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INSCRIPTIONS WITH THE FORMULA θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος ON LATE ROMAN
AMPHORAE

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Inscriptions with the Formula θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος on Late Roman Amphorae*

Two amphora necks with Greek inscriptions (reg. no. 265/86 and field reg. no. 294/90) were found during recent excavations of the Polish Archaeological Mission directed by Włodzimierz GODLEWSKI at Deir el-Naqlun in the Fayum. Both inscriptions begin in the same way: ΧΜΓ Θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος (l. κέρδος)¹. I came across another amphora bearing this type of inscription quite by accident, while looking through the records of the Polish excavations at Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria². A few weeks later Tadeusz SARNOWSKI told me of the existence of yet another inscription of this type coming from Novae³, a legionary camp first and later a city on the Danube, some distance from Egypt to say the least. The accumulation of evidence turned my attention to Late Roman amphorae with inscriptions found in other areas of the Mediterranean and this article sums up the results of my inquiry which cannot be considered by any means final⁴. Interestingly, from some sites of which the Late Roman amphora material with inscriptions has been published thoroughly (e.g., the Athenian Agora, Carthage⁵), not even the

* The inscriptions on Late Roman amphorae published in this article were the object of my discussions with Zbigniew BORKOWSKI in the last weeks of his life and I owe to him many of the observations presented here. Therefore, let this article be truly a tribute to my teacher and friend.

The first draft of this article was read by Ewa WIPSYCKA and I am grateful for her valuable suggestions. I would like to thank also Pieter J. SIJPESTEIJN whom I consulted about the readings of the inscriptions gathered in this article. Words of thanks should also be directed to my friends, ceramologists and archaeologists in charge of the pottery from sites excavated by Polish missions: Grzegorz MAJCHEREK working presently on the material from Alexandria (Kom el-Dikka) and Piotr DYCZEK studying the pottery from Novae. A very special word of thanks to Tomasz GÓRECKI who prepared the descriptions of the two amphorae from Naqlun and the ceramological analysis of amphorae from Romania. Mr. GÓRECKI was also kind enough to discuss with me the entire ceramic material included in this article.

Last but not least, I wish to express my gratitude to the directors of the Polish missions: Tadeusz SARNOWSKI at Novae, Włodzimierz GODLEWSKI at Naqlun and Grzegorz MAJCHEREK in charge of Alexandrian field research, for giving me permission to publish the inscriptions on amphorae coming from their excavations (Novae: **III.1** and **III.2**, Naqlun: **I.1** and **I.2** and Alexandria: **I.3**).

¹ Published below as **I.1** and **I.2**.

² Published below as **I.3**.

³ Published below as **III.1**. While still working on this article, I received from T. SARNOWSKI another inscription (**III.2**) found during the 1991 season of excavations at Novae.

⁴ The results presented in this article are by no means final. It should be noted on this occasion that the state of publications of inscriptions on vessels of any kind is unsatisfactory to say the very least. Especially in older publications there is a clear tendency to disregard or even ignore the existence of inscriptions on pots. There are various reasons for this state of affairs, often simply resulting from difficulties or even the impossibility of reading and understanding these texts (this particularly concerns the so-called red inscriptions on Late Roman amphorae from Egypt, cf. J. GASCOU, *Amphores byzantines à dipinti grecs de Saqqara*, Bulletin de Liason GIECE 3, 1978, pp. 24–27). Renewed inspection of all amphorae with inscription will undoubtedly reveal more dipinti of the type published in this article. Unnecessary to say this will clarify many aspects of far-distance trade in the period under discussion.

⁵ M. LANG, *The Athenian Agora XXI. Graffiti and dipinti*, Princeton 1976; S.M. DAVIES, *The Dipinti, Stamps and Graffiti* [in:] M.G. FULFORD, D.P.S. PEACOCK, *Excavations at Carthage: the British Mission*, vol. I.2, Sheffield 1984.

smallest fragment of an inscription which could belong to the type described in this article is known.

The writing of inscriptions with the formula Θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος is in all cases very similar, exhibiting a certain proficiency (considering the difficulties engendered by the material) and a clearly cursive character; on palaeographic grounds it can be dated to the fifth-sixth century. What distinguishes particular groups of inscriptions is the colour of the ink. The ones from Egypt are written with black ink (often the same amphorae bear other presently still unintelligible inscriptions in red ink), while those from Romania and Bulgaria with red ink. The types of amphora bearing this type of inscription also differ, but it is difficult in this case to speak of regional distinctions.

With the exception of **I.1**, **II.7**, the text of the inscription begins with the formula ΧΜΓ, in two cases (**I.2**, **I.3**) followed by the isopsephic ϑθ (=ἀμήν). ΧΜΓ is a Christian symbol often encountered in Greek papyri and inscriptions, and most probably referring to Christ himself (Χριστὸς Μαρίας γέννα or γέννημα?)⁶. In one of the inscriptions published below (**III.2**), the formula ΧΜΓ was written in a way which cannot be understood in the light of any of the interpretations presented so far⁷.

In the inscriptions presented below the next two lines after ΧΜΓ contain the formula Θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος, "God's grace [is] a gain", sometimes in the ampler form Θεοῦ χάρις [καὶ] σωτηρία κέρδος, "God's grace and salvation [are] a gain" (**II.1.2-4**, **II.6.2-4**), sometimes the word κέρδος is missing (**I.3**, **I.5**). The noun κέρδος has many different meanings and it also appears in ironical contexts, sometimes even in a pejorative sense⁸. It does not occur in the Septuagint, while in the New Testament it has a double meaning: "profit, gain (in a material sense)", but also a metaphorical meaning not concerned with material benefits (NT Php 1.21: ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος, 'for me life is Christ, and death is a gain')⁹. This metaphorical meaning taken from the New Testament becomes common in patristic literature, where it is often used as a reference to the benefaction that death held for a Christian. If death is a benefaction for a Christian, then God's grace, Θεοῦ χάρις, is so as well (perhaps even more so). Our

⁶ It was J.O. TJÄDER, *Christ our Lord, Born of the Virgin Mary*, *Eranos* 67, 1970, pp. 148–190, who gave a summary of a certain stage of the century long discussion, his conclusion, however, which attributed to the symbol ΧΜΓ the meaning Χ(ριστὸν) Μ(αρία) γ(εννῆ) juxtaposing it with the Latin *VDN* = *V(irgine) D(eus) n(atus)* does not provide an answer to all the difficulties; cf. N. LEWIS, *Notationes legentis*, *BASP* 13, 1976, pp. 158–159; A. BLANCHARD, *Sur quelques interprétations de ΧΜΓ*, [in:] *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Papyrologists*, London 1975, pp. 19–24; A. GOSTOLI, *Una nuova ipotesi interpretativa della sigla cristiana ΧΜΓ*, *Studia Papyrologica* 22, 1983, pp. 9–14; G. ROBINSON, *ΚΜΓ and ΘΜΓ for ΧΜΓ*, *Tyche* 1, 1986, pp. 175–177; G.H.R. HORSLEY, *The origin of the abbreviation ΧΜΓ: a Christian cryptogram?* [in:] *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 2, 1982, pp. 177–180. I believe that in most cases the symbol ΧΜΓ can be understood as Χριστὸς Μαρίας γέννα or γέννημα; cf my paper forthcoming in *JJP* 22, 1992, *Some Remarks on the Christian Symbol ΧΜΓ*.

