Orders to Wine Delivery

Two Orders of Wine Delivery

Oxyrhynchos? (IV AD)

This paper includes two unpublished ostraca. They are housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo under inventory number S. R. 18953 and temporary number 25 1 53 4. According to the Egyptian museum’s archive this number comes from unknown provenance. The two ostraca are written in large sized cursive hand with black ink on the convex side of a pottery shred. They are distinguished with large lower margins at the end of the texts. The scribes are not professionals. The texts are complete and related, they have the same subject. The two ostraca are considered as order of wine delivery. The concaves are blank.

It is found that the formula of the ostraca have a similar topic to O. Ashm. Shelt. number 84 - 89, 91 - 137 (Oxyrhynchos; IV AD) and it has nearly the same structure which runs as follows:

1- A (issuer) to B (addressee).
2- Greetings.
3- Order verb to deliver δός.
4- Beneficiary.
5- Quantity of wine measure by knidion, and summary in figures.
6- The date (month and day).
7- The subscription of issuer.

Luckily, our two ostraca have the same both issuer and addressee like about 53 ostraca of O. Ashm. Shelt. (see commentary I). According to what is mentioned, we may say that this ostraca come from Oxyrhynchos and they could be dated to IV century AD. The handwriting is similar to P. Sakaon. 62 (Theadelphia; 22 Jan. II AD 328); especially letters α, ν and ο (text I), and P. Cair. Preis. 2 (Hermopolis; AD 362) especially letters α, ε and ν (text II).
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I

9.4 cm. x 5.5 cm  (Oxyrhynchus?, 27 Dec. IV AD)

This is reddish ostracon. It consists of eight lines. There are two
diarises on the first letter iota of the name Ἰσχυρίων, the
beneficiary, l. 3.

1- Κυριακός Θέωνι
2- χ(αίρειν)´
3- δός Ἰσχυρίωνι
4- καὶ τοῖς σῶν αὐτῷ
5- οἶνου κνιδία(ια)
6- τρία γ´
7- Τύβι α´ Κυρια-
8- κός στοι(χεί)´

Translation:

Kyriakos to Theon. Greetings. Give Ischyriion and who with
him three knidia of wine, 3. Tybi 1. (I), Kyriakos agree.

II

10.5 cm. x 10.7 cm.  (Oxyrhynchus?, 18 Jan.IV AD)

This is medium brown ostracon. The ostracon consists of four
lines.

1- Κυριακός Θεωνι χ(αίρειν)´ δὸς
2- Δημητρίῳ ἀλίπτη οἶνου
3- κνίδιον ἐν, κνίδ(ιον) α´ Τύβι
4- κυ´ Κυριακός στο(χεί)´

Correction:

1- L. Κυριακός
2- L. ἀλείπτη
3- L. Κυριακός

Translation:

Kyriakos to Theon. Greetings. Give Demertios, the trainer, one
knidion of wine, (knidion) 1. Tybi 23. (I), Kyriakos agree.
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Commentary:

Overview and compared with Archive of O. Ashm. Shelt.

1- A (issuer) to B (addressee):

Texts I, II. I. 1 is Κυριακός Θέων, the structure of these two names are mentioned ca. 108 times in Oxyrhynchos throughout O. Ashm. Shelt. 84 - 190 (IV AD), ex. in addition to three times at SB. XX.15078 -15080 (IV AD).

2- Greetings:

Text I. L.2, II.L.1, this Abbreviated form is stable, throughout ostraca of Archiv O. Ashm. Shelt, e.g. O. Ashm.shelt 100, L.1: Κυριακός Θέωνι χαίρειν).

3- Order verb to deliver δός:

This form is stable, throughout O. Ashm. Shelt, e.g. 105, 1-3: Κυριακός [Θ]έωνι χαίρειν δός ἵσχυρώνι.

4- Beneficiary:

Text I, I.3, the Beneficiary ἴσχυρών is mentioned in four times in O. Ashm. Shelt., he receives variant amounts of wine on different days: 105, 3-7, three knidia of wine in Tybi 4 (30/31 Dec.); 125, 2 - 5, two knidia of wine in Tybi (the day unknown) (27. Dec. - 25 Jan); 134, 3 – 6, three knidia of wine in Tybi (ca. 27. Dec. - 25 Jan.), 152. 2 - 5, five knidia of wine, from 26 Mecheir until 30 (20 - 24 Febr.).

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5- Quantity of wine measure by knidion, and summary in figures:

The quantity of wine is ranging between one to three knidia (about knidion, see Ph. Mayerson (2002); “The Enigmatic Knidion: A Wine Measure in Late Roman/Byzantine Egypt”, ZPE 141. PP. 205-09), e.g. O. Ashm. Shelt. 105, 1-3: οἶνου κνίδια τρία, κνίδ(ω) γ. Cf. O. Ashm. Shelt. 149, 5-6.

6- The date (month and day).

Text I. l. 7f, II. l. 3f, the order of date is day and month followed by the subscription of the issuer. The vintage takes place in July/August (Mesore) but the wine was contracted to be delivered some six months later in December/January (Tybi) during which time the winter would see to it that wine was fully fermented (i.e., stabilized) and in saleable condition. In all likelihood, he did not bottle the wine in Mesore, but did so prior to delivery in Tybi form his supply of stored fermented wine, see Ph. Mayerson (2002), “The Enigmatic Knidion, Op. Cit. p 206.

The Egyptians had different kinds of wine. Although it was produced mostly from grapes, it could also be made from the fermented juice of dates and other fruits. The price of wine was defined according to its quality; there were expensive wine, ordinary wine, cheap wine, bad wine and vinegar wine. Wine was the second most important beverage after water in the Roman and Byzantine worlds. Clearly, wine was widely available and commonly consumed in the middle and upper classes. It is difficult to declare if the same thing was true for the rural population or not. Nevertheless, wine generally was a basic stuff for life at that time, see R. S. Bagnall, “Egypt in Late Antiquity” Princeton University Press. USA 1993. p. 32).

7- The subscription of issuer:

Text I. l. 7f, text II. l. 4, Κυριακός στοι(χεί), it is noticed that Shelton considered the signature verb στοι(χεί) mere a monogram through most of the pieces of his Archive, cf. O. Ashm. Shelt. 182, S.B. XX. 15080 (Oxyrhynchos; IV AD).

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Plate I

(Oxyrhynchus?, 27 Dec. IV AD)

Plate II

(Oxyrhynchus?, 18 Jan. IV AD)