

BOOK IV • NUREMBERG 1493

The Nuremberg Chronicle

*Emperors, Popes
and Crusades*

COMPLETE IN MODERN ENGLISH • 49 WOODCUTS

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The Nuremberg Chronicle

Book IV. Emperors, Popes and Crusades

Hartmann Schedel's history of the world, from the
Nuremberg edition of 1493, in modern English

BlusaBooks · MMXXVI



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printed by Anton Koberger, Nuremberg, 12 July 1493. Translated from the
Latin from images of a hand-coloured copy. Woodcuts from the same copy
(workshop of Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff).

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FOREWORD

The history of the world in one book. In the summer of 1493 a book appeared in Nuremberg that set out to tell everything — from the creation of the world to the year of its own printing, and beyond that to the end of the world. In Latin it was called *Liber Chronicarum*, "the Book of Chronicles", but the world came to know it as the Nuremberg Chronicle. It was one of the largest and most splendid books of the early age of printing: a great folio volume of more than six hundred pages in which text and pictures are woven into a single whole.

Who made it. The Chronicle was written by Hartmann Schedel (1440–1514), a Nuremberg physician, humanist and one of the great book collectors of his time. Schedel gathered and reworked everything his age knew about the course of the world — the Bible, the Church Fathers, the ancient authors and the newest Italian chronicles, above all the *Supplement to the Chronicles* of Jacopo Filippo Foresti of Bergamo and the writings of the humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II. The book was printed by Anton Koberger, perhaps the greatest publisher in Europe at the time, and paid for by two wealthy citizens of Nuremberg, Sebald Schreyer and Sebastian Kammermeister. The Latin edition was completed on 12 July 1493, and on 23 December of the same year a German translation by Georg Alt followed.

A book of pictures. The Nuremberg Chronicle is remembered first of all for its pictures. The woodcuts were made in the workshop of Michael Wolgemut and his stepson Wilhelm Pleydenwuff. In those very years the young Albrecht Dürer was an apprentice in Wolgemut's workshop, and it is often thought that his hand may have taken part as well. The book contains 1,809 pictures, yet they were printed from only 645 woodblocks: one portrait of a king or a prophet serves for many different people, and one view of a city sometimes stands for several cities. Still, many of the great city panoramas — Nuremberg, Vienna, Cologne, Regensburg — are the first views of these cities in print on such a scale and with such life. Some copies were coloured by hand in the fifteenth century at the buyer's wish.

The seven ages of the world. Following medieval tradition, Schedel divided history into seven ages: from the Creation to the Flood; from the Flood to Abraham; from Abraham to David; from David to the Babylonian Captivity; from the Captivity to the birth of Christ; from Christ to the author's own day; and the seventh — the time of Antichrist and the Last Judgement. A description of the lands of Europe was added at the end.

What is in this book. This is the fourth book of six in the series. It continues the sixth age of the world and covers more than three centuries — from the year one thousand to the middle of the fourteenth century. It opens with the famous picture of the prince-electors, in which Schedel shows how the Holy Roman Empire "stands on four columns", and goes on with the emperors of the Saxon, Salian and Staufen houses — Saint Henry II and Cunegonde, Conrad II, Henry III and Henry IV, who in 1077 stands in the snow at the gate of Canossa in a penitent's robe. Here are the Investiture Controversy between emperors and popes, Gregory VII and Urban II, the First Crusade and the taking of Jerusalem in 1099, Godfrey of Bouillon, the Templars and the Hospitallers, Bernard of Clairvaux, Frederick Barbarossa, Saladin and the fall of Jerusalem in 1187, Innocent III, Frederick II, Francis of Assisi and Dominic, Saint Louis, Thomas Aquinas, Rudolf of Habsburg, the fall of Acre, the first Jubilee year, the destruction of the Templars, the popes at Avignon, Louis the Bavarian, Dante and Petrarch. Almost every page carries the lives of popes, new orders of monks and knights, learned men, physicians and signs in the sky. Between these stories Schedel sets large views and descriptions of cities: Ulm, Nicaea, Passau, Damietta and Munich. For convenience we have divided the book into eleven parts.

Our translation. We translated from the Latin edition, working from images of the pages of a hand-coloured copy. The translation is complete — sentence by sentence, with nothing left out and nothing retold. Here and there we divided Schedel's long sentences, but we did not change their content. Where a word had faded in the print or an abbreviation was unclear, we restored the sense from the context and from the sources Schedel himself drew on. Where the Chronicle gives a year in the margin — the year of the world, the year from the founding of Rome or the year after Christ — it is kept at the head of the entry. The book also exists in a Latvian edition.

