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STANDARD *DIPINTI* ON NARROW-NECKED LIGHT CLAY AMPHORAE
FROM TANAIS AND ITS VICINITY IN THE 3rd-4th CENTURIES AD

Summary

With the destruction of the power of Mithridates VI Eupator in the 60's of the 1st century BC, Pontic regions became the area of Roman control. It is reflected in the inscriptions on the Black Sea area amphorae. Greek *dipinti* of Roman period are comparable with the Latin (Roman) inscriptions of the same time. The most widely *dipinti* on amphorae were widely spread in the periods of economic upswing.

Since the 90s of the 20th century, the number of publications related to *dipinti* of the Northern Black Sea area has increased dramatically. Notes on amphorae from many monuments are put into scientific circulation. Their comparison reveals standard forms made in the points of departure of the goods and inherent to certain types of vessels. As the result of this work, we found out that the inscriptions on the vessels of the 2nd century AD from the excavations of Tanais and the Bosphorus settlements contain similar elements. The marking is made in two lines, one of which may contain the numbers, and the second line - the full or abbreviated name.

The most orderly marking system in the Northern Black Sea area existed in the first half of the 3rd century AD and the second half of the 4th century AD. In the middle of the 3rd century, elements of standardization can be traced in *dipinti* on many types of amphorae. It has been known by now, that the inscriptions on large red pottery and narrow-necked light clay amphorae had certain standards and definite differences. Markings on large red-pottery amphorae contained, as a rule, two required elements - the amount of content in an amphora and the name of the manufacturer (or a wholesaler, who had deal with a future sale). When re-using red pottery vessel, only nominal marking was probably made.

Relatively rare types of amphorae Zeest 79; Robinson K 112; Robinson J 47, Manor 38.1, often have only one nominal mark. The names on these vessels do not have stems exotic to the Greco-Roman world, which can be often found on large red-pottery and narrow-necked light clay amphorae of the 3rd century AD.

The most informative category of inscriptions is presence of marks on the narrow-necked light clay type D amphorae of the first half - the middle of the 3rd century AD. Analysis of these marks allows the reconstruction of certain aspects of winemaking and wine trade in the Black Sea region. In addition, in the course of further studying of the inscriptions on the narrow-necked light clay type D amphorae and comparing

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them to data about winemaking and wine trade available to the authors of antiquity, it was possible to draw the following conclusions:

1. The main part of the standard inscriptions was applied immediately after filling the vessel with wine at the center of its production. The Pontic Heraclea was probably such center for narrow-necked light clay amphorae.

2. Inscriptions on test sample vessels contain indirect information about the minimum area of a separate specialized wineries of Heraclea - 7.8 - 20.4 hectares. One could obtain 25,737.5 - 40,781.3 liters of wine at such area allotment from one crop. There must have been at least 8,875 - 11,250 type D amphorae for bottling that wine. Amphorae were produced in large quantities in workshops independent from wineries.

When following supplies, inscriptions of the group «γευματηρά» were changed at standard marks close to them within the meaning. Their full form consisted of the following elements: 1. the amphora stamp of the manufacturer of the amphora 2. the reduced name of the manufacturer of the product 3. the number of the pithoi from which the contents of the amphora originated (product quality) 4. the name of the merchant (shipper), sometimes in a full form in the genitive case.

The last elements could be applied from the opposite side of an amphora or away from the rest of the information. The absence of the first or second nominal marks could testify the coincidence of the supplier and the manufacturer of the goods. Such inscriptions were important for the tax authorities. They gave opportunity to control the volume of trading.

Comparison of nominal marks of the various non-recurring Tanais complexes reveal that the names of the owners of the majority of Tanais cellars in the middle of the 3rd century AD on the basis of *dipinti* on amphorae are not definable. Similar nominal marks found in different complexes reflect one source of acquisition of vessels, that could be the contents of amphorae manufacturers or wholesalers, who bought goods out of Tanais.

The ruin or destruction of many villages and towns of the Pontic region, the Propontis and the Aegean Sea in the second half of the 3rd century AD affected the quality of the source base of *dipinti*. In the last quarter of the 3rd century AD and the beginning of the 4th century, there was some stabilization of the economic and political situation. During the second half of the 4th century, Tanais restored.

In the first half of the 4th century AD, early versions of narrow-necked light clay type F amphorae of have numerically small and scattered marks, showing some decline of the marking system. They have more similarities with the inscriptions of the 2nd century AD than with *dipinti* on D type amphorae of the middle of the 3rd century.

From about the middle or from the third quarter of the 4th century, the standard markings on the narrow-necked light clay amphorae of types E and F appeared. This paper identifies them as a single category – inscriptions of «α / π» group. This group

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has some similarity with the Athenian «tax notations», which were applied to the amphora after 312 AD [Lang, 1976, p. 82 ff.].

Inscriptions of « α / π » group differ from standard *dipinti* of the first half of the 3rd century AD, which could be a reflection of changes in customs legislation. Numerous marks of numbers disappeared. Indications of the quality and origin remain in nominal marks. Instead of one name, two names or more often appeared there. Standard marks with the same names were spread across the Northern and North- Western Black Sea regions. Total to date, there are at least eighty-six names in the inscriptions of the group « α / π ». All of them are known on the island and the mainland of Greece and in the Southern regions of the Black Sea region. In lapidary inscriptions of the Bosphorus 60 % of these names are mentioned. In Tanais there are only 32,6 %. This may be an indication that the names belonged to individuals associated with the production or transport of the contents of vessels, who that lived outside of the Bosphorus - maybe in the Pontic Heraclea.

The existence of standard *dipinti* on narrow-necked light clay amphorae from Heraclea in the second half of the 4th century indicates the magnitude of the revival of trade. The following factors could increase the number of people associated with the same consignment of goods: strengthening of state control over trade, increase in costs of production of goods or commercial transactions (including increased risk of transportation), the appearance of the lease in land use. However, we need more precise dating of each mark to confirm these assumptions. Now, standard groups of the inscriptions can, even found on fragments of amphorae without profile parts, indicate the type of a vessel and its approximate date. This should be important in the study of the archaeological sites, where there are no other dating findings.

The analysis of *dipinti* on transport amphorae originating from excavations from the Low Don settlements, transforms them into an important source of economic History of the Pontic regions. Expanding its capacity depends on the increase in the number of publications of materials of various monuments.