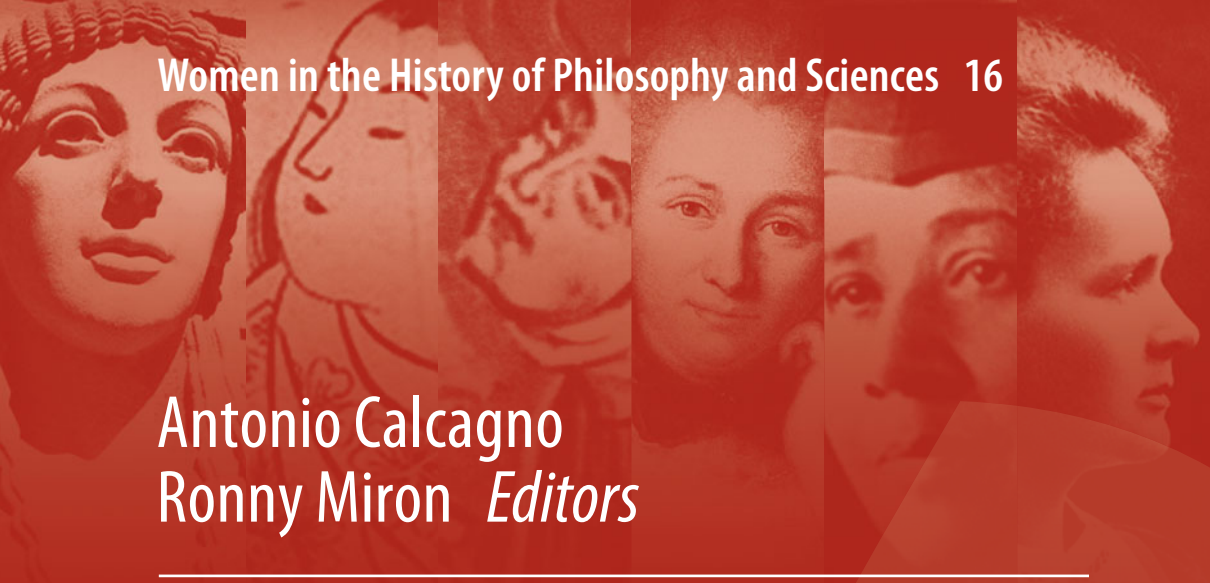
Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences 16



Antonio Calcagno
Ronny Miron *Editors*

Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Edith Stein: Philosophical Encounters and Divides

Springer

Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences

Volume 16

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As the historical records prove, women have long been creating original contributions to philosophy. We have valuable writings from female philosophers from Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and a continuous tradition from the Renaissance to today. The history of women philosophers thus stretches back as far as the history of philosophy itself. The presence as well as the absence of women philosophers throughout the course of history parallels the history of philosophy as a whole.

Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt and Simone de Beauvoir, the most famous representatives of this tradition in the twentieth century, did not appear form nowhere. They stand, so to speak, on the shoulders of the female titans who came before them.

The series Women Philosophers and Scientists published by Springer is of interest not only to the international philosophy community, but also for scholars in history of science and mathematics, the history of ideas, and in women's studies.

Antonio Calcagno · Ronny Miron
Editors

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ISSN 2523-8760 ISSN 2523-8779 (electronic)
Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences
ISBN 978-3-031-14758-6 ISBN 978-3-031-14759-3 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-14759-3

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Series Foreword

Women Philosophers and Scientists

The history of women's contributions to philosophy and the sciences dates back to the very beginnings of these disciplines. Theano, Hypatia, Du Châtelet, Agnesi, Germain, Lovelace, Stebbing, Curie, Stein are only a small selection of prominent women philosophers and scientists throughout history.

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The Springer Series *Women Philosophers and Scientists* will publish monographs, handbooks, collections, anthologies and dissertations.

