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724 Pseudo-Eupolemos

Ted Kaizer (Durham)

**Historical Work:**

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

**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 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. (5) When ambassadors
αἰχμαλωτίσαι τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας. (5) προέβεβε θεος αἰγυπτίων πρὸς αὐτὸν, ὅπως χρήσαται λαβὼν ἀπολυτρώσῃ ταῦτα, μὴ προελέσθω τοῖς δυστυχοῦσιν ἐπιμβαίνειν, ἀλλὰ τὰς τροφὰς λαβὸντά τὸν νεανίσκον ἀποδοῦναι τὰ αἰχμάλωτα.

ζευγνηθήναι τε αὐτὸν ὑπὸ πόλεως ιερὸν Ἀργαρίζων. ὦ εἶναι μεθερμηνεύμονον ὁρὸς ὑψιστοῦ, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ Μελχισεδέκ ιερέως ὄντος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ βασιλεύσων τοῦ βασιλείου δώρα. (6) λιμῷ δὲ γενομένου, τὸν Ἀβραὰμ ἀπαλλαγὴν εἰς Αἴγυπτον πανοικία, κάκει κατοικεῖν, τὴν τε γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἀιγύπτων γῆμαι, φάντος αὐτοῦ ἀδελφὴν εἶναι. (7) περισσότερον δὲ ἰσότρησθαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἦδοντα αὐτὴν συγγενεῖσθαι, καὶ ὅτι συνεβή φθείρησθαι αὐτοῦ τὸν λαὸν καὶ τὸν ὅικον. μᾶντεις δὲ αὐτοῦ καλέσαντος, τοῦτο φάναι, μὴ εἶναι χίραν τὴν γυναίκα· τὸν δὲ βασιλέα τῶν Ἀιγύπτων οὖν ἐπιγνόναι, ὃτι γυνὴ ἡν τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ, καὶ ἀποδοῦναι αὐτὴν τοῖς ἄνδρι. (8) συζήσατα δὲ τὸν Ἀβραὰμ ἐν Ἡλιούπολι τοὺς Ἀιγύπτων ιερεῖς πολλὰ μεταδίδαμεν αὐτοὺς, καὶ τὴν ἀστρολογίαν καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τοῦτον αὐτοῖς εἰσηγήσασθαι, φάμενον Βαβυλωνίους ταῦτα καὶ αὐτῶν εὐρηκέναι, τὴν δὲ εὑρέσειν αὐτῶν εἰς Ἐνώχ ἀναζημέειν, καὶ τοῦτον εὐρήκειν πρῶτον τὴν ἀστρολογίαν, οὐκ Ἀιγύπτως. (9) Βαβυλωνίων γὰρ λέγει πρῶτον γενέσθαι Βηλῶν, ὃν εἶναι Κρόνον· ἐκ τοῦτον δὲ γενέσθαι Βηλῶν; (7) ἤκαστο τοῦτον τὸν Χαναάν γεννῆσαι τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Φοινίκου· τοῦτον δὲ Χοῦμ ιουν γενέσθαι, ὃς ὑπὸ τὸν Ἐλλῆνον λέγεσθαι Ἀσβολον, πατέρα δὲ Αἰθίππου, ἀδελφὸν δὲ τοῦ Μεστραείμ, πατρὸς Ἀιγύπτου. Ἐλληνας δὲ λέγει τὸν Ἀθλαντα εὐρηκέαν ἀστρολογίαν· εἶναι δὲ τὸν Ἀθλαντα τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ Ἐνώχ, τοῦ δὲ Ἐνώχ γενέσθαι ιουν Μαθουσάλαν, ὃς πάντα δὲ ἄγγελον θεοῦ γυνὴν, καὶ ἦμᾶς οὕτως ἐπίγνοναι.
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.


Χαλδαϊκήν, ‘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) Ἄργαριζίν: 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’, 106-107, and for different opinions, cf. references in biographical essay. Cf. esp. Garbini, ‘Eupolemo storico giudeo’, 615 with n.10-12, who emphasises that the text gives Argarizin as the name of the temple, not of the city, and who draws attention to the relatively uncommon construction of ὑπὸ followed by accusative.

ὁρος υψιστου: cf. commentary above, on Χαλδαϊων πόλιν (3).


724 F 2 - (III 212, 4) EUSEB. P.E. 9, 18, 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject: Jewish literature, mythical past</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Work:</td>
<td>[following a fragment from Artapanos, 726 F1]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source date: 4th century AD</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historian's date: 2nd century BC</td>
<td>[followed by fragment from Molon, 728 F1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical period: mythical / biblical past</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 Historicorum 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 ἀδεσπότοις εὑρομεν τὸν Αβραάμ ἀναφέροντα εἰς τούς γίγαντας, τούτως δὲ οἰκούντας ἐν τῇ Βαβυλωνίᾳ διὰ τὴν ἀσέβειαν ὑπὸ τὸν θεόν ἀναφεβήκια, ὃν ἐνα Βήλων ἐκφεύγοντα τὸν θάνατον ἐν Βαβυλώνι κατοικῆσαι, πώρον τε κατασκευάζαμεν ἐν αὐτῷ διαιτάσαμεν, ὃν δὴ ἀπὸ τοῦ κατασκευάζαντος Βήλου Βήλων ὁνομασθήκια, τὸν δὲ Ἀβραὰμον τὴν ἀστρολογικὴν ἐπιστήμην παιδευθέντα πρῶτον μὲν ἐλθέν εἰς Φοινίκην καὶ τοὺς Φοινικαῖς ἀστρολογίαν διδάξας, ὃστεν δὲ εἰς Αἴγυπτον παραγενέσθαι). Since Freudenthal, 90-91, the fragment has been interpreted as either an abridged version of the longer fragment he attributed to Pseudo-Euopelemos (724 F 1), or at least as something that went back to the same original source as the longer fragment. Cf. Wacholder, ‘Pseudo-Euopelemos’ two Greek fragments, 83-113 [but cf. id., Euopeleus. 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-Euopelemos (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 ἀδεσπότοις εὑρομεν). Doran, ‘Pseudo-Euopeleus’, 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 Euopelemos or Pseudo-Euopelemos (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-Eupolemos’, 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


N. Walter, 'Pseudo-Eupolemos (Samaritanischer Anonymus)' in id., *Fragmente jüdisch-hellenistischer Historiker* = W.G. Kümmel (ed.), *Jüdische Schriften aus Hellenistisch-Römischer Zeit* 1.2 (Gütersloh 1976), 137-143.

*SubSection head*

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