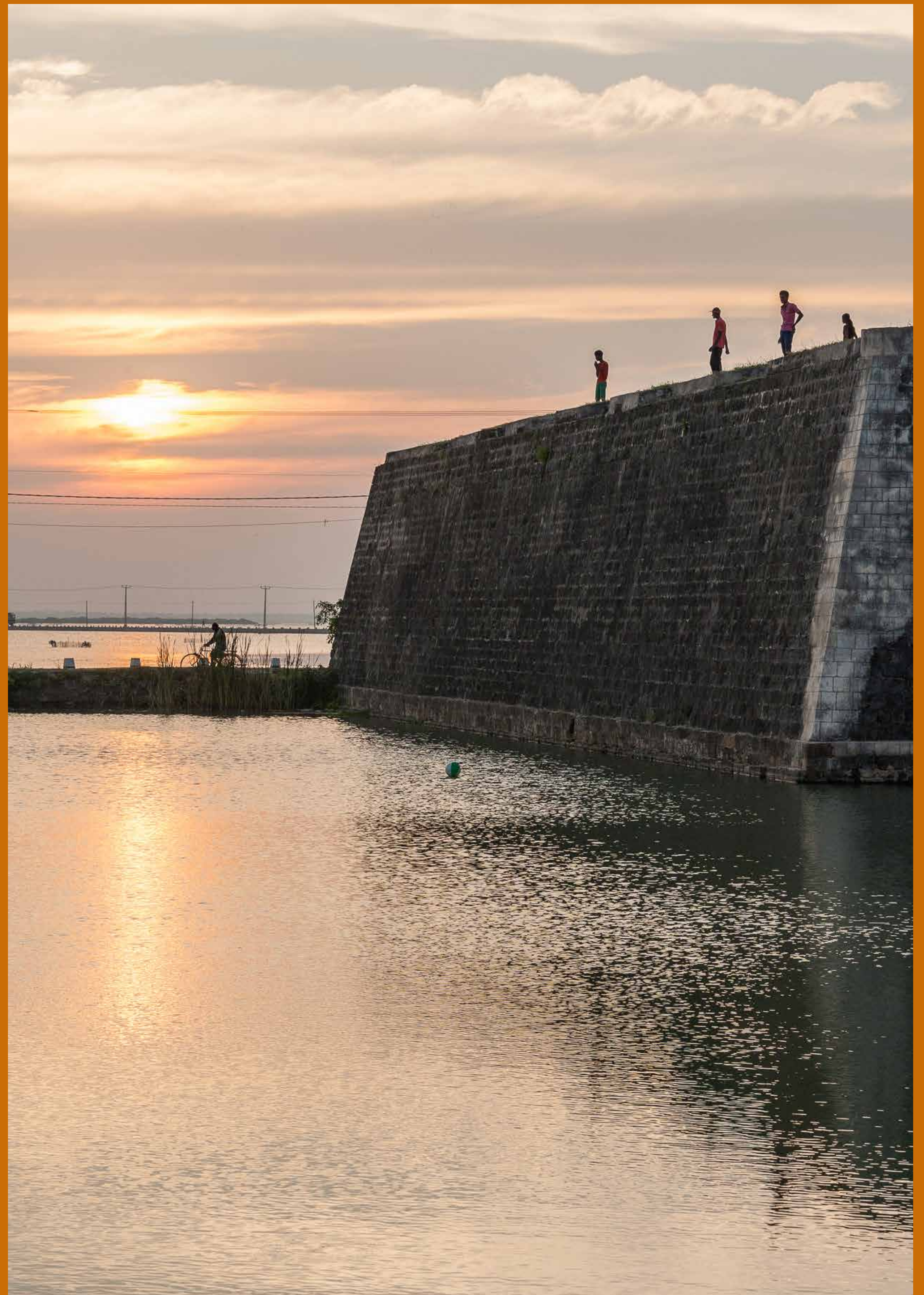


Jaffna Fort...

