LIMINAL BODIES: BOUNDARIES, TRANSGRESSION, AND GENDER IN PAN-MEDITERRANEAN CHAPBOOKS

Roxanna Colón-Cosme
Haverford College

From the late fifteenth century and well into the twentieth, small, brief, inexpensive pamphlets, known as *pliegos sueltos*, were one of the primary sources of information and entertainment in the Iberian Peninsula.[1]

These unassuming publications usually contained *romances, glosas de romance*, songs, accounts of shipwrecks, battles, weddings, natural disasters, and other forms of popular literature.[2] Beyond the Iberian Peninsula, publications like the *librikos de romansas*—brief booklets written in Judeo-Spanish using Hebrew script (i.e., *aljamiado*)—left a record of the popular ballads sung among the Sephardic community living in the Mediterranean. These popular and ephemeral publications—sixteenth century Iberian *pliegos sueltos* and twentieth century Sephardic *librikos de romansas*—appropriated and refashioned the contents of the medieval *romancero viejo* and similarly sang about lovers and heartbreak, explored the war between Moors and Christians and represented [3]liminal spaces of war, conflict, and negotiation.

Something interesting about these chapbooks is that whether they are narrating a shipwreck or commemorating the events of the so-called "Reconquista," the representation of spaces of interaction between gender was commonplace. In this article, we will explore how these publications that spanned across time—from the late fifteenth to the twentieth century—and space—from the Iberian Peninsula to the Mediterranean—depicted gender and gender roles. We will intern into spaces where women are seen as victims of the geopolitical context, regarded as spoils of war, involved in disreputable sexual relationships, or engaging in masculine-labeled behaviors. I believe the study of liminal experiences from a gendered perspective, focusing on how each gender recognizes their incumbent sociopolitical boundaries and means of transgressing them, is integral to understanding one of the main thematic concerns of pan-Mediterranean chapbooks: gender interactions.

Liminal is defined in the dictionary as the transitional or intermediate point between two conditions, stages, or periods. In anthropology, liminality has been described as the middle stage of a rite of passage where the individual is no longer in a pre-ritual status, but they have not yet transitioned to their new post-ritual stage.[4]

I understand liminal as what lies between a geopolitical border and also as the transitional periods or circumstances in which the boundaries between one thing and another are completely erased. Liminal represents both the limits and unrestrictedness of an experience. Liminality can be gendered and understood as the liminal experiences associated with and triggered by gender or as the blurring of the confines of gender. Through the study of gender liminalities, we may explore, for instance, how the body interacts with interstitial spaces or how men and women conform or break with social boundaries and negotiate imposed gender roles. In exploring gender in these Iberian and Mediterranean brief publications, we must weigh in the purpose of these texts, their intended audience, and the reasoning behind their chapbook format. Most importantly, since I believe that the brief pages and amusing contents of the *pliegos sueltos* and the *librikos de romansas* move in the uncertain space of the liminal, my analysis of gender in pan-Mediterranean chapbooks will focus precisely on the ambiguity, hybridity, and overall distress of women living liminal experiences in a geopolitical or social border.

Spoils of War: Negotiating Gender in Warfare

One of the main topics of the *romancero* was the medieval past of the "Reconquista." Therefore, the glosses or variants, printed in *pliegos sueltos* and inspired by the medieval *romancero*, brought to the minds of their readers past stories of warfare and geopolitical instability. Encouraged by this historical-literary space, in 1525 the glossator Francisco de Lora composed a gloss inspired by the famous medieval Romance del rey moro que perdió Valencia, "Helo helo por do viene / el moro por la calçada" (Lora 3).[5] The story takes place in a Valencia recently conquered by the Cid, Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, and features a Moorish king, probably King Bucar of Morocco, attempting to regain the lost city. In the *glosa*, the city of Valencia is characterized as a woman and contested between the Christian and Moorish forces. Moreover, the depiction of Valencia as a territory-body disputed between two intrinsically masculine forces is restated in the interactions between men and women in the text.

In his attempt of avenging the loss of Valencia, the Moorish king decides to take advantage of the female community of his adversary: "contra la real usança / me haze tomar vengança / delas muy flacas mugeres" (Lora 4).[6] More specifically, the Muslim king intended to capture both the wife and daughter of the Cid: "su muger doña ximena / sera de mi cativada," and "su hija Urraca hernando / sea mi enamorada" (Lora 4).[7] In this space of political instability, the female body takes center stage as a weapon to inflict damage on the enemy. Dishonoring the women works as a sort of reparations for the lost space of Valencia, seen as feminine:

> Partese mi corazon
>
> en saber Valencia mia
>
> que toda mi perdicion
>
> este tu nuevo patron
>
> la convierte en alegria. (Lora 4) [8]

The Moorish king tries to seduce Urraca as part of his (re)conquest strategy. Simultaneously, the Cid, Urraca as part of his (re)conquest strategy. Simultaneously, the Cid, Urraca's father, has asked her to seduce and distract the Muslim king from an imminent and secret attack:

> aquel moro hide [perro]
>
> detene melo en palabra.
>
> Fingireys tenerle fe
>
> mostrandole mil favores
>
> porque mas credito os de. (Lora 5) [9]

Spectators of a double cross, we witness how the Moorish king and Urraca are deceptively falsifying love as a means to secure the political territory.

The woman's body becomes a device to forge the war between Moors and Christians. For the Moorish king, the attempted capture of Urraca's body would dishonor the Cid; similarly, the Cid turned the body of his own daughter into bait to neutralize the advances of the Muslim king. The border is negotiated through the weaponization of the female body—as a captive and as bait. The woman's body—in lieu of the territory of Valencia—is thus exploited by men as part of their geopolitical transaction. However, reminiscent of Valencia, the woman's body also resists the conquest attempt. Ultimately, the Moorish king and the Cid are on two sides of a border, and the body of Urraca—and, by extension, the territory of Valencia—is stuck in a liminal space of negotiation where the female body is exploited and threatened by men's desires and geopolitical objectives.

In another *pliego suelto* of the sixteenth century, we find a gloss to the medieval *Romance del asalto de Baeza*, also known as the *Romance de Pero Díaz*, "Moricos los mis moricos / los que ganays mi soldada" (Peralta264).[10] The *romance* narrates the historical assault planned by the Moorish community against the city of Baeza in 1407. The glosa by Luys de Peralta delves into the details of the siege, which encompassed the capture of a woman (daughter of a certain Pero Díaz) projected to be the new lover of the Moorish king: "y trae con alegrias / la hija de Pero

Pero diaz / para ser mi enamorada" (Peralta 265).[11] Once again, we find a woman at the center of geopolitical negotiations. The Muslim king, concerned with the conditions in which the captive lady should be delivered, commands that her honor remains intact, untouched by other men: "Y ninguno sea osado / de le tocar en desonra / mas traelda a buen recabdo" (Peralta 265).[12] The extraction conditions of the daughter are carefully designed by the Moorish king to delimit her space and erase her possibility of interaction with others.

Once captured, the woman needed to be groomed and adorned: "de joyas de gran valor / haze que venga arreada / como conviene a mi honor" (Peralta 265).[13] The nameless daughter is an inanimate object about to travel among the rest of the loot; through her ornamentation, the woman becomes one of the new material possessions of the Muslim king. The woman's body and identity are completely lost within the transportation and garment arrangements created to change her appearance and prevent her communication with others. The conquest of the territory of Baeza also constitutes the conquest of the women within the territory and the erasure of their bodies and identity. Once again, the female body is represented in an intermediate, liminal, and ambiguous space in which women's identity is suppressed in the process of negotiating a border.

Another example of women's liminality in the context of war is from the gloss of the *Romance de la Mora Moraima*, "Yo mera mora Morayma / morilla de un bel catar," composed by Jerónimo Pinar.[14] The famous *romance* tells the story of a frightened Moorish woman called by the door in the middle of the night. The person at the liminal space of the door is a Christian man posing as her uncle. The gloss explores the negotiations between the Moorish woman and the Christian man who wants to transgress into her private space. This Christian man disarms Morayma by falsifying a Moorish identity. He achieves this by showcasing his linguistic expertise—as a speaker of Arabic—his familial appeal—by providing insider information about Morayma's family circle—and his sociocultural competence—through his awareness of the social circumstances that affected the Muslim community at the time. In a way, the Christian man appropriated his enemies' culture. Through all these strategies, the Christian weakens the liminal space of the door that separates him from Morayma.

