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Variously Flowing Streams in Vyacheslav Ivanov's The Dream of Melampus: Intertextual Analysis

Abstract

The article treats the content, sources and contexts of Vyacheslav Ivanov's poem "The Dream of Melampus" in the part concerning the image of "variously flowing streams". It is found that the direct literary source of the image is F. Schiller's poem "Berglied", read by Vyach. Ivanov in Vasily Zhukovsky's translation. In Schiller the four rivers symbolizing the four rivers of Eden, run away from an invisible source on the four cardinal directions. In Ivanov, they become stretches of a cosmic canvas, intertwined by the World Soul, as well as streams made of everlasting monads, the souls. The symbolism of weaving in Ivanov (including "The Dream of Melampus") is under consideration. It is shown that Ivanov associates weaving with the activity of the World Soul, interweaving the body of the cosmos, and with Leibniz's principle of the pre-established harmony. It is indicated that Goethe's works, primarily "Faust", are the most important source that makes correspondence between weaving and the flows of moisture. Having attracted additional contexts, it was possible to clarify a number of particular issues: thus, vechnost' ("eternity") in the poem mostly corresponds to the Greek concept of αἰών (meaning "life" or "century"); while the crucial opposition of efficient causes and final causes (goals) has its source in Leibniz's "Monadology". With reference to the poetics of Ivanov, other traces of Leibniz's teaching are also discussed. Based on the analyzed texts, the interpretation of the "dark theogony" of Vyacheslav Ivanov himself is proposed: in particular, his idea of everlasting incorporeal monads, migrating from aeon to aeon, from world to world, and accepting various corporeal forms is elucidated.