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The Museum and the Research Centre Vyacheslav Ivanov Archive in Rome, Italy

The Museum and the Research Centre Vyacheslav Ivanov Archive in Rome: Literature, music, art, and the city

Vyacheslav Ivanov remained in cultural memory as, above all, the creator of the so-called "Tower" (Bashnya) in St. Petersburg – the center of Russian symbolist creative thought. The Ivanovs rented an upper-floor apartment on Tavricheskaya St. in St. Petersburg in 1905–1912. The apartment was largely situated in a rounded corner of a residential building, which was shaped like a tower crowned with a dome. Tenants could go up to the roof through the back door and enjoy a view of the city. The Tower became the spot where numerous cultural figures of the Silver Age gathered for discussions, dialogues, music, and theatrical performances. Along with writers, philosophers and scholars – such as Aleksandr Blok, Andrei Bely, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Velimir Khlebnikov, Nikolai Berdyaev, Pavel Florensky, Faddei Zelinsky and others – the Tower was frequented and witnessed performances by Mikhail Gnessin, Mikhail Kuzmin; the musical critic Vyacheslav Karatygin and the artists Léon Bakst, Mstislav Dobuzhinsky and Konsyantin Somov were also among the regular visitors and collaborators. Vsevolod Meyerhold put up a play and formed his ideas of new theatre. Many, among them Maximilian Voloshin, Mikhail Kuzmin, Andrei Bely, Fyodor Stepun and others, used to come for long stays with the Ivanovs or rented rooms nearby, and conversations could continue over weeks and months. Both discussion and collaboration would often move over to other spaces: publishing houses, the editorial offices of the magazine "Apollon," or the

quarters of the Religious-Philosophical Society. They continued in correspondence, so that the space of the Tower expanded and the basic principles it stood for came to life again in other venues after the meetings on Tavricheskaya came to an end. As a center that brought together creative forces, above all poetic and philosophical but also musical and artistic, the Tower remains unparalleled in terms of its stimulating and contagious energy. Among others, the Tower left its mark both on the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin and on Osip Mandelstam's poetry. To a certain extent, the Tower's essence and role bear a comparison with Platonic Academy but the likeness does not exhaust its ambition. In Ivanov's mind, the Tower was to transform the world through the dialogue and mutual influence of the creators of new harmonies, to create a universal *sobornyi* art. The goal was to combat the impending chaos, the future catastrophe, in an appeal to the legacy of the humanistic culture that had the gift of merging Greek and Roman Antiquity with Christianity. The conversations that took place in the Tower were to aspire to the task of humanistic synthesis and that of the synthesis of all arts without which, Ivanov was sure, culture and the creative arts could never fulfill their transfiguring, liberating mission.

The Ivanov Centre in Rome has adopted, as its logo, the symbol of the Tower, a stamp designed by Dobuzhinskii for Ivanov's book *Following the Stars* (*По звездам*). Here is a humorous sketch by the same artist (currently in the collections of the Russian Museum): a winged Vyacheslav Ivanov stands on the roof of his house with a little candle, directed upwards.

The museum organized in the Tower apartment could have claimed a place among other important literary museums of the 20th century, but we can only imagine it. In recent decades, the apartment has belonged to Vladimir Kumarin-Barsukov, a founder and leader of the Tambov criminal gang arrested in 2007 (from the

newspapers of that time Kumarin's arrest, photo of the house on Tavricheskaya St

On July 17th, 1994, a memorial plaque was installed. It read as follows: "This house, Vyacheslav Ivanov's 'Tower,' was, in 1905-1912, a place of gatherings for Russian cultural figures, poets, philosophers and artists." The board was a gift to St. Petersburg from Neuvecelle, a small town in France where Vyacheslav's son Dimitrii was born in 1912. A journalist who was well known in France, he later used the name of his birthplace as his pseudonym. Neuvecelle's authorities commissioned the plaque, hoping to celebrate their famous citizen and become famous themselves, brought it to St. Petersburg and took part in the installation and the unveiling. On Sobchak's orders, it was then accompanied by an explanatory plaque: "Memorial plaque - gift to St. Petersburg from Neuvecelle, France." It is currently lost.

In 1924, Vyacheslav Ivanov emigrated to Rome with his family, and brought his manuscripts, books, photographs and art works with him. The family never owned a house in Rome; they rented furnished apartments. Between 1926 and 1936, Ivanov taught languages in Collegio Borromeo in Pavia and lived there. His family remained in Rome. After his return in 1936, they rented a small apartment in a old house on the Tarpeian Rock, monte Tarpeo on the Capitoline Hill, from there you could see the Forum and the Coliseum. The windows opened onto a small garden with a fountain. About it, Ivanov wrote in a poem: "A murmuring garden and behind/Your naked relics, Rome! ..." The poem ends with the line "...an earthly Paradise."

