

## NAMES OF THE SEA BETWEEN KOREA AND JAPAN

Based on Jason Hubbard's forthcoming *Iaponiae Insulae* (2012) on Western printed maps of Japan up to 1800<sup>1</sup>.

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### Introduction

In the recent past, both in the Republic of Korea<sup>2</sup> and in Japan<sup>3</sup> inventories were published of printed maps showing Korea and Japan and the sea in-between, with sea-names in sympathy with the relevant position of the respective nations. The underlying principle was, that the case for the selection of a specific name would be strengthened if it could be proved that that name was predominantly used in different periods in the past. The number of cases in which a specific name version was found on different maps or in different atlas editions was used as argument to prove a case.

In all these examples of toponymical analyses of historical maps, only the fact that a specific name was printed in a specific sea area was registered (the name location), and the names were not put into context with other names on the map (name hierarchy), nor were different views on the meaning of sea names (directional names, territorial waters, etc) taken into account. Finally, the influence of the map frame on the incorporation of specific sea names was not taken into consideration either.

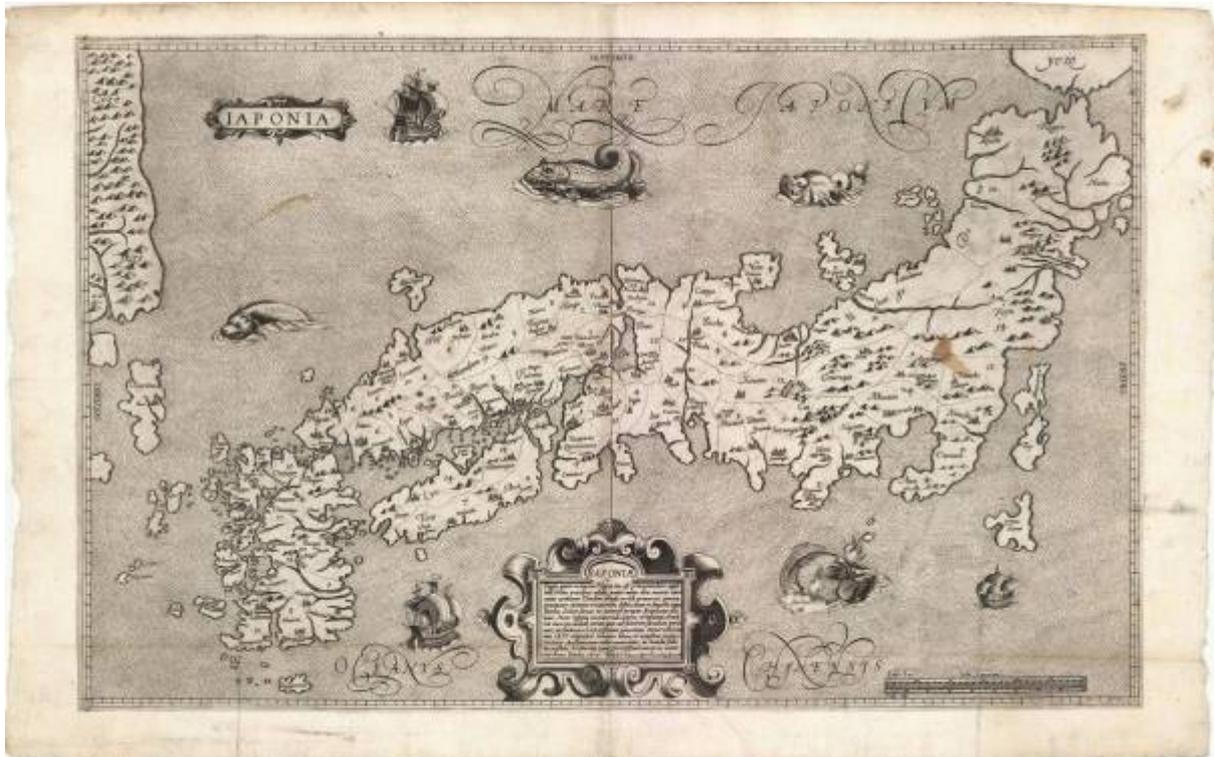
More important still is the fact that the occurrence of specific name versions on specific maps as such does not prove which name versions were predominantly used at a specific time. If maps were to be the only source to derive the dominant name versions from, then their circulation numbers or print runs would have to be taken into account as well. One map showing 'Mare Japonicum' intended for a specialized book on the Christianization of Japan that never was published (Blancus 1617), printed in a limited edition, would not have the same impact as a map showing 'De Noord Zee van Japan' (The Sea north of Japan) in an atlas by Isaak Tirion, published in a number of editions in different European languages from 1728-1755. In many cases western cartographers brought out their atlases in a number of different languages, by different publishers, and whether all these different editions of the same atlas were retrieved in these toponymical analyses seems more or less a random factor.

