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SCYTHIANS: SCIENTIFIC GENOCIDE (3)
SCYTHIAN GENEALOGY

This is one of the most controversial enigmas of Scythian identity. Herodotus gives us three versions of Scythian origin - *two legendary* and *one historical*.

THREE VERSIONS

He prefers the historical one: "It claims that the Scythians were a nomadic tribe living in Asia, and that once, by force of arms, they *were driven by the Massagetae across the River Araxes and into Cimmerian land.*" This story differs somewhat from that provided by Aristeas of Proconnesus who asserts that "*Issedones were driven out* of their territory *by the Arimaspians*, the *Scythians were expelled by the Issedones*, and the *Cimmerians* living on the southern sea *were forced to leave their country by the Scythians*" (Herodotus, 1998: IV. 11, 13, our emphasis).

Although realistic (Scythian as nomads; their origin in the steppe; pressed by stronger and aggressive tribes; crossing Araxis, i.e. Volga…), this story does not give us much information about *the language* and *mythology* of Scythians.

The second is the legend told "by the Greeks who live on the Euxine Sea". It says that Heracles, "while driving the cattle of Geryon" came into a deserted land ("currently occupied by the Scythians"). Here Heracles "encountered storms and frost" and had to "cover himself with his lion skin" for sleeping. When he fell asleep his horses disappeared "in mysterious way". Roaming around to find them he came into the region called "Hylaea" where " he found in a cave a being who was half young woman and half viper". She gave him back his horses but under one condition: to have intercourse with her. She also said that she would bear him three sons and asked Heracles what to do with them. He gave her a bow and a girdle and advised that she should keep with her only the son who could draw the bow as his father had done and gird himself with the girdle in the Heracles way. She should send away the others that fail the trial. Of those three sons - *Agathursus*, *Gelonus* and *Scythes* – only the youngest (Scythes) passed his father's test. From

33

Scythes, the son of Heracles, "were descended every successive Scythian king" and "also, Scythians still carry cups on their belts even today, because of Heracles' bowl."(Herodotus, 1998: IV. 9, 10).

It is easy to recognize classical motives (a roaming hero; woman-snake; man-beast; three brothers/heirs; bow test…[1]). But first of all the story intends to "establish" the right to and "justify" Hellenic colonization in "waist" Pontic regions. We are again faced with a scarcity of linguistic and other data of special interest for our investigations.

The most important and interesting is the Scythian version:

"According to the Scythians, theirs is the most recent race on earth, and their account of their origins is as follows. The first man to be born in their country, which had previously been uninhabited, was someone called *Targitaus* (ΤαργιτάοV), whose parents, according to the Scythians – this is what they say, but I myself do not believe it – were Zeus and a daughter of the Borysthenes River. This is supposed to be Targitaus' lineage, and then he had three sons - *Lipoxaïs* (Λιπόξαϊς), *Arpoxaïs* (Ἀρπόξαϊς), and *Colaxaïs* (Κολάξαϊς), who was the youngest. During their reign there fell from the sky on to Scythia golden implements: *a plough and yoke, a sagaris, and a cup* (ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ φερόμενα χρύσεα ποιήματα, ἄροτρόν τε καὶ ζυγὸν καὶ σάγαριν καὶ φιάλην). The first one to see them was the eldest son, and he ran up to take possession of them, but at his approach the gold caught fire. He retreated, and the second son approached, but exactly the same thing happened to him – the burning gold drove him back as well. At the approach of the youngest son, however, the fire died down, and he took the golden implements back to his own home. The two older brothers therefore yielded to the youngest brother and handed the whole kingdom over to him" (Her., 1998: IV. 6).[2]

"The Scythian tribe called *Auchatae* trace their lineage back to *Lipoxaïs*, while the *Catiari and Traspians* trace their lineage back to the middle brother *Arpoxaïs*, and the kings of Scythia, *Paralatae*, are descended from the youngest brother. Their own name for themselves collectively is *Scoloti*; it is the Greeks who call them *Scythians*" (Herodotus, 1998:IV.6).[3]

This legend is the subject of numerous disputes and interpretations. Way back, Justin disagreed with Herodotus that Scythians are the youngest, and said that, on the contrary, they are *one of the oldest people (gens antiquisima)*.[4] Some interpreters bridge this difference by suggesting that Herodotus gives "vague",

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[1] In Herodotus we could find such motives in many places: "Heraclide dynasty" in Lidia (Herodotus, 1998:I.6); Carians, Lydians and Misians of "three brothers" (Herodotus, 1998: I. 171); Heracles' visit to Egypt (Herodotus, 1998: II. 42); Ethiopians send bows to Persians to try to draw them before they come with their army (Herodotus, 1998:III.21).

