Prospero Moisè Loria: A Case Study of Jewish Secularism in Liberal Italy

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Abstract In his will, Prospero Moisè Loria (1814–92) requested an autopsy and cremation and left his large inheritance to the municipality of Milan to establish a secular philanthropic institution, the Società umanitaria, “to enable all the disenfranchised poor, without distinction.” Loria and other Italian Jews were at the heart of secularist activity in Italy’s culture wars, as demonstrated by their engagement with secular philanthropy, battles for cremation, and Freemason activity. By exploring Loria as the most generous nineteenth-century Italian Jewish philanthropist, along with his affiliation with the Alliance israélite universelle as a secular Jewish institution in the Mediterranean, this essay shows how forms of secularism and Jewishness could coexist for Italian Jews and how secularism in Italy could include a commitment to a Jewish collective, and thus seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the composite mixture of secular Italians and to a discussion of Jewish secularism in an international context.

Keywords Jewish secularism · Philanthropy · Freemasonry · Alliance israélite universelle · Liberal Italy and the Mediterranean

In his will, opened the day of his death in October 1892, the “Jewish multi-millionaire” Prospero Moisè Loria made specific choices regarding his own burial and bequest.¹ He requested an autopsy before cremation and left his entire inheritance to the municipality of Milan to establish a philanthropic institution, the Società umanitaria, “to enable all the disenfranchised poor, without distinction, to become independent through support, employment and education.”² Accompanied by a modest cortege, including two rabbis “in a third class carriage without flowers or decorations,” he was “laid to rest” in a plot previously purchased in the city cemetery’s Jewish section.³ The modesty of his funeral clashed with his unprecedented bequest of over nine million lire, the highest ever registered in Milan and a remarkable sum

¹ *Corriere della sera*, October 29, 1892. All quotations are translated from the Italian unless indicated otherwise.

² Will of Prospero Loria, July 26, 1892, in Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (BNCF), Biogr. L. 795.

³ *Corriere della sera*, October 30, 1892.

on a national scale.⁴ Created in 1893 after many legal disputes, the Umanitaria began functioning in 1902 and became one of the most significant secular and progressive foundations in the country and a successful example of collaboration between Jewish and non-Jewish reform-minded philanthropists and social activists.⁵

Decisions regarding death and philanthropy are intrinsically connected to legacy as well as to social practices and statements to political and religious authorities. Loria choices were relatively common among wealthy secular Jews in liberal Italy. Who was Prospero Loria, and what does the complicated story of his death tell us about Italian culture wars and the role of Jews within them?

Born in 1814, Loria was a successful entrepreneur operating between Habsburg Lombardy, Trieste, and Ottoman Egypt. After returning to Italy in 1862, he engaged with practices at the heart of secularist activity in Italy's culture wars and at the same time with the Alliance israélite universelle (AIU) until his death in 1892. Well known in his time, he is remembered today only for his bequest to the secular Umanitaria, which, according to his most recent biographer, revealed his disconnection from his identity as a Jew.⁶ While, however, we may read him one way because of what he eventually decided, his life was more open and complex than its end suggests.

Loria and other Italian Jews were at the heart of secularist activity in Italy's culture wars, as demonstrated by their engagement with secular philanthropy, battles for cremation, and Freemason activity. By exploring Loria as the most generous nineteenth-century Italian Jewish philanthropist, along with his affiliation with the AIU as a secular Jewish institution in the Mediterranean, this essay illuminates Italian Jewish efforts in the struggle to shape a secular civil society in Italy and explores the international and Jewish dimensions of secularist movements for Italian Jews.

Recent work has shown the multifaceted nature of secularism and of secularization as a set of processes.⁷ Attempts to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the opposition between tradition and modernity have reinvigorated work on both Eastern and Western European Jewry between the eighteenth century and twentieth.⁸ In this context, Ari Joskowicz and Ethan

⁴Stefania Licini, *Guida ai patrimoni milanesi: Le dichiarazioni di successione ottocentesche* (Soveria Mannelli, 1999), 63.

⁵Massimo Della Campa, ed., *Il modello Umanitaria* (Milan, 2003).

⁶Bruno Pellegrino, *Il filantropo: Prospero Moisè Loria e la Società umanitaria* (Bologna, 2014).

⁷See, e.g., Phil Zuckerman and John Shook, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism* (Oxford, 2017).

⁸Michael Silber, "The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of a Tradition," in *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York,

Katz have reopened the discussion of the multiplicity of Jewish secular encounters, never considered to embody “simply the opposite, absence, or nullification of religion.”⁹

The literature has established that Jews joined nonreligious causes while retaining ties to other Jews in Western Europe. Lisa Leff, for example, explores how nineteenth-century Jewish activists in France combined universalistic and Jewish rhetoric and commitments and the ways in which they interacted with other French liberals through a “paradoxically sacred secularism.”¹⁰ Although this perspective is essential if we are to understand the active role that Italian Jews played in shaping a secular civil society, one separate from the ubiquitous Catholic institutions, it is, however, still marginal in historiographic work on nineteenth-century Italian Jewry, which refrains from discussing secular Jews, whose assimilation has been interpreted as “an identity without diversity.”¹¹ More dynamic interpretations have been suggested in works on Italian Jewish self-representation and on individual intellectuals.¹² Going beyond intellectuals, this article brings to the fore the social and symbolic practices of Italian Jews, such as secular philanthropy and cremation, that were closely linked to Italian culture wars. We aim to show how forms of secularism and Jewishness could go hand in hand for Italian Jews and how secularism in Italy could include a commitment to a Jewish collective, and thus seek to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the composite mixture of secular Italians and to a discussion of Jewish secularism in an international context.

Italian Jews do not appear in discussions of culture wars in Italy, where the particularly fierce conflicts between liberals and Catholics are reflected

1992), 23–84; Eliyahu Stern, *The Genius: Elijah of Vilna and the Making of Modern Judaism* (New Haven, CT, 2013).

⁹Ari Joskowicz and Ethan Katz, “Introduction: Rethinking Jews and Secularism,” in *Secularism in Question: Jews and Judaism in Modern Times*, ed. Ari Joskowicz and Ethan Katz (Philadelphia, 2015), 1–21, 5–7.

¹⁰Lisa Leff, “Jews, Liberals and the Civilizing Mission in Nineteenth-Century France,” in *The Jews of Modern France*, ed. Zvi Jonathan Kaplan and Nadia Malinovich (Leiden, 2016), 129–53.

¹¹Elisabeth Schachter, *The Jews of Italy, 1848–1915: Between Tradition and Transformation* (London, 2011), 26.

¹²L. Scott Lerner, “The Narrating Architecture of Emancipation,” *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 3 (2000): 1–30; Ferrara degli Uberti, *Making Italian Jews: Family, Gender, Religion and the Nation, 1861–1918* (London, 2017); Francesca Sofia, “David Levi,” in *Gli ebrei e l'orgoglio dei essere italiani: Un ampio ventaglio di posizioni tra '800 e primo '900*, ed. Fabio Levi (Turin, 2011), 23–60; Tullia Catalan and Cristiana Facchini, eds., *Portrait of Italian Jewish Life (1800s–1930s)*, *Quest* 8 (November 2015), <http://www.quest-cdecjournal.it/index.php?issue=8>.

in large gaps in the research on Catholicism and nationalism.¹³ As Michael Borutta has argued: “Not only did [the conflict] cause a culture war, but also a ‘real’ war between the nation and the papal state, and it divided society into secularist (bourgeois, male, urban) and Catholic (clerical, female, rural) blocks.”¹⁴ Italian Jews fully participated in the “real” Risorgimento wars and, after unification, in Italian political life. However, when it came to discussing issues pertaining to the religion of the majority, they remained cautious—even when it touched them closely—because they were integrating into a weak state still in the process of legitimizing itself. During the Mortara Affair of 1858, when Italian Jewry had moved to the center of the “global conflict between liberalism and the papacy,”¹⁵ the Italian Jewish press—the voice of emancipated Piedmont Jewry—was conscious of the still-precarious situation of Jews on the Peninsula and remained circumspect “in the hope that, inspired by justice, the pope would ensure that similar situations [would] not arise in the future.”¹⁶ After the 1870 annexation of Rome, readers could find stronger anticlerical statements, for example: “Rome—the hearth of religious intolerance, the chapel of fanaticism—goes back to being free.”¹⁷ But these never reached the tones of the anti-Catholic tropes of Jewish liberals in France or Germany.¹⁸

This caution may also be explained by the fact that, while in the 1870s most Jewish members of Parliament (MPs) were connected to the political parties of the Right, the most extreme anticlerical issues, such as free compulsory education for women and cremation, were first proposed by radicals on the Left. And it might, moreover, have been motivated by the still-precarious sense of belonging that was brought home by antisemitic liberal opposition to Jews in government, especially the 1873 Pasqualigo Case.¹⁹ Such circumspection in Parliament on issues dealing with the religion of the majority goes

¹³Guido Verucci, *Cattolicesimo e laicismo nell'Italia contemporanea* (Milan, 2001), 223–58; Martin Papenheim, “Roma o morte: Culture Wars in Italy,” in *Culture Wars: The Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Christopher Clark (Cambridge, 2003), 202–26; Lucy Riall, “Martyr Cults in Nineteenth-Century Italy,” *Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 2 (2010): 255–87.

