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978-1-107-12184-3 - Conflict and Commerce in Maritime East Asia: The Zheng Family and the Shaping of the Modern World, c. 1620–1720

Xing Hang

Excerpt

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## Introduction

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During the seventeenth century, a single mercantile dynasty from Fujian, a province on the southeastern littoral of China, dominated the country's foreign commerce. The Zheng family's multinational and transnational enterprise traded extensively with ports across maritime East Asia. Its broad reach extended from the shores of Japan to the Strait of Melaka, thousands of kilometers away, and its powerful naval fleets roamed the East and South China Seas. The family competed fiercely and often successfully for control over this space with the Dutch East India Company (VOC), whose joint-stock model was considered a harbinger of the modern capitalist corporation.<sup>1</sup> In fact, sufficient quantitative evidence exists to show that the Zheng's revenues, on average, exceeded seventy million in 2014 US dollars during their over six decades in power, from 1622 to 1683.<sup>2</sup>

The Zheng's impressive commercial activities formed part of a broader effort to secure their political survival and legitimacy. Under four generations of patriarchs they flexibly redefined their role in accordance with changing geopolitical circumstances. They began as one of many pirate bands that infested the China Seas during the final decades of the Ming dynasty (1368–1662). After the Manchu Qing (1636–1911) entered China in 1644, they morphed into a resistance force fighting on behalf of the beleaguered Han Chinese dynasty. When the Ming cause appeared all but doomed, the illustrious second-generation patriarch, Zheng Chenggong (1624–1662), seized the island of Taiwan from the Dutch East India Company in 1662, where he and his descendants forged a mercantile state with a sophisticated territorial administration. They undoubtedly aimed to eventually assert control over their entire economic sphere of influence in maritime East Asia, as demonstrated in their

<sup>1</sup> VOC is the Dutch abbreviation for *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (United East India Company).

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Appendix 3 for the specific methodology and calculations behind the Zheng organization's revenues and profitability.

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repeated plans to invade the Spanish Philippines and a renewed, ill-fated campaign on the mainland coast of China from 1674 to 1680.

The Zheng organization shaped and was, in turn, caught up in a unique confluence of regional and global history: a traumatic dynastic transition in China, the first wave of European expansion and colonization in East Asia, and its ever-tighter integration into a worldwide economic system. The prosperity of all four clan patriarchs depended upon their ability to manipulate and profit from the contradictions set into motion by these trends. Not surprisingly, they were among the most cosmopolitan, colorful, and conflicted individuals of their time. Indeed, the family left a far-reaching yet understudied imprint upon historical narratives from vastly different cultural contexts – from China, Japan, and Korea to the Netherlands, England, Portugal, and Spain. These historiographical traditions uniformly found it difficult to refrain from embellishing the Zheng's fantastic exploits and forging legends that grew out of, but eventually became inseparable from, the realities of their lives and times.

Zheng Zhilong (d. 1661), the founder of the family enterprise, was also known as Nicolas Gaspard and Iquan, plus countless orthographic variations of these aliases between and among the different languages whose speakers he interacted with throughout his eventful life. In his youth, he learned Portuguese and converted to Catholicism in Macao, married a Japanese woman, served as an interpreter for the Dutch East India Company in Taiwan, and plundered the Chinese coast as a pirate. In 1628, he submitted to the Ming and became an official and trade mogul whose wealth exceeded entire kingdoms. Yet his career ended abruptly when the Manchus took him captive to Beijing and later executed him.

His eldest son, the half-Japanese Zheng Chenggong, better known as Koxinga, transformed this enterprise into an anti-Manchu resistance with hundreds of warships and hundreds of thousands of troops, including entire special regiments of Japanese samurai warriors and African musketeers. He outmaneuvered the formidable Dutch East India Company to forge an economic and, increasingly, political hegemony over maritime East Asia. However, his crowning achievement, the seizure of Taiwan in 1662, took place amid a larger backdrop of defeat and demoralization by the Manchus on the mainland. Soon after this momentous victory, Koxinga perished amid the tropical island heat.