[2] We could not accept insertion of *four* implements (Rawlinson, Waterfiled…) for this is absent in Greek texts and represents (inadequate) interpretation.

[3] Waterfield (Herodotus, 1998) is prudent deleting that Scoloti are named *after the name of one of their kings* (τοῦ βασιλέος ἐπωνυμίη).

[4] "Scythian tribe from the time immemorial thought of himself as the oldest; after all, for a long time, there was a dispute among Scythians and Egyptians concerning the antiquity of their tribes" (Justin, II.1, in How and Wells, 1979: 304).

"approximate" measures saying that Scythians add that "from the time of their first king Targitaus until the invasion of Darius, a thousand years passed, but no more" (Herodotus, 1998: IV. 7).

There is also difference concerning the real or symbolic significance and meaning of the things that "fell from heaven", as well as about: the name of Targitaus and his sons; the ethnonyms of the tribes descended from the three brothers… Etymological efforts were mainly bound by a paniranic approach, and all onomastic puzzles remained unsolved.

Scythian Charter. The Scythian version is their legendary explanation and justifycation of: *primordial rights to the land they occupy; kinship of Scythian tribes; celestial basis of social stratification…* In this latter sense their legend resembles the famous *Purushasūkta* of the *Rig Veda*, explaining the origin of Vedic castes: from different parts of the body of the first man (*Purusha*) emerged four *varnas* (*varṇa*, "colour") or castes – *brahmans*, or priests, from the mouth; *kshatriyas*, or warriors, from the hands; *vaysiyas*, or commoners, nomads (cattle breeders) and agriculturalists, from the thighs; and *śūdras*, servants, from the legs (Rig Veda, 1999: X. 90).[5]

Scythian version is a *charter* of Royal Scythians ("the largest and most advanced Scythian tribe, who regard all other Scythians as their slaves" – Herodotus, 1998: IV. 20), which will reveal to us their supposed origin and mythical rights to rule, as well as the level of social stratification of Scythian society

Targitaus. The ancestor of all Scythians is named Targitaus (Ταργιταοσ). Some interpretters associate the name with the Greek ταρχυω, used in Homer's Iliad for paying respect to a deceased hero (Budimir, 1952: 261). Greeks accepted this term from Anatolian languages (Ivanov, 1990:6). Its parallels are lycian *trg/q/as*, "god", Hittite *tarḫ-*, "to defeat, conquer", from which the name *Tarhun* (the god of storm), Luwian *Tarḫunza*, the thunder god (Gamkrelidze and Ivanov, 1995:695).

Without any doubt, prominent Scythian ancestors (like in Greek, Hittite, and actually, all PIE peoples) were "heroes", sent to "heaven". According to what has just been cited, the legendary parents of Targitaus were Zeus and the daughter of the Borysthenes river, half woman, half snake. Such an origin of first ancestors is actually a pan-IE motif. In Greek mythology too, heroes are offsprings of gods and some higher natural elements (mountains, rivers…) or human beings. In this sense Targitaus is also equaled with Heracles.

Now, we could link **Targitaus** both with the heavens and the first man and hero.

