

JUDAISATION OF A HISPANIC BALLAD: *LANDARICO* IN THE WORKS OF SEPHARDIC AUTHORS HAIM S. DAVIČO AND LAURA PAPO BOHORETA FROM THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA*

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RESUMEN

Este trabajo estudia la manera en la que fue adaptado, es decir, judaizado el romance español *Landarico* entre las comunidades sefardíes de Serbia y Bosnia. Más concretamente, me dedico a analizar el uso que de este romance hacen dos grandes autores sefardíes de la antigua Yugoslavia, Haim S. Davičo (1854-1918) de Serbia y Laura Papo Bohoreta (1891-1942) de Bosnia. Las obras de estos dos autores reflejan fielmente los cambios que sus respectivas comunidades introdujeron en la historia y en el significado del romance tal y como se advierte en otras versiones recopiladas en la Península Ibérica y las demás comunidades sefardíes. Por añadidura, ambos autores describen el contexto (el lugar y la ocasión) en el que este romance fue cantado, ofreciéndonos de esta manera valiosos datos sobre el papel que los romances (y el folklore en general) tenían entre los sefardíes. Se prestará particular atención a la relación entre el género y el romancero.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Romancero, *Landarico*, Haim S. Davičo, Laura Papo Bohoreta, judaización, estudios de género.

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I examine the case of domestication, i.e. judaisation of the Spanish ballad *Landarico* by the Sephardic communities of Serbia and Bosnia. Specifically, I analyse how the ballad was used by the two leading Sephardic authors from the former Yugoslavia, Haim S. Davičo (1854-1918) from Serbia and Laura Papo Bohoreta (1891-1942) from Bosnia, in their own original work. I argue that the use these authors make of the ballad reflects the changes their respective communities introduced to the ballad's plot and meaning, as portrayed in other versions collected in the Iberian Peninsula and from among other Sephardic communities. Moreover, both authors depict the context (the place and the time) in which this ballad was performed, thus revealing valuable information about the role ballads (and folklore in general) had among the Sephardim. Particular focus is laid upon the issue of gender and balladry.

KEY WORDS: Balladry, *Landarico*, Haim S. Davičo, Laura Papo Bohoreta, judaisation, gender studies.

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Landarico is a scholarly title for a Spanish ballad about female infidelity: a story of a queen who is punished by death for committing adultery. In order to facilitate the identification of different ballad-types, both Hispanic and pan-Hispanic ballads were accorded certain reference numbers (IGR) in various catalogues¹. Thus in Diego Catalán's *Catálogo general del romancero pan-hispánico*, *Landarico* appears as item TTTU0426 (Catalán *et al.* 1984: I, 233). Samuel G. Armistead (1978: II, 64-73) classifies the Sephardic versions of *Landarico* as M8. Manuel da Costa Fontes (1997: I, 179-80), who looks at balladry tradition in Portuguese, maintains the same letter as Armistead, which is used by both to designate different ballad-types about the adulteress, but assigns it a different number: M4².

Landarico is just one of the numerous *romances* that the Sephardim took with them as part of their Iberian heritage after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. The various versions collected attest to the great popularity this ballad enjoyed among the exiled Spanish Jews³. Further proof of this is that the ballad appears in the works of two leading Sephardic authors from the former Yugoslavia, Haim S. Davičo (1854-1918) from Serbia and Laura Papo (1891-1942) from Bosnia, in which, as I shall show, beyond the mere text of the ballad various details of interest such as when and where the ballad was performed are provided.

Davičo uses *Landarico* in “Naumi: jalijska noveleta” (“Naumi: Yalia’s Novella”, 1883) (hereafter “Naumi”), the first tale he wrote about the Sephardic community in Belgrade, and in the last, “Buena — priča i slika sa Jalije” (“Buena — A Tale and Scene of Yalia”, 1913) (hereafter “Buena”). In Papo’s case, this ballad appears as a part of her play, *Avia de ser* (hereafter *AS*), and in her essay, *La mužer sefardi de Bosna* (hereafter *La mužer*)⁴. The interpretation of the ballad and the Sephardic context in which this *romansa* (Judeo-Spanish for ballad) was set differs with each author. Davičo’s and Papo’s interpretations of *Landarico*, which derive directly from the tradition, confirm Diego Catalán’s theory of a ballad being an open system:

El romance tradicional es un sistema abierto (no un organismo o estructura cerrada), tanto verbalmente, como poéticamente, como temáticamente, y su evolución depende de la adaptación de ese sistema abierto o subsistema (poema) al ambiente, al sistema lingüístico, estético y ético del grupo humano en que se canta, en que se reproduce. El cambio es claramente ecosistémico. (1972: 205)

The survival of medieval Spanish ballads such as *Landarico* among the Sephardim nearly up to the present day has been possible precisely because these ballads have received different interpretations at different times and in different places. They were adapted in order to better fit the social, cultural and psychological needs of those who fostered them. In other

¹ IGR stands for ‘índice general del romancero’.

² Bearing in mind that in this paper I examine *Landarico* in the Sephardic tradition, for future references to this and other ballad-types I shall be using Armistead’s titles and reference numbers (1978).

³ See Armistead (1978: II, 64-73), Benamayor (1979: 76) & Anahory Librowicz (1980: 61-64).

⁴ Papo wrote *AS* in 1930 and *La mužer* in 1932. With regard to the former, two editions of the play have appeared in recent years. In 2015, Sejdalija Gušić, Spahić Edina & Ana Cecilia Prenz Kopušar prepared a facsimil edition of various of Papo’s plays, including this one, while in 2016 Eliezer Papo published a critical edition of the play. With regard to the latter, see Papo (2005). For this paper, I have consulted the original manuscript kept in the Historijski arhiv Sarajeva under the classmark O-BP-168.

words, if ballads had not had anything to convey to the Sephardim, they would have stopped transmitting and performing them.

The first point I aim to analyse here concerns the interpretation and role this *romance* had among the Serbian and Bosnian Sephardim — as seen in the works of these two authors — while underscoring a specific context linked to this ballad. The specificity of the treatment of this ballad by Davičo and Papo most probably has its roots in the folk tradition of the Bosnian and Serbian Sephardic communities respectively. This point will be highlighted in contrast with other Sephardic communities as well as with the ballad in Hispanic tradition.

The second point concerns the manner in which these two authors use elements of folk literature (in this case a ballad) for the purposes of their own literary works. *Landarico* appears in both authors in its unchanged traditional form (in part or in full) but set within the plot of the main work of each author. Davičo renders the ballad into Serbian. Papo, by contrast, introduces it in its original language, Judeo-Spanish. I shall argue that two main goals can be discerned behind the decision of these authors to use oral literature in this way. The first is to collect and save valuable folk material by furthering its continued dissemination through a written source. Up until then this literature had been kept alive exclusively through oral transmission. The second goal is to use these existing forms of folk literature to reinforce the main idea of their own works. This is achieved by drawing a parallel between the folk lore conveyed in these literary forms and the main idea of their own stories, conveyed through the fate of their characters.

It is important to highlight this treatment of folk literature as it encompasses diverse facts of cultural importance. For example, Davičo stresses the occasions on which some ballads were sung in his community and how they were perceived by their listeners. Papo, on the other hand, depicts how ballads were performed among the Bosnian Sephardim and for what they were used.

