
Documents 1579B

The voyage of Francis Drake and the discovery of Palau in 1579

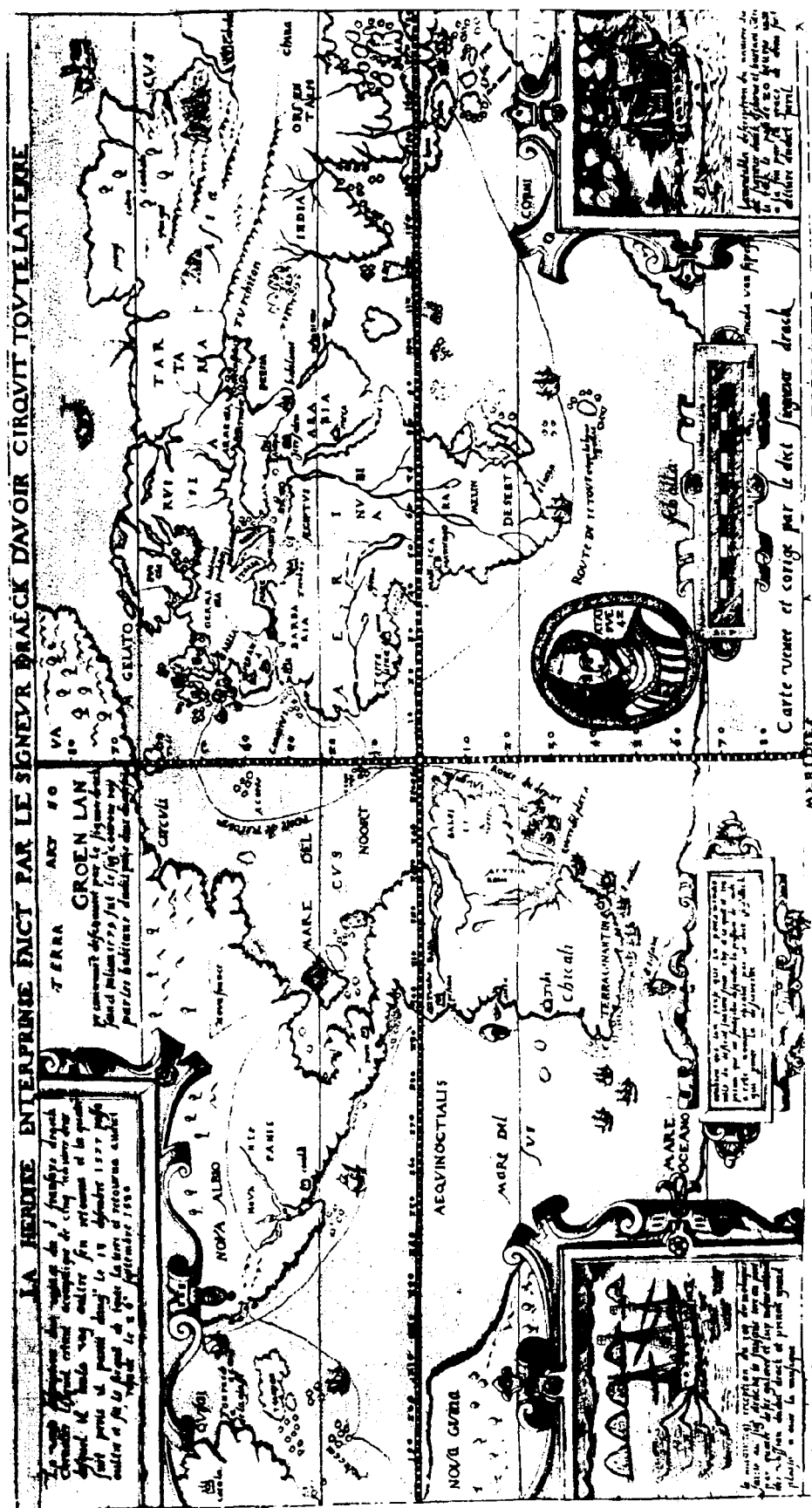
Sources: The two main documentary sources are "The Famous Voyage" and "The World Encompassed". See bibliography, under 1579.

