WILL AND FREE WILL IN ANTIQUITY

A Discussion of Michael Frede, *A Free Will*[1]

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Michael Frede's posthumously published Sather Lectures discuss the origin and scope of the concept of a free will in antiquity, from the Stoics to Augustine via, among others, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Plotinus. This is the second time Sather Lectures have been devoted to the idea of the will.[2] Frede disagrees with his illustrious predecessor's thesis that a notion of the will as a factor or distinct event in the mind appears only with Augustine.

The theme is tricky because the concept of a free will has become problematic in contemporary philosophy, and so may well have outlived its usefulness. Frede's aim, however, is not philosophical but historical. He wants to find out 'why and when the notion of a free will first arose' and what this notion was, and to follow its subsequent career (6). This investigation, which at a first glance is primarily concerned with ethical issues, encompasses matters not only from an epistemological point of view but also against the backdrop of various forms of *Weltanschauung* obtaining in a rather wide spectrum of philosophical or philosophico-religious contexts. As a consequence we are presented with a profound interpretation of an impressive part of the history of ancient philosophy and some of its reverberations, observed here from a particularly interesting and revealing angle. Frede's account is marvellously compact. My epitome of his argument unavoidably fails to do justice to its riches.

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[1] M. Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, ed. A. A. Long, with a foreword by David Sedley (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2011), pp. xiv+206.

[2] A. Dihle, *The Theory of the Will in Classical Antiquity* [*Will*] (Berkeley, 1982).

The introductory chapter presents an overview of the subject as a whole and seeks to establish conceptual clarity. To get started with the enquiry we need a general idea, or schema, of a free will, to be abstracted from the ancient texts that deal with a will, or a free will (7–10, 17–18). We not only want a notion of a will but also one of freedom. An unprejudiced preliminary adumbration of the notion of a will is the impression that something can be believed to take place in the mind, that is, a choice or a decision, which enables one to act in a certain way. The idea of freedom, originally political, mostly means freedom from constraint, or outside force, allowing one to lead a good and responsible life. Now it is a fact, not so easy for some of us to empathize with, that in later antiquity the world becomes the domain of unpleasant supernatural forces, or may be believed to have been created by an evil or at the very least incompetent Demiurge. Freedom should mean that such forces are not able to prevent us from living a good life. Another likely impediment to the conviction that we are free agents consists in the belief that everything that happens has in some way been causally predetermined. This is how Epicurus interpreted Democritus, though wrongly, because Democritus had no conception of fixed natural laws. But Epicurus' own atomic swerve, Frede goes on (13), should not be seen as pertaining to mental events entailing free actions, but as demonstrating that causal chains are constantly interrupted at some juncture, so that some of our actions will indeed be independent.[3] Stoic determinism, often misunderstood not only now but also in antiquity, is mitigated by the assumption that God in his scenario made room for our decisions and choices when setting up the course of events (14). The general assumption shared by representatives of various schools of philosophy is that there are laws, or rules, which typify not the behaviour of all things without exception, but diverse ones typifying and valid only for specific sets of objects. The behaviour of plants is different from that of animals or humans. The higher one gets on the *scala naturae*, the greater the number of differences among individuals of the same species, as these are not fully determined by their given nature, but may develop in a multiplicity of different ways.

It is especially in the world of late antiquity, ruled according

[3] Compare Diog. Oen. fr. 54, iii. 2–iii. 11 Smith, where Epicurus' discovery of *ἐλευθέραν τινὰ ἐν ταῖς ἀτόμοις κείνησιν* is defended against Democritus on ethical grounds (the combination *ἐλευθέραν κείνησιν* occurs only here, twice).

to many by malicious intellects or a cosmic tyrant, that the notion of a relation between the will and freedom becomes crucial (17). There, freedom is reduced to freedom of the mind, or rather of the responsible will. We may decide to do something, but may very well be incapable of achieving what we want because we are thwarted by superhuman powers. So it is here that the concepts expressed by the terms *prohairesis* (or, later, *boulēsis* and *thelēsis*) for will ('choice'), and *eleutheria* for freedom, come together (8–9). 'The doctrine of free will is certainly not a doctrine to explain how we manage to raise our arm or cross the street. It is, rather, a doctrine of how we are responsible for raising our arm, if we do raise our arm' (18).

We should notice both Frede's stress on the distressing conditions of late antiquity and his emphasis on the moral connotations of 'will'. The combination of *eleutheros* and *boulēsis* is found only once, and is late, while that of *eleutheros* and *thelēsis* fails to occur. The phrase *eleuthera prohairesis* is first found in Philo of Alexandria, while the combination of *eleutheros*/*-ia* with *prohairesis* occurs several times in Epictetus.[4] Both these witnesses are not so very late. Yet this evidence undoubtedly lends support to Frede's point, in chapters 3 and 5, that Epictetus is the first philosopher to speak of a free will. Nevertheless, we are left with a certain discrepancy between the chronology of the developmental phases of the concept of a free will, and the dating of a stressful environment that makes people want to fall back on the possession of such a will as a last resort.

