

Foreword

The idea to compile and publish a Festschrift, to be offered to Dr Agnes Korn as a sign of deep appreciation on the part of those who consider her their advisor, their instructor and their guide, occurred independently to both editors. When they revealed their intentions to each other, forces immediately began conspiring to bring this project to life as quickly as possible. Within days, the group of young researchers to whom the editors had reached out announced their genuine willingness to contribute chapters to this long-overdue project.

It is beyond any doubt that no Festschrift could possibly unite all the researchers whose academic lives Agnes has touched and continues to touch. An exhaustive list would include dozens of names reflecting the vast geography of her professional life and renown. The current volume is thus limited to contributions from those who, albeit established in various corners of Europe, have had the pleasure of interacting with Agnes during her time in Paris, where she is currently based as a *chargée de recherches* at CNRS. The topics explored here have been selected by their authors so as to conform to her wide area of interest and expertise.

The genuine admiration and recognition which Agnes enjoys result in large part from the sincerity, scrupulous fairness and loyal support she shows to those who benefit from her guidance and encouragement. Her combination of objective criticism and eagle-eyed meticulousness reveals the tremendous respect she feels for her students' work. Agnes devotes an immense amount of time to supervising them in all aspects of their academic careers. Yet, her support goes far beyond the usual scientific instruction; she also cares for her students' well-being, showing great understanding in the face of whatever personal issues may impede a student's progress on a given task. On numerous occasions, she has helped her students stand their ground and receive fair treatment even though it meant that she herself would have to deal with unpleasant consequences.

Agnes extends the same generosity, kindness and attention to young researchers whom she does not formally supervise but who approach her for academic or administrative assistance, whether in the form of a call for advice or of a desperate plea for help.

A scientist through and through, Agnes is at once teacher, mentor and friend. As time goes by, her outstanding personality will no doubt leave its mark on more lives and careers as more and more researchers have the honour of adding their names to the long list of Agnes's eternally grateful students and friends.

For our part, it is out of this deep sense of gratitude that we offer her this humble sign of appreciation.

The editors are indebted most profoundly to Dr Ursula Reichert, whose cooperation with Agnes spans almost two decades, for graciously accepting to print this volume and to Dr Hélène Gérardin for her invaluable help in editing it. Sincere thanks are also due to all contributing authors and anonymous reviewers, as well as all those who provided generous support and technical assistance in bringing this project to life; namely Hossein Amiri for producing the visual, Dr Thomas Jügel for supporting us in the editing process, Nicholas Kontovas for proofreading certain passages, Loïs Pastor for designing the cover, and Dr Christian Rammer for advising us and maintaining a liaison with the publisher.

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