

Editor's Notes for *Panis Angelicus*

This carefully orchestrated motet is a breathtakingly beautiful setting of "*Panis Angelicus*", which is a verse from the hymn "*Sacris solemniis*", attributed to Saint Thomas Aquinas for the Feast of Corpus Christi, written in the 13th century. The verse later became famous in its own right, and has been set to music separately from the rest of the hymn by many composers, Hilarión Eslava included.

The popularity of this Eucharistic prayer probably led Eslava to write several settings or variants for it. Here's a list of all of the versions we are aware of and their location or origin (in brackets), if known:

1. *Panis angelicus*, alto and tenor voices with instrumental accompaniment (Burgo de Osma), CPE-65
2. *Panis angelicus*, soprano duet with instrumental accompaniment (Pamplona), CPE-27
3. *Panis angelicus*, SATB with instrumental accompaniment (Pamplona), CPE-605
4. *Panis angelicus*, TTB or SAB voices with small orchestra accompaniment (Sevilla), CPE-604
5. *Panis angelicus*, TSB or SAB voices with optional organ or piano accompaniment (Salamanca and Eresbil, the latter in two different variants), CPE-601
6. *Panis angelicus*, a cappella SATB (one of a collection of six Eucharistic motets printed by B. Eslava ca. 1864, Biblioteca Nacional de España), CPE-367/5
7. *Panis angelicus*, SATB and two choirs with orchestra (mentioned by Eslava biographer Leocadio Hernández Asuncce), CPE-600

Of these, I have previously transcribed 5 and 6; 4 is the subject of these notes; 1-3 are safely locked up from prying eyes at the Cathedrals of El Burgo de Osma and Pamplona (though we have incipits); and 7 has not yet been found. We know, however, that 3-5 share the same melody, and that 3 and 4 are probably the same. Version 6 is perhaps the best known, as it was often performed in public concerts in Madrid in the 1860's and its score was printed and sold by Hilarión's nephew Bonifacio Eslava. That particular score, along with the rest of the series, can be found in many libraries around Spain and has been commercially recorded.

Transcriptions of versions 5 and 6 can be found on the [hilarioneslava.org](https://hilarioneslava.org/music/) music page, at <https://hilarioneslava.org/music/>,

or on my MuseScore pages, at <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/7383299> and <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/6738327>, respectively.

The source for the present transcription (again, of #4 above) is a digital copy of a manuscript preserved at the archives of the Cathedral of Sevilla, obtained via the Institución Colombina. None of the sources cited under #5 above appear to have come directly from Hilarión Eslava or from the print shop of Bonifacio Eslava, and the organ part is in all cases very nearly a close-score version of the choral parts, leading me initially to wonder if Eslava had originally intended the piece to be performed a cappella. This orchestrated version (and the possibility that a similar or the same version may be extant at the Cathedral of Pamplona) makes me believe otherwise. What we don't yet know is *when* this orchestrated version was written or arranged, and *by whom*.

Although the Institución Colombina possesses many dated works by Eslava written during his tenure as master of the Chapel at the Cathedral (1832-1844), this particular manuscript is undated and in a different handwriting. The choral parts and organ reduction included in the manuscript are identical to those found in the non-orchestrated versions I found earlier. Furthermore, it uses the modern G-clef for the two higher voices (which could be sung TT, SS, TS, ST, or SA), whereas Eslava typically utilized C-Clefs for soprano, alto and tenor voices (a common practice at the time), and the score includes ample, detailed, consistent dynamic notations that are somewhat rare to find in Eslava's manuscripts. This may all be evidence that the manuscript was written well after Eslava's stay in Sevilla, perhaps even posthumously. As no other credit is given on the manuscript, I cannot be certain that the orchestration is Eslava's, but in my opinion, it is nonetheless expertly done. The Cathedral of Sevilla was blessed with several very talented successors to Eslava, and this could have been the work of any one of them as well.

Latin Text	English Translation
Panis angelicus fit panis hominum; Dat panis caelicus figuris terminum: O res mirabilis! Manducat Dominum pauper, servus et humilis.	May the Bread of angels become bread for humankind; the Bread of Heaven puts all foreshadowing to an end; Oh, thing miraculous! The body of the Lord will nourish the poor, the servile, and the humble.