



**The Fate of Josephus's *Antiquitates Judaicae* 13.171–173:  
Ancient Judean Philosophy in Context**

by [Ken Penner](#)

**Introduction**

***The Problem***

Josephus is our main source of information about the Jewish “sects” in the Second Temple period. At various points in his writings we find the characteristics of individual sects described, but on three occasions he specifically includes a comparison of the three sects, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, and in all three instances, the views of Fate and Free Will are the distinguishing feature.<sup>1</sup> In fact in *Antiquitates Judaicae* 13.171–173, the views of Fate are the *only* criterion by which the three “philosophies” are distinguished:

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<sup>1</sup> The three locations are *B.J.* 2.162–166; *A.J.* 13.171–173; *A.J.* 18.12–15.

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Κατὰ δὲ τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον τρεῖς αἰρέσεις τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἦσαν, αἱ περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων διαφόρως ὑπελάμβανον, ἧ μὲν Φαρισαίων ἔλεγετο, ἡ δὲ Σαδδουκαίων, ἡ τρίτη δὲ Ἐσσηνῶν.

[172] οἱ μὲν οὖν Φαρισαῖοι τινὰ καὶ οὐ πάντα τῆς εἰμαρμένης ἔργον εἶναι λέγουσιν, τινὰ δ' ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ὑπάρχειν συμβαίνειν τε καὶ μὴ γίνεσθαι.

τὸ δὲ τῶν Ἐσσηνῶν γένος πάντων τὴν εἰμαρμένην κυρίαν ἀποφάνεται καὶ μηδὲν ὃ μὴ κατ' ἐκείνης ψήφον ἀνθρώποις ἀπαντᾶν.

[173] Σαδδουκαῖοι δὲ τὴν μὲν εἰμαρμένην ἀναιροῦσιν οὐδὲν εἶναι ταύτην ἀξιοῦντες οὐδὲ κατ' αὐτὴν τὰ ἀνθρώπινα τέλος λαμβάνειν, ἅπαντα δὲ ἐφ' ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς κείσθαι, ὡς καὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν αἰτίους ἡμᾶς γινομένους καὶ τὰ χεῖρω παρὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀβουλίαν λαμβάνοντας.

ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τούτων ἀκριβεστέραν πεποίημαι δὴ λωσιν ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ βίβλῳ τῆς Ἰουδαϊκῆς πραγματείας.

At this time, there were three schools of the Judeans, which thought differently about human actions, of which one was called of Pharisees, another of Sadducees, and the third of Essenes.

Thus the Pharisees would say that some things but not all things are the work of Fate, yet that some things are upon ones' selves to take place or not to happen.

But the group of the Essenes declares Fate mistress of all, and that nothing which is not according to her decree comes to pass for people.

But Sadducees, deny Fate, esteeming her to be nothing, nor her to receive the end of human things, but rather that all things depend upon us, so that we become responsible for good things, receiving misfortunes by our own thoughtlessness.

But about these things, I have made a more careful exposition in the second book of The Jewish History.<sup>2</sup>

Opinions as to the historical value of this description have varied dramatically. On one hand, D. Flusser could say Josephus' description of the Pharisees "need not be disputed,

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<sup>2</sup> The translation is mine.

since it offers a complete and interesting outlook,<sup>3</sup> and at the other extreme, G. F. Moore could claim that Josephus here is totally misleading: “The way readers would have understood Josephus is foreign to all Jewish thinking we know anything about.”<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, interpreters of Josephus have offered widely differing opinions regarding Josephus’ source for this description. The question of whether the report comes directly from Nicolaus of Damascus, some other Jewish source,<sup>5</sup> or from Josephus himself has been as disputed as that of whether Josephus was influenced in his description by Stoicism, Platonism,<sup>6</sup> popular astrology,<sup>7</sup> or Jewish theological debates of the time.

Very few scholars have succeeded in moving beyond the two main preoccupations in Josephus study: source criticism and historical questing. The former tendency dominated Josephan studies from about 1870–1920, and the latter has been dominant

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<sup>3</sup> David Flusser, "The Jewish Religion in the Second Temple Period," *Society and Religion in the Second Temple Period* (Jerusalem, 1977), 9.

<sup>4</sup> George Foot Moore, "Fate and Free Will in the Jewish Philosophies according to Josephus," *Harvard Theological Review* 22 (1929): 382–383.

<sup>5</sup> Gustav Hölscher, "Josephus," *Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1916), 9:1934-2000.

<sup>6</sup> Shlomo Pines, "A Platonistic Model for Two of Josephus' Accounts of the Doctrine of the Pharisees Concerning Providence and Man's Freedom of Action." *Immanuel* 7(1977), 38-43.

