

ABSTRACT

The oldest state known to have been founded by the ancestors of the Turks is the Asian Hun State. The earliest records on the Huns date back to 2070 BC and are based on the legendary story of the Xia Hou Dynasty, of which the first known ruler was Chunwei. In Chinese sources, apart from this legend, the nomads who came from the north and raided Chinese lands were called Rong, Di, Shan Rong, Quan Yi, and Quan Rong. Accordingly, the ancestors of the Huns were called Northern Di in general, Xunyu in the Xia period, Guifang in the Yin period, Xianyun in the Zhou period and Xiongnu in the Han period. Of these, the Rong and Di were relocated west of the Yellow River after they were defeated by the Zhou Dynasty, and they were divided into two as Red Di and White Di. The Rong, Di and Yi tribes are mentioned in the northern lands of China before 771-481 BC. One of the tribes mentioned in Chinese sources and subjugated by Modu is the Dinglings who were later referred to as Toles in Turkic inscriptions. During the northern and western expeditions of Modu in 201 BC, it was named for the first time with the Kyrgyz. They were recorded by Chinese sources as having settled around Baikal Lake as nomadic people. This is the main subject of our article. It is stated by many researches that the ancestors of the Dinglings are the community who created the Andronovo Culture. Starting from the Bronze Age and continuing throughout the Iron Age, shallow slabs of wide granite were placed around graves, a tradition which seems to have spread as far as the Orkhun region. The graves of this cultural period which date back to 1000 BC and are thought to have connections with the Karasuk Culture on the one hand and the Glazkov Culture on the other hand. They are of great importance, especially since they were also utilized by the Huns. Their developments beyond Khakassia are very important since those are the lands where they were last seen after Andronovo Culture. Although scholars have rejected the claim that the Huns are the ancestors of the Mongols, in terms of anthropological and material culture Huns have connections with the nomadic Europoids of the Baikal and Yenisey region. In this respect, cultural development continued towards Baykal and Otuken. With this study, we will discuss the period of Slab Grave Culture or Flat Stone Grave Culture, which has not yet been specifically studied in Turkey. Through this analysis, we will reveal important links with the Huns and other pre-cultures, then reveal their relations in terms of burial culture and material remains. In this respect, the connections of the Andronovo, BegazDandybai, Karasuk and Slab Grave and the characteristics of the Hun graves and cultural continuity in the directions of the area extending from the Kazakhstan, Yenisey and Baykal triangle to Mongolia will be elaborated upon. Cultural continuity will also be shown in terms of material remains, especially the tomb structure style. According to Chinese sources, there is plenty to learn about the early Turkic tribes' presence in this region.

Keywords: Slab Grave, Culture, Xiongnu, Lake Baikal, Turkics, Archeology.



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YASSI TAŞ MEZAR KÜLTÜRÜ VE HUN (XIONGNU) BAĞLANTISI

ÖZ

Yazılı kaynaklara göre Türklerin ataları tarafından kurulduğu bilinen en eski devlet Asya Hun Devleti'dir. Hunlarla ilgili en erken kayıtlar MÖ 2070 yılında Xia Xou Hanedanlığı'nın efsanevi öyküsüne dayanmaktadır ve buna göre bilinen ilk hükümdarı Chunwei'dir. Çin kaynaklarında bu efsane dışında kuzeyden gelip Çin topraklarına akınlar yapan konargöçerler Rong, Di, Yi, Shan Rong, Quan Yi, Quan Rong olarak adlandırılmaktaydılar. Buna göre Çin Kaynaklarında Hunların atalarına kuzey Di, Xia döneminde Xunyu, Yin döneminde Guifang, Zhou zamanında Yen-yün ve Han zamanında ise Xiongnu denilmiştir. Bunlardan Rong ve Di'ler Zhou Hanedanlığı tarafından yenilgiye uğratıldıktan sonra Sarı Irmağın batısına yerleştirilmişlerdir ve bunlar Kızıl Di ve Ak Di olarak iki kısma ayrılmışlardır. Hunlardan önceki Çin'in kuzey topraklarında adları zikredilen Rong, Di ve Yi kabileleri MÖ 771-481 yılları arasında anılmaktadırlar. Çin kaynaklarında bahsi geçen ve Modu'n tarafından itaat altına alınan boylardan biri de daha sonra Türk yazıtlarında Tölesler olarak zikredilen Dinglinglerdir. Modu'nun kuzey ve batı seferleri sırasında ilk kez adı Kırgızlar ile birlikte Modu'nun MÖ 201'de gerçekleştireceği Çin akınından önce zikredilen bu konar göçer Türk boyu makalemizin de konusu ile muvazi olarak Baykal Gölü ve çevresini yurt tutmuşlardır. Dinglinglerin atalarının pek çok araştırmacı tarafından Andronovo Kültürü'nü meydana getiren topluluk olduğu ifade edilmektedir. Baykal Gölü ve özellikle güney doğu kıyıları başta olmak üzere Tunç Çağı'ndan itibaren ve Demir Çağı boyunca fazla derin olmayan, geniş granit vb. levhalarla çevrili benzer özelliklere sahip sığ düzenlenmiş mezarlar Orhun havalisine kadar yayılmıştır. MÖ 1000 yıllarına kadar dayandırılan ve bu bakımdan Karasuk Kültürü ile diğer taraftan Glazkov Kültürü ile de bağlantıları olduğu düşünülen bu kültür dönemi mezarları özellikle Hunlar tarafından da tatbik edildiğinden oldukça önem arz etmektedir. Andronovo Kültürü'nün ardından son görüldükleri topraklar olması bakımından Hakasya ötesinde meydana gelen gelişmeler oldukça önem arz etmektedir. Zira her ne kadar tarihi kaynaklar bakımından Hunların Moğolların ataları oldukları çürütülse de antropolojik ve maddi kültür bakımından Hunların Baykal ve Yenisey bölgesi konargöçer Evropoidleri ile olan bağlantıları bulunmaktadır. Bu bakımdan Baykal ve Ötüken'e doğru kültürel gelişim devam etmiştir. Bu çalışma ile Türkiye'de henüz spesifik olarak çalışılmamış ve Hunlarla bağlantıları açıkça görülen Yassı Taş Mezar Kültürü veya Plaka Taş Mezarları olarak adlandırılan dönemin ön kültürlerle olan bağlantılarını ortaya koymaya ve mezar kültürü ve maddi kalıntılar bakımından ilişkilerini ortaya koymaya çalışacağız. Bu bakımdan Kazakistan, Yenisey ve Baykal üçgeninden Moğolistan'a uzanan hat doğrultusunda kültür devamlılığını gösteren Andronovo, BegazDandıbay, Karasuk ve Yassı Taş mezarlarının bağlantıları ve Hun mezarlarının özelliklerini belirterek maddi kalıntılar ve özellikle mezar yapı üslubu bakımından kültürel devamlılığı gösterilecek ve coğrafi bakımdan gelen son noktada Çin Kaynakları referansına göre bölgede erken görülen Türk boyları bağlantıları ortaya konulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yassı Taş Mezarları, Kültür, Xiongnu, Baykal Gölü, Türkler, Arkeoloji.

INTRODUCTION

Studies from the early 20th century revealed that the term “*Andronovo Culture*” originated near the beginning of the second millennium AD and was ascribed to the first nomads in Central Asia. The earliest discoveries on the Andronovo community were obtained in the upper reaches of the Ural River. From there they seemed to have spread to Inner Asia because of the growing development of the livestock economy, the use of horses as a mount, and the rapid and collective mobility of their wheeled carts. Chronological analysis of their material culture remains date their occupation within this region back to around 2150 BC.¹ The Upper Ural region findings were identified as belonging to Koptyakov Culture, the early stage of Andronovo Culture. Although named differently, they originated in the same area (map 1-2)² and descended from the same family. According to the distribution graph of the pottery obtained from the systematically classified graves belonging to the Andronovo Culture since this date (Graph 1-2), the artifacts belonging to the Federovo period found in Russian Altai and Upper Ob dated back to 2000 BC, in Za-Ural (beyond Ural) dated back to 1980 BC and those in the Yenisey junction dated back to 1900 BC.³

The Yenisey area is the last place where material remains belonging to the Andronovo Culture period were found. Remains of this culture have not yet been discovered in the lands further east. After settling in the Altai Sayan region for about a thousand years, the warrior steppe people of the Bronze Age did not actually disappear. Instead, they underwent anthropological and cultural change due to the development of the Iron Age and the migration of tribes in northern China. Immediately afterwards, the Karasuk Culture period was identified as a new cultural period in the region. Investigations have shown that the Andronovo Culture tradition was dominant

¹V. A. Zah, “Koptyakovskaya Kultura v Nijnem Prityobolye”, *Vestnik Arheologii, Antropologii i Etnografii*, no:2 (17), 2012, p. 29-40.

²K. V. Salmikov, “Andronovskiye PoseleniyaZauralya”, *SA XX*, 1954, p. 214.

³V. İ. Molodin,– A. V. Epimohov, - J. V. Marçenko, “Radiouglerodnaya Hronologiya Kultur Epohi Bronzi Urala i Yuga Zapadnoy Sibiri: Printsipi i Podhodi, Dostijeniya i Problemi”, *Vestnik Novosibirsk Gosuderstvenna Universitata. Seriya İstoriya, Filologiya*, C.13, S: 3, 2014, p. 145.

during this period. Karasuk Culture spread into the Kazakhstan region as well as the Yenisey region. BegazDandybay Culture was also evident in the same area, the beginnings of which can be dated to the last phase of the Andronovo Culture and beginning of the Iron Age. The Tagar and then Tashtik Culture periods followed the Karasuk Culture of Yenisey. From 1000 BC onwards, Chinese sources assert that Turkic tribes have occupied the region. An extension of these cultural periods spread over a wide area extending to Baikal and its surroundings, and also to Mongolia. The graves and grave building structure of the communities settled in the region are very similar to the Karasuk and Begaz graves seen in the continuation of the Andronovo Culture.

1. Begaz Dandybay, Karasuk and Slab Grave Culture Relations and Building Features

In the last stage of Andronovo Culture, graves with high stone plates were found in predominantly in the central and eastern parts of Kazakhstan. These graves belong to the last phases of the Andronovo Culture, and there are some that are classified as Begaz Dandybay Culture. Margulan-Orazbayev, famous for their work on the graves in the region, dated these markers and settlements back to the 10-8th centuries BC. They suggested that the graves with huge granite slabs were for prominent members of the society after the change in the understanding of ownership in the patriarchal society structure.⁴ Kizlasov and Margulan found that the arrowhead they obtained in their study on the Begaz graves in 1950 was very characteristic, and that the similar arrowhead types belonging to the Scythians in eastern Europe were found in the 6-4th centuries BC. On the other hand, they stated that these arrowheads were found in the Slab Grave Culture graves of Mongolia, and that according to Kiselev's studies, the rate of these arrowheads in Siberia was %24, while it was 41 in Mongolia.⁵

Gryaznov inferred a connection of the graves of BegazDandybay (drawing 1) with both Andronovo and Karasuk Culture, and expressed that a link existed between the Andronovo and the pre-Scythians in Kazakhstan.⁶ However, he did not accept a similarity between Gryaznov's BegazDandybay and other graves with the same characteristics belonging to the Slab Grave Culture, stating that there was a cursory impression similarity at first glance and that the ancient tribes of central Kazakhstan took the method of building a vertically placed grave wall as in Mongolia.⁷ But what if this technique had passed to Mongolia via Kazakhstan, Altai Sayan and Baikal areas? Of course, this is possible because Seymin-Turbin type axes and other products, which reflect the Andronovo period character and are known to have subsequently been used in the Karasuk Culture period, were discovered in Mongolia.⁸ However, Gryaznov does not admit that it is even possible for the slab graves of Mongolia to have originated in Yenisey or Kazakhstan.

Undoubtedly, the largest of the granite slab kurgans the Great Salbyk Kurgan (photo 1) found in the Khakasya Salbyk steppe has been dated to the Tagar Culture period. It was observed that the length of the granite slabs reached 5 meters in height and some weighed up to 50 tons.⁹ S. V. Kiselev, who excavated the Tagar Culture sites, stated that this culture was founded upon Karasuk Culture, and in many aspects (tools, burial style, decorations, etc.) it continued the legacy. This cultural lineage continued with Tagar and Tashtik Culture in the Yenisey area.¹⁰ While the existence of Scythians in the Yenisey region during the Tagar Culture is in question, the Huns are mentioned in the Tashtik Age. The findings obtained clearly show the connections with the Huns during the Tashtik period. Ultimately, it is obvious that the anthropological structure of the Asian population from the Bronze Age to Early Iron Age has changed thanks to the mobility of the Europeans (dendogram 1).

2. Chronology and Spread of the Slab Grave Culture

In the distant lands (Za-Baikal) of Lake Baikal (towards the Mongolian and Chinese territories), Slab Grave Culture graves were excavated first by G. F. Miller who discovered 17 graves.¹¹ Slab Grave Culture graves were excavated on the lands surrounding Lake Baikal (Pri-Baikal) by Agapitov in the village of Tirgan in 1881.¹² Afterwards, excavations were made by P. Horoshih across the Olkhon Island on the northwest coast of Lake Baikal, but no data were obtained because the graves had been robbed. In 1928-1929, Soviet archaeologist G. P. Sosnovski uncovered 50 graves at different points in the Selenge basi¹³ and introduced the term Slab Grave (Kultura Plitochnih Mogil, Культура плиточных могил) into the literature for the first time with his later

⁴A. H. Margulan-A. M. Orazbayev, "Begazi-dandibayevskayakultura", *Drevnyaya Kultura Tsentralnogo Kazahstana*, Nauka, Alma-Ata 1966, p. 161-163.

⁵L. P. Kizlasov-A. H. Margulan, "Plitochnye Ogrady Mogilnika Begazi", *KSİİMK*, XXXII, İzd. Nauk, Moskva-Leningrad 1950, p. 135.

⁶M. P. Gryaznov, "Pamyatniki Karasukskogo Etapa v Tsentralnom Kazahstane", *SA XVI*, Edit. M.İ. Artamanov, Moskva 1952, p. 162.

⁷Gryaznov, *ibid.*, p. 158.

⁸Vitali V. Volkov, "EarlyNomads Of Mongolia", *Nomads Of The Eurasian Steppes In The Early Iron Age*, Edit. Jeannine Davis Kimbal-Vladimir A. Bashilov-Leonid T. Yablonsky, Zinat Press, Berkeley, CA 1995, p. 321.

⁹E. B. Vadetskaya, *Sibiry Kurganlari*, Trans. Atilla Bağıcı, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Pub., Ankara 2014, p. 56.

¹⁰S. V. Kiselev, *Drevnyaya İstoriya Yujnoy Sibiri*, Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moskva 1951, p. 186.

¹¹G. B. Turkin, "Keramik Plitochnikh Mogil Predbaykalya", *Keramik Kak İstoriçeskii İstoçnik*, p. 65.

¹²A. V. Kharinskiy, M. A. Zaytsev, V. V. Svinin, "Plitochnye Mogil Priolkhonya", *Kultur i Pamyatniki Bronzovogo i Rannego Zhelezno Vekov Zabaykalya i Mongolii*, Ulan-Ude 1995, p.64.

¹³N. N. Dikov, *Bronzoviyvek Zabaykalya*, Ulan-Ude 1958, p. 21.

work.¹⁴ Many theses have been written regarding the first emergence of the Slab Grave Culture, and one of them is considered in the Glazkov Culture.¹⁵ The Glazkov Culture is contemporary with the Andronovo Culture seen in Siberia. According to another view, Slab Grave Culture is related to the Karasuk Culture. This view was first claimed by Sosnovski, and was based on the Taphar 73 burial data. With these findings, Sosnovski revealed an aspect of the relationship between slab graves and Karasuk Culture and even the Tagar Culture in Yenisey.¹⁶ Okladnikov offers an alternative, attributing Kurumchi Culture to the Turkic tribes whose presence was determined archaeologically in the 1st millennium BC.¹⁷ He argued that remaining Runic inscriptions prove that this Turkic tribe is actually the Kurikan people.¹⁸ This is a very important finding, as Dashibalov directly relates the burial culture of this Turkic tribe, which he refers to as autochthonous (native), to the Slab Grave Culture.¹⁹

Chronologically, there is no consensus on when Slab Grave Culture emerged. Sosnovski, who gave the period its name, dated the first series of slab graves excavated in the Za-Baikal region east of Lake Baikal somewhere between the 7th-4th centuries BC, while dating the second series around the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. N. N. Dikov also dated the early phase to 7th-4th centuries BC²⁰, like Sosnovski. Okladnikov, who made researches and excavations along the Lena, Selenge and Angara rivers and around Baikal, dated Slab Grave Culture to 10th-3rd centuries BC.²¹ The period that Okladnikov's period is simultaneous with the Karasuk Culture. While there are experts who date the early periods of the Slab Grave Culture earlier than the 1st millennium BC, there are also experts who date it to the Iron Age. A. D. Tsybiktarov divided Slab Grave Culture into two periods (Karasuk Culture Bronze products continued to be used in the Chulut phase). P. İ. Şulga dated it between the 11th-9th centuries BC and N. N. Dikov dated it to a range between the 7th-2nd centuries BC.²² Kızlasov-Margulan calculated it to be around the 7th-6th centuries BC, based on the arrowhead sample obtained from the BegazDandybay slab graves.²³ On the other hand, Kharinsky objected to the views of Tsybiktarov because Tsybiktarov classified graves in Selenge as belonging to Slab Grave Culture and dated them to the 5th century BC.²⁴ Kharinsky argued that these graves belong to much earlier periods. Slab Grave Culture began during the 1st millennium BC on the west of Baikal and may have come into being at the end of 2nd millennium BC on the territories opposite Olkhon.²⁵ Another issue is the situation of the Kereksur graves classified as Slab Grave Culture. Konolov states that the discovery of Tsybiktarov's slab graves, which applied later on a Kereksur, dates back to an earlier period, i.e., to the end of the 2nd millennium BC.²⁶

