

# DAS GÄNSEBUCH (THE GEESE BOOK)

## German Medieval Chant

Schola Hungarica

László Dobszay and Janka Szendrei, Directors

Matthias Ank, Organ



## Medieval Chant from Nuremberg

### Das Gänsebuch (Geese Book)

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the free imperial city of Nuremberg assumed great economic importance through the production of metal goods and trade in metals, textiles and spices. Nuremberg proudly displayed the wealth it had amassed: not only was the splendour of the city's civic buildings and ceremonies unsurpassed, but also that of both its Gothic parish churches, St Lorenz and St Sebald. In each parish, a member of the city council was appointed as trustee and business administrator overseeing the finances that the city provided to support and furnish the parishes and their edifices. The parish churches also reflected the self-assurance of the city musically, through their festive liturgies. To this end both churches sponsored well-known schools, the task of which was to train singers for the liturgy. Nuremberg was part of the diocese of Bamberg and had to take its lead from the liturgy of the seat of the bishop, Bamberg Cathedral. The surviving liturgical manuscripts show that, in spite of this dependency, the rich Nuremberg churches developed a characteristic and in many ways independent liturgy that incorporated divergent elements. The basis of the music, the roots of which lay in the Bamberg liturgy of the eleventh century, was continually augmented by chants from newly introduced feast days.

Shortly after 1500 the parish of St Lorenz commissioned a two-volume Gradual, a book in which the music of the Mass liturgy for the choir was collected. The last time a Gradual for the church had been made was in 1421. Since then several important feast days had been introduced. A prebendary of St Lorenz, Friedrich Rosendorn, was charged with the revision of the liturgy and the writing of the text and

music. According to the colophons the first volume was finished in 1507, and work on the second was completed in 1510. Friedrich Rosendorn had died in the year the first volume was finished, and it is not known who was in charge of the copying of the second volume; a visible stylistic break between the volumes is not evident.

The size and elaborate decoration of the manuscript reflect the prestige of the church. The high feasts of the church year were set off with detailed illuminations, attributed to the well-known Nuremberg painter Jakob Elsner, who died in 1517. Some initials are ornamented with gold-leaf, others are historiated and contain scenes showing the events commemorated on the important feast days. The margins exhibit colourful acanthus tendrils and buds inhabited by animals, birds, angels, wild folk, and dragons. In some cases the representations in the lower margin develop into rich narrative scenes, in which animals act as people, particularly as musicians. Numerous hunting and combat scenes are found throughout the book. These sometimes provocative allegories function on various levels. Common to all is their basic multivalence and their applicability in various contexts. Book illuminations had long established themselves as a vehicle for criticism. They facilitated suggestions of political and social criticism that would not have been possible had they not been encoded.

The popular name *Geese Book* derives from a *bas-de-page* illumination for the Feast of the Ascension showing a choir of geese directed by a wolf dressed as cantor. In front of the geese is an open large-size musical manuscript on a stand. A fox slinks behind the geese, his pose implying that he is about to grab one of

the singers.

The *Geese Book* with a total of 1120 pages is the only complete extant source for the pre-Reformation liturgy of the Mass in Nuremberg and preserves the music of one of the most prominent city parish churches of the empire. Nuremberg manuscript illumination reached a high point in the *Geese Book*. The manuscript is today preserved in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, bearing the shelf number M. 905.

Because the volume of music contained in the *Geese Book* is so substantial, the portion that was recorded for this compact disc is quite minuscule. Chants from feasts with a special relevance for the church of St Lorenz and Nuremberg were chosen. In most cases these are première recordings. Many sources document the use of the organ in the liturgy of St Lorenz. The famous swallow's nest organ on the north wall of the nave was installed in 1444 and enlarged in 1479. It was therefore decided to alternate organ music with the Mass chants.

The choirboys of St Lorenz sang the Introit *Viri Galilei* (Men of Galilee) for the Ascension, while looking at the choir of geese. They could thus see themselves and reflect on their own doing through this whimsical depiction.

For the years from 1424 to 1524 the most important feast day in Nuremberg was the Feast of the Holy Lance and Nails, better known as *Heiltumsweisung*. On the second Friday after Easter, the imperial relics and regalia were displayed to the people in Nuremberg's main market square. This collection of sacred objects, assembled chiefly by Emperor Charles IV, was placed under the eternal protection of Nuremberg by Emperor Sigismund. A three-storeyed scaffolding was erected in the market square so that the ritual could take place as prescribed by the city council. There, as well as in the Nuremberg churches and monasteries, they sang the

Mass *Lancea Christi et armorum domini* (Lance of Christ and the Arms of the Lord), which had been composed at the court of Charles IV in Prague during the fourteenth century.