How to read it. Place names, peoples, lesser-known persons and things no longer familiar today are explained in footnotes on the same page, where they first appear. Schedel writes as a man of the fifteenth century: his numbers and dates often disagree with what we know today, he confuses rulers of similar names, and he tells legends as seriously as history. We have left his mistakes in the text untouched and explained them briefly in the notes. At the end of the book each part has a commentary, *In plain words* and *What history tells us*.

The pictures. The woodcuts in this book are the originals — cut from the pages of the same hand-coloured copy and placed where they stand in the Chronicle. There are 49 of them: the great picture of the electors and the estates of the Empire, family trees of the imperial houses, the monasteries of the new orders, councils, comets and other wonders, and large city panoramas. Several of the large pictures fill two facing pages in the Chronicle, so here they are given in two parts. Two woodcuts illustrate the false medieval accusations against the Jews; we have kept them because they are part of the source, and in the footnotes and the commentary we say plainly that they are lies. At the start of each part there is a colour illustration in the manner of late fifteenth-century book miniatures — it is a modern work, not part of the Chronicle.

The Nuremberg Chronicle series.

- I. The Creation and the First Ages of the World
- II. From the Babylonian Captivity to Constantine
- III. From Constantine to the Year One Thousand
- IV. Emperors, Popes and Crusades
- V. The Last Times and the Last Judgement
- VI. The Description of Europe

This is the publication of a historical source. Schedel writes with the faith, knowledge and prejudices of his time. We leave his words untouched; our explanations are only in the footnotes and the commentary.

PART I

THE PRINCE-ELECTORS, HENRY II AND CONRAD II



Illustration in the manner of 15th-century manuscript miniatures

On the Institution of the Prince-Electors of the Empire

The law on the election of the emperor was issued by Gregory V¹. In the eleventh month after he had been forced to leave, he was restored in Rome and took the harshest revenge for the injury he had received from the Romans. When Otto III had become emperor by right of succession, though not without difficulty, this same pontiff, being of the same nation and aware of the weakness of the Empire

1. Gregory V (996–999) — the first German pope, a cousin of Otto III. The story that he founded the college of electors is a legend: the circle of seven electors only took shape in the 13th century.

and the fickleness of fortune, assembled a synod and passed a decree on choosing the emperor, so that the supreme majesty of the Empire might remain longer among the Germans: to the Germans alone (who are therefore called electors) it should belong to choose the prince. We see this law kept up to the present day for more than four hundred years — so that in future the Empire should not pass by succession of blood, but the emperor should be chosen by the German princes alone together with the King of Bohemia. The one elected is then called Caesar and King of the Romans; but if the Roman pontiff crowns him, he shall be called Emperor and Augustus. On this confirmation more is written in the Decretals, in the chapter "Venerabilem"².



The Seven Prince-Electors, the Emperor and the Estates of the Empire (left half)

2. "Venerabilem" — a decretal of Pope Innocent III (1202) on the election of the King of the Romans and the pope's right to approve it; included in the canon-law collection *Liber Extra*.

And these are the electors, as the figure shows: the Archbishops of Mainz, Trier and Cologne, and the Margrave of Brandenburg, the Count Palatine³, the Duke of Saxony and the King of Bohemia. The offices are divided among them so that the first three are chancellors: the first of Germany, the second of Gaul, the third of Italy. The Margrave of Brandenburg is chamberlain, the Count Palatine steward⁴, the Duke of Saxony sword-bearer, and the King of Bohemia shall be cupbearer; yet they say he was added to the others in order to settle disagreements among the electors⁵. About this some write as follows:



The Seven Prince-Electors and the Estates of the Empire (right half)

3. Count Palatine — here the Count Palatine of the Rhine, an elector with his seat at Heidelberg; originally the steward of the royal palace (*palatium*).

4. Steward, chamberlain, sword-bearer, cupbearer — the so-called arch-offices of the Empire (*Erzämter*); the electors performed them only symbolically, at the emperor's coronation banquet.

5. The Bohemian king's right to vote was disputed until the 13th century; the seventh vote did give an odd number, but it was not introduced for that purpose.

