

## Letter from the Editors

This autumn issue contains a variety of contributions spanning the entire era of European Expansion and global interaction. Two of the essays deserve special attention, because we received them in such dramatically different ways.

The essay by Professor George Alisonas grew out of the annual Crayenborgh lecture which he gave in the spring of 1995 for the Masterclass students at the Leiden History Department. Those present at this lecture are not likely to forget it, because Alisonas set out to speak in late sixteenth-century Dutch. The chairman of that meeting, however, persuaded the speaker to switch to English, because this would be more understandable, even to native Dutch speakers. The audience was then treated to a lecture on cross-cultural misunderstandings in the Early Modern period. Professor Alisonas told the editors that he just wanted to check one last source in Paris before handing over the written text of the lecture. Now, after a year of waiting in eager anticipation, we feel privileged to publish the final version, which is approximately four times longer than the original and probably should have been added to the *Cambridge History of Japan*.

However, one does learn from experience. When we were told by Professor Henk Wesseling about Doctor David Abulafia's seminal talk that he gave at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Research in Wassenaar just one month ago, we immediately got a hold of the text and rushed it to the printer.

Instead of the usual interview, this issue carries a discussion on Latin America which developed on the internet and may have escaped the attention of our readers. It has been faithfully reconstructed here by one of our editorial assistants, Marten Brienem.

We also would like to call the attention of our faithful subscribers to the book *Pilgrims to the Past*, which will be published on 12 November on the occasion of *Itinerario's* twentieth anniversary. It is a thoroughly revised publication of all twenty-five interviews that *Itinerario* published in its twenty years of existence. Unfortunately, we are unable to present this highly

entertaining and instructive collection free of charge to all of our readers. We hope, however, to offer a special price reduction on this book in combination with the 1997 subscription to *Itinerario*.

Finally, we would like to point to the article by Francisco Javier Guillamón Álvarez on the Spanish eighteenth-century political reforms. In our opinion, this contribution is an illuminating complement to the article by Antonio Annino on Spanish American constitutional and political history in *Itinerario* 19/2 (1995).

As this issue goes to press, the three-day conference on *Religious Transformations* (25-27 October), organized by Phyllis Mack and Michael Adas of the Rutgers Centre for Historical Analysis of Rutgers University, in close cooperation with the FEEGI network, draws to a successful close. Fourteen papers were presented on Southeast Asia and America (North and South) under the theme of *Colonial Encounters*. The last day was devoted to *Post-colonial Encounters*, with the spotlight falling on Islam in Europe and religion and post-colonial culture in contemporary society. Needless to say, we hope to publish some of these papers in future issues of *Itinerario*.

The Editors