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From the Editor

Rachel J. Omansky
University of Pennsylvania, romansky@sas.upenn.edu

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FROM THE EDITOR

The Editorial Board is pleased to present the second issue of the fifteenth volume of the *Penn History Review*, the Ivy League's oldest undergraduate history journal. The *Review* continues to publish outstanding undergraduate papers based on original primary research. The Board is proud to feature scholarship that maintains our tradition of insightful and diverse historiography. These papers span not only centuries and geographic regions, but also across disciplines in the study of history. The authors published in this issue approach their historical inquiries with a particular respect to the larger theme of exploration. In addition to providing four exemplary student essays, this issue of the *Review* also offers a special section entitled 'The Study of History.'

In evaluating the role of maps in crusading, Julia Harte explores the *mappaemundi*, literally 'world maps,' made in Western Europe in the years that preceded the Crusades. These maps had little relation to the physical geography of the region they represented, revealing more about the intellectual and spiritual beliefs of the cartographer. As Crusaders returned from their ventures, however, views of the world changed and myths about the size of the Christian world were dispelled. Harte argues that the Venetian merchant Marino Sanuto and renowned cartographer Pietro Vesconte used this new information to generate new support for another crusade through the claim that better maps could cause the armies of Christendom to triumph over the Muslim Infidels.

In his essay on the Window Tax, a British tax assessed over the period 1696-1851, Andrew Glantz demonstrates how eighteenth and nineteenth century window taxes reveal an important tension between citizen and state. The author provides a thorough assessment of relevant records and other archival support that separates his account from relevant literature. In his attention to architecture and tax administration, Glantz provides a thorough analysis of the Window Tax and the changes it wrought on society, both in terms of eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain and the contemporary world.

Cameron Hu synthesizes accounts of British expeditions to Mecca and Medina in order to theorize an anomalous phenomenon in geographical history: the impersonation of Arab Muslims by English and Christian ex-

plorers. Beginning with the reign of Caliph Umar (r. 644–652), non-Muslims have been forbidden entry to the Hijaz, the northwestern region of the Arabian Peninsula, and site of the Islamic holy cities. However, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, several travelers masqueraded as "eastern" natives and Muslims from birth in order to negotiate their prohibition. Hu contends that such impersonation was a dual performance – an act projected as much toward Europe and Christianity as it was toward the Muslims after whom the explorer modeled himself – and that as a discursive medium, impersonation made claims about mastery, sovereignty, epistemology, and the delimitation of Muslim and Christian.

From 1964-68 the Johnson administration engaged in a “Water for Peace” deal. Julie Steinberg explores this attempt to insert American influence into the Middle East by brokering water allocation agreements between Israel, Egypt and Jordan. By constructing nuclear desalination plants that would make brackish water usable, the administration believed it could resettle Palestinian refugees onto new irrigable land and mitigate tensions over the division of the water supply. In addition, Johnson thought linking American aid of the project to Israeli acceptance of nuclear safeguards would help prevent a regional arms race. Ultimately, the administrations' expectations exceeded certain geopolitical realities, namely, the refusal of Arab and Israeli governments to cooperate.

The special section of this issue of the *Review* is a trio of features on ‘The Study of History.’ First, Andrew Schiera offers a historiographical analysis of the study of history in American schools. Using a variety of American history textbooks published from the 1940s to the present, Schiera explores a survey of textbooks and asserts that the textbook author is enormously influential and authoritative in the study of American history. He further argues that the textbook giants often imposed a civic duty on their readers by reaffirming timeless American values and confidence in our ability to overcome future challenges. The next feature consists of graduate student interviews; a number of graduate students across various specialties were asked a series of questions pertaining to their undergraduate and graduate careers. Finally, ‘The Study of History’ culminates with abstracts of the 2008 honors theses. Each author has participated in the three-semester honors program, this year under the direction of Dr. Kristen Stromberg Childers and Dr. Michael Zuckerman, and has completed a thesis investigating original historical questions.

The collection and publication of these papers was the collaborative effort of many individuals. The *Review* would like to thank the many members of the history faculty who encouraged their students to submit essays for

publication. The Editorial Board would like to especially thank Dr. Ann Moyer, the undergraduate chair of the history department, for her continued support, and Dr. Susan Miller, the undergraduate departmental advisor, for her guidance. Finally, we thank the University of Pennsylvania and the History Department in particular for its financial support of the *Review*, its efforts to foster undergraduate research, and the commitment of its faculty to cultivating future historians.

Rachel J. Omansky
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF