

Editor's Notes for *A Elvira*

This unusual *salon* piece by Hilarión Eslava, labeled “*A Elvira. Melodía*”, came to us courtesy of the Biblioteca Provincial Deputación de A Coruña (the library of the provincial government of A Coruña/La Coruña in Galicia, northwest Spain), and specifically, from the Canuto Berea collection. We are indebted to the Deputación de A Coruña for granting us access to this music and to Adela Sanz and Pedro Gómez for obtaining the digital images that are the basis for this transcription.

The original is a score printed by Eslava's nephew, Bonifacio Eslava, one of the biggest music editors in Madrid during the second half of the 19th century. Although there is no date on the score, it would have been printed between 1860 and 1870, before Bonifacio Eslava's print shop moved to Madrid's calle del Arenal (the site today of the Teatro Eslava). Setting and style-wise this is definitely a late work by Hilarión from his Madrid years, when he was working as Master of the Royal Chapel and as professor of composition at the Madrid Conservatory. The poem upon which the lyrics are based is not mentioned on the score and has not been found (Eslava, perhaps?). It is very much typical of Romantic-era poetry, reminiscent of Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (1836-1870) or José de Espronceda (1808-1842).



Canuto Berea (1836-1891) was a musician, conductor, impresario, and music editor from La Coruña, and one of the city's most respected citizens of his time. His large music collection, donated to the local provincial government by his descendants, contains several previously unknown works of Hilarión Eslava, such as this piece, all of which I hope to transcribe in the near future. Canuto Berea was Galicia's biggest distributor of Bonifacio Eslava's music, so it is possible they might have been friends, and if so, it is likely that he and Hilarión would have met. The name *Elvira*, which is not used in the lyrics, is probably just a dedication, but its intended recipient remains a mystery. For what it is worth, Berea did have a sister by that name, *Elvira Berea Rodríguez* (1849-?), who was a pianist and piano teacher in La Coruña.

Spanish Lyrics	Approximate English Translation
<p>Gira, oh, Luna! en el cielo esplendente, derramando tu luz plateada. Gira, oh, Luna! de estrellas cercada que también envidiaron mi amor. Como tú iluminaban mi frente cuando gloria y placer la ceñía. Las que vieron mi amor y alegría, sepan ora mi acerbo dolor.</p>	<p>Turn, O Moon! in the resplendent sky, Pouring out your silvery light. Turn, O Moon! of stars surrounded, which also envied my love. Like you, they illumined my forehead when glory and pleasure girded it. Let those who witnessed my love and joy now know my bitter pain.</p>