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"Dust and Ashes": The Funeral and Forgetting of Sabato Morais*

ARTHUR KIRON

Who were those hundreds and thousands that crowded Fifth Street this afternoon for entire squares from side to side, leaving just room enough for the cars to pass? Who were those hundreds whose weary feet traveled the distance from Fifth and Green to Twelfth and Federal streets? A guard of honor it was which kings might envy. Who were they?¹

Sabato Morais remains something of a riddle to students of nineteenth-century American Jewish history, just as the phenomenon of his thousands of mourners baffled observers at his funeral in November 1897.²

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The following abbreviations have been used: *AH*, *The American Hebrew*; *AJA*, *American Jewish Archives*; *AJH*, *American Jewish History*; *CJS*, Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania; *DAB*, *Dictionary of American Biography*; *DHL*, Doctor of Hebrew Literature; *EJ*, *Encyclopedia Judaica*; *HUC*, Hebrew Union College; *IHL*, Sabato Morais, *Italian Hebrew Literature*; *JE*, *Jewish Encyclopedia*; *JQR*, *Jewish Quarterly Review*; *JTSA*, Jewish Theological Seminary of America; *LBIYB*, *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*; *MI*, Mikveh Israel; *OCC*, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*; *PAAJR*, *Publications of the American Academy of Jewish Research*; *PAJHS*, *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*; *PJAC*, Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center; *PJE*, *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent*; *SM*, Sabato Morais; *UJE*, *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*; *YU*, Yeshiva University.

1. Marcus Jastrow, *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 6. Edwin Wolf 2nd estimates the Philadelphia Jewish community grew from approximately 15,000 in 1880 to 70,000 in 1904. See Edwin Wolf 2nd, "By the People and for the People," typescript history of the Federation of Jewish Charities, *PJAC*, 21, cited in Robert Tabak, "Orthodox Judaism in Transition," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia: 1830-1940*, ed. Murray Friedman (Philadelphia, 1983), 48 and 318, n. 1. Cf. the figures listed in Jacob Rader Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585-1984* (Lanham, 1990), 194: 40,000 in 1890, 75,000 in 1900.

2. Morais' dates of birth and/or death have sometimes been misstated. He was born on Sunday, April 13, 1823 (2 Iyar 5583) in Livorno and died on Thursday, November 11,

We know the rough outlines of Morais' life,³ just as his contemporaries, of course, knew the identity of the immigrant Eastern European Jewish masses who lost a day's pay to attend his burial that rainy Monday afternoon in Philadelphia.⁴ But the Italian-born Morais, who two years after his death was memorialized by Kasriel Sarasohn's Orthodox New York *Yudishe Gazeten* as "*der grester fun ale ortodoksishe rabonim in*

1897 (16 Marheshvan 5898). According to the morning edition of the (Philadelphia) *Public Ledger*, Friday, November 12, 1897, the *PJE*, November 19, 1897, and the account of his son Henry S. Morais, a founder and editor of the *PJE*, who apparently was present at the time of his death, Morais suffered a stroke Wednesday evening, November 10, lapsed into a coma for approximately twenty-two hours, awoke briefly and finally died of a massive brain seizure shortly before 6:00 p.m., Thursday, November 11, 1897. His funeral service occurred the following Monday, November 15, at 2:00 p.m.

3. See the biographical information and memorial tributes specially prepared after Morais' death for the *PJE* and *AH*, November 19, 1897. For guides to the primary and secondary sources, see Dianne Ashton, *The Philadelphia Group: A Guide to Archival and Bibliographic Collections* (Philadelphia, 1993); Moshe Davis, "Sabato Morais: Selected and Annotated Bibliography of his Writings," *PAJHS* 37 (1947): 55-93; Arthur Kiron, "Sabato Morais Papers Finding Aid" (CJS, 1992). Since Morais' death, a handful of reminiscences, brief biographical sketches, articles and two unpublished theses have appeared. In particular, see Henry Samuel Morais, *Sabato Morais: A Memoir* (New York, 1898) [reprinted from the *Proceedings of the Sixth Biennial Convention of the Jewish Theological Seminary Association* (New York, 1898)]. For a collection of reminiscences read on the occasion of the centenary of Morais' birth (1823-1923), see William Rosenau, "Sabato Morais—An Appreciation of the Centenary of His Birth"; Marvin Nathan, "Discussion," in *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook* 33 (1923): 356-74; *Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of The Reverend Doctor Sabato Morais by the Congregation Mikveh Israel, Wednesday Evening, April 18, 1923* (Philadelphia, 1924). Other reminiscences include Cyrus Adler, "Semi-Centennial Address," and Joseph H. Hertz, "Sabato Morais—A Pupil's Tribute," in *The Jewish Theological Seminary Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. Cyrus Adler (New York, 1939), 5-6; 46-48. For the two theses, see Max Samuel Nussenbaum, "Sabato Morais: Champion of Orthodoxy" (D. H. L., Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University, 1964) and Ruth Alpers, "Traditionalism, Americanization, and Assimilation: The Struggles of Sabato Morais, 1851-1897" (rabbinic thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1994). For articles about Morais, see Alan D. Corre, "Sabato Morais and Social Justice in Philadelphia, 1858-1897," in *The Quest for Social Justice: The Morris Fromkin Memorial Lectures*, ed. Alan D. Corre (Milwaukee, 1992), 19-35; Moshe Davis, "Shabbtai Morais: toldotav, de'otav u-fe'ulotav," in *Sefer ha-shanah li-yehude amerikah*, ed. M. Ribalow ("Sabato Morais: his life, thought, and activities," in *The American Hebrew Yearbook*) 7 (New York, 1944), 574-92; Robert E. Fierstien, "Sabato Morais and the Founding of the Jewish Theological Seminary," in *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, ed. Murray Friedman (Cranston, N.J., 1993), 75-91; *idem.*, *A Different Spirit: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1886-1902* (New York, 1990), passim (revised from the author's DHL thesis at the JTSA about the founding of the JTSA). Other brief biographical sketches include Cyrus Adler, "Morais, Sabato," *DAB* 7 (New York, 1934), 149-50; Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1963), 354-

amerike . . . on sofek" ("without doubt . . . the greatest of all orthodox rabbis in the United States"),⁵ has become almost invisible in standard accounts of the American Jewish past. As the centenary of his death approaches, this neglect is all the more surprising, given the statement by Cyrus Adler, one of American Jewry's most visible public figures in the early twentieth century, that "to the Jews of England, France, Italy, and the Orient, [Morais] was the representative American Jew."⁶ *The New York Times* remembered Morais as "the most eminent rabbi in this country . . . a powerful and aggressive factor in discussions of vast import and interest to millions of people; a deep, incisive, fearless thinker, speaker, and writer."⁷ Moshe Davis declared in 1947, fifty years after Morais' death, that "a volume on Sabato Morais, his life and times, is a desideratum in American Jewish history."⁸ Despite this high estimation of Morais by his contemporaries and by Davis, the call for such a publication went unanswered. In a recent survey of scholarly

56; Judah David Eisenstein, *Otsar Zikhronotai*, Part 1 (New York, 1929), 20; Alex J. Goldman, *The Greatest Rabbis Hall of Fame: A Who's Who of Distinguished American Rabbis* (New York, 1987), 99-114; Henry S. Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1894), 59-63; Pamela Susan Nadell, *Conservative Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (New York, 1988), 190-93; Abraham A. Neuman, "Morais, Sabato," *UJE* 7 (1942): 638-40; Jack Riemer, "Morais, Sabato," *EJ* 12 (1971): 294-95; Solomon Solis-Cohen, "Necrology," *PAJHS* 8 (1900): 149-50; Cyrus L. Sulzberger, "Morais, Sabato," *JE* 8 (1904): 679-81.

4. For a colorful description of immigrant Jewish life in Philadelphia around this time, see "Jewish Immigrant Life in Philadelphia, From *The Sunday Mercury*, August 10, 1890," reprinted in *AJA* 9 (April 1957): 32-42. For background on the Philadelphia Jewish community during the second half of the nineteenth century, see Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*; Murray Friedman, ed., *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940* (Philadelphia, 1983); Maxwell Whiteman, "Philadelphia's Jewish Neighborhoods," in *The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History of Ethnic Groups and Lower-Class Life, 1790-1940*, eds. Allen F. Davis and Mark H. Heller (Philadelphia, 1973), 231-54, and additional Yiddish sources, 251, n. 10.

5. *Yudishe Gazeten* ("The Jewish Gazette"), *Pesah blat* ("Passover Issue"), March 24, 1899, 12. I am grateful to Rabbi Abraham J. Karp for bringing this rare source to my attention. A copy of this issue can be found in the Abraham and Deborah Karp Collection of Judaica Americana at the Library of the JTSA.

6. Cyrus Adler, *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 3. Indeed, Morais' extant, voluminous correspondence, held at CJS (formerly the Annenberg Research Institute, and before that the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning) amply bears out Adler's assertion, featuring letters received from around the world, including Holland, Canada, the Caribbean, England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Palestine, Poland, Rumania, and from as far away as India.

7. *The New York Times*, Saturday, November 13, 1897, 7; also quoted in *AH*, November 19, 1897, 68.

8. Davis, "Annotated Bibliography," 57.

opinions about the "Greatest American Jewish leaders" in *American Jewish History*, Morais did not merit a single mention.⁹

Why has the memory of this once renowned figure suffered so deeply the passage of time? To put the question more broadly, what is the process by which a particular figure or event comes to occupy a central or peripheral place in the history and memory of a particular ethnic group? Is it useful to speak of an American Jewish ethnic memory? If so, how is contemporary ethnic remembering entwined with the activity of history writing, and what role, if any, does gender play in the politics of forgetting? The following discussion will reopen the issue of Morais' legacy—the world from which he came, his life and times, his unprecedented funeral and subsequent scholarly neglect—as part of a preliminary effort to map a process of forgetting in the broader context of a particular transitional moment in the history of American Jewry.¹⁰

Sabato Morais was born on April 13, 1823 in Livorno (or Leghorn, as English sailors called it), just south of Pisa on the western coast of the northern Italian duchy of Tuscany. Sabato was the third of nine children, with one younger brother and seven sisters. He was raised "in quite humble circumstances" and educated in Livorno.¹¹ Morais' father Samuel descended from Portuguese Marranos who arrived in London in the 1650s, perhaps from colonial Brazil, and settled in Livorno around 1730. Sabato's mother Buonina Wolf was of German-Ashkenazic origin and it was she who decisively influenced her young son to pursue his religious vocation. Both Morais' father and his paternal grandfather

9. See the forum on the "Greatest American Jewish Leaders" in *AJH* 78 (December 1988): 169–236. Morais is actually mentioned twice in respondent Benny Kraut's article (216 and 233) but only in passing, and not as a subject or "candidate" for consideration. Otherwise, Morais does not receive a single mention. One interesting exception to this general neglect is the hagiographic treatment by Rabbi Alex J. Goldman, *The Greatest Rabbis*, 99–114. It is telling, perhaps, that Morais' name does not appear among the list of leading names on the cover of Goldman's book calculated to draw the attention of prospective buyers.

10. On the exploding literature on ethnicity, see, e.g., Werner Sollors, ed., *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York, 1989) and additional bibliography cited there. For the classic study which has defined the terms of the debate about Jewish historiography, collective memory and modern dilemmas, see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (New York, 1989). For an important methodological guide to the subject of gender and women's history, see Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York, 1988), esp. ch. 2, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," 28–50, and more generally Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden From History: Rediscovering Women in History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (New York, 1975).

11. Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 60.

