УДК 93/94

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2018-3-663-678

Yuri E. Kondakov

A. I. Herzen Russian State Pedagogical University, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

Petersburg Collection of the 'Hermetic Library' of N. I. Novikov as the Heritage of Russian Rosicrucians from Ancient Greece to the 18th Century

Abstract

The article gives the first extensive review of the multivolume 'Hermetic Library.' It is stored in the Research Division of Manuscripts of the Russian National Library. This collection includes translations from European authors from Ancient Greece to the 18th century. Some manuscripts of the 'Hermetic Library' collection were believed by the Order of the Golden and Pink Cross to belong to the legendary Rosicrucians. The Order of the Golden and Pink Cross emerged in the 18th century within the Masonic movement. Until early 19th century the Order, mostly focused on alchemy, developed as a branch of Freemasonry. 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 continued until early 20th century. The 'Hermetic Library' is the largest literary heritage of Russian Rosicrucians. The 'Hermetic Library' was started by educator and book publisher N. I. Novikov in early 19th century. It was Europe's largest collection of alchemical and Rosicrucian works of the time. The library was to be kept secret and be used for education of the Order members. Two collections of the library fell into hands of different groups of Rosicrucians. The Moscow collection was kept in Arsenyev's family. The Petersburg collection passed from hand to hand; in late 19th century it was put up for sale. Only after 1917 the two collections of the 'Hermetic Library' were acquired by libraries of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The study of the St. Petersburg collection shows that it was copied and translated by several Rosicrucians. After Novikov's death in 1818, two different groups continued the library, and volumes following the 30th differ in content and design. Novikov's library included manuscripts on the development of alchemy from Ancient Egypt and to 18th century Europe. They included the most important Rosicrucian works. 35 volumes of the St. Petersburg collection include 191 works. The volumes were compiled to insure consistent training of the Order adepts. The article analyses the St. Petersburg collection of the 'Hermetic library.' Within the frameworks of an article it is impossible to review the contents every volume. It offers a summary of the history of writing and storage of the library until the 20th century and an overview of the volumes' design and layout, which allows to judge the overall design of the library. It also compares the St. Petersburg collection and the Moscow one.

Download the article: [kondakov_doi](#)

Keywords

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

References

BILINKIS, M. Ya. "Germeticheskaya biblioteka" N. I. Novikova. [The 'Hermetic Library' of N. I. Novikov. In Russ.]. IN: 500 let gnostitsizma v Evrope. Materialy konferentsii [500 years of Gnosticism in Europe. Conference materials. In Russ.]. Moscow, 1994, pp. 74-79.

VITBERG, A. L. Zapiski akademika Vitberga, stroitelya khrama Khrista Spasitelya v Moskve [Notes of Academician Vitberg, the builder of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow. In Russ.]. IN: Russkaya Starina, 1872, vol. 5, pp. 519-582.

GOLLERBAKH, E. A. Knigi revolyutsii: Gosudarstvennii knizhnii fond kak instrument sovetskoi kul'turnoi politiki mezhdv dvumya mirovymi voynami [The Revolution Books: The State Book Fund as an Instrument of Soviet Cultural Policy Between the Two World Wars. In Russ.] Saarbrücken, Lap Lambert AP, 2011, 525 p.

Kratkoe opisanie rukopisnogo otdela za 1914-1938 gody. [Brief description of the manuscript division for 1914-1938. In Russ.]. Leningrad, 1940, 302 p.

NEFEDOV, A. V. Torzhestvo slova i dela. Knigoizdatel' Nikolai Novikov: vozvrashchenie iz nebytiya [The triumph of words and deeds. Book publisher Nikolai Novikov: A return from oblivion. In Russ.]. Moscow, 2015, 304 p.

SERKOV, A. I. Sud'by masonskikh sobranii v Rossii [The fate of Masonic collections in Russia. In Russ.]. IN: Katalog vystavki vo Vserossiiskoi gosudarstvennoi biblioteke inostrannoi literatury, Moskva, i Vserossiyskom muzee A .S. Pushkina. [Catalogue of the exhibition in the All-Russian State Library of Foreign Literature, Moscow and in the A. S. Pushkin All-Russian Museum. In Russ.]. Petersburg; Amsterdam, 1993, pp. 27-34.

About author

Kondakov Yuri Evgenievich, PhD in History, associate professor, A. I. Herzen Russian State Pedagogical University, professor, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, +7-911-167-03-97, urakon@rambler.ru

Submitted 9.05.2018, published:

KONDAKOV, Yu. E. Peterburgskoe sobranie "Germeticheskoi biblioteki" N. I. Novikova - nasledie rossiiskikh rozenkreitserov so vremen antichnoi Gretsii do XVIII v. [Petersburg Collection of the 'Hermetic Library' of N. I. Novikov as the Heritage of Russian Rosicrucians from Ancient Greece to the 18th Century. In Russ.]. IN: Vestnik arhivista / Herald of an Archivist, 2018, no. 3, pp. 663-678. doi 10.28995/2073-0101-2018-3-663-678

You can read completely article in the russian historic-archival magazine "The Herald of an Archivist". Read more about terms of subscription [here](#) .

Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .