

283

284

285

286

287

India



Northern Province

Sri Lanka

▲ Mihintale

Anaradhapura District

North Central Province

▲ Pannala

▲ Dambulla

North Western Province

▲ Wariyapola

Kurunegala District

Eastern Province

• Kalmunai

Kandy District

▲ Thumpane

• Negombo

▲ Mawanella

• Kandy

▲ Embekka

Kegalle District

Central Province

▲ Kothmale

• Colombo

Nuware Eliya District

Western Province

Uva Province

Sabaragamuwa Province

▲ Urubokka

Southern Province

- Town
- ▲ Temple

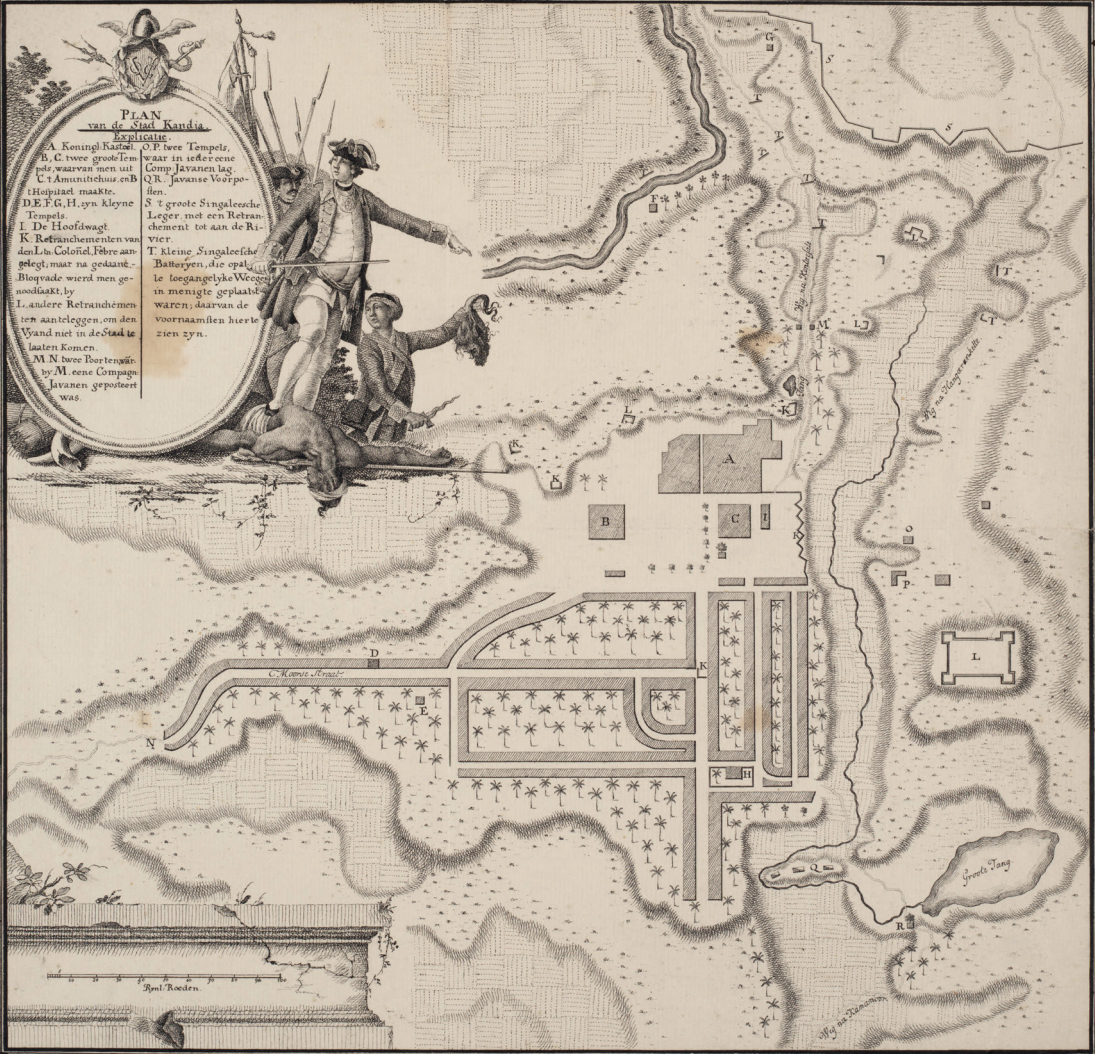
Scale 1:4,000,000 Gall-Peters Projection

PLAN
van de **Stad Kandia**.

Explicatie.

A. Konings-Kasteel. O. P. twee Tempels.
 B. C. twee grooten Tempels, waarvan men uit
 C. v. Amuntichou en B. t'hoopst niet maakte.
 D. E. F. G. H. syn klein Tempels.
 I. De Hoofdwaag.
 K. Retranchementen van den Lt. Colonel. Febr. angelegt, maar na gedaant- Bloqvade wierd men ge-
 noodsaakt, by
 L. andere Retranchemen-
 ten aan te leggen, om den
 Vrand niet in de stad te
 laten komen.
 M. N. twee Bortentwijn-
 by M. eene Compagnie
 Javanen geposteert was.

waar in ieder eene
 Comp. Javanen lag.
 Q. R. Javanse Voorposten.
 S. t. groote Singaleesche
 Leger, met een Retran-
 chement tot aan de Ri-
 vier.
 T. kleine Singaleesche
 Batterijen, die op alle
 le toegangelyke Weegen
 in menigte geplaatst
 waren, waarvan de
 voornaamden hier te
 zien zyn.



Wanderings: The Provenance of Six Sri Lankan Objects

• DOREEN VAN DEN BOOGAART AND ALICIA SCHRIKKER* •

The ‘Sri Lanka showcase’ is one of the highlights of Room 1.5 of the Rijksmuseum’s Dutch History Department. For the most part it is devoted to a group of weapons originating from Sri Lanka (Ceylon): a small, decorated ceremonial cannon on a painted gun-carriage; two large wall guns (*jingals* or *maha tuwakku*); a gold and a silver *kastane* (short sabre) and a large knife with a crystal-set gold hilt (*pithiya*) (figs. 2-6). The labels tell visitors that these objects were taken from the palace of the king of Kandy as war booty in 1765 by Lubbert Jan van Eck, the governor of Dutch Ceylon (in office 1762-65) during the Dutch siege of the building.

