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The Identity of Portuguese Early Music: New Data on João Cordeiro da Silva and his Keyboard Sonatas

A identidade da música antiga portuguesa: novos dados sobre João Cordeiro da Silva e as suas sonatas para tecla

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Abstract: The musical identity of a specific geographic area can be seen in elements of its compositions, musical practices, and traditions. Given the strong Italian presence in Portugal in the 18th century, and the intense cultural exchange between Portugal and Italy, it is important to find the distinctively Portuguese traits of Portuguese music from that time. This article proposes two complementary approaches for analyzing the identity of 18th-century Portuguese music – the biographical study of composers and the analysis of their works – and presents a study on the Portuguese composer João Cordeiro da Silva. New biographical data are revealed about Cordeiro da Silva's possible place of training, his professional activity, his retirement and residence in Elvas, and the date of his death. Research and analysis of Cordeiro da Silva's keyboard sonatas reveals a new musical source and identifies the oldest sonata, as well as highlighting compositional idiosyncrasies and a musical pattern.

Keywords: Identity. keyboard music. Portuguese patterns. Early music. João Cordeiro da Silva.

Resumo: A identidade da música de um determinado espaço geográfico pode ser observada em elementos das suas composições, das suas práticas musicais e tradições. Considerando

que no século XVIII havia uma forte presença italiana em Portugal e um intenso intercâmbio cultural entre Portugal e Itália, é importante encontrar traços distintivamente portugueses da música portuguesa composta nessa altura. Este artigo propõe duas abordagens complementares para analisar a identidade da música portuguesa do século XVIII – o estudo biográfico dos compositores e a análise das suas obras – e apresenta um estudo sobre o compositor português João Cordeiro da Silva. Revelam-se novos dados biográficos sobre o possível local de formação de Cordeiro da Silva, a sua atividade profissional, a sua aposentação e morada em Elvas, e a data do seu falecimento. A pesquisa e análise das sonatas para tecla de Cordeiro da Silva revelam uma nova fonte musical e identificam a sonata mais antiga, além de destacar idiossincrasias composicionais e um padrão musical.

Palavras-chave: Identidade. Música de tecla. Padrões portugueses. Música antiga. João Cordeiro da Silva.

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1. Introduction

During the 18th century, a great cultural exchange between Portugal and Italy marked musical production and performance in Portuguese lands. Italian musicians and composers were hired to work in Portugal; sacred and operatic music by Italian composers was performed in Portuguese churches and theatres; and Portuguese musicians traveled first to Rome and then, in the second half of the century, to Naples to improve their musical knowledge (Brito, 1989; Fernandes, 2010b). Those musicians, scholarship recipients from the Crown, would later implement what they had learned when they returned to Portugal, particularly at the Royal Patriarchal Seminary of Music in Lisbon, where Italian methods of teaching and composition were used (Fernandes, 2013).

Portuguese composers of that period were surrounded by Italian music, its techniques, and musical ideas. Recently, Italian compositional techniques have been identified in a range of European music of this period, including in Portuguese keyboard music (Gjerdingen, 2007; Nejmeddine, 2021; Nejmeddine, 2023). So how can we know what is truly Portuguese in the music of that period?

Studies on Portuguese popular music have generated significant knowledge, and research on Portuguese musical identity, particularly analysis of Fado and Cante Alentejano (both recognized by UNESCO), and this has extended to other musical genres (Costa Alves, 2020; Guerra, 2020; Guerra & Silva, 2015). However, in the field of classical music, no research has yet been done on Portuguese musical identity. To analyze the identity of 18th-century Portuguese music, two components are necessary: a biographical analysis of the composers and a musical analysis of their works. This study presents the case of the Portuguese composer João Cordeiro da Silva, born in Elvas on February 26, 1735 (Trilha, 2013, p. 209; Trilha, 2020, p. 22).

Trilha (2013, pp. 209–210; 2020, pp. 22–23) has suggested that Cordeiro da Silva studied at the Colégio dos Reis in Vila Viçosa and later at the Naples Conservatory, drawing on a mention of the Conservatory in an account by Balbi, a foreign traveler of the time (1822, v. 2, p. 215). However, there is no other proof of this, and Balbi did not specify which of the four Neapolitan conservatories Cordeiro da Silva attended. There is evidence that on 21 November 1756, Cordeiro da Silva was living in Lisbon, in Laranjeiras, in the parish of São Sebastian, and was enrolled in the Brotherhood of St. Cecilia, the organization that directed the professional activities of musicians in Lisbon and its suburbs (Santa Cecília, 1756–1825, f. 16v). From 1759 onwards, Cordeiro da Silva worked for the royal family as the organist of the Patriarchal Church, serving in the Royal Chapel of Ajuda, and from 1763 as a composer at the same institution, also staging his own operas and those of Niccolò Jommelli in the royal theaters (Fernandes, 2010a; Brito, 1989, pp. 39–40).[1] On November 29, 1807, the court departed for Brazil due to the French invasions and Cordeiro da Silva remained in Portugal returning to his hometown in the following year (Nejmeddine, 2016, v. 1, p. 357).[2]

Cordeiro da Silva's musical production includes keyboard music totaling fourteen minuets and four sonatas, one of which mentions Dona Maria Anna of Portugal. The piece is entitled *Tocata* and was probably offered to Dona Maria Ana Vitória de Bragança (1768–1788), daughter of Queen Maria I (Trilha, 2020, p. 29). João Cordeiro da Silva may have taught the queen's daughter, which, if confirmed, reinforces his close relationship with the royal family (Vieira, 1900, v. 2, pp. 304–306).

The influence of Cordeiro da Silva's education on his musical style deserves to be studied in more detail and the final period of his life has not yet been studied, although it has been proposed that he probably died in 1808 (Trilha, 2020, p. 24). The aim of

1 In 1716, the Portuguese Royal Chapel was elevated to the status of Patriarchal Basilica (Fernandes, 2013, p. 11).
2 Document at the Arquivo Histórico da Irmandade de Santa Cecília & Montepio Filarmónico (Santa Cecília, 1808, f. 9v).

this study is to find new information about Cordeiro da Silva during these periods and his keyboard music, thus combining biographical and musical research in the analysis of the identity of 18th-century Portuguese music.

2. Methodology

The biographical research focused on João Cordeiro da Silva's life in Portugal, specifically the early and late periods of his life related to his education and retirement. This research was conducted in Portugal, at the Museu-Biblioteca da Casa de Bragança, Biblioteca Municipal and Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Elvas, and through the online catalogs of the Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo and the Arquivo Distrital de Portalegre.

The musical research was based mainly on Cordeiro da Silva's keyboard sonatas as contained in manuscripts M.M. 951, M.M. 4521 and M.M. 4530 from the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal and manuscript Vm[7] 4874 from the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Nejmeddine, 2016, v. 1, pp. 232–233). In addition, manuscript BH MUS CS-2-13-1110 from the Biblioteca Histórica de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid was studied as it contains a few pieces of Portuguese keyboard music from the second half of 18th century. The analysis was supported by Hepokoski and Darcy's *Sonata Theory* (Hepokoski & Darcy, 2006).

3. Results

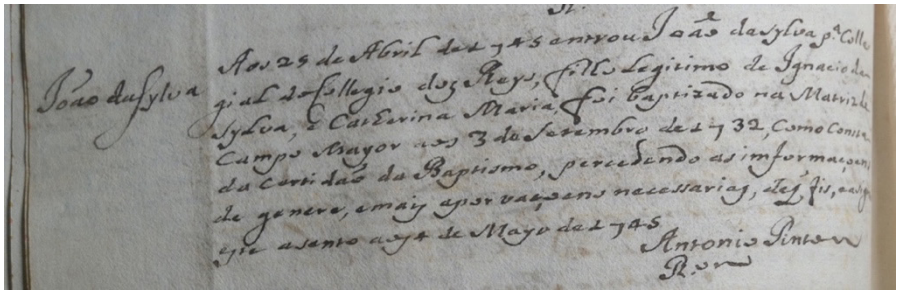
3.1 Biographical Data

3.1.1 Education

In recent years, the education of João Cordeiro da Silva has been associated with Colégio dos Reis in Vila Viçosa, a royal college in the Évora district. The college register dated April 29, 1745, lists a boy named João da Silva (Trilha, 2013, p. 209;

Trilha, 2020, p. 22). The entry indicates that João da Silva was baptized in the parish church of Campo Maior and names his parents as Ignacio da Sylva and Catherina Maria (Inácio da Silva and Catarina Maria, in modern Portuguese) (Figure 1).

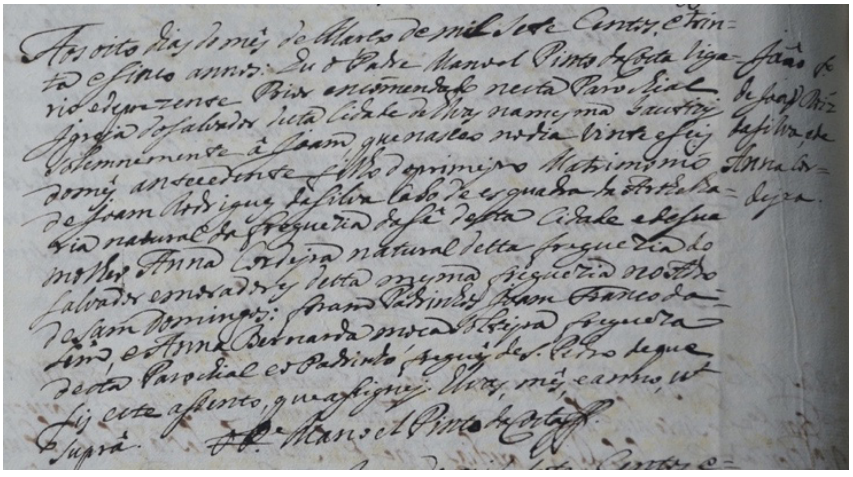
Figure 1. Entry register of João da Silva at Colégio dos Reis of Vila Viçosa.



Source: Museu-Biblioteca da Casa de Bragança, Livro de Entradas do Colégio dos Reis, folio 9v, A.H. NNG 3298/2.

However, the baptism register of João Cordeiro da Silva shows that his parents were Joam Rodrigues da Silva e Anna Cordeira (João Rodrigues da Silva e Ana Cordeira, in modern Portuguese) (Figure 2).[3]

Figure 2. Baptism register of João Cordeiro da Silva.



Source: Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Elvas, Paróquia de São Salvador, mç 56/06, Livro dos baptismos (1728–1744), folio 104v.

3 The surname *Cordeiro* was changed to *Cordeira* when given to a female. This procedure can be seen, for example, in the marriage register of another João Cordeiro, whose parents were Domingos Gonçalves and Leonor Cordeira (Paróquia de São Salvador, 1749–1780, f. 19r).

Since the parents' names in the college register are different from those in the baptism register, we can say that João da Silva and João Cordeiro da Silva were different people.

3.1.2 Retirement: Address in Elvas

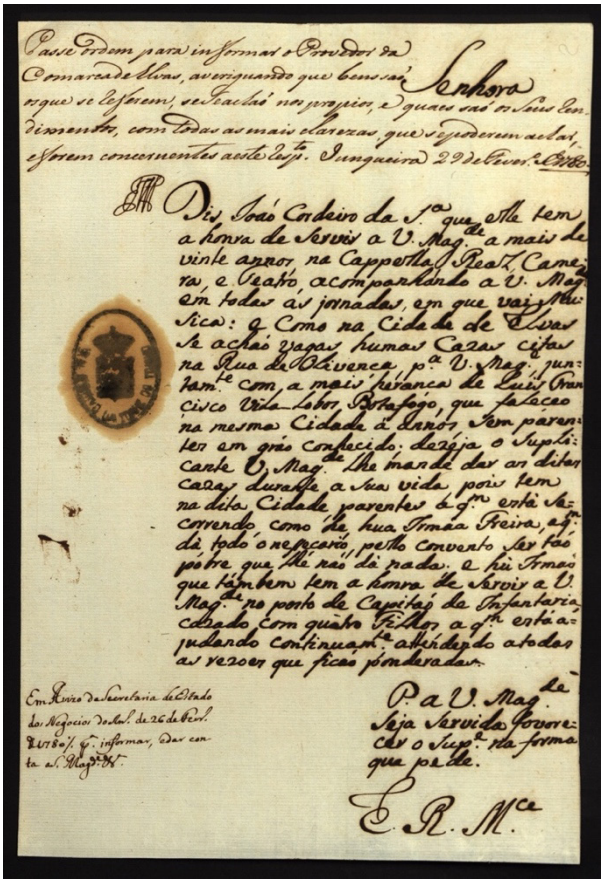
For about fifty years, Cordeiro da Silva lived in Lisbon and served the royal family. His professional activity can be summarized in his own words, as found in a request addressed to the queen dated February 26, 1780: "João Cordeiro da Silva says that he has had the honor of serving Your Majesty for more than 20 years, in the Royal Chapel, Camera, and Theater, accompanying Your Majesty on all journeys, in which music is present." (Portugal, 1780).[4] In this document, he asks Queen Maria I for some houses in Elvas that belonged to Luís Francisco Vilalobos Botafogo, explaining that he has family in Elvas, namely a sister who is a nun and a married brother with four children whom he is helping financially (Figure 3).

The houses requested by Cordeiro da Silva were part of the chapel established by Luís Francisco de Vilalobos Botafogo, who died in 1772. A document of this process, issued by the Elvas Provedorate on June 12, 1780, indicates that the assets of Luís Francisco de Vilalobos Botafogo were 'a farm with the same name Botafogo located in Cayola, territory that belongs to this city' and 'Some noble houses, with their annexes free of any tax or pension, and they start with Rua de Olivença, Rua de Alcamim, and the houses of Raymundo António'.[5] These noble houses were owned by Mariana Catherina Peregrina Clara da Conceição (Elvas, 1824: 47–48) and corresponded to numbers 26 A and 27 on Rua de Olivença (Elvas, 1834, p. 7).