As to the moral connotation exemplified by our responsibility for raising our arm, Frede rightly states that the (full-fledged) doctrine of a *free* will was not conceived in order to explain how we manage to raise our arm. But that does not exclude the existence of a simpler doctrine of *a* will, or the notion of a simpler will. Is it not intuitively obvious that somehow a will is involved in moving our arm, as we see in the case of the victim of a stroke, or of the apes used by Galen in his public vivisections,[5] which are no longer able to move their muscles though this is what they desperately want to do? The command, so to speak, is sent but not obeyed, and does not result in movement. This is an issue to which I shall come back.

The next chapter deals with 'Aristotle on Choice without a Will',

[4] Philo, *Deus* 114–15; Epict. *Diss.* 2. 15. 1; 3. 5. 7–8; *Gnom.* 31.

[5] Galen, *PHP* 1. 6. 4–6; 2. 4. 42.

and not only argues that Aristotle does not have a concept of will although he has one of the closely related notion of 'willing',[6] but also explains why he does not. According to Aristotle (just as in Plato), the soul is divided and consists of a rational and an irrational part or parts, each of which is home to a different form of desire. Willing is a desire of reason and as such provides sufficient motivation for us to act. But *epithumia*, irrational desire, is also a sufficient motivation. Without giving the matter further thought, people may just act against their better insight. This is *akrasia* (incontinence), often 'misleadingly' rendered 'weakness of will' (22). For it is not the case that a mental event has taken place, viz. a decision or choice to act in the face of this better insight. Similarly, in the case of action following a rational desire, it is not the case that a decision or choice to act upon this desire has occurred, for reason does not play a double role by both providing a desire and deciding in its favour (24). The distinction between what we do *hekontes* and *akontes*, unfortunately often interpreted as one between the voluntary and involuntary, in fact pertains to those acts for which we are responsible and those for which we are not. Aristotle has a notion of choice (*prohairesis*), that is to say, of choosing as a special 'form of willing' (27). We are responsible only for what it is in our power, *eph' hēmin*, to do, with the proviso not only that one should not be forced but also that one should know what the circumstances are (so ignorance exculpates). Choosing here is not between alternatives, but amounts to electing to do something, or to failing to elect to do it so that it does not happen. A virtuous person can only make a right choice, since akratic action is a consequence of the wrong sort of upbringing and training, while the virtuous person has been educated and self-educated in the right way and the right environment. Though the invariable motions of the heavenly bodies and the predominantly invariant occurrences in the sublunary world determine what goes on in Aristotle's universe, he accepts that a preordained regularity does not pervade the world as a whole, let alone everywhere in the same way. Accordingly, there is ample room for human actions that have not been determined in advance.

I think one may conclude from Frede's presentation of the evidence (though this is not what he says himself) that in his view the bipartition of the soul, each separate part being equipped with its

[6] Using 'willing' instead of 'will' precludes thinking in terms of a reified part rather than of an activity in the soul.

own kind of desire, or willing, precludes there being room for a single will, let alone for a free one.

I believe that Aristotle's analysis and explanation, in various passages, of animal (self-)movement are also relevant in the context of a notion of willing, or will. The living being is set in motion by its psychic faculty of appetite (*orektikon*), which includes practical reason (*nous*, or *dianoia*) as represented by imagination (*phantasia*: *DA* 3. 10). In the final chapter of the *De motu animalium* Aristotle distinguishes between *hekousioi*,[7] *akousioi*, and *ouch hekousioi kinēseis*—voluntary', 'involuntary', and 'non-voluntary' motions (as the standard rendering has it).[8] Involuntary motions occur 'without the command of thought [*οὐ κελεύσαντος τοῦ νοῦ*]'.[9] One can hardly fail to see commands of reason resulting in *hekousioi kinēseis* as representing some simple form of will. Animals have a soul that is not rational, which in humans is represented by the irrational part of soul. But in humans it is not only the irrational part of soul that causes bodily motions, for how could one be responsible for such a motion if thought fails to be involved?

In chapter 3, 'The Emergence of a Notion of Will in Stoicism', Frede argues, consistently in view of his treatment of the divided soul in chapter 2, that the Stoic doctrine of the soul's undividedness provides a necessary condition for the first appearance of the idea of a will.[10] The primitive soul we are born with gradually transforms itself into a more rational soul, or mind. Our irrational desires are perversions of reason, for reason can be (in fact generally is) influenced in a bad way by our environment. Children, like animals, act

[7] *ἑκουσίους κινήσεις*. This is the only occurrence of this relatively rare formula before Philo, *Deus* 48; for an equivalent expression see below, n. 13 and text thereto.

