

ABSTRACT

LE OPERE ANTIPELAGIANE DI AGOSTINO. ANALISI DOTTRINALE ED ESITI SPECULATIVI

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Since the end of the 19th century, the history of Augustinian historiography has been characterized by numerous and varying attempts to find breaking points in Augustine's philosophy and life, as well as strong interests about his intellectual development. The analyses of Augustine's writings against the Pelagians, with an emphasis on methodology refutation, is an efficient interpretative key of Augustine's intellectual and philosophical development.

This thesis is divided into two chapters, both dedicated to the analysis of Augustine's writings against the Pelagians, and also containing a short appendix in which consideration is given to the sermons delivered by Augustine in the early stages of the anti-Pelagian controversy. In the first chapter, *De peccatorum meritis et remission et de baptismo parvulorum*, written in order to refute the theories sustained by Pelagians and condemned by the Council of Carthage in 411, is analyzed. *De spiritu et littera* is then analyzed, explaining Augustine's perspective that the *impeccantia* is possible only by the implementation of Christ. The analysis of *De natura et grazia* follows, in which Augustine asserts, in agreement with what Pelagius wrote in his *De natura*, stating that human nature is good, but emphasizes that it is in need of God's grace in order to desire and act well and according to God's will. The analysis continues with *De perfectione iustitiae hominis*, composed to refute the *Definitiones ut dicitur Celestii*, a book in which Celestius proposes sixteen arguments in order to show that humans have the ability and must live without sin. *De gestis Pelagii* is then analyzed, a book in which Augustine examines and assesses the orthodoxy of Pelagius' defense, given during the Synod of Diospolis. The first chapter is concluded with the analysis of *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali*, where the important topics involved in the controversy against the Pelagians are summarized.

In the second chapter *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* is analyzed, a book in which Augustine distinguishes the evil of the concupiscence from the goodness of marriage. The analysis of *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum* follows, written to refute two Pelagian letters that circulated in Rome as propaganda. In conclusion, *Contra Iulianum* and *Contra secundam Iuliani responsionem*, *Opus imperfectum* are analyzed; they were composed to respectively disprove *Ad Turbantium* and *Ad Florum* of Julian of Eclano, where Augustine's doctrine of original sin is accused as Manichean.

In the appendix, Augustine's *Sermones* are analyzed; it is probable that these sermons against the rising Pelagian heresy were given before 411 or, in any case, before its official intervention in the Pelagian controversy.

This thesis shows that despite the undeniable evolution of Augustine's thoughts, which forced him to redefine some of his theological positions, the methodology outlined in *Dialogues* and adopted since his conversion to Christianity is not disqualified. According to that methodology, philosophical speculation must be triggered by God's calling and conducted by preceding faith to reason.