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Yedidyah Ha-Alexandri and the Crisis of the Modern Jewish Age: Philo of Alexandria as an Exemplary Hasid in Nahman Krochmal's Thought

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Abstract: The present article sets out to answer the question of the extent to which Nahman Krochmal's reappraisal of Philo of Alexandria in the light of his Jewish faith reflects a deep spiritual crisis that was engulfing the Maskilic world: the encroaching expansion of modern Hasidism with its transformed understanding of traditional Judaism among Eastern European communities. To this end, a major component of Krochmal's Jewish historical thought as expressed in his masterful unfinished work *Guide of the Perplexed of the Modern Age* can be revealed. The examination employs two methods in order to uncover the intent behind Krochmal's fragmentary presentation of Philo: exploring his utilization of Dähne's *Geschichtliche Darstellung der jüdisch-alexandrinischen Religionsphilosophie* to demonstrate the congruence of Philo's thought with Tannaitic ethics and drawing on similar depictions of Philo found among his circles and pupils. The study claims that Krochmal's revival of Philo as a key Jewish thinker is politically mobilized for an ideological assault on the Hasidim, with whom the Maskilim had ongoing conflicts. Reconstructing his portrayal of Philo as a paragon of Second Temple Judaism, the paper argues that Krochmal projects his own spiritual crisis from the Maskilic settings of nineteenth-century Galicia onto the Jewish reality of first-century Alexandria, thus reproducing a valiant image of Philo as the embodiment of the Maskilic consciousness that was grappling with the ancient, overly theoretical Hasideans of his days.

Keywords: Nahman Krochmal; Philo of Alexandria; Hasidism; Eastern European Haskalah; rabbinic literature; Jewish ethics; Solomon J. L. Rapoport; Isaac Baer Levinsohn; Avrom Ber Gotlober; golden mean



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1. Introduction

When approaching Philo of Alexandria (c. 15 BCE–c. 50 CE) from the perspective of Jewish history, one is initially almost compelled to accept the silence with which rabbinic tradition passes over him.¹ This silence becomes all the more remarkable if one bears in mind the tremendous impact that Philo's allegorical exegesis of Scripture exerted on world history in general and on the formation of Christian theology in particular. The first prominent intellectual who is commonly mentioned in this context is the sixteenth-century Renaissance thinker Azariah de' Rossi (1511–1578), four consecutive chapters of whose *Light of the Eyes* wrestles with Philo's convoluted body of thought from the Jewish viewpoint.² However, in his final analysis, de' Rossi remains quite ambivalent towards Philo, primarily taking issue with the fact that he does not mention or acknowledge the rabbinic oral tradition (De' Rossi 2001, pp. 140–41). The first Jewish author who managed to transform the rabbi's apparent silence into a lively discourse through a profound and systematic engagement with Philo is none other than the Galician *Maskil* Nahman Krochmal (alias RaNaK; 1785–1840), one of the founders of modern Jewish historiography. Revealing a wide array of striking commonalities between Philo's patterns of thought and those found in Tannaitic and Amoraic works, Krochmal suggests that the Jewish Alexandrians were actually partaking in an active dialog and exchange of ideas with the rabbis and that the

boundaries between both factions were in fact much more blurred than they appear at first sight (Boyarín 2004, pp. 112–16; H. Wolfson 1962, vol. 1, p. 56). As the prominent historian of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891) notes, with unreserved appreciation, “Krochmal was the first to initiate the philosophical observation of history, specifically Jewish history, [providing] a clear overview of its convoluted paths”, thus demonstrating “how to exploit and utilize the rich seam of the Talmud for historical investigation”, from which “he drew the most fruitful findings for the elucidation of the inner processes of Jewish history”.³

The present analysis will focus on Krochmal’s seminal historiographical approach to Philo’s treatises found in what may be considered the most prominent and methodological treatment of his thought to be produced during the Jewish Enlightenment: *Ḥidot Minni Kedem* (“Dark Sayings of Ancient Times”), Chapter 12 of his monumental Hebrew opus *Moreh Nevokhei ha-Zeman* (“Guide of the Perplexed of the Modern Age”, henceforth *Guide*), a work which he began writing in the early 1830s, but never managed to complete.⁴ In the *Guide*, Krochmal provides a meticulous and comprehensive metaphysical account of Jewish history, drawing on the substantial achievements of modern scholarship (Klausner 1952, p. 195) and on a Hegelian conceptual framework.⁵ This innovative historiographical treatment of the Jewish religion was not confined to academic objectives; it was also committed to and deeply immersed in its spiritual dimensions. The *Guide*’s ultimate aim was to offer perceptive and historically oriented observations about the complex and swiftly changing Jewish reality of the nineteenth century with which many young Jewish Eastern European intellectuals were struggling to come to grips.⁶ Our particular examination also concerns this unique objective of the *Guide*, insofar as it sets out to answer the following question: To what extent does Krochmal’s reconstruction and rediscovery of Philo reflect his own concerns regarding the spiritual crises of his time, and to what extent does it merely express his intrinsic historiographical interest in the Second Temple era? The answer to this question will be fleshed out in three thematic steps. In the first part, I will discuss Philo’s overall position in Krochmal’s modern Jewish historiography. I will then turn to Krochmal’s fragmentary chapter on Philo and attempt to provide a reconstruction of his employment of Tannaitic sayings, primarily taking into account his extensive use of August F. Dähne’s *Geschichtliche Darstellung der jüdisch-alexandrinischen Religions-Philosophie*. This is a source he seems to have drawn on much more heavily than August Neander’s *Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten gnostischen Systeme*, a fact that is nevertheless insufficiently acknowledged by scholarship. Finally, I will draw attention to three famous Eastern European Maskilim who viewed Philo as an ancient Hasidean and who were either part of or influenced by Krochmal’s intellectual circles, thus assisting us in reconstructing substantial parts of Krochmal’s highly fragmentary presentation of Philo: Solomon J. L. Rapoport (1790–1867), Isaac Baer Levinsohn (1788–1860), and Avrom Ber Gotlober (1811–1899).

Through these three steps, it will be shown that Krochmal’s historical perception of Philo was actually much more intricate than has hitherto been presumed. This article will put forward the claim that Krochmal’s image of Philo was not that he was merely a Jewish sage who criticized some of the aberrant Alexandrian Jews of his time (whom Krochmal perceived as ancient Hasideans) from an outsider’s perspective, but rather that Philo himself was an exemplary Hasidean who—like many of his contemporary *Tanna’im*—endorsed Judaism’s golden mean or middle path (*derekh ha-emza’*)⁷ and also conceded the pivotal role of the practical *modus vivendi* alongside the theoretical one. Bearing in mind the fact that the Hasideans mentioned in Tannaitic literature (*Ḥasidim ha-Ri’shonim*; “the pious men of old”) and 1 and 2 Maccabees (Ἀσιδᾶῖοι) are anything but a distinctly defined faction,⁸ I will contend that Krochmal attempts to reconstruct this ancient Jewish party by drawing on thought patterns taken from his own mindscape and from the intimate Maskilic settings of Galicia.⁹ It will be argued that the driving force behind Krochmal’s historiographical enterprise of rehabilitating Philo’s thought must also be understood as part of his ideological Maskilic polemics against modern Hasidism—a spiritual and social

movement that emerged from eighteenth-century Eastern Europe with a strong emphasis on Kabbalistic principles and their actual realization¹⁰—and the deep spiritual crisis in which he found himself when faced with its encroaching expansion.¹¹ Krochmal exploits his historical Hasidean reconstruction of Philo as a moderate, rationalist counter-image to the Hasidim of modern Eastern Europe, which he perceives as radical, bigoted, and irrational. Given this assumption, as will be suggested, one may take Krochmal's productive engagement with Philo to mean that the Alexandrian embodied and foreshadowed genuine Maskilic values, and as such that he points to the unified ideal of the Haskalah as a faithful continuation of the authentic Tannaitic ideal that incorporates both the objectives of the practically oriented men of deeds and those of the ancient theoretical Hasideans. He appears to transfer the emotionally charged sectarian conflicts that were repeatedly erupting between the Maskilim and the Hasidim in Eastern Europe to the situation of the Jews in first-century Alexandria. In doing so, he constructs a particular historical narrative of the past, of the inner turmoil of the ancient Jewish Alexandrian communities, by drawing upon the present; namely, upon the dire religious conflicts between the Maskilim and the Hasidim in the first three decades of nineteenth-century Galicia. At the same time, it will be shown that in their relentless polemics with modern Hasidim, Krochmal and his Maskilic circles did not exclusively seek to reveal what *Hasidut* was *not*, but that they also devoted vigorous efforts to excavating and describing what it truly *was*, at least as documented in Tannaitic literature.

To this end, at the same time, Krochmal endeavored to reclaim the Alexandrian from his long Christian appropriation as *Philo Christianus*¹² and to instead portray him in a more accurate historical light as *Philo Judaeus*. Part of Krochmal's rejudaised image of Philo was his understanding of the sects of the Essenes and the Therapeutae (which he regarded as the Alexandrian faction of the Essenes) and Philo's association with them. Both Philo and the Essenes/Therapeutae were often construed from the Christian perspective as historical phenomena that paved the way for the ensuing emergence of Christianity.¹³ These Christocentric perceptions of Jewish history were not only present in the works of the Church Fathers, but were also quite widespread in the distinguished nineteenth-century scholarship and philosophy that constituted Krochmal's main sources.¹⁴ Taking August Neander's (1789–1850) monograph on Gnosticism as its main point of departure, Hegel's representation of Philo in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* constitutes a prime example of this inclination: the “giant” (“der Riese”) with his “philosophy of all philosophies”, as Krochmal designates Hegel (Krochmal 2010, p. 432) and his metaphysical system (Klausner 1952, p. 162), considered Philo's thought, particularly his Logos doctrine, as a nonessential historical precursor to the far more advanced and revolutionary notions of Christianity: the Holy Trinity and the Logos in its incarnation as an individual.¹⁵ Using methods of historical criticism, he offered an alternative model to earlier tendentious understandings of Philo. With various references to rabbinic literature, he paints an image of Philo and the Essenes/Therapeutae as Jews, which he then brings into accordance with what he holds to be Judaism's core principle: the upholding of the golden mean, which emphasizes the indispensability of the practical life alongside the theoretical one. This path, which was delineated by Krochmal's moderate Maskilic outlook on Jewish religion, was thus projected onto his enlightened portrait of Philo.¹⁶

Despite the pivotal role that Philo plays in Krochmal's *Guide*, this subject matter has surprisingly attracted hardly any scholarly attention. In total, there has been only a single article exclusively devoted to the topic: Roland Goetschel's “Philon et le judaïsme hellénistique au miroir de Nachman Krochmal”, which was published in 1986 (Goetschel 1986, pp. 371–83). Goetschel foregrounds Chapter 12 of the *Guide* and one of its central secondary sources, Neander's *Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten gnostischen Systeme* (1818), while expanding on diverse elements of Krochmal's depiction of Philo (Goetschel 1986, pp. 377–83). His assertion is that Krochmal follows Neander rather than Dähne in his approach to Philo.¹⁷ In Goetschel's view (Goetschel 1986, pp. 378–79, 383), Neander's

representations of Philo (premised on both *Somn.* 1.102 and *Migr.* 89–93) are of particular significance for Krochmal’s portrayal of him as a spiritual Jewish exegete who quarrels with “the carnal-minded rabbis” (“die fleischlich gesinnten Rabbinen”) for being scriptural literalists on the one hand and with the excessively theoretical theosophists among the Jewish Alexandrians on the other (Neander 1818, pp. 3, 6). A further article by Fischel Lachower, “Niglah ve-Nistar be-Mishnato shel RaNaK” (“The Revealed and Concealed in the Teaching of RaNaK”), which was published in 1951, is also of special interest for our examination. In Lachower’s article—which mainly explores Krochmal’s attitude towards the Kabbalah—Philo secures a crucial place, inasmuch as Krochmal considered his allegorical writings to be ancient sources of kabbalistic precepts. Lachower’s insightful study examines Krochmal’s employment of diverse Tannaitic verses and imageries in order to shed light on his rabbinic understanding of the Philonic worldview (Lachower 1951, pp. 222–23, 230–32). Lachower also emphasizes the clear-cut contrast that Krochmal makes between *Hasidut* and *Ma’aseh*, with the latter’s adherents being theoretically minded and thus neglectful of concrete matters that are intimately attached to the social realm while the former’s adherents are practically minded (Lachower 1951, pp. 220–23). I will suggest that Krochmal’s idealized presentation of Philo—like various Tannaitic maxims adduced in Chapter 12 of the *Guide* from the Mishnaic tractate *Avot*—breaks the mold of this dichotomy to a considerable degree. This Tannaitic perception of Philo, as I will contend, is not unmediated, but actually aligns neatly with classic Maskilic conceptions of Judaism’s true teaching advanced in M. Avot and midrashic literature: the golden mean between *Derekh Erez* (worldly occupation/labor) and *Talmud Torah* (the study of the Law). Like Goetschel, Lachower also prioritizes Neander’s impact on Krochmal’s conception of Philo over Dähne’s, since the former provided him with the groundwork for his own account of Philo’s speculative notions (such as the allegorical idea of the Israelite nation as the beholders of God).¹⁸ In what follows, I will attempt to counter both Goetschel’s and Lachower’s conjectures concerning Krochmal’s predilection for Neander’s viewpoint and their relegation of Dähne’s two-volume monograph to a secondary position.