I shall start with peninsular versions of *Landarico* for an obvious reason: this is a medieval Spanish ballad, which the Sephardim initially learned before abandoning the Peninsula. It is first necessary to explain the original meaning of the ballad, the condemnation of adulteresses and thereby women, in order to appreciate the changes the ballad underwent, as found in the examples collected from among the Sephardic communities of Serbia and Bosnia. These changes, which are reflected in the treatment of the ballad by Davičo and Papo, are a result of the dynamic and fluid nature of the oral discourse which “presumes variation on all levels — transformations which, when seen collectively, represent diverse re-workings of the ballad material by the ballad transmitters” (Catarella 1990: 332). In this connection, I intend to examine *Landarico* and the way it was deployed by Davičo and Papo as a “female cultural expression, i.e. as functioning through and for women” (Catarella 1990: 332). Likewise, I shall use the differences in the interpretation of the ballad’s plot in the works of these two authors to show that gendered performances and versions can also be unstable and thus allow for different potential view points and identifications.

The material used in the case of the Iberian tradition includes the oldest extant version of the ballad from the sixteenth century and some twentieth-century versions collected throughout Spain and Portugal. In the case of Sephardic tradition, special emphasis will be laid upon versions of the ballad from Bosnia and Serbia (most of which are kept in the Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Madrid)⁵. Versions from other Sephardic

⁵ I would like to express my gratitude to the Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Madrid, for supporting my work by allowing me to use in this paper valuable material from their collection. Likewise, thanks are due to

communities will also be taken into account (see note 2). All examples collected from among the Sephardim date either from the late nineteenth or the twentieth century.

Therefore the comparison will include both synchronic and diachronic analysis. Its aim is to point out the originality and uniqueness of the Sephardic versions used by Papo and Davičo (and hence the Serbian and Bosnian Sephardic communities) compared to the Iberian tradition and other Sephardic communities.

1. *LANDARICO* IN THE IBERIAN TRADITION

The only known Spanish version of *Landarico* prior to modern times is the sixteenth-century version found in the chapbook collection of the University of Prague⁶. However, this ballad almost certainly existed since the Middle Ages. The fact that the Sephardim, who left Spain in 1492, knew the ballad well indicates its existence in the Iberian tradition before that date.

In modern times, only a few versions have been collected in Spain and Portugal. Rina Benmayor (1979: 72-73) published a version compiled by Gonzalo Menéndez Pidal in 1926 in Bohoyo (Ávila) from forty-three year old Eustaquia González⁷. In the Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal in Madrid I have consulted two more versions: one collected by Ramón Menéndez Pidal from fifty-four year old Rosario González, also from Bohoyo, and the other collected by Jenaro Ramos Hernández in 1905 in Torrejoncillo (Cáceres). The name of the informant of the latter appears merely as La Jermosa. Paul Bénichou (1968: 104-105) cites the existence (not the texts) of more versions collected by Ramón Menéndez Pidal and his wife María Goyri. However, I have not been able to consult the file containing these versions as its whereabouts is unknown. With regard to Portuguese tradition, I have looked at a version from Baçal collected and published by Francisco Manuel Alves (1938: 562), and another from Vinhais compiled and published by Firmino A. Martins (1938: 22-23)⁸.

The events depicted in the ballad are based on a historical event: the tragic death of King Chilperic I (539-584). The latter was killed by an unknown assassin while returning from hunting one evening in Chelles. The murderer disappeared in the night and was never found (Armand 2008: 181-207). Curiously, in the eyes of the King's subjects, his wife Fredegund and her lover Landri were guilty of killing the King. This interpretation not only became part of oral tradition but was also disseminated by medieval chronicles which added further information to the story that thus far has not been acknowledged as historical fact (Armand 2008: 182-184).

A case in point would be two medieval Latin chronicles, the anonymous *Gesta regum francorum* (c. 1100) and *De gestis francorum* by the monk Aimoin Floriacense (c. 960-c. 1010), which recount the event in the following way: one day, King Chilperic enters the Queen's chambers and finds her taking a bath. Taking her unawares, he approaches her from behind

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⁶ Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1912?: IX, 219-220) was the first to publish the ballad. The ballad was later reedited by R. Foulché-Delbosc (1924: 463-464, no. 76) and Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1960: I, 331-332). Most recent collections of Hispanic *romancero* usually include the oldest version of the ballad alongside other versions collected in the twentieth century. See Stefano (1993: 192-193), Díaz-Mas (2005: 295-299) & Piñero Ramírez (2008: 393-397).

⁷ Also, see Díaz-Mas (2005: 298-299).

⁸ Also, see Leite de Vasconcellos (1958) & Pires da Cruz (1988).

and strikes her with a stick. The Queen, convinced it is her lover who is joking with her, says imprudently: “Quare sic facis Landarice”, only to discover that it is the King and not her paramour who is standing behind her. The King leaves her chambers without uttering a word. Terrified of possible punishment, the Queen sends for her lover, who shows remorse for having been involved with the Queen: “Tam mala hora te viderunt oculi mei”. However, Fredegund composes herself and suggests killing the King. Upon his return from hunting, the King is assassinated by the Queen’s accomplices and she and her lover spread the rumour that the killer is the King’s nephew, the sovereign of Austrasia (Menéndez y Pelayo 1916: XII, 489-491 & Armand 2008: 183-184)⁹.

There are two reasons why Menéndez y Pelayo (1916: XII, 488-492) cites both chronicles as possible sources for the Hispanic ballad: they both precede the ballad, and the similarity between the way the event is portrayed in these works and in the sixteenth-century Spanish ballad suggests that the origins of the latter are to be found in an erudite source. This has been confirmed by later studies of *Landarico* (Bénichou 1968: 103-104, Vidaković-Petrov 1990: 166-169 & Díaz-Mas 2005: 295). The sixteenth-century ballad contains the same facts as the chronicles discussed. All the events depicted in it are done in the same way: the King surprises the Queen; mistaking him for her lover, she unwittingly reveals her adultery: “Está quedo, Landarico” (Díaz-Mas 2005: 296); the King leaves without uttering a word; the Queen seeks help from her lover; the latter expresses remorse for having become involved with her: “En mal punto y en mala hora | mis ojos te han mirado” (Díaz-Mas 2005: 296); nonetheless the Queen convinces him of the necessity of having the King killed, a deed they carry out; in the end the lovers go unpunished (Díaz-Mas 2005: 295-297).

The name of the lover that appears in Latin texts is Landaricus. This, again according to Menéndez y Pelayo (1916: XII, 492), eliminates French texts as the possible source for the Spanish ballad since French *juglares* had changed the name to Landri or Landrix. It is curious to note that the story of a queen who gets punished for committing adultery is known among scholars not by her name but by that of her lover, Landarico. The reason is that the name of the Queen (as well as the King), which appears in Latin texts, was omitted in the ballad even though she is the central figure of the story. She is addressed only by her royal title. It is solely the name of the lover that has been preserved. This can be seen in the sixteenth-century version, where he is called Landarico. In twentieth-century versions, the Queen continues to be nameless whereas the lover is still referred to as Landarico (or some close form of that name).