The Slab Grave Culture has expanded to cover a very wide area. Okladnikov pointed out that there are bronze products (daggers, axes, large spearheads, etc.) obtained from slab graves in Inner Mongolia, Ordos, West Siberia, and Scythian territories on north of the Black Sea.²⁷ He thusly believed that there were close connections to the early nomads of Eurasia. However, he stated that the slab graves are mostly seen on the southern shores of Lake Baikal and in Mongolia. In addition, many slab graves have been discovered on Olkhon Island in Lake Baikal and on the opposite territory of the island, namely along the northern shores of Lake Baikal (map 3).²⁸ On the southern coast, Okladnikov stated that these graves spread from Tataurov Village, where is close to the Selenge River, near Ulan-Ude, to the junction of Orkhon and Tula, even to the Mongolian Altai and from there to the Pamir plateaus.²⁹ Dikov, on the other hand, asserted that the slab graves spread from the Kobdo River (Hovd) to the Dalai-Nor in the west, from Lake Baikal to the Gobi Desert, from Gobi to the north of the Yellow River and Tibet, also along the southern shores of Lake Baikal.³⁰ Although Tsybiktarov drew the distribution map of the slab graves, which he classified as Kereksur, Dvortsami in detail, he showed the graves in the lands opposite the Olkhon Island of Lake Baikal on a separate map (map 4).³¹ It spread over a wide

¹⁴G. P. Sosnovski, "Ranmye Koçevniki Zabaykalya", *KSİİMK*, Vıp. VIII, Leningrad 1940, p. 36.

¹⁵Sergen Çirkin, *Güney Sibırya Arkeolojisi ve Şamanizm*, YKY, İstanbul 2019, p. 69.

¹⁶Sosnovski, *ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁷B. B. Dashibalov, *Arkheologicheskiye Pamyatniki Kurykan i Khori(K Vse Mirnomu Arkheologicheskomu Kongressu Ulan-Ude, 1996)*, Buryatskim İnstitutom Obshchestvennykh Nauk SO RAN, Ulan Ude 1995, p. 129.

¹⁸Okladnikov, *ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁹Dashibalov, *ibid.*, p.129.

²⁰Sosnovski, *ibid.*, p. 40. N. N. Dikov, *Bronzoviy Vek Zabaykalya*, Ulan-Ude 1958, p. 42.

²¹A. P. Okladnikov, *İstoriya i Kultura Buryatii*, Akademii Nauk SSSR, Ulan Ude 1976, p. 138.

²²A. D. Tsybiktarov, "K Probleme Formirovaniya Koçevogo Skotovodstva i Tsentralnoy Azii i Yego Vliyaniyana İstoriçeskoye Razvitiye Drevnego Naseleniya Regiona (Po Materialam Kulturi Plitoçnih Mogili)" *Kultura Stepnoy Evrazii i İh Vzaymodeistvie s Drevnimi Tsivilizatsiami*, İİMK RAN, Sankt-Peterburg 2012, p. 409; P. İ. Şulga, "O Hronologii i Kulturnoy İdentifikatsii Pamyatnikov VIII-VI vv. don.e. Zabaykalya i Severnogo Kitaya", *Drevnie Kulturi Mongolii i Baykalskoy Sibiri*, Ulan-Ude 2010, p. 138; Dikov, *ibid.*, p. 42.

²³Kızlasov- Margulan, *ibid.*, p. 135.

²⁴A. V. Kharinsky, *Predbaykalye v Kon. I Tys. Don. E.-Ser. II Tys. N.E.: Genezis Kultur i İkh Periodizatsiya*, Izdatelstvo Irkutskogo Gosudarstvennogo Tekhnicheskogo Universiteta, Irkutsk 2001, p. 65.

²⁵Kharinsky, *ibid.*, p.107.

²⁶P. B. Konalov, *Etniçeskiye Aspekti İstorii Tsentralnoy Azii*, İzdatelstvo Buryatskogo Nauçnogo Tsentra So Ran, Ulan-Ude 1999, p. 21.

²⁷Okladnikov, *ibid.*, p. 138.

²⁸Kharinskiy-Zaytsev-Svinin, *ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁹Okladnikov, *ibid.*, p. 137.

³⁰Dikov, *ibid.*, p. 25.

³¹A. D. Tsybiktarov, *Kultura Plitoçnih Mogil Mohgolii i Zabaykalya*, İzd. Buryatskogo Gosuniversiteta, Ulan-Ude 1998, p.194-195.

area from the end of the Bronze Age to the beginning of the Iron Age, most especially the deer stones and the graves with standing plates. Accordingly, all the graves evaluated within the Slab Grave Culture, Kereksurs; in the east of Mongolia to the Khentiy mountains, including Sikhbataramag, the Gobi Desert and Gobi-Altai, all the lands of Mongolia in the west, the central and southern lands of Buryatia, the lands to the east of Tuva, Altai Republic and Kazakhstan, especially Ili River spread over the basin.³² In fact, the connections of the Slab Grave Culture to Inner Manchuria have been revealed in recent studies, which include genetic linkage.³³

3. Grave Building Practices, Anthropological Features and Findings

Burial sites of the Slab Grave Culture are spread within the borders we tried to draw above and are dated between the 2nd-1st millenniums BC, namely from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age and early periods of nomadic peoples. Although these graves were arranged as rectangular slabs on the ground with shallow burial pits, they were classified as Kereksur, figured flat stone tombs.³⁴ Based on this classification, graves belonging to the period were distributed over a wide geography throughout the course of history. Although the slab graves are arranged in a spectacular shape (drawing 2- photo 2), the figured graves evaluated in these graves evaluated in these tombs resemble the completely peeled skin of an animal (drawing 3). Kereksurs, on the other hand, was built through piling stones on the graves, which were surrounded by rectangular and plate stones in a ring siege (drawing 4). One of the most striking practices made during a funeral ceremony was the inclusion of horse skulls in graves found in both Mongolia and Baikal.³⁵

