9. Translated by Harold N. Fowler. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd.

that dimension. In that microscopic world, in addition to matter and space, time is different from how Newton or Einstein described it.

ATEMPORALITY

Despite the main characteristics of temporality can be recognised by each of us, nonetheless atemporality is without doubt a dimension difficult to grasp, despite its traces have been found/discussed both in quantum mechanics and in psychoanalysis[11]. Niels Bohr (1987), one of the fathers of quantum mechanics, stated, "Those who are not shocked when they first come across quantum theory cannot possibly have understood it". Here Bohr refers to several phenomena that can be observed at microscopic level, one of them being the so-called *quantum entanglement*. This happens when two or more photons are freed at the speed of light in opposite directions by an atom of calcium bombarded using ultrasounds. The paradox lies in the fact that per each of the changes in direction of each of these photons, all the others, in the *same instant*, undergo the same change in direction, as they were an indivisible *UNITY, independent from space and time.*

This indivisible unity, independent from time, is a characteristic of Plato's concept of atemporality (*Timaeus*, 37 C – 38 C), which for the philosopher was the essential attribute of God[12].

[11] «We have found by experience that unconscious mental processes are in themselves *"timeless"*. That is to say to begin with: they are not arranged chronologically, time alters nothing in them, nor can the idea of time be applied to them». Sigmund Freud. 1920. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. The International Psycho-Analytical Library, edited by Ernst Jones, No. 4, p.21 https://www.libraryofsocialscience.com/assets/pdf/freud_beyond_the_pleasure_principle.pdf See also Freud. 1976. *Opere*. Vol. 8: 1915-1917. Turin: Boringhieri, p.71; Kelly Noel-Smith. 2016. *Freud on Time and Timelessness*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.133-135.

[12] Plato, *Timaeus*, 37 C–38 C: «But inasmuch as the nature of the Living Creature was eternal, this quality it was impossible to attach in its entirety to what is generated; wherefore He planned to make a movable image of Eternity, and, as He set in order the Heaven, of that Eternity which abides in unity He made an eternal image, moving according to number, even that which we have named Time. For simultaneously with the construction of the Heaven He contrived the production of days, nights, months, and years, which existed not before the Heaven came into being. In addition, these are all portions of Time; even as "Was" and "Shall be" are generated forms of Time, although we apply them wrongly, without noticing, to Eternal Being. For we say that it "is" or "was" or "will be," whereas, in truth of speech, "is" alone is the appropriate term; "was" and "will be," on the other hand, are terms properly applicable to the Becoming which proceeds in Time, since both of these are motions; but it belongs not to that which is ever changeless in its uniformity

This unity has the same characteristics that Augustine (*Confessions* XI.13, 15-16) thought to find in the Atemporality in which God, the creator of time, lives.

In a passage from the *Trinity* (XV.26, 45-47) Augustine states:

> In that Highest Trinity which is God, there are no intervals of time, […] But let no one think of any times therein which imply a sooner and a later; because these things are not there at all...

PLATO'S UNWRITTEN DOCTRINES AND THE CONCEPT OF AN ATEMPORAL GOD

Some of the elements of Plato's thought, especially those referring to the so-called unwritten doctrines, which have puzzled philosophers for long, might be re-interpreted and coherently presented. In particular, here we focus on:

- In which sense is Time a moveable image of Atemporality
- The nature of an atemporal God and His temporal creation
- The true meaning of Socrates' prophetic demon

Plato gives a crucial importance to the concept of atemporality, since it is related deeply to the concept of God[13]. In Plato's work, God is within an atemporal dimension. In fact, in *Timaeus*, 37 C–38 C, the

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to become either older or younger through time, nor ever to have become so, nor to be so now, nor to be about to be so hereafter, nor in general to be subject to any of the conditions which Becoming has attached to the things which move in the world of Sense, these being generated forms of Time, which imitates Eternity and circles round according to number. And besides these we make use of the following expressions,— that what is become is become, and what is becoming is becoming, and what is about to become is about to become, and what is non-existent is< non-existent; but none of these expressions is accurate. However, the present is not, perhaps, a fitting occasion for an exact discussion of these matters. Time, then, came into existence along with the Heaven, to the end that having been generated together they might also be dissolved together, if ever a dissolution of them should take place; and it was made after the pattern of the Eternal Nature, to the end that it might be as like thereto as possible; for whereas the pattern is existent through all eternity, the copy, on the other hand, is through all time, continually having existed, existing, and being about to exist.» In Plato. 1925. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9. Translated by W.R.M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd.

[13] «What I assert is this,—that a man ought to be in serious earnest about serious things, and not about trifles; and that the object really worthy of all serious and blessed effort is God» Plato, *Laws* VII, 803 C. See *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. 1967 & 1968. Vols. 10 & 11. Translated by R.G. Bury. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd.

philosopher clearly states that God has created the present as a mobile copy/image of His Eternity: the instants forming our present are just the fleeting reflex/ images of that immovable, atemporal and eternal unity where God "is". According to Plato, the atemporal essence/reality of God is an eternal unity, since from God's perspective all past and future events are eternal and simultaneous, and coeval to an immovable and eternal present.