¹⁴Michael Borutta, “Anti-Catholicism and the Culture War in Risorgimento Italy,” in *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, ed. Silvana Patriarca and Lucy Riall (Basingstoke, 2012), 191–213, 191.

¹⁵Ari Joskowicz, *The Modernity of Others: Jewish Anti-Catholicism in Germany and France* (Stanford, CA, 2014), 169. See also David Kertzer, *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* (New York, 1997).

¹⁶*Educatore israelita (EI)*, November 15, 1858, 340.

¹⁷*EI*, November 3, 1870, 318.

¹⁸Alexander [Ari] Joskowicz, “Liberal Judaism and Confessional Politics of Difference in the German *Kulturkampf*,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 50, no. 1 (2005): 177–97.

¹⁹Mario Toscano, *Ebraismo e antisemitismo in Italia: Dal 1848 alla guerra dei sei giorni* (Milan, 2003), 27–29.

a long way toward explaining why Jewish MPs do not appear as active agents in the Italian culture wars. However, when we shift our focus to Italian Jews' participation in battles for a secular civil society, their forceful role emerges more clearly.

The caution of Jewish MPs also emerged when they were solicited by the AIU in the 1860s and 1870s. In 1873, Samuele Toscano, one of the members of the AIU committee in Rome, noted: "Prudence demands great precautions on the part of Jews in public function, mainly in Rome, not to give pretexts to the enmity and prejudices dormant rather than extinguished."²⁰ In terms of affiliation, however, the AIU was popular from its beginning in 1861 when its four committees were the first organized outside France. By 1885, there were 709 members.²¹ The AIU's early success among Italian Jews may be explained by its secular universal appeal. Support for it showed "how the care of special Jewish interests does not in any way harm the general interests of a subject, citizen and patriot": "Although [the society was] founded by the followers of one cult . . . , everybody today recognizes that [it] contributes to the universal advantage. A wheel of the great machine that science, philanthropy, religion, and politics move to alleviate the wrongs of humanity and accelerate its progress."²²

As were other Italian secular Jews, Loria was attracted by this rhetoric and the opportunity to promote religious tolerance and equal political rights as part of the wider universal values of solidarity and action. As in France, in Italy the AIU's "civilizing mission" was profoundly embedded within contemporary "liberal crusades."²³ What was initially not explicitly clear was the extent to which this civilizing mission based on universal values was linked to French foreign policy, an issue that would eventually affect Italian Jewish engagement with the AIU in the context of increasing imperialistic tensions in the 1880s.

Italian Jews were not particularly generous to the AIU, but their affiliation with it was important. First, it filled the void of a centralized national

²⁰Samuele Toscano to Central Committee, November 6, 1873, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP), Alliance israélite universelle (AIU) Archives, Italy, Rome, 5854 (original in French).

²¹"Liste des comités locaux et régionaux," *AIU Bulletin*, January 1, 1862, 31–33; Georges Weill, "Les structures et les hommes," in *Histoire de l'Alliance israélite universelle de 1860 à nos jours*, ed. André Kaspi (Paris, 2010), 53–100, 96–97.

²²Comitato Regionale Veneto Mantovano, *Relazione, elenco e rendiconti, 1867–8* (Padova, 1869), 4, CAHJP, Collection of Jewish Communities, Italy, Padova, Alleanza Israelitica Universale, IT Pa 730.

²³Abigail Green, "Nationalism and the Jewish International: Religious Internationalism in Europe c. 1840–c. 1880," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 2 (2008): 535–58.

institution, which did not exist in Italy until 1911, when a national committee of Jewish communities was constituted.²⁴ Second, the French-based AIU continued to be the main conduit of international Jewish philanthropy in Italy throughout the nineteenth century. Italy thus diverged from the nationalization model in Great Britain and Germany,²⁵ where, after 1870, Jewish organizations were created in response to the demands of Jewish international solidarity, political commitment to patriotism, and imperial ambitions, all further complicated in the 1880s by the challenges posed by mass migration from Eastern Europe.²⁶ Italy—which had a less-developed culture of organized philanthropy²⁷—was not a destination for Jewish migrants and was late in developing imperial aspirations.

Furthermore, sharing and internalizing the Western attitude toward disenfranchised Jews in the East, Italian Jews considered affiliating with the AIU to be a sort of recognition that they themselves were part not of one of the “barbarian” countries in need of “regeneration”—an issue that was still being debated in the 1870s—but of one of the emancipated countries.²⁸ This tension also reflected in part the position of Italian Jews on the periphery of Western Europe and, because of centuries-old migration patterns, exposed them more to the diverse realities in the Mediterranean than were French or Central European Jews, thus shaping their views of AIU policies and adding their voice to the changing configurations of the “Jewish International.”²⁹

²⁴Tullia Catalan, “L’organizzazione delle comunità ebraiche italiane dall’unità alla prima guerra mondiale,” in *Storia d’Italia*, vol. 11, *Gli ebrei in Italia*, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin, 1997), 2:1243–90. On the AIU in the French context, see Aron Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims: Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Modern Times* (Seattle, 2003); and Lisa Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA, 2006).

²⁵Eli Bar-Chen, “Two Communities with a Sense of Mission: The Alliance israélite universelle and the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden,” in *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, ed. Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, and Uri Kaufmann (London, 2003), 111–28; Tullia Catalan, “The Jews of Southeastern Europe and the Policies of Western European Philanthropic Associations (1878–1930),” in *The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeastern Europe from the 19th Century to the Great Depression*, ed. Tullia Catalan and Margo Dogo (Cambridge, 2016), 183–204.

²⁶Tobias Brinkmann, “The Road to Damascus: Transnational Jewish Philanthropic Organizations and the Jewish Mass Migration from Eastern Europe, 1840–1914,” in *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*, ed. Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, and Jacob Vogel (New York, 2015), 152–72.

²⁷Maria Sophia Quine, *Italy’s Social Revolution: Charity and Welfare from Liberalism to Fascism* (London, 2002).

²⁸I discuss this aspect below. For a discussion of the AIU’s “regeneration” aims, see Aron Rodrigue, “La mission éducative (1860–1939),” in Kaspi, ed., *Histoire de l’Alliance israélite universelle*, 227–62.

²⁹Abigail Green, “The West and the Rest: Jewish Philanthropy and Globalization to c. 1880,” in *Purchasing Power: The Economics of Modern Jewish History*, ed. Rebecca Kobrin and

Through his engagement with Freemasonry, the battle for a secular death, and secular philanthropy, including his commitment to the AIU, Prospero Loria's life exemplified the place of Italian Jews in the culture wars. The international dimensions of his business and his exposure to Freemasonry filtered his commitment to the AIU and its international initiatives, further allowing us to explore one vision of Jewish secularism in Italy and in the Mediterranean context.

An Exemplary Life Lived in Habsburg Lombardy, Italy, and the Mediterranean

Prospero Moisè Loria was born in Mantua on April 7, 1814, just days before the city was returned to the Habsburg Empire, an event that marked the end of the Napoleonic era in Italy but not necessarily its legacy.³⁰ With the return of the Austrians, economic and professional restrictions were again imposed on the once-flourishing local Jewish community.³¹ Although a number of local Jews successfully invested in land and moved to properties outside the city, most of them, including Loria's family, continued to live in the former ghetto.³²

Born into a relatively wealthy family, Loria was the fourth of six sons of the merchant Leon Donato and his second wife, Zeffora Ariani, the daughter of Prospero Mazliach Ariani, the chief rabbi of Mantua from 1820 to his death in 1827.³³ Prospero was only four years old when, in 1818, his father died, so his rabbinic grandfather may have had an influence on his upbringing, but no source attests to this or to whether he attended the Jewish school (founded in 1825) to which his family contributed.³⁴ Prospero reclaimed his share of his father's inheritance as soon as he legally could and, as an Austrian citizen, moved to the bustling cosmopolitan Habsburg port of Trieste

Adam Teller (Philadelphia, 2015), 155–70. On Italian Jews in the Levant, see Attilio Milano, *Storia degli ebrei italiani nel Levante* (Florence, 1949).

³⁰David Laven and Lucy Riall, eds., *Napoleon's Legacy: Problems of Government in Restoration Europe* (Oxford, 2000).

³¹Francesca Cavarocchi, *La comunità ebraica di Mantova fra prima emancipazione e unità d'Italia* (Florence, 2002), 327–50.

³²Oswaldo Gnocchi Viani, *L'Umanitaria e la sua opera* (Milan, 1922), 4. On land investment among Mantuan Jews, see Maurizio Bertolotti, "Giacobbe e Tullo Masarani," in Catalan and Facchini, eds., *Portrait of Italian Jewish Life*, <http://www.quest-cdejournal.it/focus.php?id=364>.

³³Asher Salah, *La république des lettres: Rabbins, écrivains et médecins juifs en Italie au XVIII^e siècle* (Leiden, 2007), 41–42.