P. İ. Shulga, who has researched Hun burial structures, said that funeral burial practices are important in terms of showing the stability in homogeneous environments or the variability as a result of ethnic contact and establishing the belonging of kurgan cultures. He stated that at the end of the 1st millennium BC, polyethnic Hun burial rites were visibly different, but it was characteristic for the dead body to be laid on its back and for its head to be turned to the north even if the body was positioned to the east.³⁶ Apart from this, Dashibelov also found human skeletons in slab graves, with the legs slanted in a prone position.³⁷ The Huns are evaluated and categorized as a polyethnic people, with a fact which can be reinforced through the study of their material remains. Modu's subjugation of 26 different tribes made this classification possible. But the transformation to the polyethnic state in question occurred at the end of the 2nd millennium BC. İ. Gohman, through anthropological studies on the skeletons and skulls that were obtained in limited numbers due to robberies from the slab graves around Baikal, stated that there were samples of both Dolichocranial and Brachycranial types in the graves. However, he stated that these later developed into Turkic ethnogenesis between Hun composition and the local inhabitants of the region, and that the last period slab graves were represented by the Turks in the Iron Age.³⁸ Another remarkable finding is that the human remains that could be obtained do not represent the Europoid type, but rather than the Mongoloid type. This can be explained by the mixture of Europoids and Mongoloids which began during the Karasuk Culture period.³⁹ On the other hand, although Tsybiktarov stated that the human anthropology of Kereksurs is Mongoloid, and that the predominant population became Mongoloid after including the of Mongoloids of Baikal, Europoid-type examples can be seen from kurgans in western Mongolia and Khujirt in central Mongolia.⁴⁰ In addition, recent research has begun bringing together the Slab Grave Culture from the Neolithic Age to the Iron Age, and then the Huns and the anthropological relations of the nation representing the Turkic tribes and states (dendogram 2).⁴¹ Genetic studies also support the findings. In the last genetic studies on European Huns and Avars, their relationship with the Slab Grave Culture can be seen in the samples obtained from the Hun graves.⁴² As a result, in Asia the situation that emerged at the end of the 2nd millennium BC, with the above-mentioned dendogram, the connections of Glazkov, Karasuk and Tagar cultures were determined, and the borders of this burial culture, which was preserved with the arrival of the Huns

³²Konavalov, *ibid*, p. 19.

³³S. V. Alkin, "K Voprosu o Svyazi Kultury Plitočnikh Mogil Zabaykalya i Kultur Epokhi Rannego Metalla Vnutrenney Manchzhurii", *Yevraziyskoye Kulturnoye Prostranstvo: Aktualnyye Problemy Arheologii, Etimologii, Antropologii*, Irkutsk 2010, p. 5.

³⁴Tsybiktarov, *Kultura Plitočnikh Mogil Mongolii i Zabaykalya*, p. 126-136.

³⁵Ye. V. Shelepova, "Noviye Svedeniya o Zakhoroneniyakh Konskikh Cherepov (Po Rezultatam İssledovaniya Pamyatnika Tytkesken-V1)", *Altaye-Sayanskaya Gornaya Strana i İstoriya Osvoyeniyye Kochevnikami*, İzd. Altayskogo Gos. Uni., Barnaul 2007, p. 186.

³⁶P. İ. Şulga, "Ob istokakh pogrebnogo obryada khunnu", *Drevniye Kultury Mongolii i Baykalskoy Sibiri*, Materialy Mezhdunarodnoy Nauchnoy Konferentsii (Irkutsk 3-7 Maya, 2011), p. 391.

³⁷Dashibelov, *ibid*, p. 129.

³⁸İ. İ. Gohman, "Antropologičeskiye Materialy iz Plitočnikh Mogil Zabaykalya", *Sbornik Muzeya Antropologii i Etimografii*, T. XVIII, Moskva-Leningrad 1958, p. 442-443.

³⁹Emel Esin, *İslamiyetten Önceki Türk Kültür Tarihi ve İslama Giriş (Türk Kültürü El-Kitabı, II, Cild I/b'den Ayır Basım*, Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, İstanbul 1978, p. 11.

⁴⁰A. D. Tsybiktarov, "Otrazheniye Diplomatii Drevnikh Kochevnikov Tsentralnoy Azii v Petroglificheskikh, Paleoantropologicheskikh Topograficheskikh İstochnikakh Kultur Plitočnikh Mogili Kherekurov (Chast II, k Postanovke Problemy)", *Drevniye Kultury Mongolii, Yuzhnoy Sibiri i Severnogo Kitaya Materialy XI Mezhdunarodnoy Nauchnoy Konferentsii 8-11 Sentyabrya 2021 Goda*, g. Abakan, p. 112.

⁴¹D. Tumen, "Anthropology of Archaeological Populations from Northeast Asia", *東洋學第 49 輯*(2011 年 2 月) 檀國大學校東洋學研究所, p.38.

⁴² Whole genome analysis sheds light on the genetic origin of Huns, Avars and conquering Hungarians. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2022.01.19.476915>

SLAB GRAVE BURIAL CULTURE AND THE HUN (XIONGNU) CONNECTION

in the region and spread by their own practices, were determined up to the region of the Di people, according to Prushek.⁴³ These tribes are known as Rong, Di and Yi in Chinese sources in around 8th century BC.⁴⁴ Tsybiktarov dates the last phase of the Slab Grave Culture to the 5th century BC⁴⁵ and concludes that there is a period of three hundred years between the Modu period, which is accepted as the foundation of the Great Hun State (209 BC), and that Chinese sources date the Huns to the 5th century BC at the earliest. He appears to be examining this issue superficially, however, because roughly one thousand years passed after Chunwei⁴⁶, who is mentioned as the ancestor of the Huns in Chinese sources, before Modu came onto the scene. Even if Chunwei originated from a legend, the status of the tribes, which are the ancestors of the Huns, in Chinese sources is no longer an indisputable fact. And the names Di and Rong are seen among the loyal lords during the Zhou Dynasty (1046-221 BC).⁴⁷

It is important to specify the tomb building style of this cultural period, which is very clearly connected to the Huns, as well as the characteristic of the material remains found from this period. Unfortunately, the findings obtained are limited in quantity due to grave robberies. The theft of valuable artifacts and deterioration of the grave structure meant that these sites have not been preserved as they were intended to be. The prized artifacts included pottery pieces, items used in daily life and weapons, jewelry, human and animal bones. These items were made of materials such as clay, stone, bone, copper, bronze, and, very rarely, iron (from late graves). Among the weapons, there are axes and kelt, which are large spearheads very common in Scythian culture. This community, which has a livestock economy, was made up of horse riders according to the findings obtained, and so they employed the unique bronze apparatus for horseback riding. This cultural characteristic is consistent with the nomadic peoples who settle the lands after them.⁴⁸ Okladnikov stated that the inhabitants of the Slab Grave Culture in the remote part of Baikal (Za-Baikal region), at the end of the 2nd millennium BC, designed realistic animal-like elegant ornaments, reached a perfect level in casting technique, from copper and bronze in the molds they made from stone, and they made tripods in a way that cannot be seen in Siberia in this period, in Slab Grave Culture. Okladnikov stated that the surviving items from these graves were pieces of gold jewelry, beads made of malachite-turquoise-agate and other semi-precious stones, and seashells found in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.⁴⁹ In addition, “Deer Stones” (photo 3), which are found to be present in the steppes from Mongolia to the vicinity of Baikal, to Siberia and even to the north of the Black Sea, are also evaluated within the framework of the Slab Grave Culture. Okladnikov explained that deer stones are common in places where slab graves are found.⁵⁰ In addition to the deer stones, it has been determined that stones with or without human form, some of which are now missing, were also erected around slab graves.⁵¹ This also shows how the territory of the Scythians expanded. The decorations on the pottery were categorized by Harinsky into 3 classes (Hujirskaya-Tirganskaya and Hujir-Tirganskaya) and it was stated that cord print and pearl motifs were used as decorations.⁵²

