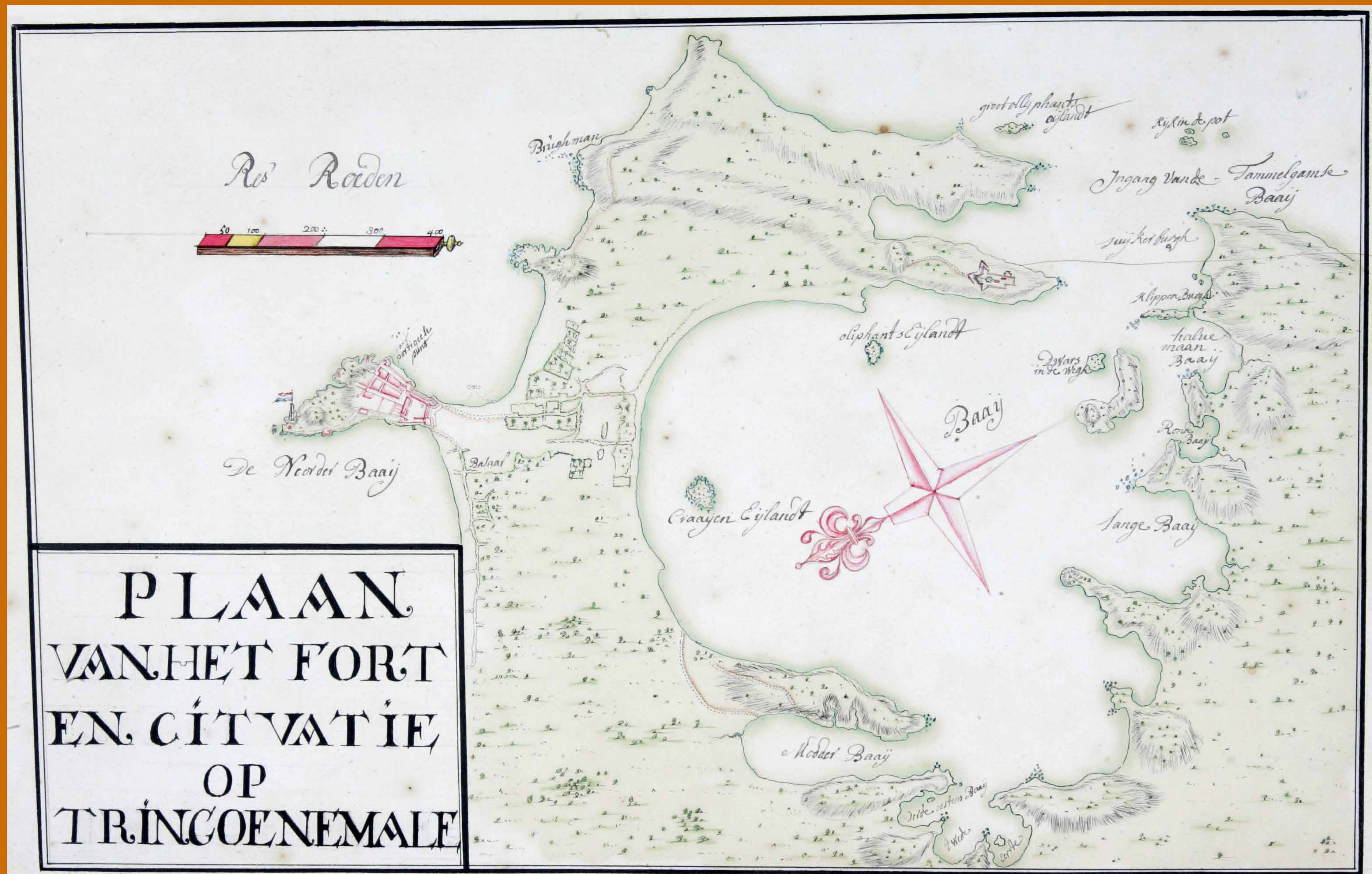


Trincomalee, the impact of ...



Map of Fort Trincomalee and surroundings, c. 1770

The VOC kept useful parts from the Portuguese fortresses they had captured, as one can learn from this map: On the east side of the fort we read 'Portugeese punt' (Portuguese point [= bastion]).

