LA DÉNOMINATION DU DÉTROIT DE CORÉE / TSUSHIMA À TRAVERS LA CARTOGRAPHIE EUROPÉENNE, DU XVII° AU XIX° SIÈCLE

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THE NAMING OF THE KOREA / TSUSHIMA STRAIT THROUGH THE EUROPEAN CARTOGRAPHY, FROM THE 17TH TO THE 19TH CENTURY

(ABSTRACT)

From the 17th to the 19th century, the representation of the Korea strait, called Tsushima strait by the Japanese, has evolved a lot in the European cartography: the drawing and the naming have gradually settled, according to various influences. The names of the seas in the Far-East have been standardized by the European cartographers. But how did they integrate the various information sources available, and how were their perceptions transmitted and imposed? In order to answer, we have to analyse the maps of the area.

The countries of the Far-East aren't in the habit of naming the seas (Pelletier, 2000). Thus, the seas of Eastern Asia are named by the Europeans, from their discovery up to the standardization. The European sources allow to relate the history of the names of the maritime spaces in the Far-East, such as of the Korea strait.

Until the 19th century, geography and cartography are synonymous: cartography reflects the knowledge of the time (Pinchemel, 1995). Historically, the map is also the main source to reconstitute the development of the geographic knowledge, especially for maritime spaces. Furthermore, the map is a representation, then it shows the point of view of its author.

Cartography advances a lot in Europe from the 17th to the 19th century. Progresses in the navigation techniques allow to achieve long discovery travels. Thanks to printing, maps and atlases spread more in Europe. After the Portuguese in the 16th century, the Dutch, with the V.O.C., are the only Europeans in the Far-East, in Japan, in the 17th century. Japan and Korea are closed to foreign contacts including Europe. The knowledge of this area slows down. At the end of the 18th century, great travels, like Lapérouse's one, change widely the map of the region. The countries in the Far-East open again to the foreign contacts in the middle of the 19th century: then, the map of Eastern Asia is rapidly completed and regularized.

There are two problems regarding the name of the Korea strait. The terminology is long to be accepted: the word of strait depends on the accuracy of the knowledge and the outline of the map. The nomenclature is important too: the choice of the name of Korea has heavy consequences.

It's important to study terminology and nomenclature, in order to explain different factors in the changes of perception, by the Europeans. The building of the name of Korea strait shows a better knowledge and a new awareness. With a chronological approach, it's necessary to consider the historic, politic, cultural, scientific and technical context, and the function of different actor, in order to understand the evolution. It's interesting to compare maps with different scales, so as to complete the information.

The strait, between Japan and Korea, is 200 km wide: it joins the Eastern China sea and the sea of Japan. Many islands are in the strait: at the side of Korea, Cheju-Do is the main island, but there are many little islands; at the side of Japan, Tsushima is in the middle of the strait, and Iki, Hirado, Gotō-Rettō and Danjo-Guntō border the coast of Kyūshū. From a geopolitical and historic point of view, the strait is a complicated space (Michoudet, Pelletier, 2004). Toponymy is a crucial stake for this boundary between Japan and Korea. The aim isn't to stand up for anyone, but to understand how has been built, historically, an international naming.

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An Asian strait unknown as far as the middle of the 18th century by the Europeans:

Several trends follow one another in the European cartography, for many reasons.

The Dutch grounds of the Eastern Asia cartography:

The Portuguese were in Japan in the middle of the 16th century, but, because of their secret policy, their maps didn't spread too much. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Dutch of the V.O.C. came to Japan; more, the Dutch cartographers created atlases, and they distribute maps a lot. The 17th century is the golden age of the Dutch cartography.

The maps with local scale:

The first map of Japan published in Europe is the one from Luís Teixeira and Abraham Ortelius, in 1603. This map is a reference in the history of the cartography of the Far-East (Walter, 1994). At that time, knowledge is very approximate, especially for Korea, which is here an island. The Japanese islands which are drawn are more useful for navigation than for science: some of them, like Meshima, are really too big. The distance between Japan and Korea is wrongly estimated: the space is too wide, and Japan is too in the north in comparison to Korea. The narrowing isn't marked enough to transmit the idea of a strait. Furthermore, there is no name at all in the maritime spaces of that map.