His eldest son and successor, Zheng Jing (1642–1681), started life as a wayward youth with a weak and emotional temperament, leading to an obsession with alcohol and sexual flings with older women. Surprisingly, these negative traits translated into benevolent, sensitive, and capable

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leadership, which came to define the majority of the organization's twenty final years on Taiwan. He became a visionary who transformed the militarily focused resistance movement of his father into a territorial state with a sophisticated bureaucracy founded upon filial piety to Koxinga's legacy and loyalty to an authentic "China" unblemished by the "barbarian" Manchus. In 1674, Jing took advantage of a domestic Qing uprising – the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories – to regain his family's lost mainland possessions. Although he suffered defeat in the end, he initially managed to seize control over more territory in south-eastern China and came closer to his organization's avowed ideal of Ming restoration than any of his illustrious predecessors.

Zheng Jing's death in 1681, soon after the failure of his mainland adventure, and an ensuing succession struggle unexpectedly brought to power his twelve-year-old son, Zheng Keshuang (1671–1717), an immature and inexperienced youth who became the mere puppet of an oligarchy of high officials. After the Zheng fleets suffered a crushing defeat in an epic battle with the Qing navy in the Taiwan Strait, the organization surrendered in 1683. Yet the preceding two years, while brief, nonetheless witnessed momentous reforms which, had they continued, could have formalized a turn away from the Ming and toward the creation of a fully legitimate maritime Chinese kingdom. This orientation, already apparent under Koxinga, never fully had a chance to mature and became permanently stillborn with the surrender of the family to the Qing.

These four generations of leaders, who dominated the East Asian sea lanes for almost six decades, deserve a comprehensive narrative simply because their larger-than-life lives, filled with high-pitched drama and sordid tales of incest and intrigue, make for an incredible story that needs to be told. Beyond that, a multifaceted study of these individuals and their organization provides insight into the heated debates surrounding the question of how China, as well as the rest of East Asia and the world, came to be what they are today. During the seventeenth century, China's high-quality manufactures and voracious demand for silver weaved together a global network of trade. What role did the Zheng play in this integration, and how did their downfall contribute to the transformation of the Chinese economic core into an impoverished periphery two hundred years later? What does their story reveal about the character and contradictions of Chinese political and cultural identity, played out in the fierce conflicts between continental and maritime China, Ming and Qing, and in relation to neighboring East Asian states and Europe? Finally, this narrative provides some context for issues of importance in the early twenty-first century, such as the resurgence of mainland China and its

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new maritime orientation, disputes over islands in the China Seas, and the liminal political status of Hong Kong and Taiwan.

### Myths made and unmade

The availability and credibility of sources have posed a tremendous barrier toward a comprehensive understanding of the Zheng and their historical significance. The original Zheng archival records suffered heavy destruction as a result of chaos and warfare, as well as purposeful Qing efforts to eradicate them after its occupation of Taiwan in 1683. The empire-wide literary purges of the eighteenth century, aimed at works deemed subversive to the court or anti-Manchu in character, further decimated what remained. Even so, a sizable quantity of materials has survived, remarkably against all odds. Most emerged out of hidden private collections or were discovered overseas, primarily in Japan – a major market for Chinese books – at the turn of the twentieth century. *Congzheng shilu* (*Veritable record of accompanying the expeditions*), purchased by researchers from a private collector in Fujian during the 1930s, is the most complete primary record to date. This meticulous year-by-year chronicle of the organization from 1649 to 1662 has been credibly attributed to Yang Ying (d. 1681), an official in charge of finances under Koxinga and Zheng Jing.<sup>3</sup> Other works include fragmentary collections of poems, edicts, memorials, and letters written by Zheng leaders and officials. Most of these materials only became widely available for scholarly use over the twentieth century.

The loss of much of the Zheng's own narrative meant that later historians increasingly had to rely upon the interpretations of others, along with the accompanying baggage of their agendas and biases. As Ralph Croizier's classic study has shown, vastly different understandings emerged over time between and within East Asian and Western historiographies. In China, contemporary Qing proclamations, memorials, and edicts primarily portrayed the Zheng as rebels and pirates acting against central authority. After their surrender in 1683, historical assessments of the family appeared whose primary focus involved meting out praise and blame to individuals according to Confucian moral standards. Officially sponsored histories perpetuated the negative narrative until well into the nineteenth century. Commoners in the Zheng home bases of southern Fujian and Taiwan, on the other hand, were the most unanimous in their praise for the family, and circulated legends and constructed shrines dedicated to their memory and exploits. In addition, former Zheng

<sup>3</sup> See the introduction to Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu*, TWWXCK, 32 (1958), pp. 1–3.

