

Editor's Notes for "Lamentaciones Breves del Viernes Santo"

This is Eslava's setting for the three lamentations utilized for Holy (Good) Friday by the Roman Catholic church. It concludes a series of nine pieces for Holy Week. Because these lamentations are much shorter in duration and somewhat less elaborate than those for Holy Wednesday and Thursday, Eslava combined them in the single handwritten manuscript that was my source for this transcription.

The source manuscript, which consisted of the various instrumental and vocal parts, was missing the final page of the first violin section (31 measures!). Rather than leave that blank, I chose to channel Eslava and compose my own version. This is reflected by red note heads in the score. If I ever find the missing page(s), I will revise accordingly.

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.

As used in the Catholic liturgy, the text comes from the Latin Vulgate Bible, which retains a trace of the original arrangement of the poetry with a 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.

FIRST LAMENTATION FOR HOLY FRIDAY (LAMENTATIONS 3: 22-23,25-30)

LATIN LYRICS

De Lamentatione Ieremiae Prophetae

22 [Heth.] Misericordiae Domini, quia non sumus consumpti; quia non defecerunt miserationes ejus.

23 [Heth.] Novi diluculo, multa est fides tua.

25 [Teth.] Bonus est Dominus sperantibus in eum, animae quaerenti illum.

26 [Teth.] Bonum est praestolari cum silentio salutare Dei.

27 [Teth.] Bonum est viro cum portaverit jugum ab adolescentia sua.

28 [Jod.] Sedebit solitarius, et tacebit, quia levavit super se.

29 [Jod.] Ponet in pulvere os suum, si forte sit spes.

30 [Jod.] Dabit percipienti se maxillam: saturabitur opprobriis.

Jerusalem convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (New Revised Standard Version)

From the Lamentation of Jeremiah the Prophet

22 (Heth:) The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end.

23 (Heth:) They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

25 (Teth:) The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.

26 (Teth:) It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

27 (Teth:) It is good for one to bear the yoke in youth,

28 (Jod:) to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it,

29 (Jod:) to put one's mouth to the dust (there may yet be hope),

30 (Jod:) to give one's cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults.

Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.

SECOND LAMENTATION FOR HOLY FRIDAY (LAMENTATIONS 4: 1-6)

LATIN LYRICS

1 [Aleph.] Quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus! dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite omnium platearum!

2 [Beth.] Filii Sion inclyti, et amicti auro primo: quomodo reputati sunt in vasa testea, opus manuum figuli!

3 [Ghimel.] Sed et lamiae nudaverunt mammam, lactaverunt catulos suos: filia populi mei crudelis quasi struthio in deserto.

4 [Daleth.] Adhaesit lingua lactentis ad palatum ejus in siti; parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis.

5 [He.] Qui vescebantur voluptuose, interierunt in viis; qui nutriebantur in croceis, amplexati sunt stercora.

6 [Vau.] Et major effecta est iniquitas filiae populi mei peccato Sodomorum, quae subversa est in momento, et non ceperunt in ea manus.

Jerusalem convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (New Revised Standard Version)

1 [Aleph.] How the gold has grown dim, how the pure gold is changed! The sacred stones lie scattered at the head of every street.

2 [Beth.] The precious children of Zion, worth their weight in fine gold—how they are reckoned as earthen pots, the work of a potter's hands!

3 [Ghimel.] Even the jackals offer the breast and nurse their young, but my people has become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.

4 [Daleth.] The tongue of the infant sticks to the roof of its mouth for thirst; the children beg for food, but no one gives them anything.

5 [He.] Those who feasted on delicacies perish in the streets; those who were brought up in purple cling to ash heaps.

6 [Vau.] For the chastisement of my people has been greater than the punishment of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment, though no hand was laid on it.

Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.

THIRD LAMENTATION FOR HOLY FRIDAY (LAMENTATIONS 5:1-11)

LATIN LYRICS

Incipit oratio Jeremiae Prophetae.

1 Recordare, ~~Domine~~, quid acciderit nobis; intuere et respice opprobrium nostrum.

2 Haereditas nostra versa est ad alienos, domus nostrae ad extraneos.

3 Pupilli facti sumus absque patre, matres nostrae quasi viduae.

4 Aquam nostram pecunia bibimus; ligna nostra pretio comparavimus.

5 Cervicibus nostris minabamur, lassis non dabatur requies.

6 AEgypto dedimus manum et Assyriis, ut saturaremur pane.

7 Patres nostri peccaverunt, et non sunt: et nos iniquitates eorum portavimus.

8 Servi dominati sunt nostri: non fuit qui redimeret de manu eorum.

9 In animabus nostris afferebamus panem nobis, a facie gladii in deserto.

10 Pellis nostra quasi clibanus exusta est, a facie tempestatum famis.

11 Mulieres in Sion humiliaverunt, et virgines in civitatibus Juda.

Jerusalem convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (New Revised Standard Version)

Here begins the lamentation of Jeremiah the Prophet

1 Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us; look, and see our disgrace!

2 Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to aliens.

3 We have become orphans, fatherless; our mothers are like widows.

4 We must pay for the water we drink; the wood we get must be bought.

5 With a yoke on our necks we are hard driven; we are weary, we are given no rest.

6 We have made a pact with Egypt and Assyria, to get enough bread.

7 Our ancestors sinned; they are no more, and we bear their iniquities.

8 Slaves rule over us; there is no one to deliver us from their hand.

9 We get our bread at the peril of our lives, because of the sword in the wilderness.

10 Our skin is black as an oven from the scorching heat of famine.

11 Women are raped in Zion, virgins in the towns of Judah.

Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.