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Archival Rossica in Slovakia: Documents on the History of Slovak-Russian Contacts in the
Archive of the Slovak Matica

Abstract

The article traces the process of formation of archival Rossica in one of the oldest archives of the Slovak Republic. The authors analyze documentary materials on the history of the Slovak-Russian contacts in the 19th century, the period when ties between Slovak and Russian scientists and public figures were most intense. It was at this time that the process of national identity formation of the Slovaks took place. The article is to investigate the content of documents from the standpoint of methodology of historical memory and that of principles of historicism. Despite the fact that the history of the Slovak-Russian relations has been in the focus of attention of national and foreign scientists for many years, there are no special scientific studies in which archival materials on this issue would be systematized. In the modern historiographic situation, as there continues a "revision" of previous assessments of the history of the Slovak-Russian relations, the role of archival heritage increases, and yet its significant part has not been introduced into scientific use. In historical science, the most important archive for reconstruction of the history of the Slovak-Russian contacts in the 19th century is the archive of the Slovak Matica. This organization was created by order of the Austro-Hungarian authorities in Martin, city in the East of Slovakia. In the 19th century the Slovak Matica was a center of social life of the Slovaks and played an important role in the formation of the Slovak nation. The article details the complex history of the formation of the archival Rossica collection in the archive of Martin and all stages of its emergence and development. The archive of the Slovak Matica has undergone significant organizational changes over a century and a half of its existence. It is currently called the Archives of Literature and Art of the Slovak National Library (ALI SNB). The authors systematize the archival Rossica in the ALI SNB by the nature of documents and problems. The article provides an overview of the main groups of archival collections and fonds that preserve the historical evidence on nature and intensity of the Slovak-Russian contacts in the 19th century. An analysis of archival materials has shown that these relations developed mainly at the level of personal contacts between Slovak and Russian scientists, writers, and public figures. The authors of the article conclude that the Rossica in the archives of Slovakia still remains an incompletely developed topic for researchers, primarily for Russian ones. Study of the archival Rossica acquires special significance in modern humanities, as there continues a revision of previous assessments of historical events, facts, and actions of national movements leaders.

Keywords

Historical memory, Slovak-Russian contacts, the Slovak Matica, manuscript fund, archival Rossica, Archives of Literature and Art of the Slovak National Library (ALI SNB).

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