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14 October 2023

Distinguished Fellowship Committee
History of Economics Society

Re: Nomination of Professor **Annie L. Cot**

Dear Colleagues:

As the history and sociology of science over the past decades has taught us, no scientific field lives by its publications alone. It needs a community to keep scholarship alive. This was so from the 18th century Republic of Letters to our days. A community that fosters scholarly exchange does not fall from thin air; it needs an infrastructure to make it thrive. There is no person among us who did more to create the conditions to make our community thrive and grow than Annie Lou Cot, and it is for this accomplishment that it is our honor and our pleasure to nominate Professor Annie Lou Cot of the University of Sorbonne Paris 1-Panthéon as Distinguished Fellow of the History of Economics Society.

Professor Cot wrote her Ph.D. thesis on neo-utilitarianism and the works of Bentham, Fisher, and Becker. She published on the history of American, British, and French economics in articles that ranged from the Harvard Fatigue laboratory to the recent history of economic experiments. She wrote on the history of labor economics, eugenics, liberal thought, and the status of women, on the history of general equilibrium theory and on interdisciplinarity. Professor Cot read large and wild. She has an eye for new avenues for research that she encourages her students to explore, and the questions and comments with which she peppers her colleagues during Q&A at conferences are often similarly suggestive of new and fruitful lines of scholarly inquiry. As longstanding member of the committee for the Best French Young Economist, Professor Cot was for many years the main go-between the French community of historians of economics and the French association for economics (AFSE), helping to preserve this key link at a time when the history of economics has been increasingly diminished in the profession's calculus.

Professor Cot has devoted much of her distinguished academic career to educate and mentor young and promising scholars. Having worked on the history of Chicago economics,

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Professor Cot was well aware of the central importance of the research seminar for the transmission and improvement of scholarly crafts. Over many years and under different names, and with Professor Jérôme Lallement of University Paris Descartes as her indefatigable sparring partner, Professor Cot organized regular seminars with young scholars still in the midst of their thesis (the Albert O. Hirschman seminar), or early career researchers (the Cournot seminar), to discuss their work in progress or projects for funding applications. These could be her own students, students that were supervised by others, or scholars who were sometimes only at the beginning of their own careers. Equally aware of the importance of the outsider's gaze, Professor Cot invited a wide range of international scholars to participate in these seminars and to contribute to deepening the experience associated with her master's program in history and epistemology of economics. The biweekly Thursday seminars where many of her invited scholars presented became regular fixtures in the agendas of many of us, and even more so after they turned hybrid these last years. Discussions at these seminars continued in the Paris bars and restaurants, and often at Professor Cot's apartment which she ran as a French salon.

The intellectual climate Professor Cot thus created enabled her students, those of others, and her audience to freely explore and expand their scholarship, creating scores of professional opportunities in the process. As witnessed from her CV, Professor Cot easily tops the list of thesis supervisors in the history of economics (with more than 30 theses supervised). Many of her Ph.D. candidates went on to have distinguished careers of their own not only in France, but also in Columbia, Chile, Japan, Italy or Belgium, as she supervised thesis work in French, English and Spanish. Because of this, the influence of her contributions to sustaining, supporting, and growing the field have been felt around the world. The reach of her influence is remarkable.


With Paris as her natural and inevitable home base, and deeply immersed in French culture, Professor Cot turned the Chicago research seminar and the *dispositif* of the French salon into weapons to further the cause of the history of economics. Relentlessly organizing seminars, conferences and workshops that would bring international scholarship to Paris, she created a tight intellectual community of historians of economics, philosophers and economists whose main glue is a shared interest in historical epistemology and the collaboration in interdisciplinary projects. A process of internationalization of the history of economics in France became a multi-pronged process in which international networks of communication were created that transgressed the classroom, that forged collaborations and sealed friendships. Many of us here present, in situ or virtually, benefitted from Professor Cot's unremitting efforts to create such an essential infrastructure for our community.

We would be remiss if we did not also emphasize the support that Professor Cot has provided for the History of Economics Society in Europe. The founding of ESHET in the 1990s created something of a gulf between the North American history of economics community and their counterparts in Europe. As the Europeans worked hard to solidify and support their own society, Professor Cot consistently attempted to promote interaction and joint ventures

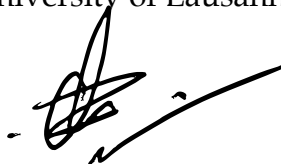
between the two societies. Professor Cot's efforts to bring communities together were a reflection of her strongly held belief, evidenced on so many fronts, that the field is stronger through collaboration and integration than through attempts to build bigger silos.

It is right and good that the HES has used its Distinguished Fellow award to recognize people who have made extensive and pathbreaking contributions to the literature in the field. But one of the marks of a mature field of inquiry is that it recognizes those who have helped to build and support the field itself, to create networks (now so much the focus of our historical analysis), and who demonstrate an almost single-minded commitment to such efforts – particularly given that deep and influential involvements in such efforts will often come at the expense of their own scholarship. It is right and good that such work be not just celebrated, but honored, and it is with this in mind that we propose Professor Annie Lou Cot as Distinguished Fellow of our Society and urge you in the strongest terms to give her candidacy every consideration.

Sincerely,



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Cléo Chassonnery-Zaïgouche
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