ΤΑ ΕΓΚΩΜΙΑ

The Lamentations before the Holy Sepulchre

English Translation by N. Takis

Dedicated to His Eminence, Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh

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1. In a grave they laid Thee, yet, O Christ Thou art Life, and the armies of the angels beheld amazed, giving glory that Thou chose to condescend.

2. How, O Life, dost Thou die? How dost Thou dwell entombed, Who hast slashed through all the bonds in the realm of death, and hast raised the dead in Hades from their graves?

3. We, O Lord, exalt Thee, O Christ Jesus, our King, and we venerate Thy Passion and burial through which Thou hast brought redemption from our sins.

4. Thou hast set the measures of the earth, yet this day in a narrow tomb dost dwell, Jesus, King of all, Who hast raised those who were dead up from their tombs.

5. O mine own Christ Jesus, Thou art King of the world. Why hast Thou come down to Hades to seek the dead? Is it not to set the race of mortals free?

6. Fairer in His beauty than all creatures on earth, He is seen now lying lifeless, his beauty gone, yet all beauty in creation springs from Him.
9. O mine own sweet Jesus, Saving Light of the world, can the darkness of the grave hide Thy Light within? Neither thought nor word can say what Thou hast borne.

10. Neither Nature’s reason, nor the angels, O Christ, grasp the mystery enfolding Thy burial, beyond all our understanding and all words.

11. I revere Thy passion Thine entombment I praise, and I magnify Thy might, Loving Friend of man; they have ransomed me from passions that corrupt.

12. When Thy mother saw Thee brought to slaughter, O Lamb, she was stabbed with painful torment; her anguish called the flock to join her bitter cries of grief.

13. “Woe is me!” the Virgin mourned through heart-breaking sobs. “Thou art, Jesus, my most precious, beloved Son! Gone is my light, and the Light of all the world!”

14. “God and Word eternal, O my Gladness and Joy! How shall I endure Thy three days inside the tomb when my heart is breaking with a mother’s grief?”

15. “Who will give me water, and a fountain of tears,” cried the Virgin Bride of God in her deep despair, “that in grief for my sweet Jesus I might weep.”

16. We will sing Thy praises, Word and God of all things, with Thy Father and Thy Holy Spirit Thou art praised, and we glorify Thy burial divine.
Both now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amin.

17. Thou art known as blessed, Theotokos, most pure.
With our faithful hearts we honour the burial suffered three days by Thy Son, Who is our God.

18. In a grave they laid Thee, yet, O Christ Thou art Life, and the armies of the angels beheld amazed, giving glory that Thou chose to condescend.

1. Truly it is right that we magnify Thee, Who bestows Life, Who upon the Cross with Thine outspread Hands all the power of the enemy hast crushed.

2. Truly it is right that we magnify Thee, our Creator; through Thy pain have we been released from pain, and from all corruption we have been set free.

3. All the earth did shake and the sun concealed itself in darkness when they set Thy body into the tomb, Christ, the Saviour and the never-setting Sun.

4. “Free from pain, my Child, I, alone among all women, bore Thee,” said Thy modest Mother with humble voice. “Now Thy passion brings more pain than I can bear.”

5. “Torn apart am I, and my womb, O Word, is wrenched within me as Thine unjust slaughter assaults mine eyes,” cried the Mother to her Son through bitter tears.
6. “Eyes that are so sweet, and Thy lips, O Word, how shall I close them?” Joseph cried appalled, trembling in dismay. “How shall I entomb Thee as befits the dead?”

7. Fearfully the earth took Thy body in her bosom, Saviour. Holding her creator, she quaked in fear, and awakened those who lay dead in their tombs.

8. Stone that man has hewn now conceals the Stone of Life’s Foundation; mortal men entomb God as mortal man, causing thee, O earth, to tremble in dismay.

9. “Child of mine, behold Thy belov’d disciple and Thy mother.” “Grant that I might hear Thy sweet voice again!” Thy pure Mother called through flowing tears to Thee.