Introductory note.

As William Lessa has so aptly demonstrated¹ the documents about Drake's voyage are greatly flawed in that there are no logbooks and no charts extant; Drake had given these to Queen Elizabeth, and she "lost" them. We are left with two major printed accounts, both based mostly on a manuscript written by Francis Fletcher, the ship chaplain. Another eyewitness, John Drake, who was the teenage cousin of the captain and was later captured by the Spanish, left two depositions that were found in Spanish archives; they contain information that is somewhat contradictory. When Drake left the coast of California, he was using Spanish charts stolen four months before from a Spanish pilot, Alonso Sánchez Colchero, near Huatulco, Mexico. Colchero had been on the way to Panama to join a galleon bound for Manila. Drake had intended to use the standard route across the Pacific (along the 13° parallel) but he seemed to have changed his mind at least once; first, intending to go directly to the Moluccas, then going back to the Philippine route. His actual track across the Pacific is not known with certainty, but the best speculation has it that he skirted the Marshalls on the north side, and avoided most of the Carolines, until he decided to make for the SE corner of Mindanao, and thus came upon some islands (Palau Group) where he spent 3 days. He named them the Islands of Thieves, the same name that Magellan had given to the Marianas.

1 Ed. note: See for instance his article entitled "Drake in the South Seas".

(Overleaf) **A map of the world showing the track of Francis Drake.** *This voyage was the first circumnavigation by an English ship. (From the French edition of Drake's voyage, Paris, 1641.*



There are glaring inconsistencies in the records of the events at Palau, resulting from the poor memory of the witnesses. They mixed their recollections of Micronesia with those of the Philippines, the Moluccas, and Java.

B1. Account printed as *The World Encompassed*

The extant manuscript of Fletcher's account does not cover the Pacific crossing (part missing) but the full account of it was edited by Drake's nephew and published under the title: "The World Encompassed" as follows.

[1579. July 25.]¹ We departed againe the day next following, viz. Iuly 25. And our Generall now considering, that the extremity of the cold not only continued but increased, the Sunne being gone farther from vs, and that the wind blowing still (as it did at first) from the Northwest, cut off all hope of finding a passage through these Northerne parts, thought it necessarie to loose no time; and therefore with generall consent of all, bent his course directly to runne with the Ilands of the Moluccas. And so having nothing in our view but aire and sea, without sight of any land for the space of full 68. dayes together, wee continued our course through the maine Ocean, till September 30. following, [Sept. 30.] on which day we fell in kenne of **certaine Ilands, lying about eight degrees** to the Northward of the line.

From these Ilands presently vpon the discovery of vs, came a great number of canowes, hauing each of them in some foure, in some sixe, in some fourteene or fifteene men, bringing with them Coquos, fish, Potatos, and certaine frutes to small purpose.

Their canowes were made after the fashion, that the canowes of all the rest of the Ilands of the Moluccas for the most part are: That is of one tree, hollowed within with great art and cunning, being made so smooth both within and without, that they bore a glosse, as if it were a harnesse most finely burnished: A prow and sterne they had of one fashion, yeelding inward in manner of a semicircle, of a great height, and hanged full of certaine white and glistering shels for brauery: On each side of their canows, lay out two peeces of timber about a yard and halfe long, more or lesse according to the capacitie of their boate. At the ends whereof was fastned crossewise a great cane, the vse whereof was to keepe their canowes from ouerthrowing, and that they might be equally borne vp on each side.

The people themselues haue the neather parts of their eares cut round or circlewise, hanging downe very low vpon their cheekes, wherein they hang things of a reasonable weight: the nailes on the fingers of some of them, were at least an inch long, and their teeth as blacke as pitch; the colour whereof they vse to renew by often eating of an herbe, with a kind of powder, which in a cane they carrie about them to the same purpose.

