724 Pseudo-Eupolemos

Ted Kaizer (Durham)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B/N</th>
<th>Eupolemus (ps.) Judaeus</th>
<th>Please fill in transliterated name here</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Historic Work:**
- **Subject:** Jewish literature, mythical past
- **Historical period:** mythical / biblical past
- **Historical Work:**
- **Source date:** 4th century AD
- **Historian's date:** 2nd century BC
- **Historian Number:** BJN
- **Historian:** Ted Kaizer

**Translation**

Thus far Josephus (A.J. 1, 158 ff. = 737 F 2). And with these things agrees Alexandros Polyhistor (273 F 19a) …, who in his *On the Jews* wrote the history for this Abraham word by word as follows:

(2) Eupolemos says in his *On the Jews of Assyria* that the city of Babylon was first founded by those who had come safely through the flood. They were Giants and built the tower read about in history; when this fell down through God’s action, the Giants were scattered over the whole earth. (3) In the tenth generation, he says, in the city of Kamarine, of Babylonia, which some call the city of Ourie (and this is translated as a city of the Chaldeans), in the thirteenth generation Abraham was born, exceeding all in nobleness and wisdom, who also invented astronomy and the Chaldaean art, and he was well pleasing to God because he was eager in his piety. (4) And this one, because of a command of God, having gone to Phoenicia settled there, and teaching the Phoenicians the turnings of the sun and the moon, and all other such things, he pleased their king. Later the Armenians made war upon the Phoenicians; when they prevailed in battle and took his nephew prisoner, Abraham, having come to his aid with his household, came to exercise control over the captors and took the children and women of the enemies as prisoner.
αἰχμαλωτίσαι τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας. (5) πρέσβειον δὲ παραγενομένων πρὸς αὐτὸν, ὅπως χρήματα λαβὼν ἀπολυτρώσῃ ταῦτα, μὴ προελέσθαι τοῖς δυστυχοῦσιν ἐπεμβαίνειν, ἀλλὰ τὰς τροφὰς λαβόντα τὸν νεανίσκον ἀποδοῦνα τὰ αἰχμάλωτα.

ζενισθήναι τε αὐτὸν ὑπὸ πόλεως ἱερὸν Ἀργαρίζων, ὃ εἶναι μεθερμηνευομένον ὄρος υψίστου, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ Μελχισεδέκ ἱερέως ὄντος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ βασιλεύοντος λαβέιν δόρα. (6) λιμοῦ δὲ γενομένου, τὸν Ἀβραὰμ ἀπαλλαγῆναι εἰς Αἴγυπτον πανοίκιαι, κάκει κατοικεῖν, τὴν τε γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἀιγυπτίων γῆμαι, φάντος αὐτοῦ ἀδελφὴν εἶναι. (7) περισσότερον δὲ ἦτο Ἰστόρισκον, ὅτι οὐκ ἦδοντο αὐτῷ συγγενέσθαι, καὶ ὅτι συνεβή φθείρεσθαι αὐτοῦ τὸν λαὸν καὶ τὸν ὄικον. μάντεις δὲ αὐτοῦ καλέσαντος, τοῦτο φάναι, μὴ εἶναι χήραν τὴν γυναίκα· τὸν δὲ βασιλέα τῶν Ἀιγυπτίων οὗτος ἐπιγνόναι, ὅτι γυνὴ ἤν τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ, καὶ ἀποδοῦνα αὐτὴν τοῖς ἄνδρι. (8) συζήσαντα δὲ τὸν Ἀβραὰμ Ἐν Ηλιούπολεί τοὺς Ἀιγυπτίων ἱερεῖς πολλὰ μεταδόθαι αὐτῶς, καὶ τὴν ἀστρολογίαν καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τούτων αὐτῶς εἰσηγήσασθαι, φάμενον Βαβυλωνίους ταῦτα καὶ αὐτὸν εὑρίσκειν, τὴν δὲ εὑρεσὶν αὐτοῦ εἰς Ἐνώχ ἀναζέμπαινεν, καὶ τούτων εὑρίσκειν πρὸ τοῦτον τὴν ἀστρολογίαν, οὐκ Ἀιγυπτίως. (9) Βαβυλωνίων γὰρ λέγει πρὸ τοῦν γενέσθαι Βῆλον, δὲν εἶναι Κρόνον· ἐκ τούτου δὲ γενέσθαι Βῆλον? (9) καὶ Ἡχὸ τοῦτον δὲ τὸν Χαναάν γεννῆσαι τὸν πατέρα τῶν Φοινίκων· τοῦτον δὲ Χοῦμ ἤν γενέσθαι, ὃν ὑπὸ τὸν Ἐλλήνων λέγεσθαι Ἀσβολον, πατέρα δὲ Αἰθίσσων, ἀδελφὸν δὲ τοῦ Μεστραίμ, πατρὸς Αἰγυπτίων. Ἐλλήνας δὲ λέγει τὸν Ἀτλαντα εὑρίσκειν ἀστρολογίαν· εἶναι δὲ τὸν Ἀτλαντα τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ Ἐνώχ, τοῦ δὲ Ἐνώχ γενέσθαι ὑπὸ Μαθουσάλαν, δὲν πάντα δὲ ἀγγέλων θεοῦ γνώναι, καὶ ἡμᾶς οὕτως ἐπιγνώναι.
This fragment about Abraham, presented by Alexander Polyhistor (273) as coming from Eupolemos (723), has been treated since J. Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor und die von ihm erhaltenen Reste jüdischer und samaritanischer Geschichtswerke. Hellenistische Studien, Heft I* (Breslau 1874), 82-103, as belonging to a different, anonymous author. In recent years, however, some scholars have argued again that Polyhistor’s attribution to Eupolemos is correct. Cf. commentary below, and the biographical essay.


