

'In Aenigmate Trinitas'  
(*Confessions*, XIII,5,6):  
The Conversion of Philosophy in  
St. Augustine's *Confessions*\*

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The old controversies about Augustine's conversion, or conversions, to Neoplatonism and to Christianity have now pretty much evaporated, in the general recognition that his Christian and Neoplatonic interests, whether in the early dialogues or in the *Confessions*, are so completely integrated as to be inseparable.<sup>1</sup> One may still conduct debates, of course, about the precise sources of his Platonism: about the presence and predominance of Porphyry or Plotinus, or about the importance of other pagan or Christian Platonic or Neoplatonic sources in the formation of his *intellectus fidei*; one may still argue about the modifications of particular Platonic doctrines in Augustine's understanding of them; one may raise questions about development or progress in his Platonism; but the facts that he was somehow at once both Platonist and Christian, and that for him those were not simply alternatives, but belonged somehow together, seem beyond dispute.

At least from the time of his reading of Cicero's *Hortensius* — that lost Platonic-Aristotelian exhortation to philosophy, which (he tells us) changed his prayers<sup>2</sup> — at the age of nineteen, Augustine's mind never ceased to be nourished by the philosophy of Platonism, which came to him from many sources; not only from

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1. Useful accounts of the history of those debates, with full bibliography, may be found, e.g., in M. Pellegrino, *Le 'Confessionii' di sant' Agostino* (Rome, 1956), pp. 161-174; A. Solignac's "Introduction" to the Bibliothèque Augustinienne edition of the *Confessions* (vol. 13, Paris, 1962). For various assessments of the problem, see also, *inter alia*, A.H. Armstrong, *St. Augustine and Christian Platonism* (Villanova, Pa., 1967); H. Dörrie, "Die andere Theologie," *Theologie und Philosophie*, 56 (1981), 1-46; J.J. O'Meara, "The Neoplatonism of Saint Augustine", in D.J. O'Meara, ed., *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought* (International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, Norfolk, Virginia, 1982), pp. 34-41; C.J. deVogel, "Platonism and Christianity: A Mere Antagonism or a Profound Common Ground", *Vigiliae Christianae*, 39 (1985), 1-62.

2. *Conf.*, III, 4, 7, (*BA*, 13, p. 374).

the famous *libri platoniorum* (whatever they might have been!) of Book VII of the *Confessions*,<sup>3</sup> but also from a multitude of other sources, some of which we know, and some of which we can only guess. Certainly, the mature Augustine knew Plato's *Timaeus* (by way of Cicero); certainly, something of Plotinus and Porphyry; certainly, Apuleius ("Platonius nobilis"); and, perhaps, Iamblichus (all these are mentioned in *De civitate Dei*<sup>4</sup>); and whatever he could glean from Cicero and Varro, and perhaps from philosophical doxographies. Certainly, he knew Virgil, in whom he (as his contemporary Neoplatonists) saw a spokesman of Platonic philosophy. To all this, and more, from pagan sources, one must add the Platonism of Philo of Alexandria, and the Platonism of the Greek and Latin Fathers — Origen, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzen, Ambrose, Victorinus, and others in that long tradition which one might describe, according to one's perspective, either as the Hellenising of Christianity, or the Christianising of Hellenism.<sup>5</sup>

The point is just this: Platonism belongs to Augustine's intellectual formation, not only at the time of his conversion, but throughout his life. In his conversion, his Platonism is not left behind, but is continually converted with him, in the on-going conversion of his intellect and will. There is, therefore, in Augustine, no simple confrontation of Christian doctrine with the philosophy of Platonism, but rather, a very complex and continuing interrelation and interpenetration. Augustine thinks Christianity Platonically, and Platonism in the light of Christian revelation; and in that thinking, Platonism is continuously developed and extended, and converted, in a way which is difficult to articulate exactly.

It will not do to say, for instance, that Platonism merely serves as "Denkmittel"<sup>6</sup> for his exposition of Christian doctrine, as though it were some external and essentially indifferent instrument. Augustine reads the Scriptures with Platonic eyes; his expositions of doctrinal points (the Trinity, Creation, Incarnation) are as they are precisely because those points are understood in terms of the achievements and dilemmas of Platonic thinking about me-

3. *Conf.*, VII, 9, 13 (BA, 13, p. 609). On the problem of the identity of these books, see the remarks of C.J. Starnes, "St. Augustine and the Vision of Truth", *Dionysius*, 1 (1977), pp. 103-106; cf. J. Pépin, *Ex Platoniorum Persona: études sur les lectures philosophiques de saint Augustin* (Amsterdam, 1977).

