

König Ludwig II

Interests in ancient Germanic legends

1. Ludwig had an interest in ancient legends reflected in Neuschwanstein Castle:
 - Sigurd
 - Gudrun
 - Tristan und Isolde
 - Parzival
 - Lohengrin (Swan Knight)
 - Tannhäuser

2. Murals on the walls at Neuschwanstein Castle show the "Swan Knight".
 - a. Ludwig's favorite animal, the swan, characterized Neuschwanstein already in the name given to the castle.
 - b. During the Middle Ages, it was the symbol of chivalry and purity.
 - c. The brilliant white water bird is like a castle relic, surfacing repeatedly, including in a wonderful majolica sculpture in the king's living room.
 - d. The swan is also represented by Richard Wagner's operas.

Grail King

Ludwig II increasingly identified himself with *Parzival*, the legendary medieval figure who became Grail King through his purity and faith and thereby redeemed his sin-laden uncle. The inner battle for freedom from sin and purity is distressingly evident in the diaries of the extremely pious king. This particular legend is the subject of Richard Wagner's last work "Parsifal", which he began in 1877. Wagner and his circle privately referred to the king as "Parsifal", and his problems were incorporated into the drama of the Grail. Neuschwanstein, originally a monument to the minnesingers of medieval times, was reinterpreted as the Castle of the Holy Grail and the Throne Room was redesigned as the Hall of the Holy Grail – dedicated to the mystery of salvation for the world.