St Deocarus, one of the two main patrons of the imperial city of Nuremberg, had received special veneration in the parish of St Lorenz ever since the translation of his relics from Herrieden in 1316. In Nuremberg his cult had developed out of diverse historical elements, particularly through the conflation of the eighth-century Deocarus, abbot of the Benedictine monastery in Herrieden, and the twelfth-century Carus, abbot of the Nuremberg Benedictine monastery of St Egidien. The relics were preserved in a large silver reliquary shrine in St Lorenz. Andreas and Margarete Volckamer donated the Deocarus altarpiece, completed in 1437. From city chronicles it is clear that in the course of the fifteenth century his role as patron of the St Lorenz parish had gained significance and that by the end of the century the popularity of his cult had surpassed that of the titular saint. Beginning in 1492 every year on Deocarus Day (7th June) members of the city council carried the shrine around the church of St Lorenz in festive procession. Nonetheless Deocarus was never officially canonized through papal proclamation, and therefore he was never entitled to his own Office. For this reason the Nuremberg clerics had to use a general formula from the Common of Saints. The saint's status was however elevated beyond that of the others through a particular stroke of artifice. A shortened Sequence was sung on his feast day. At first glance one might perceive the abbreviation to be ill chosen because it mutilates the parallel structure of the versicle. The intention, however, was clear since the opening word *dilectus* (beloved) is a synonym for *carus* (dear). Through the abridgement the chant begins with the words *dilectus Deo* (beloved of God), which

translates as *deocarus*. Using this subtle and imaginative play on words the saint's identity could be projected onto the chant from the Common of Saints.

Before the development of the cult of Deocarus at the end of the fifteenth century, Sebaldus was the unchallenged patron of the entire imperial city. Sebaldus was canonized officially in 1425 and added to the calendar of saints (19th August). Although he too never received his own papally approbated Office, he did not have to be content with a simple liturgy from the Common of Saints. In the rhymed text of the Alleluia, Sebaldus is mentioned by name. The Sequence for the saint, probably composed in Nuremberg, traces the most important stations in his life: his years as a hermit, the miracles he worked, and his final journey when his body was laid on an oxcart and the animals were allowed to seek their own destination. The legend reports that the oxen brought Sebaldus to Nuremberg and remained standing at the place where he was to be buried and where later the church of St Sebaldus was built.

The feast day for St Augustine's mother, St Monica (4th May), was introduced into the Nuremberg calendar around 1500. A four-page printed pamphlet with two mass formulas for St Monica can be found pasted into nearly all the extant Nuremberg Missals of the time. In the year 1505, the St Lorenz provost Sixtus Tucher donated a festive Office for Vespers and Early Mass on St Monica's Day. For this celebration all the St Lorenz clerics, prebendaries, the choirboys and the schoolmaster were to assemble at the altar dedicated to the "four doctors of the church." This choice of an altar was not arbitrary since St Augustine was one of the four church fathers. In the donation charter Sixtus Tucher referred directly to the already mentioned pamphlet, stipulating that the Mass was to be celebrated "as determined, printed and appended in all Missals." One

of these formulas, set to appropriate melodies, was used in the *Geese Book*.

The Feast of St Martha, the sister of Mary Magdalene and Lazarus, was celebrated in Nuremberg on 29th July. Based on the Gospel narrative, the medieval hagiography of St Martha often presented her as the counterpart of her initially sinful sister: Martha is responsible and modest, the model housewife who cares for the physical well-being of the family. In the Gradual, Alleluia and Communio, Martha is characterized as servant and hostess of the Lord; for the Introit and especially in the Sequence, events that took place in the South of France are drawn from her later years as recorded in her vita. Here she is to have subdued the monster Tarascus, the creature – half dragon half fish – that had spread terror in the Rhône in the vicinity of Avignon. After she poured holy water over him he became as tame as a lamb. The Sequence focuses on the situation surrounding the funeral of the saint. The text is difficult to understand without the context provided by Jacobus de Voragine in his *Golden Legend*. According to this collection of saint's lives, widely disseminated during the late Middle Ages, Martha died near the city of Tarascon in Provence. On the day after her death, far away in Périgueux the saintly bishop Fronto was celebrating Sunday Mass. After the reading of the Epistle, Fronto fell asleep in his chair, and Christ appeared in a dream commanding him to follow him to Tarascon in order to bury Martha. At once the two found themselves in Tarascon, where they performed a Requiem and interred Martha. Meanwhile back in Périgueux the Mass had continued to the point at which the Gospel is read, and Fronto was awakened by the deacon. Awake, he told of his strange experiences and sent a messenger back to Tarascon to retrieve the ring and gloves, which he had removed there during the preparations for the celebration of the