His name is most probably derived from PIE ***therH-**, "cross, penetrate; defeat, conquer, overcome" (See Gamkrelidze and Ivanov, 1995) > Skt. **tṛh**, "to crush, break, crack…" (> **tarhaṇa**, "who crashes, breaks") + **tavas**, "power, might, strength, courage…" which is cognate with Yaska's **tarku** < **krt** ("to cut")**,** *"knife,*

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[5] *Cāturvarṇya* (four colours/castes) is the basis of classic Indian political system and legal/social obligations and rights: *advisory* function of *brahmans*; *military* of *kshatriyas*; *nourishment* of *vaysiyas*; *servants – śūdras*.

sword" (Yaska, 2002:2.1).[6] His name points also to **tara/tāra**, mfn. "carrying across, a saviour, protector"; "shining, brilliant", "a star"; "saving; surpassing, conquering" <**tr̄**, "to liberate, save; crossing (the sky)". This will comply with the meaning of the Scythian name which we explained from lexical material comprising the semantic field: "to rule, dominate; might, force, power; *sword*; destroy, crash…" (**śak/sah/ kshi**… and numerous derivations).[7]

He represents ideal *conqueror and crashing force*. The Scythian "first man" and "king" is a personification of *celestial* might (like Heracles), of both – God of *Shining Sky* and *Lightening, Protector* and *Destroyer* (bipolarity noticed in the Sun[8] and Rudra).

Three brothers. It is said that Scythians sprang from three brothers. Colaxais also had three sons (Herodotus, 1998: IV.7). The model of the *trinity* is one of the most widespread in the IE community (but also in Semitic and other traditions), either as a pattern of a real *triad* (three separate beings) or *trimūrti* ("having three forms"). We know about different mythic clusters of this sort. The Christian trinity is preceded by the well known Vedic triad of gods of the *sky*, *atmosphere* and *earth*, i.e. Surya, Vayu/Indra, and Agni; the post Vedic gods of *creation*, *presservation* and *destruction*, i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva…; the three brother-ancestors in Russian, Teutonic and other Indo-European folklores…

Founders of Scythian tribes. The etymology of the names of these three brothers is yet unsolved. Instead of a vain effort to survey the innumerable suggestions concerning the meaning of the names of the founders of Scythian tribes, we find it more useful to state our position. To our mind, *the names of the three Scythian brothers indicate the social layers of Scythian society.*

Obviously, these names are compounds. Starting with the *first lexical element*, in the name of **Lipoxaïs** we find **lip**, "to smear, anoint", "to kindle, put in fire, burn".

Arpoxais contains **r̥ph**, "to injure, kill", related with **arpayati,** "to order movement, throw, hurl…"; **ārpayiti**, "to cause wound, injury…", **ārpayitr̄**, m, "one who inflicts, injures".

In the name of **Colaxais**, the first linguistic element is most probably **ka/kha**, "*sun*, *fire*, *light*; head, *king*, name of Prajapati …", or **khala**, "sun", but also " battle, fight". To the connection of king and god of shining sky[9] also point other information.[10]

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[6] Yaska supposes metathesis *tarku-krt*, giving other examples of such process in old Indian language: *siṃha*, "lion"<*hiṃs*, "injure"; *varāhaḥ*, "cloud"< *hr̥*, "to bring"; *pasas*, "manliness" <*sap*, "to touch"; *Parjaniyaḥ* < *tr̥p + janyaḥ* = *pr̥t +janyaḥ* = *parj +janyaḥ* =*par + janyaḥ* (Yaska, 2002: 3.18;5.4; 5.16; 10.10).

[7] Speaking about "new deities of Europe" (i.e. Indo-European ones), M. Gimbutas noticed: "A hero may substitute for a god and his weapons became divine" (Gimbutas, 1991: 399).

[8] On vedic epithet of the Sun is *vājasani*, mfn. "winning a prize or booty or wealth; granting strength or vigour; victorious" (RV, ŚB).

[9]"In Indo-European mythology, the image of this god (of the Shining Sky) is linked with kingship" (Gimbutas, 1991: 399).

[10] Greek lyric poet Alkman (VII century B. C.) links horse, one of the solar symbols, with Colaxais: ἵππος Εἰβηνῶι Κολαξαῖος δραείηται· (Fragment 1P, 59). Old-Greek κολοσσοσ denotes supreme deity on Rhodes – the Sun god.

Although it is generally agreed that those names could not be derived from Iranian languages, some interpreters point to Iranian origin of second element: **xšaya**, "king, ruler". But in Sanskrit too we find the same expression and meaning: **kshaya** < **kshi, kshayati**, "to rule, govern, have power over…".[11]

Some interpreters understand these names as appellations for gods. This, however, directly contradicts Herodotus' explicit statement that even Targitaus is not a god, but "the first man" and king. He is (like Greek Heracles) a *hero*, and his sons could only be *"kings"*, leaders, originators of Scythian clans.

