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. Ἰησοῦ, γλυκύ μοι, καὶ ἡσθήριον Φῶς τάφω παῖς ἐν σκοτεινῷ κατακέκρυψαι; ὥς ἀφάτου καὶ ἀρρήτου ἀνοχῆς.

10. Ἀπορεῖ καὶ Φύσις, νοερὰ καὶ πλήθος ἡ ἁσίμιατος, Χριστὲ, τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀφάστου καὶ ἀρρήτου Σου ταφῆς.

11. Προσκυνῶ τὸ πάθος, ἀνυμῳ τὴν ταφήν, μεγαλύνω Σου τὸ κράτος, Φιλάνθρωπε, δι’ ἕως ἔλειμαι παθῶν φθοροποιίων.

12. Ἡ ἁμικρὸς τῶν ἁρνα καθορώσα νεκρῶν, ταῖς αἰκίσεις βαλλομένη ὡδόλυσε, συγκινοῦσα καὶ τὸ ποίμνιον βοῶν.

13. Οἶμοι, Φῶς τοῦ κόσμου ὁμοίων, Φῶς τὸ ἐμὸν. Ἰησοῦ μου ποθεινότατε, ἔκραζεν ἡ Παρθένος φργωδοῦσα γονεὼς.

14. Ω Θεὲ καὶ Λόγε, ὦ χαρὰ ἡ ἐμῆ, πῶς ἐνέγκα Σου ταφῆν τὴν τριήμερον; νῦν σπαράττομαι τὰ σπλάγχνα μητρικῶς.

15. Τίς μοι δώσει ὅπως καὶ δακρύνων πηγᾶς; ἡ Θεούμφιος Παρθένος ἐκραύγαζεν, ἵνα κλαύσω τὸν γλυκὸν μου Ἰησοῦν. Ἑξάκα Πατρί καὶ Υἱῶ καὶ Ἀγίῳ Πνεύματι.

16. Ἀνυμινοῦμεν, Λόγε, ἐν τῶν πάντων Θεόν, σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Ἀγίῳ Σου Πνεύματι, καὶ δοξάζομεν τὴν θείαν Σου ταφήν.

9. i-i-sou gli-ki-mi ke so-ti-ri-on fos ta-fo pos en sko-ti-no ka-ta-ke-kri-pse o a-fa-tou ke ar-ri-tou a-no-chis


11. pro-ski-no to pa-thos a-ni-mno tin ta-fin me-gha-li-no sou to kra-tos fi-lan-thro-pe dhi on le-li-me pa-thon fthro-ro-pi-on

12. i am-nas ton ar-na ka-tho-ro-sa ne-kron tes e-ki-si va-lo-me-ni o-lo-li-ze sing-ki-nou-sa ke to pi-mni-on vo-an

13. i-mi fos tou koz-mou, i-mi fos to e-mon i-i-sou mou po-thi-no-ta-ke-kra-zen i par-the-nos thri-no-dhou-sa yo-e-ro.

14. o the-e ke lo-ye o cha-ra i e-mi pos e-neng-o sou ta-fin tin tri-i-me-ron nin spa-ra-to-me ta splach-na mitri-kos

15. tis mi dho-si i-dhor ke dha-kri-on pi-yas i the-o-nim-fos par-the-nos e-krav-gha-zen i-na klaif-so ton ghli-kin mou i-i-soun


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 anguished sobs 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.”

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

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.
5.

6. Ὑμιᾶ το γλυκὸ καὶ τὰ χείλη Σου πῶς μύσω, Ἀγαθί; πῶς νεκροπρεπῶς δὲ κηδεύου Σε; ἀνεβὸς μετὰ φρίκης Ἰωσῆφ.

7. Γῆ Σε. Πλαστούργε, ὑπὸ κόλπως δεξαμενὴ, τρόμῳ συσχεθείσα, Σώτερ, τινάσαστα, ἀφυνώσασα νεκροὺς τῷ τιναγμῷ.

8. Λίθος λαξευτὸς τὸν ἀκρόγονον καλύπτει λίθον· ἀνθρώπος θυτὸς ὑπὲρ ὧς θυτοῦ Θεού, κατὰ κρυπτεῖ νῦν τῷ τάφῳ· φρίζον γῆ.

9. Ἰδὲ μαθῆται, ὅν ἡγάπησας καὶ Ἐκ τῆς Μητέρας, Τέκνον, καὶ φθογγὴν δός, γλυκύτατον, δακρυχέουσα ἐβδό ἡ Ἀγνή.

10. Καλλὸς, Λόγε, πρὶν, οὐδὲ εἰδὸς ἐν τῷ πάσχειν ἔσχες, ἀλλ’ ἐξανοστάς ὑπερέλαμμας καλλωπίσας τοὺς βροτοὺς θειαίς αἰγαίς.