CONCLUSION

After the 2nd millennium BC, Europoid nomadic Andronovo society, who set out from Ural steppes, spread over a wide territory. Expansion borders ended in the lands of today’s Khakassia in the east. At the last stage of this cultural period, when the Iron Age began in Khakassia, the descendants of Andronovo tribes started a new era. This period was labeled in archeology and historical literature as Karasuk Culture. In this period, which is dated to the 1st millennium BC, the Europoid human type began to change with the migration movements from the north of China and marriages with Mongoloids around Yenisey, Selenge and Angara. Since the 2nd millennium BC, a certain burial culture has been revealed in Central Asia, which consists of tombs and kurgans showing the patriarchal family structure and economic level. These tombs were also implemented by Turks and their ancestors, the Huns. This cultural period, which is referred to as Slab Grave Culture, saw the peak of the Europoid-Mongoloid blending, which had started in the Karasuk period. The rectangular burial pits were delimited by vertically placed stone slabs. The upper surface of these kurgans, which were sometimes surrounded by circular sieges made of stones, was again covered with stones. The graves were arranged in multiple ways, sometimes solely for individuals and sometimes for whole families. The head of the deceased, who was laid on his back, sometimes with his legs bent to the side, was placed inside the burial pit towards to the

⁴³Esin, *ibid*, p. 30.

⁴⁴Gürhan Kirilen, *Eski Çin'in Ötekisi Türkler*, Gece Kitaplığı Pub., Ankara 2015, p. 96-117.

⁴⁵Tsybiktarov, *Buryatiya v Drevnosti İstoriya*, p. 124.

⁴⁶Gülнар Kara, *Tarihi Kayıtları ve Han Hanedanı Tarihi Biyografilerine Göre Çin Kaynaklarında Asya Hunları*, Doğu Kütüphanesi Pub., İstanbul 2021, p. 17.

⁴⁷Kirilen, *ibid*, p. 95.

⁴⁸Okladnikov, *ibid*, p.138-139.

⁴⁹Okladnikov, *ibid*, p. 142.

⁵⁰Okladnikov, *ibid*, p. 140.

⁵¹J. Bemman-U. Brosseder, “A Long Standing Tradition- Stelae in The Steppes With a Special Focus on The Slab Grave Culture”, *Aktualniyye Voprosy Arkheologii i Etologii Tsentralnoy Azii*, Izdatelstvo BNTS SO RAN, Ulan-Ude 2017, p. 14-25.

⁵²Turkin, *ibid*, p. 65-66.

north or east. In my opinion, this grave style can be traced back to the Andronovo Culture period at the earliest. It is important to determine the shallow burial pit, rectangular burial pit and pit with stone slabs. Horse bones were obtained from the graves of this period, as in the Andronovo Culture. The relationship between Begaz graves, which belonged to the last phase of the Andronovo Culture, and the Slab Grave Culture has also been examined by archaeologists. This cultural feature, which eventually spread over a wide area around Baikal and Mongolia, was observed by pre-Hun tribes, the Huns, along with the Töles and Kurikan who followed the Huns. Recent archaeological and genetic studies show the high impact of the ethnogenesis and Slab Grave Culture in human anthropology in the Hun graves. It is very important to reveal this cultural period, which corresponds to a very important period and in which the Huns and their descendants the Turks, came into existence, as a specific study. We have tried to establish a framework for this period as a launching point for future studies.

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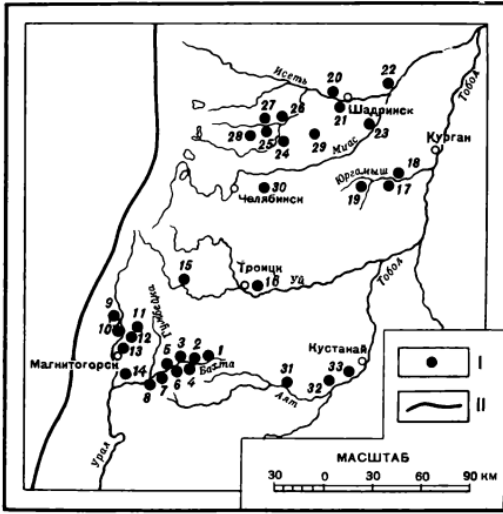
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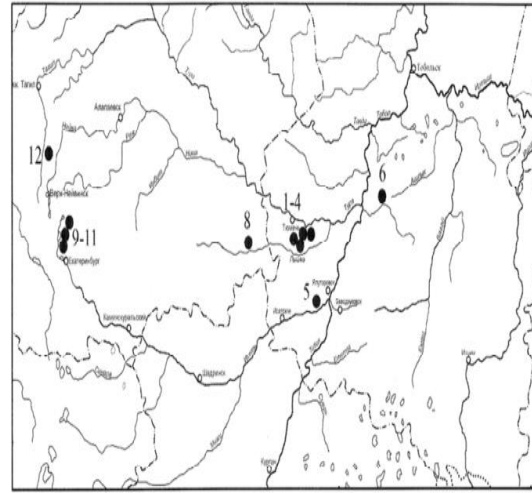
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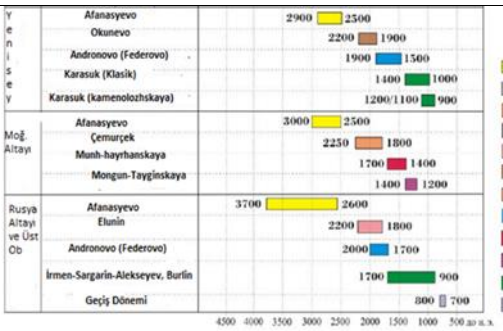
APPENDIX



