Angels and Time: Reading Augustine's *City of God* 12.16

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In *Confessions* 12 (c. 400), Augustine writes that the angels—variously referred to as the "heaven of heaven," intellectual creature, and created wisdom—at first creation immediately transcend time by turning and cleaving to the creator. Mutable without mutation, they never suffer the temporal vicissitudes of other beings made from nothing. In this sense, the angels are said to precede the creation of time (*Conf.* 12.9.9; 12.11.12; 12.12.15; 12.15.20–21).[1] Similarly, according to *The Literal Interpretation of Genesis* (401–415), from first creation the angels transcend time and change by apprehending and adhering to immutable truth. In contemplating the Light, the angels become light: that is, the unformed spiritual creature is immediately informed and illuminated by conversion to the creator (*GenLitt.* 1.3.7; 1.4.9; 1.5.10; 1.9.17; 2.8.16). Finally, the view that angels do not participate in time is strongly reinforced by the doctrine of creation *simul* developed in Augustine's mature interpretation of Genesis. Just as the works of the six days are produced by God simultaneously and atemporally, so the angelic mind apprehends these works all at once, without the "before" and "after" of temporal successiveness (*GenLitt.* 4.32.49–4.35.56). It may strike us as anomalous, then, to read in Book 12 of *The City of God* (c. 417) that

1. Thanks to Luke Mills and Robert Stein for reading and commenting on this paper; and to the members of the Columbia University Medieval Discussion Group for providing a stimulating and generous forum.

See the classic studies of A.H. Armstrong, "Spiritual or Intelligible Matter in Plotinus and St. Augustine," in *Augustinus Magister*, Congrès International Augustinien (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), 277–83; and J. Pépin, "Recherches sur le sens et les origines de l'expression *caelum caeli* dans le livre XII des *Confessions* de S. Augustin," *Ex Platonicorvm Persona: Études sur les lectures philosophiques de saint Augustin* (1953; rpt. Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1977), 41–130. There is no evidence that Augustine attributes to spiritual creation a specific intermediate mode of duration; the term *aevum* (Calcidius' translation of Plato's *aion*) would not until the thirteenth century be associated with spiritual substances or mutable natures that do not change. See Richard C. Dales, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World* (Leiden: Brill, 1990),16, 194.

1) the angels moved in time at first creation; 2) before the creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day, the changing movements of spiritual creation conditioned the passage of as yet "unmeasured" time; and 3) these angelic motions contained "before" and "after," because they moved from the future to the past.

For what reasons might Augustine have altered his long-established account of spiritual creation, and what can be learned about his views of time from reading *City* 12.16? As prior hexaemeral authors had noted, the creation of the angels is not explicitly recorded in Genesis; according to Augustine, spiritual creation is variously denoted as "heaven," "light," and "day" (*City* 11.9; *GenLitt.* 4.35.56; cp. Gen. 1.1–5). With little scriptural and less philosophical evidence about their natures, the angels—as Gustave Bardy has observed—present an "indétermination augustinienne" which, I will suggest, is well-suited to exploring a variety of hypotheses.[2] In reading *City* 12.16 and its antecedents, I want to argue first that variations in Augustine's accounts of angels are often contextual, the consequence of the historical moment and rhetorical goal of a particular work. Second, for Augustine, the "indeterminate" angels make possible a variety of thought experiments, providing a sort of "laboratory" for the problems of time and mind which are his great interest. Finally, as I have argued elsewhere, Augustine develops two complementary inquiries into of time, the well-known psychological account in *Confessions* 11, which shows how the mind measures time; and the account of time in the natural world, which emerges from his several readings of Genesis.[3] *City* 12.16 brings together these complementary discussions of time.

Fundamental to Augustine's thought is the premise that time cannot exist without change. This change is of two kinds: "For if there were no motion of either a *spiritual or corporeal creature,* by which the future moving through the present would succeed the past, there would be no time at all (my emphasis; *GenLitt.* 5.5.12).[4] He therefore consistently holds that time began *with* creation and is a consequence of it, an argument ultimately deriving from an interpretation of *Timaeus* 38b transmitted by Philo of Alexandria

2. G. Bardy, ed., *La Cité de Dieu*, vol. 35 of *Oeuvres de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959), 35:501. All references are to this edition; except where noted, all translations are mine.

3. See Charlotte Gross, "Augustine's Ambivalence About Temporality: His Two Accounts of Time," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 8 (1999): 129–48.

4. *GenLitt*. 5.5.12: "Motus enim si nullus esset uel spiritalis uel corporalis creaturae, quo per praesens praeteritis futura succederent, nullum esset tempus omnio." In *La Genèse au sens littéral en douze livres*, ed. P. Agaësse and A. Solignac, vols. 48–49 of *Oeuvres de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1972), 48:390. All references are to this edition; all translations are mine, with indebtedness to J.H. Taylor, trans*., Saint Augustine: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 2 vols. (New York: Newman Press, 1982).

and Ambrose of Milan.[5] As he repeats in his five interpretations of Genesis, there was no time before creation in which God could be idle or active, since there can be no time before time; God precedes creation in eternity (*GenMan.* 1.2.3; *GenLittImpf.* 1.3.7–8; *Conf.* 11.13.15; *GenLitt.* 5.5.12; *City* 11.5–6; *passim*).[6] These premises about time underlie the discussion of *City* 12.16 where, treating the origin of the two cities in the creation of the angels, Augustine asks whether God's eternal sovereignty implies an eternal creation.[7] He responds that the angels have existed always—*semper esse,* his characteristic term for both the eternal and the everlasting—but that, like time itself, the angels were created and are therefore not coeternal with the creator. Although some modern readers credit Boethius with first distinguishing the eternal (*aeternus*) and the perpetual (*perpetuus, sempiternus*), Augustine clearly conceives timeless eternity and endless time as ontologically discrete: "[N]ot everything immortal is with sufficient accuracy called eternal; for even if something lives forever, yet undergoes change, it is not properly called eternal" (*De Div. Quaest.* 19; 388–95).[8] Thus, when he writes in *City* 12.16 that the angels "existed always" (*semper fuisse*), we understand that their existence is temporal and had a beginning with creation: indeed, the interest of the passage lies precisely in the unexpected introduction of angelic time.

5. At *City* 12.13, Augustine writes that Plato clearly admits that the world had a (temporal) beginning, although the Platonists reject this interpretation. According to F.M. Cornford, most later Platonists understood the *Timaeus* to mean that the origin of the world was causal, not temporal (thus Calcidius); see his *Plato's Cosmology* (1937; rpt. New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1975), 24–27; and Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 268–75. According to Pierre Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and their Greek Sources,* trans. Harry Wedeck (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 168–80, Augustine read the *Timaeus* in Cicero's translation and did not make use of Calcidius. On Philo, Ambrose and Augustine, see Sorabji, *Time*, 234–35. As Christopher Kirwan points out in *Augustine* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), 163, Augustine's argument that creation and time began together is non-theological.

