

## Cosmic perspectives on the course of Rudolf Steiner's life

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**Abstract:** The constellation of the stars at the time when the first Goetheanum burnt down (Jupiter at 13 degrees Scorpio), when the foundation stone was laid in 1923 (Mars at 13 degrees Scorpio) and at the death of Rudolf Steiner (Saturn at 13 degrees Scorpio) shows how something was born spiritually which is deeply connected.

**Keywords:** Spirit birth, Goetheanum fire, laying of the foundation stone, death of Rudolf Steiner

When we speak about human beings and their relationship with the world of the stars, we mostly think first of traditional astrology and the constellation of the stars at the time that a person is born. Rudolf Steiner, however, pointed to the possibility of looking at the *constellation at the death* of a human being. The increasing importance of this constellation is based on the development of human beings towards freedom. Through this development human beings free themselves from their dependence on the stars. On death, they carry with them into the spiritual world the fruits of their earth existence which they have obtained as free human beings. Human beings increasingly become *donors* to the stellar cosmos in that they integrate the fruits of their earthly struggles into the cosmos. Rudolf Steiner very much encouraged looking at the constellation of the stars when human beings are born into the spiritual world, at the *constellation of the stars at his spirit birth*. "...we might discover interesting things if we proceed with the required reverence and solemnity [...]. We would find much more selfless, much more beautiful results if we drew up the horoscope [...] for the moment of death. [...] Anyone who starts researching in this direction [...] will discover all kinds of interesting results [...]" [9, lecture of 21 January 1917]. Those words give us great encouragement! I set out my experiences in this field in detail in my book *Auf dem Weg zu einer neuen Sternenweisheit* (On the way to a new wisdom of the stars) [3] and illustrated them with examples. In the constellation at death of a person, the *spirit will of an individuality* is shown particularly through the position of Saturn. Saturn points to the substance of the will in the spirit, to what arises as spirit will from the course of that person's life which is carried into the spiritual cosmos of the stars [3].

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<sup>1</sup> Günter Aschoff editorially revised this essay by Leo de la Houssaye after the latter's death. He wrote to the Section for Mathematics and Astronomy on 14 November 2009: "Leo de la Houssaye sent me this essay on 12 September 2009 in recognition of and gratitude for my essay on the date of Rudolf Steiner's birth [2] with the question: What do you think of it? As a result we had a longer telephone conversation at the end of September and I then sent him the three star charts (figs. 56, 58 and 59), but he no longer managed to writing a letter to me. So let these three star charts now still clarify and confirm what he has written here. Metaphorically, Rudolf Steiner made a star shine on the "13 degrees Scorpio tower" which is the star of present humanity which now fills the wide earthly spaces with the new light of Christ." On the star of present humanity see [11, lecture of 17 December 1906 in Berlin] and [15, lecture of 10 February 1923 in Dornach]. On the meaning of the pentagram see [14, lecture of 20 August 1911 in Munich].

