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Abstrak

After the Dutch East India Company captured the maritime areas of Ceylon from the Portugese in 1656, it issued Plakkaten on paper as manuscript copies to be posted at various place for administrative purposes. The Dutch clergymen got the religious documents copied on palm leaves following the traditional method. Soon they found this system unsatisfactory and attempes were made since 1720s by the superintendent of the arsenal in the Fort at Colombo to cast Sinhala type in the first instance. By 1736, a press with movable Sinhala type was established in the Fort. It was a join venture by the Dutch Reformed Church and the Duthc East India Company. It printed plakkaten, religious, educational and non-educational books in Sinhala, Tamil and Dutch. The press was active from 1737 to 1796 until it was taken over by the British with the capitulation of Colombo. The introduction of printing to Ceylon had a major impact on learning, writing and communication in the Island. It paved the way for further developments in these fields during the British period.