Maker not known. University Library Leiden, Special Collections, Collection Bodel Nijenbuis, inv.nr. COLBN 002-11-53 (edited)

The arrival of Joris van Spilbergen in 1602 was a warning of changing times, so the Portuguese started setting up coastal fortifications outside Colombo. The best place in Trincomalee was on the promontory with the famous Hindu temples. These were demolished in 1622 and the building materials used for a fort. In 1624 nothing was left of the 'Temple with the 1000 Pillars' and of the other sacred buildings.

In 1639, the Dutch captured this Portuguese fortress, but in 1643 handed it over to King Raja Sinha II as a gesture of reconciliation, who had it demolished. When the alliance between the King and the VOC fell apart, the Dutch built a new fortress in 1665, also using the former temple building material. They forbade pilgrims to visit the holy Pagoda Hill and, like the Portuguese, banned religious expression anywhere near their European settlements.



Gate of Fort Frederick showing the year 1675, 2016

The VOC Fort Trinquenemale (also called Fort Pagoda) was renamed at the dawn of the British occupation after the first British governor, Frederick North (r. 1798-1805).

Photo Johannes Odé

... colonial occupation



Mural in the Konaswaram Kovil at the top of Pagoda Hill, depicting the temple destruction in 1622 by the Portuguese, 2016

The Dutch author François Valentijn wrote that the pagoda at Trincomalee (from Tamil *Thiru-kona-malai*, 'sacred mountain') was "of an uncommon size and splendour, that was renowned in all of the Indies", yet in the year 1622 he says, it was destroyed by Portuguese Governor Constantino de Sá de Noreno, or some other in his name, "for the making of some splendid fortress there" (François Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, Vol. V B, 1726, p. 367).

Photo Johannes Odé



The fort in 1639, after the conquest from the Portuguese, c. 1695

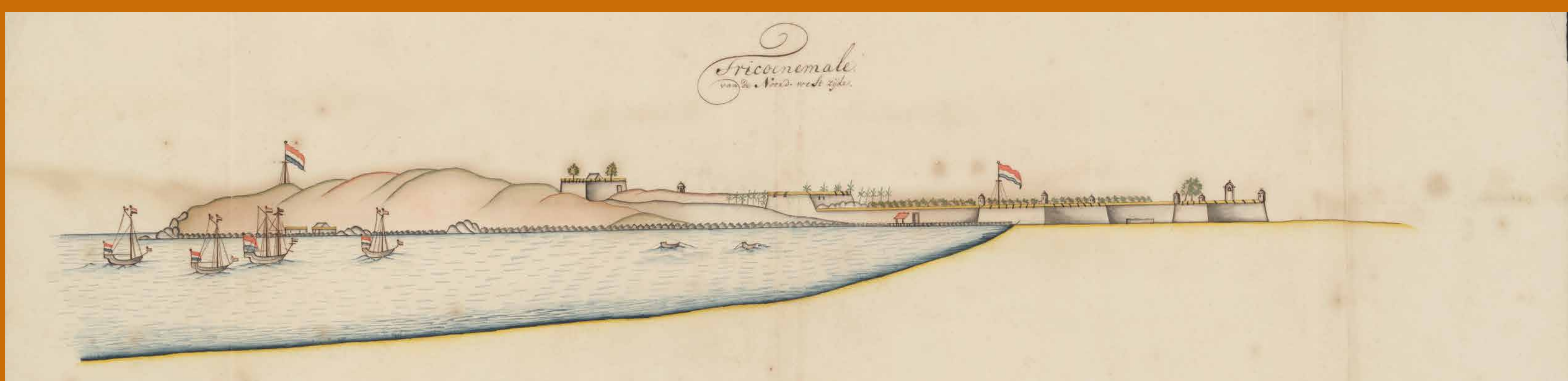
There were originally three temples on the site, the highest on Swami Rock. There is no trace of it on the map. At some distance, indicated by the letter **N**, a small pagoda has been drawn, in the present Arunagirinagar district. Apparently Hindu worship was allowed there, although the temple was close to the fort. Pilgrims were not welcome on Pagoda Hill until the British Period.

Isaac de Graaff, cartographer. National Archives, The Hague, 4.VEL, inv.nr. 1009 (detail)



Statue of Lord Shiva at the entrance of the Sri Thirukonaswaram Kovil, 2016

Photo Johannes Odé



Trincomalee seen from the northwest, 1721

Livinius Stevensz and Tatic Oliviere Helt, surveyors. National Archives, The Hague, 4.VELH, inv. nr. 344.11