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Acknowledgements

This volume would not have been possible without the support of Professors Ruth Hagengruber and Mary Ellen Waithe. We are very grateful for their insight and wisdom. The editors also thank Karen Enns, who worked long and hard to edit and finalise this manuscript for publication. Her keen eye and gift of language are invaluable.

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Editors and Contributors

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Antonio Calcagno is Professor of Philosophy at King's University College at the University of Western Ontario. He is the author of *Giordano Bruno and the Logic of Coincidence: Unity and Multiplicity in the Philosophical Thought of Giordano Bruno* (Peter Lang, 1998), *The Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Duquesne, 2007), *Badiou and Derrida: Politics, Events and Their Time* (Continuum, 2007), *Lived Experience from the Inside Out: Social and Political Philosophy in Edith Stein* (Duquesne, 2014), and *On Political Impasse: Power, Resistance, and New Forms of Selfhood* (Bloomsbury, 2022). He has edited or co-edited twelve books, including *Thinking About Love: Essays in Contemporary Continental Philosophy* (Penn State, 2015), *Contemporary Italian Political Philosophy* (SUNY, 2015) and *Roberto Esposito: Biopolitics and Philosophy* (SUNY, 2018). He is a Member of the College, Royal Society of Canada.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Antonio Calcagno and Ronny Miron

Abstract This introductory essay frames the relationship between the philosophers Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Edith Stein. Both phenomenologists were important figures in the early Phenomenological Movement. Their unique studies can be read not only as an engaged dialogue about questions, ideas, and arguments of mutual interest, for example, the nature of being and reality, but also as offering their own unique interpretations of what phenomenology studies and uncovers in its research. Engaging their teachers and colleagues like Edmund Husserl, Theodor Lipps, and Adolf Reinach, the two thinkers develop mutually intersecting but also divergent views of what phenomenology is, methodologically and philosophically.

Keywords Hedwig Conrad-Martius · Phenomenology · Edmund Husserl · Biography · Metaphysics · Reality · Edith Stein · Being

Hedwig Margarete Elisabeth Martius (1888–1966) first appeared in the field of phenomenology in 1912, when her essay "The Epistemological Foundations of Positivism" (*Die erkenntnisstheoretischen Grundlagen des Positivismus*) won the essay competition held by the Philosophy Department at the University of Göttingen. In that same year, she left Göttingen and returned to Munich. Under the supervision of Alexander Pfänder, who led the Munich phenomenologists group, she developed the first chapter of the prize essay into an extensive treatise titled, "The Perception of 'the Natural World View' that is Immanent in the 'Consciousness-Independent

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A. Calcagno and R. Miron (eds.), *Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Edith Stein: Philosophical Encounters and Divides*, Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences 16,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-14759-3_1

External World'" (Conrad-Martius, 1920, 10–24).[1] Conrad-Martius (HCM)[2] was one of the first women to have studied at a grammar school (*Gymnasium*),[3] and then became the first woman or, at least, one of the first women to study in a German university (Sander, 1997, 155).[4] Her first encounter with academic studies in philosophy was in Rostock, but she completed her formative studies in philosophy at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, where she realized that philosophy was her calling (Conrad-Martius, 2015, 61). On the advice of Moritz Geiger (1880–1937), whose courses on psychology and art history she attended at Munich University in 1909–1910, she moved from Munich to Göttingen together with a group of young philosophers previously related to the "Academic Society for Psychology" (*Akademische Verein für Psychologie*).[5] They planned to attend the courses of Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and Adolf Reinach (1883–1917). The group had various names, whose use was not consistent, even by those who coined them, yet the terms all referred to the same cultural occurrence: "The Göttingen Circle" (Rosenwald, 1989, 16, 21–22); "The Göttingen Movement"; "The Göttingen School" (Conrad, 1953/1954 N; Schmücker, 1956, 7); "The Munich-Göttingen Phenomenologists"; "The Munich Circle" and "The Munich Phenomenology" (Smid, 1982, 112); "The Munich-Göttingen School" (Rosenwald, 1989, 19) and "The Munich-Göttingen Circle" or "The Munich-Göttingen Group" (Avé-Lallemant, 1975, 23); "The Munichers" (*Die Münchener*) (Conrad-Martius, 2015, 62 n. 1; Spiegelberg, 1959, 60); "The First Phenomenological School" (Landgrebe, 1963, 22), "The Older Phenomenological Movement" (Spiegelberg, 1960, 168f), the "Original Phenomenological Movement" (Spiegelberg, 1984, 166f), and "The Beginning Phenomenology" (*anfangenden Phänomenologie*) (Husserl, 1999, §59 138; Husserl, 1991, §59 165). Whatever the terminology, the name denoted the first generation of phenomenologists active during and immediately after Husserl's time. Among their leading members were: Alexander Pfänder, Johannes Daubert, Moritz Geiger, Theodor Conrad, Adolf Reinach, Maximilian Beck, Max Scheler, and Jean Hering. The younger members of the group were: Hans Lipps, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Alexandre Koyré, Roman

