

# PAHANG AND THE SEA

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Maritime Networks and Connections  
between Southeast Asia and Beyond

ST ANTONY'S  
COLLEGE OXFORD

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# Pahang and the Iberian Thalassocracies: From the Golden Peninsula to the Passage of Empire

by Dr. Ramón Vega Piniella



**First Stop:  
Gold and Interest**

Letter from Jesuit Juan de Ribera on the strategic situation of the region

1618. Signatura: FILIPINAS,20,R.12,N.80

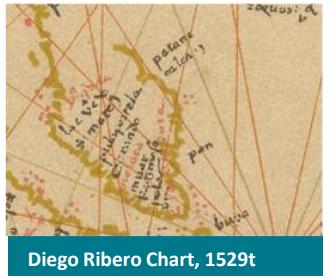


**“All the nations of the world are moved by interest,  
which is the magnet of the hearts. We see that for  
silver and gold men have gone and go even to the  
shadows of Hell. No one can doubt this maxim nor  
has need of proof.”**

## First Stop: Gold and Interest



## Cantino Chart, 1502



## Diego Ribero Chart, 1529t



Atlas Fernão Vaz Dourado,



Urbano Monte, 1587



Queen Mary Atlas, 1588



## Details from Nicolaus Germanus's 1467 copy of a map from Ptolemy's Geography



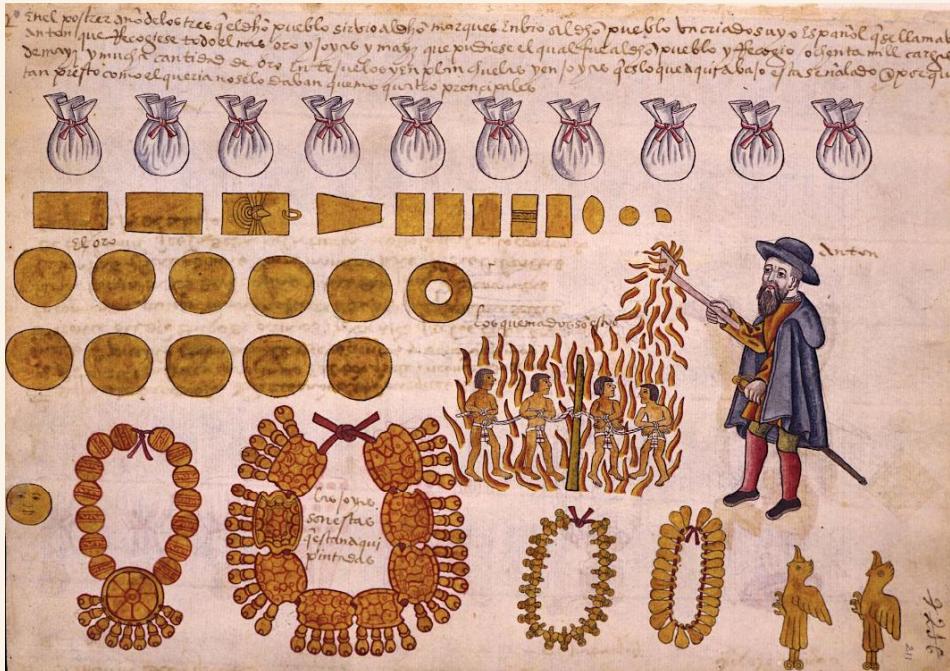
## Second Stop: The Encomienda Mentality



"Cristiano encomendero de indios de este Reyno", from  
*"Primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno"*

c.1600

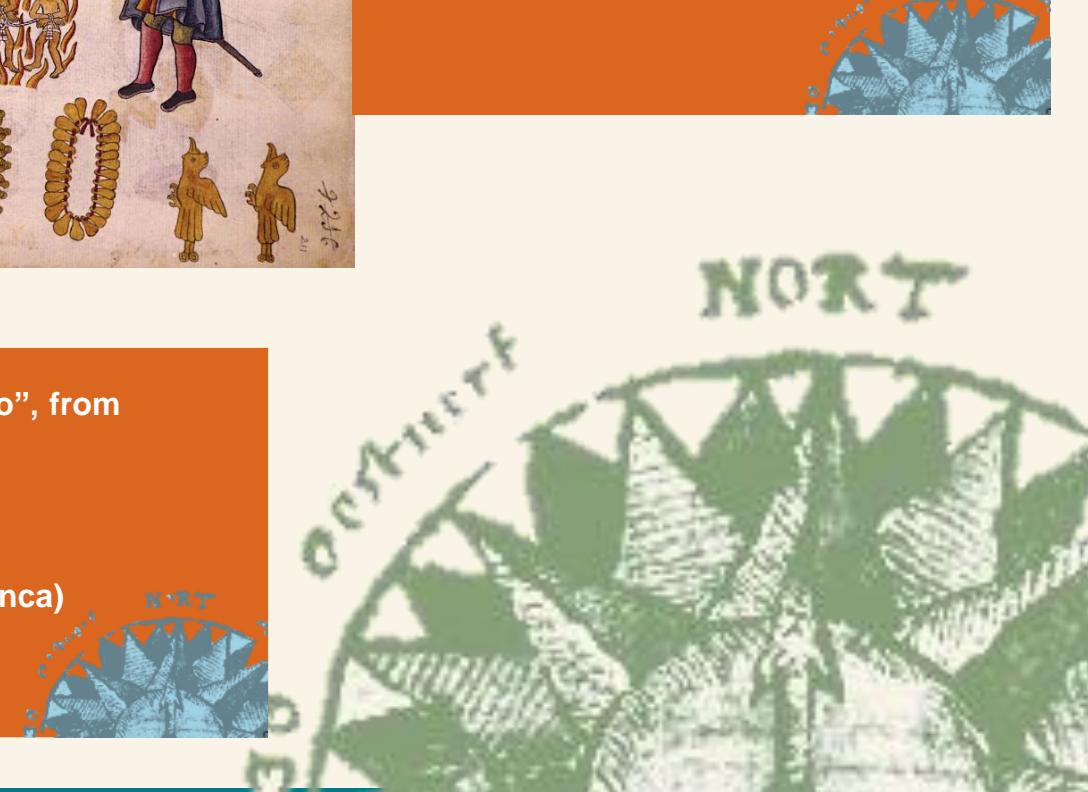
By Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, indigenous (inca) chronicler of Peru



