

CHAPTER I

FROM THE ORIGINS TO THE END OF THE XVth CENTURY

viiith Century A.D. — The *Orkney Islands* are colonized by the Vikings.

672. — The Nicobar Islands : the country of the nudists.

N 861 A.D. — Scandinavian ships manned by Naddod's men discover the *Faroe Islands*.

About 870. — The Norwegian Ottar sails round North Cape and discovers the *White Sea* (see 1553).

N 871. — *Iceland* was discovered by the Norwegian chiefs Ingolf and Leif Erickson who had to leave their native land after a murder. It is said that the Scandinavian privateer Naddod is supposed to have landed there previously.

877. — The Icelander Gunbjorn, driven by storm, catches sight of the south end of Greenland.

950. — *Greenland* (a name suggesting fertility) is reconnoitered at that time by some Icelanders.

N 983. — The Viking Erik Rode (Erik the Red) establishes an Icelandic colony on the west coast of Greenland for the purpose of founding new homes in 986 : *Österbygd* and *Vesterbygd*. He sent some parties to North America. The colony was destroyed by an epidemic in 1448. This territory was rediscovered by John Davis in 1585.

1000. — *Svalbard*. A name given by the "Northmen" towards the year 1000 to some lands which they had discovered after 4 days' sailing to the North of Iceland.

1001. — *Vinenland* or *Vinland* so named on account of the sorts of vines which were found there; this is a portion of the American Continent to the N.-E. of Labrador. Icelanders also visit Newfoundland (*Markland*).

1050. — The *Andaman Islands* described as "the legendary home of ape men and islands of impurity".

1099. — First Crusade : taking of Jerusalem.

1154. — The Arabian geographer El Edresi of Ceuta (1099-1164) established at the court of the Norman King Roger II of Sicily, put the finishing touch, at Palermo, to the "Livre de Roger" entitled : "*Amusement pour les personnes qui désirent parcourir le Monde*". It took him 15 years to complete this work which is a valuable epitome of the Mussulman stock of geographical knowledge in the xith century.

1173. — Return to Spain of the Jewish Navarrese traveller Benjamin of Tudela whose account of his voyages to the East contains valuable information.

1192. — Third Crusade under Frederick Barbarossa, Philippe-Auguste and Richard the Lion-hearted. Siege of Acre and Peace with Saladin.

1204. — Foundation of the Latin Empire of the East after the 4th Crusade.

1246. — Jean du Plan-Carpin, a franciscan traveller from Lyons dispatched by Innocent IV to the Great Khan, explores the shores of the *Aral Sea*.

1248-1252. — 7th Crusade during which the King of France Louis IX (Saint Louis) was taken prisoner and had to give up Damietta.

1253. — The Franciscan monk William of Robroek (Ruysbroek) carries out a mission to Eastern Turkestan through the *Major Sea* (Black Sea).

1260. — The Venetian gold and silversmiths Nicolo and Mateo Polo cross Asia.

1269. — The squire Pierre de Maricourt describes an instrument of navigation called *compass*.

1270. — 8th Crusade led by Saint Louis, King of France, on board the "Paradis", piloted by the Genoese Pietro Doria. He died of the plague at Tunis while the towns of Palestine fell one after another into the power of the Saracens. The fall of Ptolemais in 1291 marked the end of the Crusades.

1271-72. — The Venetian Marco Polo (1254-1323), son of Nicolo accompanies his father and his uncle during their second voyage. He visits Turkestan and makes a stay in China. He was received towards 1280 at the Court of Kublai Khan of the Mongolian dynasty of Peking. He returned to Europe through the Sunda isles and Italy. He published an account of his travels in which he mentioned Japan (Zipangu). This account was compiled in 1298 by Rustician of Pisa.

1273-1331. — Abul Feda, an Arabian historian and geographer left a "short History of humankind".