2. “And There Is Nothing New”: The Paradigmatic Crisis of Jewish Faith and Yedidyah Ha-Alexandri in “Dark Sayings of Ancient Times”

In a letter from 1838 that Krochmal wrote to the editor of *Kerem Hemed*, Samuel L. Goldenberg (1807–1846), one reads:

And in this way, one significant root is notable, which these days is worthy of being considered a basic principle; i.e., the *obligation to concretely observe the laws*. According to this principle, faith and the spiritual worship of the heart do not suffice, regardless of whether the belief is a plain thought in the initial phase of imagination or a pure and rational one. [Belief] alone is insufficient as long as we have not fulfilled it to its full extent in the light of the outer world both privately and publicly, through the [ritual] acts [corresponding to] the commandments. This is the foundation of our Torah in all places and throughout all times. [. . .] During the Second Temple period, it was not only the central Pharisean sages in the land of Israel and Babylon who went to great lengths to uphold the Torah’s tenets and to be vigilant about its precise didactic mediation—as is well known to everybody—but also some among the Jews in Alexandria and in the rest of the Hellenistic cities, who were the first, as mentioned above, to establish an inner religion of wisdom based on the secrets of faith and a wholehearted devotion and intention. See Yedidyah—perhaps the greatest among these [Alexandrian] sages—in whose treatises on the allegories of the Torah we find brilliant admonitions about not discounting the deeds in place of knowing their allegorical [content], but rather adhering to them and following them according to the tradition of the fathers. And his admonitions were not against frivolous and evil men, but against the *Hasidim* and the men of theory [*Anshei ha-‘Iyyun*] whom he regards as being on a higher level than those on the level of the [worshipping] laborers and

men of praxis [*Anshei Ma'aseh*] alone (in Greek: ἄσκητής, practitioner) (this entire [subject] and its expression in [the writings of] our first sages, may their memory be a blessing, will be elucidated at length in my work on the *sha'ar* [viz. *Hidot Minni Kedem*], which I have exclusively devoted to this sage's systematic doctrine of God). From this, one may observe that already back then, they wanted to discount deeds in place of theory, as is the case in our present days. And this [phenomenon] does not merely apply to the few theoretical men who drew on the philosophical method, or what they regard as such, but also to the few who are attracted to the mysteries of the traditional wisdom, and there is nothing new. (Krochmal 2010, p. 439; emphasis in original; my translation)¹⁹

With this revealing passage, Krochmal outlines the pivotal objectives and features of his “Dark Sayings of Ancient Times”. Four points warrant our attention:

1. Krochmal draws on Philo's thought as a source through which he isolates the true core of the Jewish faith that persists throughout all of its historical manifestations: the observation of the concrete commandments (*kiyyum ha-mizvot ba-fo'al*).²⁰
2. By adducing Philo as his chief reference point, Krochmal can historically contextualize and legitimize his own moderate Maskilic critique, which he levels against radical nonobservant Maskilim and *a fortiori* against the emerging Hasidic movement of his days that was promptly gaining steam in the Eastern European Jewish communities of the early nineteenth century, which he implicitly accuses of being antinomian, unworldly, and socially detached.²¹ Taking his cue from Philo's critique of certain groups of detached Jewish Alexandrians exhibiting antinomian inclinations (*Migr.* 89–93),²² whom he identifies with the *Hasidim ha-Ri'shonim* (Lachower 1951, p. 222), Krochmal wishes to show that already in the Second Temple era, the markedly theoretical Hasideans were being criticized for having strayed from Judaism's golden path. He thus detects in Philo's writings not only an ancient expression of the paradigmatic crisis of the Jewish faith, which repeats itself in diverse manifestations of Jewish history, but also and more importantly the decisive orthodox and authentic answer supplied by Philo himself.
3. Krochmal refers to his own analysis of Philo in Chapter 12 of the *Guide* as elaborating on this contention while also seeking to reveal pervasive links between Philo's writings and rabbinic literature, mostly to Tannaitic sayings, but also to Amoraic midrashim on divine creation.
4. This allusion to Philo must also be understood against the background of Krochmal's quarrel with Samuel David Luzzatto's (alias SHaDaL; 1800–1865) repudiation of Maimonides and Avraham ibn 'Ezra' due to their strong dependency on Greek wisdom. In fact, this bone of contention constitutes the main thematic point of departure of the letter as a whole.²³ On the basis of this very portrayal in *Migr.* 89–93, Krochmal proclaims in an earlier section of the letter that such antinomian trends in Jewish history cannot by any means serve as sufficient grounds for the complete abolition of the theoretical investigation and elucidation of the pure nature of the Jewish faith (*emunah zerufah*). Implicitly alluding to Luzzatto, he proceeds with the claim that a person who pursues this goal of abolition will give rise to every single rampant superstitious belief, ultimately inducing idolatry to such a degree that morals and faith *in toto* will become entirely corrupt (Krochmal 2010, p. 435).

The very title given to this chapter of the *Guide* discloses its affirmative historiographical attitude towards Jewish Alexandrian thought. The full title reads as follows: “Dark Sayings of Ancient Times [. . .] [‘which we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us’ (Psalms 78:3)]: On the Divine Philosophy of the Torah Which Arose and Was Developed among the Jewish Inhabitants of Alexandria and the Hellenistic Cities throughout the Entire Second Temple Period, and on Several of the Systems That Later Emerged from It”.²⁴ Krochmal's use of Psalm 78:2b–3 (which portrays the transmission of ancient teachings from father to son) to underpin the speculative *Religionsphilosophie* of Alexandrian Jewry seems to indicate that he wants to convey that its contents conform to traditional

mystical Jewish wisdom and perhaps even contain authentic kabbalistic teachings regarding *Ma'aseh Ber'eshit* and *Merkavah*.²⁵ By emphasizing the permeation of diverse Philonic ideas relating to the creation account in midrashic literature (Krochmal 2010, pp. 172–74), he appears to indicate how these speculative notions were transmitted and how they may have made their way into kabbalistic traditions.²⁶

With the title's evocation of Psalm 78:3 ("things we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us")—as well as the following verse, which is omitted but nonetheless echoed ("We will not withhold them from their children, telling the coming generation")—and the didactic oral chain of transmission that it outlines, Krochmal insinuates that Chapter 12 also addresses an acute pedagogical crisis that underlies the Jewish tradition (Amir 2018, p. 241, 254). This pedagogical crisis stems from the fact that the paternal chain of instruction that disseminated these ancient teachings of Jewish Alexandrian wisdom has been abruptly broken. It is by means of his "Dark Sayings of Ancient Times" that Krochmal attempts to restore this pedagogical chain of transmission and to uncover the salient parallels of Jewish Alexandrian rationalism to the early rabbinic worldview, which has sunk into oblivion. Taking up this pedagogical challenge specifically in a time of spiritual crisis in which the Maskilic mindset was being submerged and assaulted by the non-rational, superstitious Hasidim, Krochmal understood that it was necessary to (re)produce a historical, pedagogical narrative that places the Maskilic approach at the center of traditional Jewish knowledge.

The fact that Krochmal lays out his view of scholarly research into Judaism within the general framework of world history in Chapter 12 of the *Guide*, which takes Philo as its focal theme, points to its centrality in Krochmal's overall Jewish historiography:

Know that it is a great and magnificent principle that we require and that fits us well, for we will frequently search for and investigate the opinions, morals, and qualities which expressed themselves within our nation throughout different time periods. [And we will investigate] by means of the events that we underwent and the connections and intermingling with others that we experienced, which were more considerable than any other nation and tongue, although only to a limited degree. And [we will investigate] how we were affected and modified by their opinions, morals, and qualities, and how we have affected them, our [Gentile] fellow men, from one generation to the next. [This applies] even to those who were distant from us and who approached us gingerly and received only a few of our ways, such as the Greeks in the period of the late Platonists, Plotinus and Proclus; and, in another manner, Muhammed; and like those who were close to us and then distanced themselves, such as the devotees of the renewed testament; or the sayings of Baruch [de Spinoza] the philosopher and the [philosophical] schools following him. It is an obligation of the sages and great ones among us to examine these [matters] in their essence and their roots. All this is for the sake of attaining distinct impressions thereof through the power of exploration and ultimately for clarifying our knowledge of ourselves and our essence, which is the universal soul of Israel [*nefesh yisra'el ha-kelalit*]. (Krochmal 2010, p. 167; my translation)²⁷

It is hardly accidental that Krochmal's overview of the historiographical research aims of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* is specifically presented in a chapter primarily devoted to Philo's doctrines.²⁸ The fact that Philo was immensely influential within general non-Jewish world history aptly evinces Krochmal's contention that the immanent spirit of Israel underlies various crucial historical periods and their intellectual movements (Feiner 2001, pp. 120–21). This is made clear by his reference to the Jewish impact on Neoplatonism, through which he implicitly refers to Philo, who was widely acknowledged as its forerunner in nineteenth-century scholarship.²⁹

Against this background, it should be stressed that the revival of Philo's thought in nineteenth-century Jewish scholarship is inextricably related to the emergence of the historical consciousness within modern Judaism. It might, therefore, come as no surprise

that already in a 1787 issue of the Maskilic journal *Ha-Me'assef*, we find a section in reply to a question concerning the Second Temple period, which accords Philo a key role within the historical understanding of ancient Judaism. The anonymously written section asserts that “if it were not for the Jews Philo and Josephus, two writers of our nation who recorded the historical occurrences relating to us from the time that prophecy ceased from Israel in the days of Haggai, Zekhariah, and Mal’akhi, we would not have any remnant or remembrance from the entire Second Temple period” (Anonymous 1787, p. 10). Ben-Zion Katz goes so far as to describe this brief section as the first historical article written by a Jewish intellectual of the German-speaking realm to be of any academic value (Katz 1956, p. 254). As early as 1821, in the second issue of *Bikurei ha-Ittim*, one can also find a section devoted to Philo’s biography.³⁰ Even Rapoport, who gained recognition among scholars of the *Wissenschaft* for his biographical studies of great Jewish sages (Feiner 2001, pp. 112–13), intended to compose a thorough biography of Philo that would serve as an overall introduction to Josef Flesch’s (1781–1839) Hebrew translations of the entire Philonic *oeuvre*.³¹ With that said, it is evident that the *Guide*’s famous editor, Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), a celebrated scholar of Jewish history in his own right, ranked Philo—alongside Hillel the Elder, Rabbi ‘Akiva’, and Josephus—as one of the four most significant Jewish thinkers of the first century of the Common Era, which was characterized by a strong influence from Greek culture (Zunz 1845, p. 24). In short, with the awakening of historical consciousness and criticism among the Maskilim and *Wissenschaftler*, the view that Philo’s thought epitomized the Maskilic spirit and its principles began to feature prominently in their scholarly depictions of Judaism.³²

3. Reconstructing Krochmal’s Rabbinic-Maskilic Image of Philo

Turning to a closer look at Chapter 12 of the *Guide*, it is worth noting that Dähne and Neander were not its only sources. From the outset of the chapter, one can, for example, discern the impact exerted on it by Moses Mendelssohn’s *Netivot ha-Shalom* (also known as the *Bi’ur*) and, specifically, its introduction, *Or li-Netivah*. In a preliminary discussion on the emergence of the Septuagint and the rise of the Greek language within diasporic Jewish communities, Krochmal explicitly mentions the preparatory treatment of Rabbi Mosheh ben Menahem in his *Or li-Netivah* alongside those of both Azariah de’ Rossi and Johann G. Eichhorn (1752–1827) (Krochmal 2010, p. 166). A closer observation of the following section, which is devoted to Philo’s famous predecessor Aristobulus, exposes Krochmal’s dependency on Mendelssohn’s *Or li-Netivah*:

והיה בימי תלמי הרביעי ביניהם חכם גדול שמו
ארסטובולוס פלוסוף, וחיבר פירוש גדול על תורת משה,
ונאבד ולא נשאר ממנו כ"א איזה קונטרסים וזכרון
דברים מועטים בפי ובחבורי חכמים נוצרים הקדמונים.