After thorough etymological examinations, we could say that Targitaus' sons are the ideal Scythian **Priest** (*Lipoxaïs*), **Warrior** (*Arpoxais*), and **Ruler** (*Colaxais*). They cover the three main functions of Scythian society: *priesthood, fighting* and *ruling*…

Ruler integrates all main aspects of Scythian life, his authority being empowered by *celestial king* [12]. In this capacity *Colaxais* has "heavenly rights" to obtain *all three kinds of golden objects* symbolizing the *functions* of: *ruling* – the *plough with yoke*; *military* – the *battle-ax*; *priestly* – the *drinking-cup*.[13] The symbolical significance of these objects is underlined by the fact that they are *sacred* and made of *gold*, which is of great importance, especially for *kings*:

"It is one of the kings' most important jobs to look after the sacred gold I have mentioned, and there is an annual festival of propitiation at which they placate it with great sacrifices. The Scythians say that anyone who has the sacred gold and falls asleep out in the open during the festival will die within a year, and that is why they give him as much land as he can ride around on horseback in a day." (Herodotus, 1998:IV.7).

Though from agrarian terminology[14], the plough and yoke *are not* (as usually explained) symbols of farming (production, in general), but of the function of *ruling, administration, integration and prosperity*… The *plough* symbolizes the *connection of the heavens and earth, fertility* and *governing* over the land. The *yoke*, on the other hand, is a symbol of *command, unification, harmonization*…[15]

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[11] Skt. *kshi* has as Greek parallel κτίζω. But, beside the reflex χτ, κτ…we found also x, usually when *sh* in skt. is in pre- and post-vocal position (See skt. *kshan*, and gr. κτεινω, ξαινω).

[12] In Śatapatha Brāhmana one of the epithets of the Sun is *āsañjana*, n. "the connecting link" or "central point, the hinge, the hook, to which the worlds are attached" (See Verma, 1991:283–284).

[13] Benveniste found that these objects are of *three* (not four) kinds, plough being connected to yoke with the particle τε καὶ (Benveniste, 1938:230).

[14] "Royal" Scythians were not farmers. But Herodotus gives us information about other Scythians and related tribes who were occupied with agriculture, some of them exclusively: Callippidae, "who are Greek Scythians", and Alizones, and beyond them some Scythians who "farm the land" but the crops they cultivate "are for them to sell, rather than for their own consumption"; "farming Scythians called Borysthenites "; Geloni(ans) who are "farmers, grain-eaters and gardeners" (Herodotus, 1998: IV. 17, 18;109)…

[15] How this terminology could be expanded to other spheres it is shown by Skt. *yuga*, nmf., meaning not only "yoke" but time period as well as the concept of social liaison – "team, pair, couple, brace (*ā*)". In old Greek also we have the same symbolism. As Aristotle asserts, the concept "to marry" was expressed by "to yoke" (συζευξις), for connection between husband and wife (as well as parents and children), "does not have specific name" (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253 b). PIE word for

Scythian clans and social division. Now we can return to Scythian clans.

From **Colaxais** originate **Paralatae**, the *ruling* class (Royal Scythians, chiefs, leaders, kings, administrators), which has already been etymologically explained.

Arpoxais successors are **Catiari and Traspians** (Κατίαροί τε καὶ Τράσπιες). Herodotus' onomastics relats *military* functions (*attacking* and *ordering; defense* and *abuse*...). **Catiari** are derived from **kath, kathyati**, "to tell, order, command", **kaṭṭāra**, "a weapon; dagger"; *kaṭaka,* "an army; troop, multitude"; *kaṭu,* "sharp, fierce" (See also *katth, katthate, katthita*…"to boast; celebrate; to mention with praise; to abuse, revile…"). **Traspians** seem linked with **tras**, **trāsayati**, "to prevent, seize, capture, conquer, subdue…", **tras**, **trasati**, "to tremble, frighten" and *pīy, pīyati*, "to blame, abuse, revile, deride" (See also *pīyu*, m. "scornful, injurious").

