



Starlight

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The Stone that Fell from Heaven

from *The Ninth Century and The Holy Grail*¹

W.J. Stein²

... what falls downwards is not only Lucifer, it is a whole corona of Beings who accompany him. And the legend speaks of this corona as being the crown of Lucifer. And then Michael with his flaming sword strikes one Spirit out of the corona of Spirits, out of Lucifer's crown, a Spirit different from all the others. *One* Spirit took the path, from the heights to the depths, not as one falling, but accompanying the falling Spirits out of free will in order to bring salvation to the men who were to be delivered over to these Spirits. This being of *Angelic* nature³ prepared the way for the Lord who followed him, for the World Logos Himself took the same path which the falling Spirits took whom Michael trod underfoot. Concerning this Being who prepared the way for the World Logos, the legend says that he had shone as a wondrous jewel in the crown of Lucifer.

Michael struck the stone from Lucifer's crown; he [the stone-Being] then came down to men, formed himself into a vessel, became indeed the vessel destined to receive the Blood of Christ. This became the sacred Chalice which held within it the Sun-Host ... At first, so says the legend, it was preserved in a Mystery [centre] of Hercules, a Plutonic Sun-Hero, i.e., in a Phoenician Mystery centre in Tyre, in the City of Hiram. It then came to the Queen of Sheba, the Queen of the Star Wisdom; she brought it to Solomon. In this picture it is the path of wisdom that is described. Then this vessel came into the house in which Christ partook of the Last Supper with his disciples, and the power which flowed over from Him to his disciples streamed forth from this holy vessel (pp. 79-80). We have already called attention to the fact that Jesus is the chalice which contains the blood of Christ ... (p. 204).⁴

¹ London: Temple Lodge Press, 2001.

² A personal pupil of Rudolf Steiner's. Even though Stein trained as a mathematician and philosopher, Steiner, knowing who Stein was, had basically appointed him to write this book. (RP: "It is a fact that Rudolf Steiner indicated, via Ita Wegman, to Walter Johannes Stein that he was the reincarnated Joseph of Arimathea.")

³ See Rudolf Steiner, *Christ and the Spiritual World*, Leipzig 1913/1914.

⁴ This Jesus is identified by Stein as the Child of the Luke Gospel (pp. 184-185), i.e., the Nathan-soul. Stein's exposition would seem to import that the Grail stone or chalice was therefore of the same substance as the Nathan-soul (that "being of Angelic nature" of which Steiner speaks). This association lends another, profound mystical sense to what Stein describes, that at the Last Supper "the power which flowed over from Him to his disciples streamed forth from this holy vessel."



*The Last Supper, by
Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret*

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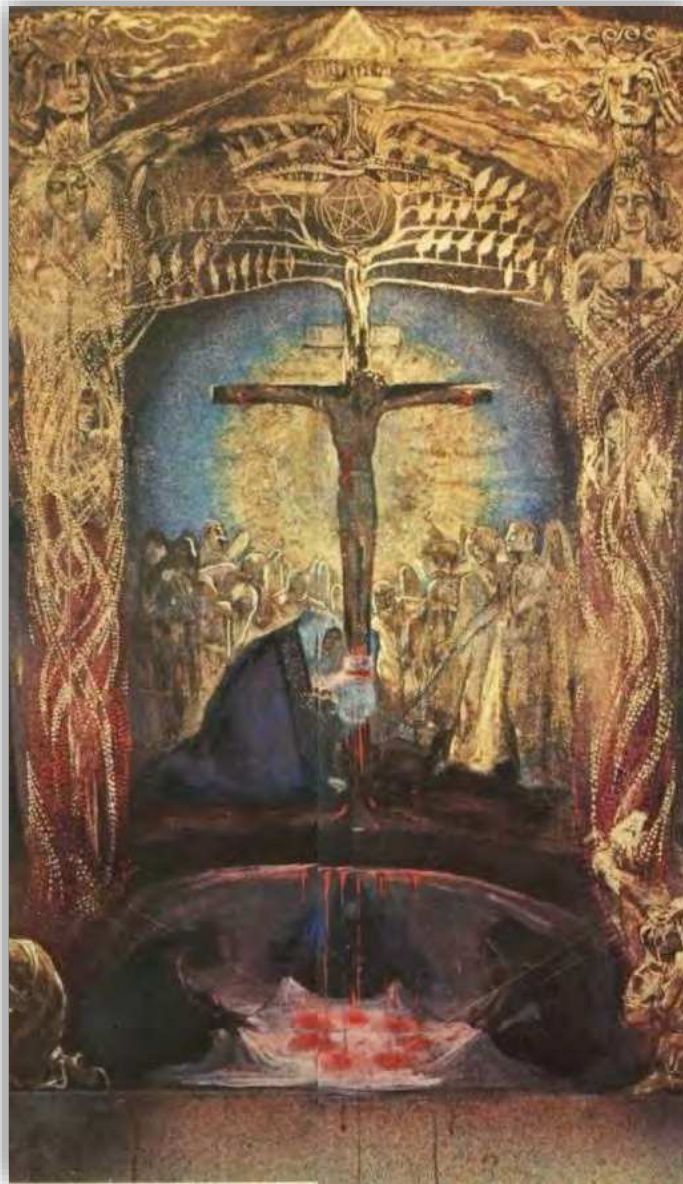
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*Joseph of Arimathea at the Cross,
a reproduction of the central panel of The Grail Triptych by Anna May**

*It is possible to order a high quality reproduction of Anna May's *Grail Triptych* from: <https://www.glomer.com/a-18588/>
During the 1940's Anna May's painting was in Hamburg where it was totally destroyed. Happily, a color photograph had been taken of the painting soon after it was completed.

Editor's Overview

This issue of *Starlight*, which focuses largely on the Grail-theme, is built around the understanding that in linking ourselves to the Grail, at whatever level this may be happening for us, invariably we link ourselves or are linked to, the central Mystery of Golgotha, including the mediating influences of the Angel Jesus and of Mary-Sophia in that most significant of all Mysteries.¹ A wholistic experience of this sort can only be inadequately represented by a series of discrete articles, but an approach has been made, through the way the articles appear in sequence, that *reflects* this central experience, and will hopefully further our meditations on it.

We link ourselves to the Grail within us through our conscious moral work undertaken in conjunction with our close attention to the spiritual processes of higher development, but the Grail within us in its turn is invariably linked to the Grail without. As the present issue shows, in connection with this latter entity (the Grail without) Steiner refers to the Earth-Temple and the Grail Castle, in relation to which the whole world should now be evolving, making of the world itself the Grail, as spoken of by Sergius Bulgakov. Great demands are made on us from within this larger sphere of evolution, not least of which is our need to understand, and to face more fully, our fundamental woundedness and illness within, comprising all the elements of our inherited fallenness, of which we may be healed. This latter theme is expressed in a very direct way especially in that most famous of the Grail stories that climaxes in Parsifal's healing influence on Amfortas.

In the further history of the Grail-stream beyond Golgotha, we thus find, to guide us, the great spiritual example and leadership of Parsifal (the re-incarnated Mani) but also that of Christian Rosenkreutz (the re-incarnated Lazarus). In the latter case we learn more fully about the process by which, in our dedication to the Mystery of Golgotha, we link ourselves to the Earth itself as Grail, as imbued with the Christ-Sun, whence Christ streams into the human I in the sense of St. Paul's words "Not I, but Christ in me." This further development is the consequence, over time, of the penetration of the blood of Christ Jesus into the Earth when the Mystery of Golgotha took place, this same blood that casts its influence within us out of our own Grail-nature that is slowly forming within and would link up with the world-Grail without. This whole development bears witness also to the fact that "the blood of Christ is Sophia's essence of life."²

We then meet, further along in time, the deeply inspiring figure of Kaspar Hauser who, because of the tragic blighting of *his* Grail-mission, awakens us to the still greater challenge we face in the form of the evil forces that oppose Grail-evolution, evil forces which lie, as always, in wait for us. Drawing further, in our time, on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg, Novalis, and Peter Deunov, whose uplifting words and powerful exhortations interweave, as in past issues, throughout the present one, we arm ourselves all the more for that greater encounter with the deeper layers and the very essence of ourselves and of the world that so very much require a growing understanding of our spiritual resources as we progress further and further in time. And in this way do we seek to ground ourselves more and more firmly and certainly in what it means to be part of "The Search for the Holy Grail in our Time."

JOM

¹ For more on the Angel Jesus see Valentin Tomberg, the subchapter "Jesus as the Receptacle of Christ" from *Christ and Sophia*, Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006, 154ff. For more on Mary-Sophia see especially the subchapter "Sophia and Pentecost" from the same book, 304ff.

² As Cynthia Avans puts it in "The Grail of ChristoSophia" at <http://www.christosophia.org/essaysthegrailofthechristosophia.html>

The Grail Triptych

From the Editor

How, we shall now ask, may we approach an understanding of the profound unfolding mystery of the Grail over so many epochs of time? The painting by Anna May given below, which was designed by Rudolf Steiner, begins to fill us in on this vast, unfolding mystery.



The Grail Triptych.

Designed by Rudolf Steiner, painted by Anna May in 1912

First, there is the re-emergence of the Grail in the possession of the Queen of Sheba (Mother Eve) in the time of Solomon, 9th century B.C.¹ Then comes the Grail's further transformation into the cup with which Joseph of Arimathea caught and preserved the falling blood of Christ Jesus on the Cross. Finally, the Grail transforms beyond this in the etheric Earth-ground now imbued with the Christ-Sun, in which Christian Rosenkreutz received his initiation in the 13th century A.D.—*the Earth itself* having in the meantime become a Grail cup out of which our future humanity is being shaped. All is conveyed in striking pictorial form in this painting.

An explanation of the different aspects of the painting will now follow.

¹ The reader will wish to re-consider in this context what is communicated about the Grail by W.J. Stein as given on this issue's front page, namely that the Grail stone or chalice was of the same substance as the Nathan-soul (see note 4 on that page). For indications concerning the reincarnation of Mother Eve as the Queen of Sheba, and then as the Blessed Virgin Mary, see Uwe Lemke, a Christian Community priest whose book, *Das Kreuz als Lebensmotiv. Frauenschicksale um das Mysterium von Golgotha*, is cited by Robert Powell in chapter 2 of *The Mystery, Biography, and Destiny of Mary Magdalene* (see footnotes 33 and 34 in Powell's book). Lemke's book has not yet been translated into English. The title roughly translates as *The Cross as Life-Motif: The Destiny of the Women Connected with the Mystery of Golgotha*. Robert Powell has confirmed that the indications provided by Uwe Lemke are indeed true.

from *Rudolf Steiner's Esoteric Christianity in the Grail painting* by Anna May²
Adrian Anderson³

[T]he scene on the right side of the triptych gives a symmetry to the composition of the painting by balancing the left side, where king Solomon and Hiram form a definite boundary to the Queen of Sheba ... (p. 80).

The Queen of Sheba is holding the [emerald] Grail stone ... (p. 22).

The sculpting of this scene [on the right] is a counter-part to the situation involving Solomon, Hiram, and the Queen of Sheba. These three are near to the curtain veiling the entry to the Holy of Holies; but the acolyte in the scene portraying the initiation of AD 1250 is about to become Christian Rosencreutz, so he is no longer outside the Holy of Holies, he is fully within the Divine. He is to be re-born as a person who has received the Holy Spirit to a very profound degree ... (p. 80)

[From the description written by Anna May in 1918, referring to the group around the sarcophagus:]

“ ... Christian Rosencreutz is surrounded by the seven Holy Rishis, as representatives of the primeval Atlantean planetary Mysteries. Right and left: linking to these Rishis are the representatives of the five post-Atlantean cultural epochs: the old Indian, the old Persian (Zarathustra), the Chaldean-Egyptian (Hermes), the Greco-Latin (Socrates, Plato, Augustine), and, as representative of our own cultural epoch, the Virgin of Orleans [Joan of Arc].” (p. 109)⁴

*

With the Crucifixion scene, the painting takes us into the most sacred of the main themes illumined by Rudolf Steiner's spiritual wisdom and research. (p. 44)

Anna May identified the person kneeling at the foot of the cross, and holding a cup in which to receive some of the holy blood, as Joseph of Arimathea. Here is the only physical witness to the crucifixion scene depicted in the painting, although we know that other people were there [all other figures in this scene are spiritual Beings who remained unidentified — Ed.]

[Also from the description written by Anna May in 1918:]

“When this Christ-blood has penetrated into the innermost depths of the Earth, in the far future, then shall the entirely Christ-permeated human being, the Parsifal of the future, awaken *out of the Grail chalice as if out of a sarcophagus* [italics—Ed.] and all religions and earlier philosophies be united into a living Christ-knowing. Then also shall Archangel Michael have bound up the dragon, and the Woman of the Apocalypse again carry the sun in herself and have the moon under her feet; that is to say, the Earth shall then have carried away [taken into itself] victory over matter.” (p. 109)⁵

² Bayswater, Australia: Threshold Publishing, 2017. This is a lengthy book with marvellous elucidations of the many spiritual themes and figures highlighted in this painting, many parts of which are well illustrated in this book.

³ Adrian Anderson is an Australian-born author and lecturer in spirituality with a PhD from Monash University. He is the author of many books.

⁴ All of these figures are pinpointed in the painting, by Anderson on p. 81.

⁵ The figures of Michael and the Woman of the Apocalypse (i.e., the Sophia) appear at the extreme right of the painting as a last boundary; at the extreme left is the figure of Melchizedek (i.e., Manu, who was also present at the initiation of Christian Rosenkreutz).

The World as Grail¹

Michael Martin

In 1932, Sergius Bulgakov published a remarkable article on the Western Christian mythos of the Holy Grail in the journal *Put'* (*The Way*). He subtitled the article "An Attempt at a Dogmatic Exegesis of John 19:34," pointing to the passage of scripture in which Christ's side is pierced by the centurion's spear: "But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water." Bulgakov's meditation on the Sacred Blood results in the exposition of a profound Christian truth essentially ignored by theologians until the late 20th century. Christ abides in the earth, argues Bulgakov, through the union of his blood and water with the soil on Golgotha, effecting a chemical union between the divine and the land, indeed, with the planet and by extension with the cosmos. The eucharistic overtones are obvious. "Between Christ's presence in the eucharistic blood," writes Bulgakov, "and his presence in the non-eucharistic blood, the blood of Golgotha, of the cross, there exists a distinction only according to the *mode* of this presence, that is, a modal, not an essential distinction."² Rudolf Steiner years before had come to a similar insight, an insight bearing a stunning degree of significance for any manner of authentic Christian ecology.

Bulgakov also considers the further ramifications of this notion and the importance of the poetic intuition in discerning religious truth. He, appropriately, speaks of this truth in terms of a *mystery*. Christ's presence in the earth, his abiding, writes Bulgakov,

is not a sacrament, for sacraments, despite all their mysteriousness, are always known, since they are linked to a definite place and time. Rather this abiding is a mystery, the world's great holy, divine mystery, the world's treasure, holiness, and glory—the HOLY GRAIL ...

It is not surprising if this mystery, till now still unilluminated by the theological-dogmatic consciousness, has lived only in the obscure presentiments of Christian legend and poetry, in which the holy myth is clouded by human imaginings, by romantic reveries. But at the appropriate time this mystery can take centre stage in the Christian world's consciousness, and then the holy treasure of Montserrat³ will catch fire with heavenly light and will lead the nations to meet the coming of Christ. The whole world is the Holy Grail, for it has received into itself and contains Christ's precious blood and water. The whole world is the chalice of Christ's blood and water; the whole world partook of them in communion at the hour of Christ's death. And the whole world hides the blood and water within itself. A drop of Christ's blood dripped upon Adam's head redeemed Adam, but also all the blood and water of Christ that flowed forth into the world sanctified the world. The blood and water made the world a place of

¹ From *The Submerged Reality: Sophiology and the Turn to a Poetic Metaphysics*, Angelico Press, 2015, pp. 164ff.

² Sergius Bulgakov, *The Holy Grail and the Eucharist*, tr. Boris Jakim. Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Books, 1997, p. 42.

³ [Ed. A multi-peaked mountain range near Barcelona, in Catalonia, Spain, and the resting place of the Holy Grail according to one legend.]

*the presence of Christ's power, prepared for the world for its future transfiguration, for the meeting with Christ come in glory ... The World has become Christ, for it is the holy chalice, the Holy Grail.*⁴

⁵The Grail's abiding on/in the earth also bears sophiological implications, opening a way for us to understand the goal of Creation in a more complete way. The Trinity, according to Bulgakov, is mirrored in Sophia (who simultaneously manifests herself in the Virgin Mary).⁶ Sophia, furthermore, inheres within Creation as a "unifying force ... cosmourgic potency ... She is the life of the world."⁷ An invisible stream, we can say then, connects Sophia and the Holy Blood which regenerated the earth at Golgotha.

What results from Bulgakov's considerations of the earth's potential for sophianicity is a sacramental *telos* [object or aim]. Such an outlook has no room, obviously, to allow the possibility of *pura natura*⁸, and Bulgakov—who was familiar with Western discussion of the issue—was completely hostile to this idea which he dismissed as "only an abstract concept, without any real application in human life."⁹ This is so because, as he argues elsewhere, "*the world does not exist* in its own being and relativity. Only the Absolute exists. *The world was created out of nothing*—Christian revelation teaches. Between God and creature, between the Absolute and the relative, there lay *nothing*."¹⁰ His teleology touches quite close to the thought of Henri de Lubac, who also found himself in clerical hot water for his stance against *natura pura*; and Bulgakov's teleology furthermore bears a striking resemblance to Teilhard de Chardin's notion of the Omega Point—which also got *that* theologian into trouble. As with Teilhard, creation, for Bulgakov, ends in its own *theosis*, to which man acts as a kind of midwife: "Creation follows a path toward the fullness of its sophianization, toward glory. On this path man is the leader as the living image of God, as the hypostatic bearer of the creaturely Sophia."¹¹ But this *telos*, this eschatology, is unthinkable without the participation of the Virgin ...

With Bulgakov, as with Solovyov and Florensky, Sophia *par excellence* is revealed in Mary, the Virgin Mother of God. In addition to the salvific role epitomized in her "Yes" and her simultaneously spiritual and *biological* unity with both the Holy Spirit and Christ, Mary is, Bulgakov argues, touched by the Divine Sophia while remaining herself the creaturely

⁴ *The Holy Grail and the Eucharist*, pp. 43-44. Emphasis Bulgakov.

⁵ [Ed. The first three sentences in this paragraph incorporate commentary from an unpublished piece shared by Michael Martin with the editor. They have been interpolated into Martin's text from *The Submerged Reality*.]

⁶ Sergei Bulgakov, *Sophia, the Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, tr. Patrick Thompson, O. Fielding Clarke, and Xenia Braikevitc. Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1993, p. 37.

⁷ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, tr. Boris Jakim. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002, p. 80.

⁸ [Ed. Physical nature as an end in itself.]

⁹ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, tr. Boris Jakim. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002, p. 298.

¹⁰ Sergius Bulgakov, *Unfading Light*, tr. Thomas Allan Smith. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012, p. 186. Emphasis Bulgakov.

¹¹ *The Bride of the Lamb*, p. 403.

Sophia.¹² Mary, in her sophianic role, dwells at the boundary between heaven and creation. As Bulgakov writes, “it is there, in heaven, that Her maximal deification is accomplished and the supreme goal of creation, its theodicy, is fulfilled.”¹³ In Her there is revealed all the fullness of the glory of the world; now nothing can be added to it.”¹⁴ “Indeed she herself is the glory of the world.”¹⁵ The Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God, a devotion used by the Eastern Church from at least the 6th century, pronounces this truth in similar terms:

Rejoice, Vessel of the Wisdom of God!

Rejoice, Treasury of His Providence!

Rejoice, Reproof of foolish philosophers!

Rejoice, for the eloquent become speechless before you!

As the hymn articulates so beautifully, rationality can become its own prison. Something more is required ...



The Assumption, by Titian

¹² [Ed. For more from Michael Martin on this theme, see *Starlight*, Advent 2018, pp. 80-81.]

¹³ *The Bride of the Lamb*, p. 413.

¹⁴ *Sophia: The Wisdom of God*, tr. Patrick Thompson et al. Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1993, p. 130.

¹⁵ *Bride of the Lamb*, p. 412.

On Mary-Sophia

from the Anonymous Author of *Meditations on the Tarot*¹

It is she—the “Virgin of light” of the *Pistis Sophia*, the Wisdom sung of by Solomon, the *Shekinah* of the Cabbala, the Mother, the Virgin, the pure celestial Mary—who is the source and aim of Hermeticism. For Hermeticism is, as a whole, the aspiration to participation in knowledge of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Mother, Daughter, and Holy Soul. It is not a matter of seeing the Holy Trinity with human eyes but rather of seeing with the eyes—and in the light—of Mary-Sophia. For just as no one comes to the Father but by Jesus Christ (John xiv, 6), so does no one understand the Holy Trinity but by Mary-Sophia. And just as the Holy Trinity manifests itself through Jesus Christ, so understanding of this manifestation is possible only through intuitive apprehension of what the Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ understands of it, who not only bore him and brought him to the light of day, but who also was present—present as mother—at his death on the Cross. And just as Wisdom (Sophia)—as Solomon said—was present at the creation (“when he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep ... then I was at work beside him—*Proverbs*, ix, 1) and “built her house ... set up her seven pillars” (*Proverbs* ix, 1), so Mary-Sophia was present at the redemption and “was at work beside him,” and “built her house ... set up her seven pillars,” i.e., she became Our Lady of the seven sorrows. For the seven sorrows of Mary correspond, for the work of redemption, to the seven pillars of Sophia for the work of creation ...

Co-creatrix, co-mediatrix, co-santificatrix



*Icon Inspired by Pope John Paul II*²

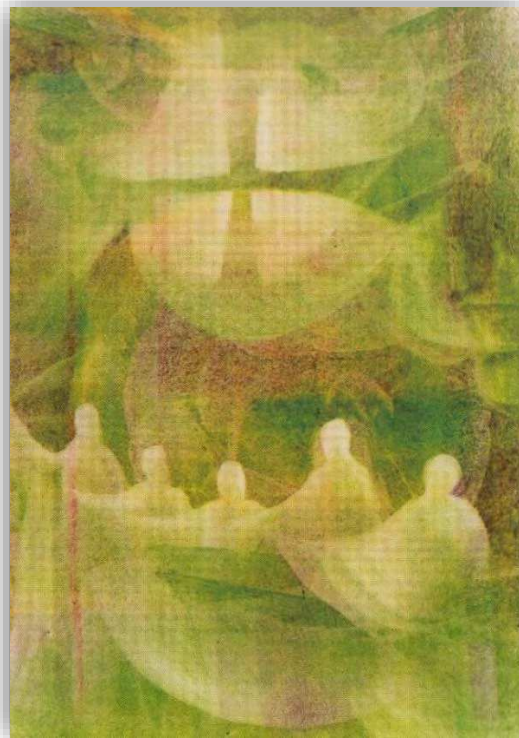
¹ Translated by Robert Powell. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2002, p. 547 and p. 279.

² See http://vultus.stblogs.org/the_eucharistic_face_of_christ/

The Holy of Holies, the Grail Chalice, and the Great Earth Temple

Rudolf Steiner

¹In the temple of the human body is located a Holy of Holies. Many people live in the temple without knowing about it. But those who sense it, receive from it the power to purify themselves so that they may enter into this sacred place. *There* is the sacred vessel which was prepared through epochs of time. *There* rests the holy Chalice which was prepared through epochs of time so that it would be ready when the time came to hold the blood of Christ, the life of Christ. When the human being has entered this place he has also found the path to the Holy of Holies in the great Earth temple.



The Grail, by Fiorenza de Angelis²

Many on Earth live there too, without knowing it; but if the human being has found himself in his innermost sanctuary, he will also be allowed to enter the great Earth temple and find the Holy Grail.

Firstly the chalice will appear to him, carved as though from wonderfully gleaming crystal that forms symbols and letters³; then gradually he will sense its holy content, so that

¹ From GA 97, lecture of 29 July, 1906.

² See <https://www.atelierdeangelis.it/fiorenza-de-angelis>

³ [Ed. The reader will note an exact analogical correspondence with these terms in Anne's Emmerich's vision of Mary's experience at her "Dedication to the Temple" as cited in the *Mysteries of Sophia Course* prepared by Karen Rivers and available from The Sophia Foundation: "At the end of the ceremony Mary was blessed by the first among the priests. It was as if Mary was transfused with light by the blessing, and under her heart in an

the content itself shines for him in a golden radiance. A human being then enters into the Mystery place of his own heart, and then a divine being emerges from this human mystery centre and connects itself to the God without, with the Christ being. This divine being lives in the spiritual light which streams into the chalice, hallowing it.

⁴[T]he time has arrived where these secrets may be proclaimed, if the hearts of people make themselves mature through a spiritual life, so that they are able to raise themselves to the understanding of this great Mystery ... through gazing at this holy chalice ...

[I]f people become ever more prepared for the reception of the Christ-I, then shall the Christ-I ever more pour itself into the souls of people. People shall then evolve themselves up to where their great archetype, Christ Jesus, is. Then people shall begin to learn to understand to what degree Christ Jesus is the great prototype of the future redeemed humanity ...

*

[Ed. To this account we may add Sergei O. Prokofieff's comments⁵ by way of further elucidation, namely that:

"Rudolf Steiner ... at the very end of the nineteenth century ... was himself able to pass through 'a spiritual standing before the Mystery of Golgotha' [Steiner's own words] and in this 'innermost and most solemn festival of knowledge' receive into his ego an imprint of the Ego of Christ Himself.

Hence the encouragement that Rudolf Steiner sounded for us ten years after this experience: 'Yes, this imprint of the Ego of [Christ in] Jesus of Nazareth can be found by human beings who have developed sufficient maturity – this imprint and at the same time the radiance of the Power of Christ and the Christ Impulse which it bears within itself.'"



indescribable glory of light, in a shining space shaped like Melchizedek's chalice, figures of the blessing in the form of light appeared. Above this, her heart opened like a temple door, and this shining mystery of light, surrounded by a canopy of symbolic jewels, passed into her opened heart ... [L]ike the Ark of the Covenant entering into the Holy of Holies ..." The Dedication of Mary, of course, bears on events *leading up* to the Mystery of Golgotha.]

⁴ From GA 109, lecture of 11 April, 1909.

⁵ In *The Heavenly Sophia and the Being Anthroposophia*. London: Temple Lodge, 1996, p. 127.

The Story of the Holy Grail¹

Harrie Salman

The story of the Holy Grail is one of the great spiritual stories of humanity. It has been told in many versions. Richard Wagner's opera *Parsifal* has given a very grand form of musical expression to the quest of the Grail. Parsifal's quest and his inner transformation during his quest symbolize the story of every modern man and woman searching for the essence of their individuality amidst the turmoil of their daily lives.

What is the Grail?

Let us begin by asking the question: What is the Grail? The word *grail* is derived from the Latin word *gradalis* (a kind of vessel). In medieval France a *grail* was a cup or bowl. In our story the Grail has healing powers and gives sustenance to those who live in the Grail castle.

The storytellers reveal different aspects of the Grail. In the poem *Perceval – The Story of the Grail*, composed between 1181 and 1190 by the French poet Chrétien de Troyes, the Grail appears as a decorated bowl containing a host, a wafer, that is given to the old king Titurel. In Robert de Boron's story, *Joseph of Arimathea*, written between 1191 and 1202, the Grail became the Holy Grail, the chalice of the Last Supper that was brought from Jerusalem to Europe by Joseph and his relatives.

The German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach added a new perspective. According to his *Parzival* and his *Wartburg War*, created in the early 13th century, the Grail is a stone that emerged from the crown of Lucifer when the archangel Michael took it from Lucifer's head. This stone was brought to the earth by angels who protected it. It was later kept in the castle of Munsalvaesche (Monsalvat, Mountain of Salvation) by the Grail king Titurel and his family. Every Good Friday a dove brought a white wafer to the stone, which renewed its spiritual power.

New Grail visions

A deeper insight into the essence of the Grail can be found in the visions of the stigmatic German nun Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824). The Grail had been in the possession of Noah, she said. It was given by Melchizedek to Abraham after being used at the sacrifice of bread and wine. It looked like a bell, shaped by nature. Moses brought it from Egypt, and later it belonged to the treasures of the temple in Jerusalem. But its significance was lost, and it was sold. At the time of Jesus it was in the possession of Veronica and used by Jesus in ceremonies. This vessel was the central chalice at the Holy Supper, where it was surrounded by six small cups out of which the apostles drank.²

¹ This article is an elaboration of a lecture that was given on August 1, 2018 at a Grail seminar in Hästholmen, Sweden.

