

ZARA MARTIROSOVA TORLONE

# VERGIL IN RUSSIA

National Identity and Classical Reception



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## *Preface and Acknowledgements*

'Virgil is too important to be left to the classicists.' Thus begins Theodore Ziolkowski's formative study *Virgil and the Moderns*. Similarly I would begin by saying that Vergil is too important to be left only to Western Europe.

As far as Russia is concerned, the division of Europe into Eastern and Western is an artificial one.<sup>1</sup> The truth is, Russia is not Europe, Western or Eastern. For a country that spans two continents and is as much an heir to the Byzantine Empire as to the legacy of Genghis Khan's hordes, a unifying geopolitical term presents a distinct challenge.<sup>2</sup>

With that in mind how can we approach the Russian reception of the ancient poet who proved to be the most influential presence through many generations of European writers? The Russian Vergil is indeed, using Craig Kallendorf's book title, 'the other Vergil'. And yet, as the reader will see, the Russian Vergil is not altogether foreign to his European counterparts. On one hand, the Russian Vergil to a large extent is based on the European understanding of Vergil, since he serves for Russian writers as a gateway to form a European identity. On the other hand, Vergil in Russia had to and did acquire distinct national features. This study aims at unravelling this palimpsestic character of the Russian Vergil.

My fascination with Vergil goes back over twenty years. I owe a debt of gratitude to many people who along the way helped me understand his poetry. I am thankful to Nikolai Alekseevich Fedorov, my first Latin teacher, who early guided my timid steps into Vergilian verse; to Maria Murav'eva (née Lada Pererva), my scholastic reading companion in Vergil, with whom I spent countless days in the Moscow University libraries reading and deciphering the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*; to Keshia and Kseniia Sarukhan-Bek for opening their Moscow home to me; to James Zetzel, whose astute and unmatched sensitivity towards the intricacies of the Vergilian text taught me what it means to read poetry in a sophisticated way, and to Susanna Zetzel, who from the very beginning was an eager supporter of my suggestion that the Russian Vergil is an unexplored terrain; and

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And last but not least I am thankful to my husband, Mark Torlone, and my daughters, Christina and Francesca, for giving me joy and happiness every day.

#### NOTES

1. On the controversy over the term 'Eastern Europe', see Munteanu (2009), 1.
2. For more on Russia's peculiar geopolitical situation, see Bassin (1991).

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## The Messianic and Prophetic Vergil

Имя Братства и Свободы  
Чтут начертано народы:  
Галл—на храмах и дворцах,  
Бритт—в законах, мы—в сердцах.

The name of Brotherhood and Liberty,  
Peoples worship in a predestined way:  
The Gaul—at the shrines and palaces,  
The Briton—according to laws, and we—in our hearts.

Viacheslav Ivanov 'Suum cuique'<sup>1</sup>

The idea of Moscow as the Third Rome originated, as we have seen, in the early sixteenth century in the letters of a Pskovian monk, Filofei, who based this concept 'on the predominantly religious premise that Russia had assumed the Orthodox Christian mantle that the Byzantines had lost when conquered in 1453 by the Moslem Turks'.<sup>2</sup> Although the doctrine largely lost its appeal in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, interest in it became revived in the middle of the nineteenth century and intensified after the events of 1917, especially in the writings of the Silver Age.<sup>3</sup> The reception of Vergil during that time reflected the preoccupation of Russian intellectuals with the destiny and mission of Russia, as they turned away from political and cultural contemplations of Russia's status vis-à-vis Europe to Russia's ecclesiastical and spiritual role.

VLADIMIR SOLOV'EV

Не три свечи горели, а три встречи, —  
 Одну из них сам Бог благословил,  
 Четвертой не бывать, а Рим далече, —  
 И никогда он Рима не любил.

Not three candles were burning but three meetings,  
 One of them was blessed by God himself,  
 The fourth will never be, but Rome is far away—  
 And he never really loved Rome.

O. Mandel'shtam<sup>4</sup>

This stanza taken from Osip Mandel'shtam's 1916 poem 'On a Sled Covered with Hay' («На розвальнях, уложенных соломой») alludes to the Third Rome doctrine. More likely, however, it alludes to the use of that doctrine by one of the most prominent Russian religious philosophers, Vladimir Solov'ev, and his poem 'Three Meetings' («Три свидания», 1899) dedicated to the divine Sophia and extremely popular at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Vladimir Solov'ev's works and his interpretation of the role of Roman and Byzantine legacy for Russian national destiny became formative for the twentieth-century 'messianic' reception of Vergil by Viacheslav Ivanov and, to a more limited degree, Georgii Fedotov.

The poem 'Three Meetings' so ambivalently alluded to by Mandel'shtam (I will return to that later) is of utmost importance for an understanding of Solov'ev's interpretation of Vergil, and it needs to be put in the broader context of Solov'ev's life and work. In 1877 Solov'ev met and fell in love with Sophia Petrovna Khitrovo, who, although never reciprocating his romantic feelings, nevertheless opened her estate, Pustyn'ka, to him. Pustyn'ka then became for the philosopher 'the closest thing to a permanent residence'.<sup>6</sup> 'Three Meetings' was in fact written in Pustyn'ka, and Solov'ev, despite calling the poem 'humorous verses', also acknowledged that the poem reflected the most significant moments of his life. One of those moments was undoubtedly his friendship with Khitrovo, whose first name, Sophia, can perhaps be considered a partial inspiration for Solov'ev's divine female.<sup>7</sup>

In this poem Solov'ev states that three times in his life he had the revelation of the glory and unity of the world, and that this revelation was given to him by the visions of divine Sophia, who appeared to

him in a female form of ethereal beauty. While he never actually refers to the beautiful vision as Sophia or Wisdom, the identity of the beautiful apparition is obvious and harks back to lecture 7 of Solov'ev's popular presentations, where he for the first time introduces Sophia by that name:

In the divine organism of Christ, the acting, unifying principle, the principle that expresses the unity of that which absolutely is, is obviously the Word, or Logos. The second kind of unity, *the produced unity, is called Sophia* in Christian theosophy.<sup>8</sup>

As Judith Kornblatt notes, Solov'ev's concept of Divine Sophia or Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia of Eastern Orthodoxy), while 'a verbal incarnation of his personal visions', was also 'informed by a host of earlier religious and literary traditions, including the biblical ones . . . as well as Neoplatonism, early Christian Gnosticism, Russian and Byzantine iconography and liturgy, the Jewish Kabbalah', and most importantly by the Russian fascination with her 'as a manifestation of the Eternal Feminine'.<sup>9</sup>

His visions of Sophia Solov'ev interpreted, as N. Zernov observes, not 'as the illusions of a distorted mind nor poetic objectifications of emotional state; these were cardinal facts, on which he built his entire outlook'.<sup>10</sup> At the centre of that outlook was Solov'ev's concept of «всеединство» ('the whole of things', 'pan-oneness'), of which Sophia appears to be a component part.<sup>11</sup> Influenced by the writings of the Slavophiles, an intellectual movement in Russia which propagated values different from those in Western Europe, especially Ivan Kireevskii (1806–56), Solov'ev furthered their ideas that European culture had exhausted its creative strength and that the further progress of humanity rested now with the Christian East, and especially Russia. Solov'ev believed that Russia had a special mission to give back to Europe the sense of the Divine, because Russian monarchs were the successors of the Byzantine emperors and because Eastern and Western churches were inextricably connected.<sup>12</sup> In his study *La Russie et l'Eglise universelle (Russia and the Universal Church, 1889; Russian translation, 1911)* Solov'ev advocated an alliance between the pope and the Russian emperor,<sup>13</sup> whom he saw as the consecrated power destined to fulfil Russia's Christian mission. Some of Solov'ev's poems, such as 'Ex Oriente Lux' (1890) and 'Panmongolism' («Панмонголизм», 1894) reflected his lifelong preoccupation with Russia's purpose in the world. Both poems deserve

some discussion since in them Solov'ev 'touched upon Russia's national destiny and the future of humanity at large'.<sup>14</sup> These poems also crystallize the ideas that influenced the Vergilian reception of Ivanov and Fedotov.<sup>15</sup>

Solov'ev starts the first poem, *'Ex Oriente Lux'*, with the declaration 'Light comes from the East, strength comes from the East!' («С Востока свет, с Востока силы!»), which then unexpectedly turns into recounting the history of confrontation between the East and the West starting with the battle at Thermopylae (480 BCE), in which the outnumbered Greek army defeated the Persian Empire of Xerxes. Solov'ev ascribes the victory to the fact that the Greeks were free citizens fighting against Persian slaves: the Western love of democratic rule is juxtaposed to the despotism of the Eastern empire that, for all its claims to greatness, cannot achieve victory because its citizens do not fight for liberty. Solov'ev reinforces this premise with the victories of Alexander the Great and then of Rome, which gave the world unity and reason. It is only with the advent of Christ, in Solov'ev's opinion, that the East and the West had the possibility of becoming united in the spirit of love and faith. The last three stanzas of the poem proceed to clarifying the opening line's glorification of the East:

И слово веще — не ложно,  
И свет с Востока засиял,  
И то, что было невозможно,  
Он возместил и обещал.  
И, разливаясь широко,  
Исполнен знамений и сил,  
Тот скот, исшедший от Востока,  
С Востоком Запад примирил.  
О Русь! в предвиденье высоком  
Ты мыслью гордой занята;  
Каким ты хочешь быть Востоком:  
Востоком Ксеркса или Христа?