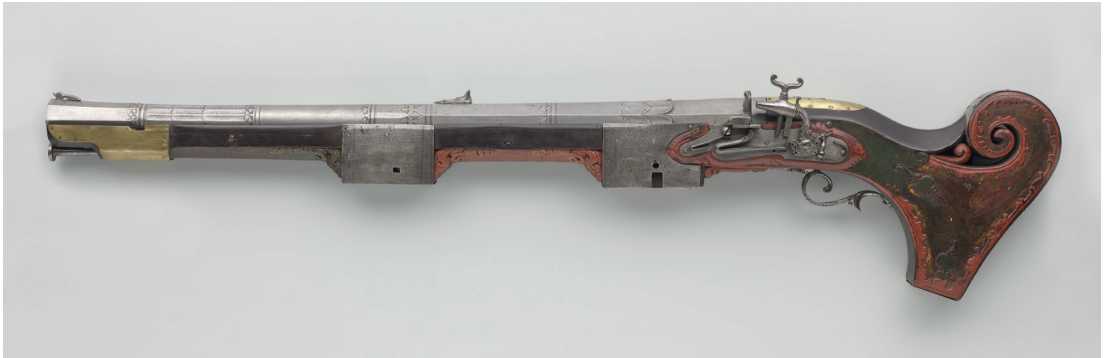
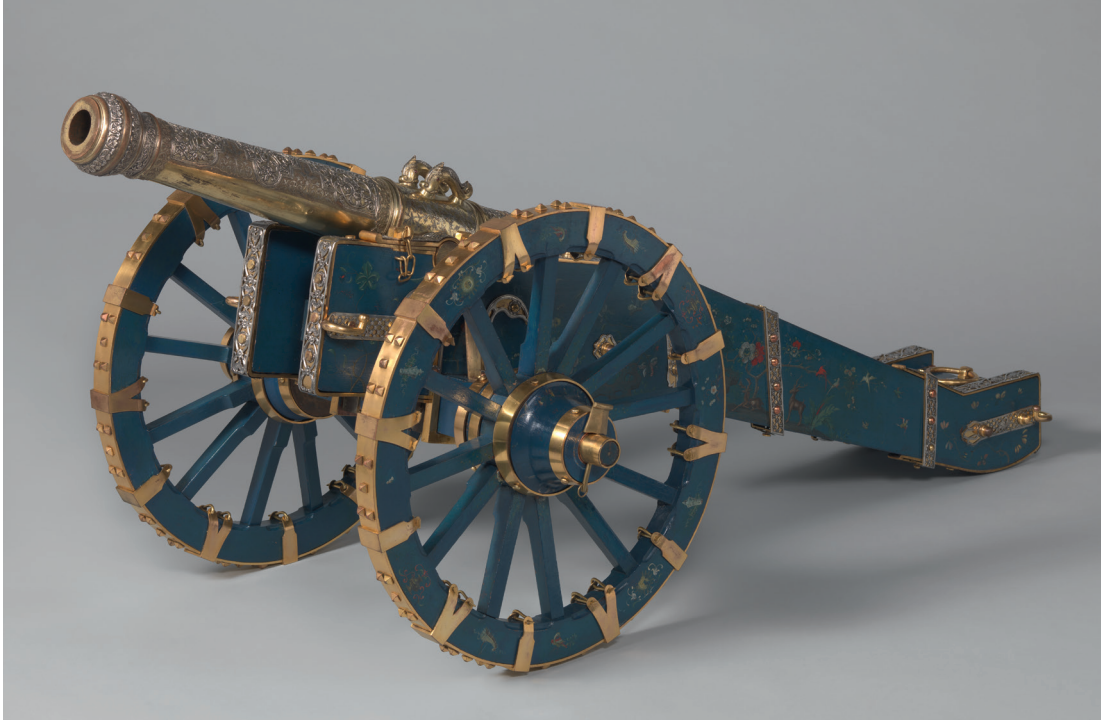
The Dutch East India Company (VOC) had been present in the coastal regions of the island because of the cinnamon trade, and over the years had expanded its power base. On various occasions this gave rise to tensions with the Buddhist kingdom of Kandy in the mountainous interior. The siege and plundering of Kandy took place in the final year of the Dutch-Kandyan War, which was waged between 1762 and 1766.¹ During the final campaign the Dutch troops violently forced themselves into Kandyan territories. After the siege of the town, they targeted both the palace of King Kirti Sri Rajasinha (r. 1747-82) and the Temple of the Tooth, the most important Buddhist shrine on the island. A Dutch map

< Fig. 1
Plan of the city of Kandy, the cartouche glorifies the cruelties of war committed by Governor Van Eck and his troops, c. 1765. Copper plate, 31 x 30 cm (scale of 1:16000). The Hague, National Archives, Maps and drawings from J.C.M. Radermacher and large-size items from the archive of the Vosmaer family, 1689-1916 (4.VMF), inv. no. 848.3.

page 300
Rijksmuseum,
Room 1.5, showcase.
Photograph:
Albertine Dijkema

shows us the occupation of the town, and provides us with a visual reminder of the cruelties of the war: the cartouche depicts Governor Van Eck standing on the dead body of one Kandyan soldier, while one of his Javanese soldiers holds the head of another (fig. 1). The *Culavamsa* (royal chronicle) also commemorates the atrocities vividly: ‘... Thereupon the hostile hosts [i.e. the Dutch] like cruel armies of yakkhas [devils], forced their way into the town and destroyed the sacred books and everything else...’.² The Dutch records corroborate this, as they also recount how the court was desecrated due to the slaughtering of the holy cows and the destruction of the Buddha statues during the Dutch occupation.³

The assumption that the objects came to the Netherlands as a result of war now makes them controversial. This is why there have been several restitution requests from Sri Lanka in the last fifty years but those requests were never really taken seriously at the time.⁴ There is no doubt about the Sri Lankan provenance of this set of objects. The sabres and the knife are recognizably Kandyan workmanship: they were ceremonial weapons that must have been carried by the king and the nobility, as can be seen from the detailed decoration and quantity of precious metals. They were part of their formal attire. The small decorated cannon would



< Fig. 2
Singhalese Cannon
 or *Lewke's Cannon*,
 outer layer Sri Lanka,
 1745-46.
 Bronze cannon
 inlaid with silver,
 gold and rubies;
 wooden gun
 carriage; cannon
 98 x diam. 43 cm;
 height of the
 ensemble approx.
 54 cm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. no. NG-NM-1015
 (see also pp. 318-37).

< Figs. 3a, b
Two Wall Guns
 (*jingals*),
 Sri Lanka,
 c. 1725-60.
 Iron barrel,
 ramrod and lock,
 brass and iron
 platework,
 length 155 and
 150.5 cm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. nos.
 NG-NM-519, -20.

