

Letter from the Editors

“God, Gold and Glory” used to be the catchphrase for students trying to understand what motivated early modern travellers, tradesmen, and states to sail beyond the European shores and impose themselves on local societies. The emphasis in the field though, more often than not, came to lay on a more materialist understanding of developing colonial and trade relations. In more recent decades, we have witnessed how the colonial encounter itself became subject to a more cultural approach, in which emphasis was placed on questions of mutual understanding, knowledge transfer, and representation. It is only very recently that historians have returned to the spiritual or religious worldview that inspired early modern travellers, traders, and statesmen in their colonial plotting, planning, and acting. With “God” back in sight as a player in the history of European expansion and a shaper of early modern global interaction, *Itinerario* is pleased to present this special issue on “spiritual geopolitics.”

This timely issue has been brought together and introduced by guest editors Susanne Lachenicht, Lauric Henneon, and Yann Lignereux. They present us with a set of articles that cover different early modern colonial enterprises in different regions of the world. In this global reach, the articles fit the spirit of *Itinerario*, and FEEGI, very well. These essays are all concerned with their own particular questions, from Cromwellian imperialist politics to the cultural meaning of encounters deep in Guyana’s jungle. But together they present us with a spectrum of research that shifts the focus back to spiritual motivations and worldviews as an important factor in European expansion and the forging of local relations.

We thank our guest editors for the work they have put into selecting the authors of these articles, and we hope that this special issue will stimulate further discussion on this important yet often strangely overlooked theme. Above all, the issue promises to be a good read and one we hope you will enjoy!

The Editors