Christian Theology is in total agreement with this interpretation of God (see John 8.58: «Jesus said to them: In truth, in all truth I say: before Abraham was, I am»). However, Plato, in *Timaeus* 38 B, would not dwell on these aspects, and after having referred to such concepts, would stop arguing about them, referring to their inherent difficulty to be grasped.

Reale (2003) noted that in many of his dialogues, when the argument relates to the highest levels, Plato does not discuss them[14], but refers to his unwritten doctrines[15].

The main argument that Plato is reluctant to discuss in his written work is the nature of God:

> Now to discover the Maker and Father of this Universe were a task indeed; and having discovered Him, to declare Him unto all men was a thing impossible (*Timaeus* 28 C).

The concept of atemporality and its relationship with Time[16] is a nodal aspect of Plato's philosophy, but also something that he did not want to divulge in his written work, since he was afraid it might be misinterpreted [17]:

[14] Giovanni Reale shows that Plato's dialogues, which have all survived, do not contain all of his teaching, but only those doctrines suitable for dissemination by written texts. See Giovanni Reale. 2003. *Per una nuova interpretazione di Platone*. Milan: Vita e Pensiero, p.183.

[15] The authors of this paper refer to the interpretation of the unwritten doctrines of Plato provided by Reale (2003) in his exegesis of Plato, which enhances and integrates the School of Tübingen's explanation.

[16] An idea, how counter-intuitive are the deductions that one can make (and therefore easy to misunderstand), is given in the arguments of another important Plato's dialogue, *Parmenides*. This dialogue is centred on the relationship between the *One* and the *many*, where the *One* coincides with the atemporal and immutable eternity and the *many* with the temporal and multiple realities.

[17] Several passages show Plato's determination, widespread and respected even among the members of his Academy, not to put into writing the vertex of his thought. For example, in *Letter II*, 314 A–C: «Beware, however, lest these doctrines be ever

> But thus much I can certainly declare concerning all these writers, or prospective writers, who claim to know the subjects which I seriously study, whether as hearers of mine or of other teachers, or from their own discoveries; it is impossible, in my judgement at least, that these men should understand anything about this subject. There does not exist, nor will there ever exist, any treatise of mine dealing therewith (Plato, *Letter VII*, 341 A-342 A).

In particular, the following passage seems to refer to the Trinitarian nature of God:

> There is also another matter—much more valuable and divine […] you say that you have not had a sufficient demonstration of the doctrine concerning the nature of "the First." Now I must expound it to you in a riddling way in order that, should the tablet come to any harm "in folds of ocean or of earth," he that readeth may not understand. The matter stands thus: Related to the King of All are all things, and for his sake, they are, and of all things fair He is the cause. And related to the Second are the second things and related to the Third the third (Plato, *Letter II*, 312 D-313 C).

The authors of this paper agree with Merlan's argument attributing Letter II to Plato, and the implications that this may have on a deeper understanding of Plato's thinking.[18] According to Athenagoras (father

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divulged to uneducated people. For there are hardly any doctrines, I believe, which sound more absurd than these to the vulgar, or, on the other hand, more admirable and inspired to men of fine disposition. For it is through being repeated and listened to frequently for many years that these doctrines are refined at length, like gold, with prolonged labour. But listen now to the most remarkable result of all. Quite a number of men there are who have listened to these doctrines—men capable of learning and capable also of holding them in mind and judging them by all sorts of tests—and who have been hearers of mine for no less than thirty years and are now quite old; and these men now declare that the doctrines that they once held to be most incredible appear to them now the most credible, and what they then held most credible now appears the Opposite. So, bearing this in mind, have a care lest one day you should repent of what has now been divulged improperly. The greatest safeguard is to avoid writing and to learn by heart; for it is not possible that what is written down should not get divulged. For this reason I myself have never yet written anything on these subjects, and no treatise by Plato exists or will exist». In Plato. 1966. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 7. Translated by R.G. Bury. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd.

[18] See Philip Merlan. 1976. *Kleine philosophische Schriften*. Hildesheim: Olms, pp.42-50. Other historical and philological research, despite not being able to

of the Church educated at the Platonic Academy), those references of Plato to the *First*, the *Second* and the *Third* would indicate precisely the Christian God.[19]

With reference to the platonic "King of all", another father of the Church, Clement of Alexandria in *Exhortation to the Heathen* VI, stated: «Whence, O Plato, is that hint of the truth which thou givest? Whence this rich copiousness of diction, which proclaims piety with oracular utterance? ».

The concept of God was at the vertex of Plato's philosophy and the difficulty to communicate it (*Timaeus*, 28 C) persuaded the philosopher to write about it only partially.

In sum, what he clearly wrote regarding his theology[20] is that every single aspect of realty (both internal and external to us) has its hierarchal meaning,[21] value[22] and its being,[23] mainly as an expression of the presence of an atemporal God, aware of everything[24], supremely

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confirm without any doubt the attribution of *Letter II* to Plato, agrees that the Letter has been inspired by Plato's thinking and is reliable in its historical references.

