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Ancient and Medieval Sources, Interpreting with Modern Sources Study on the Origin of the Scythians

*Antik ve Orta Çağ Kaynakları, Modern Kaynaklarla Yorumlayarak İskitlerin Kökeni
Üzerine İnceleme*

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Abstract

The Scythians appeared on the stage of history in 1000 BC and made a name for themselves like a hurricane. The first finds of Scythians came to the tsarist palace and the tsar Peter I (Pyort Romanov) immediately sent some scientists to the region to find out who these finds belonged to and to send them to the Tsarist Academy of Sciences. It was in such an environment that Scythian studies began, and then the debate on the origin of the Scythians gained momentum. While it is noteworthy that this tribe, whose cultures and lifestyles are described in ancient sources, resembles those who carry Turkish cultures in terms of culture and lifestyle, the origin of the names mentioned in ancient sources caused controversy, while some saw them as belonging to an Iranian language family, others argued that they would belong to a Turanian family. Especially the information provided by important authors such as Herodotus, Strabo, Ephorus, Hippocrates provides deep data on the Scythians. Within the scope of this article, we have tried to reveal that the Scythians were a tribe-tribe confederation of Turkic origin by considering all the evidence that will point to finding the origins of ancient and medieval sources and the scholars who examined this evidence. We have determined that the views of the scholars who say that the medieval sources, especially those who use the word Scythian, are called Goths, Ostrogoths and Visigoths are also called Scythians, are not correct, and that these chronicles call each tribe by their own names. As a result, it was seen that their origins and languages belonged to the Ural-Altaic language family, but it was determined that the Scythians, who disintegrated over time, were assimilated in terms of religion, language and culture.

Keywords: Scythian, Saka, Cimmerian, Massaget, Ancient

Öz

İskitler tarih sahnesine M.Ö. 1000 dolaylarında çıkmış ve adeta bir kasırga misali kendilerinden söz ettirmişlerdi. İskitlere ait ilk buluntular Çarlık sarayına gelince başlamış çar Büyük I. Petro (Pyort Romanov) derhal bölgeye bazı bilim insanlarını göndererek bu buluntuların kime ait olduğunun bulunmasını ve buluntuların Çarlık Bilimler Akademisine gönderilmesini istemiştir. İşte İskit çalışmaları böyle bir ortamda başlamış daha sonra İskitlerin kökeni tartışması hız kazanmıştır. Antik kaynaklarda kültürleri ve yaşam biçimleri anlatılan bu kavmin kültür ve yaşam biçimi olarak Türk kanını taşıyanlara benzemesi dikkati çekerken, antik kaynaklarda geçen isimlerin kökeni ise tartışmalara neden olmuş kimi bir İranî dil ailesine ait görürken kimileri Turani bir ailenin mensubu olacağını savunmuştur. Özellikle Herodot, Strabo, Ephorus, Hippocrates gibi önemli yazarlarının aktardığı bilgiler İskitlere ait derin veriler sunmaktadır. Biz de Antik ve Orta Çağ kaynakların kökenlerini bulmaya işaret edecek bütün delilleri ve bu delilleri inceleyen bilim insanlarını ele alarak bu makale kapsamında İskitlerin Türk-Moğol kökenli bir boy-kabile konfederasyonu oldukları ortaya koymaya çalıştık. Özellikle İskit kelimesini kullanan Orta Çağ kaynaklarında Got, Ostrogot ve Vizigot'lara da İskit denildiğini söyleyen bilim insanlarının görüşlerinin ise doğru olmadığını bu kroniklerde her kavme kendi isimleriyle seslendirildiğini tespit ettik. Verilen tüm bilgileri hem tarihi hem filolojik hem coğrafi hem de arkeolojik buluntular ışığında yorumlayarak ele aldığımız için bir bilginin yanlış olup olmadığı kolayca anlaşılmıştır. Bunun sonucunda kökenlerinin ve dillerinin Ural-Altaic dil ailesine mensup olduğu görülmüş fakat zamanla parçalanmış İskitlerin din, dil ve kültürel açıdan asimile oldukları tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İskit, Saka, Kimmer, Massaget, Antik

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INTRODUCTION

The Scythians were a group of nomadic warriors who raided from Southern Siberia to the Middle East, Anatolia and the North of the Black Sea around 1000 BC. It is accepted that the Scythians came to the land of the Cimmerians as a result of the tribes squeezing each other in the 8th century BC. It is known that the famine in Central Asia caused this migration of tribes (Tarhan, 1979: 365). But around 1200 BC, a climate crisis is thought to have occurred in southern Siberia. There may have been a famine because of this crisis. Archaeological finds indicate that their homeland was the Altai Mountains, in the Minusinsk region of today. The biggest problem about the Scythians is both their origins and whether they were the same tribe as the Cimmerians and Saka. In this article, we will try to reveal information about both this problem and the origin of the Scythians. Research on the ethnic origin of the Scythians has remained rather superficial. The main reason for this should be the lack of written philological data to reinforce their historical identity, despite the fact that the Scythians existed in a very large geography and over a long period of time. When the earliest findings about the Scythians were sent to the Russian Emperor Tsar Peter I, research on this tribe began. But all they had were rich ornaments found in kurgans all over the country. Although Western and Russian scientists were trying hard to identify Scythians as a tribe based on their art, they could not get the results they wanted. Eventually, two different views emerged in the world. One was the Greek or Indo-Greek tribe based on Scythian objects influenced by late Greek art, and the other was the Iranian tribe. These two views are currently the most widely accepted by foreign scholars. But while the Greek view has lost its influence, Russian archaeologists and historians continue to argue that the Scythians were an Iranian tribe. For a while there was an idea that the ancestors of the Russians were Scythians, but this hypothesis was later abandoned. However, in the last century and in recent researches, the view that Scythians were not an Iranian tribe but a Turkic tribe has gained more influence. Scholars who have studied Scythians have generally analyzed archaeological finds regionally and avoided looking at the big picture. Scholars such as Grakow, Rudenko and Artamonov were in a dilemma about their ethnic origin, and every scholar who entered this field after them could not get out of this dilemma. This is because a community of scholars has emerged who are not culturally Iranian, but who hesitate to address the origin of the Scythians, whom the western scientific world calls a tribe speaking Iranian languages. What needs to be addressed here is to reveal that the Cimmerian / Scythian / Saka names mentioned in ancient sources are a single tribe. Herodotus writes that the Scythians were in Asia and that they were defeated in the war with the Massageties and crossed the Araxes River into the land of the Cimmerians (Herodotus, IV: 11). Upon this information given by Herodotus, the name Saka is mentioned in Achaemenid sources. In the Behistun inscription of Dareios, Sakas are divided into three as Saka Tigrakhauda (Pointed-Headed Sakas), Saka Tiay Para Daray (Sakas Beyond the Sea) and Saka Haumavarga (Hermann, 1933: 158). We know that Cyrus the Great was defeated by the Massagetes. However, Persian sources refer to these tribes as Saka. We know that Darius went on a campaign against the Sakas. Herodotus, on the other hand, while describing the Scythians' warrior prowess and the defeat of the Egyptian King Sesostris by the Scythians, referred to them as "Dareios' Undefeated" (Herodotus, II: 110). It is understood from this that Scythians and Saka are different names for the same tribe. The information expressed by Starbon below also proves this view.

"In a fragment of the epic poet Choerilus' "Crossing the Bridge", he mentions the Sakas. "The sheep-herding Sacae (Sakas) are Scythians by origin, but the wheat-bearer says they lived in Asia. He wrote that they were law-abiding nomadic colonists." (Strabo, VII: 3.9)

It is already accepted by many scholars that the Sakas and Scythians were the same tribe. But what about the Cimmerians, who were they really? The answer to this question can be found in ancient Mesopotamian tablets. Babylonian sources referred to this nomadic warrior community as Gamira or Gmira. This is where the name Cimmerian, which is used today, comes from, which means "Nomad" (Gershevitch, 2007). In fact, research from Assyrian and Persian sources suggests that the name "Cimmerian" probably originated in the Middle East. According to G. Geybullayev, the name of the Cimmerians was a different pronunciation of the name "Gemer - Belt". The meaning of the name "G/Kemer" was derived from the combination of the words "Kam"/"Gam"- Shaman and "Er"- Valiant (Geybullayev, 1994: 99). M.G. Melikishvili also noted that the Cimmerians also lived in the west of the Caucasus Albaya. According to G. Geybullayev, the Iranian translations of the names of the Massagetes in the Iranian language were meaningless. Geybullayev writes that the name Massaget means "Head Sakas", as it is derived from the Turkish m-b change "Mas" - "Bas", "Sak" - "Sakas", and in Turkish it ends with the suffix "at", which indicates majority. We can support this information as follows, Tomris who defeated Dareios is mentioned as Massaget in all sources. Tomris was the leader of the Sakas. This was probably a different pronunciation of a tribe name, and this tribe was a tribe that ruled the Sakas. Strabo informs us that the Cimmerians attacked Anatolia through the Bosphorus Strait in Homer's time and even earlier (Starbon, I: 2, 9/ III: 2, 12). In contrast to this information, it is known that Scythians were sovereign in the southern Caucasus during this period and raided Anatolia and the Middle East from there. However, it is known that Scythians were involved in the Assyrian and Manna wars in the 8th century BC. In one of his letters, the Babylonian Oracle Balusezib states that the Cimmerians promised not to interfere in the Assyrian-Manna relations and adds that they cannot be trusted (Gershevitch, 2007: 102). The first ancient source about the Scythians is found in the Prism (B) of the Assyrian Emperor Asarhaddon (Durmuş, 2007: 80). According to this information, the Assyrian Emperor allied with the Scythian ruler Bartatua against the Cimmerians and Mannaites who threatened the northern borders of his country and gave him his daughter (Luckenbill, 1968: 207). In this Prism, Gimmirrai and Ashguzai are mentioned as tribal names, and it is thought that Ashguzai are Scythians and Gimmirrai are Cimmerians (Durmuş, 2007: 38). In addition, ancient sources indicate that there was a Scythian sovereignty in North-Eastern and possibly Eastern Anatolia. The Assyrian king Sargon II (721-705) assigned his son Sennacherib to gather intelligence in the northern regions. His report to his father Sargon II contains interesting information. According to the information given by Sennacherib, the Urartians were defeated in the Gamir region in Eastern Cappadocia, the Cimmerian region. It is thought that this battle took place in 707 and the defeated king was Argishti II (Sulimrski, 2006: 558). In fact, all these sources and many others show that the Scythians were in fact a great Confederate Empire and that they raided from the South Caucasus into Anatolia and Mesopotamia, from south-eastern Iran into the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia, and from the north, north of the Black Sea into Gallipoli and the Balkans. In fact, it should be noted that the attacks were in fact strategic, the main idea was to prevent troops from continental Greece from coming to the Gallipoli region

