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Marooned Dutch East India Company Mariners' Aboriginal Connections in Western Australia: The Untold Story

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Introduction

In 2016, Australia and the Netherlands will commemorate 400 years since the sailor and explorer Dirk Hartog in the Dutch East India Company's vessel '*Eendracht*' (translated as 'Harmony', 'Concord' or 'Unity') mapped parts of the Western Australian (WA) coastline. This was the second Dutch vessel to reach the Australian coast. The first was Willem Janszoon's expedition with the '*Duyfken*' (translated as 'Little Dove') in 1606 – thus before the Pilgrim Fathers left for America. More than 30 mariners from diverse national backgrounds were to map parts of the Australian coastline before Captain James Cook declared it British territory in 1770 (Heeres 1899; Appleyard and Manford 1979; Henderson 1985; Sigmond and Zuiderbaan 1995). These first journeys were long, difficult and because the instruments to determine longitude were still in their infancy, many ended unsuccessfully. It is estimated that some 200 people were shipwrecked and marooned forever on the WA shores unable to return back to Europe.¹

Despite the existing archival, anthropological, archaeological, historic and folkloric evidence pertaining to the possible cohabitation between the mariners, merchants, soldiers and passengers of the shipwrecked Dutch vessels, and the local Aboriginal people, the story of these early European visitors is yet to be told. It is of interest not only to historians but also has direct importance to present generations of Australians who are their descendants. The

¹ Western Australian Museum: *Strangers on the Shore* is an electronic database containing all known European and Asian shipwrecks around Western Australia's where survivors have had Indigenous social contact. <http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/maritime-archaeology-db/strangers-on-the-shore>.

influence of the early Dutch presence on the Australian continent adds to its present-day vibrancy and multicultural diversity. This paper explores some of the available evidence about the marooned Dutch on the Western Australian coast and makes a strong argument that further research is needed to lift the veil of the past in order to better understand the present.

An important focus of the study is its theoretical focus on two systems of knowledge, namely European and Aboriginal, which following Durie (2004), not to prove the superiority of one system over another but rather to identifying opportunities for combining both. The interface between science and indigenous knowledge need not be a site of contestation. Rather it can provide opportunities for the expansion of knowledge and understanding. Our intention is not to fuse the two knowledge systems but rather, to appreciate the integrity of each and acknowledge that dual contributions can lead to more sophisticated understandings and create a measure that has scientific robustness as well as cultural validity. The research has thus a crucial role in straddling the divide between science and indigenous knowledge, acting as agents at the interface. The challenge is to afford each belief system its own integrity, while developing approaches that can incorporate aspects of both and lead to innovation, greater relevance, and additional opportunities for the creation of new knowledge.

Western Based Knowledge: Dutch shipwrecks and the marooned

The Vereenigde Oost Indisch Compagnie (Dutch East India Company) or VOC - began trading with the East Indies at the end of the 16th century, their encounter with WA was a consequence of the introduction of a new route by Brouwer in 1610.² Following its inception, ships that left Cape Town for the East Indies had then to utilise the “Roaring Forties Trade Winds”. The advantage of the change in direction was a shorter cooler journey and therefore less illness, fewer deaths and food remained unspoiled longer. A disadvantage was the primitive instruments used to determine longitude meant more ships would now either encounter or come to grief on the WA coast. The first Dutch was Dirk Hartog in the *Eendracht* in 1616. His mapping of part of the WA coastline around the area now called Dirk Hartog Island, were the first conclusive evidence of the existence of the Great South Land. Ships wrecked on the WA coast as a result of the new route include: the Batavia (1629), Gilt Dragon (1656), Zuytdorp (1712) and Zeewijk (1727). We may still find the wrecks of the Zeelt (1672), Ridderschap van Holland (1694), Fortuyn (1724) and Aagtekerke (1726).

² <http://museum.wa.gov.au/exhibitions/voyages/timeline/1600s.html>

Slide 7: Hartog's Plate and Map

Slide 8: Table of marooned mariners

Estimates suggest a possible 200 people were marooned permanently on the WA coast. These came from the *Batavia*, *Gilt Dragon* and *Zuytdorp* shipwrecks and from crews and landing parties on long boats sent to look for them from the *Waeckende Boey*. The latter were later abandoned on shore when the weather turned stormy (See table one).³

Batavia and Sardam 1629

The first to be marooned were the two recalcitrants - Wouter Loos and Jan Pelgrom de By van Bemel from the *Batavia*, (which ran onto Morning Reef in the *Wallabi Group* of the *Abrolhos Islands* on 4 June 1629). There is banishment on the WA shore, the lesser punishment for the part they played in the mutiny and murders in the wake of the *Batavia* shipwreck. The location of their exile remains a mystery that continues to fuel debate between Phil Playford and Rupert Gerritsen.

7.Slide Hutt River or Witticarra Creek

8.Slide Playford's Map

- Playford claims they were abandoned at Witticarra Creek.
- Gerritsen, at Broken Anchor Bay - a shallow inlet at the mouth of the Hutt River (450 kilometres north of present-day Perth).
- Pelsaert notes in his journal that it was the bay he had called into with the long boat while in search of water and to look for shipwreck survivors before heading to Batavia for help.⁴
- The *Sardam*, the ship Pelsaert was given in Batavia to rescue the survivors, also lost five sailors the day the two recalcitrant were put ashore. These sailors had been sent to retrieve a barrel of vinegar floating toward one of the other islands – (a vital ingredient used for cleaning in a bid to fight illness at that time). None were ever seen or heard of again. Consequently, seven sailors from the *Batavia* shipwreck were left behind forever that day.

