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Alexandrian Judaism in 19th Century
Wissenschaft des Judentums:
Between Christianity and Modernization*

Hellenistic Judaism was not the natural priority of Jewish scholarship in modern Germany. Initially this subject rather tended to be neglected, because its relevance for formative and contemporary Judaism was not immediately obvious¹. Rabbinic and Medieval topics instead dominated the academic agendas².

Jewish scholars who nevertheless took an interest in Hellenistic Judaism lived in the atmosphere of Christian scholarship and were often stimulated by its challenging questions. From the pioneering works of the late 19th century onwards Christian scholarship had recognized the importance especially of Alexandrian Judaism as a background to Christianity. This approach was anticipated in the late eighteenth century by Gotthold E. Lessing's *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, which postulated a gradual progress of human spirituality by leaving behind Judaism and embracing Christianity. In a similar vein Christian scholars of the nineteenth century viewed Jewish Hellenism as an intermediary stage between "primitive" Biblical Judaism and more advanced Christianity. This "progress" was described in terms of transcending the allegedly binary opposite of Hellenism and Hebrew or Oriental religion³. While this approach implied a clearly condescending if not hostile attitude towards Judaism, it nevertheless acknowledged Judaism

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¹ Note that Jacob Freudenthal even called Jewish Hellenism the "stepchild" of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, in: *Jakob Freudenthal, Zur Geschichte der Anschauungen über die jüdisch-hellenistische Religionsphilosophie*, in: *MGWJ* 18 (1869) 399–421. For an overview of 19th century scholarship on Philo, see: *Leopold Cohen, The Latest Researches on Philo of Alexandria*, in: *JQR* 5 (1893) 24–50. Compare also *Yaakov Shavit, Athens in Jerusalem. Classical Antiquity and Hellenism in the Making of the Modern Secular Jew* (London 1997, revised and translated version of the Hebrew original of 1992) 330–32, where he suggests that "Alexandrian Judaism became a sublime model of cultural symbiosis".

² See for example *Leopold Zunz' programmatic essay Etwas über die Rabbinische Literatur* (Berlin 1819).

³ On different versions of this opposition in general European culture, see: *Shavit, Athens* 21–39; see also uses of "Classical Greece" in the Enlightenment: *Peter Hanns Reill, The German Enlightenment* (Berkeley 1975) 142–43, 205–7.

as part of the Christian heritage. It certainly represented a significant departure from Kant's *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der Vernunft*, which altogether denied Judaism's religiosity and thus share in the Christian tradition⁴. It may thus not be accidental that it was a convert to Christianity from Judaism, August Neander, who in 1818 first drew academic attention to Jewish Hellenism. He understood Philo's thought as an amalgamation of Oriental and Greek ideas which anticipated their complete and superior synthesis through Jesus⁵. Similarly Hegel⁶, followed by Droysen⁷, presented Judaism and Hellenism as binary opposites which were dialectically reconciled by Christianity⁸.

Christian scholarship on Jewish Hellenism influenced *Wissenschaft des Judentums* both indirectly by provoking a broader interest in the subject and, more directly, by providing a challenging definition of the nature of each religion and their relationship to each other. The foremost Christian concern which infiltrated Jewish scholarly circles was the notion of an inherent contrast between Judaism and Hellenism. Many Jewish scholars were moreover stimulated by Christian scholarship to understand Hellenistic Judaism in light of nascent Christianity. Especially Philo was thus studied with a view both to his supposed alienation from authentic Judaism and his congeniality to later Christian theology. Among Jews this perspective, echoing the Christian appropriation of Jewish Hellenism, naturally aroused considerable ambiguity. This in turn led to repeated attempts at precisely defining especially Philo's place both vis-a-vis the New Testament and rabbinic sources.

While Christian scholars had appropriated Alexandrian Judaism as a means of grounding their own identity in Ancient Hellenism, the subtext of the Jewish dis-

⁴ On Kant's notion of Judaism, see especially *Heinz Moshe Graupe*, *The Rise of Modern Judaism. An Intellectual History of German Jewry, 1650–1942* (New York 1979, translation of the German original of 1969) 169–99.

⁵ *August Neander*, *Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten gnostischen Systeme* (Berlin 1818) especially 1–27; see also his followers: *A. F. Gföerer*, *Kritische Geschichte des Urchristenthums*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart 1831); *A. F. Dähne*, *Geschichtliche Darstellung der jüdisch-alexandrinischen Religionsphilosophie* (Halle 1834); *F. C. Bauer*, *Die christliche Gnosis* (Tübingen 1834).

⁶ *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel*, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Jubiläumsausgabe, vol. 11 (Stuttgart 1992) 260–64, 295–97.

⁷ *Arnoldo Momigliano*, J.G. Droysen Between Greeks and Jews (1970), reprinted in: *idem*, *Studies in Modern Scholarship* (Berkeley 1994) 147–61; *Christhard Hoffmann*, *Juden und Judentum im Werk deutscher Althistoriker des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leiden 1988) 76–84.

⁸ This theological position has prevailed in the 20th century; see especially: *Martin Goodman*, *Jewish Attitudes to Greek Culture in the Period of the Second Temple*, in: *Glenda Abrahamson and Tudor Parfitt* (eds.), *Jewish Education and Learning* (Harwood Academic Publishers 1994) 167–74. The subject of Judaism versus Hellenism was also extensively treated by Heinrich Heine, who however extended "Judaism" to imply also Christianity. This antagonistic concept became common in nineteenth century literature, see: *Gilbert Higbet*, *The Classical Tradition. Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature* (New York, Oxford 1949) 437–68.

cussion related to the inverse issues⁹. Accepting the equation Ancient Hellenism = Modern (Christian) culture, Jewish scholars were thus concerned to define Judaism's relationship to its surroundings¹⁰. The task was to define the nature, the desirability and degree of acculturation. To what extent could and should Judaism reform itself in the spirit of the time without losing its own identity? Alexandrian Judaism came in this way to be treated as a paradigm for types of modernization in nineteenth century Germany. Depending on each scholar's position on contemporary affairs, it would either be praised and embraced as a model for imitation or treated with caution and warned against.

Overall, the 19th century witnessed a gradual rise of interest among Jewish scholars in Alexandrian Judaism. This positive interest became initially visible in the work of the liberal pioneer Isaac Marcus Jost. Subsequently, the subject was also studied by leading scholars of centre-conservative orientation, while it continued to engage the attention of liberal minds. At the very end of the century even some orthodox interest arose. Three stages can be distinguished in this overall development. In the 1820s the stage was set, in the 1840s and 50s Alexandrian Judaism became an integral part of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, while the years from 1865 onwards saw the institutionalization and proliferation of its study.

Setting the Stage in the early 1820s: Isaac Marcus Jost and Immanuel Wolf

The study of Alexandrian Judaism among Jews is ushered in by two diametrically opposed approaches, respectively introduced by Jost and Wolf. While Jost remained a pioneer scholar never fully integrated into *Wissenschaft* circles, Wolf's short remarks on Hellenism in his programmatic essay of 1822 set the tone for much of subsequent Jewish scholarship. Jost's perspective is informed by the Enlightenment concerns for emancipation and acculturation. Yet unaffected by Christian perspectives, these priorities lead him to praise the synthesis of Judaism and Hellenism in Alexandria as a paradigm for modernization in Germany. Wolf, by contrast, assumed with Christian scholarship the inherent, typological opposition between Judaism and Hellenism. Alexandrian Judaism was as a result only briefly acknowledged as a mitigated form of the Jewish principle.

