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P.Hamb.graec. 185: Garden Tax Between the Archives of (Lucius) Iulius Serenus and Gemellus Horion

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- §1 P.Hamb.graec. 185 was purchased by Wilhelm Schubart for the German papyrus cartel on 2 March 1911 and came to Hamburg in 1913 following conservation by Hugo Ibscher.¹ The dealers were Michel Casira and Farag Tadrus.² The other sixteen papyri purchased that day belong to the archive of (Lucius) Iulius Serenus, published as P.Hamb. 1 39–54.³ Although several of these items were composed in Karanis, archival records in Hamburg report an alleged provenance for the lot in Batn Harit (= Theadelphia). The veracity of this claim, which was no doubt provided to Schubart by the dealers, is not supported by any internal evidence; the villages’ respective locations mean that it is probably false.
- §2 Paul Meyer described the papyrus in a footnote but did not assign it a serial number within P.Hamb. 1.⁴ As a consequence, it has gone largely unnoticed. In both structure and content it resembles **P.Bodl. 1 24** (219/220; = Fig. 2) and especially **P.Lond. 2 166A** (219), parallels which allow several of Meyer’s provisional readings to be improved.⁵ Both of those documents were issued to Longinus son of Heraclianus for garden tax paid to the secretary of the praktores argyrikon in Karanis, a certain (Gaius) Aurelius Melas. The Hamburg papyrus is also a receipt for tax paid to Melas in his capacity as secretary, but its amount – 36 drachmas – is triple that of the others’ payments. Another related receipt is **P.Hamb. 1 42** (216), also from Hamburg’s 1911 Casira/Tadrus lot and similarly issued for a payment made through this same Melas.

¹ See **Essler 2021**: 204–205.

² On Casira and Tadrus, see **Hagen and Ryholt 2016**: 206, 215. Casira died later the same year.

³ = **TM Arch 117**. The lot includes P.Hamb.graec. 182–191, 198–204. P.Hamb. 1 39 was subsequently re-edited and fully published as **Rom.Mil.Rec. 1 76**. The same Iulius Serenus is also the recipient of **SB 22 15855**, a papyrus excavated by the University of Michigan at Karanis. Its field number (33-B518K-A) indicates that it was unearthed on the western side of the village, from house 518 in the ‘B’ level of occupation. But it was the only papyrus found in this structure and its relationship to the archive is therefore fundamentally uncertain.

⁴ **P.Hamb. 1**, p. 183, n. 6: “Er [sc. Aurelius Melas] wird auch in der zusammen mit den Quittungen des Serenus gefundenen Quittung Inv.-Nr. 185 (Höhe 20,2 cm, Breite 12,7 cm; unten unbeschrieben 16,5 cm) genannt, die folgendermaßen lautet: [ἔτους κ< Μάρκου Αὐρηλίου Σεουήρου] | [Ἀντωνίνου] Παρθικοῦ Μεγίστου | Βρετανικοῦ (sic.) Μεγίστου Γ[ε]ρμανικ[οῦ] | Μεγίστου Εὐσεβοῦς Σεβαστοῦ Ἐπιφ κγ. | διαίγρα(ψεν) Αὐρηλίω Μέλανι γρα(μματεῖ) πρα(κτόρων) ἀργ(υρικῶν) | Αὐρ(ήλιος) Τερεντίου (l. -ιος) Ἰουλίας Λογγινίας | (προ(βάτων)?) κβ (ἔτους) δραχμαῖ (l. -ας) τριάκοντα ἕξ / (δραχμαῖ) λς. – In der Zwischenquittung Nr. 44 fungiert als Vertreter der πράκτορες ἀργυρικῶν von Psenyris ein χειριστής.”

⁵ The Bodleian papyrus was acquired from Frederick Conybeare on 20 Oct. 1896, who received it from B. P. Grenfell: see **Hunt 1974**: 8. The London papyrus was purchased from the Rev. Greville John Chester on 2 Feb. 1891, as part of a larger lot that includes several items from the archive of Mikkalos (**TM Arch 602**), the most recent addition to which is Graham Claytor’s contribution to this volume.

