

Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science, 2025 (16): 1-5

ISSN 2526-2270

Belo Horizonte – MG / Brazil

© The Authors 2025 – This is an open-access journal

Pablo Rubén Mariconda (1949-2025): The Legacy of a Giant

Paulo Tadeu da Silva¹ [<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7868-1836>]

Claudemir Roque Tossato² [<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2319-4579>]

Eduardo Salles de O. Barra³ [<http://Orcid/0000-0001-8979-5281>]

Received: June 10, 2025. Reviewed: June 17, 2025. Accepted: June 20, 2025.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24117/2526-2270.2025.i18.13>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

News of the death of Professor Pablo Rubén Mariconda reached us on the morning of May 16, 2025. The night before, he had left us and, with his departure, left an immense legacy, the fruit of his impressive and tireless dedication to studies in the most diverse areas of the Philosophy and History of Science and the Philosophy of Technology, present in his articles, books and translations. We cannot measure his magnitude by his work alone, marked by its inestimable quality and importance, but also by his commitment and dedication to his students, his fruitful collaboration with so many researchers, and the Herculean strength of his work in the *Scientiae Studia* Philosophical Association, which he founded and led for nearly three decades. The Association maintains the *Scientiae Studia* publishing house, whose publications are grouped into three collections: Studies on Science and Technology, Epistemology and Analytical Philosophy, and Public Domain. Initially housed in an apartment on Santa Rosa Júnior Street, in Butantã, the Association was later transferred to its current headquarters on Cícero de Alencar Street, a house that has been completely renovated and dimensioned to be the focal point for studies and research into the Philosophy, History and Sociology of Science and Technology. Anyone entering the association's headquarters is immediately faced with enormous metal shelves, erected in a large double-height room, surrounding the large meeting table, partly taken up by books awaiting cataloging or papers relating to projects under development or to be developed.

Having entered the Philosophy course at USP in 1968, Pablo Mariconda completed his undergraduate degree in 1971. Between 1972 and 1979, while completing his master's degree under the guidance of Oswaldo Porchat (1933-2017), he worked as a teaching assistant in the Philosophy course. Between 1980 and 1986, during his doctoral research, under the guidance of Professor João Paulo Monteiro (1938-2016), he was an assistant professor in the Philosophy Department at USP. After defending his thesis, he advanced in his career, becoming a full professor in the Philosophy Department. He retired in 2019 as a

¹ Paulo Tadeu da Silva is a Professor at the Federal University of ABC. Address: Arcturus (Jd. Antares), nº 3, Bloco Delta, Sala 207 Anchieta – São Bernardo do Campo, SP – CEP 09606070 – Brazil.

E-mail: paulo.tadeu@ufabc.edu.br

² Claudemir Roque Tossato is a Professor at the Federal University of São Paulo. Address: Estrada do Caminho Velho, 333, Jd. Nova Cidade, Guarulhos/SP – CEP 07252-312– Brazil.

E-mail: toclare@uol.com.br

³ Eduardo Salles de O. Barra is a Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the Federal University of Paraná - UFPR. Address: Rua Dr. Faivre, 405 – 6º andar – Ed. D. Pedro II – Curitiba, PR – CEP 80060-140 – Brazil. E-mail: barra@ufpr.br

full professor, after four decades dedicated to teaching and research, but remained active as a senior professor until his final days. Given the unusual dimension and immeasurable scope of his work and personality, as rightly remembered in the tribute paid by the Philosophy Department of USP—of which he was head for two terms—, his portrait will need to be constructed collectively, the fruit of different memories, drawn by many hands. After the impact of his passing, we decided to delve into our memories to highlight some elements that may contribute to the construction of that collective portrait.

His career was written with the same care and attention as his beautiful handwriting, which impeccably filled the classroom blackboard, where he enchanted students with his unparalleled clarity and teaching skills. His firm voice revealed the confidence of someone who had in-depth knowledge of the topics and authors he discussed. In him, the erudition of a researcher and the soul of a teacher always went hand in hand. Other fundamental traits of his personality were his unparalleled involvement and dedication to preparing classes, his accurate problematization of philosophical issues, and his construction of an argumentative line of exposition that combined conceptual rigor with historical and philosophical depth. That was the environment in which we first met Professor Pablo; what followed was a relationship of admiration, respect, gratitude, and deep friendship.