<sup>7</sup> Luther H. Martin, "Josephus' Use of *Heimarmene* in the *Jewish Antiquities* XIII, 171-3, *Numen* 28 (1981), 127-137.

since then.<sup>8</sup> These approaches to Josephus' writings are problematic because they ignore the literary question which methodologically must precede them: What was Josephus trying to say?<sup>9</sup>

***Why address the problem now?***

Granted, the tendency of Josephan scholarship to avoid the question of Josephus' intention can be excused during most of the last century. Basic tools such as concordances, necessary for literary analysis, were lacking until recent decades, as were annotated bibliographies.<sup>10</sup> Even the English translation in the Loeb Classical Library was only completed in 1965.<sup>11</sup> But possibly the most comprehensively significant development, building on these previous achievements, is the Brill Josephus Project, a voluminous commentary and translation series of Josephus' works. Its general editor, Steve Mason, affirmed, "we are now beginning, after two millennia of acquaintance with Josephus, to ask about the shape, coherence, and significance of the *Antiquities* as a

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<sup>8</sup> Steve Mason, "Josephus and Judaism," *Encyclopedia of Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 2:546.

<sup>9</sup> Steve Mason notes, "There is a new awareness abroad that we cannot *use* Josephus for historical work until we have some confidence about his meaning in context" ("Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*," *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary* [Leiden, Brill, 2000], xvi).

<sup>10</sup> For example, K. H. Rengstorff's *Complete Concordance* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), the computer tools provided by the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae and the Perseus Project at Tufts University, and the bibliographies compiled by Louis Feldman and the Münster Josephus Project\*.

<sup>11</sup> However, the early volumes are already very dated.

composition.”<sup>12</sup> With Mason’s outline of a coherent structure, audience, and purpose for the *Antiquities*, along with the bibliographic and concordance tools, we are now in a better position to inquire into the meaning Josephus intended for *A.J.* 13.171–173 in its context.

### ***The Questions***

The literary context of *A.J.* 13.171–173 has been a conundrum ever since George Foot Moore remarked that “the paragraph has no connection with the preceding (Jonathan’s letter to the Lacedaemonians and the reception of his overtures) nor with the following narrative (the plans and movements of Demetrius’ generals).”<sup>13</sup> But some of its other contexts (in the broader sense: linguistic, philosophical, rhetorical, and historical) are equally unclear. As noted above, the questions of philosophical influences and historical value are still open, though they must be asked in conjunction with the literary questions. And these questions further depend on others regarding Josephus’ vocabulary and purpose. As a result, the following list of questions will guide the present discussion of the contexts of *A.J.* 13.171–173:

What are the relationships and differences among words Josephus uses for Fate and its associated ideas?

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<sup>12</sup> Steve Mason, “Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*,” *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, Brill, 2000): xvi.

<sup>13</sup> Moore, “Fate and Free Will,” 371.

On which influences is Josephus drawing in his presentation of the various views of Fate?

Why does Josephus choose to distinguish the sects here by their views of Fate?

Why place this description here? What purpose does it serve in this context?

What historical conclusions can we derive from Josephus' description of the sects' views of Fate?

In an attempt to address these questions, I will (1) outline the results of word studies on words Josephus uses for the idea of Fate, (2) describe parallels to Josephus' description of the Judean sects, (3) offer an explanation why Fate was a particularly appropriate criterion to distinguish the sects, (4) suggest a purpose for this paragraph in its present location, and (5) offer some conclusions as to the historical value of this paragraph for understanding the sects of Second Temple Judaism.

### **Towards a Solution**

#### ***Linguistic Context: The relationships among Josephus' words for Fate***

In Greek philosophy and myth, the words in the semantic domain covered by the English words Fate, Destiny, Providence, Fortune, and Chance included

τύχη, εἰμαρμένη, χρεών, πεπρωμένη, πρόνοια, ἀνάγκη, δαίμων, μοιρα, and αἶσα.

The confusion regarding the meaning Josephus intended for the word εἰμαρμένη here has been amplified by various suggestions that words in this semantic domain (θεός,

τὸ θεῖον, τὸ χρεῶν, τὸ πεπρωμένον, πρόνοια, τύχη) are synonyms.<sup>14</sup> Not all of these words can be interchangeable, and plenty of scholars have in fact made distinctions between these words, with similarly conflicting conclusions.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> To illustrate this confusion, here is a list of alleged equivalences: Josephus uses εἰμαρμένη and θεός interchangeably (Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*, [Leiden: Brill, 1991], 209), τὸ θεῖον is equivalent to τὸ χρεῶν (Moore, “Fate and Free Will,” 389), which is a synonym for τὸ πεπρωμένον (Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998], 196), which is identified with the will of God (Ludwig Wächter, “Die unterschiedliche Haltung der Pharisäer, Sadduzäer und Essener zur Heimarmene nach dem Bericht des Josephus,” *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistgeschichte* 21 [1969], 97B114), which is identified with εἰμαρμένη (Wächter, “Haltung,” 130), which is equivalent to πρόνοια (Feldman, *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible*, 194–195), which is providence, which is referred to by τὸ χρεῶν, (Harold W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in The Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1976), 101–102), and finally, “Josephus more or less equates God with Providence, Fate (εἰμαρμένη) and Fortune (τύχη). At least, these are for him the executive aspects of God” (Mason, “Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*,” xxx–xxxii).

