

240
621
Cantar deste Ilustre Congresso as alabãças,
meladas com quatro ou cinco chanças,
sem mais nem mais me veda a memoria
duvido o sair delas com Vitoria.

Valverde
He pois o primeiro, & mayor cortezaõ,
hum que a todos fala com o chapeu na maõ:
he tao perfeito, & ascado em seu adorno,
que todo elle parece feito a o torno;
pois viste & calça com tanta perfeiçaõ.
naõ lhe faltando a sinta, nem o galaõ.

Pinto
Segue outro que estimo & mda minto,
nas alabanzas que aqui Pinto
pois as merece pelas heroicas partes que tem,
em naõ se gavar, fazendo a todos bem
& he tao destro nas artes liberais
que naõ se pode pedir nem dar de mais.

Flamini
Ha mais outro mansebofinho,
que tras o chapeu muy rebitadinho.
he secreto & bastantemente calado,
& tem seu poco de disimulado.
divirtese, & pasea sem paixãõ,
y he amigo de levar as damas por a maõ.

Nunes
Outro que a dias que tomou estado,
& que tras, Camizola de ouro, & brocado,
he facil de saber quem he, em verdade,
por estar em pares ou nunes a dificuldade.
a bolsa lhe tange com lindo tonosinho,
mas a boz he de hum suave pasarinho.

Aqui
C. C. 9

Aqui
C. C. 9

Aqui

26 A Portuguese festival poem from Amsterdam

Broadsheet, beginning, 194 x 145 mm [ROS.EBL. C-88]

TWENTY PORTUGUESE JEWISH YOUTHS are having a celebration somewhere in Amsterdam. The celebration and the men are commemorated in a poem written in Portuguese, printed on half a quarto page. Happily, by coincidence the print was kept; it is now one of the jewels of the collection of broadsheets of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana.

The poem or song consists of one strophe of four verses, followed by 19 strophes or couplets, each with six verses (sextilhas); the meter is irregular, varying from 9 to 13 syllables.

The poet promises in his opening lines 'to sing the praises of this illustrious gathering /interspersed with four or five gibes'. Then he characterizes in the mildly satirical manner of the genre one of the participants of the 'gathering' in each strophe. His Portuguese is energetic and lively, as if he were living in Lisbon rather than Amsterdam. The portraits that are evoked offer a colourful glimpse of the elegant society of the seventeenth-century Sephardi elite, and at the same time of the inner nature of 19 individuals.

Thus, we learn about gluttons, drunkards, dandies who wave their hats or parade around in brocade and gold-

embroidered shirts, of someone who curses like a fishwife, or of one who is addicted to Spanish comedias, but also of generous, noble, shy and melancholy spirits...

One strophe will serve as an example:

*There is one whom I see going with such haste
that I don't know if it's a rooster or a hen
it isn't a talker, no cheater, either
but a good and curious scribe.
He does not squint, and neither is he lame,
but he tends more toward the black than the white.*

Although more occasional poems written by Sephardi Jews in Amsterdam are known, this *Cantar* deserves special mention. Not only is it the only poem we know of which was specifically composed for the occasion of a celebration, although the precise purpose of the celebration is not specified; it also distinguishes itself from other odes by the personal details. Other poems of this type contain stereotyped formulas which are generic and so can be mutually interchanged.

Finally, the handwritten additions to the poem add unique value. Thanks to them we know the date and location of the party as well as the poet, Jacob Torres, and we can easily identify those present at the celebration as young (between the ages of 15 and 25) descendants of primarily prominent Portuguese-Jewish families in the Amsterdam of the late seventeenth century.

It goes without saying that Jacob Torres and his *Cantar* have earned a place in the history of the rich Sephardi literature of Amsterdam.

HARM DEN BOER