4 'Dis Joaõ Cordeiro da S.ª que elle tem a honra de servir a V. Mag.de a mais de vinte annos, na Cappella Real, Camera, e Teatro, acompanhando a V. Mag.de em todas as jornadas, em que vai musica:'

5 '... a herd.e do mesmo nome de Botafogo cita em Cayola termo desta cid.e [...]. Humas casas nobres, com suas annexas livres de foro, ou penção alguma, e partem com a Rua de Olivença, Rua de Alcamim, e casas de Raymundo Ant.o ...'. (Portugal, 1780).

Figure 3. João Cordeiro da Silva's request.



Source: Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Ministério do Reino, mç. 763, proc. 33, Requerimento de João Cordeiro da Silva, capelão da Capela Real, Câmara e Teatro, solicitando a posse de umas propriedades situadas na rua de Olivença, cidade de Elvas, PT/TT/MR/EXP/051/0120/00033. Image provided by ANTT.

3.1.3 Retirement: Musical activities

In January 1808, Cordeiro da Silva was still receiving his salary as organist of the Patriarchal Church of Lisbon and not as a retiree, unlike his colleague Jerónimo Francisco de Lima, for example (Fernandes, 2010b, v. 2, pp. 292–296). However, his status changed during that year and he returned to his hometown (Elvas, 1808, p. 4; Santa Cecília, 1808, p. 9v).

On November 29 and 30 and December 1, 1808, he participated in the celebratory functions that Dom José Joaquim da Cunha de Azeredo Coutinho, the Bishop of Elvas, held for the restoration of the Prince Regent's government. The news published about these events indicates Cordeiro da Silva was

the composer and musical director during the three days, and mentions him as 'Master of the Portuguese Royal House and retired organist of the Royal Chapel of Our Lady of Ajuda':

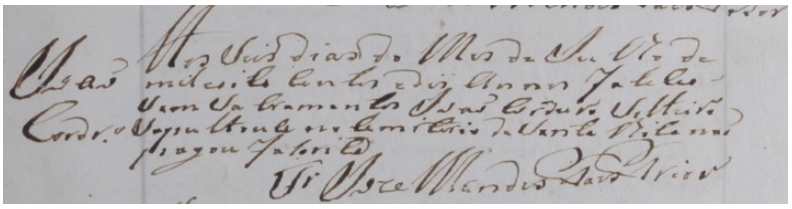
> A very decent pavilion for instrumental and vocal music had been built by the church's cross; and the entire choir performed, with applause and praise, the many pieces and compositions that the well-known professor and composer João Cordeiro da Silva, a native of the city of Elvas itself, master of the Royal Portuguese Household and retired organist of the Royal Chapel of Our Lady of Ajuda, had worked on with such pleasure and to the public's satisfaction. For such a commendable reason, regardless of his advanced age, he gladly offered to conduct the Music Chapel every day of the solemnity. This wise professor, knowing individually the voices and instruments of the orchestra he had to conduct, and the sublime nature of each of them, composed his music with such perfection and artistry that a truly celestial harmony was achieved. (Elvas, 1808, p. 4)[6]

3.1.4 Death

As far as we know, no document has been found citing João Cordeiro da Silva as the owner of the houses on Rua de Olivença. However, in the parish death registers of the municipality of Elvas between 1808 and 1811, the name João Cordeiro appears in the register for the parish of Alcáçova, to which Rua de Olivença belonged (Paróquia de Alcáçova, 1802–1859, f. 55r). The register mentions Cordeiro as a single man, who died on July 6, 1810 (Figure 4):

6 'Havia-se construido no Cruzeiro da Igreja hum Coreto muito decente para a Musica Instrumental, e Vocal; e todo o Coro executou com applauso, e louvor as muitas peças, e composições, que havia trabalhado com tanto gosto, e satisfação do Público o bem conhecido Professor, e Compositor João Cordeiro da Silva, natural da mesma Cidade de Elvas, Mestre da Real Casa Portugueza, e Organista Aposentado da Real Capella de N. Senhora da Ajuda, o qual por tão plauzível motivo, sem atenção á sua avançada idade, se prestou gostoso a reger todos os dias da solemnidade a Capella de Musica: este sabio Professor, conhecendo individualmente as vozes, e instrumentos da Orquestra, que elle tinha a reger, e o sublime de cada hum delles, compoz a sua Musica com tanta perfeição, e arte, que se ajustou huma armonia verdadeiramente celeste.'

Figure 4. Death register of João Cordeiro da Silva.



Source: Arquivo Distrital de Portalegre, Paróquia de Alcáçova, cx. 007, Registos de óbitos (1802–1859), folio 55r, PT/ADPTG/PRQ/PELV02/03/01O. Image provided by the Arquivo Distrital de Portalegre.

3.2 Musical Data

3.2.1 Sonatas' sources

The sonatas by Cordeiro da Silva are preserved in manuscripts containing pieces by several authors. In addition, a single sonata by Cordeiro is the only piece in manuscript M.M. 4521 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, and this probably belonged to the royal family for the personal use of Princess Mariana (Maria Ana) Vitória.

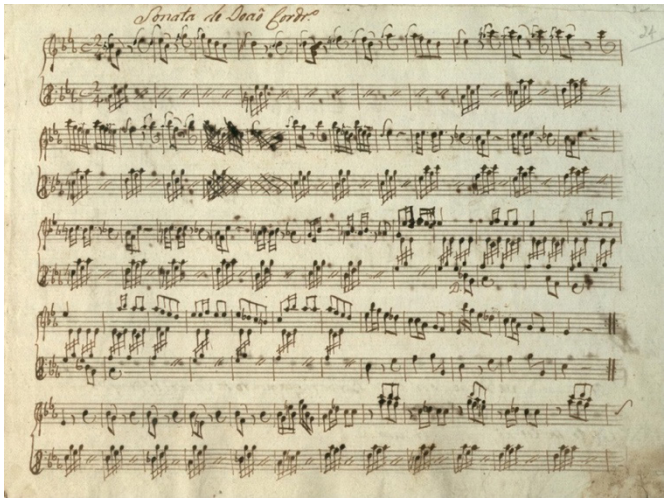
The manuscripts Vm[7] 4874 from the Bibliothèque nationale de France and M.M. 4530 from the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal are collections of keyboard pieces for domestic practice. The first collection includes pieces by Portuguese and Italian composers who worked in Portugal in the 18th century, and the second includes Portuguese and international composers from the second half of the 18th century.[7]

The manuscript BH MUS CS-2-13-1110 from the Biblioteca Histórica de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid consists of keyboard pieces by Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese composers, including an anonymous version of the Sonata in C minor by Cordeiro da Silva preserved in manuscript M.M. 951 at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (Figures 5 and 6). In manuscript BH MUS CS-2-13-1110 the melody is simplified (omitting most

7 These manuscripts are entitled 'Sonates pour clavecin de divers auteurs' and 'Sonatas del Sig.re Mathias Vento, Bocquarinni, Hayden, Cordeiro, Mesquita, e outros auctores da primr.a classe para uzo de C.na Ildobranda', respectively.

