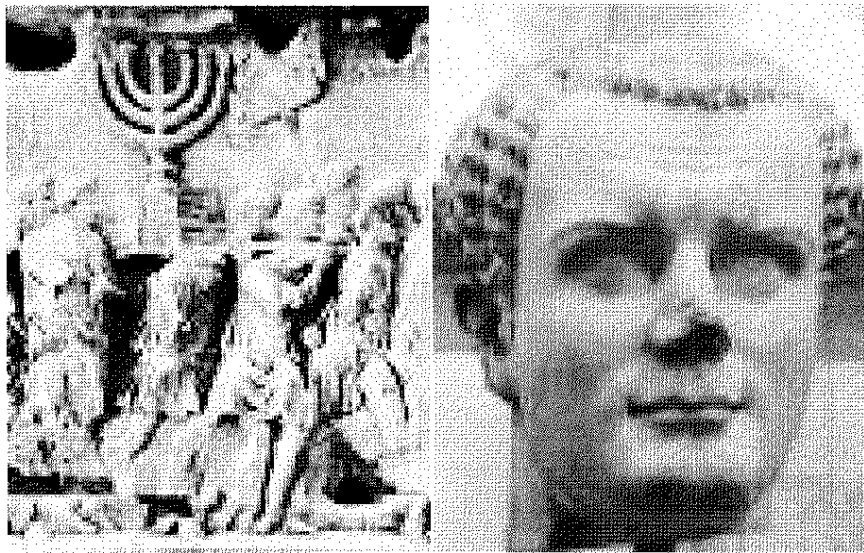


Titus and the Jews



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Emperor of the Roman Empire



Reign

24 June 79 –
13 September 81

Titus Flavius Vespasianus, commonly known as **Titus** (December 30, 39 – September 13, 81), was a Roman Emperor who briefly reigned from 79 until his death in 81. Titus was the second emperor of the Flavian dynasty, which ruled the Roman Empire between 69 and 96, encompassing the reigns of Titus's father Vespasian (69–79), Titus himself (79–81) and his younger brother Domitian (81–96).

Prior to becoming emperor, Titus gained renown as a military commander, serving under his father in Judaea during the First Jewish-Roman War, which was fought between 67 and 70. The campaign came to a brief halt with the death of emperor Nero on June 9, 68, launching Vespasian's bid for the imperial power during the Year of the Four Emperors. When Vespasian was declared emperor on July 1, 69, Titus was left in charge of ending the Jewish rebellion, which he did in 70, successfully besieging and destroying the city and the Temple of Jerusalem. For this achievement Titus was awarded a triumph; the Arch of Titus commemorates his victory to this day.

Under the rule of his father, Titus gained infamy in Rome serving as prefect of the Roman imperial bodyguard, known as the Prætorian Guard, and for carrying on a controversial relationship with the Jewish queen Berenice. Despite concerns over his character, however, Titus ruled to great acclaim following the death of Vespasian on June 23, 79, and was considered a good emperor by Suetonius and other contemporary historians. In this role he is best known for his public building program in Rome—completing the Flavian Amphitheatre, otherwise known as the Colosseum— and for his generosity in relieving the suffering caused by two disasters, the Mount Vesuvius eruption of 79 and the fire of Rome of 80. After barely two years in office, Titus died of a fever on September 13, 81. He was deified by the Roman Senate and succeeded by his younger brother Domitian.

Legacy - Historiography

⇒ Titus's record among ancient historians stands as one of the most exemplary of any emperor. All the surviving accounts from this period, many of them written by his own contemporaries, present a highly favourable view towards Titus. His character has especially prospered in comparison with that of his brother Domitian.

The Wars of the Jews offers a first-hand, eye-witness account on the Jewish rebellion and the character of Titus. The neutrality of Josephus' writings has come into question however as he was heavily indebted to the Flavians. In 71, he arrived in Rome in the entourage of Titus, became a Roman citizen and took on the Roman nomen Flavius and praenomen Titus from his patrons. He received an annual pension and lived in the palace.^[80] It was while in Rome, and under Flavian patronage, that Josephus wrote all of his known works. *The War of the Jews* is heavily slanted against the leaders of the revolt, portraying the rebellion as weak and unorganized, and even blaming the Jews for causing the war.^[81] The credibility of Josephus as a historian has subsequently come under fire.^[82]

Another contemporary of Titus was Publius Cornelius Tacitus, who started his public career in 80 or 81 and credits the Flavian dynasty with his elevation.^[83] *The Histories*—his account of this period—was published during the reign of Trajan. Unfortunately only the first five books from this work have survived until the present day, with the text on Titus's and Domitian's reign entirely lost.

