

The Book of The World: The Saxon World Chronicle



The Oldest World Chronicle in German Prose

The Drama of World History

This sumptuous codex presents the world's history from the beginning of the world, which the annalist dates as of March 18th, and the creation of Adam and Eve, recalling historical events from the Old and the New Testaments, the turbulence of Antiquity and the storms of the tribal migrations, up to Frederick II, the last descendant of the Staufer dynasty.

The story begins with the fratricide committed by Cain, paralleled in early Roman history when Romulus killed his brother Remus. Although the advent of Christ in the world announces an era of love and salvation, the Book of the World paints a quite mournful picture of human history, an endless story steeped in an ocean of blood and tears. The nadir is reached with the investiture struggle between the Pope and the Emperor which plunges the whole world into an abyss.

A Perfect Layout

The well thought-out combination between picture and text is one of the most important features of this marvellous chronicle. All illustrations are placed exactly beside the corresponding lines in the text. The selection of themes represented in the illustrations permits to concentrate on the essential narrative scenes thus creating a vivid, pictorial commentary. It enlightens the text and at the same time provides a brief resume.

The individual motives were carefully selected so that the viewer could grasp the entire narrative with a glimpse. The miniatures are only decorative, but also serve as entertaining memory-aids.

This history book must have been made by most diligent scribes and imaginative illuminators who worked hand in hand.

The Whole World In A Single Book

Man, since the olden days, has always dreamed of a "time machine" allowing him to attend the most important moments of human history or even to pay a visit to Alexander the Great or to Frederick Barbarossa. Already in Antiquity there was found a way to fulfil this dream with the invention of the world chronicle as a literary genre. It provided the possibility to have the history of the whole world available at

home.

In early Christian times the authors of such world chronicles saw world history as a carefully planned and target-oriented development directed by the hand of God. The foundations of this conception of history were laid in the Bible.

The perception of history that prevailed in medieval Europe saw a huge horizon with an enormous panorama of great empires. Well-known authors of the Early Middle Ages, like Eusebius, Hieronymus, Augustinus and Orosius, provided this view. Their works paved the way for a system of interpretation which should remain valid over a thousand years. The great Latin universal chronicles also derive from their work. The laity, however, was excluded from this exclusive "father tongue" used by the clergy and scientists throughout Europe.

In the 13th century, the situation changed radically: The Low German linguistic area, which had also seen the creation of the Saxon Speculum, a legal compendium by Eike von Repgow, gave birth to one of the most spectacular works of European book illumination: the Saxon World Chronicle. The Gotha codex is the oldest and most lavish copy of the Saxon World Chronicle.

The manuscript was kept in Wittenberg up to the 17th century before being transferred to Gotha. Its turbulent history is just as interesting and mysterious as its destiny in the 20th century. The codex found its way to St. Petersburg as war booty of the Soviet Army, and returned to its present place only after quite some time.

The Fine Art Facsimile Edition, a Rare Masterpiece for the Bibliophile

This rare example of medieval history painting has survived the troubles of time without any damage. The exact reproduction of this masterpiece makes the work immortal and its conception of the world accessible to future generations. The facsimile edition is published in a unique, internationally limited series of 980 hand numbered copies. Its 330 pages in the original format of 31 x 22.5 cm are decorated with 500 miniatures and all sewn by hand. The book is bound in a fine cowhide cover and ornate with brass clasps. The unique manuscript has been reproduced meticulously page by page, down to the finest detail.

The Commentary Volume

In order to provide you with an experienced companion on your journey through the world's history, this facsimile edition is available with an interdisciplinary scientific commentary. For the first time ever, the Gotha manuscript is examined in all its aspects.

Both the facsimile edition and the commentary are delivered in a presentation case made of acrylic glass.

Documentation Kit

A documentation folder containing two full-sized leaves from the facsimile edition and an illustrated 16-page information brochure is available for information upon request.