Fig. 4
Kastane with
Scabbard (Golden
Sabre), Sri Lanka,
 before 1765.
 Iron blade with
 solid gold hilt
 inlaid with 136
 diamonds and
 thirteen rubies;
 wooden scabbard
 covered with gold;
 78.5 cm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. no. NG-NM-560.





Fig. 5
 Kastane with
 Scabbard (Silver
 Sabre), Sri Lanka,
 before 1765.
 Iron blade with
 solid silver hilt inlaid
 with diamonds,
 rubies and crystal;
 wooden scabbard
 covered with silver;
 61.5 cm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. no. NG-NM-7112.

Fig. 6
 Singhalese Knife
 (pihiya) with
 Sheath, Sri Lanka,
 before 1765.
 Iron blade with
 crystal hilt in gold;
 wooden sheath
 covered with gold;
 29.5 cm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. no. NG-NM-7114.

also have had a ceremonial function, as traces of its use are minimal. This does not apply to the gigantic wall guns, each weighing around thirty kilograms with a barrel with an internal diameter of thirty-three millimetres, which would take a bullet weighing half a pound. These weapons would have been used for the defence of the palace and could only be fired if they were mounted on a tripod. This heavy artillery is also recognizably Kandyan: this is based on the shape of the stock, constructed in such a way that it could be supported against the shooter's chest, as well as the position of the lock, which is on the left side instead of on the right. Moreover, the lock is decorated with typical Sri Lankan ornamentation like the heads of the *makara* (dragon) and *serapendiya* (mythical bird) (fig. 7). The fact that these objects were placed together in the showcase and are linked with the violent plundering of Kirti Sri Rajasinha's palace suggests that they belong together, were looted from Kandy at the same time and brought into the collection as ensemble. This is often assumed in the literature, but is it actually the case?

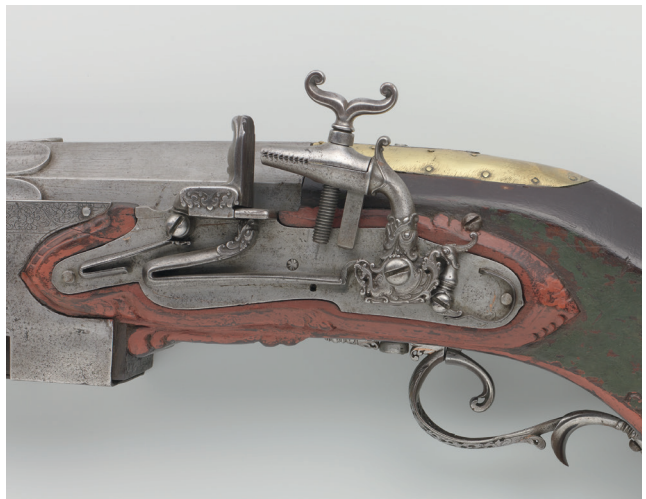
In 2021, along with colleagues from Sri Lanka, we examined the provenance of these six objects as part of the Pilot Project Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era (P_{PROCE}).⁵ The project prioritized a biographical approach, which means that we were interested not only in discovering when the objects came into Dutch hands, but also in the question of the meanings inherent in them before they came to the Netherlands. We also followed the objects during the two hundred and fifty years that they were part of the collection here and were on display in the museum.

This approach is important because it does full justice to the multifaceted objects, and because in practice it proved indispensable in answering the specific question of the provenance itself. The research project consequently also highlights the limitations of traditional provenance investigation, focused as it is

on archive research: what if the archives do not tell us everything? And how can you determine with certainty that an object described in a historical document is indeed the object you are investigating? This is also why the provenance research into these six objects consisted of archival research, combined with historical contextualization, art-historical analysis and material analysis, which we carried out together with our Sri Lankan colleagues and other experts from the Netherlands and abroad.⁶

Ganga Dissanayaka's article about the ceremonial cannon in this issue gives insight into the wealth of information that art-historical research and historical contextualization can provide. The cannon is already an important icon in the public debate about the restitution of looted colonial art. Her interdisciplinary approach has enabled us to also understand the history of this controversial object before its looting a lot better. It played a significant role in local Sri Lankan political history and is also of great art-historical importance because of the remarkable mixture of styles and motifs.⁷ In this article we aim to shed some light on the problematic aspects of archival research into the provenance of this and the other five Kandyan objects directly after 1765.

Fig. 7
Detail Wall Gun
(fig. 3a, NG-NM-519).



Provenance-focused archival research is like a historical detective story; it involves looking for traces of the objects, but also identifying and ruling out dead ends and 'false' traces.⁸ And it is about interpreting ambiguous information, understanding unclear use of words or flawed descriptions and again asking questions we thought we already had the answers to. And daring to supplement the data from the archives with art-historical and technical information. This way, we were able to determine that the six objects all came from Kandy and were present in the Netherlands before 1795. We were able to follow the small cannon and the wall guns from Kandy to the Stadholder's collection, but we also established that they found their way into the collection by different routes and at different moments in time. The history of the sabres and the knife turned out to be more difficult to reconstruct; contextual historical knowledge about these types of objects and the comparisons with those in other collections proved crucial.

Clues

The provenance research began with an examination of the knowledge about the objects that was stored in the museum's documentation. On the original handwritten documentation cards, which had been kept since the end of the nineteenth century, this knowledge was recorded cumulatively (e.g. fig. 8).⁹ From this we concluded that the six objects had not been displayed together in the museum before 1965.¹⁰ It also turned out that around 1900 the sabres and the gold knife were not identified as Sri Lankan, but at that time were thought to be Malaysian or from the Southeast Asian mainland. The gold sabre and the gold knife were exhibited before the Second World War along with other ornamental weapons from Southeast Asia in order to add lustre to the Lombok Treasure, which was looted from the Sultanate of Lombok in 1894.¹¹

Earlier in the nineteenth century it was thought that the gold sabre, the little cannon and the two wall guns had once been in the possession of Michiel de Ruyter.¹² Clearly, the objects were highly rated, but knowledge about their provenance was lost by that time.¹³ When the Sri Lankan epigraphist Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe (1865-1937) translated the Sinhala inscription on the cannon in 1894, it was concluded that it must have been a gift from a Sri Lankan nobleman to the Dutch. However, the name of the recipient was not specified in the inscription.¹⁴

This changed after the Second World War. It must have been at that time that a quote by the physician and scientist Carl Heinrich Titius (1744-1813) was added to the documentation card for the small cannon.¹⁵ In 1777 Titius was travelling through the Netherlands when he saw a 'silver cannon covered with gold, engraved and inlaid with precious stones, which the Dutch took as booty in their last war against the King of Kandy, and many other very valuable weapons' in the collection of Stadholder William v (in office 1751-1806).¹⁶ This was an important clue; not only was the small cannon described quite explicitly there and linked to the war with Kandy, but Titius mentioned that he saw other costly weapons as well. Although the wording of the last clause is not entirely unambiguous, it was tempting to think that these may have been the other weapons from the Sri Lanka showcase. But could we actually be sure of that, now that it was clear that the weapons had not been exhibited together during the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth?

