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TIME AS A DIMENSION OF BYZANTINE IDENTITY

Identity in Byzantium

Identity – going back to the Byzantine Congress in Copenhagen¹ (1996) – is a current issue of research in Byzantine Studies. Identity is closely linked with a sense of belonging². Though the systems of cultural, religious, moral and ideological rules differ in the different regions of the Mediterranean, they are all deeply rooted in a fundamental need for belonging and express a need for communication with like-minded individuals. Hence, it is not astonishing that in Medieval Studies the development of a collective identity is of particular interest given the mythical *ethnogenesis* of many nations before the very beginning of their “history”³. With respect to *ethnogenesis*, Byzantium is one of the rare exceptions: it has no mythical origin because its prehistory is an amalgam of Christian ideology and the later history of the Roman Empire⁴.

Ancient, Byzantine and modern Greek identity have common elements, but also significant differences. In particular, the idea of an unbroken *continuum* from the Ancient past to the Modern Greek present – which was at least in part provoked or intensified by Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer’s theories – was (and still is) under discussion⁵.

¹ *Byzantium. Identity, Image, Influence. XIX. International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Major Papers*, ed. F. FLEDELIUS, Copenhagen 1996, and specifically: Plenary Session I – The Identity of Byzantium.

² Always a rewarding topic for political and anthropological scientists, it actually has gained currency again, see e.g. B. LATOUR, M. LILLA, *Heimat: Was bedeutet sie heute?*, “Die Zeit” Nr. 12, March 14, 2019, p. 40sq.

³ See: e.g., P.J. GEARY, *The Myth of Nations. The Medieval Origins of Europe*, Princeton 2002, and the overview in *Integration und Herrschaft. Ethnische Identitäten und soziale Organisation im Frühmittelalter*, ed. W. POHL, M. DIESENBERGER, Wien 2002 [= FGM, 3].

⁴ See: J. KODER, *Byzanz, die Griechen und die Romaioisynē – eine “Ethnogenese” der “Römer”?*, [in:] *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern*, vol. I, ed. H. WOLFRAM, W. POHL, Vienna 1990 [= DKAW.PhH, 201], p. 103–111; IDEM, *Byzantium as Seen by Itself – Images and Mechanisms at Work*, [in:] *Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Byzantine Studies Sofia, 22–27 August 2011, I. Plenary Papers*, Sofia 2011, p. 69–81.

⁵ See: e.g., T.G. ZERVAS, *The Making of a Modern Greek Identity. Education, Nationalism, and the Teaching of a Greek National Past*, [New York] 2012 [= EEM, 790], and basically E. HOBBSAWM, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1997.

For the Byzantines in the Eastern Empire, the self-definition as *Romaioi* (“Romans”) had dominated since the 4th century⁶. They used this term, mostly without too much reflection, in order to express their belonging to the Christian Greek Roman empire. To be a *Roman* was normal; it did not express a particular relationship to ancient Rome or any conscious sense of ethnic belonging, but more or less a political and ideological superiority and, as such, a delimitation from other empires or states. The name *Romaioi* was adopted and adapted into *Rûmî* since late antiquity by the Syrians and the Arabs, and later also by Turkish tribes. Arabic scholars and writers made a clear distinction between the Byzantines, the *Rûmî*, and the ancient Greeks, the *Iûnânîûn*: Al-Ġahiz (d. 868), a member of the ‘House of Wisdom’ (*bait al-hikma*) in Bagdad, denied their hellenic tradition, maintaining that the ancient *Iûnânîûn* had been savants (‘*ulamā*’), whereas the *Rûmî* were only artisans (*ṣunnā*)⁷.

The ancient Greek term for identity is *tautotes*. Its notion was discussed in its traditional meaning, in contrast to the opposite *heterotes* (“otherness”)⁸, also by Christian authors since Late Antiquity⁹ (e.g. in Clemens of Alexandria’s *Stromata*¹⁰ and in Damascius’ *Parmenides*¹¹). The approach in the *Doctrina patrum*

⁶ Later also *Romioi*, to be found in written sources since the 16th century, see GEORGIUS CHORTATZES, *Ερωφίλη*, 6.23–25, ed. S. ALEXIOU, M. APOSKITI, Athens 1988: Πού τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἱ βασιλείες, πού τῶ Ρωμιῶν οἱ τόσες / πλοῦσες καί μπορεζάμενες χώρες, πού τόσες γνώσες / καί τέχνες, πού ’ναι οἱ δόξες τως;..., and half a century later MARINUS TZANES ΜΡΟΥΝΙΑΛΕΣ, *Ὁ Κρητικός Πόλεμος*, 2.1.87–90 (*et passim*), ed. S. ALEXIOU, M. APOSKITI, Athens 1995: Μά τήν ἀρμάδα τῶν Τουρκῶν εἶδας’ ἐκεῖ ν’ ἀράξου / καί ἄρχοντες πολλοί, Ρωμιοί, ἐτρέχανε νά φτάξου / στή χώρα, στήν πατρίδα τως, ὄγια νά πολεμοῦσι, / νά διώχνου τοὺς Ἀγαρηνοῦς, κ’ ἐκεῖνοι νά κοποῦσι. – *Romioi* is still in use: Personally I remember the quarrel of two Greek fisherman in the early seventies of the 20th c., ending with the angry question: So, what are you, a Roman or a Turk (Ρωμιός εἶσαι ἢ Τούρκος;)?

⁷ J. KODER, *Griechische Identitäten im Mittelalter. Aspekte einer Entwicklung*, [in:] *Byzantium State and Society. In Memory of Nikos Oikonomides*, ed. A. AVRAMEA, A. LAIOU, E. CHRYSOS, Athens 2003, p. 297–319; IDEM, *Remarks on the Linguistic Romanness in Byzantium*, [in:] *Transformations of Romanness*, ed. W. POHL, C. GANTNER, C. GRIFONI, M. POLLHEIMER-MOHAUPT, Berlin–Boston 2018 [= MillSt, 71], p. 111–121. – NB. *ṣunnā*, not *sunna* (“usual practice”).

⁸ Mainly for ideological and religious aspects of otherness see C.D. MERANTZAS, *ΑΝΑ-ΧΩΡΑ(-Η) ΣΗ: μορφές ετερότητας στον βυζαντινό πολιτισμό*, Athens 2014.

⁹ Most of the following quotations from Greek texts are owed to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae® Digital Library*, ed. M.C. PANTELIA, University of California, Irvine, <http://www.tlg.uci.edu> [II–III 2019].

¹⁰ CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, *Stromata*, 8.6.19.5sq, [in:] *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vol. II–III, ed. L. FRÜCHTEL, O. STÄHLIN, U. TREU, Berlin 1960–1970 [= GCS, 52]: ...μόνη δὲ εὐδοκίμει ἢ τοῦ γένους εἰς εἶδη τομῆ, ὅφ’ ἤς χαρακτηρίζεται ἢ τε ταυτότης ἢ κατὰ γένος ἢ τε ετερότης ἢ κατὰ τὰς ἰδικὰς διαφοράς...

¹¹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parmenidem*, [in:] *Damascii successoris dubitationes et solutiones*, vol. II, ed. C.É. RUELLE, Paris 1899, p. 195.20sqq: Τὸ τοίνυν ἕβδομον [scil. the 7th out of 12 questions: διὰ τί οὐδὲ ὄντιναοῦν χρόνον ἔφη ἕτερον εἶναι ἄνευ ταυτότητος· οὐ γὰρ ἐν χρόνῳ τὸ δημιουργικὸν ἔν] καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπελύσατο δεόντως ὅτι τε ἐκ περιουσίας, εἰ μὴ ἐν χρόνῳ, οὐδὲ ἐν αἰῶνι σταίη ἂν ἢ ετερότης ἄνευ ταυτότητος, καὶ ὅτι ἐγχρόνων πραγμάτων ἐστὶν ὑποστατικόν· τοῦτο δὲ ἔν. Μῆποτε δὲ καὶ ἐν-

was influential on others; its content was later received by John of Damascus and Michael Psellus¹². The *Doctrina patrum* explains the three *modoi* of difference between identity and otherness as follows¹³:

Identity is the indistinguishability, according to which the sense of the indicated term owns in every respect its uniqueness and knows in no way any difference. One must know that the identity is understandable in three modes. It is identical with kind... it is also identical with species... finally, it is identical with number... The difference is also understandable three-fold: It is a difference in kind and species and again number.

