



Baijini

Source 1 The Baijini gypsies

- Visitors to the north coast of Australia in modern times may have been Malay sea gypsies, roaming fishermen found in all parts of the Malay archipelago. Aboriginal legends refer to them as the Baijini gypsies.
- In the songs that record and preserve their traditions, Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land tell of the Baijini gypsies with copper coloured skin who visited their shores. Aboriginal people still sing of the sailing vessels that the Baijini men came ashore in, the stone houses they constructed on the Australian mainland, the cloth the women wove and dyed, the clothes they wore, and how they hunted for fish and tended small gardens.
- The Baijini men and women are said to have sailed to the coast in vessels and settled at various places for fairly long periods.
- The Baijini women wore colourful sarongs, stitched sails for their vessels and cultivated rice in at least two regions.
- The Baijini's ways of growing food are recorded extensively in traditional songs of the Aboriginal people of north-eastern Arnhem Land.
- Aboriginal people collect the roots of a type of grass which they say grew up in place of the abandoned rice gardens left behind by the Baijini when they left the coast of Australia. This grass is known as spike-rush.
- The Aboriginal people distinguish the Baijini era as belonging to the far-distant past, from what they regard as historic times, when the Macassan fishermen came sailing to the coast in their praus.

(Berndt, Ronald and Berndt, Catherine, 1954. *Arnhem Land: Its History and Its People*, Cheshire, Melbourne, pp. 15,16, 34, 35, 36 and Hiatt, Les and McKenzie, Kim, 2002. *People of the Rivermouth: The Jobarr Texts of Frank Gurrmanamana*, National Museum of Australia & Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra)

- 1 We do not know who the Baijini gypsies were. Where might these people have come from? (You might have several different answers or possibilities for this.)
- 2 From this evidence, could the Baijini be said to have 'discovered' Australia? Give your reasons.
- 3 What is the meaning of the word 'discover' you are using for this answer?
- 4 Prepare your case to present to the class.

Source 2 The Baijini at Port Bradshaw, 1948



This bark painting is from the National Historical Collections of the National Museum of Australia. The painting includes several indications of contact between Aboriginal people of the Arnhem Land coast and the Baijini.

Top centre panel shows a Malay type of anchor used by the Baijini. Top right panel shows lines of clouds (triangular patterns) with two wells (dark circles) of water. The footmarks show the Baijini coming to and from the wells.

(Pigments and ochres on bark. Yirrkala, Northern Territory. National Museum of Australia)



Macassans

Much is known about Macassan visits to Australia. What is not known is when these visits began. Some historians think that the Macassans may have voyaged to Australia for a great many centuries; others think that it was for only two or three centuries.

Source 1 Macassan fishermen

- In 1803, near Cape Wilberforce (on the north-eastern edge of Arnhem Land), Matthew Flinders came upon six praus, or sailing vessels, from Macassar, in South Celebes. These were part of a fleet, which each year set off from the centre of what is now Indonesia, primarily to collect cargoes of trepang (bêche-de-mer or sea slugs) along the north Australian coast.
- Today, Aboriginal song cycles and stories tell of Macassan life on the coast of Arnhem Land. Many Macassan words have been integrated into some northern Australian Aboriginal languages.
- The Macassans arrived in praus with the north-west monsoons around October, stayed for six months, then returned with the south-east winds.
- Some Aboriginal people participated in the trepang industry alongside the Macassans.
- Aboriginal mortuary ceremonies came to be linked with the departure of the praus, as well as, with the burial rites of the Macassans.
- The Macassans made houses on stilts, roofed with woven leaves and coconut palm.
- They brought rice, spices and tamarinds. Trees grew from the seeds of the tamarind beans. There are tamarind trees today that mark Macassan trepang processing sites around the Australian coast.
- The rows of stone fireplaces, made to hold the cauldrons to boil the trepang, are the outstanding archaeological witness to the Macassans.
- The most common artefacts found on Macassan sites are pieces of earthenware pottery. Although no whole pot survives, the shards undoubtedly come from rounded cooking pots.
- Items were traded between Aboriginal people and Macassans. Aboriginal people could readily collect items including tortoise-shell, pearl-shell or pearls. In return, the Macassans could supply food, cloth, tobacco, alcohol, axes and knives.
- There is an Aboriginal painting of a Macassan house or trepang smokehouse at Black Rock, in the Wellington Range, western Arnhem Land.
- Some Aboriginal people returned with the Macassans and stayed with them. There were said to be about 17 Aboriginal people living in Macassar in 1876, most of whom came from Port Essington. Other Aboriginal people returned to Arnhem Land.

(Based on Macknight, Campbell, 1976. *The Voyage to Marege: Macassan Trepangers in Northern Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, pp. 1, 17, 30, 38, 51, 52, 59, 78, 84, 86 and Berndt, Ronald and Berndt, Catherine, 1954. *Arnhem Land: Its History and Its People*, Cheshire, Melbourne, pp. 15–16)



Macassans

Source 2 Exhibit in the National Museum of Australia



(Bark painting of Macassan praus, 1966 by Birrikitji Gumana, Yolngu language group. Natural pigments on bark, National Museum of Australia)

A long history of trading

Grindall Bay was one of the places where Macassan traders from south Sulawesi stopped on their annual visits to collect and process trepang. Here, Birrikitji Gumana, artist and senior ceremonial leader, represents the Macassan boats in full sail.