² *The Visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich*, Book III, Angelico Press, Kettering (USA) 2015, pp. 73-74.

The German spiritual researcher Judith von Halle has opened other deeper layers of the secret. The Grail stone is living matter whose origin lies in an earlier phase of the development of the earth. In a distant past it had the shape of an egg, but in the time of Moses it had grown into a chalice-like form. In later centuries it had opened like a flower so that it could contain the wine of the Holy Supper and of his Holy Blood.³

In her own visions of the Grail, the American seeress Estelle Isaacson saw that the Grail has been there since the beginning of the world, in different forms. As a consequence of one of the earlier sacrifices of Christ, the Grail appeared for the first time in early Atlantis. It was “sculpted of harmonies, of tones resounding,” and given to humanity “as a grace to curb, or moderate, the effects of the fall (into sin).”⁴

The Grail as the etherised blood of Christ

Judith von Halle made a distinction between the Grail as a cup, and its content. In essence [content] the Grail was the Grail Blood that streamed out of the side wound of Jesus Christ when his body was pierced by a spear. This blood and water had flown into a pit under the cross, before it was collected by Joseph of Arimathea in the cup of the Holy Supper. The cup then closed like a flower. This blood was not a physical substance anymore, but the purified and etherised blood of Christ.⁵

Now a process began that Judith von Halle describes as a ‘multiplication’ of this blood, so that it could be given to humanity as a whole. Joseph of Arimathea initiated the first part of this process. He traveled by boat to Toulon in the south of France and at some distance from the coast he consecrated the earth with a few drops of the etherised blood of Christ that flowed out of the cup. He repeated this act in several special places in France, England, and Ireland, until he reached the western coast of Ireland. There he found initiates who had a certain understanding of his sacred acts (the Druids).⁶ Their successors, the monks of Irish Christianity, spread the message of Christ to Northern Europe (Nidaros/Trondheim and Skiringssal in Norway, Gotland, and probably also Finland), thence to Northern France and to Central Europe.

As a result of these sacred acts of Joseph of Arimathea, the earth etherised to a certain extent in the places where he performed them. From these sites their spiritual effect radiated out into Europe, changing the blood of human beings, so that it could become a bearer of their individual I. In these ages, people were still part of clans and tribes, and they needed

³ Judith von Halle, *Das Abendmahl*, Verlag am Goetheanum, Dornach 2006, pp. 41-48, and Judith von Halle, *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*, Temple Lodge, London 2011.

⁴ Estelle Isaacson, *The Grail Bearer*, LogoSophia, Peterborough (USA) 2016, p. 124.

⁵ Judith von Halle, *Joseph von Arimathea und der Weg des Heiligen Gral*, Verlag für Anthroposophie, Dornach 2011, pp. 68-76.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

this change for the awakening of their individual I.⁷ Only as individuals can we follow Christ, connect with our higher being, and love others. This process lasted until the 4th century.

Celtic stories of the Cauldron and the Grail

The Grail blood had been used up and according to a later legend, Joseph of Arimathea had placed the Grail Cup in Chalice Well in Glastonbury, England. Joseph may have been there, but the Grail stories do not mention it, although the early Grail legends came from the Celtic West of Europe that Joseph visited. They appeared in Wales and Brittany (in Western France) and contain motifs from Celtic mythology and fairy tales. Many Celtic myths speak of cauldrons, magical objects that represent the nature forces of rebirth, regeneration, and abundance. The famous cultic cauldron of Gundestrup, found in Denmark, and the beautiful chalices of medieval Ireland testify to the significance of this symbol. From the Welsh *Book of Taliesin* (a bard from the 6th century) comes a story called the *Preiddeu Annwn* (The Spoils of the Otherworld). In this tale a company of heroes led by King Arthur travels to the Other World to capture the cauldron of the Lord of the Otherworld. According to another tale, Taliesin received his wisdom from the cauldron of Ceridwen.

In a fairy tale from Brittany, the shepherd boy Peronnik the Simpleton nourishes himself completely from an almost empty vessel. In the next episode we see him overcoming seven trials, which brings him into the possession of a golden vessel. It provides food and riches, but it also has healing properties and can revive the dead. This vessel and a diamond lance were guarded by a giant. The shepherd has now become a knight who leads an army to fight the Muslims in Palestine. With this fairy tale we are already in the world of the Grail.⁸

Another story from Brittany tells of a hermit who is meditating on the Passion of Christ in the night of Maundy Thursday in the year 750. In his inner vision he hears the voice of Christ and receives the *Booklet of the Grail*, in which he reads about the destiny of humanity and the mission of Christ. The next day he sets off to search for this booklet, as Christ had told him. After overcoming a number of trials, he finds it. Christ asks him to copy it, because it will ascend to heaven on Ascension Day.⁹

The Grail family

While the anonymous Breton hermit was searching for the *Booklet of the Grail*, there was already a Grail family guarding the Grail¹⁰. The German poet Albrecht von Scharfenberg described the origin of this family in his poem *The Younger Titurel*, written in the late 13th century. The story begins in another Celtic territory, Galicia (northwest Spain), where the Grail had appeared in a vision to King Titurel, hovering over the mountain Monsalvat where

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-89.

⁸ Rudolf Meyer, *Der Gral und seine Hüter*, Urachhaus, Stuttgart 2003, chapter 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, chapter 4.

¹⁰ [Ed. It is my personal understanding that by then the Grail cup had itself etherized from Christ's blood and was manifesting (along with its manna-like power) out of the Earth's etheric sphere.]

his castle stood. The story says that he built a round temple for the Grail, but this is to be understood as an etheric temple.

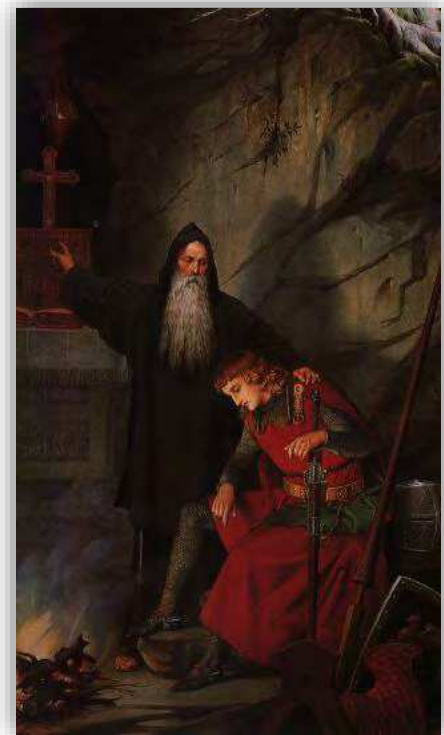
Celtic and Christian motifs interwove to create a chain of stories, with Celtic elements such as the cauldron and the knights of King Arthur, and the Christian element of the chalice of the Holy Supper. These stories were part of the courtly culture of the last centuries of the Middle Ages and played an important role in the education of the Christian knight.

The Grail tradition culminated in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*. His sources were the Grail story of Chrétien de Troyes and the star wisdom of master Kyot. In the latter we may see Kyot of Katalangen, who was married to Schoysiane, a sister of Anfortas.¹¹ In Wolfram's story we find an esoteric Christianity that unfolds in the processes of inner development within the Grail family founded by Titurel. We witness the destinies of this family, including the crisis caused by his grandson Anfortas who was wounded because of his impure love. He could not be healed by the Grail, but could also not die because he performed the ceremony of the Grail every week. His salvation was expected from his nephew Parzival, who was not yet ready for this when he came to the Grail castle as a young man. Behind some of these persons stand historical personalities who lived in a particular age and at a particular place.¹² Wolfram himself gives a hint that Parzival lived in the 9th century.

Parzival and Gawan

In Wolfram's story, Parzival is the main hero and the successor of Anfortas as Grail king. He receives a courtly education, but he still has to learn to be compassionate and interested in the destiny of others. He has to go through sufferings and trials on his path of inner schooling. Only after having asked his uncle Anfortas what ails him, as he does five years after his first visit to the Grail castle, does he give his uncle the opportunity to be healed. During these years Parzival, who is married with Condwiramurs (his guide in love), has many adventures. Just before returning to the Grail castle he understands his destiny in biographical conversations with his uncle, the hermit Trevrizent.

The story has a second hero, the older knight Gawan, the son of King Lot of Norway who is married to a sister of King Arthur. Gawan falls in love with the widow Orgeluse (the Haughty One), in whose service Anfortas received his wound. She humiliates Gawan, as she has done with many knights that she has used to revenge the death of her husband. Because



Parzival and Trevrizent,
Schloss Neuschwanstein

¹¹ See Estelle Isaacson, *The Grail Bearer*, pp. 223-244, and *The Younger Kyot*, LogoSophia, Peterborough (USA) 2017.

¹² [Ed. See, for example. W.J. Stein. *The Ninth Century and the Holy Grail*. London: Temple Lodge Press, 1991.]

of her hatred of men, she has fallen prey to Klingsor, the black magician and the lord of Chastelmarveile (Castle of Wonders). In this castle he holds hundreds of women who have lost themselves in the illusions of love. Today we would say that Klingsor knew how to manipulate the weaknesses and doubles of people. Gawain enters the castle, overcomes the trials that were waiting for him, liberates the women and becomes the new lord of the castle. Orgeluse becomes his wife, and only after this karmic healing has taken place does Parzival enter the Grail castle to put the healing question to Anfortas.

Rudolf Steiner identified Parsifal as a reincarnation of Mani, the prophet of the Holy Spirit, who lived in the 3rd century and was the founder of Manichaeism. But who is Gawain, son of King Lot? One source tells us that he may have been born in Skane (South Sweden) in the 9th century, as a reincarnation of Siegfried, the hero from the *Nibelungen* story who lived in northern Germany in the 5th century.¹³

The Nordic Grail – ganganda greida

In one of his lectures Rudolf Steiner spoke about his Grail research.¹⁴ He wanted to find the name of Parsifal on the Holy Grail and decided to ask the Spirit of the Nordic nations (Vidar). The answer was:

“Learn to understand the saying that through my powers there flowed into the nordic Parzival saga: ‘ganganda greida.’”

And then, Steiner said,

one day, I was following with inner sight the gold-gleaming sickle of the moon, as it appeared in the heavens, with the dark moon like a great disc dimly visible within it ... so that with physical sight one saw the gold-gleaming moon – ganganda greida, the journeying viaticum – and within it the large Host, the dark disc. This is not to be seen if one merely glances superficially at the moon, but it is evident if one looks closely – and there, in wonderful letters of the occult script, was the name Parsifal!

We have here the gleaming sickle of the moon as the Grail vessel bearing the large Grail disc. This disc is shining dimly because the spiritual power of the sun penetrates the moon and lights up its dark side, where we see the Spirit of the sun.¹⁵

The nordic *Parceval saga* was translated in the 13th century during the reign of the Norwegian king Hákon Hákonsson (1217-1263) as a rather free version of the story of Chrétien de Troyes. In chapter 11 we read about the first visit of Parceval to the Grail castle when the Grail is carried into the hall in a procession:

¹³ See Andreas Delor, *Atlantis*, vol. 3, Verlag Ch. Möllmann, Borchten 2016, p. 36. Delor received this information from a person who was in contact with a spirit being.

¹⁴ Rudolf Steiner, lecture held on January 1, 1914 in Leipzig, in *Christ and the Spiritual World: The Search for the Holy Grail*, Complete Works, no. 149.

¹⁵ Rudolf Steiner, lecture held on January 2, 1914 in Leipzig, in *Complete Works (CW)*, no. 149.

Next in turn a beautiful maiden walked in, and carried in her hands, just as though it were a gospel-book, something which they call in the French language a grail, but we may call 'processional provision' (ganganda greida). Such a great light shone from it that at once the brightness of all those flames in the hall vanished as starlight vanishes in the light of the sun. It was made with great skill of gold and all the most precious stones which existed in the world.¹⁶



Parzival and the Grail-Bearer, Schloss Neuschwanstein

In chapter 12 the hermit says to Parceval about the *ganganda greida*:

*"That is a holy thing which the mighty man (Titurel) causes to be borne before him as a consolation and sustenance for his soul and his life; this holy thing is of the spirit, not of the flesh."*¹⁷

The word *greidi* meant, in Old Norwegian, food and drink (including a place to sleep), offered in hospitality. The word *ganganda* meant going (around). The Grail was for Chrétien indeed spiritual food (viaticum, provision), carried in a processional way through the Grail castle.

Conclusion - The healing Grail

The Grail blood of Christ transformed the structure of the human blood, so that it can carry our individual I. Our I can connect with Christ when the human soul has been purified and the double has been transformed, so that our ego can open like a flower to receive our higher self. Then the soul has become itself a Grail, open to receive the spirit.

Amfortas could not be healed by the Grail. Before that could happen, he had to put order in his karma. On a first level this is with the help of Gawan, who supported Orgeluse in the healing of her soul. And then with Parsifal's help, who puts to him the redeeming question that opens the soul of Amfortas to the healing power of the Grail. Like Amfortas we all have Amfortas wounds that need to be recognised and healed. They are the result of the fall into sin, when our lower self was separated from our higher self.

¹⁶ *Norse Romance II, Knights of the Round Table*, edited by Marianne E. Kalinke, D.S. Brewer, Cambridge 1999, pp. 149, 151.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

In 1913 Rudolf Steiner spoke about the dying parts of our physical and etheric bodies that are accessible to dark forces, but not to our consciousness.¹⁸ And he remarked: “The Holy Grail was and is nothing else than that which can so nurture the living portion of the soul that it can become master of the dead part.”¹⁹ The Grail was an embodiment of the new wisdom that the soul needs to counteract the dark forces that prevent us from connecting with our higher self. In the same lecture Steiner related this to the division in our soul between our earth-bound Amfortas-nature and our Parsifal-nature that strives after the spiritual. Our Amfortas-nature with its dying parts and wounds can be healed by the Grail when we develop in our Parsifal-nature a spiritual consciousness.

We are used to covering our Amfortas-nature with shame and are afraid to look at it. In this way we create favourable conditions for our double (on a psychological level: the shadow). It surrounds and protects our Amfortas-nature so that we do not have to face the weaknesses that led to our wounds. Introspection, but also compassionate questions about others, can help us to face them and can initiate a process of healing. Herein are the new Grail stories in which we search for the Grail castle, which can be found in the etheric world, as Rudolf Steiner said in a conversation with Johanna Keyserlingk.²⁰

The stories of King Arthur were given for the sentient soul, the Grail stories were for the rational soul, but the story of Parsifal can educate the modern self-conscious soul, the consciousness soul. In the time of the historical Parsifal, all pupils of the School of the Grail were, according to Rudolf Steiner, called Parsifals. They went through the valley of earthly life (this is the meaning of the word *parsifal/parzival*), from the fallen state of man towards the resurrection of their true human nature.

Rudolf Steiner presented Anthroposophy as the Science of the Grail. It leads to a modern process of learning from our destiny, of facing our fallen nature and our double, and of reconnecting with our heavenly nature. We can see here a new form of healing and new inner wisdom at work. As Estelle Isaacson puts it today:

*The Grail invites us to bring before it all our wounds. And all are wounded — wounded by things we have done and things we have left undone.*²¹

¹⁸ Rudolf Steiner, lecture held on February 7, 1913 in Berlin, in *The Mysteries of the East and of Christianity*, CW, no. 144.

¹⁹ From GA 144, lecture 7 February, 1913. [Ed. “The Holy Grail was, and is, nothing else than that which can so nurture the living part of the soul that it can become master of the dead part. Montsalvat, the sanctuary of the Holy Grail, is the school in which one has to learn, for the sake of the still living part of the soul ... what has to be poured into the still living part of the soul in order for it to become master of the part of the physical body that has ‘died’ and that part of the soul which has become unconscious.”]

²⁰ *Koberwitz 1924* (edited by Adalbert Graf Keyserlingk), Stuttgart 1974, p. 84.

²¹ Estelle Isaacson, *The Grail Bearer*, p. 10. [Ed. Consider also the following from p. 10: “Anfortas stands before us as a symbol of wounds that do not heal, and we are invited to commingle this image in ourselves. Anfortas’s wound came about because of a fall—a fall we have all undergone.” — They do not heal, that is, if left to themselves.]

Additional Note on The Grail

Steiner called the home of the inspiring archangel of esoteric Christianity (the former Celtic folk spirit), the 'High Castle of the Grail.' In the Grail stories this is the Grail castle of Monsalvat that appeared for the first time in the etheric world above Titurel's fortress in Galicia. Later this etheric castle moved to San Juan de la Peña (south of the Pyrenees), to Montségur in the South of France and to Arlesheim. Southwestern Germany should have become a new Grail kingdom in the time of Kaspar Hauser (in the early 19th century), but this was prevented.



Grail castle. Cover of King Ludwig II's Diary

The Grail castle is the home of the Brotherhood of the Holy Grail, founded by Joseph of Arimathea. Its members are spiritual beings, men and women who have served the Grail. With the etherised blood of Christ kept in the Grail, Joseph had consecrated special places in France, England, and Ireland, so that the people of Europe could undergo in the substance of their blood a fundamental change, a change that liberated them from the group and clan souls and opened them to the birth of their individual I, which is carried by the blood.²²

Connected with this secret of the Holy Blood is the secret of the copies of the I of Jesus that are kept by the Brotherhood of the Holy Grail. Rudolf Steiner²³

said that when individuals have prepared themselves in a spiritual life, they will understand these secrets through spiritual science and become ripe to be granted a vision of the Holy Grail and to receive a copy of the eternal I of Jesus. Parsifal was the carrier of such a copy.

In Steiner's vision the Holy Grail sends its inspirations from the etheric world to the new mystery centers, all over the world, where the Science of the Grail (Anthroposophy) is practised. With the first Goetheanum he created a new Grail temple that now only exists in the etheric world. The common work for a new spiritual culture will bring more and more people together in the Grail family of humanity, who will in the course of time all receive a copy of the I of Jesus.

²² Judith von Halle, see note 5, pp. 68-76.

²³ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 11.4.1909, in CW, no. 109.

Michelangelo, Rudolf Steiner, and Ita Wegman (Schionatulander and Sigune)

John O'Meara

In a lecture given in Leipzig on January 1, 1914 and collected today under the title *The Search for the Holy Grail*, Rudolf Steiner stopped to note the profound “impression” that was made on him when he once came upon Michelangelo’s early *Pietà* on his way out of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.¹ Under the “after-effect” of this impression, there would come to Steiner later as a true Imagination, out of the Akasha Chronicle, the “picture” of Parsifal when he first comes across Sigune weeping over the dead body of Schionatulander, whom she despairingly holds in her arms in the manner of the *Pietà*. In offering this account, Steiner lays particular emphasis on the fact that “the picture had a meaning, and that the connection thus established ... had a meaning also.” These suggestive hints are offered in passing, in the context of the fuller and



The early Pietà

broader research into the Grail event Steiner was conducting at this time. We might suppose that Steiner’s purpose in stopping to highlight this emphasis was to clarify Michelangelo’s profound connection to the Grail event, but I rather suspect a purpose of another sort that takes us far beyond the grandeur even of that connection.



Sigune and Schionatulander

Steiner’s hints in this context should be referred to other indications he gave some years later—it would seem as a private communication—as reported by Margarete and Erich Kirchner-Bockholt in their book, *Rudolf Steiner’s Mission and Ita Wegman*. There we hear of verbal indications to a select few identifying the figures of Sigune and Schionatulander as the later incarnations of the individualities who had formerly appeared as Alexander and Aristotle respectively—the individualities who appear in our own time as Ita Wegman and Rudolf Steiner. We turn back to the lecture on the Grail event and realize that what Steiner may actually have been hinting at was that,

seeing with the eyes of Parsifal, he found himself looking upon Schionatulander dead in Sigune’s arms as the figure of himself in his own incarnation at that time. We note in relation to the momentousness of this revelation, at the same time, the precise nature of the impression Michelangelo’s sculpture made on Steiner when he came upon it in Rome, and so

¹ See *Christ and the Spiritual World* and *The Search for the Holy Grail*, tr. C. Davy and D. Osmond, London: Rudolf Steiner Press, rpt. 1983, pp. 99-100.

the grand role that Michelangelo's work was to play in Steiner's awakening to the details of his own connection to the Grail event.

Among much else to be gleaned from this extraordinary concatenation of destinies, one thing seems to call for immediate recognition: far more than we might have thought is to be attributed to the role played in the unfolding of the Grail destiny by the individualities who had formerly incarnated as Alexander and Aristotle. More specifically, we note the profound influential work that is accomplished on behalf of the Grail cause specifically by the Aristotle-individuality, through the tremendous power of his death as Schionatulander. This is work accomplished from the other side of the threshold, and part of the power of the revelation we can imagine being bestowed upon Steiner might have something to do with the fact that he sees through Parsifal's eyes as the Aristotle-individuality itself might have looked out upon the scene from its vantage-point from beyond death. Can we go so far as to suppose that this Aristotle-individuality is in some sense directing Parsifal's gaze upon the scene, by awakening Parsifal to his own relationship to the Christ?² Especially are we struck by the manner in which Schionatulander's death is accomplished, which is clearly in imitation of the Christ. It as if Parsifal himself had something to learn from gazing upon this death. We think back to the resolve that the Aristotle-individuality takes at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha from the other side of death with Michael out of the sphere of the Sun: namely, to live his way into and to battle in future on behalf of the Christianity that was in the process of establishing itself. This resolve is already being acted on in this individuality's next most significant incarnation as the Schionatulander of the Grail legend.



Rudolf Steiner



Ita Wegman

We stand astonished before the grandeur of the destiny that unfolds. Returning to the Earth after the Mystery of Golgotha, this Aristotle-individuality now dies in Christ in order that through the further exhortation of Sigune also, who acts out of the tragedy of her separation from Schionatulander, Parsifal may be brought around to accomplishing the all-important role he is called on to perform. Though secondary to Schionatulander's, Sigune's role is no less poignant. In Eschenbach's presentation, she speaks to Parzival out of the distress that a pupil will feel who knows that she must be helped along if she is to follow in the footsteps of the master who has gone before her. It is as if Sigune understands that Schionatulander's death will only be finally justified (for this is what Schionatulander has died for) if Parzival can bring himself to

² In an earlier article in *Starlight*, Christmas 2017, I delved into the notion that the Aristotelians in our movement work their spiritual impulses primarily out of the world's ends, after death. The moment recorded here would appear to be an eminent instance of this function and role.

ask Anfortas the fateful question he must ask if the Grail destiny is to be fulfilled: “what ails you/what is wrong with you?”³ Needless to say, much depends on Parsifal’s own incomparable mediation of the impulse of the Christ Who until this moment has been working only unconsciously through human souls over the long chaotic history that follows on Golgotha. About the unconscious working of this impulse Steiner has much to say in *The Fifth Gospel*, and it is clear that in the Leipzig lecture, given six months later, Steiner is continuing strongly in this line of research. In the case of Parsifal’s mediating role in the working of this impulse, Steiner speaks of a fundamental blamelessness or irrefragible purity of soul, and, in this sense, of holiness (light). To this is now brought *knowledge*: one thinks of the Aristotle-individuality pre-eminently as the great bringer of knowledge, a role dramatically borne out once again in the Grail story. However, I confess to receiving an especially strong impression of holiness also whenever I return to Eschenbach’s presentation of the four scenes that feature the dead Schionatulander and Sigune anguishing over him. There would appear to be a correspondence here with the four sculptural studies



The Bandini Pietà, with Michelangelo as Joseph of Arimathea

Michelangelo finally made of the *Pietà*-motif (his three other studies emerging towards the end of his life). A claim has been made for Michelangelo being in the process of tracing through these four sculptures the very same evolution in Christ-like acceptance that appears in Sigune’s own growth through the death of Schionatulander as presented in Eschenbach’s four scenes.

⁴ All this would suggest that Michelangelo, like Eschenbach before him, was in some very special way attuned to the great role of mediation in the Grail event that engaged both Schionatulander and Sigune as the re-incarnated forms of Aristotle and Alexander. Such evidence can only reinforce the sense we get from Steiner’s own commentary of the very special role to be assigned also to Michelangelo in the history of anthroposophical consciousness of this event.

Additional Note

“A situation that Ita Wegman would go through again with the untimely death of Rudolf Steiner” (see n.3 below). In this later situation also, the fateful question continues: ‘what ails you/what is wrong with you?’ – to be pursued, in this case, in the context of a specific issue connected with illness at that later time. (“Sigune understands that

³ A situation that Ita Wegman would go through again with the untimely death of Rudolf Steiner. See Additional Note for more on this later situation.

⁴ See [The Quest For The Grail The Golden Blade No.47](#), Edinburgh: Floris Press, 1994. To the well-known early Pietà were added the Bandini Pietà (1547), the Palestrina Pietà (1555), and the Rondanini Pietà (1564).

Schionatulander's death will only be finally justified (for this is what Schionatulander has died for) if Parsifal can bring himself to ask the fateful question he must ask if the Grail destiny is to be fulfilled: 'what ails you/what is wrong with you?'" In his own search for the Holy Grail, as we have seen, Steiner learns of his former role in (indirectly) bringing this question to light as the dead Schionatulander, and this question he nows shares again with Sigune as Ita Wegman, through whose efforts along with his own it will take the form of the healing mission of anthroposophical curative practice.

Steiner would continue to share this mission with Wegman from beyond his own death, as is made clear in Peter Selg's remarkable monograph on the subject: *"I Am for Going Ahead."*⁵ According to the testimony of some of her co-workers, spoken shortly after Steiner's death, it was clear that "'a power coming from Rudolf Steiner is active at this moment in and through Ita Wegman'" (60). It was a matter of their all continuing to work on behalf of "a healing activity arising out of the new Christian mysteries" (79), the mysteries of our time, the new Rosicrucian Anthroposophical Grail mysteries. Anthroposophical curative practice would appear to have been one of the most important initiatives, if not the most crucial initiative, undertaken in the immediate period after Steiner's death. It was linked directly to the fate of western civilization: "a guarantee for the continued existence and potentially necessary rebuilding of the entire Central European civilization" (87) which was headed towards plans for the elimination of the ill and the disabled. Such an evil program would have aborted an utterly essential part of our evolution in time, which at some level must proceed through the healing and transformation of such illness as is necessarily (i.e., karmically) brought on by our fallen natures ...



*Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman
July 1924 (Arnhem)*

⁵ *"I Am for Going Ahead": Ita Wegman's Work for the Social Ideals of Anthroposophy.* Great Barrington MA: SteinerBooks, 2012, orig. pub., 2004.

The Process of Parzival's Awakening and His Meeting with the Christ

Edward Schuldt

A secret lies hidden towards the end of Wolfram von Eschenbach's epic telling of Parzival's Quest for the Holy Grail: immediately before Parzival is called to become King of the Grail Castle, he experiences the Christ as the Greater Guardian of the Threshold. We shall see how this becomes possible not only through the Divine Feminine leading him rightly but also through the shadow side of the Divine Feminine, which besets him with the obstacles he needs to overcome to prepare his initiation.

Parzival's meeting with the Christ occurs at Whitsun, after he has spent two weeks at Easter in Trevrizent's hermitage as his pupil. Parzival engages a knight in battle who is, unbeknownst to him, his half-brother Feirifis. We see them as they come to the climax of the battle:

The stout sword of Gaheviez [wielded by Parzival] was shattered by a blow on the Infidel's [Feirifis's] helmet, which brought the bold and mighty stranger to his knees. It was no longer pleasing to God that Parzival should wield a weapon robbed from a corpse, as though this were right and proper: for this was the sword he had taken from Ither, knowing no better in his youthful ignorance.

The Infidel, who never before had gone down from a sword-blow, quickly leapt to his feet again. The issue is still undecided. The verdict between them lies in the hand of Him on high. May He avert their dying!

The Infidel was magnanimous. "It is clear to me, warlike man," he said, politely shaping his mouth to French of which he had a knowledge, "that you would go on fighting without a sword. But what honor would I gain from you then? Refrain, valiant warrior, and tell me who you are..."¹

Parzival's meeting with the Christ occurs within these lines; we shall discover later how this unseen event discloses itself to us. To understand how Parzival is able to meet the Christ in this moment, we must begin at the beginning of his life.

Parzival is the son of a widow. His mother, Herzeleide, had married Gahmuret, who returned to the East to fight for the Baruch, the most powerful ruler in the world. Gahmuret is killed in battle two weeks before Parzival's birth, and Herzeleide blames God. After Parzival's birth, she leaves her lands in the care of Schionatulander, Gahmuret's squire, and removes herself and Parzival, along with her courtiers, to the Forest of Soltane.