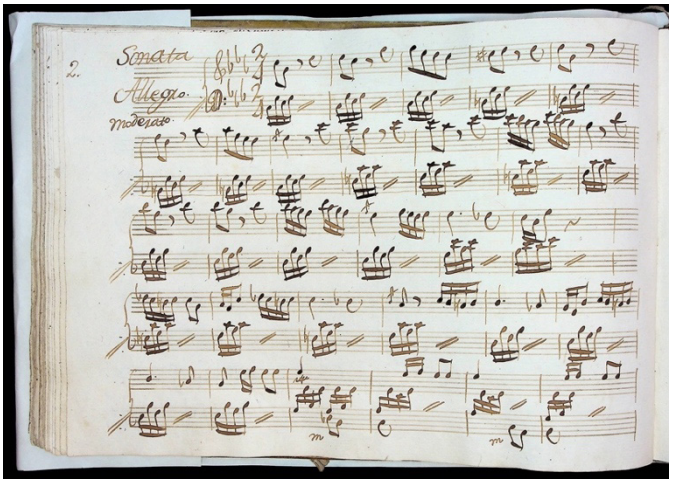
of the appoggiaturas) and modified in some passages. Some measures have been omitted (19–20 and 55–58), and two new measures with codetta modules reinforcing harmonies V–I have been added at the end of the exposition.

Figure 5. Beginning of the Sonata in C minor by João Cordeiro da Silva in the manuscript M.M. 951.



Source: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, [Acompanhamentos para missas, hinos, etc], folio 24r, M.M. 951.

Figure 6. Beginning of the Sonata in C minor by João Cordeiro da Silva in the manuscript BH MUS CS-2-13-1110



Source: Biblioteca Histórica de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, BH MUS CS-2-13-1110, folio 35v.

The M.M. 951 manuscript consists of eight notebooks with different types of paper and handwriting, and shows signs that some pages have been cut. It essentially contains accompaniments for masses, hymns and other liturgical genres, as well as keyboard sonatas. This manuscript is believed to have belonged to the Cathedral of Elvas since it includes the *Himno q~ se canta na festa da Ascēssora* (folio 39r), a hymn to be performed at the feast of Our Lady of the Assumption which was the feast of the patron saint of the Cathedral of Elvas, and three keyboard sonatas by authors related to or connected with Elvas. These are i) the Sonata in C minor (folios 24r–24v), undated, by João Cordeiro [da Silva]; ii) the Sonata in E-flat major (folios 22v–23v), undated, by Fr. Manuel [de Santo] Elias (*fl.*1767–*d.*1805/06), who also composed a sacred piece for Elvas Cathedral (*Responsorio do Natal a 4 vozes e orgão*);[8] and iii) the Sonata in F major (folio 43r–43v), dated from 1775, by Fr. Vicente de Santa Bárbara (*fl.*1775–*after*1814), sacristan-major of the Convent of São Domingos in Évora, a city not far from Elvas. The first two sonatas are included in the second booklet, and the last sonata is included in the seventh booklet. Table 1 presents information about the sources of João Cordeiro da Silva's sonatas.

Table 1. List of João Cordeiro da Silva's sonatas.

Sonata	Title	Movements	Key	Signature	Sources
1	Sonatta	[no indication]	C major	2/4	F-Pn Vm^{7} 4874, ff. 34[33]^{v}–35[34]^{v}
1	Sonata de Joaõ Cord.^{ro} da Silva	Allegro	C major	2/4	F-Pn Vm^{7} 4874, ff. 48[47]^{v}–50[49]^{r}
2	Tocata / D. Maria Anna de Portugal	[no indication]	C major	3/4	P-Ln M.M. 4521
2	Cord.^{ro}	[no indication]	C major	3/4	P-Ln M.M. 4530, ff. 4v–5r
3	Sonata de João Cordr.^{o}	[no indication]	C minor	2/4	P-Ln M.M. 951, ff. 24r–24v

8 Manuscript MUS.137 from the Biblioteca Municipal de Elvas.

3	Sonata	Allegro moderato	C minor	2/4	E-Mbhmv BH MUS CS-2-13-1110, ff. 35v–37r
4	Sonata de João Cord.ro Silva	[no indication]	B-flat major	2/4	F-Pn Vm^{7} 4874, ff. 47[46]^{r}–47[46]^{v}

Source: Table prepared by the author. Abbreviations: E-Mbhmv: España, Madrid, Biblioteca Histórica Marqués de Valdecilla de la Universidad Complutense; F-Pn: France, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France; P-Ln: Portugal, Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal.

Manuscripts M.M. 4530 and M.M. 4521 present important differences in terms of musical form. Manuscript M.M. 4530 omits some measures, which can be identified by comparison with analogous passages [measure 11 (= 3); measures 15 and 16 (= 13 and 14); measures 62 and 63 (= 60 and 61)].[9] However, the most relevant difference between this manuscript and M.M. 4521 is the omission of the first *Fortspinnung* module of the exposition in the latter (from measure 68), which marks the end of development and the beginning of the tonal resolution in M.M. 4530 (from original measure 67). At this point, the arrival of the tonic key in M.M. 4521 does not occur through materials from the exposition, which could produce a tonal resolution or a recapitulation, but rather through new material. This material also appears in M.M. 4530 after the first *Fortspinnung* module that initiates the tonal resolution, and is identified as a coda-rhetoric interpolation.

3.2.2 Analysis of the sonatas

Cordeiro da Silva's sonatas were analyzed in detail, from the point of view of musical form and style (Nejmeddine, 2016, v. 1, pp. 155–158). They consist of a single movement composed in the keys of C major, C minor, and B-flat major, and fall within the range C^{1}–D^{6}.[10] They feature a writing style that suggests they are performed at a fast tempo.

The sonatas are written in forms classified as Type 2 sonata (Sonata no. 2) – which consists of an exposition, a development, and a tonal resolution – and Type 3 sonata (Sonatas nos. 1, 3,

9 This count includes the missing measures.

10 A^{4} = 440 Hz.

4), with an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation.[11] In the Type 2 sonata, the sonata form is preceded by a short introduction (mm. 1–12) written in ABA format and in the same movement as the sonata form, its material being subsequently used in the development section. Sonatas are monothematic and bipartite, typically featuring a second part that is longer than the first. From a tonal point of view, the first part moves from the tonic key to the dominant or relative major key, and the second part follows the reverse path, starting in the tonic and subtonic keys in their parallel mode, and then moving towards the tonic key.