We can assume that this narrative takes place in a city that has just been conquered by Christians, where there is no peace and security for the Muslim community and where death is plausible and common: "Si no me abres tu [la puerta] mi vida / aqui me veras matar" (Pinar 290).[15] Moreover, the Christian man transgresses into the private space of Morayma with ease, thus revealing the social conditions of a persecuted community that probably lived in relative social insecurity. These sociopolitical conditions symbolically transformed Morayma into a territory doomed to be conquered. At the end of the *glosa*, the Moorish woman surrenders and opens the door, breaking the liminal threshold separating her from the Christian man: "fuerame para la puerta / y abrila de par en par" (Pinar 291).[16] Morayma was a victim of a historical moment of geopolitical insecurity that forced her into a liminal space—previously occupied by the door—at the risk of being sexually assaulted.

In all the cases explored in this section, women found themselves in a liminal space where gender became part of a political strategy. Urraca was exploited by her father (the Cid) and used as bait to lure the Moorish enemy. The daughter of Pero Díaz was bound to become part of the material bounty of the conquest of Baeza, a mere possession of the Moorish king. Morayma is in a liminal space between two geopolitical realities and at the mercy of a sexual assault—a symbolical reflection of territorial invasion. These chapbooks addressed not only the liminal space of the frontier but also how women experienced that liminality of warfare. The geographical border is disputed between two masculine geopolitical forces, and women are placed precisely in that liminal space when a political reality is not clear from the other. Women do not have agency but become an intrinsic part of the war strategy in these liminal communities: Urraca is a bait, a distraction on the battlefield; the nameless daughter is a potential captive, part of the material loot gained from the seizure of land; and Morayma is a victim of the political instability of a newly conquered space, the conquered body available for a sexual assault. In these belligerent spaces, women's bodies are territorialized and bound to become a spoil of war.

Assassins and Adulterers: Negotiating Gender in Bed

Conversely, it would be unfair to represent women only as a passive element in gender relationships. In this section of the article, we will explore how the liminality of women's experiences is also represented in how women break with the limits of the typical qualities associated with their gender to negotiate their identity and subvert gender roles. In this case, we will observe how the female body navigates liminal experiences as active elements of negotiation. This type of representation will not only be consulted in *pliegos sueltos* of the sixteenth century but also in chapbooks published by Sephardic communities in the Mediterranean in the twentieth century.

A *romance* from 1583 narrates the death of a man who breaks with his promise of marriage. Let us review the headline: "Aquí se contiene un horrendo y espantoso caso, agora nuevamente acontecido en Berberia en la ciudad de Marruecos con un Moro llamado Çulema y una Barbara Mora llamada Belayda, los quales tratando de sus amores, porque el Moro se casó con otra, le dieron la muerte, y ella con sus manos hizo cosas inauditas" (Pérez 279).[17] The *pliego suelto*, composed by Hierónimo Pérez de Almazán, chronicles the story of a Moorish woman named Belayda who, after learning that her fiancée Zulema has married another, decides to take revenge with the help of her cousins. Through an amorous letter, Belayda lures Zulema. Upon his arrival, he is soon stripped of his clothes by the cousins and left defenseless upon the demands of the distressed women. Belayda then commences to torture the man mercilessly: "diciendo aquestos dos ojos, / ya sacarlos convenia, / que en mirar [a otra] fueron traidores" (Pérez 281).[18] From the dissection of the eyes, Belayda proceeds toward the dismemberment of Zulema's ears, nose, tongue, hands, and of course, his private parts. The mutilation of Zulema's body was not enough punishment; Belayda progresses to feed him his genitals: "Traydor come de tu carne / ques la que mas me offendia" (Pérez 281).[19]

The gruesome spectacle is not necessarily expected of women, who are often regarded as delicate and sweet beings. In turn, Belayda becomes an active entity in exacting revenge by dismembering the body of the unfaithful man. Appropriating each part of Zulema's body, Belayda claims a violent behavior usually conferred to men. Let us remember that revenge was the principal motivator of the Moorish kings that wanted to disgrace Urraca in one case and the daughter of Pero Diaz in the other. The territorial vendettas explored in the previous section were taken against female bodies placed liminally and strategically at a geopolitical border. However, in other *romances*, such as Belayda's, we notice how revenge, in this case with a sentimental motive, is taken by the own hands of the woman, who is then the one who decides a man's fate.