From **Lipoxaïs** we should expect *priests*. This is exactly the case. Herodotus says that his descendants are **Auchatae** (Αυχαται). This could be explained by skt. **ūh**, **ūhati**, ved. **ohate**, "to observe, mark, attend to, regard; to consider, deliberate…", **vah**, "to lead, advise, instruct; to offer the sacrifice". As we have seen, Brahmans have an "advisory" role, to administer rites and ceremonies (sacrifices, funerals, "carrying away"…).

Some interpreters (including Grakov) deny the existence of priests in Scythian society, assuming that their function was performed by kings. They rely on the situation among Ossets, who did not have a separate social class of priests or warriors (a position also favored by Abaev). At best, it could be said that Scythian society was not stratified and specialized in the manner that Greek, and especially Egyptian, societies were. Precisely speaking, we do not dispute that in the Scythian community there was no *clergy* (a specialized priesthood with an adequate hierarchy). Among all Indo-Europeans "a separate class of priests is unlikely to have been established by the proto period" (Gimbutas, 1991: 395). But in historical time it is impossible to deny the existence of *priests* or *shamans* in Scythian society. Herodotus explicitly mentioned: *diviners* (who use "a large number of willow rods"). "Death by burning" is the punishment if they are found wrong or guilty of other crimes, "calling them false prophets" (Herodotus, 1998: IV.67, 70); *enareis* (the priests of goddess Argimpasa) who had another divinatory method (Herodotus, 1998: IV. 67); *holy* persons and people (Argippaei). After all, so many forms of sacrifices and rites (some of them very elaborate, like the horse sacrifice, human sacrifices to Ares, burial ceremonies for dead Scythian kings, regular rituals of different sorts…) required some sort of more or less specialized persons.

Social division is evident. Herodotus speaks about *kings*; *priests*; *other Scythians* (treated by Royal Scythians as "slaves"; farmers; traders, etc.)... Scythian legend of their origin suggests *three* functions/social strata – *kings*; *priests*; *warriors*. Strictly speaking, society had not attained the level of vedic *castes*. In that sense, although not the same, the situation might be similar to neighboring Cauca-

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yoke (*yuk'om*) is derivative of *ye-k'-*, "connect, join, harness". Yoke play "ritual role in ancient Indo-European traditions" – symbol of subjugation (Hittite, Rome, Phrygians…); unit of measure of space and time; companionship… (Gamkrelidze and Ivanov, 1995:625–26).

sian peoples. There, in later period, precisely in the time of Strabo, *four* strata ("castes") already existed among the inhabitants of Iberia:

"*One*, and the first of all, is that (caste) from which they appoint their *kings*, the appointee being both the nearest kin to his predecessor and the eldest, whereas the second in line administers justice and commands the army. The *second* caste is that of the *priests*, who, among other things, attend to all matters of controversy with neighboring peoples. The *third* is that of the *soldiers and the farmers*. And the *fourth* is that of the *common people, who are the slaves of the king and perform all the services that pertain to human livelihood*" (Strabo, 1928: XI. 3.6).[16]

Now we could better understand the Greek legend. Basically, *it repeats* the Scythian one: **Targiatus**' counterpart is **Heracles**.[17]

Heracles' sons bear Scythian names which correspond to Scythian legend: *warrior* – **Agathyrsus** < **āghāta**, "attacker, charger; attack; killing"; *priest* – **Gelonus**, most probably from **gālana** <**gai, gayati**, "to speak, sing, praise in songs", **gal**, "to drop, distill; to vanish, perish, pass away; to fuse, dissolve, melt"; *ruler* – **Scythes** (< **sah/sak/saha**… "mighty, strong, able…").

Summary of results. Now we could sum up some results of our assessments.