In later centuries, Michael Psellus¹⁴ and John Italus¹⁵ speak about the contrast of *tautotes* vs. *heterotes* as a subdivision of *genos*, whereas, for example, Pseudo-Zonaras defines *tautotes* separately¹⁶ from “otherness”, a term which he expresses primarily with *diaphora*¹⁷.

Byzantine scholars, however, did not use the term *tautotes* in the meaning of “identity”, as it is understood nowadays in social and political sciences, namely, the sum of beliefs about oneself, in particular the individual feeling as a personality

δείκνυται ὁ πάλοι ἐδείκνυμεν, ὅτι τὸν δημιουργικὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον ῥητέον. – p. 209: ...ἀμέλει τὸ αὐτὸ πρότερον ἀποδεικνύων, οὐκ ἐδεῖθη τῶν ὀνομάτων, ἀλλ’ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἐδείκνυ τῶν εἰδῶν οὐδένα χρόνον τὴν ἑτερότητα μένουσαν ἄνευ ταυτότητος.

¹² IOANNES DAMASCENUS, *Fragmenta philosophica*, 10, [in:] *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. I, ed. P.B. KOTTER, Berlin 1969 [= PTS, 7]; MICHAEL PSELLUS, *Theologica*, op. 24, vol. I, ed. P. GAUTIER, Leipzig 1989, vol. II, ed. J.M. DUFFY, L.G. WESTERINK, Munich–Leipzig 2002 (cetera: MICHAEL PSELLUS, *Theologica*).

¹³ *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione verbi*, ed. F. DIEKAMP, Münster 1907 (cetera: *Doctrina patrum*), col. 256: ταυτότης δὲ ἐστὶν ἀπαραλλαξία, καθ’ ἣν ὁ τοῦ σημαιομένου λόγος τὸ πάντη κέκτηται μοναδικόν, μηδενὶ τρόπῳ διαφορᾶς γνωριζομένης. Ἰστέον ὅτι ἡ ταυτότης κατὰ τρεῖς τρόπους λαμβάνεται. ἔστι γὰρ ταυτὸν τῷ γένει... ἔστι ταυτὸν καὶ τῷ εἶδει. πάλιν ἐστὶ ταυτὸν τῷ ἀριθμῷ... καὶ ἡ διαφορὰ τριτῶς λαμβάνεται. ἔστι γὰρ διαφορὰ τῷ γένει καὶ διαφορὰ τῷ εἶδει καὶ πάλιν τῷ ἀριθμῷ.

¹⁴ MICHAEL PSELLUS, *Opuscula philosophica minora*, vol. II, *Opuscula psychologica, theologica, daemologica*, ed. D.J. O’MEARA, Leipzig 1989 (cetera: MICHAEL PSELLUS, *Opuscula*), p. 38: Πέντε τὰ γένη κατὰ Πλάτωνα, οὐσία, ταυτότης, ἑτερότης, κίνησις, στάσις, οὐκ ὡς τὰ παρὰ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ὑπάλληλα, ἀλλ’ ὡς πανταχοῦ διήκοντα.

¹⁵ IOANNES ITALUS, *Quaestiones quodlibetales* (Ἀπορίαι καὶ λύσεις), ed. P.-P. JOANNOU, Ettal 1956 [= SPB, 4] (cetera: IOANNES ITALUS, *Quaestiones*), p. 72: τὸ γὰρ ὄν οὐκ ἔστιν οὐσία, καθ’ ὃ τῶν ἄλλων ἔρημόν ἐστι, κινήσεως, στάσεως, ἑτερότητός τε καὶ ταυτότητος, ἡ δὲ οὐσία μετὰ τούτων, καὶ ὄν. ἔστι γὰρ ταῦτα οἰονεῖ στοιχεῖα αὐτῆς, ἢ μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν παθήματα καὶ ἐνέργειαι, διὸ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ λέγεται εἶναι.

¹⁶ PSEUDO-IOANNES ZONARAS, *Lexikon*, tau 1712, ed. J.A.H. TITTMANN, Leipzig 1808 (cetera: PSEUDO-IOANNES ZONARAS, *Lexikon*): Ταυτότης κατὰ τρεῖς τρόπους λαμβάνεται. ἔστι γὰρ ταυτὸν τῷ γένει... ἔστι ταυτὸν καὶ τῷ (10) εἶδει... πάλιν ταυτὸν ἐστὶ καὶ τῷ ἀριθμῷ... καὶ ἡ διαφορὰ γὰρ τριχῶς λαμβάνεται. ἔστι γὰρ διαφορὰ τῷ γένει, καὶ διαφορὰ τῷ εἶδει.

¹⁷ PSEUDO-IOANNES ZONARAS, *Lexikon*, delta 516: διαφορὰ... τὸ ἐν τῇ συνηθείᾳ ἢ παραλλαγῇ καὶ ἀνομοιότης... καὶ πάλιν διαφορὰ ἐστὶν ἡ κατὰ πλειόνων καὶ διαφερόντων τῷ εἶδει, ἐν τῷ ὁποίῳ τί ἐστὶ κατηγορούμενον... ἢ λόγος, καθ’ ὃν ἢ πρὸς ἄλληλα τῶν σημαιομένων ἑτερότης σώζεσθαι πέφυκε, καὶ τοῦ πῶς ἐστὶ δηλωτικός.

or – in the case of collective identity – as belonging to a social, ethnic, or cultural group. Nevertheless, we observe some interest in collective identity, though expressed in other terms: an informative example is Nicephorus Blemmydes in the 13th century. He discusses the meanings of *génos* and observes, that *génos* describes the origin (*arche*) of a person or group, and he makes the following distinction:

The meanings of ‘genos’ may differ. ‘Genos’ may refer to the origin of each one’s provenance, be it of his procreator or his home... Hence, the origin of the provenance is dual, natural and local¹⁸.

Fundamental manifestations of any dimension of identity – and in particular collective identity – are *language*¹⁹ (including *culture*)²⁰, *religious* (and *political*) *commitment*²¹, and *space* (Greek keywords for local regional and supraregional

¹⁸ NICEPHORUS BLEMMYDES, *Epitome logica*, [in:] PG, vol. CXLII, col. 753: ...Τὰ σημαινόμενα τοῦ γένους διάφορα. Γένος γὰρ λέγεται καὶ ἡ ἐκάστου τῆς γενέσεως ἀρχή, εἴτε ἀπὸ τοῦ τεκόντος, εἴτε ἀπὸ τῆς πατρίδος... Διττὴ τοίνυν ἡ τῆς γενέσεως ἀρχή, φυσικὴ τε καὶ τοπικὴ... .

¹⁹ Not only Greek and Latin, but also – regionally and chronologically differentiated – more than a dozen other languages: Albanian, Caucasian Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Georgian, Gothic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin and Romance languages (e.g. Vlach), Persian, southern Slavic languages, Syro-Aramaic, many of them in dialectal variations. Maximus Homologetes’ distinction between religion and language (MAXIMUS HOMOLOGETES, *Relatio motionis*, [in:] PG, vol. XC, col. 128) is interesting: Καὶ σωπησάντων αὐτῶν λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ σακελλάριος· Διατί ἀγαπᾶς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους, καὶ τοὺς Γραικοὺς μισεῖς. Ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶπε· παραγγελίαν ἔχομεν, τοῦ μὴ μισῆσαί τινα. Ἀγαπῶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ὡς ὁμοπίστους, τοὺς δὲ Γραικοὺς ὡς ὁμογλώσσους.

²⁰ For language and culture, see: *From Hellenism to Islam. Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East*, ed. H.M. COTTON, C. HOYLAND, J.C. PRICE, D.J. WASSERSTEIN, Cambridge 2009; J. KODER, “Ῥωμαῖστί”. Παρατηρήσεις για τη γλωσσική romanitas των Βυζαντινῶν, [in:] Ἑλλην, Ῥωμαῖός, Γραικός· Συλλογικοὶ προσδιορισμοὶ καὶ ταυτότητες, ed. O. KATSIARDI-HERING, A. PAPADIA LALA, K. NIKOLAOU, V. KARAMANOLAKIS, Athens 2018, p. 73–84; IDEM, *Sprache als Identitätsmerkmal bei den Byzantinern. Auf –isti endende sprachenbezogene Adverbien in den griechischen Quellen*, APHK 147, 2, 2012, p. 5–37; IDEM, *Die Hellenis als Mitte der Ökumene: Theodoros Laskaris über den Ursprung von Philosophie, Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, [in:] *Myriobiblos. Essays on Byzantine Literature and Culture*, ed. T. ANTONOPOULOU, S. KOTZABASSI, M. LOUKAKI, Berlin–New York 2015 [= BArchiv, 29], p. 195–210; A. KONSTANTAKOPOULOU, *Λαοί, φυλαί, γλώσσαι. Διακρίσεις στα Βαλκάνια τον ύστερο Μεσαίωνα*, [in:] *Toleration and Repression in the Middle Ages. In Memory of Leons Mavrommatis*, ed. K. NIKOLAOU, Athens 2002 [= EIE / IBE, Διεθνή Συμπόσια, 10], p. 327–355; P. SCHREINER, *Bilinguismus, Bilateralität und Digraphie in Byzanz*, [in:] *Historische Mehrsprachigkeit*, ed. D. BOSCHUNG, C.M. RIEHL, Aachen 2011 [= ZSM.S, 4], p. 125–141; IDEM, *Ethnische Invektiven in der spätbyzantinischen Händlerwelt. Zum anonymen Poem im Marc. gr. XI, 6 aus dem dritten oder vierten Jahrzehnt des 14. Jahrhunderts*, 3PBI 50, 1–2, 2013 (= *Mélanges Ljubomir Maksimović*, ed. B. KRSMANOVIĆ, S. PIRIVATRIĆ, VOL. II), p. 763–778.

