

IN MEMORIAM
MARIA ROSA ANTOGNAZZA
(10.IX.1964–28.III.2023)*

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CONCEPTS HAVE HISTORY

Maria Rosa Antognazza passed away after a short illness on 28 March 2023. An internationally renowned historian of philosophy, Antognazza was born on 10 September 1964, in Tradate, Province of Varese, Lombardy. After attending primary school at Venegono Inferiore,¹ she completed her secondary education at the « Istituto Magistrale » (i.e., a primary teachers' training college) in Tradate. Barely eighteen, Antognazza took up tenure as a schoolteacher at Castiglione Olona, less than 3 km away from the family home as the crow flies. Never one to sit on her laurels, while continuing to work at Castiglione Olona (1982–1986), the primary school teacher decided to study philosophy in Milan, at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore.

* The authors would like to thank professors Letizia Antognazza, Howard Hotson, Elena Rapetti, and Maria Grazia Zaccone Sina for their generous assistance in writing this obituary.

¹ Maria Rosa Antognazza first attended the « Gambassi » State Primary School (until the end of the third grade) and then moved on to the « A. Manzoni » State Primary School (fourth and fifth grades). She subsequently spent three years at the « E. Fermi » Middle School, also in Venegono Inferiore (Province of Varese).

The choice of *la Cattolica* for studying philosophy deserves a gloss, especially in the case of students for whom this was not a default choice. Such a choice would have certainly depended in part on personal motivations, which differed from case to case, but it also implied an objective predilection for the fields of studies undertaken. Comparing the academic study programmes in Milan in the early 1980s, one immediately notices how profoundly they diverged between the two universities where philosophy was taught. Far less flexible than the one offered at the State University (*la Statale*), the curriculum at the Catholic University was marked by a set of foundation courses of considerable breadth – with an eponymous compulsory course called « Institutions of Philosophy » –,² mostly anchored in the close reading of classical texts from the Western canon. This was an approach rooted in Sofia Vanni Rovighi’s long-standing and profound teaching, to which – as has been acutely noted –³ Maria Rosa Antognazza would remain loyal and grateful until her last hour.⁴ At the Università Cattolica, Antognazza wrote her master’s dissertation (*tesi di laurea*, which in terms of commitment, engagement with scholarly literature, and length could rival a PhD thesis of today) under the supervision of Giuseppe Cristaldi, then professor of Philosophy of Religion. She successfully defended it on 10 October 1988, graduating *summa cum laude*. Antognazza’s thesis tackled the relationship between Christology and dialectics in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s early theological writings.⁵ What immediately

² In the years when Antognazza was a student, the syllabus of the « Istituzioni di filosofia » course included the reading, from cover to cover, of Aristotle (viz. *Metaphysica*) and Aquinas (viz. *De ente et essentia*), as well as the study of SOFIA VANNI ROVIGHI, *Elementi di filosofia*, 3 vols., La Scuola, Brescia 1963–1964. The three dense volumes of this ‘initiation’ to philosophy cover « Logic and Theory of Knowledge » (vol. I), « Metaphysics » (vol. II) and « Nature and the Human Being: Natural Philosophy, Psychology, and Ethics » (vol. III). For an interesting, critical appraisal of this successful work, see GUSTAVO BONTADINI, « Gli ‘Elementi di Filosofia’ di Sofia Vanni Rovighi », *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 70 (1978), p. 303–308.

³ See ELENA RAPETTI, « Sull’utilità della storia della filosofia per la filosofia: in memoria di Maria Rosa Antognazza », *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 115 (2023), p. 479–482.

⁴ On Professor Vanni Rovighi’s teaching, see also MARIO SINA (ed.), *‘Sapientiae studium’. La giornata operosa di Sofia Vanni Rovighi (1908–1990)*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1994 (« Scienze filosofiche », 57).