6. According to *GenMan*. 1.2.3, the Manichees ask, "Si in principio aliquo temporis fecit Deus caelum et terram, quid agebat antequam faceret caelum et terram?" In *Sur la Genèse Contra les Manichéens*, trad. P. Monat, vol. 50 of *Oeuvres de saint Augustin* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2004), 50:160. All references are to this edition; all translations are mine. James McEvoy, "St. Augustine's Account of Time and Wittgenstein's Criticisms," *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (1984): 547–77, points out that this was a stock question, "directed by Epicureans against Stoics, and by some Platonists against others who, taking the *Timaeus* myth literally, believed in creation."

7. In the similar problem posed in *De Trin*. 5.16.17, Augustine uses a different strategy: he discusses relational predications (e.g., if one may not be a lord without a servant, does the predication "lord" imply temporal change at creation?); and concludes that God is lord of men in time (the change is in men alone). The divine substance does not change.

8."[N]on omne inmortale satis subtiliter aeternum dicitur, quia et si semper aliquid vivat, tamen si mutabilitatem patiatur, non proprie aeternum appelatur …." (*De Div. Quaest.* 19).

In *City* 12.16, having established that "what exists for all time may appropriately be said to exist always [*semper esse*]," Augustine continues:

> [The angels] have existed for all time: so much so that they were created before all measured time, if we accept that measured time began with the creation of the sky, and they existed before that. But time, we suppose, did not begin with the sky,but existed before it; though not indeed in hours, days, months, and years. For these measurements of temporal intervals [*dimensiones temporalium spatiorum*], which are by usage properly called "times" [*tempora*], evidently took their beginning from the motion of the stars; hence God said, in creating them, "Let them serve for signs and times and days and years." Time, we suppose, existed before this in some changing movement [*aliquo mutabile motu*], in which there was succession of before and after [*aliud prius, aliud posterius praeterit*], in which everything could not be simultaneous [*simul*]. If then before the creation of the sky there was something of this sort in the angelic motions, and therefore time already existed, and the angels moved in time [*temporaliter movebantur*] from the moment of their creation, even so they have existed for all time, seeing that time began when they began. (*City* 12.16)[9]

The related issues taken up in this passages—time during the first three "days" of creation, the measurement of time by heavenly motion, whether the angels moved at first creation—are broached early on in Augustine's first two interpretations of Genesis. In *On Genesis Against the Manichees* (388–89), where he vigorously defends the notion of six temporal days, Augustine poses a stock hexaemeral question: how could the first three "days" of creation have passed without the sun, since temporal intervals are marked by the motion of the heavens (cp. *Conf.* 11.23.30)?[10] Anticipating the psychological theory of time set forth in *Confessions* 11, he claims that the human mind is capable of perceiving and measuring time independently of any observed physical motion: "For men could perceive [*sentire*] this temporal interval [i.e., day] and its duration [*moram et longitudinem*] even if they were dwelling in caves

9. *City* 12.16: "Usque adeo autem isti [angeli] omni tempore fuerent, ut etiam ante omnia tempora facti sint; si tamen a caelo coepta sunt tempora, et illi iam erant ante caelum. At si tempus non a caelo, verum et ante caelum fuit; non quidem in horis et diebus et mensibus et annis (nam istae dimensiones temporalium spatiorum, quae usitate ac proprie dicuntur tempora, manifestum est quod a motu siderum coeperint; unde et Deus, cum haec institueret, dixit: Et sint in signa et in tempora et in dies et in annos), sed in aliquo mutabile motu, cuius aliud prius, aliud posterius praeterit, eo quod simul esse non possunt;—si ergo ante caelum in angelicis motibus tale aliquid fuit et ideo tempus iam fuit atque angeli, ex quo facti sunt, temporaliter movebantur: etiam sic omni tempore fuerunt, quando quidem cum illis facta sunt tempora." *La Cité*, ed. G. Bardy, 35:202. I follow here the translation of Henry Bettenson, *St. Augustine: Concerning the City of God* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1967), 489–93.

10. This is another stock hexaemeral question, used, e.g., by Basil, *Hexameron* 1.8, who argues that the heavenly bodies were made not to produce temporal intervals but to "rule" them; for Basil, "day" and "night" as separate natures precede the creation of the sun and the moon.

where they could not see the sun rising and setting" (*GenMan.* 1.14.20).[11] Subsequently, Augustine modifies this extreme mentalist position to hold that, while temporal intervals *exist* in the absence of observed heavenly motion, they pass *unnoticed* unless they are marked and discerned [*intelligi et distingui*] by observation of the heavens (*GenMan* 1.14.21).[12] These "unobserved" temporal intervals, it would seem, are a precursor to the "unmeasured" time of *City* 12.15.

The main concern of *City* 12.16, the nature of angelic time—or, most broadly, the issue of time and mind—is introduced early on in the unfinished *Literal Interpretation of Genesis* (393). Again inquiring how the interval "day" could exist before the creation of the heavens, Augustine observes that time can exist "in the motion of an incorporeal creature, such as the soul or the mind, which changes in its thoughts" (*GenLittImpf.* 3.8.4).[13] Since in this change one thing is before and another after, it cannot be understood [*intelligi*] without a temporal interval (Ibid.). If so, then time began with the incorporeal motions of the angels, which were made *before* heaven and earth—as will indeed be argued in *City* 12.16. On the other hand, Augustine adds that time may not, after all, exist in invisible creatures and superiminent powers (Ibid.). Such uncertainty has been ascribed to the "aporetic manner" of the unfinished *Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, a project abandoned by its author as too heavy a labor (*Retrac.* 1.9); yet Augustine's aporias on angels have significant antecedents in prior hexaemeral tradition.[14] The Alexandrian fathers Clement and Origen, for example, posit the existence of an intelligible world of angelic powers and intellectual natures created before the

11. *GenMan.* 1.14.20: "Hanc enim moram et longitudinem temporis possent sentire homines, etiam si in speluncis habitarent ubi orientem et occidentem solem uidere non possent." In *Sur la Genèse*, ed. P. Monat, 50:204. It is noteworthy that, in the twentieth century, experiments have shown that human perception of the unit "day" alters during extended underground stays.

12. *GenMan*. 1.14.21, "Sed in signa et in tempora dictum est ut per haec sidera tempora distinguantur et ab hominibus dinoscantur, quia si currant tempora et nullis distinguantur articulis, qui articuli per siderum cursus notantur, possunt quidem currere tempora atque praeterire, sed intelligi et discerni ab hominibus non possunt …" in *Sur la Genèse*, ed. P. Monat, 50:206.

