
CLEODEMUS MALCHUS

INTRODUCTION

Cleodemus Malchus was a Jewish writer who was active around 200 BCE, and of whom only a few lines survive in quotations by Josephus and by Eusebius. Since Eusebius is actually quoting the fragment from Josephus, we are clearly dealing here with a single passage from Cleodemus Malchus. Josephus, in turn, credits Alexander Polyhistor with the original quotation. Because of the significant variations between the two surviving forms of the fragment, both are presented here.

For the excerpt from *Josephus*, the Greek is from, Benedictus Niese (ed.), “*Flavii Iosephi Opera*,” (2nd edition; Berlin: Widmann, 1955), 1.58-59 and the English text is based on the translation of William Whiston (1737); for the excerpt from *Eusebius*, the Greek text is from, Karl Mras, “*Die Praeparatio Evangelica*,” (2nd edition; Vol. 8 of “*Eusebius Werke*,” ed. Édouard des Places; GCS 43; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982-83), 1.507-508 and the English text is based on the translation of Edwin H. Gifford (1903).

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

The date of Cleodemus must be before that of Alexander Polyhistor, i.e. before 50 BCE. Added confirmation is given by the distinction that Cleodemus, but not Josephus, draws between Libya and Africa. Cleodemus has Libya as the name for the whole continent, while Africa refers to a much narrower area, the Punic area around Carthage. There is no reason to suppose that the work was not written in Greek.

FRAGMENT 1

JOSEPHUS, *ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS*, 1.15.1 §239–241

²³⁹ λέγεται δέ, ὡς οὗτος ὁ Ἐώφρην στρατεύσας ἐπὶ τὴν Λιβύην κατέσχευεν αὐτὴν καὶ οἱ υἱῶνοί αὐτοῦ κατοικήσαντες ἐν αὐτῇ τὴν γῆν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐκείνου ὀνόματος Ἀφρικὰ προσηγόρευσαν. ²⁴⁰ μαρτυρεῖ δέ μου τῷ λόγῳ Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ πολυῖστωρ λέγων οὕτως· Κλεόδημος δέ φησιν ὁ προφήτης ὁ καὶ Μάλχος ἱστορῶν τὰ περὶ Ἰουδαίων, καθὼς καὶ Μωυσῆς ἱστόρησεν ὁ νομοθέτης αὐτῶν, ὅτι ἐκ τῆς Κατούρας Ἀβράμῳ ἐγένοντο παῖδες ἱκανοί. ²⁴¹ λέγει δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα ὀνομάζων τρεῖς Ἰαφέραν Σούρην Ἰαφράν. ἀπὸ Σούρου μὲν τὴν Ἀσσυρίαν κεκληῖσθαι, ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δύο Ἰαφρᾶ τε καὶ Ἰαφέρου, πόλιν τε Ἐφρᾶν καὶ τὴν χώραν Ἀφρικὰ ὀνομασθῆναι. τούτους γὰρ Ἡρακλεῖ συστρατεῦσαι ἐπὶ Λιβύην καὶ Ἀνταῖον· γήμαντά τε τὴν Ἀφράνου θυγατέρα Ἡρακλέα γεννῆσαι υἱὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς Δίδωρον· τούτου δὲ γενέσθαι Σόφωνα, ἀφ' οὗ τοὺς βαρβάρους Σόφακας λέγεσθαι.

²³⁹ It is related of this Ophren that he made war against Libya, and took it, and that his grandchildren, when they inhabited it, called it Africa. ²⁴⁰ And indeed, Alexander Polyhistor gives his attestation to what I here say; who speaks thus, “Cleodemus the prophet, who was also called Malchus, who wrote a History of the Jews, in agreement with the History of Moses, their legislator, relates that there were many sons born to Abraham by Keturah; ²⁴¹ nay, he names three of them, Apher, and Surim, and Japhran. And, from Surim was the land of Assyria denominated; and, from the other two, the country of Africa took its name, because these men were auxiliaries to Hercules, when he fought against Libya and Antaeus; and that Hercules married Aphra’s daughter, and of her he fathered a son, Diodorus; and that Sophon was his son, from whom that barbarous people called Sophacians were denominated.”

EUSEBIUS, *PRAEPARATIO EVANGELICA*, 9.20.2–4

² Ταῦτα μὲν δὴ ἀπὸ τῆς προειρημένης τοῦ πολυῖστα γραφῆς. καὶ ὁ Ἰώσηπος δὲ ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ τῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας τοῦ αὐτοῦ μνημονεύει διὰ τούτων· λέγεται δὲ ὡς οὗτος ὁ Ἀφρὴν στρατεύσας ἐπὶ τὴν Λιβύην κατέσχευεν αὐτὴν, καὶ οἱ υἱῶνοί αὐτοῦ κατοικήσαντες ἐν αὐτῇ τὴν γῆν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐκείνου ὀνόματος Ἀφρικὰ προσηγόρευσαν. ³ μαρτυρεῖ δέ μου τῷ λόγῳ

² This then from the aforementioned work of Polyhistor. But Josephus also in the first book of his Antiquities mentions the same author in the following passage: “Now it is said that this Afren made an expedition into Libya and subdued it; and his grandsons, having settled there, called the land Africa after his name.” ³ My statement is confirmed by Alexander Polyhistor,

Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Πολυΐστωρ λέγων οὕτως· Κλεόδημος δέ φησιν ὁ προφήτης, ὁ καὶ Μαλχᾶς, ἱστορῶν τὰ περὶ Ἰουδαίων, καθὼς καὶ Μώσης ἱστόρηκεν ὁ νομοθέτης αὐτῶν, ὅτι ἐκ Χεττούρας Ἀβραάμω ἐγένοντο παῖδες ἱκανοί· λέγει δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα, ὀνομάζων τρεῖς, Ἀφὲρ, Ἀσοῦρ, Ἀφραν.⁴ καὶ ἀπὸ Ἀσοῦρ μὲν τὴν Ἀσσυρίαν, ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δύο, Ἀφρα τε καὶ Ἀφὲρ, πόλιν τε Ἀφράν καὶ τὴν χώραν Ἀφρικὰ ὀνομασθῆναι. τούτους δὲ Ἡρακλεῖ συστρατεῦσαι τεῦσαι ἐπὶ Λιβύην καὶ Ἀνταῖον· γήμαντα δὲ τὴν Ἀφρά θυγατέρα Ἡρακλέα γεννῆσαι υἱὸν ἐξ αὐτῆς Διόδωρον. τούτου δὲ γενέσθαι Σοφωναῖν, ἀφ' οὗ τοὺς βαρβάρους Σοφὰς λέγεσθαι. Τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ τοῦ Ἀβραάμ ὥς ἐν ὀλίγοις τοσαῦτα παρακείσθω.

who speaks thus, "But Cleodemus the prophet, who is also called Malchas, in narrating the history of the Jews even as Moses their Lawgiver has narrated it, says that by Chettura Abraham had many sons: and he also mentions their names, calling three of them Afer, Assur, and Afran.⁴ And from Assur Assyria was named; and from the other two, Afra and Afer, a city Afra and the country Africa. And these," he says, "joined Hercules in his expedition against Libya and Antaeus; and Hercules, having married the daughter of Afra, begat of her a son Diodorus. And of him was born Sophonas, from whom the barbarian Sophae are called." Let it suffice then that the story of Abraham is briefly set forth in these quotations.