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Histoire du Japon moderne et contemporain : permanences et ruptures

«Visual Representation of Japan in the Abraham Ortelius Theatrum Orbis Terrarum»

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### Abstract

First published in 1570, Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* is commonly considered the first modern atlas. Although the first separate map of Japan appeared only in the 1595 edition of the atlas, the country was depicted on the maps of the world or regions starting with the first edition.

Japan first became known to the Europeans at the close of the 13th century through the account of Marco Polo who described it as a single island. Later, the Europeans mapping East Asia seemed to have used the representation of Japan from Chinese maps, with the background of the earliest depictions of the archipelago as a single island descending from them. A turning point in representation of Japan came with the Portuguese, who maintained the closest connections with the island kingdom in the early period of European acquaintance with it.

This presentation outlines direct or indirect usage of East Asian sources of the visual representation of Japan in the European maps and to reveal characteristic features of the archipelago's representation when European mapmakers got an opportunity to be acquainted with Japanese maps and measure the islands directly; such was the case of maps made by Ignacio Moreira (1538/39-?), Luis Teixeira (1564-1604).

Teixeira's map of Japan (*Japoniae Insulae Descriptio*) represents a compilation of Portuguese and Japanese information in which the latter dominates, primarily that obtained in Gyogyi-type maps.

The presentation demonstrates how Chinese and Japanese cartographical sources were used in Japan's representation in the Ortelius Atlas Maps (which include maps of the world, Asia, Tartaria, East Indies, China, Pacific Ocean and a single map of Japan). One more purpose is to demonstrate the cross-influence, interdependence among modern Far Eastern and Western cartographies in mapping Japan.