

LA GUERRA DE LOS MORISCOS AND GINÉS PÉREZ DE HITA'S (AB)USE OF THE BALLAD

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Familiar texts often contain links to the unfamiliar. Take, for example, Ginés Pérez de Hita's *Guerras civiles de Granada: Historia de los bandos de los Zegries y Abencerrajes*, which was first published in Zaragoza in 1595. The work enjoyed immense popularity, going through at least twenty-one editions in the first twenty-four years of publication (Bryant xviii). It depicts the final period of Muslim rule in Granada, and the city's conquest by Ferdinand and Isabella. In theme and in style, the work comes out of the frontier ballad tradition. Together with its well-known predecessor, *El Abencerraje* (1560), it helped establish a new narrative institution, the Moorish novel, and with its protagonist, the romantic and sentimentalized Moor, the genre became nothing less than a hallmark of Spanish fiction both at home and abroad (Carrasco Urgoiti, *Los moriscos* 14).

Many recognize that the crowning achievement of *Historia de los bandos de los Zegries y Abencerrajes* lies in Pérez de Hita's masterful use of Spain's Moorish ballads, employed to add color, dramatic flair, and, most important, as the actual source material for the topics that Pérez de Hita addressed.¹ The ballads in its less familiar sequel, *La guerra de los moriscos: Segunda parte de las guerras civiles de Granada*, however, do not show the same artistic innovation. Indeed, as a preface to the first ballad in *La guerra de los moriscos*, Pérez de Hita himself admits that he is more or less obliged to use this poetic form, "por no quebrar el estilo de la primera parte," that is, the style of *Historia de los bandos de los Zegries y Abencerrajes* (10). As such a phrase might indicate, his poetic inventions for *La guerra de los moriscos* are not exactly gifts to the genre, and he frequently only deploys the ballads as plot summaries appearing at the end of each chapter.² In the introduction to her edition of the text, Paula Blanchard-Demouge states that "exemptuando dos o tres, los romances de la segunda parte repiten sin ventaja alguna lo que hubiera estado mucho mejor en prosa y se podrían suprimir sin disminuir la

importancia de la obra” (xxvii). Menéndez y Pelayo also comments that “los romances que esta segunda parte contiene, escritos casi todos por él mismo, son meras gacetas rimadas, que repiten sin ventaja alguna lo que está dicho mucho mejor en la prosa” (147).

In this article, however, I argue that a look at the symbolic uses—and abuses—of the ballad not only contributes to a richer understanding of *La guerra de los moriscos*, it also raises fundamental questions about connections between genre, history, and narrative: What does the ballad represent as a poetic form in sixteenth-century Spain? How and why have the ballads changed so radically from one Pérez de Hita volume to the next? In *La guerra de los moriscos*, why does the ballad appear at the end of every chapter but one? Can we find some significance in the placement of the ballads if not in the ballads themselves? An exploration of texts, forms, and placement of these ballads shows, among other things, the inadequacy of the ballad form for Pérez de Hita’s task at hand: the writing of a contemporary history that reflects the emergence of more complicated subjectivities in post-expulsion Spain. I will attempt to address these issues by focusing on what I find to be the text’s most important chapter, but before I turn to this episode, I will first clarify some of the stakes of this investigation regarding Pérez de Hita’s work and, more generally, regarding historical and fictional narratives.

