Западный эзотеризм: путеводитель для запутавшихся. Гл. 3: Апологетика и полемик

Hanegraaff, W.

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SUMMARIES


Although the problem of insider in the academia was widely discussed in a number of publications, it is still one of the most debatable topics amongst scholars of esotericism and new religious movements. In the article, the author examines a concept of “going native in reverse,” which refers to a situation when an insider completes academic training as a scholar of esotericism and becomes a part of the academic community. Followers of esoteric doctrines were always interested in academic researches, and such fields as Egyptology had a prominent influence on development of esoteric groups, their symbolism, rites and doctrines. Keeping this in mind, we can say that insider comes to the academia, in the first place, not for an academic sanction for his activities, but rather with hope to understand deeper the roots of the esoteric current he or she belongs to. On the other hand, an academically trained insider can bring new perspectives into the academia, which may be important for a deeper understanding of esotericism. From this point of view, development of contacts between academically trained insiders and outsiders inside the academia is an important opportunity for future development of esoteric studies.

Gerhard Wehr. Meister Eckhart. [Chapter] Towards a History of Reception and Development / Tr. from German by Julia A. Shabanova.

The chapter “Towards a History of Reception and Development” from the book “Meister Eckhart”, written by the contemporary German scholar Gerhard Wehr, presents a wide range of reminiscences of the German mystic’s studies of the 14th century. The author develops ideological connections of Eckhart’s studies to views of both his contemporaries, i.e. German Medieval and Renaissance mystics and philosophers of the 19th–20th centuries who were romantics, German idealists and Post-Kantian philosophers. Gerhard Wehr, tracing subtle influences of Eckhart’s studies on the further studies in irrational areas, focuses on special interpretations, subtlety of translations, and history of publications of one of the most influential German mystics in the Latin and German periods of the European Medieval epoch.

Olga V. Kleschevich. Analysis of the Alchemical Layer of the Treatise «Aesh Mezaref» (part II).

The aim of this paper is an analysis of the alchemical layer of the treatise «Aesh Mezaref» (in translation by K. Burmistrov), that is a part of the «Kabbalah Denudata» by Knorr von Rosenrot. Using our ways of interpretations of alchemical texts and the traditional compositional scheme of an alchemical treatise, we restore an initial sequence of fragments of the treatise and make the
analysis of its principal meanings. Our work gives ground to claim that all three basic semantic layers marked by K. Burmistrov in his analysis of the kabbalistic layer of the treatise «Aesh Mezaref» (kabbalistic-alchemical, alchemical, and astrological), from the point of view of an alchemical layer, change a sense of the message, its function and informative burden. The alchemical narration opens a treatise’s direction to the disclosure of kabbalists’ attempts to explain processes of alchemical opus magnum by only kabbalistic methods, and also of attempts to create a general kabbalistic-alchemical system.


«Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion» became one of the first large works by French Traditionalist Rene Guénon (1886–1951). In this work Guénon gives a detailed account of the lives of Theosophical Society leaders and stages of the Society’s development and the basic postulates of teachings preached by the theosophists. Guénon shows that Blavatsky’s and her followers’ claims of an «ancient» and «eastern» character of their doctrine are baseless. On closer examination Theosophy appears to be only a whimsical mixture of diverse elements based on the particularly modern idea of evolution, which is alien not only to the East but also to the traditional West. Guénon gives a convincing demonstration that the myth of the «great Teachers» (mahatmas, created by Blavatsky) is a result of transferring Rosicrucian and Freemasonic beliefs in high-level Initiates onto an Indian foundation. Guénon also touches upon other interesting topics, including the relations of the theosophists with the Rosicrucians, the spirits, the Freemasons, and the Protestant sects as well as the political role of the Theosophical Society. Guénon believes that the impact of Theosophy to be purely negative, as it misrepresents Eastern traditions to Western people (the most obvious result being «to unbalance a good number of feeble-minded people») and discredits Western intellectualism to Eastern people. This issue includes the third part of the translation of the Guénon’s work (chs. IX–XIII); the continuation follows in the next issues.


The “Aliter” journal presents a Russian translation of Chapter 3 from Wouter Hanegraaff’s “Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed”. Wouter Hanegraaff is one of the most important scholars in the study of Western Esotericism and is one of the founders of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE). The “Guide for the Perplexed” is conceived as a practical and accessible introduction to Western Esotericism as a field of study, meant to furnish its readers with basic knowledge and tools necessary for further autonomous exploration of the subject. Chapter 3 is an exploration of discourses that led to the creation of Western Esotericism as a category of knowledge
which are little known to the general public. The chapter follows esotericism’s story from Catholic and Protestant “genealogies of darkness” and to the Enlightenment’s battle against superstition and paganism.

Paul C. Hillery. Unearthing the Druid Revival.

The Druids were the professional class of the ancient Celts. They were the doctors, lawyers, judges, architects, priests, poets and historians of this once great people who migrated across Europe over 3,000 years ago. Their achievements have largely been forgotten, exterminated, exacerbated or integrated in modern times, except for those involved in the Druid Revival. This revival began in mid-17th century archeology in England and included many famous members such as poet William Blake and Winston Churchill. But the influence of Druid teachings can be seen throughout the world, following the millions of Irish who had to migrate during the various Potato Famines or were lured by the Gold Rush to California. Ongoing research using modern archeology and botany reveal much once thought to have had no written language. Experts such as Philip Carr-Gomm, Ronald Hutton and Rupert Sheldrake are important for this understanding. The scientific importance of Druidry is apparent in medicine, agriculture, morphogenetic research. The psychological advantages of their culture and philosophy display a humanistic lifestyle, with significant roles for women, a democratic structure and it has spearheaded the environmental movement for more than 50 years.

Sergey S. Loginovsky. New European Science in the Worldview of René Guenon.

The article considers representations of the French esoteric thinker René Guenon (1886–1951) about science. Guenon considers science as a defective form of knowledge incapable to lead to the comprehension of truth. We show that these representations are within an esoteric discourse, accurately expressing its many characteristic features.


The article deals in the ancient and modern history of Martinism as a spiritual movement having its roots in both French and Russian soil. A brief background is provided to illustrate the main sources of the Martinist doctrine and administrative structure as well as a glimpse of main structural periods of the development of Martinism in Russia. The core of the article is the detailed history sketch on the establishment and further expanding of the Martinist movement in modern Russia after the fall of the USSR. Four of the many modern Martinist orders have installed their administrative structures in this country, e. g. the Traditional Martinist order, Ancient Martinist order, Martinist order of the Unknown Philosopher, and Reformed Initiatic Martinist order, while another one