We see a comparable example of female agency in some couplets of 1530 where a presumably powerful lady asks a Black slave man to sing and charm her: "Coplas de como una dama ruega a un negro que cante en manera de requiebro: y como el negro se deja rogar en fin la señora vencida de su gracia le offrece su persona" ("Coplas" 157).[20] Throughout the couplets, the lady implores Jorge, the enslaved Black person, for a song: "Canta Jorge por tu fe / y veras que te dare / una argolla para el pie / y otra para la garganta" ("Coplas" 157).[21] However, Jorge understands the disparity between the lady, a free woman allowed to ponder about love and affection, and himself, an enslaved person who does not enjoy the same luxuries: "No puedo cantar cativo / que soy mas muerto que vivo / de vuestro amor tan esquivo" ("Coplas" 157).[22] Nevertheless, the obstinate woman tries to convince Jorge by presenting him with many benefits: he will be clothed, received in a perfumed bed, fed a recently killed chicken, and, lastly, he will be freed from slavery: "y luego te quitare / el hierro que traes al pie / y la argolla a la garganta" ("Coplas" 159).[23] Ultimately, in return for the lady's promise of freedom, Jorge agrees to sing, i.e., approves the sexual act.

Interestingly, in the final couplet we learn about the woman's absent husband:

Porque cantas tan donoso

deste mi cuerpo gracioso

te sirve mientra mi esposo

viene de la tierra santa

ya quere canta. ("Coplas" 160)[24]

By "tierra santa," the couplets refer to the Crusades, a series of religious wars fought between Christians and Muslims to secure the control of holy sites. Upon the doubtful return of the husband, the lady oversees both her household and her sexual desires. Through her infidelity and also by becoming romantically involved with a man outside her social circle, the woman has placed herself as an outlaw in a liminal space outside of the conditions imposed on a woman of her degree. She rationalizes her decision to have a romantic and sexual relationship with an enslaved person by indicating that although dark in color, Jorge speaks as a white person—a notion perhaps associated with his ability to sing and charm her: "que aunque de color mohíno / la platica tienes blanca" ("Coplas" 160).[25] By voicing this justification, the lady confirms to the reader that she is aware of the possible ramifications of her decision; we may infer that being sexually involved with a Black and enslaved person was frowned upon in the society of her time.

The interesting couplets showcase a woman negotiating the expected roles of her gender. At the time, women had to patiently wait for the man of the house to return from the war. The lady, however, has decided to take advantage of her situation and become an agent of her own sexuality and her security. It is important to remember that male adultery, although criticized by the church, was tolerated, while female infidelity was thoroughly disapproved by society and the church. María Sanchez-Perez explains the subject of adultery in the pliegos sueltos:

> Desde siempre, el adulterio masculino—aunque criticado por los teólogos—era tolerado y solo vagamente censurado, mientras que la infidelidad femenina era reprobada y denostada duramente. Ya en la Biblia se estipulaba claramente qué se entendía por adulterio: mientras que la mujer era siempre adúltera, el hombre solo lo era cuando lo cometía con una mujer casada. Es decir, era el estado civil de la mujer lo que definía el adulterio – (Deuteronomio 22:22). Ahora bien, mientras que la Iglesia consideraba el adulterio—masculino y femenino—como un pecado y, por tanto, como un delito, la justicia civil únicamente lo consideraba así cuando lo cometía la mujer. Lo más frecuente además, en la época que nos ocupa y ya desde la Edad Media, es que si una mujer era descubierta manteniendo relaciones extraconyugales la justicia entregara a los adúlteros—junto con los bienes de la esposa—al marido para que él hiciese con ellos lo que desease, sin excluir que pudiese matarlos. (289)

Therefore, by deciding to be sentimentally or sexually involved with an enslaved Black person, the powerful woman in these couplets is not only acting against marriage and societal rules but also against the church and God. Furthermore, by granting freedom to her enslaved person, the woman intermingles with social policies regarding slavery, a transaction primarily associated with men. Of course, the lady's resolve is not without its problems because the enslaved person is her subordinate, and she does not decide to free him out of goodwill but to fulfill her desires. Nevertheless, the lady's determination to free Jorge and make him her lover places her socially beyond the gender rules associated with the women of her time.