[1] The first part of the dissertation, "The Entire Phenomenon of the Real External World" (Conrad-Martius, 1916, 345–397), is based on the first chapter of the prize essay. The second part, "Sensory Givenness: Feeling and Appearing" (Conrad-Martius, 1916, 397–542), is entirely new and anticipates the subsequent book, *Realontologie* (Conrad-Martius, 1923).

[2] In his speech given on February 27, 1958 for HCM's seventieth birthday, Avé-Lallemant indicated that "HCM" was Conrad-Martius's nickname among her pupils at the University of Munich. To her circle of her friends, she was Hatti. Stein uses Hatti for HCM quite systematically; see in particular: Stein 2005; Stein 1960.

[3] In 1903, HCM enrolled in the *Gymnasialkurse für Frauen* at the Helene Lange School in Berlin, and in fall 1907/1908 she received her Abitur at the Sophien-Realgymnasium in Berlin.

[4] Sander (1997, 155). See also a note by Andreas Uwe Müller in Stein (2013, 7 n. 10).

[5] The society was established in 1895 by Theodor Lipps and later operated by his students and assistants. Walther's addendum of "philosophy" to the name of the society (Akademische Verein für Psychologie und Philosophie) (see: Walther 1960, 379) mirrors its origin in "the Munich psychological school" (Die Münchener psychologische Schule) and its declared objective of "scientific engagement with psychological questions and the philosophical [questions] included in it" (cited from: Smid 1982, 114).

Ingarden, Edith Stein, and Hedwig Conrad-Martius. HCM described the atmosphere at that time with the following words:

> We were not doing anything other than carefully scrutinizing virtually everything with regards to its real essence. We disputed about the essence of nature, amongst all the genres of nature—plant, animal, human—kinds of nature, about the sociological and historical and its nature, about art, about the psychological, ethical and transcendental. We talked about nature spirits, demons and angels as if we had, de facto, met them. We didn't meet them de facto—at least not the angels, but we met their essence and got a grasp of it. We didn't ask at all whether they actually really existed. (Conrad-Martius, 2015, 61)