and to enter Anatolia and Mesopotamia from three directions. By the 6th century BC, the Scythians had already buried many kingdoms such as Med, Assyria, Urartu, Phrygian, etc. on the stage of history and stood before us as the dominant power of the region. They had even brought the Egyptian king to their presence in Egypt. For this reason, it is natural that Scythians are mentioned in three different sources with three different local names. However, it is also seen that different Scythian names are mentioned from time to time. This is a tribe/tribe name. Because it is clear that Scythians were a confederation of tribes and tribes.

FINDINGS

When we look at the ancient sources, the most important source providing information about the Scythians is undoubtedly Herodotus. Herodotus described the Scythians by combining them with Greek mythology and stated that they believed in Greek gods. However, it would not be correct to say that all Scythians believed in Greek religion in the geography where Scythians were spread. However, this is understandable since the conditions of that period and the data on how Herodotus obtained this information are quite limited. Herodotus says that Targitaus or Targitay's father was Zeus and his mother was the daughter of the river Borysthenes, and then states that Hestia was called Tabiti, Zeus was called Papaïos, Earth was called Api- Zeus' wife, and the celestial Aphrodite was called Argimpasa and Poseidon was called Thagimadas (Herodotus, IV: 59). The information Herodotus gives here is important because he is reporting what he has heard. Herodotus says that the person called Toprak- Api was the wife of Zeus, which naturally means that Toptak-Api was seen as the mother of Targitay. Api today means "Mother-Mother" in Chuvash Turkish (Ashmarin, 1994: 278; Bayram, 2007:36). Apart from this, the expressions "Eçüm Apam Bumin Kagan, Istemi Kagan..." from the eastern side of the Kül Tigin monument built by Bilge Kagan were used in the sense of ancestor and ancestor, and in many old Turkish inscriptions in the sense of "sister". N.I. Ashmarin, who prepared a 17-volume Chuvash dictionary, writes that the word Papay is used as father and Tura Papay is used as God Father in Chuvash language (Ashmarin, 1999: 95-96). In Khakassian, a similar word used as "Paba" carries the meaning of "Father" (Arıkoğlu, 2005: 344). Today in Azerbaijan, the words Papa and Ata are also used along with the word Baba. In his work, Feofilakt Simokatta writes that in 584, one of the Avar beys was named Targitay (Simokatta, 1986: 1.4, 4-5; 1.7,7; 6.9,6). Simokatta himself is an important historian who was among the Huns. In fact, this alone shows that the Scythians were the ancestors of the Turks living in the Eurasian steppes. According to Azerbaijani researchers, the name of the god Argimpasa comes from ancient Turkic. The word "Argim" is old Turkic and means "Irkin"- "rain that falls continuously for several days" (Nadelyaev, Nasilov, Tenishev, Sherbak, 1969: 212). The concept of "Pas/Bash" was accepted to mean "Headman/Leader" and it was suggested that the name Argimpasa was formed from these two words (Geybullayev, 1994: 105).¹

¹ Geybullayev gives the majority of these words in his work and argues that they are Old Turkic with etymological and linguistic evidence. We will not cover all the words in this article. But you can refer to Geybullayev's work for detailed information. By giving an example here, we will demonstrate the importance of the research.

"Sandakurru- "San"- Name, Glory, Fame; "Da"- La suffix; "Kur"- Firm, Valiant; Sandakshatra(u)- "Sanda"- Named, Glorious; "Shat"- Heir, Prince; "Ar"- Private, Valiant" (Geybullayev, 1994: 100).

Herodotus states that the Scythians respected their ancestors and told Dareios that they would “fight if the graves of our ancestors were insulted” (Herodotus, 2004). This is the same as the Cult of the Ancestors found in the Turkic and Mongolian nations in Asia. Herodotus also describes the Scythians' adherence to their traditions and their funeral rituals. Here he describes the construction of kurgans, which is clearly seen in the Turks Culters.

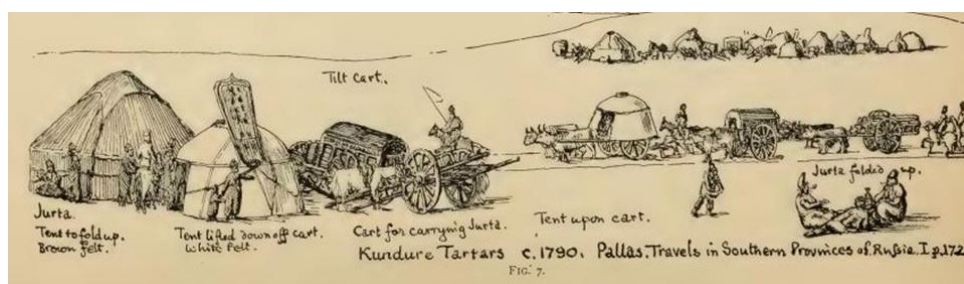
The burial-place of the kings is in the land of the Gerrians, the place up to which the Borysthenes is navigable. In this place, when their king has died, they make a large square excavation in the earth. After this is ready, they take up the corpse, once the body has been covered over with wax and the belly ripped open and cleansed, filled with cut up galingale and spices and parsley-seed and anise, and then sewn together again. Then they convey it in a waggon to another nation. Those who receive the corpse do the same as the Royal Scythians, that is they cut off a part of their ear and shave their hair round about and cut themselves all over the arms and tear their forehead and nose and pass arrows through their left hand. Thence they convey in the waggon the corpse of the king to another of the nations over whom they rule; and they to whom the corpse came before accompany them. When they have gone round to all conveying the corpse, then they are in the land of the Gerrians, who have their settlements furthest away of all the nations over whom they rule, and they have reached the spot where the burial-place is.

After that, having placed the corpse in the tomb upon a bed of leaves, they stick spears along this side and that of the corpse and stretch pieces of wood over them, and then they cover the place with matting. Then they strangle and bury in the remaining space of the tomb one of the king's mistresses, his cup-bearer, his cook, his horse-keeper, his attendant, and his bearer of messages, and also horses, and a first portion of all things else, and cups of gold; for silver they do not use at all, nor yet bronze in burial. They all join together to pile up a great mound, vying with one another and zealously endeavouring to make it as large as possible (Herodotus, IV: 71).

As it is understood from this, the corpses were embalmed in a natural way. We know that this tradition of embalming continued until Mehmed the Conqueror. The Turks Mongols used to perform this embalming ritual after embalming the corpse so that the corpse would not smell during the waiting period. It was Byzantine writers and historians who expressed this similarity. Another information given by Herodotus is very important. Herodotus' account of what happened to two Scythian leaders named Anacharsis and Scyles reveals a different situation (Herodotus, 1993). Anacharsis, a Scythian prince, must have left the Scythian country and traveled to the Greek mainland. Herodotus wrote that he may have been killed because he left the Scythian traditions and became fond of Greek traditions (Herodotus, 1993). But the real reason why he was killed by his brother Saulius was that he played drums at night in the temple of the Snake-Legged Scythian goddess Hylae, performed shamanic rituals and wore pictures on his clothes (Ustinova, 1999: 79). This shows that he was killed as a result of a cultural clash, considering his betrayal. Scyles was a Scythian king who lived in the 5th century BC and admired Greek culture. He was ostracized by his people for adopting the Greek lifestyle and

was executed by his brother (Wheeler, 1855: 21-22).² Herodotus further states that the Scythian kingdom was divided into three (Herodotus, IV: 7). Strangely enough, in the information given about the Xiongnu, that is, the Huns, it was written that the Huns were ruled by three clans or tribes (Kim, 2016: 17). In Scythia, the power over all Scythians was in the hands of a group or tribe called the Royal Scythians. These were the highest and elite part of the whole Scythian confederation. But a similar situation existed in the entire Hun Empire. There was a hierarchical supreme Xulianti, the tribe of Teoman's Modu, who ruled the Hun tribes (Kim, 2016: 17). Even this is an important example of the Scythian-Hun connection in cultural terms. The funeral rituals of Scythians and Huns and the fact that Hun objects are very similar to Scythian objects, as we will explain in the General Evaluation section, suggest that these two states may actually be a single nation. Herodotus uses an expression while describing the Scythians' bath construction. "They rejoiced and howled like wolves" (Herodotus, IV: 75). We think that we don't even need to mention that the wolf was an important animal among the Turks in Central Asia. As a way of life and as a tactic of warfare, the wolf is the most important Turkic symbol and symbol. Many ancient sources, including Herodotus, mention that the Scythians were a people who lived in tents made of felt on chariots. E. Minns says that these Scythian felt tents on chariots were also found among the Tatars and provides a drawing from 1790. Apart from this drawing, we know that ancient Turks lived in felt tents and could carry them on carts. This is another example of the cultural continuity of a nation. Apparently, E. Minns argues that the Scythians were Turkic in all respects.