Vergulde Draak 1656

The next ship to go down was the *Vergulde Draak* in the early hours of 28 April 1656 when it struck a reef five kilometres off the coast, south of what is now known as Ledge Point, 100 kilometres north of Perth. Of the **193 people on board 75**, including the Skipper, Pieter Albertszoon, made it to shore. Nothing was saved from the wreck. Survivors subsisted on the few provisions thrown onto the beach by the waves. The Under-Steersman and six sailors were sent to Batavia for help (a distance in excess of 2,500 kilometres) in a long boat. They arrived there on seven June.⁵ The Governor-General, immediately dispatched the *Witte Valk* and *Goede Hoop* to rescue the 68 left behind who were 'about to go inland where they very much hoped to find provisions and drinking water'.⁶

Of the two ships dispatched to rescue survivors, The *Witte Valk* returned without landing a shore party because of the wild winter weather.⁷ The *Goede Hoop's* shore party proceeded inland for

³ Gerritsen notes that official documents record 73 individuals from these ships as last seen alive on the shores of the coast of Western Australia between 1629 and 1656.³ And a further 25, between 1629 and 1727, who disappeared near the shore or in close proximity to the coast from landing parties sent to rescue them. The table of shipwrecked and marooned survivors shows some were rescued, many were not.

⁴ Pelsaert, 1629, p. 237.

⁵ 'Resolution of the Council for the Indies, 7 June 1656. Algemeen Rijksarchief, Kolonial Archief VOC (ARKA-VOC) 577', in J Green, *The loss of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie jacht 'Vergulde Draeck', Western Australia 1656*, 2 vols, British Archaeological Reports. BAR Supplementary Series 36(i), Oxford, 1977, vol.1, p. 48.

⁶ 'Letter from Governor-General and Council to the Council (Chamber of Amsterdam) of the VOC, 4 December 1656. ARKA-VOC 1214 fol. 84r', in J Henderson, *Marooned*, St George Books, Perth, 1985, p. 54.

⁷ 'Letter ... 4 December 1656', in Henderson, 1985, p. 54.

'several mijlen' at the relevant latitude but did not locate survivors. Instead they **lost another three sailors** in the dense wattle of the coastal plain.⁸ Moreover, the next day, they lost another eight **crew members** sent to look for the lost sailors when their longboat overturned close to the shore, and was dashed to pieces on the beach.⁹ The Worsening weather forced the *Goede Hoop* to sail away, now leaving another **11 sailors** to their fate and without having found the **original 68. Thus, there were now 79 left in WA from the Gilt Dragon disaster.**

Ships sent to find them - Waeckende Bouy (1658) et al

The executives of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) in Batavia responded immediately. The *Goede Hoop* and *Witte Valk* were ordered to the area but were unable to relocate the wrecksite or the survivors. To make matters worse, the *Goede Hoop* lost another 11 sailors. The following year, 1657, the *Vincq* was sent, it too without success. The problem was a mistake of half a degree - too far north - in recording the latitude for the wrecksite. Errors of this nature were not uncommon at that time. It did not stop there.

In 1658, the VOC sent the *Emeloort*¹⁰ and *Waeckende Boey* in search of the marooned. Recent research has established that the crew of the *Waeckende Boey* did find what remained of the wreck, still partly above water, and the survivors' campsite, but no sign of the survivors. The crew of the *Waeckende Boey* found remains of the wreck, still partly above water, and a survivors' campsite, but no sign of the survivors. A shore party led by Upper Steersman, Abraham Leeman, began a search northward along the coast. They found 'a number of pieces of planking placed in a circle with their ends upwards, about 26 kilometres south of the latitude where the wreck of the *Vergulde Draak* was found in 1963.¹¹ On 21 March they found another structure, this time on the beach in the locality of the wreck site. This too comprised planks 8 to 9 feet long [2.4-2.7m] and a foot wide [30cm], that had also been stuck in beach sand with 12 to 13 struts made from similar planking.¹² Researchers speculate that the first planking circle, was erected by the abandoned sailors from the *Goede Hoop* using the wreckage of their boat. The second, given its proximity to the wreck, by those stranded from the *Vergulde Draak*. Abraham Leeman and his crew made for Batavia in a long boat. Miraculously, only four of the fourteen survived this epic journey back to Batavia. The town of Leeman is named after this courageous Dutchman. In recent weeks literature uncovered by Rupert Gerritsen suggests that another ship the *Immenhorn* was also directed to make for the Southland to search once more for the survivors of the Gilt Dragon. It set sail on 18 February 1659. However, not much more is known about it as yet.¹³

No further boats were reported lost until 1712, (some 54 years Later) when the *Zuytdorp* ran into cliffs near the Murchison River a few weeks after leaving the Cape of Good Hope on 22 April 1712. The cliffs are highly visible for a considerable distance out to sea during daytime so this must have

⁸ 'Report by Governor-General to Heeren XVII, 4 December 1656 (Letters and papers sent over in 1657). ARKA-VOC 1104.'

⁹ 'Report from Governor-General to Council of the VOC, 28 November 1656. ARKA-VOC 1104 fol. 3-4', in Green, 1977, vol. 1. p. 50; 'Sailing Orders for 'Emeloort' and 'Waeckende Boey' 31 December 1657', in Henderson, 1985, p. 62.