The nature of Jost's interest in Alexandrian Judaism reflects the transitional phase between the Enlightenment and *Wissenschaft* proper. Although Jost has al-

⁹ On the close connection between scholarship and identity, see especially: *Michael A. Meyer*, Jewish Scholarship in Modern Germany, in: *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 8 (1992) 181–93; *Shaviv*, Athens 49–57.

¹⁰ Cf. *Shaviv*, Athens passim, who discusses Hellenism as a mirror of Judaism in terms of modern *secular* culture. The Christian element in the modern interpretation of Hellenism has thus not been given sufficient attention.

ready turned to historiography, he remains loyal to the ideals of the Emancipation and is not influenced by Hegelian dialectics. He rather treats history from a general political and cultural point of view without constructing overall national and ideational categories¹¹. Alexandrian Judaism fascinates him as a model of non-rabbinic diaspora culture, which profits from an enlightened host government and redefines itself in terms of a rational-ethical religion.

Treating initially the political aspects of Jewish history, Jost clarifies the conditions for religious and cultural rejuvenation in Jewish Alexandria. He argues in contemporary terms that Egyptian Jews benefited from a clear division between state and church. This enabled them to identify nationally with their host country, while maintaining strong religious ties to Jerusalem¹². This assessment implies the Mendelssohnian definition of Judaism as a religion and equates Hellenism with modern secularization. Relying on the German concept of patriarchal emancipation from above¹³, Jost moreover explains that Alexandrian Jews were granted full civil rights upon proving their loyalty to their rulers. They consequently enjoyed the “greatest civil bliss and a high degree of independence” (ibid, 299).

Jost presupposes a direct link between emancipation and acculturation. He suggests that it was the high civic status of Alexandrian Jews, which prompted their cultural flourishing and enabled them to create an enlightened alternative to what he considers as dishonest, corrupt and magical Pharisaism. The liberal climate of Alexandria provided the Jews with a suitable framework to develop a rational world-view, which subordinates the law to wisdom and not *vice versa* (ibid, 177). Alexandrian Judaism thus serves Jost as a highly relevant model for diaspora life, which implemented Enlightenment ideals and liberated itself from the kind of corruption represented by rabbinic culture. His only reservations concern the insufficient degree of religious reform in Alexandria. He criticizes Philo for following the Palestinian practice of Scriptural exegesis rather than developing an independent philosophical system (ibid). In his opinion, Alexandrian Jews generally remained too receptive and too concerned with the transformation of Greek notions into “proper” Jewish forms¹⁴.

¹¹ Salo W. Baron, *History and Jewish Historians*, compiled with a foreword by A. Herzberg and L. A. Feldman (Philadelphia 1964) 246; Michael A. Meyer, *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Historiography: Motives and Motifs*, in: Ada Rapoport-Albert (ed.), *Essays in Jewish Historiography* (Atlanta 1991, 2nd ed.) 160–75; Reuven Michael, *Jewish Historiography, From the Renaissance to the Modern Time* (Hebrew, Jerusalem 1993), especially 217–45; Ismar Schorsch, *From Wolfenbüttel to Wissenschaft: The Divergent Paths of Isaac Marcus Jost and Leopold Zunz*, in: LBIYB 22 (1977) 109–28.

¹² Isaac Marcus Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliten seit der Zeit der Maccabäer bis auf unsere Tage, nach den Quellen bearbeitet*, vol. 2 (Berlin 1821) 265 (from now on abbreviated as: history).

¹³ Richard Rürup, *Emancipation und Antisemitismus* (Göttingen 1975) 11–36.

¹⁴ Ibid, 64. In his later work, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten* (Leipzig 1857) 1–12, 344–93, Jost expresses a higher appreciation of the philosophical justification of the Halacha by the Alexandrian Jews.

The underlying theme of Jost's discussion is the modernization of Judaism in light of both universal rationalism and the surrounding culture. Its topical concern can be appreciated by comparing his description of Alexandria to his later discussion of his own time. German Judaism is – like Ancient Alexandria – praised for its efforts to abandon rabbinism in favour of enlightened rationalism. Poland, by contrast, is – like Ancient Palestine – criticized for remaining committed to tradition and obstinate to modern scholarship¹⁵. Jost especially praises the German Jewish schools whose curricula combine Jewish and general subjects. He moreover stresses that Mendelssohn, despite his traditional rhetoric, really was a radical opponent of rabbinism, who aimed at the abolition of the law (*ibid*, 64–65). Finally, Geiger is deeply appreciated as the pioneer of progressive Judaism, who completed Philo's work by developing a Jewish theology from within. German Jews are thus shown to have implemented the ideals of their Alexandrian forefathers.

Jost's enthusiastic appreciation of Alexandrian Judaism is based on a liberal, distinctly Jewish perspective. Rather than evaluating it against the background of nascent Christianity or assuming an inherent tension between Judaism and Hellenism, he presents Alexandria as the paradigm of authentic Judaism unaffected by "Pharisaic" corruptions. In his view, Judaism and general culture complement each other as well in Alexandria as in modern Germany.

Jost's approach remains unique in the early 19th century and will be continued only later. It is immediately counterbalanced by Immanuel Wolf's foundational manifesto *Über den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judenthums* (1822)¹⁶. Hegelian dialectics are applied here in order to highlight the unchanging essence of Judaism in contrast to the Hellenic spirit¹⁷:

Later a principle totally different (*ein von ihm ganz verschiedenes Prinzip*) from Judaism came into conflict with it: Hellenism. Judaism assumes the Divine idea as the given and revealed; while in Hellenism all knowledge has developed by itself from the human mind. Both are, each in its distinct way, the most important elements in the cultural history of the human mind (*Bildungsgeschichte des menschlichen Geistes*).

Wissenschaft des Judenthums is thus officially established on the assumption of an unchanging Jewish essence which is diametrically opposed to Hellenism. Symbolizing religion and philosophy respectively, these two are envisioned in permanent and inevitable conflict. Wolf can consequently attribute only little importance to Alexandrian Judaism¹⁸. While he briefly acknowledges that it produced Philo's philosophy, Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism, he suggests that these are

¹⁵ Isaac Marcus Jost, *history* vol. 9 (Berlin 1828) 40–103; see also: *idem*, *history* vol. 10, III (Berlin 1847), especially 6–22, 121–28.

¹⁶ Immanuel Wolf, *Über den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, in: *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 1 (1822) 1–24.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

¹⁸ Cf. *Shaviv*, Athens 331–2, stressing the importance and positive appreciation of Alexandrian Judaism by Wolf.

hybrid forms, created by a mitigation of the Jewish and the Hellenic principle through Egyptian culture (ibid, 7). Philo can thus not be recommended as a priority of academic research, because his philosophy would not sufficiently illuminate the “Jewish principle” in its pure and unchanging form.

Alexandrian Judaism in the scholarship of the 1840s–50s: Zacharias Frankel, Heinrich Graetz and Maurice Wolff

During the 1840s and 1850s, when Hellenistic Judaism becomes an integral part of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the oppositional model predominates. Frankel, Graetz and Wolff are all familiar with the idea of an inherent contrast between Judaism and Hellenism. Each of them comes to terms with it in his own way, redefining the dividing line between Judaism and nascent Christianity.