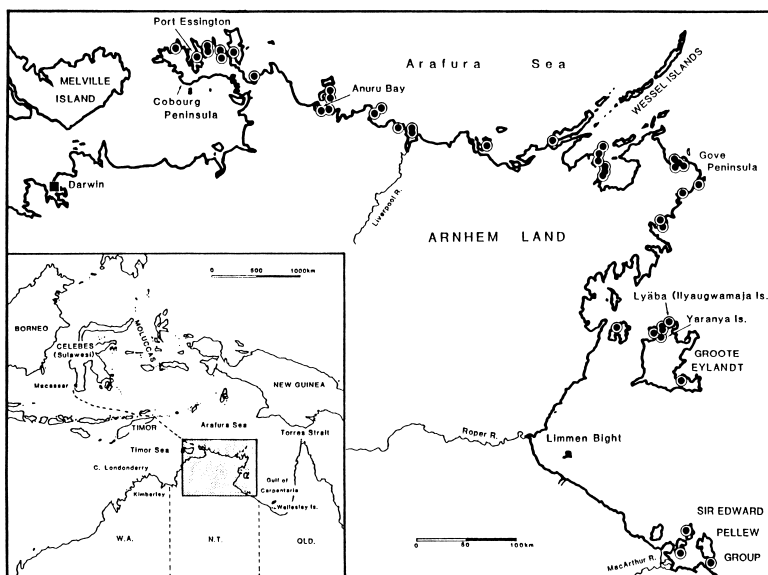
Incorporating the Macassan story

Birrikitji Gumana has painted the boats of Dreamtime Macassans. Their way of life is recorded in the Macassan song cycle.

The sails of the Macassan fleet were thought to be like wet season storm clouds gathering on the horizon at the change of season. They are actually called wangupini, the Yolngu word for 'cloud'.

The shape of the Macassan sail forms the basis of the anvil shape that is used to portray clouds in the art of the Dhalwangu, Madarrpa and Manggalili clans.

Source 3 Map of Macassan trepang processing sites



(Connah, Graham, 1993. *The Archaeology of Australia's History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 8)

- 1 According to this evidence, do you believe that Macassans had contact with Australia over a period of hundreds of years? Give your reasons.
- 2 From this evidence, could Macassans be said to have 'discovered' Australia? Give reasons.
- 3 What is the meaning of the word 'discover' you are using for this answer?
- 4 Prepare your case to present to the class.



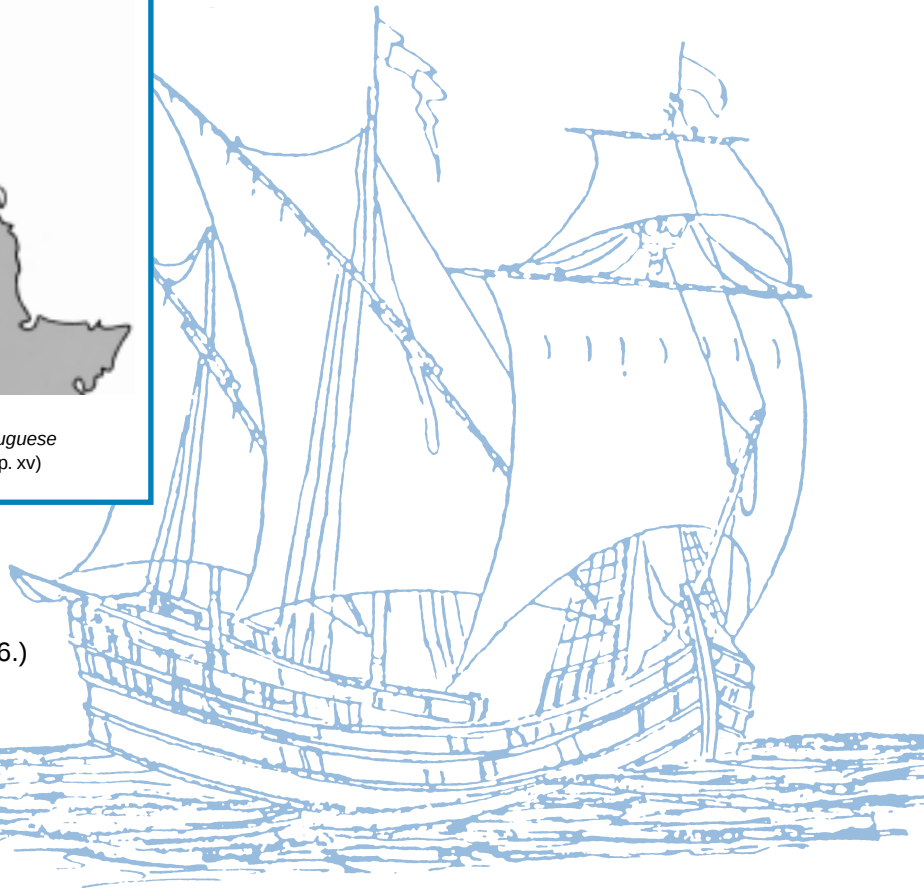
Portuguese

Source 1 Outline of Java La Grande as shown on the Dauphin Map, 1536



(Fitzgerald, Lawrence, 1984. *Java La Grande, The Portuguese Discovery of Australia*, The Publishers Pty Ltd, Hobart, p. xv)

Some historians claim that Source 1 is a map of Australia, copied from one drawn originally in about 1524. (To see a copy of the map, go to page 36.)



