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Sinopean Amphorae and Chernyakhov Culture

The Chernyakhov culture flourished in southeastern Europe in second third of the third century until early in the fifth century, with the Goths as the dominant population. Among the numerous goods imported into the area were amphorae of the Delakeu type. These amphorae are completely dominant in almost all archeological sites on the northern coast of the Black Sea. In the hinterland of eastern Europe (far from the sea) the smaller Heraclea's amphorae of the Shelov Type F prevail.

Delakeu amphorae are between 75 and 96 cm high, and the colour of clay from which they are fashioned is light or dark red. Workshops which produced similar amphorae are in the Demirci site, on the outskirts of Sinope. Among the several related types and variants of amphorae which were manufactured there only one type has the same shape as the Delakeu. This is the type C Snp I-1 of the typology of D. Kassab Tezgör, which is found in small numbers, only on the southern coast of the Black Sea. The types C Snp I-2, II and III occur on the whole Black Sea littoral [*Kassab Tezgör 2006*].

Although the Sinopean type C Snp I-1 and the Delakeu amphorae were of the same shape, they were made from different clays. The fabric of the Sinopean products had very distinctive added inclusions: many large, black sparkling grains of pyroxene, and in lesser numbers, brown fragments of basalts, quartz, and sometimes mica. The Delakeu amphorae were made from denser clay without any added temper, although it contains some natural inclusions: very small, dark particles, sometimes mica, and also pieces of limestone surrounded by grey spots, which appear during the firing. These different clays attest to the existence of the different production centres. The overall distributions differ too. The Delakeu amphorae are therefore imitations of Sinope Type C Snp I-1, and may be called "pseudo-Sinopean". From their associated finds, the Delakeu amphorae are dated from middle of the fourth to the middle of the fifth century. In the hinterland of Eastern Europe we know only of one Sinopean container of this period. It is an amphora Type C Snp I-2, made from clay with black sand, which was found near the Chernyakhov border in an area close to Kiev.

The delivery of Sinopean wine to the area of Chernyakhov apparently started in the middle of the fourth century. Growing demand required the increase of production, and for this purpose a new centre for wine production was established in another location on the Black Sea littoral. Specialists, certainly potters who could made the standard containers, were brought from Sinope. This new centre was presumably oriented towards the market of northern *barbaricum*, where a low price for wine was more important than the quality. This presumably explains the mass appearance of "pseudo-Sinopean" amphorae of the Delakeu type in the Chernyakhov sites, and in other cities which were under the barbarian control (Olbia, Tyras, Tanais – there they were usually present with other Sinopean products), and also the absence of such amphorae in other ancient cities.