10. Suffering in pain, neither form, hadst Thou, O Word, nor beauty, but by Thine arising, Thy beauty shines, and Thy holy rays adorn all those on earth.

11. Sun and moon as one turned to darkness in their sorrow, Saviour, and like faithful servants, they wore their grief, when they wrapped themselves in blackness like a shroud.

12. Struck with fear, the sun saw Thy light invisible as Thou lay lifeless and concealed in the grave, my Christ, and it shuddered and relinquished its own light.

13. Weeping bitter tears, Thy pure Mother mourned to see Thee lifeless lying in the tomb, yet Thou art, O Word, the ineffable and everlasting God.
14. Witness to Thy death, through her bitter tears Thine all-pure Mother weeping, cried aloud unto Thee, O Christ: “Do not linger with the dead, for Thou art Life!”

15. Singing hymns. O Christ, all the faithful now sound forth the praises of Thy crucifixion and burial for by Thine entombment we are freed from death.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

16. God beyond all time, with the Word and Spirit everlasting! strengthen every scepter, O righteous Lord, of the Orthodox against our every foe!

Both now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amin.

17. Life was born of Thee who art holy and most pure, O Virgin. Grant thy church protection from all dissent and reward us with the blessing of thy peace.

18. Truly it is right that we magnify Thee Who bestows Life, Who upon the Cross with Thine outspread Hands, all the power of the enemy hast crushed.
5. ως νεκρὸν τὸν ζῶντα σὺν μυροφόροις πάντες μυρίσωμεν ἐμφρόνως.

6. Ἁλαζον ὁ Ραδές παραπομπή καὶ τῆς Χριστοκτονίας, τῆς τῶν Προφητικῶν ὑπηρετής προδέδωκεν ὑπὸ τὴν ἀβυσσον σφοιξα.

7. Οὔς ἔθεμε τὸ μάνα, ἐκινήσαυ τὴν πτέρναν κατὰ τοῦ Ἑνεργέτου.

8. Ἐπιστημονεῖ τοῦ Σώμα Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ζωοδότου.

9. Οἱ ἁφρόν ὑπηρετής προδέδωκεν ὑπὸ τὴν ἀβυσσον σφοιξα.

10. Τὸν ρῦσθην ὁ πωλήσας αἵμαλωτος κατέστη, ὁ δόλιος Ιουδαίας.

11. Ἑλαζον κηδεύει σὺν τῷ Νικόδημῳ, νεκροπρεπὸς τὸν Κίστην.

12. Ὁ γλυκόν ὑπὲρ Σαλωμῆν, ὑπὲρ Τέκνων, ποῦ ἔδυ Σου τὸ κάλλος.

13. Θρήνον συνεκινεῖ ἡ Πάναγγειον Σου Μήτηρ, Σοῦ, Λόγε, νεκρωθεντός.

14. Θάνατον θανατότω Σὺ θανατοίς, Θεὲ μου, θεία Σου δυναστεία.

15. Πεπλάνηται ὁ πλάνος, ὁ πλανηθεὶς λυτροῦται σοφία Σῇ, Θεὶ μου.

16. Υἱὲ Θεοῦ Παντάνασ, Θεὲ μου, πλαστουργή μου, πῶς πάθος κατεδέξατο;

17. Ἡ Δάμαλις τὸν Μόσχον ἐν ξύλῳ κρεμασθέντα ἠλαζον ὁ ὀρώσα.

18. Ὁ Φῶς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν μου, ὑλουκάτατον μου Τέκνων, πῶς τάφον ὑν καλπῆται;

19. Δοξάζω Σου, Υἱὲ μου, τὴν ἄκραν ἑυσταλαγχίαν, ἢς χάριν ταῦτα πάσχεις.

20. Ἀναστήθη Οἰκτίρμον, ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν βαράθρων ἐξανειστῶν τοῦ Ἀδοῦ.