Figure 1: Description of Kundure Tatars in the Kyrgyz land in 1790 in Minns' Book (Minns, 1913: 53)



Hippocrates gives richer information about the Scythians. He states that the Scythians were nomads and lived in two or three sectioned houses covered with felt on carts pulled by oxen (Hippocrat, 1881: 110). What is described here are the Turkish and Mongolian Otags in Central Asia. According to the information provided by Hippocrates, this cultural lifestyle was also practiced during the Scythian period. Geybullayev argues in Hippocrates' "Diseases IV" that the Scythians called Piy (fat) Vutir, and that this word is formed from two words in Turkic languages, Ava- Uva, which means food, and Turi, which means milk, and that it is Food from Milk or Milk Food (Geybullayev, 1994: 103). Later, the information given by Hippocrates

² We see many similar incidents in Turkish history. An example of this event is the murder of the Uighur ruler Böğü Kagan by the elders of the state after he accepted the Mani religion, abandoned the Turkish tradition and finally wanted to settle in the temple as a priest. One reason for his death was that he wanted to attack China, which did not accept the Mani religion, under the influence of a Mani priest. Böğü Khan was deposed from his throne for disregarding the custom.

describes how this Vutir was made. This information shows us that Scythians were nomads from Central Asia.

“Vutir is made only from horse's milk; for this purpose, they pour horse's milk into a wooden container and shake it (the author is describing the production of Nehre- Yani butter, which is common among the Turks), when the milk foams and the fat partially rises to the surface, it is called Vutir. The solid and heavy part of the milk sinks to the bottom, which is separated and dried. Hippocrates later wrote that this dried part was called Ippaka in Scythia. In ancient Turkic languages, ipi - Ippaka is derived from the word “bread” and “food” and the term “Eppek” used in our language comes from here.” (Geybullayev, 1994: 103-104)³

Today, many researchers use the expression “Ippaka” in its Latin form “Hippace”. However, the ancient Greek spelling of the word “ἵππαχην” is transliterated as “Ippakhane/Ippaka” (Hippocrates, 1881: 6. 94). This is also an important element to pay attention to. Because the word is derived from ἵππα - horse (horse-related). In addition, Minns, who evaluates Hippocrates' writing that the Scythians were red-brown in color due to the cold, points out that this feature was also found in the Tatars and Kublai Khan (Minns, 1913: 45). Hippocrates mentions that they lived on the Rhiphaen mountain (probably Ural) and saw the sun on the summer solstice, and that they were windy and cold. This shows that the homeland of the Scythians was the Northern regions and Siberia. Therefore, the hypothesis of western scientists that the homeland of the Iranians was Central Asia is also meaningless here. Because the Scythians were a northern people who landed in Central Asia later, so they would not have been Iranians.

Ctesias, who lived in the 5th century BC, was the physician of the Achaemenid King Artaserhas II. He lived during this period and wrote about Persian history. Among the information provided by him, there is an interesting piece of information other than the marriage of the Saka queen Zarina and the Parthian king and the resulting Median wars, which we will frequently mention in this article. This is the part where the queen is informed of the death of the rebel Cyrus at the Battle of Cunaxa. Cyrus was a satrap and rebelled against his brother Artaserhas II. As a result, he dies at the battle of Cunaxa. Ctesias is said to be the bearer of the news here, and in Scythian style he gives the news slowly. Below we give the passage as it is. Here the expression “the king fled” does not fit both historically and as a conclusion. What is meant to be said here is that the king flew away. It is known that death was always expressed as “Flight”⁴ among the Turks in Central Asia. And flight was seen as paradise in ancient Turkish.

“This is what Ctesias does in the announcement of Cyrus' death. For the messenger comes but does not tell Parysatis straightaway that Cyrus has died – this is what is called a ‘Scythian discourse’ – rather, he first announced that he was winning and she was pleased and worried. Afterwards she asks, ‘How is the King faring?’ And he says that he has taken flight.” (Ctesias, 2012 107-108)

³ I am a living witness that my grandmothers and grandfathers and the elderly people around me use this expression. I personally know that this type of bread, which is also made in a sweet way, is called “Şirin (sweet) Eppek (bun/bread)” by my family.

⁴ It flew- it migrated in the sense . There is a word “Uştmay” in Sogdian. It is thought to mean heaven. But the origin of the word derives from the meaning of “Perfect Existence” rather than heaven. The passage above directly preserves the meaning of death as flight and in the Altay language family.

Ephorus, a historian and geographer who lived in the 4th century BC, is another source that admires the Scythians and provides information about them. Today, it is accepted by the scientific world that Strabo repeated some of his information. The historian Ephorus, like Strabo, says that the Scythians drank mare's milk (Strabo, 1969; Starbo, 1964: .3.9; Pownall, 2003). Ephorus also writes that they were just, had their own good laws and could not be enslaved (Pownall, 2003: 127-128). In this case, we can say that the Scythians adhered to Central Asian traditions and had their own "Traditions". Mare's milk is a common expression in the ancient world. Probably what is being referred to here is koumiss. We can say that koumiss was fermented from horse's milk and was a drink specific to the Turko-Mongolian tradition. This cultural element again shows that they were Turkic-Mongolian. Ephorus calls the Scythians fair nomads. However, he states that they were different from other barbarian Scythians and were more cultured (Pownall, 2003). The Scythians he praises here are the western branch of the Scythians who remained north of the Black Sea and were culturally fragmented and began to intermingle with the Greeks. He may have used these expressions because he had no connection with the others. We can understand this from his praise of the Scythian Anarchasis. Strabo found Ephorus' thoughts wrong in the case of Anarchasis, but he listed Ephorus among the "Seven Sages" (Pownall, 2003). We have already stated who Anarchasis is. This information shows that Ephorus praised the part of the Scythians to the north of the Black Sea for their recognition, but thought it appropriate to call the others barbarians. But from the part where Ephorus calls all nomadic Scythians just, it seems that he must have been fascinated by the fact that they had their own laws and lived simply.

The earliest surviving maps from that period provide extensive information about the Scythian homeland. The first one is undoubtedly the map of Eratosthenes⁵ (276 BC - 194 BC). Another important source about the Scythians is undoubtedly the geographer Cludius Ptolemaeus. Even though he lived between 100-160 AD, the map he drew gives important information. His map, like Etastosthenes' map, shows the homeland of the Scythians as the northern regions. But this map is more detailed. Because the regions he named as Scythian and Saka are important. He writes Scythia for a part in the North of the Caspian Sea and Scythia for a part in Central Asia. Since the Sarmatians dominated the Northern and Western parts of the Black Sea from these periods, Sarmatia is written here. But to the north of these and the Central Asian part is written Skythai. Here, the word Skythai, which corresponds especially to the southern Siberia region and apparently written in the North-Eastern Caspian region, coincides with all archaeological data. Because many important finds belonging to the Scythians are in today's Kazakhstan region. This is also consistent with Ptolemaeus' map. . Below this region lies the Sacae region. This region is probably today's Central Asia. In the middle of the Sacae region, the Massaget script is read. This corresponds to the information we have given above. The reason why these regions are depicted separately is that there was no centralized state in Central Asia during this period. In addition, the province of Sakasena, the center of the Scythians in today's Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus, described by ancient sources, appears on the map. Based on this information, we can say that the Scythian tribes in this region today belong to the Ural-Altaic language family and belong to the Turkish culture.

⁵ Eratosthenis. (1789). *Geographicorum Fragmenta* (Seidel, G. C. F., (Ed.). Vandenhoeck et Ruprecht.

Figure 2: Scythia on Eratosthenes' World Map (Mcphail, 2011)

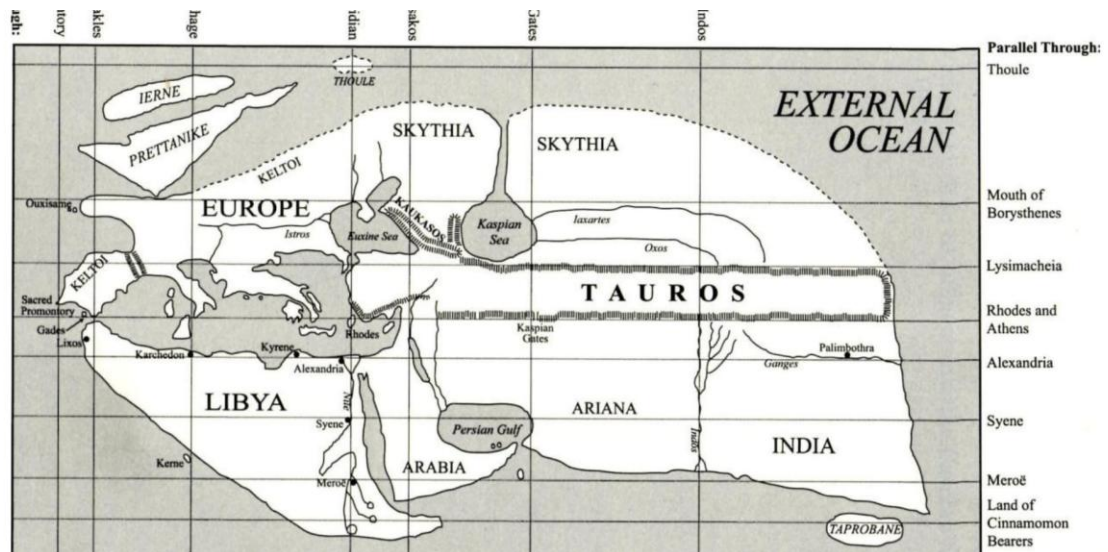


Figure 3: Ptolemaic North Caucasus Sarmatian Scythian Border (Ptolemy, 1562)