These are the officers of state:
 Mainz, Trier and Cologne —
 each of them shall be the Empire's chancellor.
 Then the Palatine is steward, the Duke bears the sword,
 the Margrave is over the chamber, the Bohemian pours the cup.
 They set up the king and keep the law in due order,
 and create the lord who is highest over all for ever.

We have found that the year in which this law was made was the first or, as others write, the second after the thousandth year of Christian salvation.



The Quaternions of the Empire: Cities and Villages (left half)

But the form and manner in which the seven prince-electors of the Roman Empire choose a new king, how they are assembled and summoned when they must appear at Frankfurt, the city on the Main, and what is to be done there and in what order, is taught most clearly by the Golden Bull⁶, which Charles IV, Emperor of the Romans, issued at the solemn diet of Nuremberg in the year 1356. The one elected is then called Caesar and King of the Romans; but he is called Emperor and Augustus only when the Roman pontiff confirms him. For our emperors, when they are elected, are called Kings of the Romans before their consecration and coronation, as if the name of emperor were to be valued more highly than that of king. The ancient Romans, on the other hand, after the expulsion of Tarquin the Proud, out of hatred for kings abolished the royal name entirely, decreeing by a resolution of the Senate that no one should henceforth be allowed to be king in the city. But for so many years they called many men imperators⁷ for honour's sake, when they had fought well and successfully against the enemy. For among the Romans (of whose prince we are speaking) there were three degrees of the highest dignity: king, dictator, imperator. Of these, the supreme power of all belonged to the king. After the king, the dictatorship held the second place in rank; after the dictatorship, the imperium followed in the third degree.

But Julius Caesar, although after his victory the army had often hailed him as imperator, usurped not the name of imperator or of king, but that of dictator — so hateful had the name of king become in the city. Yet, desiring the name of king and fearing the indignation of the people, he began preparing an expedition against the Parthians and, declaring that it was written in the Sibylline Books⁸ that the Parthians could be conquered only by a king, he contrived to be called king. This hastened his death, or gave cause to the conspirators. The imperium,

6. Golden Bull — the fundamental law of the Empire issued by Emperor Charles IV (1356) at the diets of Nuremberg and Metz; it fixed the seven electors and the procedure for electing the king.

7. Imperator — in the Roman Republic an honorary title given by the soldiers to a victorious general; only under the emperors did it become the title of the ruler.

8. Sibylline Books — the ancient Roman collection of sacred prophecies, kept on the Capitol and consulted in times of danger to the state.

however, is authority over arms and armies, entrusted for the defence and increase of the commonwealth. But since that custom has completely died out and has passed not only out of use but even out of the memory of the Germans, let us regard as ancient this more recent one, which has been kept now for many years. Let us follow what our forefathers piously established and handed down to us, and what the consensus of the Christian faithful has approved. And from now on let us take delight in the writings of the most diligent and learned historians (which are our only refuge), and not be curious about what others say.



The Quaternions of the Empire: Cities, Villages and Peasants (right half)

YEAR OF THE WORLD 6203 · 1004 AFTER CHRIST

John XIX

John XIX⁹, pope, a Roman by birth from the district of the Porta Metropolitana, was appointed in place of John. Having obtained the papacy, he gave himself to idleness and in that time did nothing worthy of remembrance. He died (as some authors report) in the fourth year of his pontificate, likewise in the fourth month, and was buried in the basilica of St Peter. The see then remained vacant for nineteen days.

Sergius IV

Sergius, the fourth pope of this name, a Roman by birth, whose father was Martin, was made pontiff after the aforesaid John. He was a man of most holy life and pleasing manners. Both before his pontificate and in office itself he was generous to the poor; cheerful towards friends and household, merciful towards offenders, mild towards the obstinate. He was moreover so prudent that during his whole pontificate nothing was done that could be reproached as negligence in the ruler. For, having turned his whole mind to God — as all pontiffs ought to do — he governed everything justly and honestly according to the judgement of his own mind, being well formed by nature and by habit. Meanwhile, at his counsel and urging, the princes of Italy formed a league and resolved to drive the Saracens out of Sicily, and set about it with united strength and forces. Thus William, son of Tancred the Great, Duke of Normandy¹⁰, with the help also of the princes of Capua and Salerno, drove them out of Sicily in a short time. While this was happening in Italy and Apulia, and while Italy and almost the whole world suffered from famine and plague, Sergius, a most holy man, died in the second year of his pontificate, on the fifteenth day, and was buried in the basilica of St Peter. The see then remained vacant for eight days.