³⁴Paolo Bernardini, *La sfida dell'uguaglianza: Gli ebrei a Mantova nell'età della Rivoluzione francese* (Rome, 1996), 296.

in 1837, attracted by its business opportunities.³⁵ His welcome in Trieste, its port, and its prosperous Jewish community is attested to by his later donation establishing the Pia fondazione Loria to “encourage, through prizes, Jews of this Austrian Littoral and of the Italian Kingdom to pursue a seamanship career and excel in it.”³⁶

The city also attracted Prospero’s younger brother Salomon, who fled to Trieste in 1842 after being a victim of anti-Jewish riots in Mantua, the last of a series of incidents prompted by Catholic prejudice combined with the perception that Jews held disproportionate economic power and should be denied access to public careers.³⁷ The riot exploded when the young Salomon Loria dared respond to provocation in a public café in a way “less submissive than in the past.”³⁸ To prevent the incident from escalating, the authorities arrested and imprisoned him despite the efforts of his mother to publicly defend him against their anti-Jewish “animosity.”³⁹ In the Mantua *Ghirusc* (Expulsion)⁴⁰ that followed, some of the victims—for example, the Massarani and Norsa families—opted for Milan, but Salomon joined his older brother. This traumatic family episode may have influenced Prospero’s later attention to the fate of persecuted Jews in Russia and elsewhere.

In Trieste, the Loria brothers took advantage of the new opportunities that were changing the scope of Mediterranean and international commerce by creating a company to import and export wood to Egypt. As the main port of the Austrian Empire on the Mediterranean and a free port since the eighteenth century, Trieste had consolidated its strategic role and become one of the main European transit sites for trade with the East, mainly through the Egyptian route.⁴¹ In the late 1840s and the 1850s, a group of Trieste businessmen—most notably the banker Pasquale Revoltella, the key mediator between the French Saint-Simonian engineer Lesseps and Austrian authorities—invested in the modernization of Egypt’s infrastructure.⁴² It was

³⁵Tullia Catalan, *La comunità ebraica di Trieste (1781–1914): Politica, società e cultura* (Trieste, 2000).

³⁶Pia fondazione Loria, *Atto fondazionale* (Trieste, 1878), 4.

³⁷Alessandro Novellini, “Perseguitar li ebrei a morte: I tumulti contro il ghetto di Mantova nella prima metà dell’Ottocento,” *Storia in Lombardia* 22, no. 1 (2002): 75–95.

³⁸Jacob Norsa to Gabriel Trieste, July 12, 1842, Conferenza Israelitica del Regno Lombardo-Veneto: Corrispondenza 1841–1844, CAHJP, Collection of Jewish Communities, Italy, Padova, IT Pa 727.

³⁹Pellegrino, *Il filantropo*, 46–49.

⁴⁰Isaia Levi, “Famiglie distinte e benemerite della comunità di Mantova,” *Vessillo israelitico* 54, no. 7 (1906): 404.

⁴¹Giovanni Panjek, “I rapporti economici fra Trieste e Alessandria d’Egitto nell’Ottocento,” in *Le rotte di Alexandria*, ed. Franco Però and Patrizia Vascotto (Trieste, 2011), 43–51.

⁴²Giulio Cervani, introduction to *Voyage en Egypte (1861–1862) di Pasquale Revoltella* (Trieste, 1962), 9–88.

in this context that the company started by the two Loria brothers expanded, with Salomon located in Trieste and Prospero in Egypt (he had moved to Alexandria in 1842).⁴³

In Alexandria, Loria found both a thriving Jewish community and a growing Italian one. European Jews were attracted to the city, where they could maintain their foreign citizenship under the capitulation system, and contributed significantly to its cosmopolitanism. Italian Jewish families there had in 1854 created a community modeled on that of Livorno, whence the majority had arrived, bringing with them teachers, school programs, prayer books, and liturgical music.⁴⁴ This community coexisted alongside other Jewish groups, the majority of whom spoke only Arabic.⁴⁵ Loria's direct exposure to Jewish life in Alexandria may be one reason why he later committed to the AIU, while his experience of the city's cosmopolitan Levantine bourgeoisie may have made him less prone to stereotypical views about the East.

Although there is no direct documentary evidence, Loria probably joined the Freemasons after his move to Alexandria, and this affiliation remained crucially important to him. As for many other Italian Jews, Freemasonry functioned both as a crucial venue for his social integration and as a sphere in which he could act, together with others, to shape a secular society.⁴⁶ Francesca Sofia has documented the significant contributions to Freemasonry in Liberal Italy of Italian Jews, notable among whom is the patriot David Levi, the founder of the *Grande oriente italiano*, Freemasonry's national organization, in 1861 and the most visible example of a synthesis between Mazzinianism, Saint-Simonianism, Freemasonry, and Judaism.⁴⁷ As reconstructed by Liana Funaro, a similar mixture of beliefs characterized Jewish Freemasons from Livorno and other Jews attracted to Tuscany from elsewhere in the Peninsula and around the Mediterranean. For them, "Masonic ideals (nearly a modern form of religiosity, with their own ritual, often veined with Orientalism) met the Sephardi tradition, mingled with messianism and

⁴³ Pellegrino, *Il filantropo*, 79.

⁴⁴ Milano, *Storia degli ebrei italiani nel Levante*, 198.

⁴⁵ Jacob Landau, *Jews in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (New York, 1969), 26.

⁴⁶ On Freemasons' role in the secularization of society in Italy, see Fulvio Conti, *Storia della Massoneria italiana: Dal Risorgimento al fascismo* (Bologna, 2003).

⁴⁷ Francesca Sofia, "Gli ebrei risorgimentali tra tradizione biblica, libera muratoria e nazione," in *Storia d'Italia*, vol. 21, *La Massoneria*, ed. Gian Mario Cazzaniga (Turin, 2006), 244–65, and "David Levi." David Levi was one of the first Italian intellectuals to rediscover Giordano Bruno as "the founder of the philosophy of freedom until he became its martyr." Levi himself linked his "mysterious fascination" with Bruno to his being "born from a noble and old race, squashed for eighteen centuries under the weight of an accusation, as blasphemous as absurd, of having sacrificed a God (as if God could be put to death)." David Levi, *Giordano Bruno o la religione del pensiero* (Turin, 1887), 9.

prophecy. . . . Jewish and Masonic universalism, ideals of sociability and perfectibility, perspectives of social redemption and national emancipation, and Mazzinian lessons interweaved, all nurtured by the idea of progress.”⁴⁸ The life trajectories of many Jewish Freemasons from Livorno confirm the community’s large Mediterranean reach: in Thessalonica, Alexandria, and Tunis, Italian Jewish Freemasons continued “the uninterrupted tradition of Mazzinianism, secularism and philanthropy”⁴⁹ and often played a crucial role in the decision to adhere to the Italian Grande oriente, sharing with those in the motherland a strong commitment to the Italian national cause and secular values.⁵⁰

The Italian Masonic lodges in Alexandria were among the most popular venues for bourgeois sociability, places where many Italian Jews mingled with other Italian immigrants. The first Italians settled in Alexandria in the eighteenth century, but it was mainly after the European upheavals of 1848 that the city became a refuge for Italian political activists and businessmen who contributed to the local Levantine bourgeoisie by establishing institutions, newspapers, hospitals, and schools.⁵¹ In his early years in Egypt, Loria had obtained the protection of the Piedmont consulate even though he was an Austrian citizen, but this was revoked in November 1851 when authorities began to be more stringent regarding the status of Europeans in Egypt.⁵² Loria was in the orbit of democratic Italian circles in Alexandria, and, in March 1851, he participated in one of the major fundraising subscriptions launched by Mazzini in London, a subscription that consolidated the interest of English and European radicals in the Italian patriotic cause.⁵³ Through the lodges, he may also have been in contact with French and other Saint-Simonians heavily engaged with building dams and other grand projects for the Egyptian viceroy.⁵⁴ The fact that wood was required for these projects may explain the rapid success of Loria’s business, although his success was later described in antisemitic tones as unscrupulous and involving the slave trade.⁵⁵ The im-

⁴⁸Liana Funaro, “Massoneria e minoranze religiose nel XIX secolo,” in *La Massoneria a Livorno dal Settecento alla Repubblica*, ed. Fulvio Conti (Bologna, 2006), 343–416, 396.

⁴⁹Funaro, “Massoneria e minoranze,” 408.

⁵⁰Fulvio Conti, “Entre Orient et Occident: Les loges maçonniques en Méditerranée entre le XIXème et le XXème siècles,” in *L’Europe méditerranéenne*, ed. Marta Petricoli (Brussels, 2008), 111–21, 117.

⁵¹Michel Ersilio, *Esuli italiani in Egitto, 1815–1861* (Pisa, 1958), 129–60.

⁵²Pellegrino, *Il filantropo*, 78.

⁵³Fabio Bertini, *La democrazia europea e il laboratorio risorgimentale italiano* (Florence, 2007), 32.

⁵⁴Michael Reimer, *Colonial Bridgehead: Government and Society in Alexandria, 1807–1882* (Cairo, 1997).

⁵⁵Paolo Valera, *Vita intima e aneddotica di Prospero Moisè Loria, fondatore dell’Umanitaria* (Milan, 1906), 14.

mense debts of the Egyptian government led to delays in payment, and the company was eventually liquidated in 1862. Loria then returned to live in Italy with his wife, Anna Tedeschi, whom he had married in Mantua in 1857. The Egyptian experience made Loria a millionaire, and, although there is no documentary evidence of Loria's initiation into Freemasonry in Egypt or of any direct acquaintance on his part with Saint-Simonians there, it is likely that he was first exposed to them in this context and that they strongly influenced his views on secularism and philanthropy.