[8] See M. C. Nussbaum (ed., trans., comm.), *Aristotle's* De motu animalium [*De motu*](Princeton, 1978), 52, and J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* [*Works*], 2 vols. (Princeton, 1984), i. 1095. Nussbaum, *De motu*, 379–81, discusses differences from and resemblances to Arist. *EN* 3. 1 and other passages.

[9] Trans. Nussbaum, *De motu*, 52; Barnes, *Works*, i. 1095, has 'without express mandate of reason'.

[10] It is not strictly true that the Stoic soul is undivided, for according to their standard doctrine it has eight parts (*SVF* i. 141, 529; ii. 827, 885, etc.). Its 'commanding' part, the undivided *ἡγεμονικόν*, is the location of both reason and the affections (perverted reason). According to the Platonic and Aristotelian model, these are placed in two (or more) different parts of the soul. One should not be misled by our sources that may speak of 'soul' when what is meant is the commanding part (for the ambiguity cf. Philo, *Her.* 55). The very term *ἡγεμονικόν* suggests a relation with the idea of a will. Frede (32) derives it from Plato, *Prot.* 352 B, where, however, the adjective is said of knowledge, not of (a part) of the soul.

impulsively, or rather *re*act to the impulsive impressions (*hormētikai phantasiai*) that impel them to act. But mature adults do not act in this immediate way, at least they do not need to, because there is a barrier between impression and action: the impression must be assented to or be rejected by reason, and action only follows upon an impression that has been thus assented to. (Yet assent can be given quasi-automatically.) Our rational impulse has two ingredients, viz. a passive one, the impression one cannot avoid, and an active one, the assent to it (37). The adult's desire is a desire of reason, and so a willing (*boulēsis*), but such a desire can be either a reasonable willing or an unreasonable appetite (*epithumia*).

Frede does not credit Chrysippus with a notion of the will, but I think such a notion can be abstracted from Chrysippus' simile of the walking as compared with the running man.[11] The man who walks represents someone whose actions are controlled by reason, someone whose soul produces a series of conations, *hormai*, that are according to reason. The running man represents the person carried away by anger or any other emotion. When someone walks in accordance with a reasonable *hormē*, the motion of his legs is not excessive, 'so that he can stop whenever he wants (to stop)'.[12] The verb used by Chrysippus for 'he wants', *ethelein*, belongs to the family of words connected with the idea of willing (he also uses *boulesthai*). The *hormē* that leads to walking is what we moderns would naturally call an act of will, and the counter-order to stop walking is likewise an instance of volition. An important verbatim fragment of Diogenes of Babylon already uses the expression 'voluntary movements' (*kata prohairesin kinēseis*—note the use of *prohairesis*, not *boulēsis*) often encountered in Galen and elsewhere. I assume that these are movements of the body, like the respiratory movement explained by the physician Asclepiades of Bithynia.[13]

Frede calls attention (43–4) to the growing concentration on the

[11] Verbatim quotation at Galen, *PHP* 4. 2. 14–18=*SVF* iii. 462.

[12] ὥστε καὶ στῆναι ὅταν ἐθέλῃ.

[13] *SVF* iii, Diog. 30, ap. Galen, *PHP* 2. 8. 44, 'That which causes a man to make voluntary movements is a certain psychic vaporization' etc. (trans. De Lacy; for a synonymous expression with the word ἑκούσιος see above, n. 7, and text thereto). Asclepiades, according to Aëtius (whom we may date to *c.*100 CE) at ps.-Plut. *Plac.* 4. 22. 2, distinguished between physical and 'voluntary respiration' (κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἀναπνοήν), induced by the contraction of the finest pores in the lung and the narrowing of the bronchial passages, 'for these obey our will' (τῇ γὰρ ἡμετέρᾳ ταῦθ' ὑπακούει προαιρέσει). This passage is lacking in D. J. Furley and J. S. Wilkie, *Galen on Respiration and the Arteries* (Princeton, 1984). For Galen's view see e.g. *Mot. musc.*

inner life that follows from the Stoic desire to avoid being influenced by anything but what is good in the exclusively Stoic sense of the word. Such a focus on the inner life is very clear in Epictetus (44–8). Epictetus' point is that it is *eph' hēmin* to withhold assent from, or to assent to, an impulsive impression, but that acting does not follow from assenting because the former is not *eph' hēmin* (one may have assented to the impulsive impression to cross the street but fail to reach the other side, to cite one of Frede's favourite examples). What is of primary importance is how we deal with our impressions, our *chrēsis tōn phantasiōn*, for only this is up to *us*. Epictetus uses the term *prohairesis* to refer to 'our disposition to deal with our impressions in a certain way, most crucially to choose how to assent to impulsive impressions' (46).[14] Such an assent constitutes a willing. The Epictetan *prohairesis*, that is to say the 'ability of the mind, or reason' (48), to choose may therefore be welcomed as the first notion of a will on record, and is more complicated than the notion that may perhaps be attributed to earlier Stoics.

