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IN MEMORY OF MAURIZIO MIGLIORI
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Maurizio Migliori passed away at the age of 80. He faced more than a year of serious illness with great courage and the support of his stainless faith. His profound acceptance of the predictable conclusion proved worthy of a true philosopher. Thus, a great voice of ancient philosophy, and especially of Italian and international Platonism, is reduced to silence.

Born on the 5th of October 1943 in Cantù, he graduated in philosophy with honours in 1967 at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, specialising at the same university in 1969.

He was a high school teacher from the school year 1968/69 to 1990/1991.

After having been Associate Professor in History of Ancient Philosophy at the State University of Macerata, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Department of Philosophy and Humanities, from 1991 to 2000, he became Full Professor of History of Ancient Philosophy at the Department of Humanistic Studies of the same University from 2000 to 2015.

In spite of his retirement due to age, as a professor passionate with research

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and teaching, he continued, indefatigable, to teach on annual contracts.

He has held numerous further academic positions both nationally and internationally: President of the degree course council from the Academic Year 2001/2002 to 2003/2004 and Director of the Department of Philosophy and Human Sciences from the Academic Year 2005/2006 to 2011/2012, both positions held at the University of Macerata; Member of the IPS – International Plato Society; Representative of Europe in the Executive Committee of the International Plato Society from 2001 to 2007; Member of the Executive and Vice-President of the SISFA – Italian Society for the History of Ancient Philosophy – from 2009 to 2013; Honorary President of the section of the SFI – Italian Philosophical Society of Macerata; Member of the Scientific Committee of the journal *Ordia Prima – Revista de Estudios Clásicos*, Córdoba (Arg) and of the journal *Humanitas*; Member of the Scientific Committee of the online journals *Thaumazein* and *Phenomenology and Mind*; Member of the Scientific Committee of the series *Temî metafisici e problemi del pensiero antico. Studi e testi*, founded by Professor Giovanni Reale and now directed by Professor Roberto Radice, Casa Editrice Vita e Pensiero; Member of the Scientific Committee of the series *Askesis/Studi di filosofia antica*, Edizioni Mimesis, of the series *Filosofia*, Editrice Morcelliana, of the series *Questioni di filosofia antica*, Edizioni UNICOPLI, and Head of the series *Lecturae Platonis*, published by Academia Verlag in Sankt Augustin (D).

Among the acknowledgments he was awarded, the most recent is that of the 1st Prize Winner, section *edited essays*, of the 2013 *Viaggio a Siracusa* for the essay *Il disordine ordinato. La filosofia dialettica di Platone*.¹

Maurizio Migliori did not live locked in the ivory tower of the academic life, but as a convinced and consistent upholder of the unity of philosophical theory and praxis he was always politically and socially engaged. As an endorser of absolute freedom of thought, he was not a person easily framed within rigid party logics, which rather dissatisfied him. Nevertheless, the influence of his convictions and his concrete involvement in the service of left-wing ideals, even in the turbulent years around 1968, left their sign.

Guided by Socrates' and Plato's conviction that the philosopher must seek for the harmony between theoretical research and the pursuit of the common good, he has always considered fundamental to take care of society. He urged his friends, colleagues, and citizens, whatever their political background, not to give in, out of the indignation towards the incapacities of the politicians ruling from time to time, to the dangerous anti-democratic temptation of trivialising socio-political and historical realities or processes. For these are always multi-causal and multi-layered and require to be assessed with keenness and ability to differentiate, to avoid slipping into commonplace and prejudice.

What emerges is the profile of a thinker who uses the art of dialectics to decipher the dynamics at work in the community. Maurizio Migliori appears as a great democratic visionary who bequeaths to us a valuable lesson in unity as

¹ *Il disordine ordinato. La filosofia dialettica di Platone*: vol. 1: *Dialettica, metafisica e cosmologia*, vol. 2: *Dall'anima alla prassi etica e politica*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2013.

well as of intellectual flexibility.

Remaining on this theme, on the academic track, Maurizio Migliori gave a decisive contribution to the establishment of the Chair of Political Philosophy/History of Political Doctrines at his university, which was previously lacking. He also covered a module of this teaching from the year of its establishment; in 1994/95: The Modern Conception of the State; 1995/96: Systems Theory and Luhmann; 1996/97: Von Clausewitz and the Theory of War; 1997/1998: The Debate on sociological Research in the 1960s in Germany and the human Sciences; 1998/1999: The Hegelian Dialectic in Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution*; 1999/2000: Game Theory and Complexity; 2000–2001: The Application of Dialectics to political Analysis: Marx and Marxisms; 2001–2002: A *strong* Paradigm: Systems Theory.

Maurizio Migliori's scholarly achievements and outputs in the field of ancient philosophy have been outstanding, ranging from the Pre-Socratics (Sophists and Eleatics in particular) to Aristotle.

This thematic extension is the coherent expression of Maurizio Migliori's intention to demonstrate, on the basis of a punctual analysis of the texts, the possibility of interpreting Plato's thought, on the theoretical level, as a systematic unity. Simultaneously, on the historical-philosophical level, Maurizio Migliori highlighted Plato's place in the debate of its time, between the Sophists and Socrates on the one hand, and between Aristotle and the Lyceum on the other.