The members of the Munich-Göttingen Circle were particularly attracted to Husserl's resounding call in his *Logical Investigation* from 1900 to "go back to the 'things themselves'" (*auf die* "*Sachen selbst*" *zurückgehen*) (Husserl, 1970, 168; Husserl, 1984, 10).[6] This call was framed within Husserl's early struggle against psychologism, relativism, and various forms of reductionism (Husserl, 1970, §23, §31; Husserl, 1975, §23, §31), and his particular demand that the conditions of consciousness be examined independently of the thinking subject (Husserl, 1970, §66; Husserl, 1975, §66). Among the various issues Husserl addressed in his *Logical Investigations*, essence-intuition had a particularly formative influence on the Munich-Göttingen phenomenologists. They saw it not only as Husserl's most essential philosophical achievement, but also, in particular, as the genuine core of phenomenology. Following him, they were convinced that objects perceived, and the ways in which they are known are founded upon lawfulness of essence (*Wesensgesetze*) stemming from the things themselves, which are capable of being directly grasped through phenomenological intuition (Husserl, 1970, 168; Husserl, 1984, 10). Furthermore, this first generation of phenomenologists followed Husserl's doctrine of regional ontology, which serves as a framework for the study of essences. In this regard, the region (*Region*) is marked as the highest material genus of the essences that belong together (Husserl, 1952, §9; Husserl, 2012, §9), and it consolidates "the *highest and most inclusive generic unity belonging to a concretum*" (Husserl, 1952, §16 36; Husserl, 2012, §16 31). HCM called this method of "essence observation" (*Wesensfassung*) "the genuine philosophical task" (*Aufgabe*) (Conrad-Martius, 1916, 348), whose objective is, as Reinach put it, to reveal the essential "what" (*was, Washeit*) that makes something into this specific object (Reinach, 1969, 220). Reinach further explained: "There is no accidentally-being-so in essences, but rather a necessarily-having-to-be-so, and an essentially-cannot-be-otherwise." Moreover, according to him, the direct access to things is aimed at leading us not only to the essences we have "already" intended (*intendiert*), but also to new essences that must be discovered and brought under the gaze (Reinach, 1969, 210).

However, the early phenomenologists would soon discover that the very thing for which they had gathered around the founder of phenomenology in Göttingen was

[6] The phrase "to return to the things themselves" appeared in Husserl's writings in several contexts. See also: Husserl (1970, §4 172, §6 174–175), Husserl (1984, §4 17–18, §6 22–23). This saying has also been discussed extensively in connection to the realistic orientation in phenomenology. See Seifert (1995), Kuhn (1969), Schmücker (1956).

largely no longer in existence. As soon as Husserl's first volume of *Ideas* appeared in 1913, readers noticed that the reality of the things themselves had now become fixed in the idealistic framework of consciousness that avoided addressing any category external to it. Stein observes:

> The *Ideas* included some expressions which sounded very much as though their master wished to return to idealism. His oral interpretation could not appease our concerns. It was the beginning of that development which led Husserl to see, more and more, in what he called "transcendental Idealism". …the genuine nucleus of his philosophy.… This was a path on which, to his sorrow as well as their own, his earlier Göttingen students could not follow him (Stein, 2002, 201).

Husserl protested his students' criticism and their rejection of the developments that had occurred in his writings after the publication of *Logical Investigations* (1900–1901), namely, that in *Ideas I* one finds an explicit consolidation of the transcendental reduction that ultimately removes the element of existence from the realm of phenomenological study. He dismissively described his Göttingen students as "remaining stuck in ontologism and realism,"[7] adding that "almost half of my mature students have remained stuck in half-measures (*Halbheiten*) and are afraid of the radicalism of the necessary essence of phenomenology, precisely what established my life component and to which I owe all my insights" (Husserl, 1959, 285). Husserl specified his criticism and wrote to Ingarden that like Stein, HCM "was never really my student and she consciously rejected the ethos of philosophy 'as a rigorous science'" (Husserl, 1968, 23). Accepting this ethos functioned almost as a dare for Husserl when he evaluated the phenomenologists of his period (Husserl, 1987, 296), and their attitudes to his transcendental turn became a test of the authenticity of their phenomenological positions. All this is well-confirmed in Stein's letter to Ingarden dated September 30, 1922: "All the orthodox 'transcendental phenomenologists,' those who do not stand with idealism are considered 'Reinach phenomenologists' [*sic*]... and are really no longer affiliated with the group. Husserl explained that before Freiburg he never really had any students" (Stein, 2005, 203–204).

