

UC UC Historians Win Ohio Book Awards

By: UC Department of History

UC historians Christopher Phillips and Ethan Katz have won the 2017 Distinguished Book Prizes from the Ohio Academy of History. Professor Phillips won in the Senior Faculty category for his 2016 book, *The Rivers Ran Backward: The Civil War and the Remaking of the American Middle Border* (Oxford University Press) and Professor Katz has won the Junior Faculty category for his 2015 book, *The Burdens of Brotherhood: Jews and Muslims from North Africa to France* (Harvard University Press).

Professors Phillips and Katz will receive their book awards at the OAH's annual meeting at Ohio State University. A roundtable devoted to Phillips's book will be held on April 1, with regional scholars discussing its contributions to Civil War, regional, and U.S. history.

Phillips's book explores the fierce internal conflicts over their political and social loyalties in the states that bordered the Ohio and Missouri Rivers, west of the Appalachians. White supremacy and widespread support for the existence of slavery pervaded the "free" states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, which had much closer economic and cultural ties to the South, while those in Kentucky and Missouri held little identification with the South except over slavery. The book reveals the complex history of the western border states as they struggled with questions of nationalism, race, secession, neutrality, loyalty, and even place, as the Civil War tore the nation apart. Ultimately, the pervasive violence of the Civil War and the cultural politics that raged in its aftermath proved to be the strongest determining factor in shaping these states' regional identities, North, South, and Midwest, leaving an indelible imprint on the way in which Americans think of themselves and others in the nation. Phillips shows that the Civil War was more than a conflict pitting the North against the South, but one within the West that permanently reshaped American regions.

Katz's book is a sweeping history of Jews and Muslims in France from World War I to the present that focuses on the experiences of ordinary people. Katz shows how Jewish-Muslim relations were shaped by everyday encounters and by perceptions of deeply rooted collective similarities or differences. Jews and Muslims advocated common and divergent political visions, enjoyed common culinary and musical traditions, and interacted on more intimate terms as neighbors, friends, enemies, and even lovers and family members. Drawing upon dozens of archives, newspapers, and interviews, Katz tackles controversial subjects like Muslim collaboration and resistance during World War II and the Holocaust, Jewish participation in French colonialism, the international impact of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and contemporary Muslim antisemitism in France. Through their eyes, colonial France was a multiethnic, multireligious society more open to public displays of difference than its postcolonial successor. This book thus dramatically reconceives the meaning and history not only of Jewish-Muslim relations but ultimately of modern France itself. The book has also won a number of national and international awards.