

Editor's Notes for *Oficio de Difuntos*

The *Oficio de Difuntos*, *Officium defunctorum*, or “Office for the Dead” is a prayer cycle of the Canonical Hours in the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church and Lutheran Church, said for the repose of the soul of a decedent. It is the traditional reading for All Souls' Day (normally November 2) and can be used at other times when said for a particular decedent. The liturgy comprises various prescribed psalms, scripture readings, prayers and other elements. In its abbreviated musical rendition, it is traditionally performed in its entirety for Matins (night services).

Hilarión Eslava's *Oficio de Difuntos* was composed ca. 1847 for Spain's Royal Chapel of Music, three years after Eslava joined that institution and very soon after his appointment as its titular Master following the retirement of his predecessor, Mariano Rodríguez de Ledesma. Later published in 1855 as issue number 12 (part of Volume 9 / 19th Century Music) of Eslava's sacred music compendium, *La Lira Sacro-Hispana*, his *Oficio de Difuntos* became one of his best-known and most enduring compositions, being often performed in exequial ceremonies at the Spanish Court and for important figures of Spanish society, including Eslava himself, for many decades after the Maestro's death. The work is scored for two SATB choirs and a small symphonic orchestra.

I have divided this work into two parts to allow for more convenient handling and digital storage purposes. Part 1 features Lesson 1 of the Office, based on Psalm 94. Part 2 includes Lesson 2, which consists of two readings/lessons from the Book of Job, and the final responsory *Libera me Domine*.

This composition, in its 1855 published version, was performed and recorded in 2018 in Pamplona/Iruña by the Coro Sinfónico de la Federación de Coros de Navarra and the Orquesta Sinfónica Ciudad de Zaragoza under directors Jose Antonio Huarte (choir) and Juan Luis Martinez (orchestra). The recording is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMn4K5onLWY> (Lesson 1 begins 17.5 minutes into the recording, and Lesson 2 at 43:20).

Part 1 (Psalm 94)

Part 1 is divided into seven sections, which I have identified with their incipit text in my transcription. Each section is concluded with one of two plainchant responses. Part 1 concludes with a repetition of its first section, as indicated in my transcription.

The original score did not indicate any solo parts. However, based on other works of similar nature by Eslava, I conclude this was likely an omission by the original publisher, and have clearly marked the passages where Eslava probably intended to use solo voices. The conductor and/or choral director should exercise discretion with regard to these passages and may even wish to assign additional solos that I did not indicate as such.

The source material, from Eslava's *Lira Sacro-Hispana* published in the 1850's, utilized 5-line staves for the plainchant responses. Since traditional Gregorian notation typically uses 4-line

staves, I have provided these passages in more standard 4-line staves in my transcription. In the event I erred in so doing, actual images of the responses are provided below for reference purposes.

Regem, cui omnia vivunt,
Venite adoremus.

Regem, cui omnia vivunt,
Venite adoremus.

Venite exultemus Domino,
jubilemus Deo salutari nostro:
praeoccupemus faciem ejus in confessione:
et in psalmis jubilemus ei.
Regem, cui omnia vivunt,
Venite adoremus.

Quoniam Deus magnus Dominus,
et rex magnus super omnes deos:
quoniam non repellet Dominus plebem suam:
quia in manu ejus sunt omnes fines terrae:
et altitudines montium ipse conspicit.
Venite adoremus.

Quoniam ipsius est mare, et ipse fecit illud:
et aridam fundaverunt manus ejus:
venite adoremus, et procidamus ante Deum:
ploremus coram Domino, qui fecit nos:
quia ipse est Dominus Deus
noster: nos autem populus ejus, et oves pascuae ejus.
Regem, cui omnia vivunt,
Venite adoremus.

Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis,
nolite obdurare corda vestra,
sicut in exacerbatione secundum diem tentationis in
deserto:
ubi tentaverunt me patres vestri:
probaverunt, et viderunt opera mea.
Venite adoremus.

Quadraginta annis proximus fui generationi huic:

The King, unto whom all things do live,
come let us adore.
The King, unto whom all things do live,
come let us adore.

Come let us rejoice unto our Lord,
let us make joy to God our saviour:
let us approach to his presence in confession, and
in Psalms let us make joy unto him.
The king, unto whom all things do live,
come let us adore.

For God is a great Lord,
and a great King above all Gods:
because our Lord repelleth not his people:
for that in his hand are all the bounds of the earth,
and he beholdeth the heights of the mountains.
Come let us adore.

For the sea is his, and he made it:
and his hands founded the dry land:
come let us adore, and fall down before God:
let us weep before our Lord, that made us:
because he is the Lord our God:
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
The King, unto whom all things do live,
come let us adore.

Today if ye shall hear his voice,
harden not your hearts,
as in the provocation according to the day of
temptation in the wilderness:
where your fathers tempted me:
proved, and saw my works.
Come let us adore.

Forty years was I nigh unto this generation:

et dixi, semper hi errant corde:
ipsi vero non cognoverunt vias meas:
quibus juravi in ira mea,
si introibunt in requiem meam.

*Regem, cui omnia vivunt,
Venite adoremus.*

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Venite adoremus.

and said, they always err in heart:
and they have not known my ways,
to whom I swear in my wrath,
if they shall enter into my rest.

*The King, unto whom all things do live,
come let us adore.*

Eternal rest give unto them O Lord:
and let perpetual light shine unto them.
Come let us adore.