Similarly, the Sephardic *librikos de romansas* edited and adapted the medieval *romancero* to retell or invent stories about promiscuous, adulterous, and evil women. In these Judeo-Spanish compositions, there is quite an impressive list of *romansas* about inadequate and old husbands and unfaithful and evil wives. One of the cases is the *romansa* "La adúltera" compiled and published by Yacob Abraham Yoná in 1908. It tells the story of an unfaithful woman who is visited by her lover while still in bed with her husband and breastfeeding her child. As soon as the husband walks out the door, the lover enters through a window. However, when the husband forgets something and returns home, the lover needs to hide in a closet, where he is discovered soon afterward by the husband. The woman in the *romansa* interacts with her lover while she is still in bed nursing the child.

The incredible scene destroys the holiness often associated with motherhood. Beyond the idea of the unfaithful woman, the *romansa* represents a quasi-antithetical image of an unfaithful mother: a woman that is both a mother and a lover. The way the mother navigates womanhood goes, once again, outside the typical delimitations of gender.

A more brazen case is the Sephardic *romansa* of "Celinos y la adultera," also compiled and published by Yacob Abraham Yoná in 1905. The *romansa* has roots in a twelfth century French *chanson de geste*, and there are several (oral) records of the *romance* in twentieth century Sarajevo, Salonika, and Burgos. It tells the story of the wife of an old count (Blankaninyya), who, dissatisfied with her marriage, falls in love with a young man named Celinos (Klareto in the Sephardic version). The lover, Celinos, advises the woman to fake a pregnancy and to ask the husband for deer meat to eat (*hazir* [pig] in the Sephardic *romansa*). Celinos planned to kill the old husband once he went hunting the deer/pig. However, the old husband kills Celinos instead and brings his head to the adulterous woman, after which he also proceeds to behead her.

While only the twentieth century versions of "Celinos y la adultera" survive, the premise of this *romansa* was prevalent in folk literature and especially present in the *romances* and *relaciones de sucesos* printed in chapbooks.[27] Many of these *relaciones* were known as casos escabrosos and narrated sensationalist and tremendous events, such as murder, torture, adultery, and other repudiable behavior.[28] Let us review the very graphic heading of one of these *casos* about a *malcasada* (not happily married):

> Aqui se contiene vn caso digno de ser memorado, el qual sucedio en este año de mil y quinientos y nouenta en la ciudad de çamora, el qual trata de la cruda muerte que vna muger dio a su padre por casarla a su disgusto y assimesmo trata como mato a su marido, y causo otras cinco muertes como la obra lo yra declarando por su estilo y trata de la justicia que se hizo della, y de vn amigo suyo / Fue la presente compuesta por Iuan Vazquez natural de Fuente Ouejuna. (Vázquez 1)[29]

In the *romance* published by Juan Vázquez in 1590, a lady is in love and refuses to marry a young man selected by her father. After the negative of the daughter, the father fell ill and decided to wed her to a seventy-year-old man instead of the original lover or the young man. The daughter then plots with her lover to kill her old husband:

> todo gusto os quiero dar
>
> dezime señora en que,
>
> en que le hemos de matar.
>
> Y alli el concierto hizieron
>
> de como le matarían
>
> y por obra lo pusieron
>
> y sus desseos cumplieron
>
> que entre ambos tenia
>
> y aquella noche siguiente
>
> entro en su casa el amigo
>
> por un secreto postigo. (Vázquez 5)[30]

In the process, the couple kills not only the husband but also two servants and a maid. She then cross-dresses as a man to avoid being recognized in their journey to evading justice: from Zamora to Burgos and then Santander. Later, the woman's father discovers the daughter's location and decides to pay her a visit, only to find his own demise at the hands of his own daughter. Finally, the authorities arrest the couple and torture them to confession: the lover is subjected to the gallows and the woman to the *garrote vil*.[31]

In this story, we see one of the most recurrent topics of the Sephardic *romancero* and the *casos escabrosos*: the unfaithful woman who plans the death of her husband with the help of a lover. In this *caso*, the woman kills her husband and father, along with three others, before being executed by the law.