[19] Athenagoras of Athens, *A Plea for the Christians*, 23.7. Translated by B. P. Pratten: «Did, then, he (Plato) who had contemplated the eternal Intelligence and God who is apprehended by reason, and declared His attributes—His real existence, the simplicity of His nature, the good that flows forth from Him that is truth, and discoursed of primal power, and how "all things are about the King of all, and all things exist for His sake, and He is the cause of all;" and about two and three, that He is "the second moving about the seconds, and the third about the thirds;"—did this man think, that to learn the truth concerning those who are said to have been produced from sensible things, namely earth and heaven, was a task transcending his powers? It is not to be believed for a moment».
http://www.logoslibrary.org/athenagoras/plea/23.html

[20] Commenting *Republic* 379 A, Roberto Radice states that this is a "passage that became very important, since the word *θεολογία* appears for the first time in the Greek and Western culture, probably a creation of Plato himself". See Platone. 1991. *Tutti gli scritti* , Milan: Rusconi, Note 73, p.1331.

[21] «In our eyes God will be "the measure of all things" in the highest degree—a degree much higher than is any "man" they talk of». Plato, *Laws*, IV 716 C, *op.cit.*

[22] «What I assert is this,—that a man ought to be in serious earnest about serious things, and not about trifles; and that the object really worthy of all serious and blessed effort is God». Plato, *Laws VII*, 803 C, *op.cit.*

[23] «"Then if we were to say in a word, 'if the one is not, nothing is,' should we be right?" "Most assuredly."». Plato, *Parmenides*, 166 C, *op.cit.*

[24] «Let us never suppose that God is inferior to mortal craftsmen who, the better they are, the more accurately and perfectly do they execute their proper tasks, small and great, by one single art,—or that God, who is most wise, and both willing and able to care, cares not at all for the small things which are the easier to care for—like one

good[25], creator and immovable model of the temporality in which we live[26] and in which he partakes.[27]

THE TRINITARIAN NATURE OF GOD IN THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

The entire Trinitarian theology is focused around a series of arguments and dogmas, which in a first instance seem enigmatic and irrational. The main sources of such statements and dogmas can be found in the New Testament and in the writings of the Fathers of the Church, from Origen to Augustin.

In this section, we briefly summarise some of the essential theological statements referring to the Trinity.

GOD is atemporally one and simultaneously three divine persons[28] (the Father, The Son and the Holy Ghost) who are identical in substance, power and eternity, who can only be distinguished by the

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who shirks the labor because he is idle and cowardly,—but only for the great». Plato, *Laws*, X 902 E–903 A, *op.cit.*

[25] «But as to saying that God, who is good, becomes the cause of evil to anyone, we must contend in every way that neither should anyone assert this». Plato, *Republic*, II 380 B. In Plato. 1969. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vols. 5 & 6. Translated by Paul Shorey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd.

[26] After having mentioned the "Father generator", Plato states that «He planned to make a movable image of Eternity, and, as He set in order the Heaven, of that Eternity which abides in unity He made an eternal image, moving according to number, even that which we have named Time». Plato, *Timaeus*, 37 D–38 C, *op.cit.*

[27] If in *Timaeus* (37 D–38 C), Plato had associated God to the atemporal Unity, in *Parmenides* (151 E-155 D) he states that the One takes part to time, however it is and it is not in time, it become and does not becomes.

[28] Augustine, *De Trinitate*, VI, 10: «Since God is one, but yet is a Trinity». Ibid., IV, 21: «Since in their proper substance wherein they are, the three are one, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the very same, by no temporal motion, above the whole creature, without any interval of time and place, and at once one and the same from eternity to eternity, as it was eternity itself, which is not without truth and charity. But, in my words, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are separated, and cannot be named at once, and occupy their own proper places separately invisible letters. And as, when I name my memory, and intellect, and will, each name refers to each severally, but yet each is uttered by all three; for there is no one of these three names that is not uttered by both my memory and my intellect and my will together [by the soul as a whole]; so the Trinity together wrought both the voice of the Father, and the flesh of the Son, and the dove of the Holy Spirit, while each of these things is referred severally to each person». See also *De Trinitate*, VIII, 1, *op.cit*.

kind of relationship linking one to the others[29].

THE FATHER:

- Shows a similarity with the memory of us human beings[30];
- Eternally generates the Son (*Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*, DS 150) enabling Him to be who He is (Augustine, *De Trinitate* II.1);
- Manifests Himself in His incarnated Son[31];

THE SON:

- Is associated with the Intellect[32];
- Is defined as beginning and end[33];
- In him all things hold together[34];
- Is the mediator between GOD and humankind and

[29] As the Lateranensis Council IV (AD 1215, Chapter 2, De errore abbatis Ioachim, DS 804) states that, the three divine persons are distinct among themselves for their original relations: "It is the Father who generated, the Son who is generated, and the Holy Ghost who proceeds". See also: Council of Toledo XI (AD 675), Symbolum, DS 528 and Council of Florence, Decretum pro Iacobitis (AD 1442), DS 1330. http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism_it/p1s2c1p2_it.htm

[30] Augustine, *De Trinitate* XV.23, III: «For although the memory in the case of man, and especially that memory which beasts have not—viz. the memory by which things intelligible are so contained as that they have not entered that memory through the bodily senses—has in this image of the Trinity, in proportion to its own small measure, a likeness of the Father».

