



2004

Varieties of Haskalah: Sabato Morais's Program of Sephardi Rabbinic Humanism in Victorian America

Arthur Kiron

University of Pennsylvania, kiron@pobox.upenn.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.upenn.edu/library_papers

 Part of the [Jewish Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kiron, A. (2004). Varieties of Haskalah: Sabato Morais's Program of Sephardi Rabbinic Humanism in Victorian America. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/library_papers/73

Suggested Citation:

Kiron, Arthur. "Varieties of Haskalah: Sabato Morais's Program of Sephardi Rabbinic Humanism in Victorian America" in *Renewing the past, reconfiguring Jewish culture : from al-Andalus to the Haskalah*. Ed. Ross Brann and Adam Sutcliffe. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. http://repository.upenn.edu/library_papers/73

For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.

Varieties of Haskalah: Sabato Morais's Program of Sephardi Rabbinic Humanism in Victorian America

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Jewish Studies

Comments

Suggested Citation:

Kiron, Arthur. "Varieties of Haskalah: Sabato Morais's Program of Sephardi Rabbinic Humanism in Victorian America" in *Renewing the past, reconfiguring Jewish culture : from al-Andalus to the Haskalah*. Ed. Ross Brann and Adam Sutcliffe. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

JEWISH CULTURE AND CONTEXTS

Published in association with the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies
of the University of Pennsylvania

David B. Ruderman, Series Editor

Advisory Board

Richard I. Cohen

Moshe Idel

Deborah Dash Moore

Ada Rapoport-Albert

David Stern

A complete list of books in the series is available from the publisher.

*Renewing the Past,
Reconfiguring Jewish
Culture*

From al-Andalus to the Haskalah

Edited by
Ross Brann and Adam Sutcliffe

PENN

University of Pennsylvania Press
Philadelphia

Publication of this volume was assisted by a grant from the Martin D. Gruss Endowment Fund of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania.

Copyright © 2004 University of Pennsylvania Press
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Published by
University of Pennsylvania Press
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-4011

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Renewing the past, reconfiguring Jewish culture : from al-Andalus to the Haskalah / edited by
Ross Brann and Adam Sutcliffe.

p. cm.—(Jewish culture and contexts)

Papers delivered at a symposium of a seminar at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies of
the University of Pennsylvania, 1999.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8122-3742-0 (alk. paper)

1. Jews—Civilization—Congresses. 2. Jews—Spain—Civilization—Congresses. 3. Jews—
Italy—Civilization—Congresses. 4. Hebrew poetry, Medieval—History and criticism—
Congresses. 5. Philosophy, Jewish—Congresses. 6. Haskalah—Germany—Congresses.
7. Jews—Civilization—Historiography—Congresses. I. Brann, Ross, 1949-. II. Sutcliffe,
Adam. III. University of Pennsylvania. Center for Advanced Judaic Studies. IV. Series.

DS113.R43 2003
909'.04924—dc22

2003061366

Contents

Foreword vii
David B. Ruderman

Introduction: Al-Andalus, Enlightenment, and the Renewal of
the Jewish Past 1
Adam Sutcliffe and Ross Brann

PART I PHILOSOPHY, POETRY, AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN PREMODERN AL-ANDALUS AND ITALY

1 Aesthetic Models in Conflict: Classicist versus Ornamental in
Jewish Poetics 21
Joseph Yahalom

2 The Uses of *Exile* in Poetic Discourse: Some Examples from
Medieval Hebrew Literature 31
Esperanza Alfonso

3 Their Rose in Our Garden: Romance Elements in Hebrew
Italian Poetry 50
Dvora Bregman

4 The Crisis of Medieval Knowledge in the Work of the
Fifteenth-Century Poet and Philosopher Moses da Rieti 59
Alessandro Guetta

PART II RENEWING TEXTS, CHANGING HORIZONS: THE JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT'S APPROPRIATION OF ANDALUSI IDEALS

5 Judah Halevi's *Kuzari* in the Haskalah: The Reinterpretation
and Reimagining of a Medieval Work 71
Adam Shear

6	The Aesthetic Difference: Moses Mendelssohn's <i>Kohelet Musar</i> and the Inception of the Berlin Haskalah <i>Jonathan Karp</i>	93
7	Varieties of Haskalah: Sabato Morais's Program of Sephardi Rabbinic Humanism in Victorian America <i>Arthur Kiron</i>	121
PART III REFASHIONINGS OF THE JEWISH PAST IN THE ERA OF HASKALAH		
8	Solomon Maimon and His Jewish Philosophical Predecessors: The Evidence of His Autobiography <i>Allan Arkush</i>	149
9	Quarreling over Spinoza: Moses Mendelssohn and the Fashioning of Jewish Philosophical Heroism <i>Adam Sutcliffe</i>	167
10	Strategic Friendships: Jewish Intellectuals, the Abbé Grégoire, and the French Revolution <i>Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall</i>	189
11	Heine and Haggadah: History, Narration, and Tradition in the Age of <i>Wissenschaft des Judentums</i> <i>Jonathan Skolnik</i>	213
	List of Contributors	227
	Index	229

Chapter 7

*Varieties of Haskalah: Sabato Morais's
Program of Sephardi Rabbinic Humanism
in Victorian America*

Arthur Kiron

The philosophical question of the relationship between the one and the many has been debated since antiquity. From monoltry to monotheism, from Plato to the American penny's *e pluribus unum*, successive cultures have struggled to make sense of how particular elements participate in and belong to universal categories.¹ Recent debates over the historical definition of the term *Haskalah* echo this ancient dilemma, which is inextricably bound up with a key ideological controversy concerning the modern Jewish experience.² The German-Jewish experience, it has been argued, provides a "mirror of modernity" for all modernizing Jewish experiences.³ Whatever regional variations may exist in Jewish experiences of enlightenment and modernization, according to this argument, these details pale beside the profound and overarching commonalities intrinsic to the trends first manifested and consciously, programmatically articulated by Jews in German-speaking lands. Until recently, alternative accounts of Jewish modernization have largely been erased, delegitimized, or downplayed. Revealingly, the experiences of Jews in Muslim lands and in the western diasporas of England and America have been particularly widely ignored. Jewish modernization in these areas did not follow the familiar pattern of hope, crisis, despair, emigration, and national rebirth that was influentially staked out as paradigmatic by a generation of historians of German and Eastern European Jewry. The traditional definition and circumscription of the term *Haskalah*, thus, has contributed in part to the exclusion, until recently, of both these regions from the mainstream of modern Jewish historiography.⁴

I would here like to challenge this regnant model of *Haskalah*, not by

offering a new definition but by posing a counterexample. Sabato Morais, the main figure in this account, played a central role in shaping an enlightened Jewish religious culture in the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century. Morais was the preeminent exponent and programmatic disseminator of a distinct form of what I would like to call rabbinic humanism, that in its own time was variously referred to as "historical Judaism" and/or "enlightened orthodoxy." What I here will try to explicate is what Morais and his contemporaries understood by the seemingly oxymoronic phrase "enlightened orthodoxy" and ask how this outlook functioned for Jews living in a Victorian, English-speaking milieu.