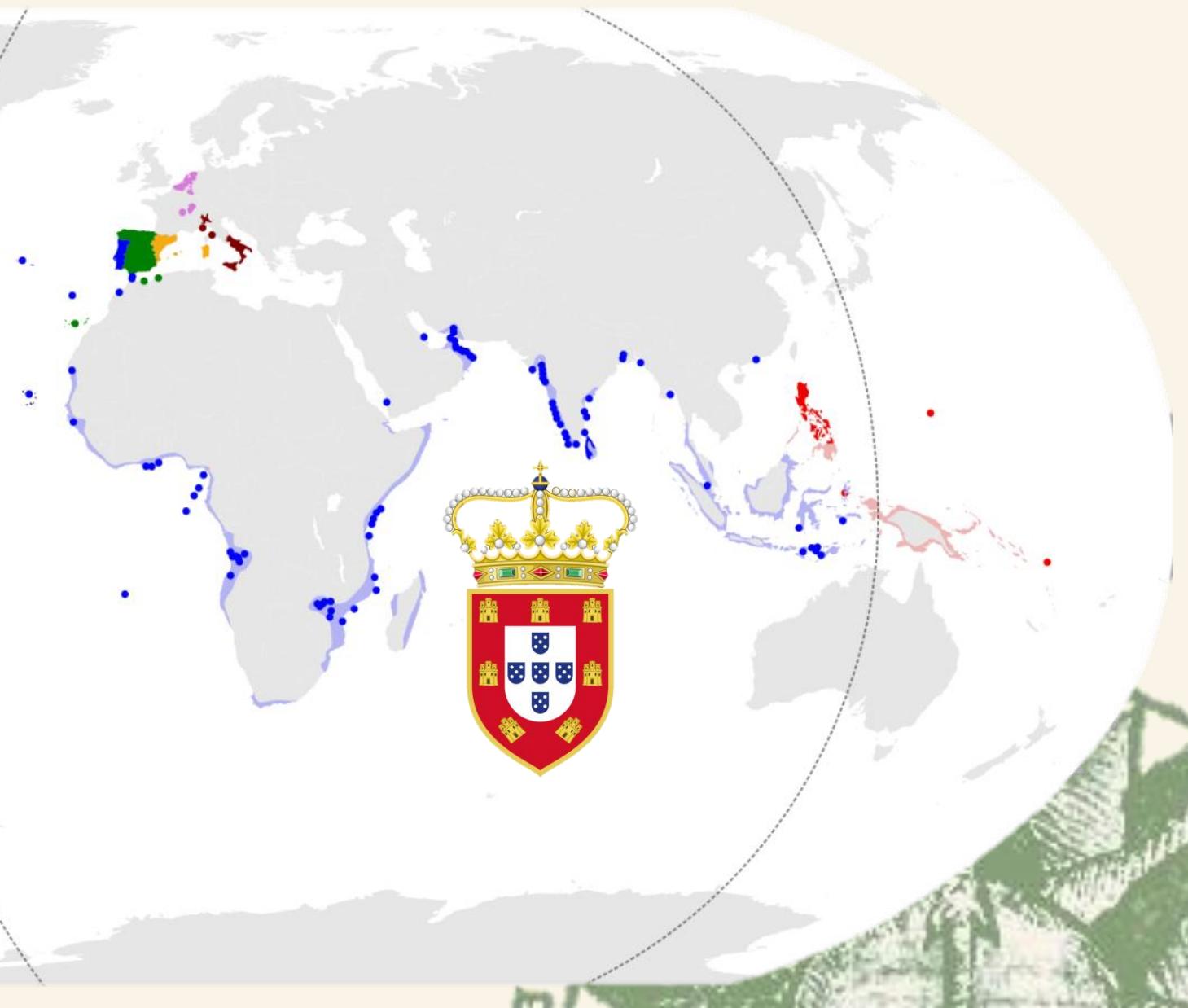
Codex Kingsborough  
Codex Tepetlaoztoc

c.1550

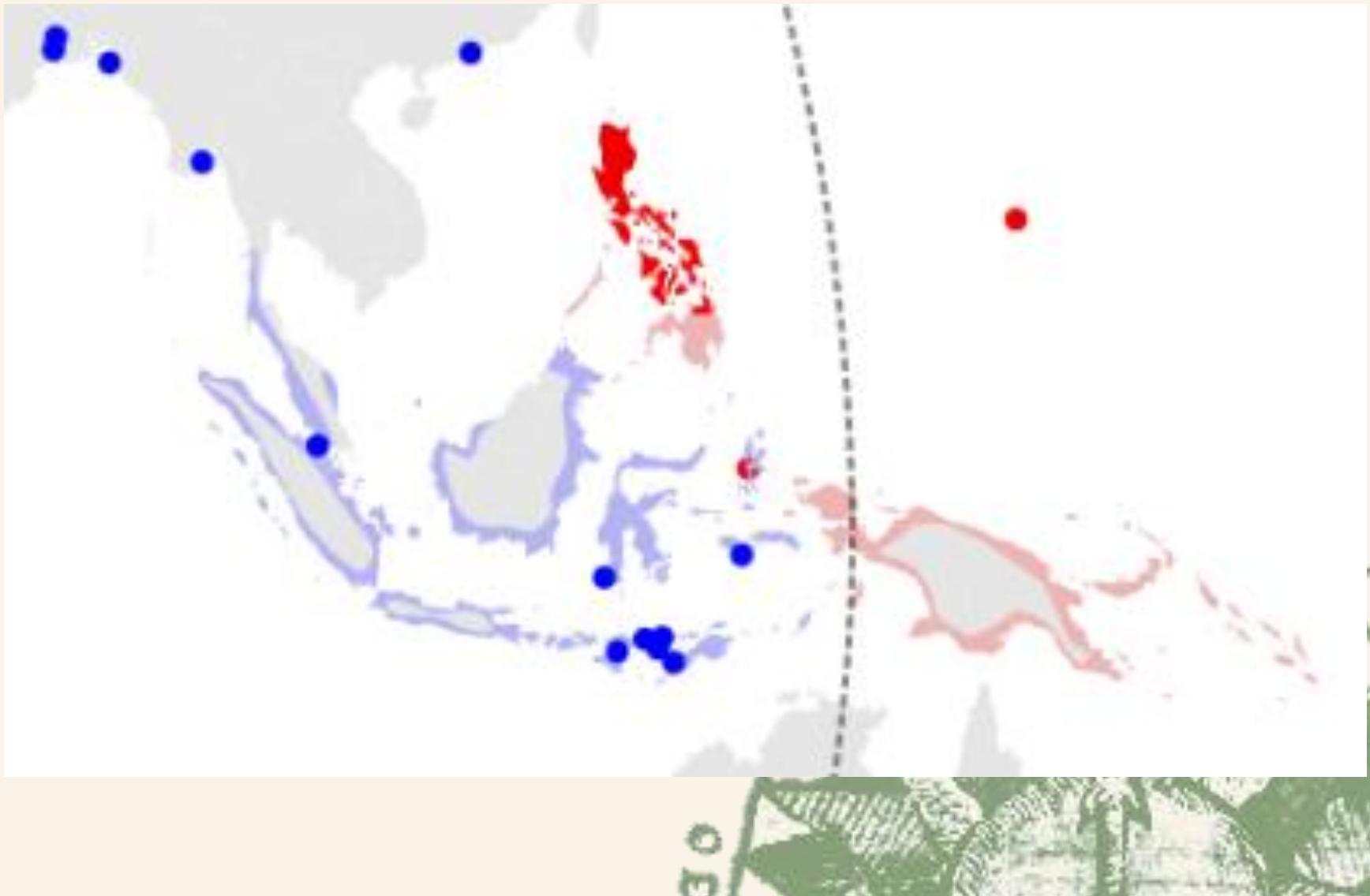
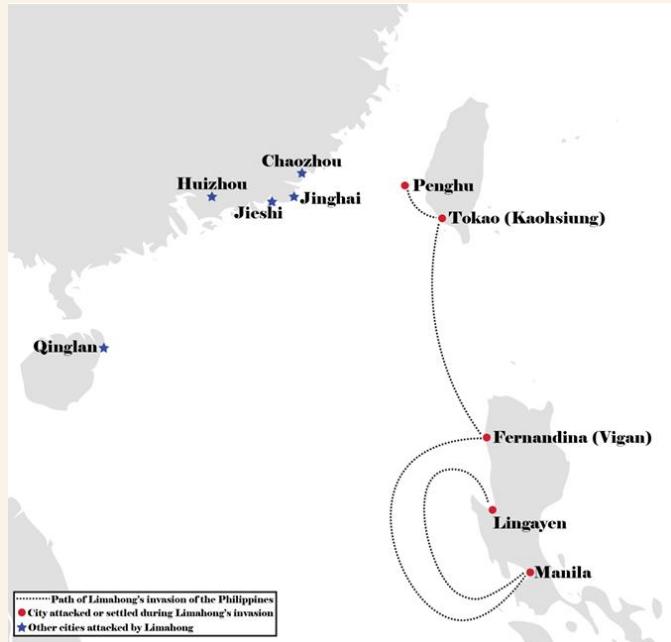
Complain to the King of Spain and  
the Consejo de Indias about the  
"Encomenderos"



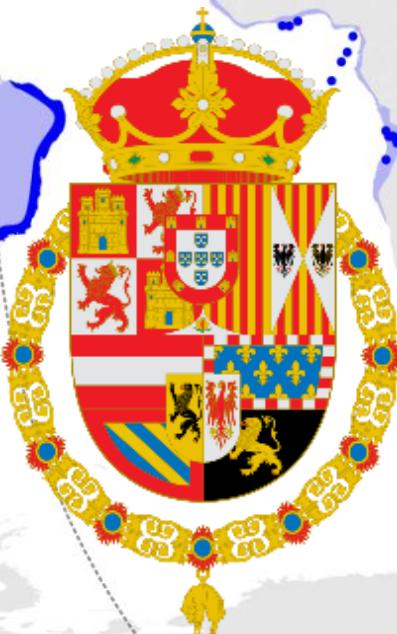
## Third Stop: Iberian Rivalries Malaca and Manila