[31] The Son «He is the image of the invisible God» (Col 1.15) and «who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being» (Hebrews 1.3). http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/_INDEX.HTM

[32] Augustine, *De Trinitate* XV.23: «…and likewise the understanding in the case of man, which by the purpose of the thought is formed thereby, when that which is known is said, and there is a word of the heart belonging to no tongue, has in its own great disparity some likeness of the Son».

[33] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, IV, 25: «The Son is neither simply one thing as one thing, nor many things as parts, but one thing as all things; whence also He is all things. For He is the circle of all powers rolled and united into one unity. Wherefore the Word is called the Alpha and the Omega, of whom alone the end becomes beginning, and ends again at the original beginning without any break. Wherefore also to believe in Him, and by Him, is to become a unit, being indissolubly united in Him; and to disbelieve is to be separated, disjoined, divided». Translated by William Wilson: http://www.logoslibrary.org/clement/stromata/425.html. See also Tertullian, *De Monogamiâ*, V.

[34] Colossians, I, 16c-17«He is before all things,and in him all things hold together»

consequently between eternity and time[35], immobility and dynamism;

THE HOLY GHOST

- Is associated with the prophetic ability to foresee future events[36];
- Has a special relationship with sanctity and perfection

Similarly to Plato, Augustine (*Confessions* II.37-41) argued that God is the creator of time and that his primary dimension is a unity (the One) encompassing the totality of past, present and future events[37] and that within every human being there is this atemporal and Unitarian divine presence listening to every human thought and experiencing every (past, present and future) human experience with a unique,

[35] 1 Tim 2:5: «For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human»
http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__P110.HTM

[36] 1 Corinthians 14.3, talking about the gifts of the Holy Ghost states that the one of prophecy is the most important. See also 1 Corinthians 12.9; 1 Thessalonians 5.19-21. In the *Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed* (DS 150) we read that the Holy Ghost had already spoken "through the profets". Clara Burini, in a note of *Gli apologeti greci* (2000), p.78, argues that the definition of "Spirit of Profecy" in Justin can be found in *I Apol*. 31, 1; 32, 2; («the holy and divine Spirit of prophecy»); 33, 5; 35, 3; 38,1; 39, 1; 50, 5; 41, 1; 42, 1; 44,1; («the holy Spirit of prophecy»); 51, 1; 53, 6; ; 59,1; 60, 8; 63, 2. See also: "Spirit of Prophecy" in Athenagoras of Athens, *A Plea for the Christians* 10, 4; 18, 2. St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon: «The Holy Spirit, through whom the prophets prophesied, and the fathers learned the things of God, and the righteous were led forth into the way of righteousness», in *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* (1920), translated and edited by J. Armitage Robinson. Justin, *I Apol.*, 61, 10-13; Clement, *I Clem.*, 8, 1; 13, 1; 16, 2; Barnabas, *Ep. Barn.*, 6.14; 12. 2; 19.7. Thomas Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate*, Quest. 12 Art. 5, Resp. 2: «Prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit». Augustine, *De Trinitate* IV.20.

[37] Augustine, *Confessions* XI.13, 15: «But if the roving thought of any one should wander through the images of bygone time, and wonder that You, the God Almighty, and All-creating, and All-sustaining, the Architect of heaven and earth, for innumerable ages refrained from so great a work before You would make it, let him awake and consider that he wonders at false things. For whence could innumerable ages pass by which You did not make, since You are the Author and Creator of all ages? Or what times should those be which were not made by You? Or how should they pass by if they had not been? Since, therefore, You are the Creator of all times, if any time was before You made heaven and earth, why is it said that You refrained from working? For that very time You made, nor could times pass by before You made times. But if before heaven and earth there was no time, why is it asked, What were You doing then? For there was no then when time was not».

simultaneous (and eternally present) absolute awareness.

A NOVEL INTERPRETATION OF THE TRINITY ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSEFUL EVOLUTION THEORY

In this section, we argue the parallelism between the Trinity and the concept of time at the basis of the Purposeful Evolution Theory philosophical paradigm interpreting the nature of God and the cosmos.

The following two definitions, the first one from Plato referring to the One «And there would be and was and is and will be»[38] and the second from the Bible «the one who is and who was and who is to come!»(John, *Revelation*, 1.8), clearly prove that Plato's philosophy on the concept of God's participation to time is in line with Christian Theology. Our argument reinterprets and discusses the Christian dogmas without adding any potentially estranged element. In fact, the PET paradigm discusses on the founding elements such as the theological concepts related to the awareness of God, his unity, trinity, atemporality, his being model and creator of temporality and God's interaction with temporality. In order to explain the enigma, the authors investigate every possible interaction between eternity and time and do so from the temporal perspective, following only the (temporal/earthly) criterion to divide conceptually the being in *past, present and future.* In this way, the awareness of God, despite being atemporally one and indivisible, can be conceived in three parts. This specific way of conceiving the awareness of God can be traced back to Plato[39].

