

'Entra mayo y sale abril':
Medieval Spanish Literary and Folklore
Studies in Memory of Harriet Goldberg

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Preface

THIS VOLUME HAS A curious history, as homage volumes go. In the year 2000—the idea was really Joe’s—we set out to put together three sessions at the Thirty-Fifth International Medieval Congress, the annual May fête sponsored by the Medieval Institute of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in honor of the long, distinguished and—thankfully—still active career of Samuel G. Armistead. We got the green light from the Congress organizers and set about our work. One of the speakers we wanted to attract was Harriet Goldberg, whose dissertation had been directed by Sam at the University of Pennsylvania. Harriet was a friend of ours and, like us, the moderators, and participants in the multiple-session homage, she was a great admirer of Sam and all that he represents to so many generations of students and scholars in the United States and throughout the world of Hispano-Medieval and of Judeo-Spanish studies.

At that moment, we knew that Harriet was courageously fighting the cancer that would eventually take her from us and feared that she might not be able to travel from Villanova (near Philadelphia) to participate. But this was Sam, she said, and participate she would! And she did, splendidly. Harriet sailed in to Kalamazoo, a bold hat skirting the issue of her hair loss, full of the energy and laughter that we all so dearly miss now, and read an elegant paper, prepared with her usual humor and grace. It was warmly received by everyone, and by none more so than by her beloved mentor. Contrary to what many of us expected of a cancer patient, it was Harriet who, typically and openly, put everyone at ease with her mirthful sallies and amusing stories.

Not long after this successful event, it occurred to us—really Joe’s idea, again—that we might take good advantage of Harriet’s positive attitude and presence to propose a special session at a later International Medieval Congress to honor *her*. This proposal was accepted and sponsored by IMANA (the Ibero Medieval Association of North America, founded in 1988 to increase the Hispano-medievalist presence every May in Kalamazoo). We kept the project a secret as long as we could. When Harriet learned of our *fait accompli* and that she

was to be *la invitada de honor*, she was surprised, gratified and, we know, thrilled. Excited about the honor, she began making plans to be with us in May of 2002. The three speakers were to be Samuel G. Armistead who, despite numerous commitments, knew that he could not be there, E. Michael Gerli, a Commonwealth Professor at the University of Virginia and great admirer of Harriet's scholarly work over the years, and Manuel da Costa Fontes who, as was Harriet, is a folklore specialist and concentrates on the Portuguese *romanceiro*. Joseph T. Snow, Harriet's friend of many years, would moderate.

Alas, what was planned as a homage to Harriet Goldberg's many and solid scholarly accomplishments, owing to Harriet's slipping the bonds of this earth on November 3, 2001, did in fact take place but, instead, as a memorial to her lasting memory, on the 2nd of May, 2002. Harriet's two daughters, Joan and Laura, along with two of Harriet's granddaughters, conscious of how special a celebration of Harriet's scholarly life this was to be, and aware, too, of how much this event meant to their mother and grandmother, made special plans to be in Kalamazoo to represent the Goldberg family. They attended the planned tribute and offered the appreciation of the entire Goldberg family in a moving conclusion to the session. Joan and Laura later attended a private dinner with the session organizers and participants and we traded stories: what Harriet meant to them as mother, counselor and friend: what Harriet was to us as colleague, friend, and scholar. As a result, we learned that Harriet Goldberg was a much more multi-faceted personality than any one of us realized.

In the aftermath of this event, so indelibly stamped with the still commanding presence of the late Harriet Goldberg, we felt that the proper, ideal end to the memorial session would be a volume of studies reflecting Harriet's scholarly interests—medieval Spanish folk narratives and epic legends, the pan-Hispanic *romancero*, medieval antifeminism and anti-Semitism, proverbs, riddles, and so on. With this in mind, we began to compile a selective list of some of her numerous friends, colleagues and admirers in order to invite them to contribute. And thus this volume was born.

Although Alan Deyermund wanted to attend the memorial session he could not, owing to a conflict in his native Europe. However, both he and Sam Armistead published moving accounts of Harriet Goldberg's invaluable contributions to Hispano-Medieval studies over the previous three decades. We are grateful to the *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* and to *La Corónica* for their gracious permission to reprint them here.

Professor Fontes' contribution is the one presented at the original tribute. Professors Armistead and Gerli preferred to contribute with newly crafted pieces.

The remaining authors in this volume wrote their studies with the pre-established criteria in mind, thus helping us attain the goal of a thematically unified and highly useful collection of studies to honor the memory of a truly distinguished hispanist, Harriet Goldberg.

To each of the contributors to this volume go our heartfelt thanks for the constant and patient collaboration with us as we worked to create the best possible memorial volume. Our thanks, too, to Tom Lathrop, who accepted, in his typically gracious manner, the responsibility to publish this volume in the Juan de la Cuesta series, almost before we had finished our presentation to him.

In many ways, Harriet Goldberg abides with us still. We know that Harriet—who never expected this volume—would be surprised, thrilled and gratified. She would also be proud to think that her work had inspired such a dignified assemblage of studies. Owing to the extent and influence of Harriet's contributions to Hispano-Medieval studies, we take comfort in knowing they will not be the last.

M. C. F.

J. T. S.

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