Suetonius Tranquilius gives a short but highly favourable account on Titus's reign in *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*,^[84] emphasizing his military achievements and his generosity as Emperor, in short describing him as follows:

Titus, of the same surname as his father, was the delight and darling of the human race; such surpassing ability had he, by nature, art, or good fortune, to win the affections of all men, and that, too, which is no easy task, while he was emperor.^[84]

Finally, Cassius Dio wrote his *Roman History* over a hundred years after the death of Titus. He shares a similar outlook as Suetonius, possibly even using the latter as a source, but is more reserved, noting:

His satisfactory record may also have been due to the fact that he survived his accession but a very short time, for he was thus given no opportunity for wrongdoing. For he lived after this only two years, two months and twenty days — in addition to the thirty-nine years, five months and twenty-five days he had already lived at that time. In this respect, indeed, he is regarded as having equalled the long reign of Augustus, since it is maintained that Augustus would never have been loved had he lived a shorter time, nor Titus had he lived longer. For Augustus, though at the outset he showed himself rather harsh because of the wars and the factional strife, was later able, in the course of time, to achieve a brilliant reputation for his kindly deeds; Titus, on the other hand, ruled with mildness and died at the height of his glory, whereas, if he had lived a long time, it might have been shown that he owes his present fame more to good fortune than to merit.^[54]

Pliny the Elder, who later died during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius,^[85] dedicated his *Naturalis Historia* to Titus.^[86]

In contrast to the ideal portrayal of Titus in Roman histories, in Jewish memory "Titus the Wicked" is remembered as an evil oppressor and destroyer of the Temple. For example, one legend in the Babylonian Talmud describes Titus as having had sex with a whore on a Torah scroll inside the Temple during its destruction.^[87]

At **Vespasian's** death on 23 June 79 he succeeded without challenge; and when **Berenice** returned to Rome he promptly, though reluctantly, sent her away once more. All fears which Roman society had entertained of him were soon dispersed. Affable, and possessed of remarkable good looks, he also won a reputation for generosity, some of which represented personal largess but much of it lavish expenditure from public funds. He repaired the two great disasters of his short reign, the destruction caused by **Vesuvius** in 79, and the plague and fire in Rome in 80; but he also completed the **Colosseum** and built the **Baths** which carry his name. It was a further source of popularity that these months saw no executions or trials for *maiestas*, and that certain informers were scourged or exiled. With his brother **Domitian** (q.v.), who was eventually suspected of poisoning him, relations were uneasy. But **Titus'** death, which occurred outside Rome on 13 Sept. 81, was almost certainly due to natural causes. He was immediately deified: a generation later he was described as '*amor ac deliciae generis humani*' (Suet. *Tit.* 1).

(OXFORD, 1970)

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③ גיטין (1)

The Gemara returns to the central narrative:

אָזל שְׂרָרִיָּה לְטִיטוּס – [Vespasian] went to Rome, and he sent Titus to take charge of the military campaign against Jerusalem. .. ואָמַר אֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ צוּר חָסִיד בּוֹי. – In this connection, Scripture states: *And he shall say, "Where is their God, the rock in which they sought refuge?"*⁽¹⁷⁾ זֶה טִיטוּס הִרְשָׁע – This is a reference to the evil Titus,⁽¹⁸⁾ שְׁחִירָף וְגִידָף כְּלַמֵּי מַעֲלָה – who profaned and blasphemed the One above. מָה עָשָׂה – What did he do? הִנָּכַס לְבֵית קֹדְשֵׁי – He seized a harlot in his hand, and entered the chamber of the Holy of Holies.⁽¹⁹⁾ וְהִצִּיעַ סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה – He spread out a Torah scroll, וְנָטַל סִיף וְגִידָר אֹת – and committed a sin⁽²⁰⁾ upon it. Then he took a sword and slashed the *paroches*.⁽²¹⁾ וְהָיָה דָם מִבְּעַבְצֵי וְיוֹצֵא – and blood was seen bubbling out of the *paroches*.⁽²²⁾ [Titus] thought that he had killed "himself";⁽²³⁾ as it is stated: שְׂאֵגוֹ עָרְרִיף בְּקֶרֶב מוֹעֵדָךְ שְׂמוֹ אוֹתָתָם – as it is stated: *Your [God's] enemies roared in the midst of Your meeting place; they established their signs as true signs.*⁽²⁴⁾ Titus interpreted the bleeding as a sign that he had killed God.

The Sages comment on God's restraint in the face of Titus' unconscionable behavior:

אָבָא חָנַן אָמַר – Abba Chanan says: מִי־כְמוֹךָ חָסִיד וְהָיָה – מי כמותך חסיד ויגיד? Scripture states: *Who is like you, O Strong One, God?*⁽²⁵⁾ חָסִיד וְקָשָׁה – This is a reference to God's restrained posture at the time, as follows: *Who is like You, strong and firm, for you hear the insult and blasphemy of that evil man [Titus], and yet you remain silent?* In the academy of R' Yishmael it was taught: מִי־כְמוֹכָה בְּאֵלֵינוּ – מי כמוכה באלמנו? Scripture states: *Who is like You among the mighty ones, HASHEM?*⁽²⁶⁾ This is homiletically interpreted to mean: *Who is like You among the mute ones?*⁽²⁷⁾ In the face of Titus' blasphemy, You remained silent.⁽²⁸⁾

