

## On Anselm's Argument and That Which Cannot Be Conceived<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** I intend to show in this paper that Anselm of Canterbury's argument "that than which nothing greater can be thought", rather than a definition, is the meaning of the name of God. According to the argument, by not carrying out the ascesis required to enter one's own mind and to withdraw it from anything other than God – a practice imposed by the very apophatic nature of the divine name –, the *insipiens* renounces the rationality of thinking. Thus, by not paying attention to the fact that the Anselmian discussion is presented in the form of a medieval *quaestio*, further commentaries to this text, and especially the contemporary ones, fail to show that, inspired by Augustine of Hippo, Anselm developed what himself purposely took as a philosophical program: to withdraw from the senses in order to turn to the intelligible, the "natural place for the contemplation of truth".

**Keywords:** Anselm, *Proslogion*, Apophatic Argument of God's Existence, The Intelligible.

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Anselm of Canterbury's argument on the existence of God can be paraphrased in a very simple way. Indeed, the author insists that its main characteristic is precisely the *simplicity* (although it is an uncomfortable tongue twister):

Let us say that God is "that than which nothing greater can be thought". Let us also say that we understood what was said. Therefore, we have in the intellect the apprehension of the expression "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" and it may be the case that we also have the comprehension of what this expression means. Thus, it will always be certain that at least the apprehension of the expression exists in our intellect. But if one also comes to understand what it means to say "that than which nothing greater can be thought", it will not be possible to think that as existing only in the intellect because, otherwise, it would not be "that than which nothing greater can be thought", since that existing in the intellect and existing outside it is greater than only existing in the intellect. Therefore, "that than which nothing greater can be thought" can only be thought as existing in the intellect and outside it. Insofar as God is "that than which nothing greater can be conceived", it seems that the conclusion is: *ergo*, God exists. That is it. Or almost.

Three initial observations. The first one is that the immediate sensation that it comes down to a random sophism is false. The argument is *formally* unassailable. Some of the best logicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century dwelt on several variants of the so-called "ontological argument", only to conclude that it indeed "works", and for our ends it is enough to invoke Kurt Gödel.<sup>2</sup>

The second one is that it can be *materially* refutable, let us put it this way, mainly if we focus on the conception of existence that it implies or if we dispute on the meaning of "greater". That was what all its critics did. From the first of them, from Anselm's time, a monk called Gaunilo, to contemporary philosophers, passing through, of course, Kant. A hypothetical Aristotelian reader, to whom "being is said in many ways", will say that that which is in our intellect exists in a different way than what exists outside the intellect. What is in our intellect can be in potentiality, what is outside it, in actuality. From the existence of what is in potentiality cannot derive the existence in actuality. The most widely known refutation, the one presented by Kant, reminds us that since "existence" is not an attribute, one cannot say that something that exists is *greater* than something that does not. In short, the argument is logically strong, but it seems metaphysically fragile (a judgment, let us not forget, with which Hegel disagreed and, according to Ruy Fausto, Marx as well<sup>3</sup> ...)

The third observation is that the argument, whose strength demands that thinking admits the existence of God, seems not to provide any conviction. Nobody has never begun to "believe in God" only because they had heard Anselm's argument. Now, it is very odd that an argument does not provide conviction.

This said, let us head to Anselm's exposition. As is well known, the designation of "ontological argument" is not his, but Kant's, and the argument has met the most varied avatars, in particular Descartes's and Leibniz's (it is Descartes whom Kant has in mind, not Anselm). When reading Anselm, we hope to show that his argument is not source of inspiration to Descartes, although both keep an unequivocal family feeling, not more – but also not less – than that.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. for instance Timossi, R. G., *Prove logiche dell'esistenza di Dio da Anselmo d'Aosta a Kurt Gödel. Storia critica degli argomenti ontologici*. Genova: Marietti, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Fausto, R., "Pressuposição e posição: dialética e significações 'obscuras'" in *Marx: lógica e política, II*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987, pp. 149-179. Marx will not say, of course, that God exists, but for him the structure of the ontological argument should still be valid since it is necessary to think categories that "pass" from what is thought to reality. Categories of the real, not concepts of the understanding. According to the author, the exemplary case is *value*, key to the comprehension of the weaving of the real in capitalist societies and that only this way is unraveled.

In Anselm's text the argument takes the second chapter of the *Proslogion*, a tiny book dedicated entirely to the argument:

Therefore, Lord, you who grant understanding to faith, grant that, insofar as you know it is useful for me, I may understand that you exist as we believe you exist, and that you are what we believe you to be. Now we believe that you are 'something than which nothing greater can be thought' [*aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit*]. So can it be that no such nature exists, since 'The fool has said in his heart. There is no God'? But when this same fool hears me say 'something than which nothing greater can be thought', he surely understands what he hears; and what he understands exists in his understanding, even if he does not understand that it exists [in reality]. For it is one thing for an object to exist in the understanding and quite another to understand that the object exists [in reality]. When a painter, for example, thinks out in advance what he is going to paint, he has it in his understanding, but he does not yet understand that it exists, since he has not yet painted it. But once he has painted it, he both has it in his understanding and understands that it exists because he has now painted it. So even the fool must admit that 'something than which nothing greater can be thought' exists at least in his understanding, since he understands this when he hears it, and whatever is understood exists in the understanding. And surely 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' cannot exist only in the understanding. For if it exists only in the understanding, it can be thought to exist in reality as well, which is greater. So if 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' exists only in the understanding, then 'the very thing than which a greater cannot be thought' is something than which a greater can be thought. But that is clearly impossible. Therefore, there is no doubt that both in the understanding and in reality 'something than which is not valid [*non valet*] that a greater is thought' exists<sup>4</sup>.

The translation of *aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit* is very hard. In other passages Anselm writes *id quo nihil maius*.<sup>5</sup> Instead of "something", usually employed, it is also referred as "that" (employed by us) or "this" which "nothing greater can be thought". What matters is that it is undetermined.

