

## VEČNAJA PAMJAT'

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While exploring different aspects of Vjačeslav Ivanov's work – his poetry, his religious philosophy and his relations with his contemporaries, both like-minded and not – the papers gathered in this volume have common threads that point to two of the most interesting characteristics of his creative genius. The first of these, most apparent in Ivanov's essays but easily discernible in his poetry, is an explicit "universalism", a quest for values that transcend the local and particular, whatever national identity they may necessarily possess. The second is a pervasive characteristic of Ivanov's method: the way in which much of his poetry springs from a particular stimulus, be it an event or an opinion, another's poem, a work of art or the inspiration of a contemporary.

Marina Kostalevsky's 'The Birth of Poetry from the Spirit of Criticism: Ivanov on Skrjabin' traces the development in Skrjabin, whom Sabaneev characterized as the only Symbolist musician, of the qualities that led Ivanov to discern in him a kindred genius. Professor Kostalevsky analyzes Ivanov's group of three essays on Skrjabin, delivered as lectures after the composer's premature death ended their short but mutually stimulating friendship. In the second of these, Ivanov responded to the frequently-made criticism that Skrjabin composed outside the Russian musical tradition, arguing that human creativity must clothe its expression in a national form even as it aspires to universal meaning, and declaring that "Skrjabin's aspirations represent the moment of universal self-determination on the part of the national Russian soul". This position reflects the core of Ivanov's religious aesthetic, the idea that the most exalted human perception of the universality of the divine spirit

can only be expressed through some realization of it in the particulars of the real world. More than that, as Professor Kostalevsky points out, Skrjabin's significance for Ivanov is that he represents the rise to universality of the Russian genius at a time when the "crisis of humanism" had robbed Western civilization of that role. Michael Wachtel, examining in another context Ivanov's sonnet on the death of Skrjabin, points out that he regarded the loss of the composer as a "personal, national and even universal tragedy". Acceptance of the paradoxical tension between the local and the universal pervades Ivanov's writing, not just the articles published under the title *Rodnoe i vse-lenskoe* in 1917. Valery Blinov's 'Vjačeslav Ivanov and Acmeism: Literary Polemics of 1912-1914' examines the definition of Symbolism that Ivanov put forward in the period when the Acmeists were asserting the need for a return to poetry with less ethereal objectives. In doing so, he highlights Ivanov's claim that the Symbolist aesthetic has a universal validity as the essential nature of all true art in any age. Robert Bird in 'Vjačeslav Ivanov and Theology' offers a fascinating account not just of Ivanov's possible influence on Orthodox theology in this century, but of the symbolic theology of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Earth Mother and the realized unity of the material and spiritual worlds. This is of course another sense in which Ivanov's aesthetic theory transposes into a theological position, again achieving a universal significance. Finally, James West's paper on 'Criticism, Mysticism and Transcendent Nationalism in Vjačeslav Ivanov's Thought' focuses on the distinction Ivanov drew between "zemlja rusckaja" and "Rus' svjataja", the one a physical, temporal entity, the other a universal spiritual value, Russia's contribution to the spiritual welfare of all humankind.

Much of Ivanov's writing has its point of origin in a response, though not in any sense that would diminish his creativity: on the contrary, he raised the reactive poetics that we usually associate with occasional verse into a serious aesthetic form. Sometimes Ivanov placed pointers in the form of epigraphs, subtitles or references in the text of the poem. Often the connection is left to be discovered through familiarity, achieved sooner or later, by quest or by happenstance, with the source of his inspiration. Michael Wachtel's paper on 'The "Responsive Poetics" of Viacheslav Ivanov' focuses on this characteristic, illustrating it with two carefully researched examples and exploring the way in which the discovery of the original stimulus can greatly enrich our understanding both of the particular poem, and of Ivanov's poetics as a whole. Professor Wachtel's example is the origin in one of Schiller's epigrams of the expression "nežnaja tajna", as both the title of Ivanov's 1912 collection of verse and a phrase used in several of the poems it contains. The poem 'Narciss' in the 1904 collection *Prozračnost'*, with the subtitle 'A Pompeian bronze', provides a similar example in the visual realm: in this case the poem is somewhat cryptic as long as the bronze figure remains anonymous, but a deeper meaning is elucidated by the details of a well-known and am-

bivalent bronze that is described and illustrated in Johannes Overbeck's standard work on the antiquities of Pompeii. Though this property of Ivanov's creativity is not explicitly the subject of the other papers in this volume, it is quite striking how many of them point incidentally to other instances of the same thing. While Michael Wachtel shows how Ivanov responded in kind to Brjusov's poetic tribute to Skrjabin, Marina Kostalevsky presents a no less interesting example of the phenomenon in question outside Ivanov's poetry: his response in his essays on Skrjabin not only to the composer, but on the level of form to Dostoevskij's celebrated homage to Puškin. The central example in Robert Bird's paper is another "poem of response", with the icon of the "Mater' božija sporitel'nica" at Optina pustyn' as its inspiration, while Robert Jackson's paper analyzes what might be described as an internal variant of the genre – the poem "Nudus salta!.." from 'Rimskij dnevnik', the second part of which is a carefully constructed response to the first.

The Russian philosophical circles in which Ivanov moved were strongly influenced by contemporary German thought and by the rapid development of academic psychology in Western Europe, which drew in its turn on contemporary advances in the physiology of perception. In addition, Ivanov was familiar with late nineteenth-century German Classical scholarship, especially the work done on ancient Greek religion. In his *Ėllinskaja religija stradajuščego boga* Ivanov synthesized this learning with his own insights into its spiritual significance for contemporary humankind, producing a difficult text, couched in a dense and often metaphorical language that draws on the vocabularies of mythology, psychology and Orthodox theology. Though often related to Nietzsche's exploration of Dionysianism in his *Birth of Tragedy*, this work differs markedly in form, function and substance, and sheds light on every aspect of Ivanov's work, from his philosophical and religious ideas to his aesthetic and his poetic practice. Carol Anschuetz's paper compares Ivanov's interpretation of Greek religion in *Ėllinskaja religija* not with Nietzsche's, but with that of Walter Burkert, a distinguished scholar of early religion writing in the German tradition in the post-war years. In both Ivanov's and Burkert's presentation of pre-Christian religion, it is paradoxically only through the ecstasy of a ritualized death – in its Christian form, the mystery of the eucharist – that humans fully experience life. They differ, Dr. Anschuetz concludes, in the greater emphasis that Ivanov placed on the function of the ecstatic state as the psychological well-spring of all human creativity.

The papers of which this symposium is comprised collectively reinforce the point that Ivanov's philosophical essays are not a commentary on his poetry, nor his poetry just an exemplification of his ideas in verse. In this context it is very fitting that their presentation at Yale University in September 1996 was punctuated with readings of Ivanov's verses by Dmitrij

Vjačeslavovič Ivanov, who provided as so often on such occasions a gracious living link to the legacy of his father.