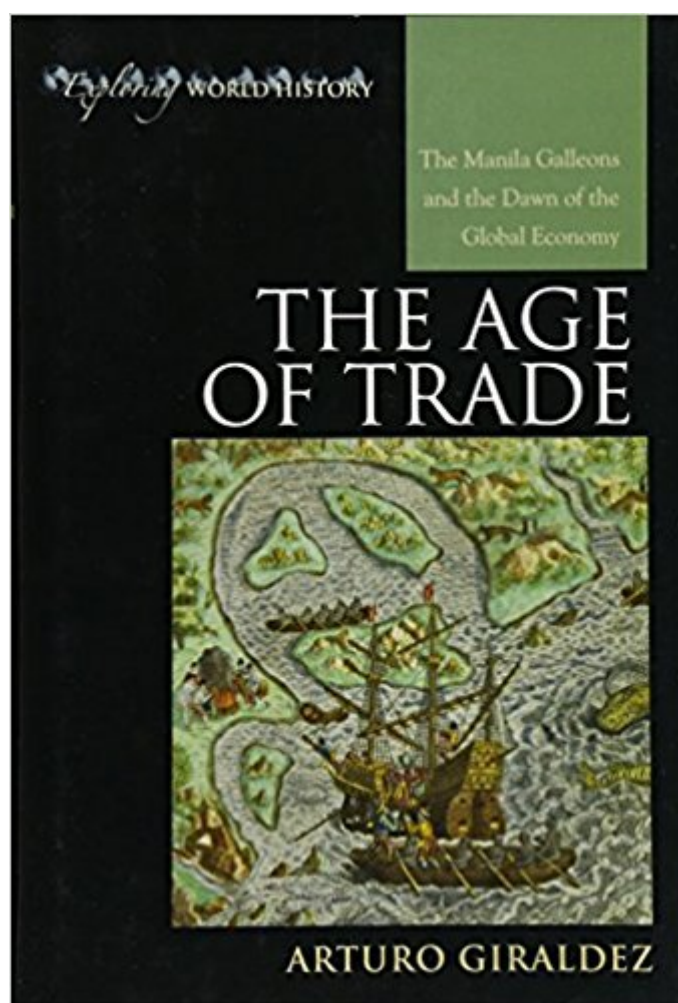


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# The Age Of Trade: The Manila Galleons And The Dawn Of The Global Economy (Exploring World History)



## 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

Giraldez seeks to bridge the disciplinary gap between those who study the early modern Americas and those who analyze the Spanish Empire from a European perspective by examining the so-called galleon trade, the Spanish-controlled shipping link that connected the Philippines with Mexico between 1565 and the early 1800s. This link, the author argues, represents the dawn of the global economy in that it turned global trade into an uninterrupted flow. Fueled by Chinese demand for American silver and New World demand for porcelain, silk, spices, and ivory, the galleon trade was vital to the global Spanish Empire. The author discusses how the Spanish, taking advantage of endemic internal conflict, settled the Philippines and turned Manila into an emporium; how

Manila's ethnic Chinese population played a vital role in its trade; and how political unrest and natural disaster disrupted traffic until, in the late 18th century, unrest in China, the British occupation of Manila, the expulsion of the indispensable Chinese community, and changing consumer taste among Mexico's upper classes caused a severe decline in trade. . . . [T]his study...does a fine job showing how the galleon trade closed the last gap in the globe-spanning web of trade. Summing Up: Recommended. General, public, and undergraduate collections. (CHOICE) This is the story of the Spanish treasure ships called Manila Galleons which sailed with their valuable cargo of silver between the Philippines and Mexico, starting with the founding of Manila in 1571 and lasting until the final galleon set sail in 1815. The establishment of Manila prompted the Pacific trade route, just like Christopher Columbus's voyages that set in motion the Atlantic economy and trade with nations within this sphere of influence. . . . This is . . . a historic recounting of the story of the establishment of a global economy and the rise and fall of the Spanish empire. . . . The book is well researched and very detailed. (Ontario Sailor Magazine) The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy "a definitive treatment of the galleon line that sustained the commercial exchanges between China and the Spanish American colonies for almost 250 years" restores the missing link. . . . The Manila galleons serve as a powerful lens to understand the period and the region. While The Age of Trade acts as a summary of early historic relations between East Asia and the West, explaining China's central role in global trade as well as the particular role of the Philippines, it also connects monetary history, climate change and the environment to reveal that the effects of this initial foray into globalization and world trade when first took place bear striking resemblance to those today. . . . On a larger scale, The Age of Trade reveals that the effects of world trade had already then begun to resemble much those today if not indeed foretell them. The benefits of a connected world seem immediately apparent. However, this first global trade led to major dislocations and displacements, exploitation and sunk many into dependence; it also caused environmental degradation, effects that then, as now, are not always transparent. The Manila Galleon may seem a world away from our own, but the reality is that it is strikingly close. (Asian Review Of Books) This new work on the Manila Galleons is a welcome addition to the historiography of not only trans-Pacific trade, but also global maritime history from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. . . . This work is of substantial value to maritime history. It goes well beyond the history of the Manila Galleons as it synthesizes a large bibliography of books and articles to help explain the globalization of the China trade with Europe and America from the fifteenth into the nineteenth centuries. (International Journal of Maritime History) Giraldez's interdisciplinary ambition is ... responsible for giving us a work that is as valuable as it is long