It proved to be a complicated puzzle, which began with the reconstruction of the history of the cannon itself. In the years after the Second World War this history had already been researched to a great extent and we have supplemented this knowledge with archival research. According to the VOC archives and the archive

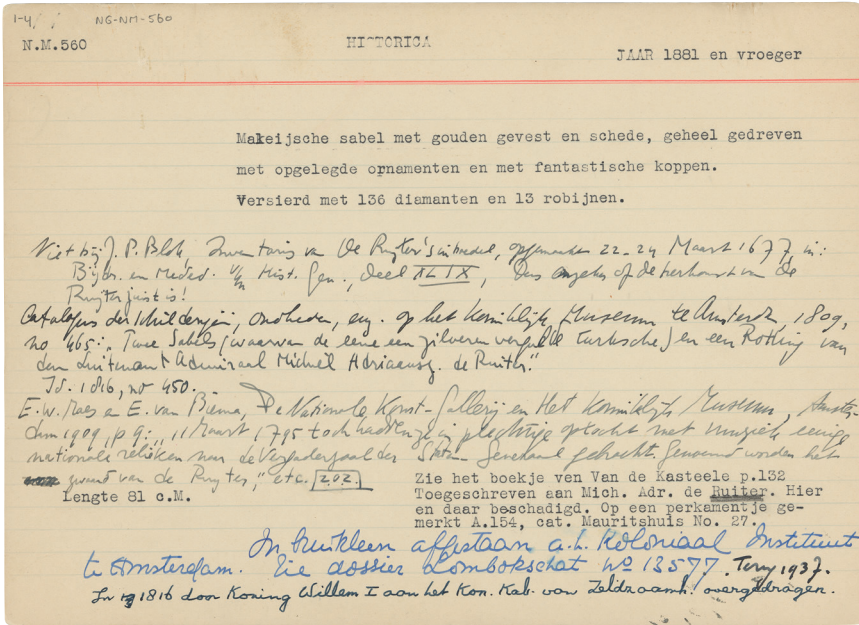


Fig. 8
Rijksmuseum
handwritten
documentation
card for inv. no.
NG-NM-560 (fig. 4).

of William v, after the conquest of Kandy, Governor Lubbert Jan van Eck apparently decided that a 'small silver cannon' from Kandy ought to be gifted to the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttele, the regent of the underage Stadholder William v. We were able to establish that it was shipped from Sri Lanka in November 1765 and that it arrived in Amsterdam in the spring of 1766 and was handed over to the Stadholder's court in October of that year.¹⁷ It is important to note here that we obtained this information from correspondence and not from the eighteenth-century inventories of the possessions of William v from the Archives of the Royal House. No trace of the cannon could be found on these lists. Information is therefore not always to be discovered in the places one would expect to find it first. From the letters and documentation of the descendants of Governor Van Eck, who dealt with the rest of the estate, we also know, for example, that the cannon had indeed already been exhibited as a trophy of war in the Stadholder's 'cabinet of curiosities' in The Hague in 1769.¹⁸

The earliest Dutch descriptions of the object in the VOC archives were confusing, though, because the emphasis was placed on the silver elements rather than the gold and precious stones in it. It was initially described as two feet long, whereas it is well over three feet (98 cm) and was valued at twenty rixdollars (*rijksdaalders*), a rather low amount for such a lavishly decorated object.¹⁹ The Sri Lankan historian Leslie Brohier had already remarked on this in 1965 and questioned whether the small cannon in the Rijksmuseum really was the one described in the VOC archives.²⁰ It was very useful that the cannon's weight was also mentioned in the earliest documentation; this, after all, was a precise figure and would not have been based on an estimate. Ultimately the small cannon in the Rijksmuseum was found to weigh exactly the same as the one in the documentation (45 kilos/90 pounds)²¹ and this allowed us to remove any doubt about the identification of the object in the historical sources.

With archival research confirmed by material analysis in collaboration with

the Rijksmuseum's Conservation and Science Department, we were therefore able to establish that it had indeed most probably been acquired during the plundering of Kandy and had found its way into the Stadholder's collection as a trophy of war. The Titius quote moreover suggested that there were other 'very valuable weapons' present. Could they have been the two *kastanes*, the knife and the wall guns?