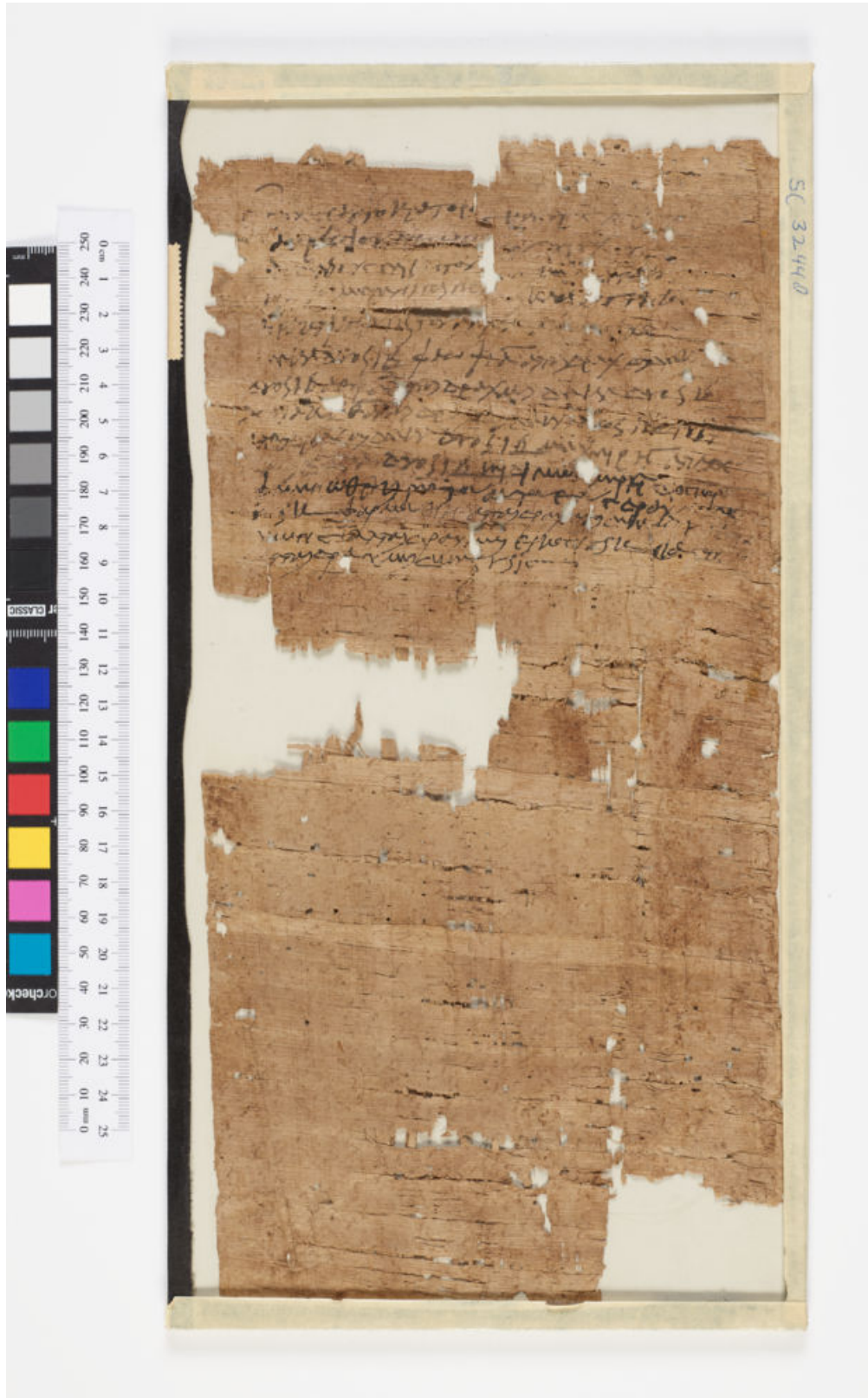


Fig. 1. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Gr. class. c. 39 (P) (= P.Bodl. 1 24). Creative Commons License Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 (CC BY-NC 4.0)

