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A Ptolemaic Account

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A Ptolemaic Account

P. Mich. inv. 930

9.8 x 7.3 cm.

Early II B.C.

Plate 2

This papyrus was acquired by the University of Michigan through M. Nahman in 1922.¹ It is light brown in color and well-preserved, although traces of ink at the bottom edge indicate that at least one additional line of text has been lost. The hand is Ptolemaic and likely dates to the early second century B.C. Prices noted in the text are consistent with a date between 210 and 183 B.C., while the absence of iota adscripts suggests that it should be placed in the latter part of that period.²

The text appears to be a private account, which notes a receipt and several expenditures. The expenditures include both purchases and payments (wages?) to individuals. A number of similar accounts from the Ptolemaic era survive; these include *P.Tebt.* I 116, 117; III 891, 893; and *P.Hibeh* I 121, as well as many examples among the Zenon papyri. Although its contents are rather mundane, this text does offer several items of interest. A previously unattested word, ἀναγώγιον, appears in line 8. Additional instances of two uncommon names, Μελαινίς and Ἑλιξ, occur in lines 2 and 11 respectively, while a Persian (Ἀρσάκης) may lurk in line 3.

¹ I would like to thank the Special Collections Library, University of Michigan, for permission to publish this text. I am also grateful to Gregg Schwendner and Jim Keenan for suggesting improvements to earlier versions of this article.

² On prices as a dating criterion for Ptolemaic papyri, see T. Reekmans, "Monetary History and the Dating of Ptolemaic Papyri," *Studia Hellenistica* 5 (1948) 15-43 and "The Ptolemaic Copper Inflation," *Studia Hellenistica* 7 (1951) 61-119, and W. Clarysse and E. Lanciers, "Currency and the Dating of Demotic and Greek Papyri from the Ptolemaic Period," *Ancient Society* 20 (1989) 117-32. Concerning iota adscripts, see W. Clarysse, "Notes on the Use of the Iota Adscript in the Third Century B.C.," *CdE* 51 (1976) 150-66, particularly his concluding remarks on 165-66.

εἰς ἀν(αλώματα) Ἄψ
 ἔσχον παρὰ Μελαινίδος
 (δραχμας) ρι / Ἀρσάκη φ
 4 χιτῶνος ci
 οἴνου κ(εράμιον) (δραχμας) co
 ποτηρίου ρμ
 Διονυσίῳ {(δραχμας)} (δραχμας) ρλ
 8 χόρτου ἀναγώγιον (δραχμας) cμ
 στήμονος (δραχμας)
 Δημαρίῳ (δραχμας) π
 Ἑλιξι v

1 Ἑλιξι, ξξ ex κι

For expenses 1,700
 I have received from Melainis
 110 drachmas / To Arsakes 500
 For a chiton 210
 For a keramion of wine 270
 For a cup 140
 To Dionysios 130 drachmas
 For bringing up of hay 240 drachmas
 For thread ... drachmas
 To Demarios 80 drachmas
 To Helix 50 drachmas

1 This line was probably added last, after the writer had totalled the expenditures; oblique slashes, which appear in the papyrus against lines 2-3, 7-8, and 10-11, are probably check-marks made in the process of adding these. The expenditures preserved in the text total 1,620 drachmas. The missing sum in line 9, plus one

or more lost at the end of the text, would easily make up the difference.

2 The name Μελαινίς is not common in the papyri. Other instances include *P.Petrie* III 2.19 (237/6 B.C.) [= *Prosopographia Ptolemaica* 14403], where it belongs to a former slave and *SB* I 4004, an undated inscription.

3 Ἀρσάκης is a Persian name. The name is also found in *P.Ryl.* IV 589.4,23,31,39,47,86 (Philadelphia, 180 B.C.) and *P.Grenf.* I 12.31 (Thebaid, ca. 148 B.C.): Ἡρόδοϋ Ἀρσάκου Πέρσης. On Persians in Ptolemaic Egypt, see F. Heichelheim, *Die auswärtige Bevölkerung im Ptolemäerreich* (Leipzig 1925) 76-79.

5 For the years 210-183 B.C., wine prices run between 220 and 300 drachmas per keramion; cf. Clarysse and Lanciers, *Ancient Society* 20 (1989) 117. The price given here falls comfortably within that range.

7 The payments here and in lines 10-11 may represent wages, although this is not certain. Clarysse and Lanciers (see above, note on line 5) give a range of 150 to 600 drachmas per month for a laborer's wage between 210 and 183 B.C. Assuming payment for a week's work is intended here, the sums given in these lines would fit within those limits.

8 The word ἀναγώγιον is a new one; for the phrase cf. *BGU* VI 1251.16 (III-II B.C.): χόρτου ἀγώγια.

9 στῆμονος is probably in reference to thread intended for the warp of a cloth to be woven; cf. *P.Tebt.* I 116.23n. Our writer failed to record the amount of material and the sum paid for it.

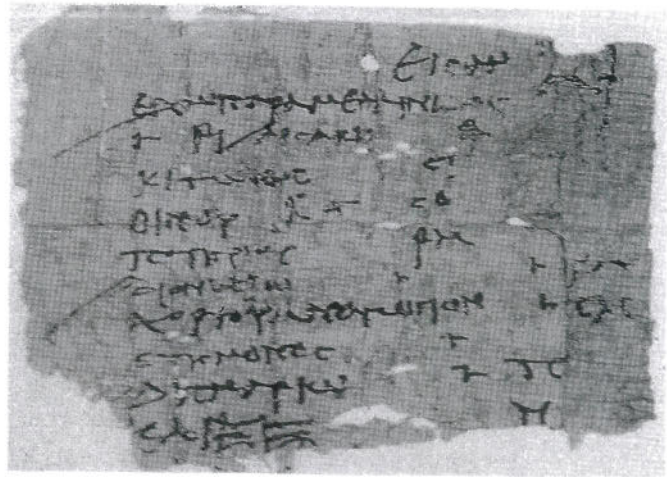
10 For Ἐλιξ *Namenbuch* cites only *P.Flor.* I 50.94 (A.D. 268): Ἐλικα. I have not been able to locate any other occurrence of the name. Our writer encountered some problems with the declension of the name; he appears to have written Ἐλικι and then changed it to Ἐλιξι.

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Plate 2

(to Jenkins, "A Ptolemaic Account")



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