⁷ Cf. *infra*, com. ad **III.2.1**.

⁸ LSJ. s.v. "I.1 gain, profit, 2. desire of gain; II. (plur. - only in Homer!) cunning arts, wiles".

⁹ Cf. J. LOUW, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, New York 1988, s.v. κέρδος: "κέρδος in the sense of 'gain' is not restricted, however, to monetary gain or profit. It may refer to any kind of benefit or advantage"; W. BAUER, K. ALAND, B. ALAND, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*⁶, Berlin–New York 1988, s.v.

inscriptions demonstrate that the noun κέρδος entered common language at least in the formula Θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος¹⁰.

Some inscriptions contain numbers as well, presumably an isopsephic recording of Christian formulae of some kind (**I.3**: $\gamma\alpha\rho\lambda\beta = 1132$; **I.5**: $\upsilon\pi\delta = 484$; **I.6**: $\phi\pi\gamma = 583$)¹¹.

The text of the inscriptions following these opening formulae is of an economical nature primarily. A name in the genitive appears, often preceded by the adjective ἅγιος (**I.4**, **II.1**, **II.6**, **II.7**(?), **III.1**, **III.2**)¹², presumably referring to the church or the monastery where the amphora was filled with the product mentioned further on in the text. In two or three inscriptions (one from Histria, **II.2.4–5**¹³, one from Novae, **III.1.3–4**, and one from Sucidava (Celei) not far from Novae, **II.7.3–4**¹⁴) the phrase Θεοῦ σῶζοντος appears beside ἀγίας Μαρίας; it may also be present on two other amphorae (**II.3.4**, **II.5.5**), this time without ἀγίας Μαρίας in the preceding line. Perhaps we are dealing here with a monastery or church with two names - "Church/Monastery of St. Mary and the God of Salvation/Saviour", although it is difficult to avoid the impression that at least the second part of the invocation appears somewhat improbable in reference to Late Antiquity¹⁵. Another possible interpretation of the phrase Θεοῦ σῶζοντος is to understand it as a sort of formula expressed in the *genetivus absolutus*, formula with religious content only ("God redeems, God is the Redeemer") which has absolutely nothing to do with the

¹⁰ Cf. NT 1K1 36.2: τὸν ἀθάνατον τῆς ἀναστάσεως καρπὸν τρυγᾶν; W. BAUER, K. ALAND, B. ALAND, op. cit. (n. 9), s.v.; G.W.H. LAMPE, *A Greek Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. (meaning D, especially D.5).

It might be added that the noun κέρδος occurs in several customs accounts in the phrase ἐπ' ἀγοθῶν Κερδῶν Ἐρμῆς or simply Κερδῶν Ἐρμῆς which refers to a day on which no duties were received; cf. D. FORABOSCHI, *Hermes Cerdon: P. Mil. Vogl. 25 e 250*, *Parola del Passato* 23, 1968, pp. 304–306; U. HAGEDORN, D. HAGEDORN, P. Coll. Youtie I 31.12 com.; P.J. SIJPESTEIJN, P. Customs, p. 88 n. 19.

¹¹ These inscriptions have analogies, although without the formula Θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος, and so not included in this article: SB I 1984e – $\upsilon\pi\delta (=484)$ and $\beta\rho\iota\zeta (=2117)$; SB I 1984f – again $\upsilon\pi\delta$. The meaning of these numbers remains unclear and the summing up of numerical assignments of letters in particular words of the formula Θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος has not given any results. All that remains is to quote B.P. GRENFELL and A.S. HUNT, *Excavations at Oxyrhynchus*, Egypt Exploration Fund. Archaeological Report 1906/07, pp. 10–11: "the numbers 484, 583 and 2117 had a mystic significance. 484 is possibly to be explained as the sum of the letters composing the word Θεοῦ; the addition of ἀμήν (99) to this would produce 583".

¹² On the margin of these observations one should remember that this arrangement of the inscription provides yet another possibility of interpretation: κέρδος ἀγίου Μηνᾶ, ἀγίας Μαρίας, "the gain [of church/monastery] of St. Menas (St. Mary) [is] God's grace", Θεοῦ χάρις. "Gain" would, of course, refer to the production and sale of the liquid filling the amphora. Two inscriptions with the formulae in developed form (**II.1** and **II.6**), Θεοῦ χάρις [καὶ] σωτηρία κέρδος, provide evidence in favour of abandoning this particular interpretation.

¹³ Cf. infra, com. ad loc. cit.

¹⁴ Cf. infra, com. ad loc. cit.

¹⁵ So far there is no study collecting the invocations of churches and convents in Antiquity (with exception of two out-dated studies on monasteries and churches in Egypt: P. BARISON, *Ricerche sui monasteri dell'Egitto bizantino ed arabo secondo i documenti dei papiri greci*, *Aegyptus* 16, 1938, pp. 29–148; L. ANTONINI, *Le chiese cristiane nell'Egitto dal IV al IX secolo secondo i documenti dei papiri greci*, *Aegyptus* 18, 1940, pp. 129–208). Ewa WIPSZYCKA, whom I consulted about this matter, was sceptical; in her opinion, there is little chance that any church in Antiquity was called by the name of Christ and in the light of the quoted inscriptions the fact appears even less probable.

invocation of the church (monastery)¹⁶. In those cases where the noun can be read (II.1.7, II.2.6, II.4.5(?), II.6.6, II.7.5), the amphorae appear to have been filled usually with one product, γλυκέλαιον¹⁷, "sweet oil"¹⁸, with two possible exceptions. In one case (III.1.5) the amphora was filled most probably with ἀλέλαιον, "oil mixed with salt, salted oil"¹⁹, while in the other (I.1.5–6), if the reading is correct, the liquid in question was ἔλαιον ἅγιον, "sacred oil"²⁰, i.e., oil for ritual purposes²¹; moreover, its name was accompanied by a term defining its quality (πρωτεῖος), a sort of mark of quality. The name of the liquid is usually followed by a number accompanied by the common symbol for ξέσται (ϝ); the measurement is often repeated twice or even three times (I.1.7–8, I.3.5–6, II.1.8–9, II.7.6–7)²².

Inscriptions with the formula Θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος appear on amphorae of different types²³:

¹⁶ The *genetivus absolutus* is somewhat surprising in such a context, for this kind of syntax should hardly be expected in this type of text. Why this syntax became part of the common language is possibly explained by phrases in use earlier like θεῶν θελότων, θεοῦ θέλοντος.

¹⁷ In papyri the noun γλυκέλαιον ("sweet oil") is often in the plural, γλυκέλαια, cf. P. Oxf. (= P. L.Bat. III) 18.2–3 com. In the inscriptions published here it is always in the singular.

¹⁸ Γλυκέλαιον is also mentioned in the inscription from Oxyrhynchos, SB I 1984f, mentioned earlier on (n.11).

¹⁹ Cf. infra, com. ad loc. cit.

²⁰ Cf. infra, com. ad loc. cit.

²¹ "Sacred sweet oil", ἅγιον γλυκέλαιον, is mentioned also in an inscription on an amphora found in Sucidava on the Danube (Romania). The inscription, although without the formula Θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος, is otherwise very similar to those presented in this article. The reading proposed here is based on a drawing published in *ed. princeps* (D. TUDOR, *Sucidava III. Quatrième (1942), cinquième (1943) et sixième (1945) campagnes de fouilles et de recherches archéologiques dans la forteresse de Celei, département de Romanați, Dacia* 11–12, 1945–47, pp. 176–177) and re-published in: E. POPESCU, *Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV–XIII descoperite în România*, București 1976, pp. 317–318, nr. 316 (with extensive bibliography). The inscription is on the neck of an amphora of type 2 (according to the classification presented in this article below) and is written over another text consisting of two big letters Θ and Υ which are interpreted by D. TUDOR and E. POPESCU as Θ(εοῦ) υ(ίος) or just Θ(εο)ῦ. The text reads:

1. χμγ
2. λα ἀγίου Κόνωνος
3. ἀγίου γλυκελέου
4. (ξέσται) λ[α]
5. π†ρ

3. γλυκελαίου 4. ϝ (=ξέσται)

2. λα could be the number of ξέσται repeated in 1. 4. D. TUDOR and E. POPESCU read in this line Λουκονόχου and treated it as the name of a presbyter (1. 5). The reading ἀγίου is beyond doubt, while the *lambda* is actually a ligature of *gamma* and *iota*, preceded undoubtedly by *alpha*, something that escaped the attention of the Romanian editors. The name Κόνωνος seems to be a very possible reading. An ἐποίκιον of St. Konon is attested in Fayum (P. Kl. Form. (= SPP) 786.2–3: τ' οὐ' ἐποικ(ίου) [τ'] οὐ' [ἀγ]ί(ο)υ Κόνωνος; cf. A. CALDERINI, *Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici* III (2), p. 141; S. TIMM, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1985, Teil 2, p. 1471.

3. D. TUDOR: (τ) τογ Λγκατίογ (sic!), E. POPESCU: (τ)οῦ Λουκατίου - both consider this as the name of Loukonochos' father. The reading γλυκελέου is certain, also ἀγίου is very possible reading. The liquid contents of the amphora was a "sacred sweet oil".

²² It would be interesting to compare the number of *xestai* with the capacity of the particular type of amphora but I have found no information about the capacity of the amphorae in question.

²³ Typology according to: D.P.S. PEACOCK, D.F. WILLIAMS, *Amphorae and the Roman Economy: an Introductory Guide*, London 1986; J.A. RILEY, *The Pottery from the Cisterns 1977.1, 1977.2 and*

1. *Peacock-Williams 43, Carthage LR amphora 2, Kellia 169* (IV - beg. VII c.) - **II.2, II.3, II.4, II.5, II.7, III.1, III.2, IV.1**;
2. *Peacock-Williams 44, Carthage LR amphora 1, Kellia 164* (beg.V - mid VII c.) - **I.1, II.1, II.6**²⁴;
3. *Peacock-Williams 36, Carthage —, Kellia —* (I - IV c.) - **I.2**;
4. so called "spatheion", *Peacock-Williams 51, Carthage —, Kellia 185* (end IV - VI or VII c.) - **I.3**²⁵.

The chronological range presented here is rather broad and one reason for this is that classes of amphorae are discussed, not particular variants. It would appear, however, that all the amphorae with the inscriptions under discussion (except one) could be dated to the sixth century and this is in accordance with the palaeographic dating of the inscriptions. The only earlier item in this group (**I.2**), an amphora usually dated a 100-200 years earlier, was found in context with sixth and seventh century vessels (the part which was found had been used in the wall of one of the Naqlun hermitages), suggesting that the amphora had continued in use for a long time and the inscription on it could have been written shortly before it became an element of the construction of the wall. This amphora belongs to a type which is thought to have been produced in Tripolitania and vessels from that region were known for their durability and often remained in use for much longer periods of time than the more delicate Egyptian amphorae made of Nile silt.

Although the production centres of the other types of amphorae have not been determined as yet, it is possible, on the basis of petrographic analyses, to tentatively assign particular types to geographical regions. And so amphorae of type **1** (according to the typology presented above) were produced on the islands and coasts of the Aegean Sea; amphorae of type **2** in northern Syria or on the southern coasts of Anatolia rather than in Cyprus or the Aegean, finally amphorae of type **4** (so called "spatheia") in Northern Africa or Tripolitania.

As far as their contents is concerned, i.e., the product which they served to transport (with the exception of "spatheia"), most scholars believe it was olive oil. This opinion, although quite common, is not always documented satisfactorily, in view of the fact that discoveries of whole amphorae with the contents are an exception (mostly in shipwrecks). Furthermore, when any traces of the contents are actually found, only rarely are there any laboratory analyses made to identify the product. Most often the reasoning is logical: if an amphora was produced in areas of large scale oil-production, it could have served no other purpose than to transport olive oil. One should add that a number of inscriptions considered in this article confirms this intuitive opinion.

The description of the contents is often accompanied (**II.2.6, II.4.5, II.5.5, II.7.5, III.1.5**) by two letters which undoubtedly are a ligature of *psilon* and *rho*, usually without a clear symbol of abbreviation²⁶. In the inscriptions published below I believe it could be understood as an abbre-

1977.3 [in:] J.A. HUMPHREY (ed.), *Excavations at Carthage Conducted by the University of Michigan*, vol. VI, Ann Arbor 1981, pp. 85-124; M. EGLOFF, *Kellia. La poterie copte*, Genève 1977. For other significant information on the amphorae discussed here see W. HAUTUMN, *Studien zu Amphoren der spätrömischen und frühbyzantinischen Zeit*, Bonn 1981.

²⁴ The amphora discussed in n. 19 is of this type also.

²⁵ Also a "spatheion" found in Abu Fana bears an inscription perhaps belonging to the same group as discussed here. The text of the inscription begins as follows: ΧΜΓ | Θεοῦ χάρις | κέρδος κτλ. It will be published by H. HARRAUER, to whom I am indebted for this information. I also wish to extend words of thanks to T. GÓRECKI, member of the Austrian mission at Abu Fana, who told me about the discovery of this object at Abu Fana.

²⁶ One can assume that an identical ligature, interpreted by the publisher as ηρ(), is to be found in the inscription on a vessel from Oxyrhynchos, SB I 1984f, already mentioned above (notes 11 and 18).

viated form of the noun ὕρ(χη), usually referring to a clay vessel used to store pickles or wine, but difficult to identify more closely on the basis of infrequent mentions in literature and only one papyrus document²⁷. Should this interpretation of the repeatedly encountered ligature be considered correct, then perhaps the word ὕρ(χη) should be taken as a technical term used in the 6th century to designate a type of amphora known in ceramological literature as *Late Roman amphora 2*, because it only appears on amphorae of this type and, what is more, it may have been present on all amphorae of this type published here (the bottom part of inscriptions **II.3**, **III.2** and **IV.1** have not been preserved)²⁸.

Taking into account the character of the inscriptions gathered here and an analysis of the amphora types on which they appear, it would seem that all the amphorae were used in the 6th century. It was then that the partly religious, partly commercial inscriptions were executed. Amphorae were used to transport olive oil (or perhaps just one kind of oil, γλυκέλαιον²⁹) from Tripolitania, Syria and the Aegean to Egypt and the Black Sea areas³⁰. Oil was produced in estates belonging to monasteries (or churches) and it is there that the inscriptions were written on the necks of amphorae; this may perhaps explain the religious character of the first part of all the inscriptions.

²⁷ LSJ. s.v. ὕρχη (sic! *spiritus lenis*), "jar, for pickles, for wine"; P. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Paris 1984, p. 1161, s.v. ὕρχη: "«réceptif de terre» contenant du poisson mariné, parfois du vin"; a noun of Aeolic origin (Poll. VI.14) from the same root as the Latin *orca*; F. PREISIGKE, WB, s.v. ὕρχη, "Tontopf", gives one reference only: PSI IV 428.8, 84 (receipt from the Zenon's archive, the noun ὕρχη mentioned twice in the nominative in unabbreviated form). Two other references in *Spoglio lessicale papirologico*; both, however, refer to two editions of the same document: P. Med. II 70 (ed. S. DARIS) is a reedition of SB VI 9499 (ed. princeps: A. TRAVERSA, *Dai papiri inediti della raccolta milanese*, Aegyptus 35, 1955, pp. 185-200 (nr. 37, pp. 192-196). The papyrus has been recently republished again (P.J. SIJPESTEIJN, K.A. WORP, *Einige griechische Papyri aus dem byzantinischen Ägypten*, ZPE 90, 1992, pp. 236-237 – with photograph on Tafel V). The signs transcribed by the first editor as the ligature of *ypsilon* and *rho* and interpreted as ὕρ(χαί) turned to be a quite clear figure *sampi*. The numbers changed in this way give an accurate calculation; there is, therefore, no doubt about the reading proposed by P.J. SIJPESTEIJN and K.A. WORP and the references given by *Spoglio lessicale papirologico* are to be deleted.

²⁸ It is interesting that on three amphorae of ὕρχη type I have found no traces of usual symbol for *xestai* (**II.1**, **II.4**, **II.5**) as it may be presumed on the base of drawings and poor photographs. Could be ὕρχη itself a measure? But in two other inscriptions on amphorae of this type (**II.7** and **III.1**) the symbol for *xestai* does appear (even repeated twice in **II.7**).

²⁹ It is known from elsewhere that γλυκέλαιον was the object of a rather lively trade in the 7th century. Near the locality Yassi Ada on the Asia Minor coast a wreck of a commercial ship was found which must have sunk shortly before 626 A.D. In the wreck there were 822 amphorae; chemical analyses indicated the presence of "eroded olive stones" in 31 of them. Two of the 31 amphorae with "olive stones" inside bore the inscription EAE, three others - the inscription ΓAY, presumably identifying the contents as ἔλα(ιον) in the first case and perhaps γλυ(κέλαιον) in the second case; cf. F.H. VAN DOORNINCK JR., *The Cargo Amphoras of the 7th Century Yassi Ada and 11th Century Serçe Limani Shipwrecks: Two Examples of a Reuse of Byzantine Amphoras as Transport Jars* [in:] *Recherches sur la céramique byzantine* (= BCH Suppl. XVIII), Athènes 1989, pp. 247-257.

³⁰ It should be pointed out that all the conclusions on a possible way of transporting oil in the 6th century do agree in general with the conclusions on commercial routes at the same time drawn from the ceramic evidence by C. ABADIE-REYNAL, *Céramique et commerce dans le bassin égéen du IV^e au VII^e siècle* [in:] *Hommes et richesses dans l'Empire byzantin*, tome I: IV^e-VII^e siècle, Paris 1989, pp. 143-159, especially pp. 153-159 with the map on p. 159.

Inscriptions with the formula θεοῦ χάρις κέρδος³¹

The catalogue is presented in geographical order. The edition of the text of the inscription is preceded by information on the type of amphora (according to the works cited in note 23).

I. EGYPT

1. Amphora Naqlun inv. no. 265/86 (doc. no. 565/86)* (Tafel V)

(*Peacock-Williams 44, Carthage LR amphora 1, Kellia 164*)

The neck of an amphora found in the court of hermitage 1³². Text written in black ink, in a hand betraying a certain cursiveness. This is the only one of the inscriptions published here not beginning with the formula ΧΜΓ. If the reading of lines 5–6 is correct, the inscription confirms the fact that sacred oil might have been transported in these amphorae³³.

On the opposite side, where the neck joins the body, illegible signs in red ink.

1. †
2. Θεοῦ χάρις
3. καίρδος
4. Βικτ[ο]ρίας
5. ἐλαίου ἁγίου ὀ{ς}
6. πρωτίον
7. (ξέσται) κθ κθ
8.] κθ

.....

3. κέρδος 6. πρωτεῖον 7. ξ (=ξέσται)

4. Βικτ[ο]ρίας – the name although obvious as feminine form of very common Βίκτωρ/Οὐίκτωρ is attested in Egypt only once (in form Οὐίκτωρία): P. Oxy. XVII 2151.13 (private letter, 3rd century). In this place we should expect the name of the producer (usually a church or a monastery) and the absence of the adjective ἅγιος generates some doubt (cf., however, I.3.4 with com.). The amphora was filled in the church/monastery of St. Victoria?
5. The reading ἐλαίου at the beginning of line 5 is quite certain. The letters -ου read at the end of the word ἁγίου can be also read as a ny. The reading ἐλαίου τινός should be, therefore taken under consideration but it seems to be less probable because of the lack of adjective meaning of τίς.

The adjective πρωτεῖος means that the product mentioned in the preceding line was of top quality (cf. F. PREISIGKE, WB, s.v. "von bester Beschaffenheit, von erster Güte").

³¹ Inscriptions marked with an asterisk (*) are published here for the first time.

³² Hermitage no.1 was investigated by the Polish Mission in 1986, cf. W. GODLEWSKI, T. HERBICH, E. WIPSYCKA, *Deir el-Naqlun 1986-87. First Preliminary Report*, Nubica 1-2, 1990, pp. 171-207.

³³ Cf. supra, introduction, p. 138 et n. 21.

The syntax of the text in lines 5–6 (as they are transcribed above) is rather uncommon but the relative pronoun at the end of line 5 (masculine instead of neuter) is the reason why *πρωτεῖον* in line 6 stands in nominative (ἐλαίου ἁγίου ὃς) πρωτεῖον [ἔστί]).

7–8. The sign of volume to be expected at this point is not evident, but I see no reason not to reconstruct here the usual symbol Ϝ (=ξέσται). The number of *xestai* repeated (cf. **I.3.5–6**, **II.1.8–9**, **II.7.6–7**; cf. *supra*, introd., p. 138).

2. Amphora Naqlun without reg. no. (doc. no. 294/90)* (Tafel V)

(*Peacock-Williams 36, Carthage —, Kellia —*)

The neck of an amphora built into the structure of a sixth or seventh century mudbrick wall at the entrance to hermitage 89³⁴. The writing is very faint, letters big. The text has been preserved in fragments, only where the vessel surface has not flaked off yet³⁵.

1. † χμγ ϑθ †
2. Θε[ο]ῦ χάρις
3. κáιρδος
4.]υπ....[
-
3. κέρδος

4. This line should contain the name of the producer of the fluid contents once filling the amphora or the name of the product itself.

3. Amphora of the "spatheion" type, Alexandria reg. no. SA 721/61* (Tafel V)

(*Peacock-Williams 51, Carthage —, Kellia 185*)

The neck of a "spatheion" found in 1961 on Kom el Dikka, in sector A covering the north-western part of the baths and the so-called "subterranean vaulted structure". Text written in black ink, writing very clear, straight and neat. One of two inscriptions where the formula Θεοῦ χάρις is not followed by the term κέρδος (also **I.5**).

1. χμγ ϑθ
 2. Θεοῦ χάρις
 3. † Ἀρλβ †
 4. Κύντου
 5. (ξέσται) λς L
 6. (ξέσται) λς L
4. = *Quinti*? 5-6. Ϝ (=ξέσται)

³⁴ Cf. *supra*, introduction, pp. 139.

³⁵ The text of the inscription as it is presented below, was read and transcribed during the excavation and the photograph (fig. 2) was taken a few weeks later when the process of flaking off of the vessel surface was much farer advanced.

3. Αρλβ (= 1132) (Βρλβ (= 2132) is not totally to be excluded) is presumably an isopsephic recording of some other formula (cf. infra, **I.6**, **I.7**, supra, introd., p. 137 et n. 11).
4. Κύντου = Quinti as a genitive of the Latin name Quintus. Although F.TH. GIGNAC, *A Grammar I*, p. 225 does not give Κύντος as the Greek form of the Latin name Quintus (GIGNAC lists the forms Κοίντος, Κουίντος and Κυίντος), the form Κυντιανοῦ is twice documented as an equivalent of the Latin Quintianus. GIGNAC does not list another Greek equivalent of the Latin name Quintus; in an inscription from Alexandria (SB I 2101.8) it is written simply Κίντου (gen.) and it probably is the best analogy to our text.

The reading of line 4 may raise some doubts for other reasons: F.TH. GIGNAC, loc. cit. does not note any occurrence of this name later than the 4th century. D. FORABOSCHI, *Onomasticon*, s.v. Κυίντος does record one document, P. Oxy. XVIII 2197 – quite certainly of 6th century date (the archives of Apions), which is a receipt for delivered bricks, but the reading of the name there is highly dubious (l. 182: ὑπὸ Κυί[ντο]ν).

In front of the genitive Κύντου we expect ἁγίου (cf., however, **I.1.4**). On the photograph it looks as if the proper name is followed by an *alpha* (with an abbreviation stroke?). However, ἁ(γίου) in this position is unexpected and, as far as I know, never abbreviated in this kind of inscription. Only inspection of the original can provide certainty. A saint of the name Κ(ο)υ(ί)ντος is unknown to me.

- 5–6. The number of *xestai* repeated (cf. **I.1.7–8**, **II.1.8–9**, **II.7.6–7**; cf. supra, introd., p. 138).

4. SB I 1965 (Oxyrhynchos)³⁶

An inscription presumably on the neck of an amphora (SB I 1965: "Henkelgefäß")³⁷.

χμγ. ϑθ. Θεοῦ χάρις καίρδος ἁγίου Μηνᾶ Πέτρου Ἄφροῦς
 Παμνο[], ϑθ ϑθ ϑθ
 κέρδος

Next to the word καίρδος B.P. GRENFELL and A.S. HUNT noted *l. κέρδος*, which F. PREISIGKE left out while reprinting the text of the inscription in SB.

In Oxyrhynchos there were churches (perhaps monasteries?) of St. Menas and St. Peter (cf. S. TIMM, *op. cit.* (n. 21), Teil 1, p. 288). If the inscription refers to two (or even more) churches / monasteries, it is hardly possible not to repeat the adjective ἅγιος in front of each name.

The name Ἄφροῦς sounds very strange (it is *hapax legomenon* in F. PREISIGKE's *Namenbuch* with the reference to this text only). Perhaps the name in question is Ἄπφοῦς, a very common proper name in the Byzantine Period. I am unable to explain the rest of the inscription (a misreading of the last part of this inscription is not to be excluded!).

³⁶ *Ed. princeps*: B.P. GRENFELL, A.S. HUNT, *Excavations at Oxyrhynchus*, Egypt Exploration Fund. Archaeological Report 1905/06, p. 14.

³⁷ This amphora (or its part), just as the next three (**I.5-7**), should presumably be stored in the Coptic Museum, having been moved there together with all other objects of the Coptic period from the Cairo Museum. However, I could not identify any of these vessels in the collection of the Coptic Museum. All the inscriptions on amphorae from Oxyrhynchos were published by B.P. GRENFELL and A.S. HUNT without giving any indication of line divisions; in this form they entered SB.

5. SB I 1984a (Oxyrhynchos)³⁸

An inscription presumably on the neck of an amphora (SB I 1984: "Henkelgefäße").

χμγ. χ†μ. Θεοῦ χάρ(ις) Μαρίας.

χμγ - In the publication of six inscriptions of this kind from Oxyrhynchos, B.P. GRENFELL and A.S. HUNT, *Excavations at Oxyrhynchus*, Egypt Exploration Fund, Archaeological Report 1906–07, pp. 10–11 (= SB I 1984 a–f) the first verse of the inscription is always χμγ, but in the commentary (p. 11) it was noted that "*in one instance* (unfortunately the authors did not specify which) *the letters were reversed, γμχ*". This observation, which could be of some importance for understanding the meaning of the formula ΧΜΓ, but which was not reflected in the text of the inscription, was missed by almost all who have discussed the problem of the interpretation of ΧΜΓ so far.

B.P. GRENFELL, A.S. HUNT: i.e. a chrisim between χ and μ.

Church or monastery of St. Mary? (cf. III.1.3, III.2.4, perhaps also II.2.4, II.7.3). Cf. P. Oxy. XVI 1911.IV.80-81 (557 A.D.): εἰς τὴν ἀγί(αν) Μαρίαν γέννα τοῦ Χριστοῦ which has been interpreted by S. TIMM, op. cit. (n.21), p. 288, as "die Kirche(?) der Maria, der Christusgebälerin", but he gave no evidence for support his translation of the name of the church; he did not even mention the fact that he had changed the interpretation of the first editors (B.P. GRENFELL and A.S. HUNT): "Choiak 28th, at St. Mary's, Nativity of Christ"; cf. L. ANTONINI, op. cit. (n. 15), p. 177. It is certain, however, that the church mentioned in P. Oxy. XI 1357.30 was St. Mary's (cf. P. Oxy. I 147 (556 AD): κήπιον τῆς ἀγίας Μαρίας; cf. S. TIMM, op. cit. (n. 21), p. 297 n. 19) and γέννα Χριστοῦ refers simply to Christmas day (other festivals are mentioned in other lines; cf. P. Oxy. XI 1357, introd., pp. 20 and 28).

6. SB I 1984b (Oxyrhynchos)

An inscription presumably on the neck of an amphora.

χμγ. Θεοῦ χάρις καίρδος υπδ

κέρδος

χμγ - cf. supra, I.5 com.

Next to the word καίρδος B.P. GRENFELL and A.S. HUNT noted *l.* κέρδος, which F. PREISIGKE left out while reprinting the text of the inscription in SB.

υπδ (=484) – isopsephic recording of some kind of formula? (cf. supra, introd., p. 137 et n. 11)

7. SB I 1984d (Oxyrhynchos)

An inscription presumably on the neck of an amphora.

χμγ. Θεοῦ χάρις καίρδος φπγ

κέρδος

χμγ - cf. supra, I.5 com.

³⁸ *Ed. princeps* nr. I.5–7: B.P. GRENFELL, A.S. HUNT, op. cit. (n.11), pp. 10–11.

Next to the word κέρδος B.P. GRENFELL and A.S. HUNT noted *l. κέρδος*, which F. PREISIGKE left out while reprinting the text of the inscription in SB.