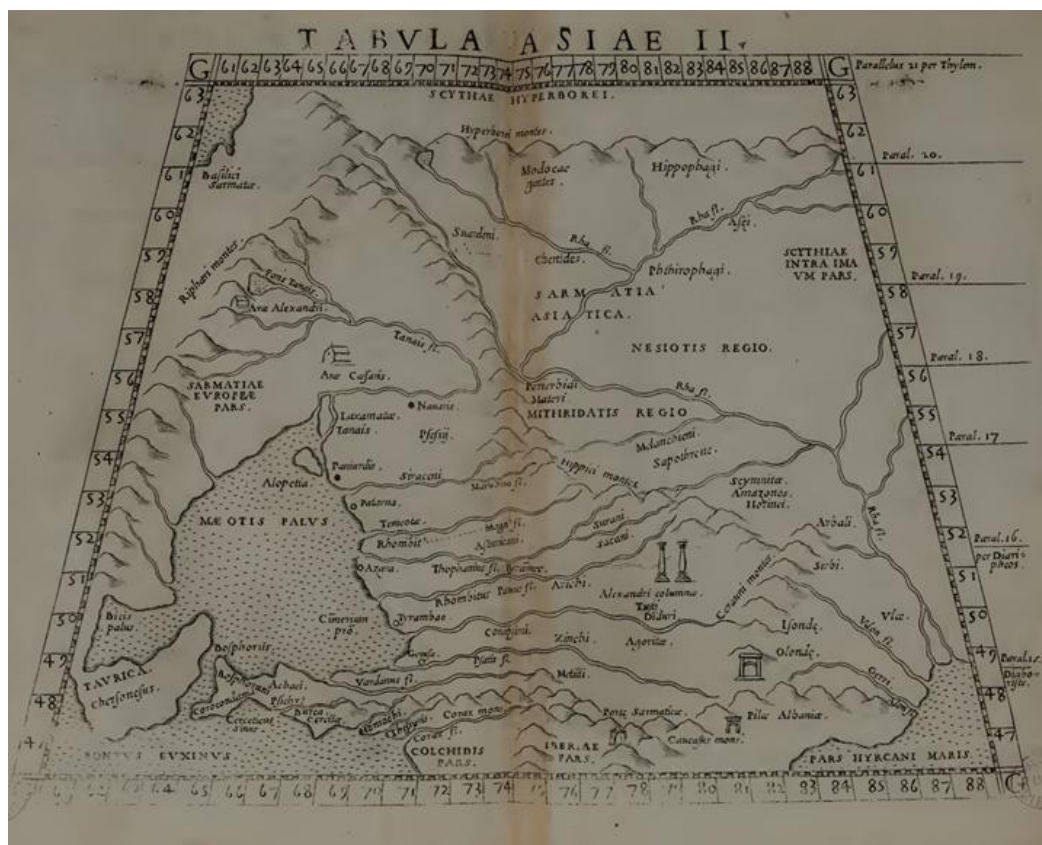


Figure 4: Ptolemy Central Asia Scythian-Saka Region (Ptolemy, 1562)



Figure 5: Ptolemaic Map Reproduction Codex GI 57 (Ptolemy, 2017)



It should be emphasized that the South Caucasus centered in Ganja was the most important place for the Scythians. According to Strabo, the Atropatena state had the province of Sakasena (Strabo, 1969: 9. 7,2). Today it is recognized by many scientists that this region is located in Azerbaijan. Geybullayev, on the basis of ancient Xenophon, emphasizes that the Sakas lived in the neighboring regions of the Gurgan and Qadus in the Midian region and writes

that Astara-Lankaran and Mughan were the ancient Midian lands (Ksenophon. 2011). You can also look at Ptolemy's map about the city of Sakasena. There is a small Sakasena in this region. It is believed that Kaspis lived in Salyan, Mughan regions of Azerbaijan and Sakas came and settled in these regions. This region is called "Balasacan". It is known that Balasajan - "Pala" - comes from the Old Turkic "Flatness" (V.V.Radlov, 1898: 4.2, 1162), Sacan - from the name of Saka, and the last time the XIII century writer Yakut al-Hamawi drew attention to this place (Geybullayev, 1994: 108). The name Balasajan is still alive in Azerbaijan today. According to us, it is obvious that the name Balaken, one of the northern provinces of Azerbaijan, came from here. In addition, in present-day Kyrgyzstan, between Lake Issyk-Kul and Bishkek, is the city of Balasagun. Although it is not known by whom this city was founded, it is known that it was an important center under the rule of the Gokturk and Uighur states. This similarity draws attention. The Scythians called the Kerch Strait, known as the "Cimmerian Strait", the "Balık Yolu- Fishway", while the Greeks called it Panticapaeum (Gershevitch, 2007: 93). The names "Ordu Balık (Balıg)" and "Besh Balık" in Central Asia are strikingly similar. This very strait was the most important entrance to many ancient cities and trading colonies. Based on this expression, which means "Balıg Yolu-Fishway), we can state the following. Probably the Scythians called these cities "Balıg". That is why they called the strait the "Balıg Yolu-Fishway), which means the road leading to the cities. Apart from that, the name of this Sakasena province was Sakasin, which was derived from Saka and the suffix sin (Old Turkic Shin/Chin was the suffix denoting affiliation). The center of Sakasena province is disputed by western scholars today.

Herodotus mentions the name Orthocorybantili when naming the peoples living under the Medes. This name may be a Greek translation of the name Tigraxauda (Pointed Hat Wearers) mentioned in the inscriptions of Darius I and Xerxes (Gershevitch, 2007: 100). It is identified with Herodotus' Orthocorybantes, Strabo's Sacasene inhabitants, Arrian's Sacasinae. The province of Sakasena is located in what is today Azerbaijan. Today, the names of cities such as Sheki, Ganja are related to the old Sakas. In addition, it is written in a Pahlavi-language source that Afrasiab from Turan founded the city of Ganja in Aturpatakan (Kasumova, 1992, 19). M.I. According to Dyakonov, there is also a Sakasena prefecture centered on Ganja (Dyakonov, 1956: 250). Geybullayev, who expressed the following information about Sakasena, one of the centers of Sakas, states based on ancient sources as follows:

"As is well known, B.C.. II. in the century, the capital of the Atropatena province was the city called Ganzak in Persian sources. Ancient writers Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy wrote the name of this city as Gazaka and falsified Zaza. V. the century Armenian historian Favst Buzand mentions him as Gandzak (Favst Buzand, III, 7). All these names are distorted forms of the Ganja or Ganjek toponym in different languages. The fire temple of the Azerbaijanis was located in the city of Ganja, located 6 farsangs from the Cave, to the south-east of Lake Urmia. 9. the century-old Arab geographer Ibn Khordadbeh wrote this toponym as Cenze, 13. the century-old Arab geographer Yagut Hemevi writes as Jaznek (distortion of Cenzek). Researchers who have written about the meaning of the toponym Ganja have associated it with the word "treasure", which means young in Persian. This is not a reasonable idea. We attribute the Ganja (Gan Decek) place names that appeared in the regions where the Saklar lived both in Atropatena and in Albania to the existence of a tribe called Gan Decek among the Saklar.

Mahmud of Kashgar wrote that in Central Asia, one of the Turkish tribes in the region where the Sakas lived in ancient times was called Ganjek. The second part of the Ganjek ethnonym, "cek", reflects the Sak ethnonym due to its substitution of s - ç in Turkish languages. It is related to this that both Ganja rivers in Azerbaijan are called Ganzak in ancient sources." (Geybullayev, 1994: 119)

They are depicted with pointed hats on ancient wall Achaemenid wall reliefs and on Scythian archaeological objects. This "Man in the Golden Dress" outfit was fully proven when it was found. Interestingly, 14. in a century-old source called "Acaib-ed-dunya", it is mentioned that young men in Ganja city wear fluffy felt hats (Mikhluco, 1954:208). In addition, medieval Arabic sources that provide information about the city of Samarra, which was released for the Turks by the Abbasid caliph and where the Central Asian animal style is seen even in archaeological objects, provide information that is very important. We see the first trace of Scythians in Islamic geography in this period. We also find information about how the Afshin wore in the sources of this period. There were two shirts, one inner and one outer, the outer shirt was made of red dibac, the chest part was decorated with rubies and jewels, and the kalansuvah (börk) on his head was a pointed cone-shaped hat embroidered with pearls and jewels (Esin, 1973:318). This outfit reminds us of the dress of the Man in the Golden Robe. I have already stated above that many golden royal dresses belonging to the Scythians have been found in the Turkestan region today.

Arrian(us) (86-146) has described at length the problems that Alexander had with the Scythians in Bactria. The fact that the Scythians retreated and attacked again told one of the best examples of a false retreat. But the Macedonian troops could not understand this tactic. When the news reached Alexander the Great about how Spitamenes' cavalry and the Scythian cavalry had defeated the Macedonians, trapped the Macedonian troops on an island, and that only 40 cavalry and 300 infantry had survived this battle, Alexander was in a difficult situation (Arrian, 1986: 210). Arrian gives deep information about the Scythians in his work. According to him; The new Scythian king (Scythians of Europe) sent a delegation of ambassadors to Alexander; he wanted to be a friend and ally by giving his daughter to him and said that he would obey Alexander's orders. Alexander politely declined this offer. Spitamenes, a powerful satrap, was the one who rebelled against Alexander and gathered nomads around him. Arrian writes that Spitamenes attacked the Massaget branch of the Scythian people and defeated them (Arrian, 1986: 239). The author of which Spitamenes dressed up as a Scythian when proclaiming himself king (Arrian, 1986). This shows him that the Scythians and Persians were peoples who wore different clothes from one another and had different cultures.