Ginés Pérez de Hita was a cobbler by trade and resided predominantly in Lorca, but also lived for periods in Cartagena and Murcia.³ An avid reader and amateur author, Pérez de Hita regularly wrote plays for religious festivals in all of the above cities, gaining considerable local acclaim.⁴ Writing primarily to augment his small income, Pérez de Hita shows in his epic poem, *Libro de la población y hazañas de la Muy Noble y Muy Leal ciudad de Lorca* (1572), a deep vocation to regional history.⁵ In this way, he contributed to a new vogue in sixteenth-century Spain—chorography—or, the writing of local history.⁶ Pérez de Hita’s two-part narrative, *Guerras civiles de Granada*, however, goes beyond chorography to explore and offer opinions on the contentious relationship between Spain’s Christian and Muslim populations. Each volume of the narrative is valuable; the first for its romantic portrayal of Al-Andalus and the second for its sympathetic portrait of the Moriscos. In the introduction to his edition of the second volume of the text, Joaquín Gil Sanjuán remarks:

Pérez de Hita ejerce de verdadero testigo de cargo contra la crueldad, rapiña y otros desmanes de los ejércitos cristianos que acudieron a sofocar la rebelión. Se trata de una crítica tan dura, que sorprende cómo pudo obtener el privilegio real para la publicación de la *Segunda parte de las Guerras civiles de Granada*. (xlix)

While this has prompted some to conjecture if Pérez de Hita himself was a Morisco,⁷ the more likely explanation is simply that Pérez de Hita's lived experience was one of true *convivencia* with his Morisco neighbors.⁸

There are some obvious differences between the two parts of *Guerras civiles de Granada*. Published in 1595, part one—*Historia de los bandos de los Zegríes y Abencerrajes*—depicts a remote history (the world of Granada before 1492) and contains a great deal of imaginative embellishment. Part two, *La guerra de los moriscos*, written in 1597 but not published until 1619,⁹ depicts the bloody Morisco revolt of the Alpujarras (1568-1570), a historical moment coetaneous to Pérez de Hita. In *La guerra de los moriscos* the author not only includes eyewitness accounts of various soldiers, but partially documents his own experience serving in the war. Yet while scholars have often praised *Historia de los bandos de los Zegríes y Abencerrajes* as Spain's first historical novel, *La guerra de los moriscos* languishes under its designation as an underwhelming example of novelized history.¹⁰ The latter is generally passed over by scholars because of its supposed lack of literary or rigorous historical merit.¹¹ In Menéndez y Pelayo's, *Orígenes de la novela*, for example, he reads Pérez de Hita's opening chapters of *La guerra de los moriscos* literally, and fails to see that Pérez de Hita's etymologies as well as other "errors" could, in fact, be figurative or symbolic discourses (135). Menéndez y Pelayo goes on to claim that Pérez de Hita's second volume "carece del interés novelesco de la primera, y sin duda por eso fue reimpresa muy pocas veces y llegó a ser libro rarísimo" (147). Regarding the text's reception, Paula Blanchard-Demouge admits that the second volume of Pérez de Hita's work lacks the popularity of the first, especially in historical circles. While generally a defender of Pérez de Hita, she notes that "la preponderancia del elemento histórico, y la importancia de hechos notables y recientes, sobreponiéndose a la fantasía, fueron causa de que, careciendo de interés novelesco, esta parte haya sido juzgada con severidad, y de que los historiadores, recordando

la primera, la considerasen con desdén” (vii). Thus *La guerra de los moriscos* falls short for most scholars because it lies between the cracks of literature and history, not quite measuring up in either category.

But, what do the genres “literature” and “history” mean in this early modern context? And, could it be that the ways in which they are woven together in this text presents us with an opportunity? As I shall demonstrate below, even if *La guerra de los moriscos* is an awkward text, its unevenness has much to tell us. Moreover, the much-maligned ballads it contains are the key to understanding just how literature and history fit together.

The particular historical moment that Pérez de Hita depicts in *La guerra de los moriscos* partially accounts for its less than elegant rendering. In 1568, as a response to new restrictions against Muslim customs, groups of Moriscos began to attack and loot villages, especially in the Alpujarra region. By 1569 the number of rebels amounted to thirty thousand, thus causing a serious threat to national security, especially since much of the Spanish army was posted in Flanders at the time (Kamen 181; García Arenal, *Los moriscos* 63). The war became more momentous as the Moriscos received help from their Muslim brethren in North Africa. Although Christian Spain eventually prevailed in 1570, the crushing of the rebellion marked the most vicious European conflict of the entire century (Kamen 182).¹² The war resulted in still stiffer restrictions against the Morisco population and their mandatory removal to different parts of the Peninsula. In a veritable trail of tears, many Moriscos died in the forced march of relocation. Almost forty years later, in 1609, Philip III declared that Moriscos, like Jews and Muslims before them, were to be expelled completely from Spain.