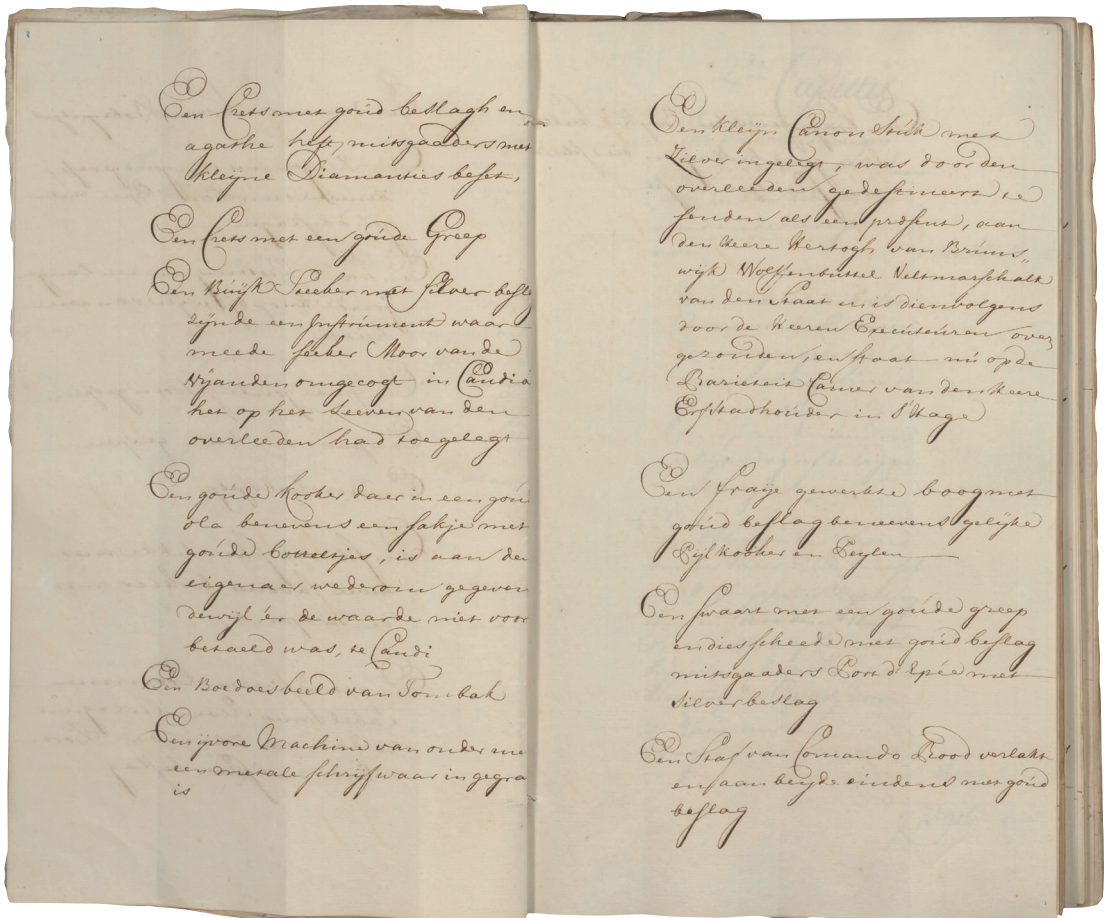
Words and Silences

We were unable to find the *kastanes*, the knife and the wall guns in William V's inventories. As this had also been the case for the small cannon, there was no reason to suspect that they had not ended up in the Stadholder's

collection after the war with Kandy. In any case, other documentation showed that the objects were linked together around 1965 through a collaboration between the Rijksmuseum and the National Archives.²² The discovery of an estate inventory dating from 1765 in the Van Eck family archives proved to be crucial (fig. 10).

Van Eck died on 1 April 1765, shortly after his return from Kandy. In the weeks before that, he had gathered together a dozen objects from the palace at Kandy: he purloined some of them himself during the conquest and bought others from soldiers or middlemen. Among them there was also 'a golden sword' and 'a silver and gold *buiksteker*' from Kandy.

Fig. 10
Estate inventory of
Lubbert Jan van Eck,
the governor of
Dutch Ceylon,
10 November 1765.
The Hague, National
Archives, Archives of
the Van Panthaleon
van Eck family,
1398-1946 (1.10.65.01),
inv. no. 60. 1.



His executors stated that some of the objects were said to have been the personal property of the king: 'And which small cannon, as well as some other things /: as more or less critical, and according to general rumour having belonged if not to the crown, at least to the goods of the King of Kandy.'²³

These objects, which were described in the VOC archives in 1765, corresponded to the objects from Kandy that were listed in the estate inventory in the family archives. In any event they were sent to Van Eck's heirs in the Republic. It seems that in 1965 the archivists directly associated the objects in the estate inventory with the objects in the Rijksmuseum, because Van Eck had, after all, also made a gift of the little cannon. This was where we ran into two problems: firstly, the identification of the objects with this historical description was problematic and, secondly, it proved impossible to reconstruct the final settlement of Van Eck's estate.

To begin with the first: the object described in the estate inventory as a silver *buiksteke* (literally 'belly stabber') was earlier linked to the silver *kastane*, and the gold *buiksteke* from Van Eck's inventory was linked to the knife. Was that right? Could the silver *kastane* actually have been described as a *buiksteke*? Etymological research told us that the word *buiksteke* actually occurred rarely, but was used in the eighteenth century by the Dutch in a South Asian context to describe knives or daggers which were worn on the stomach as part of a costume. It would not have been used to describe sabres.²⁴ This means that the silver *kastane* cannot have found its way into the Stadholder's collection by way of Van Eck's heirs.²⁵

Secondly, the Van Eck family archives did not tell us with whom the objects ended up after they reached the family in the Republic. All we could discover was that the objects were shared out among family members.²⁶

As we were likewise unable to tell from the Stadholder's archives exactly when the objects found their way into the Stadholder's collection, the association between Van Eck's objects and those in the Rijksmuseum seemed uncertain.

All that we knew for certain from the archives was that the Stadholder was the owner of the gold and silver sabres and the gold knife in 1795.²⁷ We also established with certainty that the objects were unmistakably Kandyan. After comparison, moreover, they proved to be of such exceptionally high quality, in design and visual language as well as in the use of material, that they could only have come from the palace. The hilt of the gold *kastane*, for example, is made of solid gold, inlaid with 136 diamonds and thirteen rubies (figs. 11a, b). It is also lavishly decorated with motifs like the goddesses Saraswati and Lakshmi, who can also be found adorning other royal objects such as the royal throne of Kandy. How else could these royal objects have come into Dutch hands other than through the looting in 1765? The fact that we did not find any written proof of a gift of those objects to William v by the descendants of Van Eck did not mean that that gift had not taken place, at any rate with regard to the gold sabre and the gold knife. After all, had Titius not spoken about 'other very valuable weapons'?

Things were even more complicated when it came to the silver *kastane* and the wall guns, because we found them neither in Van Eck's estate nor in the original list of items looted from the palace. Yet they were unmistakably Kandyan and experts confirmed their exceptional quality.

Discoveries and context

A good understanding of the context and history of the collection proved essential in the research into the wall guns and the silver *kastane*, as was knowledge of the way the objects had been dealt with during the latter days



Figs. 11a, b
Detail Golden sabre
(fig. 5).
Photographs:
Joojsje van Bennekom

of the war with Kandy. The collection of William v and his wife Wilhelmina of Prussia as stated in the inventories shows their personal taste, but the inventories also list the gifts they and William v's predecessor, William iv, had received from the 'territories exploited by the West India and the Dutch East India Company'. Their cabinet of curiosities and art gallery is regarded as the first public museum in the Netherlands, which was visited by people from at home and abroad.²⁸ Private individuals, such as governors, commanders and the governor-general of the *voc* in Batavia, regularly sent gifts to the Stadholder. Governor-General Petrus Albertus van der Parra (in office 1761-75), for example, sent precious stones to William v for his daughter Louise. Chief law enforce-

ment officer Jacob C.M. Radermacher (1741-1783), also one of the founders of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences (1778), sent a selection of 'Hindustani' weapons from Bengal for William v's collection of arms.²⁹ Among the correspondence in the Royal House Archives we also found a letter from Batavia dated 1769, which mentioned the shipment of a box containing 'four large Kandyan guns' for the Stadholder.³⁰ This was an important clue, because after examining the collection's paperwork we were able to establish that the two wall guns had indeed originally been part of a set of four.³¹ In the end we were also able to link the wall guns to the period of the war with Kandy.