The first sort and company of those canowes beeing come to our ship (which then by reason of a scant wind made little way) very subtilly and against their natures, began

¹ Ed. note: Noted in margin.



*Drake perorati novit quem terminus orbis,
Et quem, bis mundi vidit utraque, Polus;
Si faciant homines, facient te Sidera notum,
Sol nescit comitis non memor esse sui.*

Drake's portrait in *The World Encompassed* (1st ed., 1628).



Portrait of Sir Francis Drake.



Another portrait of Sir Francis Drake. Engraved by Thomas de Leu from a painting from life by Joseph Rabel.

THE VVORLD Encompassed

By
Sir FRANCIS DRAKE,

Being his next voyage to that to *Nombre.*
de Dios formerly imprinted,

Carefully collected out of the notes of Master
FRANCIS FLETCHER *Preacher in this im-*
ployment, and diuers others his followers in
the same :

Offered now at last to publique view, both for the honour of
the actor, but especially for the stirring vp of *heroick spirits,*
to benefit their Countre, and eternize their names
by like noble attempss.



LONDON,

Printed for NICHOLAS BOVRNE
and are to be sold at his shop at the
Royall Exchange. 1628.

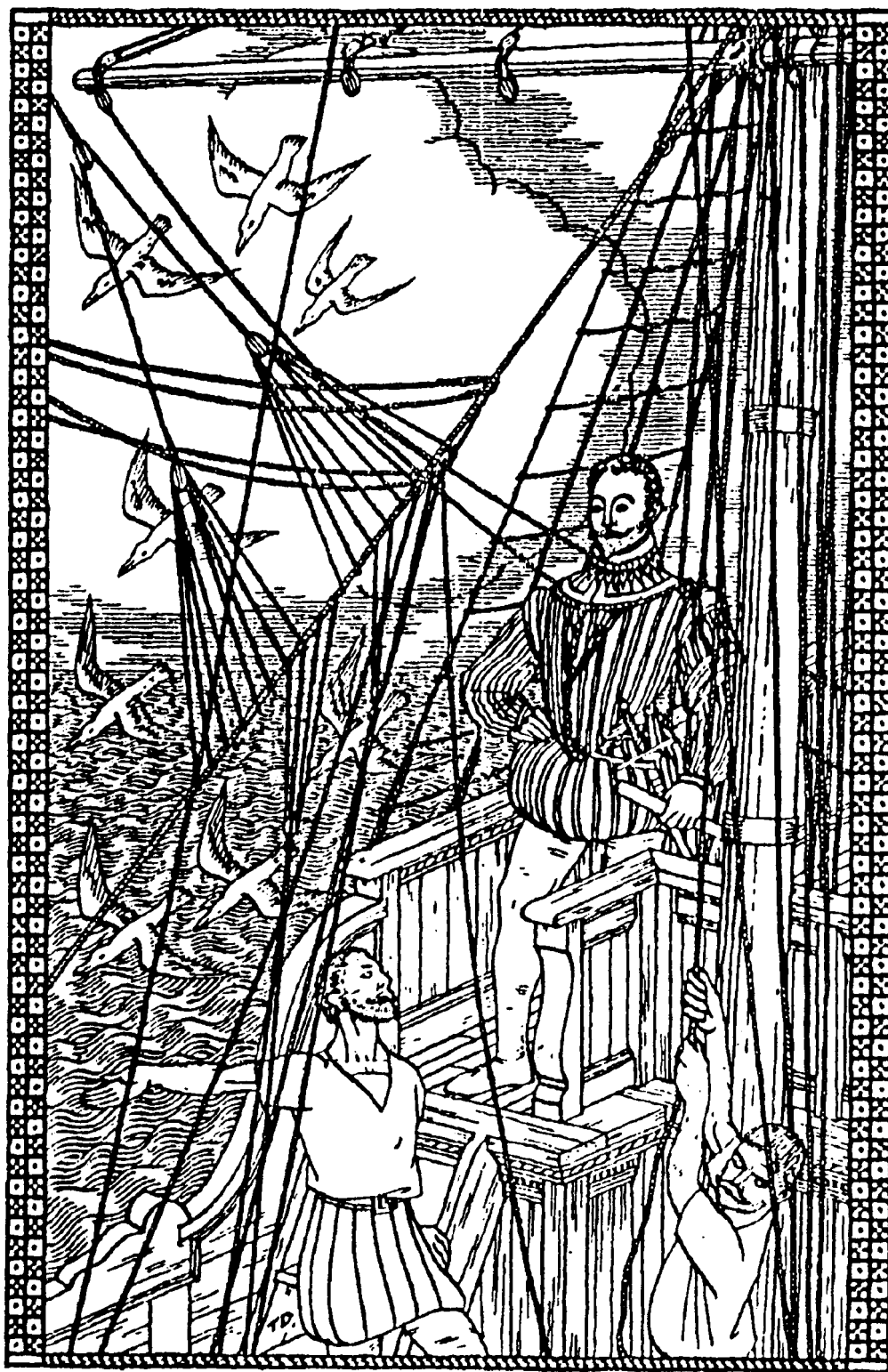
Title page of the 1628 edition of *The World Encompassed*.