Other important sources to be used in order to assess the predominant geographical names currently in use, would be travel books, guides for mariners and encyclopedias. Both on Korea and Japan travel books were published in Dutch and translated into other European languages, but as far as I could discern, no mention was made of the sea between Korea and Japan. As this sea was outside the waters currently navigated by western ships, no mention was made of it in Guides to mariners either. Remain the encyclopedias. The most widely known encyclopedia is the *Encyclopédie* published by Diderot and d'Alembert (Paris 1751-1766). It already has main entries on Korea (Corée) and Japan (Japon) but does not refer to the seas around these countries. Neither is a sea between Korea and Japan mentioned in the list of seas under the entry 'Sea' (mer).

In this paper I will deal with these various issues on the basis of a single source, the forthcoming *Iaponiae insulae*, published in the Explokart series by Jason Hubbard. It is a complete cartobibliography of all printed maps of Japan published up to 1800. An obvious reproach would be: why not use Korean cartobibliographies as well? I did consult the web-cartobibliography by Henny Savenije (<http://www.cartography.henny-savenije.pe.kr/>), on old printed western maps of Korea, but the maps there either had no sea names or were also contained in Hubbard's cartobibliography. I had no access to other cartobibliographies of Korea.

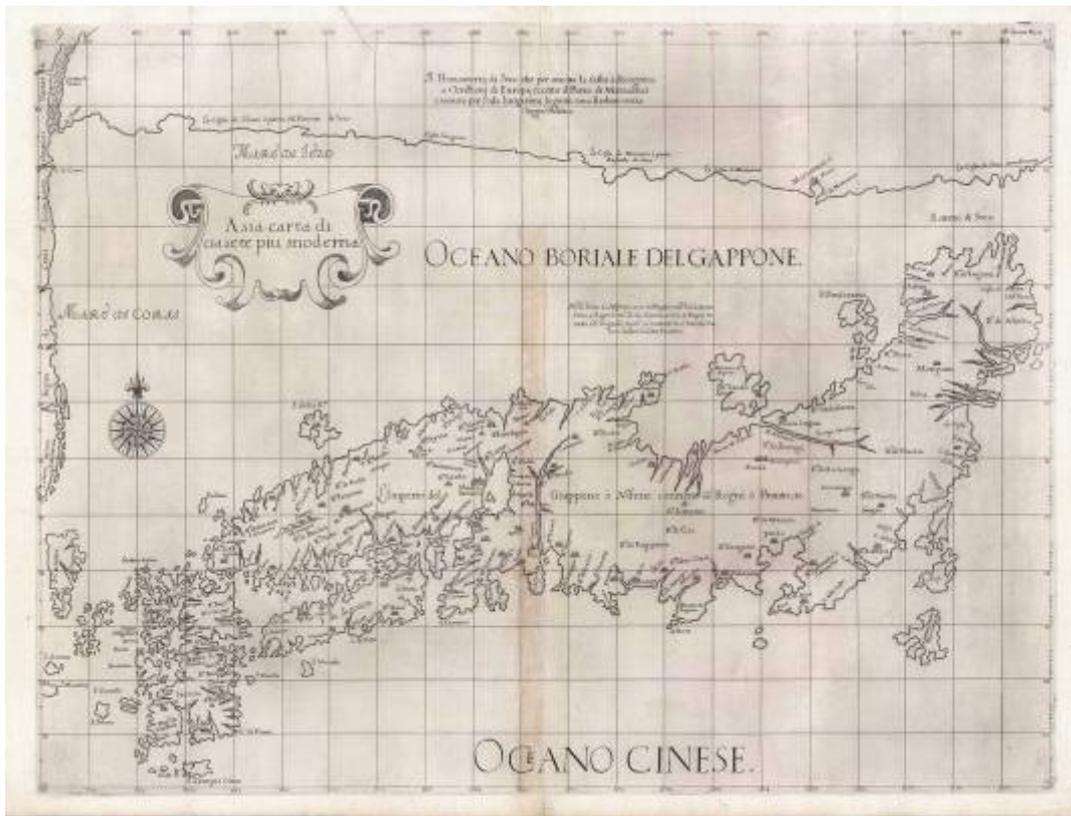
## Name location

Although the first map dedicated exclusively to Japan printed in Europe dates from 1528 (*Libro de Benedetto Bordone*), it took until 1586 until such a map also named the sea in which Japan was located (Thevet, *Le Grand Insulaire et Pilotage d'André Thevet Cosmographe du Roy...*). It referred to these seas as **La mer de Cin** and **La mer Indique**. The very influential map of Japan added to Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* in 1596 originally bore no sea names. In a later version, by Hondius (in *Gerardi Marcatoris Atlas Sive Cosmographicae Meditationes...*, 1606) sea names were added to this map: **Oceanus Chinensis** for the Pacific, while the Yellow Sea was named **Enseada Nanquin**. This map probably was based on the first map of Japan by the Jesuit cartographer Inacio Moreira, produced during his stay in Japan in 1584/5. Moreira visited Japan again in 1592, and the result of that visit was a far superior map, printed by Blancus in 1617 and probably intended for a book on the christianization of Japan which was not realised. This latter map had little exposure, but was later also used by Gennaro and Dudley (1646). These two authors also copied its sea names. The Blancus/Moreira map is the first to contain in the sea northwest of Japan the name **Mare Japonicum**, while south of Japan the name **Mare Chinensis** occurred.