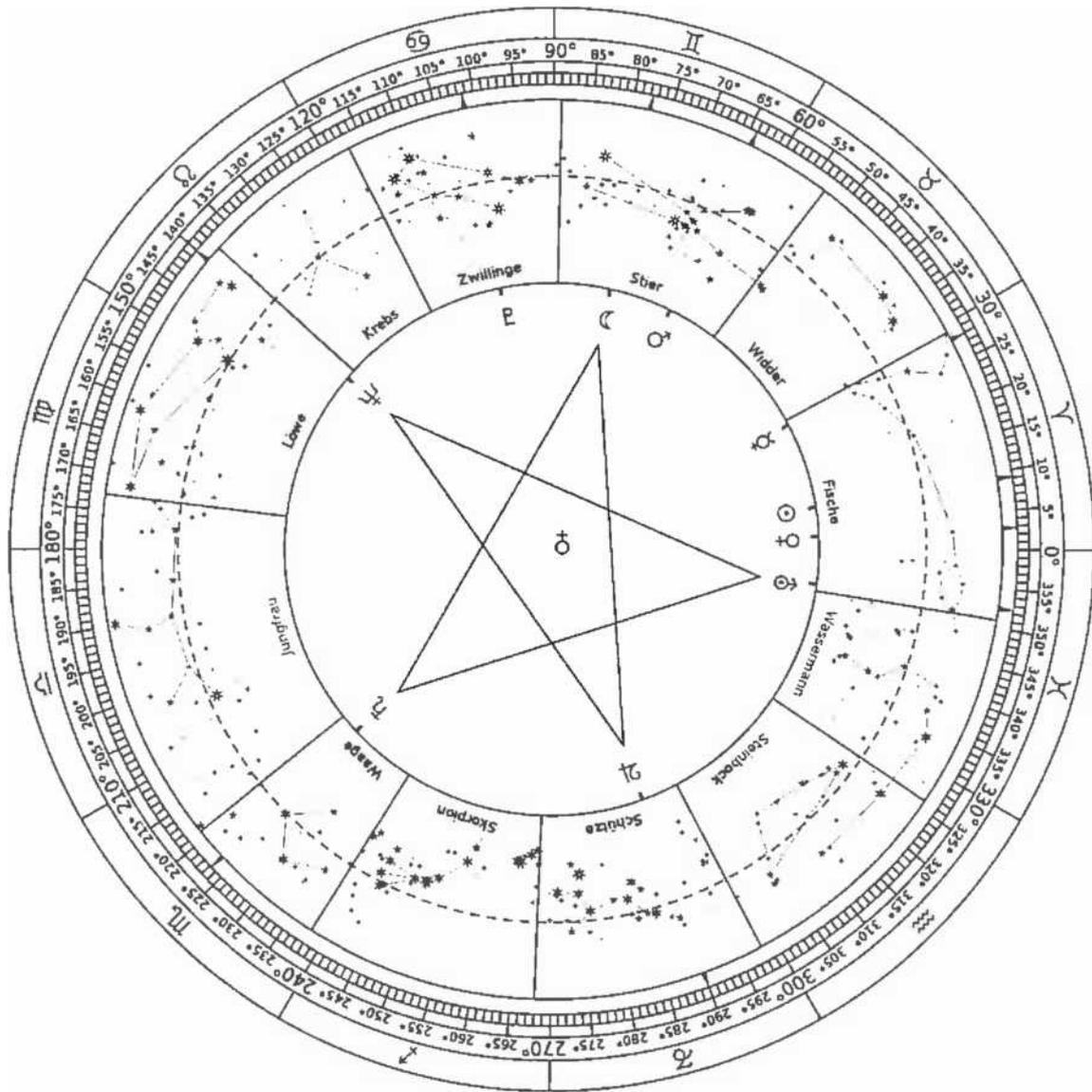


Figure 56: Position of the planets on 30 March 1925, Dornach, 10.00. Saturn stood in the 13th degree of the sign of Scorpio (death of Rudolf Steiner).

Anyone who has immersed themselves to some extent in such a renewal of the wisdom of the stars can ask themselves whether we can also make such interesting discoveries and find such fine results if we look at the constellation of the stars at Rudolf Steiner's birth into the spiritual world. Can we attempt to make significant discoveries in immersing ourselves with reverence and solemnity in the cosmic language of his spirit birth? What do the heavens reveal at the moment in which Rudolf Steiner left the earthly plane?

### **The constellation of the stars at Rudolf Steiner's spirit birth**

When Rudolf Steiner left the earthly plane, Saturn was at a specific position in the heavens. Or rather, Saturn indicated a direction. If we use the astrological "sign language" we say: Saturn stands at 13 degrees Scorpio (sign). Saturn indicates the direction 13 degrees Scorpio. What does that mean?

We know the traditional constellations: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, etc. These are broad images: imaginations of spiritual realities. In earlier times there were also imaginations for less broad areas of the heavens, for the so-called decades, of which there were 36. See the outer "ring" of figure 59.

Into the Middle Ages there were also *imaginations for the 360 individual degrees of the zodiac*. Imaginations for 360 points of the compass! The Rosicrucians worked with that. Robert Fludd (1574-1637), a well-known Rosicrucian, passed on the degree imaginations. Rudolf Steiner pointed out that Robert Fludd was a pupil of Paracelsus and a member of an occult fraternity. There was no interest in these images up until the early twentieth century. Then Robert Fludd's work got into the hands of Janduz (pseudonym for Madame Duzéa) [4] and she was delighted. She collected all the accounts of these degree images and published them.

We might find these ancient spiritual wares to be of a questionable nature ("nothing more than ancient accounts"); the images of the zodiac, however, also come from ancient accounts. But these images nevertheless contain eternal wisdom. We might well be surprised by the accounts for the images relating to the degrees!