The narrative is resumed:

וְנָטַל אֶת הַפְּרוֹכֵת – He took the *paroches*,⁽²⁹⁾ וְעָשָׂהוּ כְּמִין גְּרִיגוֹתַי – and formed it into the shape of a wine-carrier. וְהָבִיא כָּל בְּלִים שֶׁבְּמִקְדָּשׁ וְהִנִּיחֵן בָּהֶן – and he brought all the utensils of the Temple, and put them on a ship, intending to go and be praised for his triumph in his city. – He put them on a ship, intending to go and be praised for his triumph in his city. – Then he brought all the utensils of the Temple, and put them in it. וְהוֹשִׁיבֵן בְּסַפִּינָה לִילָךְ לְהִשְׁתַּבַּח בְּעִירוֹ – He put them on a ship, intending to go and be praised for his triumph in his city. – Then I saw wicked men who deserved to be buried; yet they came (to destroy the Temple), and then departed from that holy place. וְיִשְׁתַּכְּחוּ בְּעִיר אֲשֶׁר בְּנִעְשׂוּ – But eventually they will be forgotten in the city [Jerusalem] regarding that which they had indeed done in it.⁽³⁰⁾ אַל תִּיקְרֵי – Do not read this as it is written „קְבָרִים” – buried. אֱלָא – Rather, read it as though it were written קָבְצִים – gathered. אַל תִּיקְרֵי – Furthermore, do not read this as it is written „וְיִשְׁתַּכְּחוּ” – and they will be forgotten. אֱלָא – Rather, read it as though it were written, וְיִשְׁתַּבְּחוּ – and they were praised. With these two changes, the verse can be interpreted: *Then I saw*

wicked men gathered together. They came [to destroy the Temple], and then departed from [that] holy place. And they were praised in the city [in which they lived] for that which they had indeed done.

A slightly different version of the preceding exposition: There are those who say that there is no need to replace "buried" with "gathered." Rather, this word can be translated literally as buried, דאפילו מילי דמסמךן - קבורים ממש - איבא דאמרי - for even hidden things (i.e. valuables hidden by the Jews) were revealed to them, and it is to those valuables that the verse refers. Thus, the verse is interpreted: Then I saw wicked men [with valuables that had been] buried etc.

The Gemara returns to the narrative: A hurricane at sea threatened to drown [Titus]. He said: He said: אמר - כמדומה אני שאלהיהם של אלו - אמר - "It seems to me that the power of the God of [the Jews] is only in water. When Pharaoh came against the Jews, He drowned him^[31] in the waters of the Reed Sea. When Sisera came against the Jews, He drowned him (i.e. his army) in the waters of Nachal Kishon.^[32] So now too, He threatens to drown me in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. אם גבור הוא ועלה ליבשה ויעשה עמי מלחמה - If He is truly powerful, let Him come up on dry land and wage war with me there!" - A Heavenly voice^[33] emanated and said to [Titus]: רשע בן רשע בן בנו של - "O evil man, the son of an evil man, a descendant of the evil Esau. I have a puny creature in My world, and it is called a gnat."

Parentetically, the Gemara interjects: Why did [God] call it a puny creature? - אמאי קרי לה בריה קלה - Because it has an entrance through which food is received but it does not have an outlet through which waste is excreted.

The Heavenly voice continued: "Go up on dry land and fight [this puny creature!]" - עלה ליבשה ויעשה עמי מלחמה - When [Titus] ascended to dry land, a gnat came and entered his nose. It picked at his brain for seven years. ונקר במוחו שבע שנים - One day, [Titus] was passing the doorway of a smithy, and when [the gnat] heard the sound of the smith's hammer, it fell silent.^[34] [Titus] said: "There is a remedy for me!" - אמר איבא תקנתא - Every day they brought another smith, and they banged with their hammers in the presence of [Titus]. לנקרי נהיב ליה ארבע

To a gentile [smith] he gave four zuz. לישראל אמר ליה - But to a Jewish [smith] he said, מיקסתיך דקא חזית בסנאך - "For you it is enough that you witness the suffering of your enemy." He did this for thirty days. עד תלתין יומין עבד הכי - But from then on, having grown accustomed to the sound of the hammering, [the gnat] became accustomed to it.^[35] It was taught in a Baraisa: אמר ר' פנחס בן ערובא - רבי פנחס בן ערובא - אני הייתי בין וקשמת פפעו את - I WAS AMONG THE NOBLES OF ROME. WHEN [TITUS] DIED, THEY SPLIT HIS HEAD OPEN, AND THEY FOUND a gnat INSIDE IT that was LIKE A SWALLOW WEIGHING TWO SELAS.^[36] A Tanna taught in a Baraisa: כגוזל בן שנה - במתניתא תנא - The gnat was LIKE A ONE-YEAR-OLD PIGEON WEIGHING TWO LITRAS.^[37] Abaye said: נקטינן - אמר אביי - We hold a tradition של - פיו של - נחושת וצפורנו של ברזל - that its mouth was of copper and its nails were of iron.^[38]

The narrative is resumed: he told - אמר להו - When [Titus] was dying, כי הוה קא מייית [those present], ליקליוה להווא גברא - "Burn that man [i.e. himself], and scatter his ashes over seven seas - ולבדרי לקיטמיה אשב ימי - so that the God of the Jews will not find him and stand him in judgment."