¹⁰ <http://museum.wa.gov.au/search/site/Emeloort>: Translation of Jonck's journal, sailing with Emeloort to the Southland 1658 [typescript]. Jonck, A. P. 1977 Translated from KA 1115 "Overgekomen brieven en papieren", 1659, fol. 204-218. Maritime Museum Not Geographic Boats/ships-History of Biography-Diaries-Memoirs 17Cent A/930.102804 JON 69 ...wam_mar_biblio - admin - 19-11-2012 - Maritime Archaeology Databases [Journal or daily register of my voyage in the ship "de Waeckende Boey", accompanied by the ship Emeloort from Batavia to the Southland, to search for the ship Den Vergulden Draak, wrecked there 1656 \[typescript\]](#). Leeman, A. 1977? Translated from an extract from 'In een open sloep van Australie naar Java' from the journal *Marineblad*, 1910-1911 p.19-36. the Dutch text is attached to the translation. Maritime Museum Netherlands Boats/ships-History of Biography-Diaries ...wam_mar_biblio - admin - 19-11-2012 - Maritime Archaeology Databases: [Boat from Waeckende Boey the Emeloort](#). However, the Waeckende Boey failed to investigate further, and returned to Batavia ... stranger_on_the_shore - admin - 22-02-2011 - Maritime Archaeology Databases; [Vergulde Draeck](#) Goede Hoop lost a boat and eleven men. In 1658 another two ships, the Emeloort and the Waeckende Boey, were ...stranger_on_the_shore - admin - 22-02-2011 - Maritime Archaeology Databases

¹¹ See R Gerritsen, *and their ghosts may be heard*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, South Fremantle 1994, pp. 42-3, 291 for discussion on the location of this and the second structure; Day Register, Samuel Volkersen of *Waeckende Boey*, 26 February 1658', in Henderson, 1985, p. 96.

¹² 'Journal or daily register of Abraham Leeman', 21 March 1658, Battye Library MS PR 3756/1.

¹³ WAD Researchers speculate that some of the 118 left on the *Vergulde Draak* possibly made it ashore clinging to wreckage, swimming or floating. But that currents would have carried them to other parts of the coast, away from where the main body of survivors had assembled.

occurred at night. Philip Playford's estimate is that there were at least 200 to 250 people on board.¹⁴ Despite the many deaths on the journey from the Netherlands to the Cape that plagued both the *Zuytdorp* and its sister ship *Belvliet* In 2009, the '*Heeren Resoluties van de Caap 1712*', in the Nationaal Archief, that noted how the *Zuytdorp* had waited at the Cape for its 22 sick to return to health and had then also replaced most of the 112, who had died before reaching the Cape, with soldiers from the garrison. This suggest around 290/300 were on board when it left the Cape Playford (1972), also estimates that between 30 to 180 survived the sinking of the *Zuytdorp*.¹⁵ His estimates are based on the numbers known to have survived the *Batavia*, *Vergulde Draak* and *Zeewijk* shipwrecks.

Table 1: Shipwrecks and the marooned on the WA coast

Year	Ship	Location Shipwreck/ Longboat Lost	Number Rescued	Number Marooned	Location Marooned
1629	<i>Batavia</i>	Shipwreck 4 June 1629 Morning Reef Wallabi Group, Abrolhos Islands	230 survived 125 later murdered	2 marooned Wouter Loos & Jan Pelgrom de By van Bemel	Hutt River or Witticarra Creek
1629	<i>Sardam</i>	Longboat sent to Abrolhos Islands 13 October 1629	Sent to retrieve a barrel of vinegar, boat not seen again	5 missing sailors	Abrolhos Islands
1656	<i>Vergulde Draeck</i>	28 April 1656, the <i>Vergulde Draeck</i> , five kms off Ledge Point	193 on board, 75 made it to shore <i>Vergulde Draeck</i> found in 1963	68 marooned, left on the WA coastline	6 sailors made it to Batavia
1656	<i>Witte Valk & Goede Hoop</i>	Goede Hoop shore party travels several miles inland	Sent to find the 68 marooned from the <i>Vergulde Draeck</i>	11 missing 3 sailors lost inland/ 8 sent to find them	Long-boot crew lost in the ocean
1658	<i>Waeckende Boey</i>	26 February 1658 shore party under Abraham Leeman	Leeman & thirteen abandoned	10 Died en route to Batavia	4/14 made it alive to Batavia
1712	<i>Zuytdorp</i> left Cape Good Hope 22 April 1712	<i>Zuytdorp</i> <i>Zuytdorp Cliffs</i> <i>Murchison</i>	Estimates 200-250 on board. Officially 152	Estimated 75-150 or more marooned	Wreck found 1927 confirmed 1959
1727	<i>Zeewijk</i>	Half-Moon Reef, Abrolhos Islands 9 June 1727	100 survived; 88 rescued after many months on Gun Island	12 missing 2 marooned	Longboot crew never seen again
TOTAL ESTIMATE				100 Known Marooned 75+/- assumed marooned	TOTAL 173-225 or more

We speculate that since around 87% of the passengers and crew on the *Batavia* managed to survive the initial disaster, even though they were wrecked in the middle of the night, in storms and hundreds of metres from the shore. Nearly 50 per cent of those on the *Vergulde*

¹⁴ PE Playford, 'Wreck of the *Zuytdorp* on the Western Australian coast in 1712', *Journal and Proceedings of the Western Australian Historical Society* vol. 5(5), 1959, p. 36; PE Playford, *Carpet of silver: the wreck of the *Zuytdorp**, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1996, pp. 61, 200.

¹⁵ Gerritsen, 1994, pp. 37-8 (40-180 survivors); Playford, 1996, pp. 203 (30 survivors).

Draak also made it to shore. It is presumed that a similar percentage of the *Zuytdorp* contingent also made it ashore.¹⁶

Zeewijk

The next ship to founder on the WA coast was the *Zeewijk*. It went down on Half-Moon Reef in the Pelsaert Group of the Abrolhos Islands on 9 June 1727. Over half the ship's complement perished. The survivors found refuge on nearby Gun Island. A month later they sent **12** sailors and upper steersman to Batavia for help in their longboat. Nothing further was ever heard of them. After waiting for months, the remaining **88**, built a new vessel from the remnants of the *Zeewijk*, of whom **82** made it to Batavia alive.¹⁷ The fact that a large number of shipwrecked victims were still alive nearly a year after being marooned increases the possibility of that cohabitation took place. Also, another 12 may well have ended up on the mainland from the *Zeewijk* longboat.

Slide 11: Aboriginal map of country

Slide 12: VOC Books

Slide 13: VOC Correspondence

Slide 14: Map of WA not separated from Malaysia

Post Settlement (1829) Indicators

From the beginning of "British settlement" in 1829, reports about shipwreck survivors started to appear. On July 5, 1834, the *Perth Gazette* carried a report that two Aboriginal men, *Tonguin* and *Weewat*, had heard of a wreck around 30 days journey, or about 400 miles, to the north. According to the two Aboriginal men, there was 'white money' on the wreck¹⁸. The following Saturday the *Gazette* published another version of the same story. In this rendition, the wreck, or 'broke boat', as the Aborigines said, also had survivors.¹⁹ Some months before, other Aborigines from the north had brought some British coins into Perth, claiming that they had received them from indigenous groups to the north.²⁰ Investigations of these stories were later conducted by a Swan River Aboriginal man named *Weeip* and by a party on the ship *Monkey*, but with no confirmation. It was subsequently determined that the event had actually

¹⁶ Gerritsen 2009, forthcoming

¹⁷ Letter of Governor General Council 31 October 1728 cited in Henderson *Unfinished Voyages* (1980 edition) p.47; Edwards 1971:86-168; Ingelman-Sundberg 1978:7-10; Gerritsen 1994a:38-9.

¹⁸ *Perth Gazette* July 5, 1834, p. 314

¹⁹ *Perth Gazette* July 12, 1834, p. 318

²⁰ *Perth Gazette* July 19, 1834, pp. 322-333

taken place at least a century earlier²¹ and that the historical chronology had been compressed within the indigenous oral traditions, a common feature of oral transmission.²²

While these events and speculations were playing out, other stories also began to circulate. In July 1834 some Aborigines reported that they had contact with a party of whites living around 40-50 miles inland of the Swan River.²³ No more was heard of this group, but in September that year the *Perth Gazette* re-published a British newspaper report in the *Leeds Mercury*, of a secret expedition that had revealed an unknown white colony living on the northern shore of New Holland, as Australia was known at the time. These people were said to be of Dutch extraction and to have been the descendants of VOC mariners shipwrecked some generations before.²⁴ Others say they came from the *Concordia* that was lost in 1696.

Over the following decades, these incidents, mixed up with tales of mysterious settler parties and a lost white tribe resident in central Australia, flowed into folklore, eventually developing into a legend complex in which one or probably more, survivors of Dutch shipwrecks settled on the western coast of the continent, intermarried with local Aboriginal groups, and so effectively peopled Australia with Europeans possibly several centuries before the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.²⁵ In later years there would be echoes of these traditions in accounts of a tribe of fair, tall, blonde and blue-eyed Aborigines living to the north of the Swan River.²⁶

In 1839 Lt. George Grey and members of an expedition, following a series of mishaps at Shark Bay and Murchison River, while struggling back to Perth on foot, on 4 April when they were just north of Hutt River, according to Grey, they came across yam fields..., 'as far as we could see'.²⁷ He commented that 'more had been done here to secure a provision from the ground by hard labour than I could believe in the power of 'uncivilised man'.²⁸ Explorer and surveyor Augustus Gregory later reported that the people from this region, the *Nanda*, 'never dug a yam

²¹ Thought to be the wreck of the VOC ship *Zuytdorp* in 1712, though the wreck of the VOC *Vergulde Draeck* off Ledge Point in 1656 also left survivors whose ultimate fate is unknown.

²² See for example, Vansina, J., *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*. Chicago and London: Aldine and Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961 and his *Oral Tradition as History*, James Curry, 1985.

²³ *Perth Gazette* July 26, 1834, p. 326.

²⁴ *Perth Gazette* September 20, 1834, p. 359

²⁵ Rupert Gerritsen, 'The evidence for cohabitation between Indigenous Australians, marooned Dutch mariners and VOC passengers', in Nonja Peters (ed.), *The Dutch down under, 1606-2006*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley 2006) 38-55.

²⁶ Gregory A C, Inaugural Address, *Proceedings of the Queensland Branch of the geographical Society of Australasia*, 1, pp. 18-25. See also [Gregory, Augustus Charles, Journals of Australian explorations](#), Adelaide : Libraries Board of South Australia, 1969 [1884]. Daisy Bates wrote of her encounters with Aboriginal people with 'Dutch' features, Bates, D., *My Natives and I*, Hesperian Press, Victoria Park WA, 2004, p. 118.

²⁷ G Grey, *A journal of two expeditions in north-west and western Australia during the years 1837-39*, vol. 2, T. & W Boone, London, 1841, p. 12. This was the first of numerous yam fields that existed at the time of British colonisation in the river valleys of the Geraldton region.

²⁸ Grey, 1841, p.12.

without planting the crown in the same hole'.²⁹ When they reached Hutt River on 5 April Grey's party noted passing the first of

'Two native villages, or, as the men termed them, towns, — the huts ... being much larger, more strongly built, and very nicely plastered over the outside with clay, and clods of turf ...'.³⁰

The first village was in fact only a matter of 200 metres or so from where the fresh water was located by Pelsaert's crew on the day they abandoned the two mutineers. Recent research estimates that this settlement of permanent dome-shaped dwellings that could accommodate ten people, had an estimated population of 290.³¹

Slide 15: Shipwreck Artifacts found to date

Slide 16: artifacts ie Leyden Tin

Artefact Indicators

Over time a range of objects and artifacts also turned up to provide even more tantalising clues that hint at the survival of marooned. The unexplained uprights and poles from the *Vergulde Draak* mentioned earlier by Waeckende Bouy search parties were chanced upon again in the mid-19th century at three points along the coast, along with a spectacular "incense urn", that was handed over to the New Norcia Mission in 1846 by some *Juat* people who had found it at a well about 20 kilometres south of where the *Vergulde Draeck* was wrecked.³²

In 1890 kangaroo shooters stumbled on a mast, 'about 40ft [12m]' long, 25 kilometres north of the wreck site. It is presumed to be part of the wreckage of the Gilt Dragon. They significantly also found a large rusty iron pot of about 50 litres capacity, a couple of horn spoons, a copper shovel and two crescent-shaped hatchets all indicating that it may have been one of the survivors' camp sites.³³ An extremely weathered, crumbling skeleton was found in 1931 in a small cave, which showed signs of having been occupied at Eagles Nest. A clump of coins was found on the beach opposite the *Vergulde Draak* wreck site at the same time. Both

²⁹ AC Gregory, 'Memorandum on the Aborigines of Australia' in H L Roth, 'On the Origin of Agriculture', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 16, 1887, p. 131.