That weapons from Kandy had first found their way to Batavia and were

Fig. 12
Throne and regalia of the kings of Kandy. Colombo, National Museum, inv. nos. 41.42.170, 41.43.170, 41.44.170, 41.45.170, 41.46.170 and 48.44.216. Photograph: Sugath Wanigarathna Jayasekara / Department of National Museums, Sri Lanka



Fig. 13
Goblet of the king of Kandy, 1786. Drawing by Jan Brandes in his sketchbook, volume 2, p. 39. Pencil, watercolour in grey and brown, 195 x 155 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. NG-1985-7-2-24.



then gifted to the Stadholder was not a unique occurrence; evidently the royal provenance of some objects was a reason to donate them to him. This fits a broader European pattern.

The historian Robert Aldrich has shown how in 1815 a great many Kandyan objects found their way to Europe by different routes after the British had besieged and looted Kandy, while the most important royal objects such as the Kandyan throne and King Sri Wickrama Rajasinha's golden sword (fig. 12) were gifted to King George IV.³² In the years after 1765 numerous objects from King Kirti Sri Rajasinha's palace were still in circulation. We know this from descriptions in archives, but also from a drawing by Jan Brandes, who in 1786 drew a goblet made of a sea coconut encased in silver and added in the margins that it was formerly owned by 'the black king of Kandy' and that it had been taken by a Captain De Saint Angel during the looting of the city of Kandy by VOC troops (fig. 12).³³ It is by no means inconceivable that the silver *kastane* from the palace in Kandy found its way into the Stadholder's collection by a different route such as this and was also part of the tableau of war trophies remarked upon by Titius during his visit to the Stadholder's cabinet.

Conclusion

The showcase in Room 1.5 of the Rijksmuseum contains a group of eighteenth-century objects that originate from the palace of King Kirti Sri Rajasinha of Kandy. They are presented as a set, as if they were removed at the same time after Kandy was plundered by the VOC in 1765, and entered the museum's collection together. Archival research revealed that before they ended up in Stadholder William V's collection, all the objects had arrived there by different routes. We also established that in the years immediately after their arrival they were probably displayed together as war trophies in the Stadholder's cabinet. From the Napoleonic era onwards, the objects began to roam again and found their way into depots and institutions; they were split up and were given new meanings. Some of the objects were thought to have once been owned by Michiel de Ruyter, and at different times it was suggested that the objects had come from Indonesia, not Sri Lanka. It was only after the Second World War that they were linked for the first time with the plundering of the palace in Kandy on the basis of archival research, but not all the clues found at that time proved able to

support this. It was also during this post-war period that Sri Lanka first requested restitution of the little cannon.³⁴ The identification of objects in historical documents is always accompanied by uncertainties, which were not recognized at the time. By combining archival research and material analysis we were able to remove some of these.

In the end, this research not only gave us more of an idea of the provenance of the six Sri Lankan objects in Room 1.5 of the Rijksmuseum, it also shed light on the history of the collection itself. In the eighteenth century, Sri Lankan objects formed an important part of the Stadholder's collection.³⁵ Newspapers in the Republic regularly covered the war with Kandy,³⁶ and the display of the valuable weapons from Kandy in the seventeenth-seventies was an expression of growing national awareness. The Napoleonic era created a rift in two ways: the objects began to roam, and Sri Lanka itself, or Ceylon, was also no longer uppermost in the minds of the Dutch, as the British had taken over colonial rule on the island.³⁷ This gave room for new stories and provoked the wanderings of many of the objects.

ABSTRACT

Six objects that are displayed together in the Rijksmuseum were researched as part of the Sri Lanka work-package of the Pilot Project Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era. This group of elegantly decorated ceremonial weapons has a clear Sri Lankan origin as it shows recognizable Kandyan workmanship. The objects are linked to the violent plundering of the town and palace of the kingdom of Kandy by the Dutch in 1765 and are said to have been looted and added to the collection of the Dutch Stadholders shortly afterwards. This has made the objects controversial.

While we could confirm that they were likely spoils of the Dutch Kandyan war, we also found that each of them had a different itinerary before it was placed in the collection. Unfortunately, the inventories of Stadholder Willem V's collection remained silent about these objects: their exact moment of arrival in the collection has not been recorded. Our provenance research therefore included a reconstruction of the wanderings of each of these objects from the palace of Kandy to the Dutch Stadholder's collection. In this contribution we discuss the research process, and highlight the problem of archival silences and histories of forgetting, and of mis- and re-interpretations that haunted these objects and troubled us along the way. Our eventual reconstruction of the wanderings of the objects was therefore based on intensive archival research and historical and art-historical contextualization, as well as etymological research and material analysis. For complex provenance cases like this, such an interdisciplinary approach is indispensable.