Sabato, after whom he was named, were Freemasons and immersed in rebellion spurred by the Napoleonic invasion in June 1796. "It was [Sabato, the paternal grandfather] who instilled a feeling for liberty into his compatriots. It was he who exclaimed 'Up for liberty; down with tyrants . . . [and] in his son Samuel Morais was found a devoted Republican, a man who even suffered imprisonment for his political opinions, who was wont to exclaim 'Even the boards of my bed are Republican.'" Imbued from childhood with a tradition of political engagement, and through his own involvement as a Freemason in the Risorgimento (the movement for Italian national unification), Morais became devoted to the republican ideals of Giuseppe Mazzini, Italy's "Prophet in Exile." Mazzini found safe haven in London after 1837, along with other exiled Italian nationalist leaders, including a number of Jews from Livorno.¹²

Morais arrived in London in 1845 from Livorno at the age of twenty-two. Spurred by economic hardship, he came to London as a poor young scholar, teaching ordination in hand, seeking his first appointment as assistant to the leader of religious services at the city's most prestigious congregation, the Sephardic Sha'ar Shamayim at Bevis Marks. He failed to win the post, principally due to his unpolished English, but so favorably impressed those who interviewed him that within a year he would return to take the position of Master of the congregation's Orphan school. Morais lived in London from 1846 until 1851 and came to know many prominent Jewish families through his congregational work and as the Hebrew and Italian tutor of their children. The Jewish philanthropist Sir Moses Montefiore was a native of Livorno who befriended Morais. In London Morais met Mazzini and later corresponded with him. Morais reportedly turned over his passport to

12. The significance of Morais' formative years in Livorno and in London requires separate treatment. For general background on the Jews of Livorno, see SM, "The History of the Jewish Congregation of Livorno," in *Menorah Monthly* 11, 6 (December 1891): 353–61; Flora Aghuib Levi d'Ancona, "The Sephardi Community of Leghorn (Livorno)," *Sephardic Heritage*, eds. R. D. Barnett and W. M. Schwab (Grendon, 1989), 2:180–202. For a guide to the archival sources of the Jews of Livorno, see Paolo Castignoli, "Fonti Per La storia Ebrei A Livorno. Gli Archivi Locali," in *Italia Judaica* (Rome, 1989): 183–90 (English Summary, "Sources for the History of the Jews in Leghorn—the Local Archives," 217–18). For an overview of the Morais family and his life before coming to the United States, see Nussenbaum, 5–19. On Morais' mother's influence, see Morais, *Memoir*, 8; for the quotes about Morais' father and grandfather, see Morais, *Memoir*, 7. For Morais' certificate of membership (in Italian) in the Freemasons, see SM Papers, Box 17, FF 40 (CJS). On Mazzini, see William Roberts, *Prophet in Exile: Joseph Mazzini in England, 1837–1868* (New York, 1989) and Dennis Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven and London, 1994).

Mazzini before leaving London for America, enabling the exiled leader, who faced an outstanding arrest warrant from the Austrian imperial authorities, to travel surreptitiously to the continent and back to Italy.¹³

In 1851, with the encouragement of friends and admirers, Morais reluctantly left London for the United States to apply for the office of hazan, or reader, at Philadelphia's Congregation Mikveh Israel. Mikveh Israel was the oldest and wealthiest synagogue in Philadelphia and a Sephardic sister congregation of Bevis Marks in London. Like Morais' native Livorno, Philadelphia was a bustling port city, a hub of nineteenth-century culture, commerce and publishing with a revolutionary political tradition of its own. Morais arrived in New York harbor aboard the steamer *Asia* on Friday, March 14, 1851. After spending his first weekend in America in New York, Morais travelled south to Philadelphia, where he delivered a sermon on the following Sabbath to his prospective congregation. Within a month, on April 13, 1851 (his twenty-eighth birthday by the Christian calendar) Morais was elected minister. Morais became a naturalized American citizen on May 17, 1854. The following spring he married Clara Esther Weil, a teacher he met at the Hebrew Sunday School, and on September 13, 1868 the synagogue by election granted him a life-time appointment.¹⁴

13. On his years in London see Davis, "Shabbtai Morais," 576; Morais, *Memoir*, 12–13; Nussenbaum, 8–10; on the London Sephardic Jewish community, see Albert M. Hyamson, *The Sephardim of England* (London, 1951). For Morais' relationship with Montefiore, see SM Papers, Box 1, FF 21; Box 11, FF 4 (CJS). On Jewish home education in England before 1870, see Todd Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656–1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990), 77–88. For Morais' account of his meeting Mazzini, see SM, "'A Patriot': A Lecture delivered before the Youngmen's Hebrew Association of Phila.," ms., SM Papers, Box 12, FF 11 (CJS). For the story of Mazzini and Morais' passport, see Morais, *Memoir*, 24; Cecil Roth accepts this account as factual in *History of the Jews of Italy* (Philadelphia, 1946), 457.

14. On Philadelphia's revolutionary tradition, see "American Radicalism in the Local Community: Philadelphia in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism*, eds. Margaret C. Jacob and James R. Jacob (Atlantic Highlands, NJ and London, 1984), 258–302. For general background on Philadelphia and its distinctive history, see E. Digby Baltzell, *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia: Two Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Class Authority and Leadership* (Boston, 1982); Sam Bass Warner, *Philadelphia: A Private City* (Philadelphia, 1971); *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, Russel F. Weigley, et al. eds., (New York and London, 1982). On early Philadelphia Jewish history, particularly as centered around Congregation Mikveh Israel, see Edwin Wolf 2nd and Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson* (Philadelphia, 1957). On Morais' predecessor at Mikveh Israel and the controversy leading to his departure, see *A Review of the Late Controversies Between Rev. Isaac Leeser and the Congregation Mikveh Israel* (Philadelphia, 1850) and *A Review of "The Review" of the Late Controversy between the Rev. Isaac Leeser and the Philadelphia Congregation, "Mickve Israel" by an Israelite* (New York, 1850). For the account of

Morais transplanted to America a distinctive Anglo-Livornese "rabbinic humanist" outlook whose formative elements await further study.¹⁵ The sources of Morais' worldview and literary interests are extraordinarily diverse, and his political views are steeped in the teachings of Mazzini and in his admiration for Abraham Lincoln, for him another republican in the Mazzinian mold.¹⁶ Morais was a sensitive student of medieval Jewish philosophy (particularly that of Maimonides)¹⁷ and Hebrew poetry,¹⁸ the entire range of the Italian Jewish literary tradition,¹⁹ the historical studies and Hebrew writings of the nineteenth-century Galician

Morais' arrival in America, see *The Asmonean*, 3, 23 (March 28, 1851): 181 and Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1894), 59. For Morais' naturalization on May 17, 1854, see Declaration Documents, Supreme Court, East District Pennsylvania, V.9A, cited in Nussenbaum, 12, n. 31. For information about Morais meeting his wife, see "Rosa Mordecai's Recollection's of the First Hebrew Sunday School," *PAJHS* 42 (1952–53): 403; for the year of marriage, see the *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 3. For the date of Morais' lifetime appointment as minister at Mikveh Israel, see Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 60.

15. This locution, of course, needs to be more clearly explained and expanded upon. In short, I have in mind Morais' Livornese Jewish blend of religious humanism in contrast to primarily Franco-German Enlightenment currents. For this contrast and an argument for a Livornese Jewish tradition of religious humanism influenced by Giambattista Vico, see Jose Faur, "Sephardim in the Nineteenth Century: New Directions and Old Values," *PAAJR* 44 (1977): 29–52 and *idem.*, "Vico, Religious Humanism and the Sephardic Tradition," *Judaism* 27 (Winter 1978): 61–71, and esp. 67, n. 12.

16. On Morais' admiration for Mazzini and Abraham Lincoln, see Morais, *Memoir*, 23: "For [Sabato Morais] these two men stood for the highest aims; they represented the noblest achievements of the century." See also, SM, *An Address on the Death of Abraham Lincoln . . . On Wednesday, April 19, 1865* (Philadelphia, 1865) and *A Discourse . . . On Thursday, June 1, 1865, The Day Appointed for Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, for the Untimely Death of the Late Lamented President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln* (Philadelphia, 1865).

17. Morais translated into English for the first time Maimonides' *Ma'amar Tehiyat ha-metim* ("Treatise on Resurrection") and *Igeret Teman* ("Epistle to Yemen") dealing with the problem of messianism and false messiahs and the fate and fidelity of the Jewish community. They appeared in serialized form in *The Jewish Messenger*, beginning September 15, 1854, and *The Jewish Messenger*, September 15, 1876, respectively. On the image of Maimonides in the early *haskalah* and in the nineteenth century, see James H. Lehman, "Maimonides, Mendelssohn, and the Me'asfim," *LBIYB* 20 (1975): 87–108; Jay Harris, "The Image of Maimonides in Nineteenth Century Jewish Historiography," *PAAJR* 54 (1987): 117–39. Morais' view of Maimonides stands in strong contrast to that of Samuel David Luzzatto, who condemned Maimonides for what Luzzatto in general referred to as "Atticism."

18. Morais translated from Hebrew into English Dunash Ben Labrat's poetic introduction to a book dedicated to Hasdai Ibn Shaprut. See *Jewish Record*, July 20, 1877, 3; for Morais' translation as well as that of the poetry of Menahem Saruk, see *IHL*, 163–70. For background see Eliyahu Ashtor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain*, trans. from Hebrew by Aaron Klein and Jenny Machlowitz Klein (Philadelphia, 1963), 1:228–63.

19. See SM, *IHL*, ed. Julius Greenstone (Philadelphia, 1924).

maskil, Solomon Yehudah Rapoport,²⁰ and the teachings of the renowned Jewish biblical exegete from Trieste, Samuel David Luzzatto.²¹ For halakic rulings Morais turned to Haham Abraham Baruch Piperno, his teacher and chief rabbi in Livorno.²² He was tutored in Semitic languages and was exposed to the wider Italian and European literary heritage by Salvatore De Benedetti of the University of Pisa.²³ Morais nurtured a deep love for music, particularly Italian opera, composed Hebrew poetry, and was perhaps the most outstanding Hebraist in America in the nineteenth century.²⁴

20. In 1867, Morais proposed inviting Rapoport to the United States from Prague to serve as an halakic authority (Rapoport died later that year). See Davis, "Annotated Bibliography," 64 (no. 23) regarding SM, "Hebrew Ritual," *Jewish Messenger*, 21, 5 (February 1, 1867): 4-5; 21, 9 (March 8, 1867): 4-5; 21, 15 (April 12, 1867): 4. On Solomon Yehudah Rapoport, see Isaac Barzilay, *Solomon Yehudah Rapoport and His Contemporaries* (Israel, 1969); H. S. Morais, *Eminent Israelites of the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1880), 291-96.

