

The
Gutenberg
Press

Five Centuries of German Fraktur

by Walden Font

Johannes Gutenberg 1455



German Fraktur represents one of the most interesting families of typefaces in the history of printing. Few types have had such a turbulent history, and even fewer have been alternately praised and despised throughout their history. Only recently has Fraktur been rediscovered for what it is: a beautiful way of putting words into written form. Walden Font is proud to present, for the first time, an edition of 18 classic Fraktur and German Script fonts from five centuries for use on

your home computer. This booklet describes the history of each font and provides you with samples for its use. Also included are the standard typesetting instructions for Fraktur ligatures and the special characters of the Gutenberg Bibelschrift.

We hope you find the Gutenberg Press to be an entertaining and educational publishing tool. We certainly welcome your comments and suggestions. You will find information on how to contact us at the end of this booklet.

Verehrter Frakturfreund!

Wir hoffen mit unserer „Gutenberg Presse“ zur Wiederbelebung der Frakturschriften = ohne jedweden politischen Nebengedanken = beizutragen. Leider verbieten uns die hohen Produktionskosten eine Deutsche Version dieses Benutzerhandbüchleins herauszugeben, Sie werden aber den Deutschen Text auf den Programmdisketten finden. Bitte lesen Sie die „liesmich“ Datei für weitere Informationen. Wir freuen uns auch über Ihre Kommentare und Anregungen. Kontaktinformationen sind am Ende dieses Büchleins angegeben.

A brief history of Fraktur

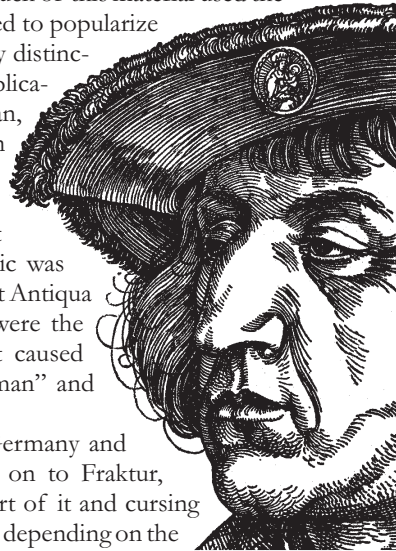
At the end of the 15th century, most Latin books in Germany were printed in a dark, barely legible gothic type style known as *Textura*. What little was printed in German used the rougher and more base *Schwabacher* type. When the German emperor Maximilian (reigned 1493-1519) decided to establish a splendid library of printed books, he directed that a new typeface be created especially for this purpose. This typeface was to be more elegant than the boorish Schwabacher, more modern than the gothic Textura and yet distinctly “German” in that it should not incorporate elements of the *Antiqua* that were the rage in Italy at that time.

Based on the *Bastarda* handwriting used by the scribes of the Emperor’s chancery, the calligrapher Leonhard Wagner designed a typeface to these specifications. It soon became known as *Fraktur* (pronounced frac-toor) for the broken character of its lines.

Only four of Maximilian’s planned 130 editions were completed in his lifetime, and Fraktur would have quickly vanished, but the books that were in fact completed had been sent for illustration to the foremost German Renaissance artists, Dürer, Cranach and Grün. These artists became inspired by the novel typeface and used it in their publications. Albrecht Dürer’s “*Unterweysung*” is still one of the most famous books printed in Fraktur.

When the reformation movement swept across Germany, a flood of printed propaganda came with it. Much of this material used the new, fresh Fraktur type, which helped to popularize it extensively. It allowed for an easy distinction of catholic and protestant publications: Protestants printed in German, using Fraktur; Catholics printed in Latin, using Antiqua types similar to the ones we use today. One edition of the Bible even had each verse start with a Fraktur letter when the topic was salvation or other positive events, but Antiqua when Satan, hell, and damnation were the topic. It was this separation that caused Fraktur to be known as the “German” and Antiqua as the “Latin” font.

For the next five centuries, Germany and many Scandinavian countries held on to Fraktur, swaying between unanimous support of it and cursing the “anachronistic monk’s scribbles” depending on the



Maximilianus Imperator

current level of national sentiment. Most works intended for a general audience continued to be printed this way well into the 20th century, while books of a more scientific nature used the “learned” Latin type. In the meantime, most other European countries adopted Antiqua, and still use it to this day.