This ballad, like so many others, has survived the test of time, and in the twentieth century a number of versions have been collected in Spain (Catalonia, Castile and Extremadura) and Portugal (Piñero Ramírez 2008: 395). These examples from the Iberian Peninsula show how the oral tradition has introduced new elements and changes to the plot of the ballad over the course of centuries. In modern Iberian versions, that is in those from the twentieth century, two novelties can be discerned compared to how the story was depicted in the Latin chronicles or the sixteenth-century ballad. The first is the mention of children. When the Queen reveals her adultery, she also confesses that two of her sons were fathered by her lover and that she bestows upon them a more privileged treatment:

⁹ For more information on the King’s wife, Fredegund, see Bernet (2012).

Los del rey visten de seda, los tuyos seda y bordado;
 los del rey gastan espada, los tuyos puñal dorado;
 los del rey montan en mula y los tuyos a caballo;
 los del rey comen en mesa y los tuyos a mi lado.
 (Díaz-Mas 2005: 298)

The question arises as to how such an open favouring of some of her children over the others could have gone unnoticed. In my view, this element was clearly introduced to intensify the Queen's guilt. She is not only an adulteress but she is also depicted as a bad mother who attempts to secure better treatment for her illegitimate children than for her legitimate ones, thus inverting what was traditionally imposed by law as expressed in *Las siete partidas* (Burns 2001: IV, 948-955). This reference to her children and the unequal treatment they receive appears in both Spanish and pan-Hispanic versions of the ballad, which led Benmayor to conclude that it must have formed part of the peninsular ballad before the Jews had left Spain (1979: 74).

The second novelty concerns the denouement of the ballad. In the sixteenth-century version, the Queen and her lover elude punishment by killing the King. The modern versions, by contrast, make sure that the guilty parties receive their due: once the affair has been revealed they are both sentenced to death (see, for example, Díaz-Mas 2005: 298-299). This ending is more in keeping with the code of ethics prevalent in Hispanic balladry, in which the death penalty for the adulteress is almost a *sine qua non*: "Only the terrible retribution with which the adulteress is threatened — if not actually punished — rings true to Hispanic balladry's inexorable judicial code" (Armistead & Silverman 1971: 223). With this solution to the events, the ballad seeks to assert male authority and convey a clear didactic message that adultery committed by a woman warrants strict punishment.

2. *LANDARICO* IN THE SEPHARDIC TRADITION

Landarico is one of the most popular ballads fostered among the Sephardim both in the former Ottoman Empire and in North Africa¹⁰. The Sephardic tradition has remained faithful to the peninsular interpretation of the ballad in most aspects. The Queen is sentenced to death by beheading, a well-known folk motif (Q421.0.2), and thus the typical punishment reserved for an adulteress in folk literature¹¹. The recognition of male authority is thereby clearly emphasised.

The differences consist of adding more details in the description of the privileges the lover's sons enjoy and the omission of the figure of the lover. The latter is only mentioned in the words of the Queen when she imprudently reveals her secret, but he does not, as in Spanish versions, participate in the development of the plot. The main idea focuses on the adulteress being punished, thus confirming the aforementioned didactic role of the ballad: "– Perdón, perdón, señor el rey, | esfueño lo ha pasado. | El rey esvainó su espada, | la caveza le cortava" (Benmayor 1979: 69, no. 6c). This is what Teresa Catarella (1990: 340) defines as the mythic move in the narrative trajectory of the ballad in which the primary

¹⁰ See note 2.

¹¹ On beheading as a form of female castration, see Cixous (1980; 1981: 41-55; & 1989). Likewise, all reference numbers to folk motifs are taken from Stith Thompson's catalogue (1966).

linguistic and thematic relationships are solved according to the conventional archetypes of the patriarchy.

This, however, was not the case of the Bosnian and Serbian Sephardic versions of the ballad in which the lover plays an active part and appears in dialogues. As a result, *Landarico* receives a different interpretation in the works of Davičo and Papo which reflects the changes that these two Sephardic communities had introduced to the plot and the function of the ballad. I shall first examine how Davičo treats *Landarico* in his tales. This will be followed by a study of Papo's usage of this ballad in *AS*, and her essay, *La mužer*.

3. LANDARICO IN THE WORK OF HAIM S. DAVIČO FROM SERBIA

Haim Samuilo Davičo (1854-1918) represents the leading cultural figure in the Serbian Sephardic milieu at the turn of the twentieth century. His cultural legacy consists of his literary work (tales and essays), his translations (predominantly from Spanish and mostly of theatre), his theatre reviews and his work as a collector of Sephardic folklore. A good part of Davičo's literary work focuses on his native Judeo-Spanish culture and hence bears valuable testimony of the Sephardic community in Serbia of his time and immediately prior to his birth¹².

When the centuries-long Ottoman rule came to an end and the Serbian state was created some Sephardic Jews supported the idea of their community integrating into the Serbian society. Davičo belonged to this group and worked to achieve this goal. Through his texts Davičo expressed his belief that this process was not only inevitable but also desirable as in this way the Sephardic community would start to benefit from the modernisation Serbia was undergoing and thus catch up with the rest of Europe (Vidaković-Petrov 1990: 115 & Jovanović 2014: 984). Furthermore, with this aim in mind Davičo opted to use the Serbian language rather than Judeo-Spanish as a means of communication and consequently decided to disseminate his work by publishing in Serbian periodicals rather than in the Sephardic press.

Although Davičo was an advocate of these changes taking place in the Sephardic community in Belgrade, supporting its modernisation and integration into Serbian society, he was at the same time fully aware of the consequences this process would have on the Sephardic language, tradition and identity. He became the first Sephardic intellectual in Serbia to understand the necessity of preserving the memory of Sephardic culture in written form and as a consequence wrote four tales and two essays dealing exclusively with Sephardic topics and motifs. The two essays were entitled, "Slike iz jevrejskog života na Jaliји beogradskoј" ("Scenes from Jewish life in Belgrade's Yalia", 1881) and "Jedne večeri na Jaliји" ("One Evening in Yalia", 1895)¹³. The four tales all carry as the title the name of a female protagonist: "Naumi" (1883), "Jalijske zimske noći: Luna" ("Yalia's Winter Nights: Luna", 1888), "Perla: slika iz beogradske jevrejske male" ("Perla: A Scene from Belgrade's Jewish Quarter", 1891), and, finally, "Buena". The latter was published in instalments in 1913 in *Delo (Work)* while the first three appeared in *Otadžbina (Fatherland)*, both of which were

¹² For a more detailed account of Davičo's life and work, see Vidaković-Petrov (1990: 113-122; & 2010: 307-316) & Jovanović (2014: 981-1002).

¹³ Yalia was the name of the Sephardic neighbourhood in Belgrade where the author was born. The name comes from a Turkish word *yali* meaning strand or bank, in this case the bank of the Danube which was the area Belgrade's community of Spanish Jews inhabited (Milošević 1967: 130 & Vidaković-Petrov 2010: 311).

Serbian periodicals. All four tales, along with the two mentioned essays, were subsequently published under the title *Priče sa Jalijske (Tales from Yalia)* in 2000¹⁴.

Focusing his work on his native culture, Davičo, as I shall document with *Landarico*, turns to folk tradition as the most genuine representation of that culture which was rapidly disappearing. For this reason, Davičo either introduces elements of Sephardic folk culture and language into his own work or he collects folk material *in situ* in his endeavour to preserve this tradition. It should be noted that the scope of his work is not large in either of these cases but it does hold an immense cultural value as it represents the last remains of the little that the Sephardic community in Serbia saved of their own culture.