in peace to traffique with vs, giuing vs one thing for another very orderly, intending (as we perceiued) hereby to worke a greater mischiefe to vs: Intreating vs by signes most earnestly to draw neerer towards the shore, that they might (if possible) make the easier prey both of the ship and vs. But these passing away, and others continually resorting, wee were quickly able to guesse at them what they were: For if they receiued any thing once into their hands, they would neither giue recompence nor restitution of it, but thought what euer they could finger to bee their owne: Expecting alwayes with browes of brasse to receiue more, but would part with nothing: Yea being reiected for their bad dealing, as those with whom we would haue no more to do, vsing vs so euilly, they could not be satisfied till they had giuen the attempt to reuenge themselues, because we would not giue them whatsoever they would haue for nothing: And hauing stones good store in their canowes, let flie a maine of them against vs. It was farre from our Generals meaning to requite their malice by like iniurie. Yet that they might know that he had power to doe them harme (if he had listed¹) he caused a great peece to be shot off not to hurt them but to affright them. Which wrought the desired effect amongst them, for at the noise thereof, they euery one leaped out of his canow into the water, and diuing vnder the keele of their boates, staied them from going any way till our ship was gone a good way from them. Then they all lightly recouered into their canowes, and got them with speed toward the shoare.

Notwithstanding other new companies (but all of the same mind) continually made resort vnto vs. And seeing that there was no good to be got by violence, they put on a shew of seeming honestie, and offering in shew to deale with vs by way of exchange; vnder that pretence they cunningly fell a filching of what they could, and one of them puld a dagger and knives from one of our mens girdles, and being required to restore it againe, he rather vsed what meanes he could to catch at more. Neither could we at all be to ridde of this vngracious company, till we made some of them feele some smart as well as terror: and so we left that place by all passengers to bee knowne hereafter by the name of the **Island of Theeues**.

[Octob. 3.] Till the third of October wee could not get cleare of these consorts, but from thence we continued our course without sight of land till the 16. of the same month [Octob. 16.], when we fell with foure Ilands standing in 7. deg. 5. min. to the Northward of the line. We coasted them till the 21. day [Octob. 21.], and then anchored and watered vpon the biggest of them called Mindanao. The 22. of October [Octob. 22.] as we past betweene two Ilands, about sixe or eight leagues South of Mindanao, there came from them two canows to haue talked with vs, and we would willingly haue talked with them, but there arose so much wind that put vs from them to the Southwards. October 25. [Octob. 25.] we passed by the Iland named Talao in 3. deg. 40. min. we saw

1 Ed. note: Misprint for "liked".

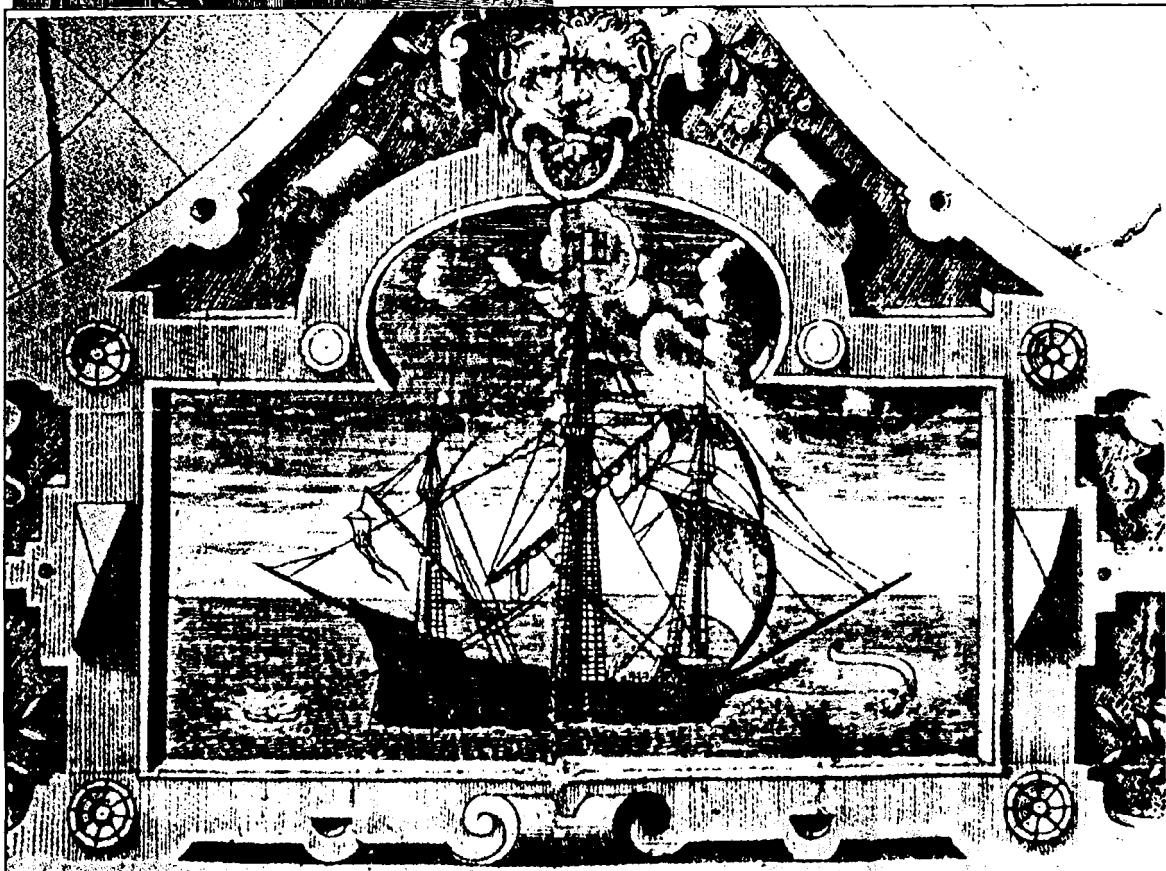


Drake surveying the Palau Group, 1-3 October 1579.