MIDRASH (4) מדרש רבה (ויקרא)

מדרש אחרי מות פרו כב סי ג רבה

לדורות הקדא הוא דכתיב (דברים ד. מא) 'אז יבדיל משה'.

ג. דבר אחר 'ויתרון ארץ' אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא לנביאים אם אין אתם עושין שליחותי יש לי שלוחין הוי 'ויתרון ארץ וגו' ככל אני עושה שליחותי אמר רבי אחא ככל הקדוש ברוך הוא עושה שליחותו אפלו על ידי נחש אפלו על ידי צפרדע ואפלו על ידי עקרב ואפלו על ידי יתוש טיטוס הרשע נכנס לבית קדשי הקדשים ותרבו שלופה בידו וגדר את הפרכת ונטל שתי זונות והציע ספר תורה תחתיהן ובעלן על גבי המזבח ויצאה חרבו מלאה

מסורת המדרש
אז יבדיל משה ראה
מכות י. תניי ואתחנן
הוספה ג.
ג. ד"א ויתרון ארץ
אמר הקב"ה לנביאים
שמדרי א. קה"ה (נח)
ד כה"ע. בכל הקב"ה
עושה שליחותו ביד
ו. שמדרי שם. במד"ה.
כ. תחומא ותניי חוקה
א. פדריא פכ"ט. יליש
האדני תחוקה. ארוב
תנא. קהלת תחוקה
(כה"ע). ע"ע ספר
האדני שם. ברכות ס.
סכת ע"ה. נדרים מא.
גטין נ"ה. ירושלמי
ברכות פ"ט ה"ב. שם
פ"ד ה"ח. ב"ר י"ה
ובג"ש. אפילו ע"י
תחומא ותניי. פדריא. יליש

the prophets: 'If you will not carry out My errands I have other messengers.' Thus we have explained the text, 'And the superfluities of the earth with all.'¹ 'With all' I carry out my errands. R. Aha said: The Holy One, blessed be He, carries out His errands with the help of all, even through the instrumentality of a serpent, even through that of a frog and even through that of a scorpion, aye, even through that of a mosquito. ¶ The wicked Titus entered the interior of the Holy of Holies, his sword drawn in his hand, slashed the curtain, brought two harlots and, spreading out a Scroll of the Law beneath them, cohabited with them on the top of the altar, and his sword came out full of blood, —according to some authorities it was from the blood of the sacrifices, and according to others it was from the blood of the bullock and he-goat of the Day of Atonement. He began to utter revilings and blasphemies against heaven, and said: 'The case of one who makes war with a king in the desert and vanquishes him cannot be compared with that of one who makes war against a king in his own palace and vanquishes him.' What did he do then? He collected all the vessels of the Temple and placed them in a net, then he embarked on a ship. As soon as he had embarked a violent gale smote the sea. Said he: 'It appears that the power of this God is only on the water. He punished the Generation of Enosh by water. He did the same to the Generation of the Flood, and the same to Pharaoh and his army, and in my case also, when I was in His own house and within His own domain He could not hold out against me, but now in this place He has confronted me.' The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: 'Villain! By thy life, I shall inflict punishment upon thee by means of a trifling creature which I created during the first six days of creation!' Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, beckoned to the sea and it ceased from its fury. When he reached Rome all the citizens of Rome came out and lauded him with the words: 'O conqueror of the

Barbarians!' Immediately afterwards a hot bath was prepared for him and he entered and bathed. When he came out they mixed him a cup of wine. The Holy One, blessed be He, brought in his way a mosquito which entered into his nose and gnawed its way up until it reached his brain. It began to bore in his brain, so he ordered: 'Call the doctors, and let them split open the brain of that man¹ and ascertain what it is whereby the God of this nation inflicts punishment upon that man.' Forthwith the doctors were summoned. They split open his brain and found in it something resembling a young pigeon which possessed a weight of two pounds. R. Eleazar b. R. Jose observed: I was present when the pigeon was placed on one side [of the scales] and two pounds on the other side, and the one weighed exactly the same as the other. They took the pigeon and placed it in a bowl. As the bird changed² so did he change, and when the mosquito fled the soul of the wicked Titus fled.

