

In Memoriam Tomás Calvo Martínez (1942-2023)

Within three years, three experts, the best connoisseurs of Aristotle's philosophy, Pierre Aubenque (2020), Enrico Berti (2022), and Tomás Calvo Martínez (2023), have passed away. All three held high positions in the prestigious international association Institut International de Philosophie (IIP Paris-Nancy): Pierre Aubenque was Secretary General of the IIP for many years, Enrico Berti and Tomás Calvo Martínez were Presidents of the IIP. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to meet Aubenque, as he was not able to come to the IIP conference in Zadar (2007), which I organized with Daniel Kolak, where he was supposed to be a speaker. He handed over his position as IIP Secretary General to the Hegelian Bernard Bourgeois, with whom I was friends. My sincere friends were also Tomás Calvo Martínez and Enrico Berti (2022) whom I dearly wanted to interview for our journal *Distinctio*, but unfortunately, the death of both of these prominent philosophers hindered the realization of this idea. Calvo Martínez generously accepted my proposal to be a member of the Advisory Board of our journal *Distinctio*.

Tomás Calvo Martínez matured academically through the study of ancient philosophy, namely the pre-Socratics and Plato. He received his doctorate from the Universidad Complutense (Madrid) in 1969 with the dissertation "Parmenides Against the Popular Wisdom of His Time" (*Parménides contra la sabiduría popular de su tiempo*). One of the greatest honors for university professors is to end their academic career at the university where they started. This was also the case for T. Calvo Martínez. He became a professor at the Universidad Complutense Madrid in 1995, where he received his doctorate in philosophy. The thorough analysis of Plato's works earned Tomás Calvo Martínez a reputation in Platonic circles. He was elected President of the International Plato Society (1992-1995). Together with Luc Brisson, he published an anthology of contributions to the symposium of the International Plato Society: *Interpreting the Timaeus and the Critias* (Selected Papers from the IV Symposium Platonicum). Sankt Augustin, Academia Verlag, 1997.

Calvo Martínez advocated for a dialogue between hermeneutic and analytic philosophy, which is confirmed, among other things, by the fact that he organized international symposia in Granada with important

living philosophers: Willard Van Orman Quine and Paul Ricoeur (Calvo Martínez, T. – Acero, J. eds., *Symposium Quine*. Granada, University of Granada, 1987) (Calvo Martínez, T. – Avila Crespo, R. eds. *Paul Ricoeur: The Paths of Interpretation*.

He also gained a reputation for his translations and commentaries on the philosophy of Aristotle. His translations into Spanish with detailed commentaries on Aristotle's works "On the Soul" (*Aristóteles. Acerca del alma*. Introducción general, Introducción, Traducción y Notas por T. Calvo Martínez. Madrid, Gredos, 1978 (ISBN: 84-249-3518-7) and "Metaphysics" (*Aristóteles. Metafísica*, Introducción, Traducción y Notas por T. Calvo Martínez. Madrid, Gredos, 1994 - ISBN: 84-249-1666-2) gained respect and recognition not only among Spanish academic scholars but also among experts in ancient philosophy around the world. For his academic work, Calvo Martínez was elected President of the prestigious International Institute of Philosophy (2008-2011).

The interpretations of Aristotle presented by Calvo Martínez do not have the characteristic of excessive innovation, as is often the case with German experts on Aristotle's philosophy (Werner Jaeger; Franz Dirlmeier, Wolfgang Wieland). The approach to Aristotle's writings that Calvo Martínez has practiced is hermeneutically correct, in the spirit of Aristotle's philosophy and without attempting to adapt it to modern trends. Calvo Martínez rightly interprets one of the most controversial passages in the interpretation of Aristotle's ontology, *to on hei on*, henologically (*pros hen*) in the sense of the search for a common identity or *ousia*. Although Calvo Martínez is rather conservative in his approach to Aristotle, he opposes an identification of the *Metaphysica generalis* with ontotheological interpretations, as practiced by Hegel, Heidegger, and the scholastic tradition. Calvo Martínez has plausibly shown that Aristotle, unlike Parmenides and Plato, recognizes the polysemy of the verb "to be" in its various uses and applications (*to on legetai pollachos*; 1033a33). Aristotle never abandoned this thesis. Rather, any reflection on language and reality must necessarily start from the recognition and acknowledgment of this fact. Aristotle's *aporia* consists in recognizing and acknowledging this indisputable fact. Calvo Martínez also tends, like P. Aubenque, to characterize Aristotle as a philosopher of *aporias*; the key to understanding and interpreting Aristotle remains the *aporeticity* of his work: being will always remain *aporetic*: *aei zêtoumenon kai aei aporoumenon, ti to on* (Met. Z 1028 b2). The hallmark of any good commentary on the classics of philosophy is to help the reader out of the labyrinth of

aporetism. Calvo Martínez does this skillfully and successfully. The first prerequisite is a correct translation in the sense of the author of the text. The burden of Aristotelian ontology is certainly the term *ousia*, which in the Latin tradition is translated as *substantia*, which is continued by excellent English translators (W. D. Ross, David Bostock, Hugh Lawson-Tancred, Fred D. Miller) and also applies to German translators (Eugen Rolfes, Horst Seidel, Christoph Rapp). *Ousia*, as a term, implies a broader meaning than the Latin word *substantia* suggests. Ingemar Dühring translates *ousia* as “existence”, as does Calvo Martínez, who uses the word “entidad” as a possible equivalent for Aristotle’s *ousia*. With regard to the difficulty of translating the Aristotelian *ousia*, Julia Annas claims that the term *ousia* is cognate with *einai*, and raises corresponding problems. Traditionally, translation with substance in serious cases obscures the meaning in *Metaphysics* rather than illuminating it. Therefore, Julia Anna translates *ousia* as “reality” or “real object”. Similar to Dühring’s interpretation of the central concept of Book IV of the *Metaphysics* (1003 a 31) “Being qua Being” (ὄν ἢ ὄν; on hei on) as a question about what *ousia* is, i.e. what a being is in relation to its essence and existence, Calvo Martínez also understands the central question of first philosophy as a question about *ousiai*, entities that exist and compose the universe (las entidades que hay y componen el Universo). A particularly important pillar for understanding Aristotle’s metaphysics, according to Calvo Martínez, is the principle of contradiction, because it serves as a link to the first *ousia* (*proté ousia*), which excludes all possibilities and contradictions.

The editors of the journal *Distinctio* bid farewell to Calvo Martínez, an excellent expert on ancient philosophy, and thank him for his willingness to cooperate with our journal. Requiescat in pace.

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