Best known as one of the founders of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City in 1886, Sabato Morais remains a curiously forgotten figure in the history of American Jewry.⁵ In his own time, however, as Kasriel Sarasohn, publisher of the orthodox Yiddish newspaper *Tageblatt*, put it in a memorial tribute, Morais was widely regarded as "without doubt the greatest of all orthodox rabbis in America."⁶ Morais was born in Livorno, a port city in the Italian duchy of Tuscany in 1823, and raised there amid the nationalist and revolutionary ferment of the Risorgimento. His mother was of Ashkenazic descent, and his father a poor Jewish butcher whose ancestors were Portuguese conversos. "Sabatino," as he was affectionately known, was the third of their nine children. Morais's father Samuel and his paternal grandfather Sabato, after whom he was named, were both fervent advocates of the Republican cause. Radical activists regularly visited his childhood home where they gathered to eat, drink, and sing patriotic songs; his own father, reportedly, was once imprisoned by the Livornese authorities who suspected him of involvement in a seditious plot.⁷

Morais's early education in Livorno was heavily influenced by this atmosphere of political turbulence and also by an enlightened merchant reform program that introduced new pedagogical methods to the teaching of the city's poorer youth.⁸ Morais received his rabbinical training from the city's *haḥam* (Sephardi rabbinic authority), Abraham Barukh Piperno.⁹ The rabbinical degree of "Maskil," the equivalent of a teacher's certificate, was conferred on him in 1846.¹⁰ Driven by the need to find employment, Morais then left Livorno for London, where he became a teacher at the Jewish Orphan School attached to the Spanish and Portuguese congregation Sha'ar Shamayim, at Bevis Marks.¹¹ Morais spent five years in London, where he formed friendships with many of the Italian nationalists living there in exile, including Giuseppe Mazzini, the leading intellectual voice of the Risorgimento.¹² During this time he also mastered the English language,

acculturated to Victorian manners of dress and decorum, and eventually, to warm encouragement, began to preach publicly in English.¹³ In 1851 Morais reluctantly left London to apply for the newly vacant position of *Ḥazan* (cantor) across the Atlantic at Philadelphia's Spanish and Portuguese congregation Mikveh Israel. Though he lived the majority of his years in Philadelphia, there is clear evidence that the revolutionary environment of his formative youth in Sephardi Livorno and Victorian London made a decisive impression on the religious and political program that he was to teach and disseminate in America until his death in 1897, at the age of seventy-four.¹⁴

Throughout his nearly fifty-year ministry in the United States Morais promoted his Italian Sephardi heritage as part of a programmatic vision of what Jewish life in his new American homeland might become. He offered a rationale for Jews to remain observant that addressed the open, pluralistic character of the American environment. He also articulated reasons for being Jewish that were consonant with the ideology of American exceptionalism and the emergent Victorian culture of refinement he found there. Morais's outlook took hold after the Civil War as part of what Jonathan Sarna has called a "Great Awakening" of Jewish culture in America.¹⁵ It was Morais's outlook and program of religious education in short, and not, as has often been assumed, the positive-historical teachings of Zecharias Frankel, that ultimately provided the ideological underpinnings of the early Jewish Theological Seminary that he founded, aided by a group of supporters, in 1886.¹⁶

Golden Ages, Promised Lands

On his first Thanksgiving in Philadelphia in 1851, Morais preached to his congregation a vision of regenerated Jewish life in America based upon an image of Sephardic cultural openness.¹⁷ Taking as his starting point the so-called golden age of medieval Jewry in Muslim Spain, Morais traced the migration of this tradition to "the Italian schools"¹⁸ following the rise of "bigotry and fanaticism" after the Christian *reconquista* that culminated in the expulsion of 1492.¹⁹ Coming from Livorno and London, Morais hoped to extend this diasporic chain of Jewish cultures to America. The achievements of Andalusí Jewry provided him with his key historical paradigm. Morais called on his coreligionists to imitate this "illustrious example": "Religious and secular lore flourished among them," he declared, "poetry,

the most stirring poetry which speaks to the heart and breathes pious sentiments, was cultivated in their academies. No knowledge, however abstruse, no philosophy, however profound, was neglected by the luminaries of our nation."²⁰

Crucial to the argument of Morais's sermon was the seemingly paradoxical link he perceived between the medieval Sephardi experience and American exceptionalism.²¹ For Morais, America was indeed different: it was a promised land unfettered by the corrupting legacy of a feudal past. Morais rearticulated in Jewish terms the familiar Protestant notion that the discovery of America had been a providential act.²² America, Morais told his congregation, provided a refuge for the oppressed and a haven for religious liberty, protected by "this mighty [Atlantic] ocean, that heavenly constructed bulwark between us and the despotism of the old world."²³ Morais never abandoned this basic belief in American exceptionalism. Forty years later, on Thanksgiving Day, 1891, he once again spoke of the essential difference between America and Europe, the inquisitorial past which "reeks with the smoke of burning pyres into which young and old were pitilessly cast."²⁴ Even as he praised America for its exceptional attributes of freedom and republican government, however, Morais recurrently looked to the European medieval Jewish past for models of virtue. As he characteristically put it in a Passover sermon published in 1881, Morais considered America to be the "virgin soil" "in which the . . . ritual system governing Judaism (will) be regenerated."²⁵

The twenty-seven-year-old Morais's 1851 Thanksgiving address, delivered only eight months after his arrival in Philadelphia, was the first programmatic articulation in America of the Sephardi tradition. The address is "programmatic" in the sense that Morais did not merely evoke elements of Sephardi history and culture that he admired, but consciously formulated them as the basis of a practical curriculum of models for imitation. He planned and subsequently set about implementing and disseminating an actual program of Jewish religious education and cultural regeneration. The golden ages of Iberian and Italian Jewry with which he identified formed the ideological centerpiece of a concrete plan to cultivate a cadre of young Jews that in some senses resembled Mazzini's "Young Italy" movement. Morais planned to educate and organize a new generation of educated, refined, and ritually observant Jewish citizens of the American republic to achieve nothing less than revolutionary change. To realize these ends, he pleaded for communal support for the "literary associations" recently formed in Philadelphia, asking not only for financial sponsorship, but also

for hands-on tutelage. "Let men of talents step forward to (young people's) aid," Morais exhorted, "let men of science mingle among them, let the (force) of their eloquence give a new impulse."²⁶ Jewish leaders, Morais believed, must "impress these youths with the important idea that it is not for their sake alone that they must study but for the sake of [all Americans] . . . as well as for the honor of Israel."²⁷ The community leadership must "[m]ake them understand that it is not by hoarding . . . silver and gold that they can bring their [might] to the advancement of humanity," but that goal must be attained through "learning and wisdom."²⁸

On its face, this outlook resembles what Ismar Schorsch has called "the myth of Sephardi supremacy" in modern Jewish history.²⁹ According to Schorsch and others who have studied the phenomenon in German-speaking lands, late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century enlightened Ashkenazi intellectuals in Berlin and elsewhere turned to the Sephardi legacy because to them it represented "cultural openness, philosophic thinking and an appreciation for the aesthetic."³⁰ Morais's use of the Sephardi legacy, however, differed from that of these Ashkenazi intellectuals in several important respects. First, he promoted this topos in Philadelphia, which had neither an entrenched Ashkenazi rabbinical establishment against which to rebel nor a history of political exclusion to overcome. Second, his emphasis on biblical rather than talmudic study as the basis of a devout Jewish religious curriculum did not represent a break with orthodox tradition, as it did for the German Maskilim, but rather only replicated the model of Sephardi education he had received in Livorno.³¹ Third, while Morais shared the identification of some Ashkenazim with the Sephardi rationalist tradition, and particularly with the figure of Maimonides, he did so as a Sephardi Jew and without articulating a challenge to his traditional values and educational priorities. He openly embraced, for example, a Newtonian view of the universe about planetary motion and gravity, while claiming that these doctrines were fully consonant with theistic teachings.³² Similarly, he found no theological objections to the study of astronomy and believed that William Harvey's theory of the circulation of blood was already present in the Talmud.³³ In this respect, his views were entirely in keeping with what David Ruderman has shown to be the acute Anglo-Jewish engagement with the culture of Newtonianism and scientific discovery, exemplified in particular by David Nieto, the early eighteenth-century rabbi of the Sephardi synagogue in London, whose works Morais had read closely.³⁴ Morais's primary concern was not, however, with scientific or philosophical speculation but with moral philosophy: the studied reflection on what constitutes

a virtuous life. Fundamental to Morais's religious program was the biblical teaching that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."³⁵ Nonetheless, he firmly believed that scientific research and rational reflection supported rather than undermined Jewish teachings and were continuous with a long tradition of Jewish scientific inquiry. In each of these respects Morais did not challenge either the traditional hierarchy of values or the educational curriculum of the Sephardi culture from which he came.³⁶