⁵ The typescript of Antognazza’s « tesi di laurea », a work of 400 pages, is available for consultation at the Library of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, in Milan (shelfmark: T.44599). The full title reads: *Rapporto tra Cristologia e Dialettica negli Scritti teologici giovanili di Hegel. Annotazioni semantico-ermeneutiche*. After an introductory section (p. I–XI: « Introduzione », « Note sul metodo seguito », and « Avvertenza »), the thesis unfolds in four chapters devoted to a commented close reading of all the theological writings of the young Hegel, as edited by Herman Nohl (Tübingen 1907). Chapter 5, « L’incontro-scontro del giovane Hegel con Cristo », encapsulates the conclusions of the painstaking exegetical work and proposes the results of the whole investigation. A point of note is the distinction between *de facto* Hegelianism vs. « Hegelianism of intention » (p. 388–389) according to an articulation that had been developed by the more recent and sophisticated research on Hegel’s Christology in the 70s and early 80s, such as Wilhelm Klein and Hans Küng’s. Chapter 5 (p. 324–389) displays remarkable philosophical maturity in the sophistication with which secondary literature is referred to and engaged with, viz., in a positive

strikes the reader is Antognazza's early predilection for both close reading of philosophical sources and for their sober, well-balanced contextualization. Her solid philosophical as well as theological education emerges consistently throughout: for instance, when she deals with the disambiguation of conceptual analysis, she recalls first-hand Gottlob Frege (p. IV). The multi-column table compiled on p. 363 and devoted to the use of key terms such as 'Faith', 'Christ' and 'Jesus' – the latter terms were normally regarded as synonymous, or nearly so, by much of the specialized literature (e.g., Enrico De Negri, Jean Hyppolite, Massimo Borghesi, Bernard Bourgois, etc.) – is particularly significant of the young Antognazza's fastidiously precise exegesis.⁶ There is not even the faintest shadow of flat paraphrasing in this early work of hers: « An attempt was made to examine the text directly, » she warns, « so that what Hegel did not say explicitly, but which may be read between the lines, would come to light » (p. x).

The taste for research had been awakened in the young woman. Antognazza soon applied for a doctoral scholarship funded by the Catholic University. The competition comprised a written examination on a subject chosen by lot, followed by an oral test to which only those who would have achieved the highest marks in the written component were admitted. She had no academic sponsors at the time, but her written examination attracted the attention of one of the members of the selection committee, Professor Mario Sina, who was struck by the student's lucid and precise prose, the clarity of argument, and the finesse of the short essay's

yet never mimetic manner. For the chronology of Hegelian writings, already debated by Dilthey and Nohl, Antognazza followed GISELA SCHÜLER, « Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jugendschriften », *Hegel Studien*, 11 (1963), p. 111–159. A quick glance at the « Bibliografia » (p. 390–400) shows the author's profound knowledge of Hegel's writings, read in German or in any case compared to the original text; sixteen entries related to 18th and 19th century philosophy in general are listed, while the specialist literature in the field of the thesis's subject-matter amounts to no less than 70 entries. The use of Piero Coda's then newly published book *Il negativo e la Trinità* (Rome 1987) may appear as an obvious choice, but Antognazza shows also first-hand knowledge of earlier literature, e.g. see her careful engagement with Wolf-Dieter March's *Gegenwart Christi in der Gesellschaft* (Munich 1965). Last but not least, the author also draws upon two important book reviews by SOFIA VANNI ROVIGHI, namely « Intorno al primo Hegel », *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 52 (1960), p. 73–77, and « Hegel e il Cristianesimo in un libro recente di Hans Küng », *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 64 (1972), p. 76–84. Antognazza's personal copy of her dissertation is kept by Professor Hotson, Maria Rosa's husband. Since she had prepared for her *viva voce* examination using this copy, its pages are peppered with meticulous marginalia, underlining, highlighting, and other annotations. As indirect evidence of the equivalence between the « tesi di laurea » in those years and a current PhD dissertation, one need only think of Umberto Eco's witty *How to Write a Thesis* (Milan 1977, first translated into English in 2015): though intended for a master's thesis, it is nowadays commonly used as a guide for writing a doctoral dissertation.

⁶ On p. IV, she writes: « We have tried to stick as closely as possible to the texts by directly interrogating the expressions used by Hegel in speaking of the person of Jesus. [...] It would be a matter here of ascertaining the weight assumed in the Hegelian writings by the different sense with which the two names *Jesus* and *Christ* denote the same 'object' » (our translation).

outline. An expert in modern philosophy, Sina perceptively sensed in the young woman the makings of a researcher: he decided to support her by offering her the opportunity to work under his supervision. Under Sina's learned guidance, Antognazza began to work on the problem of the Trinity in Leibniz, a topic that was neither easy nor conventional. As she would later often say: « I did not choose Leibniz, Leibniz chose me ».