## Fourth Stop: The Iberian Union and the Map of The World

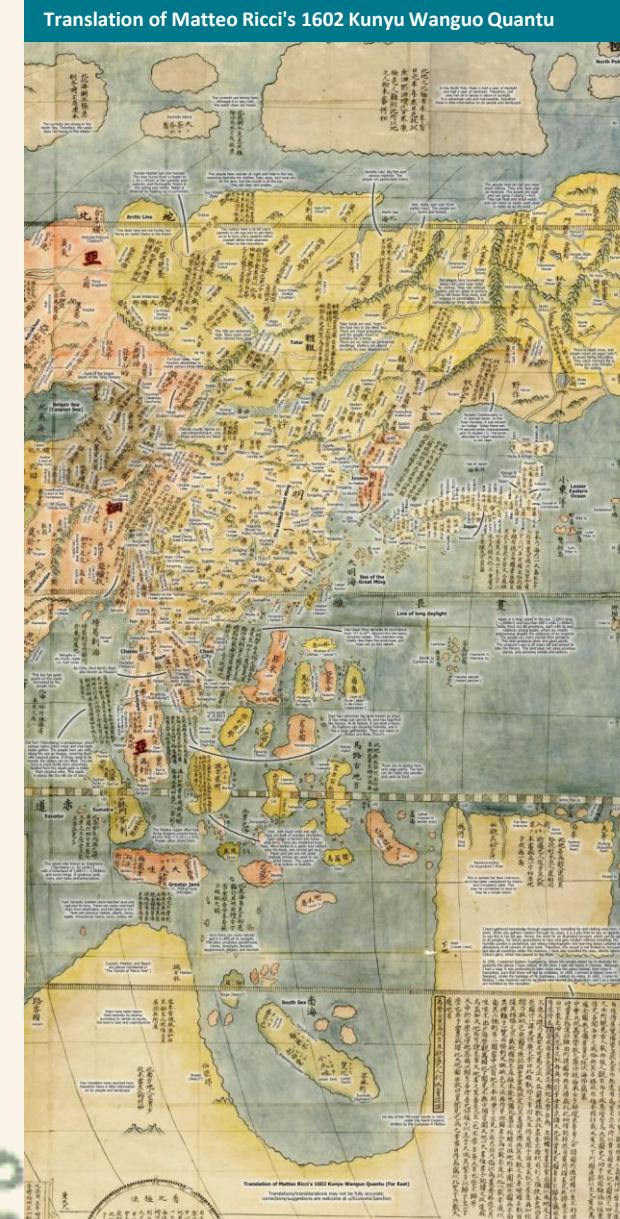
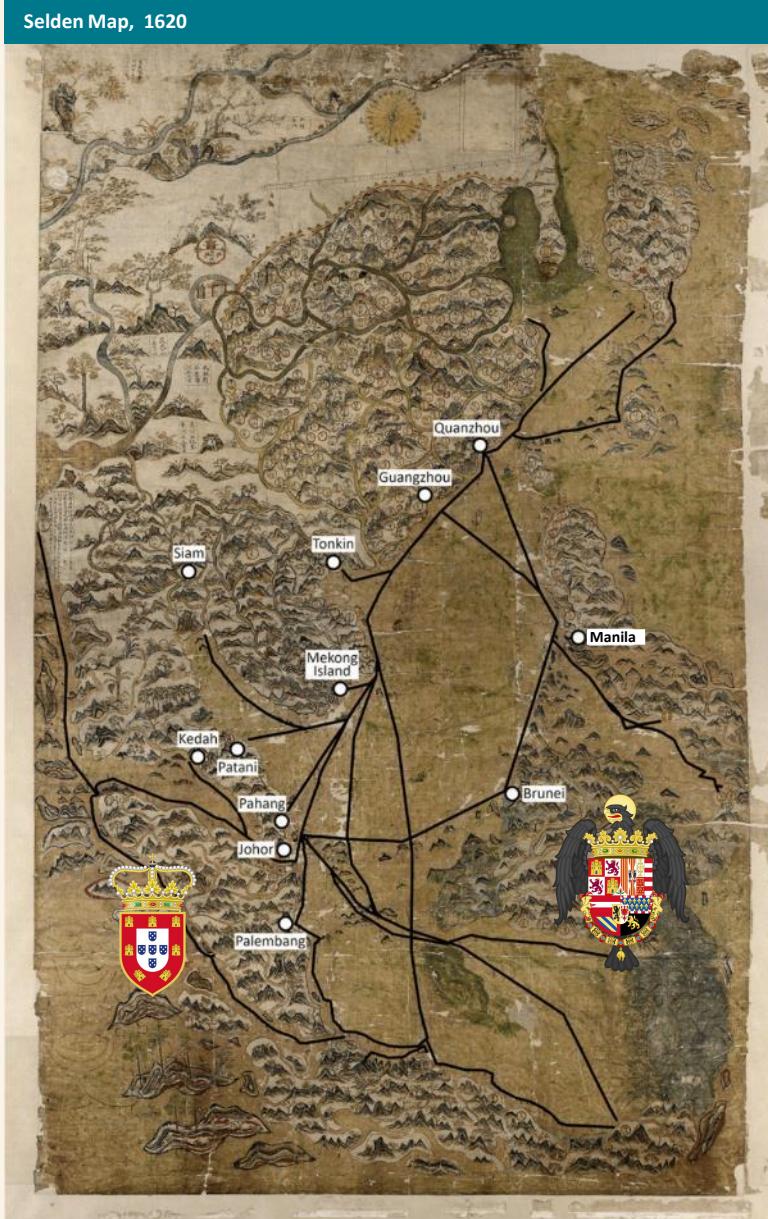