4. *De civ. Dei*, VIII, 12 (BA, 34, p. 274).

5. As A.H. Armstrong remarks (*op. cit.*, p. 34, n. 3), "The pattern of Christian Platonism was well established before there can be any question of Plotinian influence"; cf. deVogel, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

6. The term is from M. Schmaus, *Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des heiligen Augustinus* (Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie, 11), "Nachwort", p. xv\* of the 1969 reprint.

diation between the Absolute One and the multiplicity and mutability of finite beings. Platonic problems about the divine unity and distinct, descending divine hypostases, problems about the nature of the soul and its ways of knowing, problems about the nature and significance of matter, and so on, constantly inform the perspective of the Christian Augustine, and profoundly shape his understanding of the Scriptures and the central points of Christian doctrine. His Platonism is internal to his Christianity, and cannot be dissociated from it.

But it is equally untrue to say that Neoplatonism provides the *intellectus*, while Christianity provides the moral force and inspiration.<sup>7</sup> There is no such division of the moral and the intellectual to be found in Augustine, or, for that matter, in pagan Platonism. One need only recall what Augustine himself says about his reading of the *Hortensius*: "mutavit affectum meum et ad te ipsum, domine, mutavit preces meas". That pagan Platonic work was for him an exhortation, at once moral and intellectual, to return to God: "ut ad te redirem", he says.<sup>8</sup> And surely, in Augustine's view, the deficiency which mars that pagan aspiration is as much intellectual as moral: "nomen Christi non erat ibi".

Indeed, the problem is in the first place intellectual, rooted in the fact that, although they know something of the eternal Word of God, they do not know the Word made flesh. According to Augustine's Platonic doctrine of illumination, man's soul is inwardly illumined by the eternal Word, the eternal reasons of the divine thinking; but, sharply aware of a certain *impasse* in that Platonic ascent to contemplation (described in Book VII of the *Confessions*), Augustine sees that in man's wayward state, distracted by attachments to the temporal and sensible, the inner light will not suffice without the Word spoken outwardly and temporally in the words of revelation. The divine Trinity cannot be rightly known without the prompting of that external word.<sup>9</sup> The Word Incarnate is thus at once the *principium fidei* and the *principium philosophiae*, the principle of Augustine's Christian Platonism, both intellectually and morally.

Nor can it be right to say that, while Neoplatonism provides philosophy, Christianity provides theology. Quite apart from the

7. Cf. the argument of O. duRoy, "Augustine, St.", in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, pp. 1041-1058; and the same author's *L'intelligence de la foi en la trinité selon saint Augustin* (Paris, 1966), pp. 96-97, 453, 456.

8. *Conf.*, III, 4, 7, (BA, 13, p. 374). On Augustine's reading of the *Hortensius*, see M. Testard, *St. Augustin et Cicéron, I: Cicéron dans la formation et dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1958), esp. pp. 19-39.

9. Cf. R.D. Crouse, "St. Augustine's De Trinitate: Philosophical Method", in E.A. Livingstone, ed., *Studia Patristica*, Vol. XVI (Berlin, 1985), pp. 501-510.

obvious anachronism of the application of that late medieval differentiation, such a division simply will not work in the interpretation of Augustine. For him, there is no dividing line between what is philosophical and what is theological. True philosophy and true religion must be one. Philosophy is *studium sapientiae*,<sup>10</sup> and that *sapientia* is ultimately the eternal Word of God. In that conviction, Augustine speaks as a Christian, but also as a true Platonist. For Platonism, from Plato, and throughout its history, is never a "natural" philosophy as distinguished from theology.<sup>11</sup> It is always inevitably and emphatically theological, as it ascends the line from belief to understanding, and as it interprets allegorically the oracles and dreams and visions of divinely possessed prophets, poets and philosophers: ever seeking understanding in the light of eternal reasons; ever aspiring towards a unitive knowledge of the supreme, transcendent Good; ever seeking *homoiosis theou* — divine likeness. And Platonism is never without the thought of divine revelation, as opening a door to understanding. That becomes most obvious, of course, in the later history of pagan Platonism, from the time of Plutarch on, but that dimension of Platonic thought is there from the beginning, in the dialogues of Plato.