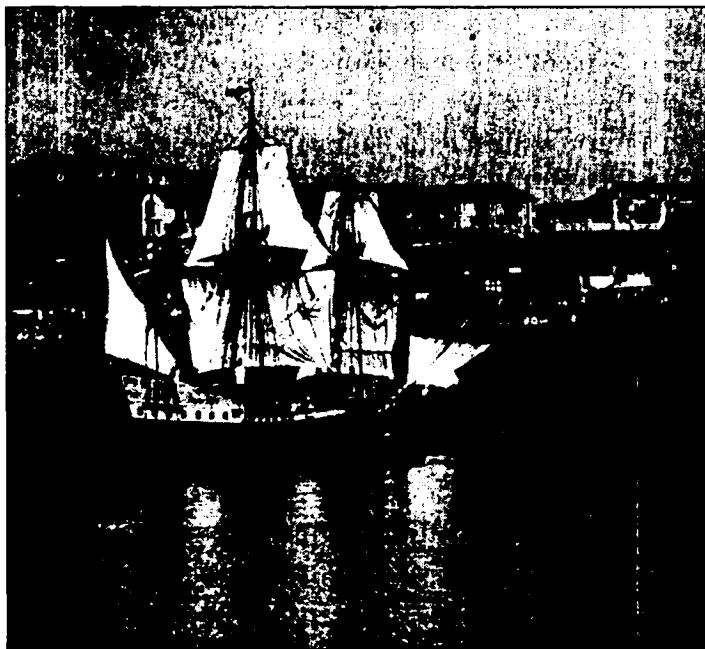


Queen Elizabeth of England knight-
ing Francis Drake on 4 April 1581.
(From Jules Verne's *The Exploration of the
World*, f.p. 368)

(Below) A true picture of the **Golden
Hind** of Captain Drake. After her famous
circumnavigation, she was exhibited for
about 100 years at Deptford on the Thames.
(From the "*Hondius Broadside*", ca. 1595:
"*Vera totius expeditiones nauticae*")



to the Northward of it three or foure other Ilands, Teda, Selan Saran, [Octob. 30.] (three Ilands so named to vs by an Indian)¹ the middle whereof stands in 3. deg. we past the last saue one of these, & the first day of the following moneth [Novemb. 1.] in like manner, we past the Ile Suaro [= Siao] in 1 deg. 30. min. and the third of Nouember [Nou. 3.] wee came in sight of the Ilands of the Moluccaes as we desired. These are foure high piked Ilands, their names, Tirenáte, Tidóre, Matchan, Batchan, all of them very fruitfull, and yeelding abundance of cloues, whereof wee furnished our selues of as much as we desired at a very cheape rate. At the East of them lyes a very great Iland called Gil-lola.



A half-scale version of the Golden Hind at Plymouth in 1938. *Originally-named Pelican, Drake renamed his small 100-ton flagship while in the Strait of Magellan. The Golden Hind was equipped with 16 or 18 guns and faced Spanish ships in the Pacific that had no mounted cannon up to that time. (From the National Geographic Magazine, July 1938)*

1 Ed. note: It is said that three islands are named, out of a possible total of four that were seen, but there is no comma between the word Selan and the word Saran in the printed text. This had led me to suppose that Selan Saran is the name of one island (For possible identification, see another footnote below).

B2. Account printed as *The Famous Voyage*

Source: Hakluyt's 1589 edition of the The Famous Voyage of Sir Francis Drake, in the English Voyages part of his Principall Voyages.

Note the remark made by Dr. Helen Wallis, in The Hakluyt Handbook (1974) about Hakluyt's source for the Pacific portion of the voyage; it is an anonymous ms. (Harleian ms. 280, folios 83-90) entitled: "A discourse of Sir Francis Drakes iourney & exploites after hee had past ye Straytes of Megellan into Mare de Sur, & throughe the rest of his voyadge afterward till hee arived in England. 1580 anno." ¹

[October. Certaine Islands in 8. degrees.] After we had set sail from hence [i.e. California], we continued without sight of land till the 13. day of October following², which day in the morning we fell with certaine Islands 8. degrees to the Northward of the line, from which Islands came a great number of Canoas, [Strange Canoas.] having in some of them 4. in some 6. and in some also 14. men, bringing with them coquos, and other fruites. Their Canoas were hollowe within, and cut with great arte, and cunning, being very smooth within and without, and bearing a glasse as if it were a horne daintily furnished, hauing a prow, and a sterne of one sorte, yeelding inward circle wise³, being of a great heighth, and full of certaine white shels for a brauerie⁴, and on each side of them lie out two peeces of timber about a yard and a halfe long, more or lesse, according to the smalmes, or bigness of the boate.⁵