And the prophetic word was not false,  
And a light from the East shone,  
Heralding and promising  
What had been impossible.  
And, spilling wide,  
Full of portents and might,

That light from the East  
Made peace between East and West.  
O Rus! In lofty premonition  
You ponder a proud thought;  
Which East do you want to be:  
The East of Xerxes or of Christ?

In these lines Solov'ev connects with Russia the future of civilization and the ability to unite East and West in the name of Christ if Russia chooses to do so. The barbaric Eastern legacy associated with Xerxes would be forgotten, replaced by the 'light' brought from the East by Christ. It is interesting that in this poem Solov'ev allows Russia to be an Eastern country, which will finally fulfil the prophecy of all-powerful East declared in the first line.

The poem 'Panmongolism', however, is far less optimistic about Russian destiny. The poem starts with a misleading stanza:

Панмонголизм! Хоть имя дико,  
Но мне ласкает слух оно,  
Как бы предвещием великой  
Судьбины Божией полно.

Panmongolism! Although the name is monstrous,  
Yet it caresses my ear  
As if filled with the premonition  
Of a grand divine fate.

That fate, however, does not materialize in the poem. Rather, Solov'ev envisions Western civilization being overwhelmed by the people from the East, 'countless as locusts' («как саранча неисчислимы»), who destroy the last hope of Russia's ideal unifying mission:

О Русь! забудь былую славу:  
Орел двуглавый сокрушен,  
И желтым детям на забаву  
Даны клочки твоих знамен.  
Смирится в трепете и страхе,  
Кто мог завет любви забыть...  
И третий Рим лежит во прахе,  
А уж четвертому не быть.

O Rus! Forget your former glory:  
The two-headed eagle is ravaged,

And your tattered banners passed  
Like toys among yellow children.  
He who neglects love's precepts,  
Will be overcome by dread and fear . . .  
And the third Rome falls to dust,  
Nor will there ever be a fourth.

In this poem, as well as in his essay 'Byzantinism and Russia', Solov'ev questions the idea of Moscow as the Third Rome. Jonathan Sutton notes that for Solov'ev 'the ideal of the Third Rome was becoming increasingly remote and deceptive—one that only Russia's flatterers wish to perpetuate'.<sup>16</sup> These writings display Solov'ev's extreme concern about Russia's reduced commitment to spiritual practice, and Christian ideals replaced by the distractions of secular life and intellectual trends.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, as Greg Gaut observes, 'Solov'ev tended to an arrogant Eurocentrism when speaking of non-Christian people outside Europe'.<sup>18</sup> However, for the subsequent thinkers and writers of the Russian Silver Age, such as Ivanov and Andrei Belyi (1880–1934), Solov'ev, as Susanna Lim points out, 'was above all the great prophet of reconciliation and unity'.<sup>19</sup> Pamela Davidson is right in emphasizing in Russian literature 'the image of writer as a divinely inspired prophet, responsible for shaping the spiritual and moral destiny of the nation'.<sup>20</sup> While this tendency is not unique to Solov'ev and its rise goes back to the time of Derzhavin and later Pushkin,<sup>21</sup> Solov'ev (along with Tolstoi and Dostoevskii) greatly contributed to the future development of this inherited tradition and allowed the writings of Ivanov and Fedotov to assume the same tone of prophetic declarations.

Solov'ev's famous and influential work *The History and Future of Theocracy* (*История и будущность теократии*, 1885–7) contains a zealous plea for restoration of unity between the Latin and the Orthodox churches.<sup>22</sup> While his work had little appeal to Catholicism, Solov'ev did offer an entirely novel interpretation of the 'Third Rome' doctrine. He suggested that Moscow had a mission to reconcile two ancient rivals, Rome and Constantinople, and be the place where the Latin world and the Christian East would unite in the perfect symbiosis.

Between 1881 and 1891 Solov'ev developed friendships with Nikolai Fedorov (1828–1903) and Afanasii Fet (1820–92). These years

also coincided with Solov'ev's intense interest in the unity of East and West through Christendom. In 1887 Solov'ev and Fet embarked on a Russian translation of the *Aeneid*, which we will discuss in detail in the last chapter of this study. Fet was attracted to the project because it presented him as a poet with a challenge. For Solov'ev, however, the *Aeneid* represented 'the perfect embodiment of the Roman principle of universalism'.<sup>23</sup> In a letter to Nikolai Strakhov, Solov'ev stated:

[П]еревожу с Афанасием Афанасьевичем «Энеиду». Я считаю «отца Энея» вместе с «отцом верующих» Авраамом настоящими родоначальниками Христианства, которое (исторически говоря) явилось лишь синтезом этих двух parental'й.

Afanasii Afanas'evich [Fet] and I are now translating the *Aeneid*. I consider 'Father Aeneas' along with Abraham, the 'father of believers,' to be the true ancestors of Christianity, which was (historically speaking) only a synthesis of these two forefathers.<sup>24</sup>

There had certainly been centuries of Christianizing interpretation that viewed Aeneas 'as a good proto-Christian or at least Stoic'.<sup>25</sup> But for Solov'ev the historical necessity inherent in Aeneas' divinely ordained missions represented the confirmation of the idea of Rome's pre-eminence as the spiritual guide of the world. In another of his letters, this time to the Jesuit Paul Perling, he elaborated on this idea:

Переводя теперь в часы досуга «Энеиду» русскими стихами, я с особенною живостью ощущаю в иные минуты ту таинственную и вместе естественную необходимость, которая сделала из Рима центр Вселенской Церкви.

Dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobili Saxum (*petra*)

Accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

Чем это не пророчество?

Now that I am spending my leisure time translating the *Aeneid* into Russian verse, I occasionally sense with a special acuity that mysterious and simultaneously natural necessity which made Rome the center of the Universal Church.

Dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobili Saxum (*petra*)

Accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

Is this not a prophecy?<sup>26</sup>

These lines taken out of their context are cited by Solov'ev from the *Aeneid* (9.448–9) and refer to a famous episode about Nisus and

Euryalus, two Trojan lovers who die together during a brave foray among the enemy. Vergil glorifies Euryalus as he describes his untimely death:

Fortunati ambo! Si quid mea carmina possunt,  
nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo  
dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobili saxum  
accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

Both of you fortunate! If my songs have any power,  
No day will ever come that wipes you from the memory  
of the ages,  
not while the house of Aeneas stands by the Capitol's rock  
unshaken,  
not while the Roman Father rules the world.

The story of the homoerotic love and death on behalf of that love becomes in Solov'ev's rendition a Christian prophecy. The Greek word *petra*, which he adds parenthetically as a translation of Latin *saxum* is meant to suggest a parallel to the biblical passage Matthew 16:18 in which Christ founds his Church upon Peter (the Greek word, as David Matual points out, 'is an ad hoc creation based on *petra*, rock'<sup>27</sup>). This passage, as we will see later, will also attract Ivanov, who following his mentor would interpret it in the light of Christian love.

While Solov'ev tried to apply his beliefs to the *Aeneid*, the ultimate culmination of his 'messianic' interpretation of Vergil manifested itself in his translation of the Fourth Eclogue, in which the birth of a mysterious child is predicted.<sup>28</sup> In his commentary on the *Eclogues* Wendell Clausen observes that 'the Christian, or Messianic, interpretation prevailed unchallenged for centuries, supported by, and supporting, Virgil's reputation as a seer, a Christian before Christ'.<sup>29</sup>

It is hard to imagine that Solov'ev was not aware of the secular interpretation of the poem and scepticism in classical scholarship about the parallels between Vergil's text and the Bible.<sup>30</sup> After all, such interpretations were dismissed as early as 1858 by John Conington, the most important nineteenth-century commentator on Vergil. However, both Solov'ev and Ivanov, as we will see, preferred the medieval view of the Fourth Eclogue as a prophecy of the birth of Christ. In order to understand their choice we need to put it in the broader perspective of what the Fourth Eclogue meant for Russian thinkers, a perspective best explained by Averintsev in his formative

essay on Vergil, familiar from our earlier discussion. Here is what he writes about Vergil's 'messianic' eclogue:

