

Editorial Foreword

HAIL AND FAREWELL In July, 2006, Thomas Trautmann wrote in his parting foreword, “*CSSH* changes editors once in a blue moon, if then. This is one of those blue moons.” It had been almost nine years since the last transition. “Eight and three-quarters, to be exact,” Trautmann reminded us. Lest you gasp in amazement, please realize that his predecessor, Raymond Grew, was editor of *CSSH* for over twenty years. In October, 2006, when I became editor, I told myself that I would not linger in the post. I would serve a modest three years; an ample five at most. Ten years later—nine and three quarters, to be exact—I see my blue moon rising in the Ann Arbor sky. It has passed overhead a few times before, I suspect, but I was busily reading manuscripts. Editing *CSSH* is exhilarating, captivating work. Once you settle into it, and it settles into you, ordinary time/space blurs into the editorial *longue durée*.

In its fifty-eight years, *CSSH* has had only five editors: Sylvia Thrupp (the journal’s founder), Eric Wolf, Raymond Grew, Thomas Trautmann, and Andrew Shryock. Our first priority has always been to sample, review, and publish excellent scholarship across the humanities and social sciences, and editorial longevity helps immensely in that task. *CSSH* is often described as a stodgy journal; our cover design, fonts, and layouts have changed little in recent decades. We are seldom swept up in intellectual fads. Trendy academic jargon is rare on our pages. Despite our aversion to the cosmetically “now and wow,” frequent readers of *CSSH* know that our articles are innovative, empirically rich, theoretically sophisticated, and often analytically unusual. I am sure this is because our networks of evaluation, and our house style, emerge from an interdisciplinary mix of younger and older scholars who hold each other accountable to a diverse set of methods, writerly tastes, and ways of framing an argument. Long-term editorship is an important part of our networks of accountability; we cultivate it and, over time, we become heavily invested in reproducing it.

In what now amounts to *CSSH* tradition, new editors have spent several years watching their predecessors run the journal. My own apprenticeship to Tom Trautmann was six years long; his to Ray Grew was twice that and more. New editors are drawn from the existing editorial committee, where they have inspected dozens of manuscripts for us, proving themselves capable of the heavy lifting and careful deliberation that go with the job. They have also, along the way, acquired a good sense of what *CSSH*-worthy scholarship looks like. The succession is a slow process—often it is a waiting game; rarely does anyone lobby to be editor; they must be ardently wooed—but the

same networks of accountability that produce excellent *CSSH* articles are likely to snag the kind of scholar who can predictably spot those articles when they arrive on our doorstep in manuscript form.

This process has its drawbacks. It is hard to steer *CSSH* in new directions. Old editorial networks are sticky; precedent brings with it a limiting set of preferences for certain topics, approaches, and types of external readers. In our fiftieth anniversary issue (2008: 1–8), and in the issue marking my fifth year as editor (2009: 717–21), I described some of the coverage problems a strong brand creates. I was never able, for all my scheming, to push *CSSH* deeper into the past. Its temporal focus remains decidedly modern. Nor could I budge the journal from its geographical fixation on Eurasian societies, colonial and postcolonial, national and imperial. The New World (north and south); sub-Saharan Africa and its diasporas; the medieval, premodern, and ancient; contemporary Western societies, with their distinctive identity formations—all have provided subject matter for some of my favorite *CSSH* articles of the last decade, but they are not as central to the journal as I would like, and much compelling work in these areas is published elsewhere. Our disciplinary home ground, likewise, is located in the hybrid zones between history and anthropology, with a bias toward scholarship firmly rooted in area studies. The presence *CSSH* once had in sociology has withered; we are no longer a key site for all-purpose theory building; our ability to attract interesting work in comparative economic and political systems (as done by actual economists and political scientists) is not as strong as it could be. Our annual reports from Cambridge University Press assure us that *CSSH* is one of the world's leading history journals, its articles widely downloaded and cited, but there are multiple fronts on which we need to expand.

With these challenges in mind, I am delighted to say that the new editors of *CSSH*, Paul Johnson and Geneviève Zubrzycki, are ideally equipped to maintain the journal's traditional strengths while leading it in new directions. They are creative, highly productive scholars, each is blessed with the comparative sensibility so crucial to *CSSH*, and, proof in the pudding, they have both published superb articles in *CSSH*.¹ Paul Johnson, Professor of History and Afroamerican and African Studies at the University of Michigan, has served on the *CSSH* editorial committee since 2012. He specializes in the study of religion, with a particular interest in Brazilian, Caribbean, and other Afro-Atlantic societies. Among Johnson's award-winning books are *Secrets, Gossip and Gods: The Transformation of Brazilian Candomblé* (Oxford University Press, 2002) and *Diaspora Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa*

¹ Paul Christopher Johnson, "An Atlantic History of 'Spirit Possession,'" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53–2 (2011): 393–425; Geneviève Zubrzycki, "Nationalism, 'Philosemitism,' and Symbolic Boundary-Making in Contemporary Poland," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 58–1 (2016): 66–98.

(University of California Press, 2007). Geneviève Zubrzycki, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan, is new to *CSSH*, but not to academic journal work, having served in editorial roles at *Sociology of Religion* and *American Journal of Sociology*. Her research interests include nationalism, religious experience, anti- and philo-Semitism, Eastern Europe, and collective memory. Her first book, *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), was bedecked in accolades, and her next effort, *Beheading the Saint: National Identity, Religion and Secularism in Quebec* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), will transport her unique analytical style from Europe to North America.