There she rules her court with three commands: Parzival shall not know of God, because God is at fault in Gahmuret's death; Parzival shall not know of knighthood and chivalry, because she does not want him aspiring to become a knight; and Parzival shall not know his name, for that would bring him into connection with his destiny, which would take

¹ Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, tr. A.T. Hatto. Penguin Books, 1980, pp. 370-371.

him away from Herzeleide and renew her suffering. So Parzival grows up in what we might consider idyllic surroundings, simple and unencumbered, but also poverty-stricken, particularly spiritually. His mother is depriving him of his relationship to the spiritual world, of knowledge of his destiny, and of access to the means of fulfilling that destiny. So we see, in Herzeleide, a shadow side of the Divine Feminine (which, in the last analysis, is nothing but the shadow side of ourselves), not that which leads us onward in the words of Goethe (“The Eternal Feminine leads us onward”) but that which keeps us from the right unfolding of our lives.



Parzival and Herzeleide,
Neuschwanstein Castle

Eventually, Parzival does leave Soltane. He has met knights riding through the woods who tell him what they are and that King Arthur can make him a knight, so he will no longer be deterred. To frustrate his efforts, however, Herzeleide dresses him in fool’s clothes and sets him on the back of a broken-down nag; and she gives him five pieces of advice, well-intentioned but lacking context, so that Parzival is equipped with them for misfortune and failure. Among those pieces of advice are to win a lady’s ring and to kiss and embrace her, and to accept the teaching of a wise, grey-haired man.

Parzival first encounters Jeschute, the wife of a knight named Orilus. Orilus is absent, riding to adventure; Jeschute is sleeping in her pavilion. Parzival, following his mother’s advice, falls upon her, despoiling her of her ring and brooch, tearing her clothing in the process, and kissing her roughly. So Parzival incurs the first of the pieces of karma for which he will have to atone.

Leaving Jeschute, he comes upon a lady by the side of the path, cradling a dead knight in her arms. This is Sigune, whose betrothed Schionatulander has been killed fighting Orilus, who is seeking to claim Herzeleide’s lands for himself and his brother Lâhelin.² Sigune asks Parzival his name; but he is only able to answer “*bon fils, beau fils, cher fils*, this is what my mother called me.” But Sigune is the sister of Herzeleide. She recognizes her sister in the timbre of Parzival’s voice and says to him: “You are Parzival!”

Now Parzival has been given a power to connect with his destiny, but Herzeleide tries at once to frustrate it. Parzival asks the way to Arthur’s court; Herzeleide purposely sends him down the wrong path, fearing for his safety. There is a grave consequence to Herzeleide’s fresh misdeed. For now Parzival meets the Red Knight Ither, who is in dispute with Arthur.

² [Ed. At this stage, more is required to defeat the marauding forces represented by Orilus than an overt victory, since Schionatulander dies in this engagement. Some deeper sacrifice is needed (which Schionatulander accomplishes) through which forces truer to the depths of our evolution are freed and made available for a full victory.]

Ither tells Parzival how to find Arthur and asks Parzival to carry a message of reconciliation for him to the king. Parzival finds his way into Arthur's court. There a maiden, Kunneware, laughs; she has vowed not to laugh until the greatest knight should come to Arthur's court. Keie, Arthur's seneschal, is affronted by the idea that this bumpkin-on-a-nag is being singled out by Kunneware as the greatest knight, and so Keie strikes her. This is a second piece of karma for which Parzival will have to atone, for Kunneware would not have suffered this blow had Parzival not naively acquiesced in his mother's intention to dress him up as a bumpkin.

Parzival asks Arthur to make him a knight. Now the whole company of the knights of the Round Table laughs. Arthur says that before Parzival can become a knight, he must have arms and armor. Parzival tells them he has met Ither, from whom he can get armor, sword, and lance; Arthur gives him leave to try. So Parzival returns to Ither. Parzival is skilled with the javelin, a small, spear-like weapon that is not permitted under the rules of chivalry. He throws a javelin through the visor of Ither's helmet and kills him, and with the help of a page robs the corpse of the red armor and arms. This murder of Ither is a third piece of karma for which Parzival will have to atone; and that will not happen until Parzival meets Feirifis in battle.

He comes then to an old, grey-haired knight named Gurnemanz, and for two weeks Gurnemanz teaches Parzival the skills of knighthood as well as social mores. Then, with Parzival having become fully equipped to go into the world as a knight, Gurnemanz delivers a long recitation of advice, most importantly: "You can hear, see, taste, and sniff.... Do not ask many questions." This has the consequence that when Parzival comes to the Grail Castle for the first time, five years before he will be called there as King, he does not ask the Question that would cure the wounded King Anfortas; and so he is cast out of the Grail Castle to begin his Quest. This has been Gurnemanz's intention: behind him stands the figure of Ahriman, who is intent on keeping the human being separated from the spiritual worlds, and who accomplishes this aim through disposing us not to ask questions. We might characterize this effect as the shadow side of the Divine Masculine.

All these things happen to Parzival without his knowing the suffering he has caused, or even being aware of suffering at all; and this originates in the influence Herzeleide has had on her son. How, then, are we to reconcile the actions of Herzeleide with our idea of the Divine Feminine that works in us for the good?

We will not go down a false path if we recognize in Herzeleide, and by extension her court, the "poor in spirit" of whom the Christ speaks in the First Beatitude: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*³ The First Beatitude stands in an essential relation to the beginning of Parzival's spiritual development. In the sense of the First Beatitude, being *poor in spirit* does not concern humility and submission; it is, rather, the lack of an immediate, waking, living connection with the divine world. Commentators point to Mary, the mother of

³ The Nine Beatitudes are given by the Christ at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. See the Gospel of Matthew 5:3-12.

Jesus, as poor in spirit when she is humble before the announcing Archangel Gabriel and submits herself to the will of God. But Mary is rich in spirit: she is fully conscious of an archangel at a time when most of humanity are no longer aware of spiritual beings, and the certainty of this experience gives her the strength to bear what will come to meet her.

The Christ brings to humanity the potential to become inwardly self-reliant; it is the inner foundation of spiritual self-reliance of which the Christ is speaking when he gives the Nine Beatitudes. In the Middle Ages, the Beatitudes were regarded as promises made by the Christ to those who believed in Him. *Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted* was understood as an assurance that if we believe in Jesus as Savior, He will assuage our suffering. From this perspective, Jesus was regarded as a personified all-providing Father-God. This perspective arose from the general experience human beings had of themselves as members of a group, be it family, tribe, or folk, that looked to others, human and divine, to provide for them. Since the Renaissance, however, people have begun to experience themselves more and more strongly as individuals and to value their capacity of self-determination, something not possible if someone else, a person or God, is providing for us. So we recognize the Beatitudes not as the promise of gifts, but as a statement of the potential for inner self-reliance that the Christ has laid into humanity and of the challenge for each person to become inwardly active and realize that potential.

This gives us the key to understanding why Parzival needs the obstacles created by Herzeleide. Rudolf Steiner reveals previous incarnations of Parzival beginning with ancient Egypt, where he was incarnated as the Youth of Sais, a neophyte who lifts the veil of Isis before he is ready.⁴ This youth reincarnated at the time of Christ as the son of the widow at Nain, whom the Christ raises from the dead⁵. He is one of three people raised from the dead by the Christ, the others being Lazarus and the Daughter of Jairus. Each of these three is given the mission of leading the spiritual life of one of the three succeeding cultural ages. Because of the failed initiation he has experienced in Egypt, the Youth of Nain receives the task of leading the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, in which we are now living.

He reincarnates in the third century as the prophet Mani. Mani teaches the doctrine of light and darkness and the redemption of the darkness through the light. Because of this karmic background, when Herzeleide has let slip the fact of God's existence and Parzival asks, "What is God?", she answers, "God is light." The incarnation as Mani is the last preparation for his life as Parzival.



Resurrection of the Youth of Nain

⁴ Sais lay on the west bank of the Nile; according to Herodotus, the grave of Osiris was here. See Novalis, *The Novices of Sais*, and Schiller, "The Veiled Image of Sais."

⁵ See the Gospel of Luke 7:11-17.

If Parzival were to bring with him into the ninth century the connection with the spiritual worlds he has formed during his earlier incarnations, however, he would not be able to develop that connection out of his own forces. Therefore it is necessary that his connection with the higher worlds be completely extinguished, in order to experience the darkness of the earth and the separation from the heavens that is needed to go rightly through the realm of the First Beatitude. This process begins with his mother in Soltane; it is completed with his tutelage by Gurnemanz.

We see, at the hand of Parzival's experience, how this native capacity for higher connection, if we bear it in our present life, must be extinguished before we can realize the second half of the Beatitude. *For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven* concerns the capacity to strive for an immediate spiritual experience acquired out of our own forces; but first we must go through the valley of darkness: we must pierce the vale.

After Parzival has been cast out of the Grail Castle, he again comes upon Sigune. When she inquires whether he has asked the Question and he tells her that he asked no question, she curses him. This is the beginning of Parzival's experience of suffering, the moment of his entering the realm of the Second Beatitude: *Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted*. He meets Jeschute again, now with Orilus, and is able to bring an end to the suffering she has experienced for the six months since he attacked her; and he sends Orilus, whom he has defeated in battle, to Arthur's court as servitor to Kunneware, thereby redeeming the suffering Kunneware experienced. Parzival still bears the burden of his murder of Ither.



Parzival and Kundrie,
Neuschwanstein Castle

The next day Parzival meets Gawain, a knight of the Round Table, and enters into the realm of the Third Beatitude: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*. What *meek* and *inheriting the earth* mean in the sense of the Beatitudes we shall leave for another time. What is important for our purpose here is that, with the appearance of Gawain, Parzival's soul forces begin to separate from each other: in this light, Parzival is the representative of the soul force of thinking and Gawain the representative of the soul force of feeling. For now, the willing human being remains hidden within Parzival.

This beginning of the separation of the soul forces signals the moment in which Parzival will experience the Lesser Guardian of the Threshold, which he does when Gawain takes him back to Arthur's court. Then Kundrie, the messenger of the Grail, enters—as ugly as Wolfram can make her—and accuses Parzival of being a false knight because he has not asked the Question at the Grail Castle. Kundrie, in her appearance and in her accusation, is the picture of those parts of himself that Parzival has not

redeemed. Her accusation sets Parzival on his Quest, and with that he comes into the realm of the Fourth Beatitude: *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*

At the end of his Quest, then, Parzival comes into the realm of the Ninth Beatitude: *Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.* The Ninth Beatitude is about uniting with Christ; it is connected with the development of our spiritual body as the ninth member of our ninefold constitution.

Now Parzival meets Feirifis. Feirifis is the representative of the soul force of willing in the human being: Parzival's soul forces have completely sundered their bonds with each other. Parzival enters into battle with Feirifis, and his sword shatters as he is delivering Feirifis the fatal blow. Parzival's sword is the one he has taken from Ither, and its breaking is the karmic consequence of Ither's murder. Parzival must atone for Ither's death with his own.

It was no longer pleasing to God that Parzival should wield a weapon robbed from a corpse ... The Infidel ... quickly leapt to his feet again ... The verdict between them lies in the hand of Him on high.

All the conditions are thus fulfilled that are a prerequisite for meeting the Greater Guardian of the Threshold: the bonds uniting Parzival's soul forces have completely loosened; Parzival has redeemed all his karma; and Parzival's life is no longer his own. Returning to our main quotation given above (in the second paragraph), we can imagine how, between one sentence and the next, Parzival stands before the Christ and hears the admonition we read in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*. Part of this admonition pertains particularly to Parzival's next deeds:

Thou must now share with thy fellows the powers which, together with them, thou didst acquire. I shall therefore bar thine entry into the higher regions of the supersensible world so long as thou hast not applied all the powers thou hast acquired to the liberation of thy companions.⁶

Feirifis puts down his sword, spares Parzival's life, and asks: *Who are you?* Today we can say: Parzival is the spiritual leader of humanity in the Fifth post-Atlantean Epoch. His initiation in the 9th century makes it possible for those who came after him to follow the same path.

Feirifis would not have understood this answer, but he lived it. Kundrie comes to Parzival with the news that his name has appeared within the Grail cup; and she tells him that he cannot come to the Grail except in the company of one who cannot come there through his own powers. Parzival chooses Feirifis, and Feirifis witnesses the mysteries of the Grail and of Parzival's healing of Anfortas through the spoken word. Much has been made of the specific words Parzival speaks to Anfortas, usually rendered as "Uncle, what ails thee?" —

⁶ Rudolf Steiner, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* (GA 10), chapter 9, tr. George Metaxa. The Anthroposophic Press, 1947.

as though it would be just these words and no other that could heal Anfortas. The particular words, however, are not what is essential. Rather is it, first, the fact of Parzival asking a question; for when we ask a question, the Christ becomes active within us.

We understand how this connects with Anfortas when we recognize that he has so fallen into the sin of bodily desire that the Christ no longer has any access to him, and without the Christ being active in him, the healing Holy Spirit cannot work. Because he asks a question, Parzival joins the impulse of the Christ Being to that of the Father God holding sway in Anfortas; then the Holy Spirit can enter Anfortas and heal his wound.⁷ The second



Parzival and Anfortas, by David Newbatt
(<https://www.amazon.com/Parzival-Quest-Grail-David-Newbatt/dp/0946206546>)

essential element is that Parzival's spoken words have acquired a spiritual power, through his initiation, that the words of other people do not have; otherwise anyone could have asked a question and brought about Anfortas's healing. The expectation of the Grail Knights that Parzival will heal Anfortas is based in their knowledge that Parzival, when he comes to the Grail Castle, will have undergone initiation and developed an extraordinary power of speaking. Parzival comes to the Grail Castle for the first time *before* his initiation, and because of this the hopes of the Grail Knights at that point remain unfulfilled. It is also worth noting that the German of Parzival's question, "Oheim, was wirret dir?", properly translates to "Uncle, what brings thee into disorder?" This points to the fact that Anfortas's wound, while present in the etheric body that is forming the physical, finds its source in his chaotic, unpurified astrality.

We have seen that Parzival's meeting with the Christ appears between those lines from Wolfram's poem that describe Parzival's battle with Feirifis; how that presentation corresponds with the event of the historical Parzival's Grail initiation is a question for further research. In the Esoteric Lesson of August 27, 1909,⁸ Rudolf Steiner spoke of the historical initiation of the members of the Grail Order. The background to Rudolf Steiner's remarks lies in the medieval legend of Flor and Blanche fleur, who were the literary embodiments of

⁷ [Ed. See W.J. Stein, *The Ninth Century and the Holy Grail*, London: Temple Lodge Press, 2001, pp. 264-265: "What was the suffering of Anfortas? He was given up to the *Father*-forces, the forces that work in the body: he could not find the *Son* ... he did not find the way from the Father to the Son; the way from natural necessity, from the compulsion of Nature, to freedom of the soul, he did not find ... Thus through Parzival's inner soul activity there was added to the *Father* element of the suffering Anfortas, the *Son*. And through the union of the two there followed the resurrection, the renewal of dying Nature. Therein the power of the *Holy Spirit* is revealed."]

⁸ Rudolf Steiner, *From the Content of the Esoteric Lessons*, Vol. 1 (GA 266/1), Munich, August 27, 1909.

Charibert, Count of Laon, and his wife, who lived in the century before Parzival's birth.⁹ Charibert and his wife were the maternal grandparents of Charlemagne; after his death, Charibert inspired the founding of the Order of the Holy Grail. In the esoteric lesson, Rudolf Steiner indicated that all the pupils initiated into the Order of the Grail were called 'Parzivals.' The initiations of the Parzivals were conducted by the discarnate souls of Flor and Blanche fleur as well as by the individuality who appears in the Wolfram as Parzival's great-grandfather Titurel, whom Parzival spies through the door of an anteroom. In a personal conversation with Ilona Schubert, Rudolf Steiner identified Titurel as a reincarnation of Melchisedek.

Charibert of Laon went through a short lifetime in the 13th century, undergoing a great initiation [about which more in the following article, Ed.] He reincarnated soon after, in the 14th century, receiving at this time the name of Christian Rosenkreutz. So we must ask ourselves: is Christian Rosenkreutz still active in the initiation of the Parzivals? How does Christian Rosenkreutz relate today to the Order of the Holy Grail? There is a further circumstance that lends these questions added weight. Wolfram names his source for the story of the *Parzival* as Kyot of Katelangen; Kyot's source was Flegetanis. Flegetanis is known to history as Hiram of Tyre¹⁰, the builder of Solomon's temple, who reappeared in the 8th century as Charibert of Laon.

We can also ask about the fundamental nature of the inner schooling of a Grail Knight. Looking at the whole of Parzival's spiritual life as it is narrated in Wolfram's poem will reveal how his development leads in an archetypal way through each of the nine Beatitudes in turn¹¹ and the challenges that beset him in this respect at every step. Parzival is the representative of the human being of our age; our own inner work follows the path he opened. As for the challenges that Parzival encounters at the hand of the shadow side of the Divine Feminine: these appear in one form or another in the life of each one of us; we are, as Parzival was, thrown back on our own capacities by the shadow, so that we may be strengthened, so that we may worthily follow the light radiating from the Divine Feminine. That light itself can work in paradoxical ways, as witness the effect achieved in Parzival by the stern responses he receives from Sigune and Kundrie when he initially fails to proceed to the task required, to be able to speak the words that will finally heal Anfortas and bring hope to everyone again.

⁹ *The Ninth Century and the Holy Grail*, pp. 64ff.

¹⁰ Once again, W.J. Stein, *The Ninth Century and the Holy Grail*, pp. 184-185.

¹¹ The Beatitudes as deed can also be seen in the last chapter of the Gospel of Luke, beginning with the experience of Cleopas and the other disciple on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) and continuing through the end of the chapter.

The Initiation of Christian Rosenkreutz¹

Claudia McLaren Lainson

In the 13th century the wisdom of the twelve cultural epochs streamed from a circle of twelve wise men into the young Christian Rosenkreutz, who lay at their center. This is an imagination reflecting the twelve rays of the heart chakra that formed a new organ of cognition. There were no known initiates upon Earth at that time. In eleven of the twelve lived the memory of all past wisdom while the twelfth anticipated the cultural epoch about to come. No new wisdom could find humanity on Earth, for there were no persons living at this time who had formed the organ into which this revelation could have been received. As these twelve rays permeated the being of Rosenkreutz, his heart must have had an experience of being pressed into on all sides—from twelve different directions. He must have experienced a point of bitter loneliness at this central meeting place, at his heart's center, where this twelve-fold wisdom condensed to such an extent that each ray became a contributor to the forming of a new organ capable of bestowing new life. Christian Rosenkreutz lay as if dead in a body that was becoming increasingly transparent. After this initiation, no longer did the being of Christian Rosenkreutz depend upon the wisdom flowing from the others. Due to the manner in which he took in all the wisdom streaming into him from the twelve, and having suffered the complete loneliness this initiation had caused, Rosenkreutz was able to fashion— from the depths of his heart—a capacity not only to receive the centralized twelve-fold wisdom streams, but also to form out of this a thirteenth principle. He awakened from this experience like a new soul.

As Rudolf Steiner puts it:

Within him there now existed something that was like a completely new birth of the twelve streams of wisdom, so that the twelve wise men could also learn something entirely new from the youth. His body, too, came to life in such a way that this revival of his absolutely transparent body was beyond compare. The youth could now speak of quite new experiences. The twelve recognized that he had experienced a repetition of the vision of Paul on the road to Damascus. In the course of a few weeks the thirteenth reproduced all the wisdom he had received from the twelve, but in a new form. This new form was as though given by Christ himself. What he now revealed to them, the twelve called true Christianity, the synthesis of all the religions, and they distinguished between the true Christianity and the Christianity of the period in which they lived.²

This is a beautiful imagination for the awakened heart. When Lazarus was awakened from the dead by Christ, he was given Christ's etheric body. This can be seen as the beginning of the Rosicrucian stream. In his incarnation in the 13th century, he would model this mystery

¹ [Ed. From *The Circle of Twelve and the Legacy of Valentin Tomberg*, Boulder CO: WindRose Academy Press, 2015, from pp. 68-77. Note that Christian Rosenkreutz would not be so named until his incarnation in the 14th century, and only for convenient reference is he so named in the following account of his initiation in the 13th century.]

² Rudolf Steiner, *Christian Rosenkreutz, the Mystery, Teaching, and Mission of a Master*. Forest Row UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2005, pp. 17-18.

out of his own forces: *he would incarnate a new capacity*. This new capacity then became the key that would gradually open the door to the new revelations sounding from the Church of John [about which more in another article below — Ed]. Rosenkreutz was making way for a mystery impulse that would continue to reveal its treasures as a Grail activity on Earth—for with an awakened heart, Christ can indwell a human being. *Thus did Christian Rosenkreutz prepare humanity to receive the future as an activity of the human heart, which became an organ of cognition for revelation.*

These are apocalyptic mysteries. With the onset of the Second Coming and the opening of the gates of Hell in 1933, humanity was being called to a new knighthood so as to develop the courage to stand before the apocalyptic realities that would be unfolding. As Robert Powell puts it:

The Christian Rosenkreutz individuality is a kind of guardian of what is called the Eternal Apocalypse. (The Book of Revelation is only part of a much greater revelation that is called the Eternal Apocalypse.) So the mysteries of Christian Rosenkreutz connect onto this stream of Lazarus John.³

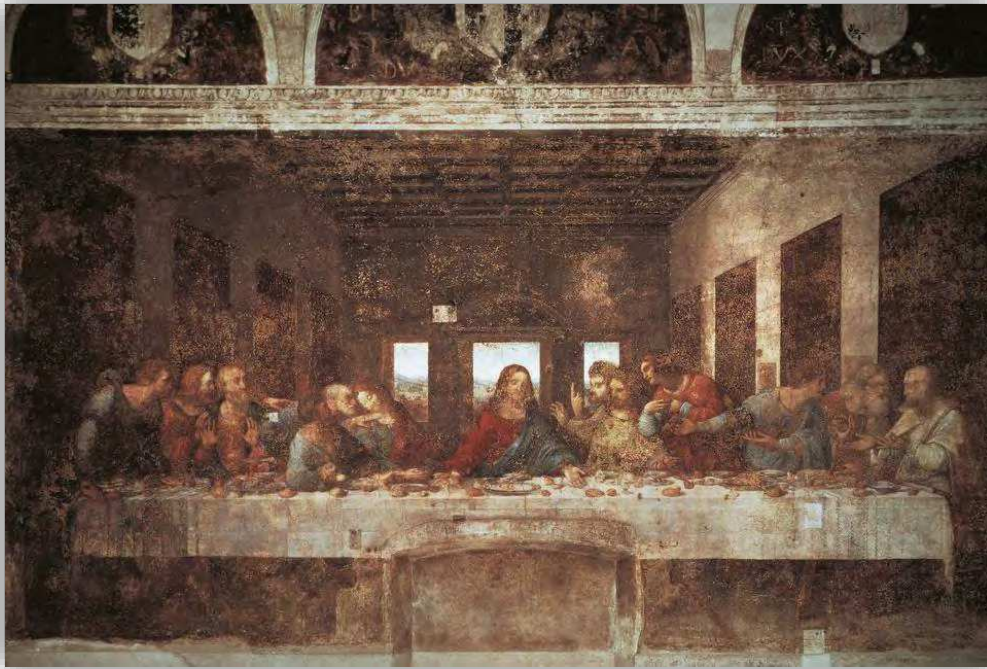
The deed of Rosenkreutz imprinted a new possibility for humanity. He created new possibilities for all human beings to turn again towards Christ. Christ initiated this stream. Lazarus was its first initiate; and Rosenkreutz would embody this throughout his incarnations. As a result of this initiation and the radiations now emanating from the etheric body of Christian Rosenkreutz (whether incarnated or not), it has thus become possible to seek the Rosicrucian stream. An altogether new outlook has begun thanks to the radiations of the wonderful etheric body of Christian Rosenkreutz.

The imagination of this initiation can be further referred to the experience which Christ brought with Him to the Earth in His incarnation as Jesus from an existence formerly reflected in Him as far back as the time of the ancient Sun-epoch. Here again is Rudolf Steiner:

Let us imagine that what we have just described of the Sun was gathered up and concentrated completely in the soul of a Being and then, at a later time, brought forward again. Imagine that this Being appeared on Earth and worked in such a way that out of what the archetypal deed and smoke of sacrifice created—that is, the light-engendering time and the bestowing virtue—an extract of activating grace would be carried over and reflect soul warmth and glorious light out of the cosmos. Imagine all this concentrated in a single Soul, who in turn gives this to the Earth-existence, and that assembled around this soul are those who intended to radiate this back and preserve it for the remainder of Earth-existence. In the center is the One who bestows out of the sacrifice and through sacrifice; around this being are those who are intended to receive it. Here we have linked together, on the one hand, what the sacrifice is and what belongs to it, translated into earthly existence; and, on the other hand, the possibility of destroying this sacrifice, for

³ Robert Powell, *Great Teachers of Humanity*, lectures given in Petaluma, California, in July 2007.

everything that can be given to the human being to bring about grace may be either rejected or accepted. *Imagine that all of this were embodied in an intuition — then one would have what one experiences standing before Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper': here we have the entire Sun together with the Beings of sacrifice, the Beings of bestowing virtue, the Beings of soul-warming bliss and light-filled splendor⁴ — [all this] as grasped by the soul radiated back for the Ones who have been chosen to preserve what arises in earlier times for later times. All this has been set out especially for the Earth — together with the possibility that it can also be rejected by the betrayer.*



The Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci

The Rosicrucian stream works with Christ. It was Christ who worked through Christian Rosenkreutz when he was encircled by the twelve. His etheric body shone with new life, and bestowed light to the twelve surrounding him. Those around him were the Bodhisattva individualities who received this radiance and radiated it back in order to preserve it for the remainder of Earth-existence. In like manner the twelve who were around Jesus Christ at the Last Supper reflected his light, as did the circle of the Bodhisattvas around the Cosmic Christ at his Transfiguration.⁵ We can rest assured that Bodhisattvas work

⁴ [Ed. Respectively, as indicated earlier in Steiner's lecture, "[1] the sacrificing Thrones kneeling before [2] the Cherubim ... at the center of the Sun, [3] the Spirits of Wisdom surrendering in devotion to the vision of the sacrifice, their devotion growing into an image of sacrificing smoke which spreads in all directions outward ... [4] the Archangels being created out of the clouds of smoke and radiating back from the periphery." From a lecture given in Berlin on November 7th, 1911. The whole of this text is to be found towards the end of the Chapter "The Inner Aspect of the Sun Embodiment of the Earth" in *Inner Experiences of Evolution*, Great Barrington MA: SteinerBooks, 2006.]

⁵ At the Transfiguration only two of the Bodhisattvas are witnessed: Elijah and Moses, yet one is to imagine that these two represent the entire circle of twelve that surround the Cosmic Christ.

together, for their source is Christ, and their mission is the radiating of his Love. Their words inspire those around them and touch into the divinity that lives in each one of us. In this Rosicrucian stream lie, in fact, the secrets of the Holy Grail, as Steiner indicates:

That is the mystery of the Holy Grail, the holy lance of love, the fructifying light of the Sun that will again unite with Eve [Earth]. The esoteric brotherhood of the Rosicrucians is the nursery in which the human material for the coming Age must be formed. In times of special darkness an especially bright light must constantly arise. Christ was born during the Age of Oriphiel; when Oriphiel again comes into his regency (in a few centuries), then the spiritual light that was brought by Christian Rosenkreutz and has now spread must have created a multitude of clairvoyant people who are pioneers working consciously towards the goal (the goal of spiritualization). That will call into existence the separation into two main streams: a race of good people and a race of evil people. Good and evil are still relatively little differentiated. Our eyes also penetrate very little through the uniform [element] of flesh. Now, it is a relatively short step from evil to good, and from good to evil. If the forces of the masters intervene increasingly powerfully in the life of humanity—along with those human beings who join them with all their strength and will; as well as [on the other hand] the powers of the Gods of Hindrance, also called Mammon (forces of Satan and the Asuras) and their human followers—then the good will be developed into a divine good, and the evil into something terrible: Anti-Christ. Then every one of us “world-helpers” (the word is spoken with the greatest humility) will need all the power that can accrue to him or her through suffering and overcoming, through evil and overcoming evil. The purpose of Rosicrucianism is to call people to this battle through such knowledge and to give them peace in this battle.⁶



Judas laying his hand in the dish, *The Last Supper* 1593-1594, by Agostino Carracci

⁶ Rudolf Steiner, *Esoteric Lessons 1904-1909*. Great Barrington MA: SteinerBooks, 2007, pp. 135-136.