A concurrent (if less violent) historical incident is also worth mentioning here for its connection not simply to the Morisco theme, but also to the writing of history. The “discovery” of the falsified *Libros plumbeos* ignited a widespread debate about history, truth, and authorship, and the influence of such an affair on writers of the day cannot be underestimated. At the end of the sixteenth century, leaden tablets with Arabic writing were found in the Sacramonte of Granada. The tablets, discovered together with relics of Christian martyrs, contained a variation on the Acts of the Apostles that seemed to date back to the first century AD. Had they not been forgeries, the books would have implied an even longer (and less inimical) relationship

between Muslims and Christians on the Iberian Peninsula. They also would have raised considerably the importance of the Christian church of Granada. While the Moriscos had already been expelled from Granada at the close of the War of the Alpujarras in 1570, L.P. Harvey sees the forged leaden books as “a desperate last-resort attempt on the part of members of the small group of ‘protected’ Moriscos to salvage something from the shipwreck of Spanish Islam” (267). Harvey goes on to explain that the hoax was a success in that it did, at least temporarily, bring about “a change in Granada in the status of the Arabic language and of people of Arab descent (contempt now yielded to respect)” (267). While the cult of the *Libros plumbeos* was suppressed a few decades later, the Sacromonte affair is important in that it publicly demonstrated (just at the time Pérez de Hita was re-writing and editing *La guerra de los moriscos*) how history could be manipulated to a variety of ends.¹³ Indeed, the affair demonstrates that ascertaining the validity of a narrative and assessing the authority of written texts (especially those that purported to be histories) were urgent questions in early modern Spain.

The ways that narrative—either fictional or historical—functions in society is, even today, at the center of an important debate among literary critics and historians. The supposed “truth” of history is, of course, an arguable conceit. With his landmark books, *Metahistory* and *The Content of the Form*, historian Hayden White challenged his colleagues to think more critically about what it means to write history. The re-telling of history, according to White, is dependent on discourse—and this discourse is just as prone to emplotment (a pre-disposed plot) and tropology (use of tropes) as any work of fiction (*Metahistory* 7). White proposes the importance of understanding not only the historian’s object of study but also the discourse used to represent it (*The Content* 3). White claims that historians use the same “linguistic figuration” as imaginative writers, thus infusing their writing with “the kind of latent, secondary, or connotative meanings that will require that their works be not only received as messages but read as symbolic structures” (*Figural* 8). The recognition of history as simply one type of narrative discourse is now a commonplace. Historian Keith Jenkins, perhaps the foremost popularizer of White’s insights, sums up what is now the orthodox view of history as a mode of knowledge production. As Jenkins puts it, historical narratives are “always ideological,” shot through with “moral

judgments about right and wrong and how the individual historian thinks the world works” (xii).

Given the way that literature and history overlap, how, then can they be picked apart? Marina Brownlee provides a clue. While acknowledging the contributions of Hayden White, Brownlee criticizes the fact that he does not place the texts he studies in their historical context nor account for narrative’s hybrid expression and interpretation. She goes on to say that we must think of Spanish sixteenth-century works (in her case, *El Abencerraje* and the *Káida*) as “generic embodiment[s] of history.” (67) It is precisely this question—how history influences genre—that comes to the fore when analyzing the work of Pérez de Hita.