Regarding Davičo's first practice, that of introducing elements of Sephardic folk culture in his own works, two techniques can be discerned. The first is to introduce Sephardic folk material (in part or in full) in Judeo-Spanish, while at the same time providing its explanation or Serbian translation. For example, when referring to Judeo-Spanish poetry or balladry, Davičo places some lines in Judeo-Spanish alongside their translation to Serbian (Davičo 2000: 33, 66-67, 101-102 & 104-105).

The second technique Davičo employed, which was also common to other contemporary Sephardic authors of the former Yugoslavia, consists of finding a place for folk literature within the plot of the main work. In this way, folk literature does not function as a mere decorative element or one that exists independently from the main work but rather as one that enriches the plot of a particular work and strengthens its meaning. This is the case of *Landarico* and its role in Davičo's work.

Davičo uses *Landarico* on two occasions, in his tales "Naumi" and "Buena". The reason why all Davičo's tales about the Sephardic community of Belgrade have as a title the name of a female protagonist is because their emphasis is upon Sephardic women and their position in the Sephardic (traditional) society. Davičo's use of *Landarico* is closely related to this idea.

As a child, Davičo was exposed to various forms of Sephardic folk literature. According to David Alkalaj, the ballad tradition in particular left a strong impact on him as he frequently saw them being performed: "Još detetom [Davičo] slušao je u kući svoga dede, čuvenog ćir-Haima Daviča, anegdote i priče iz prošlosti mahalske i uživao u romacama i baladama koje su na španskom, na čuvenim *tajfas* (večerinke) izvijale razne *tijas* Mirjame, Blanke i druge" (1925: 80)¹⁵.

In Alkalaj's account, it is evident that it was women who performed ballads, that they were the guardians of balladry and transmitters of the legacy¹⁶. Since ballads formed an inseparable part of the Sephardic culture and everyday life, Davičo could not write about his community without taking them into account. The function played by ballads among the Sephardim is skilfully illustrated in Davičo's use of *Landarico*.

I shall start with "Buena" as it is here where more emphasis is given to *Landarico* which appears in its complete form. The ballad was rendered into Serbian with a couple of

¹⁴ All the quotations from Davičo's work will be taken from this edition. See Davičo (2000).

¹⁵ "During his childhood, he [Davičo] had had the opportunity, in the home of his grandfather — the renowned Mr. Haim Davičo — to listen to anecdotes and tales from Yalia's past and enjoy Spanish ballads and songs at the legendary *tajfas* (evening gatherings) performed by different *tijas* by the names of Miriam, Blanka or the like." Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Serbian into English are mine.

¹⁶ On this, see Catarella (1990: 331) & Armistead (1996: 13-26).

verses in Judeo-Spanish at the very end. In his other tale, “Naumi”, Davičo only makes a reference to the ballad through quoting two lines in Judeo-Spanish, which he also translates to Serbian to ensure that the readers understand the message. Since *Landarico* is unknown in Serbian culture, Serbian readers might otherwise have been unable to make the link between the meaning of the two lines and the fate of Davičo’s characters. I aim to highlight the meaning of the ballad as it appears in Davičo and how the ballad connects to the main idea of his tales.

The plot of all four of Davičo’s tales about the Sephardic community in Belgrade includes a love story, usually with a tragic denouement. For example, at the heart of “Buena” lies an emotional story of two young couples in love: David and Reina, on the one hand, and Rufo and Buena, on the other hand. These young people long to spend their lives together, but they are confronted by the opposition of their families. This is owing to the situation of women in traditional societies, such as the Sephardic one, in which their life choices were determined by the wishes and expectations of men, that is their fathers or husbands¹⁷. This lack of freedom of choice on the part of the characters in Davičo’s tales is reinforced in his interpretation of *Landarico* in which the Queen was not allowed the freedom to marry whom she wanted, a point to which I shall return shortly.

Davičo depicts these family and social conflicts which seem to constitute an insurmountable obstacle to the realisation of the couples’ love. The origin of these conflicts derives from the changes that the Sephardic community is experiencing and which divide the community into two factions: those who defend traditional values at all costs, which implies children obeying their parents’ wishes, and those who are trying to follow the pace of the times by allowing their children to make their own choices.

An example of this conflict is portrayed in the scene in which Juda, Buena’s father, goes to see his brother Haim, in order to arrange a marriage of convenience between his daughter and Haim’s son, David. Juda insists on the marriage taking place in spite of the fact that Buena and David are not in love with each other. His brother Haim, on the other hand, defends a more open and modern view on the subject: “Veridba je stvar dopadanja dvoje mladih. Roditelji mogu tu da savetuju, ali ne treba da prisiljuju i nameću” (Davičo 2000: 98)¹⁸.

Davičo very cleverly uses the obstacles that these young people are facing to highlight the conflicts within the Sephardic community as it is poised between old and new values, between East and West: “I zbilja, u mahali beše od nekog vremena nastupio prevrat. Evropski duh poče istiskivati istočnjački” (Davičo 2000: 107)¹⁹. Davičo’s attitude of open-mindedness, which is evident in his writing, defines his position in this conflict. This is seen in the way he portrays his female characters, showing great sympathy and comprehension for their situation. In keeping with this idea, he uses *Landarico* to show that the lack of freedom of choice usually results in a tragic ending such as the one depicted in the ballad.

The moment Davičo chooses to introduce *Landarico* in his tale is very suggestive. The community is commemorating the Ninth of Av (Hebrew *Tisha B’Av*). This day in the Jewish calendar marks the memory of the destruction of both the First and Second Temple in Jerusalem. Over the course of time, other tragedies were added to the commemoration of this day; for example, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 was one such tragedy

¹⁷ On this, see Rubin (1975: 157-210).

¹⁸ “Engagement is a matter of two people sharing feelings for each other. Parents can offer their advice on this matter but they shouldn’t force or impose their will.”

¹⁹ “And indeed, a change has been coming to the neighbourhood for some time. The [Western] European spirit began replacing the Oriental one”.

(Danon 1996: 69). However, a tragedy of a personal nature could also be associated with it. Thus *romances de endechar* came to form part of a rich repertoire of texts performed for this day:

Para aumentar el ambiente de general tristeza es costumbre reunirse a entonar cantos tristes, ya sean los poemas paralitúrgicos relativos a la caída de Jerusalén (quintot), ya las endechas que vienen a recordar a los difuntos de cada familia, ya cualquier otro cantar triste que narre un hecho desgraciado y sea capaz de conmover a los oyentes; y entre estos cantares tristes se incluyen un buen número de *romances*. (Díaz-Mas 1981: 100)

This atmosphere of sadness and melancholy proved to be ideal for Tija Miriam, one of the secondary characters of this tale, to sing ballads which in their core recount the tragic destiny of young women about to marry a man they do not love. But how does *Landarico* fit into this idea of doomed love? And why would the Belgrade Sephardim, according to Davičo, have associated the ballad about adultery with the Ninth of Av?

Landarico is clearly known both in Spain and in other Sephardic communities as a ballad that condemns adultery and punishes the adulteress. This constitutes the main message conveyed by the twentieth-century versions. In addition, the ballad contains several aspects which depict the female protagonist not only as an unfaithful wife but also as a bad mother, who shows no compunction in treating some of her children better than others depending on who their father is.