11. Ἡλιὸς ὅμοιος καὶ σέληνη σκοτισθέντες, Σώτερ, δουλοὺς εὐνοοῦντας εἰκοτίζων, οἱ μελαίνας ἀμφίεννυνται στολάς.

12. Ἐφριζέν ἱδών, τὸ ὀφρατὸν Φῶς Σε, Χριστὲ μου, μνήματι κρυπτόμενον ἀπίνουν τε, καὶ εἰσκότασεν ὁ ἥλιος τὸ Φῶς.

13. Ἐκλαίει πικρῶς ἡ Πανάμοιος Μήτηρ Σου, Λόγε, ὅτε ἐν τῷ τάφῳ εὕρακε Σὲ τὸν ὀφρατὸν καὶ ἀναρχὸν Θεόν.

6. "Εyes 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.


“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.

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

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. As women bearing myrrh did, 
let us in our awareness 
anoint as dead the Living.
6. Three-times blessed Joseph, 
thou shalt tend the Body 
of Christ, Who hath bestowed Life.
7. Those He fed with manna 
have raised their heels to spurn Him 
From Whom all things are given.
8. Ignorance most foolish! 
Those who slew the prophets 
have come, O Christ, to slay Thee.
9. Mindless as a servant, 
he who learned the myst’ries 
betrayed the Depths of Wisdom.
10. He who sold the Saviour, 
Judas the Betrayer, 
has sold himself as captive.
11. With help from Nicodemos, 
Joseph tendeth 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, 
the Light of mine eyes hidden!
14. Death to Death Thou bringest, 
through Thy divine dominion. 
My God, by Thine own dying.
15. Foiled is the Deceiver; 
Redeemed is the deceived one, 
My God and my Creator, 
the King of all, and God’s Son, 
how hast Thou borne Thy Passion?
16. Beholding Thee suspended 
on the tree, the Mother 
cried out in lamentation.
17. “My Son, I give Thee glory 
through Thy divine dominion.”
18. Mindless as a servant, 
who linger deep in Hades.

5. Ως νεκρόν τον ζωντα 
σὺν μυροφόροις πάντες 
μυρίσασμεν ἐμφόνως.
6. Ἰωσήφ τρισμάκαρ, 
κηδεύσα τὸ Σῶμα 
Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ζωοδότου.
7. Ός θέρειζε τὸ μάννα, 
ἐκτίνασαν τιν πετράν 
κατὰ τὸ Εὐεργέτον.
8. Ω τῆς παραφροσύνης 
καὶ τῆς Χριστοκτονίας, 
tῆς τῶν Προφητοκτόνων.
9. Ός ἄραν ὑπηρέτης 
προδέδωκεν ὁ μύστης 
tὴν ἄμφισον σφιάς.
10. Τὸν ρύστην ὁ πωλήσας 
ἀχιμάλωτος κατέστη, 
ὁ δόλιος Ἰουδας.
11. Ἰωσήφ κηδεύει 
σὺν τῷ Νικόδημῳ, 
νεκροποιῶς τὸν Κτίστην.
12. Ω γλυκὸς μου ἔαρ, 
γλυκύτατόν μου Τέκνου, 
ποὺ ἔδυ Σου τὸ κάλλος;
13. Θρήνον συνεκίνει 
ἡ Πάναγυς Σου Μήπηρ, 
Σου, Ἀγέ, νεκρωθέντος.
14. Θάνατον θανάτῳ 
Σὺ θανατοῖς, Θεέ μου, 
θεία Σου δυναστεία.
15. Πεπλάνηται ὁ πλάνος, 
ὁ πλανηθεὶς λυτροῦται 
σφία Σῆ, Θεέ μου.
16. Υἱὲ Θεοῦ Παντάνας, 
Θεέ μου, πλαστούργη μου, 
pῶς πάθος κατέδεξα; 
17. Ἡ Δόμαλις τῶν Μόσχων 
ἐν ξύλῳ κρεμασθέντα 
ἡλαξέν ἐρώσα.
18. Ω Φως τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν 
μου, 
γλυκύτατόν μου Τέκνου, 
pῶς τὰφόν νῦν καλτήπη;
19. Δοξάζω Σου, Υἱὲ μου, 
τὴν ἀκραν εὐσπλαγχνίαν, 
ης χάριν ταῦτα πάσχεις.
20. Ἀναστηθεὶ Οἰκτίρμον, 
ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν βαράθρων 
ἐξανιστῶν τοῦ Ἀδοῦ.
the Mother who didst bear Thee
through flowing tears entreats Thee.
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.
24. By Thy Resurrection
grant peace upon Thy churches
and to Thy flock salvation.
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.

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