²¹ For the significance of religion in the context of shaping of Byzantine political identity, see currently the comprehensive collection edited by G. DUNN and W. MAYER, *Christians Shaping Identity from the Roman Empire to Byzantium. Studies Inspired by Pauline Allen*, Leiden 2015 [= VC.S, 132], in particular the contributions from D.C. SIM, *Jews, Gentiles and Ethnic Identity in the Gospel of Matthew*, [in:] *Christians Shaping Identity...*, p. 25–47, and from R. SCOTT, *The Treatment of Ecu-*

identity: *patris, polis, politeuma, kome, chorion; klima, epeiros, oikoumene*)²², phenomena which are deeply rooted in human consciousness.

This paper does not deal with space, religion and language, which were discussed in earlier studies, but with one further complex dimension, the relationship between *identity* and *time*.

Identity and time

At first glance, time and temporality are not so obviously related to identity, though they are immanent in human consciousness and as phenomena not imaginable without beginning and end²³. Characteristically, William Butler Yeats says at the beginning of his famous *Vision*:

I think if I could be given a month of Antiquity and leave to spend it where I chose, I would spend it in Byzantium a little before Justinian opened St. Sophia and closed the Academy of Plato²⁴. I think I could find in some little wine shop some philosophical worker in mosaic who could answer all my questions, the supernatural descending nearer to him than to Plotinus even, for the pride of his delicate skill would make what was an instrument of power to princes and clerics, a murderous madness in the mob, show as a lovely flexible presence like that of a perfect human body.²⁵

Following him, human beings identify their belonging not only in terms of space, but also in terms of time. Mikhail Bakhtin had an entirely different approach to time: some hundred years ago, he referred to Einstein's Theory of

menical Councils in Byzantine Chronicles, [in:] *Christians Shaping Identity...*, p. 364–384; furthermore: L.D. RIEDEL, *Leo VI and the Transformation of Byzantine Christian Identity. Writings of an Unexpected Emperor*, Cambridge 2018, and J. KODER, *Byzanz – römische Identität, christliche Ideologie und europäische Ausstrahlung*, [in:] *Katalog zur Ausstellung "Das Goldene Byzanz und der Orient"*, ed. F. DAIM, D. HEHER, Schallaburg 2012, p. 27–41.

²² For space: J. KODER, *Space and Identity – Byzantine Conceptions of Geographic Belonging, Opening lecture*, [in:] *From the Human Body to the Universe. Spatialities of Byzantine Culture, Symposium Uppsala University, 18–21 May 2017* (in print); IDEM, *Byzantion wird Konstantinupolis: Anmerkungen zu Ortswahl und Namen*, [in:] *Constantinople réelle et imaginaire autour de l'oeuvre de Gilbert Dagron*, ed. C. MORRISON, J.-P. SODINI (= TM 22, 1), Paris 2018, p. 21–33; IDEM, *Anmerkungen zum Awaren-Sgraffito von Sirmium*, comm. R. WEDENIG, [in:] *Lebenswelten zwischen Archäologie und Geschichte. Festschrift für Falko Daim zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. J. DRAUSCHKE et al., Mainz 2018 [= MRGZ, 150], p. 733–740.

²³ See: H.U. GUMBRECHT, *Zeitbegriffe in den Geisteswissenschaften heute*, [in:] *Akademie im Dialog*, X, Vienna 2017, p. 5–13; in general: V. GRUMEL, *La Chronologie*, Paris 1958 [= TEB, 1], p. 161–235.

²⁴ In 529 or a little later, the emperor Justinian imposed a ban of teaching in the Platonic Academy in Athens; on December 27th, 537, he inaugurated the new Saint Sophia (the second building being destroyed by fire during the Nika riot, 532); see: R. SCOTT, *Justinian's New Age and the Second Coming*, [in:] IDEM, *Byzantine Chronicles and the Sixth Century*, Ashgate 2012, p. 7–8.

²⁵ W.B. YEATS, *A Vision*, London 1937, p. 279.

Relativity and introduced the term *chronotope* (“time-space”) into the theory of literature, in order to express the inseparability of space and time:

The special meaning it [scil. the *chronotope*] has in relativity theory is not important for our purposes; we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor... What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space)... The *chronotope* as a formally constitutive category determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature as well. The image of man is always intrinsically *chronotopic*.²⁶

As for the topic “time in Byzantium”, Paolo Odorico, starting from the peak of the confrontation between Neoplatonism and Christianity in the 6th century, recently made a significant contribution. He studied the influence of four categories of time – cosmic, historical, social, and individual – on the human condition and pointed to the formation of a new class of historiography that focussed on a universal history since the creation of the world (John Malalas, the *Chronicon Paschale*...): *Le temps cosmique est pour les Byzantins fondé sur l’action de Dieu, et de Lui dépend aussi le temps historique, qui ne repose que sur sa volonté. Le temps social de l’Empire s’aligne sur cette base, en rapportant à la dimension théologique* [emphasized by JK] *toute son organisation*²⁷. Earlier, Gilbert Dagron analyzed the *ecumenic* purview of the emperors’ political and religious power²⁸. In his remarks on the territorial and temporal *ecumenicity*, he emphasized the latter’s importance, which still increased in the 9th and 10th centuries. Relying on these considerations, it is obvious to postulate an inseparability of time and identity, especially collective identity.

The outstanding importance of *eschatological* time was highlighted by Gerhard Podskalsky and Paul Magdalino. Podskalsky²⁹ again emphasized the theological origin of the Byzantine concept of history in the Jewish and Hellenistic tradition

²⁶ M. BAKHTIN, *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel*, [in:] *The Dialogic Imagination*, Austin 1981, p. 84sq.

²⁷ P. ODORICO, *Le temps de l’Empire*, [in:] *Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου “Όψεις του Βυζαντινού Χρόνου”*, 29–30 Μαΐου 2015, ed. E.G. SARANTE, A. DELLAPORTA, T. KOLLYROPOULOU, Athens 2018, p. 30–41 (with rich bibliography), the quotation from p. 40; see also: the graph on p. 31.

²⁸ G. DAGRON, *L’œcumenicité politique: droit sur l’espace, droit sur le temps*, [in:] *Το Βυζάντιο ως Οικουμένη*, ed. E. CHRYSOS, Athens 2005 [= IBR.IS, 16], p. 47–57.

²⁹ G. PODSKALSKY, *Représentation du temps dans l’eschatologie impériale byzantine*, [in:] *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l’Antiquité au Moyen Âge – III^e–XIII^e siècle (Colloque int. du CNRS 604)*, ed. J.-M. LEROUX, Paris 1984, p. 439–450. Some years later PODSKALSKY (*Ruhestand oder Vollendung? Zur Symbolik des achten Tages in der griechisch-byzantinischen Theologie*, [in:] *Fest und Alltag in Byzanz*, ed. G. PRINZING, Munich 1990, p. 157–166, 216–219), studied the discussion of the Church fathers on the biblical symbolism of the number Eight, which replaces Seven, and the transition to the eighth *aion*, to the eighth-days-system on the occasion of Christ’s resurrection. For this topic, see also: A. SHARF, *The Eighth Day of the Week*, [in:] *Kathegetria. Essays Presented to Joan Hussey for her 80th Birthday*, ed. J. CHRYSOSTOMIDES, Camberley 1988, p. 27–50.

and identified two types of imperial eschatology, the political and the religious, resulting in the perpetuation of the millennial reign. Magdalino³⁰ took the chronological scheme of the cosmic week, which originated in the era of the world and dominated the thought of Byzantine authors, as an occasion to point out their concentration on the fate of the Byzantine empire and its capital Constantinople, when they express their eschatological expectations.

