

EDITORIAL

Since 1969 – the year when man landed first on the Moon – this journal has been devoted to the literature concerned with the Moon, with emphasis on its studies from space. Since 1978, when the peak of the exploration of the Moon by means of spacecraft subsided somewhat, and emphasis shifted to planetary missions, the scope of the journal has been widened to embrace both the Moon and the Planets, including our Earth.

The Earth as a planet began to claim increasing attention in planetary science as a result of sustained work of artificial satellites which were launched in great numbers to explore the properties of our planet from space. The first generation of such satellites was concerned mainly with studies of the gravitational field of our Earth, but in more recent years the emphasis has shifted to detailed imaging and remote sounding of different parts of air, land, and sea for geophysical and other studies. Such studies have, in turn, called for the applications of remote-sensing techniques originally developed for planetary missions; and which in recent years have become an important tool of the exploration of our own planet as well.

Now we wish editorially to recognise the importance of the studies of the Earth from space in the general framework of comparative planetology of the solar system by extending the scope of this journal to embrace the space exploration of our planet as well. In doing so, it is not our aim to convert in any sense our journal into one devoted mainly to traditional geophysical and geological approaches, for in this respect the students of the subject are already well served by the existing literature.

However, the interests of our journal will henceforth be extended to the Earth as an astronomical body, studied by space-borne means; and in this endeavour contributions are welcome, not only on the data obtained and their interpretation, but also on the methods of acquisition and reduction of the observations. This general trend of research has already been amply recognised in the academic world by the existence of numerous “Earth and Planetary Sciences” departments in Universities and other institutions of higher learning in the last decade, and by including our Earth within the scope of this journal we wish to serve this research even more closely in the future than we have done in the past.

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