Manuel Leitão de Avilez in Andalucia

OWEN REES

There occurred a significant influx of Portuguese musicians into Spain during the early and mid seventeenth century, the Portuguese musical presence in Andalucia being perhaps particularly notable. Thus, for example, during the second and third decades of the seventeenth century two of the most important musical posts in Andalucia were occupied by Portuguese musicians. The better known case is that of Estêvão de Brito, maestro de capilla at Málaga Cathedral from 1613. The other case – the subject of this article – is much less familiar: that of Manuel Leitão de Avilez (d. 1630). Leitão de Avilez was maestro of another prestigious institution in Andalucia, the capilla real in Granada, burial place of the Catholic Monarchs and of their successors Philip the Fair and Juana. Before that, he held the post of maestro at another dynastic funerary chapel in Andalucia: the Sacra Capilla del Salvador in Úbeda, commissioned by Francisco de los Cobos y Molina (d. 1547) in the 1530s as a pantheon for his family. Francisco de los Cobos was Secretary (from 1516) and chief financial advisor to Charles V.† Only a few surviving works by Leitão de Avilez have so far been identified, all of them preserved in manuscripts at the capilla real in Granada. A certain amount of confusion has previously surrounded their authorship, which I shall deal with below. Suffice it to say here that we can be confident of his authorship of all of the music concerned. This brief study, which it is hoped will stimulate not only awareness and performance of his music but further research into his life and career (about which our knowledge is still very partial), builds

† He was the dedicatee of Luis de Narváez’s Los seys libros del Delphin de música (Valladolid, 1538), and it is indeed possible that Narváez was in his service.
upon the crucial and invaluable work of José López-Caló and Robert Stevenson on the composer and the sources of his works.  

Much remains to be done in investigating the biography of Manuel Leitão de Avillez, but what has so far been established will be set out here. Francisco da Cruz informs us that he was a choirboy at Portalegre Cathedral, and Diogo Barbosa Machado expanded this information to claim, first, that he was in fact a native of Portalegre and, second, that he was a disciple of Antonio Ferro. That Leitão de Avillez was born in Portalegre is indeed confirmed by a document from the capilla real in Granada. However, the year of his birth is unknown. We next catch sight of him in March 1601, when he applied unsuccessfully for the post of maestro de capilla of the capilla real in Granada. The relevant capitular documentation from that institution, revealed by López-Caló, provides the crucial information that at the time of his application he was attached to the ‘capilla de Cobos en Úbeda’, that is, the Sacra Capilla del Salvador. Leitão de Avillez was thus already in Andalucia in 1601, but we do not currently know for how long he had been in the service of the Cobos-Molina family.

Two years later he again applied to become maestro of the capilla real in Granada, and the capitular documentation on this occasion specifically notes that at that point he held the post of maestro of the Capilla del Salvador in Úbeda. (It is likely that he occupied this post already in 1601, at the time of his previous attempt to gain the Granada post.) His application was successful, and indeed he was to remain at the capilla real until his death in 1630. This appointment — and particularly the fact that he subsequently continued in the post for a substantial period — must have brought great relief to the members of the chapter of the capilla real, since they had been

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4 *idem.* Ferro was, according to Barbosa Machado, likewise a native of Portalegre (*ibid.*, p. 126), and the teacher of Manuel de Tavares (*ibid.*, p. 227).

5 This ‘Libro de las Fundaciones’ is described and reproduced in part by López-Caló in *Catalogo*, II: Apéndices Documentales, pp. 289–94; the passage concerning Leitão de Avillez is on p. 294.

6 Leitão de Avillez was placed second in this competition. The successful applicant was Alonso de Tejeda, from Salamanca, regarding whom see Dionisio Preciado, *Alonso de Tejeda (ca. 1556–1628): Obras Completas*, 2 vols, I, Madrid: Editorial Alpuerto, 1974.

7 *Catalogo*, II, p. 28. López-Caló presents in this volume transcriptions of entries referring to music and musicians in the actas capitulares of the capilla real.
without a *maestro* — or rather, a *maestro* who actually took up the post or stayed in it for any significant length of time — since the departure of Ambrosio Cotes in 1596. (Cotes had been *maestro* since 1581.) Among the most trying events during these seven years of instability in the musical leadership of the *capilla real* was doubtless the precipitous departure of Juan Martín de Ricos, who took up the post on 19 June 1598 but resigned less than three months later, on 11 September, to become *maestro* at Jaén Cathedral.⁸ The timing could hardly have been worse for the authorities at the *capilla real*: King Philip II died on 13 September, and the news would have reached Granada during the next few days, prompting immediate preparations for the local exequies, including the provision of suitable music for ceremonies which would have been all the more important for a royal foundation such as the *capilla real*.⁹ Ricos’s resignation was announced to the chapter on 18 September: that is, perhaps only a day or two after they heard of the King’s demise. It seems likely that the resultant problem of musical provision was solved in part at least thanks to the *maestro* of Granada Cathedral (which, of course, is attached to the *capilla real*), Luis de Aranda. A fine six-voice motet by Aranda, *Quomodo sedet sola*, is preserved in a set of *capilla real* part-books of this same period (and which also include works by Leitão de Avillez, as explained below), and — tellingly — the motet bears the date ‘1598’ in the source. Its text would have been wholly appropriate for the royal exequies, and — as I have argued elsewhere — it seems very likely that it was indeed composed for, and sung at, these ceremonies in Granada.¹⁰ Aranda was, we know, hoping to secure the post of *maestro* of the *capilla real* he had, for example, offered his services and those of the Cathedral boys, without recompense, for Christmas Matins at the *capilla real* in 1597 (when the *capilla* was without a *maestro*),¹¹ and had then duly applied for the post of *maestro* in the competition of 1598 in which Juan de Ricos was successful.¹²

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¹¹ As mentioned, the *capilla real* is the mausoleum of the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, and of their daughter Juana and her husband Philip the Fair. Philip’s son, the Emperor Charles V, intended (until his abdication in 1556) that the *capilla real* be his resting-place also, and indeed ordered that his son Philip (the future King Philip II) be buried there. In fact, the monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial was to fulfill this function of mausoleum of the Spanish Hapsburgs under Philip. See William EISLER, ‘Charles V and the Cathedral of Granada’, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 51 (1992), pp. 174–81.

The case of Juan de Riscos was not, unfortunately for the *capilla real*, the last occasion on which the chapter of that institution were infelicitous in their choice of appointee during this period. After his precipitous departure there was a long-drawn-out process with several rounds of edicts (i.e. advertisements) issued to the major Spanish cathedrals. In 1600 the chapter attempted to attract the *maestro* of Málaga Cathedral, and also Ginés de Boluda (previously *maestro* of Toledo Cathedral) from Seville, but without success. Riscos himself wrote to the chapter in July 1600, expressing regret at having left the post, and declaring his willingness to return. Finally, in March 1601, the chapter voted for the election of Alonso de Tejeda from Salamanca. As noted above, it was in this competition that Leitão de Avilez came second. However, Tejeda apparently never took possession of the post: on 14 November of that year the Zamora Cathedral chapter accepted Tejeda’s offer to come and serve them as *maestro*, and he is described in the relevant *acta capitular* as *maestro* of Salamanca (this being his post before he secured that in Granada) rather than of the *capilla real*.

Two years later, Leitão de Avilez arrived in Granada to take up the post of *maestro*. He was serving the chapel already in August, and took full possession of the post in early September. Unfortunately for our purposes, the *actas capitulares* are missing for a significant part of his career at the *capilla real*, from 1608 until 1621. However, a number of entries from years outside this period refer to Leitão de Avilez, several of these entries being concerned with his provision of *chansonetas* for Matins of Christmas Day. For example, in late November of 1606 he was granted the customary twenty days’ leave to compose the *chansonetas*. The next year he complained that, although he had composed *chansonetas* to the best of his ability, there were insufficient singers to perform them. The chapter’s response was that he would have to manage with those performers at his disposal, except that he could also bring in a *bajoncillo* player. In the years 1623–5 and 1627, i.e. from the other end of his career in Granada, the *actas capitulares* mention the need to secure the services of one or more *típles* for

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15 *Catalogo*, II, p. 25.
18 *Catalogo*, II, p. 33.
19 *Catalogo*, II, p. 34.
Christmas, and in two of these years the chansonetas are mentioned specifically in this connection.\footnote{Catalogo, II, pp. 35–6.}

It was of course often the case that the maestro of an important chapel would assist in the recruitment of singers for that institution, and Leitão de Avilez may indeed have acted in this way, perhaps playing a part in recruiting other Portuguese musicians to the service of the capilla real. For example, in 1606 the chapter directed him to negotiate with an unnamed Portuguese alto,\footnote{Catalogo, II, p. 33.} and — more strikingly still — in 1608 the organist’s prebend was granted to a ‘Francisco Díez’, who (like Leitão de Avilez) was from Portalegre.\footnote{Catalogo, II, p. 292.}

