

Kyot and the Stellar Script of Parsifal

By Ellen Schalk

In the lecture cycle *Christ and the Spiritual World: The Search for the Holy Grail*, Rudolf Steiner makes an admission regarding his spiritual scientific research:

If you follow up the various expositions in my books and lecture–courses, and if you feel about it as I do, you will find, especially in the older ones, that what I have said in connection with the name of the Holy Grail is one of the least satisfying parts. ... [for] often, when I tried to trace the further course of this stream – when I tried to unravel the further occult development of Christianity in the West – then before my soul rose the admonition: “You must first read the name of Parsifal in its right place.” [1]

In this search for the place where the name of Parsifal stands written, Rudolf Steiner was ever and again led astray by exoteric science, in that it deemed Kyot – Wolfram von Eschenbach’s secret source – to be an invention of the poet. After following lengthy false trails, Rudolf Steiner is finally led onto the right path through the thought association “stellar script – Grail” that is inspired into him through Kyot’s words, “a thing was called the Grail,” and the reference to an oriental document by the star-sage Flegetanis. Inspired by Kyot, Rudolf Steiner found “the name Parsifal in wonderful letters of the occult script on the sickle of the moon.”

It is the great achievement of Werner Greub, today still scarcely appreciated, to have resolved the Kyot issue that for generations now has not been uncovered by science. Kyot is no invention of the poet. Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Willehalm* epic – the first of the trilogy *Willehalm – Parsifal – Titurel* – is the bridge to *Parsifal*. Indeed, Willehalm is identical with Wolfram’s secret source Kyot, he is identical with Kyot of Katelangen, with Kyot of Provence, with Willehalm of Toulouse, with Saint Guilhem, and with Willehalm of Oransche [note by translator: in English one can translate this name also as William of Orange, although this person is not to be confused with the other well-known William of Orange who was the liberator of the Netherlands]. Wolfram’s secret source for *Willehalm* is Willehalm himself, since no one other than the historical Willehalm was in a position to produce an authentic report on the historical battle of Alischanz (in 818 AD). Kyot himself proves to be the author of the epics that through Wolfram are translated into Middle High German. He is a contemporary, a witness, and a co-organizer of the events of the ninth century. Wolfram also describes for us in *Parsifal* a bit of the family history of his secret source Willehalm, who like no secondary chronicler is in a position to inform Wolfram about every detail.

As Willehalm, Count of Toulouse, Kyot lands in Arabian captivity. There he learns the Arabic language and studies the ancient cultures. In a manuscript by the Baghdad scholar Th’âbit ben Sâlômôn he finds a reference to the Grail tradition, which the holy three kings have already pursued. In *Parsifal* it is reported of Kyot that he had found the Flegetanis document (which caught the attention of Rudolf Steiner!). After Willehalm’s escape from captivity, his teacher – Queen Arabel – accompanies him to Oransche and becomes his wife, Gybure (she becomes a Christian). After Gybure’s death we find Willehalm as Duke of Katelangen in Montpellier. He applies himself as an urban planner, a creative artist, and a seeker of the Grail.

Finally, with the aid of the Flegetanis document, 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. Willehalm-Kyot now goes back to the hunting castle Le Verdus near Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert. From there, as Kyot of Katelangen he lends support to those of his relatives who are situated in official positions of authority. He delivers his daughter Sigune to his sister-in-law Herzeloyde in Kanvoleis for her upbringing. After the death of his brother Tampenteire he provides support for his niece, Condwiramur. After her marriage to Parsifal he also has the opportunity to be Parsifal’s teacher for 16 months. Five years later he accompanies Condwiramur to Munsalvaesche and returns to Montpellier with Kardeiz, whose education he takes over.

At the end of his richly active life, as Wolfram's secret source he authors *Parsifal*. He commits his three epics to an oral tradition. Some 350 years later Wolfram translates the French Kyot-transmission into Middle High German. *Willehalm* is a portion of the biography of Kyot.

Let us return again to Rudolf Steiner's 'admission'. In this context he describes how in the third post-Atlantean cultural epoch, when star wisdom influenced the human soul directly, the Sibylline forces were justified, although they were no longer appropriate for soul development in the fourth cultural epoch.