One genre that embodies both historical and imaginative discourse is the ballad. I have published elsewhere on the connections between the ballad and historically-based expressions of nostalgia, specifically in the *Cancionero musical de palacio* and the sixteenth-century vihuela repertoire.¹⁴ In that study, I detailed the increasing connections between the ballad and a romanticization of the Muslim population that expressed nostalgia for the period before the completion of Reconquest. These are the very ballads, of course, that ultimately inspired *El Abencerraje*. And, in much the same way, Pérez de Hita employs these Moorish ballads in *Historia de los bandos de los Zegríes y Abencerrajes* as nostalgic tokens of the Reconquest. Both *El Abencerraje* and *Historia de los bandos de los Zegríes y Abencerrajes* depict a fully exoticized Muslim: he is quick to arms, quick to enamor and to enrage, and ultimately quick to declare the Christian as his superior. Yet both the Christian and Moorish characters in the Moorish ballads, as well as the novels they inspire, are one-dimensional. Lacking any individual character development, they stand for a collective identity of a people’s nation and religion—either Christianity or Islam. In this way, the Moorish ballad pertains to epic discourse, which is set in an “absolute past” and based on national tradition (Bakhtin 16). The heroes within this tradition are “inaccessible to personal experience” and the epic “does not permit an individual, personal point of view or evaluation” (Bakhtin 16).

La guerra de los moriscos, however, is set in the present. And because it is a contemporary history, Hita no longer has a nation’s wealth of ballads to draw on that might inspire or depict this contemporary period. Instead, he has to invent the ballads himself and uses them almost exclusively as repetitive plot summary. At first glance, the result

is a rather unimaginative contribution to the genre. Of the twenty-five chapters in *La guerra de los moriscos*, ballads as plot review appear at the end of all but one chapter. Full of information that Pérez de Hita already rendered in prose, the ballads simply recap highlights, and even include the same uninteresting facts and figures. For example, Chapter Twelve, subtitled: “En que se escribe cómo su Majestad le mandó al Marqués de Mondéjar que saliese de las Alpujarras y que fuesse a la Corte, dexando en todos los lugares más importantes soldados de presidio, y como el Reyecillo acordó de dar la batalla al Marqués de Vélez en Verja una noche,” concludes with a ballad that again describes the way in which the Moriscos mounted the battle (119). Pérez de Hita writes:

Tres esquadras hizo grandes
sacadas de sus vanderas:
ocho mil le diera al Derri
soldados de la frontera,
Otros ocho al Habaquí,
porque entiende bien la guerra
y seys mil le dio Abonvayle
de la gente más ligera. (134)

The ballad adds nothing to the episode, thus supporting Blanchard-Demouge's and Menéndez y Pelayo's view that the author demonstrates no real reason to place in verse what was already expressed better in prose.

For another gratuitous ballad, we could turn to Chapter Twenty-three, the subtitle of which is: “En que se pone cómo el Señor Don Juan llegó a reconocer a Serón, Castillo fuerte, y cómo allí le mataron los Moros quatrocientos soldados, y entre ellos a Don Luys Quisada, su ayo” (302). The chapter faithfully records the aforementioned struggle and resulting death, and it is instructive to see how Don Luis's end is rendered first in the chapter and then in the concluding ballad. The pertinent section of the chapter reads:

Don Luys Quixada [...] murió pocos días después, causando a su Alteza [Don Juan de Austria] gran dolor, como si hubiera perdido a su propio padre. El único consuelo que quedava en aquella desgracia era hazer al difunto solemnísimas obsequias y un enterramiento

digno de un buen general y militar esclarecido, para lo qual el Señor Don Juan mandó que todos los Capitanes, mostrando grande tristeza, salieran con sus Compañías y llevaron los atambores destemplados y los pífanos tocando dolorosamente; que los Alférezes llevasen las banderas tendidas y arrastrando por el suelo, y los soldados con los alcabuzes al revés de como se suelen llevar. (309)

Pérez de Hita concludes the sad funereal scene with an epitaph for Don Luys. The unique and personal pathos of the epitaph is far more emotional than the ballad that summarizes Don Luis's death at the end of the chapter. The ballad reads:

Y al buen Don Luys Quixada,
que mostrava ser soldado,
en un muslo han herido
de un cruel arcabuzazo.

