

An Analysis on Maps Related to Northeast Asia in Major Western Historical Atlases: Focusing on Cartographic and Historical Geographical Issues*

Jong-geun KIM

Northeast Asian History Foundation

I. Introduction

A historical atlas is a compilation of historical maps containing geographical information from the past including state borders, administrative districts, and the locations of mountains and rivers. As such, historical atlases are important objects of geographical study, particularly for cartographic and historical geographical studies.¹ However, there has been a lack of comprehensive research on historical atlases among Korean scholars of geography, and previous studies were largely limited to historical maps in-

* This article is translated from the Korean manuscript originally published in the *Journal of the Korean Cartographic Association* 한국지도학회지 18, no. 2 (2018): 1-21.

¹ See, for instance, Kim Jong-hyuk, “Yeoksajido jejakеul wihan yeogsajiri hwangyeongbokwon” [Restoring the Historical-Geographical Environment to Produce Historical Maps], *Hanguk jidohakhoeji* 13, no. 2 (2013): 77-94; Kim Jong-geun and Yi Saang-kyun, “Yeoksajido pyeongga gijunан gaеbalgwa pyeonggasarye” [Developing and Assessing a Criterion for Historical Map Evaluation], *Hanguk jidohakhoeji* 16, no. 2 (2016): 59-69; Jeon Jong-han and Lee Myeong-hee, “Jungjuk eui yeoksajido pyeonchan e gwanhan gichoyeongu” [A Foundational Study on the Compilation of Historical Atlas in China: From the Perspective of Historical Geography], *Dongbuga yeoksa nonchong* 56 (2017): 92-135.

cluded in elementary and secondary school textbooks.² This has gone in tandem with the overall lack of interest in publishing historical atlases in Korea besides school textbooks.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, historical atlases assumed a new significance in Korean society, and this led to the translation and publication of a number of historical atlases.³ However, most of those atlases were made primarily by historians and graphic designers and little involved geographers. For the most part, translated historical atlases only featured translations of place names in major historical atlases originally published in the Anglosphere. In rare cases in which historical atlases were newly compiled, conventional map drawing methods such as projection techniques were directly adopted from Western atlases with little consideration to the unique conditions in Korea. As such, such Korean historical atlases were fraught with cartographic inaccuracies involving scale, direction, display of legends, projection technique, and the selection of a central meridian.

In response to these problems, this study undertakes a cartographical and historical geographical analysis of major Western historical atlases used as source material for historical atlases recently published in Korea to illuminate the origin of the problems that continue to haunt them. Specifically, this study takes a close look at *The Times Complete History of the*

² See, for instance, Kim Kam-young, “Junghakgyo sahoe gyogwaseo e natanan jujedo pyohyeon eui munjejeom mit gaeseon banghyang” [Problems and Improvement of Thematic Mapping in Middle School Social Studies Textbook], *Hanguk jiri hwangyeong gyoyuk hakhoeji* 21, no. 2 (2013): 43-55; Jung Jae-jun, “Godeunghaggyo sahoegwa gyogwaseoui jido olyu bunseog” [Analysis of Errors in Maps Featured in High School Social Studies Textbooks], *Hanguk jidohaghoeji* 15, no. 3 (2015): 127-41.

³ These include Kim Yong-man and Kim Jun-soo, *Jidoro boneun Han'guksa* [Korean History Through Maps] (Seoul: Sumaksae, 2004); Song Ho-jung, Lee Byung-hee, Kim Dong-jin, Kim Jung-chan, and Kim Han-jong, *(Atlas) Hanguksa* [History of Korea] (Paju: Sakyejul, 2004); Geoffrey Parker, *The Times Compact History of the World*, 2nd ed., trans. Kim Sung-hwan (Paju: Sakyejul, 2004); Park Han-je, Kim Hyung-jong, Kim Byung-joon, Lee Geun-myung, and Lee Jun-gap, *(Atlas) Jungguksa* [History of China] (Paju: Sakyejul, 2007); Kim Ho-dong, *(Atlas) Jungang yurasiasa* [History of Central Eurasia] (Paju: Sakyejul, 2016); Richard Overly, *The Times Complete History of the World*, 8th ed., trans. Wang Soo-min and Lee Ki-hong (Seoul: Yekyung, 2016).

World (2015) and the *DK World History Atlas* (2008), as they are well known in the Anglosphere and have been translated into various languages besides Korean including French, German, and Japanese. The two publications and their translations are also widely quoted in textbooks and news reports or used by museums. By analyzing these two atlases, this study therefore aims to throw light on the origin of issues related to maps of Korea in Western historical atlases.

The present study is comprised of three parts. Firstly, it surveys the history of Western historical atlases featuring maps involving Northeast Asia to determine when they started to be featured and how they evolved to reach their present form. Secondly, it analyzes how maps of Northeast Asia are featured in the two aforementioned Western historical atlases. Lastly, this study delineates the diverse issues related to the maps of Northeast Asia in the two historical atlases based on an analysis of their cartographical format and historical geographical details.

II. The History of Historical Atlases Related to Northeast Asia in the Anglosphere

1. Overview

When was a historical atlas first made in the history of mankind? The earliest known historical atlas is *Lidai dili zhizhang tu* published in the twelfth century under the Song dynasty of China. This historical atlas was mainly concerned with the list of geographical name changes for administrative districts in China and neighboring countries from ancient times to the eleventh century.⁴

In the Anglosphere, historical atlases only started to be created since the sixteenth century. In 1570, Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) published the first modern map collection called *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, which remained in publication until its fortieth edition was issued in 1612. It be-

⁴ A reproduction of this map is currently available from the National Digital Library of Korea (<http://www.dlibrary.go.kr/>).



Figure 1. Partial View of the Map *Gujin huayi quyu zongyao tu* in *Lidai dili zhizhang tu* Listing the Names of Korean Kingdoms such as Buyeo, Balhae, Goryeo, Baekje, Silla, Okjeo, on a Landmass that Supposedly Represents the Korean Peninsula (Source: National Library of Korea).

gan as a simple collection of available maps, but in 1579, historical maps of the Classical World became added to the section called “Parergon.” With each new edition, more historical maps were added: 12 in 1584, 26 in 1591, 32 in 1595, 38 in 1603, and 43 in 1606. In 1624, after the death of Ortelius, Balthasar Moretus (1574-1641) turned “Parergon” into a separate volume of ancient historical maps titled *Theatri Orbis Terrarum Parergon*. That was the first historical atlas published in the West that consists only of historical maps.⁵

The research and publication of historical atlases beyond the seventeenth century were also fueled by purposes other than scholarship and education, as they were used to buttress nationalistic territorial ambitions. In seventeenth-century France, for instance, the House of Bourbon wanted to greatly expand its realm to a series of natural barriers that bordered the

⁵ Jeremy Black, *Maps and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997): 9.