After World War I, Fraktur gradually went out of style as German society became more cosmopolitan and open to international influences. Of course, the Nazis put an end to that when they rose to power in 1933. All things German were glorified, and Fraktur was declared the only “Aryan” type. Many pseudo-Fraktur and Gothic fonts were created then, most displaying the harsh spirit of the “New Germany” and all of them stiff and ugly.

It is ironic to learn that it was Hitler himself who finally terminated Fraktur printing. By January 1941, Germany had conquered most of Europe, and the German type had become a communications barrier with the new “vassals”. Fraktur was replaced by the standard Antiqua. In a typical ideological about-face, Hitler declared Fraktur to be “Un-German” and “of Jewish origin”, and so it was officially abolished. Hitler’s order directed all newspapers and publishing houses to switch to Antiqua at the earliest practicable date. This was an economic impossibility for many printers, so the decree didn’t have any profound effect until late in the war. The allied forces naturally couldn’t have agreed more with Hitler on the legibility issue and promptly ordered the regulation to remain in effect.

Following the war, German printers and type designers looked for new directions that were not reminiscent of Germany’s militarist past, and eventually developed a style similar to the Bauhaus designs of the 1920’s.

During the next forty years, Fraktur became associated closely and solely with the Third Reich. Fraktur became “Nazi-print”. This image was enforced by many movies, documentaries, books and articles, and it proves almost impossible to correct today. Nonetheless, printers and type designers are carefully pulling the old treasures back into the light and hope to free them of political connotations.

We hope that our little bundle of 18 fonts contributes to that end, we cordially invite you to enjoy this new, old, beautiful way of putting thoughts on paper.



The Fonts

Gutenberg Bibelschrift

Only in today's age of capitalism and high technology are we able to appreciate not only the artistic value of Johannes Gutenberg's work, but also the immense business acumen and vision that this man possessed. At a time when laboriously handwritten books fetched astronomical sums in the market, Gutenberg conceived of a method to mass-produce books of equal quality, thus opening up a true goldmine. For the twenty years it took him to develop the art of printing, Gutenberg never lost his vision, overcame immense technical and financial difficulties, and finally produced books of such a technical and artistic quality that they cannot be duplicated by today's printers. How soon we started to take the art of printing for granted is shown by the fact that Gutenberg was quickly forgotten after his death. Our entire knowledge of the man and his life is derived from a handful of legal documents, most of which were destroyed in a 19th century fire. The only monument to the man Johannes Gutenberg is the one he built himself: his 42-line Bible.

The Gutenberg Bibelschrift font is an accurate rendition of the type developed and used by Gutenberg for his 42-line Bible. His aim was to imitate the beautiful, but hard to read Textura calligraphy then used for most books. To that end, he had to render not only the letters of the alphabet, but also a great number of common ligatures and abbreviations. To strengthen the impression of original handwriting, he also cast several slightly different versions for each letter, so that his entire font consisted of 290 types. We have reproduced the most common version of the alphabet, as well as the ligatures and abbreviations used. The original font had no numerals. Whatever numbering was required was added in red ink after printing was completed.

Alte Schwabacher

When Fraktur was developed, most German-language publications were printed using a form of Schwabacher type. This font evolved from the bastarda scripts that were widely used at the time. Schwabacher types are easily distinguished from Fraktur fonts by the rounded stems of such letters as "o" and "d". The Schwabacher font has a bold and original character, it complements the Renaissance woodcuts of Dürer, Cranach and many other artists. Being a very ornamental font, it is suitable for decorative printing, or to augment calligraphic work.

Wittenberg Schwabacher

By the time Martin Luther completed his German translation of the Bible, printing had been a flourishing industry for over eighty years. It is therefore no surprise that the *“Biblia Deutsch”* found fertile ground; hundreds of thousands of copies were sold, the original printer could not satisfy the demand and a good number of pirated copies appeared. All these Bibles were printed in some form of Schwabacher; our Wittenberg version comes closest to the original font.

Gebetbuch Fraktur

The first of Emperor Maximilian’s magnificent books was a prayer book, 10 copies printed on parchment. It was for this book that the first Fraktur font was commissioned because all other available types were either too common or too antiquated. This Fraktur was based on drawings by Leonhard Wagner. The punches were cut by Johann Schönsperger, who also printed the prayer books. The finished copies were then given to noted Renaissance artists for illustration. The result were books of such high artistic quality and excellent workmanship that they stand up to Gutenberg’s 42-line Bibles.