According to a commentator, the term *aliquid* would be used in Latin to translate the stoical Greek notion of *ti*, taken as "a gender superior to being, once it extends both to what is (to bodies, since only bodies are beings, *onta*) and to incorporals, which are beings (*onta*) and which distinguish themselves in four species: the void, the place, the time and [...] the *lekta*"<sup>6</sup>, (the *significations*, let us put it this way). Thus, "something" must be technically understood as encompassing all, without being mistaken with "being". Except for a better judgment, it is impossible to say this in Portuguese. The same repair must be done of other terms, in particular of the ones that derive from "intellect" and "intelligize".

Then we should note that the second chapter begins with a "therefore" (*ergo*): that is to say, "due to what was said before, then ...". But actually, one is not used to pay attention to the proem and to the first chapter because they sound like prayers – compassionate, indeed –, which are not very apt to attract the attention of philosophers and philosophy professors.

The exposition has the structure of the *quaestio*, that is, of a question in the medieval sense: given a certain question, it is answered "yes" or "no", *sic et non*. The title of chapter 2 is *Quod vere sit deus*: "That

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<sup>4</sup> Anselm, *Monologion and Proslogion*. Trans. by T. Williams. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996, p. 99, 100. (Modified and with our emphasis). "Ergo, domine, qui das fidei intellectum, da mihi, ut quantum scis expedire intelligam, quia es sicut credimus, et hoc es quod credimus. Et quidem credimus te esse aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit. An ergo e non est aliqua talis natura, quia 'dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est deus'? Sed certe ipse idem insipiens, cum audit hoc ipsum quod dico: 'aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari potest', intelligit quod audit; et quod intelligit in intellectu eius est, etiam si non intelligat illud esse. Aliud enim est rem esse in intellectu, aliud intelligere rem esse. Nam cum pictor praecogitat quae facturus est, habet quidem in intellectu, sed nondum intelligit esse quod nondum fecit. Cum vero iam pinxit, et habet in intellectu et intelligit esse quod iam fecit. Convincitur ergo etiam insipiens esse vel in intellectu aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest, quia hoc cum audit intelligit, et quidquid intelligitur in intellectu est. Et certe id quo maius cogitari nequit, non potest esse in solo intellectu. Si enim vel in solo intellectu est, potest cogitari esse et in re, quod maius est. Si ergo id quo maius cogitari non potest, est in solo intellectu: id ipsum quo maius cogitari non potest, est quo maius cogitari potest. Sed certe hoc esse non potest. Existit ergo procul dubio aliquid quo maius cogitari non valet, et in intellectu et in re". *Proslogion*, chapter II. *Quod vere sit deus in Anselmi Cantuariensis opera omnia*. Ed. F. S. Schmitt. Stuttgart, Frommann, 1984, I, Vol. 1, pp. 101-102.

<sup>5</sup> This occurs, for example, in chapter IV of the *Proslogion*, p. 104.

<sup>6</sup> De Mural, A., *Néoplatonisme et aristotélisme dans la métaphysique médiévale. Analogie, causalité, participation*. Paris: Vrin, 1995, p. 26.



God truly is”. Yes or no. First: “We indeed believe that You are ‘that than which nothing greater can be thought’”. Second: “Or would it be that there is no such nature because “the insipient said in his heart’: ‘there is no God’?”. One out of two: either God is “that than which nothing greater can be thought” (it will be demonstrated that it cannot be thought of as nonexistent) or “there is no God”.

As usual in the *quaestio*, the setting of the alternatives is anchored on “authorities”, i. e., on statements from authors whose stand is generally accepted. In the case of the argument they are an excerpt from Seneca, in whose work *Natural Questions*<sup>7</sup> Anselm finds the “definition” (with quotation marks because it indeed is not a definition) of God as “that than which nothing greater can be thought” and, in contraposition, nothing less than an excerpt from the *Bible*, in which is read “said the insipient in his heart: ‘there is no God’”. That is to say, in contrast to what one might expect, the “authority” – the quotation – that enables to state that God exists is of a philosopher, not a Christian, and the “authority” that enables to state that God does *not exist* is a biblical excerpt from *Psalms* 14 (or 13), repeated literally in *Psalms* 53 (or 52).

The text does not inform the origin of its “authorities”, but the second one is widely known by any contumacious reader of the *Bible*, and the quotation from Seneca seems to be known by the presumed reader. There is a catalogue dated from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century of the books of Bec Abbey – of which, as is well known, Anselm was an abbot and where he wrote the *Proslogion* before becoming archbishop of Canterbury –, in which is indeed included the reference to a copy of Seneca’s<sup>8</sup> *Natural Questions*, an author truly committed to translating to Latin the stoical Greek terminology.

The term “believe” in the expression “We in fact believe that You are ‘that than which nothing greater can be thought’” *does not refer* to the Christian faith – as may seem –, but to the philosophical “definition” (still with quotation marks) of a “pagan” (even if he is the most “Christian” amongst the “pagans”, to whom an apocryphal correspondence with Saint Paul is attributed<sup>9</sup>).

“That than which nothing greater can be thought” is not a definition because the expression is entirely *negative*; it refers to what “cannot be conceived”, therefore, it does not define. What seems to be predicated from the subject of the sentence is actually that it “*cannot be conceived*”.

But although the expression does not define, it designates. It is a designation of God, or if we prefer, a name of God<sup>10</sup>. That is, the *meaning* we give to the word “God”. When we say the word “God”, we intend to mean “that-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought”. One should think about the expression entirely linked with hyphens, as if it was a single word. After all, we do not know how to define “God” and we can refer to him in several ways (as with the word “Lord” from the beginning of the second chapter of the *Proslogion*). But the particular way proposed by Seneca has the advantage, over the others, of allowing us to think that if God is designated as “that-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought”, then given the analysis of this designation, he necessarily cannot be thought as nonexistent.

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<sup>7</sup> “Quid est Deus? [...] qua nihil majus cogitari potest”. Seneca, *Questions naturelles*. Texte et trad. par P. Oltramare. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1929, I, Præf., 13, 7.

