

Summary

Presented dissertation is an attempt of an enquiry into the elements of ancient meditaerenian philosophy of history predating the thought of St. Augustin of Hippo. The introduction opening the dissertation is devoted to the description of the notion of philosophy of history and it includes the main thesis of the dissertation, which is posited in it. A general definition of philosophy of history, called also historiosophy, is introduced in the following form: „philosophy of history is a systmatic explanation of general history in the light of a principle, owing to which all the historical events and consequences are linked together and related to a certain final meaning.” Additionally, six theoretial conditions are listed, joint fulfillment of which permits to qualify any given system of thought as a philosophy of history. These include: relevant conception of time, concept of „historical time”, evaluative periodization of history, possibility of discovering a ruling principle of history, formation of a subject of history, and corelation of philosophy of history with a political doctrine. Very important in this context is the term „evaluation of history”, that is an approach to history permitting its study from the perspective of a philosophy of history. Presented dissertation is focussed mainly on identifying these conditions/elements of historiosophical thought within the body of intellectual development preceding St. Augustine of Hippo.

An important stage of a research in the filed of history of legal and political doctrines is their presentation against the background of a broder philosophical thinking within which they developed and found their support. Thinking about the meaning and the principle of history constitutes this background. The culminating moments in the deveopment of philosophy of history are the age of the enlightenment and the nineteenth century. Political doctrines which emerged around these epochs frequently remained dependent on philosopies of history constructed within the frameworks of the same systems of thought. Indeed, it is difficult to study some political doctrines in separation from their grounding in philosophy of history.

Until now research into historiosophy was mainly focussing on the enlightenment and 19th century thought. A growing interest in the thought of St. Augustine and his theology of history can be observed as well. However, the historiosophical thought preceding St. Augustine's work

has not been presented adequately so far by scholars in any language. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the pre-Augustin philosophy of history in full spectrum of its appearance, its structure and its relation to contemporary political doctrines. The present dissertation is intended as a project aiming to fill this gap in historical research.

On the basis of the aforementioned explanations the main thesis of the dissertation is presented. It can be summed up in the following statement: before St. Augustine of Hippo there already existed systems of thought which included certain elements necessary for the emergence of philosophy of history. First chapter is devoted to the perception of time proper to the peoples of antiquity. In the beginning the cyclical conception of time is presented. Firstly, it is described within the framework of mythological vision of reality. Then, important links between mythology and cosmogony as well as certain crucial existential experiences of men of antiquity are displayed. Further, some philosophical determinants of the theory of cycles are presented in its relation with cosmogony and theology. At this junction the cyclical theory of time is juxtaposed to the linear one, which emerged within the biblical prophetic tradition and found its continuation in Christianity. Description of the Christian thought concerning time is arranged according to the type of argumentation peculiar to the first theologians. Their discussion of the subject was maintained within the domains of protology, soteriology, trinitology, theory of numbers and ethics.

Second chapter is wholly focussed on the problem of periodization of history. The starting point are the historiosophical aspects of myths. Against this background the first attempts of the qualitative ordering of history are presented. The concept of the „golden age”, derived from ancient poetry and pagan myths, is given special attention. This concept was overtaken by church writers and subjected to a process of ecclesiastical adaptation which – through the use of an historiosophical key – enabled them to link the rule of the Roman Emperor Augustus with the beginning of Christianity perceived as an opening of the new eon of history. Next, the thinking about periodization of history is presented on the basis of historiography from Herodotus to Eusebius of Caesarea. This exposition also includes the first attempts undertaken by ancient historians to find the principle ordering history and rendering it logically coherent. The chapter shows an early evolution of historiography which culminated in the universal history as conceived by Eusebius of Caesarea.

If the discourses presented in the first two chapters were devoted only to some particular elements of philosophy of history, the following two chapters are focussing on these intellectual currents, which are trying to shed more light on a deeper dimension of historiosophical thought, where the vision is more systematically integrated and interrelated with other branches of philosophy and theology.