Diodoros mentions the Scythians in Siculus. It clarifies the accuracy of the map found above with the statement below. As can be understood from this statement and as can be understood from the Oxus finds, Southern Turkestan, as well as the region of Afghanistan, Tajikistan today, were the southern borders of Scythia.

"Now India is four-sided in shape and the side which faces east and that which faces south are embraced by the Great Sea, while that which faces North is separated by the Emodus range of mountains from that part of Scythia which is inhabited by the Scythians known as the Sacae;" (Diodoros, 1967: 2. 35)

But some of the information he gives coincides with the information given by Herodotus. He probably got this birth myth from her. But the most important thing is the information he gave after this legendary birth, when talking about the area where the Scythians ruled and their form of government.

*“But some time later the descendants of these kings, because of their unusual valour and skill as generals, subdued much of the territory beyond the Tanais river as far as Thrace, and advancing with their armies to the other side; they extended their power as far as the Nile in Egypt.” And after enslaving many great peoples which lay between the Thracians and the Egyptians they advanced the empire of the Scythians on the one side as far as the ocean to the east, and on the other side to the Caspian Sea and Lake Maeotis; for this people increased to great strength and had notable kings, one of whom gave his name to the Sacae, another to the Massagetae, another to the Arimaspi, and several other tribes received their names in like manner. It was by these kings that many of the conquered peoples were removed to other homes, and two of these became very great colonies: the one was composed of Assyrians * and was removed to the land between Paphlagonia and Pontus, and the other was drawn from Media and planted along the Tanais, its people receiving the name Sauromatae” (Diodoros, II: 43.4-41).*

This information is very important because he writes that the Scythians dominated the region by conquering a wide area from Oceania to the Caucasus, they were made up of tribes and were divided into three in order to rule the region. This shows us why Persian and Greek sources give us information as if they were describing different people, especially why they always used different names in the Assyrian-Urartu-Manna wars. The reason for this was probably that there must have been a tribal confederation. Those in the North of the Black Sea depended on a separate leader, the Caucasus and the Mediterranean area depended on a different leader, and Central Asia and Southern Siberia depended on the main command center, the chief leader. This is evidenced by archaeological finds. Especially in the recent period, the “Golden Clothes” found in Kazakhstan actually indicate that the main commander, who passed into literature as the Royal Scythians, may have been in this region. Pazırık and similar finds show the Southern Siberia and the Minusinsk basin. In particular, he says that he took these names from his tribes, where the names Saka, Massaget and Arimaspi were actually the name of a king. This expression explains more than one nomenclature and leader names in ancient sources. Because it probably explains the fact that the boy-tribe organization mentions more than one name when talking about them from ancient sources, where each neck or tribe has its own name, for this reason. Although the people are generally known as Scythians, this is probably a name that the Greeks wore. Such a three-part administration of the country resembles the Huns' administration, while having a different leader in each such region resembles the “Yabgu” position that we will see later in Central Asia. Because when the Göktürks also grew up and spread over a wide geography, they left the country to the rule of commanders who were originally descended from the dynasty, called eastern and western “Yabgu”, both to manage the region correctly and to continue conquering. It is also normal that this was not understood in ancient times and that every leader was looked upon as a Scythian king. Because the Western Yabgu from the Göktürk state are also seen as kings when looking at medieval sources. Because such a management is a characteristic of the steppe. Such a rule is

not even out of the question in the West. The information given by Scillus is important in this sense. In this information, he reveals the Turkic-Mongolian tradition. Scillus tells that there were revolutions in the Scythians after this period and that power women became kings in Scythia, which is the most well-known feature of Tomris hatun. He wrote a similar statement earlier when talking about the Saka queen named Zarina:

“Now this people, in general, have courageous women who share with their husbands the dangers of war, but she, it is said, was the most conspicuous of them all for her beauty and remarkable as well in respect to both her designs and whatever she undertook” (Diodoros, II. 34.5).

It should be noted that throughout history, only in the Turkic-Mongolian tradition have women had such a say in the administration of the state and publicly participated in wars. No Iranian tradition says that women participated in the war. On the contrary, Iranian and Arabian writers were surprised that the women of the Turks who came to the region in the Middle Ages had so much say and were warriors.

Another important historian and writer who provides information about the Scythians is the Roman Claudius Ælian. He not only conveys the information given by Herodotus, but also gives deep knowledge about Decapitation and nomadism among the Scythian/Saka elements. The Scythians wander up and down their own Country; but Anacharfis, being a wife man, extended his travels farther: for he came into Greece, and Solon admired him (Ælianus, V: 125). His information he gives is important to us. Because he says that the Scythians move up and down from their own country. In fact, this does not mean not only nomadism. It may be an analogy/analogy. It may mean that they lead a highland- winter style of life. Because he could have used a different expression instead of up-down. We already have this information from what Herodotus told us. But as a historian of the ancient world, it is very important that he confirms Herodotus with such knowledge and gives a new information about the Scythians, as we will see below.

“The Horses of the Sace have this quality, that if one of them casts his Rider, he stands still till he gets up again. If any of them intends to marry a Virgin, he fights with her, and if she gets the better, he carries him away Captive, and commands and has dominion over him. They fight for victory, not to death. The Sace, when they mourn, hide themselves in caves and shady places.” (Ælianus, XII: 240).

The information given above is very important. The information he gives when describing how a Saka chooses a mate. In the Dede Korkut saga, it is known that “Beyrek” wrestled with the girl he was going to marry, shot arrows, rode horses and competed. It is a well-known fact that noble and warlike men in ancient Turks were looking for a leader-spirited wife more than themselves when choosing wives for themselves. With these characteristics, it seems that the Scythians lived according to the Turkish-Mongolian tradition.

One of the fifth-century Byzantine writers, Priscus, who served as an ambassador to Attila, referred to Attila and the Huns as Scythians in his work “Fragmenta Et Excerpta” (Priscus, 2020: Fragmenta:6-7-8). The Scythian expression about the Huns is clearly used in the work from beginning to end. The most important element here is that Priscus does not give

hearsay information, but first-hand information as a person who has personally Decamped among the Huns. Westerners conducting Byzantine research today say that the Scythian expression is a general expression used in tribes such as the Goths, Ostrogoths, Visigoths. However, the information provided by Priscus refutes these views. Because Priscus clearly distinguished these peoples from each other, he stated that they spoke different languages as follows:

"Someone, whom I thought was a barbarian from Scythian dress, approached and greeted khaire (Hello) in Greek. I was surprised at a Greek-speaking Scythian. Since there was a mixture of peoples, they spoke Hun, Got, and Latin languages Decently in addition to their own languages. But no one could speak Greek easily, except those they captured from the coast of Thrace and Illyricum" (Priscus, 2000: 8).

Procopius, the most important historian of the sixth century, gives us some information in his work called History of the Wars. The first one mentions two nations named Antae and Sclaveni, and mentions them as Massaget, and then expresses that they lived with a typical Hun characteristic (Simplicity) (Procopius. VII: 14.28).⁶ It is believed that the two tribes mentioned here are the Hun tribe. Procopius equates the Massagets with the Huns in his work. There is also a place where he mentions Aigan, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Cavalry Units of the Byzantine army, "Aigan was born from the Massagets, whom they now call the Huns.." he uses the expression (Procopius, III: 11.9-10). This shows that even Procopius, one of the most important historians of Byzantium, thought that the Huns were Massagets. As we mentioned above, ancient sources such as Herodotus and Arrian (Arrian) state that the Massagets were a branch of the Scythians. So, naturally, the Scythians and Huns were one people according to Procopius.

"Now there was a man among the Massagets who was the leader of several Decently talented men with courage and strength; this man inherited from his ancestors and fathers the privilege of being the first Decoy among all the Hun armies to attack the enemy." (Procopius, III: 18.12-19).

This information we have given above also comes across as a good example showing that Procopius holds this view. Apart from this, today's researchers argue that the accumulation of knowledge from the past was transmitted exactly in Byzantine historiography and that the word Scythian is a common expression used for all mounted nomads. However, Procopius established the sentence in his work "We have always dealt with the Persians and Scythians, but the Vandals invaded the Moorish ...". This shows him that the Persians and the Scythians were considered separate elements (Procopius, III: 19.7). Elements such as vandals, on the other hand, were not called Scythians, as the researchers said, but by their own names. Procopius also referred to Attila and his army as "Attila, who invaded the Roman region with a large army consisting of Massaget and other Scythians..." (Procopius, III: 4.24). The most confusing point

⁶ Anthea and Sclaveni are two large tribes living in the Dnieper and Dniestr region. There are discussions about the origins. One group argues that they are the ancestors of the Slavs, while the other group of scientists argues that they are Sarmatian- Alan tribes. Although it is said that they speak Iranian and Slavic languages as languages, Procopius provides information from outside these data. He states that they are a barbaric-speaking people. The most important one tells that they believe in a god who rules the lightning, who creates everything, and they offer all their sacrifices to him, out of which they respect rivers, fairies and some spirits, and they sacrifice to them (Procopius. VII: 14.22-27). This situation brings to our mind Kayra Khan, Ulgen Khan in Turkish mythology, while it shows that we should not forget that the ancient beliefs of the Turks believed in holy spirits and fairies.

in Procopius' work is VIII. This is the part in his book where he talks about the tribe called Tetraxitae. Procopius, who said that this tribe was the Goths, further writes that they were also formerly called Scythians, and everyone who held this region was given the name Scythian. Based on this information, researchers state that Procopius called every nomad a Scythian.