Loria and his wife chose to reside in Milan during a period of strong economic and cultural growth for the city.⁵⁶ Loria retired from commercial life but continued to build his fortune through safe bonds and real estate investments.⁵⁷ Reinforcing the hypothesis that he was initiated into Freemasonry in Egypt, Loria was immediately received at the highest levels of Milan's vibrant Masonic community, joining the Insubria lodge together with other Jews, including Luigi Luzzatti and the lawyer Giacomo Guastalla, both of whom would later also be involved with the AIU. Between 1864 and 1868, Loria's lodge was involved in a schism with the Grande oriente, having demanded that the social basis of the lodge be expanded by reducing entrance fees, simplifying rituals, and promoting a clearer sense of Masonic philanthropy in society as aiming to "diminish or eliminate need."⁵⁸ This vision of philanthropy—explicitly framed with anticlerical aims—strongly influenced Loria even after he was appointed as one of the leaders to oversee the reunification of his lodge with the Grande oriente in April 1868. Despite Loria's and other schismatic lodges' failure to democratize Freemasonry, their progressive and anticlerical outlook influenced local philanthropic initiatives throughout the 1870s and 1880s, making Milan "a laboratory of democratic and progressive political and cultural elaboration" in which Loria was fully engaged.⁵⁹

Loria's personal trajectory took him from Lombardy to Egypt, then back to the newly unified Italy, enabling him to build a fortune and exposing him to networks, ideas, and initiatives that framed his secularism. Both his wealth and affiliations were fundamental to his active engagement in Italy's culture wars. Never just an emulator, and never seeking only recognition, Loria remained firmly committed to his own principles and his vision of how to shape secular civil society through philanthropy.

⁵⁶Elena Canadelli and Paola Zocchi, eds., *Milano scientifica, 1875–1924* (Milan, 2008).

⁵⁷Germano Maifreda, *Gli ebrei e l'economia milanese: L'Ottocento* (Milan, 2000).

⁵⁸Novarino Marco, *Progresso e tradizione libero moratoria: Storia del rito simbolico italiano, 1859–1925* (Florence, 2009), 28–37.

⁵⁹Anna Maria Isastia, *Uomini e idee della Massoneria* (Rome, 2001), 87.

Dimensions of Secular Philanthropy

Loria's philanthropic phase was jump-started by the trauma of his wife's sudden death in July 1868. From the start, three elements were central to his giving: a strong link between philanthropy and memory, an obsession with "curing and removing the causes of ills, rather than merely assisting those who suffer,"⁶⁰ and the formula *senza distinzione* (without distinction), a feature that distinguished secular donations made by Jews from those made by non-Jews.

Loria's emphasis on the relationship between philanthropy and memory—which was to frame his legacy—was already evident when, as a childless widower, "long-lasting and productive philanthropy" became his way of commemorating his wife "instead of the usual marble monument."⁶¹ He insisted on this point on many occasions, an emphasis that can also be understood as a reaction to the post-Risorgimento "monumental wave" of the first decades after unification.⁶² While other Italian Jews—most notably Tullo Massarani—contributed greatly as "organizers of public memory,"⁶³ Loria's position was similar to that of another important family of Jewish secular philanthropists, the Nathans, close supporters of Mazzini.⁶⁴ Soon after Mazzini's death in their house in Pisa in 1872, instead of erecting a marble monument, the Nathan family initiated a subscription "to found a popular institution to include evening schools and libraries."⁶⁵ According to one of Ernesto Nathan's biographers, it was its Jewishness that set the family apart from the "Italian custom more focused on highlighting the celebratory moment in death rather than the seed that continues to offer life."⁶⁶ That a disproportionate number of Italian Jewish philanthropists emphasized education and professional formation can be interpreted as evidence of this desire to change society through philanthropy.

⁶⁰Loria to Loeb, July 17, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 1360. All letters from Loria are in Italian (unless indicated otherwise), while communication from the AIU was in French.

⁶¹Acceptance of Loria's donation to the Professional School in Rome, December 21, 1883, Rome, Archivio Capitolino, Titolario postunitario, Pubblica istruzione, b. 36, fasc. 1.

⁶²Marina Tesoro, *La memoria in piazza: Monumenti risorgimentali nelle città lombarde tra identità locale e nazionale* (Milan, 2012).

⁶³Mariachiara Fugazza, "Massarani e la memoria del Risorgimento," in *Tullo Massarani: Un patriota ebreo da Mantova a Milano*, ed. Maurizio Bertolotti (Mantua, 2016), 79–95, 90.

⁶⁴Anna Maria Isastia, *Storia di una famiglia del Risorgimento: Sarina, Giuseppe, Ernesto Nathan* (Turin, 2010).

⁶⁵*L'emancipazione*, March 30, 1872, quoted in Alessandro Levi, *Ricordi della vita e dei tempi di Ernesto Nathan*, ed. Andrea Bocchi (1927; Lucca, 2006), 45.

⁶⁶Ugolini Romano, "La formazione morale e politica di Ernesto Nathan," in *Gran maestro della Massoneria e sindaco di Roma: Ernesto Nathan, il pensiero e la figura a 150 anni dalla nascita*, ed. Anna Maria Isastia (Rome, 1998), 85–98, 89.

Although Loria had distributed donations previously, from the 1870s the scale, the broad conception of alleviating suffering through long-term solutions to social problems instead of temporary relief, and his search for a capable collaborator to foster productive and efficient philanthropic strategies placed him among the major philanthropists of his time.⁶⁷ Italy lagged behind other Western countries in terms of philanthropic modernization by means of organization and professionalism.⁶⁸ However, attempts to implement change were made there, and Loria's notion of philanthropy as prevention rather than cure and structural change rather than palliative almsgiving may be interpreted as one of them. Not satisfied with limiting himself to monetary disbursement, Loria focused obsessively on making a major impact. This hands-on approach was a key issue when he was deciding how to spend his money. His attempts at rationalization, prevention, and secularization—which crystallized in the Umanitaria but characterized his efforts throughout his life—stand out in the context of contemporary Italian *beneficenza* still embedded in its “culture of alms,” even after the novelties introduced by the Crispi Laws on charity in 1890.⁶⁹

Loria's debut as a philanthropist in Milan coincided with the climax of projects aimed at building a secular civil society during the particularly entrenched culture wars of postunification Italy, during which the church maintained so much of its influence that secular philanthropy became a crucial arena for the expression of anticlerical politics by Italian liberals in general. For Jews, philanthropy was a platform for secular liberal politics, free from parliamentary constraints and potential criticism. As elsewhere, philanthropy “without distinction” by Jews signaled their integration as well as their emulation of, and adaptation to, mainstream bourgeois values.⁷⁰ In Italy, however, secular philanthropy was also the expression of a more-active role in the attempt to shape a secular civil society separate from the overarching influence of the Catholic Church.

Loria's philanthropy in Milan reflected his commitment to modern, secular causes such as women's vocational training and the battle for cremation. Particularly significant was the Mantegazza women's professional school promoted by local Freemasons, who “understood the whole importance of

⁶⁷Peter Mandler and David Cesarani, eds., *Great Philanthropists: Wealth and Charity in the Modern World, 1815–1945* (London, 2016).

⁶⁸Quine, *Italy's Social Revolution*. On the modernization of philanthropy, see Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton, NJ, 2011).

⁶⁹On Umanitaria's pioneering focus on prevention, see Maria Letizia D'Autilia, *Il cittadino senza burocrazia: Società umanitaria e amministrazione pubblica nell'Italia liberale* (Milan, 1995), 5–20.

⁷⁰Céline Leglaive-Perani, “De la charité à la philanthropie,” *Archives juives* 44, no. 1 (2011): 4–16.

creating an institution to take girls away from the influence of nuns and priests.”⁷¹ The school demonstrated a significant collaboration between Jews and non-Jews as both donors and board members. Loria’s donation in 1876 doubled the school’s assets and was decisive in terms of ensuring its further development,⁷² but it also points to a trend among other secular Jews who were active on the school board for decades. These included Lazzaro Frizzi, Enrico Fano, and Tullo Massarani, who in 1905 established the school as his universal heir, the only condition being that it continue to operate “without distinction.”⁷³

Loria also became involved with the Pious Institute for rickets sufferers, one of the first special education schools for rachitic children in Europe, established by the Freemason and doctor Gaetano Pini, who was inspired by the most recent debates on sanitation and public health.⁷⁴ Always specific as to how his donations should be spent, Loria in this case asked that his money “be spent in the adoption of means to prevent rickets, focusing on the causes of the illness.”⁷⁵ Tullo Massarani and Lazzaro Frizzi again served as board members and important donors.⁷⁶

The most progressive initiative supported by the Milanese Freemasons was the battle for cremation, the most extreme form of the secular approach to death. Revived during the French Revolution, cremation became in the 1870s a “vogue,” “a transatlantic phenomenon.”⁷⁷ In terms of legislation, scientific techniques, and number of crematoria, however, Italy took the lead as the battle for a secular death and the hygienic disposal of remains carried anticlerical connotations embraced by Freemasons, intellectuals, and professionals.⁷⁸ The practice was strongly opposed by Catholic authorities and by most Jewish rabbis, although a small minority of the latter endorsed it, raising fierce debates in the Jewish press that predated similar debates elsewhere.⁷⁹

⁷¹Novarino, *Progresso e tradizione*, 59.

⁷²Scuola professionale femminile in Milano, Bilancio consuntivo (1889), Rome, Archivio Capitolino, Uffici, tit. ser. 1, b. 56, fasc. 2, Lapide Anna Tedeschi.

⁷³Will of Tullo Massarani, November 20, 1900, BNCF, Biogr. M450.