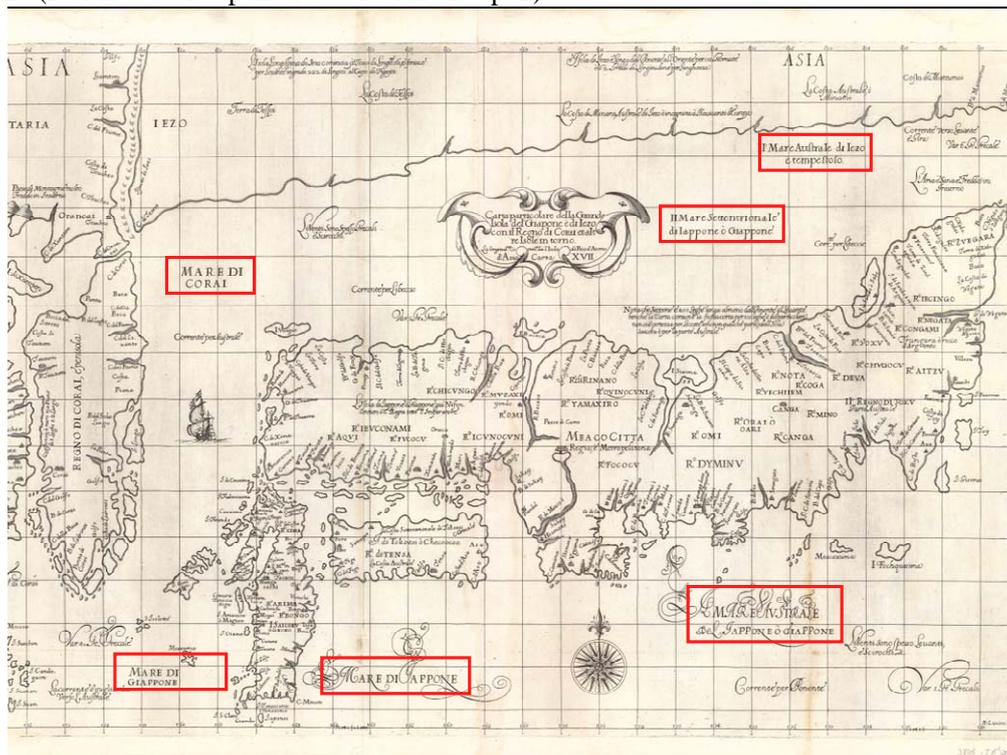


Blancus/Moreira 1617

It is not clear what the location of these names meant: did **Mare Japonicum** refer to that body of water in which it was located, or did it just refer to all the waters in which Japan was located, and did **Mare Chinensis** only refer to the fact that to go to China, that was the direction to take? This still has to be cleared. However, in the book *Nuova descrizione del Giappone*, on the history of Christianization of Japan by Bernardino Gennaro, a Jesuit like Moreira, the situation is more clear. As the name **Mare Japonicum** has been changed into the cardinal name **Mare Boreale**, it is now clear that it refers to the sea northwest of Japan, and that the **Oceano Cinese** either refers to the sea south of Japan or is used as an umbrella concept for all Eastern Waters. A slightly different situation is shown on the map of Japan in the *Arcano del Mare* (1646) by Robert Dudley: The sea northwest of Japan here is called **Oceano Boreale del Giappone**, and the one to the south **Oceano Cinese**. This map by Robert



Dudley was the first to show the names **Mare de Corai** and **Mare de Jezo**, typographically suggesting that these were subsets of the **Oceano Boreale del Gappone**. The situation is different, however, on the next edition of this map published the following year, in 1647. Here, Japan is surrounded by four times the name 'Sea of Japan' in different versions, thus strengthening the idea that the name 'Sea of Japan' referred to the waters in which Japan was located. The sea in-between Japan and Korea is named **Mare di Corai** in its western part, **Il Mare Australe di Iezo e tempestoso** (the southern and tempestuous sea of Hokkaido) in the north and in the south **Mare Settentrionale di Iappone o Giappone** (North Sea of Japan or Sea North of Japan).

