Preface

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The essays in this special issue have been assembled in honor of Kenneth Stow, Professor Emeritus of Jewish History at the University of Haifa and founding editor of *Jewish History*. As scholar, teacher, and editor, Kenneth has assumed a leading position in the field. His extensive list of publications reveals the breadth of his scholarly work, which spans a millennium and more. That is a prodigious accomplishment in its own right. Even more impressive, perhaps, has been his determination to widen the scope of his research by turning to a remarkable range of topics requiring mastery of a wide array of tools and methods.

Kenneth Stow received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1971. He began his teaching career at the Jewish Theological Seminary (1972–1975) and at Queens College (1975–1976) before moving to Haifa in 1976. At the University of Haifa he served in several capacities, including Departmental Chair and Chair of the Faculty Research Authority. Among his major achievements was the training of graduate students who have since entered the field and become university faculty. Over the years he has also held numerous visiting professorships in the United States, in Canada, and at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

Initially, Kenneth established his scholarly reputation by examining the attitudes of the medieval Church toward the Jewish population of western Europe. His publications on the Crusades, canon law and papal policies, and medieval Catholic conceptions of the Jews earned him accolades from many quarters. Kenneth subsequently enlarged the focus of his work to incorporate the internal history of Jews in western Christendom; this shift entailed a move from intellectual to social history. His pioneering and highly influential article on the medieval Jewish family in Rhineland was an outgrowth of this new direction. Specialized studies on various aspects of Jewish communal and family life in medieval Venice and Rome followed, drawing on his expert knowledge of Italy, its language and culture.

His interest in Rome carried into the early modern era and came to fruition in a book on the sixteenth-century Roman ghetto, titled *Theater of Acculturation*, based on his 1996 Kennedy Lectures at Smith College. Relying on Jewish notarial documents held in Rome's Capitoline Archives, Kenneth showed how Jews, through the adoption and adaptation of Roman culture, preserved their identity instead of surrendering it through assimilation.

More recently, in *Jewish Dogs* he returned to the Church and the Jews by tracing the long history of the anti-Jewish metaphor first used by John Chrysostom. Far more than a history of antisemitism, *Jewish Dogs* is a penetrating study of Catholic doctrines and their broader cultural implications over the course of two millennia. Kenneth's current research, which focuses on the transformation of *ius commune* and customary law in the early modern period, offers a novel understanding of Jewish civil emancipation as the culmination of a legal process that took two hundred years to complete.

Alongside these demanding projects, Kenneth made time for the establishment of the journal *Jewish History*, together with the late Robert Cohen, and has served as its editor-in-chief for twenty-five years. Thanks to Kenneth's extraordinary efforts, *Jewish History* has emerged as the premier English language journal in the field. And it is much to the credit of our honoree that many younger scholars found in him an encouraging editor and mentor who helped them gain confidence in themselves and a better understanding of academic writing. Numerous established scholars also have benefited from Kenneth's generosity as a colleague and for his dedication to promoting the advancement of Jewish historical research.

Former students and colleagues in four countries have contributed articles to this Festschrift. The range of their subjects, which span medieval intellectual history and thought, Renaissance and early modern Italy, early modern Ashkenaz, Holocaust rescue, and modern Israel, mirrors many of the areas that have been the focus of Kenneth's attention in the course of his career and testifies to the source of inspiration that he has provided even to those working on other topics. We thank each of the authors for their contributions and extend our special thanks to Yossi Chajes, Federica Francesconi, and Adam Teller for their early efforts in launching this project.

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With this double issue, we begin our tenure as the new editors-in-chief of *Jewish History*. A new editorial board is now in place, a streamlined process for submissions has been set in motion, and we have begun to receive generous support from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the Program in Judaic Studies at Yale University, for which we are greatly appreciative. We remain committed to maintaining the standard of excellence that has been the hallmark of *Jewish History* to date and are heartened not only by the continued strength in the field of Jewish history in North America and Israel, but also by the growing interest in Jewish studies across Europe, as well as in South Africa, Latin America, and other regions of the world. Our aim is to ensure that *Jewish History* continue to serve as a dynamic forum for a field that has begun to realize its global potential.