- §3 All four texts were written in the same hand, which we may conclude is that of Melas himself.⁶ His term in office, in concert with the present text's mostly extant dating formula, point to a date in the summer of 216. The following spring, Caracalla was dead, and the last papyrus dated by his reign in the Arsinoite is [SB 12 10913](#), from Epeiph 6 – some two and half weeks prior to the Hamburg receipt.⁷ Meanwhile, [BGU 1 222](#) – another receipt for garden tax – indicates that, in 215, the office of secretary of the *praktores argyrikon* in Karanis was held by a Zosimos.⁸
- §4 Given the lot with which it was acquired, its composition in Karanis, and its date, all of which point to the archive of (Lucius) Iulius Serenus, it is a reasonable hypothesis that this papyrus relates somehow to the archive. Prosopography, however, is a complicating factor: the payer and his mother are otherwise unknown, and her name – Iulia Longinia – suggests a familial relationship to Gemellus Horion and the archive that bears his name rather than that of (Lucius) Iulius Serenus (see commentary, below).
- §5 The text is written with the fibers. The back is blank.

⁶ The second hand of [P.Bodl. 1 24](#) belongs to an Aurelius Dioskoros. A further text potentially involving Aurelius Melas is [SB 6 9241](#), which names him as a homeowner in Karanis. That papyrus was excavated on the eastern side of the village and was assigned the field number 29-158*-GIII. But the excavation's record of objects specifies that it was among the items discovered "beneath house 158 and above the vaults of C123", which is problematic: the house above granary C123 is 152, not 158.

⁷ [Rathbone 1986](#): 105–106 argues that Caracalla was no longer recognized in the Arsinoite by Epeiph 12, noting in support of this point the first recognition of Macrinus in Thebes ([SB 6 9143](#)), a text written on the same day as this Hamburg papyrus. So also [Strasser \(2017: 39, 77\)](#), who interprets the anonymous "year 1" of [O.Stras. I 155.4](#), [P.Köln 2 92](#), and [P.Köln 2 93](#) as an indication that word of Caracalla's death had arrived in the Arsinoite by late June or early July.

⁸ This is likely Aurelius Longinus alias Zosimos, the principal figure of [TM Arch 667](#). In addition to serving as secretary in 215, Zosimos was also a *sitologos* in Karanis from 215–217 (and previously from 200/201–211/212), and possibly *praktor* in 218/219. See [Clayton 2021](#) (last accessed 23 February 2022).



Fig. 2. P.Hamb.graec. 185. Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky. Creative Commons License Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)

[ἔτους κδ Μάρκου Αὐρηλίου Σεου]ή[ρ]ο[υ]
 [Ἀντωνίνου] Παρθικοῦ Μεγίστου
 Βρετανικ[ο]ῦ Μεγίστου Γερμανικ(οῦ)
 Μεγίστου Εὐσεβοῦς Σεβαστοῦ Ἐπιφ κγ.

5 διαίγρ(αψεν) Αὐρηλίῳ Μέλανι γρ(αμματεῖ) πρ(ακτόρων) ἀρ(γυρικῶν)
 [Κ]αρ(ανίδος) Τερεντίου Ἰουλίας Λογγινίας
 . π(αραδείσου) κβ (ἔτους) δραχμὰς τριάκοντα ἕξ, (γίνονται) (δραχμαὶ) λς.

1 κ prev. ed. 3 *l.* Βρετανικ[ο]ῦ 4 *l.* Ἐπειφ 5 *l.* διέγρ(αψεν) 6 Αὐρ(ήλιος) prev. ed. *l.*
 Τερέντιος 7 προ(βάτων) prev. ed. (*l.* δραχμὰς) δραχμαὶ prev. ed.