**Report on *The Search for the Holy Grail: The Grail Mystery of
Kaspar Hauser—4th Grail Seminar—with Robert Powell
in Kinsau, Germany, from August 5-11, 2018.***

Angelika Jenal

(translated from the German by Robert Powell)

The conference began on Sunday evening, August 5, in Sophia Hall, Kinsau, Bavaria, with a concert of the Schwabinger Piano Trio, who have played there every year since 1998. In the first half of the concert, they played Beethoven's Triple Concerto in C Major (op.56) in a transcription for piano trio by Beethoven's student Carl Reinecke. After the break, they played Schubert's Piano Trio in Eb Major (op.100). Both presentations were played with great mastery on the part of the three musicians, reaching out to touch the hearts of the listeners.

Here there came to mind Robert Powell's statement concerning music as a "universal cosmic language." The souls of the conference participants—eleven different nationalities—were united in a beautiful way through the sublime music of this concert on the opening evening of this Grail seminar. Likewise, the Choreocosmos cosmic dances during the week of the conference (with the exception of Wednesday) also represented a "universal cosmic language"—at least, as designated by Robert in connection with the accompanying music. Both the cosmic dance and the accompanying music could be experienced as *gateways to heaven*, to the spiritual hierarchies, especially in the "echo" thereof during the night, and/or directly in the depths of one's heart.

Our souls were attuned and expanded through the concert, and during the following days of the Grail seminar we were able to receive sublime soul-spiritual experiences. These experiences formed the foundation for our growing connection to the spiritual hierarchies as well as for deepening spiritual knowledge concerning the *Kaspar Hauser mystery*. The latter came about through Robert's presentations, which spanned the seminar in a grand arc of continuously illuminating lectures and conversations. These continued during the wonderful excursion day with visits to two of King Ludwig II's castles (Schloss = castle): Schloss Neuschwanstein, and Schloss Linderhof with its extensive park. In between visiting these two castles, we also visited the remarkable Ettal monastery. Here it is appropriate to express our heartfelt gratitude to Doris Wolf from Hamburg, who not only took care of a great many of the seminar's practical details but also organized everything regarding this one-day excursion in an exceptional way.

About the Choreocosmos Cosmic Dances

The experience of the *seven planetary dances*, shaped eurythmically through the planetary choreographies and the planetary gestures together with the corresponding (planetary) sound gestures, were musically accompanied in the most wonderful, uplifting way by Italian pianist Fabio Berellini. He elevated us on a soul level through the "wings of music." His powerful playing of the accompanying Beethoven music—the pieces having been chosen to bring to expression the journey of the soul descending into incarnation through the

various planetary spheres—was often greeted with spontaneous applause, which was truly well-deserved!

A further addition to the planetary dances was the experience of the planets—in two instances—being embedded in the signs of the zodiac. During our one-week seminar, we were able to have the experience not only of the seven planetary dances but also of the zodiacal signs of Aries and Cancer, the music chosen for the zodiacal signs being based upon the correspondence of the twelve major and minor keys in relation to the twelve signs of the zodiac. Highpoints of our gathering were the three evening celebrations in connection with Choreosmos cosmic and sacred dances. The culmination was the celebration on the final evening (Friday) of *The Journey of the Soul into Incarnation*, whereby our work during the week with the cosmic dances expressing the seven planetary spheres came to expression—on the journey of descent: the cosmic dances we performed in each case prior to the reading of a profound text depicting the soul's experience in the relevant planetary sphere in connection with the spiritual hierarchy indwelling that cosmic sphere of existence.

Concerning the Evening Celebrations

- A *Prayer Sequence*—developed eurythmically by Robert to music by Franz Schubert—was celebrated on Tuesday, August 7.
- The *Meeting with Christ in the Etheric* was celebrated on Thursday, August 9.
- The *Journey of the Soul into Incarnation* was celebrated on Friday, August 10.

The Choreocosmos cosmic dances we worked with in relation to the *Journey of the Soul into Incarnation*—these cosmic dances honoring the connection with Divine Sophia and her bearing down of the Heavenly Jerusalem. On the first two of these three evenings the sacred dances were enacted in connection with the above-mentioned *Prayer Sequence*. This encompassed working with the Lord's Prayer in the original language of Aramaic, the Our Mother prayer of the Etheric Christ given through Valentin Tomberg, the Ave Maria prayer in connection with the seven "Sayings from the Cross," and the eurythmic *Hallelujah* with the seven "I AM sayings" of Christ—together with five other eurythmic prayers, one of which formed the closing prayer-meditation of the entire sequence. The other eight were done such that each introduced an esoteric text spoken in the three languages of this seminar: English, German, and Italian. Truly the *Word* sounded forth!

These various elements—the words of the esoteric texts, the eurythmy to the sequence of prayers, and the music accompanying the prayer sequence—wove together harmoniously in the circle of participants. In the center of the circle, which was beautifully and artistically shaped with silk cloths in the colors of the seven planets, there was a 7-armed candelabra with candles in the seven colors of the chakras, surrounded by seven Sophia icons, which served to deepen the soul-spiritual substance of the celebrations. Thereby there took place in the most beautiful way a calling-in of the Spiritual Hierarchies, in conjunction with a gentle—at times powerful—uniting with them. An *etheric temple* was created and could be experienced. Within this etheric temple our seminar themes and daily conversations, also our cosmic dances for the *Journey of the Soul into Incarnation*, took place.

Regarding the Kaspar Hauser Mystery

Right from the outset of our deepening into this mystery, the *confrontation with evil* stood out as an important aspect. This was evident both in view of Kaspar Hauser's biography—his time in captivity and his murder—as well as in the sense of the present-day necessity on the part of human beings to strive for an understanding of the confrontation with evil in our time. Right away, in consideration of Kaspar Hauser's destiny, there shone through a connection with the *Grail mystery*, where Parzival, who subsequently became Grail king, was confronted with evil in the person of Klingsor and his cohorts. *Parzival's task* at the time of Charlemagne in the ninth century—as the individuality who had been raised from the dead by Christ as the *Youth of Nain* in an earlier incarnation—was to prepare for guiding humankind into the Grail mystery in our present (fifth) cultural epoch that began in the year 1414, around the time of the start of the Renaissance. Robert drew our attention to two other significant *raisings from the dead* by Christ. He referred to Rudolf Steiner's indications concerning these three in connection with their spiritual guidance, one after the other, of the fifth, sixth, and seventh cultural epochs:



Kaspar Hauser at age 12
Sketch by A. Lucas

Parzival/Kaspar Hauser as the spiritual guide of the fifth cultural epoch, the European epoch (1414-3574).¹

John the Evangelist [re: *Christian Rosenkreutz*], who as *Lazarus* was raised by Christ from the dead, in preparation for his future task of spiritually guiding the sixth cultural epoch, the Slavic epoch (3574-5734).

The *Daughter of Jairus*, the third referred to by Rudolf Steiner in this sequence of three raisings from the dead, who was prepared by Christ for the task of spiritually guiding the seventh cultural epoch, the American epoch (5734-7894).

Kaspar Hauser cannot be looked upon in isolation in consideration of his tragic life and destiny. He must be seen, as Rudolf Steiner indicated, as the rightful Prince of Baden. Thus, he was related to royalty throughout Germany and other parts of Europe. For example, the Bavarian King Ludwig II (1845-1886), who was born twelve years after the murder of Kaspar Hauser in 1833, was himself related to Kaspar Hauser. Born 33 years after Kaspar Hauser's birth in 1812, he was a cousin twice removed. As further indicated by Rudolf Steiner:

¹ During the course of the one-week seminar, Robert spoke much about the close relationship between Parzival (8th/9th centuries) and Kaspar Hauser (19th century). For those interested in these lectures, audio files can be requested from Kelly Calegar (<https://www.sophiaschoolofmovement.org/>). It may be possible eventually to also obtain transcripts of the lectures.

*Southern Germany should have become the new Grail castle of the new spiritual knights and the cradle of future events. The personalities whom we know as Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, Herder, and so on, had prepared the spiritual space well. Kaspar Hauser should have gathered around him all those who lived in this well-prepared spiritual space.*²

Against this background, we can understand King Ludwig II's spiritual impulse to create a Grail Castle, Schloss Neuschwanstein, in Southern Bavaria. It would appear that Ludwig, at some point in time after he was crowned King of Bavaria at the age of 18, received direct inspiration from Kaspar Hauser from the spiritual realm. This is above all apparent in that Kaspar Hauser, as the Prince of Baden in Karlsruhe, was to have created a Grail castle in Southern Germany, as indicated by Rudolf Steiner in the above quote. Through his captivity and subsequent murder, he was prevented from fulfilling his destiny. However, the impulse to build a Grail castle continued to work on, and evidently this impulse was then taken up by Kaspar Hauser's younger relative, King Ludwig II of Bavaria.



Ludwig II

Already in his young years, before he became King, Ludwig was passionately interested in the Grail legends. Having spent much time with his family at their summer residence castle in Hohenschwangau in Southern Bavaria, Ludwig had already there dipped into the connecting links of his family extending back into the Middle Ages. In the region of Hohenschwangau he experienced a "paradise on earth," where in his youth he was able to live according to his ideals. He was happy there. And it was there, a little higher up the mountain—more elevated than Schloss Hohenschwangau, but within walking distance—that he espied the perfect location for his Grail castle, **Schloss Neuschwanstein**.

Our visit to Ludwig's Grail castle was most memorable. We could experience there, on the one hand, the world of the Holy Grail and the Grail knights in the beautiful, romantic frescoes decorating the walls of the castle—executed according to the King's instructions for the various rooms of the castle. And on the other hand, it was possible also to experience Ludwig's deeply Christian impulse. Alas, in the space of this report it is not possible to depict many details regarding this—details which were deeply touching and moving.



Schloss Neuschwanstein

² T.H. Meyer, *Ludwig Polzer-Hoditz: A European*, London: Temple Lodge Publishing, 2014.

The following offers a sketchy outline of two examples to illustrate two of the rooms in King Ludwig's Grail castle. It is a matter in the first place of the majestic and grand Upper Room ("Singers' Hall"), painted with frescoes of scenes from Wagner's opera *Parsifal*.

Secondly, as an example of King Ludwig's deeply Christian soul, the sacral space of the Throne Room at the spiritual center of the castle can be contemplated. The Throne Room can be experienced as the power center of the whole castle. The throne itself was to have been placed in the apse beneath the painting of Christ with Mary and John, with nine steps ascending up to the throne. On the walls, many representations of saints and also



The Throne Room

worldly rulers may be seen—predominantly those who showed compassion in a special way. The connection to heaven with its stars is shown in the Throne Room, above all in the great dome showing the Sun and the stars. In King Ludwig's bedroom, there is a prayer room not far from his bed—as is the case in each of his three main castles. In the king's bedroom at Schloss Neuschwanstein, on the wall at the foot of the bed, a portrayal of Christ's resurrection



The Garden of Klingsor

can be found. At the same time, we also find that the *confrontation with evil* is represented in the castle. For example, we see this in the portrayal of Lucifer being cast down into hell; in the representation of St. George battling with the dragon; in the painting of Klingsor, and also in the dragons carved in limestone at the end of the castle's main stairway.

Looking now more closely at King Ludwig II's relationship with the Grail, it seems likely, as already mentioned, that he was inspired by Kaspar Hauser, particularly

with regard to the impulse to build a Grail castle. Also given the close friendship between King Ludwig and the composer Richard Wagner, it is important to consider Richard Wagner's personal connection with Parsifal and the Grail. It is evident that there *is* one, given his sublime composition of the Grail opera *Parsifal*. One senses that there is a mysterious thread—possibly a karmic connection—weaving between Richard Wagner and Kaspar Hauser here. Indeed, Wagner was born just under eight months after Kaspar Hauser. And, moreover, Wagner wrote in his diary that he met Kaspar Hauser in Bamberg in January 1833, the year of Kaspar Hauser's death on December 17. One cannot help but turn one's

spiritual eye toward this great spiritual connection evidently indicating a *common destiny mission* in service of the Holy Grail. In terms of this interweaving, let us not forget that Richard Wagner was King Ludwig II's favorite composer and that in various rooms, halls and corridors in Schloss Neuschwanstein Ludwig incorporated motifs from Wagner's operas — above all from *Parsifal*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, and *The Ring of the Nibelungen*.

In this connection it seems important to mention that King Ludwig was motivated by high ideals with regard to his artistic architecture and interior design of the castle, but that he also integrated the newest achievements of his time: running water, electricity, the telephone, and so on. In other words, he was endeavoring to explore new ways, combining old and new values, with respect to improving the quality of life in addition to creating artistic and elevating,



A Set for Wagner's Parsifal

artistically shaped surroundings. This innovative approach to life found its realization right into the society of his time. Among other things, he founded a Union of Workers for the workers employed in the building of the castle, with the goal of instituting the ongoing payment of wages even during absence owing to illness. At that time, this was a revolutionary deed, something far ahead of its time. Perhaps it is not too unreasonable to correlate the building of Schloss Neuschwanstein — spiritually inspired in terms of its origin — to the *thinking* dimension of King Ludwig's soul?

Turning now to the second castle we visited that day, **Schloss Linderhof**: this castle was built by Ludwig between 1870 and 1886, the year of his death. This was the castle he favored to spend time at. It was his primary residence. With our visit there, we could directly experience the influence of the castle at Versailles, outside of Paris, built by King Louis XIV of France, known as the "Sun King." As at Versailles, at Schloss Linderhof there is a *mirror hall*. With this and other features of the castle, it is evident that French culture is imitated throughout the castle. One example: King Ludwig created a table that *appeared to lay itself*; in reality, the table was sent down mechanically through a trap-door opening down through the floor into the kitchen, where a previously prepared meal for the king was set upon the table and then sent back up to the king again — for him to dine on. The rooms of Schloss Linderhof are decorated with many French-style paintings and scenes, among them a portrayal of Louis XIV in his bedroom in the presence of his courtiers for the morning (or perhaps evening) reception.

The building of this small but elegant castle could perhaps be seen in connection with the *feeling life* of Ludwig II. Here again, as with Schloss Neuschwanstein, his idea of kingly rule was borne by the ideal of being "king by the grace of God."

On this day of our excursion, we also had a deep experience and received a profound impression from our visit to the Benedictine **Ettal Abbey**, founded in the year 1330, close to the Bavarian mountain resort town of Garmisch-Partekirchen and not far from the famous town of Oberammergau. Our visit here took place between our visits to the two castles of King Ludwig II. Ettal Abbey is associated with the *Grail stream* in so far as Ludwig IV of Bavaria, known as *Ludwig the Bavarian*, the founder of Ettal Abbey, was quite possibly a forefather of King Ludwig II. After Ludwig the Bavarian's excommunication through the pope, Ludwig went to Rome and was crowned emperor in Saint Peter's by two bishops who were hostile to the pope. The emperor, when he returned to Germany, founded Ettal Abbey,



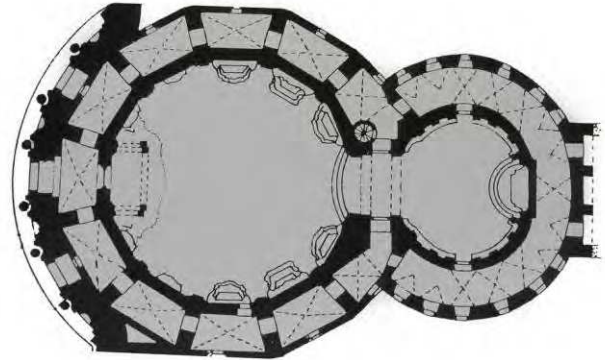
Ettal Abbey interior; altar: foreground, center, bottom, and high altar in the background

dedicating it to "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin." This founding was part of a vow that he had made upon his coronation in Rome.

Ludwig the Bavarian, in growing up, became acquainted with the story of *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach and also with other Grail works, including *The Younger Titurel* by Albrecht von Scharfenberg—the only Grail work to give a description of the architectural structure of the Grail castle. Ettal Abbey connected directly onto the Grail stream, insofar as its

architectural design was drawn from the description of the Grail temple in Albrecht's *The Younger Titurel*. (Let us recall that according to Wolfram, Titurel, who was Parzival's great grandfather, was the builder of the Grail castle later visited by Parzival.) The north wing attached to Ettal Abbey was built to house knights ("Grail knights" in the imagination of Ludwig the Bavarian). The south wing attached to the abbey was built for the monks and priests. The architectural plan of the abbey indicates two intersecting domes: a small cupola covering the area for the priests, arching over the high altar, and a large dome arching above the area of the congregation. It is astonishing to see that the ground plan of Ettal Abbey is more or less identical with that of the First Goetheanum designed by Rudolf Steiner, the foundation stone of which was laid in September 1913 and which tragically burnt down on New Year's Eve 1922/1923. The almost identical ground plans of the two is a clear indication that the First Goetheanum was inspired by the Grail temple—in turn intended to mirror the "architecture of the heavens." Whereas in the case of Ettal Abbey the large dome extended above the congregation, the large dome of the First Goetheanum arched over the auditorium. And whereas in the case of Ettal Abbey, the cupola extended above the high altar, the small dome of the First Goetheanum arched over the stage area. The central focus at the back of the stage was to have been occupied by the great statue of Christ, *The Representative of Humanity*, created by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) with the help of the English sculptress Edith Maryon (1872-1924).

In Ettal Abbey the central focus is the high altar, upon which there is a beautiful, small, gold-colored Madonna and Child statue created by the Italian sculptor Giovanni Pissaro. According to Ludwig the Bavarian's biography, after he was crowned emperor, a mysterious elderly monk appeared to him and presented Ludwig with this beautiful Madonna and Child statue, at the same time giving the emperor the instruction that upon his return to Germany he should build an abbey for which the small statue should occupy the central place. This small statue depicts in a most touching way the Jesus child lovingly turned toward his mother, and she, in turn, is lovingly gazing back at the child. With this statue upon the high altar, a deeply Christian essence streams throughout the interior space of the abbey. In addition, there are approximately four hundred figures painted within the cupola, of which about two hundred have been identified from the Old and New Testaments. Especially striking is the depiction of Christ's transfiguration on Mount Tabor, with Moses and Elijah on either side of him. There is also a painting of the scene of the crucifixion and also one depicting the resurrection. However, the central image shows Mary's assumption into heaven—the Marian event to which the abbey was dedicated.



Ettal Abbey Floorplan



First Goetheanum

After this one-day excursion, the seminar continued the next day back in Sophia Hall, Kinsau. We began by contemplating the world-historic event that, at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, and in fulfilment of Rudolf Steiner's mission as *prophet for the Etheric Christ*, began through his commencing to lay the foundations of spiritual science, thus preparing for his subsequent proclamation of the approaching event of Christ's coming in the etheric realm, which he dated 1933. Kaspar Hauser (1812-1833), the "Child of Europe," ideally would have prepared the way in the social realm for Rudolf Steiner's spiritual impulse that began to unfold around the year 1900. However, this could not take place, because of the tragedy of Kaspar Hauser's imprisonment and murder by very evil men opposed to him. Like Kaspar Hauser, King Ludwig II also experienced a dramatic and untimely end to his life. Kaspar Hauser was twenty-one years old when he was murdered. His relative, King Ludwig II, died in mysterious circumstances at the age of forty. After having been arrested at Schloss Neuschwanstein charged with being insane—a charge fabricated by the psychiatrist Bernhard

von Gudden, head of the Munich Asylum, who had never met Ludwig³—the King was taken to a small castle of his, Berg castle, on the shore of Lake Starnberg, south of Munich. There, on the evening of Pentecost Monday, June 13, 1886, King Ludwig's life—he had taken an early evening walk together with Dr. Gudden along the shore of Lake Starnberg—ended, as did that of Dr. Gudden, in the shallow water of the lake, not far from the shore. The mysterious circumstances surrounding the deaths of the two men have to this day not been explained satisfactorily. It is quite possible, though, that just as in the case of the murder of Kaspar Hauser, with King Ludwig also there was foul play on the part of evil men opposed to him. Indeed, many hold that the King was murdered while attempting to escape from Berg. Given that both Kaspar Hauser and King Ludwig II of Bavaria were in service of the Grail, the possibility that dark anti-Grail forces were arrayed against both of them seems quite likely. Right up to the present time, the descendants of the king's family have refused to release the results of the autopsy pertaining to the king's body—results that could probably explain the real circumstances of his death. Clearly the family has sought all along to veil the true circumstances surrounding the king's death.

What remains is to behold the ongoing *Grail stream* that cannot be hindered, as can be seen, for example, from Rudolf Steiner's life as the proclaimer of spiritual science, which he termed "the science of the Grail." Our fourth Grail seminar—the first one to be held in Germany, the first three having been held in France—bore witness to the ongoing unfolding of the Grail stream.⁴ On Friday, in closing, Robert referred to a conversation which Ludwig Polzer-



The Lake where Ludwig was found

Hoditz had with Rudolf Steiner on November 11, 1924, in which the latter put forward three questions. After this conversation, Ludwig Polzer-Hoditz wrote down the questions asked by Rudolf Steiner—questions intended to stimulate us, through occupying ourselves with them, to find answers to them: the question of the two John figures / the question: Who was Demetrius?⁵ / the question: Whence came Kaspar Hauser? After our warmhearted goodbyes at the end of the seminar on Friday evening, these questions remained livingly in our hearts and minds and also in the Sophia Hall, now steeped in the mood of Parzival and Kaspar Hauser, upon whom we had focused our attention during this week.

³ King Ludwig asked Dr. Gudden, "How can you declare me insane? After all, you have never seen or examined me before."

⁴ For a report about the preceding three Grail seminars, see Natalia Haarahiltunen, "The Stars Are Shining: Three Summers in France," *Starlight* vol. 17, no. 2 (Advent 2017), pp. 77-82.

⁵ [Ed. Dmitry (Demetrius) was the youngest son of Russia's Ivan IV, known as Ivan "Grozny"—usually translated Ivan the Terrible (1530-1584). On 15 May 1591 (O.S.), Dmitry died from a stab wound, under mysterious circumstances.]

In conclusion, I would like to say that Estelle Isaacson's presence at this fourth Grail seminar was greatly missed, not just by myself, but by many participants who greatly appreciate Estelle's work—participants from all over Europe. Originally it had been announced that she would be present as a contributor to this fourth Grail seminar, and then we heard that because of health considerations, she was unable to make the long journey from the United States to Southern Germany to attend this seminar. She had been co-presenter, with Robert, at the preceding three Grail seminars in France. At any rate, we all send her our most heartfelt greetings. She has so greatly enriched our lives—inspiring our search for the Holy Grail—especially with her last two books, which are priceless treasures in the history of literature concerning the Holy Grail:

Estelle Isaacson, *The Grail Bearer: Tellings from the Ever Primal Story—Through the Eyes of Repanse de Schoye* (Taos, NM: LogoSophia, 2016), and *The Younger Kyot: Tellings of Mages and Maidens—Shimmering Through the Grail Land of Grace* (Taos, NM: LogoSophia, 2017)

Postscript by Robert Powell

Heartfelt gratitude to Angelika for her report (above) on the fourth Grail gathering in Europe. I would also like to express gratitude to Angelika for her translation of Estelle Isaacson's book *The Grail Bearer* into German, which was published through Amazon by James (Jim) Wetmore (editor/publisher, LogoSophia) in time for the Kaspar Hauser Grail seminar, which Jim also attended. Many thanks also to Jim for his wonderful work as publisher and editor of *The Grail Bearer* and various other great literary treasures of our time.

After the fourth Grail seminar—this time focusing upon Kaspar Hauser and his mission of creating a Grail castle in Southern Germany—the question arises: How will this annual Grail gathering in Europe develop further? If one looks at the very end of my article on the 2018 Choreocosmos workshops (published in the *Starlight* Advent issue, 2018)), one will see that a Grail gathering is planned in 2019, signifying the beginning in Europe of the Sophia Grail Training and associated Grail Knights Training. The Sophia Grail Training commenced in California in 2007, and the Grail Knights Training began there in 2012. This first European gathering will take place in south-west France, in the town of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, where the second Grail workshop (led by Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson) took place in September 2016. As described in Estelle Isaacson's book *The Grail Bearer* referred to above, Parzival, prior to becoming Grail king, visited his uncle Kyot at the location where now the town of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert stands. Indeed, this town is named after the historical person St. Guillaume underlying the figure of Kyot in Wolfram's *Parzival*.⁶

⁶ [Ed. For more on St. Guillaume/Guilhem's role in the writing of Wolfram's three epics, see Ellen Schalk's remarkable essay "Kyot and the Stellar Script of Parsifal," as translated by Richard Bloedon at <https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/kyotandthestellarscriptofparsifal.pdf> We learn in this essay, among other things, of Guilhem's immediate experience of the historical Grail family: "he discovers the house of the Grail and takes home as his bride the Grail-daughter, Schoysiane. She dies during the birth of their daughter, Sigune." Ellen Schalk's essay may also be found as Appendix V in Claudia McLaren Lainson's *The Circle of Twelve*, Boulder, CO: WindRose Academy Press, 2015.]

Guillaume de Toulouse was canonized a saint by Pope Alexander II in 1066, and, as described in *The Grail Bearer*, acted as a kind of “patron saint” of all knights. By gathering in Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert for the Grail Training in Europe, we connect onto the historical Grail story and to the sacred dimension of this location. For, upon his retirement from knightly service to Charlemagne, Guillaume/Kyot was offered a gift by the emperor, and he chose a piece of the sacred relic of the True Cross, that had come into Charlemagne’s possession. This fragment of the True Cross given to Guillaume/Kyot was then installed in the abbey that he subsequently built—the abbey now situated in the heart of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert.

When Parzival arrived in Gellone (as Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert was known before it was renamed in honor of Saint Guillaume/Guilhem), his inner light was dimming. In the abbey he knelt before the Cross and wept. Taking in the spiritual transmission from Golgotha of the relic of the True Cross—each day he prayed before the Cross—Parzival slowly regained his strength (a moving depiction of this is given in Estelle Isaacson’s book, *The Grail Bearer*.) It is in this holy place on planet Earth, where a relic of the True Cross can be experienced, that the Sophia Grail Training will begin in Europe in 2019 during the week leading up to Michaelmas, as described at the end of the report on the 2018 Choreocosmos workshops (in *Starlight Advent 2018*). All Grail seekers will be welcome to join us at this sacred location so deeply connected with the historical Grail stream.⁷



Interior of the Abbey at St. Guilhem-le-Désert

⁷ For details of the Grail gathering at Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert during the last week of September 2019, follow this link: <https://sophiafoundation.org/upcoming-events-non-sponsored-events/>
See also <https://sophiafoundation.org/upcoming-events-sponsored-events/> —especially the Grail Facilitator Training in May 2019 and the Grail Knights Training in July 2019.

from *The Way of Novalis*¹, Chapter 9 “Penetrating the Whole at Last”

Novalis on Illness, the Eucharistic Embrace, and Visionary Wholeness

John O’Meara

In mid-summer of 1798, Novalis fell seriously ill, overcome for the first time by the tubercular bacterium that two and a half years later would claim his life. His beloved Sophie’s former governess, known as Ma Chère, had just died. Her death must have impacted like an echo or repetition of what he had been through over a year before in the death of Sophie. While recovering at a spa in Teplitz, Novalis’s thoughts turned especially to the body and to illness. In *Novices*, his “thinking man” had already given thought to the body as the place where nature stands in an immediate relation to us. It is on the basis of our body that nature, through the self, induces those thoughts that he had said emanate back out into the medium of outer nature to be further dispersed there. But the body becomes in this way a medium for knowing nature’s life without:

Unknown and mysterious relations within our body cause us to surmise unknown and mysterious states in nature ... (MAN 77)²

Nature is thus seen as “a community of the marvelous, into which we are initiated by our body.” In the *Teplitz Fragments*, Novalis speaks of how “[t]he whole body breathes” (STJ 101)³, focusing still more specifically on the lips, which we alone use to ingest just as it is out of the lips alone that we speak. Their “gentle, soft elevation is a symbolic wish for touch,” and so, he concludes:

Everything in nature invites us figuratively and modestly to enjoy it—and so the whole of nature might well be feminine, virgin and mother at the same time.

We continue to find among these Fragments Novalis’s most characteristic concerns: a focus on the “philosophy of life” as the study of “the independent, *self-made* life,” as well as on “the world” as “a universal trope of the spirit” (STJ 105), which echoes his previous remark that “the human being” is “a perfect trope of the spirit.” All these are interconnected perceptions, and to this set of concerns Novalis now adds that “[i]t is a true trope to substitute the body for the spirit” (STJ 103). The self in its capacity for thought is now shown penetrating to this new level of insight. There is especially a focus on eating as a process of spiritual “appropriation,” through what nature has to offer. Eating together becomes further “symbolic of union,” and from here Novalis’s thoughts turn to the “commemorative meal” (STJ 102-103), alluding to the eating of bread and the drinking of wine as a partaking in the

¹ John O’Meara, *The Way of Novalis*, Ottawa: HcP Ottawa, 2014, pp. 191-196 *passim*.

