

Eleazar Before the Romans: Josephus's Exorcism Account

STR-ANCIENT-006 / REV A / 2026.09.08

Josephus reports seeing Eleazar perform an exorcism using a ring, a root and words attributed to Solomon. A basin of water becomes the proposed visible test of an invisible departure.

STATUS	First-century reported performance; supernatural explanation and Solomonic authorship unverified
CLASSIFICATION	STR
MATERIAL	Roman Judaea; account written in Rome
DISPOSITION	PUBLIC / SOURCED STORY
CATEGORY	Strange Files
RECORD TYPE	Ancient stories
STORY HISTORY	Account completed in 93-94 CE, describing the era of Vespasian

THE ACCOUNT

Before Vespasian and other spectators, Josephus says, a man named Eleazar brought a ring containing a root to the nostrils of someone thought possessed. The patient fell, and Eleazar invoked Solomon while commanding the demon not to return. To persuade those watching that it had departed, he placed a basin of water nearby and ordered the departing spirit to overturn it. The invisible claim was given a visible object on which to leave its mark.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

The passage is in Jewish Antiquities 8.45-49, part of Josephus's work completed in 93-94 CE. Unlike much later grimoires attributed to Solomon, this is a named ancient author's report that he witnessed a performance in his own era. It remains Josephus's account, without independent verification of supernatural causation. His claim that Solomon originated the incantations records an already existing attribution; it does not supply a surviving manuscript written by Solomon.

WHY IT STAYS WITH US

The basin makes this account especially memorable. The audience was offered something to observe beyond a sufferer's change in behavior. That makes the narrative an early example of a supernatural claim accompanied by a proposed demonstration. Its historical value survives even when the explanation remains unverified: it shows how one writer connected healing, authority and persuasive spectacle.

WHERE THIS TELLING COMES FROM

Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews, Book VIII

University of Chicago, LacusCurtius; William Whiston translation

<https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-8.html>

Historiography: Josephus passages

University of Pennsylvania

<https://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/other/courses/rels/735/historiography.html>

RETURN TO THE STORY

Eleazar Before the Romans: Josephus's Exorcism Account

Visit the record for its illustrations and further reading.

<https://u225x.com/record/STR-ANCIENT-006>