

Menaion – September 18  
Stikhiry for the Post-feast of the Cross

*Stikhiry, Mode IV [As one noble among martyrs]<sup>1</sup>*

Lifted up<sup>2</sup> onto the Cross, O Master,  
with ‹Thyself›<sup>3</sup> Thou liftedst up the whole nature of fallen Adam.  
Wherefore, while we lift up Thine exceeding-noble<sup>4</sup> Cross,  
O Lover of Mankind,  
we beseech Thee, crying out:  
In Thy power from on high, spare us, O Most-High<sup>5</sup>:  
For Thou art a merciful God  
‹to those›<sup>6</sup> who venerate Thine honorable and light-bearing Cross<sup>7</sup>  
at its divine uplifting<sup>8</sup>.

Now as the Psalmist<sup>9</sup> foresaw,  
the footstool where Thy most-pure feet stood,  
today we venerate with love:  
Thy most-honorable Cross.  
And lifting ‹it› up with devotion,  
we pray to Thee, crying out:  
O Most-High, Thou hast sanctified<sup>10</sup> all with Thy divine Cross:  
Show us to be partakers of Thine ineffable compassion,  
and of Thy grace.

As before an unconquerable weapon,  
an unbreakable shield,  
and as before a scepter divine,  
we bow down, O Christ, before Thy most-holy Cross;  
for by it the world was saved,  
and Adam rejoiceth.  
We on earth gather and<sup>11</sup> venerate this<sup>12</sup> ‹saving act› in songs of praise and  
thanksgiving,  
and, celebrating the divine exaltation of ‹the Cross›,  
we beseech cleansing ‹from our sins›.

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Lifted up onto the Cross, Master,  
with ‹Yourself› you lifted up the whole nature of fallen Adam.  
For this reason, while we lift up your most-noble Cross,  
Lover of Mankind,  
we beseech You, crying out:  
In Your power from on high, spare us, Most-High:  
For You are a merciful God  
‹to those› who venerate Your honorable and light-bearing Cross  
at its divine uplifting.

Now, as the Psalmist foresaw,  
the footstool where Your most-pure feet stood,  
today we venerate with love:  
Your most-honorable Cross.  
And lifting ‹it› up with devotion,  
we pray to You, crying out:  
Most-High, You have sanctified all with Your divine Cross:  
Show us to be partakers of Your ineffable compassion,  
and of Your grace.

As before an unconquerable weapon,  
an unbreakable shield,  
and as before a scepter divine,  
we bow down, Christ, before Your most-holy Cross;  
for by it the world was saved,  
and Adam rejoices.  
We on earth gather and venerate this ‹saving act› in songs of praise and  
thanksgiving,  
and, celebrating the divine exaltation of ‹the Cross›,  
we beseech cleansing ‹from our sins›.

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<sup>1</sup> The stikhiry are divided into nine phrases to match the number of musical phrases found in the samopodoben (automelon / model melody) *ѣкѡ дѡбла* *Jako doblja*, ‘As one noble among Martyrs’, which has nine phrases — not all unique — in the following bodies of chant: Carpatho-Rusyn (Ioann Bokshaj and Iosif Malinich, *Tserkovnoe Prostopinie* [Uzhhorod/Ungvar, 1906; reprinted Pittsburgh: Byzantine Catholic Seminary Press, s.d.] p.20); Kiev Caves, Optina, and Valaam (L. V. Bobchuk, *Podobny* [Kiev: Izdanie Svjato-Troitskogo Ioninskogo Monastyra, 2004] pp. 78-80), while Bulgarian chant has seven (*op. cit.* p. 81).

<sup>2</sup> There are a number of translational issues in this short piece, and to follow these comments on them, it will be helpful to have the Slavonic text:

ВОЗНОСИ́МЪ ТѢВѢ, ВЛАДЫ́КО, НА КРЕСТЪ, \*  
СОВОЗНѢ́СЛЪ Ё́СН ПА́ДШЕЕ А́ДАМОВО Ё́СТѢСТВО ВСЕ: \*  
СЕГѠ́ РА́ДИ ВОЗНОСА́ЩЕ \* ПРѢЧУ́ДНЫ́Й КРЕСТЪ ТВОЙ, ЧЕЛОВѢ́КОЛЮБЧЕ, \*  
Ѡ́ ВЪШНІ́А ТВОЕА́ КРѢ́ПОСТИ \* ПРѠ́СИМЪ ЗОВѢ́ЩЕ: \*  
СПАСИ́, ВЪ́ШНИЙ: Ѣ́Кѡ ВѠ́ МІ́ЛОСТИВЪ, \*  
ПОЧИТА́ЮЩІ́А ЧЕСТНО́Е И́ СВѢ́ТНО́СНОЕ, \*  
ТВОЕГѠ́ КРЕСТА́ БОЖѢ́СТВЕННОЕ ВОЗНЕСѢ́НІЕ.

