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*Cover illustration:*

The Governor of the Dutch East India Company establishments on the Coromandel Coast going on a trip with his family (in the coach), accompanied by an elaborate escort of which a small part is to be seen in this detail of a new-year greeting card offered to the Governor by the drummers of the garrison of Nagapattinam in 1724. Source: National Archives, 4.AANW inv. no. 221. By courtesy of the National Archives, The Hague, the Netherlands.