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followers and private gentry scholars authored unofficial accounts, or wild histories (*yeshi*), which rely upon Qing records, access to family documents and archives, and oral testimonies from eyewitnesses, most of them unavailable today. Initially, they contained both positive and negative assessments of the Zheng's character.

The narratives of the family converged over the Qing. Zheng Zhilong came to be seen as a profit-seeking opportunist who did not hesitate to switch sides in pursuit of his interests, while Keshuang, the last ruler, was a weakling puppet of wicked advisors. Koxinga and Zheng Jing, on the other hand, received praise for their steadfast loyalty, even to a doomed dynasty. Koxinga was especially celebrated for sacrificing his filial obligations to his own father, Zhilong, for the Ming cause. The *Taiwan waiji* (*Unofficial record of Taiwan*), written in 1707 by Jiang Risheng, a southern Fujian gentry and son of a former Zheng commander, combined analytical narrative, moral judgment, and embellished dialogues and legends drawn from local folklore to solidify this tacit consensus. The work further transformed Koxinga into a hero of supernatural stature. During the middle of the nineteenth century, faced with French and Japanese designs on Taiwan and Fujian, the Qing court appropriated this discourse too. It deified Koxinga with an official shrine in Tainan, southern Taiwan, according him official sanction as a moral paragon to rally residents against foreign aggression.<sup>4</sup> This 180-degree turnabout in historical memory toward one of the Qing's bitterest former enemies had few parallels in China and elsewhere.

The Zheng inspired and continues to articulate modern nationalisms across East Asia. Books that came to reflect the Qing-era consensus on the Zheng were exported in large numbers to Japan over the Tokugawa (1600–1868) and early Meiji (1868–1912) periods, primarily via the port of Nagasaki. During the eighteenth century, narratives of the family patterned after their Chinese counterparts appeared in print. The Zheng also featured prominently in foreign affairs compilations and local gazetteers of Nagasaki, which drew largely upon Tokugawa official documents on international relations and interviews of incoming Chinese vessels at the Kyushu port. Many of these accounts, together with dramas and other fictional narratives, capitalized upon Koxinga's birth in Japan to a Japanese mother to nativize him as a Japanese cultural hero. Chikamatsu Monzaemon's (1673–1725) eighteenth-century masterpiece play *Kokusenya kassen* (*Battles of Koxinga*) portrayed Koxinga as a samurai

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed analysis of the evolution of the Zheng family's historical image, see Ralph C. Croizier, *Koxinga and Chinese nationalism: myth, history, and the hero* (Cambridge, MA: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1977), pp. 12–37.

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imbued with the “Japanese spirit” (“*Yamato damashi*”), whose bravery and prowess saved the Ming house from destruction. It became an instant hit and left a deep imprint upon the popular consciousness.

During Japan’s fifty-year rule over Taiwan from 1895 to 1945, the authorities on the island promoted precisely this martial image of an adventurer and conqueror to inspire loyalty among their skeptical colonial subjects. The family’s pan-Asian connections and business network also became useful in justifying imperial expansion and attempts to forge a Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere in the Second World War. Japan’s defeat and subsequent incorporation into an order dominated by the United States put a stop to its quest for political leadership. Accordingly, postwar Japanese popular and scholarly accounts portray Koxinga and the rest of the clan as generic, pan-Asian heroes devoid of a specific national belonging. Nonetheless, they continue to emphasize the family’s trading network as harbingers of East Asian integration, reflecting the important position occupied by Japanese capital in the region.<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, the historical experience of the Zheng has undergone multiple reimaginings in a divided China that mirror its contested politics since 1949. At the height of the Cold War, from the 1950s to late 1970s, the Republic of China, defeated on the mainland and forced to withdraw to Taiwan, upheld Koxinga and Zheng Jing as moral paragons. Their anti-Qing resistance became an inspiration for the Guomindang’s own agenda of recovering the mainland from the Communists, who, like the Manchus, were seen as destroying authentic Chinese culture.<sup>6</sup> Starting from the 1980s, amid closer cross-strait interaction and the loss of Taiwan’s ability to represent “China” abroad in the face of the mainland’s rise, advocates of a separate Taiwanese consciousness have gradually gained ground in both political and historical discourse. The new historiography engendered in this climate celebrates the Zheng as founders of an independent maritime kingdom and downplays their Ming loyalism because of the uncomfortable association of this ideology with China.<sup>7</sup>