<sup>15</sup> Moore distinguished τὸ χρεῶν from both τύχη and εἰμαρμένη (Moore, “Fate and Free Will,” 388), and Attridge concluded it does not refer to cosmic power apart from God (Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History*, 101–102). Wächter denied the identification of Fate with God. He distinguished εἰμαρμένη from the will of God in *A.J.* 19, as Squires did Fate from both providence and the will of God. (J. T. Squires, “Fate and Free Will in Hellenistic Histories and Luke-Acts,” *Ancient History in a Modern University*, [Sydney: Macquarie University, Ancient History & Documentary Research Ctr, 1998], 133). Attridge likewise separated εἰμαρμένη from πρόνοια (in later Greek philosophy), as Sandmel did for Philo (Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979], 101) and Martin did for

I will not address the relationships among *all* these words in this paper. Instead, I will focus on the two words with the most striking similarity to εἰμαρμένη in Josephan usage, χρεῶν and πεπρωμένη, before turning to a discussion of Josephus' use of εἰμαρμένη itself. I will argue that Josephus uses the words χρεῶν and πεπρωμένη synonymously with εἰμαρμένη in most cases to refer to the limit of a life-span, except for in the schools passages such as *A.J.* 13.171–173.

### *Χρεῶν*

The twelve instances of the word χρεῶν, most literally translated as *necessity*, occur in three clusters in Josephus' works: *B.J.* 1, *B.J.* 5-6, and *A.J.* 7-8. In every instance, it is associated with death. In *A.J.* 7.383, David realizes he is about to die and is going to τὸ χρεῶν. In *A.J.* 8.307 Basanes is overtaken by τοῦ χρεῶν and buried. In *A.J.* 8.409, 412 and 419, τὸ χρεῶν make a false prophet appear true in order to hasten Achab's end: it finds him on the battlefield and overcomes him. In *B. J.* 1.233, τὸ χρεῶν derides Malichus' hopes, and he is stabbed through. In *B. J.* 1.275 τὸ χρεῶν has outstripped Herod's zeal, since Phasael is dead. In *B. J.* 5.355 τὸ χρεῶν involves both innocent and guilty in a common ruin. In *B. J.* 5.514 many go to their tombs ere τὸ χρεῶν is upon them. In *B. J.* 5.572 τὸ χρεῶν blinds the rebels and is imminent for the city. In *B. J.* 6.49

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Josephus (Martin, "Josephus' Use of *Heimarmene*," 135). Dillon separated Chance from Fate in Greek philosophy (John M. Dillon, "Fate, Greek Conception of." *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, [New York: Doubleday, 1992] 2:776-778), but Feldman denied that Josephus even used εἰμαρμένη as Fate in the Stoic sense (Feldman, [1984, 432]).

one's end is something everyone must surrender τὸ χρεῶν. Finally, *B. J.* 6.314 sums up Josephus' usage: it is impossible for men to escape τὸ χρεῶν, one's destruction.

### ***Πεπρωμένη and Πεπρωμενον***

Like τὸ χρεῶν, the word pair πεπρωμένη and πεπρωμενον occur in three groups: *A.J.* 10, *A.J.* 19, and *C. Ap.* 1. Also like τὸ χρεῶν, these two words are associated with death. In *A.J.* 10.76, Josiah is urged on by πεπρωμένης in order to destroy him. In *A.J.* 10.246,<sup>16</sup> Baltasarēs blames himself and πεπρωμένη for the prophecy of his destruction. In *A.J.* 19.347 Agrippa is under a sentence of death and accepts τὴν πεπρωμένην as God wills it. Only the references in *Against Apion* (1.247, 266) are slightly different from this pattern, in that they are used as attributive adjectives, not as substantives. Yet even there they limit a time period, though not of a person's life; the thirteen years of banishment are πεπρωμένοι.

### ***Είμαρμένη***

Now we turn our attention to the word for Fate used in *A.J.* 13.171–173. Again, sixteen of the twenty occurrences of εἴμαρμένη in Josephus are clustered, in four places: *B.J.* 1–2 (5 times); *B.J.* 4 (twice); *B.J.* 6 (5 times); *A.J.* 12–13 (4 times). And again, the association with death is clear in most cases.

In *B.J.* 1.662 Herod anticipates τὴν εἴμαρμένη by attempting suicide. It is εἴμαρμένη that decreed Ananus and his guards should perish in *B.J.* 4.297. In *B.J.* 6.85,

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<sup>16</sup> Marcus has ἀνάγκης in the text, but πεπρωμένης and πεπρωμένης ἀνάγκης as variant readings, in manuscripts P<sup>1</sup>LV and SP<sup>2</sup> respectively.

Julianus, being mortal, can not escape εἰμαρμένη and dies despite his bravery. In *B.J.* 6.108 Josephus offers advice to save those condemned by God, in spite of εἰμαρμένη. In *B.J.* 6.267 the temple, like living beings, can not escape εἰμαρμένη and is destroyed. In *B.J.* 6.428 the whole nation has been shut up in the city by εἰμαρμένη and everyone is either killed or captured. In *A.J.* 16.397 εἰμαρμένη is blamed for the deaths of Herod's sons. In *A.J.* 19.347 a dying Agrippa says εἰμαρμένη refutes those who had called him immortal. In *C. Ap.* 2.245 Zeus is at the mercy of εἰμαρμένη and so cannot rescue his offspring from death.

Even when εἰμαρμένη is not an absolute substantive, that is, even when it is modified by or is modifying another word, it can be associated with death or destruction. In *A.J.* 12.279, on his deathbed, Matthatias tells his sons, “I am about to go τὴν εἰμαρμένην πορείαν.” In *B.J.* 6.250 ἡ εἰμαρμένη ἡμέρα has arrived for the destruction of the temple. In *B. J.* 1.628 Herod weeps over τὴν ἄδικον εἰμαρμένην, that δαίμων τις is bent on destroying him. Only in *B.J.* 4.622 does there seem to be a special case in which a modified εἰμαρμένη does not appear to be associated with death or destruction; there Vespasian suspects that it was not without divine providence that things went well for him, but that δικαία τις εἰμαρμένη brought him success. I will return to this exceptional text later in the paper.

Aside from this example regarding Vespasian, the sole exceptions to the absolute use of εἰμαρμένη being associated with death are the three passages describing the differences between the Judean φιλοσοφία. In *A.J.* 18.13 the Pharisees believe πράσσεσθαὶ εἰμαρμένη τὰ πάντα. In *B.J.* 2.163, they similarly believe εἰμαρμένη τε καὶ θεῶ προσάπτουσι πάντα, and

βοηθεῖν εἰς ἕκατον καὶ τὴν εἰμαρμένην. By contrast, in *B.J.* 2.164 Sadducees τὴν εἰμαρμένην παντάπασιν ἀναιρούσιν. Likewise, in our passage, *A.J.* 13.171–173, Pharisees say τινὰ καὶ οὐ πάντα τῆς εἰμαρμένης ἔργον εἶναι, the Essenes' group declares πάντων τὴν εἰμαρμένην κυρίαν, and Sadducees deny the existence of εἰμαρμένη.

I will argue that in these three passages describing the three Judean philosophies, Josephus uses the word εἰμαρμένη quite differently than in the rest of his writings. He does not use it here as one's fated hour of death or life-span. Nor is he intending it here primarily as some executive aspect of God or as a synonym for providence (although this might be a significant secondary association). Rather, I will argue that Josephus uses the word εἰμαρμένη here specifically for its philosophical associations.

### ***Where is Josephus getting his ideas of Fate from?***

Before we examine the reasons for Josephus' inclusion of anything here, it is useful to discuss the question of sources because it is possible that the distinctive language comes from another author.

George Foot Moore pointed out that there is no Hebrew word equivalent to εἰμαρμένη and no such conception in Judaism without a personal God.<sup>17</sup> While several Hebrew words do occupy the semantic domain of lot, portion, and inheritance, it is true that these are never used as absolute subjects. For example, although the Hebrew Bible and Dead Sea Scrolls do use the word לַרְוּחַ to speak of one's lot (Pr 1:14), God casting a

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<sup>17</sup> Moore, "Fate and Free Will," 379. Niddah 16b may weaken the force of Moore's argument on this point.



claimed that the idea of εἰμαρμένη in Josephus' writing came from a Jewish source,<sup>21</sup> and as we saw above, Nicolaus of Damascus has at times been credited with the view included here. But Josephus' source for the material before and after A.J. 13.171–173 is clear. Since A.J. 12.240, he has been closely following the account in 1 Maccabees. After paraphrasing 1 Macc 11:74–12:23 (=A.J. 13.163–170), he introduces his description of the three Judean schools with a simple “now at this time.” He then immediately resumes his paraphrase of 1 Maccabees with 12:24 (=A.J. 13.174).<sup>22</sup>

But attributing this passage to a source would in no way help explain its inclusion here; it would merely add something to be explained. Not only must we explain why the original author wrote about sects and fate, but we still have to explain why Josephus decided to insert that description particularly here. He was certainly not compelled by the narrative in 1 Maccabees to make any mention of fate or sects. The only reason I can see why he would be compelled to place the contents of A.J. 13.171–173 here exactly would

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<sup>20</sup> 4QTobit<sup>b</sup>ar=4Q197, in Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 391.

<sup>21</sup> Gustav Hölscher, “Josephus,” *Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* (1916), 9:1949n.

<sup>22</sup> J. Sievers claims that the letter quoted in 1 Macc 12:19–23 has no immediate parallel in A.J. 13, implying that the last sentence of A.J. 13.170 is not a summary of this letter (J. Sievers, “A Synopsis of Portions of War, Antiquities, and 1-2 Maccabees: Problems and Solutions” [paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL Josephus Seminar, Nashville, Tenn., November 19, 2000]). Of course, as Sievers reminds us, the contents of this letter do appear at A.J. 12.226–227. Sievers argues unconvincingly that this omission, replaced with the schools passage, indicates a second draft of *Antiquities*.

be if he were conflating 1 Maccabees with another source covering the same events but including mention of the sects, and there is no indication that he was doing so.