Edith Stein (1891–1942) shared HCM's critical assessment of Husserl's transcendental turn, eventually separating from Husserl in 1918 when she left her position as his private assistant. In 1911, she entered the University of Breslau to study psychology, German, history, and philosophy, but deeply dissatisfied with the positivist and experimental reductionism of psychology, Stein sought other fields of study that might help her to understand more fundamental questions about science and the mind. She attended Richard Hönigswald's philosophy lectures, and though the eminent neo-Kantian was an impressive scholar of the history of philosophy, his views of nature were limited. As Alasdair MacIntyre has noted, "Stein's own response to Hönigswald's own teaching was complex. But when she found herself asking for the first time her own philosophical questions, they were questions to which Hönigswald's own Neo-Kantianism offered no answers" (MacIntyre, 2007, 14). At Breslau, Stein met her friend George Moskiewicz, who encouraged her to meet Adolf Reinach at the University of Göttingen. Reinach had been deeply influenced

[7] Husserl's words are cited in Spiegelberg (1959, 60).

by the Würzburg school of psychology while he was working with the philosopher Edmund Husserl. Stein had encountered Husserl's *Logical Investigations* in various psychology articles, and she had studied the psychologists of the Würzburg school in her seminar with Wilhelm Stern (1871–1938).[8]

In 1913, she decided to go to Göttingen to study with Reinach and Husserl and, eventually, she met with Husserl, who accepted her into his seminar. Stein confessed to him that she had read only the first volume of his *Logical Investigations*, which dealt with questions of psychologism and the failure of psychology to justify the foundations of its own empirical science. In preparation for the study of Husserl's philosophy, she attended Reinach's seminar, as well as Husserl's early *Natur und Geist* (Nature and Spirit) lectures of 1913 in which he discussed the themes of nature, intersubjectivity, and empathy.[9] In Göttingen, Stein became part of the Göttingen Philosophical Society, as mentioned above. Max Scheler also attended some of the society's meetings and occasionally presented lectures to the group. Stein's relationships with various members of the society lasted throughout her lifetime and she was deeply influenced by some of their ideas, especially those of her friend and future godmother, Hedwig Conrad-Martius. It is this philosophical friendship that forms the focus of this volume.[10]

Sometime between 1915 and 1916, Stein proposed to Husserl that she work on the problem of empathy. He asked her to undertake a historical study of the problem in addition to a phenomenological analysis. During this period of Stein's teaching, studying, and researching, Husserl was appointed Professor at the University of Freiburg. He and Stein agreed that she would defend her dissertation at Freiburg, and at the end of 1916, she moved there, successfully defending her dissertation, *summa cum laude*, in March, 1917. When Husserl asked her to be his assistant, she began to perform some of Adolf Reinach's former duties. As Reinach had enlisted to fight in World War I, Stein offered a seminar to prepare incoming students in the phenomenological method.[11]

As Husserl's assistant, Stein was asked to prepare some of his texts for publication. She learned to decipher his notation—Husserl habitually wrote on loose pieces of paper in Gabelsberger shorthand (Stein, 2022, 492)—which afforded her unprecedented access to his unpublished manuscripts. In addition to her teaching duties and her own philosophical work, she edited and readied for publication three of Husserl's important texts: volumes two and three of his *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy*, his *Thing and Space*

[8] Stein refers to Stern on several occasions in her biography. She found him "always equally benevolent and friendly" (Stein, 2002, 153), but regarded his perceptions that were based on experimental method as "underchallenging" (141).

[9] Husserl first delivered a lecture entitled *Natur und Geist* on February 21, 1919 in Freiburg before the *Kulturwissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft.* The lecture was published in Husserl (1987, 316–324). He presented lectures with the same titles again in the winter semester of 1921/1922, and lastly in the summer semester of 1927, on both occasions at the University of Freiburg. The latter were published in Husserl (2002). For further reading see Weiler (2002), Orth (2003).

[10] See also Ales Bello (1993), Avé-Lallemant (2015), Miron (2017), Miron (2021).

[11] For further reading see Ricci (2010).