Gregory had in fact reported this first the previous year.

³⁰ Grey, 1841, p. 19.

³¹ R Gerritsen, *Nhanda villages of the Victoria District, Western Australia*, Intellectual Property Publications, Canberra, 2002.

³² Gerritsen, 1994, pp. 49-50; A curious 'Circle of Stones', 5-6 metres in diameter with one or two of radiating lines, first seen in 1875 in very inaccessible country 200 kilometres north of the *Vergulde Draeck* wreck site, is also thought to have possibly been constructed by the survivors from that ship.³² The Indigenous population in the area, the *Juat*, do not appear to have traditionally constructed stone arrangements, and it is unlike any other stone arrangement in southern Western Australia. The location itself, unlike most other ceremonial sites, is quite inhospitable. It is thought that perhaps the structure was created to indicate that the survivors had been there and the direction in which they intended to proceed.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 52.

are presumed to have some relationship to the wreck.³⁴ Some Spanish coins and rusty hinges were also found in this locality in 1938.³⁵ Another coin was found on the banks of the Moore River, 65 kilometres inland, in 1957. And a single Spanish ducaton, identical to those from the *Zuytdorp*, was given to a station manager, Charles Gill at Shark Bay in 1869 by an aboriginal man who found it at Woomerangee Hill, 40 kilometres north of the *Zuytdorp* wreck site.³⁶

In 1971 photographer Tony Bell claimed to have found a stone cross laid out on the ground, graves, fragments of green bottles and a 'roofless stone hut' to the north of the wreck site,³⁷ However, it is difficult to link these with the survivors with any confidence. An inscribed brass tin, known as a 'Leyden Tobacco Tin', similar to those found at other wreck sites, was discovered at Wale Well, 55 kilometres north of the *Zuytdorp* wreck site in April 1990. It is thought to possibly have come from a survivor of that wreck,³⁸ but how it got there is uncertain. An unusual grave at that location, found at the same time as the tobacco tin,³⁹ could have some connection, but that too is uncertain.

No other archaeological or observational evidence has yet come to light to provide us with any certainty as to the ultimate fate of any of these marooned seafarers apart from those left by survivors of the Batavia mutiny - the fort structures on *West Wallabi* and Beacon Islands. And Rock art while compelling is less convincing than the land-based artifacts found at the *Zuytdorp* wreck site.

Slide 16: Walga Rock and ship

Slide 17: Rock cave art Bigge Island, off the Kimberly Coast.

The whereabouts of the *Zuytdorp*, began to be revealed in 1927 when material was found on a cliff-face about 60 kilometres north of the Murchison River by stockman Tom Pepper.⁴⁰ However, it was not until 1959 that the identity of the wreck was confirmed by Phillip Playford.⁴¹ It appeared the *Zuytdorp* had struck the rocky platform at the base of the Zuytdorp Cliffs (580 km north of Perth), swung side-on and came to rest against the rocky platform,

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 53-4.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 53.

³⁶ *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 12 May 1869, p. 12; Playford, 1959, p. 38-9.

³⁷ *The Sunday Times*, 23 May 1971, p. 4. But see Henderson, 2007, p. 48.

³⁸ Playford, 1996, pp. 214-6.

³⁹ *The West Australian*, 8 September 1990, p. 6.

⁴⁰ There has been considerable debate about who first found the wreck in modern times. although he may have actually been directed there by members of the Drage family See Playford, 1996, pp. 82-100; G Henderson, *Unfinished voyages: Western Australian shipwrecks 1622 - 1850*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2007, pp. 47-8.

⁴¹ Playford, 1959.

eventually breaking up into three sections.⁴² The discovery also of a considerable amount of material from the wreck on top of the cliffs as well as the slopes would tend to establish that a proportion of the ship's complement managed to get off the stricken vessel and on to shore. These included cannon breechblocks and lead sheeting, coins, large bottles, navigational instruments, the remains of chests and barrels, a brass dish, clay pipes, callipers, pins, writing slates, a pistol and musket balls.⁴³

The fact that breech blocks and lead sheeting were among the things brought ashore again suggests survivors had time to retrieve non-essential items, since initial efforts after a shipwreck are always directed first to retrieving perishables such as food and water. This is consistent therefore with a scenario of the ship remaining afloat for some time, and this too would have enabled most of the complement to make it to the shore.

Closer to the wreck site researchers also stumbled onto two possibly three campsites and the ashes of a large fire beacon. These indicators also tend to suggest survivors were present in the area for some time after their ship was wrecked.⁴⁴ This is a claim the Nanda and Malgana peoples of that (Kalbarri/Geraldton/Shark Bay) region also make.

Slide 18: DNA Newspaper

NANDA, ORAL TRADITION AND ARCHIVES - LIEU DE MÉMOIRE

The oral history tradition of the Nanda and Malgana Aboriginals contains references to cohabitation with Dutch mariners. I first came across this notion in 2005, when I met John Mallard, who runs a teaching unit on Aboriginal Health at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Western Australia. He claimed Dutch heritage and had even been to Holland to connect with his 'roots'. At our next meeting he brought along a 1941, Western Australian newspaper photograph of his grandfather with the *Zuytdorp* figurehead, which had become an important part of his family's history - a *lieu de mémoire* of cohabitation. The existence of many light-skinned, with blue eyes and fair hair, Aborigines in Nanda folklore and the belief that there is some truth to the legends is the basis upon which the National Library conducted interviews with Nanda for their collection.