Since all Byzantine writers considered the Scythians and Huns as one people, this statement is a very important statement. He both stated that the languages of the people they called Scythians and the Goths were different, and also made it clear how more than one language was used in a confederation-style empire. It can be thought that the Scythians considered here within the scope of the research can speak more than one language just like the Huns and can live in tandem with more than one culture. Based on this information, researchers state that Procopius called every nomad a Scythian. However, Procopius also gives information in the following lines that "Several of them had an additional name, such as Sauromatae or Melanchlaenae or something else" (Procopius, VIII: 5.5-6). Probably, the people Procopius called the Goths were actually Sarmatians, a different tribe or another Central Asian tribe. Already, when Procopius mentions the Huns named Utigur and Kutrigur (Bulgarian Turks), he tells where the names Utrigur and Kutrigur came from, giving the information that "In ancient times there was a large Hun group called the Cimmerians who lived in this region ..." (Procopius, VIII: 5. 1-3). In addition, Procopius mentioned the Utigurs and Kutrigurs when he mentioned that they were formerly Cimmerians. This shows that Procopius especially used the name Massaget, Scythian, Cimmerian for the Huns (Bulgars, Sabirs). He called other people by their names. In addition, although he uses the names Scythian and Massaget for several tribes and expresses their origins differently, thanks to the extra information he gives, he makes us think that these tribes are probably also Central Asian (largely Turkish).

An expression used by Procopius in the work of Agathias, which continues his history, is also very important. When Agathias speaks of his work as Bulgarians- Hun:

All these peoples were given names such as Scythians or Huns, whereas individual tribes had their own names based on the traditions of their ancestors - Cotrigurs, Utrigurs, Ultizurs, Brugundil and so on and so forth (Agathias, V: 11).

This expression has an important place in our understanding of the origin of the Scythians. The fact that he uses the expression here other than the names Scythian and Hun shows that he considers the Scythians and Huns to be the same people. In fact, as we have stated above, the state organization, the legal order consisted of a confederation of height and reached up to the Middle Ages without any deterioration in this system. The information described here further clarifies the information given by Procopius. As can be understood from these statements, according to medieval Byzantine sources, the Huns and the Scythians were considered a single tribe.

When we look at the work of Evagrius Scholasticus, another Byzantine writer who lived during this period, we see that the Scythian expression was used for the Avars, another Central Asian people of Turkish origin:

"The Avars are a Scythian race. It is one of the nomadic inhabitants living in the plains beyond the Caucasus. Their neighbors had fled en masse from the Turks"

(Scholasticus, V: 1)

Here, the expression They fled from the Turks is not a racial concept, but a state name. The most important real Root known today is that the real name of the Turkish Empire is the Turkish Khaganate. A misunderstanding has led to their names being passed into the literature as Kōk- Göktürk. For the Huns who conquered Thrace, he stated that they were the Massagets of the ancients (Scholasticus, III: 2).⁷ The fact that Attila is mentioned as the Scythian king in this statement is also valuable as evidence supporting the fact that the Huns and the Scythians are the same people. The same author described the attacks made by Attila's son Dengizcich in 467-69 as the Scythian war (Scholasticus, II: 14). In the work, Evagrius Scholasticus depicted the information with very clear lines. He clearly characterized many events in the almost contemporary period and used the names Scythian and Massaget for Hun and Avars. Although there is an exception in his work, it is obvious that this situation is usual when looking at the authors before him.

The Byzantine historian Menander Prorektor has also made the situation very clear with the information he has provided. He himself includes the following statement in his work *Historia*:

“When the Turks, who used to be Sacae, sent an envoy to Justinian about peace, the Emperor decided to send an envoy to the Turks.” (Menander, X: 2).

This statement was also clearly stated by the Byzantine historian that the Sakas are the same tribe as the Turks. Despite all this historical information and data, the strange situation is that foreign researchers who translate the works of Byzantine historians are constantly disturbed by the identification of the names Scythian, Saka, Cimmerian and Massaget with Hun, Avar, Root Turk, Bulgarian Turks, and in this case they hide behind sentences such as “Hereditary Expression” or “General Name Given to Nomads” by throwing in footnotes. Menander says in his work that the letter from the Göktürks was written in Scythian (Menander, X: 1). The fact that the Turks are called Scythians here is a very important statement. Because Menander used the Scythian expression especially for the Turks and made it clear. But Menander mentioned the Avars directly by their own names in his work. Perhaps this is because they are in closer contact with the Avars. But in his work, he also explains that the Avars were allocated a region and that the Avars did not accept this region and wanted to live in Scythia, depending on their region (Menander, V: 4). This shows him that in fact the Avars were also considered Scythians, but they were called by their own names. Another reason for this is that such a way of expression may have been chosen to distinguish the ambassadors who came to Byzantium

⁷ But Michael Whitby, who translated this work, showed a different attitude by writing the name of the Got people in front of the Massagets from the footnotes he made in the work. He claims that these are the Goths, that the people who will be a threat in this period are the Goths, and that the expression called these Massagets is a Herodotist expression. In our opinion, this view is wrong. Evagrius has already mentioned the Goths as “Got” in his own work. In particular, two places where he uses the Scythian expression attract attention. Both statements refer to the Got leader, the Byzantine politician Theoderic Strabo, while writing the Scythian expression. Perhaps the origin or nation of this leader may have been based on a Scythian nation. Because we know that some women in her family were married to the Alan-Sarmatian leader. He probably has blood ties with these nomadic tribes. It should be remembered that since Emperor Leon's mother was a Caspian Princess, he was nicknamed “Leon of the Caspian” or “Leon of the Scythian” during his reign. Perhaps this Gothic leader had Scythian ties in his family. But we do not know this. What we don't understand here is why Evagrius, who saw and heard a people who lived in this period, who is almost contemporary, doesn't confuse the tribes, but the scientist who translated it confuses the tribes. However, in the footnote of the chapter where the Scythian king Attila is mentioned in the same work, the translator does not mention the Scythian word at all (Scholasticus, I: 17).

during the Köktürk-Avar war. This work is very important in terms of showing us that the Saka and Scythian expressions were used by Menander only for the Turkish nations.

In the work *Strategikon* attributed to Emperor Mavrikios (582-602), the title Scythian Ambush, after the Scythians took the order of battle, the collision began, a fake retreat took place soon after and the horsemen retreated. The enemy opposite goes after them, and the cavalry, which was hiding and hiding on the right and left wings for a short time, suddenly attacks and defeats the enemy by getting into a circle. He writes that the Ephthalites (Akhuns) did the same, but while retreating, they dug a ditch, some of the enemy died while they were surrounded in the ditch, and he tells how the Sassanid Ruler Firuz was defeated by the Ephthalites in this way (Dennis, 2011: 80-81). The name of this war tactic has been passed to the literature as “Turanian Tactic” and it is known that it is the most important war tactic used by Turkish and Mongolian mounted cavalry. By making these false retreats of the Scythians I. We explained in detail in the history section that they defeated Dareios. In this work, it is explained that the Scythians practiced training exactly as in tactics when preparing for war. This book, which describes the strategies of a war, provided deep information about the Scythians. In fact, it is stated that no one except the Scythians can immediately get over a war defeat (Dennis, 2011: 103). It is natural for us to think that the Scythians described here may be Huns. Already, the work describes the Scythians, that is, Avars and Turks, and fighting other peoples similar to Huns in the title, while it writes that Turks and Avars pay more attention to military organization among the Scythian peoples (Dennis, 2011: 155). It is probably the Göktürks who are mentioned here as Turks. The most important part of the *Strategikon* is the part where the Scythians say that they split into mounted squads of 10-15 people, headed to where the prey is and then shot arrows while chasing the prey. A similar event described here, which actually seems important from the point of view of military training, also attracts attention during the Persian-Scythian struggles. A similar example is when Dareios, who saw that the Scythians, who were in order of battle against Dareios, suddenly fell into turmoil, was told, “Sir, the Scythians are hunting after a rabbit”. The purpose here is not only to hunt, but also to do military training. This tradition continues culturally in Central Asia even today.

Theophylact Simokatta, the last historian of the First Age, who is considered the most important historian of the century, known for the rich information he gives in his work, *Decrees* the following sentence in the part where he describes the struggle between Varam and the Sasanian Ruler Khosrow:

"He was expelled from his kingdom, left Ctesiphon, and hesitated because he did not know what to do after crossing the Tigris River, because some advised him to go to the eastern SCYTHIANS, whom we are accustomed to call TURKS, while others advised him to go to the Atrapaean mountains to save his life" (Simokatta, IV: 10.1)

As it can be seen, a great historian such as Simokatta clearly states that the Turks are called Scythians. The information given by Simokatta is very important. Because between the 3rd and 7th centuries, various Turkish elements fought or established relations with Byzantium. Dec. One of them is the Idlers. As we mentioned above, Simokatta, who stated that snow falls on the Scythian region near the Caucasus at certain times of the year, actually defines that the Southern Caucasus and the Northern regions today are Scythian territory.

