

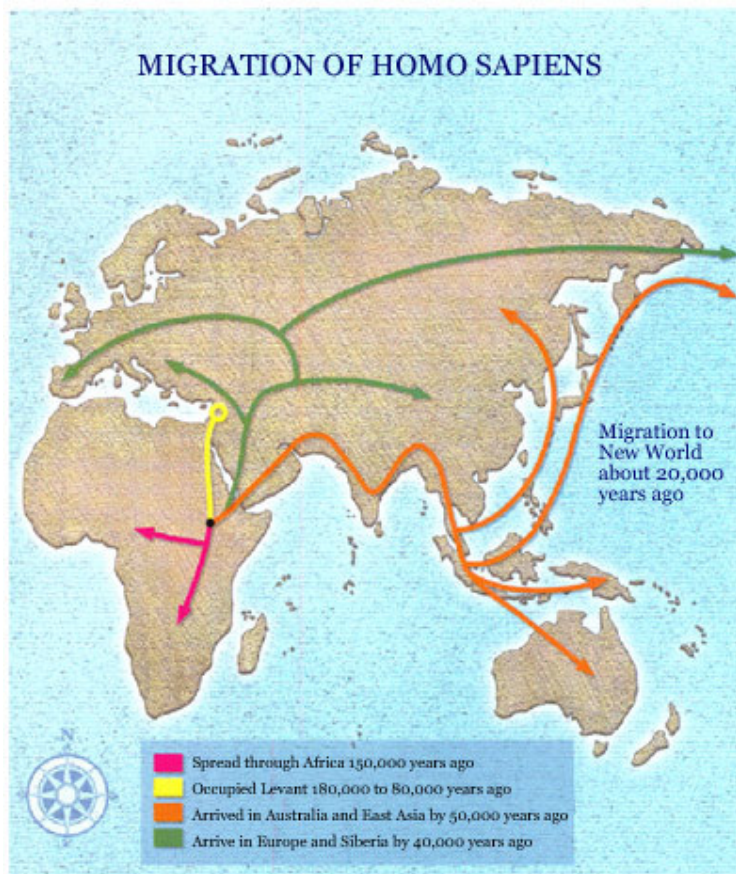
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through timeline...

50,000 Years Before Present

Aboriginal people migrate to Northern Australia through Asia

Before about 50,000 years ago, when humans successfully migrated out of Africa, they were already beginning to diverge into distinct populations.



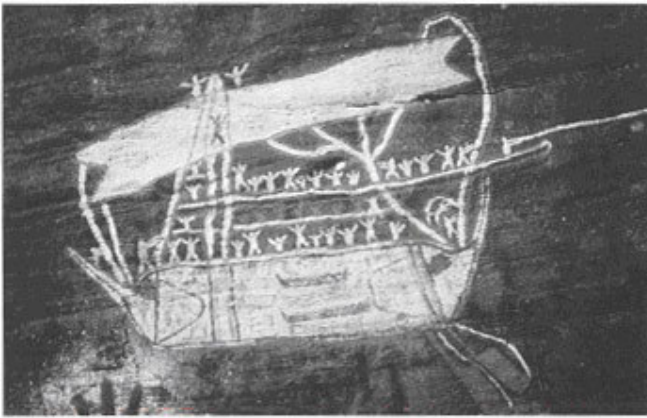
The migration of Homo sapiens from 150,000 to 40,000 years ago. *Courtesy of Tadeusz Majeski/ ABC Press*

Our species evolved in Africa 200,000 years ago. Paleoanthropological studies have found that people spread out of Africa in at least two waves. The earlier wave travelled from Eastern Africa into the east coast of the Mediterranean known as the Levant about 80,000 years ago. The later second wave moved from Africa into the Arabian Peninsula and continued eastward following the coast of South Asia about 50,000 years ago. This southern wave kept rolling along reaching South East Asia, where one branch of people migrated to Australia and New Guinea, while other branches moved along the coast of East Asia. A branch of this second wave migration moved north, into the central Asia and spread west into Europe and east into Siberia about 40,000 years ago. Eventually humans made their

way to the American continent about 20,000 years ago

The actual timing of the southern wave of humans is hard to ascertain because it appears to have moved along the coast. After the end of the last Ice Age 12,000 years ago the melting glaciers drowned large stretches of coastline so the evidence is now under the ocean. The fossils we have of these migrants offer few clues as to what sparked their spread.

Migration to the Australian continent for these travellers was a difficult task. Australia is separated from South East Asia by a great expanse of water. During the last Ice Age, the distance was smaller because so much water was locked up in glaciers. But before 50,000 years ago humans would still have faced a voyage across fifty miles of open sea to get to Australia. They must have built sea craft strong enough to survive the voyage, a technological feat that went beyond making spears or lighting fires.



Macassan prahu with crew. Aboriginal rock painting, Groote Eylandt. *Courtesy Northern Territory Museum & Art Gallery*

The first Aboriginal people arrived on the northwest coast of Australia between 65,000 and 40,000 years ago. The archaeological evidence suggests that Aboriginal people traded with Macassans and the peoples of southern Java for thousands of years. Aboriginal people eventually populated the entire continent of Australia constantly hunting the birds, fish and animals and taking advantage of the land's resources. That was until the coming of Europeans in the 1600's.

1600s - 1700s

Dutch map west coast of Australia and Van Diemens Land



Prado y Tobar - Relacion sumaria del del descubrimto. que enpeco pero fernandez de quiros...y le acabo El capan don diego de prado...con asistencia del capan luis baes de torres...1607, Prado y Tobar, Diego de, written ca. 1614-1615, (Safe 1/16 CY 298), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

For at least 40,000 years Aboriginal people lived isolated in Australia. About 1000 years ago people from China, India, Arabia, Malaya and the Pacific Islands started to explore the oceans around them. It is most likely that these sailors visited the north coast of Australia and traded with Aboriginal people.

Around CE 150 a brilliant Greek astronomer named Ptolemy drew a map of the world. Ptolemy speculated that land masses might lie beyond the known European world. Like many others, Ptolemy believed there was a Great South Land to balance the landmass of the Northern Hemisphere. Ptolemy called his imagined land *Terra Australis Incognita* - the unknown south land. Gradually Europeans explored and pushed the boundaries of the known European world. The first Europeans to visit Australia were the Dutch. Willem Janszoon mapped part of the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1606 and was the first European to set foot on Australia soil. Janszoon was followed by Dirk Hartog in 1616 and Abel Tasman in 1642 and 1644. The Dutch named the west coast of Australia *New Holland*. In 1699 the English pirate William Dampier landed on the West Coast of Australia and this was a catalyst for British interest in New Holland.



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