In the Slavonic the stikhira begins with a participle, *возноси́мъ* *voznosimu*, from the verb *возносити* *voznositi*, ‘to lift up / exalt / raise’ (and other possible meanings). In the next clause, the participle, *совознѢ́слъ* *sovozneshl*, is based on the same root, with the prefix, *со-* *so-*, which has a root meaning of *with*. In the following clause, there is still another participle based on the original verb, *возноса́ще* *voznosjashche*. And at the very end of the piece, we find the noun, *вознесѢ́ніе* *vozneseenie*, also based on the same root.

So the author has made a point of beginning and ending the stikhira with words based on the same root, and has used the root twice more in the meantime. The challenge for the translator is to try to reflect this probably deliberate usage to the extent possible, without violating the canons of English.

Later in the stikhira, the author also used a different root twice in the same clause: *въшні́а* *vyshnija*, from *въшній* *vyshnij*, ‘high’, referring to God’s power or strength, and then again *въшній* *vyshnij*, in the vocative to refer to God. There is another challenge for the translator in that usage.

Let us have a look at the first word. The sense is that by being raised onto the Cross, Christ raised up again Adam’s fallen nature. Should we translate ‘exalt’, ‘raise up’, ‘lift up’, ‘elevate’? All are possible. I chose ‘lifted up’ as perhaps the simplest, and one that might allow a somewhat unusual but not entirely outlandish rendering of *vozneseenije* at the very end. Besides, the prepositional phrase *на крестъ* *na krest*, looks very much like a limit of motion, and that consideration also confirmed my preference for ‘lifted up’; in English we cannot say ‘exalted onto the Cross’.

<sup>3</sup> [Note: Angle brackets enclose words added to satisfy the requirements of English grammar, or to clarify the meaning.]

To render *совознѢ́слъ* *sovozneshl*, I decided to translate root and prefix. Since we have no verb ‘co-lift-up’ in English, the methodology obliged me to choose ‘lift up with’, and to supply an object for the preposition.

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<sup>4</sup> This could also have been translated with a superlative ‘most noble’.

<sup>5</sup> Here is the clause with two uses of the same adjective, *vyshnij*, ‘high’. ‘High power’ would be understandable enough, I think, but ‘power from on high’ seems preferable. In addressing God, we do not usually say, ‘O High One’, so my choice is ‘O Most-High’.

<sup>6</sup> This could also conceivably be ‘to us’; the original is a substantived participle ‘venerating’; English requires a noun or pronoun for it to modify. A participial construction here seemed quite clumsy to my eyes and ears, so I chose to render the sense by a relative clause.

<sup>7</sup> Literally, the Slavonic says ‘venerating the divine lifting-up of Thine honorable and light-bearing Cross’; but in the belief that the author intended to begin and end the stikhira with the same root, and in the desire to respect that intention, I was obliged to change the formal object of the veneration from the ‘lifting up’ to the ‘Cross’.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Uplifting’ as a noun is unusual, to be sure; but I very much wanted to keep the same root at the end as at the beginning. I would also have been comfortable with using ‘exalted’ and ‘exaltation’, but in the first note I explained why I rejected ‘exalted’ in the opening clause. Then, too, I have a preference for Saxon roots. The fact that the Slavonic uses an unusual word for the feast, *вознесѣніе* *vozneshenie*, ‘ascension’, instead of the usual *воздвиженіе* *vozdvizhenie*, ‘exaltation, elevation’, encourages me in this choice.

<sup>9</sup> I.e., David the King and Prophet.

<sup>10</sup> The Slavonic shows an abbreviation, *осѣвъ*, which I have taken as a participle of the verb ‘to sanctify’; it might also be taken as an abbreviation of the participle of ‘to illumine’, especially because the preceding stikhira uses the word *свѣтоносное*, ‘light-bearing’; though to take it in this meaning, I would want to see some other explicit or implicit reference to light, or to a source of light, in this stikhira.

<sup>11</sup> Literally: ‘Gatherings of earthly-ones, we venerate...’.

<sup>12</sup> Literally: ‘...we venerate this..., celebrating... the divine exaltation of that..., we ask cleansing’. I have added the words in angle brackets to clarify the meaning as I understand it. This part of the stikhira could have been rendered ‘...we venerate the latter..., celebrating... the divine exaltation of the former..., we ask cleansing’; but that would hardly be poetic English.