The magnificent Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel, where Leibniz had been librarian, marked a further stage of Antognazza's *peregrinatio academica*. In 1993, only a few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, she carried out a period of research in that tiny German village located on the far edge of the former Federal Republic. There she further investigated the subject of Trinitarian controversies in relation to Leibniz's unpublished manuscripts preserved at the Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek in Hannover. Among her earlier publications, in 1991 Antognazza had already published an article on some unpublished Leibnizian controversies on the Trinity.⁷ The opening paragraph of this article encompassed *in nuce* the vast research programme Antognazza would undertake and accomplish over the following two decades: « The Leibnizian texts presented here are connected to the lively Trinitarian discussions that swept through Europe in the 17th century following the spread of Socinian Anti-trinitarianism. Originating on the theological terrain, these discussions became closely intertwined with philosophical problems, such as the relationship between faith and reason, the debate on the scope of the principle of non-contradiction, the reflection on the limits of the human intellect, the value and meaning of analogy; the legitimacy of the use of the concepts of 'nature', 'substance', and 'person', [and] the clarification of the concept of 'relationship' ». These considerations served as the cue for two noteworthy historical-speculative essays on Leibniz and the concept of person,⁸ and for Antognazza's first original monograph a couple of years later.⁹ The unconventional angle from which she investigated Leibniz's

⁷ MARIA ROSA ANTOGNAZZA, « Inediti leibniziani sulle polemiche trinitarie », *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 83 (1991), p. 525–550. After a dense and sober introduction (p. 525–534), the edition of previously unpublished (or incompletely edited) notes by Leibniz follows at p. 535–550.

⁸ Cf. MARIA ROSA ANTOGNAZZA, « Leibniz e il concetto di persona nelle polemiche trinitarie inglesi », in VIRGILIO MELCHIORRE (ed.), *L'idea di persona*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1996, p. 207–237. In the same year, Antognazza published another substantial article « Hofmann-Streit: il dibattito sul rapporto tra filosofia e teologia all'Università di Helmstedt », *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 88 (1996), p. 390–420.

⁹ MARIA ROSA ANTOGNAZZA, *Trinità e Incarnazione: il rapporto tra filosofia e teologia rivelata nel pensiero di Leibniz*, Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1999 (xi–419 pp.); translated into English as ID., *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation: Reason and Revelation in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. GERALD PARKS, Yale UP, New Haven 2007. One should recall another important publication from the *annus mirabilis* 1999: MARIA ROSA ANTOGNAZZA, HOWARD HOTSON (eds.), *Alsted and Leibniz on God, the Magistrate and the Millennium*, Texts edited with introduction and commentary, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 1999 (Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung). Antognazza and Hotson had found a

oeuvre enabled her to open an untrodden path in relation to the German philosopher, who emerges as « neither a *proto-Deist* » who subordinates revelation to reason, « nor a Reformed epistemologist *ante litteram* ». ¹⁰ Let's rewind the film of her life for a moment.

It was the prospect of setting up a family with her husband Howard Hotson that led Maria Rosa Antognazza to move to Aberdeen in 1994. Relocating to a place with which she had no connection, she faced the challenges of having to learn English almost from scratch and the uncertainty of whether she would be able to progress in her career. The distance between the city that is home to the third oldest university of Scotland and the Italian region of Lombardy where she was born and studied was more than merely geographical. The prevalent philosophical culture in the English-speaking world was far removed from – and in many ways at variance with – the more historically-informed tradition in which she had been steeped as a young scholar. Not everyone would have had the patience, determination, and acumen to turn such barriers into opportunities. And yet it was in the 'city of granite' that Maria Rosa Antognazza first left her scholarly mark as a researcher and a lecturer.

Having successfully managed a demanding linguistic and climatic adaptation, all while learning the ropes of motherhood,¹¹ Antognazza joined Aberdeen's Department of Philosophy as a Research Fellow in 1996. The following year she remained there as the recipient of a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship. She was tasked with taking the lead of the Reid Project, a major research initiative intended to organise and promote scholarship around the manuscripts and works of a foremost figure of the Scottish Enlightenment, Thomas Reid, who had lectured at Aberdeen's King's College in the mid-18th century. The project, under the auspices of the then Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy, Gordon Graham, would grow into the Centre for the Study of Scottish Philosophy (now the Institute for the Study of Scottish Philosophy). Researchers from across the globe participated in the work of the Reid Project, giving Antognazza the opportunity to interact with many established and upcoming philosophers, historians of philosophy and intellectual historians. The work of the young and brilliant scholar did not go unnoticed at her home institution, for in 2000 she was appointed to a permanent

volume containing four works by Johann Heinrich Alsted, which included handwritten underlining and *marginalia* by Leibniz himself. As a reviewer (John Christian Laursen) promptly stressed, what one learns from Leibniz's underlining in the passages on God is precisely the « confirmation of the importance to him of the polemics between Socinians (antitrinitarians) and trinitarians ».