## Fourth Stop: The Iberian Union and the Map of The World



Portuguese and Spanish Empires merged between 1580 and 1640

## Fourth Stop: The Iberian Union and the Map of The World



Pahang 彭亨

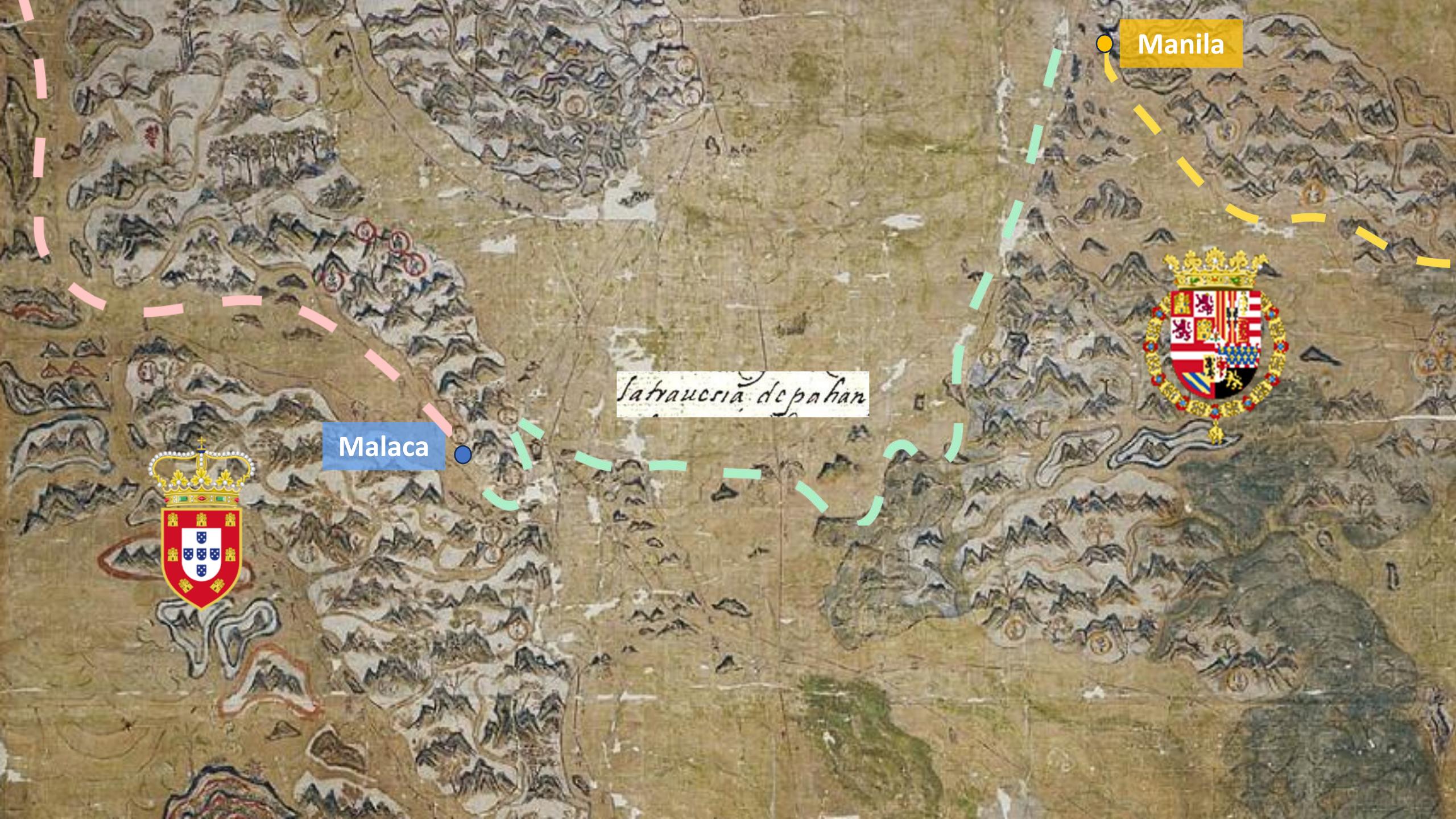
## Fourth Stop: The Iberian Union and the Map of The World