φργ (=583) – isopsephic recording of some kind of formula? (cf. supra. introd., p. 137 et n. 11)

II. ROMANIA³⁹

1. Amphora, Museum in Constanta reg. no. 20184⁴⁰

(*Peacock-Williams 44, Carthage LR amphora 1, Kellia 164*)

Fragmentarily preserved amphora (neck and part of body) found in the eastern sector of the baths at Sacidava (near Histria). Written in red ink, the inscription covers all of the neck and part of the body, down to the ribbing. The text consists of 9 lines and is an ampler version of the model inscription presented in the introduction. Between lines 5 and 6 a horizontal line. Below the inscription, almost on the ribbing, a drawing:

$$\begin{array}{c|c} \theta & \varepsilon \\ \hline \mu & \theta\eta \end{array}$$

interpreted by E. POPESCU as the formula Θε(ὸς) μ(ε)θ' ἡμῶν⁴¹.

1. † χμγ
2. Θεοῦ χάρις
3. σωτηρία
4. κέρδος
5. ἀγίου
6. Ἰσιδώρου
7. γλυκελέου λα d'
8. (ξέσται) λα d'
9. (ξέσται) λα d'

7. γλυκελαίου 8-9. ϝ (=ξέσται)

³⁹ The reeditions of inscriptions on amphorae from the area of present-day Romania published below are based on drawings by Romanian epigraphists, which leave much to be desired as far as quality is concerned. Only seldom also photographs of the texts are given (I have been informed that it is extremely difficult, even next to impossible, to order photographs in Romania these days). Amphora types were identified by T. GÓRECKI, mainly on the basis of sections published in Romanian studies.

⁴⁰ *Ed. princeps* (only the amphora): C. SCORPAN, *Ceramica romano-bizantina de la Sagidava, Pontica* 8, 1975, p. 274 (description of the amphora), p. 298 pl. X.4 (photograph); *ed. princeps* of the inscription: E. POPESCU, op. cit. (n. 21), pp. 164–165, nr. 140 (drawing and photograph, the latter not being referred to at no. 140).

⁴¹ The reading by E. POPESCU raises doubts, especially as far as the two letters in the bottom right corner of the drawing are concerned, but I am unable to propose a different interpretation on the basis of this drawing. On the photograph only the upper part of the drawing is visible (letters θ and ε).

3. E. POPESCU read Σω[τήρ], but there are more letters than only two visible, even in the drawing. The horizontal stroke immediately after the omega could be part of *tau*, of the *eta* only the bottom part has been preserved and it turns smoothly into the loop of *rho*. The reading proposed here is a development of the formula ("God's grace and salvation [are] the benefit"), although the lack of a conjunction and the syntax of the phrase is disturbing at the very least. The usual formula expanded in the same way: **II.6.2-4**.
4. E. POPESCU read κύ(ριος), although once again more than just the two first letters can be seen. The reading κέρδος is virtually certain.
5. E. POPESCU read ἄθ(ά)νατος - the reading is justified only by the drawing, for the photograph leaves no doubts that ἁγίου should be read here.
6. E. POPESCU read Γ(α)ωρου without accents or commentary of any kind. The photograph leaves no doubts as to the reading Ἰσιδώρου. Presumably the amphora was filled in the monastery of St. Isidoros.
7. E. POPESCU read Ανκαλέου, while the reading γλυκελέου is virtually beyond doubt and the drawing raises doubts as to the first letter only.
- 8-9. The number of *xestai* repeated (cf. **I.1.7-8**, **I.3.5-6**, **II.7.6-7**; cf. supra, introd., p. 138).

2. Amphora, National Museum in Bucarest⁴²

(Peacock-Williams 43, Carthage LR amphora 2, Kellia 169)

Amphora neck found in Histria, in the "Temple" sector. Written in red ink and preserved completely (at least to judge by the drawings) in six lines. It is disturbing not to find any traces of the symbol for *xestai* in either one of the two drawings (cf. **II.4**, **II.5**, and supra, introd., p. 140 n. 28).

1. † χ̄μ̄γ
2. Θεοῦ χάρις
3. κέρδος
4. *name*
5. Θεοῦ σόζον(τος)
6. ὕρ(χη) γλυκελέου

5. σοζον } inscr., lege σόζον(τος) 6. υρ} inscr., γλυκελαίου

2. Neither E. POPESCU nor I. BARNEA were able to read this line (I. BARNEA limited himself to reading line 1, describing the rest simply as "cinq lignes indéchiffrées"). The reading Θεοῦ χάρις is beyond question.
3. E. POPESCU read ἡ φιλοσ(οφία) marking this indeed astonishing reading with a question mark. The reading κέρδος is virtually certain; the initial *kappa* is evident, while the letter read by E. POPESCU as *phi* is simply a ligature of *epsilon* and *rho*.

⁴² *Ed. princeps*: E. POPESCU, *Die spätgriechische Inschriften aus Klein-Skythien*, Dacia N.S. 11, 1967, p. 175 et fig. 11 (drawing); reedition: E. POPESCU, op. cit. (n. 21), p. 166 nr. 142 (the same drawing); I. BARNEA, *Les Monuments paléochrétiens de Roumanie*, Città del Vaticano 1977, p. 89 nr. 58 (a **different** drawing). In the *ed. princeps* and in later reeditions the register number of the objects is not given.

4. Here we expect the name of the producer. On the base of E. POPESCU's drawing I would be inclined to read Οὐίκτωρο[ς] (cf. for a single name without the adjective ἄγιος, **I.1.4** and **I.3.4**). However, the drawing given in I. BARNEA's book favours a reading [ἀ]γίας Μαρτί[ας] (cf. **III.1.3** and **III.2.4**, perhaps also **I.5**). Both is possible.
5. The reading Θεοῦ σῶζον(τος) is almost certain on the basis of the drawing by E. POPESCU; cf. supra, introd., pp. 137-138.
6. On the basis of the drawing the reading ὕρ(χη) γλυκελέου is almost certain, cf. **II.4.5**, **II.5.5**, **II.7.5**, **III.1.5**. On ὕρ(χη), cf. supra, introd., pp. 139-140.

3. Amphora, National Museum in Bucarest⁴³

(Peacock-Williams 43, Carthage LR amphora 2, Kellia 169)

Part of the neck and one handle of an amphora found in the "Temple" sector at Histria. Written in red ink, the inscription is only partly preserved; of the first four lines E. POPESCU read only line 1 (XMG).

1. † χ̄μ̄γ
2. Θε[εοῦ χάρις]
3. κέρδος
4. Θεοῦ σῶζω[ντος]
-
4. σῶζοντος

4. The reading Θεοῦ σῶζω[] is absolutely certain; the supplement follows the reading of **III.1.4**. Cf. supra, introd., pp. 139-138.

4. Amphora, National Museum in Bucarest⁴⁴

(Peacock-Williams 43, Carthage LR amphora 2, Kellia 169)

The neck of an amphora found in Histria during a survey of the site (no information on the exact provenance). Five lines written in red ink; the last three lines in the drawing are very incomplete. E. POPESCU read only line 1 (XMG). There are no traces of the symbol for *xestai* at the bottom of the inscription (cf. **II.2**, **II.5**, and supra, introd., p. 140 n. 28).

