

Henri Collet, *Méthode active de langue espagnole* (1920)

Henri Collet was unfortunately unable live off of his activity as a composer, and to earn his living he maintained a career as a Spanish teacher throughout his life. As he confided in his memoirs, “Free to write in peace, I took advantage of this stable position to compose and to write” (*Mémoires*, vol. 1, autograph manuscript, Paris, Clostre-Collet private archives, pg. 5bis). Collet, who held an *agrégation* in Spanish (1909) and a doctorate carried out at the University of Bordeaux and during numerous visits to the Iberian peninsula (he defended his thesis [*Le mysticisme musical espagnol au xvi^e siècle*](#) on 11 March 1913 at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Paris), at first taught in the upper primary schools of the City of Paris (the *École Lavoisier*) and at the *École alsacienne*, before obtaining a permanent post at the *Lycée Chaptal*, a Parisian *grand établissement* on the Boulevard des Batignolles. In the 1930s, he was also given responsibilities in teaching Spanish language and culture at the *École normale supérieure* in Fontenay-aux-Roses, *École des hautes études commerciales* (HEC), *Institut d'études hispaniques de Paris* (lectures on Spanish music and folklore), etc.

It was in the context of these pedagogical activities that Collet published a *Méthode active de langue espagnole* (Paris: Delagrave, 1920, 268 pp.) which “proposes to teach, in a manner both scientific and practical, one of the languages of which the knowledge appears indispensable today to all those—industrialists, businessmen, men of the leisure, students—who have grasped the lesson of the war and understood the character of the coming economic struggles” (foreword, pg. 3). Written in French, the book nevertheless contains many bilingual passages. It is illustrated with black-and-white engravings that aid the presentation of the vocabulary, and the lessons are organised around various themes: school, the home, the human body, the family, games, but also “basic knowledge of Spain, its constitution, its politics, its place in the world” (foreword, pg. 4). The elementary and gradated exercises intermingle with extracts from modern literary texts (by José María de Pereda, Juan Valera, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Santiago Rusiñol, etc.) and also the exposition of numerous rules of grammar.

After some “Preliminary Basics” (pp. 5-8), the first part of the work (“Morphology”) contains six chapters (1. The Article, pp. 12-19; 2. The Substantive, pp. 22-35; 3. The Adjective, pp. 38-49; 4. The Pronoun, pp. 52-95; 5. The Verb, pp. 98-113; 6. Indeclinables, pp. 146-163). As for the second part (“Syntax”), it consists of three chapters (1. Syntax of the Substantive, pp. 168-78; 2. Syntax of the Adjective, pp. 180-91; 3. Syntax of the Verb, pp. 194-219). At the end of the work appear three appendices: the first provides six complementary extracts from literary texts and newspaper articles (pp. 223-38), the second gives miscellaneous information on

weights and measures, the postal service, Spanish railroads, etc. (pp. 239-48), and the last presents examples of verbal locutions from everyday speech and Spanish proverbs, and a brief sampling of Spanish poetry (pp. 239-61).

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31/03/2017

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Further reading

- Etcharry, Stéphan, « *Cervantes y el Quijote en la obra pedagógica, literaria y musical de Henri Collet* », dans Lolo, Begoña (dir.), *Cervantes y el Quijote en la música. Estudios sobre la recepción de un mito*, Madrid, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 2007, p. 473-489. ISBN 978-84-96408-41-8.
- Etcharry, Stéphan, *Henri Collet (1885-1951), compositeur : un itinéraire singulier dans l'hispanisme musical français* (dir. Louis Jambou), Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2004 (exemplaire microfiché, Atelier National de Reproduction des Thèses, Université de Lille III, code : 1054.42528/04, ISSN : 0294-1767).
- Thomas, Romain, *Bulletin de la Société d'études des professeurs de langues méridionales*, 15^e année, n^o 37, mars-juin 1920, p. 42-43.

To quote this article: Stéphan Etcharry, "Henri Collet, Méthode active de langue espagnole (1920)", Dictionary of Composer's Writings, Dictéco [online], ed. E. Reibel, last edited: 01/02/2024, <https://dicteco.huma-num.fr/book/2371>.