Perceptions on Sea Names and Marine Region Names in the Vicinity of Finland

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In my presentation I will talk about the background of sea names and marine region names in the vicinity of Finland – mostly about the names of Baltic Sea and its regions. I will also discuss the names of other seas in the neighbourhood which are important to Finland (such as North Sea, Arctic Ocean and White Sea) and their acquisition by and adaptation into the Finnish and Swedish languages. I will examine the occurrences of these names in some other languages in the Baltic Sea region as well. I will consider the motivation of sea and marine region names from linguistic, geographic and maritime perspectives.

Marine region names – like other geographical names – speak about the places themselves and about the people who use these names. Seafarers and coastal inhabitants have named marine regions from their own premises and in their own languages in ways that make sense to them. Map makers, cartographers and cartographic publishers have similarly played a significant role in how the names are presented. Names have typically been lifted from previous maps or atlases, when new maps have been drafted. Such copying may also have led to misconstructions in terms of the names, their spelling and location: maps may show names in the wrong place. Still, the copying practices have perhaps preserved names better than would have been possible if the only source of information had been the oral tradition of transient seafarers. Settlements have been more permanent in the coastal areas, which means that while the local naming traditions

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may have been handed down more faithfully in these regions, they have not perhaps been recorded as reliably.

When sea names are adopted from one map to another, any alternative names or those which have been changed, stay hidden. At the same time, names get established and become more neutral, so much so that they lose their meaning. Names become mere names. It has not been possible to use overly value-laden or political names in such transfer of names in international maps.

The naming innovations of coastal inhabitants or their ambitions to change existing names have reached early internationally-minded cartographers only with difficulty. Neither have they readily appeared on small-scale maps. When mapping turned into a more exact science and grew to become a national enterprise and once our regional seas began to be discussed in increasing literary media, the names were also subjected to contradictory pressures. Such contradictions could emerge, when the practices of landlubbers and seafarers clashed or between people on different coasts of the same sea. I will briefly return to this question while tackling the Bothnian Sea.

When an object matters to its users, its name is employed by many, also in different language groups. Geographical names typically have parallel names in other languages, but it is also possible that previously or widely used names have been adopted as such or assimilated in a given language (including the language of the map).

As ours is a seminar on sea names which is held in Helsinki – which is called in Finnish *Itämeren tytär*, in Swedish *Östersjöns dotter* ‘the daughter of the East Sea’, in English *the Daughter of the Baltic Sea* –, I would like to bring up some sea names or marine region names in the vicinity of Finland and at the same time discuss their linguistic and cultural historical background.
1. Baltic Sea

Figure 1. Baltic Marine Subdivisions


Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps_of_the_Baltic_Sea#/media/File:Baltic_Marine_subdivisions.gif
The Finnish name for the Baltic Sea is *Itämeri*, the ‘East Sea’ in English. The Swedish name *Östersjön* ‘East Sea’ already appears in 1499 (*Östersjön*), but is probably older than this, as is implied by the reference to *ad mare orientale*, ‘to the Eastern Sea’ in 1158. Einhard, the chronicler of Charlemagne, mentions the name Ostarsalt as early as 808. This was used by the Danes to refer to the Baltic Sea. In Old Icelandic, the Baltic Sea was called the *Eystrasalt*. The word salt originally carried the meaning of ‘sea’ or ‘salty water’. From the perspective of Dutch–Danish seafarers, this sea was located in the east, which is the basis of the name in the German and Swedish languages.\(^1\)

*Ooster Zee, Mare Orientale* (Lucas Waghenaer 1584)

*Oost Zee* (Petrus Plancius 1594)

In 1638, the Danish government tasked the admiral Erik Ottesen Orning with determining the proper name of this sea. The seafarers he interviewed compared the sea to the North Sea and the West Sea, which was commonly considered to be located next to the west coast of Jutland and to stretch “down toward Brittany and out towards the undefined Atlantic.”\(^2\)

The first appearance of the Finnish name (1649 *Itämerest*) goes back to a translation of a Swedish statute.\(^3\) The name was thus a loan translation at a time when Finland was a part of the Swedish domain and Swedish was the official language of this realm also in the eastern, Finnish part of the kingdom. The names carry the same meaning in both languages, even if the Baltic Sea or the ‘East Sea’ was in the east when seen from Sweden and in the west or the southwest when looked at from Finland. The *Baltic Proper* or the *Central Baltic Sea*, which is also referred to as *Itämeri* ‘East Sea’ in Finnish, is located southwest of Finland.

The Finnish name has long since been established and is now seen as a neutral name. Its referent is commonly understood by all Finnish speakers. However, when exonyms were beginning to be established in the Finnish language in the mid–nineteenth century, *Itämeri* ‘East Sea’ was by no means a term taken for granted. The Baltic Sea was also

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\(^3\) VKS.
known in Finnish as *Saksanmeri* ‘German Sea’ (*Itä-eli Saksamereen* 1845⁴), although Finnish newspapers, for example, tended to use the name ‘German Sea’ to refer to the North Sea. In addition to Finnish, Swedish and German, the Baltic Sea is now known as the ‘East Sea’ in the North Germanic languages (e.g. the Danish *Østersøen*) and in the most West Germanic languages (e.g. the Dutch *Oostzee*). In Estonian, this sea is known as *Läänemeri* ‘West Sea’, although Estonians could also have looked to Swedish or German (*Ostsee* ‘East Sea’) for inspiration, as Estonia has been subordinated to both the Teutonic Order and the kingdom of Sweden.

The other common name for this marine region is the equivalent of the Baltic Sea in many different languages: *Балтийское море* (Baltijskoe more) in Russian, *Baltijas jurā* in Latvian, *Baltijos jūra* in Lithuanian, *Morze Bałtyckie* in Polish and *mer Baltique* in French.

As far as we know, the name was first employed by archbishop Adam of Bremen in the history of the archbishops of Hamburg–Bremen in the eleventh century (*Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* 1075 – 1076).⁵ According to Adam, the inhabitants of this bay- like sea used the name Balticus ‘Baltic’, because the marine area extended like a belt (Danish *bælt*) across the Scythian lands as far as the Greek Orthodox countries. The Greek Orthodox Church had already established itself a place in the eastern nook of the Gulf of Finland. Other origins have also been proposed for the word *Baltic*.⁶

*Mare Baltium* (Ziegler 1532)
*Mare Balticum* (G. Ruscelli 1561)
*Mare Balticum, vulgo De Oost Zee* (Adriaan Veen 1613)
*The Balticke Sea or commonly the East Sea* (John Speed 1627)
*Mare Balticum vulgo De Oost Zee* (Andreae Buraei 1635)
*The Baltick or East Sea* (Hermann Moll c. 1727)
*Mer Baltique* (R. & J. Ottens c. 1730)

Different peoples and different maps have over the centuries used different names for this sea, but current usage recognises only the names with two meanings mentioned

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⁴ Tikkanen (1845), p. 94.
⁶ See also Room (1997), p. 45.
above – the ‘Baltic Sea’ and the ‘East Sea’ in different languages – and the Estonian ‘West Sea.’