In sum, while Morais turned to his own Sephardi legacy in order to rejuvenate American Jewish culture in its image, he did not invoke it in order to displace or overthrow traditions he regarded as oppressive and obtuse. In fact, he emphatically rejected on several occasions the assertion by some Sephardim of their genealogical superiority to their non-Sephardi coreligionists.³⁷ He did not share their belief in a distinct and superior Jewish lineage descended directly from the tribe of Judah, and could not accept the aristocratic exclusiveness of Sephardim who refused to "intermarry" with Ashkenazim (Morais himself, to recall, was the product of such a "mixed marriage").³⁸ In this respect it is noteworthy that Morais never called the Andalusí heritage, admired by him as well as by German-Jewish Maskilim, "Sephardi," perhaps preferring to see in the history of the Jews of Muslim Spain a legacy belonging to all Jews, both Sephardi and Ashkenazi. While he embraced the "Sephardic mystique," Morais opposed any hint of "Sephardic superiority."³⁹

The approach Morais adopted to the sensitive topic of liturgical reform illustrates his willingness, in the interest of preserving communal unity, to accommodate and even support Ashkenazi demands at the expense of the traditions he held personally dear. The "ritual question," as it came to be known in the 1870s, divided American Jews accustomed to the Sephardi rite from those familiar with the sounds and order of prayers of the Ashkenazi service. The variety of pronunciations and orders of prayer, however, was only one obstacle to liturgical consensus. Difficult theological disputes arose over whether to retain passages referring to animal sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple, whether to do away with references to certain messianic doctrines such as bodily resurrection, and whether to eliminate the hope for a national restoration of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. Due to the widespread perception of the service as burdensomely long, there also were repeated calls for the excision of various poetic accretions (*piyyutim*). To further complicate matters, individual ministers began creating and publishing their own prayer books, each different in its details and orientation from the next.⁴⁰

Following a controversial decision in 1875 by a formerly traditional congregation in New York City, Bnai Jeshurun, to "reform" the prayer service, public pressure began to build for Morais, as a leading representative of the enlightened orthodox religious camp, to respond. In seven serialized installments, first published in the Philadelphia *Jewish Record* and subsequently reprinted in various other nationally circulating Jewish newspapers, Morais laid out his plan for acceptable modifications of the prayer service as a step toward arriving at a uniform liturgy for American Jews.⁴¹ At the outset, as was typical of him, Morais rhetorically urged Jews to allow "humility and not pride" to shape the course of future actions on this divisive issue.⁴² He then proceeded to announce the practical concessions he was ready to make. Morais explicitly accepted the benefits of a simpler, abbreviated service based in large part on the Ashkenazic order of service, and expressed his willingness to omit such traditionally central elements as references to temple sacrifices.⁴³

The specific elements Morais regarded as essential to retain, however, remained unpublished. His most detailed statement on this matter is found in a handwritten marginal note in his personal scrapbook, today found at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies Library at the University of Pennsylvania.⁴⁴ From that annotation, we know that Morais's central liturgical concession was his willingness to accommodate a non-Sephardic majority by sacrificing the Sephardic order of prayer. He responded to the challenge of modifying the prayer service by abbreviating it, adapting it, and accepting translations of it. He accepted the removal of historical accretions of sacred poetry that he regarded as extrinsic to the sacred liturgical core discussed in rabbinic sources. Yet he also defended the retention of the poetry of certain Sephardic medieval Hebrew poets, including Solomon ibn Gabirol, Judah Halevi, Moses and Abraham ibn Ezra, and the "touching exhortation at the end of [Baḥya ibn Pakuda's] *Chobot Hallebabot*, each paragraph of which begins *Nafshi* [my soul]."⁴⁵ He demanded that Hebrew be the language of prayer, but allowed for the provision of vernacular renderings "worthy of the original to interest those who cannot enjoy the Hebrew."⁴⁶ Morais's compromises were never implemented, but the selections he defended and excisions he permitted reveal the essence of what he valued: a form of worship that retained elements of the Sephardi *musar* (moral-pietistic) tradition but which was deeply modified to meet the practical expectations of an Ashkenazic majority.

Prayer, even communal prayer, belongs to one of the most personal of religious experiences. On an intellectual level, however, in contrast to the

stress on interior personal development in the Germanic tradition of *Bildung*, Morais's Sephardi program tended to place little emphasis on the inward state of the individual. Morais was chiefly interested not in questions of personal development but in the needs of the group in relation to a universal whole. In this sense, his concept of the task of the individual differed from that of any of the stages of German *Bildung*, which David Sorkin has characterized as shifting from an early eighteenth-century emphasis on "moral individualism," to a new ideal of "aesthetic individualism" in the latter half of the century, and which George Mosse has diagnosed as fundamentally "nationalist" in character in the nineteenth century.⁴⁷

Contrastingly, in eighteenth- and particularly nineteenth-century Italian and Italian-Jewish moral and political philosophy (especially as found in the writings of Giuseppe Mazzini and Samuel David Luzzatto, who most directly influenced Morais), the position of reason was always subordinated to claims of intuition and emotional sentiment. For Morais, in keeping with this tradition, reason existed as a tool—a means to an end—but did not serve as an autonomous source of authority or knowledge. Individual ethical knowledge for Mazzini, for example, originated in the feelings of the individual heart, but required an outward moving confirmation or recognition in the feelings of other people as well as in the traditions of the past.⁴⁸ For Luzzatto, too, the ultimate criterion of truth was emotional, not rational. Truth originated in the experience of suffering and in the ability to feel empathy for others.⁴⁹ For Mazzini in particular, and Morais in his footsteps, religion was conceived to be the foundation of a virtuous republic: "religion is the supreme, educative principle, politics are the application of that principle to the various manifestations of human life."⁵⁰

The key difference between Morais's view and that of German and German-Jewish advocates of *Bildung* was that Morais believed religious self-cultivation was precisely supposed to lead away from the self, through a process of *abnegazione* (or self-abnegation), and toward intensified political and social activity.⁵¹ In general, Morais endorsed a particular religious mission for Jews as a priestly people chosen by God and willing to make individual sacrifices to achieve universal social justice. His program functioned similarly to that of Germanic *Bildung* as an agent of embourgeoisement, but it radically differed from the latter model in its structural emphasis on notions of duty and sacrifice in the active service of a religious republican revolution.

The structure and direction of Morais's outlook on the "mission" of

Judaism moved outward, from the individual to the experience of the ethnic group to the interests of the nation, and then to the universal collective. Morais's program for Jewish cultural regeneration in America foreshadows (perhaps ironically, given that Morais opposed political Zionism)⁵² Louis Brandeis's famous adage that to be a good American, a Jew must be a Zionist, insofar as furthering the work of Zionism in the Land of Israel contributed to the spread of American democratic principles around the world.⁵³ According to Morais, by strengthening one's attachment to Judaism in America, one became a better American and thus participated in the improvement of all humanity. His outlook also might be contrasted with the rational individualist, the moral and aesthetic individualist, as well as nationalist models of German liberal thought in which the universal claims of reason were centered in each individual or in the needs and character of the *Volk*. Different from the exclusivist nationalism that George Mosse has shown to be built into the nineteenth-century German conception of *Bildung*, Morais cast Jewish cultural regeneration in America as a universalist project.⁵⁴ To that end, he recast the American holiday of Thanksgiving in terms of Jewish universalism, offering "gratitude to God" for providing America as an asylum from persecution, where Jews were able to participate in the "march of modern civilization."⁵⁵

The establishment and development of youth-oriented cultural and educational institutions were central to Morais's implementation of his programmatic vision of Jewish revitalization. There is clear historical evidence for his continuous efforts in this regard both before and after the Civil War. In 1873, eight years after the war's end, Morais's name appeared on a broadside endorsing the organization of a new "Hebrew [Literary] Association."⁵⁶ According to the announcement, the stated object of the proposed association was to "gain an insight into the Jewish learning of the past," through the study of all subjects that "may expand the range of human thought and impart a knowledge of what is good and useful."⁵⁷ Following the association's establishment, meetings were "held in various places every two weeks." "These [meetings] were well attended, and there was always an instructive literary program with a Jewish tinge, as well as music and recitations."⁵⁸ Morais "served as president for a period, and addressed (the members) at all meetings."⁵⁹ Among the leaders of the association were Nathan Weissenstein, a student of Morais from the Jewish Foster Home, and other Morais students including Jacob Voorsanger, who would later become a prominent rabbi, and the sons of Philadelphia Jewish leaders, such as Lewish W. Steinbach, Hyman P. Binswanger, Harry B. Som-

mer, and David Solis-Cohen. Marcus E. Lam, a student of Morais from Maimonides College (the "first American Jewish theological seminary"), served as secretary.⁶⁰

Two years later, in 1875, the Philadelphia Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) opened its doors. The YMHA, according to its founders, was explicitly patterned after this earlier Hebrew Association and quickly became a popular literary and cultural meeting place for young Jews, male and female, in their teens and twenties.⁶¹ The group that formed the YMHA included most if not all of the young men involved in the Hebrew Association. These young Jews formed a core of Jewish activists seeking a "revived Judaism."⁶² What they perceived to be at stake was not merely the entertainment nor the edification of individual Jews, but the very survival of Judaism and the Jewish people in America.

