

Editor's Notes for Lamentaciones ad libitum de Semana Santa (Miércoles, Jueves y Viernes Santo)

The Book of Lamentations in the Bible forms part of the Roman Catholic liturgy of the Holy Week (the week preceding Easter Sunday), signifying the important themes of lament, atonement, and repentance that underlay the final week of Lent. The Lamentations consist of three sets of three lectures intended for Thursday, Friday and Saturday preceding Easter Sunday. Over time, however, the tradition moved from morning matins to the prior evenings, which is why the Lamentations are often named for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Such is the case for Hilarión Eslava's *Lamentaciones*.

Transcribed here are the composer's settings for the nine lamentations sung on Holy Wednesday, Holy (Maundy) Thursday, and Holy (Good) Friday, each based on a passage from the Old Testament's Book of Jeremiah. Set for a solo voice (soprano or tenor), these pieces are in vivid contrast to other settings by Eslava I have previously transcribed, all voiced for double choirs and richly orchestrated. Since all that is required here instead are a strong voice and an organ, these Lamentations offer a viable, yet beautiful and more intimate alternative for smaller churches to use in lieu of Eslava's more elaborate settings.

As used in the Catholic liturgy, the text comes from the Latin Vulgate Bible, retaining a trace of the original arrangement of the poetry with a Hebrew letter at the beginning of each verse, which is prominently reflected in Eslava's work. Each lamentation is ended with the call: "*Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum*" ("Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God"), which actually comes from Hosea 14:1. This too is reflected in Eslava's Lamentations.

Originally published as three sets of three Lamentations for each day of use, copies of the scores were provided by Eresbil, the Basque Music Archive. I have combined my transcriptions into a single collection, simply because these works are stylistically very similar and I felt it might be more convenient for future users to have these pieces gathered as a set.

The Eresbil scores were in printed form, date and publisher uncertain, but judging by the use of modern clefs and score print quality, they would have been published no earlier than the mid-1860's. However, the incipits to these Lamentations match those of the *Lamentaciones para tiple ad libitum* kept at the Catedral de Sevilla (sig. 38-1-4, 39-1-1, and 39-1-2), some of which date to 1838, during the composer's time there as Master of the Chapel¹. As I have not had the opportunity to review the Sevilla scores, further similarities among the complete scores can only be an educated hypothesis. Nevertheless, the *Catalogación Provisional de Eslava* (CPE) preliminary numbering assigned to the *Lamentaciones*, which appears on the Table of Contents

¹ See *Catálogo de Libros de Polifonía de la Catedral de Sevilla*, H. González Barrionuevo, et al., eds., published by the Consejería de Cultura, Junta de Andalucía, Centro de Documentación Musical de Andalucía, Granada (1994), pp. 359-363.

of my transcriptions roughly follows the non-sequential way these works have been itemized in Sevilla.

Also, I found a handwritten version of the second and third Lamentations for Good Friday (transposed for bass solo voice) erroneously included with another manuscript, Eresbil #E-ESL02-R60, titled *Lamentaciones Breves del Viernes Santo*. I did not use this latter source except to confirm that it was essentially identical except for the key.

As implied by the title, each of these Lamentations is to be performed “*ad libitum*”. Everything – including tempo, dynamics, and ornamentation -- is to be performed at the musical discretion of the soloist, with the organist following along with basic chords. I have scrupulously followed the note durations and measure structures provided in the source for the solo voice. However, the accompanying chord durations provided in the source did not always match the solo voice, so I have often extended (and sometimes shortened) the chords as needed to match the vertical alignment shown in the source. I could have “faked” the original appearance in the resulting transcription by hiding additional tied chords, etc., as needed, but I felt leaving these visible might actually be an aid to the soloist.