The memorial on the next page (Source 2) is located in Warrnambool, in south-western Victoria. It consists of:

- a bust of Prince Henry the Navigator, King of Portugal between 1424 and 1460, who sponsored many great Portuguese voyages of discovery
- a bust of Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, who was the first person to sail from Portugal to India around the tip of Africa
- a large white stone cross, with words on the base that translate as:
'Thus we open the way to new oceans where no generation had ever sailed before.'

- 1** List those features that suggest it might be a map of Australia.
- 2** List those features that suggest it might not be a map of Australia.
- 3** Does the monument in Source 2 claim that the Portuguese 'discovered' Australia? Give reasons.
- 4** From this evidence, could the Portuguese be said to have 'discovered' Australia? Give reasons.
- 5** What is the meaning of the word 'discover' you are using for this answer?
- 6** Prepare your case to present to the class.



Portuguese

Source 2 A memorial to Portuguese exploration



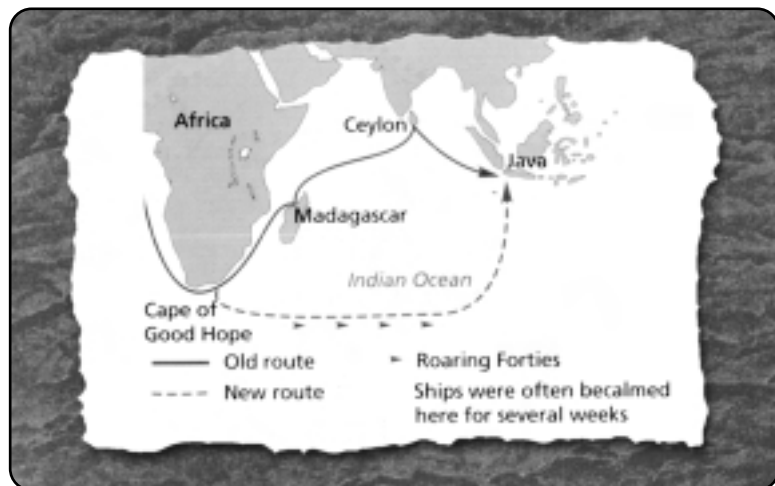
(Robert Lewis)



Dutch explorers

Source 1

Routes of Portuguese and Dutch ships to Asia before and after 1611



(Coupe, Sheena, Coupe, Robert and Andrews, Mary, 1994. *Their Ghosts May Be Heard*, Pearson Education Australia, Melbourne, p. 46)

In 1611 European navigators learned to use the 'Roaring Forties' and south-east trade winds to shorten the sailing time between the Cape of Good Hope and Batavia (part of modern Indonesia).

- 1 Find this area in a modern atlas and mark where Australia would be located on this map.
- 2 When would you expect European sailors to 'discover' Australia?

Source 2 is a map of New Holland (Australia) made in 1767. It has been annotated to show the different people whose voyages had contributed to knowledge of the area and the creation of such maps.

Source 2

Map of European contacts with New Holland 1606–1699

1699

William Dampier (English)

1616

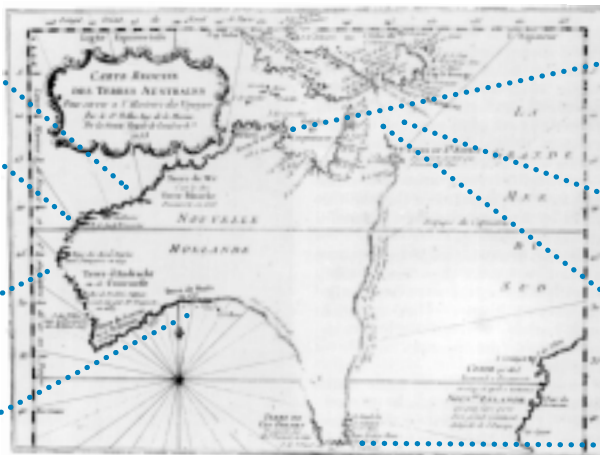
Dirk Hartog at Shark Bay (Dutch)

1616–44

21 instances of Dutch ships 'hitting' part of the Australian coast by accident on the way to Asia

1627

Pieter Nuyts (Dutch) maps the area up to the Great Australian Bight



1623

Arnhem Land area mapped by Willem van Coolsterdt (Dutch)

1606

Luis de Torres maps Torres Strait (Portuguese)

1606

Willem Jansz maps part of the northern tip of Australia (Dutch)

1642

Abel Tasman (Dutch) maps the southern half of Tasmania

(A section from Alexander Dalrymple's 'Chart of the the South Pacifick Ocean', 1767. British Library. In Kenny, Joan, 1995. *Before the First Fleet*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney, p. 44)

- 3 Which has been the main nation involved in the discoveries shown?
- 4 What does this map suggest about who 'discovered' Australia?
- 5 How much of Australia had been mapped by 1750?
- 6 From this evidence, could seventeenth-century Dutch explorers be said to have 'discovered' Australia? Give reasons.
- 7 What is the meaning of the word 'discover' you are using for this answer?
- 8 Prepare your case to present to the class.



Captain James Cook

When you did your survey in Activity 2 there is a very good chance that many people said 'Captain Cook discovered Australia in 1770' (although he was actually a Lieutenant, not a Captain, at the time). Here are some sources of evidence about Cook and his voyages.