- 1311-1327. — Publication of the Atlas of charts compiled by the Venetian Marino Sanudo.
1312. — *Lanzaroto Island* (Canary Islands) discovered by Lanzaroto-Malocello, of Genoa. He brought back two Guanches who were received with a feeling of interest by Society. Another neighbouring island was called *Allegranza*.
- 1325-1377. — Travels by Ibn Batutah in the East, Arabia, India, Sunda Islands, Pacific (Slow Sea) and Sudan.
- 1339-1364. — The *Coasts of Guinea* were discovered at that time by various navigators from Dieppe.
1341. — The *Canary Islands* already known to the ancients, are re-discovered by Nicoloso di Recco and Angiolino del Tegghia de Corbizzi, Genovese mariners in the service of Portugal. They were so named on account of the dogs that were found there.
1344. — *Island of Madeira*: its discovery is ascribed to the Englishman Robert Macham; it was visited again in 1419 by Juan Gonzalez and Tristan Vaz, Portuguese navigators.
1346. — The *Rio de Oro* on the Western coast of Africa, discovered by the Catalan Jacques Ferrer.
1402. — *Canary Islands*, Jean de Bethencourt, a Norman navigator, chamberlain to King Charles VI, was given the "investiture" of these islands by the King of Castille in 1406. This "king of Canarians" did not survive his appointment.
1408. — *Porto Santo* discovered by the Portuguese Tristaõ Vaz and Joaõ Gonzalvez Zarco.
1419. — *Madeira*: re-discovered by Gonzalvez Zarco and Vaz. It was at first named Saint-Lawrence, the saint of the day on which it was discovered, and subsequently *Madeira* on account of the timber found there.
1419. — This year marks the beginning of the Portuguese voyages along the west coast of Africa.
1427. — The Spanish pilot Diego of Sevilla is transferred into the service of the King of Portugal.
1432. — The *Azores Islands* discovered by the Portuguese Gonzalez Velho who took possession of them. These islands had, however, appeared on a chart in 1351, as having been seen in the previous century by Italian navigators.
1434. — *Cape Bojador* or *Cape Num* is rounded for the first time by the Portuguese Gil Eanez.
1441. — *Cape Blanco* is discovered by the Portuguese Antaõ Gonzalvez and Nuno Tristaõ.
1445. — *Arguin Island* discovered by Lançarote Peçanha.
1446. — The *Senegal River* (named after the Moorish Zenagas tribe) is discovered by the Portuguese Deniz Fernandez.
1447. — *Cape Verde* is discovered by Deniz Fernandez and Nuno Tristaõ.
1447. — *Rio Grande* (Portuguese Guinea) where Nuno Tristaõ was murdered.
1449. — The *Cape Verde Islands* are discovered by Antonio di Noli, a Genovese in the service of Portugal. In 1483, the King of France Louis XI sent a naval division there for the purpose of bringing back a remedy for leprosy.
- In 1456, Alvisè Ca da Mosto, a Venetian in the service of the Infante of Portugal and the Genovese Uso di Mare give a description of the negro kingdoms of Senegal.
- Towards 1450 the cardinal legate Nicolas de Cusa conceived an ingenious apparatus for sounding the seas which he called "explorator profunditatis".
- Under the reign of Louis XI, King of France (1461-1483) French galleasses plied regularly for the benefit of pilgrims going to the Mount Saint Catherine of Sinai.
1467. — Pedro de Covilham, a Portuguese traveller, visits the coasts of Abyssinia and of the Red Sea, sailing as far as India, the country of spices.
1469. — Foundation of the African trade Portuguese Company:— Joaõ de Santarem and Pedro de Escovar reach the *Equator*.
1471. — Fernando Poo and Escobar de Santarem discover *Annobon Island* on January first, then *Saint Thomas* under the Equator, and *Principe Island*.
1481. — Foundation of the *El Mina* Station on the coast of Guinea by Azambuja and Pedro de Cintra.
1482. — Lopez Gonzalvez reconnoitres the mouth of the Gaboon River (Cape Lopez).
1484. — The *Rio Padraõ* (Congo River) is reconnoitred by the Portuguese under the leadership of Diego Caõ, a squire of John II of Portugal's Household. His astronomer was Martin Behaim (Bohemia) of Nuremberg who, in 1492, recorded the results of the expedition on the famous globe called "globe of Nuremberg" on which Christopher Columbus based his justification for undertaking discoveries.
1486. — *Algoa Bay*, discovered by Bartholomeo Diaz and his pilot Pedro de Alemquer.