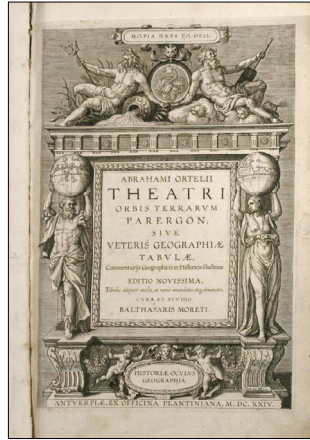


Figure 2. The Cover Page of "Parergon" by Abraham Ortelius (Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

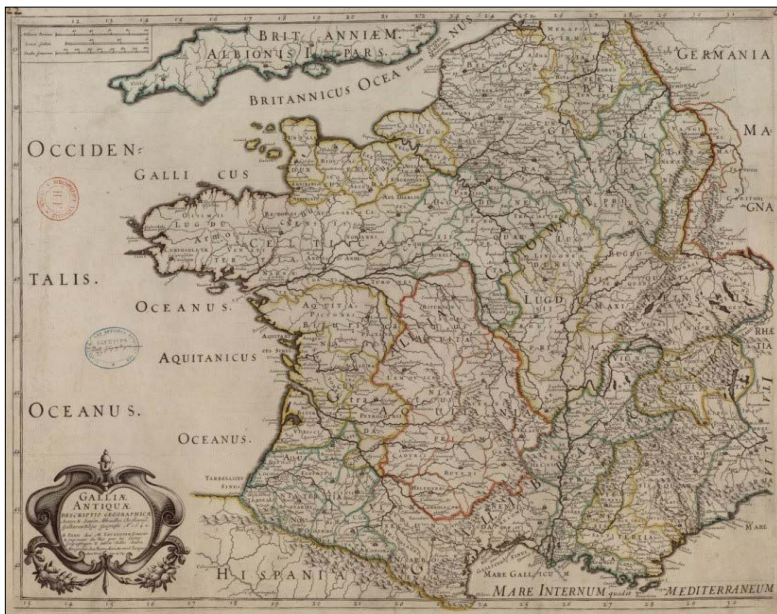


Figure 3. Galliae Antiquae Descriptio Geographica by Nicolas Sanson (1641), Royal Geographer of the House of Bourbon (Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

Rhine, Alps, Pyrenees, and Atlantic. To legitimize its territorial expansion, France claimed that the desired land used to be Gallia, which belonged to her ancestors: the Gauls. *Galliae antiquae descriptio geographica* by Nicolas Sanson (1600-1667) was used as a key propaganda tool for this nationalistic territorial assertion.⁶

According to Jeremy Black, an authority on the history of Western historical atlases, historical atlases began developing in the nineteenth century with the rise of nationalism and Eurocentrism. Naturally, the scope of the newly published historical atlases in the West was limited to the European continent and Asia Minor where Europeans were active at the time, and was clearly preoccupied with documenting the locations and territorial boundaries of ancient nations, war sites, and the former names of major cities and notable geographical features. The nineteenth century was, after all, a time when nation-states were being formed in Europe, imperialism was developing, and European powers were actively expanding overseas. It is thus suggestive that the development of historical atlases in Europe around the time was directly and indirectly correlated with the territorial competition among European nations inside and outside Europe.⁷

2. Historical Atlases Involving Northeast Asia

Since the scope of interest for nineteenth century European historical atlases was largely aligned with European history, there was an enormous lack of information on other regions such as Africa and Asia. Northeast Asia, including Korea, China, and Japan, was only very briefly and inaccurately treated in nineteenth century European historical atlases. In China, on the other hand, a great number of historical atlases were made in the nineteenth century, which the British government would translate into English to procure historical geographical information on the country.⁸ A prime ex-

⁶ Peter Sahlins, "Natural Frontiers Revisited: France's Boundaries since the Seventeenth Century," *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 5 (1990): 1423-51.

⁷ Black, *Maps*, 1997.

⁸ Sin Deok-yong, "19segi huban ihu cheongjo hakjadeul cui yeoksajido jejkseonggwa" [The Main

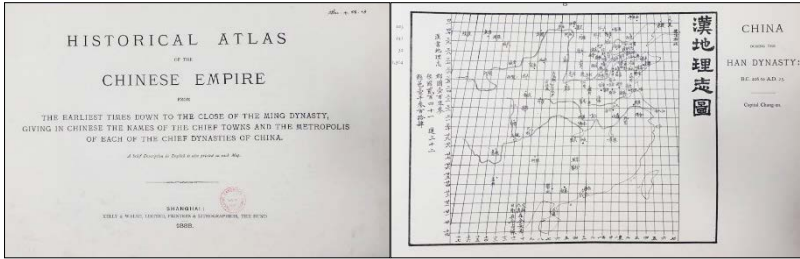


Figure 4. The Cover of the First Edition (1888) of the Historical Atlas of the Chinese Empire (left) and a Map of China at the Time of Han dynasty (right).

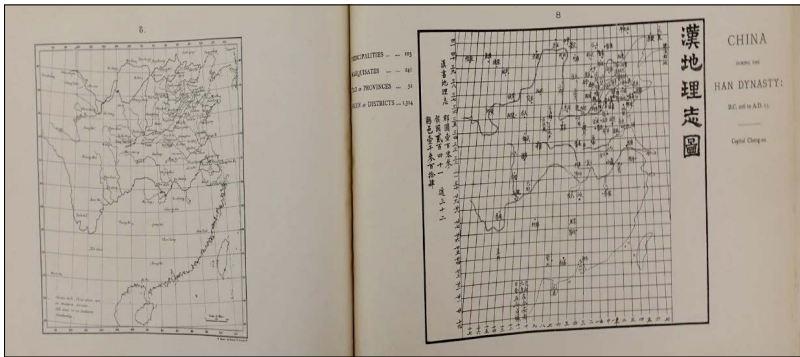


Figure 5. Maps of Han China in the Second Edition of the Historical Atlas of the Chinese Empire (1898). The Map on the Right is a Reproduction of the Original Chinese Map, While Its English Version is on the Left (Oxenham, Historical Atlas, 1898).

ample of this was the *Historical Atlas of the Chinese Empire*. The book published in 1888 by E. L. Oxenham, a British consul in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province at the time, was created by adding English names and notes to a reproduced Chinese historical atlas (Figure 4). The second edition of the work was published in 1898 with fully translated English maps juxtaposed with the original Chinese maps.

Outcomes of Historical Map of The Ching Dynasty Since late 19C], *Hanguk jidokhwojei* 8, no. 1 (2008): 1-27.

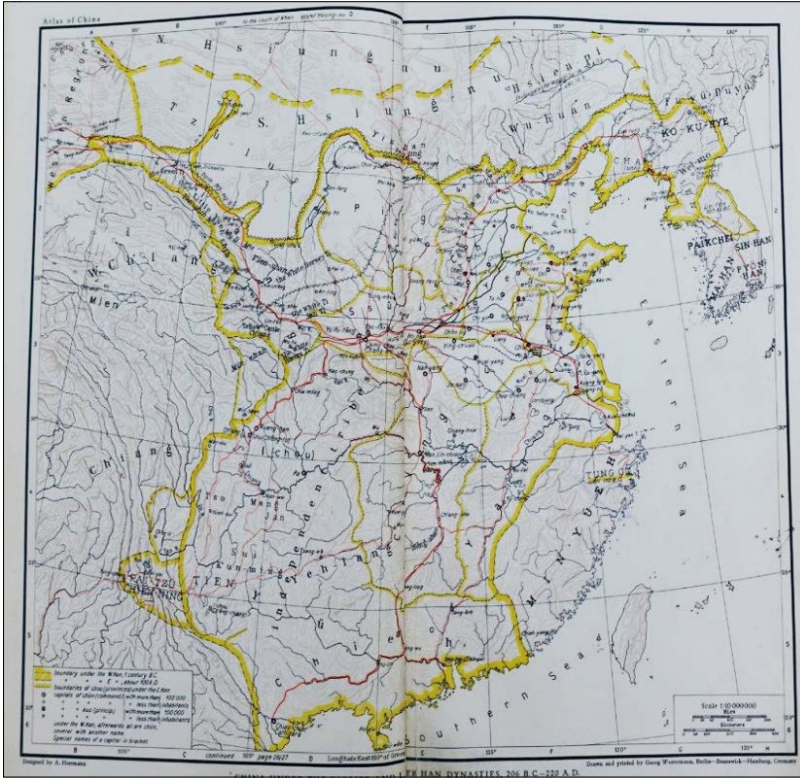


Figure 6. *Historical and Commercial Atlas of China* by Herrmann (1935: 22-23). The Upper Half of the Korean Peninsula is Marked as Part of the Han dynasty.