⁷⁴Simonetta Polenghi, *Educating the Cripples: The Pious Institute for Rickets Sufferers of Milan and Its Transformations (1874–1937)* (Macerata, 2009).

⁷⁵*Corriere della sera*, April 6, 1880.

⁷⁶Riccardo Galeazzi, *Il Pio istituto rachitici di Milano, 1874–1913* (Bergamo, 1913), 41.

⁷⁷Stephen Prothero, *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001), 15.

⁷⁸Fulvio Conti, Anna Maria Isastia, and Fiorenza Tarozzi, *La morte laica: Storia della cremazione in Italia (1880–1920)*, 2 vols. (Turin, 1998), vol. 1; and Fulvio Conti, “La cremazione a Torino dalle origini al 1925,” in *Le radici della città: Donne e uomini della Torino cremazionista*, ed. Giovanni De Luna (Turin, 2003), 11–27.

⁷⁹David Malkiel, “La cremazione dei defunti: Tecnologia e cultura; Saggio storico-fenomenologico” [in Hebrew], *Italia* 10 (1993): 37–70; Gianfranco Di Segni, “I rabbini di

Even those rabbis who vehemently opposed it had to find ways to deal with increasing numbers of Italian Jews, both men and women, who chose it. From the early 1880s, disproportionate numbers of Jews were among the founders and members of secular cremation societies, often choosing this option for themselves. Founded in 1876, the Milan Cremation Society, for example, numbered three hundred members by 1881, including several Jews (Loria did not join until 1883).⁸⁰ However, choosing cremation did not entail a rupture with Jewish culture and society, as demonstrated by the case of Tullo Massarani, who opted for “purification via fire” with Jewish rituals before and after the burial of his ashes.⁸¹

When it came to cremation, however, Loria had specific ideas that set him apart from most of his fellow Freemasons. Even before officially joining the local cremation society, he arranged to make an annual donation through the municipality of Milan for the establishment of the Istituzione Loria per le autopsie gratuite, inspired by Andrea Verga, his doctor and friend. The institution was to provide everything needed to perform autopsies in the city cemetery, underwriting the cost for those who could not afford it, and giving the funds that remained at the end of every year to the cremation society.⁸² Loria believed that autopsies had wider social implications and considered them fundamental to the progress of science: “Our cadaver can help medical science. . . . An autopsy also serves to remove the last obstacle to cremation, . . . which, by saving space, increases work and bread to so many poor and . . . prevents the development of miasma, which threatens the lives of the city’s inhabitants.”⁸³

According to his friend Verga: “Although he was distant from the medical sciences, [Loria] promoted pathological anatomy in this city and founded an institution that no other city in Italy and perhaps in the world possesses, and from which it is a sin not to benefit.”⁸⁴ Approved by the city council, the project faced opposition from other Freemasons. For Loria, the scientific investigation of death was crucial, but, for others, the symbolic and political anticlerical aspects of cremation were more important, and autopsies were

Roma nell’Ottocento e agli inizi del Novecento,” in *Ebrei a Roma tra Risorgimento ed emancipazione (1814–1914)*, ed. Claudio Procaccia (Rome, 2014), 131–62, 155.

⁸⁰Registry of Members (1876–1911), Cremation Society (Socrem) Archive, Milan.

⁸¹Will of Tullo Massarani.

⁸²Loria to Milan Municipality Board, May 21, 1883, Socrem Archive; Lilli Dalle Nogare, “Andrea Verga, Prospero Moisè Loria e la questione delle autopsie gratuite (1882–1895),” *Storia in Lombardia* 2 (2002): 137–43; Paola Zocchi, “Tra autopsie cremazione e suicidio: L’istituzione Loria di Milano nel pensiero del promotore Andrea Verga (1881–1894),” in *Il medico di fronte alla morte (secoli XVI–XXI)*, ed. Georges Vigarello (Turin, 2008), 159–84.

⁸³Loria to Milan Municipality Board, April 2, 1888, Socrem Archive.

⁸⁴Dalle Nogare, “Andrea Verga,” 141.

ultimately opposed. This internal struggle, along with Catholic and popular resistance, explains the limited success of the Istituzione Loria, which, however, continued to operate until 1938.⁸⁵ Even in progressive Milan, the project faced opposition not only from Catholics but also from other Freemasons, for whom the anticlerical symbolism of cremation was more important than Loria's secular faith in science, the work ethic, and hygiene.

However, Loria's faith in science did not clash with his secular messianism, a notion that was both Jewish and Saint-Simonian. When in 1884 he first revealed his views regarding a *società umanitaria*, Loria hoped that "it would help find a solution to the Social Question and therefore facilitate the coming of the Messiah, which will mean progress, civilization, universal peace, the redemption of the suffering classes, the fraternity of humanity, becoming one family, and keeping the world as one country."⁸⁶ According to Osvaldo Gnocchi Viani, his collaborator, the "mystic image of the Umanitaria never gave [Loria] rest or truce."⁸⁷ Loria conceived of the Umanitaria as a large, unified, and efficient philanthropic structure designed "to coordinate all existing organizations and promote new ones, moving harmoniously toward one objective . . . to ensure accommodation and work for all the needy": "As the goal is purely philanthropic, it is therefore superior to any religious or political sect."⁸⁸ His vision of a future society promoted by the Umanitaria strongly resonated with Saint-Simonian ideas and provides insights into his messianic beliefs. His fascination with Saint-Simonian doctrine may have been influenced by Gnocchi Viani, who began to work as Loria's personal secretary in 1884. A well-known journalist and socialist activist who had himself already written about Saint-Simonians, Viani was to be a key player in the establishment of the Umanitaria as its first secretary.⁸⁹

Loria's messianic beliefs have been interpreted as being connected to Reform Judaism.⁹⁰ However, his references may be better understood within the messianism-without-Messiah tropes of Jewish secular leftists of the late nineteenth century, who considered messianism to be the only element of Jewish religious tradition compatible with their goals of radical social and political

⁸⁵Istituzione Loria in Socrem Administrative Budget, 1938, Socrem Archive.

⁸⁶Prospero Loria, *Società umanitaria: Proposte* (1884), 17, Fondazione: Eredità Loria, Disposizioni testamentarie di Prospero Moisè Loria, 1/2, Archivio Società umanitaria, Milan.

⁸⁷Gnocchi Viani, *L'umanitaria*, 9.

⁸⁸Prospero Loria, *Proposte al congresso di beneficenza* (1884), quoted in Pellegrino, *Il filantropo*, 223.

⁸⁹Giovanna Angelini, *Osvaldo Gnocchi Viani, I Sansimoniani: Protagonisti e ideali della città futura* (Milan, 1996), 7–43.

⁹⁰Rinaldo Salvadori, "Prospero Moisè Loria e Osvaldo Gnocchi Viani," *Storia in Lombardia* 17, no. 1 (1997): 7–25, 21.

change.⁹¹ His allusions to the Messiah were not understood by those around him, as is evident in the biography by Paolo Valera, a journalist known for a number of scandals for which he was charged with defamation: “Sometimes he seemed devoted to the Messiah, other times he seemed indifferent: one day Gnocchi Viani stopped writing the ideas on the famous workhouse and the Umanitaria to ask him what Jews intended for the Messiah or the coming of the Messiah. Loria seemed embarrassed. Well, he said, the coming of the Messiah can be interpreted in many ways. For me, it is the event of human redemption.”⁹²

While Valera sarcastically portrays Loria’s vagueness as ignorance to emphasize his intellectual and moral inferiority, his inability to understand how a secular person like Loria could explicitly refer to the Messiah may also relate to an encounter, or even a collision, between two ways of being secular. Like the low-ranking journalist Valera or the higher-level activist Gnocchi Viani, Loria too believed that secularization meant that human activity had replaced God’s providence in shaping the present. However, with regard to the future, his secularized thinking differed from theirs: as the Messiah had not yet come, the misery of the present was real, and the future was not predetermined. His secularized notion of the coming of the Messiah allowed him to hope that his philanthropy could solve the Social Question. This position, with its combination of faith in science and belief in a secular Messiah, demonstrates the complexity of Italian secularism for Jews, not only because of the choices Loria made about his death but also because his philanthropy was infused with a secular messianic vision. It thus illuminated not only how secularism and Jewishness could be compatible but also how cross-fertilization with other forms of spirituality did not appear to contradict his faith in science.

As previously noted, Loria may have already been exposed to Saint-Simonianism in Egypt, through his Masonic affiliation in Italy, or through his collaboration with Gnocchi Viani. As occurred in France, his exposure to Saint-Simonian ideas may have reinforced his identification with the AIU.⁹³ It is within this framework that, when he sent his 1884 brochure on the Umanitaria to the AIU Central Committee, Isidore Loeb, its secretary and a champion of Jewish internationalism and universalism, found it “very interesting.”⁹⁴

⁹¹ Christoph Schulte, “Messianism without Messiah: Messianism, Religion and Secularization in Modern Jewish Thought,” in Joskowicz and Katz, eds., *Secularism in Question*, 79–97, 82.

⁹² Valera, *Vita intima*, 10.

⁹³ Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity*, 81–116.