Theuerdank Fraktur

One of Maximilian’s most ambitious printing projects was a glorification of his voyage west to wed Mary of Burgundy. The romanticized account of this adventure was lavishly laid out in the epic *“Theuerdank”*. The typeface for this book was probably designed by Vinzenz Rockner, the Emperor’s personal secretary. Theuerdank is an almost “modern” Fraktur and forms the base for many subsequent designs. Note that the printed letters of the original were embellished further by adding ornamental lines in various colors by hand.

Coelnisch Current Fraktur

The founder of the famous Luther foundry in Frankfurt is said to have started his business with borrowed punches for the Coelnisch Current Fraktur. This font is an excellent choice for headlines and titles and is best used sparingly at sizes above 30 points. It works well with the Theuerdank or Gebetbuch Fraktur as text fonts, but also provides a nice contrast when used with the Luther Fraktur.

Neue Schwabacher

While most German-language publications from about 1480 to 1530 were printed in the Schwabacher type, it fell into disuse after the rapid rise of Fraktur. It experienced a resurgence during the 17th century, when this particular font was designed. Its appearance is robust and it matches the bold, dark woodcuts of that period very well. Neue Schwabacher is equally well-suited for text or headline projects.

Luther Fraktur

This font was designed by Erasmus Luther in 1708 and still is considered one of the most beautiful and legible Fraktur fonts. The Luther Fraktur forms a link between the earlier Gebetbuch Fraktur and the later Breiskopf Fraktur types. It is very well-suited for any type of printing, especially for religious texts. Luther Fraktur looks best when it is printed at relatively large sizes: at about 13 - 14 points.

Breiskopf Fraktur

While Luther based his font on Maximilian's Gebetbuch Fraktur, Johann Gottlieb Immanuel Breiskopf took the younger Neudörffer-Andreä Fraktur as his model, a font that was used by Dürer to print several of his theoretical works. The Breiskopf Fraktur represents what is commonly thought of as a "classic" Fraktur. It gained immediate success and remained the most popular Fraktur well into the last century, but then fell into disuse until 1899, when it was re-cast by a number of foundries.

Unger Fraktur

Enlightenment, French Revolution and the beginning development of the classicist style in art and architecture made a renewal of the traditional typefaces unavoidable. Johann Friedrich Unger, a renowned Berlin printer and publisher, took on the task and presented this light, sharply-contrasted Fraktur in 1793. It was very well received by the luminaries of the time; Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister" was one of the first books printed in Unger Fraktur.

Fette Haenel Fraktur

The middle of the 19th century saw the advent of the "elephant", or "modern" typefaces, which featured strong contrasts between stems and hairlines. This font, created in 1846 by Eduard Haenel, is a good example. The font is well-suited for headlines and general advertising purposes.

Peter Schlemihl

Adalbert von Chamisso's story about a man who sells his shadow to the devil inspired this curious font - a graceful type surrounded by a fine shadow line. Peter Schlemihl is a graceful font that is best used in headlines, but also makes an interesting text font.

Ganz grobe Gotisch

Looking at this font will best explain the name "black letter". It is possibly the blackest of all types, yet it maintains an amazing legibility. Ganz Grobe Gotisch is especially effective in advertising, headlines and other applications where a "strong impression" is desired.

Maximilian Gotisch

The 19th century type designer Rudolf Koch drew inspiration from his strong Christian faith. He devoted his life to the development of a fitting typeface for the Bible. Maximilian, appropriately named for Fraktur's originator, comes close to this goal. Its broad and noble impression makes it an ideal choice for headlines and quotes.

Zentener Fraktur

Zentener Fraktur could easily be considered the most beautiful of all Fraktur types. It was one of the last Fraktur fonts produced before World War II, and as such presents the pinnacle of Fraktur development before it was taken over by the Nazis..

Opf-Brodder Rinnend

A stack of old family letters yielded this personal handwriting. My grandfather wrote a clear, yet traditional script, and we thought we'd make a fun font for personal and informal correspondence. Your friends will probably curse you if you use it for longer letters - it tends to be hard on the eyes!

Kurrent Kupferstich

Kurrent Kupferstich is a rendition of the Old German Script as it was used from the 18th century on in most official documents. If you happen to trace your German family roots, or have letters or documents from before 1900, you will want to use this font to help you learn the old German script: simply type some text in any ordinary font, then convert it to Kurrent Kupferstich and practice your reading skills.

