

Editor's Notes for "Lamentación Tercera del Jueves Santo"

This is Eslava's setting for the Third Lamentation for Holy (Maundy) Thursday, which continues a series of nine pieces for the Catholic Holy Week. During this time of confinement due to the Covid-19 outbreak, it is great therapy to work on these masterful examples of Eslava's musical repertoire. I was working to finish all of these by Holy Week, and am so happy to finish this, the last one, on Holy Thursday itself (at least if you are in Seattle or west thereof).

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 lamentation is based on Lamentations 3:1-9. If you read the English translation below, you will see this lamentation describes tribulation on a very personal level.

As used in the Catholic liturgy, the text comes from the Latin Vulgate. 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.

Regarding the transcription, I found many errors and inconsistencies within the source material. Measure 125 in the bass line was empty, missing the beginning syllable of the word "Ghimel". I added a suggested note at this point to fill in the gap – it is in red font with an explanatory note. Especially frustrating was the inconsistent usage of staccatos and other articulations. Sometimes I added or removed articulations to achieve suitable consistency with the remainder of the parts. If in doubt, you may want to obtain and consult the original source material.

ORIGINAL TEXT:

3 [Aleph.] Ego vir videns paupertatem meam in virga indignationis ejus.

2 [Aleph.] Me minavit, et adduxit in tenebras, et non in lucem.

3 [Aleph.] Tantum in me vertit et convertit manum suam tota die.

4 [Beth.] Vetustam fecit pellem meam et carnem meam; contrivit ossa mea.

5 [Beth.] AEdificavit in gyro meo, et circumdedit me felle et labore.

6 [Beth.] In tenebrosis collocavit me, quasi mortuos sempiternos.

7 [Ghime].] Circumaedificavit adversum me, ut non egrediar; aggravavit compedem meum.

8 [Ghime].] Sed et cum clamavero, et rogavero, exclusit orationem meam.

9 [Ghime].] Conclusit vias meas lapidibus quadris; semitas meas subvertit.

Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1 [Aleph.] I am one who has seen affliction under the rod of God's wrath;

2 [Aleph.] he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light;

3 [Aleph.] against me alone he turns his hand, again and again, all day long.

4 [Beth.] He has made my flesh and my skin waste away, and broken my bones;

5 [Beth.] he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation;

6 [Beth.] he has made me sit in darkness like the dead of long ago.

7 [Ghime].] He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has put heavy chains on me;

8 [Ghime].] though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer;

9 [Ghime].] he has blocked my ways with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked.

Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.