Mass for the Dead. Indeed after a time the messenger returned from Périgueux with these very items.

The program concludes with the Introit for the feast of the titular saint of the church of St Lorenz (10th August). In many respects the *Geese Book* functions as the script for the performance of the liturgical year that filled the late Gothic church of St Lorenz, as it appeared after the completion of the hall choir in 1477. On the

feast of St Lawrence this connection is especially poignant. Indeed the text of the Introit takes on new meaning: *Sanctitas et magnificentia in sanctificatione ejus* – “Holiness and splendour are within his sanctuary”.

**Volker Schier and Corine Schleif**

*Sung texts for this release are available as PDF files online at [www.naxos.com/libretti/geesebook.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/geesebook.htm)  
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leader in the budget-priced market.*

## Schola Hungarica

The musicologists László Dobszay and Janka Szendrei founded the Schola Hungarica in Budapest in 1969. Concentrating their efforts on Gregorian chant, the Schola Hungarica has sung many works from late-medieval choral traditions and liturgies throughout Hungary, France, Italy, Sweden and Bohemia. In depth musicological research on the repertoire and a lively interpretive performance are the hallmarks of the ensemble. The characteristic sound of the Schola Hungarica is produced through a combination of children's, men's and women's voices. Sources record that in the late Middle Ages children and adults (all male) sang in cathedral, collegiate and parish churches. The choir has made more than fifty records and compact discs, for which it received numerous international prizes. The Schola Hungarica has toured many European countries, and is one of the most recorded choral ensembles specialising in Early Music.

**Members:** Zsuzsa Angyalföldi, Zsolt Annár, Gergely Balaskó, János Bali, Richard Blázy, Dániel Császár, Judit Fehér, Gabriella Galbács, Judit Hamar, Benedek Héja, Zsuzsanna Izsépy, Ferenc Klein, Csaba Kocsis, Csaba Kozák, Ágnes Krepelka, János Kristófi, Bálint Kruppa, Ferenc Lak, György Merczel, Zoltán Mizsei, Johanna Molnár, Anna Nagy, Éva Cecília Nagy, Zsófia Nelhiber, Gábor Németh, Júlia Pásztor, Péter Patai, Erzsébet Pedrigán, Ágoston Polyák, Orsolya Rédly, Mihály Regős, Ervin Rieder, Ágoston Schranz, András Soós, Dóra Teveli, Zsolt Unterweger

## Matthias Ank

Matthias Ank was born in Mannheim in 1959 and studied church music in Heidelberg. In 1987 he became organist and assistant to the cantor at the cathedral of Brunswick and in 1991 cantor and organist in Hagen, Westphalia. Since 1991 Matthias Ank has held the position of music director at the church of St Lorenz in Nuremberg.

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## Das Gänsebuch (Geese Book):