Slide 19: Genealogy showing Ellis van Creveld

⁴² Playford, 1996, pp. 115, 201-3.

⁴³ Playford 1960:24-29; Gerritsen 1994a:36-7; Playford 1996:82-4,120-27.

⁴⁴ Playford 1996:120-24.

During his growing years his family were still practicing many of the old ways. “My father and my mother were introduced as a formal part of Aboriginal marriage. In this case four brothers were taken across and met four sisters. My father and his younger brother were successfully matched with my mother and her sister, and the two other brothers and two sisters weren’t a successful match, so the brothers were taken across to Mullewa later and met two sisters from another family and that was a successful match. So, you had two lots of brothers marrying two lots of sisters.

John acquired his information about cohabitation from his grandfather, “... I was a very inquisitive child and always asked questions and I got that information via him, but I also got information about this from my mother, who is from the **Wadjarri**. She tells a story about white fellas, going way back, that was walking up one of the rivers through where Mullewa is now....” Pastoral settlement took place in the region between Shark Bay and the Murchison, but although traditional society no longer existed by the 1920s, the oral traditions about cohabitation among the Nanda persist into the present.

Collective identity is based on the elective processes of memory, so that a given group recognises itself through its memory of a common past.⁴⁵ That common past, sustained through time into the present, is what gives continuity, cohesion and coherence to a community. To be a community, a family, a religious or ethnic community involves an embeddedness in its past and, consequently, in the memory texts through which that past is mediated.

In this instance is supported by genealogical information that links the Councillor and Mallard families via **Sarah Feast**, who first married Charles Mallard and after his death Barrowa (John Oona Councillor). These families also record Ellis van Creveld syndrome.

The other Aboriginal group who may share a common past with the Dutch are the Noongars. **Nyungars** live in the south-west corner of Western Australia. The *Vergulde Draak*, whose 68 survivors were never found, was wrecked on the coast of Noongar country. Their country butts onto that of the Nanda.

A further clue that it may have taken place comes from an 1833 article in the *Perth Gazette* newspaper that mentions the Aboriginal man Yagan, “a subject of terror to the white people, who yet commanded their admiration” was seen in Perth with his two sons, estimated to be around 9 and 11 who, the journalist notes answer to the names Narli and ‘Willem’. The journalist who estimated Yagan’s height to be over 1.8 metres tall, also described him as

⁴⁵ Michael Piggott, “Archives and memory”, in: Sue McKemmish, Michael Piggott, Barbara Reed and Frank Upward (eds.), *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society* (Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga 2005) 299-328.

'having a greater stature than the average aboriginal, "head and shoulders above his fellows – in mind as well as in body". More compelling even than these physical indicators are medical research.

Several other reports over many years (1830s to 1945) attest to some aborigines in the region having fair skin and European facial features. Others talk of albinos. For example, between 1890 and 1945, newspapers around Australia at various times carried articles about an albino Aborigine from the La Grange area near Broome called Jungan or Jan Gun. An article in 1934 recounts recollections of 40 years earlier by Miss K. McPhee, the daughter of Mr Alex McPhee, the owner of La Grange Pastoral Station, who she claimed her father had 'discovered' Jan Gun (Jungun). She also mentioned she owned an enlarged photo of Jan Gun that had a lock of his reddish-brown hair attached to it.⁴⁶ The newspaper journalist who wrote the article speculates that Jan Gun (Jungun) could be the offspring of the lost explorer Leichardt. It appears that Jan Gun was considered so exotic in fact that he was displayed at numerous venues around Australia including the Victorian Waxworks Museum.

Folkloric tradition of the times also reported group of Albinos as purportedly seen on the plains behind Hall's Creek and Wave Hill. On Saturday 3 February 1890, the *West Australian Newspaper* ran an article by E.H. on Pieter Ngarras, an aboriginal who displayed European features". It notes:

With a great blonde beard, not white but bright golden, sturdy sinuous limbs decidedly bandy, a noble, girth and a passion for the sea— none of these aboriginal characteristics; Provided that there is the same 'strong..- atavistic tendency among, white races as there are among the negroid and Asiatic, Pieter is quite possibly, an amazing throw-back over 14 or 15 generations to the early Dutchmen, it may be to the two desperadoes marooned by Pelsart near Champion Bay in '1627. The supposition is not an absurdity in that Mendel himself allows the passing of 17 generations for the verification of his theories. Residents of Shark Bay have assured me that Pieter's forebears were all typical aborigines, and his ancient sister Mithie, the only, other full blood that now exists there, is unremarkable. With a hollow nose and black skin incongruous with his white characteristics, this man spends his life cruising the shallow waters of Hamelin Pool, where he is well known as a 'hard case' of the stations. His most cherished possession is a little dinghy which he has fitted with a mast and' sail, and in which and on which he is eternally working— a trait in itself most unaboriginal, harking right back to the Eendracht, the Vergulde

⁴⁶ The Queensland Observer, 22 October 1898; Argus West Australian,

Draecke and other adventurers who scoured those seas in the dawn of our history, with many crews marooned and shipwrecked there.

Among the most prominent genetic indicators upon which journalists speculated that cohabitation with Europeans had possibly occurred before colonisation by Britain - were tallness and baldness. This firstly based on the observation that northern Europeans are relatively tall and the impression,⁴⁷ drawing on very limited evidence, that the Aboriginal people from the upper Murchison and Gascoyne Rivers, and from Shark Bay to the north west coast, were also relatively tall, the latter populations particularly.⁴⁸ Baldness appears to have been uncommon in all Aboriginal populations except along the Murray River in south-eastern Australia.⁴⁹ However, anecdotal evidence indicates it was a feature in the central west of Western Australia, from the coast to the western edge of the Western Desert.⁵⁰ Surveyor Phillip Chauncy commented that in the 1840s and 1850s the “only bald natives I ever saw were the warran [yam] diggers [of the central west coast region].

