

Editor's Notes for *Tantum ergo sobre la Marcha Real*

The text of the "*Tantum ergo*" invocation consists of the last two stanzas of the sacred hymn "*Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium*", written by Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) and used by the Roman Catholic and a few other Christian denominations in honor and praise of the Blessed Sacrament. In the sacred liturgy, the "*Tantum Ergo*" is usually sung before the Benediction, when the priest blesses the congregation with the consecrated Host. It is also often sung as part of the "*Pange lingua*" during special festivities honoring the Sacrament of the Eucharist, particularly during the Feast of Corpus Christi. The "*Tantum ergo*" has been set to music many times, by composers as diverse as Palestrina, Mozart, Bruckner and Fauré.

Hilarión Eslava wrote a number of different musical settings for the "*Tantum Ergo*", including at least one version with its melody based on the "*Marcha Real*". The "*Marcha Real*" or "*Marcha Granadera*" ("Grenadiers' March") was used since the time of Spanish king Charles III (1716-1788) in both religious ceremonies and to honor the monarchs. Today, the tune is easily recognizable as the basis for Spain's national anthem. Eslava's sacred rendition was apparently very popular in its time, as we have encountered many different variations of this piece, with different voicings and instrumentations, adapted by different people (perhaps to suit the musical resources they had available). Unfortunately, we have yet to encounter an "official" version definitively originating from the hand of Eslava himself.

This particular arrangement draws on three different incomplete versions we have found, each with its own merits I thought worthy of inclusion in this transcription. We know of yet other arrangements, but have so far not been able to obtain them. The settings I used are as follows:

- **Sbarbi Arrangement:** We received this manuscript from the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid (sig. 687-6). It was penned in 1892 by José María Sbarbi Osuna (1834-1910), a contemporary (and likely acquaintance) of Eslava's, who would have been very familiar with the Maestro's music. Sbarbi was a priest, musicologist, and essayist, and from 1871 until his death, he served as Master of the Chapel at Madrid's Monasterio de la Encarnación. This rendition was set for STBB voicing with accompaniment by flute, clarinet, two violins, and contrabass, probably reflecting the resources Sbarbi had available at his temple. It also included an organ reduction that was essentially identical to that included in the other two sources below. The second bass part was identical to the forte sections of the first bass part, therefore I omitted the second bass in my transcription. The instrumental parts were considerably more elaborate than those included in the BNE version below.
- **BNE Arrangement:** We received this manuscript from the Biblioteca Nacional de España (File MP/4033-8, although I can no longer find it on their online archives). Of unknown provenance (likely copied after Eslava's death), it was a handwritten set of *particellas*, consisting of STB voicing with accompaniment by flute, two clarinets, two horns, ophicleide, two violins, and contrabass (also an organ reduction). While more fully instrumented than the Sbarbi arrangement, the instrument parts were simpler.

- **Casa Dotesio Arrangement:** We received this undated printed score from Eresbil (Basque Music Archive, sig. E-ESL02-R23-01). Casa Dotesio was a successful publishing house founded in 1882 in Bilbao by Louis Ernest Dotesio (1855-1915). In 1898, it acquired the musical holdings of the publishing company run by Bonifacio Eslava (Hilarión’s nephew). A note on this score reads “Depósito y almacén de música y pianos de B ESLAVA” (“Warehouse and sales of music and pianos of B ESLAVA”). One can postulate that the new owners found this piece stored somewhere amid the records and/or premises they had acquired, and decided to publish it. It would therefore have been issued posthumously to Eslava (who had died in 1878), and with little or no guidance from his nephew Bonifacio. It consists of SATB voicing with organ accompaniment basically identical to the reductions found in the Sbarbi and BNE arrangements. I incorporated the alto part from this score into my transcription.

One peculiarity of the Casa Dotesio (SATB voices) and BNE (SB voices, but not tenor) arrangements was that the vocal parts for the second verse omitted the final words “*compar sit laudatio*” beginning at the second beat of Measure 42, and instead utilized a series of three “*Amens*”. I concluded it is highly unlikely that Eslava, a priest and Master of the Royal Chapel, would have omitted the well-known final text and replaced it in this rather simplistic manner, so I chose to use the lyrics as provided in the Sbarbi version, which retained all lyrics and had only a single “*Amen*” for the final two notes, more in line with Eslava’s own style.

In my transcription, I have identified the source for each of the instrumental parts. Although all the parts sound well together played in their entirety from these disparate sources, the conductor can and should use discretion on which parts to actually include in performance based on the musical resources that are available.

LATIN LYRICS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Tantum ergo Sacramentum Veneremur cernui: Et antiquum documentum Novo cedat ritui: Præstet fides supplementum Sensuum defectui.	Hence so great a Sacrament Let us venerate with heads bowed And let the old practice Give way to the new rite; Let faith provide a supplement For the failure of the senses.
Genitori, Genitoque Laus et Jubilatio, Salus, honor, virtus quoque Sit et benedictio: Procedenti ab utroque Compar sit laudatio. Amen.	To the Begetter and the Begotten, Be praise and jubilation, Hail, honor, virtue also, And blessing too: To the One proceeding from Both Let there be equal praise. Amen.