Certainly, there are deep and crucial differences between Platonic theologies; but they do not arise from the circumstance that some are theological and others philosophical, or that some depend on *fides* while others proceed *sola ratione*. All begin in *fides* (although there are, of course, differences in *fides*); all seek an *intellectus* which is theological and sapiential; all seek the *intinerarium mentis in Deum*.

How then shall we speak of Augustine's Christian Platonism? None of those familiar formulae will really fit the case. Augustine is not a Christian who simply borrows elements from Platonism to expound his Christian doctrine. He is not intellectually a pagan Platonist who must find Christianity for moral suasion. Nor is his thought divided between a Christian theology and a Platonic philosophy. Both intellectually and morally, both philosophically and theologically, he is, at once, both Platonist and Christian. Platonism is not just a stage on his way to Christianity; he is, and he remains, a Christian Platonist, and, as such, he stands within a long tradition, which both precedes and follows him, to which he makes a fresh, distinctive contribution.

But what makes Platonism Christian? And how is it converted?

10. Cf. G. Madec, "Notes sur l'intelligence augustinienne de la foi", *Revue des études augustinienes*, 17, 1-2 (1971), 130.

11. Cf. C.J. deVogel, "What was God for Plato", ch. X of her *Philosophica*, Part I (Assen, 1970), pp. 210-242.

A full answer to such questions would involve a history of varieties of Platonism (both in itself, and in relation to other ways of thinking), and the whole history of early Christian doctrine. The long debates between pagan and Christian, and between orthodox and heretic within the Christian church, are all, in some measure, chapters in the history of Platonic thought. How can the Arian controversy, for instance, be understood theologically, except as an issue concerning the subordination or equality of derivative divine hypostases? Pagan and Christian, orthodox and heretic, find different answers to that question; but the question itself is at the heart of Platonic philosophical theology, and the different answers will prescribe different directions in the development of that theology. Is Gregory of Nyssa less a Platonist than the Arian, Eunomius? Or is the Christian, Origen, less a Platonist than the pagan, Plotinus? Certainly, the Christians have their distinctive *fides*, in what they recognise as the word of revelation; but even that *fides* is not an irrational or arbitrary choice, simply external to philosophy. *Fides* has its underlying *ratio*: its content is recognised, interpreted and understood by a mind which both questions it in certain ways, and is also questioned by it. In that symbiosis, Christian Platonism, as a distinctive form of philosophical theology, is forged; and the philosophy of Augustine is one form, or phase, of the development.

For an understanding of the development of Augustine's Christian Platonism, the *Confessions* is a uniquely important document. There, more clearly than in any other ancient work, we are privileged to look into the genesis of a philosophical position with the very eyes, as it were, of the author. The *Confessions* will not, of course, provide the whole story. Three decades of Augustine's thought and writing follow its completion, and there is a continuing and important development to be seen there; but at least the seeds of that development may be seen in the *Confessions*.

Much has been written about the structure and composition of the *Confessions*. Perhaps Book X is an "interpolation" to satisfy the curiosity of those wishing to know Augustine's state of mind ten years after his conversion. Perhaps the last three books are the beginning of an intended commentary on the whole of Scripture.<sup>12</sup> Such hypotheses seem to me implausible; but, however that may be, the work as we possess it presents a strikingly coherent and complete account of the meaning of conversion: first, on the level of the personal, historical experience of an individual, in terms of human activities and interactions, and particular events, seen as

12. For surveys of scholarly opinion on these points, see, e.g., A. Solignac, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-26; R.J. O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Confessions: The Odyssey of Soul* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 7-12.

providential; then, on the level of the soul's inner life of memory, intellect and will, under the illumination of the Word; and finally, and most profoundly, in the last three books, on the level of philosophical theology, in the exposition there of a Christian and Platonic doctrine of the *conversio* (*epistrophé*) of all creation.<sup>13</sup>

The doctrine of *conversio* is the very heart and substance of the whole argument of the *Confessions*. Without that, the first ten books would make an interesting and impressive story, but the deeper meaning would remain implicit. It is the explication of the doctrine of *conversio*, especially in Book XIII, which discloses the philosophical ground, implicit in the structure, in the arguments, and in the language of the earlier books.

The doctrine that created beings have their true formation, or illumination, in a relation of conversion towards their principle is, of course, familiar from earlier Platonic sources, and especially from the fifth of the *Enneads* of Plotinus.<sup>14</sup> In fact, Augustine, in *De civitate Dei*, speaking of the illumination of the soul, refers the doctrine specifically to Plotinus, "ille magnus Platonicus", explaining Plato's meaning.<sup>15</sup> "In this matter", says Augustine, "we have no conflict with those more excellent philosophers".<sup>16</sup> Similarly, in Book VII of the *Confessions*, the doctrine of illumination found in pagan Platonism is said to be the same as that suggested by St. John's Gospel, "non quidem his verbis, sed hoc idem omnino".<sup>17</sup>

Still, the doctrine as it stands in pagan Platonism, true so far as it goes, will not suffice. The human soul, labouring "in reliquiis obscuritatis",<sup>18</sup> turned away from God, lost in its attachments to the temporal and sensible, tending towards what Augustine calls "the vagabond fluidity of formlessness,"<sup>19</sup> cannot return to illuminating truth, unless it be recalled by the Word of Truth himself, uttered temporally and sensibly. The *cognosce teipsam* (*gnothi sauton*), which defines the inward and upward aspiration of the Platonist,<sup>20</sup> will not be adequate; only by calling of the Word made flesh

13. Cf. R.D. Crouse, "Recurrrens in te unum: The Pattern of St. Augustine's *Confessions*", in E.A. Livingstone, ed. *Studia Patristica*, Vol XIV, (Berlin, 1976), pp. 389-392.

14. Plotinus, *Enneads*, V, 3, 49; cf. Armstrong, *op. cit.*, p. 39, n.7.

15. *De civ. Dei*, X, 2 (BA, 34, p. 430).

16. *Ibid.*; cf. R. Russell, "The Role of Neoplatonism in St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei*", in H.J. Blumenthal and R.A. Markus, eds., *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought* (Essays in honour of A.H. Armstrong, London, 1981), pp. 160-170.

17. *Conf.*, VII, 9, 13 (BA, 13, p. 608).

18. *Conf.*, XIII, 2, 3 (BA, 14, p. 428).

19. *Conf.*, XIII, 5, 6 (BA, 14, p. 432).

20. On the history of this conception, cf. P. Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même de Socrate à saint Bernard* (Paris, 1974). On the "cognosce teipsam"

can the soul be recalled to the Word which illuminates within. Thus, the eternal Word, says Augustine, "spoke in the Gospel through the flesh, to the ears of men, externally (*foris*), that it might be believed and sought and found within (*intus*), where the good and only master teaches all disciples".<sup>21</sup> By the prompting of the Word externally, the soul is recalled to find and recognise the truth within, "*in domicilio cogitationis*".<sup>22</sup> Thus, the conversion of the soul proceeds in dialogue between the Word without, and the same Word within; and that is why the *Confessions*, and, in general, the Augustinian philosophy which follows from it, must have the form of engagement with the Word of God in Scripture.

But this revision of Platonic doctrine involves, and, indeed, presupposes another, more profound, revision of Platonic thought, which appears explicitly in Book XIII, in the statement there of the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>23</sup> The doctrine of conversion through the Word, and to the Word, implies for Augustine, as for his Christian predecessors, that the Word be God, and not a subordinate, or somehow intermediate, divine hypostasis. There are indeed, in pagan Platonism, adumbrations of the doctrine of the Trinity. The similarities are impressive and important, but the differences are altogether crucial. It is not correct to say, with Oliver duRoy, that Augustine attributes to Porphyry "une véritable connaissance de la Trinité",<sup>24</sup> and criticizes only his misunderstanding of the Incarnation. Consider what Augustine actually says:

You, Porphyry, speak of the Father, and his Son, whom you call the paternal intellect or mind, and a medium of those, which we suppose you call the Holy Spirit, and, after your fashion, you call them three gods.<sup>25</sup>

That final point is crucial: "appelas tres deos — you call them three gods". Augustine indeed allows that Porphyry has some vague intimation ("quasi per quaedam tenuis imaginationis umbracula")<sup>26</sup> of the direction Platonic thought should take; but he

in Augustine, cf. *De trin.*, X. 8. 11-12 (BA, 16, pp. 140-144, with the complementary note, pp. 607-608); P. Courcelle, "Étude du 'connais-toi toi-même' après S. Augustin", *Annuaire du Collège de France*, 67 (1967), 441.