The translated versions of Chinese historical atlases, however, posed limitations to studying Chinese historical geography in the West. The publication of the *Historical and Commercial Atlas of China* in 1935 by Harvard University marked the first serious attempt by Western scholarship to overcome such limitations. Published as the first volume of the Harvard Yenching Institute Monograph Series, this work was authored by Albert Herrmann (1886-1945), a professor of historical geography at Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany, and the maps were made by Georg Westermann. The atlas was designed and made in Germany instead of the United States because at the time Germany was the center of Chinese studies and

mapmaking. It was the first ever meaningful scholarly historical atlas on China made in the West, and the far-reaching significance of this work is demonstrated by the fact that, since its reissue in the United Kingdom in 1966, it is still being used in many college-level courses on Chinese history at Cambridge and other major universities.⁹

However, it took over forty years for Herrmann's work to start making impacts in the Anglosphere due to the Eurocentric approach in the western scholarship. This myopic focus eventually began to change in the late 1970s, and *The Times Complete History of the World* (*The Times*, henceforth) was at the center of the emerging trend. As clearly indicated in the foreword, *The Times* first published in 1978 was conceived from the beginning as an attempt to overcome Eurocentrism, and thus adopted revolutionary formats and contents. Its scope covered vast areas outside Europe including Northeast Asia, Africa, Oceania, broke away from the conventional description revolving around nation-states, and presented a broader treatment of diverse historical ebbs and flows. *The Times* also utilized diverse map projection methods as needed without being hobbled by the ubiquitous Mercator projection.¹⁰ This novel surge of interest in civilizations outside Europe continued into the 1980s, and new historical atlases introducing the history and culture of China and Japan were made in the United Kingdom and the United States.¹¹

But the innovative trend of going beyond the framework of individual nation states was confined to Europe, and the historical atlases on Northeast Asia still mainly covered the histories of China and Japan. This marginalized the history of the Korean peninsula in historical atlases published in the Anglosphere so that treatment of it would be perfunctory, elided, and frequently inaccurate. The History Atlas of Asia published in 1997, for instance, erroneously denotes the areas down to the Gangwon

⁹ Peter Bol, Dongbuga yeoksa jaedan, et al., *Yeoksa jidojip eui gaenyeom gwa jejak bangbeomnon* [The Concept and Production Methodology of Historical Atlases] (Seoul: Dongbuga yeoksa jaedan, 2016): 64.

¹⁰ Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Times Atlas of World History*, 1st ed. (London: Times Books, 1978): 14-15.

¹¹ Bol et al., *Yoksa*, 2016.

and Chungcheong Provinces on the Korean peninsula as part of Han dynasty in 2 AD (Figure 8(a)), and another map dated in 264 AD identifies the northwestern part of the peninsula as the realm of the Wei dynasty while its southeastern part and the Ulleung Island are marked as part of Japan (Figure 8[a]).

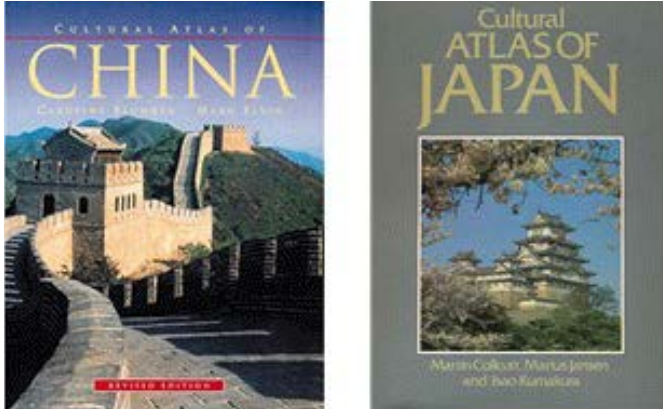
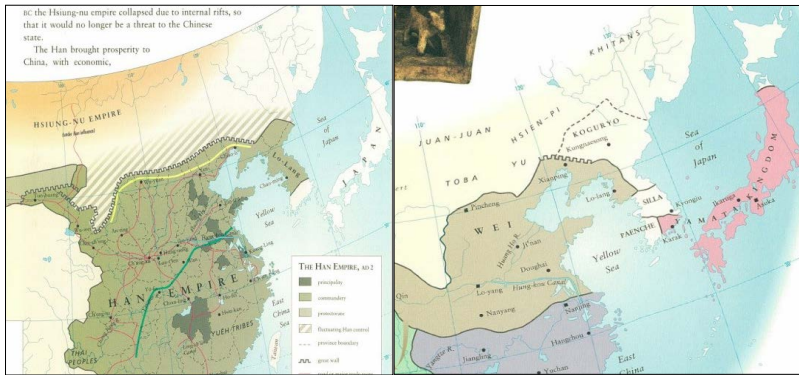


Figure 7. Covers of the Cultural Atlas of China (Blunden, 1983) and the Cultural Atlas of Japan (Collcutt, 1988).



(a) The mid-north Korean peninsula erroneously indicated as “Lo-Lang” in the ‘The Han Empire, AD 2’ map (b) The southeastern Korean peninsula incorrectly indicated to be part of Japan in the ‘Three Kingdoms, AD 264’ map

Figure 8. Inaccuracies from the History Atlas of Asia by Barnes and Hudson (Macmillan, 1998: 49).

In the 2010s, however, this lopsided treatment of Northeast Asian history and geography in Western historical atlases gave way. *The Korean History in Maps* published in 2014 by Cambridge University Press is representative of this new movement. The central axis of this work is firmly anchored on the history of Korea which in older historical atlases was often relegated as a subset of Chinese and Japanese history. With the direct involvement of four Korean history experts in Korea and the United States, the *Korean History in Maps* was edited by Michael Shin of Cambridge University. Another example is the *Historical Atlas of Northeast Asia, 1590-2010* published in 2014 by Robert Cribb and Narangoa Li of the Australian National University. Cribb and Li questioned the traditional myopia of Western historical atlases engrossed in China and Japan that practically ignored a vast region of land, people, and culture outside the two countries, and attempted to take an in-depth look at Manchuria, the Korean peninsula, Siberia, and the diverse groups of people who lived in those regions.

III. Major Modern Western Historical Atlases and Northeast Asia

1. *The Times Complete World History* (2015)

Since its first edition published in 1978, *The Times Complete World History* sold more than 225 million copies worldwide and has been translated into eighteen languages including French, German, Italian, and Korean. The ninth edition published in 2015 was edited by Richard Overy of the University of Exeter along with six experts in the histories of Europe, Africa, and China, modern world history, and archaeology. A total of 166 editors were involved between the first and eighth edition. The maps in *The Times* were drawn by graphic designers, which was different from the traditional method of mapmaking.