First, after evidence presented by Herodotus, it is clear:

a) Herodotus has many *difficulties understanding Scythian language and mythology*.[18] This is evident from the ambiguity of the Scythian gods' names (names, epithets, epiclesis, attributes…); the mixing up of their function and sexes, as well as hierarchy (Hestia is in the first place of the "pantheon", but "Ares" has a central role in sacrifices; the oldest gods – heavenly "father" and "mother" – are only second in rank; the third group consists of solar deities, and, remarkably, the god of the dominant Royal Scythians…);

b) He *applies the Hellenic cultural matrix* (hellenization), which is, to say the least, dubious;

c) Herodotus is *not reliable in interpretation* but is scrupulous in recording. That eliminates any suspicion about his journey to Scythia. He, of course, did not travel throughout the country as could have been construed from his writing, but he did use information from Greek Pontic, Scythian and foreign sources;

Second, the main conclusions that could be drawn from Herodotus' work are:

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[16] This model of social differentiation is closer to *Purushasūkta*. For Scythians, Herodotus find as characteristic that they have no bought slaves, and though the Royal Scythians treat all others as their "slaves" there actually were some native Scythians serving as king's attendants (Herodotus, 1998: IV.72).

[17] Apollodorus noted that Heracles originally was called *Alkyd* (Apollodorus, 1976: V. 2.4.8–2.8.5). That seems to point to ἀλκή, "strength, force, might, courage" (Cf. *tṛh*, "to crush, bruise" in Targitaus).

[18] Even for modern researcher, it is highly difficult to get through a very elaborated, decorative and richly symbolic language of Sanskrit, especially religious texts. Linguists have noticed an "extreme profusion of synonyms" (dozen of names for elephant, earth, water or fire, more than 100 names for lotus, 250 for the adulteress…), using of words "as symbols which have many meanings, sometimes even contradictory" (Ivanov and Toporov, 1968: 105).

a) Scythians *did not belong to Iranian stock*, either in language or mythology[19];

b) Their language is probably *a variant* of *Sanskrit/Prakrit*[20];

c) Although closely related to other IE, especially IA cultures, Scythian *mythology and language have some local distinctive traits* and *should be studied separately…*

d) Scythians *show significant indications of early Indo-Aryan community* (similarities with pre- and Vedic religion, worship of the deities of light, fire, earth, waters, fertility and destruction…);

e) A solution of the Scythian enigma *could help us not only to understand their origin but, what is also important, gain an insight into pre-historic and early historic events in the Indo-European community as a whole…*

All this could be inferred both from the correct information and the "errors" of the father of history from which precious truths could be discerned. When Herodotus said that the Scythians considered themselves to be the youngest of nations we should seriously think of the possibility that they (or at least Royal Scyths) could have come there later than other peoples (Cimmerians, Maeotae, etc…).[21]

SCYTHIAN ONOMASTIC PUZZLES

There are more Scythian onomastic problems in Herodotus' work that remained tough puzzles (ethnonyms, oronyms, hydronyms...). They should be analyzed with full consciousness of Herodotus' shortcomings, "noise" in communication with his informants, being inhereted from predecessors, corruption by copyists, or, simply, mistakes. But some are convincingly confirming the close afinity of Scythian and Indo-Aryan languages, in the first place Prakrits/Sanskrit.

Leaving them for further deliberation we shall try to give expalanation of only two, both the most interesting and discussed by linguists, but not yet deciphered.

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[19] As we already said, nobody could deny a strong kinship of Sanskrit and Old Iranian. Morgenstierne finds that in the sixth and fifth centuries B. C. the languagages of Iranians and Indians (their eastern neighbours) were still close, having hundreds of common words, so that inhabitants of border regions could understand each other (Morgenstierne, 1974: 271–279). Norman Bird, lexicostatistian, found that "85 per cent of Iranian words from his list have Indic equivalences" (in Renfrew, 1987: 193). Retaining reservations to such claims (it is said also that 77 per cent of Hittite words have co-occurrence with Indic roots?) and the method itself, we are aware of "high co-occurrence of Indic and Iranian" especially in the earliest time. On the other hand, it is obvious that there are significant differences between Sanskrit and Iranian, in the case of Scythians both in language and mythology.

[20] We should have in mind: *a)* Prakrits substantially influenced Sanskrit; *b)* there are no original Scythian documents which could allow us to establish, more or less precisely, the affinity of Scythian and Sanskrit (judged from Herodotus' information, it is substantial).

