

Zeitschrift: Archives des sciences et compte rendu des séances de la Société
Herausgeber: Société de Physique et d'Histoire Naturelle de Genève
Band: 44 (1991)
Heft: 1: Archives des Sciences

Artikel: Pallas' theory of the earth in German (1778) : translation and reevaluation : reaction by a contemporary : H.-B. de Saussure
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Kapitel: I: Biography of Pallas
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-740194>

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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY OF PALLAS

Peter Simon Pallas (1747-1811) was first a student of medicine at Halle, Göttingen, and Leiden but soon became interested in a variety of other fields in the natural sciences. Searching in vain for a position in Germany and Holland, he accepted the invitation of the Empress Catherine II to work at the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg. He spent the next forty years in Russia and participated in the "Academic expedition" of 1768-1774. His results were published (Pallas, 1771-1776) in German and then translated into Russian, French, English, and Italian. The theory of the Earth discussed in this paper was written for a talk at the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg (Pallas, 1777; the German version of 1778 is translated here). He wrote a great number of articles in Latin on zoology, botany, and other subjects of natural history which were published in various German cities and at St. Petersburg (see list of works of Pallas given by K. A. Rudolphi in a reprint [1967] of Pallas 1771-1776 travels). He was furthermore editor of 7 volumes of *Neue Nordische Beyträge...* (1781-1793), including articles written by him and other naturalists. Twenty years after his first expedition, Pallas undertook a second but shorter trip to the Caspian Sea (1799-1801). When he finally decided to return to his home town Berlin in 1810, he died one year later. For further information see F. Wendland (1986), the Introduction by Dietmar Henze to a reprint of the first expedition of Pallas (1967), and Vasily A. Esakov's article in the DSB.

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