

## Letter from the Editors

Before you lies an unofficial but nonetheless truly Special Issue, as it contains an interview with one of *Itinerario*'s founding fathers, Professor Leonard Blussé. He has been a mastermind and driving force behind the journal in the past thirty-odd years, and was responsible for the very popular interview section. On the occasion of Blussé's retirement, *Itinerario* sent a delegation of editors to his office, armed with pen, paper, and dictaphones to record his remarkable life story as an eccentric academic. Apart from the interview, which we hope will make for interesting reading, the issue contains four articles that all relate, in various ways, to questions of regime change in the Age of Revolutions (1760-1830) in Monsoon Asia and South Africa.

It is no coincidence that we have collected these articles for our unofficial special issue dedicated to Leonard Blussé. All four contributions emerged from a conference held in Mumbai in January 2010. It was organised by Blussé in cooperation with Prof. Ruby Maloni and Dr. Anjana Singh of Mumbai University. The conference was convened in the context of the Encompass programme—a multilateral Dutch-Asian and South African educational and research collaboration. It dealt with Monsoon Asia in the Age of Revolutions. As the title suggests, the scope of the conference was broad, and included papers on the transfer of local knowledge to Europe (Maxine Berg, Sujit Sivasundaram, and Andreas Weber); changing information networks (Penny Brook, Charles Jeurgens, and Gerrit Knaap) and local state formation (Nadeera Seneviratne, Abdul Wahid, and Murari Kumar Jha), to name just a few. The conference programme bears witness to the broad conceptualisation of this period and the abstracts of the more than thirty papers can still be viewed at <http://www.hum.leiden.edu/history/encompass/>. In true Blussé style the conference provided a stage for young researchers and senior scholars to present their work and interact. The remarkable historic setting and professional organisation of Dr. Singh created the perfect atmosphere for a creative exchange of ideas and expertise.

The four articles presented here were submitted to *Itinerario* individually in the past year and it was thanks to the auspicious timing of the authors and the peer review-

ers that we could publish them collectively in this issue. François-Joseph Ruggiu takes us back to the 1760s and 1670s to show how the French experience in India developed to shape the “no territory” policy in France. The contribution by Pius Malekandathil analyses how the Portuguese responded to new political and economic challenges in India during the revolutionary period, as ruralisation of power became the cornerstone for the Portuguese traders in India. Danelle van Zyl, a former Encompass student, takes a more private approach to the theme of regime change, by analysing the emotional life of Dutch men and women in the Cape Colony immediately after the British take-over. Her analysis is based on samples from the “Sailing Letters,” a unique set of private letters located at the National Archives in Kew. Finally, Simon Layton takes us to the area of piracy and examines at the changing British representation of “pirates” in the Indian Ocean during the revolutionary era.

We would like to conclude this letter by expressing our thanks to Jedd Mc Fatter, who has worked with us as copy-editor for the last four years and decided to step down last month. His work has been invaluable to us and we wish him the very best with his career.

The Editors