Because what is the imagination for the direction pointing towards 13 degrees Scorpio, indicated by Saturn at Rudolf Steiner's passing? The imagination shows an unending expanse of water. In the middle of the lake, the sea, there is a tower. The tower rises out of the sea. It rests on a foundation stone which has been laid in the element of water. So we have a building resting on a foundation stone resting in the water. It is the imagination of a building resting on a foundation stone in the etheric water element.

This image already existed centuries ago because we find the 13 degrees Scorpio reproduced in the image of a tower in the water as long ago as in the *Astrolabium planum* (Augsburg, 1488) [5]. See figure 57.

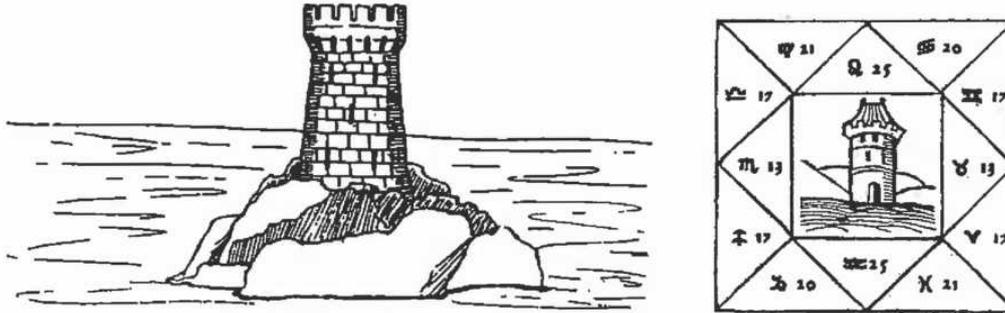


Figure 57: Imagination for 13 degrees Scorpio (sign). Left: from the Janduz collection; right: from the Augsburg *Astrolabium planum* of 1488.

The foundation stone for the building of the General Anthroposophical Society was laid in the etheric sphere at the Christmas Conference in 1923. At the passing of Rudolf Steiner Saturn pointed to the cosmic imagination of the building, founded on a foundation stone resting in the etheric water element.

In the constellation of stars at spirit birth, Saturn may be considered as the bearer of the deepest, existential life impulse which the person concerned takes with him or her into the spiritual world at death. The constellation of the stars shows that everything associated with the impulse of the laying of the foundation stone is part of what carries Rudolf Steiner through the portal of death. It might come as a surprise that there is such a clear connection between Rudolf Steiner's passing and the laying of the foundation stone. A study by F. W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven on Rudolf Steiner's life can throw a light on that. Let us summarise the study.

### Rudolf Steiner's final years of life

F. W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven has set out important aspects in his booklet on the foundation stone [16]. He describes Rudolf Steiner's path in the final years of his life:

1. The first Goetheanum burning down;
2. The laying of the foundation stone of the General Anthroposophical Society;
3. Rudolf Steiner's passing.

Zeylmans says that these three events are intimately connected. They must be seen in context together. Zeylmans hints at this very cautiously. With the knowledge we have obtained since then, we can today say:

**Re 1:** The first Goetheanum building was the mantle of a spiritual being. Rudolf Steiner fetched the formative forces for the building of the Goetheanum from elevated, spiritual worlds. We can understand that the forces of his own etheric mantle were built into it. When the building suffered its death by fire, this struck Rudolf Steiner's life forces. From that point onwards he kept having to absorb into himself ever new life forces from cosmic heights.