Source 1 A comment on Cook's voyage

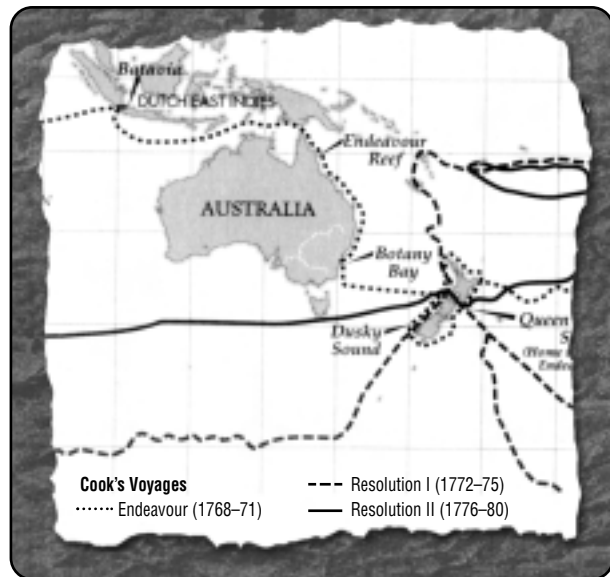
“Cook resolved to sail westward from New Zealand ‘until we fell in with the east coast of New Holland, and then to follow the direction of that coast to the northward, or what other direction it might take us, until we arrive at its northern extremity’.

He sighted land on 20 April 1770, and spent the next four months mapping ‘a totally unknown coast which Cook was confident no European had seen before’.

He named the land ‘New South Wales’.”

(Scott, Ernest, 1920. *A Short History of Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 33–4)

Source 2 Outline of Cook's voyage



(Dugard, Martin, 2001. *Farther Than Any Man*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p. x)

Source 3 A map of Australia after Cook's voyage of 1768–1770



(Scott, Ernest, 1920. *A Short History of Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p. 36)

- 1 What did James Cook achieve?
- 2 From this evidence, could James Cook be said to have 'discovered' Australia? Explain your reasons.
- 3 What is the meaning of the word 'discover' you are using for this answer?
- 4 Prepare your case to present to the class.



Matthew Flinders

In 1798 George Bass and Matthew Flinders in the ship *Norfolk* proved that Tasmania was an island separated from the mainland of Australia.

There were still conflicting ideas about whether Australia was a single land mass (which the French believed) or at least two or more separate islands (which the British suspected). In 1801 Flinders in the ship *Investigator* was sent to decide.

It was known that there were no estuaries of great rivers or inland seas on the east and west coasts, but nobody knew if the area around the Great Australian Bight and the Gulf of Carpentaria contained openings that would indicate that Australia was separated into two or more islands.

Between 1801 and 1803 Flinders surveyed these two areas in detail and added his knowledge to existing charts to produce 'a map of the whole continent showing it to be one vast island'. This is the map opposite. ►

He said that it was no longer appropriate to call it New Holland or New South Wales, and proposed that it be called 'Australia'. In 1817 this proposal was adopted.

(Based on State Library of New South Wales, 2001. *Matthew Flinders*.

The Ultimate Voyage and Marchant, Leslie R., 'Setting the Flinders record straight', *The Australian*, 9 April 2002)

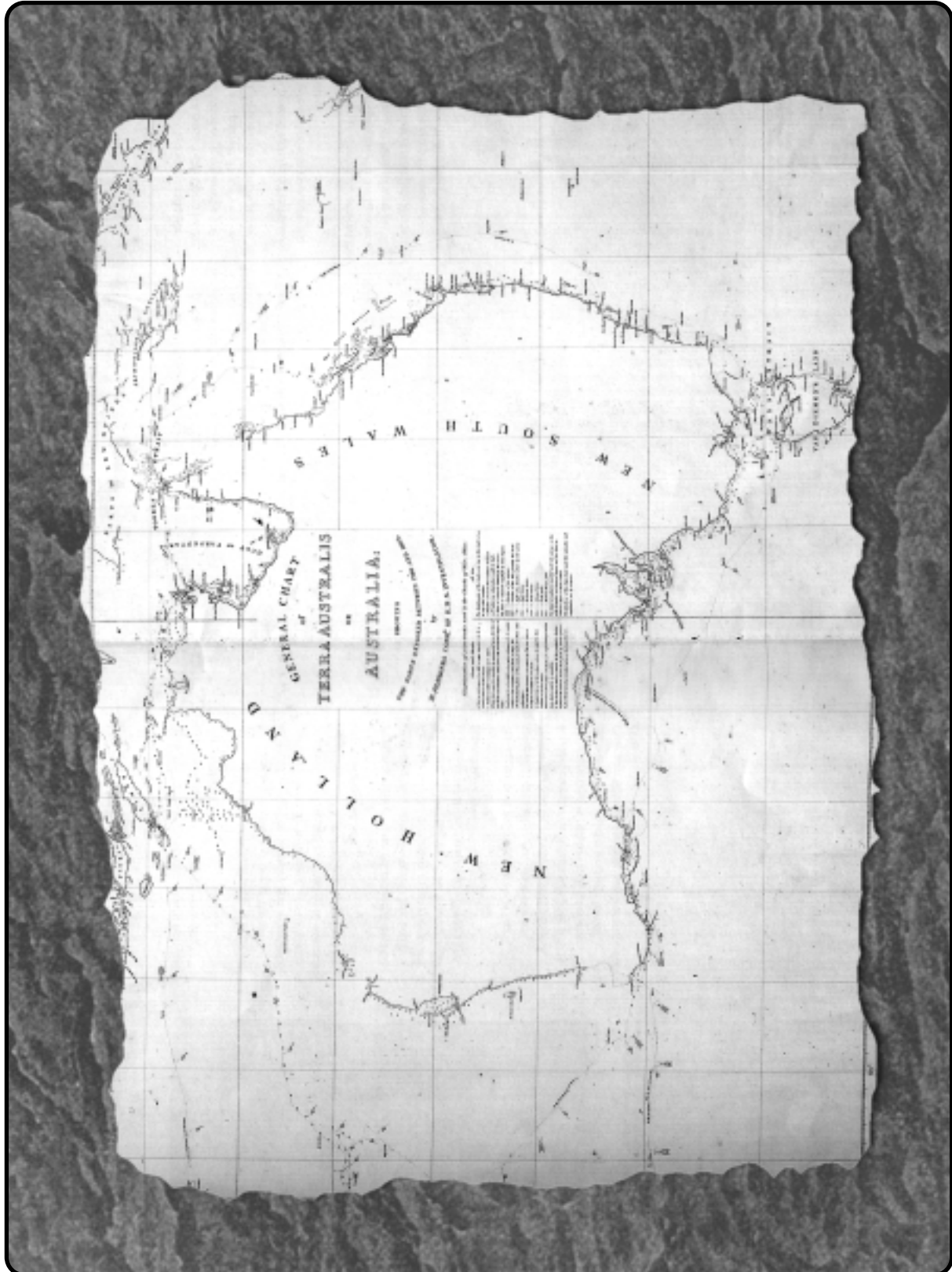
- 1** What did Matthew Flinders achieve?
- 2** From this evidence, could Matthew Flinders be said to have 'discovered' Australia? Explain your reasons.
- 3** What is the meaning of the word 'discover' you are using for this answer?
- 4** Prepare your case to present to the class.



