Current and Back Issues’ Content of Manuscript Studies to Become Fully Open Access

Effective in 2024, and made possible by the generous support of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies (SIMS) at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries, all current and back issues’ content of the journal Manuscript Studies will become fully Open Access (OA) under the Diamond OA model, which allows readers and authors to access journal content free of charge.

Manuscript Studies joins the University of Pennsylvania Press’s growing Open Access journals program which also includes the Journal of Disaster Studies, Observational Studies, and Pasados: Recovering History, Imagining Latinidad. Content for Penn Press’s Open Access journals is available on Project MUSE.

Since its first issue in 2016, Manuscript Studies has embraced the full complexity of global manuscript studies in the digital age. It has been conceived with four main goals: to bridge the gaps between material and digital manuscript research; to break down the walls which often separate print and digital publication and serve as barriers between academics, professionals in the cultural heritage field, and citizen scholars; to serve as a forum for scholarship encompassing many pre-modern manuscripts cultures—not just those of Europe; and to showcase methods and techniques of analysis in manuscript studies that can be applied across different subject areas. The journal is edited by Nicholas Herman, the Lawrence J. Schoenberg Curator at the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies and Medieval Studies Librarian at the Penn Libraries; Lynn Ransom, Curator of SIMS Programs, Schoenberg Database Manager, and founding member of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies; and Amey Hutchins, Penn Libraries’ Manuscripts Cataloger and Reviews Editor.

“Free and open access has been central to the vision of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies since its founding,” says Sean Quimby, Associate University Librarian and Director of the Jay I. Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, and Director of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year.

“New agreement, an expansion of our longstanding partnership with Penn Press, strengthens and supports a robust exchange of knowledge among a global community of manuscript scholars and students.”

SIMS is home to the Lawrence J. Schoenberg collection of manuscripts, donated to the Penn Libraries by Schoenberg in 2011, and the Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts, a free, open-access resource that enables researchers to trace the provenance of manuscripts from their origins to present times. In addition to publishing the journal Manuscript Studies, SIMS engages scholars from around the world through the annual Schoenberg Symposium on Manuscript Studies in the Digital Age, held in partnership with the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Print volumes of the journal will remain available for purchase.

Check Out All the Penn Press Journals on Their New Website!

The Journals Section of the Penn Press website has a new look! And with the new look comes increased functionality—the webby word for making it easier to find what you’re looking for and for more online services for subscribers and readers to access their journals.

The site went live on Tuesday, November 28th, so it still has that new-car smell.

Visit pennpress.org/journals and give it a spin!
Penn Press to Become Publisher of *Nova Religio* in 2024

In 2024, the University of Pennsylvania Press will become the publisher of the journal *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, the official journal of the Association for the Academic Study of New Religions, Inc. (AASNR). The journal is hosted on Project MUSE. *Nova Religio* began publication in 1997 and presents scholarly interpretations and examinations of emergent and alternative religious movements. Original research articles, field notes, perspectives on the study of new religions, reviews and review articles, keep scholars well informed on a wide range of topics including: new religions; new movements within established religious traditions; neo-indigenous, neo-polytheistic and revival movements; ancient wisdom and New Age groups; diasporic religious movements; and marginalized and stigmatized religions.

The journal publishes quarterly and is edited by Marie W. Dallam, Professor of Religious Studies in the Honors College at the University of Oklahoma; Joseph P. Laycock, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Texas State University; Catherine Wessinger, Rev. H. James Yamauchi, S.J. Professor of the History of Religions at Loyola University New Orleans; and Benjamin E. Zeller, Professor of Religion and Chair of the Religion Department at Lake Forest College, and President of AASNR. The Reviews Editor is Rebecca Moore, Professor Emerita of Religious Studies at San Diego State University.

“*Nova Religio* is excited to begin our partnership with the University of Pennsylvania Press. The Press’s mission to disseminate and advance scholarship so as to understand and inform is aligned with our goal to better understand often contentious and complicated subjects. We look forward to collaborating to expand access to this critical scholarship,” said AASNR President Zeller.