The later editions (1477–1621) of Ptolemaic maps (Ptolemy, c. 90–165/170 CE) refer to the Baltic Sea also as Oceanus Germanicus and Mare Germanicum (Schedel 1493), as Oceanus Sarmaticus ‘Sarmatian Sea’ (Ptolemy, printed in Bologna 1477), and as sinus Venedicus ‘Wendian Bay’ (Ptolemy, printed in Rome 1478). More commonly, however, the name of the ‘German Sea’ has been reserved for the North Sea, and the ‘Wendian Sea’ occasionally appears as pertaining to the Gulf of Finland. ‘Wends’ was an old Germanic name for western Slavic tribes residing in the seventh century in what is now eastern Germany, while Sarmatians were nomadic tribes inhabiting the steppes of southern Russia, Ukraine and Hungary.

Venedic Oseano (Francesco Berlinghieri 1482)
Venedicus sinus and the southern part of the sea Svecium mare (Abraham Ortelius 1595)
Venedicus sinus (Philip Cluver 1616: located in the Gdansk Basin)
Sarmatico Oseano (Francesco Berlinghieri 1482)
Oceanus Sarmaticus (Giacomo Gastaldi 1548)
Mare Balticum sive Sarmaticum (Cornelis de Jode, Johannes Portantius 1593)

Adam of Bremen also says that the sea is used to call according to savages as Mare Barbarum and Pelagus Sciticum, the ‘Scythian Bay’⁷, on G. Ruscelli’s Europaæ Tabula VIII in 1561 the name is Mare Sarmaticum ‘Sarmatian Sea’. Old maps have since employed the term the ‘Scythian Ocean’ (Oceanus Sciticum: Olaus Magnus 1539) to refer to a part of the Arctic Ocean we know as the Barents Sea.⁸

The Old Slavic language (for example, the Russian Primary Chronicle or Nestor’s Chronicle from 1095, the oldest extant copy from 1377) referred to the ‘Sea of the


⁸ The Barents Sea has also been called the ‘Northernmost Sea’ (Oceanus Hiperboreus, in for example Ziegler 1532), the ‘Murmansk Sea’ (Murmanskoi more 1595 Mercator) and the ‘Sea of Moscow’ (Mer de Moscovie 1692 Sanson). In addition, Adam of Bremen cites such names as mare Orientale ‘Oriental Sea’ and Orientale pelagus ‘Oriental Bay’. —Ehrensvärd – Kokkonen – Nurminen (1995), p. 21–22.
Varyags’9 (after the Variags or Vikings ‘traversing the eastern trade routes’). The first Russian marine atlas (1714) used such names as Vostočnoe more ‘Eastern Sea’, Baltijskoe more ‘Baltic Sea’ and the old Varjatskoе more ‘Varangian or the Varyags’ Sea.’10

Catalan and Italian nautical charts of the fourteenth century had chosen such names for the Baltic Sea as Mare Noricum sive Gochlandia, the ‘Sea of Noricum or Gotland’, Mare Noricum et Suecia11 ‘Sea of Noricum and the Swedish Sea’, Mar de Allemania e Mar di Gotilandia, the ‘German or the Gotland Sea.’12 Gotland is the largest island in the Baltic Sea, and Noricum was a province on the northern border of the Roman Empire, along the Danube in what is now Austria. – On fifteenth- and sixteenth-century maps,13 the Baltic Sea is also known as Gotticum Mare or Mare Goticum, which could refer to the largest island fully encompassed by the Baltic Sea or to the ethnic group of the Goths or the Gutes. – On the map by Iacomo Gastaldi (1568) the sea or the northern part of Baltic Sea Proper goes by name Golf Oster Gothico.

The hand-drawn map of northern Europe by Nikolaus Germanus in 1467 has several names for the Baltic Sea. It goes by the name of Balteatus pontus ‘Baltic Sea’ east of Jutland, whereas off the coast of Pomerania and Prussia the name turns into Sabulosus pontus ‘Sand Sea’ and into Mare Goticum further east.14 – The Miller Atlas (1519), too, which may have been co-produced by, Lopo Homem, Pedro Reinel and Jorge Reinel, illustrated by António de Holanda, the southern part of the Baltic Sea carries the name Sabulosus Pontus, while Gotticum Mare is the name northeast of this point.15

Mare Goticum (Sebastian Cabot 1544)
Mare Gotico (Iacopo Gastaldi 1561)

10 Kniga 1714.
13 Gotticum Mare (Nikolaus Germanus 1482 and the Agnese Atlas from the 1540s): Mare Goticum (Olaus Magnus 1532), G. Ruscelli, Tavola nova di Prvssia et di Livonia 1561.
In a 1658 map of Denmark, drafted by the French Sanson family, we can find three or four parallel names for the Baltic Sea: *Mare Baltique, Oost-See; ol. Mare Suevicum*, and *Codanus Sinus*. In this context, *Codanus Sinus* may refer to the entity formed by the Baltic Sea and the Kattegat strait or only to the area encompassing the Öresund (the Sound), the Kattegat and the Skagerrak. The name appears where the current Kattegat is located in the 1635 map by Willem and Johan Blaeu: *Sinus Codanu’s Schager Rack*. Also on the map by Johannes Mejer from 1650: *Sinus Codanuus vulgo* [most commonly] *das Kattegatt*.

– The Latin name *Sinus Codanus*, is mentioned in *Naturalis Historiae* by Pliny the Elder (23–79 in the Common Era, CE). The name also appears in the oldest known geographical textbook in Latin (*De Chorographia*, 43 CE). This is why *Sinus Codanus* has often been considered to be the oldest recorded version of the concept of the Baltic Sea.17

Gerard Mercator (1595) used the name *Codanus Sinus* when referring to the western part of this region. The eastern part he called *Svecium* Mare ‘Sea of Swedes/Swedish Sea’ (‘which the Germans call die Ostsee’). In his work *Germania* from the year 98, Tacitus used the name *Suebicum mare* ‘Svebian Sea’ to talk about the eastern half of the sea.18 *Suebi* was an umbrella term for German peoples residing in the northeastern parts of Germania and extending as far as the Finnish, Estonian and Sarmatian borders. They had originally inhabited the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea. ‘The Sea of Swedes’ also appears in a Danish map in 1570 (Ortelius): *Svecium Mare, olim Mare Balticum, hodie Germanis De Oost See*.19

*Mare Svevicum* (Gerardus de Jode 1578)

*Sinus codanus quod et Mare Svevicum* (Philip Cluver 1616)

*Sinus Codanuus Melae et Plinio, Mare Suevicum Tacito, Mare Balticum Adamo Brem.*

(Johannes Meier 1652)

*Sin. Codanus* [the southern part of the sea] and *Mare Sarmaticum* [the eastern part of the Baltic Sea Proper] (James Moxon 1670)

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16 Also found as *Suevicā Mare* on G. Botero map of 1582.
Perceptions on Sea Names and Marine Region Names in the Vicinity of Finland

In the great world map of 1507 by Martin Waldseemüller, the Baltic Sea is known as *Mare Germanicum sive Offner see*. This must be a misplaced name, which should have appeared where the North Sea is. The joint name for the Kattegat and the Skagerrak is *Mare Balticum*. Waldseemüller has in fact admitted in a cartouche of this map that his knowledge of the Nordic Countries could be better.