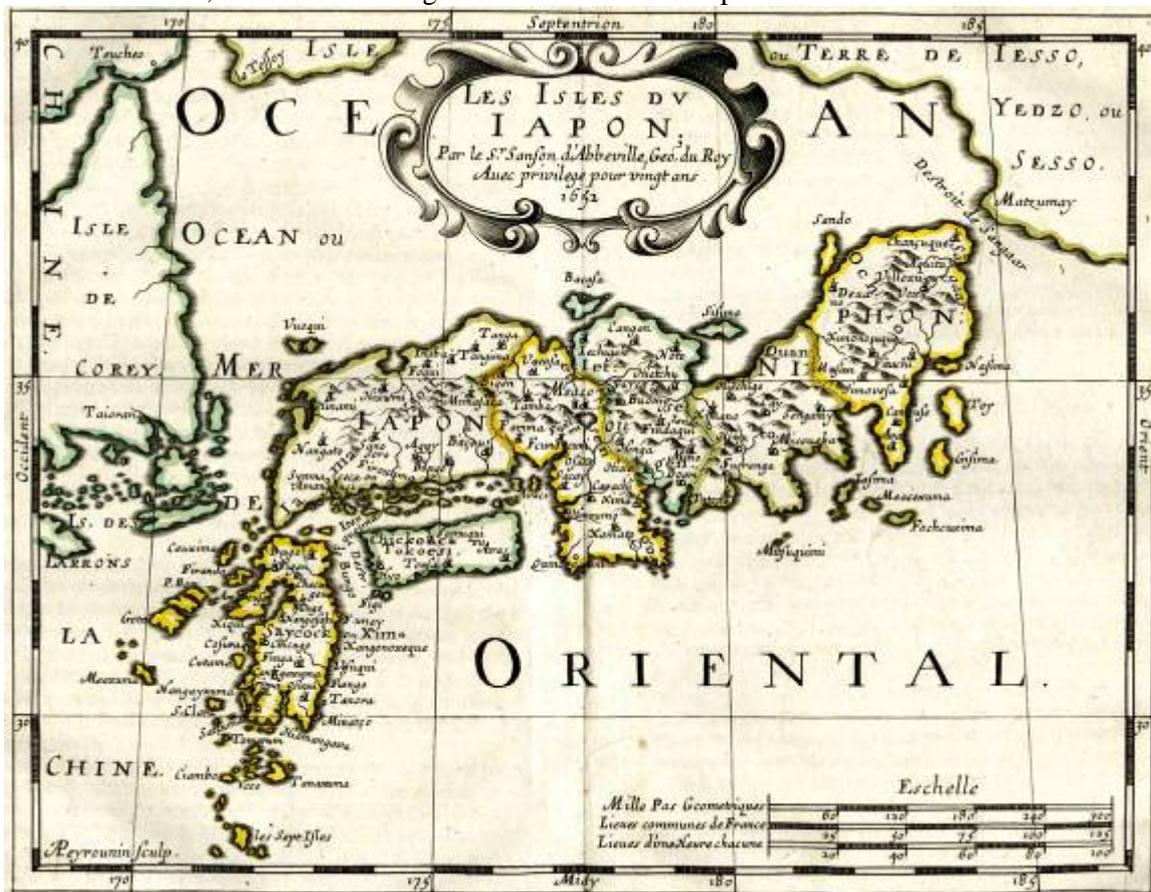


These maps by Blanco, Gennaro and Dudley based on Moreira's second visit had a small circulation and were by far less influential than those by Ortelius and Blaeu. On Blaeu's map of China (from the *Nouvel Atlas*, 1634) the Pacific is called **Oceanus Chinensis**, and this included also the sea northwest of Japan.

Janssonius in his *Atlas Minor* (1648) first also followed the 'Moreira school' and had likewise the name **Mare Japonicum** in the water northwest of Japan and **Oceanus Chinensis** in the waters east and south. Later he lapsed, and had **Oceanus Chinensis** for both waters on the map of Japan in his *Novus Atlas* of 1658.