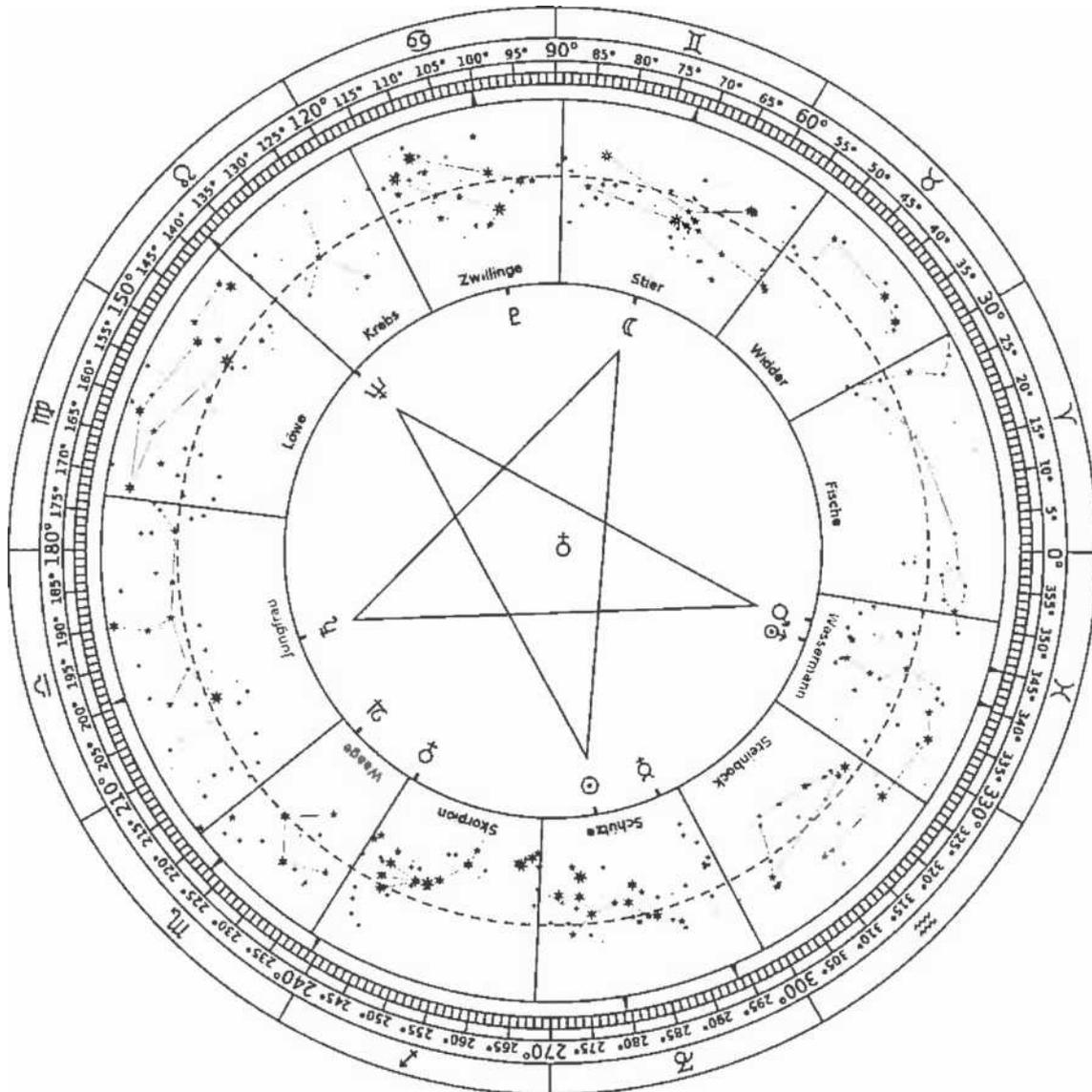


Figure 58: Position of the planets on 31 December 1922, Dornach, 22.00. Jupiter was at 13 degrees of the Scorpio sign (fire at the first Goetheanum). Note by G. Aschoff: The fire was discovered at 22.00. The fire was set at 17.20. See [1] in for further details.

**Re 2:** The 1923 Christmas Conference took place one year later. The foundation stone was the transformed Goetheanum itself. The *imaginative* images of the first Goetheanum returned – borne aloft by the flames and transformed in the fire – in the Foundation Stone verse: experienceable through inspiration. That was a Mystery event.<sup>2</sup>

**Re 3:** Zeylmans emphasises that Rudolf Steiner's passing must also be seen as being included in this Mystery event. Fire, Christmas Conference and Rudolf Steiner's passing are stages or steps of a Mystery event fulfilled by Rudolf Steiner. Zeylmans hints at this, as indicated, very cautiously: only *together* do these steps form the secret associated with Rudolf Steiner's life.