דָּם מֵאֵן דָּאָמַר מִדָּם הַקָּרְבָּנוֹת וּמֵאֵן דָּאָמַר מִן דָּם פֶּר וְשַׁעִיר שֶׁל יוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים הַתְּחִיל מִחֶרֶף וּמִגֶּדֶף כְּלָפִי מְעַלָּה אָמַר לֹא דְמֵי הֵהוּא דְעֵבֵד קָרְבָּא עִם מַלְכָּא בְּמַדְבָּר וְנִצַּח לֵהּ לֵההוּא דְעֵבֵד קָרְבָּא עִם מַלְכָּא בְּגוּ פְּלִטִין דִּידָהּ וְנִצַּח לֵהּ מָה עָשָׂה כְּנֶס כֹּל כְּלֵי בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וְנָתַן לְתוֹךְ גְּרָגוּתַי אַחַת וְיָרַד לוֹ לְסַפִּינָה פִּיּוֹן שְׂיָרַד מִחָא נַחְשׁוּלָא כִּימָא אָמַר דּוֹמָה לִי שְׂאִין כַּחוּ שֶׁל אֱלֹהֵי זֶה אֱלָא בְּמִים דּוֹר אָנוּשׁ לֹא פָּרַע מֵהֶם אֱלָא בְּמִים וְכֵן דּוֹר הַמַּבּוּל וְכֵן פָּרַע וְחִילוּ אֵף אֲנִי פִּיּוֹן שְׂהִיִּיתִי בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ וּבְכַרְשׁוֹתוֹ לֹא תִּהְיֶה יְכוּל לַעֲמֹד בִּי וְעַכְשָׁו לְכָאן קָדְמֵי אָמַר לוֹ הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא רָשַׁע חֲיִיק בְּכַרְיָה פְּחוּתָהּ מִמָּה שֶׁבְּרָאתִי מִשְׁשֶׁת יָמֵי בְּרָאשִׁית אֲנִי פּוֹרַע מִמֶּךָ מֵיָד רַמְזוּ הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לִים וְעַמְד מוֹזַעְפוֹ פִּיּוֹן שְׂהִגִּיעַ לְרוּמֵי יִצְאוּ כֹל בְּנֵי רוּמֵי וְקָלְסוּהוּ נְקִיטָא בְּרַבְרִיא מֵיָד הַסִּיקוּ לוֹ אֶת הַמֶּרְחֵץ וְנִכְנַס וְרָחַץ פִּיּוֹן שְׂיִצְא מוֹגוֹ לוֹ כְּסָא דְחַמְרָא וְזַמֵּן לוֹ הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יְתוּשׁ אֶחָד וְנִכְנַס לְתוֹךְ חֲטָמוֹ וְהִיָּה אוֹכֵל וְהוֹלֵךְ עַד שְׂהִגִּיעַ לְמוֹחוֹ הַתְּחִיל מְנַקֵּר אֶת מוֹחוֹ אָמַר קְרָאוּ לְרוֹפְאִים וַיִּפְצְעוּ מוֹחוֹ שֶׁל אוֹתוֹ הָאִישׁ וַדְּעוּ בְּמָה אֱלֹהֵי שֶׁל אִמָּה זֹו נִפְרַע מֵאוֹתוֹ הָאִישׁ מֵיָד קְרָאוּ לְרוֹפְאִים וַפְצְעוּ אֶת מוֹחוֹ וּמִצְאוּ בוֹ כְּמוֹ גּוֹזֵל בֵּן יוֹנָה וְהִיָּה בוֹ מִשְׁקָל שְׁתֵּי לִיטְרָאוֹת אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בְּרַבִּי יוֹסִי תַמָּן הוּיָנָא וַיִּתְּבִין גּוֹזֵלָא מִן דִּין סְטָרָא וְתַרְתִּין לִיטְרָיא מִן דִּין סְטָרָא וְתַקֵּל חַד כֹּבֵל חַד וְנִטְלוּהוּ וְנִתְנָהוּ בְּתוֹךְ קַעֲרָה אַחַת כֹּל מֵאֵן דִּהְוָה הַדִּין שְׁנֵי הָוָה הַדִּין שְׁנֵי פָּרַח יְתוּשָׁא פָּרַח נִשְׁמַתָּא דְטִיטוּס הַרְשָׁע.

5

Titus's Tinnitus

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Historical approaches to tinnitus have depended highly on cultural factors. While ancient Oriental mysticism regarded it as sensitivity to the divine, Roman medicine associated it with depressive and seizure disorders on the basis of presumed common pathophysiology shared by the three conditions. In the Babylonian Talmud, tinnitus appears as Titus's curse: a gnat buzzing in the brain, responding to sound therapy, and then habituating. Various sources show varied emphases with common attention for contextual and emotional aspects that have become an important focus in modern management of tinnitus.

Keywords tinnitus, history, Talmud, Hippocrates, Galen, gaining

Historical descriptions of tinnitus are scarce in contrast to the current clinical importance of the condition. Hippocrates (ca. 460–ca. 377 BCE) suggested that distribution of pathology concerned not only geography but also chronology (Hippocrates, 1861, t. V, p. 140). However, with regard to tinnitus, this less likely points to major changes in epidemiology (Anglada, 1869) than to differences in medical and non-medical perception of the phenomenon through the ages.