In 1854, Zacharias Frankel devotes his inaugural lecture as the president of the Breslau Seminary to the topic of Palestinian and Alexandrian exegesis¹⁹. In his opinion, they differ in every important aspect. While Palestinian exegesis is based on direct familiarity with Scripture, Alexandrian exegesis refers to the LXX, itself a product of interpretation. While Palestinian exegesis is nourished by faith and aims at applying Biblical law to daily life, Alexandrian exegesis is oriented towards philosophy which is artificially attached to Scripture. Finally, Palestinian exegesis rejected Hellenism, whereas Alexandrian exegesis was highly receptive to and – in Frankel’s words – “slavishly dependent” on it (ibid, 29). This list of contrasts establishes Palestinian exegesis as the primary and more authentic form of Jewish Bible interpretation. Alexandrian hermeneutics, by contrast, emerges as derivative or un-Jewish.

Frankel’s list of contrasts between Palestinian and Alexandrian exegesis significantly parallels his description of moderate and radical reform in the 19th century²⁰. In his inaugural article of the *Zeitschrift für religiöse Interessen des Judentums*²¹ he outlines the path of moderate reform, which should embrace *Wissenschaft* in the service of faith. The radical reformers, on the other hand, are criticized for their cold rationalism, which lacks religious devotion and halachic commitment²². Parallel to the Ancient Hellenists, they have in Frankel’s eyes departed so much from traditional Judaism that they hardly deserve to be called Jewish. Indeed, Frankel judges the threat of general culture to Judaism to be so severe that in

¹⁹ Zacharias Frankel, Über palestinische und alexandrinische Schriftforschung, Programm zur Eröffnung des jüdisch-theologischen Seminars zu Breslau, Jahresbericht 1 (1854) 1–42.

²⁰ See also Michael A. Meyer, Jewish Scholarship 185–86.

²¹ Zacharias Frankel, Über die Reformen im Judenthume, in: Zeitschrift für religiöse Interessen des Judentums 1 (1844) 3–27 (from now on abbreviated as: Reformen).

²² Note also Frankel’s more vehement formulations in later years: Zacharias Frankel, Alte und Neue Zeit, in: MGWJ 13 (1864) 3–22.

the *Monatsschrift* of 1872 he compares his own time to the Maccabean period²³. Interpreting the revolt primarily as a clash between Judaism and Hellenism²⁴, Frankel thus presents these two principles in permanent existential conflict.

Frankel's own programme acknowledges the revelation of Biblical law and the authority of its traditional interpretation. Opposing Reform, he thus acknowledges Scripture as *noli me tangere*, while applying historical criticism to all but the early strata of the Oral Law²⁵. The model for Frankel's "thinking party of faith" is Ancient Palestinian scholarship, which – in his words – "did not leave the boundaries of theology and remained untouched by foreign influences" (ibid, 23)²⁶. Alexandrian learning, on the other hand, poses the same challenge as the contemporary use of critical scholarship by the Reform Movement. Frankel responds to this challenge by subordinating criticism to faith and Alexandrian Judaism to Palestine. He is consequently able to appreciate Alexandrian Judaism to the extent that it can be shown to depend on Palestine and not to differ from it theologically.

Frankel devotes his first major publication in 1841 to the LXX²⁷. It is his explicit purpose to examine the development of Palestinian Halacha, for which few other sources of such early date are extant. He assumes that the Halachic tradition had emerged monolithically in pre-Maccabean Palestine and subsequently influenced the peripheries of Jewish learning, including Alexandria (ibid, XIII)²⁸. Frankel thus appreciates the LXX as a form of disseminating Palestinian Judaism and particularly points to features, which he identifies as Palestinian in origin and character. The nature and function of the LXX, he suggests, originally paralleled those of Targum Onkelos. Both translations responded to the religious, and not the aesthetic needs of the people. Both originally provided textual explanations,

²³ Zacharias Frankel, Die Söhne des Tobias, die Hellenisten und der Spruchdichter Sirach, in: MGWJ 21 (1872) 49–64, 97–122. Note that MGWJ 13 (1864) 106–118 contains an anonymous article on the Maccabean revolt, which identifies the Ancient Hellenisers with modern sympathisers of the Emancipation.

²⁴ This interpretation does not seem to reflect the ideology of the historical heroes themselves, see also: Arnoldo Momigliano, Alien Wisdom. The Limits of Hellenization (Cambridge 1975) 74–96; Martin Goodman, op. cit.; Jonathan Goldstein, Jewish Acceptance and Rejection of Hellenism, in: E.P. Sanders et al. (eds.), Jewish and Christian Self-Definition (Philadelphia 1981) 2.64–87; M. Himmelfarb, Judaism and Hellenism in II Maccabees, in: Poetics Today 19 (1998) 19–40.

²⁵ See also: Louis Ginzberg, Students, Scholars and Saints (Philadelphia 1928) 195–216; Michael M. Meyer, Jewish Religious Reform and Wissenschaft des Judentums – the Positions of Zunz, Geiger and Finkel, in: LBI Yearbook 16 (1971) 19–41, especially 33–36; Ismar Schorsch, Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism, in: idem, From Text to Context. The Turn to History in Modern Judaism (Brandeis 1994) 255–65 (originally published in 1981).

²⁶ Note the positive reception of Frankel's programme among his students: Marcus Brann, Geschichte des Jüdisch-Theologischen Seminars in Breslau (Breslau 1905) 28–40.

²⁷ Zacharias Frankel, Vorstudien zur Septuaginta (Leipzig 1841).

²⁸ See also his later discussion of this point: Zacharias Frankel, Zur Frage über das Verhältnis des alexandrinischen und palästinischen Judenthums, namentlich in exegetischer Hinsicht, in: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 4 (1850) 102–109; idem, Alexandrinische Messias Hoffnungen, in: MGWJ 8 (1859) especially 247–48.

which were meant as supplements and not as substitutes of Scripture (ibid, 5–13). It was, according to Frankel, only the later alienation of Egyptian Jews from Palestine, culminating in Philo's total ignorance of Hebrew, which changed the character of the LXX and made a continuous authoritative translation necessary. In a similar vein, Frankel interprets the LXX's deviations from the Hebrew text as a form of Midrash based on Palestinian traditions. His foremost examples are the euphemistic replacements of Biblical anthropomorphisms. He takes them to be inspired by Onkelos and thus undoubtedly Palestinian in character. The possibility of Greek influence, as might be suggested by Aristobulus, is not considered.

Frankel expands this line of investigation in his subsequent book *Über den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik* (Leipzig 1851). This study extends beyond the LXX and includes such documents as the Greek translation of Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon. Frankel now includes in the wider tradition of mainstream Judaism works with weaker links to Palestine. Philo, however, indicates the limits of Frankel's appropriation. While his views of Philo have become more positive over time, they remain ambivalent and ultimately critical. Lowering his demands of Hebrew as an sign for Jewish authenticity, Frankel now differentiates between Philo's knowledge of Hebrew and his possible familiarity with Palestinian traditions. He suggests that Philo sometimes relied on Palestinian Aggada, which he then sought to legitimize by wrong etymologies²⁹. It is implied that Philo could be regarded as authentically Jewish although he knew no Hebrew. Significantly, Frankel's greater leniency regarding the linguistic boundaries of authentic Judaism anticipates a change in his own views on contemporary affairs. While he withdraws from the Frankfurt Rabbinical Conference in protest against the reformers' demand for a vernacular liturgy, he later concedes that Hebrew could be abandoned if the people no longer regard it as a meaningful vehicle of the sacred³⁰.

