

## ***Note from the Editors***

This will be the last issue of the *Journal* under the current editors, as UniCredit has decided to entrust the responsibility for the periodical to others. In taking leave of our readers, to whom we owe our warmest gratitude for having followed us over the course of the years, we feel that the end of this cycle warrants a brief recapitulation of our activity, which we are certain will be carried on by worthy successors. We offer them sincere best wishes.

The *Journal of European Economic History* was founded in 1972 by the eminent economic historian Luigi De Rosa. Its mission was to “achieve a knowledge of European history under the economic profile and, through this knowledge, to succeed in tracing a common thread through the history of the European economy.” In this endeavour it was to be “not only the first review of European economic history, [but] the first review devoted to European history *tout court*.” The approach that De Rosa proposed was destined to foster a significant internationalization of research in economic history, a development for which he laboured fruitfully for three decades until his sudden death in 2004 during a scholarly conference in Burgos, Spain, where he had gone to present a paper.

The baton then passed in 2005 to Paolo Savona, whose signature appears on this note together that of Michele Barbato, who had collaborated with De Rosa from the *Journal's* inception. With the decisive support first of Banca di Roma and Capitalia and then of UniCredit, the new editorial team continued on the path indicated by De Rosa upon founding the thrice-yearly publication with the backing of what was then Banco di Roma. While not altering the review's fundamental approach, the new team strove to further reinvigorate the project, stepping up its publishing initiatives and steadily enhancing the value of the *Journal*. In so doing it relied on the generous assistance of the Editorial Board, composed of illustrious scholars from outstanding

European and American universities, whose aid De Rosa had enlisted from the start, and the equally prestigious Advisory Board, subsequently appointed by the current editors and comprising economists attentive to history and historians of economic thought as well as economic historians.

All this abetted the expansion of the field of historical inquiry, which tends to assimilate ideas and methods belonging to other disciplines or arising in a diversity of geographical areas with “different cultural sensibilities”. Professor Peter Mathias, who has served as chief scholarly consultant of the *Journal* from its foundation, offered an effective description of this approach in a paper presented at the LUISS University in Rome in 2008. In that paper Professor Mathias reconstructed the methodological paths that economic history has pursued since the 1950s, thanks to fruitful cross-fertilization with its “neighbours”: economics in the first place, sociology, anthropology, political science and law, all disciplines that exert direct and indirect influence in different respects.

Expansion of the scope of inquiry opened the publication’s horizon to new issues, and new research papers flowed in for the editors to evaluate with the assistance of the Advisory Board. The task of referees became more challenging and their numbers had to be increased in order to draw on essential new fields of expertise. At the same time the *Journal* strengthened its relations with university presses and publishing houses throughout the world, particularly those specialized in the social sciences, from which it received an ever growing number of volumes. These it systematically reviewed or otherwise brought to the attention of its readers. The data bank that was gradually formed now embraces some eight hundred publishers from around the globe; the system was initiated by De Rosa, who in this way as well demonstrated his outstanding qualities as an editor.

Nor did the *Journal* neglect De Rosa’s own contribution to economic history. In 2009 it paid tribute to him with an international conference in his honour in his native Naples. The two volumes of his selected essays published on that occasion, offering an overview of his wide-ranging interests, were intended to stimulate a return to what to this day remain great issues in economic history. That is, the objective was

not simply to give testimony to the breadth and the thematic, methodological and interpretative richness of De Rosa's work, but also to spur new inquiry on topics of central importance to the review he had founded and guided with authority and passion for three decades.

The present volume of the *Journal* encompasses the three issues for 2011 and coincides with its fortieth anniversary. Planned since the beginning of 2011, it contains the cumulative indexes of all the writings that appeared in the *Journal* from 1972 to 2010, embracing some thousand essays published under the heading of "articles", "notes" or "problems" and a thousand book reviews as well. All the essays are indexed by author, geographical area, year of publication and subject. Each section can be said to recount a part of the life of the review. The index of authors reflects the wide range of backgrounds and affiliations. The index by geographical area shows that the *Journal*, though focused on Europe, has also considered Europe's influence on other regions and, equally important, their contributions to shaping Europe. The index by year of publication highlights how the review has adapted and updated its contents to emerging trends in historiography (from cliometrics to new institutionalism to global economic history). And the subject index offers telling proof of the comprehensive scope of the issues treated, reflecting an approach that considers economic history a discipline of synthesis, one that combines fact and theory, institutions and society, without forsaking its specific historical methodology. To scan the list of the thirty macro-subjects is perhaps the handiest way to grasp the "patrimony" accumulated by a publication that remains the only one of its kind.

The volume also contains a valuable introductory essay by Professor Mathias, "*The Journal of European Economic History. A review of its existence over the forty years from its foundation*" retraces the main stages of the review's life, dwelling on its scholarly and cultural role and its growing influence. Lastly, the thousand book reviews are indexed by author only and appear in chronological order.

Naturally, it is not for us to judge what has been accomplished over the years. In taking our leave, it only remains for us to underscore the authoritative assistance provided by the members of the Editorial Board

and the valuable collaboration lent by the members of the Advisory Board through their active participation in carrying out the publishing plans. We are grateful to the members of the two boards, and we warmly thank Giovanni Farese for his intelligent collaboration with the review in all these years. Finally, we are well aware that the ambitious publishing plans and events we have organized could not have succeeded without the cooperation of the editorial and administrative staff, to whom we are deeply indebted.

*Michele Barbato*  
*Paolo Savona*