[And there was in the days of Ptolemy the fourth a great sage among them, whose name was Aristobulus, [and he was] a philosopher. And he wrote a large treatise on the Law of Moses, which was lost; and nothing remains but some pages and the testimonies of a few sayings quoted by ancient Christian sages in their treatises.] (Krochmal 2010, p. 167; my translation; my emphasis)

וכן העיד אריסטובולו"ל א"ש יהודי [...] הוא אריסטובולו"ל
וכתב לתלמי המלך הנקרא תלמי פילומיט"רה, חבור
גדול בלשון יון על תורת משה, כולל מאה פרקים,
ונאבד באורך הימים, ולא נשאר ממנו כי אם מקומות
מעט הבאים מתוך דברי מחברים אחרים [...].

[This was also attested by Aristobulus the Jew [...]. This Aristobulus wrote a large treatise in Greek, comprising 100 chapters, on the Law of Moses for King Ptolemy, known as Ptolemy Philometor. This was lost during the time that had elapsed, and only small sections cited in the writings of others remain.] (Mendelssohn 1990 [JubA 15.1], p. 37; my emphasis)³³

Krochmal’s reliance upon *Or li-Netivah* and the *Bi’ur* as a whole within the context of Chapter 12 of the *Guide* is of relevance to the present examination, for it suggests that Mendelssohn’s explicit and affirmative use of Philo and Jewish Hellenism in his edition of the Pentateuch shaped his own stance on the subject.³⁴

However, Chapter 12 of the *Guide* suffers from one acute problem, which was pointed out by Leopold Zunz in his edition of it: it is incomplete and extremely fragmentary (Zunz 2010, p. ii).³⁵ The lion’s share of Krochmal’s rabbinic passages, which are cited in a

section entitled “A Compilation of Sayings in the Talmudim and Midrashot for the Sake of Elucidating the System of Yedidyah and the Alexandrians” (Krochmal 2010, p. 168; my translation) in order to reveal their parallels with Philo’s views, are often left unexplored. This presents the readers of this chapter with the serious task of reconstructing Krochmal’s original intent. By Drawing on his own fragmented statements and on his central secondary source, Dähne’s *Geschichtliche Darstellung der jüdisch-alexandrinischen Religions-Philosophie*, which he appears to use as a sourcebook for countless Philonic passages translated into German and also cited in the Greek original, it can be demonstrated in what follows how one may reproduce some of Krochmal’s basic assertions.

Dähne’s two-volume monograph on Jewish Alexandrian philosophy, which was published in 1834, was unparalleled in the German-speaking world of those days thanks to its extensive in-depth treatment of and innovative approach to Philonic thought. It entirely displaced its predecessor, Ernst A. Stahl’s (1772–1795) “Versuch eines systematischen Entwurfs des Lehrbegriffs Philos von Alexandrien” (Stahl 1793, pp. 767–890). To illustrate Stahl’s shortcomings, while at the same time helping us to appreciate the merits of Dähne’s comprehensive presentation of Philo’s body of thought, we will adduce an illuminating observation found in a section titled “Von der Moral des Philon von Alexandrien” from the famous Prussian Enlightenment theologian Johann David Michaelis’s (1717–1791) *Moral*: “I cannot cite anything meaningful with regard to Philo’s ethics. As valuable as E. H. Stahl’s *Versuch eines systematischen Entwurfs des Lehrbegriffs Philos von Alexandrien* is in relation to Philo’s dogmatics, it is brief, deficient, and unsatisfactory on the matter of his ethics” (Michaelis 1799, p. 490 n. 217; my translation). This specific deficiency perplexed Michaelis, since he had stated that “Philo is full of ethics, also in his allegorical commentaries, and a certain number of his writings are predominantly and mostly dedicated to ethics”.³⁶ Precisely this thematic emphasis is extensively accounted for in Dähne’s book, particularly in the two sections entitled “Die Ethik Philo’s” (pp. 341–424) and “Von der Uebung der alexandrinische-jüdischen ethischen Grundsätze, oder von den Therapeuten und Essenern” (pp. 439–97). Both of these sections foregrounding Philo’s ethics resonated particularly well with Krochmal’s image of Philo as an ancient Jewish sage of the Second Temple period who also assigned pivotal importance to concrete deeds within a given social *Umwelt*. Dähne’s work helped Krochmal to portray Philo in a universal moral light in accordance with *musar* literature.³⁷ The moralistic perspective of the *musar* genre was strongly endorsed by central figures of the early Berlin Haskalah within the framework of their universalistic understanding of Judaism and its pedagogical mediation, such as Moses Mendelssohn, Naphtali Herz Wessely (1725–1805), Isaac Satanow (1732–1804), and David Friedländer (1750–1834).³⁸ As Patrick Koch perceptively observes, the interest in *musar* literature was echoed in “the *Zeitgeist* of [. . .] the Jewish Enlightenment, itself influenced by an increasing interest in formulating a new system of ethics in the Humanities” (Koch 2015, pp. 3–4).

Moreover, with respect to his allegorical exegesis, Dähne emphasizes, for example, the fact that Philo and the rabbis had a common hermeneutical approach to Scripture: “In the past a multifold meaning was presupposed, so that there was no longer a natural boundary, and the rabbis, who spoke of a thousandfold meaning of every single verse, in essence rested on the same foundation as Philo did”.³⁹ Both of these focal points are insufficiently accounted for in Neander’s brief introductory chapter on Philo (“Elemente der Gnosis im Philo”, pp. 1–27).⁴⁰ In fact, Neander sought to read Philo more along the lines of speculative Christian theology and exegesis. He thereby portrays the Alexandrian as a spiritual interpreter of Jewish Scripture who went against the literalist rabbinic tradition of his day. Krochmal, who was aware of these elements, even explicitly criticizes Neander’s Christian portrayal of Philo’s Logos theology.⁴¹

Krochmal’s portrayal of Philo as an exemplary antique Jewish sage constitutes the crux of his entire twelfth chapter. He alleges a wide array of rabbinic passages outlining Tannaitic virtues, above all from M. Avot, in order to make this contention plausible.⁴² For Krochmal, the distinguishing feature of Tannaitic wisdom was its stress on the golden mean (*derekh ha-emza’*) of authentic Jewish faith, preserving a delicate balance between

practical (*ma'aseh*) and theoretical (*iyyun*) matters.⁴³ In fact, this outlook appears to have been mediated via well-known Maskilic portrayals of Judaism's fundamental precept, which deems *Derekh Erez* to be a basic prerequisite for *Talmud Torah*. Wessely's famous pedagogical treatise *Words of Peace and Truth* may be taken as the prime example of this stance. In it, he argues that the Jewish tradition purports that the crucial position of *Derekh Erez*—which he construes to mean human culture and general secular learning subjects (*Torat ha-Adam*)—fundamentally supplements and even precedes the sacred *Talmud Torah* (the study of the Law), which he designates as *Torat Hashem*.⁴⁴ To substantiate his secular view of the Jewish religion, he draws support from Vayikra Rabba 9:3, in which it is claimed that *Derekh Erez* “preceded the Torah by twenty-six generations”.⁴⁵ By focusing on *Migr.* 89–93—in which Philo criticizes the extremely spiritual and detached Jewish Alexandrians for no longer observing the Mosaic Law in its literal sense while exclusively adhering to its higher allegorical meaning—Krochmal portrays Philo as a central paragon of the original Jewish mindset. At the same time, it seems quite clear that he endeavors to politically exploit his Maskilic portrait of Philo as a genuine ancient Hasid by pitting it against the modern Hasidic movement,⁴⁶ which in those days was gaining a strong foothold in Eastern European Jewish communities and was involved in numerous clashes with Jewish *Aufklärer*.⁴⁷ Thus, he is able to expose the modern Hasidic movement's considerable deviation from the concrete and indispensable observation of the laws in favor of a mystical *Schwärmerei* and irrational superstition, revealing it to be *Hithasdut* (sanctimoniousness).⁴⁸ These critical accounts often convey the false impression that the Hasidic movement of the first half of the nineteenth century was monolithic, entailing no substantial variation whatsoever.⁴⁹ Krochmal appears to have appropriated his monolithic and tendentious view of Hasidism from prior stereotypical critiques by Mitnaggdim, which “were typically distorted to the point where they barely resembled actual Hasidism”.⁵⁰

However, due to the fragmentary condition of Chapter 12, it is still quite difficult to discern exactly how Krochmal classified Philo. It seems clear that he regarded him as an adherent of the Essenes/Therapeutae, which he, in turn, identifies with the original Hasidim mentioned in Tannaitic literature (*Hasidim ha-Ri'shonim*). At the same time, he portrays him as a Jewish thinker who strongly objected to a negative phenomenon that was common in the Hasidean way of life in Alexandria of the first century CE: the Hasideans' exaggeratedly spiritual and detached mindset. This might suggest that Krochmal understood Philo to be an exemplary Hasidean who upheld the unblemished ancient rabbinic worldview that maintained the golden mean and who, for this reason, harshly criticized the excessively spiritual Hasideans of his days for neglecting the practical observance of the Mosaic Law and Jewish ceremonies.

By singling out a few examples and sorting them out into thematic groups, one can throw further light on Krochmal's programmatic presentation of Philo and his intellectual Jewish environment. For him, Philo's depictions of the religious rituals of the Essenes and the Therapeutae in *Contempl.* and *Prob.* (§§75–91) are especially significant. Through these Jewish sects, he attempts to illustrate how Philo and these sages align with similar ceremonial patterns documented in rabbinic literature. This becomes quite apparent from the outset, when we encounter his allusion to B. Pesahim 12b and B. Shabbat 10a regarding the late mealtime (taken in the sixth hour) of the Torah scholars. Krochmal makes two brief and fragmentary remarks on these Talmudic passages: (1) that “our sages taught [this] as well”, and (2) that “Philo spoke about the congregation of the Essenes”.⁵¹ In all likelihood, the specific section that Krochmal had in mind is taken from *Contempl.* 34, where Philo describes the fasting rituals of the Therapeutae who solely “desire the vision of the Existent” (*Contempl.* 11): “Food and drink none of them would ever deal with before the setting of the sun, since they judge philosophizing to be appropriate for light”.⁵² In the following paragraph (§35), Philo even mentions the number six in connection with some of the Therapeutae who practice strict fasting, who “only after six days taste necessary food”.⁵³ With a very high degree of certainty, we may assume that Krochmal encountered these Philonic illustrations in Dähne's monograph, the first volume of which dwells on

this specific subject by providing a German translation of the entire section from *Contempl.* (§§34–37) (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, pp. 447–48). To Krochmal, the images of both Philo and the rabbis conform to his understanding of the Hasideans' original mindset as involving theoretical investigations coupled with ascetic rituals.⁵⁴

Four further rabbinic passages from M. Avot that Krochmal employs and thematically correspond to his attempt to portray the Essenes and the Therapeutae as the earliest Ḥasidim are M. Avot 4:21, 5:10, 5:13, and 6:4. The sayings in both M. Avot 5:10 ("What is mine is thine and what is thine is thine own—he is a saintly man [ḥasid]") and 5:13 ("he that is minded to give and also that others should give—he is a saintly man") feature the Hasidean virtue of selfless generosity and the ideal of joint property in their agreement with the Essenes' communion of goods (*Prob.* 77, 85–87; *Hypoth.* 11.4–13). For the sake of clarification, Krochmal makes a complementary observation about M. Avot 5:10, stating that this maxim is "in accordance with the pronounced strictness of the [thought] system that necessitates an absolute abandonment of all possessions" (Krochmal 2010, p. 171). His brief remark following his citation of M. Avot 5:13 is even more revealing: he writes that this Tannaitic dictum "perhaps hints at this community", entertaining the idea that the reference to this Hasidean virtue is an allusion to the Essenes (Krochmal 2010, p. 171).

