Tonio Andrade and Xing Hang, eds.

*Sea Rovers, Silver, and Samurai: Maritime East Asia in Global History, 1550–1700.*

This volume is not only a work on piracy and economy, as its title suggests. In fact it discusses trade, state formation, local politics, diplomacy, cosmology, legal cases, and cultural exchanges in the early modern era, and shifting historical images in recent decades. Most of the chapters in this volume focus on the late sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries, assuming that this period, when the Zheng regime was influential, was an important origin of the uniqueness of maritime East Asia. Most of the chapters therefore discuss issues related to the regime.

In the first chapter, Michal Laver discusses the interaction between a Chinese pirate/merchant leader and the representatives of the English and Dutch East India Companies in Hirado. Laver argues that in such a “space in between” far from the political capitals, not state agents but private multi-ethnic pirate/merchants played an important role in the negotiations over large-scale trade and diplomacy.

Chapter Two by Peter Shapinsky focuses on the representation of maritime actors. He argues that pirates and ambassadors tried to influence each other, performing certain identity representations. Chinese and Japanese pirate/merchants deployed a representation of sea lord and performed civility and culture, bearing land-based titles or a pseudonym as a Confucian scholar. This was a reaction to Chinese and Korean literati/ambassadors, who represented themselves as land-based civilization, and considered the maritime world as uncivilized.

In Chapter Three Birgit Tremml-Werner discusses the relationship between Momoyama Japan and the Spanish Philippines, a typical example of a lack of a common system of diplomacy. The author emphasizes the quick accommodation and establishment of hybrid forms in diplomatic protocol, sometimes through skillful translation. For example, tribute and friendship was used interchangeably in the translated letters.

Chapter Four by Robert Batchelor discusses space and time in early-modern East Asia, focusing on a newly discovered map and calendars created in the seventeenth century. The map was strikingly creole, referring to different sources, probably including a Spanish map. The calendars based on old Ming calendars were a sort of resistance to the Qing regime, and they were included in the gift from Zheng to the English East India Company (EIC).

Chapter Five by John E. Wills Jr. discusses the origin and the early life of Zheng Yiguan (Zhilong), the father of Zheng Chenggong, based on neglected
sets of Chinese and European sources. Some European missionary sources show that Yiguan and his relatives had frequent trade contacts with Manila and Macao, through which they accessed New World silver and Southeast Asian goods.

In Chapter Six, Cheng-heng Lu discusses Zheng Zhilong and his private military organization, the Zheng Ministry. Zhilong's men were promoted to high ranks in the Ming navy through their battle against other pirates, but they remained faithful to their boss, not to the government. The military positions provided legitimacy, which allowed him to control crucial ports and trade routes. Lu emphasizes that in this way Zhilong combined an official army with his private troops.

In Chapter Seven Patrizia Carioti examines the correspondences between the Zheng regime and the Tokubawa shogunate. Although the shogun Iemitsu decided not to respond to Zheng's request for military support, Carioti assumes that Zheng obtained metal and weapons from Japan. Zheng's trade was so influential for the Japanese economy that the shogunate did not want to rebuke the Zheng regime.

In Chapter Eight, Adam Clulow discusses a legal case, which Chinese junk traders brought to the Japanese court in Nagasaki. They demanded compensation from the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which unlawfully confiscated their cargo, and surprisingly the shogunate ordered that the VOC pay it, and refrain from attacking Chinese junks sailing to Japan. This means, Clulow argues, that the shogunate asserted its authority beyond coastal waters.

In Chapter Nine, Anna Busquets focuses on the negotiations between Spanish Manila and the Zheng regime. Zheng Chenggong demanded that the Spanish pay him tribute and taxes and submit to his rule. The Spanish rejected the demand, and the tension ended only with Chenggong's sudden death. The author argues that he considered the Spanish presence in the Philippines to be illegal and the Chinese district in Manila to be his vassal.

In Chapter Ten, Leonard Blussé discusses cracks and tensions within the Zheng family. Blussé illuminates how after the death of Zheng Chenggong, the family fell into conflicts between influential members over the leadership and the inheritance.

Chapter Eleven by Xing Hang deals with Zheng Jing's rule of Taiwan (1663-1673) and the changing “Chinese” identity under his regime. Hang argues that Jing was a highly capable leader, having successfully promoted agriculture and trade. His planned invasion of Manila was the culmination of his elaboration of a “Chinese” identity, representing civilization and agricultural economy.

In Chapter Twelve, Dahpon David Ho discusses the depopulation of the South China coast enforced by the Qing regime in 1661-83. Ho argues that the