The print depicting the prelude to the siege of Jaffna (see below) seems to suggest that the population enthusiastically welcomed the VOC in 1658. Therefore the print can be seen as an expression of European arrogance, even as propaganda – the more so because in that period the relationship between the VOC and the interior kingdom of Kandy was quite problematic and would not really improve afterwards. Since Jaffna was seen as a possible springboard for the competing colonial powers, in particular the British, the fort, commonly called the ‘Castle of Jaffna’, was modernized in the eighteenth century and provided with ravelins – forward half bastions – to protect the vulnerable entry gates. These elaborate fortifications make Jaffna Fort a unique example of the Dutch forts in Sri Lanka. The major restoration project (2009-2012) was financially supported by the Dutch government, which was also an indication of the significance of the colonial monumental heritage.



Zeeland Bastion seen at sunset

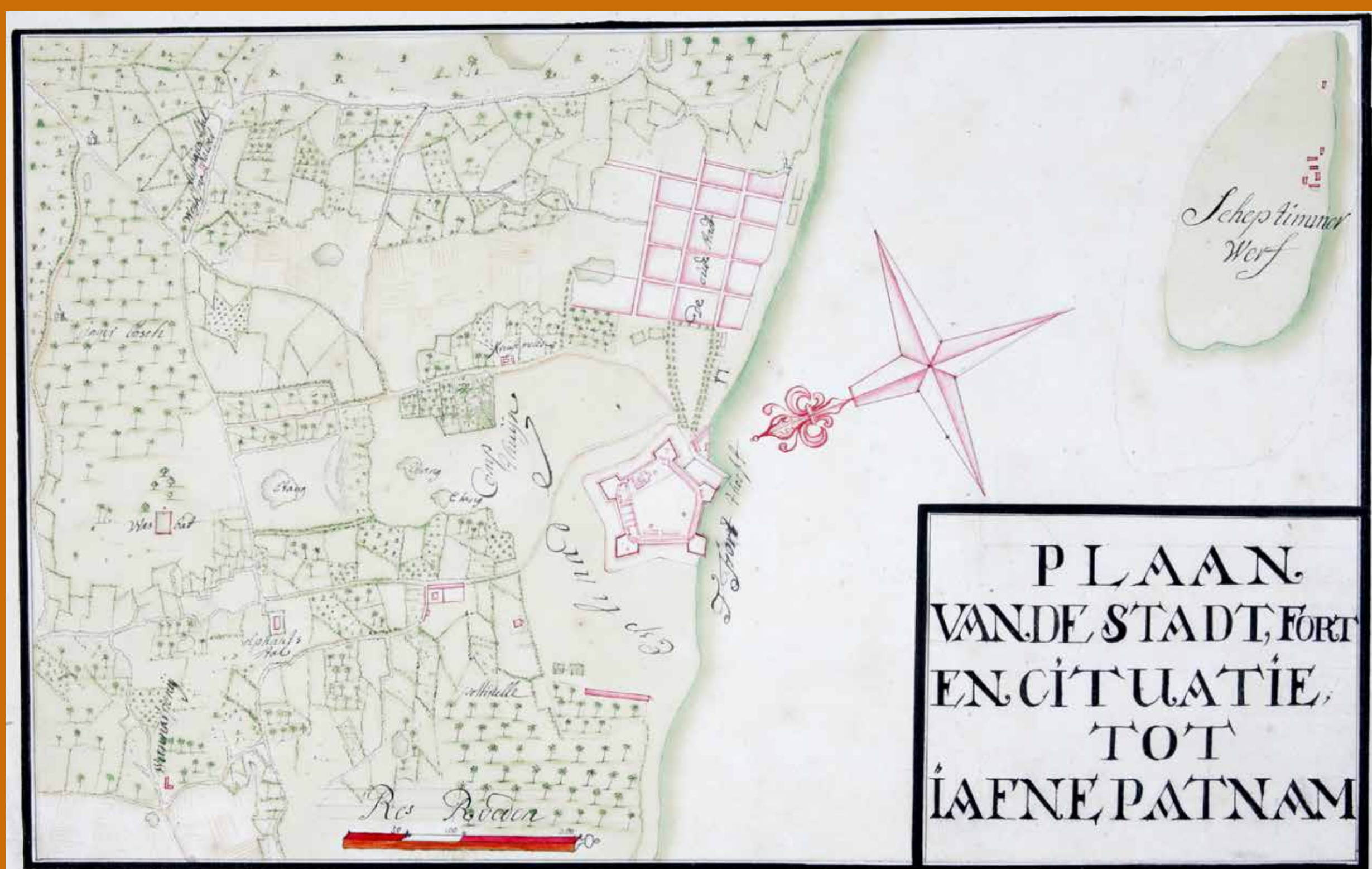
Photo Johannes Odé, 2016



Prelude to the siege of Jaffna by General Rijcklof van Goens the Elder, March 1658

The print brings together various events that preceded the siege of the Portuguese held *Jafanapataõ* (March 16-June 23). In the background on the top right, we see the transfer of the VOC force to Elephants Pass on native vessels. The main theme of the print is depicted in the foreground to the right: The reception of General van Goens by local headmen. In the words of Philippus Baldaeus, army-chaplain who happened to be at the spot: ‘We were courtiously met by the inhabitants of the land, who abundantly presented us with all kinds of food and fruits’. The troops then marched on through Chavakachery and Navatkuli until finally Jaffanapatnam came into view. One of the bastions is depicted with a waving Portuguese flag.

Print in Philippus Baldaeus, Naauwkeurige beschryvinge van het machtige eyland Ceylon (A true and exact description of the great island of Ceylon), 1672, p. 143. Artist not known.



Plan of the Castle of Jaffna and surroundings, c. 1770

In Jaffna the auctions were held where merchants from South India bought the highly sought-after Ceylonese elephants – the map shows two stables where the animals stayed after their transfer all the way from the south or from the Wanni. Also indicated are the powder mill and the Compagny’s Gardens. The connections over water were essential, which is why the jetty is explicitly indicated at the Zeeland Bastion. The gate lies between this bastion and Bastion Holland. The Old City was only a few minutes’ walk away.

Maker not known. University Library Leiden, Special Collections, Collection Bodel Nijenhuis, inv.nr. COLLBN 002-11-51 (edited)

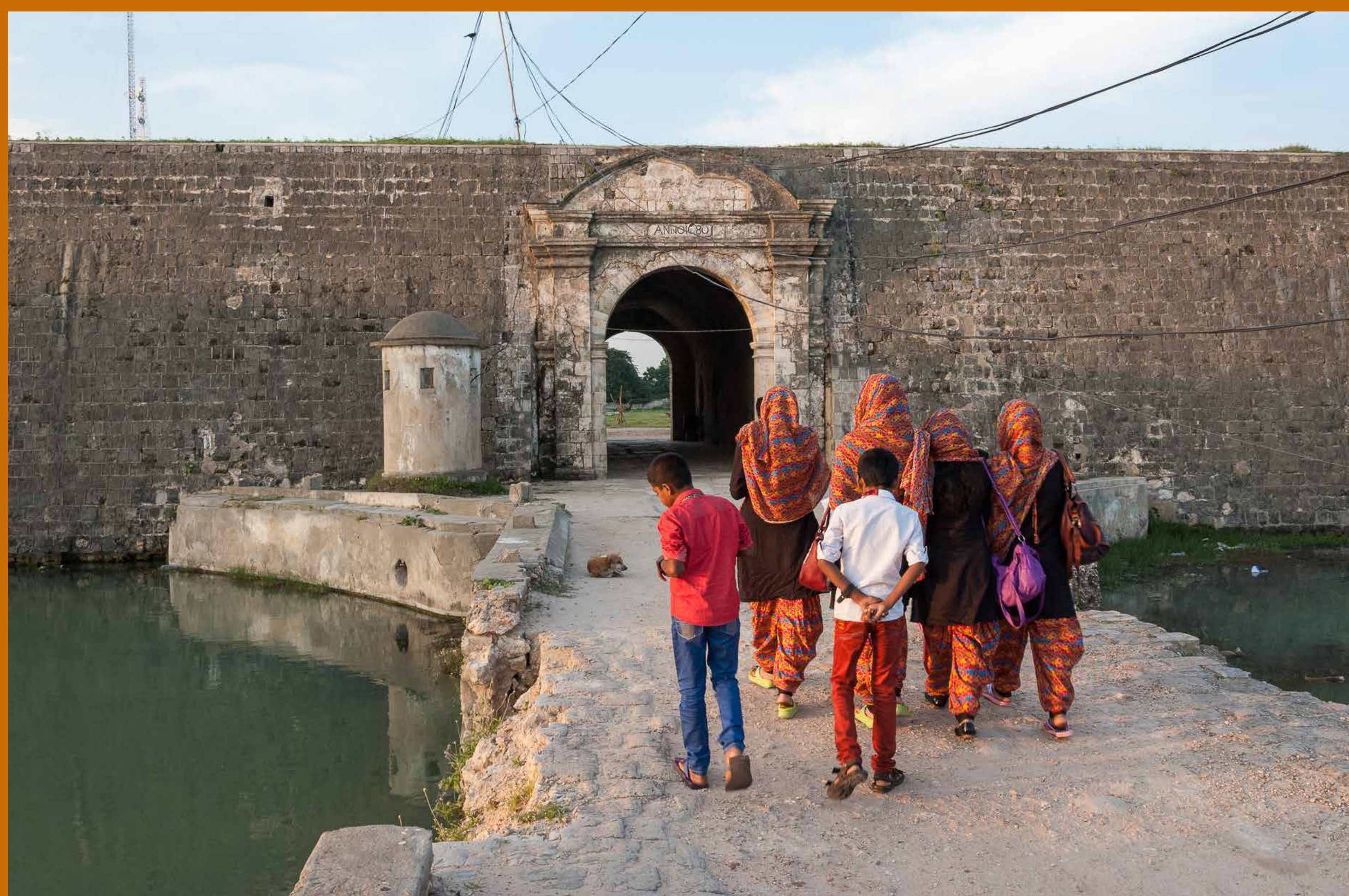
...restored for the future



Interior view of the Castle of Jaffna, c. 1710

To the left of the Dutch Reformed Church one sees the residence of the Commander (*commandeur*), recognizable by the grand porch. In front of it stands a soldier on guard. Next to the Commandement, and further to the left in the courtyard, are the houses of the senior staff. Just above the well, we see two men meet. One is followed by a young slave who wears the folded umbrella of his master.