1487. — Bartholomeo Diaz discovers the *Cape of the Storms* (Cape of Good Hope) also called the *Lion of the Sea* and *Cape of Africa* which John II of Portugal changed into "Buona Speranza" (Good Hope) because he felt optimistic about the fact that Diaz had reached the southern end of Africa.
1490. — During his voyage (see 1467) Pierre de Covilham accompanied by the Rabbi Abraham visits Ormuz and India.
1492. — On September 12 Christopher Columbus notes, at sea, the *declination* of the magnetic needle.
1492. — *Lucayes Islands* or *Bahamas*. These were the first places discovered by Christopher Columbus on his first voyage with the "Santa-Maria", the "Pinta" and the "Nina".
San Salvador (Watling Is.), one of the islands of this archipelago was the first sighted by the great navigator during the night of the 11th to the 12th October 1492. It was seen by Rodrigo de Triana, the look-out of the "Pinta", whose captain was Martin Alonzo Pinzon.
 On the 28th October 1492, Columbus discovers *Hispaniola*, i.e. "New Spain" (isl. of Cuba or Santo Domingo) during this first voyage 1492-1493). On the 6th of December, he lands at the Saint Nicholas Mole; Ovando settled down in the South of the Island where he founded the town of *Santo Domingo*. *Haiti*, the native name of the island, meaning mountainous country, prevailed in 1803 after the departure of the French. Napoleon tried to reestablish the slavery of the blacks who had been liberated by the Convention, which brought about a whole series of slaughters of the white and ended in 1808 by the establishment of the Republic of Haiti. In 1848 the Dominican Republic was established.
1492. — *Cuba* is discovered by Christopher Columbus who called it the "Pearl of the Antilles".
1493. — The Pope Alexander VI Borgia, by his bull "Inter-coetera" settles the "line of demarcation" between the Portuguese and the Spanish colonies, as situated at the meridian passing 100 leagues to the west of the Azores and Cape Verde islands.
1493. — During his second voyage (1493-96) Columbus, in the "Maria-Galante" with Juan de la Cosa as pilot, discovers a total of 46 islands: *Maria-Galante*, the *Guadeloupe*, in honor of Santa Maria of the Guadeloupe, the *Martinique* (the islands of the Caribbean cannibals), the *Saints*, discovered on all Saints' Day, *Dominica*, *Saint Christopher* that pleased Columbus so much that he gave it his name, *Antigua*, after the Sevillian church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, with a settlement at San Juan of *Puerto Rico*.
1494. — The *Virgin Isles*, discovered by Christopher Columbus during his second voyage.
1494. — *Jamaica*, discovered on May 3rd by Christopher Columbus who called it Santiago. Xaymaca, a native name meaning the "island of the Springs". Columbus took refuge there in 1505. In 1509, Diego, the son of Columbus, sent Don Juan de Esquivel to take possession of it. In 1655, Oliver Cromwell dispatched admirals Penn and Venables who took possession in their turn.
1494. — Treaty of Tordesillas between Spain and Portugal the latter country obtains the benefit of a transfer 270 leagues further west, of the line of demarcation, which later on, ensured its Brazilian possessions.
1497. — The Venetian navigator Giovanni Cabotto (Jean Cabot) (1451-98) who had settled down in London, proposes to King Henry VIII of England to find a route to Cathay, more to the North than that advocated by Columbus. He discovers *Newfoundland*, landing at Prima-Vista and Baccaloes, which names are still borne by one of its capes as well as an adjacent island. He lands next in *Labrador* (*Acadia*) and *Nova Scotia* which was believed to be the Great Khan.
 His son Sebastian Cabot (1470-1555) accompanied him in his expeditions to Newfoundland and Canada.
1497. — On the 22nd of November, Vasco de Gama on board the "San Gabriel" rounds the *cape of Good Hope* and discovers the way to India. — On Christmas day he enters *Port Natal*.
- 1497-98. — Amerigo Vespucci, during his first voyage, explores the coasts of Venezuela and Honduras.
1498. — Christopher Columbus, during his third voyage (1498-1500) on the 31st of July discovers the *island of Trinidad* which he calls so after the aspect of the three "Trinity Hills"; he also discovers the American continent (Venezuela).
 He discovers *Saint Vincent*, the *Grenadines*, *Grenada* and *Tabago* which takes its name from the native pipe for smoking tobacco.
1498. — Vasco de Gama calls at *Sofala*, at *Mozambique* where he embarks an Arabian pilot from the sea of the Indies, at *Zanguebar* and *Melinda*. He lands on the *coast of Malabar* and visits the Zamorin of Calicut where two Moors from Tunis who understand Castilian and Genoese act as interpreters.