“We are pleased to partner with *Nova Religio*. The journal’s commitment to interdisciplinarity and diverse global perspectives has made it the top home for scholars publishing in new religious movements,” said Mary Francis, Director of the University of Pennsylvania Press.


**Director of Journals Jocelyn Dawson Reports from Charleston 2023**

From November 7 to 10, I attended the Charleston Library Conference. The best panel I attended was on AI and Large Language Models and their use in libraries—there was also a good session on the stagnating peer reviewer pool and a great Subscribe to Open workshop. In the AI realm, it was reassuring to hear that there are new tools like scite and Scopus AI that students are being encouraged to use for research-backed use of AI.

There were more than sixteen University Press members in attendance from institutions such as Central European University Press, University of California Press, Oxford University Press, University of Michigan Press, and Duke University Press.

The most-talked-about themes were, unsurprisingly, artificial intelligence, open access, and research integrity, which encompasses peer review. For example, Kelly Denzer, a librarian at Davidson, shared that their library is very interested in Subscribe to Open, especially cost-neutral models.

I also met Steve Fallon from DeGruyter and discovered that he and the other DeGruyter staff are excited about the American Philosophical Society (APS) collection. One of their sales reps said that they are always happy to have new content to talk about and reported that the librarians they’ve spoken to about APS have been enthusiastic in their responses.
Missives from the Field: Penn Press Represented at Early Fall Conferences

Early in the fall semester, Penn Press editors were seen at the following annual scholarly conferences, along with Penn Press books: Senior Editor Elisabeth Maselli writes about the American Political Science Association (APSA); Senior Editor Robert Lockhart reports on the Urban History Association (UHA); and Editor-in-Chief Walter Biggins reports back from the Pennsylvania Historical Association (PHA).

American Political Science Association
August 31–September 3, Los Angeles

The APSA was held at the Los Angeles Convention Center this year, and the exhibit hall was in a central location, opening right behind the registration desks. This allowed for a great deal of traffic and the hall was busy throughout the conference.

We co-displayed with Ingram again this year, along with Stanford, Edinburgh, Bristol/Policy, and Fordham University Presses. This turned out to be a good arrangement as it allowed me to focus on meetings with potential authors. Most of the researchers I talked to had projects addressing democracy, Artificial Intelligence, and/or the intersection of religion and politics, with a fairly international focus running throughout.

Urban History Association
October 26–29, Pittsburgh

This was the first UHA conference in five years, and the topic, “Reparations and the Right to the City,” was timely, which made attendance robust. Attendees include mostly academic historians working on a wide range of topics related to or occurring in cities within the United States and internationally. New Penn Press titles of particular interest to attendees included Brent Cebul’s *Illusions of Progress*, Giana McKee’s *Hospital City, Healthcare Nation*, and Faiza Moatasim’s *Master Plans and Encroachments*. This eclecticism is conducive to our list, as most of the books on display come from our Politics and Culture in Modern America series, such as Melanie D. Newport’s *This is My Jail* (2022) and Kyle T. Mays’ *City of Dispossessions* (2022).

Other exhibitors included Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Temple University Presses, several public history exhibitors, and Scholar’s Choice.

In conversations with researchers I learned about several interesting projects, including one on “reparative planning” and another that explores the Mexican American experience of the War on Drugs.

Pennsylvania Historical Association
October 26–28, Harrisburg

A small but lively meeting, Pennsylvania Historical Association (PHA) features a mix of professors, libraries, museum personnel, amateur historians, and interested people who just happened to hear about it from connected friends. There was also a small contingent of undergraduate and early doctoral students, usually following the lead of their professors. This year’s theme was “Future Visions of Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic,” with lots of sessions focusing on the Underground Railroad and connections between the Commonwealth and immigration—whether voluntary or otherwise. Several books drew sustained attention throughout the meeting:

- Susan H. Brandt, *Women Healers* (2022)
- Kathleen M. Brown, *Undoing Slavery* (2023)
- Michael A. Blaakman, *Speculation Nation* (2023)


My primary goal in attending was to re-establish an acquisitions presence at PHA so that writers and researchers in attendance—most of whom were either quite advanced in their careers or quite early, with the in-betweeners mostly being people in “alt-ac” careers—had another choice beyond the usual Temple and Penn State University Presses.