Krochmal construes the other three Tannaitic sayings as essentially portraying the ascetic Ḥasid victorious struggle over his lower order of desires and passions.⁵⁵ For instance, he understands M. Avot 5:11 ("hard to provoke and easy to appease—he is a saintly man [ḥasid]") as the individual's victory over all the affections of the soul. A more clear-cut example is his reference to M. Avot 6:4, which delineates the ascetic mode of life of the one who strives to follow the path of the Torah ("Thou shalt eat bread with salt and thou shalt drink water by measure [. . .] while thou toilest in the Law"). With reference to this rabbinic saying, Krochmal notes that this is a maxim "conforming to the ethics of this system, demanding that the laborer [adhere to] the obligation to victoriously prevail against the sensual matters".⁵⁶ Krochmal was most likely thinking in this respect of a very similar Philonic passage in *Contempl.* 37, in which the Therapeutae are portrayed as ascetics whose entire nutritional intake is restricted to bread and water. Krochmal must have been acquainted with this testimony from Dähne's German translation (Dähne 1834, p. 448). He reads the virtue ethical maxim attributed to Rabbi El'azar ha-Kappar in M. Avot 4:21 ("Jealousy, lust, and ambition put a man out of the world") along similar lines, arguing that the Tannaitic sage was deeply familiar with this ascetic Hasidean outlook. However, Krochmal also wants to present Rabbi El'azar ha-Kappar as conforming to a balanced mindset that ultimately compels the individual to take part in the pleasure of useful worldly things and that resists radical abstinence.⁵⁷ He illustrates this through the baraita' invoked in B. Nazir 19a, where Rabbi El'azar ha-Kappar appears to posit the contrary; that is, that the ascetic withdrawal from wine and worldly pleasures is what should actually be considered sinful (Krochmal 2010, p. 171).

A closer look at Dähne's work would actually suggest that Krochmal was attempting to bring these Tannaitic maxims into line with Philo's virtue ethics, which is often expressed through Hellenistic motifs of athletic competition involving prizes. For example, the Israelite patriarchs and the Essenes are also understood in a similar manner as "athletes of virtue" (ἀθληταὶ ἀρετῆς).⁵⁸ In Dähne's subchapter entitled "Die Ethik Philo's", one frequently comes across the athletic metaphors of man's rational soul wrestling with the sensual passions in order to attain the prize of virtue. In one section, we read:

A crucial turning point in the human striving for virtue always arose in the moment where the instruction had led to the attainment of the prize, the (imperturbable) faith, and man, who was beyond the education of his adolescence, had completed his development (τέλειος), so to speak. [. . .] And after these preliminary remarks, it no longer remains unclear as to why it is repeatedly said that [*Praem.* 27:] he [viz. Isaac] strove for perfection due to his noble nature and that he was awarded the prize of joy, victorious without competition, winning the virtue by dint of his natural powers. (Dähne 1834, pp. 394–95)⁵⁹

These depictions seem to have left a lasting mark on Krochmal's apprehension of Tannaitic moral doctrines. His description of the meaning of the Mishnaic *zokheh* bears a striking resemblance to Dähne's explanations of Philonic ethics:

[...] והוא על דרך שיטה זו שכל עבודת העובד הוא התאבקות ונצוח נגד החומרי ועונג הבשר.

[And it is according to this ethical system that the entire work of the laborer is wrestling with and victory over the sensual matter and carnal lust] (Krochmal 2010, p. 171).

Er war eine drückende Last, die des Geistes Ringen nach göttlicher Vollendung und Seligkeit niederhielt und ihn an das Sinnliche fesselte [It (the human body) was a pressing burden, which held down the spirit's wrestling for perfection and blissfulness and enchained it to the sensual] (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, p. 328).⁶⁰

The other major feature of Krochmal's portrayal of the parallels between Philo and the ancient Hasideans involves their similar *Weltanschauung* advancing a distinct hierarchical structure, which places the theoretical life above the practical one, *without* discounting the latter. As Zunz already indicated (Zunz 2010, p. iv), Krochmal's chief differentiation is between sages devoting their lives to good deeds (*Anshei Ma'aseh*) and the Hasidim primarily focusing on speculative mystical matters (Krochmal 2010, p. 170). The first level is primarily designated as the level of the laborer (*madregat ha-'oved*) and the sin-fearing righteous individual (*madregat ha-zadik ve-yare' ha-het'*), while the second, superior level is that of the Hasid (*madregat ha-hasid*). The third and ultimate level is reserved for the beholders of God (*madregat ha-zofeh*).⁶¹ Krochmal lays out his viewpoint by drawing on both the sayings of Hanina' ben Dosa' in M. Avot 3:11—in which he hierarchically distinguishes between *hokhmah* and *yir'at het'* and alludes to those who adhered to both⁶²—and those of the prominent Hasidean Pinhas ben Ya'ir in M. Sotah 9:15:

And this is the proof that those practical men differentiated themselves from the possessors of mysteries, who did not entirely neglect the deeds relating to worldly matters and their obligations towards their fellow men. And herein is a difference from the designation "Hasidim", which refers to those who possess the mysteries and who devote their souls to visions of and absorption in the Godly mysteries by means of complete isolation and abstinence from the [customary] ways of life. And the Hellenistic Jews used the name ἄσκητός to designate those of the first level and ἄσκησις [to designate] their action, and this is the specific word that was admitted into late Aramaic as the term *'esek* [for the action] and *'Osek* for the one possessing this virtue respectively, and as *'Oved* and *Ish Ma'aseh* in Hebrew. The last two levels are found in the famous baraita' of Rabbi Pinhas ben Ya'ir; they are "the shunning of sin lead[ing] to saintliness, and saintliness lead[ing] to (the gift of) the Holy Spirit" [M. Sotah 9:15]. Here, too, the contrast indicates that the shunning of sin is on the level of the practical men who have not yet withdrawn from worldly deeds and social settings, whose work is to be mindful of the sin [in the world]. And the Hasidut is the complete opposite of the mundane world and the deeds therein; [it is] seclusion for the sake of beholding the divine. And the next level, which is the last one, is the intellectual vision of the divine mysteries and the secrets of the Torah, which transcend the [ordinary] methods used by the mere intellect. (Krochmal 2010, pp. 168–69; my translation)

In this fragmented passage, Krochmal appears to argue that Tannaitic literature already documents the phenomenon of the lopsided lifestyle of many Hasideans, who solely devote themselves to divine mysteries while altogether disregarding earthly matters within a given social context (Lachower 1951, p. 223). In the final analysis, however, he does not appear to claim that the Hasidean worldview did not put any emphasis on practical deeds. Krochmal's construal of the Essenes as the ancient Hasideans is somewhat puzzling, since, in Philo's view, they were actually those who follow the practical course of life (*Contempl.* 1). Rather, Krochmal wishes to point to a specific degeneration of the original Hasidean mindset, which was no longer sufficiently accounting for practical matters.⁶³ It is precisely in this fact that the radical thrust of his rabbinic image of Philo lies. He seems to impose his Maskilic reading of Philo as a vehement critic of the Hasideans onto the Tannaitic

worldview outlined in M. Avot. In doing so, he offers a counterintuitive interpretation of the ancient Hasidean faction—who on the face of it actually appear very much concerned with practical rituals⁶⁴—as being primarily identified with speculative contemplations and withdrawal from social reality. Krochmal utilizes Philo as a Maskilic paragon of ancient times, which he holds up as a prime example of the Hasidean outlook immersing itself in Godly mysteries, while being unwilling to compromise, like many of his Hasidean counterparts, the fundamental position of the practical commands and ceremonies. He has no principal problem with conceding such a prominent role to a Hellenistic Jewish thinker like Philo, who is nevertheless not even mentioned in rabbinic literature. This seems to stem from the fact that he regards Alexandrian Jewish thought as an important source of various teachings that help to shape Tannaitic wisdom.⁶⁵ He also alludes to Y. Hagigah 15b, where the famous pupil of Rabbi ‘Akiva’, Rabbi Yoḥanan Ha-Sandlar, is designated as “a true Alexandrian” (*alexandri le-amito hu*),⁶⁶ and additionally must surely have been aware of the Zugot, Yehudah ben Tabba’i, and Yehoshua ben Peraḥayah, who sought refuge in Alexandria.⁶⁷

Again, making recourse to Dähne’s account of Philonic ethics, it becomes quite manifest that this was a model for Krochmal’s hierarchical presentation of the different groups within the Tannaitic period. Krochmal’s portrayal particularly corresponds to Dähne’s description of Philo’s understanding of the human being’s varying moral and epistemological levels as symbolically conveyed in the lives and names of the biblical patriarchs:

Philo views his characterization of Cain’s offspring in similar fashion [such as in *Post.* 125 regarding the meaning of the name “Seth”]: here, too, the numerous names which are mentioned between Seth and Moses indicate the different levels and stages that lie in the middle between the beginning of the permanent virtue and the highest perfection. (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, p. 364; my translation)

In a few instances, Dähne even outlines the ascending levels of the ascetic life according to Philonic moral precepts (“Grade [. . .] der Askese nach Philo’s Sätzen”),⁶⁸ which culminate in the vision of God as its ultimate theoretical objective (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, p. 350, 421). Taking his cue from various Philonic passages—such as *Leg.* 2.89, 1.55, *Contempl.* 1, *Mos.* 1.48, *Fug.* 47, and *Decal.* 101—Dähne centers Philo’s stance regarding the practical life (βίος πρακτικός) as a *conditio sine qua non* for the higher theoretical life (βίος θεωρητικός):

For as long as the years of adolescence or manhood provide the individual with even greater powers, he is equally obliged to lead an active, practical life (βίος πρακτικός, ἀρετή, πρακτική, ἡ πρᾶξις) instead of a contemplative one. In it, he should strive for the higher wisdom and virtue which he himself has achieved and exert it among his fellow men, or at least through this deed refute the generally plain disrepute of the indolent life and at the same time establish the purity of his ascesis. (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, p. 412; my translation)

The section of Philo’s *oeuvre* within the thematic context at hand that left the deepest impression on Krochmal is *Fug.* 25–36 (perhaps even more so than *Migr.* 89–93), which he translated into Hebrew from Dähne’s German.⁶⁹ In this insightful and lengthy portrayal, Dähne wished to showcase Philo’s view of “the relationship of the practical life to the theoretical”, which is expressed in a critique leveled against the ascetic Jewish Alexandrians who strictly withdraw from all worldly possessions, including useful ones (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, p. 413). In *Fug.* 35–36, we read:

State business is an object of ridicule to you people. Perhaps you have never discovered how serviceable a thing it is. Begin, then, by getting some exercise and practice in the business of life both private and public; and when by means of the sister virtues, household-management and statesmanship, you have become masters in each domain, enter now, as more than qualified to do so, on your migration to a different and more excellent way of life. For the practical comes before the contemplative life; it is a sort of prelude to a more advanced contest;

and it is well to have fought it out first. By taking this course you will avoid the imputation of shrinking from it through sheer laziness (PLCL 5:29).⁷⁰

One brief complementary remark that Krochmal parenthetically adds to the beginning of his Hebrew translation of *Fug.* 35, in which Philo directly addresses his critique to these particular types of men (“To such men, then, let us say” [λέγωμεν οὖν τοῖς τοιούτοις]), is quite illuminating. To Krochmal—alluding to the idea and formulation of M. Avot 3:10 (“He whose fear of sin comes before his wisdom” [*ve-kol she-hokhmato kodemet le-yir’at hat’o ein hokhmato mitkayemet*])⁷¹—these men are “namely, those on the level of the Ḥasidut, who have separated themselves [so that this level] takes precedence over their deeds” [*hainu lemi she-hevdilu le-madregat ha-ḥasidut kodemet le-ma’assav*] (Krochmal 2010, p. 178; my translation).