According to the PET this tripartition is the access key to Plato's unwritten doctrines and to the deepest meanings of the Christian Dogma. Bearing in mind the parallelism of the First, Second and Third, as described by Plato, to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost as indicated by the Christian Dogma, one could establish the following link between the above tripartition of God's essence and the three main

[38] The complete passages is «But since the one partakes of time and can become older and younger, must it not also partake of the past, the future, and the present?». «Certainly». «And there would be and was and is and will be». In Plato, *Parmenides*, 155 C-D, *op.cit.*

[39] «Whom? I asked. Is it the sort of person who might know, besides what is to be, both everything that has been and now is, and might be ignorant of nothing? Let us suppose such a man exists: you are not going to tell me, I am sure, of anyone alive who is yet more knowing than he». Plato, *Charmides*, 174 A. In Plato. 1955. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 8. Translated by W.R.M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd.

tenses of time:

Awareness of the First that is the *Father – matrix of the past*.
Awareness of the Second that is the *Son – matrix of the present*.
Awareness of the Third that is the *Holy Ghost – matrix of the future*.

Table 1 presents a synthesis of the main convergences that the PET has identified between the Trinitarian theology and temporality.

Table 1: Time and Trinity

	PURPOSEFUL EVOLUTION THEORY		CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
	TEMPORALITY	MAIN SIMILARITIES BETWEEN TEMPORALITY AND THE ATEMPORAL TRINITY	ATEMPORAL TRINITY
PAST	The *past* is an array of elapsed events that, contrary to future ones, can be archived in the *memory*.	If we compare, as Augustine did, the Father to memory (from where we can only retrieve the experience of elapsed events) we can associate the Father to the past	The FATHER is comparable to *memory*.
PAST & PRESENT	Every recording of the *past* can tangibly manifest itself to us only in the *present* time.	Since the past tangibly manifests itself to us (by means of echoes, finds, traces, sediments, memories, etc.) only in the present time, it can be associated to the Father who manifests Himself in the Son incarnated within the temporality of the present.	The FATHER manifests Himself in the incarnated SON.

PRESENT & PAST	Everything producing heat, falling under the laws of the thermodynamics, defines the time arrow, which is the *present* proceeding from the *past* towards the future.	Since the act of thinking is a thermodynamic activity, every thought (as every intellectual activity) can only manifest itself in the present time and does not proceed nor have origin from the future, but from the traces that the mental activity (a thermodynamic activity as well) of the past has left in memory. Again, we can associate the Son to the present and the Father to the past.	The SON is comparable to the intellect and proceeds, generated, from the FATHER, who is comparable to memory.
PRESENT & PAST	Under the dominion of temporality, everything derives in each instant its own dynamics and conformation directly from those ones that had in the previous instant, now part of the *past*. Because of these universal characteristics of the *present* time, the entire genetic heritage is inherited from the previous generations and not from the future ones.	Considering that the term *generating* means *giving origin/life* to a being of the same species, and that the past and the present, despite being different, belong to the same species (time), one could reasonably state that the past *generates* the present enabling it to be what it is. Also for this reason, we can respectively associate the Father and the Son to the past and the present.	The FATHER eternally generates the SON enabling Him to be who He is.

PRESENT	The *present* is a chronological array of instants and each instant can be defined as *alpha and omega* since each instant is so fleeting that beginning and end coincide in itself.	The presence of *alpha* and *omega* in each single instant makes possible to associate the present to the Son.	The SON is *alpha* and *omega* (both beginning and end).
PRESENT	The *present* is the only tense when something may exist and manifest itself, including any recording of the past or prevision about the future.	This coexistence of all things in every single moment makes it possible to associate the present with the Son.	In the SON, all things hold together.
PRESENT & FUTURE	Within temporality, the present is a highly special tense: on one hand, it is median between past and future, and between time and atemporality; on the other hand this is the only tense when something may exists and manifests itself.	The Divine Person most suitable to be incarnated in a body that can only exists in the present time, the most suitable one to mediate between the atemporal eternity and the temporality of the present, is without doubt He who incarnates the essential characteristics of the present, hence the Son, median between the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the same way that the present is median between the past and the future.	The SON mediates between the One and the many, between the Trinity and the humankind. His incarnation in a human body falls within this mediating activity.

FUTURE	In the temporal dimension of the Cosmos, traces of atemporality have been found. Therefore, despite being difficult to find, atemporality does exist and it is not completely disjointed from time, where one can only have memory of the past and not of the future.	If God, One and Trinum, had created time as a movable image of the atemporality, essence of His Divine Nature, then the matrix of the future can be neither the Father, nor the Son, but only the Divine Person who has a special relationship with foreknowledge, hence the Holy Ghost.	Prophecy is a gift of the HOLY GHOST.