1499. — Alonzo de Ojeda and the pilot Amerigo Vespucci (2nd voyage) explore the East coasts of South America : *Guiana, Orinoco and Brazil*.

This voyage, according to some statements, is supposed to have preceded by one year the discovery of the American continent by Columbus.

1499. — Pinzon, Columbus's fellow traveller, reconnoitres *the mouth of the Amazon*.

(*) Up to the end of the xvth Century, the charts used by pilots show no mention of soundings in figures but merely crosses to represent reefs and dotted lines to represent sand banks. On the other hand, the Hanseatic League track-charts, a sort of sailing directions, give a few soundings expressed in fathoms, cubits or feet. Dutch charts of the xvth are already showing coastal soundings.

In 1504, on the chart of Juan de la Cosa, Columbus's pilot, is represented for the first time a line of soundings along the American coast between the Trinidad and the Maranhao, as a result of the work carried out by Pinzon and Amerigo Vespucci.

On Lucas Waghenauer's coast charts (1584) soundings figures are becoming numerous.

CHAPTER II

XVIth CENTURY

1500. — Pinzon reconnoitres, by land, on January 26, Cape Saint Augustine.

1500. — While making Gama's voyage to India over again, Pedro Alvarez Cabral, was driven by storm to the *Brazilian coasts* at Porto Seguro, on April 24, 1500. He gave this coast the name of Land of the Holy Cross (Santa Cruz) which, subsequently was changed into *Brazil*, on account of the redness of its timber trees and was explored in detail by Amerigo Vespucci from 1500 to 1504.

1501. — During his 3rd voyage (1501-1502) Amerigo Vespucci travelling on behalf of the King of Portugal, reconnoitres Cape Saint Augustine, Cape Saint Roque and the Brazilian coast as far as the bay of Todos os Santos (Bahia).

1501. — The *East coast of Newfoundland, the Saint Lawrence River and Labrador* are reconnoitred by Gaspar Cortereal who sailed from Lisbon on a voyage of discovery on behalf of the King of Portugal. He considered the "Terra de Labrador" fit for cultivation, whence its name, and reached the entrance to a strait which he called *Anian Strait*, after the name of two brothers, his fellow travellers, and which was subsequently called the strait of Hudson in 1610. He thought he had discovered the strait leading into the sea of the Indies. He lost his life there the following year, so did his brother Miguel who had sailed off in search of him.

1501. — *Ascension Island*. John of Nova Gallego discovers this island on Ascension day, May 20 1501. It was only two years later that Albuquerque gave it this name.

1502. — *Saint Helena Island* is discovered by the Portuguese John of Nova Castella who was in command of a Portuguese squadron when returning from the Indies.

In 1513, Fernando Lopez was exiled there from the Indies. Resided there secretly until 1588 when Sir Thomas Cavendish returned after his voyage. The Emperor Napoleon I was deported there (H.M.S. "Northumberland") and interned from the 15th of October 1815 to the 5th of May 1821, date of his death.

1502. — *Santa Lucia* discovered on the 18th of June by Christopher Columbus during his 4th voyage.

1502. — *Gulf of Mexico*. During his 4th and last voyage (1502-04) Columbus explored some shores of this gulf in order to seek a passage to Cathay and more particularly the northern coast of South America as far as the isthmus of Panama and the coasts of Yucatan.

§ 1502. — Amerigo Vespucci is supposed to have sighted a land in latitude 52° S., probably *South Georgia*. This is also supposed to have been sighted later in 1675 by Antonio de la Roche, an Englishman returning from Peru who had been driven by storm to the East of Staten island and also in 1756 by the Spanish ship "Leon" that fixed its position in latitude 54° 20' South.

1503. — The *Fernando Noronha Island*, discovered by Gonçalvez Cœlho, during Amerigo Vespucci's 4th voyage (1503-04).

1503. — *Caymans Islands* (Jamaica) discovered by Christopher Columbus who called them "Las Tortugas" on account of the turtles which he found there.