Necrology

Alan David Deyermann,

1932-2009
Alan Deyemond writing a bibliographical reference for a doctoral student in León, September 2005.
“AMIGO DE SUS AMIGOS . . . QUÉ SESO PARA DISCRETOS”:

IN MEMORIAM ALAN DAVID DEYERMOND

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In the preface to *Hispanic Studies in Honor of Alan D. Deyermond: A North American Tribute*, John S. Miletich explained that the volume was not a retirement homage for Alan, adding, “it would be difficult—really, impossible—to imagine him retired in any sense of the word” (1). Although Alan’s official retirement from Queen Mary College came in 1997, he in no sense retired from the world of Hispano-medievalism. Indeed, liberated from the administrative obligations of an academic position, Alan was able to dedicate himself entirely to the pursuits he loved: the dissemination of his research through publications and presentations; the continued success of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, the annual Colloquium, and the publication of the Papers of the Hispanic Medieval Research Seminar; his frequent trips to Spain to attend conferences, participate in defenses and receive honors; and his contributions to the work of students and colleagues, both junior and senior, whether through written and oral critiques, extensive and meticulous editorial assistance, or words of encouragement over a glass of wine. His energy seemed boundless and his productivity endless, which is why as I sit in a hotel in St Albans writing these words over two weeks after his death, it still seems impossible that he’s gone.
Alan was born in 1932 in Cairo, where he spent the first four years of his life. He learned to speak English and Arabic with equal ease, but lost his facility in the latter when he moved to England. He attended Quarry Bank High School in Liverpool, moving shortly after the war to the Channel Islands where he attended Victoria College in Jersey. He began his university studies at Pembroke College at Oxford by reading French and Spanish, finding a passion for Hispanomedeival studies in his final year. He thus pursued a B. Litt. in medieval Spanish literature under the direction of Peter Russell. At the age of twenty-four, he assumed the position of Assistant Lecturer at Westfield College and by 1969 held the title of Professor there. He had a deep loyalty and love for Westfield, which later merged with Queen Mary College and moved to Mile End Road, and he served his Department and College well as Senior Tutor, Director of Graduate Studies, Head of Department, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and Vice Principal.

The high esteem in which colleagues across Hispanic and medieval studies held Alan is reflected in the numerous accolades he earned. He served as President of the London Medieval Society (1970-74), the British Branch of

Alan Deyermond receiving the Premio Internacional Elio Antonio de Nebrija in 1994.
the International Courtly Literature Society (1974-77), the International Courtly Literature Society (1977-1983), and the Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas (1993-95). Among his many honors are: Corresponding Member, Hispanic Society of America (1973); Corresponding Fellow, Medieval Academy of America (1979); Académico Correspondiente, Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona, (1982); Honorary President, International Courtly Literature Society (1983); Member, Hispanic Society of America (1985); Socio de Honor, Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval (1985); DLitt, University of Oxford (1985); Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (1987); Fellow of the British Academy (1988); Premio Internacional Elio Antonio de Nebrija (1994); Doctor of Humane Letters, Honoris causa, Georgetown University (1995); Doctor Honoris causa, Universitat de València (2005); Académico Correspondiente of the Real Academia Española (2009). Before he died, Alan learned that he would be named Doctor Honoris causa by the Universidad de Granada. He was honored with four homage volumes: the aforementioned North American Tribute; The Medieval Mind: Hispanic Studies in Honour of Alan Deyermond, edited by Ian Macpherson and Ralph Penny; ‘Quien hubiese tal ventura’: Medieval Hispanic Studies in Honour of Alan Deyermond, edited by Andrew M. Beresford; Juan Ruiz: Arcipreste de Hita y el ‘Libro de Buen Amor’: II Congreso Internacional; Homenaje a Alan Deyermond, edited by Francisco Toro Ceballos, Louise Haywood, Francisco Bautista, and Geraldine Coates. In addition to the II Congreso Internacional in Alan's honor, there have been special sessions dedicated to him at the Congress of Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo (three in 2006, one in 1999) and at the Seminario sobre Teatro Medieval in Elche (2000).