Leitão de Avilez apparently died in post during 1630. López-Calvo does not reproduce any notice of his death found in the actas capitulares, but these actas do record that the Christmas chansonetas for that year had to be provided by Gabriel Díaz, maestro de capilla of Córdoba Cathedral, and that he was paid from the money made available by the fact that the Granada post of maestro was vacant.\footnote{Catalogo, II, p. 38.}

Sources, issues of attribution, and repertory

The sojourn of Leitão de Avilez as maestro in Granada is reflected in two manuscripts of the capilla real, which are the only surviving sources of his music known to me: the set of part-books already mentioned which contains Luis de Aranda’s motet Quomodo sedet sola, and the choirbook Libros de polifonia Ms 7.\footnote{This is the manuscript’s numbering at the capilla real, and is adopted here and in the Census-Catalogue of Manuscript Sources of Polyphonic Music, 1400–1550, 5 vols, American Institute of Musicology / Hänssler Verlag: Neuhausen-Stuttgart, 1979–88, where it is assigned the siglum ‘GranCR 7’. However, it should be noted that José López-Calvo numbers this manuscript ‘1’ in his two published catalogues of the Archivo de Musica of the capilla real: ‘El Archivo de Música de la Capilla Real de Granada’, Anuario Musical 13 (1958), pp. 103–28, and the Catalogo. As for the part-books containing works by Leitão de Avilez, and Aranda’s Quomodo sedet sola, they have no numbering in the Archivo de Musica, while López-Calvo assigned them different numbers in his two published catalogues: they are no. 5 in his Anuario musical article, and no. 6 in the Catalogo.} This latter book is the more important for our composer, containing six of the eight surviving works attributed to him. Among the other attributed items in the book are Masses by Morales and Aliseda and pro deflectis lessons by Morales. The choirbook cannot at present be dated, although the handwriting suggests that the original copying took place in the first half of the seventeenth century. It may be the same as one of the items
in a 1610 inventory of the *capilla real* music books, described there as ‘Otro libro grande de diferentes autores de mano y marca mayor, aforrado en pergamino, de misa y officio de disuntos’. The volume certainly appears in an inventory of 1745, an entry which mentions most of the works by Leitão de Avilez in the book: ‘mas ay para las ferias 2a, 4a y 6a de quaresma los Domines y el verso Ajuva nos, y un motete que dize In jejunio, y unos pasillos para la Pasion de la dominica Ympalmis’. Among the items thus listed, ‘Los Domines’ are the first and second verses of the Tract for Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in Lent, of which the first verse begins *Domine non secundum peccata nostra* and the second verse *Domine ne memineris* (hence ‘los Domines’). The setting by Leitão de Avilez in the manuscript correspondingly falls into two sections treating one verse each. *Ajuva nos*, mentioned in the inventory, is the third verse of this same tract, and there are two settings of this text by Leitão de Avilez in the manuscript, the first (for four voices) copied immediately after the setting of verses 1 and 2 (although a difference in vocal ranges indicates that it was not composed as part of a single musical item together with *Domine non secundum*), and the second (for three voices) occurring later in the book. The same composer’s *In ieiunio* (another Lenten work) follows the first *Ajuva nos*, and is itself followed by what the inventory identifies as ‘la Pasion de la dominica Ympalmis’, that is, a setting of the St Matthew Passion for Palm Sunday. This in turn is followed by the remaining work by Leitão de Avilez in the book, a setting of the St John Passion for Good Friday.

In the *capilla real* part-books mentioned above are just two further works by Leitão de Avilez: one is another item for Holy Week — a set of Lamentations (for Maundy Thursday) — and the other a motet for St Nicholas, *Non est inventus* (the latter discussed further below). Unfortunately, one part-book is missing from the set, but the editorial completion of the relevant voice-part (the tenor) is a relatively straightforward task in the cases of both of these works. Editions of the two works are provided at the end of the present study.

