The Festschrift that follows honors a colleague for two pivotal roles that he has played in the field of Hebrew and Judaic Studies in the American university context. Through his books and articles, Robert Chazan has reshaped the study of European Jewry in the Middle Ages, particularly as it relates to Jewish-Christian relations. At the same time, through his work in the major organizations representing the field of Judaic Studies—the Association for Jewish Studies and the American Academy for Jewish Research—Chazan has helped to build the field and to situate it firmly in the context of the American academy. Additionally, through his service as founding chair of the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, and later through his leadership of the dual-degree programs of the Skirball Department together with the Wagner School of Public Administration and the Steinhardt School of Education, he pioneered in making the university a place for the training of professionals dedicated to Jewish communal service and education. To all of these efforts he has consistently brought his impeccable scholarly credentials, his administrative acumen, and the integrity and friendship for which he is so well known.

Chazan was born in 1936 and grew up in Albany, New York, where he received his earliest Hebrew education. In 1958 he earned his B.A. from Columbia College and B.H.L. from the Jewish Theological Seminary. He received an M.H.L. and Rabbinical Ordination from the Seminary in 1962. During his years at the Jewish Theological Seminary he was privileged to be part of the Talmud Program, which was essentially a program to train scholars. There he met and established permanent relationships with leading scholars who brought together deep understanding of traditional Hebrew texts and critical historical inquiry. He went on to acquire his Ph.D. at Columbia University, where he studied with Salo Baron and completed his dissertation under the supervision of Gerson Cohen in 1967. His dissertation was entitled Thirteenth-Century Jewry in Northern France: An Economic and Political History. This topic and the wider interest it indicated
would define his research program throughout his career. He holds honorary degrees from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Chazan taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary already in his days as a graduate student, from 1962–67. His appointment at the Ohio State University, where he taught from 1967–80, can be seen with hindsight as part of the spread of Judaic Studies in North America beyond its early East-Coast context. At Ohio State Chazan also served as director of the Melton Center for Jewish Studies, where he helped to develop an interdisciplinary program that continues to flourish today and that set the pattern for many programs in North American colleges and universities. After a brief stay at Tel Aviv University Chazan moved to Queens College of the City University of New York, where he served from 1981–87. At Queens he again took an administrative and leadership role, serving as director of the Center for Jewish Studies.

In 1987 Chazan was asked to serve as the first chair of the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, where he was appointed S. H. and Helen R. Scheuer Professor of Jewish History with an associated appointment in the Department of History. Chazan had been part of an advisory committee that helped New York University plan and execute the development of what would become the Skirball Department. The University intended to build its new department into a top-tier academic unit, one that would be one of its star programs as it moved ahead in becoming an elite university with a distinguished Faculty of Arts and Science. Chazan served as chair from 1987–1997 and succeeded in creating a department that was intimately linked with a variety of academic structures at NYU. This formula served as the basis for the growth and excellence of the department. Since the Skirball Department’s inception he has participated in the training of doctoral students, many of whom currently teach Jewish history at North American colleges and universities. In addition, Chazan served as director of the general education program of the College of Arts and Science, where he contributed greatly to NYU’s climb to greater quality and reputation.

In the wider field of Judaic Studies Chazan served as the editor of the *AJS Review* from 1983–88 and as president of the Association for Jewish Studies from 1988–91. He was a member of the executive committee of the American Academy for Jewish Research and served as its president from 1996–2000. In addition, he chaired the Academic Advisory Board of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture and