

# Southern Cross (Crux)



Once upon a time... there was a constellation, the Southern Cross, known to the ancient Greeks because it could be seen in southern Egypt. Ptolemy considered it as part of the Centaurus constellation. The constellation could be fully visible as far north as Brittany in the fourth millennium BC. However, the precession of the equinoxes took their stars below the European horizon and were eventually forgotten by the inhabitants of northern latitudes. In A.D. 400, most of the constellation never appeared above the horizon for Athenians.

Historians consider João Faras (Mestre João), an astronomer and physician to King Manuel I of Portugal who accompanied Pedro Álvares Cabral in the discovery of Brazil in 1500, the first European to correctly represent the constellation. Faras drew and described the constellation (calling it “Las Guardas”) in a letter written on the beaches of Brazil on May 1, 1500 to the Portuguese monarch.

## The modern constellation of the Southern Cross (Crux)