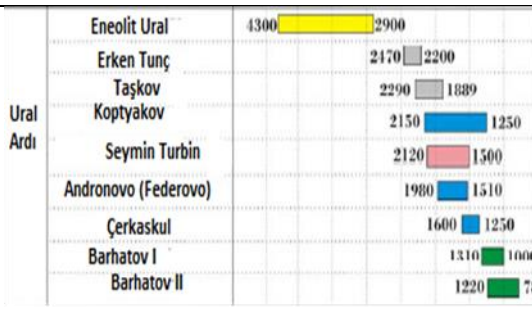
Map 1: Andronovo Settlements around the Tobol, Ural and Iset Rivers (Salnikov, *ibid.*, p. 214.)



Map 2: Koptyakov Culture settlements in the lower course of the Tobol River. (Zah, *ibid.*, p. 30.)



Graphic 1: Radiocarbon chronology of the cultures of the Urals and Southwest Siberia (Molodin, V. İ. –Epimohov, A. V. -Marçenko, J. V., *ibid.*, p.145.)



Graphic 2: Andronovo Culture family and Koptyakov Culture chronology (Molodin, V. İ. – Epimohov, A. V. -Marçenko, J. V., *ibid.*, p. 145.)

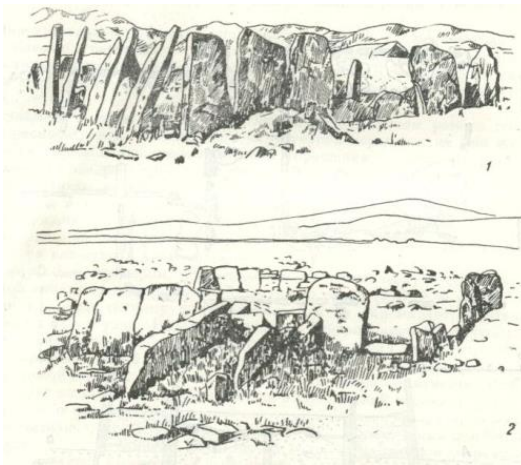
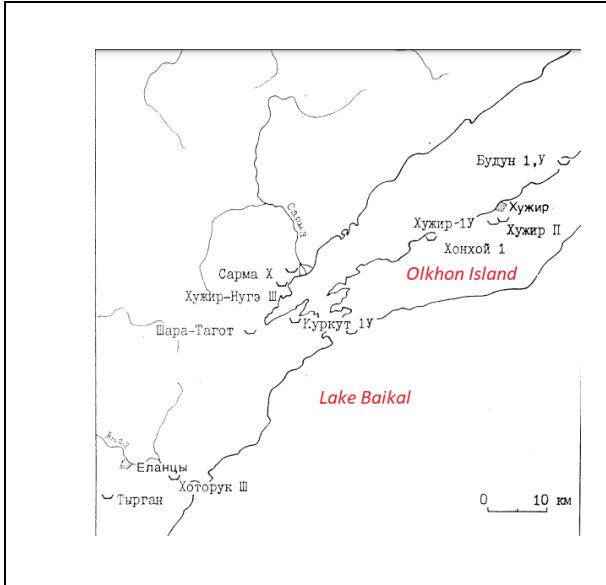


Illustration 1: Begaz (Gryaznov, *ibid.*, p. 154)

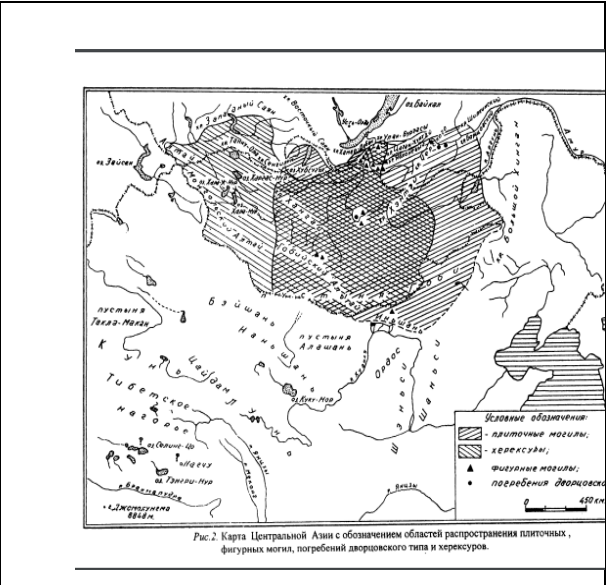


Photograph 1: Great Salbik Kurgan Granite slabs interior cut (Elvin-Kürşat Yıldırım Archive)

SLAB GRAVE BURIAL CULTURE AND THE HUN (XIONGNU) CONNECTION



Map 3: Slab Graves on the northern shores of Lake Baikal and Olkhon Island (Kharinskiy-Zaytsev-Svinin, *ibid*, p. 65)



Map 4: Spread Map Of Slab Graves (Tsybiktarov, *Kultura Plitočnkh Mogil Mongolii i Zabaykalya*, p. 194)

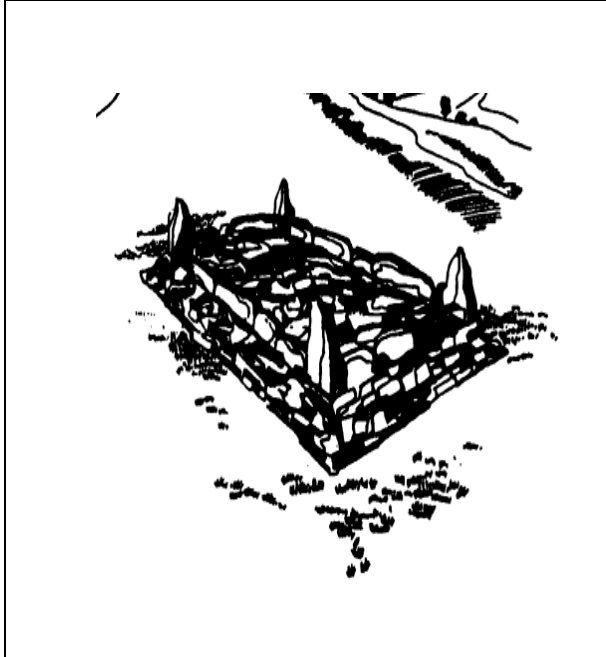


Illustration 2: Tsybiktarov, A. D., *Buryatiya v Drevnosti İstoriya*, Vyp.No. 3, İzd. Buryatskogo Gosuniversiteta, Ulan-Ude, 1999, p. 102.