On the mainland, representations of all four generations of the Zheng in scholarly articles, books, and other media have changed dramatically from the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 to the second decade of the twenty-first century. Before the 1990s, the family

<sup>5</sup> Croizier, *Chinese nationalism*, p. 32; Jiang Renjie, *Jiegou Zheng Chenggong: Yingxiong, shenhua yu xingxiang de lishi* (Taipei: Sanmin Bookstore, 2006), pp. 43–88.

<sup>6</sup> Croizier, *Chinese nationalism*, pp. 63–70; Jiang Renjie, *Jiegou Zheng Chenggong*, pp. 118–123.

<sup>7</sup> Jiang Renjie, *Jiegou Zheng Chenggong*, pp. 127–130. See also Peter Kang, “Koxinga and his maritime regime in the popular historical writings of post-Cold War Taiwan and China,” in Tonio Andrade and Xing Hang (eds.), *Sea rovers, silver, and samurai: maritime East Asia in global history, 1550–1700* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, forthcoming).

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was seen as an enlightened class of nascent capitalists who stood up successfully to European imperialism. Koxinga, in particular, acquired, and still enjoys, a reputation as a national hero (*minzu yingxiong*) for his momentous victory over the Dutch. However, during the 1990s, mounting cross-strait tensions called the family's official legacy into question. Koxinga's historical position was downplayed, while some scholars went as far as to accuse his son, Zheng Jing, of plotting Taiwanese independence. On the other hand, their enemies, the Kangxi emperor (b. 1654, r. 1662–1722) and Shi Lang (1621–1696), the Zheng defector who inflicted the final defeat upon the family, became celebrated as the main facilitators of Taiwan's reincorporation into the motherland. As China's interests become global in the early twenty-first century, the Zheng are acquiring renewed significance as harbingers of the country's naval power and maritime sovereignty. This shift reflects the transformation of official priorities, from the focus on national liberation and world communism to a more confident vision of a resurgent China.<sup>8</sup>

Surprisingly, historical interpretations of the Zheng in the West began earlier than in East Asia: soon after the Dutch loss of their Taiwan colony in 1662. Western sources draw upon the massive documentation left behind by administrators and employees of the Dutch and English East India Companies, and the Spanish colonial authorities and Roman Catholic missionaries of the Philippines. These materials, many of which are preserved in manuscript form at archives across Europe, provide information unavailable in any surviving Chinese materials. Because the Zheng presented a serious challenge to the very economic and political survival of these fragile European overseas outposts, the records naturally focus upon diplomatic exchanges with the organization, the number of its junks sailing to a given port, and the quantities and profitability of goods traded. They also vividly describe the appearance and demeanor of Zheng leaders and officials, and present them as complex, multidimensional personalities. The Chinese accounts, with their adherence to Confucian moral categories, typically leave out such details.<sup>9</sup>

Two early autobiographical narratives left a deep imprint upon Western historiography. In 1674, an account of Koxinga's attack on Taiwan and its subsequent surrender appeared in print in Amsterdam under the

<sup>8</sup> For more on the evolving historical image of the Zheng family on mainland China, see Xing Hang, "The contradictions of legacy: reimagining the Zheng family in the People's Republic of China," *Late Imperial China* 34.2 (2013).

<sup>9</sup> Leonard Blussé, "The VOC as sorcerer's apprentice: stereotypes and social engineering on the China coast," in W. L. Idema (ed.), *Leyden studies in Sinology: papers presented at the conference held in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Sinological Institute of Leyden University, December 8–12, 1980* (Leiden: Brill, 1980) provides an insightful overview of how Dutch and Chinese sources view a similar set of events in vastly different ways.