The map of Gerhard Mercator, translated by De-La-Popelinière in 1613, is another reference in the Dutch cartography. The information is nearly the same as on the last map, but it's written "Chinensis" in the north of Japan and "Oceanus" in the south. This expression indicates the whole maritime space around Japan. Korea seems to be very far away from Kyūshū, and so, there isn't any separation in the sea: no strait appears on this map.

The map of Joan Jansson, even if the drawing is a little different, looks like the map of Mercator. The expression "Oceanus Chinensis" is written for all the seas around Japan, and nothing is written in the strait: the strait seems to be too wide.

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who worked with the V.O.C., draws a map in 1679. Information is still approximate. The word strait is written on that map, but not in the Korea strait, where it's mentioned "Mer de Coreer". This word shows a part of the sea next to Korea, but anyway, the Korean strait isn't seen like a strait.

Adrien Reland, who worked with the V.O.C. too, draws such a map in 1716. The maritime way between Japan and Korea isn't obvious, and the only maritime name is "Mer du Japon" in the south of the Japan: this name corresponds to every maritime space around Japan, without any separation by a strait.

The maps with the Asian scale:

Jocodus Hondius, Mercator's son-in-law and the founder of one of the Dutch cartographic school, makes a map of Asia in 1602. Japan is very diagrammatic, and Korea is missing. Of course, the maritime spaces can't be clearly delimitated. His son Jocodus Hondius draws another map in 1623: there are more details, but it's difficult to see the separation between the "Oceanus Occidentalis" in the north of Japan and "Oceanus Chinensis" in the south.

Willem-Janszoon Blaeu, the founder of the other Dutch cartographic school, who works with the V.O.C., draws a map of Asia in 1608. The only maritime name is "Oceanus Chinensis" in the Pacific ocean. In 1635, on another map, he writes "Oceanus Chinensis" in the south of Japan and "Oceanus Occidentalis" in the north, like Jocodus Hondius. In 1659, his son Joan Blaeu writes only "Oceanus Chinensis", in the south of Japan. In 1662, his brother Willem Blaeu publishes a map, which is the same as the one of his father in 1635. Another map of Willem Blaeu, in 1670, shows "Oceano de la China", into "Mare del Zur", on Japan. Thus, the seas are continuous. Claes-Jansz Visscher, in 1608, who worked with Willem-Janszoon Blaeu, and Nicolas-Joan Visscher, who worked with Joan Blaeu, made maps, which are equivalent to Blaeu's ones. The map of George Humble, in 1626, is just the same with an English translation.

None of those maps shows the Korea strait as a real strait: the name isn't written, and the space between Korea and Japan is oversized.

The teaching of the Jesuit network settled in Far-East:

The Jesuit missionaries live in Japan since the middle of the 16th century, but their maps become known later. They have the possibility to access to Japanese sources.

The maps with local scale:

The map of Japan of António-Francisco Cardim in 1612 shows many things about land spaces. The maritime spaces have no name, and the coasts seem to be a little risky. It's difficult to see a strait between those countries, which aren't precise enough.

The map by Robert Dudley in 1646 is more original, because there are many names for the maritime spaces of the region. However, nothing is told for the Korea strait, instead the word is used in other places on the map.

Philippe Briet builds a map in 1650: he's inspired by the other Jesuits, especially Cardim. There are some names for the seas, but it's impossible to see where the delimitations are. The word strait is used for very tight spaces, but not for the Korea strait, which is still far too wide.

The map of Martino Martini in 1655 has the same sources as Briet. The way between Japan and Korea is nearly as wide as the Eastern China sea and the sea of Japan. The only name is "Oceanus Chinensis", in the Eastern China sea: this word seems to concern both those seas, without any separation by a strait.

Antoine Gaubil shows, on his map of 1752, a space which looks like a strait, even if it's a little too wide, but there isn't any name for the maritime spaces in this area.

The maps with the Asian scale:

In 1682, Giacomo Cantelli-Da-Vignola uses information from Martini and Tavernier. The seas haven't any name, but a strait is showed in the north of the map: however, the Korea strait isn't named. Korea is turned in the direction of China: as a result, the strait seems wider

than it is really. Another map shows this lie, with another scale: this area really doesn't look like a strait.

