

Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia

from the Librarian-General's desk

Recommended Reading List No.3:

Books on the Rosicrucian Tradition

As with previous Reading Lists, the purpose of this list is to provide a basic guide for members wishing to study the subject - whether from an historical or Philosophical point of view. Although the original Manifestos were written in either German or Latin, the present list is confined to works in English as these are both more convenient for general use and more accessible. Many of them are to be found in the High Council Library [see Ordinance VI para5 for rules re borrowing of these books]. It should also be noted that the choice of books on this list, and all comments upon them, reflect the personal opinions of the Librarian-General and do not necessarily reflect those of other members of High Council.

Rosicrucian Texts

FAMA and CONFESSIO The Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of R:C: Commonly of the Rosie Cross.
With a Preface ... by Eugenius Philalethes (i.e. Thomas Vaughan) ... 1652. Now reprinted in facsimile together with an Introduction, Notes etc. by Fra. F.N.Pryce ... and 'Problems of the Fama' by Fra. J.Heron Lepper, 1989. Available from Treasurer-General
The first two of the Manifestoes, giving the life, work and aims of the Fraternity. They were originally published in German in 1614 and 1615.

THE CHEMICAL WEDDING The hermetick Romance: or the Chymical Wedding. Written ... by Christian Rosencrutz, translated by E.Foxcroft, 1690. (Facsimile text printed in MONTGOMERY, Cross and Crucible see below)

The third of the Manifestoes, this allegory was the work of the Lutheran scholar, J.V.Andreae (he later denied being author to his wife), who incorporated complex alchemical and hermetic symbolism into the text.

MAIER, Michael Laws of the Fraternity of the Rosie Crosse (Themis Aurea). Facsimile reprint of the original English edition of 1656. Introductory Preface by Manly P.Hall. 1976

Maier was among the most important of early apologists for the Fraternity. His book first appeared in 1618.

VILLIARS, N. Montfaucon de Conte de Gabalis, newly rendered into English with commentary and annotations (by Mrs.C.T.Dudley) 1913

First published at Paris in 1670, the Conte de Gabalis is concerned chiefly with the idea of Elemental Spirits - a doctrine traditionally associated with Rosicrucianism.

SECRET SYMBOLS of the Rosicrucians of the 16th and 17th Centuries. An exact reproduction of the original but with the German text and terms literally translated. 1936

The best English edition of the Geheime Figuren, a pictorial anthology of alchemical, hermetic and Rosicrucian symbolism originally published at Altona in 1785-88. There is a coloured issue of this translation, but the colours are inaccurate and it is suggested that (if they so wish) fratres paint the diagrams themselves on the basis of the coloured German facsimile of 1919. An edition issued by Franz Hartmann in 1888 is both incomplete and inaccurate.

[A translation, with modern explanations, was given by Fra.Norman Hackney (a metallurgical engineer) in 'Quarterly Notes' 1921-1931; reprint to follow]

ALLEN, Paul M. (Ed.) A Christian Rosenkreutz Anthology. Revised Third Edition, 1981

A valuable collection, containing translations of the three Manifestoes and of Robert Fludd's The Rosicrucian Brotherhood (1629), together with a reduced facsimile of the Secret Symbols and two pictorial alchemical texts: Khunrath's Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom and Stolcius's Pleasure Garden of Chemistry. It also contains a series of essays on Rosicrucianism by Rudolf Steiner - necessarily from a partisan point of view.

Historical Studies

WAITE, A.E. The Real History of the Rosicrucians, 1887. Modern reprints exist.

An early study, superseded by the following title but still of use. It was written to counterbalance the lunacies of Hargrave Jennings's work (see below).

WAITE, A.E. The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, 1924. Reprinted in the USA in 1961.

The definitive history, in English, of the entire Rosicrucian movement (although more recent historians have disputed some of Waite's conclusions about the early history of the Fraternity. (Copies in many Masonic libraries))

McINTOSH, C. The Rosicrucians. The History and Mythology of an Occult Order. Revised edition, 1987.

More limited in scope than Waite's work but useful for the chapters on more recent developments.

JAYES, Frances M. The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, 1972. Also in paperback.