In general, these pieces express a graceful character, featuring rare dramatic passages achieved through chromaticism and the crossing of hands combined with leaps. In terms of style, the sonatas present a galant writing style characterized by homophonic texture, a melody segmented into two-measure units with syncopation and dotted figures, the presence of various types of accompaniments (Alberti bass, murky bass, drum bass, arpeggiated chords, broken octaves), a slow harmonic rhythm, and half-cadences and perfect authentic cadences preceded by the formula 6/4–5/3.

The exposition is continuous and preferentially emphasizes the transition zone or the *Fortspinnung* zone. The primary-theme zone is almost always constituted solely by the theme, which is presented as a sentence or, more frequently, a phrase of six to sixteen measures, organized in one or two blocks with partial or complete repetition of the same. The transition zone has variable dimensions and is separate from the primary-theme zone, except in Sonata no. 2, whose continuation module of the sentence of the primary theme dissolves into a transition activity. It is predominantly based on the materials of the previous zone, with new materials being used in the case of the Sonata no. 1, whose transition zone has a tonal path different from the other sonatas, beginning and ending in the dominant

11 The typology of sonata forms is based on Hepokoski and Darcy's *Sonata Theory* (Hepokoski & Darcy, 2006).

key with a deviation from the tonic key in its parallel mode. In the remaining sonatas, the transition zone is composed in the key of the relative major or modulates directly to the dominant key. The *Fortspinnung* zone also has a variable length resulting from the repetition of some modules and is composed in the keys of the relative major or the dominant. The closing zone is often short and consists of one to three *codetta* modules.

The development section is about half or two-thirds the size of the exposition section. The composition of this section is quite heterogeneous in terms of both material and keys: the most common option for the beginning of this section employs the primary theme in its entirety in the dominant key or only as a reference in the relative major key; there is also an episode with new material in the key of the minor supertonic and material from the introduction in the key of the tonic in its parallel mode. This section generally explores three keys and recurrently relies on material from the primary-theme zone associated with material from the transition zone, the *Fortspinnung* zone, or the introduction, except in Sonata no. 4 where only material from the transition zone is used.

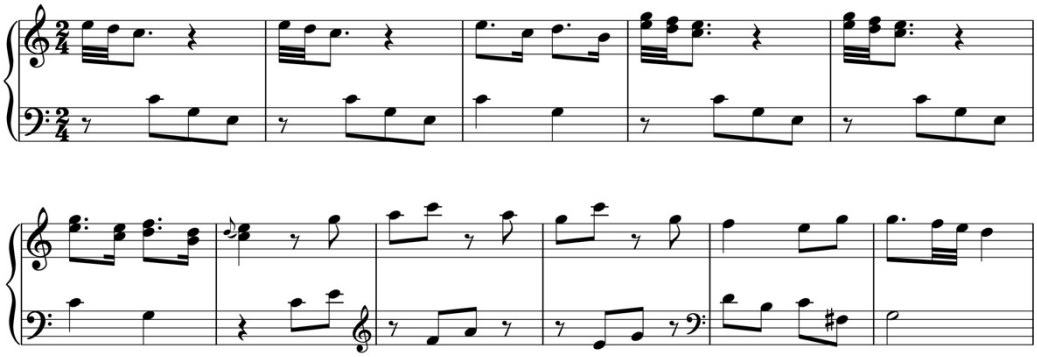
The tonal resolution section occurs after the development section only in Sonata no. 2 and consists of the initial module of the *Fortspinnung* zone and the closing zone transposed to the tonic key. These two zones are interspersed by a coda based on the initial motif of the development section and material from the second *Fortspinnung* module.

In the other three sonatas, the development section proceeds to a recapitulation in the tonic key, prepared by a short connection motif (in Sonata no. 3) or, more frequently, without any harmonic preparation, abruptly passing from the modified mediant or minor supertonic to the tonic key. The recapitulation revisits all the zones of the exposition (omitting some modules) or omits only a zone (the transition or *Fortspinnung* zones) and/or some modules; the transition zone appears shortened or expanded in relation to its size in the exposition section. The recapitulation varies between half and the entire size of the exposition section.

3.2.3 Sonatas' idiosyncrasies

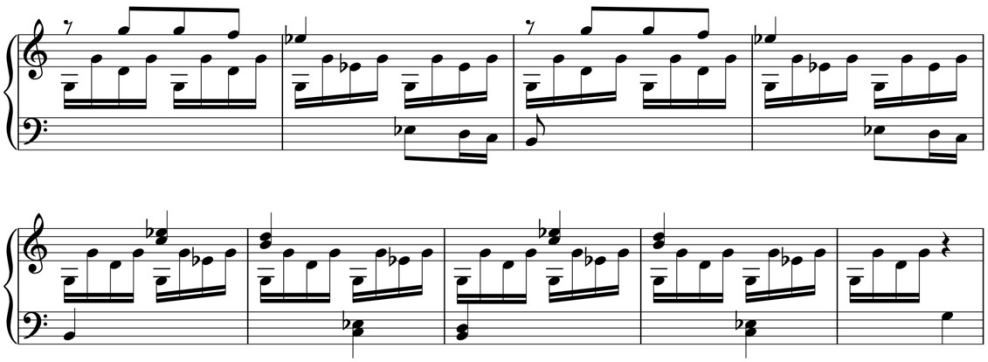
In his keyboard sonatas, Cordeiro da Silva explores short melodic intervals, and uses some dialogues and echoes. Sonata no. 1 frequently features melodic intervals of seconds and thirds. This can be observed from the very beginning of the piece, in the primary theme (Example 1). In the recapitulation, Cordeiro uses a dialogue that involves crossing hands in different registers (Example 2).

Example 1. Beginning of the Sonata in C major.



Source: Transcription by the author from F-Pn Vm^{7} 4874, folio 34[33]^{v}, mm. 1–11.

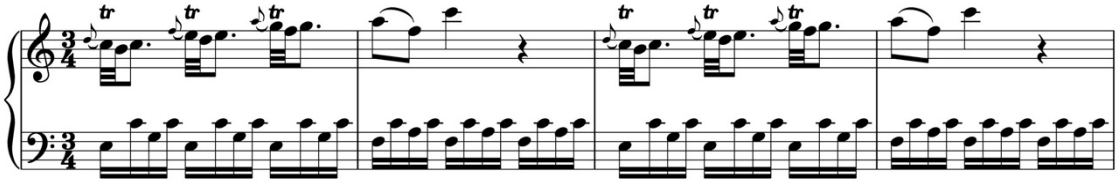
Example 2. Excerpt from the recapitulation of the Sonata in C major.



Source: Transcription by the author from F-Pn Vm^{7} 4874, folio 35[34]^{v}, mm. 86–94.

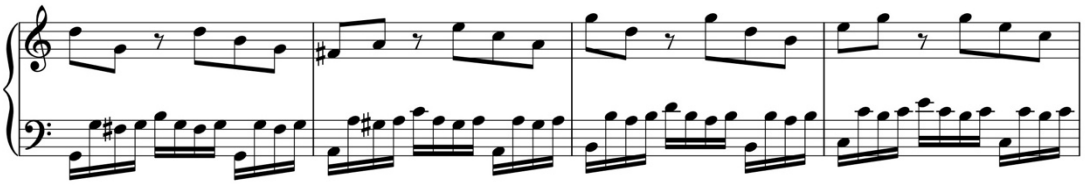
Sonata no. 2 is characterized by the frequent use of intervals of thirds in the upper line at the structural and melodic level. Examples 3 and 4 show this procedure at the beginning of the primary theme and the first *Fortspinnung* module, respectively.

Example 3. Beginning of the primary theme of the Sonata in C major.



Source: Transcription by the author from P-Ln M.M. 4521, mm. 13–16.

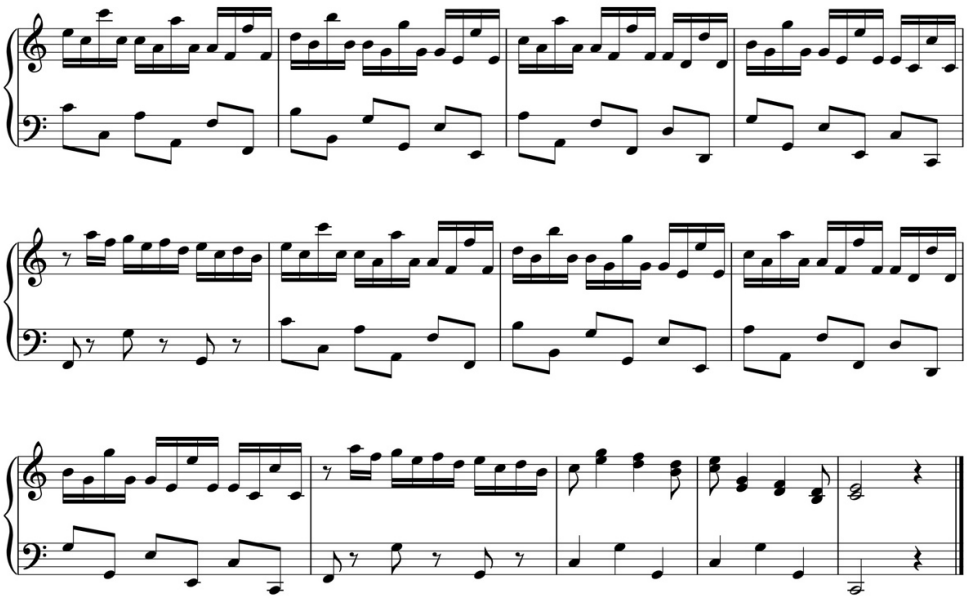
Example 4. First *Fortspinnung* module of the Sonata in C major.



Source: Transcription by the author from P-Ln M.M. 4521, mm. 24–27.

In the tonal resolution, Cordeiro introduced a coda-rhetoric interpolation also based on thirds before rewriting the closing module with harmonic thirds (Example 5).

Example 5. Coda-rhetoric interpolation and closing module in the tonal resolution of the Sonata in C major.

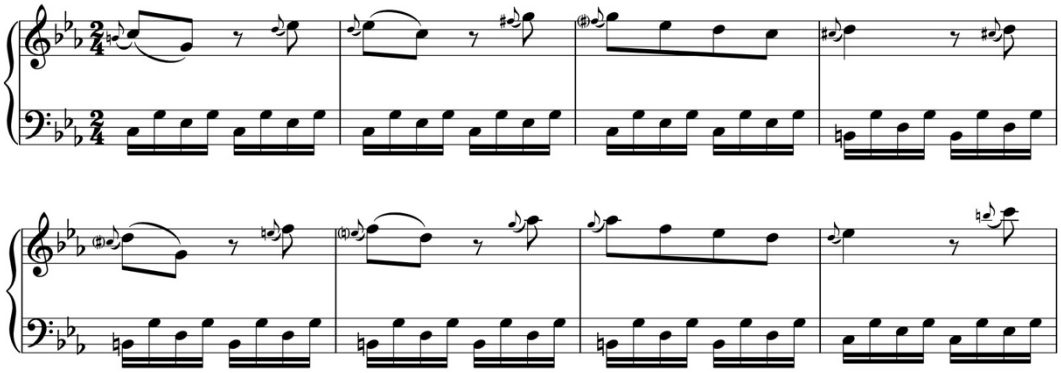


Source: Transcription by the author from P-Ln M.M. 4521, mm. 71–83.[12]

12 In the manuscript, the last note of the lower staff in measure 74 is D^2.

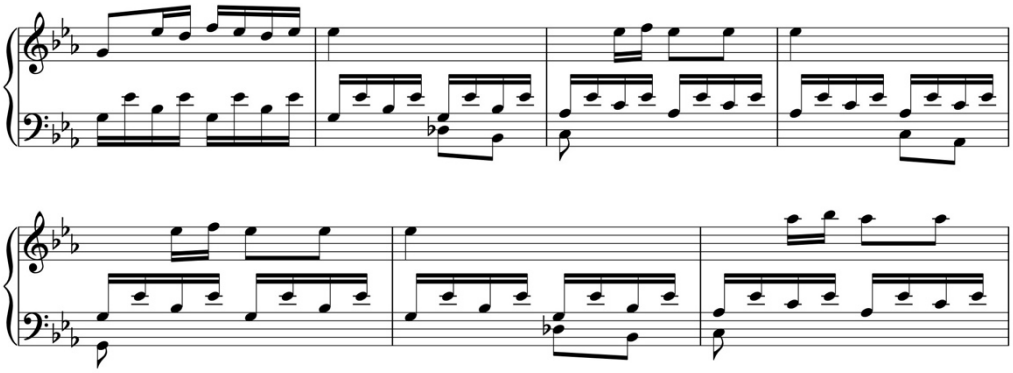
Sonata no. 3 combines the use of melodic intervals of seconds and thirds, dialogues and echoes. These melodic intervals are the basis of the sonata's primary theme (Example 6). The dialogue is used for the composition of the first *Fortspinnung* module (Example 7).

Example 6. Beginning of the Sonata in C minor.



Source: Transcription by the author from P-Ln M.M. 951, folio 24r, mm. 1–8.

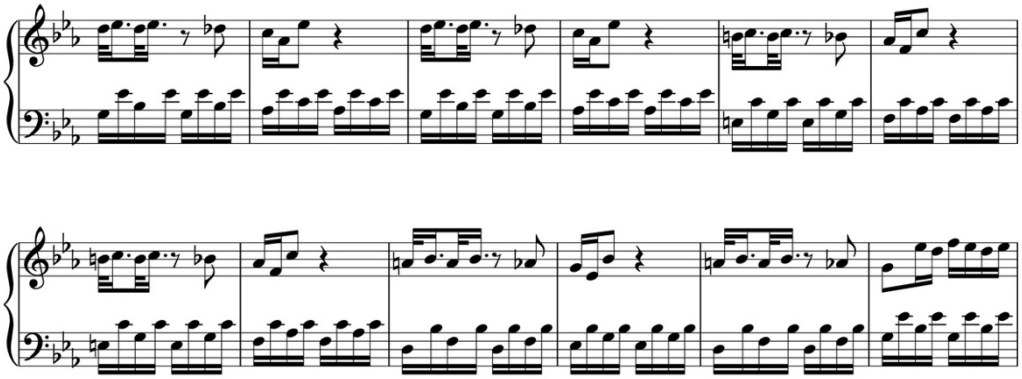
Example 7. Beginning of the first *Fortspinnung* module of the Sonata in C minor.