Hippocrates and Galen (ca. 129–ca. 199 CE), the ancestors of Western medicine, mentioned tinnitus in their works. The latter proposed pathophysiology based on his concept of sympathy through vapors (Galen, 1833, vol. 19, pp. 485–496). This refers to transmission of abnormal irritation of the brain through *ara bilis* (black bile), a humor of powerful influence originating in the intestinal tract (Siegel, 1968). Imbalance of humors was thought to modify the mental traits of the patient, that is, the temperament (from *temperare*, combine, regulate) (Galen, 1833, vol. 1, pp. 509–694). Tinnitus was thus explained as part of melancholia, a term coined by Hippocrates from *mēlav* (black) and *colōn* (bile). The clinical observation—if not the pathophysiological model—has remained relevant as tinnitus is not uncommonly associated with depressive disorder. Great attention was paid to the effect of melancholic vapors and humors on the brain by physicians as late as the early Renaissance. Galen viewed the same mechanism of sympathy through vapors as underlying what current nosography labels epilepsy (Galen, 1833, vol. 8, p. 177). In his magisterial work on the history of epilepsy, Owsei Temkin (1994) discussed tinnitus in the context of epilepsy, and referred to Soranus (98–138 CE) or, rather, his paraphraser, Caecilius Aurelianus (5th century, CE) (p. 38); Celsus (ca. 25 BCE–50 CE) (p. 38); Aretaeus (ca. 81–ca. 138 CE) (p. 39, p. 44); and Aetius (ca. 123–ca. 170 CE) (pp. 59–60). In his famous apologetic pamphlet the latter North African colleague of Galen reported a woman complaining from frequent *tinnitus* (sic) in her

right ear (Aetius, 1997, sect. 4, p. 50). In an attempt to improve allegations of magical practices as treatment, he discussed the relation of this symptom to *morbus comitalis* (epilepsy) caused by combination of black bile with liquefied flesh and with a presentation consistent with migraine. This underlines the symptomatic essence of tinnitus and its currently established association with seizure disorder and migraine (Seidman and Jacobson, 1996).

Non-medical sources may also be of interest because of particular emphasis placed on different aspects as compared to medical descriptions (Dan and Christiaens, 1999). Vedalic imagery provides a mystical dimension of tinnitus-like experience: “*Inexplicable anguish can derive from the sounding of spatial tones*,” that is, tonal sounds that “*the physical ear cannot hear, while the subtle hearing detects that which is inaudible to the ear and reveals it in the heart*” (Fiery World, 1948, p. 157). This experience was to be recognized as a sign of communion with space reserved only for a spiritual elite, the great firebearers. The neurophysiological pathways underlying such extensive associative elaboration originating from unimodal sensory signals are still not fully understood. At the highest levels of sensory-fugal processing, neuronal modules in the paralimbic and limbic cortices bind several brain areas into distributed but integrated multimodal representations (Mesulam, 1998) consistent with this ancient Indian construct. A similarly positive moral connotation to tinnitus is evident in ancient Egyptian prescription for identifying those gifted for divination. The Demotic Magical Papyri outline the following test: the elders anoint virgin boys and surround them with bricks while performing a magical ritual in order to elicit eventual ringing in both their ears or at least the right ear (Betz, 1992). These two accounts present strongly positive beliefs associated with tinnitus, wherein it is seen as a mark of exceptional sensitivity to the divine. This perception can be predicted to reinforce the experience unlike the current application of cognitive-behavioral therapy (Andersson, 2002).

In clinical practice, however, tinnitus was most often experienced as bothersome and negatively connoted. This is reflected in an apparent account of tinnitus in the Babylonian Talmud. Although the Talmud is essentially a composite corpus of lore and legal discussion, it features a host of medical depictions from acromegaly (Wyszyński, 2001) to Zuleika syndrome (Dan and Kornreich, 2000). The Gitin section (Fig. 1) relates the punishment inflicted upon Titus after he destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem.

A gnat entered his nostril and pecked at his brain for seven years. One day Titus was passing by a blacksmith. He heard the noise of the sledgehammer and the gnat became silent. Titus thus said: ‘Here is the remedy.’ Every day he brought a blacksmith to bang in his presence. [...] For thirty days this worked fine but then the gnat became accustomed [to the banging] and it resumed pecking (Babylonian Talmud, Gitin, p. 56b).

No trace of this can be found in Roman historical sources, which generally recorded the qualities and achievements of Titus (39–81 CE) with great fondness. Maimonides (1135–1204 CE), a prominent physician and Talmud scholar, insisted that Talmudic lore should be read as poetic allegory conveying noble messages (Maimonide, 1979, p. 570). In this light, Titus’s curse—tinnitus—appears as a more severe sanction than many mythical punishments such as drowning Pharaoh and his whole army when he was only reconsidering his decision to let the Hebrews go free. From 67 CE on, Titus crushed Jewish rebellion with brutality. The Temple was burned in 70 CE, all captives were butchered, and desecration was completed with sacrifices made to Roman standards in the Temple court.