¹⁰ MARIA ROSA ANTOGNAZZA, « Faith and Reason », in EAD. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Leibniz*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2018, p. 718.

¹¹ On how Antognazza united the identities of mother and philosopher, see the poignant essay by CLARE MARIE MORIARTY, « Philosophia », in *The Philosophers' Magazine* (20 June 2023) URL: <https://www.philosophersmag.com/essays/316-philosophia>.

lectureship at Aberdeen. Based initially at the Old Brewery that housed the Department of Philosophy, she taught the whole range of history of philosophy courses from Plato and Aristotle to Nietzsche and Existentialism, and of course the classical anglophone « Descartes to Kant » modern philosophy courses. During this time, she also taught a course on a line of research that she would never abandon: « Philosophy, Science and Belief ». The relationship between faith and reason, belief and knowledge, and philosophy and theology would remain a cornerstone in Antognazza's philosophy, one which would intersect closely with her work on her philosopher of choice, Leibniz.

In 1999, Antognazza published her first book, based on her doctoral work mentioned above and entitled *Trinità e Incarnazione: il rapporto tra filosofia e teologia rivelata nel pensiero di Leibniz*.¹² Leibniz's trinitarian doctrine and other aspects of his theology were discussed in several articles she published during her Aberdeen years, steadily raising her international profile as a specialist of Leibniz. Antognazza's writings at this stage of her career contained the nucleus of the ideas she would develop in later years, a scholarly agenda of sorts, and one to which she would remain rigorously and innovatively committed.

In 2003, as she was about to become a mother for the third time, Antognazza was appointed to a lectureship at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, King's College London. Over less than a decade, she would be promoted to Reader and Professor. Having moved to the Department of Philosophy, she served as its Head for the academic years 2011–12 and 2014–15. At the Strand Campus she taught a course on Spinoza and Leibniz, but both her undergraduate and postgraduate teaching shifted significantly to philosophical theology, the philosophy of religion, and epistemology. Former students testify to the effort she put into producing lecture notes that were at once comprehensive and propaedeutic, as well as to the humanity with which she approached philosophical concepts, and the clarity of her explanations. Graduate students who were privileged to have had her as their mentor or supervisor remember her as a *Doktormutter* in the most maternal sense of the term: she would never discuss a student's work without having first read and annotated their work, she would see to their wellbeing as well as to their academic formation, she was as gentle and kind as she was rigorous and exacting. On the example of 'her' Leibniz, she would commit seriously to the minutest of tasks as part of the pursuit for something bigger.

Antognazza's *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge UP, Cambridge 2009) stands out as both a masterpiece in the genre of intellectual biography and, *tout court*, the most incisive and expansive treatment of Leibniz's life, thought and works published to date. This book earned her the Pfizer Award (2010) from the

¹² See n. 10 above.

History of Science Society. Drawing on her own extensive research as well as the most recent directions in research on the German philosopher, Antognazza succeeded in the arduous task of recasting Leibniz scholarship by combining historical precision and context with the breadth and depth of his theoretical and practical endeavours. No work on Leibniz has ever captured so intelligibly the unitary character of his thought and works, thus challenging the long-standing fragmentation of his philosophy into unrelated and ostensibly dichotomous parts. As she herself notes in the Introduction, Bertrand Russell and others after him had insisted on putting forward dualistic and reductionist accounts of Leibniz, often depending on their own philosophical standpoints and with little respect for the context of his works and the harmony among them. Imposing anachronisms and partial appropriations on a figure who was « supremely capable of seeing the harmonies underlying seeming antitheses » is problematic from a methodological viewpoint and, more significantly, skewed at the level of interpretation. In Antognazza's work, which reminds the reader of the poignant motto Leibniz gave to the Society of Sciences of Berlin, *Theoria cum Praxi*, the truly harmonious Leibniz comes to the fore most forcefully in the unity of his theoretical and practical pursuits. To lose sight of this unity is to risk misinterpreting and misrepresenting the philosopher. It is also in consideration of the extent of Russell's pervading legacy throughout a century of Leibniz anglophone scholarship that Antognazza's work shines like a beacon for current and future scholarship.