More plausible is Maier's theory that the idea of εἰμαρμένη came not from a foreign source such as Nicolaus nor from a Jewish source, but from Josephus himself.<sup>23</sup> If Josephus wrote this section, the question arises: What were the influences on Josephus that inclined him to portray the philosophical schools in this way?

### ***Philosophical Influences (Parallels)***

Steve Mason proposes that "Josephus's deliberate characterization of the Jewish groups as ἀιρέσεις and φιλοσοφίαι, concerned with issues such as ethics and immortality," suggests "a priori a philosophical sense for the term" ἀιρέσεις.<sup>24</sup> It is this proposal of the Jewish groups as Hellenistic philosophical schools which I will now explore.

If Josephus was influenced by *specific* philosophical *texts* in his description of the Judean philosophical schools, we can only know this by identifying verbal parallels that are both striking and unique. If Josephus was influenced by Hellenistic ideas, as Stählin claimed,<sup>25</sup> which were they? Which philosophies does his presentation resemble?

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<sup>23</sup> Gerhard Maier, *Mensch und freier Wille: Nach den jüdischen Religionsparteien zwischen Ben Sira und Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1971), 10.

<sup>24</sup> Mason, *Pharisees*, 397.

<sup>25</sup> Gustav Stählin, "Das Schicksal im Neuen Testament und bei Josephus," *Josephus-Studien: Untersuchungen zur Josephus, dem antiken Judentum und dem Neuen Testament, Otto Michel zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet*, ed. Otto Betz, Klaus Haacker, Martin Hengel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 319-343.

Shlomo Pines in 1973 tried to show that the view of the Pharisees and Sadducees on free will in *B.J.* 2.162–165 and *A.J.* 13.172 was an adaptation of a Greek philosophical text resembling that used by Apuleius (I xii 205–206),<sup>26</sup> but the parallels between the two texts are neither striking nor unique. Pines would have us believe that Josephus took a description of Plato’s view of Fate and ascribed parts of it to Pharisees, other parts to Sadducees, and none to the Essenes. Plato did address fate and free will but of course his conclusions are obscured by the dialogue genre; in *Republic* 10.617e a place for free will is preserved while the laws of fate are laid down:

ὑμεῖς δαίμονα αἰρήσεσθε. πρῶτος δ’ ὁ λαχὼν πρῶτος αἰρείσθω βίον ... αἰτία ἐλ-  
ομένου· θεὸς ἀνάιτιος “you shall choose your own fate (*daimon*). Let him to whom  
falls the first lot select a life ... the blame is his who chooses; God is blameless.”<sup>27</sup> Plato  
holds free will and fate in tension.

Even more striking is the parallel to Cicero’s *de Fato* 39:

<p>         Duae sententiae fuissent veterum          philosophorum, una eorum qui censerent          omnia ita fato fieri ut id fatum vim necessitatis          afferent, ... altera eorum quibus viderentur          sine ullo fato esse animorum motus voluntarii,       </p>	<p>         There were among the old philosophers two schools of          thought: the one held the view that everything is          determined by fate—that this fate entails a necessary force.          . . . The others were of the conviction that the soul’s          promptings are determined by the will, without any       </p>
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<sup>26</sup> Schlomo Pines, "A Platonistic Model for Two of Josephus' Accounts of the Doctrine of the Pharisees Concerning Providence and Man=s Freedom of Action," *Immanuel* 7 (1977), 41.

<sup>27</sup> Dillon, "Fate," 778.

Chrysippus tamquam arbiter honorarius medium ferire voluisse ... <sup>28</sup>	influence from fate. Between these contending options, Chrysippus wanted to arbitrate by finding a middle way. <sup>29</sup>
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Here, the three “schools of thought” correspond to the Pythagoreans, the Epicureans, and the Stoics, respectively. Likewise, Josephus elsewhere connected the Essenes with the Pythagoreans in A.J. 15.371 and the Pharisees with the Stoics in Vita 12. The reader would have naturally associated the Sadducees, deniers of fate, with the Epicureans.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Tacitus described the dominant philosophical schools with a three-fold division over the issue of Fate:

... quippe sapientissimos veterum quique sectam eorum aemulantur diversos reperies, ac multis insitam opinionem non initia nostri, non finem, non denique homines dis curae; ... contra alii fatum quidem congruere rebus putant, sed non e vagus stellis, verum apud principia et nexus naturalium causarum; ... ceterum plurimis mortalium non eximitur quin primo cuiusque ortu ventura destinentur, sed quaedam secus quam dicta sint cadere fallaciis ignara dicentium: ...	... Indeed, among the wisest of the ancients and among their disciples you will find conflicting theories, many holding the conviction that heaven does not concern itself with the beginning or the end of our life, or, in short, with mankind at all; ... while others, on the contrary, believe that, though there is a harmony between fate and events, yet it is not dependent on wandering stars, but on primary elements, and on a combination of natural causes. ...  Most men, however, cannot part with the belief that each person's future is fixed from his very birth, but that some things happen differently from what has been foretold through the impostures of those who describe what they do
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<sup>28</sup> M. Tullius Cicero, *de Fato* 39 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), 234–235.