In Davičo's interpretation, by contrast, the Queen's actions are understood differently, and they are therefore perceived with more understanding and empathy. The ballad becomes a story of an unhappy or miserable woman who had to renounce her true (first) love to marry a man she did not love: "Estáte, estáte, Anderlino, | tú mi primer namorado" (Benmayor 1979: 68, no. 6a). The excuse for the Queen's behaviour is to be found precisely in the fact that she was not allowed to marry her true love. The moral message therefore points in a different direction: the ballad works as a symbol of resistance against prearranged marriages which force young women to marry against their will. By writing about young people who cannot fulfil their love for the same reason, Davičo's tale also embodies a criticism of the negation of free will.

We have no information about whether Davičo collected the ballad from the community or if it came from memories of his childhood. Its content does not differ from most Sephardic versions: in keeping with the code of ethics the adulteress is punished for her actions. But it is the reaction of those who are listening to the ballad, particularly the two young couples who are fighting the opposition of their parents, which reveals the perception of the ballad as seen in Davičo: "Nesrećna sudba junakinje balade izmamljivaše suze, uzdahe i jecanja. Junakinje i junaci ove priče [David, Reina, Rufo and Buena] ćutahu, ne jecahu niti uzdisahu, ali srca njihova setna ali presretna, kucahu silno i zaklinjahu se da ih nikakva sila neće rastaviti..." (Davičo 2000: 105-106)²⁰.

²⁰ "The tragic fate of the ballad's protagonist provoked tears, sighs and moans. The heroes and heroines of this tale [David, Reina, Rufo and Buena] kept silent, they didn't moan or sigh but their sad yet joyful hearts were beating hard and they swore that no fate would separate them..."

The reaction is one of empathy and understanding for the Queen's actions and sadness for her fate. The characters of Davičo's tale identify themselves and their fate with that of the Queen as they fear that they too will be forced to renounce their true loves. Davičo's exploration of alternative narratives and representation of the Queen being contemplated as a victim corresponds to the "unconscious rejection of patriarchal codes but the conscious pseudo-adherence to them" (Catarella 1990: 341).

This new understanding of the ballad fits perfectly within the plot of Davičo's tale in which young couples struggle against the pressure of traditional values to preserve their love. Davičo underlines the similarity between the Queen's fate in the ballad and that of his own characters. The ballad adds force to the Sephardic context in which the plot of Davičo's tale unfolds. At the same time, it shows the role that folklore played in the everyday life of the Sephardim.

As noted, the ballad, according to Davičo's account, is performed for the Ninth of Av. The link between this ballad and *Tisha B'Av* emerged thanks to this different interpretation of the ballad's events which depict the adulteress as a victim of circumstances rather than a transgressor. Her tragic fate, coerced as she is into renouncing her true love and marrying someone else, followed by her terrible punishment (beheading) for keeping that love alive in spite of being married, links the Queen's story perfectly to this day which commemorates national and personal tragedies. Without this change in the perception of the female character, this ballad would have no place within this Jewish holy day.

Davičo rightly calls this ballad Spanish, thus indicating its origin. But the usage and the place it received among the Sephardim from Belgrade, as described by Davičo, show how the ballad was domesticated by the Spanish Jews. By giving it a different meaning and by associating it with the Ninth of Av, the ballad underwent a process of cultural adaptation to its environment. In other words, the ballad was judaised. There are reasons to think that Davičo's account of this ballad derives from oral sources. The fact that he links the ballad to the Ninth of Av in two different tales (see below) leads me to believe that he was documenting elements of oral tradition of his community rather than adapting the ballad to the needs of the plot of his tales. There are other examples in the Sephardic tradition similar to *Landarico*. One of them is *Parto en tierras lejas* (L2) which only in the Bosnian Sephardic tradition became a lament sung for the Ninth of Av (Papo 2005: 157 & Vidaković-Petrov 2014: 318).

In "Naumi", written thirty years before the publication of "Buena", *Landarico* is used for the first time. On that occasion, Davičo introduces only two lines from the ballad which were sufficient for him to convey his message to the prospective readers. The tale's plot revolves around a tragic love story between Naumi, a young Sephardic girl, and her sweetheart David. In spite of the love they feel for each other, these two people are unable to be together because Naumi's parents have chosen another suitor for their daughter: a rich Jewish man from another Serbian city. In desperation, Naumi attempts suicide to avoid the destiny that awaits her, only to fail. She eventually dies of grief, thus underlining just how tragic the consequences of taking traditional customs to the extreme can be.

The tale again takes place during the Ninth of Av. By setting the plot of his tale at this time, Davičo hints at a tragic outcome of the story. Once again he links the fate of his character, in this case Naumi, and the Queen from the ballad with this day of mourning in Jewish culture. However, this time Davičo uses the ballad in a slightly different way.

As stated above, Naumi's parents choose a wealthy man as the ideal husband for their daughter and force her to marry him. To oppose the idea of wealth being the deciding factor when choosing a spouse, Davičo quotes these two lines from the ballad: "Mas te quero, mas te amo | que al rey con su fonsado" (Davičo 2000: 33). This is the moment in the ballad when the Queen expresses her feelings for her lover without realising that the King is standing behind her. The meaning of these lines is to underscore that true feelings are more valuable than material wealth. Davičo provides a Serbian translation of the lines and clarifies the link between the ballad and the plot of his own tale by rendering the word *fonsado* meaning the king's guards or army as the king's wealth or treasure.

These lines were not included in the version of the ballad which Davičo introduces in "Buena". Although in the latter tale the main idea is also to underline that young people should not be forced to marry against their will, there is no reference whatsoever to this conflict of material values versus true love. In "Buena", the confrontation is between traditional and modern values and hence these lines would not have the same functional role there as they do here. In "Naumi", Davičo draws a clear parallel between the main character of the ballad, the Queen, and Naumi, the protagonist of his tale. Both characters reject material values and try to overcome the circumstances imposed upon them, each in her own way. Hence they are seen as victims who long for something they cannot achieve.

The lines quoted do not appear in any of the Spanish or Sephardic versions of the ballad that I have been able to consult. However, similar verses can be found in the Portuguese version from Baçal: "mais te quero, Andarilho, | do qu'ó rei com ser coroado" (Alves 1938: 562), suggesting that this version belongs to the same tradition as Davičo's. In addition, the octosyllabic verse and the assonantal rhyme of Davičo's lines correspond to formal traits which characterise ballads as a genre, which leads me to conclude that these lines were not an invention of Davičo's.

In summary, on two occasions Davičo turns to *Landarico* to draw similarities between its content and that of his tales. This is a ballad which condemns adultery as an act that goes against family values. But in Davičo's interpretation it becomes a story where the condemned protagonist is contemplated with more understanding and sympathy. Here the Queen is perceived more as a victim of circumstances for having to renounce her true love and marry someone else. Davičo uses this idea to draw parallels between the ballad's plot and the destiny of his own characters. Thus his use of *Landarico* serves to support the main idea of his own tales.