Alan worked hard on behalf of the profession, serving as General Editor for Critical Guides to Spanish Texts, for Research Bibliographies and Checklists, and for Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, which he founded. He was the Open Forum Editor for Journal of Hispanic Research, and served on the editorial boards of Bulletin Hispanique, Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, Celestinesca, Colección Támesis, Diablotexto, Donaire, Hispanic Review, Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, Iberoromania, Medievalia, Quaderni Ibero-Americani,
Revista de Filología Española, and Romance Philology. He lectured widely throughout Europe and the Americas and held visiting professorships in Argentina, Canada, England, Mexico, Spain, and the United States. Befitting his passion for teaching, several of these professorships came after his retirement, including an annual course he taught for the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. He directed or co-directed at least 50 doctoral dissertations in Great Britain, Spain, the United States, and Italy, helping form generations of scholars.

With his first study, “The Index to Petrarch’s Latin Works as a Source of La Celestina”, published in 1954, Alan’s research career spanned 55 years. Trying to assess, or even just to summarize, his extraordinarily extensive and complex corpus of work is a daunting task. For most scholars, we can say that he was a specialist in the medieval epic or she was an expert on Berceo. Alan, however, cannot be easily categorized, for he did it all. He wrote on Celestina, Libro de buen amor, epic poetry, the ballad, Berceo and quaderna vía poetry, sentimental fiction (a phrase he coined), lyric poetry (from cantigas d’amigo to kharjas to courtly lyric), Catalan poetry, theater, the Bible in medieval texts, women writers and women’s voice, historiography, hagiography, lost literature, and more. He was, in essence, a specialist in Iberian medieval studies, but even that assessment is reductive given that he published several Golden Age studies as well.

Rather than letting down the reader, and more importantly Alan, by a feeble evaluation of his vast production, I prefer to focus on what I see as his personal attributes and passions as reflected in his research. In a 2006 interview in El País, Alan, borrowing the famous line from L. P. Hartley’s novel The Go-Between, said that the past is a foreign country and added, “después de haber estudiado tanto la Edad Media, cuando leo una obra medieval no la leo con ojos de hombre medieval, pero sí soy consciente de cómo la habría leído un medieval” (qtd. in Cruz). Alan was passionate about reconstructing for twentieth- and twenty-first-century readers that lost country and trying to make us aware of how a medieval audience might

1 For a fine evaluation of Alan’s contributions to Hispanomedieval studies, see Rafael Beltrán.
have understood a particular work or genre. In *A Literary History of Spain: The Middle Ages* (1971), which was translated and expanded as *Historia de la literatura española, I: La edad media* (1973), Alan showed his extraordinary breadth and depth of knowledge, his open-mindedness and independence of thought, and his informative skills by mapping out the literature of the Middle Ages, making it accessible to students and specialists alike. He did not focus on what from a twentieth-century perspective were considered the highpoints of medieval Iberia, but on all medieval literature so that we might understand each work and genre as a medieval audience would. In doing this, he expanded the canon to include such works and writers as Leonor López de Córdoba and her *Memorias*. Now in its nineteenth printing, the Spanish version has become a standard reference work for students of medieval Spain. Alan complemented his literary history by participating in Francisco Rico’s project, *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*. In volume I, *Edad Media* (1980a) and *Edad Media: Primer Suplemento* (1991a), Alan sought to make another foreign country, the criticism of the Middle Ages, more accessible. He offered clear and succinct evaluations of the criticism related to each genre or work, and carefully selected and edited the critical studies included. These volumes proved to be essential starting points for the critical examination of medieval Iberia. In another attempt to give a more accurate view of the Peninsula in the Middle Ages, Alan compiled inventories of lost literature, texts that only survive through references to them in extant works. In numerous articles and notes, he offers proof for the existence of a wide range of texts whose whereabouts are now unknown: *cancionero* poetry (2003c), historiography from the Trastamaran period (1986b), texts by Jews and *conversos* (1996c), hagiography (1990c), Arthurian works (1997d), Portuguese literature (1986c, 1995g), and so on. In conjunction with the Premio Nebrija, the Universidad de Salamanca offered Alan the opportunity to publish a book, and he chose lost literature as its subject: *La literatura perdida de la Edad Media castellana: catálogo y estudio, I: Épica y romances* (1995a). In this volume, Alan discussed the causes for the loss of texts (war, censorship, fire, physical wear, cultural disinterest, etc.) and the methodology for reconstructing the horizon of lost literature, and then provided evidence for the existence for twenty-nine epic texts and
thirty-eight ballads. Given that the debate over lost texts is especially crucial in the discussion of the epic, Alan’s choice of topic was courageous and his findings significant.