5. os ne-kron ton zon-da sin mi-ro-for-is pan-des mi-ri-so-men em-fro-nos

6. i-o-sif tris-ma-kar ki-dhef-son to so-ma chri-stou tou zo-o-dho tou

7. ous e-thre-pse to man-na e-ki-ni-san tin pter-nan ka-ta tou ev-er-ye-tou

8. o tis pa-ra fro-si-nis ke tis chri-sto-kto-ni-as tis ton pro-fi-to-kto-non

9. os af-ron i-pi-re-tis pro-dhe-dho-ken o mi-stis tin a-vi-son so-fi-as

10. ton ri-stin o po-li-sas ech-ma-lo-tos ka-te-sti o dho-li-os i-o-dhas

11. i-o-sif ki-dhe-vi sin to ni-ko-dhi-mo ne-kro-pre-pos ton kti-stin

12. o gli-ki mou e-ar gli-ki-ia-ton mou tek-non pou e-dhi sou to kal-los

13. thi-non si-ne-ki-ni i pa-nagh-nos sou mi-tir sou lo-ghe ne-kro-then-dos

14. tha-na-ton tha-na-to si tha-na-tis the-e mou thi-a sou dhi-na-sti-a

15. pe-pla-ni-te o pla-nos o pla ni-this li-trou-te so-fi-a si, the-e mou

16. i-e, the-ou, pan-da-nax the-e mou plas-tour-ye mou pos pa-thos ka-te-dhe-ko

17. i dha-ma-li-sis ton mos-chon en xi-lo kre-mas-then da i-la-la-zen o-ro-sa

18. o fos ton of-thal-mon mou gli-ki-ta-ton mou tek-non fos ta-fo nin ka-li-hti

19. dho-xa-zo sou i-e mou tin ak-ran ef-splach-ni-an is cha-rin ta-ta pas-chis

20. a-na-sti-thi i-ktir-mon i-mas ek ton va-ra-thron e-xa-ni-ston tou a-dhou.

5. As women bearing myrrh did, let us in our awareness anoint as dead the Living.


7. Those He fed with manna have raised their heels to spur Him from Whom all things are given.

8. Ignorance most foolish! Those who slew the prophets have felt the Depths of Wisdom.

9. Mindless as a servant, he who learned the myst'ries of Christ, Who hath bestowed Life.

10. He who sold the Saviour, Judas the Betrayer, has sold himself as captive.

11. With help from Nicodemus, Joseph tends the Body as does befit the Master.

12. Thou art my sweetest Springtime, My sweetest Son, I ask Thee, "Where has Thy beauty faded?"

13. When she beheld Thee lifeless, My sweetest Son, I ask Thee, "How hast Thou borne Thy Passion?"


15. Foiled is the Deceiver; Redeemed is the deceived one, My God, by Thy own wisdom.

16. My God and my Creator, the King of all, and God’s Son, how hast Thou borne Thy Passion?

17. Beholding Thee suspended upon the tree, the Mother cried out in lamentation.

18. “My sweetest Son, most precious, the Light of mine eyes hidden! How can a tomb conceal Thee?”

19. “My Son, I give Thee glory for Thy supreme compassion which causes Thee to suffer.”

20. Arise, O Lord of Mercy, and with Thee, also raise us who linger deep in Hades.
22. The powers of the Heavens stood up in fear and wonder when they beheld Thee lifeless.
23. Early in the morning women bearing myrrh came to sprinkle Thee with spices.
(3 times)
24. By Thy Resurrection grant peace upon Thy churches and to Thy flock salvation.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
25. My God, Who art three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, on all the world have mercy. Both now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amin.
26. Deem thy servants worthy, O Virgin, to bear witness at thy Son’s Resurrection.
27. Every generation offers adoration my Christ, at Thine entombment.

The English translations have been arranged to match the Greek text in number of syllables and location of accented syllables. Therefore, they should work equally well with any musical arrangement.