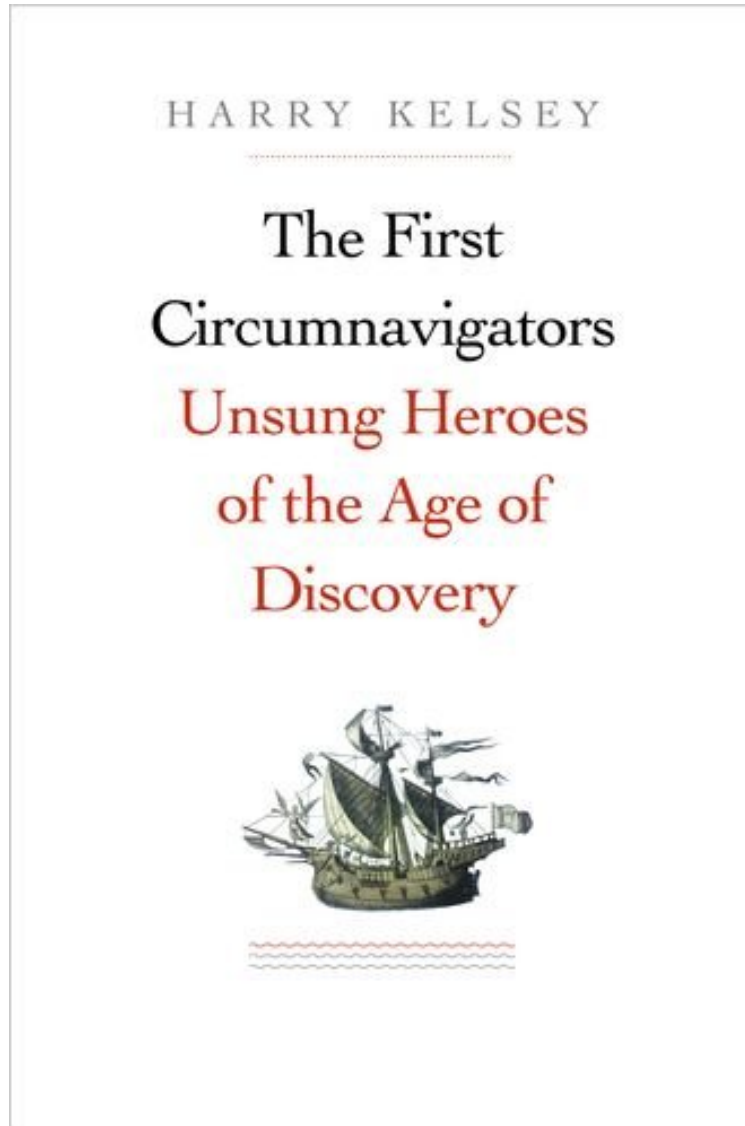


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The First Circumnavigators: Unsung Heroes of the Age of Discovery

Harry Kelsey

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Harry Kelsey : The First Circumnavigators: Unsung Heroes of the Age of Discovery before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The First Circumnavigators: Unsung Heroes of the Age of Discovery:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. covers the the field of the first circumnavigators like Harry KelseyBy Joseph L. FeeneyNobody, I mean nobody, covers the the field of the first circumnavigators like Harry Kelsey. He lists not only the captains who were the first to circle the globe, but each individual crew member too. I was especially interested in the progress of these ships. They were unaware, as yet, of the patterns of the trade winds in

the Pacific. One ship left "Manila" bound for Mexico, and returned a month later, having given up in the face of constant headwinds. The privations that these men suffered surprised me too. Many expeditions returned home with less than 10% of the original crew. Dr. Kelsey's book brought me along on these voyages. It was a most interesting read. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Must read for history buff. By John Veatch Fascinating story. Well researched and incredibly readable. Must read for any history buff. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Round the world in 100 years. By Gderf The book starts in 1519 with the difficulties of Magellan's voyage and completion of the circumnavigation by Elcano. A major takeaway is esteem of Magellan's contribution under extremely difficult circumstances, political as well as navigation and seamanship. The book disabused me of the notion that Francis Drake was the second captain to circumnavigate the globe. It features mapping the Pacific in the 16th century after Magellan by all Spanish navigators until Drake, although Sebastian Cabot gets a mention. The book adds knowledge about lesser known navigators, while the more important explorers like Cabrillo never went completely round. Vizcaino is never mentioned. There is interesting politics mixed with navigation, including how severe privation necessitated the Spaniards to violate the boundary specified by the treaty of Zaragoza. The litany of subordinate captains pilots and, in some cases, crew bespeaks extensive research but makes for somewhat tiresome reading. The piecemeal maps of the Pacific could do with augmentation by a larger view. Renditions of the voyages makes interesting reading albeit, except for Magellan, with minimal historical significance. The book accounts for how, as trade with the Islands became based in New Spain, circumnavigation became more of an accident than an accomplishment. It ends with the voyages of Drake and Cavendish as the Spanish and Portuguese ceded primacy of navigation and commerce to the English and Dutch, who became the major beneficiaries of Iberian sponsored exploration.

Prior histories of the first Spanish mariners to circumnavigate the globe in the sixteenth century have focused on Ferdinand Magellan and the other illustrious leaders of these daring expeditions. Harry Kelsey's masterfully researched study is the first to concentrate on the hitherto anonymous sailors, slaves, adventurers, and soldiers who manned the ships. The author contends that these initial transglobal voyages occurred by chance, beginning with the launch of Magellan's armada in 1519, when the crews dispatched by the king of Spain to claim the Spice Islands in the western Pacific were forced to seek a longer way home, resulting in bitter confrontations with rival Portuguese. Kelsey's enthralling history, based on more than thirty years of research in European and American archives, offers fascinating stories of treachery, greed, murder, desertion, sickness, and starvation but also of courage, dogged persistence, leadership, and loyalty.

This book is a thorough and well-written narrative based upon the original journals of early seamen who circumnavigated the globe. Harry Kelsey has put life into the men who sailed on these voyages, detailing the hardships they suffered, the food they ate, the dangers they faced, the natives they met, and the fights they had. In sum, much that goes beyond popular accounts to explain the remarkable and daring accomplishments of sixteenth-century explorers who searched the world for riches both real and imagined are contained in these pages. Iris Engstrand, University of San Diego