Through and throughout her work on Leibniz, Maria Rosa Antognazza provides cues, reflections, and arguments for what she really considered to be the proper relationship between philosophy and its history. This was the subject she chose to speak about, programmatically, at her Inaugural Lecture at King's College London on 27 November 2013. A revised version of it was later published as « The Benefit to Philosophy of the Study of its History », ¹³ an article that has become a standard feature in many course bibliographies around the world. Going beyond the justification that engaging with the history of philosophy is a way of doing philosophy, Antognazza here argues that the history of philosophy trains us to think alternatively, « outside the box of current philosophical orthodoxies ». Here too, she takes to task Russell's dualistic approach by rejecting his characterisation of what is « mainly philosophical » and « mainly historical » as independent approaches to philosophy (he discards the latter). Antognazza, on the other hand, argued that « the history of philosophy should be both a kind of history and a kind of philosophy », and illustrates how this is so by drawing on three case studies from epistemology, metaphysics, and the historiography of philosophy. The « long, broad, and deep conversation » of philosophy with its history is the best way,

¹³ MARIA ROSA ANTOGNAZZA, « The Benefit to Philosophy of the Study of its History », *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 23/1 (2015), p. 161-184.

she insists, to ward off all-too-common tendencies towards « antiquarianism » and « anachronism ». This is an important aspect of what she describes as the « subversive potential » of the history of philosophy, for by challenging philosophical ‘dogmas’ that condition the reception of, or impose themselves on, past ideas, our engagement with the history of philosophy is carrying out a quintessentially philosophical activity. Moreover, just like the unitary understanding of Leibniz, the benefit the study of its history brings to Philosophy is never purely theoretical. Antognazza’s own engagement with philosophy and (its) history manifests in a most eminent manner how and why the history of philosophy is as practical a discipline as it is theoretical.

Appearing in print almost a decade after the publication of her monumental *Leibniz*, the *Oxford Handbook of Leibniz* (Oxford UP, Oxford 2018), edited by Antognazza, is equally indispensable as a starting point for anyone interested in the philosopher, be they an undergraduate student or a seasoned specialist. Forty-two chapters make up the 800 pages of this encyclopaedic work, organised along eight parts covering practically all the main areas of the polymath’s output. Antognazza’s constant and heightened interest in Leibniz’s theological thought is markedly evident. Aside from a chapter on « Leibniz as Historian » (Ch. 33), she authored the Handbook’s last three chapters, under Part VIII on Natural and Revealed Religion. The themes are as much about Leibniz as they reflect Antognazza’s philosophical interest in and beyond him: « Faith and Reason » (Ch. 40); « Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrines » (Ch. 41), and « Ecclesiology, Ecumenism and Toleration » (Ch. 42).

A crowning moment in Antognazza’s career was celebrated on 14 November 2016. As *Leibniz-Professorin*, or holder of the Leibniz Professorship in Leipzig, she delivered in his birthplace the lecture marking the 300th anniversary of the philosopher’s death. On that occasion, she returned to the themes in Leibniz’s thought that were closest to her heart, noting how his properly theological concerns had been underestimated. She linked this omission to the kind of historiography that drew an equivalence between inevitable progress and irresistible secularization. It is only against the background of Leibniz’s epistemologically grounded, pragmatic understanding of theology, which leads to the love of God and thus to salvation (which for him was eternal happiness), that his pragmatic politics could be properly understood. Placing his approach to theology as praxis alongside the prudential approaches to religious belief followed by Pascal and others, Antognazza, once again rejecting false dichotomies and challenging established ‘dogmas’, argues that this kind of pragmatic theology is neither in conflict nor in competition with explorations of a theoretical nature. Leibniz’s view of the advancement of knowledge and the sciences, she insisted, was that this represented the highest celebration of the glory of God and his creation, because such advancement led to the improvement of the human condition and

hence to sustain human wellbeing. Here and elsewhere in her works on Leibniz, Antognazza shows how Leibniz's thought is always *ad altiora* and *ad maiora*, not in a formally metaphysical sense but above all in terms of truth and purpose.