...

Hízosele enterramiento
de general afamado
arrastrando las vanderas
y atambores destemplados
todos cubiertos de luto,
señal de duelo mostrado. (319-20)

While the moment of drama and pathos in the text is augmented by the insertion of an epitaph at Don Luis's burial site, the above ballad merely repeats, in paler tones, what was already vibrantly depicted in prose and poetry in the body of the chapter.

But the ways in which the ballad is used and not used (as opposed to an analysis of the rather banal ballads themselves) register important shifts in writing. A salient exception to the appearance of the ballad as tedious plot summary, for instance, occurs in Chapter Fourteen and the change in pattern merits our consideration. The conspicuous absence of a ballad as summary at the end of the chapter, the *only* chapter to lack a concluding ballad in the entire text, calls our attention to this section and is further signaled by the chapter's position—an almost exact midpoint—and by its length—two to three times longer than the other chapters. At this juncture of the story, the Moriscos have just suffered a bitter loss to the Christians in the battles of Bentomiz and Frigiliana.

And, once the Christian troops withdraw, the Reyecillo (Don Fernando Muley Abenhumeya) knows that his people have time to regroup before the next battle. Thus, the Morisco leader “determinó de hazer unas solemnes fiestas para alegrar sus gentes y todo su campo” (153). The Reyecillo inaugurates a twelve-day tournament of various feats— one on one combat, a race, a long jump, songs and dance, to name but a few. The elaborate finery and luxury of these games—beautiful clothes, gloriously painted shields, ladies gazing down from towers—are utterly unbelievable at this point of the civil war. We have already had countless examples in the text of Morisco homes looted, women and children sold into slavery, and even fear of general starvation. The bulk of the chapter, therefore, invokes a highly anachronistic moment, better suited to the Reconquest era of *El Abencerraje* or *Guerras Civiles de Granada*.¹⁵

But beyond a simple moment of nostalgia, there is more here: while the jousts invoke those of old chivalric times between *moro* and *cristiano*, in this instance the competitions take place between Moriscos and the various Turks who had come to help them. The chapter, therefore, serves to underline an explicit division between these two groups. Furthermore, the Moriscos are continually invoked as the “Spanish” side of these contests. The following citation, which describes the central contest of the chapter between the Morisco Maleh and the Turk Caracacha, provides a rich example of the ways in which Hita is realigning the different ethnic groups:

Desta suerte anduvieron peleando gran parte del día sin cansarse; mas como la fuerça del bravo Español era más dura y él era nacido en mejor clima que el Turco y con ella avía acompañada una gran soltura y ligereça como sabemos que tenían aquellas gentes del reyno de Granada y, finalmente, de nación española y de sangre rebuelta con la goda, mostrava gran ventaja y demasiada destreza contra el Africano, qye aunque era hombre de grandes fuerças, con el continuo cansancio vino a aflojar gran parte del brio que de principio mostrava, lo qual sintiendo el bravo español Maleh le apretava con mayores fuerzas que hasta allí, de lo qual el Turco se espantava y dezía que aquél no era hombre sino Diablo del infierno, pues mientras más yva más las fuerças se le doblavan, y dezía entre sí: «¡O, Santo Alá, y qué Hércules es este que con tanta fuerza me oprime!» (161-62).

Caracacha is rarely called by his name throughout the fight, but by the epithets “the Turk” or “the African.” Maleh, on the other hand, is complimented by his assignation as “the Spaniard” or “the Christian.” Moreover, Pérez de Hita even ascribes to Maleh Gothic blood—a myth usually used to distinguish old Christians from new Christians who would be tainted with Semitic blood. The inclusive language—the Moriscos are of the Spanish nation—clearly seeks to underline the main point of Hita’s text: a critique of the war against the Moriscos.