² All references to *The Novices of Sais*, tr. Ralph Manheim. Brooklyn, NY: Archipelago Books, 2005.

³ All references to *Philosophical Writings*, tr. and ed. Margaret Mahony Stoljar. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997.

body and blood of Christ. Novalis's idea of the influence of nature in us thus evolves into a concept of Eucharistic effectiveness:

In this way we partake of the genius of nature every day and thus every meal becomes a commemorative meal ... a mysterious means of transfiguration and deification on earth—of vivifying contact with that which is absolutely alive.

A significant deepening of experience is taking place in these Fragments, a deeper engagement with the body as a medium through which the world-spirit is at work. Hence the ideal value attached also to the act of touching, also to the embrace which itself has been growing as a focus in Novalis's thought and which he here presents in association with the "Eucharist" (STJ 101). It is the embrace of "nature" as "virgin and mother." Novalis's experience at the spa—the communal gathering at meals while being lovingly tended to by female nurses—had come together in this marvelous revelation.



Sculpture of Mary Holding Jesus in the Eucharist, World Youth Day, Krakow 2016

In this context, Novalis's thoughts turn, for the first time in his Fragments as a whole, specifically to "Sophie, or women" (STJ 104), and to "the beautiful secret of the virgin," which is "the premonition of motherhood—the sensing of a future world that slumbers within her and is to be developed from her" (STJ 105). In this last set of associations we recognize another intimation of the full extension of Novalis's thought: Nature herself at last opens her world to us, as veiled maiden and mother *and* in direct association with womanly virginity and motherhood. Women, in the *Teplitz Fragments*, are seen as offering an especially extraordinary impetus in this respect. Hence "the postulate of feminine mysticism": "[w]hat a high opinion of the free force and self-creative power of their spirit this presupposes" (STJ 108). In the meantime, all of this fresh insight has come to Novalis through his illness, which has restored him to the sense of his imperfection and his dependence on others: "Through imperfection one becomes open to the influence of others—and this influence of others is the purpose" (STJ 107). In our illnesses, only others can help us, and in this reversed situation Novalis sees Christ at work: it is He Who appears in others, outside oneself, in nature, and all ordinary life becomes in this way potentially "a divine service." Clearly in these Fragments Novalis was growing more and more deeply *into* the world, to the point, as he puts it, of considering "*everything* that has happened" (STJ 104) as the starting-point and gateway to everything else one might hope for by way of expansion into, and beyond, the world.

That the world seemed to be opening up to Novalis more and more at this point was directly linked to his deepening confrontation with himself as brought on by his illness. In a set of Fragments written after his stay in Teplitz, he returns to illness as a theme: "Characteristic of illness," he notes, is "the instinct for self-destruction. So it is with everything imperfect" (STJ 114). We are familiar with this thought from as far back as the *Miscellaneous Observations*. There can be no progress without our throwing off older forms of self that constitute illusionary identities, a task that according to Novalis is given to us

throughout our lives. Death constitutes, at the last, the most advanced form of self-liberation in these terms. Especially has this been Novalis’s task, which he has tried to anticipate, as we have seen, by identifying here and now with his own death in relation to Sophie’s. He returns to this focus here: “Dissolution of the difference between life and death” —illness being, as he might have put it, a trope of that dissolution. Here we are put in mind once again of the intense level at which Novalis was living out his evolution, we are to assume *throughout* the months during which he was engaged in his philosophical writings. He had responded to the inscription at Sais with the idea of becoming immortal, and that is what he was for the most part silently in the process of trying to do by engaging with death at the extreme level that he was. The projection of nature as the veiled maiden and mother, with which the self is identified, takes place from within this underlying informing impulse. This is also implied in the Tale of Hyacinth and Rosebud, inasmuch as Rosebud stands for the dead Sophie, whom Hyacinth will *re-encounter* behind the veil of the great Mother, Isis.⁴

As we have seen, Novalis’s basic vision projects the self and nature or the world as, at some point, literally united, at a level that *includes* the workings of the world-spirit that runs through the whole, and Novalis’s “encyclopaedistics,” which extend philosophical representation to every conceivable subject, portends nothing less than a science of the whole on this basis. There is to be a broader and broader penetration of the association of the self and nature extended to every conceivable sphere of life, and what arises from this project as a constant focus is “the theory of pure objects” which Novalis says “*is* Encyclopaedistics” (STJ 127). Every object of attention is to fall into that range of operation in the self that magically brings thoughts and things into a unitary relation. This operation further involves what Novalis calls the “education of the nonself,” by which latter term he means outer nature or the world: the process of magically uniting self and nature *moralizes* nature. Novalis’s clearest statement of this principle is to be found in his *Last Fragments*: “Nature ... can only be explained as progressing—toward morality” (STJ 157), which leads him to speculate whether even the so-called “immutable laws of nature” might not “be deception.” In his *General Draft* Novalis puts it in this way: “Nature is to become moral” and “We are ... its moral stimuli” (STJ 123). In the Fragments written just after Teplitz he had said: “Now the spirit is spirit out of instinct—a nature spirit. It is to *be* a rational spirit, to be spirit out of reflection and art” (STJ 116).



Christ Healing the Sick

⁴ See my article on “Novalis and the Enigma of Nature” in *Starlight*, Advent 2018, to which the present article constitutes a sequel.

With magical idealism it is inevitably a matter of grasping what is “perfect” — “whoever has them [thoughts, and things] both *perfectly* in his power *is* the magical idealist.” In his *Draft*, Novalis will go on to note: “Everything perfect ... expresses a whole related world” (STJ 133); everything lies in a relation to the whole. In his *Last Fragments* he will put it thus: “Is not everything full of meaning, symmetry, reference, and strange connection?” (STJ 161) Morally-speaking, however, the “perfect” can only be grasped in a necessary relation to the “imperfect,” the moral power lying in the whole mystery of that incontrovertible dialectic. This agrees with the fact that Novalis sees nature and spirit as lying in an *evolutionary* moral relation: we can only know as much of nature and spirit as lies in us to know at a certain point in historical and cosmic time, an emphasis Novalis comes back to especially in his *Last Fragments*. In his *Draft*, in a number entitled “Philosophical Pathology,” Novalis notes that “[a]n absolute drive toward perfection ... is an illness, as soon as it shows itself to be destructive and averse toward the imperfect” (STJ 131). While in Teplitz, as we have seen, Novalis conceived of his own illness as an outgrowing of imperfection: illness involved, once more for him, a further dissolution of the self in its illusionary identifications. Illness, in the meantime, gives us up to the influence of others, in a mutually engendered experience between those who give care and those who are cared for. Novalis had perceived a whole Eucharistic culture arising out of that situation especially where he emphasizes the spectacle of communal eating as an assimilation of nature. In this Eucharistic experience he had further envisioned the embrace of nature as virgin and mother. Clearly everything was, at this point, coming together for him.

In the *Draft* Novalis grabs hold of this whole situation at a still deeper level, *and what he now describes appears to have become his own experience at this time*. For one who is deliberately propelled and naturally overcome by “the absolute drive toward perfection,” “[p]rofundity and the will etc. know no bounds” (STJ 130). But *at* this threshold of knowledge, Novalis notes, he who would identify only with perfection finds that “*exhausted*, the power of imagination stands still.” “Here,” Novalis notes somberly, “we arrive at the possibility of mental illnesses—mental weaknesses,” and only “the moral law here appears as the sole, true great law of the raising of the universe to a higher degree—as the basic law of harmonious development. Unceasingly man progresses—more easily with each, true step ...” Having grasped that whole situation at last, *Novalis is now himself transported*. His imagination can *progress* in profundity: “space for movement grows” (STJ 131). He is in possession of what it means that “Everything ... expresses a whole related world,” and now he *has* the experience he has been envisioning for so long, a new wholistic vision that opens up, with every movement, to his now magical touch:

That is why [and how] the veil of the eternal virgin floats around perfection of every kind — which the lightest touch dissolves in magic fragrance, which becomes the cloud-carriage of the prophet. (STJ 133)

Novalis’s *Hymns* has surely *here* been born:

With every move in perfecting it the work leaps away from the master into more than spatial distances—and thus with the last move the master sees the work that is ostensibly his separated

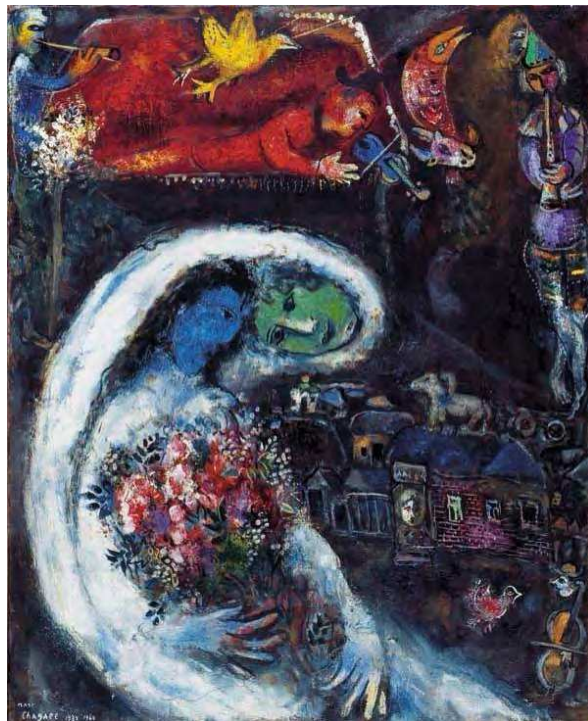
from himself by a gulf of thought—whose breadth he can scarcely grasp—and which only the power of the imagination can cross.

*At the moment when it was to become wholly his it became more than himself, **its** creator—and he became the unknowing instrument and property of a higher power.*

Consider the way the *Hymns* first comes across to us:

Glory to the queen of the world, to the great prophet of the holier worlds, to the guardian of blissful love!⁵

Away fled the glory of the world, and with it my mourning⁶; the sadness flowed together into a new, unfathomable world ... [T]he region gently upheaved itself; over it hovered my unbound, newborn spirit. The mound became a cloud of dust, and through the cloud I saw the glorified face of my beloved. In her eyes eternity reposed. I laid hold of her hands, and the tears became a sparkling bond that could not be broken. Into the distance swept by, like a tempest, thousands of years.



The Betrothed, Chagall 1932

⁵ See *Hymns to the Night*. Tr. George MacDonald. Crescent Moon Publishing, Kent, UK 2010, p. 38 and p. 40.

⁶ Mourning over his Sophie, which had brought on illness.

Peter Deunov and the Blossoming of the Human Soul

Harrie Salman

The Holy Grail cup is an extraordinary piece of living matter that was given to mankind as a grace to moderate the effects of the Fall into sin.¹ The Fall led to the separation from our higher being. Through his death and resurrection Christ re-established this lost connection. The Holy Grail received his etherised blood. Judith von Halle² explained that Joseph of Arimathea travelled with this etherised blood to Europe to consecrate the earth at special places with this blood, so that its energy radiated out into Europe. This caused a change of the human blood, liberating it from the influence of the group souls, so that it could become a carrier of the individual "I". Von Halle explains that this etherised blood of Christ affected the physical constitution of people. Since then human beings can work upon their soul to transform it into a pure vessel (a human Grail) for the spirit.

After Joseph of Arimathea's mission, the living Grail cup was guarded in the etheric Grail temple (or castle) of Monsalvat. From here the former folk spirit of the Celtic peoples inspired the development of esoteric Christianity. In this temple, copies of the "I" of Jesus were kept, available for every human being when their soul was ready to receive such a copy.³

The Grail stories, especially Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, speak of seekers of the Holy Grail and of a Grail family that lived in the presence of the Holy Grail. These stories relate to events from the 9th century. In the decades around 1200 they became part of the courtly culture of Western Europe. Wolfram's *Parzival* exemplifies a path of inner development of people who could all be called Parsifals, disciples of a spiritual training that led them through the valley of our earthly reality to the awakening of their higher being. In the context of this work of inner transformation we will examine the significance of the Bulgarian spiritual teacher of the 20th century, Peter Deunov.

The Science of the Grail

At the end of the Middle Ages a new spiritual training began in the school of Christian Rosencreutz. Here one could learn to work in a healing way in the world, avoiding both the path of the mystics and the path that was leading to modern materialistic science. This Rosicrucian brotherhood worked in secret. At the beginning of the 20th century Rudolf Steiner publicly inaugurated Anthroposophy as a continuation of the Rosicrucian project of a new spiritual science. Above all he wanted to bring together individualities with Aristotelian and Platonic backgrounds to spiritualise human thinking.

Steiner wrote about a 'hidden knowledge' concerning the secrets surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ. This knowledge was present among those who were able to

¹ Estelle Isaacson, *The Grail Bearer*, LogoSophia, Peterborough (USA) 2016, p. 124.

² Judith von Halle, *Joseph von Arimathea und der Weg des Heiligen Gral*, Verlag für Anthroposophie, Dornach 2011.

³ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 11.4.1909, in CW (= Complete Works), no. 109.

communicate with the spiritual world. During the European Middle Ages there were almost always such people with a higher consciousness (which was based on the faculties of imagination, inspiration, and intuition). Using the symbol of the Holy Grail, Steiner described their hidden knowledge as 'knowledge of the Grail.' In a similar way he could call the Rosicrucian initiates 'Grail initiates' and define Anthroposophy as the *Science of the Grail*.⁴

The symbolism of the Holy Grail belongs to the Western European spiritual tradition. But we can also apply it to other spiritual streams in which the secrets of the life of Christ were known and in which disciples were initiated into the 'hidden knowledge of the Grail.' We can think of the Bogomils and the Order of the Knights Templar. Neither of these groups used the language of the Grail. The origin of the Bogomils lies in Bulgaria. According to Peter Deunov the Bogomil stream was founded by the Bulgarian prince Boyan, who lived in the 10th century. Because they were persecuted in the Balkan countries, Bogomils (who are 'people dear to God') fled to Italy and Southern France, where they became known as Cathars (the 'Pure Ones').

The School of the White Brotherhood

Peter Deunov (1864-1944), the son of an Orthodox priest, worked as a teacher in a Methodist school in 1887-1888. Between 1888 and 1895 he studied at a Methodist seminary and university in the United States. In the last year of his stay he is said to have done a traineeship as a pastor in different Methodist parishes in the United States. Back in Bulgaria, he went his own way, meeting people from different spiritual groups. In these years he had profound spiritual experiences, including meetings with angels and with Christ, who would occasionally speak through him. On 19 March 1897, he was inspired from the spiritual world. As he said later: "Then I was given a mission from Heaven, then I was told that I am a Master for all humanity. The assigned mission is in connection with the new path of the Slavs and with the coming of the Sixth Race [the next cycle of cultures]."⁵

Peter Deunov also shared other messages he received, among them a message called *Khio-Eli-Meli-Mesail*, given to him in 1897 by 'The Voice of God, Emanoil,' in which Christ announces his coming. It ends with the words: "I am waiting for an answer at the secret door of your heart."⁶ In this year he founded the 'Society for the Upliftment of the Religious Spirit of the Bulgarian People.' This message was followed in 1898 by *The Call of the Angel of the Bulgarian Nation*. This angel is in charge of the preparation of the coming Slavic culture.⁷ In 1899 Peter Deunov received a new revelation called *Testimonies of the Spirit*, 10 questions which he and his disciples could answer positively, thereby committing themselves to God

⁴ Rudolf Steiner, *Occult Science*, chapter 'Present and Future of the Development of Man and the World,' 1909.

⁵ Peter Deunov, *Harmonizing of the Human Soul*, tr. Galina Markina, Byalo Bratstvo Publishers, Sofia 2013, p. 386. The Sixth Race is a concept from Theosophy. Peter Deunov called it the 'Race of Love.'

⁶ *Khio-Eli-Meli-Mesail*, Byalo Bratstvo Publishers, Sofia 2003, p. 23.

⁷ Harrie Salman, 'Peter Deunov – Prophet of the New Age,' *Starlight* 2014/2. The translated text of the call of the angel can be found at: <http://en-petardanov.com/topic/900-a-call-to-my-people-%E2%80%93-bulgarian-sons-of-the-slavic-family/> More information on the work of Peter Deunov can be found in Harrie Salman, 'Peter Deunov and the White Brotherhood,' *Starlight* 2015/1.

and to the necessary spiritual work.⁸ In 1900 he had *Seven Conversations with the Spirit*, about which he wrote to his disciples.⁹

In the circle of these first disciples he gave talks in which Christ spoke through him, in 1903 and 1904. These words of Christ are called: 'Christ as a Best Friend,' 'The Kingdom of God is Near,' and 'The Word of Jesus Christ.'¹⁰ They elaborate the themes already contained in 'The Call of the Angel' of 1898. The Society for the Upliftment was later also called the *Veriga* (Chain of Divine Love), founded in 1899. In the annual summer meetings of the Chain usually the Lord's Supper was held, which was a celebration with bread, wine, and fruit. For the meeting of 1907

expressly, in which 14 other people participated besides Deunov, 1 large cup and 14 small cups were made. In the protocols of the meeting the bigger one was not referred to as a Grail Cup. In later years the small cups are not mentioned anymore, only the bigger cup with the image of the Lord. Here is a description of the ritual of 1911: "To everyone bread and wine was given by Mr. Deunov, for which they came to him one by one. When giving



The Cups used at the Meeting

the bread Mr. Deunov said: *This is the Living Bread of Life, that has come down from Heaven for the salvation of your soul.* When giving the cup of wine he said: *This is the Cup of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord, which is given for your salvation.*"¹¹ In the Chain meeting of 1911 Deunov introduced, additionally, the sacred emblem of the Pentagram as the symbol of the evolution of the soul. The pentagram shows five qualities, connecting the five points of the star: the creative forces of virtue, justice, love, wisdom, and truth. "Where they are, is God. They will secure you admission to anywhere. They are not given to you for philosophical contemplation, but for practical application," Deunov said.¹² The five points of the star represent the path of Christ, who appears on top of the pentagram as the Great Master.

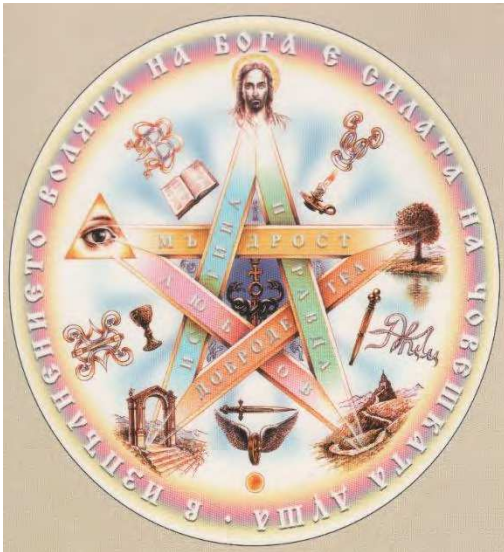
⁸ Milka Krалева, *The Master Peter Deunov*, tr. Janeta Shinkova, Kibea, Sofia 2001, p. 24.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰ Beinsa Douno, *The Teacher*, vol. 1, *The Dawning Epoch*, tr. Maria Krалева and Harry Carr, Shining Word Press, London 2016, pp. 1-14.

¹¹ Peter Deunov, *Verigata na Bezhestvenata Lyubov* (protocols of the meetings, edited by Dimitar Kaley), Zakhari Stoyanov Publishers & Byalo Bratstvo Publishers, Sofia 2007, p. 242. In these meetings the 'Friends from Above' were also present. On August 14, 1910 the participants heard them singing, through Peter Deunov, the 'Our Father' in Bulgarian, in a voice that nobody had ever heard, and in a harmony in which a moving spiritual solemnity was predominant.

¹² Milka Krалева, *The Master Peter Deunov*, pp. 36-37.



The text on the periphery says: “In the fulfilment of the will of God lies the power of the human soul.” One of the many symbols on the emblem is a cup, of which the explanation says: “Suffering is the cup which resembles a flower because through the endurance of suffering your life will blossom and from the blossom good fruit will grow.” In the first Youth Camp in 1923 Peter Deunov used the image of **the blossoming of the soul** in his first talk to the young people. It is his image of the human Grail, of the human soul that is opening like a chalice to receive the angels from above. Here are some passages from this talk that illuminate essential qualities of his School:¹³

*The blooming of this [flower] bud [of the human soul] is remarkable as it is one of the most magnificent moments in this universe, which is called ‘the blossoming of the human soul,’ and which has been awaited by all Elevated Beings. The **chalice**, in which the soul will appear, will show its beauty, its magnificence, and God will imbue it with His Light and Love ... Once the human soul starts to bloom, all the Angels, who are God’s servants, will come. For millions of years, since immemorial times, they have been waiting for the blossoming of the human soul and for the divinity in man to shape, so that they can gather the nectars from it. And once they have come, they will introduce the new culture which we refer to as the culture of Divine Love¹⁴ ... There is nothing greater than this: to see the world of God, together with the hidden possibilities it holds, once your soul has blossomed. This is not an illusion; this is some-thing which you will experience. This is why I am telling you that you should all be pure in your heart and pure in your aspirations ... If you perceive the idea that you are souls who have come from God, and you wish to serve Him, this is what your lives will be like. This sun will shine within your minds and souls, and your soul will see God. The Great Divine Spirit will dwell in you and you will become strong and fearless to accomplish everything that you desire. ... On the Great Day which is now coming into the world, your flaws will disappear at once. When you open up to the Divine Light, and the Divine Warmth permeates through you, all your past shortcomings and every evil will disappear without a trace. Now I wish that you consider yourselves disciples of the Great Universal Brotherhood of Light and that you are preparing yourselves for it. May the temptations not be hindrances to stumble on, but rather turn you into heroes. Do*

¹³ Lecture of July 2, 1923, in Beinsa Douno, *The Blossoming of the Human Soul*, tr. Ernestina Staleva, Byalo Bratstvo Publishers, Sofia 2012, pp. 363-370.

¹⁴ [Ed. The reader may wish to compare the details of this passage with what Rudolf Steiner had to say about the flower-chalice of the human germ in *Egyptian Myths and Mysteries*. See the Easter issue of *Starlight* 2016, pp. 40-41.]

you really understand the meaning of a hero? A hero is one without fear and without darkness, one filled with Love and Light.

Peter Deunov renamed the Chain into the School of the White Brotherhood. The Great Universal Brotherhood of Light exists in the spiritual world under the leadership of Christ. It is also called the White Lodge and consists of the angelic hierarchies and the elevated teachers of humanity. On earth one can only be a disciple of the esoteric school of this heavenly brotherhood. In this school of Divine Wisdom, Love, and Truth founded in 1922 in Sofia, Peter Deunov was known as the Teacher Beinsa Douno. It consisted of two classes, a general esoteric class and a special esoteric class for young people, both with lectures at 5 AM. In 1927 the community of Izgrev (Sunrise) was established near Sofia as the centre of the movement.

The Return of Christ

In a talk in 1910 Peter Deunov announced that the beginning of the Second Coming of Christ would be in 1914.¹⁵ On March 22, 1914 he invited the spiritual circle that had gathered for his lectures over a number of years, for a festive dinner. In the course of his speech he called it a great spiritual day. Also in the heavens there was a feast at this time, because a new epoch began in the Spiritual World, the Age of Aquarius. This is the New Age of the returning Christ. From above spirits were coming down, he said, and with them Christ was coming, but not in a physical body. This Second Coming will take a long time: "This will happen either with a blessing, when they [Christ and the spirits above] will only repair the present situation, or if this turns out to be irreparable, He will come with a catastrophe, He will demolish everything thoroughly (like buildings with rotten foundations), and He will begin His Work again."¹⁶

The Second Coming has begun and it will take a time for Christ to visit everybody. When people are not ready, He will come back later. Here are the words of Peter Deunov:

Christ is coming now to visit human minds and hearts ... Remember that Christ is a manifestation of the Love of God. And He will come as an inner Light in the minds and hearts of the people. This Light will attract everybody around Christ as a great centre. The opening of human minds and hearts and the reception of Christ from within — this will be 'the Second Coming of Christ' on earth. He will preach above all the great science of Love and the methods how to apply it ... Prepare to meet Christ! Prepare, so that everybody in that time can meet Christ. Put on your new clothes. For some Christ will come even today; for others — tomorrow; still for others — in years. You will see Him when you are prepared. Receive Christ in your hearts as a Friend, and in your mind — as Teacher. Christ is now working ... If you are in harmony with Christ, your consciousness will wake up. You will see Him. Christ is coming to the world with His Intelligence and Love. Christ is already coming to the Earth to bring Divine Love for all

¹⁵ Beinsa Douno, *The Teacher*, vol. 1, *The Dawning Epoch*, p. 17.

¹⁶ Peter Deunov, talk of March 22, 1914, in *Iskayte sila, imayte vyara*, Sofia 1994, pp. 9-12.

*people. He will teach people self-sacrifice and Love. He brings Love, Wisdom, Knowledge, Freedom! The Light of Christ penetrates everywhere!*¹⁷

The New Culture of Love and Brotherhood

Peter Deunov worked for the preparation of the new culture. People born as Bulgarians had a special role to play in this preparation, also because among them were, as he said, reincarnated Bogomils. In the circles of his school he was regarded as the re-born Boyan, the founder of the Bogomil movement. He wanted to bring together in his esoteric school a vanguard of the new humanity that would include people from all over the world, above all Russians. He offered them not his own teaching, as he said, but the teaching of Christ.



Peter Deunov Giving a Talk

To be a disciple or pupil of the school of the White Brotherhood was a serious matter, as John O'Meara has shown in his recent article on Peter Deunov.¹⁸ In his many talks, we see how Peter Deunov supported the development of virtues and especially a moral consciousness in his disciples related to the divine laws of nature, how he gave them very specific exercises for the mind, the heart, and the will, individual exercises as well as group exercises. Clairvoyance should not be a goal but is rather a result of developing love. In accordance with the spiritual traditions of Eastern Christianity, he spoke of the pride of man, of the suffering caused by man's mistakes, and of the path of meekness and humility that

¹⁷ Metodi Konstantinov, Boyan Boev, Maria Todorova and Boris Nikolov, *Uchitelya*, Sofia 2005, pp. 394-396. See also: Beinsa Douno, *The Master Speaks*, Evera Books, Walnut Creek (USA) 2012, pp. 113-116.

¹⁸ See "The Master Peter Deunov Among His Pupils" in *Starlight* 2018/1.

leads to Christ. As in the Russian tradition, suffering is described as an essential element of our inner transformation.¹⁹

Rudolf Steiner and Peter Deunov

The work in the esoteric school of Peter Deunov had its own specific qualities when we compare it with work in the esoteric school of Rudolf Steiner. The Bulgarian Boyan Boev (1883-1963) knew the work of both teachers. As a young man he had listened to lectures of Steiner and met him. Having expressed his wish to become his disciple, Boev was told by Steiner that he would meet his teacher in Bulgaria. This is what happened, and Boev became the personal secretary of Peter Deunov. Later he spoke about his meeting with Steiner to Vlad Pashov, who wrote an account of it:

Boev entered Sofia University and in 1908, due to its temporary closure, he went to München, to continue his studies ... [There] brother Boev came into contact with Rudolf Steiner. Steiner revealed the deeper side of natural science in the light of occultism, which aroused his interest in occult science ... In a private conversation Steiner told him: "Bulgaria will develop a mighty spiritual stream and it will be led by a great initiate. He will work in Bulgaria not as I work here, but in a different way. I work here in scientific and materialistic circles. My task is to enlighten contemporary scientific thought from a spiritual point of view and to give a spiritual impulse to the waning Western European civilisation, so that it can be reborn and make its transition to the sixth race. There in Bulgaria, you will work for the foundation of a new culture, the culture of the sixth subrace [the coming Slavic culture], from which the sixth race will be born. Because the sixth race will have to develop the human heart, you too will work there mostly on the development of the human heart, with the Gospel in your hands."