### Name hierarchy

Nicolas Sanson (*L'Asie en plusieurs cartes nouvelles, et exactes ...*, 1652) introduced in large type on his map called 'Les Iles du Japon' the name **Ocean Oriental**, and had, in far smaller type, **Ocean ou Mer de la Chine**, thus subordinating the second name to the position of a subset of the first.

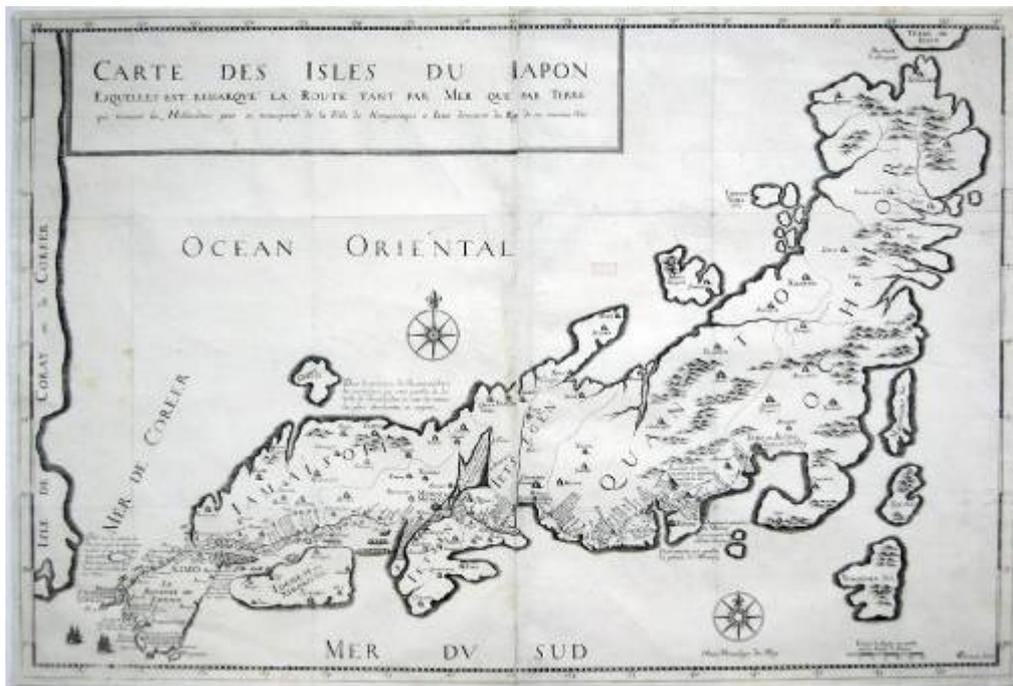


Sanson 1652

In 1651 the Jesuit missionary Martino Martini left China, but on his way back to Rome was intercepted by the Dutch, with the result that the maps of China he had brought with him were published in Amsterdam by Joan Blaeu in 1655 as the *Atlas Sinensis*. It only contained the sea name **Oceanus Chinensis**, located in the Yellow Sea area.

