



THE DISPUTE OVER UNIVERSALS AND ANSELMIAN REALISM

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ABSTRACT

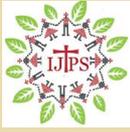
The use of reason in the act of knowing God, led to the secularization of Western theological doctrine and its emergence in the eleventh century (and the beginning of the second Christian millennium), and the use of reason in understanding faith, with the introduction of the well-known Anselmian phrase understand what you think. Through Anselm's rational approach, philosophical speculation became an instrument for explaining the dogmas of faith. Anselm starts from the date of faith, encountered in his works by the fact that God exists and that nothing greater can be conceived. Faith is the essential premise for asserting the existence of God, having no empirical means to scientifically prove something so complex and almost impossible to understand. Anselm conceives a meditation on the reason of faith and thus demonstrates the existence of God, through what would later be called Immanuel Kant, the ontological argument. According to the definition offered by Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, Anselm was concerned with an inductive legitimation, of the determined being (of the second being), towards the determining being. This premise of the inductance of reason, appears in Anselmian realism, when trying to identify certain concepts called universals, with the essence of reality.

Keywords: universal quarrel; Anselmian; realism; nominalism: determined being: ontological bargain; Monologue;

INTRODUCTION. THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The present research aims to analyze some essential points from the scholastic period, namely the moment of the dispute of the universals (or the quarrel between the nominalists and the realists) and the influence that realism had on the Anselmian work. The main aspects that will be tried to answer, during this research, are related to the influence of the Anselmian philosophy in the theology of that period. Therefore, a series of questions will be presented, which will be answered during the paper, as follows: What are universals? Did universals appear in the medieval period, or is this issue discussed since the Greek period? What is realism? What is nominalism? What is the difference between Platonic universals and Anselmian universals? What is Anselm's contribution to the triumph of realism? Why for Anselm, nominalist thinking is not worth following? What is the thinking of the Church from that period for?

The dispute over universals emerged as a reiteration of its aeropay and their (leading to the truth) dialectic. In this sense, towards the end of the Middle Ages it had the intention of returning to antiquity and to the values of the ancient worlds. Religiously, the Protestant



Reformation¹ emerged, as a tendency to return to early primary Christianity and to the methods of approach and interpretation present in Greek philosophers. The renaissance current makes its presence felt in art (literary languages appear in literature, based on substantiated and logically elaborated dialectics). In the dispute of universals, the chronology of time is blurred, being put *face to face* the perennial values of philosophy, as if they existed in a universal crucible, of the same historical time. The goal was to extract and share the cognitive values of all philosophers who transcend their time, in order to reach a common summon of values, put at the service of universal human knowledge and to reach the perennial values of humanity.

1. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE APPEARANCE OF UNIVERSALS IN THE GREEK PERIOD

The problem of universals has been present since the time of Greek philosophy. Given the context of the emergence of universals in ancient times, the first to address this issue were Thales, Heraclitus and Parmenides, through the concept of meaning², which was attributed to common nouns such as man, tree and white. This concept was also taken over by Anselm in the work *De grammatico*, where he considers the paronyms and their double meaning, highlighted by the words *per se* and *per aliud*. Ancient philosophers asked themselves about the logic of things represented by words, the difference between work and concept and an issue that is taken up in Anselmian philosophy, namely the concepts of being in reality and being in the mind. From the point of view of Platonic philosophy, this so perennial phrase seems to be extrapolated from physical things (the sensible world) to abstract Ideas (the world of Ideas). But in Aristotelian philosophy, the emphasis is on the concept of the general to that of the particular. But in order to understand the Anselmian problem, it is considered necessary to bring into question the concept of Platonic realism but also that of Aristotelian realism.