4. *LANDARICO* IN THE WORK OF LAURA PAPO FROM BOSNIA

Laura Papo, also known by her nickname Bohoreta (Hebrew for firstborn), was undoubtedly the leading figure in the Bosnian Sephardic cultural scene in the first half of the twentieth century thanks to her multifaceted work²¹. She wrote different literary genres such as theatre, narrative (tales, essays and newspaper articles) and poetry, and she gathered valuable folk material *in situ*²². Moreover, Papo was the first female Sephardic author ever to write plays, works that she herself directed. Likewise, she translated or adapted works from Serbo-Croatian, French and German to Judeo-Spanish (E. Papo 2012: 131-132 & 143).

²¹ For an account of Papo's life, see E. Papo (2011) & Prenz Kopušar (2012: 3-19).

²² For a complete list of Papo's work, see E. Papo (2012).

The topics that Papo chose for her works, such as the customs and traditions of her community, the problems of everyday life and the role of Sephardic women in society (both the Sephardic and Bosnian), were closely related to the ongoing changes in the life of the Sephardim at the turn of the twentieth century. As in Serbia, with the end of the Ottoman power the Sephardim started to assimilate into the larger Bosnian society which was beginning its modernisation (see Lovrenović 2001: 147-157 & Hoare 2007: 70-99). This process not only entailed a switch from a religious education limited to boys to a mixed-sex secular education, but also from the use of Judeo-Spanish to Serbian as the language of the classroom (Vučina-Simović 2011: 140-142 & 152-153). These circumstances prompted Papo to turn her eyes to her own community and reflect upon the consequences these changes would have on Sephardic cultural heritage and identity.

However, the aims of Papo's work were just the opposite of Davičo's. Whereas Davičo chose to write in Serbian, which determined his target audience, Papo opted to address her work primarily to the Sephardic community by writing in Judeo-Spanish. By doing so she endeavoured not only to preserve and collect the evidence of that tradition but also to secure its survival. Therefore Papo took upon herself the role of an ideological emissary with the mission to preserve and, if possible, re-activate the cultural heritage of the Sephardim through her writings.

Papo set about accomplishing this task of collecting, preserving and developing the Judeo-Spanish folk tradition in two ways: by compiling the folk material *in situ*, and by incorporating elements of this material in her plays and thus disseminating it. Eliezer Papo provides an insight as to just how Laura Papo went about doing so:

Empezó a publicar retratos de personas comunes, ancianos y ancianas de antaño, “tipos antiguos” que, en su opinión, encarnaban la forma de vida judeo-española, los valores y concepciones de la sociedad judeo-española tradicional, sus anécdotas y recopilaciones folclóricas sobre las costumbres y juegos en desaparición. (2011: 102)

Avia de ser (hereafter *AS*) is a perfect example of the aforesaid. This one-act play was written in 1930 and marked the beginning of the most productive period in Papo's creative life. Two manuscripts of it have been preserved. The first manuscript is a preliminary version of the play consisting of fourteen pages with two subtitles: *Evocacion* and *Stampa, scena de la vida de un tiempo* (E. Papo 2012: 139-140). The second manuscript represents the complete version of the play which consists of twenty-two pages and a further scene added at the end, the inclusion of which seems not to have been initially planned (E. Papo 2012: 140). The title remains the same, *Avia de ser*, but the subtitle changes, *Escena de la vida de un tiempo kon romansas en un akto*.

At the beginning of the first page, the names of the main characters are given (la Madre, Rahelika, Sarika — sus dos izas) along with information regarding the place and the date of the composition of the play: Sarajevo, 18 February 1930. On the last page appears the date when the play was completed: 26 February 1930. Both manuscripts are in Judeo-Spanish Latin script in which influences of the Serbo-Croatian graphic system can be seen (E. Papo 2012: 139-140).

AS has no particular plot; it simply depicts a mother and her two daughters embroidering at home, the daughters all the while listening to the tales and ballads their mother is telling them. Thus the play represents an authentic *escena costumbrista* which contains the following elements taken from daily life:

- women in their domestic environment doing household chores;
- folk literature being transmitted orally (ballads and tales are being recited aloud); and,
- transmission of this literature from one generation to another (the mother is conveying age-old lore to her daughters).

One of Papo's main goals with this play was to depict how ballads formed part of the everyday life of Sephardic women which was centred around the home and household chores. In this way Papo provides an insight into one of the key places where the ballads were performed among the Sephardim (in the home environment) and what they were used for (to entertain and to teach).

In order to succeed in her aim, Papo introduces a number of ballads in *AS*. In addition to *Landarico*, the following ballads appear in the play: *Don Bueso y su hermana* (H2), *La mujer engañada* (L13), *La partida del esposo* (I6) [+ *La vuelta del hijo maldecido* (X6)], and *La doncella guerrera* (X4). All of these ballads, with the exception of *La vuelta del hijo maldecido* (hereafter *La vuelta*), form part of the Sephardim's Hispanic heritage. *La vuelta*, as Armistead and Silverman maintain (1982: 151-168), is an example of the influence of the new, Balkan environment.

Here, nonetheless, the focus is only on *Landarico*, a ballad Papo knew well as she herself was a transmitter of this *romansa*. When interviewed in 1911 by Manuel Manrique de Lara, she recited precisely this ballad²³. Furthermore, like Davičo, she made use of it in two of her own works: in *AS*, and in *La muŕer*. However, she introduces the ballad in its original language, Judeo-Spanish, unlike Davičo who renders it in Serbian.

In Papo's *AS*, *Landarico* is used to initiate discussion between the main characters of the play, a mother and daughters, regarding the interpretation of the events depicted in the ballad. Here the ballad is performed by a woman for a female audience in a typically female context (performing household chores in the home). The sex of the performer and recipients and the performance context legitimise women's interpretation of the events described in addition to exemplifying didactic and entertaining purposes of ballads.

We know that the ballad was sung during the performance of the play for several reasons. The manuscript indicates that some lines of the ballad, such as [the King] "Topo la reina en kavejos, | ke a penjar se los ija [sú]" (*AS* fol. 9), were to be sung twice; or there is a stage direction indicating *kanta* (*AS* fol. 9). Furthermore, the characters of the play, the daughters, encourage their mother to sing: "SARA Agora mos va kantar la [romansa] de Andarleto" (*AS* fol. 9).

The last quotation reveals two facts: the ballad was also known among Spanish Jews by the name of the lover which in Sephardic versions is not *Landarico* but *Anderleto*. This was the most widely spread name of the lover among the Sephardim (Armistead 1978: II, 64

²³ For an account of Manrique de Lara's journey to the Balkans and his field work among the Sephardim in Bosnia and other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, see Armistead (1978: I, 7-39) & Catalán (2001: I, 66-72).

& III, 331). In addition, within the play both daughters make comments indicating that they knew the ballad well because they had obviously heard it before: “RAHELA Akea romana dela reina ke enganjo al marido” (AS fol. 9). Rahela’s and Sara’s request for this ballad could suggest that the ballad must have been frequently sung among the Bosnian Sephardim and thus was well known to the audience.

The mother proceeds to sing the ballad. The daughters listen to her carefully. The verses go up to the point when the Queen imprudently reveals that she has a lover. Unaware that the King is standing behind her, she adds that two of her sons are her lover’s and the other two the King’s. This is the moment when the mother ceases singing and then summarises the rest of the ballad’s plot in her own words: the Queen turns around and sees her husband and knows that for this fatal indiscretion she is going to die (AS fols 9-10).