1. † χ̄μ̄γ
2. Θεοῦ χάρ[ις]
3. καίρδος
4. Αρ..ω̄του
5. ὕρ(χη) γ[λυκ]ελ[αίου]
3. κέρδος

⁴³ *Ed. princeps*: E. POPESCU, op. cit. (n. 21), pp. 166–167 nr. 143 (drawing). No register number provided.

⁴⁴ *Ed. princeps*: E. POPESCU, op. cit. (n. 21), p. 167 nr. 144 (drawing). No register number provided.

4. Ἄρυότου naturally comes to mind. However, Ἄρυότης is a typical Egyptian name and I doubt whether it occurs outside Egypt. Since I assume that this amphora like other ones were imported into Romania (cf. supra, introd., p. 140), the possibility that this specific one was imported from Egypt cannot be excluded. On the other hand the inscriptions on the amphorae found in Egypt are always written with black ink while this one is written with red ink.
5. ὕρ(χη) γ[λυκ]ελ[αίου], cf. **II.2.6**, **II.5.5**, **II.7.5**, **III.1.5**. ὕρ(χη) written without a clear mark of abbreviation; on ὕρ(χη), cf. supra, introd., pp. 139-140.

5. Amphora, Museum in Histria⁴⁵

(*Peacock-Williams 43, Carthage LR amphora 2, Kellia 169*)

The neck and handle of an amphora found in the vicinity of Histria. The inscription in six lines is written in red ink; according to E. POPESCU, it is illegible. The reading below is proposed on the basis of a very poor photograph. There are no traces of the symbol for *xestai* at the bottom of the inscription (cf. **II.2**, **II.5**, and supra, introd., p. 140 n. 28).

1. † χ̄μ̄γ̄
2. Θεοῦ χάρις
3. κέρδος
4. Κι....
5. Θεοῦ σ[φύζοντος]
6. ὕρ(χη) γλυκ[ελαίου]

6. υρ| inscr.

4. A name is expected, but cannot be read; ἀγίου at the beginning of the line seems excluded.
5. The supplement Θεοῦ σφύζοντος follows **II.2.5**, **II.3.4**, **II.7.4(?)** and **III.1.4**; cf. supra, introd., pp. 137-138.
6. The reading ὕρ(χη) γλυκ[ελαίου] is almost certain, cf. **II.2.6**, **II.4.5**, **II.7.5**, **III.1.5**. On ὕρ(χη), cf. supra, introd., pp. 139-140.

6. Amphora, Sucidava 1⁴⁶

(*Peacock-Williams 44, Carthage LR amphora 1, Kellia 164*)

The neck of an amphora found in Sucidava (Celei) on the Danube. Six lines written in red ink. Bottom arm of the cross, which is drawn level with line 1, continues below the text, down to the edge of the sherd.

1. † χμγ
2. Θεοῦ χάρι[ις]
3. σωτηρία

⁴⁵ *Ed. princeps*: E. POPESCU. op. cit. (n. 21), p. 168 nr. 145 (no drawing, very poor photograph being not referred to on p. 168). No register number provided.

⁴⁶ *Ed. princeps*: D. TUDOR. op. cit. (n. 17), p. 178 nr. 26. fig. 28.2 (drawing); reeditions: D. TUDOR, *Oltenia romană*², București 1958, p. 414 nr. 248. fig. 95 (drawing) – non vidi; D. TUDOR, *Oltenia romană*³, București 1968, p. 524 nr. 350; E. POPESCU, op. cit. (n. 21), p. 319 nr. 318 (a **different** drawing).

4. κέρδος
 5. ἁγίου
 6. γλυκελέ[ου
6. γλυκελαίου

1. D. TUDOR, Dacia 11-12, 1945-47, loc. cit., read XP(ιστοῦ); IDEM, *Olt. rom.*³, loc. cit.: X(ριστοῦ); E. POPESCU, loc. cit., read XMF and such a reading is beyond doubt.
2. D. TUDOR (in both transcriptions) and E. POPESCU read only Θεοῦ (E. POPESCU added in square brackets [χάρις]). Their drawings in this place differ somewhat; on D. TUDOR's drawing the bottom part of 3 or 4 letters from the beginning of the next word are visible and the reading χάρι[ις] is possible on this basis.
3. In both transcriptions D. TUDOR gives στωτ?, E. POPESCU read σωτήρ also with a question mark. On the drawing traces of two letters are visible after rho. The formula would, therefore, have the same form as in **II.1**.
4. In both transcriptions D. TUDOR gives καρσος; the drawings by D. TUDOR and E. POPESCU clearly differ at this point; on the first of the two κέρδος is quite certain.
5. In both transcriptions D. TUDOR gives: ΑΗ.....Ζ. The reading ἁγίου is certain. If the name is fully preserved, it could end in -ου ("Ἐρου??). On the other hand, if this line continues further to the right a reading Βίκ[τωρος] could be considered.
6. To judge by the drawing the sixth line was the last line of the inscription. Perhaps the number of *xestai* was given at the end of this line.

7. Amphora, Sucidava 2⁴⁷

(*Peacock-Williams 43, Carthage LR amphora 2, Kellia 169*)

The neck of an amphora found in Sucidava (Celei) on the Danube, now in the National Museum in Bucarest. The seven lines of the text are written in red ink. The uniqueness of the inscription lies in the fact that it does not start with the formula XMF. On the other side of the neck a red dipinto similar to examples known from Egypt (cf. **I.1**).

1. [Θ]εοῦ χάρις
2. [κ]έρδος
3.
4.
5. ὕρ(χη) γλυκελέου
6. (ξέσται) ζ
7. (ξέσται) [

5. γλυκελαίου 6-7. ζ (= ξέσται)

2. The word κέρδος written with a cross in the middle as in **III.1.2** and **III.2.3**.
 - 3-4. These lines as drawn in E. POPESCU's book are difficult to interpret. I do not exclude a reading:

ἁγίας Μαρίας
θεοῦ σφῆζο(ντος); (cf. **III.1.3-4**, perhaps also **II.2.4-5**)
- However, especially the ending of Μαρίας is difficult (it looks more like -ιον). If the reading suggested above is correct, this inscription reads exactly as those from Novae in

⁴⁷ *Ed. princeps*: E. POPESCU, op. cit. (n. 21), p. 347 nr. 398 (drawing).

Bulgaria (**III.1** and **III.2**); even the cross in the middle of the word κέρδος is repeated. The hand of these three inscription might be the same; they perhaps came from the same place (the same producer of oil?).

5. ὕρ(χη) γλυκελέου, cf. **II.2.6**, **II.4.5**, **II.5.5**, **III.1.5**. On ὕρ(χη) cf. supra. introd., pp. 139-140.
7. Probably the number of *xestai* mentioned in line 6 repeated (cf. **I.1.7-8**, **I.3.5-6**, **II.1.8-9**; cf. supra, introd., p. 138).

III. BULGARIA

1. Amphora, Novae reg. no. 54/89 W⁴⁸

(*Peacock-Williams 43, Carthage LR amphora 2, Kellia 169*)

Bottom part of neck and fragment of the body of an amphora, found in the legionary camp at Novae, in sector XI (principia), room D2, layer of old earth beneath a canal. The text written in red ink is to be found on the bottom part of the neck and on the body (to my knowledge no other inscription of this kind is to be found in such a position on the body of the vessel). The text may be incomplete at the top, so there is no reason to exclude the presence of the formula XMG in the preceding line.