Ученые Нового времени, в отличие от наивных людей Средневековья, исходили из того что истинный смысл эклоги — это смысл происходящий, злободневно-актуальный, и потратили немало усилий в безрезультатных поисках выяснить, в каком именно из важных семейств Рима — у самого Августа, у Поллиона или у кого иного — должен был родиться чудесный отпрыск. Если бы эклога значила не больше этого, она устарела бы через год. Но средневековое перетолкование при всей своей наивности, по крайней мере, воздаст должное двум первостепенным фактам: во-первых, центральный смысл стихотворения Вергилия, рядом с которым должны отступить все прочие его смысловые аспекты,—это пророчество о наступлении нового цикла жизни человечества, об обновлении времен; во-вторых, Вергилий оказался прав. Он чувствовал время. Что касается перетолкований, таков уж объективный характер Вергилиевой поэзии, что она не просто для них открыта, но несет в себе их необходимость, эстетически их предвосхищает. Голос поэта сам летит в будущее и, можно сказать, акустически рассчитан на отзыв в сердцах тех кто придет позднее.<sup>31</sup>

The scholars of the New time, unlike the naive people of the Middle Ages, were keen on interpreting the meaning of the eclogue as it related to the current events, to burning issues of the day, and they spent considerable efforts on futile attempts to find out in exactly which prominent Roman family—perhaps Augustus', or Pollio's, or someone else's—a miraculous child was supposed to be born. If the eclogue meant nothing more than that, it would have been outdated in a year. But the medieval interpretation, despite all its naivety, at least took into consideration two most important facts: first, the central meaning of Vergil's poem to which all other semantic aspects must yield,—namely that this poem is a prophecy about the arrival of a new cycle of life, the renewal of times; secondly, Vergil was right. He felt time. As for the interpretations, such is the objective nature of Vergil's poetry that it is not just open to them, but carries in itself a necessity for such interpretations, *anticipates them aesthetically*.<sup>32</sup> The poet's voice flies into the future and, one can say, it anticipates acoustically the echo in the hearts of those who will come later.

This statement by Averintsev reflects a similar tendency in modern scholarship to steer away from too close political readings of the poem.<sup>33</sup> Bruce Arnold observes that the Fourth Eclogue 'cannot

even at this early date be disassociated from Vergil's own lifelong struggle with the complex problem of moral and political regeneration that informs all of his work'.<sup>34</sup> Following the same lines of argument, Solov'ev's and Ivanov's preoccupation with the proleptic message of the eclogue was not some misguided proselytizing of Christian zealots. The poem for them presented an opportunity to contemplate the destiny of humankind in general and Russia in particular. They were exactly those 'hearts' whose echo, in Averintsev's words, Vergil's poetry 'aesthetically anticipated'.

For Solov'ev the poem was a ready poetic expression for most of his persistent ideas. Mutual discusses in detail the parallels between Solov'ev writings and the Vergilian text. I would like to outline here only a few ideas crucial for Solov'ev's interpretation of the poem and reflected in his Russian translation.

Solov'ev (and later Ivanov) found Vergil's historiosophy in tune with his own. He especially favoured Vergil's association of the new Golden Age with the arrival of a saviour, a miraculous child. The inherent difference between Vergil's view of history and Solov'ev's is, as Mutual aptly points out, that for the former the age of Saturn was not a blissful closure to the succession of ages, but only a link in a historical cycle and might be followed by yet another age of human deterioration.<sup>35</sup> For Solov'ev, however, 'the God-man is the fulfillment of history'.<sup>36</sup> Solov'ev's preoccupation with the divine Sophia also found its reflection in his interpretation of the Fourth Eclogue. Vergil's *iam redit et Virgo* ('already the Virgin returns') in line 6 of the poem was interpreted by Solov'ev not only as the mother of the coming saviour, but also the feminine ideal, which the divine Sophia also represented. Solov'ev accepted the medieval Christian understanding of the Fourth Eclogue, the messianic message of which both St Jerome and St Augustine found doubtful.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Solov'ev took some liberties in translating the Vergilian text in order to emphasize his messianic interpretation of the poem. For example, lines 38–9 of the eclogue read:

nec nautica pinus  
mutabit merces; omnis feret omnia tellus.  
The pine ship  
will no longer exchange wares; the whole earth will bear everything.

Solov'ev translated this as: 'And the pine ship / will no longer exchange wares; the whole earth will give equally to everyone' («И cosine

корабельной / товаров уж не менять: вся земля давать всем поровну будет»). The word 'equally' not even hinted at in Vergil's text is added to the translation by Solov'ev as a way to emphasize Christian equality and love in the predicted new order of things.

As becomes clear from Solov'ev's letters to his brother Mikhail, there existed two versions of the translation: one was loose and adapted to reflect Solov'ev's main religious beliefs; the other, favoured by Afanasii Fet, stayed faithful to the original.<sup>38</sup> Solov'ev stated in one of the letters that he tore up the loose translation and preserved only the one that closely followed the Vergilian text. Solov'ev's rejection of the freer version is puzzling, but allows for a conjecture that in the end he decided that Russian readers must infer from Vergil's eclogue their own conclusions without being pushed into a certain direction by the poetic licence of the translator. Vergil, the pagan Roman poet, must speak to Russian readers on his own terms. The translation of the poem by Solov'ev that we have now is sometimes exceedingly literal and goes against the natural Russian word order, as if Solov'ev were overly conscious of his tendency to distort the Vergilian text for his own philosophical purposes. He even imitates Vergil's hexameter as much as Russian prosody allows, following the same goal of staying close to the original.

Even Solov'ev's translation practices proved to be influential, especially for the Russian Symbolists, who became saturated with his ideas.<sup>39</sup> One of the most prominent Russian Symbolists, Valerii Briusov (1873–1924), accused, as we will see in Chapter 6, of 'literalism' («буквализм»), seems to have taken Solov'ev's approach very much to heart and reproduced the *Aeneid* in the same vein of sometimes 'foreignizing' translation practice. However, the reaction to Solov'ev's teachings among Russian intellectuals was not always positive, as one can infer from Mandel'shtam's vague mention of Solov'ev's 'Three Meetings' cited at the beginning of this chapter. If the pronoun 'he' in the line 'and he never really loved Rome' does refer to Solov'ev's reception of Roman legacy, Mandel'shtam's assessment might seem somewhat unfair, because Solov'ev strove to synthesize East and West and in fact did 'love' Rome. However, Mandel'shtam, an erudite Russian poet of Jewish descent, once proverbially defined Acmeism, the literary movement he belonged to, as 'yearning for world culture' («тоска по мировой культуре»).<sup>40</sup> Rome for him, but especially ancient Rome, held universal significance: it existed as an idealized entity, an unbroken focal point of

human existence, but most importantly as an unchanging civilization of perfect harmony between nature and humanity.<sup>41</sup> Although, as Kalb notes, for Solov'ev 'Russia represented a "third principle", one that could overcome the differences between the East's "God-man," focused on religious faith, and the West's "Mangod," intent on human, worldly potential,<sup>42</sup> the religious messianic underpinnings of Solov'ev's vision of Rome did not fit into Mandel'shtam's concept of the eternal city as a cultural landscape open for all. Mandel'shtam's reception of Rome throughout his poetry (with a strong preference for Ovid) remained largely secular and distanced from any religious revelations pursued by Solov'ev.<sup>43</sup> The religious principles of the latter, however, deeply influenced Viacheslav Ivanov, who was, as Alexei Losev points out, 'the most consistent pupil of Solov'ev'.<sup>44</sup>

Kalb observes that 'the story of Aeneas, along with Virgil's model of literary nation-building, held deep resonance for Russian Symbolist writers at the turn of the twentieth century, as they put Virgil's myth and example to work in their own nationally based writings'.<sup>45</sup> In order to better appreciate Ivanov's deep engagement with Vergil, explored in the following pages, we need to briefly place it in the context of Russian Symbolism, the most prominent movement of the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century, since Ivanov is considered one of its leading figures. Michael Wachtel emphasizes that the 'Russian Symbolists' creativity was based on a type of reception diametrically opposed to that posited by [Harold] Bloom, 'at the basis of whose theory is the poet's continuous struggle with his 'belatedness' and wilful 'repression' of the tradition. Wachtel continues:

The Symbolists, an erudite group of poets and thinkers, shared a reverence for past accomplishment. If the English Romantics strove to escape the burden of the past, the Russian Symbolists sought with equal fervor to integrate themselves with it. Rather than exemplifying Bloom's notorious 'anxiety of influence,' the works of the Symbolists evince what might be termed an 'anxious desire to be influenced.' Rarely has a creative movement so eagerly and energetically looked backwards. . . . Reception, in short, was not simply an aspect of Russian Symbolism; it was one of its guiding principles and lifelong pursuits.<sup>46</sup>

It is in this light that we have to consider Ivanov's reception of Vergil, in whose writings he found answers as he contemplated the crisis of Russian national identity after the Revolution of 1917. As Ivanov

took Solov'ev's Roman text to heart and fell under the spell of his reception of Vergil, he gave the Roman poet perhaps the most messianic rendition in the whole history of the Russian reception of Vergil.

## VERGIL IN EXILE

А я уже стою в саду иной земли,  
Среди кровавых роз и влажных лилий,  
И повествует мне гекзаметром Виргилий  
О высшей радости земли.

But I am already standing in a garden of a foreign land,  
Amid the bloody roses and moist lilies,  
And Vergil with his hexameter relates to me  
The lofty joy of earth.

Nikolai Gumilev<sup>47</sup>

Russian emigration circles in Europe after the Revolution offered a unique cultural environment since it caused a massive exodus from Russia, mostly of the intellectual and political elite.<sup>48</sup> These exiles to a large degree conditioned and influenced the direction of Russian thought abroad, and within only a couple of decades provided important and long-lasting contributions to the literary and philosophical landscape. To name only a few, the prose and poetry of Bunin, Nabokov, Merezhkovskii, Tsvetaeva, and Georgii Ivanov; music by Rakhmaninov and Stravinskii; the theatre of Mikhail Chekhov and ballet of Fokin and Nizhinskii; the paintings of Korovin, Kandinskii, and Rerikh; the philosophy of Berdiaev and Stegun; the historical works of Rostovtsev and Vernadskii—this was the intellectual environment where Viacheslav Ivanov and Georgii Fedotov left their valuable input.<sup>49</sup> As A. Kiselev correctly points out, what emerged in these culturally thriving surroundings was the enduring history of debates about the history and mission of Russia in the world.<sup>50</sup> Most of Ivanov's and Fedotov's works written abroad inevitably return to these discussions, as do their works on Vergil. However, in order to engage more deeply with the works on Vergil written after they left Russia, it is important to consider the broader intellectual and philosophical context of these thinkers' writings.

## Viacheslav Ivanov

Русь! на тебя дух мести мечной  
 Восстал и первенцев сразил;  
 И скорой казнию конечной  
 Тебе, дрожащей, угрозил:  
 За то, что ты стоишь, немея,  
 У перепутного креста, —  
 Ни Зверя скиптр нести не смея,  
 Ни иго легкое Христа.

Russia! The sword-bearing spirit against you  
 Has risen in revenge and crushed your firstborns;  
 And threatened you while you have trembled  
 With imminent and final execution.  
 Because you stand confused,  
 Before the cross on the crossroads—  
 Neither daring to carry the sceptre of the Beast,  
 Nor the light yoke of Christ.

V. Ivanov, *Cor Ardens*<sup>51</sup>

These lines written by Ivanov (Figure 7) as he contemplated Russian defeats in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 and the future of Russia are cited by him again in his essay 'On the Russian Idea' («О русской идее», 1909) and further explained:

Не было ни конечной казни, ни в следующие годы — конечного освобождения. Развязка, казавшаяся близкой, была отсрочена. Но поистине, хоть и глухо, сознала Россия, что в то время, как душевное тело вражеской державы было во внутренней ему свойственной гармонии и в величайшем напряжении всех ему присущих сил, наше собирательное душевное тело было в дисгармонии, внутреннем разладе и крайнем расслаблении, ибо не слышало над своими хаотическими темными водами веющего Духа, и не умела русская душа решиться и выбрать путь на перекрестке дорог, — не смела ни сесть на Зверя и высоко поднять его скиптр, ни целно понести легкое иго Христово. Мы не хотели целно ни владычества над океаном, который будет средоточием всех жизненных сил земли, ни смиренного служения Свету в своих пределах; и воевали ни во чье имя.<sup>52</sup>

There was neither the final execution, nor in the following years the final liberation. The closure, which seemed so close, was postponed. But indeed, perhaps in a muffled way, Russia understood, that at the time



Иванов Вячеслав  
Иванович

Figure 7. Portrait of Viacheslav Ivanov by Konstantin Somov (1906).

when the spiritual body of the enemy state was full of its inner self-renewing harmony and replete with the great tension of its powers, our collective spiritual body was in disharmony, in inner disarray and extreme weakness, because it did not hear over its dark chaotic waters the fluttering Spirit, and the Russian soul did not know how to choose decisively its path at the crossroads. It neither dared to mount the Beast and lift up high its sceptre, nor did it dare to carry the light yoke of Christ with determination. We did not want with any determination either to have sway over the ocean that will be the centre of all forces of life, nor to take on the humble service to the Light within our own boundaries. And we waged the war in the name of nothing.

Ivanov's ruminations certainly reflect the influence of Solov'ev's 'response to concrete historical and cultural changes originating from China and Japan at the point when the modernization and westernization of these nations were challenging the existing relationship between and indeed the very categories of, east and west', the response we have seen in his poems 'Ex Oriente Lux' and

'Panmongolism'.<sup>53</sup> However, most importantly, this very pessimistic excerpt crystallizes Ivanov's lifelong preoccupation with Russian national destiny in the context of his two main interests: the classical world and Christianity. As he contemplated the first losses in the Russo-Japanese War and then the events of the Russian Revolution of 1917, he once again brought to the fore the two main discourses that characterize also the Russian reception of Vergil in the context of Russian identity: the imperial and the religious. Russia, in his opinion, needed direction. Unable to achieve its imperial aspirations and most importantly having been defeated now by an Asian country, Russia needed to reposition itself towards its spirituality, more specifically Christ. This idea persists in most of Ivanov's writings about Vergil. While Ivanov's allusions to Vergil are scattered throughout his works, from early poetry to the later 'Roman Diary' of 1944, in the following pages I address only texts that contribute to a consistent theme in Ivanov's reception of Vergil, that of spiritual awakening and inspiration. Before we closely consider these works, it is necessary to say a few words about Ivanov's education and background.

As Vasilii Rudich aptly observes, Ivanov 'was regarded by many, with a mixture of bewilderment and admiration, as the Hellenic spirit incarnate'.<sup>54</sup> Ivanov began his study of ancient Greek and Latin on his own at the age of twelve. After graduating from a classical gymnasium in Moscow with the highest honours, he immediately attracted the attention of his professors as he pursued the study of history and philosophy at Moscow University, where he made an impression with his impeccable knowledge of ancient languages. Recognizing his great promise as a scholar, in 1886 Ivanov's teachers arranged for him to study at the University of Berlin at the seminar of the famous Theodor Mommsen.<sup>55</sup> Under the tutelage of Mommsen and Otto Hirschfeld, Ivanov wrote a Latin dissertation, *On the Tax-Farming Companies of the Roman People* (*De societatis vectigalium publicorum populi Romani*), which he completed in 1895 but only published fifteen years later. Although the thesis was undertaken in the spirit of Mommsen's *Römisches Staatsrecht* (*Roman Constitutional Law*) and in accordance with his teacher's methodology, Ivanov's conclusions ran counter to Mommsen's own theory.<sup>56</sup> Ivanov's thesis was, however, well received by Mommsen and highly praised by Hirschfeld, who both acknowledged their young student's outstanding achievements.<sup>57</sup> Ivanov, however, chose not to pursue the academic career open to him in Germany.

Perhaps Ivanov's disinclination to study Roman history further was largely due to his inability 'to identify himself with the Roman spirit' because of its imperial ideals and aspirations.<sup>58</sup> During his dissertation years Ivanov immersed himself at first in the study of the origins of Roman belief in Rome's high historical mission. That study, as we will see, is directly connected to his reception of Vergil. At that time, however, under the influence of Nietzsche, Ivanov's interests shifted from Rome to the study of Dionysiac religion, which became his main interest. His *The Hellenic Religion of the Suffering God* (*Эллинская религия страдающего бога*, 1903–5) and his second book, *Dionysus and Predionysianism* (*Дионис и прадиионисийство*, 1923), are both sophisticated and complex works in which Ivanov displays his lifelong drive to reconcile the disparate elements of his world view, mainly Classics and Christianity. Ivanov's drive to construct a syncretic view of paganism and Christianity was by no means a new one. As Pamela Davidson observes, 'in post-Renaissance humanist culture' the tension that existed for St Jerome and St Augustine and 'the line of demarcation, drawn by Dante, who firmly excluded pagans from the sphere of Christian revelation,' became considerably blurred. Russia at the turn of the century was also characterized by 'an all-embracing tendency towards cultural syncretism'.<sup>59</sup>

*The Hellenic Religion of the Suffering God* was not strictly speaking a scholarly book, but rather a course of lectures Ivanov developed and delivered in Paris in 1903. In these lectures he argued that Dionysus must be seen as 'prototype or forerunner of Christ' and that the cult of the pagan god 'offered a certain method of psychological parallel to that of Jesus'.<sup>60</sup> These ideas found their deeper development in Ivanov's *Dionysus and Predionysianism*, which reflects in more detail Ivanov's religious and philosophical quest and contains traces of such influences as Nietzsche, Erwin Rohde, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, Gilbert Murray, and E. R. Dodds.<sup>61</sup>

The core and starting concept for understanding Ivanov's reception of Vergil is Ivanov's view of ancient Rome not as a phenomenon of 'natural' impromptu culture, but as a historical and cultural context for Christianity, just as in the case of his approach to Hellenism in general and the Dionysiac cult in particular. Ivanov's move to Rome in 1924 and conversion to Catholicism in 1926 contributed to and even enforced this tendency to assimilate the most influential pagan legacy in his Christian world view.<sup>62</sup> Rome and *Latinitas*

existed for Ivanov as an embodiment of what he termed the 'Hellenic principle' («эллинство») identified with Mediterranean and European culture and rooted in 'the blood and language of the Latin tribes'.<sup>63</sup> Rome for Ivanov was a perfect locale that housed two of his spiritual passions, not as a utopian fantasy, but as a geographical city in which pagan shrines and the Hellenic spirit existed side by side with Christian churches, and the pagan past was neither disturbed nor annihilated by the advent of a new religion. For Ivanov there existed a miraculous, uninterrupted continuity that stretched from Dionysiac mysticism through Vergil and on to Christian Dante.