Indeed, Maurizio Migliori said he had fallen in love with Plato at the age of 16 and has never stopped studying him since, according to him the role of the undisputed protagonist of his research.

The same constructive tension between unity and flexibility, discernible in his political convictions and in their concrete manifestations, characterised also Maurizio Migliori's approach to Platonic thought. There are at least two theoretical levels of his reading of Plato, which, as a Platonist myself, I consider crucial. For this reason, I allow myself to highlight them over others, albeit important.

On a first level, Maurizio Migliori certainly does not question either the genetic component of the Platonic dialogues or their historical and chronological contextualisation, but he rightly no longer accords it the great significance it had in the research tradition of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Maurizio Migliori openly rejects two opposing interpretative tendencies: the first, which is expressed in the belief that the dialogues should be isolated by contrasting them one against the other, identifying in each of them a system of its own, and new, aimed at correcting if not even overcoming the previous dialogue, whatever it may be; the second, the interpretation according to which the Platonic work as a whole would embody a monolithic and closed system, which is gradually communicated in the single dialogues.

At a second level, Maurizio Migliori rejects both the attitude of those who hold as true—i.e. corresponding to Plato's thought—only what the dialogues (the writings) say to be true, and the attitude of the radical *oralists* who believe they can find Plato's authentic word only in the oral teaching—i.e. the so-called

unwritten doctrines (ἄγραφα δόγματα)—carried out within the Ancient Academy, and witnessed indirectly, leaving aside later authors, by its then eminent members (Xenocrates, Speusippus, Aristotle).

As was bound to happen in a proponent of complex thought, these two theoretical levels intertwine in a sort of *Arachne's web*—a metaphor dear to Maurizio insofar as it is explanatory of the complexity and multifocal nature of Plato's thought—which becomes the hermeneutic fulcrum of the School of Ancient Philosophy he founded: the School of Macerata.

Fully aware of the fact that Plato, also from a cultural-historical perspective, treads the very line between the culture of orality and the civilisation of writing, Maurizio Migliori takes extremely seriously the apparent paradox that Plato embodies in his *Phaedrus*, decisively criticising writing and simultaneously being an extraordinary and unequalled *philosophical writer*.

By introducing an element of profound *dynamism* into the cornerstones of the Tübingen–Milan School, of which he considered himself a member, the Platonic system of thought is read in *paradigmatic* terms: ontology (the theory of Ideas) and metaphysics (the Principles of Plato's Oral Teaching in the Academy), constitute its *essential unity*, but this unity does not hinder the critical analysis of the consequences that derive from it, the discussion of any aporias that may be produced in putting it to the test in different contexts of ontological, cosmological, ethical, psychological, logical and metaphysical reflection, and its refinement through the unveiling of ever new research perspectives.

This, in turn, also implies the constant and reciprocal cross-reference between the content of the dialogues and the unwritten doctrines, in a continuous *interplay* of allusions and referencing intentionally construed by Plato *to clarify each other*.

Under this light, even the didactic-educational and *protreptic* function of the Platonic dialogue is not seen as following a linear development, i.e. starting from the writings whose meaning would be entirely superseded by the oral contents to which they refer, being reduced to a mere means to an end, but a circular one, as the expression of a *dialectical interrelationality* between what is written and what is unwritten.

The concept of a *Platonic system* is, in this new hermeneutic perspective, completely transfigured, and hinged on what for Maurizio Migliori is the heart of Plato's philosophy: *dialectics*. There *is* a *Platonic system* that, dialectically speaking, is both *closed and open* and pervades, transversally and homogeneously, all the dialogues. We are, in other words, confronted—in each single dialogue and in their totality—with a fundamental and essential unity, to which the multiplicity of the diverse particulars is variously connected.

Maurizio Migliori considered himself a *unitarist*, and not to ascribe to himself a label that would serve as a banner of a particular originality of thought. He shunned this alleged originality, to which so many interpreters of Plato aspire, apologising in advance to his readers if they happened to come across any such element while reading his works.

With an extraordinary and authentic modesty, Maurizio Migliori longed to

be nothing more than an *exegetes* of Plato. If he bestowed on himself the definition of unitarist, it was precisely to give voice to his faithfulness to this idea: the Platonic text, like its intrinsic and omnipresent dialectic, privileges the logic of *uni-multiplicity*, of *distinction but not separation*, bringing out the relationship that binds the whole, *simultaneously*, to the individual parts and their wholeness.