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pseudonym of C. E. S. Historians commonly attribute authorship to Frederik Coyett (1615–1687), the last governor of the island.<sup>10</sup> Around the same time, Vittorio Riccio (1621–1685), an Italian Dominican missionary, published a massive tome detailing his personal experiences on the southeastern coast during the 1650s and 1660s, as well as the work of the church across China. Since Koxinga permitted the Dominicans to establish a church and proselytize in Zheng-held areas, Riccio regularly interacted with Koxinga and his officials.<sup>11</sup> Both works contain highly negative portrayals of the Zheng, depicting them as amoral pirates who did not hesitate to renege upon their promises, and were responsible for the torture, maiming, and killing of hundreds of thousands of innocents. This appraisal came to define Western popular and scholarly works on the family until well into the twentieth century, although their tone acquired a greater degree of nuance over time.<sup>12</sup> Behind the shrill accusations lies a lingering sense of bitterness at the defeat of Europeans at the hands of what they considered to be a group of treacherous, heathen natives.

After the Second World War, the horizons of Western historiography broadened considerably amid intensified academic exchanges, first with Taiwanese scholars, archives, and academic institutions, and later, with their mainland counterparts in the waning years of the Cold War. From the 1950s to 1970s, scholars in Taiwan painstakingly compiled and annotated, under government sponsorship, a vast body of Chinese-language documents pertaining to the island's history and published them in a 354-volume series: the *Taiwan wenxian congkan* (*Taiwan historical documents collectanea*). Historians on the island further supplied exhaustive studies of these materials in academic journals such as *Taiwan wenxian* (*Taiwan historica*) and *Taiwan fengwu* (*Taiwan folkways*). Ming and Qing accounts related to the Zheng family feature prominently in these endeavors, which greatly facilitated access to Chinese-language sources on the subject in the West. The general influx of literature from the mainland starting in the late 1970s added to the body of available resources.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> C. E. S. can be interpreted as the abbreviation for Coyett et Socii, Latin for Coyett and associates.

<sup>11</sup> Anna Busquets has undertaken an exhaustive analysis of Riccio's complete manuscript. See her "Dreams in the Chinese periphery: Victorio Riccio and Zheng Chenggong's regime," in Tonio Andrade and Xing Hang, *Sea rovers, silver, and samurai*. Although still unpublished in its entirety, parts of Riccio's narrative have appeared in José Eugenio Borao-Mateo, Pol Heyns, Carlos Gómez, and Anna Maria Zanduetta Nisce (eds.), *Spaniards in Taiwan: documents*, 2 vols. (Taipei: SMC Publishing, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Croizier, *Chinese nationalism*, pp. 29–31.

<sup>13</sup> A detailed introduction to the primary documents and historical accounts of the Ming-Qing transition from both Taiwan and mainland China, with significant sections on the Zheng family, can be found in Lynn Struve, *The Ming-Qing conflict, 1619–1683: a historiography and source guide* (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 1998).



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Collectively, the large-scale influx of Chinese-language sources has ameliorated the previous Western negativity toward the Zheng. At the same time, because their narration style, character portrayals, and political agendas differ drastically from the traditional European historiography, they have presented new problems of interpretation for historians trained in the West. Research on the Zheng has largely become the provenance of two dynamic subfields. Late imperial Chinese historians, such as Lynn Struve and Wong Young-tsu, build upon the Qing historiographical tradition as later modified on both sides of the strait. They emphasize Zheng resistance against the Manchus and relations with the Ming loyalist courts. As Struve insightfully points out, the rise of the Zheng reflected the widespread militarization of Chinese society during the late Ming amid the systemic breakdown of civil institutions in the face of mounting internal and external crises. Wong correctly argues that the war-plagued southeastern coast reacquired political order by rallying around the family's banner of anti-Qing resistance.<sup>14</sup> However, neither scholar sufficiently accounts for aspects of the Zheng's behavior that may contradict their avowed Ming loyalism and the potential for shifts over time in response to altered circumstances.