She is depicted as an insatiable and fierce demon: "La infernal llena de gozo / quando le vio degollado" (Vázquez 7).[32] Something interesting about these unfaithful and deadly women is that beyond wishing for the death of their husbands, they both had a complicated and hostile relationship with their parents. The woman of the *caso*, in addition to killing her husband, seeks revenge against her father for marrying her against her will: "oy te truxo tu pecado / ante la presencia mia / donde entiendo lo has pagado" (Vázquez 7).[33] On the other hand, Blankaninyya, the woman from the Sephardic r*omansa*, is depicted as a vain woman who contrastingly blesses her beauty and curses her parents for marrying her to an older person:

bendizyendo al Dyez del syelo,

ke tal linda la fu'e a kriar;

maldizyendo 'a padre 'i madre,

ke kon 'un vyežo la fu'e a kazar.

("Romansa 12" 227)[34]

We notice that the women in these chapbooks do not live within the parameters of their assigned gender. Instead, they exploit their circumstances and adopt a way of living that seems more masculine to find justice or sexual freedom. Most of these women have been dealt a bad hand—they have been betrayed, abandoned, and forced to marry someone older—and, as a consequence, they have taken action and adopted a more masculine role, even cross-dressing as a man, to seek vengeance or ensure that their romantic or sexual needs are met.

Conclusion

Through this review of a selection of *romances*, *glosas de romance*, *coplas*, and *romansas* published in Iberian and Sephardic chapbooks, we evaluated the boundaries, transgressions, and negotiations associated with gender.

In the first section of the paper, we explored the female body as a liminal and passive entity used to negotiate a border in a warfare scenario. In those cases, the woman—Urraca, the daughter, and Morayma—does not have agency and is right in the center, in the liminal space between two masculine political and ideological camps. In the second section of the paper, we considered a different type of liminality, one in which women (re)act and negotiate their own social roles. In this second case, the woman is an active entity. Her liminality consists of how she disrupts the limits established for her feminine gender and adopts behaviors or strategies that tend to be associated with men or masculinity: revenge, violence, torture, murder, subordination of the other, infidelity, cross-dressing, etc.

In all these chapbooks, we noticed some recurrent stories and themes. First, some women were reduced to interchangeable goods and spoils of war as part of a geopolitical conflict scenario. Another recurrent story was those of unfaithful women who look for entertainment outside the home and at the expense of the husband's absence. Related to this motif, we have that of the *malcasada*, the unhappily married woman that often seeks the help of a lover to get rid of the husband (by killing him). Interestingly, women in these stories were willing to participate in violent activities, like killing and torturing, to get rid of a husband or to avenge an infidelity.

Our study of gender in these publications provides certain preliminary conclusions. The creators of chapbooks were simultaneously editing and reprising medieval oral materials while also creating new compositions that went completely beyond the medieval contents of the *romancero*. These publications, from both the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries, were unapologetic and brutal; they were heavily invested in presenting the boundaries and transgressions in the daily interactions of men and women. As we have seen in the examples provided, these chapbooks simultaneously broadcasted Moorish kings and Christian knights defending a border, reported adulterous women plotting against gullible, old, and inadequate husbands, and showcased women taking committing murder, taking revenge, and torturing. Women in these scenarios were always in the middle of the experience, either as a sacrifice of the war between

two male sides or as the daring axis, here and there, exerting their femininity while also engaging in behaviors expected of men and breaking with expected roles.

My work reinstates the connection between the Iberian *pliegos sueltos* and the Sephardic *librikos de romansas*.[35] Furthermore, I aim to emphasize the fondness within the Hispanic and Sephardic letters for ephemeral publications that, from distant spaces and contexts, showcase women's licentious deeds and scandalous sexual behaviors. These pan-Mediterranean chapbooks present women in the interspace, experiencing life in-between different geopolitical realities or in the middle of expected gender roles. Did others use women to negotiate a boundary, or were women negotiating their own boundaries? Undoubtedly, these texts illustrate how geopolitical borders and social boundaries influence how women navigate space and participate in liminal experiences where they remain hybrid in their political and gender identities. At times, women conform to their assigned roles within society, but at other times, they are able to transgress and negotiate their function and agency. Pan-Mediterranean chapbooks provide a marvelous sight into the liminality of the women's experience, the negotiation of their sociopolitical identity, and their shifting gender roles in warfare, in bed, and beyond.