As recognised by the International Hydrographic Organization IHO, the international name of this marine region is the *Baltic Sea*.  

1) Gulf of Bothnia

The Gulf of Bothnia (Finnish: *Pohjanlahti* ‘the bottommost bay; northern bay’; Swedish: *Bottniska viken*) is the northernmost arm of the Baltic Sea. It is situated between the west coast of Finland and the east coast of Sweden.

The earliest Swedish name on a map, *Norre Bottn*, dates from 1688. The current Swedish name was established in the eighteenth century (*Botniska viken* 1743). The Finnish name *Pohjanlahti* is mentioned in 1820 and in a 1839 textbook of Finnish history: “Kahdenpuolen Pohjanlahden päästä asui Kainulaisia” [On both sides of the bottom of the Gulf of Bothnia lived Kainu people]. In the first Finnish textbook of geography in

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21 Svenskt ortnamnslexikon, p. 45.
22 Becker 1821, p. 31 and the map of Europe 1820.
23 *Suomen historia* (1839), p. 65: VNS.
1804 the names were *Pohjanmeri* (“Pohian merehen”) and *Pohjanpuoli* (“Itä-meri, iosa on 2 suurta lahtia, Pohian puoli ja Suomen puoli” ‘East Sea where are two large bays, the Northern side bay/ Bothnian side bay and the Finland’s side bay’.

The oldest maps mostly use the Latin name for the region (as does the *Carta Marina* of 1539 by Olaus Magnus, referring to the Gulf of Bothnia as *Mare Botnicum*). The Swedish and Latin names originate from Old Swedish *botten*, which has carried the meaning of a gulf or the farthest nook of a gulf. Both coasts of the Gulf of Bothnia were referred to as *Bottmen* already in the fourteenth century. *Bothnia* is a latinisation. In old maps, the ‘Gulf of Bothnia’ in various spellings is almost the sole name of this marine region.

*Sinus Boddicus* (the globe of Gemma Frisius c. 1537)

*Mare Botnicum* (Olaus Magnus 1539)

*Boddicus sinus* (Abraham Ortelius 1570)

*Noort bodem* (Lucas Waghenaer 1583)

*Nort Bodem* (Anthony Ashley 1588)

*sinus Botnicus* (Mercator 1595; in the text: on the map, the southern part of the gulf is called *Finnisch See* and the northern one *Botner See*)

*Boddicus Sinus* (John Speed 1627)

*Il’mare Botnico ò Boddico* (Robert Dudley 1646)

*Norre Bottn* (Petter Gedda 1695)

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24 Rinta-Nikkola (1804), p. 86.
Die Bothnische See oder Busem (Joh. Strindbeck Jun. 1717)
Bothnick Bay (Herman Moll 1727)
Golfe de Bothnie (R. & J. Ottens c. 1730)
Norre Bottens Wiken (Jonas Hahn 1750)
Bottniska Wiken (Hermelin/Hällström 1804)

Exceptions to the rule are Ziegler in 1532 (*Sinus Fenmonicus Sueticus*), G. Ruscelli’s *Schonladia nova* in 1561 and in 1574 (*Sinus Finonicus et Sueticus*), with their ‘Finnish and Swedish Bay.’ Other languages have adopted the name with the same contents or as phonetic adaptations:

- Estonian *Põhjalaht* or *Botnia laht*
- Latvian *Botnijas liežs*
- Lithuanian *Bönijos įlanka*
- Polish *Zatoka Botnicka*
- German *Bottnischer Meerbusen*
- Russian *Ботнічеський залих* (Botničeskij zaliv)
- French *golfe de Botnie*

2) Bay of Bothnia

The *Bothnian Bay* or the *Bay of Bothnia* (Swedish: *Bottenviken*; Finnish: *Perämeri* ‘the farthest sea’) is the northernmost part of the Gulf of Bothnia, which is in turn the northern corner of the Baltic Sea. The name has historically been in Finnish *Kainuunmeri* ‘Sea of Kainuu / Kven Sea’ (*Kaino more, Kajano more* 1323, *Kainw mare* 1504, *mare Cairo* 1535, *Keynus mehre* 1561) as a testament to the old meaning of *kainu* ~ *kainulainen*, signifying Finns residing on the coast of the Bay of Bothnia. The name *Kainuunmeri* has been used as recently as the end of the nineteenth century. The old tradition is still alive in the village name *Kainuukylä* and in the town name *Kainuu* (Swedish *Kalix*) near by the coast of the Bothnian Bay.\(^{25}\)

The Finnish name *Perämeri* was adopted only in 1910 during the production of the Finnish Geographical Atlas (*Suomen Kartasto*), and the names appear in parallel in an

\(^{25}\) Räisänen (2007), *Kainuu, Kainuunkylä, Perämeri*. In: SPNK.

This marine region has various names in international maps from the sixteenth century on, such as *Botnisch mare* (Münster 1544), *Botner See* (Mercator 1595), *Golfo Botnico* (Iacomo Gastaldi 1568) and *Bodner See* (Matthäus Merian 1695).

Russian ボトニッシュ ゼーフ / Боттенвикен

Estonian *Perämeri* (a Finnish endonym)

Latvian: *Botnijas līcis / Botenvikens*

Lithuanian *Botenvikenas*

Polish *Botnik Północny*

German *Bottenwiek*

French *baie de Botnie*

3) Bothnian Sea

The Bothnian Sea (Finnish: *Selkämeri* ‘Open Sea’; Swedish: *Bottenhavet*) is the southern half of the Gulf of Bothnia. Old maps rarely give a name to this area. Sometimes it is called the ‘Swedish Sea’ (as in Olaus Magnus 1539, referring to the western parts of the area with *Mare Sveticum* and in the 1558 map by Cornelis Anthonisz 1558: *D. Swetsce Zee*). At other times, it is known as the ‘Finnish Sea’ (at least in Mercator in 1595: *Finnisch See*).

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Swedish name *Bottenhavet* has been considered a latecomer (*Botten-hafvet* 1811\(^ {28} \)). The Swedish–speaking seal hunters of the Finnish coastline named this sea *Södersjön* ‘Southern Sea’, while the Alanders continue to call it *Norrhavet* ‘Northern Sea’, as it is located north of the Åland islands.\(^ {29} \) *Söderhavet* ‘Southern Sea’ to them meant the marine region south of Åland.

*Golfo Svetico* (Iacomo Gastaldi 1568)

*Swedisch Mare* (Sebastian Münster 1577)

*Finnisch See* (Matthäus Merian 1695)

As far as we know, the Finnish name was coined by the Hydrological Research Institute operating under the Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters (*Suomen Tiedeseura*).