Philo's mystical allegorization of Scripture, however, remains a method of exegesis which Frankel continues to regard as thoroughly un-Jewish. While acknowledging the Midrashic appearance of Philo's hermeneutics, Frankel criticizes it severely for its unreliable quotations from Scripture and its assimilation of foreign philosophy (ibid, 190–94). Frankel's ambivalence about Philo is moreover visible in his subsequent article in the *Monatsschrift* dealing with Philo's ethics. These are negatively compared to the Talmud, because they are said to lack a Scriptural basis. Philo's moral philosophy is thus described as self-centered, aiming at mystical perfection of the individual rather than at practical beneficence to society³¹. Apart from some traditional aspects found especially in his historical writings, Philo can therefore not be integrated into Frankel's concept of mainstream Palestinian Judaism. For him, Philo is not sufficiently rabbinic and too mystical to be

²⁹ See for example Frankel's discussion of Philo's Midrash on Chanoth, ibid, 44–45.

³⁰ *Zacharias Frankel*, Über das Wesentliche der Function und Qualification des Rabbiners, in: *The Central Archives for the Jewish People* (Jerusalem) 17–991.

³¹ *Zacharias Frankel*, Zur Ethik des Jüdisch-Alexandrinischen Philosophen Philo, in: *MGWJ* 16 (1872) 241–252, 281–297.

truly Jewish. Ironically, Frankel's conservative position meets Christian scholarship which also tended to regard Philo as un-Jewish in important respects.

Frankel's early protegee, Heinrich Graetz, develops an independent approach to Alexandrian Judaism. His two major discussions in *Construction der jüdischen Geschichte* (1846)³² and in *Geschichte der Juden* (1856) indicate a significant change of his views. While his early essay relies on the ideas of the Enlightenment in order to overcome the Hegelian opposition between Hellenism and Judaism, his later discussion is far more sensitive to Christian concerns and agendas. His views thus change in the opposite direction of Frankel, whose position has become more liberal over time.

Graetz' early essay *Construction der jüdischen Geschichte* represents a clear departure from Frankel's position. Alexandrian Judaism is here no longer evaluated by its dependence on Palestine. Graetz rather examines it from a broader cultural perspective, relying both on the values of the Enlightenment and Hegelian idealism. In his eyes, Jewish history can be understood as a welcome dialectics between Jewish and foreign ideas. The most important confrontation of this kind in early Judaism is the "strife of life and death" between Judaism and Hellenism. Despite such rhetorics of a binary opposition Graetz creates a distinctly liberal framework for his discussion of Alexandrian Judaism. Parallel to his predecessor Jost, he initially points to the emancipation of the Jewish community in Egypt, which lead to their acculturation. While Jost however favoured acculturation unreservedly, Graetz differentiates between the high and low culture of Hellenism. He supports Jewish exposure to Greek learning, but criticizes the imitation of their "corrupt" life style (ibid, 128–29).

In this context Graetz gives particular attention to the emergence of Ancient Jewish scholarship, which he interprets with Hegel as the beginning of an ever increasing self-awareness (ibid, 364–73). His attitude towards Alexandrian learning is both appreciative and ambivalent. Graetz' own traditional values and Frankel's work encourage him to highlight Talmudic learning as the quintessence of Judaism, which is said to assert Jewish identity against foreign influence and to precede other forms of Jewish scholarship. At the same time, however, Graetz cherishes a high esteem for Alexandrian learning. He stresses that it attempted for the first time to conceptualize the Jewish idea in philosophical terms. While Graetz acknowledges that Alexandrian literature is partly inspired by Greek ideas, he argues for its distinct Jewishness and loyalty to Halacha. He thus shows that Philo's exposure to Platonism dialectically enhanced his Jewish self-awareness and produced a theology similar to that of the rabbis³³. He moreover insists that in the case of Philo allegorization of Scripture did not imply the abrogation of its literal and historical sense. The literal meaning was instead appreciated as much as the allegorical.

³² Heinrich Graetz, *Construction der jüdischen Geschichte*, in: *Zeitschrift für die Religiösen Interessen des Judenthums* 1 (1846) 81–97, 121–132, 361–81, 413–21.

³³ A similar approach is taken by Nachman Krochmal in his *Moreh Nebukhei Ha-zman* (ed. by Simon Rawidowicz) (chapter twelve).

Graetz' early position does not merely represent a broadening of Frankel's approach, now including also Philo among the authentic Jews of Antiquity. Stressing that Alexandrian scholarship has conceptualized the Jewish idea for the first time in philosophical terms, he in fact suggests its centrality for all of Jewish history. Indeed, assuming with the Enlightenment that general culture is identical with universal rationalism, Graetz has overcome the posited opposition between Hellenism and Judaism. This enables him to hesitantly suggest Alexandrian Judaism as an inner Jewish paradigm for enlightened diaspora life.

A decade later, in his monumental *Geschichte der Juden*, Graetz' view on Alexandrian Judaism has changed³⁴. Studying the development of this literature from the LXX onwards, he no longer appreciates it in light of rabbinic literature but nascent Christianity. This perspective creates considerable ambivalence especially with regard to Philo and shifts his interest to earlier Alexandrian thinkers. Graetz' discussion corresponds now more to Christian scholarship. He interprets all forms of Alexandrian Judaism in terms of prophecy and frequently speaks about their "apostolic mission". It is again his commitment to the Enlightenment idea of acculturation, which nevertheless steers his new ambivalence about Alexandrian Judaism into a positive direction.

Graetz's view of Alexandrian Judaism is now oriented towards nascent Christianity. This primarily means that his focus has shifted from Philo, now identified as an inadvertent founder of Christianity, to the earlier stages of Alexandrian Judaism which are safely removed from Jesus. Especially Aristobulus, living around 200 BCE, is now praised as ushering in an enlightened culture similar to that of Medieval Spain³⁵. Indeed, Aristobulus' thought is – despite its highly fragmentary nature – presented as a paradigmatic reconciliation of religion and philosophy. Graetz particularly appreciates the Ancient identification of Aristobulus as an Aristotelian, because he takes Aristotle's rationalism to be inherently congenial to Judaism, while Plato's mystical poetry is associated with Christianity (ibid, 40).

Graetz moreover reinterprets Alexandrian Judaism in light of the apostolic role it is said to have played among the nations. This function is explicitly identified as a continuation of "the work of the great prophets"³⁶. Graetz's appreciation of prophecy as universal mission reflects liberal interpretations of Judaism and its relationship to the nations. In contrast to Geiger, however, Graetz is concerned about the particular Jewishness of this mission. Regarding Ancient Alexandria, he distinguishes three stages and types of missionary activity. The LXX is said to have been Judaism's first "apostle", who familiarized the nations with the historical and religious facts. Hellenistic apologetic literature, such as the Sibylline oracles, is

³⁴ History vol. 3 (Leipzig 1856) 30–54, 298–342. I shall only refer to the first edition, for which Graetz himself was responsible. Brann's later revised edition changes the tone of Graetz's writings, stressing piety and anti-semitism.

