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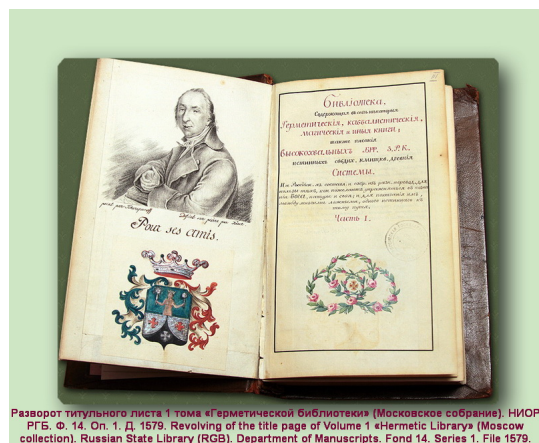
Petersburg collection of «the Hermetic Library» of N. I. Novikov - The legacy of Russian Rosicrucians from the time of ancient Greece to the 18th century

Abstract

An extensive review of the handwritten, multi-volume Hermetic Library is given in the article for the first time. It is kept in the department of manuscripts of the Russian National Library. This collection includes translated works of European authors from the days of Ancient Greece to the 18th century. The Hermetic Library included the books that the Order of the Golden and Pink Cross considered Rosicrucians to belong to their legendary predecessors. The Order of the Golden and Pink Cross appeared in the XVIII century within the framework of the Masonic movement. Till the beginning of the XIX century, the Order was developed as a special direction of Treemasonry, focused on alchemy. In 1782 the Order of the Golden and Pink Cross opened its subdivision in Russia. Having survived a number of prohibitions, the organization of Russian Rosicrucians existed until the beginning of the 20th century. The Hermetic Library became the largest literary heritage of Russian Rosicrucians. The "Hermetic Library" was created by the

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educator and book publisher N. I. Novikov in the beginning of the XIX century. At that time it was Europe's largest collection of alchemical and Rosicrucian works. The library was to be kept secret and be used in the education of the members of the Order. Two collections of the library fell into the hands of different groups of ROS. The Moscow collection was kept in Arsenyev's family. Petersburg collection was passed from hand to hand and in the end of the nineteenth century was put up for sale. Only after 1917 two collections of the Hermetic library got to the book depositories of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The study of the St. Petersburg collection of the library shows that it was copied and translated a few of the Rosicrucians. After Novikov's death in 1818, the work on the library was continued by two different groups, so after the 30th volume the collections of the books differ in content and design. Novikov included in the library the works which show the development of alchemy from Ancient Egypt till Europe of the eighteenth century. They included most important works of the Rosicrucians. 191 works are a part of the 35 volumes of the St. Petersburg collection. The books were formed by thus, to provide consistent training of an adept of the Order. The article offers an analysis of the St. Petersburg collection of "Hermetic library". The size does not provide contents or overview of each volume. It summarizes all that is known about the history of writing and storage of the library until the XX century. The overview of the appearance of the volumes is provided to judge about the General idea of compiling the library. St. Petersburg and Moscow collections are compared.



Keywords

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Secret societies, Freemasonry, the Order of the Golden and rosy cross, the Rosicrucians, alchemy, esoteric literature, alchemical literature, manuscripts collections, libraries.

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