The daughters immediately express empathy with the Queen and her fate: “RAHELA Tristi di ea, krue negro, otraves no kalio ke la mate” (AS fol. 10). So does the mother, thus underlining that women are weak emotionally: “LA MADRE I el korason de la muđer es siempre flako” (AS fol. 10). But the latter makes sure that her daughters understand that the Queen got her due at the end. This reinforces the original idea of the ballad that adultery is wrong and warrants punishment: “LA MADRE Luke buško — akeo topo” (AS fol. 10). Sara, one of the daughters, attempts to defend the Queen by saying that her only crime is having been in love: “SARA I si namoro, mira tu fečos agora” (AS fol. 10). Her mother is quick to reply and point out that if a woman is married, and especially if she has children, she should not seek a lover: “LA MADRE Onde vites tu muđer kazada, afižada — namorarse, ni si vea ni si sienta!” (AS fol. 10). Thus the mother uses the ballad to teach her daughters that adultery is wrong, thereby underlining that the intent of the ballad was not merely to entertain but that it played a didactic role as well. But so far the ballad contains no new elements which would alter how it was widely understood.

However, unlike most versions, in the Bosnian tradition the ballad does not end here. An addition at the end changes the perception of the ballad. The ballad ends at the exact place in the narrative most likely to incorporate or to openly express the ideology of the singer about the topic of the ballad as highlighted by Catalán: “Más notables aún son las modificaciones que se producen al final del romance. Según suele ocurrir, la adaptación del poema al sistema ético y estético de la sociedad en que se canta se manifiesta sobre todo en la inestabilidad del desenlace” (1972: 193). This has also been highlighted by Catarella (1990: 340) who, after having examined two ballad-types, *La vuelta del marido* (I1) and *Albaniña* (M1), the theme of the latter also dealing with the unfaithful wife, emphasises the instability and the ambivalence of the versions, particularly in their endings, even when the performers are only women.

So when the Queen is condemned to death, the audience (here the daughters) is expected to sympathise with the King (Vidaković-Petrov 2014: 325). The Queen has not only betrayed her husband but she has also favoured the children she has had by her lover. Why then do the daughters express their compassion for the Queen?

A ballad’s content (and its main idea) can be modified either by replacing or by adding/omitting elements (Catalán 1972: 192). In the case of *Landarico*, in the Bosnian Sephardic tradition the shift was carried out through an addition. As I show below, the female singers of this ballad introduced not one but two significant additions compared to other Iberian or Sephardic versions of which Papo was well aware and which change the interpretation of the ballad’s ending.

The mother ends the story of the ballad by including two more lines illustrating the dialogue the Queen is conducting with her lover. After realising that she is going to be punished for her adultery, the Queen summons her lover for help: “Andarleto, mi Andarleto | mi pulido enamorado” (AS fol. 10). But he replies: “Para mi topi remedio, para vos | andate buškaldo” (AS fol. 10). This dialogue between the Queen and her lover in Papo’s version is incomplete. Papo omits the part where the Queen explains that the adultery has been revealed and that she is threatened with death. It is precisely this confession by the Queen which provokes the lover’s reply. The omitted part, however, would not have caused any confusion for her audience. *Landarico* was one of the most popular ballads among the Bosnian Sephardim (see Papo’s comment about it in her *La mužer* below) and all versions collected in Bosnia, as I shall show, contain this development of events.

So after the outcome of the dialogue between the Queen and her lover, the mother in Papo’s play underscores the new idea of the ballad’s ending: “LA MADRE Veš luke son lus ombres! El Dio no de kreerlos!” (AS fol. 10). The added message is that women should beware of the deceiving nature of men. The mother’s comment works as an inference to the closing dialogue between the Queen and her lover in the ballad which changes the focus of the *romance*. Now in addition to condemning female adultery the ballad condemns the deceptive nature of men.

This last idea was condoned by the tradition which Papo transmits here faithfully. The corpus of recorded versions from Sarajevo (and also some from Belgrade) corroborates this fact. I have consulted the following versions of *Landarico* from Bosnia and Serbia: 1) Leo Wiener (1903: 262-263, no. 11) published a version he collected from an informant in Belgrade, who was originally from Bosnia; 2) in 1911 Manrique de Lara recorded versions of *Landarico* from sixty-five year old Ester Abinum Altaraz from Sarajevo and twenty-four year old Pascua Oserovics de Alcalay from Belgrade (both kept in the Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal); 3) *Jevrejski glas* published a version of *Landarico* on 26 April 1940 told by Sara, the wife of Moše Papo (this is the only information provided by the newspaper); 4) Kalmi Baruh (1933: 277) published a version of the ballad from Sarajevo; 5) Samuel Elazar (1987: 40-41 & 259-261) published three Bosnian versions of the ballad, one of them being the one that appeared in *Jevrejski glas* and two new versions.

All these versions make reference to the dialogue between the Queen and her lover as seen in Papo. A case in point is the version recounted by Abinum Altaraz, in which this dialogue reads: “[the Queen] Anderleto, Anderleto | el rey me quiere matar. | [the paramour] Para mí topé [*sic*] remedio | i para vos andad buscavdos”. Moreover, in the version collected by Wiener and the one told by Oserovics de Alcalay (which I cite below), this dialogue is carried even further: the lover not only leaves the Queen to her fate but he also rebukes her for having taken a lover while being a married woman:

[the Queen] Andarlieto, Andarlieto, [...]
dame tú a mé un consejo, | que el rey mos tiene amenazados.
[the paramour] Para mé, todo remedio; | para te, ve buscátelo.
Como tienes rey por marido, | ¿qué te busca el amorado?

In some of these versions, the dialogue between the Queen and her lover called for the addition of a metatextual comment at the end of the ballad designed to make sure that the audience interpreted the ballad correctly (Vidaković-Petrov 2014: 325). It reads: “¡Mal

añada a las mujeres | que en los hombres se confían!; | los falsos y mentirosos, | echados a la malina”²⁴. The mother’s words about the untrustworthy nature of men in Papo’s play have their source in this addition approved by Bosnian tradition.

In Bosnian versions of *Landarico*, the final dialogue between the Queen and her lover appears as the dominant part of the ballad; it is here that the main idea is conveyed. This is because in twentieth-century balladry dialogue has become a dominant trait. This was not the case in the *romancero viejo* in which the presence of dialogue was minor and less significant for the ballad’s plot. According to Catalán (1972: 203), the greater importance played by direct speech in modern balladry can be attributed to the fact that one episode or dialogue tends to acquire a dominant position within the ballad. In this way, the idea conveyed by this particular dialogue becomes the main theme of the entire *romance*.

However, the reinterpretation which we find in Papo (and in the Bosnian Sephardic tradition) should not be considered as a completely new element introduced by the Bosnian Sephardim but rather as a pre-existing element that has been developed further by this community. I believe that this idea of men’s deceitful nature appears in the old Spanish version of the ballad. As noted, in the sixteenth-century version, the Queen also seeks help from her lover after the adultery has been revealed. Instead of offering her his help and support, the paramour expresses his remorse for having ever become involved with her. This idea, however, was not taken further in the old version (there is no mention of him abandoning her), but it must have served as a source for the additions in Bosnian versions of the ballad. This brings me to another point: can gender be said to play a role in the addition of these parts?