³⁵ Graetz later doubts the reliability of the Ancient sources and thus Aristobulus' Jewishness, see: *Heinrich Graetz*, *Der angebliche jüdische Peripatetiker Aristobulus und seine Schriften*, in: MGWJ 27 (1878) 49–60.

³⁶ History vol. 3, 331.

described as the second apostle who actively fought idolatry by seeking to convert its adherents to monotheism. The third stage is characterized by diversity: while most Jews became too assimilated to spread Judaism, Philo continued the apostolic task, remained committed to the Halacha and subordinated philosophy to religion.

While Philo is still appreciated against the background of his Jewish contemporaries, he is portrayed now with a new degree of ambivalence as a transitional figure between Judaism and Christianity. On the one hand, Graetz continues to appreciate Philo's defense of the law. He even describes Philo in terms which anticipate his somewhat Romantic description of the great Biblical prophets: both arose in generations of Jewish self-alienation and fought as individuals for the revival of authentic Judaism³⁷. Graetz is, however, significantly sceptical about Philo's allegorization of Scripture and criticizes his reconciliation of Judaism and Hellenism. Stressing the inherent conflict between the latter two, Philo's synthesis is now presented as a cosmetic operation, which does not penetrate beyond the surface and does not accomplish a true reconciliation. This rather harsh criticism of Philo derives from Graetz's keen awareness of his role in early Christianity. As he put it, Philo inadvertently became "the father of a mystical world view" (ibid, 331). Graetz' disappointment with Philo increases over time. In the second edition of his *History*, he explicitly associates Philo with Kabbalah, which is in his opinion – parallel to the modern Reform movement – another way of reintroducing Christianity into Judaism³⁸.

Beneath the surface Graetz' discussion of Alexandrian Judaism clearly deals with modern Jewish identity. For him, as for his predecessors, Alexandria symbolizes diaspora culture and serves as a paradigm for acculturation in contemporary Germany. He explicitly draws the parallel in his discussion of the Reform movements. He initially asserts here that German Jews were, thanks to Mendelssohn, destined to play the same role as Alexandrian and Spanish Jews before, namely to reconcile Judaism with general culture³⁹. Graetz welcomes such a reconciliation on the condition that it preserves the special nature of Judaism and avoids imitation of Christian sentimentality. Indeed, the rejuvenation of Judaism through general culture must, Graetz insists, enhance the appreciation of Judaism's historical role, liberating it from the Kabbalistic and Hassidic aberrations.

In this context Graetz appreciates Mendelssohn as the initiator of a felicitous acculturation, while harshly condemning the reform circles around Israel Jacobson⁴⁰. His true heroes, however, are more the conservative Isaak Bernays and

³⁷ Regarding Graetz' view of Biblical prophets, see especially: *History* vol. 1 (Leipzig 1874) 21–23, 151–53, ibid, vol. 2, 27–29, 118–20, 292–95.

³⁸ *History* vol. 3, (21863) 308.

³⁹ *Heinrich Graetz*, *History*, vol. 10 (Leipzig 1870) 410.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 1–40, 408–418. Regarding the charge that the reformers christianize Judaism, see also Graetz' letter of 7. 2. 1869 to R. Kirchheim, in: *Heinrich Graetz*, *Tagebuch und Briefe*, edited and annotated by R. Michael (Tübingen 1977) 297: "Gegen die Verchristlichung des Judenthums, die in der Cultusreform liegt, werde ich bis zum letzten Hauch und mit allen Waffen, die mir zu Gebote stehen, kämpfen."

Isaac Noa Mannheimer, who both favoured moderate reform and personified rabbinic Judaism in somewhat enlightened garb (*ibid*, 427–37). Graetz even claims that Bernays had a deeper, “prophetic” understanding of Judaism than Mendelssohn, because he recognized more clearly its historical function and apostolic role among the nations (*ibid*, 428, 431). It is Salomon L. Steinheim who is in this context explicitly called “German Philo” (*ibid*, 477). Graetz meant this both as a compliment and criticism. He is on the one hand impressed by what he identifies as Steinheim’s clear grasp of Judaism’s essence, namely its historical role vis-a-vis the nations. Steinheim is thus appreciated for using Kantian ideas in order to establish Judaism’s superiority over Christianity, for his appreciation of rabbinic Judaism and his concern about alienated contemporary Jews. At the same time, however, Graetz criticizes Steinheim’s neglect of halachic observance and ignorance of Hebrew (*ibid*, 481). He significantly suggests that these shortcomings brought the Jewish theologian closer to Christianity. As he puts it, it was no surprise that although Steinheim himself did not convert he was buried by his wife in a Christian cemetery. This comment indicates that Graetz considers such modern features as ignorance of Hebrew and insufficient halachic commitment as a betrayal of Judaism to Christianity. In the same way as Philo had in Antiquity become the forefather of Christianity, so does Modern Reform prepare the way for total assimilation into Christian Europe.

While Frankel’s views of Alexandrian Judaism have increasingly become positive, those of Graetz became more critical and ambivalent over time. It was the model of main-stream pious Judaism which allowed Frankel to overcome to some extent the opposition between Judaism and Hellenism. He could consequently integrate more and more Jewish Hellenistic thinkers into the framework of authentic Judaism and into the list of academic subjects deserving Jewish research. Graetz, by contrast, increasingly exchanged the integrative model of the Enlightenment by oppositional parameters of Christian scholarship. Although he was himself much influenced by Christian accents and perspectives, he attempted to avoid their theological conclusions by focussing on the early stages of Alexandrian Judaism. Philo, it was implied, could happily be left to the study of those embracing the “mystical world view” of which he had become the founding father.

A third, more popular perspective illuminates the process by which Alexandrian Judaism is integrated into modern Jewish scholarship. Maurice Wolff, a liberal rabbi officiating in Sweden after completing his doctoral studies at the universities of Berlin and Leipzig, discovers Philo in the late 1840s as a model for modern Jewish spirituality. Faithful to the ideals of the Enlightenment, Wolff appreciates Philo most enthusiastically among the Jewish scholars of the second generation. In contrast to the early Jost, however, he is keenly aware of Christian scholarship on the subject and explicitly challenges it. It is his explicit aim to extricate Philo from such perspectives and to render him in this way relevant to the broader Jewish public. Wolff’s conception of Philo develops in three stages.

In 1848 Wolff publishes a pioneering article on Philo in the last volume of *Sulamith*⁴¹. His approach is characterized by the interest he shares with the Enlightenment in acculturation and reconciliation of Judaism and general culture. He thus stresses that when Philo's pristine thoughts are separated from his often fanciful style, his humanism and rationalism become apparent. Wolff especially praises Philo's appreciation of the virtues and their contribution to man's spiritual improvement and imitation of God. These are seen as central Jewish values advocated also in rabbinic literature.