⁹⁴ Loeb to Loria, July 6, 1888, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 823. On tensions embedded in Loeb’s “Eurocentric Jewish universalism,” see Paolo Bernardini, “Look-

Despite his clear secularism, Loria also demonstrated an affinity with specifically Jewish causes in ways that reflect a secular, integrated vision of the place of Jews in the world. His donation to the Jewish community of Trieste in 1878 was intended to help young Jews, Austrian and Italian, begin maritime careers.⁹⁵ Professional training was also the focus of Loria's philanthropy in Rome, where his donation in 1882 (mediated by Vittore Ravà, who held an important post in the Ministry of Education and was also active in several Jewish organizations) enabled the opening of the first women's professional school in the capital. His donation to the municipal school targeted young girls from poor families living in Rome "without distinction," but special tax exemptions and bursaries were set aside for girls from the Sant'Angelo neighborhood.

The *rione* Sant'Angelo was a historic neighborhood and included the Roman ghetto. After centuries of humiliation and segregation, the Jews of Rome were in September 1870 the last in Italy to be emancipated. However, it took another decade for the neighborhood to be renovated, leaving conditions unchanged for most of the residents, particularly the poorest. In 1876, the same Vittore Ravà who mediated Loria's donation to the municipal school founded in the same *rione* the Società di fratellanza per il progresso civile degli Israeliti poveri to "transform the character and habits of Jewish poor in Rome" through vocational training and allow them to "stop living apart, in a filthy and unhealthy neighborhood . . . that should disappear so that this shame to the capital of Italy will be removed."⁹⁶ Loria's 1883 donation to this society as well as a series of documents confirm the close link between the Fratellanza association, the secular municipal school, and the Jewish community of Rome. Jewish Roman leaders appreciated his "special conditions in favor of the poor families living in Rione Sant'Angelo and therefore of Jewish ones who live there in significant majority."⁹⁷ Notices posted on the narrow streets of the former ghetto urged parents to register their daughters in the municipal school.⁹⁸ Loria's special clauses were to be enforced for twenty-five years, after which it was hoped that Jews would no longer be living in the former ghetto. His objective of moving Jews out of the ghetto, in both geographic and occupational terms, enables us to view his secular donation as a strategy for Jewish integration through strengthening secular civil society.

ing East, Thinking West: Isidore Loeb (1839–1892) and the Jews in the Ottoman Empire," in Catalan and Dogo, eds., *The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeastern Europe*, 171–82.

⁹⁵Pia fondazione Loria, *Atto fondazionale*, 4.

⁹⁶Vittore Ravà, "Relazione del presidente," in *Relazione*, ed. Società di fratellanza per il progresso civile degli Israeliti poveri di Roma (Rome, 1877), 17.

⁹⁷Tranquillo Ascarelli, "Relazione del presidente," in Società di fratellanza, *Relazione* (Rome, 1883), 11.

⁹⁸*Avviso*, September 20, 1882, Rome, Archivio Comunità ebraica di Roma (Ascer), 94/6.

Loria's engagement reflected wider trends among Italian Jewish secular philanthropists such as the already-mentioned Nathan family, among the first to promote women's secular education in Rome in the early 1870s and for whom the Fratellanza was the only connection to a Jewish organization in Rome.⁹⁹ The Fratellanza association soon enjoyed the support of Jewish philanthropists abroad. In Paris, the AIU was asked to support the "civilizing and humanitarian institution aimed at effacing in the Jews of Rome the suffering defects of the past."¹⁰⁰ Not all Italian AIU members agreed to apply for AIU support for an Italian cause. As Rabbi Lolli, the president of the AIU regional Venetian-Mantua committee, argued: "It seems undignified for Roman Jews and Italians in general . . . to recur to foreign support, generally destined for barbarian countries."¹⁰¹ The issue was momentarily resolved through a one-time donation to the Fratellanza to help the Jewish school in Rome. The debate illustrates tensions among Italian AIU members, who sought to be recognized as part of the emancipated giving countries rather than the receiving "barbarian" ones, and the extent to which northern Italian Jews applied notions of an "inner Orient" to perceptions of their coreligionists in Rome. This attitude reflected the narratives at the core of the northern Italian liberal approach to the southern question (codified in those same years) and formed a basis for the civilizing mission of the AIU.¹⁰² It also revealed a synergy between Loria's local and international activities, together with his interest in coreligionists in distress and his goal of Jewish integration through shaping a stronger secular civil society.

Loria's adherence to the AIU began in 1865,¹⁰³ before his cousin Prospero Ariani, the chief rabbi of Milan from 1866 until 1892, opened the Milan AIU branch.¹⁰⁴ In October 1878, Loria made a generous donation to the AIU to be divided between general issues and education. From that moment, he clearly saw the AIU as a potential heir, as he inquired whether the Italian government would allow it to inherit from an Italian citizen.¹⁰⁵ He identified with

⁹⁹Società di fratellanza, *Relazione* (Rome, 1881), 27.

¹⁰⁰Della Seta a Comitè Central, March 16, 1881, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Rome, 6441.

¹⁰¹Eude Lolli, in Protocol of Meeting of AIU Venetian-Mantua Committee, March 10, 1874, CAHJP, Comitato AIU Regionale Veneto Mantovano, IT PA 730. On Lolli, see Maddalena Del Bianco Cotrozzi, *Il Collegio rabbinico di Padova: Un'istituzione religiosa dell'ebraismo sulla via dell'emancipazione* (Florence, 1995), 237–42.

¹⁰²Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2002).

¹⁰³"Adhésions nouvelles et rectifications a la liste général," *AIU Bulletin*, July 3, 1865, 45–74, 64.

¹⁰⁴On Ariani, see Cotrozzi, *Il Collegio rabbinico di Padova*, 263–64; and Rony Hamaui, *Ebrei a Milano* (Bologna, 2016), 22, 58, 97–98.

¹⁰⁵Subscription form, Paris, October 22, 1878, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 8207.

the AIU's combination of particularism and secular universalism: in the beginning its Frenchness was not an ideological obstacle, only an institutional one that was easily overcome. Reassured that it could receive an inheritance, he soon became the largest donor to the AIU in Milan, giving regularly to general causes as well as assistance for Russian Jews and schools in Palestine, echoing his interest in vocational training in Italy and his Levantine experience in Alexandria.

Through the mediation of the president of the Roman Jewish community, Samuele Alatri, with whom he had been in contact through the *rione* Sant'Angelo school, from April 1887 Loria intensified his relationship with the AIU when he established a further annual donation for "its branches that better suit me."¹⁰⁶ However, before proceeding with his donation, the scrupulous philanthropist wished to ensure that the AIU conformed to his secular worldview. He therefore inquired whether—in addition to "the main aims of emancipation and moral progress of Jews," of which he approved—the AIU had ever sponsored the restructuring of a Jewish cemetery.¹⁰⁷ The AIU response resonated deeply with Loria's principles: "The Alliance agrees to contribute only to institutions of education and professional training or to institutions with a general interest in Judaism; it does not support those with a religious character, such as the building of synagogues or cemeteries."¹⁰⁸

The secular aims of the AIU satisfied Loria, who not only proceeded with his donation but also drafted his first will, which named the AIU as his universal heir.¹⁰⁹ As a testimony to the "public esteem" in which he was held and to "ensure homage to [his] philanthropic feelings,"¹¹⁰ in October 1889 he was nominated as a nonresident member of the AIU Central Committee. Although he declined, he continued to be involved with the AIU until a few months before his death.

Loria was interested in two main areas of the AIU's work: Jewish relief efforts focused on migration and persecution and the educational/secularizing dimensions that resonated with his work in Italy. In October 1889, he suggested that the AIU open a fund "to relocate those poor Jews who, for the religion they profess, are in a bad condition to other countries where in a

¹⁰⁶Loria to the President of the AIU, May 5, 1887, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 9584. On Samuele Alatri, see Claudio Procaccia, ed., *Ebrei a Roma tra Risorgimento ed emancipazione* (Rome, 2014), *passim*.

¹⁰⁷Loria to Central Committee, May 30, 1887, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 9703/1.

¹⁰⁸Central Committee to Loria, June 3, 1887, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 9703/2.

¹⁰⁹Loria to Loeb, July 6, 1887, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 9922.

¹¹⁰Loeb to Loria, November 14, 1889, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 8437.

better condition they can give back the subvention they received.”¹¹¹ One month later, he suggested that the AIU open a subscription to fund Baron de Hirsch’s projects to facilitate emigration. Loria shared Hirsch’s approach to philanthropy, which sought to make recipients self-supporting citizens who were expected to repay any funding in full. Both proposals were refused. The response to the second indicated: “A subscription would not bring anything. The world is not, like you, touched by philanthropic demands.”¹¹² Both Hirsch and Loria were forced to look elsewhere. In 1891, Hirsch created the Jewish Colonization Association, which took over the funding and organization of Jewish migration to places other than Palestine,¹¹³ while Loria finally opted for the Umanitaria. Hirsch’s solution was Jewish and Loria’s universal. Both would have preferred to work through the AIU because it was Jewish and universal at the same time, but, by the early 1890s, it had pushed them away.

In the meantime, Loria continued to engage with the AIU. In December 1889, he supported another emigration project (proposed by a man called Bendana) to “immediately install two thousand young, vigorous, and single men in Palestine [to] reenter in the heritage of their fathers . . . only real and legitimate owners.”¹¹⁴ This claim to Palestine was framed with explicit parallels between Jewish regeneration there and the unification of Italy, a trope used by Jewish and non-Jewish proto-Zionists in Italy and elsewhere.¹¹⁵ In his letters on the Bendana project, Loria mentioned his collaboration with Armand Levy, one of the founders of the AIU branch in Rome in 1873 and the first promoter of a statue of Giordano Bruno in Rome, a crucial anticlerical symbol in the Italian culture wars.¹¹⁶ An example of cosmopolitan nationalism, Levy epitomized the transnational fluidity of nineteenth-century activism conducted for the freedom of nationalities—Poles, Italians, Romanians, and Jews—and against the temporal power of the church.¹¹⁷ His explicit

¹¹¹Loria to Bigart, October 22, 1889, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 4827.

