

Dear Readers,

As the year of 2016 draws to a close, it is our great pleasure to present this issue of the *Chicago Journal of History* in expression of our gratitude for your readership and contribution. As editors, we regard the journal as not only a publication but also a collaborative intellectual enterprise, and it is our hope that it will continue to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas, a platform for interdisciplinary dialogues, and a showcase for outstanding undergraduate research in the coming years.

The Autumn 2016 issue features eclectic, rigorous and innovative research articles authored by Anna Davis (Johns Hopkins University), Alexandra Houston (Princeton University), Mirela Kadric (University of Sydney), Matthew Schweitzer (University of Chicago), Isaac Stein (University of Chicago) and Anna M. Walker (Princeton University). Some authors, such as Houston and Walker, engage with literary sources to answer historical questions. Houston, for example, traces the representations of leprosy in medieval and early modern literature. Walker, on the other hand, examines literature's role in nationalist movements in the Balkans. Stein and Schweitzer both provide engaging lenses into marginalized racial and ethnic groups in the United States: Native Americans and Polish immigrants. Davis' probing analysis of documents from the Harriman Alaska Expedition offers remarkable insights to our understanding of this period of environmental history. And finally, Kadric's study brings us back to the controversial and complex question on the relationship between national identity and transnational politics. These articles address a wide array of historical topics, all of which arise from fundamental cultural, social and political concerns that are still relevant to this day.

In fact, that this present issue of the *Chicago Journal of History* is, in the words of Lucien Febvre, the "daughter of its own time," is apparent in its preface, "History and Truth in the Age of Trump," authored by economic historian, Jonathan Levy. In this short essay, Professor Levy reflects on the status of the noble dream of objectivity in historical inquiry, and encourages undergraduate students to one day use the craft of history to contribute to the betterment of our shared human life.

Indeed, convinced that historical research has a role to play in connecting the *ethos* and *bios* of human societies, we invited five distinguished scholars to our October symposium: "Bio-History in the Anthropocene." We express our most sincere gratitude to Professors Kyle Harper (University of Oklahoma), Lynn K. Nyhart (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Joanna Radin (Yale University), Julia A. Thomas (University of Notre Dame) and Russell H. Tuttle (University of Chicago) for their deep thoughts on the challenges and opportunities of our present historical moment and geological age, insights on how humanities, social and natural scientists could inform each other across disciplinary boundaries, and their encouragement for us to be not only students of history and biology but also human beings and citizens, in pursuit of a better understanding of the past and present of our own civilizations.

In this issue, we have published the full transcript of this event, with the hope that those who were not present at this lively discussion may also benefit from the intellectual experience of discoursing with the panelists via the medium of the written text.

The organization of this conference was not an easy task. For this reason, we would like to thank, first of all, Professor Jonathan Lyon for his critical role as the moderator of the panel. Our most trusted collaborator, Phoenix Biology, has made every effort to make this event a success. We are indebted to the University of Chicago Student Government for its generous support, and we owe thanks to Janie G. Lardner, for much help and assistance from the Department of Comparative Human Development. We are moved especially by Professor Jocelyn Malamy, Master of the Biological Sciences Collegiate Division, as well as Kila Roberts and Marcia Gilliland-Roberts, for their enthusiasm and endorsement. At last, I would like to personally thank all of our editors for their creative and committed efforts throughout the past months. Emelia Lehman, Colin Garon and Chloe Hadavas have punctiliously edited the panel transcript, first prepared by Alexander Jarman, Elazar Chertow, Darren Wan and Sophia Weaver. Michelle Shang deserves credit for the advertisement of this event.

In addition to the six aforementioned research articles, you will find in this issue two captivating interviews with prominent historians and intellectuals of our day. In "Humanity and the Great Seas," David Abulafia, Professor of Mediterranean History at the University of Cambridge and a renowned maritime historian, reflects on his past scholarship in social, economic and political histories of the seas—the Mediterranean and the Atlantic—and offers an equally perceptive account of the current developments in the Pacific and elsewhere around the world. He then introduces us to his current project on oceanic history. Finally, as one of the founders of "Historians for Britain," Professor Abulafia shares with us his insights on the relationship between Britain and the European Union near the end of the conversation.

The other interview features one of the most influential intellectual historians of our day, Quentin Skinner. As a founder of the "Cambridge School" of political thought and intellectual history, Professor Skinner presents here a history of his own intellectual journey. In this interview entitled "Ideas in Context," he clarifies some of the most important concepts associated with his academic approach, and responds to many critics of his methodology. Indeed, this article shows that there is as much speech as there is act in intellectual history. It should also be noted that both Professor Abulafia and Professor Skinner have offered some advice to undergraduate students, and we thank them wholeheartedly for their guidance and counsel.

The *Chicago Journal of History* editors invite you to explore this issue and to join us in our future events. We are also more than happy to send you a copy of any particular issue by mail. We appreciate your feedback, be it afterthought or criticism, and we look forward to presenting to you an even more enjoyable issue in spring 2017.

Sincerely,
Hansong Li