Platonists and Peripatetics, who posit the division of the soul into parts, are unable to accept this Stoic notion of the will of the undivided soul (or rather, the undivided commanding part, or *hēgemonikon*) (48). Chapter 4 describes how they nevertheless came to include a notion of a will: they revised their doctrine by accepting the Stoic idea of the assent of reason. This innovation was legitimized by a creative interpretation of terms such as *hekōn* in Plato and Aristotle, evidence for which is found in Alexander of Aphrodisias, Numenius, Plotinus, and Porphyry (57–8). Reason, suggesting what one should do, is involved with cognition, but also with the will, as it judges whether to assent or not to assent to this suggestion (52–3). Calcidius 'claims that ⟨the commanding part of⟩ the soul is *self-moved* and that its motion consists in assent [*adsensus*] or desire but that this presupposes an impression . . . which the Greeks call *phantasia*' (58).[15]

Resuming the thread of chapter 3 on the emergence of a notion of will, chapter 5 now deals with 'the emergence of a notion of a

1. 1. 4, 372. 13–17 K., 1. 1. 9, 414. 6–7 K., and the account of voluntary action and voluntary movement ibid. 2. 5, 440. 6–444. 12 K.

[14] In fact Epictetus is not the first to use προαίρεσις in such a context: see above, text to n. 4, and cf. n. 13; but he gives the notion much wider scope.

[15] Calc. *In Tim.* 156 (cf. Waszink ad loc.), emphasis added; I repeat this quotation (restoring the commanding part omitted by Frede) in view of the evidence in Origen (below, text to n. 26).

free will in Stoicism'. Freedom (*eleutheria*), according to Chrysippus and other Stoics, is *exousia autopragias*, the licence or ability to act independently. What counts as independent action has been considerably reduced in the wake of Stoic determinism (67–8). But the cosmos created by the Stoic God, a superb craftsman, is the best of all possible worlds. Living things do not have to be directed, because they have been created in such a way that they can take care of themselves. Humans have, moreover, been provided with reason, with an understanding of the good, and with the capacity to acquire insights that are true. Therefore they are in a position to construct their lives with an ingenuity that is analogous, on its restricted scale, to the ingenuity with which God created the world (73). *Autopragia* means acting according to our own view of a situation. But this freedom (also referred to with the term *autexousion*) has to be acquired by overcoming the detrimental influence of the environment, which unavoidably makes us dependent on false opinions and on passions from the moment we are born. Only the Wise Man is entirely free (75).

However, it is with Epictetus that we find the first notion of a *free will*, that is, of a will that cannot be constrained by any outside force whatsoever to desist from the decision it takes in order to live a good life (76–7). We should note that this will is free in two respects, viz. *from* outside constraints and *to* decide. The focus on the good life entails that one should always attempt to make up one's mind in accordance with one's understanding of the benevolent God's scenario. We may recall the account in the introductory chapter of Aristotle's view that a virtuous person can only make the right choice. But someone who is not free in this way is forced to assent to an impression (82), because he is a self-enslaved captive of the fated course of events that have formed his personality. He has proved incapable of making the right use of his impressions although God meant him to.

Frede maintains that this notion of a free will is not useless. That we should be able to make choices without being guided by false beliefs, or be able to make a perfectly justifiable choice in a situation of which you do not (and cannot) know the ins and outs, is not, in his view, 'hopeless' (87–8). True enough, I should say, if you are prepared to secularize the notion and abandon the belief in a 'benevolent God whose providence reaches down to the smallest

details' (to quote the formula of page 86). This seems to be Frede's considered view too (178).

Chapter 6 deals, briefly, with 'Platonist and Peripatetic Criticisms and Responses'. The Stoics' opponents misunderstood Stoic determinism as entailing that our actions are fully determined by an endless chain of causes, ignoring the rider that, though an action may not be free, we are still responsible for it because it was up to us to become the sort of person who would either do it or not do it. Arguing against both Epicurus and the Stoics, Carneades insisted on a distinction between external and internal causes. According to Cicero, *De fato* 25, this internal cause is the nature of the *motus voluntarii* of the soul, but Frede points out that that these motions must actually 'have their origin in the nature of the soul, or organism' (92). The Latin formula 'does not refer to a will, let alone a free will, which causes these motions' (93).[16] However, I myself find it hard to distinguish these psychic motions, which have their origin not in the outside world but in the soul itself, from a sort of will.