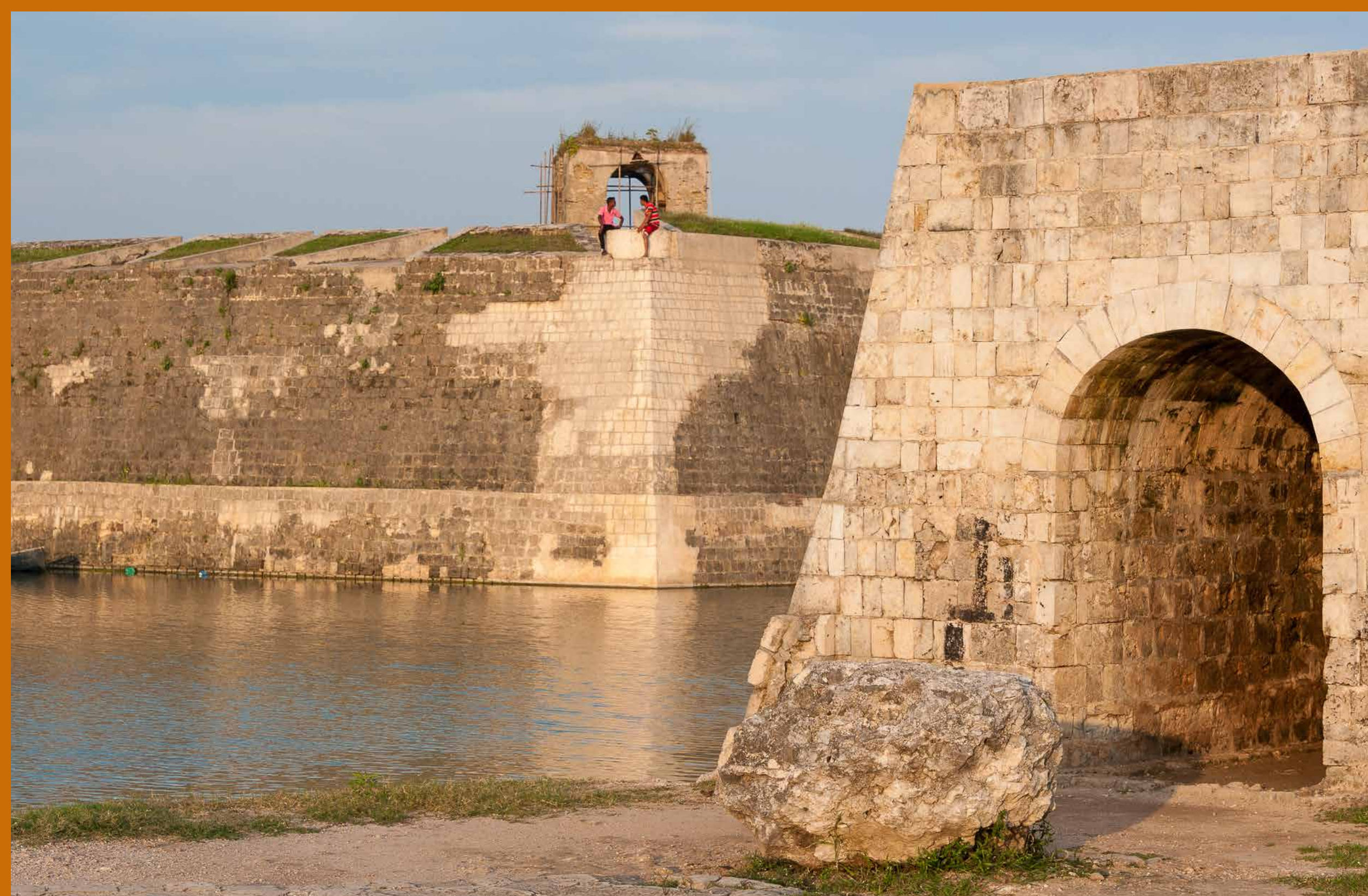
Cornelis Steiger. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv.nr. RP-T-1902-A-4661