(Matthew Flinders, Art Gallery of South Australia)



Matthew Flinders

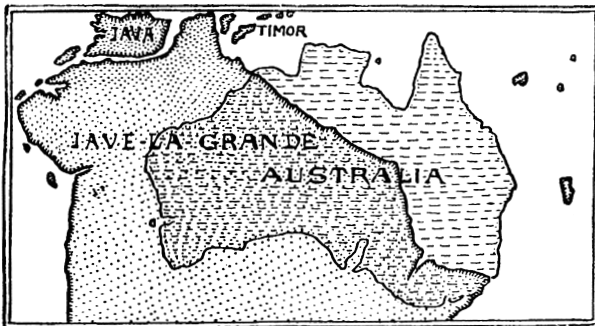


(Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, MAXX/804b/1803/1A)



Using evidence from maps

On page 24 (Possibility E) you saw a map showing the outline of a place named Java (or Jave) La Grande (literally, 'big Java' — Java being one of the main Indonesian islands to the north-west of Australia). Some historians say that Java La Grande is actually a map of part of Australia, produced as a result of a Portuguese voyage during 1522–1524. Here is an illustration of that map in relation to the size and location of Australia as we now know it exists.

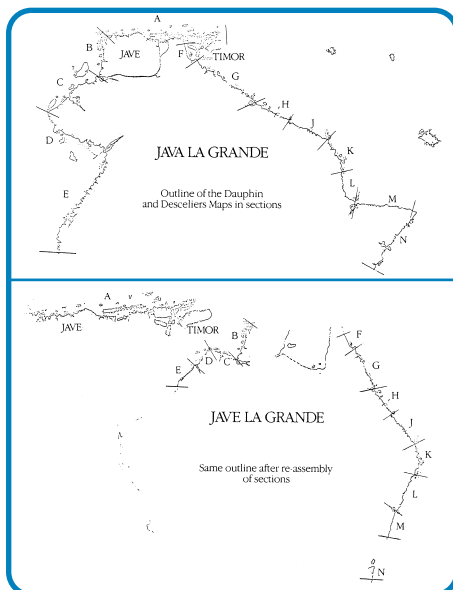


(Collingridge, George, 1915. *The Discovery of Australia*, Hayes Brothers, Sydney)

- 1** Are there elements about the map that suggest it might show part of the coast of Australia?
- 2** Are there elements that might make you doubt that it is a map of Australia?
- 3** Historians who say this is a map of part of Australia do two things:
 - They compare parts of the map with the modern coastline.
 - They say that owing to the difficulty of determining longitude at this period of time many maps were distorted in shape. They say that you have to make adjustments to these old maps to see what they should really look like today.

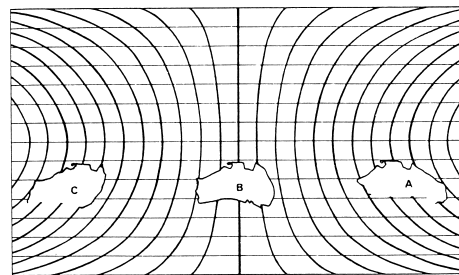
Maps a, b and c below are three examples of this. Discuss them and decide if they make the the Java La Grande map more convincing as a map of Australia.

a) Distortion of the Java La Grande maps according to Fitzgerald



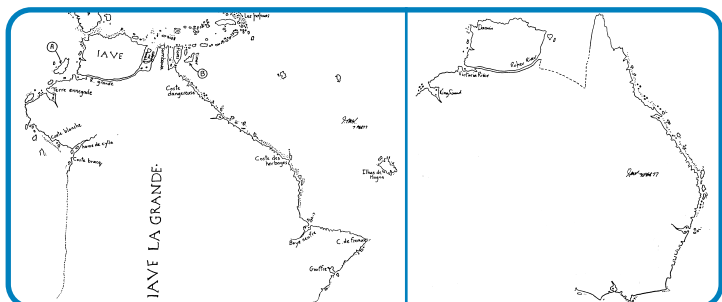
(Fitzgerald, Lawrence, 1984. *Java La Grande, The Portuguese Discovery of Australia*, The Publishers Pty Ltd, Hobart, p. xv)

b) Distortion of the Java La Grande maps according to McIntyre



(McIntyre, Kenneth Gordon, 1982. *The Secret Discovery of Australia*, Picador, Sydney, p. 113)

c) Distortion of the Java La Grande maps according to McKiggan



(McKiggan, Ian, 1977. 'The Portuguese expedition to Bass Strait in A.D. 1522', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 1:19)