Carneades then attacks the Stoics by arguing that only actions that are not forced by being dependent on external causes but have their origin in our own nature are up to us, thus significantly reducing the scope of responsibility. Alexander of Aphrodisias agrees with Carneades by stating that an action is *hekousion* 'if it is due to unforced assent' (95). Against the Stoics, he argues that what is up to us cannot in any way have been determined beforehand, and that only what we are capable of both doing and not doing is in our power. Here Alexander creatively interprets Aristotle's idea that something is up to us only if its coming about or not depends on us alone. Praise or blame in his view is irrelevant unless one could have acted otherwise. So it is Alexander who first anticipates the later idea of a free will in the sense that, *ceteris paribus*, one is able to choose between opposites, though he fails to explain how this can be possible (100).

Frede criticizes the infelicities of Alexander's account (which I have not cited) rather severely and not inappositely, but I feel bound to suspect that some of us will feel more at home in the quite secu-

[16] Frede believes that 'the Greek would be *hekousioi*', but it is equally possible that *voluntarius* corresponds to *kata prohairesin* (above, n. 13). He does not discuss passages such as Lucr. 2. 251–62, where it is the mind (*mens*) that determines where we go and one's *voluntas* that causes movements to stream through our body ('hinc motus per membra rigantur'); cf. ibid. 264–71. For a parallel in Calcidius see above, n. 15, and text thereto; for one in Origen, below, text to n. 26.

lar and liberal world of Alexander than in the rigid atmosphere of Stoicism, or the bellicose and sectarian worlds of early Christianity.

With chapter 7, which presents Frede's second hero after Epictetus, viz. Origen,[17] we turn to early Christian thought. The Stoic doctrine of a God whose providence reaches down to the smallest details, unacceptable to Peripatetics and acceptable to Platonists only with important reservations, was 'apparently congenial to Christians'; and so was the later Stoic doctrine of a free will, though there is nothing in the Septuagint or New Testament which points in this direction (103). The former Platonist Justin Martyr and his pupil Tatian know the notion, and the latter had been a philosopher too before his conversion. Frede argues that he cannot have been a Stoic because of his view on animal intelligence, but this is not true.[18] Pantaenus of Alexandria, an important Christian teacher, had been a Stoic philosopher. In the voluminous works of Clement of Alexandria 'there is a good deal of reference to the fact that there are things which it is up to us (*to eph' hēmin*)[19] to do or not to do' (104).[20]

Origen (the Christian), the first great systematic Christian theologian, was quite familiar with philosophy and its methods (105). He also instructed his students in the teachings of the various schools, atheists excepted. His doctrine of the free will was largely accepted in the East, as is clear from the fact that Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzen, among other similar passages, included his essay on the subject from the treatise *On Principles*[21] in their anthology from his writings, the *Philocalia*. Frede points out that Origen needed the doctrine of a free will to defend the unity of God against Gnostic Christians, who believed that the God of the Old Testament is an evil Demiurge and must be distinguished from

[17] Note that Frede, perhaps rightly, does not distinguish between the pagan and the Christian Origen. For the other view see K. O. Weber, *Origenes der Neuplatoniker: Versuch einer Interpretation* (Munich, 1962).

[18] See Long's n. 5 at Frede, 190.

[19] I have counted 25 instances.

[20] On these Christian teachers see U. Neymeyr, *Die Christlichen Lehrer im zweiten Jahrhundert: Ihre Lehrtätigkeit, ihr Selbstverständnis und ihre Geschichte* (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen, and Cologne, 1989).

[21] Frede, citing titles of works by Platonists Longinus, Porphyry, and Damascius, accepts that this title denotes the principles of reality (111). It has now been given back to Theophrastus: see D. Gutas (ed., trans., comm.), *Theophrastus:* On First Principles (*Known as his* Metaphysics) (Leiden and Boston, 2010). It is attested for Aristotle in the catalogue of the *Vita Menagiana* (no. 21) and for Strato at D.L. 5. 59. Compare also the heading of Aët. *Plac.* 1. 3.

the Good God of the New Testament, and who argued that the salvation or damnation of human beings has been settled once and for all. His argument is also directed against those who believe in astral determinism (117–18). So this free will, we may point out, is only free in a definite context and against a specific background.

According to Origen, God created free intellects that are equal and only become unequal (angels, demons, humans) because they are free to make mistakes. So some of them, so to speak, have to come down. The visible world with bodies has been created to accommodate the intellects that have descended as human souls, and so is 'contingent on the free will of creatures' (111). As Christians 'we have to believe . . . that we will be punished and rewarded according to the way we have lived, because we are free (*eleutheroi*)', and we 'must assume our freedom' (106–7). Wrong decisions are caused by satiety, carelessness, or negligence (123).