[21] Grousset (1951:39) holds that Scythians ruled over autochthonous inhabitants. "It is possible that in southern Russia Scythians from time immemorial represented aristocracy imposed over the Cimmerian, ie. Thraco-Phrygian substrate".

Sauromatians, Σαορομάται, οι (Herodotus, 1920: IV. 21, 57, 102, 110-120…and Σαυρομάτις χωρη, IV.123).[22] Modern historians and linguists have not deciphered this ethnonym. Supporters of the Iranian theory made it at least clear that this question is left *unsolved*. Available propositions are controversial and unconvincing: "possessors of spears/swords" (Müllenhoff, Vasmer); *sairima* (Marquart, Rostovtzeff); "black-caps" (Vernadsky); *melanchlaeni* ("black-robes") i.e. *sau + roma* (Dumézil); "killers of heroes" (*saura-marta*, Blumell); "tamers of gray horses" (Pizani); "tamers of silver-gray horses" (Kote)…

Trubachev, here again, stands apart: ***sar-mat** means "female, belonging to women". He finds the key in "Sauromatians governed by women" (Σαυρομάτων δε ἐστιν ἔθνος γυναικοκρατουμενον, Scyl. Cariand. 70) and supposes *sar, IA "woman" and adjective suffix -*mat*, with the corresponding Iranian term *harvat* (-*sar = Iranian *har). Scythians, according to Trubachev, borrowed that term from Indo-Aryans in the northern Black Sea region (Trubachev, 1999: 271).

The question of "matriarchate", the rule of women, popular among antique and modern students of Sauromatians, deserves separate attention in another context. We are here concentrated on the linguistic roots of the name of Sauromatians. Our main source and guide in this endeavor is, again, Herodotus who in his way gives us the crucial information. He errs in interpreting names but gives us reliable onomastic material, in this special case semantically *quite logical* and *morphologically sound.*

Σαορομάται is a word of Scythian origin. It is, to our opinion, compound of two linguistic elements:

Skt. s̲a̲u̲r̲a̲ < s̲u̲r̲a̲, s̲ū̲r̲a̲, and s̲ū̲r̲y̲a̲… **sura** means "*the sun*; deity, gods' idol", **sūra**, "*the sun*", **sūrya**, "*the sun*" and Sun-god (*Sūrya*). In *saura* our attention is drawn by *a-* prefixation of vowel *u*, well known rule (*vrddhi*-woyel), with a meaning of dependence, relation, correlation. Thus, s̲a̲u̲r̲a̲/s̲a̲u̲r̲y̲a̲, mf. denotes "belonging to the Sun, solar, a son of the Sūrya…" Similarly, **śaiva**, mf. means "belonging to Śiva, sacred to Śiva", adherent of this god; **vaishṇava**, mf. "relating, belonging or devoted, consecrated to Vishnu; a worshiper of Vishnu"…

The second part is not a suffix but the noun **mata** (< **man**), "fate, doctrine, belief"…[23]

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[22] Elsewere (Nikić, 2006) we tried to solve other onomastic puzzles, at the same time discussing at lenth the origin, ethnical structure, burrial practice and mythology of Sauromatians.

[23] Here we find interesting to give an explanation of one of the most prominent sociologists, Max Weber. He was very well aware that, like Confucianism, Hinduism knows of *dualism of doctrine and ritualistic obligation*: In Hindu terminology there is a distinction between *dharma* and *mata*. *Mata* is related to metaphysical theology. To Christian doctrine (*Kristi-mata*), for example, belong ideas such as: that all (and only) men have souls; that supernatural beings created the world and all souls from nothing…But, this is not of prime importance. The central criterion is *dharma*. In essence "Hinduism is primarily ritualism", a fact inferred by modern authors who say that *mata* (doctrine) and *marga* (holly aim) are transitory and *ephemeral* (i.e. freely chosen), while *dharma* is *eternal* – that is unconditionally valid.Weber explains that for Hindu man the first question about the essence of some religion is not what its doctrine (*mata*) is but what its ritual (*dharma*) is. For Christian dharma, for example, are characteristic: communion, baptism, visiting church, weekend, etc. In Hinduism dharma is dependent on the caste in which someone is born. (Weber, 1960:21–25).