This Talmudic report of tinnitus has remained remarkably modern. Tinnitus is assimilated with the buzzing of a gnat. Its etiology is metaphorically attributed to a literal upper airway

infection, but its mechanism primarily involves the brain. The Aramaic word *wjwm* and its Hebrew equivalent are classically translated as “his brain.” Although Talmudic medical knowledge of the brain seems anachronistic, it asserts this organ as the locus of reasoning. The reports goes on to describe empirical management of tinnitus with an ancient version of sound therapy that is strikingly similar to current approaches (Henry et al., 2002). It interprets the effect as silencing, consistently with gating mechanisms. The report also mentions treatment failure by habituation following the initial success. Further in the same section, it is said that “when Titus died, they pierced his skull and found an animal the size of a dove.” The ensuing discussion confronts this tradition with other similar alleged findings. Again, Roman historians say nothing about this. Strong taboos against defilement of the dead prevented the practice of human dissection in Rome. As for Jewish tradition, autopsy was not allowed until the eighteenth century CE, when it became accepted upon biblical precedent. To Talmudists, major sources for human anatomical knowledge were therefore notions from the observation of casualties of battle and serious accidents. Drawing on the weight and size data provided in the Talmud for the mass found in Titus’s skull, Katz (1997) proposed a differential diagnosis including hemangioma, meningioma, and acoustic neuroma, which may all manifest with tinnitus.

This brief overview of selected ancient sources reflects diversity in renditions of a universal symptom placing a common emphasis on emotional connotations. The non-medical texts particularly underline contextual influences that are now systematically taken into account in the evaluation of the patient with tinnitus (Henry et al., 2002).

⑥ JOSEPHUS - WAR OF THE JEW 7:5

Josephus (AD 37 – c. 100),^[1] also known as **Yosef Ben Matityahu** (Joseph, son of Matthias) and, after he became a Roman citizen, as **Titus Flavius Josephus**,^[2] was a first century Jewish historian and apologist of priestly and royal ancestry who survived and recorded the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. His works give an important insight into first-century Judaism.

Josephus's two most important works are *The Jewish War* (c. 75) and *Antiquities of the Jews* (c. 94).^[3] *The Jewish War* recounts the Jewish revolt against Rome (66-70). *Antiquities of the Jews* recounts the history of the world from a Jewish perspective. These works provide valuable insight into the background of first century Judaism and early Christianity.^[4]

was placed the commander of the city that was taken, and the manner wherein he was taken. Moreover, there followed those pageants a great number of ships; and for the other spoils, they were carried in great plenty. But for those that were taken in the temple of Jerusalem, they made the greatest figure of them all; that is, the golden table of the weight of many talents; the candlestick also, that was made of gold, though its construction were now changed from that which we made use of: for its middle shaft was fixed upon a basis, and the small branches were produced out of it to a great length, having the likeness of a trident in their position, and had every one a socket made of brass for a lamp at the tops of them. These lamps were in number seven, and represented the dignity of the number seven among the Jews; and the last of all the spoils was carried the law of the Jews. After these spoils passed by a great many men, carrying the images of Victory, whose structure was entirely either of ivory or of gold. After which, Vespasian marched in the first place, and Titus followed him; Domitian also rode along with them, and made a glorious appearance, and rode

After these triumphs were over, and after the affairs of the Romans were settled on the surest foundations, Vespasian resolved to build a temple to Peace, which he finished in so short a time, and in so glorious a manner, as was beyond all human expectations and opinion: for he having now by Providence a vast quantity of wealth, besides what he had formerly gained in his other exploits, he had this temple adorned with pictures and statues; for in this temple were collected and deposited all such rarities as men aforesaid used to wander all over the habitable world to see, when they had a desire to see them one after another: he also laid up therein, as ensigns of his glory, those golden vessels and instruments that were taken out of the Jewish temple. But still he gave order that they should lay up their law, and the purple vails of the holy place, in the royal palace itself, and keep them there.

MEILA (7) טל' מילא (י.ס.)