Visitors enter Jaffna Fort, 2016

Photo Johannes Odé

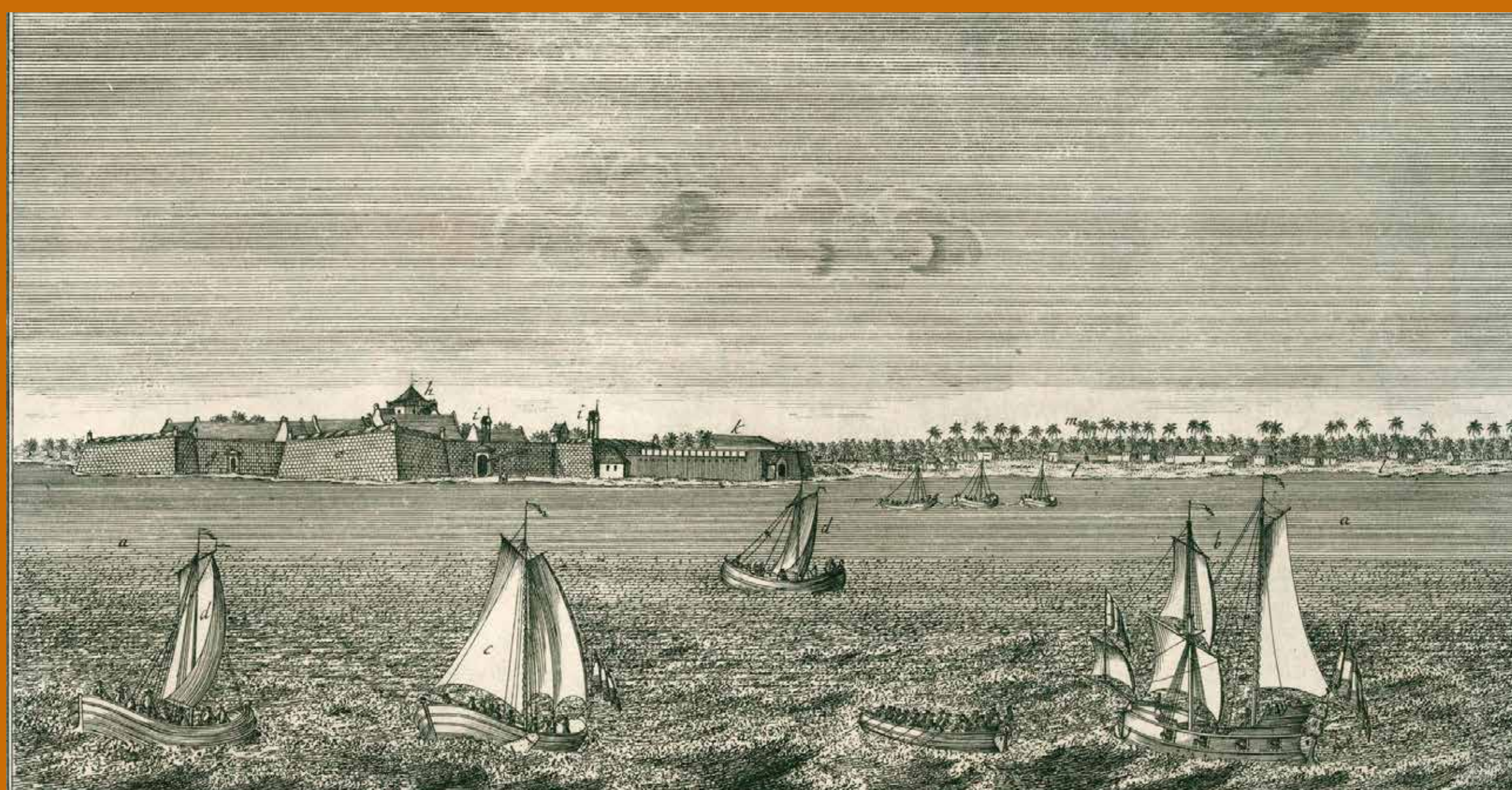
The gate, built in 1680, is situated between the Holland and Zeeland Bastions.