A year later, in 1849, Wolff publishes a book length study on Philo's philosophy⁴². The main purpose of this popular research is to defend Philo from a Jewish point of view against his treatment in Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Within his overall dialectics of human culture Hegel had interpreted Philo's notion of God as Jewish, which meant for him wholly transcendent and thus inferior to Christianity. Wolff criticizes this interpretation of Philo, rightly insisting that his concept of God is not completely transcendent, but instead contains two features of immanence, namely the creation of the world and the Divine Logos⁴³. Hegel had moreover presented Philo against the background of Gnosticism, stressing that preexistent matter is indeed a positive principle for Philo. Wolff correctly replies that matter is for Philo a neutral entity – a feature which precisely distinguishes him from Gnostic dualism⁴⁴. Wolff overall insists that contrary to Hegel's claims Philo has already achieved – prior to Christianity – a felicitous synthesis of the competing Greek and Oriental principles. While thus accepting the notion of a binary opposition between Hellenism and Judaism, he has denied Christianity's claim to their reconciliation and instead accredited it to Philo.

In 1854 Wolff recommends Philo from the platform of the Jewish *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*⁴⁵. He now praises him to the general public as a preacher of prophetic values. Parallel to the Biblical prophets Philo is said to have preferred devotion of the heart to cult sacrifices, stressing both religious experience and Jewish ethics. Wolff describes him as being totally immersed in the Divine Being and aiming at "höchste Gottesbegeisterung". This enables man to realize the Divine image within himself and to achieve true morality⁴⁶. "It is high time", Wolff concludes, "that our spiritual life be improved so that we gain that deep inner spirituality which among Israel's great and wise teachers also Philo recommended so heartily."⁴⁷ These Romantically enriched interpretations of Philo are based on

⁴¹ Maurice Wolff, *Sulamith* 9/1848 219–36. The first two pages as well as the title are missing from the microfilm copy available at the National Library in Jerusalem.

⁴² Maurice Wolff, *Die Philonische Philosophie in ihren Hauptmomenten* (Leipzig 1849) (from now on abbreviated as: *Philosophie*).

⁴³ *Ibid*, 16–17, 26–27.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 23–24.

⁴⁵ Maurice Wolff, *Philonische Ideen über Gottesverehrung*, in: *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 18/1854, 358–61 (from now on abbreviated as: *Philonische Ideen*).

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 358–60.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 359 "... Es ist hohe Zeit, dass es mit unserem religiösen Leben besser werde und wir

the ideas of the Enlightenment and aim at presenting Philo as an ancestor of Jewish spirituality. Although Wolff stresses the homogeneity in this respect of Ancient Judaism and refrains from contrasting Philo to Pharisaism, his approach resembles in important respects that of Jost. On the margins of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* both men attempted to reactivate the form of acculturation achieved by Alexandrian Judaism in general and by Philo in particular.

The Scholarship on Alexandrian Judaism from 1865 onwards: institutionalization and proliferation

From 1865 onwards, two centrist institutions begin to promote the study of Alexandrian Judaism: the *Institut zur Förderung der israelitischen Literatur*, headed by Ludwig Philppson et al., and the Breslau Seminary⁴⁸. The *Institut zur Förderung der israelitischen Literatur*, which aims at a general educated public, publishes in 1865 and 1870 a translation of Philo's works⁴⁹. The editors explain their endeavour as a response to the recent recognition of Jewish Hellenistic works as an independent branch of Jewish literature. They moreover stress the relevance of this literature for modern Judaism. In their opinion, Jewish Hellenism truly integrated the Jewish and the Greek spirit – a process, in which both cultures were transformed and influenced each other. This kind of synthesis was later repeated in Medieval Spain and – in the editors' words – “gains a strong revival in recent times”⁵⁰. The editors thus recommend Philo's works to the general Jewish public in the hope that they might find here stimulating ideas for their own identity. Indeed, Philo is presented as a direct predecessor of the moderate liberal path advocated by the editors. He is especially praised as an alternative to two negative extremes, namely the “exclusive reverence of the letter”, on the one hand, and wide-spread “frivolity” on the other⁵¹.

The more conservative Rabbinical Seminary at Breslau institutionalizes the study of Jewish Hellenism by gradually integrating it into the syllabus and producing two generations of leading scholars in the field. Nearly the whole first decade of the Seminary is marked by a complete separation of Jewish and Classical

zu der tiefen Innerlichkeit kommen, die unter den grossen, weisen Lehrern Israels auch Philo ans Herz legt.”

⁴⁸ At the *Hochschule für Jüdische Wissenschaften* in Berlin, on the other hand, Jewish Hellenism does not seem to have drawn much attention. See e.g. *Haim Steinthal*, *Über Juden und Judentum. Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Berlin 1925, 3rd ed.).

⁴⁹ *Institut zur Förderung der israelitischen Literatur* (ed.), *Das Leben Mosis von Philo von Alexandria* (from now on abbreviated as: *Moses*), in: *Bibliothek der griechischen und römischen Schriftsteller über Judentum und Juden in neuen Übertragungen und Sammlungen*, vol. 1 (Leipzig 1865); *idem*, *Philo des Alexandriners gesammelte Schriften*, *ibid*, vol. 3 (Leipzig 1870).

⁵⁰ *Moses*, *ibid*, Vorwort.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 15–16.

studies. Jacob Bernays and Manuel Joel, followed later by Jacob Freudenthal, teach only general Greek and Latin literature and history⁵². In 1863 Joel delivers for the first time a course on *Jewish Philosophy of Religion from Philo to Maimonides*. In 1871 the Seminary's advertisement of the *Lehmann'scher Prämienspreis* requires for the first time an essay on Philo. Significantly, nobody applies that year for the prize, which so far focused on rabbinic subjects. During the 1870s and 80s, however, the study of Hellenistic Judaism flourishes at the Seminary. From 1873 onwards it is principally taught by Freudenthal, who both delivers general survey courses and teaches more specialized subjects for advanced students.

Inspired by Frankel, the graduates and teachers of the Breslau Seminary produce most of the research on Jewish Hellenism during the 1870s and 80s. The Seminary's *Jahresberichte* become a central organ for the new discipline. These studies of Alexandrian Judaism can be clearly divided into two groups: those that remain loyal to Frankel's methodological and ideological approach and those that depart from it. Benjamin Ritter was the most important of Frankel's direct disciples continuing his work. Accepting his teacher's hypothesis of Palestinian superiority over Alexandria, Ritter takes a more positive approach to Philo and argues for his knowledge of Hebrew. Indeed, he integrates him into the system of Palestinian Halacha. His book *Philo und die Halacha* aims at showing Philo's agreements with the Palestinian schools⁵³. Even more loyal to Frankel's position are Schmiedl, who criticizes Philo's allegory in the *Monatsschrift* of 1865⁵⁴, and Rippner who describes Philo's theory of the Logos as confused and un-Jewish⁵⁵.

Bernays and Freudenthal, on the other hand, both rather alienated from tradition and not ordained as rabbis, introduce a new perspective to the study of Alexandrian Judaism. Bernays remains unaffected by both Christian and Orthodox agendas to the extent that he does not even justify the authentic Jewishness of Alexandrian Judaism. He argues in his few essays on Jewish rather than purely classical subjects for the great fluidity of the boundaries between Judaism and Hellenism⁵⁶. He shows that the author of a work hitherto attributed to Philo is

⁵² See: Jahresbericht des Jüdisch-Theologischen Seminars Fraenkelscher Stiftung (1856–68), from now on abbreviated as: Breslau Jahresbericht.

⁵³ Bernhard Ritter, *Philo und die Halacha*. Eine vergleichende Studie unter steter Berücksichtigung des Josephus (Leipzig 1879).

