

Psalm 120

Henry Lawes (1596–1662)  
edited by Richard Shakeshaft

Soprano  
Cantus  
Alto

Tenor  
Bass  
Bassus

The musical score is arranged in four systems. Each system contains a vocal line (Soprano, Tenor, Bass, Bassus) and a keyboard accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal parts are written in a style typical of the 17th century, with a focus on harmonic support for the text. The keyboard part provides a steady accompaniment with some melodic interest in the bass line.

1 Distressed, and in my mind dismayed,  
When destitute of human aid,  
To thee successfully I prayed.  
Lord, shield me from the fraudulent;  
From those that are on malice bent;  
Who envious calumnies invent.

2 O thou false tongue, steeped in the gall  
Of serpents what reward, for all  
Thy mischief, shall to thee befall!  
Like arrows shot from Parthian strings,  
Fired juniper, and scorpions' stings;  
Such art thou, O thou worst of things!

3 Woe's me, that I from Israel  
Exilèd, must in Mesech dwell;  
And in the tents of Ishmael!  
O how long shall I live with those,  
Whose savage minds sweet peace oppose;  
Where fury by dissuasion grows.

George Sandys (1578–1644)