In 1990, we joined the second round of undergraduate research scholarship holders, who were part of Pablo's study group. The group met twice a week; on Mondays, we read and discussed texts on the History and Philosophy of Science; on Thursdays, we dedicated ourselves to seminars on Euclid's *Elements*. Those meetings determined our trajectories, both in our master's and doctoral research and in our teaching careers. We began these meetings by reading E. J. Dijksterhuis's book, *The Mechanization of the World Picture*. Something worth noting, which exemplifies both Pablo as a great tutor and a generous person dedicated to the training of researchers, was the way we read Dijksterhuis's work: as the majority were students who had little (or no) familiarity with academic texts in a foreign language, Pablo translated the original in English into Portuguese live and we followed along with the English text in hand. From that beginning, we gained a basis for translating texts from English into Portuguese. We were always amazed by his ability to translate fluently and simultaneously with the reading, striving for clarity and confidence. In the meetings about *The Elements*, each of the propositions in the thirteen books that make up the work was demonstrated in detail. Each member of the group was responsible for presenting the demonstration on the board, and it was not limited to the mere exposition of the proposition or problem in question but required the precise and rigorous justification of each of the steps of the demonstration. While Mondays were dedicated to improving knowledge about the history and philosophy of science, the Thursday meetings honed our argumentative skills. That training period allowed the group to acquire the basic elements that constitute the process of constituting modern science: the importance of geometry for 16th and 17th century thinking and the questions that contributed to the development of a new way of thinking about science. The seminars continued in that format for more than a decade, dedicated to the reading and discussion of other texts, such as, Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and the preprints of the debates on the interaction between science and values raised by Hugh Lacey and his interlocutors, including Pablo himself.

In recent years, these seminars have been held at the headquarters of the *Scientiae Studia* Philosophical Association. As our research matured, the meetings were also dedicated to discussing our own texts, especially chapters of master's dissertations or doctoral theses. Attentive and demanding criticism was always accompanied by the generosity and spirit of collectivity that prevailed in the study group. Few others know how to lead a group of students in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, as Pablo did, sealing sincere and lasting friendships, like ours. The meetings, held in a room with a long rectangular table or, in another, with rectangular tables forming a square, fostered the spirit of collectivity and cooperation that fueled our studies. Each of us could see the others around us, which

positioned us on the same level, even though Pablo was responsible for leading the discussions. That experience is an example of his immense dedication to the training of researchers, a concern that accompanied him until his departure, but that did not end with it. The magnitude of his work and commitment is evident in the large number of researchers trained in this way who not only entered various educational institutions, based in São Paulo, Paraná, Bahia, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and Pará, among others, but also in the fact that a good number of them have replicated the same experience of collective and cooperative training in those places, passing on much of what they learned both from his way of working and from interacting with other colleagues. The fruits of that dedication will still be reaped over the coming years since the multiplying effect of his example is far from exhausted.

During the period in which we participated in the study group, Pablo Mariconda's concerns focused on the detailed study of authors from the 16th and 17th centuries, although he also supervised other works that did not concern those centuries. It was during this participation that several members of the group began to develop research on Galileo, Kepler, Mersenne and Newton, for example. The group formed a very broad understanding of the so-called Scientific Revolution, including the sharing of bibliographical references, many of which were obtained during several days dedicated to research, journal by journal, of all the periodicals available in the Library of the Philosophy and Social Sciences courses at FFLCH/USP. His example always inspired the group's effervescence so that the commitment of each member flowed naturally.

Pablo produced a large number of articles focused on the formation process of modern science. He devoted himself especially to the works of Galileo, both those related to mechanics and those defending Copernicanism. He also wrote many articles and texts on the philosophy of technology and the question of science and values.

Another notable aspect of Pablo's work concerns the translations he left us, both those made for the collection *Os Pensadores (The Thinkers)* and those related to the work of Galileo, an author to whom he dedicated many years of his life. The first that deserves mention was made in partnership with his father, Letizio Mariconda. We refer to the translation of *Dircorsi e Dimostrazioni Matematiche intorno a due nuove scienze attenenti alla Meccanica ed ai Movimenti Locali*, published in 1985 by Ched Editorial and Editora Nova Stella. The Brazilian translation was entitled *Duas novas ciências de Galileu Galilei*. The second is the extensively commented translation of *Diálogo sobre os dois máximos sistemas do mundo Ptolomaico e Copernicano*, which has as its introduction the essay "O Diálogo e a condenação" (The Dialogue and the Condemnation). The translation, the introduction that contextualizes the text, and the explanatory notes constitute an impressive and exquisite piece of work. The first edition was published in 2001 by Discurso Editorial and its second edition in 2011 by the *Scientiae Studia* Philosophical Association and 34 publishing house. In addition to those translations, Pablo translated other texts and letters by Galileo, which are included in the *Scientiae Studia* journal of which he was the creator and editor-in-chief.