Krochmal illustrates the presence of this Philonic viewpoint in Tannaitic literature by drawing on “the remarkable parable” (*ha-mashal ha-mufla*) of Rabbi ‘El‘azar ben ‘Azariah in M. Avot 3:18 (“He whose wisdom is more abundant than his works, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are abundant but whose roots are few; and the wind comes and uproots it and overturns it”) (Krochmal 2010, p. 169). Krochmal’s explication of Ben ‘Azariah’s metaphorical image is in broad agreement with Philo’s account of the complementary and hierarchical relationship between the practical and theoretical modes of life: “And [this juxtaposition of *hokhmah* and *yir’ah* also applies to] the remarkable parable that [symbolically] likens the deed to the root of the tree planted in the earth, [i.e.] in the world’s corporeality, and the wisdom to the tree’s branches, which strive upwards to the heavens, [i.e.,] the cognition of God”.⁷² It appears anything but a mere coincidence that Krochmal would gravitate towards such Tannaitic imagery.⁷³ In all likelihood, he had in mind a similar metaphorical image of man as a heavenly plant (φυτὸν οὐράνιον) from Philo’s thought—which rests on *Tim.* 90a⁷⁴—which he came across in Dähne’s section dedicated to Philo’s anthropology (“Die Anthropologie Philo’s”, pp. 288–341):

With reference thereto [viz. to the Godly creation of man’s rational faculty, *Det.* 83–84], he designates the human soul [. . .] as divine, an imprint, a reflection, a part, a planting place [. . .] a Godly plant, whose roots extent up to the divine sphere. [. . .] [n. 342:] *Quod det. pot. insid.* p. 170 [*Det.* 84] it is called [viz. the human soul]: τὸ θεοειδὲς ἐκεῖνο δημιούργημα, ὃ λογιζόμεθα, οὗ τὰς ρίζας εἰς οὐρανὸν ἔτεινε., de plant. N. p. 216 [*Plant.* 17]: φυτὸν οὐράνιον. (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, pp. 298–300; my translation).

Accounting for Dähne’s explanation here, it seems that Krochmal utilizes the Philonic notion of man as a φυτὸν οὐράνιον, whose roots extend up to the heavens and whose feet are attached to the earth (*Det.* 84–85), for his allegorical interpretation of the Tannaitic image of the tree’s branches pointing heavenwards in order to imply a yearning for the vision of the divine. In *Det.* 85, he continues in a similar fashion to Krochmal by aligning the φυτὸν οὐράνιον according to a hierarchical scheme of a worldly and a heavenly sphere, insofar as he maintains that God raised the human mind “upward[s], that his nourishment may be celestial and imperishable, not perishable and earthly” (PLCL 2:259), while fixing his feet to the earth as they symbolize man’s most corporeal and unconscious part.

All of the examples above prompt the conclusion that Krochmal read Philo’s complementary and hierarchical account of the practical and theoretical modes of life through a Tannaitic lens. From this, there emerges a striking image of Philo as an ancient Hasidean, advancing the golden middle way by reproaching—similarly to Ḥanina’ ben Dosa’, the exemplary model for the *Anshei Ma’aseh*—an aberrant negative trend among the Hasideans of his day of neglecting concrete deeds and withdrawing from their social environment. Seen from another perspective, it is quite clear that he applies Dähne’s reproduction of Philo’s viewpoint to the segmented Tannaitic sayings in order to unearth their deeper meaning and broader historical context.

Given this fact, one cannot ignore the resemblance of the ultimate aim of Krochmal’s *Guide* to his Maskilic perception of Philo’s Jewish philosophy. Both criticize extreme deviancies within their Jewish communities for discounting the concrete deeds that are intimately

linked to Jewish laws and ceremonies. This fact is also insinuated in Rawidowicz's insightful concluding statement regarding Krochmal's idealized picture of Philo: "RaNaK saw in Philo the highest man of virtue, simultaneously a believer and a maskil, both the harsh criticism of the 'Rabbis' (the 'materialistic among the rabbis')⁷⁵ and the man who uncompromisingly observes the commandments".⁷⁶ This passage underpins Philo's rather unique place in the early rabbinic world according to Krochmal's Jewish historiography: on the one hand, as a member of the Essenian sect—which Krochmal, in turn, construes as being the *Hasidim ha-Ri'shonim*—he is a typical contemporary theoretical Hasidean who is profoundly immersed in speculations regarding the divine. On the other, like many of the great Tannaitic sages recorded in M. Avot, he is unwilling to reduce to insignificance the status of the commandments and the ceremonial elements of the Jewish faith, which are intimately attached to ethical deeds, and, thus, argues for their decisive complementary role within the theoretical *modus vivendi*.

Although this historiographical engagement with Philo seems to reproduce, *mutatis mutandis*, Krochmal's own social settings in Galicia—in which the Maskilic mindset was constantly provoked by the irrational Hasidic outlook—one cannot simply equate the ancient Hasideans with modern Hasidim. It is evident that Krochmal believed them to be entirely different things. The ancient Hasideans, in Krochmal's view, actually mark the elite intellectual party of the *Tanna'im*, who were responsible for the development of central kabbalistic teachings. On the other hand, he conceives modern Hasidim as fanatical, inflammatory, plebeian, ignorant, sanctimonious, *schwärmerisch*, and a long way from constituting a leading intellectual party.⁷⁷ In this respect, the Maskilim, with their scholarly achievements and their theoretical views of Judaism, are much closer to the *Hasidim ha-Ri'shonim* than the modern Hasidim are. Drawing on the historical example of the ancient Hasideans, Krochmal merely wishes to point to the destructive potential of the overly theoretical approach to the Jewish tradition. When speaking of modern Hasidism, Krochmal appears to consider that the moderate stance of the ancient Jewish faith has already been completely destroyed.

4. The Hasidean Image of Philo in View of the Maskilic Crisis within Krochmal's *Umfeld*

If one turns to Krochmal's Maskilic intellectual circles, one finds very similar images of Philo as an ancient Hasidean, which also seem to be intended to expose modern Hasidism as deviating from the true essence of the Jewish faith. From the way in which he adduces these examples, it becomes apparent that Krochmal's belief that Philo's rabbinic mindset underlined the indispensability of the observation of Jewish law alongside theoretical contemplation was widespread among his circles and pupils. Three prominent Eastern European Maskilim are of particular relevance to us in this context and will facilitate a more coherent understanding of Krochmal's Philo: Solomon J. L. Rapoport, Isaac Baer Levinsohn, and Avrom Ber Gotlober.

Indeed, when thinking of Krochmal's prominent pupils, Rapoport, with whom he had a long-running intellectual relationship that persisted over three decades and who was considered by some to be "the father of the Jewish *Wissenschaft* alongside Krochmal" (Graetz 1870, pp. 494–95), is the one name that outshines all the others.⁷⁸ Rapoport has won much acclaim in Jewish intellectual circles in both Western and Eastern Europe for his pioneering academic work on biographies of celebrated Jewish thinkers of the past (the so-called *Toledot*).⁷⁹ If one observes his historical apprehension of Philo more closely, one is immediately confronted with its various commonalities to Krochmal's. Reading, for example, Rapoport's seminal essay on the *paytan* 'El'azar Kalir published in *Bikurei ha-Ittim* in 1830, one notices his strikingly similar portrayal of Philo and the Essenes:

I have already established in my book *'Erekh Milim*, with strong evidence against the author of *Me'or 'Einayim* (chp. 3), that the Essene sect, which is mentioned in the books of Philo the Jew and Josephus, is not the [same as the] Boethusians mentioned in the *Shisha Sedarim*, since it is not remarked anywhere in Philo's or

Josephus's writings that the Essenes deny the Oral Torah in the explicit manner that this is said about the Sadducees. In his work *Quod omnis probus liber sit*, Philo wrote that all of their customs in each matter, which could exclusively be transmitted by means of Godly enthusiasm, were passed down to them from their forefathers. Similarly, in his work *De vita contemplativa*, Philo wrote that they have many ancient books discussing numerous sublime subject matters into which they delve and in which they immerse themselves. It is possible that those books were testaments of *Ma'aseh Ber'eshit* and *Merkavah* [. . .]. Hence, I thought it obvious that this sect is part of the sect of the Pharisees, differing merely by being people who are fiercer in their piety and their more ascetic life. They are [in agreement with] most of the wise Ḥasidim of antiquity found in the *Mishnayot*. The vast number of *Mishnayot* in chapter 6 of [M.] Avot are based on them. Therefore, Philo wrote in the abovementioned work about the [ascetic] grief-filled lives of these people who eat nothing but a slice of bread with salt and drink [only] a small quantity of water [M. Avot 6:4]. [. . .] I also thought it to be right that the Essenes be denoted as “the vatikin [who] would conclude the recitation of *Shema'* with sunrise” in *Shishah Sedarim* (B. Berakhot 9b), and there they were also called the “holy community of Jerusalem”. Various passages in Josephus and Philo reveal the Essenes' conformity to their prayer [rituals]. (Rapoport 1830, p. 118 n. 20; my translation)

This passage by Rapoport—who was pivotal to the dissemination of Philo's thought in his own right and also regarded himself as Philo's great defender against de' Rossi's denunciations of him⁸⁰—contains three remarkable parallels to Krochmal's image of Philo: (1) The writings of Philo and the Essenes/Therapeutae are an ancient source of authentic kabbalistic wisdom. (2) Philo and the Essenes/Therapeutae are not merely an ascetic and mystical offshoot of the Pharisean sect⁸¹ and the rabbinic tradition as a whole, but are specifically associated with the ancient Hasideans mentioned in the Mishnah.⁸² (3) Both rabbinic passages relating to ascetic and ceremonial aspects of Jewish faith that Rapoport adduces for his thesis (M. Avot 6:4 and B. Berakhot 9b) are also mentioned in Krochmal's “Dark Sayings of Ancient Times” for the same purpose.⁸³

When considering the book *Te'udah be-Yisra'el* by another renowned Jewish Enlightenment and critic of modern Hasidism close to Krochmal's intellectual circles, Isaac Baer Levinsohn—known as “Russia's Mendelssohn” due to his pivotal role in the propagation of the Maskilic worldview in the Russian-speaking realm⁸⁴—one can observe that an almost identical image of Philo as an Essenian sage emerges from it.⁸⁵ Like Krochmal and Rapoport, Levinsohn also construes the Essenes to be the true ancient Hasideans while leveling criticism against Chapter 3 of de' Rossi's *Imrei Binah*, in which the Essenes are portrayed as a heretical sect who deliberately deny oral tradition.⁸⁶ He draws support for his hypothesis by resorting to Abraham Zacuto's (1450–1510) historical account of the Jewish nation in *Sefer Yuhasin*, in which Zacuto purports that the Essenes are the Hasideans.⁸⁷

Krochmal's rabbinic image of Philo is also clearly echoed in Avrom Ber Gotlober's writings, a key figure of the Haskalah's Hebrew literature. In his work *Toledot ha-Kabbalah ve-ha-Hasidut*, which was published in 1869, he expounds his view of Philo in very clear terms, while in several instances explicitly adopting ideas from Chapter 12 of Krochmal's *Guide*. In Chapter 3 of this book, Gotlober dedicated an entire section to the thesis claiming that the Essenes were the original Hasideans and that the latter barely have any point of commonality with modern Hasidim (Gotlober 1869, pp. 30–37). The same is true of the Therapeutae, to whom Gotlober also devotes an entire section. As he argues, the Therapeutae were part of the Pharisean faction and also bore a strong resemblance to the ancient Hasideans as described in Tannaitic literature (Gotlober 1869, pp. 38–42). Within this framework, Gotlober goes on to accord Philo a prominent role in the last section of Chapter 4. Taking his cue from Chapter 12 of Krochmal's *Guide*, he assesses Philo's ancient

Jewish philosophy to be nothing short of the chief source for the kabbalistic system, which is, in turn, to be construed as the authentic system of the ancient Hasideans:

Behold that in the above words [Migr. 91] regarding the matter of the defilement of the Sabbath, we find statements which do not appear anywhere in the written tradition and which are taken from the oral tradition [*torah she-be-‘al-peh*], which Philo believed in, like a Pharisee. We have identified in his sayings the first principles of the *system of Hasidism* [*shitat ha-hasidut*]; namely, the striving after the *concealed and secret*, after the hidden and symbolic underlying the literal words of Scripture, like the soul veiled to the body [Migr. 93]. (Gotlober 1869, p. 42; my translation; emphasis in original)

The various coinciding elements between Krochmal’s rabbinic image of Philo and those of these three Eastern European Jewish Enlighteners clearly indicate that the *Guide’s* “Dark Sayings of Ancient Times” was instrumental in bringing about a new and innovative way of historically approaching the early rabbinic tradition as one that was closely intertwined with Jewish Alexandrian wisdom as primarily manifested in Philo’s historical and exegetical treatises. Furthermore, the alignment of Philo with the ancient Hasideans within an overall anti-Hasidic framework—as evinced by the writings of these three thinkers—points to him being highly relevant to the ongoing struggles between the Maskilim and modern Hasidism. By referring to Philo’s ancient works, Krochmal’s Maskilic counterparts could better historically contextualize their own spiritual crisis. They could depict their progressive stances not only as being merely rational and firmly rooted in the Jewish tradition, but also as battling a deviant phenomenon of the Jewish faith that went as far back as the origins of Jewish philosophy.

It is, of course, not easy to establish to what degree Krochmal formed these positions on his own, especially when taking into account his long-running affiliation with Rapoport, who was even more committed to rigorous scholarly investigation than Krochmal himself.⁸⁸ Yet even if we presuppose that Rapoport assisted Krochmal in the development of certain thought structures in this respect, one still needs to bear in mind that Rapoport himself acknowledges the seminal nature of Krochmal’s approach to Jewish history. For this reason, Rapoport repeatedly encouraged his teacher, as he discloses in his eulogy of him, to continue working on the *Guide*, which he seems to have had direct access to and intimate firsthand knowledge of (Rapoport 1841, pp. 46–48).

5. Conclusions

It might appear *prima facie* quite baffling as to how one single and highly fragmented Hebrew chapter on Jewish Alexandrian thought from nineteenth-century Galicia established one of the cornerstones of the modern scholarly understanding of Philo from the viewpoint of the Jewish tradition. Precisely this was achieved by one of the most enigmatic figures of modern Judaism, Nahman Krochmal, with his “Dark Sayings of Ancient Times”. Krochmal’s productive engagement with the subject, which reveals manifold links between Philo and the rabbis, dared to go much further than de’ Rossi’s *Light of the Eyes*—which ultimately remained quite ambivalent towards Philo and his Hellenized Judaism—and in doing so left an enduring mark on many significant Eastern and Western European Maskilim and *Wissenschaftler* (Klausner 1952, p. 194).

This paper has shown that the unusual historiographical enterprise of reviving Philo’s Jewish thought undertaken by Krochmal and his Eastern European Maskilic counterparts was by no means exhaustive in its scholarly merits and outreach. He also skillfully leveraged it as a counter-argument against heresy charges leveled against numerous Maskilim by the devotees of the swiftly encroaching Hasidism. Harnessing Philo in order to address the spiritual crisis provoked by the aberrant inclinations of the modern Hasidic mindset with which these thinkers were pronouncedly preoccupied assisted Krochmal in shielding the purified nature of Jewish faith in its complementary dialectical relation to concrete pious deeds. By turning to Philo’s Jewish ethics, he could demonstrate that the Maskilic line of thinking was not only anchored in ancient Jewish traditions in Alexandria, but also in

early rabbinic texts. Krochmal's references to Philo's thought allowed him to represent the Jewish tradition as being in keeping with the rational Maskilic viewpoint, ruling out any possibility of including the non-rational contemporary Hasidic movement. The historical depictions of Philo's writings indicated to Krochmal that the intimate spiritual crisis in which he was deeply immersed was actually part of a considerably wider paradigmatic historical crisis of the Jewish faith, which neglected the practical commandments in favor of highly speculative precepts. It is in Philo's Jewish thought that he discovers an adequate philosophical articulation of the unblemished Jewish solution to and position regarding this sort of spiritual crisis: the golden mean.

Philo's corpus enabled Krochmal to reanimate and expand on various aspects underlying the Tannaitic worldview, which the Mishnah typically lays out in aphoristic fashion. For example, Philo's systematic and detailed treatises provided him with the possibility of offering a historical presentation of the enigmatic group of the *Hasidim Ha-Ri'shonim* in a much more comprehensive and nuanced manner, accounting for both their positive and problematic features, while at the same time countering the Christian perceptions of the Essenes and the Therapeutae. Through this deepening of their historical Jewish consciousness, which was facilitated by Philo's body of work, Krochmal and his moderate Maskilic counterparts could assess the increasingly changing and crisis-ridden Jewish reality of their time and the radical elements of its corrosive potential with sober judgment. From this newly adapted critical perspective, Krochmal evaluated modern Hasidim as a departure from Judaism's golden mean;⁸⁹ a mean not only aptly delineated by the *Tanna'im*, but also by Philo and the Essenes/Therapeutae, whom he, in turn, construed as being part of the ancient Hasideans. Yet Philo, with his comprehensive moralistic thought and its emphasis on the golden mean, was eventually able to overcome the exceedingly speculative worldview of many of his fellow Hasideans, thus providing Krochmal's synoptic survey with an ancient precursor to the historical emergence of the exemplary Maskilic frame of mind. As Shmuel Feiner aptly notes, Krochmal construed "the Judaeo-Hellenistic centre in Alexandria" as a "symbol of an unparalleled exemplary period (the stage of 'power and achievement' of the second cycle)", which was "linked to the appearance of enlightened men who spread light, reason, and science, and fought against folly" (Feiner 2001, p. 124). This apt observation necessitates a supplementary remark: alongside these Jewish Alexandrian Enlighteners—with Philo serving as their exemplary representative—Krochmal also identified their Hasidean counterparts in Alexandria, the antinomian, lopsided *Schwärmer* who believed themselves to be nothing short of "disembodied souls [. . .] explor[ing] reality in its naked absoluteness" (PLCL 4:91).⁹⁰

In his seminal book *Imagined Hasidim: The Anti-Hasidic Writings of Joseph Perl*, Jonatan Meir offers a penetrating analysis of the critical attitude that Josef Perl (1773–1839)—a Maskil with whom Krochmal had very close relations—expressed towards modern Hasidism in his satirical literature. In this work, Meir sheds light on Josef Perl and his Maskilic circles' imagined, distorted representations of modern Hasidism as a social and spiritual movement of Eastern European Jewry (Meir 2013, p. 239). Indeed, the above analysis of Krochmal's "anti-Hasidic" Maskilic perception of Philo has also exposed this strong negative thrust. But this would be missing a substantial point, for our examination has demonstrated that this critical attitude towards the modern religious phenomenon of Hasidism as *Hithasdut* merely covers one substantial aspect of the subject matter. It does not account for the constructive aspect of their historiographical approaches towards true, ancient Hasideans and Tannaitic literature, which Krochmal and his intellectual circles were attempting to historically reconstruct and better comprehend with the assistance of the voluminous *Corpus Philonicum*. Focusing on Krochmal's inclusive attitude towards Jewish Hellenistic literature, this study has further helped to illuminate a common misconception that regards Eastern European Jewish Enlighteners as progressive thinkers who were seeking to radically reform the Jewish faith. On the contrary, by harking back to Philonic treatises, Krochmal, with his moderate Maskilic worldview, endeavored to

uncover the true nature of the early rabbinic tradition, to which he was uncompromisingly committed.⁹¹

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Notes

- ¹ See (Runia 1993, p. 15 n. 58).
- ² For further insightful discussions of de' Rossi's reception of Philo, see (Veltri 1995, pp. 372–93; Veltri 2018, pp. 48–51; Weinberg 1988, pp. 163–87; N. Cohen 2008, pp. 34–39; Marcus 1948, pp. 29–71; Rosenberg-Wohl 2014, pp. 109–38; Runia 1993, pp. 32–33; Amir 2018, pp. 237–38).
- ³ (Graetz 1870, pp. 484–85) (my translation). For a more in-depth examination of the emergence of the historical consciousness in the nineteenth century, see (Schorsch 1983, pp. 414–17, 425–26; Feiner 2001, pp. 71–156; Lehnardt 2007, pp. 363–88; Taubes 1963, pp. 150–64).
- ⁴ (Amir 2012, p. 113). The editing of the *Guide* was undertaken posthumously by none other than Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), and it was first published in 1851. For a thorough and insightful analysis of Zunz's role as the editor of the *Guide*, see (Schorsch 1986, pp. 116–17). See Zunz's depiction of Krochmal in his *Die Monatstage des Kalenderjahres, ein Andenken an Hingeshiedene* (Zunz 1872, p. 43).
- ⁵ For Hegel's influence on Krochmal, see (Rawidowicz 1928, pp. 535–82; Lehnardt 2012, pp. l–li; Harris 1991, pp. 113–44; Klausner 1952, pp. 205–14).
- ⁶ Although Krochmal scarcely completed any written work, he still managed to leave a mark on the Eastern European Haskalah that has in many respects remained unmatched. His tremendous impact came primarily to the fore through his charismatic pedagogical activity within his surrounding intellectual Jewish circles. For Krochmal's impact on Eastern European Maskilic circles, see (Klausner 1952, pp. 165–70; Rapoport 1841, pp. 41–44). For Rapoport's relationship with Krochmal, see (Strauss 2019b, pp. 209–11; Klausner 1952, pp. 221, 240, 245–46; Graetz 1870, p. 494).
- ⁷ Krochmal devotes two brief chapters of the *Guide* to the notion of the golden mean, Chapters 2 (*Ha-Shevilin*) and 4 (*Ha-Tokh*): see (Krochmal 2010, pp. 10–12, 16–17). For a more thorough analysis of this important theme, see (Amir 2018, pp. 81–86).
- ⁸ In the Mishnah, the Hasideans are depicted, for example, as waiting “an hour before they said the *Tefillah*, that they might direct their heart toward God” (M. Berakhot 5:1) or as dancing alongside the *'Anshei Ma'aseh* (men of good deeds) “with burning torches in their hands, singing songs and praises” (M. Sukkah 5:4). The English translations of the Mishnah in this article are taken from (Danby 1933). For discussions of the ancient Hasideans, whose nature and identity as a group remain obscure, and their links to Second Temple Judaism, see (Jost 1857, pp. 125–26, 174–79, 198–99, 207–9, 272; Kampen 1988; Kampen 1986, pp. 61–81; Simkovich 2018, pp. 165–66; Singer 1974; Daniélou 2014, pp. 28–29; Frankel 1853, pp. 30–40, 61–73; Ben Shalom 2008, pp. 78–81).
- ⁹ To avoid confusion, I will consistently use the term Hasideans to denote the ancient Jewish faction mentioned in rabbinic literature, and Hasidism, Hasidim, and Hasidic to denote the modern religious movement.
- ¹⁰ For a more extensive presentation of Hasidism, see (Biale et al. 2018; Wodziński 2018; Elior 2006; Talabardon 2016; Idel 1995).
- ¹¹ See Krochmal's letter to Samuel D. Luzzatto, in which he outlines the chief objective of the *Guide* in terms of an adequate response to the perplexing crises of his times: (Krochmal 2010, p. 425). For further analysis, see (Amir 2003, pp. 266–80, 294–95; Amir 2018, pp. 56–59).
- ¹² For a very detailed and extensive examination of Philo's reception history among the Church Fathers, see (Runia 1993).
- ¹³ For a more detailed examination of Christian perceptions of the Essenes and the Therapeutae, see (Taylor 2012, pp. 141–94; Taylor 2003, pp. 31–33; Philo of Alexandria 2020 [Taylor and Hay], (henceforth PACS), vol. 7, pp. 45–51; Inowlocki 2004, pp. 305–28). For an innovative and learned analysis of Philo's depiction of the Therapeutae and their symposia and what they disclose about Jewish identity within a cultural Roman framework, see (Niehoff 2010, pp. 95–116).

