

A Tale of One City: Moderating Networks, and Managing Globalization in Nagasaki circa 1600-1800

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Since the paradigm of 'seclusion' that dominated the field of early modern East Asian foreign relations fell from grace, 'connection' has formed the main drive behind the research agendas of the past couple of decades. In doing so, some scholars turned to Ferdinand Braudel's conceptual framework of the Mediterranean to assess the situation in Asia, and thus began to underline the importance of port cities in connecting its various regions. Although these scholars have presented interesting ways to study the city as a place in its own right, few actually analyzed the positions and functions of these cities within larger global systems. This paper aims to do just that, using the so-called model of *hinterland systems*.

Early modernists generally agree that early modern cities had both formal and informal hinterlands. The formal hinterland consisted of rural spaces under the city's direct jurisdiction, while the informal hinterlands included all spaces within a city's sphere of influence, which could be rural, urban, and even *trans-regional* or *trans-continental* in nature. Cátia Antunes proposed that as smaller cities, which could be part of a larger city's hinterland, have in turn hinterlands of their own, it is better to speak of *hinterland systems*. Moreover, in her study on early modern Amsterdam and Lisbon she shows how cities could compete with one another for control over part of the hinterland, making a city's position within these systems dependent on its ability as a moderator of the networks responsible for global flows of people, goods, capital, credit, culture, ideas, and information.

Utilizing both early modern Dutch and Japanese sources, this paper assesses how throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Nagasaki's micromanagement of aforementioned networks effected its own position, and that of other cities, within these *hinterland systems*. Consequently, this paper reappraises the networks responsible for some of the abovementioned global flows. Traditionally, scholars have given much attention to the volume of Japan's early modern foreign trade passing through Nagasaki, and its various regulations imposed by Japan's central government. Recently, economic historians such as Shimada Ryuto began to investigate the impact of Japan's export volume on the Asian and European economies. However, when it comes to the composition and mechanics of the networks responsible for this trade, there is still substantial ground to cover. Early modern Nagasaki was a place where people subjected to (slightly) different systems of risk management, granting of credit, conflict resolution, price determination et cetera, had to compete *and* cooperate. These systems changed over time, incidentally transforming daily (business) procedures in Nagasaki, which in turn forced both foreign and domestic actors to adapt their local, regional and global business strategies. Looking at alterations in the shape and workings of these networks not only gives us more insight in the business cultures of several Nagasaki based merchant groups, but also tells us something about the way globalization worked at a micro level.