<sup>29</sup> Translation from Mason, “Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*,” xxxi.

<sup>30</sup> Mason, “Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*,” xxxi.

<sup>31</sup> Cornelius Tacitus, *Annales ab excessu divi Augusti* 6:22. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906).

Cicero and Tacitus expressed the centrist Stoic viewpoint sympathetically.<sup>32</sup> Likewise in Josephus' writings we find many expressions favourable to Stoicism. Josephus put Stoic terminology in the mouths of Abraham (*A.J.* 1.156), Solomon (*A.J.* 8.108), and King Jeroboam (*A.J.* 8.227). In fact, the vocabulary of *A.J.* 13.171–173 closely matches that of the founder of Stoicism, Zeno, according to Ehiphanius:

τὰς δὲ αἰτίας τῶν πραγμάτων πῆ μὲν ἐφ' ἡμῖν, πῆ δὲ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.<sup>33</sup>

In all this we can conclude with Moore that εἰμαρμένη here was intended in its technical, philosophical sense, although, as Attridge pointed out, Josephus does not employ the themes which generally accompany philosophical discussions of fate: teleology, regularity, harmony.<sup>34</sup> This absence of philosophical themes led Martin to propose that Josephus used the term in its popular astrological sense, but in doing so Martin made εἰμαρμένη something oppressive, hardly Josephus' intention here.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Why did he Choose Fate to distinguish the sects?***

The technical philosophical vocabulary and Cicero's delineation of the three perspectives on Fate are telling. The reason why Josephus focussed on their attitude toward εἰμαρμένη was that he was writing for a Hellenistic audience, who contrasted the

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<sup>32</sup> See *de Fato* 44.

<sup>33</sup> *Against Heresies* 2.3.9, quoted in Mason, *Pharisees*, 207.

<sup>34</sup> Attridge, *Interpretation*, 155–156.

<sup>35</sup> Those who most believe in εἰμαρμένη are his favourites, the Essenes.

Stoics, Epicureans, and the Pythagoreans on this issue. He described the Jewish sects in language they could understand.<sup>36</sup> Josephus used εἰμαρμένη for its associations with philosophical debates current among his audience, making the sects relevant and interesting for his audience, while at the same time fulfilling his objective of implying ancient Judean attachment to philosophy.

### ***Why is A.J. 13.171-3 here?***

Now, with a clearer understanding of Josephus' purpose, we can return to the question of the placement of *A.J.* 13.171–173 in this particular literary context. In the hey-day of source criticism in Josephus studies, the placement of any passage could be “explained” by positing that it was placed there by the author of the source Josephus happened to be using at that point in the narrative. As noted above, Hölscher considered this passage to be from an intermediate Jewish source.<sup>37</sup> Rivkin likewise said Josephus felt constrained by his source to keep the passage here.<sup>38</sup> D. Schwartz presented a similar explanation, the source being Nicolaus of Damascus. But Steve Mason has convincingly argued that the typical vocabulary used in this passage shows it is characteristically Josephan and not ineptly taken from a source.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> As he does also in *A.J.* 15.371, *Vita* 12, *A.J.* 10.277–78; *C. Ap.* 2.180.

<sup>37</sup> Hölscher, “Josephus,” 1973.

<sup>38</sup> E. Rivkin, *A Hidden Revolution* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 34.

<sup>39</sup> Mason, *Pharisees*, 198.

H. Rasp noticed that this introduction of the sects prepares the reader for the later mention of the Pharisees in *A.J.* 13.288, ὡς καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐπάνω δεδηλώκαμεν. This preparatory function explains its inclusion, but not its placement.

The problem is as George Foot Moore stated it: this paragraph has no connection to its context. It follows Jonathan's letter, and is followed by the account of Demetrius' generals; the only connection with its context is the introductory chronological note.<sup>40</sup> Thus, while Josephus took the information from a source, he placed it here because he wished to convey that the three sects were in existence at the time of Jonathan.<sup>41</sup>

Luther Martin challenged Moore's conclusion, arguing that Josephus placed this discussion of εἰμαρμένη here to contrast it with πρόνοια. Martin claimed that Josephus presented the Jews as the people who are freed by the providence of God from an oppressive and deterministic εἰμαρμένη understood in the popular astrological sense. He suggested that the connection with the preceding context was the direction of Jonathan's affairs by the πρόνοια θεοῦ (*A.J.* 13.163). In Martin's view, *A.J.* 13.171–173 further locates the Jews in the international world of Romans and Greeks, and shows their philosophical uniqueness. *A.J.* 13.174 then returns to an account of the actions of Demetrius' generals.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Moore, "Fate and Free Will", 371–372.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Schäfer ("Der vorrabinische Pharisäismus," *Paulus und das antike Judentum* [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1992], 134) suggests there might be other reasons for the placement of this passage, "die mit der Geschichte der Pharisäer nichts zu tun haben," but he doesn't offer any alternatives.