"When the Christ Impulse entered into the evolution of humanity in the way known to us, one result was that the chaotic forces of the Sibyls were thrust back for a time, as when a stream disappears below ground and reappears later on. These forces were indeed to reappear in another form, a form purified by the Christ Impulse [2] ... 'Yes, a time is coming when the old Astrology will live again in a new form, a Christ-filled form, and then, if one can practice it properly, so that it will be permeated with the Christ Impulse, one may venture to look up to the stars and question them about their spiritual script.'" [3]

At this point Rudolf Steiner introduces two personalities whose soul forces were transformed under the influence of the Christ Impulse: the Maid of Orleans as a Christianized Sibyl, and Johannes Kepler as the one who was able to read the new stellar script. We may regard it as our future task to practice for ourselves the mode of thinking infused with the Christ Impulse as modeled for us by Kepler, and to learn to read the new stellar script.

Following upon this, Rudolf Steiner mentions an example from Wolfram's *Parsifal* – in order to make clear that at that time there was a searching for the spiritual stellar script: "What sort of time was it, then, when Parsifal entered the Castle, where Amfortas lay wounded and on Parsifal's arrival suffered unceasing pain from his wound? What was this time? The saga itself tells us – it was Saturn time.*" [Note in 1963 edition, p. 128: * i.e., a period when the forces of Saturn work with particular strength.] As it was on Good Friday that Parsifal had his conversations with Trevrizent, Wolfram notes in his review of this time: "*dö der Sterne Sätturnus/wider an sin zil gestount, / daz wan uns bi der wunden kuont ...*" / "When the star Saturn had returned to the zenith, we knew it by the wound ..." [4]

With the above quotation regarding the star constellation, it is quite apparently not a matter of a spiritual scientific research result – since it indeed notes: "the saga tells." Whether the Wolfram text was correctly translated into New High German, is not discussed. The weight lies in the influence of the stars that stand in relation to the increased suffering of Amfortas. From this context one may not conclude from Steiner's quote that he has expressed himself in a spiritual scientific manner regarding the Parsifal *chronology*, in the way that this has indeed occurred in the current year's [1987] edition of the Sternkalender. [5] Rudolf Steiner is quite simply reporting what the translator says when that translator expresses the opinion that 'zil' (Middle High German) means 'zenith'. [6] The 'zenith' misunderstanding comes from the fact that in regard to this passage, the translator [from Middle High German] and the publisher were always of the opinion that they had to 'clarify' Wolfram's text – even if they understood little of astronomy. Such text clarifications are by no means always 'clarifying'.

Thus it is said about these textual passages that Saturn has run its course, that it has again reached its zenith in the constellation of the Crab, and that it was situated there in conjunction with the Sun. Rudolf Steiner connected on to this accepted translation, without taking a position with regard to the chronology. With any examination he would have been able to reveal it as a further misdirection on the part of exoteric academic scholarship; meanwhile, this error has been duly corrected by Wilhelm Deinert. [7]

According to Kyot-astronomy, every planet has its goal. The term 'zil' – the meaning of which is the issue at hand – is referred to in contemporary astrology as 'domicile' or 'house'. Every planet has its home or its 'zil' in a certain constellation of the zodiac; the return of the planet to its 'zil' describes its entry into this constellation. (Saturn requires approximately 30 years for this; its 'zil' is Capricorn.)

Whoever would nonetheless presume to see Rudolf Steiner's quote as the basis of a Parsifal chronology must quickly fail; for we know that on that Good Friday, Trevrizent can exactly determine when Parsifal was last at this place. Parsifal then took Taurian's spear along with him – which is an important fact for the chronology. The absent Trevrizent notices this taking in the psalter (the psalter serves as an 'agenda' for Trevrizent). Thus he is in a position to tell Parsifal exactly how long he has been straying: "fünfthalp jar un dri tage"[8]; i.e., viewed seasonally, a half year and three days lay in between. When one reckons from Good Friday backwards for this span of time, one never comes into mid-summer (Crab!), but rather into September (Virgo). The posthumous publication of the essay related to these matters in the current year's [1987] Sternkalendar, on the occasion of the 33rd anniversary of Joachim Schulz's death may presumably not be something he would have wished for. If he had been certain of his competency in regard to this issue, he would indeed have taken care of getting it published back then.

Based on Wolfram's numerous indications regarding planetary constellations, the question thus arises as to whether he provides indications about chronological matters that allow us to determine with certainty the historical time of the Parsifal story. Upon precise examination, it becomes evident that it did not have its source in his poetic imagination, but rather that it corresponds to the facts. Wolfram never tires of repeatedly assuring us that what he presents is based on his secret source Kyot – whom he greatly venerates – and that he does not say anything other than what his master has spoken, and that he speaks the truth.