21. It is often assumed that Morais was a disciple of Samuel David Luzzatto. Discipleship can mean either literally the student of someone or, in a broad sense, an adherent of a given outlook. Morais, who carried on a life-long correspondence with Luzzatto's son Isaiah, did not actually study with Luzzatto, though he read his writings, which he remarked "are, of course, known to every Italian student" (SM to Bernhard Felsenthal, Dec. 14, 1896, SM Papers, Box 7, FF 10 (CJS)). H. S. Morais reports that one of his father's students said that "although a master of the Holy Scriptures, [Morais] preferred to call himself a disciple of Luzzatto, and often had resort to that scholar in cases of doubt or disputes" (H. S. Morais, *Memoir*, 29). Nonetheless, the precise meaning of "discipleship" here refers to biblical exegesis and did not concern Morais' attitudes toward Luzzatto's views on the study of philosophy, literature, or history in general. For Morais' relationship with and attitude toward Luzzatto, see SM, *IHL*, 78 ff. On Luzzatto, see Marc Gopin, "The Religious Ethics of Samuel David Luzzatto" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1994) and additional bibliography provided there; Morris Margolies, *Samuel David Luzzatto: Traditionalist Scholar* (New York, 1979). For Luzzatto's negative attitude toward emancipation, see Salo W. Baron, "ShaDaL v'ha-mehapek'ha ba-shanot ha-1848-49" ("Samuel David Luzzatto and the Revolution of 1848-49"), *Simha Assaf Jubilee Volume*, M. D. Cassuto and Joseph Klausner, eds. (Jerusalem, 1953), 40-63.

22. An important instance in which Morais solicited a legal-ruling was during the Civil War when he asked Piperno for a decision about the permissibility of interment of Jews in non-Jewish public cemeteries. Morais translated Piperno's (negative) response and published it, beside the shared opinion of Nathan Adler (chief rabbi of Great Britain, which was solicited by Isaac Leiser), in *OCC* 21 (1863): 181-86. See also, for the ongoing polemic over this sensitive issue, *OCC* 21 (1863): 266-72. For another example of Morais seeking a legal responsum from Piperno, see Nussenbaum, 77, n. 106, and 223.

23. He also corresponded with him. See SM Papers, Box 8, FF 1 (CJS). On Morais' relation with De Benedetti, see Morais, *Memoir*, 8-9. According to H. S. Morais, De Benedetti published a sketch about his former pupil in the journal *Il Vessillo Israelitico* (n.p., n.d.); see *ibid.*, 7 (note).

24. Morais, *Memoir*, 14. Morais brought at least three boxes filled with scores of Italian Jewish liturgical music with him to Philadelphia. See MI Archives, Philadelphia. For

Morais served at Congregation Mikveh Israel over forty-six years, from 1851 until his death in November 1897, the longest continuous tenure, according to Pamela Nadell, "of any nineteenth-century American Jewish congregational leader."²⁵ In the course of the next half century Morais became one of the most beloved of American Jewish leaders and an outspoken intellectual force whose concerns and influence were national and international in scope. Despite his manifold activities, which extended to almost every area of civic life, contemporary historians tend to remember Morais for his role as founder and first president of the original Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTSA), established in New York City in 1886 and today the home of the modern Conservative movement.²⁶

For those attending his funeral in 1897, however, Morais would have been remembered above all not as the founder of the JTSA but as the humble minister of Philadelphia's most prestigious Jewish congregation.²⁷ If prodded, they also might have mentioned the many political

a sample of Morais' poetry, see his "Ode to the Hebrew Language" in *Menorah Monthly*, 3, 3 (September 1887): 177-78.

25. Nadell, 192.

26. See Corre, 19. Morais' role in the founding of the JTSA, and the competing denominational claims upon that institution and Morais as its founder, directly bears upon our question of history and memory but requires separate treatment. For the debate, see Moshe Davis, *Emergence*; Charles Liebman, "Orthodoxy in Nineteenth Century America," *Tradition* 6 (Spring-Summer 1964): 132-44; Abraham J. Karp, "The Origins of Conservative Judaism," *Conservative Judaism* 19 (Summer 1965): 33-48, and Nussenbaum, 107-29. For a review of the debate, see Jeffrey Gurock, "Resisters and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886-1983," in *AJA* 35 (November 1983): 162-63, n. 6. The debate has been renewed by Fierstien, "Sabato Morais and the Founding of the JTSA," who affirms the centrality of Morais as an institutional founder, while characterizing the early Seminary as essentially guided by the positive-historical outlook of Zecharias Fraenkel and the Breslau Juedisch Theologisches Seminary after which it was named. Fierstien, thus, implicitly circumscribes Morais' founding role to what amounts to a beloved figurehead, relying in part on Davis and Ismar Schorsch's study of Zecharias Frankel in order to claim continuity between the early Seminary and later movement of modern Conservative Judaism. See Ismar Schorsch, "Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism," *Judaism* 30 (1981): 344-54. Without entering here into the details of the debate, the "Breslau argument," in short, conflates the early Seminary's outlook with that of Frankel's positive-historical Judaism while projecting back on to the early Seminary aspects of the character of the "second" Seminary reorganized in 1902 by Mayer Sulzberger and others and then headed by Solomon Schechter. Schechter's place in the ethnic memory of American Jewry, meanwhile, has been assured, if only by virtue of the fact that the school system of the modern Conservative movement is named after him.

27. While undoubtedly a significant achievement, it was among Morais' last contributions. Morais is said to have referred with affection to the JTSA as "his Benjamin, the child of his old age." See Rosenau, 356.

causes he took up throughout his life, often at great personal risk. In 1858, for example, Morais had defiantly refused to recite the prayer for the nation in protest over President James Buchanan's indifferent response to the abduction and baptism of an Italian Jewish child named Edgardo Mortara, a scandal known as the Mortara Affair.²⁸ Many would know that Morais had been enrolled as an honorary member of the Union League in 1887, for his support of Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.²⁹ Morais had faced personal threats and pressures yet continued to use his pulpit to preach support for the Union and opposition to the institution of slavery, winning for the congregation the gratitude of President Lincoln himself.³⁰ A few might have known of his support of Native American Indians, while many others would have known from direct experience of Morais' regular trips to visit the elderly, the sick, the poor or the imprisoned.³¹

Morais would have been familiar from the local press to many of the non-Jewish Philadelphians witnessing the funeral procession. In 1868, for example, he had appealed publicly to the provisional government in Spain to revoke the infamous Edict of Expulsion of 1492.³² In 1870 Morais had called for a negotiated peace during the Franco-Prussian War

28. See Bertram Korn, *The American Reaction to the Mortara Affair* (Cincinnati, 1957); for Morais' response, see Nussenbaum, 131–32; on the little-known “Second Mortara Affair,” the abduction of another Italian child named Joseph Coen in 1864, and Morais' response, see Nussenbaum, 132–33.

29. See the *Chronicle of the Union League of Philadelphia, 1862–1902* (Philadelphia, 1902), 532; Maxwell Whiteman, *Gentlemen in Crisis: The First Century of the Union League, 1862–1962* (Philadelphia, 1975), 316, n. 35; *idem.*, “The Philadelphia Group,” in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia*, 166; Davis, *Emergence*, 112, 418, n. 92.

30. During the Civil War Lincoln sent a letter to Mikveh Israel expressing gratitude for a copy of a prayer publicly delivered by Morais in support of Lincoln and the Union cause. See Moshe Davis, “Mikhtav Linkoln li-kehilah yehudit,” in *ha-Doar*, 24, 16 (February 18, 1944): 271; Arthur G. Klein, “The Lincoln Letter to A Jewish Congregation,” *Congressional Record*, 90, 8 (February 29, 1844): A993–94; Bertram W. Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (1951; third ed., New York, 1970), 35–37. Korn has claimed that Morais, “unlike Einhorn and Felsenthal, was not an abolitionist,” but above all supported national unity for the sake of Republicanism around the world (35) [similar to historians who have criticized Abraham Lincoln for being primarily concerned not with ending slavery, but preserving the Union]. This point has been forcefully disputed by Nussenbaum, 34–42. In addition to the evidence brought by Nussenbaum to prove that Morais opposed slavery, undoubtedly part of the reason Morais never formally held membership in an abolitionist organization had to do with the Christian religious zeal of many of these groups.

31. Corresponding Secretary Herbert Mead, Indian Rights Association, to SM, September 24, 1889, SM Papers, Box 5, FF 5 (CJS).

32. Nussenbaum, 145.

when Paris came under siege.³³ In the same year, amidst a bruising public debate in Pennsylvania about capital punishment, Morais had published an historical sketch of rabbinic opposition to the practice and defended Jews from being blamed for the death penalty because it appeared in the laws of Moses.³⁴ They might have heard or read about his strong criticism of the Chinese Exclusion Acts during the 1880s;³⁵ his unprecedented role mediating a volatile garment-workers strike in the summer of 1890;³⁶ his outcries against the persecution of Armenians in 1895;³⁷ his regular protests throughout the second half of the nineteenth century against the treatment of Jews in Morocco, Switzerland, Romania, the Balkans and Russia.³⁸ The non-Jewish clergy in attendance might have mentioned Morais' ecumenical outlook and earnest respect for other faiths—even as they recalled how he zealously battled missionary activity, prayer in the public schools, and pronouncements that the United States was a Christian nation, or Thanksgiving a Christian rather than national holiday.³⁹

Most of those anonymous faces lining the route of the funeral procession or enduring the cold rain in the overflowing crowd gathered at the entrance to the cemetery would have been the unknowing direct beneficiaries of Morais' behind-the-scenes roles and fundraising efforts for the Hebrew Immigrant Society and the Jewish Alliance. Morais had quietly solicited financial support on their behalf from Baron Maurice De Hirsch via the Baron's almoner, Morais' childhood friend Emmanuel Veneziani. Through his connections, Morais was able to put on a more secure financial footing organizations which provided basic relief assistance and vocational training and built agricultural and industrial schools for the new Jewish arrivals.⁴⁰

33. Nussenbaum, 145; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 27, 1868, 3.

34. SM, “Capital Punishment,” *Jewish Messenger* 27, 9 (March 4, 1870): 2. The first monograph-length study of the topic in America was published by Morais' student Samuel Mendelsohn, one of the two students to graduate from Maimonides College. See Samuel Mendelsohn, *The Criminal Jurisprudence of the Jews* (Baltimore, 1891).

35. Nussenbaum, 3–4; 145–46; *Jewish Record*, December 4, 1885, 5.

36. On the strike, see note 61.

37. Nussenbaum, 149.

38. *Ibid.*, 133–38.

39. *Ibid.*, 138–45. For general background on these issues in nineteenth-century American Jewish life, see Naomi W. Cohen, *Jews in Christian America* (New York and Oxford, 1992); *idem.*, *Encounter with Emancipation* (Philadelphia, 1984).

40. On Morais' role at the Hebrew Immigrant Society and Jewish Alliance, see Nussenbaum, 63–68. On the causes and course of the mass migration, see Salo Baron, *The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets* (New York, 1987), 69–74, esp. 71.

Some in attendance, such as his family, close friends and congregation members, might have mentioned Morais' work with orphans, first at the Orphans' School in London, and later through his involvement with the Jewish Foster Home in Philadelphia. Not a few women would have known Morais personally from his support for their charitable associations such as the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, the Young Women's Union, the United Hebrew Charities, the Jewish Maternity Association, *Ezrath Nashim*, the National Council of Jewish Women, and as the first traditional Jewish leader in the United States to support women's right to vote on congregational matters.⁴¹ His innumerable public lectures at the local Young Men's Hebrew Association, the Hebrew Literary Society, his regular instruction at the Hebrew Sunday School Society, at the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia, his role in the founding of the Jewish Publication Society, and his myriad unpaid civic contributions would have made Morais a familiar face to most.⁴²

Others might have mentioned Morais' rich body of publications and contributions as a translator, poet, biblical exegete, theologian and historian.⁴³ Yet again, they might have emphasized his importance for the history of American Jewish higher education. In addition to having been the driving force behind the founding of the JTSA in 1886, two decades earlier Morais had participated in the creation of the short-lived Maimonides College, the "first American Jewish Theological Seminary,"

41. On Morais and the Jewish Foster Home, see Nussenbaum, 59–60; for background on the Jewish Foster Home of Philadelphia, see Dianne Ashton, "Souls Have No Sex: Philadelphia Jewish Women and the American Challenge," in *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, 34, 45; Evelyn Bodek, "Making Do: Jewish Women and Philanthropy," in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830–1940*, 148–53. On Morais and the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society of Philadelphia, see *OCC* 26, 9 (December 1868): 427. For Morais' support of the National Council of Jewish Women, see Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women* (Tuscaloosa, 1993), 23 and 254, n. 42. For background on Jewish women and philanthropy in Philadelphia, and the organizations listed here, see Bodek, 143–62.