Thus, Platonic realism (or the main form of knowledge in Plato) considers the existence of universes in forms and ideas, or as it is generically called in Platonic idealism by ideal forms.³ The theory of Platonic forms had in mind that this material world is a copy of the real world. Plato spoke of forms when he tried to explain the notion of universals. Thus, Platonic forms are abstract representations of things that later became universal in his philosophy. In Plato, forms acquire a degree of reality (like the Anselmian concept of the divine essence), by the fact that forms are perfect and unchanged. The world of forms, in Plato, is somehow differentiated from the sensible world (or the world of substances) present in Aristotelian philosophy.

An interpretation of Platonic realism (of ideas) defines Plato as the one who opposes nominalism, but in this case it is controversial by Aristotelian realism. Instead, Aristotelian realism (of substances) is then to be criticized by idealism. Aristotileism is in this sense, a realistic critique of Platonic realism, a problematization that decisively influenced the entire period of the Middle Ages.

¹ The Protestant Reformation appears in the sixteenth century through Martin Luther, in an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church (through the 95 theses on the practice of Catholic indulgences).

² Since ancient times, they have tried to barely consider the hermeneutics of the word.

³ These from the Platonic point of view are the eternal and immutable truths, and these eternal truths were part of the object of knowledge (or what the intelligible world of Ideas represented).



2. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE APPEARANCE OF UNIVERSALS (REALISM VERSUS NOMINALISM) IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Within the history of medieval philosophy, the dialectical dispute between nominalists and realists emerges. Thus, the problem that arose in the Middle Ages is that of the status of universals. The theme of the philosophical dispute of the universals was present, both in the Greek period (especially in Plato and Aristotle), and in the scholastic and medieval period. The medievalists, in the work *The Quarrel of Universals*, wondered whether universals are names, things, or concepts.⁴ But before the medievalists wondered whether universals were things, names, or concepts, the Neoplatonists had wondered why Aristotle's universals were beings, names, vocal and sounds.⁵ Thus, in this case, the transfer was made from the Aristotelian to the universal categories.

In the medieval period, the realists had in mind the existence of only two types of entities and particularities, which would resemble the universals. Particularities are similar to each other because they share the universal. Also, universals can be similar, by substituting them with other universals, for example in this case, wisdom and generosity are similar to each other in that they are both virtues. The most important problem in this medieval period, not dark but full of ontological turmoil, is that which unites the late scholastic philosophy with the Latin medieval philosophy. This lies in the interpretation of Aristotle's *Categories*, from the premise of the problem of universals. This medieval problem did not develop on the basis of Porphyry's Isagogy⁶, but rather in connection with the works of Aristotle. The terms that Aristotle uses in his work begin to have certain hermeneutical fluctuations in the medieval period. The Aristotelian categories had as a stake the fixing of the intelligibility *ratio* of one work in relation to another work. On the issue of categories, it was debated by the philosopher Pierre Abélard who considered the notion of substance. Abélard considered that Aristotle proposed two divisions of substance, namely: the first substance and the second substance. But although this can be interpreted as a distinction about things, to the detriment of the distinction between words, over time various interpretations of what the notion of substance means can be found. Anselm takes this concept in his work *Monologion*, thereby referring to the divine being. Anselm tries to prove the existence of God, referring to an ideal or a universal, because God must exist both in reality and in mind or thought. (because if God existed only in thought, there could be the assumption that another being greater than God could also be conceived, which would be wrong).

The historical context in which the problem of universals appears is one conducive to highlighting the metaphysical corpus, which brings with it the constitution of the ideational context, about God from late Antiquity to the Middle Ages. The corpus of theological writings (of the Church Fathers and of the church writers) and philosophical writings on God, set out two orientations, one specific to the east and another to the Christian west. Respectively, the Platonic and neo-Platonic orientation towards Eastern theology and the Aristotelian orientation (especially after the first millennium), towards Western theology.

⁴ Alain de Libera, *The Quarrel of the Universals*, from Plato to the End of the Middle Ages, Amarcord Publishing House, Timișoara, 1998, p. 10.

⁵ Ibidem, p.10

⁶ The cultural concepts of the modern world were born from the quarrel of universals, and this quarrel came from a wrong isagogy (Εἰσαγωγή or Interpretation) of Aristotle's "Categories", expounded by the Phoenician Porphyry (a disciple of the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus). Lycopolis). However, sometimes a hermeneutics different from the original meaning of the text can paradoxically produce a leap in the history of thought.



Therefore, Eastern theology emphasizes affectivity and ascetic-mystical experience, while in Western theology the emphasis is on reason and the practical manifestation of good. In this sense, the quintessence of universals is a historical record, combined between Aristotelianism and Platonism.

This controversy in the philosophical history of universals, begins with the late antiquity, in parallel with the effort of theologians, to bring together the Neoplatonic and Aristotelian exegetical methods. Thus agreeing two founding corpora of theology and philosophy (exegetical and dogmatic), one Latin or Aristotelian and the other Greek or Neo-Platonic.⁷ In this case it is necessary to differentiate two problems of thinking, specific to universals, namely the other texts transmitted and those of the doctrinal system of thought itself. Regarding the transmitted texts, there are accidents of updating the texts in time, in the sense of *traduttore, traditore*,⁸ but without knowing the original, the thinker of the Middle Ages could think Aristotelian terms, without knowing the historical context and thus the meaning of these concepts. Regarding the (doctrinal) system of thought, the thinker of the late Middle Ages, reproduces Aristotelianism and bases it on new conceptual supports (considering the theory of *supositio*).⁹

Therefore, the term quarrel of universals is very comprehensive, but it also contains, among others, a reference to some issues that refer to the interpretation of the universal, in the singular (of the objective in the subjective, of the general in particular). During this period, the emphasis is on the critical relationship between essence and existence, having as a starting point the concept of Aristotelian substance. Through this concept, medievalists (like Anselm) try to reprobate abstract notions from antiquity.

3. THE PROBLEM OF REALISM IN ANSELMIAN PHILOSOPHY

During the school period (from Anselm's time) we can consider two important aspects. The first aspect is determined by the opponents of that time, who were not philosophers or logicians, but people of the Church, and the second aspect concerns philosophy, which was also made by people of the Church, because they represented authority and thus enjoyed of knowing the world, from a scientific point of view. In the work *The Quarrel of the Universals*, Alain de Libera exposes the philosophy of the three Persons, of Roscelin de Compiègne which is harshly criticized by Anselm. Roscelin de Compiègne considers that the definitions of the three Persons are the following: *tres usie, id est tres substantie*,¹⁰ although he considers canonical (according to the Ecumenical Councils), that the Trinity is a single Being (ουσια; substance) but tripled in Persons (προσωπειον;) distinct in a perihoresis (περιχώρησις; rotation. The term appeared in St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Gregory of the Nazis) or exemplary trinity communion life. Anselm challenged this name of the three Persons, arguing that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct

⁷ It is also about the sequencing of the writings of the Holy Fathers of Latin origin and of those of Greek origin, in the volume Latin Patrology and Greek Patrology. This common patristic work of Christian patrology is a monumental sum of the writings of the Church Fathers and church writers, systematized and recovered by the Catholic prelate Jacques-Paul Migne between 1841 and 1855

⁸ This concept refers to the possibility of changing the original meaning of the text, through translation, with all the effort of updating the original text. Therefore, the scientific research of a text must start from the study of the original text, in its original language.

⁹ Alain de Libera, *The Quarrel of Universals*, p. 452. (suppositio comes from Latin, a concept that means underweight).

¹⁰ The quarrel of universals, p.127. (three beings which are three substances)



concepts, and that from a theological point of view the *Father was incarnate at the same time as the Son*.¹¹

The problem of realism in Anselmian argumentation is determined by a historical condition that refers to the opposition between Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy. The importance of the Anselmian argument lies in the ontological order, of the two ontological concepts that refer to the divine being, and this aims at the transition from “being in the mind” to “being in reality”, a syllogism preceding Cartesianism. These phrases are taken both in the Hegelian philosophy and in the philosophy of Abbot Gaunilo of Marmoutier and priest of Tours as well as in the philosophy of Rene Descartes.