Another Jesuit that used the second Moreira map as main source was Philippe Briet who in 1658 published *Cartes Generales de toutes les parties du Monde*, and like Sanson he used the **Ocean Oriental** concept, without clarifying whether this only referred to the water northwest of Japan or to the overall seas; to the south he inserted **Mer de la Chine**. The same is done by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier in

his *Recueil de plusieurs relations et traitez singuliers et curieux* (1679), where Mer du Sud and Mer de Coreer seem subsets of the Ocean Oriental.



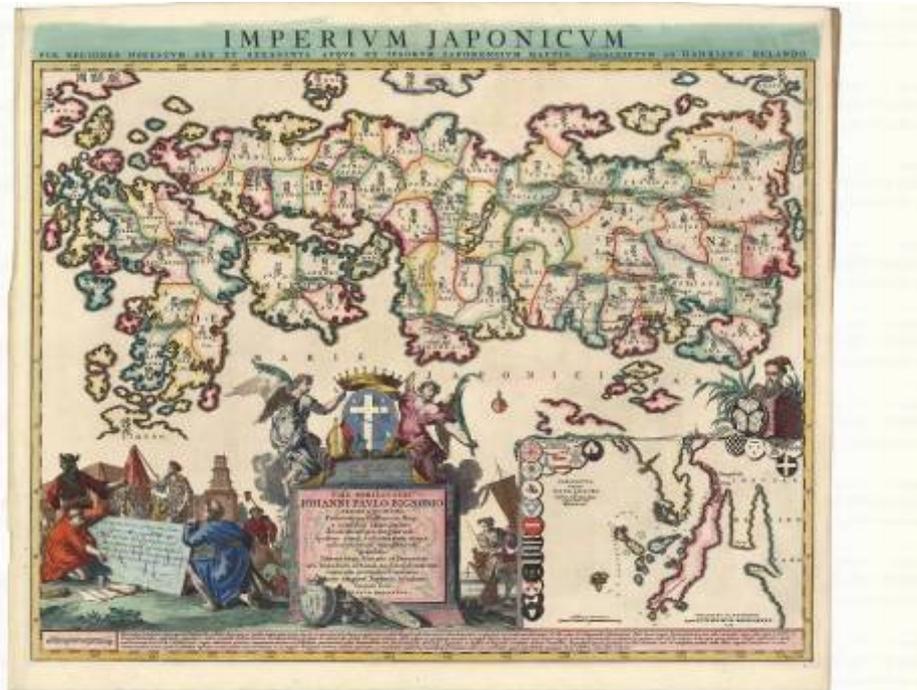
Tavernier 1679

That idea of the hierarchy is strengthened by Vincenzo Coronelli who in his *Corso geografico universale* (1692) placed the name **Oceano Oriental** at both sides of Japan, and had **Mare del Giappone** and **Mare della China** clearly as subsets of this ocean. I interpret this that the **Mare del Giappone** was the sea in which Japan was located and the **Mare della China** (apparently Korea was seen as part) as the seas that watered China's coast.



Coronelli 1692

The idea that the name Sea of Japan is the sea that waters the Japanese coasts at all sides is strengthened by the 'Ryusen type' of map, produced by Adriaan Reland on the basis of indigenous Japanese maps produced by Ishikawa Ryusen (1691). In the book *Recueil des voyages au Nord* (1715) Reland includes a map of Japan with the sea name **Maris Japonici Pars**, that is part of the Sea of Japan, that would also exist at other sites than the location of the name indicated.



Reland 1715

### Names as directions

In his *Atlas Geographus* (1712) Herman Moll inserted a map of Japan, which showed the **Sea of Corea** as the only name between Japan and Corea, with **The Great South Sea** to the east and south of Japan. Applied in this sense, the concept **Sea of Corea** could be interpreted as the sea one has to traverse in order to get to Korea.