NOTES

- * The research into the six Sri Lankan objects from the Sri Lanka showcase was undertaken as part of the Pilot Project Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era (PPOCE). This project was a joint initiative of the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (RMA) and the Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (NMVW), carried out under the leadership of the NIOD and its Expert Centre Restitution (ECR). The present article is based on the provenance reports about the objects for which Alicia Schrikker, Doreen van den Boogaart, Asoka de Zoysa, Ganga Rajinee Dissanayaka, Ruth Brown and Kay Douglas Smith, Arie Pappot, Senarath Wickramasinghe, Chamikara Pilapitiya, Joosje van Bennekom and Jan de Hond worked together, see also notes 5 and 6.
- 1 The displays in the Rijksmuseum rooms might change due to the wish to alternate the exhibited items or include new insights. For an introduction to the Dutch history in Sri Lanka in relation to the collection of the Rijksmuseum, see Lodewijk Wagenaar, *Cinnamon and Elephants: Sri Lanka and the Netherlands from 1600*, Nijmegen 2016. For the wars with Kandy, see Channa Wickremesekera, *Kandy at War: Indigenous Military Resistance to European Expansion in Sri Lanka 1594-1818*, Delhi 2004. And for a recent view on Kandyan history, see Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Many Faces of the Kandyan Kingdom (1591-1765)*, Colombo 2020.
 - 2 Wilhelm Geiger and C. Mabel Rickmers, *Culavamsa: Being the More Recent Part of the Mahavamsa*, Delhi 1996, p. 267, line 125.
 - 3 R. Raven-Hart, *The Dutch Wars with Kandy, 1764-1766*, Ceylon Historical Manuscripts Commission, Bulletin no. 6 (Nugegoda 1964), pp. 98-99; Colombo, Sri Lanka National Archives (SLNA), Archives of the Dutch Central Government of Coastal Ceylon, accession number (Lot) 1, inv. no. 4881, 'Report of the military campaign'. Transcription kindly shared with us by Chris Nierstrasz, author of *In the Shadow of the Company: The Dutch East India Company and Its Servants in the Period of Its Decline (1740-1796)*, Leiden 2012.
 - 4 Jos M. van Beurden, *Treasures in Trusted Hand: Negotiating the Future of Colonial Cultural Objects*, Amsterdam (PhD Thesis Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) 2016; Jos M. van Beurden, *Ongemakkelijk Erfgoed: Koloniale Collecties en Teruggave in de Lage Landen*, Zutphen 2021, p. 54; Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, 'Appendix 2. A History of Restitution Requests 1964-1972', in Schrikker, Van den Boogaart et al. 2022 *Kanon* (note 6).
 - 5 'Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era', see note * and <https://www.niod.nl/en/projects/pilotproject-provenance-research-objects-colonial-era-pproce> (consulted 19 June 2022).
 - 6 Jona Mooren, Klaas Stutje and Frank van Vree, *Clues: Research into Provenance History and Significance of Cultural Objects and Collections Acquired in Colonial Situation. Final report. Pilot Project Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era*, Amsterdam (NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, and Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen) 2022, see <https://niod.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1303893587>. The present article is based on our detailed reports for each object in 2022 published by the NIOD, the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, and the Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen: Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, in collaboration with Asoka de Zoysa, Ganga Rajinee Dissanayaka, Ruth Brown, Kay Douglas Smith and Arie Pappot, *Provenance Report Regarding 'Singalees kanon of Lewuke's kanon'*, see [RAP_PPOCE_ProvenanceReport_46_SingaleesKanonLewukesKanon_NG_NM_1015_V10_202203.pdf](#); Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, in collaboration with Senarath Wickramasinghe (National Museum, Colombo), *Provenance Report Regarding 'Kastane met schede [Golden sabre]'*, see [RAP_PPOCE_ProvenanceReport_48_KastaneMetSchede-GoldenSabre_NG_NM_560_V10_202203.pdf](#); Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, in collaboration with Senarath Wickramasinghe, *Provenance Report Regarding 'Kastane met schede [Silver sabre]'*, see [RAP_PPOCE_ProvenanceReport_49_KastaneMetSchedeSilverSabre_NG_NM_7112_V10_202203.pdf](#); Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, in collaboration with Chamikara Pilapitiya (National Museum, Colombo), *Provenance Report Regarding 'Two wall guns (jingals) - Gingals or Grasshoppers'*, see [RAP_PPOCE_ProvenanceReport_50_TwoWallGuns_NG_NM_519and520_V10_202203.pdf](#); Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, in collaboration with Senarath Wickramasinghe, *Provenance Report Regarding 'Singalees mes [knife] or Piha-*

- kaetta met schede*', see RAP _ PPROCE ProvenanceReport_47_Piha_kaetta_NG _ NM_7114_VIO_202203.pdf.
- 7 See Ganga Rajinee Dissanayaka, 'Lewke's Cannon: A Visual and Political Dialogue Captured in Gold and Silver', pp. 318-37 in this *Rijksmuseum Bulletin*.
 - 8 For a further reflection on practical problems, methodology and approaches in provenance research, see Mooren, Stutje and Van Vree 2022 (note 6).
 - 9 For the route the objects took in different collections in the Netherlands, see the provenance reports referred to in note 6.
 - 10 Theodoor Herman Lunsingh Scheurleer, *150 Jaar Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Koninklijk Penningkabinet: herdenkingstentoonstelling in het Mauritshuis*, The Hague 1966, pp. 75-76.
 - 11 Haarlem, Noord Hollands Archives (NL-HlMNHA), Rijksmuseum and legal predecessors in Amsterdam, accession number 476, inv. no. 2410 (held in the Rijksmuseum), 'Bruikleen Koloniaal Instituut, no 13564', 28 July 1926; 'Jaarverslag van het Rijksmuseum.' In: *Verslagen omtrent 's Rijks verzamelingen van geschiedenis en kunst*. Gravenhage (Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeversbedrijf) 1937, pp. 18-19; Ewald Vanvugt, *De schatten van Lombok: Honderd jaar Nederlandse oorlogs-buit uit Indonesië*, Amsterdam 1994, p. 76.
 - 12 Eveline Sint Nicolaas, 'Het kanon van de koning van Kandy', *Historiek*, see <https://historiek.net/het-kanon-vande-koning-van-kandy-10/18808/> (consulted 3 February 2022).
 - 13 See the reports listed in note 6.
 - 14 Don Martino de Zilva Wickremasinghe, 'A Sinhalese Inscription of 1745 A.D.', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 44 (1894), 3/4th issues [5th series, 10th volume], pp. 659-61.
 - 15 Theodoor Herman Lunsingh Scheurleer, 'Het Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden en zijn beteekenis voor het Rijksmuseum', *Oudheidkundig Jaarboek (Bulletin NOB, 4th series)* 13 (1946), pp. 50-67, esp. p. 50.
 - 16 'eine ganze silberne Kanone mit Golde überzogen gravirt und mit Edelsteinen besetzt, welche die Holländer in ihrem letzten Kriege, mit den Königen von Candi erbeutet haben, und viele andre sehr kostbare Waffen'. Carl Heinrich Titius, quoted in Johann Jacob Volkmann, *Neueste Reisen durch die vereinigten Niederlande*, Leipzig 1783, p. 157.
 - 17 The Hague, National Archives (NL-HANA), Archives of the Van Panthaleon van Eck family, 1398-1946, accession number 1.10.65.01, inv. no. 60 1, Letters regarding the death and settlement of the estate of Lubbert Jan van Eck, Lord of Overbeek, Governor of Ceylon, by the executors of his will made in Colombo addressed to the heirs. With enclosures, letter 10 November 1765. The Hague, Koninklijke Verzamelingen (Royal Collections; NL-KAHV), William v Batavus, Prince of Orange-Nassau (1748-1806) (A31), inv. no. 1773, Exchange of letters between Thomas Hope, representative of the Stadholder at the VOC, and the Duke of Brunswick and sporadically with William v, letter 19 July 1766. The cannon was kept in the office of the VOC chamber until October, see NL-HANA, Archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1602-1795, accession number 1.04.02, inv. no. 61, Minute resolutions of the ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the Lords XVII, 1 October 1766.
 - 18 NL-HANA, Van Panthaleon van Eck family (1.10.65.01), inv. no. 66, Inventories of the bequeathed goods of Lubbert Jan van Eck etc., 20 March 1769.
 - 19 'Een kanonnetje met zilver ingelegt, zwaar 90 lb; en geschat op 20 Rixd'. At that time the Amsterdam foot measured 0.283 m. In 1765 50 guilders (20 rix-dollars) would have had a 'purchasing power' of 1,346.80 guilders (€ 611.15) in 2021. NL-HANA, Archives VOC (1.04.02), inv. no. 3143, Ceylon, 'Resolution genome in raden van politie seedert 5 Januari tot 31 December 1765', 22 October 1765, fol. 2882.
 - 20 R.L. Brohier, 'A Unique Museum Piece', *Journal of the Dutch Burger Union of Ceylon* 50 (1960), no. 1-2 (Jan-April), pp. 6-8.
 - 21 An Amsterdam pound was 494.09 gr.
 - 22 For the correspondence see Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, object documentation file NG-NM-560, D010291; Lunsingh Scheurleer 1966 (note 10), p. 45.
 - 23 '[E]n welk cannonnetje, benevens nog eenige andere dingen /: als min of meer Criticq en volgens 't gemeen gerugt, zo niet tot de kroon, ten minsten tot de goederen van den Koning van Candia behoord hebbende.' NL-HANA, Van Panthaleon van Eck family (1.10.65.01), inv. no. 60. 1, Letters concerning death etc., letter dated 10 November 1765.
 - 24 For a discussion of this problem see Schrikker, Van den Boogaart et al. 2022 *Silver Sabre* (note 6), pp. 9-10. For an

