



SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

SAHRA MEDIA STATEMENT

PUBLICATION ON DUTCH SHIPWRECKS IN SOUTH AFRICA: SITES, STORIES, AND ARCHIVES

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Cultural Heritage Agency
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

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AN AGENCY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE



PUBLICATION ON DUTCH SHIPWRECKS IN SOUTH AFRICA: SITES, STORIES, AND ARCHIVES

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), in cooperation with its counterpart, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), is excited to announce the finalisation of its publication, titled “Dutch Shipwrecks in South Africa: Sites, Stories, and Archives.”

Recording oral histories of salvage operations

This book is the final output of a joint project which sought to record the oral history of 20th Century salvage of Dutch historical shipwrecks in South Africa. The latter half of that century saw numerous salvage operations involving removal of valuable artefacts from Dutch wrecks to sell for profit. Due to the lack of comprehensive oversight at the time, much of this activity went unrecorded, leaving important historical knowledge lost or scattered. The aim of this project was to gather and preserve this information – much of which existed only in the memories of divers and in their personal notes, sketches, and photos – before it was lost forever.

Collaboration between SAHRA and RCE

Dutch wrecks in South Africa, in particular those of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), West India Company (WIC), the Dutch Admiralty and Royal Netherlands Navy, are still considered to be of important cultural heritage in the Netherlands. This project was therefore fully funded by the RCE to support SAHRA with the care for this shared maritime cultural heritage. The publication was compiled on the one hand by collating the stories of salvors and heritage managers to shed a light on the impact of the salvage events on the historic shipwreck sites, while on the other hand, students of Leiden University contributed by writing papers on the biographies of some of the ships and their shipwreck events. Information and excerpts from these student papers were included in the book.

Publication on Dutch shipwrecks

The publication of “Dutch Shipwrecks in South Africa: Sites, Stories, and Archives“, which exists as a very limited number of print copies and an eBook, is one of several project outcomes, including augmentation of the SAHRA shipwreck database and Geographical Information System (GIS). The information was also used to create new records on the RCE’s Maritime Stepping Stones public database (MaSS), which can be accessed at [MaSS - stepping stones of maritime history \(cultureelerfgoed.nl\)](http://MaSS - stepping stones of maritime history (cultureelerfgoed.nl)). The information collected will serve as an invaluable baseline for the future site management.

SAHRA and the RCE sincerely thank all who contributed to the project. We hope readers will enjoy learning more about the fascinating world of shipwrecks as much as we enjoyed uncovering their stories!

For more information about the book, please contact SAHRA at info@sahra.org.za.

