



Gemstone of Paradise: The Holy Grail in Wolframs Parzival

G. Ronald Murphy

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The story of the Holy Grail has gripped the imaginations of millions since it first appeared in medieval romances, among them Wolfram von Eschenbach's Middle High German *Parzival* (c. 1210). Strangely, the Grail is identified in *Parzival* not as a cup or dish, but as a stone. This oddity is usually interpreted merely as further evidence of the difficulty of discerning the true sources of the Grail legend. G. Ronald Murphy seeks to illuminate this mystery and to enable a far better appreciation of Wolfram's insight into the nature of the Grail and its relationship to the Crusades. Wolfram's sacred stone was in fact a consecrated altar, precious by virtue of the sacrament but also, Murphy argues, by virtue of the material from which it was made: a precious green stone associated with the rivers of Paradise. *Parzival*, Murphy believes, was intended as an argument against continued efforts by Latin Christians to recover the Sepulchre by force. In Wolfram's story, warring Christians and Muslims are brought together in peace by the power of the Grail - a stone Murphy believes still exists. An entirely original reading of Wolfram's famous text, this engrossing and accessible book appeals not only to scholars and students of medieval literature but to anyone who is drawn to the lasting mystery of the Holy Grail.



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