The Times covers a selection of notable world events from the origin of humanity until 2015 through chronology, pictures, tables, and graphs accompanied by historical maps that help readers gain a diachronic understanding of the world. The geographical scope of this work encompasses

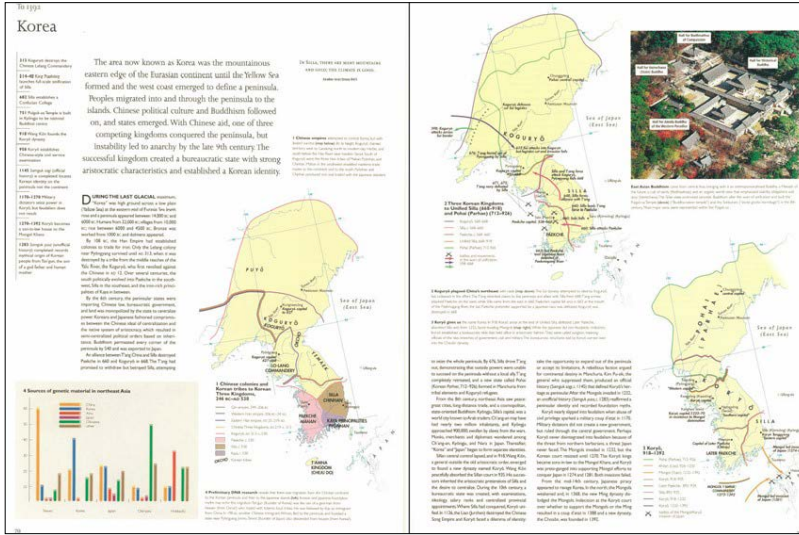


Figure 9. Pages from *The Times Complete History of the World, 'Korea Up To 1392'*

Table 1. *The Chapter Arrangement of The Times*

Chapter	Subsections	Topics	Maps
1. Human Origins and Early Cultures	11	30	30
2. The First Civilizations	11	35	35
3. The Classical Civilizations of Eurasia	14	44	44
4. The World of Divided Regions	30	99	101
5. The World of the Emerging West	30	102	102
6. The Age of European Dominance	24	100	100
7. The Age of Global Civilization	40	151	155
Total	160	561	567

the entire globe, divided into topical subsets that focus on a particular continent, nation, region, or city through a variety of maps in diverse scales.

The Times consists of seven chapters and the second chapter covers the history of Korea including the periods of the Three Kingdoms, North-South States, and Goryeo. The chapter has eleven subsections and covers thirty-five topics (Table 1).

The number of maps on Northeast Asia in *The Times* is 98 in total,

Table 2. *The Number of Maps Featuring Northeast Asia in The Times*

Chapter	World	Asia	China	Korea	Japan	Total
1	5	0	0	0	0	5
2	0	1	4	3	0	8
3	0	3	8	0	0	11
4	0	4	4	0	3	11
5	2	12	5	3	2	24
6	4	3	3	0	3	13
7	9	4	9	1	3	26
Total	20	27	29	7	11	98

accounting for roughly 17% of the 567 maps included in the atlas. In terms of proportion, 47 out of the 98 maps (48%) featured Northeast Asia as part of larger maps of the world or Asia. In terms of nationality, the maps of China number 33, Korea 6, and Japan 16. The editorial thrust of *The Times* thus seems to rest on China, Japan, and Korea, in that order (Table 2).

2. The *DK World History Atlas* (2008)

The *DK World History Atlas* (henceforth *DK Atlas*) was first published in 2000 and its second and third editions subsequently came out in 2005 and 2008. DK (formerly known as Dorling Kindersley) is a major British publisher specializing in a diverse array of pictorial books, and many of their books have been translated into Korean. The *DK Atlas* was not one of them, but the work has been translated into German, Italian, Norwegian, Icelandic, and Japanese, to name a few.¹² Jeremy Black at the Department of History of the University of Exeter, who authored a number of books involving ancient cartography and historical maps, served as the editor-in-chief for a group of thirty-eight authors specializing in the histories of the world, North and South Americas, Europe, Africa, South and Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania. The expertise of the authors was not limited

¹² Jeremy Black, *DK World History Atlas*, 3rd ed. (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2008).

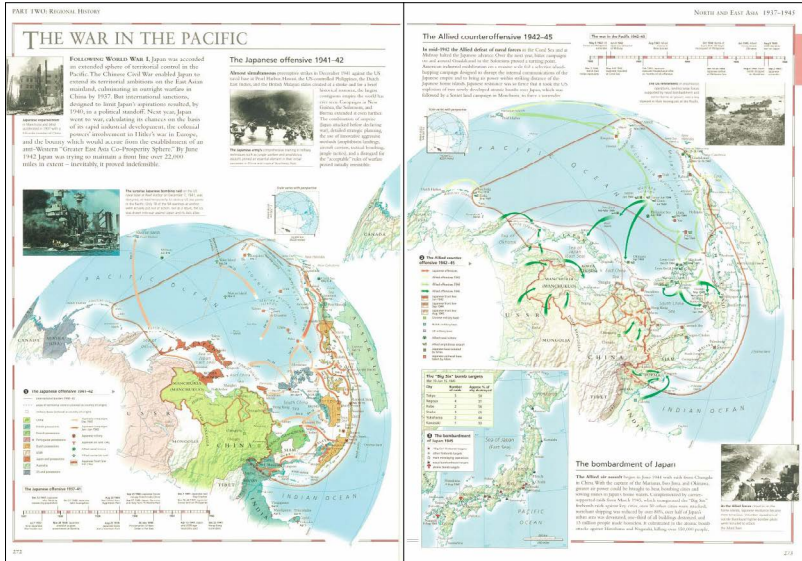


Figure 10. Pages from the DK World History Atlas that Combines Historical Maps with Text, Photos, Tables, Timeline, and Projection Method, "The War in the Pacific" (Black, 2008: 272-73).

to history, but extended to diverse fields including geography, anthropology, humanities, and regional studies. While the direct involvement of geographers is a quality that distinguishes the *DK Atlas* from *The Times*, both had a historian as the editor-in-chief. Moreover, Richard Overy and Geoffrey Parker, both editors of *The Times*, served as advisors for the *DK Atlas*. The high quality of the maps should be credited to the large mapmaking team of DK with over 50 specialists. A typical page of the *DK Atlas* consists of topic, text, map, photo, timeline, map projection. An interesting feature is that, unlike *The Times*, the map projection is presented in the form of an illustration.

The chronological scope of the *DK Atlas* begins at the birth of humanity and leads up to the present, and its geographical scope encompasses the entire globe. Maps of diverse scale are featured from ones that cover the world to ones that focus on an individual continent, region, nation, or city. The *DK Atlas* is divided into two parts: the first part covers the world