42. On Morais and his many educational and cultural activities in Philadelphia, see Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia*, 60 ff.; Nussenbaum, 50–83. On the Hebrew Education Society, see *Fifty Years Work of the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia, 1848–1898* (Philadelphia, 1899); on the Hebrew Sunday School Society, see "Rosa Mordecai's Recollections," 397–406. On the Hebrew Literature Society, see *Souvenir and History of the Hebrew Literature Society, Philadelphia, PA* (n.p., 1905). On the Young Men's Hebrew Association, see William R. Langfeld, *Y.M.H.A. of Philadelphia—A Fifty Year Chronicle* (Philadelphia, 1928) [cited in Nussenbaum, 54, n. 17]; Benjamin Rabinowitz, "The Young Men's Hebrew Association, 1854–1913," in *PAJHS* 37 (1947): 221–26. On the Jewish Publication Society, see Jonathan D. Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888–1988* (Philadelphia, 1989).

43. For guides to his published and unpublished writings, see note 3.

established in Philadelphia in 1867. Morais had held the post of Professor of Bible and Biblical literature, and after the death of Isaac Leeser in 1868 remained one of the College's principal leaders, along with the Talmudic scholar and rabbi Marcus Jastrow, until its demise in 1873.⁴⁴ Those mourning his loss in Italy,⁴⁵ London and around the Jewish world, meanwhile, might have known Morais from his earlier years in Europe or perhaps through his participation on the Central Committee of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*, an influential international Jewish defense organization.⁴⁶ As for the Eastern European Jewish masses who showed up on the day of his funeral in unprecedented numbers, they would simply have known "Mr. Morais" as the teacher of their children whose humble manner and life-long personal involvement in charitable work endeared him to all.⁴⁷

Morais' future obscurity was anticipated at the time of his death by Joseph Krauskopf, a controversial Reform rabbi in Philadelphia. Krauskopf, a long-time adversary of the staunchly traditional Morais, astutely observed in his memorial tribute that "the historian would not hesitate to enroll his name among the world's truest and noblest immortals. But that will never be known. The eye of the public chronicler found in his exceeding modesty an inexorable concealer."⁴⁸ One clue to understanding the "concealed" life of this enigmatic Italian-Anglo-American-Sephardic-Ashkenazic teacher and minister, and the

44. See Bertram Korn, "Maimonides College: The First American Jewish Theological Seminary," *Eventful Years and Experiences* (Cincinnati, 1954), 151–213 (see 166 for Morais' title); David Uriah Todes, "History of Jewish Education in Philadelphia, 1782–1873" (Ph.D. diss., Dropsie College, 1952), whose appendix contains photostatic copies of parts of the lost minute book of the College.

45. Special memorial services were held in his native Livorno. See the December 1897 issues of the Italian Jewish periodicals *Il Vessilo Israelitico* and *Il Caviere Israelitico* for memorial tributes.

46. See Nussenbaum, 61; Zosa Szajkowski, "The *Alliance Israelite Universelle* in the United States," *PAJHS* 39 (1950): 389–93. Morais curiously did not join the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, founded one year before the *Alliance* in 1859. He did direct the Philadelphia branch of the *Alliance* when it was established the following year in 1860. See Szajkowski for the friction between the two groups. On the Board of Delegates of American Israelites see Max J. Kohler, "The Board of Delegates of American Israelites, 1859–1878," *PAJHS* 29 (1925): 75–135; Allan Tarshish, "The Board of Delegates of American Israelites, 1859–1878," *PAJHS* 49 (1959): 411–27.

47. *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 3.

48. Krauskopf, *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 6. The term "traditional" is used throughout this essay to capture Morais' religious orientation, though it understates his fervent belief in God and the divine origin of the Bible, his resistance to higher biblical criticism, particularly of the Pentateuch, and overstates his commitment to rigidly orthodox standards of observance.

obscurity into which he has fallen, can be found in the funeral that caused such astonishment and comment in November of 1897. The depth of feeling his funeral revealed does not, however, only refer back to the man who was mourned or the pathos expressed that day. The size of the funeral and the details of the service and burial mark a historical transformation in the character of public Jewish funerals in the United States and hint at fundamental changes then underway within American Jewish communal life.

The phenomenon of mass, public Jewish funerals in the United States has received increasing attention in recent years.⁴⁹ Beginning in 1902 with the funeral of "Chief Rabbi" Jacob Joseph in New York City, and followed by the funerals of prominent cultural heroes such as the Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem in 1916, large-scale Jewish funerals in America drew hundreds of thousands of participants over the decades leading up to World War II.⁵⁰ Dramatic public pageants, including political demonstrations, ethnic celebrations, as well as mass funerals, were carefully planned and staged. These public ceremonies functioned as occasions for the Jewish masses to affirm and defend American Jewish ethnicity. They also offered opportunities for the new immigrants and their children to give collective expression to pent-up emotions of loss and anger. Thousands would turn out to mourn a prominent communal figure or to protest, for example, the persecution of Jews in Russia in 1903 and 1905. These orchestrated ceremonies marked a new professionalization and commercialization of American Jewish life while serving as "integrating rituals" for immigrant Jewish communities like the Lower East Side.⁵¹

Morais' funeral occurred five years prior to the first mass public Jewish funeral in New York City. It was an unprecedented event in Philadelphia as well as in American Jewish history and was recognized as such at the time. The Reverend Henry Pereira Mendes, leader of New York City's most prestigious Jewish congregation, the Sephardic Shearith Israel, proclaimed that "no such minister in this country ever had such a magnificent funeral."⁵² A circular issued by a committee organized to

49. Arthur Goren, "Sacred and Secular: The Place of Public Funerals in the Immigrant Life of American Jews," *Jewish History* 8 (1994): 269-305; Ellen Kelman, "Sholem Aleichem's Funeral" (New York, 1916); "The Making of A National Pageant," *YIVO Annual* 20 (1991): 277-304; Leonard Dinnerstein, "The Funeral of Jacob Joseph," in *Anti-Semitism in American History*, ed. David A. Gerber (Urbana, IL, 1986), 275-301.

50. Abraham J. Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi," *PAJHS* 44 (March 1955): 180-82; Dinnerstein, 275-301; Goren, "Sacred and Secular," 272.

51. Goren, "Sacred and Secular," 299-300.

52. H. P. Mendes, *PJE*, Monday, November 19, 1897, 7.

endow a Morais chair at the Jewish Theological Seminary in his honor declared that "the spontaneous and universal tributes of affection and veneration evoked by the death of the Rev. Sabato Morais are almost without precedent in modern Israel, no such outpouring of the people as was seen at his funeral having ever before been known in this country."⁵³ Another prominent New Yorker, Daniel P. Hays movingly recorded the impact Morais' funeral made on him:

I was so impressed by the occurrence at the funeral of the late Rev. Sabato Morais, on the fifteenth instant, that I cannot refrain from writing about it . . . I refer to the ovation paid to his memory by thousands of Russian Jews for whose advancement he had worked and who remembered him as a true friend.

The scene in front of the house was a most memorable one. Men, women, and children from the Russian quarter had gathered there long before the hour fixed for the funeral ceremonies, and with sorrowful faces, waited regardless of the rain, until his body was brought from his house and placed in the hearse. It was not idle curiosity that held them there, it was no expectation of witnessing impressive funeral ceremonies, but an honest desire to pay the last tribute or respect to one whom they regarded as a father. And when the hearse and carriages moved away from the house, they followed it on foot, not in any regular order, but as if each one realized that they would never again feel the kindly influence of his presence and could not bear to have him thus abruptly taken out of their lives. It was a crowd such as follows a departing hero on his way to battle for their cause, except that they were subdued and overawed by the magnitude of their grief.

At the cemetery, a like scene was being enacted. Masses of these people lined the adjoining streets and waited patiently for the funeral to arrive. They knew they could not enter the cemetery grounds, because the space was too limited to admit them. But there they stood, women holding their children by the hand and babies in their arms—men with grey hair and other in the prime of life—a quiet, sad tearful assemblage, waiting for *their* dead [emphasis in original]. For he was "theirs." They had been welcome at his house at all times during his life, and he had been a constant visitor at their humble homes. He had been their guide, counselor, and friend in a strange land.⁵⁴

Additional details of the funeral are found in New York's *American Hebrew*:

Long before the crowds had begun to assemble, and though they numbered thousands, ten policemen detailed to preserve order found little

53. Circular, "In Honor of Sabato Morais," copy held in the Charles J. and Mary M. Cohen Collection, Box 1, FF 16 (CJS).

54. Daniel P. Hays, "Impressions of Dr. Morais' Funeral," *AH*, November 19, 1897, 71.

trouble; for those who came were there simply to tender respect to the dead and had no morbid desire to satisfy, knowing that they could not see the face of their beloved friend, as by his request no one but his family and those who tenderly prepared the body for burial were permitted to gaze upon it.

The service at the house was read by Rev. Dr. H. Pereira Mendes of New York, but there was no address, at the request of the deceased who also asked that there be no memorial service. The carriages then conveyed the mourners to the cemetery . . . At the cemetery the burial service of the Portuguese ritual was read by Dr. Mendes and the body, wrapped in a winding sheet, was tenderly placed in the grave upon a layer of green boughs. Sprigs of green were cast in by relatives and those who stood about and the company retired to the receiving room where the final services of sepulture were recited. Prayers were read shortly after at the synagogue, and are recited there morning and evening instead of at the house of mourning.⁵⁵

The Morais family, in a special notice of appreciation to the public published in the *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent*, wrote: "the scene of last Monday profoundly impress[ed] everyone. To have seen how a beloved father was revered by the vast multitude of his co-religionists intensely affected every witness."⁵⁶

Morais' funeral is curious on its face if we consider that the Italian-born Morais, who lectured in English and prayed according to the Sephardic liturgical rite, came from an entirely different cultural universe from that of the masses who attended his funeral. He did not speak Yiddish, the so-called "jargon" of the Eastern European immigrants. He was the leader of the wealthiest Sephardic congregation, located in North Philadelphia while his Ashkenazic mourners lived in Port Richmond or south Philadelphia amidst the squalor and congestion of immigrant life, what one newspaper reporter called "a stench in the nostrils of decent people."⁵⁷

The variety of people who attended the event or who later produced a torrent of tributes to a man they otherwise shared little or nothing with in matters of religion or politics also hints at the special character of Morais' funeral. The *American Hebrew* observed that the participants included "men of different faith, honored in the community, some laymen, others whose garb expressed their devotion to religion, [which] was evidence of the esteem in which he was held by men of all creeds."⁵⁸

55. *AH*, November 19, 1897, 66.

56. *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 3.

57. *The Sunday Mercury*, August 10, 1890, reprinted in *AJA* 9 (April 1957): 36. According to the preface to the reprint, the article was authored by Louis Edward Levy, publisher of the *Sunday Mercury* and founder in 1884 of the Association of Jewish Immigrants of Philadelphia.

58. *AH*, November 19, 1897, 65.