In many ways, Alan was a walking encyclopedia of medieval studies. He had a broad understanding not only of medieval literature, culture, and history but of the bibliography relating to the period. His extraordinary grasp of bibliography is legend. Students and colleagues were amazed by his ability to cite not only an author and his text but often the actual page number. Many of us recall Alan telling us to get a book off a shelf in his office or from the library and turn to a certain page (“page 263, no. 264”), and he was spot-on. While Alan’s offices at Westfield and at Queen Mary and his study at home gave the impression of extraordinary disorder, he was miraculously able to locate the book or the offprint he needed. He was a demanding editor and bibliographer, always seeking accuracy and completeness. His attention to bibliographic detail is seen throughout his scholarship, and most especially in his bibliographies. In some people, such attention to detail might be
irritating and persnickety, but not in Alan. As Nicholas Round observes:

Bibliographical completeness, textual accuracy and logical rigour did not make him a pedant. They were always a means to understanding, never an end. Nor was his a conservative scholarship, bringing familiar controversies to predictable order. Rather, it was dialogic: argument ensured continuing debate by redefining its terms. His concern with the elusive and discontinuous -orality, folklore, lost literature, mixed genres- brought to the foreground "the distinction between evidence and inherited assumptions".

So did his openness to new critical approaches. Something could always be learned – from linguistics, narratology, socio-economic criticism, the visual arts. Medieval studies, after all, were interdisciplinary. "One must be both a critic and a historian", he thought. (2009)

Alan’s daughter Ruth told me that every ten years or so, he made major changes in his life and worldview, such as choosing to become a vegetarian when he was fifty. Another of these transformations was his resolution to be a feminist around the age of forty, a decision reflected in his rearing of an independent and strong daughter and in his support of the ascension of women in the Anglican Church. In his research, he also worked to include women in the canon or to enhance their position therein. He included evaluations of López de Córdoba and her Memorias in several studies (1971, 1973a, 1983a, 1992h), analyzed in detail the poetry of Florencia Pinar (1978b, 1983a), and made important contributions to the study of Teresa de Cartagena (1976-77, 1983a, 1992h), whom he considered the first Spanish feminist. He offered a feminist reading of Celestina (1995e) as well as studies on female characters and the female narrative voice (for example, 1980 [1983], 1992h, 1993d, 2005i). By including women’s texts and focusing on women’s voices in his teaching, Alan brought his goal of improving the twentieth- and twenty-first-century perception of medieval women into the classroom. I recall a lecture he gave to one of my undergraduate seminars on women’s voice in the lyric. When one woman objected to his conclusion that some lyric may have actually been authored by women, Alan smiled, said in a good-humoured way, “What, do you think that women only started thinking and writing with Jane Austen?” and then proceeded to explain in detail his views and methodology. In characteristically generous fashion, he had provided the class with an extensive bibliography on the lyric; the student undertook a research project
on women’s voice in the lyric and ultimately shared Alan’s view.

A devout man, Alan was an active parishioner of St Peter’s Church in St Albans. His knowledge of the Bible was vast, as may be gleaned from a review of his bibliography. While many of his studies benefited from his intimate familiarity with the Bible, several focus exclusively on the treatment of biblical material in individual works. Alan examined, for example, the specific uses of the bible in the Poema de Fernán González (1990f) and in the work of Juan del Encina (1999b), analyzed Old Testament allusions in the cancionero (1989c) and in two cantigas d’amigo (1992f), and considered biblical parody as a tactic in the epic (2000g) and the biblical references as unifying elements in medieval literature (1996g).

As a glimpse at Alan’s bibliography shows, Alan wrote extensively of animal imagery and the bestiary. When I first met him in the late 1970s, he was lecturing at Berkeley on the bestiary, and the title of his speech upon receiving the honoris causa doctorate from the Universitat de València was El bestiario poético en la Valencia bajomedieval. Alan’s study of the medieval bestiary reflects his lifelong love of animals and his concern for their welfare. Anyone who visited Alan at home or at the university surely met one of his poodles. I knew Toby and then Tom, both handsome standard poodles, and enjoyed walking with them and Alan on Hampstead Heath. The dogs attended Alan’s seminars, met Alan’s visitors in his office, and shared tea and biscuits (of the human variety) with them. Alan spoke with them as equals, and they had an air of perros sabios about them, which didn’t seem surprising considering all the discussions they heard and the books and papers heaped around them.