I limit myself to mention some of Maurizio Migliori's most important works on Plato's thought: *L'uomo fra piacere, intelligenza e Bene. Commentario storico-filosofico al "Filebo" di Platone*;¹ *Platone, Filebo*;² *Platone, Politico*;³ *Arte politica e metretica assiologica. Commentario storico-filosofico al "Politico" di Platone*;⁴ *Plato's Sophist, Value and Limitation on Ontology*;⁵ *Platone*;⁶ *Lifelong Studies in Love With Plato*.⁷

In the same spirit are both the works dedicated by Maurizio Migliori to Eleatism, such as his article, *Unità, molteplicità, dialettica. Contributi per una riscoperta di Zenone di Elea*,⁸ and to the relationship between Sophistic and Eleatic philosophy, such as his *La filosofia di Gorgia*,⁹ and the much more recent chapter *La filosofia dei Sofisti: un pensiero posteleatico*,¹⁰ as well as the wide-ranging and profound study that has become a classic, *Dialettica e verità. Commentario filosofico al "Parmenide" di Platone*,¹¹ and the critical edition of the *Parmenides*,¹² which, in addition to their independent worth, have shed light on Plato's multifaceted and extensive reception of Eleatic thought, as well as on the way in which Plato, in his role as a philosophical writer, *assimilated* and then *developed* this cultural heritage.

Maurizio Migliori produced an extraordinary number of books, articles, and book chapters, which cannot be cited here in their totality. A complete bibliography of his works, updated to 2021, is still available at the following link: docenti.unimc.it in the section downloads. His last monograph, entitled *How*

¹ Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1993, 1998².

² Introduzione, traduzione, note, apparati e appendice bibliografica di M. Migliori, Rusconi, Milano 1995, Bompiani, Milano 2000².

³ Introduzione, traduzione, note, apparati e appendice bibliografica di M. Migliori, Rusconi, Milano 1996, Bompiani, Milano 2001².

⁴ Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1996.

⁵ Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 2007. Previously released in Italian: *Il Sofista di Platone. Valore e limiti dell'ontologia*. Cinque lezioni e una successiva discussione con Bruno Centrone, Arianna Fermani, Lucia Palpacelli, Diana Quarantotto, Morcelliana, Brescia 2006, 2018².

⁶ ELS La Scuola, Brescia 2017.

⁷ Academia Verlag, Baden-Baden 2020.

⁸ Unicopli, Milano 1984.

⁹ Celuc, Milano 1973.

¹⁰ In: *La bellezza della complessità. Studi su Platone e dintorni*, Petite Plaisance, Pistoia 2019, pp. 67–95.

¹¹ Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1990, 2000².

¹² Platone, *Parmenide*, introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati di M. Migliori, testo greco con edizione critica a cura di Claudio Moreschini, Rusconi, Milano 1994, 2000².

Plato writes. The Educational and Protreptic Intent of the Great Student of Socrates,¹ has been published posthumously.

Thanks to the permission of Maurizio Migliori's family, we have the privilege and honour to publish in this Special Issue of *Organon* his contribution entitled *The Different Aspects of the Relationship between Plato's Philosophy and the Eleatic School*, in which his knowledge of Sophistic, of the School of Elea, and his immense knowledge of Plato converge, also from the point of view of the *dramaturgical framework* of the dialogues and its relevance to their theoretical content.

In this brief tribute to the dear Maurizio, I cannot omit the quotation of a passage he placed at the very end of both volumes of his monumental research, the work of a lifetime, *Il disordine ordinato. La filosofia dialettica di Platone*:

Non c'è, né potrebbe esserci, una via più bella di quella <della dialettica>, di cui io sono da sempre innamorato, ma che molte volte mi è già sfuggita e mi ha lasciato solo e senza via d'uscita ... Non è molto difficile mostrarla, ma molto difficile seguirla ... Gli dèi, dunque, come ho detto, ci hanno dato la consegna di indagare, di apprendere e di insegnare gli uni agli altri in questo modo (Filebo, 16b5–e4).²

There is not, nor could there be, a more beautiful way than that <of dialectics>, which I have always been in love with, but which has already eluded me many times and has left me alone and without a way out ... It is not very difficult to show it, but very difficult to follow it ... The gods, then, as I have said, have given us the task of investigating, learning, and teaching one another in this way.³

I conclude by wishing all historians of ancient philosophy and enthusiasts of Plato to succeed—paraphrasing three lines from Plato's *Parmenides* so fondly loved by Maurizio—in doing two things: *to have the skill to play this serious game* (137b2: *πραγματειώδη παιδιὰν παίζειν*), and *to have the courage to swim across such and so vast ocean of words* (137a5-6: *διανεῦσαι τοιοῦτόν τε καὶ τοσοῦτον πέλαγος λόγων*).

At best, making *good use* of the legacy that Maurizio Migliori has entrusted to us.

In memory of a great philosopher, a dear and true friend.

¹ Series: *Lecturae Platonis*, Academia, Baden-Baden 2023.

² οὐ μὴν ἔστι καλλίων ὁδὸς οὐδ' ἂν γένοιτο ἧς ἔγω εἰραστής μὲν εἰμι ἀεὶ, πολλάκις δὲ με ἦδη διαφυγοῦσα ἔρημον καὶ ἄπορον κατέστησεν ... Ἦν δηλῶσαι μὲν οὐ πάνυ χαλεπὸν, χρῆσθαι δὲ παγγάλεπον· ... οἱ μὲν οὖν θεοί, ὅπερ εἶπον, οὕτως ἡμῖν παρέδοσαν σκοπεῖν καὶ μανθάνειν καὶ διδάσκειν ἀλλήλους·.

³ My translation of Maurizio's Italian translation.