During the academic year 2019–2020, Antognazza was awarded the *Mind* Senior Research Fellowship to work on her book-project «Thinking with Assent: Renewing a Traditional Account of Knowledge and Belief». Displaying heroic tenacity and dedication, she devoted herself, until the very last days of her life, to the revision of the book *Thinking with Assent*.¹⁴

This forthcoming publication possibly constitutes Maria Rosa Antognazza's most ambitious and comprehensive philosophical endeavour and, in a way, brings to an original and unified conclusion the threads of her entire philosophical efforts. She was likely inspired by Timothy Williamson's *Knowledge and its limits* (Oxford 2000), which argues for a new «epistemology of knowledge» that should reject the 20th century's «analytical orthodoxy» according to which belief conceptually precedes knowledge. With the benefit of Williamson's insight and making good use of her familiarity with pre-modern philosophical analyses, Antognazza aims to push the «revolt against post-Gettier epistemology»¹⁵ further, in a truly radical manner. Despite differences and variances within contemporary 'analytical' epistemology, the shared feature Antognazza focuses on is the lack of a «distinction in kind» between knowledge and belief, which leads to a «reductive analysis of knowledge in terms of belief plus additional conditions». What may first appear to be a negative or 'deconstructive' approach in reality hides a robust positive proposal; one which uncovers, though a far-reaching understanding of the history of philosophy, those neglected tools for a craftsman-like reconstruction of concepts through a refined appreciation of their 'genesis'. The careful use of ancient (mostly Plato and Aristotle) and medieval thinkers is paramount in *Thinking with Assent*. This final book is the culmination of a long, meticulous scholarly preparation. A glimpse into this enduring process is provided in one of Antognazza's last articles, «Intuitive cognition in the Latin medieval tradition», which appeared in a special issue of the *British Journal of the History of Philosophy* devoted to «Intuition in the history of philosophy» (vol. 31, 2023, issue 4), which she co-edited with Marco Segala. Strikingly, this article includes a precise reference, *ad paginam*, to Sofia Vanni Rovighi's *Gnoseologia* (Brescia 1963). This 'return' to a work dating back to her formative years as a student in Milan is hardly

¹⁴ The monograph was accepted for publication with Oxford University Press before Antognazza's untimely demise. After his wife's passing, Professor Hotson took upon him the task of preparing the book for publication, assisted by several colleagues of hers. It is expected to appear in print towards the end of Spring 2024.

¹⁵ Here the reference is to the short, influential paper by EDMUND L. GETTIER, «Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?», *Analysis*, 23 (1963), p. 121–123. Here we refer to an earlier draft of *Thinking with Assent*, which Antognazza shared with us at the end of Summer 2021.

surprising, especially when it is read in the light of the following acknowledgement in *Thinking with Assent*: « I have been thinking about the views advanced in this book for over three decades, starting from my undergraduate studies in Milan. Over such a long period of time, my debts to a great many people have grown incrementally. First of all, I would like to acknowledge my impersonal and indirect but nevertheless very important debt to the philosophical thought of Sofia Vanni Rovighi (1908–1990), whose writings have shaped my formative years, and whose way of doing philosophy through the history of philosophy has reached me via her students, notably Mario Sina (my *Doktorvater*) and Maria Grazia Zaccone ». *Quale principium, talis est clausula*.

From 2014 to 2020, Maria Rosa Antognazza served, *inter alia*, as a member of the Advisory Board of the Max Weber College (University of Erfurt). She was elected as Chair of the British Society for the History of Philosophy in April 2017, and was confirmed for a second term in 2020. She was the President of the British Society for the Philosophy of Religion (2019–2023) and, since 2022, a member of the Academia Europea. She had served as a member of the executive committee of the Royal Institute of Philosophy from 2017 until her death. In its tribute to Antognazza, the Institute described her very aptly as having been « skilled in stewardship ».

The concepts one uses to read oneself and the reality around oneself carry with them the colour of the mind that understands and employs them. They usually have a history, albeit one which may be concealed at first glance. Yet we must patiently listen to the history of the history-teller in order to properly understand the story they tell; and we ought to have a sense for its unrealized possibilities, for every thought carries with it something that had remained so far unthought. The lines written by genuine thinkers draw also from what, unspoken, peeks from « between their lines ». Through her industrious scholarly efforts, Maria Rosa Antognazza bore remarkable witness to how philosophy and the transmission of knowledge are two sides of the same, precious coin.