Illustration 3: Slab Grave Culture Figured tomb specimen (Yu. S. Grişin, “O Figurnkh Plitočnkh Mogilakh Zabaykalya i Mongolii, *KSİA*, 162, 1980, p. 13.)

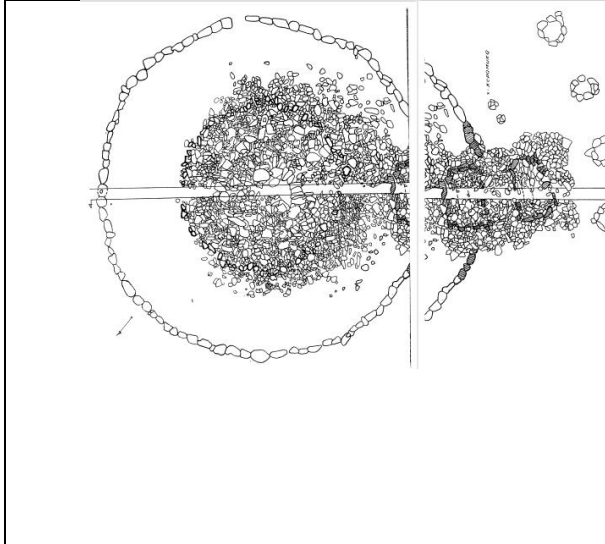


Illustration 4: Tsybiktarov, *Kultura Plitoçnih Mogil Mogolii i Zabaykalya*, p.199.

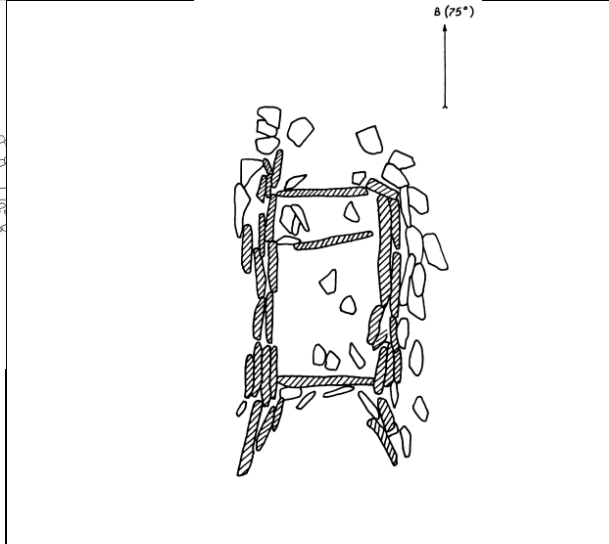
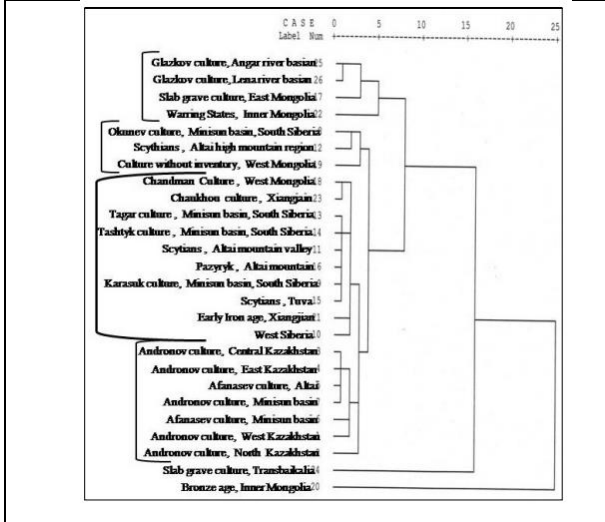
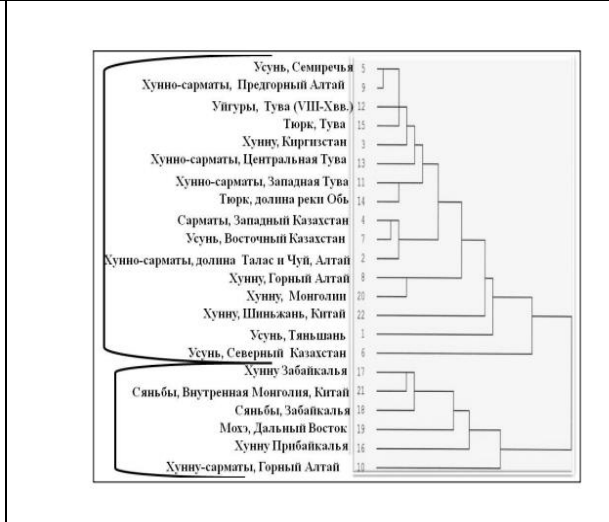


Illustration 5: Yassı Taş Mezarlarında dikdörtgen levhaların dikilmesi ile oluşturulmuş kabir. (Tsybiktarov, *Kultura Plitoçnih Mogil Mogolii i Zabaykalya*, s. 205)



Dendrogram 1: Dendrogram showing the relationship between the Bronze and Early Iron Age populations of Asia (D. Tumen, “Anthropology of Archaeological Populations from Northeast Asia”, 東洋學第 49 輯(2011 年 2 月) 檀國大學校東洋學研究所, p. 36)



Dendrogram 2: Dendrogram showing population relationships from Xiognu period to 1st millennium AD (Tumen, *ibid.*, p. 38.)

SLAB GRAVE BURIAL CULTURE AND THE HUN (XIONGNU) CONNECTION



Photograph 2: Slab Grave Cemetery in Orkhon Valley Temeen Chulu Aymag (Elvin-Kürşat Yıldırım Archive)



Photograph 3: Slab Grave in Temeen Chulu Aymag in Orkhon Valley and Deer depiction on vertical plate

Dikey levha üzerine geyik (Elvin-Kürşat Yıldırım Archive)