... Once Boev asked the Master [Peter Deunov] if he was known to Steiner, if he ever met him. The Master replied that they knew each other and had seen each other. Brother Boev curiously asked: 'Where and when?' The Master said that they met in the spiritual world and knew each other from there. He added that Steiner was a good worker in the field of God, very active and full of forces, to whom was given the task to give a spiritual impulse to Western European culture, to save it from perishing and to make possible its resurrection and transition to the new culture.²⁰

There has been some speculation on the spiritual identity of Peter Deunov. A final word cannot be given on this issue. The most likely candidate is the Master Jesus, who was Zarathustra reborn as the Matthew Jesus child, and who died in his body when his I passed over to the 12 year old Nathan Jesus child of the gospel of Luke. The individuality of the Master Jesus incarnates every century. According to Rudolf Steiner, who was asked about this by Rittelmeyer, he lived at that time in the Carpathian Mountains. Steiner said that he

¹⁹ [Ed. For more on the decisive role of well-borne suffering in Deunov's teachings, see the Pentecost issue of *Starlight*, 2018/1, pp. 58ff.]

²⁰ From a manuscript of Vlad Pashov, published by Emily Michael in *Sealed by the Sun*, Varna 2014, pp. 343-344.

was in spiritual contact with him. This information is not fully conclusive, but it makes sense to connect Peter Deunov with the earlier known incarnations of the Master Jesus, one of them as the 'Friend of God' from the Swiss Oberland (Uplands) at the end of the Middle Ages.²¹

The main intention of Rudolf Steiner was the creation of a new spiritual science that would lead to the transformation of the present materialistic science. For this he wanted to train a group of people with Aristotelian and Platonic backgrounds and to open ways for all people in every activity of life to work together with spiritual beings, to be inspired by them. Christ stands, for Steiner, at the centre of anthroposophical activity. From Him come the renewal of life and the opening of the door to the spiritual world, so that we can connect consciously with our higher being and other beings. Steiner also had other tasks, such as the formulation of a new teaching on karma and reincarnation, and the announcement of the Return of Christ. He gathered people from different karmic streams, helping them to develop their consciousness soul and supporting their spiritual development. He gave them meditations, exercises, and extensive spiritual information, also about the human double.

Anthroposophy has a Michaelic character. We live in a time of spiritual war. Followers of Steiner, however, failed to bring their karma in order and to work together for the new Michaelic culture. The foundation of the new esoteric school at the conference of Christmas 1923 was a failure, and Steiner died in 1925. In retrospect we may say that the development of the consciousness soul released too powerful antisocial forces that could not be dealt with by the co-workers of Steiner. It seems that many of them were living out their ideals in their minds, and not in their souls or in their moral consciousness. Not enough of them became clairvoyant, learned to think with their heart or developed a social consciousness. In spite of that, the anthroposophical impulse did spread all over the world.

The story of the school of Peter Deunov is different. From 1922 he was able to work for more than 20 years with his disciples. When he died in 1944 he could say that "a small task had been completed." The emphasis of his work was not so much on spiritual knowledge. He shared results of his spiritual research, but left it to his disciples to work that out. He did not say much about the development of the new senses of spiritual perception (*chakras*). Occasionally he mentioned the 'frightful mirror' in which we see how our imperfect being really looks like (i.e. the meeting with the Lesser Guardian of the Threshold). He was more concerned with the soul development of his disciples and the development of their moral consciousness.

Peter Deunov had the background of a pastor of the Methodist church, known for its congregational singing and community development. He brought this capacity of the good shepherd into his work as a spiritual teacher. He spoke about the importance of prayer, which he described as the 'breathing of the soul' and communication with God, and about contemplation, about love and brotherhood as the foundations of the new culture, about the virtues of the new humanity, about the intelligence we can find in nature and in the beings

²¹ John O'Meara has entered more fully into these considerations in his article on Peter Deunov in *Starlight* 2018/1, pp. 60-61. See also p. 65.

working in nature, about the education of the soul (intellect, mind, heart, and will), about health and sickness, nutrition, and many other very practical things.

In the South and the East of Europe the emotional life is very strong, and the consciousness soul with its faculties of self-knowledge and self-mastery is not so well developed. The Slavic soul learns through suffering which results from making mistakes. The soul can grow through suffering, but also through the experience of joy. In this respect the methods of the school of Peter Deunov offered abundant possibilities including: listening to his lively talks and sermons (based on Bible quotations) which were easy to understand, doing the practical tasks that were included in them, listening to live music, singing spiritual songs alone and together (Deunov was a gifted violin player, song writer, and composer), praying, meditating on Bible quotations related to the colour rays of light, practising the sacred circle dance of paneurythmy, doing gymnastic and physical exercises, meeting the sunrise in meditation in spring and summer, participating in excursions into nature, summer camps in the mountains, and meetings with other disciples from all levels of society in an atmosphere of brotherhood and sisterhood, in common meals and communal life, giving love and helping others.²² For the brothers and sisters gathered around their Teacher life was happy although the social and economic conditions in Bulgaria were very simple. For them, it must have been like the life of the early Christians and the medieval Bogomils, and a



Peter Deunov and Group: Boyan Boev stands center in white

foreshadowing of the new Slavic culture. Peter Deunov cultivated the 'undefeatable Grail mood' that Rudolf Steiner had described in 1918 when he spoke about the 'Christ people' of Eastern Europe.²³ According to him something of the Christ impulse of love was continuously flowing into the souls of people in the eastern parts of Europe (in contrast to the 'Church people' of Central Europe and the 'people of the Lodges' in the West).

In Europe, above all in the East but especially in Russia, Steiner said, lives the innermost part of the human soul, where the consciousness-soul awakens, a Grail mood of making connection with the spiritual world. There is a deep, 'instinctive' religious disposition in the Eastern soul to connect with Christ that creates the conditions for the new culture of love and community. This disposition must be brought to consciousness and precisely this is

²² This list is my own. I have been familiar with the practices of the School of the White Brotherhood since 1997.

²³ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 3.11.1918, in CW no. 185.

what Peter Deunov had been doing. He did not speak openly about the Grail, but in his teaching he was helping his disciples to work on their human Grail, their 'soul Grail.'

The Sophianic Qualities of the School of Peter Deunov

This Grail metaphor does not exhaust the qualifications we can attribute to the teachings of Peter Deunov. In his speech to Russian members of the Theosophical Society in 1912, Steiner spoke of their task: to 'ensoul the spiritual,' to 'breathe soul into the spirit,' to connect heart and mind.²⁴ In Western culture the opposite takes place, we bring too much mind into the soul, so that it loses its liveliness. Thinking should be creative and imbued with heart forces, warmth, life, and morality before we can call it spiritual. Only then can we bring the being Anthroposophia to life in us. Our thoughts should not only be Michaelic, but also Sophianic, connected with the being of Sophia. The (rigid intellectual) thought forms of the West must be enlivened with the soul fire from the East, Steiner said. This we can learn from Peter Deunov (the Teacher) from the East. While the Grail stream connected with the Celtic folk soul in the West, the Sophia stream moved to the East. From Ephesus, where Maria Sophia, the mother of Jesus, lived with her new 'son,' John, this stream entered into the lands of the Slavs, as far as the so-called 'Land of Holy Sophia' in Northern Russia. This stream prepared the future culture, that we can also call the culture of Sophia. The heavenly Sophia, the consort of Christ, has her counterpart in us, in our purified soul. In the Western Grail tradition we may speak of the 'soul Grail,' but in the Eastern Sophia tradition we may also speak of this purified astral body as our Holy Sophia that can receive the Holy Spirit.²⁵

The soul needs to be nourished, enlivened, ennobled, elevated, and purified, and needs to develop love and wisdom. It also needs art and religion. A rather intellectual Anthroposophy does not offer such food to the soul. Steiner's intention was different; in 1923 he remarked:

So we may say that anthroposophy begins in every case at the scientific level, calls art to the enlivening of its concepts, and ends in a religious deepening. It begins with what the head can grasp, takes on all the life and colour of which words are capable, and ends in warmth that suffuses and reassures the heart, so that man's soul can at all times feel itself in the spirit, its true home. We must learn, on the anthroposophical path, to start with knowledge, then to lift ourselves to the level of artistry, and to end in the warmth of religious feeling.²⁶

Many people feel that in Anthroposophy there is not enough art (even though there are mystery dramas, eurythmy, painting, and other artistic activities), and not enough religion (this field was relegated to the Christian Community). But we have to mention the Sophianic Movement developing out of the Sophia Foundation, in which science, art, and religion come together. In the school of Peter Deunov these three fields were never separated.

²⁴ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 11.4.1912, in CW no. 136.

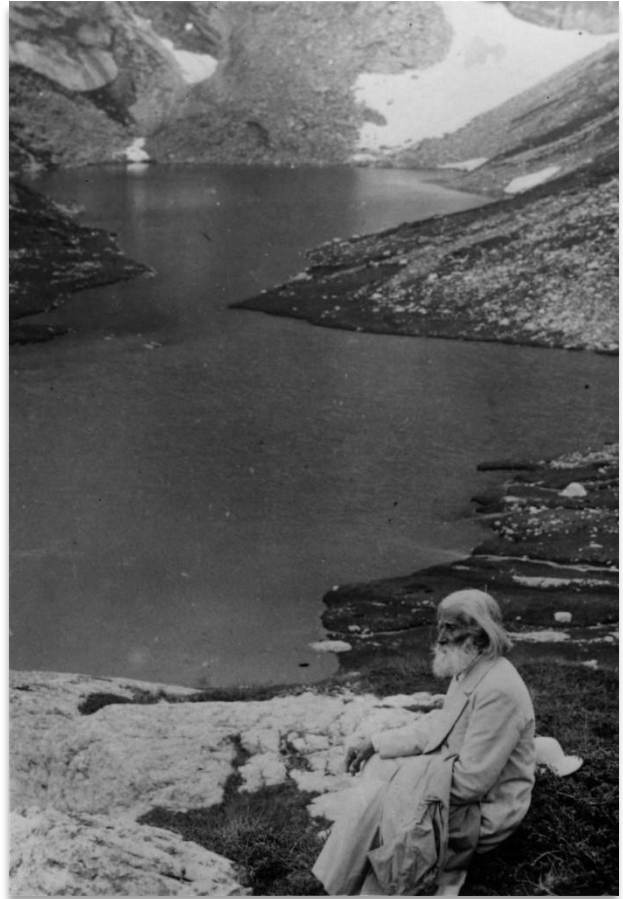
²⁵ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 31.5.1908, in CW, no. 103.

²⁶ Rudolf Steiner, second lecture of 30.1.1923, in CW, no. 257.

Where they come together, the I awakens, the soul rejoices, the etheric body is harmonized, and the physical body rejuvenates.

All the activities from his school are truly nourishing, ennobling, and purify the soul; they can all be called Sophianic, being in the service of the Divine and the human Sophia. Peter Deunov himself did not speak about Sophia as the All-Wisdom of God, as it was not part of Bulgarian spiritual tradition. But he spoke of “the Divine Mother as the essence of all living things in the world.”²⁷ She is Nature, the feminine face of God.

The preparation of the new culture needs the care of the soul, as many people in anthroposophical circles understand. Another teacher from the East, Valentin Tomberg, was not accepted when he brought an anthroposophical impulse that was deeply religious. In America the psychotherapist Robert Sardello also has shown how we can bring soul and love to a soulless and loveless world by working with the spiritual forces of the Grail and Sophia.²⁸ Western and Eastern esoteric Christian traditions have to work together to prepare the two fundamental aspects of the new culture in which the Spirit Self will unfold in its Knowledge (Wisdom) aspect and in its Love aspect. Rudolf Steiner and Peter Deunov were spiritual brothers, with Steiner working from the mind to the heart, and Deunov concentrating on the soul and the heart. For Deunov, the development of virtues and new qualities of the soul is an act of the conscious, spiritual will: the practice of love towards God, our neighbour and ourselves, which he saw as an ordering of karma: “Karma is paid up by suffering ... liquidated through Love ... If you live in the law of Love, you leave the law of karma. You then have freedom.”²⁹



Peter Deunov in the Rila Mountains

²⁷ Beinsa Douno, *The Woman – Source of Love and Life*, tr. Antoaneta Krushevska and Ernestina Staleva, Byalo Bratstvo Publishers, Sofia 2001, pp. 18-19.

²⁸ Robert Sardello, *Facing the World with Soul*, Hudson 1992, and *Love and the World*, 2001.

²⁹ Peter Deunov, *Harmonizing of the Human Soul*, pp. 249, 131, and 118.

Conclusion – Building Bridges

Steiner and Deunov had different missions and were working in cultural settings in which different concepts were used and people had different needs of inner development. Nevertheless they were both preparing the new culture, from different angles. After a century, the cultural settings have changed, and a *renewal* of spiritual impulses is necessary. Anthroposophy has in many ways become rather dogmatic and intellectual. Valentin Tomberg and others have been victims of these tendencies.

In a new orientation that is taking place now, the Grail roots of Western European spirituality and the Sophia roots of Eastern European spirituality are being rediscovered and *brought into a further relation to each other*. The methods of Peter Deunov greatly help to heal the one-sidedness of the Anthroposophical Movement. A good number of Bulgarians from Deunov's School emigrated to Western Europe and have spread his ideas, among them, perhaps most famously, Mikhaël Aïvanhov (1900-1986), who left Bulgaria in 1937 and founded the Universal White Brotherhood in France.³⁰ As a result of Aïvanhov's activities affiliated associations or groups were founded in about 40 countries. After the fall of communism in 1989 Deunov became a well-known figure again; his books are today available in every bookshop in the country, and with time more and more of his basic texts are being translated into English (see the list below). On the other side of this great meeting of East and West, also in the circles of the Bulgarian White Brotherhood the works of Rudolf Steiner are studied because many Bulgarians today have developed a more intellectual approach. Peter Deunov was already supporting the translation of lectures of Steiner into Bulgarian in his own day. Boyan Boev was involved in this. There also is an Anthroposophical Society in Bulgaria, with about a hundred members, that is taking care of the translation of Steiner's lectures today.

In the spiritual world Anthroposophy and the School of the White Brotherhood have the same source in the White Lodge. Anthroposophy originates in the School of Michael within the White Lodge. The school of the White Brotherhood in Bulgaria does not represent the fullness of inspirations coming from Christ and his White Lodge. Its activities manifest a Sophianic aspect of these inspirations, as the Anthroposophical Movement expresses a Michaelic aspect. Both aspects belong together in the spiritual world as faces of the Christ impulse. The modern Sophianic Movement, as supported by the Sophia Foundation, may well be a bridge between these two aspects that has been under construction since the work of Valentin Tomberg began to be championed again, thanks very much in large part to the efforts of Robert Powell.

³⁰ In his autobiographical reflections (see *A Living Book: Autobiographical Reflections I*, Prosveta, Fréjus 2011), Mikhaël Aïvanhov wrote: "He asked me to go to France to preserve his teaching, which he suspected would be forbidden in Bulgaria" (164). And this indeed happened, in 1945.

**Available books and booklets of the work of
Peter Deunov (Beinsa Douno) in English:**

From the Bulgarian publisher (orders in English are taken): izdatelstvo.bratstvo@gmail.com

Books (5-7 euros):

Harmonizing of the Human Soul / Health and Sickness / Paneurhythmy / Prayers, Formulas, Devotional Songs / The Blossoming of the Human Soul / The Salt / The Testament of the Color Rays of Light / The Wellspring of Good

Booklets (1-4 euros):

Child of the Universe / Methods for Self-improvement / Peter Deunov – Prophet of the New Age / The New Day / The World of Great Souls / The High Ideal / The Language of Love / The Mindful Heart / The First day of Love – texts of songs / The Pentagram / Woman – the Source of Love and Life

From the American webshop Evera most Deunov books and brochures are available:

<http://www.everabooks.com/>

From Amazon or other booksellers:

Beinsa Douno, *The Teacher*, vol. 1, *The Dawning Epoch*, 2016.

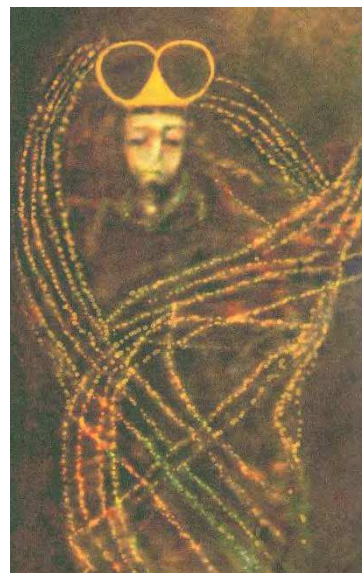
Beinsa Douno, *The Wellspring of Good*, 2015.

David Lorimer, *Prophet for our Times – The Life and Teachings of Peter Deunov*, 2015.

The Historical Grail Stream and the Grail at the Present Time

Robert Powell

Let us look back again to the historical Grail stream, which first surfaced in the eighth and ninth Centuries in Europe, and was founded through a high Initiate named Titurel, who carried the Grail impulse at that time. To understand this founding on a deeper level, we must trace the lineage of this high Initiate in his different incarnations, and in so doing we come to the one called Melchizedek, who brought bread and wine to Abraham some four thousand years ago. Melchizedek introduced the agape communion (with bread and wine) in preparation for what Christ would later bring as the Eucharist. If we go back further from Melchizedek, we come to the time of Noah, the great Initiate who led his people out of Atlantis at the time of the Deluge. In Hindu tradition he is called the Manu.¹ “Manu” is not a personal name, but a title, like “Buddha.” The current Manu (Noah–Melchizedek–Titurel) has the task of overseeing the development of the seven post-Atlantean cultural epochs—that is, the Ancient Indian, Ancient Persian, Egyptian-Babylonian, and Greco-Roman cultures, as well as our present culture, often referred to as the European cultural epoch. The future epochs this Manu will oversee are the Slavic in the age of Aquarius, and the American in the age of Capricorn.



Melchizedek, from The Grail Triptych, by Anna May

Titurel brought the Grail impulse as a metamorphosis of what he had already initiated in earlier times. Looking back to the work of the Manu as Teacher of the Seven Holy Rishis—the founders of the Ancient Indian culture—we see that the essence of what the Manu transmitted to them (as also to his later disciples) was a work intended to prepare people for the incarnation of the Logos—for **the Coming of Christ**. The Manu’s teaching from that time is summarized in the Vedas. The term “Veda” means “Word.” The Veda is the Holy Word—that is, in our modern language, the Holy Gospel. The Vedas embody what the Manu was able to bring through the Seven Holy Rishis at the founding of the Ancient Indian culture. The Rishis were priests in service of the Word, and this Ancient Indian tradition still lives on in its spiritual disciplines. Vedic priests, or Brahmins, have the task of studying the Vedas, reciting them, and performing priestly service. We may say, then, that the Grail stream grows out of this ancient Vedic stream, which reaches all the way back to Ancient India, forming the deep undercurrent of esoteric tradition that flows through all the cultural epochs. It is a stream leading also into the future, preparing us for the imminent descent of Sophia, Divine Wisdom.

¹ The next Manu, the successor to the “Noah” Manu, will be the Mani–Parsifal individuality—the first human Manu—named Sâvarna in the Hindu tradition.

Sophia and the New Grail Mysteries

In considering Christianity, the past event upon which we focus our attention is of course the Mystery of Golgotha, the Turning Point of Time. But as to the future, we look to the New Mysteries of the Holy Grail. We look back still to the Mystery of Golgotha as the most significant event in the history of the Earth, but we look now also to the future in preparation for **the Coming of Sophia**, who in the Book of Revelation is called the Bride of the Lamb. Sophia's true mission will unfold in the far-distant future, but something of this mission—perhaps we may say a fragrance thereof—has been coming gradually to expression since the latter part of the Eighteenth Century.² Sophia more and more inspires us, and our work draws upon this inspiration. It is important to emphasize that in preparing for the increasing presence of Sophia, we are in no way undermining any existing tradition, but in all ways continue to respect the utmost importance of the time-honored tradition of Christianity. This point must be made, for in some circles it is believed that we can simply dispense with Christian tradition and move on to something new. However, this approach is not at all what lives in Sophia, who honors everything from the past and seeks to renew it, to raise it to a new level of experience, a new dimension of existence.

The Church of Peter, and the Church of John

The book *Meditations on the Tarot* offers a key for entering the path of the Sophia Mysteries. This book is an expression of the great Johannine tradition, which traces its origin back to the beloved disciple John. As the book's author puts it in the First Letter, "The Magician," John is in service to Peter, the rock upon which the Church was founded, and who was consecrated to this office by the Risen Christ. Although not recorded anywhere in the Gospels, it is a fact of humankind's spiritual history that in an act of great humility, Peter was consecrated by the Risen Christ as Head, or First Bishop, of the Church. This act established the tradition of the Apostolic Succession—and we may say that alongside its Johannine aspect, another key theme of *Meditations on the Tarot* is an exploration of the inner mission of the Apostolic tradition. The task of Peter is clearly expressed in the final chapter of the Gospel of St. John, where he is thrice asked by Christ, "Lovest thou me?" Each time Peter answers "Yes," to which Christ responds, "Feed my sheep." This interchange expresses the mission of the exoteric Church, which has the task, as an expression of the will of Christ, of administering the sacraments unto the End of Time. And for countless



Christ's Charge to Peter, by Raphael

² [Ed. For more on this theme, see Robert Powell's contribution to *The Mystery of Sophia: Bearer of the New Culture*, Lindisfarne Books, 2014.]

people, the sacraments are their connection with Christ. It may be that at present some are unable to assimilate the esoteric dimension of Christianity, or relate personally to the depth we are trying to address here. But they are not for this reason in any fundamental way lacking! They have the eternal blessing of devotional resonance with the central sacrament of the Mass! We honor this, for the Mass offers sustenance to human souls through the substances taken in Communion with Christ, and as it has just been said, we know from the conversation between Peter and the Risen Christ that administering the sacraments is a central task of the Apostolic Church.

The task of John, however, is different. Pointing to John, who was walking along the shore behind Peter at the time of his conversation with the Risen One, Peter asks, “What is to become of him?” to which the Risen One replies, “What is it to you if he waits until I come again?” Implicit in these words is John’s task to hold true to the element of depth—that is, to the esoteric teachings of the Church—until the time of the Second Coming. This is the task given to John, who is to bring these teachings into the world, and in due course—at the time of the Second Coming—into the exoteric Church as well as an impulse of renewal. *And that time is now!* This is exactly what we find in the book *Meditations on the Tarot*, for it seeks to renew the element of depth, the esoteric mysteries, in the Church of Peter. Peter and John work together as the two disciples charged with guarding the Outer and Inner Mysteries of Christianity. The Church—in essence single and undivided—unites past with future, and the time is now come when John is to open up the esoteric mysteries of Christ. As an example of what is meant by bringing the element of depth into the exoteric Church, we find in the Ninth Letter of *Meditations on the Tarot* the seven I AM sayings of Christ set in relation to the seven chakras. Taking up Christian esoteric practices such as working with the seven I AM sayings of Christ in relation to the seven chakras is an important step on the esoteric path of development leading to the great esoteric School of Christ. To enter more fully into the School of Christ is, however, a matter also of developing moral qualities. This esoteric path is not so much a matter of acquiring esoteric wisdom, but of shifting focus to moral deepening. Yes, through Christian esoteric practices we may make strides in knowledge, but ultimately the way we come into closer connection with Christ is through our striving to become better human beings morally.

This is the essence of what is expressed in the profound book titled *Meditations on the Tarot*. Through entering the School of Christ we may eventually come to a point where Christ begins to bestow certain blessings and graces upon us. We may be shown certain things. Our hearts may be touched by the Risen One, whence flows unimaginable blessing. Such is the heart of the book *Meditations on the Tarot*. It is an elaboration of the Moral Schooling of the Greater Guardian of the Threshold, who is Christ. And so it is one of the fundamental books qualified to prepare us to receive something of the New Christ Mysteries.

As an example let us take a reading from the First Letter of this profound work, regarding St. Anthony the Great, one of the Desert Fathers of Egypt:

Among Christian Hermeticists nobody assumes the title and function of “initiator or master.” For all are fellow pupils, and each is master of each in some other respect. We

*cannot do better than follow the example of St. Anthony the Great, who subjected himself in all sincerity to the pious men whom he visited, making it his endeavor to learn for his own benefit just how each was superior to him in zeal and ascetic practice. He observed the graciousness of one, the earnestness at prayer in another; studied the even temper of one and the kindheartedness of another; fixed his attention on the vigils kept by one and by the study pursued by another; admired one for his patient endurance, another for his fasting and his sleeping on the ground; watched closely this man's meekness and the forbearance shown by another; and in one and all alike he marked especially devotion to Christ and the love they had for one another. Having thus taken his fill, he would return to his own place of asceticism. Then he assimilated in himself what he had obtained from each and devoted all his energies to realizing in himself the virtues of all. (St. Athanasius, *The Life of St. Anthony*, chapter 4)*

Let this be also the spirit of our work—to bring to realization the words of Christ, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in your midst.” That is how He can be present with us, and that is precisely the meaning of the above quote—to hold in consciousness the ideal of Christ as Teacher, Master, and Initiator, who in our time, working in close collaboration with Sophia toward the fulfillment of the evolution of humanity and the Earth, guides us in all we do.

The Three Christian Streams

Let us now consider the question of Paul and the Pauline tradition. To what source might we turn to learn more on this question? In relation to the newly-arising Sophia teachings in our time, we find such a source in the great Russian poet and philosopher Vladimir Solovyov³ in whose work “A Short Story of the Antichrist” (written in the last year of his life) we discover much that is helpful with regard to the foregoing question, for “Paul” is an important character in this work. In his short story, Solovyov describes a great vision of the coming of the Antichrist in our time. He speaks of Three Streams of Christianity: the Petrine, going back to Peter; the Johannine, stemming from John; and the Pauline, associated with Paul. Paul, previously called Saul, was—as Saul—one of the most zealous persecutors of the early Christians. However, Saul then had a direct supersensible encounter with the Risen Christ before the Gates of Damascus and was converted, after which he undertook his missionary work on behalf of Christ. The Pauline stream of Christianity was founded out of the spirit of this encounter. Such direct illuminations are possible—as we see not only in Saul, who thereby became Paul, but in the case of many another enlightened mystic throughout history. The Protestant tradition can be seen in relation to this primal experience of Saul

³ Solovyov was born in 1847 and died in 1900 at the early age of 53. His life was significantly changed by his three meetings with Divine Sophia. Through the fruits of his labors, issuing from these encounters with Sophia, he has come to be known as the founder of the stream of Russian Sophiology. This stream has the goal of incorporating Sophia into the tradition of Christianity. Several priests within the Russian Orthodox Church have also taken up this work, the Russian Orthodox priests Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov being among the best-known representatives of Russian Sophiology. [Ed. For more on this stream of sophiology in *Starlight*, see the Epiphany 2017 issue, pp. 19-33 and the Advent 2018 issue, pp. 29-40.]

becoming Paul. Since its inception through Martin Luther in the year 1517, Protestantism has of course split into innumerable sects, but taken together they comprise what Solovyov viewed as the Pauline stream. Moreover, Solovyov saw the Roman Catholic Stream as the Petrine stream, and the Eastern Orthodox Church as an expression of the Johannine stream. Regarding the latter, it would be more accurate to say that the Johannine stream encompasses the pulse of the living Christ as shepherded by the great being we call John, whose work shines through *Meditations on the Tarot*, the subtitle of which, tellingly, is “A Journey Into Christian Hermeticism.” This text is the foundational work of the great stream of esoteric Christianity known as Christian Hermeticism.



Conversion of St. Paul, by Pietro Novelli

Viewing them together, it can be said that the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church represent two branches of the original Apostolic Church. Or we might say, by way of analogy, that just as we have the two lobes of the lungs, so these two branches of Christian tradition form together the two lobes of the Apostolic Church—that is, the Original Church of Christ’s disciples, founded by them through the event of Pentecost, at which they were transformed from the status of disciples into that of apostles. But then, as we have seen, we have the third great stream of Christianity, the Pauline stream, founded upon the untiring missionary activity of he who had experienced direct contact with the Risen Christ. Paul’s case teaches us also that it is not necessary, in the quest for spiritual enlightenment, to turn to earthly spiritual teachers; rather his example encourages us to strive for, and to open ourselves to, direct encounter with Christ. Against this background, we can see how these three streams of Christianity relate to three levels in the human being. The quality of Peter is faith, seated in the human will. The quality of John is love, living in the human heart. The quality of Paul is hope, which lives in the fullness of human thoughts, in the head. Paul was a very learned man, and it is clear that Protestantism came about through a powerful awakening in humanity’s thinking capacity from around the time of the Renaissance, commencing at the beginning of the age of the consciousness soul.⁴ The Pauline stream really only begins to mature after the onset of the time of the consciousness soul. Thus, alongside the two branches, or lobes, of the Apostolic Church, a new stream of Christianity—of which Paul was a forerunner—began to develop in the age of the consciousness soul, signaled by the birth of Protestantism.