In his study of the Jewish cultural revival in America that began during the 1870s, Jonathan Sarna sees in the group that coalesced around the Philadelphia Jewish "Y" a cadre of defenders of the Jewish religion and its ritual observances.⁶³ It is noteworthy that all of these activists were students, congregants, or disciples of Morais. The knew him from Mikveh Israel, from the Jewish Foster Home and Hebrew Sunday School, from the Hebrew Education Society (a kind of "Hebrew high school"), from Maimonides College, from his involvement as a sponsor and mentor at their literary associations, and from private classes and discussions held at Morais's home. In practice, Morais's home functioned as an informal private school and salon where students and friends regularly gathered for study and discussion.⁶⁴ Cyrus Adler, one of Morais's students and a future president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, reflecting on this aspect of Morais's role as an educator, wrote: "It is true that when he saw the absolute necessity, he established the [Jewish Theological Seminary], but in Philadelphia, in his own house, with his own books, and at all hours, he taught all that would come."⁶⁵ Indeed, Morais's final hours before his death in November of 1897 reportedly were spent at his home with two of his students, Gerson Levy and Isaac Husik (later to become a respected scholar of medieval Jewish philosophy), reading and discussing with them the poetry of Judah Halevi.⁶⁶

This circle of young Jewish intellectuals later established, according to documents discovered by Sarna, a secret covenant "for God and Judaism" that they called *Keyam Dishmaya*.⁶⁷ They pledged to restore pride in Jewish traditions and specifically to revive the importance of observing Jewish holidays. In the late 1870s, sometime after the founding of the YMHA, these

Philadelphians set about organizing the "Grand Revival of the Jewish National Holiday of Chanukka."⁶⁷ In this period, tellingly, Jews were experiencing new external threats, such as conversionist pressures, social discrimination, and incidents of exclusion such as the notorious Seligman Affair of 1877.⁶⁸ This and other anti-Jewish, discriminatory incidents, including that which occurred at Manhattan Beach on Coney Island in 1879, instilled a new sense of foreboding and anxiety among Jews in America. If the stated intention of the Hanukkah pageant was to affirm ethnic pride and religious observance, it took place against a backdrop of new and disturbing hostilities toward Jews as a group.⁷⁰

In turning to the festival of Hanukkah, a minor holiday in the traditional Jewish calendar, these activists also were highlighting a historical event that Morais had repeatedly emphasized in his pulpit sermons and public addresses as a symbol of Jewish national consciousness, an episode during which Jews had willingly endured martyrdom in defense of their faith.⁷¹ The pageant was thus not simply an attempt to focus Jewish attention away from the temptations and distractions of Christmas. The event also positively celebrated a tradition of duty and sacrifice, affirmed the group identity of the Jews as a nation, and utilized the contemporary means of street pageantry to communicate these messages, all in defiance of a climate of increasing religious and ethnic intolerance.⁷²

Morais and his students invested a large portion of their time and energies in strengthening and focusing Jewish communal life through these various forms of extrasynagogal social, educational, and cultural activities. It was the distinctively Sephardi cultural and religious outlook of Morais and the young activists he inspired that most sharply distinguished them from the Reform leadership and their students, centered in Cincinnati. Refusing to become a passive benchmark against which all modern Jewish experiences of reform or assimilation were measured, Morais and his circle defended a traditional, observant, and culturally open alternative to the confessional, denationalized "American Judaism" of Jewish Reform.

Polemics

In response to the various challenges he faced, Morais frequently found himself engaged in polemical exchanges in the local and national press. In his polemical pieces, Morais adopted a style of discourse similar to what Ernst Curtius has called "affected modesty."⁷³ In this humanist rhetorical

genre of “modesty formulas” the speaker protests his own lack of skill and establishes a tone of humility and submissiveness in order to win a receptive hearing. In Jewish sources, the motif of “affected modesty” is a commonplace rhetorical trope. The precise origins, modes, diffusion, and popularization of the style in Hebrew literature, regrettably, remain relatively unstudied.⁷⁴

In Morais’s case, this polemical style reflected his own self-effacing personality. It was also, however, a consciously adopted and stylized form of writing, with roots in both Italian humanist and Jewish rhetorical traditions. Morais struck this tone and style early on in America. In 1854, three years after his arrival, and in the course of his first public polemic with Isaac Mayer Wise, the future leading advocate of the American Reform movement, Morais began by pleading:

I beg your pardon if I intrude on the columns of your paper, but it is through its medium that I can receive enlightenment. I venture to request that you will grant a small corner therein to the questions I am about to ask. You were the first to call my attention to the history of the Israelites by Dr. I. M. Wise, and as the literary attainments of the gentleman have gained renown, I felt curious to peruse some pages of his last work. I shall not enter into any discussions regarding its merit, as an English production, or the manner in which the records of the Bible have been rendered. I leave that to an abler pen and a more erudite mind. My object is solely to obtain information respecting certain statements made in that work which *to me* appear quite erroneous.⁷⁵

Morais, then thirty-one, took issue with Wise’s *History of the Israelite Nation*, which tried to “explain naturally, what is supernatural,” to allegorize various biblical passages concerning miracles, for distorting, according to Morais, the literal and grammatical meaning of the biblical text, and perhaps most grievously in his eyes, for misrepresenting medieval and early modern Sephardi commentators on the Bible, such as Abraham ibn Ezra and Isaac Abrabanel.⁷⁶

In a polemical exchange published in the Philadelphia *Sunday Dispatch* in February 1859, Morais responded to various Reformers’ attempts to eliminate or allegorize Jewish ritual observances. In the course of his argument, Morais elaborated on his understanding of *mitzvot* as an instrument of Jewish national survival for which Jews throughout their history had been willing to suffer martyrdom. In support of his view he cited rabbinic sources, such as Pirke Avot, and Sephardi philosophers such as Judah Halevi and David Nieto. “The supreme object of [the Jewish people’s] exis-

tence,” he explained, is the “glory of God.” What was ultimately at stake, Morais argued, was God’s reputation on earth: “Let all thy actions aim at the sanctification of the Deity.” The phrase “sanctification of the Deity,” of course, is a figure of speech that in Hebrew also refers to the ultimate worship of God through martyrdom (*qiddush ha-shem*). Morais, in fact, explicitly connected the two ideas, by recalling how Jewish “religious observances have preserved our nationality, what the Maccabees gallantly staked their lives for, and what our progenitors have ever fulfilled despite the bloody mandates of an Antiochus and the boiling cauldron of the Spanish Inquisition.”⁷⁷

Three decades later, during the 1880s, as the battle between the Reformers and the enlightened orthodox camp intensified, Morais refused to change the long-standing tone and style of his polemics. Responding to one of the many highly personal attacks that characterized this dispute, Morais declared: “my aim is not animadversion. I look not through the jaundiced spectacles of fanaticism, and harp on every sentiment that may differ from the accepted notions of Israel’s faith; for although I can understand *lo kol ha-de’ot shaveh*, ‘all opinions are not alike [equal],’” and as we have never been enjoined to believe blindly, so I would deem it a sinful presumption to cast obloquy on any man whose religious principles conflict with those established.”⁷⁸ Over the course of his nearly five-decade ministry in America, despite his apparent flexibility on various ritual questions, Morais remained consistent in his commitment to his Sephardi rabbinic humanist heritage, to the obligations and purposes he detected behind ritual observance, and to the enlightened moral-theological message he saw inscribed in the books of Moses.