The most dramatic, albeit unverified, claim of unusual physical attributes of Aboriginal populations from the central west of Western Australia arose in 1861 when the *Perth Gazette* reported:

“From Champion Bay [Geraldton] we hear that a tribe of natives have made their appearance at the eastern most sheep stations upon the north branch of the Upper Irwin [River⁵¹], who differ essentially from the aborigines previously known, in being fair complexioned with long light coloured hair flowing down to their shoulders, fine robust figures and handsome features: their arms are spears ... which they throw underhanded.”⁵²

Diseases associated with Cohabitation

Porphyria Variegata and Ellis van Creveld are two syndromes that have been associated with cohabitation. These syndromes are the result of founder effect in their respective communities the Mennonites of Lancaster County, USA and the South African population. In

⁴⁷ No specific study was done of height in traditional Aboriginal societies in Western Australia, so this argument relies upon fragmentary records and observations.

⁴⁸ Gerritsen 1994a:76-7.

⁴⁹ Birdsell 1972:506.

⁵⁰ Gerritsen 1994a:75-6.

⁵¹ Approximately 100 km east of Geraldton.

⁵² *Perth Gazette* 9 August 1861, p.2.

population genetics, the founder effect is the loss of genetic variation that occurs when a new population is established by a very small number of individuals from a larger population in isolated human populations such as the Amish and Aborigines.⁵³

Biodiversity is often used as a measure of the health of biological systems.... from effectively zero. Considered a lead for some time was information from an American woman who had married an Aborigine from the Shark Bay region. She informed researchers her husband died from a rare metabolic disease called *porphyria variegata*. This appears to genetically link Aborigines from the area to Afrikaner progenitors of the diseases. The *Zuytdorp* is known to have arrived at the Cape in March 1712, where it took on extra crew. It is thought a son of the progenitors may have been among them.

The genealogical studies of Dean and Barnes suggested that the gene for the South African form of variegate porphyria was introduced into South Africa in 1688, when two Dutch settlers, Gerrit Jansz van Deventer and Adriaantje Ariens married in Cape Town. This has now been proven most South African patients carry a single founder mutation, and haplotype analysis of the ancestral chromosomes has confirmed a relationship with Dutch families with variegate porphyria. In the years following 1688 the gene spread widely through South African populations and is common amongst South Africans of Dutch ancestry, whatever their race or home language.⁵⁴ In 2002, researchers from the Biochemistry Section of QEII in Perth together in collaboration with researchers from the Department of Genetics University of Stellenbosch analysed 296 cases of porphyria in WA between 1978 and 1998, that included three Aborigines. They concluded that the mutations causing variegate porphyria in the Western Australian Aboriginal population occur sporadically and were not inherited from shipwrecked sailors. (Intern Med J 2002; 32: 445–450).⁵⁵

Ellis van Creveld

Another rare genetic feature among the Nanda is Ellis van Creveld syndrome (chondroectodermal dysplasia). The many symptoms that characterise this autosomal recessive syndrome include highly visual polydactyly, the growth of extra fingers and toes. The syndrome has increased incidence among persons of Old Order Amish of Pennsylvania

⁵³ It was first fully outlined by Ernst Mayr in 1952, using existing theoretical work by those such as Sewall Wright. **Sewall Green Wright** (December 21, 1889 – March 3, 1988) was an American geneticist known for his influential work on evolutionary theory and also for his work on path analysis. With R. A. Fisher and J.B.S. Haldane, he was a founder of theoretical population genetics. He is the discoverer of the inbreeding coefficient and of methods of computing it in pedigrees. He extended this work to populations, computing the amount of inbreeding of members of populations as a result of random [genetic drift](#).

⁵⁴ University of Cape Town website - www.pophyria.uct.ac.za/professional/prof-vp...

⁵⁵ E. Rossi, C. Y. B. Chin, J. P. B. Beilby, H. F. J. Waso and L. Warnich, 'Variegate porphyria in Western Australian Aboriginal patients' Biochemistry Section, Pathcentre, QE II Medical Centre, Nedlands, Western Australia, Australia and Department of Genetics, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch, South Africa. <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118962878/abstract?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>

descent, especially those from Lancaster County.⁵⁶ In the general population of the United States, the frequency is 1 case per 60,000 live births, whereas among persons of the Old Order Amish, the incidence is estimated at 5 cases per 1000 live births. The frequency of carriers in this population may be as high as 13 per cent.⁵⁷ Goldblatt et al documented the second highest incidence of Ellis van Creveld to be among the Aboriginal population in the south-west of Western Australia who have a purported carrier prevalence of 1/39 live births.

Goldblatt et al implied the syndrome was introduced by Dutch seafarers.⁵⁸ Goldblatt et al reported on two children with Ellis-van Creveld syndrome in the Mallard (Nanda) extended kindred of Western Australian Aboriginal descent. A further two family members with isolated postaxial polydactyly of the feet (as probable heterozygous manifestations of the Ellis-van Creveld gene). These male and female second cousins both had short limbs, postaxial polydactyly and cardiac malformations. Goldblatt et al, proposed that **founder effect** and random genetic drift resulted in a relatively high frequency of the Ellis-van Creveld gene in the Aboriginal people of Western Australia. The apical ancestor of these families is a Nanda woman Alice McMurray who was married first to Charles Mallard Jnr and later to John Councillor of the Naaguja Peoples of the Hutt River area. They are also related to the Drage family in Carnarvon.

The progenitors among the Amish in Lancaster County are Samuel King descended from an Anabaptist family of Steffisburg, Bern, known as K \ddot{o} ng or K \ddot{u} ng (in Bernese dialect, equivalent of German Alsace K \ddot{o} nig also spelled Koenig).