The Finnish names of the gulfs and bays of the Baltic Sea came up during the production of the Finnish atlas, which was published in 1910. The atlas makes clear that the southern half of the Gulf of Bothnia had been known as *Selkämeri* ‘Open Sea’ and the northern half as *Perämeri* (= Bay of Bothnia). According to a 1915 encyclopedia, the more southern half of the Gulf of Bothnia was often labelled as *Raumanmeri* ‘Rauma Sea’ (in accordance with the medieval coast town of *Rauma*) and was sometimes known as *Selkämeri* in literature. The Finnish name *Selkämeri* grew to be

\(^ {28} \) Svenskt ortnamnslexikon, p. 45.

\(^ {29} \) Slotte, P. (2007), *Bottenviken*. In: SPNK.
established in the 1920s thanks to geographical textbooks and nautical charts.  

Estonian Selkämeri (Finnish endonym)  
Latvian Botenhavets / Botnijas jūra  
Lithuanian Botenhavetas / Botnijos jūra  
Russian Боттенхав (Bottenhav) / Ботническое море (Botničeskoe more)

I know of only one name dispute in the Baltic Sea area. People in the Rauma region have repeatedly suggested that the whole of the Bothnian Sea should be called Raumanmeri (Raumosjön in Swedish). Some maps have indeed used this form as the primary name of the Bothnian Sea, recording Selkämeri only in brackets. The Finnish name Raumanmeri has typically been reserved for the Finnish half of the Bothnian Sea off the coast of Satakunta

4) Kvarken

Kvarken (Finnish Merenkurkku; Swedish Kvarken or Norra Kvarken as opposed to Södra Kvarken ‘South Kvarken’, which refers to the northern half of the Sea of Åland) is the narrow neck of the Gulf of Bothnia separating the Bothnian Bay (the inner part of the gulf) from the Bothnian Sea. The name is mentioned in literary sources already in the late sixteenth century. The name goes back to the Swedish word of kvärk or kvark, which refers to the narrow ‘throat or neck’ in the middle of the Gulf of Bothnia. The Finnish name

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30 Paikkala (2007), Selkämeri. In: SPNK.
32 Paikkala (2007), Raumanmeri. In: SPNK.
Merenkurkku contains the word for ‘throat’ in Finnish. We have data on the Finnish name from 1847 onward.\textsuperscript{33}

\textit{Querken} (Anders Bure 1611 and 1662; Nicolas J. Piscator c. 1633)
\textit{Öster Qwerkan} 1694\textsuperscript{34}
\textit{Kuerken} (Olof Rudbeck 1701)
\textit{Ö. Kvarken} (Bonnier 1948)
Estonian \textit{Kvarken /Põhja-Kvarkeni vääin}
German \textit{Kvarken}
Lithuanian \textit{Kvarken as}
Polish \textit{Kvarken Północny}
Russian Норра-Кваркен, пролив
\textit{(Norra-Kvarken, proliv)}

5) Archipelago Sea

The Archipelago Sea (Finnish \textit{Saaristomeri} and Swedish \textit{Skärgårdshavet} which have the same meaning as the English name has) is a part of the Baltic Sea between the Gulf of Bothnia, the Gulf of Finland and the Sea of Åland, within Finnish territorial waters. The name is a coinage. The Finnish name first appears in a primary-school geography textbook\textsuperscript{35} in 1916, which says that “Pohjanlahden ja Suomenlahden väällä on \textit{Saaristomeri}” [‘between the Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland lies the Archipelago Sea’]. The Finnish and Swedish names began to be widely used in the 1960s. The name

\textsuperscript{33} Slotte, P., \textit{Merenkurkku.} In: SPNK.
\textsuperscript{34} Svenskt ortnamnslexikon, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{35} Jotuni (1916): Paikkala (2007), \textit{Saaristomeri.} In: SPNK.
refers to the string of islands in the Åland Islands and off the city of Turku.

Estonian Saaristomeri
Danish Skærgårds havet
German Schärenmeer
Latvian Šēru jūra
Lithuanian Archipelago jūra
Polish Morze Archipelagowe
Russian Архипелаговое море (Arhipelagovoe more)

6) Åland Sea

The Sea of Åland (Finnish: Ahvenanmeri; Swedish: Ålands hav) is a waterway in the southern Gulf of Bothnia, between the Åland islands and Sweden. It connects the Bothnian Sea with the Baltic Sea proper. The specific term of the English name is the same as in the Swedish one. The first mention of the Åland Sea (c. 1250) comes from a Danish account of a medieval sailing route detailing the route from Arnholm in Sweden across the Åland Sea, “trans mare Aland”. The sea name contains the Swedish name of the Åland province. The name originates in Sweden, that is, in the west from the Finnish perspective. The Finnish name Ahvenanmeri includes the Finnish name of the province Ahvenanmaa ‘Ahvenaland.’

Figure 8. The area of the Sea of Åland

Source: “Ålands hav” by MoRsE. Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%C3%85lands_hav.png#/media/File:%C3%85lands_hav.png

Alandz haff (c. 1340)
Alands Haaf (Frederick de Wit c. 1690)
Aland Haaf (Nicolaus de Vries 1709)
Aland Haff (Johan-Elias Grimmel 1742)
Ålands Haaf (Jonas Hahn 1750)
Аландсъ гафъ (Alands haf) (Aleksei Nagajev 1739 – 1752)
Estonian Ahvenameri
Danish Ålandshavet
German Alandsee / Äländers improved
Latvian Olandes jūra
Polish Morze Alandzkie
Russian Аландское море
(Alandskoe more)

7) Gulf of Finland

The Baltic Sea region between Finland and Estonia bordering on Russia is the Gulf of Finland, Suomenlahti in Finnish and Finska viken in Swedish. In the thirteenth century when the concept of Finland was still undeveloped, seafarers used the name Mare Estonum ‘Estonian Sea’ (c. 1250). To begin with, Finland only referred to what is currently in Finnish Varsinais-Suomi ‘Finland Proper’. This is the southwestern province in Finland, and the core of this area is not really on the coast of the Gulf of Finland. At least from the 16th century onward, old maps call

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37 Svenskt ortnamnslexikon, p. 378.
38 Diplomatarium Fennicum: http://extranet.narc.fi/DF/detail.php?id=100. Although the name Suomenvesi (Some wesi; vesi ‘water area’) exists in the Treaty of Oreshek in 1323.
this marine region almost invariably the ‘Gulf of Finland’, making occasional use of the ‘Sea of Finland’. The Finnish name Suomen lahti makes its first appearance in a statute from 1771 (Suomen lahdesa ‘in the Gulf of Finland’), in 1804 the name is Suomenlahti or Suomen-meri. The name has an identical meaning also in Estonian (Soome laht), Latvian (Somu līcis), Lithuanian (Suomijos įlanka), Polish (Zatoka Fińska), Russian (Финский залив, Finskij zaliv), German (Finnischer Meerbusen) and French (golfe de Finlande). — The name refers both to the location of the sea off the coast of Finland and to the direction of the sea from the perspective of the author of the name. It also tells the name of the route leading to Finland.

Mare Finonicum sive Sinus Venedicus (Olaus Magnus 1539) ['Finnish Sea or Wendian Bay']

M. Finonicum (the Agnese Atlas from the 1540s).

Golfo Finisco (Iacomo Gastaldi 1568)

Finnicus sinus (Abra’ham Ortelius 1570 and Mercator 1554, 1569, 1595).

['Finnish Bay’]

Finnish Gulf (John Speed 1627)

Golfe de Finlande (Adam Olearius 1659)

Finske Bottn (Carl Gripenhielm 1688: botten’gulf or the farthest nook of a gulf’)

Заливъ Фїнскїи Sinus Finicus (Akim Klešnin 1724)

Gulf of Finland (Herman Moll 1727)

Golfe de Finlande (R. & J. Ottens c. 1730)

Finska Wiken (Jonas Hahn 1750)

The map of Olaus Magnus (1539) gives the parallel name ‘Wends’ Bay’ (Sinus Venedicus), whereas the globe of Gemma Frisius from about 1537 contains the name Sinus Liuonicus Rutenicus ‘Livonian or Rutenian/Russian Bay’. The map’s inaccuracies may have led to a misunderstanding between the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Riga. These may have blended into one: ‘Livonia’ pertains to the Livonian region, while Rutenia has nothing to do with the Slavic tribe of Ruthenes but rather refers to Russia. In Lucas

40 Slotte, Kr. (2007), Suomenlahti. In: SPNK.
Wagenaer’s map (1596 – 1598), the northern half of the marine region is called *Finnicus Sinus* and the southern half goes by the name of *Mare Livicum* or the *Lifflandtsche Zee*. It is very likely that here, too, the southern name refers to the Gulf of Riga, as this is where Livonia was located. – However, the map of Livonia by Johannes Portantius (1573 – 1598) separates between the Gulf of Riga (*Sinus Magnus Liuoniæ*) and the Gulf of Finland, which he calls *Sinus Posterior Liuonię*, ‘the posterior bay of Livonia’. This is also the case in the map prepared by Maciej Strubycz from 1589. In later maps of Livonia, the Gulf of Riga is still called the ‘Great Livonian Bay’, but the Gulf of Finland is known as precisely that, no longer as ‘the posterior bay of Livonia’. The name appears as *Colf Delivonia Altri Colfo Moscovitico* ‘Livonian or the Muscovitian Gulf’ in the *Moscovia* map by S. von Herberstein in 1546. This, too, may refer to the Gulf of Riga.

*Sinus Livonicus et Ruthenicus* (Sigismund Herberstein 1549)
*Sinus Finnicus olim Venedicus* (Johannes Meier 1652)
*Golfe de Finlande ou de Livonie* (Nicolas Sanson 1666)

8) Gulf of Riga

The *Gulf of Riga* in the Baltic Sea takes its name from the town of Riga also in Finnish and Latvian: it is *Riianlahti* in Finnish, *Rigabukten* in Swedish, *Rīgas jūras līcis* in Latvian. Estonians, who live closer to the region, call it *Liivi laht* ‘Gulf of Livonia’ and *Riia laht*. The Lithuanian name is *Rygos įlanka*, the Poles call it *Zatoka Ryska*, the Russian name is Ри́жский зали́в (Rižskij zaliv), the Danish name is *Rigabugten* and the German name is *Rigaischer Meerbusen*. The name *Riianlahti* first appears in its Finnish form in 1844 (written *Riigan lahti*). It seems that the ‘Gulf of Livonia’ started to be replaced by the ‘Gulf of Riga’ in maps after the mid–seventeenth century.

The map *Tavola nvova di Prvssia et di Livonia* of G. Ruscelli (1561) calls the sea east of Gotland *Mare di Livonia* and the sea south of the island *Mare Gothico*. The map of Gotland in Tomasco Porrachi’s work *L’Isole più famose del mondo* (1572) has the names *Mare Livonico* and *Mare Gothico*. The ‘Livonian Sea’ has apparently been placed erroneously in the middle of the Baltic Proper, unless the ‘Livonian Sea’ has been

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considered to extend beyond the Gulf of Riga to cover a part of the Baltic Sea off the coast of the gulf.\footnote{See also Jode (1593) \textit{Mare Livonicus}.}

\textit{Mare Livonicum} (Olaus Magnus 1539)
\textit{Golfo Livonico} (Iacomo Gastaldi 1568)
\textit{Sinus Magnus Luioniae} (Johannes Portantius 1573 – 1598)
\textit{Rigisch boden} [and \textit{Sinus magnus Luione} as the name of the eastern part of the bay] (Gerard de Jode 1593)
\textit{Rigsche Bodem} (Petrus Plancius 1594)
\textit{Clilipenus Sinus} (Philip Cluver 1616)
\textit{Sinus Magnus Livonie} (Petrus Kærers c. 1630)
\textit{Sinus Magnus Livoniae} (Johannes Janssonius (c. 1630)
\textit{Venedicus Sinus} (Johannes Meier 1652)
\textit{Golfe de Livonie} (Adam Olearius 1659)
\textit{Sin. Venedicus} (James Moxon 1670)
\textit{Sinus Rigensis} (Gerardus Valck c. 1673 – 1686)
\textit{Magnus Sinus Livoniae} (Pierre van der Aa c. 1674 – 1729)
\textit{Golfe de Riga} (Guillaume Sanson 1681)
\textit{Sinus Rigensis} (after Frederik de Wit 1688)
\textit{Golfe de Livonie ou de Riga} (N. de Fer 1700)
\textit{Golfe de Riga} (J. van Lugtenburg 1711)
\textit{Die Rigische See oder Busem} (Joh. Strindbeck Jun. 1717)
\textit{Livonian Sea} (Hermann Moll 1727)
\textit{Golfe de Livonie} (R. & J. Ottens c. 1730)

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Rigabukten.png}
\caption{The area of the Gulf of Riga.}
\end{figure}

Source: “Rigabukten” av MoRsE. Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rigabukten.png#/media/File:Rigabukten.png
2. Other seas in the vicinity of Finland

1) White Sea

There is a bay of the Barents Sea in Russia, northeast of Finland, which goes by the name of the White Sea; it is known as Vita havet in Swedish, Белое море (Beloe more) in Russian and as Серако ям (Serako yam) in the language of the Nenets people living close by. The Karelian and Finnish names for this marine region come from a different source: the Finnish Vienanmeri, ‘the Sea of Viena’ is based on the name of the Viena region. Vian Karjala ‘White Sea Karelia’ is a historical geographical region in the north of Russian Karelia. We encounter the Finnish name Wienanmeri (Wienammereen ‘to Vienanmeri) in 1839\(^\text{43}\) and Walkinen meri in 1804\(^\text{44}\) or Walkonen Meri in 1820\(^\text{45}\) or Walkia Meri ‘White Sea’ in 1844,\(^\text{46}\) but the latter was

\(^{43}\) Suomen historia, p. 6; VNS.

