

***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This paper includes two unpublished ostraca.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  $\frac{25}{53} \frac{1}{4}$ . 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, v and o (text I), and P. Cair. Preis. 2 (Hermopolis; AD 362) especially letters α, ε and v (text II).

*Orders to Wine Delivery*

**I**

9.4 cm. x 5.5 cm

(Oxyrhynchos?; 27 Dec. IV AD)

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

- 1- Κυριακὸς Θεῶνι
- 2- χ(αίρειν)·
- 3- δὸς Ἰσχυρίωνι
- 4- καὶ τοῖς σὺν αὐτῷ
- 5- οἴνου κνίδ(ια)
- 6- τρία γ·
- 7- Τῦβι α· Κυρια-
- 8- κὸς στοι(χεῖ)·

**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.

(Oxyrhynchos?; 18 Jan. IV AD)

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

- 1- Κυριακὸς Θεῶνι χ(αίρειν)· δὸς
- 2- Δημητρίῳ ἀλίπτῃ οἴνου
- 3- κνίδιον ἓν, κνίδ(ιον) α· Τῦβι
- 4- κγ· Κυριακὸς στοι(χεῖ)·

**Correction:**

- 1- L. Κυριακός
- 2- L. ἀλείπτῃ
- 3- L. Κυριακός

**Translation:**

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

**Commentary:**

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

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

Texts I, II. 1. 1 is Κυριακὸς Θέωνι, the structure of these two names are mentioned ca. 108 times in Oxyrhynchos throughout O. Ashm. Shelt. 84 - 190 (IVAD), 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: Κυριακὸς Θέωνι χ(αίρειν).

**3- Order verb to deliver δὸς:**

This form is stable, throughout O. Ashm. Shelt, e.g. 105, 1-3: Κυριακὸς [Θ]έωνι χ(αίρειν) δὸς Ἰσχυρίωνι.

**4- Beneficiary:**

Text I, l.3, the Beneficiary Ἰσχυρίων 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.).

Text II, l.2, the Beneficiary is Δημητρίῳ ἀλείπτῃ (about ἀλείπτῃ see Mark Golden (Routledge 2004) Sports in the Ancient World , p.32), is mentioned five times in O. Ashm. Shelt., he receives variant amounts of the wine on different days: O. Ashm. Shelt. 86, 2- 4, two *knidia* of wine in Tybi 1 (27 - 28 Dec.); 92, 2 - 4, one knidion of wine in Tybi 2 (28 -29 Dec.); 102, 2- 4, two knidia of wine in Tybi 3 ( 29 - 30 Dec. ); 107, 2 - 4 , two knidia of wine, in Tybi 4 (30 - 31 Dec.); 137, l. 2-4, two knidia of wine in Tybi (27. Dec. - 25 Jan).

**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: οἴνου κνίδια τρία, κνίδ(ια) 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).

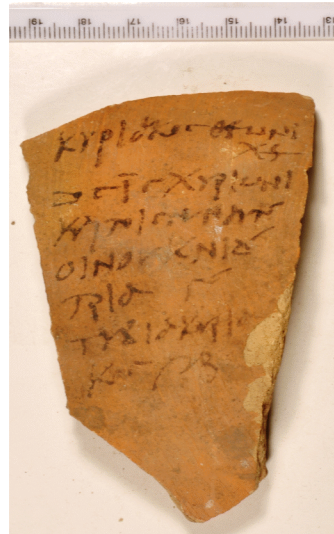
**7- The subscription of issuer:**

Text I. l. 7f, text II, l. 4, Κυριακός στοι(χει), it is noticed that Shelton considered the signature verb στοι(χει) 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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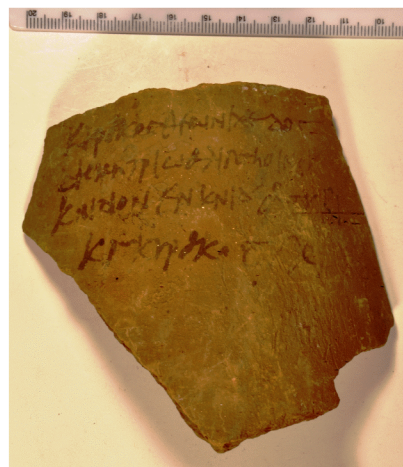
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Plate I



(Oxyrhynchos?; 27 Dec. IV AD)

Plate II



(Oxyrhynchos?; 18 Jan. IV AD)