

David de Aaron de Sola

David de Aaron de Sola or **David Aaron de Sola** (1796 – 1860) (Hebrew: דוד אהרן די סולה) was a rabbi and author, born in Amsterdam, the son of Aaron de Sola.

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Family history and education

David Aaron De Sola was descended from a distinguished family of Sephardim, who emigrated from Spain in 1492 on the expulsion of the Jews from that country by Ferdinand and Isabella. The family seems to have settled mainly in Holland and includes, among others, the preacher Isaac de Sola (1675-1735) and Dr. Benjamin de Sola (1735-1816), who served as court physician to William, Prince of Orange.

At just eleven years of age, D.A. de Sola entered as a student to the *bet ha-midrash* in Amsterdam, studying diligently, and after a course of nine years received his rabbinical diploma from Haham d'Azevdo of Amsterdam who stated that de Sola was "to the fullest extent competent to discharge rabbinical functions...and assume the ministerial office in every city." ^[1]

He also engaged in secular studies. In addition to the Spanish and Portuguese languages, which were spoken at home, he read both German and French literature. Moreover, he studied mathematics and astronomy, and his great-uncle, Dr. Benjamin de Sola, introduced him to medicine. He became proficient in drawing, sketching, and music as well.

Rabbinic career

Rev. <div>David Aaron de Sola</div>	
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Rev. David Aaron de Sola	
Personal	
Born	December 26, 1796 <div>Amsterdam, Netherlands</div>
Died	October 29, 1860 <div>London, England</div>
Religion	<u>Judaism</u>
Spouse	Rica/Rebecca de Hezekiah Meldola
Children	Six sons, nine daughters
Parents	Aaron de Sola
Occupation	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Rabbi</u></div>
Jewish leader	
Predecessor	<u>Raphael Meldola</u>
Position	<u>Rabbi</u>
Synagogue	<u>Bevis Marks Synagogue</u> <div>London</div>
Began	1818
Ended	1860

In 1818, D.A. de Sola was called to London to become one of the ministers of the Bevis Marks Congregation under Haham Raphael Meldola (who would also later become his father-in-law). De Sola's addresses before the Society for the Cultivation of Hebrew Literature led the *mahamad* (board of directors of the congregation) to appoint him to deliver discourses in the vernacular, and on March 26, 1831, he preached the first sermon in English ever heard within the walls of Bevis Marks Synagogue (all previous ones being spoken in Spanish or Portuguese). His discourses were subsequently published by the *mahamad*. Of his style, one observer wrote: "Though a scholar and a thinker, yet he...used the most unpedantic terms and assumed a quiet, colloquial manner." ^[2]

Publications

D.A. de Sola's most significant work was the publication in 1836 and again in 1852 of the prayer book, *Translation of the Forms of Prayer According to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*. This undertaking, which received the encouragement and financial support of Sir Moses Montefiore, "was a remarkable feat of scholarship" and formed the basis for several subsequent editions. Other writings by D.A. de Sola include:

In 1829, he issued his first work, *The Blessings*, with an introductory essay on the nature and duty of thanksgiving.

In 1837, de Sola published *The Proper Names in Scripture*; about the same time he wrote *Moses the Prophet*, *Moses Maimonides*, and *Moses Mendelssohn*, and in 1838 *Notes on Basnage and Milman's History of the Jews*.

In 1839, collaborating with M. J. Raphall, he translated eighteen treatises of the *Mishnah*. The work had a strange fate, for, the manuscript having reached the hands of a member of the Burton Street Synagogue, it was published in 1842, without the permission of the authors, before it had been revised or corrected for the press, and with an anonymous preface expressing views entirely opposed to those of de Sola and Raphall.

In 1840 de Sola, conjointly with Raphall, began the publication of an English translation of the Scriptures, together with a commentary. Only the first volume, *Genesis*, was published, in 1844.

In 1860, he translated into English, in four volumes, the festival prayers according to the custom of the German and Polish Jews.

Besides his works in English, de Sola wrote in Hebrew, German, and Dutch. He contributed frequently between 1836 and 1845 to the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* and to *Der Orient*, and published in German *A Biography of Ephraim Luzzato* and a *Biography of Distinguished Israelites in England*. His chief work in Dutch was his *Biography of Isaac Samuel Reggio*, published in 1855 and afterward translated into English.

Organizational Activities

De Sola was instrumental in organizing the Association for the Promotion of Jewish Literature and other societies of a similar character.

Musical Contributions


D.A. de Sola had a lifelong passion for music. As his son Abraham relates, "nature had gifted him with a fine ear and a most melodious voice." In 1857, he published *The Ancient Melodies of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, including a historical account of the poets, poetry, and melodies of the Sephardic liturgy. In the notation of the melodies he was assisted by Emanuel Aguilar, the composer.

Additionally, de Sola composed a melody for Adon Olam that is still used in both Sephardi and Ashkenazi synagogues in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Three recordings of this moving melody can be heard here: 1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jkP3Vj10Oo ...2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbIIInkQO-q5> ...3) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G22pTOVveKQ>

Family Life

De Sola was married in 1819 to Rica/Rebecca de Hezekiah Meldola (born Amsterdam 1796 died London 1866, eldest daughter of Haham Raphael Meldola, who was born in Florence and was also accomplished in her study of religion and languages. They had a fruitful marriage, producing six sons and nine daughters. Among the sons was Rabbi Abraham de Sola, who served as minister at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of Montreal and Samuel de Sola, who in 1863 was elected to succeed his father as minister of the Bevis Marks. One daughter, Jael, married Solomon Belais, son of Rabbi Abraham Belais, at one time treasurer to the Bey of Tunis. Another daughter, Eliza, married Rev. Abraham Pereira Mendes and was the mother of Rabbi Dr. Frederick de Sola Mendes and Rabbi Dr. Henry Pereira Mendes. Of the other daughters, five married in London, one being Annette Hannah de Sola born 1827, London and who married in London in 1863 Maurice Moses Cohen Rogers born 1831 in Leeward. Their grandson Dr Keith Bernard de Sola Rogers, born London 1910, died London 2005. Dr Rogers "Until 1941 he was a research assistant under Sir Almoth Wright and Sir Alexander Fleming, part of the illustrious team in the inoculation department at St Mary's, concerned with immunology, early blood transfusions, and the development of sulphonamides, and, above all, penicillin. Indeed, Keith Rogers was probably the first patient to be treated clinically with penicillin ointment. He was to captain the London University rifle team in an important match when he developed severe conjunctivitis. The penicillin worked and the match was won." . David de Sola died at Shadwell, near London, in 1860.

References

1. Richard Barnett, "Haham Meldola and Hazan de Sola," https://www.jstor.org/stable/29777989?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
2. Biography of David Aaron de Sola by Abraham de Sola
 -  This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Singer, Isidore; et al., eds. (1901–1906). "Sola, de" (<http://jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?letter=S&artid=889>). *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.

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