Translation

Morais also introduced his Sephardi rabbinic humanist heritage to his students through translation. The legacy of the Jewish experience in Muslim Spain and Renaissance Italy again occupied a paradigmatic place in his thinking. In fact, Morais once drew upon the image of a medieval Sephardi Jewish translator to make his point. Writing about Hasdai ibn Shaprut, the tenth-century minister to the successive courts of Abd al-Raḥmān III and his son Al-Ḥakam II in Muslim Spain, Morais held up the circumstances of his rise to power “as an exemplification of the advantages derived from (secular) knowledge.”⁷⁹ Morais then recounted the story of how the only

man able to translate from Greek into Arabic a rare copy of a medical treatise on pharmacology (by Dioscorides), sent as a gift by the Byzantine emperor, Constantine VII, to the Cordovan caliph, "was the Jew, Ḥasdai ben Isaac [Shaprut]." ⁸⁰ Subsequently, through the influence Ibn Shaprut gained by his talents, "the refining agencies of science and literature were set to work," Morais explained. Ibn Shaprut's knowledge of nonsacred subjects not only brought him favor with the Cordovan ruler, Morais writes, but it also "gained for him the power which he used to the noblest ends." ⁸¹

Through his translations of Sephardi and Italian-Jewish texts into English, Morais himself served as a conduit, transferring Jewish learning "from east to west," from Europe to America. Significantly, Morais's translations were often directly related to his practical work as an educator. In the fall of 1872, shortly before the closing of Maimonides College, where Morais held the position of "Professor of the Bible and Biblical Literature," ⁸² he published a serialized English rendering of Samuel David Luzzatto's "Lessons in Jewish Moral Theology," in the Philadelphia *Jewish Index*, a newspaper edited by two of his students. ⁸³ After the closing of the college, and consequently the *Jewish Index*, Morais turned to the Philadelphia *Jewish Record*, founded in 1875 by Alfred T. Jones, to continue disseminating translations of Luzzatto's works, including his autobiography, and other highlights of Italian Jewish literature. ⁸⁴ At the Young Men's Hebrew Association as well as at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Morais delivered numerous lectures on medieval Sephardi and Italian Jewish literature, and published translations of these texts in the journals associated with these institutions. ⁸⁵ He and his students produced the first translations into English of a number of works of medieval Hebrew poetry and philosophy. ⁸⁶ Morais's daughter Nina, knowledgeable in French, Italian, and Hebrew, completed her father's translation of the Book of Jeremiah for the Jewish Publication Society after his death. ⁸⁷ Solomon Solis-Cohen, another Morais disciple, produced the first English translations of medieval Hebrew poetry dating from the golden age of Spanish Jewry. ⁸⁸ The content of the poems selected for translation suggests that Morais and his students turned to the act of translation as a means to educate Jews and to defend Judaism. They sought to counter the allure of crude materialism, religious reform, evangelical revivals, and other challenges to Jewish tradition and identity as they understood them. Cultivating linguistic competency in the multiplicity of Jewish languages and sources was the linchpin of Morais's pedagogical program. Through the practice of translation Morais weaved together and inculcated

among his students his Sephardi rabbinic humanist views about politics, religion, and moral conduct.

These acts of translation not only served to defend Judaism against the looming threats to it that Morais perceived, but also functioned as a Jewish version of religious-cultural refinement in the vernacular language of America. By utilizing English translations to disseminate enlightened Jewish religiosity based on Sephardi and Italian sources, Morais introduced a strand of Jewish classicism into Victorian Jewish culture. His translations paralleled the simultaneous rise of classical and Renaissance translations in the Anglo-American literary world. The study of these venerated traditions of learning, and the emulation of their models of honor and virtue, was a key activity for members of the rapidly expanding middle classes of the nineteenth century who sought refinement, or at least its outward veneer. Classical motifs and values were widely reproduced in the poetry, literature, history-writing, architecture, and home furnishings of the Victorian milieu. The city of Philadelphia, for example, publicly embraced classical architecture in its buildings, landscapes, and monuments, while Philadelphians adopted modes of dress and purchased furniture and interior home decorations that reflected this anxious culture of refinement. American Jews entering and undergoing upward mobility in this English-speaking environment were caught up in these same cultural trends, and their poetry, novellas, travel essays, and translations, as exemplified by the work of Morais and others, reflect the impact of Anglo-Victorian culture on the world of Jewish letters. Morais's enlightened orthodoxy amounted to a refined version of the *vita activa* in religion and politics, as well as in the emergent Atlantic Jewish "republic of letters" of the nineteenth century. ⁸⁹

Translation also served for Morais and his circle as a vehicle for Jewish acculturation in an English-speaking environment. In his own writings, Morais's choice of words was often founded on a precise vocabulary translated from other languages. He sometimes used specific terms in English that derived from his Livornese Jewish upbringing to convey basic concepts and ideas. The word *abnegation* is perhaps the most vivid example of a word infrequently used in English, but much used by Morais. ⁹⁰ This term translated the Italian *abnegazione*—a word carrying several nuanced layers of religious and political meaning, connoting duty, sacrifice, service, and humility. In America, Morais often used this word to define and inspire attachment to enlightened orthodox Judaism. For example, in a sermon delivered in December of 1887, on the eve of the opening of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Morais declared that the Maccabees' "abnegation—

the regard for duty before life"—ought to be taken as a model for all Jews to follow. The memory of the martyrs' willingness to die for their faith, Morais hoped, would inspire all Jews to observe "the sabbath of the Decalogue, the covenant of Abraham and the dietary laws."⁹¹ Thirty-six years after coming to America, Morais still resorted to this distinctly un-English term to capture the essential difference between what he believed in and the laxity of ritual observance he opposed.

Central to the mission of the early Jewish Theological Seminary was the cultivation of religious ideals in accordance with Morais's views about humility and abnegation. Morais, in fact, stated that the principle of humility was to be the basis of the proposed institution in a Sabbath sermon he delivered at Congregation Shearith Israel in New York City on January 30, 1886, the day before the founding of the seminary. "The basis of [the seminary]," Morais declared, "shall be humility, not hostility, its sustaining pillars, steadfastness of purpose and fealty to ancestral traditions, not boastfulness and vainglory."⁹² Continuing throughout 1886 on an almost weekly basis while he rallied financial support for the seminary, Morais delivered a series of lectures on the Sephardi Jewish experience, focusing on the biographies of leading rabbis from the golden age of Jewish life in Spain and from his native Italy.⁹³ These lectures cumulatively amounted to the formulation of a pantheon of rabbis for study and imitation. When taken as a whole and in the context of the reason for their delivery, these documents provide a clear vision of the ideals according to which Morais believed enlightened orthodox American rabbis should be trained. In these lectures Morais repeatedly stressed the importance of character formation and humility as guiding principles. These words were in no sense empty rhetorical gestures, but referred to a specific group of idealized Sephardi and Italian Jewish historical examples for imitation. During the foundation of the Jewish Theological Seminary, as he had done throughout his career, Morais repeatedly returned, as minister, teacher, public speaker, writer, and translator, to the ideals of Sephardi and Italian Jewry he programmatically introduced in 1851.

