

Darejan Kacharava, Guram Kvirkvelia

Sinope and Colchis

The Vani site (on the territory of inner Colchis) stands out because of the number of Sinopean imports. Among Sinopean products imported to Vani, amphorae prevail. The earliest stamped amphora was found in grave No. 9 (in the third quarter of the 4th century BC). It is worthy to note that Sinopean amphorae are in evidence at many sites in Colchis, both in the coastal area and in the hinterland.

Tiles represent another group of Sinopean imports. Numerous fragments have been found in the contexts of the second half of the 4th century and the first half of the 3rd century BC. Some fragments bear stamps. Of particular interest is a grave excavated in Dablagomi (some 10 km from Vani), where, out of thirty-three tiles used for the roofing of this grave, four are stamped.

The third group of Sinopean imports is represented by *louteria*. All louteria found at Vani are of Sinopean production, and as a rule, they are found in cultural layers. Interestingly enough, Sinopean products were used as models for the local Colchian pottery production.

The role of Sinope in the Black Sea region, especially from the 4th to 3rd century BC, is well known. The special interest in Sinope in territories settled by Colchian tribes is expressed in the foundation of a number of colonies along the coastal route towards Colchis. Sinope's strong economic presence in Colchis is attested to by the predominance of Sinopean imports from the 4th century BC on, and by the influence of Sinopean products on the Colchian manufacture of amphorae and tiles. This influence seems to be linked with the direct participation of Sinopean artisans in Colchian manufacture, at least in its early stage.