Let R' Shimon ben Yochai go, for he is accustomed to having miracles performed on his behalf.^[1] And after him, who shall go?^[2] R' Elazar bar R' Yose. R' Yose said to them: And were my father, Chalafta,^[3] alive, could you say to him, "Give your son for execution?"^[4] R' Shimon said to them: And were my father, Yochai, alive, could you say to him, "Give your son for execution?"^[5] R' Yose said to them: I will go instead.^[6] For it is that perhaps R' Shimon will cause punishment to befall [my son] that I fear.^[7] [R' Shimon] accepted upon himself that he will not cause punishment to befall [R' Elazar the son of R' Yose],^[8] and R' Yose then allowed his son to go along with him. Even so, he caused him punishment. For as they were going on the road, this question was inquired of them: From where do we derive that the blood of a *sheretz* is *tamei*? R' Elazar the son of R' Yose curled his mouth, and said:^[9] From the verse: *And this shall be for you the tamei among the rodents.* R' Shimon said to him: From the curling of your lips, you are discerned to be a Torah scholar, for your answer attests to your wisdom. However, you acted improperly,^[10] and therefore, let the son not return to his father!^[11] The demon Ben Temalyon^[12] came out to greet him. He said to them: Is it your will that I come with you to help annul the decree? R' Shimon cried (for God sent a demon to help him in his mission rather than an angel), and said: Even for the maidservant of my father's house, an angel appeared three times,^[14] and I did not merit an angel even one time. However, let the miracle come in whatever manner.^[15] and entered into the body of the daughter of the caesar.^[16] When R' Shimon arrived there, he was brought to the daughter, and he said, "Ben Temalyon, go out, Ben Temalyon, go out."^[17] And as soon as they called him, he departed her body, and he went away. In gratitude, they^[18] said to [R' Shimon and R' Elazar the son of R' Yose]: Ask for whatever there is for you to ask, and it will be granted. And they brought them into [the caesar's] treasury to take whatever they wanted.^[19] They found that document with the decree; they took it and tore it up.

The Gemara comments: And it is in reference to this incident^[20] that R' Elazar the son of R' Yose said in a Baraisa [in support of his position that the blood of the inner *chataos* must actually reach the *Paroches* (Curtain)];^[21] I SAW [THE *PAROCHES*] IN THE CITY OF ROME, AND THERE WERE UPON IT SEVERAL DROPS OF BLOOD from the inner-*chataos* offerings that were sprinkled on it. This proves that the blood of those offerings were sprinkled onto the *Paroches*.

SUKKA (8) טל' סוכה (ה.)

But let us, then, derive the height of the Ark-cover from the *tzitz*,^[20] for it was taught in a Baraisa: THE *TZITZ* WAS A SORT OF GOLD PLATE, TWO FINGERBREADTHS WIDE AND ENCIRCLING the Kohen Gadol's forehead FROM EAR TO EAR. AND INSCRIBED ON IT, ON TWO separate LINES, were the words "HASHEM" (i.e. the Tetragrammaton)^[21] ON THE UPPER line AND "HOLY TO" ON THE LOWER line.^[22] AND R' ELIEZER THE SON OF R' YOSE SAID: I SAW [THE *TZITZ*] IN THE CITY OF ROME, AND the words "HOLY TO HASHEM" WERE all INSCRIBED ON ONE LINE.^[23] In any case, the Baraisa expressly states that the height of the *tzitz* is two fingerbreadths, which is certainly less than the height of the Table's border.^[24] Hence, why not derive from the *tzitz* that the Ark Cover was merely two fingerbreadths high?

YUMA (9) טל' יומא (ג.)

The Gemara cites a Baraisa regarding the manner in which the Sanctuary sprinklings are performed:

A Baraisa has taught: WHEN HE SPRINKLES, HE DOES NOT SPRINKLE UPON THE CURTAIN, BUT only OPPOSITE THE CURTAIN, without the drops of blood actually coming into contact with it.^[11]

A dissenting view:^[12] R' ELAZAR THE SON OF R' YOSE SAID: I SAW IT (i.e. the Curtain) IN ROME, AND THERE WERE UPON IT MANY DROPS OF THE BLOODS OF THE BULL AND HE-GOAT OF YOM KIPPUR.^[13] Clearly, the blood was meant to reach the Curtain.

RASHI (10) טל' ראש (ע.)

אני ראיתי ברומי. במסכת מעילה (ק"י:) גבי בן תלמיין נעשה נס לרי' אלעזר ברבי יוסי שריפא את נח מלך רומי שניכנס עד גנוסה ששמו בן תלמיין והכניסוהו לאוצר המלך לטובל כל מה שירצה ולא היה חפץ אלא לטובל משם איגרום שכתבו גזירות שגזרו על ישראל ומנאס וקרעס ° ושם ראה כלי בית המקדש כנאמר: כשדרון. מלמעלה למטה " כמנאס: דמים

AVOS D'REBBE NASSON (11) אבוס ד' רבי נאסון (41112)

יב (א) דברים העשוין ונחזין אלו הן אהל מעד וכחם שבו וארון ושבדי לוחות ונצנצת הבן החסמה [גלויות של שמן המשחה] ומקלו של ארון שקדיה ופירויה ובגדי ברוחה ובגדי כהן משיה אבל ככתשת של בית אכמינס שלחן ומנורה ופיריות וציץ ערשן בערשן ברומי: יב (ב) [מעשה בר] שרשן שישב ושנה לתלמידים ועברה בלה לפניו עזה עליה חכמיסה בתוך ביתו חמסר לאבו ולאשרו רחצה וסכה וקשטוה וקריו לפניו עד שתלך לבית בעלה: יד אלו [שתקנו חכמים] שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא (ב) [ר] חמשה