¹¹²Loeb to Loria, November 24, 1889, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 4586.

¹¹³Theodore Norman, *An Outstretched Arm: A History of the Jewish Colonization Association* (London, 1985).

¹¹⁴Loria to Loeb, December 16, 1889, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 8612/1 (original in French).

¹¹⁵Shlomo Avineri, “Risorgimento e Sionismo,” in *Italia-Israele: Gli ultimi centocinquanta anni* (Milano, 2012), 33–38.

¹¹⁶Zosa Szajkowski, “La fondazione dell’Alliance israélite universelle a Roma nel maggio 1873,” *Rassegna Mensile Israel* 22 (1956): 27–33; Bucciantini Massimo, *Campo dei Fiori: Storia di un monumento maledetto* (Turin, 2015), 42–45.

¹¹⁷Alain Boyer, “La conversion abolie et la découverte d’une identité nationale juive: Armand Levy (1827–1891),” *Yod* 6 (1978): 16–21.

anticlericalism, his foreignness, and his Jewish origin prevented support for his initiative for a statue of Bruno, although in 1885 he appeared among its French subscribers together with Italian intellectuals and politicians, including Jews such as David Levi and Tullo Massarani.¹¹⁸ Although through the AIU Loria was in contact with Levy a few years later, he was not involved with the Bruno monument fundraising campaign, probably because he was not a politician himself and because of his faith in consecrating memory through productive philanthropy rather than monuments.

Levy and Loria found Bendana unsophisticated but supported “his Jewish patriotic projects . . . using the utmost caution so that no pretext of hostility can be attributed to Jews and the *Alliance*, which serves as its center.”¹¹⁹ This passage clarifies how for Loria the AIU represented the center of Jewish interests in the world and his awareness of the antisemitic accusations directed against it. As part of its antisemitic campaign, from 1880 the Jesuit Italian journal *Civiltà cattolica* portrayed the AIU as the symbol of the immense power attributed to Jews to reinforce the myth of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy.¹²⁰ In line with his French colleagues, Loria agreed with the AIU “strategy of silence” and suggested that maximum caution should be utilized.¹²¹ However, the AIU rejected his immigration proposal because it considered Palestine “incapable of receiving and nourishing new Jewish immigrants.”¹²² The Palestine initiative reinforces the sense that Loria’s concerns were Jewish as well as universal, but in ways that speak to his specifically Italian context and the idea of national rebirth. This may also explain the connection with Armand Levy, a committed Romanian nationalist also engaged with the Polish cause. For these AIU supporters, cosmopolitan nationalism provided a framework for linking the particular and the universal.

¹¹⁸Subscription for the monument to Giordano Bruno, March 1, 1885, Rome, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Min Pubblica Istruzione, Monumento a Giordano Bruno, 1876–1889.

¹¹⁹Loria to Loeb, December 16, 1889, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 8612/1 (original in French).

¹²⁰*Civiltà cattolica* 31, no. 4 (1880): 753–56. See also *Civiltà cattolica* 41, no. 8 (1890): 399; Giovanni Miccoli, “Santa sede, questione ebraica e antisemitismo fra Otto e Novecento,” in Vivanti, ed., *Storia d’Italia*, vol. 11, *Gli ebrei in Italia*, 2:1369–1574, 1419. On antisemitism in Liberal Italy, see Simon Levis Sullam, “Critici e nemici dell’emancipazione degli ebrei,” in *Storia della Shoah in Italia: Vicende, memorie, rappresentazioni* (2 vols.), ed. Marcello Flores, Simon Levis Sullam, Marie Anne Matard-Bonucci, and Enzo Traverso (Turin, 2010), 1:37–62.

¹²¹Grégoire Kauffmann, Michael Laskier, and Simon Schwarzfuchs, “Solidarité et défense des droits des Juifs (1860–1914),” in Kaspi, ed., *Histoire de l’Alliance israélite universelle*, 143–52.

¹²²Loeb to Loria, January 1, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 8612/2 (original in French).

However, in practice, national ambitions were not necessarily compatible, as Loria discovered when he supported the AIU project of a Jewish vocational school in Tripoli. As elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, the wealthiest members of the Libyan Jewish community held European citizenship. Italian Jews had been crucial to Italian cultural penetration in Libya through the establishment in 1876 of the first Italian secular school for boys, followed two years later by the first secular school for girls.¹²³ Free of charge from 1885, the Italian schools presented strong competition to the community's traditional Talmud Torahs, which were "lodged in the synagogues, where groups of 150 children sit on the floor around the rabbi," as reported by David Casez. In August 1889, Casez had been sent by the AIU "to study the situation of the Jewish community in Tripoli and the means to create a vocational school."¹²⁴ As the director of the AIU school in Tunis, Casez had already witnessed the complex attitude of the Italian Jewish elite toward the AIU: initially in favor since it was seen as a promoter of Western education reforms, after the French occupation in 1881 the AIU was resented as an agent of French imperialistic policies. As Tzur has argued: "At the critical moment divergent European nationalist interests won over general Jewish interests."¹²⁵ Casez and, later, Albert Navon, both AIU graduates destined to have successful careers within the organization itself, found a similar configuration in Tripoli:¹²⁶ opposition from Italian Jews, who perceived the AIU as an organization with a French imperialist agenda, as well as hostility from Tripoli's religious leadership, who resisted the AIU's secular and modernizing objectives. This reveals how different types of secularism were at stake in the context of two parallel culture wars, one in Italy and one within Judaism itself.

In 1889, Loria suggested that the AIU provide for students at the Tripoli school—expecting that they would fully repay their debt later—and transform some of the city's six synagogues into schools or even sell them.¹²⁷ Once again, the AIU did not support his proposal. First, it feared that his secular outlook would further complicate its own reception within what was

¹²³Rachel Simon, *Change within Tradition among Jewish Women in Libya* (Seattle, 1992), 111; Ariel Paggi and Judith Roumani, "Giannetto Paggi da Pitigliano a Tripoli," *Hazman veharaion: Il tempo e l'idea* 12 (2013): 23.

¹²⁴"Israélites de la Tripolitania," *AIU Bulletin*, 2nd ser., 14 (1889): 106–12.

¹²⁵Yaron Tzur, "Religious Internationalism in the Jewish Diaspora—Tunis at the Dawn of the Colonial Period," in *Religious Internationals in the Modern World: Globalization and Faith Communities since 1750*, ed. Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene (Basingstoke, 2012), 186–206, 197.

¹²⁶Joy Land, "Albert Navon," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, 5 vols., ed. Norman Stillman (Leiden, 2017), 3:563–64.

¹²⁷Loria to Bigart, October 22, 1889, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 4327.

a hostile local religious setting. As Navon reported, the AIU faced the “underground and insatiable fanaticism of the rabbis.”¹²⁸ They demonstrated a “fanatic resistance,” saying in effect: “We don’t want your charity. We would rather die in misery than change our religion.”¹²⁹ Given this delicate equilibrium, Loria’s secular proposals were considered too extreme, as was his suggestion that the money be lent rather than given. In Libya—“a country where almsgiving has become an institution, a profession, where there is no shame in asking, but rather it seems one’s right”—Loria’s “moral suggestion” was not an option.¹³⁰ Navon and Loria agreed on only one point: that it would be wiser to send teachers from overseas directly to Tripoli rather than, as Loria put it, “waiting for students to become teachers and sacrifice themselves and return to Tripoli as an expression of gratitude, becoming impoverished slaves in their homeland, rather than enjoying freedom and riches elsewhere”: “I fear that with this system the work of the AIU is eternalized and does not help the populations, which is contrary to my ideas.”¹³¹ As an educational organization firmly rooted in Paris, the AIU had strict policies about teacher training that contrasted with Loria’s philanthropic vision of intervention.¹³² His opposition may also have stemmed from his own experience of leaving Mantua in his youth, never to return.

A further element of contrast emerged in the imperialistic tensions between Italy and France that challenged the commitment of Italian Jews to the AIU as a French institution. In his report, Navon noted “the forced neutrality of the old Italian Jewish families long established in the country”: “It’s not that they aren’t with us in heart, but in a country where political ambitions are no secret, even minimal participation in an organization without a clearly defined character can be seen by the pure Italians as antipatriotic and they are forced to abstain. They don’t believe in the sincerity of our charitable activity, but imagine that the Alliance is hiding a political agenda for which vocational training schools are only the first step.”¹³³ The animosity of the Italian elite toward the AIU needs to be understood within the context of the changing tides of Italian foreign policy. After losing Tunisia to France in 1881, Francesco Crispi, the minister of foreign affairs and later prime minister, focused on French cultural influence in the Mediterranean as Italy’s greatest concern: hence his rhetoric of Italy’s “civilizing mission”

¹²⁸Navon to Leven, March 4, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Libya.

¹²⁹Navon to Central Committee, April 29, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Libya.

¹³⁰Navon to Leven, Tripoli, April 1, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Libya.

¹³¹Loria to Loeb, July 17, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 1360.