<sup>8</sup> “Catalogus librorum Abbatiae Beccensis circa Saeculum Duodecesimum”, ed. F. Ravaisson in “Ad opera Lanfranci appendix”, PL, 150, cc. 769A-782C. Turnhout: Brepols, [1850] 1989. Although Marcia Colish, among others, understands that the manuscript referred to the Catalogue is posterior to Anselm’s time, it is important to note the literality of the expression collected by Anselmo. Cf. Colish, M. L., *The Stoic tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages. T. 1. Stoicism in classical Latin literature*. Leiden: Brill, 1990

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Berry, P., ed., *Correspondence between Paul and Seneca*, A.D. 61-65. Lewiston: Mellen, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> The expression is common, check for example Barth, K. *Faith in Search of Understanding: Fides quaerens intellectum*. Ohio: World Publishing Company, 1962.



As to the “insipient”, the *insipiens* from the text of the Latin Vulgate, generally translated in our versions of the *Bible* as the “insensate”, who says “in his heart: ‘there is no God’”, is a dual figure: it can be understood as much as “insipient” with an “s”, which means “ignorant” (the “insensate”), as with a “c”, “incipient”, which means “iniciant”, someone who does not know. The *insipiens* is not necessarily “insensate”: he can be the one who does not know and who, however, seeks to know. And he can be the one who refuses to know. One can play with both meanings: the *insipiens* does not know and it may as much be that he seeks to know and that he does not. In both cases, he is the one who does not know and says “there is no God”. As we will see, it is thanks to the *insipiens* that Anselm will be able to determine that his argument, instead of proving that God exists, proves negatively that God *cannot* be *thought* as nonexistent.

That is what the initial paragraph of chapter 3 of the *Proslogion* says (in fact, the argument is unfolded from chapter II to chapter IV, but it does not take more than three pages):

This being exists so truly that it cannot even be thought not to exist. For it is possible to think that ‘something exists that cannot be thought not to exist’, and such a being is greater than ‘one that can be thought not to exist’. Therefore, if ‘that than which a greater cannot be thought’ can be thought not to exist, then ‘that than which a greater cannot be thought is not that than which a greater cannot be thought’; and this is a contradiction. So ‘that than which a greater cannot even be thought’ exists so truly that it cannot be thought not to exist<sup>11</sup>.

The argument does not properly say “God exists”. It says: “God cannot be thought as nonexistent”<sup>12</sup>.

If the *insipiens* can “say in his heart”, that is, can think that God does not exist, it is because he does not know what the word “God” means, in other words, that it means “that-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought”. Provided that if he is “incipient”, with a “c”, he changes his mind and states that he thinks that God exists, but if he, otherwise, is “insipient”, with an “s”, then he renounces, willingly or not, to the rationality of thinking.

One should remember that we have said it was easy to *materially* refute the argument, but that it was virtually impossible to attack it *formally*. Not by coincidence, Anselm restricts it to the formal scope. He insists in not making any positive statement. As he will later say in the four lines of chapter XV: if we believe we are able to think “that-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought”, then this *is* precisely *not* “that-than-which-nothing-greater-could-be-thought”. God is *quiddam maius quam cogitari possit*: something greater than what could be thought<sup>13</sup>.

From that derives the misconduct of the first criticism – first, from the historical point of view – against Anselm’s argument. Gaunilo, monk at Marmoutier Abbey, writes a replica somewhat “in the insipient’s defense”, the *Pro insipiente*<sup>14</sup>, in which, after summarizing the argument, he denies its pertinence.

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<sup>11</sup> Anselm, *Monologion and Proslogion*. Trans. by T. Williams. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996, p. 100 (Our emphasis). “Quod utique sic vere est, ut nec cogitari possit non esse. Nam potest cogitari esse aliquid, quod non possit cogitari non esse; quod maius est quam quod non esse cogitari potest. Quare si id quo maius nequit cogitari, potest cogitari non esse: id ipsum quo maius cogitari nequit, non est id quo maius cogitari nequit; quod convenire non potest. Sic ergo vere est aliquid quo maius cogitari non potest, ut nec cogitari possit non esse”. *Proslogion*, chapter III. *Quod non possit cogitari non esse*, p. 102-103.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Gilson, É., “Sens et nature de l’argument de saint Anselme”, *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 1934, 9, pp. 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> “Ergo domine, non solum es quo maius cogitari nequit, sed es quiddam maius quam cogitari possit. Quoniam namque valet cogitari esse aliquid huiusmodi: si tu non es hoc ipsum, potest cogitari aliquid maius te; quod fieri nequit”. *Proslogion*, chapter XV. *Quod maior sit quam cogitari possit*, p. 112.

<sup>14</sup> *Gaunilonis quid ad haec respondeat quidam pro insipiente in Anselmi Cantuariensis opera omnia*. Ed. F. S. Schmitt. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann, 1984, I, Vol. 1, pp. 125-129.



The summary is brief: “Maybe the one who questions or denies existing such a nature ‘than which nothing greater can be thought’, provided that it is”, one says that its existence can be proved, since even the one who denies or questions such a nature already has it in the intelligence. Now, being only in the intellect is less than being in the intellect and outside it... etc. So Anselm’s argument would have as a necessary conclusion that “what is greater than all [*maius omnibus*], whose being in the intellect was already proved, would not be only in the intellect, but also in the thing [*in re*], insofar as, otherwise, it could not be greater than all”<sup>15</sup>.

However, it could be objected, says Gaunilo, that if it was sustained that what I understand exists in my intellect, it would, too, be the case of false affirmations, which I also understand. To prevent this from happening, one must distinguish between what can only be thought “when understanding, that is, comprehending through science that that exists by the thing itself”<sup>16</sup>, therefore, that it is true.

The example, given by Anselm, of the painter, who knows that it is different to think something before and after having performed what was thought, leaves aside, says Gaunilo, that the reality attributed to the work in the painter’s soul is different from the reality of the accomplished painting. And quoting Augustine, he reminds that what is in the artificer’s soul, as the accomplished work, “has no life” (it is an artifact)<sup>17</sup>.

Anselm’s argument is also denied by means of the reference to the “Lost Island”: it has all the imaginary qualities and is superior to all the others, it is unfortunate that one does not know or cannot know where it is<sup>18</sup>. One understands perfectly what was said when they describe it, but who would accept the conclusion that, provided that it has all the qualities, it also has to exist, otherwise it would not be superior to all the others, and that, however, one understands that it is. Thus, literally: “who would be more foolish, the one who sustained it or the one who believed in it?”<sup>19</sup> (incidentally, the debate between these two religious devotees is really acid). Gaunilo did only not go as far as to expressly say “the existence is not an attribute, therefore etc.”.

