

THEOLOGISCHE REVUE

116. Jahrgang

– April 2020 –

Subjekt und Wahrheit. Meister Eckharts dynamische Vermittlung von Philosophie, Offenbarungstheologie und Glaubenspraxis, hg. v. Martina ROESNER. – Leuven: Peeters 2018. 224 S. (Eckhart: Texts and Studies, 8), geb. € 78,00 ISBN: 978-90-429-3550-1

This volume, edited by Martina Roesner, has its origins in a meeting held in Vienna, whose aim was to elucidate various aspects of the “performative-dynamic dimension of Meister Eckhart’s thinking” (6). In this sense, the collection brings together contributions on Eckhart’s exegetical method, his thoughts on the relations between sciences, his project of transmitting truths, the reception of his ideas in the 19th century, and the use of his conceptual framework in contemporary biblical exegesis.

The first contribution, by C. Ströbele, shows how far Eckhart’s exegetical methodology derives from his reception of Maimonides, whose reflections on how to interpret the divine discourse are fundamentally assumed, albeit sometimes with modifications. This intersection of reception and innovation is explored in five aspects. In the first place, an interpretation of the Holy Scripture that connects “literal sense” and “true sense” is emphasized and it is shown to underpin Eckhart’s thesis of the concordance between theology, metaphysics, and praxis. Secondly, the author explores Eckhart’s favoured image of a seed of meaning that must be reached by breaking the shell in which it is found, a metaphor found in Maimonides that points to the distinction between a manifest and a hidden sense of the Scripture. It is then noted that behind the anthropological basis of Eckhart’s exegesis lies a philosophical psychology akin to that exposed by Maimonides, although it emphasizes the connection between human intellect and divine nature as a nexus of univocity. Next, the profile of Eckhart’s public is addressed. It seems that in this regard Eckhart’s distance from Maimonides’ apparently elitist position is considerable. Nevertheless, in contrast to that view, Ströbele points out that writings other than the *Dux neutrorum* were targeted at a large audience of non-specialists. Finally, Eckhart’s exegesis *ex naturalibus* is approached and considered with reference to Maimonides, thus making it clear that it emerges from a “relationship of correspondence” between the structures of nature and of theological discourse.

M. Roesner’s contribution shows how a theory of the subject marked by the notion of univocity is built on the basis of Eckhart’s thesis of the convergence between philosophy and theology. Indeed, it is the univocal relationship between God and human beings as intellectual subjects that allows for the different sciences to return to a common basis embodied in the idea of an “I” that is sheer spontaneity. To support her claim, Roesner focuses on the problem of the criteria against which revealed theology is considered to be a scientific discipline. She convincingly shows that Eckhart, reinterpreting the tradition, anchors the *ens inquantum ens*, subject-matter of metaphysics, to an “egology”; more specifically, he relates the notion of *ens nudum simpliciter et absolute* to that of the

“substance of God” and this, in turn, to that of an “I” that manifests itself as a thinking subject. This “I” is said univocally with respect to God and human beings, and it embodies the common nucleus of the diversity of sciences. This “I”, finally, this “point of indifference between God and man” (75), guides a certain type of existence, which grasps reality as a whole from its most profound origin.

At the heart of *F. Löser’s* contribution is the demand for transmitting the truths that one has come to grasp. In this sense, Eckhart’s understanding of the Dominican motto *contemplata aliis tradere* guides the investigation. With regard to the notion of contemplation, its relation to the idea of “reconnection to the innermost”, place of the truth and of the presence of God, is indicated, although it is stressed that the task of externalizing, of letting shine what has been learned by an intellectual (“*vernünftig*”) interiorization, is for Eckhart more important than that of retreating to divine interiority. The expression *aliis tradere*, in turn, raises two questions: one concerning the public of the message that emerges from the intellectual vision of God, through which all mediation is overcome and which perfectly identifies with the knowledge God has of himself; and another about the privileged method of transmitting that message. In this context, Löser emphasizes the amplitude of the Eckhartian public, formed by both literate and illiterate people, and, with respect to the method, he highlights the need for the use of parables, which arises from the unsurpassable distance that exists between our words and the contemplated truth.

In a thoroughly researched contribution, *A. Quero-Sánchez* examines the extent of F. W. J. Schelling’s knowledge of Eckhart and demonstrates that Schelling was influenced by Eckhart’s thought not just after the “turn” of 1806/09, but even before then, during the elaboration of the so-called “Philosophy of Identity”. That Schelling had knowledge of Eckhart’s writings after 1806/09 is established by, for instance, passages in the *Weltalter*, in which the ideas of freedom, of an immediate knowledge of God, and of the absolute as nothing are clearly indebted to Eckhart’s sermons. Similarly, the *Erlanger Vorlesung* of 1821 is marked by the influence of Eckhartian thought, for example, in the understanding of God as “nothing” and “something”, and in the idea of poverty with respect to everything. Quero-Sánchez’s claim that Eckhart’s influence can also be identified in texts prior to the “turn” is corroborated through an analysis of the *Würzburger System* of 1804, in which Schelling already uses notions that refer to Eckhart, such as, for example, in his identification between the ambits of the “real” and the “ideal”, which echoes Eckhart’s notion of “immediacy” (“*Unmittelbarkeit*”). This leads to the hypothesis that closes the text, namely that it is plausible to suggest that Schelling had had direct access to Eckhart’s writings already around 1806/10, meaning that reference to Eckhart’s thought is indispensable for adequately understanding Schelling’s early philosophy.

The last contribution, by *L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger*, marks an attempt to bring Eckhart’s *Book of Divine Consolation* closer to the *Book of Job*. The background to the attempt is a perspective on the relations between philosophy and religion according to which Eckhart’s attempt to bring these spheres closer together appears as a kind of exception amid a long history of estrangement. At the center of the study is the idea of a double sense of suffering: that of those who have chosen to distance themselves from God, and an allegedly, although not evident, “light and sweet” suffering of those whose sufferings are seen from the perspective of God’s will (184f). Having assumed this perspective, which is outlined in the *Book of Divine Consolation*, it would be possible to escape the aporias that confront the exegesis of Job’s journey. For example, it would become clear that Job’s sufferings do not derive from a detachment from God and that, in this sense, they cannot be overcome by any human consolation. Instead, divine consolation, based on the model of the union of man and God, must come

into play. This alone guarantees true consolation, although, I would point out, it is not entirely clear how exactly this answers the question of why there is undeserved suffering in the first place.

The multifaceted character of Meister Eckhart's thought is reflected in Roesner's edited collection, which competently addresses a range of sources, interlocutors, practices, and historical impacts of Eckhart's works. Yet, precisely because of its diverse profile, the volume could be said to lack a clear thematic thread, which would allow for greater and more direct dialogue and interaction between its various contributions. Two editorial observations: it is useful that each contribution has an abstract in English; it is unfortunate that no index of names, themes or passages is provided.

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