

Abraham Zacarías López Penha

Abraham Zacarías López Penha was born on March 18, 1865, in Curaçao. His parents, Haim Daniel López Penha (1820-1897) and Rachel Levy Maduro (1818-1875) were both members of very old Sephardic Curaçaoan families. In 1886 Abraham moved to Barranquilla, Colombia, where his sister Sarah and his brother David were already established. Unlike David, who was a very successful businessman, Abraham made a career as a writer, journalist and bookstore owner. He published several collections of poetry, and novels, and corresponded with a lot of artists, writers and intellectuals of his time. Among his poetry books are *Cromos* (1895), *Reflorescencias exóticas, efímeras* (1898), and *El libro de las incoherencias* (1909). We know that he published at least two novels: *Camila Sánchez, novela de costumbres* (1897), and *La desposada de una sombra* (1903). According to Ramón Illán Bacca, the poetry and prose written in Barranquilla at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth, was indeed *Modernista*, but still with a heavy Romantic influence. In the words of Josette Capriles, “[Abraham Zacarías] died destitute and abandoned in 1927 and is buried in the old Sephardic cemetery of the Cementerio Universal in his adoptive city of Barranquilla” (211).



Works Consulted

- Bacca, Ramón Illán. “Zacarías López Penha, ese desconocido”. *Huellas, Revista de la Universidad del Norte* 22 (Abril 1988), 18-25.
- Capriles Goldish, Josette. *Once Jews: Stories of Caribbean Sephardim*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009.