Ottó Sütterlin

Anybody who has tried, will confirm that the classic Kurrent script is very hard to write. There are many sharp angles, straight lines and abrupt changes in direction. To give schoolchildren an easier start, the Viennese graphic artist Ludwig Sütterlin (born 1865, died 1917) devised a form of Kurrent that consisted of wide curves and very few sharp angles, intended as a basic script from which the pupils would develop their individual handwriting. "Sütterlin" became the "standard" script in all Prussian schools in 1915. By 1934, it was firmly established in virtually all German schools. Sütterlin Kurrent is the handwriting remembered by today's older German generation, and much confusion exists whenever Sütterlin, Kurrent and Old German Script are discussed as totally separate things. Instead, they are simply different styles of writing German. Like all Fraktur and Kurrent types, Sütterlin disappeared after 1941.

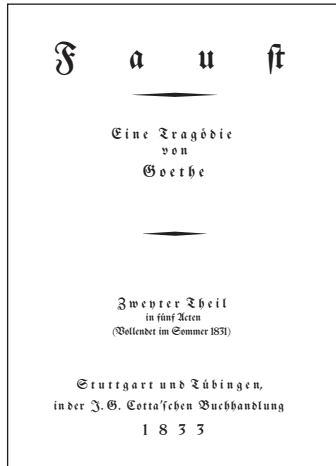
Frankfurt, den 14ten Mai 1886

Liebste Emma!

*Deine reizende liebevolle Zeile vom
28ten April erforderte rasche Beantwortung, die
ich habe mir so anzuehen, daß ich mich am
liebsten gleich nach Empfang zur Beantwortung
eingesetzt hätte; da ab aber 11 Uhr Abend
war und ich gerade auch dem Theater kam,
soß kein Abendessen genommen hätte, ließ ich
liebster die Beantwortung bis heute bleiben.*

A Word about Orthography

Throughout the ages, individual orthography varied greatly, as regional and dialect differences had a heavy impact on the way words were written as well as on specific terms and grammar. Without delving into the linguistic details of the development of the German language, we only recommend that you consult the appropriate literature on which spelling of a particular word applied during the period of your printed piece. The title page below displays such “old-style” spelling.



Rules for Setting Fraktur Type

(adapted in part from Albert Kapr, “Fraktur”)

The following typesetting guidelines apply specifically to German texts. While Fraktur was not intended to be used in any other language, it would seem acceptable to type English, French or Scandinavian texts in it, as these languages made use of Fraktur or Gothic fonts at one time or another. The rules should still be followed as far as applicable. This will ensure that the printed end result is in conformity with traditional printing customs.

The long f featured in all Fraktur fonts was also present in all Antiqua types before 1800. The advantage in using the long f lies in greater legibility of long words, as well as a richer type image. f is used at the beginning of words, and partial words in longer combinations, as well as in within words: *f*agen, *E*rb*f*e, *l*e*f*en, *e*is*e*n, *g*est*e*rn, *S*ö*e*ben*e*n*e*, *M*ikro*f*os*e*p, *t*rans*p*irieren.

If a word is hyphenated, the ꝛ remains: *Met-zer*. Likewise, if a word ends in an apostrophe, the ꝛ remains: *lauff'*.

Combined words that drop the 'e' also use the ꝛ: *Verwechslung*, *erleue*. Abbreviations retain the ꝛ as well: *Verf.-Gef.*

The round or ending *ß* is used at the end of words and partial words, and at the end of syllables derived from foreign terms: *dieß*, *Häschén*, *austrinken*, *Ordnungslicke*, *Dispens*, *Ischiaß*. *ß* also occurs at the end of syllables in rare combinations such as *sd*, *sf*, *sm*, *sn*, *sw*: *Dresden*, *Arabeske*, *riskant*, (but *obstur*), *Moskau* (but *Minsk*), *Wismut*, *Klausner*. There is no *ss*; the proper forms are either *fs*, *sf*, *ff* or *ß*.

Ligatures (joined letters) improve the flow of printed Fraktur. The following ligatures are available in most fonts of the Gutenberg Press: *th* *ff* *ffl* *ffl* *ffl* *ß* *ft* *ts*. *ß* is placed at the end of words ending, or about to end in *fs*. Ligatures are used whenever the applicable pair of letters falls into a syllable. Combined words do not use ligatures: *doch*, *Much*, *hoffen*, *verfilzt*, *flach*, *oft*, *Wasser*, *Ast*, *Kage* but not *auffordern*, *Echilfinfel*, *Schnupftuch*.

Bold and Italicized fonts are rare in Fraktur printing, and even those available don't look quite right. Skewing Fraktur electronically creates unsatisfactory results as well. Legibility considerations prohibit setting in capital letters.

For centuries, printers got around this problem by capitalizing only the first two letters of an emphasized word: *Ich bin der Herr, dein Gott*. However, this method disappeared at the close of the 18th century and should only be used to reproduce printed matter from before that time. The only traditionally correct solutions are **bold** and *s p r e a d t e x t*. It is important to note that all ligatures except *th*, *ff*, *tz*, and *ß* are split when text is spread. Alternately, different fonts such as the Schwabacher can be used to emphasize: **Beispiel einer Schwabacher als Aufzeichnungsschrift**. Lastly, the words to be emphasized may be set one or two points larger than the base type: **Beispiel einer Vergrößerung als Aufzeichnung**.

Complete sentences in foreign languages must be set in Antiqua; the same applies to words and phrases that have not yet found their way into the German language: *va banque, en gros*. The same is true of capital acronyms: *CDU, FDP, SPD*.

Several fonts do not feature certain letters because they were not used at the time: Gebetbuch Fraktur was used to print Latin, it therefore does not contain “u” and “w”. Many fonts designed before 1900 have no J. We have provided the appropriate characters for ease of use, but the purists among us should refrain from their use.

The handwriting fonts demand special attention with regards to the correct spacing of individual letters. While some letter combinations require extra spacing; others do not. We therefore have provided a free joint that can be used where extra spacing is appropriate.

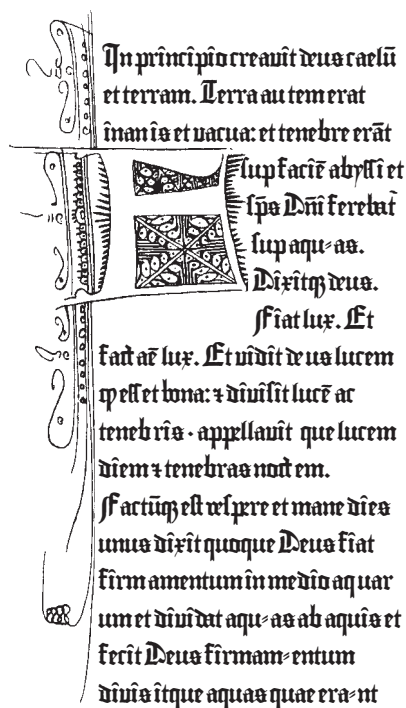
Ligatures and Special Characters

To provide easy access to the most commonly used ligatures and special characters, we have assigned them to keys not generally used in Fraktur printing. Umlauts were assigned to specific ANSI codes, because they correspond to particular keys on a German keyboard. To produce characters using the ANSI code, you need to press and hold the ALT key and type the code on the number pad while continuing to hold the ALT key down. When you let go of the ALT key, the character appears. The following chart provides a reference.

ff	~	ff ligature	ä	0228	a-umlaut
tz	@	tz ligature	ö	0246	o-umlaut
ch	#	ch ligature	ü	0252	u-umlaut
ck	\$	ck ligature	Ä	0196	A-umlaut
ss	%	ss ligature	Ö	0214	O-umlaut
fl	{	fl ligature	Ü	0220	U-umlaut
si	}	si ligature	fl	[fi ligature
sf]	sf ligature	ft		st ligature
ft	_	ft ligature	ß	0223	double s
ſ	<	ending s	/	>	free joint

Notes on setting the Gutenberg Bibelschrift

Parchment or paper was extremely expensive in medieval times. For that reason it was important to fit as much text as possible onto a page. Early scribes thus developed ligatures and abbreviations to conserve space. While writing material became more abundant towards the close of the Gothic Era, these techniques were maintained, thus making room for elaborate decorations and miniature paintings called *illuminations* that continued to adorn books for several centuries. Gutenberg printed only the “raw” text of his Bible, leaving space for initial letters, numbers and decorations, to be added by hand later. Ligatures and abbreviations were also helpful in maintaining the two evenly justified columns of text featured in the 42-line Bible. In order to produce authentic-looking text and to control text flow, you should use the abbreviations and ligatures provided. Use them sparingly, or else your text will become illegible. Curiously enough, the abbreviations originally intended for Latin texts also appear in certain German books, where they appear totally out of place. You should employ these devices only for Latin texts. Here is an example:



Gutenberg had to account for slight variations in a scribe's handwriting to create the illusion of a handwritten book. He therefore created several punches for each letter. Including ligatures and other symbols, his typeset eventually contained 290 characters. The chart below shows the available special characters, the ASCII code, and for which combination of letters they were used.