Fifth Stop:  
The Passage of Pahang

*Satraucia de pahan*





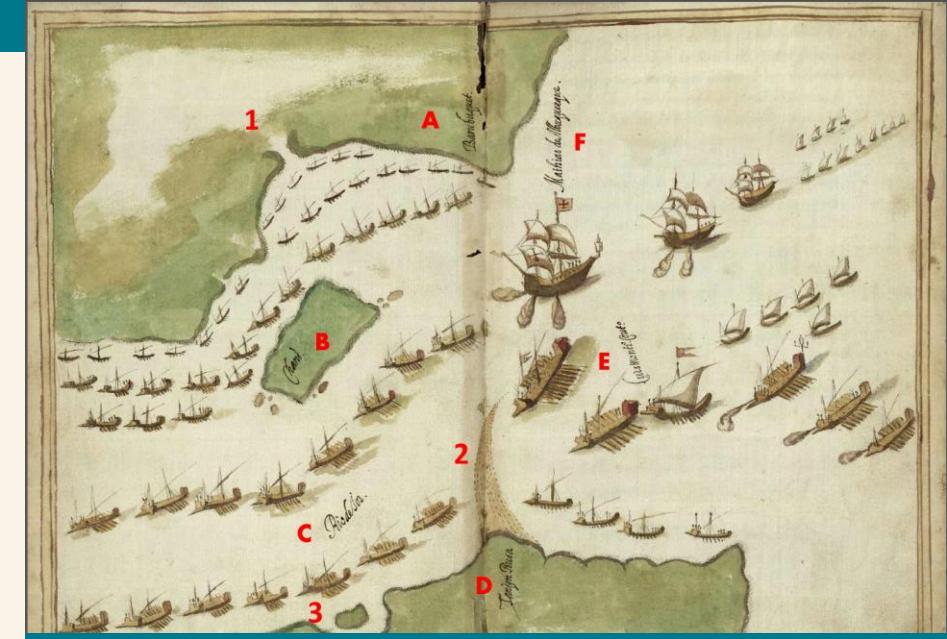
# Fifth Stop: The Passage of Pahang

## Letter about the expedition to Sumatra

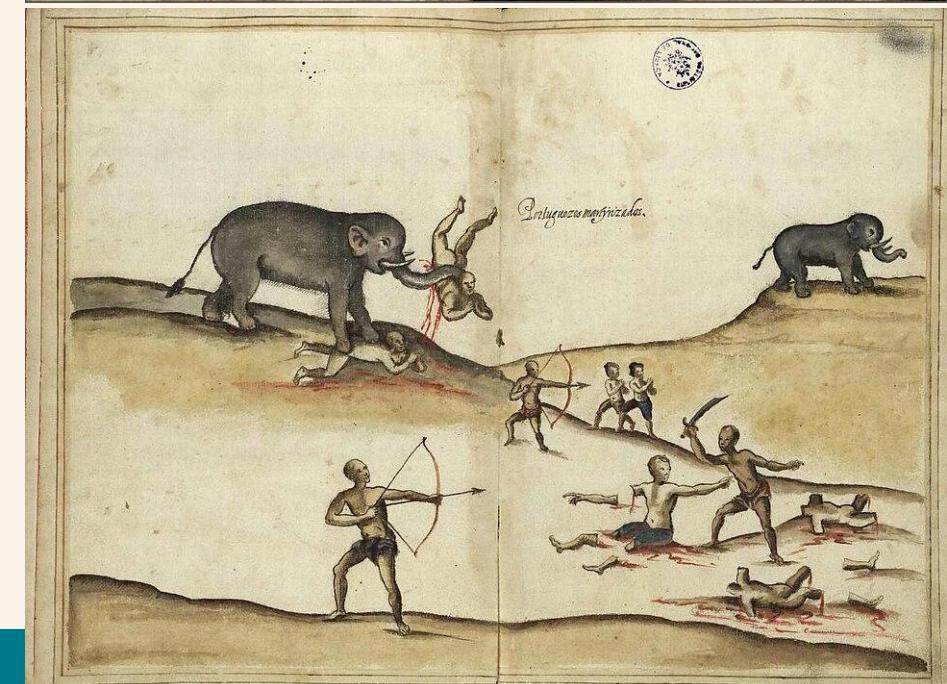
c.1582

**Signatura:**  
**AGS, GYM, LEG, 137**

“The voyage from the Philippines to Malacca goes by way of Brunei. One passes six leagues beyond the city and then sails along the coast of the island for more than one hundred and fifty leagues, until reaching the passage of Pahang, which is the mainland of Malacca. It is thirty leagues across from Brunei to that point, and I myself have arrived at this passage. Along the way there are small islets, some sparsely inhabited and others uninhabited. Pahang is a river populated by Moors, and pepper is gathered there. Following the southern coast, seventy or eighty leagues away, lies Malacca; and by the northern coast, at a similar distance, is Patani, and from Patani to Siam is ninety or one hundred leagues, if one follows the bay.”



Historia de Servicos com Martiro de Luis Monteiro Coutinho, 1615



Letter from Jesuit Juan de Ribera on the strategic situation of the region. Interview with the captured Holand General Blancarte

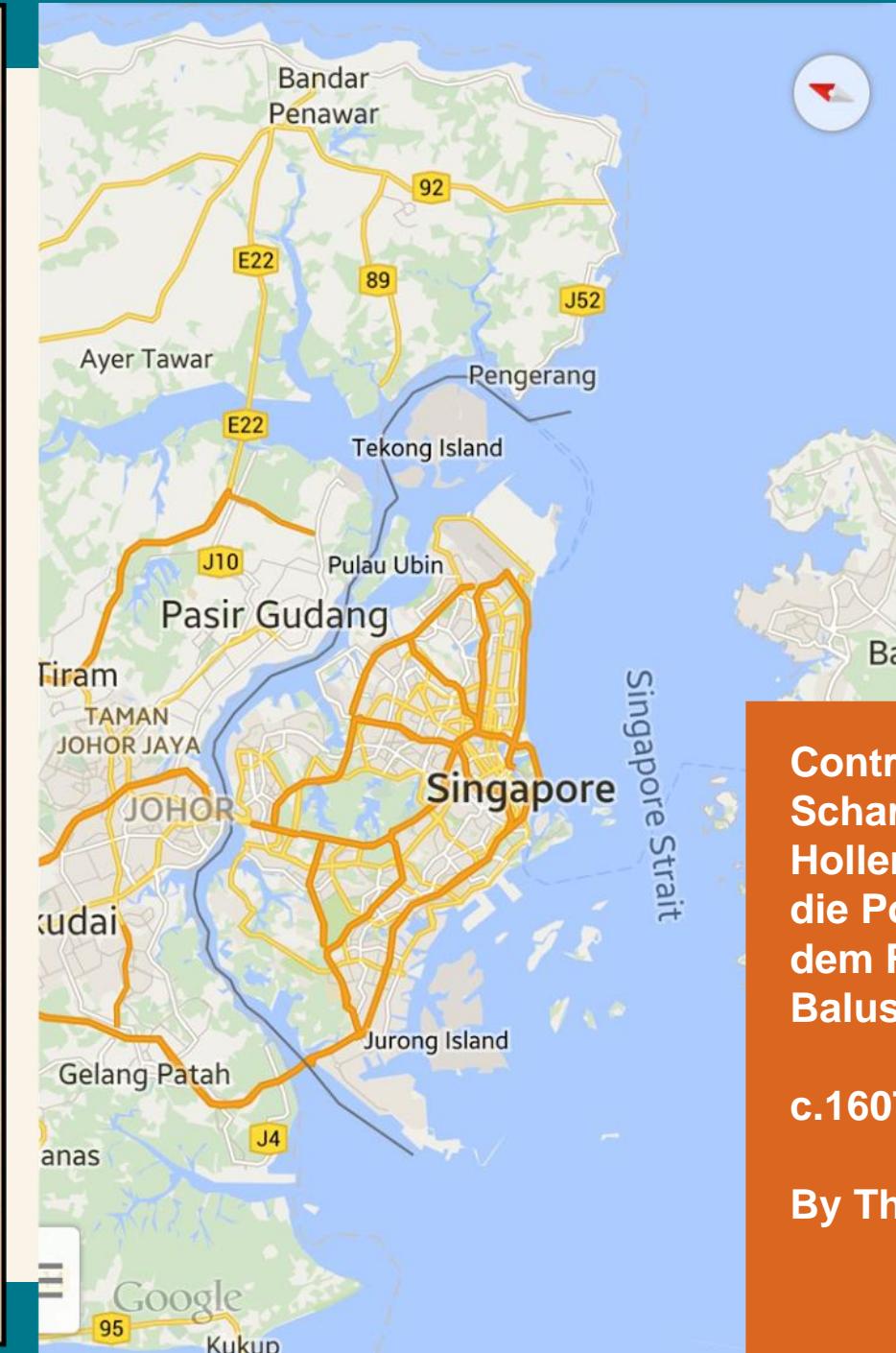
1618

Signatura:  
FILIPINAS,20,R.12,N.80



por sus intereses y almogerifazgos, Tienen fáctorias o correspondencias con Olanda, Zeeland, Escocia, Inglaterra, Irlanda, Dina, marca, Noruega, francia, Alemania La Alta, y la bosa, Germania, Colonia, Baviera, Austria, Ingria, Boemia, hasta la Transilvania, y en nuestros Reynos dentro de Sevilla, asfí lo dixo el olan des General blancarte que tuvimos aquí captivo —