It is also necessary to consider Ivanov's view on Vergil in the context of his other 'Roman' texts.<sup>64</sup> During his first trip to Rome in 1892 Ivanov wrote a poem entitled 'Laeta' ('Joys') in which he exclaimed with exhilaration: 'Having reached my sacred goal, I, a pilgrim, have attained bliss.'<sup>65</sup> Ivanov declared Rome 'a new homeland', the place where finally the 'homeless traveller' could 'establish the altar for his penates'. The poem, 156 lines of elegiac distichs (in imitation of the ancient elegiac metre), was written in response to Ovidian exilic poetry. It echoes and juxtaposes Ovid's *Tristia* with the title of the poem 'Laeta' in order to emphasize Ivanov's exhilaration at being in Rome and contrast it with Ovid's devastation at being banished from his beloved city.<sup>66</sup>

Apart from his personal experiences that were so inextricably connected to Rome, Rome is central to Ivanov's poetics as the focus of the world culture in which the Russian artist could assert his place. Influenced by the writings of Vladimir Solov'ev, Ivanov saw the task of a Russian artist as twofold. On the one hand, a Russian poet living in the First Rome had a duty to contemplate thoroughly and to understand Russia's role as the Third Rome and its 'selfless ability to synthesize East and West'.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, the merging of East and West would be fully realized by joining in the creation of a Kingdom of God, in which the Eastern and Western churches could enter the long-awaited union.<sup>68</sup> Cultural unity would lead to a religious one, human culture would merge with religious faith, and the Christian *Civitas Domini* could be understood through Rome's ancient past as the *Caput Mundi*, the centre of the world. Thus Ivanov claimed kinship in his vision of Rome not only with Vergil and Aeneas, but also with the Augustine of the *Confessions* and Dante of the *Divine Comedy*.

By 1924, the year of his final move to Rome, Ivanov had lived through the deaths of his two beloved wives, Lydia Zinovieva-Annibal (1907) and Vera Shvartsalon (1920), and the havoc of the first post-revolutionary years in Moscow and Baku.<sup>69</sup> He found in Rome once more his promised land and expressed his exultation in the *Roman Sonnets*. The first sonnet, written a few days after his arrival, relates his feelings of Phoenix-like rebirth, a resurrection from the cleansing fire:

Вновь, арок древних верный пилигрим,  
В мой поздний час вечерним 'Ave, Roma'  
Приветствую, как свод родного дома,  
Тебя, скитаний пристань, вечный Рим.  
Мы Троя предков пламени дарим;  
Дробятся оси колесниц меж грома  
И фурий мирового ипподрома:  
Ты, царь путей, глядишь, как мы горим.  
И ты пылал и восставал из пепла,  
И памятливая голубизна  
Твоих небес глубоких не ослепла.  
И помнит, в ласке золотого сна,  
Твой вратарь кипарис, как Троя крепла,  
Когда лежала Троя сожжена.<sup>70</sup>

Again, true pilgrim of your ancient arches,  
I greet you, as my own ancestral home,  
With evening 'Ave, Roma',  
You, wanderer's harbour, eternal Rome.

The Troy of our forebears we give to fire;  
The chariots' axles crack between the thunder  
And furies of the world hippodrome:  
You, king of roads, see how we are burning.

And you went down in flames and rose from the ashes;  
The mindful blueness  
Of your deep skies did not grow blind.

Your cypress, standing sentinel, remembers  
In the caress of golden dream  
How strong grew Troy as she lay burned.

Ivanov's lyric protagonist greets his beloved city in Latin: 'Ave, Roma'. The introduction of Latin, as Kalb observes, 'into an otherwise Cyrillic text semantically links Russia to the Western world, thus

echoing the poet's own journey from Russia to Rome.<sup>71</sup> Just as Troy had metamorphosed into Rome, so the poet feels that he has been granted another life and has been raised from the ashes, as he emerges from Russia in turmoil into the eternal city, the 'wanderer's harbour'. The poem brings to mind Aeneas' address to his comrades amid the devastating shipwreck (*Aen.* 1.202–7):<sup>72</sup>

revocate animos maestumque timorem  
mittite; forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit.  
Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum  
tendimus in Latium, sedes ubi fata quietas  
ostendunt; illic fas regna resurgere Troiae.  
Durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis.

Restore your souls and dismiss sad fear;  
Perhaps at some point even these things will be a pleasure  
to recall.

We are headed towards Latium, where the fates promise  
Restful settlements; there it is allowed for the kingdom  
of Troy to rise again.

Endure, and save yourselves for the happy events.

In contrast to Aeneas, who is terrified by the storm and uncertain of his future when he delivers these words (208–9: '*talia voce refert curisque ingentibus aeger / spem vultu simulat*'—'he says these words aloud but vexed with great sorrows / he feigns hope on his face'), Ivanov's triumph over fear and trying fate is unreserved. The identification with the Trojan hero en route to his new home was not new to Ivanov's poetry. In his first collection, *The Pilot Stars*, the poem 'Cumae' («Кумы»)<sup>73</sup> referred to Aeneas' plight again through the prophecy of the Cumaean Sibyl given to the hero during his descent to the underworld in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*. That descent had been necessary for Aeneas to abandon his past as a vanquished Trojan and prepare for his future as the victorious if ruthless Roman. Without the descent into the underworld the rebirth of Aeneas from the Trojan *Flammentod* would have been impossible.

In the *Roman Sonnets* Ivanov identifies himself even more with the plight of the hero Aeneas who had to undergo the transformation from a Trojan into a Roman. The poet envisions the rise of the new city from the Trojan fire and life from the destroyed civilization. The hope is not feigned; it is confident and exhilarating. The cypress tree, in Roman poetry a traditional symbol of death, becomes a symbol of

resurrection, a new beginning that the poet anticipates in Rome, his new abode. Resurrection from the annihilating fire as a spiritual rebirth was one of Ivanov's persistent themes, and was especially prominent in his *Cor Ardens* collection (1911) and was even reflected in the title. Zelinskii explained Ivanov's interest in the theme of rebirth by means of fire with reference to the suffering and resurrected god Dionysus, Ivanov's main scholarly interest.<sup>74</sup> The poem not only evoked the burned Troy, but also the rebirth of Rome herself: «и ты пылал и восставал из пепла» ('and you burned and rose from the ashes'). Ivanov might have been alluding here to the numerous resurrections of the city: from destruction by the Gauls, from the great fire of Nero, from the barbarian attacks. Rome in a cyclical motion soared over time, and the sky of the city became 'mindful' («памятливая») of all its history; the word in Russian is derived from «память» ('memory'). The idea of memory was reiterated again in relation to the cypress tree, to which the ability to remember was also attributed.<sup>75</sup> Here Ivanov was following in the footsteps of his beloved Greeks, for whom loss of memory signified death: Lethe, the river of oblivion, was located in Hades; as long as memory persisted, however, resurrection was inevitable and death was kept at bay.

Rome for Ivanov acquired a universalism in which the Eastern Trojan Aeneas was transformed into the founder of the Western Roman nation, and the Russian poet into a harbinger of a renewed Christian ideal, a role that Ivanov assumed persistently. For Ivanov, furthermore, Vergil stood on the threshold of a new world, bridging the gap between the pagan past and the Christian present and future.<sup>76</sup> Therefore even Vergil's own doubts about the brutalizing price of building Rome did not enter Ivanov's perception of Rome and his interpretation of its greatest poet. This curious detail, however, in Ivanov's treatment of the Vergilian text is consistent with Ivanov's overall philosophical views.

