

PREFACE.

The history of geography during the era of the great geographical discoveries can hardly be fully intelligible without a comparative study of the maps which were then accessible, and on which the explorers based their schemes for new enterprises. In this respect the printed maps, owing to their wider circulation, played a part by no means inferior in importance to that of the manuscript geographical drawings, of which as a rule only a few copies existed, jealously concealed in the archives of the State or in the chests of merchant-adventurers. But even printed maps of this period have become very rare, and extensive collections of them are only to be found in a few libraries. Many of the most important of these documents are therefore not easily accessible to students — a difficulty the unfavourable influence of which may be traced even in elaborate geographical treatises of the most distinguished authors.

It is this circumstance which has induced me to publish the present systematic collection of the most important maps printed during the early period of cartography. I have endeavoured to make the work as complete as possible, in order to enable every student of historical geography to examine and consult in his own library correct copies of the most important and characteristic geographical documents published in print during the XV. and XVI. centuries. But it did not enter into the plan of this work to give a systematic reproduction of *manuscript maps*, for which the reader is referred to the celebrated Atlases of Jomard, Santarem, Theobald Fischer, and others. The necessity of confining my work within reasonable limits has furthermore compelled me to refrain from reproducing some very large printed maps, the insertion of which would have been possible only on a scale so reduced that the copies would have been almost worthless. The most interesting among these omitted maps are the newly discovered large map of Scandinavia by Olaus Magnus, the terrestrial globe in gores by Mercator, Sebastian Cabot's planisphere, Mercator's Flandria, his large map »*ad usum Navigantium*,» and an immense cordiform map by Vopel. In the text references will be given to several more or less complete descriptions and reproductions of these which have been lately published.

This work was originally written in Swedish and published under the title: *Facsimile-atlas till kartografiens äldsta historia, innehållande afbildningar af de viktigaste kartor tryckta före år 1600, af A. E. Nordenskiöld*. But in order to make it accessible to students not versed in the Swedish language, this English edition was undertaken and sent to press during the printing of the Swedish original, which was finished in March 1889.

While preparing the sheets for the press the author has received much important information and valuable aid from Mr E. DAHLGREN of the Royal Library at Stockholm. The translation has been executed,

under the author's supervision, by Captain J. A. EKELÖF of the Royal Swedish Navy, and revised by the learned geographer and explorer Mr CLEMENTS R. MARKHAM. It is a pleasant duty for the author here to record his best thanks to these gentlemen for the assistance they afforded him during the composition and publication of this work.

He will feel himself richly rewarded if it should contribute not only to supply a defect in the geographical literature of the day, but also to promote new discoveries in the recesses of libraries and map-collections.

Dalbyö, Aug. 15th 1889.

A. E. NORDENSKIÖLD.

