EDITORIAL

When our journal was founded nine years ago, the exploration of the Moon by spacecraft was approaching its grand climax; and less than seven months later the first men of Apollo 11 mission set foot on this nearest of our celestial neighbours; to be followed between 1969–1972 by five additional successful missions of increasing range and scope. Moreover, the years which elapsed since that time witnessed also the launch of 22 unmanned missions to other planets, with destinations ranging from Mercury to Jupiter; and not less than four of these spacecraft are currently en route to Saturn and beyond.

The results secured by these missions – both manned and unmanned – have advanced already our knowledge of the Solar System immeasurably; and their impact, not only on astronomy, but also on many other branches of science, has been profound. Moreover, it has become equally evident that a proper understanding of the structure and past history of the Solar System (including its origin) can be gained only on the basis of a combined testimony of all planets, and their interpretation requires an interdisciplinary approach on a broad front. This, in turn, requires a fusion of interests by the students of the Moon as well as of the planets – especially the terrestrial planets – and underlines the great value of comparative studies of all celestial bodies in the Solar System, which should bring all information supplied by them into a common focus.

In response to these trends, whose justification is becoming increasingly manifest, the undersigned editors of this journal propose to broaden its scope, as from the next issue, to include contributions dealing with all aspects of lunar and planetary studies – with emphasis on their comparative and interdisciplinary aspects – from the international community of scholars working in this field; in the hope that the wider tribune which will so become available may extend its contribution to further growth and efflorescence of our subject.

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