Table 3. *The Chronological Structure of the DK Atlas and the Number of Maps*

Part	Time Period Covered	Subdivision	Map
Part 1: Eras of World History	– 30,000 BCE	1	2
	– 10,000 BCE	2	6
	10,000 – 5,000 BCE	2	3
	5,000 – 2,500 BCE	2	3
	2,500 – 1,250 BCE	2	6
	1,250 – 750 BCE	2	4
	750 – 500 BCE	2	5
	500 – 250 BCE	2	3
	250 BCE – 1 CE	2	3
	1 – 250 CE	2	5
	250 – 500 CE	2	3
	500 – 750 CE	2	4
	750 – 1000 CE	2	4
	1000 – 1200 CE	2	4
	1200 – 1300 CE	2	3
	1300 – 1400 CE	2	4
	1400 – 1500 CE	2	11
	1500 – 1600 CE	2	4
	1600 – 1700 CE	2	3
	1700 – 1800 CE	2	4
	1800 – 1850 CE	2	6
	1850 – 1900 CE	2	5
	1900 – 1925 CE	2	4
1925 – 1950 CE	2	5	
1950 – 1975 CE	2	6	
1975 – Present	2	5	
Part 2: Regional History	North America	11	52
	South America	6	24
	Africa	7	34
	Europe	22	96
	West Asia	9	43
	South and Southeast Asia	8	39
	North and East Asia	10	51
	Australasia and Oceania	5	19
Total		129	473

and the second zooms into areas of a smaller scale such as continents or regions (Table 3). The first part is further divided into 25/26 separate time periods from “10,000 BCE” to “1975-present.” Each period contains one world map and one historical map presenting a topic. A world map depicts the events that occurred across the globe during a certain period, and a topical section introduces a topic involving a certain period through historical maps of varying scale—from the world down to a city. In the period “10,000-5,000 BCE,” for instance, the world map shows the locations of known civilizations in the world while the topical historical map illustrates the worldwide emergence of agriculture. Another interesting feature is that a historical map does not always precisely match the time period it is labeled under. Also, the length of each time period division varies: each division can be 20,000, 5,000, 2,500, 1,250, 500, 250, 200, 100, 50, or 25 years long, with a general tendency to shorten as it approaches present day. While these time divisions may seem random, it was probably the best possible strategy to give a justifiable treatment to all significant events around the world during any given time period.

The second part covers regional histories in eight chapters, largely following the continental divisions: North America, South America, Africa, Europe, Western Asia, South and Southeastern Asia, North and East Asia, and Australia and Oceania. Asia is divided into three separate chapters in accordance with the distinct historical and cultural backgrounds of each region. Each chapter is split into several time periods as in the first part of the book, but the first chapter “North America: Exploration and Mapping” acts as a guide to introduce readers to the process of mapmaking and how the geographical information was acquired. Following the first chapter, the rest of the book is partitioned by historical time periods such as “The First East Asian Civilization to 200 BCE,” “The Han and the Great Migrations 21 BCE-c. 60 CE,” “Early Medieval East Asia 618-c.1300,” “The First States in Japan and Korea 300 BCE-1333 CE,” “East Asia and the Ming 1368-1600,” “The Era of the Qing Empire 1644-1914,” “The Modernization of East Asia 1860-1936,” “The War in the Pacific 1937-1945,” “Communism and Capitalism in East Asia since 1945.”

As for maps involving Northeast Asia in the *DK Atlas*, there are 71 in

Table 4. *Number of Maps on Northeast Asia in the DK Atlas*

Part	Northeast Asia	China	Korea & Japan	Korea	Japan	Total
Part 1: Eras of World History	71	0	0	0	0	71
Part 2: Regional History	14	26	4	2	5	51
Total	122	26	4	2	5	122

the first part and 51 in the second part (Table 4). The cartographical treatment of Northeastern Asia in the first part tends to be brief throughout the twenty-six world maps. The region is more prominently featured through the five topics dealing with the rise of Buddhism and Confucianism in “The emergence of organized religion,” the expansion of Buddhism in “World religions,” “Mongol campaigns,” “The spread of agriculture,” and “The Korean War,” which brings the total up to 71 for maps including Northeastern Asia in the first part. In the second part of the atlas, except for the two maps on Tibet and North Asia, there are 51 maps featuring Northeastern Asia out of a total of 53 maps (Table 4). Out of the 51 maps, 14 maps cover the whole of Northeast Asia, 26 China, 4 Korea and Japan together, 2 Korea, and 5 Japan. As such, China’s presence dwarfs Korean and Japan while Japan receives relatively more attention than Korea. Furthermore, the two maps devoted to the Korean peninsula are not actually interested in Korea per se but presented in the context of the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War.

As seen above, there are 122 maps in the *DK Atlas* that feature Northeastern Asia, which account for about 26% of the total of 473 maps. Of the 51 regional historical maps, 14 feature Northeast Asia in its entirety, 26 are dedicated to China, and the remaining 11 concern Korea and Japan, which includes only two that are solely focused on Korea. Similar with *The Times*, China again dominates the *DK Atlas*’ treatment of Northeast Asia, followed by Japan, leaving Korea as the least featured country.

IV. Current Issues in Cartography and Historical Geography Concerning Historical Atlases on Northeast Asia

1. Cartographical Issues

1) Incomplete Display of Basic Cartographic Elements

The basic cartographic elements are scale, direction, and legend.¹³ Scale indicates how big areas are represented in a map in relation to their actual size. Without a scale, it can cause serious misunderstanding as there would be no other means of knowing the actual distance and size of geographical features shown on a map. It is therefore an element essential to a proper map which must be clearly marked. Direction indicates the north-south and east-west positions within a map, and the lack of direction can severally compromise the usability of a map and the geographical understanding of a mapped area. Legend is the system of symbols noted on the map. Since a map cannot exhaustively list all surface features of an area, it selectively describes only the notable features and marks them using a system of symbols. If there is no legend of any kind or only limited explanation of very few symbols, the map would not avail the readers of the full extent of the geographical information regarding a certain area.¹⁴

Scale, direction, and legend, therefore, are essential elements that must be marked in accordance with the accepted rules of mapmaking. Should there be a map without these elements, it ought to be labeled as a “map-like illustration.” It is also possible to derive the direction and scale with a certain level of accuracy, provided that the map contains proper latitude-longitude lines. Since longitude lines run from north to south, they can be used to indicate the north-south position of a map. If there is no indication of direction at all, it is also customary in the art of mapmaking for the top of the map to point north. Scale also can be roughly estimated from

¹³ Mark Stephen Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps*, trans. Son Il and Jeong In-chul (Seoul: Pureungil, 1998).

¹⁴ Han Kyun-hyung. *Jidohak wollon* [The Principles of Cartology] (Seoul: Minumsa, 2006).

Table 5. *Cartographic Elements in the Maps of Northeast Asia in The Times and the DK Atlas*

	Maps of Northeast Asia in <i>The Times</i> Atlas (out of the total 98 maps)	Maps of Northeast Asia in the <i>DK Atlas</i> (out of the total 122 maps)
Scale	0 (0%)	61 (50%)
Direction	0 (0%)	17 (14%)
Legend	93 (95%)	122 (100%)
Latitude & Longitude	50 (51%)	82 (67%)

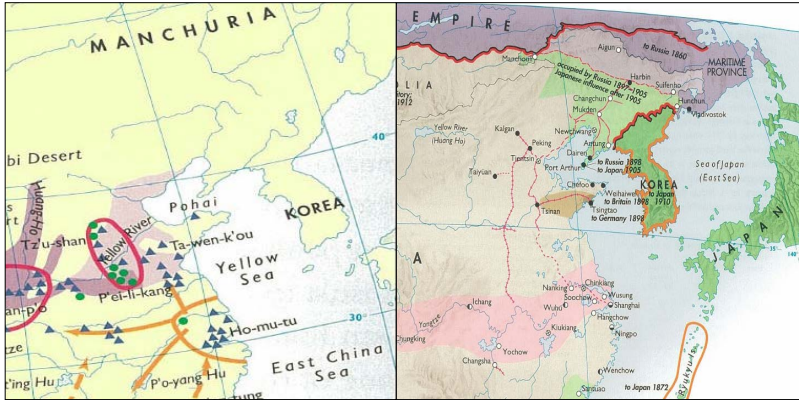
the latitude and longitude, as one degree of latitude is about 111 kilometers in length. While the length of one degree of longitude varies between 117.5 km and 0 km depending on its distance from the equator, it can be estimated by the latitude it intersects. However, the distance within a map cannot be accurately appraised if there is no precise numeric notation of the latitudinal and longitudinal degree or the map reader does not have the necessary knowledge. Obviously, the best way to avoid all these issues is to mark the scale on the map.

