

Nino Inaishvili

Sinopean Imports on the Southeastern Black Sea Coast

From the middle of the fifth century BC, close trade relations were established between the populations of the southern and eastern Black Sea coasts. Sinope, one of the oldest mercantile centres on the southern Black Sea, is pivotal in these relationships. In burial contexts of Pichvnari, early Sinopean drachmae appears, dated to between 490-453 BC, alongside imported amphorae (Chian, Lesbian, Thasian, Mendean), Attic painted and black-gloss pottery, polychrome glass vessels, silver and bronze vessels, foreign coins of Cyzicus, and silver coins from Black Sea coastal cities (Panticapaeum, Theodosia, Nymphaeum). Some researchers postulate that in the Archaic and Classical periods, Sinope served only as a mediator in mercantile relations between Athens and Colchis. According to other opinion, Sinope was a leader in commercial contact with centers in the Pontic basin, Athens, and the Aegean and Mediterranean areas.

In the Hellenistic period, archeological data illustrate close and direct connections between Colchis and Sinope. Coins, amphorae (including sealed ones), pottery (*louteria*, jugs), fragments of tiles, and local imitations of Sinopean pottery and tiles revealed during systematic archaeological excavations, confirm the commercial contacts of the southern and eastern Black Sea coasts from the 4th to 3rd cc. BC. As it has been suggested, ceramic products, olive oil, and wine were introduced to Colchis from Sinope, and exports from Colchis included wood, pitch, flax, flax products, wax, and others. From the 3rd to 1st cc. BC, the role of Sinope, as a center of trade and transit, increased. It became the main supplier of numerous products to various locations in the Black Sea basin, including the eastern Black Sea coast.

Archeological materials found at the fortified military sites of the southeastern coast (amphorae, construction and household ceramics) illuminate close links with Sinope in the Late Roman and early Byzantine periods.