One should note the uncertainties that have surrounded the attribution and authorship of these eight pieces, all but two of which bear attributions

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25 *Catalogo*, II, p. 313.
26 *Catalogo*, II, p. 317.
simply to ‘Lusitanus’ or ‘Lusitani’. López-Caló, in both the original and revised versions of his published catalogue of the capilla real sources, altered these attributions to ‘Lusitano’, and thereby there arose a confusion with the more famous composer thus known by his Portuguese nationality, namely Vicente Lusitano, renowned for his 1551 dispute in Rome with Nicola Vicentino. However, the attribution of the other two works in the Granada sources (the four-voice Aduiva nos and the Lamentations) makes things clear: they are ascribed to ‘Aviles Lusitani’ (i.e. ‘Aviles the Portuguese’). When compiling the original edition of his catalogue, López-Caló thought that ‘Aviles Lusitani’ (the two words appearing on the top of the verso and recto respectively of the opening in Ms 7 bearing the four-voice Aduiva nos) represented a dual attribution (‘doble adjudicación’), to ‘Avilés’ and to ‘Lusitani’, i.e. to two separate composers. At that stage he did not know who ‘Avilés’ was, but mentioned the better-known ‘Lusitano’, i.e. Vicente. However, when he came to republish his catalogue, López-Caló had uncovered the documentation described above regarding Leitão de Avilez’s presence at the capilla real. He nevertheless maintained there a note of caution regarding the attribution, saying that the documents ‘hacen pensar que se trate de un único autor’ (i.e. that ‘Aviles’ and ‘Lusitani’ refer to the same man), and his new catalogue still simply gave ‘Lusitano’ as the attribution for the remaining six pieces. There are sufficient technical correspondences among the eight pieces to indicate that we are right to apply Occam’s razor to the issue of authorship here, and to conclude with confidence that all eight are the work of Manuel Leitão de Avilez, the local maestro de capilla. All suspicion of Vicente Lusitano’s involvement can be firmly removed. It would, of course, have caused no confusion among the users of these books at the capilla real to refer to Leitão de Avilez, their maestro de capilla, at the head of some pieces simply as ‘Lusitanus’/‘Lusitani’, although the use of this designation alone (rather than ‘Aviles Lusitanus’) is quite striking.

29 Catálogo, I, p. 23.
30 In the article on Vicente Lusitano in Grove Music Online (www.grovemusic.com, accessed 9 February 2008), Bonnie Blackburn mentions the works preserved in Granada, noting that they ‘are possibly not his’. Despite this observation, however, the works are included in the work-list (where in addition the set of Lamentations is, confusingly, included in the list of motets, under the incipit Quonodo sedet sola). Such treatment of these items in this work of reference is likely to perpetuate the misapprehension that they might be by Vicente Lusitano, not least since Blackburn repeats López-Caló’s idea that there may be ‘a double attribution, Avilés/Lusitano’ in the Granada sources of two works. What is surely the correct reading of the use of ‘Lusitani’ in the Granada sources is, in fact, suggested by Blackburn correctly emphasizing at the beginning of the article, with regard to our ignorance of Vicente Lusitano’s family name, that ‘Lusitano’ simply means ‘Portuguese’.
Designations of nationality (such as ‘Lusitanus’ and ‘Hispanus’) appended to authors — including composers — names were common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly on title pages, as were of course designations of the author’s or composer’s native city.\(^{31}\)

Besides the eight known surviving works, two Masses by Leitão de Avillez, now apparently lost, are listed in the *Primeira parte do index da livraria de musica do muyto alto, e poderoso Rey Dom Ioão o IV. Nosso Senhor* (Lisbon, 1649). These are a *Missa Ave virgo sanctissima* for eight voices, and a *Missa Salva Theodosium* for twelve voices.\(^{32}\) The first surely belonged to the group of works based upon the famous five-voice motet *Ave virgo sanctissima* by Francisco Guerrero. The *Missa Salva Theodosium* must clearly be connected with D. Teodósio II, Duke of Bragança (1568–1630).

Of the eight surviving works, the motet *Non est inventus* deserves particular attention for its possible reflection of an aspect of local devotion in Granada. (An edition of the piece, with the missing tenor part reconstructed, is appended to this study.) The motet is denoted in the altus part-book as being for St Nicholas (and in the quinta pars book as for feasts of confessors), and the text is that of the second and third antiphons at Second Vespers in the Common of a Confessor Bishop (such as was Nicholas). The feast of St Nicholas was one of five feasts specially celebrated by the University of Granada, with the participation (at this period) of singers and instrumentalists from the *capilla real*.\(^{33}\)