I am excited to welcome this dynamic duo to the editorship of *CSSH*. Johnson and Zubrzycki have a natural eye for quality, they are fair and careful readers, and their combined areas of expertise and disciplinary training will help us teach *CSSH*, this excellent, old, inertial beast, a few new tricks. I wish them the great pleasure that comes from collaboration with so many gifted authors and reviewers. Part fuel and part drug, it is what every *CSSH* editor misses most when they pass the baton.

ETERNAL THANKS On my way out the door, I want to make a deep, reverential bow to David Akin, our managing editor, who kept *CSSH* running smoothly during my decade as editor, handling everything from budget calculations, to equipment purchases, to the surgical art of editing and proofing our manuscripts. If *CSSH* essays have a certain style (and most readers think they do), it is largely because Akin works so closely and carefully with our authors, the already good ones and those whose analytical brilliance, sadly, is packaged in ugly prose. By our count, Akin polished 332 articles and review essays on my watch, and his skills as a fixer allowed us to showcase the work of many talented scholars whose first language was not English. For evidence of the quality of his work, just tally the number of times he is thanked in author acknowledgments. It is very many, but hardly enough. Perhaps I can correct the deficit by sharing a strategy for the future success of *CSSH* that Trautmann, Shryock, Johnson, and Zubrzycki agreed on as they discussed the editorial succession: “Keep David Akin healthy and happy.”

I also want to thank former editors Ray Grew and Tom Trautmann for good advice whenever I needed it, and Mark Zadrozny, our publisher, for treating *CSSH* so well at Cambridge University Press. The members of our editorial committee deserve medals for sitting through ten years of manuscript meetings, in which a sleep-deprived editor tried to make sense of our most promising new essays. The external reviewers recommended at these meetings, a discerning and reliable crew, seldom let us down. Paolo Squatriti and Stuart Kirsch, our book review editors, did valiant, multi-year service, soliciting hundreds of short reviews and the occasional review essay, and chasing down a growing

number of truant reviewers and de facto book thieves. Since our book review editors are not trained as bounty hunters and repo men, we have decided, as of 2016, to phase out our short book reviews, opting instead for meatier review essays.

A final measure of gratitude goes to the ten editorial assistants who served beside me in the trenches, most of them graduate students in the Department of Anthropology. They processed roughly four hundred manuscripts a year, corresponded with authors and reviewers, extracted late reviews and overdue revisions, dealt with bruised and inflated egos, kept everyone on schedule, and learned, more or less, how peer review really works. They loved a job that, at most journals, is done nowadays by an automated system, and our authors and reviewers cherished the human contact. So did I. My right hand men and women were: June Gin, Laura Brown, Susanne Unger, Anna Genina, Karen Hébert, Randy Hicks, Daniel Birchok, Jini Kim, Geoffrey Hughes, and Deborah Jones. Thank you all.

PARTING GIFTS But what about the rest of you, our faithful and growing readership? As much as I want to thank you for consuming our product, I know that you are a diffuse, digital target. Our article abstracts are now viewed online over half a million times each year, but the supple metrics provided on our Cambridge website tell me that about three hundred people (give or take a hundred) will read this foreword. It is a humbling figure. I have always tried to say something interesting about the articles featured in each new issue, explaining how they fit together and what insights come from reading them in larger, comparative contexts. I have enjoyed and sweated over this little ritual, and I am grateful to the stalwart few who have read my forewords over the years. I imagine you as an audience made up of editors, former and current, who know the sweet pain of assembly; the authors whose papers I describe (along with their best friends, worst enemies, and proudest kin); and a final type, my favorite: the happy few who still read *CSSH* as if it were an edited volume, an integral creation that appears, refreshed and anew, four times a year, to engage and inspire those who read it front to back. A good editor must see the journal that way, and he or she must pretend that all its readers, the cruising six hundred thousand and the hyper-attentive three hundred, do so as well.

For my final go, I have put together ten essays, a bit extra as I say goodbye. They have all the charms of *CSSH* fare, and some of them are heading in the new directions I hope the journal will explore. I ask you, this last time, to help me conjure up their connections. Look at the four essays on Iran, ancient and modern, pagan and Muslim, by **Nile Green, Alireza Doostdar, Richard E. Payne, and Assef Ashraf**. Consider how little you know about this place (if indeed it is one place across all that space and

time). Read the two essays on pluralism in Muslim law, medieval Mediterranean and Mughal-British, by **Francisco Apellániz** and **Nandini Chatterjee**. Ponder how thin and inaccurate our current understandings of shari'ah can be. Study the two essays on plant science and pharmacology in post/colonial India, Vietnam, and Senegal, by **Prakash Kumar** and **Laurence Monnais** and **Noémi Tousignant**. See how new approaches to expert knowledge are changing the way scholars define metropolitan and peripheral societies. For a real jolt, read the two essays about the moral intentions of police dogs and undercover cops, by **Chris Pearson** and **Gregory Feldman**. Think over the odd parallels in how we define the good, the bad, and the bestial at the boundaries of law and order. And to finish things off, read our review essay, by **Marina Welker**, and study how the lines between activism, advocacy, and critical scholarship are drawn in four recent books on mining operations and corporate responsibility.

It is rich material, endlessly rich, and more is on the way. I will sorely miss being the one who brings it to you.

—Andrew Shryock,
CSSH Editor