Only recently, Ilias Anagnostakis³¹ discussed the relationship between time and collective identity. Proceeding from the appeal *Μετανοείτε, ἤγγικε γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* (Matthew 3, 2 and 4, 17), he studied the Life of Nikon Metanoete not only as an element of the narrative in the saint's life, but also "as an element of the saint's identity and as the reflection of an eschatological age", and "as the regulatory element in the religious identity of a community", thus emphasizing the importance of time for collective identity.

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For a nearer analysis of the relationship between *time* and *identity*, the meanings of key words like *aion*, *kairos* and *chronos*, and the relationships among them are helpful³². In spite of their versatile use in Patristic and Byzantine texts and their ambiguity, a closer examination of these three terms opens the opportunity for differentiated interpretations (and translations), which comply with the development of meanings in post-classical Greek and offer efficient links to identity. Not surprising, many of these meanings are strongly influenced by the Bible; the following four passages in the Septuagint and the New Testament³³ may underpin this observation:

Ecclesiastes 3, 1–2, 11, 14: For every thing there is a *chronos* (time) and for every matter under heaven a *kairos* (right time), a *kairos* to give birth and a *kairos* to die, a *kairos* to plant and a *kairos* to harvest the planted... He made everything good in its *kairos*; and he has given the *aion* (eternity) in their heart, but mankind should not comprehend what God had created, from beginning to the end... I understood that whatever God had done, lasts for the *aion*; there is no adding to it, and no taking away from it.

³⁰ P. MAGDALINO, *The End of Time in Byzantium*, [in:] *Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*, ed. W. BRANDES, F. SCHMIEDER, Berlin 2008, p. 119–133.

³¹ I. ANAGNOSTAKIS, *Ο χρόνος στον Νίκωνα τον Μετανοείτε: ἤγγικε γὰρ...*, [in:] *Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου "Όψεις του Βυζαντινού Χρόνου"*, ed. E.G. SARANTE, A. DELLAPORTA, T. KOLLYROPOULOU, Athens 2018, see here p. 213: ...η ειδική χρήση του εσχολογικού χρόνου... δημιουργεί ταυτότητες και καταλήγει στην εργασιακή χρονομετρία.

³² In the cases of *eniautos* and *etos* (not in G.H.W. LAMPE, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961 and E. TRAPP et al., *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Literatur*, vol. I–II, Vienna 2001–2017), both correspond in principle (LSJ, col. 576b–577a, and 704a) to "year", the former emphasizing the duration of the year (see: e.g., PSEUDO-IOANNES ZONARAS, *Lexikon*, epsilon 717), the second the unit of time (I am grateful to the anonymous reader for this clarification).

³³ English translations borrowed (and adapted) from: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/esv/> [4 I 2019].

Sophia Salomonis 7, 17–19: For he himself gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that exist, to know the constitution of the world and the activity of the elements, the *arche* (beginning) and *telos* (end) and middle of *chronoi* (times), the alterations of the solstices and the changes of the *kairoi* (seasons), the cycles of the *eniautos* (year) and the constellations of the stars...

Titus 1, 1–3: Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of *aionios* (eternal) life, which God, who never lies, promised a long *chronos* (time) ago and at the *idioti kairoi* (proper times) manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior...

Luke 18, 29–30: Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this *kairos* (time), and in the *aion* (age) to come the *aionios zoe* (eternal life)³⁴.

The framework of meanings of *aion*, *kairos* and *chronos* is confirmed by these and other³⁵ passages in the New Testament. For a more differentiated understanding of the terms during the Byzantine period, I am quoting some characteristic examples from the large number of relevant Patristic texts, beginning with the definitions by Pseudo-Zonaras and continuing with quotations from other sources. Pseudo-Zonaras defines *aion*: “the time or what is coextensive in the heavens, like a temporal movement or distance”³⁶; *kairos*: “suitable time for work”³⁷; and *kata kairos*: “in the convenient and appointed time, so the apostle: He [Christ] died at the appointed time for the wicked”³⁸; *chronos*: “movement and course of the sun in a proportioned motion; or the coextensive with the substance of the world distance, in which every movement is measured, be it of the stars or living being or whatever is moved”³⁹.

³⁴ See also: Gal 4, 10: ἡμέρας παρατηρεῖσθε καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτοὺς.

³⁵ E.g. Gal 6, 7–10: *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον). And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season (καιρῷ γὰρ ἰδίῳ) we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity (καιρόν), let us do good to everyone.* Act 1, 6–8: *So when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time (ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ) restore the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons (χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς) that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

³⁶ PSEUDO-IOANNES ZONARAS, *Lexikon*, alpha 63sq: Αἰών· ὁ χρόνος ἢ τὸ συμπαρεκτεινόμενον τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. οἷόν τι χρονικὸν κίνημα καὶ διάστημα· ... ἀπέραντος αἰὼν δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰεῖ ὧν.

³⁷ PSEUDO-IOANNES ZONARAS, *Lexikon*, kappa 1145: Καιρός· χρόνος ἐπιτήδειος εἰς ἐργασίαν.

³⁸ PSEUDO-IOANNES ZONARAS, *Lexikon*, kappa 1149: Κατὰ καιρόν· κατὰ τὸν εὐκαιρον καὶ προσήκοντα καιρόν καὶ χρόνον. οὕτως ὁ Ἀπόστολος (Rom 5, 6)· κατὰ καιρόν ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανε.

³⁹ PSEUDO-IOANNES ZONARAS, *Lexikon*, chi 1860: Χρόνος· ἡλίου κίνησις καὶ πορεία μετὰ ἐμμέτρου φορᾶς, ἢ τὸ παρεκτεινόμενον τῇ ὑποστάσει τοῦ κόσμου διάστημα, ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα μετρεῖται κίνησις εἴτε ἀστέρων, εἴτε ζῶων, εἴτε οὐτινοσοῦν τῶν κινουμένων.

kairos⁴⁰ / chronos⁴¹

Pseudo-Galenus, in *Peri chymon*, draws a remarkable parallel in the following comparison: “What in the universe (*kosmos*) is an element (*stoicheion*), is in human beings a humour (*chymos*), even as in the year (*chronos*) a season (*kairos*), not having complete identity (*tautotes*) or likeness (*homoiotetes*)... the seasons of the year being spring, summer, winter and autumn”⁴².

In the early 9th century, two authors explain the difference of *chronos* and *kairos* for their contemporaries. George Choiroboscus answers the question “How differ *kairos* and *chronos*?” as follows: “*kairos* is the measured arrival of days, *chronos* the extent of many *kairoi* and days”⁴³. Michael Syncellus explains that “*chronos* is more general and comprehensive than *kairos*; *chronos* encompasses *kairos*, but *kairos* does not encompass *chronos*”⁴⁴. The term *chronos* stands in the tradition of the Antiquity; it is formulaically linked with *trochos* and *tyche*, this often in ecclesiastical texts⁴⁵,

⁴⁰ καιρός (often contrasted to αἰών): *due measure, proportion, fitness, exact or critical or convenient time, season, opportunity, period* (LSJ, col. 859b–860a); *fit, right, proper time, opportunity, present age, age to come, ages of history, and time compared with eternity* (G.H.W. LAMPE, *A Patristic...*, col. 693b); *year* (E. TRAPP et al., *Lexikon zur...*, col. 734b).

⁴¹ χρόνος: *time, a definite time, period, date, term, year* (LSJ, col. 2008b–2009a); *time*, esp. in contrast to *kairos* and to *aion*, (*divine*) *timelessness, eternity* (of Son or Word), *occasion and year* (G.H.W. LAMPE, *A Patristic...*, col. 1534b).

⁴² PSEUDO-GALENUS, *De humoribus*, 19.485sq, [in:] *Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, vol. XIX, ed. C.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1830: Ὅπερ ἐν κόσμῳ στοιχείον, τοῦτο ἐν ζώοις χυμὸς, ὡσπερ δὴ καὶ ἐν χρόνῳ καιρός, οὐ παντελῆ ταυτότητα ἢ ὁμοιότητα ἔχοντα... καιροὶ δὲ δι’ ὧν ὁ χρόνος ἔαρ καὶ θέρος καὶ χειμῶν καὶ φθινόπωρον.

⁴³ GEORGIUS CHOIROBOSCUS, *Epimerismi in Psalmos*, vol. III, ed. T. GAISFORD, Oxford 1842, p. 47: Τί διαφέρει καιρός καὶ χρόνος; καιρός μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶ μεμετρημένη ἡμερῶν ἄφιξις, χρόνος δὲ πολλῶν καιρῶν καὶ ἡμερῶν περιοχὴ.

⁴⁴ MICHAEL SYNCELLUS, *Le traité de la construction de la phrase de Michel le Syncelle de Jérusalem*, § 156, ed. D. DONNET, Brussels 1982 [= EPAHA, 22]: καθολικώτερός τε καὶ περιεκτικώτερος τοῦ καιροῦ καθέστηκεν ὁ χρόνος· περιέχει μὲν γὰρ ὁ χρόνος τὸν καιρὸν, ὁ δὲ καιρὸς τὸν χρόνον οὐ περιέχει. From these differentiations many special meanings, as “seasons of the year”, derive later, for example, in Manuel Philes’ poem *Eis ta d’ theia kai iera euaγγelia*, MANUEL PHILES, *Carmina*, poem 39, vol. I–II, ed. E. MILLER, Paris 1855–1857):

Ὁ πᾶσαν ἀπλῶς τεκτονεύσας τὴν κτίσιν,
Ἐν πᾶσι τηρῶν τὴν τιμὴν τῆς τετραδος,
Τέσσαρσι καιροῖς ὠραίζει τὸν χρόνον.

⁴⁵ ISIDORUS PELUSIOTA, *Epistulae de interpretatione divinae scripturae*, [in:] PG, vol. LXXVIII, col. 158: Τροχειδὴς γὰρ ὁ χρόνος... Ὅτι δὲ τροχὸν τὸν χρόνον ἐκάλεσε, διὰ τὸ τροχειδὴς καὶ κυκλικὸν σχῆμα; similar *Catena in epistulam Jacobi*, 21sq, [in:] *Catena Graecorum patrum in Novum Testamentum*, vol. VIII, ed. J.A. CRAMER, Oxford 1840; GREGORIUS AGRIGENTINUS, *Commentarius in Ecclesiasten*, 1.13, [in:] *Pseudo-Gregorii Agrigentini seu Pseudo-Gregorii Nysseni commentarius in Ecclesiasten*, ed. G.H. ETTLINGER, J. NORET, Turnhout 2007 [= CC.SG, 56]: Κυκλικὸς δρόμος τοῦ χρόνου, μέσον ἑαυτοῦ πάντα διαλαμβάνων καὶ περιγράφων, οἷόν τις τροχὸς ἄπαυστον ἔχων τὴν κίνησιν, and 10.8: Εἶτα φησὶν ὁ σοφὸς Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς (scil. Eccle. 12, 6–7): Καὶ συντριβὴ ἢ ὕδρια

but also among non-theological authors⁴⁶, whereas the term *kairos* is used only as an exception in this context⁴⁷.

kairos / *aion*⁴⁸

As early as the break between the 4th and 5th centuries, the relationship between *kairos* and *aion* is explained by John Chrysostomus: “Short is the present *kairos* in relation to the interminable *aiones*”⁴⁹. In another homily, he refers to Paul’s letter to the Romans: “... and we must leave off from indifference. For deliverance is nearer now than we believed. Do you see, how he draws their attention already to the resurrection? As the *chronos* goes on, he says, the *kairos* of this life will be consumed and that of the future *aion* comes nearer”⁵⁰. One generation earlier, Basil of Caesarea makes a clear distinction between the short *kairos* of this life and the eternity of the *aion*: “The present *kairos* is for repentance and forgiving of sins; but in the future *aion* comes the just judgement of retribution”⁵¹.

ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ συντροχάσει ὁ τροχὸς ἐπὶ τὸν λάκκον, καὶ ἐπιστρέψει ὁ χοῦς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, ὡς ἦν. Τῇ συντριβῇ γὰρ τῆς ὕδριας τῆς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, τὴν ὄστρακίνην φύσιν τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου σώματος ἐδήλωσεν προφανῶς, περὶ οὗ φησιν καὶ Παῦλος ὁ μέγας ἀπόστολος (scil. 2Cor 4, 7). Ἐχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὄστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, καὶ πάλιν (scil. 1Cor 5, 1). Οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐὰν ἡ ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία τοῦ σκήνους καταλυθῇ, οἰκοδομῆν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἔχομεν οἰκίαν ἀχειροποίητον αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Ἀλλὰ καὶ συντροχάσαι τὸν τροχὸν ἐπὶ τὸν λάκκον εἰπών, τὸ πᾶν χρονικὸν διάστημα τῆς ἐκάστου σαφῶς ἠνίξαστο ζωῆς συναποπερατωθῆναι καὶ πληρωθῆναι, τροχοῦ δίκην κυλιεσθαι πεφυκός, ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν εἰς τὰ αὐτὰ πάλιν ἐπανιών, εἴτα καὶ κατιὸν ἐπὶ τὸν λάκκον ἦτοι τὸν θάνατον; THEODORUS STUDITES, *Parva catechesis*, 37.21, ed. E. AUVRAY, Paris 1891: καὶ ὁ χρόνος ὡσπερ τις τροχὸς κυλιόμενος...

⁴⁶ Examples: GEORGIUS CHOIROBOSCUS, *Prolegomena et scholia in Theodosii Alexandrini canones de flexion verborum*, [in:] *Grammatici Graeci*, vol. IV.2, ed. A. HILGARD, Leipzig 1894, p. 11; THEODORUS CYZICENUS, *Epistulae*, [in:] *Επιστολαὶ ἐκ τοῦ Βιενναίου κώδικος phil. gr.* 342, ed. S.P. LAMPROS, NEΛΛ 19, 1925; 20, 1926, p. 23: ...χρόνου, τοῦ κοσμικοῦ τροχοῦ...; THEODORUS PRODROMUS, *Carmina historica*, Poem 45.365, [in:] *Theodoros Prodromos, Historische Gedichte*, ed. W. HÖRANDNER, Vienna 1974 [= WBS, 11]: ὦ μοι βίου κύλινδρος, ὦ τροχοὶ χρόνου; *Historia imperatorum*, ed. F. ΙΑΔΕΒΑΙΑ, Messina 2000, p. 594: ὁ χρόνος καὶ ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ὁ τροχὸς τῆς τύχης ἐνέπεξεν πολλοὺς; *Historia Alexandri Magni*, 57.16, [in:] *Ps.-Kallisthenes. Zwei mittelgriechische Prosa-Fassungen des Alexanderromans*, vol. I–II, ed. V.L. KONSTANTINOPULOS, A.C. LOLOS, Meisenheim am Glan 1983 [= BKP, 141].

⁴⁷ GEORGIUS MONACHUS, *Chronicon breve*, [in:] *PG*, vol. XC, col. 1205, 1228, 1240.

⁴⁸ αἰών: *period of existence, lifetime, life, age, generation, destiny, long space of time, age, space of time* clearly defined and marked out, *epoch, age, epoch, age, the ages*, i.e. *eternity* (LSJ, col. 45b); *age, aeon, eternity, time, long but definite period*, but also *period(s) of indefinite duration* (G.H.W. LAMPE, *A Patristic...*, col. 55–57a); *year* (E. TRAPP et al., *Lexikon zur...*, col. 37b) – αἰώνιος, ...lasting for an age (αἰὼν II), perpetual, eternal (but dist. fr. αἰδῖος).

⁴⁹ IOANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS, *In epistulam ad Hebraeos*, [in:] *PG*, vol. LXIII, col. 25: βραχὺς γὰρ ὁ παρὼν καιρὸς πρὸς τοὺς αἰῶνας τοὺς ἀτελευτήτους.

⁵⁰ IOANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS, *In epistulam ad Romanos*, [in:] *PG*, vol. LX, col. 621sq: ...καὶ δεῖ λοιπὸν ἡμᾶς ἀπαλλαγῆναι τῆς ῥαθυμίας. Νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν (Rom 13, 11). Ὁρᾶς πῶς ἐφίστησιν αὐτοῖς ἤδη τὴν ἀνάστασιν; Τοῦ χρόνου γὰρ προϊόντος, φησὶν, ὁ μὲν τοῦ παρόντος βίου δαπανᾶται καιρὸς, ὁ δὲ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος ἐγγύτερος γίνεται.

⁵¹ BASILIUS CAESARIENSIS, *Regulae morales*, [in:] *PG*, vol. XXXI, col. 700: τῆς μετανοίας καὶ τῆς ἀφέσεως τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὁ παρὼν ἐστὶ καιρὸς. ἐν δὲ τῷ μέλλοντι αἰῶνι ἡ δίκαια κρίσις τῆς ἀνταποδόσεως.

aion / chronos

The relationship between *aion* and *chronos* was subject to the continuous development of both term's meanings. In the majority of cases, it may be found in theological contexts, once already in an ancient tragedy⁵². In the Septuagint, with some insignificant exceptions, the wording εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον, "for eternal times" (adjectival use of αἰών)⁵³ dominates, and this wording was predominant in the patristic literature until the 5th century⁵⁴.

The development towards a separate interpretation of the two terms began obviously from the 5th/6th centuries, in particular in the discussion of the meaning of the *aīdiótes* ("everlastingness")⁵⁵. A representative selection from the large number of authors should begin with Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita; he postulates in *De divinis nominibus*:

It is necessary, I believe, to be informed about the nature not only of time (*chronos*), but also of eternity (*aion*) by the savants,

and he continues with an explanation, from which the main passage reads as follows:

... He [scil. Gregory of Nyssa] calls time, what by generation and destruction and alteration occasionally acts differently. Therefore, the theology teaches that we already here, bound in time, participate in eternity, whenever we are suitable for the eternal and always such existing eternity... (Therefore, we should) send hymns to God as eternity and time, as creator of all time and eternity and as 'ancient of days', because he is before time and above time and changing 'periods (*kairoi*) and times (*chronoi*)' and again existing before eternities, being before eternity and above eternity, and his kingdom is the kingdom of all eternities.⁵⁶

⁵² By the chorus in AESCHYLUS, *Septem contra Thebas*, v. 219sq, [in:] *Aeschyli Septem Quae Supersunt Tragoediae*, ed. D.L. PAGE, Oxford 1972: μήποτ' ἐμὸν κατ' αἰῶνα λίποι θεῶν / ἄδε πανάγουρις...; see: the explanation in *Scholiam Graeca in Aeschylum quae exstant omnia*, hypothesis-epigram-scholion 219sq, ed. O.L. SMITH, Leipzig 1976–1982: ...ἤγουν ἡ συναγωγὴ τῶν ἐνταῦθα ὄντων θεῶν, καταλείψοι τὴν πόλιν κατ' ἐμὸν αἰῶνα καὶ χρόνον, ἤγουν ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ βίου.

⁵³ Septuagint: Ps 8 and 15, Is and Bar; in the New Testament, Pauline epistles: πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων and similar.

⁵⁴ Eusebios of Caesarea, Basil of Caesarea, Didymus the Blind, Ephrem the Syrian, Theodoret of Cyrillus and Cyril of Alexandria. A later example is the Second Council of Nicaea.

⁵⁵ *LSJ*, col. 36a: "αἰδιότης, eternity. – αἰδιος everlasting, eternal... ἄ. is dist. fr. αἰώνιος as everlasting from timeless, but dist. fr. ἀεῖζωος as eternal (without beginning or end) from ever-living".

⁵⁶ PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS AREOPAGITA, *De divinis nominibus*, ed. B.R. SUCHLA, Berlin 1990 [= PTS, 33], p. 216sq: Χρῆ δέ, ὡς οἶμαι, καὶ χρόνου καὶ αἰῶνος φύσιν ἐκ τῶν λογίων εἰδέναι... Χρόνον δὲ καλεῖ (possibly GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *In sanctum Pascha*, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni opera*, vol. IX.1, ed. E. GEBHARDT, Leiden 1967, p. 261sq) τὸν ἐν γενέσει καὶ φθορᾷ καὶ ἀλλοιώσει καὶ ἄλλοτε ἄλλως ἔχοντα Διὸ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐνθάδε κατὰ χρόνον ὀριζομένους αἰῶνος μεθεξείν ἡ θεολογία φησίν, ἡνίκα τοῦ ἀφθάρτου καὶ αἰεὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχοντος αἰῶνος ἐφικώμεθα... Τὸν δὲ θεὸν καὶ ὡς αἰῶνα καὶ ὡς χρόνον ὑμνεῖν, ὡς χρόνον παντὸς καὶ αἰῶνος αἴτιον καὶ παλαιὸν ἡμερῶν (Dn 7, 13), ὡς πρὸ χρόνου καὶ ὑπὲρ χρόνον καὶ ἀλλοιοῦντα καιροῦς καὶ χρόνους (Dn 2, 21) καὶ αὐθις πρὸ αἰῶνων ὑπάρχοντα, καθ' ὅσον καὶ πρὸ αἰῶνός ἐστι καὶ ὑπὲρ αἰῶνα καὶ ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ βασιλεία πάντων τῶν αἰῶνων (Ps 144, 13).

In chapters 4 and 5 of his *De aeternitate* (Κατὰ τῶν Πρόκλου περὶ αἰδιότητος κόσμου επιχειρημάτων), John Philoponus (6th century) argues against Proclus⁵⁷, and he offers a concise definition: “Eternity (*aion*) existed when time (*chronos*) did not exist, and eternity will exist when time will not exist”⁵⁸. The *Doctrina Patrum* (7th–8th centuries) says in a similar manner: “Eternity (*aion*) is timeless time (*chronos achronos*) and endless end (*peras aperanton*)”⁵⁹. Finally, John of Damascus (7/8th century) states: “What for those under the time (*chronos*) is the time, is for those in the everlasting (*aidia*) the eternity (*aion*)”⁶⁰.

Most of the authors after the turn of the millenium remained more or less in the paths of their predecessors, so, for example, John Italus (11th century)⁶¹ and Gregory Palamas⁶². I should also mention John Cyparissiotis, who quotes *De divinis nominibus*, book 10 of Dionysius Areopagita⁶³, and Gennadius Scholarius, who authored an *epítome* of the first part of Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*⁶⁴.

The personality who deals with the relationship between *aion* and *chronos* several times is Michael Psellus (11th century) – not only in the *Opusculum logicum* 4⁶⁵ and in the *Theological Treatises* 41, 88 and 105, but especially in his *Theological Treatise* 32, which is entirely dedicated to the topic “About eternity” (*Peri aionos*)⁶⁶:

⁵⁷ IOANNES PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, ed. H. RABE, Leipzig 1899 (cetera: IOANNES PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate*), p. 104: δ’. Ὅτι, κὰν λέγωμεν ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν χρόνος καὶ ἔσται ποτὲ ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται, τὸ ἦν τοῦτο καὶ τὸ ποτὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ὑποκειμένου φύσιν ἐκλαμβάνοντες οὐ τμήματος χρόνου δηλωτικὸν νοοῦμεν ἀλλὰ τοῦ αἰῶνός τινα ὑπαρξίν, ἐν ᾧ οὐκ ἦν ἢ ἔσται χρόνος. ε’. Ὅτι, κὰν παράδειγμα ἦν ὁ αἰὼν τοῦ χρόνου, οὐκ ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸν χρόνον αἰεὶ εἶναι, ὡς ὁ αἰὼν αἰεὶ ἐστίν.

⁵⁸ IOANNES PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate*, p. 116: δ’... κὰν εἴπωμεν ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν χρόνος καὶ ἔσται ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται, τὸ ἦν καὶ τὸ ἔσται οὐ χρονικὸν νοοῦμεν ἀλλὰ τῆς τοῦ αἰῶνος ὑπάρξεώς φαμεν εἶναι σημαντικά· ἦν γὰρ αἰὼν καὶ χρόνου μὴ ὄντος καὶ ἔσται αἰὼν, ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται χρόνος.

⁵⁹ *Doctrina patrum*, p. 253.15: Αἰὼν ἐστὶ χρόνος ἄχρονος καὶ πέρασ ἀπέραντον.

⁶⁰ IOANNES DAMASCENUS, *Expositio fidei*, [in:] *Die Schriften des Johannes...*, vol. II, Berlin 1973 [= PTS, 12], p. 15: ... ὅπερ γὰρ τοῖς ὑπὸ χρόνον ὁ χρόνος, τοῦτο τοῖς αἰδίους ἐστὶν αἰὼν.

⁶¹ IOANNES ITALUS, *Quaestiones*, p. 60: ... ὁ αἰσθητὸς οὗτος διάκοσμος οὐκ ἔστι παράδειγμα, ἀλλ’ εἰκὼν, ἄλλου ὄντος τοῦ παραδείγματος· καὶ χρόνος ἐνταῦθα, αἰῶνος ὄντος ἐκέῖσε.

⁶² E.g. GREGORIUS PALAMAS, *Orationes contra Acindynum*, 2.12.50, [in:] *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ συγγραμματα*, vol. III, ed. L. KONTOGIANNES, B. PHANOURGAKES, Thessalonica 1970.

⁶³ IOANNES CYPARISSIOTES, *Expositio materialia*, 8.3, [in:] *Ἰωάννου τοῦ Κυπαρασιώτου τῶν Θεολογικῶν Ῥήσεων Στοιχειώδης Ἐκθεσις*, ed. B.L. DENTAKES, Athens 1982 [= ΗΦΜ, 5].

⁶⁴ Here, the chapter Περὶ αἰδιότητος is of particular interest: GENNADIUS SCHOLARIUS, *Epítome primae partis Summae theologicae Thomae Aquinae*, Treatise 1.10, [in:] *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios*, vol. V, ed. M. JUGIE, L. PETIT, X.A. SIDERIDES, Paris 1931.

⁶⁵ MICHAEL PSELLUS, *Opuscula*, op. 41.60–65: εἰ γὰρ αἰὼν ἐστὶ ζωὴ ἐν στάσει καὶ τῶ αὐτῷ ὡσαύτως, εἰκόνα δὲ δεῖ τοῦ αἰῶνος τὸν χρόνον εἶναι, ἀντὶ μὲν κινήσεως νοεράς ψυχῆς τινος μέρους κινήσεως μέτρον τὸν χρόνον οἰητέον, ἀντὶ δὲ ταυτότητος καὶ τοῦ ὡσαύτως καὶ μένοντος τὸ μὴ μένον ἐν ταῦτῳ... δεῖ δὲ οὐκ ἐξωθεν τῆς ψυχῆς λαμβάνειν τὸν χρόνον, οὐδὲ τὸν αἰῶνα ἐκεῖ ἔξω τοῦ ὄντος, οὐδὲ παρακολούθημα οὐδ’ ὕστερον, ἀλλ’ ἐνωρώμενον καὶ ἐνόντα καὶ συνόντα, ὥσπερ κἀκεῖ αἰὼν.

⁶⁶ MICHAEL PSELLUS, *Theologica*, op. 32, Περὶ αἰῶνος (etiam: *De omnifaria doctrina*, Appendix 2, Περὶ αἰῶνος.

Understand time (*chronos*) as an image of eternity (*aion*). If so, the reasoning by conversion says: agree that eternity is an example for the time... Such is eternity; time is a product of it, left behind by the father's state. It was born in order to come to an end... We participated in a small share of the nature of time. The soul... is placed between eternity and time... Its substance is eternal, but its energy is temporal... Also the harmonious concordance of time and eternity leads me to this, as the opposites – correlating with each other – coalesced.⁶⁷

The individualization and personalization of temporality can be verified by the combination of time-related terms with the possessive pronouns *emos* or (collectively) *hemeteros*. A biblical starting point seems to be the passage in the Gospel of John: *Jesus said to them, My time has not yet come, but your time is always here... Go to the festival yourselves. I am not going to this festival, for my time has not yet fully come*⁶⁸, which was commented on in the *Catena in Ioannem*⁶⁹ and from many Church fathers (Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Cyril of Alexandria, John Chrysostomus, Nilus of Ancyra and Socrates Scholasticus⁷⁰).

⁶⁷ MICHAEL PSELLUS, *Theologica*, op. 32, 1sq: Αἰῶνος εἰκόνα τὸν χρόνον ἐπίστασο· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, ἀντιστρέψας ὁ λόγος ἔρει, χρόνου παράδειγμα τὸν αἰῶνα τίθεσο... 49sq: Τοιοῦτος μὲν ὁ αἰὼν· ὁ δὲ γε χρόνος γέννημα μὲν ἐκείνου, ἀπολελειμμένον δὲ τῆς πατρικῆς στάσεως· γεγέννηται γάρ, ἵνα καὶ ἐκδράμη... 73–75: ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐν βραχεῖ μέρει τῆς τοῦ χρόνου μετεσχῆκαμεν φύσεως· ἡ δὲ γε ψυχὴ, ὅπερ ἠρώτηκας, μεταξύ αἰῶνος καὶ χρόνου τετάχεται... 78–82: αἰωνίζει is eternal μὲν γὰρ αὐτῆς ἡ οὐσία substance, χρονίζει is temporal δὲ ἡ ἐνέργεια force, action... 99–102: ἐπάγεται γάρ με εἰς τοῦτο καὶ ἡ παναρμόνιος συμφωνία χρόνου πρὸς αἰῶνα κραθέντος καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων ἀλλήλοις συνομολογησάντων.

⁶⁸ Io 7, 6 and 8: λέγει οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ὁ καιρὸς ὁ ἐμὸς οὕτω πάρεστιν, ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ὁ ὑμέτερος πάντοτε ἐστὶν ἔτοιμος. ... ὑμεῖς ἀνάβητε εἰς τὴν ἑορτὴν· ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀναβαίνω εἰς τὴν ἑορτὴν ταύτην, ὅτι ὁ ἐμὸς καιρὸς οὕτω πεπλήρωται; Jesus said to them, My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. – See also: NONNUS' *Paraphrasis sancti evangelii Ioannei*, VII, 23–25, 32–35, ed. A. SCHEINDLER, Leipzig 1881:

...καὶ σφιν ἄναξ ἀγόρευεν ἀμοιβαίῳ τινὶ μύθῳ
οὕτω καιρὸς ἦλθεν ἐμὸς χρόνος, ὑμέτερος δὲ
πέπταται αἰὲν ἑτοῖμος, ἐλεύθερος...
οὕτω ἐγὼ κλισίας νεοπηγέας ἄρτι γεραίρων
εἰς τελετὴν ὁσίην ἐπιβήσομαι· ἡμετέρου γὰρ
οὕτω μοι τετέλεστο χρόνου δρόμος· ὡς ὁ μὲν εἰπὼν
ἔστιχεν ἀγνὸν ἔδεθλον ἀκερσικόμων Γαλιλαίων.

⁶⁹ *Catena in Ioannem*, 261.6 and 30sq, [in:] *Catena Graecorum patrum...*, vol. II, Oxford 1841: Οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν, ὑμεῖς τίνες ἐστὲ συμβουλευόντες ταῦτα καὶ διδάσκοντες, ἀλλὰ τί φησιν; “ὁ καιρὸς ὁ ἐμὸς οὕτω πάρεστι,” τουτέστιν ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ τοῦ θανάτου... Τὸ δὲ “ὁ καιρὸς ὁ ἐμὸς οὕτω πεπλήρωται” δηλοῖ ὅτι ἔδει καὶ σημεῖα γενέσθαι καὶ δημηγορίας λεχθῆναι...

⁷⁰ BASILIUS CAESARIENSIS, *Regulae morales*, [in:] PG, vol. XXXI, col. 797, 800; CYRILLUS ALEXANDRINUS, *Commentarii in Ioannem*, [in:] *Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Joannis evangelium*, vol. I, ed. P.E. PUSEY, Oxford 1872, p. 400, 584, 587; IOANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS, *In Ioannem*, [in:] PG, vol. LIX, col. 271; NILUS ANCYRENSIS, *Epistulae*, III, *Ep.* XLIII, [in:] PG, vol. LXXIX. For Athanasius of Alexandria and Socrates Scholasticus see below.

Athanasius of Alexandria⁷¹ and Socrates Scholasticus⁷² extended the interpretation of Io 7 in referring additionally to Mt 26, 45: *Then he came to the disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners*⁷³, and to the marriage in Cana, Io 2, 3–5: *When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, They have no wine. And Jesus said to her, Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, Do whatever he tells you*⁷⁴. Thus both authors indicate the general significance of *kairos* (and even *hora*, “time of day”⁷⁵) as the proper or suitable time in human life.

However, a reference to the present time of the respective authors is only implied or hinted at in these texts. The decisive additional step came from the following authors, who equated the *kairos* with their individual lifetime or (collectively) with the historical period, in which they and their contemporaries existed: Athanasius of Alexandria criticised his opponents, the followers of Arius, who “in our time” by challenging the right faith, do not support the truth, and he compares them with a group of disciples, who did not accept the content of Jesus’ teaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and in the synagogue at Capernaum (Io 6)⁷⁶. John Chrysostomos appealed to his contemporaries in his 4th homily on the First Letter to the Thessalonians: *Ours is the time! Let us use it for what is necessary! Let us cut off the ropes of the sins! Before we pass away, let us judge ourselves!*

⁷¹ ATHANASIUS, *Apologia de fuga sua*, col. 13, [in:] *Athanase d’Alexandrie. Apologie à l’empereur Constance. Apologie pour sa fuite*, ed. J.-M. SZYMUSIAK, Paris 1958 [= SC, 56]: Καὶ γὰρ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ταύτην ἐλθεῖν, ἔλεγεν αὐτὸς τῇ μὲν μητρὶ· οὕτω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου· τοῖς δὲ χρηματίσασιν ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ· ὁ ἐμὸς καιρὸς οὕτω πάρεστι. Πάλιν τε ἐλθόντος τοῦ καιροῦ ἔλεγε τοῖς μαθηταῖς· καθεύδετε τὸ λοιπὸν καὶ ἀναπαύεσθε· ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἤγγικεν ἡ ὥρα, καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἀμαρτωλῶν...