13. *GenLittImpf.* 3.8.4: "[Q]uaerendum est utrum praeter motum corporum possit esse tempus in motu incorporae creaturae, ueluti est anima uel ipsa mens: quae utique in cogitationibus mouetur et in ipso motu aliud habet prius, aliud posterius, quod sine interuallo temporis intellegi non potest." In *Sur la Genèse au sens littéral livre inachevé*, trad. P. Monat, vol. 50 of *Oeuvres de saint Augustin* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2004), 50:406. All references are to this edition; all translations are mine.

14. *Saint Augustine on Genesis*, trans. and intro. Roland Teske (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 15–16, notes the "hesitant and aporetic character" of *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book*.

visible world.[15] Like views were taught by Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus.[16] Similarly, Basil of Caesarea, whose hexaemeron Augustine read in the translation of Eustathius, describes a supernatural world preceding creation, beyond time, without beginning or end, and filled with "supramundane powers" and "rational and invisible natures" (*Hex.* 1.5).[17] We do not know the exact extent of Augustine's acquaintance with the Greek fathers,[18] but there is from Origen to Basil a continuous tradition of a timeless world of nonphysical natures (i.e., the "heaven" of Gen. 1.1) preceding creation. This tradition is a likely cause of the uncertainty regarding the creation of the angels expressed in Augustine's early *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber.*

In *Confessions* 12, Augustine does not use the term angels, but refers variously to the "heaven of heaven" (*caelum caeli*, cp. Ps. 113.16), "intellectual heaven," "intellectual nature," "spiritual creature," or "rational and intellectual mind"—suggesting, as A.H. Armstrong has shown in his classic study, the close relation of the concept of spiritual creation in *Confessions* 12 to the Plotinian generation of intellectual being—Nous and Soul—from the One.[19] In particular, the Augustinian conversion by which spiritual creation

15. See Pierre Nautin, "Genèse 1, 1–2, de Justin à Origène," in P. Nautin, ed., *In Principio: Interprétation des premiers versets de la Genèse* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1973), 61–94; and A. Solignac, "Exégèse et Métaphysique Genèse 1, 1–2 chez saint Augustin," in *In Principio*, ed. Nautin, 153–61. On the invisible and intelligible world in Philo and the Greek fathers, see also Sorabji, *Time*, 250–52; and Pépin, "Recherches," 104–25.

16. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem*? (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 98–101.

17. Saint Basil, *Exegetic Homilies*, trans. Agnes Clare Way (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1962), 9, writes of a "certain condition older than the birth of the world and proper to the supramundane powers, one beyond time, everlasting, without beginning or end. In it the Creator perfected … rational and invisible natures, and the whole orderly arrangement of spiritual creations which surpass our understanding." According to Pelikan, *What Has Athens?*, 98, Basil thus "taught a double creation": first an invisible world of "nonphysical essences, including angels" and then a temporal world of plants, animals, and humans. See also David Bradshaw, "Time and Eternity in the Greek Fathers," *The Thomist* 70 (2006): 311–66.

18. According to Taylor, ed., *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 1: 6: "[I]t seems almost certain that [Augustine] had read in Latin translations two important Greek works on the first book of Genesis: St. Basil's *In Hexaemeron* translated by Eustathius and Origen's *In Genesi homiliae* translated by Rufinus. On Augustine's possible indebtedness to Basil for his views on time, see John F. Callahan, "Basil of Caesarea: A New Source for St. Augustine's Theory of Time," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63 (1958): 437–54.

19. A.H. Armstrong, "Spiritual or Intelligible Matter," 277–83. Most readers take the spiritual beings of Confessions XII to be angels; thus Étienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, trans. L.E.M. Lynch (New York: Random House, 1960), 197–98, who writes that "since [the angels] are immutable *de facto* as a result of their beatitude, they are preserved from change and consequently do not fall within the order of time." Pépin, "Recherches," 41–130, concludes that the term *caelum caeli* accommodates a wide range of meanings; from a cosmological perspective, the term denotes "une cité d'intelligences supérieures rivées à Dieu par la contemplation, liberées de l'écoulement temporel …."

or "pure mind" turns and adheres to God closely parallels the movement by which the Plotinian Nous, timelessly turning back to the One, is informed by contemplation. Given this Neoplatonic model, it is not surprising, as Armstrong notes, that according to *Confessions* 12 the spiritual creature is prior to and not subject to time (12.15.20).[20] But whereas for Plotinus the production of intellectual being is eternal, for Augustine the angels pertain to the temporal order of finite beings and never lose their potential mutability, although raised above time by grace.

Most important for a reading of *City* 12.16 is Augustine's insistence that the spiritual creature escapes time and change as a direct consequence of its particular mode of intellection. The intelligences who cleave to God offer an instructive epistemological model: always in present contemplation of unchanging truth, with no past to remember and no future to expect, they never experience the painful distension and scattered thought that characterize the human soul in time (cp. *Conf.*11.26.33; 11.29.39).[21] The spiritual creature knows not in part, not in an enigma, not through a mirror, but directly, completely, face-to-face, and all at once [*simul*]: "[Their] knowing is not one thing at one moment and another thing at another moment but all [things] at once without any temporal successiveness" (*Conf.* 12.13.16; cp. 1 Cor. 13.12).[22] This account of spiritual intellection clearly resonates with a variety of visionary moments described in *The Confessions.*

In the mature *Literal Interpretation of Genesis* (401–14), however, Augustine presses his model of atemporal angelic intellection into the service of his doctrine of simultaneous creation. Working from the text, "He who lives in eternity created all things at once" (Wisd. 1.18),[23] Augustine holds in his *Literal Interpretation of Genesis* (401–14) that God created all things

20. Armstrong, "Spiritual or Intelligible Matter," 280. See, e.g. *Conf.* 12.15.20: "[E]tsi non invenimus tempus ante illam, quia et creaturam temporis antecedit, quae prior omnium creata est, ante illam tamen est ipsius creatoris aeternitas …." In St. Augustine's *Confessions*, trans. W. Watts (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 2:318. ("We do not find that there was time before it [*caelum caeli*], yet it is created first of all things. However, prior to it is the eternity of the Creator himself.") All citations are to this edition; all translations are mine, with an indebtedness to Henry Chadwick, trans., *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

21. See *Conf.* 11.29.39: "At ego in tempora dissilui, quorum ordinem nescio, et tumultuosis varietatibus dilaniantur cogitationes meae, intima viscera animae meae" (Watts, 2:280).

22. *Conf.* 12.13.16: "[C]aelum intellectuale, ubi est intellectus nosse simul, non ex parte, non in aenigmate, non per speculum, sed ex toto, in manifestatione, facie ad faciem, non modo hoc, modo illud, sed, quod dictum est, nosse simul sine ulla vicissitudine temporum …" (Watts, 2:310–12).