The *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent* reported that "distinguished delegations from New York and Baltimore, and elsewhere . . . [and] Ministers and officers of all the local Jewish congregations and educational and charitable institutions attended the funeral."⁵⁹ Within a month of his death, one group of Eastern European Jews founded a fraternal order in Portland, Oregon, called Sabato Morais Lodge 464.⁶⁰ Krauskopf, Isaac Mayer Wise, Emil G. Hirsch, Kaufmann Kohler, and Henry Berkowitz were among the many prominent Reform leaders who paid moving tribute in print to a man with whom they had battled, on occasion fiercely, throughout their lives.

Perhaps the most telling symbol of the diverse composition of the crowd was the almost certain presence of Philadelphia's Russian-Jewish anarchists. The devout Morais had gained the respect of these secular radicals in 1890 while mediating their conflict with the city's wealthy manufacturers, some of whom belonged to his own congregation. The decade leading up to the volatile cloakmakers strike had witnessed intensive union organizing throughout the country as well as repressive, violent tactics against the unions, widespread layoffs and social unrest. Despite the risks, Morais intervened and made such an impression during the course of a long summer of negotiations that in the fall "the anarchists called off their pork-eating Yom Kippur Ball which was to follow after the strike."⁶¹

Contemporary accounts indicate that Morais' funeral transcended (even as it no doubt was influenced by) the Old World custom of publicly paying homage to an honored and beloved communal leader. The mass turnout, for example, did not rest "on a highly disciplined communal order" as was the case in Europe and a decade later in New York City.⁶²

59. *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 3.

60. See William Toll, *The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class: Portland Jewry over Four Generations* (Albany, 1982), 31.

61. For the quote, see Maxwell Whiteman, "The Cloak Makers Strike of 1890," *PJE*, October 23, 1964, 44. For additional sources on the strike see Nussenbaum, 149-53; (Philadelphia) *Public Ledger*, July 22, 1890, 2; August 4, 3; August 5, 2; August 8, 6; August 15, 1; August 19, 1; August 23, 2; August 26, 1; *PJE*, July 25, 1890, 5; August 8, 6; August 15, 6; August 29, 6. For an account of Morais' Yom Kippur service sermon admonishing the factory owners, see Marvin Nathan, "Discussion," 371-72. See also, the Morais Ledger, p. 441, SM Papers Box 18 (CJS); Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 233; Maxwell Whiteman, "Western Impact on East European Jews," in *Immigrants and Religion in Urban America*, eds. Randall M. Miller and Thomas D. Marzik (Philadelphia, 1977), 117-37. For a telling contrast, see how the anarchists in New York City attacked "chief rabbi" Jacob Joseph in New York City and defiantly staged their Yom Kippur Ball, in Abraham J. Karp, *Haven and Home* (New York, 1981), 109.

62. Cf. Goren, "Sacred and Secular," 270.

While all American Jewish funerals were “voluntary” in character, no exhortations were needed nor were any issued for those attending Morais’ funeral to leave their shops or close their stores.⁶³ News of the death seems to have spread by word of mouth. In fact, one newspaper reported a spontaneous kind of memorial service for Morais the day before the funeral on Sunday, November 14, “in the down town section of the city, among the poorer classes of Jews, who all day yesterday congregated in groups on the streets bewailing the loss of their common friend, teacher, and protector.”⁶⁴

The spontaneous outpouring witnessed on Sunday and the massive turnout for the funeral procession the next day also cannot be explained by comparison to a gathering of Hasidim mourning the loss of their rebbe, or to a throng of Eastern European Jews lamenting the death of a prominent legal authority (*posek*).⁶⁵ In short, Morais never sought a following and was not a legal authority. To understand the difference it must be borne in mind that the traditional, Eastern European rabbinical leader was not a “ministering” rabbi but above all a judge and communal authority removed from close, daily contact with the general Jewish population.⁶⁶ For example, when Isaac Elhanan Spektor, the famous Lithuanian rabbi, died in 1905, thousands of mourners flooded the streets of Kovno and openly wept. The eulogies delivered, however, did not discuss the personal bond he had with the masses who came to mourn him. The speakers stressed the rabbi’s “wisdom and compassion, the profundity and originality of his writings, his humanity in interpreting personal law, his public service as conciliator and diplomat, and his

63. *Ibid.*, 269.

64. (Philadelphia) *Public Ledger*?, Monday, November 15, 1897 (the date is inferred from the first line which refers to the funeral that will take place “at 2:00 p.m. this afternoon”), Charles J. and Mary M. Cohen Collection, Box 1 FF 16 (CJS).

65. Cf. Goren, “Sacred and Secular,” 270, on the pilgrimages of the Bratslaver Hasidim to their rebbe’s grave in Uman, Ukraine; also, cf. the mass funeral of the Lubavitcher rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson held on June 12, 1994, reported in *The New York Times*, June 13, 1994, A1.

66. On the role and function of the office of the rabbinate in Eastern Europe, see Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*, trans. Bernard Cooperman (New York, 1993), 72–75 and *idem.*, *Out of the Ghetto* (New York, 1978), 142–60. For the contrast with the emergent, professionalized “ministering” rabbi in the West, see Ismar Schorsch, “Emancipation and the Crisis of Religious Authority—The Emergence of the Modern Rabbinate,” in *Revolution and Evolution: 1848 in German-Jewish History*, eds. Werner Mosse, Arnold Paucker, and Reinhard Rurup (Tübingen, 1981), 206–54; Stephen Poppel, “The Politics of Religious Leadership: The Rabbi in Nineteenth-Century Hamburg,” *LBIYB* 28 (1983): 439–70. On the Orthodox American rabbinate at the end of the nineteenth-century, see Gurock, “Resisters and Accommodaters,” esp. 100–127.

humility,” but for good reason there was no mention of Spektor as a ministering rabbi.⁶⁷

With the possible exception of the funeral procession in 1905 for Kasriel Sarasohn, the Orthodox publisher of the Yiddish daily *Tageblatt*, Morais’ mass funeral differed in style, if not in size, from the orchestrated public funerals in New York City.⁶⁸ The 1909 funeral for the secular Yiddish playwright Jacob Gordin, for example, was organized by Joseph Baroness, whom Arthur Goren depicts as the “proverbial *klal tu’er*—the ubiquitous communal doer—and beloved master-of-ceremonies, parade marshall and eulogizer.”⁶⁹ By contrast, while Morais’ funeral did feature a procession which originated from his home, Morais had explicitly forbade any kind of vainglorious effusions or pageantry en route to or at the burial site, including the delivering of the traditional *hesped* [eulogy] or the conducting of a memorial service.⁷⁰

Reading the testimonials to Morais one cannot help but notice the recurrent expressions of a profound and personal bond of love people

67. Goren, “Sacred and Secular,” 273.

68. Goren, “Sacred and Secular,” 276 writes: “There were no ‘crashing bands,’ ‘no panoply of purple,’ and no flowers (possibly an allusion to Italian funerals and to the majestic funeral of the recently deceased Catholic Archbishop of New York). A simple informality marked the occasion.” It should be pointed out, however, that while descriptions of this procession bear a close resemblance to that of Morais, the actual details of the funeral service differ in kind. At Sarasohn’s funeral, for example, it was reported by the *New York Evening Post* that when it came time to deliver eulogies, “the object of every rabbi was to excite the audience by his speech to tears and loud lamentation” (Goren, “Sacred and Secular,” 277), whereas no eulogies were delivered at Morais’ funeral. For more on the subject of the traditional eulogy, or *hesped*, see note 70. Another intriguing exception might be the mass funeral of a female Jewish communal worker, Mary Siegelstein, on the Lower East Side of New York City on Sunday, November 5, 1905. See *The New York Times*, November 6, 1905, 9. There are important differences, of course, such as the fact that Morais’ funeral occurred on a Monday, entailing financial hardship for the attenders, as well as the fact that Morais was not of Eastern European origin (Siegelstein was married to a Romanian Jew and was active in the Romanian Aid Society).

69. Goren, “Sacred and Secular,” 279.

70. This custom by itself is not unprecedented. Morais’ friend, Marco Mortara, the chief rabbi of Mantua, had left similar instructions for his funeral which were carried out three years earlier in Italy (see *JE*, 9, s.v. Mortara: “In his will he wrote his epitaph, containing merely biographical data, and expressed the wish that no sermon should be preached at his funeral and no eulogy published in the newspapers”). On the status of the eulogy or *hesped* in Jewish law, see e.g., *Shulkhan ‘arukh*, *Yoreh De’ah*, *hilkhot avilut*, no. 344. On the Italian Jewish tradition of the eulogy dating from early modern period, see Elliot Horowitz, “Speaking of the Dead: The Emergence of the Eulogy among Italian Jewry of the Sixteenth Century,” in *Preachers of the Italian Ghetto*, ed. David B. Ruderman (Los Angeles and Oxford, 1992), 129–62.

felt for him. To be sure, memorial tributes and newspaper reports can hardly be taken at face value as historically reliable evidence. But the descriptions of Morais' funeral cannot be dismissed merely as heartfelt exaggeration. Leading members of the Philadelphia and American Jewish community repeatedly emphasized that they had never witnessed such a scene. Undoubtedly (and in contrast to smaller-scale funerals of prominent Jews in America earlier in the nineteenth century), the size of Morais' funeral presupposed a mass migration of Eastern European Jews, most of whom had arrived in the country only within the previous two decades. But never again would such a distinctly non-Eastern European figure receive the kind of spectacular tribute granted Sabato Morais at his funeral.

On the other hand, the massive public turnout is not fully explainable by reference to the man being mourned. Indeed, any sincere mourning process ultimately is less concerned for the one lost than it is with consoling those experiencing loss. Alasdair MacIntyre has argued, for example, that for the heroic societies of antiquity, "it is through the performance of burial rites that the family and the community can restore their integrity after the death of what was part of themselves."⁷¹ This resembles what Morais' contemporaries sensed about the massive turnout for their fallen leader: "It was a crowd such as follows a departing hero on his way to battle for their cause, except that they were subdued and overawed by the magnitude of their grief . . . For he was 'theirs.'"⁷² Though not orchestrated to affirm ethnic pride, the Morais funeral did serve a kind of integrative or mending function, evidenced by the spontaneity of events leading up to and including the funeral itself.

The need for this integrative function of mourning as collective mending can also be inferred from Morais' above-mentioned instructions to eliminate all ostentation from the funeral service. It was well publicized in advance in the local newspapers that "in accordance with the strongly expressed desire of the deceased rabbi, the obsequies will be of the plainest character, he having asked that no orations, eulogies or memorial services of any kind be held. The family, in compliance with these injunctions, have requested that no flowers be sent to the house." These instructions, which Morais sent in a series of letters to his eldest child Nina and her husband Emanuel Cohen (whom Morais named as executors of his estate), implied that even the traditional mourning period, or *shivah*, was voluntary for his children:

71. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (2nd ed.; Notre Dame, 1984), 127.