Zinaida Gippius, who visited the poet, left the following commentary on this poem: "Not many people in Paris still remember the famous St. Petersburg Tower on Tavricheskaya and its owner. Everything has changed now. Instead of the Tower - the Tarpeian Rock and the

'naked relics' of Rome. Instead of the boisterous crowd of the newest arrivals on the poetic scene - some young seminarian or another sitting at the round tea table in his black cassock, or an Italian scholar. Some are deemed worthy of a tête-à-tête in the host's own narrow study cluttered with books" (the article "Almost Heaven: Meeting Vyacheslav Ivanov in Rome," December 1937).

In the end of 1939, Benito Mussolini decided to destroy the old buildings on the Capitoline Hill, which used to obstruct the ancient sacred road, via Sacra. He personally inaugurated the works with a stroke of his pick on a house roof in the vicinity of Ivanov's apartment. The family had to move at once. A friend of Ivanov's, Tolstoy's daughter Tatyana Lvovna, found their new apartment. It was situated on the top of Little Aventine Hill, close to the ancient San Saba basilica inside the Aurelian Walls (via Leon Battista Alberti 25). Here, Ivanov lived until his death in 1949. The family stayed in this apartment until 1986, and cherished the poet's legacy until the last of those who stayed, his son Dimitrii, had to move out when the owner left the apartment to a servant. A memorial plaque has been installed on the house walls.

The Vyacheslav Ivanov Museum and Research Centre in Rome is physically located in a small apartment that Dimitrii Ivanov purchased close by. It is not technically a memorial apartment since Ivanov himself never lived there but, according to his son, the layout is similar to via Alberti and the view is almost identical. What mattered was a view on the Dome - the dome of St. Peter's Cathedral by Michelangelo, which was initially visible in the distance (it has since been hidden by the growing foliage). Dimitrii Vyacheslavovich moved all of the poet's manuscripts, his library and the furniture from his study, second- and third-hand and of fairly poor quality. The archive contains tens of thousands of manuscripts by Ivanov,

his family and his contemporaries. Twenty-eight thousand pages have been digitized and can be found online at www.v-ivanov.it. There are books, portraits, and a large archive of photographic material.

Despite the absence of a permanent home, poor living conditions and the challenges of everyday existence, Vyacheslav Ivanov had the gift of feeling at home - in a higher symbolic sense - in Rome as both world and Home with a capital 'H'. Small as it is, the Ivanov Centre is a true and a truly museum insofar as it fits in the space of Rome.

His arrival to Rome in 1924 was a return to the homeland for Ivanov, as it was for many Russians, for Gogol in particular. He already wrote about his kinship with Rome a long time before, without however separating himself from Russia at the same time, in a poem composed during his first visit to the Eternal City in 1892: "Faithful to my homeland/ I deem Rome my new homeland". The walls of his St. Petersburg apartment were adorned by Piranesi's etchings with views on Rome. Rome is also the subject of his best poetic work: the "Roman Sonnets", initially entitled "Ave Roma," written soon after his arrival in 1924, and the "Roman Diary" written in 1944.

The 1924 arrival to Rome, the joy of reunion, gave Vyacheslav Ivanov a burst of new energy.

Vyacheslav Ivanov tells of this also, in detail, in his letter to Mikhail Gershenson from December 31, 1924, which sums up, in a sense, the first four months in Italy: "For over a month in Rome, my soul could not keep still due to that characteristic effect of happy excitement that Rome alone has over it - like an angel that comes and troubles the baptismal font. Even rhymes woke up and I sent Gorky nine sonnets ... entitled "Ave Roma" - a beginning, I feel, of a large cycle of Roman etchings."

Both in these descriptions and in the poems themselves, the poet's attention is focused on the water imagery - on the sacred and beautiful streams of Roman water. Rome itself emerges as a source of inspiration, literally a source responsible for the troubling of water as in the Pool of Siloam for those "waiting for the moving of the water". Rome's aqueous soul is manifested in Rome's fountains, which most of the sonnets are devoted to. In the first sonnet («Regina Viarum»), the poet appears before the reader's eyes on via Appia, which the Ancients called "the queen of roads". Then he ascends the Quirinal Hill («Monte Cavallo») and proceeds from there, via the Quattro Fontane («L'acqua felice»), to the Piazza di Spagna towards the boat-shaped Fontana della Barcaccia («La Barcaccia»). Then he walks towards the Barberini Square and the Triton Fountain («Il Tritone»), from there to the medieval district and The Turtle Fountain («La Fontana delle Tartarughe»), walks up to the Temple of Asclepius, reflected in a small lake surrounded with fountains («Valle Giulia»), descends to the Trevi Fountain («Aqua Virgo») and ends up on the Pincho Hill, with its view on the evening Rome and on the dome of St. Peter's basilica («Monte Pincio»).