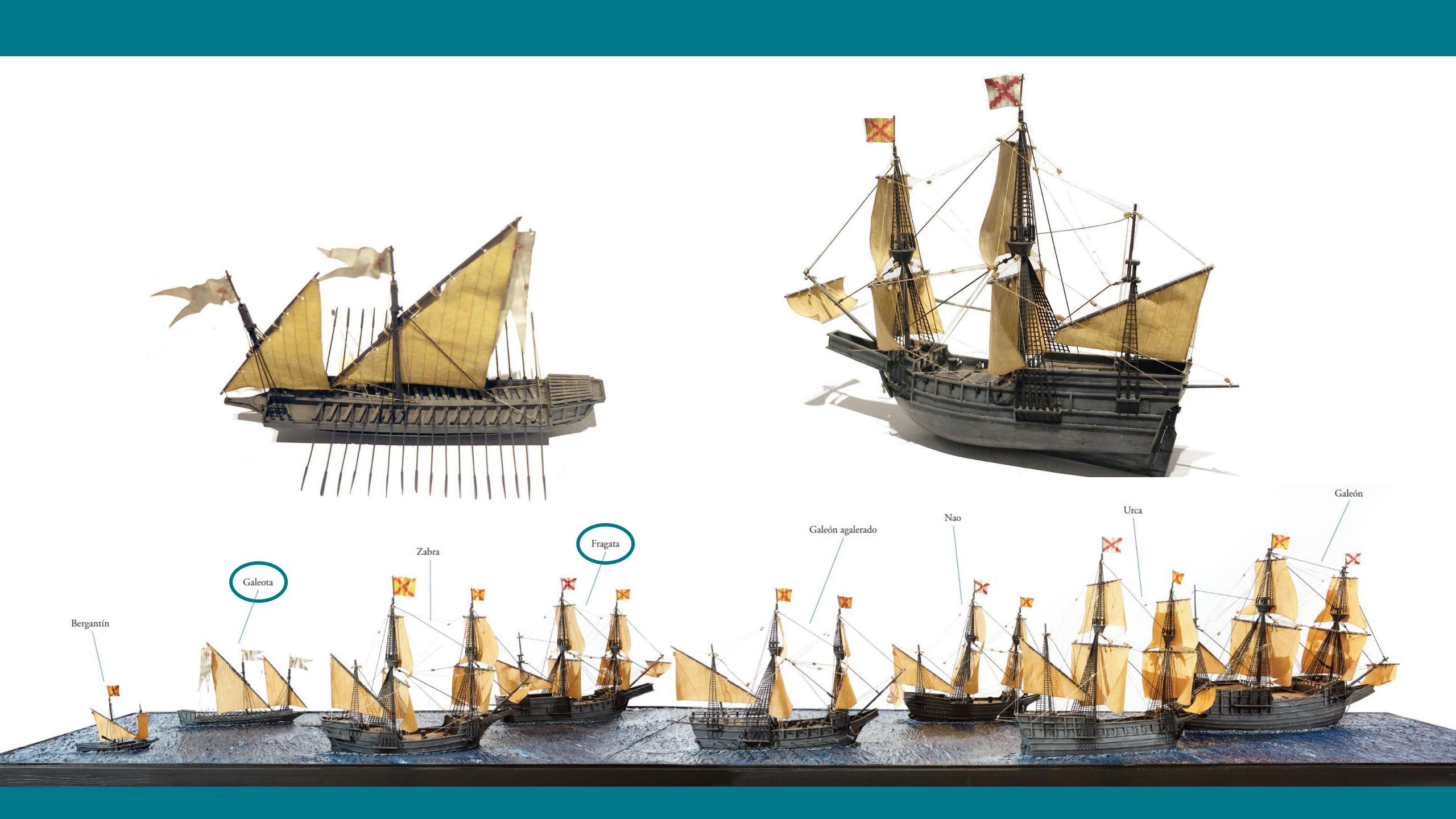
**“They have factories or correspondences with Holland, Zeeland, Scotland, England, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, France, Upper and Lower Germany, Germania, Cologne, Bavaria, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, up to Transylvania, and in Our Kingdoms within Seville, as said by the Dutch general Blancarte who we had captive**



Contrafactur des  
Scharmutz als der  
Hollender wider  
die Portigesen in  
dem Flus  
Balusabar

