



# José Augusto Alegria: Biobibliography

AMONG CURRENTLY ACTIVE musicologists born in Portugal, José Augusto Alegria ranks as foremost. Beginning in 1962, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation at Lisbon published his six-volume edition of the complete works of frei Manuel Cardoso (1566-1650) (*Portugaliae Musica, Série A*, v, vi, xiii, xx, xxii, xxvi [1962, 1963, 1968, 1970, 1973, 1974]). These tomes were followed in 1978 by the complete works of Diogo Dias Melgaz (1638-1700) (*PM, Série A*, xxxii). Presently programmed for proximate publication by the same foundation are his transcriptions of João Lourenço Rebelo's miscellany of polychoral vespers music (Rome: 1657) that was long thought irretrievable until part-books in the Biblioteca Santini came to the attention of Gulbenkian Foundation authorities.

Buttressing these monumental editions, Alegria has published invaluable catalogues (listed below), an epoch-making history of Renaissance and Baroque music at Évora, articles in *A Cidade de Évora, Alvoradas*, and six other learned journals, dictionary articles in *Enciclopédia Luso-Brasileira de Cultura Verbo* and *Dicionário da História da Igreja em Portugal*, two editions sponsored by the Lisbon-based choral group *Polyphonia*, and facsimile editions of Mateus = Mateo de Aranda's two path-breaking treatises (Lisbon: 1533 and 1535) with annotations. His original compositions include a *Hino eucarístico, letra do dr. José Maria Sardo*, catalogued under ALE 613 at Elvas Municipal Library ("Inventário da Secção de Música, Ref. Nº 79 . . . da Biblioteca Municipal de Elvas . . . 4 de Abril de 1946").

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation responsible for publication of most of his previous scholarly works now announces for publication in the near future still another two monographs that promise to be of prime value: his catalogue of the music in the Paço Ducal at Vila Viçosa and his history of the heavily endowed choristers' school that flourished there throughout the Baroque era (*Colégio dos Reis Magos*).

His biography forms the necessary prelude to the itemized bibliography that follows. His parents were Miguel João Alegria, native of Vila Viçosa, and Maria José Coelho Alegria, native of Terena (near Fronteira). Second among five children (all still alive in 1981) and eldest of four sons, he was born December 27, 1917 (not January 6, 1918, the date given in *The New Grove*) in São Mamede parish, Évora. Although no one in his immediate family was musical, his mother (who was related to the Rosa family active in theatrical affairs during the first decade of this century) sang Alto Alentejo regional songs in a pleasant soprano voice. Aged nine, José Augusto entered a choral group directed by the Salesian father Pedro Morais at the Évora Oratório de São José where he attended primary school. In October, 1930, he entered the Évora archdiocesan seminary, remaining until completion of his studies for the priest-



hood in June, 1940. His chief musical mentors in the Seminário were Dr. Clemente Ramos, who beginning in 1932 "conducted the seminary choir with exquisite sensitivity," and the priest who was *mestre de capela* of Évora Cathedral from 1936 to 1940, Mateus das Neves. Born on Terceira Island in the Azores, Neves had grown up in Macao where he studied music with an Italian priest. As a result, he imbued his Évora pupils with a widely cosmopolitan musical outlook.

Alegria sang tenor in the seminary choir and also conducted it from time to time. On June 29, 1939, he received the first tonsure; on August 25, 1940, he was ordained priest by the Évora archbishop, Manuel Mendes da Conceição Santos; and on September 1 he celebrated his first Mass in the Oratório of São José. In October of 1940 he was appointed to teach *canto coral* in the Évora seminary from which he had just graduated and in 1951 to teach Portuguese literature. In 1940 he also became chapelmaster of Évora Cathedral. With interruptions for study and concertizing abroad, he continued teaching in the seminary and as cathedral chapelmaster until 1980. He taught Latin in the seminary one year 1947-1948, taught moral philosophy in the Escola Industrial e Comercial of Évora 1951-1966, and religion in the Évora Liceu 1966-1981.

During summer study trips he took organ lessons with Pascal Piriou at the Seminário dos Olivais (1941) and short courses at the Mosteiro de Singeverga (1942), Montserrat (1948), and Solesmes (1951). In 1945 he founded the Coro Polifónico of Évora consisting of twelve voices (three to a part) that until 1949 gave concerts of Alto Alentejo regional music in Campo Maior, Estremoz, and intervening locales. From 1949 to 1951 he studied at the Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra at Rome, where on June 27, 1951, he received Diploma 795 signed by Higinio Anglés, president, and David Pujol, secretary, attesting his completion of the Advanced Course in Gregorian Chant. Although holder of a scholarship from the Portuguese Instituto para a Alta Cultura while in Rome and although invited by Anglés to continue for the doctorate, he returned home in mid-1951 because of family financial problems. At once he resumed his former teaching posts. To these was added during the biennium 1952-1954 a course in musical paleography offered by the Centro de Estudos Gregorianos at Lisbon. He was elected a canon of Évora Cathedral in 1957 and that same year participated in the Troisième Congrès International de Musique Sacrée at Paris. In 1961 he attended the sacred music congress at Cologne.

In 1966 following the death of the founder, Mário de Sampaio Ribeiro, he became director of the Lisbon mixed choral society Polyphonia. Continuing as such to September 1974, he led the group during their successful tours of France and England. As a measure of his merits, the Lyons daily *L'Écho* of May 20, 1970, rated his conducting of a classical Portuguese program the evening of May 14 in the Église Saint-Paul a revelation of rare beauties ("Deuxième rencontre internationale de musique sacrée" by A. Gravier). The group sang at Wigmore Hall, London, February 28, 1973, a program that typically included liturgical works by Dom Pedro do Cristo, Estêvão Lopes Morago, Filipe de Magalhães, Francisco Martins, Duarte Lobo, and Diogo Dias Melgaz, followed by Portuguese-text secular songs from the Cancioneiro de Elvas.

In 1967 he became a founding member of the Consotiatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae at Rome. On February 2, 1979, he became a Corresponding Member of the Academia Portuguesa da História.



*Bibliography* (FCG = *Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian*; PM = *Portugaliae Musica*)

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