

## Letter from the Editors

---

Across the publishing landscape we see a steady push towards more and more special issues of journals. As editors of *Itinerario*, we are committed to continue to offer a platform for individual submissions and publish at least one regular issue with individual articles each year. We feel that the current issue is a fine example of the great value that individual contributions make to the field.

This issue of *Itinerario* opens with an interview with Alison Games, who talked with Suze Zijlstra and Ananya Chakravarti about her trajectory from studying the history of early America to the Atlantic world and beyond. The conversation turns to the state of the field and specifically the gender dynamics in departments and universities.

The early decades of north European trade beyond Europe brought with it a new set of legal challenges for merchants and companies. In his article, Ed Cavanagh traces the prehistory of the development of international systems for conflict resolution in the Atlantic world.

Global travel was not without its hazards, although Frederik Vermote here argues that Jesuit missionaries who did not arrive at their intended destination very often had not died but had been redirected en route. During this period, travellers reported a surprising number of encounters with mermaids and tritons. Their sightings are the way in for Vaughn Scribner to discuss how enlightenment thinkers sought to reconcile the wondrous and the rational in their changing understanding of the world.

The onward march of Western Christianity was not blindly accepted across the world. On Madagascar, Thomas Anderson shows, missionaries found hospitals to offer domesticating spaces in which both Christianity and Western science could prove themselves effective against certain diseases. Their success before their captive audience proved crucial for missionary activities on the island. Staying in the nineteenth century, “Military Migrants” presents the latest findings about Luxembourg soldiers recruited into the Dutch army in the Dutch East Indies. The data of Thomas Kolnberger and Ulbe Bosma shows that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, professional recruiters were broadening the base of potential recruits. They started recruiting more men from non-military backgrounds who were mainly motivated by the immediate financial benefits of enlisting.

The violence that Dutch soldiers inflicted, for example on Timor, was often only recorded in Dutch sources, presenting us with a very one-sided understanding of

events. Comparing and connecting colonial written documents with oral sources offers a fruitful method for writing history of traumatic events, especially when the voices of the victims are not recorded in the written record. Hans Hägerdal shows how oral histories convey both memories of atrocities, as well as the way in which traumatic events were given meaning as a historical turning point.

The Editors