Notes

[1] See Sánchez-Pérez.
[2] Note that *romance* here refers to the metric pattern found in Spanish ballads, not the genre of chivalric romance or the Romance languages. The *glosa de romance* is a poetic composition that emerged in *pliegos sueltos* in the sixteenth century to gloss, comment, and expand the content of a *romance*.
[3] The *romancero viejo* denotes the collection of medieval Iberian anonymous *romances* that were transmitted orally and eventually passed on to written literature in divergent or glossed versions. In contrast, the *romancero nuevo* includes those romances written by a known author for their printed inclusion in *cancioneros*, *romanceros*, and *pliegos sueltos*.
It is important to note that, from a material perspective, the printed chapbook recontextualized and appropriated the contents of the medieval and oral *romancero*. Regardless of their origin—oral or printed—these ballads belonged to an indeterminate space between oral and written culture because, even after being printed in chapbooks, they continued to be sung orally from generation to generation. For more information about the relationship between oral and written Sephardic literature, see Díaz-Mas.
[4] See Gennep.
[5] The original formatting, capitalization, and punctuation found on the chapbooks is preserved in all the quotations. My translation: "Look, look, where he comes / rides the Moorish king this way."
[6] "in opposition to the royal norms / makes me take vengeance / against the frail women" (my trans.).
[7] "his wife doña Ximena / shall be my slave" and "his daughter Urraca Hernando / for my mistress I intend" (my trans.).
[8] "My heart breaks / in knowing, my Valencia / that all my undoing / your new lord / turns to happiness" (my trans.).
[9] "that Moor son of a [dog] / charm him with words. // Pretend your devotion / shower him with a thousand courtesies / so he confides in you" (my trans.).
[10] "Moorish, oh my Moorish / those who earn my salary" (my trans.).
[11] "and bring with joy / the daughter of Pero Díaz / to be my lover" (my trans.).
[12] "And no one be daring / to touch her dishonorably / but bring her safe and sound" (my trans.).
[13] "with jewels of great value / have her come dressed up / as befits my honor" (my trans.).
[14] "I was the Moorish woman Morayma / a Moorish maiden of a beautiful face" (my trans.).
[15] "If you do not open [the door], my life / I will perish here before you" (my trans.).
[16] "I went to the door / and opened it wide-open" (my trans.).
[17] "Here is contained a horrendous and frightful case, newly occurred in Barbary [Coast] in the city of Morocco with a Moorish man named Zulema and a barbaric Moorish woman named Belayda, who dealing with their love, because the Moorish man

married another, was given death, and she did unheard things with her own hands" (my trans.).
[18] "saying these two eyes / it is convenient to take them out / because by looking [at another] they were traitors" (my trans.).
[19] "Traitor, eat your [own] flesh / that which offended me the most" (my trans.).
[20] "Songs of how a lady begs a Black man to sing as a way of flattery: and how the Black man plays hard to get, finally, the lady, defeated by his grace, offers herself" (my trans.).
[21] "Sing Jorge, for the love of God / and you will see that I will give you / a ring for the foot / and another for the throat" (my trans.).
[22] "I cannot sing while I am a captive / because I am more dead than alive / elusive from your love" (my trans.).
[23] "and then I will take away / the iron that you wear on your foot / and the ring around your throat" (my trans.).
[24] "Why do you sing so gracefully / of my gracious body / help yourself, while my husband / comes from the Holy Land (the Crusades) / you already want to sing" (my trans.).
[25] "although dark in color / you have a white talk" (my trans.). Mohíno said of the cattle that have very dark black hair, also refers to a hinny, the offspring of a horse and a donkey.
[26] His name varies across versions: Klareto, Carleto, Delino, Zelino, Celinos, etc.
[27] The *relaciones de sucesos* worked as a kind of news booklet where people read about battles and stories of captives and were informed about recent events, like weddings and natural disasters.
[28] The *casos escabrosos*, written as *romances* or songs, were one of the subgenres that achieved more success in the *pliegos sueltos* of the sixteenth century. For more information about the casos, see Sánchez-Pérez.
[29] My translation:
Here is a case worthy of being commemorated, which happened in the year 1590 in the city of Zamora, which deals with the cruel death that a woman gave her father for marrying her to her displeasure and likewise deals with how she killed her husband, and caused five other deaths as the work will be declaring in its style and deals with the justice that was done to her, and to a lover of hers. This was composed by Juan Vázquez, a native of Fuente Ovejuna.
[30] "I want to give you all the pleasure / tell me, lady, how / how are we going to kill him. // And there they made an agreement / about how they would kill him / and they put it to work / and fulfilled were the desires / that they both had / and that next night / the lover entered her house / through a secret shutter" (my trans.).
[31] The *garrote vil* was a weapon used to strangle a person.
[32] "The infernal [woman] filled with joy / when she saw him beheaded" (my trans.).
[33] "today your sin brought you / before my presence / where I understand that you have paid" (my trans.).
[34] "blessing God in Heaven / who made her so beautiful / cursing her father and mother / who married her to an old man" (my trans.).
[35] See Pedrosa.