⁵⁴ A. Schmiedl, Zur Geschichte der allegorischen Schriftauslegung, in: MGWJ 14 (1865) 296–306, 335–46.

⁵⁵ Benjamin Rippner, Über die Ursprünge des Philonischen Logos, in: MGWJ 20 (1872) 289–305. Note that Rippner saw himself as a follower of Mendelssohn, whom he places in the conservative camp, *idem*, Moses Mendelssohn. Ein Vortrag (Leipzig 1879).

⁵⁶ Note that also Manuel Joel investigates Philo. He integrates him into his history of philosophy, where he emphasizes his reconciliation of the Bible with Stoic thought, as well as Philo's subsequent influence on the Church Fathers. See: *Manual Joel*, Über einige geschichtliche Beziehungen des Philonischen Systems, in: MGWJ 12 (1863) 19–31; *idem*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie, vol. I (Breslau 1876) 53–67; *idem*, Blicke in die Religionsgeschichte, vol. I (Breslau 1880) 143–44.

actually a non-Jew, while the phocylides so far regarded as a non-Jew is indeed Jewish⁵⁷. He thus assumes the deep respect for Judaism on the part of a non-Jew. The Jew, on the other hand, is identified as Jewish only by virtue of his references to some Biblical laws and despite the fact that he lacks a sense of Jewish distinction from other nations. For Bernays, being Jewish – both in Antiquity and modernity – does not necessarily imply segregation or opposition to the Gentile environment.

Continuing Bernays' approach, Freudenthal focuses his research more specifically on pre-philonic Alexandrian Judaism. He readdresses the issue of an assumed opposition between Judaism and Hellenism, challenging Frankel's earlier approach both by stressing their harmonious coexistence and the dominant position of Alexandria. In 1869 Freudenthal publishes a detailed study of IV Maccabees, which points to the successful amalgamation of Judaism and Hellenism⁵⁸. This work of the diaspora is said to have reconciled the tensions between the two cultures, which had violently clashed in Palestine. Freudenthal thus concludes that the author is a proud believer, while cherishing at the same time a Greek sense of aesthetics and using Hellenistic rhetorics (ibid, 115).

A few years later Freudenthal's *Hellenistische Studien* explicitly challenge Frankel's method and view of Hellenistic Judaism as inauthentic. In his study of Eupolemus and Artapanus he shows how the authors' assimilation of foreign traditions was fully compatible with their Jewish identity and did not at all diminish their Jewish national pride⁵⁹. Freudenthal moreover reopens the question of Alexandrian exegesis in relation to Palestine⁶⁰. One has to take into account, he insists, that Jewish Egyptian literature precedes the written Palestinian sources. Hellenistic exegetes have furthermore drawn on Palestinian and Greek sources, both of which they independently develop further. Freudenthal speaks in this context about "Hellenistic Midrash" and demands its appreciation as an independent creation. He even raises the possibility that Hellenistic Midrash from Egypt influenced rabbinic literature. Such influence is all the more plausible in his opinion because of the high degree of Hellenization throughout Palestine. While he stresses that generalizations must be avoided, each case demanding an individual examination, he suggests that the allegorization of Scripture in Palestine is an import from Egypt (ibid, 74). The motif of the Androgynous is furthermore shown to have been a Platonic tradition which was adapted by Philo to the Biblical story of Adam's creation and then transmitted to Palestine. In this way, Freudenthal also provides an alternative approach to the work of Michael Sachs and Julius

⁵⁷ *Jacob Bernays*, Über die unter Philo's Werken stehende Schrift über die Unzerstörbarkeit des Weltalls (Abhandlungen der Königl. Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin vom Jahre 1882, Berlin 1883); *idem*, Über das Phokylideische Gedicht. Ein Beitrag zur hellenistischen Literatur (Breslau Jahresbericht 1856).

⁵⁸ *Jacob Freudenthal*, Die Flavius Josephus beigelegte Schrift über die Herrschaft der Vernunft (IV Makkabäerbuch) (Breslau Jahresbericht 1869).

⁵⁹ *Idem*, Hellenistische Studien, Heft II (Breslau Jahresbericht 1875) 105–218.

⁶⁰ *Idem*, Hellenistische Studien, Heft I (Breslau Jahresbericht 1874) 66–68.

Fürst, who study Greek influence on rabbinic sources without taking Jewish Hellenism into account⁶¹.

Towards the end of the century, when all extant works of Philo begin to be translated and published in a critical edition by Leopold Cohn and Paul Wendland⁶², studies on this most challenging representative of Jewish Hellenism proliferate. Most of them are produced by academically trained rabbis, who synthesize and elaborate the themes which have guided Jewish scholarship thus far. In 1884, S. Weisse, a rabbi of centre-conservative views, publishes a book which compares Philo to Maimonides⁶³. His perspective is informed by the fact that – in his words – both “made a systematic attempt to reconcile positive faith with philosophy”. He stresses that both relied on allegorical exegesis, but suggests that in the case of Philo this sometimes lead to inadvertent abandonment of “positive Judaism”. In 1891 Max Freudenthal publishes a study of Philo’s epistemology, in which he describes him as an eclectic of mystical tendencies. He especially appreciates him as a convinced humanist, who aimed at the “Verschmelzung zweier eigenartiger Bildungsströme”⁶⁴. A year later appears rabbi Dr. Meyer Dienstfertig’s book on prophecy in the first century of the common Era, which identifies Philo as the “father of mysticism”⁶⁵. In 1895, Salomon Tiktin publishes his doctoral thesis on Philo’s theory of the virtues, which shows in detail how Philo was a believing Jew as well as a follower of Greek philosophy⁶⁶. In 1900 Jakob Horovitz, the Polish born centre orthodox rabbi of Frankfurt, publishes a book on the Platonic influences on Philo’s theory of creation⁶⁷. Faithful to Frankel’s approach, he argues for the exclusively Hellenic character of Philo’s thought and does not even address the issue of his place within Judaism. Finally, at the beginning of the 20th century, Leopold Treitel begins to publish a series of extended essays on Philo, showing that his appeal to the nations did not imply an abrogation of the law, but rather to the contrary its wider dissemination and thus affirmation⁶⁸.

⁶¹ *Michael Sachs*, *Beiträge zur Sprach- und Altertumsforschung* (Berlin 1852); *Julius Fürst*, *Glossarium Graeco-Hebraeum oder der griechische Wörterschatz der jüdischen Midraschwerke* (Strassburg 1890); *idem*, *Zur Erklärung griechischer Lehnwörter im Talmud und Midrasch*, in: *MGWJ* 38 (1894) 305–11.

⁶² Leopold Cohn und Paul Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini Opera quae supersunt* (Reimer 1896–1915).

⁶³ S. Weisse, *Philo von Alexandrien und Moses Maimonides* (Dessau 1884).

⁶⁴ *Max Freudenthal*, *Die Erkenntnislehre Philos von Alexandria* (Berlin 1891) 1. Freudenthal admits that Philo was less sophisticated on purely theoretical issues, which he tended to link to psychology and ethics.

⁶⁵ *Meyer Dienstfertig*, *Die Prophetologie in der Religionsphilosophie des ersten nachchristlichen Jahrhunderts* (Breslau 1882).