What, then, was meant by the term "enlightened orthodoxy"? For Morais, the Sephardi heritage offered one answer to the question of how to be a truly enlightened and believing citizen. It was, in his eyes a harmonious model that combined openness to general cultural trends—poetry, science, and reason, as well as to universal social justice—with devout adherence to particular revealed religious doctrines and practices. In politics, as in religion, Morais exhorted each individual to abnegate the self in the service of

a greater public purpose, rather than to retreat from the collective to the private interests of the individual. The radical character of Morais's republican politics paralleled, ironically, a very conservative understanding of the submission of the self before God and the authority of tradition. This harmonization was possible, he believed, only because Enlightenment and Orthodoxy complemented rather than opposed each other.

This paradigm also suited the nineteenth-century Victorian culture of refinement in which Morais lived. Enlightened orthodox Judaism, qua Sephardi rabbinic humanism, functioned as a model of Victorian classicism in Jewish terms during a period of intensive upward mobility. Translation, in particular, served as a vehicle by which Jews could become "respectable" on their own terms. By means of translations, they gained access to their own refined models of ancient wisdom and classical learning in the vernacular of their new homeland, and thus also were able to popularize Jewish classics among non-Jews. Morais disseminated the Sephardi legacy in particular in order to remind his Jewish contemporaries of their heroic religious traditions of martyrdom, duty, and sacrifice, and thus to inspire Jews in America to remain ritually observant and communally steadfast against the threats that faced them. Throughout his ministry, indeed, including the very last day of his life, Morais promoted a Sephardi version of Haskalah modeled upon imagined golden ages of the past, in order to shape and secure future Jewish life in the hopefully promised land of America.

Notes

I am profoundly grateful to David Ruderman and the staff of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies (CAJS) and its library for the extensive and extended support they have given me. Funding for this research came from the CAJS, the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. Arthur Aryeh Goren has helped me with inestimable patience and tireless support to complete this project. I am especially grateful to Adam Sutcliffe for his close reading and rewriting of the final version of this chapter.

1. On the problem of the one and many in ancient Near Eastern and Greek thought, see, for example, Barbara Nevling Perter, ed., *One God or Many: Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World* ([Chebeague, Me.]: Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 2000); Michael C. Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Hellenic Studies; distributed by Harvard University, 1971); and especially Stephen R. Morris, "Let There Be One Ruler: Unity and Plurality in the City and Soul in Plato's Early and Middle Dialogues" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1991).

2. For a succinct review of the recent debates about the meaning and application of the term *Haskalah*, see David Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), esp. 10–20.

3. See Gerson Cohen, “German Jewry as Mirror of Modernity,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 20 (1975): ix–xxxi.

4. For an amplification of this argument, and extended discussion of the issues subsequently raised here, see Arthur Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands: The Victorian Rabbinic Humanism of Sabato Morais” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1999).

5. On the eclipse of Morais and his legacy, see Arthur Kiron, “‘Dust and Ashes’: The Funeral and Forgetting of Sabato Morais,” *American Jewish History* 84, no. 3 (1996): 155–88.

6. *Yudishe Gazeten* [Jewish Gazette, New York], Passover issue, March 24, 1899, p. 12.

7. On Livorno and Morais’s childhood there, see Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands,” 45–47. Information about Morais father and household is based on a printed copy of a eulogy delivered by Salvatorre de Benedetti, “Parole di S.D.B Lette in nome di lui il 12 Giugno 1862 nell’occasione dei funerali di Samule Morais, morto il di 27 Maggio 1862,” 2. This document and subsequent primary sources cited here about Morais are all located in the Sabato Morais Collection, Center for Advanced Judaic Studies Library, University of Pennsylvania (hereafter SM-CAJSL), unless otherwise noted.

8. For Morais’s recollections of his “earliest school days,” see his *Italian Hebrew Literature*, ed. Julius H. Greenstone (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1926), 190, and “The History of the Jewish Congregation of Leghorn,” *Menorah Monthly* 11, no. 6 (December 1891): 356. On the merchant reform program and the Jews of Livorno, see Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands,” 48–49, relying in particular on David G. LoRomer, *Merchants and Reform in Livorno, 1814–1868* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 171–88. Cf. Guido Sonnino, “Il Talmud Tora di Livorno,” *Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 10, nos. 4–5 (August–September 1935): 190, for educational changes already underway in the eighteenth century.

9. On Piperno and Morais’s rabbinical training, see Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands,” 50–52. Note especially, Morais’s “The Death of Haham Piperno,” *Occident and American Jewish Advocate* (Philadelphia; hereafter *Occident*), ed. Isaac Leiser, vol. 21, no. 8 (November 1863): 266–70.

10. Morais’s rabbinical ordination certificate is located in SM-CJSL, box 13, file folder (FF) 38.

11. I am deeply grateful to Miriam Rodrigues-Pereira, archivist of the Spanish and Portuguese congregation in London, who located, deciphered, and transcribed a number of pertinent documents relating to Morais’s tenure at the orphan school.

12. On Morais’s time in London, see Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands,” 95–111; On his relationship with Mazzini, *ibid.*, 97–99; Alessandro Levi, “Amici israeliti di Giuseppe Mazzini,” *Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 5, no. 12 (April 1931): 587–612, esp. 591; Denis Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. 21–48, 49–67 and *passim*.

13. On the term “Victorianism” employed here as a concept denoting aspects of upward mobility and cultural refinement, see Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands,” 87–95.

14. Morais’s career in Philadelphia, accompanied by extensive bibliographical information, appear in Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands.” Important pioneering studies include Moshe Davis, “Sabato Morais: Selected and Annotated Bibliography of His Writings,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 37 (1947): 55–93; Max Samuel Nussenbaum, “Sabato Morais: Champion of Orthodoxy” (D.H.L. thesis, Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University, 1964); Alan D. Corre, “Sabato Morais and Social Justice in Philadelphia, 1858 [sic]–1897,” *The Quest for Social Justice: The Morris Fromkin Memorial Lectures*, ed. Alan D. Corre (Milwaukee, Wis.: Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, 1992), 19–35.

15. Jonathan D. Sarna, *A Great Awakening: The Transformation that Shaped Twentieth Century American Judaism and Its Implications for Today* (New York: Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education, [1995]).

16. On Frankel’s teachings and their relationship to the modern Conservative movement of Judaism, see Ismar Schorsch, “The European Origins of Conservative Judaism,” *Judaism* 30 (1981): 344–54. Schorsch does not, *per se*, assign the ideological origins of the early Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) to Frankel. That additional claim has been argued by, among others, Moshe Davis, *Emergence of Conservative Judaism: The Historical School in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1963), esp. 224–25, 235, 345, 350, and Robert E. Fierstein, *A Different Spirit: the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1886–1902* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1990), 80. For an extended discussion of the debate over the ideological origins of the JTS, see Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands,” 318–37.

17. Sabato Morais, “A Sermon Delivered on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27th, 1851 by the Rev. S. Morais, Minister of the Congregation Mikve Israel, Philadelphia,” *Asmonean*, December 12, 1851, 181.

18. *Ibid.* Morais kept a personal scrapbook in which he pasted and heavily annotated by hand articles he published. In the published account, he wrote “French and Italian schools.” In his clipping of the *Asmonean* article, he has crossed out “French and.” When quoting from his works, I have followed when possible the versions found in the annotated clippings (and will note so), to offer insight into Morais’s intentions, problematic though this notion maybe, and despite the fact that his emended text was not available to his readers. The scrapbook, today known at the “Sabato Morais Ledger” (hereafter “Ledger”), is located in SM-CAJSL, box 17, and is cited here by the page number in the Ledger.

19. On the Christian *reconquista*, or “reconquest” of the Iberian Peninsula from Muslim rule, see Elijah Ashtor, *The Jews of Moslem Spain*, trans. from Hebrew by Aaron Klein and Jenny Machlowitz Klein, with intro. by David J. Wasserstein (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1992) Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, trans. from Hebrew by Louis Schoffman, with intro. by Benjamin R. Gampel (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1992).