Despite the importance of these elements, however, *The Times* and the *DK Atlas* have many maps that are deficient in this area, as shown in Table 5.

Regarding scale, it was not marked in any of the Northeastern Asia maps in *The Times*, and the *DK Atlas* had 61 maps with a scale. Direction is not indicated in any of the maps in *The Times*, and the *DK Atlas* had 17 maps with direction marks. While scale and direction can be gleaned from latitude & longitude lines as previously explained, only 51% of the maps in *The Times* and 67% in the *DK Atlas* included them. On that the other hand, nearly all of the maps in *The Times* and the *DK Atlas*, 95% and 100% respectively, had the legend properly noted. Hence, from the perspective of cartography, *The Times* is better described as “a collection of map-like illustrations” and only about the half of the *DK Atlas* can be qualified as proper “maps.”

2) Inaccuracies in Expressing Geographical Features

Major geographical features such as coastlines, rivers, or tributaries, when represented on a smaller scale map, need to be drawn using the generalized



(a) Inaccurate descriptions about coastlines, rivers, and lakes of the Korean peninsula (from a map on 'Early agriculture' in 'The beginnings of Chinese civilization to 475 BC')

(b) Inaccurate descriptions about national borders and coastlines of the Korean peninsula (from a map on 'The dismemberment of the Ch'ing empire, 1842-1911' in 'The collapse of the Chinese empire, 1839 to 1911')

Figure 11. Samples from *The Times with Geographical Inaccuracies*.

data imported from a larger scale map; otherwise, the necessary data must be created afresh in accordance with the smaller scale in order to ensure the accuracy and precision of the geographical information it conveys.¹⁵ The accuracy and precision is also important for historical maps to safeguard the reliability of its information, as inaccurate and imprecise geographical information compromises the integrity of the historical account featured in the map.

A number of inaccuracies have been identified in *The Times* and the *DK Atlas*, where 32 maps in the former and 10 in the latter include erroneous representations of coastlines, rivers, or national borders among others (Figure 10).

Figure 11(a), for instance, shows a map marked with archaeological sites in China. The geographical depiction of the Korean peninsula in this map contains a number of errors. The Bay of Wonsan cuts deeper into the peninsula than it actually does, Janggigot (Homigot) is not marked, and the

¹⁵ Han, *Jidohak wollon*, 2006.

shape and location of Jeju Island are inaccurate. The line depicting Amnok (Yalu) River is incorrect, the Duman River is nowhere to be seen, and Cheonji, the caldera lake on Mount Baekdu appears to be out of proportion. The Figure 11(b) is a map of Northeast Asia toward the end of the Qing dynasty. The shape of the borders between Joseon and Qing, the coastline of the Korean peninsula, the shape of Jeju Island, and the shape and location of Tsushima Island are largely incorrect, which may undermine the credibility of the historical map itself.

3) Inaccurate Representations of the Korean Peninsula's Shape

Map projection allows a three dimensional globe to be transcribed onto a two dimensional plane, Map projection and the central meridian decides how land and sea will be arranged on a map. As such, the selection of map projection and the central meridian reveals the purpose of a map.¹⁶

The two historical atlases under investigation in this study are both made in the United Kingdom, and thereby cater to the habits and expectations of British readers. Therefore, most of their maps locate the central meridian in Europe or the Middle East. Accordingly, the map projection pushes Northeast Asia to the edges of the globe into a slanted position. In *The Times*, for instance, out of the 19 world maps that feature the Korean peninsula, 18 of them show Korea in either a slanted or supine position. The *DK Atlas* has 56 of 57 world maps showing Korea in a tilted position. This is the result of the central meridian being far away from Northeast Asia, which may come natural to British readers but not to readers in East Asia. Furthermore, there are instances in the historical atlases where the Korean peninsula in a slanted position even in smaller maps dedicated to Korea. There are seven maps each in *The Times* and the *DK Atlas* that centrally feature the Korean peninsula. Out of these seven maps, six maps in *The Times* and the *DK Atlas*, respectively show Korea in a slanted angle rather than being aligned due north and south. Should this trend continue, it may result in the normalization of the abnormal that could cause unsus-

¹⁶ Han, *Jidohak wollon*, 2006.

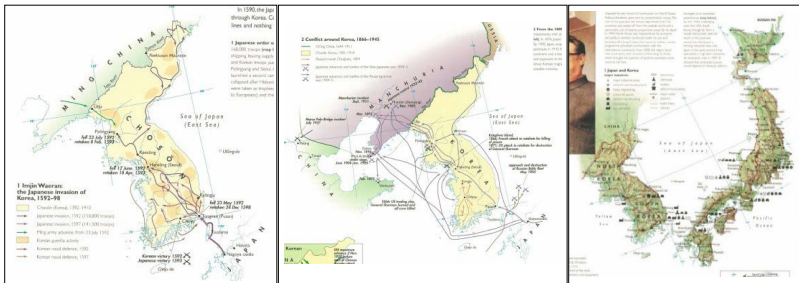
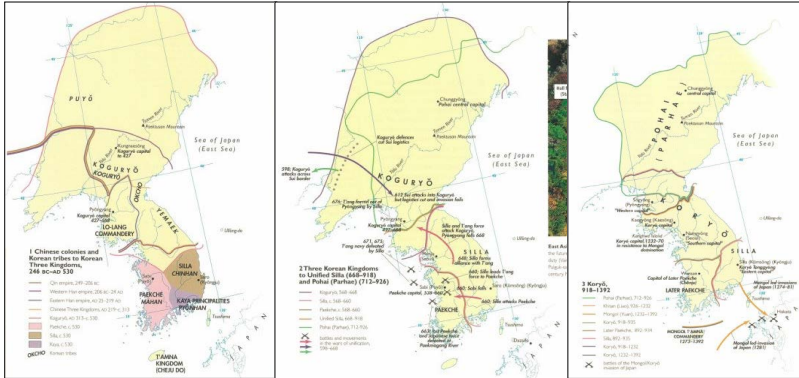


Figure 12. Depictions of a Slanted Korean Peninsula in *The Times* (Overy, 2015: 70, 71, 194, 195, 309).

pecting readers to believe that the slanted position is the “normal” shape of the Korean peninsula.¹⁷

¹⁷ Michael Shin, the chief editor of *Korean History in Maps*, once mentioned that in order to avoid this very problem, all maps in his historical atlas are precisely aligned along a north-south axis, including all the maps showing the Korean peninsula (Bol et al., *Yoksa*, 76).

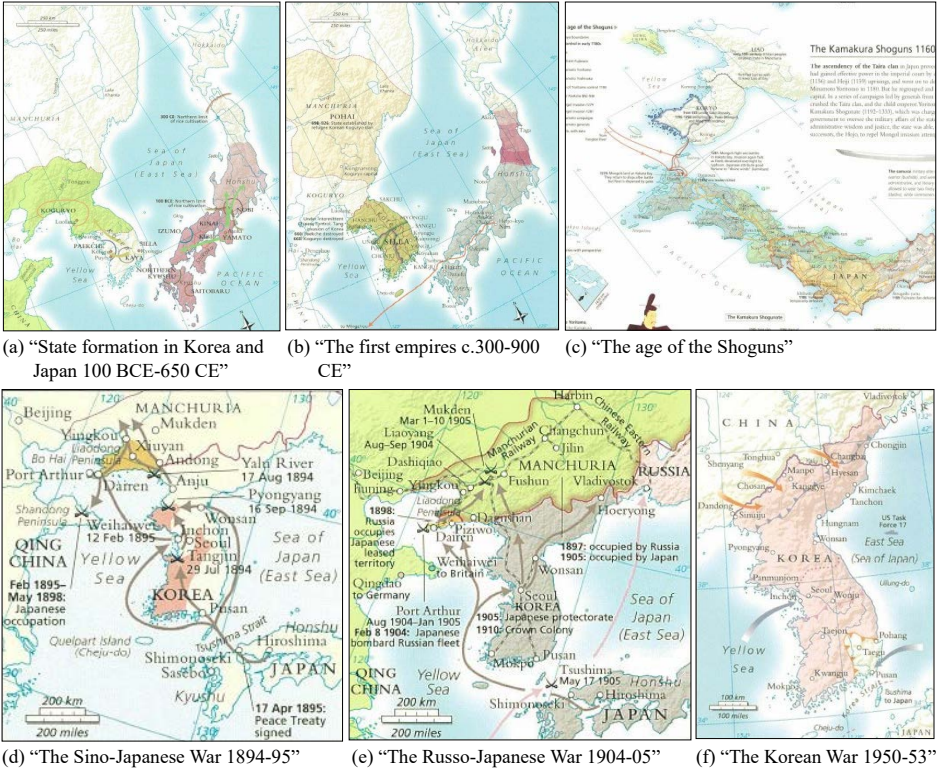
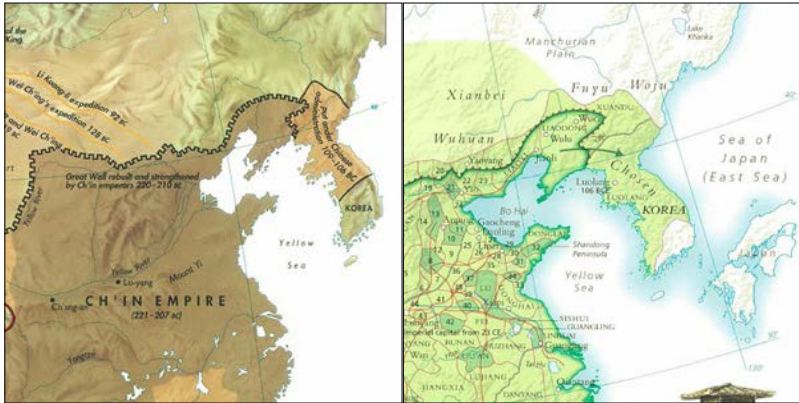


Figure 13. Depictions of a Slanted Korean Peninsula in the DK Atlas (Black, 2008: 109, 264, 265, 270).

2. Historical Geographical Issues

1) Overrepresentation of the Four Han Commanderies

While there are scholarly debates on the precise location and extent of the Four Commanderies of Han, no authoritative opinion places the commanderies in the middle or southern part of the Korean peninsula. But both historical atlases exhibit a tendency to exaggerate the alleged extent of the commanderies. Figure 14(a) is part of a map from *The Times* titled "The expansion of Han China," which marks the northern half of the Korean peninsula as Han Chinese territory. Figure 14(b) is a map called "The Han



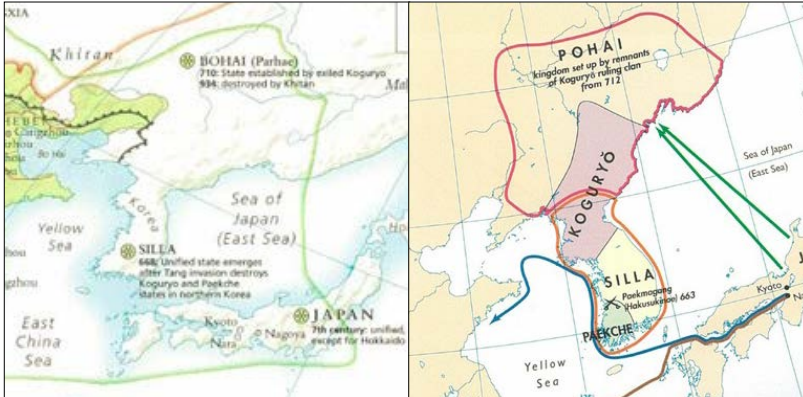
(a) "The expansion of Han China" of *The Times* (b) "The Han Empire 140 BCE-220 CE" of the *DK Atlas*

Figure 14. Overrepresentations of the Four Han Commanderies in *The Times* and the *DK Atlas* (Black, 2008: 260; Overy, 2015: 89).

Empire, 140 BCE-220 CE" from the *DK Atlas* that shows an even more exaggerated description of Han Chinese territory reaching down to the southwestern coast of the Korean peninsula. Although a scholarly consensus on the precise location and extent of the commanderies is yet to emerge, it is at the least evident that they were not situated in the lower half of the Korean peninsula from Gangwon Province down to the North and South Jeolla Provinces. These two maps, therefore, are misinformed about the Chinese influence on Korea at the time of the commanderies.

2) Historical nomenclature of Balhae

Balhae is perceived by Korean scholars as a successor of Koguryo for having been founded by its remnants. As such, the kingdom's name is pronounced in Korea as "Balhae." China, however, deems Balhae as part of its own history and uses the Chinese pronunciation of "Bohai" or "Pohai." Since there exists a difference of opinion on how to pronounce Balhae, third parties tend to take a neutral approach by listing both pronunciations. The *DK Atlas*, for instance, lists both pronunciations as "BOHAI (Palhae)" but seemingly lends more credence to the Chinese pronunciation by fully capitalizing it whereas the Korean pronunciation is placed in parentheses.



(a) “Tang China and its neighbors c.750” in the *DK Atlas* showing the Korean pronunciation in parentheses (b) “Japan and east Asia, 600-900” of *The Times* showing only the Chinese pronunciation

Figure 15. Misrepresentations of Balhae in *The Times* and the *DK Atlas* (Black, 2008: 262; Overy, 2015: 136).

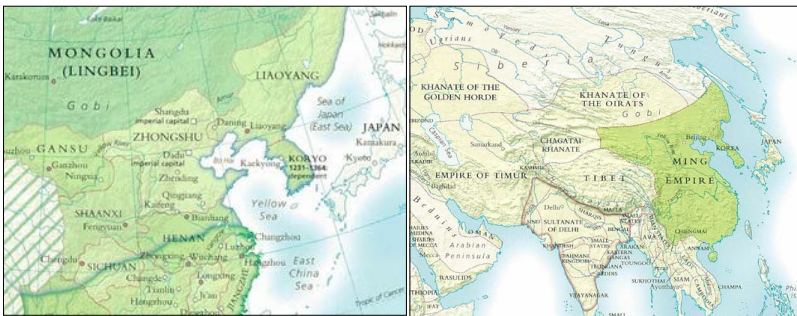
The Times, however, lists only the Chinese pronunciation “POHAI” and omits the Korean pronunciation Balhae (Figure 15). The editorial perspective of these historical atlases, therefore, is not at all neutral but consistently supporting the Chinese claim on Balhae.

3) Oversimplification of Borders

The map in Figure 15(a) above is from *The Times* under the title “Japan and east Asia, 600-900” and describes the realms of Koguryo, Silla, Baekje, and Balhae. While this map has the latitudinal and longitudinal lines and legends to meet the minimum cartographical requirement, it oversimplified the borders among the listed countries with little regard to the natural geographical features such as coastline and rivers. If it proves difficult to ascertain the precise historical borderline, using other types of lines to indicate an approximate line could be a viable alternative. Oversimplification of border details, however, undermines the credibility of a map and therefore does not qualify as an alternative.