Frede briefly studies Origen's essay *Peri autexousiou*, 'On Freedom',[22] where the notion of what is 'up to us' (and so our freedom to do what merits praise or blame) is explained. At 3. 1. 2–3 'he sets out the notion of what it is for there to be things that are up to us. This explication proceeds on standard Stoic lines' (112).[23] Someone who argues that he is forced to act because of external circumstances does not know what it means that things are up to us (3. 1. 4–5), for one can refuse to assent to an impression. Someone who blames his native constitution is refuted by the example of people who successfully overcame it (3. 1. 5). The next paragraph discusses scriptural proof texts in favour of freedom, and the remainder of the essay is devoted to the exegetical neutralizing of scriptural proof texts denying freedom that have been adduced by the (Gnostic) opponents.

The introductory section 'could have been taken straight from a late Stoic handbook', as is proved by the terminology and the parallels in Epictetus,[24] though for *prohairesis eleuthera*[25] we have to look

[22] *Princ.* 3. 1. The Greek text is preserved at *Philocal.* 21, where the words 'and solution and explanation of the scriptural passages believed to destroy this' are appositely added to the heading. Rufinus translates the short version as *De arbitrii libertate*.

[23] Note that *Princ.* 3. 1. 2–4 is printed as *SVF* ii. 988, the parallel passage *Orat.* 6 as *SVF* ii. 989, and *Princ.* 3. 1. 5 as *SVF* ii. 990.

[24] See also Görgemanns's helpful notes in H. Görgemanns and H. Karpp (eds.), *Origenes: Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien* [*Vier Bücher*], 3rd edn. (Darmstadt, 1992), 463–75; for *Princ.* 3. 1. 3. 6–8 *φαντασίαν . . . χρήσασθαι κτλ.* he refers to Epictetus (ibid. 469 n. 12).

[25] Cf. above, text to n. 4.

elsewhere in Origen's works (113). Regrettably, however, Frede has omitted to deal with paragraphs 3. 1. 2–3 in some detail. Here Origen prepares the notion of a free will bottom up by starting from a distinction between things that are moved externally and those that are self-moved: the latter comprise living beings, including plants and generally all things that are held together by nature or soul. What is ensouled is moved 'from itself', *aph' heautōn*,[26] as an impression (*phantasia*) arises which induces a conation (*hormē*). The rational animal has not only the faculty of imagination, but also that of reason. It is up to reason to judge impressions and to accept some and reject others, so that one may act accordingly.

Though Origen fails to express himself very clearly, this freedom of the will must be grounded in self-movement, that is, a freedom of movement of one's nature (*phusis* in the Stoic sense), including one's bodily nature, and soul. For the self-motion of the soul one may compare the passage of Calcidius quoted above from an earlier chapter of Frede's.[27]

Chapter 8 is entitled 'Reactions to the Stoic Notion of a Free Will: Plotinus'. Frede first proves that the distinction between the God of Jews and Christians, who freely creates the world the way he wills, and the God, i.e. Demiurge, of the Greeks, who fabricates the best possible world (highlighted in a famous passage of Galen quoted by Dihle at the beginning of his book),[28] should not be generalized. In the first place Plato's Demiurge is not the highest principle, because he depends on the Forms and the Good. Furthermore, 'Numenius, Plotinus and all later Platonists distinguish God from the demiurge',[29] so one should compare the God of these philosophers with that of Moses (128–9). Frede then discusses the Plotinian treatise 6. 8 [39], which Porphyry in his systematic ordering of the treatises placed in the penultimate position and to which he gave the title 'On the Voluntary, and (the) Will of the One'.[30]

Plotinus argues that we must clarify what it means for something

[26] Görgemanns, *Vier Bücher*, 465 n. 7, refers to *SVF* ii. 499.

[27] Above, text to n. 15.

[28] Gal. *De usu part*. 3, 905. 1–908. 17 K., comparing Epicurus, Moses, and Plato and others (other references to Moses (and Christ) at *Diff. puls*. 8, 579. 16 K., and 8, 657. 1 K.); Dihle, *Will*, 1.

[29] Frede does not mention Alcinous, for whom see below, n. 32.