Gaunilo had already remarked that, as Anselm wants, “it cannot be thought that God does not exist”, so much argumentation is unnecessary, and he concludes by pointing out (through a reference to the so-called “Augustinian cogito”) that although one might say that one cannot think that the “greatest of all” (*maius omnibus*) does not exist, it so happens that, he says, I also “know, unequivocally, that I am, however, I know

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<sup>15</sup> “Dubitanti utrum sit vel neganti quod sit aliqua talis natura, *qua nihil maius cogitari possit*, [...] et ideo necesse est ut *maius omnibus*, quod esse iam probatum est in intellectu, non in solo intellectu sed et in re sit, quoniam aliter *maius omnibus* esse non poterit”. *Pro insipiente*, p. 125. Our emphasis.

<sup>16</sup> “Nisi forte tale illud constat esse, ut non eo modo, quo etiam falsa quaeque vel dubia, haberi possit in cogitatione, et ideo non dicor illud auditum cogitare vel in cogitatione habere, sed intelligere et in intellectu habere, quia scilicet non possim hoc aliter cogitare nisi intelligendo, id est scientia comprehendendo, re ipse illud existere”. *Pro insipiente*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>17</sup> “Unde nec illud exemplum de pictore picturam quam facturus est iam in intellectu habente, satis potest huic argumento congruere. Illa enim pictura antequam fiat in ipsa pictoris arte habetur, et tale quippiam in arte artificis alicuius nihil est aliud quam pars quaedam intelligentiae ipsius; quia et sicut sanctus Augustinus ait: ‘cum faber arcam facturus in opere, prius habet illam in arte; arca quae fit in opere non est vita, arca quae est in arte vita est, quia vivit anima artificis, in qua sunt ista omnia, antequam proferantur’ [*In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus*, I]. Ut quid enim in vivente artificis anima vita sunt ista, nisi quia nil sunt aliud quam scientia vel intelligentia animae ipsius?” *Pro insipiente*, p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> “Aiunt quidam alicubi oceani esse insulam, quam ex difficultate vel potius impossibilitate inveniendi quod non est, cognominant aliqui ‘perditam’, quamque fabulantur multo amplius quam de fortunatis insulis fertur, divitiarumque deliciarumque omnium inaestimabili ubertate pollere, nulloque possessore aut habitatore universis aliis quas incolunt homines terris possidendorum redundantia usquequaque praestare”. *Pro insipiente*, p. 128.

<sup>19</sup> “... ideo sic eam necesse est esse, quia nisi fuerit, quaecumque alia in re est terra, praestantior illa erit, ac sic ipsa iam a te praestantior intellecta praestantior non erit – si inquam per haec ille mihi velit astruere de insula illa quod vere sit ambigendum ultra non esse: aut iocari illum credam, aut nescio quem stultiozem debeam reputare, utrum me si ei concedam...”. *Pro insipiente*, p. 128.

I may not be”. Now, if I can think that this that I know so certainly (that I am) may not be, then “why would I not be able to do the same regarding any other thing that I know with the same certainty?”<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, last insult, he concedes that, though poorly argued, Anselm’s text is very edifying...

The five pages of Gaunilo’s *Pro insipiens* are, as Michel Corbin says, almost a catalogue of the future refutations of the argument, from Thomas Aquinas to Kant<sup>21</sup>.

The rejoinder is devastating (and violent – both texts play constantly with the figure of the *insipiens*, the fool, the idiot). I will not analyze in detail Anselm’s answer<sup>22</sup>, twice as long as Gaunilo’s text, and truly complex. There, Anselm extensively retraces Gaunilo’s argumentation and his own. But Gaunilo’s biggest mistake is that his pretense critical refutation is, as Anselm puts it, “that which I have never said”. In fact, Gaunilo begins with a reference to “that than which nothing greater can be thought”, only to move on immediately to that which is “greater than all”. And all his argumentation is structured in reference to the “greater than all”<sup>23</sup>.

“Agreeing” with Gaunilo, Anselm continues: now, even if it is possible to say that God is “the greatest nature that is”, it certainly does not imply that one must think that such a nature exists. Likewise, he concedes that the expression “greater than all (*omnibus maius*)” is similar to the one that refers to the “Lost Island”, with all its qualities (moreover, Anselm promises to hand it down to Gaunilo, officially, I believe... ). Finally, he even concedes that, indeed, *nothing* derives from these expressions<sup>24</sup>. That is true because both are positive: in one of them, God’s predicate is “the greatest nature that is”; in the other, the one from the Lost Island, “more fertile than all the other lands”. With regard to “that than which nothing greater could be thought” (*aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit*), nothing positive is predicated from that which is conceived, there is only the enunciation of a rule – “that than which nothing greater could be thought” only cannot be thought as nonexistent. Thus, the reference to the nonexistent things that can be thought is of little importance, as well as the difference between existing in thought and outside it, because “that than which nothing greater could be thought” does not receive any predication, either in thought or outside it – but from the comprehension of its enunciation necessarily results that it cannot be thought as nonexistent. Thereby, it is clear the difference between the reason why I can know, certainly, that I am, albeit I may not be, and knowing why God, “that than which nothing greater can be thought”, cannot be thought as non-being.

The reference to two historical poles of the criticism of the ontological argument, Thomas Aquinas’ and Kant’s, does not take into consideration the use these two philosophers make of the criticism. It only

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<sup>20</sup> “Cui cum deinceps asseritur tale esse maius illud, ut nec sola cogitatione valeat non esse, et hoc rursus non aliunde probatur, quam eo ipso quod aliter non erit omnibus maius [...]. Et me quoque esse certissime scio, sed et posse non esse nihilominus scio. Summum vero illud quod est, scilicet deus, et esse et non esse non posse indubitanter intelligo. Cogitare autem me non esse quamdiu esse certissime scio, nescio utrum possim. Sed si possum: cur non et quidquid aliud eadem certitudine scio?”. *Pro insipiente*, p. 129.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Corbin, ad *Pro insipiens*, nota a, p. 289. A true catalogue of the uses of the argument throughout History is presented in the almost 800 pages of the collection of articles published by Marco Olivetti, *L'argomento ontologico. The Ontological Argument. L'argument ontologique. Der ontologische Gottesbeweis*. Padova: CEDAM, 1990.

