



# BOOK REVIEWS



*Bonisteel Masonic Library*

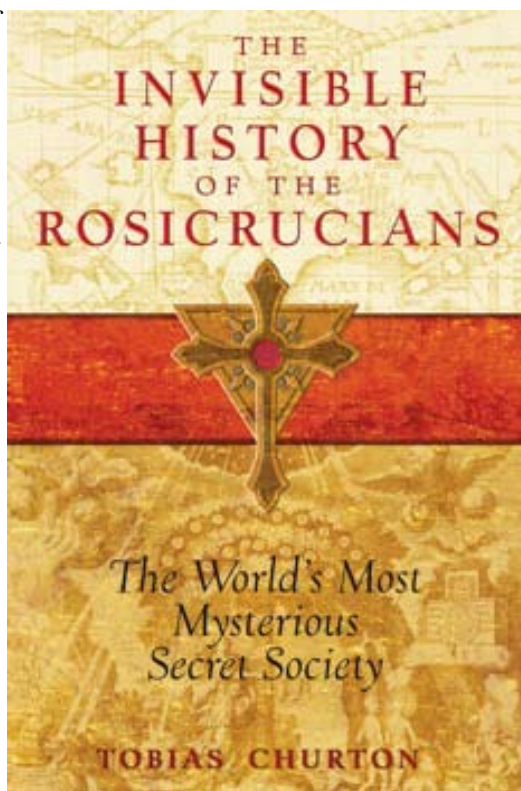
## THE INVISIBLE HISTORY OF THE ROSICRUCIANS

THE WORLD'S MOST MYSTERIOUS SECRET SOCIETY

by Tobias Churton

*The Invisible History of the Rosicrucians* is yet another ambitious undertaking by Tobias Churton. Within its pages the author takes on the task to write a book on the often misunderstood and extremely complex history of a Fraternity that was never really meant to exist in the first place and follows its progression over the centuries right up to the present day fraternal organizations with links to Rosicrucianism including the Rosicrucian Fraternity as it exists in present day.

This by all means is not a book that one can merely just sit down and read in a hurry and fly through the pages. It deserves a lot of time and thought while reading as the author seems at times to ramble on about certain topics at times, nonetheless there is quite a vast amount of information contained within its pages and it is all tied together rather nicely toward the end of the book, although waiting for it all to tie together may get a little frustrating at times as the author spans over four hundred pages explaining the Invisible Fraternity made up of Philosophers, Alchemists and other men of high intellect, then claims that the Fraternity didn't really exist at all, Although it certainly does today, and Churton does a very nice job at painting a picture of the progression of the present day Rosicrucian's and some of the struggles they have had over the years since they actually have existed.



The first “Rosicrucian” writings, the Fama Fraternitatis, Confessio Fraternitatis and the Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz, all when written were done so anonymously and then later traced to be the works of Johannes Valentin Andreae, even though Andreae only admitted to writing The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz. After they accidentally became published and as Churton claims, they were all written as a sort of prank or game aimed at taking a shot at the Universities of the time and “*What began as a game became a religion*”, mainly by a group of European intellectuals that had a desire to make the world a better place by healing this sick free of charge and advancing on medicinal

cures at the time and overall leaving the world a better place than when they found it.

The downside I found in this book are that Churton spends well over two thirds of the book being extremely meticulous as to the figures and history of how the so called Rosicrucian writings affected acted upon and were viewed by people of the era. At times the timeline was hard to follow as it bounced around quite often leaving the reader to have to sort of retrace some of the pages to make sense of some of it, it almost felt like the author was in quite a hurry while writing the book so he just wrote down all the information he knew relating to the topic, which I must admit is a lot, without taking the time to put the information in

a easily traceable timeline. Mr. Churton is obviously quite knowledgeable on the subject. However, Churton states on page 366 “Should readers be experiencing a degree of confusion at this point in our story, please be assured that this is no sign of intellectual failure. The confusion is built into the very fabric of the story and is, regrettably unavoidable. Andreae himself spoke of the situation after the publication of the so-called manifestos as nothing less than a Turrus Babel- and the Tower of Babel represents the ultimate confusion and dispersion of sense; a veritable divine judgment on the folly and hubris of God’s creature, the human being.” I suppose a history of a Fraternity that technically didn’t exist for centuries and the lack of definitive documentation regarding to the Invisible’s because of the fact they were indeed invisible is quite a task to undertake and I applaud Churton for taking on such an ambitious task.

The book is filled with valuable information and the reader will definitely gain knowledge on some very historical characters from the past, including Tobias Hess, Andreae, Sir Francis Bacon, Aleister Crowley, Robert Fludd, Louis Claude de St.-Martin, Max Hiendel and countless other intellectual movers and shakers over the centuries and their impact on not only the development of the current Rosicrucian Fraternity but their impact on society as a whole centuries ago and in present day. Anyone interested in Rosicrucianism or some of the people of the past centuries mentioned above I firmly believe will enjoy this book as I have. There is without a doubt a ton of information to be learned from this work by Tobias Churton and anyone with the desire to be enlightened on the topic would be doing themselves a huge disservice by not taking advantage of reading what the author has put together, he is extremely knowledgeable on the subject and the world of Western Esotericism is better for it.

Reviewed by Shawn M. Gorley

*The Invisible History of the Rosicrucians, The World’s Most Secret Society.*

By Tobias Churton copyright 2009

Publisher: Inner Traditions. Rochester, Vermont

ISBN# 978-1-59477-255-9

Pages: 576

#### **About Author:**

Tobias Churton is a world authority on Freemasonry, Gnosticism, Hermeticism and Rosicrucianism. Holding a Masters degree in Theology from Brasenose College, Oxford, Tobias is an Honorary Fellow of Exeter University and Faculty Lecturer in Western Esotericism. An accomplished film-maker and composer with an award winning drama documentary series Gnostics for Channel 4 (UK), Tobias has also written a biography of Elias Ashmole (1617-92) and standard works on Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, the Gnostic Gospels and Aleister Crowley, as well as a musical on the life of Nancy Cunard (1896-1965), a thriller (The Babylon Gene) and much poetry and song. He describes himself as a ‘spiritual philosopher-artist’.



For more information about the author please visit website at <http://www.tobiaschurton.com>



Many of the books that we review here are provided by publishers and authors in exchange for a review. The review will published online and in Rising Point at [www.bonisteelml.org](http://www.bonisteelml.org)

The purpose of this publication is to disseminate the writings of Freemasons and to provide contemporary information on Freemasonry.