⁷² SOCRATE DE CONSTANTINOPLE, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, III, 8.39–41, vol. I–IV, ed. P. MARAVAL, P. PÉRICHON, Paris 2004–2007: ...ὁ Ἰωάννης ἔγραφεν οὕτως· Ἐζήτουν οὖν αὐτὸν πιάσαι, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπέβαλεν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας, ὅτι οὕτω ἐληλύθει ἡ ὥρα αὐτοῦ. 40. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ταύτην ἐλθεῖν ἔλεγεν αὐτὸς τῇ μὲν μητρὶ Ὅπως ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα μου, τοῖς δὲ χρηματίσασιν ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ Ὅ ἐμὸς καιρὸς οὕτω πάρεστι. 41. Πάλιν τε ἐλθόντος τοῦ καιροῦ ἔλεγεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς· Καθεύδετε λοιπὸν καὶ ἀναπαύεσθε· ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἤγγικεν ἡ ὥρα, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται εἰς χεῖρας ἀμαρτωλῶν. – See also NICEPHORUS CALLISTUS XANTHOPULUS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, [in:] *PG*, vol. CXLVII, col. 16.

⁷³ Mt 26, 45: τότε ἔρχεται πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Καθεύδετε τὸ λοιπὸν καὶ ἀναπαύεσθε· ἰδοὺ ἤγγικεν ἡ ὥρα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἀμαρτωλῶν.

⁷⁴ Io 2, 3–5: καὶ ὑπερῆσαντος οἴνου λέγει ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ πρὸς αὐτόν, Οἶνον οὐκ ἔχουσιν καὶ λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι· οὕτω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου. λέγει ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ τοῖς διακόνους...

⁷⁵ *LSJ*, col. 2035b–2036a, s.v. ὥρα (C), II.1.a.

⁷⁶ ATHANASIUS, *Disputatio contra Arium*, [in:] *PG*, vol. XXVIII, col. 484: ...ἐτέρων δὲ μὴ συναισθημένων τῶν θεῶν καὶ πνευματικῶν ῥημάτων τοῦ Κυρίου εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω ἐπιστραφέντων, αἰτίαν τῷ εὐεργέτῃ καὶ ψόγον προσαψάντων, καὶ λεγόντων, Τίς δύναται αὐτοῦ ἀκοῦειν; Ὅπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἡμετέρου καιροῦ πράττουσιν οἱ μὴ βουλόμενοι συνοδεῦειν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, διὰ τὸ παρέπεσθαι θλίψεις καὶ πειρατήρια τῇ πίστει. Φασὶ γὰρ, Τίς δύναται φυλάξαι τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἐντολῶν τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ τῆς πίστεως;

*Do not let the sun go down on your anger!*⁷⁷. Ephrem Syrus prayed to God to send to him his grace and to unravel his thoughts, because the distractions and cares during the present time (*proskairos kairos*) kept him away from God's eternal benefits⁷⁸. Finally, at the end of Byzantium, Gennadius Scholarius lamented "our discord", in comparing it with the mentality of "preparedness" in the times of the apostle Paul⁷⁹.

To sum up the evidence, which results from the quoted sources and the mentioned studies: Time cannot be unlimited and infinite, because for human beings it is unimaginable without beginning and end. Time has to be structured in the dimensions of the past, present and future (and this for different cultures in different ways). The sources allow us to conclude that from the varieties of time (which were identified in the above mentioned bibliography), *eschatological* (*cosmic*) time dominated the thinking of the *homo byzantinus* in relation to individual and collective identity, whereas the *historical* dimension was rather limited to authors of a small educated class.

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⁷⁷ IOANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS, *In epistulam I ad Thessalonicenses*, hom. IV (on 1Thess 3, 5–8), [in:] PG, vol. LXII, col. 415sq: Ἡμέτερος ὁ καιρὸς· χρῆσώμεθα αὐτῷ εἰς δέον. Τὰ σχοινία τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων διακόψωμεν· πρὶν ἢ ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὸ κριτήριον, αὐτοὶ κρίνωμεν ἀλλήλους. Ὁ ἥλιος, φησὶ, μὴ ἐπιδυέτω ἐπὶ τῷ παροργισμῷ ὑμῶν. (Eph 4, 26).

⁷⁸ EPHRAEM SYRUS, *Precaiones*, Prayer 5, [in:] Ὁσίου Ἐφραίμ τοῦ Σύρου ἔργα, vol. VI, ed. K.G. PHRANTZOLES, Thessalonica 1995, p. 324sq: Χάριν τούτων ἀδεῶς ἰκετεύω τὴν σὴν ἀγαθότητα, ἀνεξίκακε Κύριε, ὅπως ἔλθῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ συνήθως ἡ χάρις σου, καὶ ἐπισυνάξῃ τὴν ἐμὴν διάνοιαν, καὶ ἰάσῃται πάλιν τὰ δεινά μου τραύματα. Ἴδου γὰρ οἱ περισπασμοὶ <καὶ> αἱ μέριμναι τοῦ προσκαιροῦ καιροῦ ἀδολεσχοῦσι καὶ ἀμεριμνοῦσιν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὰ ἀγαθὰ σου τὰ αἰώνια...

⁷⁹ GENNADIUS SCHOLARIUS, *Apologia de silentio ad Theodorum Branam*, [in:] *Oeuvres complètes...*, vol. IV, Paris 1935, p. 271sq: ...οὔτε γὰρ διειλόμεθα καλῶς τὴν Παύλου (probably 1Tim 4, 1–3) τε καὶ τῶν ὁμοίων πρὸς τὰ τοιαῦτα παρασκευὴν καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀναρμοστίαν, οὔτε τὸν τῶν ἐργατῶν ἐκείνων καιρὸν καὶ τὸν ἡμέτερον νῦν. Τότε μὲν γὰρ ἐκλογὴ ψυχῶν καὶ πίστεως αὐξήσις, τὸ σύμπαν εἰπεῖν· νῦν δὲ ψυχῶν ἀποστασία φρικώδης καὶ οὐράνιος ἐγκατάλειψις σὺν δίκῃ τὸ ἡμέτερον κατακαλύπτουσα γένος. – Similar also GENNADIUS SCHOLARIUS, *Quaestiones theologicae de praedestinatione divina et de anima*, 1.2.1, [in:] *Oeuvres complètes...*, vol. I, Paris 1928: ...ὁ γὰρ ἡμέτερος καιρὸς καὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ὄχρητο λόγων, μᾶλλον δὲ παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ, καὶ δεῖ τὴν ἐσχάτην ἀμορφίαν τοῦ γένους ἐν ἅπαντι πράγματι καθημένους ἐν γωνίᾳ ποῦ θρηνεῖν σιωπῇ καὶ τὴν ἀπαγωγὴν τῆς τοιαύτης ἐξαιτεῖσθαι ζωῆς, ὅποταν ἐπινεύῃ τὸ θεῖον.

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Abstract. The notion of identity (*tautotes*) was discussed, often in contrast to its opposite “otherness” (*heterotes*), not only during Classical Antiquity but also by Christian and Byzantine authors since Late Antiquity. Fundamental manifestations of every dimension of Byzantine identity – and in particular of collective identity – are language (including culture), religious (and political) commitment, space and time; these phenomena are deeply rooted in human consciousness.

This paper deals with the relation between identity and time (temporality). This relation is analysed on the basis of key terms like *aion*, *kairos* and *chronos* and the relations among them; the individualization of temporality becomes manifest in combinations of the mentioned terms with adjectives like *emos* or *hemeteros*. Not surprisingly, Byzantine authors – referring to passages in the Old and the New Testament – dealt mainly with *eschatological (cosmic) time* in relation to individual and collective identity, whereas the interest in the *historical* dimension of time was limited to authors of a small educated class.

Keywords: *aïdiotes*, *aion*, *chronos*, eschatology, *heterotes*, identity, *kairos*, otherness, *Romaioi*, *tautotes*, temporality, time.

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