21. *Conf.*, XI, 8, 10 (BA, 14, p. 288).

22. *Conf.*, XI, 3, 5, (BA, 14, p. 278).

23. *Conf.*, XIII, 5, 6 (BA, 14, p. 432-434).

24. O. duRoy, *L'intelligence* (*op. cit.*), p. 103. For a more judicious view, cf. M.T. Clark, "The Neoplatonism of Marius Victorinus the Christian", in Blumenthal and Markus, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-159; and in her introduction to *Augustine of Hippo: Selected Writings* (Classics of Western Spirituality, N.Y., Ramsay, Toronto, 1984), pp. 21-24.

25. *De civ. Dei*, X, 29 (BA, 34, p. 528).

26. *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

certainly does not say that Porphyry knows the doctrine of the Trinity as the equality of divine hypostases within the essential divine unity. At best, Porphyry's doctrine would approximate a kind of Arianism. He does not see that "inseparabilis distinctio, tamen distinctio", that "simplicitas" which is at the same time "multiplicitas",<sup>27</sup> of which Augustine speaks. Thus, from the standpoint of Augustine, Porphyry understands neither the Trinity, nor the Incarnation; neither the goal, nor the way, of *conversio*.

The mutual relations of pagan and Christian Platonism are at this point very delicate. According to Augustine, the doctrine of the Trinity is in some sense implied in pagan Platonism, as the completion of its tendency, and as the resolution of its problems about the relations of divine hypostases; and yet, it is a truth which cannot be attained except through faith in the mediation of the Word made flesh. Not very much is said expressly on that point in Book XIII of the *Confessions*, but it is strongly underlined in the first book of *De trinitate*, which is approximately contemporary with that book, and perhaps anticipated by it.<sup>28</sup> There it is argued that no consideration of corporeal things, no consideration of the nature and affections of the soul, no striving to transcend the mutability of creatures, will serve as starting-point, because "the eye of the human mind is unable to focus in so excellent a light, unless it be strengthened by the justice of faith".<sup>29</sup>

As Augustine sees it, the doctrine is implied — indeed demanded — by Platonic thought, as its own clarification and completion; and yet, it is unattainable without the externally revealed Word, grasped first by faith, and only later demonstrated. The *intellectus fidei*, then, will not be an alternative to Platonism, but a fulfillment of the aims and tendencies of that philosophy. It is, in fact, a revision, or conversion, of Platonic thought at its most central point — a conversion of incalculable importance in its implications for the later history of philosophy.

Some of those implications are evident within the *Confessions*; others will become apparent in *De trinitate*, in the "metaphysic of Genesis"<sup>30</sup> in *De Genesi ad litteram*, or in the theology of history in

27. *Conf.*, XIII, 11, 12 (BA, 14, p. 444).

28. Cf. H. Kusch, "Studien über Augustinus, I: Trinitarisches in den Büchern 2-4 und 10-13 der Confessiones", *Festschrift Franz Dornsteiff* (Leipzig, 1953) pp. 124-183.

29. *De. trin.*, I, 2, 4 (BA, 15, p. 94); cf. R.D. Crouse, "St. Augustine's *De trinitate*" (*op. cit.*) pp. 506-507.

30. Cf. A. Solignac, "Exégèse et Métaphysique. Genèse 1, 1-3 chez saint Augustin", in *In Principio: Interprétations des premiers versets de la Genèse* (Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1973), pp. 153-175; R. Paderello de Angelis, *L'influenza del pensiero neoplatonica sulla metafisica di S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Rome, 1981), pp. 145-148.