In the work *Phenomenology of the Spirit* by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the Anselmian opposite of the relationship between being in the mind and being in reality, is formulated from certainty to reality¹², from what is directly to reality itself. But what is the form of reasoning to be in the mind and to be in reality, expounded by the abbot Gaunilo, to the Anselmian philosophy? Is this argument valid? The main claim of Gaunilo's answer to Anselm is stated in the statement that Anselm's argument for the existence of God is real, and then a valid argument can be inferred (exemplifying that for Anselm's argument to exist, the largest island should be imaginable to exist both in reality, and not just in the mind). Why does Abbot Gaunilo think this? In his work, Abbot Gaunilo considers, by logically exemplifying by reduction to the absurd, that there is an ocean on an island, but which due to the difficulty (or rather the impossibility) of finding what does not exist, has become an example which has been called by to some philosophers The *Lost Island*. So the story of the *Lost Island*, which is blessed with riches and delights in abundance and is superior everywhere in its abundance to all others lands inhabited by humans. The reasoning goes on to say that if someone says that it really is so, then it will be easy to understand what is being said, because nothing is difficult in the mind, but it can even be impossible in reality. But if this above example should continue to be deduced, as if it were a logical consequence of this: “you can no longer doubt that this island, which is better than all other countries, exists with true somewhere in reality, than you can doubt it is in the mind; and because it is better to exist not only in the mind but also in reality, therefore, it must be the fact that it exists. For if it did not exist, any other land existing in reality would be better than it, and thus this island, already conceived by you as better than others, will not be better.”¹³

René Descartes in *Third meditation* wrote that the *a posteriori* argument regarding the existence of God is constructed. But is it necessary to prove the existence of God? It is necessary to prove the existence of God, to be sure that what is perceived as true, even exists in reality. God is the guarantor of the correspondence of the idea of a thing with that thing. Ideas are mediators between human consciousness and reality, because there is no intelligible access to how reality actually “looks”. The ideas of sensitive objects are aroused by the fact that we are affected by those / objects. The idea itself is known to exist, it cannot be said that

¹¹ Ibidem. (Anselm continues Blessed Augustine, in the subordinationist sense, of understanding the relationship between the Three Trinity Persons and not the coordinationist of the status of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity or God; -Catholic, precisely because only the premises of reason *sola ratione* and not of Holy Scripture *sola scripturae* were considered, which mentioned only that the Holy Spirit “the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth ... proceeds from the Father” - John 15, 26) .

¹² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010, p. 134

¹³ Gaunilo, *Liber pro insipiente*, (Basic writings; Proslogium; Monologium; Cur Deus homo; Gaunilo's In behalf of the fool / (La Salle, IL: Open Court, c.1962, also by Saint Anselm, S. N. Deane, Saint Anselm, Saint Anselm, and Saint Anselm (page images at HathiTrust), 1962, p. 40



people have no ideas. But, a clear and distinct idea of an object, is that idea, which appears as presenting an obvious thing, which is presented only with its properties, namely without being mixed with other perceptions and ideas about other things. Ideas can be born, received from the outside (ideas of perceived objects) or made by man. Inborn ideas are in man as a given and refer either to substances (for example to God), or to accidents. Those relating to substances have more objective reality than the others (ie they have a correspondent in reality; formal reality is the reality of the idea itself). The qualities possessed by an effect must also be found in the cause of that effect. Thus, the phrase of being in the mind and being in reality is also rediscovered in modernity, the emphasis being placed on the concept of the existence of reality, which can be taken into account by an ideal or a universal. Anselm argues that if God is the supreme being, he must exist both in reality and in thought (because, if he existed only in thought, another higher existence could be conceived).

