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Review: *Music by Pedro de Cristo: An Edition of MM 36 from Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra*, edited by João Pedro d'Alvarenga, Ana Delfina Gaunt, António Jorge Marques (Lisbon, Lisbon Chamber Choir, 2024)

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In the field of early music, it is hard to make a good music edition. Editors need to be equipped with a wide range of specialized knowledge in multiple languages, they need to design an effective editorial process, and they need the financial support to make it possible. The Centre for Music Studies (CESEM) at NOVA FCSH, Portugal, is an institution with the necessary expertise, and with funding from the Direcção-Geral das Artes and collaboration with the Lisbon Chamber Choir, a team of editors led by João Pedro d'Alvarenga has put together a solid edition of deserving repertoire. By focussing on the music in one of Pedro de Cristo's holographic choirbooks, most of which is previously unedited, they have helped to bring the music of an important yet underserved late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Portuguese composer back to life.

The edition features fifty compositions, mostly for four voices: psalm settings, antiphons, responsories, Magnificats, alleluias, hymns, motets, villancicos, and one Mass setting. They are presented in the order in which they occur in the manuscript. Unfortunately, despite the title of the volume, it is not quite a complete edition of the manuscript: eleven works were left out, presumably because they are later additions to the manuscript or are probably not by Pedro de Cristo. The prefatory material includes an introduction to the project, a short biography of the composer, a brief description of the manuscript including a discussion of issues of authorship, and an explanation of the editorial method. The critical notes are brief but helpful, listing concordances, text sources, and any corrections to the source reading. They do not contain lists of variants, and concordant readings are only mentioned when they were used to provide a correction or completion. The entire volume is bilingual in Portuguese and English, enabling easy reception to a worldwide readership.

The scores themselves are elegantly presented, following sensible and today largely standard editorial methods (original note values, regular barlines, modern clefs, ligatures indicated by square brackets, and editorial accidentals above the notes). For each piece, an individual editor is given; more than two-thirds of the compositions were edited by Ana Delfina Gaunt. While easy to read, this is not exactly a performance edition: many of the compositions were notated in high clefs and would need to be transposed for performance by most ensembles. Likewise, while chant intonations present in the manuscript are included in the edition in black breves and semibreves (as in the manuscript), the tones for the middle verses of psalms, canticles, and hymns are not supplied. An introductory note on *alternatim* performance gives some suggestions and provides links to relevant online resources.

From what I have seen to this point, the editions appear to be extremely accurate. This is not something to be taken for granted: in modern editions of early music, errors are often not hard to find. It is nevertheless instructive to see what few manuscript readings the editors considered necessary to correct. In some cases, the source contains parallels that the editors removed (e.g., *Benedicamus Domino II*, b. 16 on p. 31 and *Ave Regina caelorum*, b. 7 on p. 86). To my ear, the original melodic lines are more intuitive, even if the corrected versions are unproblematic. Elsewhere, the editors removed a very brief off-beat dissonance (*Alma redemptoris mater*, b. 42 on p. 123). These are the sorts of corrections that a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century editor might have made, but I do not believe the manuscript in these places contains scribal errors: the pieces were composed with these minor imperfections.

In other cases, notated sharps were removed. In *Beata Dei genitrix*, b. 29 (p. 78), the f-sharp in the altus was removed to avoid a very glaring simultaneous clash with the f-natural an octave above in the superius. In *Una hora non potuistis*, b. 30 (p. 111), an f-sharp in the second superius was removed to avoid a clash with the f-natural immediately following in the altus. Both of these cases raise interesting questions: were the clashes really intended by the composer? Would singers have sung them as written, or would they have adjusted what they sang based on what they heard? Elsewhere, there is arguably less reason to remove the sharps. In *Ave maris stella*, b. 27 (p. 144), a g-sharp in the bassus was removed because it clashes with the g-natural in the tenor, but it also forms a cadence with the superius. In *De profundis*, b. 2 (p. 54), the editors removed a c-sharp presumably on account of the chromatic melodic motion, but here there is no sounding clash at all. In my view, removing contrapuntal infelicities and questionable sharps from the scores and simply recording them in the critical notes serves to round out some of the music's more unique and characteristic edges—even if a performer might justifiably choose to make these changes.

These are extremely minor quibbles. There is no general agreement within the musicological community about what constitutes a contrapuntal error that must be corrected, or what clashes would have been acceptable to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century singers: the editors made choices that are consistently within the mainstream.

The introduction says that the editions will be freely available online on the website *Archive of Iberian Polyphony* (director João Pedro d'Alvarenga).¹ As of 29 May 2025, ten of the fifty pieces were available to download as pdf files, in which the musical typesetting is identical to that of the printed edition. While one might have wished to have encoded music files available to facilitate analysis and comparison, the online archive of editions is nevertheless a useful resource, especially when paired with the manuscript image archive *Portuguese Early Music Database* (PEM). Even when all files are available to download, the very reasonable price for the printed edition should not be too much of a hindrance for those wishing to have something on paper. And I hope this volume does reach a wide audience of both scholars and performers, making the music of Pedro de Cristo more widely available to be sung and heard.

Paul Kolb studied music at Harvard University, completed his doctorate at the University of Oxford, and has held postdoctoral fellowships at the universities of Salzburg and Leuven. His research focuses on notation, scribal habits, and genres in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century music. He is currently working as a church musician in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising.

¹ See <<https://iberianpolyphony.fcsh.unl.pt/>>.

