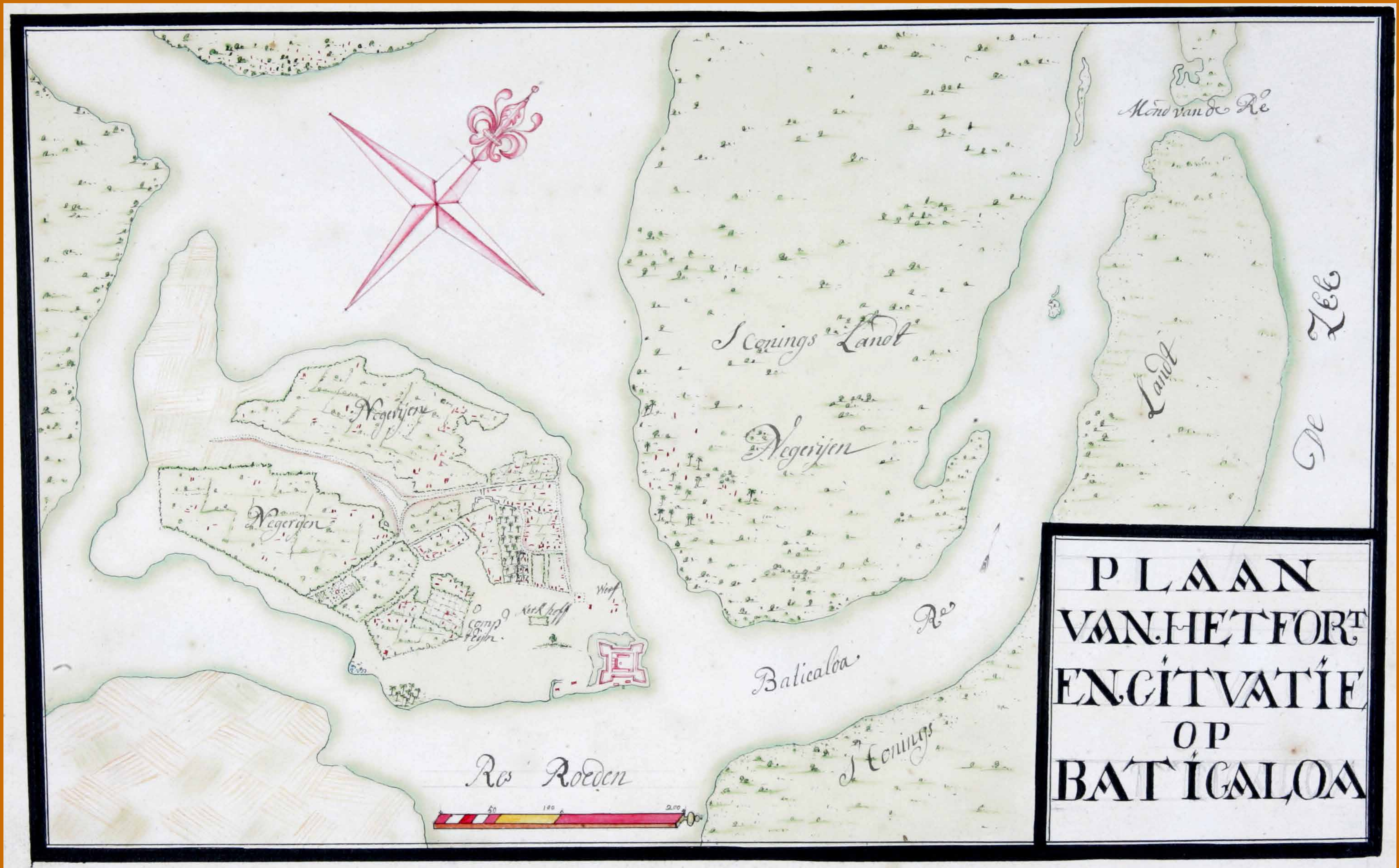


# Batticaloa, first encounter...



Map of Fort Batticaloa and surroundings, c. 1770

Above the fort one sees a wharf (*werf*), possibly to build or repair small vessels, a little bit to the left the graveyard (*Kerckhoff*) and further to the left the Company's garden (*Comps th[u]ijn*). Such a local food supply was not uncommon (perhaps the most famous being the still-existing garden in Cape Town). Batticaloa was an enclave in the middle of Kings Territory ('*s coning landt*'), the VOC had only a limited area of rural villages (*negerijen*).

