Medieval Music – Notker

St. Gallen (Switzerland) near Germany & Austria

***About Notker***

Monk and author, b. about 840, at Jonswil, canton of St. Gall (Switzerland); d. 912.

He received his education with Tuotilo, originator of tropes, at St. Gall's, and the Irishman Moengall, teachers in the monastic school.

He became a monk there and is mentioned as librarian (890), and as master of guests (892-94).

Known as teacher, poet and author.

***Music notation in Notker’s time***

Words were written down

Music was learned by rote (someone else singing) and memorized.

Later the idea of adding ‘gestures’ above the words help to remind singers about the direction of one note to another.

These marks were simple lines up or down at an angle.

Later other types were added.

There were no lines (like a music staff) for any kind of reference.

***Notker & sequences***

Notker introduced the sequence, a new species of religious lyric, into Switzerland and nearby countries.

It had been the custom to prolong the *Alleluia* in the Mass before the Gospel, modulating through a skillfully harmonized series of tones. Notker learned how to fit the separate syllables of a Latin text to the tones of this jubilation; this poem was called the sequence (q.v.), formerly called the "jubilation". (The reason for this name is uncertain.)

Between 881-887 Notker dedicated a collection of such verses to Bishop Liutward of Vercelli but it is not known which or how many are his.

Links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWnfhNuiGpQ>

Notker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kUCSrAMaLo>

neume notation