<sup>42</sup> Martin, "Josephus' Use of Heimarmene," 135.

Steve Mason has effectively discredited Martin’s thesis, showing it to be “an extreme example of the tendency to interpret Josephus’s words by every possible stratagem except Josephan usage.”<sup>43</sup> The logical consequence of Martin’s conclusion is that Sadducees are Josephus’s heroes and Essenes his villains, a patent falsehood, judging by all other remarks Josephus makes about them. But most significantly, as Mason says, “in *A.J.* 13.171–173 Josephus is *not* trying to present the Jewish groups as unique—but rather as philosophical schools in Hellenistic fashion, with differing views *περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων.*”<sup>44</sup>

While Mason was able to plausibly explain the passage’s purpose, he found it difficult to explain its placement. However, Mason’s recently proposed outline of the structure of *Antiquitates Judaicae*<sup>45</sup> does illuminate the part this passage plays in the larger scheme. Mason noticed a concentric pattern for the twenty-volume work, divided into two parts, one for each temple. Our passage falls in the first section of what he calls “Part II: Second Temple (A.J. 11–20)”, in “A. Reestablishment of the aristocracy through the glorious Hasmonean house; its decline (11–13).” It is at this glorious time of restoration, just before the subsection Mason labeled “Zenith of the Hasmonean dynasty with John Hyrcanus” in Volume 13, that the three Judean philosophical schools are introduced.

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<sup>43</sup> Mason, *Pharisees*, 396.

<sup>44</sup> Mason, *Pharisees*, 397.

<sup>45</sup> Mason, “Introduction,” xxii.

Because the concentric pattern has its turning point between volumes 10 and 11, the mirror-image of Volume 13 would logically be Volume 8. Significantly, Volume 8 is devoted to Solomon, a great philosopher during another glorious time. Seen in this structural pattern, the placement of the emergence of the Judean philosophical schools in Volume 13 mirrors that of Solomon's glory and wisdom in Volume 8. This placement strengthens Josephus' implication that the Jewish sects were philosophical and ancient: they date at least back to the time of the Hasmoneans, and are counterparts of the great ancient philosopher Solomon.

That Josephus intends to stress the antiquity of Judean philosophy by placing them in Volume 13 seems clear enough, but if Josephus was trying to say that Jewish philosophies dated back to Jonathan's time, he had many opportunities to do so earlier (for example, between *A.J.* 13.153 and 154 or 157 and 158, or in 163) or later (between 180 and 181, or 193 and 194). Although the reason for the exact placement here is not entirely clear, I may venture a guess.

I have dismissed the likelihood of a literary source on the basis of Josephus' characteristics, and noted the chronological and preparatory function of the passage, but even so, the connection to the immediate literary context remains largely obscure. Clearly Josephus wished to depict the antiquity of the Jewish sects as philosophical schools. But the earlier the reference, the better for his purposes, so we must look for an explanation as to why did he not refer to them earlier. Even if he was constrained by a chronological reality (that the sects only emerged during Jonathan's reign and not earlier), he should have introduced the sects most effectively at a point immediately after *A.J.* 13.153. My

guess, admittedly unfalsifiable, is that something in the paragraph immediately preceding *A.J.* 13.171–173 reminded him to make mention of the sects sometime soon. He then did so at the earliest opportunity, even though he was in the middle of a narrative source. This explains the brevity of the excursus. In order to return to the storyline as soon as possible, he introduced only enough about the sects to make a chronological reference, to name and number them, to place them on a relative philosophical spectrum, and to imply their similarity to Greek philosophical schools. All this he achieved in a mere four sentences, after which he referred to his earlier work those interested in more details.

But what could that trigger in the previous paragraph be? Martin was right to look to the immediately preceding paragraph to find some connection with the excursus. He noticed the reference to πρόνοια there, and the relationship of this word to εἰμαρμένη, though he misconstrued the relationship. I suggest that the connection between πρόνοια and εἰμαρμένη, seen in Vespasian's realization regarding εἰμαρμένη in *B.J.* 4.622 offers a relevant parallel. In this earlier work of Josephus, he wrote that when “fortune was everywhere furthering his wishes and circumstances had for the most part conspired in his favour,” Vespasian began to suspect that it was not without πρόνοια that he seized the government, but by some just εἰμαρμένη. Likewise, in *A.J.* 13.163, “when he saw that by God's providence all his affairs were going to his liking,” Jonathan sent a letter to the Romans. As Josephus was composing this paragraph, the similarity of realizations – that prosperity is attributed to πρόνοια – may well have reminded Josephus of what he had said earlier about Vespasian and εἰμαρμένη, and he recognized this might provide a convenient introduction to the philosophies of Judaism. In order to make the philosophies seem as ancient as possible, he immediately inserted this paragraph after the one he was

working on. He kept the excursion brief because he had only two points to convey: Judaism was philosophical, and its philosophical schools were old.