*Maker not known. University Library Leiden, Special Collections, Collection Bodel Nijenhuis, inv.nr. COLLBN 002-11-55 (edited)*

In 1602 Joris van Spilbergen visited the east coast of Sri Lanka. King Vimala Dharma Suriya I received him warmly when it seemed the Dutch could possibly play a role in expelling the Portuguese, for Joris van Spilbergen pretended to be a representative of Prince Maurice of Holland. This first meeting became famous by the travelogue 'Historical Journal' (1605).

A year after Joris van Spilbergen, Sebald de Weert, Vice Admiral of the first VOC fleet sent to Asia, arrived to find out whether the King would keep to the agreements. His mission failed due to misconduct by this Hollander. The King felt insulted and threatened, and had him executed. Only thirty years later, King Rajasinha II asked the now powerful VOC for help against the Portuguese. As a test of their skills, Fort Batticaloa was captured in 1638.



Reception of Sebald de Weert by the local chief of Batticaloa (*Maticalo*), 30 April, 1603, c. 1646

In the foreground left, a magician shows his skills. Such an imagination fit the view of the 'other' coined by Edward W. Said in 1978 as 'Orientalism'.

*Plate 4 of 'Voyagie naer de Oost-Indien, onder Wybrandt van Waerwijck', Voyage No 11 in: Isaac Commelin, Begin ende voortgangh, van de Vereenighde Nederlantsche Geocroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie, Volume I. Amsterdam: J. Janssonius. Maker not known. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv.nr. RP-P-OB-75.430.*



View of the fortress of Batticaloa, 1721

Outside of the fort a well is visible. In the water one sees a VOC *chaloupe* (sloop).

*Livinus Stevenz and Tarik Olivierse Helt, surveyors. National Archives, The Hague, 4.VELH, inv.nr. 344.7*



