

## PREFACE: HAPPY CENTENNIAL TO THE ACS DIVISION OF THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

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The nature of [scientific] communities provides a virtual guarantee that both the list of problems solved by science and the precision of individual problem-solutions will grow and grow. At least, the nature of the community provides such a guarantee if there is any way at all in which it can be provided. What better criterion than the decision of the scientific group could there be?

—Thomas S. Kuhn, 1970 (1)

We, the co-editors of this commemorative issue of the *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry*, believe that Kuhn's words speak for the history of science as well as they do for science itself. We are more than delighted to welcome you, our readers, to this special issue of the *Bulletin*.

Indeed, we are overwhelmed by and appreciative of the responses of 16 of our colleagues to publish their articles in this special issue. These historians of chemistry and chemist-historians individually, and thus collectively, have shared their diverse ideas and visions for the future of the study of the history of chemistry. We sincerely thank them for their participation. They have joined together with a wonderful diversity of personal and professional experiences to share their mindful deep thinking and personal commitments to chemistry and to the history of chemistry. We have been stimulated by the insights and examples given in this set of essays, and we look forward to seeing future work in the history of chemistry along the lines outlined here. We are grateful

as well to those who supported the project with insights and assistance behind the scenes.

These papers reveal the authors' idiosyncratic responses to the prompt we provided:

The working theme for this special issue is: "Novel Insights in the History of Chemistry: Looking Back Yet Mostly Looking Forward." Possible subjects include:

- questions or topics ripe for exploration
- promising methodologies
- developing new audiences
- interdisciplinary opportunities
- new ways of analyzing previously studied topics

This theme led to a wide variety of responses, which we have collected together into the following six topics arranged after Roald Hoffmann's thoughtful foreword and this preface:

### **Expansive Approaches to the History of Chemistry**

"Epitomizing Chemistry for Changing Audiences in Britain, 1820 -2020," by Robert G. W. Anderson

"Mendeleev's 'Problems: A Means to Engage Students and Teachers in the History of Chemistry,'" by Arthur Greenberg

"Archaeological Chemistry: Past, Present, Future," by Mary Virginia Orna

“Can We Bring Chemistry Back? Exploring the Potential of ‘Gateway Artifacts’ at the Science History Institute,” by David Allen Cole

### **Foci on Specific Topics**

“Historiography of the Chemical Industry: Technologies and Products versus Corporate History,” by Anthony S. Travis

“A Future History of Selectivity in Organic Chemistry: Whence, Where, and Whither?” by David E. Lewis

“The Development of Medicinal Chemistry as a Disciplines: A Topic Ripe for Historical Exploration,” by John Parascandola

### **Multidisciplinary Approaches and Tools**

“Moving Beyond the Intersection of Chemistry and History: Evolving Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Historical Study of Chemistry,” by Seth C. Rasmussen

“Computational History of Chemistry,” by Guillermo Restrepo

### **Thriving, Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity and the History of Chemistry**

“History of Chemistry as a Tool for the Engagement of Underrepresented Students in Chemistry,” by Sibrina N. Collins

“Out of Obscurity: Contextualizing Forgotten Women Chemists,” by Marelene F. Rayner-Canham and Geoffrey W. Rayner-Canham

### **Relationships of Historians and Chemist-Historians**

“‘The Poor Sister:’ Coming to Grips with Recent and Contemporary Chemistry,” by Stephen J. Weininger

The Importance of Plurality and Mutual Respect in the Practice of the History of Chemistry,” by Peter J. T. Morris and Jeffrey I. Seeman

“The Long and Short of It: The Future Writing of History of Chemistry,” by William H. Brock

### **The Past, Present and Future of History of Chemistry**

“Does History of Chemistry Have a Future?” by William B. Jensen

“Remote Interviewing and the History of Chemistry,” by Jeffrey I. Seeman

“Is There Room for the Present in the History of Chemistry?” by Carmen J. Giunta

“Reflections on the Last and the Next Hundred Years,” by Alan J. Rocke

We happily celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Division of History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society. Happy Birthday HIST!

We encourage you, our readers, to contribute to the future of HIST. We especially invite you to submit articles to the Division’s journal, the *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry*. All articles in the *Bulletin* become open access after three years; of course, they are immediately available to members of HIST. So, there are decades of papers dealing with the history of chemistry—which have a long shelf life!—available for all to read, free of charge.

We also thank the Executive Committee of HIST for providing the funds for this special issue of the *Bulletin*—two other issues will appear in 2022 as usual. Three issues of the *Bulletin* will appear in 2022, a record! Furthermore, the Executive Committee agreed with our request that this special issue be Open Access immediately.

In addition to the *Bulletin*, HIST sponsors many activities, including symposia and awards, about which more information can be found at the Division’s website: [acshist.scs.illinois.edu](http://acshist.scs.illinois.edu). The Division’s present and future will depend on the ideas and energy of the history of chemistry community: please join us in making that future!

We dedicate this special issue to the founders of the Division of History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society, Charles A. Browne and Edgar Fahs Smith, and to all those others who have participated in any of the activities of HIST during its first 100 years. Look for centennial features in the other 2022 issues of the *Bulletin* as well, commemorating some of those important contributors.

### **Reference**

1. T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1970.