Source: Transcription by the author from P-Ln M.M. 951, folio 24r, mm. 28–34.

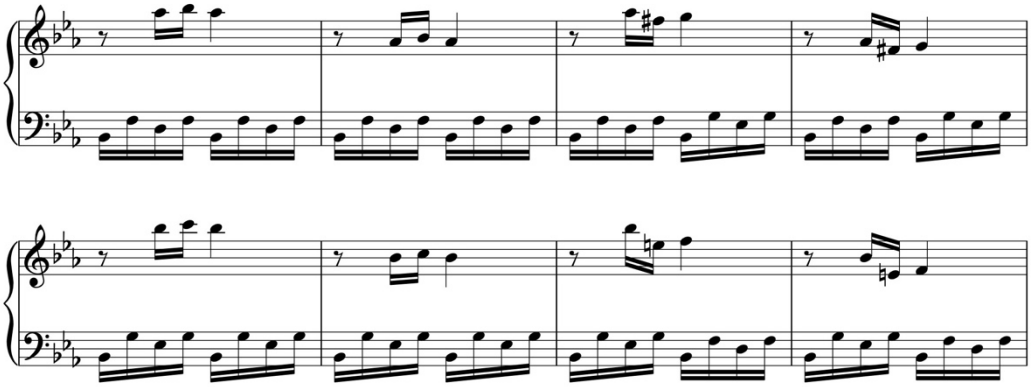
Echoes are initially treated as a suggestion, in the transition zone of the exposition, and become effective at the end of development (Examples 8 and 9).

Example 8. Transition zone of the Sonata in C minor.



Source: Transcription by the author from P-Ln M.M. 951, folio 24^{r}, mm. 17–28.

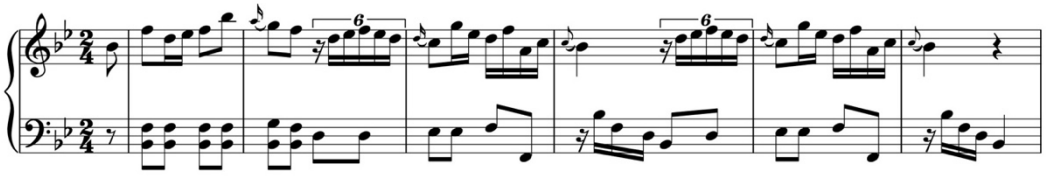
Example 9. Excerpt from the development of the Sonata in C minor.



Source: Transcription by the author from P-Ln M.M. 951, folio 24^{v}, mm. 61–68.[13]

Sonata no. 4 begins using melodic intervals of seconds and thirds in the primary theme (Example 10). In the recapitulation section, we can observe some echoes (Example 11).

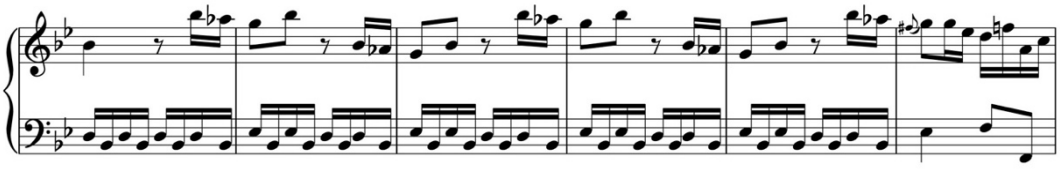
Example 10. Primary theme of the Sonata in B-flat major.



Source: Transcription by the author from F-Pn Vm^{7} 4874, folio 47[46]^{r}, mm. 1–6.

13 In the manuscript, the first and fifth notes of the lower staff in measure 62 are D^{3}.

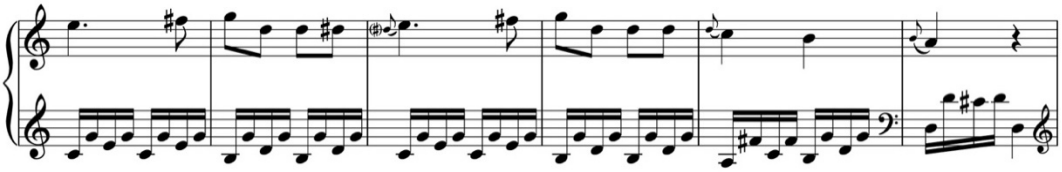
Example 11. Excerpt of the recapitulation of the Sonata in B-flat major.



Source: Transcription by the author from F-Pn Vm^{7} 4874, folio 47[46]^{v}, mm. 61–66.

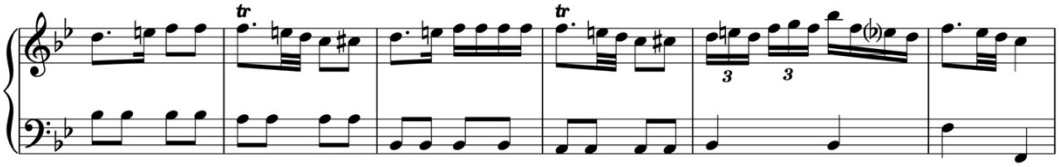
In addition to the use of compositional techniques common in Cordeiro da Silva's sonatas, we can observe a similarity in the transition zone in sonatas no. 1 and no. 4 (Examples 12 and 13).

Example 12. First module of the transition zone of the Sonata in C major.



Source: Transcription by the author from F-Pn Vm^{7} 4874, folio 34[33]^{v}, mm. 12–17.

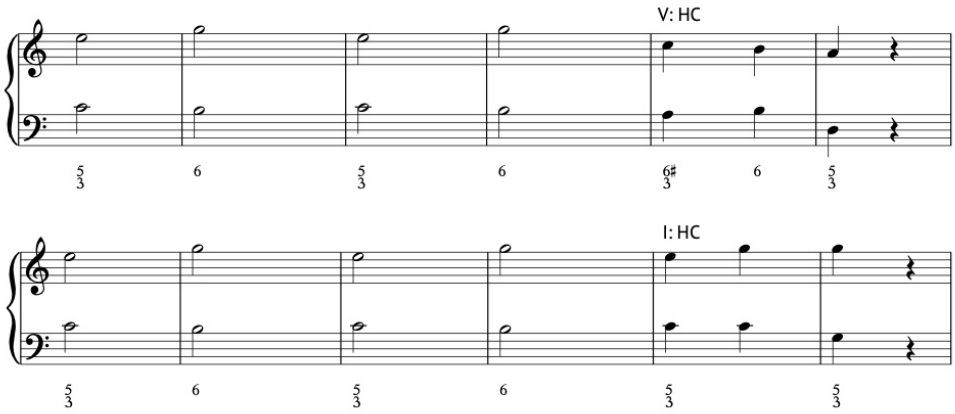
Example 13. First module of the transition zone of the Sonata in B-flat major.



