

JUAN DE DIOS TORRALBO CABALLERO (1977-2023), *IN MEMORIAM*

Professor Juan de Dios (Juande) Torralbo Caballero was born in Córdoba in 1977, although he always considered Doña Mencía –a beautiful and tiny village in the province of Córdoba- his hometown. Deeply in love with the beautiful locations in the Sierra Subbética that constituted his sentimental geography (Castro, Priego, Cabra, Zuheros, Doña Mencía), Juande had many additional passions in his life. Literature was one, literary translation another, and academic life and the Universidad de Córdoba in particular (where he always worked and the institution he loved), were also part of those things he enjoyed the most and devoted his life to. But it is extremely difficult for me to decide what aspects of his rich life to choose in this brief tribute. Not the least because he was taken away from us all who loved him –especially his parents, his wife, his little children- in such a sudden, unexpected and brutal manner. It may be argued that all deaths are brutal and tragic, but this was more so. Because Juande was one of those few persons that, if you are lucky enough to meet in life, you immediately learn to love. His bonhomie and cordiality (with literally everybody), his extreme generosity (towards anyone in need of a helping hand), his good humor (that eternal smile...), were integral parts of him. And from that inbred disposition must stem his talent and hardworking personality, always ready and willing to work and to contribute to his (various) fields of study.

Juande studied and always worked at the Universidad de Córdoba. He was there as an undergraduate student (1998-2004), a doctoral teaching assistant (2004-2008), an assistant professor and then a tenured one (2008-2012) and finally Professor of English since 2021. I had the privilege of being a member of the commission for his professorship, and can witness to his excellent qualifications, proficient research and teaching record, and outstanding service to the academic community. And also to the humility with which he displayed his merits, the humility of someone who thinks he will always have much to learn from books, colleagues and students. At the Universidad de Jaén we also had the privilege of having him in our Online Master in English Studies, and all my colleagues agreed that Juande was unique in many senses.

Nowadays there are, I think, two kinds of University professors. On the one hand, the most (let's say) modern academics, who exhibit a remarkable degree of specialization in an increasingly reduced topic. Those are professional and efficient, very necessary, and perform an important function for Spanish university. The other group is the one made up of scholars with an interdisciplinary outlook, a vast cultural knowledge, an eclectic approach to,

and a passion for, the discipline, a truly philological nature. This is the one to which Juande belonged, and the one I think we mostly need.

Prof Torralbo's academic interests were, as is well known, varied. True, he focused on literary studies and literary translation of 17th, 18th and early 19th century texts, and his work on Aphra Behn, Pope and Dryden, and Katherine Phillips, as well as his translations, were outstanding. But he also studied, translated and wrote about a diversity of different topics and authors, both in the English and Spanish tradition, namely: the lesser known Hester Pulter (he was the first person who brought her to my attention) and Fanny Calderón de la Barca, Anne Brönte and Jane Austen, Romantic and early Romantic poets, Juan Valera, Blanco White, the 20th century Spanish poets from Córdoba Ricardo Molina and Manuel Álvarez Ortega, the poetic journal (also from Córdoba) *Cántico* and its role in the cultural opposition to Francoism... Because Juande Torralbo held a PhD in English, supervised by Prof Bernd Dietz at the Universidad de Córdoba, but also another in Spanish Literature granted by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Besides an MA in Psychology. He also occupied important positions at the Universidad de Córdoba: Director of the university's School of Languages, Director of Innovative Teaching, Vice-Dean of International Relations... It was not accidental that different Rectors and Vice-rectors wanted him in their teams. His efficiency in those positions was equaled by his work in the organization of various international conferences of the MA program in specialized translation, a program supervised by Prof. García Peinado, who always had Juande as a member of the scientific and organizing committees. He was also the best mentor any student could wish for: dedicated, insightful, understanding, and I know that his PhD students had him as a reference, academic and personal.

All the above is factually true, but I have to admit that Juande Torralbo was not only one of my closest colleagues but also -I'm proud to say- my friend of fifteen years. Apart from his family and friends, he will be deeply missed in the profession, and especially by those of us who had the privilege of knowing him. Ironically and cruelly enough, his heart, "once pregnant with celestial fire" failed him, but so "large was his bounty, and his soul sincere" that many of us will never forget him. Rest in Peace.

Juande Torralbo Caballero passed away on 2 August 2023, at the age of 46.

Jesús López-Peláez Casellas (Universidad de Jaén)