In his essay 'Legion and Communitality' («Легион и соборность», 1916) Ivanov juxtaposes the two terms: 'legion' represents the power of the community against which any individual within that community is powerless; *sobornost'* («соборность», 'communitality') is the Orthodox concept of a unity of believers in the Church through Christ within which any individual is respected and valued.<sup>77</sup> That concept, in Olga Deschartes's words, 'unifies the living with the living and the living with the dead, it springs from *Memoria Aeterna* and creates the

*Communio Sanctorum*.<sup>78</sup> While Ivanov associates ancient Rome and the new Communist Russia with the concept of the 'legion', *sobornost'* for him is a uniquely old Slavic concept which was closely linked both to Ivanov's 'metatemporal, or "panchronic", interpretation and representation of culture' and to his belief that Russia and the Russians had a 'Roman' unifying mission in the history of Christendom.<sup>79</sup> This interpretation yet again has to be put in a broader context upon which we briefly touched in the introduction to this study and to which it is necessary to return now. As Russian intellectuals from the eighteenth century on tried to align Russia with Western values, alongside the overall sense of inferiority to the West there lingered a continuous sentiment that 'Russia would contribute to the total renewal of world civilization, of which Russians would serve as both the prophets and the architects.'<sup>80</sup> Greenfeld writes:

One final step had to be taken before the transvaluation of the Western canon could crystallize as the Russian national consciousness. The backwardness of Russia meant the immaturity and underachievement of its civilization by Western standards. The Russian patriots connected the abomination of reason to too much civilization—a curse they were spared—and interpreted the latter as separation from vital, primeval sources, of which they had to spare. (While in the course of the eighteenth century, it was many times emphasized that backwardness was not necessarily an obstacle on the road to greatness, this intellectual somersault, making virtue out of necessity, turned backwardness into a guarantee of greatness.) At this juncture the Russian nationalist elite discovered, or perhaps invented, the 'people,' which determined the criteria of membership in the nation and led to its definition as an ethnic collectivity. For they connected the spiritual virtues of the Russian soul: spontaneity and feeling, to these vital forces: blood and soil . . . The soul—the sign of Russianness—derived from blood and soil.<sup>81</sup>

We can see how Ivanov's interpretation of the Russian mission in the world fits into this construct of seeing the Russian soul as a stronghold of true spirituality, ready to assume leadership on the road to spiritual epiphany while also encompassing all the benefits of Western culture. Greenfeld suggests that for the most part this construct was 'ressentiment . . . that fueled Russian national consciousness'. In the eighteenth century it proved to be especially important because it was 'the period of gestation' of Russian national identity.<sup>82</sup> But after the Revolution of 1917, reverting to that idea of the collective power of the pure Russian soul was bound to happen in order to recover

whatever of that identity was left.<sup>83</sup> For Ivanov it became connected with the Russian spiritual mission. Ivanov also extended this syllogism into the realm of Christianity, where the idea of ethnic collectivity was supplanted by the concept of *sobornost'*, the Orthodox concept of religious unity. Vergil's work was not treated by Ivanov solely as a text of the emerging Roman Empire conquering the world with its imperial collective enforced by legions, but also as a religious text transfigured in the epiphanic light of unifying *sobornost'*.<sup>84</sup>

In the *Roman Sonnets* Ivanov saw himself as the new Aeneas, who would start his journey from the ancient gates of Rome and end it at the citadel of the Christian fate, St Peter's. This journey also showed Ivanov's persistent integration of Classics and Christianity, with a strong preference for the latter; like Dante he chose Vergil to be his guide and then abandoned him at the gates of St Peter's because, as a pagan, even Vergil must be barred from the Kingdom of God.

That spiritual journey through Rome also fits into Ivanov's perception of Russia as a Third Rome, which, unlike its Roman predecessor, would have different priorities. Ivanov thought of the Russian Revolution as he was writing his sixth sonnet, 'Fontana delle Tartarughe'.<sup>85</sup> The entry in his diary dated 3 December 1924 reads: 'The entire time I've been abroad, I've been maintaining "Hannibal *ad portas*".'<sup>86</sup> By interpreting Communism as Russia's Hannibal, and thus its undoing, Ivanov linked together Russian and Roman history.<sup>87</sup> While Russia, with Hannibal-Communism at its gates, was temporarily unable to fulfil its Christian mission, Ivanov, like a Russian Aeneas, took upon himself the task of being the mouthpiece of the Third Rome in the first one until Hannibal could be defeated.

In this respect Russia's designation as the spiritual Third Rome (although temporarily hindered in its mission) becomes particularly poignant. In the essay 'On the Russian Idea' with which I started my discussion of Ivanov, he finally reveals his expectations: 'You, Russian, must remember one thing: universal truth is your truth and if you want to preserve your soul, do not be afraid to lose it.'<sup>88</sup> Here Vergil's importance for Ivanov is disclosed by the author himself through his citation of the famous lines in *Aeneid* 6.788–853 alongside his injunction to Russians. When Aeneas descended into the underworld in Book 6 to hear the prophecy about his destiny from his father, Anchises, the latter showed him the 'Roman parade' populated by the future great figures of Roman history: following Augustus were the souls of heroes from earlier times—the kings of Rome, then the

great men of the republic, ending with the two Scipios who had defeated the Carthaginians and Quintus Fabius Maximus Cunctator, who had saved Italy from Hannibal. Anchises broke off this pageant to prophesy Rome's mission (851–3):

tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento  
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,  
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.  
Roman, remember to rule the nations with your sway  
(these will be your arts), and to impose the custom of peace,  
to spare the vanquished and to bring down the haughty.

Ivanov construes these Vergilian lines not as an expression of 'national selfishness but the providential will and idea of sovereign Rome in the process of becoming the world' («не эгоизм народный, но провиденциальную волю и идею державного Рима, становящегося миром».<sup>89</sup> Subsequently he borrowed the didactic tone for his message to his compatriots, but the imperial pride was gone, replaced by a spiritual quest. In this essay Ivanov makes it clear that Rome represented for him not just an image of empire but a spiritual entity with a spiritual mission, thus again linking classical antiquity to Christian values on the common basis of faith. Russia's loss of itself would culminate in a resurrection of the spirit, just as Troy in the *Roman Sonnets* rose from the ashes to become Rome. By understating Roman imperial aspirations and linking them to Russia's spiritual role in the world, Ivanov moved even further away from the world of classical antiquity into the world of Christian faith.

In 1931 Ivanov returned to Vergil one more time and wrote in German<sup>90</sup> his essay 'Vergils Historiosophie', which was published in the prestigious literary journal *Corona* edited and published at that time in Zurich and Munich by Martin Bodmer and Herbert Steiner.<sup>91</sup> In this essay Ivanov's continual allusions to Dante, whom he saw as the only poet who understood the essence of the 'Christian' Vergil, are, as Pamela Davidson observes, full of several 'intellectual inconsistencies'. Ivanov viewed Dante as a poet 'whose spiritual outlook exhibited Dionysiac traits' and as such can be used as yet another proof that the Dionysiac religion is a 'prefiguration of the ideal, primitive essence of Christianity'.<sup>92</sup> However, as in the case of Ivanov's reception of Vergil, we must not look for the reflection of the historical Dante and his attitudes to pagan antiquity in Ivanov's essay. Ivanov was interested in Dante 'as a vehicle which he could invest

with his projected spiritual ideal of a synthesis of Greek and Christian mysticism'.<sup>93</sup> The same approach is at the core of his reception of Vergil, whom Ivanov in a very decisive way read through the lens of mysticism and Christian belief. Furthermore, as Rudich points out, Ivanov's reception of the *Aeneid* was connected with Ivanov's theory of *antiroia* (the reverse flow), the flow of causality, directed from future to past.<sup>94</sup> In Ivanov's view the Christian beliefs and texts illuminate the poetry of the pagan past. This later essay unequivocally presents Vergil in a messianic light in tune with his medieval reception, which Ivanov, despite his fine classical training, accepted as 'instinctual' when assessing Vergil. Does Vergil, asks Ivanov, 'no longer belong completely to antiquity, but also already to the "progenies" who in fact know themselves to be installed in Heaven?' Although Ivanov in this essay no longer directly addresses the question of Russian national destiny in the context of Vergil, it is clear that it is on his mind as he returns again to contemplation of Aeneas' mission and especially his dispute with Dido:

The belief which for the Greeks is clearly characterized by the content of their ideas and the inherent dialectics of basic knowledge as the point of departure for a philosophy of history—verified, by the way, by Aristotle's concurrence—is especially Aeschylus' and Herodotus' magnificent view of the Persian Wars as the pinnacle of the age-old struggle between Europe, proud of the ethical make-up of the free ancient Greeks, and Asia, with its Libyan foothills, represented by the principle of theocratic despotism. Virgil remains true to this view, in his own, truly Roman way, as one for whom Hellas represents the transmitter of tradition and *Urbs Roma*, the universal city. This perspective provides him with a deeper justification for the dispute with Carthage over world rule, a struggle that was decisive for the development of national power, and helps to interpret the divine directive that dutifully burdened his hero with the painful dispute with Dido. To be sure, the poet must, in order to adapt the classical theory to his national point of view, undertake a colossal adjustment: he removes the Trojan War, where the Greeks perceive an important moment precisely in their struggle with the Orient, from the traditional connections, blames Ilium's fall only on Laomedon and the Priamides (*Laomedontae luimus perturia Troiae, Georg. 1.502*;<sup>95</sup> *culpatus... Paris*,<sup>96</sup> *Aen. 2.602*; Aeneas, as we know, belongs by lineage to an auxiliary strand of the royal house),<sup>97</sup> and, highlighting this artificially, has the Trojan people, after emigrating to Hesperia, appear to be the true bearers and shapers of the civic ideal ('*Polisidee*') of the Occident. Yet even this very broad scope appears too

narrow for the lofty flight of the poet; proof of the historical necessity and the beneficial effects of this new world regime, supplied (most insistently via Polybius) by political historiography, is not enough for him: he strives to make the case for transcendental justification of the events in order to prove for everyone the religious consecration of Roman political power.<sup>98</sup>