\(^{44}\) Rinta–Nikkola 1804, p. 9.

\(^{45}\) von Becker 1820.

\(^{46}\) Ahlqvist (1844), p. 22; – L. S. Platou 1812 ”Det hvide hav, en meget stor havbugt I Rusland”, p. 12; VNS.
discarded during the course of the nineteenth century. Languages other than Finnish refer to the 'White Sea' without exception: for example, *Valge meri* in Estonian, *Baltā jūra* in Latvian, *Baltoji jūra* in Lithuanian, *Morze Białe* in Polish, *Kvitsjøen*, *Kvitehavet* or *Hvitehavet* in Norwegian *bokmål*, *Kvitsjøen* or *Kvithavet* in New Norwegian and *Hvidehavet* in Danish.

In the Norse mythology there is a dangerous sea called *Gandvīk* (misspelled also *Grandvik*), known also as “the bay of Serpents” because of its tortuous shape. According to most modern authors the name seems to refer to the White Sea.

Old maps also talk about the ‘White Sea’ or the ‘White Lake’ almost without fail. Adrian Veen (1613) does, however, give the parallel name of *Sinus Grandicus*, citing also another parallel name, *Bella more*, as a phonetic adaptation of the Russian name. The word ‘lake’ is used, when the maps depict these waters as a lake, without a connection to the northern sea areas. On the map of Olaus Magnus (edition 1567) *Granduicus Sinus* refers to the bay and *Lacus albus* to the lake to north of it. Also on the map of Mercator (1607) the sea is drawn in two separate parts: *Albus Lacus and Bella more*.

The onomastic counterweight of the 'White Sea' has historically been *Lake Ladoga* further in the south, traditionally (in old maps) known as, for example, *Schwartz See*, *Lacus niger* ‘Black Lake’.

The sea has also had the name *St. Nicholas Bay* because there was in the 16th century an important military harbour in the present Severodvinsk. Harbour’s name was based on the name of St. Nikolo monastery. The British sailors visited the monastery in 1553. The whole White Sea became known in 16th century English maps as “St. Nicholas Bay”.

*Lacus Albus* (Olaus Magnus 1539)
*Der wys see* (Sebastian Münster 1544)
*Lago Bianco* [the western part] and *Golfo Gradvich* [the eastern part] (Iacomo Gastaldi 1568)
*Granduicus sinus* (Abraham Ortelius 1595)

48 Heimkringla, p. 314.
[the northern part] *Mourmanska more* ‘Murmansk Sea’, [the southern part] *biella more* (Simon von Salingen 1601)

*Bella more id est Album mare olim Sinus Grandicus* (Adriaan Veen 1613)

*Bella more hoc est Album mare olim Sinus Granduicus* (Andreas Buraeus 1626)

*Bellamore, autrement Mer Blanche, et Golfe de S. Nicolas* (Pierre de Val 1677)

*White Sea of old Granduicus sinus* (Richard Blome c. 1680)

*Mare Album* (Frederic de Wit 1688)

*Bella More ou Mer Blanche* (Guillaume Sanson 1692)

Бѣлое море (Piter Picart 1720–1721)

*Bela More ou Mer Blanche* (R. & J. Ottens c. 1730)

*White Sea* (Laurie & Whittle 1812)

### 2) Arctic Ocean or Arctic Sea

The Arctic Ocean, located in the northern hemisphere and mostly in the Arctic north polar region, is called *Jäämeri* ‘Ice Sea’ or *Pohjoinen jäämeri* ‘Northern Ice Sea’ in Finnish, and *Norra ishavet, Arktiska havet* or *Arktiska oceanen* in Swedish. The Finnish name is first mentioned in 1771 (‘*hamaan Jäämereen asti* ‘all the way to the Arctic Sea’),\(^{50}\) in the first Finnish textbook of geography (1804\(^{51}\)) the names were *Pohia oceanus* and *Jäämeri*. The forms *Pohjoinen Jäämeri* ‘Northern Ice Sea’ or *Jäämeri* ‘Ice Sea’ have probably come to the Finnish language from Swedish. The previous Finnish name has apparently been *Ruijanmeri* (*Ruidan meri* 1762, *Rujan-meri* 1820\(^{52}\); *“Rujan eli Rutjan meri jota myös Jäämerekse mainitaan”*\(^{53}\) ‘the Sea of Ruja or Rutja which is also called the Ice Sea’) and then as translated from the Swedish language *Pohjois-Jäämeri* (*Pohjais-Jäämeri taikka Rutjan Meri*), ‘Northern Ice Sea or Sea of Ruija [Finnmark]’ 1844\(^{54}\) or a shorter one *Pohjanmeri* ‘Northern Sea’, as this occurs occasionally in nineteenth-century newspapers.

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\(^{50}\) VKS: Finnish translation of the 1771 decree issued by the king of Sweden.

\(^{51}\) Rinta-Nikkola 1804, p. 7.

\(^{52}\) Becker 1821 [1820].

\(^{53}\) Becker 1821: 30.

\(^{54}\) Ahlqvist 1844: 15. – Platou 1812: 10 "Nord–ishavet, rundt om Nordpolen". *Rutjanmeren* 1831 (Otava 1)
The Finnish name *Ruija* (*Rudia* 1764) means ‘Finnmark in Norwegen’, in folklore ‘the northern area’, and the Finnish word *ruija(t), rutja(t)* ‘the aurora borealis’. The name *Ruijanmeri* has naturally referred to the sea area viewed from the coastal area of the Northern Norway.

The name has been adopted with the same meaning as in other languages, even if the native peoples probably had their own names for this marine region. However, the Northern and Inari Sami spoken in Finland have adopted the name in accordance with international practice, calling this sea *Jiekŋamearra* and *Jiekŋaáhpi*, which can be translated as ‘Ice Sea’. The Russian name is Северный Ледовитый океан (*Severnyj Ledovityj okean*) ‘Northern Ice Ocean’ while Estonians talk about *Põhja-Jäämeri* ‘Northern Ice Ocean’ or the *Arktika ookean*. The sea is called *Ziemelu lebus okeans* ‘Northern Ice Sea’ in Latvian, *Artikias vandenynas* ‘Arctic Ocean’ in Lithuanian, *Ocean Arktycny* ‘Arctic Ocean’in Polish), *Arktische Ozean* and also *Nordpolarmeer, Nördliches Eismeer, Arktische See* or, in short, *Arktik* in German, *océan Arctique* and *océan Glacial arctique* ‘Arctic Ice Sea’ in French, *Ishavet* and *Arktiske Hav* in Danish and *Nordishavet* or *Polhavet* in New Norwegian and Norwegian bokmål.

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55 SSA, p. 100, 112.
In old maps, names referring to ice – such as *Mare Congelatum* (Claudius Clavus 1425–1439) and *Mare glaciale* (1482 Nicolaus Germanus: Geographica)

- *Mare Congelatum* (Claudius Clavus 1425–1439)
- *Mare glaciale* (1482 Nicolaus Germanus: Geographica)
- *Mare Glaciale sive Congela Mare Glaciale* (Waldseemüller 1507)
- *Arctic Icy Sea* (L. S. Delarochette 1794)
- *Icy Sea* (Laurie & Whittle 1812)

alternate with names referring to the north, such as *Oceanus Hyperboreus* (Sebastian Münster 1544) and *Oceanus Septentrionalis* (Mercator 1595).

- *Oceanus Hyperboreus* (Sebastian Münster 1544)
- *Oceanus Septentrionalis* (Mercator 1595)
- *Oceanus Septentrionalis* (Adriaan Veen 1613)
- *The North Ocean* (John Speed 1627)
**Mare Septentrionale** (Johannes Janssonius 1628–1651)

**Noort-Zee ou Ocean Septentrional** (Guillaume Sanson 1692)

**Northern Ocean** (Herman Moll 1727; the name could perhaps refer only the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean and/or the Norwegian Sea)

**Northern Ocean** (Evans Smith 1851)

Only rarely do both of these characteristics appear. These maps tend to be rather new, as in the case of **Nördl Eis Meer** (Justus Perthes 1852). However, they are seen already on the map by Abraham Ortelius (1567): **Mare Congelatum**, and further west **Oceanus Hyperboreus** and south of this, between Iceland and Norway, **Oceanus Deucalidonius** ‘Caledonian or Scottish Sea’, and on the later edition 1595: north of Norway **Oceanus Septentrionalis qui et Hyperboreus**, north of the Kola Peninsula **Amalchium mare** (Hecataeo), **Morinarusa** (à Cimbris vocatur), and further to the east together the names **Oceanus Sarmaticus** (Plinio et Melæ), **Oceanus Scythicus** (Ptolemaeo), **Oceanus Euroboreus** (Iornandi). On the map by Philip Cluver (1616) appears **Amalchium Mare** as a name of the Arctic Ocean or the Murmansk Sea.

In such names as **Oceanus Septentrionalis**, the meaning may have extended beyond the ‘Northern Ice Sea’ and may have encompassed the Norwegian Sea, the North Sea and a part of the Northern Atlantic. Paolo Forlani’s **Oceano Sithico** (1570) possibly refers to the ‘Scythian Sea’ (as part of the Arctic Oceania). According to a Greek belief, the Scythians were the northernmost people on earth: the Scythian realm extended to the borders of regions where snowfall was constant. Beyond this country lay **Hyperborea**, where the sun would rise and set only once a year and where the people lived to be a thousand years old in a state of perfect happiness.

The maps do not always make it clear what they refer to: does the name cover only a limited marine region or that which we now call the Arctic Ocean? For example, the map of Europe by Abraham Ortelius (1567) uses the name **Ocean Hyperboreas** to denote the westernmost part of what is now the Arctic Ocean, but talks about **Mare Septentrional** with Scandinavia and employs **Oceanus Schytius** east of this point. Apparently, the ‘Tatars’ Sea’, which usually occurs north of Siberia (for example, **Oceanus Tartaricus** in 1607 by Petrus Kaerius) is meant to denote only the eastern half of the Arctic Ocean. Obvious regional sea names include the ‘Sea of the Lena River’, **Mer de Len**, and the ‘Amur Sea/Sea of the Amur River’, **Mer de Amur**, which we can find on the map by Guillaume Delisle from 1714.
Perceptions on Sea Names and Marine Region Names in the Vicinity of Finland

north of Norway: *Cronium Mare*, and to the east of it: *Amalchium Mare, sive Mori Marusa* ['sea of death'], *h.e. Mare mortuum (Tacito), pigrum et Immobile, al. Congelatum et Glaciale* (Johannes Meier 1652)

*Mer de Moscovie* (Pierre du Val 1676)
*Mer du Nord* (Henri A. Chatelain 1714)

3) North Sea

The sea area between continental Europe, Scandinavia and the British Isles has also had a significant role in Finnish seafaring. The *North Sea* (Finnish: *Pohjanmeri,* Swedish: *Nordsjön*) has provided a passage from the Baltic Sea to the wide oceans. Its Finnish name is most likely a Swedish loan. An alternative Finnish name was *Saksanmeri* ‘German Sea’ from 1776 (“Saxan ympäri owat Pohjan puolella Saxan Meri, Danmarkki ja niin kutzuttu Itä-meri”: ‘Germany is surrounded by the “German Sea”, Denmark and the so-called “East Sea” in the north’).  

The name *Pohjanmeri* as pertaining to the North Sea appears in the Finnish language in 1776 (“Ruotzi sattuu Lännen puolella *Pohjan Mereen* ja Norjaan”: ‘Sweden borders on the “North Sea” and Norway in the West’).  

The Finnish *Saksanmeri* is in a way a mistranslation of the

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56 STS, no. 10, 1th Juni 1776. http://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/sanomalehti/binding/1104707/#?page=2; see also the Fig. 11.

57 Also the name *Pohja-lahti* ‘North bay’ has been used in Finnish (Rinta–Nikkola 1804, p. 43, 70).

58 STS, no. 19, 1th October 1776.  
original name, which signifies the ‘German Sea’. In the Finnish language, saksa has historically referred to Lower Saxony, and the word has since extended to also include other German tribes residing in what is now Germany. The name Saksa is today a Finnish exonym of Deutschland ‘Germany’.

The ‘North Sea’ of the oldest maps was larger than the North Sea of today, covering The Norwegian Sea, northern parts of the Atlantic and at least a part of the Arctic Ocean.

The North Sea carries the same meaning in many other languages, too.

f.ex. in German (Nordsee), French (mer du Nord), Dutch (Noordzee), Dutch Low Saxon (Noordzee), West Flemish (Nôordzee), Zeeuws (Noordzee), Frisian (Noardzee), Low German (Noordzee), Norwegian bokmål and New Norwegian (Nordsjøen), Danish (Nordsøen; but also Vesterhavet ‘West Sea’), Estonian (Põhjameri), Latvian Ziemeljūra, Lithuanian Šiaurės jūra, Polish Morze Północne and Russian (Северное море, Severnoe more),

even if it is clearly located to the north of continental Europe only. The previous German names were Westssee and Deutsches Meer ‘German Sea’. Danish has the parallel name of ‘West Sea’ (Vesterhavet), as does Northern Frisian (Weestsiie). The Scots language recognises the name German Ocean, while Scottish Gaelic calls this sea An Cuan a Tuath ‘Northern Sea’.

On a map of Norway from 1583 (by Lucas Waghenaer) the name appears as Noordt Zee. In Waghenaer’s 1584 map this (Nordzee, or Oceani Germanici in Latin) is found where the Skagerrak is, west of which lay De Zee de Pol in genaempt de Beldin.