The journal *Scientiae Studia – Latin American Journal of Philosophy and History of Science* represents one of Pablo Mariconda's major projects. Created by him in 2002, its earliest issue was published in the first quarter of 2003. From 2003 to 2015, the journal published four issues per year and, in some years, special issues; in 2016 and 2017, its last two years, two issues were published each year, thus totaling 58 issues in its 14 years of existence. The *Scientiae Studia* journal published works by Brazilian and foreign researchers in the form of articles and reviews. In addition, a part of the journal was dedicated to publishing translations of scientific documents, such as correspondence and short scientific or philosophical treatises. In its 58 issues, the journal has covered the most diverse areas of science, such as physics, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, geology, and biology, as well as subjects related to the philosophy of technology and the sociology of science.

The dedication to Galileo's work, in addition to being the subject of articles, lectures and conferences, resulted in the book *Galileo and the New Physics*, co-authored with Júlio

Vasconcelos, one of his students. The first edition was published in 2006 by Odysseus publishing house. The second edition, revised and expanded, was published in 2020 by the *Scientiae Studia* Philosophical Association. With a well-constructed, didactic text with the necessary depth, it is an excellent book for a first approach to the work and life of Galileo Galilei.

From 2010 onwards, Pablo dedicated himself to the project of translating the *Discourse on the Method* and the related essays that accompanied it when it first appeared in 1637. Once again, this is a collective work, carried out by Pablo, César Augusto Battisti, Érico Andrade, Guilherme Rodrigues Neto, Marisa Carneiro de Oliveira Franco Donatelli and Paulo Tadeu da Silva. The translation project began in August 2010, during the 4th Seminar on History and Philosophy of Science, in Ilhéus/Bahia. In 2018, the translation was published, with the title *Discurso do método & Ensaios (Discourse on the Method & Essays)*, accompanied by the introductory essay “Science and Technique in Discourse on the Method & Essays by Descartes”, written by Pablo, and the explanatory notes to the Discourse and each of its essays, written by the translation team. This work is extremely important, as it is the first complete and annotated translation of the Cartesian text in its entirety since it includes the translation of the essays Dioptrics, Meteors and Geometry. In 2019, the translation was one of the books awarded the 5th ABEU Prize, well-deserved recognition for the work that was done. For Portuguese language readers, this translation is extremely important, because it brings together what the historiographical tradition has adopted as the Discourse on the Method – which, in fact, is only the introduction – and the author’s scientific production, in the same organic whole.

Pablo’s fundamental contribution to current research on science was the translation and publication of several works on the relationship and interaction between science and values. Of note is the collection Hugh Lacey produced, entitled *Values and Scientific Activity*, in three volumes published by *Scientiae Studia*, to which are added a series of articles by Lacey himself and his interlocutors published in successive issues of that journal. In addition to Lacey’s original contributions, both the publisher and the journal have published texts by several authors, both national and foreign, who discuss and problematize the place and role of scientific knowledge in society. A fundamental issue today is to understand and problematize the relationship between science and technology, enterprises that use rationality but involve values whose scope extends to the field of ethics, concerning the legitimacy or otherwise of the use of objective knowledge in the spheres of the social world. Pablo’s vision was always to bring bibliographical material to the Brazilian academic community, and the general public, that can help in the difficult task of demystifying science and technology—whose connections have become so strong that the neologism ‘technoscience’ has emerged—in this aspect as enterprises that isolate themselves from the social world and its problems, that disrupt the traditional standards of scientific and technological objectivity, and that have serious and harmful consequences for very many human beings. In other words, Pablo saw the *Scientiae Studia* Association as a space not only focused on the dissemination of texts aimed at the academic world but also as an action of great responsibility in the face of severe social transformations.

In 2008, Pablo formed the Philosophy, History and Sociology of Science and Technology Research Group at the IEA (Institute of Advanced Studies) at USP, promoting research and a large number of events, bringing together various researchers to present and discuss important science and technology issues.

All of his translation work would seem to be exclusively linked to the field of high-quality research, but that assessment would overlook the immense role that his translations play in the education of undergraduate students. They are the gateway to philosophical study and research. In that sense, research is aligned with teaching, two fundamental pillars of university life.

The void that his absence causes will be constantly filled by the perennial presence of the work and legacy that he built. A legacy that will remain alive in the memories of dozens of his advisees, his research and academic cooperation colleagues, the thousands of students who were able to attend his classes, and in the hearts of his friends and family.