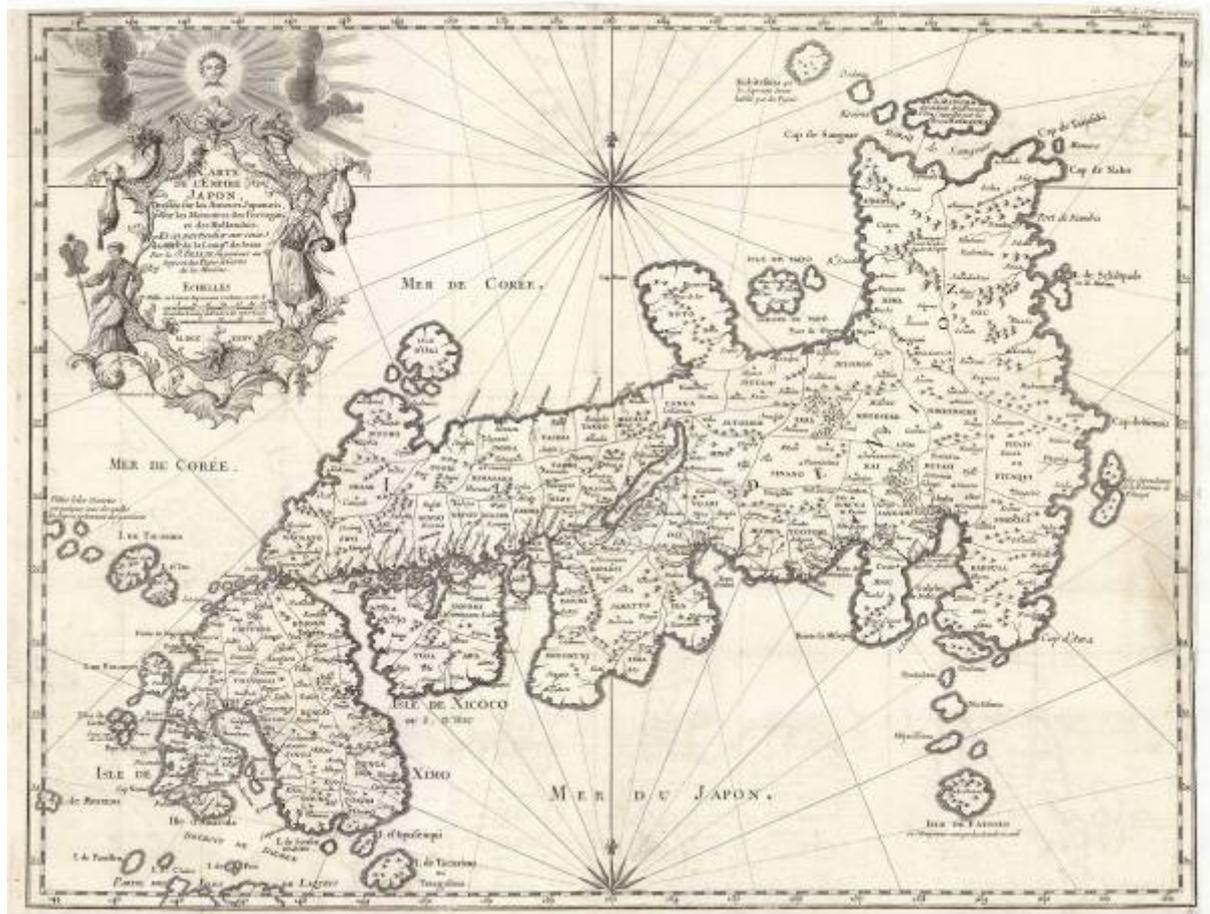


Moll 1712

Engelbert Kaempfer produced a map of Japan like the one by Reland based on indigenous sources (he used no sea names however), and he much influenced the representation of Japan by the French: notably by Jacques-Nicolas Bellin, who produced a map for the book *Histoire et description generale du Japon* by P. de Charlevoix (1735). Like in Moll's atlas, the name **Mer de Corée** is inserted in the waters from Japan to Korea (even twice so), and the name **Mer du Japon** indicates the waters one has to traverse in order to get to that realm.

The only exception to this trend seems to be the map of Japan by Jacob Keyzer in his *Atlas portatif très exact ou livre des cartes geographiques* (1747) where, as a first, the whole sea between Japan and Korea is indicated with two names, **De Noord Zee van Japan of Corease Zee**; to the south of Japan flows **De Oost Indiese Zee**, a Dutch version of the Oceanus Orientalis.

