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## Jacques Merleau-Ponty, a pioneer of a historical-philosophical approach to cosmology

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Jacques Merleau-Ponty (1916-2002) was a French philosopher and historian of science, professor of epistemology at the University of Paris X-Nanterre since 1967, for years president of the French Philosophical Society, and a great supporter of the dialogue between philosophy, history and science. Attracted from physics from his early studies, he, on the advice of his more famous cousin Maurice, turned to philosophy to face the physics revolutions of the twentieth century, entering, in particular, the school of science which in the 1950s was the newest and challenging: relativistic cosmology. And he did it in 1965 with a book born from his doctoral thesis: *Cosmologie du XXe siècle. Étude épistémologique et historique des théories de la cosmologie contemporaine*. In this text, of rare and elegant historical-scientific-philosophical competence, the most recent cosmological hypotheses dialogue in a masterly way with philosophical thought, in an authentic exchange, focusing on the epistemological status of this peculiar science, on the methodologies of its protagonists, on the ontological consequences of its concepts. Unfortunately, this text has not received the deserved international recognition, perhaps due to some unfortunate editorial contingency, since it has never been translated into English, but only in Italian and Spanish. Actually, much of his most recent work (on the history of physics and astronomy as well) has remained confined to the French sphere. This is a serious shortcoming for a field of research that, by its nature, requires a deep historical-philosophical understanding, which is often lacking. I think we should recover this scholar.

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