- 14 See Taylor's description of Christian scholarship on the Essenes in the nineteenth century in (Taylor 2012, pp. 3–5).
- 15 For an analysis of Hegel's Christocentric portrayal of Philo, see (Strauss 2019a, pp. 187–237; O'Regan 2008, pp. 101–27; Westerkamp 2009, pp. 91–144).
- 16 For a lucid and insightful depiction of Krochmal as the "middle-of-the-road maskil", see (Feiner 2001, pp. 115–25).
- 17 (Goetschel 1986, p. 383). As Goetschel argues, a further indication thereof is that Krochmal also applies Neander's approach to his account of Gnosticism in Chapter 15 of the *Guide*.
- 18 (Lachower 1951, pp. 233–42). For Philo's reception history among the scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, see (Niehoff 1999, pp. 9–28; Niehoff 2011, pp. 31–32; Sills 1984). Another notable section on Krochmal's understanding of Philo is found in the superb, recently published monograph of Yehoyada Amir, who also places emphasis on Krochmal's use of Dähne as a secondary source: (Amir 2018, pp. 254–61).
- 19 This letter was first published in a special issue of *Kerem Hemed* that included numerous letters from known Maskilim which Goldenberg had compiled (Krochmal 1839, pp. 269–70).
- 20 Krochmal's depiction of Philo's stance appears to draw upon Chapter 4 of de' Rossi's *Imrei Binah*, which also speaks of *Shemirat ha-Torot ba-fo'al* with respect to the very same section of Philo's *Migr.* (§§89–93): see (De' Rossi 1829, p. 56). His more nuanced understanding of Jewish law actually seems to echo the Mendelssohnian concept of the *Zeremonialgesetz* as "the bond which was to connect action with contemplation, life with theory" (Mendelssohn 1983, p. 99). Lachower also draws attention to this similarity (Lachower 1951, p. 262). For a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of Krochmal's approach to Halakha and its "striking degree of commonality" (p. 369) to that of Mendelssohn, see (Sacks 2016, pp. 354, 362–73).
- 21 For the Hasidic doctrine of *bittul ha-yesh* ("annihilation of reality"), see (Biale et al. 2018, pp. 5, 164, 777). It is important to note that Krochmal's critique of modern Hasidism as being antinomian in nature seems to be adopted from the clichéd portrayal of the Mitnaggdim, which was exaggerated for the sake of polemics. See (Biale et al. 2018, pp. 85–91). The Hasidic movement remained committed to Jewish ritual law and their special religious customs remained mostly confined to its limits (Biale et al. 2018, pp. 90, 92, 170, 355–56, 620, 797). For Krochmal's critique of the Hasidic movement of his days as outlined in the opening chapter of the *Guide*, see (Krochmal 2010, pp. 7–9). Feiner also touches on Krochmal's projection of this critical perception onto the Second Temple era: see (Feiner 2001, pp. 123–24).
- 22 See (Flusser 1968, p. 478).
- 23 (Krochmal 2010, pp. 432–36, 440–42). For more extensive discussions of Luzzatto's rejection of Maimonides and Ibn 'Ezra' in this context, see (Klausner 1952, pp. 74–75, 100–10; Barzilay 1969, pp. 101–5; Balsam-Geld 2017, pp. 278–79; Feiner 2004, p. 151; Feiner 2001, pp. 130–34, 148–49).
- 24 The English translation of Psalm 78:3 is taken from the NJPS version. For Krochmal's original Hebrew, see (Krochmal 2010, p. 165; my translation). Cf. Zunz's summary of the contents of the *Guide's* Chapter 12 in his introduction to the work: (Zunz 2010, p. iv).
- 25 For the widespread view of ancient Kabbalah as having originated in Alexandrian Jewish wisdom traditions, see (Kohler 2019, pp. 31–32, 37, 42–43, 163, 233, 249–51). For more in-depth examinations of *Ma'aseh Ber'eshit* and *Ma'aseh Merkavah* in their rabbinic and later kabbalistic meaning, see (Abrams 1998, pp. 329–45; Halperin 1980; Gottstein 2011, pp. 69–133; E. Wolfson 1993, pp. 13–44; Scholem 1965, pp. 1–83; Afterman 2016, pp. 49–59). Chapter 12 of the *Guide* appears to have exerted an influence on other Maskilic engagements with Philo's writings: for example, the title of Josef Flesch's book *Katot Minni Kedem*, comprising a Hebrew translation of Philo's *Contempl.* and *Prob.* 75–87, is also predicated on Psalm 78:2–3. For a more detailed explanation of this similarity, see (Strauss 2019b, p. 211).
- 26 For Philo's reception in Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah, see (E. Wolfson 1996, pp. 99–106; Morlok and Strauss forthcoming).
- 27 See (Goetschel 1986, pp. 374–75; Klausner 1952, p. 194).
- 28 Krochmal's depiction resembles Immanuel Wolf's (1799–1847) formulation of the chief research objectives of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in his famous article "Ueber den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judenthums" (Wolf 1822, pp. 23–24). It is noteworthy that Wolf accords Philo and Hellenistic Jewish literature an important role in the historical development of the Jewish religion: see (Wolf, pp. 7, 8, 11). For further analysis, see (Niehoff 1999, pp. 11–14). Also see (Amir 2018, pp. 242–43, 357).
- 29 Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy might have impacted Krochmal in this respect. Cf. (Strauss 2019a, pp. 177–85; "Philons Wirkungsgeschichte: Vom Neuplatonismus über Kabbala und Gnosis bis hin zur jüdischen und christlichen Philosophie").
- 30 (Anonymous 1821a, pp. 22–23). M. Pelli believes that its authorship is to be ascribed to the journal's editor Salomon Jacob Cohen (1771–1845): see (Pelli 2005, p. 285). Also see (Anonymous 1821b, p. 13). Cf. (Amir 2018, p. 240).

- For a more detailed explanation of Rapoport's intention, see (Strauss 2019b, pp. 205–8, 223).
- Mendelssohn's commissioned translation of Menasseh ben Israel's *Vindication of the Jews* (1782)—translated into Hebrew in 1813 by Samson Bloch Halevi (1784–1845)—seems to have played a significant role in the mediation of the image of Philo as an ancient thinker who personifies Maskilic values and ideas. In this apologetic treatise, Menasseh repeatedly draws on Philo's *Legat.* and *Spec.* in order to reinforce the thesis that Judaism is, in essence, universal and tolerant. For further analysis, see (Strauss forthcoming a). Rapoport and Flesch are also worth mentioning in this respect, as they believed that scholarship on Philo could be used to convey the Maskilic outlook and incite Eastern and Central European Jewish communities to become more pious and balanced. For further discussion of this theme, see (Strauss 2019b, pp. 205–6; Amir 2018, pp. 240–41, 255). The Maskil Mordecai Aaron Günzburg (alias RaMAG; 1795–1846), who in 1836 translated Philo's *Legat.* into Hebrew from Johann F. Eckhardt's German rendition of the text, also exemplifies this trend. As Eli Lederhendler argues, Günzburg viewed Philo "as the ideal maskil: imbued with love for his people and capable of defending them with reason, worldly knowledge, rhetorical skill, and the personal stature that comes with great wisdom" (Lederhendler 1989, p. 107). Also see (Amir 2018, p. 241). For a more detailed examination of Günzburg's reception of Philo, see (Strauss forthcoming b).
- The English translation that I have drawn on and slightly modified is taken from (Mendelssohn 2018, pp. 284–85). It is important to note that Mendelssohn, in turn, based his passage on de' Rossi's *Light of the Eyes* (De' Rossi 1829, p. 82). Mendelssohn did not only draw on Philo's testimony in relation to the emergence of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (*Mos.* 2.26–40), but also in two further significant instances in his *Bi'ur*: (1) Mendelssohn utilizes *Mos.* 1.84–88 for his elucidation of the meaning of the colored wool described by the term *argaman* (Exodus 25:4), and (2) he refers to Philo's reading of the poem Song of the Well (*Shirat ha-Be'er*; Numbers 21:18) in *Mos.* 1.256–257. For a more extensive analysis of this theme, see Strauss forthcoming a. For Mendelssohn's decisive impact on Krochmal, see (Harris 1991, pp. 100–101 n. 54; Rapoport 1841, p. 44; Klausner 1952, p. 154; Graetz 1870, p. 483).
- Also see (Schorsch 1986, p. 288).
- (Michaelis 1799, p. 495; my translation). For an extensive and very learned presentation of Philonic ethics, see (Lévy 2009, pp. 146–71).
- For the importance of *musar* for Krochmal, see, for example, (Krochmal 2010, p. 441). On the general role of religious ethics in Krochmal's thought, see the penetrating examination in (Sacks 2016, pp. 352–53, 362–73).
- For further scholarly discussions on this theme see, for example, (Morlok 2020, pp. 300–33; Lohmann 2019, pp. 58–73, 244, 248–50; Bor 2001, pp. 48–63).
- (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, p. 76; my translation). In the second volume, Dähne also adduces similar interpretations of Philo and the rabbis (Dähne 1834, vol. 2, pp. 14–15), which Krochmal puts to use in the *Guide*: (Krochmal 2010, p. 176). This use is also alluded to by Andreas Lehnardt in the German edition: see (Lehnardt 2012, p. 419 n. 1).
- The main thesis of Neander's work is that Philo's dualistic systematic thought—which posits an unfathomable, hidden, and transcendent God (τὸ ὄν/ὁ ὤν), on the one hand, and His revelatory aspect, the Logos, on the other—was adapted by all of the emerging doctrines of Gnosticism (Neander 1818, p. 8–11). On Krochmal's understanding of Gnosticism, see the comprehensive presentation of (Amir 2018, pp. 258–60, 262–88). Cf. (Brakke 2010, pp. 59–62). Gnosticism is customarily understood as a religious syncretistic school of thought of the second and third centuries of the Common Era of the Greco-Roman realm, which incorporates a wide array of religious and philosophical precepts into overarching, dualistic systems of belief. For the scholarly category of 'Gnosticism' and its problematic features, see (Brakke 2010, pp. 1–28). For a broad description of the Gnostic tradition, see (Berger and Wilson 1984, pp. 519–50).
- See (Krochmal 2010, p. 184). Lachower also concedes this point: see (Lachower 1951, p. 235). Cf. (Strauss 2019a, pp. 205–6).
- He draws on M. Avot 2:6, 2:8–9, 2:11, 2:19, 3:2, 3:9–10, 3:13, 3:17, 3:21, 4:11; 4:21, 4:28, 5:13–14, 6:4. For a detailed analysis of M. Avot and Philo's description of the Jewish sects, see (Niehoff 2017, pp. 469–71). Cf. (Philo of Alexandria 2020, PACS 7:153, 274, 347). For Krochmal's understanding of rabbinic tradition, see, for example, Chapter 5, "The Rabbinic Tradition", in (Harris 1991, pp. 206–57). Cf. also (Lehnardt 2002, pp. 105–26).
- Cf. Safrai, who in contrast to Krochmal understands the Hasideans as men prioritizing praxis over theoretical studies: (Safrai 1985, pp. 133–54).
- (Wessely 1782, third page; the text is unpaginated). For further analysis, see (Pelli 1978, pp. 43–55; Pelli 1974, pp. 222–38).
- Vayikra Rabba, *zav*, par. 9, to Leviticus 7:11 (ed. Margoliot, 2:179).
- This is reminiscent of Perl's programmatic portrayal of the Vilna Ga'on. For an insightful discussion of this topic, see (Meir 2013, pp. 201–3).