The drawing, more than the toponymy, shows that the Jesuits don't consider the Korea strait as a strait: the word seems to designate spaces far more confined.

The take-over by the French cartographic school:

In the 18th century, the French cartographers are very important for the European cartography. They are not in Eastern Asia, but they know the Dutch and Jesuit sources.

The maps with local scale:

Jacques-Nicolas Bellin, in 1735, draws his inspiration from Reland and the great European trends: he becomes influential for all the 18th century. His map shows Japan, but Korea isn't on the map: so, the strait seems very wide. Furthermore, the word "Mer de Corée" is written precisely in the strait: Bellin hasn't seen the proximity between Japan and Korea, and he doesn't consider this place like a strait. This map of 1764 is exactly the same.

Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon-D'Anville is one of the most famous French cartographers. His map of Japan in 1737 is cut in the strait: it's impossible to see how wide it's, and no name is written. Then, he draws too different maps of Korea: the little islands in the strait are different on those both maps, and Kyūshū isn't visible. Bourguignon-D'Anville never gives any name to the seas, so it's difficult to understand what he thinks about these spaces.

The map of Philippe Buache, in 1754, brings corrections to the map of Gaubil: the islands are more precise. However, there isn't anything more for the Korea strait: this space doesn't seem to be tight enough to be thought as a strait by Philippe Buache.

The maps with the Asian scale:

Nicolas Sanson-D'Abbeville, one of the creators of the French cartographic school, makes, in 1650, nearly the same map as Willem Blaeu. "Océan Oriental" is the Pacific ocean, and "Mer de Chine" is closer to the continent. Nevertheless, Japan isn't a demarcation in these maritime spaces. In his map of China of 1656, Korea is deeply distorted, and not at all in the direction of Japan. This map is quite original, but the Korea strait isn't more visible. His son Guillaume Sanson-D'Abbeville draws Korea in the same way in 1667, and the only name of "Oceanus Orientalis" is written for all the maritime spaces in Asia. The Korea strait isn't thought like a separation between too different seas. In 1669, his drawing stays the same, but he writes the word "Mer de la Chine" along the Asian coast, crossing the strait.

In the same way, Vincenzo-Maria Coronelli writes "Mare della China" from the Southern China sea to the sea of Japan, through the Korea strait, still too wide.

Nicolas De-Fer, in 1696, calls the sea of Japan "Mer Septentrionale de Japon" and the Eastern China sea "Mer de la Chine". The delimitation between these basins is probably in the Korea strait, but the intermediate spaces aren't named.

Guillaume Delisle is one of the great French cartographers of the 18th century. On his map of 1705, the only maritime name is "Mer Orientale ou Mer de Corée", in the sea of Japan: this name may concern the Eastern China sea too, which hasn't any name on that map.

Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon-D'Anville produces many maps of Asia. In 1732, the strait is visible on his map, but he doesn't give any name to this object: the sea is still too wide in this area. In 1734, Japan is simply out of the map: instead, there is only the ocean. The shape of the lands and the seas has no sense anymore: the word strait can't be defined there. With another scale, the author writes only "Mer Orientale", for the Eastern China sea and the

Pacific ocean: this word includes all the maritime spaces of the Eastern Asia. The Korea strait has nothing particular.

Gilles and Didier Robert-De-Vaugondy, inspired by Delisle, Dudley, Bellin and Bourguignon-D'Anville, make a map of China in 1757. The map is cut just at the east of Korea, and Japan isn't drawn at all, that's false. The name of "Océan Oriental" shows every maritime space of the area, without any topographic obstacle, such as a strait, between Japan and Korea.

The drawing of the map of Jacques-Nicolas Bellin of 1764 is very different from his maps with another scale. The strait is visible, but it's shifted, and there isn't any name written in the maritime spaces, not for the seas, neither for the straits.

None of those French cartographers, who seem to be representative and influential in Europe, has identified a strait at the place of the Korea strait.

As far as 1780, the Korea strait isn't known in Europe: the Europeans weren't allowed to go to this area, and they didn't have any measurement techniques, especially for longitude. Then, the shape of the Korea strait stays blurred. About its naming, most of the maps don't give any name to that strait, but some of them put the word sea, instead of strait. The European cartographers don't know that the sea is so tight between Japan and Korea. Things change with the travel of Lapérouse, in 1787.

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Lapérouse and the creation of the Korean strait:

During the 18th century, more importance is given to scientific travels. James Cook, an English traveller, went to the Pacific ocean many times between 1768 and 1776, but not in Eastern Asia. That's why Louis XVI and his Secretary of State for the Navy, Charles-Pierre Claret-De-Fleurieu, sent Jean-François Galaup-De-Lapérouse in that area, in 1787, so as to complete the world map. In that travel, Lapérouse, for the first time, uses the name of Korea strait: how did he understand it was a strait, and why did he choose the name of Korea?

The information at Lapérouse's disposition for his expedition:

Jean-Nicolas Buache-De-La-Neuville, Buache's nephew, is in charge of preparing the maps for Lapérouse's travel (Pelletier, 1979). He has great responsibilities in France, and he can access to the best information sources of the time.

The maps of the preparation for the travel:

Those maps, drawn before the travel, are published after it: some of them are corrected with Lapérouse's discoveries.

The first map, retouched by the editor, is drawn like the other maps of that time in Europe. The strait isn't mentioned, and the only name of sea in this area is "Mer de Chine", from the Southern China sea till the sea of Japan. Therefore, the Korea strait isn't tight enough to be perceived as a strait.

The second map is older. The lie of the strait is very approximate, with a lot of little island arranged geometrically: the general shape of the strait isn't visible. More, there isn't any name in the maritime spaces of that map, and, of course, nothing in the strait.

The third map is as inaccurate as the second one, even if the arrangement of the little islands is different. That shows how this area is badly known by the Europeans. There are too

many obstacles in the sea to see the shape of the strait, but, with another scale, it's possible to identify a way between Japan and Korea. Maybe could Lapérouse think of that during his travel.

The fourth map shows the route of Lapérouse, but there are some errors. The Yellow sea seems to be very important, whereas the Korea strait isn't well shown. In fact, this map aims at showing commercial possibilities for France in the area of the Yellow sea; the scientific interests, in the strait, seem to be of minor importance.

None of those maps mentions a strait between Korea and Japan: Lapérouse can't know it when he goes to the Far-East. For all that, Lapérouse can maybe, visually, imagine that there's a strait between the two countries: this notion can be underlying, even if it isn't clearly expressed.

Lapérouse's intuition through his log book:

In his log book, Lapérouse explains what he thinks during the travel: he speaks about the places he wants to go to, for example. When he's in the Eastern China sea, he writes that he wants to go up to the "canal du Japon" (De-Brossard, Dunmore, 1985b). His explanations show clearly that this term points out the Korea strait.

The word of canal is very useful in navigation: it's just a way that a boat can use, even if it isn't very tight. The name of Japan, told by Lapérouse, isn't so surprising: Korea isn't well known by the Europeans, so it's probably easier to find one's way with the name of Japan, better known.

Lapérouse insists on the facts that his measurements of the area are very important for science, because no European boat has ever done it before. So, he says that he doesn't know exactly the shape of the place, but he can imagine that this place is particular, whatever the width can be: the word of canal shows that the general lie of the place is perceived by Lapérouse.

The results of the observations:

The changes in the perception of Lapérouse are visible with the same documents, his log book and his maps.

Lapérouse's commentaries about the exploration of the Korean strait:

When he arrives in the Korea strait, Lapérouse explains that he's in the "détroit de Corée": it's the same place that he called "canal du Japon" a few lines before (De-Brossard, Dunmore, 1985b).

He uses the name of Korea, instead of Japan, because he chooses to hug the coasts of Korea, so as to measure them. Where he stays, he can see Korea but not Japan, so this choice seems to be spontaneous. After that, he's more hesitant, describing the place between Japan and Korea, without saying any name again. The problem is to name a place clearly, so as to be useful for navigation, without standing up Korea or Japan, because of politic and economic consequences.

The word of strait is used instead of canal. With the context, it's possible to explain how Lapérouse defines those words. A canal is a long way, not necessarily very tight, where a boat can go across. A strait, or strait, is the precise place where the way is the tightest: in fact, it's just a line. The problem is that Lapérouse doesn't define those words: he doesn't seem to attribute importance to it, although it's important, because his choices are going to spread in Europe.

The new map of the Far-East:

The first map in the atlas of Lapérouse just shows the areas where the traveller went and did measurements, especially near Korea and Japan. This map only concerns new land discovered, but nothing is mentioned about the maritime spaces, and about the Korea strait precisely.

Another map shows exactly the itinerary of Lapérouse in the seas of Eastern Asia. The strait isn't mentioned, but just at the north is written "Mer du Japon". Every island isn't really determined at that time, but the measurements realized are more accurate than every map before.

The third map, with local scale, shows precisely the places where Lapérouse did measuring: in particular, a part of Cheju-Do and Tsushima is very accurate. Great progresses had been accomplished in Europe in the 18th century to determine longitude: Lapérouse is the first traveller, in Eastern Asia, to have the advantage of these new techniques. He's very enthusiastic about it, thinking that the knowledge of earth will progress very rapidly (Bellec, 2000). He can't explore everything in this area, but this travel is the basis of new discoveries.

On the fourth map, Lapérouse writes for the first time the name "Détroit de Corée" in the Korea strait: it concerns all the way between the Korean peninsula and the island of Kyūshū, on the axis of Tsushima. Thanks to new measuring techniques, the distance between the two countries is well established: the width is far tighter than what it was on the maps before. As Lapérouse is the first European to travel in those seas, he's the first to be able perceive the strait in that way. On that map, the strait isn't only a line, but all the way: the word is used not only for navigation but also for geography. As there are many straits between the islands of Japan, the name of Japan strait would have been ambiguous for the Europeans; the name of Korea seems more obvious. The toponymy of "Détroit de Corée", given by Lapérouse, is consequently spontaneous, logical and pragmatic.

The observations of Lapérouse are a turning in the perception of the Korea strait by the Europeans. However, the map is still incomplete: its representation is going to move during the 19th century, and the naming too.

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Towards a standardization of the representation and the naming of the Korean strait:

According to Fleurieu, the navigators have the mission to fix the drawing of the earth (Pelletier, 1998). As for Lapérouse, the place names must respect the traditions of local populations: if there aren't, the navigators have to remember the name of the first navigator discovering a place (Kobayashi, 1988). Lapérouse is the first navigator in the Korea strait, so it's important to see how the name he gave to that place has been transmitted.

The gradual integration of the discoveries in cartography:

The travel of Lapérouse is the beginning of the exploration of the region: other navigators complete his work. But the progress of the geographic knowledge isn't linear.

The continuation of Lapérouse's work:

The Russian navigator Adam-Johann Von-Krusenstern travels in this area in 1804, and he makes a new map showing his discoveries. He passes between Kyūshū and Tsushima. His

observations complete Lapérouse's ones for land measuring, but he doesn't give any name to the maritime spaces.

The English William-Robert Broughton publishes the map of his travel in 1807. He sails at the north of Cheju-Do and next to the Korean peninsula, so as to specify the knowledge let by Lapérouse, but he doesn't give any name to the strait or the seas.

A map of 1805 shows the results of the travels of Lapérouse in 1787, Colmet in 1789, Broughton in 1797 and Krusenstern in 1804 and 1805. The name of "Strasse von Corea" is written in the strait, but only between Tsushima and Korea: it's difficult to know if the term concerns all strait or just the west way. Anyway, the perception of Lapérouse is confirmed by this document.

At that time, thanks to the new techniques and the rigorous methods, the drawing of the Korea strait is well known: the coasts and the islands are accurate, but there are some fluctuations in the toponymy.

The repercussions on the cartography in Europe:

In 1829, the Dutch cartographers R.-G. Bennet and J. Van-Wyk make a map of Japan with the name "Straat van Korea" designing the whole strait, although the name is written between Tsushima and Korea. The new discoveries are not completely integrated, but the strait is brought to the fore.