# ...with the Dutch



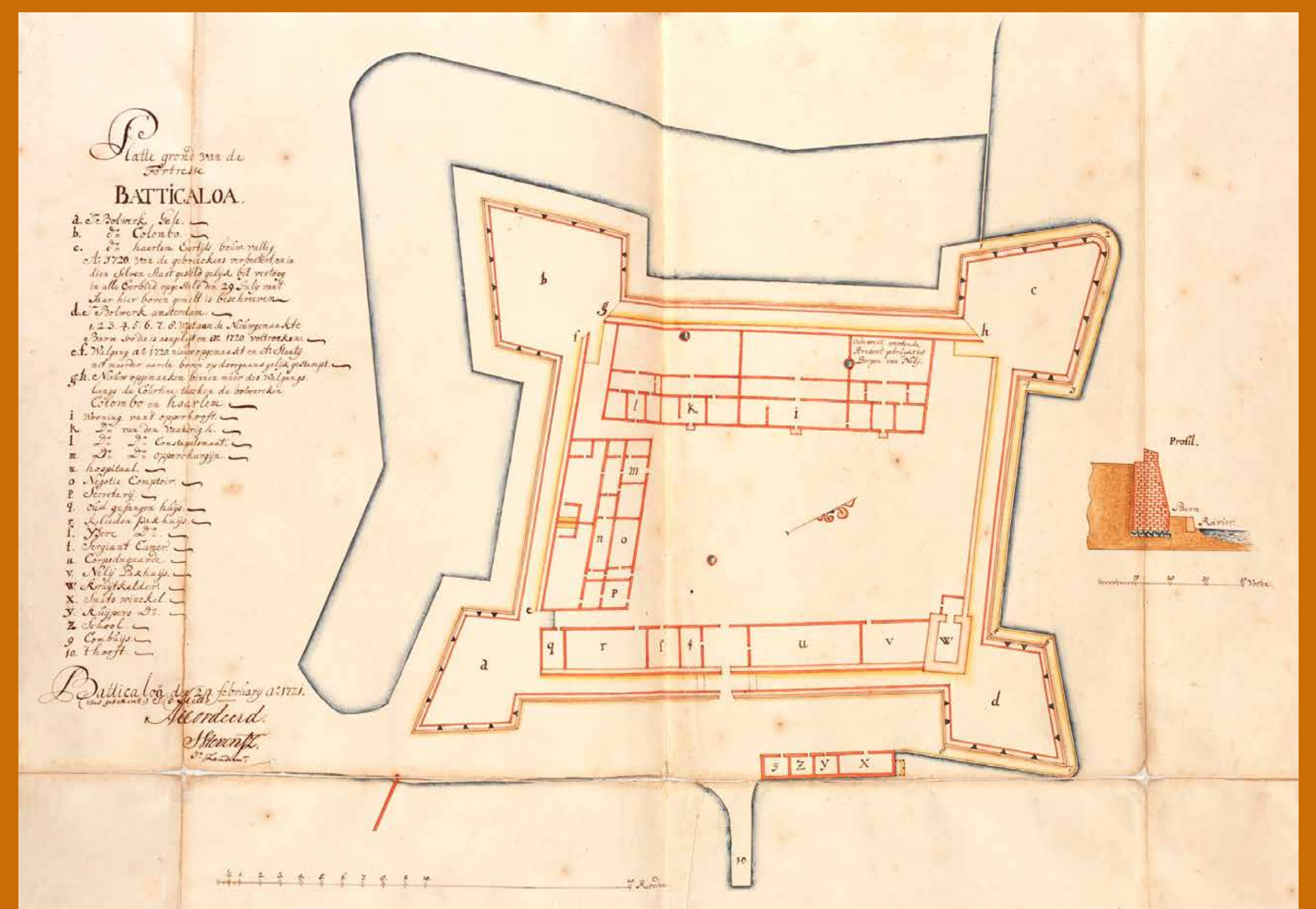
View of Fort Batticaloa with British made cannons, 2011

Photo Anton Croos.



View of the bay from the fortress of Batticaloa during the British occupation, c. 1862-1903

William Louis Skeen (attributed). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv.nr. RP-F-F80319.



