

## REPORTS

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### REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC SESSION “HUMAN AND NATURE: BETWEEN DESTRUCTION AND CREATION” ORGANIZED AS PART OF THE 23RD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF HISTORICAL SCIENCES IN POZNAŃ ON 24TH AUGUST 2022

<https://doi.org/10.14746/sho.2022.40.2.008>

At the beginning of the 21st century, the awareness of interdependence between man and the natural environment is common. Meanwhile, traditional historiography continues to focus on relations between people and only slightly takes into account the fact that all human actions has been occurring in a natural environment, which determines them to a greater or lesser extent. Throughout history, the above actions, on the one hand, consisted in using natural resources and the pursuit of a humans' release from the restrictions that nature applied to them, and on the other on its sacralization, including attributing supernatural power and mystical character to animals, trees or mountains. As a result, interaction with nature played an important role not only from the point of view of the human economy but was also one of the factors shaping thinking patterns, emotions, behavior and beliefs as well as social structures and state organisms.

The paradox of history is that in the second half of the twentieth century, i.e. when it seemed that people achieved a high degree of control over nature, at the same time they realized that they reached the point where continued unlimited exploitation of it may lead to the degradation of the entire civilization.

In this context, a number of research questions arise, which environmental history has been trying to answer for over 50 years, focusing on, among others, interactions between man and the natural environment and their impact on the development of civilization.

Broadly defined environmental history was the context for the session entitled "Human and Nature: Between Destruction and Creation", organized and conducted on 24th August 2022 by prof. Tadeusz Janicki (Faculty of History, UAM, Poznań, Poland) and prof. Dariusz Gwiazdowicz (Department of Forest Protection, Poznań University of Life Sciences, Poland) as part of the 23rd International Congress of Historical Sciences Poznań 2022.

The main goal of the session was the interdisciplinary reflection of specialists from various scientific disciplines on the problem of the destruction of the natural landscape and the creation of cultural landscape in the past as one of the results of civilization development and other issues related to interaction between human activity and the natural environment.

During the session, the following papers were delivered:

- Pre-historic activities of old Japanese in northern Japan from the view point of Archaeological studies **Takayoshi Koike** (Research Faculty of Agriculture, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan)
- Ecological awareness of the ancient Greeks and Romans **Kazimierz Ilski** (Faculty of History, UAM, Poznań, Poland)
- The notion of "primary forest" from the eighteenth century until the birth of phytosociology and modern ecology **Piotr Daszkiewicz** (The National Museum of Natural History Paris, France), **Tomasz Samojlik** (Institute of Mammal Biology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Białowieża, Poland)
- Different forms of civilisations and the development of woodlands: Systems of interaction **Hansjorg Küster** (Institut für Geobotanik, Universität Hannover, Hannover, Germany)
- History of nature protection in woodlands in Germany 1900–1970 **Jürgen Rosebrock** (Stiftung Naturschutzgeschichte in Königswinter, Königswinter, Germany)
- Historical variability of human-nature relations in the aspect of hunting in Poland **Dariusz Gwiazdowicz** (Department of Forest Protection, Poznań University of Life Sciences, Poland)

- Polish attempts to transformation of nature during Stalinism **Dariusz Jarosz** (Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warszawa, Poland)
- Agriculture and the environment in Poland after 1945 **Tadeusz Janicki** (Faculty of History, UAM, Poznań, Poland).

As follows from the above list, four referents focused on forest, one of the most important ecosystems for the biological, economic and cultural human existence. The process of changes in forest ecosystems, from their exploitation and destruction, through forms of their protection, to attempts of their reconstruction was analyzed. In addition, the subject of considerations were various ideas and activities regarding nature protection, relations between human and nature in the context of hunting, the concept of landscape shaping in a totalitarian system on the example of Poland during Stalinism and the influence of agriculture on the natural environment in postwar Poland.

In general, the papers brought a wide panorama of the relationship between human and nature from prehistory to modern times. Selected examples show the transformation of the natural landscape and the creation of cultural landscape under the influence of economic, social and cultural factors. At the same time, it has been shown that nature was not and is still not only the subject of human activity and exploitation, but it remains an active factor affecting the history of civilization.

According to the assumptions, the session was interdisciplinary, because not only historians, but also specialists from other fields, including foresters (D. Gwiazdowicz, T. Koike), biologists (H. Küster, P. Daszkiewicz, T. Samojlik) and a specialist in environmental protection (J. Rosebrock) spoke about the relations between human and nature throughout history. The papers and the accompanying discussion have shown how creative analysis of historical issues from the perspective of specialists in various fields could be.

As a result, the session, apart from expanding historical knowledge, in the long run, after publishing the results of the research, can contribute to the formation of a new social awareness and help in taking rational actions for further sustainable socio-economic development, including counteracting the further deforestation of the world and degradation of others elements of the natural environment.

**Tadeusz Janicki**, b. in 1964 in Krotoszyn, associate professor, habilitated doctor of humanities, head of the Department of Economic History of the Faculty of History of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Author of many works on the socio-economic history of Poland and Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries, with particular emphasis on the history of the countryside, agriculture and agricultural policy, the Nazi occupation of Polish lands, the political thought of the Polish peasant movement and the regional history of Wielkopolska. Organizer, together with Professor Dariusz Gwiazdowicz from the Poznań University of Life Sciences, of the session at the International Congress of Historical Sciences entitled: "Man and Nature: Between Destruction and Creation", which took place as part of the 23rd International Congress of Historical Sciences in Poznań 2022.