23. On Augustine's adoption of creation *simul* in the interval between his two early exegetical studies of Genesis, see Jean Guitton, *Le Temps et l'éternité chez Plotin et saint Augustin* (Paris: Vrin, 1959), 177–82.

simultaneously in the same atemporal instant: matter, form, and all the works of the six days, some actually and others potentially and causally.[24] At the center of this doctrine—a complex effort to clarify the relation of the eternal and the temporal—Augustine places the angels, whose atemporal intellection of creation effectively eliminates time from the Genesis narrative. For Augustine, creation is marked by two logically discrete stages: God makes formless matter from nothing, and perfects it according to his Wisdom or Word. In this latter movement, the unformed creature, by nature tending toward nothingness, is recalled and turns back to imitate its exemplar in the Word; thus, in a conversion appropriate to its degree of being, it receives formed or perfected being (*GenLitt.* 1.4.9). As has been seen, Augustine associates unformed spiritual creation with "heaven" (Gen. 1.1) and perfected spiritual beings with "light" (Gen. 1.3). A third association, "And he called the light Day" (Gen. 1.5) makes possible simultaneous creation. As Augustine explains, "[T]he day that God first made is the company of spiritual and rational creatures, that is, supercelestial angels and virtues, placed in the presence of all God's works" (*GenLitt.* 4.35.56).[25] The six days of Genesis are therefore not temporal intervals, but angels, whose simultaneous knowledge of the works of creation is "repeated" six times. Augustine emphasizes that this interpretation of "day" is literal, not figural or allegorical, for the incorporeal light or angelic mind, an intelligible reality, is necessarily more real and excellent than any corporeal radiance (*GenLitt.* 4.28.45).

Bringing together scripture and neoplatonic metaphysics, *On Genesis* sets out a complex and threefold movement of the angelic mind that transposes the temporal to the noetic. Each "day" of creation—as indicated in the verse, "and there was evening and morning, one day" (Gen. 1.5)—is marked by three types of apprehension. The spiritual being knows itself first in its own nature as a creature distinct from God (this is "evening" knowledge, a "faded" likeness of true being). Then, turning back to the creator in a conversion of love and praise, it knows itself in Him and receives formed or perfected being ("morning" knowledge). Finally, the spiritual being apprehends the "next" work of creation to be made (e.g., the firmament) as an immutable reason in the Word ("daylight" knowledge) (*GenLitt.* 4.22.39; 4.24.41; 4.26.43; 4.32.50). As in *Confessions* 12, this noetic movement is reminiscent of Plotinus: according to P. Agaësee, it resembles the three phrases of the self-

24. On creation *simul*, see, e.g., *GenLitt*. 4.33.51–52. On the causal reasons, which make possible the potential existence of things, see also *GenLitt*. 4.33.51–52; 5.7.20; 6.5.8; 6.6.10–11.

25. See the classic study of Marie Thérèse d'Alverny, "Les Anges et les Jours," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 9 (1957): 271–300. *GenLitt*. 4.35.56: "Dies ergo ille, quem Deus primitus fecit, si spiritalis rationalisque creatura est, id est angelorum supercaelestium atque uirtutum, praesentatus est omnibus operibus Dei …" (*La Genèse*, ed. Agaësse and Solignac, 48:368).

constitution of Intellect: "regard vers l'Un, arrêt et distantiation par rapport à lui, désir et amour du générateur."[26] Since the spiritual creature apprehends all it sees simultaneously, "evening," "morning," and "daylight" knowledge are experienced *simul* (*GenLitt.* 4.29.46). The angelic mind knows the works of creation not in time but according to what Augustine calls the "before" and "after" of the order of causal connections (*ordinem conexarum causarum*): like God's creative act, their apprehension of creation is simultaneous (*GenLitt.* 4.32.49–35.56). While Augustine will introduce ancillary teachings—notably the causal reasons—to support his theory of creation *simul*, the foundation of his doctrine is clearly the angelic mind, "which can grasp simultaneously all that the sacred text sets down separately" (*GenLitt.* 4.33.51).

For a study of angels and time, Augustine's account in *On Genesis* has important consequences beyond eliminating time from the biblical narrative. First, the angelic mind, which knows things simultaneously, fully, and face-to-face, is quite different from the human mind, the operations of which involve change from one state to another. As Augustine writes elsewhere, "The soul moves in time, whether remembering what it had forgotten or learning what it did not know, or willing what it did not will" (*GenLitt.* 8.20.39).[27] In contrast, the angels of *On Genesis* are said to experience three logically discrete modes of knowing simultaneously, perhaps as one attends to the several notes of a chord. The angels always contemplate immutable truth, always know the creature in its own existence, and always refer this knowledge with praise to God (*GenLitt.* 4.30.47; cp. *City* 11.7). According to Sorabji, the various mental movements of the angels described in *On Genesis* are "distinguishable co-existent states of mind" and likely not movements at all, although he also observes that they involve "quasi-change."[28] Second, Augustine envisions this timeless angelic intellection as the mode of knowing in heaven, when after the resurrection humankind will be made equal and joined to the angels (*GenLitt.* 4.23.41–25.42). Finally, the inquiry into angels and time acquires an essential historical dimension when Augustine considers the fall of the bad angels. The devil never enjoyed the certain beatitude which allowed the good angels to transcend time and change, but fell through pride at the very start of time (*GenLitt.* 11.16.21–23.33). In the penultimate book of *On Genesis,* Augustine thus arrives at the notion of two loves which, commencing with the good and bad angels, characterize the two cities which together move through the time of the world (*saeculum*).

26. *La Genèse*, ed. Agaësee and Solignac, 48:648, who refer the reader to *Enn*. 5.1.6. and 5.2.1.

27. *De Gen.* 8.20.39: "Exempli enim gratia per tempus mouetur animus uel reminiscendo, quod oblitus erat; uel discendo, quod nesciebat, uel uolendo, quod nolebat" (*La Genèse*, ed. Agaësse and Solignac, 48:368).

