

# INTRODUCTION

## CROSSING BORDERS: CONNECTING EDGES OF ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

In November 2015, the Transdisciplinary «Culture, Space and Memory» Research Centre (CITCEM) organised its fourth conference, on a broad and transversal theme, under the suggestive and auspicious title, *Crossing Borders: Connecting Edges of ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY*<sup>1</sup>. The conference essentially intended to gather a multiplicity of views on a topic that has attracted a growing amount of attention and the interest of specialists in several areas of knowledge, among which History. It thus aimed to intersect different research perspectives, inter- and transdisciplinary, the key mission of this research unit. In 2014, CITCEM established a strategic research line covering History of the Environment, focused on Maritime Cultures<sup>2</sup>, and aimed at highlighting the relationship between the sea, in its broadest sense – oceans, coastal seabords and rivers –, and Man, intersecting social, economic and technological processes. Indeed, CITCEM's members include researchers who work on areas related to History and the Environment, in a space that is open to the most diverse areas of knowledge, such as History, Geography, Archaeology, Demographics, Literature, Art, Museology, Cinema, etc..

CITCEM's 4<sup>th</sup> Conference also served to launch the *Portuguese Network of Environmental History (REPORT(H)A)*, whose website, regularly updated, is its most visible outlet<sup>3</sup>. Founded a year ago, this network primarily serves as an important platform intended to aggregate work that has been developed in this domain, in a dispersed manner, in Portugal, and give it greater visibility, within and beyond borders. The aim is to gather research groups, projects and publications, rooted in the crossroads of legacies and influences among disciplinary areas. It further intends to confirm the existence of intellectual domains that are permeable to environmental issues, following a multidisciplinary approach that can boost the development of data-gathering methodologies and highlight increasingly more transversal topics.

This issue of the journal, *CEM Cultura, Espaço e Memória 7 – 2016 (CEM Culture, Space and Memory 7 – 2016)*, is dedicated to Environmental History, thus giving continuity to these actions. It is published in a context of social and institutional concerns with the sustainable management of natural resources, and the positioning of the environment as a global heritage, acknowledging furthermore that knowledge of the past is essential to

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, please see <<http://www.citcem.org/4encontro/papers.html>>.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, please see <<http://www.citcem.org/linhas-de-investigacao/culturas-maritimas-e-ambiente>>.

<sup>3</sup> Available at <<http://www.reportha.org/pt/>>.

the definition of environmental strategies and policies of the future. Three major lines are addressed, both transversal and global: discuss the use of resources; study «nature in itself»; and interpret all forms of thinking and representing nature. This does not mean, however, that other possibilities were excluded, as those unfold into as many other topics, indicative of an array of potential approaches – climatic changes, welfare, social and environmental resilience, calamities and hazards, science and the environment, environmental conflicts, energy and change, endangered species, iconic specie and human routes, artistic explorations in environmental contexts, imperialism and the environment, literature and the environment/nature, metaphors and perceptions of landscape change.

The total number of articles in this issue bear witness to the way in which historiography (among other domains) has appropriated this topic and its concepts, integrating multidisciplinary perspectives. The responses were extensive, and the studies published in this issue, peer-reviewed twice, cover widely different approaches, whether in terms of the object of study, the sources used, or the methodologies employed. In fact, the present issue includes topics as diverse as **meteorological extremes** (*«In the furious waves of the deep ocean sea» – the perception of the state of the weather and other phenomena in the Franciscan community of the Minho River mouth (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries)*), **social resilience and the environment** (*Extinctionism: Mass Catastrophe or Mass Hysteria? Philosophizing Contemporary Environmental Science through Nietzsche's Pre-Eugenic Ideology*), **prevention and control of exotic invasive species** (see *People, transports and the spread of the Argentine ant in Europe, from c.1850 to present*), **science and the environment** (*The Importance of the Study, Organisation and Availability of Scientists' Archives for the History of the Environment – the Rui Serpa Pinto Archive of the Natural History Museum of the University of Porto*), **environmental policies** (*Nature as Policy: Thinking Agriculture and Nature in the Rural Transformation of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Portugal*), **imperialism and the environment** (*The Woodlands Commission of the State of India (1863). Science, Colonialism and Nature in the New Conquests, Goa*), **environmental conflicts** (*From the Occupation of the Territory to Environmental Degradation: the Case of Mining in S. Domingos; Environmental Conflicts and Technical Progress in the Mining Industry in Portugal (1858-1938)*), **metaphors and perceptions of landscape change** (*Architecture and Water Management in Ribeira Lima: Contributions to their Study and Business Networks and Political Dictatorships: the Case of the Expansion of Forestry in the State of Espírito Santo/ Brazil*), **energy and technological landscapes** (*History of Asbestos in the World and in Portugal; Potential Energy in the Transformation of the Landscape. The Douro Coal Field, and The Tua Valley, symbolical and technological landscape*), as well as **artistic explorations, literature and the environment** (*The Tua Valley and Railway, «A Geological Poem»: Nature and Work and Maritime Landscapes in Painting*).

Finally, as is usual practice in this journal, other entries are added to the thematic dossier, such as other studies, reviews and news bulletins.

This issue thus comprises a material embodiment of the efforts researchers from different areas have developed in Environmental History, not only gathering, in a single volume, multidisciplinary contributions, but also reach a public we hope is broad and

eclectic. More than a set of articles, this issue aims to be the banner of a movement that is both an aggregating and multiplying force, resulting from the different disciplinary fields it has assembled.

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(CEM 2016 editors)