This people have the nether part of their eares cut into a round circle, hanging downe very lowe upon their cheekes, whereon they hang things of a reasonable weight. The

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- 1 Ed. note: This may be a far-fetched statement considering that the anonymous narrative in question, attributed to the dictation of one of two seamen, William Legge, or John Doughty, only says the following about the Pacific crossing: "When they had graved & watred their ship in the latter ende of August they set sayle and bent their course S.S.W. and had not the sight of land againe till ye latter end of november at which time they had sight of one of the Iles of Moluccas, called Trenate where they tooke in about .vj. toon of cloves."
 - 2 Ed. note: Misprint for 1 October 1579. They stayed in the vicinity from 1-3 October.
 - 3 Ed. note: This in-curving feature is not reported accurately, as all Carolinian canoes were out-curving.
 - 4 Ed. note: Later editions may have introduced some errors in stating that the shells were set off "in the inside", perhaps referring to inlaid shells.
 - 5 Ed. note: The expression "on each side of them", rather than "on one side of them", has led most readers to visualize double-outrigger canoes, and this mistake may not have been in the original text by Fletcher.

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October.
Certaine Islands in 8. degrees.
Strange Canoas.

This people haue the nether part of their eares cut into a round circle, hanging downe very lowe vpon their cheekes, whereon they hang things of a reasonable weight. The nailles of their hands are an ynche long, their teeth are as blacke as pitch, and they renew them often, by eating of an herbe with a kinde of powder, which they alwaies carrie about them in a cane for the same purpose.

We leauing this Island the night after we fell with it, the 18. of October, we light vpon diuers others, some whereof made a great shewe of Inhabitants.

We continued our course by the Islands of Tagulada, Zelon, and Zewarra, being subiect to the Portugals, the first whereof hath growing in it great store of Sinuamon.

The 14. of Nouember we fell with the Islands of Molucca, which day at night (hauing directed our course to runne with Tydore) in coasting along the Island of Muty, belonging to the King of Ternate, his Deputie or Viceking seeing vs at sea, came with his Canoa to vs without all feare, and came aboard, and after some conference with our Generall, willed him in any wise to runne in with Ternate, and not with Tydore, assuring him that the King would be glad of his comming, and would be ready to doe what he would require, for which purpose he himselfe would that night be with the King, and tell him the newes, with whome if he once dealt, he should finde

Nouember.
The Isle of Ternate.

The Famous Voyage (Hakluyt ed. of 1589). Part about Palau.

nailes of their hands are an ynche long,¹ their teeth are as blacke as pitch, and they renew them often, by eating of an herbe with a kinde of powder, which they alwaies carrie about them in a cane for the same purpose.²

[Islands.] We leauing this Island the night after we fell with it³, the 18. October, we light upon divers others, some whereof made a great shewe of Inhabitants.

We continued our course by the Islands of Tagulada, Zelon, and Zewarra⁴, being subject to the Portingals, the first whereof hath growing in it great store of Sinnamon.

[November.] The 14. of November we fell with the Islands of Moluccas, which day and night (hauing directed out course to runne with Tydore) in coasting along the island of Mutyr, belonging to the King of Ternate, his Deputie or Viceking seeing us at sea, came with his Canoa to us without all feare, and came aboard, and after some conference with our Generall, willed him in any wise to runne in with Ternate, and not with Tydore, assuring him that the King would be glad of his comming, and would be ready to doe what he would require...

B3. Narrative by John Drake, as told by Antonio de Herrera

Source: Herrera's Historia (Valladolid, 1606), volume 2, book 9, chapter 13; reproduced on p. 334 of Wagner's Sir Francis Drake's Voyage.⁵

... Nueva Albion. Here he remained a month and a half, repairing the two⁶ ships which he had with him. From here he went to the Ladrones Islands in 9° where he killed 20 Indians because they attacked him with 100 canoes in order to take his ships. Steering towards the south and the southwest he went to an island which is in 7°, where he took water and wood, and sailing to the southwest, arrived in 20 days at the Moluccas.