In this passage Ivanov's earlier preoccupation with Russian national destiny shines through. He saw Roman political power as 'consecrated', 'divinely ordained'. More importantly, the age-old juxtaposition between East and West was brought forth by Ivanov again. Trojans, originally from the Orient, became true shapers of the fates of the Occident. It is hard not to recognize Ivanov's thoughts on Russia in these lines. Caught between Eastern despotism and Western secular imperialism, Russia had to shape its destiny by accepting Christ as the only source of power, both religious and secular. Ivanov perceived Vergil as the 'first poet to speak of national determination as mission' and cited here again the celebratory warning '*tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento (haec tibi erunt artes)*' ('Roman, remember to rule the nations with your sway (these will be your arts)'), interpreting it as 'national self-determination on the one hand, universal on the other—within one harmonious single entity'. Ivanov ended his essay on the optimistic and proleptic note:

Following the collapse of the ecumenical ideal that fades out in Dante's treatise *De monarchia*, the newly born national consciousness mines from the same quarry, fulfilling its needs in accordance with its capacity. The songs of praise of Italy in the *Aeneid* and in the second book of the *Georgics* inspire Petrarch to patriotic hymns. Virgil's vernacular becomes a holy relic, a spiritual palladium of nations proud of belonging to the *genus Latinum* by descent, language, moral stance.

Ivanov wanted to see Russia as a part of the 'genus Latinum' that he is describing. In 1931, however, it became clear that Russia was irrevocably consumed by the Communists, and all hope was lost. That is perhaps the reason why Ivanov's contemplation of the Russian national mission is suppressed here, hidden under his 'Vergilian' text.

Ivanov's essay on Vergil must be considered side by side with another contemporary contemplation of Vergil, by the famous Russian religious philosopher Georgii Fedotov.

### Georgii Fedotov

Georgii Fedotov, like Ivanov, also voiced a reception of Vergil closely connected with his hopes of Russia's mission in the world, although his interpretation of the Roman poet in messianic light was less pronounced and less connected with Solov'ev's and Ivanov's ideas of Christian unity.

Born in 1886 in Saratov, Fedotov graduated from St Petersburg Technology Institute and was caught up in the sweep and excitement of the 1905 revolution, which found him at first supporting radical socialists. His subsequent arrest and exile to Germany, where he studied history in Berlin and Jena, brought him under the influence of humanist philosophy, the study of which he pursued upon his return to Russia, where he entered the University of St Petersburg. Under the tutelage of Ivan Grevs, Fedotov completely severed his links with any political movement and devoted himself entirely to the study of the European Middle Ages.<sup>99</sup> Persecution related to his politically active past, however, persisted and in 1911 forced him to leave for Italy, where he worked for a while in the libraries of Rome and Florence; he returned to Russia the following year. It was Italy, by Fedotov's admission, that shaped him as a historian of Russian culture: 'It was precisely the deep immersion into the sources of Western culture which opened up the magnificent beauty of Russian culture. Returning from Rome, we for the first time quivering with awe peered into the columns of Kazan Cathedral; the medieval Italy made Moscow more understandable.'<sup>100</sup> This approach also became palpable in Fedotov's reception of Vergil as he tried to connect the *Aeneid* with the trials of Russian emigration after the Bolshevik revolution.

Fedotov left Russia for good in September 1925. He lived for a short time in Berlin, but found his permanent residence in Paris. There he took a position at the St Sergii Theological Institute (Institut de Théologie Orthodoxe Saint-Serge) where such important figures as Sergii Bulgakov and G. V. Florovskii also taught. Until 1940 Fedotov taught there the history of Western Christianity, hagiology, and Latin. In the 1920s–30s he published a series of monographs on the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, which manifested his philosophical goal of seeing Christianity not in any narrowly defined denomination, but as a wholesome, unifying, not separating concept, which reflected Solov'ev's ideas of unity.<sup>101</sup> His last two major works

most likely to Gnedich's translation of the *Iliad* and Zhukovskii's of the *Odyssey*, both of which were repeatedly mentioned earlier in this study, Fedotov denies Vergil any longevity and meaning in Russia. He sees Homer as a soothing, calming influence, juxtaposing his poetry with Vergil's, whose sound in Russian is still foreign. It is important to note that, unlike Ivanov, Fedotov essentially rejects Rome for Greece rather than integrating them into a whole. Only at the end of his essay does Fedotov proclaim the *Aeneid* as inspirational 'in the hour of a solemn feat, when we will be required to give up everything vital and dear, the beauty itself' («в час сурового подвига, когда от нас потребуется отречение от кровного и родного, от самой красоты»). Fedotov thus refuses to appreciate Vergil's poetry aesthetically, disregarding its poetic value as on a par with the Homeric poems. Vergil's epic is cast by him as a narrative of sacrifice and complete isolation as Fedotov becomes concerned with aligning Russia with Greece for reasons of religious and spiritual legacy.

After Ivanov and Fedotov, Russian artists and thinkers rarely returned to the messianic or prophetic readings of Vergil's poetry. As the Soviet state emerged from the Civil War and massive exodus, the national discourse in Russian literature also changed, turning away from imperialist and spiritual doctrines towards more individualistic personal contemplations. This change in the perception of Rome in general, and Vergil in particular, again reflected an effort to assign meaning to the present, but the sweeping political and religious interpretations receded into the background, yielding to the less grandiose Vergil. In the later twentieth century Vergil found a complex postmodern response in the poetry of Joseph Brodsky (1940–96), who initiated a new kind of Vergilian reception concerned neither with empire nor with Christianity, but with the place of an artist in his own country and in the world.

## NOTES

1. Ivanov (1971–9), 1.628, 'To each his own.'
2. Kalb (2008), 15.
3. In some cases the Silver Age figures when attempting to interpret the new environment rejected the promise the doctrine conveyed. Later in the Soviet period (under Stalin) the doctrine came back into use yet again. See Clark (2011), 169–209.

4. Mandel'shtam (1974), 97–8.
5. The poem is multi-layered and, along with allusions to Solov'ev's poem, 'three meetings' also evokes Mandel'shtam's brief romance with Marina Tsvetaeva and their meetings. See Gasparov's commentary in Mandel'shtam (2001), 754. A. M. Ranchin points out several possible interpretations of the pronoun 'he' in Mandel'shtam's stanza. He singles out three most likely ones: one referring to Mandel'shtam himself and his 1917 essay 'Skriabin and Christianity', in which he doubted the benefits of Roman culture; the second pointing towards Vladimir Solov'ev and his poem 'Three Meetings'; and the third an allusion to Pseudo-Dimitri, who falsely declared himself an heir to the Russian throne, accepted Catholicism, and, after receiving support from Rome, refused to try to bring Russia under the Pope's control. See A. M. Ranchin, «Византия и «Третий Рим» в поэзии Осипа Мандельштама» ('Byzantium and the "Third Rome" in the poetry of Osip Mandel'shtam'), 8 December 2010. Available at: <<http://www.portal-slovo.ru/philology/43764.php>> [last visited 10 May 2013]. See also Freidin (1987), 114–15, who suggests that the pronoun might have referred to the unfortunate Tsarevich Aleksei, the 'scheming son of Peter the Great', and again perhaps to Mandel'shtam himself. While all these interpretations are plausible, I do not see them as mutually exclusive, and would like to address in more detail the allusion to Solov'ev as most relevant to this study. See also Sinit'syna (1998), 8, who believes that Mandel'shtam in these lines engages in polemic with Solov'ev and disagrees with his views on Rome.
6. Kornblatt (2009), 13.
7. Kornblatt (2009), 13.
8. Cited in Kornblatt (2009), 7.
9. Kornblatt (2009), 11. Kornblatt also points out that Sophia 'appears in Byzantine iconography as male (Christ the Wisdom of God)'.
10. Zernov (1944), 117.
11. See Gustafson (1996), 31. Marina Kostalevsky (1997), 3, observes that the idea of unity, 'from time immemorial, held a persistent fascination for minds reared against the geopolitical backdrop of the boundless, scattered lands called Russia'. Kostalevsky also traces this idea back to the 'Third Rome' doctrine.
12. On the teachings of Ivan Kireevskii, see Gleason (1972). On the Slavophiles in general, see Riasanovsky (1952).
13. This connection to Catholicism became as important for Ivanov later as it was for Solov'ev.
14. Connolly (1992), 384.
15. Both poems can be found at: <[http://az.lib.ru/s/solowxew\\_wladimir\\_sergeewich/text\\_0060.shtml#064](http://az.lib.ru/s/solowxew_wladimir_sergeewich/text_0060.shtml#064)> [last visited 1 March 2013]. The