Source: Transcription by the author from F-Pn Vm^{7} 4874, folio 47[46]^{r}, mm. 7–12.

This similarity reveals a pattern that leads to a half cadence in the dominant key or tonic key. Example 14 shows this schema in the key of C major.

Example 14. Schema of the pattern identified on João Cordeiro da Silva's sonatas



Source: Schema prepared by the author.

4. Discussion

As previously shown, João Cordeiro da Silva was not the João da Silva who studied at the Colégio dos Reis of Vila Viçosa, as suggested by Trilha (2013, p. 209; 2020, p. 22). The presence of a sonata by Cordeiro da Silva in manuscript M.M. 951, belonging to the Cathedral of Elvas, indicates that he may have studied at that institution. This manuscript is a compilation of notebooks and João Cordeiro da Silva's sonata appears five notebooks before a sonata dated 1775, by Fr. Vicente de Santa Bárbara, so we can assume that Cordeiro da Silva's sonata was composed at a much earlier date, possibly in his youth.

It is important to note that music students at Elvas Cathedral could begin as a choirboys and continue as instrumentalists at age 14 or 15, sometimes with a contract to learn an instrument for four or five years (Porto, 2020, pp. 349–355). Therefore, it is possible that Cordeiro da Silva studied at Elvas Cathedral until around 1750 and continued to work there up to 1756. He may have continued his studies at the Naples Conservatory, as reported by Balbi (1822, v. 2, p. 215). However, this could only have occurred between 1750 and 1756, since by 1756 he was already residing in Lisbon and had officially begun his

professional career. This is evidenced by his enrolment in the Irmandade de Santa Cecília — a royal obligation for musicians to practice their profession — and by his request to the queen, in 1780, for houses in Elvas, which demonstrates that he had already been working for the royal family since the 1750s.

If Cordeiro da Silva studied in Naples, he would have been one of the first Crown scholarship recipients to be sent there, since during the reign of King John V (1707-1750) Portuguese musicians were sent to Rome for music education (Fernandes, 2013, pp. 11–12). He was certainly not one of the last scholarship recipients sent to Naples, as previously thought (Alegria, 1944/45, p. 82; Trilha, 2013, pp. 209–210; Trilha, 2020, pp. 22–23). Documentation dated May 12, 1760 shows that other Portuguese musicians obtained passports to travel to Italy for music education. Three of these musicians – Jerónimo [Francisco de] Lima, Brás [Francisco de] Lima, and João [de] Sousa [Carvalho]) – were enrolled in the Conservatory of St. Onofrio a Capuana in the following year, on January 15, 1761 (Fernandes, 2013: 23–24; Giacomo, 1924, pp. 110, 113).

As Fernandes (2010b, v. 2, pp. 292–296) has shown, in January 1808 Cordeiro da Silva was still working as the organist of the Royal Chapel, which means he continued in this role for twenty years after the date of 1788 that Trilha indicated (2020, p. 23). Information about his musical activities in Elvas at the end of 1808, the request for houses in his hometown and his address, as well as the entry of his death in the death register, are new data that confirm Cordeiro da Silva's return to his hometown, as indicated elsewhere (Nejmeddine, 2016, v. 1, p. 357), and excludes the possibility that the composer died in 1808, as suggested by other authors (Trilha, 2020, p. 24).

Through the analysis of musical sources, it was possible to identify Cordeiro da Silva as the composer of an anonymous sonata in a collection of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese sonatas. A sonata by Pedro António Avondano, a Portuguese composer, had already been identified in manuscript BH MUS CS-2-13-1110

from the Biblioteca Histórica de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, though it was incorrectly attributed to David Perez (Nejmeddine, 2024). A comparison with Cordeiro da Silva's composition in manuscript M.M. 951 left no doubt that Cordeiro da Silva was the author of the anonymous sonata.

The musical analysis of the keyboard sonatas presented here shows Cordeiro da Silva's compositional style. The emphasis on melodic intervals of seconds and thirds, and the use of dialogues and echoes, reveals the composer's idiosyncrasies and uncovers a musical pattern used for modulation, which is applied in the transition zone of two sonatas. This pattern is an example of the musical identity of Cordeiro and Portugal as it does not appear in the keyboard music of Portuguese composers of Italian origin, such as Pedro António Avondano. In the first movements of Avondano's sonatas, it is most common to base the transition composition on the *Prinner* schema. This was done using a single *Prinner* (Sonatas III, IV, VI, VII, VIII, IX) or a double Prinner (Sonatas I and V).[14] Sonata II by Avondano is the only one that bears a slight resemblance to the beginning of Cordeiro's pattern. This shows the importance of a combined biographical and musical approach to analysing the identity of 18th-century Portuguese music.

5. Conclusions

This study presented new data on the biography and keyboard sonatas of the composer João Cordeiro da Silva. The biographical data refers to his education, professional activity, retirement, and death. Firstly, Cordeiro da Silva did not study at the Colégio dos Reis in Vila Viçosa, but probably at the Cathedral of Elvas. With regard to his professional activity, it is now confirmed that he served the royal family in the Royal Chapel, the Camera and Theater and accompanied them 'on

14 The *Prinner* is characterized by the simultaneous descent of the melody, from the 6th to the 3rd scale degree, and of the bass, from the 4th to the 1st scale degree. For more on *Prinner* and its variants, see Gjerdingen (2007, pp. 45-60 and 455). The numbering of Avondano's sonatas refers to the critical edition of the nine keyboard sonatas published in two volumes by Nejmeddine (2024, 2025).

all journeys, in which music is present'. This activity took place for around 50 years, from the 1750s to 1807. The proximity to the royal family allowed him to request houses number 26 A and 27 on Rua de Olivença, in Elvas, where he lived from 1808 onwards, after retiring and returning to his hometown. In Elvas, Cordeiro da Silva continued to compose and conduct his music and died on July 6, 1810.

Regarding his keyboard sonatas, this study revealed a new source and identified the Sonata in C minor as the oldest sonata of his authorship. It also identified the idiosyncrasies of Cordeiro da Silva's sonatas, namely the frequent use of melodic intervals of seconds and thirds, dialogues, and echoes, as well as a musical pattern in the transition zone of the exposition. By combining biographical research and musical analysis of the composer João Cordeiro da Silva and his sonatas, this study revealed a musical pattern that may form part of the identity of Portuguese music.

These findings prompt further inquiry into Portuguese repertoire of this period and its relationship to Italian music, seeking possible exchanges and influences, as well as Portuguese musical patterns. Future research exploring Neapolitan influences and the interpretive practices of Cordeiro's music in the Portuguese context may also provide a more comprehensive understanding of the composer's stylistic language.

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