Wolfram's epics contain factual accounts from the 8th and 9th centuries, whereas in the Parsifal story of Chrétien de Troyes one finds the thoughts of 12th century people regarding the Grail, but no factual accounts from the 9th century. Chrétien does not base himself on Kyot as Wolfram does. Out of devotion to Kyot, Wolfram finds it disconcerting that Chrétien does not mention Kyot and praises only Philip. "If Master Chrétien de Troyes did not do justice to this story, that may well vex Kyot, who furnished us the right story." ("Ob von Troys meister Christjan/diesem maere hat unreht getan/daz mac wol zürnen Kyot/der uns diu rehten maere enbot") [9]

Wolfram does not depict the astronomy of the 12th century, having drawn not from contemporary Arabic reports as has been hitherto presumed. Rather, he makes use of an astronomy as it was taught by Tebit at the time of Harun al-Rashid in Baghdad at the end of the 8th century – in which one must indeed recognize Wolfram's Flegetanis. ("Flegetanis" means star-sage.)

If Wolfram's indications regarding the planets are correct, then these must have been given to him by a contemporary of the Grail events: by Kyot. This was the person who was astronomically schooled and had considered the planetary movements in the context of the fixed star background as something quite real – in terms of their location. We find with Wolfram four kinds of ancient astronomical knowledge: 1) the observation and calculation of the movement of the stars; 2) the knowledge of star-influences, and thereby the qualitative effect of the planets upon the individual person – which are strengthened or weakened through the west-east course of the planets through the zodiac (Amfortas!); 3) the art of reading the occult script in the stars. A fourth kind of star influence has to do with the Sibyls, who experienced the star forces as they work from the organism of the Earth.

What is significant for the Parsifal chronology, above all, is the first of the four named kinds of astronomical knowledge. In the context of this essay, however, it would lead too far to interpret all of Wolfram's relevant indications regarding star constellations. Wolfram specifies these planetary positions because Kyot was capable of seeing certain correspondences between the occurrences in the sky and those on the Earth – which at that time were perceptible as real influences in a way that we are no longer capable of today. Wolfram presents the constellations in the manner conveyed to him by Kyot. In fact it seems that even Parsifal's contemporaries at the Grail castle were not educated enough to be accomplished astronomers; indeed no constellation is described as though it had been directly observed. In the Grail family one had drawn conclusions about the planetary constellations based on the health condition of Amfortas. Presumably in Christian Europe at that time no one was schooled in the Chaldean star wisdom of Flegetanis except for Kyot-Willehalm, who in his captivity went so far as to acquire the eastern 'heathen' schooling in addition to his western education, and he learned 'Chaldaic'.

Kyot must have resolutely researched and energetically sought out the Grail family. Indeed he was the only western person who knew of the prophetic cosmic revelation of the impending Grail events – as did once the wise men prior to the birth of the Solomon Jesus youth. Kyot’s mission was to make sure that in Munsalvaesche people would also come to know the eastern aspect of the Grail prophecy that was known to him, and that they would take measures that would need to be taken to ensure that in the right moment everything happened accordingly. One can clearly recognize Kyot-Willehalm as the guiding spiritual force [Spiritus rector] in the background.

Ultimately we have Rudolf Steiner to thank for the insight into these connections, as the one who found – via Kyot – the occult stellar script PARSIFAL in the bowl of the moon. And then we have Kyot himself, who fulfilled his mission in the 9th century. Last but not least, we have Wolfram von Eschenbach to thank for faithfully conveying this lore.

[Translated by Richard Bloedon, from an essay originally published in *The Journal of Anthroposophical Work in Germany* – issue number 160, 1987.]

Endnotes:

1. Rudolf Steiner, *Christ and the Spiritual World: The Search for the Holy Grail* (1983 edition), pp. 97-98.
2. Ibid., p. 94.
3. Ibid., p. 122
4. From p. 286 in the 1961 Vintage books edition of the English translation by Helen Mustard and Charles Passage. The scholarly reference – for text comparison to a corresponding passage – is to P 489, 24-26 [i.e., 489th passage, verses 24-26].
5. This refers to an article written in 1947 by Joachim Schultz entitled “Parsifal and the Stellar Script” – that was edited and published by Suso Vetter in the 1987/88 edition Sternkalender. Sternkalender – “Star Calendar” – is published by the Philosophisch-Anthroposophisch Verlag, in Dornach.
6. ‘Höchstand’ – in New High German
7. *Ritter und Kosmos im Parzival. Eine Untersuchung der Sternenkunde Wolframs von Eschenbach* (“Knights and the Cosmos in Parsifal: An Investigation of Wofram von Eschenbach’s Knowledge of the Stars”) – by Wilhelm Deinert; Munich: Verlag Beck, 1960.
8. In the comparative text notation: 460, 22
9. In the comparative text notation: 827, 1-4