In the atemporal dimension, the awareness of God is one and indivisible. However, this awareness, despite being unique and atemporal, it simultaneously directs itself everywhere, in any possible direction, therefore also in the temporal dimension. From the human being point of view, living in the present time, the awareness of God might be conceived as the sum of three distinct[40] directions:

- Towards the past
- Towards the present
- Towards the future

Each of the above three perspectives is atemporally addressed to the fruition of eternity. As in a game of mirrors, it is possible to be aware of something; to be aware of being aware of something; to be aware of being aware of being aware of something; and so on. Therefore, the *interpenetration* of the three divine persons or awareness is absolute. Following from this, we can paraphrase Augustin, stating, «Beside this, they are infinite in themselves. Each of them is in each of the others, all are in each one, each one in all, all in all and all are one thing»[41]. It is one, only eternal awareness addressed, on one hand

[40] «But surely the one was shown to have parts, a beginning, a middle, and an end». Plato, *Timaeus*, 153 C, *op.cit.*

[41] Augustine, *De Trinitate* VI.10. See also Concilio di Firenze, Decretum pro Iacobitis (1442), DS 1331: «Per questa unità il Padre è tutto nel Figlio, tutto nello Spirito Santo; il Figlio tutto nel Padre, tutto nello Spirito Santo; lo Spirito Santo è tutto nel Padre, tutto nel Figlio».

atemporally towards itself, and on the other hand towards every past, present and future temporal reality[42].

Such unity, in conformity to the Christian theology, can express itself because of three *awarenesses* identical for *substance*, *power and eternity*. These awarenesses can be distinguished only on a relational basis, namely for the position and role that each of them has with respect to the other two.

In particular, we can say that, despite being memory of the same eternity:

The person *awareness* of the Father is the matrix of the past, superintending it from the atemporal eternity and therefore is comparable to memory;

The person *awareness* of the Son is the matrix of the present; it superintends it from the atemporal eternity and therefore can be defined as intellect, and alpha and omega;

The person *awareness* of the Holy Ghost is the matrix of the future; it superintends it from the atemporal eternity and therefore may bestow the gift of prophecy.

The argument presented by Achtner (2009), where the author refers to Confessions XI, 26, 27 and especially 28 supports the possibility that human awareness in Augustin was similar to what we have discussed so far about divine awareness. Table 2 summarises Achtner's argument discussing the Augustinian idea of human awareness (Achtner, 2009).

Table 2 Time and consciousness in Augustin

Time	Consciousness/*animus*
Past	Memory (*praesens de prPETeritis memoria*)
Present	Attention (*praesens de praesentibus contuitus*)
Future	Expectation (*praesens de futuris expectation*)

Source: Achtner, 2009

The intellect works in the present, but its present *action* can also

[42] With reference to the concept of divine omniscience in Plato's philosophy, besides the already cited *Laws* X 903 A and *Charmides*, 174 A, see *Parmenides*, 134 C: «And if anything partakes of absolute knowledge, you would say that there is no one more likely than God to possess this most accurate knowledge?».

influence, change the future, something that the intellect cannot do in the case of past events, since these cannot be changed once they have happened.

Athenagoras (*A Plea for the Christians*, 10.2) associated the intellect to the «Son of God in the Idea and Action» and as such, this could influence the present and the future. This association can help understand the following statement by Plato:

> Swear by the God that is Ruler of all that is and that shall be, and swear by the Lord and Father of the Ruler and Cause. Whom, if we are real philosophers, we shall all know truly so far as men well-fortuned can (*Letter VI*, 323 D).

The key to the interpretation of the above passage lies in the fact that on one hand, the intellect expresses its influence both on the present and future, and on the other hand it derives its existence and ability to act from memory, which can be directly associated to the past, hence to the origin of everything.

If we compared the above passage «Father of the Ruler and Cause» with what is written in the *Letter II*, 312 D–313 C, and particularly with the issue «much more valuable and divine […] the nature of "the First."», we can infer that this First was actually that Father, since writing about Him the author of the Letter II states: «Related to the King of All are all things, and for his sake they are, and of all things fair He is the cause». Then he adds that «related to the Second are the second things and related to the Third the third […] », aiming to show in a synthetic and enigmatic way the divine issue. Athenagoras, father of the church and former member of the Platonic Academy, interpreted the above statement as an evident sign that Plato's philosophy had already conceived God as *unum et trinum*.

On the basis of the above argument, one could suppose that for Plato and/or his Academy the reality to be linked to the First would be related to the past and memory; the reality to be related to the Second would refer to the present and the intellect; and that the reality to be connected to the Third would relate to the future and the prophetic gift.

However, if the Third is related to the concept of predicting the future, then he is also directly connected to the concepts of infallibility and holiness, which allows us to rightly name it as the Holy Ghost. In order to understand this, one has to shed a light on a concept, the temperance, which Plato has widely discussed. Reale (2003) has described it as "dominion of oneself, moderation and rational balance"

qualities also describing well Socrates, who would humbly state he knew not to know,[43] despite Delphi's oracles had defined him as the wisest among the men.

In *Philebus* (48 B–D), Plato makes Socrates say that ignorance and stupidity induce men to ignore themselves, their real identity, because they consider themselves either more handsome, or richer, or more gifted than they are[44].