In the work *The Teaching on Salvation to St. Athanasius the Great and Anselm of Canterbury*, by Stephen Lucian Thomas, the dialectic between nominalism (universals are only a name) and realism (universals are real)¹⁴ is exposed. The concept of universals represents a symbol of the notions of medieval and scholastic philosophy. These general terms as well as their nature, during the universals, later led to the appearance of the three currents: realism, nominalism and conceptualism. Realism uses concepts from the field of reality, or what may correspond to reality, although these concepts are framed in a dimension superior to human reality, a dimension that is transcendent to this reality. Realism in Anselm's work is reduced to what is real in ideas.

These ideas are based on the concept of perfection, which Anselm exposes in *Monologion* and the concept of greatness in *Proslogion*, concepts that demonstrate the existence of a being to whom these concepts are attributed, although this problem has its origins in antiquity. Thus, in the work *Introduction to Philosophy. Medieval and modern philosophy*,¹⁵ Gh. Cazan considers that the *axis of solstice is the quarrel of universals*¹⁶ and draws attention to the origin of this problem that begins with Plato. Plato was concerned with the existence of ideas, which are by their nature separate from the sensible world (ideas have objective reality, and the sensible world exists only insofar as they participate in these ideas) and Aristotle considers that the existence of universals lies in things. In his work *On Categories*, Aristotle distinguishes between the concept of general and species, and in his work *Metaphysics*, Aristotle draws a parallel between the particular and the general, where he mentions that *the general exists in the particular*¹⁷. In order to understand the two currents I will work with during the research, I consider it necessary to define the terms. Thus, realism is “an orientation that admits and tries to prove that universals (concepts) are real and have substantiality existing by themselves, and nominalism represents universality (concept and idea) do not have an independence, it is not independent, the only one there is in reality the individual”¹⁸ Realism was defined as an orientation that admitted and tried to prove that universals (concepts; categories) are real, that is, they have substantiality existing by themselves. According to this concept and through it or with the concept, as a theoretical

¹⁴ Ștefan Lucian Toma, *The teaching about salvation at St. Athanasius the Great and Anselm De Canterbury*, Andreiana Publishing House, Sibiu, 2011, p. 154

¹⁵ Cazan Gh. Al, *Introduction to philosophy. Medieval and modern philosophy*, Actani Publishing House, Bucharest 1996

¹⁶ Ibidem, p.31

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Univers Enciclopedic Gold Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010, p. 21.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p.155



foundation, the representatives of realism wanted to argue the substantiality of the Christian Church, the reality of God as well as of the Trinity. Unlike realism, nominalism considers that the universal (concept, idea) has no independence, because it is not in itself a perfect, substantial state, but is only a name (lotus vocis) of general and species. The only one who has reality (existence) is the individual, because the individual has life. The concept (universal, idea, reason) exists only in the human mind, as a product of it, as the nominalists admitted. Nominalism is more inclined to real life and experience. That is why nominalism was appreciated as representing the modern way of life.

Those who represented realism in the medieval period tried to argue in favor of the existence of God, the Christian Church and the Trinity. Instead, the representatives of nominalism researched the areas of absolutist theology, which could lead to heresy. Anselm considered that nominalist thinking was not worth following, because the concepts used by nominalists were logically inconsistent and meaningless. Anselm points out that this thinking, which can lead to heresy, is not worth following. However, the main dispute arises between Anselm and Roscelin de Compiègne. Roscelin de Compiègne is generically named as the founder of nominalism. In this controversy over Roscelin de Compiègne, Anselm argues against nominalism that if a thinker declares *God to be universal, an abstraction, but the three persons God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are individual, he thinks as a nominalist and has three Gods, but if the universal, God is reality itself, God is One and the three persons are the forms of One.*¹⁹