Χαλδαικήν, ‘the Chaldaean art’, i.e. astrology.

(4/5) the war episode is a midrash on Genesis 14; the nephew is Lot (14: 12-16).

(5) ᾿Αργαριζίν: the fact that Abraham’s meeting with the priest Melchizedek is located specifically at this place was the main reason for Freudenthal (and still is for most scholars) to look for a Samaritan author behind this fragment, rather than the Jewish Eupolemos (723), since Mt Gerizim was the holy place for the Samaritans, whereas the ‘real’ Eupolemos gave pride of place to the Temple at Jerusalem (723 F 2b). For discussion, cf. Wacholder, *Pseudo-Eupolemus’ two Greek fragments on the life of Abraham*, *HUC 34* (1963), 88, with n.32, argued that they indicate that the author used the Hebrew bible alongside the LXX. Cf., in contrast, N. Walter, ‘Zu Pseudo-Eupolemus’, *Klio* 43-45 (1965), 284–286.


Én dè ádēspōtōs eúdoymen tōn Ἄβραμα ἀναφέροντα εἰς τοὺς γίγαντας, τοῦτος δὲ οἰκούντας ἐν τῇ Βαβυλῶνια διὰ τὴν ἀσέβειαν ὑπὸ τὸν θεὸν ἀναιρεθήκη, ὡς ἐνα Βῆλον ἐκφεύγοντα τὸν θάνατον ἐν Βαβυλῶνι κατοικήσα, πῦργον τε κατασκευάσαντα ἐν αὐτῷ διαίτασθαι, ὡς ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦ κατασκευάσαντος Βῆλον Βῆλον ὑμνομασθήναι, τὸν δὲ Ἄβραμον τὴν ἀστρολογικὴν ἐπιστήμην πιάσαντον πρῶτον μὲν ἐλθὲν εἰς Φοινίκην καὶ τοὺς Φοινικαῖς ἀστρολογίαν διδάξα, ὡστεν δὲ εἰς Ἁγιοπτὸν παραγενέσθαι.

[following a fragment from Artapanos, 726 F1]
But in anonymous works we found that Abraham traced back his ancestry to the Giants; that these, living in Babylonia, were killed by the gods because of their ungodliness; that one of them, Belos, escaping death, had settled in Babylon, and lived in a tower that he had built, named Belos after the Belos who had built it; and that Abramos, who was educated in the science of astronomy, first went to Phoenicia and taught the Phoenicians astronomy, and later came to Egypt.