The Christian-ness of Maleh and the Muslim-ness of Caracacha is also seen by their differing interpretations of the lunar symbol. When Captain Maleh first enters the field, with much pomp and circumstance, he displays his shield: a silver half moon and the hand of a beautiful woman. Below the depiction appears a *letra* in Arabic letters, a poem dedicated to his beloved Morisca, named Luna:

Mientras mi Luna a la Luna
tocare, tengo esperançã
que menguante ni mudançã
jamás avrá en mi fortuna. (155)

Then the Turk Caracacha enters, with a shield depicting a beautiful woman and written below her in “*letra turquesca*” states:

La Luna, Sol, ni Luzero
no tiene tal hermosura
como el retrato y figura
de la dama que más quiero. (156)

Enraged by the implication—that Caracacha’s lady is more beautiful than, not just the celestial moon, but his beloved lady Luna—Maleh confronts Caracacha, asking him if he knows what a moon is? Caracacha replies that of course he does, “Pues nosotros los Africanos no ponemos en nuestros escudos sino la Luna, teniéndola por divina y celestial insignia de nuestras armas, y que por ellas nos gobernamos en nuestras prósperas y adversas fortunas” (158). Clearly, for Caracacha, the moon is a symbol of Islam and represents his warlike nature as a Muslim—a sign of arms by which they govern themselves, through good fortune and bad. For Maleh, the moon represents the refined courtly love that

romanticized Moors of yore have come to represent. This association with the courtly world is then further highlighted by the reward Maleh receives upon winning the contest: a wreath of laurel placed on his head. Thus, the jousting scene culminates with this courtly (and Petrarchan and Ancient Roman) gesture, one that even evokes Abindarráez Abencerraje and his own crown of jasmine in *El Abencerraje*. Far from a bellicose figure, Maleh has not only radically changed the meaning of the Muslim lunar sign, but is also now associated with Italian and Latin letters. The entire scene, therefore, from the use of the letra, to Maleh's prize, to the language Hita employs to describe these warriors—all symbolically augment the genteel Christian-ness of the Moriscos, and the very other Muslim-ness of the Turks.

Let us now return to some of our original questions: What significance can we find in the use and misuse of the ballad in *La guerra de los moriscos*? Specifically, why isn't the ballad used in Chapter Fourteen and what does this tell us about this chapter and, more generally, about the use of the ballad in the writing of contemporary history? One possible answer may well lie in the chapter's conclusion.

The final scene at the end of Chapter Fourteen finally disrupts the nostalgic reverie and brings us back to the horrors of the present-day civil war. The concluding contest is one of song, and two Moriscos compete for the prize. The first one, Luna, sings of the happy future when Granada will again be under Morisco control, but she also includes an ominous reference to treachery and betrayal towards the Morisco leader.

The following song, however, is an even fuller recognition of the times. Before the singer begins, we are told that “la mora era muy hermosa y no vestía de color porque su corazón vestía luto, porque en la batalla de Berja le avían muerto a su padre y quatro hermanos, por cuya muerte vivía lastimada” (184). She sings that she is alone in the world riding a wave of sadness. She intones, pleading:

Dejadme llorar
 la gran desventura
 desta guerra dura,
 que os dará pesar.
 De las blancas sierras
 y ríos y fuentes

no verán sus gentes
bien de aquestas guerras.

...

Ni tú, Don Fernando [Reyecillo]
verás tus vanderas
termolar ligeras
con glorioso vando. (185-86)

The Morisca then faints and dies.