In other words, in the absence of one's own apartment, furniture and homeland, there was Rome as the home to all humanity with its moving waters. As its inhabitant, the poet was true to the high - "Towering" - aspirations to creative dialogue of literary and philosophical thought, music, and art. In the relative seclusion of emigration, he continued to construct his unities and syntheses through correspondence with old and new interlocutors, which constitutes one of the foremost parts of the collection. It includes valuable letters from Vladislav Khodasevich, Maksim Gorky, Ivan Bunin, Grigol Robakidze, Zinaida Gippius, Aleksandr Grechaninov, who emigrated to Paris, the major Russian-Polish scholar of Antiquity Faddei Zelinskii, the Italian comparatist Alessandro Pellegrini, the founder

of Italian Slavistics Ettore Lo Gatto, and the Italian journalist of Russian Jewish origin Leone Ginzburg (known antifascist and founder of the publishing house Einaudi) There is correspondence with the philosophers Lev Shestov and Semen Frank and letters by the artists Konstantin Somov and Alexandr Benois from Paris Initially, Ivanov kept up a correspondence with Anatoly Lunacharsky concerning the project of creating a Russian Academy in Rome, which did not come to fruition Of particular importance, both in terms of volume and contents, are the letters exchanged with Ivanov's children while he was away from Rome, in Pavia, the correspondence with Olga Shor, with the Russo-Germano-Jewish thinker Evsei Shor, with the philosopher Fedor Stepun and with the editors of the Parisian journal "Sovremennye zapiski" and the Swiss journal "Corona "

Correspondence with Berdyaev did not continue but Ivanov had a portrait of Berdyaev, a lithograph by the artist Vadim Falileev, which dates from 1922 Ivanov may have brought this portrait with him in 1924, or received it from Falileev later as the artist lived in Rome in 1938 and visited the Ivanovs, his etchings with Roman landscapes are still in the apartment Blok's presence was continued through his portrait - an unsigned sketch brought from St Petersburg, possibly by Yury Annenkov Blok's name seems to be in his own handwriting Andrei Bely's first wife Anna (Asya) Turgenev signed her engraving of Ivanov with two dates and two places 1911, Petersburg and 1937, Dornach

The artists Tatyana Lvovna Tolstaya, Sergei Petrovich Ivanov, and the architect and painter Andrey Beloborodov worked together with Ivanov and their work constitutes an organic part of the Vyacheslav Ivanov Archive in Rome The portrait of Ivanov was painted by his close friend Tatiana L'vovna Sukhotina-Tolstaya, as he posed, Ivanov wrote her a poem

The synthesis of the arts was one of Ivanov's foundational principles over the entire course of his life It is this kind of synthesis that he considered to be a means of overcoming chaos and establishing harmony Hence his collaboration with artists and musicians, which he considered crucial for the creative mission

One of the main tasks of Ivanov's life in Rome was his poem "Svetomir," which he started to plan out in St Petersburg before the Revolution, and on which he worked primarily in the last decades of his life The Roman collection includes ample materials on "Svetomir" plans, manuscripts, numerous letters to friends and family where the poet discusses this project, which was dear to him

Consider a fragment from a document, a letter from February 18th, 1938, addressed to the Pope, which describes the poet's aims (translated from the Italian) "Most Holy Father, I have been informed that Your Holiness granted me a monthly allowance, making it possible for me to devote my last years to the continuation and the completion of my work on a vast project I conceived as a spiritual testament of a poet and a Christian thinker with the intention to call onto the troubled and devastated soul of the Russian people, which *ingemiscit et parturit usque adhuc* ("groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" Romans, 8:22), and to beg it to seek out an unblemished vision of its true condition and its destiny as part of the Church of Christ "

According to Ivanov's conception, his mission was a theurgic one; the poem was to contain certain motifs, sounds, images and rhythms that were key to Russian and, further still, European culture The appearance of such fundamental symbolism was meant, ideally, to serve the goal of Russia's transformation, of the overcoming of the chaos and horror that had overwhelmed it In this respect, the mission of

"Svetomir" reminds one of Gogol's intentions when he was working on the second volume of his "Dead Souls;" as in Gogol's case, this plan could not be brought to a conclusion

What matters for us here is that Ivanov's design was influenced by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's opera "The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevroniya," which premiered in the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg at the high point of Ivanov's Tower, on February 1907. The archive contains plans of "Svetomir," then in the form of an opera libretto. Ivanov dreamed of a musical mystery play as an art form that perfectly corresponded to his intentions. He was close to Skriabin with his mystery play "Prometheus," and his vision of transforming the world through symbolic images and through the synthesis of all art forms. In his article on Skriabin, Ivanov writes that different art forms are but different facets of a single spirit. Art seeks synthesis, it is liturgical and its highest aim is the transformation of the world in freedom.

