

**Nomination for the Elisabeth of Bohemia Prize 2023**  
**Laura Aurora Benítez Grobet**

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Laura Aurora Benítez Grobet was born on August 13, 1944, in Mexico City. She studied Philosophy at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), where last March she was appointed Emerita Professor, the highest possible distinction at UNAM.

She has worked as a professor for over half a century, teaching college, undergraduate and graduate level courses in her three main areas of expertise: Modern European Philosophy, Novo-Hispanic Philosophy, and Philosophical Pedagogy. In 1984 she joined the Institute of Philosophical Research [Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas] at UNAM, where she has developed an extensive and original body of work that has granted her a spot among today's leading scholars in her fields of research.

Besides her ground-breaking work on Descartes and Cartesianism in the Spanish-speaking world, her writings on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz have been hailed as truly pioneering. In the words of Sarah Hutton, "Not only does it do credit to Mexico's most important female philosopher, but in publishing on Sor Juana, Prof. Benitez-Grobet anticipated the development of a new area of interest, the history of women philosophers, which is receiving world-wide attention today".

To describe Sor Juana as a "philosopher", as Professor Benítez did before anyone else, is not a minor achievement: although for centuries Sor Juana's writings have sparked the admiration of many a reader, hardly anyone noticed or took seriously the strictly philosophical dimension of her ideas. Going against the grain, Laura Benítez reconstructed Sor Juana's conception on the nature of knowledge and, within it, the role of understanding and sensitivity. Hence, where others had only seen wit, beauty and psychological depth, Laura Benítez identified a complex epistemological framework, in tune and on a par with the greatest thinkers of her time.

Stemming from these endeavors, the lifework of Laura Benítez includes 7 single-authored books, 27 edited volumes, and more than one hundred and fifty articles.

Throughout her lifetime, Professor Benítez has not only provided a role model for many female Philosophy students but has also actively promoted the academic careers of numerous women who, by her side, have formed and have been formed in a scholarly sisterhood. Thanks to Professor Benítez's encouragement, guidance and teaching, the group known as the "Cartesian girls" was organized.

In just recognition of her work, Laura Benítez has reaped many honors during the past few decades. One of the most significant in terms of the recognition of her research into and promotion of female philosophers is the edited volume *Filósofas de la Modernidad temprana y la Ilustración. Homenaje a Laura Benítez y José Antonio Robles* [Female Philosophers of Early Modernity and Enlightenment. A Tribute to Laura Benítez and José Antonio Robles], published in 2014 by two of her former students. In their Foreword, the authors describe Professor Benítez's Permanent Seminar as the starting point of their own project and, more importantly, as a space devoted to uprooting a most damaging prejudice: the prejudice of pretending that women do not belong to the History of Philosophy.

Other Festschriften include *La filosofía moderna en la obra de Laura Benítez* [Modern Philosophy in the Work of Laura Benítez] (Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, 2013) and *Cincuenta años de investigación y docencia. Homenaje a Laura Benítez (Fifty Years of Research and Teaching. Tribute to Laura Benítez)* (Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas, 2023).