Ground plan of fort Batticaloa, 1721

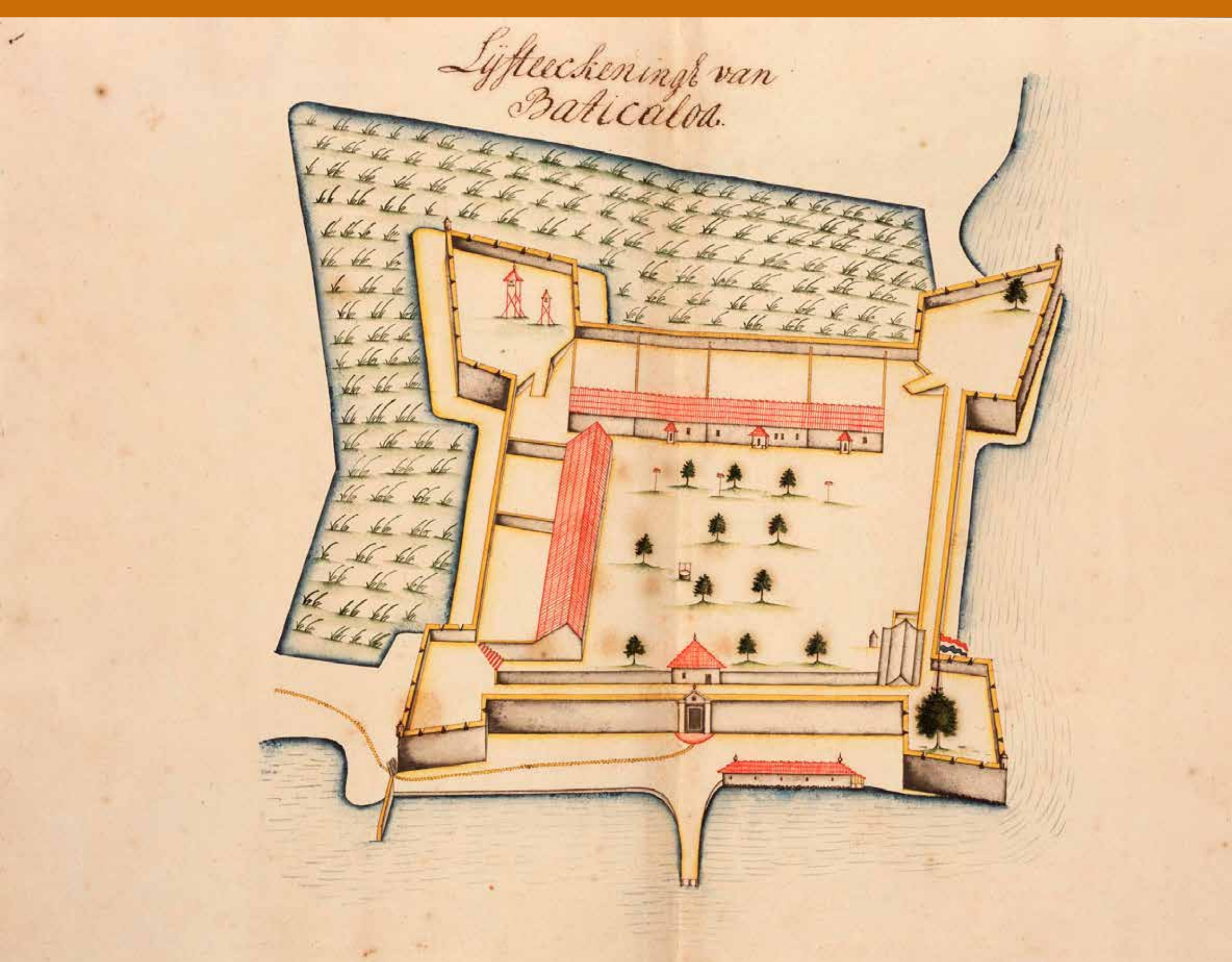
The jetty indicated in the legend under number 10 symbolizes the lifeline with the outside world. Batticaloa was a small enclave that, in addition to its strategic importance, mainly served for the supply of construction timber for the VOC-settlements on the west coast.

In the fortress there was a small school (indicated in the legend by the letter **z**), where the children of the married soldiers were taught. The children, like most of their parents, were of Eurasian descent.

Livinus Stevenz and Tatik Olivierse Helt, surveyers. National Archives, The Hague, 4.VELH, inv.nr. 344.3

## Legend

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a. Galle Bastion                           | q. Former prison                        |
| b. Colombo Bastion                         | r. Warehouse of textiles [from India]   |
| c. Haarlem Bastion [restored in 1720]      | s. Warehouse for hardware/stock of iron |
| d. Amsterdam Bastion                       | t. Room [home] for the sergeant         |
| e-f. Wallwalks completely restored in 1720 | u. Corps du garde                       |
| g-h. Idem                                  | v. Warehouse for rice ( <i>nelij</i> )  |
| i. Home of the Chief ( <i>opperhooft</i> ) | w. Powder cellar                        |
| k. Idem of the Ensign                      | x. Smithy                               |
| l. Idem of the Assistant Constable         | y. Cooper's workshop                    |
| m. Idem of the first surgeon               | z. School                               |
| n. Hospital                                | 9. Galley                               |
| o. Trade office                            | 10. Jetty                               |
| p. Secretarial Office                      |   |



Batticaloa, 1721

A well is visible in the center of the courtyard. Above it are three dovecotes placed on stilts, possibly the home of carrier pigeons.

Livinus Stevenz and Tatik Olivierse Helt, surveyers. National Archives, The Hague, access VELH, inv.nr. 0344.4.