⁶⁶ *Salomon Tiktin*, *Die Lehre von den Tugenden und Pflichten bei Philon von Alexandrien* (Inaugural Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde, Breslau 1895).

⁶⁷ *Jakob Horovitz*, *Untersuchungen über Philons und Platons Lehre von der Weltschöpfung* (Marburg 1900).

⁶⁸ *Leopold Treitel*, *Der Nomos, insbesondere Sabbat und Feste in philonischer Bedeutung*, in: *MGWJ* 47 (1903) 214–31, 399–417, 490–514; *idem*, *Die religiöse und kulturegesehichtliche Stellung Philos*, *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 3 (1904) 380–401.

The study of Philo makes an entrée also into Viennese circles. Moritz Friedländer (1844–1919), a Hungarian born educator and scholar who abandoned a rabbinic career because of his liberalism, publishes several volumes on Judaism during the Second Temple. He gives special emphasis to the role of Jewish Hellenism in the emergence of Christianity⁶⁹, beginning his work in 1880 with a translation and annotation of a Philonic treatise⁷⁰. Combining the perspective of Christian and Jewish liberal scholarship, Friedländer writes in order to draw Jewish attention to a neglected author, whose thoughts on Judaism remain in his opinion unparalleled in their beauty, nobility and depth (ibid, II). He especially praises Philo for subordinating the law to the spirit and pointing to Judaism's universal, prophetic and humanistic principles. In contrast to his Palestinian brethren, Friedländer suggests, Philo was thus able to liberate himself from national narrow-mindedness and to reach a higher level of spirituality, which he transmitted to the nations (ibid, VI-IX). Friedländer has clearly adopted here the Christian view of a spiritual progress from Palestinian to Alexandrian Judaism, whose universality and assumed abrogation of the law he admires. At the same time, however, he identifies Philo as unquestionably Jewish, presenting him to his contemporaries as a model for their own identity. He is able to do so, because he conceives of both pairs Hellenism and Judaism, and Christianity and enlightened Judaism as congenial systems with no inherent tension.

Even Adolf Jellinek, who cherishes no particular interest in Jewish Hellenism, supports Friedländer's views, while however rejecting his harsh criticism of Palestinian Judaism (ibid, 65–71). Jellinek emphasizes that whenever Judaism has been liberated from its national boundaries it revived prophetic universalism. This truth, proven already in Ancient Alexandria, expresses itself in Modernity, too. Indeed, Jellinek insists that since the time of Mendelssohn and Lessing "the genius of Philo hovers over Europe" (ibid, 71).

Summary and Conclusion

The history of Jewish scholarship on Alexandrian Judaism has revealed a complex picture which tells of acculturation and attempts to define Jewish identity in nineteenth century Germany. At the hidden centre of these academic discussions stands the issue of Judaism's relationship to both Christianity and modernization, which were in nineteenth century Europe intimately linked.

⁶⁹ See especially: *Moritz Friedländer*, *Das Judenthum in der vorchristlichen griechischen Welt. Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Christenthums* (Wien 1897); *idem*, *Der vorchristliche jüdische Gnosticismus* (Göttingen 1898); *idem*, *Die Religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judenthums im Zeitalter Jesu* (Wien 1905).

⁷⁰ *Moritz Friedländer*, *Über die Philanthropie des mosaischen Gesetzes. Von Philo. Übersetzt und erläutert* (Wien 1880).

Alexandrian Judaism receives increasingly more attention by Jewish scholars towards the end of the century even being addressed by orthodox rabbis. A positive interest in Jewish Alexandria is initially visible in I. M. Jost's writings, which combine a new historiographical approach with a firm commitment to the values of the Emancipation. His liberal orientation, as yet uninfluenced by Christian perspectives, is characterized by the absence of a conflict between Judaism and Hellenism. Indeed, Jost identifies Philo as an exemplary model for acculturation leading to a rational reformulation of Judaism's principles.

Wissenschaft des Judentums proper, however, is ushered in on the basis of the Christian oppositional model, which assigns Hellenistic Judaism an important transitional role in the dialectics of spiritual progress. This approach presented a considerable challenge, both stimulating interest in the subject but also arousing deep Jewish ambivalence about Jewish figures thus appropriated by Christian theology. This ambivalence and oppositional view of Judaism and Hellenism were overcome to varying degrees by applying either of two integrative models: Frankel's hierarchical model of Palestinian mainstream Judaism to which increasing numbers of Alexandrian Jews – except Philo – could be subordinated and the universal model of the Enlightenment. The latter had been partly used by Graetz, wholeheartedly embraced by Wolff and subsequently became the basis of much research by liberal Jews in the second half of the nineteenth century.

While Jewish scholarship on Alexandrian Judaism thus adopted Christian themes and concerns, it has created its own cultural subtext. Christian scholars needed to define more precisely the relationship between Judaism, Hellenism and Christianity so as to clarify their own identity in Modern Europe. They chose Hellenism as the root of their Christian heritage, while defining Judaism as the Other from which Christianity emerged and transcended. Jewish scholars also needed to define the relationship between Judaism, Hellenism and Christianity in order to clarify their own identity. Yet for them this meant to describe Judaism in relation to the majority culture. Thus Jewish scholars, too, associated Hellenism with general culture, often stressing its universal and rational aspects, but usually well aware of its Christian dimension. The integration of Judaism and Hellenism in Ancient Alexandria moreover became a paradigm for acculturation, modernization and pluralism within Judaism. These aspects were unique to the Jewish discussion and distinguished it rather clearly from Christian approaches.

In this context, it is not surprising that orthodox scholars took little interest in Alexandrian Judaism and did not have any formative impact on its study among Jews. Wishing to establish rabbinic culture in its orthodox interpretation as the only authentic form of Judaism, they were naturally not interested in either modernization or pluralism. Equally significant, however, is the lack of serious interest on the part of Abraham Geiger⁷¹. In some ways we might have expected him to

⁷¹ See Geiger's passing references to Alexandrian Judaism in the following places: *Abraham Geiger, Das Judentum und seine Geschichte* (Breslau 1940) 78–92; *idem, Berührungen der Bibel und des Judentums mit dem classischen Alterthume und dessen Ausläufern*, in: Jü-

embrace Jewish Alexandria as a model for his own Reform programme. He does not do so, it seems, because he takes the Bible – and not the Talmud – to be the authentic basis of Judaism in its historical development. Alexandrian Judaism therefore lacks importance as a significant alternative to rabbinic authority.

Finally, 20th century scholarship repeats the patterns of the 19th century, somewhat gravitating towards conservative positions. Countries with strong Jewish liberal traditions, such as America, have significantly produced much of the research on Alexandrian Judaism, while the subject has been almost entirely neglected in Israel⁷². This situation will only change as a result of profound cultural transformations.

dische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben 4 (1866) 51–67; *idem*, Die Geschichte der Zweiten Tempelperiode und deren Behandlung, *ibid*, 6 (1888) 247–79; *idem*, Entstehung des Christenthums, *ibid*, 11 (1875) 8–17; *idem*, Allgemeine Einleitung in die Wissenschaft des Judenthums, edited by *Ludwig Geiger* (Berlin 1875).

⁷² An exception to this rule is especially Yehoshua Guttman. A more characteristic transformation of a German-Jewish Philo scholar seems to be Isaac Heinemann, who upon arrival in Israel began to write in Hebrew about rabbinic Midrash.