⁴ The age during which the consciousness soul comes to birth—our present age—extends for 2160 years from 1414 to 3574. The consciousness soul is the third and highest aspect of the human soul, after the sentient soul (feeling life) and mind soul (thought life). The development of the consciousness soul will lead to increasing awareness of the life of spirit. The 2160-year span of the age of the consciousness soul is related cosmologically to the unfolding of the Age of Pisces.

A Fourth Stream: Sophianic Christianity

And now, with the onset of Christ's Second Coming in the Twentieth Century, yet another stream of Christianity is emerging: *the Sophianic stream*.⁵ This newly-arising form of Christianity not only looks back to the Mystery of Golgotha, but seeks to connect with Sophia's increasing influence, leading humanity and the Earth into the future. From our time forward, Christ and Sophia, the Lamb and His Bride, are working together on behalf of the development of the Earth and humankind. Only in the Apocalypse of John do we find any intimation (through references to the Lamb and His Bride) of this new, Sophianic stream of Christianity. Thus John, as well as representing Johannine Christianity, plays a key role in the development of Sophianic Christianity.

Moreover, it is evident that John has a deep connection to the modern Initiation into the Mysteries of the Holy Grail. John's work is to enliven the whole stream of Christianity. Even as at the Last Supper he listened to the beating of the Master's Heart, so does he continue listening to the Master's Heart throughout the unfolding of time. Through his attunement to Christ's Heart he is blessed to be able to inspire the Heart of the Church with the New

Mysteries now arising. John stands steward over tremendous esoteric wisdom, which he administers in measured portions over the course of time as stimuli to the further development of Christianity. John's primary concern is the moral evolution of humankind. To the degree we develop morally, we come increasingly into the spiritual warmth streaming from Christ through John. And as we have just seen, John is guardian also of the new Sophia Mysteries arising in our time, which seek to *elevate our head-thinking to heart-thinking*. This instreaming of grace is not guaranteed. We must first open ourselves to the grace and blessing streaming in through Christ and Sophia.

As already noted, at the heart of the Pauline stream lives hope. Ultimately, hope directs us to the Resurrection, to the grace of hoping that one day we too shall find our resurrection. Of course, it is somewhat one-sided to so schematically characterize the Pauline stream, given that the Letters of Paul address the importance of all three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love. There is nothing surprising in this, for Paul was the one—at the very beginning of the spread of Christianity—who most clearly elaborated a theology. Nonetheless, as Paul was awakened before the Gates of Damascus by the Etheric Body of



Vision of St. John on Patmos, by Luca Giordano

⁵ As indicated by Rudolf Steiner, "Through Holy Sophia, a beholding of Christ in spiritual form is beginning to arise in the Twentieth Century"—see Rudolf Steiner, *Isis-Mary-Sophia* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2002).

Christ, hope first dawned in the fullest sense that the mission of humanity — the interweaving of faith, hope, and love — might one day be accomplished.

The Rose of the World

Our work in preparing for the Coming of Sophia as Bearer of the Rose of the World entails understanding the importance of all world religions, which latter we may liken to the Petals of the Rose of the World. Among the great religions (other than Christianity) are Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Taoism, and the indigenous or shamanic religions directed primarily to the Earth Mother. How do they relate to one another? Sophia loves every human being, even as Christ does.

The vision of the Rose of the World is that of humankind as one great family. We all of us share a common origin — the Divine. Viewing humanity as one great family, we see how each of the different world religions opens to us an aspect, a petal, of the flower that is Sophia. Her universal wisdom has been revealed through the founders of these religions, to each of whom was given a key fit especially to one facet thereof. Which key was given to each founder was a function of geographical location, particular human collectivity, and evolutionary moment in time — factors that come to expression in the mode of consciousness of the people for whom each religion has been destined. One day, all these wisdom streams shall be woven into an all-embracing supersensible structure we may call Sophia's Beehive, for it will represent the portal through which the one Colony of Humankind migrates when surpassing — which means also transfiguring — the Earthly world.

In Sophia's Beehive, a spiritual structure is gathered together from the pollen and nectar of the Rose of the World; all religions are united in higher synthesis. Our great task is to differentiate among the world religions and great spiritual streams, while at the same time holding in overview their synthesis as Universal Divine Wisdom. This latter overview represents nothing less than the Transcendent Unity of Religions — the "horizon," so to say, of Sophia's vantage point. Yes, this is Sophia's perspective, but it must also be said, from the complementary perspective of the path of humankind toward its goal, that all the world religions leading up to Christianity were, in the wake of the momentous event of Christ's incarnation in human form upon the Earth (the Turning Point of Time), given the new mission of becoming Christianized (or perhaps better said, Sophianized), of transforming their mysteries through the light of the Christ impulse and the gradual descent of Sophia. Thus may these religions as freshened tributaries further renew the impulse of Christianity in the evolution of humanity — signifying a metamorphosis of those religions, as of a stem or leaf into the wonder of the flower that hitherto showed no clear sign of itself.

The Mystery of Golgotha changed all religions⁶ through the unique fact that a God-born being became human. Though an important matter for consideration, the fact that some religions (at least in their pre-Christian forms) do not reflect every aspect of the final goal of

⁶ Including Islam, the third Abrahamic Religion, which however appeared after Christianity, at least insofar as it renewed the promise of Hagar and Ishmael.

humankind's evolution (which is resurrection) may in the end be seen as a function of the time, place, and the human collectivity concerned, which is to say that it may be a question of certain keys opening certain doors on the eventual path to the Heart of the Rose of the World. The pivotal point is that resurrection is the goal of evolution.⁷ Through many lives we work toward resurrection—that which Christ Jesus attained in a single incarnation—the *Incarnation*. From the perspective of Sophia's universal wisdom, we see the world religions as petals of the Rose of the World, as partial aspects, or "relative absolutes," bestowed upon human communities. This breathtaking panorama we have called the Transcendent Unity of Religions. However, at the same time we must integrate into this vertical, static, simultaneous "Platonic" dimension, the more horizontal, dynamic, evolutionary, "Aristotelian" dimension of the path we must tread toward the goal of resurrection. We must keep hold of the fundamental truth that a New Humanity was inaugurated at the Resurrection of Christ Jesus!

And this monumental reality must also occupy the heart of Sophia's wisdom, the Rose of the World. The point where these two dimensions—panorama and path—intersected in time was the junction of the upright and horizontal beams of the Cross at the time of the First Coming. Now, in the time of the Second Coming, we may in a sense say that Christianity as an historical religion is one among the petals of the Rose of the World, whereas what we may call Christosophy, the eternal union of Christ and Sophia, occupies its center. Christosophy functions both as a heart, taking in and recirculating the life-blood of pre-Christian religions, and as a lung, breathing out a renewing fragrance to all the world religions as they are slowly Christianized (or Sophianized). It is a most difficult, delicate, and challenging task to communicate such a teaching in our secular, materialistic time, for it requires that the universal nature of both Christ, the Lamb, and Sophia, the Bride of the Lamb, first be fully grasped—a work that will require the collaboration of many in times to come.

⁷ The idea of resurrection is proclaimed, for example, in Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity—perhaps also in the specifically esoteric teaching of Islam cultivated primarily by the Sufis. Yet, although it is proclaimed as a goal, the actual attainment of resurrection is the unique mystery of Christianity. In the words of John: "Christ is the first born from among the dead" (Rev. 1:5)—that is, the new Adam or the new human being of the future.

Re-Envisioning Hierarchy through the Grail Story¹

Bill Trusiewicz

In the first article in our ongoing study entitled *The Grail Cup and the Holy Lance as Remedy for the Counter Evolutionary Forces of the Ancient Priestly Wisdom*,² we addressed the polarity of independence and collaboration in the context of modern spiritual evolution. We saw how the wrong sort of independence is used as a counter-evolutionary influence, and that collaboration is the remedy for an unhealthy independence. In the three articles in this sub-series within a greater series, we are dedicated to seeking a remedy for the three old practices of independence, hierarchy, and secrecy. We are examining these ancient principles of priestly wisdom in order to recognize the activity of backward, atavistic forces that linger in our present-day culture, forestalling the Christening of the Human Ego by what Rudolf Steiner called “erecting something of a dam to hold back the whole stream.”³ Understanding how *independence, hierarchy, and secrecy* frustrate the maturation of the human ego is the key to overcoming their influence and rising to the level of the future Philadelphia culture, which is based on “brotherly love” or what we would call today “human love,” and which is the objective of building a community of Grail Knights.

To begin, we will be seeking to penetrate to an understanding of the original evolutionary necessity for the ancient priestly wisdom and the subsequent decadent forms it has taken in modern life, which are a hindrance to the development of conscience on the part of individuals. Later, in this study, we will translate our findings into “Grail terminology” seeking the elusive goal that is the primary object of this series: *Building a Community of Grail Knights*, while emphasizing the help that comes through uniting the masculine forces of Michael with the divine feminine forces of Sophia, represented respectively by the Lance of Love and the Holy Grail.

The Reformation Confronts the Hierarchy of Rome

In our last study we pointed to the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit order, which arose within the Catholic Church (1534 AD), as an example of a resurgence of the ancient priestly wisdom. Less than twenty years prior to the founding of the Jesuit order, a monumental awakening occurred, by which countless Christians began to seek freedom from the damming forces of the ancient priestly wisdom in the hierarchy of the Church of Rome. Martin Luther, the German priest, monk, professor, and theologian, initiated the movement, with his ninety-five Theses, which he nailed on the door of All Saints Church, in Wittenberg in October of 1517. The movement he spearheaded, which became known as the Protestant

¹ [Ed. This article is the second part of a three-part study named in the article’s first sentence, and the fourth instalment in a larger series entitled “Towards Building a Community of Grail Knights.” All the articles in this series have been appearing exclusively in these *Starlight* pages and date back originally to the Advent 2012 issue.]

² See *Starlight*, Volume 15 No. 1, Easter 2015.

³ Rudolf Steiner, *Freemasonry and Human Evolution*, II, Lecture of October 23, 1905, Berlin.

Reformation, rejected Papal authority for the authority of the scripture; rejected the purchase of indulgences and the practice of penance for justification and insisted that Christians were justified by their faith alone; rejected the interposition of the priest between individual believers and God, asserting that all baptized Christians constituted a holy priesthood; and rejected Latin as the Biblical language in favor of the German vernacular that could be understood by the common people. All of these were significant steps toward freeing Christians from the shackles of the ancient priestly wisdom. In spite of the fact that Luther was declared a heretic, excommunicated from the church of Rome and had to seek asylum in Wartburg Castle in Eisenach, a movement of tremendous energy and vitality was spawned, as various Protestant sects arose out of the freedom of thought stimulated largely by vernacular translations of the Bible that anyone who could read might study and come to their own understanding about, rather than merely acquiescing to church dogma without question.



Martin Luther, by Lucas Cranach, 1526

It is well worth quoting Martin Luther's response to the general assembly of the Holy Roman Empire that demanded that he recant his writings:

*Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.*⁴



St. Ignatius of Loyola, by Peter Paul Rubens

As the news spread of Martin Luther's singular confrontation with the hierarchy of the Church of Rome, thousands of Christians began to further question the Pope and the authority of the Church. It was under these circumstances, which questioned the authority of Rome and started an exodus from Catholicism, that a converted former military officer named Ignatius Loyola formed the Society of Jesus—what later was called the "Jesuit" order. The order, in direct opposition to the rising tide of freedom of thought and exercise of conscience, redoubled its efforts to retain and further strengthen hierarchical authority. Ignatius' order was built on the military model, coining the term "Christian Soldiers," which "stressed absolute self-denial and obedience to the Pope and to superiors in the

⁴ *Martin Luther*, ed. Martin Brecht, tr. James L. Schaaf, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985-93.

Church hierarchy, using the motto *perinde ac cadaver*—‘as if a dead body,’ i.e. that the good Jesuit should be as well-disciplined as a corpse.”⁵

With this brief historical vignette let us move on to an examination of hierarchy and how it works as a counter-evolutionary force in the broader context of its origins and its continuation into modern civilization.

Hierarchy and its Origins in Ancient Egypt

The Greek word hierarchy literally means “rule of priests” and contains the root word “arche” as an indication of the idea of “first place” or “presiding.”⁶ For our purposes we can envision a Hierarchical order as a pyramidal structure, in which power is concentrated in the highest point and flows downward affecting the whole pyramid ending at its broad base. Our term ancient priestly wisdom can refer, for instance, to the hierarchical order of ancient Egypt where the Pharaohs were Priest-Kings who ruled the land. These priest-kings were originally initiates who were regarded as gods by the common people based on their ability to have converse with the exalted beings of the spiritual world (gods) and the dead, through having, in a certain sense, conquered death. It was a time when a remnant of the ancient clairvoyance survived amongst the general population of humanity; when mystery schools functioned as training grounds for rulers whereby the higher beings of the spiritual world aided in the guidance of humanity. There was justification for this ruling principle in ancient times when the authority of a priest/King could be fathomed by only a select few individuals, based on a wisdom they held in secrecy to protect it from abuse. This wisdom housed in the mystery schools which formed the inner sanctuary of the temples of worship was protected by a thick mantle of ritual, which was allowed to ray out into the general culture in a manner deemed appropriate, through many ordered layers of priestly service that produced sacred Art, Architecture, Theater, Music, and Dance in a rich tapestry of ceremony enacted in sacred festivals year round. We call this form of government “Theocracy,” literally “rule of God.” And we may regard the populace at this time, in general, as unschooled “children,” who were intellectually and spiritually immature, needing the guidance of more mature “adults” or those qualified by their initiation knowledge.

Hierarchy in Today’s World

Existing with different names but exhibiting the same principle, our modern institutions are also built on the principle of hierarchy, in which a President, a Commander in Chief, a Prime Minister, a Governor, a Mayor, a Premier, a Pope, a Pastor, a Bishop or Archbishop, a CEO (Chief Executive Officer), or some otherwise-named person is at the summit of a pyramidal social structure as we mentioned earlier. *Power concentrated in the head* is the rule of The Ancient Priestly Wisdom that continues into our day. It is remarkable to

⁵ “Carried and directed by Divine Providence through the agency of the superior as if he were a lifeless body which allows itself to be carried to any place and to be treated in any manner desired.” Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, tr. George E. Ganss, Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970, p. 249.

⁶ Wikipedia.

consider the longevity of this archetypal method of governance. And it is only natural: we see it in the so-called “pecking order” of every species of animal from birds to elephants. It is also called *dominance hierarchy*.

Seeing how prevalent the hierarchical principle is that originated in the Ancient Priestly Wisdom, the reader might be wondering how otherwise might things be structured if not by this principle? The answer is that the hierarchical principle will not be replaced altogether but will be transformed and inverted to become a de-centralized inverted hierarchy. The basis of this new hierarchy follows from the teaching Jesus gave to his disciples when they were arguing about who would be the greatest among them. Jesus said to them:

The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you would be like the youngest and the one who rules like the one who serves.

The governing principles of our current social, political, mercantile, academic and religious groups, must give way, must be molded and shaped by the development of the Christened individual ego, not the other way around. It is difficult to envision a renewed social structure without the present hierarchical social forms. This is because we have as yet only begun to find the universal human being in ourselves, in which ethical individualism is the key to a social structure that allows individuality to develop while replacing the old centralized hierarchical authority. While the current hierarchies do hold our social forms together as a constraining outer force, they obstruct individuals seeking to develop their capacity of judgment based on conscience, as noted earlier.

The reader will remember that we began this series on Grail Knighthood by examining Valentin Tomberg’s bid for freedom of the conscience: “let us keep one province free from compromise; let us remain true to the spirit, independent of all teachers and organizations in the world. Let us remain true to the inner voice of conscience?”⁷ It is the domain of conscience that is under attack by the adversaries of the spiritual evolution of humanity. Notice that Tomberg pinpoints teachers and organizations because it is the nature of organizations to be structured hierarchically and of teachers (and other officials) to represent authority. Such is the Ancient Priestly Wisdom in its modern form—one of the greatest obstacles to the development of the Christ ego in humanity, which is the “Holy Grail” of human development. While we have been speaking of the ancient priestly wisdom as an obstacle to our development, we nevertheless must recognize that it is also the perfect ground for the growth of conscience; it is the necessary



To Caesar and To God, by Titian

⁷ See Lecture 1 of *Inner Development*, Anthroposophic Press, Hudson NY, 1992, p. 32.

dark earth for spirit seeds to grow. If there was no resistance to our emerging faculties they would have little vitality; to produce a hearty species, forces of resistance must be present. While we always seek for betterment, we nevertheless can be grateful for the existing social structures—“rendering to Caesar what belongs to Caesar,” as Christ Jesus instructed his disciples. Hierarchy acts as a cohesive force in *outer life*, but also, at the same time, presents an obstacle to the maturing of the *inner life*: the forces of conscience in humanity.

Hierarchy in the Grail Saga

By way of expanding and deepening our understanding of these principles, we shall now proceed to integrate what we have gleaned above into our knowledge of the Grail story, its characters, and its primary symbols: the Grail cup and the Lance of love. And additionally, to indicate the part played by the Divine being of Sophia, the Wisdom of God as an answer to the counter-evolutionary forces of the Ancient Priestly Wisdom.

To grasp the far-reaching spirit at the heart of the Parzival saga, in its many iterations, we must understand that the story is couched in a social context very different from our own, in which Knighthood was a widespread phenomenon with its practices and strict codes of conduct, while what is being indicated spiritually far outreaches the phenomenon of knighthood. Knighthood should only be for us a symbol of outer social affairs, conduct and mores. We must transpose the picture of knighthood to our new millennium—to our own time where, for instance, corporations are the various feudal Kingdoms, CEOs and presidents are the kings, their staff are the knights and pages. Here one seeks honor through monetary increase (profit) and promotion to higher levels of authority within the corporate hierarchy. Here black suits and ties are the armor and pens, computers and words are the weapons. Here corporate jets, Jaguars, Mercedes Benzs and BMWs replace horses; here jousting is the game of competition that is enacted in various ways in high profile commercials, within board rooms and between competing markets.

For the similarity to be truly meaningful for our purposes, we must be able to imagine the same sorts of forces working in our most intimate social environments: the cultures and subcultures in which we are engaged. We need to have a supple imagination for these things. Can we picture the hierarchies that exist within our own sub-culture, analogous to Knighthood? If we are able to do this, we won't be so quick to point judgmental fingers at others but will recognize our own deficiencies—knowing that pointing the spear/sword toward ourselves is what ensures the vitality of our own community. This may be the most significant factor that distinguishes a true, modern Grail Knighthood from Grail Knight Masquerades, which, we can be sure, are being enacted in the environs of true Grail Knighthood. One cannot imitate Grail Knighthood without knowing what it is. And the most dangerous of devils are the ones who infiltrate the highest levels of human striving and whose object is to create the most perfect counterfeit possible to derail evolutionary trends. So we as Grail Knights must be watchful, first and foremost of our own motives, and then in the closest circles of the sub-culture we identify with. We must bring our sword/spear with us always, dividing soul from spirit, brandishing it so that “piercing through the middle” (one of

the translations of the name “Parzival”) we ensure that our blood can become etherized and transformed into the “divine blood” that fills the Grail Cup—so that our Grail Community can enjoy radiant health.⁸ In so doing we remember that the healing of the Grail community by Parzival was accomplished only when Parzival recognized “himself to be the cause of Anfortas’s suffering,” as Walter Johannes Stein reminds us.⁹

As we seek for the innermost treasures of the Grail story, we see that Montsalvat and the Grail Castle, although a picture of a spiritual landscape and its presiding edifice, are not the primary thing, the objective, for the Grail Castle is “in ruins” morally and spiritually, but rather are they the place of illness and suffering. If we are both penetrating and honest in our evaluation of our own spiritual communities, we will see a similar picture to the one painted of Montsalvat and the Grail Castle, and we will not give up until we succeed in offering the nourishing Grail cup and applying the healing Spear to what we ourselves are contributing to the wounding of our communities.

Transforming Cosmic Intelligence Into Human Intelligence

The next step we must take to penetrate to the healing power of the Lance of Love and the Grail cup is to identify the various groups of players in our “script.” In the ninth century, in which the Parzival story took place, it is critical to realize that the ancient priestly wisdom had multiple guises—which had their seat in the *cosmic intelligence*. We will remember that the primary task of the individuality who incarnated as Parzival in the ninth century was to initiate an impulse that would provide humanity with tools to convert cosmic intelligence to human intelligence. In order to provide what would be required to birth *human intelligence* for humanity, Parzival found himself in a triple-bind, confronting Catholicism spread abroad in the world like a great sea, the Knights of King Arthur in the valley, and on the mountain the Grail Knights in their fallen state—all in service to the cosmic intelligence.

The seat of priestly authority rested, most obviously, in Rome with the Pope and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church as we saw in our review of Martin Luther’s story. Less obvious was its seat in the Knights of the Round Table and in the Grail Knights. Parzival had to raise himself above all of these to become the Grail King, which office represents the inverted hierarchy. We have been referring to the circle of twelve Knights of King Arthur. What do they represent? They are those who seek to advance the twelvefold cosmic intelligence according to their own “‘Christian’ laws and commandments.” They do so through coercion—by the sword. They seek to establish a “Christian kingdom of this world,” a sort of counterfeit of the Kingdom of God. Whenever the disciples of Jesus sought to advance his teaching by the sword, or through any sort of coercion, Jesus always reminded them that his Kingdom was not “of this world.” He was never about worldly power or

⁸ This refers to the lance dripping with blood that keeps the Grail cup full and provided healing to the wound of Amfortas in Wagner’s *Parsifal*.

⁹ “Who seeks the imagination of the Grail and thinks that he sees anything other than the slaying of what is noblest through his own imperfection, cannot redeem the suffering Grail King.” W.J. Stein, *The Ninth Century and the Holy Grail*, Temple Lodge, London, 1991, p. 107.

authority. According to Walter Johannes Stein, Rudolf Steiner, who visited his eleventh grade Waldorf School students, who were studying the ninth century and the story of Parzival, told them "... that [the Grail Knights] were not knights of the sword but Knights of the Word. The Word, he said, is the Grail sword."¹⁰

We know that the Parzival legend is precise in many respects. Let us take a look at some more of those significant details that might bring us closer to the heart of the tale—to its most brilliant illuminations.

At the beginning of Parzival's long journey to become the Grail King, he is inordinately attracted to the armor of knights. At his first sight of knights clad in shining armor, he falls down at their feet thinking they are gods. Not long afterwards he acquires his own armor in a crude and ill-advised manner: by killing the noble Red Knight, Ither, a deed that he later regrets and which sullies his name. In contrast, later on in the story, when Parzival stumbles upon and enters the Grail Castle, he receives a different sort of "armor" after he removes the armor he got by killing the Red Knight¹¹: the cloak of Repanse de Schoye, the Grail Queen, is given to him. It is lent to him by Repanse until his own clothing will be made for him.¹²

What is the significance of these details? Parzival is born into the world of Knights and is ineluctably attracted to it. His killing of the noble Ither for his armor is a commentary on Knighthood, which clothes the outer man with shining refinement and honor but cares little for the inner man who is a murderer. In counter-distinction, the Grail Queen sees something that is hidden in Parzival—his interior purity, his potential. She lends him her cloak as an outward sign of his inner beauty which she intuits—knowing that he is destined to become the Grail King. As prospective Grail Knights, we may take this as a personal invitation from the Divine Sophia that *we* are called to serve the Grail according to our inner beauty.



From the Liesborn altarpiece, 1465

With other significant details, in Book VI, of Eschenbach's *Parzival*, we discover that Parzival's long sought-after inclusion into the circle of Arthur's Round Table was not to be. When Parzival was invited by Arthur to join, and gave his assent—he was deemed to be so honorable that Arthur said to him: "You have caused me both sorrow and joy, yet you have brought and sent me more honor than I have ever received from a man before." Yet, after much praise was given Parzival by both knights and ladies—deemed by all to be of the highest nobility and virtue, Kundrie, the sorceress rides in to set the record straight. Remaining on her "mule as tall as a war horse," she exclaims first to

¹⁰ W.J. Stein, *The Ninth Century and the Holy Grail*, p. 6.

¹¹ W.J. Stein calls this armor "the armor in which he is clad by earthly forces," p. 138.

¹² See Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, tr. Helen M. Mustard and Charles E. Passage. Vintage Books, 1961, p. 125.

Arthur: “The fame and power of the Round Table are lamed now that Sir Parzival has joined its company, though he bears, as he sits over there, the outward signs of a knight.” And then to Parzival she speaks (I select only a few incisive remarks out of her long diatribe): “You!...You are the one to blame...You should have taken pity...You are destined for hell...You bar all salvation, you curse of bliss, you scorn of perfect merit!...You baited lure! You adder’s fang! You death to joy and bestowal of grief!”

What are we to make of this paradoxical situation? Parzival is the object of both the highest praise and the meanest dishonor? We are witnessing the clash of two world-views: that of the cosmic intelligence represented by Arthur’s Round Table, which is concerned with *OUTWARD* rightness, and the cosmic *human* intelligence that calls to Parzival, through Kundrie, from the Grail Setting—which is a matter of *INNER* rightness.

Yet the Knights of the Grail and their King Anfortas present another layer of hierarchy that Parzival must rise above to earn the right to serve the Grail. As we mentioned, the Grail community, as depicted in all accounts, is itself afflicted—ill, fallen from grace. It is a picture of failure, but a failure that is nevertheless blessed by the grace of the Grail and those who directly serve it. What of the ailing Anfortas? What does he represent? Anfortas is the remnant of Hierarchy within the Grail community. His Kingship is official—in name only. He has not earned his Kingship but came to it through his blood—not by spirit-birth but because he was the son of Titurel.¹³ His good blood proved not to be equal to spirit-birth. He was not “a son of a widow” like Parzival but was carried through life by earthly father-forces. He is not “made wise by compassion,” to use Richard Wagner’s term, like Parzival, but has succumbed to love’s excess, devoid of wisdom—when he ran after a love that was not written on the Grail’s rim. He was seeking renown for himself and, in pursuing the haughty Orgeluse (whose name means “proud lady”), a beauty that was outward, showed himself bound to the earthly sphere, wherein the Ancient Priestly Wisdom has its source and Hierarchy its seat. No wonder he was wounded: officially the King, he is nevertheless devoid of the quality of leadership that the Grail now requires: humility, which is the first requirement for one who would SERVE. Service is the essence of the inverted hierarchy that we spoke of earlier when quoting Jesus: “He who would be greatest among you will be the servant of all.”

Feminine Wisdom Guiding Parzival

From the foregoing we will be able to realize how spare is the wisdom guiding Parzival to the honor of serving the Grail. Surrounding him is Maya, an illusion of many layers, which he must penetrate “through the middle.” Where does that spare, precious wisdom come from? It comes, unquestionably, from the women. I would like to quote from Robert Sardello, in this regard.

¹³ [Ed. Consider Jesus’s words to Nicodemus in John 3:3. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”]

*Indeed all of the actions of Parzival can be said to originate from, be sustained by, and revolve around the feminine characters. The women of the Grail are representatives of the soul qualities necessary for transforming the self ...*¹⁴

We should qualify this with one exception. The hermit Trevrizent must be included among those who ply their holy wisdom on Parzival. Why Trevrizent? His guiding help is obvious. What stands out with Trevrizent, among all the other male associates of Parzival, is the fact that he separated himself from the world, became a hermit, and “made a vow to God Almighty that nevermore would [he] practice knighthood.”¹⁵

The Transcendent Masculine must Unite with the Immanent Feminine

We would correctly infer that what is being indicated by these facts is a monumental shift of emphasis for humanity in its evolution: from the masculine to the feminine, from the outer to the inner, from illusion to reality. The *transcendent* spiritual must become the *immanent*. Thought and word must become fact and reality—clothed in flesh and blood: the Word made flesh in the human being. And the mystery of this immanence, of this manifest grace and truth, is *revealed* in the Divine Mother, Daughter, and Holy Soul. But we must ever keep in mind that the goal is not to establish the superiority of the feminine: the superiority factor is what makes the hierarchy into a counter-evolutionary force. Hierarchy itself is not evil. There is hierarchy in the spiritual world, but it is an inverse hierarchy, as we mentioned earlier. And as Valentin Tomberg has so clearly pointed out: with the spiritual (inverse) hierarchy, progress depends on the higher being sacrificing itself for the lower, whereas in the earthly hierarchy it is the reverse—“the successor is the enemy of the predecessor.”¹⁶ So leaving all thought of superiority aside, the goal is a marriage between the masculine and feminine—a Hieros Gamos, a marriage that creates inner wholeness that is the re-attainment of Paradisal Unity. However, because of the lop-sided state of affairs in our current evolution, a balancing emphasis must now be put on the feminine.

