



Symbols, Myths and Religious Sense in Humans Since the First



Concept Note

This symposium aims to discuss the “neuronal” particularity of the human race (the genus Homo) which allowed it to reach a higher level of consciousness than the rest of the beings that preceded it; Man knows that he knows, and this reflection, in the proper sense of the word, immediately goes hand in hand with the need to take a step back from the “natural” world that surrounds him and believe in a “supernatural” world. The first Man and the first “Homo religiousus” are one and the same.

The symposium will be divided into four sessions, preceded by an introduction on the systematic and chronological position of the genus Homo and its genesis as we know them today.

The first session, on Archaeology, will examine the objects and signs collected from prehistoric sites, demonstrating the reality and antiquity of the distance taken by the gaze and thought of humans. This material testifies to the birth of the Symbol and of the Sacred. Panelists in this session will be scientists involved in the search for these signs, a search made less challenging by the appearance of the first graves and with the explosion of art, sculpted, painted and engraved.

The second session, on Ethnology, will focus on the diversity of the myths of contemporary populations, but also on their limits, a pale reflection of the wealth of beliefs that have flourished among the 100 billion humans who have populated the world since prehistoric times and during

the 3 million years of their history. Anthropologists who have collected this information in the field and reflected on its meaning have been invited to talk in this second session. After examining the “People from before”, it seemed important to us to question the “People from here and elsewhere”, as time and space have been sources of great diversity.

The third session, on Biology, will look at the application to Man, a living being, of the knowledge of the evolutionary history of life and subsequent interpretation of the cognitive, technical, intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic and ethical aspects of the human race, what we call Hominisation... The invited speakers in this session are of course scientists, naturalists, anatomists and physiologists.

The intention of fourth session, on Philosophy, is to define the meaning of ‘religious sense’ and what it represents and entails. The theologians gathered for the symposium will propose, on the basis of the conclusions of the first three sessions, a primarily rational definition of this characteristic of Man, as well as a spiritual conviction of his sense for religion. The final conclusions will come from them.