YEAR OF THE WORLD 6213 · 1014 AFTER CHRIST

9. Schedel numbers the popes after the lists of his time; today this pope is counted as John XVIII (1003–1009).

10. William Iron Arm — son of the Norman Tancred of Hauteville; he fought the Saracens in Sicily only around 1038, long after Sergius IV; Tancred was not Duke of Normandy.

Benedict VIII

Benedict VIII, pope, born at Tusculum¹¹, whose father was Gregory. At the beginning of his pontificate he crowned with the imperial crown Henry, who under the law of Gregory V had been made emperor in place of the deceased Otto III. After that he enjoyed Emperor Henry's protection in all things. But when this defender died, he was driven from the see by a rebellion, and another was set up in his place. Later, however, being reconciled with his enemies, he drove out the false pope¹² and returned to the city and to his dignity. And not long afterwards he died in the eleventh year, fifth month and thirteenth day of his pontificate, and was buried in the basilica of St Peter.

There are also those who relate of this Benedict — especially the teacher Peter Damian¹³ — that a certain bishop one day saw this Pope Benedict in a wilderness sitting on a black horse, and asked him what the reason was that, being dead, he rode on a black horse. He answered: "I am grievously tormented." Then Benedict asked the man to distribute to the poor in his name the money he had hidden (he showed the place). For the gifts that had earlier been given as alms had profited him nothing, since it was clear they had been gained by plunder. The bishop carried out the command and at once, resigning his bishopric, embraced the monastic life.

John XX

John, the twentieth pope of this name¹⁴, a Roman by birth, whose father was Gregory, having been Bishop of Porto, as some will have it, or, as others hold, not ordained in any holy order, took up the papal office at the time when Conrad was

11. Tusculum — an ancient town in the Alban Hills near Rome (by modern Frascati); its counts repeatedly placed popes from their own family on the throne in the 10th–11th centuries.

12. False pope — the antipope Gregory (VI), set up by the Crescentii family in 1012; in fact Benedict drove him out at the very beginning, with the help of Henry II.

13. Peter Damian (1007–1072) — Italian monk, cardinal and church reformer, author of many tales about the fate of sinners after death; later declared a Doctor of the Church.

14. In modern numbering, John XIX (1024–1032), brother of Benedict VIII, of the family of the Counts of Tusculum.

made emperor in place of the deceased Henry, and afterwards received the imperial crown from him. Later the Romans greatly harassed the pope with rebellions and open fighting, but by the authority and power of Emperor Conrad he was set free. The emperor also threatened the Romans with destruction if they went on harassing the pontiff with rebellions as they had begun to do. The life of this John is wonderfully praised. He died in the eleventh year of his pontificate, on the ninth day; the see then remained vacant for eight days.

YEAR OF THE WORLD 6223 · 1024 AFTER CHRIST

Benedict IX

Benedict, the ninth pope of this name, as some will have it a nephew of Benedict VIII, born at Tusculum, whose father was Alberic. The Romans drove him from the see as an idle and worthless man, and in his place they set up John, Bishop of Sabina, naming him Sylvester III¹⁵. When he was driven out after forty-nine days, Benedict was at last restored. But after a month and twenty-one days, seeing that he would again have to face the same dangers, he freely handed over the papal office — or (as some affirm) sold it — to John, archdeacon of St John at the Latin Gate, who was afterwards called Gregory VI¹⁶. For this reason Benedict was rightly accused by all and condemned by the judgement of God. For it is known that after his death his likeness appeared to someone in a most monstrous form. And when that person asked why this likeness bore so dreadful an appearance, though he had once been pope, it said: "Because in life I lived without law and reason. Therefore, by the will of God and of Peter, whose see I defiled with every kind of vice, my likeness bears more of the beast than of the man in it." For, having occupied the see of Peter at intervals for ten years, four months and nine days, he finally died. And it cannot be said that the see was then vacant, since he had sold the papacy. Thus there arose between Benedict and the others the thirteenth schism, full of confusion and scandal for the Church.

15. Sylvester III — John, Bishop of Sabina, on the papal throne for a few weeks in 1045; today often regarded as an antipope.

16. Gregory VI — John Gratian, Benedict IX's godfather; in 1045 he did indeed buy the papacy for a large sum, and in 1046 Emperor Henry III deposed him at the Synod of Sutri.