Karl Jaspers believes that in the historical period of Anselm, the Church had a tendency to open to realism because this reaffirms the success that Anselm had, by rationalizing thought and rationally demonstrating the existence of God. The essential idea of K. Jaspers is that Anselm was aware that realism could always be defeated by realism and that his philosophy could be forgotten. In the book *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*,²⁰ Eugene Fairweather poses an essential problem for universals, namely a phrase that Anselm expounds in his philosophy. This phrase can be summarized in the following words: How can someone who still does not understand how a few people are a man in species, understand how, in the greatest mystery and in high nature, a few people, each of Those is God, one God . Thus, in Anselmian philosophy the question is aimed at and not necessarily the answer and that is why Anselm's philosophical argument means highlighting the fact that the question is the main element in problematization. It problematizes the very idea of God and his existence in both human and divine nature. As a father of scholasticism, Anselm highlighted in his philosophy the Platonic idealism, which he placed in the service of the Catholic Church. Anselm argues in favor of the existence of God and deals with the field of logic and syllogisms in *De grammatico*. Anselm is also considered the theorist of realism and the concept of universals, which are inspired by Aristotle's philosophy. Anselm also considers that "universals have an existence in themselves, they do not refer to individuals, but to things in themselves, realism being transcendental."²¹

Anselm's preoccupation goes in the direction of the problem of universals, from the works *Monologion (VII)*, where he discusses universality and in the work about truth (VII),

¹⁹ Ștefan Lucian Toma, *The teaching about salvation at St. Athanasius the Great and Anselm of Canterbury*, Andreiana Publishing House, Sibiu, 2011, p. 157.

²⁰ Fairweather Eurigene, *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, The Westminster Pres, Philadelphia Friend, W.H.C, The Rise of Christianity, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, p. 99.(

²¹ Ștefan Lucian Toma, *The teaching about salvation at St. Athanasius the Great and Anselm of Canterbury*, Andreiana Publishing House, Sibiu, 2011, p. 154.



where he discusses the problem of the truth of the being of things. Anselm mentioned to the ancient Greeks that they conceive of matter reducible to "earth, water, fire, and air,"²² and these elements are individualized by explaining the forms of things by themselves. In the work *A History of Philosophical Ideas*, Gheorghe Vlăduțescu identifies the Anselmian problem in an ontological mediation but rested in a precarious metaphysics.

As for Anselmian philosophy, universals refer to an absolute being which means that they are ante rem. This person is distinct from the existence of things that are in re. Therefore, universals retain their status of authority through the very ontological interpretation of being. The initial formulation of the argument for proving the existence of God, from the history of Christian philosophy made in the "classical version", belongs to the theologian and scholastic philosopher Anselm of Canterbury, who by assuming the Augustinian perspective, in relation to the relationship faith-understanding, aims to formulate a logical argument, by which the human intellect "understands what it believes."²³ "Faith in search of the intellect" is the Anselmian ideal, confessed by him many times in "*Proslogion*", it directs and offers a deep spiritual meaning to his entire philosophical approach to argumentation. Anselm presents his exposition in the form of a prayer - a style also preferred by Blessed Augustine in his "Confessions" - and Anselm, being the "father of scholasticism", confesses by himself this way of expression, that the One whose existence he argues is not only an object of philosophical reflection, but, first of all, the Supreme Person and the object of faith. In Anselm's view, the purpose of argument is not to justify and thus substantiate the acceptance of God's existence, but the very rational understanding of an assumed truth, through an act of unconditional faith. "I do not try, Lord, to enter into Your height, for I cannot measure it with my intellect, but I only want, as far as possible, to understand the truth in which my heart believes, and which it loves. For I do not search to understand, but I believe to understand; and I still don't think I could understand if I didn't believe."²⁴