To further promote the visibility of Penn Press, I participated in a roundtable session, “Building a Career in the Historical Professions,” with Sarah Piccini of the Lackawanna Historical Society; Lexy deGraffenreid from Penn State University Libraries; Kate Lukaszewicz of Classrooms Without Borders; and Lynne Calamia from the Roebling Museum in Roebling, New Jersey.
Penn Press in the Media

The announcement of Wharton School Press becoming an imprint of Penn Press was included in Publishers Weekly, Shelf Awareness, and Publishers Lunch.

The announcement of Manuscript Studies journal content becoming Open Access was included in Penn Almanac.

Richard Vague, author of The Paradox of Debt (2023), was interviewed on “Daytime Columbus” and the ThinkAdvisor website and the book was reviewed in The Brunswick News, CFA Institute Enterprising Investor, and TheDerrick.com (link not available). The book also entered The Wall Street Journal best-seller list in the #9 spot on July 9, 2023.

American Burial Ground (2023), by Sarah Keyes, was announced on the NEVADA Today website (University of Nevada, Reno), and Keyes was interviewed on the Writing Westward podcast.

Speculation Nation (2023), by Michael Blaakman, was excerpted in Lapham’s Quarterly.

Faiza Moatasim, author of Master Plans and Encroachments (2023), was interviewed on the New Books Network.

England’s Jews (2023), by John Tolan was reviewed in The Jewish Link (reprint of review that originally appeared in The Jewish Press).

Gadi Sagiv, author of Jewish Blues (2023), was interviewed on the New Books Network.

The Silver Women (2023), by Joan Flores-Villalobos, was reviewed in Los Angeles Review of Books.

Jewish Life in Medieval Spain (2023), by Jonathan Ray, was featured on TheMedievalists.net website.

A.J. Berkovitz, author of A Life of Psalms in Jewish Late Antiquity (2023), published essays in Tablet Magazine and Ancient Jew Review.

Illusions of Progress (2023), by Brent Cebul, was excerpted in Penn Today.

Adrian Weimer, author of A Constitutional Culture (2023), was interviewed on New Books Network.

Joel D. Anderson, author of Reimagining Christendom (2023), was interviewed on the New Books Network.

Debapriya Sarkar, author of Possible Knowledge (2023), was interviewed and the book was excerpted on The Folger Shakespeare Library/The Collation blog.

Author of This Is My Jail (2022) Melanie Newport’s appearance at 2023 Printers Row Lit Fest aired on CSPAN.

Sanaa Alimia, author of Refugee Cities (2022), published an article in The International News.

Urvashi Chakravarty, author of Fictions of Consent (2022), was interviewed in The Sundial/ACMRS.

Bad Humor (2022), by Kim Coles, was reviewed in the Times Literary Supplement.

Cosmos, Liturgy, and the Arts in the Twelfth Century (2022), by Margot E. Fassler was reviewed in The Living Church.

The Military and the Market (2022), edited by Jennifer Mittelstadt and Mark R. Wilson, was reviewed in The Strategy Page.

Cultivating Empire (2022), by Lori J. Daggar was included in The Christian Century’s “Take & Read: American religious history” roundup.

Andrew D. Berns, author of The Land Is Mine (2022), was interviewed on the Seforim Chatter podcast.

A Right to Lie? (2021), by Catherine J. Ross, was featured in a New York Times op-ed.

Illusions of Empire (2021), by William S. Kiser was selected as an Editor’s Pick in Choice.

Jennifer Taylor Westerfeld, author of Egyptian Hieroglyphs in the Late Antique Imagination (2019), was interviewed on Medievalists.net.