The family constitutes an important subject of study for another group of historians: those whose expertise lies in maritime China, defined as a chain of ports, islands, and coastal territory stretching from the Liaodong peninsula in the north to Hainan in the south. For them, this littoral zone had a distinct past and identity characterized by profit-driven acquisitiveness and openness to the outside world, in contrast to the inward-looking continent and its rigid imperial autocracy and Confucian value system.<sup>15</sup> Experts of this dynamic field, whose focus is on the early modern period, or roughly the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, are increasingly expanding beyond their disciplinary confines and seeking to understand China's

<sup>14</sup> Lynn Struve, *Southern Ming: 1644–1662* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 6–7; Wong Young-tsu, "Security and warfare on the China coast: the Taiwan question in the seventeenth century," *Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies* 35 (1981–1983), p. 133.

<sup>15</sup> The dichotomy of a maritime and continental China was first articulated in John King Fairbank, "Maritime and continental in China's history," in Fairbank and Denis Crispin Twitchett (eds.), *The Cambridge history of China* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), vol. XII.1: Republican China, 1912–1949. The vast-ranging and path-breaking research of John E. Wills, Jr. has built upon this analytical foundation to develop maritime Chinese history into an exciting and vibrant new field in its own right. One of his definitive works is "Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang: themes in peripheral history," in Jonathan D. Spence and Wills (eds.), *From Ming to Ch'ing: conquest, region, and continuity in seventeenth-century China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979). Deng Gang, *Maritime sector, institutions, and sea power of premodern China* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999) offers a comprehensive, book-length treatment of maritime Chinese economic history.

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position within a broader world that they see as interconnected and interdependent. Many cooperate closely with global historians or have come to define themselves as such. Others are joining forces with specialists in various geographic and disciplinary fields to articulate an East Asian maritime zone comparable to the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and Mediterranean worlds. They conceive of this space, comprising the China Seas but with increasing inroads into the Indian and Pacific Oceans, as an integrated unit characterized by economic, diplomatic, and cultural exchanges whose internal dynamics exceed connections outside the region.<sup>16</sup>

Maritime historians build upon the rich Western historiography on the Zheng but dispense with the past negativity and emphasize the more neutral focus of these sources upon the family's trading network and multilateral ties with East Asia ex-China. Their works reveal a profit-driven, realpolitik side of the Zheng that Ming and Qing specialists have only lightly treated before and calls into question the family's commitment to the loyalist cause. The Zheng organization, they argue, should be treated as an entity separate from the dynastic transition on the mainland. Patrizia Carioti claims that the family established an "informal state," while Cheng Wei-chung goes farther, characterizing it as a fully independent sea-based kingdom.<sup>17</sup>

Many maritime scholars are merging their findings with the perspectives and arguments of late imperial Chinese historians. The pioneering works of John E. Wills, Jr., Leonard Blussé, and Tonio Andrade show that the Zheng inherited the legacy of a long line of merchant-mediators in the China Seas, who used their skills, connections, and military acumen to dominate the littoral and the seas. The success of these middlemen depended upon an ability to bridge their fluid maritime environment of

<sup>16</sup> Leonard Blussé has played a major role in the articulation of an integrated maritime East Asian regional history. See his "No boats to China: the Dutch East India Company and the changing pattern of the China Sea trade, 1635–1690," *Modern Asian studies* 30.1 (1996). It is important to note that the maritime East Asian and global perspectives are by no means mutually exclusive. Recent works that position the region within a global context include the collection of chapters in Angela Schottenhammer (ed.), *The East Asian Mediterranean: crossroads of knowledge, commerce, and human migration* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 2008); François Gipouloux, and Jonathan Hall and Dianna Martin (trans.), *The Asian Mediterranean: port cities and trading networks in China, Japan and Southeast Asia, 13th–21st century* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2011); and Blussé, *Visible cities: Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the coming of the Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Patrizia Carioti, "The Zhengs' maritime power in the context of the 17th century far eastern seas: the rise of a 'centralised piratical organisation' and its gradual development into an informal 'state,'" *Ming-Qing yanjiu (Ming-Qing studies)* 5 (1996); Cheng Wei-chung (Zheng Weizhong), *War, trade and piracy in the China Seas, 1622–1683* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).