Using evidence from maps

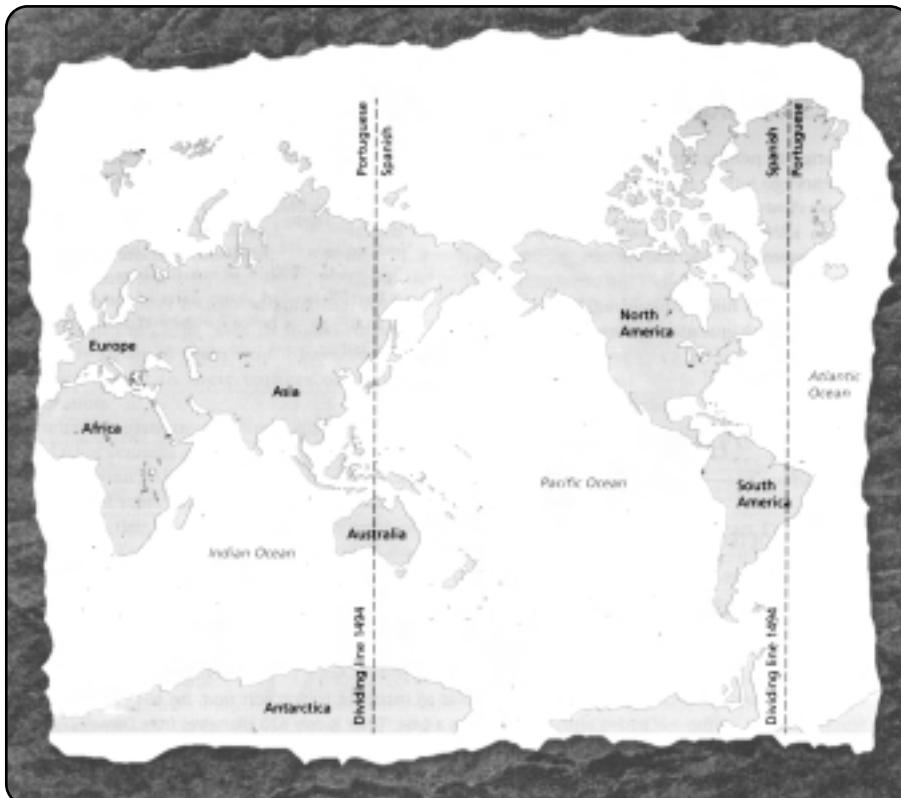
Those who believe the maps show part of the coast of Australia also say that we must take into account a number of facts relating to the maps.

- We know that there were two Portuguese expeditions in the Pacific area in the period — by Cristovao de Mendonca, and Gomes de Sequeira, both with several ships.
- At the time, the world had been divided by the Pope between the Spanish and the Portuguese. This division was set out in the Treaty of Tordesillas. The map below shows the dividing lines.
- This meant that discoveries to the west or left of the line belonged to Portugal, and those to the east or the right to Spain. If one country found land in the other's area, it would keep the discovery secret.
- In 1522 Spain and Portugal were at war.
- In 1529 the Treaty of Saragossa ended the war, and Portugal paid the Spanish to move the line 17 degrees to the east — which includes all the east coast of Australia.

- In the 1530s a series of maps were created that showed Java la Grande. All seem to have been based on one original, and then copied by different people.
- In 1755 an earthquake in Lisbon, Portugal, destroyed all the maps and records of the original voyage of Cristovao de Mendonca in 1522–24.

Use this information to answer these questions:

- 4 Why might the Portuguese deliberately distort the location of Australia?
- 5 Why might they want to change the line in 1529?
- 6 Why would they keep their discovery quiet?
- 7 Why might we not be able to find any records of the 1522–24 expedition?
- 8 Does this information change your ideas about the Dauphin Map? Give reasons.



Other historians disagree with those who believe the Portuguese 'discovery' of Australia theory.

- Some identify the map as being of a different place — such as Vietnam.
 - Some say the maps were drawn after a Spanish voyage around Asia, not a Portuguese voyage around Australia.
- 9 Why is it so difficult to know definitely if it is a map of Australia?



Using other evidence

If the Portuguese did explore and map parts of Australia between 1522 and 1524, we might expect to find other evidence that they were there.

1 Suggest some things that you might expect to find.

On the next page is a list of sources relevant to the argument that the Portuguese did or did not 'discover' Australia. All relate to possible 'non-map' evidence about a Portuguese expedition to Australia in 1522–24. These are not listed in any particular order or sequence.