4) Representing the Korean Peninsula as a Vassal State of China

In the *DK Atlas*, there are four maps that list Korea as a vassal state to the reigning Chinese dynasty at the time such as Han, Yuan, Ming, and Qing. Figure 14(b), for instance, shows most of the Korean peninsula under the rule of Han China through its commanderies, and during the Yuan dynasty, the entire nation of Korea is represented as part of the Mongolian empire (Figure 16(a)). This trend also persists during the times of the Ming and Qing dynasties as shown in Figure 16(b) and (c).



(a) "The Mongol (Yuan) period c.1300"

(b) "The World in 1400"



(c) "Qing China, 1644-1911"

Figure 16. Misrepresentations of the Korean Territory in the *DK Atlas* (Black, 2008: 71, 263, 268).

5) Issues with the Notation of Dokdo and the East Sea

Generalization is one of the most crucial processes in the mapmaking. Based on scientific principles, a mapmaker must consciously decide which geographical features to mark on a map and which to leave out.¹⁸ For instance, when making a small-scale map of Northeast Asia, small islands associated with the Korean peninsula are mostly omitted. Dokdo is also frequently neglected in the process of generalization because of its small size and remote location. But the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) of Korea has mandated that all maps published in Korea must include Dokdo.¹⁹ This is based on the need to clearly demarcate the easternmost point of the territory of the Republic of Korea. Similarly, the East Sea must be noted as “동해” or “East Sea” as mandated by the NGII to preserve the national identity of the sea.

Of course, any map made outside Korea can follow its own set of rules for generalization and is not legally bound by the rules of mapmaking set by the NGII of Korea. But in an effort to safeguard the sovereign interest of the nation, the Korean government has for years consistently asked governments, mapmakers, and publishers around the world to join in adopting correct notations for Dokdo and the East Sea. But even before South and North Korea simultaneously joined the United Nations in 1991, many overseas mapmakers had been following the notation guideline provided by Japan.

Figure 17 shows the history of how Dokdo and the East Sea were treated in *The Times* from the first edition (1978) to the ninth (2015). Between the first and third edition (1978-1989), *The Times* described Dokdo as “Takeshima or Tok-do island claimed by South Korea (unresolved)” and the East Sea as “Sea of Japan.” After 1991, however, the note on Dokdo being a disputed territory disappeared, and the East Sea is marked as “Sea of Japan (East Sea),” which has been maintained to the present.

Regarding the treatment of Dokdo in the latest editions of *The Times*

¹⁸ Han, *Jidohak wollon*, 2006.

¹⁹ As specified, among others, in the Guideline on Making and Maintaining World Maps established as Rule No. 81 of the Korean NGII (February 3, 2015).



(a) 1st edition (1978)

(b) 3rd edition (1989)



(c) 4th edition (1993)

(d) 5th edition (1999), 6th edition (2004)



(e) 7th edition (2007), 8th edition (2010), 9th edition (2015)

Figure 17. Changes to the Notation of Dokdo and the East Sea Over Editions of *The Times* (Barraclough, 1978: 279; Stone, 1989: 279; Parker, 1993: 275; Overy, 1999: 279; 2004: 307; 2007: 307; 2010: 309; 2015: 309).

Table 6. Renditions of Dokdo and the East Sea in the Latest Editions of *The Times* and the *DK Atlas* (Black, 2008: 269; Overy, 2015: 296, 311).

	Dokdo	Naming of the Sea between Korea & Japan
<i>The Times</i>	No Reference	No Reference: 67
		Parallel Reference: 29
		“Sea of Japan”: 1
<i>DK Atlas</i>	No Reference	No Reference: 89
		Parallel Reference: 32
		“Sea of Japan”: 1

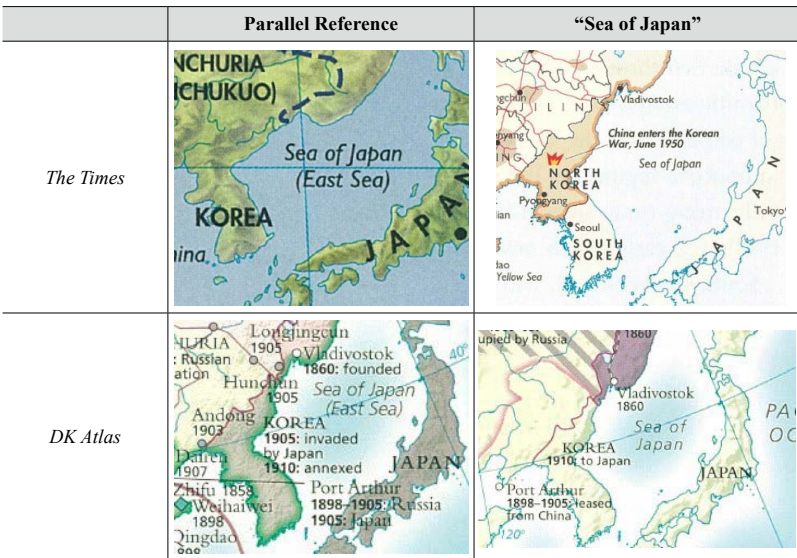


Figure 18. Renditions of the East Sea in the Latest Editions of *The Times* and the *DK Atlas* (Black, 2008: 269; Overy, 2015: 296, 311).

and the *DK Atlas*, neither of them includes the island on their maps, as shown in Table 6. The East Sea is also frequently neglected in the majority of their maps, and, if at all noted, it is usually in the system of dual-naming with parentheses as in “Sea of Japan (East Sea).” There are three exceptions, however, in that two maps in *The Times* and one in the *DK Atlas* are marked only with “Sea of Japan” without the parallel reference to “East Sea.”

V. Conclusion

This study has analyzed two authoritative Western historical atlases that command worldwide influence through numerous translations: *The Times Complete History of the World* and the *DK World History Atlas*. While their focus predominantly remains on Europe and North America, they also substantially covers the history of Northeast Asia. But their perspective suggests a conformism to the conventional emphasis on China and Japan. This is evident in the majority of their maps on Northeast Asia in which Korea is denoted as a subordinate territory to China or Japan and usually depicted in a context of war and conflict between the two.

Cartographical issues have been revealed that made the two atlases seem lacking: the insufficient representation of scale and direction, the inaccurate representation of key geographical features such as coastlines and rivers, and the inaccurate representation of the Korean peninsula's shape and orientation. In terms of historical geography, the atlases showed various issues including the exaggerated boundaries of the Four Han Commanderies, the incorrect notations of Balhae, the ambiguous marking of national boundaries, the description of Korea as a vassal state of the Chinese dynasties Yuan (Mongol), Ming, and Qing, and the inaccurate nomenclature of East Sea.

The scope of the current study is limited to the two most influential historical atlases published in the Anglosphere. In the follow up study, the scope of analysis will be expanded to other historical atlases published in more diverse languages. Also, it seems necessary for Korean cartographic scholars to take serious interest in the cartographical and historical geographical issues regarding Korea reported in this study, as it is possible for such issues to be propagated and reproduced through textbooks, museums, media articles, and research studies in different countries around the world.²⁰

²⁰ In February 2017, for instance, an exhibition on Chinese immigration in New Zealand under the title *Being Chinese in Aotearoa* held at the Auckland War Memorial Museum used a map that showed the Korean peninsula as part of China (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nzstory/permalink/1325487627517377>).

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