-
1. [Θε]οῦ χ[άρις]
 2. [κ]έρ[δο]ς
 3. [ἀ]γίας Μαρία[ς]
 4. [Θε]οῦ σφ[ύ]ζοντο[ς]
 5. ὕρ(χη) []ελέου
 6. (ξέ[σ]ται) .δ .

5. []ελαίου 6. ⚭ (=ξέσται)

2. The word κέρδος written down with a cross in the middle (cf. **II.7.2**, **III.2.3**).
- 3-4. These lines follow the suggested reading of **II.7.3-4** (cf. com. ad loc.).
5. ὕρ(χη) []ελέου, cf. **II.2.6**, **II.4.5**, **II.5.5**, **II.7.5**. The reading [γλν]κελέου, cannot be excluded entirely, although the letter before the *epsilon* is rather a *lambda*, which would suggest the reading [ἀ]λελέου. Against such a reading is the fact that the noun ἀλέλαιον appears only once in Greek: it is used as a name of a component of an ointment used for swelling – Ps.-Gal., *De remediis parabilibus* 14.386: [Πρὸς τὰς χάννας φυσιώσεις.] Ἀλέλαιον ἐπιμελῶς λειώσας κατάπλασσε, ἐπιτιθεὶς οἰσυπηρὸν ἔριον. To judge by the verb λειώσας, ἀλέλαιον is meant as a substance and not a fluid in this particular context in Pseudo-Galen (cf. LSJ, s.v., "salt in oil"), but one cannot exclude the possibility that the noun

⁴⁸ *Ed. princeps*: T. DERDA, *Zwei Aufschriften auf spätrömischen Amphoren* [in:] T. SARNOWSKI mit Beiträgen von M. BARAŃSKI, T. DERDA, P. DYCZEK, K. DIMITROW, W. GACUTA, J. KOLENDO, A. KUNISZ, J. OLCZAK, L. PRESS, *Novae. Das Stabsgebäude. Architektur und Funde* (Limesforschungen. Römisch-Germanische Kommission), Frankfurt (in press) with a photograph, section and description by P. DYCZEK.

could also be understood as an "oil mixed with salt, salted oil". If, however, one accepts the reading [ἄ]λελέου, it becomes necessary to assume that the abbreviation of ὕρ(χη) is indicated by a vertical stroke after the *rho* like in **II.2.6**, **II.5.5**. On ὕρ(χη). cf. *supra*, introd., pp. 139-140.

2. Amphora, Novae, reg. no. 98/91W⁴⁹

(*Peacock-Williams 43, Carthage LR amphora 2, Kellia 169*)

The neck of an amphora found in sector XI (principia) of the legionary camp, close to where **III.1** was found. Fragmentarily preserved first four lines of an inscription written in red.

†

1.	† χμγρ
2.	θεοῦ χάρις
3.	κέρ†δος
4.	ἀγίας Μαρία[ς]

1. The reading χμγρ is certain (instead of the expected χμγ). Such a form of the formula, if it was not an error by the scribe (e.g. *rho* instead of a chrism, cf. **I.2.1**), does not fit any of the existing interpretations of the formula ΧΜΓ, with the exception of the generally rejected interpretation χειρός μου γραφή. This interpretation was suggested by C. WESSELY, *Griechische Papyri des British Museum*, Wiener Studien 9, 1887, pp. 252-254, with two documents referred to; both are Latin papyri published first by G. MARINI and republished by J.O. TJÄDER, *Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700*, Bd. I: Papyri 1–28, Lund 1955; Bd. II: Papyri 29–59, Stockholm 1982, Bd. III: Tafeln, Lund 1964. In both cases, P. Lat. Tjäder I 6 (= P. Marini LXXV).23 and P. Lat. Tjäder II 30 (= P. Marini CXIV).75 the reading χμγρ seems impossible although the readings given by J.O. TJÄDER, χ()μ()γ(), can be questioned. Possible reading in both cases is χσμγ with a cross or even a chrism after *gamma*; cf. T. DERDA, *op. cit.* (n. 6). Other occurrences of the formula χμγ written as χμγρ have been questioned by A. BLANCHARD, *op. cit.* (n. 6), p. 20. As far as I know, there is no other document with the formula written as in our inscription.
3. The word κέρδος written with a cross in the middle (cf. **II.7.2**, **III.1.2**).

⁴⁹ *Ed. princeps*: T. DERDA, *op. cit.* (n. 48).

IV. ITALY

1. Amphora, Palatine (Rome) reg.no. 38410⁵⁰

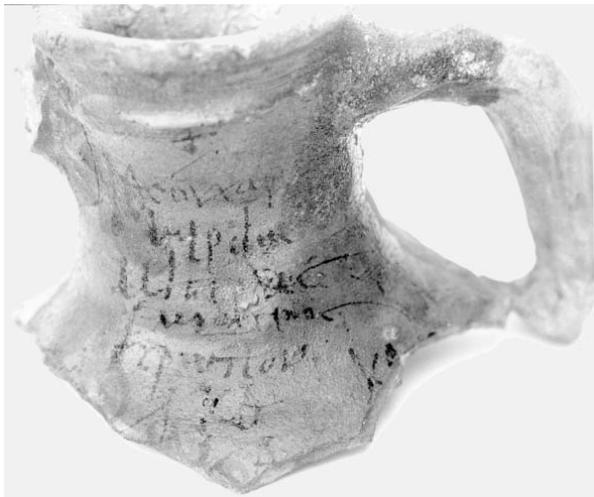
(*Peacock-Williams 43, Carthage LR amphora 2, Kellia 169*)

The neck of an amphora found on the Palatine, sector P, layer 154. Only one line of the inscription has been preserved and the reading below, proposed on the basis of a drawing, is beyond doubt.

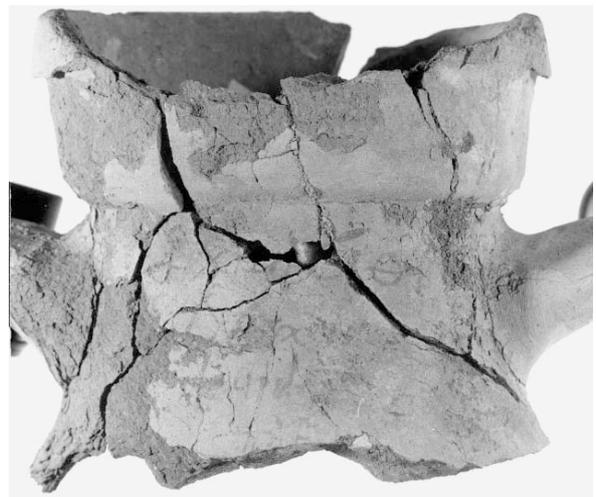
1. Θεοῦ χάρις
.....

1. P. PENSABENE, op. cit. (n. 40), p. 191: "La parola Θεοῦ sembra leggersi nel n. 2, seguita dall'indicazione della misura".

⁵⁰ *Ed. princeps*: P. PENSABENE, *Anfore tarde con iscrizioni cristiane dal Palatino*, *Rivista di studi Liguri* 47, 1981, pp. 197–198 nr. 2 (fig. I.2: a sketch of the object), p. 212 (drawing of the inscription). The same object was described also by P. PENSABENE, *Nuove acquisizioni nella zona sud-occidentale del Palatino*, [in:] *Archeologia Laziale* IV, Roma 1981, pp. 101–118 (drawing p. 115 nr. 4).



Nr. I 1



Nr. I 2



Nr. I 3