1 Ed. note: There is here none of the nonsense, added in later editions, to the effect that their nails were designed to be used as weapons.

2 Ed. note: The so-called herb was betel leaf, and the powder was the slaked lime, both used in chewing the nut of the areca palm. The words "in a cane" have unfortunately been edited out of some editions. Hence we note that the natives carried their lime in a hollow piece of bamboo.

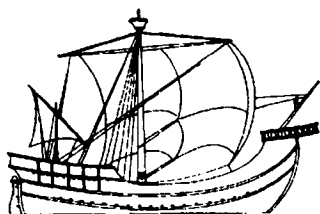
3 Ed. note: This comment has led to the notion that the ship spent only one day in sight of the Palau Group.

4 Ed. note: Transcribed otherwise in some later editions. The first-mentioned island is clearly recognizable as Tagolandang (or Tahulandang) off the NE tip of Celebes Island, south of Sangihe Island. The other two words may come from a split of the word Selonwarra, a misprint for something like Sulawesi, i.e. Celebes Island.

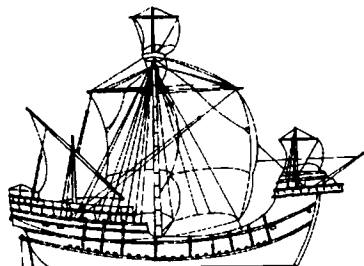
5 Ed. note: This secondary account is nevertheless based on the two depositions of John Drake, the first made at Santa Fé (now Argentina) on 24 March 1584, the second made at Lima in January 1587. It is in fact copied almost literally from Drake's first deposition.

6 Ed. note: Two ships mentioned in the second deposition, but only one (the truth) in the first deposition.

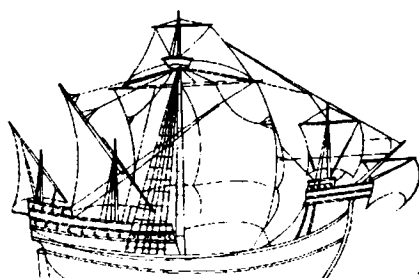
**Evolution of the galleon,
according to R. Morton Nance.**



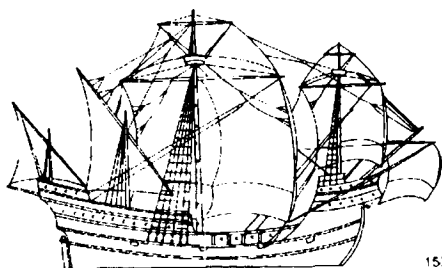
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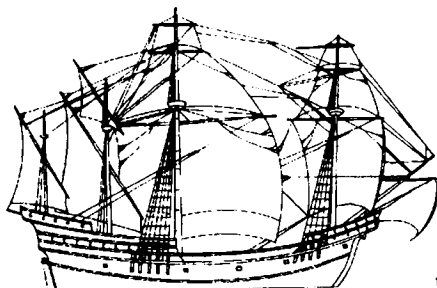
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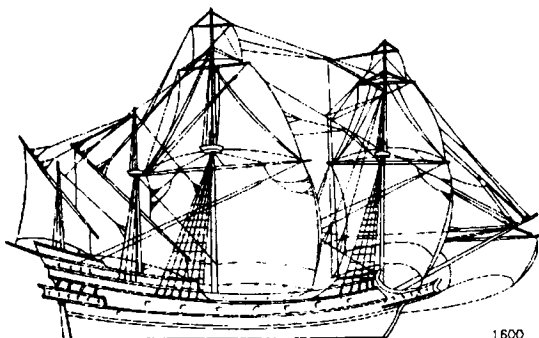
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1530



1560



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