

Editor's Notes for *Coplas al Cristo de la Quinta Angustia* (Cádiz version)

In Spain, *cofradías* or *hermandades* are fraternal religious organizations established in the Roman Catholic tradition under the auspices of Catholic Canon Law, with worship, penitence, and charity as their foundational pillars. They are usually centered around the name and veneration of Christ, the Holy Virgin Mother of God, Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, the Blessed Sacrament, or a particular saint. This tradition is especially strong in Andalucía (southern Spain) and in its largest city, Sevilla.

Worship in the *hermandades* during the year takes many forms, including Masses and special religious services on certain holidays. On a few occasions during the year, the *hermandades* lead processions –solemn parades of a holy image or *paso* (often elaborate, richly decorated life-size representations of Christ or Mary, or a scene from the Gospels associated with the special devotion of the *hermandad*) through the streets of their home town. Throughout Andalucía, Holy Week processions are the year's religious highlight for many of the local *hermandades*, as this time recalls the most important events in the church calendar –Christ's death and resurrection.

Many of these groups date back hundreds of years. Sevilla's *Hermandad de la Quinta Angustia de María Santísima Nuestra Señora* (Fifth Sorrow of the Most Blessed Mary Our Lady) was established in 1541. *Quinta Angustia* ("Fifth Sorrow") refers to the fifth of the seven *dolores* or sorrows endured by the Virgin, namely witnessing the suffering of her Son on the Cross.

Some of Sevilla's oldest *hermandades* have a rich musical patrimony that includes works commissioned for or donated by notable Spanish composers. During Hilarión Eslava's tenure as Master of the Chapel at the Cathedral of Sevilla (1832-1844) and later in life, he came into contact with many of these groups and composed music for them. In 1871, on what was to be his final visit to Sevilla, don Hilarión was in fact admitted as a brother in the *Hermandad de la Quinta Angustia*, for whom he had written a set of *coplas* (a simple musical poem form) years earlier, in 1852. These are the *Coplas* that are transcribed here. These *Coplas* are referred to also as *Coplas para el Quinario*, meaning (presumably) that they were intended to be sung during the five-day worship cycle (five = *quinque* in Latin) of meditation, prayer, and fasting that precede the celebration of the most significant event of the *hermandad*. At the *Hermandad de la Quinta Angustia*, this takes place in early February.

The source material, which the music archive of the Catedral de Cádiz kindly shared with us in 2021, consisted of several manuscript pages of *particellas* for various instruments and voices, in two different keys (Eb and D). At the time I chose to transcribe the Eb version, as it was more complete. This choice was proven to be fortuitous, when in 2025, we stumbled across what was likely the original version of this piece, penned by Eslava himself in 1852. This original version was indeed in the key of Eb. Additionally, it was much more richly orchestrated, incorporated upper voices, and included five complete verses (the Cádiz version only included three verses, and each of those verses only included half of the full lyrics).

Although the Cádiz version was clearly incomplete, and may have been adapted by someone other than Eslava, I decided it was still worth keeping in the catalog for the following reasons:

1. It is adapted for a male chorus, which might be preferred in some cases.
2. With the sparse instrumentation, the accompaniment can be performed by a small group of musicians, which makes it more accessible for performance in modern times.

The 1852 version may be found on the hilarioneslava.org music page under CPE-457, or at <https://musescore.com/user/29381772/scores/26114929>

Other things to bear in mind with this transcription:

1. The Cádiz manuscript was unclear as to whether the organ part (which also sounds great on the piano, with its percussive timbre) is *obbligato* or a simple reduction. If just a reduction, it lacks much of the detail present in the other instruments. In my opinion, the accompaniment sounds incomplete without the keyboard part, so I believe it was probably intended to be *obbligato*.
2. Although there appeared to be three male voicings, it soon became apparent that the Bass and Baritone parts were identical, so I chose to omit one of the voices in this transcription.
3. Regarding tempo and dynamics, except for a couple of fermatas and vague initial tempo indications, there were no dynamics provided in this Cádiz version. I have therefore updated this transcription to reflect such notations as were provided in Eslava's 1852 manuscript.

SPANISH TEXT	APPROXIMATE TRANSLATION
El tesoro de la sangre, que vertiste en tu pasión, ábranos, Señor, las puertas de la celestial Sión.	May the treasure of the blood, that you poured out in your passion, open to us, Lord, the gates of heavenly Zion.
1. Duros golpes, crueles hierros que clavó rencor impío, sin piedad rasgan, Dios mío, tu cuerpo, afrenta del sol.	1. Hard blows, cruel nails that sinful rancor pounded in, mercilessly tear, my God, your body, facing the sun.
2. Por la herida preciosísima de tu divino costado, tú nos libras del pecado que cual hostia se inmoló.	2. Through the most precious wound to your divine side, you deliver us from sin like a host immolated.
3. Muerta la luz de tus ojos que la lumbre dan al día, toda ansiosa ve María y en sollozos prorrumpió.	3. Gone is the light of your eyes that illuminate the day, a distressed Mary contemplates and bursts into weeping.