\(^{31}\) Intriguingly, by the seventeenth century ‘Lusitanus’ could apparently be taken as an indication either that the person concerned was Portuguese or that they were a New Christian, and this aspect of Leitão de Avillez’s biography may be worth investigating further. The implication of Jewish descent at this period is discussed by Ian Maclean, in his forthcoming study ‘“Nostri Lusitani”: Portuguese Medical Authors and their European Reputation in the Late Renaissance’. I am most grateful to Prof. Maclean for sharing with me the fruits of his research before publication. The Jesuit António Vieira observed that at this time the designation ‘Portuguese’ was popularly confused with ‘Jew’: see Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 13, who there discusses the very considerable migration of Portuguese conversos to Spain from 1580 onwards. During questions following a conference presentation of some of the material in the present article (Congreso Internacional ‘Música y Músicos en Instituciones Eclesiásticas: Andalucía en la Edad Moderna’, Universidad Internacional de Andalucía, Sede Antonio Machado, Baeza, 7 December 2006), Pilar Ramos offered the information that the ‘Francisco Díez’ from Portalegre appointed to the organist’s post at the *capilla real* during this time was very likely a New Christian, as is suggested by the wording of the document declaring his *limpieza de sangre* in connection with his Granada appointment. She raised the possibility that the same might have been true of Leitão de Avillez, a hypothesis which might again be tested by consulting the declaration of his *limpieza de sangre*, if this can be located.

\(^{32}\) They are listed on p. 450 and p. 457 respectively of the *Index*. The first is within a collection of Masses by Victoria, António Vieira, Pedro da Fonseca Luzio, and Filipe de Magalhães. The second piece existed as a separate item.

Music was provided for the University’s procession to the church of San Nicolás, in the high Albaicín: ‘San Nicolás, en cuyo día se gana un grande jubileo y este día sube la Universidad a celebrar la fiesta con paseo de a cavallo y con atabales y trompetas y ministriles y ansi mismo concurre la Universidad de los Beneficiados de todas las parroquiales’. Pilar Ramos located contracts or payments for the capilla real musicians’ participation in this celebration for the period 1619–30, i.e. the last decade during which Leitão de Avilez was maestro of the capilla real. It seems likely that Non est inventus was sung on these occasions, and it may well have been composed for them.

The other seven currently known works by Leitão de Avilez are all, as explained above, items for Lent and Holy Week. Given their nature, the most rewarding approach to further study of them will likely be contextual, with regard to the liturgical/polyphonic genres to which they belong. For the two Passions, issues include use of the chant tone, which elements of the text are set (for example, neither setting includes an exordium), and aspects of text-treatment such as the use of appropriately agitated style for particular sections of text and the periodic addition of an extra voice-part. Considering these settings thus in context will also increase the possibility of identifying concordances (perhaps in New-World sources, given the great quantities of music from Andalucia which traveled thither). The strikingly simple style (with clearly alla breve rhythmic profile) adopted for the Lamentations and In ieiunio likewise calls for contextualization with related repertory of the period. Few though his surviving works may be, Manuel Leitão de Avilez deserves a place in the histories of Portuguese music and musicians of the period, not least because of the very high quality of the music, freed now (one hopes) from the confusion with Vicente Lusitano which has dogged it in some modern accounts. While it is possible that further material related to him may be discovered in Granada, the case of Leitão de Avilez also strongly invites investigation of the patronage of the Cobos-Molina family, the musical history of the Sacra Capilla del Salvador in Úbeda, and the place of this chapel within the network of musical institutions in Andalucia and (as the case studied here demonstrates) beyond.

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Lamentation

Original clef: Tenor C4; Altus C3; Bassus F4
Original mensuration signature: tempus imperfectum diminutum

Manuel Leitão de Avilés
CIVITAS
PLENA

CIVITAS
PLENA

CIVITAS
PLENA
Non est inventus

Original clef: Treble G; Alto C2; Bass F3
Original mensuration signature: tempus imperfectum diminutum

Manuel Leitão de Avelez

Tiple
Non est inven tus si mi lis il li,

Altus
Non est in-

Tenor
Non est inven tus si mi lis il li, si-

Bassus
Non est inven tus si mi lis

Ti
non est in ven tus si mi lis il li qui

A
ven tus si mi lis il li, si mi lis il li qui

T
mi lis il --- --- --- --- li

B
il --- li, si mi lis il --- li

Ti
con ser va ret le gem ex cel si, qui con ser va ret

A
con ser va ret le gem ex cel si, le gem ex cel-

T
qui con ser va ret le gem ex cel si, le-

B
qui con ser va ret le-