2 Use the table below to analyse the evidence about the possible Portuguese 'discovery' of Australia, following these steps:

- Read each source and decide which piece of physical evidence it relates to. Write the letter of the source next to the relevant evidence.
- Locate where each piece of evidence is in Australia. Fill in the appropriate column.
- Decide whether the source/s relating to each piece of physical evidence either supports or challenges a Portuguese 'discovery' theory. In your own words, explain your reasoning.
- Based on your reasoning, decide on your rating of each piece of physical evidence. Use this scale:

5 = Very convincing 4 = Fairly convincing 3 = Fairly unconvincing 2 = Very unconvincing 1 = Cannot tell

Non-map evidence	Source	Location	Supports or challenges a Portuguese 'discovery' theory	Rating
Geelong keys				
Bittangabee Bay ruins				
Carronade Islands cannons				
Aboriginal ceremony				
'Mahogany Ship' wreck				

3 Now look at the Dauphin Map (on page 36). Using this map and an atlas, consider the question: 'Does the location of these sites of possible Portuguese evidence in Australia strengthen or weaken the claim that the Dauphin Map shows Australia?' Give reasons.

4 Do you think there is strong evidence to support the idea that the Portuguese mapped Australia?



Using other evidence

Source A

“A witness to an Aboriginal ceremony in the Broome area in the early 1900s described a boat landing. On the beach Aboriginal warriors stood armed with spears and shields. Two large canoes carrying about 30 men approached the shore, each with a tube of bark projecting over its bow. They wore helmets, breastplates and thigh pieces made from bark. Others carried wooden swords and pieces of wood fastened together to resemble crossbows. The canoes came ashore and the men jumped onto the beach. A discussion took place between the leaders of the parties and was interrupted suddenly by two loud blasts on conch shells. The cannon had opened fire and the battle commenced. At intervals, conch shells were blown loudly, and at each blast of the conch shells, Aboriginal warriors and the others fell dead. After an hour, the last invader fell.”

Source D

“In 1847 workmen digging the foundations for a lime kiln at Lime Burner’s Point, Geelong, in Victoria, discovered some keys in undisturbed soil about five metres down. This would have been the level of the beach hundreds of years previously.”

Source E

“In 1916 Australian naval officers discovered two old cannons on Carronade Island at the entrance to Broome Bay, in Western Australia. They were marked with the Crown and Rose — a symbol of Portugal.”

Source G

“People who saw the Geelong keys have disagreed over the age of the keys, whether they were rusted, and even whether they were found in the old soil or had fallen there during the digging process.”

Source B

“A local Department of National Parks and Wildlife archaeologist says that the remains at Bittangabee Bay (near Eden in New South Wales) are the ruins of an 1840s whaling station known to have been in the area.”

Source C

“At Bittangabee Bay, near Eden, are the ruins of a large stone building. ‘Pro-Portuguese’ historians say that it was the custom of Portuguese ships on long voyages to winter in a safe haven. The Bittangabee Bay ruins seem similar in design to known Portuguese buildings of that type. A large stone seems to have part of a date (15 4) carved in it. (The third number was unable to be read.)”

Source F

“Jeremy Green of the West Australian Maritime Museum has pointed out some misconceptions regarding the history of the guns — their discovery, manufacture and probable ownership. A chemical analysis was carried out on one of the guns which led to a conclusion that it was a South East Asian copy of a European-type gun. Such guns were known to have been used by Macassan trepangers who frequented the north and north-west coasts of Australia.”

(Sources A–C, E–G: Fitzgerald, Lawrence, 1984. *Java La Grande, The Portuguese Discovery of Australia*, The Publishers Pty Ltd, Hobart, pp. 118–125. Source D: McIntyre, K.G., 1982. *The Secret Discovery of Australia*, Picador, Sydney, pp. 169–71)



The 'Mahogany Ship'

One of the main pieces of physical evidence used by supporters of the Portuguese theory is the supposed wreck of one of the Portuguese vessels on Cristovao de Mendonca's 1522–24 voyage: the 'Mahogany Ship'.

Look at this evidence about the 'Mahogany Ship' and answer the questions that follow.

- In 1836 two sailors whose boat had been wrecked near Warrnambool were walking back towards Port Fairy (then called Belfast), when they came upon the wreck of a ship high in sand dunes and well back from the shore line. The ship seemed to be of an old style, and the wood seemed unfamiliar.

Map of supposed location of the 'Mahogany Ship'

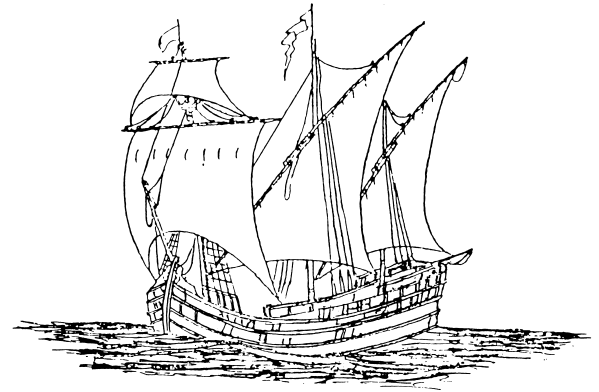


(Transactions of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, 1892, vol ix, part 1)

- Many people were recorded as seeing this wreck periodically between 1836 and 1880, when it was last seen. Because of its unusual wood, it became known as the 'Mahogany Ship'. Many of those who saw the ship and commented on its unusual shape were sailors.
- The first organised search for the wreck was in 1890. Periodically there are still searches organised, and the Victorian Government at one time offered a \$250 000 reward to anyone who could find the wreck.
- Some European residents in the nineteenth century recorded that some local Aboriginal people were markedly different in appearance from others, being 'more yellow' and 'more European' in appearance.
- Various local people have claimed to have relics from the ship, or made from the wood of the ship, but many have been proved false, and none has been proven true.