***What Historical Value can we get from this passage?***

If Josephus' is mainly concerned here with depicting the antiquity of Jewish philosophy, the possibility exists that he is not concerned with portraying their main disagreement accurately. He may be exaggerating or bending the facts or being selective about what he states, in order to achieve his desired effect. Before we can use Josephus' statements for historical reconstruction, we need to examine his statements for any evidence to confirm or disprove the possibility that Josephus bent the truth. We need to compare what Josephus says with what we learn from other sources. If something he says fits his agenda but is called into question by other sources, it should be viewed with suspicion.

At the outset, the likelihood that the main disagreement was over *εἰμαρμένη* is not corroborated by any other ancient document. The New Testament, the rabbinic writings, and even Josephus' narratives indicate that the main disagreements between Pharisees and Sadducees were over issues other than fate and free will.

As Wächter<sup>46</sup> and Flusser<sup>47</sup> note, the likelihood that the Sadducees eliminated God from interest in human affairs is likewise small, if they believed the Torah, with its accounts of God's instigation of the flood, of Abraham's call, and of the Exodus from

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<sup>46</sup> Wächter, "Haltung," 105–106.

<sup>47</sup> David Flusser, "Josephus on the Sadducees and Menander," *Immanuel* 7(1977), 61-67.

Egypt. Ben Sira 16:17–23, in its denigration of the view attributed to the Sadducees by Josephus, does not imply this view was held by a significant and powerful group.<sup>48</sup>

Likewise, the likelihood that the Essenes attributed everything to fate and none to free will is small. If the Dead Sea Scrolls are from Essenes, we have evidence that they held determinism (well-known from 1QS 3:15–16, 1QH<sup>a</sup> XII, 39 [= Sukenik 4:38], 1QH<sup>a</sup> VII, 25–35 [= Sukenik 15:12–22] and CD) and free will in tension. In 1QH<sup>a</sup> VIII, 28 (= Sukenik 16:10) the poet exercises choice in purifying his hands (γpk rbhl ytrxb yn) w).<sup>49</sup> If the Dead Sea Scrolls are not Essene, this is the only surviving indication in Josephus, Philo, Pliny, or anywhere else that the Essenes were complete fatalists.<sup>50</sup>

Josephus polarizes the three philosophical schools to a greater degree than we would expect from our other sources, and this polarizing tendency is what we would expect from someone interested in depicting the Judean philosophical schools polarized over the same issue as the Greek philosophical schools. This is not to say that Josephus imposed a totally foreign debate onto the Judean sects; it could well be true that Essenes

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<sup>48</sup> Because Ben Sira wrote around 180 BCE, before the time of Jonathan, the Sadducees may not have been an identifiable group yet (A. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era* [Leiden: Brill, 1997], 20).

<sup>49</sup> Wächter, “Haltung,” 109–110.

<sup>50</sup> Moore, “Fate,” 372. Steve Mason’s rebuttal to Moore on this point depends on the supposed interchangeability of θεός and εἰμαρμένη in Josephus’ writings (Mason, *Pharisees*, 209), but this imagined equivalence is discredited by the above study of εἰμαρμένη, at least regarding its usage in the schools passages.

were more deterministic than Sadducees, and that Pharisees held a moderate position. Other sources, including Josephus, confirm a tendency for Sadducees to be skeptical and Essenes to be radical. So although there may well be such a kernel of historical truth in Josephus' description, Josephus was more than likely exaggerating the differences or oversimplifying them in order to make his point.

### **Conclusion**

We cannot rely on Josephus' account of the differences between the three Judean sects in *A.J.* 13.171–173 for historical information about what their main disagreements were, or for their views of fate because Josephus is likely exaggerating and shaping the truth for his purposes.

We have reason to believe he is exaggerating because the Essenes depicted in the rest of Josephus' writings are not characterised by total determinism; they do exercise choice. Nowhere else besides in Josephus are Essenes described as total determinists. Furthermore, if Essenes produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, they acknowledged an element of choice in joining the group. Likewise, the Sadducees could hardly have totally eliminated God's role in human affairs if they believed the Torah, with its constant accounts of God's intervention.

In *A.J.* 13.171–173 Josephus does not use the key word *εἰμαρμένη* in his usual way. Instead of associating it with death, as he usually does, here and in the other schools passages he uses the term in its technical, philosophical sense. He calls the three groups

αἰρέσεις, his term for schools of philosophy, and has them differ on a philosophical point, the same point by which Cicero distinguishes three Greek philosophical schools.

Josephus' primary purpose is evidently not to describe the main point on which the three disagreed with historical accuracy, but to indicate the antiquity of Judean philosophy. Josephus does not connect *A.J.* 13.171–173 to its literary context in any way other than chronologically. The chronological reference is significant because Josephus often uses appeals to the antiquity of customs or institutions as a way of legitimizing them.

I do not doubt that Josephus would have been capable accurately describing the main disagreements among the Judean groups, if that had been his intention. But because his rhetorical point was not dependent on historical accuracy, we ought not to privilege Josephus' description of their differences here in reconstructing the nature of Jewish sectarianism. Instead, we can use this passage to get to know Josephus' concerns, above all his desire to present Judean culture as a venerable and philosophical society, using categories readily understood by an audience of Roman elites.