28. Sorabji, *Time*, 31–32.

"Concerning these two cities," he observes, "I shall perhaps write more at length in another book (*GenLitt.* 11.15.19).[29]

In *City* 12.16, Augustine clearly disregards, or at least holds in abeyance, both the notion of a temporal angelic intellection and the doctrine of simultaneous creation which, a few years earlier, he had developed in *The Literal Interpretation of Genesis.*[30] Having argued that the angels have existed for all time, because time came into being with them, he further claims that before the creation of the heavens, the spiritual motions of the angels conditioned the passage of "unmeasured" time. As he elaborates:

> [The angels] are said to have existed always because they have been for all time; and they have existed for all time because without them periods of time could not exist. For when there was no created thing whose change and movement could be the condition of time's passage [*cuius mutabilibus motibus tempora peraguntur*], time could not exist. Thus although the angels always existed, they were created, and the fact that they always existed does not make them coeternal with the Creator. For he has always existed in changeless eternity; whereas they were created. But they are said to have existed always because they have existed for all time, and without them no time could exist [*sine quibus tempora nullo modo esse potuerunt*]. However, since time is changing and transitory, it cannot be coeternal with changeless eternity. Now the immortality of the angels is not transitory or temporal; it is not in the past, as if it no longer existed, nor yet in the future, as though it had still to come into existence; and yet their movements, which condition the passage of time, pass from the future into the past [*tamen eorum motus, quibus tempora peraguntur, ex futuro in praeteritum transeunt*], and therefore they cannot be co-eternal with the creator. For in the movement of the Creator there is no question of a past which no longer exists or a future which is yet to be [*in cuius motu dicendum non est vel fuisse quod iam non sit, vel futurum esse quod nondum sit*]. (*City* 12.16)[31]

This passage raises two questions: for what reasons might Augustine have revised his earlier view that angels transcend all time and change; and how are

29. *GenLitt*. 11.15.20: "De quibus duabus ciuitatibus latius fortasse alio loco, si dominus uoluerit, disseremus."

30. According to Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (1967; Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 178–79; 289–81, *De Genesi ad Litteram* was completed in 414, while Books 11–13 of *City* were written in 417–18.

31. *City* 12.16: "… semper fuisse dicantur, quia omni tempore fuerunt, et propterea omni tempore fuerunt, quia nullo modo sine his ipsa tempora esse potuerunt. Ubi enim nulla creatura est, cuius mutabilibus motibus tempora peraguntur, tempora omnino esse non possunt: ac per hoc etsi semper fuerunt, creati sunt, nec si semper fuerunt, ideo Creatori coaeterni sunt. Ille enim semper fuit aeternitate immutabili; iste autem facti sunt; sed ideo semper fuisse dicuntur, quia omni tempore fuerunt, sine quibus tempora nullo modo esse potuerunt; tempus autem quoniam mutabilitate transcurrit, aeternitati inmutabili non potest esse coaeternum. Ac per hoc etiamsi inmortalitas angelorum non transit in tempore, necpraeterita est quasi iam non sit, nec futura quasi nondum sit: tamen eorum motus, quibus tempora peraguntur, ex futuro in praeteritum transeunt, et ideo Creatori, in cuius motu dicendum non est vel fuisse quod iam non sit, vel futurum esse quod nondum sit, coaeterni esse non possunt" (*La Cité*, ed. Bardy, 35:204).

we to understand the relation between spiritual creation, time, and motion?

First, as for the revision of earlier views: it is less a question of reconciling disparate accounts of angels than of considering the issues which preoccupied Augustine during the period 397–417.[32] In *Confessions* 12 (c. 400), Augustine's insistence that spiritual beings ("heaven") immediately transcend time at first creation clearly reflects the strong Platonist outlook which then dominated his thought. Similarly, in the *Literal Interpretation of Genesis* (401–414), Augustine's concept of transcendent angels who apprehend creation atemporally works to sustain his doctrine of creation *simul*.[33] The noetic movements of the angels, reminiscent of Plotinian thought, effectively eliminate the contradictory notion of an immutable God working in time. In contrast, I want to suggest, in *City of God* 12 (c. 417) Augustine radically revises his treatment of angels—in the process jettisoning certain neoplatonic features—in order to provide a foundation for his theory of history. As he announces in Books 11–12, his intention is to treat the origins, development, and ends of the two cities which, beginning with two communities of angels moved by two opposing loves, are interwoven in this present transitory world [*saeculum*]—one predestined to reign with God for all eternity, the other doomed to undergo eternal punishment (11.1, 12.1, 12.9, 15.1). Since in these two societies of angels "we find something like the beginnings [*quaedam exordia*] of the two communities of mankind," it is plausible that Augustine revised his concept of angels in order firmly to locate spiritual creation at the *start* of (historical) time and *in* (historical) time (*City* 11.34).[34]

In *City* 12.16, the view that angels have existed for all time—that history began with them at the start of time—rests on Augustine's well-known *non-theological* argument that there is no time antecedent to creation. In Books 10–12 of *City*, however, he takes pains to lay a strong *theological* groundwork for the origins of the two cities, working to define the time of history in accordance with revealed truth. As Étienne Gilson has observed, "[In a theology of history], more than anywhere else in the Augustinian system, reason can only advance by following faith."[35] If for the Platonists the origin of things is a metaphysical issue, for Augustine it is also historical fact held on scriptural authority.[36] In particular, Augustine holds with certain belief

32. According to Chadwick, Augustine composed the *Confessions* in the last three years of the fourth century (*Confessions*, p. xiii).

33. See, e.g., the analysis of Agaësee and Solignac, eds., *La Genèse*, 48:648.

34. *City* 11.34: "… de duabus istis diversis inter se atque contrariis societatibus angelorum, in quibus sunt quaedam exordia duarum etiam in rebus humanis civitatum …" (*La Cité*, ed. Bardy, 35:142).

35. Gilson, *Saint Augustine*, 175.

36. John O'Meara, *Understanding Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1989), 157–59.

that the time of history is linear, progressive, and unidirectional, having a temporal beginning, moving towards a final end, and acquiring significance from unique events.[37] In Books 10–11 of *City*, his special concern is to show that a novel beginning (*novitas*) is possible—that "new things can be made" (*possunt fieri nova*, *City* 12.21). To this end he adduces a series of related theological arguments based on the revealed truth of the soul's blessedness. These arguments are used to disprove the eternity of the world (*City* 10.31); to establish that God did not change his will in creating the world (*City* 11.4); and to counter theories of cyclical time (*City* 12.21).[38] In short, Augustine uses his theological argument to establish the nature of origins and beginnings in conformity with revealed truth.

In response to the Platonist view that whatever endures forever must have always existed, Augustine first argues that the soul which moves from earthly misery to lasting happiness undergoes a genuine change in time. To avoid condemning the soul to endless misery, one must grant the possibility of novel temporal beginnings—for the soul and, similarly, the world (*City* 10.31). The eternal soul envisioned by the Platonists would perpetually alternate between earthly misery and false happiness in the afterlife—false because reincarnation precludes the expectation of secure beatitude. But if an eternal soul attains certain and lasting happiness, it makes a new beginning. Just as the soul's "novel and genuine felicity" is eternally willed and not a change in God's design, so the creation of the world does not disturb divine immutability (*City* 11.4).[39] Finally, Augustine uses his theological argument to polemicize against cyclical theories of time, which both jeopardize the soul's blessedness and preclude novel and unique historic events. In a Christian theology of history, the first of these is the redemption: "Christ died once for all our sins"—the Pauline *ephapax* or "once for all time" (*City* 12.14; cp. 1 Thess. 4.16). The redemptive time of history, which begins with the two

37. My account is much abbreviated; for discussion of linear and cyclical time, see Arnaldo Momigliano, "Time in Ancient Historiography," *History and the Concept of Time* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 13–41. While noting that Augustine offers evidence that the Greeks conceived time as cyclical and the early Christians as linear, Momigliano cautions that these views do not necessarily represent those of ordinary fifth-century Jews, Greeks, and Christians (21). Nor did all Greek philosophers and historians espouse cyclical time (25).

38. A variant of the argument is also used to distinguish the good and bad angels at first creation (see *City* 11.13).

39. As Augustine argues, to say that God changes his will to effect the beatitude of the soul is to make God subject to mutability; to say that this change is not part of the divine plan is to deny that God is author of beatitude (*City* 11.4). But see Kirwan, *Augustine*, 157–65, who argues that Augustine "has not disproved the thesis of a beginingless universe," but simply shown that the cyclists who wish to establish lasting beatitude expose God to the charge of mutability.

societies of angels, is linear and irreversible: "Let us keep to our straight way, which is Christ" (*City* 12.14, 21).[40]

As Peter Brown has argued in his magisterial biography, it is superficial to regard *City* "as a book about the sack of Rome"; rather, in consequence of the sack, Augustine encountered a new and challenging audience of pagan refugees in Carthage.[41] Thus, writes Brown, *City* should be read as "an effort to clear away the obstacles that littered the extensive common ground between educated pagans and their Christian peers."[42] The theological argument for *novitas* may well have had special rhetorical force for the Platonists in Augustine's audience, who, like Christians, valued the secure happiness of the soul.[43] Still, this theological strategy directed towards pagans, "an appeal to the phenomenon of change in the soul," has puzzled some modern readers.[44] "Qui nous force de lier la destinée de l'âme à celle du monde?" asks Jean Guitton.[45] In the fourth century, however, the doctrine of an eternal world was a cause of real concern for Christians, undermining as it did the significance of scriptural history.[46] Directed against such pagan views, Augustine's arguments for temporal beginnings and linear time undergird the architecture of salvation history constructed in the second half of *City.* More than mere analogy, Augustine's theological argument for *novitas* extends his central thesis, that the elect are moving through time towards a single goal: "The deepest meaning of history lies in the gradual formation of [the City of God]."[47] To seek an end, history demands an originating point. When in 12.16 Augustine locates temporal angels at the beginning of things, then, he emphasizes for his pagan audience the historical movement to blessedness. In so far as the two cities begin with the angels, spiritual creation stands in time

40. *City* 12.21: "[V]iam rectam sequentes, quod nobis est Christus, eo duce ac salvatore a vano et inepto impiorum circuitibus iter fidei mentemque avertamus" (*La Cité*, ed. Bardy, 35:222).

41. On Augustine's new audience, "the cultured pagan nobleman of Rome [who] had begun to make their presence felt, as refugees, in the salons of Carthage"; see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 298–311.

42. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 511.

43. Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God: A Reader's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 138.

44. O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, 137.

45. Jean Guitton, *Le Temps et l'éternité chez Plotin et saint Augustin* (Paris: Vrin, 1959), 205. See also *La Cité*, ed. Bardy, 35:509, who finds that Augustine's arguments "se développe en dehors du problème philosophique."

46. Guitton, *Le Temps*, 206. For an evaluation of Augustine's contribution to the issue of the eternity of the world, see Dales, *Medieval Discussions*, 11–13.

47. Gilson, *Saint Augustine*, 175.

and at the start of time (*City* 12.1).[48] In sum, Augustine's unusual treatment of the angels owes something to both his arguments from revealed truth and to his theology of history.

The second question, the nature of angelic time, is more puzzling. For as we have seen, in *City* 12.16 Augustine abruptly jettisons the doctrine of simultaneous creation developed in *The Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, instead arguing that the angels move in time from first creation. It is curious, however, that throughout *City* 11 Augustine had explicitly taught simultaneous creation. As in *De Genesi,* for example, in *City* he explains that "day" signifies angelic intellection of creation; and he again distinguishes "twilight," "daylight," and "morning" knowledge (11.29; cp. 11.7). Similarly, he endorses his earlier view that the days named in Scripture are not different intervals, but a repeated noetic movement of the same one "day" (*City* 11.9). If Augustine early on warns the reader that "[w]hat kind of days these are is difficult or even impossible to imagine" (*City* 11.7),[49] his warning may refer as much to the earlier doctrine of creation *simul* as to the new temporal scheme of *City* 12.16, where he introduces the idea of unmeasured angelic time. As he writes in this chapter, before the creation of the heavens, time certainly existed, but not in measured temporal intervals or units (*dimensiones temporalium spatiorum*) such as days or years. The unmeasured time preceding the creation of the sky is supported by the changing motions of spiritual creation, in which there is a succession of before and after, and which pass from the future into the past (*City* 12.16). This angelic time is of great interest and has several consequences for reading *City* 12.16.[50]

First, the notion of unmeasured time finds an antecedent in the "disorderly" time of the *Timaeus*, which Augustine read in the translation of Cicero. According to Plato, "time came into being with the heavens"—that is, when the world soul began to impart to the heavenly spheres their intel-

48. As O'Daly writes: "In talking of the origins of the city of God, Augustine must … talk of angels" (*Augustine's City of God*, 139). On Augustine's theology of history, see esp. the classic study of R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); and Henri Marrou, *L'Ambivalence du temps de l'histoire chez saint Augustin* (Paris: Vrin, 1950).

49. *City* 11.6: "Qui dies cuius modi sint, aut perdifficile nobis aut etiam inpossibile est cogitare, quanto magis dicere" (*La Cité*, ed. Bardy, 35:50).

50. As has been seen, Augustine takes up the concept of "unmeasured" time early on in his study of Genesis, positing an "unobserved" time in which temporal intervals exist but pass unnoticed in the absence of the celestial clock (*GenMan*. 1.14.21). This early analysis assumes, as he will later argue in *GenLitt.*, that time exists in the sense world independently of the observer. In *GenLittImpf.* 3.8 Augustine suggests that time is supported by the motions of an incorporeal creature, a position to which he reverts in *City* 12.16.

ligible motions (*Tim.* 38b–c).[51] In creating the periodic motion of the heavens "to define and preserve the numbers of time" (*Tim.* 38a–c), the demiurge provides a standard of measurement which enhances the intelligibility of the sense-world.[52] Indeed, in the view of F.M. Cornford, "[N]othing that [Plato calls] time can exist without these units of measurements; and these again cannot exist without the regular revolutions of the heavenly bodies, the motions of the celestial clock."[53] More recent readers, however, find in the *Timaeus* a "disorderly time" preceding the fashioning of the heavens and associated with the discordant motions of primitive chaos.[54] Sorabji reports that in the interpretation of the Middle Platonists Plutarch and Atticus, *orderly time* is in the *Timaeus* preceded by *disorderly time*; and, moreover, he finds "traces" of disorderly and subsequent orderly time in Augustine.[55] But it is noteworthy that Augustine's premises differ from those of Plato. For the Christian thinker, time before the creation of the sky is conditioned not by primitive chaos but by the mental motion of the angels, as they know creation in itself and as immutable reasons in the Word of God. This time is *unmeasured* but not, I suggest, *disorderly*, since the condition of its existence (spiritual motion) is ontologically superior to that of measured time (the physical movement of heavenly bodies).

