

Title: Two Poets and Three Firegods: Vyacheslav Ivanov's Place in Khlebnikov's Mythical Universe
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The poetic language of Velimir Khlebnikov is notable for its integration of a wide variety of mythological themes, ranging from ones of specifically Slavic origin to those of a more universal nature. These interests quickly brought the young poet into contact with the Symbolists, specifically with Vyacheslav Ivanov and his circle.

An early manifestation of the literary association between Khlebnikov and the Symbolists was to be centered around the image of the Firegod (*Zharbog*). This invented Slavic deity first entered the annals of Russian poetry in 1906 with Vyacheslav Ivanov's poem of that title. Shortly thereafter, it became the source of inspiration for Khlebnikov's own poem "Zhar-bog! Zhar-bog!" ("Fire-god! Fire-god!" 1907), as well as three further works that emerged from the themes developed within it. The borrowed Firegod theme consequently came to serve as the center for an entire literary universe to be constructed around it. This paper will demonstrate how the expansion of a single theme into entire works (and often multiple works) is typical of Khlebnikov's creative process as a whole.

Of further interest is the fact that Khlebnikov's variation on Ivanov's poem displays a subtler response to Symbolist aesthetics than one might expect of the iconoclastic Futurists. Its complex treatment of the Firegod theme belies much of the harsh rhetoric aimed at Ivanov and his circle in manifestoes signed by the young poet. This paper will thus use Khlebnikov's adaptation of this theme as an opportunity to discuss and re-examine the poet's reception of Symbolism's literary legacy.