Most cartographers in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century however did as Bellin and used the name 'Sea of Korea' or its translations as the only name for the sea between Korea and Japan, and 'Sea of Japan' as the name for the approaches to Japan from the southeast, while to the east of Japan the name 'Ocean oriental' would be used. The only exception was Antonio Zatta who, in his *Atlante Novissimo* (1785) included a map of Japan with the name **Mar del Giapon** between Korea and Japan. To the south of Japan he had **Mar dell' Indie Orientale**. As this atlas was published in Venice, this seems a result of the lingering influence of the Jesuits.

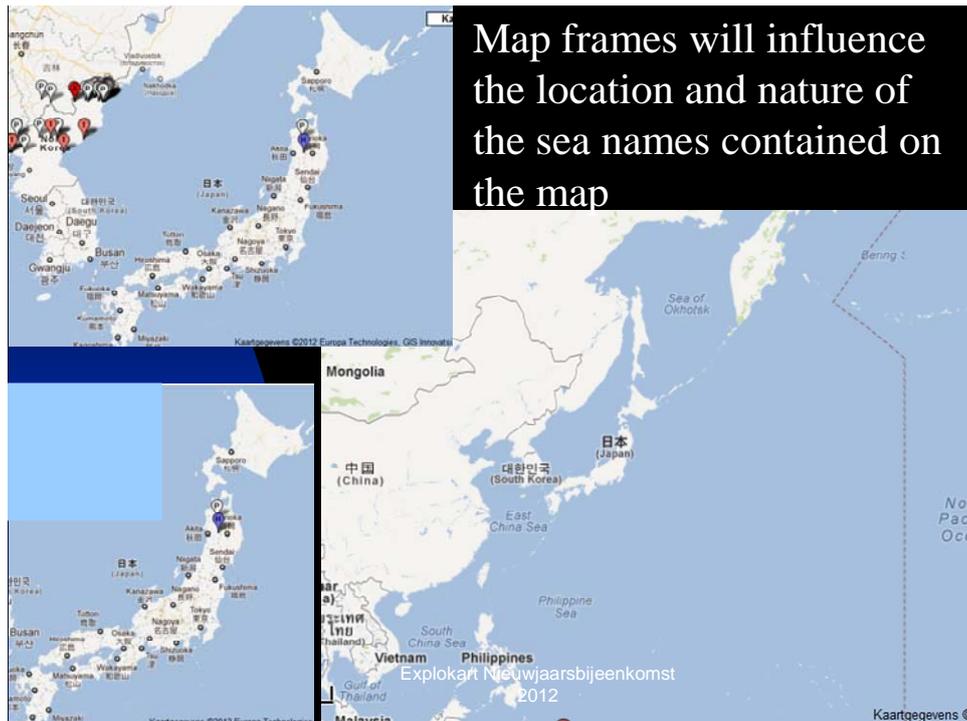


Bellin 1735



## Influence of the map frame

We have not looked at the influence of the map frame that, for island realms, would determine where large sea areas would result, that had to be named (there seems to be a ‘horror vacui’ amongst cartographers before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which led them to bestow names on nameless areas). In that sense, a comparison between the sea names on the maps of Japan and Korea and the maps of Asia or of East Asia is still needed. Within a larger frame where the name Eastern Ocean or its equivalents would be inserted, there would be less need for incorporating the name ‘Sea of Japan’ to the southeast of that realm.



## Summary

Amongst the general trends regarding sea names on western printed maps of Japan up to 1800 the following can be discerned:

- The Pacific is either called Oceanus Orientalis, or East Indian Ocean or Oceanus Chinensis or Mar del Zur
- Initially, Japan seems to be located in the ‘Sea of Japan’ and Korea in the ‘Sea of Korea’, these names thus indicating ( more or less) territorial waters.
- There is one Italian /Jesuit line of maps which, from 1617 onwards sticks to the name ‘Sea of Japan’ for the sea between Korea and Japan (Moreira/Dudley/Zatta)
- Otherwise, the name ‘Sea of Korea’, first only used for coastal/territorial waters, is gradually transferred to the whole sea between Korea and Japan, so that by 1800 it is the almost universal designation of this sea area.

<sup>1</sup> Jason Hubbard (2012) *Iaponiae Insulae*. Explokart series. Hes& De Graaf, Houten

<sup>2</sup> East Sea, the Name Used for Two Millennia. The Korea Society for East Sea, 2005 (?)

<sup>3</sup> A historical overview of the name “Sea of Japan”. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006