Third chapter deals with millenarianism of antiquity. Separate and distinctive versions of this current are presented and discussed, together with their theoretical underpinnings, which are mainly of anthropological and exegetic character. The following currents of thought are presented and discussed in order of appearance: the messianic kingdom from the tradition of Israel, the chiliasm of the New Testament, also known as „the first millenarianism“. In later centuries the so-called „second millenarianism“ was developing and this current is presented here in the two distinct versions - of Saint Irenaeus and of Tertulian. Censure of millenarianism, especially the one deriving from circles related to the Alexandrine school, which was focussed on undermining the assumptions of the millenarianism of the early Church, was unable to finish off this current. At the threshold of III and IV centuries there appeared yet another version of pre-Augustinian chiliasm in the work of Methodius of Olympus. Its intellectual construction seems to be dependent in high degree on the Alexandrine school style of thought.

In fourth chapter the conception of „eternal return“ is presented. This view was born in the times of pagan antiquity and was closely related to the circular conception. In the Bible it acquired the form of soteriological monism, for which the soteriological dualism remains an alternative. Soteriological monism was supported on the concept of the exodus and return of beings from and to God. When related to a relevant notion of history this view acquires a historiosophical dimension. It was Origen who presented a concept of apocatastasis in a systematic manner, linking it with other branches of his theology. His conception, which remained under strong influence of Platonic thought, aroused some serious doubts among the Church hierarchy from the point of view of its adherence to doctrinal orthodoxy. By contrast, free from such doubts was the thought developed by Gregory of Nyssa, whose conception of eternal return was supported on the idea of double creation, where the key significance is accorded to the first act of creation, which includes the human nature as a subject of salvation.

In fifth chapter some elements of pre-Augustinian historiosophy are presented, which can be detected within the trinitarian controversies of the first centuries. The chapter also touches

upon the political question of God's rule over history. While tracing the debate it becomes evident that the distinction of the form of God's existence „in itself” versus „in the world” yields some interesting historiosophical dimensions. At the same time it remains strongly linked to the concept of political monarchy. The source of this thinking can be traced to Aristotle and currents deriving from his idea. It found continuation in the thought of Filon of Alexandria and in the Alexandrine school. Taken over by Christianity it became a source of controversies related with such heterodoxal currents as gnosticism and monarchianism. It eventually yielded a discussion centered on the introduction of number into the divine monad. Diverse attempts to solve this problems undertaken by Irenaeus of Lyon, Tertulian, Origen and Athanasius the Great gave birth to the discussion on the principle of history. At the same time the aforementioned theme of imperial theology returned as developed by Eusebius of Ceasarea.

The final and concluding chapter summarizes the prior findings and presents author's solutions to the problems formulated at the outset. It becomes evident that before Saint Augustine there already existed some important elements characteristic of historiosophic thought. However, they were lacking a systematic and integrating approach so typical for the classical philosophy of history. Nonetheless, some currents of thought by virtue of their completeness could legitimately be accorded status of a genuine philosophy of history. The best candidates are millenarianism and apocatastasis. Yet, the claim of the former was rejected by the author of the this work on the basis of the absence of any relation to political doctrines. On similar grounds the same negative decision was taken with respect to the latter, with this reservation that in the case of Origen there seems to exist some threads related to the theological and political vision of the empire. This dissertation identified and indicated also some lements of pre-Augustinian historiosophy which remianed in strong relations with political doctrines of monarchy and the conception of empire.

In closing remarks certain new research ideas and possible cognitive perspectives which seem to be opening by the present work are considered. The author is convinced that the notorious present-day tendency to marginalize any philosophy of history is not warranted. The criticism of philosophy of history may hold its value with respect to these currents of thought which emerged during the era of the enlightenment and which were related to the naive and optimistic trust in the idea of progress. However, as this study shows, it is possible to look upon history from a philosophical perspective in a different way, which is free from defects usually ascribed to the modern conception of historiosophy. Modern thought cannot claim exclusive

monopoly on philosophy of history as this type of intellectual investigation is much older, has more ancient and nobler sources, reaching to biblical era and to the epoch of early Christianity. Tracing the evolution of historiosophical thought from the time of antiquity to the present could also broaden our understanding of the history of political and legal doctrines.

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