### The Late Medieval Liturgy of St Lorenz, Nuremberg

- |   |       |   |       |
|---|-------|---|-------|
| <b>1</b> Kaspar OTHMAYR (1515–1553) /<br>Lucas OSIANDER (1534–1604)<br>Bicinium and Chorale:<br>Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott †  | 3:12  | Offertorium: Posuisti Domine<br>Communio: Posuisti Domine   |       |
| <b>2</b> Mass for Ascension<br>Introitus: Viri Galilei  | 2:41  | <b>9</b> Heinrich ISAAC (ca. 1450–1517)<br>Ricercare in D minor †   | 2:28  |
| <b>3</b> Hans KOTTER (ca. 1485–1541)<br>Fantasia in C †   | 1:21  | <b>10</b> Mass for Saint Monica *<br>Offertorium: Jesu transfixi vulnera  | 1:10  |
| <b>4</b> Mass for the Holy Lance and the Nails *<br>Introitus: Foderunt manus meas<br>Alleluia: Michael descendit<br>Alleluia: Surrexit pastor bonus<br>Sequentia: Hodiernae festum lucis<br>Offertorium: Videbunt in quem transfixerunt<br>Communio: Apprehende arma et scutum | 12:37 | <b>11</b> Conrad PAUMANN (ca. 1415–1473)<br>Kyrie Angelicum †   | 2:25  |
| <b>5</b> Conrad BRUMANN (d. 1526)<br>Carmen in G †  | 1:19  | <b>12</b> Mass for Saint Martha *<br>Introitus: Marthae piaememariam agamus<br>Graduale: Domine, non est tibi cure<br>Alleluia: Ora pro nobis<br>Sequentia: Marthae ingens sanctitas<br>Offertorium: Stetit Jesus iuxta aram templi Marthe<br>Communio: Martha satagebat circa frequens | 16:50 |
| <b>6</b> Mass for Saint Deocarus *<br>Alleluia: Justus germinabit<br>Sequentia: Dilectus deo et hominibus   | 4:55  | <b>13</b> Arnolt SCHLICK (ca. 1455–ca. 1525)<br>Maria zart, von edler Art †   | 2:18  |
| <b>7</b> Ludwig SENFL (ca. 1492–ca. 1555)<br>Lied: Ewiger Gott (Nuremberg 1534) †   | 2:37  | <b>14</b> Mass for Saint Lawrence<br>Introitus: Confessio et pulchritudo<br>in conspectu eius   | 1:48  |
| <b>8</b> Mass for Saint Sebaldus *<br>Introitus: Os justi meditabitur<br>Graduale: Os justi meditabitur<br>Alleluia: O Sebalde<br>Sequentia: Concinamus pariter   | 12:56 | <b>15</b> Heinrich FINCK (1445–1527)<br>Ich wird erlost †   | 1:22  |
|   |       | <b>16</b> Bells of the Church of St Lorenz  | 0:53  |
- \* World première recordings  
† Matthias Ank, Organ

This audio compact disc was produced as a collaboration of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Bavarian Radio Studio Nuremberg, and HNH International. It is one of the features of the international multimedia project Opening the Geese Book. Additional components include an interactive DVD ROM and a digital facsimile of the entire manuscript on the Internet.

For further information see: [www.public.asu.edu/~cshleif](http://www.public.asu.edu/~cshleif)



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With thanks to Volker Schier and Corine Schleif (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies)  
and Susette Clausing (Bavarian Radio)

*The Geese Book*, named after an illumination showing a choir of geese directed by a wolf, is the only complete source for the pre-Reformation liturgy of the Mass in Nuremberg. The architecture, artistic furnishings and music of the two late-Gothic parish churches reflected the city's wealth and self-confidence. This recording presents selected chants from feast days of particular significance to the church of St Lorenz and to the city of Nuremberg, interspersed with organ music by South German and Nuremberg composers. Of special note is the Feast of the Holy Lance and Nails, the most important feast day in Nuremberg during the years from 1424 to 1524.

# DAS GÄNSEBUCH (THE GEESE BOOK)



ACMRS

## German Medieval Chant



Studio Franken

- |   |  |       |    |   |       |
|---|--|-------|----|---|-------|
| 1 | <b>Bicinium and Chorale</b>                    | 3:12  | 9  | <b>Ricercare in D minor</b>             | 2:28  |
| 2 | <b>Mass for Ascension</b>                      | 2:41  | 10 | <b>Mass for Saint Monica *</b>          | 1:10  |
| 3 | <b>Fantasia in C</b>                           | 1:21  | 11 | <b>Kyrie Angelicum</b>                  | 2:25  |
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**Schola Hungarica**  
**László Dobszay & Janka Szendrei, Directors**  
**Matthias Ank, Organ**

Recorded in the Lutheran Church in Wendelstein from 9th to 12th September, 2002,  
 and in the Church of St Lorenz, Nuremberg, Germany on 25th February 2003

Producers: Susette Clausing (BR), Volker Schier and Corine Schleif (ACMRS)

Engineers: Thilo Grahmann and Klaus Brand (BR) • Booklet Notes: Volker Schier & Corine Schleif

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 and Susette Clausing (Bavarian Radio) • Please see the booklet for a detailed track list

\* **World première recordings** • Cover Picture: *Fol. 186r, Geese Book*

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Playing Time  
70:53



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Sung texts and translations can be accessed at:

Booklet notes in English

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