Thus the games invoke a time before the Reconquest, but are anachronistic and unbelievable in the middle of a civil war. This tension, between past and present, is further exacerbated by a recasting of contemporary Moriscos as pre-Reconquest Christians. For the Moriscos in this chapter, the moon is merely a beloved woman, and their Gothic blood allows for their donning of Classical laurels. And yet, the eerie reality of their fate haunts the chapter's end. Like Cassandra, the beautiful Morisca sings of the Reyecillo's, and thus all Moriscos' demise. And yet, again like that Trojan prophetess, no one listens to her predictions.

So why not wrap up Chapter Fourteen with a ballad like all of the other chapters? One reason is that while the other chapters depict the horrors of the civil war, they do not depict the tension between pre-Reconquest and present day, between Spain's past and present. Because the ballad, as C. Colin Smith put it, pertains to a national literature, it is incapable of encompassing all that is here (6).¹⁶ The ballad, that one-dimensional national genre, cannot contain these two poles. We have in Chapter Fourteen the depiction of a *changing* Morisco identity that is fluid and indefinable. What's more, the chapter underlines simultaneously the Moriscos' hereditary ties to glorious Muslim Al-Andalus *and* the Moriscos' likeness to the Spanish Christian. Thus, the ballad's absence here shows its inadequacy as a literary form for Pérez de Hita's task at hand: the writing of a *contemporary* history that underlines a clash between two historical moments and that reflects the emergence of more complicated subjectivities in post-expulsion Spain. The ballad's absence, therefore, marks its death as a viable genre for "modern" Spain.

To conclude, Pérez de Hita's unflinching look at this appalling historical moment, as well as his criticism of the Spanish crown's

handling of it, are better reasons for his second volume's tepid reception than previous scholars' explanations of "not quite literature, not quite history." Pérez de Hita's text shows us that, when depicted honestly, the painful reality of early modern Spain pushed authors to find new ways to talk about their past, their present, and their future. On the one hand, when safely in the realm of the remote past, authors like Pérez de Hita could rely on the literary tropes seen in the Moorish novel of *El Abencerraje*, as well as those circulated in the popular Moorish ballads. On the other hand, when trying to figure the present and the future, Pérez de Hita, and later Miguel de Cervantes, were forced to invent new ways of writing in order to weave together new stories, ones that simultaneously chronicle the loss of past glories and the insecurities of an empire's present and future.

NOTES

¹ In this first volume, Pérez de Hita avails himself of both the *romancero viejo* and the *romancero nuevo*. Carrasco Urgoiti notes that Pérez de Hita used the ballads, “como fuente de peripecia y como ornato que ambienta y engalana la obra” (*Los moriscos* 32). She doubts he sincerely used the ballads as historical sources, saying, “Si [Pérez de Hita] era sincero al conceder valor documental a estos poemas, ignoraba que el romancero viejo y el nuevo difieren sustancialmente, aunque no dejaba de distinguir entre ambos estilos, prefiriendo el último” (*Los moriscos* 32). Diane Sieber, however, counters this view, saying that Pérez de Hita used the ballads as literal, historical sources. She concludes that, given the way history was written and read in the early modern period, the two volumes of *Las guerras civiles de Granada* were *both* composed and read as factual histories. She thus extends the argument of Menéndez Pidal, who maintained that “en general los historiadores del siglo XVI se apoyan en los romances con la misma fe que los cronistas del XII al XIV se apoyaban en los cantares de gesta para contar los sucesos de tiempos anteriores” (102).

² In his introduction to the text, Joaquín Gil Sanjuán notes that Pérez de Hita’s ballads are even “didáctico[s] por su fácil memorización y cuyas estrofas parecen escritas para ser recitadas” (xxxiii). Thus the ballads in *Historia de los bandos de los Zegríes y Abencerrajes* are taken in part from oral tradition and written down by Pérez de Hita, whereas the ballads from *La guerra de los moriscos*, are composed and written down to then be circulated orally.

³ Pérez de Hita was born sometime in the decade of 1540 and his precise date of death is not known. According to Carrasco Urgoiti, there is no proof that he lived after 1600. (“Chronology,” *The Moorish Novel*, n. pag.)

