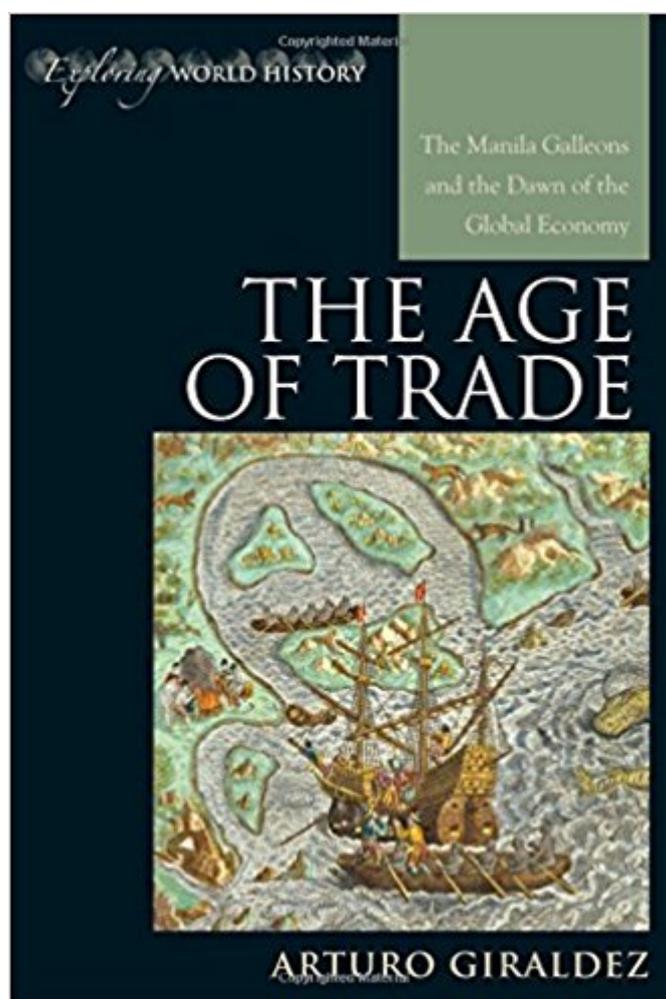


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The Age Of Trade: The Manila Galleons And The Dawn Of The Global Economy (Exploring World History)



Synopsis

This groundbreaking book presents the first full history of the Manila galleons, which marked the true beginning of a global economy. Arturo Giraldez, the world's leading scholar of the galleons, traces the rise of the maritime route, which began with the founding of the city of Manila in 1571 and ended in 1815 when the last galleon left the port of Acapulco in New Spain (Mexico) for the Philippines, establishing a permanent connection between the Spanish empire in America with Asian countries, most importantly China, the main supplier of commodities during that era. Throughout the two-and-a-half-century history of the Manila galleons, the strategic commodity fuelling global networks was always silver. Giraldez shows how this most important of precious metals shaped world history, with influences that stretch to the present.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an excellent history, thoroughly documented and full of information, and the writing is very good. The book could use some illustrations--what did the galleons look like? What did the Cavite navy yard look like? What was Acapulco like? Reader alert: this is written in the academic style of often long, sometimes turgid paragraphs, and is author-narrated, with no real attempt to have the story tell itself. If this style is not to your taste, sample some of the book before buying it. That said, this is probably the best book on the context of the Manila galleons. The galleons era ran till about 1820, for something like 250 years, and were crucial in early globalization, in the most basic sense American silver shipped to China and Chinese products shipped to the Americas (and on to Europe

sometimes). The trade was huge in its day. This book is about the whole context, including the origin of the Spanish interests in Asia and conquest of the Philippines (they never controlled all the islands), the workings of governing them, the delicate position of Manila in Asia (the Japanese came close to invading at least once), the galleons themselves and what it was like to sail on them, and the end. You don't have to read the entire book (which is under 200 pages of text) because individual chapters can stand alone. I found two chapters especially interesting. Chapter 4 concerns the seventeenth century, locating the galleon trade in the greater Spanish context of European wars, the annexation of Portugal (1580-1640 very roughly), and the rise of competition with the Dutch and English. This chapter has some fascinating detail on relations with China and Japan.

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