Year 24 of Marcus Aurelius Severus Antoninus Parthicus Maximus Britannicus Maximus Germanicus Maximus Felix Pius Augustus, Epeiph 23. Terentius, son of Iulia Longinia, has paid thirty-six drachmas (36 dr.) in garden tax for year 22 to Aurelius Melas, secretary of the praktores argyrikon of Karanis.

- §6 1 For reasons of space, ἔτους may have been abbreviated, but it is rather more likely that the initial epsilon was written elaborately large in the left margin: cf. the layouts of [P.Hamb. 1 42](#), [P.Lond. 2 166A](#), and [P.Bodl. 1 24](#), in the same hand.
- §7 5 διαίγρ(αψε). Melas elsewhere employs this unusual orthography; cf. [P.Bodl. 1 24.3](#) and [P.Lond. 2 166A.3](#). On the interchange of ε and αι (usually in the other direction), see [Gignac 1976](#): I 193.
- §8 6 [Κ]αρ(ανίδος). A difficult reading and restoration. The receipt's formula leads one to expect the payer's name in the nominative, for which reason Meyer read Αὐρ(ήλιος) Τερεντίου (*l.* Τερέντιος), but the first hysilon is difficult and there is, moreover, space for one more letter before alpha at the start of the line. The extant traces suggest alpha (or possibly lambda), a blotted letter that might be epsilon, and a rho surmounted by an abbreviation stroke. But possible restorations of a name in the nominative fail to convince: [\langle Οὐ>α]λέρ(ιος) violates Youtie's law by positing an omitted Οὐ- (for which cf. [P.Fam.Tebt. 28](#) and [P.IFAO 1 9](#): the latter is a case of haplography); another alternative is [Α]λέρ(ιλᾶς) (cf. [P.Mich. 4 223.2048](#)). The parallel texts [P.Bodl. 1 24.4](#) and [P.Lond. 2 166A.4](#) suggest a different solution: there, Melas includes the abbreviated toponym Καρ(ανίδος) in his title, and the ductus of the abbreviation supports reading it here, as well: in both parallels, rho is badly blotted and followed by a sinusoid abbreviation stroke. Here, the blotted letter is plausibly also rho, but Melas' subsequent stroke of abbreviation seems to have been poorly executed, which might explain why he added an additional one surmounting it (an atypical method of abbreviation for him). It remains odd for the payer to be called son of his mother rather than his father.
- §9 Ἰουλίας Λογγινίας. The name is reminiscent of the Longinus son of Heraclianus to whom the parallel receipts [P.Bodl. 1 24](#) and [P.Lond. 2 166A](#) were issued, but it is even more suggestive of Gaius Iulius Longinus, son of Gaius Iulius Niger. On this reckoning, Iulia Longinia would be the granddaughter of Niger and a cousin of Gemellus Horion, the last keeper of that family's archive ([TM Arch 90](#)). A date in the summer of 216 is compatible with such a familial relationship between the two.
- §10 7 There is space for one letter before pi, where I also discern a single fleck of ink. Since the receipt is otherwise complete, I can offer no interpretation, and the identification of the tax is necessarily tentative as a result. It is indicated on the papyrus by a large pi which loops upward from the right hasta and continues retrograde into the same sinusoid abbreviation stroke used elsewhere (e.g., *l.* 5). The same abbreviation appears in [BGU 1 222.6](#), [P.Bodl. 1 24.5](#), [P.Lond. 2 166A.5](#), [P.Hamb. 1 40.7](#), and [P.Hamb. 1](#)

41.7. On the Berlin and Bodleian papyri, the pi and abbreviation stroke are not ligatured and we should not, therefore, interpret the abbreviation stroke as alpha with Meyer.

§11 κβ. For the shape of beta, cf. the ductus of that letter in **P.Hamb. 1 42.5**, another text in the hand of Melas. From the base of the letter, sometimes preceded by a ligature or descending hasta, the pen inclines upward to the right before turning back at the apex and descending into a sinusoid figure-eight that produces the letter's two bubbles. The delay in paying an assessment of garden tax is paralleled by **P.Hamb. 1 41**, issued in the same year (216) for the payment of garden tax for year 21 of Caracalla's reign.

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