⁴ See Carrasco Urgoiti, *Los moriscos*, especially Chapter 5.

⁵ See Carrasco Urgoiti, Chapter 5 of *Los moriscos* in which she states that Pérez de Hita read novels of chivalry, *Orlando Furioso*, but above all, regional histories and chronicles (33).

⁶ Richard Kagan notes that unlike royal historians, chorographers emphasized the regional differences and distinctive natures of Spanish towns in the early modern period. In this way, chorography “served as the counterpoint to royal history, offering the cities a role in Spanish history denied them by the *cronistas del rey*” (86). It is easy to see, therefore, how Pérez de Hita’s later critical narrative of *La guerra de los moriscos* could have grown out of his earlier experimentation with chorography.

⁷ See Carrasco Urgoiti, *Los moriscos*, 42. Beyond the views he expressed in writing, Pérez de Hita’s profession as a cobbler would also connect him to Moriscos, as cobblers and artisans of leather were typically of Morisco origin. See Gil Sanjuán (xviii) and Carrasco Urgoiti, *The Moorish novel*, 78.

⁸ For a nuanced study of Granada as a “frontier city” and the intermingling of its Christian and Morisco inhabitants, see David Coleman’s *Creating Christian Granada*.

⁹ Menéndez y Pelayo observes that there are references to an earlier version of *La guerra de los moriscos*, published in Alcalá de Henares by Juan Gracián in 1604, but that there is no extant copy. The first version we have is from the year 1619, published in both Barcelona and in Cuenca by Esteban Liberós and Domingo de la Iglesia, respectively. (See Menéndez y Pelayo’s note on page 150 in *Orígenes*.) Carrasco Urgoiti, however, argues that the reference to a 1604 version must actually refer to Pérez de Hita’s first volume, *Historia de los bandos de los Zegríes y Abencerrajes*, and not to *La guerra de los moriscos*. See *Los moriscos*, 100, n5.

¹⁰ In his influential study of the origin of the Spanish novel, Menéndez y Pelayo says that the first volume of Pérez de Hita’s text is a “novela histórica” and the second volume is a “historia anovelada” (134). In her comparison of the two volumes, Carrasco Urgoiti observes that they consist of “idealización en un caso, veracidad en otro” (Carrasco Urgoiti, “La cultura” 41).

¹¹ A notable exception to this is Carrasco Urgoiti, who long championed the importance of Ginés Pérez de Hita. See, for example, *Los moriscos y Ginés Pérez de Hita*. Paula Blanchard-Demouge is another scholar who early took note of Pérez de Hita’s importance. See her introduction to the 1915 edition of *La guerra de los moriscos*. More recently, Diane Sieber has defended the historical rigor of both volumes in her article, “The Frontier Ballad and Spanish Golden Age Historiography: Recontextualizing the *Guerras Civiles de Granada*.”

¹² While other historians of the conflict do not classify it quite as extremely as Kamen, they do see it as a particularly brutal and savage war. See García Arenal, *Los moriscos*, 63 and L.P. Harvey, *Muslims in Spain: 1500-1614*, Chapter Six.

¹³ For more on the *Libros plumbeos* and their cultural and historical context, see García-Arenal and Rodríguez Mediano’s *Un Oriente español: Los moriscos y el Sacromonte en tiempos de Contrarreforma*.

¹⁴ See Quinn, “Romanticizing the Moor in the Sixteenth-century Spanish Ballad.”

¹⁵ Carrasco Urgoiti notes, however, that these games lack the famous and expected equestrian component, thus recognizing the reality of the times in this one aspect. See *Los moriscos*, 44.

¹⁶ Smith goes on to say that “the ballad had early and strong beginnings in Spain because it was to keep so much of the national past alive and to give voice to *collective* aspirations, and that it endured longer than elsewhere because Spain clung so tenaciously to her past” (6, emphasis added).

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