It appeared above that today’s North Sea has also been called the ‘German Sea’ or the ‘German Ocean’ (with reference to the Latin name Oceanus Germanicus). Both names were still in use in the 1830s. In antiquity, this sea was known as Oceanus Germanicus or Mare Germanicum, which served as the basis of loan into other European languages. Pliny the Elder (23 – 79 CE) referred to the North Sea as Germanium Mare alongside the more common Septentrionalis oceanus. The name also appears in Germania (98 CE) by Tacitus and made its way to medieval and modern nautical charts.59

59 Wikipedia (English) 9th August 2015.
The name can also be found in a third-century Ptolemaic map in its Greek form Γερμανικὸς Ὠκεανός (Germanikós Ὠκεανός). From Greek it was translated into Latin as Oceanus Germanicus or Mare Germanicum, and then into English as the German Sea and into German as Deutsches Meer. 

*Germanicum mare* (Nicolaus Germanus 1482)
*Oceanus Germanicus* (Ptolemaic map of Britain 1486, Lienhart Holle)
*Oceanus Germanicus* (Hartmann Schedel 1493)
*Das Gross Deutsch mer* (Erhard Erzlaub 1500)
*Oceanus Germanicus* (Ortelius 1570)
*Mare Germanicum, vulgo De Noord Zee* (Adriaan Veen 1613)
*Noort zee* (Joan Blaeu 1664)
*Northern Ocean* (James Moxon 1670)
*German or North Sea* (Hermann Moll 1727)
*Нѣмщкое море* (‘German Sea’) (Georgi Kazalov 1758)

A third relatively common name for this sea is the ‘Western Sea’. *Oceanus occidentalis* ‘Western Sea’ on Ziegler’s 1532 map may refer to the North Sea or the Atlantic, for the name has been positioned partly above the North Sea, partly between the islands of Ireland and England. As a rule, the name *Oceanus Occidentalis* has referred to the Atlantic Ocean.

The ‘Western Sea’ (*West See*) is found in the map of Holstein (Gerard Mercator 1596), which has *Oceanus Germanicus* in small print underneath. The ‘Western Sea’ has mainly been used by the Danes, while the different variants of the ‘Western Sea’ typically signify the Atlantic. In the Danish database *Danmarks Stednavne* we can find following names: *Occidentalis Oceanus* (Saxo Grammaticus 12th century), *Noricum fretum* (Saxo Grammaticus 12th century), *iotlandz hafi* 1051 and *dat Westerhaf* 1332.

*De West See* (Mark Jordan 1558)
*Westerse* (Laurentz Benedicht, printed in Copenhagen 1568)
*Vester Sioen* (Jonas Hahn 1748)

In Sanson’s map depicting Denmark (1658), *Nort See olim Septentr* or *Oceanus* is the name

60 Nordsee: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nordsee#Namen
of a larger marine region. A part of this on the west coast of Jutland appears as *West-See ol. Cimbricum Mare* ‘Cimbrian Sea’. According to Pliny the Elder, the Cimbri were a Germanic tribe residing in north Jutland. They left their domicile already around 120 BCE, battling the Romans in various parts of continental Europe and vanishing off the face of the earth in the process. Jutland carries the name of *Cimbria* on some maps as late as the sixteenth century (Ziegler 1532: *Cimbrj*, Münster 1540: *Iuthia Cimbria*, Ortelius 1570: *Chersonesus Cimbrica* ‘Cimbrian Peninsula’ [Jutland], Mejerus 1650: *Mare Cimbrici pars de West See*).

Other common names in use for long periods were the Latin terms *Mare Frisicum*, as well as their English equivalents, ‘Frisian Sea’61 ‘The North Sea is also known as the ‘English Sea’ (*Das Engelsch more*, Münster 1544) and the ‘British Sea’. For example, Olaus Magnus (1539) uses not only *Mare Germanicum*, but also *Oceanus Britannicus* closer to the British Isles. In most maps, however, it is the English Channel which is known as the ‘British or English Sea’ (for example, *Oceanus Britannicus* in 1605 by Johannes Vrints; *Mare Anglicum* 1546 Münster). The map of Nicolas de Fer from around 1700 which depicts Denmark (Dannemarq) and southern Götaland (Sud-Gothlande), the coastal waters of western Jutland are called *Mer de Dannemarq* ‘Danish Sea’. Guillaume Sanson’s 1692 map refers to the North Sea as *Le Grand Ocean*, the ‘Great Ocean’, and employs *Noort-Zee* to refer to the Arctic Ocean. On this very map *Le Grand Ocean* may also denote the entire Atlantic Ocean.

*Mer de Danemarck* (G. Sanson 1668)

*Mer. de Danemarq* (and below of it *Mer d’Alemagne* ‘German Sea’) (Pierre d Val 1676)

*Mare di Danimarca* (Antonio Zatta 1781) as the name of the eastern part of the sea

3. Conclusion

It is usually the most easily discernible and the most important targets and objects that are first given their names. Macrotoponyms generally represent the oldest naming layer. Once a name exists, it is easily loaned into other users’ language as a phonetic adaptation or as a translation. Sometimes parallel names come into being, with entirely different contents.

61 Wikipedia 9th July 2015.
Sea names which have been used only nationally or in a more limited area have rarely found their way to old maps. An exception is Der Curische Haff (on the fortification map of Memel by Smenai Anraksin 1757), in English Curonian Lagoon, in Finnish Kuurinhaffi.\(^6\) When the production of larger-scale maps started, the focus usually lay on land areas. Locally used sea names – such as the Finnish Kainuunmeri, Raumanmeri and the Swedish Norrhavet north of the Åland Islands – did not really appear on the new maps.

Before the advent of roads, seas and waterways served as major routes, and they still do. Objects which have been named understandably have showed the way. The names reflect the travellers’ needs and help make sense of the direction, location, destination and the links and interrelationships of places. Those, too, residing in one place – on the coast in particular, but also those further inland – have needed to use sea names to varying degrees. Names which give guidance and denote a location include the Indian Ocean (this also has names with different meanings in Hindi, for example), the English Channel, The Gulf of Mexico, and the Celebes Sea. Some objects have been named for an external characteristic, such as the Kattegat, the Mediterranean Sea and the Sargasso Sea. Large objects have also been given mythological names, such as the Atlantic Ocean (Ancient Greek Ἀτλαντὶς θάλασσα, Atlantis thalassa, the ‘Sea of Atlas’) and the Ionian Sea. The travellers here have included local residents, hunters, fishermen, merchants, seafarers, map makers, explorers and colonialists.

When a name gets established, an important role is played by the advances and status of a literary language. Finnish became an official language in Finland during the nineteenth century. To help the language get rooted, one needed textbooks and atlases in Finnish. They were produced by translating works from foreign languages. While this was going on, names were also translated. — In particular, there is an urgent need to agree on the names of objects crossing national borders which could be used in international contexts. Different languages may nevertheless contain a number of different names for such objects, both endonyms and exonyms.

Many names which today could be seen as political or hegemonic, have not necessarily always had these labels. Names adopted into common use – direct loans or

loan translations in particular – have long ago lost their contents. They have in practice
turned into neutral labels denoting, identifying and locating the object. They function as
an address without our having to think about their contents in our daily lives. This can
happen to international and national names alike.

The names have become our common property.

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Perceptions on Sea Names and Marine Region Names in the Vicinity of Finland


**Maps used on websites:**


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