

Editor’s Notes for “*Lamentación Primera del Jueves Santo*”

This is Eslava’s setting for the First Lamentation for Holy (Maundy) Thursday, which continues a series of nine pieces for the Catholic Holy Week. I had originally transcribed this work in 2020 but having learned much about MuseScore and transcriptions during the past two years, I have re-edited it accordingly.

The Book of Lamentations in the Bible forms part of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Holy Week (the week preceding Easter Sunday), signifying the important themes of lament, atonement, and repentance that underlay the Paschal festivities. The Lamentations consist of three sets of three lectures, for Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Over time, the tradition moved from morning matins to the night before, so that in some cases the Lamentations are named for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Such is the case for Eslava’s Lamentations.

This text is from Lamentations 2:8-11. The calamitous fall of the gates and walls of Jerusalem (by Babylonian army of King Nebuchadnezzar) described in Verses 8-9 are well matched by Eslava’s furious, dramatic rendering, and the anguish of the remaining passages are heartbreakingly reflected in alto and soprano solos.

As used in the Catholic liturgy, the text comes from the Latin Vulgate text. But the translators of the Vulgate decided to keep a trace of the original arrangement of the poetry and kept the Hebrew letter at the beginning of each verse, which is prominently reflected in Eslava’s work. Each lecture 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 pieces.

ORIGINAL TEXT	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
De lamentatione Jeremiae prophetæ:	The lamentation of Jeremiah the Prophet:
8 [Heth.] Cogitavit Dominus dissipare murum filiae Sion; tetendit funiculum suum, et non avertit manum suam a perditione: luxitque antemurale, et murus pariter dissipatus est.	8 [Heth.] The Lord determined to lay in ruins the wall of the daughter of Zion; he stretched out the measuring line; he did not restrain his hand from destroying; he caused rampart and wall to lament; they languished together.
9 [Teth.] Defixae sunt in terra portae ejus, perdidit et contrivit vectes ejus; regem ejus et principes ejus in gentibus: non est lex, et prophetae ejus non invenerunt visionem a Domino.	9 [Teth.] Her gates have sunk into the ground; he has ruined and broken her bars; her king and princes are among the nations; the law is no more, and her prophets find no vision from the Lord.
10 [Jod.] Sederunt in terra, conticuerunt senes filiae Sion; consperserunt cinere capita sua, accincti sunt ciliciis: abjecerunt in terram capita sua virgines Jerusalem.	10 [Jod.] The elders of the daughter of Zion sit on the ground in silence; they have thrown dust on their heads and put on sackcloth; the young women of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground.

11 [Caph.] Defecerunt prae lacrimis oculi mei, conturbata sunt omnia viscera mea; effusum est in terra jecur meum super contritione filiae populi mei, cum deficeret parvulus et lactens in plateis oppidi.

Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

11 [Caph.] My eyes are spent with weeping; my stomach churns; my bile is poured out to the ground because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, because infants and babies faint in the streets of the city.

Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.