Another source from which we will get some data on the ethnic origin of the Scythians is the famous Byzantine historian 8-9. Theophanes, who lived for centuries, was the Confessor. In the Confessor chronicle, when describing the invasion of Thrace by Attila, the Hun ruler of Europe, he uses the expression “Attila, the son of Moundios, who was also a Scythian, was a brave and arrogant person who, after eliminating his elder brother Bdellas, became the sole ruler of the Empire of the Scythians, who called themselves the Huns” (Confessor, 1997; Aydın, 2021: 112). This statement is very important. Here, the Byzantine historian uses the Scythian expression for Attila and Muncuk Khan. As we have already stated, Byzantine historians used the Scythian expression for warriors of Turkish origin from the east. Although Procopius explains in his own work why the Kutrigurs, who belong to the Ogur tribes called Huns in the Confessor's chronicle, are referred to as such, he has included the names Kuturgi and Uturguri for the Bulgarians in different works (Confessor, 1997; Aydın, 2021: 145). In the light of this data, we are based on the following information. Byzantine historians actually called all the Turkish raids that came first as Scythians, and then, as they got to know the tribes, they began to call them by their own names. For example, an attack made by just a single Hun boy was also an attack by a Hun, and they described it as an attack belonging to an entire people. Maybe this attacking neck name was different. But the Byzantines preferred to call them Hun. Confessor, let's take the detail that Emperor Leon's son Constantine later wrote that he was engaged to the daughter of the Scythian khan (Aydın, 2021:224). The khan mentioned here is the Khazar khan. As far as we understand from Theophanes' work, the Turks were the only people who used this name in the region after the Scythians and were called by this name. The fact that Theophanes used the expression “Huns, whom we are not used to calling Turks,” when describing the arrival of the Göktürk ambassador shows that he first referred to the Turks as Scythians and then as Hun, and they did not want to use different expressions other than these expressions.

In fact, the hypothesis that we stated above, “Byzantine historians say Scythians in tribes such as the Goths and Visigoths, this is a stereotyped expression,” was again destroyed by a medieval historian. Jordanes/Jordanis (5.century) the famous Got historian clearly distinguishes this statement. Jordanes also reveals a region that coincides with the information given by ancient sources when giving information about Scythia and says that it extends to the east of the Caspian Sea to the northern ocean to the lands of “Hun, Alban and Seres” (Jordanes, V: 30-31). The thing to note here is that it is very important to establish two important expressions such as Hun and Alban. Because after the Scythians, the Caucasus was founded by the Alban state, which was formed in tribes, and it mentions the name of the Hun, which was dominant in Central Asia. This information he gives coincides with the information of Herodotus, Strabo and Ptolemy. In the sequel, he says that the Scythians had some martyrs established in the Greek colonies in order for their trade to develop in the North of the Black Sea. For a long time, he mentions the tribes belonging to different races living in the region during his period by their own names. He distinguishes the Huns from these tribes and mentions a different tribe named Got in the continuation of the same narrative (Jordanes, V: 37). This shows that the Byzantine historians clearly knew the origin of every tribe living in the region called Scythia. Where the Goths have ever been wiser than other barbarians and were nearly like the Greeks, as Dio relates, who wrote their history and annals with a Greek pen (Jordanes, V: 40). Jordanes reveals one more piece of information in his work, which he gives in such

detail, that he clearly distinguishes the difference between Parthians and Scythians. Dec. From their name or race Pompeius Trogus says the stock of the Parthians had its origin. Even yet today in the Scythian tongue they are called Parthi, that is, Deserters. And in consequence of their descent, they are archers—almost alone among all the nations of Asia—and are very valiant warriors (Jordanes, V: 48). This information is due to the fact that the name mentioned in the literature today as Parthian was actually put forward by the Scythians. We know that there were states established after the disintegration of the Empire of Alexander the Great. The Parthians are the tribes that rebelled to save the Iranian homeland from the hands of the Seleucids during this period. As we mentioned above, Arrian told about Alexander's Central Asian adventure, while the Achaemenid satrap came to the region and fought with Alexander by dressing up as Scythian kings. This indicates that the Parthian tribes passing through here probably lived under Scythian rule and then fled to save their homeland, today's Iran. That's why the Scythians called them deserters. From this we know that the Sakae queen Zarina married the Parthian king, but then the Parthians rebelled against the Medes. This is it happened in the 7th century, which is why it caused the long-lasting Med- Saka war. So, obviously, the Parthians have caused trouble to the Scythians several times throughout history, and probably the Scythians gave them this name. This shows him that the name Parth, which has passed to Greek sources, is actually the fact that the Scythians put the name as a result of the rebellion of a people who were their subjects. Jordanes, while giving information about the origin of the Huns, writes that the Gothic King entered Scythia and found witches called "Haliurunnae" and expelled them, and that the Huns descended from these witches (Jordanes, XXIV: 121-122). Jordanes states here that the Huns lived in Scythia.⁸ The author then repeats the information given by Priscus. He already makes references to Priscus in his work. There are two events that should be taken into account when examining the author's work. One of them, as we mentioned above, the author calls the entire region of the ancient Scythian Empire Scythia and is clearly looking for races such as the Goths, Ostrogoths and Visigoths to be found in the region. However, in his work, he equates the Goths, to which he belongs, with the Getae and Scythians.

We understand this from the part where Tomris mentions him as the leader of the Getae in the part when he tells his story, and from the part where he says that he encountered the silk tents after the Achaemenid war. Tents made of woven material were already a feature of Scythia. But the author is clearly doing his best here to base his own Got origin on the old. While he mentions the Huns as barbaric and evil in the parts, he describes himself in his work, it is seen that Priscus could do nothing but pass on his rich knowledge in the parts he refers to Priscus. It should be noted here that it is understandable that the authors of the period already knew that they could separate the races from each other. Apart from that, the information he gives is completely false. He had not seen the Huns, Avars and other Turco-Mongol elements from Central Asia called Scythians. Already, using the information he received from Priscus directly in the continuation of the work, calling Attila a Scythian indicates that his information contradicts. We have used this source only to show that the tribes clearly separated from one another at that time. However, all the Byzantine writers who saw peoples such as Hun, Avar,

⁸ The fact that he constantly refers to the Huns as barbarians and constantly equates the Goths with the Greeks, that the author is a Goth nationalist, and that he humiliatingly distinguishes the Huns in his work, makes us suspicious of the hypotheses he throws about the origin of the Goths.

Pecheneg and Göktürk use the expression Scythian directly. This author probably could not give information because he could not access detailed information about these tribes.

IX. Byzantine Patriarch I, who lived in the century. Photios gives some information in his work "Bibliotecha". In this author, he used the phrase "Turks living east of the Tanasais (Don) river, formerly called Massagets and Kirmikhiones by the Persians" in his work - he called the Turks Massaget, like the authors before him (Photios, 1920: 73).⁹ The important thing here is that the text from which this statement was taken was written by taking it from the work of another Byzantine historian, who we assume has not survived to this day. As we mentioned below, it is very important that Theophanes, who lived during the period when the Turks came, kept the Massages equal to the Turks.

Niketas Khoniates says in his work "Historia" that the Scythians crossed the Danube and plundered Thrace in 1122-1123 (Niketas, 1995: 9). The people described here are the Pechenegs. As we have explained above, Byzantine historians referred to all cavalry groups of Turkish origin from the east as Scythians. Khoniates also refers to the Kumans as Scythians in the same work (Niketas, 1995: 18-19). The people called Huns here are now Hungarians. In fact, as in Theophanes the Confessor, horsemen who come are first called Scythians; then, when relationships were established, they called them by their tribal names. Until this moment, what we have described has been based entirely on Ancient and Medieval sources. After this, I find it useful to refer to the important opinions of several scientists who have put forward some views on the Scythians. Some opinions have been put forward based on these main sources, which are very important to cite.

Someone like Rostovtseff, who argues to the death that the Scythians are an Iranian people, and even emphasizes that there are some Iranian words like Artamonov on these names, felt obliged to establish the following statement. He even expressed that the Turani people's opinion is dead. But then he contradicted himself with the sentence he set up:

"Also M.D 4. and 3. emphasis has also been placed on the Mongolian physiognomy of the Scythians represented in the Bosphoran (Bosphorus) monuments belonging to the centuries. But it should be borne in mind that the monuments have two ethnographic types: one is Mongolian, as in Solokha, and the other is Indo-European, as in most other monuments. Despite this, I completely agree with those who believe that the Scythians are of Iranian origin, but I also easily accept that he carries a strong Mongolian and Turanian blood. Since the study of language does not provide decisive criteria, my reasons are mainly based on historical, archaeological and religious assessments." (Rostovtseff, 1969: 60)

Another scientist who is left in a dilemma is Rene Grousset. He is a French academic who has worked in many fields such as Central Asian history in the first half of the last century. He argues that the Scythians are the Northern Iranians who have become nomads in the steppes of Turkestan, now the homeland of Iran (Grousset, 2006:33). Since the finds discovered during Grousset's period could not answer many questions, he stated that Scythian art was similar to

⁹ The author stated that he received this information from the Historia of an author named Theophanes. But this is not Theophanes the Confessor. This is Theophanes' work II. Justinian and II. It describes the period of Tiberius, that is, the events between the years 566- 581, and the Decadence of Maurice. Detailed information about the author has not reached the present day. But as explained in the footnote, it was an important work in terms of giving the first information about the Turks.

Hun art. But he interpreted this by linking it to the steppe lifestyle. Writing that the Scythians and Huns drank wine in the enemy's skull and cut their faces with knives in order to shed "Bloody Tears" after their dead, he states that they have similarities in common cultures (Grousset, 2006:50). He also gives examples of how many Scythians drank the blood of the enemy they first killed, drinking a glassful on a high hill, just like the Huns, and how many Huns drank from a skull cup to celebrate a treaty. But he expresses them not in the part where he describes the Scythians, but in the part where he describes the Huns. Although he also expresses similarities with the Huns about their art, he emphasizes that there is a strong Assyrian (Greek) influence. The famous Hungarian historian Gyula Németh Described the Scythians as an Iranian people in his book published in 1940, while emphasizing the kinship between Hun archaeological finds such as Grousset and Scythian finds (Nemeth, 1982: 199-204).