c.1607

By Theodor de Bry



## Fragata



**Length and beam: 24 x 7.8 meters.**

**Crew: Mariners 15; soldiers 40 to 100.**

**Cargo: From 20-50 tons, the most common, up to 95.**

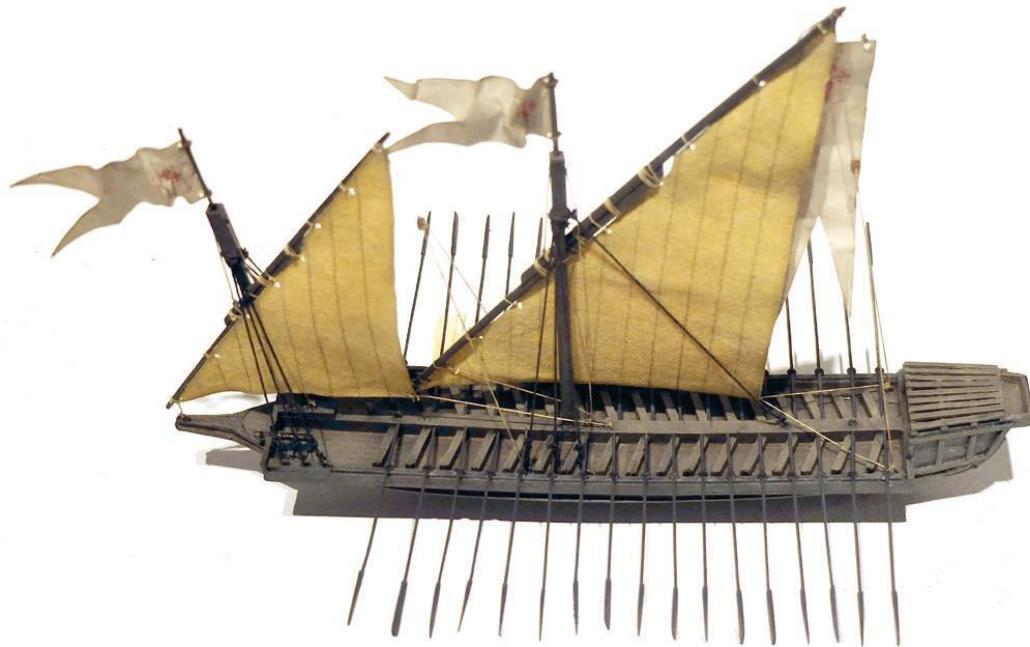
### **Description and functions:**

**Excellent ships to be used as warships sailing alone, but also as escorts, explorers, fighting piracy or serving as mail carriers. They compensated their lack of weaponry with speed, becoming very versatile ships.**

### **Notes:**

- The design was truly revolutionary for its time, laying the foundations for many other ships in later centuries. It is very possible that the first ones were manufactured in Cuba with direct the involvement of Pedro Menendez.
- The smaller ones were cheap to make, sometimes costing the same as a 'bergantin'.
- Some of them with much larger dimensions, up to 180 and 200 tons, were built.

## Galeota



**Length and beam: 21 x 4.5 meters.**

**Crew: Mariners 8 (approx.), Rowers 17 per lane; Soldiers: Up to 60.**

**Load: 10 tons.**

### **Description and functions:**

Extremely fast and light, they were used as "subtle forces" to take advantage of these qualities. They could act individually, fulfilling the functions of the 'bergantines', or as patrol boats, something for which they were highly prized on the American coasts. When they joined larger fleets, they supported other ships, using them to surround enemy fleets and board damaged boats.

### **Notes:**

- The rowers were volunteers, known as "good-buoy". Generally they were experienced fishermen, who earned more by fishing than by joining the fleets.
- Similar to the so-called 'half galeras' or 'subtle galeras', were the small versions of the Mediterranean 'galeras', although with a price four times lower.
- In the Bay of Biscay they also served for fishing.
- On both sides they were armed with small artillery, known as 'versos' (to shoot shrapnel onto the decks of other boats). Some of these guns, longer and of good reach, were called 'captain killers'.
- With their two Latin sails, they were the best boats to ride the winds and the storms.



Contrafactur des  
Scharmutz els der  
Hollender wider  
die Portigesen in  
dem Flus  
Balusabar (Detail)

c.1607

By Theodor de Bry



Fifth Stop:  
The Passage of Pahang

Letter about the expedition  
to Sumatra

c.1582

Signatura:  
AGS, GYM, LEG, 137



“This I know from the **account of the Indians** in my **encomienda**, who in their ships have gone many times to trade in Malacca and Siam in the company of the Bruneians... And it seems to me... that it would be very important to bring that kingdom of Brunei into the service of His Majesty by the best means possible, because it is in the passage and its people have a reputation for seafaring and fighting, though they are all small.”

# Conclusions



1. Pahang was imagined as golden, and this belief had real consequences.
2. Spaniards approached it thanks to **the encomienda workers traditions**.
3. Cartography, from Pigafetta to Ricci to Erédia, consistently marked Pahang because a reason. It was a reference in both latitude (Malaysia-china) and longitude (Malaysia-Brunei) at a node of world trade.
4. The **Passage of Pahang** symbolized the junction of two thalassocracies. It represented the dream of a single global route of commerce and communication



Letter from Jesuit Juan de Ribera on the strategic situation of the region

1618

Signatura:  
FILIPINAS,20,R.12,N.80



en un yugismo. \_\_\_\_\_  
C Todas las Naciones del mundo semuuen por interés que es el iman  
de los coracones; y auemos que por la Plata y Oro Ganydo yuan  
Los Sombres Gasta las Sombras del Infierno. desta Alaxima  
ninguno puede dudar, ni tiene necesidad de prueua \_\_\_\_\_

en un yugismo. \_\_\_\_\_  
C “All the nations of the world are moved  
by interest, which is the magnet of the  
hearts. We see that for silver and gold  
men have gone and go even to the  
shadows of Hell. No one can doubt this  
maxim nor has need of proof.”

Agustín García-López Loaeza

Ahmad Mashadi

Ahmad Mukhlis Bin Mohd Amin

Ahmad Zaki Bin Rashid

Amru Khalid Bin Sazali

Brendan Luyt

Camilo

Cesar Cabanas

Chung Mayb Khuen

Clement Onn

Cristina Álvarez Faes

Cuauhtémoc Villamar

Daniel Tham

Dato Indera Ibrahim bin Ismail

David Alfred (&Family)

David Almazan

David Clarke

# Thank you!

Eng Dih Teo

Firman Faturohman

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Juan Payá

Karamina Puspitasari

Kwa Chong Guan

Li Jia Apica

Madya Dr Riswadi Bin Azmi

Mages Periasamy

Manuel Gracia Rivas

Mercedes Alonso Frayle

Michael Fletcher

Miriam Yeo

Mohd Rohaizat Abdul Wahab

Mok Ly Yng

Noorashikin Zulkifli

Nuno Correia

Peter Borschberg

Rafael López Guzmán

Siddharta Pérez

Steven Milon Esparza

Sze Wee Low

Wan Helmy Zain

William R. Sargent

Yuan Hong

and all the admirable  team

Pahang Museum Team

# Thank you!

*Dr. Ramón Vega Piniella*

*ramonvegap@gmail.com*