The map of Philipp-Franz Von-Siebold, in 1851, doesn't give any name to the maritime spaces, except for the straits. The whole strait is called "Canal Koraï", the west way "Str. Broughton" and the east way "Str. Von Krusenstern": one name comes from Lapérouse, and the two others are the names of the navigators. The canal is subdivided in two straits: the definition of these words may depend on the scale. The nomenclature is new in the history of cartography (Michel, 1994a).

Some maps, like the one of M. Mouchez in 1852 and the one of Alfred Maury and V.-A. Malte-Brun in 1855, are more ambiguous: the names given to maritime spaces aren't well delimitated, and it's difficult to see exactly what the term strait represents, and what the name of Korea strait means.

Later, some cartographers use the toponymy of Siebold. For example, John Rodgers and John-M. Brooke, in 1859, give the same nomenclature, but they say "Channel" instead of canal. P.-F. Zegelbert does the same in 1859, but he says "Kanaal" instead of strait: the scales are inverted in comparison with Siebold. Karl Ritter and M.-A. Pogio, on their map of Korea in 1895, speaks about "Koreanischer Canal" for the whole strait, "Brouton Canal" for the west way and "Krusenstern Canal" for the east way: the nomenclature is the same as Siebold, but the terminology is different and looks confused.

Other cartographers prefer using another toponymy. In 1861, Vincent Clérot just speaks about "Détroit de Corée", like Lapérouse, without distinguishing the two ways. V. Carré, in his map of 1886, writes "Détroit de Corée" for the whole strait, "Détroit Ouest de Corée" in the west way and "Détroit Est de Corée" in the east way. Cardinal points are preferred to the names of the navigators.

These trends are the most important, but there are some other maps, which mix different systems of naming. There are some confusions in the names given to the strait: the words strait, channel and canal are used, but it's difficult to understand exactly what they mean; the names of Korea, East, West, Broughton, Krusenstern and even sometimes Tsushima can be written for the same spaces. That's a problem for the standardization.

The normalization of the naming of the Korean strait:

The fluctuation in the toponymy is a problem for the cartographers and the navigators, who need to know precisely how to call the spaces they go to. Some attempts try to make it more understandable.

The hesitations of terminology:

Terminology is the choice of a word so as to designate a geographic object. This language has to be perfectly clear. The different terms used for the Korea strait show that the vocabulary isn't accurate enough.

For the maritime spaces, Fleurieu tries, at the end of the 18th century, to establish a typology of the terms (Carpine-Lancre, 1992). He defines the different maritime basins, according to the scale, but he doesn't do it for the intermediate spaces, such as the straits (Claret-De-Fleurieu, 1799).

During the 19th century, some navigators try to do it more precisely. In France, Bonnafoux and Paris make a specialized dictionary, but the definitions aren't so accurate (Bonnafoux, Paris, 1856). For the strait, there isn't any limitation for the width, the length or the depth; the definitions and the translations of canal and channel are approximately the same.

Despite this will of standardization, the oceanographic vocabulary stays indefinite, even nowadays.

The nomenclature which asserts itself:

Nomenclature is the way the geographic objects are named. It's more difficult for maritime spaces than for land spaces, because the delimitations aren't so evident.

At the beginning, when a place is discovered, a name is given. But why is a name given and not another one? Can a name given by a navigator be legitimate? Everyone doesn't agree, and that's why there are so much fluctuations for the Korea strait, for the whole way and for the two routes.

Fleurieu thinks that the best way is to respect the name given by the navigator who has discovered the place: because of the travel of Lapérouse, he considers that the name of Korea strait has to be used by everyone (Claret-De-Fleurieu, 1799). His proposition is important for Eastern Asia, because the map of the region comes from Lapérouse.

During the 20th century, two International Hydrographical Conferences, in 1919 and in 1926, try to officially delimitate and name the maritime spaces in the world.

The efforts for standardization are difficult: by use, the name of Korea strait is accepted, but the process of naming are more complex.

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The analyse of the European cartography of Eastern Asia during this period brings to the fore the coming out of the Korea strait. More than a best knowledge of the place, due to Lapérouse, the maps show the gradual intellectual building of a geographic object.

The stake of the naming is very important in the maritime spaces of the Far-East. That's why it could be interesting to study how cartography has been considered by the International Conferences: the historic aspects are a part of the arguments in the actual debates.