View of Holland Bastion, 2016

Photo Johannes Odé

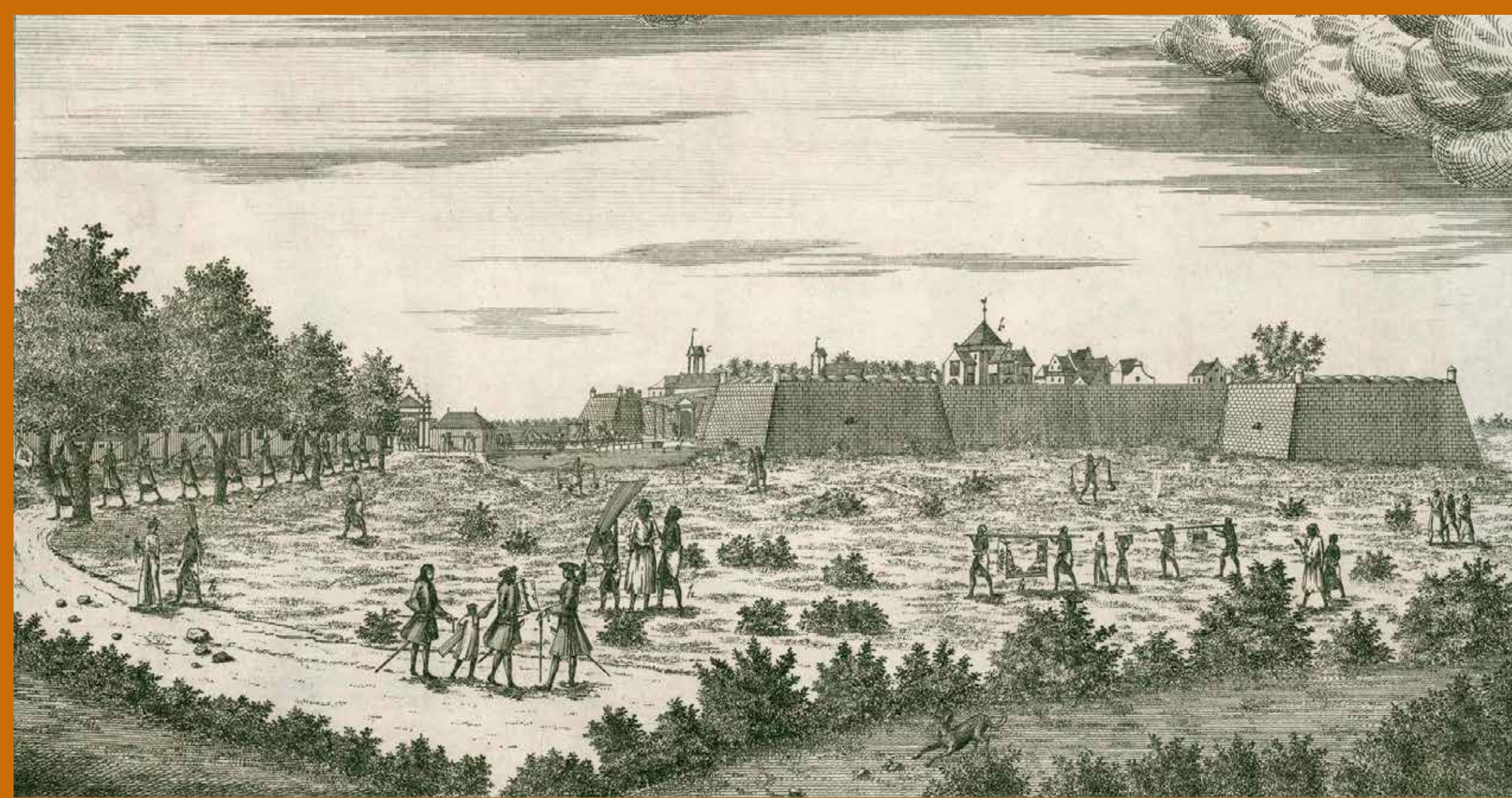
The light color of newly installed blocks of stone makes it clear that the restoration project was an exceptionally large job. See the billboard shown on banner 5.



The Castle of Jaffanapatnam seen from the seaside, c. 1735

Heydt, although surveyor by profession, is apparently also interested in maritime affairs. In the legend he specifies two Muslim vessels, a 'Dutch' sloop and a VOC yacht, called Hottentot. Towering above Bastion Zeeland one sees the Dutch Reformed Church.

Johann Wolfgang Heydt. Plate LXXXIV, Amsterdam Museum, inv.nr. LA 1905 (detail)



The Castle of Jaffanapatnam seen from the landside, c. 1735

Beyond the drawbridge, one sees the commander ride out, seated in a carriage with a span of two horses. He is accompanied by an escort consisting of European soldiers and a guard of local *lascorines*. In the foreground we see a number of VOC officers and a native headman – the latter is protected from the sun by a large leaf of the *talipot* palm, carried by servant.

Johann Wolfgang Heydt. Plate LXXXV, Amsterdam Museum, inv.nr. LA 1905 (detail)