### **What does the wisdom of the stars say in this respect?**

At the moment when the first Goetheanum passed through its fiery death, in the evening of 31 December 1922, Jupiter stood in the heavens precisely at 13 degrees Scorpio. Jupiter points in exactly the same direction as Saturn at the passing of Rudolf Steiner. It indicates the direction towards the imagination of the building with its foundation stone in the sea. It is important to understand that when we look at death constellations we are seeing the *deeds of people* which, undertaken in freedom, take effect in the spirit cosmos. With this Jupiter at 13 degrees Scorpio we are thus also looking at a deed which Rudolf Steiner undertook at the moment of the fire. He spoke the words of cosmic communion in the large hall of the first Goetheanum. Sergej Prokofieff has pointed out that during the fire he fulfilled for the building what he described at the end of his lecture as the "cosmic cultus" [7, p.39]. Until that point the building had not been spiritually and esoterically consecrated. It was destroyed on 31 December 1922 through the fire but at the last moment it had still been "spiritually christened". Surrounded unnoticed by fire, Rudolf Steiner stood there as a high priest and fulfilled the consecration of the building [7, p.38] just at the moment when the building was "in the process of dying". A mighty metamorphosis was able to take place. At Easter 1924, Rudolf Steiner said: "What previously was more or less an earthly matter, what was worked out, established as an earthly matter, that has been carried out into the widths of the cosmos through the flames. [...] Now we comprehend that we may represent not just an earthly matter but a matter of the wide etheric world in which the spirit lives. Because the matter of the Goetheanum is a matter of the wide etheric sphere, in which spirit-filled wisdom of the world lives. It has been borne outwards and we may be imbued with the Goetheanum impulses coming from the cosmos.." [12, lecture of 22 April 1924] Building on this mighty event, Rudolf Steiner was able to let the 1923 Christmas Conference take place one year later. He was able to form the foundation stone in the spirit: the foundation stone for the building of the General Anthroposophical Society. The foundation stone was the transformed Goetheanum itself. The imaginative images of the first

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<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Steiner did, however, already refer to this seven years earlier. In the closing words of the lecture of 20 September 1916 [8]: "...then the other foundation stone will be able to form in all our souls which, multiplying many times over, wishes to bring those things spiritually into the world which sought to be built for our idea over the physical foundation stone which three years ago we solemnly entrusted to the earth here on this hill." [Addition by G. Aschoff]

Goetheanum returned and resounded to inspirational experience, enabling Rudolf Steiner to fulfil his act of foundation.

On 23 December 1923, Rudolf Steiner delivered his opening address. On the morning of 25 December the foundation stone was laid. During this event Mars stood at 13 degrees Scorpio. It precisely indicated the direction towards the imagination of the “building on the foundation stone in the sea”.

Thus the three stages of the Mystery event are *cosmically* linked. Three times the same cosmic direction towards 13 degrees Scorpio was indicated in the script of the stars: through Jupiter at the consecration of the burning first Goetheanum, through Mars at the formation of the spiritual foundation stone for the General Anthroposophical Society, through Saturn at the passing of Rudolf Steiner.

For a clearer understanding, we can be aware that Jupiter is connected with the etheric (Jupiter “recalls” the old Sun) and Mars with the soul element (Mars “recalls” the old Moon). Through the act of consecrating “the first Goetheanum during the fire, the matter of the Goetheanum became a matter of the wide etheric world”. The foundation stone was formed in the spirit to save human souls.

Rudolf Steiner not only laid the foundation stone for the building of the General Anthroposophical Society, but he also took the karma of the Society on himself [13, Foreword by Marie Steiner]. That was his great sacrificial deed. And it became possible for him to give numerous lectures about karmic connections. But this sacrificial deed also led to his illness, which was not his own illness but the spiritual one of the Society [6, p. 137]. The fact that Rudolf Steiner connected his karma with the one of the General Anthroposophical Society led to his passing. His passing can be seen as the consistent continuation of what had been prepared through his preceding deeds.

The connection thus shown can put us in a state of reverential wonder. We must be clear that Rudolf Steiner did not direct his deeds by the stars! He acted on the basis of intuition. As a consequence his deeds were integrated into the spirit cosmos in the right way. We must avoid thinking in terms of an old astrology where the stars determined the actions of human beings. In Christ’s life every step was in harmony with the world of the stars [10]. To the extent that Rudolf Steiner was acting as a Christ initiate, that was also so in his case. Zeylmans hinted at the connection we have discussed in a very carefully way. He sensed that Rudolf Steiner’s life task was already evident at the time that the first Goetheanum went up in flames when he spiritually “christened” the building at the last moment. As the next step for realising his task, it became possible for Rudolf Steiner to form the spiritual foundation stone. It becomes clear from the above that the passing of Rudolf Steiner also belonged to the consistent realisation of his life task. As the fruit of our study we can see that Rudolf Steiner fulfilled three acts which are inseparably connected. They were received in the spirit cosmos at 13 degrees Scorpio.