overdue. Finally, we have a definitive and updated academic overview of the galleon trade. The work's textbook like coverage and general reliability are invaluable assets to both specialists and to a general academic audience. Before now, historians seeking to understand the galleons have had to turn to a diverse and often obscure hodgepodge of articles, books, and primary sources just to connect the most basic dots about the galleons.... By interweaving diverse sources, however, Giraldez has made a comprehensive history of the galleons accessible even to those who do not primarily study the Philippines, including of course those interested in Jesuit studies. Indeed, insofar as *Journal of Jesuit Studies* readers are invested in the workings of early global trade, this text will long be an indispensable reference.... Its expansive coverage ... indispensably paves the way for a growing body of literature about the early modern Philippines, the galleons, and their rippling effects on the rest of the world. (*Journal of Jesuit Studies*) For more than two centuries, the giant Spanish treasure ships of the Manila Galleon crossed between Mexico and Manila, tying together "and profoundly affecting" economies in three continents. Yet, incredibly, no full history of this essential building block in the construction of globalization has been written since the First World War. At last, Arturo Giraldez has filled this lack. The fruit of more than two decades of research, *The Age of Trade* is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the Pacific, the growth and decline of the Spanish empire, the underpinnings of today's globalization, and the little-known story of the world's money supply. (Charles C. Mann, author of *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*)

This groundbreaking book traces the rich and perilous history of the ships and sailors that launched the global economy. The first line of navigation between Asia and the Americas, the Manila galleons first set sail from the Philippines in 1565, remaining the lifeblood of world trade until the last galleon of 1815. Drawing on a remarkable body of research, leading scholar Arturo Giraldez 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.

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. Chapter 5 concerns the galleons themselves, some on how they were built and sailed, and how the trade was conducted on shares and allocations, crews, passengers, and more. Chapter 6 is a less lively read but offers important detail on how Manila was governed, the sometimes murderous relation between the Spanish and the resident Chinese, the Moro attacks and the international colonial context, so to speak. Among the intriguing details are the length of the voyages--averaging 4 to 5 months Manila to Acapulco, and the difficulty of provisions. The fatality rate was often high and over the span tens of thousands must have died at sea or in wrecks. The officers were usually Spanish or Mexican, and the crews mostly Asian, many of who apparently settled in Mexico. This Asian influence in Mexico is often overlooked, but seems to have been considerable. The author uses the term "Magellan Exchange" which I have not seen before, in the same way the common "Columbian Exchange" has been used, only to describe how American crops were carried to the Philippines and on to the rest of Asia, and how some from Asia came to Mexico and then to the rest of the Americas. Many of the galleons were very large for their time, up to 2,000 tons, mostly constructed in the Philippines.

Where is any mention of the ivory trade? The ivory trade along with silk and porcelain was among the most valuable commodities sold to the Americas and Europe through the galleons. These were

brought in from Africa to be carved and finished in Manila. I was hoping for an in depth look into this.

Lots of fascinating information and some data, but unfortunately presented in a disorderly and poorly written fashion. Also I read it on my iPhone and could not get the footnotes to work (that is, no ability to click on a footnote and go right to it).

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