The name of Sauromatians, signifies *worshippers of the Sun, Sun religion, adherents of the Sun-cult.* This interpretation is confirmed by all available information, provided by ancient history and modern archaeology (See Smirnov, 1964). Also the Scythian perception of the Sauromatians was that their distinctive trait is *worship of the Sun as the supreme deity*. Of course, Sauromatians knew other related cults too (of fire, fertility…) but the Sun-cult was the main characteristic of their religion.

Amazons. We already treated (Nikić, 2006) the all range of interesting questions (the mythical profile of Amazons; their locations; the reasons for obsession of classical world with women-warriors; Athens and women's question; the position of Greek poets, philosophers and historians: Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus…).

Obviously, the most difficult question was a puzzle of the Amazons' "name". Herodotus gave his famous interpretation:

Amazons are called by Scythians *Oiorpata*, meaning "killers of men", "because *oior* is *man* in Scythian, and *pata* means *to kill*" (Herodotus, 1998: IV. 110).

At first glance everything is clear. But modern linguists and historians were not happy with Herodotus' explanation. They asked for other interpretations, mostly from Iranian. Some renown linguists (Zeuss, Müllenhoff, Vasmer…) take that οιορπατα is actually οιροπατα which they interpret from Iranian: *vira*, "man" and *pati*, "master, lord". Muller thought that this name could not be interpreted from the Iranian. Abaev, however, suggests correction of οιροπατα to supposed original Iranian οιρομ ατα – *vīra-mār-ta*, "men-killers". Zgusta stiks to classical solution: οιορπατα i.e. ἀνδροκτόνοι.

Unfortunately neither of these suggestions represent step forward compared to classical conjectures.

Herodotus' interpretation looks more authorative than it really is, just because historian supports it by the "Scythian testimony". But, here, again, our conclusion about Herodotus' method and etymology finds its justification. Like in other cases, we are faced with his *reliable registration* and *unreliable interpretation*. What Herodotus does is application, once more, of Greek etalon and legendary approach. He, simply, follows and favours Greek traditional view, established by his famous predecessors. Homer called Amazons "the peers of men" (Ἀμαζόνες ἀντιάνειραι). For other poets Amazons were daugthers of Ares. Pindar went further defining Amazons as "men's destroyers" (ἀνδρολέτειραν). Hippocrates also claimed they were warriors and do not quit their virginity until they kill three enemies.[24]

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[24] Legends about "women-warriors" were popular in antiquity. According to some authors (Cf. G. C. Rothery, *The Amazons*, London, 1915) they go back to III millennium B.C. The oldest registered is in *Mahābhārata*. Kālidāsa (V c. B. C.) also knew about female bodyguards of one raja. Megasthenes testified that Candra Gupta had female warriors who protected him...

Οιορπατα is, actually, identical with **āyur-pati** < **āyur,** comp. for **ayus**, n. "life, vital power, vigour, health, long life" (*RV, AV, ŚBr, Mbh*); "active power, efficacy" (*RV*), i. e."young, full of strength and health" + **pati**, f. "mistress, a wife" = **patnī**"[25] This meaning is the exact parallel to the name *Amazons*.[26]

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СКИТИ: НАУЧНИ ГЕНОЦИД (3)

Резиме: Да је Херодот поуздан у *регистрацији* скитских термина али непоуздан у њиховој *интерпретацији* најбоље се види у његововом тумачењу скитске генеалогије. У овом делу се расправљају легенде о пореклу Скита и уз широку лингвистичку анализу доказује да њихова генеалогија, са једне стране, може бити протумачена из индо-аријских језичких оквира, а, са друге, да она потпуно одражава општу схему Индо-европејаца (о три брата, краљевима, свештеницима, ратницима…). Истовремено се, као типични примери заблуда модерне лингвистичке науке, анализирају значења израза *Сауромати* и *Амазонке*.

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[25] Cf Gr. oαρ, αρος, ep. ωρ, „woman, wife" (Gr. *o,a,e* - Skt. *a*); also Gr. ποσις, Lat. *potis*…
[26] This term is neither Scythian nor Greek. For its etymology see Nikić, 2006.