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The experience in the anthropology of Michel Meslin

THE EXPERIENCE IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF MICHEL MESLIN. RELIGIOUS ANTHROPOLOGY AS A PROPEDEUTIC TO THEOLOGY.

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Summary :

The starting point is Michel Meslin's synthesis of his research: religious anthropology is a "propaedeutic" or "necessary mediation" for "any theological reflection on the believing man". The aim of this research is therefore to identify the theological

implications of an approach to religious experience that seeks to build bridges between anthropology and theology. In this respect, Schleiermacher's theology of the "believing subject" is central, and the philosophy of becoming of Heraclitus of Ephesus is illuminating for considering experience.

Meslin also revisits the notion of religion from the perspective of the "sacred lived". Comparing his thinking with other highlights the unclarified debate between "religious experience" and historical Christian experience, at a time when some would like to see the end of religion (e.g. Daniel Dubuisson). We are also led into another debate, that concerning the notion of homo religiosus. In a critical dialogue with Julien Ries and with Mircea Eliade, M. Meslin refutes such a hypothesis, in which he sees an anthropomorphism that ignores itself and, above all, a dangerous stance for the validity of religious anthropology. This criticism can be extended by designating the theory of homo religiosus as a form of modalism.

Finally, while anthropology stops at a threshold that only faith can cross, this essay shows how and in what respect it can become a "propaedeutic" for theology, insofar as it listens to believers. As it unfolds in a unique "cognitive universe", where subjectivity and objectivity come together, taking religious experience into account calls into question certain theological options (e.g. the distinction between fides qua creditur and fides quae creditur) and ultimately raises the question of whether it is a "theological place

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Publié le October 3, 2023 – Mis à jour le October 4, 2023

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