20. "Sermon Delivered on Thanksgiving Day," Ledger, 2.
21. On American exceptionalism, see Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution* (1955; reprint, San Diego: Harvest Books [Imprint]; Harcourt Trade Publishers, 1991); discussion in Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22–50, and John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (1955; reprint, San Diego: Harvest Books [Imprint]; Harcourt Trade Publishers, 1991), 22–23, for the cosmopolitan interpretation of the American national mission as an "asylum for mankind."
22. For the topos of America as a promised land, see Werner Sollars, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 43–50.
23. "Sermon Delivered on Thanksgiving Day," Ledger, 2.
24. Sabato Morais, "Thanksgiving Address," *Ledger and Transcript* (Philadelphia), November 23, 1891 (clipping found in the Lucien Moss Collection, located at the American Jewish Historical Society).
25. Sabato Morais, "An Address Delivered on Passover," undated, reprinted in *The American Jewish Pulpit* (Cincinnati: Bloch Publishing Co., 1881), 14.
26. "Sermon Delivered on Thanksgiving Day," Ledger, 2.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ismar Schorsch, "The Emergence of Historical Consciousness in Modern Judaism," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 28 (1983): 436; idem., "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 34 (1989): 47–66; and Ivan G. Marcus, "Beyond the Sephardic Mystique," *Orim: A Jewish Journal at Yale* 1, no. 1 (1985): 35–53.
30. Schorsch, "Myth of Sephardic Supremacy," 47.
32. On Sephardi religious education in Livorno, see above, note 7, and also Isaac Rignano, *La universita israelitica di Livorno e le opere pie da essa amministrate: Cenni storici, legislazione amministrazione* (Livorno: Belforte, 1890). Morais cites Rignano as a source for his 1891 survey "History of the Jewish Congregation of Leghorn," 360; Alfredo Toaff, "Il Collegio Rabbinico di Livorno," *Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 12, nos. 7–9 (1938): 192–95; Renzo Toaff, *La Nazione Ebraica a Livorno e Pisa (1591–1700)* (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1990), 341–58.
32. Morais's Newtonianism is discussed in Max Nussenbaum, "Sabato Morais: Champion of Orthodoxy," 158–59. Cf. the letter from Solomon Solis-Cohen to his teacher Morais dated October 24, 1894: ". . . the Copernican, Newtonian discoveries gain fresh confirmation daily. No true philosopher (in the English sense, Newton, Faraday) can be other than deeply religious." For the letter, see SM-CAJSL, box 7, FF6.
33. Morais's letter to Jacob Solis-Cohen, dated February 8, 1861, found in SM-CAJSL, box 1, FF18. Nussenbaum has transcribed the letter and conveniently made it available in "Appendix A" of Nussenbaum, "Sabato Morais," 189–90.
34. David B. Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 323–34. For Morais's knowledge of Nieto's writings, see Morais, *Italian Hebrew Literature*, 70–75.

35. See Psalm 111:10: *re'shit hokhmah, yir'at ha-shem*; cf. Proverbs 1:7; 9:10. Notably, *re'shit hokhmah* was the name of one of the early rabbinical academies in Livorno, and where David Nieto taught before departing for London. See, e.g., Flora Aghib Levi d'Ancona, "The Sephardi Community of Leghorn (Livorno)," *The Sephardi Heritage: Essays on the History and Cultural Contribution of the Jews of Spain and Portugal*, ed. R. D. Barnett and W. M. Schwab (Grendon, England: Gibraltar Books, 1989), 2:185.
36. Cf. Nussenbaum, "Sabato Morais," 158–59, and see the second of three serialized articles of a biographical essay about Solomon Yehudah Rappaport, the eminent Galician Maskil, which Morais published in the *Occident* 26, no. 5 (September 1868): 272, where he explicitly states that science is not antagonistic to religion. The Sephardi outlook(s) toward scientific inquiry require separate treatment.
37. For Morais's explicit repudiation of the Sephardi belief in its own superior lineage, see his essay "On the Appellation Properly Belonging Our People," SM-CAJSL, box 14, FF1, 6–7; and cf. "Hebrew, Israelite or Jews?" *Ledger and Transcript* (Philadelphia), February 2, 1892, Ledger, 235.
38. Morais, "Appellation," 6–7; idem., "Hebrew, Israelite or Jew," Ledger, 235.
39. Schorsch, "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy," uses the phrase "Spanish mystique" (p. 53) and coins the term "Sephardic mystique" (p. 61). A distinction also can be drawn, however, between Askenazi embraces of a Sephardi image of cultural superiority for the sake of crafting a new kind of emancipated Jewish citizen and the traditional Sephardi self-description of its own superior lineage. Marcus, "Beyond the Sephardic Mystique," 35–53, uses the phrase to refer to a more general trend in modern Jewish historiography that emphasizes historical rupture over continuity when studying the Jewish past.
40. On changes in the Jewish liturgy in nineteenth-century America, see Abraham J. Karp, "America's Pioneer Prayer Books," *Jewish Book Annual* 34 (1976–77): 15–25; Eric L. Friedland, "The American Jewish Prayerbook in the Nineteenth Century: Piety and Innovation," in *The American Synagogue in the Nineteenth Century: From the Collection of William A. Rosenthal* ([Cincinnati]: American Jewish Archives, 1982), 19–24; Leon A. Jick, *Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820–1870* (Hanover, University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 1976), 155; 186–87.
41. Sabato Morais, "The Ritual Question," serialized in the *Jewish Record* (Philadelphia), November 5, 1875, 4; November 12, 1875, 4; November 19, 1875, 4–5, November 26, 1875, 4, December 3, 1875, 4, December 10, 1875, 4; December 17, 1875, 4; see also *Jewish Record* (Philadelphia), January 21, 1876, 4–5. For a more detailed discussion and additional citations, see Kiron, "Golden Ages, Promised Lands," 164–70, esp. 194 n. 154.
42. "The Ritual Question," *Jewish Record*, November 5, 1875, 4.
43. Ibid.
44. Morais penciled in this annotation on the margin beside the seventh article in the series on the "Ritual Question," *Jewish Record*, December 17, 1875, which he clipped and pasted into his personal scrapbook. See Ledger, 80.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.

47. David Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), introduction, xxiii, and passim; idem., *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 15–18 and 86–104. George Mosse, “Jewish Emancipation: Between Bildung and Respectability,” in *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg (Hanover, N.H. and London: University Press of New England for Clark University, 1991), 1–16, esp. 2, for the idea of *Bildung* as “individual character formation” and later “self-cultivation,” which he distinguishes from “moral comportment” (*Sittlichkeit*).

48. Gaetano Salvemini emphasizes this point in his valuable study *Mazzini*, trans. I. M. Rawson (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1957), 15–17.

49. Marc Gopin, “The Limits of Intellect and the Dangers of Moral Egoism,” in “The Religious Ethics of Samuel David Luzzatto” (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1993), 70–183. Cf. Sabato Morais, “Religion of Intellect and Sentiment,” *Jewish Record*, October 30, 1885; Ledger, 343.

50. Quoted in Salvemini, *Mazzini*, 64.

51. For an extended discussion of the concept of *abnegazione* in nineteenth-century Italian and Italian-Jewish thought, see Arthur Kiron, “Livornese Traces in American Jewish History: Sabato Morais and Elijah Benamozegh,” in *Per Elia Benamozegh: Atti del Convegno di Livorno (Settembre 2000)*, ed. Alessandro Guetta (Milan: Edizioni Thalassa De Paz, 2000), 41–62.

52. On Morais’s opposition to political Zionism, see Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands,” 236–41.

53. Louis D. Brandeis, “The Jewish Problem—How to Solve It,” in *Louis D. Brandeis: A Biographical Sketch*, ed. Jacob De Haas (New York: Bloch, 1929), 184–86.

54. Mosse, “Jewish Emancipation,” 10: “self-cultivation” and “moral comportment” functioned not merely to delimit classes within society, but were also “nationalized as well—an attribute of those who could boast Germanic roots and who alone could appreciate the good, the true and the beautiful. Not only Bildung, but respectability itself contracted, elaborating distinctions between those inside and those outside society.” See also additional sources provided by David Sorkin, *Transformation*, 182, nn. 5–6.