Works Cited

"Coplas de como una dama ruega a un negro que cante en manera de requiebro." 1530. Burgos. Printed by Juan de Junta. *Los pliegos poéticos de la colección de Marqués de Morbecq (siglo XVI). Edición en facsimile, precedida de un estudio bibliográfico.* Edited by Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino, Madrid, Estudios Bibliográficos, 1962, pp. 157–64.

Díaz-Mas, Paloma. "Escritura y oralidad en la literatura sefardí". *SIGNO. Revista de Historia de la Cultura Escrita*. Universidad de Alcalá, vol. 11, 2003, pp. 37–57.

Gennep, Arnold van. *The Rites of Passage.* 1909. 2nd ed., University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Lora, Francisco de. *Romance del rey moro que perdio a Valencia nuevamente glosado por Francisco de Lora.* 1525 Printed by Alonso de Melgar. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica (BDH)*, http://bdh.bne.es/bnesearch/detalle/bdh0000251189.

Pedrosa, José M. "Coplas sefardíes y pliegos de cordel hispánicos". *Sefarad,* vol. 55, no. 2, 1995, pp. 335–57.

Peralta, Luys de. "Glosa nuevamente trobada por Luys de Peralta sobre el Romance de Fajardo" (XXXIV). Vol. I. *Pliegos poéticos góticos de la Biblioteca Nacional: Vols. I–IV.* Edited by Justo García Morales and María Luisa Pardo Morote, Dirección General de Archivos y Bibliotecas, Serie Conmemorativa Menéndez Pelayo, Madrid, Joyas bibliográficas, 1957, pp. 261–68.

Pérez de Almazán, Hierónimo. "Aqui se contiene un horrendo y espantoso caso." 1583. Valencia. Printed by Vicente de Miravet. *Los pliegos poéticos de la colección de Marqués de Morbecq (siglo XVI). Edición en facsimile, precedida de un estudio bibliográfico.* Edited by Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino, Madrid, Estudios Bibliográficos, 1962, pp 279–82.

Pinar. "Romance de la Mora Morayma: glosado" (XXXV). Vol. I. *Pliegos poéticos españoles en la Universidad de Praga: Vols. I–II.* Edited by Centro de Estudios de Bibliografía y Bibliofilía, Serie Conmemorativa, Madrid, Joyas bibliográficas, 1960, pp. 289–96.

"Romansa 9 (La adúltera)." *Libriko de romansas importantes.* 1908. Sofia. Printed by Yacob Abraham Yoná. *Folk Literature of the Sephardic Jews, Vol. I: The Judeo-Spanish Ballad Chapbooks of Yacob Abraham Yoná.* 1st ed. Edited by Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman, University of California Press, 1971, pp. 196–97; 435–51.

"Romansa 12 (Celinos y la adúltera)." *Güerta de romansos importantes.* 1905. Salonika. Printed by Yacob Abraham Yoná. *Folk Literature of the Sephardic Jews, Vol. I: The Judeo-Spanish Ballad Chapbooks of Yacob Abraham Yoná.* 1st ed. Edited by Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman, University of California Press, 1971, pp. 227–28; 389–413.

Sánchez-Pérez, María. "El adulterio y la violencia femenina en algunos pliegos sueltos poéticos del siglo XVI." *Revista de dialectología y tradiciones populares,* vol. 68, no. 2, pp. 287–303.

Vázquez, Juan. *Aqui se contiene vn caso digno de ser memorado.* 1590. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica (BDH),* http://bdh.bne.es/bnesearch/detalle/bdh0000256458.