Aspects of Iberian sacred polyphonic music between the early 16th and the first third of the 17th century - styles, influences and questions of authorship

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The majority of surviving sacred vocal polyphony of the Renaissance and early Baroque periods was composed for integration in the mass, the liturgical offices, and funerals or obsequies. Our perceptions of this repertory rely almost exclusively on the extant sources, and it is from this evidence that we create ideas of historical patterns, authorship and stylistic development. Unfortunately, however, only a relatively small proportion of Iberian musical sources survive: these may therefore pose problems in authorship identification of pieces in circulation. In the first paper in this panel, Rodríguez-García exposes a new problem of attribution in a Credo that has traditionally been ascribed to the early Spanish composer Peñalosa, and which was included in an important composite Marian Mass copied in Tarazona 2/3.

The next two papers on the other hand focus on two Portuguese composers active during the period of Spanish Habsburg domination in Portugal: one who made his career in Spain; the other who remained in Portugal. There was much more circulation of musicians and repertories than we might suppose, leading to greater awareness of musical currents elsewhere and new influences. At the same time, northern polyphonic music exerted a considerable influence throughout the 16th century, and well into the 17th century through the example of Franco-Flemish composers at the Madrid royal court. In her paper, Castilho continues her work on the relatively unexplored Portuguese composer Manuel Tavares who spent most of his career in Spain and the Canary Islands, focussing on the development of his style in his canticles settings. Nelson’s paper on the Requiem mass in Lisbon explores the unknown use of northern European music in Magalhães’s Missa pro defunctis, which in other respects conforms to traditions of polyphonic Requiems in the Iberian Peninsula.

The speakers in this panel are members of the Early Music Research Group (Estudos de Música Antiga) based at CESEM, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and this session consists of three case studies of current research into early polyphonic music.

Did Francisco de Peñalosa compose the Credo of the mass Rex virginum?

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One of the two composite masses Rex virginum of Iberian origin features a Gloria and a Credo traditionally attributed to the composer Francisco de Peñalosa (d. 1528) – the other movements being credited to Pedro de Escobar (Kyrie), Pedro Fernández de Castilleja or Pedro Hernández de Tordesillas (Sanctus), and Alonso Pérez de Alba (Agnus). All the movements that comprise the
mass are unica, and appear copied in the manuscript E-TZ 2/3 (fols. 200v-209r) under the name ‘Misa de Nuestra Señora’. The composers’ names are written both in the Table of Contents (only Escobar and Peñalosa) and in the body of the manuscript, at beginning of the each movement. A closer look to the inscription at the Credo (fol. 204v) reveals that the name ‘P.losa’ has been scratched out, a detail that has gone unnoticed up to now. This correction (within a manuscript that is generally considered reliable despite a few conflicting attributions and corrections) raises the question of the Credo’s ascription. Furthermore, the style of the movement is unlike Peñalosa’s standard compositional practice (as previously stated by scholars, the dissimilarity between the Gloria and the Credo is immediately noticeable). This paper will examine the Credo of the mass Rex virginum in order to shed light on the piece’s authorship so testing the hypothesis that the scribe could have been right in discarding the attribution to Peñalosa.

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Um olhar pelo trajeto de Tavares através dos seus cânticos Nunc Dimittis

Maria Luísa Castilho
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Das obras que chegaram aos nossos dias de Manuel de Tavares, compositor português do século XVII, que efetuou a sua carreira em Espanha, podemos distinguir sobretudo dois núcleos: as elaboradas para um só coro e as produzidas para vários coros. Constatando que as obras monocorais são obras de juventude e as policorais de maturidade propõe-se através dos seus dois Cânticos Nunc Dimittis, sendo um para quatro vozes, uma obra de juventude escrita para a catedral de Baeza e o outro para nove vozes e baixo contínuo, uma obra de maturidade composta para a catedral de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, analisar e delinear o trajeto estilístico de Tavares através da sua comparação. Esta far-se-á através dos seguintes parâmetros de análise: descrição codicológica e dos conteúdos musicais, o enquadramento normativo, a estrutura macro-formal, a modalidade, o plano cadencial, a textura contrapontística e os tipos de escrita, o acompanhamento, a prática da dissonância, o material temático e motivo e a relação entre texto e música. Com este estudo analítico pretende-se obter esclarecimentos que melhor permitam avaliar a linguagem pessoal do compositor, bem como o grau de assimilação das inovações estéticas do seu tempo.

Luísa Correia Castilho doutorou-se na Universidade de Évora com a dissertação intitulada: As obras de Manuel de Tavares e o desenvolvimento da policoralidade na polifonia portuguesa do século XVII (Setembro de 2009). Possui o Mestrado em Ciências Musicais com uma dissertação sobre a música na Sé de Castelo Branco, uma Licenciatura em