They had five daughters and two sons, Hans (b. 1684) and Samuel (b. 1689), either of whom could have been the father of Samuel K \ddot{o} ng/King (b. c 1724). Samuel K \ddot{o} ng was an Anabaptist. In December **1744**, Samuel and his brothers Jacob and Christian migrated to Philadelphia. In **1750** Samuel married Anna Yoder (b. 1728 in Europe) in Berks County. He died on Jan 16, 1777, he and his wife having produced 12 or possibly 14 children. It is thought that about 12% of the Amish Mennonite population of Lancaster County have the surname King and are the descendants of Samuel and Anna.

The Old Order Amish derive from the Dutch Mennonite sect of the Anabaptist groups formed in Switzerland and elsewhere during the Reformation, whose members began migrating to the USA in 1683 to escape persecution in Europe. It is hypothesized that if a

⁵⁶ Ellis van Creveld syndrome, also known as 'chondroectodermal dysplasia', is a rare genetic disorder characterized by short-limb dwarfism, polydactyly (additional fingers or toes), malformation of the bones of the wrist, dystrophy of the fingernails, partial harelip, cardiac malformation and often prenatal eruption of the teeth...

⁵⁷ McKusick, Victor A 'Ellis-van Creveld syndrome and the Amish', *Nature Genetics* 24, 203 - 204 (2000) ; www.emedicine.com/ped/topic660.htm).

⁵⁸ Goldblatt, JC Minutillo, PJ and J Hurst.1992. Ellis-van Creveld syndrome in a Western Australian Aboriginal community, Postaxial polydactyly as heterogenous manifestation, *Medical Journal of Australia*, 157: 271-272.

common genetic link between both the Amish and Aboriginal populations can be established it is highly likely that Europeans, probably Netherlanders, introduced it.

In any case there were significant Dutch Mennonite populations throughout the Netherlands at the time and in particular a large one at Franeker, which is located opposite Texel on the mainland.

Germans in the VOC

Highly acclaimed journalist, Roelof van Gelder notes that of the nearly one million people in service to the VOC in Asia between 1602-1795, globally fifty per cent were foreigner (to the Netherlands). Of these Germans comprised by far the largest number.⁵⁹ VOC crews contained numerous Germans looking to make good in the booming Netherlands Golden Age economy. On arrival many were told a stint on a VOC ship would set them up financially. The composition of the Zuytdorp crew reflects van Gelder's thesis. However, of the 286 on board when the ships left the Netherlands, 112 died enroute to the Cape, another 22 were sick on arrival. The Zuytdorp waited at the Cape for the 22 to be nursed back to health and also recruited the number lost enroute from the local garrison. However, there are no records as to who they were. Hence, we are working very much in the dark.

Slide 20: Ethnic composition of soldiers on board Zuytdorp

Ethnic Composition of the Zuytdorp

Soldiers Shipping List 1711/12

Soldiers and trades persons	Nos.
Netherlands	34
Germany	35
Switzerland	04
Norway	03
Prussia	04
Belgium	07
Denmark	01
Latvia	01
Difficult to decipher	15
Total	104

⁵⁹ Roelof van Gelder, *Het Oost Indisch avontuur: Duitsers in dienst van de VOC*, Sun; Nijmegen, 1996.

Monsterrol, uitgande reis *Zuytdorp*,1712

VOC Archives The Hague.

Slide 21: Cartoon traded genes?

Geneticists

The genetics researchers will use Y-chromosome and mitochondrial DNA markers to determine the ancestral composition of each population and determine the level of relatedness between them. Recent discovery of the E-vC gene, its mutations and mitochondria should lead to a better understanding of the probabilities that EvC is linked to cohabitation!⁶⁰ The results of these activities will be collated to demonstrate conclusively that the traditional stories of the Nanda and other relevant narrative traditions regarding their Dutch ancestry are accurate or not. The various genetic data collected will be analysed under the supervision of Dr Jack Goldblatt et al at Princess Margaret Hospital and Dr Vanessa Hayes of the Sydney Children's cancer laboratories.⁶¹ Barry Marshall group. WE NEED TO LOCATE A SPONSOR WILLING TO SINK 300,000 INTO THE PROJECT.

The Aboriginal people

Significance of further research

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

The current project is to analyse existing research from the various disciplines together with new archival and genetic research, resulting, we hope, in a synthesis that will produce a conclusion regarding the Nanda oral history tradition that Dutch mariners cohabited with them.

A positive outcome would have ramifications in Australia, the Netherlands, Britain and the United States. Most particularly it will be of profound importance to the Nanda people themselves, providing them with conformation, or not, of their long-held beliefs about this aspect of their ancestry as it relates to their native title claim. If pre-1788 European settlement is confirmed, this will also help

⁶⁰ Chen & Laufer-Cahana 2006.

⁶¹ Twelve y-chromosome markers (six single nucleotide polymorphism markers and six short tandem repeats⁶¹ will be analysed in male samples with genotypes determined using restriction site polymorphisms.⁶¹ Haplotypes will be defined according to the evolutionary relationships of the markers and the standard Y chromosome consortium mutation-based nomenclature (Y chromosome consortium 2002). To identify complementary female origins and diversity, the mtDNA hypervariable sequence 1 (HVS-1) will be amplified using primers L15996 and H16401⁶¹ with M13 (121) and M13 reverse sequence primers attached to the 5'-end of each primer respectively. HSV-1 haplotype diversity will be determined according to Nei⁶¹ with the average number of nucleotide substitutions per site between pairs of sequences calculated using the model by Tamura and Nei⁶¹. The samples also will be screened for the mtDNA 9-bp deletion, which is located in the COII/tRNA^{Lys} intergenic region.

with the development of a much-needed indigenous heritage tourism industry in the region, with consequent economic and social benefits.