Authority and Dissent in Jewish Life
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The 31st Annual Symposium on Jewish Civilization took place on Sunday, October 28, and Monday, October 29, 2018, in Omaha, Nebraska. The title of the symposium, from which this volume also takes its name, was “Authority and Dissent in Jewish Life.” All of the papers collected here are based on presentations at the symposium itself.

The academic sponsors of this symposium represent three major institutions of higher learning in Nebraska: Creighton University (the Klutznick Chair in Jewish Civilization, the Kripke Center for the Study of Religion and Society), the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (the Harris Center for Judaic Studies), and the University of Nebraska Omaha (the Schwalb Center for Israel and Jewish Studies).

In large measure, the symposium owes its success to two groups of dedicated and talented individuals. First are my academic colleagues: Dr. Ronald Simkins (Creighton University), Dr. Jean Cahan (University of Nebraska–Lincoln), and Dr. Curtis Hutt (University of Nebraska Omaha). To use language drawn from this volume’s title: we exercise our collective authority collaboratively and creatively; dissent ensures that we consistently maintain individual and institutional integrity.

The second group consists of people who really know how to get things done. From Creighton, there is Colleen Hastings; from UNO, Kasey De Goey; and from the Omaha Jewish Federation, Jennie Gates Beckman. Their unexcelled excellence adds luster to every symposium-related activity.

The publication schedule we devised with Purdue University Press results in a period of two years between each symposium and its volume. My friends outside the world of education are always asking, What takes so long? My academic colleagues know well
that our publications are exemplary in both the speed with which they appear and the quality of their contents. This is possible only because of the high level of dedication and professionalism displayed by the staff at Purdue University Press, with whom we have had an excellent relationship for more than a decade.

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