72. Hays, "Impressions," *AH*, November 19, 1897, 71.

I will not have any oration, obituaries, memorial services, nor any kind of praise indulged in to do me honor. If my children wish to keep the 7 days of mourning, let my sons do so morning and evening in the synagogue, and my daughters in their home.⁷³

The details of the burial also provide startling insight into the unusual character of the funeral and its relation to the man being mourned. For example, while a hearse carried Morais' body to the cemetery in a closed coffin, according to religious tradition, when the procession arrived at the grave, his enshrouded body was removed from the casket and placed directly in the earth, "upon a layer of green boughs," and covered with quicklime. The *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent* described this element of his burial as being in accordance with "antique orthodox custom,"⁷⁴ but in fact the particulars seem to have been of more recent origin. In the specific instructions he left regarding his burial, Morais effectively removed control over the disposition of his body from the traditional *hevrah kadisha*, or Jewish burial society. Instead, he placed his trust in his family, asking them to ensure that his body be left alone prior to burial. In a letter to his daughter Nina, on May 25, 1896, Morais explained that he

disliked a hurried burial, and the exposal of the body. Unless I die of a contagious disease, let my corpse remain unburied until signs of putrefecation are visible. Then dispense with the usual washing, as practised by our people, but let me be wrapped, with the clothing which I happen to have on, in a sheet. Let quick lime be put in the grave, in which I shall lay without coffin, and another layer of quick lime on the top of me so that the flesh be speedily consumed.⁷⁵

The following January Morais sent a letter to Emanuel confessing "an unconquerable dislike against the practise of being washed and shrouded." Preferring that his feelings not be made known, Morais requested that "people may be told that as a means of atonement, I expressed the desire of being wrapped in a sheet over the clothes, which I happened to have

73. SM to Nina (Morais) Cohen, May 25, 1896, SM Papers, Box 7, FF 9 (CJS); cf. *AH*, November 19, 1897, 66; *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 3. In an undated fragmentary holograph found among the Morais papers, Morais writes, apparently in response to a question put to him concerning Jewish burial practices, that "the beautiful custom of giving the 'meal of consolation,' based upon Biblical and Rabbinical authority, has unfortunately greatly degenerated. So has the practice of sitting low *all the seven days* (emphasis in original), as a mark of humiliation, become unnecessary and in America almost abrogated."

74. *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 3.

75. SM to Nina Morais, May 25, 1896, SM Papers, Box 7, FF 9 (CJS).

on at the hour of death, and being buried between two layers of quick lime, so that the flesh be soon consumed." Morais explained that this "last mentioned plan has not been opposed by the rabbis. I have seen it followed in Italy, and I heard that the late ecclesiastical Chief of the Portuguese Congregation in London, Benjamin Artom, was so interred."⁷⁶

In the course of this sensitive discussion, Morais disclosed another important clue which helps decipher a life kept carefully concealed. Earlier in the same letter, while gently answering his son-in-law's hesitant inquiries about plans for his burial, Morais explained:

You did not give me any "pain" by approaching that subject. Life has never been to me a delightful gift from my parents, and that for reasons which it were idle and foolish to relate. At one time I spoke and wrote against cremation. In later years, my mind underwent decided change. Still, as I have already stated to you when in Philadelphia, the fear of shocking the Jewish community made me reconsider the determination of being cremated.⁷⁷

Morais' modesty and sensitivity help to explain his attitude toward burial and cremation in particular but more importantly toward his own life in general, which had a morose side to it. According to one interpretation, Morais suffered at the end of his life from a depression caused by a *Galut* [diaspora] mentality whose "pillars of low profile and usefulness" no longer functioned, and because of the decline of religious observance, the impact of Darwinism, new scientific discoveries, and the spectre of new, virulent racial theories. It seems to me that there are more

76. SM to Emanuel Cohen, January 16, 1897, SM Papers, Box 7, FF 11 (CJS).

77. SM to Emanuel Cohen, January 16, 1897, SM Papers, Box 7, FF 11 (CJS). The issue of cremation had been the subject of ongoing debate in Italy during the nineteenth century. See Elia Benamozegh, *Sefer Ya'aneh ba-esh* (Livorno, 1886). On Morais' early view, see his sermons "Cremation—Incompatible with Jewish Precepts," (undated) ms., SM Papers, Box 13, FF21 (CJS) and "Sermon on Cremation," *AH*, April 16, 1880, 99 (cited in Davis, "Annotated Bibliography," 89, no. 248). See also the lengthy letter Morais sent to H. P. Mendes in 1887, summarized by Davis, "Annotated Bibliography," 85, no. 216. Davis remarks that Morais opposed cremation as a violation of Jewish law. Davis then quotes Morais' observation that in Italy "the cremation system is fast gaining adherents (for the country is small and the population is large). The Rabbis in Italy are loth to encourage a usage so contrary to our history, but they fear that a refusal to inter the cremated may drive families bereaved of their relations from the synagogue." See *JE*, s.v. "cremation": "some Italian Kabbalists were opposed to cremation on the ground that it is not in consonance with the spirit and traditions of Judaism." A similar discussion took place in England around the same time—see Benjamin Schwesik, *Teshubah 'al Debar hanisrafin. Responsum with regard to the ashes of cremated bodies in which are explained some laws referring to this strange practice.* (London, 1888), noted in Lloyd P. Gartner, *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870–1914* (London, 1960), 303.

personal explanations for Morais' somber reflections, namely: the loss of his mother when he was fifteen, the poverty and privation Morais' family in Italy knew which first pushed him to leave Livorno in search of work, the personal pain he must have felt having spent his life at a great distance from his family and native home, the premature death of his wife Clara in 1872, leaving him alone (he never remarried) with seven young children to rear, and an extended period of illness at the end of his life. Given these elements, and the personal tone of Morais' comment, I think it unjustified to describe this frame of mind as a depression or to attribute its cause to external circumstances such as Darwinism.⁷⁸

If Morais was not suffering from depression when he wrote out his last wishes, neither were his carefully considered views about burial and cremation an idiosyncrasy of his old age. These views, I submit, point to a profound, consistent aspect of his personality—his proclivity for self-effacement. This character trait appears in virtually every description of Morais and is evident throughout his writings. As *The New York Times* wrote, "his demeanor in social life was shrinking, almost timid."⁷⁹ Charles J. Cohen, twice president of Mikveh Israel, recalled that "such a simple matter as the wearing of a silk gown to lend dignity to the person he strenuously resisted, until a committee of earnest women of the Congregation prepared a suitable robe, which he was persuaded to accept and adopt, although the canonical cap that accompanied it was declined."⁸⁰ One other example may suffice to convey this aspect of his personality. During his lifetime, Morais repeatedly shunned the titles "rabbi" and "doctor" despite his having received rabbinical ordination in Italy and an honorary doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. Before he died, Morais instructed his daughter Nina to make sure that on his tombstone "no title whatsoever must be attached to my name. On the tomb stone: [written in Hebrew] "Shabbtai Morais," [written in English] "Sabato Morais" and the date of death shall suffice." Morais made this last directive a condition of his will.⁸¹

78. Corre, 30–31.

79. *The New York Times*, Saturday, November 13, 1897, 7.

80. See Charles J. Cohen, "Dr. Morais' Relation to the Congregation," in *Commemoration*, 13; On the "priestly garments" episode, see Mrs. Elias P. Levy and Mrs. Samuel Hart to SM and Morais' response [no exact date—1851], SM Papers, Box 1, FF 8 (CJS).

81. SM to Nina (Morais) Cohen, May 25, 1896, SM Papers, Box 7, FF 9 (CJS); cf. *AH*, November 19, 1897, 66; *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 3. Morais Will, Article 1, Philadelphia City Archives, Register of Wills, Estate no. 1710 (1897), filed November 22, 1897; a copy is held in the SM Papers, Box 17, FF 22 (CJS). On the preparation of Morais' will, see Emanuel Cohen to SM, September 10, 1893, SM Papers, Box 7, FF 3 (CJS); SM to Emanuel Cohen, May 25, 1896, Box 7, FF 9 (CJS).

Morais' attitude toward his body also extended to his corpus of writings. In a letter to Nina, dated [Sunday] July 19, 1896, written in the evening following the conclusion of *Tisha be-Av* (the fast day for the observance of the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem), Morais, who often published anonymously, reveals that "there has been a period in my life, when my aversion to publishing anything of mine, or about myself, determined me to deal with my writings as with my body, viz., to have them consumed in two layers of quick lime."⁸² In the next breath, however, Morais "reconsidered that thought, for some things which I may have translated from Hebrew or Italian, and something original may be of service to modern Jewish literature. In that case it would be selfish to carry out the original idea."⁸³ In short, Morais' plans for his funeral point to a fusion of temperament and principle. Morais was modest and self-effacing; more importantly, he sincerely believed he was only "dust and ashes" before God, as he is reported to have told his well-wishers at the JTSA who surprised him in early May 1897 with a celebration just after his seventy-fourth birthday (only six months before his death).⁸⁴

Given the prominent place Morais occupies in nineteenth-century American Jewish history, how do we explain the forgetting and scholarly neglect of him a century later? This process of forgetting did not merely result from passage of time but rather points to profound changes then underway which affected subsequent interpretations of what was deemed worthy of being remembered. To begin with, however, Morais' historiographical neglect is traceable to the funeral itself. Some commentators defined the spectacle of the mass funeral as a solution to the problem of memorialization Morais posed to his mourners: how to remember someone who wanted to enshroud both his life and his death in a cloak of self-effacement.⁸⁵ To understand Morais and the process of his being forgotten is first to understand the extent to which throughout his life

82. SM to Nina Cohen, July 19, 1896 (9th of Ab) SM Papers, Box, 7, FF 10 (CJS). The original letter is missing from the collection at CJS; the statement quoted here is taken from a typed transcription, apparently prepared by Cyrus Adler in preparation for his biography of Morais (see Davis, "Annotated Bibliography," 60, for Adler's plan to write Morais' biography).

83. Morais, curiously, saved everything. Writing to her brother Henry on April 25, 1898, regarding the disposition of their father's personal papers, Nina complains that "as regard the letters in the boxes—I am finding them a very tedious task as every scrap of paper or card appears to have been kept." Nina Cohen to H. S. Morais, April 25, 1898, Papers of Henry S. Morais, YU Archives.

84. Morais, *Memoir*, 4.

85. See *AH*, November 19, 1897; *PJE*, November 19, 1897.

and even in planning for his own burial he consciously tried to erase himself from historical memory. Krauskopf eloquently explained these related problems of memorialization:

For the critical eye of man [Morais] has left behind no visible monument of great achievements, but to the eye of God he has reared a monument far greater than any of those famed by man. That greatness was his goodness, which in point of intrinsic merit will compare with the greatest wonders of genius. Were it possible for man to measure the amount of good he dispensed among the sorrowing and afflicted . . . the historian would not hesitate to enroll his name among the world's truest and noblest immortals . . . To do good was the first duty of his creed, to do it in silence always, and in secrecy wherever possible, was his second.⁸⁶

If Morais' legacy was to elude future historians, at least the memory of the masses who attended his funeral would linger as a testimonial to his goodness. Indeed, many of those writing in 1897 could find no better vehicle to express the character of collective loss than by referring to the spectacle of the enormous gathering of people overflowing the streets of Philadelphia that Monday afternoon. This figure of the masses bearing witness to the love felt for Morais is a recurrent trope. *The American Hebrew* voiced the widely held opinion that

No worthier tribute could be paid to Sabato Morais' attachment to the cause of the poor than the vast multitude that sought entrance to the house on the day of the funeral, and filled the street and square in front of the house, following reverently so long as the carriage was in sight and then taking the [street] cars to the cemetery, where an equally large crowd of men and women had long before proceeded. The gathering of these thousands was testimony to the love that was borne to Sabato Morais by his lowly brethren in faith.⁸⁷

Some of the memorial notices also manifest a clear historical consciousness of social changes then underway. For some observers, Morais' funeral marked the passing of "an older generation" of Jewish ministers. Reform Rabbi J. B. Grossman, for example, contrasted this "champion of the old spirit of orthodoxy" to "the new spirit of reform." The scholar and European-trained Rabbi Marcus Jastrow defined this generation gap in terms of the inroads of materialism on the religious vocation. According to Jastrow, Morais belonged to

the older generation of Jewish ministers in America who differ from the younger generation essentially in that the former were contented with giving

86. Krauskopf, "Tribute," *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 6.

87. *AH*, November 19, 1897, 65; cf. Morais, *Memoir*, 32.

the impetus to charitable and educational work, stimulating the nobler ambitions dormant in the hearts of those who to all appearances are entirely absorbed in the engrossing pursuits of wealth and material comforts, thus causing institution after institution to spring forth, organization after organization to be formed and making of scattered individuals a united and active community with a character of its own, yet unconsciously bearing, as I said before, the stamp of those silent and often ignored guides and directors that keep in the background ready to come forward when their help is needed, and to retire again, leaving the practical men to manage and execute the institutions of their creation.⁸⁸

Those who knew and loved Morais repeatedly referred to him in their memorial tributes in idealized terms, as a religious role model, a prophet like Jeremiah, a man of constancy, duty, absolute sincerity, piety and humility.⁸⁹ At the same moment in which they were writing these tributes to him, however, these very same traits were diminishing in worth in culturally specific ways. For example, if one were to read "women" in place of Jastrow's "older generation," these descriptions also can be seen to reflect the "feminization" of the figure of the rabbi and particularly of the (male) religious vocation. The "silent and often ignored guides and directors that keep in the background ready to come forward when their help is needed" closely resembles the nineteenth-century idealization of women as pious, self-sacrificing enablers, moral guideposts responsible for the education of the young and for nurturing and strengthening the bonds of communal life. In fact, the synagogue, the spiritual center of Morais' life's work, had been undergoing for decades a process of feminization. As Morais himself observed in 1892, attendance at weekly services increasingly depended on women to fill the pews.⁹⁰ Part of what explains the decline of interest in Morais as a major American Jewish leader, in other words, was the cultural feminization of the values he embodied and the diminishing worth attached to the communal roles he played.⁹¹

88. Marcus Jastrow, *PJE*, November 19, 1897, 6.

89. See "Tributes" in *PJE*, *AH*, November 19, 1897, and note 3.

90. On the feminization of the synagogue, see Rogow, 46 and the sources cited on 253, n. 27. See Morais' own observations of this phenomenon in *A Discourse Delivered on Sabbath Bemidbar, Sivan the 2d, 5662 (May 28, 1892) It Being The Thirty-Second Anniversary of the Consecration of the Synagogue on Seventh Street above Arch (Philadelphia, 1892)*, 8.

91. On women, religion, and gender in nineteenth century America, see Barbara Welter, *Dimity Conviction: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, OH, 1976); Carrol Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York, 1985). On "feminization," see Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion, 1800-1860," in *Clio's Consciousness Raised*, eds. Mary Hartman and

What is noteworthy, however, is that Morais had explained his own conception of religious piety and vocation in feminine terms decades earlier, in his inaugural Sabbath sermon delivered at Mikveh Israel, on March 22, 1851.⁹² Morais used that occasion to express to his potential congregation his fundamental views about the meaning and purpose of Jewish worship, of prayer and ritual observance. Standing before the congregation for the first time and preaching in English, Morais declared:

True worship resides in the heart, and truly it is by purifying our hearts that we best worship God; still the ordinances which we are enjoined to perform aim but at this object: to sanctify our immortal soul, to make it worthy of its sublime origin . . . We must also be upon our guard lest the essential should become secondary; we must take heed not to confound true devotion with false piety. The former is simple, modest, it does not strive to attract the attention of men, but like the devoted Hannah, it speaks with the heart, the lips move and the voice is scarcely audible. The latter is clamorous, affected, full of ostentation.⁹³

Morais drew upon the "simple, modest" biblical Hannah (I Samuel 1:13) to convey his conception of true religious piety and duty. True worship, Morais explained, resembles the act of a simple yet devout woman, barren of child but not of faith, who personally addresses God, not through public ostentation but almost imperceptibly through whispered prayer.

Morais' attitudes about women and piety can be understood biographically insofar as he spent his entire life surrounded by females. He grew up with seven sisters, his mother profoundly influenced the course of his life, he later fathered five daughters of his own, and he had a number of close

Lois Banner (New York, 1974); Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York, 1977). For studies of women as organizers, see Estelle Freedman, "Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870-1930," in *Feminist Studies* 5 (Fall 1979): 512-29; Arlene Kaplan Daniels, *Invisible Careers: Women Civic Leaders form the Volunteer World* (Chicago, 1988). On Jewish women and the idealization of feminine piety, see Karla Goldman, "The Ambivalence of Reform Judaism: Kaufmann Kohler and the Ideal Jewish Woman," *AJH* 79 (Summer 1990): 477-99. For more general background on American Jewish women, voluntarism and communal life, see *AJH* 70 (September 1980), guest editor June Sochen; Nancy B. Sinkoff, "Educating for 'Proper' Jewish Womanhood: A Case Study in Domesticity and Vocational Training, 1897-1926," *AJH* 77 (June 1988): 572-99; Beth S. Wenger, "Jewish Women and Voluntarism: Beyond the Myth of Enablers," *AJH* 79 (Autumn 1989): 16-36; Paula Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle and London, 1995).

92. *The Asmonean*, 3, 23, March 28, 1851, 181.

93. *Ibid.*, 181.

female friends whom he knew through his charitable and congregational work. But these attitudes toward women and piety, typical though they were of his time in some ways, also reflected a sincere religious and moral principle inculcated during Morais' youth in Livorno.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century an important program of merchant reform was introduced into Livorno which transformed the self-understanding of its Jewish community. Beginning in March 1832, shortly before Morais' ninth birthday, a school of "reciprocal instruction," teaching both religious and secular subjects, was opened for the Jewish children of the city, patterned after the non-Jewish schools already established there. The reciprocal education schools were originally intended to serve a broader social reform program "as a practical and effective means of educating the lower classes." The reciprocal system, started in England at the end of the eighteenth century by William Lancaster, made a select group of older children responsible for guiding and monitoring the younger ones, with a single teacher overseeing the supervision of the school. These schools, with some modifications, found their way to Tuscany after the Napoleonic invasions. In Livorno the schools—to which Morais himself alludes in his "History of the Jewish Congregation of Leghorn" (1891)⁹⁴—reportedly emphasized, in David LoRomer's words, a "spirit of association," cultivated "gentleness" (*mansuetudine*) and harmony among the students, and aimed at nothing less than the "moral perfection of the population," with special emphasis placed on educating young girls. Characteristic of educational reform throughout Europe and America at this time, women were increasingly viewed as the backbone of civil society and the foundation of a stable polity as the heart of strong families. Consequently, women's education and moral sphere of activity could no longer be neglected, an outlook intrinsic to the kinds of activities to which Morais devoted himself in later years.⁹⁵

Morais identified true power and authority with God, not with worldly accomplishments, political muscle, entering the public sphere or

94. SM, "The History of the Jewish Congregation of Leghorn," 356: "Highest among the high, stands the educational institute, which comprises twenty-one schools, each seeking to attain a specified object. Thus scores of infants under the superintendance of well-trained female teachers, acquire rudimental knowledge and are promoted from grade to grade, always joining secular to religious studies, so that while to a male child, that institution affords the means of becoming a bookkeeper, a mechanic, or a Rabbi, to a girl it offers the facilities of gaining accomplishments fitting her for the parlor not less than for the kitchen." Cf. SM, *IHL*, 190, for memories of "my earliest school days."

95. I am indebted to David G. LoRomer, *Merchants and Reform in Livorno, 1814-1868* (Berkeley, 1987), 171-88 for his enlightening discussion of educational reform in Livorno during this time.

gaining public recognition. As Morais once put it, "to exercise social and domestic virtues is to serve the Lord and Redeemer."⁹⁶ For Morais, communal and charitable work functioned as a form of worship, a sacrificial service of the heart (*'avodah*). Morais followed the biblical writings he read so carefully, such as Jeremiah and Ecclesiastes, in pronouncing earthly achievements "vanities."⁹⁷ For example, in May 1897, when Morais publicly opposed the impending convention of the first world Zionist congress, he explicitly drew upon Jeremiah and Ecclesiastes to declare political Zionism a "vanity, wherein there is no usefulness."⁹⁸ In principle Morais objected to a convention to advance political Zionism because he judged the essentially secular call for a Jewish return to the Land of Israel to be in conflict with the traditional religious doctrine that only God, not Jews, should initiate a messianic restoration. But Morais' opposition also reflected a religious sensibility rooted in the idea that true piety involved humble submission to God's will. Three months later, in August 1897, political Zionism was born at Basle, and three months after that Morais died.

The year 1897 constitutes a pivotal date in the history of modern Jewish politics that directly bears upon our understanding of subsequent judgements about what would constitute a "usable past" worthy of being remembered. The year Morais died saw the birth of both political Zionism and Jewish socialism (the Bund). Zionist thinkers in particular were preoccupied in the decades after Morais' death with the creation of a New Jewish Man, akin to revolutionary efforts to produce a New Negro, New Woman, or, later, a New Soviet. Max Nordau, a disciple of the founding father of political Zionism, Theodore Herzl, spoke about a new, muscular Judaism (*Muskeljudentum / yahadut ha-shririm*), envisioning a new Jewish masculinity.⁹⁹

96. Quoted in Nussenbaum, 130.

97. Ecclesiastes 1:2; Jeremiah 16:19. Morais translated the book of Jeremiah into English for the reorganized Jewish Publication Society. His translation remained unrevised at the time of his death and was completed posthumously by his daughter Nina. See the unpublished letter of Nina Morais to H. S. Morais, April 25, 1898, Papers of Henry S. Morais, YU Archives: "The Jeremiah was completed a month ago and sent to Dr. [Marcus] Jastrow [editor of the JPS Bible translation committee]. I hope that he will permit me to make another version of the whole before the manuscript is finally accepted. In my opinion, the translation is fine, clear and vigorous."

98. SM, "The Zionist Movement," *PJE*, June 4, 1897, 1.

99. On the theme of "muscular" Zionism see Max Nordau, "Muskeljudentum," in *Juedische Turnzeitung* (June 1903), excerpted and translated by J. Hessing in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (New York and Oxford, 1980), 434-35. For discussion, see Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (New York, 1992). I am grateful to Michael Stanislawski for sparking my thinking on this topic.

Though politically engaged in his own day, the "feminine" Morais did not provide a legacy for "muscular" Zionism. Morais' humble personality and public opposition to political Zionism contributed to the future marginalization of this "representative of an older generation." Additional support for this conclusion can be gained by comparing Morais' fate with that of the classical American Reform movement of Judaism in the following decades, which languished under the leadership of Kaufmann Kohler, who vehemently opposed the new Jewish nationalism. On the other hand, Morais' well-known successor, Solomon Schechter and the "rabbinical Zionists" of the modern JTSA, allied with the remarkable dissident Reform rabbi and communal leader Judah Magnes, actively promoted American Zionism and succeeded in transforming the modern Seminary into the center of the largest movement of American Judaism.¹⁰⁰

It is ironic that during the late nineteenth century, while Morais continued to embrace and identify with an idealization of feminine piety, Jewish women were themselves, in the words of Beth Wenger, moving "beyond the myth of enablers."¹⁰¹ Jewish women began transforming their traditional roles and volunteer work by moving in ever greater numbers into the public sphere. According to Wenger, this "volunteer work, initially designed for women's selfless activities, allowed women to acquire a sense of self-hood and gender consciousness while sharpening leadership and organizational skills."¹⁰² In the broader terms of the late nineteenth century, a time of heady optimism, of exploration, colonization and imperial expansion, Morais' outlook was quaint at best.¹⁰³

100. See Arthur A. Goren, "Spiritual Zionists and Jewish Sovereignty," in *The Americanization of the Jews*, eds. Robert M. Seltzer and Norma J. Cohen (New York, 1995), 165-92. For background on this early period and the direction of American Zionism, see Ben Halpern, "The Americanization of Zionism, 1880-1930," *AJH* 69 (September 1979): 15-33; Allon Gal, "The Mission Motif in American Zionism (1898-1948)," *AJH* 75 (June 1986): 363-85; Naomi W. Cohen, *American Jews and the Zionist Idea* (New York, 1975).