Second, Augustine's consistent tendency to view heavenly motion as only incidental to time—evident since *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber*—is made explicit in *Confessions* 11: "I once heard a learned man say that the motions of the sun, moon, and stars in themselves constitute time [*ipsa sint tempora*]; but I could not agree" (*Conf.* 11.23.29).[56] Augustine's thought experiment concerning the solar day, without denying the relation of the unit "day" to solar revolution, demonstrates that time is not the move-

51. In interpreting the *Timaeus*, some commentators took Plato to mean that the cosmos had a (temporal) beginning, others that Plato offers a heuristic narrative and that the cosmos is endless; see Sorabji, *Time*, 268–83.

52. See Richard D. Mohr, "Plato on Time and Eternity," *Ancient Philosophy* 6 (1986): 39–46.

53. *Plato's Cosmology*, ed. Cornford, 102. The motions of the celestial clock derive from the intelligible movement of the world soul.

54. See Gregory Vlastos, "The Disorderly Motion in the *Timaios*," *The Classical Quarterly* 33.2 (1939): 71–83. Vlastos concludes that Plato "compromised" to include elements of spatial and temporal order in pre-existing chaos: "Just as the pre-existing chaos had traces of geometric pattern, so it had traces of arithmetic periodicity" (77). However, he emphasizes that the issue of disorderly time is "vexed"; for example, disorderly motion implies an irrational world soul.

55. Sorabji, *Time*, 270.

56. *Conf.* 11.23.29: "Audivi a quodam homine docto, quod solis et lunae ac siderum motus ipsa sint tempora, et non adnui. cur enim non potius omnium corporum motus sint tempora?" (*Confessions*, trans. Watts, 2:258).

ment of the heavenly bodies (*Conf.* 11.23.30).[57] Similarly, an example from scripture shows that the sun—far from measuring time—stood still while Joshua fought his battle during a sufficient time-interval (*spatium temporis*; Ibid.). Indeed, time in *Confessions* 11 is independent not only of heavenly, but of all physical motion—it is, as James McEvoy writes, "a different sort of extendedness from the three-dimensional."[58] As Augustine concludes, time is located in the mind or consciousness of the perceiving subject, who measures temporal intervals independently of any observed physical motion. Time itself he describes as an extension or distension of soul (*distentio animi*), a sort of temporal "stretching" produced by the mental operations of remembering, attending, and anticipating (*Conf.* 11.26.33).

Nor does Augustine refer to the movements of heavenly bodies when, as I have argued elsewhere, he develops an account of time in the physical world that complements his famous discussion of time and mind.[59] According to the *Literal Commentary on Genesis,* the temporal order and sequence of the natural world is regulated by the causal reasons (*rationes causales*), bits of intelligibility placed in matter at first creation (*GenLitt.* 4.33.51–52). Adapted from Stoic and Plotinian thought,[60] these reasons are said to bear "numbers of extraordinary power," and these in turn guarantee an inherent "before" and "after" in the natural world independent of any observer (*GenLitt.* 5.7.20; 4.3.7; cp. Wisd. 11.21). For example, a tree flowers, leafs out, and bears fruit in fixed and successive temporal intervals (*certis dimensionibus temporum*; *De Mus.* 6.17.57). Time itself, writes Augustine, "moves according to the numbers received atemporally at creation" (*GenLitt.* 4.33.52).[61] Adumbrated in the early *On Music* (387-391) and fully developed in *On Genesi*s, Augustine's account of time in the natural world describes an "ordered successiveness of things" instituted and governed by God (*GenLitt.* 5.5.12; 7.28.42). From this perspective, *City* 12.16 is as anomalous in its account of time measured by celestial revolutions as it is in its claim that time is conditioned by angelic motion.

57. On Augustine's analysis of the solar day, see esp. Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (London: Duckworth & Co, 1987), 157–59.

58. McEvoy, "St. Augustine's Account of Time," 559.

59. See Gross, "Augustine's Ambivalence," 129–48.

60. Like the Plotinian *logoi*, "active formative principles" that inform the visible world, the reasons confer intelligibility upon created things. Like the Stoic *logoi spermatikoi*, "seeds planted by the divine logos with a delayed reaction or time-bomb effect," the Augustinian reasons allow beings originally latent as causes to emerge as visible creatures, each in its own proper time (*GenLitt*. 6.5.8.; 6.10.17). See Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 31–32.

61. *GenLitt*. 4.33.52: "[H]os enim numeros tempora peragunt, quos cum crearentur non temporaliter acceperunt." Agaësse and Solignac translate, "Car le temps s'écoule selon les lois nombrante qui leur ont été intemporellement données lors de leur création" (48:361).

In a thought-provoking discussion of Augustine and time, Gareth Matthews has likened the psychological account of *Confessions* 11 to the "A-series" proposed by J.M.E. McTaggart, and similarly likened the account of creation and time in *City* 12.16 to the "B-series" proposed by the same contemporary philosopher.[62] The A-series uses words like "past," "present," "future," "yesterday," "today," and "now"—terms which convey the "flow" of time from a first-person perspective. In contrast, the B-series—which includes terms like "earlier," "later," and "simultaneous with," along with calendrical dates and times—establishes a static chronology of events according to relations of before and after. B-series words tell us about fixed relations *among* temporal events, but do not relate those events to *us* as observers; as Matthews notes, they are insufficient to guide human actions in time.[63] For example, to know that the train leaves at 7:00 is unhelpful unless one also knows that it is *now* 6:45. Matthews concludes that "Augustine's two different accounts of time [in *Conf.* 11 and *City* 12] reflect the contrast between the A-series and the B-series"—that is, Augustine's famous account of time in the soul is from a tensed and first-person perspective, whereas the account of the heavenly clock allows for the establishment of tenseless chronology. Taking a fresh look at McTaggart's formulations, I want to propose rather that the A and B series *together* may help us read *City* 12.16. That is, we may understand the *unmeasured* angelic time existing "before" the creation of the sun, moon, and stars as a paradigmatic example of mental time—McTaggart's A-series—or past, present, and future from an angelic perspective; while the *measured* time which commences with the celestial clock may be understood as McTaggart's B-series, a chronology of fixed intervals.[64] Needless to say, such tenseless chronology is characteristic of the time of history, the burden of Augustine's argument in the second half of *City*. According to this reinterpretation of Matthews' reading, 12.16 brings together Augustine's two accounts of time, that in the mind—for the spiritual being is a perceiving consciousness—and that in the physical world, a temporally ordered series of natural or historical events.[65]

Given this reading, what can be concluded about angelic time and motion in *City* 12.16? First, Augustine's treatment of spiritual creation in this

62. Gareth Matthews, *Augustine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 77–85.

63. Sorabji, *Mind*, 33–37; Matthews, *Augustine*, 82. See J. Ellis McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," *Mind,* 17 (1908): 457–74, who proposes these temporal series in the course of his argument that "neither time as a whole, nor the A series and B series, really exist."