The ontological argument - it is a perfect form of unlimited confidence, which Anselm had in man's cognitive capacity - presupposes precisely the transition from being in the mind to being in reality, in an attempt to arrive at a statement, above all doubt and thereby to a compelling proof. Anselm justified his speculations by the statement, as did Descartes later, that his intention was only to submit to evidence, which seemed doubtful (*dubium probare*), that is, to see that something - understood on the basis of a knowledge already present in the intellect - "it exists only in the imagination, like all false things, or in reality, like the true ones".²⁵ In *Monologion*, Chapter VII, Anselm discusses the problem of the universal. In his work, Anselm uses the term *de universalis* and designates a quality of the creature, in relation to the Creator, but in his text the term may lose its contact and no longer refers to the whole. Thus, following Aristotelian thesis, Anselm considers that "if the universality of things, whether visible or invisible, comes from a certain matter, no doubt they cannot even exist, nor can they be called, as being of a certain matter outside the supreme nature, either of itself or of the third essence."²⁶

²² Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, *A History of Philosophical Ideas*, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, 1990, p.35

²³ Anselm, *Proslogion*, Bilingual Edition, Latin Translation, Afterword and Notes by Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, p.25.

²⁴ Anselm, *Proslogion*, Bilingual Edition, Latin Translation, Afterword and Notes by Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, p.10

²⁵ Anselm, *Proslogion*, Bilingual Edition, Latin Translation, Afterword and Notes by Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, Scientific Publishing House, Bucharest, p.10

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p.26.



In Chapter III of the *Proslogion*, Anselm considers that "if any mind could think any better than you, the creature would rise above the creator and judge the creator." The appellation of relationship could be translated in the following phrase: it would formulate judgments having as subject the creator. Jean-Luc Marion uses the Anselmian concept of the negativity of divine transcendence, suggesting an approximation to the Kantian approach, by the following argument which aims in terms of transcendent-thinking rather than in the transcendental experience of the limits of thought itself. Therefore, I will expose the three aspects of modernity on the ontological-anselmian argument. The first aspect is exposed in the Kantian argument, through the example of thalers that can take the example of the divine nature, but it is conceived by reason as a finite thing.

In an attempt to find out the determinations about God, Anselm considers that, "I properly understand that he made them all out of nothing." In this part of Anselm's work, the problem of nothingness appears (*ex nihilo*).²⁷ Although Anselm tries to avoid the problem of nothingness, which does not lead to the idea of something existing and predictable, either the report is made to a negative approach to something that is, or the report is made to the hypostasis of nothing. Thus the problem of nothingness is an *aporia* (a problem without solution or without solution), because it is difficult or even impossible to give an essentialist definition to such a notion, like nothing, not that it would limit nothing by definition, but would be ontologically impossible to anyone to define anything essentialist.

Chapter nine, from *Monologion*, is also found in the work *On Truth*, but is also present in both texts, thus resuming the Augustinian theme of the divine being, which contains the divine (cataphatic) archetypes of the creator. But different theses are also problematized between the two texts. The first text tries to prove the existence of things before creation, (it is a difficult thesis, because anything that existed before creation, or the current existence of the Universe - because it was not even anything - would have been something eternal like God, and the difficulty is thus, the exclusive demonstration only of the divine existence - first of all - before (creation) and in what second text will be argued the concept of rectitude (*rectitudo*), in terms of the essence of things.

4. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE THEORY OF UNIVERSALS IN THE THEORY OF B. GOEBEL

In work *Anselm's Theory of Reconsidered Universals*, a new solution to the ontological nature of universals is presented. If in Platonic philosophy, universals referred to things, in Platonic philosophy and in Anselmian philosophy, universals acquire an ontological value and refer to the divine being (to God). B. Goedel proposes a new interpretation of Anselmian universals. It considers the different forms of realism, in terms of the existence of universals and how they can be combined to highlight the realism to which Anselmian philosophy refers. As for the reconstruction of the Anselmian argument, it uses a sum of objective or pan-realistic ideas. B. Goebel considers that the core of the Anselmian ontology can be characterized by an ontology of the five categories. B. Goebel, considered Aristotle's Categories, in order to be able to observe the way in which Anselm related to them. B. Goebel also considers that in Anselmian realism, the stake is the ontological value of being, therefore "the essence of universal theory is a three-level account of reality, in which entities at different levels vary in degree of existence and essence."²⁸ Although Anselm used the

²⁷ Ibidem, p.28.