101. Wenger, "Jewish Women and Voluntarism: Beyond the Myth of Enablers," 16-36, and additional sources cited, 17, n. 3.

102. *Ibid.*, 17.

103. If the political figures with whom Morais identified most were the mid-nineteenth century republicans, Mazzini and Lincoln, as H. S. Morais states (Morais, *Memoir*, 23), the figure with whom he might be most usefully contrasted would be Theodore Roosevelt and the later generation of Republicans Roosevelt led (including the life-long bachelor and prominent Philadelphia Jewish leader Judge Mayer Sulzberger, one of the main actors in the reorganization of the JTSA in 1902), or the Jewish nationalists discussed above. On Roosevelt's interest in the "manly arts" and the centrality of national honor to his political outlook, see Howard K. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power* (Baltimore and London, 1989).

At least one additional factor, intimately related to the subject of gender and the politics of memory, also contributed to the forgetting of Morais: the enduring impact of a new scientific ethos and the consequent professionalization of spheres of public service like the rabbinate and social work and of fields of learning like philosophy and history. Morais' outlook combined a close relationship between knowledge and ethics, communal unity and God, republicanism as social democracy and an emotional bond of brotherhood to all humanity, fundamentally anchored to the authoritative truth of biblical revelation. The new scientific ethos, partly originating in an Enlightenment attack on revelation and clericalism, made reason a basis of authority, was universal in scope and method, pursued a detached ideal of objectivity, and was empowered by a new system of credentials. The new ideal eclipsed Morais' rabbinic humanist sensibility under concrete historical conditions then transforming traditional Jewish communal life.¹⁰⁴

At the end of the nineteenth century the United States experienced radical changes in the relationship between society and knowledge which affected the cultural valuation of socially assigned gender roles for women and men. "The methods of science," according to Ira Robinson, "were to separate the amateur from the professional, the dilettante from the dedicated specialist in the context of an age in which scientificity was the hallmark of the modern and the authoritative."¹⁰⁵ By applying this characterization to the kinds of voluntary and philanthropic work performed by Morais and other American Jewish women and men during this time and then analyzing these changes in terms of gender, it is immediately evident how a nonegalitarian cultural differentiation occurred between volunteer women, ministers, unaccredited "amateurs" and "dilettantes" and the credentialed professionals.

From its early associational foundations American Jewry was moving from voluntarism to professionalism in its leadership patterns. The concurrent professionalization of both Jewish communal workers and the office of the rabbinate profoundly affected the lives of Jewish women

104. Donald J. Wilson, *Science, Community and the Transformation of American Philosophy, 1860-1930* (Chicago and London, 1990); Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of the Social Sciences* (New York, 1991); Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, 1988); David Hollinger, *Morris Cohen and the Scientific Ideal* (Cambridge, MA, 1975); Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven and London, 1985); *Religion and Twentieth Century American Intellectual Life*, Michael J. Lacey, ed. (New York, 1989).

105. Ira Robinson, "The Invention of American Jewish History," *AJH* 81 (Autumn 1994): 315.

and men. Professionalization further eroded the already diminished authority and prestige of the uncredentialed Jewish minister or hazan in America as a leadership figure symbolizing authoritative knowledge and wisdom. The professionalization of wisdom was underway, and to some extent in reaction to the feminization of Jewish religious life. Rabbis increasingly pursued and received doctorates as well as seminary certification. Charitable activity began to be carried out by university-trained and credentialed specialists guided by new scientific methodologies. Morais' life's work, so closely identified with the synagogue and foster home, caring for the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, and attending to the education of children on a voluntary, unremunerated basis, was serving less and less as a male cultural ideal. Many of these responsibilities, which in traditional Jewish society belonged on an associational basis to the male leadership of the community, were deemed "unmanly" with increasing frequency even as Morais' mourners depicted him as a paragon of virtue for emulation.¹⁰⁶

The biography of Cyrus Adler exemplifies the historical transition from amateur communal leader to accredited "Scholar-Doer," as Jonathan Sarna puts it, under the impact of scientism and professionalization.¹⁰⁷ Adler, one of the founders of the American Jewish Historical Society, was tutored early in life by Morais and went on to receive at the age of

106. On professionalization during this time period and its impact on Jewish women's philanthropy, see Bodek, 161–62; for general background, see Roy Lubove, *The Professional Altruist: The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880–1930* (Cambridge, 1968); Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York, 1976); Bruce A. Kimball, *The "True Professional Ideal" in America: A History* (Cambridge, MA, and Oxford, 1992). The professionalization of the medical profession, the marginalization and outlawing of midwives, and the violent surgery practiced against women may be taken as just one example of the effects of this process on the lives of women. See e.g., G. J. Barker-Benfield, "Sexual Surgery in Late-Nineteenth-Century America," *Seizing Our Bodies: The Politics of Women's Health*, ed. Claudia Dreifus (New York, 1978), 13–41. A similar point is made by Bodek, 162, who uses the fate of the midwife in early modern Europe as an analogy for the fate of the volunteer woman in America.

107. Jonathan D. Sarna, "Cyrus Adler and the Development of American Jewish Culture: The 'Scholar-Doer' as a Jewish Communal Leader," *AJH* 78 (March 1989): 382–99; Robinson, "Invention"; Cyrus Adler, *I Have Considered the Days* (Philadelphia, 1941). Another exemplary contrast could be drawn between Morais and Bernard Drachman, a professionally-trained and accredited rabbi, co-founder of the original JTSA, whom Jeffrey Gurock has characterized as having moved during the same period "from exception to role model," whereas Morais, as we have seen, went from being a "role model to the exception." See Jeffrey Gurock, "From Exception to Role Model: Bernard Drachman and the Evolution of Jewish Religious Life in America, 1880–1920," *AJH* 76 (June 1987): 456–84.

twenty-four America's first Ph.D. in Semitics from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore in 1887. At Johns Hopkins Adler was imbued with the new scientific ideal. While he never received a rabbinical ordination, he did lecture at the early Seminary on biblical archeology and later became president of the first independent graduate school of Jewish studies, the Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning, established in Philadelphia in 1907. After Solomon Schechter's death in 1915 Adler simultaneously held the presidencies of Dropsie College in Philadelphia and the JTSA in New York City until his death in 1940. Adler invested his offices as president of institutions of higher Jewish learning with the prestige traditionally associated with the activity of rabbinical scholarship using the title of doctor conferred by the modern university. In so doing Adler invented a new and authoritative leadership role in American Jewish communal life. To put it slightly differently, as Ismar Schorsch has explained the professionalization of the western European rabbinate, "the doctorate became the emblem of the modern rabbi."¹⁰⁸ In Adler's case, the doctorate substituted for *semihah* (ordination), just as the doctor substituted for the rabbi as a new type of Jewish communal leader.

Morais, by contrast, labored without the credentials of the western seminary rabbi, the training of the professional social worker, or the doctorate of a modern university graduate. He received a traditional Jewish education in Italy. His rabbinical ordination certificate, signed by Haham Abraham Baruch Piperno, the respected chief rabbi of Livorno, attests that he completed a curriculum of biblical and Talmudic literature with commentaries and was prepared to handle Jewish legal sources. In the *bagitto*, or Judeo-Livornese dialect, the title *maskil* on his ordination certificate identified its bearer as ordained to teach but was inferior to the title *hakham*, the highest rabbinical title used by Sephardic Jews to designate someone empowered to render legal decisions.¹⁰⁹ Morais lacked the imprimatur of the modern western theological seminary, having never gone on to complete his training at the Rabbinical College of Padua, founded in 1829, where the leading Italian Jewish scholars of his day, Isaac Reggio and Samuel David Luzzatto, taught. Morais was

108. Schorsch, "Emergence of the Modern Rabbinate," 243.

109. For the Morais *semihah* (ordination) certificate, see SM Papers, Box 13, FF 38 (CJS), signed by Piperno, Abraham Curiat, Isaac Alveranga, and Angiolo Funaro. Moshe Davis has pointed out that this document was not a rabbinical ordination, but limited to authorizing its recipient to teach Jewish subjects (*hat'arat hora'ah*). See Davis, "Shabbtai Morais," 575, n. 6. On the Judeo-Livornese usage, see Vittorio Marchi, *Lessico del Livornese con Finestra Aperta sul Bagitto* (Livorno, 1993), 304.

essentially an “amateur” in the language of both the seminary and the university. True, Morais was the first Jew to be granted an honorary doctorate of laws from the University of Pennsylvania (in 1887, the same year Adler received his Ph.D.) in recognition of his outstanding achievements. But this degree, unlike Adler’s, was not a “real” credential. It conferred on Morais a title (doctor) he neither sought nor used, but one by which the community was able to distinguish him from other uncredentialed “reverends.”¹¹⁰

It was Cyrus Adler, finally, who assiduously collected and carefully arranged Morais’ personal papers at Dropsie College in anticipation of fulfilling, in Moshe Davis’ words, a “dream, amidst his busy life, to pause for a brief moment and inscribe a poem in the form of a biography to his master.”¹¹¹ As his former pupil and successor (after the death of Solomon Schechter) as president of the JTSA, Adler faithfully remembered Morais with love and devotion. But Adler’s professional life never left him time to pause, and so his hope of completing his master’s biography went unfulfilled and the process of forgetting continued unchecked.

Perhaps overlooked by feminist scholars as a man, undoubtedly dismissed by others as unimportant, Sabato Morais was an unusual exception whose Anglo-Livornese rabbinic humanist legacy challenges standard evaluations of nineteenth-century American Jewish religious leadership. Analogous to “women’s” history, which for so long remained invisible, Morais’ biography invites us to revise judgments about what is deemed historically significant, to analyze the role gender plays in the assessment of historical significance, and to reexamine the claims for inclusivity that accompany those historical assessments. The riddle of Morais’ life and funeral raises the question and points the way toward reinterpreting the transformation of American Jewish leadership at the end of the nineteenth century while posing broader questions about the politics of ethnic memory in the twentieth.

110. On the conferring of the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, see Secretary Jesse Y. Burk, University of Pennsylvania, to SM, May 3, 1887, SM Papers, Box 4, FF 4 (CJS); *University of Pennsylvania One Hundred and Thirty-First Annual Commencement Programme*, Wednesday June 8, 1887, 4. Morais was the first Jew to receive such a degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and according to Jacob Rader Marcus, “in all probability, [Morais] was the second Jew in the United States so to be singled out . . . the first was Bernhard Felsenthal.” See Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry* (Detroit, 1989), 3:124. Note, however, that the *PJE*, Nov. 19, 1897, 3; Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 442; Davis, *Emergence*, 355 all claim Morais was the first to be so honored. Marcus does not provide a date for Felsenthal’s degree.

111. Moshe Davis, “Annotated Bibliography,” 60.