64. For a summary and refutation of the view that A-series terms are "illusions" and not "real," see Yuval Dolev, "The Tenseless Theory of Time: Insights and Limitations," *Review of Metaphysics* 54.2 (2000): 259–88. Discussion of McTaggert's work is on-going.

65. As I have argued, the two account of time—in the mind and in the physical world—are compatible; see Gross, "Augustine's Ambivalence," 129-48.

passage is consistent with the general principles about time and motion—if not angels—set forth in his *oeuvre*. The angels have existed for all time, moving in time from the moment of their creation; without their changing motions, in which there is a succession of before and after, time could not have existed (*City* 12.16). Times (*tempora*) are carried through (*perago*) the motions of the angelic mind from future to past, just as temporal change is moved through (*ago*) the motion and changes of form in matter (Ibid., cp. *Conf.* 12.12.15).[66] Time, itself a creature, is the concomitant of spiritual and material motion, but not an epiphenomenon of spirit or matter (*GenLitt.* 5.5.12).[67] As Augustine writes towards the end of *City* 12, "The creator of time is none other than he who [also] made the things whose change and movement is the condition of time's course" (12.26).[68] Second, it may be asked whether the mental time of the angels is analogous to the psychological time of C*onfessions* 11, where "the mind [*anima*] expects and attends and remembers, so that what it expects passes through what has its attention to what it remembers" (*Conf.* 11.28.37).[69] But although Augustine insists in 12.16 that time passes through the mental motions of the angels from the future to the past, the angelic consciousness itself appears to be undivided in time, and is indeed characterized by a certain *presentness*: "[T]he immortality of the angels does not pass in time; it is not in the past, as if it no longer existed, or in the future, as though it has still to come into existence" (*City* 12.16).[70]

Third, the nature of angelic motion described in 12.16 remains an open question: does the angels' apprehension of the creature in itself and in the Word—"evening" and "morning" knowledge—here involve purely noetic motion, or is the motion temporal as well? I am inclined toward the latter view.

66. Augustine characteristically uses two types of verbs to express the relation between time and changing things, whether spiritual or material: For example, 1) created things are said "to suffer" (*patior*), "be subject to" (*subdo*), or "to have" (*habeo*) time; and 2) temporal intervals (*tempora*) are said to be "passed or driven through" (*perago*, *ago*) spiritual and material creation by the changing motions thereof; or "made" (*fio*) by these same motions.

67. See John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 81–83.

68. See *La Cité* 12.26: "Quis enim alius creator est temporum, nisi qui fecit ea, quorum motibus currerent tempora?"

69. *Conf.* 11.28.37: "Nam et expectat et adtendit et meminit, ut id quod expectat per id quod adtendit transeat in id quod meminerit" (*Confessions*, trans. Watts, 2:276).

70. Ac per hoc eitamsi inmortalitar angelorum non transit in tempore, nec praeterita est quasi iam non sit, nec futura quasi nondum sit: tamen eorum motus, quibus termpora peraguntur, ex futuro in praeteritum transeunt, et ideo Creatori … coaeterni esse non possunt" (*La Cité*, ed. Bardy, 35:204). See also Bettenson's translation: "Now the immortality of the angels is not transitory or temporal; it is not in the past, as if it no longer existed, nor yet in the future, as though it had still to come into existence; and yet [the angels'] movements, which condition the passage of time, pass from the future into the past, and therefore they cannot be coeternal with the Creator" (*City*, 492).

Augustine's introduction of the idea of unmeasured time inevitably temporalizes the creation of the world, which in 12.16 is divided into periods "before" and "after" the fashioning of the sky—three days and three days. Of course, the nature of angelic time is ultimately unknowable. Sorabji calls the movement of spiritual creation a "quasi-time" dependent upon "quasi-change";[71] and Richard Dales observes that such time cannot be measured, "since there [is] no motion relative to which it [may] be compared."[72] Augustine himself notes at the close of 12.16 that he has discussed these matters without reaching any positive conclusion—and that this inconclusiveness warns readers that some issues should not be attempted. As will be recalled, Augustine holds that humankind will be equal to the angels after the resurrection (*GenLitt.* 4.24.41); whatever the nature of angelic time, we can be certain that it does not possess the violent dynamism of time within the human soul, which is "stretched" (*tenditur*), "pulled apart" (*distentus*), and "torn asunder" *(dissilui*) by its own temporal operations (*Conf.* 11.28.37–29.39).

"Often the subject of time brings one to the heart of a philosopher's interests, because his metaphysical beliefs are so bound up with it," observes Sorabji.[73] For example, as Armstrong's classic study of *Confessions* 12 makes clear, the introduction of temporal angels will inevitably distort Augustine's treatment of the Plotinian hypostases. Even more seriously, temporal angels render incoherent the Neoplatonic framework of Augustine's doctrine of simultaneous creation. On the other hand, in *City* 12.16 Augustine's "indeterminate" angels serve as a sort of laboratory for exploring a variety of issues of time and mind—for example, the notion of unmeasured time, and (to use modern terms) the coexistence of tensed and tenseless time. Most importantly, the angels of 12.16 serve as a vehicle for two of Augustine's most deeply-felt concerns: they bring together his theology of history and his theory of mental time. These "temporal" angels on the one hand establish the historical origins of the two cities and on the other reaffirm the teachings of *Confessions* 11, that mental motion alone can support time—that time is first and last a problem of mind. Augustine's willingness in *City* 12.16 briefly to suspend significant aspects of his Neoplatonic teachings about angels may be read as a measure of his attachment to both these issues—as an indication of his engagement with both history and time.

71. This interpretation is based on Sorabji's view that the mental movements of the angels in *City* 12.16 are identical with those described in *De Genesi ad Litteram* 4.22.39; but it should be noted that in the latter text creation is presented as simultaneous.

72. Sorabji, *Time*, 31; Dales argues that the angels who adhered to God "could be said to be in time potentially and could possess temporal duration, or persistence through time" (*Medieval Discussions*, 11).

73. Sorabji, *Time*, 1.

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