¹³²On AIU teaching policies, see Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance israélite universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860–1925* (Bloomington, IN, 1990).

¹³³Navon to Loeb, March 4, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Libya.

and his growing interest in Italian schools outside Italy.¹³⁴ These tensions filtered into the Italian Jewish press and alarmed Loria,¹³⁵ who in 1890 wrote to Loeb:

I have read that the Alliance committees in the East oppose Italian schools and threaten not to support pupils if they attend them. I also know that Crispi has written to a person of influence here, complaining about the situation, and expressing his surprise that Italians contribute so generously to the Alliance, which he deems to be unpatriotic. This was referred to me as it is known that I have good relations with them. In truth, this news has left a bad impression on me, but I hope that you may be able to disprove it and indicate what may have been its cause.¹³⁶

Loeb reassured Loria that the AIU was apolitical and, while thanking him for his continuous support, pointed out that Italian donations to the AIU were relatively insignificant.¹³⁷ A new AIU committee was founded in Tripoli in the same year, and, in August 1890, the AIU professional school opened with twenty pupils.¹³⁸ However, differing views on intervention as well as the systematic rejection of his proposals and the perception of the AIU as a French institution in an increasingly tense imperialistic context caused Loria to distance himself from the organization. As he wrote to Loeb in July 1890: “[I] neglect to occupy myself with the Alliance, but I hope you will pardon me in view of the goal that animates us both.”¹³⁹ His correspondence with the AIU halted for a few months. When it resumed in February 1891, he redirected his AIU donation to “poor Jews who, because of their persecution in Russia, desire to emigrate to other countries, a policy that now is more urgent.”¹⁴⁰ In his last letter to the AIU (in March 1891), he again praised its work with impoverished Russian Jews.¹⁴¹

Strict adherence to his own secular philanthropic principles for long-term solutions rather than temporary relief led him to clash with other institutions,

¹³⁴Christopher Duggan, “La politica coloniale di Crispi,” in *Alla ricerca delle colonie (1876–1896)*, ed. Pier Luigi Ballini and Paolo Pecorari (Venice, 2007), 43–65, 45–49.

¹³⁵“Corrispondenze del Vessillo,” *Vessillo israelitico* 38, no. 3 (1890): 101.

¹³⁶Loria to Loeb, April 7, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 650/1.

¹³⁷Loeb to Loria, April 10, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 650/2.

¹³⁸“Statistique des écoles et de l’apprentissage,” *AIU Bulletin*, 2nd ser., 15 (1890): 52–66, 65; “Comités nouveaux et renouvelés,” *AIU Bulletin*, 2nd ser., 15 (1890): 127–28, 128.

¹³⁹Loria to Loeb, July 17, 1890, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 1360.

¹⁴⁰Loria to Loeb, February 25, 1891, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 5219.

¹⁴¹Loria to Central Committee, March 2, 1891, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 5242.

influencing further giving. In autumn 1891, he offered a large donation to the municipality of Milan for a first nucleus of the Società umanitaria, his proposal centering around a permanent organization offering employment to anyone in need without distinction.¹⁴² Gnocchi Viani tried to convince him that a temporary institution was preferable within the context of Milanese tensions between a moderate majority supported by Catholics and the Democratic-Republican bloc headed by Gnocchi Viani himself. Loria insisted: "Temporary provisions in times of crisis are like medicines in the case of an epidemic, and . . . I intend to prevent illness."¹⁴³ His proposal was rejected by the municipal board, whose members included Loria's friends and collaborators Gnocchi Viani, Tullo Massarani, and Enrico Fano.¹⁴⁴ Deeply hurt,¹⁴⁵ Loria withdrew his offer and continued to explore other options, not having yet finalized his will. In April 1892, he inquired whether the municipal board of Rome could receive a bequest and suggested ways to find new donors.¹⁴⁶ He updated his will only the following month. Until the end of his days, the hands-on philanthropist was evaluating his options in an obstinate attempt to have his views implemented.

In May 1892, Loria gave Pietro Dolfin-Guerra, a Milanese lawyer and Freemason and one of his executors, a sealed letter (to be opened on the day of his death) requesting that the AIU, which held his will, be informed of his passing.¹⁴⁷ We do not know whether Loria was still thinking of the AIU as his universal heir in May 1892. He may have decided to change his will then or two months later when he revoked all previous wills and established the Società umanitaria as his universal heir. Until this time, however, he remained involved with the AIU and its mission to help coreligionists. His bequest to a non-Jewish institution should not detract from the commitments and attachments he had established throughout his lifetime.

In his last will, drafted in July 1892, Loria requested that an autopsy be conducted on his corpse before cremation and that his ashes be kept in a tomb close to his wife's resting place that he had already purchased in the city cemetery. Just as his donation directed to the *rione* Sant'Angelo in memory

¹⁴²Prospero Loria, *Offerta al Municipio di Milano* (Milan, 1891).

¹⁴³Loria to Municipality Board, November 27, 1891, Fondazione: Eredità Loria, Ventilazione Ereditaria, 1/1, Archivio Società umanitaria.

¹⁴⁴Maurizio Punzo, "Osvaldo Gnocchi Viani: L'attività nel consiglio comunale di Milano," *Storia in Lombardia* 17, no. 1 (1997), <https://francoangeli.it/Riviste/sommario.asp?IDRivista=57&lingua=en&anno=1997>. See also Pellegrino, *Il filantropo*, 211–13.

¹⁴⁵Valera, *Vita intima*, 13.

¹⁴⁶Loria to Rome Municipal Board, April 7, 1892, Roma, Archivio Capitolino, Uffici, tit. ser. 1, b. 56, fasc. 2.

¹⁴⁷Dolfin Guerra to the Secretary of the AIU, November 11, 1892, CAHJP, AIU Archives, Italy, Milano, Dossier Loria, 8944.

of his wife did not mention that the neighborhood included the former Roman ghetto, his will did not mention that his tomb was in the Jewish section of the cemetery.

Conclusion

Loria's requests in his will referred to social practices debated throughout his life in constant exchange with other Jews, Freemasons, doctors, and activists in Trieste, Egypt, and Italy. Following his death, Loria was eulogized in the *AIU Bulletin* as one of the organization's "most devoted collaborators."¹⁴⁸ The *Vessillo israelitico*, by contrast, expressed disappointment that he had left nothing to Jewish institutions.¹⁴⁹

Loria's commitment to the AIU was not inconsistent with his vision for the Umanitaria; rather, it was a logical part of his philanthropic goal of shaping a secular society that would respect differences within it. His near obsession with ensuring respect for his principles reveals his desire to achieve long-lasting change through philanthropy. His choices in both life and death demonstrate how there was room in Jewish secularism for multiple identities (e.g., Jew, Freemason, and Saint-Simonian), how one could be a secular Jew in Italy without being divorced from a Jewish collective, and how a secular faith in science could coexist with a vision of the coming of the Messiah as the "redemption of the suffering classes." Indeed, the cross-fertilization between these beliefs played a crucial role in his attempts to shape a secular civil society in liberal Italy. From this perspective, the Jewish experience adds significant nuances to our understanding of secularism in both the public and the private spheres, as it was more varied than one might think.

Loria's philanthropic trajectory allows us to expand the scope of connections and tensions embedded in Italian Jewish secular philanthropy, both locally and transnationally, within the changing equilibria of internal and foreign policy. Through his biography, we have followed the specific configuration of Italian Jewish affiliation with the AIU. That organization connected decentralized communities but also revealed tensions between them and with existing networks of Italian Jews as agents of secularization in a Mediterranean context. Thus we see the formative significance of the periphery in a context in which the nation-state was not necessarily a key parameter, at least in the early decades of the AIU.

¹⁴⁸"Compte rendu des travaux: Nécrologie," *AIU Bulletin*, 2nd ser., 17 (1892): 10–16, 15.

¹⁴⁹Flaminio Servi, "Cenni necrologici: P. M. Loria," *Vessillo israelitico* 40, no. 11 (1892): 377–78.

Loria's life, death, and legacy speak to broader issues regarding the Jewish role in the Italian culture wars. My analysis of Loria's engagement with the AIU and the issue of cremation has shown how straightforward categorizations between secular and religious, scientific and spiritual, private and public do not apply to liberal Italy in terms of either its national or its transnational dimensions. The issues raised may appear specific to Loria, but they are in fact typical of many Italian Jews in this era because of emigration patterns and Mediterranean network connections. Paradoxically, while Italian Jewish secularism was framed by the culture wars in Italy and their relationship with nation-state formation, it was also shaped by the weakness of the nation-state in practice, the lack of a cohesive Jewish body at the national level, the polarization between the various and very diverse Jewish local contexts, and Italy's peripheral situation both within Europe and within the Jewish world. This allowed Italian Jews like Loria to embrace the AIU as secular Jewish internationalists because it was an organization that was both Jewish and secular, particular and universal, while disregarding its Frenchness—a position that was often challenged in the Italian Levantine diaspora in the age of imperialism but was nonetheless sustained throughout the nineteenth century.

The weakness of the Italian state and the stranglehold that the church still maintained on society rendered Jewish efforts to create a secular civil society through philanthropy and the battle for a secular death especially important during the Italian culture wars. As elsewhere, choices regarding death and philanthropy were made in accordance with mainstream bourgeois standards and became means of attaining and demonstrating attachment to the nation and successful integration. But, in Italy, these choices were also social practices that allowed active engagement in the attempt to shape an accepting secular civil society.

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