

Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé (1950–2023)
In memoriam

Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé passed away on March 15, 2023. Her untimely death is very much felt in the community of scholars of Classical Antiquity and *Studia graeco-arabica* joins it in deep mourning.

The works of Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé on the Cynic movement represent a turning point in the scholarship. A series of articles in around the 1980s – some of them with a twin focus on ancient Cynicism and Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives of the Philosophers* – paved the way to her first book, the ground-breaking *L’ascèse cynique* (1986). Here Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé unravels the elusive meaning of the challenge issued by the Cynics to the common morality. Under her guidance, the insolent appeal to live according to the nature with no criteria other than this, even if the βίος κατὰ φύσιν entails scandalous behaviour, reveals itself to be grounded in the ideals of καρτερία – stiff upper lip – αὐτάρκεια – complete independence – and ἀπάθεια – the blessed status of the divine. These ideals are destined to find their full-fledged expression in Stoicism. The controversial relationship between the Cynic movement and the rise of Stoicism is explored in *Les Kynika du Stoïcisme* (2003).

In between these two books the scientific production of Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé made room for new topics: the in-depth study of individual philosophers, often relatively unknown, and Neoplatonism. She was a member of the CNRS research unit UPR 76, the famous worldwide team working, at the time, on the Platonic school of the end of Antiquity. This explains in part why she began also to devote her enormous skills to the study of a thought which is significantly distant from Cynicism. The team was at work on Porphyry’s *Life of Plotinus*, a unique document of ancient philosophy, and for the first volume of the comprehensive study devoted by the team to this text Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé wrote a book-length article on “L’arrière-plan scolaire de la *Vie de Plotin*” (1982), a masterpiece of erudite scholarship and, at one and the same time, a vibrant portrait of Platonism in the Imperial Age. In 1991 she was appointed Director of the UPR 76. The early ‘80s saw also the beginning of one of the main scientific enterprises in the field of Ancient philosophy ever conceived after Zeller’s *The Philosophy of Greeks in their Historical Development*. Her husband Richard Goulet launched the *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, a monumental reference work brought to completion in 2018 with the constant help, and no less than 120 entries by Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé. In close connection with this prosopographical piece of research, and as a prosecution of her study of Diogenes Laertius’ documentation about the Cynic movement, she directed the French translation of the *Lives of the Philosophers* (1999), translating Book VI and part of other books and writing an incisive, clarifying general introduction. First-hand extensive documentation on ancient philosophers and philosophies nourished all her scientific enterprises, those which form the core of the astonishing activity outlined above and the collateral ones, like the direction of two conferences on the formal structure of ancient works (*Titres et articulations du texte dans les œuvres antiques*, 1997) and on the literary genre of the commentary (*Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation*, 2000).

A living example of καρτερία, Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé was, and still is for all of us, also a living example of συμπάθεια. Far from considering the Cynic and Stoic ἀπάθεια an ideal, she practiced constantly the virtue of compassion in its etymological meaning, a virtue which helped her remain attuned to the team she directed as well as, in more recent times, to all those who had the great fortune to cross her paths. Her last years were a great challenge to her innate καρτερία, and she won. Our mourning today marks not only the loss of a great scholar, but also the sorrow for the loss of a unique person.