<sup>22</sup> Anselm, “Quid ad haec respondeat editor ipsius libelli [Responsio editoris]” in *Opera omnia*, 1984, I, vol. 1, pp. 130-139.

<sup>23</sup> “Primum, quod saepe repetis me dicere, quia quod est maius omnibus est in intellectu, si est in intellectu est et in re – aliter enim omnibus maius non esset omnibus maius –: nusquam in omnibus dictis meis invenitur talis probatio. Non enim idem valet quod dicitur ‘maius omnibus’ et ‘quo maius cogitari nequit’, ad probandum quia est in re quod dicitur”. *Responsio editoris*, p. 134. Our emphasis.

<sup>24</sup> “Fidens loquor, quia si quis invenerit mihi aut re ipsa aut sola cogitatione existens praeter ‘quo maius cogitari non possit’, cui aptare valeat connexionem huius meae argumentationis: inveniam et dabo illi perditam insulam amplius non perendam.” *Responsio editoris*, p. 133.

seeks to show that Anselm would probably reply to them that “they criticize what I did not say”. Moreover, the aim is not to dispute on the pertinence of these critiques. We can return to the remark, made in the beginning, that the argument does not produce any conviction.

To this end, let us first turn our attention to a passage of Anselm’s answer to Gaunilo that seems very enigmatic. Gaunilo’s text is presented as if the author vouched for the *insipiens*, and Anselm says that he will not reply to the *insipiens*, but to the *Catholic*, and that he will reply Catholically, calling, immediately below, for Gaunilo’s “faith and consciousness”<sup>25</sup>.

What surprises us is that the *Proslogion*’s proem promises to present “an argument which suffices in itself and which does not depend on any other”<sup>26</sup>. In his previous book, the *Monologion*, a chain of meditations on the divine essence – and that is explicitly referred in the *Proslogion*’s proem as its precedent –, Anselm says that his writings must “presume nothing from the authority of the *Scriptures*, but by means of arguments and plain discussion must show what is stated according to the necessity of reason and to the clarity of truth”<sup>27</sup>. “The necessity of reason” and “the clarity of truth” are emphatically in opposition to “the authority of the *Scripture*”. So what does this reference to “catholicity”, to Gaunilo’s “faith and consciousness”, mean? Particularly because in the answer to Gaunilo Anselm insists in the bourdon “what can be more logical than that?”. And, again, he does not make any reference to the *Scriptures* or to the Christian faith.

It is well known that one of the best contemporary commentators of Anselm’s work, the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, understands that “the proof of God’s existence”, as he says, is comprehensible only in the context of Anselm’s “theological program”<sup>28</sup>. “Theological”, not “philosophical”. Barth presents his reasons: Anselm himself says that before naming his text *Proslogion*, that is, “allocution” (in opposition to the previous work *Monologion*, in other words, “soliloquy”), he had named it precisely *Fides quaerens intellectum*<sup>29</sup>, “faith in search of the intellect”, the intelligence. And the first enunciation of the argument makes reference both to faith and to “what we believe”. Recalling:

Therefore, Lord, you who grant *understanding to faith*, grant that, insofar as you know it is useful for me, I may understand that you exist as we *believe* you exist, and that you are what we *believe* you to be. Now we *believe* that you are something than which nothing greater can be thought.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> “Quoniam non me reprehendit in his dictis ille ‘insipiens’, contra quem sum locutus in meo opusculo, sed quidam non insipiens et catholicus pro insipiente: sufficere mihi potest respondere catholico”. [...]. Ergo vero dico: Si ‘quo maius cogitari non potest’ non intelligitur vel cogitatur nec est in intellectu vel cogitatione: profecto deus aut non est quo maius cogitari non possit, aut non intelligitur vel cogitatur et non est in intellectu vel cogitatione. Quod quam falsum sit, fide et conscientia tua pro firmissimo utor argumento”. Anselm, op. cit., p. 130. Our emphasis. The pair *fide et conscientia* is a reference to the *First Letter of Paul to Timothy* (1, 19), according to which “without good conscience, faith shipwrecks”. Anselm, in the second version of the *Epistle on the Incarnation of the Word*, quoting the passage literally, explains that “good conscience” also refers to the solidity of wisdom and of “customs” (*morum et sapientiae gravitate*), without which “faith shipwrecks”. Cf. Anselm, “Epistola de incarnatione verbi, posterior recensio” in *Opera omnia*, 1984, II, vol. 2, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> “... unum argumentum, quod nullo alio ad se probandum quam se solo indigeret...”. *Proslogion, Prooemium*, p. 93.

<sup>27</sup> “... quatenus auctoritate scripturae penitus nihil in ea persuaderetur, sed quidquid per singulas investigationes finis assereret, id ita esse plano stilo et vulgaribus argumentis simplicique disputatione et rationis necessitas breviter cogeret et veritatis claritas patenter ostenderet.” Anselm, *Monologion, Prologus* in *Opera omnia*, 1984, I, vol. 1, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Barth, K., *Faith in Search of Understanding*, op. cit. For a classic opposing exposition, check Gilson’s article, already quoted, “Sens et nature de l’argument de saint Anselme”.

<sup>29</sup> “... unicuique suum dedi titulum, ut prius Exemplum meditandi de ratione fidei, et sequens Fides quaerens intellectum diceretur. [...]. *Proslogion, Prooemium*, p. 94.

<sup>30</sup> Anselm, *Monologion and Proslogion*. Trans. by T. Williams. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996, p. 99 (Our emphasis).

What Anselm's argument brings into play is "what we believe" about God. It is truth that it consists of an argument, not a proof. They are not the same thing. On the one hand, *argumentum est ratio rei dubiae faciens fidem* technically means "what provides faith in something doubtful". The definition is traditional and recurrent. Anselm knows it through Boethius' *De topicis differentiis*, a commentary of Cicero<sup>31</sup>. On the other hand, the very definition of the Christian "faith" is provided with reference to the *argument: fides enim est substantia sperandarum rerum, argumentum non apparentium*: "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the argument of things not seen" (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 11, 1). *Fides est argumentum non apparentium: "argumentum"* in Latin, "élenchos" in the original Greek.