According to Plato, the consciousness of the self can happen only by taming every impulse dictated by stupidity and ignorance, and the main virtue that can do so is the temperance:

> And so this is being temperate, or temperance, and knowing oneself—that one should know what one knows and what one does not know. (Plato, *Charmides*, 167 A)

And

> For while badness could never come to know both virtue and itself, native virtue through education will at last acquire the science both of itself and badness. (Plato, *Republic* III, 409 D)

Achieving the consciousness of self is for Plato a quest of great importance, since the deepest part of us is directly connected with God: «…the part we call divine which rules supreme in those who are fain to follow justice…» (Plato, *Timaeus*, 41 C).

If it is true, as Plato stated in *Protagoras* (322 A), that man is *partaker of a divine portion*, due to *his nearness of kin to deity*, then also atemporality should be somehow connected with humankind. When in his dialogues Plato describes Socrates - the man he considered most temperate and therefore the most favourite one in the difficult task to discover his true self – he refers often to the atemporal dimension of human inwardness. Such references concern mainly with the Socratic demon and his prophetic gift. In fact, the foresight itself shows an access to the atemporal dimension: this is the only dimension

[43] See Plato, *Apology*, 23 A–B. In Plato. 1977. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol.1. Translated by Harold N. Fowler. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd.

[44] «[…] But by far the greatest number, I fancy, err in the third way, about the qualities of, the soul, thinking that they excel in virtue when they do not. […] And of all the virtues, is not wisdom the one to which people in general lay claim, thereby filling themselves with strife and false conceit of wisdom?». Plato, *Philebus*, 49 A. In *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9, *op.cit.*

where the future - eternally co-existing with the present and the past - can be known as it was present.

In the human inwardness, Plato saw God's atemporality (where everything, also the three tenses, becomes one). He thought that a good man, temperate and truly wise, could access it both in life, as Socrates, understanding himself, and in death:

> […] I also assert, both in jest and in earnest, that when one of his like [the most truly wisest] completes his allotted span at death, I would say if he still be dead, he will not partake any more of the various sensations then as he does now, but having alone partaken of a single lot and having become one out of many, will be happy and at the same time most wise and blessed, […] (Plato, *Epinomis*, 992 B)[45]

The vision of the future as it were present makes anybody infallible. God's infallibility is a direct consequence of his being in an atemporal dimension, since from His atemporality He cannot make any single mistake: "he would have seen it in advance and immediately corrected it" (Piccioni 1996; 2012). After all, also Socrates' demon has the prophetic gift, and is therefore infallible:

> […] a wonderful thing has happened to me. For hitherto the customary prophetic monitor always spoke to me very frequently and opposed me even in very small matters, if I was going to do anything I should not; […] for the accustomed sign would surely have opposed me if I had not been going to meet with something good (Plato, *Apology*, 40 A-C).

This passage, together with a few others (Ibid., 41 C-D, 42 A)[46], seems to imply that Plato was aware of two paradoxes, which can be linked to the faculty of seeing the future as it was present (Piccioni 1996). The solution to the first paradox affirms that the prophetic vision makes us infallible by definition. Let us suppose that the wisest choice for Socrates would be to go out from a maze with five exits and an infinite number of cul-de-sacs. Knowing in advance that crossing the threshold of one of these cul-de-sacs, one would find himself at the same starting point, after a long journey back and forth, would allow Socrates to avoid all cul-de-sacs, but would not affect his freedom to choose the exit.

In Plato's philosophy, the biggest mistake is the sin, as departure from virtues and beauty that he strictly connects with the concept of

[45] In *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9, *op.cit.*
[46] See also Plato, *Theages*, 128 B–130 A. In *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 8, *op.cit.*

sanctity and love. Consequently, those who benefit from the prophetic gift not only stretch towards infallibility, but also towards sanctity and love. In *Theages* (128 B–130 A) Plato makes Socrates say:

> But what I always say, you know, is that I am in the position of knowing practically nothing except one little subject, that of love-matters. In this subject, however, I claim to be skilled above anybody who has ever lived or is now living in the world. […] There is something spiritual, which, by a divine dispensation, has accompanied me from my childhood up. It is a voice that, when it occurs, always indicates to me a prohibition of something I may be about to do, but never urges me on to anything; and if one of my friends consults me and the voice occurs, the same thing happens: it prohibits, and does not allow him to act. And I will produce witnesses to convince you of these facts.

Soon after, he quotes the example of two friends: Charmides and Timarchus, who did not follow the warning of Socrates' prophetic demon, and had to face two mishaps, one of them fatal.

In *Charmides* (173 A-174 C) Plato states that atemporality, therefore the gift of foresight, not only makes the temperate person – who has discovered his true nature - infallible and lucky, but also it transmits on him the highest knowledge. The atemporal faculty to foresee the future, not only allows to avoid any cul-de-sac, or "to get out unharmed" from the perils of sea and war, but also to avoid any kind of mistakes: grammatical, mathematic, geometric[47], etc., and in the last instance, would allow, as Plato states, to know the good and evil.