55. Morais, “Sermon Delivered on Thanksgiving Day,” 181.

56. “Hebrew Association,” dated December 15, 1873, Philadelphia. A copy is pasted in a scrapbook kept by Mary M. Cohen (a student of Morais and close friend of his eldest daughter Nina), in the Charles and Mary M. Cohen Collection, CAJSL, box 4.

57. *Ibid.*

58. William R. Langfeld, *Young Men’s Hebrew Association of Philadelphia: A Fifty Year Chronicle* (Philadelphia: Young Men’s and Young Women’s Hebrew Association, 1928), 6–7.

59. *Ibid.*, 7.

60. *Ibid.* On Maimonides College, see Bertram W. Korn, “The First American Jewish Theological Seminary: Maimonides College, 1867–1873,” in *Eventful Years*

and Experiences: Studies in Nineteenth Century American Jewish History (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1954), 151–213.

61. Langfeld, *Young Men’s Hebrew Association*, 7–11. See also S. M. Fleischman, *The History of the Jewish Foster Home and Orphan Asylum of Philadelphia, 1855–1905* ([Philadelphia: Board of Managers, [1906?]]).

62. Jonathan D. Sarna, “The Making of an American Jewish Culture,” *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, ed. Murray Friedman (Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1993), 148; Sarna, *Great Awakening*, 12–15.

63. Sarna, “Making of an American Jewish Culture,” 148, and *Great Awakening*, 12–15.

64. See Kiron, “Golden Ages, Promised Lands,” op. cit., 154, 190–91, n. 122.

65. Cyrus Adler, “[Memorial] Tributes to Rabbi Morais,” *Jewish Exponent* (Philadelphia), November 19, 1897, 3, continued on 6.

66. Charles Hoffman, Memorial tribute, *Jewish Exponent*, November 19, 1897, 2.

67. Sarna, “Making of an American Jewish Culture,” 148; Sarna, *Great Awakening*, 12–15.

68. Sarna, *Great Awakening*, 13.

69. On the Seligman Affair and Manhattan Beach incident, see John Higham, *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 127–30, and Hasia Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1889* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 191–92. Morais’s reaction to the Seligman Affair can be found in a sermon he delivered shortly thereafter entitled “On the Refusal of Admission by the Grand Union of New York to Joseph Seligman, Jewish Banker” (MS), SM-CAJSL, box 13, FF30.

70. For background on the intensification of hostilities against Jews in America during the Gilded Age, see Higham, *Send These to Me*, 95–152; Naomi W. Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States, 1830–1914* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984), 249–65.

71. For examples of Morais’s emphasis on Hanukkah as a celebration of Jewish nationality in light of a religious tradition of duty, sacrifice, and martyrdom, see “Sephardim Orphan School,” report of a sermon delivered by Morais at the Orphan school, in the *London Jewish Chronicle*, January 4, 1850, 99–100; and Morais’s “Hanuccah,” *Jewish Index* (Philadelphia), January 1, 1873, Ledger, 58; “Hanuccah,” *Jewish Record*, December 12, 1879, Ledger, 154; “A Few Words about Hanuccah . . .” *Jewish Record*, December 23, 1881, Ledger, 181; “Hanuccah,” *American Hebrew* (New York), December 19, 1884, 84.

72. On the importance of street pageantry in Philadelphia during this time, see Susan G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 155, drawing attention to Philadelphia’s “distinctive calendar of festivity and repertoire of public ceremonial events.”

73. Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. from German by Willard R. Trask (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 83–85, 407–13.

74. But note Gerson Cohen's annotation to Ibn Daud's *Sefer ha-qabbalah* in Gerson Cohen, *A Critical Edition with a Translation and Notes of the Book of Tradition (Sefer ha-qabbalah)*, / by Abraham Ibn Daud (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), 87, note to line 443, noting Maimonides' *Igeret Teman*, ed. A. S. Halkin (New York: ha-Hevrah ha-amerika'it le-meḥkar ha-yahadut, 1952), 2, line 16. David B. Ruderman also has described this rhetorical trope in his "An Exemplary Sermon from the Classroom of a Jewish Teacher in Renaissance Italy," *Italia* (1978): 19–20, referring to the modesty formula adopted by Judah Messer Leon in his fifteenth-century study of rhetorical forms in the Bible, entitled *Nofet Zufim*. For an English translation, see *The Book of the Honeycomb's Flow: Sēpher Nōpheth sūphīm*, by Judah Messer Leon, critical ed. and trans. Isaac Rabinowitz (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983).

75. "The History of the Jewish Nation by Dr. Wise," *Asmonean*, January 20, 1854, p. 109, Ledger, p. 4. Published anonymously under the pseudonym "Veritas." Wise's book was *History of the Israelitisch Nation from Abraham to the Present Time* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1854).

76. *Ibid.*

77. *Sunday Dispatch* (Philadelphia), February 20, 1859, Ledger, 10; reprinted in the *Jewish Messenger* (New York), March 18, 1859, 82–83.

78. "Dr. Wise on the Oral Law," *Jewish Record*, February 1884, Ledger, 222.

79. Morais, *Italian Hebrew Literature*, 158.

80.. *Ibid.* For background, see Ashtor, *Jews of Moslem Spain*, 1:167, on Dioscorides and this incident.

81. Morais, *Italian Hebrew Literature*, 158.

82. See Korn, "Maimonides College," 166.

83. Samuel David Luzzatto, "Lessons in Jewish Moral Theology," translated from the Italian for *Jewish Index* by Morais, in eleven serialized installments from October 2, 1872, to January 1, 1873. Ledger, 48–58.

84. For Morais's numerous translations which appeared in the *Jewish Record*, see esp. 1875 to 1879, including August 3, 1877, to October 26, 1877. Several of these efforts, including Luzzatto's "A Critical and Hermeneutical Introduction to the Pentateuch," are reprinted in Morais, *Italian Hebrew Literature*; see 93–152, for Luzzatto's introduction.

85. See, for example, *Proceedings of the Fifth Biennial Convention of the Jewish Theological Seminary Association*, appendix: "'Prolegomena to a Grammar of the Hebrew Language' by Samuel David Luzzatto, translated from the Italian by Sabato Morais, President of the Faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary" (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary Association, 1896), 71, and additional studies reprinted in Morais, *Italian Hebrew Literature*.

86. Note especially, Morais's translation of Maimonides' "Discourse on the Resurrection of the Dead," translated in five serialized installments in the *Jewish Messenger* (New York) between September and October of 1859, and of Maimonides' "Letter to Yemen," translated in twelve serialized installments in the *Jewish Record* (Philadelphia), from July to September, 1876.

87. Nina Morais to her brother Henry S. Morais, April 25, 1898. Located in the "Papers of Henry S. Morais," Yeshiva University Archives.

88. See, e.g., Solomon Solis-Cohen, *When Love Passed By and Other Verses* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1929) and *Selected Poems of Moses ibn Ezra*, trans. Solomon Solis-Cohen from a critical text, edited and annotated by Heinrich Brody (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 934).

89. For additional discussion and sources on this topic, see Kiron, "Golden Ages, Promised Lands," 87–95, 294–96.

90. On *abnegazione* and Morais's understanding of the term, see Kiron, "Livornese Traces," 41–62.

91. Morais, "The Jewish Sabbath," *Public Ledger and Transcript*, December 20, 1887 (clipping found in the Lucien Moss Collection, located at the American Jewish Historical Society).

92. Morais, "The Jewish Theological Seminary: Sermon Delivered Last Sabbath in the Shearith Israel Synagogue of New York," *Jewish Record*, February 5, 1886, 4; Ledger, 356.

93. Morais lectured, inter alia, about Sabbatai Donnolo, Nahmanides, Solomon Ibn Adret, Hasdai Crescas, Immanuel of Rome, Joseph Albo, Isaac Abrabanel, Haim Joseph David Azulay, and rabbis from the Italian rabbinical seminary founded in Padua in 1829, Samuel David Luzzatto, Lelio Della Torre, Isaac Reggio, and their contemporary Marco Mortara, chief rabbi in Mantua. For discussion and further citations, see Kiron, "Golden Ages, Promised Lands," 327 and 357 n. 32.