Alan’s unparalleled generosity is well known. In conducting his funeral service, Margaret Tinsley, a Reader at St. Peter’s, commented that he was her “most valued and respected sermon commentator”. Smiles appeared on many faces and heads nodded, for so many of us knew precisely what she meant. Many of Alan’s contributions to Hispanism and medieval studies do not appear on his curriculum vitae, for he spent countless hours helping others advance their own research. In A North American Tribute, Miletich noted that the contributors were then mid-career colleagues who had benefited from Alan’s “extraordinary generosity towards his associates” (1).
A blog set up in memory of Alan by Rosanna Cantavella of the Universitat de València has allowed colleagues from around the world to remember Alan; his kindness and his willingness to give of his time and knowledge are tributes that appear throughout the commentaries.

As might be expected, this generosity translated into Alan’s published work. He was greatly concerned with promoting the careers of junior scholars and co-wrote articles with some of us. When he invited me to work with him on an interpretation of *Libre dels tres reys d’Orient* (1984e), I was stunned. He was, after all, the great medievalist and I was a mere graduate student. He carefully explained what he felt I had to contribute, and he treated me as a peer. According to our strengths, we equally researched and wrote the article, and in the process he taught me a lot about the drafting and placement of research.

The esteem in which Alan held his colleagues is also reflected in his publications. It was extraordinarily important to him that valued scholars and friends be properly honored and remembered, and to this end he undertook the editing of numerous homage and memorial volumes as well as the posthumous publication of several studies of colleagues. When I called Alan to tell him of John K. Walsh’s illness, within minutes he determined that we had to do something to show Jack how important he was to us, and by the end of the conversation we had determined that there would be an homage volume on hagiography (1990a). Upon his return from a conference in Spain a week later, Alan had recruited most of the contributors and tapped Brian Dutton to edit the volume with us. While Brian, Alan and I had well-defined editorial tasks, it was largely owing to Alan’s determination that contributors met our deadlines and we were able to get a bound volume to Jack so that he could have the articles read to him. Although the final text did not go to press until after Jack’s death, Alan knew how important it was for Jack to see and hold the volume. In a similar vein, Alan did not want to bid his friend farewell by telephone, so he and Ann traveled to Berkeley to spend time with Jack.

In his work, Alan also showed himself to be generous in his recognition of his debt to other scholars. For example, he dedicated *La literatura perdida de la Edad Media castellana: catálogo y estudio, I: Épica y romances* (1995a) to
his dear friend, Samuel G. Armistead:

Este tomo va dedicado a Samuel G. Armistead, conocedor como nadie de la épica y el romancero hispánicos. Es el Menéndez Pidal de nuestros días. No siempre estoy de acuerdo con él, pero me apoyo siempre en sus investigaciones y aprecio siempre la generosa ayuda que proporciona a otros investigadores. (15)

In a similar fashion, in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española, I: Edad Media* (1980a), he acknowledged his, indeed our, debt to the pioneers of medieval studies:

El presente volumen se publica en memoria de Marcel Bataillon, Américo Castro, Ernst Robert Curtius, H. J. Chaytor, Étienne Gilson, Otis H. Green, María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Tomás Navarro Tomás, Pedro Salinas, Leo Spitzer y Samuel M. Stern. (vii)

While he did not necessarily agree with all the findings of these scholars and he well knew that some of their research had been surpassed by later scholarship, in dedicating the volume to these figures Alan was sending a message to us all: Respect our roots, for without these foundational scholars we would not exist.

Generosity was a Deyermond hallmark, and he meant it to be. He was generous with his time, resources and knowledge, at times sacrificing energy he could well have spent on his own work in order to assist others with theirs. Through his generosity, he intended to help others, especially young scholars, but he also hoped that others would learn from his example. In a 1997 interview in the journal *Donaire*, Alan said:

Es conveniente también aceptar la responsabilidad de la profesión – y no sólo aceptarla sino también ofrecer a otros lo que, de joven, te han ofrecido a ti. Una de las cosas que me han producido más alegrías en los últimos veinte años es ver como jóvenes a quienes he ayudado un poco (leyendo sus originales, ofreciendo consejos, procurando datos solicitados), en llegando a ser catedráticos, ayudan de forma similar a los jóvenes de hoy. Por el contrario, una de las cosas que me han dado más pena es ver que algunos pocos jóvenes a los que he ayudado se sienten ahora demasiado importantes y sin tiempo para atender a los jóvenes de hoy. (Qtd. in Macpherson and Penny ix)

As Alan defined it, his generosity was based in a philosophy of “pay it forward”. He had benefited from the largesse of others when he was young.
He was therefore generous himself to young scholars and he expected those who received his kindness to pass it on to other generations. For Alan, this was a professional and moral obligation.

From his long list of publications and accomplishments, one might be tempted to conclude that Alan was completely immersed in the study of the Middle Ages, but nothing could be farther from the truth. He was keenly interested in, and often critical of, the world around him. A man who took scriptural teachings to heart, he was disturbed by economic and social inequality, finding it abhorrent that the rich and powerful could live so lavishly while many couldn’t even scrape out a living. An avid follower of politics, little passed Alan’s attention or comment. As a resident of Florida, I received numerous calls and e-mails following the 2000 presidential election, but Alan was my most frequent correspondent. He was at first amused by the events, then dumbfounded, and finally angry. In the years following that election, I don't think we had a single conversation in which he didn’t have some sharp (often humorous) comment about George W. Bush; on my recent visit to St. Albans, Ruth pulled out a calendar of Bush “witticisms” that Alan kept next to a chair in the Deyermond sitting room. Alan viewed the war in Iraq as unjustifiable and illegal, and seemed equally furious with his government as with mine. Although he generally felt that we moderns had a much better life than the medievals, on occasion he found that medieval values were superior. He noted, for example, that while there were surely injustices during the Spanish Inquisition, it was governed by rules and a Guantánamo would never have been tolerated.

In his personal life, Alan enjoyed an unusually close and warm relationship with his wife and daughter. He and Ann met as students of nineteen at Oxford, and anyone who ever saw them together knew that he deeply loved and respected her. They complemented and challenged each other nicely. Ruth, who is very much her father’s daughter in intelligence and attitude, brought Alan great joy. She is a lecturer in the War Studies Department at King's College, and Alan was immensely proud of her and her accomplishments.

As a scholar, a teacher, a mentor, a friend, Alan is irreplaceable. Joseph T. Snow, a valued friend and colleague of Alan, closed his reminiscence on the
memorial site with these words:

La mía, y la nuestra, pérdida, casi no hay palabras para expresarla adecuadamente. Los congresos, los países atravesados, los honores recibidos, la originalidad de sus publicaciones, la muchedumbre que hoy y el día de mañana seguirá lamentando la ausencia de esta gran persona, siempre sonriente, siempre generosa, siempre sencilla, todas estas fases de su extraordinaria vida marcarán por muchos años más el legado de quien fue para todos el perfecto amigo. (Cantavella)

Alan was indeed the perfect friend, generous with his time, his energy, his knowledge, his tea and sherry, his rib-crushing hugs.

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Alan D. Deyermond

This bibliography has been compiled using the following sources: Alan’s 2006 curriculum vitae, graciously provided by Ruth Deyermond; the bibliographies included in A North American Tribute (3-13) and The Medieval Mind (xiii-xxiii); and OCLC FirstSearch. Every attempt has been made to assure that this bibliography is complete, but there are surely some oversights. Alan’s CV has numerous incomplete entries and some enigmatic notations which were surely space holders to remind Alan to add a complete bibliographic reference. Some of these have been easy to resolve (e.g., “Teodor”, “Pedro Marcuello”) while others remain mysteries (e.g., “Complutense”). Since Alan did not include reviews and privately published material in his CV, and they are not registered in online catalogs, they have been excluded from this bibliography.

Although Alan objected to the MLA format for bibliographies and citations, La corónica style requires it. His works have been arranged in chronological order, however, with the letters a, b, etc., used to distinguish multiple entries in a single year, according to the order in which they appear here.

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Connolly


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