Small fragments of Ivanov's large design came to fruition as songs by Aleksandr Grechaninov, a religious-minded composer who set some of Ivanov's spiritual poems to music. The musical cycle of 1916 was based on the spiritual poetry written as the first sprouts of the future "Svetomir." Consider a song based on the poem "The waters of the source are pure" with its imagery of water, clear source, the movement of the waters and the well, it seems akin to the "Roman Sonnets" cycle. The purpose of the musical cycle, just as that of "Svetomir" later on, is to bring to the surface the spiritual forces that help overcome chaos and death and bring light - a task that was as relevant in 1916 as in the 1930s-1940s. The Ivanov Museum Centre in Rome has organized a CD recording of the cycle along with other musical pieces based on Ivanov's poetry; the recording is available on the web

page of the Ivanov Centre (cf <http://www.v-ivanov.it/averoma/track17.htm>)

Ivanov's life in Rome left little hope to realize a large musical mystery play. Ivanov entrusted his daughter, who became a composer and a church organist, with the musical aspects of his project. Through her, the household had access to Italy's musical circles. She collaborated and corresponded with Ottorino Respighi and other musicians and worked on a mystery opera "Veneration of the Cross."

In the aftermath of Ivanov's death in 1949, his heirs directed their efforts towards preserving not only the documents in the collection but also the Tower's creative purpose. It is with this in mind that Dimitrii Vyacheslavovich Ivanov formed, after many years' efforts, the Vyacheslav Ivanov Research Centre in Rome. It is now an independent institution acknowledged by the Italian authorities.

The Centre's primary interest has been, and remains, philological work of the kind that has, according to the organizers' best judgment and within the context of the last decades of the 20th century, been especially close to the intellectual and literary pursuit of symbolism. Activities such as organizing multiple conferences dedicated to Ivanov in collaboration with leading universities and research organizations, or supporting researchers who came and continue to come to do work in the Roman collections, have all contributed to the formation of more than one generation of scholars in the special spirit Ivanov stood for. The Vyacheslav Ivanov Archive in Rome prepares publications of Ivanov's work and the work of his entourage as well as of conference proceedings and supports research leading to dissertations on Ivanov. The latest of these publications is a critical edition of "Svetomir" in the series "Literaturnye pamiatniki" ("Literary Monuments") in collaboration with the re-

searchers at the Institute of Russian Literature in St Petersburg and the Institute of World Literature in Moscow cf <http://litpamyatniki.ru/library/1895>)

The ongoing project of systematizing, describing, and scanning the manuscripts of the collection, which has stretched over many years, is still underway (the systematization of the manuscripts started in the end of 1980s, description in 1992 and the scanning and the design of the website in 2006-7)

The Research Centre is devoted to the task of preserving and spreading Ivanov's intellectual and creative legacy and of strengthening, in his own spirit, the European constituent of Russian culture and the Russian constituent of the European culture. This demands, according to the ideal of the Tower, a synthesis of art forms and a constant directedness towards Rome.

The musical part of the Archive - musical scores and similar materials - have partly been entrusted to the Glinka Museum of Musical Culture, Moscow. This leaves in Rome Lydia's musical scores and her grand piano. As well as musical recordings, the Centre organizes concerts hosted by Ivanov conferences in St Petersburg. It has recently taken part in the organization of a concert in the Hermitage museum. Italian musicians performed pieces by Giovanni Paisiello first written in St Petersburg, relying on manuscript scores found in St Petersburg.

The artist Andrey Beloborodov bequeathed his archive and some of his work to Olga Shor and they have been merged with the Ivanov collection; some of the paintings have later been transferred to the Russian Museum, while another part is in the Museo di Roma. A painter and an architect, the classicist Beloborodov who painted multiple Roman landscapes is close to Ivanov, to the architecturally static and solemn

character of Ivanov's poetry. They shared a common cult of Rome. Some of Beloborodov's Roman landscapes in the Ivanov Archive continue, as if illustrating them, Ivanov's own poems. Villa Sandoz in Palladian style, designed and decorated by Beloborodov and reminiscent of the Pavlovsk palace, is nearby. This is a Roman Russia in Rome, and in Ivanov's spirit.

The Museum Centre hosts philologists, musicians, artists, and students from many countries and offers tours not just of its own collections but also of Ivanov's Rome to its guests, of the City that inspired his work. The Centre's collections have thrice been represented at exhibitions in Rome, both in the National Library and in the National Institute of Research on Rome; they have also been exhibited in Russia in the Russian State University for the Humanities (RGGU) in Moscow and in the Institute of Russian Literature (the Pushkin House) in St Petersburg. Its primary task today is the preparation for the exhibition dedicated to V. Ivanov's 150th anniversary in 2016 in Moscow.