Part 2

Part 2 includes three movements as follows:

- *Parce Mihi, Domine* (Spare me, Lord), based on Job 7:16-21;
- *Tædet Animam Meam* (My soul is weary of my life), based on Job 10:1-7; and
- *Libera me, Domine* (Deliver me, O Lord)

The first two Part 2 movements (Lesson 2 of the traditional Office) share the same source as all of Part 1, namely Volume 9 of Eslava's *La Lira Sacro-Hispana*, originally provided to us by Eresbil (Basque Music Archives) –also available at the Biblioteca Nacional de España. In this source, while all the other movements are lavishly orchestrated, the *Libera me, Domine* final response is scored basically a cappella (with a bit of support from the bass strings). We have recently found another, fully-orchestrated version of this section at the archives of the Catedral Metropolitana in Santiago, Chile. This was in the form of a manuscript that could have been penned no later than 1851 consisting only of the *Libera me, Domine* movement, and entitled *Responso a 8 con acompañamiento y orquesta (o sin ella)*. In English, this translates as *Response for 8 [voices] with orchestra accompaniment (or without)*. We believe that this was probably the original form of the composition which, for reasons unknown, had its orchestration stripped down when it was published in the *Lira* a few years later.

Besides the orchestration, there are only a few minor differences between the two versions (most noticeable in the soprano and tenor parts of Measures 24, 55, and 147). We can only speculate as to why the fuller orchestration was missing in the *Lira Sacro-Hispana*, which was published only a few years later. Perhaps Eslava felt the orchestration was not strictly necessary (which is certainly implied by the full *Responso* title). After all, with the sparse bass accompaniment delivered by violoncello and contrabass, it showcases an exceptionally beautiful double choir arrangement of this ancient prayer. At any rate, I have decided to make the richer orchestrated version available in this transcription.

Interestingly, the "*Libera me, Domine*" score is nearly identical to "*Ne recorderis*", a separate work obtained in the form of a manuscript we have procured from the archives of the Real Colegio Seminario de Corpus Christi in Valencia, Spain (see <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/7023616> or <https://hilarioneslava.org/wp->

content/uploads/2021/12/Ne_recorderis.pdf). The lyrics are different (most of the time), but otherwise there is little discernible difference.

The original Part 2 score did not indicate any solo parts. However, as in Part 1, there may be passages herein where Eslava intended to use solo voices. The conductor and/or choral director may wish to assign solo parts that I did not indicate.

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| <p>Job 7:</p> <p>16 Parce mihi, nihil enim sunt dies mei.</p> <p>17 Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum? aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum?</p> <p>18 Visitas eum diluculo, et subito probas illum:</p> <p>19 Usquequo non parcis mihi, nec dimittis me ut glutiam salivam meam?</p> <p>20 Peccavi, quid faciam tibi o custos hominum? quare posuisti me contrarium tibi, et factus sum mihimetipsi gravis?</p> <p>21 Cur non tollis peccatum meum, et quare non auferis iniquitatem meam? ecce, nunc in pulvere dormiam: et si mane me quæsieris, non subsistam.</p> | <p>Job 7:</p> <p>16 Spare me, Lord, for my days are as nothing.</p> <p>17 What is man that you should esteem him, or that you should set your heart toward him?</p> <p>18 You visit him at daybreak, and at once you test him.</p> <p>19 How long will you not spare me, nor give me leave to swallow my own spittle?</p> <p>20 I have sinned. What shall I do for you, O protector of mankind? Why have you set me against you, and why have I become so heavy within myself?</p> <p>21 Why do you not remove my sin and take away my iniquity? Behold, now shall I sleep in the dust, and if tomorrow you should seek me, I would not stand.</p> |
| <p>Job 10:</p> <p>1 Tædet animam meam vitæ meæ, dimittam adversum me eloquium meum, loquar in amaritudine animæ meæ.</p> <p>2 Dicam Deo: Noli me condemnare: indica mihi cur me ita judices.</p> <p>3 Numquid bonum tibi videtur, si calumniaris me, et opprimas me opus manuum tuarum, et consilium impiorum adjuves?</p> <p>4 Numquid oculi carnei tibi sunt: aut sicut videt homo, et tu videbis?</p> <p>5 Numquid sicut dies hominis dies tui, et anni tui sicut humana sunt tempora,</p> <p>6 Ut quæras iniquitatem meam, et peccatum meum scruteris?</p> <p>7 Et scias quia nihil impium fecerim, cum sit nemo qui de manu tua possit eruere.</p> | <p>Job 10:</p> <p>1 My soul is weary of my life, I will let go my speech against myself, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.</p> <p>2 I will say to God: Do not condemn me: tell me why thou judgest me so?</p> <p>3 Doth it seem good to thee that thou shouldst calumniate me, and oppress me, the work of thy own hands, and help the counsel of the wicked?</p> <p>4 Hast thou eyes of flesh: or, shalt thou see as man seeth?</p> <p>5 Are thy days as the days of man, and are thy years as the times of men:</p> <p>6 That thou shouldst inquire after my iniquity, and search after my sin?</p> |

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| | <p>7 And shouldst know that I have done no wicked thing, whereas there is no man that can deliver out of thy hand?</p> |
| <p>Libera me, Domine, de morte æterna, in die illa tremenda, Quando cæli movendi sunt et terra Dum veneris judicare sæculum per ignem.</p> <p>Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo, dum discussio venerit, atque ventura ira Quando cæli movendi sunt et terra.</p> <p>Dies illa, dies iræ, calamitatis et miseræ, dies magna et amara valde Dum veneris judicare sæculum per ignem.</p> <p>Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis.[</p> | <p>Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal on that fearful day, When the heavens and the earth shall be moved, When thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.</p> <p>I am made to tremble, and I fear, till the judgment be upon us, and the coming wrath, When the heavens and the earth shall be moved.</p> <p>That day, day of wrath, calamity and misery, day of great and exceeding bitterness, When thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.</p> <p>Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord: and let light perpetual shine upon them.</p> |