[30] *Περὶ τοῦ ἑκουσίου καὶ θελήματος τοῦ ἑνός*. The title *Περὶ ἑκουσίου* is found in the bibliographies of Xenocrates (D.L. 4. 12), Aristotle (D.L. 5. 24), and Theophrastus (D.L. 5. 43).

to be up to humans, and then should try to transfer this notion to rational souls, intellects, and the One, or God. Plotinus' approach is bottom up, just like Origen's, but he starts at a higher level: if it is part of human nature that one can be free, this freedom must have its source at the next higher level (131). Again, this level depends on the higher level next to it, which in its turn depends on the highest level: the One, or the Good, which must be the ultimate source of such freedom as we have. Something is up to us if its occurrence is not already caused by what happens in the world, and if 'our willing to do it' on which it depends is a 'desire of reason' (133–4), that is, having its source in rational considerations. This is very close to Stoicism, but the difference is of course that for Plotinus, a Platonist, the soul has a non-rational part. The course of events, moreover, is not fully determined. The soul has to take care of the body, which means that it is to a large extent kept away, or tempted to keep away, from its main activity, which is to think. Real freedom, therefore, is the internal capacity 'to think the right thoughts and form the right desires' (141). The incorporeal intellects on the level above soul are not distracted in this way, but are always thinking and contemplating what is true, so they are wholly free from distraction and from problems involved with choosing, and so free to do what they want and what is up to them, which is one thing only, viz. to think.

Turning now to the God beyond thought and being, on the highest level, Plotinus attempts to determine what is up to Him, though language cannot really formulate this and one has to appeal to the resources of *theologia negativa*. One may begin by saying what it would be wrong to uphold, viz. that God is what he is by accident, so that he merely happens to be good, or by necessity, which means that his nature obliges him to be good.[31] These horrible alternatives are refuted: God acts the way he does because there is no difference between God and his nature, and because that is the single and only thing he wants. The whole of creation, from Intellect down to matter, eternally follows and flows from God's will,[32] which is entirely free because entirely simple (*venia*

[31] On this dialectical exercise see now L. Lavaud, 'Traité 39 (VI, 8) *Sur le volontaire et sur la volonté de l'Un*', in L. Brisson and J.-F. Pradeau (ed. and trans.), *Plotin*, vi. *Traités 38–41* (Paris, 2007), 173–326 at 182–4. Frede rightly disagrees with the attempt to explain the objection that God acts out of necessity as being of Christian provenance (150–1).

[32] Compare Alcinous, whose First God 'is the Father through being the cause of

sit verbis). As one descends the *scala entium*, freedom becomes progressively more restricted.

So in Plotinus' hierarchical Platonist system there are profound philosophical reasons for the world's dependence on God's absolute and unconditioned will. It is wrong to believe that this doctrine is due to the influence of the Christian doctrine of God's absolute and unconditioned will. And Plotinus does not make the mistake of some Christians, who believe that our will, created in the image of God's will, allows us, too, to make 'absolute and unconditioned' choices (150–1).

Chapter 9 is entitled 'Augustine: A Radically New Notion of a Free Will?'.[33] As is only to be expected after what has been argued so far, this rhetorical question is answered in the negative. Research on ancient philosophy of the last thirty years or so has shown that Augustine is a late antique rather than an early medieval figure, and that it is this that explains his distance from Plato and Aristotle (153–4). He is of course influenced by Cicero, whose brand of Scepticism, as Frede perceptively points out, allowed for the qualified acceptance of philosophical views, in this case Stoic or Stoically inspired views. Platonism, moreover, had already assimilated 'large doses of Stoicism' (154).[34] He also studied the works of the Neoplatonizing Christian priest Marius Victorinus, the probable author of certain *libri Platonicorum* that are now lost, presumably translations of Plotinus and Porphyry.

Augustine's view of the will is certainly Stoic, but integrated into an already traditional form of Platonism. It is also dependent on a tradition of Christian speculation on these issues—think of Justin and Origen, for instance. Augustine is original, but 'on a more modest scale' than has been believed (155–6). And though his view that the will is immediately involved in cognition and that you have to have faith before you can understand differs from that of Plato, Aristotle, and the earlier Stoics, it comes close to the complex view

all things and bestowing order on the heavenly Intellect and the Soul of the world in accordance with himself and his own thoughts, for by his own will [*boulēsin*] he has filled all things with himself' (*Didask*. 10, 164. 40–165. 1 H., trans. Dillon, slightly modified). For background see J. Whittaker ad loc., in J. Whittaker and P. Louis (ed., trans., comm.), *Alcinoos: Enseignement des doctrines de Platon* (Paris, 1990), 104–5 n. 193.

[33] As Dihle, *Will*, had argued, and many others believed.

[34] Think of the *Στωϊκὰ λανθάνοντα δόγματα*, 'hidden Stoic doctrines', absorbed in Plotinus' writings according to Porph. *Vita Plotini* 14.

of the will according to Epictetus, according to one of Frede's more elegant arguments. According to Epictetus, the will is involved in all our decisions to assent or not to assent to impressions, so also to purely cognitive, non-impulsive impressions. And the Stoics, too, accept things on faith, for they believe in oracles and divination (157–9).

The main source for Augustine's view is the early treatise *De libero arbitrio*, originally directed against the Manichaeans, incorrectly depicted by Augustine as positing a bad Demiurge like the Gnostics. Augustine later tells us that this work implicitly contains his answer to Pelagianism as well, that is, his argument that merit does not mitigate one's need for divine grace. Freedom, for Augustine, is a rather negative concept, for it is a lack of wisdom, a freedom to go wrong, to sin. We must have sinned, for otherwise we would not live our unhappy lives in a menacing world. God is not responsible for this situation, for we are ourselves to blame, just as Origen had maintained. But Augustine's position is far bleaker than Origen's, even though he finds it difficult to be precise about who sinned when. Frede argues that we may understand him as believing that the original sin of rejecting virtue and closeness to God and opting for the opposite has been committed by Man ('Adam'): that is to say, by Mankind in general, of which each of us is a part. The evil we suffer in the world is a punishment by a just God for this sin. But Augustine also seems to leave original sin without an explanation, because there can be no explanation for an action that is beyond the rational and intelligible order of things (172).

Accordingly, we at one time, collectively and by proxy, had freedom (*libertas*) and a free will, but in our present situation we have only a *liberum arbitrium*. Though we have enslaved ourselves by original sin, it is still in principle up to us how we choose and decide: we are still responsible, just as we are according to Stoic doctrine (167–8). But we are not in a position to act in such a way as would give back to us our prelapsarian freedom on our own account. Only God can do this, so we are entirely dependent on divine grace. All we can do is soldier on and try to develop a new will, which will fight against the enslaved will (169). Origen, as we have seen, attempted to neutralize passages in the Pauline letters which seem to deny freedom, but Augustine, as it seems following an interpretation of Marius Victorinus, accepts that it is only owing to divine grace that we can will the right things (170–1).

So Augustine's notion of free will is not new. It relies on the Stoic notion of a free will and especially on that of a will that is no longer free. His God, like the Stoic God, arranges the course of events in the world providentially, using the enslaved wills to serve this end. The difference is that in Augustine's universe there is a way out thanks to the divine grace one can only strive after and hope for, but not earn (174).

Chapter 10, 'Conclusion', briefly and elegantly summarizes the main points and findings of this beautiful book. It ends with a rewardingly cynical remark.

We are told that Frede intended to do more work on the subject, e.g. to extend his enquiry into the early Byzantine period.[35] Presumably he would also have included a treatment of Proclus' treatise *De providentia et fato et de eo quod in nobis ad Theodorum mechanicum*.[36] One also misses a paragraph on the Middle Platonist doctrine of so-called hypothetical necessity.[37]

The typescript has been excellently prepared for publication by A. A. Long, to whom we must be most grateful for having made Frede's important study accessible. In his Editor's Preface Long tells us among other things that he divided each of the first three chapters into two, added a bibliography, and eliminated the kind of mistakes or irregularities that tend to creep into a work in progress.[38] He also modified the title of the work. This originally was 'The Origins of the Notion of the Will', but the editor added the word 'Free' because Frede has for the most part been concerned with the origins of free will. Long, moreover, most help-

[35] A paper 'John of Damascus on Human Action, the Will, and Human Freedom' was published in K. Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources* (Oxford, 2002), 63–95.

[36] Edited by H. Boese, *Procli Diadochi tria opuscula: De providentia libertate malo* (Berlin, 1960), and D. Isaac, *Proclus: Trois études sur la providence*, ii. *Providence, fatalité, liberté* (Paris, 1979). Annotated German translation by M. Erler, *Proklos Diadochos: Über die Vorsehung, das Schicksal und den freien Willen an Theodoros, den Ingenieur* (*Mechaniker*) (Meisenheim am Glan, 1980). Annotated English translation based on a retro-conversion that works out what the original Greek must have been by C. Steel, *Proclus:* On Providence (London, 2007).

[37] See G. Boys-Stones, '"Middle" Platonists on Fate and Human Autonomy', in R. W. Sharples and R. Sorabji (eds.), *Greek and Roman Philosophy 100 BC–200 AD*, ii (London, 2007), 431–48.

[38] There were very few such mishaps. One has escaped Long, viz. Clement of Alexandria as 'Origen's famous student' (104). The sentence 'But there is the divine law Origen referred to' (74) could have been deleted.

fully provided references to ancient authors and modern literature in additional endnotes. In works published by himself Frede was as a rule less forthcoming, I assume because he thought that his readers knew, or should know (*nota praefabor*), though rumour has it that he cared less about recent scholarship than perhaps he could have.[39] There is a charming brief Foreword by David Sedley, presenting the author and highlighting his marvellous and influential contributions to the study of ancient philosophy.

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[39] One misses, for instance, a discussion of S. Bobzien, 'The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem', *Phronesis*, 43 (1998), 133–75.

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