A scholarly analysis of the Manifestoes and the milieu in which they appeared, seeing them as an integral part of a scheme to promote a tolerant Protestantism in central Europe, tinged with the hermetic ideas of Dr. Dee.

JACKSON, A.F.C. Rose Croix. The History of the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales. Revised and enlarged edition, 1987.

Although the masonic Rose-Croix degree has no direct connection with Rosicrucianism, it is so seen by the general public and this excellent history enables us to understand its true relationship and to explain this to others.

Histories of the S.R.I.A.

GREENSILL, T.M. History of the S.R.I.A. (Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia), 1987

Fra. Greensill's work is now the standard history of our Society and it has superseded the various brief (and unreliable) histories of Fra. Westcott. Available from the Treasurer-General.

WILSON, H.C.B. Early History of the S.R.I.A. (1937-1944) and The Origin of our Rosicrucian Society (1947)

Fra. Wilson's extremely detailed accounts of the earliest Colleges supplement the preceding work.

VOORHIS, H.V.E. Masonic Rosicrucian Societies (in: Rosicrucian Fama, 41/42, 1971) An earlier edition of 1958 has illustrations.

A prime source for the history of our sister Society in the U.S.A. and for the Society in Scotia.

Commentaries on Texts, and Studies of Rosicrucianism

GARDNER, F.L. A Catalogue Raisonne of works on the Occult Sciences, Vol 1 Rosicrucian Books. Second edition, 1923.

A bibliography listing 761 titles; it is very useful for the student seeking information on early works.

BENNEL, M. & WYATT, I. An Introductory Commentary on The Chymical Wedding, c.1960

Based exclusively on the ideas of Rudolf Steiner, but useful for its sensitively abridged translation of the text.

CASE, Paul Foster The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order.

An interpretation of the Rosicrucian Allegory and an Explanation of the Ten Rosicrucian Grades, 1985 Fourth edition.

The Grades, it should be noted, are linked to those of Case's B.O.T.A. and are not those of the S.P.I.A.

HALL, Manly P. Codex Rosae Crucis. A rare and curious manuscript of Rosicrucian interest, now published for the first time in its original form (with) Introduction and Commentary, 1933. Later reprints exist.

A manuscript similar to the Secret Symbols with an excellent critical commentary

KNIGHT, G. & McLEAN, A. Commentary on the Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz, 1984

With a revised and modernised version of Foxcroft's translation.

MONTGOMERY, J.W. Cross and Crucible, Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654) Phoenix of the Theologians, 1973. Two volumes.

A biography and critical study with a facsimile text of The Chemical Wedding and an exhaustive commentary.

There are many papers on various aspects of Rosicrucianism throughout the 'Transactions of Metropolitan College'; they can be located through Fra. Keith Jackson's Index of Papers published in the Metropolitan Transactions to 1980. Fratres will also find many valuable papers in issues of The Hermetic Journal

Inevitably Rosicrucianism has attracted bizarre, fanciful and idle speculation from many sources over

the years, and much has been written on the movement and its alleged history and beliefs that is both academically and spiritually worthless. It would, of course, be invidious to specify the latter but fratres would do well to approach the following works (given as samples of the genre) with due caution -

HEINDEL, M. The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception, 1908 Many reprints.

The author's ideas do not represent in any way Rosicrucianism in a guise recognisable as such.

JENNINGS, Hargrave The Rosicrucians, Their Rites and Mysteries. Third edition, 1887 Two volumes. Later reprints exist.

A nonsensical work which has nothing whatever to do with its supposed subject.

WITTEMANS, Fr. A New and Authentic History of the Rosicrucians, 1938

A highly misleading title, the "history" being neither new nor authentic.

A.M.O.R.C. Fratres will inevitably encounter works issued by the self-styled Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis. This Order is rightly proscribed by the United Grand Lodge of England, and fratres will gain little or no benefit from a study of its publications.

In addition to our edition of The Fame and Confession of P.C. and History of the S.R.I.A. mentioned above, the Society publishes a number of Booklets reprinted from Papers given at Study Groups and Circles.

Reprints of short Papers are also available for use by Colleges and Study Groups.

Recommended Reading List No.1: The Kabbalah
" " " No.2: Alchemy

Subsequent Reading Lists will cover: Astrology, Tarot, Western Mysticism, Buddhism and Gnosticism.