*De civitate Dei*; still others are as "seeds of reasons" which will germinate in Boethius<sup>31</sup> or Eriugena,<sup>32</sup> or in other forms of medieval Platonism.<sup>33</sup> In the *Confessions*, the trinitarian doctrine of Augustine is explicated only in the final book, and then only briefly, as it is discovered in the text of Genesis. "Ecce apparet mihi in aenigmate trinitas", says Augustine;<sup>34</sup> and, later on in Book XIII, he suggests an analogy for understanding it, in the three elements of human personality — *esse, nosse, velle*.<sup>35</sup> The passages are brief, but crucially important. This understanding of the divine activity as being, knowing, willing, underlies the whole of the *Confessions*: the whole work, with its recurrent patterns of *esse, nosse, velle*, is *aenigma trinitatis*.<sup>36</sup> The whole conception of human personality and human activity presented in the work is nourished by, and everywhere reflects, that understanding of the divine principle as the unity in distinction of being, knowing, willing. That is to say, the Augustinian argument (as becomes especially clear in *De trinitate*) is not by analogy from the soul to God; rather, it is fundamentally the other way around: the doctrine of the Trinity illuminates the understanding of the soul which is its image.<sup>37</sup>

Existence, knowledge of the truth, and the *voluntas* which is their bond of union: that is the trinitarian paradigm which informs the thought of the *Confessions*, whether in the autobiography of Books I-IX, or in the doctrine of the soul's conversion in Book X. But it is in the final three books that the pattern is disclosed in its metaphysical dimensions, as grounded in, and dependent on, the triunal activity of God, in the descent and return of all creation from and to its principle. It is within that broader context of *conversio* that the conversion of the rational creature, in its knowing and its willing, has its deepest meaning.

31. Cf. R.D. Crouse, "Semina Rationum: St. Augustine and Boethius", *Dionysius*, 4 (1980), 75-86.

32. Cf. especially the articles by S. Gersch, G. Madec, B. Stock, and J. O'Meara, in W. Beierwaltes, ed., *Eriugena. Studien zu seinen Quellen* (Heidelberg, 1980); and J. O'Meara, "Eriugena's Use of Augustine", *Augustinian Studies*, 11 (1980), 21-34.

33. Cf. R.D. Crouse, "Anselm of Canterbury and Medieval Augustinianisms", *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 3, 1 (1987), 60-68; "A Twelfth Century Augustinian: Honorius Augustodunensis", forthcoming in the Proceedings of the Congresso Internazionale Agostiniano (Rome, 1986).

34. *Conf.*, XIII, 5, 6(BA, 14, p. 432).

35. *Conf.*, XIII, 11, 12 (BA, 14, p. 442).

36. Cf. C.J. Starnes, "The Place and Purpose of the Tenth Book of the *Confessions*", forthcoming in the Proceedings of the Congresso Internazionale Agostiniano (Rome, 1986).

37. Cf. R.D. Crouse, "In multa defluximus: *Confessions*, X, 29-43, and St. Augustine's Theory of Personality", in Blumenthal and Markus, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 180-185.

All created beings seek their places; that is the meaning of their motion. That is their *pondus* — their inner weight, their tendency, their specific gravity. The rational creature seeks its place in a free and rational way, in knowledge illumined by the Word, to which it is united and conformed in its existence by good will, kindled by the gift (the *donum*) of the Spirit. That is the *pondus*, the internal spring of its conversion, its inner weight of *amor*. "Pondus meum amor meus",<sup>38</sup> says Augustine; and that one phrase perhaps best sums up the meaning of his own conversion.

Conversion, in the *Confessions*, is conversion by the Trinity of Father, Word and Spirit, and it is conversion to the Trinity. It is conversion understood on ever deeper and more universal levels: it is the conversion of the human individual; it is the conversion of the soul; it is the *conversio* of all creation. And in all this, there is the conversion of philosophy, to a new conception of human personality, a new understanding of the powers of the soul, and a new metaphysic of the cosmos — all rooted deeply and unmistakably in the tradition of Platonic thought, but at the same time giving that tradition new Christian directions of development, not only in Augustine's later writings, but also in later centuries of the history of philosophy.<sup>39</sup>

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38. *Conf.*, XIII, 9, 10 (BA, 14, p. 440); cf. *De civ. Dei*, XI, 16 (BA, 35, pp. 82-84).

39. Thus, the excellent remarks of P. Hadot, with reference to the *De trinitate* as "un moment décisif de l'histoire de la pensée", might justly be applied to the Augustinian conversion of Platonic thought already present in the *Confessions*; cf. P. Hadot, "L'image de la Trinité dans l'âme chez Victorinus et chez saint Augustin", in *Studia Patristica*, Vol. VI (Berlin, 1962), p. 409.