(Based on Fitzgerald, Lawrence, 1984. *Java La Grande, The Portuguese Discovery of Australia*, The Publishers Pty Ltd, Hobart)

A Portuguese caravel from the early 1500s



- Do you believe that there was a wreck? Explain your reasons.
- Do you accept that the 'Mahogany Ship' is a wrecked Portuguese caravel from the 1520s? Explain your reasons.
- Discuss how the following would affect your current beliefs about the Portuguese 'discovery' of Australia:
 - if the wreck were located, and found to be a Portuguese ship of the 1520s?
 - if the wreck were located, and found to be a whaling ship of the 1820s?
 - if no wreck is ever located by searchers?
- If you take together the evidence of the Dauphin Map (page 36), the possible physical remains of a Portuguese expedition to Australia (page 33) and the 'Mahogany Ship', how convincing is the idea that the Portuguese 'discovered' Australia? Give reasons.
- What is the meaning of the word 'discover' you are using for this answer?



Reflections

You have used a variety of evidence to come to your conclusions in this unit.

- 1** Use this table to briefly list the main strengths and weaknesses of each of these types of evidence:

Type of evidence	Strengths	Weaknesses
Maps		
Stories		
Paintings		
Objects		
Oral history		

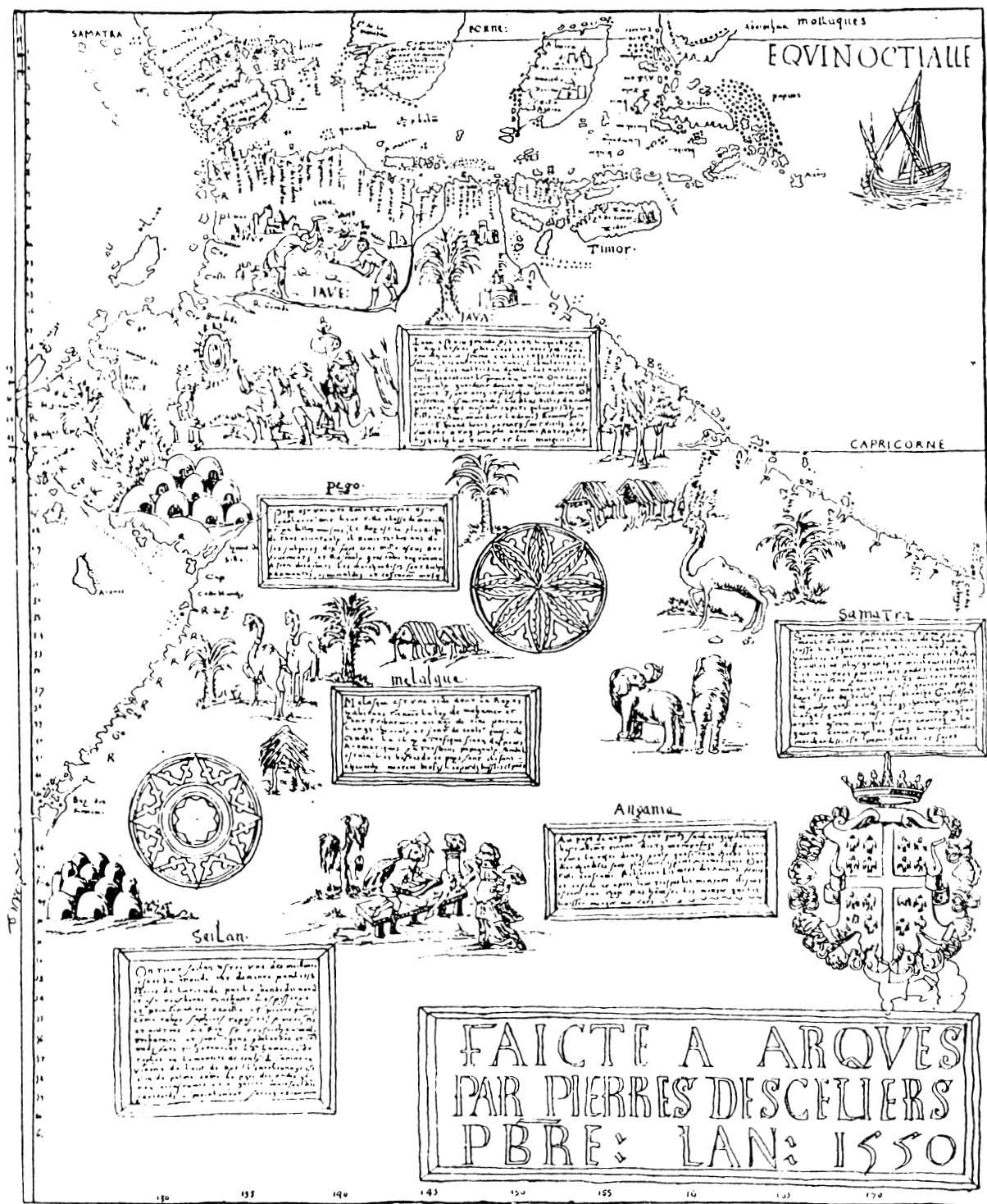
- 2** Look back to question 6 on page 15. Has your answer to who 'discovered' Australia changed?

- 3** Prepare a museum display about the 'Discovery of Australia' so that people looking at the exhibition understand the nature of the controversy about this question in Australian history. You are to include eight objects, with explanatory captions.

Decide what eight objects you would choose, and write the captions that you would give each.



Dauphin Map



(Collingridge, George, 1915. *The Discovery of Australia*, Hayes Brothers, Sydney)