The added dialogue and the metatextual comment at the end of *Landarico* clearly express the female perspective of events and were probably introduced by female singers of the ballad²⁵. The fact that women became the principal informants in the modern oral tradition of Hispanic (and Sephardic) balladry conditions to a great extent the point of view, ideologies and perceptions expressed in ballads. As Catarella highlights, “it is predominately women who retain, rework and transmit ballads and from whom the overwhelming majority of ballad versions have been collected” (1990: 331). Owing to this fact, the *romancero* contains a strong female voice as, according to Ian Michael (1993: 101), the ballad was the one means by which ordinary women could convey their feelings and ambitions and which they themselves re-created and passed down²⁶. To this we can add Catalán’s view regarding Hispanic balladry that “los romances que actualmente se cantan o recitan representan, sin duda, un enjuiciamiento del mundo referencial que ha de considerarse en buena parte como expresión de una perspectiva femenina” (1984: 21). Regarding the Sephardic tradition, Susana Weich-Shahak (2009: 274) and Paloma Díaz-Mas (2009: 81-101) also insist on a close connection between gender and genre: while the role of men was to transmit the liturgy and the regularly performed paraliturgical repertoire in Hebrew, it was the women who

²⁴ The lines are taken from the version given by Oserovics de Alcalay. The added comment has the form of a saying which is a frequent way to end a ballad. Sayings such as this one can easily be applied to other ballads having a similar plot due to the didactic message they contain. For example, this particular saying appears in the Bosnian versions of another ballad, *La vuelta del marido* (I1.3). See Armistead (1978: I, 319-330) & Armistead, Silverman & Šljivić-Šimšić (1971: 46).

²⁵ For more information on the question of women and the *romancero*, see Guerra Castellanos (1971), Odd (1983) & Gómez Acuña (2002).

²⁶ Also on this, see Menéndez Pidal (1953: II, 372-374), Petersen (1982: 76) & Mariscal de Rhett (1987: 655-656).

transmitted the *romances* and *cantigas*. Consequently, the voice of women is strongly present in Sephardic balladry.

This has clearly been the case of *Landarico*. The original text sought to assert male authority by punishing the adulteress. According to Catarella (1990: 340), this represents the mythic move in ballads' narrative trajectories: the *romance* affirms the values of the prevailing social order. Although Bosnian tradition does not sanction the adultery or favouring of illegitimate children over legitimate ones, it does change the status of the female character from a clear transgressor to a woman who is misled by male deception (Vidaković-Petrov 2014: 325). Thus a perfidious woman is rendered into one who can be led astray. This is what Catarella (1990: 340) defines as the transformative move in which new episodes, motifs and characters are developed and a new narrative direction is established in compliance with the wishes of the speakers and the characters in the ballad.

The change in interpretation of the ballad undoubtedly determined the target audience. In Davičo, this ballad underwent a change of context of performance entailing a partial shift in interpretation. The ballad, as noted, was performed for the Ninth of Av. The occasion on which it was performed and the message it conveyed called for the presence of a general audience consisting of both men and women.

Since versions of *Landarico* in Bosnia contain a message directed to women, who are presented here as victims of male deception, the ballad was sung by women for a mostly female audience who were potential victims. This custom is depicted perfectly in Papo's play with the mother singing the ballad to her daughters. Furthermore, the occasion is exclusively female: the home environment where women are alone doing their household chores.

This is by no means an isolated case in Sephardic balladry. Another example is *Delgadina* (P2). This ballad of Spanish origin deals with the topic of incest and recounts the story of a father who tries to force himself on his daughter. For having rejected him, the daughter is punished by being locked up in a tower and deprived of water. She eventually dies of thirst (Benmayor 1979: 139-142 & Jovanović 2013: 292-293).

Among the Sephardim, this ballad was performed by elderly women for young women to teach them how to react properly if they are faced with a similar situation (Alexander-Frizer 2008: 352). The ballad should provide a defence mechanism for these young women, a strategy to which they should adhere in order to avoid a worse fate. To accomplish this aim, the ballad is directed to an audience whose members are potential victims of male aggression and the composition of that audience is therefore gender-determined. Although this story represents a voice against the father's authority and his ability to control his daughter's destiny (and therefore against men in general), it excludes their presence (Jovanović 2013: 296-297)²⁷. Therefore performing different forms of folk literature was one of the ways for elderly women to pass certain lessons on to young girls. Papo emphasises this educational role of *Landarico* in her text *La mušer*: "Avia las romances ke las alegrava i konsolava a las solas y entre gente [a las mujeres]. La romansa di Andarleto era la mas estimada de nuestras nonas, porque aki se demoštrava ki los ombres son negros, ke no preme kreerlos. [...] Mis fižikjas, no kreaš a los ombres" (2005: 164).

²⁷ For more information on discursive strategies which include different forms of oral literature used by women to openly express their views and experience, see Buxó Rey (1988) & Harding (2003: 268-291).

This idea of using ballads as an educational tool is put into practice in the play. The mother uses *Landarico* as an *exemplum a contrario*, that is telling her daughters what they should not do. Firstly, they should not commit adultery; and, secondly, they should not put their trust in men. The last message is a specific trait of the Bosnian Sephardim, and it has not been documented in relation to the ballads studied here among other Sephardic communities or in Spain or Portugal.

CONCLUSION

Landarico, a ballad about the queen adulteress, may just be one of the numerous *romances* of Spanish origin that the Sephardim continued to foster in their diaspora after 1492, but it is undoubtedly one of the most cherished. In addition to various examples collected during field work from different Sephardic communities, the ballad appears in the works of two leading cultural figures of the former Yugoslavia at the turn of the twentieth century: Serbia's Haim S. Davičo and Bosnia's Laura Papo. Both authors introduce the ballad in their work in order to reinforce the message they want to convey by drawing a parallel between the age-old lore contained in the ballad and their own work. This use of folk literature characterises the Sephardic authors of the first half of the twentieth century.

Furthermore, Davičo's and Papo's versions of *Landarico* not only have different aims and interpretations but also different social uses. In Davičo, the ballad is performed during a time of sorrow, the Ninth of Av. This shows how the ballad was domesticated to its environment, which enabled its survival over the course of centuries. In Papo, the ballad serves to entertain the listeners (women only) at their household chores while conveying a didactic message.

However, the ballad's didactic message differs with each author. Davičo uses *Landarico* to show that forcing women to marry against their will leads to a tragic outcome. Thus the queen is perceived as the victim of circumstances for having to marry against her will and not as a transgressor, the dominant image of her in other traditions, both Iberian and among other Sephardic communities. Papo transmits the new focus that the ballad acquired in the Bosnian tradition in which through an addition at the end the main idea of the ballad is changed from that of punishing the adulteress to condemning the deceiving nature of men. This shift in interpretation of the ballad entailed a change of the context in which it was performed: female singers address the ballad to a female audience (young women) to teach them not to put their trust in men.

Thus the versions of *Landarico* used by Davičo and Papo differ from those collected from other Sephardic communities both in their reception and in their roles. This demonstrates that one single yet geographically dispersed ethnic group was able to create a different interpretation of the same ballad topic. At the same time, that very same ballad can play a different role and function according to the occasion for which it is performed and the audience for which it is intended.

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