- poems were also influential for the writings of Alexander Blok, Valerii Briusov, Andrei Belyi, Georgii Chulkov, and Sergei Solov'ev.
16. Sutton (1988), 175.
  17. One reason for Solov'ev's concern and disillusionment at the time was the tsar's refusal to pardon regicide.
  18. Gaut (1998), 93.
  19. Lim (2008), 321. Lim also points out significant contradictions in Solov'ev's universalism, as it pertains to his writings on China and Japan. See also Ram (2003), 225, on Solov'ev's uncertainty about the Orient and xenophobic tendencies regarding China.
  20. Davidson (2000), 643.
  21. See Davidson (2007).
  22. Zernov (1944), 125.
  23. Matual (1982), 276.
  24. Solov'ev (1970), 1.36. Trans. in Matual (1982), 276. For 'forefathers', however, Solov'ev uses the word *parentalia*, declining it in Russian.
  25. Galinsky (1996), 249.
  26. Solov'ev (1970), 3.154–5. Matual (1982), 276.
  27. Matual (1982), 276.
  28. The most exhaustive review of all the identifications of who the child might have been can be found in Coleiro (1979), 219–54.
  29. Clausen (1994), 127.
  30. Several classical scholars have hinted at a religious interpretation of the eclogue. Brooks Otis (1964), 137, described the poem 'as prophetic and inspired—almost like a prayer that is answered'. Before him W. F. Jackson Knight (1944), 137, went so far as to suggest: 'Perhaps Virgil already reached his greatest poetic discovery, that the Holy Family, human and divine in one, is enough to unify the explorations of the spirit.' The most influential secular interpretations of the eclogue are (to name a few) those of Putnam (1970), Leach (1974), Alpers (1979), and the commentary by Clausen (1994). The influential study by Edward Norden (1924) made, as Clausen (1994), 128–9, points out, the Christian interpretation acceptable and connected the Fourth Eclogue with Eastern theology and ritual.
  31. Averintsev (1996), 40.
  32. The italics are omitted from the online version cited but appear in the 2004 edition (222).
  33. Some important bibliography on those interpretations can be found in Briggs (1981), 1267–1357. For a shorter but comprehensive discussion see Clausen (1994), 121, who dates the 'blessed event' (the birth of the child) to the year 40 BCE. He suggests that 'Virgil is alluding to the Pact of Brundisium, a political settlement between Antony and Octavian', which was 'solemnized, in the high Roman fashion, with a dynastic marriage as

- Antony took to wife Octavian's sister, the blameless Octavia'. The offspring of that union would be the 'expected son of Antony and Octavia and heir to Antony's greatness—the son that never was; a daughter was born instead.'
34. Arnold (1994), 160.
  35. Matual (1982), 278.
  36. Matual (1982), 278.
  37. Clausen (1994), 127.
  38. See Matual (1982).
  39. For the detailed account of the Symbolist assessment of Solov'ev, see Cioran (1977), 89–104.
  40. See the N. Ia. Mandel'shtam, *Vospominaniia (Memoirs)*, <<http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/?t=page&num=11706>>, p. 296 [last visited 12 May 2013].
  41. For more on Mandel'shtam and Rome, see Torlone (2009), 132–52.
  42. Kalb (2008), 17.
  43. See Torlone (2009), 132–52.
  44. Losev (2000), 585. Losev (575–94) also offers a comprehensive overview of Solov'ev's influence on the other leading Symbolists, such as Valerii Briusov.
  45. Kalb (2008), 10. Clark (2011), 24, also points out that the story of Aeneas 'resurfaced periodically in works by Soviet writers, most notably in Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*'. For the numerous parallels between *Doctor Zhivago* and the *Aeneid*, see Griffiths and Rabinowitz (2011), 176–94, who aptly observe that '[i]t was Virgil who set the pattern for focusing the history of a people through the myth of a single life' (180).
  46. Wachtel (1994a), 4–5. Bloom (1976).
  47. This fragment is cited in Ronen (2008), 107.
  48. Kiselev (2004), 21.
  49. Although some of these figures had already made their reputations in Russia, they were less successful abroad but undoubtedly contributed greatly to the creation of the impressive Russian cultural milieu.
  50. Kiselev (2004), 22.
  51. The collected works of Ivanov are available at: <<http://www.rvb.ru/ivanov/>> [last visited 3 March 2013].
  52. Ivanov (1971–9), 3.323.
  53. Lim (1998), 323.
  54. Rudich (1986), 275.
  55. Wachtel (1994b).
  56. Rudich (1986), 276. Mommsen's theories later met with much criticism as well, especially his treatment of the institution of the principate, which he considered solely from the legal point of view, excluding its political and social aspects. The 'grand fallacy' of that approach was that

- Mommsen wanted to 'describe and understand a social organism by studying only its formal law'. See Linderski (1990), 53.
57. Wachtel (1994b), 360, has convincingly demonstrated that Otto Hirschfeld was considerably more involved than Mommsen in Ivanov's academic career, since Hirschfeld was in charge of the progress of Ivanov's dissertation thesis. Later Ivanov downplayed Hirschfeld's role and exaggerated his own closeness to Mommsen, whom he admired immensely.
58. Rudich (1986), 278.
59. Davidson (1996a), 85–6.
60. Davidson (1996a), 86.
61. For further most recent discussion of these two works, see Westbroek (2007).
62. Ivanov did not officially emigrate to Rome, but went there in fact as a representative of the Soviet state with permission from Anatolii Lunacharskii, the first Soviet Commissar of Enlightenment, and with the assignment of establishing a Russian Academy in Rome. He took this task seriously, but nothing came of it. He never renounced his Russian citizenship explicitly, although in 1929 he was declared «невозвращенец» ('one who failed to return'), and his citizenship lapsed in 1936 (Kalb, 2003, 25 n. 7).
63. Myers (1992), 86.
64. A detailed analysis of these and other 'Roman' poems of Ivanov can be found in Torlone (2009).
65. Ivanov (1971–9), 1.636.
66. Frajlich (2007), 100 and 119 n. 24, cites Vladimir Toporov's suggestion that in 'Laeta': 'a vivid panoramic description of Rome, synthesized in its various spatial and temporal images, leads to the theme of returning again according to his circuits and faithfulness to Rome... and further to the theme of homeland'.
67. Kalb (2008), 17.
68. Ivanov's vision of Rome was also strongly linked to Solov'ev's advocacy of a unification of the Orthodox and Roman churches in his most famous theological work, *La Russie et l'Eglise universelle*. In this unified church, according to Solov'ev, East and West would be equal partners, but Russia would have a special role to play.
69. In 1920–4 Ivanov was professor of classical philology and poetics at the newly founded University of Baku.
70. Ivanov (1971–9), 3.578. I have followed the division of the lines in the English translation of the poem according to this edition.
71. Kalb (2008), 152.
72. We have already seen these lines in the discussion of *The Bronze Horseman* in Chapter 3.
73. Ivanov (1971–9), 1.574.

74. Zelinskii (1916), 3.103. Zelinskii emphasized Heraclitus as well as Dionysus as a source for Ivanov's interest in rebirth by fire.
75. Klimoff (1986), 131.
76. Kalb (2003), 32.
77. Rosenthal (1993) analyses the term «соборность» in works by Ivanov, Sergei Bulgakov, and Pavel Florenskii. This concept was influenced by Solov'ev's idea of universalism. See Losev (2000), 585. See also Cioran (1977), 246–51 and 252–73, for the influence of Solov'ev's concept of Sophia on Florenskii and Bulgakov respectively.
78. Trans. Kalb (2008), 147.
79. Meerson (1999), 719. Ivanov (1971–9), 3.259–60.
80. Raeff (2003), 136.
81. Greenfeld (1992), 258.
82. Greenfeld (1992), 259–60.
83. The Bolsheviks for the most part tried to do away with the discourse of national identity or 'Russianness', replacing it instead with the idea of the 'Soviet people', again a contrived construct that proved to be extremely feeble in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union.
84. See Kalb (2008), 151–2.
85. Kalb (2003), 37.
86. Ivanov (1971–9), 3.852.
87. Braginskaia (2004), 62, points out that the equation of the Russian Revolution with foreign attacks on the Roman state was customary at that time among Russian intellectuals.
88. Ivanov (1971–9), 3.326.
89. Ivanov (1971–9), 3.326. In the Russian version the play on the palindromic effect of the words «Рим» ('Rome') and «мир» ('world') gives the lines a special emphasis.
90. Ivanov wrote other works in German as well, among them poetry. His engagement with German poetry, philosophy, and music remained lifelong. See Wachtel (1994a), 9–14. Wachtel points out that Ivanov 'mastered ornate, literary German' (11), which manifested itself in his essay on Vergil.
91. Davidson (1996b), xxxix. The translation of Ivanov's 'Vergils Historiosophie' first appeared in print in 2009 in the work co-authored by me and my colleague John Jeep, whose expertise in German and unlimited patience made the translation of this very challenging text possible. See Jeep and Torlone (2009).
92. Davidson (1989), 43.
93. Davidson (1989), 46.
94. Rudich (2002a), 35. Ivanov worked out this concept in his commentary to the poem 'Melampus's Dream' («Сон Мелампа», 1907).