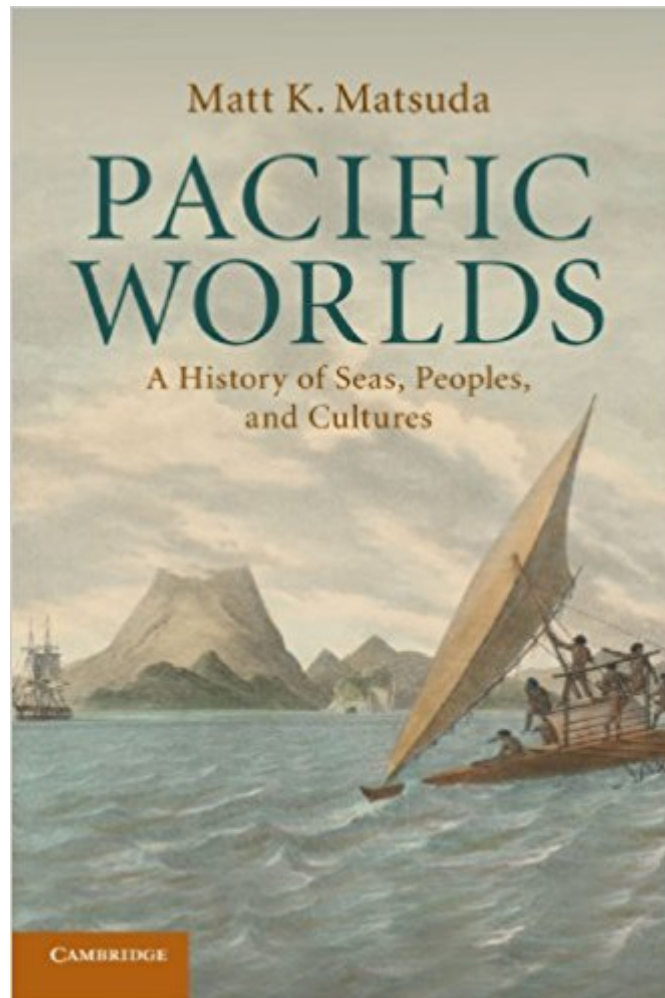




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Pacific Worlds: A History Of Seas, Peoples, And Cultures



Synopsis

Asia, the Pacific Islands and the coasts of the Americas have long been studied separately. This essential single-volume history of the Pacific traces the global interactions and remarkable peoples that have connected these regions with each other and with Europe and the Indian Ocean, for millennia. From ancient canoe navigators, monumental civilisations, pirates and seaborne empires, to the rise of nuclear testing and global warming, Matt Matsuda ranges across the frontiers of colonial history, anthropology and Pacific Rim economics and politics, piecing together a history of the region. The book identifies and draws together the defining threads and extraordinary personal narratives which have contributed to this history, showing how localised contacts and contests have often blossomed into global struggles over colonialism, tourism and the rise of Asian economies. Drawing on Asian, Oceanian, European, American, ancient and modern narratives, the author assembles a fascinating Pacific region from a truly global perspective.

Book Information

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rich in details and enlivened by carefully selected, more than just vivid snapshot accounts through time. Along the way, we are introduced to diverse local beliefs, customs (hierarchy, taboo/kapu systems, etc.), natural resources to be coveted by Europeans and Asians. The perspective the author employs is that of trans-localism: "These are not sequential narratives of civilizations, countries, and nations...This history is episodic, a collected set of characters and experiences...: the stories take on full meanings only when linked to other stories and places" (p. 5). Some of the larger topics discussed are as follows:> Ancient Lappita (strictly speaking, a specific ceramic pattern)

culture that sprang from the encounter of migrating Austronesians (starting 3000 BCE) and indigenous Papuans. By means of commerce of voyaging vessels political and kinship ties were established, extending as far east as Samoa and Tonga. Powerful trading and tribute network of the Micronesian Yap (cf. spiritual and administrative center of the megalithic Nan Madol on the island of Pohnpei - "on a stone altar") and Polynesian Tonga (from the 12th century). The Srivijaya empire (683-13th c.), "whose domination extended from the Indonesian islands to the Malay Peninsula, and north...to the Philippines" (p. 33).> Arab merchants, navigators, scholars and the spread of Islam: sultans of Malacca (founded 1400) by Iskandar Shah (originally a fugitive Hindu prince named Parameswara), overseeing the vital route between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, and those of Tidore and Ternate. Ming China's treasure fleet commanded by the Muslim admiral Zheng He (1405-33).

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