- 47 For more on this topic, see (Harris 1991, pp. 6–12, 17–18; Mahler 1985, pp. 27, 32–37, 41, 50–52, 58–59, 66, 80–81, 122; Feiner 2001, pp. 117–19; Lehnardt 2012, pp. xvii–xxi; Liss 2020, pp. 244–46; Gruschka and Aptroot 2010, pp. 94–95; Meir 2013).
- 48 The designation of *Hithasdut* can be traced back to the Mitnaggdic critique of Hasidism (Biale et al. 2018, pp. 7, 86). Accounting, for example, for such Hasidic factions such as Habad with “its singular intellectuality”, (Biale et al. 2018, p. 125) refutes, to a large extent, Krochmal’s negative perception of Hasidism as being utterly irrational. For further analysis of Habad’s emphasis on intellectual endeavors, see (Biale et al. 2018, p. 131; Meir 2013, pp. 227–28; Meir 2017, p. 305; Elijor 1993, pp. 159–72). For an insightful presentation of the image of Habad Hasidism among Maskilim, see (Meir 2017, pp. 297–315). Krochmal’s entirely negative apprehension of modern Hasidism as a fanatical sect is a recurring theme of his correspondence: see (Krochmal 2010, pp. 413, 416–18, 425, 430–31, 432). For further discussions relating to this specific Maskilic critique of Hasidism, see (Harris 1991, p. 17; Meir 2013, pp. 126–27, 178, 185, 189, 193, 196, 216, 221, 225–26; Krochmalnik 2003, pp. 210–11; Schulte 2002, pp. 138–58; Freudenthal 2019, pp. 432–36).
- 49 See (Biale et al. 2018, p. 160 [“Since early Hasidism, as well as its later manifestations, was never a monolithic movement, its leaders did not adhere to a single set of ideas or practices”]). For an extensive description of the broad variation of nineteenth-century Hasidism, see (Biale et al. 2018, pp. 291–400). For further in-depth discussions of this monolithic perception of modern Hasidism that was common in the Eastern European Haskalah, see, for example (Meir 2013, p. 80). For recent literature on modern Hasidism and its conflicts with the maskilim, see (Meir 2016, pp. 60–94; Wodziński 2005; Biale et al. 2018, esp. pp. 387, 478–501, 531, 547–48, 808; Werses 1990, pp. 91–109; Werses 1999, pp. 65–88; Feiner 1999, pp. 95–128).
- 50 (Biale et al. 2018, p. 98). For the influence of the Mitnaggdic critique of the Hasidim on Maskilim, see (Biale et al. 2018, pp. 94, 478, 481, 483; Mahler 1985, pp. 42–43).
- 51 On this point, I am using the second part of the variant of Wolf’s edition, which adds *havurot ha-iss²i* (Krochmal 2010, p. 168).
- 52 PACS 7:80. Cf. ((Philo of Alexandria 1929–1962, (henceforth PLCL), vol. 9, p. 133)).
- 53 PACS 7:80. Cf. PLCL 9:133 (“only after six days [...] bring themselves to taste such sustenance as is absolutely necessary”).
- 54 This is also emphasized by Dähne (1834, vol. 1, p. 447). See (Amir 2018, p. 251).
- 55 Krochmal supposes that the mishnaic term *zokheh* for victory (*nizahon*) originates from the Aramaic and that it is also employed metaphorically to mean “according to this ethical system that any laborer’s work is a wrestling battle and victory over the sensual matter and carnal lust” (Krochmal 2010, p. 171; my translation). Consulting W. Gesenius’s *Hebräisches und chaldäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (Gesenius 1834, pp. 542–43), we find the second metaphorical definition of the biblical adjective *zakh* to be “pure in the moral sense” (*rein* [...] *im moralischen Sinne*). For his supposed use of Gesenius’s dictionary, see (Lehnardt 2012, p. xlvii). In fact, in Mishnaic Hebrew, the term usually means the judicial right over property, see (Steinberg 1960, p. 205). Cf. (Jastrow 1903, p. 398): “לזכות בו to deserve divine reward through him”. In tractate Avot, there are two sayings that employ this term metaphorically: see M. Avot 5:18 and 6:1.
- 56 (Krochmal 2010, p. 171; my translation). Cf. S. Maimon’s depiction of the ancient Hasideans in (Maimon 1988, p. 102).
- 57 (Krochmal 2010, p. 171). It is interesting to note that Salomon Maimon’s positive evaluation of contemporary Hasidim partially rests on their deviation from the ancient Hasideans in this respect, inasmuch as they partake in worldly pleasure: “They asserted that true piety was in no way a matter of abusing the flesh, for doing so also weakened the soul’s power and destroyed the spiritual calm and good cheer needed for attaining the knowledge and love of God. On the contrary, the argued, one should satisfy all bodily needs and embrace all sensual pleasures, insofar as they are necessary for our emotional development” (Maimon 2018, p. 86). For further explanation, see (Biale et al. 2018, pp. 174–81).
- 58 See, for instance, *Prob.* 88; *Virt.* 193; *Congr.* 164. For further analysis of Philo’s athletic metaphors, see (Svebakken 2012, pp. 99–102; , [henceforth PACS vol. 4, pp. 158, 198, 204–6, 236, 247, 334]B97-religions-1190691; Pfitzner 1967, pp. 38–48; Arnold 2014, pp. 44, 50; Sterling 1994, pp. 689, 692–96). For an innovative interpretation of M. Avot in connection with this specific depiction of the Essenes echoing Roman Stoic terminology, see (Niehoff 2017, pp. 469–71).
- 59 For the soul’s battle with the passions as a common theme of Kabbalah and Hasidism and its Graeco-Arabic sources, see (Idel 2009, pp. 62–96).
- 60 Also see (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, 360).

- (Krochmal 2010, pp. 168–70). For this Tannaitic hierarchical conception of virtues and its pervasive use within early modern *musar* literature, see Koch’s insightful depiction in (Koch 2015, p. 53).
- “R. Hanina b. Dosa said: He whose fear of sin comes before his wisdom, his wisdom endures; but he whose wisdom comes before his fear of sin, his wisdom does not endure. He used to say: He whose works exceed his wisdom, his wisdom endures; but he whose wisdom exceeds his works, his wisdom does not endure”.
- See, for example (Krochmal 2010, p. 172): “she-lo nahshov she-’efshar [. . .] she-yiheyeh ha-ḥasid ba’al ha-mada’ meikel be-ma’asim”.
- As Safrai justifiably notes, the Ḥasidim in rabbinic literature seem to be identified with the men of deeds (‘*Anshei Ma’aseh*’) (Safrai 1985, pp. 144–54).
- This attitude is also evinced in Krochmal’s reference to the rabbinic designations for God, which in his view are “taken from the Hellenistic Alexandrians”: see (Krochmal 2010, p. 171).
- Krochmal also refers to a saying ascribed to him in M. Avot 3:11 (“Any assembling together that is for the sake of Heaven shall in the end be established, but any that is not for the sake of Heaven shall not in the end be established”), while pointing out that he might be alluding to the Essenes: (Krochmal 2010, p. 168). Cf. ‘*Erekh Milin*, where Rapoport attempts to point out exactly the same fact by resorting to Yoḥanan Ha-Sandlar see (Rapoport 1852, p. 102): “And still we may learn from this that there was also a famous Tanna’ from Alexandria, although he left it to study in the Yeshivot of the land of Israel” (my translation). See (Amir 2018, p. 251).
- See (Belkin 1989, p. 6 n. 2).
- (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, p. 399; emphasis in original). Cf. (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, p. 417).
- (Krochmal 2010, pp. 177–78). For the German translation of *Fug.* 25–36, see (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, pp. 413–16). Krochmal also translates *Migr.* 89–92 into Hebrew see (Krochmal 2010, p. 178), again using Dähne’s German rendition see (Dähne 1834, vol. 1, pp. 66–67). For a discussion of this passage in connection with rabbinic literature, see (Urbach 1969, pp. 255, 263–64; Belkin 1940, pp. 11–13; S. Cohen 2007, pp. 129–30; Naiweld 2015, pp. 421–22).
- For further analysis of the relationship between the contemplative and practical modes of life in Philo, see (Calabi 2008, pp. 155–84).
- Krochmal explains this saying in the following manner: “haynu she-ra’ui le-hakdim be-madregat ha-’oved be-ma’aseh (ὁσιότης), ve-’aḥar lavo’ le-madregat ha-ḥasid ha-mesalek ‘azmo mi-ma’asi” (Krochmal 2010, p. 169).
- (Krochmal 2010, p. 169; my translation). Interestingly enough, the famous historian Y. Baer also made a very similar and in-depth comparison: see (Baer 1953, pp. 95, 97, esp. 103–5).
- He also adduces and interprets an analogous metaphorical image of a tree symbolizing the righteous individuals (*zadikim*) from a *baraita*’ in B. Kiddushin 40b attributed to El’azar bar ṣadok along similar lines: see (Krochmal 2010, pp. 169–70).
- For further analysis of this dependency, see (Runia 1986, pp. 324–29).
- This is an obvious allusion to Neander’s treatment of Philo: see (Neander 1818, p. 3).
- (Rawidowicz 1971, p. 263). Cf. (Lehnardt 2012, pp. xlix–l).
- S. Maimon also alludes to the contrasting features between the ancient and modern Ḥasidim: see (Maimon 1988, pp. 102–3).
- For further analysis of Rapoport, see (Barzilay 1969; Klausner 1952, pp. 215–81). For a succinct description of Rapoport’s biography, see also (Brämer 2007).
- See (Barzilay 1969, pp. 36, 50; Feiner 2001, p. 112; Klausner 1952, pp. 236–37).
- For a more detailed examination of Rapoport’s reception of Philo, see (Strauss 2019b, pp. 201–26). Also see (Ruderman 2020, pp. 172–73).
- It is interesting to note that a similar stance is also advanced in (H. Wolfson 1962, vol. 1, pp. 56–59, 188–89).
- As Taylor observes, Graetz also regarded the Essenes to be the same as the Ḥasidim: see (Taylor 2003, pp. 5–6).
- (Krochmal 2010, pp. 171, 174). Cf. (Philo of Alexandria 2020, PACS 7:347).
- (Meir 2019, pp. 237–57; Haußig 2003, p. 214; Ruderman 2020, pp. 144–45).
- For a depiction of Levinsohn’s relationship to Krochmal, see (Klausner 1952, p. 167).
- (Levinsohn 1828, p. 55). A very similar and more detailed depiction with explicit reference to Krochmal is found in Gotlobler’s *Toledot ha-Kabbalah ve-ha-Ḥasidut* (Gotlobler 1869, pp. 30–38, 40, 42). For Levinsohn’s historical study of the Kabbalah and its links to his anti-Hasidic polemics, see (Meir 2019, pp. 140–57).
- (Zacuto 1717, p. 104). See (Taylor 2003, pp. 5–6, 27, 90–91, 187–88; Baer 1953, pp. 98, 103; Jacobs 1957, pp. 146–48; Philo of Alexandria 2015, p. 379 n. 127).
- See, for example (Graetz 1870, pp. 495–96).
- Hasidism does in fact put emphasis on the balance between theory and practice: (Biale et al. 2018, pp. 160, 183).

- ⁹⁰ See Krochmal's Hebrew translation and reference to this section: (Krochmal 2010, pp. 178, 435). For further analysis, see (Daniélou 2014, pp. 85–87).
- ⁹¹ See (Harris 1991, pp. 273 n. 77, 309, 317–18; Feiner 2001, p. 129; Klausner 1952, p. 158).

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