

Zeitschrift: Publikationen der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft.
Serie 2 = Publications de la Société Suisse de Musicologie. Série 2

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Musikforschende Gesellschaft

Band: 35 (1995)

Artikel: The sixteenth-century Basel songbooks : origins, contents and contexts

Autor: [s.n.]

Vorwort: Preface

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-858817>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 07.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Preface

This book examines a group of manuscripts surviving today in the University Library of Basel. Traditionally thought to have belonged to the Basel humanists Bonifacius (1495-1565) and Basilius Amerbach (1533-1591), these ten sets of partbooks are central to our understanding of the sixteenth-century German Tenorlied repertory, and also preserve a large number of contemporary madrigals and chansons. Since these sources are often the best witnesses we have for establishing the repertory's chronology, authorship or patterns of transmission, some of the songbooks have received considerable attention in the past: however their origins have never been established, or indeed even seriously discussed.

The present study investigates the bibliographical and paleographical evidence for the manuscripts' production, and offers archival data concerning their scribes, owners, and composers. Chapter 1 summarizes the present state of research on the Amerbachs as patrons of music, and presents some hitherto unknown musical references gleaned from the inventories, letters and account books preserved by this dynasty of lawyers. These archival documents reveal the family's musical interests and activities and refer to printed and manuscript music books which are no longer extant. The documents are also valuable in that they provide evidence for establishing the specific circumstances under which some of the surviving songbooks were copied or acquired, and used.

The remaining chapters of Part I examine the songbooks themselves, and address questions pertaining to their provenance, date of compilation and usage. As a result of studying the sources' physical and scribal make-up, it has been possible to group several of the manuscripts together and identify many of the scribes by name. For instance, while the Württemberg messenger Jacob Ceir can now be singled out as the compiler of the important Senfl manuscript F X 1-4, Basilius Amerbach's music teacher Christoph Piperinus has emerged as the main scribe of the majority of the collection.

A further result of this research is that two songbooks, previously assumed to be from the Amerbach estate, can now be assigned to their rightful owner – the Basel goldsmith and typecutter Jacob Hagenbach (1535-1565). The evidence, culled from library catalogues, from the identification of individuals cited in the musical texts, and from Hagenbach's monogram and family heraldry, is presented in Part II of this study. It suggests strongly that Hagenbach copied, illustrated and owned these sources. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, it demonstrates that he composed three pieces – two of which have previously been taken for the work of Heinrich Isaac.

The study also discusses the relationship between these musical sources owned by Hagenbach and an anthology of poetry compiled by Hagenbach's friend and fellow musician, the Basel doctor Felix Platter (1536-1614). This manuscript collection of verse is of particular significance, since it contains over 60 German texts, enabling one not only to reconstruct for the first time performances of many sixteenth-century chansons and madrigals in the German language, but also, and more importantly, to shed new light on how untexted songbooks (like those owned by Jacob Hagenbach) might have functioned. A bibliographical catalogue concludes the study (Part III), presenting in a single place the musical tastes of these prominent Basel burghers.

This volume represents a revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation written at New York University and submitted to its Department of Music in December of 1989. During the preparation of the dissertation, I received the help and encouragement of

several people. First of all, I would like to thank my advisor and fellow *Bücherfreund*, Stanley Boorman, who first sparked my interest in Renaissance music, was responsible for my philological and bibliographical training, and diligently guided the dissertation through all stages of its development. I am also indebted to Wulf Arlt, Howard Brown, Jan LaRue, Joshua Rifkin and Edward Roesner, each of whom (over the course of my graduate school career) contributed greatly to my knowledge and understanding of either sixteenth-century music or source-critical matters. My greatest debt of all, however, is to my wife Josephine Thalia Howell, who, for nearly two years, single-handedly held-down the fort of daily existence so her husband could hide-out in an Ivory Tower. Her unflagging encouragement, generous support and sound advice kept me going, kept me working ... inspired me to finish.

Any study as bibliographical in content as the present one obviously owes a great debt to the staff of many libraries. In fact, this study would not have been possible without the generous assistance and cooperation of the directors, librarians, photographers, or bookbinders of the following institutions: Oeffentliche Bibliothek der Universität Basel, Stadtsarchiv Basel, Historisches Museum Basel, Oeffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Universitätsbibliothek München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen, Kantonsbibliothek St. Gallen, Stadt- und Staatsbibliothek Augsburg, Zentralbibliothek Zürich and Stadtsarchiv Zürich.

I am grateful to the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, and particularly to the Schweizerische Musikforschende Gesellschaft (Ortsgruppe Basel) for providing financial support during the years 1984-1985. Grants from the Hans Zehntner-Stiftung and the Freiwillige Akademische Gesellschaft-Stiftung enabled me to work from 1986 to 1987 as a full-time Research Fellow at the University Library of Basel. These two awards, although intended exclusively to finance my work on an annotated catalogue of all the library's sixteenth-century music manuscripts, gave me valuable time to check many of my earlier findings regarding the songbooks and documents discussed in this volume. The catalogue, published in 1988 as *Die Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Basel: Katalog der Musikhandschriften des 16. Jahrhunderts*, is a complementary study to this present volume and is referred to hereafter as KatK.

Finally, I must thank the Swiss Musicological Society – particularly Ernst Lichtenhahn and Wulf Arlt – for having offered me the opportunity to publish my work on the Basel manuscripts in their prestigious series, and, in turn, for having produced such an attractive volume. I would also like to thank Marcel Jenni, Matthias Schneider, and Martin Kluge for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of this volume. To all of these individuals, institutions, foundations and societies, I would like to say in my best Baseldytsch: “Merci vylmol.”

Each of the seven chapters in this study represents an autonomous unit, five of which document a distinct scribal complex of manuscripts or set of problems presented by an individual source. Consequently, when I identify different scribal hands in different chapters with the same set of sigla (i. e., S1, S2, S3) this does not mean that a scribe called S1 in one chapter is the same scribe identified as S1 in another. On the contrary, each new chapter deals with a different group of hands and paper types. All sixteenth-century printed collections of Tenorlieder are cited using the new RISM sigla found in volume 1 of *Das Tenorlied*, edited by Norbert Böker-Heil, Harald Heckmann and Ilse Kindermann.