

Editor's Notes for Lamentación Segunda del Miércoles Santo

This is Eslava's setting for the Second Lamentation for Holy Wednesday, which continues a series of nine pieces for Holy Week.

The Book of Lamentations in the Bible forms part of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Holy Week (the week preceding Easter Sunday), signifying the important themes of lament, atonement, and repentance that underlay the Paschal festivities. The Lamentations consist of three sets of three lectures, for Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Over time, the tradition moved from morning matins to the night before, so that in some cases the Lamentations are named for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Such is the case for Eslava's Lamentations.

This second lamentation is based on Lamentations 1:6-9. As used in the Catholic liturgy, the text comes from the Latin Vulgate text. But the translators of the Vulgate decided to keep a trace of the original arrangement of the poetry, and kept the Hebrew letter at the beginning of each verse, which is prominently reflected in Eslava's work. Each lecture is ended with the call: Jerusalem convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum (Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God), which actually comes from Hosea 14:1. This too is reflected in Eslava's pieces.

ORIGINAL TEXT:

VAU. Et egressus est a filia Sion omnis decor eius: facti sunt principes eius velut arietes non inveniētes pascua: et abierunt absque fortitudine ante faciem subsequēntis.

ZAIN. Recordata est Ierusalem dierum afflictionis suæ, et prævaricationis omnium desiderabilium suorum, quæ habuerat a diebus antiquis, cum caderet populus eius in manu hostili, et non esset auxiliator: viderunt eam hostes, et deriserunt Sabbata eius.

HETH. Peccatum peccavit Ierusalem, propterea instabilis facta est: omnes, qui glorificabant eam, spreverunt illam, quia viderunt ignominiam eius: ipsa autem gemens conversa est retrorsum.

TETH. Sordes eius in pedibus eius, nec recordata est finis sui: deposita est vehementer, non habens consolatorem: vide Domine afflictionem meam, quoniam erectus est inimicus.

Jerusalem convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

VAU. And all her elegance has departed, from the daughter of Zion. Her leaders have become like rams that cannot find pasture, and they have gone away without strength before the face of the pursuer.

ZAIN. Jerusalem has remembered the days of her affliction and the betrayal of all her desirable ones, whom she held from the days of antiquity, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and there was no one to be a deliverer. The enemies have looked upon her and mocked her Sabbaths.

HETH. Jerusalem has sinned a grievous sin. Because of this, she has become unstable. All who glorified her have spurned her, because they have looked upon her disgrace. Then she groaned and turned away again.

TETH. Her filth is on her feet, and her end has not been remembered. She has been vehemently put down, having no consolation. O Lord, look upon my affliction, for the adversary has been lifted up.

Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.