

Consuelo López-Morillas

Professor of Spanish and Portuguese; Adjunct Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

An international flair and the love of languages mark the career and the life of Consuelo López-Morillas. She will not be attending this year's reception in honor of retiring faculty because she will be in Madrid, Spain, directing a year-long study abroad program. And this sojourn comes a year after she spent six months in Cairo, Egypt, researching classical Arabic literature and brushing up on colloquial Arabic.

The daughter of a distinguished Spanish scholar and an American mother who is also an accomplished translator, Consuelo López-Morillas was born in the United States but has spent long periods of her life in Spain, which is also the birthplace of her husband, IU professor emeritus of geology Enrique Merino. Consuelo was educated at Bryn Mawr College, from which she received her B.A. in 1965, and the University of California at Berkeley, receiving a Ph.D. in Romance philology in 1974. At Berkeley, and later in Madrid, she also studied classical Arabic.

She began her professional career as assistant professor in the Department of Romance Languages at The Ohio State University, where she taught between 1974 and 1977 and to which she returned for two terms in 1979 to teach in their Arabic program. By 1977, however, she had already settled in Bloomington, and here she rose through the ranks of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese with a promotion to associate professor in 1982 and to full rank in 1994. In that year she became adjunct professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC) and in 1997 a full member.

One of her colleagues in the latter department, Professor Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, who chaired NELC at the time Consuelo joined it, has this to say about our colleague:

"During my 20 years at IU Bloomington, I have considered it my good fortune to have Consuelo as a colleague, for reasons both academic and institutional. Early on, she formed a bridge between the Departments of Spanish and Portuguese and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, most palpably through her seminars on Andalusian Arabic poetry and on one of her specializations, the hybrid muwashshah, a classical Arabic lyrical poem whose closing line—termed kharjah—is often a quotation in colloquial Arabic or—to the delight of Romance scholars—in Iberian romance, of which it constitutes the earliest extant examples. Less obvious was her continued support of the NELC department, always characterized by the utmost professionalism and integrity. Her judicious and diplomatic intervention with the administration of the College of Arts and Sciences at a time when the very existence of the NELC department was threatened was a key factor in its survival. As I feel the greatest personal gratitude, so too is IU indebted to the principled stand that she took. Academically, she serves as a model in her commitment to intellectual growth, most recently demonstrated in her reimmersion in Arabic language studies, this with a goal of devoting her retirement to a deeper engagement with the great classical Arabic Qur'an commentaries."

Within the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Consuelo taught courses on Spanish language and literature as well as linguistics, for which courses she drew on her philological and historical preparation. As a scholar Consuelo soon developed an interest in *aljamiado*, the language of a corpus of medieval texts written in Spanish but using Arabic characters. The *aljamiado* texts are mostly religious, and Consuelo has published three books editing, comparing, and studying a number of *aljamiado* versions of the *Qur'an* and commentaries on the sacred book or on the Prophet Mohammad. Professor López-Morillas has been active as well in the compilation of a critical bibliography of contemporary scholarship on the *kharjah*. She is also the author of 24 articles, touching for the most part on Hispano-Arabic topics, an important and rich area of research since the Iberian peninsula, known then as Al-Andalus, was under Arabic domination for seven centuries, that is, for most of the middle ages.

Consuelo's scholarly reputation has resulted in her being invited to give lectures at such universities as Emory, Chicago, Yale, Vanderbilt, Virginia, and at the Middle East Institute in Washington, D.C. She has also been invited to lecture in Spain, the United Kingdom, and Jordan. Consuelo's career culminated in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese with her service as acting chair (2000–2001) and then chair (2001–2006). In that capacity she oversaw many changes in the department and was responsible for attracting to IU a good number of the faculty who are now our colleagues. The six years during which she served as department chair revealed a colleague who consistently modeled excellence in research, teaching, and service, who nurtured our large and growing department with quiet support, and who provided the kind of leadership that resulted in a sustained period of vibrant intellectual life.

I imagine that, when her duties in Madrid and her time as an active IU professor come to an end in late June of this year, Consuelo will return to Bloomington, though I am sure her *Wanderlust* will not abate and her travels will continue. She has also of late rekindled her interest in musical performance and has begun singing with a group called Al-Andalus that specializes in some of the Hispano-Arabic materials that have informed Consuelo's career. Hers will be an active retirement as she continues her research, and also an esthetically enriching one as well.

Josep Miquel Sobrer