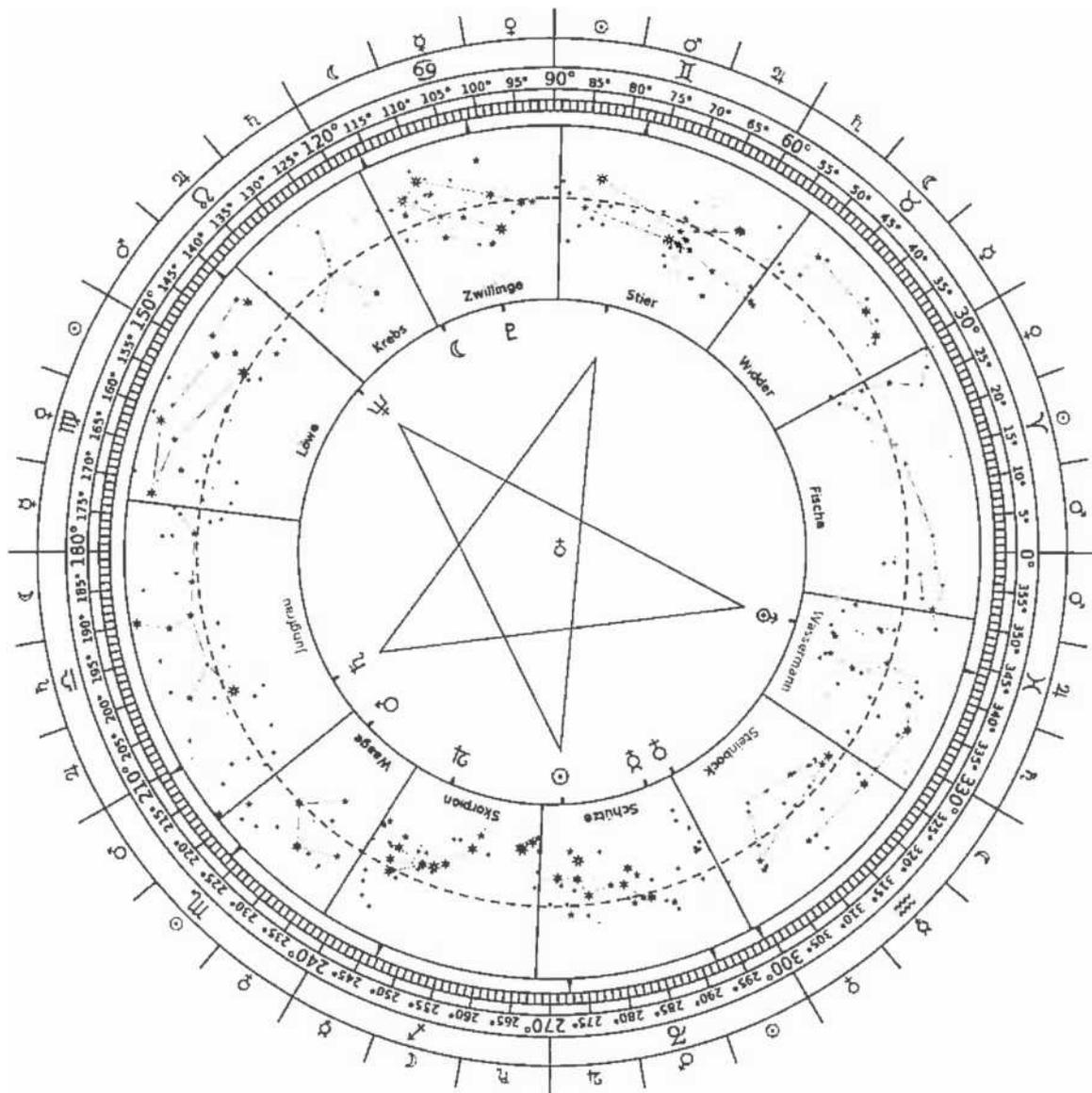


Figure 59: Position of the planets on 25 December 1923, 10.00. Mars was at 13 degrees of Scorpio (laying the foundation stone for the foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society). Note by G. Aschoff: The moon at the time of Rudolf Steiner's death is at 18 degrees Gemini. See figure 57.

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From out of Buddha's power of peace,  
which he obtained in earth existence  
and which in Mars he did embed,  
Rudolf Steiner brought down into this earthly world  
the bright light of love and peace,  
the pure warmth of love and peace  
so that we human beings could find  
the seed on earth of the world of Christ.

Günter Aschoff, 29 January 2011