The author of the *Epistle*, attributed to Paul, is more courageous and precise than the translators of the *Bible* normally are. In the King James Bible it says "evidence of things not seen"; in the *Jerusalem Bible*, "a means of demonstrating the reality of things not seen". Chouraqui's translation, despite the much-vaunted pretension of literality, does not hesitate in using "la preuve de ce qui n'est pas visible". João Ferreira de Almeida's old (revised) translation (revised) seems to be the most attentive one: "a convicção de fatos que não se vêem". In Portuguese, "convicção" seems to be more convenient than "evidence" or "a means of demonstrating", both excessively strong<sup>32</sup>.

The vacillations in the translation are highly understandable. Since at least the Middle Ages there has been the ones who have indicated the skeptic ("academic") trait of the comprehension of the "argument" rather as an "estimation", as Peter Abelard does in the following generation, as mentioned by his opponent William of Saint-Thierry<sup>33</sup>.

If we said above that Anselm's "argument" does not produce conviction, is because it, indeed, does not intend to transcend the title's boundary *Fides quaerens intellectum*, "faith in search of the intellect", the intelligence. Now, what does that mean?

Immediately before presenting the argument, in the last words of chapter I of the *Proslogion*, Anselm says "I do not seek to understand in order to believe, but I believe in order to understand. For I believe that "if you do not believe, you do not understand"<sup>34</sup>. Actually, this is one of Augustine's the most famous quotations. More precisely, from Augustine's *Bible*, for "if you do not believe, you do not understand" is a variant that Augustine reads in the book of *Isaiah* (Isa 7, 9).

For Augustine (and for the Augustinian Anselm), faith serves as a compass and as an engine with which reason can fulfil its nature, withdrawing from the sensible and turning to the intelligible. That is to say, in an openly platonic manner (probably referring to a passage from *Timaeus*, 29c-d, in which Plato uses "pistis",

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<sup>31</sup> Boethius, *De differentiis topicis*, I, PL, 64, col. 1174, apud Corbin, ad *Proslogion*, "Préambule", p. 229, footnote a. As Corbin says, loc. cit., in such conception, an argument is a proposition that enables choosing between the two parts of an alternative.

<sup>32</sup> A recent Portuguese version, from Frederico Lorenço (São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 2018), translates ὑπόστασις as "garantia" (guarantee) and ἐλεγχος as "certeza" (certainty): "Faith is the guarantee of things hoped for and the certainty of things not seen" ("Ἔστι δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἐλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων).

<sup>33</sup> "In primo limine theologiae suae [Abaelardo] fidem diffinivit aestimationem rerum non apparentium, nec sensibus corporis subjacentium, [...]. Absit enim ut hos fines habeat christiana fides, aestimationes scilicet, sive opiniones academicorum sint aestimationes istae, quorum sententia est nihil credere, nihil scire, sed omnia aestimare". Guillelmus to Sancto Theodorico, "Disputatio adversus Petrum Abaelardum" (PL 180, 249A-250A). Cf. *Opuscula adversus Petrum Abaelardum et de fide*. Ed. P. Verdeyen. Turnholt: Brepols, 2007, pp. 17-59. Pope Innocent III, a disciple of Abelard, tries a formulation of commitment, somewhat incongruous: *aestimatio certa*. Cf. Michauld-Quantin, P., "Aestimare et Aestimatio" in *Études sur le vocabulaire philosophique du Moyen Âge*. Roma: Ateneo, 1970, pp. 9-24.

<sup>34</sup> "Neque enim quaero intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam. Nam et hoc credo: quia 'nisi credidero, non intelligam'". *Proslogion*, chapter I. *Excitatio mentis ad contemplandum deum*, p. 100.



“faith”, in the following sense)<sup>35</sup>: one must initially *believe* in the supersensible in order to accomplish the ascesis, which moves us from the contemplation of the sensibles to the Idea, from the beautiful figures to the contemplation of the ideal Beauty.

Fortunately, there is a passage in which Augustine exemplarily clarifies his comprehension of the relation between faith and reason.

Consentius, Augustine’s correspondent, asks him for a doctrinal exposition “based *only on faith*, without resorting to complicated arguments from philosophers”. And due to a compelling reason: belief is accessible to all; reason, only to a few privileged ones. And as Consentius recalls, truth must be presented to all.

In his answer, Augustine says that Consentius’s request is mistaken because the aim is to clarify the dogmas of religion and that can only be accomplished *rationally*. And there could be no opposition between faith and reason, since we are, of course, rational. And Augustine delimits with precision the relation between both, faith and reason:

So, then, in some points that bear on the doctrine of salvation, which we are not yet able to grasp by reason – but we shall be able to sometime – let faith precede reason, and let the heart be cleansed by faith so as to receive and bear the great light of reason; this is indeed reasonable. Therefore the Prophet said with reason: ‘If you will not believe, you will not understand’ [Isa 7, 9].<sup>36</sup>

There is a relation of mutual complementarity between faith and reason, through which faith has the function of “purifying the soul” and propelling reason in a way that that in which one believes can be rationally understood: faith, although absolutely necessary, is only the starting point, the point of arrival is “the great reason”. Therefore: “believe in order to understand”.

Augustine says it is rational that faith purifies the heart so that it withstands the “light of great reason”. “Purifying the heart is not, as it may seem, only a moral imperative (it is also, but not only that), but it is essentially the progressive withdrawing from the sensible (“disconnecting from the commerce with the senses”) towards the soul’s interiority. We can only make a brief reference to this theme so frequently addressed by Augustine.

Only by turning ourselves to the inner soul is possible to know that which is more important to our knowledge, that is: “I have always estimated that these two matters, God and the soul, were the main ones amongst which have to be demonstrated ...”.

Back to the first chapter of the *Proslogion*, which we had set aside:

Come now, little man. Leave behind your concerns for a little while, and retreat for a short time from your restless thoughts. Cast off your burdens and cares; set aside your labor and toil. Just for a little while make room for God, and rest a while in him. ‘Enter into the chamber’ of your mind, shut out everything but God and whatever helps you to seek him, and seek him ‘behind closed doors’<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Agostinho, *A trindade*. Trad. A. Belmonte. São Paulo: Paulus, 1952; IV, xviii, § 24.

<sup>36</sup> Saint Augustine. *Letters, Volume II (83-130)*. Trans. by Sister Wilfrid Parsons. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, p. 302.

<sup>37</sup> Anselm, *Monologion and Proslogion*. Trans. by T. Williams. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996, p. 97 (modified). “Eia nunc, homuncio, fuge paululum occupationes tuas, absconde te modicum a tumultuosis cogitationibus tuis. Abice nunc onerosas curas, et postpone laboriosas distentiones tuas. Vaca aliquantulum deo, et requiesce aliquantulum in eo. ‘Intra in cubiculum’ mentis tuae, exclude omnia preter deum et quae te iuvent ad quaerendum eum, et ‘clauso ostio’ quaere eum”. *Proslogion*, chapter I. *Excitatio mentis ad contemplandum deum*, op. cit., p. 97.

That is, *quaerendum eum / quaere eum* (searching for him / searches for him), as in the expression *fides quaerens intellectum*. The purpose is not to examine this initial paragraph, only a few remarks are enough. For example, the *homuncio*, which I translated as “little man”, refers immediately to the first paragraph of Augustine’s *Confessions*, which begins with the statement that the one who intends to praise God, the *magnificent*, is a man, “this random fragment of his creation (*aliqua portio creaturae tuae*)”<sup>38</sup>. The expression “go into your room, close the door and pray” is a quotation from the *Gospel of Saint Matthew* (6,6).

Actually, we have not quoted more than the initial lines of a three-page text (the original brings no arrangement in paragraphs), invoking God and showing how and why such invocation is necessary to assert that “if I do not believe”, that is, if I do not know that I must withdraw from the “turmoil of the senses”, then “I do not comprehend”. The “therefore”, with which the exposition of the argument begins, makes reference precisely to that.

To the extent of what was said in chapter I, “locked in the cell of my mind” – *and only that way* –, it makes sense to present the argument (at least on this point Karl Barth is right).

Let us return to Gaunilo, the patron of all critics of the argument. What does he do? Not only does he criticize what Anselm did not say, but he also did not listen to what Anselm said. If the *insipiens* does not comprehend, if he does not bother to practice the previous asceticism to step into his own mind and to move it away from everything else that is not God, then he does not understand why it would not make sense to move from “that than which nothing greater could be *thought*” to the nature of the “greater than all”. The inner soul, where we find ourselves, only allows thinking. Such is the meaning of Anselm’s appeal to his reader’s “consciousness and faith”. An appeal that, without losing the program that limits the argument to the “necessity of reason” and to the “clarity of truth”, demands the *rational* role of faith as it is conceived by Augustine.

We can draw here on the wisdom of another great reader of Augustine (at least of *Augustinus* of Jansenius ...), Pascal, who in a famous passage on the “Augustinian cogito” reminds us that it does not matter whether Augustine’s and Descartes’ *words* are the same, because after all they are not thinking the same thing and no one has ever suspected that Augustine had established “a solid and reliable principle of a whole physics, as Descartes intended to do”<sup>39</sup>.

It is indeed possible to make a collage of Descartes’s quotations that practically say the same *words* as Anselm does (it is also possible to show the relations between the argument on God’s existence in the “Third Meditation” and Anselm’s argument<sup>40</sup>), but that does not mean that both were thinking the same. And the main difference is precisely that, according to Augustine, and in contrast to Descartes, Anselm was not interested either in physics or in the natural things.

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<sup>38</sup> Agostinho, *Confissões*, L. I, i, 1. Trans. by L. Mammì. São Paulo: Penguin / Companhia das Letras, 2017, p. 37.

<sup>39</sup> “I would like to ask unbiased people whether this principle: ‘Matter has a natural, invincible incapacity to think’ and whether this other: ‘I think, therefore I am’ are indeed the same in Descartes’s spirit and in Saint Augustine’s spirit, who said the same thing twelve centuries ago. Actually, I’m far from saying that Descartes is not their true author, even if he had taken them nowhere else but from the reading of this great saint, for I know how much of a difference there is between writing a word at random, without reflecting longer and more extensively on it, and realizing in this word a range of admirable consequences, which proves the distinction between the material nature and the spiritual nature, and making it a solid principle to a whole physics, as Descartes intended to do. For without examining whether he succeeded in his pretension, I assume he did, and it is in this assumption that I say that this word is so different in his writings from the word of others who said it *en passant*, as well as a man full of life and strength is different from a dead man.” Our translation. Pascal, *De l’esprit géométrique*. Œuvres. Ed. L. Brunschvicg. T. IX, pp. 284-285. Cf. Gouhier, H., *Cartésianisme et augustinisme au XVIIe siècle*. Paris: Vrin, 1978. Especially “Un texte célèbre de Pascal”, pp. 140-146.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Gilson, É., *Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien*. Paris, Vrin, 1967.



In other words, one should not expect, as in Descartes, a “Sixth Meditation” (which presents the reasons from which one can “infer the existence of the material things”): there is no reason to leave the “cell of the mind” and go back to the turmoil of sensible things. Once one enters the soul, what is left to want from the outside? Is it not the natural place, let us put it this way, of the rational souls the contemplation of truth, that is, of God?

Only the present *infralapsarian* state, posterior to the corruption of the human will, can impel us to that. A delicious anecdote from Augustine tells us of the attempt of his friend Alipius to only give in to his friends’ requests to join them in the circus (the old roman circus...) for the purpose of keeping his eyes closed in order not to take part in that abomination. Only to be seen, a few minutes later, wildly roaring along with the crowd<sup>41</sup>. In the present life, it is hard for us to remain in our inner souls, with the door closed to the senses. But only because we are distant from our nature.

That is why, even when one understands Anselm’s argument, it should not be expected that it “causes a great effect on the spirits”.

