

Editor's Notes on "Del uno al otro polo"

This *a cappella* SSTB choral work in the form of a fugue can be found in Hilarión Eslava's widely popular *Método Completo de Solfeo*, first published in 1845 in Madrid¹, in a section at the end of the book titled "Canto con palabras" ("Singing with words"). Preceding this short piece are Eslava's indications on how to approach singing with words, beginning with solfège and on the use of this example for that purpose, including the suggestion for students to practice by singing in turn each of the individual parts comprising the piece.



The lyrics are erroneously attributed in the *Método Completo de Solfeo* to a "translation in verse of Psalm 16 of David by Mr. Carvajal." They are actually from Psalm 116 in the Vulgate or Greek numbering (Psalm 117 in the Hebrew or Masoretic system used today in the Western churches). The poetic rendition of the Psalm is from a comprehensive, annotated translation of the Psalms in five volumes by Tomás José González Carvajal (1753-1834). González Carvajal, born in Sevilla, was considered a man of letters, a patriot, and a respected religious writer. Trained as a lawyer, he served in the military in Spain's War of Independence against Napoleon, participated in the liberal Cortes de Cádiz (an action for which he was persecuted after the restoration of the absolutist monarchy after the war), taught at the University of Sevilla, and at the end of his life, with one of the many changes in the political winds happening at the time in Spain, was invited to serve briefly in the nation's government.

González Carvajal's *magnum opus* on the subject of The Psalms, "Los Salmos/traducidos nuevamente al castellano en verso y prosa/conforme al sentido literal y a la doctrina de los Santos Padres/con notas sacadas de los mejores intérpretes, y algunas disertaciones" (1819) would have been widely circulated in Eslava's Sevilla and further afield. Psalm 116 (reproduced here) can be found in Volume V of this work².

(Right) *The original Psalm 116 in González Carvajal's "The Psalms" (1819)*

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SALMO CXVI.

Alleluia. † 1

Del uno al otro polo 2
Ó gentes y naciones,
Ó pueblos y regiones,
Al Señor alabad.
Pues su misericordia 3
Con nosotros hoy sella,
Ostentando con ella
Eterna su verdad.

1 Alleluia.
2 Alabad al Señor, naciones todas; alabadlo, pueblos todos.
3 Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia eius: et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.

1 Alleluia.
2 Alabad al Señor, naciones todas; alabadlo, pueblos todos.
3 Porque sobre nosotros se ha confirmado su misericordia, y la verdad del Señor permanece eternamente.

¹ For an in-depth background on Eslava as a pedagogue and this work in particular, see Preciado, D., "Don Hilarión Eslava y su "Método Completo de Solfeo"", in *Monografía de Hilarión Eslava – Primer centenario*, Musikaste-Eresbil, Pamplona (1978), pp. 217-263. (In Spanish)

² Available online at <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=-01A7tgDBH4C&rdid=book--01A7tgDBH4C&rdot=1>. In Spanish. Public domain.

Psalm 116 (Vulgate) Translation

| <i>ORIGINAL SPANISH</i> | <i>ENGLISH TRANSLATION</i> | <i>ENGLISH TEXT (NIV)</i> |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Del uno al otro polo o gentes y naciones, o pueblos y regiones, al Señor alabad. Pues su misericordia con nosotros hoy sella, ostentando con ella eterna su verdad.</p> | <p>From Pole to Pole, oh peoples and nations, oh towns and regions, raise your praises to the Lord. For his mercy with us today he seals, holding with it eternally his truth.</p> | <p>Praise the Lord, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.</p> |