However, as Plato argues in *Euthyphro* (3 B–C), discussing about foresight causes misunderstandings and derision. It is likely for this reason that the philosopher refused to write about the origin from which, in his opinion, goodness, sanctity, perfection, infallibility and

[47] According to Plato, geometry, as mathematics, is a reality that has always been and always will be atemporally. Pythagoras, who demonstrated the famous theorems, can be compared to Christopher Columbus. Both have expanded our horizons, without creating nothing new, but bringing to light what already existed. It is for this reason that the authors of this paper want to believe the tradition that at the entrance of Plato's Academy it was written: «Let no one ignorant of geometry enter here». See Reale (1991) in a note to Platone. *Tutti gli scritti* where he states, «An excellent documentation on this inscription can be found in H.D. Saffrey, ΑΓΕΩΜΕΤΡΗΤΟΣ ΜΗΔΕΙΣ ΕΙ ΣΙ ΤΩ. Une inscription légendaire, *Revue des Ètudes Grecques*, 1968, 81, pp.67-87».

unity of God derive.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper had addressed a crucial philosophical question related to the nature of God and the link between Eternity and Time. It focussed on the Trinitarian nature of God arguing that this has been discussed already in Plato's theology and was part of Plato's unwritten doctrines. We have no proofs that Plato intended God as Trinity as in the Christian Dogma, however, all the clues support that the Trinitarian nature of God is a consequence of Plato's concept of time as movable image of Atemporality. In fact, the main argument of this paper stems from this same definition of Time.

The paper further explores the above argumentation, referring to the novel Purposeful Evolution Theory paradigm, which interprets Time as in Plato, as a movable image of Eternity. The philosophical demonstration creates a parallelism between Time and Trinity, stating that the relationship among past, present and future coincides with the relationship among the three persons of the Trinity. The authors argued that if an atemporal God existed, He could not be but the One and the Three at the same time and agreed with the Fathers of the Church who considered Socrates and Plato as bearers of the *lógoi spermatikòi*. In fact, if God existed, and where in the atemporal dimension cannot be but the ONE / *Unum*. However, seen from a temporal point of view, he cannot be but *trinum*. Atemporality, as discussed by Plato and the Fathers of the Church, is in communication with time, therefore it is possible to create a parallelism between the nature of the atemporal God, creator of time, and the perception of temporality from the human being point of view.

The association of the time's tenses (past, present and future) to the atemporal nature of God demonstrates specific characteristics of God that are in line with the Christian Dogma of Trinity. For instance, prophecy, the ability to foresee the future, is possible only if those who live in time have access to the atemporal dimension. The ability to foresee the future brings, as a direct consequence, infallibility, which is the ability to avoid mistakes. The word *sin* in Plato's philosophy as in the New Testament is synonymous of *mistake*, therefore those who predict the future cannot be but without sin, hence good as God, who is perfectly good. The creation itself is perfect since every mistake can be predicted in advance and be avoided by the perfectly good God.

The above argument not only explains the infallibility, the goodness

and perfection of God, but can also be referred to Socrates' *prophetic dæmon* as debated in Plato's dialogues. Socrates' dæmon was suggesting what not to do (hence the mistakes to be avoided) and not what to do, living intact his free will. This is perfectly logic, because the ability to predict the future allows only avoiding mistakes, since it does not show the correct way, but only indicates how not to follow the wrong ways. This explains Plato's emphasis on Socrates' dæmon and its characteristics since they are strictly connected to the vertex of his philosophy, which is centred on the concept of an atemporal God and its relation with Time. Furthermore, this also explains Plato's ethics, based on the idea of Good that is atemporal and would not allow mistakes. In particular, the above discussion connects to the debate the Holy Ghost has a special relationship with the concept of infallibility (avoiding mistakes/sins) and therefore Holiness. We proved that behind the assertion of the Fathers of the Church regarding the Trinity, there is a rational way to explain why the three persons have specific names and attributes. This has its roots in Plato's philosophy. We cannot say that Plato believed in a God *Unum et trinum*, but there are many clues in this direction and most importantly, this is the inevitable conclusion of the philosopher's statement that time is the movable image of Atemporality.

The debate about time and God has been endless. Many philosophers (Origen, Augustine, Thomas of Aquinas, Hegel, etc.) have reasoned around the concept of time and eternity, shading some light on the relationship between time and God, but nobody so far has attempted rational explanation of the nature of God, establishing a strong parallelism among the time tenses (past, present and future) and the three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Ghost), in this way explaining infallibility and holiness of God. The authors are aware of the potential controversial nature and limitation of the study, and wish to spur further debate on the topic. Plato decided not to explain the vertex of his thoughts in writing, but only gives little clues about it in his dialogues, since he was fully aware of the inherent difficulty of debating such issues. We do not have strong evidence that Plato conceived God as *unum et trinum*, but this seems a direct consequence of his statement that time is a movable image of atemporality/eternity and this is at the basis of what we have discussed in this paper. This research may open new avenues regarding the anthropic cosmological principle and the overall interpretation of the cosmos, whose evolution cannot be casual, but is finalised to life. Further research should be

undertaken on the relationship between the nature of God, as interpreted in this paper, and its creation, the Universe. In particular, our research seems to indicate a new path bridging the atemporal phenomena that have been demonstrated in quantum mechanics and classical physics interpreting the temporal dimension with which human kind is familiar.

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