Anselm’s argument only works in its proper place, thinking. Both opposite positions are “I *think* that God is ‘that than which nothing greater can be conceived’” and “I *think* God does not exist”. The argument demonstrates that the second position cannot be thought without contradiction. Therefore, if I am not *insipiens*, that is, if I am rational, I know I *cannot think* that God does not exist and that God, without a doubt, exists both in the intellect and in reality (in the “thing”).

Let us quote the last sentence of the argument (and of chapter II of the *Proslogion*), which we have just evoked: *existit ergo procul dubio aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari non valit, et in intellectu et in re*.

Even if we put aside the shift, on the same page, from “nihil maius cogitari *possit*” to “nihil maius cogitari *non valit*”<sup>42</sup>; and the fact that Anselm is employing *existere*, not *esse* (“being”) to refer to God, it is still almost impossible to translate *res*. *Res* means “coisa” (thing) in Portuguese. Obviously, “reality” is a term derived from *res*: it means something like “coisidade” (thinghood). The difference in the sonority of the words only disguises our discomfort. Although Anselm sustains that God must be conceived as existing *outside* the intellect, he is not stating that one must think that God “exists” as a “thing” or that he exists in “reality”, as we refer to sensible or material things (if we simply continue reading the *Proslogion* we will be certain of it). That is why that which my rational mind now knows that cannot be thought of as nonexistent is only evident in the soul.

Indeed, the “cell of the mind behind closed doors” is a very claustrophobic image (even more if we keep the term “cell”, instead of modernizing the Latin word and translating it as “room”, which is the true meaning of “*cell*” in Latin, not “prison”, as it means to us). And let us not forget that to the Augustinians it is by entering the “cell of the mind” that the vast rooms of the “storehouse” or of the “palace of the memory” are uncovered, in which God’s inaccessible light, that allows us to see the *ideas*, can shine on us, to the extent of our strength, “by means of the participation that makes everything what it is, in the way it is”.

I still quote Augustine, to whom “one must not expect the truth from the senses”: the purified rational soul,

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<sup>41</sup>Agostinho, *Confissões*, L. VI, viii, 13, op. cit., pp. 155-156.

<sup>42</sup> The words “not valid” define the argument: what is not valid is to sustain that “that than which nothing greater can be thought” has to be/exist in the intellect, but not in reality.

illuminated by that intelligible light, sees the reasons in whose vision it finds supreme happiness, not through the eyes of the body, but through that principal eye in which it excels itself, that is, through its intelligence. Reasons which, as was said, is licit to call ideas [ ... and only] to a few is granted to see what is true<sup>43</sup>.

It seems clear that the background that justifies Anselm's argument is much more a specific "*philosophical* program" than a "theological" one, as Barth thinks.

The great philosophical master of Anselm's subsequent generation was Peter Abelard. Hegel's *History of Philosophy* attributes to "these great men", Anselm and Abelard, the elaboration of theology from philosophy. Anselm disputed directly with Abelard's first teacher, Roscelino de Compiègne, by attacking his "nominalism"<sup>44</sup>.

By inclining to an openly Aristotelizing philosophical option, Abelard seems to invert the Augustinian motto "believe in order to understand". As he says (and he stated that he knew Augustine very well), "one cannot believe without understanding" ("intelligizing", "comprehending"), and it is literally *ridiculous* to speak about that which neither the ones who listen nor the ones who teach can intelligize, comprehend<sup>45</sup>.

It is not surprising that, with the astounding rising tide of the Latin reception of Aristotle, Anselm's argument has a meager fortune during the Middle Ages, having to wait for another philosophical moment to blossom again.

Amongst the countless modern and contemporary references to the argument, I conclude reminding one that seems particularly sharp to me, from a philosopher quite out of fashion, though perhaps one of the most mandatory in these days:

"The reason cannot rest in sensuous things"; it can find contentment only when it penetrates to the highest, first necessary being, which can be an object to the reason alone. Why? Because with the conception of this being it first completes itself, because only in the idea of the highest nature is the highest nature of reason existent, the highest step of the thinking power attained: and it is a general truth, that we feel a blank, a void, a want in ourselves, and are consequently unhappy and unsatisfied, so long as we have not come to the last degree of a power, to that *quo nihil majus cogitari potest*,—so long as we cannot bring our inborn capacity for this or that art, this or that science, to the utmost proficiency. For only in the highest proficiency is art truly art; only in its highest degree is thought truly thought, reason. Only when thy thought is God dost thou truly think, rigorously speaking [ ... ] God, as a metaphysical being, is the intelligence satisfied in itself, or rather, conversely, the intelligence, satisfied in itself, thinking itself as the absolute being, is God as a metaphysical being<sup>46</sup>.

The quotation is from Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* and it seems to me that it expresses, with much competence, the essence of Anselm's argument. And as was already made explicit in Seneca's text, right after *nihil maius excogitari potest: Deus totus ratio est*.

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<sup>43</sup> Agostinho, "As ideias", trad. de M. Novaes, *Discurso*, São Paulo, 2010, v. 40, pp. 377-380. Our translation. The question *de ideis* is the question XLVI of Augustine's *Eighty-three diverse questions*. That one cannot expect the truth "from the corporal senses" ("Non est igitur exspectanda sinceritas veritates a sensibus corporis") is read in question IX of the same work. *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*. Ed. A. Mutzenbecher. Turnholt: Brepols, 1975, p. 16.

<sup>44</sup> Our translation. Cf. Anselmo, "Epistola de incarnatione verbi, posterior recensio" in *Opera omnia*, op. cit., II, vol. 2, pp. 1-35. Check, for instance, Parodi, M., e Rossini, M., a cura di, *Fra le due rupi. La logica della trinità nella discussione tra Roscellino, Anselmo e Abelardo*. Milano: Unicopli, 2000.

<sup>45</sup> "Nec credi posse aliquid nisi primitus intellectum, et ridiculosum esse aliquem aliis predicare quod nec ipse nec illi quos doceret intellectu capere possent". Abelard, *Historia calamitatum* in *The Letter Collection of Peter Abelard and Heloise*. Ed. D. E. Luscombe. Oxford: Clarendon, 2013, Ep. I, p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> Feuerbach, L. *The Essence of Christianity*. Trans. George Elliot. New York: Prometheus Books, 1989, pp. 36, 37.

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