





The second issue of *Global Environment* is a further step towards our principal objective, that is, setting up a world-wide network of scholars who should find in the journal a meeting point where they can compare very different sources, methods, and approaches regarding different socio-economic and environmental contexts. This network does not include just the journal's authors and readers, but also the referees who are providing an essential support to our project with their professional attitude and passion. Indeed, the refereeing system – which involves both editorial board members and external experts selected ad hoc - is working with great efficiency and speed. This is not only a guarantee as to the quality of the articles, but also bears witness to our journal's enthusiastic reception in the scholarly community.

We believe, now more than ever, that global environmental history is a work in progress within which researchers from geographically and culturally distinct realities strive to communicate with one another. This results in a constant blending of knowledge, an experience that transcends not just the limits of scholars' respective cultural identities, but also the traditional boundaries between the humanities and the natural sciences, although within an essentially historiographic perspective. Thus, the work we have carried on so far reflects a widely shared conviction that we need to make a great effort to exercise tolerance and be ready to “listen” to different points of view. To emphasize this aspect of our project, we have inaugurated a “Forum” section. In the present issue, this fea-

tures a dialogue between scholars from different geographical areas and cultural traditions – Piero Bevilacqua, Gullermo Castro, Ranjan Chakrabarti, Kobus du Pisani, John McNeill, and Donald Worster – on the issues and interpretive categories involved in the global study of the environment from a historical perspective, and the role that national historiographies play in it.

This section is not the only novelty in this issue. We also have devoted a special section entitled “Policies” to the publishing of documents attesting to the importance of the contribution of historians to political decision-making, notably as regards the defining of environmental policies and of the very concept of sustainability. The guidelines for the introduction of social and cultural values in the sustainable management of European forestland we are publishing in this issue of the journal are the result of the work of a group of historians. We believe that environmental historians can contribute significantly to political action and the public debate on environmental issues, without giving up their scientific autonomy. The failure of policies is often a result of inadequate knowledge of the historical and environmental contexts in which national and super-national institutions deploy their strategies. Such contexts are the result of long-period dynamics which call for area-specific strategies, not abstract and generalizing ones. Furthermore, historical knowledge can be used not just to generate interpretive frameworks and inform public decision-makers, but also to shed light on the inner workings of environmental and socio-economic processes.

As regards multidisciplinary, which is one of the founding tenets of our journal, all the articles in the other sections bear witness to the extraordinary productiveness of environmental studies as a terrain for the experimentation of new methods and the merging of different research approaches. We thus have Hans Aage’s sophisticated reasoning, whereby he strives to look at the relationship between economy and ecology with different eyes; Silvana Bartoletto and Mar Rubio’s historiographic foray into a sphere that is typical of the “hard sciences” in their article on CO₂ pollution; Hana Skokanova’s exploration of engineering issues in her historical study of the effects of human action on the environment; Joan Marull, Joan Pino, En-

ric Tello's reflection on the concept of "landscape efficiency", which introduces interpretive categories typical of economic analysis into landscape studies. and Eugenia Ferragina's fruitful employing of a geopolitical perspective and concepts drawn from the literature on the relations between security and the environment. Debojyoti Das, Grigory Isachenko, and Paolo Malanima's reviews in the "Library" section of the journal open vistas onto realities that are very distant and different from one another. Joachim Radkau offers us a valuable glimpse of the contents of a book shedding light on some little known aspects of the history of the Green party in Germany, and helps to deconstruct certain myths about German environmentalism. Finally, in his conversation with Federico Paolini, Serge Latouche illustrates the category of "degrowth" as a springboard for a critique of the cultural models dominating contemporary economic thought.

Thus, with this issue we are offering a very broad range of reflections, investigative methodologies, and interpretive approaches. This is the result of a great effort at selecting and organizing whose results we are very satisfied with. It is our intention to carry on this effort in the future in the hope of contributing in a small way to achieving a deeper historical knowledge of the environmental problems our whole planet is struggling with today.

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