Just how significant is it that all of Parzival’s help comes from women? What is being ushered in by Parzival and his Grail quest is unspeakably more profound than what might be imagined in these slight indications. Let us now seek to penetrate to the deepest layers of this wisdom, which has the Divine Feminine as its source.

“Twenty-Four” Auguring A New Stage of Human Evolution

In his first visit to the Grail Castle Parzival observes, while sitting in the great hall beside Anfortas, Repanse de Schoye arrayed in Arabian silk—“radiant as the dawn,” says Wolfram, carrying “the perfection of paradise” called the Grail—“whom the Grail permitted to be its bearer.” According to Wolfram’s account, Repanse, the Queen of the Grail, is in the middle of a procession of twenty-four maidens, as the twenty-fifth, with twelve before her

¹⁴ Robert Sardello, “Foreword” to Linda Sussman’s *The Speech of the Grail*, Lindisfarne Books, Hudson NY, 1995, p. xv.

¹⁵ Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, Book IX, p. 480.

¹⁶ Valentin Tomberg, *Inner Development*, p. 21.

and twelve behind.¹⁷ The Grail she carries is the means of nourishment for the community: it produces whatever food or drink one reaches out for instantly, “food warm or food cold, dishes new or dishes old, meat tame or gam,” and “whatever drink one held out his goblet for ... mulberry juice, wine, or red sinopel.” In this “twenty-four” we have the cosmic number twelve as a reflection of the twelve signs of the Zodiac but doubled. Let us consider the meaning of this twice twelfefoldness. The children of Israel whose tribes were named after Israel’s twelve sons, were led through a desert wilderness after they were set free by Moses from slavery to the Egyptians. During this wilderness trial that lasted forty years, in which providing nourishment was an especial challenge, God fed the Israelites with manna that fell from heaven every twenty four hours. The manna was round, sweet, and wafer-like but could not be saved for the next day or it would decay. Of course, the day is comprised of not just twenty four hours but is counted in two twelve hour intervals. Compare this to the Grail, which also provides nourishment and has a twice twelve aspect.

Consider that our next step in human evolution is to transform our untamed astral body from a chaotic mix of contradictory thoughts and feelings that serves our egoistic passions and instincts to an organ of harmonious and focused intentionality serving our human higher purpose—to Manas. Twenty four is the number of Manas, the very essence of transformed astrality; it is the bread of life, nourishment for our Christened Ego to transform the personal in us into the universal. Here we confront the mystery of a wholly new stage of evolution. Rudolf Steiner once told the priests of the Christian Community that “... [for] those who work together who have made themselves spiritual, who represent a stage of human evolution, there must be twenty-four, and these are the four and twenty elders.”¹⁸ It doesn’t take a great deal of imagination to see that the Grail community was and is meant to represent this “stage of human evolution.”

According to Wolfram, as mentioned earlier, the Grail procession, with Repanse de Schoye bearing the Grail, was made up of twenty-four maidens who were each holding a burning candle. What is being described here? In a cosmic-earthly script, we read: these are the female counterparts for the twenty-four elders, with Repanse (representing the divine feminine trinity) as the twenty fifth, just as God (representing the masculine trinity) is the twenty fifth around Whom the twenty four elders gather. Walter Johannes Stein¹⁹ says of the Grail procession: “The Grail appears in a circle of twenty-four lights. They are the twenty-four elders...” Is this not a picture of the immanent female twenty-four as the Earthly (as the candle of soul) reflecting the male transcendent twenty-four elders (as the flame of spirit)? In this picture Repanse is representative of the purified tri-partite human soul²⁰ that has united with spirit and transformed into spirit-self—another name for Manas.

¹⁷ “And the noblest member they placed in the center, with twelve on either side ...” *Parzival*, Book V, seventh page.

¹⁸ See Rudolf Steiner, *The Book of Revelation—And the Work of the Priest*, Rudolf Steiner Press UK, 1998, p. 65.

¹⁹ In *The Ninth Century and the Holy Grail*, p. 144.

²⁰ The tripartite human soul consists of sentient soul, intellectual soul, and consciousness soul.

What is pictured for us in a nuanced artistic description is twenty-four lights and twenty-four bearers of the lights: the elders are the heavenly (transcendent) lights and the maidens are the earthly (immanent) bearers of the lights. Wouldn't the descent of cosmic intelligence to become human intelligence require a deeper incarnation of Christ in the Etheric—a further incarnation of Christ into His Body on Earth? And wouldn't that be most worthily borne by these Grail-bearing maidens—by women, as in the case of those who could witness the Crucifixion, the deepest descent of the Christ in the suffering body of Jesus? Exemplified in such a women as Mary Magdalene or the Solomon Mary, for instance.

A Sacred Wedding

It appears that we are witnessing, in the Parzival saga, an unparalleled Hieros Gamos, a sacred wedding of the twenty-four leading male individualities with as many female counterparts—an unprecedented spiritual marriage of such consequence we can barely imagine. In this context, let us consider further the scenario depicted by St. John in his Revelation, a scene that he witnessed himself, in the spirit. While John gazed spiritually through a door into heaven he witnessed



From The Crucifixion - 1360 ca, by the Master of the Urbino Coronation

“one sitting on a throne” and round about, seated on their own thrones, “were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.” The one sitting on the throne held a book in his right hand, sealed with seven seals. But no one could be found in heaven, earth or under the earth that was worthy to open the book. Until, as John beholds this, the “Lamb that was slain” took the book from the one who sat on the throne, whereupon there was great rejoicing and worship for the Lamb, as the twenty-four elders sang a new song”:

Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made us, unto our God, kings and priests and we shall reign on earth.

Focusing on the topic at hand, we acknowledge two things in the verses above: the twenty-four elders have become “kings and priests,” and by virtue of the “Lamb that was slain.”

We should bear in mind as we read these words about the twenty-four elders becoming priests and kings, that through Christ's authority *all* true Christians are destined to become kings and priests. As early as Abraham the patriarch, God spoke of his descendants being a “kingdom of priests.” And to Moses on Mt. Sinai He spoke again: “You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”²¹ The apostle Peter in his first letter recorded in the

²¹ Holy Bible, *Isaiah* 61:6.

New Testament says to the “elect”: “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood...” And John, prior to his beholding the throne of God with the twenty-four elders, said to the believers: “He [Christ] ... has made us kings and priests unto God...”²²

This reference to kings and priests points to the ultimate hierarchical inversion since kings and priests represent the highest levels of hierarchic authority. If we employ only earthly wisdom, it would be foolish to believe that ALL (of the elect) are destined to be kings and priests. Logic tells us that the ALL could not fit at the pinnacle of the hierarchical pyramid. Only one or perhaps a few could occupy that lofty position. The ALL could only fit at the base of a pyramid. And, using plain logic, how could ALL become kings and priests—that would create perhaps millions of kingdoms and religions (spiritual paths)? To ordinary logic that sounds like a formula for chaos.

But knowing that Christ, the best and highest representative of the human being, was first and foremost “the servant of all,” we get a picture of an upside-down pyramid with “the lamb who was slain” at the pointed base holding others up, instead of at the top. And those, “wise through compassion,” who, like the lamb, give up their lives for others, fill the upper part of the triangle, which widens at the top like a grail vessel—giving more honor to the less honorable, as St. Paul adjures.²³ This is the true picture of the inverted hierarchical pyramid with Christ at the base washing the disciples’ feet. And we all, who belong to Christ, are ever trying to “outdo one another in showing honor.”²⁴

In closing, let us gather together all that we can and cannot yet fathom of the preceding conversation, and let us resolve in the strength of conscience that comes, uniquely, by the feminine and masculine sacraments—by the grace and truth represented by the Grail cup and the Lance of Love—to break free from the chains of hierarchy that surround us. Let us break free from “the pattern into which the state and the economic system [seeks to] mold us,” to use Steiner’s words, or any other system of authority that hinders the development of our innermost nature. Let us drink deeply from the Grail cup, of the springs of water that nourish, heal, and restore the fractured sword of the Word in us. Then we will, as a new Grail Knighthood, truly tread the path of freedom and love that leads to the Grail community that we seek.

²² New Testament, *Revelations of St. John*, 1:6.

²³ New Testament, *I Corinthians* 12:21-26.

²⁴ New Testament, *Romans* 12:10.

On the Path of the Grail¹

Vlad Pashov²

Simon of Cyrene and Joseph of Arimathea are two characters who are mentioned for the first time in connection with the dramatic end of the life of Christ Jesus. The first carries the cross of Christ Jesus, and the second takes his body from the cross and buries Him. If one looks at the story from a mere historical point of view, there is nothing especially startling about it. But if the issue is considered from a spiritually-minded point of view, then another light is shed on these two actors in the Great Drama.

Here, in events that are centred in the Crucifixion, starting from the Last Supper and ending with the Resurrection and Ascension, we find a meeting of the microcosmic and macrocosmic, the human and cosmic (i.e. the Divine). From the Last Supper to the Resurrection, on the Path of Occult Development, there are seven stages, which were known to the first Christians and which they also practiced. In one of the previous chapters, I stopped over these stages and explained how they are understood in an esoteric sense. Now I will only mention the names of these stages, giving some additional explanations on them.

1. The Washing of the feet.
2. The Scourging.
3. The Crowning with thorns.
The Bearing of the Cross
- 4. Crucifixion.**
The Releasing from the Cross
5. The Laying in the tomb.
6. Resurrection.
7. Ascension.

[...] Christ has brought The Mystery Secrets to the historical scene and has presented to the world the whole Path that the one who seeks Initiation, towards New-Birth, must travel. These are the stages through which the disciples of the Mysteries passed (until then, in other forms). And now Christ brings these to the historical scene, while at the same time renewing

¹ [Ed. From Pashov's monumental study, *The Historical Road of the White Brotherhood through the Centuries*, Vol. 5. This excerpt translated from the Bulgarian by Emily Michael and adapted by the Editor.]

² [Ed. Vlad Pashov (Vladimir by birth, but popularly known among his contemporaries as Vlad) was, at school, a pupil of Boyan Boev who was one of Peter Deunov's closest disciples. Following the full example of his favorite school teacher, Pashov later became a disciple in the White Brotherhood Society. He also became a diligent reader of the works of Rudolf Steiner, which had been translated into Bulgarian, among others by Boev himself. Details provided by Emily Michael.]

them and illuminating them as a Path for those who want to consciously walk the Way of Perfection.

If we follow the simple development of the images, we see how the first three stages and then the last three stages are grouped into two perfectly symmetrical parts of the Great Drama that stand one above the other as two equal arcs of one spiral. Both times we see a great ascending from below. In the first case we find the images of the microcosmic form of man from the feet (the Washing of the feet), to the chest (the Scourging), to the head (the Crowning with thorns). In the second case we find the same order, but now as the images of the Macrocosm, also in upward ascendancy, which we can call the macrocosmic human form, according to the occult perception that man is the small universe, and the universe is the Great Cosmic Man³. First, there is the Laying in the tomb: the tomb corresponds to the feet of the world; the physical world represents the feet of the Cosmic Man. The etheric ambience is the chest of the Cosmic Man: the sphere of the Resurrection. The top of the Heavenly sphere, like the human head, holds the head of the Cosmic Man, the head of the World Ascension. The microcosmic and the macrocosmic man are equally aligned in their triple construction, going from bottom to top, from the feet to the head, from the earth's depths to the Heavenly heights. In the middle, in the fourth stage, between the two trinities, stands the Cross of Golgotha.

The Cross is the Secret of Human Karma. After the first three stages, the Washing of the feet, the Scourging, and the Crowning, according to the Gospel of John, in front of the palace of Pilate, the mysterious words are uttered: "This is the Man!" From the first three stages the human image grows: the Secret of the Human Form appears on the Cross. The physical body of man is the Cross. His earthly destiny grows from him. It is the Cross that one has to learn to take on oneself. When a man stretches his arms horizontally and stands upright, he forms the cross. When a person dies, the cross of the body becomes the Door that leads that person from the microcosm into the Macrocosm, from him/herself into mankind and the world. Then the Cross becomes a threshold between two worlds. One world is narrow and small; in this world man is alone — this is his personal, physical-related existence. The other world is wide and great, a world in which man is connected, and in communion with, the whole Creation and has risen above himself.

The Egyptians represented the Mystery of the Cross with the sacred sign TAO, a sign similar to a key. Tao, the Cross, is the Key that opens the Door that leads from the earthly into the spiritual world.

According to the Gospel, the Cross, which occupies the middle area between the three microcosmic and macrocosmic stages, is related to two new characters. In the first three stages the Path leads to the Bearing of the Cross. Here appears the first of the two mystery characters. In the Gospel it is said that "[a] certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to

³ Adam Kadmon.

carry the cross.” (Mark 15:21) Simon of Cyrene, the bearer of the Cross, leads through the first three stages of the microcosmic destiny to the Cross.



Simon carries the Cross on Golgotha (Fresco of Theophanes the Cretan in Stavronikita Monastery, Mount Athos)

And when the middle of the Great Drama is fulfilled, when Christ dies on the Cross, the second mysterious figure appears—Joseph of Arimathea. In the Gospel it is said that “[a]s evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’s body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.” (Mark 57-60) According to John’s Gospel, Nicodemus, another secret disciple of Christ, also took part in the funeral.

Thus, Joseph of Arimathea appears as the liberator of the Cross. He leads from the Cross to the three stages of the Macrocosm, which begin with the Laying in the tomb. Simon of Cyrene and Joseph of Arimathea show two of the most important Secrets in man’s life: the incarnation of the man, which is directed towards the Cross, and the release of the person from the Cross-body. When a person becomes Simon of Cyrene and Joseph of Arimathea, these two Soul Mysteries are realized and embodied in him. The Mysteries that we must realize in our development as human beings, looking at the images of Simon of Cyrene and Joseph of Arimathea, are those of the Bearing of the Cross and the Release from the Cross.



When we read the Gospel, we must focus on the images given there and let them act on our souls. In this way they will purify the soul and transform it, turning it into a representation of what stands before it.

So, each person becomes the bearer of a Cross until the middle of the Path. First, one has to join slowly with the Cross by carrying it, until it passes through a Door (at the midnight hour) and one merges completely with the Cosmic Cross. It is only one who walks the narrow Path, at first outside this transformation, who can free him/herself in releasing from the Cross, becoming thereby a conscious Liberator of the Cross. When this happens on the Path of Occult Development, one comes to the point where one can consciously leave or exit the body whenever one wishes.

At both stages, of Simon of Cyrene and of Joseph of Arimathea, a human being is lightly connected with the Cross. At the first stage he/she bears the Cross. At the second stage he/she takes the body from the Cross. In the middle, the Cross itself holds the body attached to it. Before and after the middle, the human being is a bearer: however, Simon bears the Cross, and Joseph bears the Body of Christ.

If the Cross is the inner Mystery of the human earthly body, of the destiny that is conditioned by it, wearing the Cross is the way by which a human being comes to a true affirmation of his/her incarnation, to the voluntary bearing of his or her destiny on Earth. Simon of Cyrene does not bear his own cross, but the cross of Christ. The thought of suffering along with Christ, which sounds in St. Paul's messages, will help one find the affirmation of one's personal destiny in oneself.

The removal from the Cross after this concerns all that pulls a human being out of his/her relation and bondage to the body, that which raises one over one's personal being,

everything that frees one from one's body. However, we must not confuse a healthy release from the body with a painful one. Releasing from the Cross, without this being preceded by the Bearing of the Cross and Crucifixion on the Cross, is something painful. Many psychic (mediumistic) and exalted mental states are based on a premature loosening of the connection between the soul and the body, before the soul has fully descended to the ground of the earth, before it has been fully on the Cross of the body. Again the Apostle Paul's thoughts, expressed in his messages of dying with Christ and of the resurrection with Christ, bear on this question. With this thought, Paul shows people the way, how to rise above the body-connected consciousness, how to rise above themselves, and how to penetrate the spiritual world, into the Cosmos.

In the Bearing of the Cross, the first three of the seven stages are included, the microcosmic stages of personal trial and purification. In the Releasing from the Cross are found the last three stages, when the person unites with the Cosmos, with that which is Great in it.

The Releasing from the Cross and the image of Joseph from Arimathea are together a great symbol. Apart from the description of Joseph of Arimathea in the Gospel, tradition tells us the following: Joseph of Arimathea stands under the Cross with the Holy Grail in his hand, the Cup from which Christ drank with the disciples at the Last Supper. The Roman soldier stabs the ribs of the crucified Jesus with a spear, and Joseph of Arimathea collects in the cup of the Last Supper Christ's blood that now flows from Him, mixed with water from the wound caused by the spear. So begins the story of the Holy Grail. The Spear and the Cup, the Grail Signs, are next to each other. Joseph of Arimathea stands there, on the Cosmic Altar, as the original King of the Grail, with a gesture of sacrifice, holding up the Cup as during a Mass.

If we can describe the Releasing from the Cross with the words "Man receives the body of Christ," the Grail scene shows us the receiving of Christ's blood by man. At both points Joseph of Arimathea is the one who is appointed by fate to act as an archetype of how the Eucharistic sacrament will be accepted in the course of history.

Joseph of Arimathea is the man of the Last Supper, he accepts the body and blood of Christ. Through this cosmic gift, he penetrates into the Kingdom beyond Death, into the Kingdom beyond the three stages of the Macrocosm: the Laying in the tomb, Resurrection, and Ascension. But this is the Kingdom of life and consciousness freed from the body, of which man becomes the master and is no longer a servant but rather, together with Christ, the master of destiny, the master of heredity.

When by accepting the body of Christ our body accepts something of the essence of the body of Christ, it is also taken from the Cross. Joseph from Arimathea rises in us and with him also rises the Mystery of the Grail, brought by the Angel. In this way do we release ourselves from the Cross, and we learn, freed from the body, how to enter into the Kingdom of the Spirit...

The Disciples were asleep in the garden of Gethsemane. Only one of the Twelve Disciples, John, does not fall asleep on the Golgotha hill but stands under the Cross. The others were not there also when the words were pronounced before the palace of Pilate: "This is the Man!" They did not attend on either the Bearing of the Cross or the Crucifixion. They ran away.

Simon of Cyrene replaced Simon Peter, who said he was ready to die for Christ but did not follow; it is Simon of Cyrene who had to carry the Cross from Jerusalem to Golgotha. Joseph of Arimathea comes to take the place of the impoverished third disciple in the garden of Gethsemane, Jacob. Indeed, it is Jacob (James) who had the task of carrying out the Grail action. It was he who should have gathered the Blood of Christ into the cup and removed His body from the Cross. Later, through his fate, Jacob assumes the task he has not assumed here. First among the Apostles, he dies of martyrdom after he brings the Gospel to the west to Spain, to the city of the Grail ...



All four of the Gospels speak of Joseph of Arimathea, and of Simon of Cyrene only three Gospels speak: John does not talk about it. Instead, he talks about Nicodemus who helps Joseph with the funeral. It is also remarkable that Luke places a group of crying women next to Simon of Cyrene. Along the way of the Bearing of the Cross, Christ turns to the women and says to them: "'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then they will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?'" (Luke 28:31)

Thus, Christ, bearing His cross, points with powerful, apocalyptic words to the great Bearing of the Cross of mankind that is to come in the future. Generally speaking, the way in

which Christianity has seen the suffering and dying Christ is similar to the behavior of the weeping women on the road. But here is now a need for a Christianity that, without losing the personal, grows beyond into the cosmic and spiritual, that sees the events of Golgotha in all its details and its prophetic images, which relate to the destiny of mankind ... One day all humankind will come to the Bearing of the Cross and the Crucifixion, but only that part of it that will have turned towards Christ will have achieved the cosmic power of Love, will pass from humanity's death into humanity's Resurrection.



2019 Events in North America and 2019 Events in Europe

I

Sophia Foundation 2019 Events in North America

See the Sophia Foundation Website for Complete Details and to Register
<https://sophiafoundation.org/upcoming-events-sponsored-events/>

March 8, 2019

Holy Saturday Mystery Los Altos, Ca

Holy Saturday Mystery: The Saturn Mysteries Of Lazarus-Cain

A Choreocosmos Weekend Workshop with Karen Rivers

Waldorf School of the Peninsula

11311 Mora Drive, Los Altos, CA

Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.

Feb 1, 2019 Early Registration Discount

April 12, 2019

Holy Saturday Mystery Durham, Nc

Holy Saturday Mystery: The Saturn Mysteries Of Lazarus-Cain

A Choreocosmos Weekend Workshop with Karen Rivers

Eno River Unitarian

4908 Garrett Road, Durham, NC

Musical accompaniment with pianist Clair Hiles.

Mar 1, 2019 Early Registration Discount

May 9, 2019

Grail Facilitator Training 2019

Sophia Grail Circle Training For Facilitators

A 3½-day training in Menlo Park, CA

Vallombrosa Center
250 Oak Drive, Menlo Park, CA
Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.
Mar 15, 2019 Early Registration Discount

June 2, 2019

Boulder Choreocosmos Week 2019
*Listening At The Fiery Edge Of Consciousness:
The Interweaving Of Human And Cosmic Destiny*
A 5-day workshop with Choreocosmos and Star Mysteries
Kelly Barn
1360 Sumac Avenue, Boulder, CO
Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.

June 20, 2019

Annual Sophia Meditation Retreat 2019
*25th Annual Gathering Of The Sophia Foundation
The Wandering Fool Or Love And Its Symbols*
Synergia Ranch
26 Synergia Road, Santa Fe, NM
Filled with presentations, Sacred Dance, Sacred Drama, Singing,
outings to special sites, an evening World Peace and Prayer Celebration,
Mystical Wedding Grail Circle.

July 19, 2019

Grail Knights Training 2019
Sophia Grail Knights Training
A 2-day training in Durham, NC
Eno River Unitarian
4908 Garrett Road, Durham, NC

July 22, 2019

Chapel Hill, Nc Choreocosmos Event 2019
Sophia And The Archangel Jesus: The Evolution Of Love
A 5-day workshop with Cosmic and Sacred Dance.
Eno River Unitarian
4908 Garrett Road, Durham, NC
Apr 1, 2019 Early Registration Discount

II

2019 Events In Europe

See the Sophia Foundation Website for Complete Details

<https://sophiafoundation.org/upcoming-events-non-sponsored-events/>

*Sophia/Choreocosmos workshops with Robert Powell
Summer 2019 – Italy and France*

August 4-9, 2019: “Choreocosmos: International Week” in the spa hotel

“Casa di Salute—Raphael” in Roncegno near Trient/Trento, Italy—<http://www.casaraphael.com/index.php/en>

“Cosmic Dances of the Nine Beatitudes” —with Italian concert pianist Fabio Berellini. 18th graduation of the Choreocosmos School for Cosmic & Sacred Dance. Arrival on August 4 for dinner at 7:00 PM; departure on August 9 after breakfast. (English/German with Italian translation).

Please note that because this is taking place at the peak summer season, it is advisable to book rooms as early as possible.

Contact: Sally Ellis-Jones, Via della Polla 44, 38052 Caldonazzo (TN), Italy.

Tel: +39-0461-724893 / Mobile: +39-348-2106251

Email: sally.ellis.jones@gmail.com

August 9-10, 2019: “Choreocosmos Graduates Meeting” in the spa hotel “Casa di Salute—Raphael” in Roncegno near Trient/Trento, Italy—<http://www.casaraphael.com/index.php/en>

“Foundations of Choreocosmos: A Spiritual Path Arising from Eurythmy—The School of Christ & Sophia” —starts on August 9 at 9:00 AM; departure on August 11 after breakfast. (English/German with Italian translation)

The focus in cosmic dance will be on working with the Foundation Stone Meditation and the Prayer Sequence—with musical accompaniment by Italian concert pianist Fabio Berellini (Cosmic and Sacred Dance)

Please note that because this is taking place at the peak summer season, it is advisable to book rooms as early as possible.

Contact: Sally Ellis-Jones, Via della Polla 44, 38052 Caldonazzo (TN), Italy.

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August 11-17, 2019: “The Sacred Alphabet and the Source of Eurythmy—the Hebrew Alphabet & the Tree of Life—the 10 Sephiroth and the 22 Paths of Wisdom corresponding to the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot.”

One week workshop with the Shambhala Path (Sacred Dance) and (weather permitting) observation of stars & planets. Musical accompaniment by violinist Vitale Cotofana.

One week Sophia workshop at *Casa di Spiritualità Oasi Sacro Cuore* in Assisi, Italy—

<http://www.oasisacrocuoreassisi.com/>—*House of Spirituality: Sacred Heart Oasis*. Arrival on August 11 for dinner at 7:00 pm; departure on August 17 after breakfast. (English/German with Italian translation)

Please note that full pension (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) is possible at Sacred Heart Oasis. However, accommodation there is limited. Early registration is advisable.

Contact: Uberta Sebregondi, viale Guglielmo Massaia 18, Sc. N/1, 00154 Roma, Italy.

Tel: +39-06-45544847 / Mobile: +39-335-6749935

Email: usebregondi@gmail.com

August 17-24, 2019: “Connecting Heaven and Earth—Star Mysteries and Earth Mysteries.” One week workshop with Choreocosmos and Sacred Dance focusing upon the Foundation Stone Meditation in Eurythmy. This year the workshop theme is “Initiation into the Mysteries of the Starry Heavens and the Earth Mother” with (weather permitting) observation of stars & planets. Musical accompaniment by violinist Vitale Cotofana, who will be joined later in the week by pianist Fabio Berellini for the Beethoven music (violin and piano) accompanying the Foundation Stone Meditation. One week Sophia workshop at *Casa di Spiritualità Oasi Sacro Cuore* in Assisi, Italy—

<http://www.oasisacrocuoreassisi.com/>—*House of Spirituality: Sacred Heart Oasis*.

Arrival on August 17 for dinner at 7:00 pm; departure on August 24 after breakfast. (English/German with Italian translation).

Please note that full pension (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) is possible at Sacred Heart Oasis. However, accommodation there is limited. Early registration is advisable.

Contact: Uberta Sebregondi, viale Guglielmo Massaia 18, Sc. N/1, 00154 Roma, Italy.

Tel: +39-06-45544847 / Mobile: +39-335-6749935

Email: usebregondi@gmail.com

September 21-28, 2019: “Sophia Grail Training” in the Chapel Saint-Laurent, 2 rue font du portal, 34150 Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, north-west of Montpellier, France.

Following on from the four yearly Grail workshops (2015-2018), which may be seen as preparation, the Sophia Grail Training, founded in 2007 in California, will now, twelve years later, commence in Europe, led by Robert Powell, who is known for his books *Chronicle of the Living Christ*, *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality*, *History of the Zodiac*, *The Sophia Teachings*, and many other works.

In Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert in 2016 he presented the findings of his research into the “destiny mystery” of the Grail knight Kyot, who was the source of Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Grail book *Parzival*. As Robert showed, there is a deep connection between Kyot and the location Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, which is why the Sophia Grail Training is taking place in this small town that is referred to as a “jewel of France.”

As well as offering the Sophia Grail Training, Robert will teach Choreocosmos, with sacred movements and gestures for prayers directed to Christ and Sophia as well as for “putting on the resurrection body” (see *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality*)—the resurrection being the ultimate goal of the human being’s spiritual evolution. He will also be presenting his new work on the Shambhala Path.

And he will also present concerning the hidden history of redemption and the new forms of devotion to Sophia in our time, in the spirit of the Grail tradition.

The Sophia Grail Circle is a community of people who join together to form a vessel to serve Christ and Sophia and the spiritual evolution of humanity and the Earth. Toward this end, we work together consciously and purposefully in service of the Holy Grail, focusing upon Sophia, the Divine Wisdom of evolution, at the heart of our community.

Accommodation in Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert is limited. Early registration is advisable.

Contact: Laurence Penetrat, 17 rue de la Mairie, 11260 Rouvenac, France.

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Starlight, the journal of the Sophia Foundation, appears twice a year, around Easter/Pentecost and Advent/Christmas. The Advent 2018 issue had as its main focus the Divine Mother/Earth Mother. The present Easter 2019 issue focuses on the Grail theme—the Grail stream, the Grail story, and Grail culture. In the context of this series, our focus in the future will be the Russian/Slavic Mission, Russian spirituality and its connection to the Grail stream, the challenges of modern evil, the role of the anti-Christ, and the future Sophia culture of the Rose of the World for which we are preparing now. If you are intending to send a contribution to the next issue, please email it to starlightjournal27@gmail.com by October 1st, 2019. Contributors are encouraged to submit as early as possible, for the issue will be in process of shaping itself as the contributions come in.



*John reclining at table with Jesus,
by Giorgio Vasari*