²⁸ The essentialist definition seeks to capture the nature of the defined thing, being one of the most difficult possible definitions that could exist. It is very difficult to capture the essence of things, the very answer to the



universal as immanent, and his philosophy is of neo-Platonic origin, he still considers the categories set forth in Aristotelian philosophy. Anselm does not discuss the problem of universals in the terms proposed by Boethius or the Phoenician Porphyry, but considers the ontological dimension, of universal entities and its properties. The universal theory refers to the famous Anselmian phrase "the existence of something greater"²⁹, which thus gives it ontologically, the status of divine being (of God). Anselm starts from this phrase, to render the presence of a universal category.

B. Goebel considers here the ontological analysis of individual substances, from Aristotelian philosophy, although Anselm shows a special interest in the ontological analysis of universal substances, given the concept of perfection and greatness, the quality of good and truth. Therefore, as far as universal substances are concerned, Anselm thus has a fully elaborated metaphysical theory. B. Goebel considers that from the point of view of contemporary nominalism, which considers the concept of universal substance, Anselm successfully falls into this current, because he also considers the divine substance. Anselm's universal theory, however, cannot be divided in two, based on a preconceived (anachronistic) division between a philosophical Anselm and a theological Anselm. In fact, there is no evidence in *Monologion* that Anselm relates to a single method (theological or philosophical), because theology is the systematic discourse on the divine, as Anselm conceives it in most of his works. Theology is thus a middle position between scholastic theology and logical philosophy. In the work *Monologion*, which is called "meditation on faith" (on the essence of the divine and the rational basis of faith), without resorting to the authority of the scriptures, Anselm lets the necessity of reason flow. Mr Goebel also considers that the argument put forward by Anselm is made up in its entirety, for a priori reasons, so that the truth has its convincing and sufficient clarity.

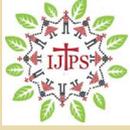
CONCLUSIONS

Given this analysis of Anselmian realism, we note that both Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy influenced both the Middle Ages and Anselmian philosophy, especially the term substance, ex nihilo, the reality of being in the mind and being in reality. Although, over time, Anselm was considered a supporter and defender of realism, B. Goebel believes that he did not consider the term divine being (ontologically), but metaphysically related to the being, taking over the term substance of the Aristotelian Categories.

The realistic metaphysics set forth in Anselm's argument attributes to God the following degrees of perfection such as, *supreme truth*, and the perfect being whose place and ontological task are taken from natural or rational theology. Platonic forms play an important role in Anselm's construction because Plato considers, like Anselm, that universals are real, although Plato considers ideal forms. Anselm considers ontological mediation in ephemeral metaphysics. Universals perform the function in the fact that the being itself is God (divinity). From this point of view, universals fulfill their function absolutely. Thus Anselmian realism was perfected in the modern period in the philosophy of Rene Descartes.

question What is it? Goebel, B, Anselm's Theory of Universal Reconsidered, Institute of Advanced Study, Volume 2, 2009, pp. 4. <http://web.dfc.unibo.it/buzzetti/SFMcorso2011-12lm/materiali/Goebel.pdf>

²⁹Righteousness currently has a sense of justice and sincerity. But here Anselm directs the dialectic of finding truth to the definition of "rectitude only perceptible to the mind" (*rectitudo mente sola perceptibilis*), and Thomas Aquinas includes this definition as that given to truth. And rectitude of the will (*rectitudo voluntatis*), problematized in the dialogue On the freedom of choice, has a role in delimiting the theories of will of the Franciscan theologians of the thirteenth centuries.



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