ā	0134	am, an	ĝ	0175	gi	ñ	0195	quam, quan
ã	0138	ar	ğ	0179	gra	ŋ	0199	que
ba	153	ba	ha	0183	ha	q̄	0203	que, quod
be	0159	be	he	0187	he	q̇	0207	qui
bet	0164	bet	î	0191	im, in, min	q̈	0212	quo
bo	0167	bo	l	0198	el, il, les, ul	q̄	0217	quod
cha	0174	cha	m̄	0202	mm, mn	q̇	0221	quoque
che	0178	che	ü	0206	an	ʀ	0137	r
cho	0182	cho	n̄	0210	nn, omin	ř	0215	re
co	0186	co	ō	0216	ao	ʁ	0156	rum
com	0189	com	ō	0220	io, on	ʂ	0163	s
cra, cri	0193	cra, cri	pa	0136	pa		0166	ser
cri	0197	cri	pe	0140	oe	ř	0177	ta
ct	0201	ct	pe	0155	per	ř	0181	ter, tur
da	0205	da	p̄	0162	præ	th	0185	th
de	0209	de	p	0165	po	ü	0252	ua, ue
dem	0215	dem	pp	0169	pp, pop	û	0196	uer, ver
den	0219	den	ppe	0171	ppe	û	0200	um, un
do	0135	do	p̄	0176	pre, pri	ʒ	0204	us
nd	0139	nd	p̄	0180	pri	va	0208	va
em, en, est	0154	em, en, est	pp	0184	pro	ve	0214	ve
er, re	0161	er, re	pp	0188	prop	ʒ	0218	et
ffl	0170	ffl	q̄	0192	qua, qui			

Fraktur Past and Present



The following pages show examples of how the fonts of the Gutenberg Press may be used. You can re-create old documents, make new ones, or just employ the unique character of these fonts in modern graphic design. There are no limits to the possibilities.



Im Anfang schuf GOTT Hymmel
 und Erde/ Vnd die Erde war wüst
 und leer, und es war finster auf der
 Tieffe; und der Geist GOTTES schwebte auff
 dem Wasser/ Vnd Gott sprach: Es werde
 Licht/ Vnd es ward Licht/ Vnd GOTT
 sah/ daß das Licht gut war/ Da schied Gott
 das Licht von der Finsternis und nannte
 das Licht Tag und die Finsternis Nacht.
 Da ward aus Abend und Morgen der erste
 Tag.

Vnd GOTT sprach: Es werde eine Feste
 zwischen den Wassern/ die da scheidet
 zwischen den Wassern/ Da machte GOTT
 die Feste und schied das Wasser unter der
 Feste von dem Wasser über der Feste/
 Vnd es geschah so/ Vnd GOTT nannte die
 Feste Himmel/ Da ward aus Abend und
 Morgen der zweite Tag.

Nach Choisytruhnt / 1713. Jar 2di 17May hat man dem großmochtigsten König Einemal von Portugal/ten Syabona aus
 Indu praecher am selb lebendig Thier, das nemmen sie Rhinocerus/ Das ist die wir all seiner gestalt Absonnterter. Es hat ein fahr wie ein gepfuefste
 kuedter, und ist von dieten schaden uebergr sehr sehr/ und ist in der gros als der Geiffender, aber niedereiter von kaynen und sehr wechsluffig es hat ein
 ebarff taeck 2ten vorn auff der Lufften/ das begundt es zu wegen wo es bey Steinen ist/ das da ein Stag Ober ist/ des Geiffandren Uebervid. Der
 Geiffandri furechs fast uel/ den wo es Ion ankompf/ so laufft Ihm das Thier mit dem Zopff zwischen die fohdern beyne/ und reiß den Geiffandren unten
 am hauch auff/ und er wuergt Ihn/ des mag er sich nicht erwehren. Damit das Thier ist also gewachset das Ihn der Geiffande nichts thum kann/ Sie sagen
 auch/ das der Rhinocerus/ Schnell/ Frayez/ und auch Lustig/ se.



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zum Volkstanz
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Äädlesuppe : Gaisburger Marsch : Hirnsuppe : Maultaschen

Hauptgericht

Saure Kartoffelrädle : Eingemachtes Kalbfleisch : Rostbraten :
Forelle : Kalbslendchen in Morchelrahm : Kässpätzle :
Krautrouladen

Nachtsch

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Please visit our website at www.waldenfont.com

It contains additional documentation, technical support files, product information and updates as well as information about Walden Pond and Henry David Thoreau. You can also write e-mail to comments@waldenfont.com We will be happy to respond.

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