He has an important place among the researches on Scythians Dec. According to Minns, the change in the nomadic depictions found in Kul Oba was probably due to the fact that the old features may have disappeared as a result of marriages with indigenous peoples (Minns, 1913:46). In fact, even today the situation is the same. The Turks spread over a wide geography are blonde, auburn, brunette, skinned. But this is because they can easily marry them without excluding the peoples of the geography where they settled. After Anatole Bogdanov said that the skulls found in the graves were long, very few were Mongoloid, and the majority were Brachycephaly; Minns suggested that the heads of Slavs and Finns used to be long and that they have become shorter in the last few centuries, and the crooked legs in Sarmatian graves found in Hungary are related to horsemanship or mixing with Altay blood (Minns, 1913:47).

It is worth mentioning two scientists here. Because they analyzed the stelae, artifacts and languages found in the Siberian region under the influence of the archaeological objects sent to the palace during the reign of Peter the Great and provided the earliest information on this subject. These are D.G. Messerschmit (1685-1735) and W. Radloff. Messerschmit (1685-1735), who was exiled to Siberia after Peter the Great, found more than 500 artifacts during his travels. During his travels, archaeological excavations were carried out in Scythian graves and some important data were found. While some of the stone stelae discovered by Messerschmit during this journey belonged to the Early Bronze Age - Okunev culture, some of them belonged to the ancient Turkic period (Letfeldt, 2023: 291). Apart from these, Messerschmit also worked as a linguist, conducted research on the dialects of Turkish during his Siberian journey and grouped Siberian languages: The classification that Messerschmidt refers to in the original text - although it is about peoples, not languages - is found in Rapport IV. There he distinguishes four "main classes" of peoples:

1. "Old Hun=Scythian" uniting the Finno-Ugor and Samoyed peoples: Ostyaks, Votyaks, Čeremissen, Wogulen, Samoyeds. Strahlenberg's "Harmonia linguarum" makes a clear distinction between these two groups: According to him, there were eight Finno-Ugric languages at the beginning and two Samoyed languages at the end;
2. "Asiatic Saermatic=Scythic" includes Turkic peoples, Siberian Tatars and Yakuts.
3. "Asiatic Aby=Scythian": Kalmyuk, Mongol, Tunguz, Manchurian, Tangut, Manchu-Tunguz peoples are listed among others, but not the Lamuts (Evenen).

4. The Rapport itself adds them to the following group according to the geographical principle. 4. “Oriental or Eastern=Hyperbolic=Scythic”: Kamčadalen (Itel'menen), Korjaken (Nymylan), Lamuten (Evenen), Jukagiren, said to belong to the Tunguso-Manchurian group of languages.” (Letfeldt, 2023: 301-302).¹⁰

As we understand from the above, Messerschmit classified all Turkic peoples living in Siberia under the title of Scythians. Auch Strahlenberg, another important scientist and soldier who lived in this period, made a similar classification and put forward almost the same view with a few differences. As it is understood, Messerschmit and Strahlenberg came to this conclusion based on the runic texts, steles and archaeological finds found in the region and by examining the local population. According to the Göttingen University publication, Messerschmit must have relied on the data of other scholars who had visited the region before him.

W. Radloff (1837-1918) may have made the most accurate scientific analysis when the first finds were discovered. Radloff conducted excavations in Siberia and many other areas and examined ancient artifacts. Since he could not find enough data as a result of these investigations, he remained hesitant towards Ritter's Indo-Germanic view. However, he stated that Yenisei people could be the successors of the ancient Siberian culture, but until there was no other evidence other than the expressions “Yellow hair” and “Blue Eyes”, what he said remained as a possibility (Radloff, 1956: 156). These statements stand before us as a good example of a scientist who tried to do science and thought quite rationally. However, Radloff did not hesitate to state that they were a warrior people similar to Turkic peoples, especially based on the weapons found in these graves (Radloff, 1956: 142). While analyzing these graves, Radloff writes that they belong to the Iron Age. However, he does not use the term Scythian since the cultural phases are not yet clear. When he mentions the graves in the Berel region, we understand that he is referring to the Scythian kurgans unearthed during excavations in the Berel region in Kazakhstan today. In fact, based on the horses and harnesses found in the graves, he stated that Turks still ride horses today. In fact, it seems that Radloff also made the cultural connection, but he used more cautious expressions based on the data he had in the conditions of that day.

When we examined their archaeology, it was understood from the motifs that the origin of the Animal Style was based on the “Khrisguur Culture”, while weapons such as Scythian swords and axes belonged to the Tagar- Karasuk culture, and the objects dated to this period were found to be handled. While their art was derived from the early Central Asian rock art, it is understood from the archaeological finds that they were influenced by the art of the regions they conquered in time and that they used elements of Mesopotamian and Greek art in their art and influenced the other cultures. Apart from this, the finds from North Central Asia and South Siberia show that there was no interaction. Although the influence of Assyrian art is somehow

¹⁰ For detailed information see: “Auch Strahlenberg legt eine entsprechende Übersicht über die Völker Sibiriens vor: Strahlenberg 1730a, pp. 31-54.

Manaster Ramer, A., Sidwell, P. 1997. The truth about Strahlenberg's classification of the languages of Northeastern Eurasia // *Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne*, pp. 139-160”

felt, the use of these motifs from the same periods does not reveal which culture the motif or figure belongs to.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

It is understood from both archaeological finds and ancient and medieval sources that the Scythians were actually a people of the Ural-Altaic family and strong Turkic cultures, living primarily in the Minunsk basin and Southern Siberia. Over time, they became a dominant power in the Middle East, Anatolia, the North of the Black Sea, Iran and the Caucasus region as an Empire, but in time they disintegrated, weakened and were replaced by their successors. Probably in the last periods, they may have used Iranian language under Achaemenid influence and Greek language under Greek influence. However, even scholars who defend the Iranian view above feel compelled to state that they carry the Turko gene and culture in terms of origin and language. Especially the information provided by ancient sources and early medieval sources reveal that the Scythians were culturally and lifestyle similar to the Turks. In the ancient sources, their burial customs, the use of koumiss, tents on chariots, war tactics, even the way they threatened the enemy, their way of life, the fairness of their laws, the way they were governed, and many other features are completely identified with Turkish culture. Another striking similarity is that while the names have no meaningful explanation in the Iranian language family, the names expressed by authors such as Herodotus in their own language have exact equivalents in Turkish languages. Until the 9th century A.D., Turkish tribes such as Hun, Avar, Utrigur, Kutrigur, Pecheneg were called Scythians, especially by writers who had seen these tribes, but later the word changed its form and Byzantium began to call those who came down from the north Scythians, since it considered everyone who was not like it as barbarians. However, in early medieval sources, it is seen that this term was used only for groups with Turkic blood, while tribes such as Goths, Ostrogoths and Visigoths had their own names. The term Scythians was also used for those related to Turkish tribes by blood. However, all sources after the 9th century A.D. should be viewed with skepticism. Because both the previous information is repeated and the term "Scythian" changes its form. In this period, it is seen that the historiography from the ancient world was completely lost and a completely biased historiography was written. In addition, archaeological researches show that the elements of early Scythian art belong to Tagar- Karasuk and Khrisguur culture. In time, they came to the Middle East and the Northern Black Sea region and took regional influences into their art and influenced the art of the region. The well tombs found in the castle of Mikenai were reminiscent of Scythian tombs and contained embroidered metal objects, horses and slaves (Mansel, 1971: 68). It is clear that they both influenced and affected neighboring cultures in terms of art and culture. The large bearded Scythian type seen in objects from the 4th-3rd century BC may be a depiction of late Scythians who were probably intermarried in the region. E.Minns and many other scholars have put forward this view, taking into account the political intermarriage in ancient sources. However, among the Asian finds, only mustachioed old typical Scythian depictions of Scythians continue in the objects, while this bearded type is found in the Black Sea and Western Asia. In fact, if you look at these mustachioed types, you will see that they are the same as the mustachioed type in the Central Asian Göktürk period balbalas. In addition to this, it is clearly visible in the finds found in Pazırık kurgans, which contain the latest Scythian

artifacts, that the Central Asian Animal Style continues and develops without disrupting itself. Even on the museum page, it is stated that the woven elements such as the carpet, which is referred to in the literature as the Pazyryk carpet, are woven in “Turkish Technique”. In my recent laboratory test, even the fermentation application seen in the yarns in the carpet has revealed that it continues in medieval Turkish carpet weaving (Spath vd., 2021). Even such similarities clearly reveal that the Scythians belonged to the High Altaic cultural environment in terms of tradition and culture. Together with these accounts, it is understood that the Scythians had Turkish blood and probably spoke their own language. However, over time, they learned the language of the peoples of the region they ruled and probably started to assimilate in the 4th century B.C. after their disintegration. Although both the philological and cultural study put forward by D.G. Messerschmit (1685-1735) and W. Radloff continued afterwards and departed from the line they laid out, it is still important today. Because when we examine these early Siberian cultures and the traces left by them, we see that they continue only from the Ural-Altaic family. There is no doubt that these horsemen who came from Southern Siberia belonged mostly to the Ural-Altaic language family and Turkic traditions.

Authorship Contribution

The study was produced as a single author.

Declaration of the Ethics Committee

If the research is based on document review, it does not require the approval of the ethics committee.

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