- example of historical use of the word *buiksteker*, see Johan Splinter Stavorinus, *Reize van Zeeland, over de Kaap de Goede Hoop, naar Batavia [...] in de jaaren MDCCCLXVIII tot MDCCCLXI. Deel v Aanmerkingen over Bengalen*, Leiden 1793, p. 58.
- 25 The family documents of Van Eck's heirs furthermore identified the silver 'buiksteker' with an episode from the war which was commemorated in Van Eck's military journal: before the siege of Kandy Van Eck had been approached by someone, a Muslim tradesman, who had been bribed by the court of Kandy to attack the governor. The journal tells us that upon approaching Van Eck 'he then drew a stilet with such a wild look that Van Angelbeek (who was there with Van Eck) suspected ill, and while pretending to be curious, he took and kept it'. In the same paragraph the word *buijsteker* and knife (*mes*) are used interchangeably: 'De Koning had hem ... wick honderd zilvere buikstekers of messen geschonken' (The King had given him ... hundred silver *buikstekers* or knives.). This episode thus further underlines that the object that was referred to in the family papers as a silver *buiksteker* could not have been the silver *kastane* at present in the Rijksmuseum. We have identified a silver knife in the collection of Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv. nos. RV-360-6017 (knife) and 6019 (sheath), which likewise arrived in the Stadholder's collection prior to 1816 and which could be a more likely match. For the full references and further discussion see Schrikker, Van den Boogaart et al. 2022 *Silver Sabre*, pp. 14-15.
- 26 NL-HANA, Van Panthaleon van Eck family (1.10.65.01), inv. no. 60. 1, Letters concerning deaths etc., letter 10 November 1765.
- 27 NL-HANA, Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1813-1848, accession number 2.04.01, inv. no. 4030, 'Bijlage 1. Degens, Sabels en Stokken' (Attachment 1. Swords, Sabres and Sticks), no. 37, 6 July 1816. NL-HlMNH, Rijksmuseum and legal predecessors in Amsterdam (476), inv. no. 843, List of objects transferred to the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities in The Hague on the orders of King William I, 1816.
- 28 Edwin Van Meerkerk, 'Colonial Objects and the Display of Power: The Curious Case of the Cabinet of William v and the Dutch India Companies', in Siegfried Huigen, Elmer Kolfin and Jan L. de Jong (eds.), *The Dutch Trading Companies as Knowledge Networks*, Leiden/Boston 2010, pp. 415-35; esp. pp. 415-16, 422.
- 29 NL-KAHV, William v (A31), inv. no. 1798, P.A. van de Parra 1767-1775, 27 July 1772.
- 30 'vier grote Kandiasche geweren'. NL-KAHV, William v (A31), inv. no. 1774, Exchange of letters between Thomas Hope, representative of the Stadholder at the voc, with the Duke of Brunswick and sporadically with William v, 1765-1771, letter dated 17 June 1767. A second box contained a *zee-klapper*, or sea coconut. Uncertain is whether it was decorated as in figure 9. It was also in its original form a popular collector's item.
- 31 For this reconstruction see Schrikker, Van den Boogaart et al. *Gingals* (note 6). The presumption is that NG-NM-515 and NG-NM-516 are the other two guns from the set of four, see *ibid*, pp. 17-19.
- 32 Robert Aldrich, 'The Return of the Throne: The Repatriation of the Kandyan Regalia to Ceylon', in Robert Aldrich and Cindy McCreery (eds.), *Crowns and Colonies: European Monarchies and Overseas Empires*, Manchester 2016, pp. 139-62, esp. 143-44. Throne, sword and other items of the regalia of the kings of Kandy are now in the National Museum in Colombo.
- 33 The goblet is depicted in various sketches on pp. 39-44, inv. nos. NG-1985-7-2-24 to 27.
- 34 See Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, 'Appendix 2. A History of Restitution Requests 1964-1972', in Schrikker, Van den Boogaart et al. 2022 *Kanon* (note 6).
- 35 Reinier Pieter van de Kastele, *Handleiding tot de bezichtiging van het Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden op Mauritshuis, in 's Gravenhage*, The Hague s.a. [1824], pp. 97-101. Various Sri Lankan objects in the Royal Cabinet were described in it as originating from the collection of William v. A 1785 guide to the museum and Stadholder William v's collection described a room that was dedicated to armour, clothing, and other ornaments from inhabitants of the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), other Indian countries, and China. See *Guide ou nouvelle description de La Haye et de ses environs*, The Hague 1785, p. 257, see <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken/view?coll=boeken&id=entfier=dpo:5469:mpeg21:0250>.
- 36 For example, *Middelburgse Courant* 13 May 1766 (no. 57): 'Slot van het Dag-Verhaal der Generale Expeditie tegen den Koning van Candia', see <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010201839:mpeg21:p001>.
- 37 For information about the small cannon's journey in the Napoleonic era, see Sint Nicolaas *Historiek* (note 12).