[followed by fragment from Molon, 728 F1]

724 F 2 Commentary

Seemingly a shorter version of the previous fragment (724 F 1), on Abraham’s lineage going back to the Giants, on the building of the tower in Babylon by the Giant Belos, and on Abraham’s teaching of astronomy to the Phoenicians and the Egyptians. I. Müller, Fragmenta Historiorum Graecorum III (Paris 1849), 212-213, still wanted to attribute this fragment to Artapanus (726), but Freudenthal, Alexander Polyhistor, 14 and 90, argued that it had to come from Alexander Polyhistor (273), as Artapanus never refers to his sources, unlike this fragment (ἐν δὲ ἀδεσπότος). Since Freudenthal, 90-91, the fragment has been interpreted as either an abridged version of the longer fragment he attributed to Pseudo-Eupolemos (724 F 1), or at least as something that went back to the same original source as the longer fragment. Cf. Wacholder, ‘Pseudo-Eupolemos’ two Greek fragments, 83-113 [but cf. id., Eupolemus. A Study of Judeo-Greek Literature (Cincinnati e.a. 1974), 287, n.112], and E.S. Gruen, Heritage and Hellenism. The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1998), 150, n.52: “The second [[fragment] reproduces the principal themes of the first and seems to be no more than a garbled summary.” On specific similarities between this text and 724 F 1, cf. L.T. Stuckenbruck, ‘The “angels” and “giants” of Genesis 6:1-4 in second and third century BCE Jewish interpretation: reflections on the posture of early apocalyptic traditions’ in Dead Sea Discoveries 7,3 (2000), 358-362. However, Walter, ‘Pseudo-Eupolemos (Samaritanischer Anonymus)’, 137-138, argued that the various details in this fragment could not possibly be attributed to a single author, and drew attention to the fact that the passage actually talks about its sources in the plural (ἐν δὲ ἀδεσπότος εὕρομεν). Doran, ‘Pseudo-Eupolemus’, 878, then concluded that the passage - “a potpourri of traditions, most probably thrown together by Alexander Polyhistor out of disparate elements” could not belong to either Eupolemos or Pseudo-Eupolemos (if the latter actually existed), or indeed to any individual author. Cf. id., ‘The Jewish Hellenistic historians before Josephus’ in H. Temporini and W. Haase (eds.), Aufstieg und Niedergang der
724 Biographical Essay

The existence of a separate author conventionally known as ‘Pseudo-Eupolemos’ is based on the hypothesis of Freudenthal, *Alexander Polyhistor*, 82-103, who attributed to him the two fragments quoted above: a longer passage which Alexander Polyhistor (273) actually explicitly attributes to the ‘real’ Eupolemos (723), and a shorter passage which is often viewed as a summary of the longer one. Freudenthal’s main reason for postulating a separate Pseudo-Eupolemos was the reference to Ἄργαριζίν, Argarizin or Mt Gerizim, the holy place of the Samaritans, as the ‘mountain of the Highest’, from which Pseudo-Eupolemos came to be interpreted as a Samaritan writer. In addition, the fragments of Pseudo-Eupolemos were said - again in contrast to those of the ‘real’ Eupolemos (723) - to be of a more syncretistic nature, to give primacy to Abraham rather than to Moses, and to emphasise the Phoenicians. Cf. E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* III.1, rev. and ed. by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman (Edinburgh 1986), 529. Freudenthal’s hypothesis of Pseudo-Eupolemos as a Samaritan writer is still followed by many, if not most, e.g. by Walter, ‘Pseudo-Eupolemos (Samaritanischer Anonymus)’, and by L.H. Feldman, *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered* (Leiden - Boston 2006), 74 and 125. Not everybody is convinced though. Cf. F. Millar, ‘The background to the Maccabean revolution’, *JJS* 29 (1978), 6, n.12 [= id., *The Greek World, the Jews, & the East. Rome, the Greek World, and the East* 3, eds. H.M. Cotton and G.M. Rogers (Chapel Hill 2006), 73, n.13], who emphasised that mention of Mount Gerizim does not necessarily imply that the author is Samaritan. Similarly, Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 147-148, at 147: “the basis for that construct has less solidity than is usually assumed.” On the date (first half of the second century BC?) and place (Egypt ?, Samaria ?) of writing, cf. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People* III.1, 529-530. However, it has also been questioned whether the two fragments assembled under this header are actually from a single author. Doran, ‘Pseudo-Eupolemus’, and id., ‘The Jewish Hellenistic historians before Josephus’, followed by Garbini, 614-616, argued that Alexander Polyhistor (273) was right to attribute the longer fragment (724 F 1) to Eupolemos, and that the second fragment, the alleged summary (724 F 2), is based on altogether different sources. See also the discussion of the fragments of Eupolemos (723).

724 Bibliography


**SubSection head**
Normal paragraph with text and links to other lemma's.
Normal paragraph with text.
Normal paragraph.